



5 Key Steps for Hybrid Work Policy Implementation

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Introduction

So, your organization is ready to hop on the hybrid work trend. But from coordinating employees to maintaining culture, you might be wondering where to start.

Work dynamics are rapidly evolving and hybrid work policy implementation has become paramount for organizations striving to strike the right balance between flexibility and productivity. It offers the benefits of both in-office collaboration and remote flexibility, but its successful execution requires careful planning and clear communication. A hybrid work policy delineates the rules and guidelines that define how a company operates in a flexible work environment.

As companies embrace hybrid models, it's crucial to recognize that there's no one-size-fits-all solution. Each organization must tailor its hybrid work policy to accommodate the unique needs and objectives of both its employees and the broader company.

This ebook outlines five key steps to effectively implement a hybrid work policy, shedding light on the importance of setting clear expectations and nurturing company culture, and harnessing technology to create a positive employee experience. By following these steps, organizations can pave the way for a harmonious blend of remote and in-person work, ultimately enhancing productivity, employee satisfaction, and overall success.



What is a hybrid work policy?

A hybrid work policy is the rules, expectations, and guidelines that a company communicates when employing a hybrid model. For companies working in a flexible way, some structure is needed to keep employees on track and accountable. Not every hybrid policy is created equally and must be adapted on a company-by-company basis to meet certain needs and requirements of both employees and the organization as a whole.

In its simplest form, a hybrid work policy states how often employees need to come into the office and how many days they can work from home. In some cases, there are anchor days where everyone is required to be in. Other companies choose to go with an even more flexible approach, allowing individuals to choose where they want to work on a daily basis. As you can imagine, a setup of this sort can get extremely complicated, as keeping track of team members and finding time for collaboration can become increasingly difficult.



A layer of complexity is also added when taking into account cross-functional tasks. For some teams, being in the office most days is crucial for productivity. In contrast, working from home is required for other teams to maintain focus on highly-complex work. So, to create a successful hybrid policy, leaders must consider how it would affect each individual team within the organization.

To ensure that teamwork is taking place when needed, hybrid policies should outline employees' responsibilities in terms of scheduling in-person and online meetings. Additionally, they should provide a clear process for planning in-office and at-home days as well as guidelines for communicating with the rest of the hybrid team.

All of this needs to be done with one main goal in mind – creating a positive employee experience. While hybrid work inevitably improves your bottom line and your team's productivity, being employee-centric is truly the key to success. With this lens on your hybrid policy, you can create a workplace that is not only cost-efficient and productive, but also one with a fantastic culture that inspires your employees and boosts collaboration.

Why a hybrid work policy is essential for your team?

It sets clear expectations

Without a clear structure in place, employees would not know how many times they actually need to be in the office. Some companies choose a remote-first model which means most days are spent working from home with the occasional day in the office. Other companies set anchor days or expect employees to be in three to four times a week. To ensure employees know what is expected of them, the policy needs to outline it. The more clearly they are communicated, the more organized and productive your team will be.

Flexibility is more productive when it is well-coordinated

A hybrid policy is essential because research shows that coordinated work is not only more productive than un-coordinated hybrid work but it also has a positive effect on employee happiness. This is not a surprise as it allows for greater autonomy as well as better work-life balance. Our deskbird research found that coordinated hybrid work improves productivity by around 20% on average per week and increases happiness by up to 40% compared to an uncoordinated model. This equates to up to a day of productivity each week for your team. For reference, we found that productivity and happiness is maximized between two to three days of remote work, just in case you wanted to include that in your hybrid work policy!



It has an effect on company culture

Poor organization is a major point of frustration for many employees. Without policies clearly outlined, expectations can get muddled and make it difficult for your team to know how to act. Therefore, to maintain a positive culture, having a guideline for employees to follow is key. It helps them understand how they need to act and also improves workplace connection by ensuring team members meet in person.

It affects future hires

Hybrid work is taking over the working world and many companies can either get flexible or get left behind. Employee expectations have simply changed. They want the flexibility and autonomy of being able to choose to work from home. Many of us are tired of long commutes and have found that many tasks are actually done more efficiently from the comfort of our own homes. So implementing a hybrid work policy is not only about keeping current employees happy but also about attracting strong new hires.



Steps for implementing a hybrid work policy

Define why you are going hybrid

There could be many reasons for making the transition to hybrid, from cost savings to sustainability to employee experience. Whatever those reasons are, it is important to share them with your employees. Since this transition requires a change of behavior from your team, it is important to provide as much transparency as possible. Therefore, the first step when implementing such a policy is to define “Why” you are doing so and communicate it clearly.

Set expectations and guidelines for every employee

Once the “why” has been defined and clarified, it is time to outline the actual guidelines that will be implemented. While this varies by organization, some examples of expectations to set are how many days employees will need to be in the office, how they need to schedule these days, and what technology they should be using when working from home. It is important to note that their expectations can also vary from team to team depending on the tasks at hand.

Communicate your plan clearly and with great detail

After outlining specific guidelines, weekly schedules, and planning methods, leaders must communicate these policies to their team. A great way of doing this is by making a digital hybrid work handbook that goes into detail about the policy. This can be shared with new hires so they know what is expected when they begin working. Or, if the company is transitioning from a fully remote or fully in-office to a hybrid model, the handbook should be distributed to existing team members. However, holding an initial meeting to provide context and answer questions will help humanize the decision.



Get feedback from your team

It is important to make these decisions with employee wellbeing and productivity as the first priority. Hybrid work policies directly impact how people work and how their day to day work life looks. Therefore, gathering feedback from your team is crucial not only so that they feel heard but also to create a policy that truly fulfills their needs. What resources do they need to manage this flexible model? How many days in the office is optimal for their individual and team performance? Getting answers to these questions helps guide decision-making.

Use technology to guide implementation

With hybrid becoming an increasingly popular model, great technology has emerged to aid in coordinating a distributed team. Communication tools play a central role in a successful remote work environment, as asynchronous in-person communication is lost when each person works from a different place, or even a different time zone. Tools that mimic this communication, like video conferencing or chatting platforms (ex: Slack) ensure messages are sent and received efficiently. Additionally, in flexible workplaces, employees need to know when their colleagues are coming in and be able to book rooms and desks in the office to ensure that they get the space and resources they need after making the commute. A desk booking or week planning software is perfect to help tackle these management challenges.

Collect workplace data

Finally, once the policy has been implemented, gather data and feedback to see what is working and what isn't. For example, space utilization data will help determine how much of the office is being used and which types of spaces are being used most. This helps with adapting the policy in the future as well as reducing rental costs if the space is not being fully utilized. From an employee lens, productivity and general employee satisfaction can also be measured to see if the new model is having a positive or negative impact.



Conclusion

Adopting a hybrid work policy is a strategic move that can guide organizations successfully as the future of work evolves. In an environment characterized by rapid change and heightened employee expectations, a well-thought-out and effectively implemented hybrid work policy can serve as a guide.

As we've explored in this article, the journey toward implementing a hybrid work policy involves a series of critical steps, from defining the "why" behind the transition to gathering feedback from the very people it impacts—your employees. By embracing this approach and using technology to facilitate collaboration, companies can ensure their employees thrive in a work environment that offers both flexibility and structure.

Furthermore, it's important to recognize that a successful hybrid work policy is not just about boosting productivity and reducing costs; it's about creating a workplace culture that inspires and nurtures employees. It's about adapting to the evolving expectations of current and future talent, attracting top talent, and retaining the best team members. In conclusion, a well-implemented hybrid work policy has the power to revolutionize the way organizations operate. By focusing on clear communication, employee coordination, and harnessing the right technologies, companies can create a workplace that is not only efficient but also empowers and motivates their teams, setting the stage for a bright and adaptable future.



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