

## Vaccinated: Marketing Workforce Hybridization

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**ABSTRACT:** *With a hybrid workplace model, employers offer exceptional workplace places, create greater collaboration and community for workers and showcase an example of the modern workplace that is digitally flexible and hybrid. This article aims to explore how the organizations and workers impacted by the long-term impact of the pandemic have accelerated the work-from-home movement and exacerbated organizational issues associated with remote work. This study used qualitative content analysis methods and relied on recent remote work research articles, digital surveys, and interviews. This article provides a viewpoint based on the authors' professional experiences in academia and the industry. This narrative review aims to underscore how the pandemic brought lasting workforce changes, including the prevalence and permanence of remote and hybrid work. The article aims to present how companies are moving toward a hybrid workforce, capitalizing on both the collaborative nature of in-person work and the flexibility of telecommuting. This research aimed to study the new work models providing opportunities to supercharge customer intimacy, workers' engagement, and productivity. This study finds that the worker's challenges regarding job satisfaction, productivity, and organizational commitment work in progress as the COVID-19 pushed organizations into unprecedented and unplanned remote work, and hybrid work is the best remedial approach. The article adds to the body of knowledge regarding remote work in organizations focused on the new hybrid work environment created by the global pandemic. The result of the study recommends that organizations create a level playing field for workers, regardless of their location, empower managers, and care for workers as their highest priority not only structurally but in ways of workspaces, working, and culture for hybrid work. The general discussion includes the conclusions from the study for further qualitative and quantitative investigations with significant implications for academicians, practitioners, and policy makers.*

**KEYWORDS:** hybrid work; work from anywhere; future of work; remote work; Covid-19 vaccination, new normal.

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## INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizations adapted to a changing workforce and embraced a blended model, accommodating some combination of in-person and virtual work. When the pandemic shifted many people to remote work, long-held attitudes about the practice shifted. For organizations adopting hybrid work arrangements (Odom, et al., 2022), the management must end the tendency to overlook remote employees' contributions and aspirations. They also must align them to enhance the essentials of productive work: energy, focus, coordination, and cooperation (Gratton, 2021). A growing remote work allows employees to work from anywhere so that the worker can choose to live in a preferred geographic location (Choudhury, et al., 2021). The pandemic produced a need for a mechanism of legal regulation of a particular organization of remote work, working hours, workplace, and working conditions (Yaroshenko, et al., 2022). As organizations switch from the traditional work model to remote work, workplace relationships are also transforming (Varma, et al., 2022).

Kojima's (2022) study determined the incidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection among individuals with a previous SARS-CoV-2 infection versus vaccinated individuals warranting a strong desire for the hybrid work. Appel-Meulenbroek's (2022) survey-based study highlighted a choice experiment identifying employee segments as the office preferred and stayed home.

A study (Zakaria, et al., 2021) highlighted the relationship between remote work and job satisfaction during the outbreak of COVID-19. Stern's (2022) study suggested localities to mitigate possible adverse effects on economic and racial equity and urge re-thinking the conventional concerns that remote work will harm labor productivity, gender parity in the workplace, or the vaunted position of cities. Davis's (2022) study argued that employers that offer remote work options to attract new employees also show a stronger propensity to expand the geographic reach of their recruitment efforts. Yudina's (2022) study suggested the approach to microelement rate setting of labor activity of budgetary institution employees working remotely. Finally, Shirmohammadi's study (2022) analyzed four themes representing misfits between desirable expectations and the unpleasant realities of remote work.

Heidt's (2022) study shows that agile work characteristics have a direct, positive, and significant effect on the success of working from home with HRM measures as a mediator. Anomsari's (2022) study shows that work from home, discipline, and work-life balance significantly affect employee performance. Widmer's study (2022) offers the benefits of appointing leaders to a new position focused on the needs and problems of workers who are not coming together in the exact physical location. Byrd (2022) argued that feelings of belongingness and engaging in meaningful work are vital. Camp's (2022) study highlighted major propositions and models that millennium managers in the new post-pandemic environment increase interpersonal communication to maintain trust and effective mentoring. Waight's (2022) study argued that remote work in high-context cultures is not without peril. Colleen-Carraher-Wolverton's study (2022) highlighted the findings from the study

demonstrate the importance of individual expectations regarding remote work on the satisfaction with remote work and intention to continue to work remotely. Finally, Choudhury (2022) proposed a research agenda around studying whether and how provisioning "geographic flexibility" through "work-from-anywhere" policies might help individuals and firms capture value from geographic mobility and mitigate adverse effects of geographic mobility frictions.

In the United States, the reported Covid Vaccine Data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as of July 1, 2022, includes People with at Least 1 Dose (Age 5+ Years) 83.2%; Fully Vaccinated People (Age 5+ Years) 71.2%; and People with 1 Booster Dose (Age 12+ Years) 49.5%, Fig. 1.

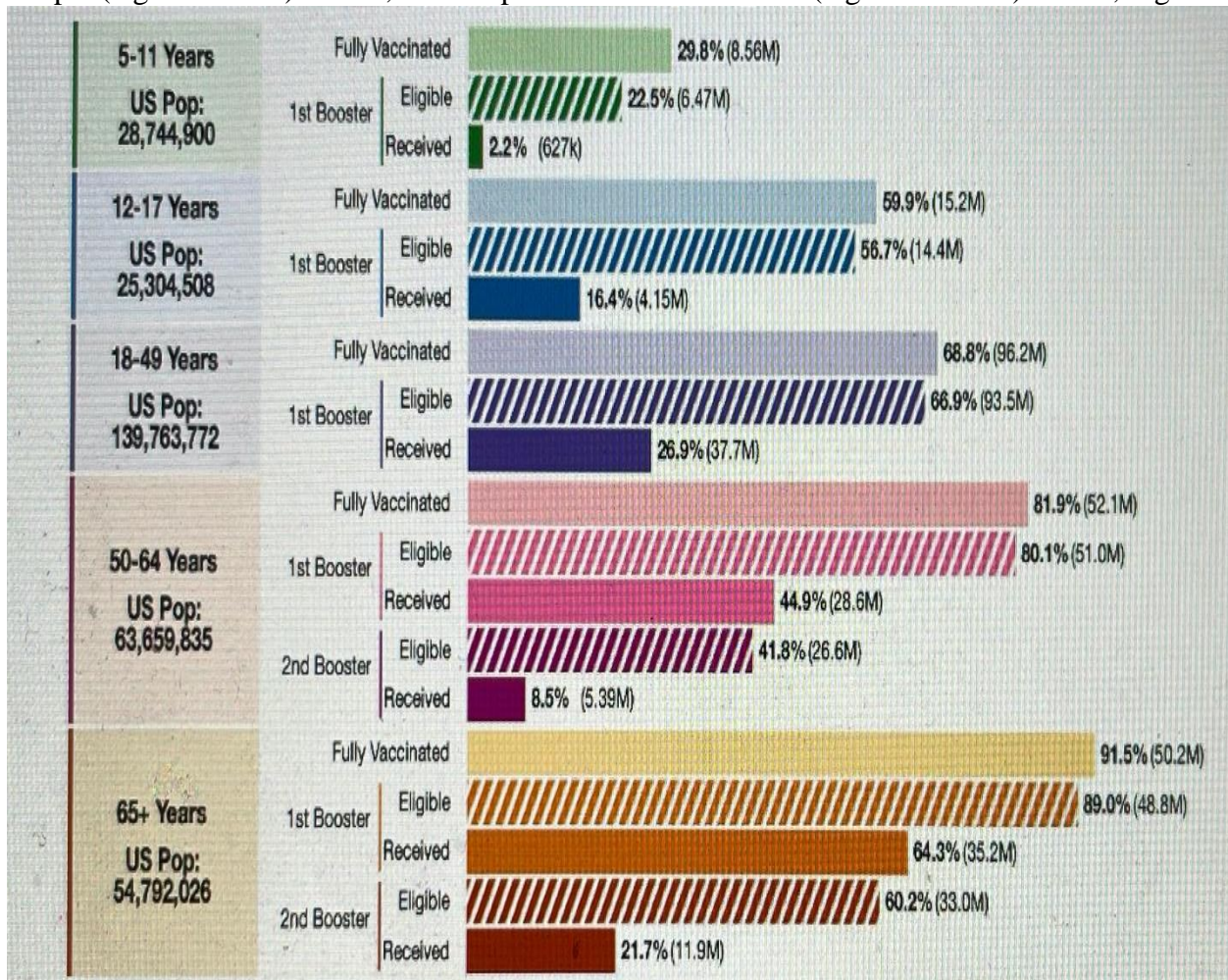


Fig. 1 Centers for Disease and Control – Covid Vaccine Data – USA

Existing studies lack insights into how the design of the available office and the home workspaces influence the choice behavior of the workspaces. This study explored the rise of the Hybrid Workplace in the current Pandemic period based on the CDC's vaccination reports. It addressed the following two questions: 1. how does the hybrid workplace appeal to employees and organizations? 2. How to make the hybrid work model suitable for the organizations? CDC's health

equity framework, when everyone can be as healthy as possible and the workers change work habits, makes a stronger argument in favor of Hybrid work models. It allows organizations to create value for all stakeholders by defining more flexible, digital, and purposeful work.

## METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative content analysis methods and relied on recent remote work research articles, case studies, and digital surveys. This article provides a viewpoint based on a narrative review and the author's professional experiences in academia and the industry. Bloom's (2022) study reported two waves of the Global Work from Home (WFH) online survey covering 32,909 respondents in 25 countries. Wave 1 conducted in July 2021 (N= 11,543, 14 countries), Wave 2 conducted in February 2022 (N=21,366, 22 countries). Survey participants recruited from the panel of the professional survey company Respondi (and its external partners), Fig. 2.

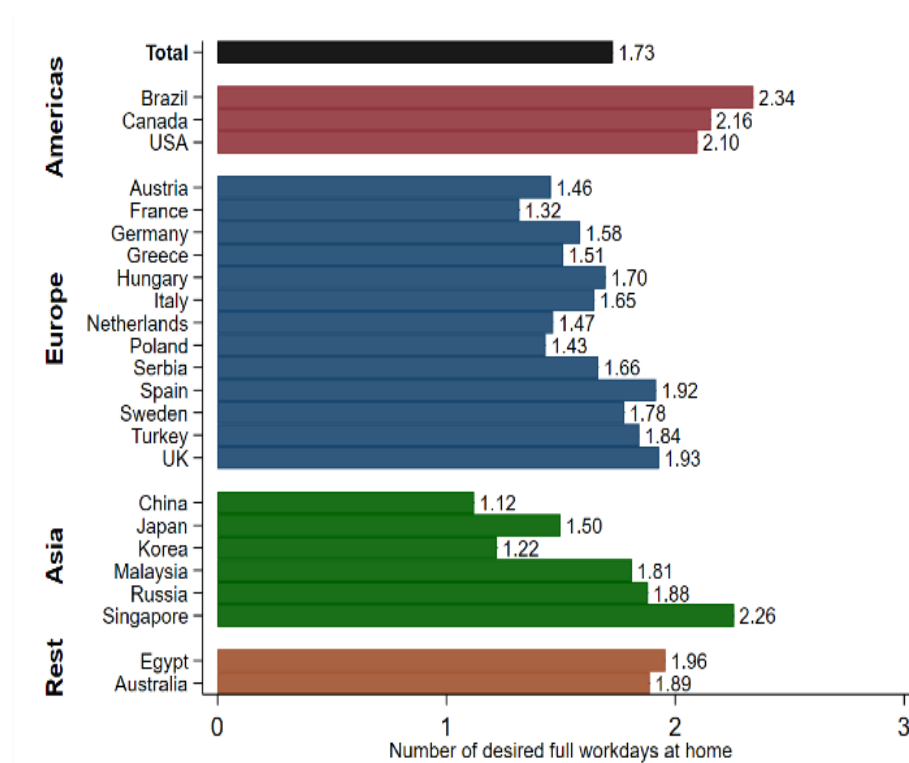


Fig. 2. Globally responders desire to WFH about 1.7 days per week. (Courtesy: Bloom's WFH Survey)

The author highlighted that employees desire about 2 WFH days, employers are planning with 1 WFH day. Perceptions about WFH improved in all countries with WFH productivity: 7% higher

relative to expectations. The WFH efficiency reported as 4% higher relative to working on business premises. Responders value hybrid WFH 2-3 days a week as much as 5% of a pay raise. 15% of global employees would quit or start looking for a WFH job if their employer announced that all employees must return to the worksite 5+ days a week. The author highlighted significant WFH benefits of keeping employees happy, increasing productivity, supporting diversity, and saving on space costs. In addition, hybrid work has earned a permanent place in the employment mix in which in-person and remote work are two ends of a fluid spectrum of options.

Google Workspace commissioned Economist Impact to complete a global survey (October 2021) on the state of hybrid work, including its challenges and opportunities. Over 75% of respondents believe hybrid and flexible work will be standard practice within their organizations in the coming three years. The Remote Work and Compensation Pulse Survey (May 2021) reported that 48% expressed a desire to be fully remote. In addition, 44% of employees favored hybrid working arrangements.

The Prudential Survey (2022) found that 87% of people want to work from home at least once a week. Moreover, 68% of American workers say the ability to work remotely and on-site is the perfect work model. Only 8% of remote employees are willing to return full-time to work after the pandemic. While 48% of workers want to work from home permanently, the remaining 44% want to work from home part of the week. If there is a reduced compensation due to remote work, 83% of employees leave their current job. 55% of respondents from the Stanford study (September 2021) found that the workers want to spend some time in the office and at home. 25% of workers want to work a home full time, and 20% of workers only want to work in the office.

A survey by Owl Labs found (December 2021) that in the United States, 87% of workers would like a 10-hour/4-day work week. Furthermore, 82% would prefer core working hours. A recent survey by the Economist (February 2022) found that 34% of respondents said that face-to-face interruptions from colleagues were the reason they lost focus at work. In a recent survey by Prudential Financial Inc (October 2021), 34% of workers would like employers to have resources to establish a home office. In addition, 33% of the workers would like reimbursement for expenses related to remote work.

PwC survey (2021) finds that 72% of Organizations offer a Hybrid Work schedule. According to a survey of 650 C-suite executives, 72% of organizations surveyed currently offer hybrid work options for employees. Furthermore, 43% of them say they will keep hybrid work options going forward. McKinsey's (2021) survey found that 75 percent of respondents said they prefer a hybrid working model, with 25 percent said they prefer to be entirely on-site.

Cisco's Global Hybrid Work Study 2022 survey of 28,000 full-time employees across 27 markets revealed that while initially, many employees were challenged by the sudden shift to hybrid and remote working arrangements has yielded many positive and lasting benefits for both employers and employees. In fact, this mode of working has become the norm and for most, across

different generations, gender, and seniority, work performance has improved as well as employees' well-being, work-life balance, relationships, and even personal confidence.

The shift to remote work moderates wage (Barrero et. al., 2022) growth by 2 percentage points over two years, shrinking the real-wage catchup effect on near-term inflation pressures by more than half. The authors also argue that the recent rise of remote work materially lessens wage-growth pressures, easing the challenge confronting monetary policy makers. Companies will need to define what hybrid work means to them. Those definitions will likely vary between organizations and will continue to be refined over time as companies collect data on what is effective—and what is not.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Hybrid work has improved work-life balance, well-being, and the company culture. The C-suite executives have been pleasantly surprised by how successful remote work has been as an urgent response (Gartner, 2021) to pandemic conditions. However, many still question the long-term value of a full-fledged hybrid workforce model. Empowering remote productivity remains a requirement. New collaboration tools, robust cloud infrastructure, and a new way of thinking about network security have become essential ingredients of a hybrid workforce. Because the future of work is hybrid, the workplace design must be equitable for it to sustain and succeed for the better. According to Gartner Research (2022), future workplace designs focus on "the individual as the stable pillar we design work around." The strategy for the human-centric model includes intentional collaboration, flexible work experiences, and evaluating performance by the worker's actual results. In addition, the hybrid workforce requires it to create equal opportunities for all employees. Cisco Global Hybrid Work study shows that nearly three-quarters (71.2%) want a combination of remote and in-office hybrid working models in the future. Around a fifth (20.2%) want a fully remote working experience, leaving just 8.6% who want to go to the office on a full-time basis, Fig.3.

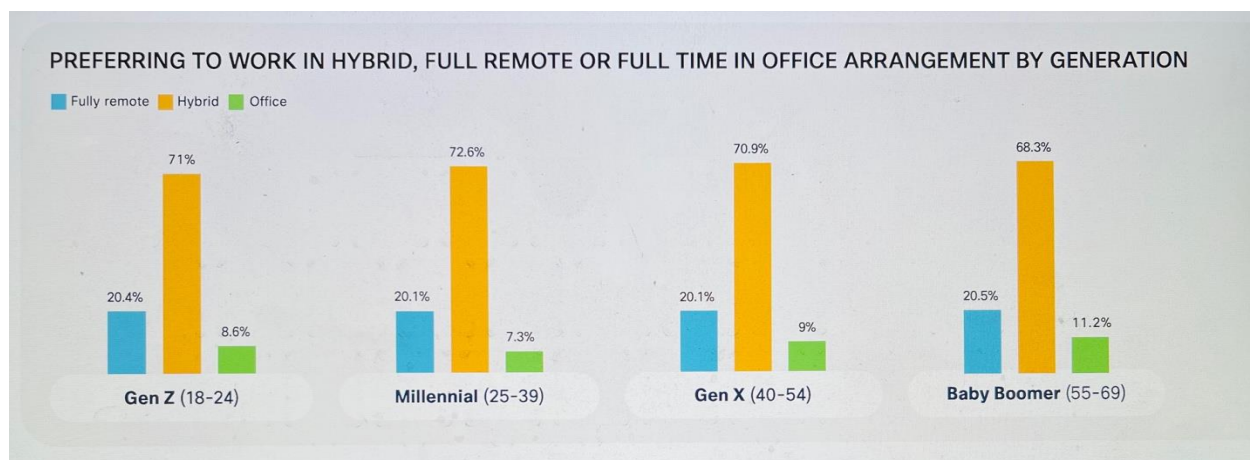


Fig. 3. Cisco Global Hybrid Work Study 2022 (Courtesy: Cisco.com)

Researchers from Stanford University, the University of Chicago, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have found that more than one-third of all remote work hours are now spent in a location other than the home. These working hours are spent at “third places,” a term used in sociology that represents non-work, non-home locations. Whether this phenomenon ultimately results in happier employees, sustainable transportation choices, and a more creative economy will depend on the response from private and public institutions. Suppose organizations provide the necessary flexibility to their staff, and policymakers engage in intelligent land use and transportation planning for third-place trips. In that case, the result could be a rare win-win-win for workers, businesses (Zhao, 2022), and the public good.

Hybrid work presents challenges of ensuring everyone feels included and engaged regardless of role or location. Therefore, organizations must be intentional about creating space for inclusive conversations and define new ways of working together. The hybrid work evolution through technological innovations will help organizations navigate remote and hybrid work environments. Furthermore, organizations that offer the freedom to work from anywhere are attractive to potential employees; not restricted to local job markets; easier to scale up or down and achieve 24/7 coverage; less burdened by office space and business travel overheads and are environmentally friendly and sustainable.

## **DISCUSSION**

Hybrid workforces have become increasingly common worldwide. Organizations' competitive edge in the market requires flexible work options and embracing a hybrid work model. Flexibility is essential to maintaining a work-life balance. Organizations should take an opportunity to reexamine traditional notions of aligning jobs to settings. Team accountability and focus are also crucial for hybrid teams. By focusing on outcomes rather than output, organizations can ensure equal treatment of employees, remote or in the office. From a financial perspective, a good proportion of the savings (Cisco, 2022) come from reduced expenditure on essential items. A sizeable 86.6% ranked savings on fuel and commuting among their top three areas for savings, followed by decreasing spending on food and entertainment at 74%. These savings are not short-term; an overwhelming majority – nearly nine in ten (86.4%) believe they can maintain these savings over the long term and, of great note for employers, 69.3% would take these savings into account when considering changing jobs.

The hybrid work requires a new operating model and strategy encompassing flexible work policy, inclusive space design, and innovative technology solutions. The modern workplace requires companies to meet new employee expectations, connect a more distributed workforce, and provide tools to create, innovate and work together to solve business problems. As a result, organizations must adjust their business model to compete. The Hybrid work model is an excellent way to stay

ahead of the game, keep employees engaged and happy, and contribute effectively to the organization's bottom line.

### **Implications and Conclusion**

Organizations have begun to prepare their workforce for the post-vaccine era by remaining flexible, communicative, and empathy driven as they help their organizations tackle issues such as vaccine hesitancy, hybrid schedules, retention, and re-skilling. To stay ahead, organizations can embrace a hybrid workforce by offering flexibility in hours, working from home options, and varied communication channels; organizations can attract and retain the best talent. However, the organizations that do not shift away from a legacy mindset and adapt to new data-driven ways of working and connecting via technology, workers will find another organization that meets their hybrid work requirements.

Amy Edmondson, a professor, and author of *The Fearless Organization* argued that people want to return to normal. The challenging word is the return. There is no returning to the pre-pandemic period. There is only one way: to move forward (Wingard, 2021) to an uncertain future that presents us with an opportunity for thoughtful design.

Hybrid workforce models reflect the intelligent composable business response (Gartner, 2021) needed for individual functions and whole organizations. There is no going back to the work model that prevailed before the pandemic. Instead, the organizations cannot be resilient without forward-thinking that embraces the possibility of nontraditional strategies such as hybrid workforces.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The remote work during the pandemic limited social capital networks within organizations for a higher level of workforce engagement. When thinking about hybrid work, future research could focus on helping build significant ties by (Deal, 2021) strategically addressing issues of onboarding employees, strengthening weak links, and building social capital in new teams.

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