

Voiceover Artist 0:00

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling productive life, then you've come to the right place productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity. Here, your host Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:17

Welcome back everybody to productivity cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity. I'm Ray Sidney-Smith

Augusto Pinaud 0:23

I'm Augusto Pinaud,

Francis Wade 0:24

I'm Francis Wade,

Art Gelwicks 0:24

I'm Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:26

And we are back with an episode on a topic that is quite a bit in the news lately and I thought that it would be really interesting for us all to have a discussion on the topic of remote work and really how to be productive in and when you were remote working. And so, today we're going to talk about what remote work is kind of defining it and understanding some of the the trends that are around remote work. What are the benefits and disadvantages are the advantages and disadvantages of remote working? And finally, I want us to talk about how to be most productive while working remotely. Because remote working does provide its own set of opportunities and challenges to being productive as an individual in the greater workforce. And so I thought it would be really good for us to be able to kick the idea around and have a discussion around that. So let's start off with what is remote work? How do you define remote work?

Art Gelwicks 1:26

Well, I can start you with my definition. And that's it requires a benchmark and the benchmark is remote work requires you to have a designated location that you would normally work from and then not working in that location being able to be as effective in some other place that is not pre determined. Now, the problem is, is that definition immediately falls apart as you start to think about what work remote work is nowadays, but I believe when you if you were to ask Someone who is an executive or a manager, that's what they would consider the definition of remote work. You have a desk you have an office, you have some place that they expect you to be. And this is the ability to work someplace else.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 2:13

I'm going to read from remoteyear.com They have a blog post that I'll link to in the in the show notes. It says what is remote work, and it says remote work is a working style that allows professionals to work outside of a traditional office environment. So that pretty much aligns with what you were talking about Art. Continuing, quoting. It is based on the concept that work does not need to be done in a specific place to be executed successfully. Think of it this way, instead of commuting to an office each day to work from a designated desk, remote employees can execute their projects and surpass their goals wherever they please. People have the flexibility to design their days so that their professional and personal lives can be experienced to their fullest potential and coexist. peacefully end quote. So, the idea here, at least as far as remote year is trying to explain it is that remote work is this way of being able to reconcile the conflicts between your professional work and your personal life. agree, disagree. Thoughts there,

Art Gelwicks 3:20

See this is go back, this goes back to where I fight with this definition. Because just the the phrase itself means that there is some place that you are expected to be when you are quote, not remote. Well, okay, that's fine. But then you look at the second part, this is the type of work that does not require you to be in a specific location. So why is this defining an expectation that you would be in a specific location? So I think, just this terminology starts to limit what we're talking about here it braces that Oh, you're working remote. So you're not actually doing your normal work. This is something special, this isn't quite as good as polished, as perfect as if you were not remote. And I think whether that's true or not, whether that's perception or not, I think that's one of the things that gets conveyed a lot with that.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 4:22

Yeah, and thankfully, I think today we see so many more people who really recognize remote work as a, as a hiring location, like, you know, you'll see like, you know, in in a job description, it'll say, you know, location for wherever the job might be, you know, situated and it'll just say remote. And so we're seeing more and more positions being hired directly for a remote position for remote working. And so therefore, less and less people are being concerned about the fact that there may be a headquarters and you You know even even myself you know now thinking about hiring staff we we are becoming a remote company. And I've always kind of been remote because I'm always on the road or, and and I live out you know pretty far distance away from my primary headquarters for my company. So you know the the, the idea of working remotely is very natural to me. But at the same time, I've always had staff centrally located and now to have them not do that has been a real use. I hate to use the word game changer but it's been a it's been a market amount of, of change for the company and how we normally work. It hasn't really been that much of a stretch for me

working with them, but then working with each other. And now I have to think about the idea of hiring people. You know who out the gate will not have experienced the city camaraderie with the staff. So there there are some implications there for in management and business ownership, thinking about how you design a company in the remote space, in the remote working space and, and on the flip side. So I think we're kind of in in a little bit of a transition space there. I'm reading here again, remote work has some statistics that were really interesting. And again, quote, it's predicted that by 2027, the majority of the US workforce will be working remotely. So we're just shy of 10 years before, it's telling us that were eight years or so I guess, before the majority of the US workforce will be working remotely. It says the number of those with the number of those with flexible working arrangements is also growing faster than the overall us workforce. at roughly three times the rate more companies are hiring and realizing the benefits and potential that remote work can offer. End quote. So we're in a space and time where, or rather space time when we are moving toward more and more of remote work. And I'm curious, Do people really understand the definition of remote work against other terms that we've heard kind of bandied around over the last 20 years, right? We have telework, we have flex work. And those are all different things. And I'm curious whether or not you think other people really know what remote work really means to them.

Art Gelwicks 7:35

Okay, I got it. I got to make one thing real clear, fast, though. Every one of these terms conveys the message that this is a special type of work. This is a benefit to you as the worker that you are getting to do something. I'm going to use special again because I can't think of another word this morning. But it's just that this is a nice thing for you because you're you know our employee and you're working here. We're gonna let you work remotely and that's a perk until it's changed until that mindset goes away that this is any different than regular office work, that they are the exact same. I don't know that that 2027 number means squat to be and I

Raymond Sidney-Smith 8:17

think we have to make sure that we continue to keep pushing forward on the the notion that yes, there are going to be those who are stuck in the in the past, and who will continue to think of remote work as as purely a nice to have for their employees. But there are a lot of companies out there who are pushing towards being fully remote companies and those companies will start to prosper and money speaks, the higher productivity was going to that is the higher labor productivity is going to really reinforce the fact that remote work is a viable option for employers. And I don't you know, we'll talk about this in the in the kind of advantages and disadvantage is a remote working but you know I don't know what the outcome is of remote remote work ultimately but I think you're absolutely right we have to continue to change the paradigm that this is not just a fringe benefit

that this is also a fundamental paradigm for working

Augusto Pinaud 9:17

and I think that's an important distinction to make you know as I see it currently you know, we can pretty much group companies in three groups Okay, we have the companies that from from the get go has been designed as remote work there are many of them I mean, from little small companies to really massive corporations. Okay, a WordPress being one of those examples. Okay, who is massive but it has been completely designed from the get go to be a remote Corporation. Then you have the opposite side of that extreme. The companies who have been traditionally basis and they don't understand Okay, or they have tried to play this but same their remote work as disadvantage. And then you have the companies that are towards the middle in different degrees who are trying to understand the advantages of that and and how they can in some instances benefit from this. This thing the problem one of the big problems we have is on the remote work is if the company has brought traditionally there is a hard time adopting anything new and I agree with you money will eventually talk and money is talking on many of these organizations showing that Oh, okay, really. It there is a difference on production, there is a difference on engagement. There is a difference in you know, how long people are staying there is a difference in the quality of the people we can you know, attract but but I agree with are completely right now. There is in many companies know the difference between a pool table and work remote, work remote is not a perk I disagree with that I don't agree with Art work remote is simply another way you offer the work there's there is nothing that you know, I work I've been working on a phone and a laptop since 1997 I don't know. Okay 20 years now more What difference does it make work where I am okay. And for some companies you still finding Oh no, we are going to change you to this cubicle so you make the phone numbers and we can see that we have people in the office. And those companies I think they are going to come to or they're coming actually to a rude awakening they are they are going to need to or adapt and understand what is this or play with a much smaller pool of talent. I'm not going to say hey, there is talent who will never understand or will not want to work remotely, that's completely fine. But that pool of talent is getting smaller and smaller too you. I do have a lot more constraints with with those. So as technology is continue advancing, and more importantly, some technologies are going mainstream. Okay, Remote Desktop things share the deck stops, and those kind of things are starting to get pretty mainstream, you know, when you can share. You know, when you think of the iPad, the iPad came out, when the iPad came out there was from the perspective of the people, it was a consumption device. We can argue right now, if your laptop can substitute my iPad, okay, and I can share the desktop in the same way you could do it from a laptop many, many years ago. But the important part of that is that is getting mainstream that is getting to the common person is not anymore, the Geek guy who can figure it out how to share the next step that is

coming to everybody's hand and the more we see those The more people is understanding, oh, can I don't need to be in the office? Oh, I will, I don't need to live in the city. I don't need to be here because of that job. And the more that noise it's getting to the hands of the people, the more these companies who has been trying to protect the known remote work, are are going to notice how small that pool of talent gets. There's always going to be companies who are only going to deal with inside. But I think the future, as you said, I don't know if he's 10 years, maybe faster than that. He is going to be more and more remote companies are not.

Art Gelwicks 13:43

There are some things within companies that require you to be physically present. If you're working in a call center, you're working to help test things. And actually I take that back because that's not the case for those

Augusto Pinaud 13:53

On a factory, I agree with you, but in that cold asking us those kind of things, no matter

Art Gelwicks 13:58

there's there's some There are some roles though that would require you to be in a location for a period of time. And if I thought about it, I could probably come up with four or five examples. But I don't think that's really the challenge of this remote work model. The challenge is the people who could, if allowed, just out of curiosity pulled up dice calm did a survey back in February, talking about their annual salary survey. And they said that 73% of tech pros considered remote work and important perk, which going back to my point earlier, I have a problem with considering it. But only 49% report having it as an option at all. It's a 24% gap between what people want to be able to do and what people are and what companies are offering. And you look at the the stats on this thing. And I'm going to say close to more than 50% of the organizations that were surveyed in this don't offer this as an option one day a week or less. And that just boggles my mind. What What is the benefit of not having this? Give me a valid reason why. And I have yet to get into a conversation with somebody who is able to say, Well, you know, this is clearly what typically the answers back are. Well, if I can't see you, you're not working, which, you know, Henry Ford believe that way, but I don't know that necessarily. That's kind of current in today's society. Well,

Augusto Pinaud 15:31

there is still a lot of Henry Ford's

Art Gelwicks 15:34

well, and, and, and, and I don't just it's very true. But if you look at some of these things, they you know, they say, look, if I can't see what you're doing, you're not working. I can't tell that you've put in

40 hours. Well, then let's back up a second who says my job takes 40 hours to do who says this particular execution or this work or these milestones that you want to accomplish? Take 40 hours to accomplish. They may only take me three hours in the right environment, why would you not want to do that? But they, it's literally they can't think that way. They can't get past that because they don't know how to manage that way they don't know how to handle that type of execution and delivery based work rather than just punch in punch out.

Augusto Pinaud 16:21

And that's exactly where the problem is. We're still thinking on an hourly doesn't matter if you're considered salary or you're considering an hourly employee. From the accounting perspective, the company consider you on hourly Okay, component, not a value component. And well, that doesn't change. Okay, we are going to continue saying I struggle with this because we are looking Okay, this person is going home how I know well, one, let me say from a person who understand it and all of here, understand it. Okay. That is ridiculous. Give me Then a laptop on track every movement on my laptop, you can do that since the 90s. Okay, I'm not talking about modern technology. Exactly. Okay, if that's what you feel you need to do, okay? But number two, what you are saying is okay, we are contract, we are hiring people that we don't trust, then why you're hiring the people in the first place.

Art Gelwicks 17:22

You I think you hit it right on the head head there. Either people you don't trust or you don't trust in, they'd never admit to this. They don't trust their ability to manage effectively for people's skills. So when you look at things like this type of execute, and contractors are the ones that probably drive me bonkers with this the most contractors as professionals who can do their job and are paid to do it efficiently and quickly. And then are told look, you will be here 40 hours a week. Okay, but I kind of got this done by Tuesday. Well, you're still going to be here for 40 hours. Well, all you're doing is watering. Down the persons rate then at that point, it's the reason why so many people don't do straight contract anymore. They do freelance. Why, because then it's project based. It's milestone based. It's not based on 22 hours of time. And that's where I think we're, I know this is kind of getting off the track, but it is a key understanding to the benefit of working where you are. And until I come up with a better term for remote work, I'm going to use that one right now. The ability to get done, what you need to get done, where you are, when you have the opportunity when it is best and most efficient and most effective.

Augusto Pinaud 18:39

But you just hit the second nail on the head. You have people who is still managing this. I mean, when you mentioned Henry Ford and I laugh, okay, they are still managing this as if any kind of work. It's a production line. Okay. And yes, there is manufacturing work, where

do you need the people to be in there and I agree With you, there are certain kinds of work that's required to have a human being in there. Okay, but they are trying to manage a knowledge base and a service based environment as you are a production line. And the problem is most of the people can wrap around their head that this is not a production line, we're just using the same principles because it's the only principles we seem to to understand. So we are still stuck in the production manufacturing place, trying to do work that is done in a completely different way. And the problem for these people this is what get is even sadder is most of these people who manage that way when you mentioned the people who don't want to get the contracts and are going to go to the freelancing world. For most of these people. They will tell you that these freelancers don't work. That's not a job. What do you mean it's not a job? That's what they have. They have a company that do that. From their perspective is not even real.

Art Gelwicks 20:03

Yeah. Oh, you're absolutely right. And here's where I get into the maturity model of this. And I've talked to clients and I've talked to other companies about this type of thing. And they're like, Oh, yeah, we want to do this. I say, you want to prove that you're ready to allow your people to work when and where they're most effective. Give them the option to work whenever and wherever they want. Just inside your build, start with that. You got a building with six floors? Is it okay for someone to pick up their laptop? That's the first thing do you give them actually mobile devices so that they can work for various locations? Or do you have them cable locked to the desk? Can they work if they're on the sixth floor? Can they work in the cafeteria for two hours out of that day, if they want to, if you can't handle that, where they're on your property, but they're not not at their desk, than you are as an organization by no way, shape, or form ready to even remotely Consider allowing people the freedom to work, because you're just not mature enough yet.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 21:05

This is tangentially related to something that we've been kind of talking about. We bring up Henry Ford, you know, 100 years ago, Henry Ford changed the face of our nation's economy and therefore the facial face of the world's economy. He, he really, you know, we were in the midst of the Industrial Revolution, and he decided to cut the work day basically in half, he created the eight hour work day by virtue of his work and then doubled their pay. So, the worker got nominally you know, 100% pay increase, but they also then had half half the work day, and now they had a leisure time, like we had never seen before in history, at least in the in modern history. And so here we are, in in an in a future time now where we have the highest abilities for greater productivity in the workforce. And there are people out there like I give the example of Steven Aarstol he was. He always says that he's Mark Cuban's best Shark Tank investment. He started the company tower, paddle tower paddle boards. And he has been using a five hour

workday in his company, for since its inception. In essence, he, you know, shaved off the additional three hours of the standard eight hour workday for his employees. And they are doing very well as a company. And so there's this tangential piece here, which is that we are we are increasing productivity by virtue of greater efficiencies, greater knowledge, and experience and better technology that's helping to facilitate humans having to do the bulk majority of this work is nothing humans aren't necessary. It's just that we're now helping and being facilitated by tech. Better integrating that into the company better. And so therefore, one, we don't have to be in a physical location to do the bulk majority of that work. And at the same time, results should matter. And we've we've already said that art to a great extent, right? results should matter not time or, you know, but in chair time, right. And so, once we can decouple those pieces and start to understand them better, I highly recommend Aarstol wrote a book called The five hour workday. And it's, I'll put a link to that in the show notes. It's a great book to really understand the changing face and nature of work and remote work, as well as flex work policies are becoming a much more ingrained piece of that puzzle, that it's, it's no longer a fringe benefit. It really is a part of how companies should manifest individuals looking at each person who comes to the company and says says okay, look at this role and Look at this individual, and how can we match it up so that they can be most productive? And if that means them not being physically here, then let's do that.

Art Gelwicks 24:09

Now, let's not let Henry Ford off the hook here, because the reason why the reason why he split the work day into 8 hour segments and increase the pay was to create leisure time so that people could buy his car.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 24:21

You bet.

Art Gelwicks 24:22

That was that was absolutely his intention.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 24:24

I fully agree. I fully agree.

Art Gelwicks 24:26

Now that said, let's think about information workers. That doesn't work for information workers. A business can't rationalize that because there is no direct benefit to them from a bottom line profit model for their people to not be working because if they're not working it, there's nothing that says they're going to go out and buy that company stuff. If what they're doing is handling data analysis for the government. Who knows? It doesn't. It doesn't cross translate. So to them the direct benefit of If you are working, we make money. If

you are working, we make money. If you are not working, we will go get somebody else so that you are working and we make money. That's, that's the hang up that there is this kind of concept. Oh yeah, we get happier employees and things like that. It's early on a Monday, I'm grumpy. What it comes down to is when they don't want you to be an employee anymore. You're not. It doesn't that benefit is nice while you're producing. So if you flip this concept around and say, Okay, if I'm going to be at my maximum productivity, my maximum efficiency and effectiveness the two things that we espouse so often, companies need to focus on everything possible to create those two situations. And they have to be willing to say, guess what, they may be most effective at home, they may be most effective in the cafeteria and we're going to live with that fact. I just think we're still way early days in most organizations being mature enough to even really start to consider that.

Augusto Pinaud 26:08

But you see, this is you made an important distinction. I agree. Henry Ford did what he did. So he could tell if he's people could afford his vehicle I agree on he was completely open about it. Okay. But at least it was to a certain extent meant as a two way street. I will give you eight hours, I will give you more salaries, you buy my cars, okay. I'm okay with that. Okay. The problem that I see in many organizations is a one way street. I'm not giving you remote. I'm not giving you the perks. I'm not giving you but you need to give me the loyalty that I'm not going to give you because as you said, that loyalty is out of the window in many organizations. But then, when the people say, you know what, I found a better opportunity now to see these corporations offended How dare these people is living remember? Wait, wait, wait, this is a two way street. Okay, I have seen corporations. Okay, were glad loyalty exist when there is a two way street, the corporation is trying to take care of the employee to certain extent, and therefore the employee respond in that same way. But I seen more than not the one way street. We're all this is all about us and we don't give you the benefit and we're changing money. And if we are our legal department can find a way to even tied you to that desk for you know, another 20 minutes we will that's where the problem comes. The problem with this remote thing is for many companies is like, Oh, well, if I let you go, I don't control you. Well, there is no more control. You can try. But he's out of the window long time ago, by the way.

Art Gelwicks 27:55

No, you're right.

Francis Wade 27:56

Actually that just just to piggyback on that point. I have a couple of friends were convinced by their companies to become remote workers. And they would do anything to go back to being in the office because there is software know that monitors your every move as a remote worker. And the minute you take your fingers off the keyboard and

scratch your head, you get a note coming in a notification that flashes on your screen that says you're not, you're not being productive. And if you stay away for too long, 10 minutes, your manager gets notified. Stay away for half an hour, you get a phone call from the office saying what's going on or not working. And they would love to go back to being in the office. But of course what the companies have done is convinced them that remote working is all that they had them, you know, take take give them a laptop, give them this they came on I actually surveyed their offices to make sure that they were remote compatible. Put them in there with the software to monitor their keystrokes and monitor their I think leaving out video monitoring And then took away their office. So they don't have the option of going back. So even if they want to go back, which they do, they can't because the company has already given away the space and has cut the cost and there's no downsizing. So there there are ways to that they're using no to limit remote workers flexibility. And I think the problem is not remote or not remote. The problem is the question is, what's the optimal allocation of space in for argument's sake, what's the what's the worker needs to get the job done? And that's a hard question to answer.

Art Gelwicks 29:37

That's, that's where I'm going to fight on this one too, because I'm looking at organizations that do this silly idea called hotelling. where they'll have entire rooms and all those floors of buildings that are nothing but vacant desks. No one actually has a desk. You come in, you just take the nearest desk and that's the one you work on and then you leave. Well, great. That that totally assumes then that You do not have a home here. So if you want to take this idea of saying, we want you to be part of a culture, great, then you need to be part of the culture. If we want you to be able to say you can work from anywhere, fine, then just assume they are not going to be directly connected. I worked from home out of a home office for four years, completely disconnected, it took me a year and a half to finally meet my manager put it that way. It is socially disconnecting. It can be isolating. depression can kick in after a while. But you also have all the benefits of for example, my commute was from my office to the refrigerator. That was it, this type of software that you're mentioning Francis, I mean, this is the kind of thing that Henry Ford would love. Because it makes sure that you're continuing to crank that widget. Now there are some companies out there. My sister in law or my wife's cousin works for a company whose both her and her husband work remotely all the time. And that ability has helped her deal with health issues that she would never would have had the option if she was having to go into the office five days a week. So there are upsides and there are downsides. But I think we're all hitting around that this core point, people need to recognize that if a job if the work you were doing does not physically have to be done in one spot, then failing to take advantage of that is a significant mistake.

Augusto Pinaud 31:33

And I'm going to come back to what you were sharing. The problem is no, that's not remote working. That is I remove you to the thing and now I put a slavery on top of you. That's what this is happening on the example you were sharing, remote working because there is no trust if my manager is getting a notification that I have not key, you know something on my keyboard in 10 minutes. Sorry, that's slavery. That's That's not even remote work anymore.

Art Gelwicks 32:02

That software actually, if you don't do work, it pops up a flag. But if you do do work, it gives you a food pellet.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 32:13

We can, we can, we can debate all day long because I think it's really a rich debate to have in, in and around the space of where work is. And it's why I wanted us to have this conversation so that our listeners could understand that there is there's a lot of complexity here. And I and we all have to really take that to heart. This to kind of takes us to the next step. But I did want to recommend to folks, there's a fantastic book called remote office not required and it's written by the the founders and owners of Basecamp. There used to be 37 signals but Jason freed and David Heinemeier Hanssons wrote the book, and so I highly recommend everybody pick up remote by Frieden and Hansen and read that because it really helps you to understand how to really effectively Understand how remote work fits in the context of other kinds of typical work. And now as Art noted, hotelling, or office hotelling, and the nature of hot desks and that whole world, but I think the five hour workday and remote are both two really good books that that helped kind of contextualize the the world of work today as it's changing. Remember, there are competing forces, there are there is the business force, which is how do we increase revenues decrease costs, there's the governmental issue, which is that they want to keep GDP high. And they want to be able to have a full as high utilization rate for their population for being able to generate tax revenues, both from the corporation and from the individual, at least in the United States where our tax system is like that. And, and then there's the individual who just wants to have a good life. How do we We navigate each of those pieces. And what I feel like is happening is it's kind of like a people are talking past one another government and industry are talking past one another. individuals and companies are talking past one another. And and all of those permutations, we all need to really be having a synchronized conversation that we can get the same results and we can get better results by us all having a conversation, bringing everybody to the table and not just thinking of employees as gears in the machine that drives you know, production. There needs to be an understanding that humans are humans and not computers, we're just not computing and pushing out outputs. There is more to it than that.

Art Gelwicks 34:45

You know what you're bringing this up and I'm just gonna jump into what occurred to me there is one group well there's multiple ones but there's one that kurz me right away who gets this talk to anyone who is either working in or has worked in a field sales organization, they understand this mechanicals, they don't have an office, most of the time they're operating out of their cars.

Augusto Pinaud 35:03

But even even in those cases are you find this sales component of especially as the organization grows, the sales part of the organization understand it, the other parts are completely, you know, unaware of that I, I work on organizations like that. And I remember fighting with accounting about the expenses about approve expenses. I'm not talking about the ones that were not that had issues. Okay. Well, I don't understand why you need to go and do all this. That's my job. Okay. And there is a completely disconnection especially, and this is something that we're going to see more and more towards those 10 year mark that we were talking early, as more parts or pieces of organizations start leaving and go remotely. Okay, one of the things we are going to start finding is Well some of the parts that can't be remote are going to need to understand what is that job and what is why these people can work or not work from anywhere because that was an issue 10 years ago were going remotely It was a problem okay i i was because of my job working remote most of the time but jus could find it or I remembered coming back to the office and then needed to fight an argue with these people who never leave the office who didn't understand why I have those perks why I could expense a bunch of things why I could. This is something that we are going to see more and more and from both sides from the people are the equal level and from the people who are above your paygrade where they don't understand why you cannot do that job. Sitting on the desk,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 37:01

we've kind of been dancing around the topic of the benefits are the advantages and disadvantages of remote working by virtue of its context within the greater societal working culture. So what what are the What's the good and the bad of remote work? I'm just nosy. So, you know, you can start at the top right, which is that if the, if the corporate culture embraces remote work, the individual has greater capacity to have more life and work balance in the sense that they're able to, you know, potentially have a shorter commute, which means if they're not commuting to work, that's another potential hour, you know, 45 minutes an hour, two hours for some people in United States where they can now use that time to, you know, eat a proper breakfast, they can go to the gym, they can they can, you know, spend more time with their family, their their all of these issues were that time can be recouped and used for health and personal rejuvenative activities, so that they're able to have a more healthy lifestyle. And I think that's, that's one major benefit I see of remote work is that if you

live a good distance from your primary office location, you can, you can now use that time more effectively. And that time can be used for your personal care

Augusto Pinaud 38:24

building on that, I think, you know, in the last hundred years, okay, there has been a change on how people see that people used to go work on retire 65 so people were okay holding their life outside of that work until they get 65 and when I get 65, I will do all the things that I've dreamed to do. What we are seeing more and more is one people is not retiring at 65 for many reasons. Okay, secondary significant group that don't want to retire At 65. But third, there is a significant group that do not want to wait until 65 to start doing those things, and that is one of the things that are making them instead of moving to the close area where that work will, will be they want to come to have a more complete life. And that's one of the the benefits that the remote working has from the employee as well as for the corporation is that the pool of opportunities increase? It's about what is the quality of the work and who is the best person who can do the work. I know exactly where you're located or where you sit it. And I think that's a really magnificent thing. Now that the technology allows to make such easy thing, it wasn't as easy, you know, 10 years ago, and I think that's a really, really important thing. Understand how big your pool is, but More importantly, how good for your own life it is.

Art Gelwicks 40:04

For me, the advantages are pretty straightforward. You have the opportunity to work at your most optimal times and location disadvantage. If it's a consistent thing where you're working remotely frequently. You can often be disconnected from the machinations of your organization, and almost isolated in many cases. So depending on the type of organization you're dealing with, you could wind up making a clear career limiting move, just by not being physically present in an office all the time. So that's a downside. But from the To me, the upsides are so significant anymore, and we're going to see this continue. Not because organizations wake up, but because technology has pushed the capability to be that much more powerful. We have bandwidth Now we've never had before, we have the ability to connect in ways we've never had before. We can sit and we can run remote desktops and we can pull up everything on our phones and we have access to all of these things. There is no reason why we can't be somewhere unless a we choose not to be there working or be. We're told not to be there working to go with the benefits. I'll give you just a practical example. I have access to everything I need for my client on my phone. I spend the half hour before I take my commute on my phone, going through and checking everything for the morning. It's basically my well check of what's going to be going on through the day. That means my commute is not spent worrying about what's going on for the day. I don't have to to fuss with that. Which means my commute can

then be spent listening to an audio book or a podcast or something else that either improves my personal life or improves me professionally. It's a more effective Use of the time.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 42:01

I'll take the I'll try to elaborate a little bit on the on one of the disadvantages of remote work that was that was to kind of touched on and and I am I'm sensitive to the fact that I believe remote work is an majority positive decision for for business. There are just so many good benefits to remote working, but for the individual, while there is this huge lower stress, you know, increased time you know, you have greater leisure time all these things, all kinds of good reasons for it. One of the things that I really understand is that the social structure of the social culture of an organization is so important and accountability is built on having people around you and as a social worker, not not an actual not the role, but as a worker who is social. I am I am fed by collaborative work. And so and and that means that in a, you know, in any corporation, you know, there there are politics involved there, you know, sort of business politics that are going on. There's corporate navigation, in terms of looking for the right person to align mentoring, all of those things happen in physical spaces today. And we don't yet have the technology as great as video technology is. It's not like we're on video camera all day long. Unless you have a very creepy boss, like Francis was talking about his video recording you all day to make sure you're doing what you're what you're supposed to be doing. But the idea here is that since we're not virtually in an office space all day long, the the nature of all of the kind of, you know, it's, it's like, what do you call it like unspoken benefits. bits of connecting with people and, and relating to them and building relationships. So we're social creatures and the more time we spend with people, the stronger our social bonds. And without those social bonds, then certain things don't happen. So for example, if I have a strong social bond with my manager, because we see each other every day, we have lunch together, we have all of these kinds of interactions. When I make a mistake, I've earned that person's trust to No, no, they see me showing up, they see me working hard. And so a little mistake is not going to break the camel's back, so to speak, by the manager, but at the manager does not see me every day. And all of a sudden, I've made this mistake in the in the, you know, in the context of just a an amorphous, being that outputs work, then potentially, that manager could say, that's too big of a mistake. We're terminating you and that And it could not be as severe mistake as say, you know, it could not be that severe of a mistake, but it could still be a big enough mistake that would cause the manager to potentially impact a promotion, terminate you, you know, whatever the various penalties are in your in your organization. So I could see the flip side to that, which is that there's a lack of socializing that is happening right now. And I'm hoping what I'm my big hope is that as technology gets better, that there is a greater understanding of the

fact that do need more rich media experiences with your co workers and with your management so that the experience is not isolating and alienating to certain people. And that can be very difficult.

Augusto Pinaud 45:42

And I will I will add to that, that there is and this is where the four of us may, you know, dropper IDs, because I think there is a mental difference on that to sensation component from certain generations coming down. You know, they're older You are the more you tend to struggle with this digital socialization and the younger you get the more you are okay with that you know there are certain Are you calling me old

Art Gelwicks 45:43

I did not call you I distinctly I think he called me old but then again my hearings going

Augusto Pinaud 46:21

is not personal to anybody you know, just check your date of birth and if you aren't below certain year again, you can call yourself old that's your decision. But But he said is the reality you know, I've seen for for certain generations to deep conversations can happen via email or text and that younger you get that's where the deep conversations happen even more than in person. I'm not saying it's a perfect solution, but I'm saying they're more used to people is to this. You know, the simpler it is, you know, I can pick my kids. You know, when When we were kids, we had family who live far. Okay? And those families were strangers for us, okay? They, they live 14 hours away. We see them five times a year, four times a year. And every time they come, they were the cousins who live far and nobody knew them. Okay? And they were really no relationship with them. My kids have relationships with their cousins and their grandparents via FaceTime. That for us was simply impossible. Okay, and when they see each other, okay, there is no difference. It is like it was for us was my cousins who live close. Okay, why? Because they interact every day or every other day via FaceTime via the games via the text. And they have it's a different relationship of how I understand it. Okay, but for them, it is a relationship. Okay, I see my kids, you know, when the grandparents come to visit They're not as strangers, my grandparents live thousands of miles away. Okay, but they're not a stranger, his grandma's coming and there is exciting for us growing up, that was not the case, okay, if you did not live close enough where we see you, you were a stranger. So that also it's going to get to the work environments, you know, and you see more and more people that now are, you know, the Friday afternoon and they go and do, you know, camera and everybody goes and share, you know, a drink or a snack or whatever, and everybody's working remotely, and they're just shooting the breeze at the end of the day or the middle of the day. So as we adapt on those remote thing, also, we need to understand that the younger generations that are coming also interact completely different

with this than all generations who were not initially remote. The way we understand this.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 48:58

Okay, so let's let's take To the productivity level, which is, what are ways in which? How do we work best remotely. So say that your company has decided that, you know, not the whole company, let's say, let's just use the example. Everybody's going to remote work, they're getting rid of the main office, and you are cut loose, you no longer have a desk, and you need to now work from somewhere. You know, as they say, at the bar at the end of the evening, you don't have to go home but you can't stay here. So you're cut loose from the company's, you know, central infrastructure, and you are now made to remote work. You're given the latitude to work from any what and how best. Do you make that happen?

Francis Wade 49:45

I think you need to, to almost make a list of all the people who you must keep in contact with in order to maintain your social status, so to speak, building on what Augusta just said and then figure out the strategy For making sure that you can be in communication with those people, especially the ones who are older who are used to seeing you, and are likely to forget about you, when they don't see you. I think you need a social strategy to be able to continue to do the work you were doing before. And it's a different strategy than the one you had when you're in the office.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 50:24

And I think on the heels of that, I think responsiveness is actually very key here, which is the responsiveness to messaging within the company itself and to clients. For that matter, where like you, you need to make sure that if there isn't a policy about how you know how response time should work within and with co workers with your management and so on and so forth. You should you should set that standard, so that you say to your co workers, my expectation is to respond back to you within 30 minutes to an hour when you send an email and vice versa or I checked My email three times a day. So if you email me, you know, before 11am, I'm gonna respond to you roughly between 1030 and 11. Again at between 230 and three and again, right before the close of business, you know, like making sure that people have expectations about how you work, at least with your close, close, you know, coworkers and management so that people aren't just don't not hear from you, especially when it comes to email or saying, you know what, if this is an issue, then you should issue a comes up, then you should call me if issue B comes up, just send me an email because that's not really time sensitive. And if this is, you know, very time sensitive, then you should use Skype or whatever video messaging technology you have in the company, and you should immediately video call me so that we can we can deal with this particular issue, face to face. And I think they're, they're really good ways to deal with

responsiveness and the richness of the media in which you are, you are communicating whether it's synchronous or async. communication that is in real time or not in real time communication, as well as the, you know, level at which you have text, audio or video to make that kind of, of, you know, communication happen

Augusto Pinaud 52:15

There is a couple of things. One is from the employee perspective, okay, it needs to be clear what is expected from okay and how you're going to make sure that especially when you know when you are just, you know, left let loose. Okay, what is the company's backed in? And as much as I agree in what you're saying from your personal sometimes it's better to understand what is the company expectation, okay, before you go into this is my expectation is my expectation matching what the company is going to expect that number one, number two, is, and this is in my opinion, one of the challenges is, how can you come now and be more effective than what you would were in the office. And number three is what is the corporation or the company expecting us, as we were discussing early, you know, there is a lot of people who don't want to go into these contracts anymore that prefer the freelancing. Why? Well, because somebody on the contract came and say this job requires eight hours when a good Freelancer may be able to do it on four. Okay. So now, but what is the expectation of and it is important to understand what is the company looking because at the end of the day, we have seen many remote experiments going bad Not because the people were not doing their job, but because the corporation didn't understood what they were trying to accomplish and then they start calling people back and the reality is after you let the people out of the barn, people don't want to come back in the barn. You know, I had a work with Corporation one. So said the price problem with it was talking about sales and we're talking about project in sales. And they were trying to change their outside sales force to inside sales force. And the manager wants his term. And I said, Well, the problem is after people, it's been an outside cat, they don't want to come inside. And that is true. And that is the same problem with remote. So it is something that corporations need to think and people need to think I know few people, okay, who on a real remote environment, want to come back to work into the office what early Francis was describing, in my opinion, it's not real remote, cuz that's something else. But in real remote environments want to come back to the office. And the reality is most of these people are even working harder than what they work in back in the office. The difference is, the company now is let him bring what they love about the work to be a reality. And that is the key for that Corporation, are you going to allow your people to go out and work and be passionate about you? Or you're going to build it in a way where I'm going to work, work from home, but hate you, and leave you on the same first opportunity I have. And that balance is really delicate and complex, right?

Raymond Sidney-Smith 55:22

I wanted to cover a couple other things before we close out, which is that you should be mindful of your work routine and your work style. That is as you approach your remote working environment, you now need to control for your own working style. Are you someone who is very comfortable working in a solitary environment? Are you a collaborative worker or, as I like to say, I'm a communal worker, I don't want to I want to work in a space with other people, but I don't really want you to bother me while I'm working. And so I want to I want to see people Doing things around me, because that motivates me to also be productive. And but at the same time, I don't want people interrupting me while I'm trying to do high focused, you know, high focused, you know, action based work. And so I want to be able to have that that environment and your equipment really makes a difference. How will your company support you technically, so that if you have a technology problem, how will you as a remote worker, get that kind of support? So if you're working for a smaller company, a small business or maybe a mid sized business that may not have some of these things figured out? You'll probably want to ask management, okay, well, if I'm now taking a company computer home, and it's set up in my in my personal space, or I have a laptop, and I'm out of the cafe, and I now can't connect to the company's VPN, or, or I can't connect to a database that's the company has, how do I get tech support for that. So there needs to be some schema For all the various ways in which, if you have a cloud software, you know, maybe there's a cloud support, contract protectable support, but maybe there's a an IT person who will be handling other kinds of things. So just making sure that you know how you're going to get supported in those various in those various areas. And then kind of my soapbox is security, how are you going to really deal with the security of all of the parts of your being a part of a company that's now remote when you're on a Starbucks Wi Fi network, that is not a secure environment. And so therefore, company data is being transferred over public Wi Fi. You need to make sure you know how to protect yourself your own personal data, but also the company's data now which is being transmitted over that that network so talking to your it talking to your ownership and management of the company to make sure that these things are being dealt with, so that you're not culpable now for having Potentially leaked a client database or given up something or have having had some kind of malware put onto your computer that then starts to affect the organization. So thinking about all of those things, client confidentiality, you know, there's some issues there that need to be dealt with that are that are really the part of productivity right there. They're a part of you being productive, but sometimes because the company doesn't have a policy, it's not really addressed and you should, you should take that lead in addressing it with your management

Augusto Pinaud 58:32

for some of these remotes on to combat that we were discussing that solitude, you know, thing there is and we have talked about the platform we've interviewed a tailor in here. Okay, there is a platform

called Fox made that allows people to connect with somebody remotely on the work okay via the camera and the idea is, you go you can introduce yourself or not, but basically you work 15 minutes where you're looking at somebody in the camera and you can work they cannot see your screen. But it feels like you're not working alone in the room. I don't, I'm the solid guy, I can work, no problem. But for the people who struggle with that, that is a fantastic new solution that you can go with somebody that, you know, it gives you that opportunity that you feel you are not working alone anymore, and we will put the link in the show notes.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 59:23

This has been a fun episode a hefty discussion. I'm sure we'll have to come back to this topic again, because there's so much more to discuss regarding remote work, especially in this this new age of remote work productivity. If you have a question about what we discussed here on productivity cast today regarding remote work regarding remote work, feel free to leave us a message there at the bottom of the episode page at productivity cast net, you can go ahead and leave a comment question and we'll be happy to go ahead and respond to your question. They're also in ProductivityCast dotnet. We have a contact form, so you can click on contact. And you can either leave us a voice based message or a written message. And that will come to us and we can hear, listen, or read and respond to you, either offline or here on the podcast. there on the podcast episode page, you will also find our show notes which includes a transcript, links to anything that we talked about today. And also the transcript links to find any of us if you need to get in touch with one of us, thanks to a gusto, Francis and arc for joining me here on this cast. If you could, please leave a rating or review in Apple podcasts or Stitcher or wherever you leave your or wherever you listen to your podcasts. And so thank you for that. And that brings us to the close of this episode of productivity council weekly show about all things productivity, here's your productive life. Take care everybody.

Voiceover Artist 1:00:51

And that's it for this ProductivityCast, the weekly show about all things productivity, with your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.