

# **A New Working Style At Pocketworks**

The plan for in-office and home working

Prepared for the Pocketeers

By Tobin (with input from almost everyone)

Version 1.0

# Survey TL;DR

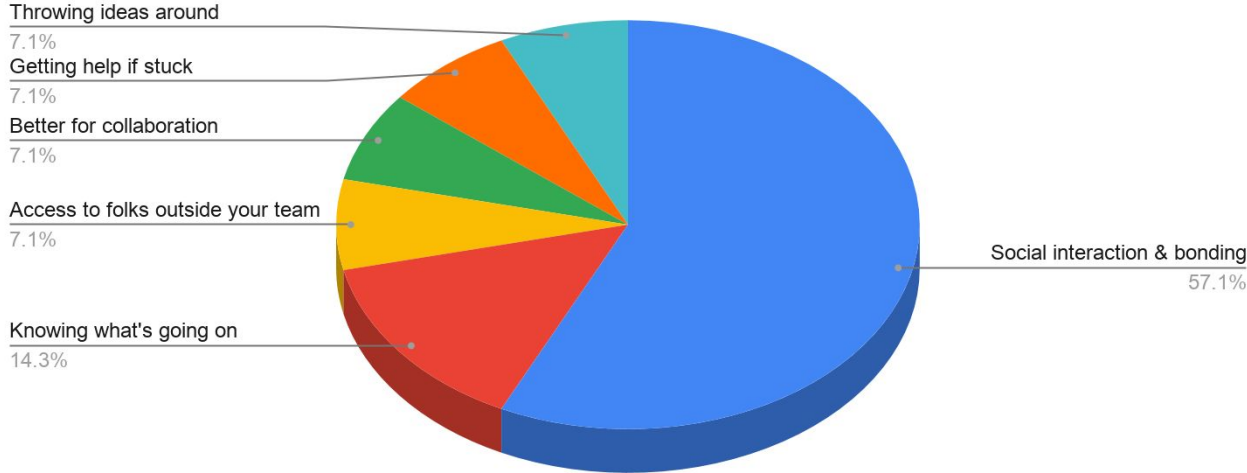
- The office is an important socialising and team-building tool.
- Most of us want to be in it at least a few days a week.
- We feel more productive at home.
- We love having the flexibility and time to manage our lives more (deliveries, fitness, house admin, life admin).
- We're not all about to start cycling in, but one or two of us might.
- We probably don't want 6 people in the office at once
- Most of us think that, in an ideal world, working from *anywhere* would improve our quality of life
- The biggest barriers to working from *anywhere* are around timezone overlap and quality of comms.
- We love the idea of retreats and team days (exotic location optional!)

Value from office	Would use it	Work from home - good?	Travel to work by	Limit people in-office?	Work from anywhere?	Work from anywhere challenges?	If we didn't have office								
Social interaction & bonding	7	1-2 days a week	4	Productivity	6	Walk	2	No Limit, there's room	4	Has really clear benefits to me	6	Timezones/Core Hours	3	Retreats/Exotic locations	5
Knowing what's going on	2	3 days a week	4	More time for life	5	Bike	2	Max 3-4	3			Comms super important	2	Team days at casual work	3
Access to folks outside your team	1	5 days a week	0	More relaxed	2	Public Transport	2							Pay People More	2
Better for collaboration	1			Better meetings	2	Car	3								
Getting help if stuck	1			Avoid awesome toilets	2										
Throwing ideas around	1			Quizzes/out-of-hours	2										
				Saving money	1										

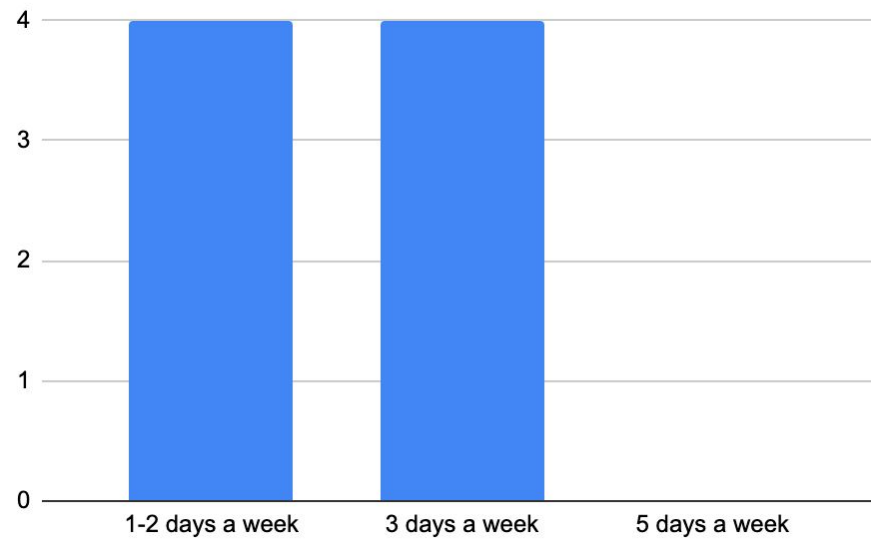
# A bit more data

Firstly, cheers for the feedback. Here's a quick overview of what we all think

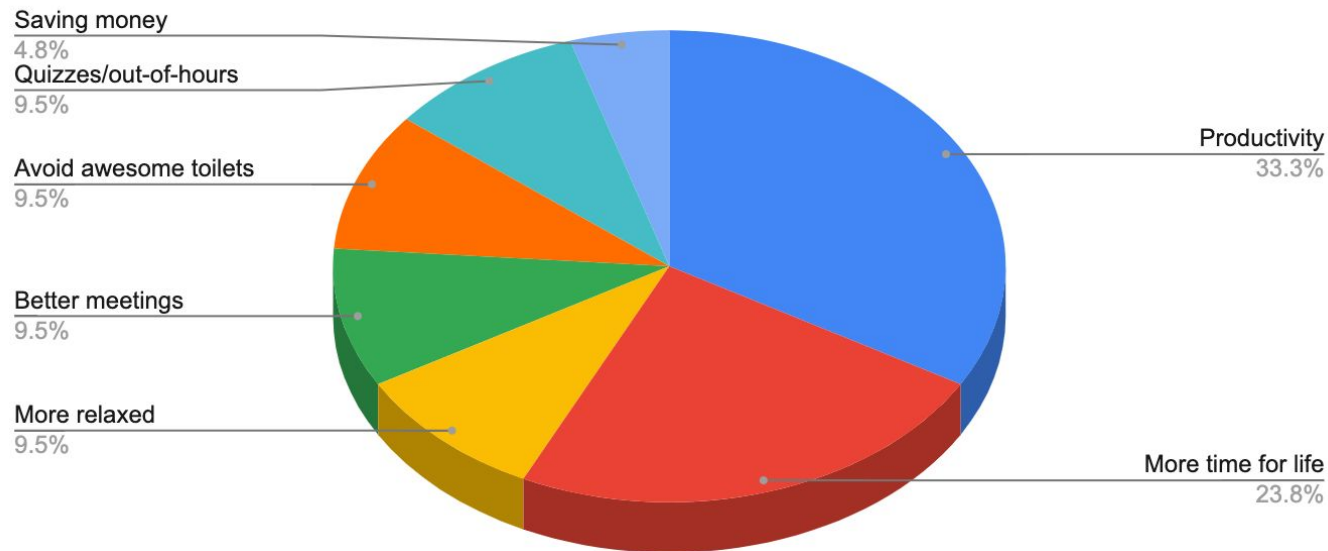
## What value do we get from the office?



How many days a week would we be in office, given the choice?



# What value have we got from working from home over the last 3 months?



**So, here's the plan...**

# Pocketworks is now a remote-first company\*

Pocketworks has **already** been a remote-first company for the last 12 weeks.

Since doing this, we've all reported better meetings, more focused work, and as a result we're more profitable and productive.

We've also enjoyed the extra time and flexibility we gain for "life admin", such as receiving parcels or working out.

The thing a lot of us miss is the social interactions that come from us sharing a physical space. There are other things too, but this is the main one. The social element obviously goes deeper, it's about building rapport, trust and relationships. Really important stuff.

So this plan looks to balance out the two things, whilst accepting we're a remote-first company.

## \*Remote first doesn't mean no office

But it does mean our **communications and practices** are designed for remote-work first. I'll talk more about those later.

# You can work from the office

Everyone can choose to work from the office if they wish. Based on the data, most of us anticipate being in the office at least 2 days a week.

We'll continue to invest in making the office great. Upcoming improvements will be ensuring we can have echo free remote meetings and better coffee facilities.



# You can work from anywhere\*



# **\*with a few conditions...**

There are a few conditions that have made remote working successful:

- We've all been available when we needed each other.
- We all had great connectivity
- We'd already racked face time before going remote

Therefore, your remote working needs to still meet these criteria:

- You are largely available during core hours
- Your connectivity must be top notch
- You return to the office when needed

More on that below.

# We need to make the office more like home

Our remote-first approach has worked brilliantly since we've all been forced out of the office. It makes us all "equal". **Therefore, it's very likely the office could be the reason it remote-first fails for us.** I believe it's because we behave differently at the office, and that goes against remote-first working. For example:

- Lots of ad-hoc comms without inviting remote people, cutting people out of the comms loop
- Echo chamber acoustics making poor quality communications
- Laggy network comms in certain areas
- Nothing written down for sharing with the people who can't be there
- Making the office an interruption zone, meaning nobody can do focused work.

The simplest way of solving this, I believe, is to make the office more like our home working setup.

- We should all be allowed to work knowing we won't be interrupted.
- Use of desk screens would be a simple way of achieving some separation.
- Headsets for meetings (noise cancelling)
- Acoustic treatment for meeting rooms to reduce echos
- Fix the networking issues

I'd be interested to know if this will kill the vibe? **Any concerns?**

# When do you *need* to be in the office?

## Onboarding new staff

The first days and weeks at a new company are really important. We should make an extra effort to spend time with new starters. So, we'll ask new starters to come to the office for at least a week, and you might be asked to return to the office to help onboard them that week.

## Retreats

Everyone must be available to gather for company retreats. These will be 2-3 day events out of the office, done quarterly (tbc).

## Client Workshops

We will continue to client workshops, and you should expect to attend these if it is a project you are involved with.

## Thoughts?

# Team socialising and activities need a little more attention

There's a good feeling here and it's because we've built relationships and trust. We don't want to risk losing that.

For example:

- Quarterly Retreats (1-2 days, local)
- Annual Mega Retreat (1-2 days, further afield)
- Friday Town Hall Meeting with Drinks & Food?

**Thoughts?**

# What about the customers?

- We're still here for them.
- They're happy, and we're delivering great work.
- We still have a challenge, because the "local advantage" might not be so strong in the new normal

# What could go wrong?

- Many of us like the social element of the office, and if nobody is here there won't be a feeling of "team".
- Some projects need people to visit client sites.  
*Historically, we've not needed to do this much. Going forward, it will reduce further. We'll explain our remote-first setup during sales, and explain that on-site visits will be minimal.*
- Clients think we're a ghost company because nobody is in the office.  
*We'll cross this one when we come to it, I suspect it will be a non-issue.*
- Increased cost of mixed home working and office working

- Any more concerns?

# Remote-first practices

We're doing well, but we should continue to learn how to do this better.

## Resources

Remote book and Rework books.

<https://circleci.com/blog/how-to-successfully-work-from-home-strategies-for-remote-work>

<https://stackoverflow.blog/2017/02/08/means-remote-first-company/>