

Going Hybrid: When Work Isn't Business as Usual

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Over the past, uh, pandemic, the logistical aspect of work has changed dramatically. WFH has supplanted WFAO (work-from-an-office) as the status quo.

But, as you probably noticed, office work isn't exactly back, baby. Instead, we're in a hybrid mode of work... baby.

We're doing half-and-half, with some folks in-person, and others dialing in to every meeting. That's not a bad thing—the hybrid model has its benefits, including more flexibility for workers, less overhead for employers—but it's got to be done with intention and thoughtfulness. Otherwise, you'll get a big, unwelcome load of people talking over each other on conference calls.

To help you avoid that kind of unpleasantness, we've compiled some of the most important principles folks operating on a hybrid model should keep in mind.

To help you avoid that kind of unpleasantness, we teamed up with Eden Workplace and compiled some keys to successful hybrid work.

1. View your people as a resource

GoFundMe CEO Tim Cadogan took the helm of the charitable fund-raising company in March 2020, just as the circumstances of pandemic life began to settle around us. He was faced with a major challenge; not just a new position, but a new reality. To bridge the gap, he mined his human resources, recasting his coworkers as teachers. By understanding his own role as student, rather than as educator or authority Cadogan felt he was able to gain a stronger grasp on the company and the challenges average employees faced.

2. Double down on communication

Hybrid work means work is more verbal than ever. When we work IRL, nonverbal cues comprise a staggering proportion of our relationships. But when the workforce is (even partly) distributed, those subliminal messages are no longer a factor, which means your non-subliminal messages need to be clearer than ever.

3. Prioritize trust

In a remote world, if coworkers don't trust each other, they can't work together. Because we all have extenuating circumstances every now and then—we've all woken up to discover a sick dog, or a kid with a snow day, or that we've developed a sinus infection before going to bed. In a post-Covid world, the ability to let our coworkers know we'll have to be out for a couple of hours is essential. Give your people that ability, and they'll give you the world.

Part of that is encouraging honesty. It's not always easy to say to your boss, "Hey, I'm not sure I can make it to the office today." In fact, it almost never is. So, it's important to actively encourage that kind of candid communication, especially if you're in a position of authority.

4. Be cognizant of which team members want to work remotely—and why

So that you can correct any imbalances that result from a hybrid setup. Surveys have shown that women favor remote work more than men, and men with children are more likely to receive promotions while working remotely than women. Which tells us that decisions about remote work feed into broader societal dynamics...and it's wise to keep that in mind.

When women work remotely, they may miss out on career-making opportunities. So, it's very important to be aware of how people are explicitly or implicitly penalized for working in-person or remote.

5. Invest in helpful tools for managing your space

When you've gone hybrid, your physical office needs to get more adaptable. How many of your employees will come in a few days per week, and how many will remain remote? Which desks should remain dedicated, and which should be "hot desks"?

Eden Workplace's workplace management solutions take all the puzzling out of those hybrid work dilemmas. Their software tools, including desk booking, vaccine tracking, and room scheduling empower you to forge ahead into the hybrid work future, without getting tripped up on logistics.