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Hybrid Work Environment

The hybrid work model is a complex subject with far reaching consequences and is here to stay. According to a **McKinsey survey**, 52% of respondents wanted to work in a hybrid arrangement. Curiously, 11% wanted to work **fully remote** while 37% desired a full return to the office. In that same survey, McKinsey found that nearly **30% of employees** would leave their company if they were forced to work in the office **100%** of the time. Currently, Amazon is facing pushback on their hybrid work mandate, requiring employees to return to the office a minimum of **3 days per week** beginning **May 1**. Google has announced a "**Cloud Office Evolution**" work structure where employees will share desks and alternate the days they are in the office. Companies of all sizes are seeking to find the optimal work environment for their employees, that will also support the annual business goals and budgets. How companies address this work structure will have lasting effects on their businesses and their ability to compete for talent.



Most company leaders feel that "**Maintaining Culture**" is the biggest challenge they're facing with a remote work structure. These companies have spent millions on real estate and more and more amenities as they've competed with one another to attract and retain the top talent. City officials are pushing to have companies return to downtown offices to revitalize the businesses that depend on vibrant office foot traffic. So how do companies ensure they are providing the flexible work structure most employees are now requesting while creating an environment for collaboration and promotion of employee's unique qualities?

At first, a hybrid work model seems straight forward — employees work from an office for some days, and elsewhere others. But there are many different models (and further variations on these core models) that emphasize different attributes of the organization, from business structure, function, and size of teams to company culture, technologies and business processes.

The different work environment models explored below highlight the advantages and potential challenges of each model.

Model	Pros	Cons
<p>01 — Fully remote Remote-first, no formal offices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save on real estate and office operational costs • Fully focused on remote technologies • Broader talent pool • More budget for offsites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only see coworkers in person at offsites • Collaboration can take longer over multiple time zones • Culture and authentic interpersonal connections are more difficult to maintain • Technology challenges (unstable WiFi) • Less firsthand insight into employees' productivity throughout the day • Onboarding employees in roles and responsibilities as well as quickly making them feel part of the team
<p>02 — Default Digital Remote-first, full flexibility. Drop in co-working spaces in certain locations. No requirement of location or fixed schedule</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coworking hubs accommodate those who want to work more in-person • Lower office costs with less real estate/square footage and operational expenses • Broader talent pool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a lot of intentionality to ensure people remain inclusive and don't end up working more closely with those physically present, and unintentionally, or worse, intentionally, excluding remote teammates • Setting up one-on-one and all-on-video protocols may create technical challenges • Work environment/desk space is not your own
<p>03 — Dynamic Hybrid Associated with an office, but work from home (WFH) available on a non-deterministic schedule</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers mix of in-person collaboration and remote flexibility without a fixed schedule • Employee determined schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion on where people are and when they are working • Without proper tools like Asana or similar, gaps in communication will occur

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Static Hybrid

Individuals will make a choice of being based in the office or remote 100% of the time

- Reliable and predictable while offering individuals flexibility in their schedules
- Predictable ways that teams will work together

- Less flexibility for the employees
- In office or WFH mode may still become the default for the company which will revert to old tendencies and alienate some employees

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Synchronized Hybrid

Teams, or companies, work from the office on the same days. e.g. Tuesday to Thursday in the office

- Allows for remote work to reduce commute fatigue
- Structured time for focused work and in-person collaboration
- Helps promote team culture and interpersonal communication

- No savings on office space
- Limited flexibility outside of designated WFH days
- Teams on different schedules will not see one another in person

As more companies develop and soon mandate various return-to-the-office policies, it is imperative that leadership is in tune with employee sentiment and carefully considers the pros, cons and implications of different hybrid models. As we have analyzed companies across the entire technology landscape, we have found that there is no one perfect solution that works across the entirety of an organization. There will always be some employees who are dissatisfied with whichever model is chosen. Therefore, we recommend that companies make these decisions at the team level to minimize pushback.



Different teams have different needs, and companies need to consider those needs when deciding on hybrid models. Junior-level teams may benefit from in-office work as it is a time for them to learn from others and develop social interactions. Meanwhile, senior-level teams may prefer remote work due to family commitments and the availability of a home office. Certain functions, such as product management, marketing, and R&D, are better suited for in-office environments where collaboration is critical to their success.

Conversely, IT/Technical Support, Development, and Customer Success functions can be very productive in a remote environment as long as they are given the right tools.

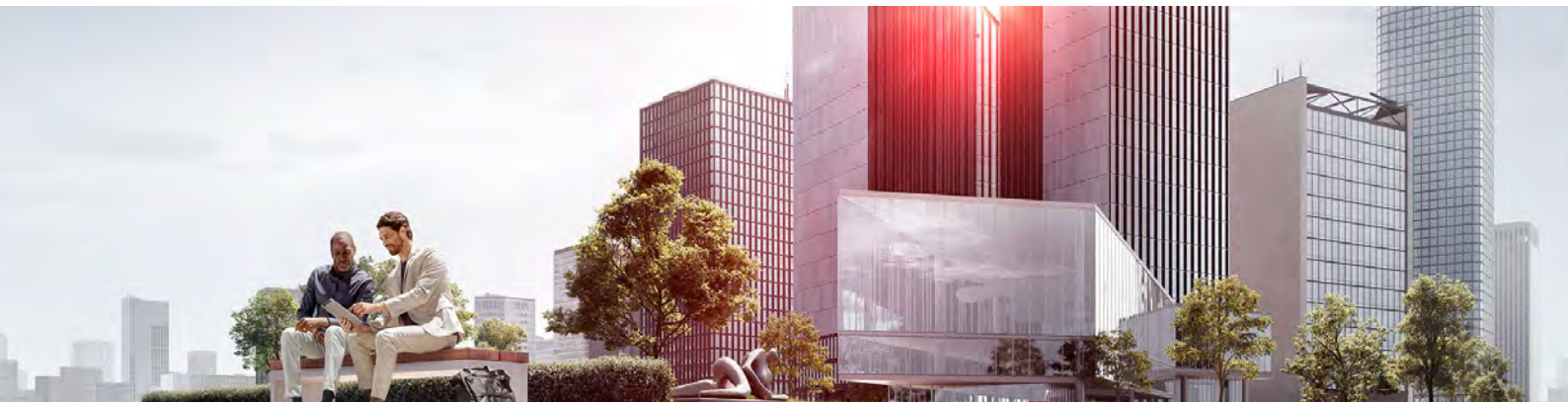
Clear communication is essential to implementing a successful hybrid model of work. Teams are likely to implement what is best for them, so expectations for each team should be clearly defined. By doing so, rogue decisions can be minimized, and the company can benefit from the diverse needs and preferences of its employees.

Summary

The pandemic accelerated the ability for employees to work remotely, and hybrid models of work are here to stay. Companies must navigate the challenges and opportunities these hybrid models provide to create a productive and engaged workforce.

We have found the companies who have their individual teams decide on their location of work model have a more satisfied and engaged work force overall and a one-size-fits-all mandate will alienate more employees than necessary. Employees need to be clear in their needs and understand that each of the different solutions have advantages and disadvantages.

It is imperative they recognize the limitations of the model their team selects and develop processes that address those constraints before they become larger issues. Transparency and communication will be key throughout the process to decide what is the best structure for the team and company as a whole.



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