

## Future of Work Reinvented Resource Center Primer for 2021

Published 26 May 2021 - ID G00752889 - 11 min read

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Initiatives: [Future of Work Reinvented Resource Center](#)

COVID-19 shattered assumptions about work. Organizations reacted quickly, but now is the time to intentionally reinvent the future of work. Leaders have a unique opportunity to evolve from location-centric to human-centric work design to drive performance and attract and retain top talent.

### Scope

The Future of Work Reinvented Resource Center provides resources to help leaders rethink their workplace strategies to address the new realities of the postpandemic digital era.

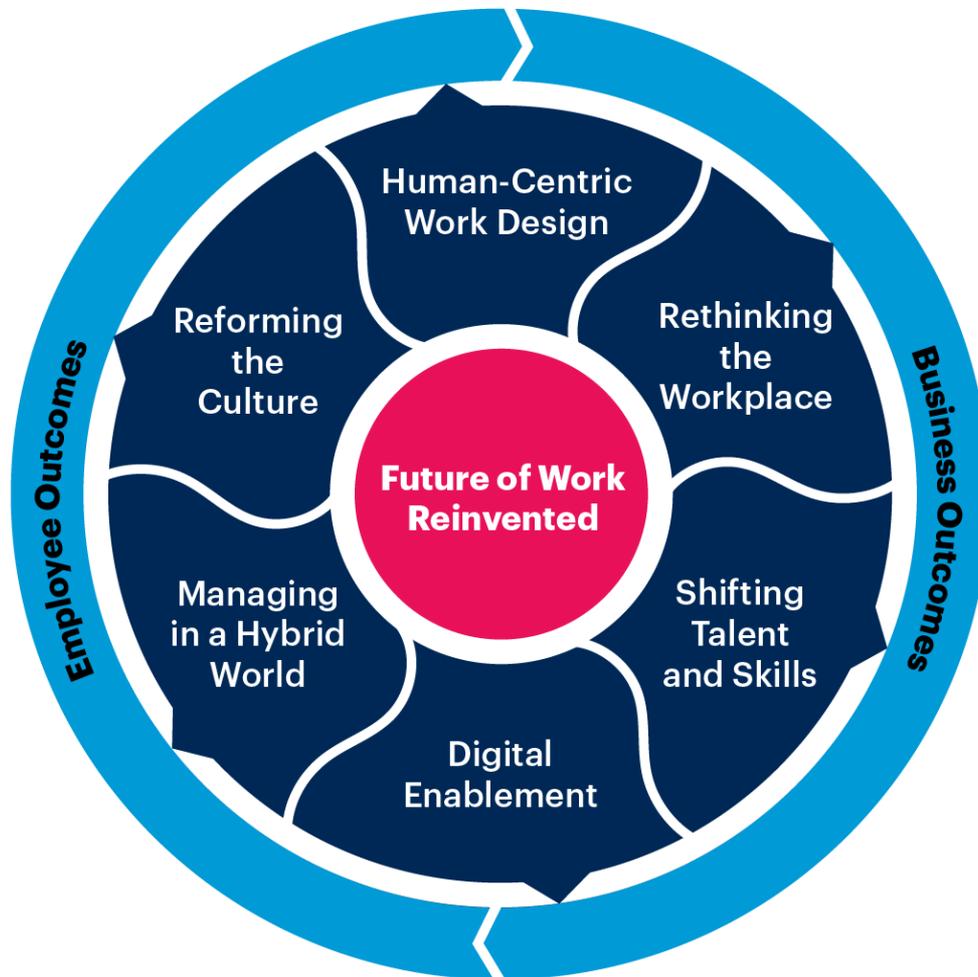
We focus on the following topics:

- **Human-centric work design:** This topic shows leaders how to boost productivity and well-being by giving employees more control over their work and work environment.
- **Rethinking the workplace:** This topic advises leaders on creating a workplace strategy for the postpandemic, hybrid work era.
- **Digital enablement:** This topic describes the technologies and practices that will be needed to optimize hybrid work in the short term and fuel organizational prosperity in the long term.
- **Reforming the culture:** This topic addresses the impact that future of work trends may have on organizational culture.
- **Managing in a hybrid world:** This topic focuses on the new skills that leaders will need to manage employees in a hybrid work environment.
- **Shifting talent and skills:** This topic analyzes the skills and competencies employees will need in the digital future and how enterprises can acquire or train workers in these skills.

## Analysis

Figure 1. Future of Work Reinvented Resource Center Overview

### Future of Work Reinvented Resource Center



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**Gartner.**

We are at an inflection point in the history of work. COVID-19 normalized remote working and raised fundamental questions about why we work the way we do. Employees experienced a more flexible work environment, and their expectations shifted: According to our Hybrid Work Employee Survey, 83% of all employees want to work in either a remote or hybrid arrangement. Only 17% of employees prefer to go back on-site full time. If the enterprise forces a full return to the office, it could lose up to four in 10 workers, especially those with in-demand digital skills.

Leaders should seize this unique, postpandemic opportunity to reinvent the workplace for the digital era. Reinvention is key because current virtualized remote work exhausts employees while a hard return on-site squanders the chance to improve employee engagement and productivity. The future lies not on either extreme but in a hybrid middleground. Remote or hybrid knowledge workers report their productivity increased during the pandemic by 1.5 times more than on-site knowledge workers. Knowledge workers with high levels of flexibility are three times more likely to be high performers than those with low levels of flexibility. If organizations design hybrid work successfully, more autonomy for employees does not mean loss of control for organizations; it means higher performance.

Future organizational success lies in being intentional about creating sustainable working conditions that maximize employees' engagement, collaboration and productivity. During the pandemic, many organizations simply virtualized the way they do things on-site. To succeed in the hybrid future, the better approach is to reinvent how work is done completely. Leaders must replace location-centric practices with human-centric practices that were designed with intentional collaboration in the hybrid environment in mind. The new imperative of the future of work is to ensure that all workers have equal opportunities to succeed, wherever they are working from, while also treating workers fairly whose jobs offer less location flexibility. Gartner research will show leaders how to address the multiple dimensions of this challenge.

## Topics

Enterprises that can reinvent the way they work and create a sustainable hybrid model will increase employee performance, reduce fatigue, and attract and retain talent more easily than competitors that return to prepandemic practices. However, there isn't a simple formula that the enterprise can follow. A successful hybrid work model must address multiple, interlocking factors as well as consider the enterprise's particular circumstances.

Our research in this area addresses the following topics:

## Human-Centric Work Design

Before the pandemic, work was largely designed around employer-controlled locations. The normalization of remote work has made it clear that for many employees, location should not be at the center of how work gets done. Organizations must transition from a location-centric model to a human-centric work model, which puts the individual at the center of work design. Flexibility becomes the norm, not the exception. The workforce will set the flexible work conditions that are the most healthy and productive for their individual circumstances. Organizations must design collaboration intentionally by addressing how, where and when teams must come together.

### Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- How do we implement flexibility across the organization?
- How do we enable team collaboration and innovation in a hybrid model?
- How do we design the employee experience in a hybrid environment?
- How do we safeguard team health and employee well-being through hybrid work design?

### Recommended Content

🔑 Some recommended content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

- [Redesigning Work for the Hybrid World](#)
- [The Future of Work Requires Executive Leaders to Embrace Radical Flexibility](#)
- [3 Hybrid Challenges Driving Employee Fatigue](#)
- [Case Study: Reset Hybrid Collaboration Habits \(Dropbox\)](#)
- [Quick Answer: Employee Perceptions of the Current State of Flexible Work](#)

## Planned Research

- Why flexibility is vital in the era of work-life harmonization
- How to implement employee-driven flexible work
- How intentional collaboration supports innovation in the hybrid world
- Strategies for extending flexibility beyond knowledge workers
- Future cost – plan your budget for a human-centered employee deal
- Infographic: Redesigning work for the hybrid world

## Rethinking the Workplace

If work can be done anywhere, what's the purpose of the office? In a more flexible model, the purpose of the office will change, along with its design and the organization's real estate portfolio. Workers want more flexibility in the workplace, but that does not mean they never want to go into the office or be on-site. Most workers want a truly hybrid design – working from home sometimes and being on-site sometimes. Frontline workers need flexibility and support, too. Above all, workers want choice and autonomy. They want to decide where and when they will work as long as business objectives are met. Human-centric work design reduces fatigue and improves engagement, retention and performance.

## Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- What is the purpose of our office and other locations in the hybrid future of work?
- How should I rightsize my real estate portfolio?
- How will the postpandemic workplace be designed?
- What are the considerations, risks and opportunities in bringing employees back to traditional workspaces?

## Recommended Content

🔒 Some recommended content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

- [How HR Leaders Are Rethinking the Purpose of the Workplace](#)
- [Supply Chain Organizations Must Adapt to Permanent Remote Work](#)

- [CFO Perspectives on COVID-19's Impact on Corporate Real Estate](#)
- [Talent Risks of a Post-COVID-19 Full Return On-Site](#)
- [11 Space Management Technologies to Watch in 2021 and 2022](#)
- [How Best to Equip Home Workers](#)

## Planned Research

- [Strategies for extending flexibility to hourly supply chain employees](#)
- [Future of work reinvented: Hourly supply chain roles need support and flexibility, too](#)
- [3 outdated assumptions that damage your hybrid work design](#)
- [Expert Insight Video: The future of hybrid working](#)

## Digital Enablement

Most organizations could pivot quickly to mandatory remote work during COVID-19 because of prebuilt infrastructure that supported flexible work locations and collaboration tools that facilitated remote work. In the postpandemic world, leaders must keep this momentum – initially to make hybrid models work and, in the longer term, to fuel the workforce's digital dexterity. Artificial intelligence (AI) and other advanced analytics will transform how machines and humans interact, while process automation will accelerate most business operations. Leaders must partner with IT and HR to help the workforce develop the ambition and ability to use fast-evolving collaboration, automation and analytic tools to ensure future success.

## Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- [What applications and personal productivity tools best support hybrid work?](#)
- [What changes to infrastructure and operations are needed for hybrid work?](#)
- [How do we coordinate hybrid work patterns and on-site resources?](#)
- [What are the emerging technologies for the future of work?](#)

## Recommended Content

🔒 Some recommended content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

- [Adapt the IT Operating Model to Deliver Indispensable Digital Workplace Services](#)
- [How IT Can Enable the Remote Workforce Life Cycle](#)
- [Top Strategic Technology Trends for 2021: Anywhere Operations](#)
- [Market Guide for Resource Scheduling Applications](#)
- [Hype Cycle for the Digital Workplace, 2020](#)
- [Building the Digital Dexterity of Enterprise Leaders](#)

## Planned Research

- The future of work (presentation slides)
- Digital workplace prism
- Digital dexterity assessment tool
- Leadership activities that drive digital dexterity
- Formalizing 5 levels of hybrid work readiness

## Reforming the Culture

Many executives worry that working from home will dilute the organization's culture and therefore require a full return to the workplace. However, 76% of executives, managers and individual contributors believe that enterprise culture has improved since moving to the new work model. Since the beginning of the pandemic, organizations have prioritized the three facets that are the strongest contributors to culture – values, mindsets and practices. Culture does not depend on location but on management focusing on the human dimension of work and the employee experience. In addition, a more flexible model supports faster decision making, more agile practices and a less risk-averse culture.

## Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- What leadership mindset is needed for effective hybrid work?
- How do we ensure an equitable and inclusive culture in the hybrid work environment?
- How is the future of work going to affect my culture?
- How do I protect my culture in a hybrid environment?

## Recommended Content

🔑 Some recommended content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

- [3 Key Facets of Organizational Culture to Help CIOs Achieve Their Desired Culture](#)
- [Create a Successful Culture of Hybrid Remote Work in Times of Crisis](#)
- [Reevaluating Culture Strategies for Remote Work](#)
- [Employee Perceptions of Culture in a Hybrid Workforce Model](#)
- [The Role of Trust in Building Ethical Culture](#)
- [Use the Right Set of Tools to Accelerate Culture Change in Your Organization](#)
- [From Separation to Harmonization: The Evolving Work-Life Dichotomy](#)

## Planned Research

- Ignition Guide to conducting a culture survey in the new work environment
- Benchmarking a culture of integrity in the new work environment
- What going hybrid means for culture
- How CIOs can advance the DEI strategy using a hybrid workforce model
- How to keep remote employees connected in the hybrid organization
- 4 antidotes to toxic employees in the hybrid organization

## Managing in a Hybrid World

Managers have built more humane relationships with their employees: They've been invited into their homes (virtually), learned more about their family situation and been brought into their health crises. Employees do not want to revert back to the state of management prepandemic. Eighty-two percent of employees agree it is important their organization sees them as a person, not just an employee. In addition, the hybrid environment will offer less visibility to managers. Their ability to coach and provide feedback will be challenged, and they will need to shift to more empathetic management. Performance by outcomes, not by inputs, will become the new norm, and the manager role must be reinvented accordingly.

## Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- How does a manager's role change in the hybrid world?
- How should leaders drive performance and innovation in the hybrid world?
- How should managers work with their teams?
- How can managers adopt more inclusive behaviors in the hybrid workplace?

## Recommended Content

🔒 Some recommended content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

- [Measuring Performance of a Hybrid Workforce](#)
- [How to Keep Remote Employees Connected in the Hybrid Organization](#)
- [Building Inclusive Leadership Behaviors: Beyond Bias Training](#)
- [Feedback Remote Workers Need](#)
- [Supply Chain Executive Report: Designing a Social Supply Chain](#)

## Planned Research

- Leading legal departments of the future
- Meeting the compliance needs of a hybrid workforce
- Rethink role design for hybrid work
- Dropbox interview: Unlearn obsolete collaboration habits
- Reignite employee engagement in the remote hybrid organization
- Renew your commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in IT: The retention advantage

## Shifting Talent and Skills

Future of work implications on talent and skills are among the most profound. Robots and AI join the workforce. Digital, automation and the gig economy converge to shorten the half-life of skills, tasks, roles and even careers. Upskilling and reskilling at the pace of market change is paramount to future-proof employees and the enterprise. Digital skills command a premium and are increasingly marbled throughout all roles. Lack of workplace flexibility will cause some workers to leave the enterprise, starting with the most in-demand. More flexibility will attract top talent. A hybrid work design also allows the enterprise to hire the best talent no matter where in the world they live. But a hybrid work design requires new skills, which leaders will have to enable employees to learn.

### Questions Your Peers Are Asking

- How do I attract, retain and motivate top talent in a hybrid world?
- How do I identify and acquire the new skills and competencies to keep pace with the future of work shifts?
- How will the future of work impact workforce planning?
- How do I access and leverage the global talent marketplace if location is no longer a constraint?

### Recommended Content

🔒 Some recommended content may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

- [How General Counsel Can Drive Staff Engagement in a Crisis Environment](#)
- [5 Competencies for Unlocking Finance's Digital Potential](#)
- [Toolkit: Skills and Competency Assessment to Maximize Your IT Workforce Effectiveness](#)
- [Case Study: Gamified Employee Technology Training \(First Citizens\)](#)
- [Using a Digital Talent Management Framework to Future-Proof the IT Workforce](#)

## Planned Research

- [Legal talent market snapshot: Top skills](#)
- [Transforming your compliance and enforcement skill set](#)
- [Use talent analytics to inform your hybrid workforce strategy](#)
- [Renew retention strategies to retain technology talent for digital business success](#)

## Suggested First Steps

- [9 Predictions for the Post-COVID Future of Work](#)
- [The Distributed Workplace of the Future Is Now](#)
- [Agile Learning Manifesto](#)
- [Create a Compelling Future-State Vision That Promotes Dialogue and Understanding](#)
- [Quick Answer: What Team Guidelines Promote Healthy Hybrid Work?](#)

## Essential Reading

- [Rethinking Future of Work Predictions: AI's Impact on Jobs](#)
- [CIOs Need to Address Culture, People and Process Change in Dynamic Environments](#)
- [Observe, Measure and Assist: Three Emerging Ways to Drive Workforce Digital Dexterity](#)
- [Remaster Your Personal Brand in Times of Transition](#)
- [Measure Training Program Value to Boost Reskilling Outcomes](#)
- [6 Pre-COVID-19 Assumptions That Should Perish With the Virus](#)

## Tools and Toolkits

- [Tool: Template for Briefing Executives or Boards of Directors on a Distributed Workforce](#)
- [Tool: Agile Learning Diagnostic](#)

## Evidence

The 2021 Gartner Hybrid Work Employee Survey included 4,264 employees from across the world, representing various industries and organizational sizes.

## Related Priorities

Initiative Name	Description
<a href="#">Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resource Center</a>	The worldwide COVID-19 outbreak is a persistent situation, requiring organizations to maintain continuity of operations in uncertain contexts and to establish revised, attainable business objectives.

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