

Key Findings

Hybrid Office Report 2021

Space your Place®

May 2021

Space Your Place helps your company adopt hybrid office solutions in a productive, safe and cost-efficient way.

Our solutions boost people's productivity, focus and health while working from home.

[Learn More](#)

The results are in: companies should be implementing hybrid working structures to ensure employee productivity and happiness.

A hybrid working model is the most effective solution for companies and organisations to adapt to current workplace patterns.

After the pandemic, we know that the role of offices is going to shift dramatically. Many have been questioning if offices are even necessary, while others are keen to have entire workforces back in offices as soon as possible. We decided to see what employees wanted, and after surveying 568 people in 29 countries, it is clear that a "one-size-fits-all" framework isn't the answer. Companies have to work towards creating personalised workplace structures that will suit their corporate values, employees' needs and the creation of sustainable workspaces.

Where our results are conclusive, is in showing that hybrid working frameworks are essential; in fact, 72% of those surveyed stated a hybrid working opportunity is an essential consideration for their future career decision-making. Effectively, hybrid working means creating a blended structure in which employees can split their time between working from home (or another location chosen by them) and working from the office.

It makes sense to shift to a hybrid working structure from a purely business perspective, as when employees are happier, they become more productive, and therefore the quality and quantity of their work increases. In turn, this increases company output and therefore profits. Additionally, in increasing home-office days on a wider scale, the climate also benefits due to decreased traffic and reduced emissions from daily commuting.

It's worth noting that every city, country and continent have different cultural and societal norms that need navigating when creating new working structures. But, in our experience, to create a hybrid working environment that works for employees and the business, three key areas must be considered and correctly balanced:

1. company values
2. employees' needs
3. sustainable working environments

In the rest of this study, we outline the key findings from the survey, including the benefits of switching to hybrid working structures from both an employer and employee perspective, and highlight what unexpected things need to be considered in the transition from traditional working environments to blended working environments.

Why make the shift to hybrid working structures now?

A crisis (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), for all its negative implications, has the true power to create change, and one of the biggest changes has happened in the workplace. If companies want to attract and retain talent, they have to shift to a hybrid way of working as soon as possible. Why?

- **To not get left behind:** 64% of companies are considering redesigning physical spaces to better accommodate hybrid working environments. In fact, in New Zealand, China and Australia, there has been a big shift to providing hybrid working environments, and early feedback reveals exceptionally optimistic results.
- **To create value-driven environments:** organisations now need to consider sustainability measures more keenly than before, and a key way to do this is to adopt 'Planet Centric Design'. This effectively means energy and carbon reduction, improving interior water use, and implementing waste and recycling programmes; decreasing the number of employees in the office (and potentially downsizing the office) is a crucial way to achieve this.
- **To foster a sense of community:** one of the key findings from the study is that employees working from home reported a feeling of increased loneliness and a decreased sense of connection to their work and colleagues. Hybrid models of working allow for flexibility (a proven factor for employee well-being) while ensuring employees have a connection to each other, which ultimately increases the quality of their work.

Key findings

The impact of hybrid working structures on organisations

Reduced company overheads

Regular hybrid working means:

- office space can decrease in size by 10% (when employees work from home 15-20% of the time).
- a decrease in the annual cost of office space rental and required supplies.
- an increase in employee retention and satisfaction, saving the costs associated with recruitment and onboarding.

Leverage COVID investments for long-term profitability

Initial up-front expenditure will ensure:

- growth of the company's digital infrastructures.
- well-structured remote access for employees and freelancers.
- well-trained, effective staff.
- a greater workforce diversity (remote opportunities are more attractive to applicants such as women, Gen Z, and those without graduate degrees).

Things to watch for

Setting up a remote-working environment requires:

- an assessment of employer liability: there have been accidents in employees' homes that have raised concerns.
- prioritisation of cybersecurity protocols to avoid data breaches.
- a focus on employee well-being. 90% of workers spend time indoors without enough daylight or fresh air; organisations need to be proactive in countering this.

Key findings

How to design the optimal hybrid office

We objectively know that effective offices aren't simply spaces with desks and chairs, and it's key to remember this when designing new office frameworks. Post-pandemic, the social function of an office will be more important than ever.

Tip: an office workspace should ideally be structured with a mix of collaborative and informal spaces for exchange, as well as dedicated areas and focused work.

The below findings from the Space Your Place study should also be taken into consideration when developing hybrid workplaces.

Prioritise employees' well-being and health

75% of surveyed employees are anxious about:

- commuting via public transport services.
- being packed into an office elevator.
- the availability of good indoor ventilation.
- effective and regular sanitisation and hygiene measures.
- occupancy rates in the workplace.
- genuine social distancing.

Location is key

Our study revealed numerous trends for flexible workspaces and different office structures that can be considered as frameworks to structure hybrid offices:

- **hub and spoke:** a main office (hub) with smaller satellite offices or workspaces (spokes).
- **coworking spaces:** the rental of desks at co-working spaces with the option for employees to book desks on different days.
- **temporary co-locations:** a space where remote staff can gather regularly, sometimes staying in a large rented house, to collaborate on projects for a set period of time.

- **working from home:** employers help employees create a proper office space within their own home.
- **remote working:** sometimes referred to as work from anywhere or being a digital nomad, this allows employees to work from different geographies or locations chosen by employees themselves.

User-centric design essentials

To ensure office spaces work for employees, the following need to be considered:

- **health and wellness:** there must be an imperative focus on indoor ventilation, natural lighting, controlled office acoustics, strict hygiene measures and true ergonomic design.
- **foster belonging:** the office needs to be designed to increase human connection, and improve the office culture and sense of belonging. This can be done by creating:
 - dedicated spaces to learn and innovate.
 - project and collaborative working areas.
 - focused working spaces.
 - a wellness room.
 - employer-provided child care.
 - gardens (or other areas with a biophilic design).
- **interaction and activity:** foster and encourage a range of tasks and activities that have been proven to increase productivity and well-being. For instance:
 - individual work: focused (deep) work, reading and learning, and thinking and strategizing.
 - in the office: project collaboration, topic discussions, informal working sessions, and in-person strategy meetings.

Key findings

The effects of hybrid working on employees

Employees' future office structure wish-list

Employees today want more flexibility, autonomy, and the ability to choose when and where they work:

- 72% want a hybrid model, with 2-3 days maximum at the office and the rest spent working remotely.
- 99% of employees demand more freedom and trust, and push back against frequent check-ins and micro-management.
- 65% wish to have proper equipment provided by the company.

Lowered personal costs

Employees need to expend less as they:

- avoid commuting.
- have a decreased need to buy meals outside the house.

Boosted productivity

Our study shows that remote working leads to a:

- 13.5-16% increase of individual productivity.
- 50+ minute average increase in time worked per employee per day.
- decreased number of working days missed.

Decreased stress relating to the pandemic

Employees are, of course, concerned about the impact of contracting COVID in their places of work:

- 70+% feel at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to their job (the perceived risk increases if they are in direct contact with others).
- those who work from home recover faster from minor illnesses.

Drawbacks of a 100% remote working setup

Following 12 months of pure home office working, it is clear that there are large drawbacks to this as a full-time working structure because of:

- **a decrease in fresh air:** most homes are not properly ventilated, and Europeans and Americans spend an average of 90% of their time indoors in closed environments.
- **an increase in physical pain:** 32% have developed neck and/or back pain due to a poor desk setup.
- **a lack of mobility:** home office leads to a 38% decrease in movement, and 54% sit for longer than 4.5 non-interrupted hours, which impacts both physical and mental health.
- **no dedicated office space:** our study shows that employees who had access to a dedicated office space reported a much better home working experience than those who did not have a not dedicated workspace.

Things to watch for

As an employer, you can only reap the benefits of remote working when:

- employees receive proper training, support and equipment (otherwise productivity decreases).
- a human-centric workflow is created, with a focus on strong leadership and employee health and well-being.
- the right people, resources and equipment are available, and employees feel empowered.

Takeaways

Work must become more human

COVID has affected the global workforce in a way no one could have predicted, including bringing the five-generation workforce closer together. It is key to be mindful of the impact such an event (the pandemic) has had on both the personal and professional areas of people's lives, and then to ensure allowances are made for this when dealing with workforces.

For instance, employers must:

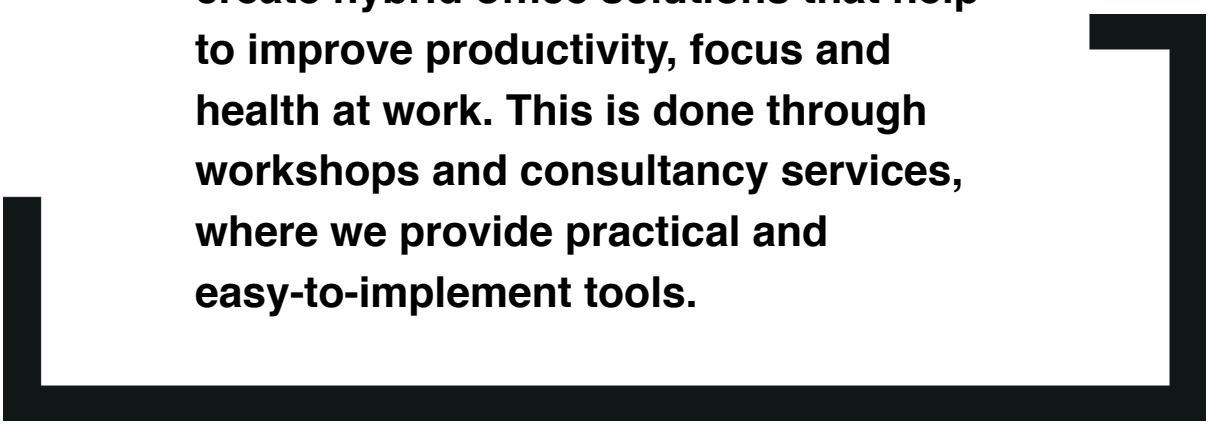
- embrace extreme flexibility, follow data insights, and continue listening closely to employees' needs, which will ultimately create a better future of work for everyone.
- create an environment that allows employees to become resilient, as it's the most resilient employers who will be the most successful (and resilient employers are supported by resilient employees).

Survey methodology

The 'Key Report Findings 2021' survey was conducted by Space Your Place between February and April 2021. In the process, 568 workers (full-time employed and self-employed) were interviewed across 29 countries.

There was a diversity of respondents surveyed across age, gender, region, work environment, industry, company size, tenure status and job level. Markets surveyed included Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Cayman Islands, China, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Privacy approach: Space Your Place takes privacy incredibly seriously and therefore anonymised all data before analysing it to create this report.



At Space you Place®, we design and create hybrid office solutions that help to improve productivity, focus and health at work. This is done through workshops and consultancy services, where we provide practical and easy-to-implement tools.

[Learn about our Services](#)