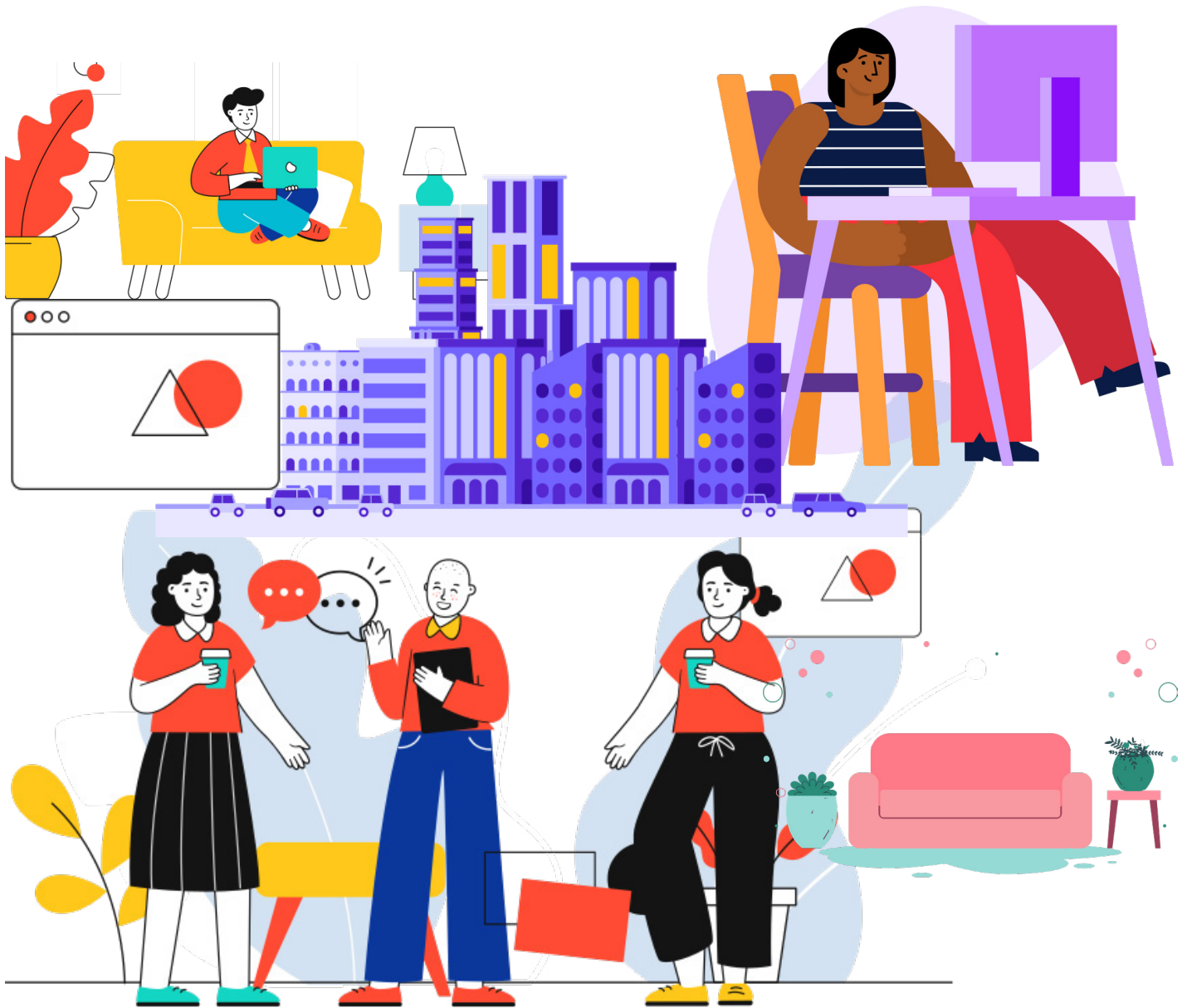


Rethinking Remote Work

What Will A Hybrid Model of Working Look Like?



There is a significant shift in the way professionals feel about remote work; from embracing it and enjoying the flexibility of working from home in the early days of the pandemic to now rethinking its longevity and sustainability. Cracks are beginning to emerge as remote work stretches on and the return to office-life is incalculable.

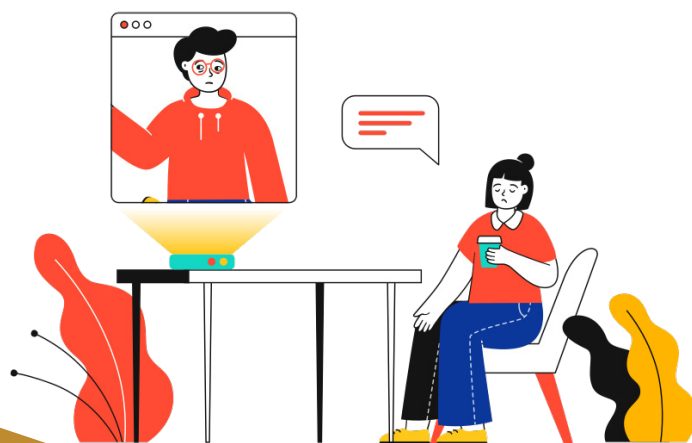
When the pandemic passes, will remote work become the model of choice for organisations, or will traditional offices remain number one, or will a hybrid model of working become the path of the future?

The working from home experiment has stretched on for far longer than everyone had anticipated and the glitter and sparkle surrounding remote work is starting to fade with many employees feeling fatigued.

A 2020 Dexus survey revealed many workers found the initial transition to the virtual workplace easy but as time went by, many were longing to be back at their offices.

The productivity gains experienced early on have started to ease off, professionals are all yearning for social interactions, in-person meetings, and the ease of collaboration that office-life can bring.

Zoom fatigue is real and the effects of the coronavirus and remote working have led to an epidemic of loneliness, anxiety, and overtime.



The Australian Bureau of Statistics Household Impacts Survey revealed, “Loneliness was the most widely reported source of personal stress for Australians during April.”

Organisations working from home are finding that there are:

- Fewer collaboration efforts
- Projects take longer
- Training becomes more difficult
- Integrating new staff is harder
- Teams are less connected
- Individuals are developing their professional skills at a slower rate as they would in an office environment

Individuals working from home are finding that there are:

- Blurred lines between personal and professional life
- Poor schedule and time management
- Feelings of social isolation
- More interruptions and distractions
- Internet connection problems

So, what is the solution to combat these challenges whilst maintaining the advantages of remote work such as no commuting, more autonomous employees, increased employee retention, and the increased flexibility?

Despite popular claims, the office isn't dead.

Google has decided most of its 200,000 workers and contractors should work from home up until June 2021 as a safety measure for the pandemic's potential staying power but will eventually make a return to the office.

After months of remote working, employees have realised working from home is not ideal 100 per cent of the time.

From dealing with kids to technological issues to missing the serendipity of interaction, employees want to make a return to the office to improve their mental health and work efficiency but not necessarily make a return to the pre-pandemic business model where there was less flexibility.

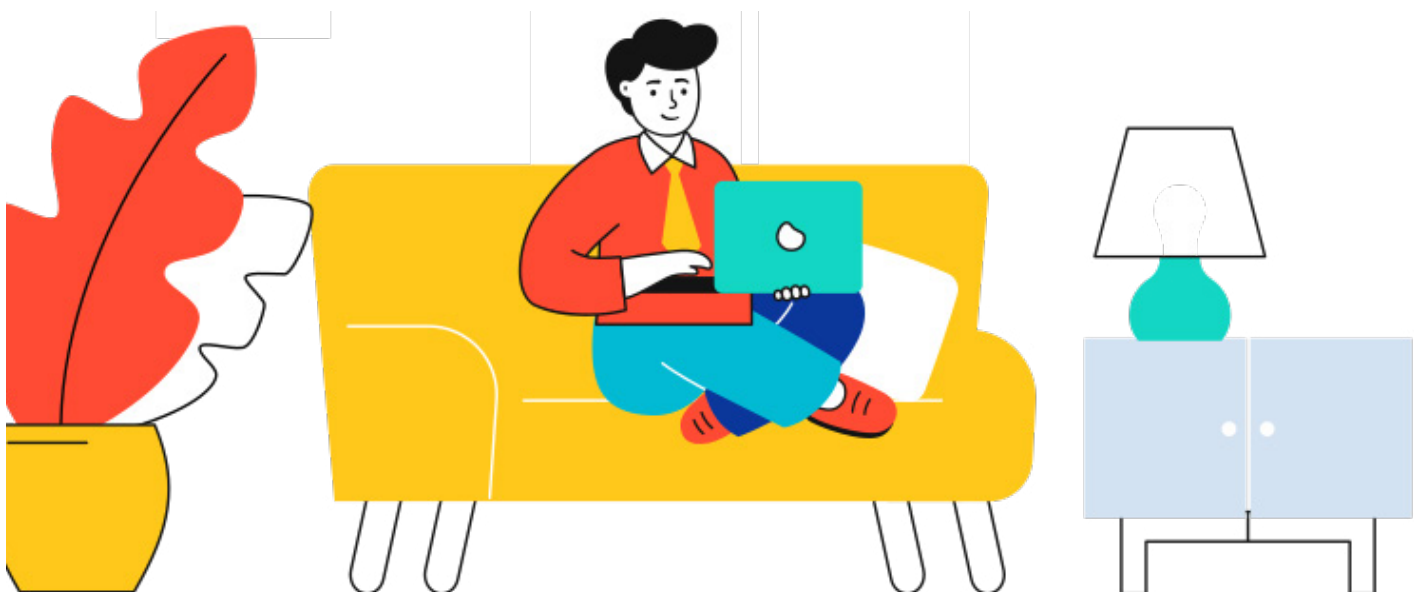
Enter, the hybrid model of working.

Many believe a hybrid model of working with both remote and office working may be the 'goldilocks' solution. Employees may have the option to work in-office some days and remotely other days. This model allows for flexibility, sense of community, and that interaction that people crave.

Rodney Hanratty, Head Human Resources ANZ at Swiss Re supports the hybrid model.

“There are these little moments during the day when they might be 30 seconds or two minutes...there was shared this and shared that. If you take that out, over a year you are losing a lot of knowledge and connectivity, and you don't know what you don't know.”

Numerous workplace surveys reveal that between 60 and 75 per cent of workers and managers expect some level of working from home to become permanent.



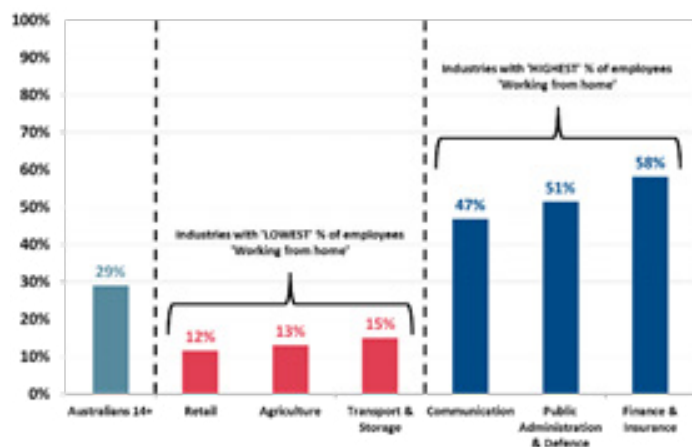
Senior leaders from 10 of the nation's top companies and professional services firms found **three days in the office is likely to become the norm**.

Most staff believe three days in the office will give that flexibility for work-life balance and be enough to maintain the culture, collaboration, and connectedness.

However, the number of days spent in-office or at home will depend on the organisation/self-employed individual.

Employees in the industries of Finance and Insurance, Public Administration and Defence, and Communications may be more likely to adopt the remote working model as these industries had the highest percentage of employees working from home.

Working from home by Industry – Top 3 & Bottom 3



Source: Roy Morgan multi-mode survey of Australians conducted from the weekend of April 17-19, 2020 through to May 29-31, 2020, n=9,905 including 6,637 working Australians. Base: Australians aged 14+.

CEO of Twitter and Square, Jack Dorsey, had announced that all **Twitter and Square employees would be able to work from home permanently, even once offices begin to reopen**.

Whilst working from home was the immediate solution to curve the spread of the coronavirus, business executives and leaders need to deeply reflect on what they want their new work paradigm to achieve in the long run.

Thus, implementing the systems, interfaces, and resources required to meet such objectives is crucial for sustainability.



A common problem for many organisations may be the cost and maintenance of hybrid working.

Is it worth having a traditional office if it will remain largely unoccupied due to staff working from home?

The alternative solution with potential cost savings and all the benefits that an office space brings are flexible workspaces.

Flexible workspaces are short term office leases designed to foster interaction. They have everything set up and managed - from the office fit-outs, internet, printing services, outgoings, office cleaning, and so much more.

They offer different solutions for different needs ranging from private serviced offices, coworking, meeting and training rooms, virtual offices, hot desks, boardrooms, and shared office spaces.

Large corporations, SMEs, startups, and solopreneurs are embracing them with the global flexible workspace market expected to expand at a CAGR of +12% over the forecast period 2020-2026.

There is an upward trend of organisations giving up their traditional office for short term flexible leases.

The \$162-billion Future Fund has taken up space with a flexible workspace provider to ensure appropriate social distancing for its employees and to cater to various project needs.

Misha Baxter, Global General Manager at Victory Offices has seen a surge in demand for flexible workspaces.

“The pandemic has shown a lot of businesses that they don’t need to lock themselves into a commercial lease.”

With a flexible workspace, employees only pay for the space they use and can simply scale up or down according to their business needs.

For example, if a team works remotely most of the week, they could have a smaller office with a rotating roster of employees to come in and collaborate when needed. Additionally, meeting rooms can be booked for hosting interviews or meeting with clients.



Flexible workspaces enhance the new remote working model. It allows employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance and the office environment provides an avenue for better connections, knowledge-sharing, and value creation – something that is often lost in remote working.

COVID-19 has forever changed the way employees work and has revealed the pros and cons of remote work through a forced global experiment.

Business leaders have now been given the opportunity to re-think and re-imagine their workplace paradigm to meet the demands and expectations of their employees.

The future is beginning to consist of a hybrid-style of working and this can be achieved more easily with the adoption of flexible workspaces.