# Investigating the long-term viability of the Hybrid Work Model: A Case of IT companies

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Since the pandemic ended, remote work has grown in popularity, with IT companies leading the way and other organizations following suit. While Covid restrictions are being lifted, offices are planning to reopen in a hybrid mode that combines remote and office. People's enhanced productivity and job satisfaction, as well as their growing comfort level with working remotely, are the main drivers of this shift. The new normal model aims to prioritize employee well-being, mental health, and work-life balance. It also offers benefits such as reduced office space, energy conservation, and increased flexibility for employees. By adopting this model, companies can retain top talent, enhance productivity, foster collaboration, and improve communication.

**Keywords:** *Hybrid Work Model, IT Company, Sustainability, Strategies.*

## 0. INTRODUCTION
## 0.1. HYBRID WORK MODEL

The word 'hybrid' in general means a combination or blend of something. Now the term hybrid work in today's competitive world especially after pandemic means the companies are trying to adopt the combination of offline and online mode of work for the betterment of their and employees growth and productivity or in other words , a hybrid workplace model refers to a that working environment where employees can work remotely or in office.

Due to the effects of COVID, some companies now want their staff back in the office, although some employees still want to work remotely. For many organizations, the end result is a paradigm that blends remote and in-office labor.

According to the plan, workers can come into the office one to four days

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a week and work from home some of the time

Employees and employers who took the Remote Work & Compensation Pulse Survey in May 2021, 48% expressed a desire to be fully remote. 44% of employees favored hybrid working arrangements. Among employers, 51% support the hybrid work model, while only 5% mention fully remote work as a possibility. (Lenka, 2021).

## 0.2. TYPES OF HYBRID WORK MODEL (VIDHYAA & RAVICHANDRAN, 2022)

- Flexible hybrid work model: Under this employees can choose their locations and working hours depending upon their priorities.
- Fixed hybrid work model: Here the organizations fix the particular days & times for employees to come to office and to go remotely.
- Office-First hybrid work model: The staff must be present on site for the work and can have the flexibility choose a few days a week to work remotely.
- Remote-First hybrid work model: Employees work mostly offline or WFH but can visit the work stations or locations for team building, collaborations and for training purposes.

## 0.3. SUSTAINABILITY OF HYBRID WORK MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

Sustainability encompasses the integration of environmental, social, and economic dimensions. The hybrid work model offers employees a high level of autonomy to maintain a harmony between personal and professional lives, resulting in improved performance and fostering a positive relationship between employers and employees.

To ensure the efficacy of the hybrid work model, organizations must first assess its technological feasibility. Equipping remote employees with the necessary tools and infrastructure for seamless work is crucial. Organizations should carefully evaluate employees' technological needs before transitioning to a flexible work environment to maintain productivity and employee satisfaction.

## 1.   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To know the benefits of hybrid work model.
- To perceive the ways and strategies to be successful in a hybrid work environment.
- To understand how the blended mode is sustainable for future.

## 2.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The secondary data method is used and the data is collected from journals, articles, etc. Moreover descriptive study is undertaken.

3.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- According to Gallup studies (hybrid-work-best-employees, 2023), 2 out of 3 professionals such as engineers, computer programmers, consultants prefer to be hybrid and half of them choose to be hybrid based upon the plans of employers.
- Gallup's research has found that what workers in hybrid mode wants, such as the following aspirations are expected by them:
  - Improved work-life balance  ○ Maximum utilization of time
  - More autonomy                 ○  Less burnout
  - Increased productivity
- According to a recent survey conducted by Adobe, over 1000 employees and managers in India expressed their belief in the positive impact of sustainability practices in the workplace. The survey revealed that these professionals feel more motivated and productive when sustainability initiatives are implemented, leading to increased collaboration with their team members. Additionally, a significant majority of Indian employees, 90%, believe that adopting a blended work system could contribute to making businesses more sustainable.
- The results of Slovakia's 2021 Hybrid Work Survey show that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed work patterns. Just 21% of surveyed organizations are now calling for a full return to the traditional office layout, compared to 43% of companies prior to the epidemic that did not allow remote work. 79% of respondents, or the majority, said they were in favor of a new hybrid model that blends office presence with remote work.
- Among the respondents, 34% favored a 'new work model' where employees can divide their time between remote working and working in office, with flexibility in scheduling. The survey also highlighted the necessity for organizations to adapt their strategies and management styles to accommodate this evolving work landscape, ensuring both operational efficiency and employee well-being in the future of work.
- NASSCOM (NASSCOM, 2021), a technology-based industry in India with offices in Bangalore and Chennai, conducted a survey on the feasibility of the hybrid work model upon employees' return to the office post-pandemic. The primary research and stakeholder interactions revealed that both employees and employers are inclined towards returning to the office, with approximately 50% of employees expressing a preference for a 3-day work week starting in January 2022. The motivations for this return include enhanced collaboration opportunities, improved infrastructure and hardware facilities, and reduced distractions compared to remote work.

- Moreover, findings suggest that 60% of organizations are expected to be prepared to reopen office spaces by 2022, focusing on aspects such as data security, meeting stakeholder demands, and implementing safety measures. Larger companies with more than 1000 workers are expected to use the hybrid work model system more frequently in the future.

## 4.  DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1. ADVANTAGES OF HYBRID WORK MODEL

- Cost reduction: It is beneficial for both employees and employers. For organizations due to less footprints the power consumption, expenditure on maintenance of workspaces, food, tea, snacks, water and parking, etc will going to be less. On the other hand, for employees the cost of travel, food and time will reduce.
- Improved productivity of employees: By less commuting to office, they will be able to save time and hence will be able to concentrate more on the work, stress level be low and they will be in mood to think of more and will try to give more outputs than earlier which will in return will produce good results which means their productivity level be enhance.
- Increased Employee satisfaction: By providing the greater autonomy to the employees, they will be able to set their own responsibilities for them will work accordingly in a comfortable zone hence will always be happier and satisfied with personal as well as professional outcomes.
- Effective recruitment tool: An IWG (International workspace group) surveyed different number of HR professionals and said that hybrid mode is an effective tool for recruiting a top talent from anywhere around the world as well is helpful in retaining the talent for longer period of time. (Golden, 2022), as per the survey report, the respondents said that 55% of their organization used blended mode with keeping in mind the child concerns,47%  using it addressed both the  work life balance and health issues and 69 % of  HR professionals said that employees have used time for care giving responsibilities more than commuting to offices.
- Employee's health and safety: As hybrid model provides the flexibility to employees when to be remote and in office so whenever they are sick can work from home and take care of their health and the time they are fit can come to office for their work. The organizations are taking full care of their employees.
- Improves work life balance: It is considerably improved under the hybrid model, as it gives employees wider scope to plan their work,

and avoid unnecessary commute by giving them autonomy over working hours and location; thereby reducing burnout or stress.

### 4.2. STRATEGIES /WAYS TO SUCCEED IN HYBRID WORK ENVIRONMENT

To be effective in competitive world with this novel work model, the leaders and the business managers needs to adopt certain strategies, HR practices or policy's, have to follow recent trends in order meet the demands of employees and to grow in future. There are different strategies followed by different organizations depending upon the policies, market demand. The paper discusses the common ways to be successful in hybrid mode (Lenka, 2021) :

- **Setting Up of New Plans and Policies for Changed Style of Working:** Almost all organizations who are going for hybrid style of work needs to modify their goals, plans, policy's as per the requirement of employees, culture and processes. Leaders must set organizational principles and behavioral guardrails such as (thinking about mental state of employees, considering equity, communicating expectations clearly, employee feedback and setting up of measurement criteria for success, etc) and then they can go with this, after this the managers or leaders must well equipped and empowered to set agreements with the employees.

  - **Strengthening Communication Channels/Networks:** As for proper flow of information it is vital for both organization and employees to communicate messages or information through proper established channels such as email, messaging apps, video conferencing platforms, and project management tools. There must be responsive and proactive flow of information so that parties involved in channel are staying connected at same level.

  - **Increasing Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):** For more complex tasks, AI is in demand by companies to improve efficiency and productivity. These technologies can be used to automate repetitive tasks, process large amounts of data, and make more accurate predictions for future growth.

  - **Emphasis on Building Conducive Culture for Enhanced Mental Well Being of Employees:** Due to longer work at home, this has led to social isolation, so new work model can succeed well if proper work environment is built keeping in mind the well being. There is a need for employers to provide free access to mental health professionals for therapy and mindfulness sessions either in-house or through an employee assistance program. Companies may also collaborate with external companies to provide training surrounding mental health awareness and preventing burnout.

- **Concentrate on DEI Initiatives:** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are what DEI stands for. This outlines the steps the company   has made to encourage the development of a diverse workforce and to establish an atmosphere that is fair and welcoming to all.
- **Focus on Collaboration:** (Baker, 2021), According to Gratner's Research, 71 % of HR leaders are more concerned about employee collaboration. At individual level, the team members can collaborate when and where they want to meet to discuss the matters, and on the other hand, organizations and the managers also need to create an opportunities to make them collaborate effectively.
- Enhancing training development sessions for employees as when required by them for new style of work, methods and tools they are work upon.
- Embracing the Agile hybrid work model.

## 4.3. SUSTAINABILITY OF HYBRID WORK MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

Over the past two to three years many reports and survey shows us that employers are eagerly waiting for employees to return to office at the earliest. How the population will behave on adopting the "New Normal or Hybrid Work Model" is question of concern for many organizations and also to check viability of sustainable practices.

When a company encourages its workers to use natural resources responsibly, it is creating a sustainable workplace. The definition of sustainability is meeting present needs without compromising those of future generations. Environmental, social, and economic are its three facets.

According to Mckinsey, to be sustainable there is role to play for leaders to do long term investment. In today's digital world, many businesses are thinking of recycling or reusing the resources or are moving towards the circular economy.

A Deloitte report shows that 57% of companies have started using energy-efficient or climate-friendly machinery, technologies, and equipment and are also imparting employee training on climate change/climate action. (Holeiciuc, 2023)

- **Organization must adhere to the following key points:**
- Well being and rights of the employees.
- Adhere to the ethical and transparent practices.
- Employees must also think that institutions providing sustainable benefits are boosting the productivity, rate their company's at top, open more opportunities for innovation and creativity and also improves work culture at office spaces.

- Organization following sustainable norms or practices gains increased importance both financially as well as improves people perception towards them.
- **There are Several Aspects of A Hybrid Work Model to be Sustainable in Future Such as:**
- Reduced footprints: the need for physical office has reduced because of the work from home option available which can lead to reduction in environmental impact of workstations by cut in real estate costs and office space utilization can boost the sustainability.
- Better buildings or infrastructure: According Environmental, Social and Governance targets it is noted that how the infrastructure is built what material is being used, as reports tell us that buildings are responsible for 40 % of global energy consumption and 33% green house gas emission. The recent reports shows us that buildings cab be made of recycled materials.
- Reduced commuting emissions: As per International work grades (IWG) "with just a relatively modest one day a week of working from home during an average year, the overall energy saved from less commuting is around four times larger than the increase in residential energy consumption.
- The different study states that US workers by shifting to a more flexible work option, can save up to 960 million hours of time per year by 2030 and on the other reducing carbon emissions by more than 100 million tons.
- Increased productivity: By adopting the remote work or hybrid combination, the employees are in their comfortable zone whether at home or office, they are likely to give more output than forced to work under controlled work environment. Moreover by less commutation to office the energy consumption at office will be less which is making them environmentally sustainable too.
- Focusing on employee well being: The blended model provides them greater flexibility resulting in lesser stress and anxiety or other health issues and allowing a better work life balance. A healthy and happy workforce is more likely to be productive, which can contribute to a more sustainable workplace.

The hybrid work model and sustainability is like a twin sister, for relevant growth in future, the role of both the elements co exists. Whenever we will think of hybrid work mode then not only we are going think of small offices, management of remote work but also to push ourselves that how this management can be done in eco-friendly way or in sustainable manner.

- **Examples of Some IT Company's following sustainable hybrid work model (Koeva, 2022):**
  - Amazon is currently using hybrid work model. Each individual decide when to come work remotely and office.
  - Meta (Facebook) trying since Jan 2022 to make their employees return to office space on new normal basis. They want their employees to work on at least 3 days a week.
  - Microsoft: They gave option to employees to remotely up to 50% of the time by taking top-down approach.
  - Sales force: They offered 3 alternatives to individuals like firstly, Flexiblity: 1-3 days in the office for collaboration, customer meetings, and presentations. Secondly, Fully Remote: For employees who don't live near an office or whose job doesn't require one. Lastly, Office-based: Only for roles that require a physical presence in the office.
  - Hubspot: It is famous for CRM platform. It also offers its workforce 3 options.
    - a) Home: Employees to visit office 1 to 2 times a quarter
    - b) Flex: Employees to visit for office 2 or fewer days.
    - c) Office: Employees who work on-site 3 or more times per week.

## 5. SUGGESTIONS

- In order to adopt hybrid work model in an organization, proper arrangements needs to made before initiating the model.
- Higher importance needs to be given to those institutions that are following sustainable practices side by side while following the blended work model.
- Adaptability to basic changes in infrastructure both by the employers and employees.
- Enhancing the agile working mode.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In a nut shell, the blended work system motivates business leaders as well as employees to work with more zeal and enthusiasm. The benefits, strategies enlightens up to build strong base for both employees and employers to build up more productivity, more clarity of flex mode to work upon and also how to achieve profitability and employee satisfaction by using the resources effectively. As discussed, majorly IT companies are at forefront in adopting the hybrid work model with proper arrangements to conserve future resources reasonably.

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