

3 perspectives on hybrid working

Based on an article by **David DeFilippo**, published on reworked.com in May 2021

The onset of the global pandemic forced overnight change in acute and unplanned ways, leaving organisations, managers and teams to work out how to maintain productivity and engage employees. The pace and scale of the shift to remote work presented issues including workforce productivity, employee wellness, how to keep remote teams connected, the ability to innovate and problem-solve effectively and discussion of hybrid work and why working from home is here to stay.

To clarify thinking and make better decisions about what's next, it's helpful to view the issues from three perspectives: **employees, managers and organisations.**

Employee Perspective

Recent survey data overwhelmingly suggests that employees do not see working remotely as a *temporary* solution in response to the pandemic. To them it's a permanent future option.

70% of employees, including those in leadership positions, **prefer the hybrid work option** over returning to the office full time.

30% of employees said they would change organisations if **forced to return to the office full time.**

47% of employees report feeling anxious about post-pandemic work plans.

Only **32% of employees** report post-pandemic work plans are being clearly communicated.

Management Perspective

70% of managers want their teams back in the office.

Traditional command-and-control leaders have found it challenging to shift to remote management due to the trust and empowerment required. However the need is clear: **Employees who report feeling supported are 3.5x more satisfied and engaged** with their organisations.

Organisational Perspective

While employees and managers work through the newness of remote work, organisations are both learning and adjusting their practices. Here are some of the changes emerging:

20% increase in roles advertised as remote eligible.

66% of organisations are evaluating the redesign of physical space to better accommodate hybrid work.

40% increase in (virtual) meeting time due to having to formally schedule participants.

The Way Forward for Work

As the economic recovery continues, organisations will feel increased pressure to attract, retain and engage talent. Early indicators suggest that organisations should strongly consider employee preferences for a flexible approach to working.



Managers who regularly guide and coach employees are the critical link to establish new employee norms and build organisational practices. Historically, management often focused on the amount of time that a person is in the office rather than results and outcomes. The former implies discomfort with autonomy whereas the latter reinforces trust and empowerment.

Here are some key management practices to help managers move their teams from traditional office working (version 1.0), to 2.0 for today's hybrid workforce:

Workplace Issue	Version 1.0 – Traditional office model	Version 2.0 – new Hybrid model
Meetings	Agenda-driven and manager-led	Rotating leader/chair Virtual standups Multimodal participation Planned informal meetings
Time Management	Traditional 9-to-5 hours	Organise time around tasks (collaboration, email, thinking time) Build in breaks and wellness times Establish "Do Not Disturb" times
Task Management	Work until task is complete	Use sprints to focus on tasks (25 minutes of work, 5 minute break)
Problem Solving	100% in-person session	Sessions designed to invite contributions from everyone Multimodal participation
Providing Feedback	Manager as single source of feedback	Multiple sources and perspectives Employee feedback
Team Communication	In-person updates	Multiple modes of communication Regular listening time with direct reports Less hierarchy in listening (skip seniority levels)
Wellness	Health and wellness is separate from work	Managers' focus on empathy Frequent pulse surveys

The integration of employee, manager and organisational perspectives and practices provides the opportunity to migrate from our pre-pandemic ways of working to a future state that puts a **greater value on employee preferences, manager acumen and workforce engagement.**