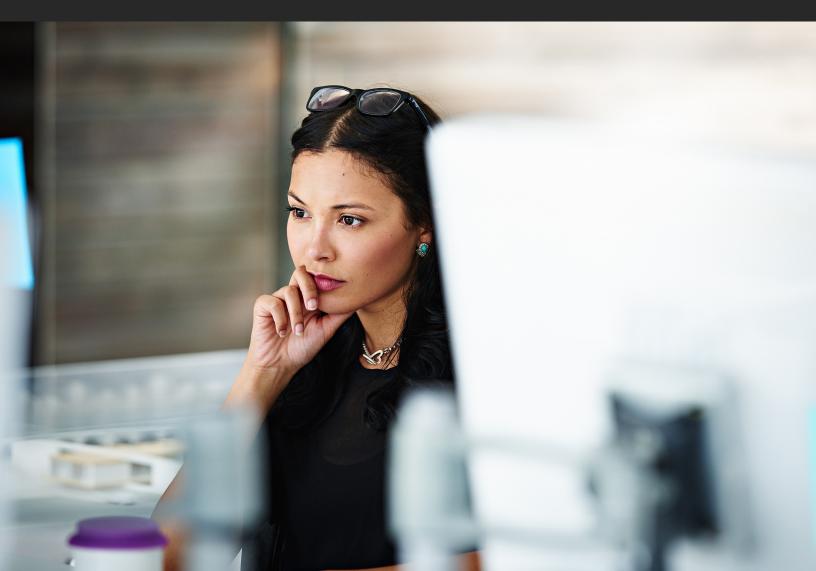# Fieldwork by Citrix

Preview

Work rebalanced:
The Citrix hybrid work report

Foreword

The working world has been dramatically reshaped. The way that companies think about and organize around work has changed more in the last three years than at any time in history, and so have employee expectations. Remote and hybrid work are now the norm, and employees expect the freedom and flexibility to work when, where and how they want. Companies must provide this in order to attract and retain talent in what remains one of the most competitive labor markets the world has ever seen.

This report looks at the actions that business leaders are currently taking to enable flexible hybrid work and how organizations are performing against four key pillars: **tech empowerment, connection and collaboration, flexibility and fluidity,** and **trust and empathy**. These pillars are critical to enabling new work models and creating a positive employee experience, to support organizational success.

The four pillars of hybrid work effectiveness

Work today is driven by technology. We work at home, in the office, on the road and anywhere in between, and rely on technology to connect us to the people and information we need to get things done. All four of the hybrid effectiveness pillars in our study relate to both people and technology, but we consider two of them – tech empowerment and connection and collaboration – through a primarily tech-focused lens; and the other two – trust and empathy and flexibility and fluidity – through a primarily people-focused lens.

Tech empowerment	Connection and collaboration
Employees have access to work technology that enables them to work effectively and to work in the way that they want. Work tech helps to equalize performance and opportunity across organizations.	Employees feel connected to their organization and their colleagues wherever, whenever and however they are working, and can collaborate effectively whether they are together virtually or in-person.
Flexibility and fluidity	**Trust and empathy**
Employees have choice over how they work, when they work and where they work, and can flex their working style and approach to match both business requirements and their own personal needs and lifestyles.	Employers trust their employees – they believe that they will complete their work and abide by company rules without needing to be checked or monitored – and employees trust their employers to be transparent with them and to treat them fairly and with respect. Leadership is empathetic and human-centered.

The research finds that, in the world of hybrid work, balance is critical. Hybrid workers – those who work partly in an office and partly remote – report being more productive and engaged than employees who are entirely office-based or entirely remote. They also report better well-being – both physical and emotional – and feel more positive about their organization. Sixty-nine percent of hybrid employees would recommend their employer as a place to work, compared to 56% of office workers and 60% of remote workers. Hybrid workers are also more likely to feel empowered by their work tech, and to have a strong emotional connection to their teams and organization.

The driving force of these outcomes is undoubtedly tech. Work tech tools are not just enabling hybrid collaboration and ensuring continued productivity in a highly distributed environment; they are also helping to solve other, more fundamental challenges. For example, over two-thirds of both business leaders and employees believe that sophisticated work tech is driving more inclusive and equal work experiences.

But the news isn't all good. While digital collaboration and tech empowerment are flourishing, the *Work Rebalanced* study finds other aspects of hybrid work are proving more challenging to get right. Many business leaders are struggling to balance heightened employee expectations of flexibility with business needs. They are also finding it difficult to forge new bonds of trust between organization and employee now that traditional 'lines of sight' are largely gone. Solutions to these more people-focused challenges are both technological and cultural, and may take longer to reach.

Business leaders must now take stock, enabling tech-driven hybrid work and harnessing the benefits it brings. In doing so, they can attract and retain the talent they need to fuel innovation and business growth.

Tim Minahan, Executive Vice President Business Strategy & CMO, Citrix

About the study

Using four key pillars of hybrid work effectiveness, the Citrix hybrid work report assesses how organizations are adapting to new employee expectations of work, and how business leaders can ensure that they are doing enough to attract, retain and engage their people.

In early 2022, Citrix, in partnership with Man Bites Dog and Coleman Parkes Research, ran an independent opinion research study, examining the views of 900 business leaders (job titles included Chief Executive Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Chief Marketing Officer, Managing Director, Chief Technology Officer, Chief Operating Officer), and 1,800 employees (knowledge workers).

Respondents were from the following markets: Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, the UK and the US. There were 200 employees and 100 leaders from each market, apart from the US where there were 400 employees and 200 leaders. Respondents were from the following sectors: financial services, healthcare and life sciences, tech, professional services, manufacturing, retail, government/public sector and education.
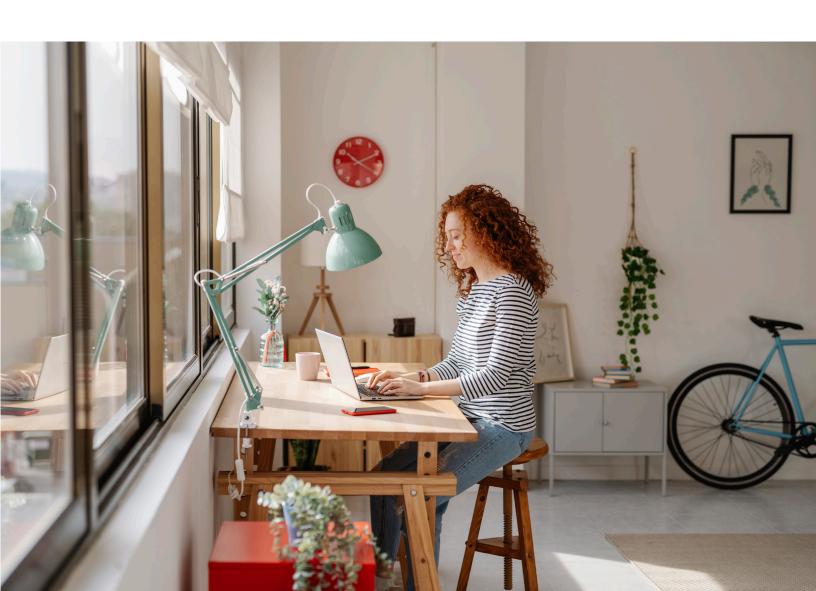
We have also analyzed the data according to employees' working location, as follows:

In-office employees	Hybrid workers	Remote workers
Employees that currently work 100% of the time in the office (567 respondents)	Employees that currently work part of the time remote and part of the time in the office (867 respondents)	Employees that are currently 100% remote (366 respondents)

Assessing organizations' 'Hybrid Work Effectiveness'

In collaboration with our research partners, we built a bespoke scoring system and ran the opinion research data through this scoring system to assess organizational performance across our four key pillars: 'tech empowerment', 'connection and collaboration', 'flexibility and fluidity', and 'trust and empathy'. We also calculated an overall score (an average of all four pillars) for hybrid work effectiveness. Scores were calculated from both the business leader and the employee data, to produce a snapshot of organizational performance according to both groups. The raw scores were indexed so that each score is out of a possible 'perfect score' of 100. Repeating the study at future dates will enable us to track movement and changes.

Executive summary

Organizations' 'Hybrid Work Effectiveness'

The research provides a snapshot of how both business leaders and employees feel that their organizations are performing against key pillars that make hybrid work successful (see 'About the Study' on page 5 for more information).

Global	Tech empowerment	Connection and collaboration	Flexibility and fluidity	Trust and empathy	Overall
Employees	75	76	66	73	72
Leaders	72	74	62	69	68

Scores in the table above are out of a maximum possible 100

The results show that, according to both business leaders and employees, organizations are strongest on the tech elements of hybrid working (the 'tech empowerment' and 'connection and collaboration' pillars) but are struggling with the more people-focused aspects (the 'flexibility and fluidity' and 'trust and empathy' pillars). This suggests that the technology that enables effective working and hybrid collaboration is functioning well, but businesses are finding it more difficult to meet employee expectations for a new work culture and attitude.

The employee data produces higher scores across all four pillars than the business leader data, suggesting that leaders are more critical of their organizations than their employees, and are perhaps finding the cultural shift more challenging than their employees, many of whom are 'digital natives' who have grown up with technology at their fingertips.

The state of the workforce

Almost a fifth of knowledge workers (19%) are currently considering leaving their organization.

- 70% of employees rate their personal performance as good.
- 65% of employees say they're currently productive at work.
- 60% of employees say they're engaged with their organization.
- Over 60% also say their physical and emotional well-being is good.
- 63% of employees would recommend their employer as a good place to work.

Tech-focused	**Tech empowerment** Score (employees) 75/100 Score (biz leaders) 72/100 64% of employees and 62% of leaders say the tech they use at work is as easy and intuitive as the tech they use in their personal life. Leaders and employees believe that tech is driving inclusivity (64% leaders and 69% employees) and equalizing performance (66% leaders and 64% employees).	**Connection and collaboration** Score (employees) 76/100 Score (biz leaders) 74/100 Most leaders and employees feel that hybrid and remote work collaboration is working well, but 63% of leaders and 69% of employees say that in-person interactions are essential for emotional well-being. But are the days of in-person collaboration numbered? 74% of business leaders and 61% of employees believe that the metaverse will completely revolutionize workplace collaboration and make physical in-person collaboration unnecessary.
People-focused	**Flexibility and fluidity** Score (employees) 66/100 Score (biz leaders) 62/100 Although leaders know they need to offer flexibility – 63% say it is becoming a key determinant in the job market – they also have some concerns: 64% say that employees now expect a higher degree of flexibility than they can accommodate from a business perspective. 62% say that employees who take advantage of flexible working options are less likely to progress quickly in their careers.	**Trust and empathy** Score (employees) 73/100 Score (biz leaders) 69/100 80% of employees say it is very important to them that they can trust their employer to be transparent and honest with them and to treat them fairly and with respect, but just 49% of them say they trust their employer. 72% of employees say that it is crucial that they work in an organization where the leadership and culture is empathetic and compassionate, and 70% said the experience of the pandemic has made it clear that empathy is a critical leadership quality.

Rebalancing work: three top tips for business leaders

1. Offering flexible, hybrid working is now essential

As offices reopen, leaders need to get the balance right. Our study shows that employees who spend part of the week working remotely and part of the week working in the office are more engaged, more productive, and have better work well-being than employees who work entirely in the office or completely remotely. Yet over a third of business leaders (34%) do not currently give their employees any working location flexibility: either they offer no office option (6%), or they mandate complete office-working (28%).

Additionally, less than half of business leaders say that their organization currently has good levels of staff retention. With the talent market being so competitive, giving employees the option to work under a flexible, hybrid model is key. After all, the cost of replacing an individual employee can be up to twice the employee's annual salary.[1]

2. Leaders need to keep honing their communication skills

Good communication skills are the most important quality in a leader in today's working world, according to employees: 55% percent of employees rank this as a top three leadership attribute. The next most important quality is empathy, rated as a top three attribute by 38% of employees. Qualities such as creativity, technical skill, and delegation are not ranked as highly by employees.

In the shift to widespread remote and hybrid working, the way that leaders interact with their employees has had to change dramatically. This is not just about the methods and modes of communication, but also about what information is conveyed and the tone of the communication. Just as hybrid working is here to stay, so is the need for leaders to communicate effectively and sensitively. Employees are clear that this is key.

34%
of employers offer no location flexibility

28%
of employers mandate complete office-working

6%
of employers offer a no office option

55%
of employees rank communication as a top leadership attribute

28%
of employees rank empathy as a top leadership attribute

[1] Gallup

3. Tech tools need to save time, not waste time

Work tech infrastructure that enables flexible, hybrid work has never been so important. Tech tools need to be in place to allow employees to work and collaborate at any time and in any place. But often, tech designed to make hybrid work possible is slowing employees down. Our study reveals that on average, employees could be losing around 54 minutes per day due to tech challenges such as restoring lost files and resetting forgotten passwords. When productivity is at such a premium and the business landscape is challenging, this is time that companies cannot afford to lose.

Leaders need to look at basing their tech strategies on employee needs and challenges. They should focus on investing in systems that simplify and automate workloads and consider digital collaboration and desktop virtualization tools that employees can access securely from anywhere.

54
minutes potentially lost
per day due to
tech challenges

Why do nearly 70% of hybrid workers feel engaged with their organization, compared to just 51% of in-office employees and 56% of fully remote employees?

Download "Work rebalanced: The Citrix hybrid work report" to find out.

Get it now

Thank you