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Explanatory Story

While the pandemic was a time of intense stress for many, behind the scenes, corporations and major industries saw a massive increase in productivity, while workers received little to no compensation for increased productivity.

According to the 2024 Bureau of Labor Statistics report on the rise of remote work during the pandemic, nearly all 61 industries studied saw a massive increase in productivity when switching to remote work during the pandemic. The report published by the BLS concluded that the larger the increase in remote work, the larger the decrease in unit capital, energy, material, and service costs growth across industries.

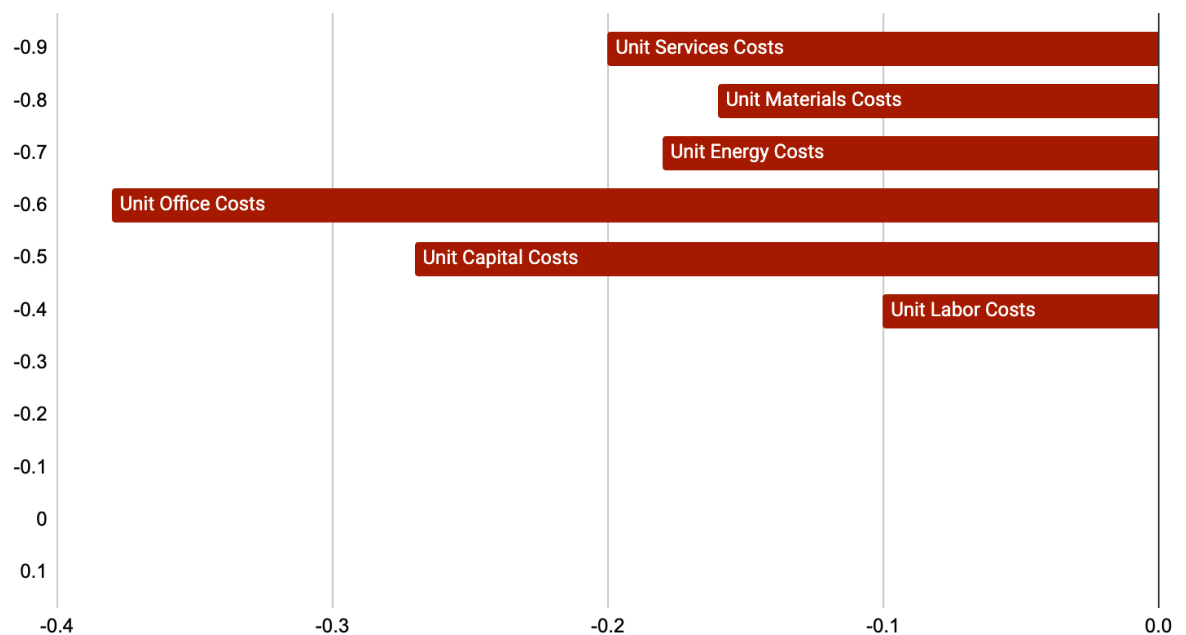
The rapid increase in remote work during the pandemic shows an important trend towards increased exploitation of workers post-pandemic, specifically in the lack of compensation for the increased productivity that came with less spending on maintenance. When asked about how workers responded to the shift towards remote work and the change in spending costs, Chris McQuiston said,

“Many people here expressed that they were happier working remotely, so they never really thought about how costs were changing throughout the company...”- Chris McQuiston, Human Resources Executive, FarmShare Inc.

Just as Chris Mcquiston said, workers shifting to remote work were more focused on the shift rather than the gains that industries were making with the shift to remote work during the pandemic, highlighting a key communication divide between workers and industries.

Looking deeper into the actual spending costs that industries were seeing cuts from, data from the 2024 report from the BLS, shows significant spending cuts to nearly every spending sector, the highest cut in spending comes from office costs, resulting from the shift towards remote work. This trend in increased productivity combined with decreased cost continued until social distance orders were lifted in 2023.

Percentage point change in remote workers and the growth in different unit input costs across 61 industries, 2019–22



While data from government sources give the details of this trend in remote work, the workers who shifted to remote work during the pandemic tell their story of the shift. When asked about the thought process during the shift to remote work,

“ I remember when the whole pandemic started and I mean...I was happy that I could just work at home, I wasn't really thinking about much else at the time and i never went back to office work either so.”- Marie DiConcillio, current remote worker

While workers were struggling with the sudden shift towards remote work, industries and corporations were silently profiting off of workers' distractions from the Covid pandemic. These tactics from industries show an ever increasing trend of corner cutting in terms of spending, specifically spending tied to workers conditions and environment.

When asked about industries cost cutting and the initial reaction to shifting towards remote work, worker Ben Martinez said,

“ I'm sure there was all kinds of spending and cost cuts when the pandemic hit, I mean it was just kinda a chaotic time for everyone so who knows what was really going on”- Ben Martinez, communications worker

Although the common sentiment of workers seems to be unaware of corporate and industry spending cuts during this time, the fact that workers were not appropriately compensated for the shift in remote work continues to be a concerning trend that continues to this day.

Works cited

Chris Mcquiston, FarmShare- 845-825-0692

Marie DiConcillio- 720-591-1085

Ben Martinez- 720-926-0668