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# To Win at Hybrid, Be a Relentless Champion of Human Connection and Collaboration

Succeeding at hybrid will require fresh thinking about workspaces and the employee experience



**Hybrid work represents a major change for organizations and the workforce — and it's here to stay. Years from now we will look back on this period as a seismic shift in how we think about work. Does your organization have a clear strategy to adapt — and succeed — in a hybrid world?**



According to bestselling author and business consultant **Keith Ferrazzi**, the leading companies in hybrid work are “remote-forward, fully innovating on the radical edge in terms of how work is done.” Unfortunately, he says, the average Fortune 1000 enterprise has barely started down that path.

It won't be easy. To win, companies will need fresh thinking about how employees work, collaborate, and contribute.

In this article, we start by exploring the concept of hybrid work. Only by understanding how hybrid work is so fundamentally different from the traditional office model can we anticipate how work will evolve. We will look at how hybrid work affects the employee experience and impacts employees and businesses. Finally, we look at ways organizations can rethink office and home workspaces to create environments that better match the reality and needs of hybrid work.

## What Makes Hybrid Work So Profoundly Different?

In 2021, entrepreneur and venture capitalist Marc Andreessen described the move to hybrid work as “a permanent civilizational shift.” He calls it “perhaps the most important thing that’s happened in my lifetime, a consequence of the internet that’s maybe even more important than the internet.”<sup>1</sup>

Maybe that’s because in large parts of society and work, we’re now decoupling physical location from economic opportunity. People are following their dreams, changing jobs, moving to new cities, and exploring more nomadic lifestyles that allow them to work and live in a much more independent way.<sup>2</sup> This is the first time in history that the work of a modern office can be done anywhere, regardless of where office workers themselves actually live.

So what can organizations do to retain their best employees in this new era of flexibility?

## For Employees, A Strong Desire for Better Work and Deeper Connection

The Great Resignation was an awakening for employees and is both an ongoing challenge and a wake up call for companies.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people started to reexamine their personal and professional priorities. They left jobs, asking questions like: Why do I do what I do? What am I good at? How can I thrive?<sup>3</sup>

Employees who have discovered their purpose are 49% more likely to report intrinsic motivation, 33% more likely to express higher job satisfaction, and 25% more likely to go the extra mile, according to London School of Economics research commissioned by Unilever.<sup>4</sup>

**Today’s employees want more than just a paycheck.** They want flexibility — the ability to work when and where they want, as long as they can get the job done. Hybrid gives people the ability to work from the front porch, be on time for their kid’s softball game, or move to a small town in another part of the country. Affordable, high-quality webcams and fast, ubiquitous Wi-Fi make this flexibility possible.

*More than half of the workforce say they are willing to take a pay cut if it means flexibility to work from anywhere, according to a survey by ADP Research Institute. Some 64% of the workforce would consider looking for a new job if required to return to the office full time.*<sup>5</sup>

**Employees want health and wellbeing.** According to a Gallup report, burnout makes employees 2.6 times more likely to leave their employer.<sup>6</sup> And the problem may be getting worse. COVID-19 and the new world of remote work make employee wellbeing and mental health even more critical today, according to the World Economic Forum.<sup>7</sup> Burned-out workers want more support, including mental health services, but only a third of companies say they offer these extra benefits.<sup>8</sup>

Reducing burnout can pay dividends for people and businesses. Offering flexible work schedules and locations, along with benefits such as mental health support, can help employees manage work/life balance while meeting the demands of the job.

**Employees want human connection.** As a result of the pandemic and the shift to flexible work, 65% of workers now say they feel less connected to their coworkers. Employee disconnection is one of the main drivers of voluntary turnover, costing US companies up to \$406 billion a year.<sup>9</sup>

One way companies can address employee disconnection is to promote friendship and meaningful connection at work. While video is not a perfect antidote, studies prove it promotes human connection. It should not be surprising then that webcam purchases and the use of video conferencing skyrocketed during COVID-19 as people sought some way to connect to colleagues while working remotely.

**Employees want meaningful work.** People find meaning at work through various avenues. Among the most important are connection to others, a sense of purpose, and the feeling of being part of something larger than yourself. According to a 2021 report from McKinsey, when employees find their work meaningful, performance improves by 33%, and they are 49% less likely to quit.<sup>10</sup>

Forward-thinking business leaders understand this intuitively. And they know that smart, talented people will not settle for old ways of working. To keep employees engaged, leaders must create a meaningful employee experience that involves purpose and connection.

## Why Employee Connection & Collaboration Matter Even More in a Hybrid World

Remote work presents new challenges when it comes to the employee experience and work output. Employees want community, a feeling of human connection and shared commitment. Studies show that employees who have a strong sense of camaraderie stay with their employers longer.

We also see increased recognition among business leaders that employee experience is a top priority, and that investing in hybrid work infrastructure is essential for productivity.<sup>11</sup> Leaders are looking carefully at areas like video collaboration technology and space planning to ensure employees can connect, collaborate, and contribute in meaningful ways.

## How Do We Make the Office a Place Where People Love to Work?

As business leaders consider their hybrid strategy, many are rethinking the purpose of the office. The traditional office — which evolved from the factory model and was designed essentially as a factory floor for knowledge workers — is generally not the best way to serve today’s knowledge workers.

Today, offices are becoming places for people to meet and collaborate in person — when being in person is necessary. For certain types of projects, responsibilities, and tasks, gathering face-to-face in a meeting room is more efficient and effective than trying to coordinate remotely. Plus, socializing in person creates a sense of community and belonging, which strengthens loyalty to

socializing in person creates a sense of community and belonging, which strengthens loyalty to one's team and organization.

*"During the pandemic and in its immediate aftermath, in-office presence will be needs-based. Offices will not be 'productivity centers' but sites for employee engagement, collaboration, and building relationships balanced by WFH productivity and efficiency." – Frost & Sullivan<sup>12</sup>*

If the primary purpose of the office is to foster collaboration and connection, organizations should optimize space and function. To that end:

- Design offices for flexibility, emphasizing meeting spaces and group collaboration zones.
- Focus on comfort. Think open, living room-inspired spaces for employee connection, rather than cubicle farms.
- Video-enable all spaces where work is done so employees can easily connect regardless of location.



In the new office, video collaboration will be ubiquitous — not just in meeting rooms. Every desk, every space, every gathering place is fair game for a scheduled or ad hoc meeting. High-quality video is crucial for enabling genuine connection for people who must be remote or who choose to be.

And that means high-quality video on both ends — in the office and in the remote location. **Meeting equity** requires that all meeting participants are seen and heard clearly by everyone else, and that all participants have an opportunity to contribute. Successful collaboration depends on it. But just as important, so does the employee experience.

## Investing in Personal Workspace

Although work is now largely centered around team collaboration, there will always be a need for individual productivity. Knowledge workers will still need time and space for analysis, writing, creativity, planning, and thinking.

These activities require quiet time for focus and concentration,<sup>13</sup> and remote work is often better suited for individual productivity. This was one of the lessons many people took away from the pandemic years, especially those of us who had never worked remotely before.

Unfortunately, we also discovered that our home offices (or personal workspaces) were not set up for productivity or collaboration. At the beginning of the pandemic, we grabbed whatever we could from our office desks and cobbled together work-from-home setups that were far from ideal. We worked at kitchen tables and chairs that were not good for posture or wellbeing. We depended on laptops not designed for ergonomics. We used our laptop's embedded camera and suffered from poor image quality, poor lighting, and awkward camera angles.

So imagine how much more productive and happier employees could be with an optimal setup for their home office. It's one step toward a better employee experience.



## We're Solving the Challenges of Hybrid Work

At Logitech we are meeting this moment with solutions to optimize hybrid work for employees, IT, and business leaders. We understand the challenges — and rewards — of hybrid work. And we have a deep product portfolio that can help companies adapt to this new way of working, create more equitable meetings, enable people to connect and collaborate, and improve the employee experience at home and in the office.

To see how we can help your organization optimize for hybrid work, visit <https://www.logitech.com/business>

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