



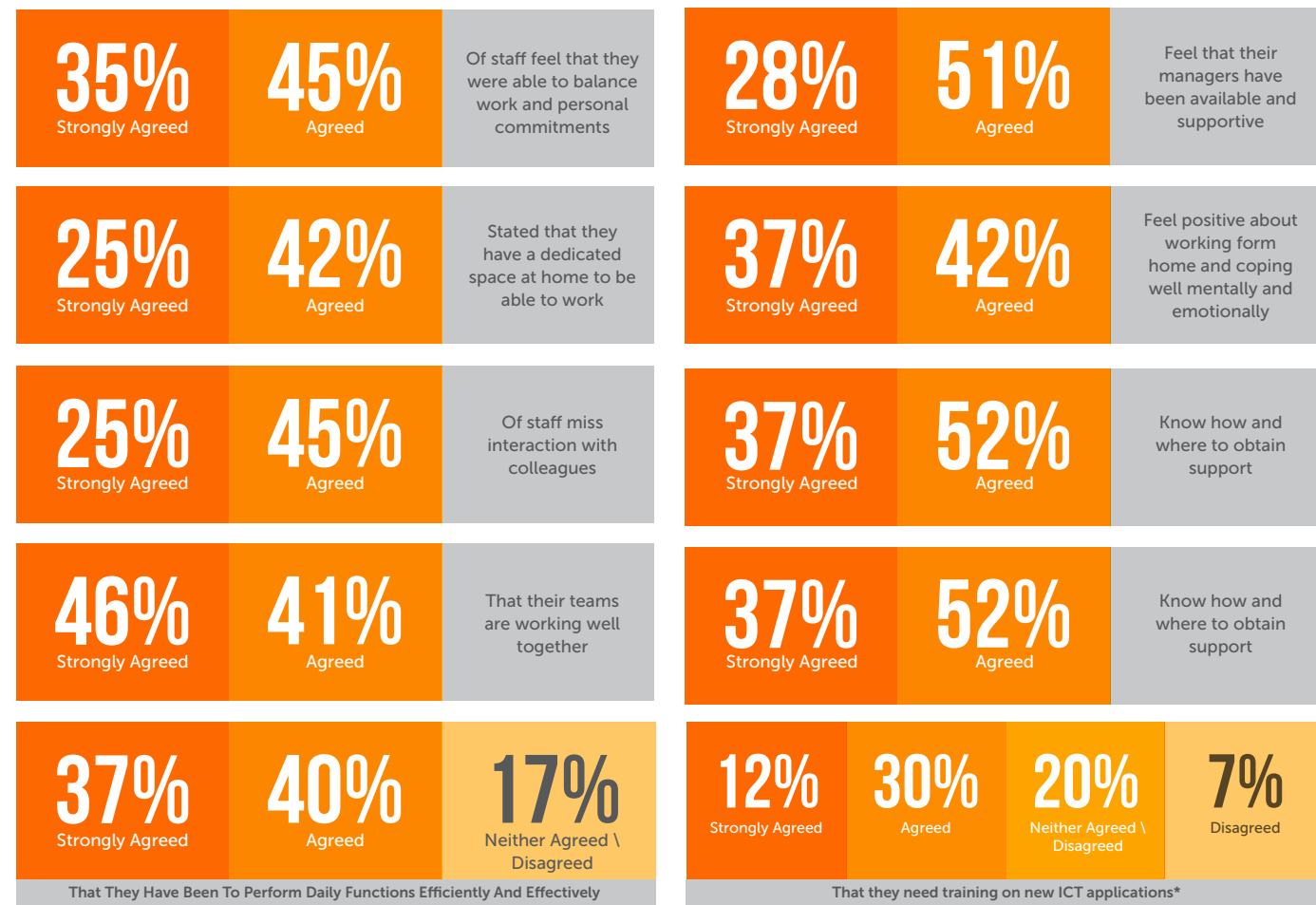
THE LOCKDOWN LOWDOWN

More than 100 days have passed since South Africa went into lockdown. There is no shortage of information in the media on how COVID-19 and the accompanying lockdown has affected the many millions of South Africans. Possibly one of the most disruptive has been people's ability to carry on working.

From an EWSETA perspective, access to the offices has moved from no access at all at Level 5, to access with permits only at Level 4 and now at Level 3, access for no more than 50% of the workforce. What this means is that EWSETA staff have moved from working from home 100% of the time to intermittent access at the office.

During the initial 'hard lockdown' stages, the EWSETA HR Team prepared a survey for staff that addressed various aspects of working from home and the results were interesting (and very positive). The infographics below indicate staff responses to the various questions posed.

"Where areas of improvement were identified, the HR Team has worked with the relevant internal departments and the COVID-19 Disaster Management Committee to meet the specific needs of staff," comments Nkateko Sithole, HR Manager for the EWSETA "and we have placed extensive focus on mental and emotional wellness during what has been an unbelievably challenging time for all South Africans."



"This article has been produced around the time of peak infections and no-one knows what to expect. It is for this reason, that EWSETA management and the Disaster Management Committee will continue to prioritise the needs and safety of all its staff, as well as those of visitors to the EWSETA."

WHAT EWSETA STAFF HAVE TO SAY

"I can say that it's a bit of both for me, this is because I am able to be at home and not be highly exposed to the virus. The down side though is that the workload is just so overwhelming and at times it's a bit difficult to manage while at home making it necessary to go to the office. I think I can support the idea of a hybrid of working from home and at the office should the pandemic subside."

Thandeka Sibisi

"From my side, I love working from home. While I miss the break in daily routine, I love the fact that I can spend lunch with my family, that I can work from the comfort of my own desk and over video conferencing."

Nora Hanke-Louw

"My experience of remote work has been more positive than negative. It took me a while to get past that feeling of being marooned on an island and I managed to find my comfort zone again. I learnt a new word that has kept me going through my new journey, "Quaranteam" which is the essence of virtual communication and collaboration to keep me connected."

Atul Patel

"Essentially, for me the lockdown and working from home brought with it both positives and negatives. On a personal note, the lockdown was of great value to me as a bout of severe ill health had left my immune system severely compromised and the lockdown provided me with a safe space to work on building my immunity up again. However, creating the distinction between 'work time' and 'family time' has been a challenge. From a business perspective, remote working has taught me that we can do more with the resources available to us and are therefore able to work smarter. But ... planning is very important. There have been times that managing a team remotely has been difficult."

Lungile Tshabala

"My experience has been largely a positive one (except for the COVID-19 bum and tum thanks to the non-stop eating). I have managed to really connect with my 14-year old daughter who is in Grade 8 and has not been to school for what feels like years. I have also realised that my fluffy black cat is a great companion (although a pretty useless PA). On a more serious note, I am extremely grateful for the remote working tools that have enabled me to mostly carry on as normal. My manager has been amazing and served as the glue that has kept the team that I am part of together exceptionally well. As a social being, I have missed the interaction with my colleagues in the office environment."

Elfrieda Tyrer

"Lockdown has taught me to appreciate all the little things that I took for granted in life while we still had freedom. It has also made realise that family is very important and how precious life is. I am finding the lockdown stressful currently as no-one knows when the pandemic will end."

Rhulani Manganyi

"The lock-down has provided me with an opportunity to integrate my work and home life. I no longer have the luxury to escape conflict in my home between my children. I have learned to handle conflict when it rears its ugly head because with happy children, I have the opportunity to focus on work. We are learning every day to appreciate that we all have different characters, strengths and preferences which makes for interesting experiences."

Khetsiwe Dlamini

"Working from home initially was fabulous. More time with the family and still able to work. Honestly, now the lines between work and home have become so blurred I don't know when work ends and home life begins. It's all kind of a mishmash of life. I think it's a brilliant work model to adopt for many organisations but what is evident, is that there must be support for staff to maintain a work life balance."

Candice Moodley