

State of Remote Work: Oil and Gas Industry



Introduction:

Oil and gas companies are facing a brutal dual reality: COVID-19, which has forced a shutdown of most offices, and the unprecedented industry downturn. To see how these businesses are coping, WolfePak Software surveyed our customer base about their immediate needs, challenges and insights about remote work. We received 236 responses from upstream, midstream and service companies within a four-day period in mid-April. The information they shared with us tells us not only where they are now but where they expect to go in the days ahead.

KEY TAKE AWAYS



O&G companies have traditionally relied on paper to run their operations, with job tickets, invoices, receipts and records processed, shared and stored in the office.



Remote work is crippling critical functions such as accounting and finance. When data is paper-based, employees can't easily get the data they need to process invoices, pay bills, issue checks, run monthly closes and keep the business going.



Efficiency is crucial at a time when the bottom line is under enormous pressure and every dollar counts.



Recognizing the need to eliminate paper processes, companies are making automation a top priority as they ramp up to go digital.

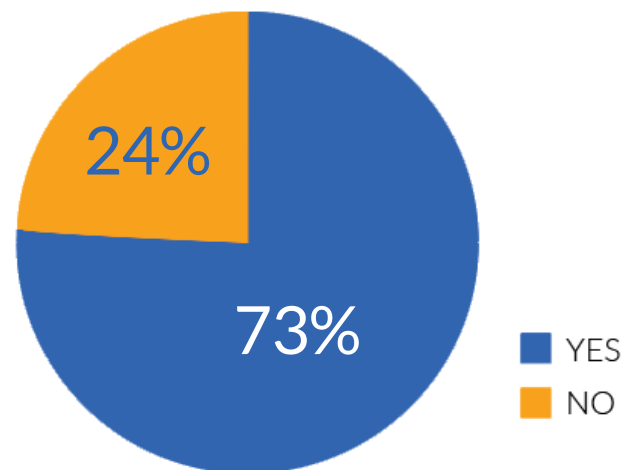
What level of remote working is your company currently at?

Remote work is the new normal. Nearly one out of three customers said their entire workforce is currently home-based. Another 42% said about half their staff is now working remotely, with some employees occasionally working from the office. That means close to three out of four businesses generally have the majority of their employees working offsite. Only 27% of those responding to the survey said all their employees are considered essential and continue to work in the office.



Are you yourself working remotely?

73% of the respondents said they themselves are now working remotely.



What has been the biggest challenge remotely processing oil and gas operations?




Working with paper-based processes is the biggest challenge to remote work.

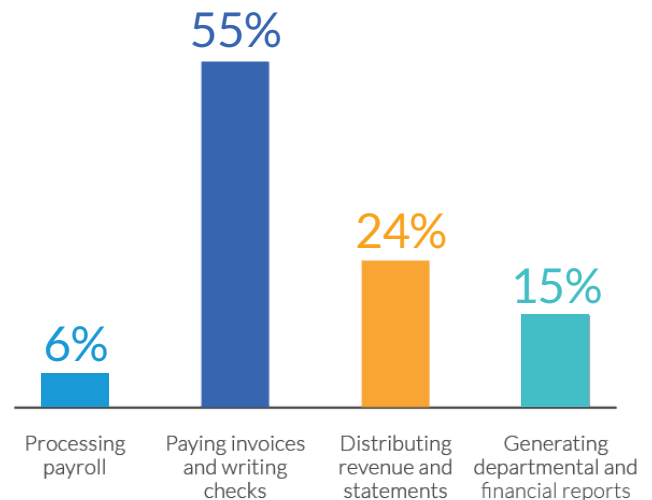
It's difficult for the financial team to do its job when everyone is working remotely and can't easily access basic and essential information. Paying invoices and writing checks is the biggest challenge for 55% of the respondents, and 24% cited distributing revenue and statements.

There are other headaches: 15% said generating departmental and financial reports is an issue, and 6% reported processing payroll as a main problem.

When all transactions are routinely recorded on paper, data is effectively trapped. In an office, it is easy to hand off files and move them through a manual system. It's extremely difficult to process and share that information with distributed employees.

KEY BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

-  Processing hard-copy checks that have been mailed to the office
-  Responding to paperwork from other divisions, government agencies and outside operators
-  Scanning documents into company systems



“ Logistics of processing items that only come by mail.

Keeping up on work that comes via mail instead of electronic transmission.

Dealing with all the paper payments and division orders from other paperwork from operators, counties, etc.

Scanning documents.



OTHER CHALLENGES



Communicating with coworkers, participating in meetings and collaborating with teams.



Operating with the limited Internet speeds of work-at-home staff and the security risks of home networks.



Managing technology challenges that arise when remote workers use different hardware and software than they would in the office.



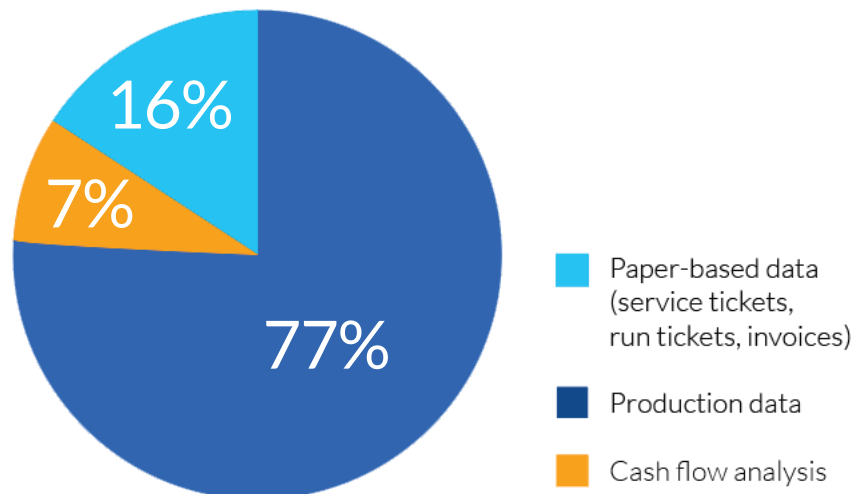
Working from home with the distractions of children and home-schooling.

What data have you found you need immediate access to but struggle to get in a remote environment?

77% of respondents are having a hard time accessing urgent information on service tickets, run tickets and invoices.

There are always exceptions: *“We have one person that works within PacEnergy that has always worked remotely via software-as-a-service (SaaS), so there have been no changes.”*

Access to production data is another struggle, cited by 16% of the respondents, while 7% said cash flow analysis is the most difficult data to obtain.



As a finance organization, what are your biggest priorities moving forward?

The current crisis is forcing O&G companies to rethink the way they process back-office work, revealing inefficiencies and vulnerabilities they can no longer tolerate. The measures they're taking now are likely to become standard operating procedure in the future. That's especially true of the financial departments within the oil and gas industry, who have been among the hardest-hit by the problems inherent in paper-based systems.

Companies are moving away from hard copy to digital data, storing it online to make information accessible from anywhere. They're coming up with new ways to communicate and collaborate, devising new processes for working at home or in the field that streamline operations. They're adopting new hardware and software, including products that automate routine functions. Overall, they're striving to improve efficiency and enhance productivity so they can protect the bottom line, weather this storm and position the company—and its employees—for the recovery that's sure to come.

FUTURE PRIORITIES

*Improving remote
working capabilities.*

*Save money,
maximize efficiency.*

Maintaining cash flow.

Weather the storm.

*In the office, upgrading
computer equipment and
performing duties paperless.*

Automation is a solution

Automation is an essential tool for companies seeking to reduce expenses, improve operational efficiency and enhance staff productivity.

Three benefits of automation include:

- Companies can do more with fewer employees at lower cost, and at the same time, improve profit margins.
- A “work from anywhere” strategy is essential at a time when so many employees are working remotely.
- Access to vital information in real time—which is one of the key advantages offered by digitizing data—helps teams make better, more informed decisions, more quickly.

AREAS YOU CAN AUTOMATE TODAY



Document
management
and storage



Mobile app
deployments for
field teams



Financial data
collection and
analysis

Conclusion

Oil and gas companies got through the sudden transition to remote work as well as they could while also dealing with the turmoil in the market. Now, with a few months of experience under their belt, they're taking this opportunity to operationalize their online and digital processes and procedures to improve data accessibility, communication and efficiency. Such action is critical to protect the already stressed bottom line.

It's rapidly become obvious that data needs to be available at your fingertips—no matter where those fingertips are located—in the office, in the field or at home. The industry has recognized that technology is no longer “nice to have” or simply a competitive advantage. It's a vital necessity to keep business functioning, and not just in critical times but on a continuing basis every day. Looking forward, it's clear that technology and automation are the solutions for increased efficiency and enhanced profitability.

We hope you found this information useful.

Want to talk more about how we can help you optimize your approach to remote working and financial management?

Contact us:

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