

## 2 hidden traps of managing hybrid teams

Based on an article by **Nenad Lazarevic**, published on forbes.com in May 2021

In 2021 and beyond, hybrid work is poised to be the darling of the modern workforce. **82%** of company leaders have said they will allow employees to work remotely some of the time when employees return to the office. According to Google Trends data, interest in the search term “hybrid work” has quadrupled between January and May 2021.

Any leader will likely attest to the challenges of managing a remote workforce. But managing a hybrid team is arguably even more complex. How do you land on the most effective hybrid structure? How do you keep employees connected when they are in and out of the office?

### What Is Hybrid Work?

A hybrid workforce is, as the name suggests, a combination of remote and in-office employees. People may split their time between the office and their homes. Or distinct segments of a team may be exclusively remote, while others are entirely office-based. Whatever structure you ultimately choose, hybrid work promises the flexibility of remote work with the interconnectedness of office-based teams. What more could you want? There are, however, traps to navigate along the way.

### Trap No. 1: Believing Culture Will Look After Itself

Culture is part art and part science. It’s a constantly volatile state influenced by leadership, recruitment, work environment, values and how people nurture relationships beyond work itself.

A hybrid work structure can cause disconnect within teams. Cliques and divisions may form between in- and out-of-office staff. Naturally, the people we work with most often are the ones with whom we tend to form the closest bonds.

**A clear, compelling mission, vision and set of goals are still the starting points for company culture in a hybrid world.** Instilling a shared set of behaviours in team members becomes even more critical. In other words, there shouldn’t be one set of creeds for internal staff and one for remote employees.

Leaders should also place **greater emphasis on fairness and accountability.** When working at home, employees need assurances that they have the same opportunities as those in the office counterparts. And in-office staff need to have confidence that remote employees are being held to the same level of accountability. Establishing activities and communication lines that strengthen bonds between remote and office-based staff is important as well.

### Trap No. 2: Rigidly Sticking To A Hybrid Structure

What is the perfect structure for hybrid work? Is it two days in the office and three days from home? Should it be three days at home and two in the office? The answer is that there is no one right correct structure for everyone — nor is there a fixed one.



**A hybrid structure should be fluid — ever-assessed and ever-changing — so you can continually adjust to find the right fit for your people and company.**

Just as remote work was before it, hybrid work is a living experiment. As with any experiment, there are assumptions to challenge, results to interpret and learnings to be had. So **don't expect the hybrid structure you start with to look the same years or even months from now.**

### **Hybrid Work: More Than Just A Middle Ground**

Hybrid work allows you to offer employees the flexibility and perks of remote work while maintaining the interconnectedness and foundation of a centralised headquarters.

Hybrid work is more than just a solution for the sake of compromise. It offers leaders the ability to **pinpoint how and where employees do their best work and structure a working environment to match those observations.**