

## Hybrid Work Models Needed

MAY 25, 2023 | ARTICLES



### Fully Remote Declines While Hybrid Increases

The pandemic saw the acceleration of the hybrid workplace. By the end of 2022, 14% of worldwide employees were totally remote. However, according to a recent Gartner forecast, fully remote is expected to drop to 9% by the end of 2023, while hybrid, defined as at least one day in the office will continue to rise. Gartner predicts that 39% of all global knowledge workers will be hybrid by the end of 2023, up from 37% in 2022, and 12% in 2021.

### Acceptance of Hybrid Varies by Geography and by Industry

Even as the hybrid work model is growing internationally, its acceptance varies by country. In the US, fully remote and hybrid represent 71% of knowledge workers; in the UK 67%; in Germany 49%; and in Japan 29%. Gartner posits, "Japanese employers are focused more on employees returning to the office full time compared with other employers around the globe."

Industries driven by knowledge workers and service industries are leading the increase in hybrid setups. Manufacturing typically requires onsite crews and frontline workers to keep plants running smoothly, so the move to hybrid is slower. However, even in manufacturing, employee demand is leading to the creation of more hybrid positions, and companies must innovate.

### Demand for Hybrid Fuels Innovation

According to Rajaram Agrawal, Managing Partner of IMSA Search Global Partners India and Managing Partner and Co-Founder of TalentAhead, "Innovative companies are identifying and mapping functions and roles which can be run on a hybrid model. For example, hybrid models in IT and sales are already prevalent. Increasingly we are seeing digital marketing, content development, and sales support roles transitioning to hybrid. A recent scan of job listings on a popular social media platform in India reveals:

- The majority (50%+) of Remote/Hybrid Jobs are in IT.
- The second largest category of Remote/Hybrid jobs is Sales and Business Development.
- Other Remote/Hybrid listings include: Marketing/Digital, Finance, HR, Content Writers."

Agrawal continues, "In some cases, having a hybrid work model enables companies to attract a new pool of talent, people who may have dropped out of the workplace due to long commutes coupled with the need to care for family members." Employees expect flexibility for improved work-life balance. Employers benefit as employees who feel empowered and respected are likely to be more productive.

### Performance-Based Hybrid Model

In India, many companies, including the largest banks are welcoming the hybrid work model in a range of functional areas including finance, operations, digital and analytics. At Axis Bank, remote working is a key results area for many departments. (The Economic Times, 4/6/2023).

Agrawal adds, "We are evaluating an approach where regardless of your level, when your metrics are well-defined, and you achieve your goals, you can work remotely for the next quarter. We see a hybrid model based on performance, as the way of the future."

At Hubspot, one of the largest global software companies, a hybrid workplace is a defining feature of the company today. As stated on their website, "At HubSpot, we believe that our values live in our hearts, not our hallways. That's why we're building a hybrid company with three flexible work options for you to choose from: @home, @office, @flex."

### Hybrid-Focused By Design, New Leadership Skills Required

As more employees are hybrid, more organizations will use virtual workspaces for employee gatherings regardless of geographic location. Gartner forecasts that by the end of 2025, 10% of companies will use virtual workspaces for sales, onboarding, and remote work. And with the increased importance of the hybrid work model, companies are looking for the right top talent to oversee this area.

Creative titles are being used to address the fact that remote and hybrid work components are essential in today's workplace, from "Vice President of flexible work" to "Head of dynamic work" to "Head of team anywhere." Regardless of what it is called, the function requires people with very strong culture-building skills, leaders who can successfully oversee a workforce that is more diverse and more welcoming, and working out of a range of workspaces.

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