

How to Enhance Employee Experiences in Hybrid Work



F R O S T  S U L L I V A N

Powering clients to a future shaped by growth



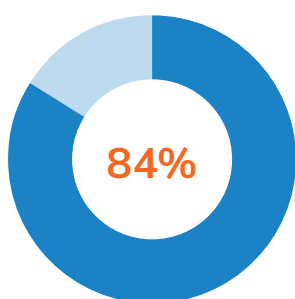
Contents

Introduction.	3
Hybrid Work Impact on Culture, Connection, and Collaboration	4
The Role of Technology in Building Trust & Community among a Dispersed Workforce.	5
Keeping a Remote Workforce Engaged and Motivate through Integrated A/V and Unified Communications	6
A People-centric C-Suite Makes Collaboration and Connection More Meaningful.	7
Best Practices for Long-term Success	8

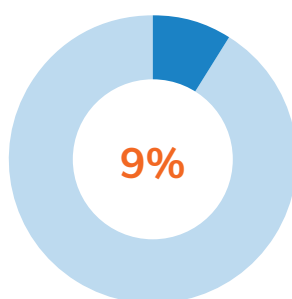
Introduction

Social-distancing protocols associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly impacted how many people work and communicate with teammates, partners, and customers. Certain industries, worker roles and preferences, and company cultures will allow for a continuation of work-from-home and flexible work practices at higher than pre-COVID-19 levels going forward. The resulting hybrid workforce will comprise some employees working in formal company offices and others working from remote locations on any given day.

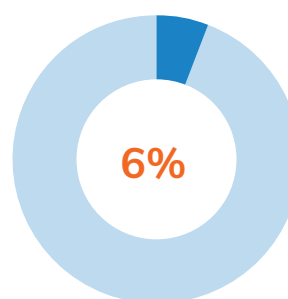
Frost & Sullivan research finds that:



of organizations plan to support hybrid work at some level in the future



have no plans to support hybrid work



are planning for all employees to work remotely full-time

However, nearly 30% of organizations are uncertain of how to begin executing long-term strategies amid evolving circumstances. Those strategies may need adjustment.

HYBRID WORK BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES	
Top Benefits of Remote Work	Top Challenges of Remote Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater access to talent located anywhere • Increased employee productivity • Reduced costs (e.g., real estate and carbon footprint) • Lower employee turnover • Enhanced inclusivity • Improved business continuity • Improved employee work/life balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of proper technology tools • Complicated access to corporate applications and services • Meeting fatigue • Disengaged employees • Distractions/no dedicated office space • Lack of meeting equity • Weakened co-worker relationships

Hybrid Work Impact on Culture, Connection, and Collaboration

Company culture, job roles, and employee preferences strongly impact hybrid work adoption rates. Trust in company leadership and among team members also factor in heavily. In the many months since the proliferation of working from home and the emergence of hybrid work, several effects have surfaced.

Established teams that were already connected, had existing trusting relationships, and had ingrained workflows have been more likely to remain engaged and productive throughout the transition of work locations. Less cohesive teams and new employees must form these important bonds and practices to coordinate and collaborate effectively, as well as to feel included and valued by the team and their organization overall.

“Working remotely has opened up a lot of new discoveries. Many people didn’t feel at all comfortable in the office—needing to come at certain hours and sit in a room that’s too hot or cold, and other things that make people uncomfortable. The new remote work setting has opened up a lot of new understanding of what inclusion actually means.”

—Jan Krogel, VP, Head of Employee Experience and People Analytics, Capgemini



The Role of Technology in Building Trust & Community among a Dispersed Workforce

The ability to see and be seen is an important facet of inclusion. Yet, even after countless Zoom, Teams, Webex, and other video meetings, many people are still not comfortable turning their cameras on. Not seeing other meeting participants is proven to cause misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and repeating of statements because of the inability to see body language. Remaining on mute and poor-quality audio also limit the ability to contribute and absorb information. As such, robust technology can build trust in co-workers and must be leveraged.

“Just making sure the technology is used effectively and that people do feel like they can be involved and part of a group, part of a community, so that they can all work effectively, can be really difficult.”

—Rich Knott, Senior Alliances Manager, Shure

Technology adoption may be somewhat impacted by employee demographics or location, but it is more likely that the success of hybrid work programs has more to do with employee maturity levels in their usage of collaboration technology, whether used in a home office audio-video setup, at an office workstation, or in a meeting room. Helping increase employee comfort or maturity levels is where managers and leaders must step up. In addition to their previous responsibilities, managers now need to monitor employee health and wellbeing to create a trustful relationship through Zoom, Teams, Webex, or other meeting platforms. Knowingly or not, managers help to develop, hone, enforce (e.g., decide whether they want to apply cameras or not), and harness company collaboration culture to drive trust, participation, and a sense of belonging.



Keeping a Remote Workforce Engaged and Motivate through Integrated A/V and Unified Communications

Collaboration technology, particularly video conferencing, affects people in different ways depending on where they are and how they use it. Today's leading video conferencing platforms also provide screen sharing, chat (in and outside of meetings), point-to-point calling, presence management, recording, and file sharing. While well-designed and modern audio solutions can help automate much of the meeting experience (e.g., in-room speaker tracking), it is often the rest of the integrated suite that requires user education to elevate employee success.

“If you need many hours of training, then that goes against the technology adoption model—it needs to be intuitive. Training is commonly about what tool is needed for what type of communication. How do you use Teams appropriately versus Yammer or another type of app? When do you need to use chat or call someone? Teams really need to spend time creating their own norms and making sure they get the appropriate training in terms of the communication channels.”

—Sandra Noe, R&D Director, Johnson & Johnson

IT may deploy systems for planned use cases; however, those systems can also serve a framework that empowers employees to learn how they want to engage with the technology and develop use cases that enhance their performance and that of their teams.

A People-centric C-Suite Makes Collaboration and Connection More Meaningful

Reliance on a hybrid and dispersed workforce leads to a concern that employees may perceive information as secondhand, dispensed from a top-down strategy. Filling in the missing ad hoc and less formal interactions, the “water cooler moments,” is important to sustaining connections and company culture when people are not physically present together.

“In the past, strategy was defined by top-level people, not really including the workers who actually perform the strategy, it cascaded down. With the pandemic we realized how dependent we are on the people. It’s great to have all the technologies, tools, and options but it’s definitely not just an IT decision. One way of keeping good people is to involve them much more in the strategy and in what’s going on in the company, so they can feel like part of the company, that we are really moving something forward. Technologies enable us but it’s the people who bring the strategy to life.”

—Jakub Kortus, Group CTIO, Creditinfo

To strengthen inclusivity and connection, the C-suite must consider the practices and processes of their workforce. Employees should have a say in the types of IT-approved technologies they use to perform tasks, collaborate, and interact. Employees must trust the technology to be a consistently supported, reliable, and easy-to-use tool that contributes to their personal success and that of their team and company.

Best Practices for Long-term Success

Every company is different according to its industry, region, employee roles and preferences, and the culture it strives to create.

When developing strategies to enhance employee experiences in the era of hybrid work, a few things are integral: a sense of trust, a sense of belonging, and an ability to contribute meaningfully. Company goals that incorporate these aspects must be established and be enabled by a strategy that incorporates the right collaboration technology.

“Everybody’s used the expression people are our greatest assets. It’s got to be a reality. It can’t be lip service anymore. We have to understand the needs of the people. Yes, trust comes into it, but you know who you can trust in your team and you know who you’ve got to monitor. Build on that by identifying what the customer needs, what works for them, and what works for employees. That’s really where we need to focus. It is people. You need the technology to make the people work more efficiently.”

—Clive Phillips, *Business Relationship Manager, L3 Technologies*





This article is produced as a result of a recently Virtual Think Tank session conducted by Frost & Sullivan.

F R O S T  S U L L I V A N

Growth is a journey. We are your guide.

For over six decades, Frost & Sullivan has provided actionable insights to corporations, governments and investors, resulting in a stream of innovative growth opportunities that allow them to maximize their economic potential, navigate emerging Mega Trends and shape a future based on sustainable growth.

Contact us: [Start the discussion](#)

The contents of these pages are copyright ©2022 Frost & Sullivan.