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# Centre Your Workspace Strategy Around Your Employees

Employee-Centricity Is Key To Navigating The Future  
Of Workplace Design And Technologies



## Executive Summary

During the COVID-19 pandemic, work experiences for employees and employers evolved. Now, organisations need to truly understand the impact of this change. Recent dominant talent narratives include the “Great Resignation” and “quiet quitting.” Organisations wanting to reopen their offices have seen some employees quit, refusing jobs and working conditions that are unsuitable for them. To insulate from workforce trends that lead to employee turnover and loss of talent, organisations must boost their employee well-being efforts by creating and maintaining a work environment in which employees want to stay and thrive. This paper is an in-depth analysis of both short- and long-term workforce trends as well as suggested next steps for organisations.

In August 2022, ViewSonic commissioned Forrester Consulting to evaluate workspace strategy and technology. Forrester conducted an online survey with 163 business and IT decision-makers and influencers at organisations in APAC, Europe, and North America to explore this topic. We found that hybrid working is here to stay in the post-pandemic world, and technology plays a critical part in enabling its success. However, some organisations are struggling with finding the right work policies to keep employees motivated and engaged despite success in providing technology that enables employee productivity. To gain a strong advantage in the future of work, organisations must adopt an employee-centred workspace strategy that allows all stakeholders to thrive.

Employee well-being refers to the overall mental, physical, emotional, social, and economic health of employees, resulting from the dynamics within — and sometimes outside — the workplace.



## Key Findings



**Technology is a key enabler of hybrid work across organisations globally.** Hybrid work is a reality for most (90%) organisations. To enable this new workforce arrangement, 85% of survey respondents have prioritised tech investments. Over 60% of respondents' firms have provided or funded hardware as part of in-office and remote setups for employees. However, some of the devices that bring productivity and employee experience (EX) gains are among the technologies employers are least likely to provide.



**Organisations miss the mark in providing an environment that optimises employee engagement and well-being.** Despite success in providing technology that enables employee productivity, 35% of respondents believed their firms are not well-adapted to a hybrid work model. More than half of respondents stated that bridging employee digital skill gaps and addressing employee mental health issues are the top challenges for hybrid work. One in two respondents also shared their struggle with finding the right work policies to keep employees motivated and engaged.



**The right balance of flexibility and structure is key to creating a healthy workspace culture.** While remote work options become the norm moving forward, decision-makers also want to get their people into the office to collaborate, share, and problem-solve in person. Firms are reconfiguring offices into a space that enables collaboration and productivity with 56% of respondents noting their firms have dedicated more space for collaboration, while 49% increased the number of individual rooms for focused work.

## Technology Powers The EX Of Hybrid Workforces

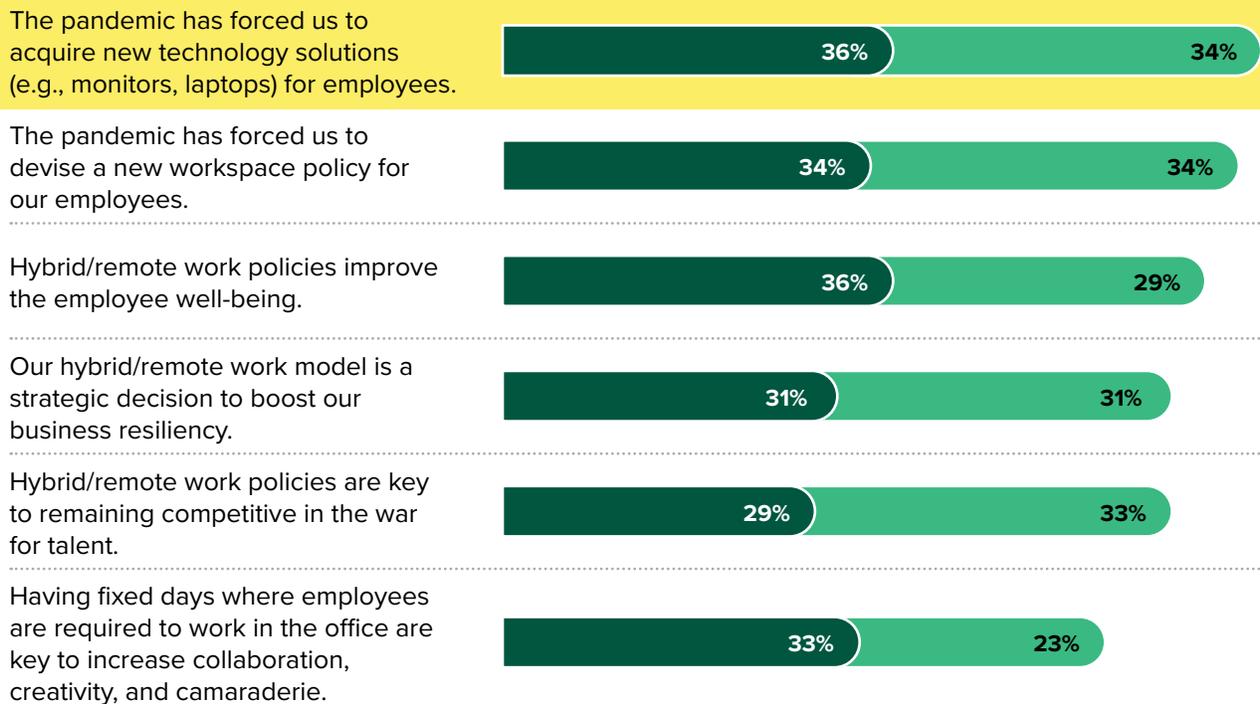
The pandemic upended how and where employees work. Organisations have changed their operating models to accommodate new health and safety measures. The future of work is front of mind as businesses emerge from the COVID-19 crisis and want to thrive in the post-pandemic world. In surveying 163 decision-makers across APAC, Europe, and North America, we found that:

- **Employees expect greater workspace flexibility.** Many of the pandemic-driven changes are mostly temporary, but some changes will remain as they are seen as the long-term future of work. Forrester research found that 52% of global knowledge workers still preferred having the choice to work from home, as the pandemic has proven the ability for employees to work from home effectively without losing productivity.<sup>1</sup> One-quarter of information workers believed that the introduction of a flexible work schedule and the option to continue to work from home would ease anxiety as they return to office.<sup>2</sup> Hybrid work has shifted from a reactive tactic to a proactive strategy. Ninety-one percent of surveyed decision-makers are adopting hybrid work within their organisations today. Majority of these respondents' organisations (68%) offer either fully flexible or fixed hybrid work models.<sup>3</sup>
- **Technology investment is a key priority in organisations' workspace design and employee well-being strategy.** For hybrid work to succeed, organisations must rethink their technology strategies to ensure that employees have a productive experience wherever they work. Seventy percent of surveyed decision-makers agreed that the pandemic has forced their organisations to acquire new technology solutions for their employees, and 85% prioritised investment in new technologies for their organisations, following revisiting workspace policy. Sixty-five percent of surveyed decision-makers also agreed that adoption of hybrid/remote work policies improved employee well-being within their organisations (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

**“To what extent do you agree with the following statements?”**

● Agree      ● Strongly agree



Base: 163 business and IT decision-makers and influencers responsible for their organisations’ employee well-being, end-user device purchasing, and/or workplace design  
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of ViewSonic, August 2022

- **The right workspace technologies enable greater employee well-being.** Part of the pandemic workforce challenges included dealing with employees’ mental health and trying to maintain the teams’ energy, collaboration, and creativity. Employees expect companies to provide a progressive work environment with tools that enable them to focus on their jobs.<sup>4</sup> Investing in the right workplace technologies not only helps employees complete tasks faster, but also makes the process more collaborative and enjoyable. Surveyed decision-makers experienced improvements in productivity (66%), employee well-being (55%), and engagement (48%) across their organisations (see Figure 2). Most (86%) surveyed decision-makers considered their organisations’ current technology devices as good or excellent enablers of employee well-being.

Figure 2

“What are the top five benefits your organisation has achieved as a result of using technology solution(s) to enable a hybrid/remote work approach?”



Base: 163 business and IT decision-makers and influencers responsible for their organisations’ employee well-being, end-user device purchasing, and/or workplace design

Note: Showing top 5 responses

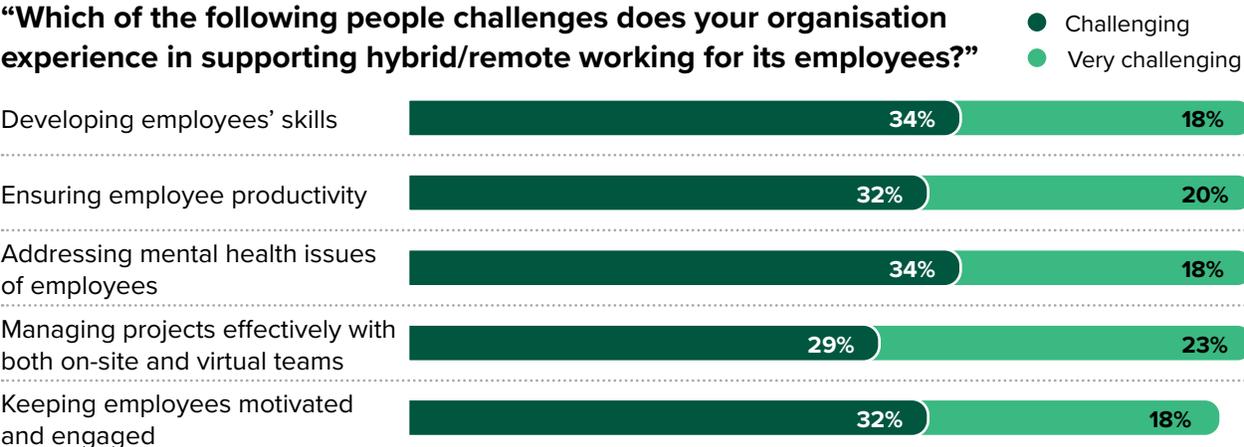
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of ViewSonic, August 2022

# Optimising Office And Remote-Working Needs For The Future

Although organisations have indicated a general intention to embrace hybrid work, many organisations have yet to get hybrid working right. Thirty-five percent of surveyed decision-makers believed their organisations were not well adapted to a hybrid work model. We asked decision-makers about the challenges they’re facing when adopting hybrid work and found that:

- **The employee digital skills gap is the top challenge.** Employees who possess the right digital skills can make the most of technologies used in a hybrid work setup. But many respondents believe their organisations are facing a digital skill gap. Over half of respondents reckoned that employee digital skill development and bridging the digital skills gap were top challenges they faced.
- **Boosting employee well-being is another concern.** Mental health has received a lot of attention because of the pandemic. Virtual events don’t fully replace the social and networking components of work. Businesses are using employee wellness as a new metric to understand their workforce and recruit top talent. While 52% of survey respondents found it difficult to identify and address employee mental health issues in a hybrid setting, organisations recognise the importance of doing so (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3**



Base: 163 business and IT decision-makers and influencers responsible for their organisations’ employee well-being, end-user device purchasing, and/or workplace design

Note: Showing top 5 challenges

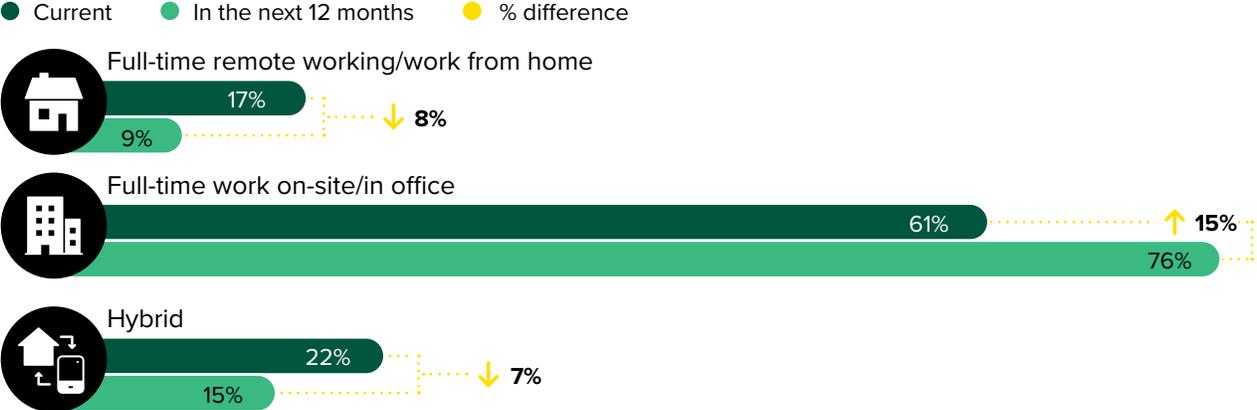
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of ViewSonic, August 2022

With countries moving towards endemic and life resuming to what it was pre-pandemic, decision-makers are keen to establish some sense of normalcy quickly.

Organisations will likely bring more workers back to the office full time despite success in enabling hybrid work. Decision-makers want to get their people into the office to collaborate, share, and problem-solve in person. When asked about workplace policies for the next 12 months, 87% of surveyed decision-makers said they will continue to adopt a hybrid work model, a 4% decrease from today (Q3, 2022). Over the next 12 months, an average of 76% of workforce will work on-site full time, up 15% compared to the current workforce (see Figure 4). Nevertheless, employees enjoy and expect the flexibility to decide where, when, and how to work; 52% of global knowledge workers still preferred to have the choice to work from home.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 4**

**“What would you foresee as the percentage of your workforce falling under each of the following working arrangement categories in the next 12 months ?”**



Base: 163 business and IT decision-makers and influencers responsible for their organisations’ employee well-being, end-user device purchasing, and/or workplace design

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of ViewSonic, August 2022

To encourage employees back into the office, decision-makers noted their organisations are reconfiguring their offices to create a more inviting office space (see Figure 5). Many leaders saw reforming the office model as a win-win move that drives higher employee experience while lowering costs.<sup>6</sup> No organisation will go back to the same office experience that they had before the pandemic.

Figure 5

"Please indicate the likely change of your office space utilization for each of the following setups in the next 12 months."

● Remove completely   ● Decrease   ● No change   ● Start including   ● Increase

Collaboration spaces (e.g., break-out rooms, innovation labs, training rooms, etc.)



Large conference rooms and executive rooms for more than 10 people



Medium-sized conference rooms for 8 to 10 people



Small spaces up to 4 to 5 people (e.g., small rooms, open meeting spaces, huddle areas)



Individual rooms (e.g., quiet rooms, meeting pods, phone booths)



Office hot desks



Individual office desks



Base: 163 business and IT decision-makers and influencers responsible for their organisations' employee well-being, end-user device purchasing, and/or workplace design

Note: Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of ViewSonic, August 2022

- **Organisations must dedicate more spaces for collaboration to increase engagement.** To create a positive work experience, organisations need the right space to make in-office interactions purposeful.<sup>7</sup> Fifty-six percent of respondents noted they are including or increasing collaboration spaces, such as break-out rooms, innovation labs, and training rooms, to ensure activities, such as group meetings, creative collaborative brainstorming, or community building, happen when employees are in. Such a move creates more opportunities for spontaneous conversation, fosters a sense of togetherness, and improves employee well-being.
- **Yet, organisations must also preserve individual spaces for deep work.** To cater to different employee work preferences, it's imperative to build office spaces with different environments to maximise employee well-being. Many people need to isolate themselves to block out noise and signal to others that they're trying to focus to get tasks done. Thus, the presence of individual focus spaces in the office remains significant. Twenty-nine percent of respondents' organisations planned to keep their individual rooms, while 49% included or increased individual rooms.

## Make Technologies Fit With Employees

Employees who have the flexibility to work with any device from any location with easy access to their preferred apps and services have a better EX than those who don't.<sup>8</sup> Hybrid work has driven a need for new scenarios that combine in-room and remote participation, and organisations are equipping employees with tools that support both in-office and at-home work models. We asked decision-makers about the kind of employee-facing tech they're investing, and found that:

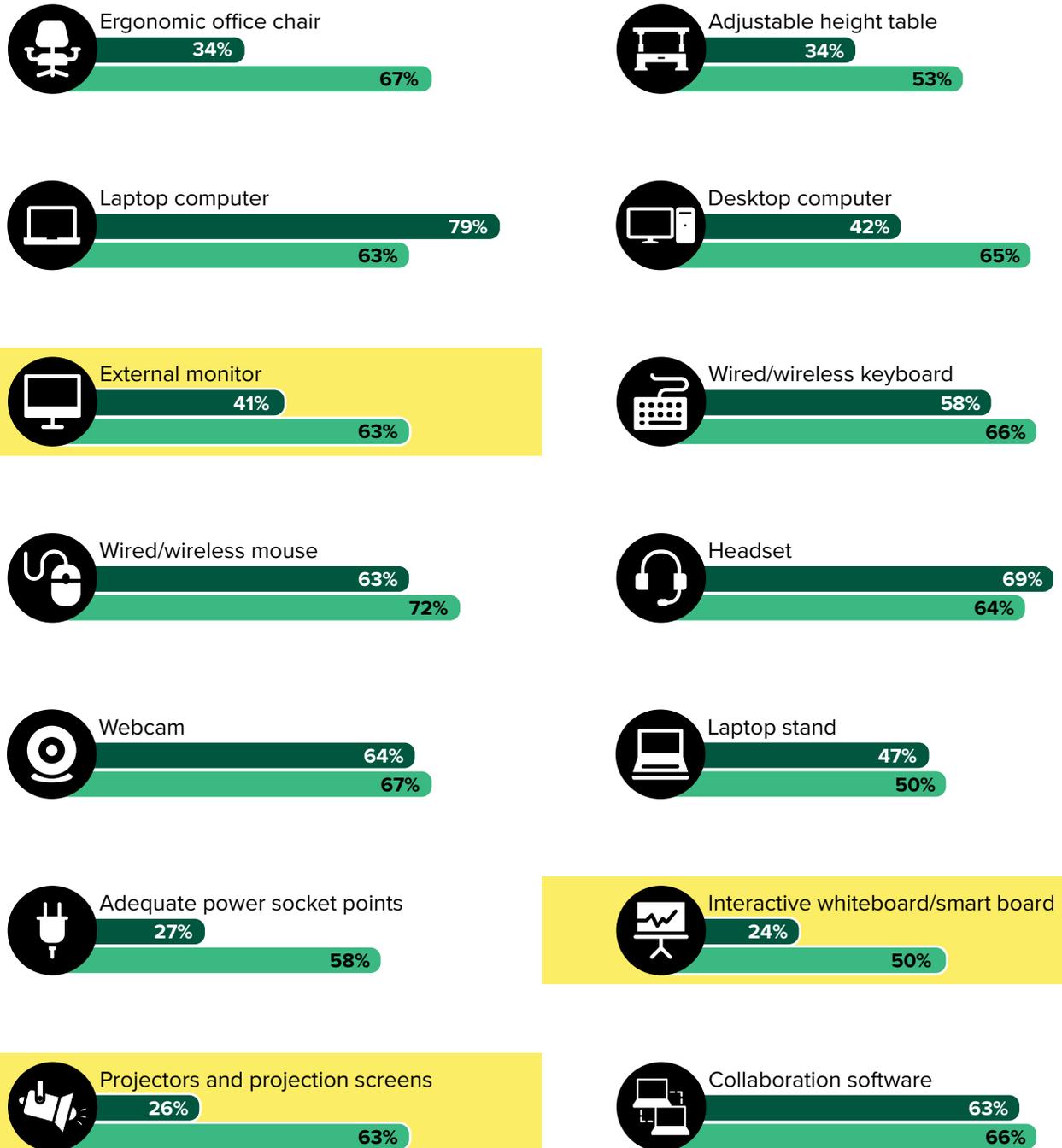
- **Employees, especially younger generations, demand greater choice in their workspace technology.** By 2030, organisations will have to grapple with a workplace in which three generations (Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z) hold a significant proportion of the working population, but one in which Gen Z and Millennials dominate (74%). Both Gen Z and Millennial workers are more likely to want autonomy when it comes to choosing the technology they use: 65% of Millennial workers and 66% of Gen Z workers thought it was important to have autonomy in choosing the devices, apps, and services that they use for work.<sup>9</sup> Forrester's EX Index reveals that the second highest predictor of employee engagement is sufficient autonomy.<sup>10</sup>
- **The right technology positions organisation for successful hybrid work.** Provisioning or funding of technology devices is critical for organisations to serve their employees. Our survey revealed a high adoption (>60%) of traditional hardware, such as laptop computers, headsets, and webcams, for in-office and remote workers. However, technology devices that have correlation to productivity and the quality of employee experience, such as external monitors, projectors/projector screens, and interactive whiteboards/smart boards, were among technology devices least provided or funded by employers for work purposes (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

“Based on your understanding, which of the following technologies/devices does your organisation provide or fund employees for work purposes?”

● Remote-working/Home setup

● On-site/Office setup



Base: 163 business and IT decision-makers and influencers responsible for their organisations' employee well-being, end-user device purchasing, and/or workplace design

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of ViewSonic, August 2022

For technology devices that improve employee productivity and well-being but are least provided or funded, we asked decision-makers what features and characteristics they're looking for. We found that they want technology that:

- **Helps employees multitask more easily.** Employees can save time and increase productivity if they can multitask easily. Surveyed decision-makers shared that external monitors with the appropriate size (53%) and shape (47%) can reduce time spent scrolling or switching between windows, allow users to open multiple windows at the same time, and display additional information or scripts when collaborating.
- **Increases collaboration across remote and in-office employees.** Improving team participation in a hybrid environment is crucial. Surveyed decision-makers indicated that an interactive whiteboard that offers high voice and audio quality (58%), touch control and writing (53%), and multidevice connectivity (50%) can visualise concepts, data, and figures digitally; bring together in-room participants; and allow real-time collaboration.
- **Enables employees to traverse office boundaries.** Employees no longer make presentations in the same office in a hybrid work arrangement. With the aid of a portable (44%) and simple-to-use (37%) projector, employees can easily adapt to a variety of office circumstances and capabilities, stated by surveyed respondents. Employees can benefit from additional screen real estate and bring presentations to life without taking up too much space, allowing better utility of the room space.

## Key Recommendations

Rapid changes in where and how we work — from pandemic lockdowns to return-to-office efforts that focus mostly on hybrid models — have initiated a redefinition of what an office is that will take years to complete. Many organisations have been engaging with their employees to figure out creative ways to keep them productive while caring for their well-being.

Forrester's in-depth survey about the future of work yielded several important recommendations:

### **Turn your future office into a networked employee engagement engine.**

The investments you make to transform your office should focus on an overarching goal: to construct an engagement engine that empowers employees wherever they are working at any given point in time.<sup>11</sup> Make anywhere work into a strategic competency by piloting different models of office work and changing variables like the frequency of attendance, room types, workstations devices, and scheduling technologies to drive flexibility, productivity, and employee satisfaction. Engineer punctuated in-person moments with a clear purpose so that when people go to the office, they have an experience that's different from working from home. And combine virtual and physical experiences for company on-site meetings to foster human connections.

### **Apply human-centred customer experience (CX) techniques to understand the value of employee engagement and its drivers.**

More firms are investing in understanding employee engagement and using scientific approaches to better grasp what drives or inhibits it. Forrester's EX Index can guide your efforts with unique insight into how different factors impact engagement.<sup>12</sup> Customer-obsessed firms create differentiation by understanding their customer journeys and reframing the opportunities to create more customer value. A similar approach works for understanding employee journeys, but with one important difference. Employee journey mapping can reveal systemic factors that inhibit employees' effectiveness in

their daily work — factors that lie outside any individual employee's control. By discovering what they are and improving them, you can make steady gains in employee engagement.<sup>13</sup>

**Boost collaboration and well-being by designing emotions into organisational processes.**

Organisations should aim for collaboration that reduces the presence of negative emotions and instead invites positive impacts on employee well-being. Collaborative environments are either red zones or green zones according to how much they promote more negative or positive attitudes toward collaboration.<sup>14</sup> Red zones are environments that are low on trust, optimism, and goodwill — people tend to turn to shame and blame when projects fail. Green zones, however, are where collaboration is valued and people achieve results through a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to excellence.<sup>15</sup> Consider what changes to make to the organisational environment reach people in meaningful ways when their negative emotions still inhibit them.

**Tech supports a collaboration-by-design strategy; it isn't the strategy itself.**

Once you have designed an emotion-first approach to collaboration, you can build the technology approach to support it, rather than thinking that technology will solve the emotional issues.<sup>16</sup> Getting the right technology mix is important to keep employees engaged and happy in their work. Technology devices that enable flexibility and autonomy will help level the playing field, providing a common experience for in-office, home, and flex workers. To ease new technology adoption, training, and coaching are needed to enhance digital know-how.

## Appendix A: Methodology

In this study, Forrester conducted an online survey of 163 business and IT decision-makers and influencers at organisations in APAC, Europe, and North America to evaluate workspace strategy and technology. Questions provided to the participants asked about current workspace design strategy, benefits, challenges, opportunities, future needs, and plans. Respondents were offered a small incentive as a thank-you for time spent on the survey. The study began and was completed in August 2022.

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### Contributing Research:

Forrester's Future of Work  
research group

## Appendix B: Demographics

REGION	
Europe	33%
APAC	34%
North America	33%

COMPANY SIZE	
500 to 999 employees	23%
1,000 to 4,999 employees	39%
5,000 to 19,999 employees	25%
20,000 or more employees	13%

INDUSTRY	
Financial services and/or insurance	12%
Manufacturing and materials	12%
Technology and/or technology services	11%
Retail	10%
Other	54%

JOB FUNCTION	
Operations	17%
IT/security	17%
Finance/accounting	9%
Customer experience	7%
Other	42%

RESPONDENT LEVEL	
C-level executive	15%
Vice president	23%
Director	34%
Manager	28%

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

## Appendix C: Supplemental Material

### RELATED FORRESTER RESEARCH

“Don’t Miss Your Anywhere-Work Opportunity,” Forrester Research, Inc., March 29, 2021.

“How To Make Hybrid Work,” Forrester Research, Inc., November 16, 2021.

## Appendix D: Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Source: Forrester Analytics Business Technographics, Workforce Survey, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Forrester Analytics Business Technographics, Workforce Survey, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Fully flexible hybrid work model is where employees have full autonomy to choose their working location and hours; fixed hybrid work model is where the organisation sets the days and times employees are allowed to work remotely or in the office.

<sup>4</sup> Source: “Employee Experience Is A Business Imperative”, Forrester Research, Inc., May 13, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Source: “Hot Desks Or Ice-Cold Employee Experiences,” Forrester Research, Inc., May 26, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Source: “The Anywhere-Work Preflight Checklist,” Forrester Research, Inc., April 22, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Source: “Goodbye Desktop Engineering, Hello Digital Experience Architect,” Forrester Research, Inc., December 18, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Source: “The Forrester Guide To Equipping The Next-Gen Workforce,” Forrester Research, Inc., February 26, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Source: “Forrester’s EX Index: A Deeper Look At The Data,” Forrester Research, Inc., March 4, 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Source: “The Future Of The Office,” Forrester Research, Inc., September 7, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Source: “Forrester’s EX Index: A Deeper Look At The Data,” Forrester Research, Inc., March 4, 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Source: “The Future Of Work Starts Now,” Forrester Research, Inc., August 2, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Source: “Your Collaboration Process Only Gets You Halfway There,” Forrester Research, Inc., October 17, 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

### ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

Forrester provides independent and objective research-based consulting to help leaders deliver key transformation outcomes. Fueled by our customer-obsessed research, Forrester’s seasoned consultants partner with leaders to execute on their priorities using a unique engagement model that tailors to diverse needs and ensures lasting impact. For more information, visit [forrester.com/consulting](https://forrester.com/consulting).

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