

The Guide to the Hybrid Workplace

2023 Edition



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THE GUIDE TO THE HYBRID WORKPLACE | 2023 EDITION

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2023

FOREWORD

As the UK's leading office design and build company, we understand the challenges businesses are facing when it comes to bringing people back to the office and navigating new ways of working.

This guide has been developed to help you understand more about the shift to hybrid working and what that means for your people and your office space.

While hybrid working is currently being hailed as the future of work, we might still look back on the concept as the best option in difficult times. Right now, without the necessary planning, commitment from leadership and buy-in from employees, there are issues to hybrid working that can impact your success. Burnout, demoralised staff and spiralling costs are just a few threats facing businesses if the process isn't managed correctly. In these uncertain times, we're here to help ensure you make the best decisions you can - informed by the science we've seen work with real-world clients.

Regardless of whether hybrid working is here to stay, the purpose of the office has changed. The workplace needs to provide opportunities that people don't have at home. From facilitating social bonding, improving collaboration to creating a better environment to engage with work, there are lessons to be learnt from the pandemic. They just need to be applied.

CRAIG SMITH | CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER AT OKTRA

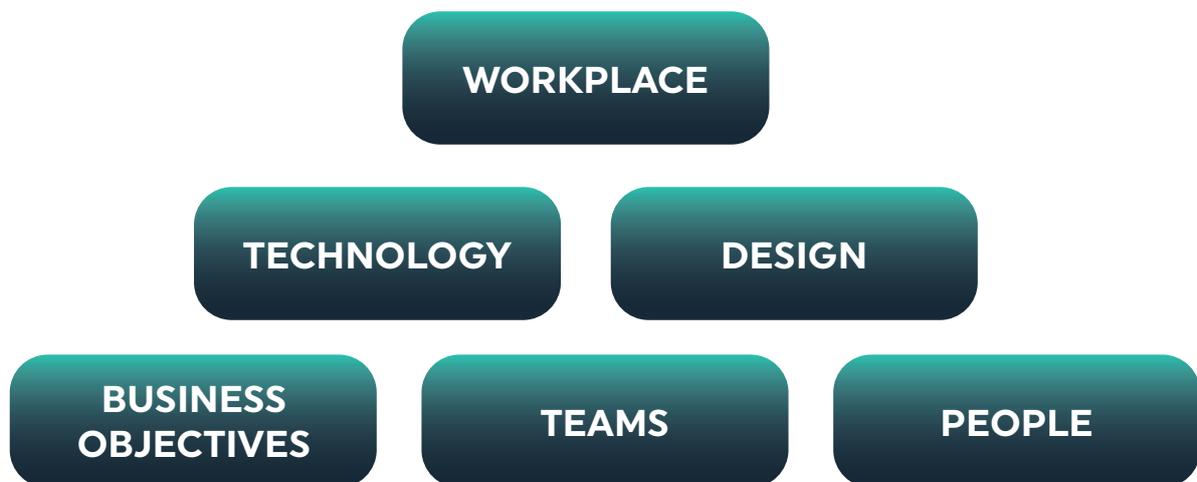


ARE YOU READY FOR HYBRID WORKING?

Taking the time to challenge the existing ways of working in your business will enable you to prioritise how you can improve your workplace. Whether you have an upcoming lease event or you are researching the best options for your business, our experts will guide you through the process.

We are already helping clients design their offices to implement hybrid working. By exploring key areas in your business, we can develop a strategy with you that addresses your requirements and transforms your office for hybrid working.

6 Key Areas to Assess Before Adopting Hybrid Working



Our workspace experts have unparalleled industry knowledge and experience helping businesses create workplace strategies that build success.

If you're contemplating hybrid working or have any questions about it, our professional teams are here to help | 020 7553 9500

WHAT IS HYBRID WORKING?

Hybrid working is an operational arrangement where a company allows their staff to do a combination of office-based and remote work.

While workplaces of the past required all employees to be physically present in the office, the future is about flexibility, blending in-person and remote collaboration. Hybrid working means employees are spending less time in the office and have more flexibility in their work. This shift has required office design to evolve to support a more transient workforce that is expecting a more purposeful and functional office.

Hybrid working will need a hybrid workplace

The hybrid workplace is a framework for your office that enables hybrid working. This will typically be a blend of traditional office space with agile design features that will accommodate new ways of working.

By aligning the key components of your business, the design of your office can be used to optimise your ways of working and enable the hybrid workplace.



66% OF LEADERS SAY THEIR COMPANY IS CONSIDERING REDESIGNING OFFICE SPACE FOR HYBRID WORK

[STATISTA, GLOBAL WORK TRENDS: APRIL 2021]

UNDERSTANDING WORKPLACE TERMS

As the term hybrid-working has risen in popularity, it is often used in the wrong context which can make talking about the hybrid workplace even more confusing. To help explain how hybrid working is different to other working models, here is a short comparison of different ways of working.

Agile working

Employees are given autonomy in deciding how their work can be carried out with the prevailing focus on the outcome over the processes involved. It is directed by company culture and encouraged through furniture and technology.

Flexible working

Flexible working is predominantly based on working hours and how the traditional 9-5 can be adapted to accommodate a better work/life balance. It is directed and encouraged by HR policy, individual needs and company culture.

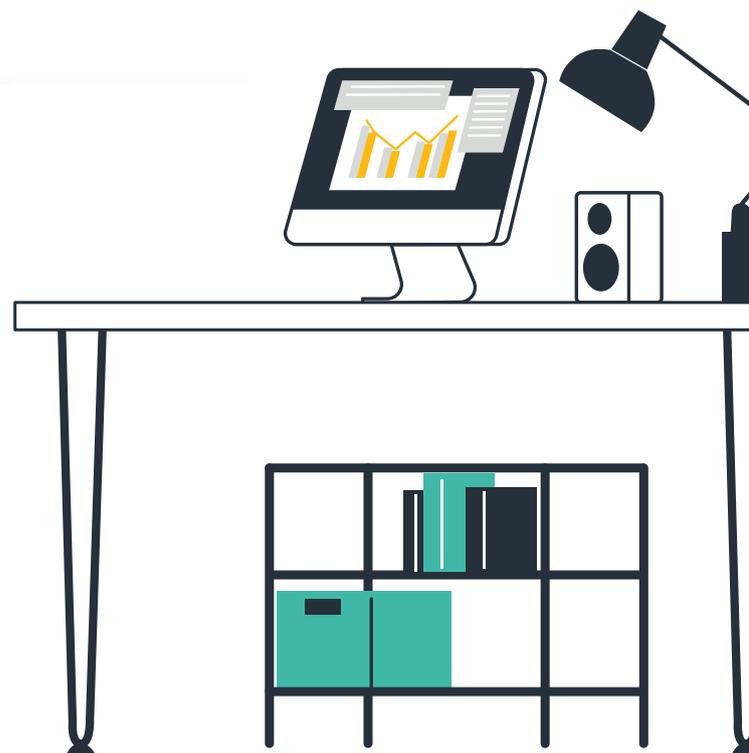
Hybrid working

Hybrid working is the combination of remote and office-based work, promoting a blend of environments and offering the best of both worlds. It is directed by HR policy, individual needs and company culture and encouraged by technology.

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"Hybrid working can't just be bolted-on to your current policies. You'll need to find the most effective ways of carrying out a task and create a strategy that brings together people, processes, connectivity and technology."

DOMINIC DUGAN, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, OKTRA



HOW CAN HYBRID WORKING HELP?

As companies return to the office, the hybrid working model has proven to be a popular way of working and companies are seeing the benefits of hybrid work across their business operations.



"To remain relevant post-pandemic, the office must become truly adaptable for people: providing spaces that offer high levels of individual control, inviting the people who use the space to reshape it around their needs at that moment."

DOMINIC DUGAN, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, OKTRA



Boost performance and productivity

Increased control over working environments can help people achieve greater productivity and improved focus. A study by Accenture found that 63% of global high-growth organisations have enabled "productivity-anywhere" workforce models.

Increase job satisfaction and wellbeing

Research has shown that when employees have more control over their work-life balance, they are more engaged with their jobs and their wellbeing improves. Employee experience is essential to keeping staff happy in the hybrid workplace.

Enhanced recruitment and retention

Research suggests two-thirds of those aged 25-34 would not consider applying for a role if hybrid working was unattainable. Furthermore, 83% of workers would now be more likely to apply for a position if it offered flexible ways of working.

Lower overheads

Employing a hybrid working model makes it possible to reduce office size by as much as 50%. Where companies decide to retain their real estate, workspaces can be redesigned to enable hybrid working or sub-let additional space.

CHALLENGES TO HYBRID WORKING

While hybrid working is being held up as the future of work and the solution to getting people back into the office, it doesn't come without its drawbacks. Before diving headfirst into hybrid working, it is important to understand some of the challenges that businesses have already started to face.

1. The potential for inequality

Not everyone has the luxury of a home office or peaceful space to work. Cramped conditions in shared houses or noisy studio flats with no desk space can negate all the benefits listed.

2. Fear of missing out

In-person interactions produce stronger bonds with teams and colleagues than virtual communications. Those who feel neglected may assume they're missing out on these opportunities, affecting perceptions of promotion and company culture.

3. Subcultures can form

When teams are physically separated from each other, there's a greater risk of disconnection. Poorly managed teams can become isolated silos working towards their own goals rather than the company vision - spurring unhealthy competition and mistrust.

4. Loss of communication

Digital-first communication can make it harder to be creative and share ideas with colleagues. These ideas have to be booked into the diary which can dilute innovative ad-hoc moments.

5. Cultural impact

The office draws people together and connects employees. Hybrid working can reduce face time between teams which can impact culture, mentorship and connections to business values.



67% OF EMPLOYEES WANT MORE IN-PERSON WORK OR COLLABORATION POST-PANDEMIC

[STATISTA, GLOBAL WORK TRENDS: APRIL 2021]

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY

If hybrid working is going to be a successful, long-term solution for your business, the way it is implemented is essential. Each business will have a different strategy based on its objectives and existing work patterns, but these steps will help create a strong foundation before you make any adaptations to your workplace.



These are key steps to follow before you start hybrid working in your business. Whether you are relocating offices or adapting your existing workplace, understanding what hybrid working can help your business achieve and clearly communicating this with staff is crucial. The hybrid workplace will be driven by a positive employee experience and a clear vision of how to deliver on business objectives.

01 Establish your objectives

Exploring how a hybrid working model can support your business objectives will determine whether you should adopt hybrid working. You may find that you can achieve your goals by making other changes to your workplace.

02 Define operational needs

Each department will have different requirements from the office. Understanding the operational needs of each team will determine employee preferences as well as how your workplace could be optimised.

03 Review current space demands

There is a misconception that hybrid working automatically means you need less office space. Optimising your space and reviewing current activity levels will help determine how much space you need.

04 Budget and timescales

The hybrid workplace may require your business to improve your IT infrastructure, equipment and office layout – it is not a simple just starting hybrid working in your current space. To ensure employee buy-in, a phased implementation will help negotiate any friction.

05 Communicate changes and expectations

Moving to a new way of working requires good communication. If you are expecting certain staff to use the office in a different way, setting these expectations out before making changes to your workplace is likely to ensure a smooth transition.

There is still a lot of uncertainty about how to best approach hybrid working, but we believe there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Every company will view hybrid working slightly differently and that is why it is important to prepare properly. Our workplace specialists can help you with the planning process and answer any questions you have about the hybrid workplace. From helping you design your new office to developing a new scheme for your existing workplace, we're here to help you.

**Contact us to
discuss your
workplace ambitions:**

Call: 020 7553 9500

Email: info@oktra.co.uk

ASSEMBLING YOUR TEAM

As with any business transition, greater demands are placed on leadership to ensure the shift is seamless. Primarily, leaders will need to address the fears and biases surrounding remote and flexible working - ensuring that adoption is encouraged, incentivised and managed across the entire workforce, regardless of location.



Chief People Officer/Human Resources

Whether you decide to utilise your current Human Resources team or create new positions dedicated to employee experiences, HR is your primary leader in creating hybrid work success. From understanding current needs, effectively managing the transition to monitoring performance, these leaders are essential in boosting adoption and ensuring no one is neglected in the shift.



Chief Operating Officer/Operations

Workplace transitions cause a wide range of unforeseen consequences and shifting the way your people work is bound to create broader procedural challenges. Your operations teams will be vital in planning ahead of these, ensuring any large-scale interruptions are kept to a minimum.



Chief Information Officer/IT

The mass appeal of remote working began with mobile technology, so IT leaders will need to be a part of any shift in work strategy. Buy-in from IT management is essential in combining IT policy with its operations - from ensuring your people have virtual work equipment to confirming employees understand how to use it.



Workplace Champions

There will be a wide range of perspectives towards the move, which can cause instability - this is where workplace champions come in. This group consists of high-performing and engaged employees who assess the current status quo in the company and filter feedback to management. This group helps prevent a "them and us" fracturing of company culture and identify any issues that might impact engagement and performance. When choosing champions, you'll want a mix of different teams and those using the office and remote working.

DEFINING YOUR BUDGET

After people, real estate is the highest cost for most companies. So while a downsized headquarters might reduce overheads, other costs such as coworking spaces and home-office setups need to be considered.

Office Space

- Rent, rates and service charges
- Building security
- Maintenance
- Existing contracts
- Dilapidations

Home Offices

- DSE (Display Screen Equipment) Assessments
- Leasing or purchasing mobile and AV devices
- WiFi and broadband contributions
- Office furniture and equipment
- Installation and set-up

Coworking/Service offices

- Membership costs
- Service charges
- Additional furniture
- Additional IT equipment
- Branding

IT Costs

- Cloud software
- Teleconferencing tools
- Monitoring software
- Data security

Soft costs

- Staff expenses
- Project contingency
- Insurances
- Staff training



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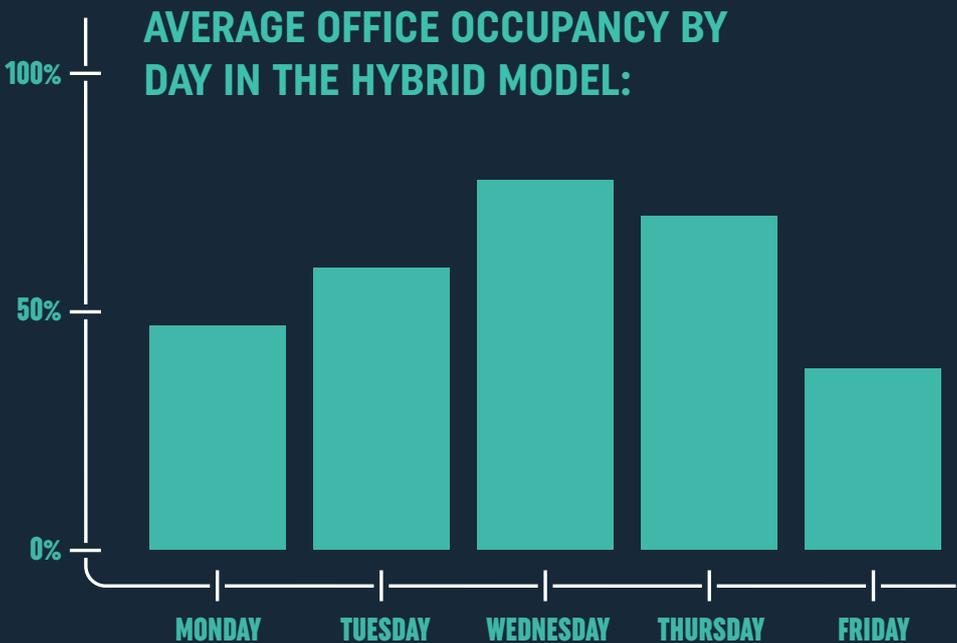
“There’s no one size fits all when adopting hybrid working practices - that’s why listening to your staff is vital. Building your employees’ feedback into your strategy is the best way to bring people on the journey. Creating an inclusive strategy will help your business move towards a shared purpose and unified culture.”

CRAIG SMITH, CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, OKTRA

DEFINING OCCUPANCY LEVELS

If you are planning to reduce or increase your office space, you need to understand your occupancy rates and workplace usage. This allows you to calculate how much space you realistically need and also how much space is being underutilised. For example, an occupancy level of 60% means 60% of desks or seats are occupied at any given time.

Hybrid working relies on the fact that not everyone will be in the office at the same time. Typically an occupancy rate of 64% was the standard estimate pre-pandemic. In the hybrid model, the focus is on the average number of days an employee is in the office. Without making any changes to your office, the occupancy rate of a hybrid working office will be around 50%.



The challenge with occupancy in the hybrid model is normalising occupancy across the entire week to make offices more balanced. As you can see from the estimates in the graph, Wednesday is the peak occupancy day with Friday being the quietest. This is to be expected but to make the office more efficient, the goal would be to have the office at 50% occupancy for the entire week. This takes the pressure off the busier days and makes the drop on a Friday less disparate to the rest of the week.

DESIGNING FOR HYBRID WORKING

The way we use the office has changed which means that workplace design has to evolve to support hybrid working. The office must have a perpetual lure and demonstrate how it can provide people with a purposeful experience.

What does the hybrid workplace need to offer?

With people splitting their time between the office and remote locations, time spent in the office has to present real value to employees to ensure they benefit from those days in the office.

Benefits of designing the office for hybrid working:

- Empowers new ways of working
- Optimises productivity
- Attracts and retains talent
- Supports flexibility and growth
- Improves space utilisation
- Unites employees



DESIGNING FOR HYBRID: FOCUS

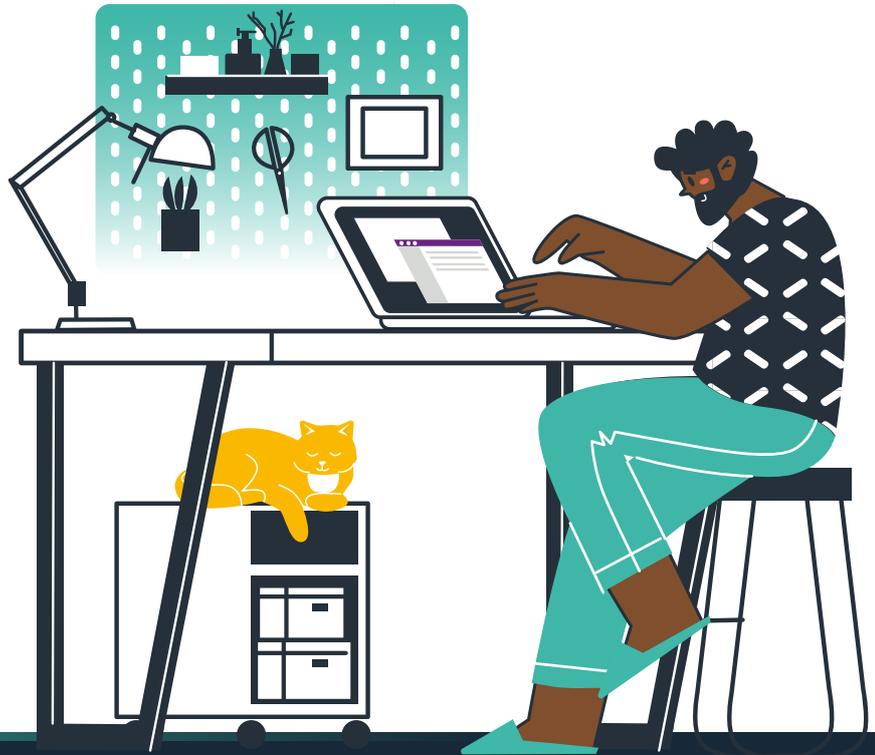
For those who can't work remotely or need the physical office to complete their primary work tasks, it's crucial to design spaces for focus and wellbeing. To ensure office-based staff receive equal benefits to those working remotely, they need a range of settings, enabling them to choose where best suits their workstyle and comfort level.

Types of space

- Booth, cubicle and pod seating
- Niches and nooks
- Socially distanced workstations
- Breakout zones

Tech & equipment

- Sit/stand desks
- Fully-adjustable task chairs
- Individual storage pedestals
- Modular worksurfaces, panels and modesty screens



Key features

- Desk hotelling to support a mobile workforce using the workplace on a part-time basis
- A range of solo settings to support changing workstyles and activities throughout the day
- Neighbourhood layouts to build a sense of community while working alone
- Individual settings and personal tables help ensure physical distancing
- Fully adjustable work settings - from task lights to ergonomic seating and desking

DESIGNING FOR HYBRID: COLLABORATION

Hybrid working moves away from assigned desks and personalised workspaces in favour of collaboration zones and hot-desking. This layout creates opportunities for cross-pollination between departments and facilitates those all-important chance encounters that cannot be scheduled or replaced with virtual meetings or calls.

Types of space

- Scrum rooms
- Small meeting rooms
- Video conference suites
- Huddle spaces
- Cafe space

Tech & equipment

- Plug & play technology
- Tackable wall surfaces
- Digital whiteboards
- Lockers and shelves
- Audio-visual conference tech



Key features

- Acoustic panelling and partitioning throughout the office helps limit distraction
- Intuitive tech and tools to seamlessly capture, record and disseminate information
- Space facilitates and fosters chance encounters and quick meetings
- Conference rooms create spaces for remote and in-person meetings on a level playing field

DESIGNING FOR HYBRID: SOCIAL

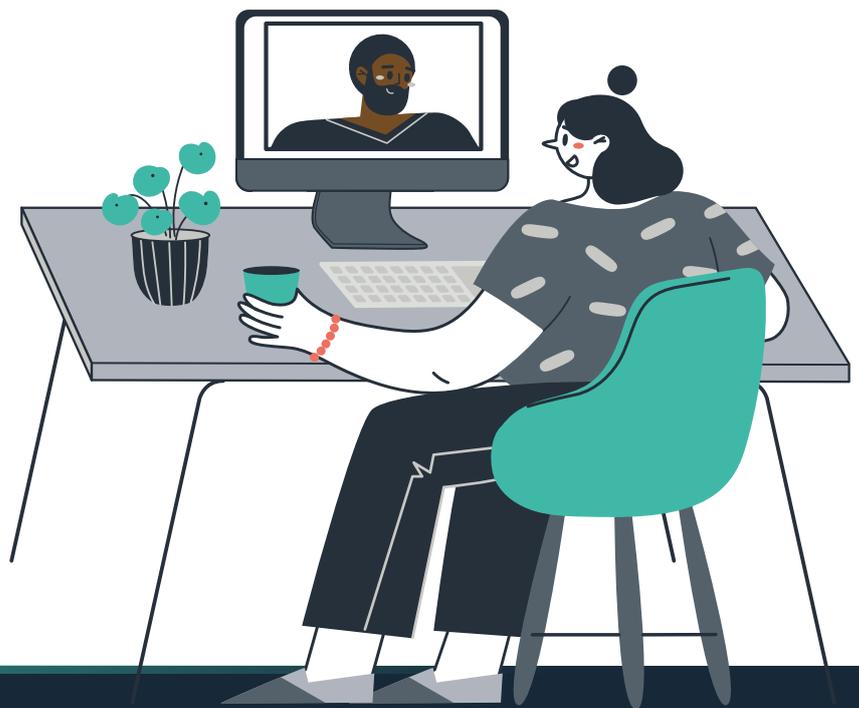
We have learned from the pandemic the importance of connections and relationships, and more specifically, in-person contact. The office plays a role in rebuilding these social networks which also helps knowledge sharing allows people to reconnect with company culture - helping them find purpose and belonging within the physical workplace and through virtual gatherings.

Types of space

- Reception areas
- Outdoor social spaces
- Lunch and cafe retreats
- Conference rooms
- Breakout zones
- High table bar seating
- Gaming areas

Tech & equipment

- Flexible and modular seating
- Power and data integrated furniture
- Cubby holes, booths and cloistered seating
- Moveable screens, dividers and partitioning



Key features

- Welcoming spaces that foster community and connection across teams and projects
- Blend of formal and informal work settings to enable different types of meeting
- Office circulation designed to help boost chance encounters between teams
- Breakout areas support internal team dynamics and reaffirm company culture
- Structured layouts and acoustic-absorbent furniture limit noise and distraction

INTEGRATING COMPANY CULTURE

Company culture is a vital part of what it feels like to work in a business. With the increase of remote and hybrid working, it is more important than ever to ensure our physical and digital workplaces foster culture. Business leaders have a role to play in preserving company culture but the office can also help create an inclusive, nurturing environment.

5 elements required to preserve culture in a hybrid workplace:

1

Learning: Mentorship and knowledge-sharing that helps employees progress.

2

Inclusivity: Having a shared sense of trust, vision and purpose.

3

Productivity: The ability to find focus and collaborate.

4

Comfort: The ability to feel comfortable physically and emotionally.

5

Flexibility: Having more control over where and how they work.



83% OF SURVEYED CEOs RATED THEIR ORGANISATION'S PIVOT TO REMOTE WORK AS A SUCCESS. BUT ONLY 5% THOUGHT THEIR COMPANY CULTURE WOULD SURVIVE A PERMANENT SHIFT TO FULLY REMOTE OPERATIONS

[PWC, REMOTE WORK SURVEY 2021]

HOW TECH SUPPORTS HYBRID WORK

Technology helped us work remotely during the pandemic, but the changing needs of business propelled the significance of tech even further. Being ready for hybrid working means having the tools and technology to support your individuals and teams, making work seamless across home offices, coworking spaces and shared conference rooms - wherever work is done.

Connectivity

- Plug and play at individual workstations, hot desks and private meeting spaces
- Power to support desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones
- AV integration in meeting rooms to engage both in-person and remote participants
- WiFi and bandwidth to account for mobile workers

Flexibility

- Modular furniture with power and data integrated technology
- Visible signage and improved wayfinding
- Dedicated video meeting equipment
- Digital whiteboards and automated assistants to capture meeting notes
- Power and data touchdown areas in lounge spaces and social areas

98% BELIEVE THEY WILL HAVE MEETINGS WITH PARTICIPANTS JOINING FROM HOME

[CISCO, HYBRID TRENDS 2021]

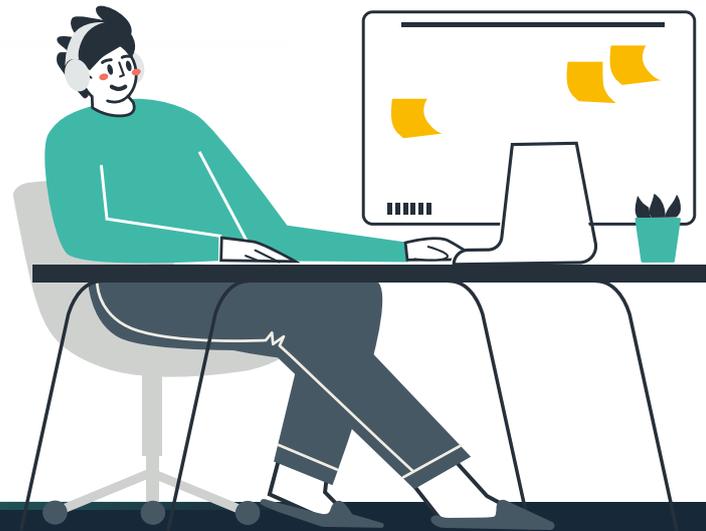


HELPING YOU TRANSITION TO THE HYBRID WORKPLACE

If you're moving office in the next two years, then it is likely that you will be looking to adopt hybrid working at some level. As emerging working trends continue to shape our working environments, office space will need to be designed differently.

66% OF BUSINESS DECISION MAKERS ARE CONSIDERING REDESIGNING PHYSICAL SPACES TO BETTER ACCOMMODATE HYBRID WORK ENVIRONMENTS

[MICROSOFT 2021 WORK TREND INDEX]



We are advising our clients to consider the following questions before making any changes to your workplace or ways of working:

- **What are your business objectives?**
- **How will hybrid working impact your people?**
- **What technology do you need to optimise your office?**
- **In which ways will your office change to accommodate hybrid working?**
- **How will you monitor the performance of your workplace?**
- **How will you retain collaboration in your office?**

Every strategy will be built on different requirements and the best way to build the foundation on the objectives you want to achieve. Our team can support you from the early stages of your project and discuss the best options available to you.

25+

YEARS DELIGHTING OUR CLIENTS

For over 25 years we have sought continuous improvement, extending our high-quality service throughout the design and build sector. Our people are always learning, always challenging and never settle for less than excellence.

In this time, we've improved the working lives of over **200,000** people.

WHY OKTRA?

Our creative teams work with you to develop designs that enable you and your people to achieve your ambitions.

We believe everyone should love where they work - it's why every space we create captures the essence of its people.

FIND OUT MORE

Thank you for reading - we hope you've found our guide helpful, wherever you are in your fit out journey. If you'd like to learn more, check out our other guides, checklists and articles below:

[DOWNLOAD](#)

[The Hybrid Lookbook](#)

[DOWNLOAD](#)

[The Office Reintegration Guide and Checklist](#)

[DOWNLOAD](#)

[The Age of Agility](#)



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