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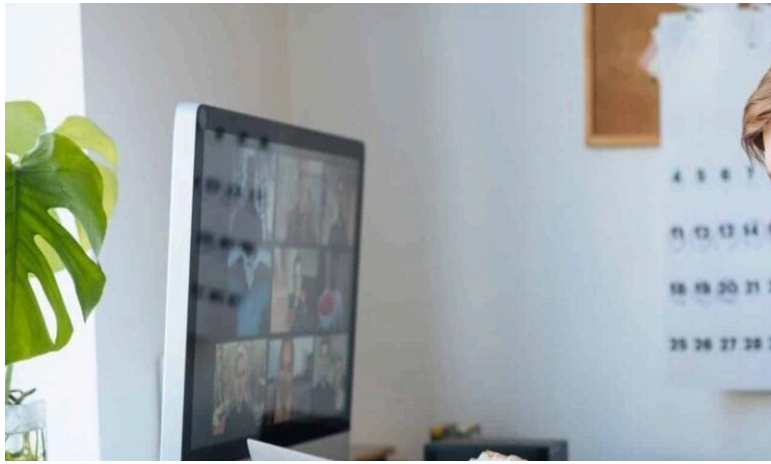
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POSTED BY: JOHN SCHMOLL | WEALTH OF GEEKS SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

A Sense HR survey uncovers 167,000 searches by potential employees for remote positions in Texas alone. People still want to work remotely, no matter what prominent CEOs such as Mark Zuckerberg may say. Across the United States, there is a surge in people seeking remote work.

Outside the Lone Star state, searches for remote opportunities also ranked high in Florida and Georgia. Top sought-after roles include data entry, customer service, and virtual assistance. These trends highlight a significant shift from traditional office jobs, signaling a ‘new normal’ in work preferences.

While the latest numbers from the **Bureau of Labor** put the number of remote workers at 27%, that may not accurately reflect the real workplace. **Researchers from MIT** point out those numbers don’t typically include self-employed workers, may be worded poorly, or exclude people not online regularly.

The students took it upon themselves to conduct a more thorough study. They discovered nearly 50% of respondents worked remotely at least once a week during December 2020.

While the U.S. is no longer under most COVID restrictions, the remote working trend remains, especially in these states:

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Texas: Pioneering the Remote Work Movement

At the forefront of the remote work movement is Texas. The Lone Star state boasts an impressive 167,000 remote **job searches**, a testament to the increasing appeal of remote work. The **Sense HR** survey of remote job search volume in 2023 found that approximately 55 of every 1,000 Texans actively explore virtual employment options. Data entry positions were searched for the most, closely followed by customer service and virtual assistance jobs.

Florida: A Highly Competitive Remote Workforce

In Florida, those looking for work registered 124,000 remote job searches. Like Texas, around 55 of every 1,000 Floridians are fervently engaged in uncovering **remote work options**. Particularly noteworthy is the popularity of virtual assistant roles in Florida, which top the list, followed by customer service and marketing positions.

Georgia: A Unique Blend of Remote Work Searches

While securing the third position in remote job searches with a count of 96,500, Georgia presents a unique profile compared to its counterparts. A closer examination reveals that only 9 out of every 1,000 Georgians actively participate in remote job searches.

This lower ratio, however, doesn't dampen the enthusiasm for remote work, as the top preferences include **data entry jobs from home**, virtual assistance, and customer service roles.

Virginia: A Steady Demand for Virtual Employment

Virginia secured the fourth spot, with 52,000 remote job searches. Six out of every 1,000 Virginians actively explore **entry-level remote jobs** within this context. The job preferences mirror the overarching trend, with data entry, virtual assistance, and customer service roles occupying the top positions among remote job seekers.

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Michigan: A Subdued Yet Persistent Outlook

Michigan, ranking fifth with 45,000 remote job searches, reveals a subdued yet persistent demand for remote employment opportunities. Four of every 1,000 individuals in this state are actively involved in remote job searches. Nonetheless, virtual assistance is the most sought-after role, closely trailed by customer service and accounting positions.

Consistent Trends Across States

An intriguing pattern emerges from the data analysis. Regardless of the geographic location, virtual assistant and data entry positions appear as the most sought-after options among remote job seekers. Virtual assistant positions rank within the top three preferences in every state. At the same time, data entry remains in the top three in eight of the ten states.

At a time when desk jobs and customer service jobs in the retail sector require people to come in every day, workers who want to stay home have plenty of options, including ones that pay more. Virtual assistance, freelance writing, graphic design, proofreading, and bookkeeping are just a few **jobs that pay \$20 an hour** and allow people to work remotely.

Knowing that – and with studies proving **remote work** leads to greater productivity, why are some CEOs of prominent companies rolling the dice by demanding workers to return to the office?

Major Companies Force Workers Back

Mark Zuckerberg, who once championed remote work, has recently changed his tune. **Meta** is now threatening to discipline and even fire workers who refuse to come into the office three days a week. Amazon, JPMorgan Chase, Apple, Disney, and, ironically, even Zoom are among **companies** requiring employees to work in the office two to four days a week.

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Studies show remote work in many positions is more productive because it eliminates a commute and enhances productivity. A growing number of job-seekers want it; why are companies forcing employees to return?



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Three reasons top the list:

Avoiding Future Layoffs

Avoiding layoffs is one driver. While layoffs are a cost-cutting measure, they carry direct and indirect costs. **HBR reported** that companies conducting layoffs underperform three years longer than those that don't. Employees who aren't laid off deal with greater distrust, burnout, and psychological stress.



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Long-term outcomes may improve if companies can reduce staff levels without layoffs, such as through voluntary resignations.

Data shows that mandated returns are more likely to cause employees to resign. If a company believes it will need to lay off workers, demanding a return to in-person work may remove the burden for them while creating longer-term productivity gains.



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Encouraging Collaboration

Collaboration can also be more difficult in remote settings, especially among creative and apprentice-based cultures. Open and honest communication is easier to achieve in person.

Companies with hybrid or remote workforces must **invest** in software and systems that foster easy connection and collaboration in both settings to avoid communication breakdown and lack of trust among co-workers.

There's also the belief that opportunities for more responsibility and assignments of interest go to those who work on-site. Leaders may be more likely to give

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promotions to people they pass in the hall over those they only “see” in virtual meetings.

More Direct Monitoring

A final reason comes from CEOs’ belief they can’t trust employees to be productive and stay on task in a remote environment. A strong desire to monitor employees in person persists in the American workplace.

Seeing people engaged in tasks at their workstations is a common measure of productivity. Managers may distrust workers whose habits they can’t observe.

A desire to prove productivity may lead to implementing digital monitoring software that reduces employees’ autonomy and makes them feel stifled and distrusted. That kind of environment may result in decreased productivity and morale, especially in a remote setting.

A Transformative Shift in Work Culture Is Here

As organizations and individuals adapt to the changing work landscape, the surge in remote job searches underscores a transformative shift in work culture. This paradigm shift could have lasting effects on workforce dynamics, the design of workplaces, and the relationship between employees and their careers.

The landscape of remote job searches in top U.S. states reveals a growing preference for flexible work arrangements and a growing push-back from employers looking to return to a traditional work environment.

Whoever ultimately wins may be whoever is willing to hold out the longest.

This article was produced by [Media Decision](#) and syndicated by [Wealth of Geeks](#).

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