

The Healthy Hybrid Workplace Toolkit

A Hybrid Future

Offices will never be the same after the pandemic. The increasing use of virtual office applications like Zoom and Slack has permanently altered the workplace. Even after a pandemic, a full return to work is unlikely. Since March 2020, remote labor has increased productivity by 47%¹. A study found that work from home employees spent less time avoiding work² and worked 1.4 more days per month. The benefits of non-office-based work are now too evident to be ignored.

Some companies will become entirely remote after the pandemic. However, remote work has drawbacks.

While remote working has increased productivity, it has also reduced employee engagement, collaboration, and work-life balance.

Unplugging is one of the most difficult aspects of remote work. This is the top obstacle for remote employees, according to research³, followed by cooperation issues and loneliness.

Fully in-office has its problems; fully remote has its problems. This is why companies are adopting a hybrid workplace which allows employees to work when and where they want. This model also allows for team collaboration, both in an onsite and offsite workplace. Companies are implementing a hybrid work model because they recognize the benefits of its blended model. But, like any work environment, it has its drawbacks. Read on and learn how to maintain a healthy hybrid workplace.



A hybrid model allows for team collaboration both in an onsite and offsite workplace



Benefits of a Hybrid Workplace

Successful businesses such as Amazon, Salesforce, Facebook, and Google have already recognized the benefits of a hybrid work model. Managing a hybrid workplace allows your company to take advantage of both remote and in-person collaboration.

Having a hybrid workforce has many advantages, including:

- 1. Boost in Productivity** - Flexible workers benefit from a hybrid workplace, since they can avoid commuting during peak times. They can also focus on tasks without the distractions of a traditional office, and work when they feel most productive, whether that's late at night or early in the morning. Having a good work-life balance makes employees more productive.
- 2. Increased Employee Satisfaction** - Employees are happier when they can work when and where they want. A 2020 SurveyMonkey study found that remote workers were happier than their office-bound counterparts⁷. Taking full control of their schedules has many positive psychological benefits. Hybrid settings can harness these benefits, while still getting the pluses of in-office productivity.
- 3. Reduced Operational Costs** - In a hybrid office, there is little need for row after row of assigned desks. Employers can plan around new occupancy levels to reduce the cost of office space rent, supplies, and other variable costs once they know how many employees will be present at any given time.

Hybrid Workplace by the Numbers

- **83%** of workers said they felt a hybrid work model would be optimal going forward.⁴
- **57%** of employees expect to be in the office 10 days or less each month.⁵
- **98%** believe future meetings will include remote participants.⁵
- **63%** of high-growth companies have already adopted a hybrid work model.⁴
- **40%** of respondents say that they could be productive whether they were onsite or remote.⁴
- **56%** said they would take less money for the ability to work from any location.⁶



7 Tips For Keeping a Healthy Hybrid Workplace

For employers and employees alike, there are many benefits to allowing staff to work remotely. The following are the top seven tips for integrating employee wellness and satisfaction into your hybrid work model.

- 1. Listen to Your Employees** - Make sure to listen and always be ready to make changes based on any issues that may arise during hybrid work transition. If your employees feel like they are heard they will be more likely to be supportive of big organization changes. You can do this by conducting monthly mental health surveys to see if your staff are depressed, lonely, or are facing any other challenges.
- 2. Put Health and Safety First** - The hybrid workplace is an outgrowth of pandemic restrictions. The world is recovering, but everyone should still be encouraged to be vigilant. Always put your employee's health and safety first. If there is a surge of cases in your area, make sure to suspend any onsite work.

Moving to a hybrid workplace model can take a toll on employees; make sure to listen to feedback. Always be on the lookout for trends, because if many remote employees are feeling increasingly isolated⁸, something needs to be done. Having the option of anonymously expressing their feelings about their mental health through surveys is very useful information to make informed decisions. Always put your people first⁹ and it will surely make transition easier and painless.

Never take any chances, conducting biometric screenings will also support their health and wellbeing¹⁰. It will also help to sanitize the office regularly to alleviate employee anxiety. If they see you taking precautions seriously they will be more comfortable returning to the office. Installing sanitizing areas and distributing hygiene kits is a good practice.

Hybrid office models give employees complete control over where and when they do their best work, allowing them to maximize their productivity.



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3. Offer Flexibility and Resources - Give your employees the flexibility to choose their own work schedule. Compromise with setups that are beneficial to both parties. Offer company resources that will make their remote work better. For example, subsidizing internet bills, and letting employees borrow office equipment like printers, laptops, and PCs.

Showing your employees that you are with them every step of the way will boost loyalty and morale. This can be financially, emotionally or professionally. By offering employees resources and flexibility, managers can focus on supporting what's important: human performance¹¹.

4. Launch Health and Wellness Programs - It is crucial to encourage employees to keep fit and healthy. You can create an authentic workplace culture by supporting the wellness of your employees¹². The office can subsidize gym memberships and stock the office pantry with healthy foods. You can send care packages to remote workers so they don't feel left out. This may sound simple, but it has a huge impact. It is also a good idea to spearhead wellness programs that target not just the physical aspect of health, but also improve mental wellbeing¹³.

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5. Go for a Step-By-Step Transition - Haste makes waste. It's been over a year since your employees have adapted to remote working, and the last thing they want is to be immediately thrown into yet another new working environment. It is critical that management supports their employees as they return to work¹⁴.

It is best to adapt a step by step transition to a hybrid working model. Make announcements ahead of time and make the timetable transparent.

Encourage employees to return to the office one day per week to start. This will allow for a much smoother transition. Never implement abrupt work schedules that can disrupt a well-established routine. The pandemic has been challenging enough for all of us, and forcing employees to drop everything and follow a new work schedule may be overwhelming.

6. Enforce Psychological Safety - A culture of safety¹⁵ is one in which no one is afraid of being judged or retaliated against. Leaders are the first line of defense in fostering a mentally healthy workplace. If your company has just recently adopted a hybrid workplace, it can take a toll on your people. Employees should feel safe in voicing their concerns without negative consequences.

Employees who feel safe, seen, heard, and understood are more likely to speak up and get help.

Provide access to employee well-being programs that support the individual needs of all employees in fostering a sense of support and belonging. Encourage open communication between co-workers and managers. Teach the leadership team to spot a distressed employee. Leaders who understand the reality of mental illness can initiate conversations and refer employees to appropriate services.



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7. Practice Transparency - Open communication and transparency are closely related to visibility and accessibility. Adapting a new workplace set-up is a big move. Some employees may feel anxious as they can feel disconnected from conversations that occur organically in-person. Remember, building trust in the workplace¹⁶ is vital in keeping employees engaged and satisfied.

As a leader, keep your team informed about everything, whether it's a positive or negative impact. Give them information that concerns their team and department. Make sure that they are always updated and that all big decisions are discussed with them. This openness is a key component of trust in productive cultures.

Empower your leadership to lead with empathy by providing a structured training series. With Aduro's leadership coaching, management can learn critical skills to help create a positive and productive work environment, regardless of location.



A Hybrid Model: The Future of Work

Global corporations are adopting hybrid work models. This is no surprise. A hybrid workplace saves employees' time, and staff get to enjoy working when and where they want. Employers can also save money on office rent, supplies, and other costs of running a physical office.

However, like any office set-up, it does have its own challenges. A hybrid team requires leadership skills that not all managers possess. Employees who work from home may feel lonely and disconnected from the company, which can affect their job performance and overall health. That's why leaders must be more proactive in ensuring a smooth transition. When transitioning to a hybrid workplace, always be open and flexible. Prioritizing employee health and safety will make them feel more secure upon returning to the office. Strive for a compromise that benefits both parties.

Employees will feel safer returning to work if you prioritize their health and safety.

Remember to support employee wellness during transition to foster a genuine workplace culture. It is also best to transition to a hybrid working model gradually. Make announcements and schedules as far in advance as possible. Remember, leaders create a mentally healthy workplace. Employees may struggle to adjust to a new hybrid workplace, so transparency is encouraged. The move to a hybrid workplace model may have its challenges but by following these tips you can ensure a smoother and more efficient transition.

Contact Aduro for holistic employee wellness programs that support hybrid, remote and office employees and leaders.



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