

Adapting Workspaces and Prioritizing Culture for Hybrid Work

A strong and adaptive company culture is essential for employee and customer engagement—and possibly for your company's survival. After all, your company culture is your DNA.

Company culture thrives when employees are in the workspace. As employees start returning to the office, some will come back full-time, others part-time. In this new reality, companies must cater to a variety of new, postpandemic-related needs, including enhanced health and safety protocols and better spaces for collaboration.

As companies move ahead with these important changes and begin reconfiguring their spaces, they will focus on three key pillars: safety, collaboration, and space optimization, according to a new study from IDG and Panduit.

The importance of company culture

Preserving company culture is key. It's essential to keeping employees engaged, it helps ensure productivity, and it can be a major draw for job seekers. Research also shows that a solid company culture can equal better business results. According to [one study](#), companies with aligned, adaptive cultures—where it's possible to quickly innovate and pursue new opportunities—earned 15% more in annual revenue than companies in the same industry with a less adaptable culture.

At the same time, the pandemic has proven that remote workers are productive, and working remotely often enables a better balance between work life and personal life. This is leading companies to adopt a hybrid approach moving forward, where employees can split their time between working in the office and at home, if desired.



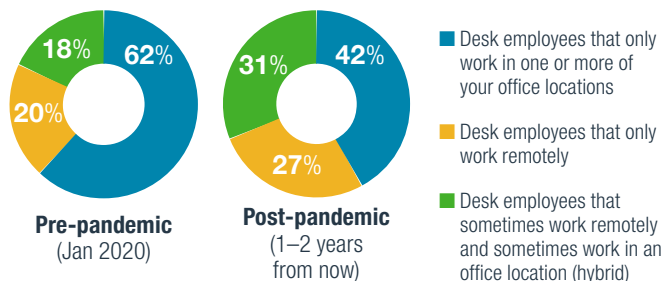
According to the IDG survey, the number of desk employees working in a hybrid capacity is expected to grow postpandemic: 31% of employees will have a hybrid work schedule, up from 18% in January 2020. On average, 27% expect to be fully remote, up slightly from the prepandemic average, 20%. (See [chart](#), next page).

The survey also showed that 90% of employees miss the office and that 94% want to spend at least one day a week in the physical location. Leaders recognize this, and many are planning to have employees back in person by year-end. Those leaders understand that culture can be challenging to develop over Webex, Teams, or Zoom and that it's more quickly and deeply cultivated within the four walls of an office. In [one survey of CEOs, HR executives, and finance leaders](#), 70% of the respondents reported that they plan to have employees in the office again by the fall.

Three key areas of focus

Whether people are in the office five or two days a week, forward-looking business leaders are funneling their resources into enhancing three key pillars: health and safety, space optimization, and collaboration.

Hybrid Work Style Growing in Popularity



Source: IDG

■ Employee health and safety

More than a year into the pandemic, 68% of the respondents cited health and safety as a top consideration for workplaces. Companies want to help keep COVID-19—and other illnesses—out of the office and are looking to implement streamlined procedures for when someone becomes sick.

■ Space optimization

For 48% of those surveyed, figuring out how to make the best use of existing physical space is important. At the same time, 48% want to modernize their office, incorporating the best technology.

■ Seamless collaboration

Finally, enabling seamless collaboration between remote and in-office teams is essential for 37% of the respondents as leaders work to connect the two types of teams.

Putting a plan into action

Companies making changes are instituting a variety of structural changes to keep employees safe:

- **80%** are either planning to expand or considering expanding existing office space by moving to multiple floors or a neighboring suite.
- **71%** will adapt their current space by building more conference rooms, training rooms, or huddle spaces to allow for physical distancing.
- **70%** will expand the size of existing meeting rooms to allow for distancing or to accommodate new technology, including more AV equipment.
- **63%** will create new hoteling areas for employees—spots where they can easily plug in and work on-site.
- **41%** will renovate lobbies or waiting areas.
- **21%** plan to move to an entirely new office space.

The technology investment

As companies make these structural changes, they will need new technological solutions. Of those surveyed, 73% need technologies and capabilities to support physical security, including access control and security cameras, and 72% will need health and wellness tech such as temperature tracking, contact tracing, and clean air circulation.

To further support health and wellness, 69% will need digital signage to better communicate with employees and 61% will require touch-free tech to help staff members work together with ease. This might include motion-, voice-, or QR-code-activated appliances, sinks, sanitation equipment, elevators, lights, and even blinds.

To enhance collaboration, space planners should focus on these important features in meeting and training rooms and other collaboration spaces:

- **Easy-to-use equipment** that supports bring-your-own-device and touch-free operation so participants can share information from any device without needing to disinfect between uses
- **Dual screens** to allow off-site participants to join a discussion
- **Touch-free options** for AV and HVAC equipment
- **Adequate wireless connectivity** to support multiple connected devices for everyone in the room

Other collaboration-related technology needs include room-scheduling systems (54%); AV equipment such as AV extension and control; displays, sound systems, and cameras (46%); and digital whiteboards (42%).

The bottom line

All of this new technology requires a robust infrastructure to support it—and most companies (63%) expect to have adequate investment funds to upgrade infrastructure over the next 12 months. Regardless of the return-to-work strategy or the percentage of employees at home versus in the office, a robust physical infrastructure that utilizes these technologies and supports collaboration, safety, and space optimization is key.

Panduit and Atlona are trusted partners that can help you accommodate the hybrid work model while still maintaining a strong company culture. Visit www.panduit.com/newoffice.