



# The Hybrid Working Evolution

How to maximise your success now and in the future 

# Managing the transition

## Why you can't hurry hybrid

Although forward-thinking organisations began putting policies, processes, and technology in place to accommodate a shift in work patterns, for most organisations, working from home was only really an occasional possibility which quickly became an absolute necessity during the pandemic.

But now, with society - and office doors - swung back open, the return to the workplace is not only allowed, it's encouraged in many quarters...certainly not by all though.

Here's our rundown of the things to consider during the transitional phase and beyond.



# What's expected of hybrid working?

## EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS

**44%**

of UK employees surveyed said their ability to conduct hybrid work – from home or office – would contribute to their happiness

**57%**

said they have felt happier over the past year as a result of working from home.

## INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

**83%**

of employers say that a shift to remote work has been productive for them.

**58%**

of executives think that remote work has improved individual employee productivity.

## LOWERED COSTS

**56%**

of people said they would take less money for the ability to work from any location.

**45%**

of organisations are planning to reduce travel expenses by 50-74%, and 30% plan to reduce them by 75-100%

**75%**

of employees say that cost savings are a major benefit, and over a third of them said they save over \$5,000 each year by working remotely.

## LIFE FLEXIBILITY

**7** Flexibility tends to be optimal for engaging employees and reducing burnout – before and during the pandemic.

**38%**

of fully remote workers would prefer hybrid work.

**40%**

of fully remote workers would give up some of their time at home to have in-person office experiences.

# What's the reality?

## EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

8 **72%**

reported exhaustion from hybrid working – nearly double the figures for fully remote employees and also greater than those based fully in the office.

## DIGITAL PRESENTEEISM

Microsoft 365 has shown the pressure is high to prove that remote work is real work, that you're just as dedicated as your in-office peers:

This barrage of communications is unstructured and mostly unplanned:

9 Average workday span

**+13%**

9 After-hours and weekend work (**+28%**, **+14%**, respectively)  
Time in meetings (**+252%**),  
and chats sent (**+32%**).

9 **62%**  
of calls and meetings are unscheduled or conducted ad-hoc.

9 **50%**  
of people respond to Teams chats within five minutes or less, a response time that hasn't changed year-over-year.

## PROXIMITY BIAS

10 **12%** Employees with effective working relationship with their manager while working from home  
**13%** Employees with effective working relationship with their colleagues

## TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGES

1 Workers feeling they have the right technology to work from wherever they want:

**73% - India**      **62% - US**  
**64% - UAE**      **55% - UK**

## RISKS TO INCLUSIVITY

9 Collaboration trends in Microsoft Teams and Outlook show that interactions with our immediate team, or close network, strengthened with the move to remote work. However, interactions outside of that team, or distant networks, have diminished

## ACCESSIBILITY

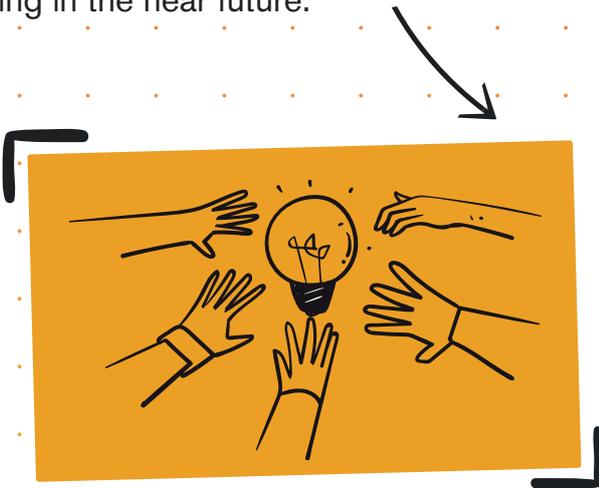
11 If technology and connectivity aren't right, a hybrid model may not be accessible for all. To ensure individuals aren't disadvantaged, employers need to invest in ensuring equal access to a strong internet connection, good IT security, and the right software to make it work, no matter where the employees are

# Strategies for long-term hybrid success

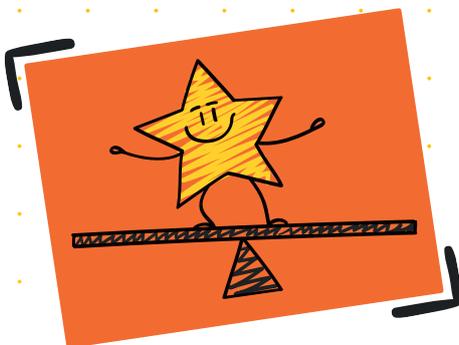
According to McKinsey research, of those who prefer hybrid work, **71% say they'd be likely to look for other opportunities if it wasn't available where they work now.** Therefore employers, if they haven't already, will need to consider how they adopt a form of flexible working in the near future.

Adopting this fundamental shift in the way we work will bring a prolonged period of transition as organisations learn to adapt, introduce and embed the right processes and infrastructure.

But, as with most things requiring change, there will undoubtedly be teething problems, a degree of uncertainty, and a level of resistance, whether that's from those making the decisions or those affected by them.



“Can we still do that?” “Can’t we do it this way?” “Wasn’t it better before?” “Why’s that changed?”



So, how can companies navigate this tricky transitional phase in a way that's as painless as possible and establish strategies that promote long-term success?

Here are four areas to focus on that can help reduce the friction with this new way of working...

# Engagement

**Commitment, effort and intensity are all determined by how engaged an employee feels within their workplace.**

But the interesting thing is, as highlighted in [our research](#), engagement isn't just driven by having a job that pays well, having more responsibility or having a great set of colleagues. No, engagement starts with 'meaning'.

Employees want to **KNOW** that they're making a difference; that the effort they're putting in matters; that what they're doing ties into the company's mission.

Not only that, the extent to which an employee thinks their job matters also affects how likely they are to suffer burnout. Although the link between the two may not be as obvious as working longer hours and stress, as you can see from our research below, the correlation is apparent.

But now, with the split between office and remote working, it's important to make sure everyone, regardless of location, has access to the information that leaves them clear on their place in the puzzle, not puzzled about their place.

Small touches such as screensavers, emails, intranet, even a physical desk prompt, can offer clarity and a sense of purpose, whilst a recognition scheme built on the values of your business offers an effective means of reinforcing behaviours that support the mission.



## Too much work doesn't cause burnout. Too little meaning does.



## Hybrid Working Values to add to your Recognition Programme

Hybrid Hero, Collaborate Champion, Totally in Touch, Ace Appreciator, Smart Thinking, Fab at Feedback, Engagement Expert, Wellbeing Wonder, Zoom Star, Interact to Inspire

# Connection



When employees are emotionally invested, they're more inclined to positively engage with their environment. Connecting with colleagues magnifies that emotion so it's important to make it feel easy and unforced.

Of course, in the office it's easy for colleagues to have an informal chat in the kitchen or an organised face-to-face meeting, but don't forget about those working from home who place value in teamwork.

**Employees are 51% more likely to feel isolated at work when they don't feel a sense of teamwork – BI WORLDWIDE (New World | New Rules of Engagement).**

But with the geographical divides presented by hybrid making it more challenging to interact with colleagues, make sure that connections are possible between everyone, whether they're working from home or in the office.

Where possible, remove any barriers to connection and leverage integrated technology - everything from a constantly refreshed intranet to an easily accessible recognition platform - and introduce tools that can allow collaboration and appreciation to flourish.

Equally, employees need to feel connected to their workspace, wherever that may be. The transition between working at home and working in the office from one day to the next needs to feel seamless and allow them to slot right into an environment they're comfortable with.

## Ways to promote connection:

- Promote peer-to-peer recognition
- Encourage and provide social activities
- Set 'fun' team challenges to encourage cross-business collaboration
- Provide space for employee knowledge and interest sharing sessions to deepen relationships and build respect
- Celebrate wins and personal milestones frequently
- Utilise collaboration tools such as Teams and Slack



# Managers

Never has the role of the manager been more critical. Research shows time and again that a manager's behaviour directly impacts an employee's engagement and connection (there are those words again).



So much so that Gallup estimates that managers account for at least **70%** of variance in employee engagement scores across business units.



With such an influential role, it's not unreasonable to think that how successfully a company transitions to hybrid rests on the shoulders of managers who span the divide between employees and leaders.

The challenge though, as we navigate this period of flux, is that many managers may feel ill-equipped to support a team that's now spread across multiple locations.

Indeed, Gallup's research also reveals that only one in 10 people possess the talent to manage. The better news is that with coaching and development plans, another two in ten exhibit some characteristics of basic managerial talent and can function at a high level.

**7/10** aren't equipped to be effective managers



By investing in training for managers, they feel empowered and have the confidence to support and encourage their teams. In addition, providing them with the supportive tools, such as a reward points pot to appreciate individuals or nudge communications to encourage recognition, allows them to keep their team connected, valued, full of purpose and at their best.

[Click here to see our suggestions on who to recognise in your organisation](#)

# Feedback



When a company undertakes a period of change, it's not only important to be transparent, but also vital to listen.

For many, hybrid working is uncharted territory and requires a togetherness from leaders and employees. Unilaterally imposing an approach shows little regard for the uncertainty and complexity of the situation.

Rather, encourage a two-way dialogue that can help introduce a more considered approach and offer a flexibility to react in a timely and intelligent fashion when the need arises.



## Ways to encourage feedback

- ✓ Introduce a suggestion and ideas box
- ✓ Run regular Townhall sessions
- ✓ Use mini polls to temperature check ideas and mood
- ✓ Invite employees to intimate roundtable discussions



"Are there any quick wins?"

"Any trends emerging, good or bad?"

"What's not working?"

"What's working?"

By implementing easy wins like mini polls or weightier forums such as townhall sessions and roundtable discussions, employees will feel reassured that what they're thinking is being listened to.

To paraphrase a well-known saying, employees not seen, still need to be heard. Getting feedback from everyone gives a balanced and realistic snapshot. A suggestion box in reception, for example, works for those in the office, but not those at home. And the townhall session? Think about how remote workers can still get involved.

But inviting employees to share their experiences is only half the story. It's just as important that feedback is listened and reacted to.

Make a point of summarising and responding to feedback. Not only will employees feel heard it will also strengthen their sense of connection which offers the benefits as outlined above.

# In summary

So, although at this moment the expectation of hybrid working doesn't necessarily correlate with the reality, what we do know is, successful adoption of hybrid working will be influenced by a willingness and ability to navigate this transitional phase with a well-considered plan.

Will this new way of working encounter problems? Inevitably! But by being fully focused on maintaining engagement, creating connections, supporting managers, and facilitating feedback, organisations can successfully lay the foundations for long-term hybrid success. Approached with empathy, hybrid working has the potential to fundamentally shift the way we work, support a better work/life balance, and continue to encourage the collaboration needed for a positive business impact.



For more information on how BI WORLDWIDE can support your employee experience, visit [BIWORLDWIDE.co.uk](https://BIWORLDWIDE.co.uk) or contact us at [enquiries@eu.biworldwide.com](mailto:enquiries@eu.biworldwide.com).

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