HYBRID BUSINESS NOW

NINE QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

MAKE IT

NOW TOGETHER HERE

Canon

FOREWORD

Louella Fernandes, Director, Quocirca

The past few years have been a time of incredible change for us all.

Businesses have had to innovate to become more agile and flexible than ever. Industry leaders have reinvented themselves in their individual sectors. The employer-employee power dynamic has changed, perhaps permanently.

If anything's been highlighted by the shift, it's that businesses are about people – and the attitudes of people are changing too. Since 2020, something of a perfect storm has been gathering. Climate change, digital disruption, global shortages and supply chain issues... It's been black swan event after black swan event, and our collective consciousness has evolved as a result.

One of the ways this has manifested is in a workforce that's in flux. According to our Future of Work 2025 research study, 70% of UK and US employees now want to work in a hybrid setting. And that makes sense. The pandemic was an opportunity for everyone to re-evaluate not just their work-life balance but also the types of companies they want to work for. We found that 42% now plan to leave their jobs in the next 12 months. That rises to 52% for 18 to 34-year-olds.

The numbers confirm it: The Great Resignation – or 'The Great Reprioritisation' – is absolutely cause for alarm. As Gen Z enters the workforce, it's becoming obvious that they have different ways of working, and different expectations of work. We are managing a multi-generational workforce and the newcomers' expectations will only become more important with time. Managing this power shift will require a conscientious approach.

70% OF UK AND US EMPLOYEES NOW WANT TO WORK IN A HYBRID SETTING

This more agile, distributed and socially conscious workforce is also dramatically changing our understanding of the workspace itself. Despite fewer desks being used overall, 40% of businesses expect their office footprint to increase between now and 2025. The traditional perception of the office as a place to get your head down and work is fading. We're seeing more purpose-built collaboration workspaces, floor plans being redesigned to feel more spacious, and many adopting the hub and spoke model of central operations and local offices.

Understanding how people work together is key. To avoid being left behind, organisations really need to be thinking about how they can deliver seamless collaboration – regardless of location. That means looking at how information and data flow between people and places.

Data has always underpinned every business process and is now even more crucial – for digital transformation, but more importantly for the sake of creating more inclusive environments that anyone can access from anywhere. No one should be penalised for working from home. This is what we mean when we talk about the democratisation of technology.

It seems complex but it's really very simple. The only question you need to be asking is: how do you ensure that employees have the same access to the same tools and information, from anywhere?

Whether it's by having a cloud-centric approach to solutions and technology, or embracing the next stage of digital transformation with automation, or optimising processes for the hybrid world – all of which should certainly be on the agenda – the details will be different for every business. What's really important is making sure the people – your employees and your customers – are happy.

We now need to absorb the fact that the changes of 2020 onwards are permanent. There's no going back to old ways of working, nor any quashing of the socially enlightened workforce.

We can see the tumultuous time we've had as a problem, or we can see it as an opportunity to reflect on our priorities and come up with a new approach for the future. Be obsessed with your people, your customers and your employees. Listen, learn, understand – and act.

And ask yourself: how does the technology help you bridge the gap between where you are now and where you want to be in five years?

Loyalty to organisations is already changing; employees are evaluating their employers based on their social values, and I believe that will be reinforced by time. This is why it's so important to invest in the right – and, critically, sustainable – workplace, technology and tools. This is the behaviour that will drive your business forward, through the good times and the more volatile ones. The businesses that do this are set to secure their place in the future.

INTRODUCTION:
MEET THE HYBRID HUBS

The challenges and changes of recent years have led to many organisations re-assessing what their working setups should look like.

Instead of returning full-time to the office, some have recognised that their business and workforce have benefitted from aspects of remote working – better employee engagement, job satisfaction and accessibility, to name a few[1] – so naturally they've opted to retain the practice in their future operations. Meanwhile, being forced to get by without an office made some businesses question whether and in what form they need one in future.

At Canon, we work with organisations of every scale in all sectors across EMEA, helping to support hybrid working environments where people are as inspired and productive as ever. Speaking to our customers, we identified four common, everyday workspaces that businesses are adopting in combination to form a new hybrid working environment.

We call them the Hybrid Hubs.

COMPANY HUB

For most businesses, traditional owned and managed offices remain at the beating heart of operations – where centralised functions reside, where paper-based processes meet digital ones and, indeed, where people still come to work. According to Canon research conducted in February 2022, **33% of respondents expect their organisations to be entirely office-based, while a further 50% are embracing hybrid working in some form**. This puts an onus on the further optimisation and increased digitisation of business workflows. Additionally, many headquarters and regional offices are being reorganised to act as hubs for face-to-face collaboration and creativity.[2]

COMMUNITY HUB

Businesses looking to decentralise their operations are often adopting co-working spaces or smaller satellite offices that are managed as a service, **enabling localised clusters of employees to collaborate and share ideas more effectively.[3]** Under such a decentralised or hub-and-spoke operating model,[4] employees get the full office experience – a work community, enterprise-grade IT infrastructure and hardware – as well as increased flexibility around where they live.

HOME HUB

According to a Slack poll, **78% of knowledge workers say they want location flexibility.[5]** This desire to work from home – and the better work-life balance it can bring – is being supported and prioritised as part of the hybrid working mix by an increasing number of businesses as they become more digitally mature. The good news for everyone is that, according to IDC data, this flexibility does not come at the cost of operational productivity.[6]

MOBILE HUB

Work is not always static. Whether it's a site visit, a coffee stop, a taxi ride, a departure lounge or a customer meeting, employees are often on the go. Advances in mobile technology and connectivity are increasingly allowing teams to **continue to work effectively, even as they move between locations.[7]**

[1]https://www.forbes.com/sites/bryanrobinson/2022/02/04/3-new-studies-end-debate-over-effectiveness-of-hybrid-and-remote-work/?sh=7460953c59b2

[2]https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252514898/Wellness-essential-as-hybrid-work-to-see-total-redesign-of-the-office
[3]https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/20/uk-business-sectors-end-plan-b-covid
[4]https://www.propertyweek.com/analysis-resi-and-data/future-of-office-market-is-hub-and-spoke-model-says-m7-boss-richard-croft/5119128.article
[5]https://futureforum.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Future-Forum-Pulse-Report-January-2022.pdf
[6]IDC - Futurescape - Worldwide Imaging, Printing and Document Solutions 2022 Predictions - R3 - November 2021
[7]https://www.railtech.com/infrastructure/2022/01/27/uic-5g-delay-has-no-effect-on-new-rail-communication-system/?gdpr=accept

? NINE QUESTIONS EVERY LEADER SHOULD BE ASKING

Each of the Hybrid Hubs offers a host of benefits for the organisations that opt to use them. But they also come with challenges, especially when a business decides to operate across many at the same time.

Defining a hybrid working model isn't to be taken lightly. To guide effective decision-making around their hybrid operations, leaders of organisations must think in depth about their people and processes. Below, and throughout the remainder of this book, we outline the questions they should be asking, and the actions they need to take to help ensure they can make a success of this new world of work.

Read on to understand how you can grasp the opportunities that lie ahead.

1 WHAT IS YOUR OFFICE ACTUALLY FOR?

What is the purpose of the traditional company office? The answer may seem obvious: for meetings, for discussions, to get business done. But when you start digging further, the answer – in the context of a 21st century, post-pandemic working era – becomes less clear.

The pandemic revealed that many occupations and tasks can be done just as well – or even better – remotely as they can in the office. In the first year, employees recorded an increase in productivity as lockdowns forced home working across the region, thanks to fewer interruptions compared to working in busy offices and more time from skipping the commute.[8] A year later, in 2022, IDC stated that productivity was still not being compromised.[9]

In contrast, this period also highlighted where in-person interactions really add value. Business leaders have emphasised the 'culture of collaboration, innovation and apprenticeship'[10] and 'spontaneous idea generation'[11] that they believe can only be fostered in an office environment. Young people, in particular, may miss out on career development opportunities, mentoring and personal connections, according to commentators.[12]

Most people also prefer onboarding to take place in a physical office,[13] and many who completed the onboarding process remotely have experienced challenges.[14] Even pre-pandemic, some commentators highlighted the power of face-to-face meetings to convey body language and other cues that can't be matched by email, phone or even video call.[15] 'Proximity bias' – where we favour people whom we see more often – can also put remote workers at a disadvantage.[16]

THE INTRODUCTION OF TOOLS THAT SUPPORT HYBRID WORKING ACROSS LOCATIONS GIVES MORE FLEXIBILITY FOR HOW OFFICES ARE LAID OUT

Moreover, a central hub for centralised functions and core operations can form part of a brand identity, team mentality and purpose. In Silicon Valley, tech firms are well known for designing their offices around supporting teamwork, creativity and wellbeing rather than desk space. Meta's Menlo Park building features walking trails and areas for outdoor working;[17] Dropbox invites its staff to use a music lounge and play with Lego;[18] Google's global HQ has space for group cooking classes and coffee tasting sessions.[19]

But you don't need to build a playground to rethink your workspace. It can start small – for example, with the digitisation of workflows that have previously been entirely paper-based or manual. The introduction of hybrid working, and tools that support it across multiple locations, gives more flexibility for how offices are laid out. More people at home? Less desk space required? More room for collaborative areas, breakaway pods and studios.

So, before you try to get into the detail of tasks better done in or out of the office, ask yourself: how do your workers like to collaborate? How does information currently flow through your organisation? And how is that changing? What new blockers have been introduced by hybrid working and how can you remove them? And, when you do, what will that mean for the office space you have?

[8]https://www.capgemini.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Future-of-Work_Final.pdf
[9]IDC - Futurescape - Worldwide Imaging, Printing and Document Solutions 2022 Predictions - R3 - November 2021
[10]David Solomon, chief executive, Goldman Sachs https://news.sky.com/story/wall-street-bankers-ordered-back-to-their-desks-as-the-city-mulls-hybrid-future-12297583. See also https://fortune.com/2022/03/10/goldman-sachs-office-hybrid-remote-work-david-solomon/
[11]Jamie Dimon, chief executive, JP Morgan Chase https://news.sky.com/story/wall-street-bankers-ordered-back-to-their-desks-as-the-city-mulls-hybrid-future-12297583
[12]https://www.morganlovell.co.uk/inspiration/insights/why-your-people-still-need-the-office
[13]https://workplaceinsight.net/longing-for-the-office-relationships-with-colleagues-are-harder-to-build-while-remote-working/
[14]https://news.microsoft.com/en-gb/2021/12/09/more-than-half-of-uk-workers-would-consider-quitting-their-job-if-hybrid-working-was-axed-research-reveals/
[15]https://www.forbes.com/sites/ellevate/2015/02/20/why-face-to-face-meetings-are-so-important/?sh=4af2914faee9
[16]https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20210804-hybrid-work-how-proximity-bias-can-lead-to-favouritism
[17]https://www.designweek.co.uk/issues/6-12-april-2015/inside-facebooks-new-office-the-largest-open-floor-plan-in-the-world/
[18]https://www.latimes.com/business/la-xpm-2012-apr-26-la-fi-dropbox-20120426-story.html
[19]https://careers.google.com/locations/mountain-view/

2 IS YOUR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION TRANSFORMATIVE ENOUGH?

In any business, success in the hybrid working era may be dependent on the digital transformation of office and departmental workflows, and of business processes. The pandemic caused unprecedented levels of digital adoption.[20] For some organisations this was an acceleration or expansion of existing plans, while for others it was a sudden change in direction.

If we consider a central office as a hub for collaboration, every team member must have equal access to documents and data – the information and resources they need to collaborate effectively – wherever they are located. Facebook tested 'advanced video technology that creates greater equity between employees in [its] office and those joining [meetings] virtually',[21] while Hootsuite has installed soundproofed pods for private video calls.[22] But solutions can be as simple as using portable videoconferencing technology that can be moved around an office.[23]

Online, Microsoft Teams, Slack and Zoom – the big business software winners during the pandemic – continually announce updates to keep up with the shifting workspace landscape and to simplify collaboration. As do cloud platforms such as Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox and iCloud, whose services, particularly when integrated with on and off-site workspace devices, have helped businesses to transform quickly and bridge the gap between the home, the office and other hybrid workspaces. But soon, work may well move beyond the current sphere into the metaverse: some independent tech experts urge organisations to jump on board sooner rather than later, or risk getting left behind.[24,25]

Now is the time to review your digital transformation so far and consider its capacity to adapt in the next five years. Are small steps enough or should you take a digital leap towards the future? And what might that leap look like?

[20]https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-covid-19-has-pushed-companies-over-the-technology-tipping-point-and-transformed-business-forever
[21]https://blog.google/inside-google/life-at-google/hybrid-approach-work/
[22]https://www.zdnet.com/article/bike-desks-and-soundproof-meeting-pods-how-one-company-changed-everything-about-its-office-space/
[23]https://espanol.news/4-estrategias-para-construir-un-lugar-de-trabajo-hibrido-que-funcione/
[24]https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/mckinsey-digital/our-insights/what-is-the-metaverse-and-what-does-it-mean-for-business
[25]https://www.techtarget.com/searchcio/feature/Examples-of-the-metaverse-for-business-and-IT-leaders

> " Interior spaces, designed with D/DOCK Amsterdam, encourage occupant well-being through individual user controls, fresh air, sunlight and materials assessments to ensure that safe and healthy products are used throughout the building. Office spaces on the two top floors are designed according to the innovative "new way of working" principle. **Each floor features a hub, or central space,** where all the community functions such as meeting rooms, coffee corners, concentration spots as well as informal working and meeting areas are clustered.[26]
> **Bosch Siemens, The Netherlands** "

[26]https://mcdonoughpartners.com/projects/bsh-office-the-inspiration-house-at-park-2020/

3 WHAT HAS YOUR BUSINESS LEARNED FROM HOME WORKING?

In 2014, Fast Company speculated that half the population might be working remotely by 2020.[27] Two years later, this forecast has nearly proved to be correct – but only owing to the impact of Covid-19. As many as 40% of people currently employed in the EU work remotely full time because of the pandemic, a major jump from the 15% of employees who had ever previously worked away from the office.[28] A real-life, global experiment on remote working abruptly began.

As we've seen, productivity remains high among home workers – but time has revealed obstacles. Employees' biggest issues centre around accessing, signing and approving documents, both physical and digital.[29] Staff need access to key systems, collaboration and communication platforms, and security features wherever they are.

Staff also need to stay creative and productive – intuitive and automated document workflows to match newly idiosyncratic working patterns can help here. Resilient operations are based on flexible tools that allow people to achieve just as much in the office as out of it, so that they are not left behind when they are working remotely.

Digital transformation and agility continue to govern the success of hybrid working – and to provide confidence that productivity can be maintained no matter what. Talk to your team: what – if anything – is holding them back? Listen to them and formulate a plan to remove such frictions.

4 WHAT LEVEL OF HOME-WORKING SUPPORT DO YOUR TEAMS NEED?

Businesses should look at the big picture of digital transformation, without ignoring the smaller details which can add up to significant lost productivity. A survey of UK managers found most had staff who experienced connectivity issues due to unreliable broadband while working from home, such as dropping out of meetings or not being able to join video calls in the first place. Yet, 58% said their organisations had taken no steps to find a solution.[30]

Our research found that 85% of employees believe that it is the company's responsibility to provide IT systems to allow them to work from home,[31] yet one in five are expected to provide their own equipment.[32] Moreover, these, along with office furniture, must be used correctly to avoid health problems and resultant absenteeism. Domestic homes in EMEA don't always have heating and cooling systems comparable to a company office, and some workers expect their employers to pay for an upgrade.[33]

Another factor to consider is whether it makes sense to provide employees with their own printers. Surprisingly, perhaps, 18–34-year-olds print an average of 123 work documents per month from home.[34] With the rising tides of Gen Z and millennials taking the lead, demand for at-home printing capabilities is certainly there – and set to keep growing.

So, what do your employees need to make remote working work for them? Equipment and software, and maybe training and education too? Does your budget support investment in these areas? If not, how should you change it?

MORE PERKS FOR YOUR PEOPLE

"The rent, the free fruit and the coffee machine saved us about £280,000 a year. We are now investing that in people. We are recruiting."
James Tew, Chief Executive Officer, iVendi[35]

[27]https://www.fastcompany.com/90318974/the-rise-of-remote-working-will-continue
[28]https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/default/files/jrc120945_policy_brief_-_covid_and_telework_final.pdf
[29]Canon research, 2022
[30]https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252506543/Poor-home-connectivity-risks-jeopardising-switch-to-hybrid-working
[31]Canon research, 2022
[32]Canon research, 2022
[33]https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/workers-bosses-provide-air-con-24978569
[34]Quocirca Home Printing Generation Gap 2022
[35]https://www.ft.com/content/70925c01-e8fe-4008-af01-204044407c1f

5 IS IT TIME TO TAKE MOBILE WORKING MORE SERIOUSLY?

The concept of mobile working was heralded with the launch of mobile phones around the mid-1980s; first as just a way of taking business calls on the go, but later for email with the advent of GPRS/mobile data connections.

However, major technical obstacles meant that mobile working was rarely practical, with everything from lagging speeds to lack of access to tools, to security issues. But in the past four decades – and especially the last five years – a lot has changed. Employees travelling for work, or stopping for a coffee, can quickly and easily connect to all the information they need and continue working.

In just a few years, on-the-go workers have benefitted from 5G, free Wi-Fi in transport hubs and on trains, improvements to European mobile network coverage, plus the evolution of mobile devices themselves to become fully-fledged computers. Meanwhile, heavy investment in cloud-based services gives secure access to business information anywhere. This has taken mobile working from theoretically possible to effective on a day-to-day basis.

So, an employee could join a meeting virtually on a train, then switch to 5G on the walk to the office. Site visits can be followed up immediately with a contract emailed from a coffee shop. A collaborative team meeting can go ahead at its regular time even when members are out and about. The time savings of mobile working, with the right technology and connectivity, can be substantial. But, as always when adding external devices to your network, you need to consider cybersecurity and ensure your workers are covered, educated and supported by IT if you're going to include mobile working in your hybrid mix.

Today's post-pandemic world offers an opportunity for your business to review the practicalities – and the enormous potential – of mobile working. The benefits for organisations doing this well are manifold, from greater accessibility to enhanced productivity – so what could it do for you?[36]

6 HOW CAN YOU SHORE UP DATA SECURITY?

On the other hand, working remotely carries more security risks than doing so inside a central company office. The physical barriers may be weaker: tablets and phones are more likely to be stolen, or forgotten on a train, taxi seat or café table; unauthorised third parties may be able to access confidential data simply by seeing it on a screen or on a print-out.[37]

The security of a network may be of more concern. A trusted network, as in an office, is considerably more secure than the public networks offered in transport hubs or the broadband connections in restaurants or even a person's home. According to Quocirca, a data breach has a mean average cost of £631,915[34]; given the penalties – and reputational damage – that can be wrought by data loss or hacks, security needs to be top of your hybrid working agenda. Remember that the security of your organisation's data is your responsibility, whether it is accessed online, in the cloud or as a hard copy.

Devices connected to open networks, such as shared or home printers, can also unlock doors to hackers who know how to look for them. Within trusted networks, the ability to access devices remotely offers numerous benefits. However, sometimes – often inadvertently – devices like home printers can be connected to unsecured environments, and even directly to the internet, without passwords or firewalls.[38]

Productivity, efficiency and collaboration are essential to effective mobile working, but it can't be successful without secure tools and the training to use them properly.

All of which begs the following questions: are your IT, Compliance and Training teams all working together to ensure these are delivered? Are the tools and training themselves effective enough to protect your business? How intimately does your workforce understand the threats and the precautions they should take?

7 COULD MOBILE WORKING BE THE CATALYST FOR EVEN BETTER WORK?

Being able to work while in transit has obvious benefits when it comes to reducing employee downtime. But beyond that, research has suggested that movement, even simply sitting on a train or a plane, can boost creativity and productivity.[39] An impending arrival at a destination can provide a deadline that helps build focus. The feeling of having more physical space and viewing nature – even through a train window – can stimulate the imagination.

Physical movement can be an even bigger catalyst for creativity, up to as much as 100%.[40] Some employers encourage 'walking meetings', where people join conference calls via their mobile device and headphones while taking a stroll. The movement of walking, whether indoors or out, is shown to have a positive cognitive effect,[41] while getting outside may also reduce the social isolation reported by people working from home.[42]

So mobile working, in and of itself, can be good for mind, body and business. Providing tools that enable it leads to a more productive, more creative and more engaged workforce, which in turn inevitably improves profit margins – by as much as 21%.[43]

It's essential, of course, that employees have the right technology and training for mobile working. A secure internet connection is useless for video calls if the employee doesn't have the correct headphones. The strongest anti-hacking software is irrelevant if a laptop is left open and unattended in a coffee shop.

Ask your employees where they would like to work. For your team, does hybrid working mean splitting time only between the office and home, or are there other locations such as clients' HQs? Review your current situation before making investments wisely.

[36]https://www.geeks.ltd.uk/insights/five-reasons-that-mobile-working-could-benefit-your-business
[37]https://www.indy100.com/news/government-britain-theresa-may-document-taxi-train-forgotten-7627661
[38]Canon research, 2022
[39]https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20160509-can-you-work-better-on-the-move
[40]https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/how-healing-works/202103/walking-meetings-the-future-safely-collaborating
[41]https://news.stanford.edu/2014/04/24/walking-vs-sitting-042414/
[42]https://www.totaljobs.com/advice/lockdown-loneliness-the-collapse-of-social-life-at-work
[43]https://news.gallup.com/poll/241649/employee-engagement-rise.aspx

Connectivity empowers work just about everywhere.
As of February 2022, commercial 5G services are available in all 27 EU countries. Meanwhile, Wi-Fi is typically offered on board on long-distance railway services, including Eurostar, TGV, ICE, Deutsche Bahn and Thalys.

9 CAN CO-WORKING BENEFIT SOCIETY... AND, IN TURN, YOUR BUSINESS?

Even when a shared office is simply desk space and a Wi-Fi connection, the concept can form part of an urban revolution. The '15-minute neighbourhood' – where people work and shop within a 15-minute walk, cycle or public transport journey from their home – is touted as a means to level up local communities while reducing carbon emissions. Indeed, a co-workspace needn't be an 'official' office at all, but a library, café or community centre.

This suits the hub and spoke model too, which sees headquarters remain in central business districts, supported by satellite offices closer to employees' homes. Spokes can facilitate those 'water cooler' exchanges so valuable to building relationships, while giving people the shorter commute so key to a work-life balance.

Putting the workplace where people live can also bring an organisation closer to the community, and therefore to its customers. UK building society Nationwide has trialled a hybrid working model whereby some office personnel can instead work from high street branches. Working alongside branch staff can offer a new perspective: "A third of our people are saying they have an even greater consideration of the human impact of their decisions," says Joe Garner, chief executive.

So, is a shared office right for you, right now? Can it offer the levels of data security and privacy you need? Can you furnish it with the hardware and software platforms required to ensure that workers there have access to the information they require? Does it meet the accessibility requirements of your staff?

More generally, is your workforce large enough to warrant a hub and spoke approach? Or would a centrally located office with good transport links work better for more people?

8 HOW COULD CO-WORKING FIT YOUR NEEDS?

Office space is often one of an organisation's greatest expenditures. Businesses that shifted to teleworking at the beginning of the pandemic could suddenly count the cost – but also see the value – of their investments.

Office-sharing companies took a hit during the pandemic,[44,45] but the global market is predicted to grow significantly.[46] This recovery is as much about the flexibility of rentable desk space as a shift in direction in response to market needs. While promotion of rented co-working spaces previously rested on 'space as a service' (products and services), it's now about offering 'productivity as a service': process efficiency, collaboration and support. Productivity is a function of value generated versus cost, so workspaces are being optimised to support this goal.

In-house services, therefore, may include room or desk booking, security, cleaning, and refilling the coffee machine. In the uncertain post-pandemic era, and the often ad-hoc nature of hybrid working, outsourcing these small but critical tasks to landlords gives tenants more time to spend on their core work.

Co-working spaces can also offer a turnkey solution to small companies and start-ups that need ready-to-use office services while they grow. Tapping into this market, some shared workspace providers are going beyond the four walls of the office to offer a business ecosystem: facilitating collaboration via improved access to key resources and information, brokering relationships via cloud-based solutions to improve experience and providing consultation services.[47]

Explore the options offered by co-working office providers. Could their services help streamline – or even grow – your operations?

THERE'S NO "ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL" FOR OFFICE USE

£13bn

would be the cost of unused office space for London businesses if employees drop to their desired average of 2.7 days in the office.[48]

60%

more office space was being utilised in Madrid from April - June 2022 compared to Q2 2020, totalling 100,000 sqm.[49]

[44] https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jan/06/wework-survive-covid-crisis-rapid-expansion-shared-office-losses-lease
[45] https://www.cityam.com/hybrid-working-powers-office-provider-iwg-towards-recovery/
[46] https://finance.yahoo.com/news/coworking-space-market-2022-2028-113600200.html
[47] https://www.workdesign.com/2016/05/future-office-space-service/
[48] https://www.cityam.com/unused-office-space-to-cost-london-firms-13bn-survey-shows/
[49] https://pdf.euro.savills.co.uk/spain/nat-ing-2021/savills-an-madrid-offices-spotligh-q2-2021-eng.pdf

NEW WORKING MODELS, NEW CHALLENGES

Shifting operating models can offer new and sometimes unexpected benefits, but with them can also come new problems. For instance, decentralised operations open up the talent pool: if a role is remote, candidates could live just about anywhere. But with this opportunity comes a possible blow to company culture, which can increase churn. No matter where employees are, it's important that a supportive, inspiring work culture is fostered and maintained.

Similarly, there is a common complaint in hybrid meetings of those not 'in the room' being treated as second-class citizens – with 'proximity bias' being out of sight often does mean out of mind, or, at least, earshot. Every employee needs to be given an even footing – a connected, consistent experience via equal access to information (and policies on how meetings are run). When the technology reflects the fact that all Hybrid Hubs are valid workspaces, company culture follows suit. It's a challenge not easily overcome, but the payoffs can be huge.

More tangibly, it's crucial that all employees have the correct equipment to do their job properly. As we've seen, many employees are expected to use their own hardware, resulting in inconsistency across a team or company. Differing speeds, versions of programs and platforms, or level of data storage, can hinder collaboration. It can mean the benefits of hybrid working get lost in the mix.

The vast majority of businesses rely on processes that are paper-based by necessity, so the document lifecycle also becomes markedly more complex with distributed operations. Unsurprisingly, then, access to the documents and data that matter appears to be the biggest

hurdle to overcome. Indeed, according to our research, the most common remote working issues IT help desks deal with involve difficulties gaining access to files outside of the office (43%) and trouble sharing files and collaborating with others (36%).

Not being able to access or share files can stop a project in its tracks. Simply put, that means cloud is a cornerstone of effective hybrid operations.

Moreover, not having the correct combination of hardware and software in place can make processes inefficient or impossible remotely. It can even result in people spending more time in the office, not necessarily because they want to, but because they aren't able to work effectively elsewhere. From our research, of the people who spend at least half of their time in the office, 33% said their experience of remote working IT falls short.

Consider an employee who doesn't have the right solution to obtain or process documents remotely. They may have to make the journey to the office – potentially interrupting a busy schedule. Some 37% of respondents report having to visit the office to print, pick up or sign documents in person, so this is not an uncommon scenario.

All of which means that, whatever hybrid operating model is right for your business, getting your IT solutions ready to support it should be a number one priority.

Review each option – the Company Hub, Home Hub, Community Hub and Mobile Hub – in turn. Consider how they will function in isolation, and how they will work together. Be cognisant of the potential issues you will face, and consider how you will tackle them.

PROBLEMS, SOLVED:
EMBRACING THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE NEW WORLD OF WORK

Hybrid working provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to give employees a better work-life balance, enhance productivity, improve creativity and optimise business expenditure. It could even benefit society.

However, as we've seen, there are many factors that should guide decision-making around adopting new working models – and IT is chief among them. Specifically, many businesses encounter issues around management of documents and information, and these challenges need to be tackled head-on.

Of course, they can be overcome; organisations shouldn't feel that they are held back. The hybrid working landscape has evolved apace since early 2020, yes – but technology has kept up.

At Canon, we can deliver the technology, services and support organisations need to achieve their hybrid working goals. We advise businesses of all sizes and levels of digital maturity on keeping pace with rapid change, boosting productivity, fostering seamless collaboration, maximising security and enabling experiences that exceed customers' expectations. Our Digital Transformation Services ecosystem covers the document lifecycle from end to end – capture, process, communicate and managed print – enabling us to tackle just about any information-based challenge a modern business might face.

DISCOVER HOW WE CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS THRIVE IN THE NEW WORLD OF WORK, HERE

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