



Basis Points – January 18, 2022

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Above the Fold

How the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis Is Changing Our Productivity Standards

Before the pandemic hit, remote workers were often seen as fortunate. They had flexibility in their schedules, didn't have to "suit up" in work attire or brave a potentially lengthy commute, especially in adverse conditions. For these benefits, remote workers often experienced differences in pay and were held to higher **standards** than their in-office colleagues. They did, however, have similar rules when it came to actual paid time off and sick days. And prior to the pandemic, taking time off was an equal balance between recovery and spread prevention.

But as the pandemic has reshaped organizational landscapes across a myriad of sectors, advances in technology, changes in management styles and more flexibility with actual “work time” has led to a much wider adoption of remote work with successful outcomes. Unfortunately for the average worker, it’s also changed the barometer of what constitutes a “sick day.” Americans are already well-known for our lack of taking time off. According to recent research by the U.S. Travel Association, American workers (pre-pandemic) left more than 25% of their eligible time off unused. Now, the Wall Street Journal is [reporting](#) that more and more Americans are actually working while sick. That trend may increase as special COVID-19-related time off exemptions disappear, pressuring workers (remote and in-office) to work, even when they are ill.

So even though many businesses are short-staffed, there are still likely a myriad of workers who are powering through their workday, even if they’d probably be better off in bed.

Three Things

1. *Unlocking the New Apple and Hyundai Relationship* – The iPhone wallet app is more than just a place to store your credit cards and plane tickets. Starting later this year, Hyundai and its Genesis brand of cars will add support for Apple’s digital car key feature, allowing users to lock and unlock with a screen tap on their iPhones. The feature is currently available on select BMW models and further make and model adoption is expected.
2. *Real Life “Trading Places” Situation Hitting One Commodity* – In the popular ’80s comedy “Trading Places,” Mortimer and Randolph Duke drive up the price of frozen concentrated orange juice after they are given false inside information. Today, orange juice prices are rising once again, but for very real reasons. The U.S. Agricultural Department is now forecasting the smallest orange crop since 1945 as the growing fruits are smaller than usual and dropping out of trees due to disease.
3. *Your Netflix Subscription Is Getting More Expensive, Again* – It’s been less than 15 months since the popular streaming platform raised its prices back in October 2020. But with rising competition in the space and fewer people stuck at home, Netflix decided to ratchet up its prices once again in order to keep its earnings growing. The monthly cost for its basic plan for U.S. customers rose from \$1.00 to \$9.99, while its standard plan increased to \$15.49 from \$13.99, and the premium plan to \$19.99 from \$17.99.

Did You Know?

FedEx Wants Lasers on Its Jets (No, Seriously)

Most of us don’t think about how dangerous getting a package from point A to B might be, but FedEx just made the world a little more aware of the hazards its planes and pilots face. The company is asking regulators for permission to install anti-missile countermeasures (including

ballistic-seeking lasers) on aircraft that fly over or close to hostile areas of the world. While this may sound extreme, several civilian aircraft have been recently fired upon by man-portable air defense systems, aka MANPADS.

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