The Hybrid Future of Work Has Arrived:

3 ways to navigate the split between home and the workplace

69% of employees surveyed during the course of the pandemic agree that COVID-19 will permanently change **the nature of work.** While companies are currently forced to experiment with new ways of working, the global pandemic is only the catalyzer of a paradigm shift that has its origins long before COVID.

Everyone agrees that our work model is bound to evolve; however, our vision of how it is going to change differs from one person to another and over time. Initially and for many, this change resulted in a vision based largely on working remotely. However, now the tone has changed and ideas have evolved.

For a few weeks now, numerous studies have shown that employees are demanding for **both working remotely** but also for **partial presence in the office**. In fact, unwanted consequences due to entirely working remotely are present for both employees and organizations; for employees, personal isolation is one such consequence. There is no need to remind that productivity is based in particular on the wellbeing and motivation of employees at work. This is where the hybrid model of work that combines remote with on-site work gains importance.

The hybrid work model is all the more important as it is much more representative of certain professions, where 100% working from home is not possible. For example, how can the manufacturing sector bring the production process at home? Digitalization no doubt allows for more work done remotely; however, face-to-face contact remains an essential part of the sector's activity.
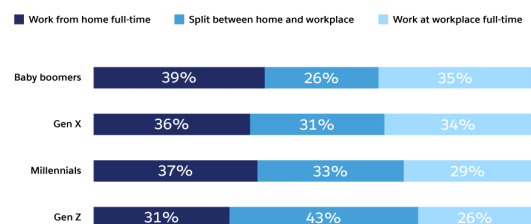
The hybrid work model

As tech-savvy "millennials" give way to the "digital natives" from Generation Z in becoming the largest segment of the workforce, the demand for a hybrid approach to work will increase unquestionably. This means that the trend towards a split between working remotely and from the workplace will become even more defining in the way organizations manage their workforce.

Taking generational shifts and technological advances aside, the elephant in the room remains the global pandemic, and the way it has forced all businesses to respond and adapt. Perhaps the most striking example is **the new 'normal'** when it comes to work. With a few months in the pandemic, companies have started questioning what the new normal should look like. And while we are coming back to the office step by step, the **hybrid workspace** will persist as the new norm for quite some time to come.

Most Appealing Work Scenario

■ Work from home full-time   ■ Split between home and workplace   ■ Work at workplace full-time

	Work from home full-time	Split between home and workplace	Work at workplace full-time
Baby boomers	39%	26%	35%
Gen X	36%	31%	34%
Millennials	37%	33%	29%
Gen Z	31%	43%	26%

salesforce | Global workforce survey, June 16-17, 2020   Numbers may not total 100% due to rounding.

43% of Gen Z employees surveyed say most appealing work scenario is a split between home and workplace

An [ongoing Google COVID-19 Communicty Mobility Trends report](#) shows that on average 33% fewer people were spending time at their workplaces after the end of general lockdowns.

Whether it is through working remotely – which has become the norm for many companies – or by adapting processes around functions for which telework is impossible – every business has been affected by rushed, yet necessary changes. And when there is change, there is opportunity to improve and optimize.

Business unusual

After several months of varying levels of confinement and social distancing, organizations are eager to reopen and return to being active at their pre-COVID pace. However, the business-as-usual outlook is bound to be affected by the notion of the hybrid workplace where remote and office work coexist. This notion is already gaining importance among decision makers and common workers alike.

45% of all respondents in the ongoing survey by Salesforce designed to determine the sentiments of workers towards the prospect of returning to the next normal, agree that **they have the space to work from home** for the long term.

At the same time, reduced capacity and employee rotation as well as enhanced cleaning procedures are pillars of office reopening strategies according to the same survey. Contact tracing is important for office workers, while factory workers consider daily wellness checks essential.

What's clear is that the way organizations respond to these uncertain times is varied. Tech giants Google, Facebook, and Microsoft have allowed employees to work remotely well into 2021 while other companies like Goldman Sachs, are pushing for a swift but safe return to the office. Of course, there are those companies who are leaving it entirely up to individual employees to decide where to base themselves. Nevertheless, the notion of the hybrid workspace remains firm and generates a number of questions and dilemmas.

Top Actions Employers Can Take to Comfort Returning Workers

	Office workers	Industrial/factory workers	Retail workers
1	Enhanced cleaning	Daily wellness checks	Daily wellness checks
2	Employee health monitoring	Employee health monitoring	Reduced capacity
3	Reduced capacity	Reduced capacity	Redesigned workplaces
4	Redesigned workplaces	Enhanced cleaning	Enhanced cleaning
5	Contact tracing	Redesigned workplaces	Team shift scheduling

salesforce | Global workforce survey, June 16-17, 2020

How to maintain productivity for jobs that can't be done remotely?

This legitimate question has arisen now more than ever, not least from companies with warehouses and factories in the logistics, transportation, farming, and physical-goods production business **whose workforce cannot work remotely**.

To avoid the closure of production lines during the pandemic, for example, it was necessary to adjust employee work schedules, as well as the flow of movement within buildings and workstations. This has a cost and sometimes an impact on working time and productivity. The concern of businesses is to ensure

work in optimal safety conditions for employees while maintaining an acceptable level of productivity in view of the situation. And that's no easy task.

The vast majority of employees who cannot work from home **lack the proper communicaitons** technology including a company-provided laptop or a phone. This sheds light on an underlying issue with on-site staff being especiallly vulnerable to feeling disconnection from the head office. Combined with the current health-safety context, it is more important than ever to secure consistent communication with on-site staff.

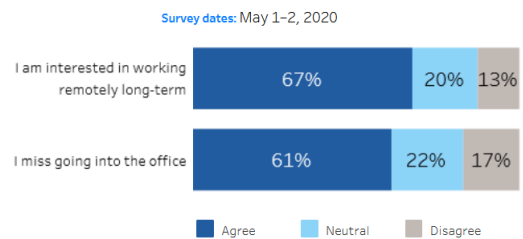## How to improve staff engagement to ensure productivity?

For other companies, the **issue of productivity** is more related to **employee engagement**. For all those who have been able to set up teleworking partially or completely, the question of the moment is rather "are my employees still as committed?" It actually refers to the new notion of productivity that has gained momentum in recent years, namely the theory that "happiness at work generates productivity". Studies have indeed shown that well-being at work generates commitment, creativity, loyalty, less absenteeism – all leading to positive effects on productivity.

Even if the picture painted at the beginning of the lockdown about working from home was sometimes quite idyllic, many have come to associate remote work with a feeling of isolation and a loss of meaning. This can ultimately lead to a drop in commitment. **61%** of survey respondents say they **miss going to the office** as opposed to working entirely remotely. At the same time **67%** of the same sample say they **are interested in working remotely long-term**.

So why not consider the hybrid work solution as a viable long-term key to productivity in this new post-COVID world?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about working remotely?

Survey dates: May 1–2, 2020

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I am interested in working remotely long-term	67%	20%	13%
I miss going into the office	61%	22%	17%

The majority of employees say that they are interested in working remotely in the long-term but at the same time miss going to the office.

A more secure and connected workplace drives employee engagement

With the initial stress gone, this is the perfect time to start reflecting on patterns of working remotely. Among the most important drivers of engagement at work, two are essential:

1) An open and transparent organizational culture
2) A physically, mentally, and socially acceptable workload

Forbes surveyed more than 1200 individuals how working from home was affecting them. While some people blossomed working from home, the survey also found a significant decline in mental health across all industries. Job satisfaction, job motivation, and satisfaction with the company were negatively impacted on the whole. Only 28% of remote employees reported positive mental health, 32% had job satisfaction and 36% had job motivation – these percentages are down from 50% to 60% pre-pandemic.

If the last few months have taught us anything, it is that businesses are resilient. They can reframe when where and how they do business, and still meet employee and customer needs. And as we move forward, it is essential that businesses maintain this mindset of resilience and agility and that they have access to technology and smart solutions that will support the hybrid way of working.

Organizations of all types and sizes must now act not only within their own walls but also beyond, in order to maintain a strong corporate culture and optimal working conditions even remotely. There is research that shows that investment budgets will probably increase significantly post-pandemic, at least for solutions that facilitate hybrid working. A survey of 290 meeting room decision makers and there one third believe IT spending will increase significantly and another third believing that their budget will be somewhat greater than before the pandemic.

Only 12% say that their budget will be declining. This means that the majority of them believe their budgets will be greater. And for those companies that have been slow to embrace hybrid working, the pandemic has tied their hands as they struggle to implement smart and secure IT solutions that would allow for engagement.

What solutions exist to answer the call for a hybrid workplace

The good news is that existing proven technologies are accessible to any business of any size which **optimize your organization's working spaces** for safety and productivity. Two of those come to light:

Digital Signage is a technology for displaying content on screen that can help make the workplace safer, strengthen bonds with employees and make them more involved in the organization. It is a powerful visual communication channel that plugs in right at the heart of modern workplace. It **brings information to employees** with large, easy to read screens that display **real-time information via engaging content** that flexibly and securely connects to your business data.
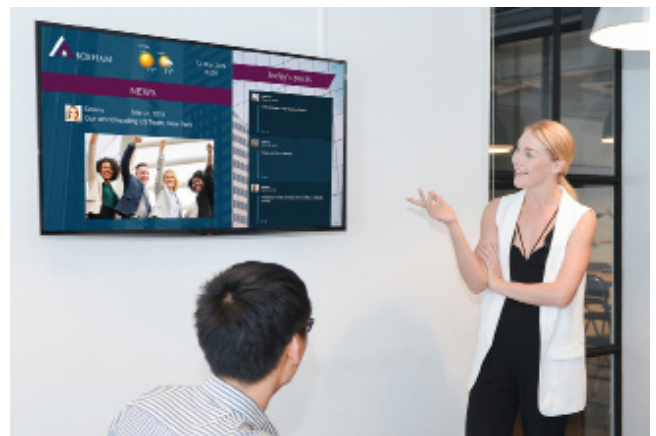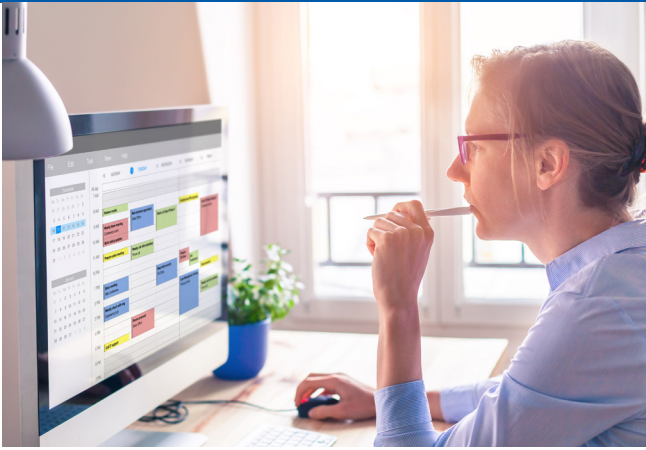
In addition, using a dedicated **work planning platform** comes in handy for keeping track of remote and on-site employees while ensuring their safety. Good management of working hours, employee rotation and presence contribute to greater flexibility with organizing work.

On the one hand, managers obtain relevant coaching data adapted to a hybrid working environment; on the other – employees feel comfortable and in control with this new form of work.

These two complementary approaches – **combining a software solution and employing display communication technology**, allow the company to resume, maintain and increase its activities by focusing on the involvement of everyone and on a trust-conducing platform designed for flexibility.

3 ways to navigate the split between home and the workplace

The actions companies should take can be divided in three main directions.

1. Organize work from home

This involves advice on the layout of the home workspace but also its link to the head office and especially remote management. The home office offers employees increased security from a health point of view; however, supervising employees is complexified. The challenge is, therefore, to ensure the continuity of projects and the commitment of employees while at the same time taking into account the physical distance that separates workers from management and other colleagues.

The key to a well-managed work-from-home schedule is to give employees flexibility. A work-from-home reality does not necessarily fit the 9-to-5 agenda. When at home, employees usually also take care of kids, laundry, housework in parallel – there are a multitude of reasons that require increased flexibility.

But for this way of working to be successful, it must be based on **two main pillars**:

- **A culture of trust:** managers must have confidence in their staff and not worry about employees managing their own time. At the end of the week, in fact, a manager must know that their employees effectuate the number work hours as scheduled, even if they have arranged them as they see fit.

- **A way to ensure that everything is going in optimal conditions**: just because there is trust, it does not mean that managers should not be able to follow up on the work of their teams. The goal is not to police people but rather to check that the balance is maintained and that they are also not working long hours. If there's one thing that lockdown has proven, indeed, it's that in a work-from-home situation, many employees tend to spend more hours at work.

This positive team monitoring is what a time management solution like Protime offers. From a collaborator portal open on your computer screen, nothing is simpler than pushing a button to start or stop the stopwatch and thus record working times.

Beyond all this, flexibility, trust and monitoring of working hours, the human being is above all social.

Being around colleagues is therefore essential. In addition, on-site work remains essential especially for occupations that do not allow remote work. In this sense, Protime makes it possible to offer a healthy and safe experience: from this same portal, in fact, it is possible to request to come to the office. This is then accepted or not, depending on the occupancy rate for example.

2. Make the office and other on-site working spaces feel safe:

In a hybrid working model, face-to-face contact is gradually regaining its place. However, in these difficult times, ensuring the **safety of employees** is essential. This involves both on-site access control and communication.
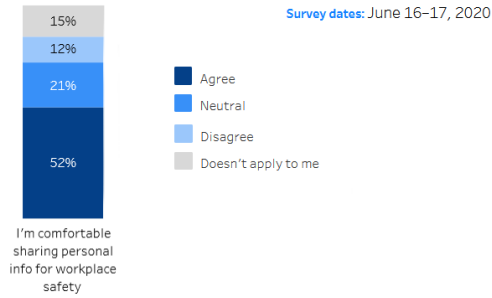
A **staff management tool** provides essential help in securing access to your offices. Protime, for example, allows you not only to confirm the presence of your employees but also to trace the various points of contacts they establish among them. Better yet, badges can limit each other's access to certain parts of the office and certain meeting rooms, reducing the risk of heightened employee mixing and therefore contamination.
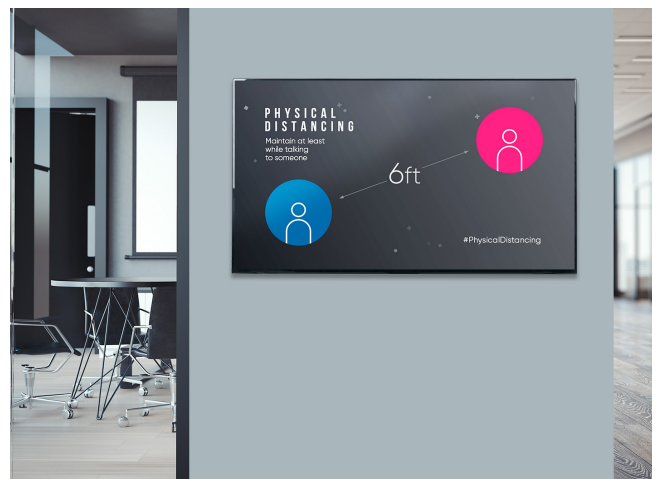
Corporate screens, on the other hand, allow you to optimize your communication, thus contributing to the safety of employees. **Digital displays** can indicate which rooms are free or occupied, serve as a relay point for counting the number of employees present at a particular area, indicate the scheduling of breaks to avoid gatherings, etc.

Actions that the company must take to reassure employees' sense of safety in the office, at production sites, and other remote on-site workspaces include ensuring contactless access to areas throughout the workplace, displaying safety instructions and company information on screens, providing adequate and dynamic real-time wayfinding to manage the flow of people and more.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Survey dates: June 16–17, 2020

- 15%
- 12%
- 21%
- 52%

Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Doesn't apply to me

I'm comfortable sharing personal info for workplace safety

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic many businesses are re-discovering digital signage as a vital new way to deliver an automated, safe form of communication that reassures employees and customers about the safety of doing business at their location. Survey data shows that 52% of employees overall are comfortable sharing personal information including health data and contacts to keep the workplace safe. With millennials, this increases to 59% and demonstrates the need for employers to consider seriously making the office and other on-site working spaces safe.

Access and occupancy control have become essential for doing on-site business in a post-COVID context. The digital signage solution from SpinetiX for example connects to face-mask recognition IP cameras and 3rd party counting sensors to automate the process, making it seamless and requiring little to no extra staffing. In addition, a staff management tool, such as the one provided by Protime, helps secure access to your office.

Wayfinding goes hand in hand with access and occupancy control. A typical wayfinding installation incorporates a digital display with real-time information for occupancy rates of meeting rooms, the closest available meeting space, and instructions on how to get there.

Finally, **alerts** can be displayed at any time and location that are part of a centralized digital signage installation for proper and timely communication on health, safety, and evacuation.

Being part of the team

Working from the office must bring a high-quality experience to employees in order to **encourage collaboration** and strengthen their bond with the organization. The most important way to foster this positive spirit is to communicate internally on everything related to the corporate culture, whether it be values, successes, or even strategic information that management wishes to share.

Visualize information

This is especially important for on-site employees at production sites or other remote sites who don't readily have access to company-provided laptops or mobile devies. Visualizing data in the form of **dashboards on digital displays** is a great way to solve that. It enables you to engage your employees with reliable and meaningful information coming right from the source – your everyday business tools.

Displaying content on screens is essential for effective internal communication. Put these screens in well-trafficked locations, and suddenly you have a common canvas of useful info that is difficult to miss. This streamlined highly visible information flow creates opportunities for more cross-functional conversations on the go, and ultimately fosters **creativity and innovation**.

Make people feel welcome

Welcome screens are another example of engagement-driven real-time content. Installed at key locations throughtout the office, they offer staff and guests prime reception experiences right from the time they enter the building. And connected to the right data source, welcome screens can indicate specific information such as the date and time of an appointment, the photo of the host and the meeting room with wayfinding instructions on how to get there.

The beauty of digital signage is that it is flexible enough to be adapted to different locations and communication needs. A single screen can serve multiple applications and can be connected to any source of data such as an **Excel sheet**, a Google calendar or an employee planning CMS.

Protime and SpinetiX share their joint expertise

When tomorrow strikes a day early and change is no longer optional, Protime and SpinetiX join forces with a common perspective. Protime, the expert in time- and staff management and SpinetiX, the leader in digital signage solutions will help you navigate the challenges that accompany the notion of the new hybrid workspace by integrating their technologies and contributing to the transformation of the working environment of your company.

About SpinetiX:

At SpinetiX, we inspire businesses to unlock the potential of their story. We believe in the power of digital signage as a dynamic new storytelling platform to engage with people. For more than 10 years, we have been constantly innovating to deliver cutting-edge technology that helps our customers shine. Engineered in Switzerland and deployed worldwide, our comprehensive suite of solutions empowers businesses to realize their full potential. Whether you're looking for a plug & play solution to bring your story to life or a fully customized solution to captivate your audience, SpinetiX is your partner to successfully grow your business.

Contact SpinetiX: sales@spinetix.com

About Protime:

Protime is founded in 1995 and is market leader in time registration, access control and workforce planning. The team of nearly 300 Protimers has a continuous focus on innovation, development and expansion of our Workforce Management solutions throughout Europe. Thanks to a continuous focus on innovation, Protime supplies her solutions in Workforce management to a wide and varied range of clients and markets. Protime is a Great Place to Work for 8 years in a row and a Best Managed Company with offices in Aartselaar (BE), Namur (BE), Waddinxveen (NL), Paris (FR), Frankfurt (DE) and Manchester (UK). Protime is an independent part of the SD Worx group. This means you can benefit from a complete service, from time management to payroll management with one and the same supplier.

Contact Protime: contact@protime.eu