Employees are ready for hybrid work, are you?

Cisco Global Hybrid Work Study 2022

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Summary

In the two years since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on 11th March 2020, people's lives have been upended.

Among the many changes has been to the way we work. While initially, many employees were challenged by the sudden shift to hybrid and remote working arrangements, our study shows that two years on, as businesses have pivoted to survive, this mode of working has become the norm and yielded many positive and lasting benefits for both employers and employees.

Our survey of 28,000 full-time employees across 27 markets reveals that for most, across different generations, gender, and seniority, work performance has improved as well as employees' well-being, work-life balance, relationships, and even personal confidence.

With the evident benefits of hybrid working, going back to the old ways of doing things is not an option for employees or for those companies serious about competing for the best talent. However, while the vast majority feel hybrid work arrangements have benefitted them, with only around one in four employees saying their company is 'very prepared' for a hybrid work future, there is much work still to be done to fully embed hybrid work arrangements and bring employers to the same readiness levels.

Culture will be critical. Three quarters of employees say their company needs to rethink its culture and mindset to make hybrid work truly inclusive. Every aspect of the employee experience must be reimagined, and companies need to understand that employees' definitions of well-being and work-life balance have fundamentally changed.

As a result, there are several key changes employees want to see including even more flexibility and greater emphasis on employee wellness and work-life balance. Our study also finds that there is room to improve communications between senior managers and their teams.

Leaders must acknowledge that a point of no return has been reached and there must be deeper and more concerted investments in culture, communications, technology, workplace policies, and infrastructure to thrive in the new hybrid working future. This study shows that employees don't want either end of the extremes – to be back in the office or to be working fully remotely – they want a middle ground that offers flexibility to achieve their own personal version of work-life integration that works for them and their employer.

This also means the reasons employees will go to the office in the future will change. Rather than a place of everyday work, it is more likely to become a meeting place for in-person group collaboration and work, where it is required, and for social connection and interaction with colleagues. With this, organizations must rethink how they see their office space, why employees will need it, and how they use it.

Hybrid is working for employees and it can work for employers too – how ready are you for a hybrid working future?

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Spotlight: Spain

Hybrid working has improved every area of wellbeing, work-life balance, and performance for employees. While organizations have also reaped positive benefits, more needs to be done to build an inclusive culture and fully embed hybrid work arrangements to boost readiness levels.

Hybrid work is making employees wealthier, fitter, and happier

Performance improvements

- 58% — Quality of work
- 58.3% — Productivity
- 51.2% — Job knowledge and skills
- 41.7% — Workplace relations and attitude

Overall well-being

Hybrid working has improved overall well-being for **77.1%** of employees

- 78.2% are happier
- 81.4% improved work-life balance

Key drivers for improvement:

- 62% More flexible work schedules
- 57.4% Reduced commuting time

52% saved 4+ hours per week / 18% saved 8+ hours per week

Financial well-being

Hybrid work has saved employees money:

73.7% saved money in the past 12 months

Average saving US$137 a week / US$7,124 a year

Average income increase 11.1%

- 91.5% commuting costs
- 79.2% food and entertainment

70.8% would take these savings into account when considering changing jobs.

Physical well-being

54.6% say hybrid working has improved their physical well-being

- 64.7% eat healthier
- 68.6% exercise more
- 63.3% are physically fitter

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Social well-being

Employees' relationships have improved:

- 68% with family
- 45.1% with friends

Most employees are also more confident with **51.2%** reporting better self-esteem and confidence.

Emotional and mental well-being

Hybrid working has improved mental well-being for **64.1%** and emotional well-being for **55.9%**.

57.2% say stress levels have decreased

Top reasons:

- 19.6% **work environment less pressurized**
- 29.3% **greater flexibility**

Because of the benefits realized, hybrid working is now preferred

65.6% want hybrid work arrangement

Their employers have been supportive of hybrid working

- 63.6% **supportive**
- 21.6% **very supportive**

An inclusive work culture is vital to support hybrid work

73.7% say companies need to rethink culture and mindset to make hybrid work truly inclusive.

However, most are unsure their organization is fully prepared

17.4% employees feel their employer is 'very prepared' for a hybrid working future

Trust remains fickle

- Believe their manager trusts them to be productive when working remotely — 72%
- Believe their colleagues can be trusted to work remotely — 58.4%

And over half believe that remote workers will have challenges fully engaging with their

- 36.5% **company**
- 43% **colleagues**

Technology presents opportunities and risks in the hybrid work future

Networking infrastructure

- 70.3% **say suffering connectivity issues on a regular basis is career limiting for remote workers**
- 84.7% **say networking infrastructure is essential for a seamless working from home experiences**
- 66.4% **say their company currently has the right networking infrastructure**

Cybersecurity

- Feel cybersecurity is critical for making hybrid working safe — 77.3%
- Think business leaders are familiar with cyber risks of hybrid work — 61.5%
- Believe their organisation currently has the right capabilities and protocols in place — 63.7%
- Think all employees in their company understand the cyber risks — 58.9%

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