

Hybrid high-performance

Your guide to making hybrid working
‘the wind in your sails’ for your
intended organisation culture





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Foreword



Hybrid
and high-
performance
are a winning
combination

Hybrid working is one of the most significant shifts in organisational practice in recent years, with 70% of people wanting to work from home at least two days per week.

The implications for organisational culture are significant. 'The way we do things around here' is changing as a result of virtual and physical spaces, new methods of communication, and different working patterns.

If culture is intentionally and consistently considered, hybrid working can help organisations create the high-performing culture they want to have. This e-book shares our approach to making that happen.

Hybrid working is here to stay

The BBC recently reported that UK workers are going into the office an average of one and a half days per week. In the main, this is less frequent than their organisations would like (for those which have defined a policy). Of course, it varies across sector, with banking and healthcare employees going in most often, and energy and technology employees least often.

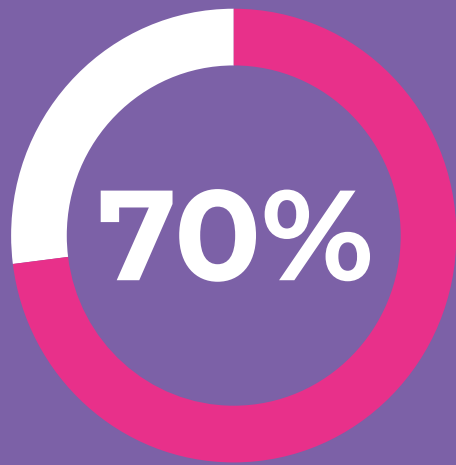
Most organisations opted for hybrid working as the Covid-19 restrictions started to lift. For many people, the novelty of those initial on-site days was welcomed: re-connecting with colleagues in person, spending less time in Teams meetings, and even the small joys of a barista coffee or a shop-bought lunch. For many organisations however, the key discussion was about the number of days people would be expected to be in the office, with little consideration for what it really meant for the work and organisational culture.

Findings from **Pecan's Silver Linings** research highlighted the challenges of fully remote working, including loss of social connections and sense of belonging, limited organisation-wide communication and anecdotal updates, and a reduced sense of cultural identity and 'how we do things round here'.

Spending time in the office might provide an opportunity to regain some of these cultural factors, but – on its own – is no silver bullet.

1.5 Days

Average number of days in the office



of the UK workforce wanting to work from home 2+ days a week

Source: CEPR Returning to the Office

36%

of the workforce choosing to go into the office on Fridays (the least popular day)

Source: CEPR Returning to the Office

5%

of the UK workforce working mainly from home prior to the pandemic

Source: CIPD Flexible Working

18–24

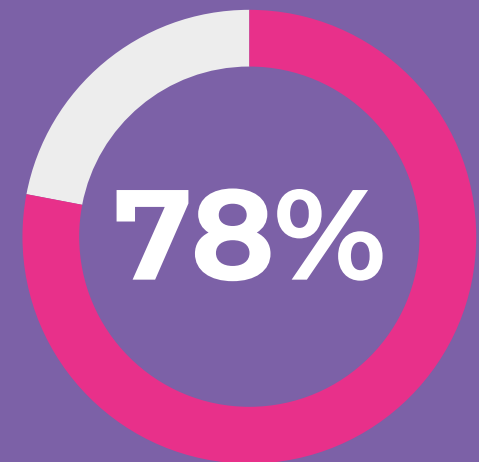
age group prefer more time in the office (2.5 days vs. average of 2)

Source: McKinsey Flexible Working Survey

21%

is the proportion of respondents who quit their jobs in 2021 who cited lack of flexibility (hours or location)

Source: Microsoft Study: Work Trend Index(2022)

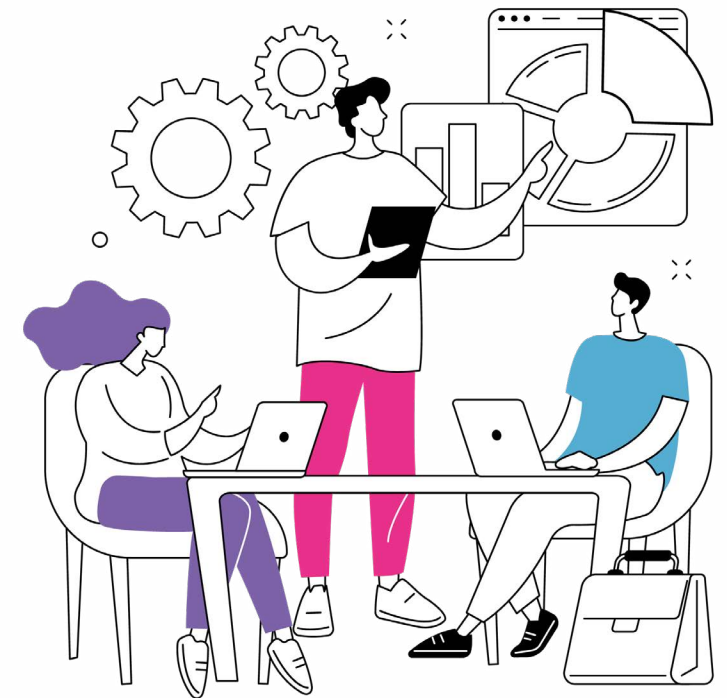


of the UK workforce reporting that hybrid working helped their work-life balance

Source: ONS Hybrid Working is here to Stay

Now that hybrid looks to be the ‘new normal’, many organisations are asking...

How can we make our hybrid approach not just ‘functional’, but actually a key driver of culture and high performance?



Be deliberate

Being deliberate about your hybrid approach helps ensure you take into account the opportunities and challenges it poses for your organisational culture:

To do this:

- Identify and articulate what you want - which may be different from when hybrid working first began
- Align key enablers, including role models, ways of working, policies and processes, and symbols and rituals – keeping in mind how these operate in the office and online
- And finally, build a self-sustaining movement to monitor and iterate your approach





Articulate what you want

Leaders as role models

Your steps to making hybrid working a success

Hardwire your culture

- Practices, policies, processes
- Roles and decision-making
- Symbols, rituals and measures

Self sustaining movement

“The culture you envisage now might not be the same as when hybrid working first began.”

Articulate what you want now

For hybrid working to become a key driver of positive culture change, it's important to re-visit and refresh your expectations for your organisational culture.

Experiences of work during the pandemic have affected organisations and individuals in different ways – both positively and negatively.

Plus, there are new challenges and opportunities to navigate, such as the 'great resignation', and high inflation and cost of living crisis.

The Hybrid Culture Mini Audit

Questions

Your space to reflect

Current Culture

1. How would you describe your purpose and culture today?
2. How does it manifest, both in the office and online?
3. What's working well already, that you can build on?

Intended Culture

1. What do your customers need from you?
2. How do you want your culture to be, 12 months from now?
3. What do you believe in?
4. What do your people want to belong to, and be proud of?
5. How do you want to be distinctive, or stand out from the competition?
6. How will you attract and keep talent?

Bring it to life

1. What will people be saying and doing (both in the workplace, and remotely)?
2. How will it impact customers?
3. What will be different? And what will be the same?
4. Do any of your values and behaviours need refreshing?

Create leaders as role models

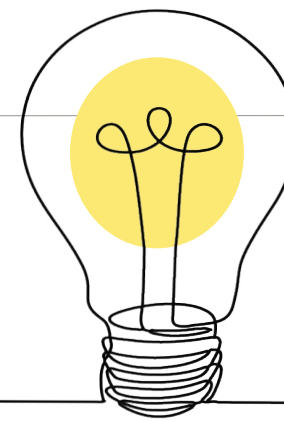
Research shows that 70% to 80% of a team or organisation's culture is determined by leaders.

So once a clear vision of the future culture has been described, the next step is to create a powerful movement of advocates. This group need to have a shared interpretation of what's intended, and a strong desire to make it a reality.

Leaders need to deliberately and visibly role model the future culture in their day-to-day decisions, priorities, behaviours and tone. They need to do this in the office, and when they're working from home. And by leaders, we mean those in senior leadership positions and those with influence at more junior levels.



Create leaders as role models



Here are our tips for leaders to role model future culture in a hybrid environment:

1. Keep it simple – create space for leaders to agree the one or two specific shifts towards the future culture that they want to bring about in the next 3 months. For example, “we’re going to become trust-builders and lead by outcome, not activity”
2. Hold up the mirror – help leaders get honest feedback on how they’re doing already with this behaviour – strengths to build on and blind spots to address. 360 feedback is a helpful tool, or simply ask their teams and peers – How do I do this well? How can I do this better?
3. Make it day-to-day – although the nature of our time together has changed, we still spend time in meetings and Teams calls most days. Leaders can ask themselves, how will I role model this mindset / behaviour shift in my conversations this week? What impact do I expect it to have? How will I know it’s working?
4. Be creative – with most people feeling meeting-fatigue, use fresh ways to communicate, inspire and engage colleagues such as podcasts, videos or workshops
5. Create a movement – give your existing change ambassadors opportunities to be more vocal and more influential. Give responsibility to people still ‘on the fence’ to turn them into positive influencers. Involve them as new voices, telling stories that build confidence and motivation to do things in the new way

**70% to 80% of culture is
determined by leaders**

Hardwire your culture

The pandemic required most organisations to move online, virtually overnight.

As hybrid working becomes permanent for many organisations, it's time to review related policies, procedures and ways of working to ensure that they help bake in the intended culture.

This helps to hardwire the culture you want into your day-to-day working **practices, polices and processes**, and differentiates you as an organisation that lives and breathes their values everyday.

This can feel like an overwhelming task when most organisations have hundreds of working practices, often different in different teams. So where to start? Successful organisations know which signature ways of working create most

value for employees and customers and set them apart from the competition. They ensure their culture, or values, are absolutely embedded through these and are religious in making sure they are adhered to.

You can read more about Pecan's approach to **signature ways of working in this article**, written for HRZone.



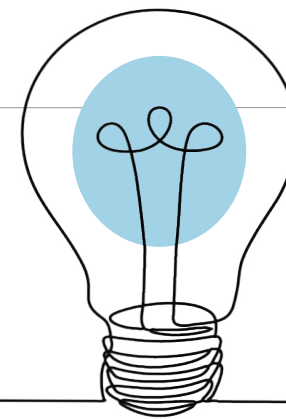


Roles and decision-making

Hybrid working offers opportunities for individuals and organisations, potentially opening up geographies and acting as a differentiator for talent attraction and retention.

So when reviewing your hybrid working approach, it's a great time to ensure your organisation's roles, structure and approach to decision-making are optimised to positively reinforce the culture you want to have.

Roles and decision-making



Here are our tips for reviewing roles and decision-making with an eye to your culture:

1. Challenge habitual thinking – ask yourself why a role needs to exist, and where the work could be done from. Then articulate clearly and succinctly the contribution it makes and how this will be evidenced – to customers, other teams and the bottom line
2. Empower decision-making – fundamentally relook at who makes which decisions and push them ‘down the line’. The more people feel they can make decisions independently, the fewer online meetings will be needed to debate and discuss
3. Create confident decision makers – empowerment is not the same as ‘passing the buck’. To support your people to make great decisions, give them relevant skills and knowledge and the psychological support they need to feel resourceful and confident
4. Be proactively inclusive – creating a more inclusive culture often means breaking engrained beliefs and behaviours. Some people prefer home-working, some people prefer offices, and some like a mix of the two; be careful not to side-line colleagues for their preferences. Define principles that support everyone to maximise their contribution wherever they work
5. Onboard new starters well – not wanting to take up people’s time, in a hybrid world new starters can take far longer to start contributing fully. Be proactive and structured and help your new starters to get included in appropriate decision-making forums from day one

Symbols, rituals and measures

Symbols and rituals are powerful signs of an organisation's culture. Posters on the walls, office routines, team nights out and celebration huddles; these are the visual and physical signs of 'what's important around here'. During the fully remote phase of the pandemic, many of these became much less visible.

Now, with hybrid working:

“What are the symbols and rituals that will help to embed your intended culture – and what are their physical and virtual forms?”

To identify these symbols and rituals, ask

colleagues about the current cultural signals they see, and what symbolic changes would encourage the behaviours you are looking for. Symbolic changes could include finishing meetings at 20 or 50 minutes past the hour to avoid back-to-back meetings, or experimenting with no-email days. Think about how these symbols are experienced in the office, as well as when working from home.

Remember, different people need different things – don't try and have a corporate approach to building social connections. Be clear on the outcome you want to achieve and leave teams to decide how they want to do it.”

As a final point, measuring the degree to which your culture is reflective of your organisation's values will likely also need to change in a hybrid world.

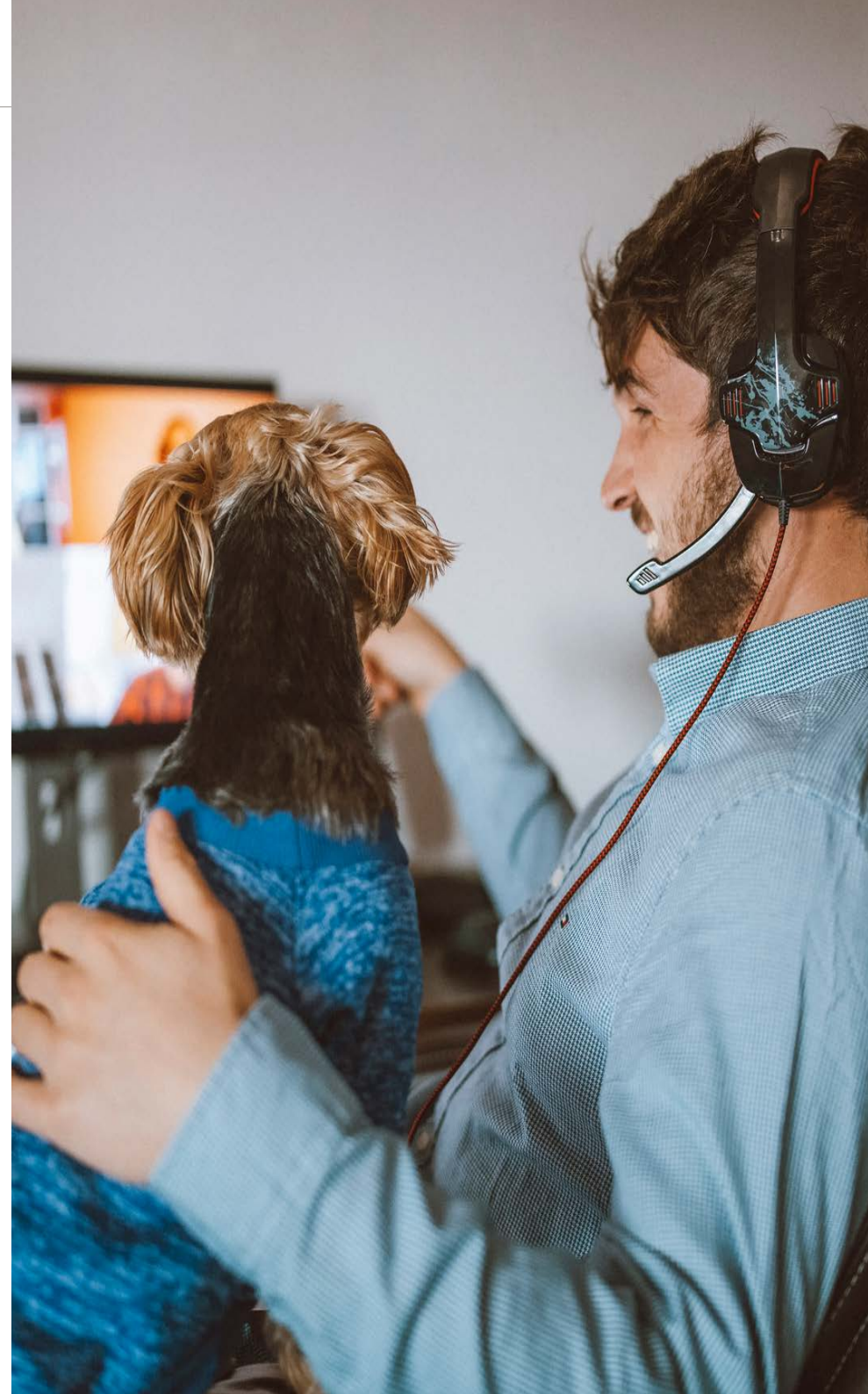
However simple tools such as pulse-checks are still easy and effective to use, keeping questions focused on behaviour and impact, not just how people are feeling.

Self-sustaining

Your hybrid working approach will now be starting to bed-in, but there's still work to do. By creating a self-sustaining movement, you can ensure that hybrid working remains helpful for your cultural journey.

By creating an ongoing dialogue about hybrid working, you can stay alert to how it is impacting your organisational culture. Take the time to regularly review what's working and what could be improved, both at a team and organisational level.

Prioritise the changes that will have the biggest benefit to your hybrid working approach: make sure your first change happens well and quickly, before moving onto the next. Naturally, people's preferences around hybrid may also change over time, so empowering teams to adjust their approach is key.



Hybrid working is here to stay, and now's a great time to consider how your approach to hybrid is impacting your culture.

By being deliberate and intentional, you can leverage the opportunities of hybrid – and manage the challenges – and create the high-performing organisational culture you want to have.

Pecan Partnership can help you achieve hybrid high-performance.

Contact us to book in a no-obligation call to discuss hybrid working, and how we can help:

[Book a call with Ella](#)

[Book a call with Andy](#)

Alternatively, email: andrew@pecanpartnership.co.uk or ella@pecanpartnership.co.uk.

Further reading:

- Pecan research: [Culture Evolution in the Workplace: A Silver Lining to the Pandemic](#)
- CIPD guidance: [for planning for hybrid working](#)
- Gallup article: [on the advantages and challenges of hybrid working](#)
- Pecan insight: [‘Great Resignation’ and organisational culture](#)
- Pecan article for HRZone: [Signature Ways of Working](#)



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Pecan's Purpose is to create cultures where people love to work and customers love to do business.

We believe culture change is about evolution not revolution - companies have core values that are fundamentally who they are. It's often as important to re-engage with these and play to strengths, as identifying what needs to evolve and change.

The Pecan team have run high pressure, fast-moving operations in start-ups, SMEs and major corporates and led mergers, acquisitions and divestments—there aren't many culture challenges we haven't experienced.

We have helped clients shape their values and behaviours and embed these into the DNA of their workplace culture across a wide range of sectors including recruitment, utilities, financial services, social enterprises and wholesale supply.

Ella has over 25 years' experience in culture change, employee engagement and performance coaching. Her background leading sales and operations teams brings a practicality and commercial focus to the challenge of culture change and engagement. Her expertise in psychology and coaching give her insight into what it takes to create a sustainable change in behaviour that impacts all aspects of organisational life for colleagues, customers and stakeholders.

Working across a wide variety of sectors including financial services, utilities, higher education and social enterprise both in the UK and internationally, brings an opportunity to share insights and learning to clients and includes award winning success for her work in mergers and acquisitions.

Andrew has 35 years' experience in supporting organisations across a wide variety of sectors to develop high-performance, customer-centric and inclusive cultures.

He has led professional knowhow businesses over the last 25 years and his career experience includes management consultancy, business development, coaching, training and marketing.

A track-record of award-winning and significant commercial improvement has been achieved through aligning vision and strategy, culture and values, attitudes and behaviours, measurement and recognition. In recent years he has also been increasingly involved with creating EDI strategies and supporting organisations to implement them.

His working style and approach embody a growth mindset of empowerment and motivation to continuously improve. Andrew's leadership style has a coaching philosophy at its heart and he is an accredited Executive Coach with the Association for Coaching.



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