

**Remote/Hybrid work:Should the Model stay Long Term?**

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BADM 460-01

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April 11, 2025

# Executive Summary

This report explores the impact and if hybrid and remote work models should be adopted long term.

Hybrid and remote rapidly adopted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The research highlights the significant advantages Hybrid work models offer, such as increased productivity, enhanced employee satisfaction, and cost savings. Remote work provides workers with greater flexibility and autonomy, leading to improved work-life balance and a reduction in environmental impact through decreased commuting. The hybrid model, which is a blend of remote and in-office work, has also proven to be effective in fostering employee engagement and reducing costs for businesses.

However, despite these many benefits, hybrid and remote work models have their challenges. One of the main concerns is a decline in collaboration, as face-to-face interactions, critical for innovation and problem-solving, become less frequent. Additionally, the lack of an organizational culture can lead to employee disconnection, while the blending of work and home life creates boundaries that are often hard to manage.

Additionally, hybrid work can show inequalities in the workplace, particularly for lower socioeconomic groups and women, who may face unique challenges working from home.

To mitigate these issues, the report proposes several strategies, including creating structured hybrid schedules, implementing mentorship programs, and introducing policies to restore work-life boundaries.

By adopting these strategies, businesses can address the drawbacks of remote work while ensuring that it remains a sustainable and productive model for the future.

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>6</b>
The Systematic Literature Process	6
Procedure	7
Instruments	8
<b>Findings</b>	<b>8</b>
Increase in Productivity	9
Productivity among Canadian Workers of all Ages	10
Flexibility and Autonomy	12
Technological Enablers	13
Cost Saving for Organizations	14
Drawbacks	15
Collaboration Issues	16
Employee feeling disconnected	17
Workplace Inequality	17
Work-life Boundaries	18
Conclusion for drawbacks	19
<b>My thoughts on how to Mitigate these issues</b>	<b>20</b>
Better Collaboration Strategies	20
	3

Strengthen Organizational Culture	21
Address Workplace Inequalities	21
Restoring work-life boundaries	22
Conclusion for these mitigation strategies	23
<b>Conclusion:</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>25</b>

## Introduction

The way of traditional work has shifted in these past few years because of the Covid-19 pandemic but the remaining question is should it stay in the long run. Hybrid/ Remote work which is also known as telecommuting has been a concept for a long time, however even more in the past few years as the Covid-19 pandemic has made it more common as people had to work from home to best avoid getting the disease. Hybrid and remote work models where employees split time between home and the office or work entirely from remote locations, have emerged as dominant features of the modern workforce. These models have not only changed daily work routines but also reshaped employee expectations, employer strategies, and organizational culture across industries worldwide. The overall appeal to employees is the fact that there is more satisfaction in the job because of more flexibility and an overall better work-life balance. For employers, the Hybrid work model promises enhanced productivity, and reduced costs. For employees, they have reported fewer distractions, more autonomy, and more control over their schedules, factors that contribute to both personal well-being and professional performance. However, the shift to hybrid and remote work is not without its problems. While many employees can thrive in remote settings it is not for everyone. Others can struggle with isolation, lack of access to

mentorship, and blurred boundaries between personal and professional life. Employers, too, face challenges in maintaining team cohesion, fostering collaboration, and sustaining company culture in a dispersed environment. Additionally, remote/ hybrid work models have different types of complexities in being consistent in communication, performance evaluation, and organizational fairness, especially towards women as from the research I conducted, there are some problems that were outlined.

Hybrid Work does have its issues in the fact that they have some drawbacks which I will be discussing in this report as well as recommending some strategies that could be used to mitigate \these problems.

With remote work, the drawbacks would be that the work can get boring as people do not want to be in online meetings for a 9-5 and it can lead to fatigue and productivity issues which is a counterargument to why it should not be adopted. While this is true, there are ways for companies to work around it which I will be going into more detail. The other main drawbacks that can come out of remote work would be collaboration issues and collaboration and innovation issues since there is an absence of face-to-face interaction which is a key limitation, especially for the IT field. There are some ways around this issue too. Some of the mitigation strategies for companies to work around the drawbacks will consist of different scheduling, implementing Cultural-Building initiatives, and giving the workers a right to disconnect.

As companies, especially in the West continue to debate if they should adopt the hybrid/ remote work model they should be considering all factors and address what drawbacks can arise as a result and attempt to find strategies to combat them as a result. This report is mainly aimed at Canadian business owners for them to consider adopting more hybrid/ remote work settings and ways that they should do

so in which that benefits the customer as well as the company in general. I believe that remote/ hybrid work should be more adopted in Canadian workplaces because of the productivity gains, enhanced employee satisfaction and how cost-effective it is for Canadian Workplaces. To support this argument, the essay will explore the multifaceted benefits of remote and hybrid work, drawing on a wide range of academic and industry research., and interviews conducted with employees in hybrid work environments It will then address key criticisms and limitations, presenting counter-arguments and solutions to the most pressing concerns. Ultimately, the discussion will emphasize that while hybrid and remote work are not without flaws, they represent a critical evolution in modern work practices, one that organizations must adapt to thoughtfully and strategically to remain competitive, inclusive, and sustainable in the future of work.

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## Methodology

### The Systematic Literature Process

While conducting my research, I have been using the systematic literature review to do so as it is extremely helpful in analyzing existing peer-reviewed articles on the impact of hybrid and remote work. Using the SLR method allowed me to focus on high-quality sources that met specific, relevant criteria that I had originally set out. This approach helped me narrow down the most valuable evidence to support my research. I managed to filter my findings based on key themes such as long-term

sustainability, productivity, employee engagement, and company culture, all of which are central to understanding how hybrid and remote work have reshaped modern workplaces and if they should stay. The SLR not only helped me organize my research more effectively but also introduced me to more areas of interest that I had not initially considered as I was originally researching the drawbacks but then found some that I believe should be addressed in this report. Overall, the SLR better helped my ability to answer the research question: How impactful are hybrid and remote work, and should it stay? The evidence I gathered through this method provided a clear and credible foundation for my analysis and helped me form a more well-rounded, evidence-based conclusion. Reflecting on the process, I found that using an SLR significantly enhanced the quality and depth of my report, making it a valuable tool for any research project that requires a critical look at existing academic literature.

## Procedure

The procedures I used to gather sources for this research are keyword searching, advanced keyword searching, and citation chaining. Keyword searching refers to searching key terms based on your research and trying to find relevant sources. Advanced keyword searching is similar to keyword searching, however, it is searching key terms to find them in specific parts of the report like the abstract rather than just the title. Finally, Citation chaining is a method of looking at citations used in the research literature you found and has helped me add sources.

## Instruments

The Instrument I found that would be most helpful in me navigating this topic would be myself conducting interviews with telecommuters and some that have been telecommuting for a long time. The participants in my interview consisted of family members such as my father Lamine Ndiaye, who is an IT consultant and a veteran worker who has worked around the world for 35 years and who has settled for telecommuters. The other one being interviewed is my brother Amadou Ndiaye, a Bilingual Collector who is relatively new to hybrid work and is a great source to find a younger worker's perspective on Hybrid work.

## Findings

Throughout this whole research, the main findings would be that most employees that are in Companies around the world who have adopted the hybrid work model since the pandemic have reported an increase in productivity, flexibility, and autonomy. One of the main people in Canada who are looking to be employed is the younger adults who themselves are used to working from home in some capacity due to them having to take online classes due to the COVID-19 capacity. Other factors are the benefits of remote work and they would be the increase in employee-satisfaction as the stress that comes with commuting, especially with workers who have to commute for a long time, is gone. Another benefit that comes from hybrid work would be the environmental impact that it has, especially in major cities.



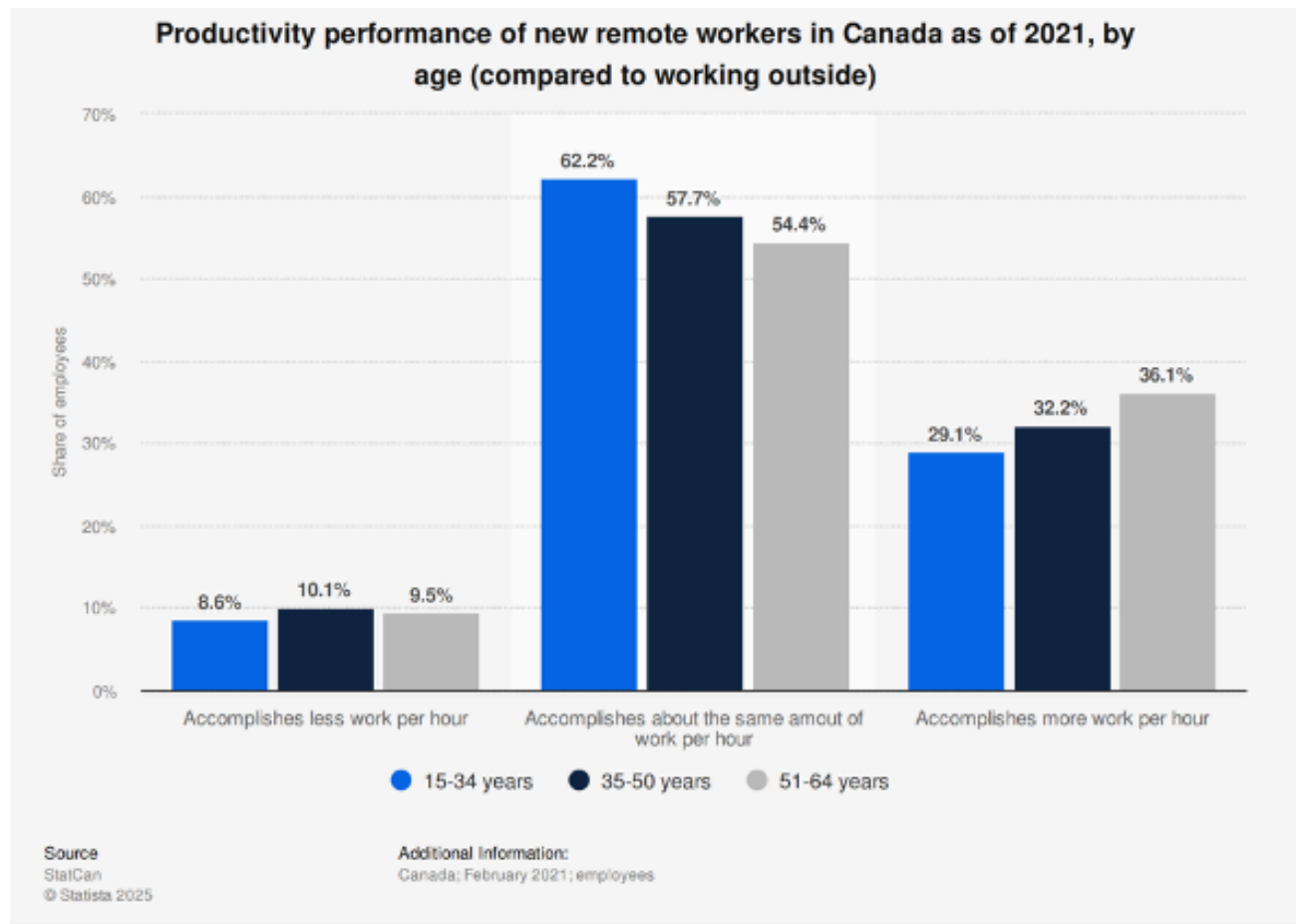
Nowadays, there are way too many ways of transportation to get workers from point A to point B and as a result, there are way too many carbon emissions. Remote work would decrease the need for commuting which would benefit the environment and reduce carbon footprint. Some drawbacks can come as a result as since working is in a remote environment and there is no face-to-face communication, it can lead to collaboration challenges as well as the concept of company culture is non-existent as a result.

## Increase in Productivity

In workplaces, the main attribute that employers are looking for in their employees is how much productivity they can manage to get out of them. With remote work, the main assumption of some people would be that employees would not be as productive as there is a certain comfort that comes from working from home which is debatable. However, multiple studies would contradict this thinking as many companies around the world have noticed that production does not take a hit as a result of remote work. The article “ Why Working from Home Will Stick” By Jose Maria Barrero, states that Productivity is expected to increase by 5% as a result of the fact that there is less commuting(Barrero et al,2021). This is based on a study done in the United States and aligns with the article “How effective is telecommuting? Assessing the status of our scientific findings.” Tammy Allen links the increase in job satisfaction among telecommuters to increased flexibility(Allen et al,2015). While Barerro his study is based on the Covid-19

pandemic so it does not predict the long-term trends based on a lot of information it can for Allen's article as it was done in 2015, way before anyone thought of a global pandemic

## Productivity among Canadian Workers of all Ages



In this graph which is the results based on a study conducted by Statista Canada, they find that most workers in Canada from the ages of where you can legally work to the expected age of retirement, can accomplish the same work or more and young adults within the ages of 15-34 accomplish the same amount of work(Statista, 2021). The graph also outlines a 36.1% increase in productivity for older workers in the age range of 51-64. The older workers are the ones that need to be more taken care of as there are fewer in the workforce and they also have problems staying productive.

Additionally, the study provides further insights by highlighting that sustained productivity over decades is not exclusively linked to youth but is also significantly influenced by the expertise and well-developed skill sets that come with experience. Over time, workers tend to change the way they approach tasks, resulting in more high-quality performance even as they face the natural challenges of aging. The graph shows that older workers continue to contribute effectively despite some limitations that might emerge, showing a great mix of being efficient and reliable. Their productivity may benefit from years of accumulated knowledge and a proven track record in adapting to varying work demands. Moreover, this information underscores the need for organizations to invest in continuous training and ergonomic improvements tailored to an aging workforce. By acknowledging these factors, employers can create supportive environments that encourage innovation and sustain productivity. To conclude on this point, by leveraging the flexibility and reduced physical strain of remote work settings, older workers especially the ones aged 51-64 can effectively translate their experience into enhanced productivity, as the supportive nature of a home-based environment will mitigate the challenges traditionally associated with aging in the workforce.

## Flexibility and Autonomy

One of the main factors for an employee to be satisfied in his field of work is how much flexibility they are afforded. Hybrid work would be a good source for workers to be as flexible as possible. Most workers believe that for them to be flexible, they need a nice place to work and what better place than the comfort of your own home? In the Article "Researchers working from home: Benefits and challenges" Balacz Aczel found that focus-intensive work like coding, and writing saw 23% higher efficiency remotely, as activities that require focus were better achieved from home.' (Aczel et al.,2021).In the article "Current Status of Remote Work, Hybrid Work and Office Work for Information Technology" Shultz and Adams Professionals observed that IT professionals in hybrid roles were 20% more efficient due to autonomy, though it is important to note that they also emphasized that inexperienced staff benefit from office based supervision(Shultz & Adams,2024). Together, these studies state the need for tailored work arrangements. It is also important to note that both studies reveal that there are limitations to unstructured flexibility. Aczel et al. noted collaboration-dependent roles suffered remotely, as "team-based tasks were more effective in-office." Similarly, Schultz & Adams found junior IT staff required office environments for mentorship, suggesting flexibility works best when working remotely.

Similarly in an interview that I conducted with Lamine Ndiaye who is an IT consultant, he stated that "Remote work has greatly enhanced my work-life balance by offering greater flexibility, eliminating commute time, and allowing me to create a personalized work environment(Ndiaye, 2025). Being able to

work from home is a benefit as it allows workers to be more flexible and particularly allows employees to spend more time with their families which is a blessing that most workers would want to enjoy.

## Technological Enablers

Before the pandemic, most people were working in person rather than at home and the technology to work from home was not as good as it is now. The fast evolution of digital tools has been instrumental in mitigating the productivity challenges associated with hybrid and remote work. The Article “Making Space for Time: Strategies for the Design of Time-aware Hybrid Work” by Anastasia Griva et al, states that companies such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom have enabled geographically dispersed teams to collaborate as effectively as in-person counterparts (Griva et al, 2024). The technology that has been implemented in the past few years has allowed for hybrid work to have little problems. These advancements have made it easier for employees to communicate, schedule meetings, share documents, and work on projects in real-time, regardless of location. The accessibility of high-speed internet, cloud storage, and mobile-friendly platforms has also enhanced the flexibility of work arrangements, making it easier for workers to switch between home and office settings. However, the article also raises an issue that comes with working from home which they call ‘zoom fatigue’ which happens when a worker is going through excessive online video meetings (Griva et al, 2024). This phenomenon can lead to mental exhaustion, reduced concentration, and a sense of disconnection, despite being virtually present. Workers can find a way to work through this and that would be by finding

ways to find balance. Griva et al also state that "Hybrid work requires a careful temporal design to balance productivity and well-being." (Griva et al, 2024). This means that organizations and employees alike need to be intentional about how time is structured, meetings are scheduled, and breaks are taken. By creating workflows that support autonomy and mental health, hybrid work can remain both productive and sustainable in the long run.

## Cost Saving for Organizations

In Canada, specifically hybrid work should be an option that every business should consider if the work can be done remotely. Recently in Canada, real estate has been in disarray and there are many office spaces which are very expensive to rent for businesses. As a result, the option of moving operations online makes sense from a financial standpoint. Office rent is one of the most significant overhead costs for many businesses, especially small to medium-sized enterprises that may not have the capital to maintain a physical location in high-demand urban centers. With the rise of hybrid work models, many companies are starting to realize that a physical office is not always necessary to maintain productivity and collaboration among team members. Eliminating or downsizing office space can free up funds that can be redirected towards beneficial parts like technology, employee benefits, training, or even increasing salaries. This creates an opportunity for organizations to become more agile and efficient, adapting to modern working environments that better meet employee preferences. In the article "Efficient transportation, daycare, key to coaxing workers back to the office: Impact of hybrid work continues to 'place upward pressure' on office vacancy, says Colliers report" David Israelton states that "Vacancies are expected to rise by 1 percentage point this year, peaking at about 15 percent nationally

by mid-2025 (Israelton, 2024)." This data indicates that more and more businesses are either downsizing their offices or not using physical offices entirely, contributing to a national trend of increased vacancies in offices. The steady rise in vacancy rates shows a significant shift in workplace culture, where flexibility and remote accessibility are becoming normal rather than being the exception. As this is an issue that is reported to go down soon, it makes sense for companies to not want to go back to an office space. Businesses are recognizing the cost savings and employee satisfaction that come with hybrid models, and unless vacancy rates drop dramatically and rental prices become significantly more competitive, it may not be in their best interest to return to traditional office setups. Going further, employees have grown accustomed to the convenience and autonomy that come with remote or hybrid schedules, and mandating a full return to the office could risk employee dissatisfaction or even turnover. Therefore, the hybrid work model is not only a practical solution but it has become a strategic one as well.

## Drawbacks

As the Adoption of Hybrid and remote work was accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the modern-day workplace is different and in some ways, it is not for the better. While hybrid work offers flexibility and is cost-effective for companies, some of these drawbacks will threaten productivity, the overall well-being of employees, and finally the cohesion of an organization. This part of the report will analyze findings from peer-reviewed articles, case studies, and analysis from the industry in outlining the challenges that will come from hybrid and remote work models. Some of the other drawbacks that will be addressed will

be the cultural erosion of the workplace, workplace inequality, and finally, the challenges in work-life balance that will include an interview with Amadou Ndiaye who is a Bilingual collector who works strictly from home.

## Collaboration Issues

As a result of the present remote work models, many companies have seen efforts for collaboration drop. The fact that there is an absence of face-to-face interactions in remote work environments makes it that there is less collaboration which is crucial for businesses to drive innovation in their organizations. In Aczel et al. study they found that "Team-based tasks, like data collection and collaboration, were more effective in an office setting." (Aczel et al, 2021). The reason why team-based activities will suffer as a result of hybrid work is because there is a lack of real-time feedback compared to an in-person office setting. Another collaboration drawback that comes from remote work is that it puts in place communication barriers. In their study, Schultz and Adams found that 58.7% of IT professionals who worked remotely faced communication gaps during complex problem-solving work (Schultz & Adams, 2024). Since the work is done remotely and there are misalignments in response times and instructions are unclear which will lead to project delays and multiple errors will be made as a result.



## Employee feeling disconnected

Because of the concept of not being able to see their coworkers and not working in an office, remote work has weakened the culture that is in an organization. In a study conducted by Lamin et al. in a Brazilian hospital who were transitioning their work to remote, that after doing long-term remote work “The content analysis of the responses revealed that managers perceived maintaining the hospital’s organizational culture and efficient communication as a challenge for those who transitioned to remote work(Lamin et al, 2024). Organizational culture is very important to establish for an organization if they want the best for their company. The other negative that comes as a result of remote work is isolation and Alienation Lamin and al also state that some employees stated how they feel isolated as a result of the fact that there's not much face-to-face interaction(Lamin et al, 2024) There's another study that supports this as in the article “A rapid review of mental and physical health effects of working at home: How do we optimize health? Oakman et al, the study states that some negative effects that come from remote work are increased stress and professional isolation(Oakman et al, 2020). If workers are feeling isolated from their work then the concept that there is a culture within the organization they work for does not exist to them.

## Workplace Inequality

While hybrid and remote work models offer flexibility, the model is built in which there are inequalities in access to resources and professional advancements. In a study conducted by Loignomn, he found that

lower socioeconomic workers face more challenges in creating effective home workspaces. (Loignon et al, 2024). There is an inequality here as the higher socioeconomic home environment is better and as a result, the workers of higher socioeconomic status have better control and job performance than the people with lower socioeconomic status. Another form of workplace inequality that comes as a result of hybrid work is gender inequality. In the article “Hybrid work is 'a gift' for mothers: But, experts say, it's only a partial solution to a larger systemic problem” by Toronto Star it states that hybrid work is the field of work in the job market that is highly sought by women(Toronto Star,2024). The article also states there is a uniqueness as women handle most of the unpaid domestic labour and that they can face bias from employers as a result(Toronto Star,2024). The last form of workplace inequality that happens due to remote work is mentorship gaps. Young people are a very important part of the workforce and the fact that there is no face-to-face contact in remote work means that they can not get trained properly especially the younger IT professionals as going back the study conducted by Schultz and Adams found that younger IT professionals prefer in-person work for supervision (Schultz & Adams,2024). The article also goes into detail about how their communication challenges all lead back to a lack of mentorship as a younger person in the workplace myself, I prefer that I can get mentored, and working remotely makes it that the mentorship will not be as good as if it was done in-person as you can get supervised better.

## Work-life Boundaries

The final drawback that comes from Remote work is the lack of work-life boundaries. The blending of personal and personal spaces can undermine an employee's well-being as well as its productivity. This issue becomes even more significant when individuals do not have a designated space at home to

separate their professional responsibilities from their personal lives. In an interview I conducted with Amadou Ndiaye who has been working as a bilingual collector for two years, he states “Your home becomes synonymous with work, making it harder to escape thoughts of work when off the clock”(Ndiaye, 2025). This illustrates that remote work can come with a mental toll. The pressure of constantly being available or connected can cause stress over time, especially when communication from work occurs outside regular hours. When this phenomenon happens it often leads to burnout, leading employees to work longer hours equally making it harder to disconnect digitally. The other drawback is with remote work there can be blurred boundaries. Oakman et al study identifies that remote workers face more stress since there is a feeling of deterioration of physical and psychological boundaries between work and home can impact mental health. (Oakman et al, 2024). These subtle but significant shifts in routine and environment can have lasting consequences on workers' overall health and job satisfaction.

## Conclusion for drawbacks

Hybrid and remote work models have their challenges which demand critical evaluation. The workplace can have its challenges with collaboration, equity, and employee well-being. Workplace inequalities perpetuate socioeconomic and gender disparities. These findings have highlighted the need in which organizations need to critically think about adapting their work models if they opt to go with remote/hybrid settings.

# My thoughts on how to Mitigate these issues

Since I believe that Hybrid and remote work models are here to stay, the drawbacks like collaboration issues, organizational disconnect, and a lack of work-life boundaries it is important to make sure that the drawbacks of it are addressed for better team cohesion in an organization.

## Better Collaboration Strategies

As the existing remote work models have reported a decrease in teamwork and collaboration, organizations can work around these issues with a few strategies I will list below.

**Implement Hybrid Schedules:** Organizations should choose dates on which workers go to the office for collaboration, I would recommend that organizations use two days of the workweek for collaboration and the rest of the focused work that could be done individually is done remotely. If implemented consistently the sacrifice of flexibility is significantly minimized.

**Collaboration Tool Kits:** Organizations should also look to have a digital whiteboard for the employees to brainstorm all at once and it can help them track progress better. It is also important for organizations to reward teamwork with rewards, especially after hitting milestones to reinforce good teamwork.

**Office Hours done Virtually:** The organization should create time in the day when team members all join a video call to brainstorm. This is done spontaneously in offices and can also be done in person.

## Strengthen Organizational Culture

In a remote setting, since workers are not in an actual physical office, it can weaken their sense of belonging in an organization; however, there are ways around this.

**Schedule Fun Activities:** Organizations should look to implement fun activities that employees will not feel forced to attend such as playing online games like Among Us, and Gartic Phone. Games like this will enhance teamwork as it is required to play the game and get to the same objective. Organizations should also look to have meetings weekly where the successes of the week are shared.

**Introduce Culture Champions:** Organizations should look to lead small initiatives with the organization like clubs that align with company values just like how Universities do it. Organizations should look to nominate members to lead them.

**Leadership Visibility:** What employers value most is honesty with workers and leaders but they also want a sense of relatability. Leaders should host 20-minute segments online where workers can ask anything they want.

## Address Workplace Inequalities

The major drawback of remote work that should be addressed is the inequalities that there are whether it is gender inequalities, socioeconomic inequalities as well as lack of mentorship for the younger workers.

**Home office Vouchers:** Organizations should look to help out workers in the lower income bracket by giving them a one-time voucher that will cover everything they need to work efficiently remotely such as comfortable chairs, desks, or good quality headphones.

**Neutral promotions:** Organizations should look to tie promotions to measurable outcomes completed in a remote environment rather than being in a physical presence. The ways to gain promotions should be shared publicly to eliminate bias.

**Mentorship Program:** The more senior employees should be paired with younger employees and they should be teaching each other rather than just the senior employee teaching the younger one.

## Restoring work-life boundaries

For some employees, there is a lack of boundary between personal life and their work life and organizations should look to address that to make employees more comfortable in remote settings.

**Forced breaks:** Organizations should look to implement a part of the day where workers should take a break for 30 minutes and the break includes shutting down the computer and encouraging them to take a short walk outside if they can.

**Boundary policies:** Organizations should set policies for workers where the company is not allowed to contact them after hours unless it is an emergency so that the employees can better disconnect when they have the time to

**Meeting-free days:** Organizations should choose one day of the week where workers have no online meetings and the work can be done asynchronously with no specific deadline. The day should be set for workers to recharge after a long week of work. I would recommend that Friday would be where this day should be implemented as most workers will feel burned out.

## Conclusion for these mitigation strategies

Hybrid and remote work require intentional design. The key is to blend structure with flexibility:

1. **Clarity:** Clearly defining expectations
2. **Being empathetic:** Recognize that every employee's environment and needs differ.
3. **Experimenting:** Pilot strategies, gather feedback, and iterate.

By focusing on fairness, creativity, and human connection, organizations can turn hybrid work's challenges into opportunities for innovation and loyalty.

## Conclusion:

In Conclusion, Hybrid and remote work models have transformed the modern workplace, driven largely by the necessity brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. These models offer great advantages for employees, including enhanced employee satisfaction, increased productivity, and the potential for cost savings, especially in real estate. Workers, particularly younger ones, value the autonomy and flexibility

that these setups provide, contributing to improved work-life balance and environmental benefits as a result of reduced commuting. However, there are notable challenges. Collaboration can suffer due to the lack of face-to-face interaction, and organizational culture risks disintegrating without consistent in-person engagement. Issues such as employee isolation, communication gaps, and work-life boundary blur also emerge as critical concerns. Furthermore, hybrid and remote work models can showcase workplace inequalities, especially for those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds or women balancing unpaid domestic labour.

I believe hybrid work should stay, however, organizations should be careful in the way that they implement it as carefully as they can with employee well-being in mind and trying to maximize as much productivity as they can gain. I do not believe that remote work should be strictly meeting, I believe it should be asynchronous work as workers will eventually get tired of being in video meetings and if the work can be done without meetings then it should be.



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