

"The future of work is remote" - Molly Pyle

These are the highlights of Molly Pyle's talk at the SingularityU South Africa 2020 Summit.



Molly Pyle, ecosystem development lead, Center on Rural Innovation.

Pyle is the ecosystem development lead at the Center on Rural Innovation. She said that we're seeing three main occurrences due to Covid-19 and the great reset:

- Mass global unemployment, exposure of gaps in failed systems on a mass scale
- The pace of automation is accelerating
- Business and societal transformation at every level

The question is how can we redesign the way we work for a better and more equitable future?

Pyle explained that remote work is the answer, not just in the short term but also in the long run. She recommends that people go remote forever. This is why:

- Remote works enables a future that is more exponential for your business – in terms of cost savings, retention and growth

- It also enables a more inclusive workplace, in terms of hiring and promotion
- Remote work is better for the environment. Carbon emissions are greatly reduced with less cars on the road
- It reduces exposure to sickness. We can keep each other safe
- Companies can make huge savings on office costs
- Employees save hours every day, not having to spend this time travelling
- Hiring is faster, on average 33% faster
- There is average 55% less staff attrition and subsequently more retention

Dell launched its Connected Workplace initiative in 2010 to encourage more remote work. Two years after they launched this, they already reported a \$14 million cost saving as well as over 6,000 metric tons carbon emissions saving. The Global Workplace Analytics Report stated that American companies save on average \$11,000 allowing part-time workers to work remotely. This was pre-pandemic.

Companies that enable remote work can be more diverse as this gives more people opportunities. A Stanford University study showed that remote workers are 13% more productive than their office working counterparts.

Pyle further explained that offices are one of the many options where work can get done. Meaningful work can be done anywhere. In a post-Covid future, Pyle believes that people will want to work from anywhere, not just from home, but also from co-working spaces.

Think about the model of co-working spaces. If we could develop these in remote areas in Africa, these could be a real driver of growth and opportunity. Imagine what this could do for income and wealth distribution! This could make a great impact on local economies.

Pyle recommends:

- Get rid of your offices
- Use this saving to give employees a fee to move to places in need of economic development (if they want to)
- Redesign your system
- Embrace new tools, e.g. digital conferencing

56% of South Africans don't have internet connection. If we give people the opportunity to connect, we can use this as a chance to improve conditions for the other 44%.

Martin Luther-King once said:

“ Every society has its protectors of the status-quo and its fraternities of the indifferent who are notorious for sleeping through revolutions. Today, our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change. ”

Pyle concluded by saying that this is what we are being called to do here now. Close the physical buildings and open possibilities through remote work.