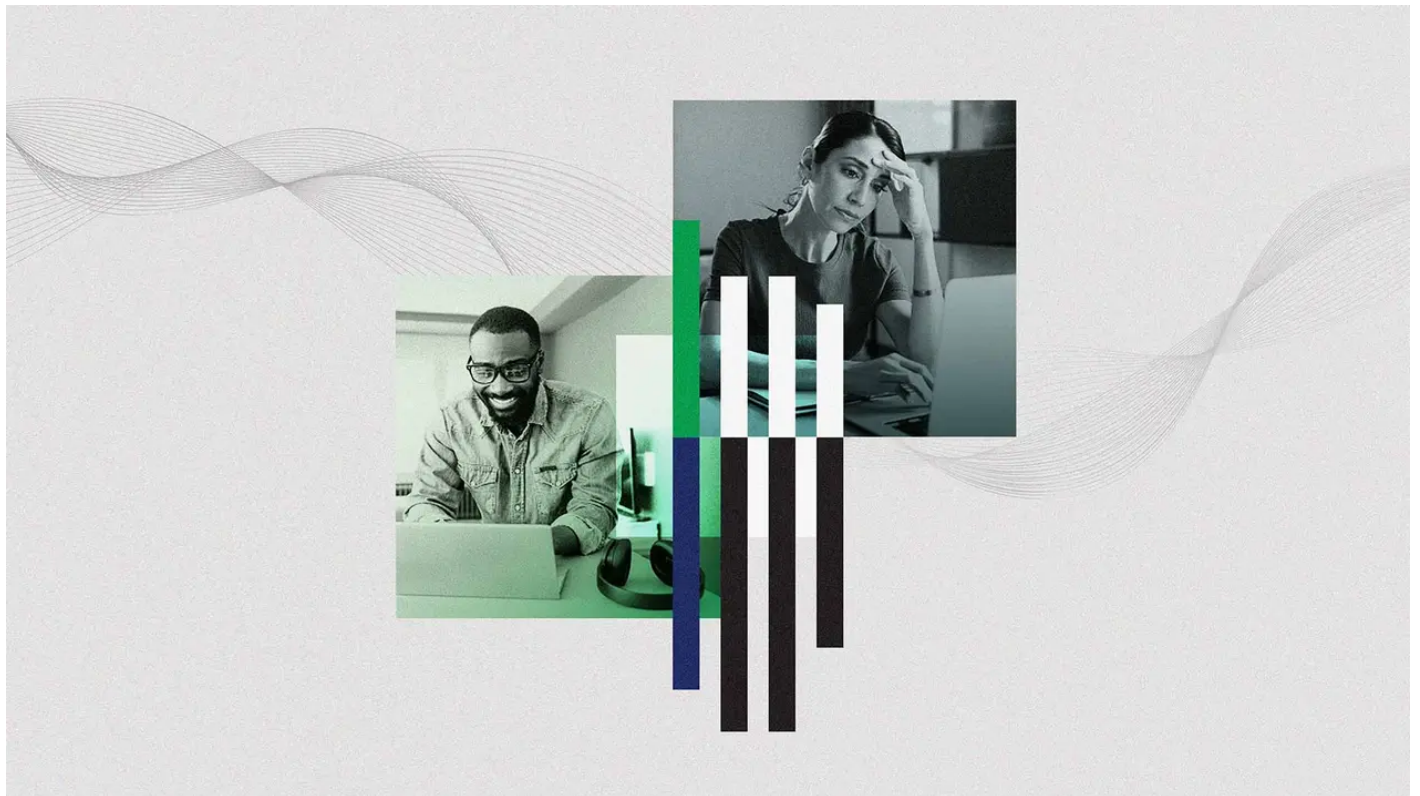




MAY 8, 2025

The Remote Work Paradox: Higher Engagement, Lower Wellbeing

A new global workplace finding unpacks the complexity of leading remote teams.



BY **RYAN PENDELL**

Globally, fully remote workers are the most likely to be engaged at work (31%), compared with hybrid (23%), on-site remote-capable (23%) and on-site non-remote-capable (19%). That's according to the latest *State of the Global Workplace* report, which tracks how employees worldwide are doing in their work and lives.

Employee engagement measures the enthusiasm workers feel for their work and their attachment to their team and organization, and it directly affects team performance and business outcomes. Remote workers may be more engaged because they have more autonomy in their work. This freedom allows them to play to their strengths, reach a flow state more easily and use their time more efficiently.

Remote Workers Are More Distressed

Although fully remote workers report higher engagement, they are less likely to be thriving in their lives overall (36%) than hybrid workers (42%) and on-site remote-capable workers (42%). Still, fully remote workers are more likely to be thriving than their fully on-site non-remote-capable counterparts (30%).

Fully remote employees are also more likely to report experiencing anger, sadness and loneliness than hybrid and on-site workers. They are more likely to report experiencing a lot of stress the previous day (45%) than on-site workers (39% for remote-capable, 38% for non-remote-capable), while having about the same stress level as hybrid workers (46%). These differences hold true even when accounting for income.

These findings suggest that being a fully remote worker is often more mentally and emotionally taxing than working on-site or working in a hybrid arrangement. Several factors may explain this pattern:

- **Physical distance can create mental distance.** For some employees, remote work may feel like “just work,” without the friendships, team lunches, storytelling and camaraderie that on-site and hybrid work can provide. Isolation can increase loneliness and, in the absence of social support, contribute to sadness and anger. Spending time with others plays a key role in positive life evaluations. For example, sharing meals with others is as strong an indicator of wellbeing as income. This could help explain why fully remote workers are less likely to be thriving than their remote-capable on-site peers.
- **Autonomy can be stressful.** Many employees want more autonomy in their work. While it can boost engagement by giving employees more control over their time, too much autonomy can create stress. Managing time independently and coordinating work with others can become difficult without clear boundaries. The fact that both remote and hybrid workers report higher stress may indicate that flexibility comes with a cognitive burden.
- **Technology can frustrate.** Past Gallup research shows that remote work requiring high levels of coordination is harder than remote work that can be done independently. Collaboration through digital technology isn't always smooth, and frustration varies by task. Remote employees may also have less access to certain resources and equipment available to on-site workers.

Why Remote Worker Wellbeing Matters for Business

Employee engagement and wellbeing together support sustainable, long-term performance and job commitment. For example:

- Globally, 57% of fully remote workers are actively looking or passively watching for new job opportunities.
- Among engaged fully remote workers, that number drops to 47%.
- When fully remote workers are both engaged and thriving, only 38% say they are looking for new job opportunities.

By supporting both engagement and wellbeing, employers can protect their remote workforce. Leaders should embrace the advantages of remote work, such as flexible workflows, while also addressing the psychological effects of working alone by encouraging social interactions.

Build an engaged, thriving and committed workforce.

- Download Gallup's *State of the Global Workplace* report to learn how employees experience work and how leaders can invigorate their workplaces.
- Discover Gallup's framework for [improving employee engagement](#).
- Understand [the cost of poor wellbeing](#) and how to help employees thrive.

AUTHOR(S)

Ryan Pendell is a Senior Workplace Science Editor at Gallup.

RELEASE DATE: May 8, 2025

SOURCE: Gallup <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/660236/remote-work-paradox-engaged-distressed.aspx>

CONTACT: Gallup World Headquarters, 901 F Street, Washington, D.C., 20001, U.S.A

+1 202.715.3030

Copyright © 2026 Gallup, Inc. All rights reserved.



Gallup uses cookies to ensure the best website experience. Please select the cookies you want. You can change this setting anytime, but doing so may impair functionality on our websites. [Privacy Statement](#)

Accept All

Manage Preferences



Cookie Settings

Gallup uses cookies to ensure the best website experience. Please select the cookies you want. You can change this setting anytime, but doing so may impair functionality on our websites. [Privacy Statement](#)



Essential

We use essential cookies to provide our visitors basic functions through our websites. Without these cookies, our websites will not work properly. ☒

Analytics

We use statistics cookies to collect information anonymously. This information helps us understand how our visitors use our websites. ☒

Marketing

Marketing cookies help Gallup improve the ads we display on third-party websites and allow third parties to gather web-usage information required to determine ad performance. ☐

Accept All

Save Preferences