PAWLIK

HYBR +ID

HYBRID WORK

Ten proactive strategies
for the hybrid future

November 2021

Contents

Dear Reader,

As a consequence of the pandemic, we've all gained experience with adapting to home office environments. And, as recent studies show, working remotely is here to stay. It is therefore important to determine what companies and managers across all sectors can learn from this experience and how, looking forward, they can apply it to the world of work.

Those who believe they can continue as they have in the past, shifting only once in a while to online or home office platforms, are mistaken. Hybrid work presents us all – and managers in particular – with major challenges. Given that no two employees are the same and that the motives driving them in their work vary, there will be differences in how they respond to in-office and home office environments. Accordingly, managers will need to respond with empathy in providing solutions that suit specific needs. Corporate culture also plays an important role here. How do you create a sense of belonging among colleagues when most of them are working remotely? What do you need to introduce into your corporate culture? In short, what can you do to make sure EVERYONE feels comfortable and thus grow as a team?

Stable technical infrastructures and the tools for asynchronous online collaboration are equally vital to ensuring that employees can work everywhere and anywhere. In addition, companies should also consider the extent to which their office space needs to be adapted to a hybrid work model.

As we all prepare to embark on what is bound to be an exciting journey, let us take the first step together!

YOUR PAWLIK CONSULTANTS TEAM

The new normal

Up until March 2020, *working from home* (WFH) and *working from anywhere* (WFA) were niche concepts – and then the coronavirus came along. It's now clear that flexible work scenarios are going to be the new normal, even after the pandemic comes to an end. Nevertheless, we're also seeing growing fatigue with working in home-office. People miss being able to see their favorite colleagues, enjoying shared lunch breaks, and they miss those short chats at the coffee machine.

Surprisingly, *digital natives* are more likely to say they could use a digital detox (the polar opposite of being online) every once in a while. They express a desire to engage in "digi-log" work, which involves a mix of digital and analogue labor. In order to make this a reality, companies, managers and HR departments will need to develop models tailored to this purpose in their organization. Indeed, the future of work is going to be hybrid. In other words, it's going to involve a fluid mixture of in-office and remote work. And this will facilitate ambidexterity in how we work, allowing new aspects to emerge without letting go of tried-and-true elements. Our key task at this point is to gain a full understanding of the respective advantages which, in combination, form the benchmark for hybrid work.

In search of a new benchmark – What are the advantages of in-office vs. remote work?

The advantages of in-office work

EQUALITY There are many jobs that can be carried out remotely, but others require almost constant on-site presence. A wholesale return to in-office work can also help prevent situations in which employees feel they are part of what might be perceived to be an unequal, two-tiered system.

FOCUS Having a structured workday at the office facilitates the capacity to concentrate on one's work and requires less self-driven motivation.

APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING Being able to interact directly with one another means employees are more likely to pick up on social cues and less likely to misunderstand each other. Creative and innovative processes, onboarding processes, development dialogues and critical assessments benefit from in-office scenarios, as do all situations within the company hierarchy where trust and personal exchange are essential.

SENSE OF UNITY Feelings of togetherness, a positive team culture and an identification with the company tend to thrive in in-office models. Being able to exchange a few words in the hall is sometimes crucial to fostering exchange among staff, plus it can also be very helpful in getting things done at an informal level. In-office work allows both digital natives and silver surfers to learn from one another and draw on each other's strengths.

MENTAL STABILITY One-on-one communication can help prevent loneliness and isolation. In-office scenarios also involve a clear distinction between one's work and private life, which makes it easier for employees to switch off when the workday is done.

The advantages of remote work

AGILITY Members of different teams can decide at the last minute to participate in online meetings if they see fit. Barriers are torn down, quality and output increase. Remote work makes it possible to more effectively address items on the agenda that might have an impact across several different departments, while also being able to optimize established processes.

COMMITMENT Employees aren't the only ones who benefit from being able to achieve a comfortable work-life balance: remote work also saves roughly 40 to 50 minutes of commuting time every day. Studies show that this can significantly increase an employee's commitment to their job.

COST REDUCTION Companies can implement desk-sharing models and thus reduce their office space. Moving to a less expensive location is also an option. Taking fewer business trips reduces costs and helps to minimize the company's carbon footprint.

Overview of our TOP 10 Hybrid Work Highlights

01 / THE NEW NORMAL

Hybrid work combines the advantages of both in-office and remote work.

02 / IN-OFFICE OR HOME OFFICE

How do you strike the right balance between remote and in-office work models? Our strategies can help you find what works best for you.

03 / HYBRID COMMITMENT

There are several different things that motivate employees. How can they get everything they need in a hybrid work scenario?

04 / HYBRID LEADERSHIP

What new skills will company leaders need in order to be able to motivate employees in the future?

05 / HYBRID CULTURE

New cultural guidelines and rituals will have to be in place in order to foster a team mentality in remote settings.

06 / HYBRID EMPLOYEE LIFE

From employee recruitment to onboarding to personnel development, hybrid HR provides both challenges and opportunities.

07 / HYBRID ORGANIZATION

What conditions are necessary to ensure the success of asynchronous, results-oriented work?

08 / THE FUTURE OF OFFICES

Low-contact, collaborative workplaces provide inspiration for office environments in the new normal.

09 / BACK TO THE OFFICE

The post-pandemic return to in-office settings must strike a balance between fulfilling business strategies and personal needs.

10 / HYBRID READINESS CHECK

Where does your company figure in the new world of hybrid work? Our check-up will help you find out where you stand.

We're all at the very beginning of a journey to the new normal. With our longstanding passion for people, the team at PAWLIK is eager to provide proactive strategies and support in navigating your way into the future. We can help you:

› identify which particular challenges your company will face,

› train your employees to remain efficient and stay satisfied in the new environment,

› take your corporate culture to the next level and anchor new behavior within a new mindset.

We'd be happy to have our Hybrid Work Highlights provide you with new ways of thinking about and preparing for the road ahead. Please feel free to contact us with any specific questions or requests you might have.

THE PAWLIK TEAM
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In-office vs. home office

The right balance: How much office do we need and where?

Does a home office make employees more productive? There was a moment when we all thought it did. But then it became clear that some employees' stress levels increased significantly and all that productivity eventually drained energy reserves.

During the pandemic, many employees demonstrated even greater commitment to their jobs, making themselves even more available than ever before. This can be attributed to different things, such as a fear of being considered lazy by colleagues, a sense of loyalty and a desire to be a source of support for the company during the crisis, or simply the intent to secure a new, more autonomous way of working.

At the same time, many people felt lonely and isolated at work. Online meetings increasingly became a chore, and the desire for in-person contact grew. As a result, levels of employee frustration went up, as did burnout rates.

In this sense, all companies are currently facing the same question: Should we bring our employees back into the office as soon as the pandemic situation allows? Opinions on this subject vary widely, with possible reactions ranging from in-office scenarios to virtual-first strategies.

However, there is an elegant middle ground here: it's called hybrid work, and it combines the advantages of remote and in-office labor. But how does a company find the perfect balance between the two? One day in the office, half-and-half – or, better yet, 80 % in-office? Most companies focus on the needs of their employees when making this decision. However, it's also very important that customer wishes and the overall corporate strategy be taken into account.
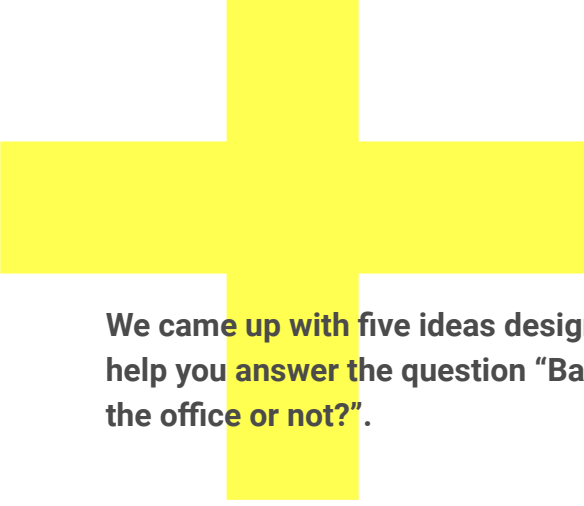
61%
OF EMPLOYEES AGED 31 TO 40 SAID THEY
FELT BURNED OUT BY REMOTE WORK.
(CAPGEMINI, 2021)

We came up with five ideas designed to help you answer the question "Back to the office or not?".

1

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL
It's important to bear in mind that you're going to need individual solutions for different tasks, business units and employees. In order to find out who will need what, we recommend that you create individual employee "personas" and ask yourself the following questions: What kinds of challenges, activities and preferences does each person have? What does their typical workday look like? Using the answers to these questions as a basis, you can then develop a customized plan for each person.

TRANSPARENCY CREATES UNDERSTANDING
Some team members may benefit less from hybrid work than others due to the nature of their job. For example, someone who works at a company's reception desk will hardly be able to work out of a home office. To prevent frustration, it's important to involve all relevant team members in the planning process. Clear communication also ensures that everyone knows and accepts who is working where and why.

2

3

NOT EVERY HOME OFFICE IS THE SAME
According to a recent Microsoft study (2021), 41% of home-office workers still lacked office equipment at home, even one year after the pandemic began. In other words, not everyone has the furnishings, space or even the peace-of-mind available to them to set up an effective office at home. You'll need to plan a budget that includes monitors, ergonomic chairs, etc. in order to be able to foster employee well-being and motivation in home offices. Alternatively, you can also offer shared-desk solutions for those who can't or don't want to work from home.

CLEAR RULES LEAD TO TOP PERFORMANCE
"I'll work from home whenever and however I like!" Though the idea is tempting, this approach inevitably renders some team members invisible. As a result, managers find it hard to recognize and reward top performance but also to identify low levels of motivation and thus react effectively. This means company leaders should set clear rules and deadlines that ensures everyone on the team remain visible – whether they're working remotely or in-office.

4

COMPANY LEADERS REDEFINE THEMSELVES
Hybrid work will require managers to rethink how they approach things and develop new skills. They are going to need empathy and trust in "their people" in order to be able to motivate teams from a distance. At the same time, they will have to make key decisions on goals, assess employee performance and provide the social glue that holds the entire team together. In order to meet these expectations, managers will need training sessions.

We recommend that you test various options and learn from each experience. This is new territory for all of us, so we're bound to make mistakes. Don't commit to one way forward too early. Challenge your teams to experiment as well. Make sure everyone is permitted to try things out, to share their experiences and learn from them too.

Committing to the Hybrid Model

What does each team member need in order to perform best in a hybrid work environment?

Each and every one of us has a different need for proximity, attention, rest and exchange with others. Some of us will thus prefer to work remotely while others will want to go to the office. If you treat all of your employees the same, you're bound to overlook individual preferences. Inevitably, dissatisfaction will grow, and you'll see performance levels decline. It's thus essential that managers come to understand the motives that drive their team members and take this into account when introducing hybrid work options.

One reliable point of reference can be gained by examining people's motives, that is, the forces underlying their actions. Individuals can be classified as being predominantly power-oriented, performance-oriented or relationship-oriented. Find out which motives drive your employees and how much remote and in-office work is best for them.

The power motive

PRO REMOTE WORK

Power-oriented team members thrive on autonomy, freedom and flexibility. They enjoy being able to organize their time and manage how they go about their work – independently.

PRO IN-OFFICE WORK

Power-oriented employees use the office as a "stage." They derive energy from being able to show who they are and what they're capable of. Unfortunately for them, working from home makes these moments of self-expression more difficult and much rarer.

Conclusion: In a hybrid scenario, power-oriented people need regular in-office contact in order to be able to draw energy from colleagues' feedback and fully apply their strength in shaping the company.

The performance motive

PRO REMOTE WORK

Virtual work thrives on an individual's ability to self-motivate. People who are performance-motivated can generate this self-motivation and really enjoy doing so. They like to go deep into the matter at hand, undisturbed by others. The absence of phone calls or e-mails fosters their ability to concentrate

PRO IN-OFFICE WORK

Performance-oriented people are not natural networkers. In-office work keeps them connect and exchange ideas with others. Direct comparisons with others in the office also compels them to achieve peak performance.

Conclusion: Performance-oriented people are good remote workers. Every now and then, however, they should come into the office to remain visible.

The relationship motive

PRO REMOTE WORK

Harmony is the defining motive here. In other words, relationship-oriented people like to maintain virtual contact with their (favorite) colleagues. At the same time, however, they find it easier to focus on complex tasks when in remote mode.

PRO IN-OFFICE WORK

They often experience remote work as a type of isolation in which they're unable to fully unfold their power of empathy, which is their core strength. What they need is lively face-to-face exchange with others.

Conclusion: Relationship-oriented people will use the home-office setting as an opportunity to focus on work, whereas when they're in the office, they'll seek out contact with colleagues.

How to make effective use of motives

IDENTIFY MOTIVES

Try to identify and categorize the factors that drive your team members. Ask your employees to give their very personal take on the advantages and challenges they see in both remote and in-office work. You should also contrast and compare where you yourself stand in terms of motives. It will no doubt deepen your own insights.

MEASURE MOTIVES

"Don't judge a book by its cover." First impressions can be deceiving – someone who seems very performance-oriented might unconsciously have significant power motives that could use some attention. Employees can live up to their full potential only when their unconscious motives have been identified. HR diagnostic tools can provide answers here.

DEVELOP NEW ROUTINES

You'll need new office returns to ensure employees are effectively leveraging the opportunities of in-office interaction. You'll need to introduce opportunities for power-motivated employees to shine or opportunities for the performance-oriented types to engage in good spirited competition, and make sure relationship-oriented employees have plenty of interpersonal contact.

CONSIDER ALL MOTIVES

In order to effectively implement new work routines, it's best to sit down with several team members, just to make sure that all three motives are represented. Providing situations in which this combination of motives are present will foster a sense of ownership across all types of employees involved in the creation of new ideas.

MOTIVE-ORIENTED TEAM ALIGNMENT

Make the different motives and preferences of all participants the key topic of your next team-building efforts. Find out what people need and when, so that everyone can do their best work across time and space, both alone and in teams.

TIME-TRACKING

Because people tend to stay within their comfort zones, they often choose a work environment that suits their motives. This can mean that other aspects of collaboration are neglected. We suggest you start keeping a diary of how much time you spend on power-, performance- and relationship-oriented behavior. MyAnalytics in MSTeams can help in this process.

Hybrid leadership

What do managers need to lead tomorrow?

Becoming a good hybrid leader takes time. Our experience throughout the pandemic – as well as that of our clients – has shown that there are three phases of development involved with effective hybrid leadership, each of which are marked by unique challenges. The length of each phase varies and depends entirely on a company's specific learning culture and the complexity of its organization.

PHASE 1: REMOTE MANAGEMENT

For starters, the technical and organizational basics need to be in place. Which tools do your team members need to engage in hybrid work? Does everyone have a laptop, a headset and a stable internet connection? What kind of training is needed to ensure that all team members can use the tools and technology efficiently? Don't underestimate the importance of this phase – our experience shows that employees need considerable time to get 100% ready for work in remote environments, and that very few are willing to admit they still lack a basic set-up after so many months of home office. Also, managers should take a moment to reflect on their own work practices: for example, have you figured out how to conduct digital meetings in such a way that everyone gets a chance to speak? You'll probably also need to introduce new processes, jour fixes and someone to handle privacy compliance in home office settings.

PHASE 2: REMOTE LEADERSHIP

This is the phase in which you'll have to develop the appropriate soft skills for hybrid leadership. You should be prepared to change with the changes coming your way. Non-verbal and on-demand forms of communication will no longer prove effective; you're going to need entirely different skills from now on. Facial expressions and gestures are difficult to interpret in video conferences, and e-mail or chat environments are notorious for cultivating misunderstanding. In other words, transparency, trust, empathy and emotional leadership are essential here. It's important to schedule time for virtual coffee breaks and to let your employees know that they can reach you with any questions they might have.

PHASE 3: HYBRID PROFESSIONALS

In order to realize the full potential of work done anywhere and anytime, you'll need new routines tailored to each task and team member. For example, an employee who handles complex calculations is going to need a quieter workplace than someone who works in communications. Early risers are most efficient in the morning, while night owls don't get creative until 8 pm. In order to effectively implement the hybrid mindset, managers themselves should be expected to literally "live and breathe" it. They must have the courage to experiment and learn. Top leaders will be expected to tear down barriers and effectively connect entire departments with one another, thereby creating innovative microcosms both within – and outside – the company. Managers will also have to learn how to implement processes and organizational scenarios for asynchronous work. This is the only way to ensure an effective mix of working together at any time.

Skills Matrix 2.0 — Define the ideal development plan for your team

If you're looking to establish a hybrid work environment, the first question to ask is: Where do I start? Our Skills Matrix 2.0 can provide some much-needed guidance (see below). It serves as a benchmark for hybrid leadership and shows which competencies are needed in each phase. To get an idea of where you are at this moment, simply read through the 15 points and compare your current expertise with the actual skills required.

If you discover that you're missing skills in the area of remote management, then start with the basics, such as facilitating online meetings. If that area is already going smoothly, then it's time to focus on remote leadership and sharpening your soft skills. If remote leadership is already part of your daily routine, then you should move on to learning more about the benefits of hybrid environments, including asynchronous work and breaking down the barriers of silo thinking. ***It's important to avoid switching back and forth between phases and to stay on track, acquiring one set of skills before moving on to the next.***

		Remote Mangement	Remote Leadership	Hybrid Professionals
Digital Savvy	The ability to work with online tools and to select the most meaningful tools for the team	✔	✔	✔
eFacilitation	Run online meetings and know how to create impact on the screen	✔	✔	✔
Reduce ambiguity	Ensure explicit communication, roles, deadlines etc.	✔	✔	✔
Manage the Basics	Provide the necessary environment to work on remote (home office, remote access, security etc.)	✔	✔	✔
Digital Socializing	Preserve a team culture and identity, create a sense of belonging and avoid isolation	○	✔	✔
Virtual Empathy	Listen and ask the right emotional questions; support the team members in coping with the work-life-blending and know their individual context	○	✔	✔
Motivation over distance	Adjust your leadership style to engage your team; know how remoteness affects the basic motives	○	✔	✔
Output Focus	Don't control your team's time and presence; trust their commitment and focus on the output	✘	✔	✔
Purpose driven	Create an alignment and trust around a shared and meaningful vision embedded in compelling storytelling	✘	✔	✔
Connected to yourself	Be self-aware and know your own motives, moments of procrastination, red lines and emotions; manage yourself without immediate outside support	○	✔	✔
Internal Marketing	Make the unseen work of your remote team visible to the rest of the company	✘	✔	✔
Asynchronous Work	Design work processes and routines without the need for synchronous coordination that enable team members to work anytime	✘	✘	✔
Liquid Organization Design	Break down organizational silos; leverage the advantage of remote work by involving people from across and outside the organization	✘	✘	✔
Ecosystem Facilitation	Bring together the right people at the right time in the right setting – wherever they are and regardless of the team	✘	✘	✔
Diversity and Culture Bridging	Remoteness allows for much richer diversity and global span in your ecosystem. Bridging the differences brings innovation and creativity.	✘	○	✔

✔ Required at this stage ✘ Too early to focus on ○ Helpful but not core focus

In a nutshell, effective work in the hybrid future requires taking leadership models to the next level. Hybrid leaders face not only more but also more varied challenges. For example, they are going to have to trust their employees to work autonomously. This can instill a sense of a loss of control. At the same time, companies have a responsibility to familiarize their managers with new work environments. It is essential that everyone involved be aware that hybrid leadership cannot be implemented overnight – it is a process of continuous learning.

Hybrid culture

The oil in the gears of interaction

Corporate culture is essential to the success of a company and the people it employs. It regulates both formal and informal interaction within an organization. It creates a bond within the company, sometimes visibly, but most often invisibly. With every encounter and every at-work experience, employees pass on something of this culture or shape it anew. In the past, colleagues bonded over joint lunches, spontaneous coffee dates or collective acts of solidarity during stressful periods. It was through these shared moments at the workplace that people formed stronger ties.

BUT WHAT IF THOSE SHARED MOMENTS ARE NO LONGER THERE?

What if employees rarely get the opportunity to interact face-to-face with each other? What if hybrid work is disrupting workflows? Companies today face the challenge of supplementing their corporate culture with modules suited to the hybrid workplace. But only those companies that adapt their "this is what makes us tick" messaging to the new situation will attract and retain motivated employees.

LOSING STEAM

Unfortunately, we don't see enough companies successfully adapting their workflows to the new reality. More and more employees in predominantly remote workplaces are considering a job change. The extent to which a person's motivation suffers depends on their individual drive structure and the frequency with which they work remotely. The causes in each case are almost always the same:

› Employees lose sight of what's expected of them.

› The values and beliefs of the company they work for begin to fade.

› Interactions with colleagues become less frequent and take place increasingly through digital formats.

› Facing less support from management, they grapple with insecurity.

› Their performance and the things they achieve are no longer immediately clear or even seen.

WE NEED NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO BOND

To establish a sense of belonging and loyalty, companies need to establish new collective rituals! This can include specifying days for in-office work or increasing the number of team events. The money saved by renting smaller office spaces should be used meaningfully to create situations in which employees can develop ties to the company.

Achieving this means that everyone involved within a predefined organizational framework must agree to the new ground rules. Successful cultural change requires transparency and the genuine participation of all stakeholders, managers and employees.

Four steps to a hybrid corporate culture

1) EMOTIONAL SWOT

Together with your team, assess where you're at:

Ask yourselves,

› What about the way in which we used to work are we proud of? And: Do we want this to continue?"

› What are the things that have always annoyed us or never worked for us?

› What do we hope to gain from a hybrid work culture?

› What limits, worries and fears do we have when we think of this new form of teamwork?

Your discussion of these questions will give you input for the second phase.
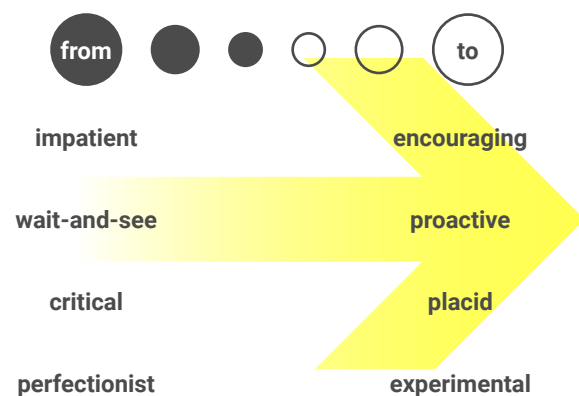
3) CULTURAL FLASHPOINTS

In the first step, you elicited the qualitative state of your transformation. Conducting employee surveys can help you determine exactly where your teams and departments currently stand, also in quantitative terms. Carrying out a thorough analysis will allow you to measure the status quo and identify the levers you need.

2) CULTURAL CHANGE

Summarize the first step in an overview. This should include a list of everything that characterizes how you work together and the values that inform your work, things that must evolve *from … to …*

A few things that might play a crucial role in relation to *hybrid work* are:

from				to
impatient				encouraging
wait-and-see				proactive
critical				placid
perfectionist				experimental

These conflicts in cultural development comprise the dimensions that you measure in step three.

4) CULTURAL DEEP DIVE

Just knowing where we stand right now and where we want to be doesn't automatically change a corporate culture. Let those affected by change become its agents! Hold team workshops to share the results of step three and decide together on what action needs to be taken. Making hybrid work a success means that each team starts at a different place and will evolve at its own pace. As with all processes involving cultural change, this won't happen overnight. Find the formats you need to make successful hybrid teams visible and show that hybrid work works.

Hybrid employee life

Rethinking employee experience – A renaissance of meaningful goals

"Why do I get up every morning and go to work?" Even before the pandemic, purpose, commitment and employee experience were among the top 10 cited leadership issues. With the advent of hybrid work, these issues have attracted even more attention. Having a sense of purpose, that is, being able to see the meaning and value in one's own work within the company, motivates employees. And companies, in turn, benefit from committed employees. It's a classic win-win situation, one that should be maintained in the hybrid workplace. But what does a successful employee trajectory look like in the new normal of hybrid work? How can companies get it right?

In recent months, our customers have frequently noted the increasing importance of purpose and group identity issues. This is understandable, because crisis situations in particular compel people to seek out anchor points that give them confidence and direction. Working through a list of tasks may keep employees busy, but it doesn't make them happy in the long term and doesn't inspire confidence in the company.

A fancy slide presentation won't cut it in making a team's purpose tangible to everyone involved. No matter how great a company's vision might be, if it's simply presented by the CEO without genuine implementation, it won't lead to a good employee experience. A goal only becomes credible when it can be experienced in each phase of an employee's time with the company – which begins with their application and ends when they leave the company.

By the way, managers also benefit from the renaissance of meaningful goals. Control becomes superfluous when teams and team management demonstrate trust in each other. Managers can use their time more wisely, as we discussed in Part 4 of this series, "Hybrid Leadership."

The six key touchpoints in the hybrid workday

Cultivating these six touchpoints will help ensure your employees are culturally engaged and eager to work toward your common goals at every stage of their tenure with the company:

1 / FIND

Those companies looking to attract talent in today's world need new job ads. Clearly embracing flexible work and telling a meaningful story ensure that applicants perceive your company as modern and employee-oriented.

Hybrid work also offers your company advantages that are associated with the geographical independence it provides. During the pandemic, a lot of talent moved out of metropolitan areas, but companies didn't. Hybrid work environments allow you to find employees anywhere in the world. Actively support your managers in considering geographically remote applicants and in conducting virtual job interviews with them. It's important to test not only professional competence, but also cultural fit. Personality diagnostics can help you with this.

2 / ENTER

Welcoming new colleagues virtually was certainly one of the most difficult challenges for HR departments during the pandemic. Because onboarding has a lot to do with getting to know someone, you'll need to revise your onboarding processes by focusing on what employees can learn in a remote context and determining which situations they need direct contact. Whereas company presentations or safety briefings can be easily reviewed from a home-office setting, running in to one's favorite colleagues is more likely to happen at the coffee machine in an in-office setting.

Create a plan for the first few weeks that clearly structures when new employees work from home office and when they work in-office. If the only option is for people to get to know each other virtually, discuss more than just tasks, talk also about the meaning of the work your team does and shared goals. Doing so will pay off in terms of ensuring a clear purpose and creating an emotional connection.

3 / GROW

Further development is an enormous source of strength for many employees. The pandemic has shown how well remote learning can work, provided the right tools are available. There is one exception: Social learning suffers considerably in a hybrid context. Offices of the future should carefully consider the fact that we need physical spaces in which people can learn with and from each other. Potential solutions include group workrooms for project teams and work cafés where employees can exchange ideas in a relaxed atmosphere.

Performance reviews should also be revised. This is because new, qualitative skills, such as self-direction, direct communication, stakeholder management and internal marketing, will become more important in the routines of hybrid workplaces.

4 / CONSOLIDATE

Most operational HR issues such as contracts, salaries, benefits, work organization or personal circumstances are addressed by this point. The list of issues that need to be rethought in all HR departments is long and include: Do we need home office contracts? Who has access to shared-desk solutions? What does all this mean for company cars? And what about employees who want to work from Thailand for three months?

5 / CHANGE

In many companies, the barriers dividing departments have grown in recent months mostly because people rarely ran into each other. However, in some cases, we saw the opposite take place. Silos shrank because many barriers to collaboration were removed, thanks to virtual collaboration tools. If this has been the case in your company, congratulations are in order. Eradicating silos not only renders internal processes more effective, it's also essential for employees to build a career internally, that is, beyond their own team. If your company falls into the first category, it will be important to dismantle any newly created silos. People may feel most comfortable while in their own "bubble," but they only develop a lasting connection with a company and grow if they are familiar with all the departments and what happens where.

6 / LEAVE

Just like onboarding, terminating employment is a delicate moment that should not, out of respect for the employee, be carried out virtually. The recommendation here is clear and simple: An employee's termination must be conducted as a face-to-face discussion.

The hybrid organization

With the right protocols in place, individual team members contribute to overall performance – anytime, anywhere

Let's start with the good news: Much of what you need for a hybrid organization doesn't have to be reinvented. Even before the pandemic, many organizations across the globe had already implemented decentralized, staggered or flexible work arrangements and had begun testing suitable procedures. Even Germany's small-to-medium-sized business sector stands to benefit from looking at how multinational corporations have created the right procedures and protocols for the new normal. But getting it right is not a straightforward process. Because additional reporting lines and procedures complicate hybrid work, companies often fail to reap its benefits. We've identified three areas that are essential to a hybrid organization worthy of its name. But first, let's start with the problems we've observed. We'll follow that up with initial suggestions for resolving such problems.

OUR PROCESSES ARE GEARED FOR SYNCHRONOUS WORK

Synchronous collaboration is so deeply rooted in the day-to-day activity of a company that in an era of remote work, many seek to transfer established processes to the virtual world. Over the past few months, we've observed employees sitting in calls on an hourly basis. Virtual meetings were constantly held for everything from business reviews to daily stand-ups to making operational decisions and even authoring reports. But it's precisely this kind of thing that squanders the opportunities presented by the flexibility inherent to hybrid work. If we're serious about "working anytime and anywhere," we need to establish asynchronous processes for communication, documentation, decision-making and reporting. Only then can we carry out more focused work remotely with efficiency.

THE PANDEMIC HAS NOT BROKEN DOWN SILOS

In the past, the dynamics of growth, specialization and the division of labor increasingly fostered the formation of silos in companies. Thanks also in part to an office architecture designed to separate people through cubicles and other partitions, islands of coworkers evolved that functioned well in themselves but discouraged cross-departmental interaction. For some of our customers, the distance between two floors was greater than that between two branches. Even during the remote-only period of the pandemic, very few people succeeded in breaking down these barriers. But there's an unprecedented opportunity in hybrid collaboration to reorganize how we work together. Employees can work with several teams from one day to the next without having to physically reorganize the office.

TARGET AGREEMENTS REQUIRE BETTER ORCHESTRATRATION

As we increasingly work asynchronously with multiple teams, it's increasingly important to sharpen our purpose and communicate a clear vision. As discussed in Part 4 of this series, "Hybrid Leadership," having purpose and developing goals together are hallmarks of hybrid work. Each colleague can and will contribute more to the common goal with his or her work. However, coordinating different activities on demand will no longer prove effective. Rather, implementing a strategy will involve stringent goal cascading. Companies need controlled strategy processes that include feedback and updates.

In summary, companies face the following challenge: They need to reorganize their strategy, planning, budgeting and development cycles. Static 12-month models are increasingly losing relevance.

Now read on to find out how you can address the key challenges mentioned above.

SWITCH TO ASYNCHRONOUS WORK

We recommend that you work together with your teams to create an overview of what kind of collaboration is needed and where, and then define the necessary framework. Which tasks are carried out primarily alone and which require working together with colleagues? Which of these tasks are carried out synchronously? And which of them can, looking forward, be done asynchronously?

Once you've determined these things, you can create a matrix similar to the following:

	INDIVIDUAL WORK	TEAMWORK
SYNCHRONOUS	9-to-5	co-creation
ASYNCHRONOUS	focus work	workflow-driven

When it comes to workflow-driven collaboration, companies still have a long way to go. But there's certainly no lack of best practices – some of the more quick-to-implement practices include automated weekly reports on team activities, online capacity planning, standardized daily checks within the team, and the introduction of simple routines like creating agendas for asynchronous meetings (check out GitLab's playbooks). How to reorganize and document information is the key focus of such practices. Ensuring accessibility in an async work environment involves replacing the ad hoc communication known in the traditional 9-to-5 context with systems and tools that let employees know exactly where to find the information they need.

BREAK DOWN THE SILOS

The pandemic has shown us that crisis teams can be formed across an organization in just a few days, or even hours. It proved easy to mobilize flexibly assembled teams in online meetings. Now think about how this kind of experience and the ability it entails might apply to your daily business. There are several types of networked organizations such as "Liquid Organizations" or "Holacracies" that can serve as a blueprint. Maintaining clarity with regard to responsibilities in a context of ever-changing roles is easily achieved today with the help of new tools that are similar in their functionality to an internal LinkedIn.

WORK WITH CASCADING GOALS

As discussed above, strategy, planning, budgeting and development cycles must be replaced by dynamic and continuous processes that ensure the individual contribution of employees. The fact that companies are capable of doing so – often against all expectations – has been proved by most of them during the crisis. Strategies involving target agreements that integrate employees into the process have found increasing use. For example, many companies have revived so-called Objectives and Key Results, or OKRs, marking a first step in the right direction. Looking ahead, the next step is to transform this dynamic into a systematic strategic planning process. This is essential to ensuring that an organization's vision and strategy can be implemented in a hybrid work context.

But how do you go about achieving this kind of reorientation? Based on our experience, it's safe to say that little will change without the presence of a change agent within the organization, a so-called Hybrid Officer. He or she must be given a clear mandate and possess the necessary skills to leave no stone unturned if they are to link up creative initiatives within an organization. Companies should not leave up to chance whether or not a consistent hybrid framework emerges. Competent accountability is a must here.

The future of the office

In the first seven parts of our Hybrid series, we've covered many aspects of the new normal: motivation, leadership, employee experience, organization and culture. Depending on how you're balancing remote with in-office work, your office space may need to undergo some changes.

There are generally four types of future office environments that can be defined:

"AS ALWAYS"

If you continue to focus predominantly on in-office work, not much will change, and you'll continue to need a classic floorplan featuring several rooms for focus work and meeting rooms. We nonetheless recommend that you also think in terms of activity-based work and set up modern spaces for phone calls, informal interaction, creativity and the opportunity to reflect.

CO-CREATION

If you decide to go Virtual First for focus work, the purpose of your office space changes fundamentally. The office is for meeting with colleagues, not for sitting by yourself at your desk. You'll definitely need some soundproofed "phone booths" and small rooms for confidential conversations, but very few individual offices. Since not all employees will be in the office at the same time, you should invest in high-quality technical equipment. Excellent sound and visual equipment goes without saying, but digital whiteboards (e.g., surface hubs) can also facilitate collaboration between those working in-office and those working remote.

HUB-BASED

Another advantage of hybrid work is that employees no longer necessarily have to reside in the same location as the company. In the medium term, it may make sense for companies to set up additional small office hubs in cities other than where their headquarters are located. These co-creation spaces also allow for decentralized meetings. If your team is (still) too small for this model, shared office rental spaces that employees use as an alternative to a home-office can be a good solution.

REMOTE ONLY

Getting rid of your office space altogether is the most radical form of the new normal. This option is certainly not tenable for all industries, activities and company divisions, but there are already several companies, mainly in the IT or online services sectors, that are testing this out. We're curious to hear more about their experience and the lessons learned.

For now, most companies have not reached the point where they have begun to plan a new office building. Changing a company's office design is expensive and tends to be a long-term project. Which is why you should start linking your hybrid model to your business strategy now, not later. Ask yourself "What balance between remote and in-office work is suited to our business model and strategy?" and coordinate closely with colleagues in your strategy, personnel, IT and facility planning divisions.

It's important to consider the following:

OFFICE ENVIRONMENT DESIGN

› Which office environments reflect your corporate strategy and your employees' needs?

› What are the specific concepts you can derive from this? Draw on the advice of an expert, such as an interior designer.

› Is the point primarily to remodel or reduce office space?

› What do you need meeting rooms to provide? Technical equipment will be a key issue here, as it will need to allow you and your employees to transition smoothly between in-office and remote work.

› How do you ensure that the booking process for in-office spaces remains easy and fair? With a limited number of rooms, it's important that everyone who wants to work in the office can find a space to do so. You'll therefore need flexible capacity-planning with rolling horizons. Under the heading "Smart Workspace or Smart Office", the first solutions are already available supporting you in this challenge.

› How might you ensure employees don't lose the sense of having "their own" space with a flex office solution? One idea is to provide lockable cabinets in which employees can store personal items (e.g., photos, favorite mugs …) for use at their respective workspaces.

HOME/MOBILE OFFICE DESIGN

› To what extent can you support employees with setting up an ergonomic and quiet workplace (e.g., furniture vouchers, free high-speed internet, etc.)? Define clear rules about what costs the company will cover.

› What do you need to consider in terms of occupational health and safety, employment law and tax law? It matters whether employees have to stay in home-office because there aren't enough office spaces, and it matters whether working in home-office is a voluntary choice. This has implications for agreements between the works council and management and for employment contracts.

› How can you ensure that employees can also take advantage of company benefits when working from home? For example, you might consider providing your employees lunch or childcare vouchers.

› And last, but not least: What data-protection or privacy-related precautions should you take?

Back to the office

Nobody knows exactly when the pandemic will end, but we can feel it coming. There's no better time than now to start thinking about your transition to the new normal, which we divide into three phases:

PHASE 1: SAFETY AND THE DESIRE FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION

Transitioning from crisis mode to the new normal is a slow, cautious and often fluid process. There will be no single day marking the end of the pandemic and the moment when companies need to strike a balance between in-office work and safety considerations. The key questions most companies are asking right now are: When can we go back to the office? Who will return first? What rules do we need? Should only the vaccinated or recovered be allowed in the office? Should those with a negative test also be allowed?

In addition to safety issues, the first phase should consider the emotional impact of the pandemic. Some employees may bristle at the mere mention of COVID. Others remain cautious about the situation because of their health history. And still others may find their ties to their employer having run thin in the absence of regular interaction. Companies should therefore provide employees the opportunity to learn together from the experience of the past months. This requires demonstrating empathy. Ideally, management will exercise considerable tact and solidarity in stewarding this phase. Having a good sense of just how cautious or eager employees are to get back to in-office work is crucial here and can be achieved by engaging in one-on-one conversations, checking in at team meetings or by conducting mini-surveys.

Finally, it's important to celebrate being able to reunite with colleagues and finally meet new colleagues in person. Give your employees the time to chat and get to know each other instead of expecting everything to return to business as usual right away.

PHASE 2: THERE'S NO GOING BACK TO THE OLD NORMAL – THE LEARNING CURVE

We all made changes to our routines during the pandemic. And we certainly learned a lot. But we also know that people tend to fall back into old habits. There are those moments in the office or when the pressure to increase sales grows that managers and teams tend to slip back into old routines and thus sacrifice all the valuable lessons they've learned.

Companies that steer clear of this pitfall, adopt new processes and change their organizational culture will have a clear competitive advantage both in terms of output and their ability to attract talent.

Be proactive in shaping the learning curve and don't leave it up to chance for teams to redefine themselves. Don't risk resurrecting outdated routines and procedures. Make a plan and appoint a hybrid officer to make sure it succeeds. And don't forget to involve your entire workforce by asking for employee input on their needs and concerns. Once this step has been completed, you're ready to transition into phase three.

PHASE 3: MAKING HYBRID THE NORM

Once a hybrid framework is in place, the next step involves stewarding your employees toward the new normal. Train your teams, coach your leaders. Since everyone learns at a different pace, it's important to exercise empathy throughout this process. If you see old habits re-emerging, don't vilify the behavior. Phrase things in terms of "We've still got a ways to go to make this work best for us" and motivate employees to grow. It's also good to conduct broad-based messaging about the framework (e.g., with those who frequently take advantage of the hybrid model) and highlight its successes. Talk about the things that already work well.

But bear in mind that there will be resistance to the changes. Some people won't understand hybrid work. Some people will reject it. This is a common phenomenon in change processes that we've observed in countless change management projects. But we also know that many companies don't excel at change management. Don't let nostalgia or cynicism get the best of your employees. Help them overcome their fears and foster faith in change.

In the next and last part of our hybrid series, we provide a checklist of all the things your company needs for the new normal that will help get you going in the right direction.

Hybrid Readiness Check

In concluding our hybrid series, we've put together a list of questions to help you assess your personal status quo.

The Hybrid Readiness Check helps you determine where you're at on your way toward the world of hybrid work and what stages you still have to face. These questions are designed to use in discussion with your team and colleagues. You should exercise self-criticism – bearing in mind the things "not yet" achieved, but always in the sense of "not yet, but soon …". After all, companies everywhere are just getting started and none have yet to reach the home stretch. Discuss as a team what more can be done to take the next step – not to define the perfect and final solution.

If you get stuck on some of the questions, feel free to refer back to the corresponding hybrid paper, which provides the most important information relevant to each topic.

IN-OFFICE VS. HOME OFFICE

	strongly agree	somewhat agree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
As a manager, you are familiar with the challenges associated with hybrid work.				
You have a clear company-wide hybrid work strategy.				
You have needs- and task-based hybrid work rules that all employees accept.				

We recommend that you test various options regarding hybrid work and reflect on each experience. This is new territory for all of us, so we're bound to make mistakes. Ensure that all team members find their individual way forward and that they gather and share their respective experiences.

HYBRID COMMITMENT

	strongly agree	somewhat agree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
You have identified and understood the motives and factors driving your team members.				
Employees' different motives and their needs with regard to hybrid work have been openly communicated and discussed.				
New office routines have been introduced for all motive types in the team.				

Employees can live up to their full potential only when you've identified their conscious and unconscious motives. HR diagnostic tools can point you in the right direction.

HYBRID LEADERSHIP

	strongly agree	somewhat agree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
You have created all the conditions needed for hybrid work (in terms of technology, skills and processes).				
You have a good sense of the extent to which your employees feel as though you understand and support them in this process.				
You are able to generate the potential for more opportunities and improved cross-team collaboration through the new routines.				

To acquire the competences needed for hybrid leadership as a manager, you need support and time. It is essential that everyone involved be aware that hybrid leadership cannot be implemented overnight – it is a process of continuous learning.

HYBRID CULTURE

	strongly agree	somewhat agree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
Your corporate culture has been enhanced with elements that promote a sense of belonging in the hybrid work environment.				
All parties involved accept the new rules of the game.				
Genuine participation of all those involved, both managers and employees, is practiced with transparency.				

If your responses to these questions tend to be more negative than positive or if you find it difficult to answer them, feel free to explore our Cultural Change Roadmap, which offers a proven path to successful cultural change.

HYBRID EMPLOYEE LIFE

	strongly agree	somewhat agree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
Your team works with a shared, meaningful goal in mind.				
The goal can be experienced in each phase of an employee's time with the company.				
Each step in the process *(find – enter – grow – consolidate – change – leave)* have been adapted to the new model of hybrid work.				

You find it easier to lead when your employees are aligned with something that transcends you. When you can count on everyone believing and being invested in the same goal, control becomes unnecessary.

THE HYBRID ORGANIZATION

	strongly agree	somewhat agree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
Asynchronous processes for communication, documentation, decision-making and reporting have been established.				
There are different types of networked organization within your organization that facilitate more interdepartmental exchange.				
Dynamic and continuous processes replace rigid strategy, planning, budget and development cycles.				

Companies should not leave up to chance whether or not a consistent hybrid framework emerges. You need competent accountability – preferably in the form of a hybrid officer.

HYBRID OFFICE

	strongly agree	somewhat agree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
The question of how to strike the right balance between remote and in-office work within your business model and strategy has been answered.				
There is a conceptual framework for the office that takes spatial, human interaction, IT and corporate strategy considerations into account.				
There is a workplace concept for home/mobile office models that takes into account considerations involving agreements between the works council and management, employment contracts and data protection guidelines.				

Changes to office design are often costly and long-term. Which is why you should start linking your hybrid model to your business strategy now, not later.

BACK TO THE OFFICE

	strongly agree	somewhat agree	somewhat disagree	strongly disagree
You and your managers have steered your organization's way through the first phase – "back in the office" – with considerable sensitivity and have consolidated the experience gained through the remote work period.				
You, or a Hybrid Officer, are actively cultivating the learning curve drawn from the previous months.				
The changes in how we work are being carried out deliberately as a change project.				

Be aware that not everyone in the company *understands* hybrid work. Don't let nostalgia or cynicism get the best of your employees. Help them overcome their fears and foster faith in change.

Now look at your answers. Were you able to provide, for the most part, positive answers to the questions? That's great! You are already well on your way to the world of hybrid work. However, if, in the course of this questionnaire, you increasingly noticed that you have some catching up to do in terms of hybrid work, please feel free to contact us. Together, we can take a closer look at how you can successfully master the change to the hybrid future.

Also, consider whether your teams would give similar answers. Passing this checklist on to your employees will help you obtain a better understanding of how hybrid work is perceived within your company. And since acquiring a differentiated assessment of things always leads to a better result, we're happy to support you with surveying your team or company!

Register at **hybrid@pawlik.de** and we'll send you **free online access to the questionnaire and a subsequent analysis of the results.**

THE PAWLIK TEAM

PAWLIK

HAMBURG
BERLIN
DUSSELDORF
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MUNICH
AMSTERDAM
BARCELONA
MADRID
PARIS
VIENNA
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