

Master the Hybrid Workplace Model: Catapult Your Company to New Heights in 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic ushered in a new era of remote work, and that era is here to stay. Fifty-nine percent of U.S. workers want to keep working from home as much as they can once the pandemic is over, according to a Gallup poll.

To keep teams working at a distance, managers and leaders will need to master the hybrid workplace.

In this eBook, you'll learn how:

- Remote work has changed the way we do business - often for the better.
- Approaching hybrid leadership effectively impacts business results.
- Hybrid team cultures are built deliberately - not by accident.
- Choosing the right partners can make all the difference.



Remote Work by the Numbers

The COVID-19 pandemic did not invent remote work, but its pressures have changed how companies use remote work and engage remote workers.

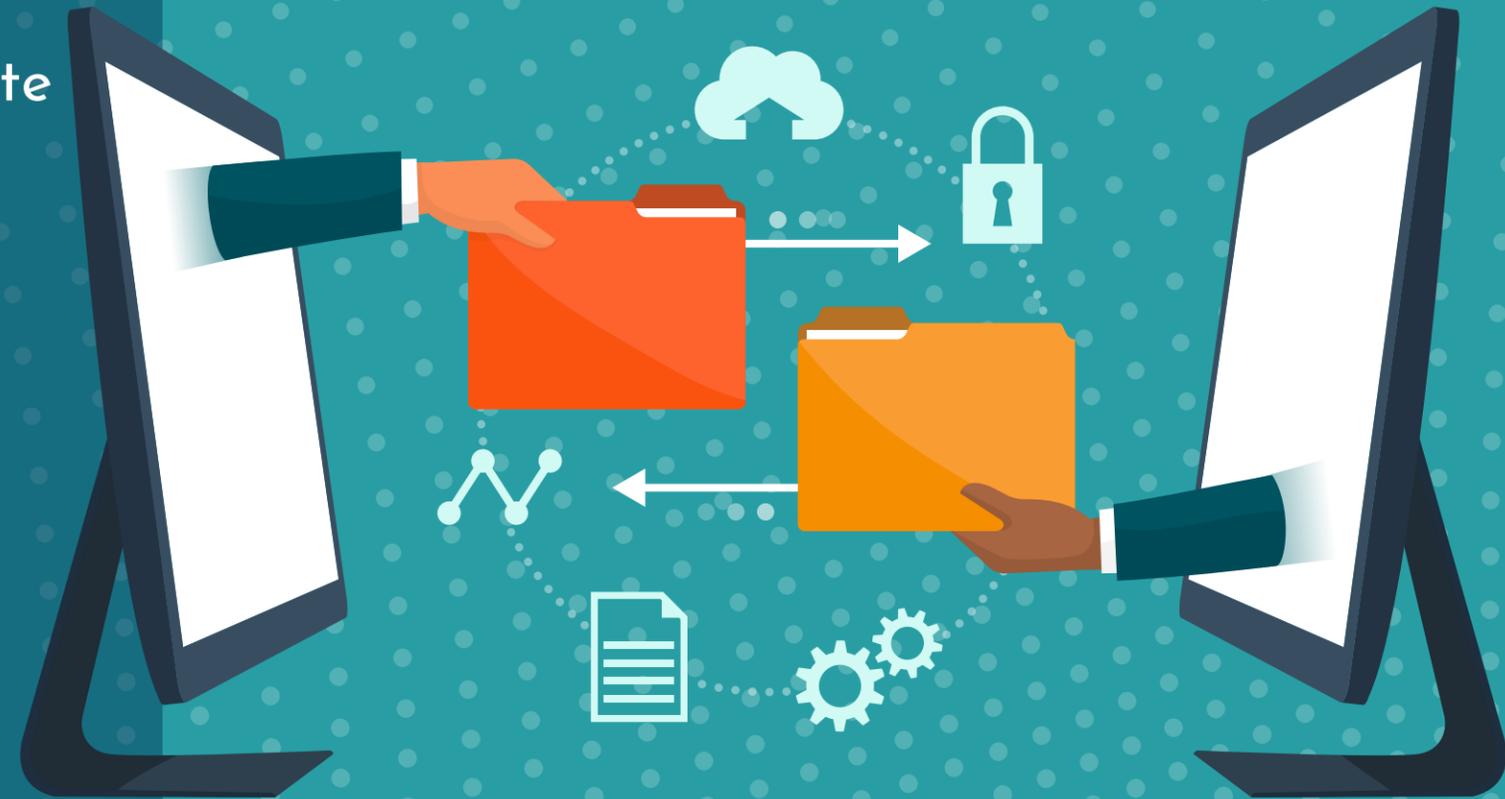
- About **43%** of workers say they work in separate places from the rest of their team “at least some of the time.”
- Engaging workers’ strengths makes them **15% more** engaged at work.



How Hybrid Teams Help Businesses

Remote work has helped workers stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Properly managed, remote teams can help businesses, too:

- When coached effectively, hybrid teams are **29% more profitable**.
- Hybrid workers are **72% less likely** to quit than non-hybrid teams.
- By using hybrid work to double the number of employees who say they can “do what they do best” every day, businesses could see customer engagement rise by 8%, profitability rise by 14% and safety incidents drop by 46%.



Best Practices for Leading Hybrid Teams

Hybrid teams focus on the same work, but they have different needs when it comes to leadership. To lead a hybrid team effectively:

- Create clear guidelines and expectations for hybrid team performance.
- Build bridges and promote a sense of “we’re all in this together.”
- Encourage teams to innovate, explore, and communicate results.
- Connect with team members and connect team members to one another.
- Rethink hiring to build stronger teams.



Build a Hybrid Team Culture

Each team has its own culture and norms, and hybrid teams are no exception. Because these teams are split between in-person and remote work, their norms develop differently than entirely in-person teams.

Help your team build an engaging, productive team culture by:

- Talking about culture. Ask team members what they want to keep and what they need to adapt to a hybrid environment.
- Set norms regarding work hours, including end of day. While technology makes it possible to communicate round the clock, it can also wreak havoc on work-life balance - ultimately undermining your team culture.



Generating Inclusivity

One challenge of building hybrid teams is to foster team cohesion. Without it, workers can develop an “us” versus “them” mentality, depending on whether they’re mostly remote or mostly in-house.

Building an inclusive hybrid team requires more than simply assigning people to the same project or set of tasks. It also requires conscious development of team culture and actively breaking down barriers that might otherwise encourage cliques to form.



How to Promote “Us,” Not “Them”

When teams are split, team members are more likely to identify with the groups they spend the most time with. For those in the office, this may mean assuming that remote team members are less productive; for remote workers, the opposite assumption may form.

To keep your team thinking of itself as a unit:

- Emphasize inclusion of all team members, regardless of location. For instance, hold all meetings via

video conference, even if some team members are in the office together.

- Set common goals and encourage collaboration on those goals.
- Encourage transparency with project management tools, regular check-ins, and other ways for team members to see what everyone is working on and how they're progressing.



Encouraging Innovation and Transparency

Some remote work challenges, like communication and team engagement, have been with us since before the pandemic. The pandemic adds another layer of challenges, like helping workers put aside their stress and worry about health and safety to focus on work.



Embrace Psychological Safety

A sense of psychological safety on a team promotes innovation, encourages engagement, and reduces turnover, whether the team is in-person, remote or both.

To build your team's sense of psychological safety:

- Make supporting your employees your number-one goal as their leader.
- Use one-on-one conversations to learn more about your team's concerns and the kinds of support they need.
- Allow workers to vent frustrations without fear of reprisal. Make it clear that you want to hear about problems so you can fix them, not so you can punish those who raised the issues.



Seeing Your Team

Feeling “seen” can be difficult for hybrid workers, especially when they’re not in the office. A lack of communication can lead to less engagement, lowered productivity, and confusion among your team about the work to be done.

In one poll, about half of hybrid workers stated that they’re often confused about what needs to be done at work and why. When workers feel confused or isolated, their performance declines - up to 21% in some cases.

Strengths-based coaching, regular check-ins, and good remote communications practices can all help team members feel seen.



Communicate Effectively Online

Online communication varies from in-person communication, but it is no less effective when done well. To improve your team's ability to communicate even when they're separated:

- Set norms for communication. For instance, decide as a team whether you'll always hit "reply all" on every email or acknowledge every message received.
- Choose the channels for communication and set guidelines for their use. Options include phone calls, email, messaging apps like Slack, video calls and other media.
- Use these tools to reach out to team members, as well as receive information from them. A brief daily check-in, for example, can build team cohesion and help team members feel engaged.



Building Your Team

When businesses offer both in-person and remote options, they access a much larger pool of talent. Candidates no longer must be local to the business; they can work anywhere with a reliable internet connection.

A larger candidate pool calls for clearer, more specific criteria. In addition to the technical skills required for the job, consider:

- Soft skills like communication, a commitment to lifelong learning, time management, and the ability to self-direct work.
- Experience with remote work tools or the willingness to learn how to use these tools.
- How well the candidate communicates via remote means.



Work With a Staffing Partner

In the remote work era, a staffing partner's assistance can be more valuable than ever.

Your staffing partner can:

- Evaluate candidates for their ability to work on a hybrid team, as well as necessary core skills.
- Connect you with qualified talent, regardless of geographic location.
- Help you create and execute a staffing plan that incorporates your organization's best practices for hybrid work.



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