



STAY OK

RETHINKING WELLBEING AT WORKPLACES IN
THE EUROPEAN SMES

HYBRID WORK STRATEGIES



MALTESE - ITALIAN CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE
CAMERE DI COMMERCIO ITALIANE ALL'ESTERO



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Introduction

Hybrid working is one of the most promising forms of work in the future. The combination of office and remote working opens up extensive opportunities for both companies and employees. Hybrid working makes it possible to work independently of time and place, with part of the work being carried out in the office and another part from any other location.

This innovative way of working offers numerous benefits, including flexibility, increased productivity, cost savings, a better work-life balance, greater employee satisfaction and an expanded talent pool. Hybrid working is therefore an ideal solution for companies that want the best of both worlds.

In addition to all the benefits, hybrid working also offers potential challenges and requirements that can be mitigated and eliminated through numerous options on both a social and technical level.

1. Summary

The global pandemic has created new challenges and opportunities in the service sector. The winners will be those who best understand the needs of their customers, work together to find different solutions and bring new ideas to the market. These behaviors will only be possible if people come together in a new, modern workplace where the feel-good factor in the workplace is quite high. By all accounts, the future of the workplace is hybrid, and these hybrid workplaces need to be integrated into the organizational culture of companies.

However, hybrid working must be planned in order to be successful. This module focuses on all aspects of well-functioning hybrid work. This includes understanding what hybrid work is and how it can be implemented effectively in terms of work organization, communication and collaboration.

1.1 Learning outcomes

Knowledge:

- Understanding the term "hybrid workplace"
- Understand what a hybrid workplace should look like from an organizational and technical perspective
- Knowing how hybrid workplaces can be implemented in the culture and environment

Skills:

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- Being able to reflect on their own work carried out at a hybrid workplace from an efficiency perspective
- Be able to communicate and collaborate effectively in the hybrid workplace
- Being able to organize a hybrid working day

Competencies:

- Have the skills to set up a hybrid workplace
- Have the skills to organize a hybrid working day
- The competence to integrate hybrid work into the organizational culture

1.2 Keywords

Hybrid work models, hybrid work policy, setting up the remote workplace, bring your own devices-BYO, communication and collaboration in hybrid teams, ideal remote workplace, organizational culture in a hybrid environment

2. Lesson 1: Hybrid working models

2.1 Introduction

The landscape of work is constantly changing, influenced by global trends, technological advances and societal shifts. This has been particularly evident during the recent pandemic, which has seen a rapid acceleration of flexible working models. Against this backdrop, hybrid working models, which combine face-to-face and remote working, have become increasingly important in recent years. This chapter is dedicated to an in-depth analysis of hybrid work models and understanding their impact on employee satisfaction and productivity in organizations, especially in SMEs. The aim is to identify the specific characteristics of these models, highlight the advantages and disadvantages and describe a comprehensive hybrid working policy.

The relevance of hybrid working models cannot be overestimated, as they have become extremely important in companies. This chapter focuses on the different forms and applications of hybrid working models, with the aim of creating a detailed understanding of these innovative ways of working. Particular emphasis is placed on the increasing importance of hybrid forms of work for employee satisfaction and productivity, which is of course also of great importance for SMEs.

The state of research on hybrid working models is diverse and dynamic. Numerous studies have already looked at the effects of these forms of work on employee satisfaction and productivity. This chapter aims to provide a practical overview for SMEs and also to open up a multidimensional perspective by incorporating findings from various disciplines and service sectors.

The chapter follows a logical structure that enables a step-by-step approach to the topic. The main part begins with a clear definition of hybrid working models, including a conceptual differentiation from traditional forms of work. It is shown that hybrid working models are a combination of presence work and remote work and are characterized by a high degree of variability. The balance between spatial and temporal flexibility is identified as a key aspect that can positively influence both employee satisfaction and productivity. Technological development plays a decisive role here, as digital communication and collaboration tools support the implementation of hybrid working methods.

A detailed overview of various hybrid working models makes it clear that these forms of work are not just a response to the pandemic, but also address long-term trends such as digitalization and sustainability. Studies show that flexible working models can lead to increased productivity and higher employee satisfaction. At the same time, the importance of

the social component and organizational culture is emphasized. Managers need special support and further training in order to successfully master the challenges of hybrid working models.

The analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of hybrid working models shows that flexibility and autonomy can contribute to increased job satisfaction. However, maintaining the corporate culture and the risk of social isolation pose significant challenges. Reducing commute times contributes to work-life balance and environmental conservation, while physical distance can affect social interaction and wellbeing.

It also emphasizes the need for a comprehensive hybrid work policy that integrates labor regulations, organizational culture, working hours, spatial flexibility and health protection. Support for psychosocial challenges, leadership development initiatives and the sustainable design of workspaces and technological infrastructure are identified as key elements of such policies.

In conclusion, the practice of hybrid working models remains dynamic and diverse. Future trends should aim to better understand specific industry differences and long-term effects on the world of work. In particular, the development of new technologies and their influence on hybrid working methods requires further research in order to continuously optimize the design of modern workplaces and adapt them to the changing needs of employees and organizations.

Our own experiences with hybrid working models have highlighted the relevance and topicality of the subject and have awakened the desire to contribute to the current debate on the design of modern workplaces.

2.2 Definition of hybrid working models

This chapter is dedicated to the precise definition and explanatory elaboration of hybrid work models. First, the conceptual foundations and the variability of these models are explored, followed by an examination of the interaction between spatial and temporal flexibility. Both the technological influences on the implementation of hybrid working models and the challenges and opportunities for HR management are examined. The aim is to provide a sound understanding of the different facets and complex dynamics of hybrid working models

2.2.1 Definitions

Hybrid working models represent a symbiosis of on-site work and remote working, which enables adaptability to individual and organizational requirements. A distinction is made between different approaches, which can vary from fixed office days to a demand-oriented physical presence. This diversity reflects the variety of working methods within the organizational framework and reflects the changes in the world of work, which are largely characterized by flexibilization and digitalization (Choudhury et al., 2021). In particular, the adaptability of hybrid models helps to integrate both individual preferences and collective needs, highlighting the need for a dynamic HR policy. SMEs are required to support individual work arrangements while keeping an eye on collective togetherness in order to achieve holistic employee satisfaction (Okta, Inc., 2023).

Thanks to their flexibility, hybrid working models offer both spatial and temporal autonomy and thus have a significant influence on job satisfaction and work-life balance. The symbiosis of space and time makes it possible for employees to decide not only when but also where they carry out their activities. This kind of self-determination can have a positive impact on productivity and at the same time optimize the work-life balance. However, there are also challenges for the organization of work, as traditional processes need to be adapted in order to integrate the newly gained flexibility. Managers in particular are called upon to adapt operational processes accordingly (Microsoft, 2021). Strategies need to be developed to balance potential conflicts between individual autonomy and organizational goals and to work out synergy effects without compromising organizational effectiveness (Barmeyer et al., 2019).

Technological developments, such as digital communication tools and cloud-based infrastructures, form the basis for the implementation of hybrid working models. Technology not only facilitates collaboration across distances, but also supports the flexibility and accessibility of employees. However, this also requires companies to invest in adequate technical resources and to continuously address data protection and security in order to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of company and employee data (Microsoft, 2021). In addition to technical equipment, the ongoing training of employees also plays a crucial role in ensuring the secure and efficient use of the available technologies (Secinaro et al., 2019).

The heterogeneity of hybrid working models poses various challenges. It is important to establish models that both support employees' individual working methods and ensure fair treatment for all. This requires a rethink of the corporate culture and new management approaches in order to successfully integrate the diverse and sometimes divergent needs. In addition, inclusion plays an important role, which can be promoted through hybrid working models by breaking down barriers and increasing equal opportunities. Maintaining organizational coherence is also crucial, as a sense of belonging and a uniform corporate

culture must be maintained regardless of the individual's place of work (Ipsen et al., 2022).

2.2.2 Overview of hybrid working models

Hybrid working models are a multifaceted response to long-term changes in the world of work. They enable SMEs to react flexibly to the changing requirements and preferences of employees as well as to market changes. In particular, advancing digitalization and the move away from rigid working models call for adaptive systems that focus on both efficiency and employee satisfaction. It is essential that a win-win situation is created for companies and employees within the hybrid work context by paying equal attention to individual needs and organizational goals. This requires a readjustment of human resources issues in order to profitably integrate the potentials and challenges that hybrid working models bring with them and to ensure the adaptability of companies in the long term (Gratton, 2021; Okta, Inc., 2023).

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, hybrid working models have seen an acceleration in their implementation and have proven to be an effective means of maintaining and increasing productivity in challenging times. They have led to a necessary transformation of workplace structures - moving away from an exclusively physical office to a model that includes remote working. This change emphasizes how quickly adjustments can be made in the context of a crisis and the opportunities that can arise for future forms of work. It became clear that hybrid models are not just a stopgap solution, but have the potential to revolutionize work processes in the long term and improve the quality of life of employees. The catalytic nature of the pandemic for hybrid working methods underlines the need to keep an eye on future developments and proactively develop innovative work concepts (Ipsen et al., 2021; Choudhury et al., 2021).

The flexibility of hybrid working models makes it possible to focus on employees' individual circumstances and preferences. The diversification of work locations and times contributes to an improved work-life balance and can therefore increase employee satisfaction. For example, a variable office presence makes it easier to reconcile personal commitments with professional requirements, which in turn increases the attractiveness of the employer. Nevertheless, the individual design of the working day can vary depending on the field of activity and operational requirements, which requires careful coordination of organizational framework conditions in order to make the most of the advantages of hybrid forms of work (Okta, Inc., 2023; Gratton, 2021).

Hybrid working models can contribute to a balance between work and leisure time and thus directly influence employee satisfaction. This balance can have a positive impact on both the physical and mental health of employees. The finding that an optimized distribution of work, taking into account individual life circumstances, can contribute to higher overall productivity underlines the relevance of hybrid working models. This suggests that a conscious design and

management of the working environment, taking into account the individual needs of employees, is a critical success factor for companies (Choudhury et al., 2021).

Digitally mediated communication, a core feature of hybrid working models, has far-reaching effects on the way information is exchanged and relationships are maintained. Increased email communication, for example, can indicate both intensified and improved collaboration, positively impacting both the quality and quantity of output. Nevertheless, it is crucial not to measure the quality of communication by volume alone, but also to check interactions for their effectiveness and ensure that digital exchange does not neglect the social needs of employees (Choudhury et al., 2021).

The social component and organizational culture are crucial to the success of hybrid working models. Social capital based on trust and equity forms the foundation for functioning teamwork, regardless of physical distance. Companies are required to implement strategies that promote a strong sense of organization and sustained commitment among employees, regardless of their physical work location. The creation of meeting spaces, both physical and digital, plays a fundamental role in effectively maintaining and developing the organizational culture (Ipsen et al., 2022).

Leadership development and the provision of suitable training initiatives are essential for the effective implementation of hybrid working models. Empowering senior leaders to lead digitally and build trust is a cornerstone for the success of hybrid teams. Possible training measures include training in digital tools, virtual team leadership and intercultural skills, which help to increase understanding of the new requirements and promote a comprehensive perspective on the management of hybrid work (Barmeyer et al., 2019; Efimov et al., 2022).

2.2 Advantages/ Disadvantages

The ability to decide where and when to work has a significant impact on job satisfaction. Flexible working models made possible by hybrid working concepts can increase employee satisfaction and thus indirectly have a positive impact on motivation and general job satisfaction (Gratton, 2021). However, it is of significant importance that this autonomy does not come at the expense of organizational coordination, but is in line with company-specific goals. SMEs are therefore faced with the challenge of integrating individual flexibility into their structures in such a way that both the needs of the employees and the requirements of the company are in balance.

The introduction of hybrid models contributes to the personalization of working methods through their flexibility. Employees can adapt their working conditions to their individual circumstances, which leads to an improved work-life balance and increased well-being. This form of work ensures greater compatibility between professional and private commitments,

which is reflected in increased job satisfaction (Gratton, 2021). However, care must be taken to ensure that the individual adaptation of working methods does not lead to cohesion within the team and the underlying work processes being compromised.

The increased personal responsibility that employees experience in hybrid working models can lead to a greater sense of responsibility and increased personal initiative. Employees who organize and design their activities independently can thus be motivated to act more innovatively and purposefully (Gratton, 2021). However, this form of work can also result in excessive demands and stress if there are no clear target expectations and support from managers. It is therefore necessary for companies to promote employee autonomy on the one hand, but also to provide supportive structures and clear communication guidelines on the other.

A positive working atmosphere and the associated engagement and commitment are essential components for the success of hybrid working models. If employees have the opportunity to organize and shape their own work, this can lead to greater loyalty to the company (Gratton, 2021). However, it should be borne in mind that not all employees are equally willing or able to develop this form of self-discipline, which is why a differentiated approach and support from the company is required.

Maintaining a stable corporate culture in hybrid working models is a challenge. Physical distancing from colleagues and the company can lead to a loss of a sense of belonging and value commitment. Consequently, companies need to develop new strategies and practices that strengthen the sense of community and engage employees, regardless of their physical work location (Ipsen et al., 2022). This can be realized, for example, through virtual team activities or regular physical meetings to cultivate the corporate culture and maintain employees' identification with the company.

The need to adapt communication strategies results from the fact that traditional communication channels based on physical presence are no longer sufficient in hybrid working environments. It must be ensured that important information is transmitted effectively and that a continuous exchange between employees can take place in order to avoid misunderstandings and information gaps (Ipsen et al., 2022). One challenge is to use digital communication tools in such a way that they meet both the professional and social needs of employees without undermining the sense of social connectedness.

Managers/Company owners have a key role to play in hybrid working environments, as they play a key role in conveying and exemplifying the values and norms of an organization. Their ability to build trust, motivate and create a positive working environment is central to the success of hybrid teams (Ipsen et al., 2022). Due to physical distancing and changing work environments, leaders need to adapt their leadership styles and find new ways to inspire their teams and reinforce company culture.

Ensuring an inclusive organizational culture is of particular importance, as hybrid working models can pose an increased risk of exclusion and inequity. Companies must ensure that all employees - regardless of their individual working conditions - are equally part of the community and have the same development opportunities. Measures to address diversity and equality should be part of the corporate strategy to create a positive and productive work environment that embraces all employees (Ipsen et al., 2022).

Reducing commute times through hybrid working models can contribute to both improving work-life balance and protecting the environment. Less time spent in traffic means more free time and less stress for employees, which has a positive impact on their overall quality of life. At the same time, the reduction in commuting contributes to a reduction in the ecological footprint and traffic density, which can meet both the environmental protection goals of companies and the increased environmental awareness of employees (Ipsen et al., 2021). However, it should be noted that physical distance from the workplace can also lead to a loss of social contacts and networking opportunities, which must be mitigated by appropriate countermeasures.

The potential for social isolation is particularly high in hybrid working models, as there is less direct interaction. A lack of physical presence can lead to feelings of loneliness and a loss of a sense of community, which in turn can have a negative impact on wellbeing and mental health (Bentley et al., 2016). Companies are challenged to find ways to maintain a strong sense of community and social connection among employees despite physical distance and to create opportunities for informal exchange.

The creation of virtual meeting spaces and the organization of physical meetings can be effective strategies to promote social interaction in hybrid working models. Through the use of technology, virtual spaces can be set up for informal conversations and exchanges between colleagues (Bentley et al., 2016). At the same time, physical meetings and events can help to strengthen team spirit and promote social bonding, which is of great importance for the well-being and satisfaction of employees.

2.3 Hybrid Work Policy

2.3.1 Hybrid Work working guideline

Designing a holistic hybrid working policy is an essential step in ensuring a smooth transition and successful implementation of hybrid working models. It serves as a framework in which

legal, cultural and operational aspects converge and provides employees with clear guidelines for action. It is crucial that the policy is not just a list of rules, but is understood as a dynamic instrument that is continuously developed and responds to employee feedback and experience. Documentation and transparent communication are the foundation for effectively managing compliance and at the same time promoting employee trust in the company. Special attention must be paid to data protection during the development process, as the increased use of digital technologies brings with it new challenges that must be adequately addressed (Secinaro et al., 2019).

Another pillar of a hybrid working policy is proactivity in dealing with psychosocial challenges. The increased use of hybrid working models can lead to risks such as social isolation or increased stress levels. Companies are required to develop preventive and supportive measures that focus on the mental well-being of employees. Incorporating employee feedback can be particularly valuable in offering tailored support that reflects both individual and collective needs. Initiatives such as virtual coffee rounds or topic-specific online groups can help to strengthen the sense of community and promote exchange among employees. In addition, regular virtual or physical check-ins by management can help to develop an understanding of employees' challenges and respond to them at an early stage (Efimov et al., 2022).

In terms of leadership development and training initiatives, consideration of the specific requirements of the hybrid model is crucial. Managers/Company owners must be enabled to adapt their skills to the changing conditions and lead effectively at a distance. The focus here is on building trust and the effective use of digital communication tools. Further training programmes that specialize in dealing with distributed teams and supporting change processes are essential to accompany the transition to hybrid working methods. Both the short-term adaptation of leadership styles and the long-term development of skills that enable managers to support team members on an individual and needs-oriented basis must be taken into account (Barmeyer et al., 2019).

The sustainable design of workspaces and technological infrastructure is a key point that must be firmly anchored in the hybrid work policy. This includes both the physical equipment of workplaces, which should be ergonomic and motivating, and the technical infrastructure, which must be safe and efficient. The guideline must ensure that both the workplaces in the company and in the home office meet the requirements for a modern and health-promoting environment. In addition to the comfort of employees, ecological sustainability should not be neglected. Investing in environmentally friendly solutions can not only save costs in the long term, but also boost employee satisfaction and the company's image (Okta, Inc., 2023).

2.3.2 Guidelines for hybrid working: how to set them up successfully

More flexibility in the workplace is important to increase the attractiveness for talent and employee satisfaction. However, it must be implemented effectively. Hybrid work policies are the basic framework for a successful, flexible working environment. From both the employer's and employee's perspective, they eliminate confusion, prevent misinterpretation and avoid biased behavior.

Everyone knows exactly what to do and what not to do in terms of working hours and place of work and where to find the right answers in case of doubt.

There are a few rules to establishing an effective policy. Crucial aspects such as eligibility, security, technology, expectations, benefits of working from home, etc. need to be discussed and defined. In this chapter, we will cover all of these aspects and provide a template that you can use as a starting point. The most important thing to remember is that developing procedures is a joint effort. The HR department, finance department, IT department, CRE, team leaders and employees need to work together to establish policies that satisfy everyone.

The introduction of hybrid working can take various forms. Let's take a look at how to set up flexible working arrangements to implement this modern way of working smoothly and successfully.

The reasons why a hybrid working policy is important

The difference between a directive for hybrid work and a guideline

Before we delve into this topic, it is important to understand the difference between a policy and a guideline, as these terms are often used interchangeably. A guideline is a set of recommendations, whereas a policy is a set of rules that employees must follow. For example, a guideline would be: "If you could ideally be on site once a week, that would be great". A policy is: "Hybrid team members need to be in the office at least two days a week." Can you see the difference?

Guidelines for hybrid working eliminate stress and confusion for everyone

There are different types of hybrid work models (remote-first, office-first, at-will, etc.) and several ways to implement them depending on the company's needs. The policy can apply to

the entire company, including fixed days for remote and on-site work. It can vary to accommodate choices and meet the needs of individual employees. Finally, it can also be flexible across teams, meaning the rules are set individually between managers and employees. All of this can be confusing and employees may not know what they are entitled to do.

Lack of clarity is one of the biggest problems in a hybrid working environment. A clear policy for hybrid working will help you solve this problem.

Guidelines for hybrid work make rules official and ensure that everyone is on the same page

You can't assume that everyone will act the way you would because you think: "That's common sense". We all have different perspectives and experiences. Maybe you see a certain aspect in a certain way that seems obvious to you. At the same time, your teammate has a completely different opinion on the subject. It is a gift to be surrounded by colleagues with different views. It makes people and companies grow faster because it offers new perspectives to think about.

However, when it comes to working methods, this can lead to one-sided behavior and conflicts. To avoid this, it is important to establish some rules. This way, employees know what they are entitled to and managers know it too.

From the perspective of both managers and employees, a hybrid working policy draws a line between what is allowed and what is not. For example, you can stipulate that your employees can visit the office whenever they want. However, they must be present at least two full days a week. Knowing the do's and don'ts not only creates more clarity, but also prevents unfair and unequal practices.

Some tips for a clear and helpful guideline for flexible working hours

Discuss with employees and other managers before creating your new hybrid working policy

It's not about revising hybrid working policies every week because you realize that a certain point doesn't meet the needs of the company or the workforce. That's why you need to consider everyone's expectations and take the necessary time to establish regulations and protocols that meet the requirements. This way, you won't have to rework as often and your employees won't be overwhelmed and annoyed by constant updates and new rules. But that doesn't mean you do it once and then keep the same policy for the next five years. Employee expectations and the workplace are evolving, so updating this document is essential. But for both you and your colleagues, this shouldn't happen every month.

Be as specific as possible

One of the main reasons for drawing up a hybrid working policy is to avoid confusion among your employees. Therefore, it is not enough to just write down a few points. You need to be specific, cover many aspects and answer as many questions as possible. Of course, more questions may need to be answered as time goes on. However, try to keep the text as simple and comprehensive as possible. A good starting point is to review templates for guidelines for hybrid work and discuss with your employees which topics are unclear.

Make it your own

There is no one-size-fits-all hybrid working model. The ability to adapt to the needs of the company and its employees is the essence of this form of work. Every industry, every company and every workforce is different. Therefore, you should take advantage of the flexibility this working model offers to develop a customized hybrid working strategy.

Remain open to feedback

Despite all your efforts, your hybrid working strategy may not be well received by your employees. It is important that you regularly seek their feedback, remain accessible and are always open to discussion. In this way, you can uncover weaknesses and improve them as quickly as possible. It also prevents your employees from becoming stressed and frustrated. This last point is essential, as it can lead to an increase in employee turnover and burnout.

Share your hybrid work policy unconditionally

Once you have introduced your hybrid working policy, it is crucial that it is shared and accessible to all employees. If in doubt, they must be able to access it anytime, anywhere. Here are some ways you can ensure this:

- Send it to everyone by e-mail;
- Talk about it at team meetings;
- Share your hybrid work policies in your instant communication channel;
- Download it to your collaboration tool (Notion, Asana or whatever);
- Hang the most critical points on the walls of the common areas (corridors, open spaces, eating and cooling zones, elevators, etc.).

How important it is to consider the 5 W's in your hybrid work policy**Why**

In this section, you need to explain why you are introducing a hybrid working policy for your employees. In order for your employees to understand the logic behind the rules, it is important that you make it transparent to them why you are introducing these guidelines.

Who

Who is eligible for flexible working arrangements and to what extent? Some workplaces find it more difficult to take advantage of hybrid working. It's important that your hybrid working

policy specifies who is and isn't eligible for these arrangements. This way, employees know from the outset what they are allowed to do depending on their status. Of course, to create a fair and inclusive work environment, you need to find ways to allow more flexibility for everyone.

When

When should your hybrid employees work from home and when should they be in the office? Another important aspect in this section is how often they need to be on-site. For example, some companies allow their employees to come in whenever they want, with the exception of one week a month when everyone has to be on site.

What

This part of your hybrid working policy needs to be very detailed. It must include your company's expectations and everything your employees are entitled to. For example, you need to mention the technology you provide, the security measures in place, the communication strategy, etc. Are you covering the cost of internet services, some of the electricity costs, office furniture and supplies, etc.? Switching to hybrid working can increase expenses for your employees. If you are considering this and your employees can benefit from a work-from-home stipend, you must also clearly state this.

Where

In this section, all "Where" questions are collected, e.g:

- Can employees work from a third workplace or only from home?
- Can they operate from abroad?
- Where can they apply for flexible working arrangements (if they have to)?
- Where can team members find more information about the Hybrid Work Policy?
- Where can they get support if they have an IT problem with mobile working?

2.3.3 Template for hybrid working hours

Overview of the guideline for hybrid work

[Company name] would like to offer its employees more flexibility in terms of working hours and location. The following hybrid working policy is intended to provide clear guidance to the entire hybrid workforce to ensure employee satisfaction, collaboration, productivity and performance. Therefore, this document sets out the rules in relation to the following:

- Suitability;
- Expectations of compliance;
- Equipment and technology;
- Communication and collaboration practices;

- Cybersecurity;
- Costs and compensation for mobile work.

Suitability

This Hybrid Work Policy applies to all employees of [name of company] as soon as their duties permit. In case of a special request (temporary or permanent), the approval of the supervisor is required. Team members can complete the flexible working forms provided by the company.

Expectations of flexible working hours

Employees are expected to be on site every day in the first week of the month. In the remaining months, they can organize their week according to the working hours and locations that suit them best. Consequently, [company name] allows flexibility of location and time (flexitime) once each team member works the number of hours specified in their contract and is available during core working hours (10am to 3pm).

Working abroad is permitted for up to three months per year and must be reported to the company.

Equipment and technology

The company provides all hybrid team members with home office equipment, including:

- Laptop;
- Screen;
- Keyboard;
- Mouse;
- Ergonomic desk and chair (subject to approval).

Employees are also entitled to the following digital resources:

- Cybersecurity technology (see below);
- Workplace booking software;
- Platforms for collaboration;
- Means of communication;
- IT remote support.

Additional equipment (hardware and software) may be provided based on each employee's role and responsibilities. Employees are responsible for preventing misuse and ensuring the security of all equipment owned by the company. Important information: [Company name] has the right to all data collected and stored on a company-owned and issued device.

2.4 Procedure for the development and implementation of rules for hybrid working

A recommended procedure for the development and implementation of organizational rules for mobile working is presented below. The recommended approach is based on two benefit aspects:

- Finding the right words: Adapting the rules to the corporate culture in particular. The rules for hybrid working should not feel like a foreign body in the company, but should fit seamlessly into the working methods and cooperation.
- Sustainable impact: Ideally, the development and implementation process is collaborative. It is critical for success to involve all stakeholders (management, employees, works council, etc.). In this way, the new working methods can be sustainably anchored in the company. The following recommendations are initially aimed at small to medium-sized companies and are geared towards their needs.

The development process

When developing and implementing rules for hybrid working, also work on introducing or strengthening a positive error culture.

"Take the pressure of expectations out of the project right from the start and focus on test-driven development."

This "scrum principle" is the principle of success in companies for a reason.

1. Develop the first version of organizational rules for mobile working rather quickly, with thorough involvement of relevant stakeholders.
2. Communicate to the workforce that the rules of the game represent an initial version and that they may still contain inaccuracies and gaps or that they may still draw too narrow a line in some areas (i.e. tend to err on the safe side at the beginning).
3. At the same time, communicate that the rules of the game will be evaluated after 2 months and adapted on the basis of the learning experience. The success factor lies in the application and rapid further development of initial results and not in the 100% perfect solution. This increases speed and quality. Then evaluate the rules of the game at

approximately annual intervals.

4. In this way, continuously incorporate learning experiences into the rules of the game and ensure that changes to the framework conditions are reflected in changes to the rules of the game.

The result is a regular testing and improvement process in which the organization approaches the optimal handling of hybrid forms of work. Expectations of the first draft or first version of the rules thus remain realistic from the outset. This ensures that employees and managers continuously help to further improve the quality of the rules through the learning experiences they have gained.

If a company wants to play it even safer, the first SCRUM sprint - i.e. the roll-out of the rules in the company - can also be preceded by a limited pilot. Different departments or interested employees from these departments can take part in such a pilot test.

Tip: Do 3 important homework assignments at the same time.

In connection with the development of game rules, three work packages should be worked on in parallel right from the start:

1. Clarify which functions or job profiles are suitable for hybrid working and to what extent. Various workstyle analysis methods are available for this, such as activity-based working or persona analysis.
2. If the company has a works council, there is the option of concluding a works agreement that regulates the administrative principles of hybrid working (e.g. working time regulations). If there is no works council, an agreement should be made as part of the employment contract.
3. Check whether technical work equipment needs to be upgraded. For example, is it necessary to extend software licenses, purchase headsets or can desktop PCs be converted to notebooks as part of the normal replacement cycle.

The actual development of the game rules starts at the same time. A multi-step procedure is recommended for this. All steps are described in detail below.

Step 1: Get the board or management behind the project

Support and commitment right up to the top of the company are critical to the success of the project. If you are the head of HR, make sure you have the full support of the board or management. It is not a question of all members of the board or management agreeing on the

content of the rules of the game. Instead, it is important that hybrid working practices are supported by everyone involved at this top level and that there is unanimity on the need for an organizational framework in the form of rules of the game exists.

Step 2: Form development team

A development team should be tasked with creating the rules of the game. Such a development team can comprise up to eight or nine people. The development team usually consists of managers, a representative of the works council and operational stakeholders, which can be:

- Employees in part-time employment
- Employees who are actively raising children or caring for relatives
- Employees with a particular commuting burden, such as e.g. weekly commuters

Step 3: Identify relevant topics and formulate rules of the game

At the beginning, the development team should agree on which topics should be regulated by the rules of the game. The third part of this guide contains a list of topics as a concrete aid for this step. Once this structure is in place, it is relatively easy to fill it with content.

Step 4: Agree the proposed rules with the board or management

It proves to be useful and expedient to first agree the proposal with the board or management before taking any further steps. A brief meeting with the HR Director, CEO or Chairman of the Management Board is often sufficient for this purpose.

Step 5: Get the management team on board

Then it's time for the roll-out. The first important step is to coordinate the proposed game rules with division, department and, if necessary, team leaders. The rules of the game are revised again based on the feedback collected. It is important that the Executive Board or management are involved in this revision loop, as the roll-out begins immediately afterwards.

Step 6: Communicate rules of the game in the departments and teams

In this next step, the department heads and team leaders have the task of presenting the rules of the game in their weekly department or team meetings. The key to success here is to communicate correctly and set realistic expectations. This can be achieved if - as described above - the rules of the game and their further development are placed in the context of a joint learning journey or learning experience. In other words, it must be emphasized that...

- ... the rules of the game in this form are a first (certainly not perfect) version.
- ... the success of implementation is evaluated in 2 months.
- ... learning experiences are regularly translated into adjustments to the rules of the game be set. (e.g. at annual intervals)

Now prepare yourself for the fact that during departmental or team meetings, weak points in

the content come up that the development team has actually overlooked. This is the positive effect of swarm intelligence. In other words, be prepared to adapt your version 1 if necessary and publish a version 1.1. of the rules of the game

Step 7: Continuously evaluate success

In the coming weeks and months, it will be essential to monitor fairly closely and systematically evaluate how the rules are proving themselves in practice. This works very well with quarterly impulse surveys, for example. These should be combined with feedback rounds with managers. These feedback rounds allow learning experiences to be compiled and jointly evaluated in a very in-depth and differentiated manner.

Step 8: Version 2.0

After around 2 cycles (approx. 4 months), work should then begin on the promised version 2.0 of the rules. In the course of its publication, it is also critical to create transparency about which changes have been made. Then continue the further development in approximately annual cycles.

Development process especially for small-sized companies

- In addition to the recommendations mentioned above, special features of the procedure for small and very small companies should also be addressed. Firstly, the category of very small companies: This refers in particular to companies with five or six employees. In practice, it has been shown that the formal definition of organizational rules is not absolutely necessary. In a small team, coordination on mobile working and remote collaboration is usually self-regulating.

- The situation is somewhat different for small companies with up to 10 employees. From this size, the implementation of formalized rules already proves to be critical to success. However, the development process should be simplified. A team of four or five employees can take on the development work and the proposed rules of the game can then be discussed and finalized directly with the entire workforce in a joint workshop in consultation with the owner (or management).

Technical introduction

1. Data protection

When working from home, data is processed outside the company per se. This often involves sensitive data and documents. A loss of this data can cause considerable damage to the company's image (and therefore usually also financial disadvantages) or give the competition a considerable competitive advantage. At the latest when personal data is involved, it is essential to deal with the Data Protection Act. A key point in complying with data protection

regulations would be not to store any data on a local computer, but to access centrally stored data exclusively via a terminal server, a virtual desktop infrastructure or a web application.

Two-factor authentication must be used to ensure that only authorized persons have access and that access does not fall into the wrong hands, for example by tapping access data via a keylogger on the PC being used.

It must also be ensured that no data is intercepted in any other way, either by the user themselves or by a Trojan that spies on screen content. This can be achieved, for example, via an encapsulated and protected working environment.

2. IT security

Many IT security requirements are already covered by the precautions taken to comply with data protection. However, another important point would be to take measures to protect the IT infrastructure. As there is always a non-negligible residual risk of zero-day attacks despite high-performance virus scanners, both on the server and client side, further measures must be taken.

These include measures such as a VPN connection at application level, digitally signed applications, running the clients within a sandbox or an encapsulated environment, cloaking the client in the network and a firewall to protect against attacks from the same (W)LAN.

3. Administration

The administration of external devices often poses a particular challenge for IT, especially when private end devices are also used. Installing software on a private PC is an absolute no-go for most administrators, especially due to the subsequent support effort.

Issuing company devices would be a significant simplification, but is also the more expensive alternative. Here too, the increased requirements in terms of data protection and IT security for the use of devices outside the company must be taken into account. As there is no direct on-site support, increased costs must be taken into account.

The use of installation- and configuration-free access components can provide significant relief. This enables a separation between professional and private use, so that private devices can also be used without hesitation, subject to the corresponding security requirements of authorities and companies. In this way, the private PC or Mac becomes a centrally managed company PC for the period of professional use.

4. User friendliness

Acceptance of the technology provided also plays a key role in achieving good work results.

Project No. 2023-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000154571

Many users like to use their familiar private PC or notebook - be it because of brand loyalty, performance or simply because they don't want another device on their desk. In the case of partial home workstations, it is also not everyone's cup of tea to lug the company notebook home with them in the evening.

3. Lesson 2: Developing effective practices for remote working

3.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the challenges and opportunities arising from the shift to remote working and contributes to the understanding and design of remote working in HR management, particularly in the context of SMEs.

The central theme of this chapter is the development of effective remote working practices in human resource management. It examines how remote working affects HR management processes and what solutions are available to ensure both organizational performance and employee satisfaction. Specific challenges for HR managers include maintaining employee loyalty and motivation, creating collaborative structures and ensuring data protection and data security. The relevance of the topic arises from its topicality and the need to develop sustainable and future-proof working models.

The aim of this chapter is to identify effective practices for remote working in HR management processes of SMEs and to analyze specific challenges. The various aspects of remote working are highlighted, focusing on both organizational performance and employee satisfaction. Concrete approaches will be shown how HR management can be designed efficiently under the conditions of remote work, with a special focus on SMEs in the service sector, which place special demands on HR management due to their specific structures.

The state of research, based on sources such as Brynjolfsson et al. (2020) and Galanti et al. (2021), shows a growing interest in the implications of remote working for work productivity and satisfaction. The COVID-19 pandemic has further fueled this area of research as it has brought with it an unprecedented increase in remote working across many sectors. This chapter picks up on these findings and focuses specifically on their pragmatic application.

The structure of the chapter includes the planning and monitoring of remote workplaces, practical examples and a final conclusion, with a focus on the HR management processes of SMEs. The first part of the chapter explains how remote workplaces should be planned and designed to meet both organizational requirements and employee needs. The second part deals with the monitoring and management of remote working, including the question of suitable control mechanisms and support services. The third part uses practical examples from companies to illustrate successful models and strategies for integrating remote working into HR management. The final conclusion summarizes the insights gained.

3.2 Setting up the remote workstation

This chapter examines how effective remote workplaces can be planned, designed and monitored to maximize the productivity and well-being of employees in SMEs. It addresses ergonomic and technological requirements as well as data protection aspects on the one hand, and highlights the importance of trust, autonomy and ethical monitoring practices on the other. The approaches and strategies presented here should help to find a balance between technical requirements and human needs and support the goals of the companies.

3.2.1 How should remote workplaces be planned and designed?

The increasing prevalence of remote working requires a fundamental redesign of workplaces that takes into account not only the functional but also the psychological needs of employees. An ergonomically and technologically well-equipped home office environment forms the basis for productive working and the well-being of employees. Studies indicate that ergonomic office furniture and a reliable IT infrastructure are crucial for preventing work-related health problems and increasing concentration and satisfaction (Davidescu et al., 2020). This implies the need for companies to invest in appropriate office chairs and desks. Physical comfort contributes significantly to the reduction of physical fatigue and thus to an increase in work performance. Furthermore, a stable and secure IT environment is of paramount importance for maintaining productivity and protecting sensitive data. It is essential that both the hardware and software are individually tailored to the requirements of the respective activity in order to ensure optimal employee performance.

The protection of company data plays a central role in the design of remote workplaces. The combination of technical and organizational security measures plays a key role here. The implementation of encryption technologies and the provision of secure storage options ensure protection against unauthorized access and cyber attacks (Cascio, 2000). In addition, data protection guidelines must be clearly defined and communicated in order to create uniform standards for handling sensitive information. Training programs for employees are essential to raise the necessary awareness of information security and strengthen skills in the secure handling of company data.

Customization of remote workplaces is also crucial for the effective design of the work environment. As Eddleston and Mulki (2017) point out, social inclusion in the workplace significantly influences the management of work and family issues. Workplace design must therefore also take into account the personal circumstances of employees in order to facilitate

a good work-life balance. Different working styles and domestic situations require flexible solutions that support both collaboration and focused working alone. The provision of financial resources or expertise for setting up an ergonomic workstation in the home environment can support employees in designing their individual workspace and thus contribute to an improved quality of work.

Adapting the home office to the cultural values and goals of the company is an additional challenge in the design of remote working. It is important to create conditions that support identification with the company even outside the physical office (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006). Design elements and symbolic connections that reflect belonging to the company can strengthen the organizational culture and maintain the feeling of inclusion and appreciation even in the home office. Measures such as virtual common rooms and regular digital team events can also strengthen a sense of belonging and informal exchange, which contributes to employee loyalty and satisfaction in the long term.

Overall, it is clear that the planning and design of remote workplaces encompasses a variety of aspects that must address the individual needs of employees as well as cultural and organizational requirements. This analysis makes it clear that a comprehensive and differentiated consideration of these factors is necessary in order to make remote working effective and sustainable.

3.2.2 How should remote workstations be monitored?

The implementation of remote working requires a balanced monitoring strategy that reconciles both the autonomy of employees and the achievement of company goals. The need for autonomy can be met by creating a relationship of trust, which serves as the basis for autonomous working. Studies suggest that an increase in autonomy can have a positive impact on job effectiveness (Grant et al., 2013). Accordingly, HR management should aim to support employees in taking responsibility for their own tasks. However, this requires a rethink of performance evaluation, which should focus less on the mere monitoring of working hours and more on the achievement of goals.

In this context, monitoring tools that enable efficiency without invasive surveillance are important. It is important to find a middle ground that ensures performance transparency without violating employees' privacy. Technologies that focus on recording output offer a suitable approach for this by avoiding direct behavioral controls and giving employees the necessary freedom for self-determined work.

The design of feedback processes to improve performance also plays a key role. It is important that feedback is given constructively and regularly in order to serve as a motivational tool.

According to Ganserer et al. (2021), such feedback can promote employees' self-regulation and thus contribute to the continuous improvement of work results. Feedback should therefore not be established as a one-sided evaluation, but as a dialog between managers and employees.

The use of technology to support monitoring and communication is a double-edged sword. While tools such as project management software or time tracking tools can help to improve performance tracking, the uses and limitations of these technologies need to be evaluated carefully and adapted to the specific conditions of each team (Hertel et al., 2005). Training on the effective use of such tools is equally important to ensure that employees are empowered to use them in the best interests of the organization.

Ethical monitoring practices that respect privacy are of particular importance in remote working. Data protection principles must form an integral part of every company's monitoring strategies. Care must be taken to ensure that monitoring systems are designed in a privacy-compliant manner and that privacy policies are clearly communicated to employees (Cascio, 2000). Involving employees in the process of implementing such tools not only promotes their acceptance, but also contributes to the creation of a transparent and fair working environment.

In conclusion, the monitoring of remote workplaces is a sensitive issue that presents both ethical and practical challenges. A balanced monitoring approach that respects both employee autonomy and company objectives can help to fully realize the benefits of remote working and successfully overcome the challenges.

3.2.3 Practical examples of teleworking workstations

The implementation of remote working models in SME's using the case study of a company highlights how crucial the provision of suitable technologies, the definition of flexible working hours and the establishment of a supportive management system are for the establishment of remote working. Romero et al. (2022) emphasize that the cultural introduction of a climate of trust and autonomy within a company not only facilitates the adaptation to remote work, but also positively influences the job satisfaction of employees. In practice, this means that companies are called upon to rethink their organizational culture with the aim of creating not only physical but also virtual spaces where open communication and cohesion are encouraged. Digital platforms can be used for team interactions to simulate social proximity and support solidarity among employees.

In terms of providing a technological foundation, companies must provide an IT setup that includes both powerful hardware and effective software and offers secure access to company data. This not only serves to fulfill functions externally, but also protects against internal and

external security risks, as Cascio (2000) mentions. Training should also be provided to support the use of new technologies, as this facilitates adaptation to remote working and at the same time strengthens data integrity.

A supportive leadership culture in remote working is essential in order to effectively manage employees from a distance. The role of managers needs to be redefined. They must act as mentors who offer both professional support and interpersonal interaction. This not only creates trust, but also a sense of security and appreciation among employees, which in turn has a positive effect on their commitment.

Flexibilization of working hours is another relevant aspect in the design of remote working models. Adapting to individual circumstances and needs can help to achieve a healthier work-life balance and thus increase both individual satisfaction and organizational productivity. It is important to note that such flexibility must be subject to clear framework conditions in order to avoid both misunderstandings and potential conflicts.

The impact of remote working on job satisfaction and performance is also of great importance. Flexible working practices, as discussed by Davidescu et al. (2020), contribute significantly to improved autonomy and associated satisfaction. The positive influence on performance, which is reinforced by granting job autonomy, shows that remote working does not only have to be an emergency solution in times of crisis, but also offers sustainable long-term success for a company.

With regard to physical separation and the associated need for solidarity and identification with the organization, it is clear that specific strategies and measures are required to strengthen the sense of belonging in international networks. Hertel et al. (2005) point to the importance of building trust and structured communication, which not only bridge physical distances, but also contribute to the consolidation of a common organizational identity. Targeted measures such as joint vision development, success stories and regular virtual meetings integrate employees across national and cultural boundaries and strengthen organizational performance.

Finally, the example of one company shows that the impact of remote working on mental wellbeing and work-life balance should not be underestimated. Grant et al. (2013) point out the need for companies to provide supportive services to strengthen both physical and mental health. Measures such as the promotion of sport and exercise, regular virtual coffee breaks or even a time-out policy can help to promote well-being and prevent burnout.

In conclusion, it is clear that the implementation of remote work requires comprehensive considerations and measures that must take into account both the technical and social aspects of work in order to be beneficial for both the employees and the organization.

3.3 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to identify effective remote working practices in companies' HR management processes and to analyze specific challenges. The findings should help to ensure both organizational performance and employee satisfaction. This objective has been successfully achieved through a systematic analysis of challenges and solutions in the context of remote working and HR management processes.

At the beginning, the planning and design of remote workstations was discussed in detail. It emerged that ergonomic and technological standards as well as data protection aspects are of fundamental importance. The provision of a secure IT infrastructure and ergonomic office furniture proved to be essential for the productivity and well-being of employees. In addition, the importance of customizing remote workspaces to employees' needs was emphasized in order to achieve an effective work-life balance.

A key aspect of the chapter is the monitoring of remote workplaces. A balance between necessary performance monitoring and the promotion of autonomy and trust was emphasized. Technological tools to measure productivity and a clear awareness of ethical monitoring practices were found to be central. Regular and constructive feedback mechanisms were identified as key to supporting employee self-regulation and performance improvement.

Practical examples from companies illustrated how remote working can be successfully implemented. It was shown that a positive organizational culture that promotes trust and initiative contributes significantly to employee adaptation and satisfaction. Flexibility in working hours and contract design was presented as a decisive factor in increasing job satisfaction and performance. In addition, strategies were identified that help to overcome the challenges of physical separation and promote employee loyalty and identification.

The research has shown that remote working has a profound impact on the work-life balance and mental wellbeing of employees. By implementing flexible working models and promoting supportive leadership, companies were able to successfully overcome these challenges. This was illustrated by examples of companies that have taken specific measures to promote the mental wellbeing and work demands of their employees.

An outlook shows that the dynamics of remote working continue to be a relevant and exciting topic. Future studies should examine the long-term effects of remote working models on organizational culture and employee retention. It would also be useful to research specific technologies and platforms that can further improve collaboration and communication in virtual teams. A more in-depth analysis of the psychological effects of remote working and its impact on employees' personal and professional development could also provide valuable insights.

3.4 Practical part

Efficient, safe and healthy work should also be possible in the home office, where employees feel comfortable at work. The following information serves as a guideline, which can be implemented differently depending on the given living and room situation.

3.4.1 Checklist

In principle, it should be the goal of every employee to make their own workspace as ergonomic as possible. To help you achieve this, the following checklist with its guideline values provides a good overview of how the workspace at home can be optimally designed. The three areas of the working environment, technical equipment and desks and chairs are examined in more detail. Good luck with your design!

Working environment

The workstation is large enough.

- ☐ The room should be over 8.0 m² in size and at least 2.5 m high.

The movement area on the side of the chair should be approximately 1.5 m by 1.0 m.

The furniture at the workstation is set up appropriately.

- ☐ The desk and screen should be positioned at right angles to the windows wherever possible to avoid reflections and glare.

Access to the workplace is safe and convenient.

The room should be accessible via normal corridors and stairs (no ladders).

The width of the access to the desk should be at least 0.6m.

- ☐ Care should be taken to ensure that there are no obstacles on the floor of the study, such as cables that could be tripped over.

The light, air, climate and noise in the workspace are pleasant and are not perceived as disturbing.

- ☐ Care should be taken to ensure that access to the window and radiators is unobstructed.
- ☐ The workspace at home should also have at least one window with a view to the outside so that you can look out and sufficient daylight can enter the room.
- ☐ The windows should be fitted with a device to prevent direct sunlight (e.g. curtains, blinds). Ideally, the artificial light should have a neutral color (without color cast, preferably warm white) and illuminate the workplace sufficiently.

In the cold season, it should be possible to regulate the room temperature (approx. 21°C as a guide).

☐ The noise level in the room and noises entering the room from outside should be quiet enough not to disturb concentration

Technical equipment

- ☐ The computer is stable and set up for comfortable working.
- ☐ The screen should stand securely on the tabletop and be large enough for the work task; the character size in relation to the viewing distance is important here.
- ☐ In addition, keyboards and computer mice that meet ergonomic requirements and are separate from the screen should be used.
- ☐ The screen should be free of or at least low in reflections and the screen height should be adjustable so that the upper display line is approximately slightly below eye level.
- ☐ There should be a hand rest area at least 10 cm deep in front of the keyboard.

Work tables and chairs

Work table and work chair are adapted to the person or adjusted correctly so that a relaxed sitting position can be adopted

The work table should be large enough (160 cm by 80 cm as a guideline for office work) and - just like the work chair - stable.

- ☐ The task chair should have five castors, be height-adjustable and offer good back support.
- ☐ For higher table heights and seat heights, a footrest should be used by shorter people.

3.4.2 Home office guide: How to set up your home office

(<https://www.notebookcheck.com/Home-Office-Guide-Wie-man-sein-Buero-zu-Hause-einrichtet.459601.0.html>)

Success in working from home is only possible with a home office that suits your own way of working.



(Image source: Pixabay)

A large part of the economy is currently shifting to the Internet and people's homes. The associated setup of a home office environment needs to be learned. This guide provides the basics of setting up a home office environment, as well as some tips and tricks for maximum productivity.

More and more people are working from home these days and many of them are facing the challenge of setting up a work environment at home for the first time. In such a short space of time, it can be difficult to set up your home office to suit your workflow. This guide aims to provide the basics of setting up a home office.

What kind of home office do you need?

If you set up your home office in your own home, the question naturally arises: How long will it be needed? Will it only be a temporary solution until you return to the office in a few weeks, or should it remain in place for the longer term? We will discuss both cases, but the answer to this question will form the basis of every other decision when setting up the home office. After all, it would make no sense to spend thousands of euros on a home office that you will only use for a week. On the other hand, a bridging solution for use over months and years would also be annoying.

Working at the kitchen table is not ideal for remote work in the long term.



(Image source: Stock)

Whether you're setting up home for just a week or an entire career, there are some basic guidelines you should always follow. These can be broken down into three points:

Separate: An office, no matter how big, should have its own space. This allows work life to be separated from private life. Working in bed can be relaxing and working at the kitchen table is quick and easy, but these places mix the personal with the professional. Even if it's just the corner of a room, a separate space for work creates a clear separation between the two worlds. The separation also helps to start and end the working day.

Stationary: Whether you need it for a year or just for a single day, a home office should be stationary. Moving between different locations can destroy your workflow and cause delays. The office should be in a fixed location.

Compatible: The working environment should be a place that promotes good, healthy working practices. Setting up in a storage room next to the bedroom will certainly bring you peace and quiet, but a cramped and poorly lit place can quickly drive you mad. The living room, on the other hand, can be bright and spacious, but also very noisy and therefore distracting. Every setup in your home is different, but you should try to find a place by a window (for natural light) that is quiet enough so that you can concentrate on your work. This place should also have as few distractions as possible.

With these three points in mind, we can now turn to the specific things that are important for the different types of home office.

Working in bed can blur the difference between home and work.



(Image source: Andrew Neel from Unsplash)

Choose a place to work that is free from distractions.



(Image source: 123RF.com)

A workstation should offer enough space and be well lit so that you can work comfortably.



(Image source: Office Space)

Temporary home office

If you're returning to a regular office in just a few weeks, a big investment in a home office can be a bad decision. If you don't need the equipment when you return to normal working life, you should opt for a temporary setup. Here are some things to consider.

Workstation structure

If you are not going to be working from home for a long period of time or if you no longer want a home office after returning to normal working life, then keeping costs as low as possible should be a high priority. In this case, it makes no sense to invest a lot of time and money in something that won't last long anyway.

The first step in this case should be to find a space in your own house or apartment. If available, this should be a little-used room. Extensive rearrangement should be avoided, but it is advisable to free up a corner in the bedroom or living room. The workspace should have clear boundaries and only be used for work. In addition, this space should not be used extensively by other family members in order to minimize distractions.

Create a specific space for the home office, even if it is small



(Image source: Gabriel Beaudry from Unsplash)

Using a little-used room can be a good idea.



(Image source: HGTV)

When it comes to furniture, a temporary solution probably has a low budget. If you only need an office for a week, you don't need to buy a large desk. A small table or a so-called laptop cart can suffice. Existing surfaces such as small tables or wall-mounted shelves can also be good interim solutions. You just need to make sure that the surface offers enough space for a computer/laptop, a notebook, any paperwork you may need and other items.

The same applies to the chair: you don't need an opulent desk chair if you only use it for a week or two. A simple chair from the dining table can suffice for a few days as long as it offers a minimum level of comfort. Otherwise, you can also help out with a cushion, which is certainly a cheaper option than buying an extra chair.

If you do need furniture, you should use local online marketplaces such as E-Bay classifieds, where used furniture may be offered. As soon as the home office is no longer needed, you can

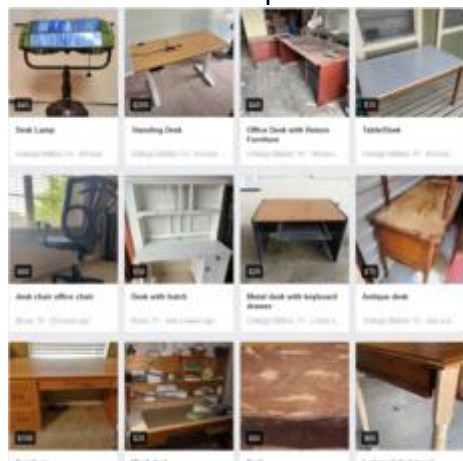
sell furniture that is no longer required to cover the costs.

A laptop cart can be useful if space is limited.



(Image source: Amazon)

Local online marketplaces often offer good deals.



(Image source: Facebook Marketplace)

If the room is quiet, a kitchen table can also be the workstation



(Image source: Nikola Balic from Unsplash)

Computer equipment and office supplies

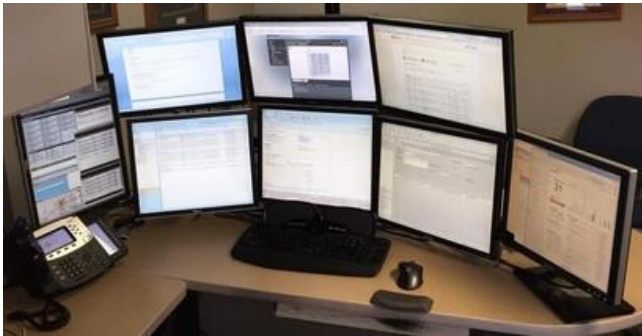
You should also think carefully about what equipment you need for a temporary office.

You should first contact your employer to find out what equipment they offer or at least what they will pay for. The IT department may be able to provide a PC for the home office if a work laptop is not provided anyway. Some employers also subsidize office supplies, furniture and technology if they are needed for the job.

If the employer stays out of it and you are responsible yourself, then you should consider what tools you need. You should also consider whether you need a desktop PC or a laptop. Finally, you should think about what software you need. For example, if you need a program that is only available on macOS, then you don't have much choice. If everything needs to be done in a browser, then an inexpensive laptop such as a Chromebook can also be a good choice.

Office supplies are also important. Large quantities of paper, pens or paper clips can lead to a surplus after the end of the home office. You should only use the materials that you really need. If the worst comes to the worst, you can always buy more of the items you need. You should therefore make a list of the items you need at the beginning. You should not deviate from this list in order to avoid excessive costs.

If you're only working from home for a short time, you shouldn't spend too much money.



(Image source: JustPromote)

You may only need a few tools for the job.



(Image source: Pixabay)

Permanent home office

If the job can be done permanently from home or if you have to work remotely for a longer period of time, then the requirements for setting up the home office naturally change. In this case, you spend much more time in the home office over years and months, so you should take the time and money to make the office environment comfortable.

Workstation structure

A long-term office should be considered a permanent part of your home. A workstation on the couch or at the dining table is therefore not a good choice. If you don't want to dedicate an entire room to your office, you should at least have a clearly defined space that is separate from the rest of your home.

If space is limited, consider a corner of a little-used room, such as a bedroom. If a room is otherwise hardly used, it can also be a good idea to convert it completely into a study.

Another thing to consider is noise. If you have children or noisy roommates in your household, you should find a room where you can close the door. This is especially true if you often have conference calls via the internet on the schedule. The office should be as clutter-free as

possible and offer enough light. A room with natural light is ideal. The room should also be quiet; tiled rooms, for example, often suffer from an echo. Such rooms should therefore be avoided or at least fitted with a carpet.

A room with a door separates the office from the rest of the apartment and reduces noise.



(Image source: Jeld-Wen)

If possible, the workstation should be by a window that lets in plenty of natural light.



(Image source: Izabelle Acheson from Unsplash)

The choice of furniture is of course a matter of taste and depends on your needs. A stationary table is a good choice as it clearly shows what the work surface is. The size of the table depends on the type of work. Is a small laptop sufficient and is hardly anything else needed? Then a small table may be perfectly adequate. Do you have a lot of paper lying around and need to work with 14 external monitors? A large desk, possibly L-shaped, may be the better choice. There are a few things you should bear in mind.

The first thing to consider is how big the room is. A lot of money spent on a huge table can be

wasted if you are working in a utility room. Rooms should therefore be measured in advance. There are numerous furniture planners online, such as Ikea's room planner.

Probably the most important piece of furniture you can buy for an office is the desk chair. A cheap desk may suffice, but a cheap chair can be uncomfortable, distracting and unhealthy. You don't necessarily have to spend thousands of euros, a simple, ergonomic desk chair can be perfectly adequate. With this piece of furniture, it can also be worth reading test reports and searching forums for empirical values. You can also try out desk chairs if you have a local furniture dealer.

If you receive customers in your own office, then the appearance of the furniture should also be taken into account. In this case, you should buy furniture that looks as professional as possible.

You should make sure that you know the dimensions of the room before buying furniture.



(Image source: WarmlyYours.com)

You shouldn't save money on a desk chair.



(Image source: William Warby from Unsplash)

Computer equipment and office supplies

If you work from home for a longer period of time or generally do a lot of remote work, you are probably entitled to a PC and other office materials from your employer. In this respect, you should clarify what you can and cannot get from your employer.

If you are responsible for the purchase yourself or if your employer gives you a free choice, you should consider various aspects. Will you be taking the computer with you to conferences, customer meetings or just to get out of the home office? In that case, you definitely need a laptop. Do you need a powerful workstation? In this case, a stationary desktop could deliver more performance for less money.

Do you need a separate telephone connection and a cell phone? Do you need a printer plus a scanner? Is an external monitor necessary and is there enough space for it? What about an external keyboard and mouse? Are power strips needed so that all these things have a power supply?

There are many tools to consider. Of course, it is always possible to buy additional items at a later date. However, you may then have to modify the already successful setup again, which can also be annoying.

If you have to take your computer with you, then a desktop PC is not a good choice.



(Image source: Caspar Camille Rubin from Unsplash)

When it comes to office supplies, you need to think about your needs. Do you need a lot of paper? Where do you store documents? What about pens? A list of necessary materials:

High-quality pens or ballpoint pens

- A place for the pens
- A simple notebook for quickly jotting down ideas and notes
- A socket strip
- Paper to write down the day's plans (there are of course also digital day planners)
- If you're not sure what you need, talk to other people who work from home.

Even today, a notebook and a good pen are often still essential.



(Image source: Markus Spiske from Unsplash)

You should make sure that you have a place for your office supplies.



(Image source: Plush Design Studio from Unsplash)

Tips and suggestions for purchases

How you set up your home office is ultimately a personal decision. However, we would like to make a few recommendations:

- Do you often have conference calls in your program? If so, you might want to invest in a good webcam (e.g. Logitech C615), microphone (Fifine USB microphone) and a headset or headphones (Panasonic ErgoFit in-ear headphones).
- In the case of video conferencing, you need a stable internet connection. As WLAN can be unstable, you may want to use a connection via an Ethernet cable. In this case, you should measure how long the cable needs to be beforehand.

- You should make sure that the office has sufficient air exchange. A humidifier or fan can be pleasant.
- The home office should have enough lamps if you plan to work in the evening and at night. A desk lamp can be a good investment.
- When setting up your desk, you should make sure that the chair is at an appropriate height so that you can write comfortably. Ideally, the monitor should also be height-adjustable so that you can bring it level with your eyes. Otherwise, neck pain and headaches can occur. If the monitor is too low, you can either raise it with a stack of books or use a monitor stand (AmazonBasics monitor stand).
- You should get up and move/stretch every one to two hours.

For regular video conferences, you need a dedicated webcam, a microphone and headphones.



(Image source: Bluejeans.com)

For a more stable connection, you should use Ethernet instead of Wi-Fi.



(Image source: Stock)

3.4.3 Bring your own devices-BYOD

(<https://www.placetel.de/ratgeber/bring-your-own-device>)

What does Bring Your Own Device mean?

Bring Your Own Device - or BYOD for short - refers to the guideline or possibility of using private electronic devices such as laptops, smartphones or tablets in the network of a company, school, university or library. Users not only access the company's or institution's network services, but also process or store internal organizational or company data.

Bring Your Own Device enables users to work on familiar devices for business purposes. This means a reduction in costs for companies, as fewer computers need to be purchased for employees. However, data security must be taken into account when applying the BYOD principle. Access to a network from a device infected by viruses or Trojans poses a threat to sensitive company data.

Advantages of Bring Your Own Device

Working according to the Bring Your Own Device principle has numerous advantages for users and institutions. Employees who can bring their personal mobile device into the company do not need any time to get used to a different operating system. They can configure their laptop according to their personal preferences. This increases employee satisfaction.

Using your own mobile device for work enables greater flexibility. When smartphones or tablets are used, employees gain mobility.

Bring Your Own Device means cost savings for companies. There is no need to buy new computers if employees use their own.

Working with your own familiar device means greater user-friendliness. With good Wi-Fi coverage, smartphones, tablets or laptops can be used flexibly and mobile in different locations, unlike stand-alone PCs. There is also no need to invest in a large proportion of IT equipment for educational institutions, as they do not have to provide computers.

Disadvantages and risks of Bring Your Own Device?

The Bring Your Own Device principle also has disadvantages for companies and institutions. One serious factor is the lack of data security when accessing an internal network or sensitive company data. Using your own end devices means a high degree of heterogeneity and diversity in a company's hardware and software equipment. The different laptops, smartphones or tablets require more effort for IT management, which puts the cost savings of purchasing company-owned devices into perspective.

Data security with the Bring Your Own Device principle

Bring Your Own Device makes administration and control more difficult, so that employees' private devices represent a security gap for the company's internal network.

If a private laptop is affected by malware and connected to an institution's network, a Trojan can read the entries on the keyboard and thus logins and passwords. In this way, hackers gain access to sensitive data. If a company's or institution's network is open to external access - for example via cloud services - external persons can gain access. This also applies to password-protected logins.

Bring Your Own Device and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

There is also a legal aspect. With Bring Your Own Device, personal or internal company data is accessed and stored on a private device. This does not comply with the guidelines of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It must be legally clarified how to proceed with regard to data and business secrets. In addition to reduced data security, the flexible use of private devices also means stress for employees. If they use their laptop in their free time and can be reached at any time, it is difficult to separate private and work life.

Advantages

- Work efficiently on your own end device
- High employee satisfaction
- High user-friendliness
- Flexibility & mobility
- Cost savings for companies

Disadvantages

- Lack of data security
- Security gap for the company network
- Legal objection: GDPR
- Heterogeneous hardware and software
- Difficult registration for IT

Guidelines and security precautions for Bring Your Own Device

When applying the Bring Your Own Device approach, it is important to weigh up the pros and cons as well as the costs and benefits. In addition to minor hurdles such as the fact that software such as Microsoft Office on private laptops is not licensed for commercial use in companies, ensuring data security requires a certain amount of effort. It is worth setting up internal company guidelines for this purpose. Basic procedures include regularly updating the operating system, using a virus scanner and standardized software to protect against malware.

Simplifying IT administration through mobile device management

For simpler administration by IT management, the use of mobile device management software (MDM) is a good idea. This allows all devices working in a company's network to be managed centrally. Access rights can be assigned or access to a specific end device can be blocked in the event of theft.

Bring Your Own Device and VPN

Encryption via a virtual private network (VPN) is suitable for secure access to a company or institution's internal network. Via the "virtual private network", a user can access the institution's network online from any location, move around in it, retrieve and save files.

Desktop virtualization has another advantage: the separation between the private and work-related "area" on the computer. From a data protection perspective, however, no data from the company network may be stored on the private device.

Additional security precautions for BYOD

Due to the wide range of cloud services available, application streaming is also used for Bring Your Own Device applications. Not only the data, but also the applications required for processing are stored in the company's secure cloud. They are transferred to the private device as soon as the command to open them is given. A high level of security and encryption is required when using cloud services. Private end devices that are connected to the company network must be encrypted using at least two-factor authentication. This means that the smartphone must be secured with a PIN and a screen lock.

Legal basis for Bring Your Own Device

Data security plays a major role in the application of the Bring Your Own Device principle. For this reason, individual internal company guidelines and regulations on data protection must be drawn up for BYOD use, compliance with which each employee confirms by signing a declaration of consent. This includes not only the responsible handling of company or customer data, but also an agreement on the extent to which the employer or other employees have access to the private device or whether the (operating) costs for the laptop, tablet or smartphone are covered by the employer.

4. Lesson 3: Effective practices and tools for communication and collaboration in hybrid teams

4.1 Introduction

Let's imagine it was December 31, 2019, and we were looking into the near future of the following year. Who could have predicted the dramatic shift in our working world triggered by the global COVID-19 pandemic at that time? The pandemic has challenged us in many ways and forced us to rethink traditional work concepts. The resulting hybrid working models, where parts of a team work remotely and others from traditional office environments, may be an evolutionary step in the development of team dynamics or a direct response to the need created by global changes. This chapter is dedicated to analyzing communication and collaboration practices and tools for hybrid teams in the specific context of human resource management.

The topic of this chapter is of great relevance in the current discussion about hybrid work systems. The focus is on the specific challenges that hybrid teams face and the solutions that have evolved in the wake of digitalization and the need for adaptability. The findings from this analysis are essential for the design of work environments in which hybrid teams can communicate and collaborate effectively, thereby increasing both individual and collective productivity.

The aim of this chapter is to identify and evaluate effective methods and tools for increasing effectiveness and engagement in hybrid teams. It shows which communication practices and collaboration tools are best suited in the HR management context to overcome the specific challenges of hybrid teamwork and improve work outcomes.

The state of research on hybrid teamwork is complex and is in a dynamic development process. The pandemic has acted as a catalyst for research and development in this area. This chapter draws on a variety of studies and analyses, including the work of Analysis Mason, which highlights the need to adapt collaboration solutions to hybrid work environments, and the research of Al-Samarraie and Saeed, which demonstrates how cloud computing tools can improve learning outcomes, motivation and self-efficacy through flexibility and accessibility.

In terms of structure, this chapter is organized as follows: This introduction, which provides an overview of the topic and approach, is followed by an in-depth look at the importance of communication in hybrid work environments and its impact on teamwork. Chapter 3 is dedicated to the exploration and evaluation of technical tools that are essential for remote work and the associated collaboration and communication. Chapter 4 discusses rules for online meetings and how they can facilitate effective virtual gatherings. Chapter 5 presents practical examples of successful hybrid teamwork in order to combine theoretical approaches with real-life scenarios. The final conclusion in chapter 6 summarizes the insights gained and provides an outlook on future developments in the field of hybrid teams.

4.2 What does communication mean when working remotely?

Communication is the backbone of any teamwork, especially when it comes to hybrid team structures. It acts as a bridge between physically separated members and is therefore crucial to maintaining dynamic and effective team interaction. Olson and Olson (2013), for example, highlight the modularization of work and a shared foundation as key components of online collaboration. These concepts are particularly relevant to hybrid teams as work can be structured to support clear task allocation and smooth coordination, which has a direct impact on team productivity and satisfaction.

The challenges of communication in hybrid teams require innovative solution strategies. Physical distance harbors the risk of misunderstandings due to a lack of non-verbal cues and spontaneous exchanges. To counter this problem, Malhotra et al. (2007) propose the establishment of communication standards that can create a system of trust and lead to a clear flow of information. Both the form and frequency of communication should be considered in order to maintain a constant level of team interaction and ensure cohesion.

The interlocking of communication and collaborative work is reflected in hybrid teams through a variety of work processes and responsibilities. Role overlaps can be both productive and challenging. Liebhart (2024) recommends creating an open culture of collaboration, supported by appropriate technologies. This approach enables individual members to not only work together efficiently, but also to contribute independently to the achievement of the overall team's goals.

Virtual meetings are a central component of hybrid teamwork and can be made more efficient through specific strategies. The toolkit for hybrid teams from Johns Hopkins University (n.d.) offers extensive recommendations, while features of Microsoft Teams, as documented

by Analysys Mason (2021), can optimize work processes through automation. Such technologies can make meetings more structured and interactive, which in turn significantly strengthens communication and a sense of community within the team.

4.3 Technical tools for remote working

Cloud-based collaboration tools have proven to be indispensable in hybrid work environments. Their ability to support communication and collaboration through flexibility, scalability and accessibility is particularly important in hybrid teams, where workforces are often distributed and dynamic (Al-Samarraie & Saeed, 2018). The implementation of such technologies helps to improve learning outcomes and self-efficacy by creating working conditions that are independent of time and place, thus enabling continuous productive collaboration. At the same time, however, data protection and security considerations should not be neglected. Concerns about IT security, the availability of services and dependence on a stable internet connection must be adequately addressed as part of planning and management, for example by establishing clear guidelines and maintaining technology partnerships that ensure reliable support.

Agile methods provide hybrid teams with a structure that optimizes both collaboration and individual engagement. By using methods such as Scrum and the associated daily stand-ups, team members can interact productively while continuously monitoring project progress (Apeldorn, 2023). Team working agreements and recurring meetings promote a common understanding and ensure transparent expectations. This is particularly important because in hybrid settings, ordinary informal conversations in the workplace, which often provide the core for cohesion and understanding among colleagues, cannot take place or can only take place with difficulty. Therefore, consciously shaping collaboration and encouraging active participation through digital communication platforms is crucial for the success of hybrid teams.

Collaboration between distributed development teams requires special attention in terms of communication and coordination. Here, virtual agile retrospectives have proven to be effective tools that not only increase communication efficiency but also contribute to reducing complexity within product development (Duehr et al., 2021). Technical roles such as the Scrum Master are crucial for managing these processes. However, the central challenge remains the continuous adaptation of the tools used to the changing team dynamics and project requirements. This results in the need for teams not only to explore technological options, but also to promote a willingness for change and further training in order to fully exploit the value of these tools.

AI systems are a promising addition for hybrid teams to take over repetitive tasks and support

internal communication (Seeber et al., 2020). They offer the potential to complement and reinforce human skills, which can lead to improved team processes. Nevertheless, integrating AI into teams first requires bridging technical gaps and sound strategic planning. It is critical that AI implementation is based on a detailed analysis of specific team needs and is supported by ongoing research and development to effectively integrate the AI systems into the collaboration environment and make them an integral part of the team dynamic.

Consideration of these technical tools in hybrid work environments highlights both the variety of options available and the complexity of their effective application. A careful and informed approach is needed to meet both the individual and collective needs of hybrid teams and maximize their performance.

4.4 Rules for online meetings

The appropriate design of virtual meetings is of great importance to ensure efficient and targeted communication in hybrid teams. Behavioral norms to be observed, as proposed by Johns Hopkins University Human Resources (n.d.), are not only necessary to maintain a professional framework, but also to create a productive and respectful atmosphere. Basic rules such as punctuality, active listening and a professional appearance in front of the camera play an important role here. Such rules of conduct help to ensure that every team member is valued and feels respected, which in turn increases the willingness to actively participate and engage in constructive exchange.

One element that helps to increase communication efficiency in online meetings is the establishment of clear communication protocols. These can include, for example, participants speaking in turn and avoiding interruptions in order to avoid misunderstandings and give everyone the opportunity to contribute their opinion. To this end, it is essential that the moderator of online meetings ensures that all participants have an equal say and that their contributions are recognized. This practice not only promotes participation, but also a sense of community and satisfaction within the team.

Another aspect to consider is the consistent use of mute functions during virtual meetings, which reduces background noise and allows concentration on the person speaking. This simple measure can noticeably improve the quality of communication and help ensure that each team member can communicate their points clearly and without distraction.

When it comes to moderating online meetings, it is important to find strategies that promote exchange within the team and actively involve all participants. The use of tools and functions such as polls and surveys can provide additional support here, as they make everyone's opinions visible and contribute to decision-making through voting. In addition, the use of

breakout rooms can benefit in-depth work by allowing smaller groups to work more intensively on specific questions and then bring the results together in a larger group.

Structured follow-up is key to ensuring that online meetings have a lasting impact. This includes documentation of the meeting, a clear allocation of tasks and regular progress checks in order to implement the agreements made. This is the only way to ensure that meetings are not just an exchange of information but produce concrete results. Such a follow-up process enables teams to maintain an overview of their projects and coordinate the necessary steps to achieve their goals.

The technological functions of Microsoft Teams, such as the Together mode and automatic meeting recordings, can be used to improve collaboration in hybrid teams. Collaboration mode, for example, offers the opportunity to increase team cohesion by creating a unified virtual environment. At the same time, functions such as the automatic recording of meetings make it possible to create a reliable archive of all meetings that can be accessed by all team members. This increases transparency and improves the traceability of discussions and decisions.

In conclusion, the correct application of rules and moderation strategies, supported by innovative technologies, can make a significant contribution to increasing communication efficiency and engagement in hybrid teams. This requires careful selection and implementation of tools as well as continuous reflection and adaptation of communication practices in order to meet the changing requirements of teamwork.

4.5. Practical examples

The dynamic nature of hybrid teams calls for innovative approaches to optimize collaboration and communication. One notable example is the use of agile methods to increase collaboration at Bosch Engineering GmbH. Through the consistent implementation of agile retrospectives and the use of digitalization tools, it was possible to establish a culture of constant feedback that strengthened both efficiency and cohesion in distributed teams (Duehr et al., 2021). The adaptation of tools such as scrum boards and shared documentation platforms increased transparency within the team and intensified the accountability of individual members. Such techniques not only reduced misunderstandings but also facilitated development efficiency, underlining the significant impact of flexibly adaptable methods and tools on the success of hybrid teams.

With regard to the role of AI systems in team collaboration, new dimensions are opening up for hybrid team constellations. AI systems can take over repetitive tasks and simplify prioritization within team projects, freeing up human capacity for creative and strategic tasks

(Seeber et al., 2020). Although these technologies have the potential to speed up decision-making processes and increase information quality, challenges arise in the form of data management and the need for continuous adaptation of AI systems. The effective integration of AI into teams therefore requires careful planning and a strategic approach to ensure seamless collaboration between humans and machines.

The use of cloud-based collaboration tools to increase productivity also includes the case of Fujitsu. There, it was found that by taking individual needs into account and implementing flexible working models, not only satisfaction but also overall productivity increased (Gratton, 2021). The use of cloud services made it possible to speed up the flow of information and simplify coordination within the team. This illustrates that the right combination of technological solutions and an awareness of employees' individual preferences is essential to enable a functioning hybrid working model.

Finally, the case of Johns Hopkins University illustrates how extensive training resources can support managers and employees in hybrid teams. The toolkit provided with materials such as guides and online courses serves to strengthen leadership and communication skills (Johns Hopkins University Human Resources, n.d.). Fostering connection through effective virtual meetings plays a central role in ensuring long-term team cohesion in hybrid work environments. The continuous development of a common team identity can thus be significantly advanced.

In summary, these examples demonstrate that an expansion of the range of methods and tools is necessary in order to sustainably support hybrid teams in their commitment and productivity. The careful adaptation and further development of existing techniques and practices is proving to be a pacemaker for the sustainable design of hybrid working models.

4.6 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to increase the effectiveness and commitment of hybrid teams through suitable communication and collaboration tools. In the context of human resource management, it examined how hybrid teams, consisting of employees working both on-site and remotely, can optimize their collaboration and communication.

The study of communication practices in hybrid teams showed that effective communication is essential to maintain team dynamics and ensure project progress. By modularizing work and creating a common baseline understanding, challenges such as misunderstandings and the loss of non-verbal communication could be overcome. Developing and adhering to communication norms proved crucial in building trust and ensuring a clear flow of information. A key finding was that linking communication and collaboration plays a key role in improving coordination and the overall success of the team.

Technical tools, especially cloud-based collaboration tools, were identified as essential for supporting hybrid teams. These tools offer flexibility, scalability and accessibility, which can increase the productivity and engagement of team members. Agile methods and specialized communication and collaboration tools also help to promote the efficiency and cohesion of distributed teams. Artificial intelligence has been recognized as a complementary tool that automates repetitive tasks and offers new opportunities for interaction, although strategic integration is necessary.

In the area of virtual meetings, significant improvements in communication efficiency were achieved through the application of behavioral norms and moderation techniques. Structured follow-up processes and the use of specific Microsoft Teams functions helped to increase team dynamics and productivity. This was particularly evident in the improved moderation and more targeted interaction during the online meetings.

Practical examples of successful hybrid teamwork, such as the application of agile methods at Bosch Engineering GmbH and the implementation of cloud-based collaboration tools at Fujitsu, illustrated the positive effects of these approaches. Also highlighted was the role of AI systems and the support of resources from Johns Hopkins University in enhancing the effectiveness of team collaboration and engagement.

4.7 Technical tools

We've compiled a list of the most valuable tech tools you can add to your remote work toolbox. From productivity management to video conferencing to employee programs like mentoring, help your remote employees do their jobs better and feel connected to your company.

Top remote working tools for your team after the pandemic

It takes a lot of effort to keep your remote team on the same page. These tech tools can help you effectively manage your team remotely.

1. Trello (<https://trello.com/>)

A visual project management platform Trello allows users to track the progress of projects and tasks. Trello was built on the Japanese Kanban board system, which was a simple way to monitor tasks to be monitored, tasks completed and tasks completed. It has a very visual component that allows you to create a board and then a list and place cards on the list. As your remote employees finish their tasks, you'll see the cards move across the board. If your teams are overwhelmed by too many bells and whistles in the software, Trello is for you.

2. asana (<https://asana.com>)

Collaboration tools are important to keep things running smoothly with your remote workers. Asana creates a space where your employees can monitor tasks and manage their tasks. It's a more sophisticated project management platform than others and one of its features is a Kanban board, but unlike Trello, its platform isn't built around the board. With Asana, members of your remote team can see the progress of other employees. This is especially useful if your employees need to take over a task after another employee has completed theirs. There are several other features like a calendar and portfolio that can be valuable options depending on the team you're managing.

3. google drive (<https://drive.google.com/drive/home>)

Google's answer to remote team management allows your team members to seamlessly share documents, files, folders and more. Google Drive can be accessed anywhere from any device, which is ideal for remote teams spread across large geographical distances.

4. Zoom (<https://www.zoom.com/>)

Before COVID, Zoom was not as well known, but in recent months it has become the go-to place for most organizations that want to stay connected despite social distancing. Zoom is a simple and user-friendly video conferencing platform. However, it also has valuable features that can help you collaborate and plan with your remote team, including a screen sharing option, a whiteboard and great security tools to keep your meetings safe from hackers. Employees can join the meeting from any device and you can even record it to share with remote workers who couldn't join you.

5. HowSpace (<https://www.howspace.com/>)

Employee development can sometimes be overlooked for remote teams. However, software like HowSpace allows you to organize training for employees working from home. You can invite your remote employees to workshops and training sessions to help them develop their skills and talents. Howspace also has interactive features for your employees such as polls and chat options.

6. dropbox (<https://www.dropbox.com/>)

Cloud storage is a must for your remote workforce, and that's exactly what Dropbox offers. Larger documents are difficult to share via email. With Dropbox, remote workers can upload larger files, presentations or videos that they can't share via email. It's also a great option if you're working with freelancers or contract workers on a project. They can simply drop their finished work into your account.

7. loom loom (<https://www.loom.com/>)

Internal communications like announcements are important, but delivering them can be a challenge. Whether you're running out of time or just want to get your message across to your

remote team quickly, Loom lets you record an audio message that you can share via messaging apps or email. This way, you can express your thoughts and let everyone know what's going on in your organization.

8. harvest (<https://www.getharvest.com/>)

Keeping track of everyone's time is one of the biggest challenges when you're monitoring remote teams. Software like Harvest can make it easier. Each employee can log their time, so you can see how long they spent working on a task, when they started it and when they finished it. Harvest is also capable of tracking expenses, which can simplify your payroll process for remote teams.

9. Customshow (<https://www.customshow.com/>)

Just because work has gone virtual doesn't mean you no longer need to create a presentation. Now you just need a tool to create and share remote presentations online. That's where CustomShow comes in. CustomShow's presentation software is the perfect remote work tool for creating stunning presentations that convey the data, reports, content and more that you need to share.

10. Recruiterflow (<https://recruiterflow.com/>)

Recruiterflow is a comprehensive software that optimizes the recruitment process for staffing and recruiting agencies, making it easier to find and hire top talent from anywhere. With its real-time analytics, communication tools, and a centralized platform to manage recruiting efforts, Recruiterflow provides an efficient and effective remote hiring solution that allows companies to track candidate progress, communicate with the hiring team and candidates, and manage recruiting activities in a consistent and organized manner. By using Recruiterflow, organizations can ensure they are effectively managing their remote hiring process and hiring the best talent available.

11. clerk (<https://clerk.com/>)

With remote teams, it's hard to train and even harder to make sure everyone is following the same rules. Scribe is a browser extension and desktop application that creates instructions in seconds. Any colleague from anywhere can instantly record an entire workflow. Simply click "Record" and execute the process. Scribe automatically creates a guide with step-by-step instructions and corresponding screenshots.

12. lead.app (<https://www.lead.app/>)

LEAD.app works directly in your company's Slack or Teams. Simply install LEAD.bot and it starts bringing people together for coffee meetings, speed mentoring or virtual happy hours. LEAD also gives organizations the ability to customize their matching so they can speak to their organization in their own voice, on their preferred schedule and according to their preferences.

13. podcast (<https://podcastle.ai/>)

The post-pandemic period has led to significant restrictions on face-to-face meetings. However, if you don't want to jeopardize your interview podcasts for this, there's a great chance to record them remotely via Podcastle, but make it sound like you're sitting next to each other. The software's editing and voice customization features allow you to record at the highest quality.

14. eSwap (<https://eswap.global/>)

eSwap is a multichannel inventory management software that makes the life of ecommerce business owners easier. Instead of manually managing all your ecommerce channels like eBay, Amazon and others, you can now link all your media to a single source and manage it from there. So even if you manage a large e-commerce brand, your team of accountants and sales managers can still work efficiently from home.

15. salesmate (<https://www.salesmate.io/>)

Salesmate is an ideal CRM and customer journey platform that enables your remote teams to automate customer support, sales and marketing processes. It's an advanced SaaS CRM with intuitive features that improve customer engagement, help create optimized marketing strategies, streamline your sales process and manage all your customer data in one place.

One of its features, email automation, can create highly targeted emails that help you better connect with your prospects and customers. You can also automate your outreach and connect with customers based on their behavior and actions.

You can also use it as a Google CRM platform that seamlessly integrates with your favorite G Suite apps like Gmail in seconds and improves the productivity of your remote team.

16. Alumni Enterprise (<https://enterprisealumni.com/>)

Alumni Enterprise is a powerful corporate alumni management platform that is easy to use and affordable. It is the right platform to connect with former employees and enables organizations to grow talent pools, increase revenue and promote their brands. EnterpriseAlumni enables organizations to attract, engage and activate their alumni community. It integrates seamlessly with most CRMs and A/B testing tools and offers features to fulfill needs such as lead generation, alumni networking, event management, and more. Use it to connect with your alumni, engage them and turn them into your ambassadors.

17. longlist (<https://longlist.io/>)

Longlist is a state-of-the-art automation platform designed specifically for fast-growing recruitment agencies and staffing firms. With its powerful features, Longlist revolutionizes the way recruiters work by streamlining the candidate and client search process and enabling seamless outreach campaigns across multiple channels via email, LinkedIn, SMS and phone. In addition, Longlist automates repetitive tasks such as email follow-ups, freeing up valuable

time for recruiters to focus on more important aspects of their work.

Longlist has a range of impressive features, including a Google Chrome extension for enhanced functionality, a comprehensive talent search function, efficient email automation, the ability to run multi-channel outreach campaigns and even facilitate video recruitment. The platform integrates seamlessly with Leading's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and Application Tracking Systems (ATS) to provide a smooth and optimized experience for recruiters.

18. WebWork time recording (<https://www.webwork-tracker.com/>)

WebWork Tracker is a comprehensive time tracking and employee monitoring software designed to increase the productivity of all types of teams. It provides tools for tracking work hours, monitoring employee activity, managing projects and analyzing productivity. With solutions such as desktop time tracking with screenshots, detailed reports, task management, shift scheduling, timesheets and more, WebWork Tracker provides insights into work patterns, helping organizations optimize performance and effectively manage remote teams. Its user-friendly interface and robust functionality make it suitable for organizations of all sizes looking to improve accountability, streamline workflows and enhance time management.

4.8 Rules for online meetings - how virtual collaboration is guaranteed to work

Online meetings are becoming increasingly popular. No wonder, as they enable constructive exchange across physical distances and help numerous companies to maintain their daily business during coronavirus. However, virtual meetings are often not as effective as hoped: the reasons range from a lack of technical knowledge to delays and high levels of background noise. To ensure that online meetings run smoothly, we provide you with a few useful tips in this online meeting etiquette guide.

12 Online meeting rules:

1. communicate topic and agenda

Good preparation is the key to a successful online meeting. This includes, above all, defining objectives and creating an agenda that is sent to the participants in advance. This allows everyone to prepare for the meeting in peace and everyone can contribute to the topic. A pre-defined agenda also serves as a guide during the online meeting and helps to work through

topics and individual points in a structured and efficient manner.

2. technology check

You have no sound or don't know how to share your screen? Too bad that all the participants are already waiting for you. Before you start a virtual meeting, you should always make sure that everything is working and that you are familiar with the individual functions.

3. wear appropriate clothing

This online meeting rule is not only aimed at the moderator, but should be taken to heart by all participants. Just because the meeting is taking place virtually, e.g. at home, does not mean that you should wear a jogging suit. Simply wear what you would have worn to a normal meeting and make sure that you tidy up your workspace beforehand and have good lighting during a video conference.

4. be on time

Plan enough time so that you can dial into the meeting on time - ideally with a few minutes buffer. If you are running late, it is important to inform the other meeting participants so that they can use the waiting time for other purposes.

5. nice welcome with a round of introductions

As the moderator, you should provide a nice intro. Welcome all participants and, if there are new employees or external participants, ask them to introduce themselves.

6. avoidance of background noise

Keyboard typing, screaming children, construction work in the background: background noise during an online meeting can be extremely distracting. For this reason, only the conference leader and the person who has something to contribute should have the microphone switched on for the audio transmission. The rest should mute themselves to avoid distractions. It is also a good idea to use a headset that supports noise canceling and blocks out background noise. Close the windows before the meeting and, ideally, switch off your cell phone.

7. pay attention to pronunciation and gestures

When communicating virtually, you should pay particular attention to your pronunciation and tone of voice. Speak slowly, calmly and clearly and pause regularly to ensure better intelligibility. This is particularly important in international companies where English is used as the language of communication.

In terms of intercultural collaboration, you should also pay attention to your gestures and body language during a web conference. This is because gestures can be understood very differently depending on the cultural context. For example, a nod of the head is interpreted

as agreement in most countries, but not so in Arab countries, Greece or Turkey. Here, a nod of the head expresses exactly the opposite, i.e. rejection.

8. less is more

Online meetings can easily help to simplify collaboration across distances. However, there are also companies where the number of online meetings gets out of hand and employees end up spending their working day just shuffling from one meeting to the next. Think carefully about the purpose of an online meeting and, above all, who should take part. Only invite people who are really involved in the topic and can contribute to the discussion.

9. keep online meetings short and crisp

The longer the meeting, the more likely it is that concentration will wane. To ensure that all participants have full attention, a maximum duration of 60-90 minutes should be set for online meetings.

10. promote interactivity - involve participants

Who doesn't lose interest during hours of monologues?

Many employees do other things during meetings: 52% do other work-related tasks at the same time, 43% answer private emails or surf the net during online meetings. (Source: NeXR Study 2020)

For this reason, involve the other participants by asking specific questions, let them vote in the chat or use a whiteboard to work out solutions together.

11. letting others finish

Let others finish speaking and try to avoid interruptions. Instead, wait for pauses in the conversation to add something.

12. create a joint protocol

In order to keep a lasting record of the results of a virtual meeting, it is advisable to take minutes together. Many video conferencing tools also have a recording function that can be used to record the meeting. In this way, employees who were unable to attend the online meeting can also view the meeting and bring themselves up to date

5. Lesson 4: Overcoming challenges and promoting productivity

5.1 Introduction

The question of how different approaches to HR management in companies influence the way they overcome internal challenges and increase productivity is a hot topic for SMEs. In particular, overcoming challenges and promoting productivity within companies are emerging as key tasks. In view of the constant changes in which companies operate, effective HR management is essential in order to meet the diverse demands and ensure the success of the respective company.

This chapter is therefore dedicated to this topic in detail and focuses on overcoming internal challenges and promoting productivity. In view of the important role of human resources as a strategic success factor in companies, a dedicated examination of the corresponding management strategies and methods is of essential importance. This aspect is gaining in complexity and urgency due to the influence of demographic change, digitalization and global political changes.

5.2 The ideal remote workplace

Against the background of the increasing spread of working from home, the question of the ideal design of the home workplace arises. This requires an examination of ergonomic requirements and the technological equipment necessary to achieve maximum productivity in the home office (Gronau, n.d.). Ergonomic furniture, such as investing in height-adjustable desks and orthopaedic office chairs, makes a significant contribution to physical health and can therefore increase employee performance in the long term. This understanding is reflected in research that points to the positive correlation between ergonomics in the workplace and employee productivity.

The need for advanced technical equipment that enables employees to work efficiently and undisturbed in the home office is also clear. The provision of high-performance end devices and reliable internet connections is a fundamental component in supporting continuous and

uninterrupted work processes. A quiet and undisturbed working environment is of similar fundamental importance, as it is an essential prerequisite for concentrated work and has a direct impact on the quality of work.

In addition, access to cloud services and remote desktop solutions can significantly improve the self-organization and flexibility of employees and meet the specific conditions of SMEs.

Another dimension of working from home is the balance between flexibility and structure in the work environment. Referring to Jensen et al. (2022), it is crucial to design working models that both allow flexible working hours and provide a clear structure. This includes the development of core working hours and the introduction of remote protocols that provide both flexibility and commitment for employees. Such a structure not only facilitates self-direction, but also helps to avoid misunderstandings and promotes a more efficient and satisfying work culture.

In the context of virtual teams, collaboration and communication can be challenging. Güttel and Schneider (2018) shed light on the influence of digital communication tools on team dynamics and productivity. The use of technologies such as video conferencing and instant messaging can significantly facilitate collaboration in distributed teams and help members from different cultures and time zones to contribute better. Regular virtual meetings also improve cohesion and provide an opportunity to exchange ideas.

Ensuring data protection and data security in the home office is emphasized in the work of Oswald et al. (2023). Measures such as implementing secure VPN connections, raising awareness and training employees in data protection issues and developing emergency plans for data breaches are fundamental to ensuring the confidentiality of information. This is particularly important for SMEs, where a high level of data integrity must be guaranteed.

In conclusion, the efficient design of the home office workplace is a complex challenge that involves both physical and psychological components. However, by taking into account ergonomic principles and technological requirements, as well as a balanced work structure, the conditions for higher productivity and employee satisfaction can be created.

5.3 How to structure a working day (routines, breaks)

Creating a structured routine in the home office makes a decisive contribution to increasing productivity. Applying Gronau's (n.d.) research findings on the importance of improved work organization for productivity, it can be emphasized that a clear daily structure with defined work and break times is essential. These defined structures enable employees to develop a

binding routine and cope with the challenges of a potentially unpredictable workload, despite the flexibilization within the scope of the available capacity. The aim here is to ensure a balance between the necessary structure and personal flexibility in order to guarantee both individualized work design and the fulfilment of organizational requirements.

In connection with the establishment of a fixed daily routine, Gronau's research indicates that clearly defined start and end times for the working day are of central importance. Through these fixed time slots, companies enable their employees to develop a disciplined work rhythm that prevents overwork and contributes to a healthy work-life balance. Furthermore, blocks of time for concentrated activities can be used efficiently by organizing them as intervals for focused work without disrupting the flow of work, followed by short breaks for recovery. Such intervals strengthen mental alertness and promote sustained work performance.

Ensuring clearly defined break times is another key element in increasing employee performance. Demography Excellence (2016) highlights the benefits of flexible working time models, where break arrangements in particular make a significant contribution to maintaining cognitive resilience. By systematically integrating breaks into the working day, employees receive regular recovery phases that counteract mental and physical exhaustion and contribute to productivity in the long term. In addition, adapting break times to individual needs can be a tailor-made solution that optimizes individual performance and contributes to overall job satisfaction.

According to Flato and Reinbold-Scheible (2008), ergonomic workplace design is of fundamental importance to ensure the long-term health and well-being of employees and to avoid work-related complaints. This includes not only the physical equipment of the workplace, but also the introduction of health-promoting measures such as virtual exercise breaks or ergonomic training. These measures can raise employees' awareness of their own health and promote healthy working habits, which ultimately increases their productivity and satisfaction.

In conclusion, working from home requires adequate adaptation of the social component to prevent isolation and maintain team cohesion. Jensen et al. (2022) point out that digital communication tools are essential to promote social exchange between team members and ensure social integration even in decentralized work structures. Structured virtual coffee breaks and team-building exercises can foster emotional connection among employees and strengthen team dynamics. Transparent communication channels build trust and contribute to an open and productive team culture.

5.4 Pomodoro technique

The Pomodoro technique is used as a time management method that increases productivity and prevents burnout thanks to its specific structure of work and recovery phases. Lami's findings, which emphasize the importance of precise time estimates for undisturbed work, can be transferred to the Pomodoro technique, as it creates clarity and focus in the work process through fixed intervals. In the Pomodoro Technique, work is organized into 25-minute work intervals followed by 5-minute breaks that provide a time management framework and help to minimize distractions and maximize productivity in the work intervals.

The effectiveness of the Pomodoro technique in SMEs results from the regular division of the work process into manageable chunks, which motivates employees to stick to the time constraints while keeping them mentally fresh. Stöger's research findings, which emphasize the positive influence of employee satisfaction on productivity, should be highlighted here. By clearly limiting work phases, the Pomodoro technique can lead to increased job satisfaction by enabling a sense of achievement through completed activities and increasing the perceived autonomy of employees.

Adapting the Pomodoro technique to your own work requires an examination of its specific needs and work processes. It is important to modify the technique so that it meets the company's requirements, for example by flexibly adapting work intervals to time-sensitive tasks such as preparing for meetings or reacting quickly to current customer events.

The impact of short, intensive work phases on mental freshness and alertness and the resulting increase in work efficiency should not be underestimated. This way of working has been proven to help reduce the cognitive load on employees and ensure consistently high productivity. It also supports stress management by enabling mental recovery through regular breaks and thus maintaining performance in the long term.

Implementing the Pomodoro technique in companies is proving to be a promising approach to overcoming the challenges of workload and stress. Gronau's contribution should be noted here, which emphasizes the importance of effective process organization for increasing productivity. Through clear time structures and discipline in the execution of work, companies can promote a resource-efficient and goal-oriented way of working. The targeted training of employees in the use of technology is just as essential as the continuous evaluation and adaptation to the dynamic requirements of everyday political life.

Finally, the influence of the Pomodoro technique on employee satisfaction should not be neglected. Stöger mentions a clear correlation between employee satisfaction and productivity, which is highlighted by an improved work-life balance and a reduced risk of burnout. Therefore, an effective implementation of the Pomodoro Technique can help to

promote individual work motivation and satisfaction as well as to sustainably increase the well-being of employees in political organizations. The Pomodoro Technique is therefore not only a method for increasing productivity, but also a tool for promoting a healthy and sustainable working environment in SMEs.

5.5 Practical examples

Applying the Pomodoro technique to advertising campaigns can be seen as an effective tool for increasing productivity, especially in times of high work pressure and tight deadlines. By dividing workflows into 25-minute intervals followed by short breaks, a structure is created that favors both concentration and creativity in the creation of content such as logos and press releases. In this context, Lami emphasizes the importance of setting clearly defined working hours to avoid interruptions and distractions and maximize productivity. The challenge lies in adapting this method to the dynamic and sometimes unpredictable nature of an advertising campaign.

The impact of short, systematic work intervals on teamwork and collaborative tasks, such as the creation of advertising material, should not be underestimated. It can be assumed that the introduction of the Pomodoro technique can increase efficiency and quality, which is particularly beneficial when several team members are working together on a project. The work results are likely to be more consistent as a result, as continuous feedback loops and knowledge exchange can take place during breaks. Stöger emphasizes the connection between productivity and employee satisfaction, which can be greatly influenced by such structured work processes.

The use of the Pomodoro technique in highly dynamic phases of product development, for example, offers the opportunity to work in a structured and goal-oriented manner even under time pressure. This helps to avoid overload and supports the teams in achieving their strategic goals. Flexibility in the adjustment of working intervals, for example to prepare for presentations scheduled at short notice, could help to harmonize both the operational and strategic requirements of the product launch.

Implementing an effective break structure can have a significant impact on team dynamics in SMEs. Making productive use of these breaks for creative processes, where new ideas are developed and shared, could increase collective creativity and encourage the development of innovative solutions. The findings of Gronau can be drawn on here, which show that breaks can also be part of a systematic approach to increasing productivity.

There is also the opportunity to optimize team interaction and social cohesion through consciously planned breaks. These times spent together offer an ideal platform for discussing strategic issues and contribute to the formation of a more cohesive team structure in the long

term. The challenge in practice will be to design these breaks in such a way that they meet both the individual recovery needs of employees and the organizational requirements.

Adapting working time models to the specific needs of volunteers in non-profit organizations, for example, is a particular necessity. Since volunteers have different availabilities and time slots, non-profit organizations must create flexible but clear framework conditions that meet both individual and organizational needs. Jensen et al. address the fact that non-profit organizations need specific human resource management strategies that are tailored to their individual goals and needs, which also applies to time management.

The use of digital technologies to improve the integration and productivity of volunteers is also of great importance. Here, the benefits of cloud services and remote desktop solutions can be built upon, allowing volunteers to participate flexibly and efficiently in organizational processes. This not only promotes the operational efficiency of non-profit organizations, but also supports the aspect of modern personnel management.

In conclusion, successful home office adaptations for maximum productivity in SMEs require both structural and technical considerations. Flato and Reinbold-Scheible emphasize the need for an ergonomically correct working environment to avoid physical discomfort and increase performance. Furthermore, care must be taken to ensure that work-life balance principles are taken into account when designing the home office workplace. The challenge is to integrate these aspects into remote work in such a way that both individual needs and organizational goals are taken into account.

5.6 Conclusion

The first main part of this chapter dealt with the challenges in HR management, especially in the case of SMEs working from home. It was shown in detail that SMEs face a variety of challenges, including demographic developments, digitalization and the need for innovative HR strategies. These challenges require flexible and adaptable management methods to ensure the performance of the company.

In the second main part, various strategies to promote productivity were examined. It was discussed that a balance between flexibility and structure in the working environment is essential. Flexible working models need to be complemented by clear structures in order to maximize productivity. The importance of ergonomic requirements and technological equipment to ensure the quality of work in the home office was also emphasized. The use of digital communication tools was also highlighted as crucial for maintaining team dynamics and the effectiveness of virtual teams.

The third main section was dedicated to the Pomodoro technique. In particular, the implementation of time management techniques such as the Pomodoro technique and the creation of structured work and break cycles were presented as successful approaches to increasing employee productivity and satisfaction.

5.7 A typical day at the Vanilla Mind Office

(<https://vanilla-mind.de/tagesablauf/>)

"Hi, I'm Melina and I work from home." And everyone's like: "Oh, how relaxed. I'd love to have a daily routine like that. It certainly doesn't feel like work at all!"

Haha, sure. I just lie around all day, wear jogging bottoms and every now and then I move the cursor a little over the screen of my outrageously large iMac. - Today I laugh at this idea. Working from home can be damn hard because it requires a lot of self-discipline, clarity and structure. Since corona, most people have had a great deal of respect for working from home, as many have experienced first-hand how much concentration and focus it takes to have a productive daily routine.

But there were also times when I blushed and thought: "They're right, if it feels this good and you can sleep in every day, it's not work."

Where does this assumption come from that work has to feel really exhausting and miserable so that you can pat yourself on the back at the end of the day? → You can find out the answer here, because I got to the bottom of it historically.

Today, I am no longer ashamed when I am asked what a typical working day looks like for me. Because I know that I have fought for my freedom myself. For many, that may sound like a dream. Getting up and going to bed whenever you want, doing nothing for an hour in between and taking a break - it works.

But what many consider to be paradise on earth also comes with great responsibility. A responsibility that very few people really want to take on. Yes, self-employment is not for everyone - but once you've realized that, you can stop the envious looks.

You're about to see what a typical working day is like for me. Disclaimer: Ideally, of course. As you know, sometimes something called life gets in the way.

My typical daily routine

09:00 a.m.

I wake up. No, that's not a joke. I usually wake up between 8 and 9 a.m. in summer and between 9 and 10 a.m. in winter. I am a real owl. I can barely look straight in the morning, let

alone form meaningful sentences. Because I know that I'm absolutely not productive at this time of day, I generally don't put any appointments in my diary before 11 am.

09:10 a.m.

90 minutes of meditation.

- Haha, little joke. I don't meditate. But I do write in my journal. This routine takes up a maximum of 5 minutes of my time, but it is one of the most important events in my daily routine. I write in my bullet journal how I feel, what I want to achieve and what I want to do for myself today. Planning in breaks alongside the obligatory to-do's also ensures that I get away from my desk and don't work straight through. Otherwise, I'm completely over-excited in the evening and can't stop the carousel of thoughts.

09:15 a.m.

Showering/dressing/make-up. I do everything exactly as if I were about to leave the house at any moment: nice, neat clothes and light make-up. This is part of my regular morning routine because it boosts my self-esteem. For me, I don't wear a business suit and pyjamas in the morning, whether I'm working from home or not (you can find a little home office etiquette guide here). I feel much more competent when I look good. These are such little psycho-tricks.

09:45 a.m.

Timon and I go for a walk around 10 o'clock. It wakes us up and being out in nature gives us so much clarity! Sometimes I also add 20 minutes of strength training, depending on the day. But exercise is a must for us! Why is that? Because we've realized that physical fitness makes you really productive! It's also extremely important for us office plants to get enough exercise. We don't even have a commute to work, so we urgently need to find a balance! If we skip sport, then the day usually doesn't go so smoothly.

11:00 a.m.

I usually start with a few administrative tasks: checking and answering emails, responding to comments on social media. I also plan what content I want to share with you next in the Courage Letter or on my channels, or work out new podcast topics. There's no reason for me to drive myself crazy with emails and messages any earlier. Emails are a slow medium. If you really want something urgent, call. You can find more interesting thoughts on the topic of accessibility here.

12:00 p.m.

You haven't read anything about breakfast here yet. That's because my body has adapted quite well to intermittent fasting. I'm not hungry before 11am-12pm and usually only drink water. But at the latest now I have a big oatmeal with lots of fresh fruit and nut butter. Big love!

12:45 p.m.

If I've had a good day at work, I now at least have a good overview of my tasks and have already dealt with a few requests. Requests for interviews or collaborations come in every day and I need quite a lot of time for such emails. Especially when I turn them down - as I do in 8 out of 10 cases - and explain why. I also often have podcast interviews or Zoom meetings at lunchtime.

3:00 p.m.

My concentration is slowly waning. What I also like to do now is further training. For example, I listen to audiobooks for business and personal development and take notes. If I can sit outside in the sun - all the better. I move my creative work to the early evening.

16:00

I usually take a break now because I can only work creatively best in the evening and often just stare apathetically at myself (or my smartphone) in the afternoon. Why obsessively try to get something done that you can do at another time with significantly less energy?

6:00 pm

Now I'm finally cooking big. I also love ordering a HelloFresh cooking box once a month. Especially when you don't have much time to cook because you still have a lot of projects to do or are simply exhausted, the cooking box is a real help. Almost all recipes can be prepared in 30-45 minutes and consist of fresh food. It also effectively prevents me from falling back into my "pasta-with-pesto-from-a-jar" rut (*affiliate link: [this link](#) gives us both a fat voucher).

7:00 p.m.

On with the remaining items on my to-do list. Now I'm really warming up and getting into my work flow. During this time, I can tackle the tasks that challenge me the most mentally and require a high level of concentration. Concepts, product ideas, marketing and much more only really get going late at night. - And no... I absolutely don't miss not having the TV on at 8:15 pm. I don't have a Netflix subscription either.

24:00 h

So now you realize why I sleep late. I don't really go home after work at all. Instead, I take lots of breaks during the day and sometimes just read a book in the park ([click here](#) for my reading list). I never actually go to sleep before 1 am. Most people can't imagine working that late, but it works perfectly for me. I only really have energy and good concentration late at night. Fortunately, it's the same with Timon, we hardly have to coordinate anything.

Working in harmony with your own biorhythm

Of course, I could also get up between 7 and 8 a.m. and try to plan my day according to this rhythm. But experience has shown that this is a waste of time (at least for me). I now know my productive times very well. I can only recommend everyone to get to know themselves

well and find out what makes their internal clock tick. It can be different for everyone.

Sometimes I manage the same amount of work in 3-4 hours in the evening that I used to manage in an 8-hour day at my job.

There are days when I really can't get anything done. Something goes wrong in my routine in the morning and the rest of the day is a drama: a bad mood, no concentration, lots of annoying calls and frustration at the end of the day because I'm aware of the fact that I'm not earning any money this way. This can easily go on for several days/weeks (!) at a time and sometimes I feel like a useless heap of misery.

The matter of personal responsibility

Timon and I are responsible for covering the running costs every month. Even if we're not constantly receiving new work. You have to keep up to date with the latest developments in order to be able to offer your customers the greatest possible benefit. Such further training must be firmly planned into the annual budget because it can cost hundreds to thousands of euros. We also have to make sure that we stay in dialog with others, because it's easy to get bogged down on your own and you lack the creative input and perspectives of others. You also learn to do without some things at the beginning, e.g. pocket money for shopping trips or restaurant visits, a vacation or even a car. But in return, we determine our own daily routine and that is worth so much more to us!

Self-employment in general already requires a lot of personal responsibility. But a typical working day in the home office adds a little extra to the whole thing: If you work from home, you have to be highly organized. Living into the day without a plan is impossible and jeopardizes your own existence. There is no one to keep you focused and politely remind you of your duties.

So much for the pyjama fairy tale and living La Dolce Vita. Nevertheless, I would never want to swap and I really enjoy my freedom!

6. Lesson 5: Navigating organizational culture in a hybrid environment

6.1. Introduction

At a time when technological advances are overcoming physical distances and fundamentally changing the way work is organized, the question arises: How can organizational culture, once so closely linked to shared physical spaces, still act as a unifying element within companies today? The core of this chapter revolves around the dynamics of hybrid work environments and their impact on organizational culture, specifically in relation to the human resource management of SMEs.

The world of work is constantly changing, and the hybrid working environment - a mixture of face-to-face and remote working - is a phenomenon that reflects these changes particularly clearly. Digitalization, reinforced by unexpected events such as the global pandemic, has accelerated the implementation of hybrid models, fundamentally changing the way we think about work, collaboration and corporate culture.

This chapter aims to thoroughly analyze the interrelationships between hybrid work environments and organizational culture. It examines the specific challenges that arise for HR management and how these can be overcome. In addition, strategies are developed that enable HR management teams in SMEs to take advantage of emerging opportunities and maintain or promote a cohesive organizational culture.

The structure of this chapter follows a logical and structured path. Following this introduction, the second chapter examines the fundamentals of organizational culture and presents various models and theories. Chapter three is dedicated to the transformation to hybrid working models and discusses the associated challenges and opportunities. The fourth chapter focuses on practical examples that are used to critically question and analyze the previously discussed concepts. The chapter concludes with a summarizing fifth chapter that reflects on the insights gained and facilitates the transfer to the practice of HR management in SMEs.

6.2 What does organizational culture mean?

Hybridity acts as a driving force of cultural change in modern working environments. It not only influences the physical presence and virtual networking in SMEs, but also has a lasting impact on their cultural framework. In this context, the question arises as to how this new form of work organization influences traditional social structures and normative convictions. Herget (2021) describes hybrid corporate cultures as the combination of traditional and digital elements, which indicates a fundamental change in the way people work. With the increasing reliance on digital networking, physical encounters are becoming a purposeful and less frequent event, inevitably changing the way intra-organizational relationships are built and maintained.

The fusion of physical and digital interaction brings with it a new type of sociodynamics. The combination of traditional face-to-face contacts and virtual communication channels leads to a redefined social interaction (Herget, 2021). This fusion makes it necessary to rethink and adapt traditional practices so that they function appropriately in a hybrid context. It is crucial that space is created for new, digital customs and rituals that meet the changing needs and habits of organizational members while preserving the core of the organizational culture.

The digitalization of communication opens up new avenues, but also poses the challenge that traditional communication channels may lose relevance or have to be reinterpreted. Hittinger and Preßl (2023) address the fact that the hybrid way of working restricts informal communication and can therefore potentially lead to a weakening of the organizational culture. Strategic approaches are needed to ensure that both effectiveness and humanity are preserved in communication and to maintain a cohesive culture in a digitally dominated world.

The analysis of organizational identity in the context of hybrid work focuses on the changing image of the "we" in SMEs. Herget (2021) argues that hybrid work models not only influence the understanding of individual roles, but can also affect the collective level and thus redefine the entire value system of an organization. This change requires conscious reflection and possibly a reformulation of what the organization is and what it stands for.

In a world where tradition meets digital innovation, companies face the challenge of reconciling these two seemingly opposing forces. As Herget (2021) points out, this fusion is both a source of synergy and an arena for potential tensions. The harmonization of the tried and tested and progressive approaches leads to a hybrid corporate culture that offers both stability through its continuous elements and dynamism through its innovative aspects. The ability of organizations to understand and use these synergy effects as a potential for increasing their own innovative strength plays a particularly important role.

The simultaneous presence of continuity and change within hybrid work environments must

be understood as a natural part of organizational reality. Traditional values provide orientation and stability in times of change, while digital innovations provide the necessary flexibility and adaptability to cope with external changes (Herget, 2021). Managing this tension requires managers to have both a deep understanding of the historical roots of organizational culture and an awareness of the need to constantly evolve.

Hybrid work focuses not only on the physical framework conditions of collaboration, but also on the role of managers and their influence on the organizational culture. As the Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies (CAHRS) explains, it is the leaders who significantly shape the corporate culture through their role model function and their decisions. This includes both communicating and actively shaping the organizational culture in an environment that grants employees autonomy on the one hand and maintains a strong sense of belonging on the other. The challenge lies in finding a balanced mix that harmonizes both aspects.

To achieve this goal, HR managers should place a particular focus on building trust and encouraging ownership. By instilling a consistent, organization-wide culture, employees can be encouraged to proactively engage and take responsibility for their own tasks and for the organization as a whole (The Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies CAHRS, 2023). The conscious use of technology and the development of a specific online identity play a decisive role here.

When dealing with teaching skills in hybrid working environments, it is essential to include the digital transformation of corporate learning. Jüster and Müller (2022) emphasize that digital media and platforms are not only of central importance for the transfer of specialist knowledge, but also for cultural competence. Learning opportunities must be designed in such a way that they integrate both physical and digital realities into the learning process and thus adequately reflect the cultural aspects of the organization. It is important to note that an excessive focus on digital methods must not lead to the loss of traditional forms of learning and teaching, which can still make a valuable contribution to employee development and retention.

In conclusion, it can be said that an in-depth examination of the various facets of hybrid organizational cultures is not only important for understanding the current world of work, but also has key implications for the strategic orientation of political organizations. The discussion and further development of the concept of hybridity therefore offers important starting points for future research and practice.

6.3 How can corporate culture be changed through remote working?

The shaping of working relationships in a hybrid environment begins with the adaptation of management styles, which significantly shape the corporate culture of SMEs. In the hybrid working environment, a shift towards trust-based leadership can be observed, which includes both physical presence and virtual presence (Garus et al., n.d.). The challenge for leaders is to find the right balance between granting autonomy and maintaining strategic direction. Too much control can undermine the benefits of hybrid working, while too much freedom can potentially lead to an erosion of cultural values. It is therefore crucial that teams receive both physical and virtual support from their leaders, which in turn requires ongoing communication and transparent communication of organizational goals.

It is also important to inspire and motivate employees from a distance. Technological tools such as online platforms can be used to create an inspiring virtual presence and thus promote team engagement. However, simply providing tools is not enough. Rather, an organizational culture must be created that encourages employees to use these tools in a way that supports both individual and collective goals. Studies suggest that productive exchange is best fostered through a combination of technological and personal forms of interaction (Garus et al., n.d.).

In order to promote self-management and initiative, structures must be provided that give employees more freedom within a defined framework. This can be achieved, for example, through target agreements that allow freedom for individual approaches but still clearly define the results to be achieved. The challenge is to provide employees with sufficient guidance without restricting their personal responsibility. A culture that rewards initiative but also offers support in the face of challenges can prove to be particularly effective (Author, 2023).

Clear communication of corporate goals and values is particularly important in a hybrid world. Physical distance must not lead to employees distancing themselves from the corporate culture. Ways must be found to ensure that everyone, regardless of where they work, shares a common understanding of the organization's goals and values. Digital communication platforms must be designed in such a way that they not only enable the transfer of information, but also promote cultural exchange and the formation of a common identity.

The design and use of digital tools for cultural mediation, such as task managers and video conferencing software, are crucial for effective collaboration in hybrid teams (Garus et al., n.d.). However, these technologies must be critically examined to determine whether they actually strengthen the corporate culture or may unintentionally lead to fragmentation. The use of such tools is valuable when they address both operational workflows and informal social interaction and thus strengthen cohesion within the organization.

However, organizational culture cannot be based on digital technologies alone, but must be promoted through organizational adaptations. Maintaining rituals and traditions, even if they have to take place in virtual form, is important for the continuity of cultural identity. It is important that traditional practices are adapted so that they retain their value in a hybrid context (Herget, 2021). Similarly, virtual team building activities and effective communication channels should be created that proactively contribute to networking and exchange within the organization.

Finally, physical space design also plays a key role in organizational culture. Despite the increase in remote working, office environments remain important places to meet and collaborate. The design of office spaces that offer retreats for concentrated work as well as areas for social interaction and collaborative work reflects the values of a hybrid culture and can strengthen identification with the organization. The physical space must be just as flexible and dynamic as the working models themselves (Gauer, 2024).

6.4 Practical examples

In the hybrid working world, it is important to promote employee loyalty and satisfaction through targeted measures. According to Cloots (2022), flexible working hours and locations can significantly increase employee retention. By combining on-site and remote working, it is possible to create an optimal working environment that meets both the needs of employees and the goals of the company. In order to fully exploit the potential of hybrid models, the individual needs and preferences of employees should be aligned with organizational requirements.

Another challenge is the task of increasing autonomy in the workplace without losing sight of coherence and solidarity in the pursuit of common goals. The individual adaptation of work activities and responsibilities not only promotes employees' identification with their work, but also contributes to the overall effectiveness of organizations.

When designing innovative onboarding processes in hybrid working environments, communicating the corporate culture plays a key role. Strategies that take into account both physical and virtual elements of onboarding can facilitate the introduction of new employees to the organization and strengthen their identification with the company (Singer, Jahr). Sponsorship programs and regular feedback are key components in making the corporate culture tangible and promoting a sense of belonging.

Adapting office infrastructures to hybrid working methods opens up opportunities to actively shape corporate culture. Gauer (2024) emphasizes that well-designed office concepts can have a positive impact on both collaboration and individual productivity. The physical office

environment should therefore be designed to support both individual and team work while reflecting the values of the organization.

Finally, it is important to reflect on the role of the digital transformation of corporate learning for the corporate culture. Online learning formats not only enable the continuous professional development of employees, but also help to shape the cultural identity of an organization (Jüster & Müller, 2022). Individually tailored training courses that convey both specialist knowledge and company-specific values can help employees to consolidate their role in the organization and at the same time contribute to the dissemination and deepening of the organizational culture.

6.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to examine the interactions between hybrid work environments and organizational culture in SMEs. The focus was on the challenges faced by HR management teams and the opportunities that arise from hybrid working models for shaping and maintaining a cohesive organizational culture.

The chapter first explained the basis of organizational culture and presented various models and theories. It was shown that hybrid working environments can both transform traditional cultural frameworks and create new identities. The analysis made it clear that managers play a central role in developing and communicating a hybrid organizational culture that strengthens both personal autonomy and a sense of belonging in virtual teams.

The transformation and adaptation of leadership styles in the context of remote work were also discussed. It was found that hybrid work environments require a realignment of leadership strategies to establish a trust-based leadership culture. The implementation of digital tools to support communication and collaboration was identified as crucial for maintaining the corporate culture. It was also highlighted that organizational adjustments such as maintaining rituals and virtual team building activities are conducive to cultural cohesion.

Practical examples were used to demonstrate the effectiveness of hybrid working models in promoting employee retention and satisfaction. Particular emphasis was placed on onboarding strategies that combine physical and virtual elements, as well as the strategic adaptation of office infrastructures to support different types of work. Also reflected was the digital transformation of corporate learning, which enables flexible and continuous skills development while helping to spread and consolidate the organizational culture.

The integration of hybrid working models in SMEs shows that this brings both opportunities

and challenges. The insights gained fit into existing theoretical approaches, but also broaden the understanding of the practical implications of these models. In particular, the balance between autonomy and leadership as well as the importance of digital tools and physical spaces for organizational culture were outlined.

In summary, this chapter shows that the hybrid work environment has a significant impact on organizational culture. By adapting leadership styles, utilizing digital tools and structurally designing physical and virtual spaces, HR management teams in SMEs can successfully overcome the challenges of hybrid work models and take advantage of additional opportunities. The insights gained help to develop a deeper understanding of the dynamics of hybrid working environments and to derive practical recommendations for action.

5 tips for successful remote team building

<https://www.raab-verlag.at/magazin/teambuilding-homeoffice/#:~:text=Rituals%20and%20traditions%20are%20important%20in%20the%20B%C3%BCro%20all%C3%A4rtig%20>

Working from home is now standard for many companies. No annoying phone calls, short commutes and comfortable jogging bottoms - working from home has a number of advantages for employees. On the other hand, the social component is often neglected. While lunch together in the office or a quick chat before the end of the working day are the order of the day, personal contact is missing in many places when working from home - to the detriment of team spirit.

The good news: you can do something about it! The following five tips will help you to successfully implement remote team building, improve collaboration and strengthen the sense of unity.

1. Maintain rituals virtually as well

Rituals and traditions are important - especially when working from home. So actively and regularly establish contact between your colleagues. Because one thing is clear: as many positive aspects as working from home has, there is still a lack of social routines that are omnipresent in the office.

With these ideas, you can also promote team spirit digitally:

Weekly meetings: Get together virtually once a week for a meeting in which the entire team is present. **Important:** There should be a fixed time frame for the meeting. Monday is a good time, for example, as this is the best time to discuss the goals and tasks for the coming week.

The company kitchen: Have you often taken lunch breaks together as a team? No reason to

stop doing this now when working from home. Simply start a video conference several times a week at lunchtime and anyone who wants to can join in. This way, you can chat with your colleagues during lunch as usual.

The team get-together: Yes, of course, going out for a meal together or trying out the latest bar around the corner would probably be more fun. But you can also have a beer together via video conference. The only rule: don't talk about work!

The shared playlist: Is the radio or your favorite Spotify playlist often playing in your office? Then now is the right time to create your own company work playlist. You can invite all your colleagues to add their own songs and you'll have a shared office soundtrack.

Digital table football: Many companies have table football, a table tennis table or other gadgets that employees can use to clear their heads. You and your team don't have to do without this when working from home. There are numerous online mini-games in which you can compete against each other. This takes the stressful daily routine out of the equation for a moment, promotes team spirit and allows you to continue working with renewed energy afterwards.

A lunch break with colleagues is also possible when working from home.

Tip: To ensure that working from home works well, it makes sense to define a period of time during which all employees can be reached. It is also important that availability is communicated, for example with a well-maintained calendar or via a constantly updated status in your communication tool.

2. Celebrate the everyday highlights

A dissatisfied customer here, a technical problem there - there are always hurdles in everyday home office life. We suggest: Pay more attention to the everyday highlights in the team. Use your weekly video conference, for example. All colleagues can share their highlight from the past week and be celebrated by the others. This not only has the advantage that everyone hears and sees each other at least once a week, but also that your team remembers the positive events.

Tip: Show appreciation to your employees working from home to motivate them. One option: design motivational cards for your team for everyday working from home. With our configurator, you can easily add a motivational saying and a beautiful photo to our blank cards and send positive thoughts straight home.

3. Value personal contact

Personal communication is the be-all and end-all for successful team building in the home office. If all conversations take place via email, it quickly becomes impersonal. This is where internal communication tools can help. Chat functions make it easier to hold conversations on a relaxed level. You can also leave work to one side here: Ask how your colleagues are doing or chat about music, hobbies and the like in group chats.

But there is a catch: text messages cannot convey gestures or facial expressions. It is therefore essential that you also communicate regularly via video chat. This is especially true when it comes to important topics such as feedback meetings.

Tip: Stand-up meetings are also a good idea for team building when working from home. These are short video chat meetings of no more than 15 minutes - standing up if possible. Hold these meetings every morning, for example, to discuss completed and upcoming tasks and possible challenges as a team.

4. Throw a digital party in your home office

Birthdays, company anniversaries or first days - there are many occasions to celebrate while working from home. With video service providers such as Slack, Zoom or Teams, you can convene a video conference and get things started together.

If the party concerns a colleague, it is best not to officially announce the party to the person, but to surprise him or her. Simply send a date on a general topic to the whole team. This serves as a pretext for the actual party. Inform all other colleagues. If you are celebrating a virtual birthday, for example, they can decorate the workplace, put on a party hat or hang up a garland of congratulations. When the person then joins in, it's time to cheer and celebrate! Or how about a joint games evening and other events? With creative games, you can ensure that your employees get to know each other better and promote team building in the home office. We have collected some ideas for you:

Virtual cooking evening: All participants receive a package of ingredients by post in advance. You then organize a digital cooking evening via video conference. You prepare a first-class menu together and enjoy a fun evening.

Two truths, one lie: Each person gives three pieces of information about themselves, including two truths and one lie. The other players have to find out which statement was a lie. The advantage: the game is ideal for virtual meetings and events.

Digital escape room: This popular activity for team events can also be implemented in a digital space. If you search the internet, you will quickly come across providers who offer online escape rooms for companies.

Speed dating: A virtual game to get to know the other team members better. Pairs or groups

are randomly assigned to different meeting rooms. They now have a certain amount of time to talk about personal topics. Tip: Prepare questions or topics to facilitate the flow of conversation.

Painting with a difference: One person describes a picture that the others have to paint (without seeing it themselves). Fun works of art are guaranteed with this game!

5. Send greeting cards and gifts.

Show your employees that they are important to you - even when they are not working in the office. For example, send an individual greetings card when a team member in the home office has a birthday or company anniversary. Because one thing is certain: a card in the letterbox is definitely more personal than any email and makes for a happy surprise.

Team building in the home office pays off!

As you can see: Team building in the home office is not that difficult - and it pays off. With well thought-out measures, you can not only strengthen team spirit, but also motivate your employees working from home. There are many ways to promote personal interaction and have a good time together despite the distance.

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Additional Material

Article/Video	Name	Link
Article	Is Hybrid Work the Best of Both Worlds? Evidence from a Field Experiment	Is Hybrid Work the Best of Both Worlds? Evidence from a Field Experiment (hbs.edu)
Article	Homeoffice – Ein arbeitspsychologischer Blick über die Coronakrise hinaus	Homeoffice Wieland Groenewald 2021 .pdf (uni-wuppertal.de)
Article	Hybrid work in Europe: Concept and practice	Hybrid work in Europe: Concept and practice (europa.eu)
Article	Hybrid working has benefits over fully in-person working — evidence mounts	d41586-024-01713-1.pdf (nature.com)
Article	Blending the physical and virtual: a hybrid model for the future of work	PC-Hybrid-work.pdf (bruegel.org)
Article	A hybrid workplace guide	A hybrid workplace guide (kpmg.com)
Article	Hybrid Work Is the New Remote Work	Hybrid Work is the New Remote Work (bcg.com)
Article	HYBRID WORKING Practical Guidance	Effective hybrid working (cipd.org)
Article	MAKING HYBRID WORK HUMAN	El GoogleWorkspace ExecutiveSummary.pdf (economist.com)

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Article	Employees are ready for hybrid work, are you?	<u>cisco-global-hybrid-work-study-2022</u>
Article	How Google is doing Hybrid Work	<u>how google does hybrid work.pdf</u>
Article	Hybrid working Shifting to the new norma	<u>ey-hybrid-working-report.pdf</u>
Article	Microsoft New Future of Work Report 2022	<u>Microsoft-New-Future-Of-Work-Report-2022.pdf</u>
Article	How to Manage a Hybrid Team	<u>How to Manage a Hybrid Team (harvardbusiness.org)</u>
Video	Hybrid work- Pros and Cons	<u>Hybrid Working: Pros and Cons (youtube.com)</u>
Video	Defining Hybrid Work - Is this what the Future of work Flexibility looks like?	<u>Defining Hybrid Work - Is this what the Future of work Flexibility looks like? - Running Remote (youtube.com)</u>