

MARCH 2021

ONE YEAR OF WORK AND COVID-19



March 13, 2021 marked one year since COVID-19 was declared a National Emergency in the United States. This WerkLabs study aims to understand, broadly, what this means to moms.

ABOUT THE STUDY



The one year mark of working amidst a global health pandemic has been reached.

How are moms, one of the most disproportionately burdened populations, faring?

As we conclude one year of working during the COVID-19 pandemic, WerkLabs set out to understand what this last year has meant for working moms-- their experiences, trials, and hopes going forward. To gather these insights, WerkLabs took a two-part approach, leveraging its qualitative and quantitative research expertise.

This present report highlights WerkLabs findings from a survey administered to nearly 2000 professionals at the beginning of March 2021. This survey was also administered in June 2020. The same channels were used to distribute the survey and WerkLabs has drawn big-picture takeaways in analyzing this data.

The report begins with key 2020 and 2021 comparisons and then dives more deeply into the data and open-ended sentiments recorded in 2021 survey responses.

The second part of this research, included in a separate report, is a comprehensive summary of key themes from 1:1 interviews WerkLabs conducted with working moms from across the country, spanning a variety of industries.

To read about the last year of work, in the voices of moms themselves, please see our complementary report, ***Employee Voices: One Year of Work Amidst COVID-19.***

COMPARED TO WORK LAST YEAR

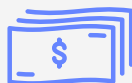
WOMEN ARE JUST AS LIKELY TO LEAVE THEIR EMPLOYER

In June of 2020, WerkLabs found that women reported being 46% more likely than their male counterparts to leave their employer in the upcoming year. Now, in March of 2021 that number is 53%.



THE ABILITY TO WORK AT LEAST PARTIALLY REMOTE APPEARS TO STILL BE AN OPTION FOR MANY

Compared to 2020, in 2021 there has been a 20% increase among moms surveyed who report being able to work at least partially remote now- one year since the onset of the pandemic.



COVID-19 SEEMS TO BE PROLONGING THE GENDER-PAY GAP

Today, 44% of moms report that they don't feel like they are being paid what they are worth to their organization, in comparison to 39% in June 2020.



WORKLOADS REMAIN BURDENSOME, DESPITE FINDING "NEW NORMALS"

Despite many moms having settled into new routines, burnout has set in. Compared to 2020, moms report their workload to be 16% less manageable in 2021.

Please note that professionals surveyed were recruited via the same channels for both the 2020 and 2021 surveys; however, the March 2021 survey did not capture a 1:1 response from the year prior.

MEN CONTINUE TO FARE BETTER THAN WOMEN AMIDST PANDEMIC



36%

Men rate their overall employee experience working during COVID-19 as 36% more positive than women.

Overall, women who were surveyed this year tend to rate their work experiences **1-2 points more negatively** than those who were surveyed in June 2020.

What impacts women's work experiences the most?

- The impact of organizations allowing for flexibility (location of work, time of day) on retention & productivity is over **3x greater** for women than it is for men.
- The impact of having job clarity on retention is over **10x greater** for women than it is for men.

*You know, I think you can work for the best employer in the world and have the most adaptive situation there is. But there is a pressure we women have. **There is a different pressure we have as moms.***

- Working Mom

MOMS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT STYMIED PROGRESS IN THEIR CAREERS



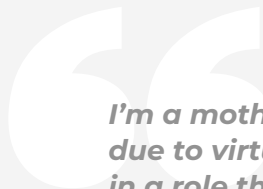
Nearly half of moms surveyed report that they feel as though they do not have opportunities to advance in their careers. This sentiment is 51% more negative compared to how dads reflect on career advancement.



One third of moms surveyed report that they don't feel as though their salary is competitive for their role.



44% of moms surveyed do not feel as though they are being paid what they are worth to their organization.



I'm a mother of 2 and I need flexibility in order to stay in the workforce due to virtual school and living with someone who is at high risk. I work in a role that I successfully did remotely for months. Now my employer is requiring that we return to the office for arbitrary reasons which will flip my world upside down. They don't care that it's forcing me and others like me out of the workforce."

-Working Mom

A (CAUTIOUS) OPTIMISM FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

The last year of work ignited meaningful conversations within workplaces on topics such as parenting, race, and mental health. Despite feeling somewhat stymied in terms of career growth, moms are hopeful that what they may now lack in advancement they have gained in a new found awareness, acceptance, and prioritization of working motherhood within organizations.

Of great interest to moms is the continued ability to work remotely. Prior to COVID-19, moms express having felt as though there was a stigma behind working remote, and the sense that it indicated less commitment to work. Now, however, employers from across the country have seen productivity not only remain constant in a remote setting, but at times increase. Moms are cautiously optimistic that when organizations begin to return to the office, they allow for continued remote work. However, it's important to note that moms are not saying they want to rid themselves of an office completely. Most feel that a blend of in office and work from home would be optimal.

HYBRID WORK

By and large, moms cite a hybrid environment as their ideal work option, where employees have the flexibility to come into an office on a more flexible basis. A majority of moms cite **one to two days in the office** as their most desirable work schedule.

"I think it took this global, earth shattering thing for us to break a lot of these societal norms that were, overwhelmingly impacting women."

"The pandemic has re-shaped my company's work culture, propelling us into a more modern environment, accepting remote work as legitimate."

"I am really hopeful for all the different options and flexibility that will be given to women moving forward, because our whole paradigm has shifted. I'm hopeful the pendulum doesn't swing too far back to how it was before. I think that we can really learn a lot from this."

-Working Moms

A photograph of three diverse professionals in a meeting. A woman with curly hair and glasses is smiling and looking towards the camera. A man with short dark hair is leaning in from the left, looking at a laptop. Another man with reddish hair is on the right, looking towards the woman. They are sitting around a wooden table with laptops and papers.

WerkLabs

Powering Employee Experience

Led by Dr. Pam Cohen, WerkLabs is comprised of a team of experienced researchers with backgrounds in social psychology, behavioral economics, and human behavior. Integrating qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, WerkLabs advises on topics such as Flexible Work Structures, DE&I, Policy Optimization, and Team Effectiveness.

Interested in learning how WerkLabs can support your workforce?

Contact [Abby Haynes](#)

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