

Mastering the Hybrid Work Model: Strategies for Success

The landscape of work has evolved significantly over the past years. This year witnessed a puzzling decision from some CEOs who mandated their employees to return to the office, only to face the repercussions of dissatisfaction, refusal, and resignations from their workforce.

The hybrid workplace emerges as the most practical and sustainable choice for companies – and 74% of companies chose it. Let's explore effective strategies for implementing and thriving in a hybrid work environment.

Emphasise the social aspect of office work

The office should serve as a hub for meaningful interactions, rather than just a place to reply to emails and join virtual meetings. The Microsoft Work Trend Index highlights that 84% of employees are motivated to come to the office for socialising with their colleagues. To make this happen:

Schedule brainstorming sessions and consider inviting guest speakers to

stimulate creativity.

Promote informal outings and team-building activities. These seemingly non-productive activities are valuable investments that foster better relationships among colleagues, ultimately enhancing collaboration and teamwork.

Organise workshops regularly, tailored to employees' interests and needs. These workshops can focus on skill development, such as public speaking, feedback delivery, presentation skills, and improvisation.

Create a comprehensive hybrid work policy

To ensure a smooth transition into the hybrid work model, provide employees with a well-documented policy that outlines the following key aspects:

Rationale behind adopting a hybrid work policy, emphasising benefits like improved work-life balance and enhanced collaboration.

Specify how many days employees are expected to come into the office. Two most popular policies are Flexible Hybrid (company mandates a certain number of days per week or per month to be in-office, most popular being 3 days per week, but employees can choose their in-office and remote work days) and Fixed Hybrid (employees can choose their in-office and remote work days, most popular being Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday).

Preferred communication platforms, including guidelines for using various tools, expected response times, and protocols for after-hours communication.

Meeting guidelines, addressing how meetings should be scheduled and conducted, especially when team members are working remotely.

Equipment and technology provisions for remote work, including details on equipment procurement, maintenance, and usage guidelines.

Office-related information, such as opening hours, holiday availability, and booking procedures for parking lots and meeting rooms.

Implement desk and meeting room booking apps

Efficiently utilising office space is crucial to cost savings. Consider adopting desk and meeting room booking apps like inspace to streamline the process of reserving workspace. Apps often integrate with popular collaboration tools like Microsoft Teams, Slack, Outlook, and Google Calendar, ensuring seamless coordination among employees.

Gather Data for Continuous Improvement

To optimise the hybrid work model, gather data on workspace utilisation, parking availability, and employee satisfaction. This data will help identify areas for improvement and guide decision-making. Conduct periodic Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) surveys to assess employee satisfaction, engagement, and well-being in the hybrid work environment. Keep the surveys concise to maintain high response rates.

Sample eNPS questionnaire questions:

How do you feel about the balance between working remotely and in the office in the current hybrid setup?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do you think the company supports your well-being, including physical and mental health, in the hybrid work environment?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the communication and teamwork within the team, especially between in-office and remote team members?

Have you experienced any challenges or concerns with the hybrid work setup? If so, please describe them.

Are there specific things about the hybrid work arrangement that you think could be improved?

Workspace booking platforms have built-in features like a heatmap and dashboards to help you understand how the space is being used and which spaces are the most popular among employees and which ones are underutilised. Most companies rightsize their portfolio by 40% using a hybrid workspace booking platform.

Improve visibility

How do you coordinate the resources for a team, when you have no idea when / where anyone is going to be working? There is a lot of an unseen challenge that has been stressing out the teams. Having a tool that helps alleviate this issue is no longer an option. In a hybrid world it's critical to be able to provide a great experience, and so it's essential to have insight into where your team will be.

PRO TIP. Team agreements, sometimes known as “working agreements,” clarify expectations so teammates can work more harmoniously no matter where they sit.

Conclusion

The hybrid work model is the future of work, offering a balanced approach that benefits both employees and employers. By prioritising social interactions, creating a clear hybrid workspace policy, implementing efficient booking systems, and collecting data for continuous improvement, companies can successfully navigate this new era of work, ensuring employee satisfaction and productivity in the long run.

Elena Beloshapkova is the CEO of *inspace*, and has been elected Business Woman of the Year by EY (2019).