A Sustainable Work Model: Towards Remote and in the Office Work

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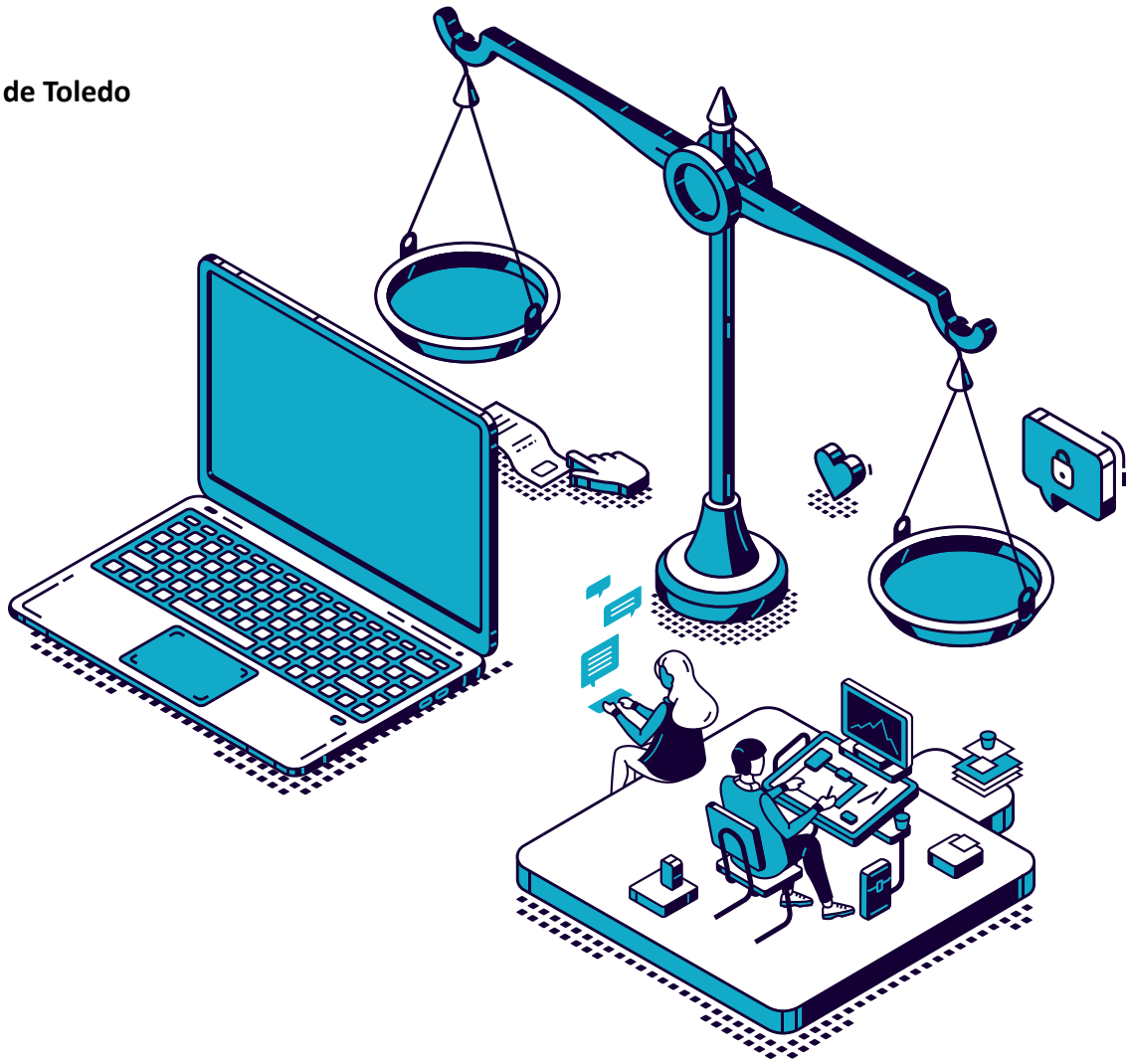

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Glossary

Agora: A gathering space, either open or semi-open, usually comprised of a system of modular tiers, which can be used for training sessions, presentations, or corporate events depending on their capacity. Coworking space: Offices that do not belong to the company (the employee), where people can work in exchange for a daily fee or any other commercial agreement.

Collaboration space: An open or semi-open place for teamwork with two or more people. There are numerous setups and features possible in this kind of space, giving rise to different kinds of meetings or group sessions. They usually house spontaneous, informal, unscheduled sessions.

Concentration space: A small enclosed space for one or two people with special soundproofing that ensures the silence, privacy, or confidentiality needed. This is a space that can be used for videoconferences and phone calls in order to avoid disrupting coworkers in the general workspace, as well as for individual or collaborative work sessions.

Added-value space: A complementary space meant to enrich the user experience which is beyond what is strictly needed for the business. Some of the common ones enable users to learn or share knowledge, co-create, socialize and interact with colleagues, specifically attend to customers and appointments, disconnect or take a break, innovate, or work with new methodologies.

Office: An enclosed, private workspace usually used by one person (sometimes shared by two).

Engagement: Commitment, motivation, and identification with the company's values. This concept is directly related to others such as emotional salary and pride of belonging.

Hub: A space set aside for innovation, usually extensively equipped with media and technology.

Agile methodologies: A set of methods to undertake projects that require speed and agility to adapt to the ever-changing conditions in the sector or market and that take advantage of these changes to gain a competitive edge. Even though these methods were created within the framework of software development, today many companies use them to internally improve their processes and to be able to innovate.

Flexible work model: A model in which there are fewer jobs than people to perform them because employees rotate remote work, and the entire staff does not go to the office at the same time.

Satellite (or remote) office: A workspace that belongs to the company but is not the space where the team is based; instead, the location matches employee needs out of convenience. Therefore, this is one of the forms of remote work.

Paperless office: An office model in which digitalizing processes and storage are preferred in order to reduce paper use, management, printing, and storage to the minimum possible.

Open-space office: An implementation model in which workstations are located in an open, shared area, without enclosed individual spaces or partitions separating them. The workstations can be assigned or not.

Clean-desk policy: A system which requires all objects and paperwork to be removed from each workstation at the end of the workday so that a different worker can use it next.

Job/Workstation: The activity or activities that a worker performs at a company for which they receive a given salary or wage, and the place where the worker does their job.

Differentiated workstation: A workstation located in an open area which has special, unique features different than the rest—it may be bigger, in a specific location, or near a collaboration space—which can be used preferentially.

Free-sitting workstation: A workstation available to anyone and that isn't associated with a specific employee. This requires a clean-desk policy.

Occupancy rate: A numerical figure which expresses the density of a given workspace via the area, in square feet or meters, that each workstation consumes over the total operating area and all the uses contained therein.

Meeting room: An enclosed space for collaborative work, usually for three or more people. Meeting rooms can have a wide variety of setups and features. They usually have to be reserved and are used for meetings or sessions that are scheduled in advance.

Remote work: Work done in a place other than the central office where the team's headquarters are located, such as a home office, a coworking space, or a satellite office.

Home office: This is one of kind of remote workspace, in which the worker performs their job in their own home. To do so, they can use their own furniture, furniture co-financed by the company, or company furniture.

Kitchen: An added-value space designed for having coffee or other beverages or food, but it can also be used in less busy hours for individual work that requires some concentration, informal gatherings, collaboration, socialization, etc.

Introduction

In recent years, we have witnessed a burgeoning interest in fostering remote work. With the development of communication tools, digitalization, the Internet, and cloud storage, it is increasingly easier to stay in touch and work remotely. However, there is no question that the global outbreak of COVID-19 has led millions of workers to work completely outside the space they are usually assigned in places like offices and factories.

The remote work we have experienced primarily stemmed from the health emergency and was not the outcome of a pilot program, as there was no time to test, program, or equip us with tools. Instead, it was a situation in which we worked from home, oftentimes without clearly predefined guidelines, without planned monitoring tools, and under time pressure and the fear caused by the uncertain course of the pandemic. Remote work has developed largely as the consequence of mobility restrictions because of widespread lockdowns and to avoid potential infection caused by proximity to people with COVID-19.

We at the International Center for Work and Family (ICWF, at IESE) have been talking about the potential benefits of remote work for years. We have long been steadfast advocates of remote work because of the unquestionably positive consequences it can have for workers, companies, and society. From our vantage point, it has always been viewed as a strategy to promote well-being, work-family balance, productivity, and sustainability.

In a 2013 study, among many conducted by the ICWF, we found that 16% of workers stated that their company offered them the possibility to work remotely some days. By 2015, this rate had risen to 29%, in 2017 it dropped to 20%, and then it held steady in 2019[1].

However, these figures were far from the real prevalence of remote work. According to the National Statistical Institute, 4.3% of Spanish workers worked remotely somewhat regularly in 2018 (Ministry of Labor and Social Security), a figure far behind the European countries where this practice is more advanced, especially in the Netherlands (14%) and Finland (13.3%). In figures from that same year, 2018, the difference was even greater in relation to occasional remote work: while in Spain the rate was 3.2%, in countries that were further along this road, like Sweden and Finland, the rates were 29.4% and 25%, respectively.

In conclusion, in recent years, Spain has lagged behind the majority of its neighboring countries in using remote work as a job-flexibility measure.

In this context, the opportunity arose to partner with the consultancy Savills Aguirre Newman to conduct this study on how to plan work from a sustainable perspective in all dimensions to seek a suitable balance between in-person and remote work. We are pleased to present this study as the outcome of this partnership.

As we are starting to return to the office, we can see that remote work experiences during the lockdown have reinforced some myths about workspaces. When trying to define new forms of work, we see how some beliefs about the benefits and risks of in-person work have become more prominent.

The purpose of this study is to offer a balanced view of the advantages and disadvantages of remote and in-person work. By doing so, we aim to foster a rational use of these spaces and improve the quality of life of employees and their families while contributing to achieving more sustainable and eco-friendly surroundings.

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[1] To consult these studies, see Las Heras (2021).

Spoiler alert: we want to warn readers that the perspective we support is that remote work, complemented by in-person work, brings the most advantages to all the aforementioned stakeholders: employees and their families, the company, and society as a whole.

Many of the figures we will show are primary sources; that is, we have collected them at the ICWF in studies conducted either previous to the ¬COVID-19 pandemic or during the lockdown (we will state this in each case). What we experienced during the health scare was not the ideal "cruise" that we all expected remote work to be. In reality, it was more like bailing water from a drifting boat with icebergs threatening both port and starboard. However, it has also taught us invaluable lessons that enable us to reflect on the real possibilities of remote work. We have the firm hope that we can use what we have all been through to develop greater resiliency among employees and companies alike, which adapt to circumstances, seek solutions, and align themselves around one goal: the common good.

We aim for this report to serve as a guide now that workers and employers do want to embark on a journey toward a new, more humane, and sustainable way of working.

Remote Work: Why Talk About It Now

When talking about remote work, we are referring to the dynamic which shifts from the office being the exclusive workspace to other spaces, home or elsewhere, being used as workspaces. In this regard, implementing remote work strategies can help rationalize the use of corporate spaces. However, even though everything is grouped under the umbrella term of "remote work," this kind of work may vary in its form and intensity. For example, some important factors around which it may vary are:

Factors of efficient remote work

- location: at home or in a coworking space;
- amount of time working remotely: from a few hours a week or an occasional day to 100% of the workweek;
- voluntary or mandatory, imposed by an exceptional situation such as COVID-19;
- flexible or rigid hours;
- permanent or alternative schemes, or with occasional adjustments.

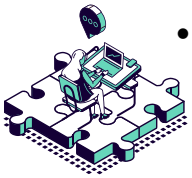
In addition to these factors or circumstances, there will be some cases and personal characteristics that facilitate or hinder the implementation of remote work. Therefore, when comparing the costs and benefits, the opportunities and the challenges of in-person versus remote work, it is important to consider these nuances. If you don't examine them, you could fall into generalizations, which tend to lead to mistakes and misunderstandings. In fact, these generalizations may be what gave rise to some of the myths.

The myths also emerge from resistance to changing the longstanding status quo in which established work patterns created a certain order. "You start at nine and leave at five." "You work from the office." "A workweek is forty hours." But why? Because at some point in history these patterns made sense and thus became treated as though they were in stone with no way to change them. Why forty hours? In Spain, it's because that number was approved in 1919. In the United States, it's apparently because Henry Ford discovered that productivity did not increase after forty hours per week (Rubio Hancock, May 1, 2019). In terms of why people work in offices, it's fairly clear: because until some fifteen years ago, it was the only way to access the means needed to perform the job—telephones, data, communication with customers, suppliers, colleagues, etc.

However, today we are living in a different world, and one that is substantially different from a century ago, when some of these practices were put into place. And well into the twenty-first century, as we are getting ready for post-pandemic life, it is absolutely imperative to adapt our customary practices to the new world. Later in this study, we will outline several practices that, in the author's opinion, are paradigmatic in our current environment. However, the goal is not to come up with a systematic or comprehensive classification. As readers will see, I try not to talk about VUCA [2] environments, a concept that has become so hackneyed and overused that it is no longer useful. Specifically, in my view, the following characteristics define our environment today:

[2] *VUCA* is an acronym used to reflect volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity in conditions and situations. The roots of VUCA are in the military: it was created within the military to describe the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of a post–Cold War world. The term began to be used widely in the 1990s. Later, it was transferred to the field of business strategy, where a VUCA environment is characterized by a high level of organizational instability.

Characteristics that define our environment today:



- **Technology that makes it possible to decentralize management.** The technological environment means that the productive capacity (of goods and services) can be carried out in a remote, decentralized fashion with very low mediation costs. This is possible because the repositories and other resources needed for production are often in the cloud, and everyone can access them easily, securely, and economically. Furthermore, communication and coordination are simple, accessible, and sustainable.
- **Acceleration of changes at work and in society.** Even though all historical periods have witnessed scientific, technological, philosophical, and other kinds of development, the past few decades are characterized not only by change but by the increasing pace of this change. We have seen a huge increase in the speed of innovation, the radicalness of changes, and the implementation of services.
- **Social—and legal—demand for transparency.** It is now possible to find out the entire scope of what companies do, as well as information on their managers, suppliers, products, production chains, alliances, etc. Furthermore, by ensuring that activities and businesses are conducted with integrity and in compliance with the regulations in force, compliance laws seek and demand greater transparency. This creates a mindset in people who want to know what is being done, and why and how it's being done. In this environment, saying that a procedure is done in a certain way "because it's always been done that way" is no longer sufficient.
- **Deglobalization process**—that is, the process by which economies and countries are trying to lower their interdependence and integration. It is estimated that 60% of the world economy was globalized until 2020. However, some people say that globalization began in 1492, with the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas, and although it has clearly sped up since the digitalization of communications, this process had already begun by the time the COVID-19 pandemic broke out (with populism, protectionism, and Brexit, for example). Deglobalization will probably lead to changes in businesses' strategies and an increase in costs that will be transferred to prices (due to lower productive efficiency).
- **Amplification of reality.** Today, what happens anywhere in the world can easily be reported on the other side of the globe. It can be seen, commented on, and discussed, and this has both positive and negative repercussions. Furthermore, companies are aware that their labor decisions, that is, their dealings with their internal customers, create an employee brand, which is also either positive or negative, and that this influences their ability to attract talent and the like.
- **An increasing concern with the environment and sustainability.** There is a steady increase in sensitivity to the environmental costs of operations and services. Workers, institutions, and governments want to produce and enjoy goods and services without compromising the future of our planet.
- **Radical awareness of the need for healthy environments.** The current pandemic has revealed that workplaces are crucial in preventing (or propagating) diseases. On the one hand, companies' responsibility to provide healthy environments—in the case of the pandemic, to not spread the virus—has become clear. On the other, after months of social isolation, it has also become apparent that the social interaction settings the work environment usually provides benefits social, psychological, and even physical well-being.

This environment requires changes in the way we work and the way work is organized, and in the conception of what is appropriate and even optimal for companies, employees, their families, and society at large.

Further outlining the organization of this study, the first part presents several myths around remote work along with data that enable us to analyze these beliefs. The second part analyzes the relationship between the new labor practices (which combine remote and in-person working) and sustainability, as defined by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The third part outlines four cases of companies that have evolved and adapted their workspaces and practices so they fit this environment. And throughout this study we will share interviews with experts in a variety of fields (psychology, psychiatry, smart cities, human resources management, and education and values, among others), who provide their vision of the topic at hand: a sustainable workplace. The report also includes interviews with four prominent business executives at companies that have adapted their workspaces and practices, which will also be explained. Finally, throughout these pages, readers will also find several brief tests they can take to help them learn more about themselves and evaluate their work and social environments. We hope the results are useful in thinking about how to get organized as we head into the future.

And now it's time: Have a good journey towards the era of sustainable work!

Did You Know…

…the majority of people do not spend their time according to their desired priorities?

When developing this report, we asked participants how much time (being realistic, and bearing in mind that they have to earn a living, get their work done, etc.) they would like to spend on each facet of their lives. Then we asked then how much time they actually spend on each of them.

The answers are shown in the table below. In light of these figures, it seems fairly clear that people would like to spend less time on work and more on other activities, including families, friends, and hobbies.

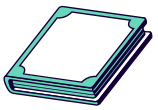
Table 1. Time dedicated to different activities vs. time desired

Activities	Average time dedicated	Average time they would like to dedicate
Family	22%	28%
Friends	11%	18%
Work	**51%**	**30%**
Hobbies	7%	12%
Religion	2%	3%
Sport	5%	9%

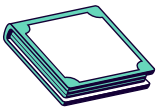
This study may give us some insight into how they can do this. Perhaps it's not about working less but about spending less time on work because, as we shall see, it's possible to save on commute and travel times. Or perhaps it's about having more flexibility, as we are no longer bound by standard workdays so we can attend to our responsibilities or needs that would otherwise be incompatible.

Regardless, we trust that the effort devoted to this study, the data it shares, and the guidelines this report offers will shed light that will lead us more clearly to this goal we're all yearning for.

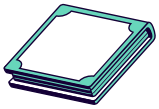
Note to readers about bibliographic references:



Many sections of this study refer to a number of studies conducted by IESE Business School's ICWF, as outlined below. These studies were made possible thanks to the inestimable cooperation of colleagues and friends, whom we would like to thank for their invaluable participation: María José Bosch, ESE Business School (Chile); Hugo Cruz, CIHE – Universidad del Istmo (Guatemala); Silvia Liñan, Concordia Bienestar y Productividad, and Magdalena Cedillos, IPADE Business School (Mexico); Juan Pablo López, Visum Consultores (Honduras); Carmen Irene López, Talento y Desarrollo (El Salvador); Pedro Sáenz, UNIFRANZ (Bolivia); and Beatriz Vegas, PAD Business School – Universidad de Piura (Peru).



Readers can find some of the information cited at the following website: https://mireialasheras.com/research-reports/teletrabajo/; other information is still pending approval for scholarly publications.



The studies cited are the following:

- **Remote Work Pilot Experience in a Multinational. Las Heras, M. © 2020 ICWF – IESE** Business School. In conjunction with Hugo Cruz, CIHE – Universidad del Istmo (Guatemala) and Bosch, M. J., ESE Business School – Universidad de los Andes (Chile). January 2020

  Study sample: 157 people who responded to a questionnaire for an average of 7.2 days, which resulted in 1,130 days reported. Date conducted: November 2019 to January 2020.

- **Working Remotely Under Extraordinary Conditions.** Las Heras, M. © 2020 ICWF – IESE Business School. In conjunction with Cruz, H., CIHE – Universidad del Istmo (Guatemala) & Bosch, M. J., ESE Business School – Universidad de los Andes (Chile). April 2020.

  Study sample: 757 people who responded to a questionnaire for an average of 4.2 days, which resulted in 3,166 days reported. Date conducted: March and April 2020.

- **Women and Men Working Remotely During COVID-19.** Las Heras, M., & Barraza, M. (IESE Business School). July 2020.
  In conjunction with Bosch, M. J., ESE Business School – Universidad de los Andes (Chile); Cruz, H., CIHE – Universidad del Istmo (Guatemala); Liñan, S., Concordia Bienestar y Productividad (Mexico); Cedillos, M., IPADE Business School (Mexico); López, J. P., Visum Consultores (Honduras); López, C. I., Talento y Desarrollo (El Salvador); Rosales, R., Universidad de Navarra (Nicaragua); Jiménez, N., & and Rodríguez, A. (Costa Rica); & Sáenz, P., UNIFRANZ (Bolivia).

  Sample: 756 people, with a total of 3,450 days reported.

- **Women and Men Working Remotely: How, When and Who. Benefits for the Company, Society, and Individuals.** Las Heras, M., & Barraza, M. (IESE Business School). July 2020.
  In conjunction with Bosch, M. J., ESE Business School – Universidad de los Andes (Chile); Cruz, H., CIHE – Universidad del Istmo (Guatemala); Liñan, S., Concordia Bienestar y Productividad (Mexico); Cedillos, M., IPADE Business School (Mexico); López, J. P., Visum Consultores (Honduras); López, C. I., Talento y Desarrollo (El Salvador); Rosales, R., Universidad de Navarra (Nicaragua); Sáenz, P., UNIFRANZ (Bolivia); & Vegas, B., PAD Business School – Universidad de Piura (Peru).

  Sample: 2,690 people, with a total of 11,500 days reported. Ninety-eight percent of the participants are from Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Spain, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru.

Expert Opinion

Oscar Gallego

Private equity and technology consultant, chair of boards of directors, industrial consultant, and expert in exponential technologies

Trends in the Working World

In your opinion, what are the main global trends that will affect the future of work worldwide in the coming months/years?

Beyond the economic, social, and political trends associated with minimum income, globalization, populism, and climate change, among others, and from the digital perspective, including the impact of COVID-19, there are three key trends which are going to affect the future of work:

- So-called 360º workspaces and 24/7 workdays. We can and will be able to work better anywhere, anytime. Contracts between employers and employees have to be redefined in order to guarantee that the work tools are appropriate and that it is possible to keep a healthy balance between personal life and work.
- Exponential technologies (artificial intelligence, blockchain, and quantum computing). These tools are going to exponentially increase our ability to make decisions based on data models and analytics, and much more quickly, which will raise the need for new types of professionals who shift from managing the life cycle of goods and services to managing business models based on data and their associated, ever-changing organization.
- Data-driven bottom lines. The possibilities of affordably accessing data storage and processing, and ultimately using exponential technologies, will boost our ability to quickly detect an increase or drop in productivity or income/profit earned, which in turn will entail considerable growth in job flexibility according to increasingly objective, real-time parameters.

How will these trends affect employees and their careers? How can professionals prepare themselves to be more employable in the future?

Everything will depend on the employee's ability to learn. The digital world makes extensive, detailed, high-quality training on almost any topic possible at a low cost (the long-tail effect). Workers have to analyze their own value constantly and acquire abilities where they notice any shortcomings. The idea that "my company has to train me" is no longer valid; instead, now we have to switch to "I independently train myself in topics of personal value that can bring my company added value." Employees will be more flexible according to their ability to learn independently and their flexibility in gaining a solid footing in rapidly changing fields of work.

The worker of the future will go from "having a job and a role" to "having projects and employers," even within the same company. The important thing will no longer be the role but the ability to bring value wherever the data models point to, and therefore one's personal brand is essential. The most employable professionals of the future will be those who accelerate the shift from digitalization (data models, digital density, exponential technologies, etc.), not those who just manage it (mere execution).

“The worker of the future will go from 'having a job and a role' to 'having projects and employers'”

You work in the field of digitalization. Do you think that face-to-face interactions will be important in the future of work? If so, why?

Face-to-face interactions are absolutely essential in work both today and in the future. This becomes clear when productivity drops in the absence of these interactions and rises when in-person interactions are interspersed according to a schedule. The issue is not whether face-to-face interactions are needed but how to schedule them so that, along with remote interactions, productivity and job well-being not only don’t diminish but actually increase. Work is bimodal, both in-person and remote, and therefore we should strive to find the right balance in line with the needs of individuals as well as the business as a whole.

Will there be offices, stores, and headquarters in the future? How will they be used? What will they look like?

Of course they’ll exist, but more as the sites of gatherings and experiences than as sedentary workplaces. They will be continuations of our households, not barren spaces; they’ll be flexible places where several people can meet, but they will also be adaptable to private uses. Offices will be meeting points where we can work collectively and co-create, but not places we have to go “just because.”

How do you lead people you don’t see? What competencies are going to become more important?

Remote leadership requires calendar discipline; prior preparation and subsequent follow-up via effective, efficient written communication; and especially frequent telephone conversations or video calls more than an avalanche of emails. Productive communicative skills are coming to the fore since in-person “manipulation,” if ever used, is no longer effective. The objective matters more than the subjective; the content matters more than the form. Everything is more businesslike and productive and less personalized. And as I said before, it’s essential to strike a balance between in-person and remote interactions so that the worker and the work benefit in both circumstances.

Looking toward the future of work, is there any good news?

Everything I’ve cited so far is good, and I would add the gradual liberalization of administrative and process-based tasks in favor of automatic means and exponential data analysis, which enable more time to be spent on prescription as opposed to prediction or description.

Do you have any recommendations for companies and managers that are planning future workspaces and policies for their employees?

To apply the maxims of some of the best companies in the world (both old and new) like P&G, HP, GE, and Google, provide (talented) professionals with all the resources possible, because their output will always be greater than the input required.

“Offices will be meeting points where we can work collectively and co-create, but not places we have to go 'just because'”

PART ONE

Myths About Remote and Office-Based Work

Myth #1: Everyone Wants to Work Remotely All the Time

One common belief is that everyone wants to work remotely. And that they want to do so full time. However, this is not true (Las Heras & Barraza, July 2020). Not everyone wants to work remotely all the time.

Full-time remote work comes with many social costs for the person doing it. It fosters a sedentary lifestyle, as they don't have to commute to work, and it can lead to social isolation, perhaps the biggest drawback of 100% online work.

In our surveys, we found that employees rate the "quality of their interactions with their colleagues" as 10% less "satisfactory" on the days they work from home than when they work at the office. This is not because there are misunderstandings but because of the lack of face-to-face interaction. They are missing the cues that we all give via our expressions, gestures, and tone of voice. We don't run into people in the hallway or at the coffee machine. There's no lunch-table conversation. If remote work is done sporadically, just a few days a week, it's not such a big deal; in fact, workers even like it. They appreciate less interaction, a bit of silence, more possibilities for inner dialogue. But when it's done full time, every day of the week, it can be very negative for the workers' mood and for psychological and social health.

Full-time remote work can lead to the tedium that's natural in someone who is always in the same physical location. It can be viewed as a type of internment dictated not by laws but by job requirements.

A 100% remote job can lead to conditions in which the worker disconnects from the work environment and lacks commitment and alignment with the brand and its values. Although it is true that culture is not only conveyed in person, being there in person does facilitate it. People notice how employees and customers are treated, who is given a bigger budget, a fringe benefit, or a larger or smaller office. And all of this ultimately conveys underlying values of integrity, commitment, quality, etc.—or, conversely, of detachment, sloppiness, and carelessness; of greed, because not all cultures are positive, and when they aren't, it's probably best not to convey them.

Working remotely full-time can bring a host of disadvantages. First, commuting to work offers employees the chance to move their bodies, and while this may seem disadvantageous if they have to do it every day, if they never have to, that can have a negative effect on their physical and psychological health. The time spent on commutes serves as a transition when they can think, read, listen to music or audiobooks, disconnect, talk on the phone, and the like. Eliminating these transitional times completely can have effects counter to those desired and expected.

In turn, a completely remote job with a great deal of pressure could make it difficult to disconnect and integrate work and family in a healthy way. This is particularly true in intellectual jobs that require concentration, where time "flies." Workers could end up isolating themselves

from their social and family milieu, leading to problems of workaholism and burnout, precisely the opposite of what is desired.

Furthermore, according to Nacho Coller (see the interview below), people who want to work remotely all the time are perhaps those who most need interaction, social learning, sharing, listening, and developing shared work competencies .

R Reality #1: Only 12% of Workers Want to Work Remotely Every Day

The reality is that just 12% of people would like to work remotely all five days in the workweek. According to our figures:

What is the profile of the employees who prefer to work remotely every day?

- most are women (64%) with a mean age of 39
- 70% are married or have a steady partner
- 58% have children
- 56% have been working at their company for four years or more

Of all the reasons cited, the most important one is the ability to take better care of their families. The most common arguments for working at home every day are:

The most common arguments for working at home everyday:

"To be able to take care of my family better" (61%).

"To save money on transportation" (48%).

"To have the chance to do a sport or a hobby" (48%).

In our analysis, we found that 7% of respondents want to work remotely only one day a week, 32% want to two days a week, 36% want to three days, and 9% want to work remotely four days a week. Only 12% want to work remotely every day. And a much smaller percentage, a mere 4%, never want to work remotely.

Working partially, or some days, from an alternative location is what makes the most sense to get the job done smoothly, maintain social contact, create relationships, learn what other colleagues are doing, and exchange knowledge, while also having a private space.

In the interview we held with Jordi Llargués, strategic facility manager at Bayer (see below), he explains that his company has decided to let employees choose how they work, with the possibility of going to the corporate office a certain number of days per week. As of this writing, the company is forecasting that 20% will choose full-time at the office, but that this percentage will gradually drop over time.

Table 2 shows the data collected from all the participants surveyed.

Table 2. Desired Number of Days of Remote Work

Days	Percentage
0	4%
1	7%
2	32%
3	36%
4	9%
5	12%

Just as 20% of the Bayer employees have chosen to work at the office five days a week, in our study we found that only 4% of the participants surveyed said that they wanted to go back to working 100% of the time at the office, citing the following reasons[3]:

Reasons for always wanting (4%) to work from home:

"At home I don't have the means I need to do my job remotely" (61%) .

"I lead a team and it's better if I'm there" (54%)

[3] Logically, these percentages do not total 100, since a person can prefer remote work for more than one reason, and there were other options on the questionnaire that were seldom chosen.

With regard to the preference for working in the office with the argument that "I have my team there," we should note that this will gradually diminish in the new reality. Team members will often be working both in-person and remotely. Likewise, even those working in-person will not necessarily be physically together.

At Metro de Madrid, Teresa Sancho, the head of Internal Communication (see interview below), explains that in her company, the pandemic has accelerated the change in mindset. Before, the goal was for most employees in the same job category and department and with the same responsibilities to be near each other. Now they have seen that this isn't necessary, that another way of working is possible, and that many employees are no longer willing to work under the old model that was inflexible with regard to times and spaces and that fostered neither autonomy nor empowerment.

Did You Know...

...The desire to work remotely does not depend on age?

Sometimes we think that not wanting to work remotely is associated with certain age groups, but this is false. As shown in **Table 3**, which illustrates the data collected from the participants in our study, on average all age groups want to work remotely the same number of days. Interesting but true!

Table 3. Desired Number of Days of Remote Work By Age Group

Days	20-30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	50-60 years
0	0%	5%	3%	5%
1	7%	3%	7%	14%
2	42%	31%	34%	24%
3	35%	34%	34%	40%
4	7%	10%	9%	6%
5	9%	17%	13%	11%

Expert Opinion

Isabella Meneghel

PhD in occupational psychology, and psychology professor at the International University of Catalonia (Barcelona)

The Psychology of In-Person and Remote Work

Why do so many of us want to return to in-person work? What are we missing in online interactions?

There are different reasons we need in-person work, and the main one is the fact that we are undeniably social creatures. Interpersonal relationships are essential to our well-being, and this includes at work as well. The field of positive psychology has extensively studied interpersonal relationships and shown that people are much happier when they have good relationships with others. Micro moments of happiness when we feel meaningfully connected to others, not only personally but also at work, are part of that well-being, and this is very difficult to maintain online, where contact, spontaneity, and nonverbal communication are missing.

What do in-person (vs. online) meetings and work contribute to communication and well-being?

In-person meetings feature a series of components in the sphere of nonverbal communication that are more difficult to manage in an online format. In face-to-face communication, even silences and pauses are normal, while in the virtual environment such otherwise natural occurrences can make people question whether there are technical issues. On the other hand, the way you approach a day you're going to work in person is different than a day you're going to work remotely. In person there are plenty of informal moments, like when workers are on their way to a meeting or going to get a coffee and running into a colleague from another department. Likewise, changing environments and physical spaces, and moving around in general, contribute to greater creativity than if we're in the same place all day long attending one meeting after another, or if we just don't have time to mentally disconnect between tasks.

What role do generational differences play (more junior vs. senior workers) in adapting to remote communication?

Generally speaking, the more junior workers adapt better to remote interactions simply because they may be more familiar with the technology than their senior counterparts. However, this doesn't mean that they don't need social contact. In fact, the younger they are, the more important peer groups are.

However, it is also important to note that this greater ease in adapting to digital communication has its downside for younger workers in that they spend much more time connected online, which can have a negative effect on their mental health.

> **"Interpersonal relationships are essential to our well-being, and this includes at work as well"**

> **“In person there are plenty of informal moments, changing environments and physical spaces, and moving around in general, contribute to greater creativity than if we’re in the same place all day long ”**

In your opinion, can too much remote work, remote studying, and remote interactions lead to social problems?

Technology allows us to be accessible 24/7. However, disconnecting is essential. Hyperconnectivity leads to cognitive overload and causes stress and even disorders or difficulties setting boundaries with colleagues, bosses, and friends.

It can also lead to a kind of dissonance because on the one hand we’re super connected, or so it seems, yet on the other we may get a sense of isolation or loneliness, because exclusively virtual relationships do not have the physical contact needed for empathy and trust to develop.

What risks does 100% remote online work pose to people compared to in-person work? What about 100% in-person compared to online?

It’s tricky to talk about risks because each person’s adaptation experiences when coping with a situation always depends on how they manage to adjust to the demands they perceive in that situation and the resources they are equipped with to deal with it. This is why we all react differently when faced with the same circumstance. It changes according to the personal, psychological, mental, and social capabilities and resources we have to deal with the demands of situations and contexts.

In work done 100% online, the most obvious risk is the sense of isolation—a loss in the quality of interpersonal relationships, disconnection, or not feeling part of the organization. It is also important to keep in mind that work environments are closely related to the organization’s culture. That’s why there has to be trust for people to be able to work remotely; company leaders have to be ready for it, so human resources management mechanisms are needed that do not rely solely on working in person .

In terms of people who work in person 100% of the time, perhaps we should highlight the sense of a lack of flexibility, the difficulty balancing work and personal life, and the stress that commutes between work and home (such as traffic jams) can cause.

> **“There has to be trust for people to be able to work remotely; company leaders have to be ready for it, so human resources management mechanisms are needed that do not rely solely on working in person ”**

Myth #2:
Everyone Can Work Remotely

Given that working remotely means that the job does not require an in-person presence, there are many jobs that simply cannot be done this way, or which lose too much of their added value if they are done remotely.

Occupations that cannot be done remotely

- personal care jobs, like hairdressers, massage therapists, dentists, caregivers for the elderly or dependents, surgeons, etc.; and
- jobs that require physical manipulation, like car mechanics, crop or livestock farmers, assemblers, cleaners, maintenance workers, gardeners, builders, etc.

Jobs that lose part of their added value

- those in which the affective-social component is extremely important, such as consultants, therapists, and teachers at nursery schools, elementary schools, and universities; and
- •those that require immediate cooperation, such as team sports.

R Reality #2
Support from a Worker's Boss, Colleagues, and Partner at Home Facilitate Effective Remote Work

There are other factors that help people effectively work remotely. They include personal characteristics like the ability to manage themselves, their supervisor's leadership style, and their boss's support to work remotely. In our data, we have found that the benefits of working from home increase when these conditions are met.

Our studies reveal that the support workers receive from their boss, their partner, and their colleagues is crucial to effective remote working.

Below we outline these independently.

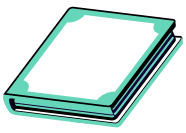
Support from the Boss

Support from a worker's boss means the supervisor's willingness to support remote work and the assistance they provide in solving any problems that arise. In our data, we see that workers who have strong support from their supervisor can increase the benefits of remote work.

Table 4. Supervisor Support

Level	Low	High	Diff.
Flow at work	5.86	6.65	13%
Job crafting	5.7	6.6	16%
Playful work design	6.55	7.56	15%
Energy accumulation at work	7.55	8.26	9%
Positive emotions at work	6.55	7.62	16%

Furthermore, in the studies cited at the beginning of this report, we at the ICWF know that:



- the performance of an employee working remotely increases an average of 19% when they have strong support from their supervisor;
- an employee working at the office with little support shows 18% lower job quality than someone working remotely with strong support;
- an employee's energy increases 23% when they work remotely and have strong support from their supervisor (compared to someone working at the office without their supervisor's support).

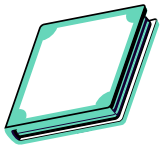
Support from People in the Remote Worker's Social Milieu

Within the role of the people in the online worker's social milieu, support from their partner stands out. This support translates as their partner's sensitivity to the fact that they need to tend to their work and family needs. In the latest study conducted by the ICWF, cited above, we measured partners' willingness to help the worker take care of their personal and work responsibilities. The results show that anyone who has strong backing from their partner also finds more advantages to working remotely.

Table 5. Partner Support

Nivel	Bajo	Alto	Dif.
Flow at work	6.09	6.43	5%
Job crafting	6.04	6.51	8%
Playful work design	6.66	7.51	13%
Energy accumulation at work	7.7	8.22	7%
Positive emotions at work	6.61	7.64	16%

One of the aforementioned ICWF studies found that:



- an employee working at an office who has a low level of support from their partner shows 18% lower performance than someone working remotely with strong partner support;
- partner support increases the quality of employees' work, especially when they work remotely—An employee working at the office with low partner support shows 15% lower quality work than someone working remotely with strong support;

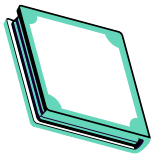
Support from Colleagues

Support from colleagues measures the team's support to facilitate remote work and solve any problems that arise. That is, it evaluates behaviors and attitudes toward those who choose to work from an alternative location. Just as with supervisor support, we have observed that people with a higher level of support from their colleagues are those who benefit the most from the positive results of remote working.

Table 6. Support From Colleagues

Level	Low	High	Diff.
*Flow at work (*Fluir en el trabajo)	5.76	6.64	15%
Job crafting (Adaptación al puesto de trabajo)	5.33	6.41	20%
Playful work design (Ludificación del puesto de trabajo)	6.48	7.3	13%
Acumulación de energía en el trabajo	7.7	8.04	4%
Emociones positivas en el trabajo	6.6	7.27	10%

In one of the aforementioned studies conducted by the ICWF, we found that:



- an employee working at the office with a low level of colleague support performs 16% less than one working remotely with a high level of support;
- the quality of work of people working remotely increases 11% when they have strong support from their colleagues (compared to those who do not have that support);

Test 1

What Level of Support Do You Have from Your Boss, Your Partner, and Your Colleagues?

To what extent do you agree with the following statements, in which:
1 = Not at all true
5 = Somewhat true
10 = Completely true

My supervisor ...

S1	understands my needs.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
S2	gets upset because I have responsibilities outside work (e.g., family, health, etc.) and uses them against me.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
S3	supports me in my effort to combine in-person and remote work.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
S4	expects and demands that I put my work responsibilities before anything else in my life.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
S5	takes an interest in my opinions on how I can best do my job and reach goals.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
S6	checks up on me if I work remotely.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

My partner ...

P1	understands my needs.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
P2	gets upset because I have responsibilities outside our family and relationship (e.g., job, health, etc.) and uses them against me.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
P3	supports me in my effort to combine in-person and remote work.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
P4	expects and demands that I put my family responsibilities before anything else in my life.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
P5	takes an interest in my opinions on how we can best organize ourselves as partners (family) and is willing to compromise on their preferences.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
P6	expects me to simultaneously attend to household (and family) needs if I work from home (remotely).	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

My work colleague(s) ...

C1	understand(s) my needs.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
C2	get(s) upset because I have responsibilities outside work (e.g., family, health, etc.) and use(s) them against me.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
C3	support(s) me in my effort to combine in-person and remote work.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
C4	require(s) my presence (e.g., at meetings) even when it's not needed and I could attend remotely.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
C5	is/are willing to listen to my opinions on how best to organize ourselves as a team.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
C6	get(s) upset if I work remotely.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

Test 1 (continued)

RESULTS

Calculation of support level

- From the supervisor: (S1 + S3 + S5) − (S2 + S4 + S6)
- From the partner: (P1 + P3+ P5) − (P2 + P4 + P6)
- From work colleagues: (C1 + C3 + C5) − (C2 + C4 + C6)

Individual interpretation of the results in any of the three areas

- Between 20 and 27: The level of support you have in this area is very high. This helps allow you to alternate remote and in-person work often.
- Between 10 and 19: The level of support you have in this area is acceptable. This helps allow you to alternate remote and in-person work somewhat frequently. Try to encourage it to continue growing. Oftentimes, the best way to do this is by offering your direct support for others and communicating very transparently.
- Between 0 and 9: The level of support you have in this area is very low. This will make it difficult for you to alternate remote and in-person work somewhat frequently. Try to encourage it to continue growing. Oftentimes, the best way to do this is by offering your direct support for others and communicating very transparently.
- Negative level in any of the areas: In this case, it is important to seek the causes behind this lack of support, this absence of empathy. Is there anything you can do to change the situation and help the other party or parties grow in this sense? If the answer is no, perhaps you could consider, if feasible, a change in job, boss, etc.

Joint interpretation of the results in any of the three dimensions (supervisor + partner + work colleague support)

- Between 60 and 81: The level of support you have is very high. This helps you work well in a hybrid fashion, some days remotely and others at the office. Never stop offering others support and experimenting with hours and with the mix (percentage) of days you work remotely and at the office (if possible). Share the benefits and your good practices in doing this. Be aware of ergonomics when working remotely.
- Between 30 and 59: The level of support you have is acceptable. If the support you receive inside and outside work is not what you need, take measures to try to increase it where it is lowest. Never stop sharing the benefits and finding ways to keep improving the support you receive. Offer support, communicate your needs, and be transparent about what you need and what you can give.
- Between 10 and 29: The level of support you have is very low. Never stop working to make space by inviting people (your boss, a colleague, your partner) to reflect on the benefits of a job where remote and office work are compatible and in synergy with each other.
- Less than 9 (or even negative): You have a rigid environment which requires much more understanding and empathy. Perhaps the work schemes are archaic. Can you change your company, your work team, your boss?

Did You Know…

…The preference for compartmentalizing is found in males and females of all age brackets except ages 40 to 50?

Generally speaking, women have a lower desire or preference for compartmentalizing; that is, for setting boundaries between work and family life. Women feel more comfortable than men playing several different active roles simultaneously, especially mother and professional. However, men don't. They prefer to compartmentalize their roles and keep them separate. The exception is the age bracket form 40 to 50, where both men and women feel fairly comfortable playing more than one active role. In this case, 63% of men and women say that they prefer not to compartmentalize their lives.

When evaluating this preference for compartmentalizing, we find that it drops in women as they get older, as shown in the table below:

Table 7. Preference for Segmenting By Age and Gender

Men			Women		
Age group	**Yes**	**No**	**Age group**	**Yes**	**No**
20-30 years	63%	37%	20-30 years	54%	46%
30-40 years	44%	56%	30-40 years	40%	60%
40-50 years	37%	63%	40-50 years	37%	63%
50-60 years	52%	48%	50-60 years	38%	62%
60 or above	39%	61%	60 or above	25%	75%

Generally speaking, people who prefer to compartmentalize their lives feel less comfortable working remotely, especially if they are working from home. Curiously, men and women aged 20 to 30 have the strongest preference for compartmentalizing their lives, that is, for separating their work life from other areas. This has become clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, when universities were forced to continue classes remotely for months, with the consequent demoralization which oftentimes translated into drop-outs (Ibáñez, November 29, 2020; Silió, November 2, 2020).

Expert Opinion

Esther Jiménez

Vice chancellor and dean of the faculty of education at the International University of Catalonia

Remote Learning *vs.* In-Person Learning

What are the risks to learning of going 100% remote?

It's clear that remote work brings major advantages in working and being able to integrate family and personal life, in addition to the many positive effects it has for society as a whole and especially for the environment. However, along with its many benefits, a 100% remote job can also have drawbacks. The absence of interpersonal relationships may limit the capacity to innovate, creativity, and learning that come from communication and the exchange of ideas. Direct contact with colleagues can also enhance emotional health.

How do people learn, and how are competencies developed?

People learn by being curious, by developing the ability to acquire new knowledge. To do so, it is essential to have initiative, self-control, determination, etc. Developing these competencies requires us to be open to change, to acquiring or changing habits, to getting out of our comfort zone, and to learning about our strengths and limitations.

What qualities in leaders help others develop competencies?

Leaders develop their workers' competencies when they know how and to whom to delegate. To do so, they have to know their employees well and to know what, when, and how to communicate; to manage time well so that the team reaches its objectives; and to create a sense of trust, which means that they have to anticipate the consequences of making decisions and behave with integrity, responsibility, and fairness in any situation.

Might there be characteristics in the physical environment that facilitate or hinder someone's ability to learn and develop competencies?

Whether we like it or not, the physical environment conditions our behavior. For over a century we have known that the physical conditions of work have psychological effects. The light, space, or colors can create an atmosphere of harmony which stimulates attention and concentration, or conversely, they can hinder the full development of our talent. The great contemporary pedagogues and architects have repeatedly stressed the importance of integrating the space as yet another learning tool.

Do you think there are characteristics that lead some people to learn better in person and others online?

Temperament influences us when we work either in-person or remotely. Some people are more introverted and systematic, and they may feel more comfortable working remotely. As I said before, learning involves flexibility and the capacity to adapt in order to learn new habits. In this sense, combining these two forms of work helps us develop a wider range of competencies because they force us to call our different types of talent into play.

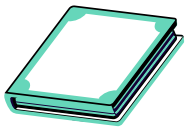
Do you have any recommendations for companies thinking about how to design the "work of the future"?

I think that the hybrid model is the future. In-person work brings a sense of community and belonging, which helps solve difficult problems and create new things, while remote work allows for greater flexibility and management capacity. Without a doubt, this is a revolution that will change the shape of our cities.

Myth #3
Performance Is Lower with Remote Work

One of the most widespread myths about remote work is that people work less and perform worse when the boss isn't there, that is, when they work remotely. However, a study conducted by the IWCF (Las Heras et al., February 2020) found that when people work remotely two to three days a week, performance improves on those days (up to 19%), and so does the quality of work (up to 18%).

Conditions for efficient remote work:



- having the support of a supervisor, colleagues, and family;
- being able to work remotely under optimal conditions: not having dependents to care for at home, having a good Internet connection, etc.;
- working remotely because it is feasible;

There are other studies that have analyzed this topic, such as the one by professors Hunton & Norman (2010), who found that when working remotely in combination with in-person work done at the office, performance is better than when working exclusively at the office. They also found that working remotely the entire week is less productive than working entirely at the office. Likewise, they detected that remote work increases productivity because it increases commitment to the company. That is, it improves commitment because the desires to continue working with the company and to contribute both grow, as does a sense of belonging.

Our data also show that flexible remote work schemes can have positive consequences for the company, such as:

Consequences of efficient remote work:

- an increase of up to 10% in the pride of belonging to the company, and
- an increase of up to 9% in the willingness to do what the company or customers need.
- an increase in productivity (19%) and quality of work (18%) on days when working remotely if this is done two or three days per week.

There are many reasons why people work. One is extrinsic motivation: we are motivated by what we are going to receive in exchange. This leads us to invest effort, time, and energy to receive money, recognition, or fringe benefits in return. But we also work for many other reasons, such as to gain intrinsic benefits from the work itself: the satisfaction of learning, of meeting and interacting with people we like to be in touch with, of developing skills and seeing new places. And there's the transcendental motivation—to have a positive impact on others, to make their lives better, to improve their health (especially for healthcare professionals), to help others learn and have opportunities to improve their lives, to give them something that makes their lives more pleasant and happier, etc. Therefore, bosses, managers, and companies have to make sure that the people working on their teams and in their organizations are fairly compensated for their work (salary, recognition) and have opportunities to learn and interact, and that they are aware of the impact of their work on others—those who receive the goods or service that the company provides.

Thus, we could assemble a list of habits that drive discouragement and demotivation, which bosses and companies should seek to eradicate, and another that they should encourage, in order to boost motivation levels.

What increases extrinsic, intrinsic and transcendental motivation:

- **Extrinsic**
  - salary in line with responsibilities
  - recognition of the work done
- **Intrinsic**
  - opportunities to learn at work (e.g., via tasks, projects, rotation)
  - positive interactions with other people at work, customers, etc.
- **Transcendental:**
  - communicating the impact of the goods and services on the people who receive them
  - opportunities to participate in decision-making processes on work issues that affect workers and the company in general
  - chances to interact with beneficiaries

What demotivates:

- inefficient policies (obsolete, antiquated, and cumbersome systems)
- lack of communication and feedback
- lack of familiarity and trust with employees
- lack of ergonomics (light, noise, cleanliness, etc.) at work
- insecurity
- lack of flexibility in approaches to work

R

Reality #3:
Partial Remote Work Increases the Commitment to the Job, Dedication, and Job Absorption

Below are some of the good practices for leaders which mix remote and office work

Be approachable:

- Offer suggestions to make the mix more effective. Ask employees to exchange ideas and suggestions: what works well, what doesn't, and why.
- Ask employees what you can do to make this kind of work as efficient and effective as possible for everyone.
- Try to make sure that no one overuses remote work because social interaction is difficult for them; this may be the person who needs this interaction the most.

Clarify what you expect of your employees' work:

- Communicate the objectives and how to reach them. Do not try to reach these goals at any price; quality, ethical, and other standards also have to be set. It is essential to ask and find out what difficulties employees are encountering and what opportunities they are detecting.
- When delegating, define the what, why, and who of each task.
- Listen to your team: create spaces of real communication, not just one-way transmission.
- Prevent your employees from becoming burned out.

Encourage frequent contact:

- Create a climate of mutual support among colleagues—those working remotely and those at the office.
- Try to organize projects according to the need to work in person during some phases. Communicate what these phases or times when everyone will have to meet in person are. Encourage people to be willing to go to the workplace because they see the advantages of doing so.
- Try to detect whether some employees are working long days without interruptions to rest, take a walk, eat, and relax.
- Avoid constant connection: clarify how and when employees are expected to communicate, so that those working remotely do not feel obligated to be connected 24/7.
- Celebrate milestones, victories, important events—personal, of the team members, or of the company. Having an in-person/remote mix does not mean that there is no need to celebrate; on the contrary, celebrating becomes even more important as a way to strengthen bonds and create a sense of belonging.

Brummelhuis et al. (2012) found in their studies that jobs that are flexible in terms of times and places help boost employees' commitment to their jobs. Their analysis resulted in an increase in vigor, dedication, and absorption at work.

Did You Know...

...The results of remote work depend on whether a worker is a compartmentalizer or an integrator?

Numerous studies (including Kreiner [2006]) have found that there are individual preferences for compartmentalizing or integrating work life and non-work life, such as family life.

- The preference for compartmentalizing refers to the inclination to play only one role or express one identity in a given time or space. People who have this preference often choose not to play their family role, or their role as a partner, parent, in-law, etc., while at work. Likewise, they prefer not to have anything to do with their role at work when they are doing physical exercise or participating as a member of an organization or club they belong to, for example. For these people, the transitions between these roles and the differentiation of the spaces where each role is performed are essential.

- The preference for integrating refers to the inclination to play different roles and express different identities simultaneously. For example, the role of mother and manager. Or athlete and business owner. Integrators don't mind changing from one role to another without a transition, such as the commute time from one place to another, or the change in the place where they play two different roles.

Therefore, people with a preference for compartmentalizing (placing heavy barriers between work and non-work) tend to prefer to keep a distance between their family and work activities. In contrast, those who prefer integrating (with weak barriers between work and non-work) tend to prefer interaction between both spheres. Therefore, working from the office is more beneficial for compartmentalizers, while working remotely from home is better for integrators.

According to a study conducted by the ICWF (Las Heras et al., April 2020), those with a preference for compartmentalizing their roles at work and at home are single women. No significant differences were found among men, as shown in the table below.

Table 8. Preference for Segmenting By Marital Status

	Men	Women
Married / in a relationship	44%	35%
Single / without a partner	40%	47%

Test 2

Are you a compartimentalizer or an Integrator?

To what extent do you agree with the following statements, in which:
1 = Not at all true
5 = Somewhat true
10 = Completely true

1	I like to handle several tasks at the same time.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
2	I prefer to focus my efforts on a single task before moving on to the next one.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
3	I think that people can be very effective when they multitask with several communication tools or tasks at the same time.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
4	Multitasking is inefficient.	
5	When I'm at work, I have some family matters in mind (dealing with a doctor, grocery shopping, a child's school, etc.).	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
6	I prefer to leave work matters behind me (not having to answer emails, phone calls, etc.) when I'm outside work hours.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
7	I don't mind if work matters arise when I'm at home (with my family, friends, etc.).	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
8	I like to leave family matters behind me when I'm at work.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
9	I'm capable of multitasking without getting overwhelmed.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
10	If I could choose, I would completely keep my work from interfering in my family/social life.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

RESULTS

To find out your profile, calculate your answers as follows: (1 + 3 + 5 + 7 + 9) – (2 + 4 + 6 + 8 + 10).

Interpretation of the results

Total score higher than 0: You are a mostly integrative person. That is, you don't mind playing several roles at the same time or multitasking.

Score on question 5 higher than question 7: You are more willing to let family matters encroach into work than the opposite (for work to encroach into family life). This could give rise to minor imbalances, such as asking to disconnect from work so nobody can contact you about any work matter when you're off work, and yet dealing with personal/family matters on work time.

Sum of the scores on questions 6 and 8 higher than 15: You're a fairly compartmentalized person who finds physical barriers to be very helpful. Therefore, if you want to work remotely, the concept of *third* space may be useful for you: a place outside the home where you can concentrate without being surrounded by your family environment, which you would prefer not to have to deal with while you're working. Likewise, this will help you disconnect more easily when you get home.

Tips for the days when you work remotely

Regardless of whether your profile is integrative or compartmentalized, below are several tips for the days when you work remotely.

1. **Set boundaries.** Set boundaries. These can be psychological or physical, although it's much better if there are both. A physical boundary may be "now my kitchen is my office," so if there is anyone at home with you, leave a pitcher of water and any other necessary items out so that no one interrupts you during a given time frame (psychological boundary). No one. This is better for both you and them.

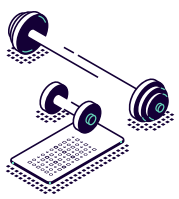
2. **Communicate these boundaries to others.** Communicate them to your partner or anyone else you live with, your work colleagues, your team, and even your boss, so they know when they can reach you by telephone, how long you'll take to answer emails if they reach you during times/days when you're off, and so on.

3. **Come up with routines.** Make lists of what you have to achieve every day, whom you should speak with (colleagues, customers, partners, etc.), what your goals on the following days will be, when you are going to take a break to eat (and make sure you only do so then), when you're going to walk a bit (remember that there are no long hallways to the printer, bathroom, or water cooler at home, so you have to offset this to avoid being sedentary). If these little walks are outdoors, such as ten minutes every two hours, they will also make you change the distance your eyes are focusing on, which helps relax them; it will also allow you to have the wind in your face, which is very healthy; and you'll absorb some vitamin D, which is essential.

4. **To the extent possible, adapt your work timetable to your own biorhythms and needs.** If you do this, communicate it, and even formalize it, if needed. While some people work best very early in the morning, others work better at night; some people have to care for children or the elderly, which requires them to perform some tasks midafternoon or midmorning, or whenever. Of course, this should be based on mutual agreement, and it should be beneficial for everyone: you, your loved ones, and your company/work team.

5. **Keep up direct, frequent communication.** Especially if you work remotely several days in a row, don't be left dealing with tasks on your own. Communicate. Perhaps the days that you go to the office you don't even run into your boss, so let them know about your progress, the difficulties you're encountering on a specific task, possible delays (and the causes), and possible improvements (and how to make them happen). That is, offer specific, feasible ideas and suggestions, be proactive, and constructively respond to others' needs.

6. **Properly prepare for meetings.** The fact that your meetings are held remotely is no excuse for not preparing for them. Humanize the contact: turn on your camera during videoconferences (at least for the first few minutes). Be clear about the status of your tasks, both those underway and those already delivered. Try to stick to the agenda, but don't miss out on a few minutes of more personal contact.



Expert Opinion

Marta Sánchez Serrano

Head of digital transformation at Vodafone (London), and
MBA from IESE Business School

Trends: Digitalization and Presence

From your perspective, what are the main global trends that will affect the future of work worldwide in the coming months/ years?

In just a few weeks, we discovered that with the right tools, technology, and the right processes, working remotely we can be as productive as or even more productive than working in person. This experience accelerated the changes that were already trending before this pandemic. Specifically, the trends are as follows:

- **Remote and in-person work are going to coexist**, which means alternative workspaces. Employees will adapt the place to the needs of their jobs, and the fit between the office and remote work will become more fluid.
- **Hyperflexible schedules** are those adapted to the needs of the company, the individual, and their family, and they're also molded to remote teams, perhaps in different time zones.
- **Expansion of the pool of resources and hiring models, including more diverse and intergenerational teams.** Project work will be used more, and therefore marketplaces for finding professionals with the right knowledge and experience will become more important.
- **"Third places" will come to the fore.** These are spaces that are neither in a corporate office nor at home, that are adapted to the needs of the individual and the job they have to do, while also leading to shorter commutes, that allow for living in rural areas (or small cities), etc.

How are these trends going to affect employees and their careers? How can they prepare themselves to be more employable in the future?

Even before the pandemic we were talking about disruption in many sectors. Today more than ever, companies need to reinvent themselves to stay competitive, and this means that each of us as an employee has to foster that attitude of constant change and learning. We have to actively seek a kind of uncomfortable tension, and actively leaving our comfort zone is the only way to keep learning and increasing our employability.

Organizations are becoming less hierarchical and more horizontal, and this means that linear, up-the-ladder career opportunities are diminishing. We have to change our way of thinking.

You work in the field of digitalization. Do you think that face-to-face interactions are important in the future of work? If so, why?

Absolutely! I have been working remotely for many years, and although I defend the value of this model, I also believe that we cannot do away with human contact. In a

> **"Being close to others boosts our optimism, makes us more resilient, and helps us better deal with everyday challenges"**

“The digitalization of companies, more flexible hours, and remote work open up many possibilities to improve the balance with family and personal lives”

virtual relationship, we can’t capture a lot of the nonverbal communication, which is very important in understanding others’ motives and thus avoiding conflicts that could have a negative impact on our job.

We are social beings; emotionally, we need human contact in all facets of life, and work is no exception. Being close to others boosts our optimism, makes us more resilient, and helps us better deal with everyday challenges. To me, the best option is the mix, a hybrid world, the sum of working both virtually and in person.

Will there be offices, stores, and headquarters in the future? How will they be used? What will they look like?

They will exist, and they will be much more suitable for their purpose. They will better adapted to the role they are expected to play, enhancing the advantages that can only be found in the physical world and being redefined to maximize the experience of remote connection.

Take stores, for example. In a world in which product supply is managed much more efficiently via e-commerce, brick-and-mortar stores have to be transformed and cover more emotional and social needs, which the online world cannot offer. Online sales are more efficient, and therefore stores have to be reinvented. They will end up being more places of leisure and learning, where you can share experiences with others.

If we are going to continue working from home a high percentage of our time, each office space should be accessible remotely to facilitate collaboration. All the spaces should be technologically advanced and defined to be coherent with the comfort of home; less clinical—albeit hygienically safe—and more similar to the living rooms in our homes, which generate interaction, psychoemotional connection, etc. They should be spaces with natural light, ventilation, and access to the outdoors.

Working from the office will be used for increasingly specific purposes: certain kinds of meetings, actions that can be carried out only at the office for a variety of reasons (safety, access to systems and people, etc.), which will require better adaptation of the space to fit a specific need. Even though there will continue to be open-plan workspaces, they should be much more flexible and able to be personalized, with modular panels that allow them to be divided according to the daily capacity; spaces especially designed for brief yet large team meetings; rooms for collaborative work, etc.

How do you lead people you don’t see? What competencies are going to become more important?

I think that soft skills are becoming increasingly important, such as empathy, communication and active listening skills, and the ability to anticipate and understand other’s needs.

When working remotely, there is no opportunity for informal chats or mere observation, so direct communication and active mood management become even more conscious, continuous goals in order to guarantee that the team remains committed.

Looking toward the future of work, is there any good news?

The digitalization of companies, more flexible hours, and remote work open up many possibilities to improve the balance with family and personal lives. Plus, changes toward more horizontal and agile structures in large companies are also opening up new opportunities for development. Professional growth can no longer be understood in just one sense; development policies are going to become much more personalized to adapt to the individual.

Myth #4:
Remote Work Hinders Innovation

Innovation and creativity are key factors in dealing with the constant challenges facing organizations. The belief that remote work hinders innovation has particularly spread with the publication of several articles. It has specifically been propagated with some articles published in such popular periodicals as Harvard Business Review (Hodari, April 27, 2015) and The New York Times (Koehn, September 4, 2010). They contain claims like "... creativity in professional life requires social relations and fortuitous encounters. It needs people who disagree. It requires getting up and moving." And while this is certainly true, remote work doesn't preclude these relationships nor does the office per se foster them.

For example, Dutcher (September 2012) found that remote work has negative effects on productivity in boring, monotonous tasks, yet positive effects on creative tasks. In another study, researchers Kim & Zhong (January 2017) found that the very structure of an office and a corporate environment kills creativity, and that, in contrast, the lack of structure and autonomous capacity for organization foster it. They were obviously talking about classic, siloed offices with compartmentalized spaces, not with added-value spaces, that is, designed for collaboration, co-creation, and joint work.

Let's think of incredibly creative minds like the artists Picasso, Dalí, and Miró. The first was the harbinger of cubism; the second of surrealism, Dadaism, and pop art; and the third a painter, engraver, and potter who was regarded as one of the top representatives of surrealism. Most of the time, they had their own places where they could work alone and cultivate their artistic genius, but they also often frequented the same sites, where they shared conversation and entertainment. Their face-to-face encounters were a chance to talk, learn, and praise or criticize each other's works. In fact, they all went through different creative periods where the influence of the others' works is apparent.

Meeting with colleagues, talking at a café, or sitting down to share a meal together can be ways of increasing interaction and creativity, although they're not the only ways. Plus, these encounters can be encouraged occasionally, with a set frequency. Likewise, they can be organized to be creative in themselves.

R Reality #4: Remote Work, Combined with In-Person Work, Facilitates Innovation

Countless studies prove that remote work can help improve innovation. For example, data collected by the ICWF (Las Heras & Barraza, July 2020) have shown that employees' sense of newness or interest in their work can increase up to 31% in people who combine at-home and office work. Therefore, neither remote nor office work per se facilitate creativity. It is essential to look more closely at which work conditions encourage it.

As Xavi Escales says (see interview below), "The majority of jobs can be done remotely, even those related to innovation or collaboration, but the problem is the lack of training in leading innovative teams remotely."

Dutcher (September 2012) finds that when some team members are remote and others are at the office, the key to productivity is for those in the office to "have the perception" that working remotely does not mean putting in less effort, working less, or being less committed.

In conclusion, studies conducted at the ICWF have found that at first glance innovation seems to be slightly higher when working at the office. However, we divided the participants into two groups:

- those who are generally highly creative
- those who are not so creative

The data show that for the group of people who are generally highly creative, working from home helps them be a bit more innovative than being at the office. However, the opposite effect occurs in people who are usually not so creative: being at the office helps them be a bit more innovative. Therefore, counter to popular belief, remote work itself does not facilitate or hinder creativity. However, appropriately managing office versus remote work does help develop creativity in human teams.

Table 9. Level of Creativity

Working at home		Working in the office	
Very creative			
Men	82%	Men	79%
Women	82%	Women	81%
Not very creative			
Men	38%	Men	43%
Women	42%	Women	44%

Did You Know…

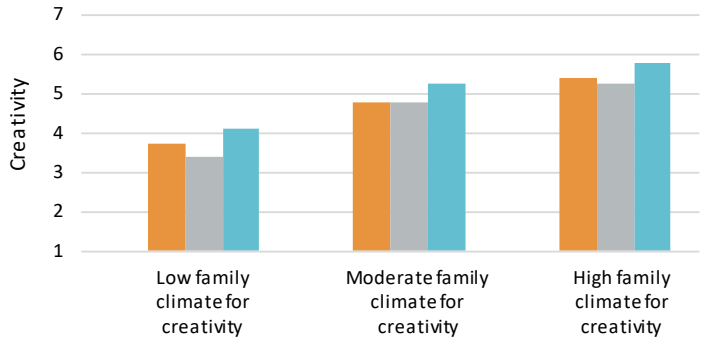
…Creative Behaviors at Work Depend on the Climate of Creativity at Home?

In 2019, the ICWF conducted a study in the United States in which dozens of stable couples (living together for more than three years) participated. It sought to find the at-home source of different at-work behaviors. To do so, one partner was asked about some characteristics of their life with their partner at home, while the other partner, in the following weeks, was asked about some of their own behaviors at work.

The results revealed that the climate of creativity at home (measured by couple member (A)—sometimes the man and sometimes the woman) resulted in creative behaviors by the other partner (B) in the ensuing weeks. That is, the climate of creativity at home influences people's creative behaviors. This finding is very important, since we tend to think that what we experience at work (stress, learning, etc.) affects our personal and family life, but that the opposite seldom happens (see **Figure 1**).

In terms of what a climate of creativity at home means, the answer would be an environment in which each person contributes what they believe is the most suitable without being constrained by the norms set by others, or by customs or social conventions.

Figure 1. Family Climate for Creativity



Test 3

What Is the Climate of Creativity in Your Home and Your Company (Unit or Department)?

To what extent is each of the following statements on your home/family true, in which:
1 = Not at all true
5 = Somewhat true
10 = Completely true

1	My partner and family are open to new ideas and ways of thinking.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
2	My partner and family let me decide how to do my work.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
3	Regardless of the results, they appreciate and acknowledge my attempts to contribute something.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
4	After deciding who should do a task, that person can do it however they want.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
5	I am inspired to try new ways of doing things.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

RESULTS

To find the climate of creativity in your home, add the scores of all the answers to the questions above.

Interpretation of the results

- Between 40 and 50: There is a climate in your home that fosters a high level of creativity. This probably also comes with some degree of disorder, which is normal as long as it is within certain bounds. Make sure that the important issues (appointments with doctors, teachers, etc.) are properly managed, and continue to enjoy an extraordinary level of openness and creativity.
- Between 25 and 39: There is a moderate level of creativity in your home. It is probably also fairly orderly. Don't forget to do something madcap or unplanned from time to time, while also keeping the order that helps you predict and plan with enough lead time.
- Between 10 and 24: There is a low level of creativity in your home. It is probably also very orderly, perhaps even a bit rigid. If your job doesn't require creativity, this won't affect you at work, but you might become tired and bored. Try to give free rein to your artistic, creative, flexible side from time to time.
- Under 10: Martial law, which is common in emergencies, rules in your home. It would be good if you looked for ways to make your approaches more flexible so that you're a bit more open to experimentation, trial and error, and learning.

To what extent is each of the following statements on your work unit or department true, in which:
1 = Not at all true
5 = Somewhat true
10 = Completely true

1	My boss and colleagues are open to new ideas and ways of thinking.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
2	My boss and colleagues let me decide how to do my work.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
3	Regardless of the results, they appreciate and acknowledge my attempts to contribute something.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
4	After deciding who should do a task, that person (or team) can do it however they want.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
5	I am inspired to try new ways of doing things.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

RESULTS

To find out the climate of creativity in the unit or department where you work, add the scores of all the answers to the questions above.

Interpretation of the results

- Between 40 and 50: There is a climate in your unit or department that fosters a high level of creativity. This probably also comes with some degree of disorder, which is normal as long as it is within certain bounds. Make sure that the important issues (delivery dates, quality standards, budgets, etc.) are properly managed, and continue to enjoy an extraordinary level of openness and creativity.
- Between 25 and 39: There is a moderate level of creativity in your unit or department. It is probably also fairly orderly. Don't forget to propose something madcap or unplanned from time to time, while also keeping the order that helps you predict and plan with enough lead time.
- Between 10 and 24: There is a low level of creativity in your unit or department. It is probably also very orderly, perhaps even a bit rigid. If your job does not require creativity (for regulatory or other reasons), this won't affect you at work, but you might become tired and bored. Try to give free rein to your artistic, creative, flexible side from time to time if your unit or department doesn't give you room to do so.
- Under 10: Martial law, which is common in emergencies, rules in your unit or department. It resembles a dictatorship. You should assess whether you are capable of working this way or whether you need a change. Perhaps if you're able to be flexible outside work, this job situation is feasible. If the market is very bad and you need the job, try to resign yourself to accommodating the situation. If not, get ready to jump ship.

Test 4

Level of Proactiveness/Creativity

To what extent is each of the following sentences true about you, in which:

1 = Never

5 = Sometimes

10 = Always

1	I look for ways, alternatives, procedures, or ideas that help me improve the way I do tasks.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
2	I often try new ways of doing things.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
3	I often notice opportunities for improvement.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
4	I love to fight to make sure that my plans and ideas are carried out.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
5	If I don't like something, I do what it takes to fix it, and that's that.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

RESULTS

To find out your predisposition to being proactive/creative, add the points of all your answers to the questions above.

Interpretation of the results

- Between 40 and 50: You are a very proactive person. You tend to see things with critical eyes, which helps you discover alternatives and try to put them into practice. This may have often caused you problems, because your ideas don't match deadlines, specifications, budgets, etc. Creativity and proactiveness are wonderful, but you have to find a way to adjust to each project's other needs, perhaps by working with people who are less creative and more procedural.
- Between 25 and 39: You are moderately proactive and creative. This may mean that you are somewhat orderly. Don't stop checking your opinions with other people who are more creative than you from time to time.
- Between 10 and 24: You are not very proactive and creative. This may mean that you are extremely orderly, perhaps even a bit rigid. With such a low level of proactiveness, you may be a bit behind in new technologies or procedures. Perhaps methodologies like design thinking or agile methods make you a bit nervous. Take heart. Try to give free rein to your artistic, creative, flexible side from time to time.
- Under 10: You are very rigid. This rigidity is often found in demotivated states. Try to live a little, perk up a bit to feel more comfortable. Try to take a different route (or means of transportation) to or from work. Talk to a stranger every now and then. You should try to find ways to make your approaches more flexible so that you're a bit more open to experimentation, trial and error, and learning.

Expert Opinion

Xavi Escales

Former CEO of Asics Iberia. Founder and CEO of
AlwaysPeopleFirst and AlwaysPeopleFirstTechnologies

Working Remotely and Leadership

Many managers fear remote work because of the "I won't see them" factor. Does this affect performance? Will changes be needed to measure performance when integrating remote work?

If you have to physically see your employees to make sure they're doing their jobs, you already have a problem. Your work as a manager is not to micromanage but to be there when your team needs you and to think about where the company should be heading to be successful in the future. As managers, we have to be demanding in what we ask of our teams (both in-person and remote workers) and more flexible with them when it comes to the way they organize their workdays.

The optimal working conditions are those that maximize the balance between employees' productivity and well-being. Therefore, companies that choose hybrid models should develop plans to boost employees' productivity and well-being, bearing in mind the differences in working remotely and at the office.

For what kinds of tasks is in-person work better than remote?

There are jobs whose nature makes them difficult to do remotely. One example is working in an industrial plant, where machinery that cannot be moved is needed. But generally speaking, the majority of jobs can be done remotely, even those related to innovation or collaboration. The problem is the lack of training in leading innovative teams remotely.

What would be the risk of an "officeless" company?

Human beings are primarily emotional and social creatures. We may be able to do away with offices, but not social gatherings. It is important to make an effort to create strong bonds among employees, because this will make teams more resilient.

Do employees work more when they work remotely? Is there a stronger risk of addiction?

Studies on this issue say that during the initial phase of the pandemic, we worked a few more hours per day on average and productivity rose. Just like all models, it has advantages and disadvantages, the latter associated with the ability to disconnect and the impact on well-being. What is clear is that the majority of employees prefer to keep working remotely at least a few days a week when we're back to life as usual. Many people have already reasonably adapted to creating their work environment at home and are reluctant to go back to the previous model because this one gives them clear advantages (flexibility, less time spent commuting, etc.).

"The optimal working conditions are those that maximize the balance between employees' productivity and well-being."

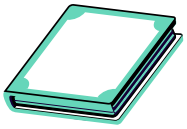
Myth #5: There's No Point to Meeting in Person. Everything Can Be Done Remotely

The development of information and communication technologies (ICT) has allowed work teams to stay in touch remotely through videoconferences, email, chats, and other tools. Therefore, some people have come to believe that all communication can be done remotely and find no benefit to meeting in person.

Data studied by the ICWF have shown that spending more time interacting face-to-face with work colleagues increases the quality of and satisfaction with relationships with team members by 17%.

What's more, some studies have found that one of the advantages of working at the office is that workers' risk of social isolation is lower.

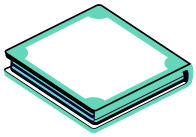
Workers with high levels of isolation



- increased detachment among team members
- decrease in trust among team members
- disappearance of team coherence

In this regard, the study conducted by Stanko & Gibson (2009) found results that suggest that remote communication is perceived as less effective than face-to-face interactions. In fact, as the psychologist Nacho Coller says (see interview below), communication mediated by a screen:

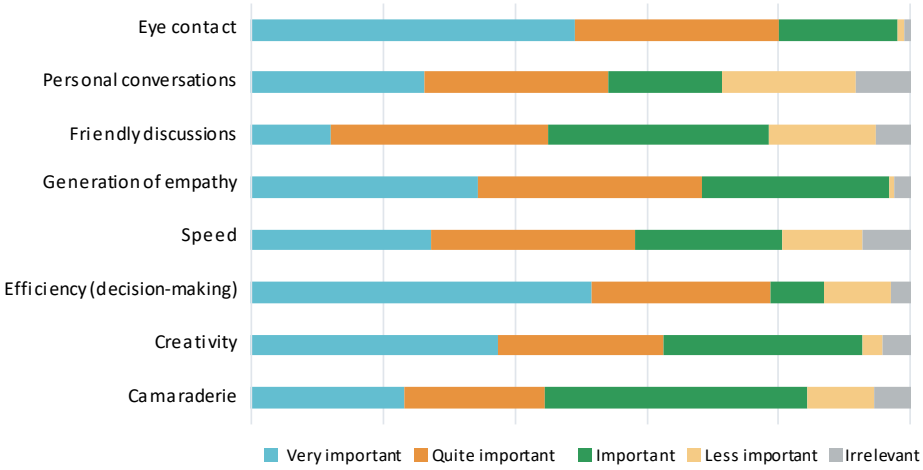
Communication mediated by a screen



- makes it harder to capture nonverbal communication, such as posture, subtle gestures, breathing pace, etc.;
- prevents us from making eye contact, because in order for others to have the sensation we are looking into their eyes, we actually have to look at the camera, so we're not really making eye contact and can't see what others are expressing;
- hampers natural interactions, since speakers constantly see themselves, at times to such an extent thatthey appear to be the main thing on the screen.

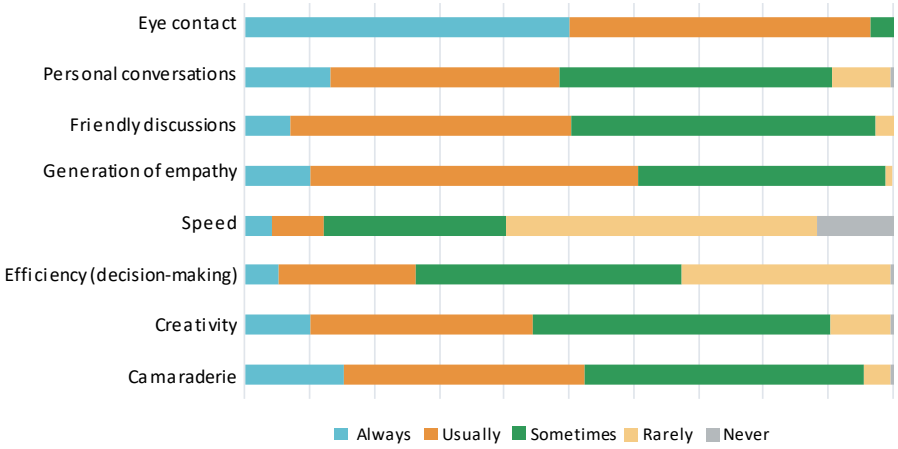
Figure 2 shows the importance that people attach to certain events or aspects of a meeting, according to information collected from the participants in our study.

Figure 2. Importance of Certain Events in Meetings



Likewise, **Figure 3** reflects the participants' perceptions of to what extent these events happen in face-to-face meetings.

Figure 3. Frequency of Certain Events in Face-to-Face Meetings



And in **Figure 4** we see to what extent participants believe that these events happen in virtual meetings, in light of their responses.

Figure 4. Frequency of Certain Events in Online Meetings

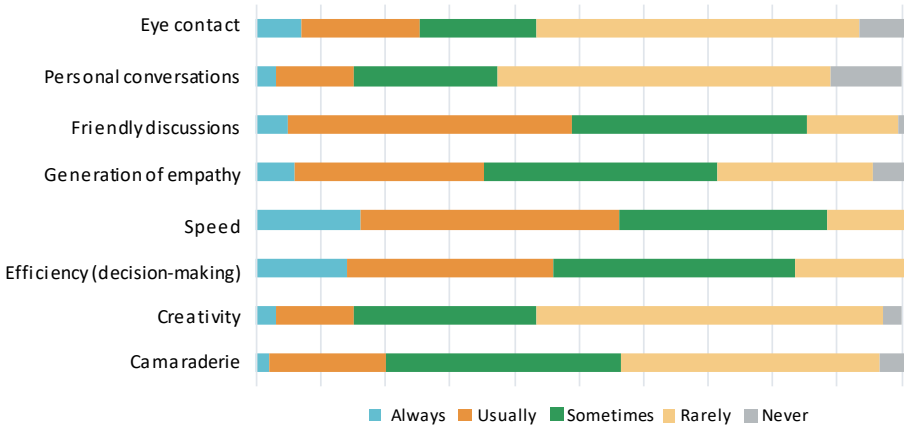


Table 10. Importance and Frequency of Events in Face-to-face Meetings vs. Online

	Importance	Frequency in face-to-face meetings	Frequency in online meetings
Eye contact	86%	89%	54%
Personal conversations	68%	70%	49%
Friendly discussions	66%	71%	67%
Generation of empathy	79%	74%	61%
Speed	71%	49%	72%
Efficacy (decision-making)	83%	59%	68%
Creativity	77%	69%	52%
Camaraderie	69%	72%	55%

As illustrated, there are aspects which are considered very important (speed and efficacy) that seem to be achieved better in online meetings, and yet other equally important ones (eye contact and personal conversations) that are better achieved in face-to-face meetings.

Table 11. Face-to-face vs. Online Meetings

Percentage of meetings you would like to attend face-to-face vs. online	Responses
No face-to-face	5%
1-25% of meetings face-to-face	46%
26-50% of meetings face-to-face	29%
51-75% of meetings face-to-face	13%
76-99% of meetings face-to-face	4%
All face-to-face	2%

R

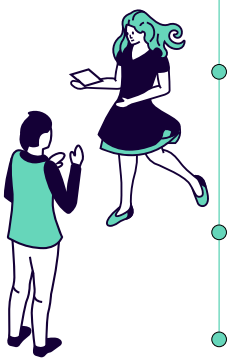
Reality #5: The Face-to-Face Communication That Occurs at Offices Has Advantages for Work Teams That Cannot Be Replaced by Remote Communication

According to data collected by the IWCF, having the chance to be surrounded by colleagues and a change of scenery by going from home to work was mentioned by 65% of the participants as the main advantage of working at the office. We found that what people miss the most, in addition to the physical space, is interaction with their colleagues.

The aspects of working at the office that employees miss the most when they work remotely for a long period of time are:

- informal conversations with colleagues **68%**
- face-to-face meetings **46%**
- physical space (office or workplace) **39%**

Face-to-face communication brings a series of benefits that virtual communication cannot replace (Heller, 2010):



- It helps people forge personal bonds which are extremely important in generating information exchanges, affect, and assistance.
- It lowers conflicts and misunderstandings because the subtleties of tone of voice or gestures can be captured better, so people seem to be able to better resolve any issues if they detect that their message has been met with rejection or disagreement. It is also easier to ask or request clarifications if you don't agree with or understand something.
- It brings into play tacit knowledge, that is, the knowledge acquired by the team spontaneously as the outcome of continuous work, and it captures subtleties.
- It generates greater loyalty among team members.

Did You Know...

...The types of meetings where face-to-face contact is the most important are sales meetings with customers?

This should come as no surprise, because these are situations when the sales team wants to capture all the subtleties and clearly understand customer requirements, not only their technical specifications but also their preferences and socio-affective needs. Salespeople want to know about the customers' past experiences, both positive and negative, and this means that all interactions are better done in person, face-to-face.

Conversely, jobs like drawing up reports, making follow-up calls to customers, or studying issues in-depth are perceived by the participants in our studies as those that do not have to be done at the office because being there brings no added value.

Table 12. Completion of Tasks Remotely and In The Office

	Best done in office	Either office or remotely	Best done remotely
Sales meetings with customers	80%	17%	3%
Project follow-up meetings with customers	46%	37%	17%
Informative meetings with employees	23%	55%	22%
Innovation/co-creation meetings with employees	75%	16%	9%
Telephone calls (e.g., to customers)	4%	29%	67%
Routine (essential) work	8%	18%	74%
Studying issues in-depth	17%	16%	67%
Working on high-value strategic issues	48%	20%	32%
Drawing up reports (presentations, etc.)	9%	14%	77%
Feedback meetings with employees	52%	38%	10%
Informal meetings	38%	30%	32%

Test 5

Interruptions: Work →Family; Family →Work

How often does each of the following happen, in which:
1 = Rarely (once a month or less)
5 = Quite often (once a day)
10 = Very often (once an hour)

1	Work issues interrupt my family or personal life (emails, calls, etc.) outside work hours.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
2	During my workday I have to interrupt work to deal with family issues.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
3	Someone or something from my work has interrupted me outside work hours.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
4	(Someone from) my family has interrupted me while I'm working.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

RESULTS

Add the answers to questions 1 and 3 to find out the level of interruptions from your job in your personal or family life.
Add the answers to questions 2 and 4 to find out the level of interruptions from your personal or family life in your job.

Interpretation of the results

- Result of (1 + 3) higher than (2 + 4): Your work is interrupting your family or personal life more than the opposite. You may want to consider setting boundaries and communicating them. This includes when, why, and how you can be interrupted outside work hours. There may be issues that require an immediate response, while others don't. You may have to have more discipline in determining when and why to communicate. You may be allowing or encouraging some of these interruptions yourself, such as by answering (or writing) emails at unreasonable times or weekends without really needing to.
- Result of (1 + 3) lower than (2 + 4): Your family or personal matters are interrupting your work life more than the opposite. Perhaps this should be the case, or maybe you and your family (e.g., spouse) need to consider whether jobs should be divided up differently or whether other protocols should be set up, such as if one of your children needs something, the school should not always call the same parent.

Expert Opinion

Yasin Rofcanin

Profesor de la Bath School of Management (University of Bath)
y director del Future of Work Research Centre - Bath

How COVID-19 Has Changed the Scene

Can you tell us what you think are the big trends that will impact the future of work, internationally speaking?

- **Growth in alternative and flexible ways of working.** As COVID has taken a toll on all of us, organizations have started to realize the value of adopting flexible work practices, including remote work, job sharing, and part-time work arrangements. However, the new model is likely to be a blended-flexible work practice, in that on some days we will see the use of offices and face-to-face interactions, and on other days employees will be allowed to work remotely.
- **Virtual teamwork.** With the aid of rapidly developing technologies, virtual teams have become a reality. A key disadvantage is that virtual teams do not have the rich and effective communication channels that teams located in the same place can offer. My view is that with the growth of virtual teams, the culture of helping and pro-social behaviors might grow.
- **Flexible and family-oriented leadership.** As employees have started working remotely, the need for a new type of leadership has emerged. As most of our research, and other recent research, has shown, demonstrating support for employees' family lives and being flexible in terms of employees' work–family balance have become the new benchmarks of leadership. In my opinion, more informal leaders—who demonstrate the value of work–life integration and who are flexible in their adaptation to new trends—will be valued in the future.

How has COVID affected employees' careers?

- **Loss of hope and expectations about the future.** A significant negative impact of COVID has been in how it affects employees' expectations for the future as well as their hope and resilience. A variety of jobs have been lost across industries and countries, and employees and new graduates have realized that it is difficult to obtain and maintain jobs.
- **Shift to self-employed career paths.** As the COVID pandemic has unfolded—and with the growth of accessible and low-cost technological advances—there has been rapid growth in levels of freelance and self-employment opportunities.
- **Multiple jobs and flexible careers.** A third trend I have observed related to the impact of COVID is that, driven by necessity, employees may hold multiple jobs. It is now not unusual to see an Uber driver who works as a designer during the day, or a research assistant also doubling as a sales agent. The definition of a sustainable career trajectory has garnered a new and flexible meaning.

One key takeaway for employees is to continuously invest in their skills and abilities and also to craft their jobs—in the sense that they become owners of what they do. Ultimately, it is all about the resources given to employees; and organizations should be willing to extend any type of resource to their employees with the hope that they will grow and be better at the job they perform.

Do you think that face-to-face relationships will still be relevant in the future of work? If so, how and why?

Face-to-face communication will still be very important. We will have the opportunity to keep the best parts of office-centric work, such as meeting clients and establishing those first bonds. But we will also free ourselves from bad habits and inefficient processes, among them, ineffective meetings and unnecessary bureaucracy. As the work continues, potential problems related to online interactions can be avoided; precious and limited time will be used to form meaningful and sustainable interactions.

Which leadership characteristics do you think will be more relevant in such an environment?

The following three key features of leadership will be the most important: understanding the needs of employees (empathy); setting role models for work–life integration (role modeling); and being creative and flexible when it comes to everyday challenges. I refer to this type of leadership as flexible family-oriented leadership.

Is there any other good news about the future of work?

My hope is that it'll be business as usual and that mainly good habits of the old working style will remain.

Myth #6:
Lots of Time Is Wasted at the Office

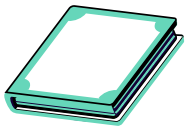
We run into coworkers at the office. We talk, discuss things, ask about each other's personal lives, solicit opinions, have coffee together, and so on. And all of that is time not spent working. Or it is? It's hard to measure. It's like pre-season games in sports, where perhaps teams don't practice tactics or general strategies, but there's room for them to be put into play later on a field, with a well-hardened, strong, resilient base. And the same holds true with organizations. The time spent socializing, talking, and discussing may be precisely what lays the fertile ground where tactics, technique, and strategy can later grow strong roots.

However, when those conversations, that walking around, those discussions are recurring, repetitive, and redundant, they may turn into sterile and even dangerous gossipmongering, criticisms, wasted time, cronyism, and nepotism.

So efficacy at the office versus in a remote location should not be measured the same. In remote work, efficacy is "production per unit of time." Performance at the office is this "production per unit of time" plus "building relationships." This is extremely important because, as we shall see below in one of the practical cases, it means that offices should be designed to encourage these relationships. There have to be added-value spaces, co-creation spaces, areas for informal meetings, etc. Spaces meant for individual concentration can be kept to a minimum because people should not primarily work individually at the office since they can do that remotely.

In our study, we analyzed the difference between the number of hours actually worked remotely and at the office, and we did not find significant differences. Specifically, the participants stated that:

Table 13. Effective Hours Worked Per Day



Office	Remote working
7.42	7.5

These results from the IWCF are backed by other international studies which find that working remotely does not affect the actual number of hours people work (Nijp et al., May 25, 2016).

R

Reality #6:
Workers With Strong Performance Actually Work the Same Number of Hours at Home as at the Office

While working remotely, a person may get the sense that they worked more hours than if they had been at the office. This may be due to two main causes which are inherent to remote work:

1. The interaction time with colleagues decreases. Specifically, our studies found that this time, which is now mediated by a screen, is up to 40% lower than when working in person. Therefore, it is time "gained" to accomplish the tasks on employees' to-do lists.
2. It lowers the need for multitasking and for shifting from one task to another because of interruptions, external information requests, or simply the offer of conversation, since remote interactions are usually planned. No one is coming up to you to ask you for anything or knocking on your door or stopping you in the hallway.

Did You Know...

...The Capacity for Self-Management Is the Key to Effective Remote Work ?

Working remotely requires people to have the capacity to manage themselves and organize themselves independently, that is, without having to constantly depend on supervision, encouragement, or direction from others.

As Dr. Pilar de Castro says (see interview below), "Remote work is a problem for people who are not very disciplined, and they need to be able to work in places and environments set aside for it, which helps them concentrate. Remote work also severely limits the contact, learning, and creation of social networking needed to improve individuals and companies."

In our study, we found that people with a strong ability to manage themselves (measured by their supervisor[1]) reported the greatest benefits of being able to work remotely two days a week. When working remotely fewer than 40% of the days in a month, the increase in certain variables depends on a person's capacity for self-management.

Table 14. Self-management

	Low level of self-management	High level of self-management	Percentage change of those with a low level vs. high level
Quality of work	8%	12%	50%
Energy at work	8%	18%	120%
Willingness to do what the company requires	6%	12%	100%
Pride of belonging	2%	11%	500%

This table shows the increase in the results (on remote workdays) if people work remotely two days a work (on average), when they have a low versus a high level of self-management.

Therefore, remote work is beneficial for those with a low level of self-management as well those with a high level. However, remote work is much more useful when the person is able to organize their work autonomously, when they are aware of and take advantage of their strengths, when they are willing to explore and learn, etc.

The capacity for self-management requires the worker:

- to thoroughly plan their work
- to carry through on that planning
- to create flexible strategies
- to make decisions independently
- to take responsibility for their decisions
- to be in contact with key people to ensure that the process is effective

[1] It is important to note that in our study, the employee's capacity for self-management is evaluated by their supervisor because people are generally biased when evaluating their own competencies and skills. In this way, we get a more objective measurement.

Test 6

How Do You Manage Yourself? And How Do Your Employees Manage Themselves?

What is your level of self-management?

To what extent is each of the following statements true with regard to you, in which:
1 = Not at all true
5 = Somewhat true
10 = Completely true

1	I'm sure I can be successful in life.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
2	Sometimes I get muddled and don't know what to prioritize.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
3	When I make an effort, I usually organize myself very well and am successful.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
4	Sometimes I fail because I don't plan ahead.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
5	My finished tasks are usually of a high quality.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
6	I don't always keep track of my tasks.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
7	I'm generally satisfied with myself.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
8	I constantly want others to tell me what to do and how to do it.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
9	I am in control of what happens to me in my day and in my life.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
10	I try to improve tasks and processes only when others suggest it.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

RESULTS

Your and your employees' level of self-management can be found by making the following calculations with the results of the questions listed in each column: (1 + 3 + 7 + 5 + 9) − (2 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 10).

Interpretation of the results

- Between 35 and 45: This is a high level of self-management. The person is well prepared to alternate remote and office work.
- Between 20 and 34: This is an acceptable level of self-management. The person is prepared to alternate remote and office work. If you are this person's boss, make sure they feel comfortable. Follow up with them until they gain confidence in their ability to organize themselves. Don't solve their problems, but help them think and make decisions.
- Between 5 and 19: This is a low level of self-management. The person is not very well prepared to alternate remote and office work. If you are this person's boss, you may want to make sure that they work on more routine and easily measured tasks. If this isn't possible, you'll have to spend a lot of time helping them organize themselves and be productive, which takes time away from your own tasks.
- Less than 5 or even negative: You may want to consider whether you or the person you supervise are in the right place. Are you/they motivated? Do you/they have the right competencies? Why are you/they in this position?

How Do You Manage Yourself?
And How Do Your Employees Manage Themselves?

What is your employees' level of self-management?

To what extent is each of the following statements true with regard to your employee, in which:
1 = Not at all true
5 = Somewhat true
10 = Completely true

1	I'm sure they can be successful in life.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
2	Sometimes they get muddled and don't know what to prioritize.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
3	When they make an effort, they usually organize themselves very well and are successful.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
4	Sometimes they fail because they don't plan ahead.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
5	Their finished tasks are usually of a high quality.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
6	They don't always keep track of their tasks.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
7	They're generally satisfied with themselves.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
8	They constantly want others to tell them what to do and how to do it.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
9	They are in control of what happens to them in their day and in their life.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
10	They try to improve tasks and processes only when others suggest it.	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

RESULTS

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- Less than 5 or even negative: You may want to consider whether you or the person you supervise are in the right place. Are you/they motivated? Do you/they have the right competencies? Why are you/they in this position?

Expert Opinion

Jaume Aurell

Professor at the University of Navarra and director of the Center of Enterprise and Humanism

Values and Culture: Remote vs. In-Person Work

What are the risks to learning of going 100% remote?

I am skeptical about whether working 100% online can work because learning also occurs from meeting with colleagues, and having positive and not-so-positive experiences, and learning from them. In my opinion, it's a complement, not an absolute value.

What are values? Can they be learned? How?

Values are what help us set priorities in our lives. They are the criteria of what is good, and therefore what we want, encourage, and cultivate. Family, money, success, solidarity: all of these are values. As are respect, generosity, and altruism. They are criteria that help us discern between different alternatives.

In education in values, both family legacy and professional experience are essential. What we get from our families is extremely important because chronologically speaking it is the first lesson, and we learn it when we are the most receptive. It should be furthered with academic and professional training, because otherwise true training in values doesn't occur.

What characteristics of leaders foster the development of values?

Leaders, true leaders, may not perceive themselves as such. Leaders that convey values are those that foster teamwork. There are university professors who are true leaders and manage to assemble a team; they encourage everyone's harmonious growth.

Leaders consider and work with the people on their team without judging them only by their family or professional values.

Might there be characteristics in the physical environment that facilitate or hinder learning and developing values? If so, what are they?

The physical environment—one with pleasant workspaces—helps generate a team atmosphere and facilitates the transmission of the company's values, which I find difficult to achieve remotely.

At the office, you run into people in the hallway, you have informal conversations, while remotely your communication is limited to the duration of a video call.

Do you have any recommendations for companies thinking about how to design the "work of the future"?

I think it's very important for every institution and every company to govern with strategy and to strike the balance that they need, to think carefully about what should be done in person and what should be carried out remotely.

The company should make sure that technology serves people, not the other way round. A solely mechanistic or solely humanistic vision cannot dominate.

> **"Leaders that convey values are those that foster teamwork"**

PART TWO

Remote Work and Office Work: Sustainable Development

In the previous section we reviewed some of the myths and realities about remote work, and we stressed how implementing a mix of remote and office work benefits work teams and organizations. However, it's important to also highlight the alignment of these flexibility strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), that is, the proposals, established by the United Nations in 2015, whose purpose is to generate economic and social development, meet society's needs, protect the planet, and improve everyone's lives.

The mix of remote and office work we suggest aims to foster a society in which the organization of workspaces yields sustainable benefits for individuals, organizations, and the environment.

In this section, we show how the mix of remote and office work is aligned with the goal of more sustainable organizations and cities. Below, we present its positive impact, specifically in the areas of.

Positive impacts of the mix remote and office work

1. health and well-being
2. equal opportunities
3. care for the environment

Remote Work and Work in the Office: Health and Well-Being

Goal 3, "health and well-being," refers to the commitment to guarantee a healthy life and promote the well-being of all workers. The workday is an important part of our daily lives. What happens during it prompts positive (or negative) emotions, creating a sense of happiness (or tedium).

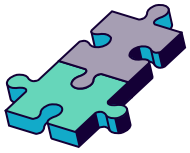
Integrating our professional and personal lives has become more important to our health and well-being in an environment in which there are many dual-income couples (in which both partners work), single-parent families, and families with older parents.

Dual-income couples and single-parent families mean that many people are taking on both family and work responsibilities at the same time. Therefore, it is critical for them to wear several hats at once. Coupled with this, the growth in cities, traffic jams, and long commutes have ratcheted up people's stress levels.

A good mix of flexibility at the workplace would focus on seeking strategies that foster emotional health and limit potential stress factors. Being able to work at home some days may lead to more efficient time use, lower the stress caused by traffic and commutes, and free up that time to tend to personal needs, engage in physical activities, or deal with family responsibilities.

In the first part of this study on myths and realities, we presented data which showed how remote at-home work, if done in synergy with office work, has positive effects on productivity, creativity, and innovation. Plus, we showed that the main benefits of working remotely tend to come to those with stronger self-management skills, the support of their boss, and certain personal skills. Likewise, our studies also found positive effects on health and well-being on the days when people worked from home, as long as this is done at most three days a week. Advantages of Combining Remote Work and Office Work for Well-Being and Health.

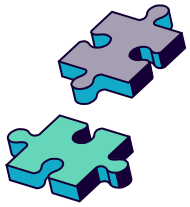
The advantages of the mix of remote work and office work on employee well-being and health include:



- up to 63% reduction in stress related to commuting
- up to 10% increase in happiness while working
- *up to 21% reduction in multitasking*

However, we should also stress that working exclusively at home deprives employees of face-to-face interactions, and this leads to disadvantages for well-being and health. Face-to-face communication, team cohesion, and the benefits of social interaction do not occur at the same level when communication is mediated by screens. The data we have found in this regard speak quite eloquently: the advantages of remote work are more sustainable when coupled with some days at the office.

Disadvantages of Full-Time Remote Work for Well-being and Health



- Unless some days of office work are alternated with remote work, the latter can increase social isolation up to 15%. Cumulatively, this can lead to depression and other psychosomatic symptoms, foster anxiety, and even lead to acute pathological symptoms.

  Some studies show that even brief interactions with others on public transportation (Epley & Schroeder, 2014) boost positive emotions. Therefore, in all senses it is beneficial to encourage ways of working that do not magnify isolation, especially among people who tend toward solitude because of their temperament or personality, or their personal situation.

- Another disadvantage of full-time remote work is that the absence of time shared in person limits the trust and cohesion that can be created among work teams. The quality of interactions with colleagues can decline up to 11%.

Therefore, the flexibility of being able to work remotely two or three days per week may be the key to having organizations whose employees have higher levels of well-being and health. Promoting a healthier life and making an effort to achieve this goal can be done in organizations that take advantage of the benefits of working remotely while limiting the risks it entails by combining in-person work at the office.

Expert Opinion

Nacho Coller

Clinical psychologist, health and sport psychologist

Well-Being: In-Person and Remote Work

What do in-person (versus online) meetings and work contribute to communication and well-being?

In-person meetings make total sense in that we're in-person beings. In each other's presence we have nonverbal communication, which is more honest and creates trust. You can digress more, with all its advantages and disadvantages, because while digressing can be inefficient, it also has benefits like the possibility that great ideas emerge and trusting bonds are created.

Likewise, virtual communication can lead to more direct, efficient meetings, where the time is better controlled, so sessions can be quicker and more efficient.

Why do many of us want to return to in-person work? What are we missing in online interactions?

There is a desire to leave behind sedentariness and find the sense of belonging that in-person relationships provide. This could also be due to excess work in the family and the need to leave the home space and environment.

We like to share and talk, and this doesn't necessarily happen spontaneously online. In fact, situations like running into people by the coffee machine or while waiting to use the bathroom, or office gossip foster communication and can even help enhance creativity.

What social problems could arise from an excess of remote work, remote learning, and remote relationships?

An excess of remote anything isn't good, since it could turn us into little islands, into a dehumanized, detached society. We need personal contact to develop our personalities.

What role do generational differences play (more junior vs. senior workers) in adapting to remote communication?

Young people have an easier time working virtually, although once again it depends on each individual's personality traits and work styles. It's impossible to generalize.

What risks does 100% remote online work pose to people compared to in-person work? What about 100% in-person compared to online?

An excess of online work can lead to social distancing, which isn't good for our personality. This is why a combination of in-person and online is important.

"An excess of remote anything isn't good, since it could turn us into little islands, into a dehumanized, detached society"

Expert Opinion

Pilar de Castro Manglano

Psychiatrist at the University Clinic of Navarra and lecturer at IESE Business School

Well-Being: Costs of Excess Remote Work

Beyond ethical reasons, why is employees' well-being important for organizations?

Mental and physical health are needed for people to perform well at work, and it has been found that working toward well-being in organizations yields benefits in terms of both efficacy and efficiency. The highest costs in companies come from leaves of absence due to stress. The workplace should be a place of learning, development, and personal growth for workers.

What conditions create the most psychiatric problems among employees?

There are certain work conditions that are associated with higher degrees of stress-related illness. For example, in relation to the environment, we can state that a competitive, non-collaborative environment generates a hostile, aggressive atmosphere, which tends to be associated with more addictive and stressful and less satisfactory lifestyles. In addition, employees' lack of communication skills or an absence of protocols in the system to solve conflicts among colleagues can make for fertile ground for workplace harassment.

With regard to the type of work, the responsibility factor and the emotional load associated with it can lead to higher stress and have a direct impact on people's lives. There are also factors related to physical conditions that affect physical and psychological health: night shifts, physically exertive jobs, or too many hours without a break are associated with greater physical and mental exhaustion.

Which might the costs and benefits of always working from home (remote work) be for employees and their well-being?

Remote work has enabled us to avoid risk and keep our jobs; it has helped make work more flexible and improved living conditions (less time spent on commutes, which can be spent on rest, family enjoyment, hobbies, and other activities). However, for people who are less disciplined, working from home has been more chaotic and disorderly, and their family spaces have been invaded, or vice-versa. Therefore, remote work is a problem for people who are not very disciplined, and they need to be able to work in places and environments set aside for it, which helps them concentrate. Likewise, remote work severely limits social contact, learning, and the creation of a real-life social network, which are essential to improving individuals and companies.

"The workplace should be a place of learning, development, and personal growth for workers"

> **“Remote work is good for organized people with a high degree of autonomy and discipline and a sense of responsibility. Working in person helps those who need an external time clock to be motivated and to work”**

As a psychiatrist, you must have treated people who work in person throughout your career. What are the costs (and benefits) of always working at the office for them and their well-being?

The cost of in-person work depends primarily on the physical conditions of the job, the distance between work and home, and the traffic. In-person work certainly leads to more contact with different kinds of personalities than online work, which, in turn, implies more distractions and decreased efficiency, in addition to a greater effort needed in order to interact with customers and other people than if they had direct contact.

Are there any characteristics—personality, circumstances—that make remote work more appropriate for some people than for others?

Remote work is good for organized people with a high degree of autonomy and discipline and a sense of responsibility. Working in person helps those who need an external time clock to be motivated and to work. Remote work leads to more social isolation, and this is negative for people who struggle with social relationships, as they aren’t exposed to opportunities to gain social confidence and overcome their struggles.

Do you have any recommendations for companies thinking about how to design the “work of the future”?

Even though the pandemic has forced us to work online, it has also revealed that people can work from alternative locations and be just as efficient. The work of the future will entail the hybrid possibility and the ease of breaking through not time but spatial barriers.

> **“The work of the future will entail the hybrid possibility and the ease of breaking through not time but spatial barriers”**

Remote Work and Work in the Office: Equal Opportunities

Goal 5, "gender equality," suggests achieving equal opportunity and empowering all women and girls. Equal opportunities for men and women are essential to society's progress. Even though women's participation in the job market has risen in recent years, there is a long way to go before opportunities in hiring, remuneration, and promotion are truly equal (Las Heras, 2017).

Rigid workspace and time structures may exclude some groups from the job market, such as women with children or dependents under their care. For this reason, job flexibility schemes are a strategy that primarily helps mothers join the working world.

In a pilot test we conducted at the ICWF in which the employees of a company alternated working at the office with remote work, which was the foundation of one of the studies mentioned at the beginning of this report, we found that everyone benefitted, but that women with children benefitted the most.

Women with children showed a higher increase in performance, quality, willingness, and energy in their jobs when they participated in remote work schemes.

Table 15. Equal Opportunities (I)

	Women				Men			
	With children		Without children		With children		Without children	
	Office	Remote working	Office	Remote working	Office	Remote working	Office	Remote working
Performance	80%	90% ↑ 10%	77%	84% ↑ 7%	75%	88% ↑ 13%	76%	89% ↑ 13%
Quality	84%	90% ↑ 6%	83%	85% ↑ 2%	78%	89% ↑ 11%	78%	90% ↑ 12%
Aptitude	86%	91% ↑ 5%	86%	88% ↑ 2%	80%	91% ↑ 11%	83%	90% ↑ 7%
Energy at work	79%	88% ↑ 9%	74%	81% ↑ 7%	75%	88% ↑ 13%	73%	85% ↑ 12%

Women without children benefitted the most from remote work in terms of their happiness and pride at the job they were doing.

Tabla 16. Igualdad de oportunidades (II)

	Women				Men			
	With children		Without children		With children		Without children	
	Office	Remote working	Office	Remote working	Office	Remote working	Office	Remote working
Happiness	88%	91% ↑ 3%	82%	86% ↑ 5%	83%	92% ↑ 9%	82%	89% ↑ 6%
Pride in the work I do	86%	89% ↑ 3%	81%	86% ↑ 5%	80%	91% ↑ 11%	80%	87% ↑ 8%

The benefits of working remotely are due to factors such as the fact that when people work at home, they have fewer unexpected demands for work, attention, or communication, which are quite common at the office. The decrease in this need to multitask when working remotely is much higher in women with children, as shown in the results of questions concerning:

- Multitasking
- constantly changing tasks
- andconstantly changing conversations

This was found in men, too, albeit the differences were not as significant, as seen in **Table 17**:

Table 17. Equal Opportunities (III)

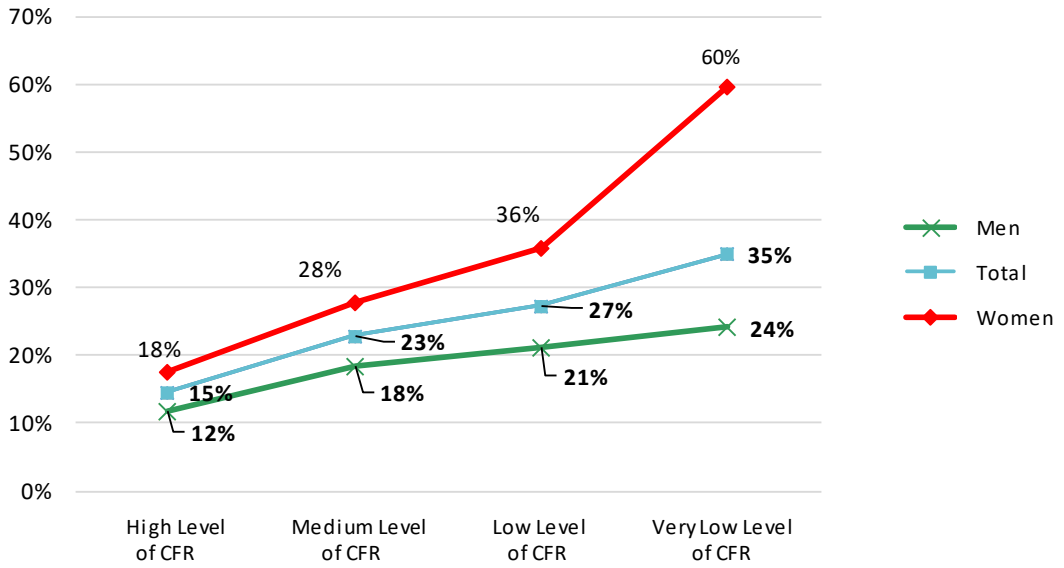
	Women				Men			
	With children		Without children		With children		Without children	
	Office	Remote working	Office	Remote working	Office	Remote working	Office	Remote working
Degree of multitasking	68%	52% ↓ -16%	59%	54% ↓ -4%	67%	57% ↓ -10%	65%	57% ↓ -7%
Task	64%	43% ↓ -21%	43%	36% ↓ -7%	60%	40% ↓ -20%	59%	43% ↓ -16%
Conversation	60%	34% ↓ -26%	41%	36% ↓ -5%	58%	36% ↓ -22%	57%	42% ↓ -15%

Figures 5 and **6** show the results of a study we conducted at the ICWF which is mentioned at the beginning of this report. In it, we estimated the level of corporate family responsibility (CFR) in the environment where people work. CFR is companies' commitment to promote work–¬life balance leadership, culture, and policies that help the employees in their organizations integrate work, family, and personal life. When the CFR is very low, that is, when flexibility measures that foster work–family integration are not offered, the company is less attractive to women. It creates barriers to their development in the organization, and therefore their opportunity level is lower.

Figure 5 shows how, when asked if their company favors men (versus women), both men and women working in flexible companies (those with a high CFR) agree that men are not favored but that it is a meritocracy; that is, those with the strongest competencies are promoted.

In environments with a low CFR, that is, with little flexibility, men and women both state that the environment favors men, regardless of their competencies and accomplishments. However, women in particular respond this way, as they are clearly more sensitive to the situation because they suffer directly from it; after all, as we know, women still often carry more family responsibilities. In any case, men also state that environments with a very low CFR favor them.

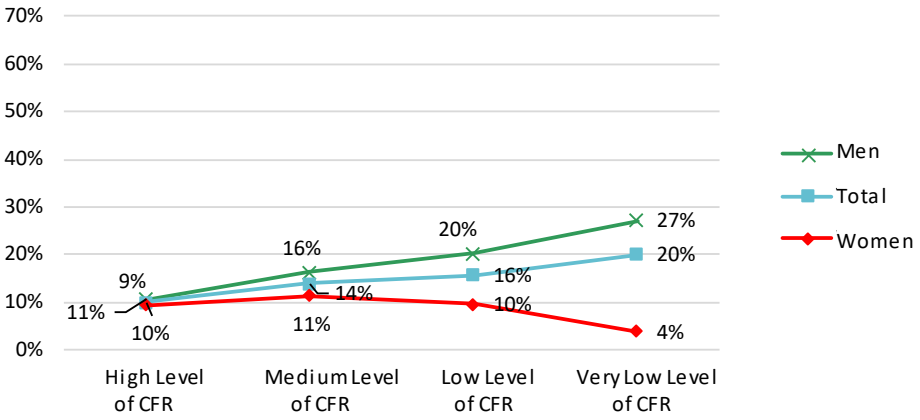
Figure 5. Privilege That Favors Men



As **Figure 6** shows, the question was the opposite: whether an environment that is flexible in terms of spaces and time favors women. Curiously, yet again, when the environment is flexible (has a high CFR), both men and women agree that it doesn't favor anybody, that it is a meritocracy, and those with the strongest competencies are promoted.

However, in an inflexible environment with a very low CFR, some men think that the context favors women. But women, who tend to have the most difficulties balancing work and family and more responsibilities at home, state that it clearly does not favor women.

Figure 6. Privilege that Favors women



Therefore, remote work combined with in-person work, as a tool that fosters flexibility and work–family integration, is a great way to achieve true equal opportunities between men and women.

Likewise, goal 8, "decent work and economic growth," seeks to promote steady, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth; full, productive employment; and decent jobs for everyone. In this regard, flexibility in time and space is a strategy to facilitate integration and decent jobs, especially for people who are caregivers, have a very difficult commute, or live outside a metropolitan area. Therefore, limiting the number of days they have to work in the office would enable these people to join the working world.

Let us examine each of them below.

Integrating People who Care for Dependents

Flexibility helps people join the job market while tending to their family needs. In addition to parents caring for their children, some people care for the elderly or for others whose circumstances require special care. Anyone who works as a caregiver not only has to integrate care for others into their workday but also has to buy medicine, go to doctor's appointments, take care of the food and grooming needs of those they are caring for, etc. Currently, there are many people qualified for jobs who are grappling with the difficulty of having one because they do not have the flexibility needed to attend to their responsibilities as caregivers.

In this regard, our studies show that there is one important factor that alleviates the difficulty in concentrating on work for people who care for others: support and sensitivity from their boss. A work team that is organized and has leaders that support job flexibility allows organizations to be prepared to adapt more resiliently to situations that restrict mobility due to future environmental, health, or social contingencies.

Integrating Different Age Groups

Working from home means adapting to new technological tools, and not all age groups are familiar with integrating online or communication applications virtually. In a pilot program carried out by the ICWF, we found that the younger age groups in the workforce are those that make the most out of remote work.

Our data reveal that employees in the age group of 20- to 30-year-olds manage to lower their cognitive overload, work more intensely, and multitask when working from home. Employees in this age group have grown up with technology at their fingertips and are able to more quickly familiarize themselves with the tools that let them work remotely. Many young people have been working remotely since their first jobs, participating in virtual meetings without any hitches, while the older age groups have had to make more of an effort to adapt to using these tools.

Table 18. Integrating Different Generations

COGNITIVE OVERLOAD				WORK INTENSIFICATION			
Age group	Office work	Experimental remote work	Percentage change	Age group	Office work	Experimental remote work	Percentage change
20-30 years	7.65	6.75	-12% ⌄⌄	20-30 years	6.74	5.37	⌄⌄-20%
30-40 years	6.77	7.03	4% ^^	30-40 years	6.31	5.48	⌄⌄-13%
40-50 years	7.43	7.60	2% ^^	40-50 years	6.38	6.09	⌄⌄ -5%
50-60 years	7.43	7.93	7% ^^	50-60 years	7.44	7.11	⌄⌄ -4%

MULTITASKING			
Age group	Office work	Experimental remote work	Percentage change
20-30 years	6.72	5.08	-24% ⌄⌄
30-40 years	6.26	5.38	-14% ⌄⌄
40-50 years	6.46	6.22	-4% ⌄⌄
50-60 years	6.32	6.22	-2% ⌄⌄

One of the major challenges facing organizations is the effective functioning of hybrid teams where employees can alternate remote and in-person work. The goal is to achieve the support, motivation, and tracking of hybrid teams in which in-person and remote workers collaborate (Bosch et al., 2020).

There are studies on this topic that discuss the benefits of a staff with different age groups working together, and while these studies highlight that having them work together is beneficial, it also requires effort (Burmeister et al., July 9, 2020). Therefore, it is important for hybrid workplace models to include strategies that address the challenges and opportunities of work teams that include different age groups.

To Avoid the Depopulation of Rural Areas

In recent years, more and more villages have emptied out in Spain because their residents have chosen to move to the big cities in search of job opportunities. Living in a village dozens of miles from the workplace is unfeasible if the job requires a daily presence. However, lowering the number of days at the office helps people keep their residence outside the city and opens the possibility of many people joining the job market without having to permanently move to big cities.

Remote Work and Work in the Office: Respect for the Environment

As we have seen, flexibility and remote work have the potential to benefit the well-being of individuals as well as organizations. The combination of remote and in-person work can also work as a measure that aligns with caring for the planet because of the benefits it brings to both society and the environment. This is aligned with the following Sustainable Development Goals:

- Objective 7: "Affordable, non-polluting energy"
- Objective 11: "Sustainable cities and communities"
- Objective 12: "Responsible production and consumption"
- Objective 13: "Action for the climate"

Lowering energy consumption tends to be presented as the main factor linking remote work to sustainability. This is based on two assumptions:

- It lowers the need for travel, as many commutes between the home and office are rendered unnecessary.
- It lowers energy consumption at offices, since less electricity and gas oil are used in workplaces when people work at home.

By reducing mobility, meaning the commute between home and the office, remote work can be an alternative way to reduce the polluting emissions caused by transportation. In turn, by lowering the number of commutes to the office, the distances traveled by employees also drop. The reduction in mobility also leads to improved air quality in cities and a drop in pollution levels (Guilera & Codina, April 15, 2020).

Some of the sustainability benefits of limiting mobility, especially at the times when people arrive to and leave their offices, are:

Benefits of limiting mobility

- It prevents traffic jams due to commutes
- There is a reduction in:
  - stress and exhaustion from traffic jams due to commutes;
  - congestion in cities, pollution, and noise;
  - the ecological footprint;
  - the accident rate on commutes to and from work;
  - noise pollution;
  - wear and tear on automobiles; and
  - the need for public transportation (Las Heras & Barraza, July 2020).

According to our figures, today 40% of people commute to work in cars (34% of them by themselves).

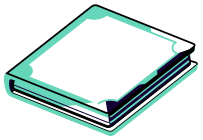
What is the main means of transportation you use when commuting to work?

Table 19. Means of Transport

	Responses
Car, alone	34%
Metro	14%
Bus	12%
Walking	11%
Motorcycle	10%
Train	7%
Bicycle/Skating	6%
Car sharing	6%

Plus, we have found that people travel an average of 30 kilometers (about 19 miles) per day to and from their usual workplace, and 22% of the respondents commute more than 50 kilometers (about 31 miles).

Table 20. Distance Traveled



Daily distance	
Less than 10 km	35%
10 to 30 km	28%
30 to 50 km	15%
More than 50 km	22%

Naturally, we have to be cautious when assuming that a drop in work commutes will lead to lower emissions, because this assumes that by reducing commutes people don't increase their travel unrelated to work. However, there are studies (Hook et al., August 19, 2020) that reveal that people who work exclusively from home may increase their mobility for personal reasons and even travel farther distances than between work and home. Therefore, in order for net CO_2 emissions to drop, a shift in mindsets and habits is needed.

At the ICWF, we suggest the remote–office work mix as a good alternative to make commute times more efficient while keeping the benefits of effective, sustainable mobility. In this way, people can use these commutes to run errands and cover other needs.

Remote work, when done flexibly, is a good tool to contain energy reductions that result from congestion due to traffic jams at rush hour. Likewise, the mix can benefit from a greater acceptance of public transportation by society, since people may be more willing to use forms of public transit if they are less crowded and needed only some days a week (Tang et al., December 2011).

Expert Opinion

Eva Bufi

Civil engineer, expert in smart cities,
and CEO of Ardana Consultants

Smart Cities in the New Reality

How would you define a smart city?

The concept of smart cities defines the evolution of a city that adapts to a new context. Technologies have to be incorporated into city services in order to make them more efficient. Private citizens, companies, and the public administration should work together, communicate, and reach understandings. Government departments and different services have to be connected to optimize their management. Cities should become pleasant, healthy spaces for citizens. A smart city is a city that evolves, adapts, is connected, is optimized, is sustainable, and has a vision of becoming a place where citizens can live, work, and interact.

From your perspective, what are the major global trends that will affect the future of cities?

There is a diverse range of realities and cultures in the world, and this means that countries view smart cities differently. In developing countries, a smart city is a city that provides its citizens with what we consider basic services, although there are trends that are affecting all cities, albeit to a differing degree. The first is technological development, including artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things. Climate change and the struggle against it is another fact. We have realized that it's essential for everyone, including cities, as prime generators of pollution, to lower emission levels, and this means limiting polluting mobility, reusing materials (circular economy), generating renewable energies, consuming local products, etc.

On top of this we have the current pandemic, which has cast doubt on different axioms of the new free and sustainable city in terms of whether urban concentration is the best system for residents, or even for our planet, and whether the use of collective transportation is a possible hotspot where illnesses are spread.

How will these smart city trends affect the future of work, companies, and employees?

Companies are already noticing these changes. The pandemic has accelerated certain behaviors and made certain things previously viewed as impossible a reality. In my opinion, companies should seek human

"Cities should become pleasant, healthy spaces for citizens. A smart city is a city that evolves, adapts, is connected, is optimized, is sustainable, and has a vision of becoming a place where citizens can live, work, and interact"

management systems and work schemes that are flexible and goal-based. They have to adopt the new technologies and use them as work tools. The relationships between the company and the worker should be win-win in terms of both where and when the service is provided. Each employee has a different situation, which can change throughout their career. Likewise, the company's needs also change. Therefore, a relationship in which both sides can adapt seems the best, always within a defined framework and with certain limitations.

Will there be offices, stores, and buildings housing headquarters in smart cities in the future? How will they be used? What will they look like?

That's a difficult question! In the short and medium term, it seems logical to think there will be, but in the long term it remains to be seen. It's clear that there is a steep increase in e-commerce, but in turn, certain stores are still around, as are certain customs. I don't predict that the need to have a headquarters will change in the medium term. The size or location may change, but there are some matters that would be hard to change by dispersing workers or having small remote or coworking offices, or by working from home. Human beings need contact to create trust and to interact, and it's going to be hard to change this completely.

Looking toward the future of work, is there any good news?

I think the good news is that for companies and workers who like to grow, learn, and evolve, the business world will become their own private paradise. We are in a world that is changing quickly, and therefore companies and workers who are changing in parallel are sure to be successful.

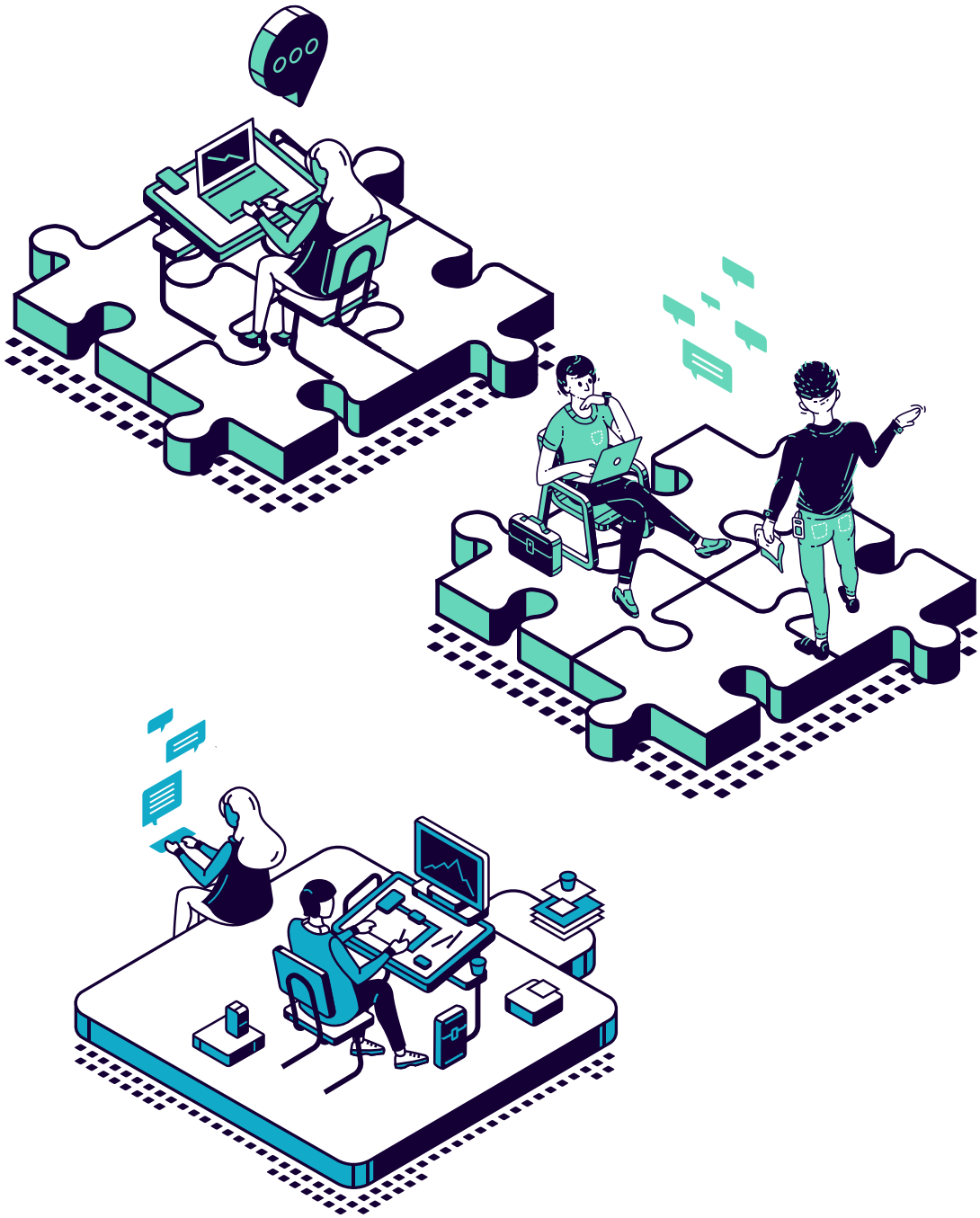
Do you have any recommendations for companies and managers who are planning the future workspaces and policies for their employees?

My recommendation would be flexibility, communication, consensus, and win-win. I would ask unions, employer associations, and governments to evolve as well, and to adapt to the new needs of workers and companies.

"Each employee has a different situation, which can change throughout their career. Likewise, the company's needs also change. Therefore, a relationship in which both sides can adapt seems the best"

PART THREE

Practical Guide to Avoid Getting Lost in the Mix of In-Person and Remote Work



Guide to Not Getting Lost in the Remote Work–Office Work Mix

Faced with a challenge as motivating as preparing a practical guide that illustrates the connections, differences, and characteristics of a hybrid work model, IESE and Savills Aguirre Newman have combined their enthusiasm, expertise, and knowledge to jointly produce the following graphic document.

It consists of illustrated information on the characteristics and conditions suitable for remote work and in-person work, what conditions determine whether a meeting works better virtually or face-to-face, whether there is an ideal candidate for the hybrid model, and prototypes of work spaces and personal profiles; in addition, it also includes some user journey examples where you can see how all of the above is put into practice.

We believe that this document can inspire and help both workers and organizations understand the keys to flexible work models as well as their singularities; it will also facilitate the approach to and implementation of these work models, at a time in which a great deal of attention is being placed on them and in which they are seen as a symbol of the future of the professional world.

1 Suitable quantity of and conditions for remote work & office working

2 Who is the ideal candidate for the hybrid model?

7 Definition of prototypes

3 Good practices for an employee working remotely & working in the office (hybrid model)

6 How to adapt?

5 User Journeys

4 When to meet face-to-face vs. online

1

Suitable quantity of and conditions for remote work & office working

Suitable quantity of and conditions for remote work

With a manager who offers...
support, emotional and instrumental.

How often?
1-2 days a week

With the support...
of a partner or spouse who recognizes the value and need of remote work.

From where?
From a quiet place that facilitates concentration.

For specific projects...
that require greater concentration and individual work.

With what means?
With suitable technical means.

And...
with access to appropriate colleagues, managers, collaborators, ressources.

Suitable quantity of and conditions for office working

With a manager...
who bases their leadership on trust and on your maturity as a professional.

How often?
2-4 days a week

With the support
of a team that gives meaning to the face-to-face work experience.

From where?
Spaces suited to the tasks to be carried out.

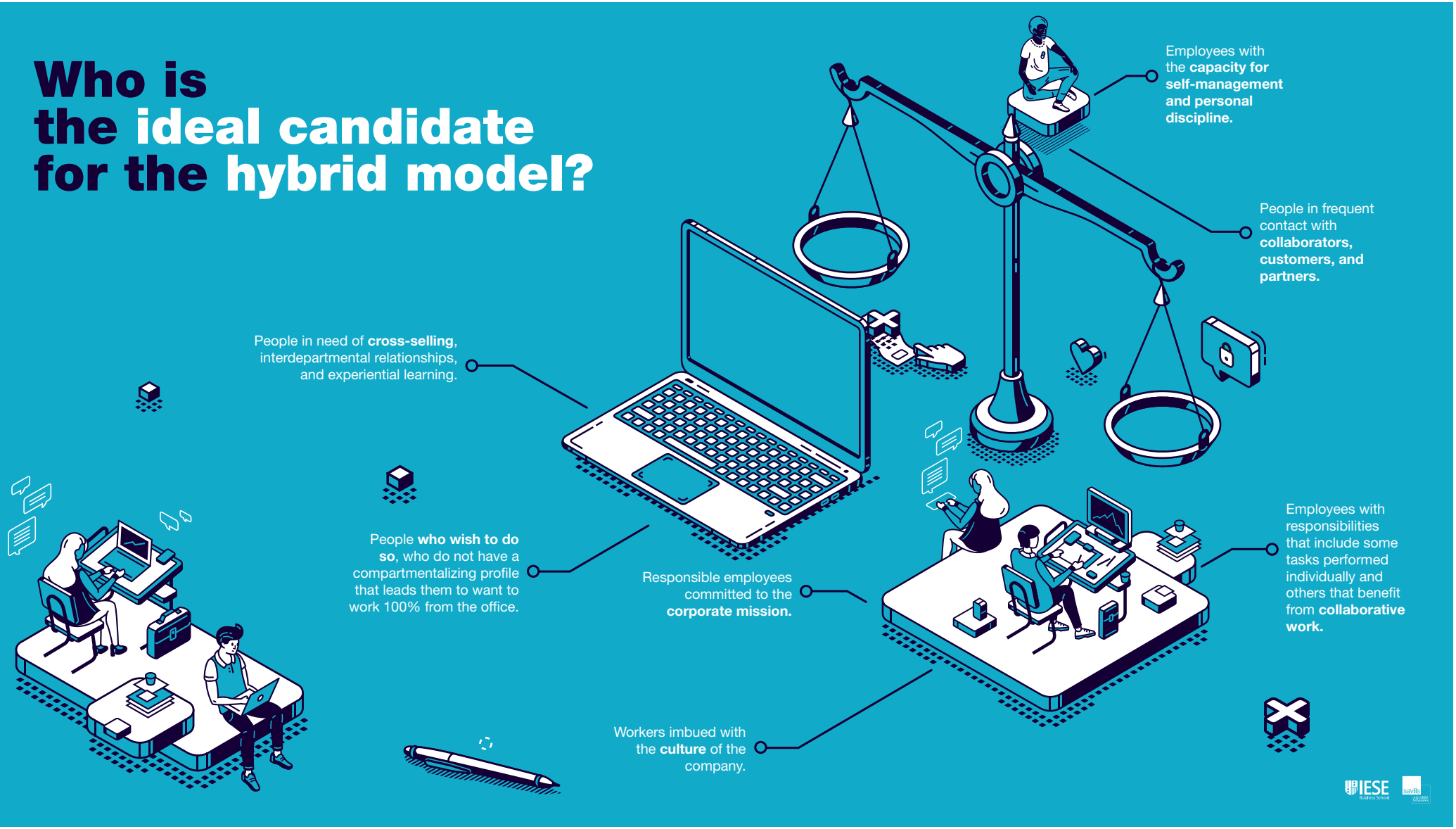
For projects and group sessions...
where the face-to-face element adds value.

With what means?
With a suitable environment in both design and format.

And...
the possibility of self-isolating and concentrating when tasks require it.

Who is the ideal candidate for the hybrid model?

Who is the ideal candidate for the hybrid model?



Employees with the **capacity for self-management and personal discipline.**

People in frequent contact with **collaborators, customers, and partners.**

People in need of **cross-selling**, interdepartmental relationships, and experiential learning.

People **who wish to do so**, who do not have a compartmentalizing profile that leads them to want to work 100% from the office.

Responsible employees committed to the **corporate mission.**

Employees with responsibilities that include some tasks performed individually and others that benefit from **collaborative work.**

Workers imbued with the **culture** of the company.

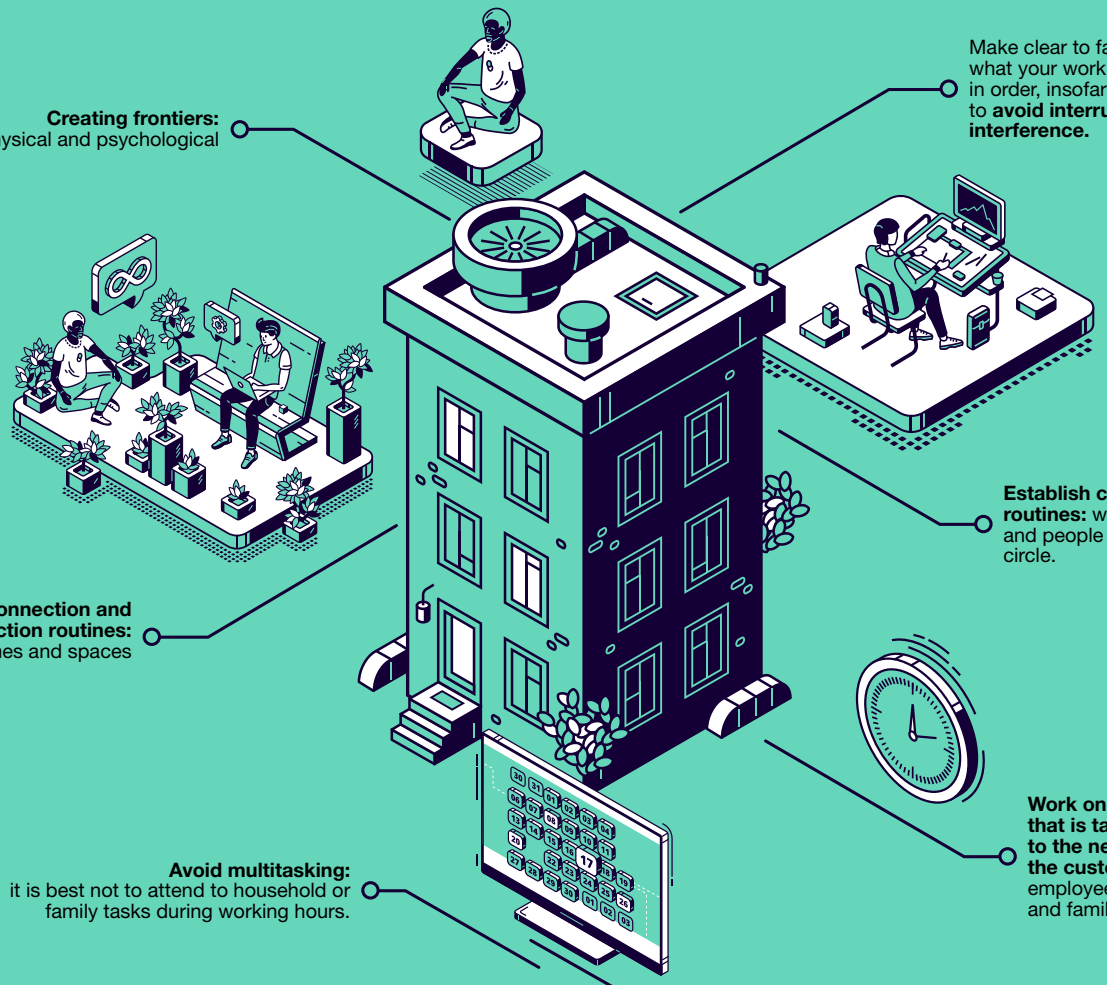
IESE Business School

savills

Good practices for an employee working remotely & working in the office

Hybrid model

Good practices for an employee working remotely (hybrid model)



Creating frontiers: physical and psychological

Make clear to family members what your work routines will be in order, insofar as is possible, to **avoid interruptions and interference.**

Establish communication routines: with people at work and people in your personal circle.

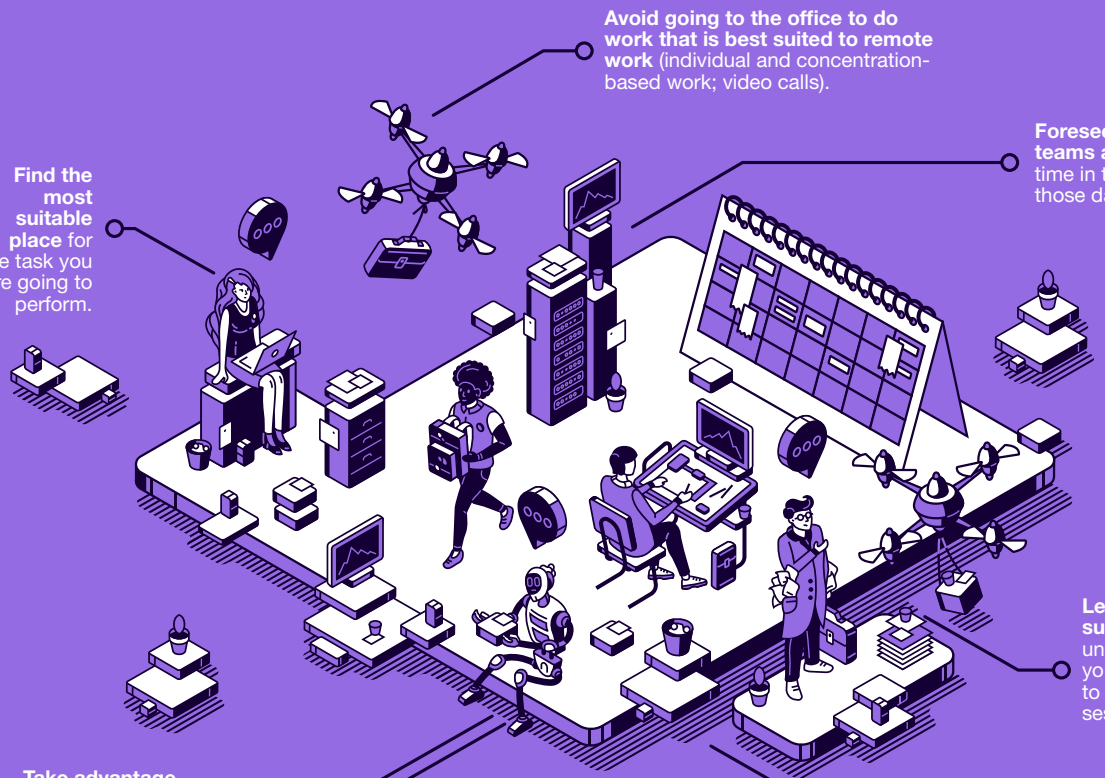
Create connection and disconnection routines: times and spaces

Work on a schedule that is tailored to the needs of the customer, the employee's biorhythm, and family needs.

Avoid multitasking: it is best not to attend to household or family tasks during working hours.

Avoid constant connection in the moments that do not fit into your work routine.

Good practices for an employee working in the office (hybrid model)



Avoid going to the office to do work that is best suited to remote work (individual and concentration-based work; video calls).

Foresee when you will coincide with teams and people who will enrich your time in the office (plan what to do on those days, with whom, and how).

Find the most suitable place for the task you are going to perform.

Let the office surprise you with the unexpected (people you did not expect to see, improvised sessions, etc.).

Take advantage of times when the office, due to the influx of people, can offer its full potential.

Find and use spaces for unscheduled events (fortuitous encounters, casual conversations) to ensure there is social interaction and that bonds with colleagues are created.

Make clear to colleagues work will be done from the office so that they know when they can count on you in-person.

4

When to meet

Face-to-face vs. online

Good practices in online meetings

Punctuality and clear meeting structure communicated in advance.

Start with the camera on (so everyone has a chance to see each other)—if people prefer to deactivate it later, that's fine.

Begin with a brief greeting and informal conversation.

Keep to the agenda.

Ensure that people with something to contribute (information, opinion, experience) do so (sometimes you will have to ask them).

Finish by reviewing what resolutions have been made and who should carry them out.

When to meet online?

1 **Routine meetings** in which you have to follow up and make process decisions.

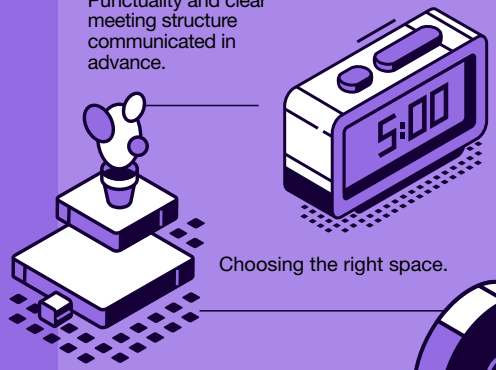
2 **Meetings in which the cost** (economic, environmental, health) **of travel does not compensate the social benefit** (creation of links).

3 **Crisis meetings** where there is not enough time to travel.

4 **Informative meetings.**

Good practices in face-to-face meetings

Punctuality and clear meeting structure communicated in advance.



Choosing the right space.

Maximization of communication in perceptible aspects in face-to-face meetings (gesture, tone of voice, eye contact, active listening).

Keep to the agenda.

In creative sessions, encourage improvisation and spontaneity.

Interact naturally and in an equal way with anybody who is connected remotely.

When to meet face-to-face?

1 **Ideation,** innovation, creativity, or brainstorming sessions.

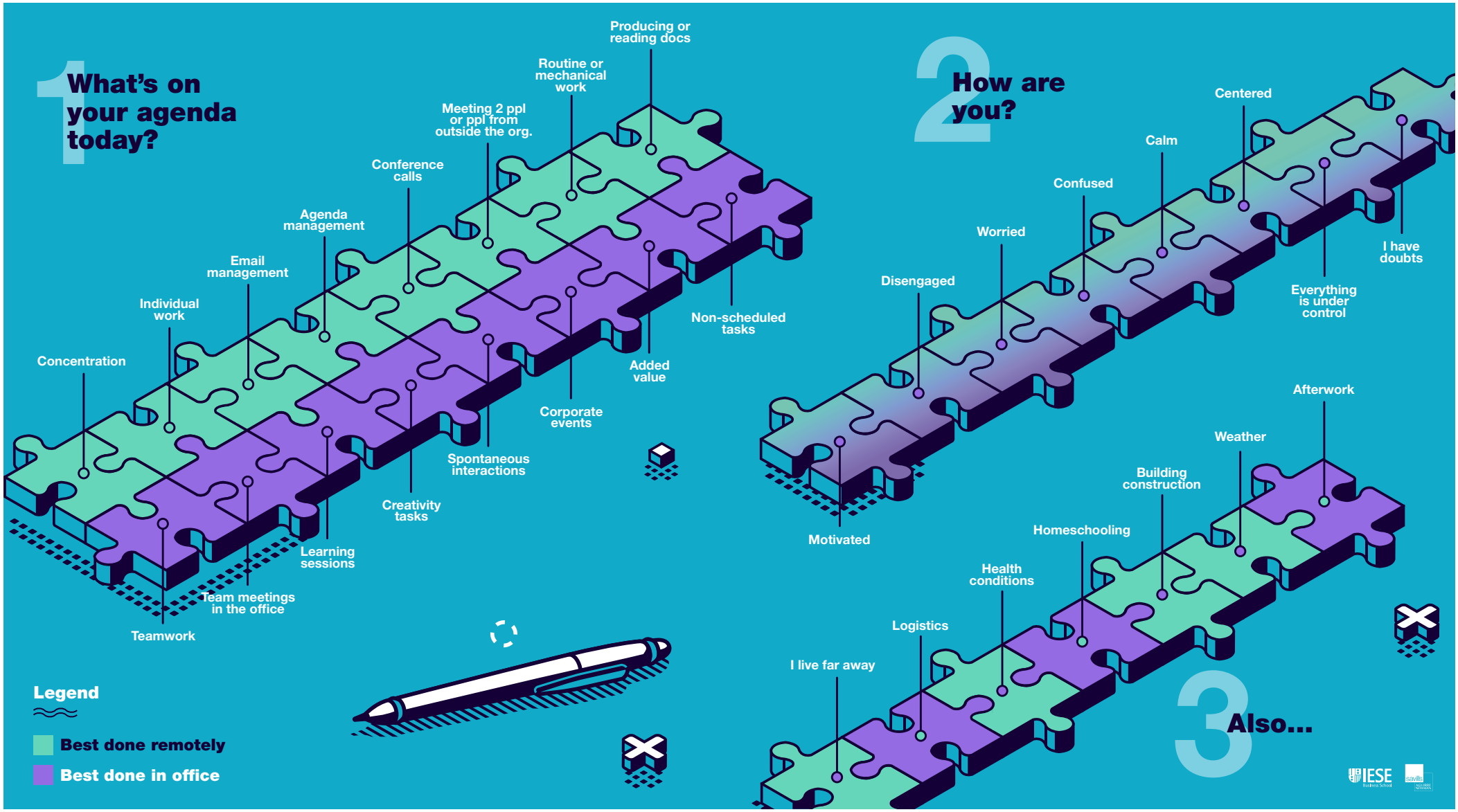
2 **Sessions with people who are not part of your usual work or project team** and where non-verbal communication and bonding are important.

3 **Meetings or sessions that require a certain degree of staging** (presentations, workshops, lectures, etc.)

4 **Meetings or encounters where the topics to be discussed are sensitive** and the closeness or empathy with the rest of the people is a differential value.

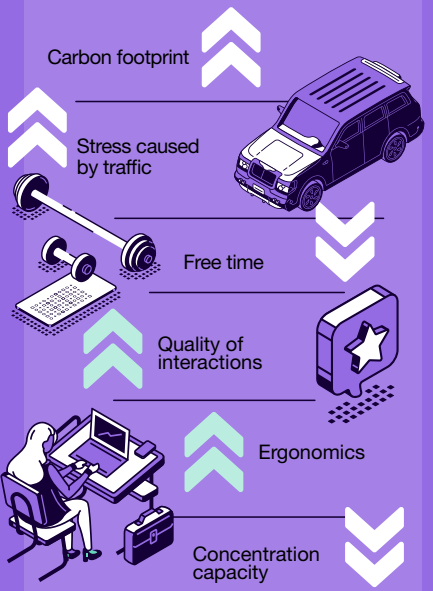
5

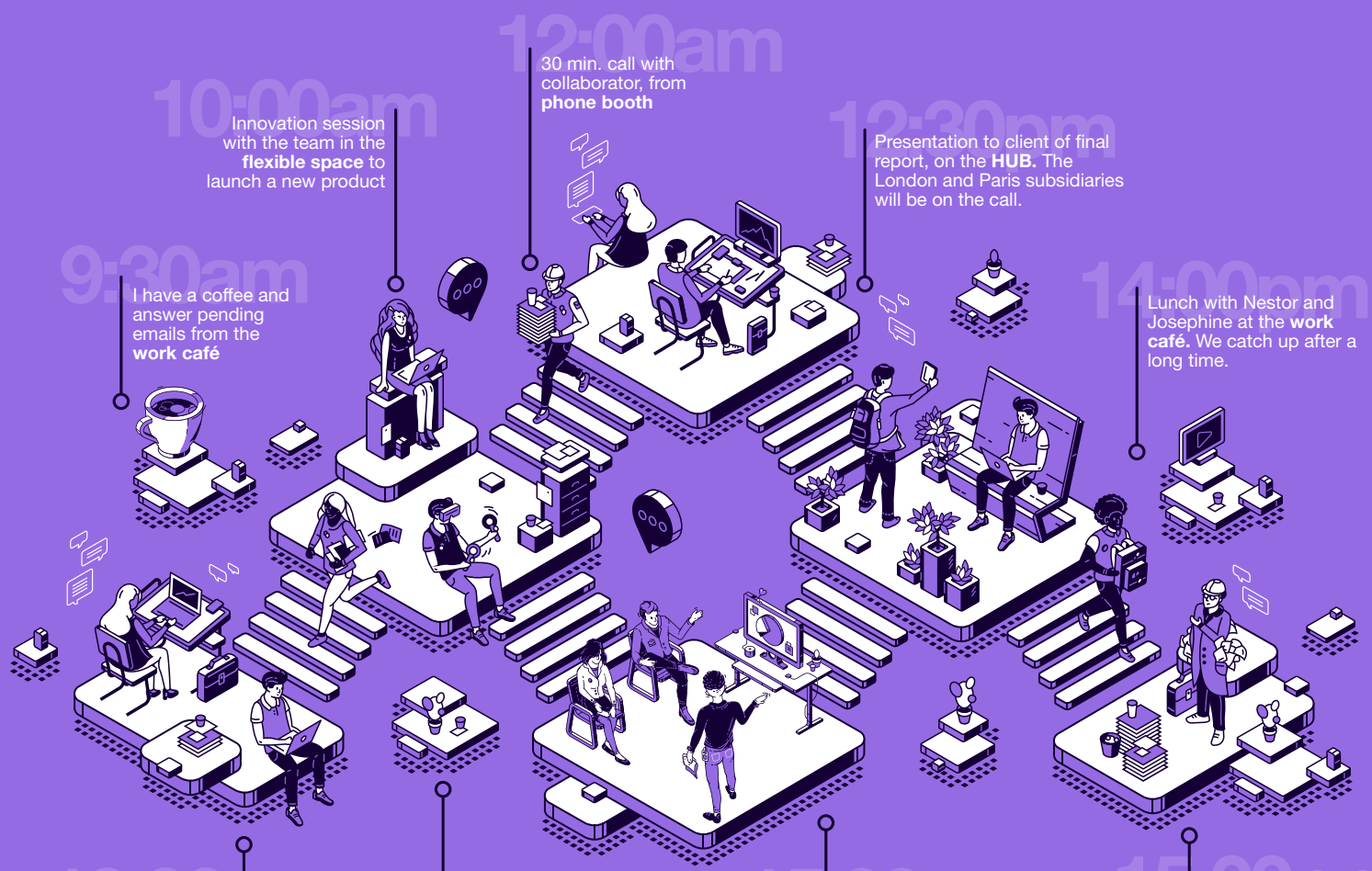
User Journeys


1
What's on your agenda today?
Producing or reading docs
Routine or mechanical work
Meeting 2 ppl or ppl from outside the org.
Conference calls
Agenda management
Email management
Individual work
Concentration
Non-scheduled tasks
Added value
Corporate events
Spontaneous interactions
Creativity tasks
Learning sessions
Team meetings in the office
Teamwork
2
How are you?
Centered
Calm
Confused
Worried
Disengaged
I have doubts
Everything is under control
Motivated
Afterwork
Weather
Building construction
Homeschooling
Health conditions
Logistics
I live far away
3
Also...
Legend
Best done remotely
Best done in office

User journey
Working in the office

- *Teamwork*
- *Email management*
- *Added value*
- *Non-scheduled tasks*
- *Confidential calls*
- *Motivated*
- *I have doubts*
- *Strange contact with others*
- *Afterwork*





User journey
Teleworking

- *Routine and mechanical work*
- *Report writing and reading*
- *Concentration*
- *Meeting ppl from outside the org.*
- *Email management*
- *Agenda management*
- *Calm*
- *Motivated*

Carbon footprint

Stress caused by traffic

Free time

Quality of interactions

Ergonomics

Concentration capacity

9:00am

Catch up on emails

10:00am

Call in remotely to a weekly follow-up meeting

11:00am

Coffee break; make two phone calls standing up

8:00am

Spend some time stretching and a while on exercise bike

11:30am

Report writing

17:30pm

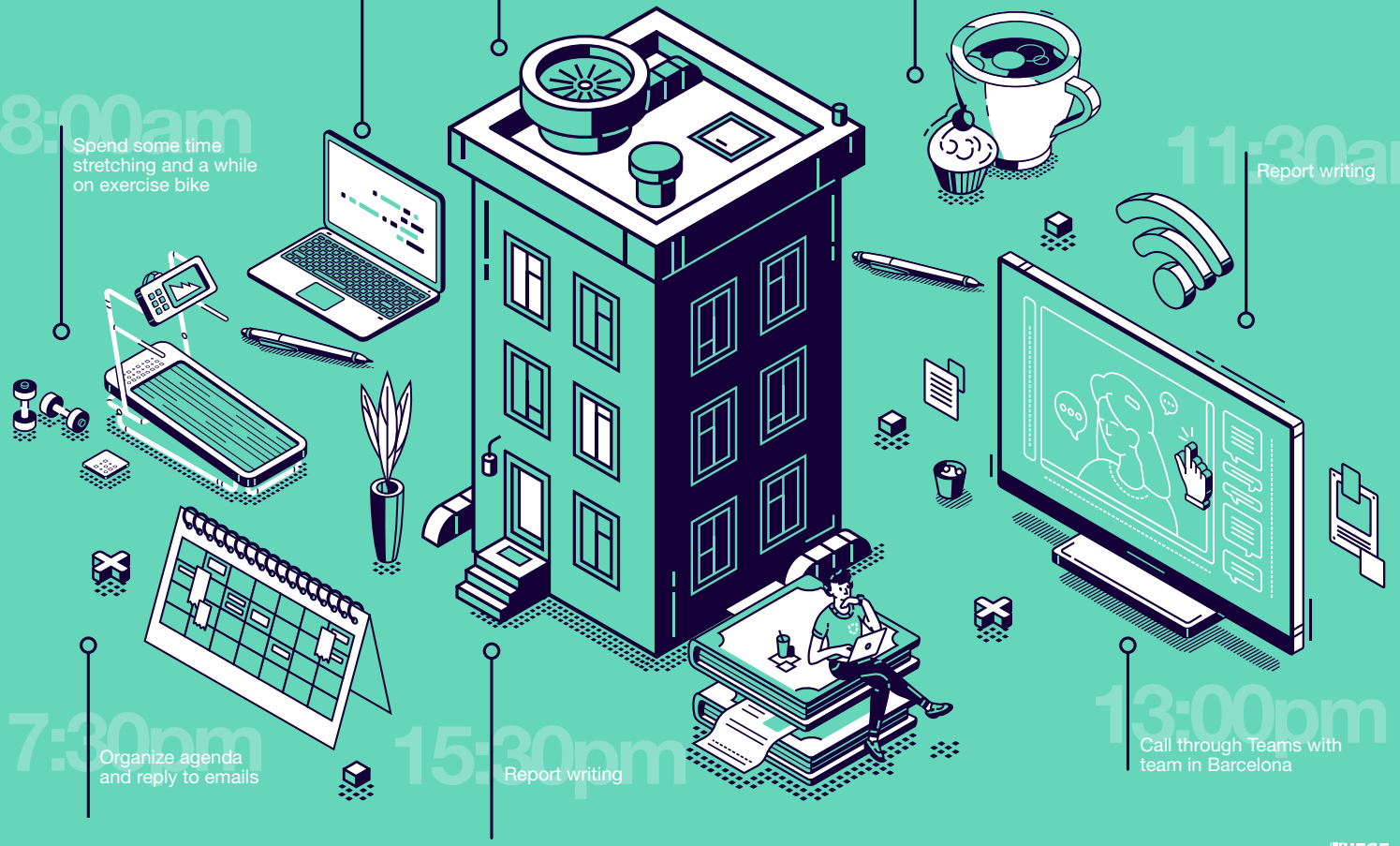
Organize agenda and reply to emails

15:30pm

Report writing

13:00pm

Call through Teams with team in Barcelona



User journey
hybrid model

- *Concentration*
- *Creativity tasks*
- *Calm*
- *Teamwork*
- *Individual work*
- *Concentrated*
- *Email management*
- *Agenda management*
- *Motivated*

Carbon footprint

Stress caused by traffic

Free time

Quality of interactions

Ergonomics

Concentration capacity

8:30am
Take advantage of rush hour to do concentration-based work from home

11:00am
The team presents its sales strategy proposals for Q2, in the **Agora**

13:00pm
Chat with my manager about team restructuring on **Office for a day**

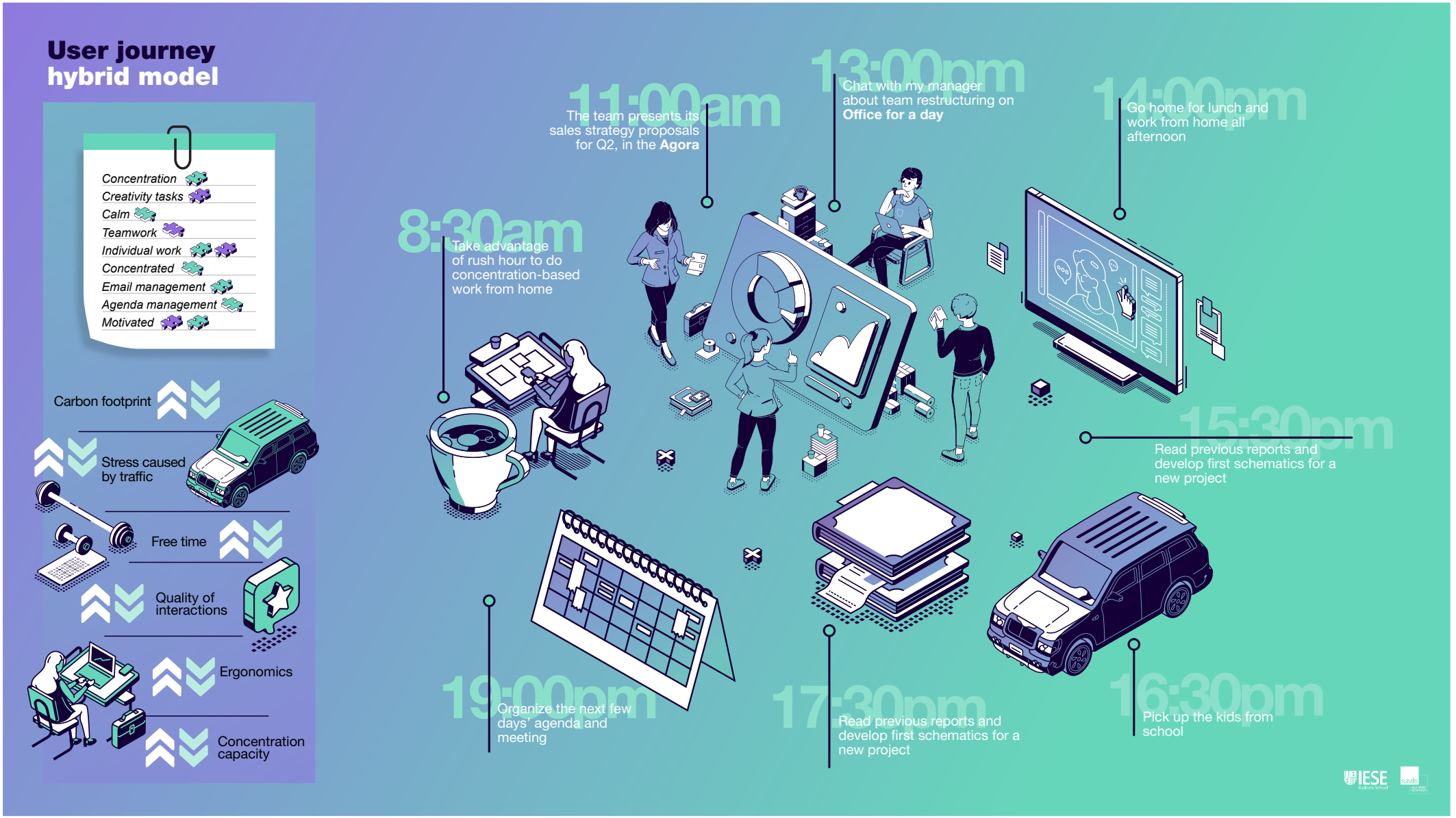
14:00pm
Go home for lunch and work from home all afternoon

15:30pm
Read previous reports and develop first schematics for a new project

16:30pm
Pick up the kids from school

17:30pm
Read previous reports and develop first schematics for a new project

19:00pm
Organize the next few days' agenda and meeting



6

How to adapt?

How to adapt?

Bolster

Interpersonal relationships that promote trust and a sense of belonging.

Strong cultures in which values are transmitted through everything that is done.

Spaces that reflect the mission and charisma of the organization.

Leading based on **trust** and a sense of mission: provide a **service.**

Change

Replace face-to-face mentality—in which being in the workplace means commitment, productivity, and fostering culture—with **a mentality of contribution,** which requires certain attitudes and competencies and not just short-term results.

Replace expectation of working from the office even if it adds no value (and may in fact retract value) **with expecting workers' presence when this entails generating relationships, co-creating, collaborating, and contributing.**

Replace offices designed in such a way that **generates silos** and spaces in which to work individually and in isolation **with offices that transmit values, generate interrelationships, and foster contribution.**

Replace a control mindset for support mindset

Replace defining schedules and spaces that are not based on the needs of the client and the employee with empowering people to make the right decisions: **beginning with where (space) and when (schedule) to work.**

Replace corporate spaces with no specific meaning or purpose with offices that add value—spaces for co-creation and informal meetings.

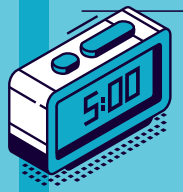
Stop doing

Go to the office for:

Remote work

Working on matters that require individual concentration and would be better done elsewhere —remotely.

Having corporate spaces that add no value (accumulation of files, paper, etc.)



Entry and exit schedules that do not reflect the needs of customers and employees, with accumulations in parking lots, dining rooms, roads, etc.

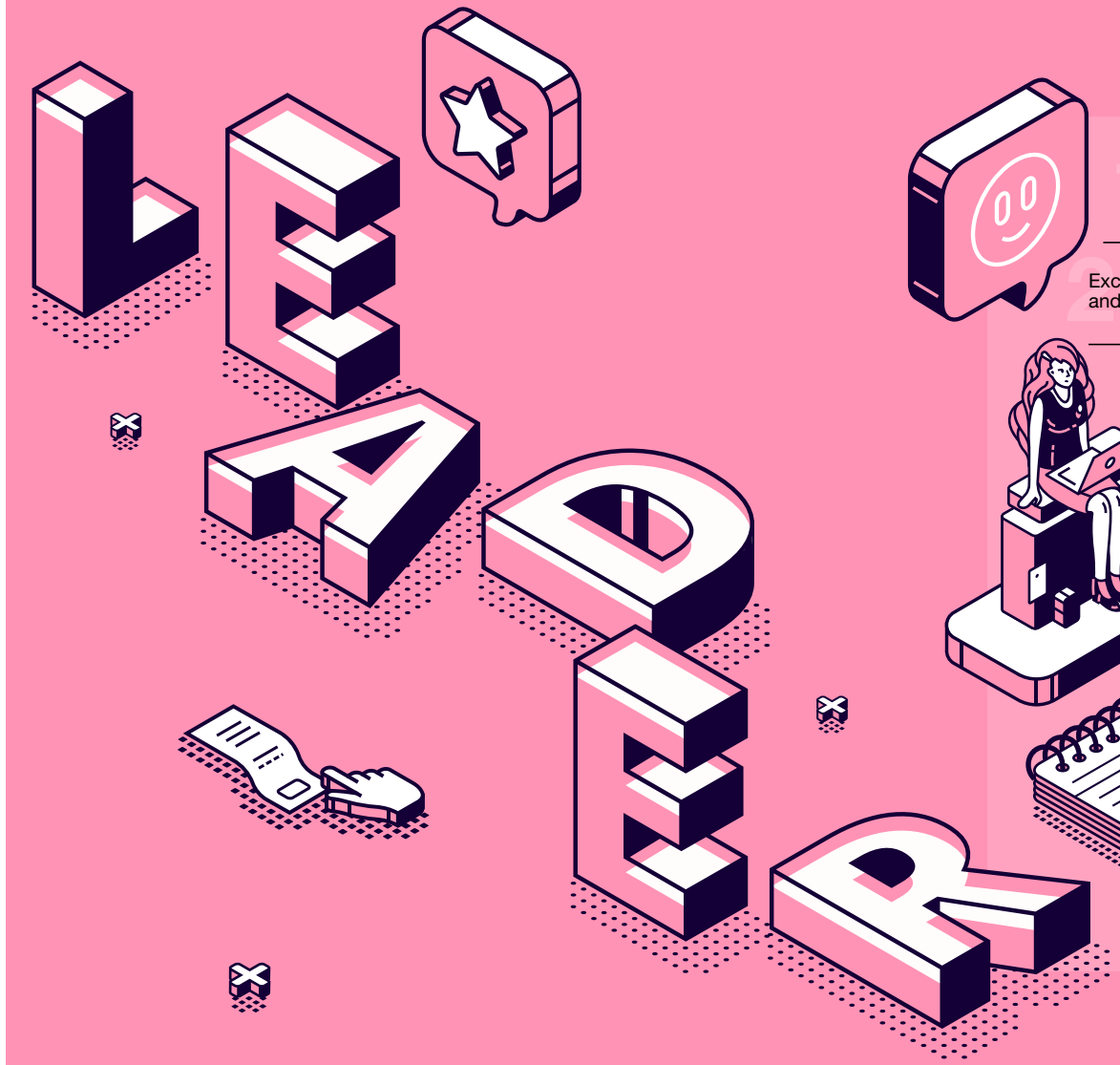
Business travel without any real need.

7

Definition

of prototypes

Definition of prototypes: Leader



Transparent, approachable, with a clear vision of objectives and strategy

Excellent communication skills and active listening

Balances professional and relational/social aspects

Aware of the value of her team, of what she can do for them, and what they can do for her

Eager and able to teach what she knows

Easily adapts to changes of plan and quickly comes up with solutions

Eager and able to learn

Motivated and proactive

Bases her leadership on trust rather than vigilance

Believes in objective-based work

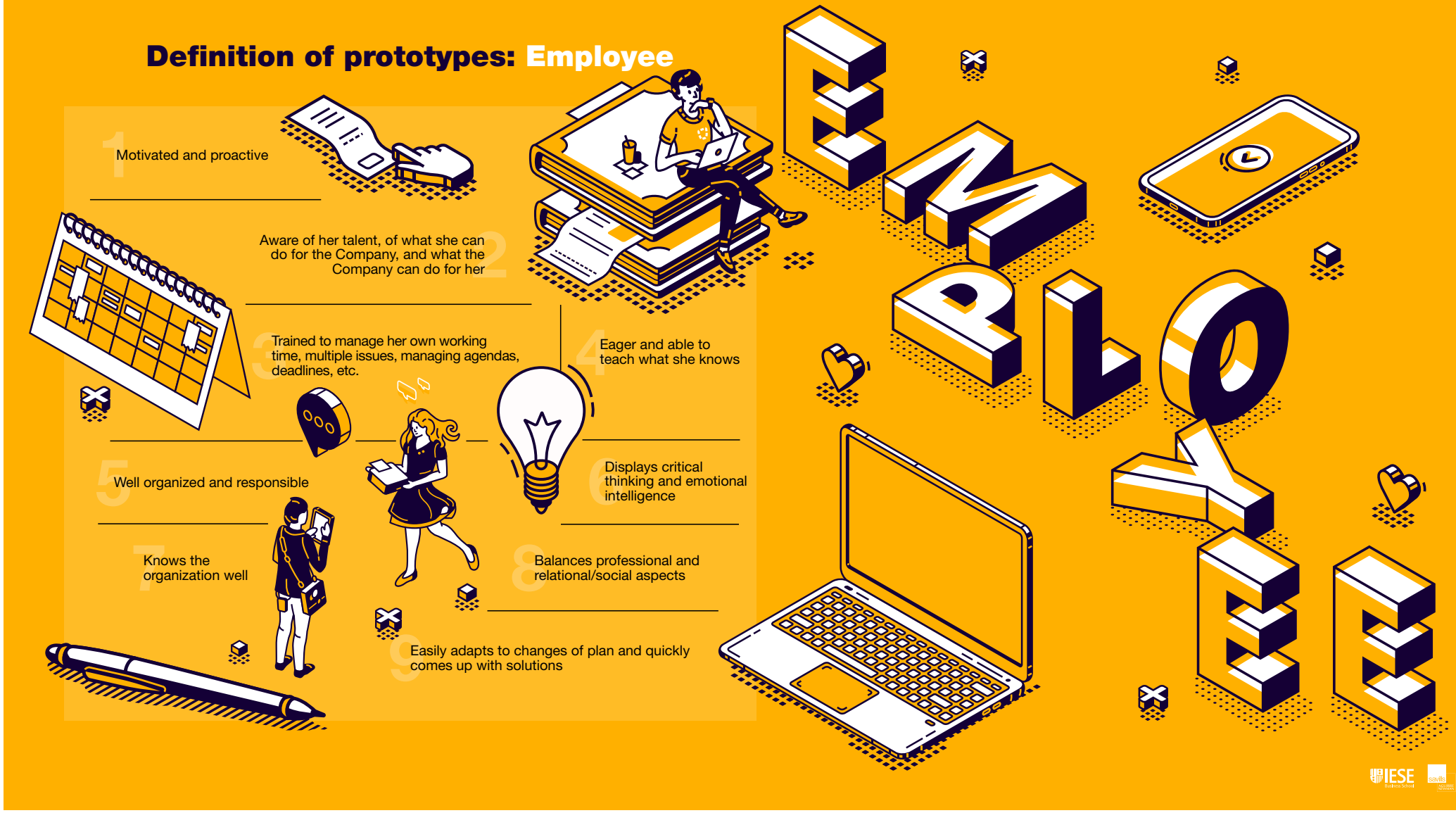
Knows the organization well

Able to instill confidence and bring out the best in her people

Well organized and responsible

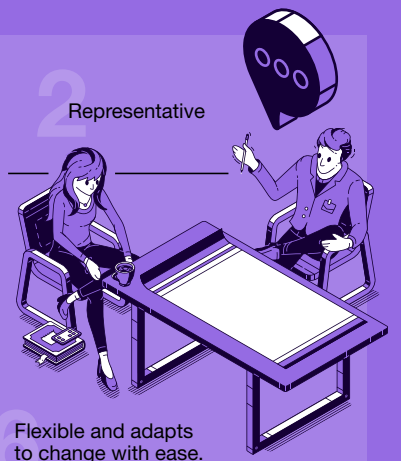
Displays critical thinking and emotional intelligence

Definition of prototypes: Employee



Definition of prototypes: Office

1. Allows for concentration and individual work.
2. Representative



3. Variety of areas and options for users.
4. Model responds to the needs of both business and people.
5. Welcoming; employees feel good.
6. Flexible and adapts to change with ease.
7. Employees know how to use it to benefit their own productivity.
8. Fosters people connecting, making them feel part of a common goal and mission.
9. Conveys well-being, health, and sustainability values.
10. Has special spaces for customers and visitors.
11. Has value-added spaces where people can learn and share knowledge, innovate, collaborate, and socialize.

12. Reflects the company's values.
13. Social and welcoming place, facilitates coming together.

14. Attractive and motivating. Makes people want to go there.

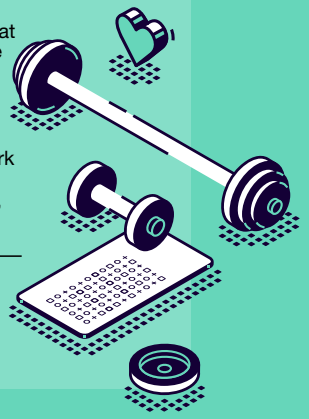
Definition of prototypes: Remote

1. Preferably in a dedicated work space.
2. Convenient and comfortable: spacious, bright, tidy, clean, pleasant, and quiet.
3. Work items and devices are brought out and stored away at the beginning and end of the day. Not a non-stop work station.

4. Adequate artificial light for when needed.
5. Space for breaks. Coffee, distraction, disconnection, every so often.
6. Ergonomics: size and height of screen, table, and chair.
7. Free from other distractions or noise.
8. Drink water frequently.

9. Spend a specified and conscious time to eat lunch and take a rest.
10. Change of posture and taking advantage of tasks that allow you to work standing up or walking around the room or space where you work. Stretching.

11. Use one or two moments a day to do some sort of exercise the day you work from home (sports session, walking early or late in the day, dancing, yoga, stretching, etc.)
12. Do exercises from time to time to focus your eyes on something at a medium and long distance.
13. Grooming and dressing routine just like when going to the office.



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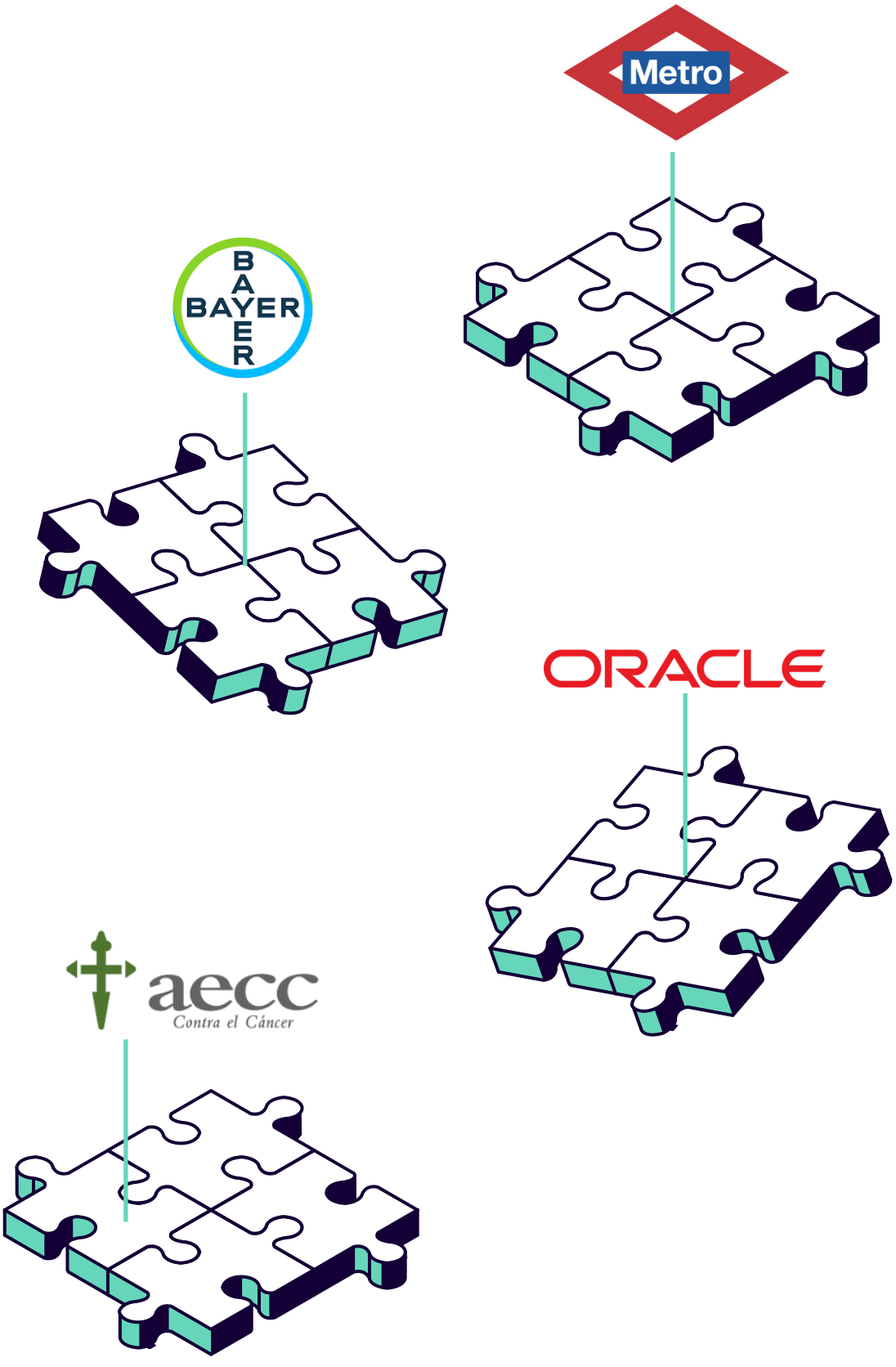
PART FOUR

Business Cases: Practical Cases and Interviews



Metro de Madrid

Background and Start Date

Sector:	Transportation. Public enterprise.
Location:	Madrid, 1919. Century-old company.
Number of employees:	In the office: 979 (total of 4,000).
Operating area:	12,000 m^2.
Initial location:	Four branches at different locations in Madrid.
Final location:	Single corporate headquarters on Avenida de Asturias (Madrid).
Project year:	2018
Motivation for project:	To bring together all its premises or branches in Madrid in order to occupy a single newly built headquarters with a unique architectural design. Adoption of new forms of work and a new office model based on optimization, efficiency, cooperation, communication, added value, and sustainability. To increase its employees' level of autonomy and reinforce their strong sense of belonging to the organization.

Qualitative Analysis

Actions carried out	Main conclusions
• Twelve interviews with senior management. • Workshops with 14 middle managers. • Online questionnaire sent to 890 people (45% response rate).	• Need to focus on approachability, communication, and cooperation. • Elimination of departmental silos. • Need to promote a culture change. • Strong commitment to company's values and strong pride of belonging. • Coherence of the messaging: a workspace that represents employees. • Aspirations for an open, transparent, diverse space which reflects a horizontal organization. Minimalist yet vibrant and dynamic. • Focus on innovation and technology. • Migration to a digital paperless office. A space that provides employees with well-being and health. • Transfer of the positive, effective, innovative user experience to the employee experience.

Quantitative Analysis

Actions carried out	Main conclusions
• Audit of the current space in the four sites. • Comparison with benchmarking, services. • Occupancy study (24 measurements).	• Occupancy ratio 10.8 m^2/workstation (WS), lower than best practices and different situations in different sites. • Office size: 12.5%, 5.5% over the standard size. Office occupancy: 74%. Sixty-five percent of the time they are occupied by more than one person, and 38% of offices are occupied with the door open. • Meeting room size: 6.8% compared to 11% of the standard size. Thirty percentaverage occupancy, always under capacity. Few meeting rooms, with ineffective sizes and locations. • No areas for collaboration and informal meetings. • No added-value areas except for cafés, which show 71% occupancy. • The storage and paper levels per person are six times the average in the services sector.

Approved Model

Key data

- From 102 offices to 13 (87% reduction).
- Remaining workstations in an open area (standardized size and greater efficiency).
- Workstations in the open area not assigned, and clean-desk policy.
- Correction of the occupancy rate to 11.6 m^2/WS, close to the standard.
- Ten percent of the area for meeting rooms in a variety of configurations and capacities.
- One collaborative/informal meeting area per 20 employees.
- One private/concentration space per 30 workers.
- Work coffee and inclusion of added-value spaces.
- Paperless office.

Interview with Teresa Sancho

Head of Internal Communication, Metro de Madrid

How did the need to update the Metro de Madrid workspace arise?

The idea for the project stemmed from a practical need, given that our many offices had become too small and obsolete. Plus, there was a real estate opportunity to build a new headquarters. To get an idea of the size, of the almost 7,000 Metro de Madrid employees, 2,000 are in offices scattered across seven different sites located are far from one another. All of this led to inefficient ways of working, lots of siloed work, a lack of digitalization, excess bureaucracy, and different cultures in each branch. So the project emerged as an opportunity to build a new headquarters in order to unify and centralize the staff, and to lower costs.

How has the pandemic affected the way you work, and what changes has it brought about, if any, in the conception of your workspace? What has changed compared to before COVID-19 in terms of the offices?

The project has evolved and changed radically, turning into a golden opportunity for us to not only redefine the spaces and physical environment but also change the organization's model and ways of working, to change its culture. Although it is true that the physical environment is not the only factor that defines a corporate culture, it does contribute to it and is part of daily life in a company. In our case, this was much more pronounced than in other companies due to our age and the fact that we're a public enterprise.

"Metro de Madrid thought the sky was the limit when designing our new headquarters, where we could all be together and work in a different way"

For example, in many companies, having an office is part of an employee's status and professional rank, and this is very strongly anchored in our culture. That's why getting rid of hundreds of offices and shifting to open, unassigned, collaborative spaces is more than just an aesthetic or physical change. It runs much deeper. That's why it's more than office design for us—although it is that, too—but instead a project to change our culture, to become a more horizontal, approachable company with more collaboration and communication; a company that focuses on innovation, technology, and sustainability.

We are taking advantage of the physical and aesthetic change to make a profound change in the work culture. It's a huge challenge!

What does flexibility mean for a company like Metro de Madrid?

Once again, we believe that the word flexibility is part of this unprecedented culture change.

Because of our idiosyncracies, resistance to change in our organization is considerable.

Our staff is comprised of employees with an average seniority of 30 to 35 years, an average age of 48, and a system where you clock in and out, even for breaks. Without a doubt, COVID-19 has helped us by serving as a point of departure for this change we have to make. Without the pandemic, we wouldn't have been able to do it as quickly; we wouldn't have been able to create the current narratives on flexibility and culture change.

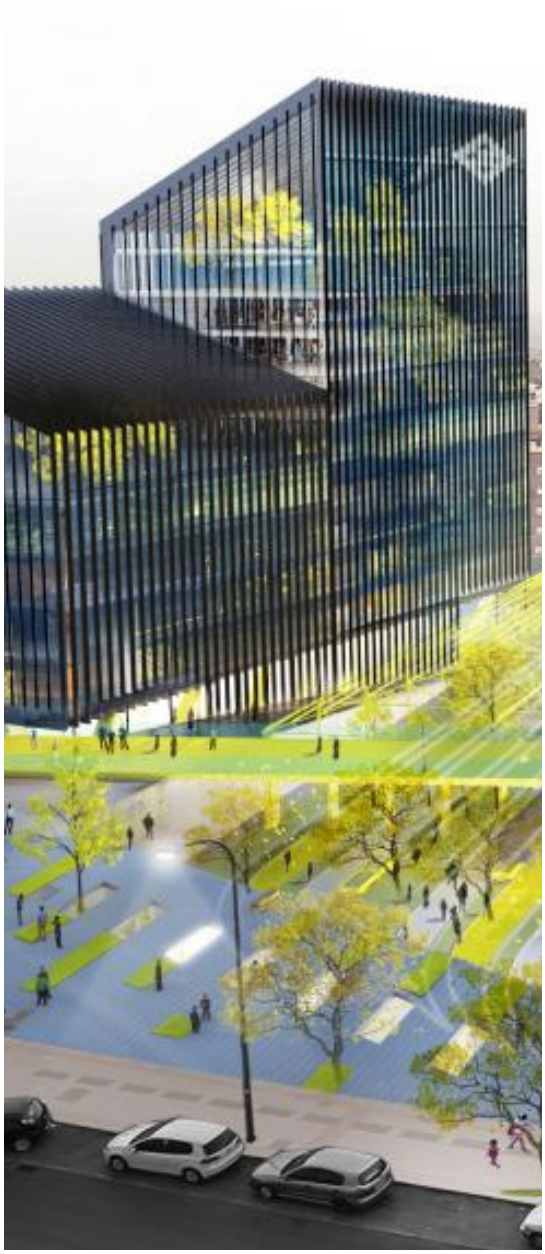
What do you think the future of in-person and remote work will be once the health situation is back to normal?

I think that the change we have started will gain momentum, and that Metro de Madrid will definitely have to move to a hybrid model that combines the in-person work needed with remote work depending on the different departments and responsibilities. The new building will help us in this huge change that we have to manage and promote.

In your project to transform the spaces, and in this entire phase we are going through, have you learned anything that surprised you that you'd like to share with our readers?

Managing the emotional part has been a major challenge during the pandemic. We have also learned how important it is to get the people affected by the change involved in it; in this regard, creating groups of ambassadors to share everything with excitement and responsibility is essential.

"If the pandemic hadn't struck, remote work at Metro de Madrid wouldn't have happened in less than 10 years"



Oracle

Background and Start Date

Sector:	Technology. Multinational.
Location:	California (United States), 1977.
Number of employees:	Madrid branch: 850.
Current operating area	8,500 m^2
Initial location:	Corporate headquarters at the Tripark Business Park in Las Rozas, 19 kilometers (about 12 miles) from the center of Madrid.
Final location:	Paseo Castellana, 81 (center of Madrid), floors 16 to 19 (3,055 m^2 of operating area).
Project year:	2020.
Motivation for project:	Strategy based on the following drivers: • Customer-centric: to reposition and promote the value of the business by being close to customers and offering them an updated, fresh, innovative image with unique services in a more central location. • New work model based on agility, flexibility, collaboration, and innovation. • Development of a strong sense of community and pride of belonging with the idea that a better employee experience will translate into a better customer experience.

Process of Managing the Change (Underway):

Acciones realizadas

- Eight interviews with senior management.
- One workshop with 19 people.
- Online questionnaire sent to 850 people (49% response rate).
- Actions with worker group (kickoff, workshops, specific sessions, etc.).
- Mock-up visits to the construction site.
- Naming/logo/claim contest.
- Contest for names of reservable spaces.
- Periodic communication (mailings, site, Slack).
- Specific community site.
- Town hall / all hands meeting.
- Video with key messages.
- Farewell to old office.
- Weekly construction update in photos.
- Training sessions.
- User's guide.
- Welcome pack.
- Help desk.
- Post-occupancy questionnaire.

Approved Model

Key data

- From 11 offices to none (open-plan model for everyone).
- Operating workstations: 260 for 800 people (flexibility rate higher than 65%).
- Customer hub on specific floor to invite them to work alongside employees.
- Amount of informal collaboration spaces in the open: 11%.
- Amount of the area for closed meeting rooms, offering a variety of configurations and capacities: 5.5%.
- Amount of concentration and privacy spaces: 3%.
- Amount of specific spaces for welcoming and attending to customers ('wow' factor): 5.2%.
- Amount of added-value spaces (work coffee , innovation, and learning spaces): 7%.
- Paperless office and clean-desk policy.
- Pioneering, innovative model based on flexibility, goal-oriented work, and trust in the organization's maturity.

Interview with Albert Triola

Country leader, Oracle Spain

Please tell us how the need to update the workspace for Oracle emerged.

The project dates from prior to the COVID-19 crisis. The need arose to relocate the headquarters, which was on the outskirts of Madrid, to a more central location in order to be closer to customers and partners. Based on that, we identified a project to update the workspace to make it more collaborative, that is, not only as a physical space for employees but also as an environment and meeting place for all our stakeholders as well.

We made a purposeful decision to focus on flexibility by implementing 40% of workstations and leaving most of the available space occupied by areas that encourage gathering, collaboration, learning, outstanding customer service, and added value. In this sense, the project was planned as an opportunity to achieve two objectives: looking inward, the headquarters was planned to be an exciting place for employees, while looking outward, it was to be perceived as a flexible, attractive space for our entire network of customers and partners.

What things have changed compared to before COVID-19 in terms of the offices?

To us, the pandemic and the reflection on workspaces that came in its wake have been like a kind of double-check or confirmation of the model we had chosen for our headquarters. The COVID-19 crisis has confirmed that the model we had been focusing on, with goal-based management and work, hybrid and focused on flexibility, was the right one.

In terms of leadership, for years we have been working to define smart goals that cascade down and adapt to each organizational level with the assistance of the right processes and technologies. They are reviewed every quarter and half-year to create a flexible team management model that is very open

to working from anywhere. In this sense, the pandemic has accelerated and consolidated this work culture and has signaled a shift—yet without disruption—which has made working and achieving goals even more important, not going to the office for its own sake.

In fact, personally, I don't like the word *office*, because we should actually be looking at the importance of being in person at work from the standpoint of a club, the Oracle club, which encompasses employees, managers, and all our customers and partners. Informal or structured conversations, chance meetings in hallways or when having coffee are all valuable. We have to stop thinking about going to the office as an obligation, and focus more on the concept of being present with and for each other.

"In a project like ours, what COVID-19 has done is simply reinforce it"

"You have to create a solid culture of commitment and trust, which doesn't mean being connected 24/7"

To me the underlying debate is not "office vs. no office" but rather how to create efficient companies where what matters isn't the office or the timetable or the start or end of the workday but being efficient in line with the goals.

It is also true that technologies and tools were already available at Oracle; that is, they were already in place for the flexibility that COVID-19 brought about, around which we had rethought our offices and workspaces. So that helped confirm we were already heading in the right direction.

How do you create a culture that fosters this hybrid model?

I think that leaders are the ones who can generate this culture. When the leader of the organization defines and communicates its overarching goals, they are guiding and defining priorities. All of this shapes the culture. Managers have to understand how to manage their teams by goals and using this vision. You have to trust managers, avoid micromanagement, stay away from regular reviews, foster a culture of commitment and trust, and not ride your teams or allow them to be connected 24/7.

The word *office* evokes an archaic, somewhat inflexible, hierarchical concept. Companies are facing a different challenge, so our corporate spaces should help generate work models and cultures based on trust and flexibility associated with the efficacy that tools and technology provide nowadays. If we talk about more junior employees in our company, it is possible to implement this culture of commitment and flexibility with transparency and approachability through good leadership in middle management, by evaluating and designing what needs improvement.

We are convinced that this culture brings value, helps us to be much more competitive, and better fits the environment in which we live, where technology and the online world meet the physical environment.

In your project to transform the spaces, and in this entire phase we are going through, have you learned anything that surprised you that you'd like to share with our readers?

Yes, we've learned a very important lesson: you have to lead by example, and you have to get employees involved so that they are part of and actors in this change. You also have to manage the transition in the change.

Bayer

Background and Start Date

Sector:	Pharmaceutical industry. Multinational.
Origen:	Germany, 1863.
Número de empleados:	477.
Superficie operativa:	9,800 m^2.
Ubicación:	Sant Joan Despí (Barcelona).
Año del proyecto:	From 2017 to 2021.
Motivación del proyecto:	Global guidelines which have implemented the WORKLIFE project and initiative in countries around the world (Chile, China, etc.) are now being applied in the Barcelona branch. WORKLIFE is a project that will take three years to implement and is based on workspace flexibility to make it a catalyst of culture change. Some of its goals are: • To promote a work atmosphere based on trust. • To foster communication among business areas. • To eliminate silos and increase flexibility. • To motivate co-creation, creativity, innovation, and efficient processes.

Qualitative Analysis

Actions carried out	Main conclusions
• Seven group interviews with 22 people at all levels. • Twenty-three individual interviews with senior management. • Four workshops with 75 people. • Online questionnaire sent to 477 people (51% response rate).	• The current Bayer offices are confined, hierarchical, and formal. • A highly individual work style predominates. • Important values for Bayer, like trust, are not noticed in the workplace. • There was a particular lack of spaces to gather informally at the office. • Employees feel prepared to adopt flexibility policies, but the corporate culture doesn't foster them enough. • Workers wanted a space with a stronger presence of natural elements more aligned with a sustainable vision. • Employees identified the need for concentration spaces at the office. • There is a need for tech support to facilitate processes and the work style in an innovative, agile atmosphere.

Quantitative Analysis

Actions carried out	Main conclusions
• Audit of the current space on seven floors. • Occupancy study (300 measurements on 10 workdays). • Comparison with benchmarking, services.	• Occupancy rate 16.3 m^2/WS, four points above best practices, sending an alarming message that has little to do with efficiency and optimization. • Office area: 36%, 4.5 times the standard. Such a high presence of offices distorts the occupancy rate. There are different office sizes and configurations, with a direct correlation to the company members' career status and progress. • Meeting room area: 14%, compared to 11% in the standard size. The majority are very large. They are occupied 94% of the time, but the meeting spaces within offices are not, so they are redundant as they are occupied only 34% of the time. Efficiency of the reservation system under 50%. • No areas for collaboration or informal gatherings. • Amount of added-value areas: 2.5% (exclusively in kitchen or coffee vending areas).

Approved Model

Key data

- From 106 to no offices (open-space model for everyone).
- From 40% to 83% of the area set aside for open spaces (individual work, collaboration, innovation, interaction).
- From two types of meeting rooms to eight types of different gathering spaces, which allow for different meeting formats and dynamics.
- The area used for the archive and paper storage was cut in half.
- From no concentration spaces to almost 500 m^2 set aside for this use in the overall implementation.
- Inclusion of healthy spaces and areas for social interaction.
- What began as a project that encompassed all seven floors of the building that Bayer owned became an implementation on five floors for the sake of a flexible and more efficient model, and after COVID-19 it has become a three-floor corporate space with an additional floor for co-working, while the rest will bring in revenues and be rented to a third party.

Interview with Jordi Llargués

Strategic facility manager, Bayer Barcelona

How did the need to update the Bayer workspace arise?

We began the project in 2017, with a technical-economic approach driven by the necessity to renovate the building due to its inevitable need for updates and machinery, which meant that our organic costs were high.

What was initially planned as a discourse on costs evolved to its current narrative of transformation, overcoming cultural resistances, and managing change. We sought a space that reflected our values of flexibility, efficiency, innovation, and a focus on creativity. The project also came in the midst of a merger with another part of the company, so both dimensions had to be shaped and co-created. This posed interesting challenges.

The project began by seeking to create efficient spaces from the operating standpoint so that they were both profitable and cost-efficient. Now it has evolved toward viewing the space as a strategic catalyst which seeks to create values and culture. Now it's no longer an architecture or interior design project but a shift in management and leadership.

How has the pandemic affected the way you work, and what changes has it brought about, if any, in the conception of your workspace? What things have changed compared to before COVID-19 in terms of the offices?

COVID-19 has led us to continue evolving the initial model and planning. We have become even more flexible in adapting our workspace transformation process. We want our Barcelona headquarters to reflect what we have learned from a time like this, with all the changes brought about by the pandemic in terms of both our employees and at a regulatory level with the new law. This has led us to evolve the approved model and continue tinkering with it even further.

In Barcelona, we have traditionally had a seven-floor corporate headquarters in Sant Joan Despí measuring 9,800 m2, with a total of 477 employees at the beginning of the project, in 2017. From the initial plan to occupy five of our seven floors, ultimately we are occupying just three and earning profits on the others from third-party renters and setting up some as coworking spaces.

What does flexibility mean for a company like Bayer?

Flexibility was already a value in our corporate culture. Today it is just further reinforced. The way we have set up the different work categories and formats according to the mix, as well as the combination of in-person and remote work, reflect this. There are different levels of hybridization which encompass everything from the concept of the home office, with four or five days spent working from home (30% to 35% of employees); to a flexible concept, where employees are estimated to be at home 2.5 days (60% of employees) and the remaining days at the office; to a full-office concept, where employees will be at the office four or five days a week (5% to 10% of employees). Logically, this has to come with contractual compensations and adjustments, as well as the proper conditions to work in each place, and of course it adapts to each job, profile, and responsibility, and the unions and workers' committees play an important role in this.

Flexibility opens up new doors and opportunities in attracting new talent as well.

"Space is finally understood as a catalyst for many other things"

"Focusing on a flexible model means focusing on empowering employees, with all the responsibility and commitment this entails"

How do you create a culture of flexibility?

Before COVID-19, we had a work-balance strategy which we have now renamed smart working to introduce new aspects that we've learned and come to value through the pandemic.

Nobody questions whether there are preassigned workstations anymore, because the discourse among the managers and their teams is not about stations or spaces but about employee responsibility and empowerment, so they can work autonomously, asynchronously—even in timetables—from their supervisors. It is a discourse that has become about trust, not micromanagement. Even time flexibility has enabled more and more employees to participate in transversal projects with other teams from other countries. It's as if management has lost its importance from the control standpoint and taken on a dimension of true leadership and trust, as well as responsibility.

We have digitalized jobs at all levels, from the app to reserve our spaces to the tools and technologies that allow for remote work. And this is no longer about job profiles but ways of working and work cultures. In this sense, the office space is more a meeting point than a place you are obligated to be.

In your project to transform the spaces, and in this entire phase we are going through, have you learned anything that surprised you that you'd like to share with our readers?

Our pilot project is being extrapolated at other branches in other countries, and we've learned a lot. One of the most important lessons is adaptation and flexibility. Another has been managing all the parties involved in the change processes. Something that's been a reality check is the importance of seeing how, when transforming spaces, the same human concerns arise, and that sometimes there is a need to approach people and explain the changes and transformations not only from the operational standpoint but also from a psychological and emotional point of view.

AECC

Background and Start Date

Sector:	Nonprofit association to combat cancer.
Location:	Spain, 1953.
Number of employees:	126.
Operating area:	12,000 m^2.
Initial location:	Amador de los Ríos, 5; and Fortuny, 3 (Madrid).
Final location:	Teniente Coronel Noreña, 30 (Madrid).
Project year:	2018.
Motivation for project:	The former headquarters of the Spanish Association Against Cancer (AECC) was a building donated by a private individual which had become too small and its installations obsolete over the years, so it no longer represented what the entity wanted based on its mission: to be a close, welcoming, transparent space that inspires trust and represents the shared home of everyone from the branches all over Spain who often travel to the central headquarters. With closeness and austerity as the engines driving the project, it was decided to look for a new site in an industrial-style building which was totally overhauled, where the importance of the work that employees do with cancer patients and their families could be highlighted.

Qualitative Analysis

Actions carried out

- Five strategic interviews with senior management.
- Online survey sent to 121 people (74% response rate).

Main conclusions

- The provincial branches had already undertaken a transformation of their spaces to become friendlier, more open, closer, and more transparent. The central headquarters should give off the same vibe.
- The workplace should represent AECC's values (and the current one clearly doesn't) and be a place where people want to work.
- It should convey calmness and extraordinary transparency.
- All of us together in a single building. The shared home where we all come from. A space envisioned as open, which helps us feel like we're a team and we work as one.
- A warm, friendly space. The association has been fighting cancer for 65 years, and it shouldn't look like a start-up.
- A focus on technology, innovation, new methodologies, and sustainability. A coherent, future-oriented message.

Quantitative Analysis

Actions carried out	Main conclusions
• Audit of the current space in both buildings. • Comparison with benchmarking, services. • Occupancy study with six measurements.	• Occupancy rate 10.2 m^2/WS, which means discomfort and a lack of space. • Office area: 12%, twice the standard. Office with uneven sizes, and disproportionate offices. The building poses many limitations to an effective layout. • Meeting room area: 8%, lower than the standard 14%. The majority are large and poorly equipped. Almost all the meetings host two to three people, and there is no appropriate place for them. • No areas for collaboration and informal gatherings. Very bulky reused furniture which doesn't help efficiency. Noisy, dark space filled with cabinets and excess paper and documentation. • Amount of added-value areas: 8%, particularly an audit space which is almost always empty and rented out to third parties.

Approved Model

Key data

- Space for 190 workstations and a 75% reduction in offices, keeping the minimum for the sake of representation.
- Collaboration spaces: 6.2%, where there were previously none.
- An amount of 11.6% of the space was set aside for meeting rooms, an increase from the previous space prioritizing small meeting rooms which better meet users' needs.
- An amount of 6.5% of added-value spaces used to welcome visitors from branches, along with areas for socialization, interaction, and innovation.
- Inclusion of spaces for learning, training, and sharing knowledge, which are very important given the association's educational mission.
- Drastic reduction in paper and storage, and a focus on sustainability.
- A space more in line with the AECC's values and message, focusing on coherence with the work of the provincial branches and a simple, transparent, approachable, and updated image.

Interview with Noema Paniagua

Directora general, AECC

How did the need to update the AECC workspace arise?

The change in workspace emerged from the review of one of our founding objectives: patient treatment. The shift in the concept of patient care based on a holistic, multidisciplinary vision led us to also reconsider our workspaces to make them more approachable, and consequently to also review the way we work.

This was coupled with the need to seek a larger corporate space that could fit our larger staff, which has grown in recent years. The association has tripled its activity and income in the past four years, and this also meant that we needed new office space.

Furthermore, reputation and image have conditioned and defined this process of changing our workspaces, since we believe it is very important for there to be coherence between our offices and our mission of being close to our patients and our entire network of partners, who encompass everything from employees to doctors, along with medical centers, the entire healthcare network, patients, and volunteers.

How has the pandemic affected the way you work, and what changes has it brought about, if any, in the conception of your workspace? What things have changed compared to before COVID-19 in terms of the offices?

Prior to the pandemic, we had strongly focused on digitalization, and this really helped us during this period. However, a large part of what we do is definitely hard to do digitally.

COVID-19 also helped us see that perhaps the initial design of our workspaces required some tweaking, since many of the open spaces we had first planned as spaces of collaboration and closeness were underused. It's true that the current health protocols have come into play here, but even when the situation goes back to normal I think that the dynamic of smaller groups will continue to be important, and large open spaces are not always appropriate for certain meetings or projects.

What's more, the pandemic opened up new opportunities to reconsider how we did certain things; for example, our presence on the street, our large corps of volunteers (which total more than 30,000), and the different prevention and information campaigns can be done in other ways. And although it's true that digitalization opens doors, it also requires a great deal of training and preparation for our volunteers.

What does flexibility mean to an organization like the AECC?

We didn't have flexibility policies in the association, and actually we still haven't formally defined them. What we have done is create protocols to adapt to the pandemic, but we haven't yet established a clear policy in this regard. We think it's better to wait until the situation goes back to normal and then consider flexibility in the format that best fits the way we work.

We know that flexibility is here to stay, and that what we've learned about working remotely and investments in technology are the future. However, our challenges will be to find a balance between in-person and remote work bearing in mind our activity, and our priority of caring for patients in all their dimensions. We will have to appropriately calibrate what it makes sense to extrapolate from the digital sphere and what it doesn't. There are physical things like having a coffee, human contact, conversations, and a sense of belonging and unity whose intangible value is difficult to offset and transfer to the virtual format. We believe that a sense of belonging and connection

"Working remotely gives us specificity, efficacy, and optimization, but the human part is missing"

with our organization is very important, and this is also achieved through physical spaces, the surroundings, collaboration, and the closeness that comes from a shared environment.

Do you think there is a given employee prototype or profile for this hybrid work model? And for a leader? What characteristics do they have?

This question is difficult to answer in our case, since we have so many different profiles; as I said before, our network of partners is extremely extensive. Our almost 1,100 employees are joined by our more than 30,000 volunteers, with a mean age of 60, along with patients, doctors, and others. What I do consider important is learning how to lead differently in a context of greater flexibility, and that trust entails responsibility. And we have to train ourselves for this.

In your project to transform the spaces, and in this entire phase we are going through, have you learned anything that surprised you that you'd like to share with our readers?

We have learned so much, and perhaps the most important thing is how difficult it is to compensate for informality and closeness, and all their value, in remote or virtual formats. We have also learned how important our stakeholders' qualifications and training are, so digitalization and all its positive effects gain importance in an organization like ours. Finally, internal communication has been and continues to be crucial throughout this entire change and adaptation process.

"Keeping up the ties with an organization when everything stops being tangible is a factor we have to pay attention to"

Conclusions

The mindset on the need for physical presence at the office in order to work has changed globally. In this regard, a good number of companies are poised to adapt their spaces, as we found in the cases shown in the pages below. For example, Bayer, headquartered in Barcelona, was caught by the healthcare crisis while it was restructuring its office. This project has gradually mutated to adapt to the lessons from this long, painful global experience of the pandemic. Now they have more added-value, co-creation, and interaction spaces and fewer individual workstations, which are used for the same work that could be done at home or in a third space, which exist for this reason.

Another example we showed is Metro de Madrid. This is not a technologically cutting-edge company, nor is it part of the gig economy. The pandemic also caught them in the midst of a headquarters move. Many questions arose while launching the project: "Will they keep my office?", "Will there be cafés near the headquarters where we can all have a coffee and croissant at break time?", "Will my desk be near my team?", "Where will they put my colleagues?", and, of course, there was no talk of remote work. Today these questions have vanished. It turns out that the unthinkable—working remotely, without an assigned spot, without your own papers piled up in plastic trays—has become a reality. Now the concept of the hot desk—not preassigned but chosen daily via an app—can be accepted as completely normal. The discussion has shifted from "I want my locker near my desk" to "How many days do I have to come to the office?" and "Can I work from other sites?"

This study benefitted from the extraordinary contributions of Rosario Sáez from Savills Aguirre Newman; Julia Gifra from Industry Meetings, IESE Business School; and María Barraza, from IESE Business School. We have laid out many aspects of interest which we will have to experiment with and continue to learn from in the coming months, when we begin a new stage of stability in the wake of the pandemic. Specifically, we outlined the exciting world of fashioning comprehensive space solutions that convey culture and values; that have a personality of their own and lend themselves to co-creation; that, no matter what day you go to them, you're there because they add value; that merge seamlessly with remote work; and that, this time, are here to stay. But not 24/7.

The ideal way forward seems to be remote work combined with in-person work because, after all, we're human and therefore we need others to related to and have contact with. Four eyes can see more than two, and when we set out to create it happens in a way that no one is quite sure of, and that's the magic of synergies. Can synergies occur remotely? Yes, but there is no doubt that they greatly benefit when combined with being in person. The level of connection of exchange and trust takes a spectacular leap when this combination is just right. And in this text, that's just what we are encouraging companies and employees to try.

It's true that what's left now, according to Eva Bufi, an expert in smart cities (see the interview above), is to "ask unions, employer associations, and governments to evolve as well, and to adapt to the new needs of workers and companies".

I have always steadfastly defended remote work, but now I find myself calming the nerves of managers who see that people can work the same and costs can be lowered as well. Yes, it's true that the company's costs are lowered. And yet it's also a lie: costs aren't lowered; they are transferred to others. These are not economic costs (such as electricity, water, heating, cleaning, and maintenance), but other less obvious yet equally real ones: not everyone has appropriate workspaces outside the office, so they may be forced into situations that are not very ergonomically sound. And there are other costs, like any stress created. This is why I am staunchly against 100% remote work for long periods of time. I think that under 30% in-person work isn't healthy—that is, less than one or two days, on average. One week it might be three days a week of in-person work, another it might be one. It depends on so many things. But

setting the same specific number of days per week at the office does not seem like the best good solution.

What is the optimal mix of remote and office work? It depends on the individual, and the company but generally speaking, the ideal is for remote work to vary between 40% and 60% of the workweek. This will also depend on what has to be done, with whom, how employees feel (physically, their mood, etc.), and what the environment is (family, home, etc.). The aim should be for flexible flexibility. Because if we make it rigid, if we set days and times in stone, much of the essence of the balance is lost. In this regard, the infographics in this study offer a few other hints.

It's common to hear that people perform better when working remotely. And that's true. But, again, it's also a lie. It's true that more units per hour are produced, and that people can concentrate more and move projects ahead. But at the same time they produce less because quality of relationships and culture aren't fostered on remote-work days. You don't notice it in the short term; everything keeps working. But once it becomes clear, it will be irreversible. So it's better not to test it. Culture is the mortar holding an organization together. It's invisible, yet it provides strength. And culture without being in-person? Without ever being face-to-face? Right now I don't think it's possible. I'm not saying it can't be done, because there must be a case somewhere where it has worked, but that would be the exception that proves the rule.

The conclusion, therefore, is that both kinds of work have to be combined. And we have to remember something that we've been teaching at IESE Business School for years: the value of trust. And trust is earned in the short term via face-to-face dealings, how we look at each other and understand one another's needs, how a leader lets employees decide without looking over their shoulder, the support they're given, how they're treated (professionally yet warmly), what leaders bear in mind when making a decision—not only efficacy but also the effects decisions are going to have (on employees, too). Trust is maintained—and even enhanced—in each interaction. Or it is destroyed and shattered in a single decision, if that decision is important enough and the abuse is flagrant—or in a series of decisions that reveal control, or absolutism, or pedantry, or conceit. Leaders have to stop micromanaging (which creates absurd costs and leads to demotivation and tedium) and deal with responsible, capable adults (which fosters proactivity and pride in the brand).

Employees who have worked remotely under precarious conditions during the pandemic, tapping into their last reserves of energy and inventing new ways of providing service and generating value, must be allowed to help bosses decide how to make this new age in work the best for everyone. I bet they'll choose a balance between remote and in-person work. It just might be the silver lining of the pandemic.

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