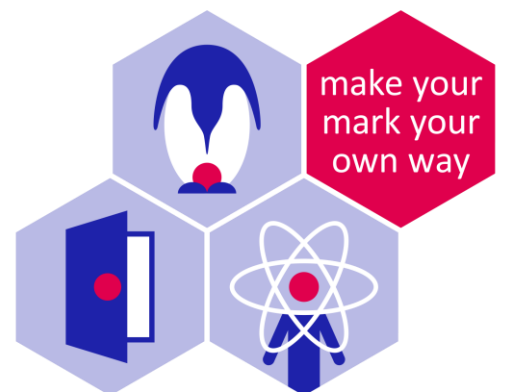


Reimagining the workplace

10 things to look for to make a
hybrid workplace a great workplace



Here at Rix & Kay, we've been considering the future of work for professional services firms and how employees and their managers can make it work – for themselves and for their clients. **To create great places to work.**

There's no one size fits all but there are some sound principles to bear in mind for the hybrid workplace of the future.

In this second thought paper in our series, we explore in more detail just what makes a hybrid workplace a great workplace.

By considering these aspects we can begin to reimagine our workplaces ...



This is a once-in-multiple generations opportunity to reshape workplaces for good – for employers, their people and clients. If we can get this right, businesses will experience better outcomes, attract and retain great clients, recruit the best people - creating a better future of work for us all.



Richard Cripps, Managing Partner, Rix & Kay Solicitors LLP



The workplace – Reimagined

So you've moved to a new way of working, a new hybrid workplace. How would you know if it were a great workplace? Here are ten signs to look for:

1 What good looks like *I know why I'm here*

We understand our purpose and our culture. Our employers clearly explained and put in place mechanisms to monitor our achievement of organisational, team and productivity goals. Our individual performance objectives support their delivery.



Organisations with a clear, well-articulated purpose were winners during the pandemic and will continue to be so.

Richard Cripps



2 What good looks like *I feel I am part of the team*

In meetings people physically present and those dialing in are treated equally. We don't feel like second-class corporate citizens if we are at home. Meeting chairs and moderators are careful to give everyone a voice. We consciously celebrate each other's achievements whether personal or professional – birthdays, promotions, long service, family events.

Find ways to share stories across and among teams to showcase and celebrate. Introduce and welcome new starters to their teams and more widely. Leaders, managers, HR, IT, Facilities, Comms must all work together to identify and remove obstacles to creating an inclusive hybrid workplace. Take the hallmarks of the firm's culture and adapt them for the hybrid workplace – online, offline, in person and on-screen.

Socialising is an important bond in the workplace. Friday night drinks have rarely been especially inclusive – especially for those with caring responsibilities or long commutes. During the pandemic we've learned to find other ways to socialise e.g. online quizzes, book clubs, cocktail making, karaoke.... let's not lose those.



Organisations need to make sure they create equal opportunities for those who choose not to go back to the office full time. Social interactions are a worry. Gone are those accidental meetings over a cup of tea, bumping into each other in the lifts. Those 'watercooler moments', says Richard Cripps



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3 What good looks like

I am an individual

We are all treated as individuals. My manager devotes time to understand what works for me. The company recognises I have a life outside of work.

The hybrid workplace impacts on life at home too and calls for planning and organisation by employees there too, to make it work. Who's at home? who's doing what? who's picking up the domestic/caring commitments today? Tomorrow? next week?

In the hybrid world, a worker's most important asset will be a good manager, Prof Cary Cooper, President of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development ***"If you have a manager with empathy and social interpersonal skills, it will work."***

4 What good looks like

My company is concerned about my wellbeing

Wellbeing here is seen not as an initiative or series of interventions such as apples on Fridays. It's intrinsic to our culture and the way we do things.

The wellbeing, both physical and mental, of a workforce has rightly become critical to organisational success and the sustainability of businesses. This has grown in importance in recent years and come to the fore during the Pandemic.

If a firm is claiming to put their employees' wellbeing as a priority but imposes layers of stress due to clunky processes, unnecessary red tape and meetings, or IT hardware and software that fails to deliver – is it surprising that employees don't see it the same way?



A genuine commitment to wellbeing is demonstrated in everything the firm does. It underpins all decision making.

Jenny Reardon, Human Resources Manager, Rix & Kay Solicitors LLP



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5 What good looks like

I'm very productive but I know when to stop

When we are working from home, sometimes we forget, or find it difficult to switch off. So, our employers have introduced us to intentional breaks. Emails, texts, push notifications prompt us to take lunch, it's "home time" or break mid-afternoon. We know they are not trying to catch us out and expecting us to be online 24/7.

31% of those surveyed by The Lawyer⁸ felt they were working harder at home than they had been in the office. Good news, but ... research by Microsoft⁹ and supported by others suggests that high productivity is masking an exhausted workforce.

Breaks are more important in the hybrid workplace. We must prevent 'blursdays'¹⁰ in our working week and avoid burnout.



You need to make a quiet space in your day to allow your brain to distil the constant flow of information. We all have ideas; the key is giving our brains some time and space to form them Dr Donohue, Founder of the Digital Wellness¹¹

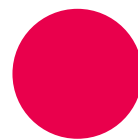


We are all familiar with the concept of Zoom fatigue. Working from home, and now hybrid, really highlights many firms' lazy approach to calling meetings. A packed diary of meetings is NOT a measure of productivity. Ask yourself does this meeting need to happen? Could it be an email? Might there be a better way to collaborate on this subject?

Dr. Sean Rintel, Social communication technology researcher at Microsoft Research suggests confronting the "meetingization" of work head-on.



More dynamic, creative, or emotional topics may require a meeting, whereas informational, status, and technical topics may benefit from more long-form document collaboration, a Teams channel, or email. Other simple tasks may be handled via chat.¹²



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⁸ <https://www.thelawyer.com/coronavirus-survey-results-2020/>

⁹ Microsoft 2021 Work Trends Index

¹⁰ Blursday – the concept of days blurring into each other

¹¹ Microsoft 2021 Work Trends Index

¹² Microsoft 2021 Work Trends Index



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6 What good looks like

We still collaborate – on and offline

When we are working from home we don't bump into colleagues at the watercooler, so we contact colleagues in other teams for a catch up. Not because there is a problem, just to keep in touch. We have created a culture of fun, kindness and cooperative collaboration. That's whether we are at home or in our offices.

During the pandemic, professional and social networks narrowed. In a hybrid workplace these need to be rebuilt and broadened. When workers come to the office, firms need to use that time to encourage employee engagement, relationship-building and collaboration. This requires an intentional focus on creating those opportunities. After all, people will expect a post-pandemic office to be a compelling and energetic space that creates a sense of community they can't get working from home. If the office doesn't give them something more than they can get working from home, why come?

Lewis Beck Senior Director, Head of Workplace EMEA at CBRE makes the point.



Time spent in the office will also likely become more of a valuable commodity to be spent prudently – shifting the focus of office space usage from 'business-as usual' to more targeted, collaborative efforts¹³



7 What good looks like

We communicate better now than ever

As our hybrid workplace developed, we were consulted widely. Our voice was heard: our views, concerns and ideas. We are in the loop know our ideas have been incorporated. The firm was honest where our ideas weren't used, and they explained why.



Internal communications will be more important in the new hybrid workplace. How effective are the channels you use? Look at your workforce. Categorise, or segment your people and think about what they need to know, when and create a plan. Craft the right messages for the right audience and deliver this through the right channels.



Richard Cripps, Managing Partner, Rix & Kay Solicitors LLP



8 What good looks like

I don't feel adrift, my career is on track

The company supports me with Learning and Development based on what I tell them I need, and how they see I'm doing. My manager has identified a clear development pathway for me and has created opportunities for role-moves, job-shares and exposure to other services and specialisms.

L&D has the potential to be a casualty of a potentially fragmented, hybrid workplace. When much L&D is learning via osmosis, it takes care and a conscious effort to replace this effectively in a hybrid environment. Take ownership of your own L&D – where do your interests lie? How can you grow?

9 What good looks like

Our hybrid workplace presented new opportunities for us

Hybrid working has proved more attractive to people from diverse backgrounds. Now there are more opportunities than ever for us to open up our talent pool and foster diversity in its widest definition. Great for us and great for our clients. In the 'battle for talent' our hybrid workplace helped us attract people from different backgrounds, bringing new ideas, new experiences and new viewpoints.



There is a particular need to think about Generation Z (18-25-year-olds) and provide them with much more support. They may not just be new starters in the firm, but entirely new to the workforce anywhere. How can you replace the 'sitting next to Nelly' learning and training experience? Try and create cohorts of new starters if your firm is large enough. This will create a natural and career-long community. Richard Cripps.



AND **What good looks like**

10 *Tech is our great enabler*

We have solutions that are joined up. They multitask and integrate with what we do. They are not tools to do a particular job, they make it easy for us to deliver the overall goal: helping us create great experiences for our clients.

There are so many tech solutions, products and platforms on the market, and more are developing all the time. Technology is what can support and make it easier for everything we have talked about in this paper to happen.

But tech is not a solution in and of itself - despite what many articles that lead on this suggest. They simply perpetuate that myth. Zoom and Teams are great to support online meetings but they can't repair the damage of a poorly led or unnecessary meeting. Being on a Zoom meeting doesn't mean your people are effectively collaborating.



Evolution, not revolution

The move towards hybrid workplaces is an evolution, not revolution. This is unlike the change we in professional services experienced at the start of the pandemic. Then, simultaneously we were all hit with the same thing. This time it will be gradual.

Firms who are successful will try. They will test. They will learn. And they will adapt.

There is a lot of talk about Agile Methodologies and being agile. It doesn't matter whether your firm adopts and applies Agile Methodologies or are simply attempting to apply an agile approach. At heart those who are the winners will share a flexible, iterative approach to implementing change in their workplaces. And they will engage their people in that shared purpose and embark on the change together. We unleashed creativity and innovation – let's not put it back in the box.

And why is it so important to get this right? 41% of employees are considering leaving their current employer and 45% say they're likely to move because they can now work remotely. Your approach to hybrid will impact who stays and who goes.¹⁴



This makes creating an exceptional employee experience in our hybrid workplace vital. This moment also offers leaders a powerful opportunity to unlock new ways to achieve everything from wellbeing and work-life balance to an inclusive and authentic company culture — and experience better business outcomes along the way.

Jenny Reardon, Human Resources Manager, Rix & Kay Solicitors LLP



¹⁴ Microsoft 2021 Work Trend Index



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And a reminder of what to look for in a hybrid office

- 1 I know why I'm here
- 2 I feel I am part of the team
- 3 I am an individual
- 4 My company is concerned about my wellbeing
- 5 I'm very productive but I know when to stop
- 6 We still collaborate – on and offline
- 7 We communicate better now than ever
- 8 I don't feel adrift, my career is on track
- 9 Our hybrid workplace presented new opportunities for us to draw from more diverse backgrounds
- 10 Tech is our great enabler



At Rix & Kay we make it easy for you to make your mark your own way

The new world of work has arrived. We're excited about the potential it offers to balance the objectives of a company and the needs of its people equally. We want you to be part of it with us. We're a firm who live our values, Expert, Committed, Transparent. A firm with a clear strategy for growth, for our business and our people. We offer quality professional training and development, exposure to working on the bigger, more stimulating instructions earlier, and high-quality work with some exciting clients.

The law is difficult and complex. It takes commitment, training, resilience and tenacity. But at Rix & Kay we want to try and make things easy. Easy too, for you to have the opportunity to make your mark, your own way. Easy to offer great client service, easy for you to work flexibly - where, when, and however you're most productive. When everything's in balance we know that's when you'll do your best work and give our clients the best service, making law easy for them.

We value and celebrate diversity (in all its forms) and the wealth of experience our people provide. We are a company of personalities where everyone has a part to play. We're a friendly, welcoming and open place where your opinions are valued and where we want your voice to be heard. Please, join us.



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