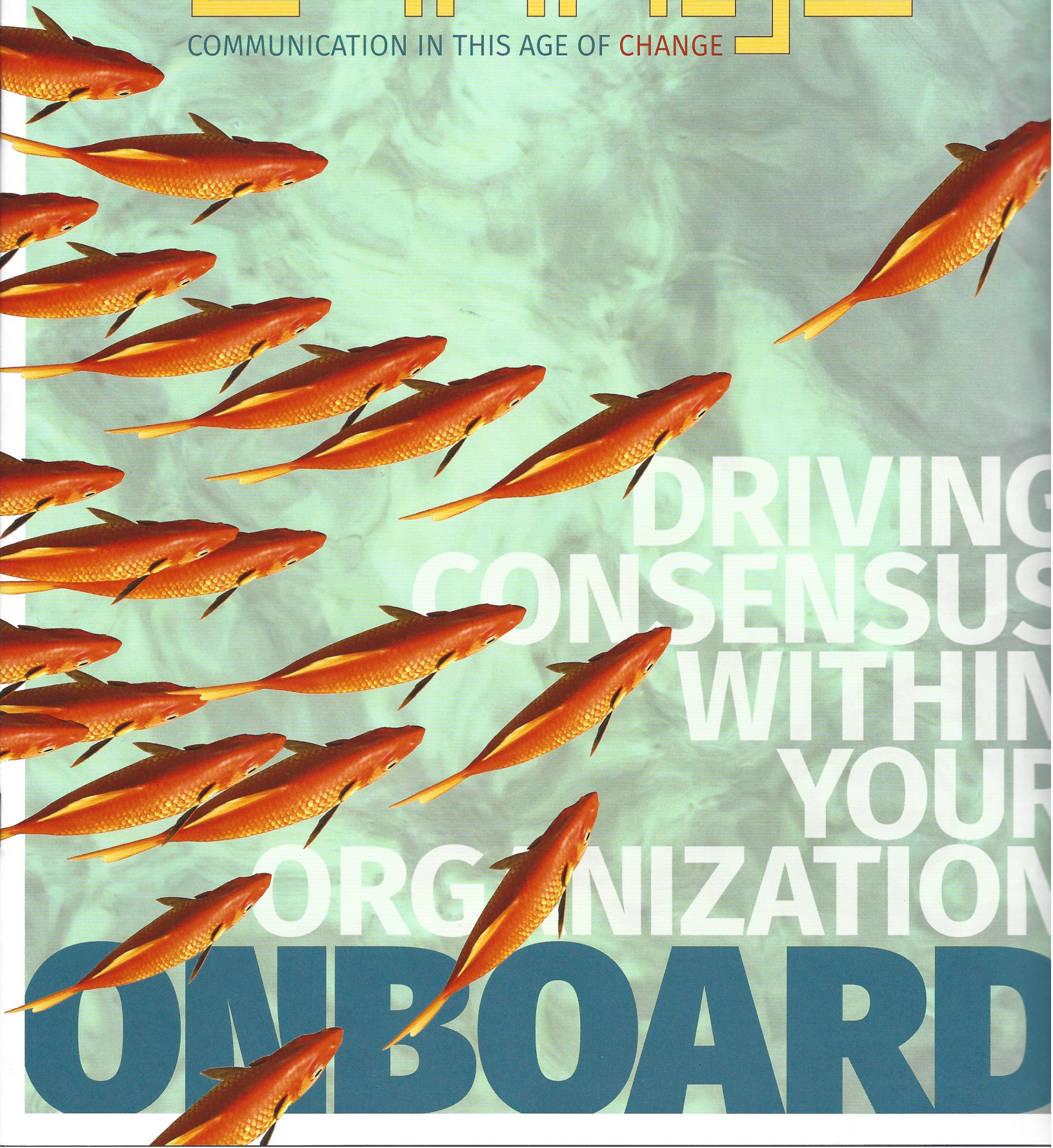


# CHANGE

COMMUNICATION IN THIS AGE OF CHANGE




DRIVING  
CONSENSUS  
WITHIN  
YOUR  
ORGANIZATION  
**ONBOARD**



# {tele}work

**Working remotely is not simply a trend.**

It's an employment revolution and a significant component in talent attraction, retention, productivity and cost savings for employers large and small.



**A**s workday commutes stretch longer and longer for millions of Americans, the notion of work-from-home jobs is an idea whose time has more than arrived.

Teleworking is gaining momentum as a competitive advantage for employers. This method offers benefits — from significant cost savings and continuity of work to increased employee productivity and better retention rates — according to Kate Lister, president of Global Workplace Analytics.

Lister noted that the definition of teleworking can blur around the edges, yet it is generally understood to mean using technology to replace commuter travel one or more days a week.

“The drivers behind embracing telework for employers are varied,” says Lister. “Many of these initiatives are not coming out of Human Resources, but Corporate Real Estate is leading the charge. Looking at occupancy studies, they found that offices were 40 to 50 percent unoccupied. Many businesses are completely reconfiguring floorplans and space around collaboration and teaming with far fewer private offices than past designs — with home and “third space” as places of concentration for individual work.”

Global Workplace Analytics partnered with teleworking job search site Flexjobs in publishing the 2017 State of Teleworking in the U.S. Employee Workforce research report. The study found regular teleworking grew 115% in the past decade, nearly 10 times faster than the rest of the workforce.

Teleworking was most commonly found in management occupations, with professional, scientific, and technical services industries having the highest percentages relative to their share of the workforce.

Financial services, call centers, health services, pharmaceuticals, nonprofits and government are all sectors experiencing growth in telework and increasing their remote workforces.

While reduced physical footprint and real estate cost savings may have initially led employers to introduce telework, many organizations and workers are finding additional benefits.

### **Flexibility — Driving Change in the Future of Work**

“The World Economic Forum identifies workplace flexibility as the number one driver of change in the future of work,” says Lister. “Our research shows flexibility is the most desired employee benefit, even exceeding compensation, across all age groups and especially with millennials.”

Offering flexible work schedules and telework is a key component for many employers in attracting talent.

Telework is surfacing in some surprising and unexpected job categories. With shortages of radiologists in hospitals in certain communities across the United States, many are turning to remote screening services — and teleworking doctors.

As reported on CBS Sunday Morning, Minnesota-based Virtual Radiologic uses an army of home-based radiologists to routinely read x-rays, CT scans and MRIs from hospitals and physician groups from all over the U.S.

Dr. Samir Shah, a teleworking radiologist featured in the news report said, “My whole life is better now; I feel like I’m the luckiest guy in the world to have this job.”

### **What Type of Economic Impact Is Teleworking Having?**

“Our research shows employers can save more than \$11,000 per half-time teleworker per year,” says Lister. “Across the existing work-at-home population, that potentially adds up to \$44 billion in savings.” If the teleworking workforce expanded to include those who could and wanted to work from home, the potential employer savings could approach \$690 billion a year.”

Another benefactor of teleworking: the environment. Existing teleworkers reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the

equivalent of taking over 600,000 cars off the road for a year, according to the 2017 research report. If the work-at-home population expanded to include those who could and wanted to telework half of the time, the GHG savings would equate to taking 10 million cars off the road.

Found time and productivity represent additional positive returns on the work-at-home investment. Half-time teleworkers gain back 11 days a year — time they would have otherwise spent commuting.

### **Innovative Technology Facilitating Change**

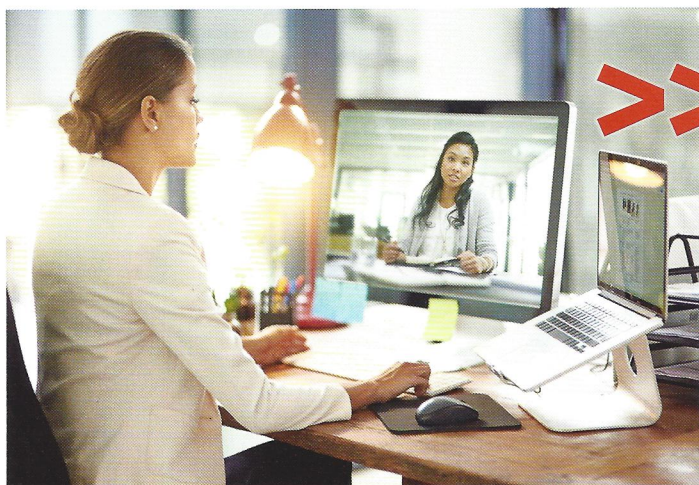
Just as where people are working is radically altering the employment landscape, how remote employees work and interface with associates, colleagues and clients is dramatically shifting as well. Innovative platforms facilitating collaboration in the face of increasingly remote workplaces are a fast-growing component of today’s evolving workplace.

Brad Richardson is the co-founder and CMO of Walkabout Collaborative, the developer of Walkabout Office, an online workplace. The platform supports remote teams and clients with live video, screen share and simple to use tools.

“Walkabout Office is a place for general business activities,” says Richardson. “Compared to Skype or video conferencing, we create a true connection where people go to a virtual office daily to interact with their entire team. Through a three-dimensional heads up display, employees can walk down the hall, knock on the door and ask a colleague a quick question. We even have a break room where people can hang out.”

Richardson and the team at Walkabout are gaining traction through a concept they refer to as “spontaneous presence.”

“Our application drives a sense of belonging, including with clients, through easy spontaneous access,” says Richardson. “Apps such as project management, document-share, email, and calendar are incorporated into our platform. There is no dial in, no downloads — simply a virtual overlay where presentations and information sharing take place as well as spontaneous collaboration. The three-dimensional display



indicates colleagues' availability and colleagues can access each other just as they would in a physical space."

The start-up's initial focus was on supporting organizations with dispersed remote work teams such as those involved in sales and account management. As their product is evolving, they are experiencing interest from a diverse group of industries.

"Our client base has expanded to include a healthcare organization with field clinicians," says Richardson. "Even a global adoption agency takes advantage of our product to allow families to initially meet children online. People have a desire for connection and connectivity. Consulting companies, business process outsourcing, any industry that has remote teams can benefit."

### Setting Up for Success

Even with all its benefits, working remotely poses some unique challenges for employees and requires planning, discipline and follow-through to ensure success.

Counterintuitively, overworking, as opposed to not working enough hours, is a common situation facing many first-time work-at-homers.

"Without the social cues of others getting up to take a break, go to lunch or leave for the day, people can get too deeply involved," Lister says. "Scheduling breaks, getting up from your desk for a stretch and setting fixed start and stop times are helpful to avoid overworking."

Lister also noted that over-communication with bosses and co-workers, especially early on into the tenure of remote workers, is wise.

## EXECUTIVE JOB SEARCH PLATFORM THE LADDERS

*recommends these successful strategies for remote workers to incorporate:*

- 1 Establish a routine:** It's important to have consistency, with regular working hours, availability for colleagues and clients and a structure to keep you focused and on track.
- 2 Set up physical workspace within your home/remote office, preferably with a door:** If you share your remote work space with family, roommates or others, it's important for them to respect your work time. Let them know you're only available for emergencies and you appreciate their help in limiting distractions.
- 3 Dress for success:** Even if it is simply "business casual," establishing a professional dress habit sets the mood and helps put you in the right mindset to get down to work.
- 4 Make sure your results are known:** While it's important to avoid blowing your own horn, making your results visible to those who rely on your work product is important to your success.

"It is important for remote workers to be solid communicators," Lister says. "Communicate more vs. less and maintain a virtual presence providing status updates and making certain that colleagues are aware of your accessibility. Be sure you are comfortable with the technology tools the company makes available and use them."

When advising her clients regarding the viability of telework for their organizations, Lister is very clear in emphasizing a reasoned and well communicated approach.

"I want to make sure they are intentional," says Lister. "With that intentionality comes reduced real estate costs, better retention and attraction of personnel, increased productivity, employee satisfaction, continuity of operations and less absenteeism. But there must be a culture of trust. This doesn't work in command and control environments where management must see the back of people's heads to know they are working. If there is a well thought out and communicated plan and remote work is voluntary, an overwhelming majority of employees will buy in."

