



What is the future of work?

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Notes from Dr. Corneil

Gartner research

Every so often, something seismic happens to the way we work

Electricity – industrial revolution

Internet – digital revolution

Pandemic – hybrid revolution

Work was organized around location, then time, now about tasks

(Past) Office centric design – (present) virtual office design – (future) hybrid design

Office centric design – on site work, location is the stable pillar we designed work around

People centric design – hybrid work, the individual is the stable pillar

Not a new phenomenon, hybrid been around since well before covid, that's why we have research and best practices from those organizations and sectors that have proven how it works

Not one single type of hybrid model, depends on the nature of the work

Does not apply to everyone, no one size fits all

Hybrid is not just a work schedule or employee perk, it's an entirely new way of working together.

A huge opportunity to change culture

If there is a silver lining to the past couple of years, it's that the pandemic has brought about a positive shift in the mindset towards a work-from-anywhere culture. It's shown that leaders can trust most people to work on their own initiative and, in many cases, has cultivated more caring relationships between leaders and their teams.

A hybrid workplace can also help build a resilient culture by preparing you for future disruptions. With many employees already working from home, you can easily go back to a fully remote operation if necessary.

Transformation of work – results oriented work environment **ROWE**

Questions

When will we work?

Where will we work?

What will we do?

Who will do the work?

How will we work?

Why does it matter?

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The “ Ps” lens – People, Purpose & Process, Place

People	<i>We are not the same people who went home to work in 2020.</i>
Purpose & Processes	<i>It's not about where you work, but how you work.</i>
Place	<i>Hybrid work is more than a location decision.</i>

Principles not rules

- Clarity and expectations
- Safety remains top priority
- Inclusion and fairness – consistency
- Flexibility is the default, does not mean always on
- Work can be done effectively from anywhere
- Digital first mindset
- Role and task based on work assignments
- Shape hybrid strategies around productivity, not just policy compliance
- Roadmap to transition, not quick fix, will be iterative, a learn it approach
- Trust & visibility

A few examples of principles that executives are using to reshape their approach:

- **Provide flexibility and freedom for people to do their best work.** Think beyond people's ability to work from home a few days to what it means to provide flexibility in *when* as well as *where*, and measure performance in terms of *outcomes* not *activity*.
- **Give team-level autonomy to achieve goals rather than top-down directions.** One size almost never fits all. Provide guidelines for work arrangements and let teams decide on specifics to suit their needs.
- **Ensure equitable access to opportunity.** Design your working norms to ensure inclusion across all groups regardless of your work arrangement.
- **Maintain a learning mindset by being adaptive.** Prioritize and create opportunities for experimentation and sharing best practices. Norms and practices will need to continue to evolve as we learn. Commit to measuring outcomes and adjusting as you go.

Process principles

- Enable both synchronous and asynchronous time
- One virtual all virtual
- IT requirements for both in office and WFH
- Scheduling
- Executives and managers not in the office all the time lead by example
- Core hours
- Meeting hygiene

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Place principles

- Design for people not the room – design for cooperation & collaboration
- Safety issues
- Creating a different workplace – no privacy, too many distractions, meetings are too easy to hold
- Set up hotel style, unassigned seating, football field
- not cheap hotel mirror home office, technology both places
- Silent zone, quiet zone, collaboration zone
- Commuting, personal storage space, no space for personal items

Create guardrails, not just boundaries

Boundaries are personal. They are the responsibility of the individual. Guardrails are policies that everyone in an organization buys into—like not emailing on a Saturday to prevent burnout—so they become part of the corporate culture. They protect everyone.

1. **Shared space is for teamwork first.** Make sure these spaces are insulated from the other staff who are working in individual spaces. Noise will be a major issue in the redesign of spaces.
2. **Depth over breadth for team time.** Teams should be thinking about organizing around monthly or quarterly events with sufficient advance notice, instead of focusing on which specific days of the week people come into the office.
3. **One virtual, all virtual.** Leaders need to drive a consistent experience and level the playing field by avoiding “in-person favoritism.” Outside of intentional time together, meetings should be structured to enable remote participants to be equally present and part of the discussion.

Leadership and Culture

1. **Lead by executive example.** If executives are still coming into the office five days a week, then employees will expect to do the same for access to opportunities. Instead, led by example and ensure that senior executives are just as distributed as employees and/or aren't coming into the office more than two to three days a week regularly.
2. **Reskill leaders to unlock productivity and talent.**
3. **Go “digital-first” versus centralizing power at headquarters.**

Ways of Working

1. **Core team hours.** Establish core team hours, an approximately three- to five-hour timeframe when teams must be online for collaborative in-sync engagement. Free up individual flexibility in managing their work schedules beyond core hours—instead of needing to be “on” from 9 to 5, make it possible for people like working parents, caregivers and people of all life stages to balance work with life responsibilities. For example, creating four-hour core collaboration hours that align with time zones versus physical locations.

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2. **Measure impact not actions.** The only way to allow people flexibility is to measure the impact they have versus the time “at desk.”
3. **Eliminate or disaggregate meetings.**

Monitor microaggressions and harassment

Proximity paradox

The hybrid model will create a two-tiered workforce

Proximity bias may create inequities and could entrench deeper structural inequality along racial and gender lines

Being out of sight out of mind

Information gets filtered

You should give heed to how you spend your day. With whom you’re spending the most time in your office? Is it the members who are in the office with you

Imbalance in the way off-site and on-site workers are treated

Rightly or wrongly, people sometimes feel that on-site workers get preferential treatment to remote workers.

Leaders may view employees 'seen' in the office as more dedicated and give them more support.

Remote workers may feel overlooked for training and promotion opportunities because they're less visible than those in the office.

Exclusion kills hybrid.

What are some of the other challenges of hybrid work?

While the hybrid workplace model seems to strike the right balance, it’s not without its flaws.

Adobe 2022 study

Technology issues 69%

Coordination of work – in person and virtual 51%

Commuting to the office 31%

People Challenges

Understand people’s emotions

Keep people engaged and informed

Wellbeing, resilience, recovery

Burnout

Coordination & scheduling is the key.

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Lost in the familiar- the return to the office

Psychological demands – transition, culture shift, change management

Not the same place – re-entry issues

In office work, once a daily routine – feels foreign and more difficult for some

Interpersonal relationships have changed

Not everyone comes back, teams are not intact

People have developed new routines and habits

We are going to be dealing with people we didn't want to deal with for a while

Rebuilding social capital different in hybrid

Difficulties in maintaining relationships

Being in a hybrid team is a bit like being in a long-distance relationship. It requires trust, regular contact and a lot of determination to make it work.

When people are working together all the time, it's relatively easy to collaborate, give feedback, get help, participate in meetings and build solid foundations within teams. And when some are working remotely, people become familiar with virtual collaboration and know to stay in touch with regular check-ins and virtual chats. But when teams are split, a disconnect can develop between those in the office and those at home.

Lack of spontaneous interaction

Many people enjoy the random chats that happen in the workplace. Remote employees can feel they miss out on office culture, spontaneous communication and team activities. Being there in person makes it easier to interact with each other, have instant catch-ups and socialize after work. Many of the challenges hybrid teams face come down to ease of connection.

Having to engage hybrid teams in new ways

Keeping remote workers engaged can be hard work and time-consuming – which is why some leaders perhaps don't give it as much attention as they should. Previously, you could walk around the office, notice body language and problem-solve when needed. Now, it's much harder to pick up on people's emotions if you can't see them in person. There's a risk that disillusionment will fester unless you find ways to create a new culture that combines in office and WFH.

Harder for new recruits to learn from more experienced staff

This is one of the biggest challenges of hybrid working. New hires can find it very difficult to learn the ropes if they only spend limited time with colleagues in the office. Not only that, forming bonds with co-workers is much harder if they don't have any in-person interaction. This can lead to feelings of isolation and frustration.

Impact on culture

The sense of belonging in an organization may not be as strong as when people are there all the time. Remote workers can feel less connected, out of the loop and like they can't contribute as

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much, ultimately feeling like they don't really fit in. All team members need to feel invested in the success of each other and the organization.

Mismatch in expectations of hybrid work

Broadly speaking, leaders are keener for staff to return to work in person than employees. That disconnect is made clear in a recent report by McKinsey . More than three-quarters of senior executives surveyed say they expect the typical 'core' employee to be back in the office at least three days a week.

But nearly three-quarters of employees say they would like to work from home for two or more days a week, and 52% want at least three days of remote working.

Less than 30% of staff feel return to work and office design policies and procedures had input from staff

Managers wedged between staff and leadership expectations

Double the number of leaders more interested in return to office, that's what they are most familiar with and it takes less effort.

Great reshuffling

Staff have a new "worth it" equation

Why people prefer WFH

- Avoid the commute – time and money
- Better wellbeing overall
- Work life balance
- Feel more productive

Need to make the office worth the commute, give people a compelling reason to come to office

Why staff stay or seek other work place

- Recognition
- In person and remote flexibility
- Improved voice at the table
- Hours and schedule flexibility

Burnout – systemic issue not individual

Burnout as a result of lack of managers & leaders not knowing how to lead in hybrid environment – too many meetings, too many emails

No recovery time

Long work days – organizational culture and administrative processes or tasks

More stretched for time 50% of managers, 20% of staff

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Think like a chef:

Look at the different recipes

Check your ingredients

Taste taste taste and adjust the seasoning

A chef works on only one task at a time and then cleans the workspace. Turn off notifications and make sure there's only one thing open on your computer so you can focus. There's abundant research that says multitasking prevents you from getting to a higher level of creativity and quality.