



Go on the offensive:

Make your hybrid policy a competitive advantage.

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As companies confront the greatest workplace transformation of our time, too many organizational leaders are slow to embrace the hybrid work model — and they hesitate at their own peril. The pandemic has provided companies a rare opportunity to rethink the way they work, and time is of the essence. An unwillingness to evolve today may hinder your ability to secure the right talent and clients in the future.

According to EY’s Future Workplace Index released October 25, 60% of companies have not formalized their hybrid work strategy yet. “Though hybrid work is here to stay, the C-suite isn’t creating the policies necessary for long-term hybrid workplace success,” says EY Global Real Estate Leader Mark Grinis.

However, not all hybrid work

models are created equal and you must be intentional about how you communicate and implement organizational change. Today we’re offering three tips to help you get on the offensive and create the hybrid work strategy that supports your people — and your business — in this new era of work.

1. Change your mindset

Stop asking, “How do we get people back to the office?” and “How do we prevent losing people?” While these are valid concerns, they put you on the defensive and distract from your efforts to build the culture, onboarding, mentoring and training programs necessary for a successful hybrid work model. Instead, look to leverage the advantages of hybrid work and the opportunity it offers to harness a key element of human

nature — the innate human desire for freedom.

Employees feel a spirit of freedom when they get to choose where and when they accomplish goals. And they feel liberated while blending their personal and work lives on their own terms. This powerful emotion enhances employee engagement, which improves customer service, reduces customer churn, increases productivity and creates better financial performance. Ultimately, the organization is better able to accomplish its mission.

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This is an opportunity for savvy employers to get ahead of the curve, combining everything they learned about remote work during the pandemic with the time-proven benefits of a collaborative workspace. Seize the moment and make your hybrid work model a competitive advantage. Your employees — and business — will thank you.

2. Be sequential to be successful

Okay, you're convinced — you're ready to embrace a hybrid work model. Though it's natural to start contemplating your new office layout, it's your organizational infrastructure that needs attention first.

To ensure a successful hybrid work model, you need to align every department in your organization to support this initiative. Stakeholders from Human Resources, Information Technology, Security, Operations, Finance and Real Estate must collaborate to deliver the policies and tools necessary to support employees working

both from home and in the office. Outlined below are three ways Human Resources can drive the development of your hybrid policy:

- **Onboarding** — Recruiting and retaining top talent begins with a compelling description of your company's culture and values. Job postings should highlight your hybrid work policy and communicate the degree of flexibility offered for that specific role. Showcasing your hybrid work policy makes you more attractive to prospective talent while setting the appropriate expectations for the candidate. Once hired, it's equally important to reinforce expectations for hybrid work flexibility and provide training on tools that support them when working remotely. This will reduce their "time to impact/productivity" and promote seamless assimilation into your company culture.
- **Mentoring** — Progressive companies understand the benefits of mentorship and should leverage software such as MentorcliQ and PUSHfar to facilitate valuable 1:1 coaching in a hybrid environment. Highlighting these capabilities during the interview process will make your organization more attractive to emerging leaders. Investing in your talent is critical to the long-term success of your organization and it should continue to be a priority no matter where your employees work.
- **Training** — Even long-time managers will need help building the skills necessary to cultivate camaraderie with a team of hybrid employees who are in the office one day and working remote the next. It is imperative that all meetings be inclusive of digital



participants and that managers avoid bias toward employees whose preferred work styles align with their own. Reinforcing cultural norms and providing skills-based training are critical to ensure all employees are seen, heard and feel included.

3. Focus on leadership

Change starts at the top. Any organization undergoing a transformation needs to empower managers to lead the change. First, you must thoughtfully communicate the organization's intent to support a hybrid work model, explaining its advantages and how it will affect leadership.

Next, you should include leadership in the development of relevant policies and the redesign of your workplace, as appropriate.

By making managers part of the process, you secure their buy-in, ignite their creativity and minimize the uncertainty that so often undermines an organization's attempts to innovate.

Stop playing defense. The pandemic has presented an opportunity to reassess and reinvent the way you work — a chance to craft a workforce strategy and supporting real estate strategy uniquely suited to your team and business. Now is the time to change your mindset and go on the offensive. Be sequential to be successful as you develop your hybrid policy and avoid false starts by aligning each department in your organization. Empower your leaders to take the initiative and develop a workforce strategy that gives you a competitive edge. ▼



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