

Tackling 4 lesser-addressed concerns of hybrid working

Providing the best of both worlds, hybrid work models have emerged as the most ideal solution for both employers and employees. Employers, however, remain skeptical.



Image source: CoWomen from [Pexels](#)

“I anticipate that in 2022 we’ll see the mass adoption of formal hybrid work models across industries,” says David Seinker, founder and CEO of The Business Exchange whose serviced office offering has been campaigning for the adoption of hybrid work models from even before the pandemic accelerated a rethink of work models.

Hybrid work offers the flexibility of working from home some of the time and the chance to be in the same space as colleagues for much-needed collaboration and networking.

There are a number of factors that need to be carefully considered and planned for to ensure a productive, sustainable and effective hybrid work model. Seinker unpacks four of the lesser-addressed concerns.

What are the best practices for performance management in a hybrid model?

For too long, in too many industries, performance was judged and assessed – at least in part – by how an employee behaves in the workplace, even if this was an unconscious bias on the part of managers. The one who spoke up the most in meetings was often seen as more proactive than the team member who was just silently getting on with their job.

“Hybrid models force us to re-evaluate exactly how performance is managed, and that’s a good thing. In a hybrid model, the outcome and output are the main criteria for measuring performance, making for fairer evaluation across the board,” says Seinker.

There is no room for micromanagement in a hybrid model, which requires a managerial mindset that prioritises and appreciates that properly supporting and empowering employees eventually eliminates the need to constantly “check up” on team members.

How do we avoid proximity bias?

Depending on the parameters of a company’s hybrid model, it is likely to happen that some employees will spend more time in the office than others, which raises concerns about an “out of sight, out of mind” situation emerging. “It’s crucial to ensure that everyone is treated fairly, irrespective of the number of times they are in the office. This calls for sufficient feedback loops and very transparent communication models,” Seinker says.

Can tech exhaustion be avoided in a hybrid model?

“Zoom fatigue” as it’s been dubbed, has become the default explanation for the tech exhaustion so many employees claim to be suffering from at the moment. Which raises fair concerns around whether formal hybrid work models will just further exacerbate this weariness as teams effectively remain dispersed across locations at any given time.

“A video call in and of itself is not the problem but rather what appears to have become an obsessive need to have meetings, possibly as a means of ‘showing’ that you’re working while remote,” Seinker suggests. “The solution is to use the hybrid model as the perfect opportunity to also assess the value and suitability of the tools we use to ensure they are in fact making our jobs easier.”

The digital tools we use should assist us in getting work done, not be the cause of our anxiety or fatigue. “That should be the long and the short of it,” Seinker adds.

How should the physical space be adapted for hybrid work?

When the office isn’t the default space where work gets done, a lot more consideration should go into the design of the space to ensure it is one that fosters connection, collaboration, creativity and innovation.

“Employees must want to be in the space and feel excited about leaving their remote workspace to come to a place that prioritises form over function. Or as the Harvard Business Review puts it, ‘less office cubicle and more cafe lounge’,” Seinker shares.

A McKinsey & Company article reminds us that “once in a generation (if that), we have the opportunity to reimagine how we work”, citing the Industrial Revolution, World War II and the proliferation of personal computers as some of the key drivers of change in this space. The piece goes on to argue that we are at another such watershed moment to reimagine how we work and this time it’s the hybrid work model driving the transformation.