Managing the Hybrid Workplace

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Example of Flexibility

Flexibility can mean different things, there is no one-size-fits-all solution given the variety of roles, work requirements and business needs.

Guidance includes flexibility regarding:

- **Site**
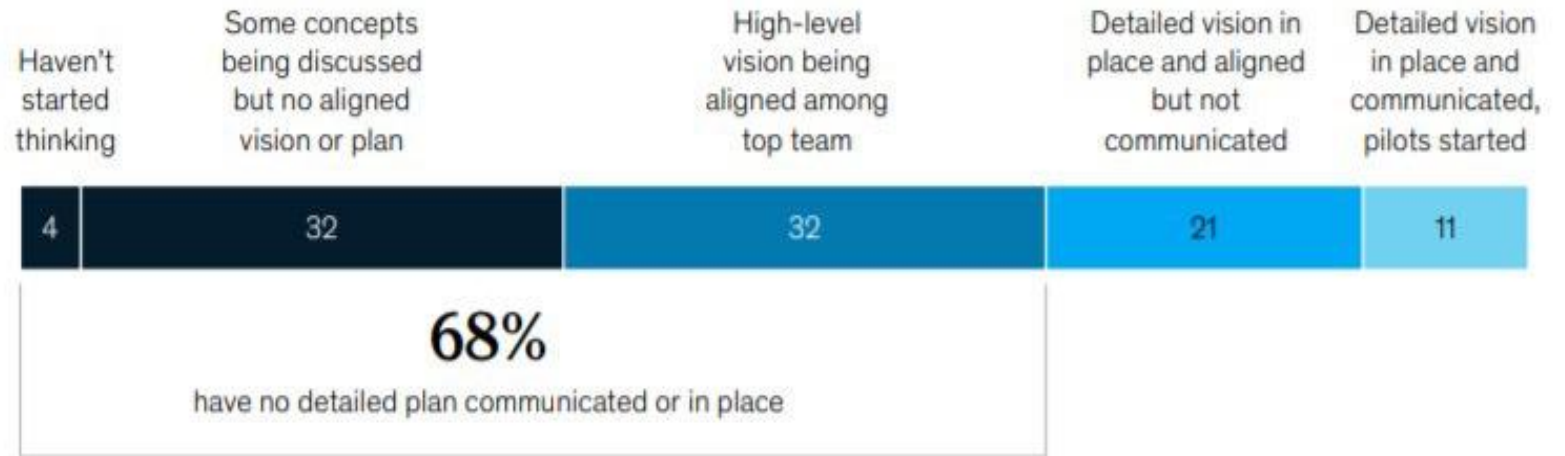- **Hours**
- **Geography**

Vision for Hybrid Work

- Although nine out of ten organizations don't yet have a detailed vision in place for hybrid work, executives envision a hybrid model going forward

- Only one in ten organizations have begun communicating and piloting that vision

Most organizations don't yet have a detailed vision in place for hybrid work.

State of post-COVID-19 return-to-office planning,[1] % respondents

Haven't started thinking	Some concepts being discussed but no aligned vision or plan	High-level vision being aligned among top team	Detailed vision in place and aligned but not communicated	Detailed vision in place and communicated, pilots started
4	32	32	21	11

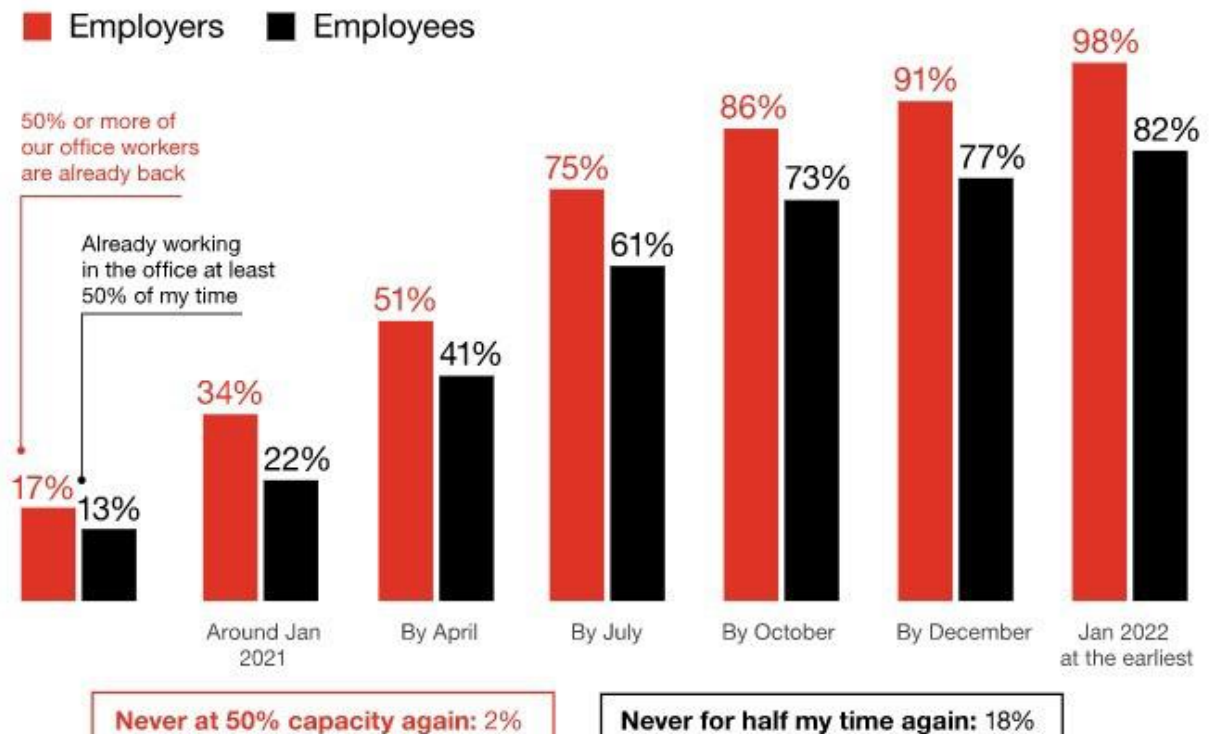**68%** have no detailed plan communicated or in place

[1]Question: What is the state of your post-COVID-19 return-to-office planning?

McKinsey & Company

Executives are ready to ramp up return to the office in 2021; employees say not so fast

- Executives expect to return to the office faster than employees.

- **Returning to the office won't be simple.** The rollout of vaccines is raising confidence in returning to the hybrid office, but uncertainties remain about how to bring employees back safely, as well as how to align workforce scheduling with school re-openings or when to resume business travel.
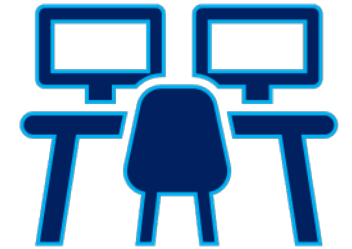
Employees expect the return to the office to take place more slowly

■ Employers   ■ Employees

50% or more of our office workers are already back

Already working in the office at least 50% of my time

	Around Jan 2021	By April	By July	By October	By December	Jan 2022 at the earliest
Employers	17%	34%	51%	75%	86%	91%	98%
Employees	13%	22%	41%	61%	73%	77%	82%

Never at 50% capacity again: 2%   **Never for half my time again: 18%**

Flexjobs Survey, September 2020

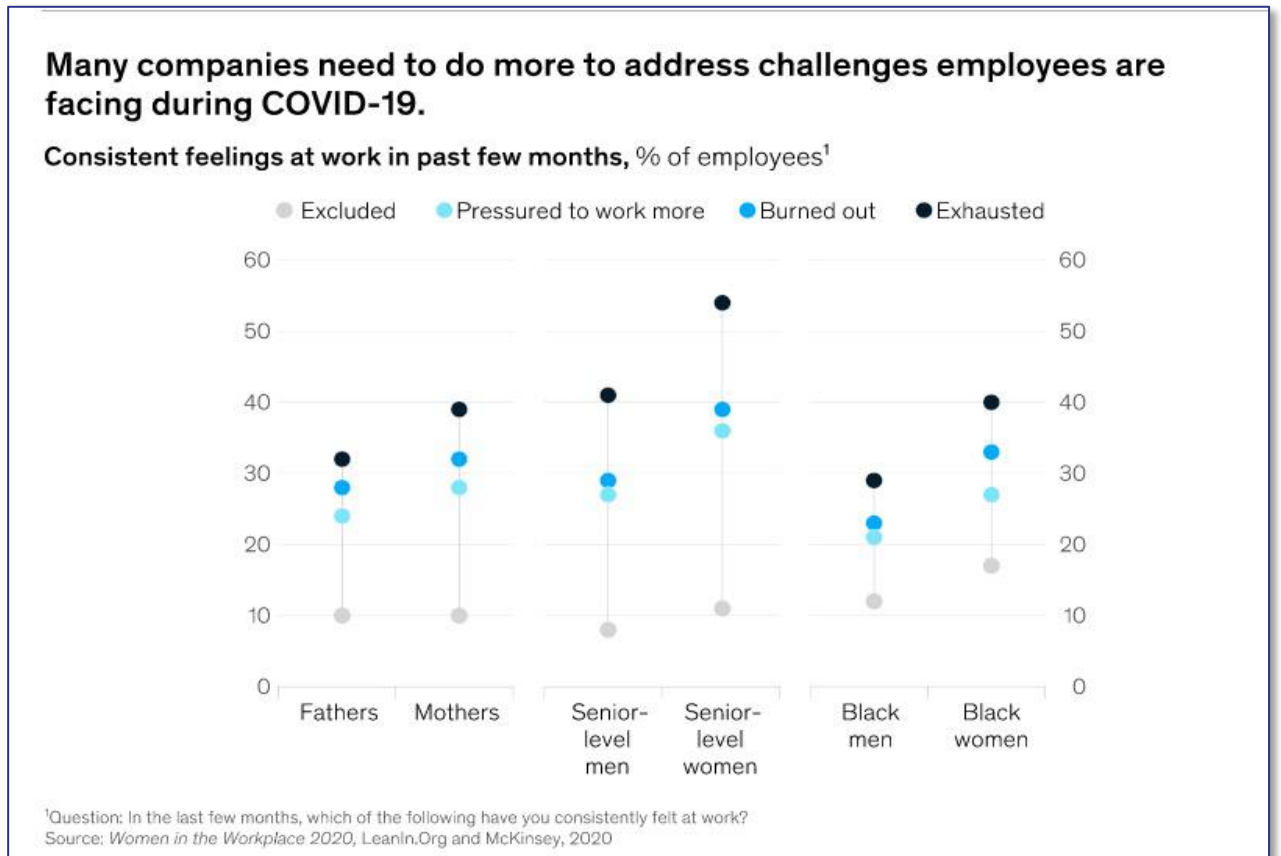For all the positives that remote work has brought, there are people who miss the office. Specifically:

- 49% said they miss seeing their colleagues

- 14% stated that they miss water cooler chats

- 11% reporting they were lonely

- 7% cited "distracted" as a reason for missing the office

- 12% worried about the impact remote work would have on their career

- 20% of workers say they find it difficult to "unplug" when they work from home

- 37% of respondents said that they miss "nothing" about the office, and only 4% would prefer to return to the traditional office full-time

https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/survey-productivity-balance-improve-during-pandemic-remote-work/

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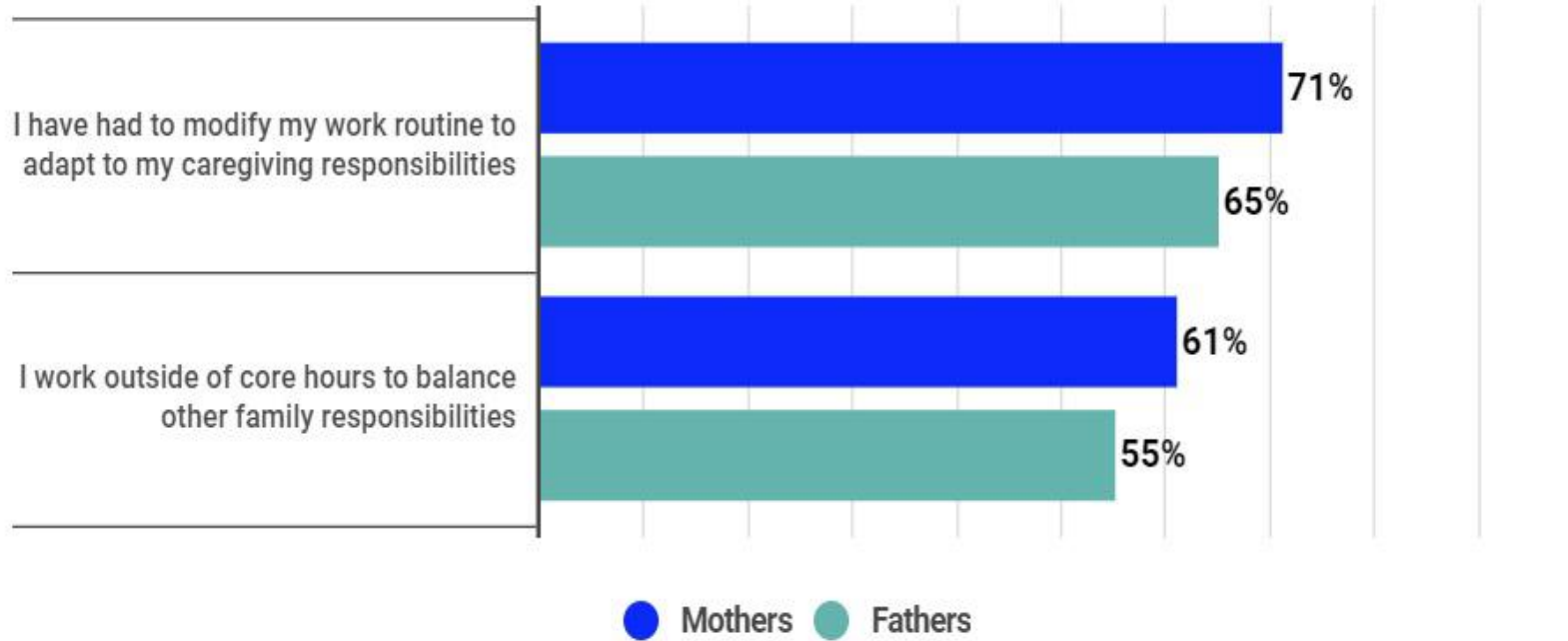METRO   *Moving forward together*

McKinsey & Company data: Women

- In the Women in the Workplace study, conducted in partnership with LeanIn.Org, it was found that the effects of the COVID-19 crisis have exacerbated gender disparities and their implications for women at work, especially for mothers, female senior leaders, and Black women across America.

Many companies need to do more to address challenges employees are facing during COVID-19.

Consistent feelings at work in past few months, % of employees[1]

● Excluded   ● Pressured to work more   ● Burned out   ● Exhausted

[1]Question: In the last few months, which of the following have you consistently felt at work?
Source: *Women in the Workplace 2020*, LeanIn.Org and McKinsey, 2020

Parents' role

Impact of Covid-19 on parents' work routine

	Mothers	Fathers
I have had to modify my work routine to adapt to my caregiving responsibilities	71%	65%
I work outside of core hours to balance other family responsibilities	61%	55%

● Mothers ● Fathers

CURRENT WORK ENVIRONMENT

Exclusively remote	38%
Mostly remote and going to a physical workplace on occasion	24%
Mostly in a physical workplace and working remotely on occasion	12%
Exclusively in a physical workplace	26%

Of those working remotely in some capacity, 91% report that they spend time working from home as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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2021 Work Trend Index: Annual Report

Flexible work is here to stay

Employees want the best of both worlds: over 70 percent of workers want flexible remote work options to continue, while over 65 percent are craving more in-person time with their teams. To prepare, 66 percent of business decision makers are considering redesigning physical spaces to better accommodate hybrid work environments. The data is clear: extreme flexibility and hybrid work will define the post-pandemic workplace.

Leaders are out of touch with employees and need a wake-up call

Many business leaders are faring better than their employees. Sixty-one percent of leaders say they are "thriving" right now — 23 percentage points higher than those without decision-making authority. They also report building stronger relationships with colleagues (+11 percentage points) and leadership (+19 percentage points), earning higher incomes (+17 percentage points), and taking all or more of their allotted vacation days (+12 percentage points).

https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work

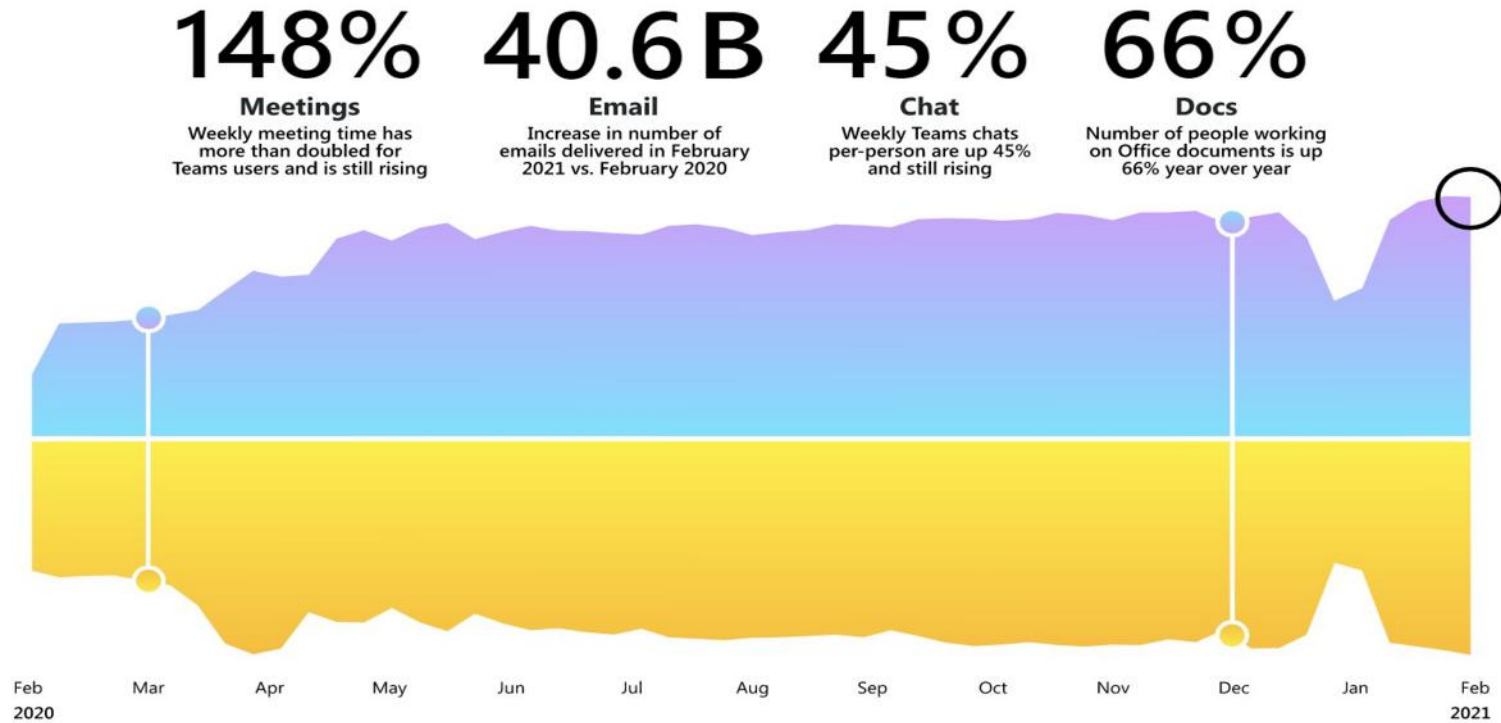King County
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2021 Work Trend Index: Annual Report

High productivity is masking an exhausted workforce

Self-assessed productivity has remained the same or higher for many employees over the past year, but at a human cost.

148%
Meetings
Weekly meeting time has more than doubled for Teams users and is still rising

40.6 B
Email
Increase in number of emails delivered in February 2021 vs. February 2020

45%
Chat
Weekly Teams chats per-person are up 45% and still rising

66%
Docs
Number of people working on Office documents is up 66% year over year

Feb 2020 Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb 2021

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Microsoft Data

- One in five global survey respondents say their employer doesn't care about their work-life balance.

- Fifty-four percent feel overworked.

- Thirty-nine percent feel exhausted.

- Trillions of productivity signals from Microsoft 365 quantify the precise digital exhaustion workers are feeling.

Communication

- **Utilize asynchronous communication** – There will be a temptation to send out messages, schedule video calls, or arrange presentations at synchronous times immediately. You might expect that members of the remote team should answer your messages as quickly as someone in the office. But that probably won't be the case. On their end, they might have problems accessing information or keeping up with meetings and conversations.

- To prevent this, follow the basic rules of asynchronous communication:
  - Constantly over-communicate with context
  - Reduce the length of meetings and eliminate unnecessary ones
  - Set agendas beforehand and ask for availability before scheduling anything
  - Record meetings and document work

- WSDOT to develop a written meeting purpose statement for every meeting (not just an agenda)

https://hive.com/blog/what-is-hybrid-team/

2021 Work Trend Index: Annual Report

Gen Z is at risk and will need to be re-energized

An overlooked demographic appears to be suffering right now: Gen Z. Sixty percent of this generation — those between the ages of 18 and 25 — say they are merely surviving or flat-out struggling right now.

Gen Z is struggling more than other generations

The last year has been more challenging for Gen Z in many ways — from bringing new ideas to the table, to simply feeling engaged or excited about work.
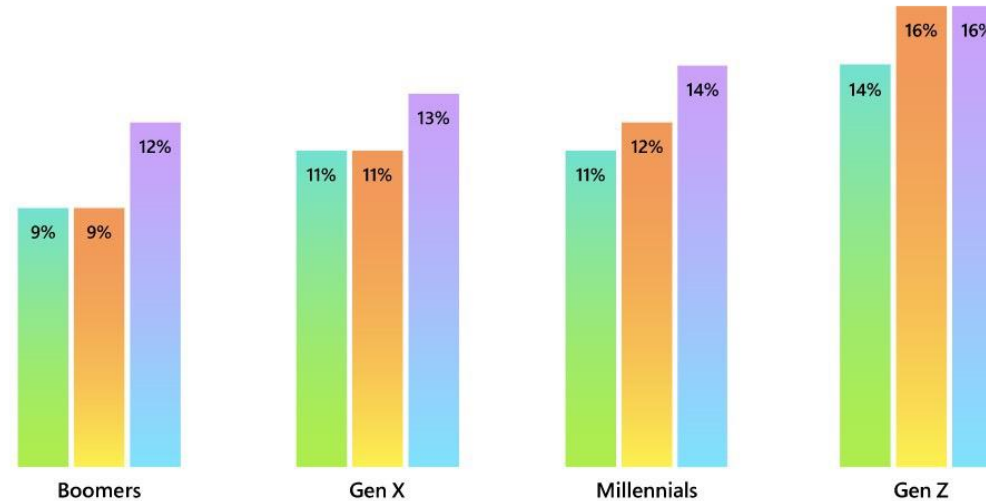
The Work Trend Index survey was conducted by an independent research firm, Edelman Data x Intelligence, among 31,092 full-time employed or self-employed workers across 31 markets between January 12, 2021 to January 25, 2021.

Boomers: 9%, 9%, 12%
Gen X: 11%, 11%, 13%
Millennials: 11%, 12%, 14%
Gen Z: 14%, 16%, 16%

Gen Z is More Likely to Say They're Struggling than Older Generations on These Aspects at Work

- Being able to bring new ideas to the table
- Getting a word in during conference calls / meetings
- Feeling engaged or excited about work
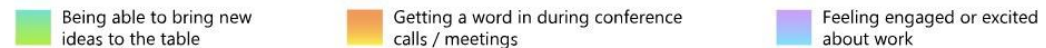
What does it mean to be a manager today

- To be successful in this new environment, managers must lead with empathy

- Check in with your Employee Assistance Program or HR to confirm their availability and to coordinate support for employees

https://hbr.org/2021/04/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-manager-today

2021 Work Trend Index: Annual Report

Talent is everywhere in a hybrid work world

One of the brightest sides of the shift to remote work is that it widens the talent marketplace. Remote job postings on LinkedIn increased more than five times during the pandemic, and people are taking notice.

Forty-six percent of remote workers surveyed are planning to move to a new location this year because they can now work remotely.

There are challenges with out-of-state telework:

- Taxes
- Labor law
- Liability
- Perception

https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work

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Microsoft 2021 Work Trend Index: Annual Report

What's at stake?

- **As the world opens up, more employees are evaluating their next move**

- Research shows that 41 percent of the global workforce is likely to consider leaving their current employer within the next year, with 46 percent planning to make a major pivot or career transition

The way forward

- Create a plan to empower people for extreme flexibility

- Invest in space and technology to bridge the physical and digital worlds

- Combat digital exhaustion from the top

- Prioritize rebuilding social capital and culture

- Rethink employee experience to compete for the best and most diverse talent

Employees are at an inflection point

41% of employees are considering leaving their current employer this year and 46% say they're likely to move because they can now work remotely. Your approach to hybrid will impact who stays and who goes.
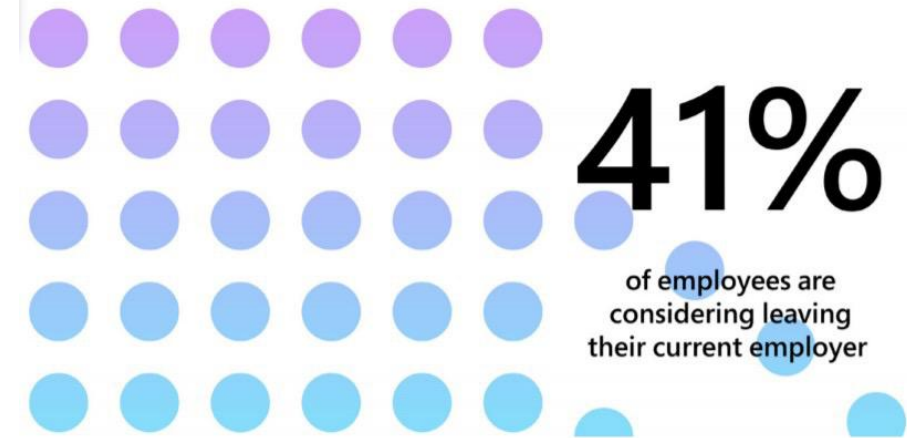
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https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work

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What's the right mix of remote work for your organization?

- Are you ready to consider a work from anywhere (WFA) in the USA?

- How can you maintain a strong company culture?

- Which HR policies will need to be updated?

- What kinds of new training will need to be offered?

https://hbr-org.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/hbr.org/amp/2021/03/what-is-your-organizations-long-term-remote-work-strategy

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Variations of the hybrid model

REMOTE-FIRST
Many leaders are choosing to go remote-first, meaning that their operations will closely mirror those of a fully remote company, with a few exceptions. Notably, most will keep their offices as space for employees to work from. Some also won't allow the same flexibility to every employee, meaning that they may require some employees to continue coming to the office if their job requires their physical presence.

OFFICE-OCCASIONAL
The idea here is that employees come into the office a few times a week. This model uses the office to blend in-person collaboration and solo work. Depending on the company's needs, this can be quite a loose policy (e.g., employees are instructed to come into the office two days a week of their choice), or there could be more firm guidelines (e.g., employees are expected to work from the office every Monday).

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Variations of the hybrid model

OFFICE-FIRST, REMOTE ALLOWED
Another option is to keep both the office and remote work but designate the office as the primary place for working.

This was a common setup prior to COVID-19; companies would have a small percentage of their workforce be remote and the rest worked from one main office space.

https://builtin.com/remote-work/hybrid-work-model

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How to sustain company culture in a hybrid work model

- One of the most important elements of effective leadership is when <u>leaders are perceived as present and accessible</u>. This is harder to accomplish virtually, but even more important in a hybrid model. Visibility is also key—both in terms of leaders being visible and in terms of how they keep team members central.

- Closely related to visibility and accessibility is the need for plenty of open communication and transparency. As a leader, be sure you're keeping people in the loop, sharing constantly and making a point to ensure your team members are in the know about as much as possible. This openness is a primary ingredient of trust.

- Create employee engagement possibilities during work hours (as opposed to non-working hours).

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Reimagine Hiring

- Hiring is among the most crucial processes to reconsider in the hybrid world.

- During the pandemic, nearly two-thirds of organizations have moved in-person recruiting events and activities to remote settings, but only one in three have reimagined hiring from the ground up.

Most organizations have changed their hiring processes, but leading companies have reimagined them entirely.

Modifications to hiring process,[1] % respondents

- ● We have not changed our hiring process
- ● Each in-person activity or event in our process is now being held remotely
- ● We have fundamentally rethought or reimagined our hiring process

Leaders

6	53	41

Middlers

6	77	16

Laggards

82	18

Note: Figures may not sum to 100%, because of rounding.
[1]Question: To what extent have you modified your hiring process? Respondents answered on a 5-point scale (5 = significantly increased; 4 = somewhat increased; 3 = no change; 2 = somewhat decreased; 1 = significantly decreased). Those answering 1 or 2 are leaders, n = 58; those answering 3 are middlers, n = 31; and those answering 4 or 5 are laggards, n = 11.

McKinsey & Company

Virtual onboarding

The goal of virtual employee onboarding is the same as <u>in-person onboarding</u>. It helps your new hire get familiar with your company and its mission and values, makes them feel welcomed and included, facilitates connections with the team and provides them with the tools and training they need to start making an impact sooner.

The only difference is that virtual employee onboarding is accomplished through video conferences, webinars, pre-recorded videos, text resources, instant messenger and interactive online training that new hires can access through their desktop, laptop or mobile device.

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Employee engagement

- Involve employees in decision making

- Use small group discussions

- Define synchronous vs. asynchronous meetings

- Develop written purposes and outcome for each synchronous meeting

- Employee appreciation

- Managers check in

- Weekly small group chats, communication weekly with company personnel

- Birthday celebrations

- Water cooler get togethers

- Virtual ice-breakers

- Virtual Town Hall and having a Q and A

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Free services

Lead	Lead you through every step to put a program into place
Assess	Assess potential and necessary steps for customized program delivery
Assist	Assist with overcoming concerns
Develop	Develop custom presentations and marketing materials
Consult on	Consult on technology needs
Develop	Develop policies, procedures and agreements
Train	Train managers and employees
Provide	Provide evaluation guidelines and strategies

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