

Top 5 requirements of a hybrid work culture

The hybrid workplace has created a monumental shift in the way work happens for many organisations.



Image source: Monstera from [Pexels](#)

Linda Trim, director at Giant Leap, one of South Africa's largest workplace design consultancies, said: "The blend of on and offline interactions means we have to think about the needs of people as they adopt a new way of working, and how the workplace and technology need to change to help them be successful."

Businesses that have returned to the office have found people need to be re-energise and rebuild their "muscle memory" for being in the workplace.

"Feeling part of a strong community actually helps people achieve more and boosts productivity, engagement, innovation and retention. Many leading organisations are making changes before people return to the office so workers can see and feel their organisation cares and is taking action to meet their needs in a new era of hybrid work."



The office is open... but how do we get staff to return?

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5 things people need for hybrid work

Safety

People need to know their organisation is doing everything possible to keep them safe and mitigate the spread of disease. "Workers are particularly concerned about cleanliness," Trim noted.

Psychological safety is increasingly important at a time where work is changing. Employees need to know that it's okay to

speak up, share ideas, ask questions and make mistakes – without negative ramifications.

Belonging

In a time where people are working from diverse locations, people need their workplace to help create community and “social glue” that builds cooperation and team cohesion. Strong communities have a sense of shared purpose, as well as shared leadership. With high levels of trust and engagement, communities allow people to learn, adapt and demonstrate resilience.

Productivity

“Hybrid work will require new spaces and technology to help people be effective. People need places for 1-on-1 or small group video calls, either enclosed or with greater acoustic privacy at their desk,” said Trim. Groups need new collaborative spaces that support both in-office and remote participants equally – where everyone can see and be seen, hear and be heard. Spaces should be designed for a better virtual presence with important elements like cameras, acoustics, content and lighting.

Comfort

Physical comfort is critical for hybrid workers, especially if they are spending a lot of time on video. People’s well-being has suffered, and they need places and experiences that help them rejuvenate and reset throughout the day. People also need to be comfortable with how work is changing, how to use new kinds of spaces and new technologies to collaborate with hybrid teams.

Control

Living through a crisis and changing ways of working, people now crave more certainty. They want to be able to have more choice and control over:

- Where they work within the office
- When they work at the office or home
- How they work, alone and with teammates

Hybrid work is the biggest opportunity organisations have to reinvent their culture. People and leaders need to adjust expectations about how work happens.

“But thinking about a hybrid workplace as a community designed to support the needs of the people as they embrace new ways of working and interacting can be a dramatic and positive change that emerges from the pandemic,” Trim concluded.

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