Future of Remote Work in the Time of Covid-19

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Agenda

- ❖ Research Overview
- ❖ Pre-Covid
  - ➢ Remote work prevalence & policies
  - ➢ Rationale & cultural belief on remote work
- ❖ During Covid
  - ➢ Benefits and challenges
  - ➢ Responses to benefits and challenges
  - ➢ "Covid learnings"
- ❖ Post-Covid
  - ➢ Return-to-work strategies
  - ➢ Long-term hybrid work approaches
- ❖ Conclusion

Research Sample Overview

Sample Size

17 companies **across industries** were interviewed for this study

Company Size

Workforce size ranged from approximately **3,000** to over **250,000**

Workforce Composition

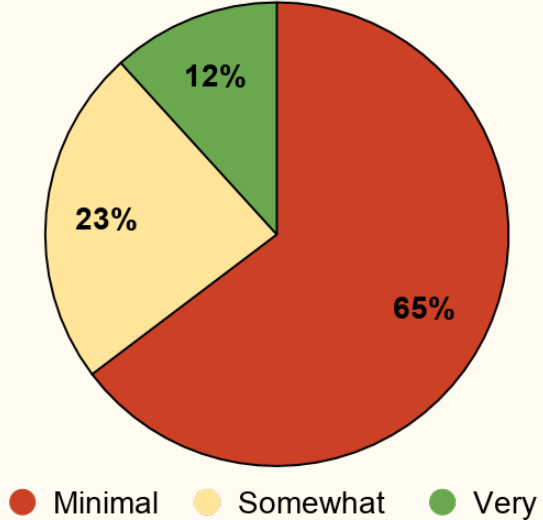**"Essential employee"** depended on company

Business Results
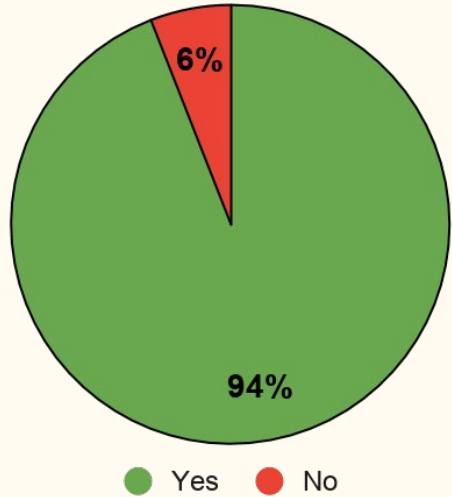
Covid-19 has had **disparate** business impacts

Pre-Covid

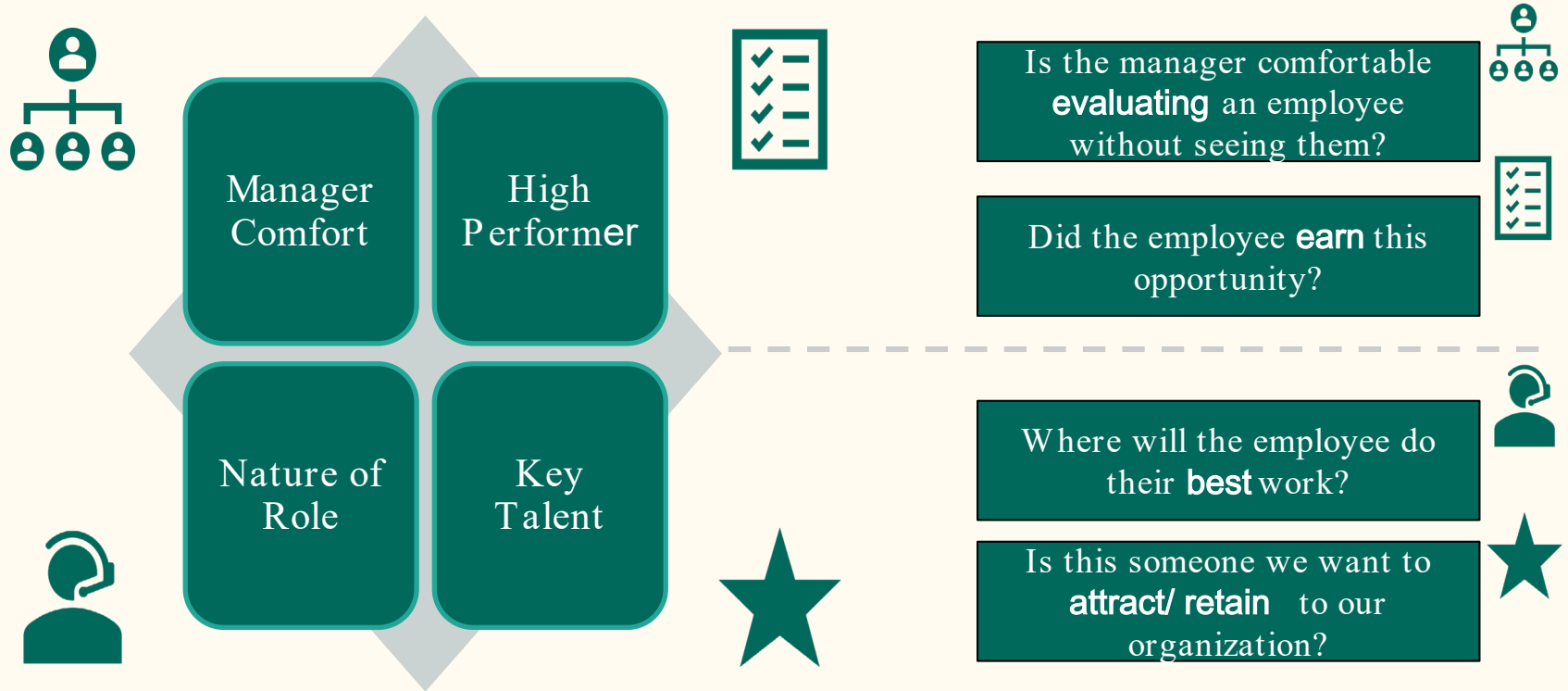# Remote work was the exception and not the norm

Prevalence of Remote Work

12%

23%

65%

● Minimal ○ Somewhat ● Very

Flexible Work Offering

6%

94%

● Yes ● No

Pre-Covid > **During Covid** > **Post-Covid**

Remote work came with set criteria for employees

Manager Comfort

High Performer

Nature of Role

Key Talent

Is the manager comfortable **evaluating** an employee without seeing them?

Did the employee **earn** this opportunity?

Where will the employee do their **best** work?

Is this someone we want to **attract/ retain** to our organization?

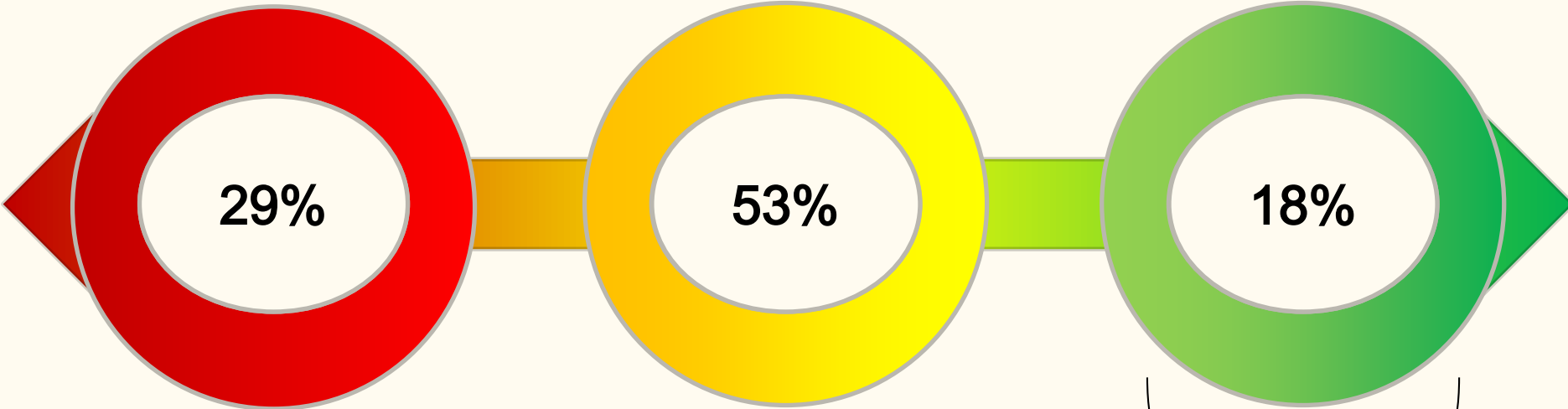Pre-Covid | During Covid | Post-Covid

Pre-Covid Perceptions

65% of companies indicated that **senior leadership** was against remote work

These companies also shared a **culture** of being in the **office** and a lack of **confidence** with remote work

47% of companies indicated that the purpose of the **office** was for in-person **collaboration** and **innovation**

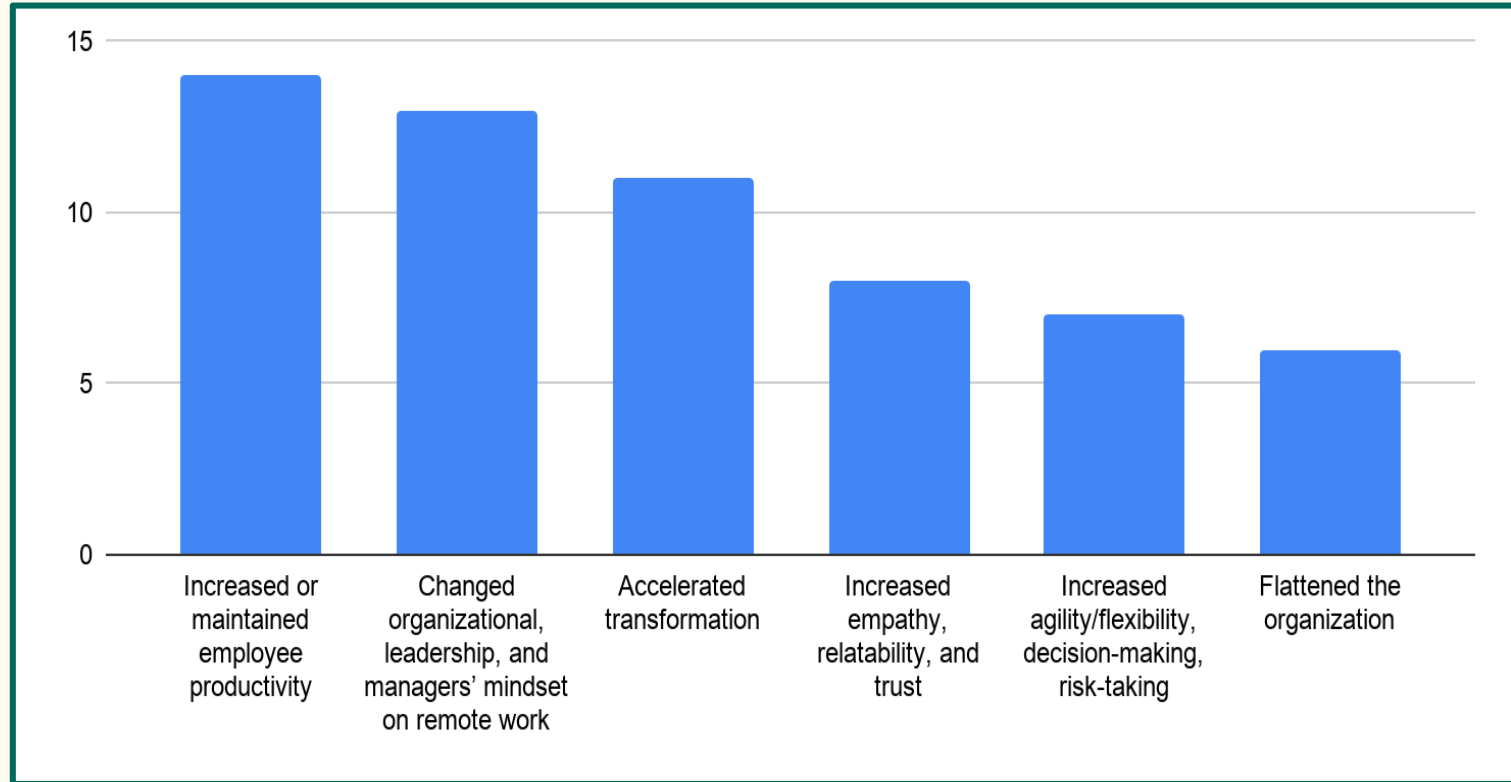# The culture of most companies was not aligned to hybrid-work

29%

53%

18%

What does it mean to be **proactive?**

Pre-Covid   During Covid   Post-Covid

During Covid

The benefits from shifting to remote work

The biggest benefit: organizational culture

Before | **During Covid** | **Sustained Impact**

01 Our productivity will go down if we go remote

- We *can* work remotely and still be productive

02 We're a massive organization with a lot of history. It's hard to be fast and agile

- We can make and execute major changes quickly
- We can take more risks without needing the results to be "perfect"

03 Performance is measured by what we see and do in the office

- Performance is measured by the impact the work has - in or out of the office

Cultural transformation

- Increase in trust
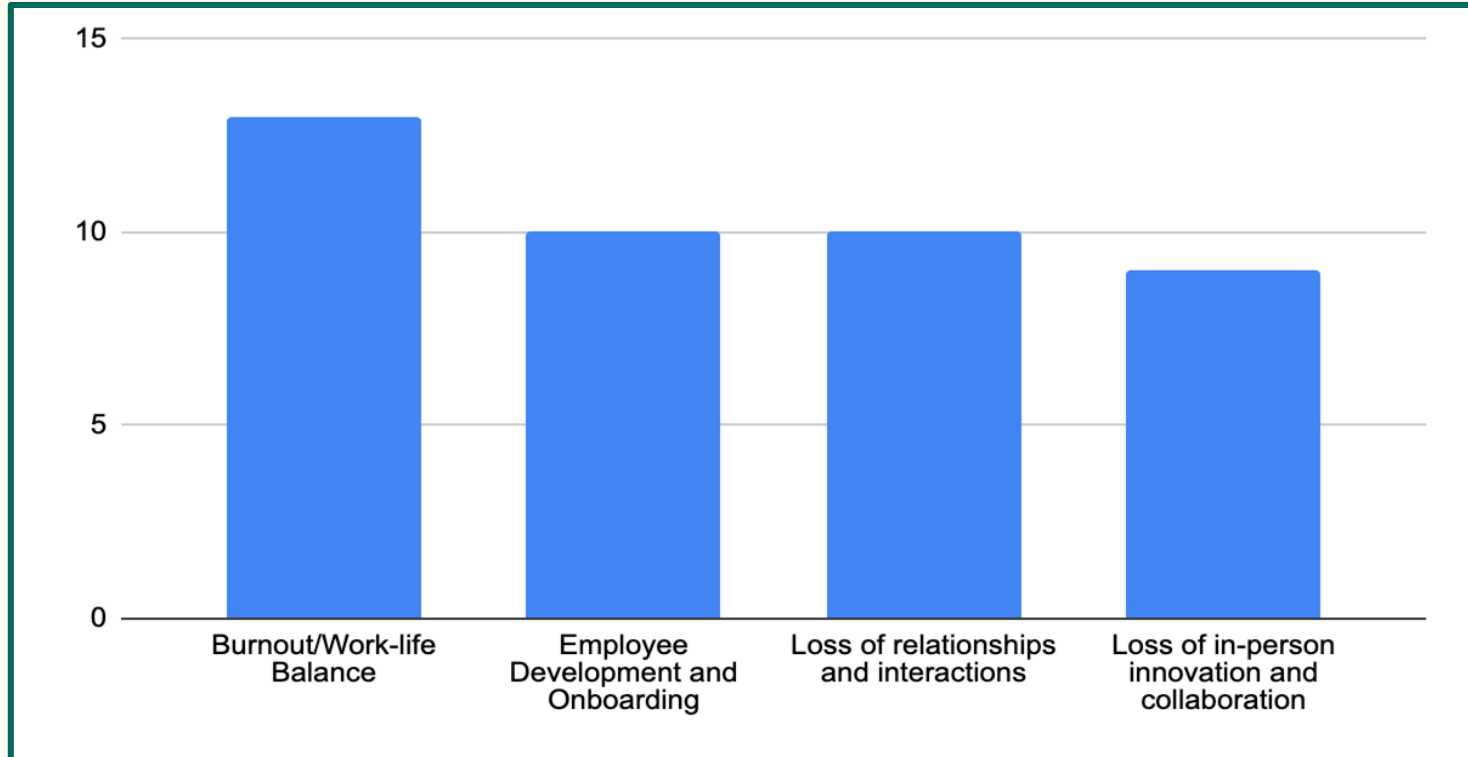- Flattened hierarchy
- Changing perspective on work

Enabled by rapid changes in technology, processes, and policies
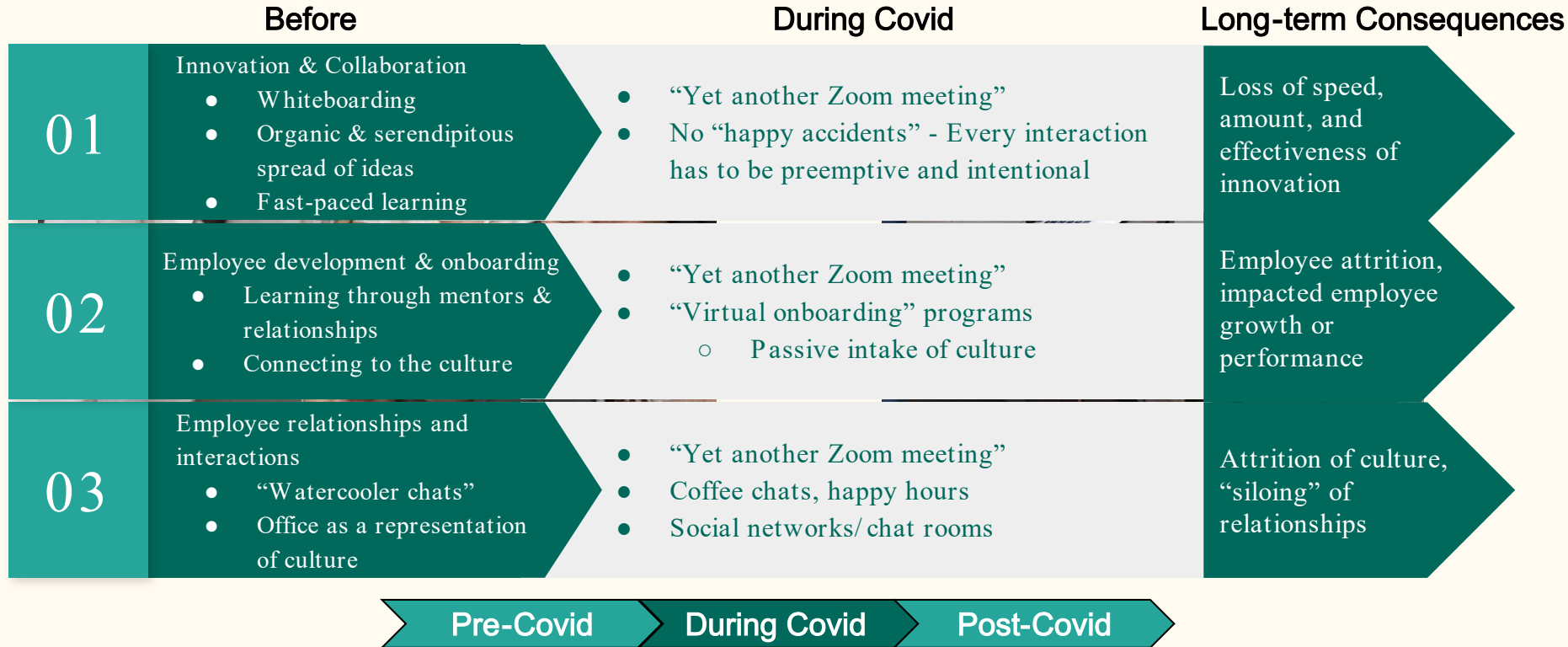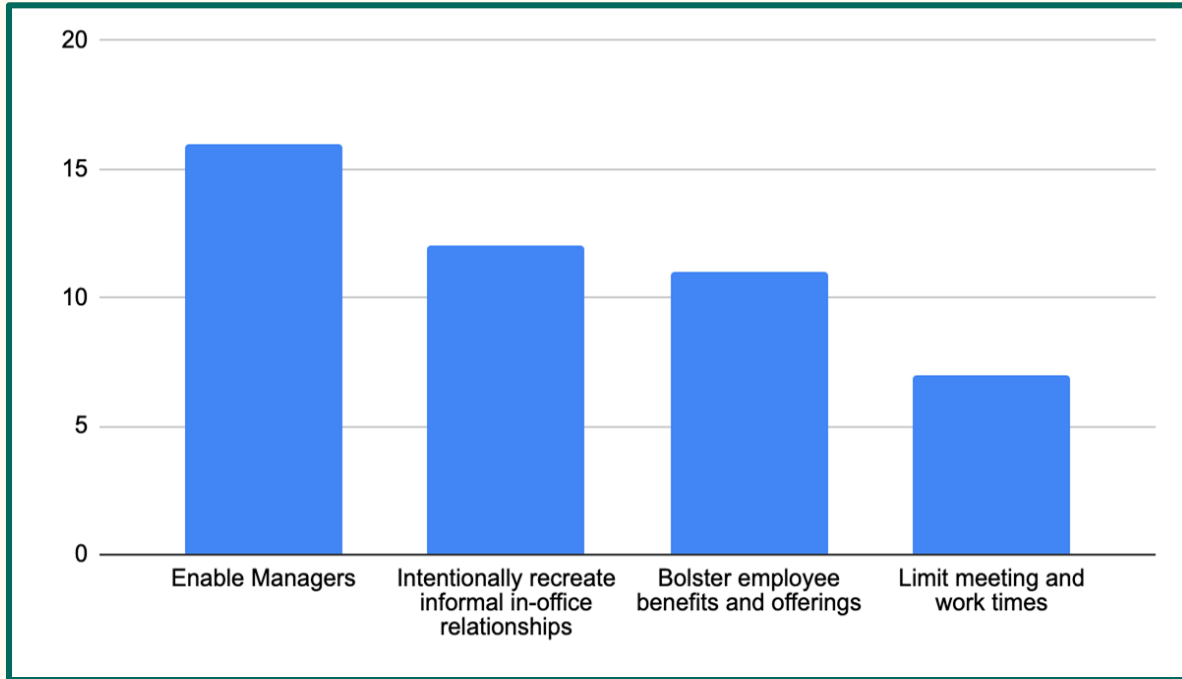
Pre-Covid | During Covid | Post-Covid

Challenges of remote work

The biggest challenge: organizational culture

	Before	During Covid	Long-term Consequences
01	Innovation & Collaboration ● Whiteboarding ● Organic & serendipitous spread of ideas ● Fast-paced learning	● "Yet another Zoom meeting" ● No "happy accidents" - Every interaction has to be preemptive and intentional	Loss of speed, amount, and effectiveness of innovation
02	Employee development & onboarding ● Learning through mentors & relationships ● Connecting to the culture	● "Yet another Zoom meeting" ● "Virtual onboarding" programs ○ Passive intake of culture	Employee attrition, impacted employee growth or performance
03	Employee relationships and interactions ● "Watercooler chats" ● Office as a representation of culture	● "Yet another Zoom meeting" ● Coffee chats, happy hours ● Social networks/ chat rooms	Attrition of culture, "siloing" of relationships

Pre-Covid | During Covid | Post-Covid

Responses to these challenges

- **The critical role of managers:** What makes a good manager of work vs. a good leader of people?
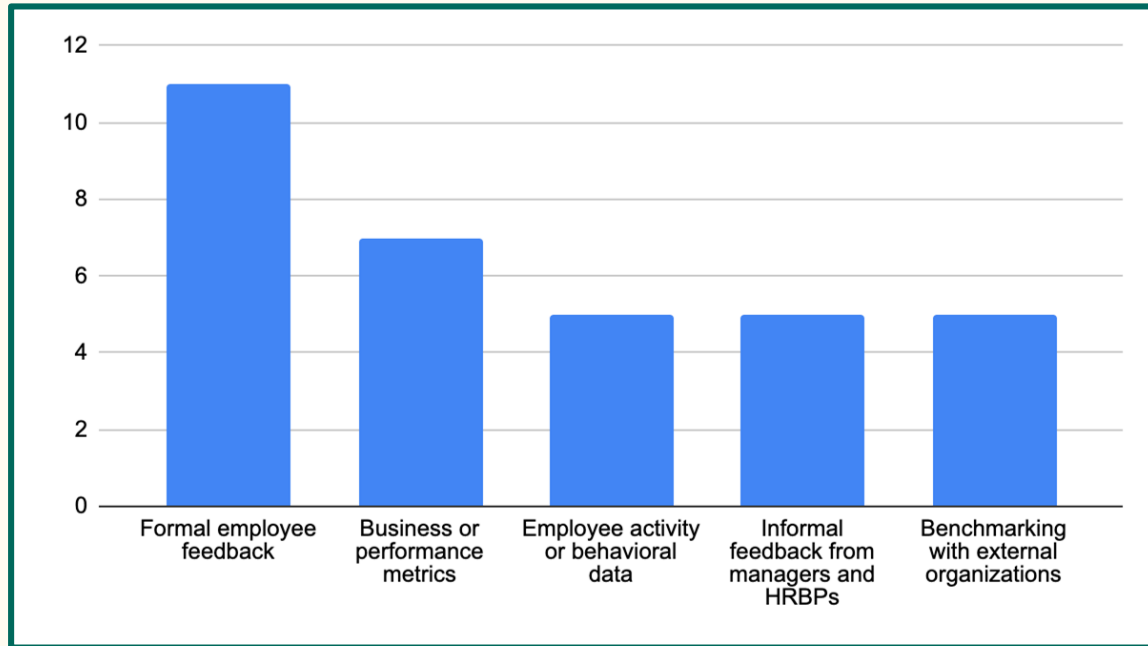
  How can manager represent and transmit the culture?

- **"Responses to Covid" as a employer brand differentiator:**

  "How did your company respond to Covid for your employees?" will be a key question prospective talent asks

- **Recognition of endless meetings' effect on burnout**

Data used to measure and inform
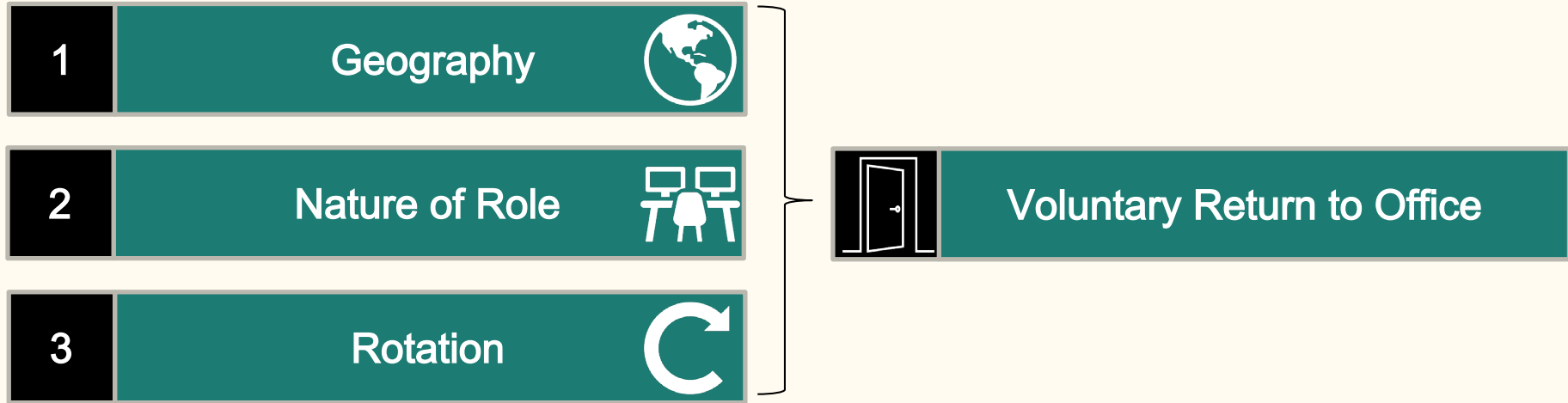## remote work decisions

- **The critical role of HR** in managing communication and advocating for employees

- **Using data** to respond *quickly* and proactively, and to measure the effectiveness of interventions

- **Recognition of remote work offerings** as a talent strategy

Post-Covid

Short-term return to work approach involves phasing employees

1	Geography
2	Nature of Role
3	Rotation

Voluntary Return to Office

Pre-Covid ⟩ During Covid ⟩ Post-Covid

Takeaways for short-term return to work

Unintended Pressure

Senior leaders and managers in the office may send the **wrong** message

Role of HR

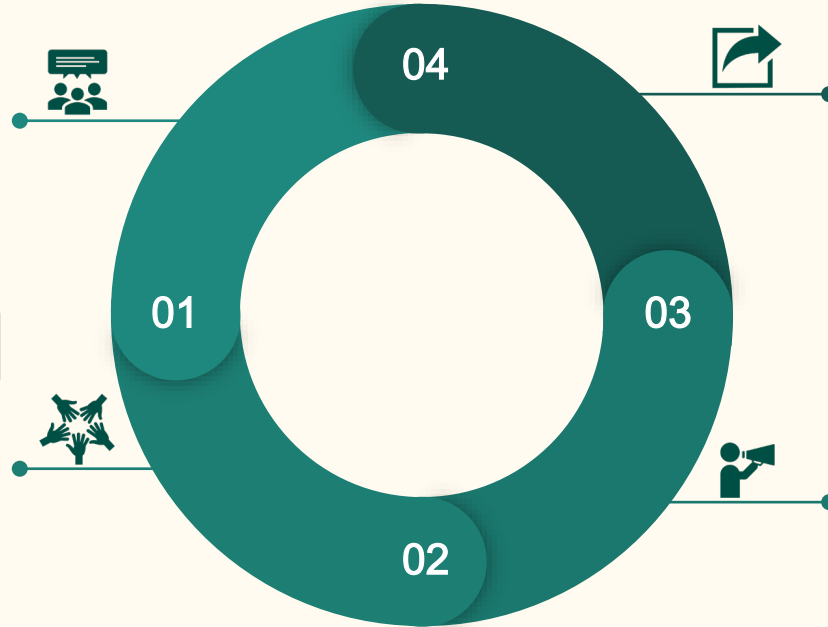Be in **lockstep** with the business and ensure **learnings** from this time are not lost

04

01

03

02

Moving Forward

Create a **centralized** policy that allows for local **flexibility**

Comms. Strategy
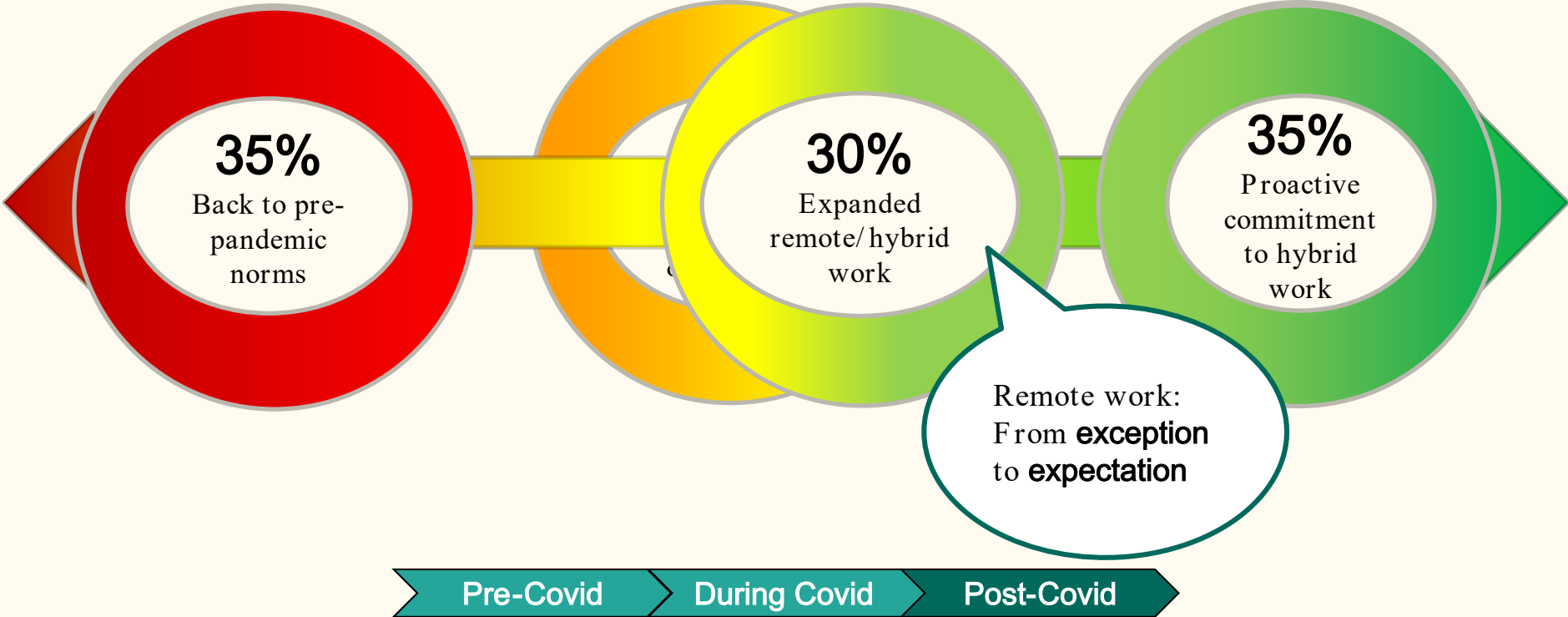
Transparent about the future role of the office

Pre-Covid | During Covid | Post-Covid

Companies recognize hybrid work is here to stay

35%
Back to pre-pandemic norms

30%
Expanded remote/hybrid work

35%
Proactive commitment to hybrid work

Remote work:
From **exception** to **expectation**

Pre-Covid > During Covid > Post-Covid

Taking the plunge: what have companies started?

1
Changing the physical space

- Transition office locations or office space
- Predict future office design & capacity

Reduce Real Estate Cost

2
Running pilots

- Pilot hybrid work and/or different office configurations
- Use smaller physical sites, teams, or international locations

Gather long-term data on hybrid work

3
Re-categorize jobs

Based on:
- Amount of time "in office" needed

Diversify talent acquisition strategy

Transform workforce

Pre-Covid ⟩ During Covid ⟩ Post-Covid

Looking ahead...questions for the long-term

1. How do we balance what employees want with business realities?
2. What additional data do we need to understand what "long-term" hybrid work looks like?
3. How do we ensure our approach does not create or exacerbate inequities?
4. How do we make sure we don't lose the positive cultural gains from the pandemic?
5. When and how do we start communicate our long-term perspective and approach to our employees?

Pre-Covid | During Covid | Post-Covid

Thank you!
Questions?

Appendix