

# How to Build a Flexible Workplace Where Everyone Thrives

## A PLAYBOOK



LiveTiles





The hybrid workplace is increasingly becoming the norm, with a large majority<sup>1</sup> of employees wanting the freedom to choose how, when, and where they work.

Flexibility is no longer just a desirable perk, but a strategic imperative<sup>2</sup> for organizations to thrive and succeed. As people's expectations continue to change, leaders must embrace flexibility at all levels to boost employee experience and well-being.

Creating more agile working environments is crucial to attracting and retaining top talent. LiveTiles' 2021 Employee Experience Global Pulse Check survey found that flexibility is now a currency more highly valued than salary,<sup>3</sup> especially by younger workers. Over 50% of today's modern workers are willing to leave their current employers if they don't receive options for flexible work arrangements, according to the EY 2021 Work Reimagined Employee Survey.<sup>4</sup>

The challenge lies in striking a balance between giving people the flexibility to work from anywhere while simultaneously nurturing strong in-person connections.

As organizations navigate the new world of work, leaders and employees see value in recalibrating relationships to develop a culture that makes the hybrid model work for everyone. This requires rethinking policies to ensure that flexible working solutions drive key outcomes such as workplace engagement, productivity, well-being, diversity, equality, and inclusion.

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[1] EY. 2021. EY Study: More than half of employees globally would quit their jobs if not provided post-pandemic flexibility. Retrieved from: [https://www.ey.com/en\\_ro/news/2021/05/ey-study--more-than-half-of-employees-globally-would-quit-their-](https://www.ey.com/en_ro/news/2021/05/ey-study--more-than-half-of-employees-globally-would-quit-their-)

[2] Morgan, J. (n.d.) How Employees Are Evolving & What Your Organization Should Do About It. Retrieved from: [https://s3.amazonaws.com/kajabi-storefronts-production/sites/23082/downloads/EvZh0fERI2Q09SoSJewH\\_How\\_Employees\\_Are\\_Evolving\\_What\\_Your\\_Organization\\_Should\\_Do\\_About\\_It.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/kajabi-storefronts-production/sites/23082/downloads/EvZh0fERI2Q09SoSJewH_How_Employees_Are_Evolving_What_Your_Organization_Should_Do_About_It.pdf)

[3] LiveTiles. 2021. The Global Employee Experience Pulse Check 2021. Retrieved from: <https://livetilesglobal.com/ex-pulse-check-global/>

[4] EY. 2021. EY Study: More than half of employees globally would quit their jobs if not provided post-pandemic flexibility. Retrieved from: [https://www.ey.com/en\\_ro/news/2021/05/ey-study--more-than-half-of-employees-globally-would-quit-their-](https://www.ey.com/en_ro/news/2021/05/ey-study--more-than-half-of-employees-globally-would-quit-their-)

# How to Create a Flexible Workplace Culture Where People Thrive

There is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to creating flexible workplace cultures. It's about adopting a mindset that respects individuals, and recognizing that people have different work styles, needs, and priorities.

This means going above and beyond to figure out ways to accommodate different realities and help everyone do their best work—no matter where they want to work, why they do the work, who they do it with, and when they do it.

More and more younger workers, for example, are seeking companies and jobs with benefits that support a healthy work-life balance.<sup>5</sup> To address this need, financial giant Citigroup is setting up shop<sup>6</sup> in the idyllic town of Malaga, Spain. “At Citi, we are listening, and to address this, [we are offering] an improved and better-balanced lifestyle [which] will be a defining feature of the new hub,” the bank said in a statement.

Citi's new approach to attracting and keeping talented junior bankers comes after several major Wall Street firms were criticized for forcing junior staffers to shoulder the burden of intense, 15-hour-a-day workloads. Citi's promise of a work-life balance for junior bankers includes a commitment to less arduous 8-hour workdays and no weekend work.

Implementing flexible working arrangements also plays a significant role in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace. By thinking differently and enabling a more flexible working environment, organizations can ensure that no one is left behind in the ever-evolving world of work.

[5] Bizouati-Kennedy, Y. 2021. 42% of Gen Z Prioritize Work-Life Balance Over Other Job Perks, Survey Says. Yahoo Finance. Retrieved from: <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/42-gen-z-prioritize-life-161927571.html#:~:text=The%20new%20GOBankingRates%20survey%20finds,when%20looking%20for%20a%20job>.

[6] Morris, S. 2022. Citi hopes Malaga beaches can win over junior bankers. Financial Times. Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/3447af72-01fa-459a-b5b6-8998b529db01>



A hybrid work model, for example, supports a dramatic cultural shift towards work from home.<sup>7</sup> Workplace flexibility allows working parents to have better work-life integration and meet their personal and career goals. Mothers can easily re-enter and stay in the labor market, while fathers get to take a greater role in domestic care. Flexible options for all help promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in the workplace.

Changing organizational habits and policies to accommodate flexible working fosters a more diverse and inclusive environment. A 2020 survey by Indeed<sup>8</sup> shows that 94% of tech workers believe that a shift to permanent remote work will eliminate commutes, boost geographic diversity, and attract new hires from different cities or regions. Two-thirds, meanwhile, say that growing acceptance of working from home will increase diversity in terms of disability, gender, and race or ethnicity.

Organizations must actively work towards ensuring that underrepresented groups—single parents, people with disabilities, people who care for elderly relatives, and the like—reap all the benefits of workplace flexibility.

Making the hybrid model work is a win-win situation for everyone, but it requires a transformation of people, processes, and infrastructure.<sup>9</sup> It involves building a culture where people feel that they belong no matter where they work.

By enabling a more flexible working environment, organizations can ensure that no one is left behind in the ever-evolving world of work.

[7] De Smet, A. et al. 2021. Married to the job no more: Craving flexibility, parents are quitting to get it. McKinsey. Retrieved from: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/married-to-the-job-no-more-craving-flexibility-parents-are-quitting-to-get-it>

[8] Lewis, L. 2020. Report: How Tech Workers See the Future of Remote Work. Indeed. Retrieved from: <https://www.indeed.com/lead/tech-workers-survey-remote-work-working-from-home>

[9] Kossek, E. et al. 2021. The Future of Flexibility at Work. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2021/09/the-future-of-flexibility-at-work>



Here's how organizations can create and maintain a flexible working environment that works for everyone, wherever they want or need to be.

# Listen to the Workforce

Empowering the employee voice<sup>10</sup> is one of the most effective ways to build trust and cultivate a sense of belonging in the workplace.

Leaders must be much more empathetic to the different ways people cope with change.

In his “Let’s Connect” event with LiveTiles,<sup>11</sup> bestselling author Simon Sinek pointed out that leaders must actively listen—and resolve—employees’ needs.

Give people a sense of control and ownership<sup>12</sup> by inviting them into planning. This way, you’ll gain more insights into the support that your employees need and create a more strategic and informed plan for flexible work arrangements.

## WHAT ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO:

- Gather employee feedback regarding work experiences and preferences, while addressing challenges or roadblocks.
- Use polls, pulse checks, focus groups, and one-on-one feedback in planning and designing future work arrangements.
- Prioritize dedicated conversations with employees about how they would like to work in a new hybrid model.
- Use an **employee communication app** that can provide data and analytics into the pain points of the organization, in real-time.

[10] Bersin, J. 2021. Voice Of The Employee: The Most Important Topic In Business. The Josh Bersin Company. Retrieved from: <https://joshbersin.com/2021/05/voice-of-the-employee-the-most-important-topic-in-business/>

[11] Nguyen-Brown, P. 2021. Simon Sinek helps shape our understanding of great Employee Experience (EX). LiveTiles. Retrieved from: <https://livetilesglobal.com/simon-sinek-helps-us-define-great-employee-experience/>

[12] LiveTiles. 2022. How To Help Your Employees Embrace Change. Retrieved from: <https://livetilesglobal.com/how-to-help-your-employees-embrace-change/>

# Focus on Outcomes

Promote a performance-driven culture.<sup>13</sup>

To achieve successful outcomes, leaders must shift their mindsets and focus on work results and deadlines rather than the time of day and number of hours worked.

This will give employees the freedom they need to design their work to meet key objectives.

It will also boost people's confidence that the work they are doing is on track and recognized.

## WHAT ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO:

- Set clear work objectives and expectations.
- Let employees know the level of performance expected, the goals and tasks, and what metrics will be used to measure their work.
- Be specific about deadlines and check-in dates.

[13] Moore, C. 2021. We need to talk about how the new way to work is about outcomes, not hours. Fast Company. Retrieved from: <https://www.fastcompany.com/90634884/we-need-to-talk-about-how-the-new-way-to-work-is-about-outcomes-not-hours>

# Upskill Workers and Ensure Digital Fluency for All

Embrace the digital workplace by automating and streamlining complicated workflows.

Appropriate planning and investment in collaboration technologies<sup>14</sup> will ensure a smooth and efficient transition to a hybrid model.

Educate and mentor employees and provide them with the proper digital training they need to seamlessly ease into new processes.

Equipping teams with the right digital tools and skills will elevate the work experiences of hybrid employees.

## WHAT ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO:

- Prioritize one-on-one or small group training to bring learning and innovation right into the heart of the digital workplace.
- Roll out awareness campaigns and stage seminars on how to use new apps and gadgets.
- Identify and invest in the right hardware, software, networking, and data solutions to support a hybrid work model.
- Invest in better tools to onboard, train, and track engagement and performance.

[14] Gyekye, K. 2022. How Companies Can Use Tech To Improve The Workplace Experience. Forbes. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2022/01/07/how-companies-can-use-tech-to-improve-the-workplace-experience/?sh=6d91d28769d0>





# Enhance Collaborative Work Spaces

Going forward, organizations must ensure that the workforce is fully supported both onsite and remotely. This entails reimagining offices for a more collaborative style of working<sup>15</sup> and designing office spaces to bridge in-person and virtual communication.

Look for ways to safely bring people together physically and allow them to spend more time being together and working together.

## WHAT ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO:

- Look into replacing cubicles with open space setups to allow group meetings and installing tools to allow for hybrid meetings.
- Use modern technology and office space design that facilitate more seamless connections among in-office and remote workers.
- Assess the feasibility of physical office solutions like flex seating and community workspace options.
- Redesign workflows or processes that are dependent on office space.

[15] Keane, J., Heiser, T. 2021.4 Strategies for Building a Hybrid Workplace that Works. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2021/07/4-strategies-for-building-a-hybrid-workplace-that-works>





# Strengthen Employee Resilience and Workplace Relationships

Leaders must create the psychological safety<sup>16</sup> that employees need, especially when facing unprecedented levels of anxiety and stress. Work extra hard to stay connected with people and show genuine concern for people's wellbeing.

Be intentional in encouraging an environment where everyone can freely speak up with ideas, issues, and questions. Organizational change will be more manageable if you keep your employees' enthusiasm and optimism alive.

## WHAT ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO:

- Have frequent one-on-one meetings to create trust. This will boost people's engagement and give them the confidence they need to embrace flexible hybrid work.
- Develop more empathetic, informal communication styles—those that encourage dialogue, listening, and feedback—to help employees cope with the uncertainties and changes.
- Foster a sense of belonging in the workplace by investing in team-building activities that can help build community among employees.
- Prioritize health and well-being programs that help employees cope with stress and new ways of working.

[16] LiveTiles. 2022. The important role of Psychological Safety for a DEI workplace culture. Retrieved from: <https://livetilesglobal.com/the-important-role-of-psychological-safety-for-a-dei-workplace-culture/>

# FLEXIBLE WORKING: Revamping the Employee Experience

Moving forward with workplace flexibility is necessary to future-proof your organization and attract and retain the best people. In these changing times, organizations can create a sense of trust and mutual respect by making room for new practices that enable employees to have their own versions of flexible work.

With a hybrid model, organizations can leverage opportunities to build new workplace norms that will not only lead to greater joy, creativity, and fulfillment for everyone, but also outstanding business outcomes.

A shift of mindset and expectations of both leaders and employees is key to defining what flexible work truly means for your organization. It all boils down to recognizing how to give employees a choice. Achieving a flexible work culture will help your organization accelerate growth, and focus on moments that matter for connection, well-being, productivity, and performance.

## LET'S CONNECT

At LiveTiles we create workplace tech for companies of all sizes to connect their employees to everything they need at work for a more personal, productive, and purposeful experience. From comprehensive digital workplaces to quick-to-deploy mobile apps, our solutions help connect your people to the very best employee experience.

[Let's connect](#) for a free consultation with one of our digital workplace or employee experience experts to identify solutions tailored to your challenges and business objectives.

