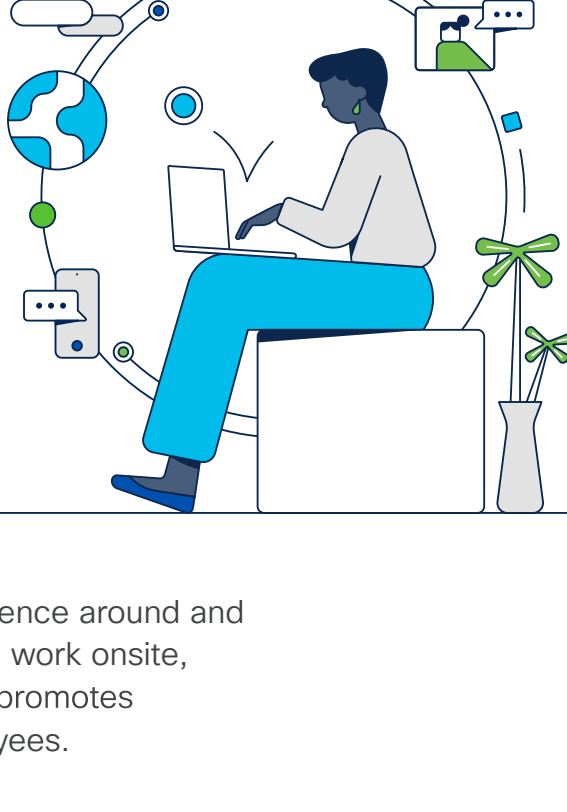


What is Hybrid Work?



Hybrid Work is an approach that designs the work experience around and for the worker, wherever they are. It empowers people to work onsite, offsite, and moving between locations. Hybrid work also promotes inclusiveness, engagement, and well-being for all employees.

Q & A

What does hybrid work look like?

A hybrid work model supports a blend of in-office and remote workers who may work at all levels in the organization. They might work onsite or offsite, with many employees switching between those environments regularly, depending on their needs.

Hybrid work helps equip people to choose where and how they will work. Wherever and whenever they decide to work, people have confidence that they can collaborate safely and securely with others and be productive. Flexibility to work offsite or onsite, and how often, depends on the organization and the nature of the employee's work and their job responsibilities.

Why are companies shifting to hybrid work?

The transition to a hybrid work model has been underway in many organizations for several years. Advances in technology, from smartphones to cloud computing, have made it possible to work and collaborate from anywhere.

Employees expect flexibility in where and how they work. New business models, work processes, and technology investments made since the start of the global health crisis can make it difficult for companies to even consider returning to their previous status quo. Many businesses are evolving to a hybrid work model to help them compete and succeed in the future.

Another motivation for companies embracing a hybrid work model is retaining top talent. In a global workforce survey sponsored by Cisco, only 9 percent of workers said they expect to return to the office 100 percent of the time after their office reopens. Not supporting a hybrid work model could prevent companies from attracting and retaining the talent they need to succeed in the future.

Is a hybrid workspace different from a hybrid workplace?

Hybrid workspace and hybrid workplace mean different things. The hybrid work model is driving an evolution from a location-centric view of where work is done (workplace) to a more human-centric view of where work is done (workspace).

- **Hybrid workplace:** Historically, a workplace has been a company's physical office location, where employees may work onsite all or part of the time.
- **Hybrid workspace:** A workspace is anywhere an employee works at any given time.

A hybrid workspace could be a workstation at the company's physical office, or it could be an employee's home office. It might even describe a desk in a hotel room, where an employee is working from and connecting to the company network while traveling.

Technology, including both software and hardware, supports secure collaboration and communication, regardless of where a hybrid workspace is located.

Does hybrid work require less office space?

Many businesses that shift to a hybrid work model will find they need to maintain less office space. In fact, the global workforce survey Cisco recently sponsored found that more than half (53 percent) of organizations plan to reduce their office footprint.

However, the office, as one of many different hybrid workspaces, serves a critical role in supporting a hybrid work model. It becomes a central hub for workers to **engage in rich collaboration** experiences, build rapport with their colleagues, connect with the workplace culture, and more.

While many businesses can **optimize their real-estate expenses** because they have a hybrid work environment, they'll need to invest in transforming the offices they keep. Those investments, physical and technological, will help enhance the worker experience by promoting employee safety, well-being, collaboration, and productivity. For example, companies may need to modify or even redesign their in-office work environment to promote social distancing. Or they may need to embrace **a secure access services edge (SASE)** architecture to support secure and seamless access from anywhere.

Characteristics of hybrid work

Hybrid work is about much more than where work is done, providing for simple, smart, and secure experiences from any location. Advanced technologies, like automation and artificial intelligence (AI), help to deliver new and more intelligent work experiences that employees can engage in fully.

The hybrid workforce of the future needs secure and seamless access to business applications and feature-rich, intuitive collaboration tools. This allows them to message, meet, call, share content, and collaborate securely from any space. An effective hybrid work model requires some key characteristics:

• Flexible

Employees in a hybrid work model may be spread across time zones and countries, working at different hours. They have different needs and require flexible tools that can adapt to their work styles, roles, and devices.

Hybrid work also provides for greater organizational flexibility overall, which, in turn, helps to increase business agility.

• Inclusive

Hybrid work should be inclusive. That means organizations do whatever is needed to help ensure all their employees enjoy equal experiences at work.

Companies that maintain a hybrid workforce benefit from a work environment where every person can participate fully and be seen and heard equally. This is impacted by the technology they implement and the corporate culture they foster.

For example, an employer that wants to promote inclusiveness in the hybrid work environment will take care to choose collaboration tools with features that can help eliminate any language barriers between employees and teams.

• Supportive

The recent global health crisis upended work as we know it, but it has also opened the door for employees and their organizations to redefine it. The rise of the new hybrid work environment is a testament to that.

To support the hybrid work vision, businesses will need to promote a supportive mindset throughout every level of their organization. That will help ensure workers are comfortable with ways of working and feel safe, secure, supported, and included.

Organizations will also need to invest in building more intelligent networks and workplaces, including smarter buildings, to support their hybrid workforce and begin preparing for the future of work that's already emerging now.

• Secure

The success of the new hybrid work environment is dependent on reliable and secure connectivity. This helps ensure all team members can work and collaborate with confidence anywhere they choose to work.

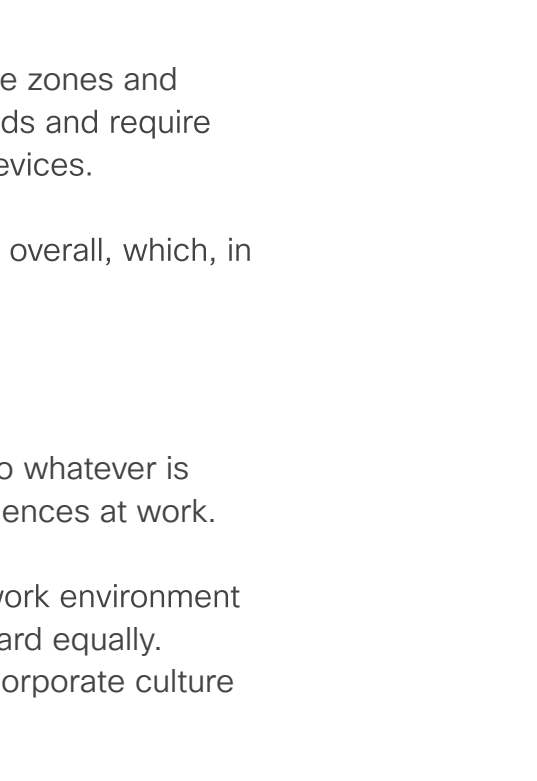
Adopting a hybrid work model implies that all workers can enjoy worry-free, secure connectivity and app experiences. This allows the organization to easily maintain network connectivity and apply its security policies consistently across all workspaces, including campus, branch, home and micro-office environments.

• Managed

The hybrid work model is complex and dynamic, requiring a different IT management approach. IT teams must be able to:

- Provision users and devices at scale and with ease
- Access robust and relevant analytics
- Secure and troubleshoot issues for end users, devices, applications, and environments anywhere
- Collaborate through a solution that provides single-pane-of-glass management

In a large organization that adopts a hybrid work model, an approach known as enhancing enterprise technology management.



Technology foundations for hybrid work

Technology plays a vital role in promoting the various attributes of hybrid work.

The strategic use of intelligent devices in hybrid workspaces can help prevent workers from experiencing video fatigue. Organizations and their workers can use data insights to understand how to improve work/life integration and help build higher-quality connections between individuals and teams.

Companies can also use intelligent applications to help reduce any in-office anxiety some workers may feel as they return to the office in the wake of the global health crisis.

For example, organizations can use technology to enable in-office workspaces like conference rooms to automatically issue social distancing alerts to inform employees when the room exceeds capacity. Or they can implement touchless meeting controls to eliminate the need for employees to touch shared devices.

Following are other foundational elements of the new hybrid work model:

Intelligent, intuitive workplace technology

When employees are at their onsite work environments, organizations are focused on enabling a safe and secure return by monitoring social density, securely onboarding users and devices, and helping to ensure that employees can be protected in their environment.

Organizations can monitor social density thresholds by using location-based services in combination with advanced network telemetry and Internet of Things (IoT) devices in buildings. They can receive real-time alerts and respond to incidents with proximity reporting.

Organizations can also use digital signage in onsite workspaces. For example, digital signage can be placed in reception areas and larger meeting rooms, with centrally deployed, multimedia content to remind workers of health and safety guidelines and share alerts and other vital information. Digital signage can even deliver that messaging to devices in home-office settings.

At the same time, organizations can adopt smart building services by simplifying the secure onboarding and connectivity of IoT devices such as cameras, heat sensors, and smart lighting. This includes the use of policy automation, analytics, microsegmentation and network-delivered power.

Also, businesses can use web apps onsite to enable everything from contactless and customized guest reception, to daily health surveys, to helping employees find available workspace in the office quickly and easily.

Zero-trust security

The success of the hybrid work model hinges on security. More specifically, a zero-trust approach should be adopted and practiced throughout the organization.

Zero-trust is a comprehensive approach to securing all access across company networks, applications, and environments from any user, device, and location. A zero-trust approach to security allows organizations to:

- Consistently enforce policy-based controls
- Gain visibility into users, devices, components, and more across their entire work environment
- Get detailed logs, reports, and alerts to improve threat detection and response
- Deploy end-to-end encryption and authentication for users and room devices

Real-time collaboration

Organizations that embrace the new hybrid work model need to invest in collaboration software and purpose-built devices that can support real-time collaboration among all workers reliably, securely, and optimally.

All employees should have access to high-quality collaboration tools from their hybrid workspace—whether it's a desk in the office, at home, or another location—to enhance frictionless collaboration experiences. Examples of these tools for real-time collaboration include:

- An all-in-one productivity device for the desktop that offers an AI-driven collaboration experience with noise suppression, virtual backgrounds, and advanced co-creation capabilities. These devices allow them to message, meet, call, and share content from anywhere.
- Headsets that provide noise cancellation and background noise reduction to help people stay focused and productive wherever they are working.
- Real-time collaboration tools, such as for video conferencing, should also allow the business to provide high-quality experiences for customers.

Full-stack observability

In distributed work and application environments, IT teams are stretched to help ensure continuously optimized user and application experience. To keep pace with the needs of the workforce, IT teams need the visibility, insights and action afforded by full-stack observability.

Full-stack observability moves beyond monitoring by combining data from apps, infrastructure and transactions to produce a shared contextual global view of operations. This allows IT teams to work together to deliver exceptional user experiences, optimize cost and performance, and help businesses plan for the future.

Secure access service edge (SASE)

As organizations continue their transition to the cloud, they need better performance and protection for their hybrid workforce and remote offices. Existing architectures do not support the agility needed to connect users and applications from anywhere, while maintaining and improving security and performance.

SASE (pronounced sassy) is an architectural approach that offers an alternative to traditional data center-oriented security. SASE converges networking capabilities with cloud-native security functions to simplify deployment and streamline management in the cloud.

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<https://pxsolutions.ca/>
info@pxsolutions.ca
833-999-7970