

TOP LINE

The ties that bind businesses and workforce location appear to be early casualties of the Covid pandemic. While the extent of the weakening of the spatial relationship between work and home remains to be seen, a path toward a more distributed work culture is emerging. Remote work options continue to expand for white collar workers in many industries, creating new employment opportunities for job hunters unwilling to relocate and new residential opportunities for workers looking to escape city life. While telework may not take over entirely, hundreds of thousands of workers are being instructed to work remotely for a year or longer; as such, the status quo is unlikely to remain intact in its entirety.

The ongoing telework boom is already changing corporate hiring practices as many interview processes shift to calls and video conferences. Over time, increases in telework have the potential to alter businesses' expectations of recent college graduates and new hires. The independence, flexibility, and self-accountability required by remote work may be distinct from qualities sought in an open floor plan office populated by small teams. Higher education must seek to adjust to real and perceived changes in business needs, ensuring that students obtain skills that make them employable in a job market in flux.

As businesses and higher education prepare for an uncertain labor market, both must seek foundational qualities in their applicants and students, respectively. While technical skills are useful, they can often be taught. Soft skills such as self-awareness and reliability are less teachable, but essential in environments that lack consistent oversight. For example, oral and written communication are particularly important in out-of-office environments where body language is not as apparent, such as zoom calls or online workrooms.

Questions to Consider:

How will ongoing Covid restrictions affect business hiring practices (i.e. remote hiring, remote work)?

What steps can businesses take to improve their confidence in hiring decisions?

COVID-19: THE HIGHLIGHTS

Scientists are evaluating the [timeline for so-called herd immunity](#); the point at which the virus cannot spread as quickly because there are not enough vulnerable humans. Early predictions suggested that up to 70 percent of a population must be immune to reach herd immunity; however, some scientists assess the threshold may be as low as 50 percent. Even so, such a threshold is distant in many parts of the world. In the interim, schools must decide how best to operate, with many of the United States' largest districts [delaying the start of the school year or opening remotely](#). In terms of higher education, UNC-Chapel Hill, which allowed students back on campus, [officially canceled in person classes](#) one week into the school year due to multiple Covid outbreaks on campus.

BEYOND THE NOISE

Fifteen to twenty percent of workers are predicted to [continue working remotely](#) on at least a part-time basis post-pandemic. Even this small shift presents the potential for change in business hiring practices. Colleges and universities should take note of potential changes in the job market and seek to position students to succeed in an increasingly complex and diverse labor market. Opportunities exist for schools to [reimagine career services](#) and shift the way they connect students and prospective employers. Schools are also in a position to prepare students for an evolving labor market as such changes occur and work with businesses to prepare students for the changing skill sets sought by employers.

TRUSTED RESOURCES: for numbers & guidance

[Johns Hopkins University](#) – Coronavirus Resource Center

[World Health Organization](#) – COVID-19 Pandemic

[Center for Disease Control](#) – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Please contact Secure Source International at info@securesource.com to schedule a leadership roundtable with our intelligence and security experts to dive into these topics and discuss security and safety related best-practices.