

Workplace for a borderless world

RICOH

The modern workplace | new look, different feel

The experience of walking into a corporate office today is dramatically different, in many cases, than it was in the fall of 2019. Many organizations had employees working from home a few days per week or in pockets, but it wasn't the norm. While most experts and business leaders agree the workplace has permanently changed, the reality of what that means is still being realized — and defined.



Where we work

For remote-capable jobs, the percent of employees working at home or in a hybrid role has tripled.¹ Some studies show the percentage working in hybrid environments — and expecting to continue to work hybrid — is much higher.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Time Use Survey



Facilities, Operations, IT and HR organizations rose to the challenges of workspace, real estate, safety, technology, and wellness issues over the past few years — and these roles continue to be in the driver's seat of building a sustainable, cost-effective, collaborative, tech-enabled, healthy workplace for today.

In this eBook, we explore some of the conditions and challenges organizations are tackling in this new, permanently altered work environment. Backed by findings of [Ricoh's 2022 Global Customer Discovery Report](#) and other publicly available research, we focus on four key areas:

- Different hybrid work models organizations are employing
- Ways employees have responded to new models and what it means for them
- Areas of the workplace where digital tools and transformation can have the greatest impact
- How leaders can quarterback these important changes for optimal long-term results

Hybrid work has a flexible definition

72%

of organizations offer hybrid work options for employees

43%

say they will keep hybrid work options going forward.²


According to our research³, most organizations want to be flexible and provide a variety of working styles to suit employees in all situations. It's not only important for employees' wellbeing — it's often the difference between employees remaining with the company or walking out the door for another opportunity. In fact, two-thirds of the global workforce (64%) said they have already, or would consider, looking for a new job if their employer wanted them back in the office full-time.⁴ As more organizations have transformed their operations to deliver on these new employee expectations, there isn't one single definition of hybrid work.

² PwC, PwC Pulse Survey: Executive views on business in 2022, January 2022

³ Ricoh, Customer Discovery Report, 2022

⁴ Kastle, People at Work 2022: A Global Workforce View, November 2021





For example, some organizations prescribe specific days when employees must report to the office. Some offer flexible required days so employees can choose which days they're onsite. Others require employees to report only for group meetings or special occasions.

“We really need to understand how we're using our spaces and why people are coming in.”

- Senior Director of Workplace, Global Fashion Retailer⁵



Many organizations employ a mix of these solutions or leave it up to managers to make decisions around the specifics. At the same time, plenty of leaders are still working to figure out the right approach for their business operations and employees. Some organizations would prefer to get most employees back in the office full time, all the time.

While these decisions can be complex with varying employee needs and demands, it's clear that keeping some level of flexibility will continue to play a role in job satisfaction, work-life harmony, and retention.

⁵ Ricoh, Customer Discovery Report, 2022

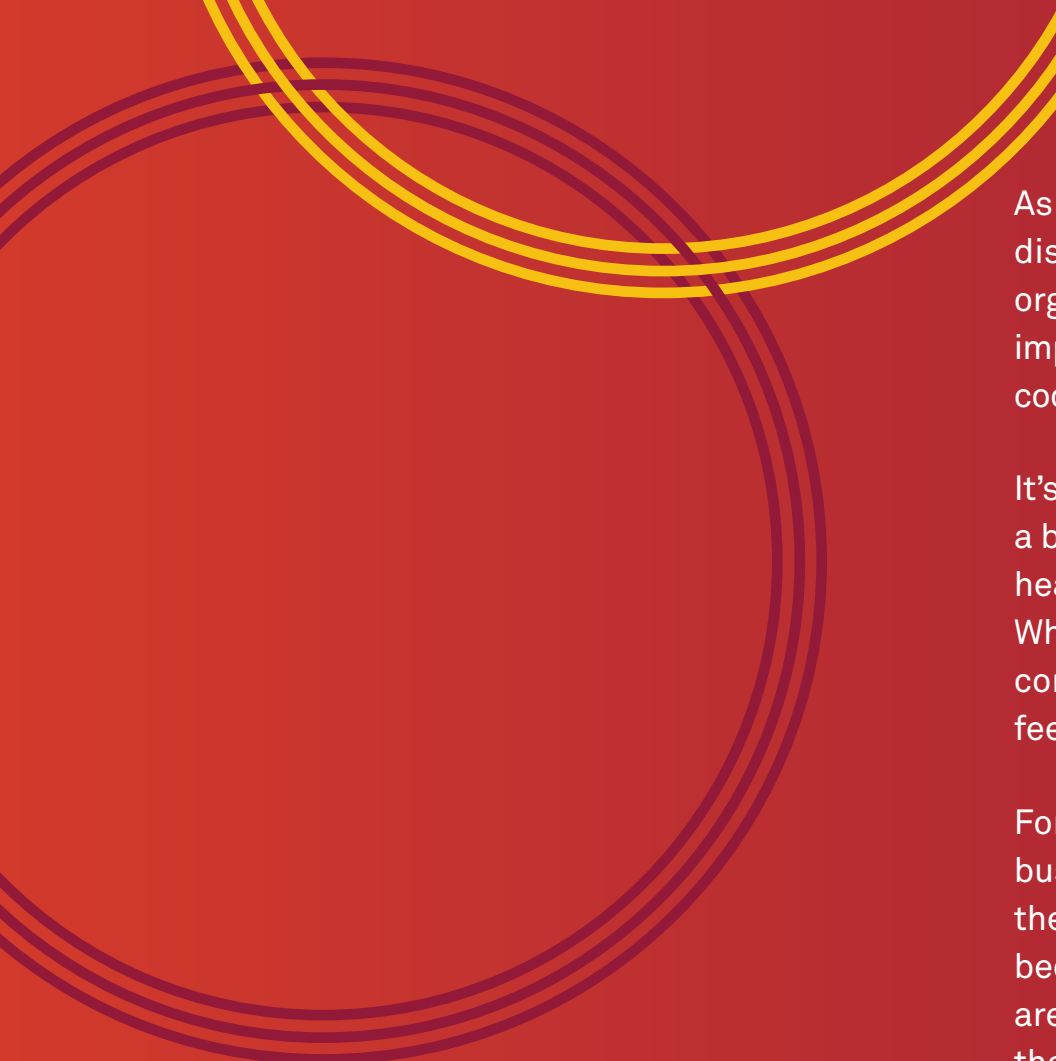
Employee dynamics have changed

Dancing in lockstep with the move toward flexible, hybrid workspaces is the ongoing challenge leaders face in building employee connections and creating a sense of inclusivity, collaboration, and teamwork. These relationships are important whether it's peer-to-peer, manager-to-peer, manager-to-manager or in group dynamics. Our research supports that many organizations continue to struggle with striking a balance between the convenience (and sometimes necessity) of remote working with the importance of face-to-face time with teams that drives effective problem-solving and innovative approaches to business challenges.

The average professional spends 21.5 hours in meetings per week, up nearly 70% since February of 2020. More than 85% of these meetings are organized for remote participants.⁶

⁶ Reclaimai, Productivity Trends Report: 1-1 Meetings, November 2021





As employees go back to the office, they often feel disconnected. There has been a significant increase in organized meetings, which are often taking place of the impromptu meetings, informal conversations, and water cooler chats of the past.

It's not uncommon for commuting employees to drive into a brick-and-mortar office only to sit down, plug in some headphones, and participate in virtual meetings all day. While some people are getting together in person, the hybrid contingent of workers dialing into those same meetings often feels left out or not fully part of the conversation.

For many leaders — especially those who expected business to “go back to normal” at some point in time — these workplace dynamics present uncharted territory. It's becoming clear that for many organizations, these changes are permanent. Now, it's crucial for management to look at their long-term workplace planning in the context of these permanently altered norms.

“Empowering people is a key thing we're trying to focus on, as well as trying to empathize more with people.”

- Senior Director of Workplace, Global Fashion Retailer⁷

⁷ Ricoh, Customer Discovery Report, 2022

The role of digital workplace tools continues to evolve

When we asked senior executives about their strategy for new ways of working, most interviewees explained that the shift to hybrid or flexible work had already been accelerated prior to the pandemic — but now it's seen as an expectation rather than a benefit, particularly among younger populations.

“Our global policy will allow employees to work 2-3 days from home. We can reduce the office space, but we have to adapt it for new ways of working.”

- Value Head of IT Infrastructure,
Global Manufacturing Company⁸



4 key focus areas for business transformation

The challenge for organizations is to adapt in a way that supports this increasingly diverse and distributed workforce, while enabling them to be productive, effective, and secure. Here's a look at some of the most important focus areas for leaders who are living and breathing this evolution.

1 Collaboration

While most leaders would agree that collaboration tools are key, it seems like the options are endless. Some factors to consider are how your collaboration tools integrate with other tools such as white board technology, project management software and other communication tools; the degree to which those tools mimic in-person meetings, intuitiveness and accessibility considerations; and data output capabilities that can help you optimize your organization's information and tools over the short and long term.⁹

2 Productivity

With myriad tools available to support productivity, the mechanics of the hybrid workforce have illuminated a greater need for digital mail tools, enterprise project management software that can cut down on endless meetings and email chains, and workflow tools that can automate key HR and payroll functions while ensuring document security and chain of custody.

3 Safety

From health access screening technologies to apps for self-reporting, virtual reception desks and workspace reservations, digital technology "beyond the badge" has become increasingly important. It's helpful in not only safeguarding employees' health and wellbeing but also providing support for organizations for reporting required by the CDC, OSHA, and other entities — also crucial for avoiding fines, lawsuits, and other disruptive actions.

4 Security

With home networks now being one of the most critical parts of the enterprise network and more applications swiftly entering the cloud, the importance of user-centric security cannot be overestimated. From identity and access services to device management, print security and more — organizations need tools and infrastructure in place to support virtual, home environments with the same redundancy as brick-and-mortar office spaces.

⁹ Kerravala, Zeus, "How Companies Can Use Collaboration Tools to Facilitate Hybrid Work," Forbes, July 2021

Does your IT organization struggle with any of these common hybrid work challenges?

Check all that apply

Collaboration

Employees struggle to effectively collaborate across multiple locations or devices

Employees are unable to quickly access remote support when issues arise

2.7 days – the average number of days spent working from home¹⁰

Productivity

Meetings don't start on time due to issues with tools or technology

IT is pulled away from strategic projects to provide space or collaboration support

More than half of employees cite effective collaboration as a major challenge¹¹

Safety

Offline processes slow teams down or require someone to come into the office

Remote workarounds for offline workflows lack compliance

Work processes that are not digitized take on average **3X as long** to complete¹²

Security

Remote work environments require additional diligence around proactive monitoring

Security protocols for remote workers aren't followed consistently

1 in 5 companies reported a data breach from remote work (2020)¹³

If you checked yes to any of these, it may be time to consider how to bridge some of these common hybrid work gaps and empower your teams to work effectively and safely from anywhere.

¹⁰ Keypoint Intelligence 2021 The Future Office Survey

¹¹ Foundry, Future of Work Study, 2022

¹² Keypoint Intelligence workflow productivity calculators

¹³ Malwarebytes Labs, Covid-19's impact on business security, 2020



How can leaders optimize operations for long-term results?

Increasing and ensuring security, collaboration, safety, productivity, and all those other things that will make a hybrid workplace successful is no simple task. It undoubtedly requires some redirection and distraction from other core work that is essential to sustaining and growing your business.

Today's leaders face many challenges, but they're also in the driver's seat when it comes to steering their businesses forward. Through collaboration among IT, Facilities, HR and Operations, organizations can quickly move the needle toward success in this new workplace reality.

Strategic investment in the right technology, tools, processes, and people is key to optimizing your operations for long-term success. In addition, choosing partners who can advise and support you on the journey will accelerate your speed to results.

Your partner in building workplace connections

Ricoh works with organizations of all sizes and across industries to drive modernizations and efficiencies that support collaboration, teamwork, technology integration, and results-based process improvement. Our people are customer obsessed, and we thrive on making meaningful connections among data, systems, and people, and partnering with our clients to uncover and make strategic use of their information. Our agnostic approach means we don't favor one technology, solution, or team for service delivery. Instead, we take a human-centered, custom approach to bring the best people, technologies, and partners together to solve our clients' challenges. If you'd like more information or to explore solutions for your business, we're ready to talk.



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About Ricoh

At Ricoh, we are unlocking the power of our customers' information, processes, and abilities so they can respond to change and provide the best possible experiences for their employees and customers. By unleashing the full power of trapped information, organizations can unlock the full potential of their people, respond to change with actionable insights, and create more meaningful human experiences.

For further information, please visit www.Ricoh-usa.com

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