

**W**hile remote work was making gradual but steady inroads prior to 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated its growth dramatically. What surprised many was how smoothly the transition often went. A report from Global Workplace Analytics found that as full-time work-from-home (WFH) employees skyrocketed from nine percent pre-pandemic to 77 percent by last summer, more than three-quarters of business leaders said employee productivity and performance improved or held steady. HR technology gets some credit for that.

As John Brownbridge, a principal in Deloitte Consulting LLP, notes, the impact of the pandemic on individual businesses varied widely. The ones that fared best were those that had the right HR data at their fingertips to make good decisions quickly and a level of HR automation that made increases in transaction volumes manageable.

### Critical growth driver

“HR tech is a foundational element for growth,” Brownbridge says. “Regardless of working arrangements, it should provide access to much-needed workforce information and insights, such as skills, experience, and capabilities. For small and midsize businesses (SMBs), he adds, taking advantage of newer technology available in HR platforms can help them level the playing field with larger competitors.

The first criteria when it comes to HR technology for SMBs should be ease of use and dependability, suggests David Burnley, vice president, product innovation at Insperty. “SMB leaders have such a broad range of responsibilities. They need to know they can count on their HR solutions all the time, especially when it comes to transactions they don’t execute on a regular basis,” he says. “Since the pandemic started, SMBs have been dealing with things like leaves, furloughs, and other situations that rarely occurred in the past, not to mention a flood of new and constantly changing rules and regulations at the federal, state, and local levels.”

# HR Technology Adapts to Remote Work’s Permanence

From social issues to virtual collaboration, HR technology is evolving to meet the needs of future employment models.



### Always-on protection

SMB leaders must be able to draw insight from the data they track, so strong reporting capabilities are a must-have for modern HR technology systems. “In the current environment, you must be able to measure and report on who was doing what in real time,” Burnley says. “Predictive capabilities are great, and that’s a direction HR tech is heading, but the current situation has pulled us back to the blocking-and-tackling basics of transparency and reporting, at least for the short-term future.”

Looking further ahead, SMBs will need HR technology that improves the

onboarding experience for new employees and helps employers address the social issues that are important to today’s empowered workers. With WFH here to stay, collaborative technologies must become increasingly integrated with HR platforms.

“For SMBs, the level of support they can rely on from their HR tech supplier will be critical,” Burnley says. “That’s Insperty’s competitive differentiator. We call our HR tech offering ‘software with a service’ because it’s backed by diligent, thoughtful professionals who can help our clients through all aspects of HR.”



# HR for what's next



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