



# The Future of Work

## Engaging A Hybrid Workforce



The year 2020 changed work forever, impacting every person and organisation across the globe. We know two things for sure: flexible work is here to stay and the talent landscape has fundamentally shifted.

Remote work has created new job opportunities for some, offered more family time, and provided options for whether or when to commute. But there are new challenges ahead. Teams have become more siloed and digital exhaustion is a real and unsustainable threat. Organisations need to be focused on creating a workplace where everyone can thrive.

## 7 Key Trends Shaping 2021

### 1. Flexible work is here to stay

- Ensure that employees are given the flexibility to work when and where they want.
- Give everyone the tools they need to equally contribute from anywhere.

### 2. Leaders must continue to practice empathy

- Gen Z, women, frontline workers, and those new to their careers reported struggling the most over 2020.
- Leaders must remain mindful of the stresses being placed on employees.

### 3. High productivity is masking an exhausted workforce

- The exhaustion we're feeling can be blamed on the speed and urgency of virtual work.
- Technology can create digital static: *"the gap between what you try to communicate online and what the person receiving the message understands."*  
As digital static increases, so does employee fatigue, anxiety, and burnout rates — while motivation and engagement decline.

### 4. GenZ is at risk and will need to be re-energized

- Gen Z (those between the ages of 18 – 25) are suffering/struggling.
- This generation is more likely to be single and early in career, making them more likely to feel the impact of isolation, struggle with motivation at work, and lack the financial means to create proper workplaces at home.

### 5. Shrinking networks are endangering innovation

- As companies balance a mix of in-person and remote teams, it will be important to remember that remote work makes for more siloed teams.
- Leaders must look for ways to foster the social capital, cross-team collaboration, and spontaneous idea sharing that's driven workplace innovation for decades.

### 6. Authenticity will spur productivity and wellbeing

- Before the pandemic, we encouraged people to 'bring their whole self to work,' but it was tough to truly empower them to do that.
- The shared vulnerability of this time has given us a huge opportunity to bring real authenticity to company culture and transform work for the better.

### 7. Talent is everywhere in a hybrid work world

Organisations will be able to hire the best and brightest from around the world, while people broaden their career and economic possibilities without compromising wellbeing and family priorities.

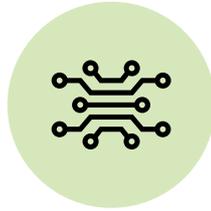
## What does it really mean to work from anywhere?

Each company will ultimately have to determine the details of their work from anywhere strategy based on their business needs. They will also have to consider the preferences of workers, who tend to value flexibility over an all-or-nothing approach and show a desire to spend at least some time in the office.

### Consider:



**Industry and role type**  
(e.g., manufacturing and healthcare vs finance)



**Technology**  
(a secure virtual environment must be in place)



**Company culture**  
(certain companies will demand workers to be in person)



**Individual circumstances**  
(it may be challenging for employees to be effective with competing priorities vying for attention)

## Questions that you can ask to guide your decision making – the 5Ts:



### Task

What does an individual need to accomplish in his/her role?



### Type

What is the optimal working style for this role and individual collaboration?



### Time

How long to tasks take to complete? How do time-zones play a role?



### Tools

What resources does the employee need to complete his or her tasks?



### Tech

What core, enabling and infrastructure technologies are necessary for employees to perform these tasks at a high level remotely?

## How can you keep remote and in-person employees engaged?

### Create a plan to empower people for flexibility

The decisions leaders make today will impact organizations for years to come. Every organisation will need a plan that puts people at the centre and encompasses:

- Policy: be clear about the guidelines
- Physical space
- Technology

### Combat digital exhaustion from the top

- As we look to create a better future of work, addressing digital exhaustion must be a priority for leaders everywhere.
- Think about how to introduce more asynchronous collaboration so employees spend less time in unproductive meetings.
- Embrace a culture where breaks are encouraged and respected.

### Invest in space and technology to bridge the physical and digital worlds

- Moving forward, office space needs to bridge the physical and digital worlds to meet the unique needs of every team — and even specific roles.
- Office space no longer stops at the office. It extends to thinking about work from home. Moving forward, companies will need to take more responsibility for employee home offices. This will be essential to making remote workers feel included – particularly for those who are early in their careers, and those with fewer resources.
- Create inclusive meeting experiences – e.g. appointing moderators and facilitators that help ensure that each meeting participant feels included and able to participate as equally as their in-person colleagues.

### Rebuilding social capital is a business imperative

- The first step is reframing team building and bonding from a passive effort to a proactive one. Equally important is expanding our networks which have contracted this year.
- Encourage teams to seek out diverse perspectives from neighbouring teams, share learnings far and wide, and check for groupthink often.
- Higher quality social interactions are essential to high functioning teams and business.

### Rethink employee experience to compete for the best and most diverse talent

If 2020 was the year of the Chief Technology Officer, then 2021 will be the year of the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)

- CHROs face the next great challenge: reimagining hiring, onboarding, and employee wellbeing in a hybrid world.
- Research suggests Gen Z is most at risk. HR leaders should rethink onboarding and double down on support for employees early in their careers to ensure their ideas are heard and that they can contribute fully.
- Managers have an amplified role in supporting new hires and helping them grow their networks. Cohort-based onboarding programs can also be redesigned, for instance, to ensure they foster connection and community in a hybrid work world.



## Need help engaging your workforce?

If we embrace extreme flexibility, follow data insights, and continue listening closely to employee needs, together we can create a better future of work for everyone.

Say [hello@engagemeconsulting.com](mailto:hello@engagemeconsulting.com) for support as we navigate the future together.

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