

HOW TO MOTIVATE EMPLOYEES TO COME BACK TO THE OFFICE

**A GUIDE FOR
MANAGERS**





Let's face it: Employees DO NOT want to come back to the office.

Popular remote-work website Flexjobs found that an astounding 97% of employees wish to work remotely with 58% of respondents wanting to work fully remote and 39% wishing for a hybrid work environment.

The fact that these findings are from a survey conducted in August 2021 suggests that employees are not ready for working from their offices.

On the other hand, the companies require their employees to work from the office. This is creating a kind of disparity between the employer and the employee which is not good for their relationship in the long term. Hence, HR has taken up the mantle of being the mediator and are urging both parties to find a middle ground. However, if we think about it, working from office surely has its merits too that needs to be emphasized to the employees for helping them ease back into working from their offices.

Hence, let us analyse the current scenario and understand how to motivate your employees to come back to the office.

THE CURRENT SCENARIO

If we look at the current situation, we can view that the effects of the pandemic are subsiding. Things are slowly getting back to normalcy. With the recent achievement of 1 billion vaccinations, even our great nation is getting back to its 'normal' state. In fact, the human race is attaining herd immunity against the virus and hence, fewer people are falling ill. All of this means that businesses can again start functioning normally like they used to. Most of the public places as well as public transport has already started operating normally with the main condition being that people who have completed both doses of vaccine are allowed with all necessary precautions. However, considering that the number of people getting vaccinated is rising daily, it is only a matter of time before everything will be returning to how it was in 2019.



HYBRID VS. WORKING FROM OFFICE



Companies are opting for either a hybrid system or a full-fledged work-from-office structure of working since the restrictions have been reduced. Transitioning to working from an office structure might be too much for the employee who has been working from his or her office for the last year. Hence, it is always advisable to switch to a hybrid working environment before starting with complete 'work from the office' structure.

There are several options for turning the work into a hybrid model.
The most common ones are:

REMOTE FIRST

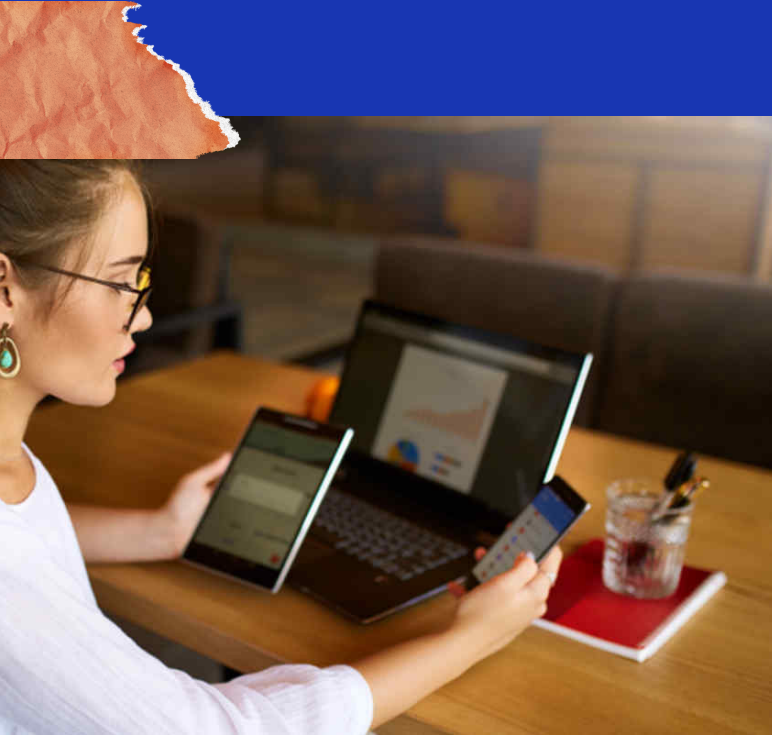
·Remote-first: The employees would be required to work from their offices or homes based on their job requirements and their physical presence requirement in the office premises and hence, this hybrid model would vary a lot for the employees working in different departments of the same company. In this model, the company acts like a fully remote organization.

OCCASIONAL OFFICE

·In this hybrid model, the employees are requested to work from their offices for a specified period. Different departments would have dedicated days as to when they would turn up for work. There are several different variations of this model, and it depends upon the company to opt for the one which suits their business.

REMOTE OPTIONAL

In the 'remote optional' model, the workers might opt to work remotely if they need to do so. However, most of the company employees work from the office itself and who gets permission to work from home is dependent on various factors such as their designation, their job duties, etc.



I.DISTRACTIONS

The major issue with working from home is the several distractions the employee has, that can prove to be detrimental to their productivity. They could have children or elder family members to attend to. They might have other household chores to take care of. They might even have guests at their place and all of these factors reduce their productive time. Besides all of these issues, they might also be distracted by social media or any hobby they might have, which, coupled with the fact that there is no supervision, might lead to delays in achieving their targets too.

2.LOWER PRODUCTIVITY

Due to the aforementioned factors, there is bound to be a decrease in the productivity of the employees. However, there are other factors such as reduced face-to-face interactions which lower the efficiency of the daily tasks. Sometimes, it is easier to misinterpret the instructions in written communication and tasks that should have been completed in an hour might take twice as long due to several unnecessary back and forth emails..





ISSUES WITH WORKING FROM HOME

3. INEFFICIENT TIME MANAGEMENT

Managing time is almost impossible in a home environment due to several external factors apart from work. There could be multiple distractions as well as household chores which would require the employee to give immediate attention. Time spent doing those tasks eat into the productive working time of the worker and they are left with doing their office work after the official working hours. This kind of inefficient time management eventually leads to work fatigue which needs to be avoided at all costs.

4. ISOLATION & LONELINESS

Being a social animal, we humans crave social interaction. Irrespective of the fact that we are with our families, we still crave further interactivity due to which we form friends and also keep an amicable relationship with our colleagues and relatives. Since the pandemic induced nationwide lockdown, people have been craving for these kinds of social interactions which is evident with the steady rise in popularity of social media and video calling apps. Working from the office helps to alleviate this issue up to an extent with the help of supportive team members.

5. TECHNOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

A major issue at the onset of the work-from-home method was the technological challenges as well as the connectivity issues. The employees had to buy new hardware as well as make necessary provisions for 24/7 connectivity to perform their daily duties. Although most of these issues have been alleviated by now, there are still multiple technical issues that plague the employees who are working from home. Sluggish systems, as well as a slower home network, results in a reduced workflow, which is again detrimental to the company interests.

STRATEGIES FOR SMOOTH TRANSITIONING TO WORK FROM OFFICE

Since we have seen the major disadvantages of working from home, it is clear that working from offices would help speed up things as well as make the daily work more efficient for the company as well as the employees. Hence, let us take a look at some of the most effective strategies for helping your employees smoothly transition from 'work from home' to 'work from office':



WE'RE
COVID
SAFE

SAFETY FIRST

The most important aspect to take into consideration is 'Safety'. The vaccinations do not guarantee 100% immunity from the virus and hence, one needs to ensure that all the protocols are followed strictly in the office and its premises. Providing sanitizing stations, as well as touch-less attendance systems, goes a long way in making your employees feel safe and secure in the work environment.

STRATEGIES FOR SMOOTH TRANSITIONING TO WORK FROM OFFICE

THE 4C ADVANTAGE

Simply put, 'The 4C Advantage' is a set of factors that will help your employee feel comfortable about coming daily into the company again. These factors help them feel at home and ensure that they are cared for. Hence, let us look closer at these:



CONNECTION

'Connection' refers to the emotional connection that the employees feel towards the company. This connection would have become weaker over time with their physical distance from their offices. Hence, the management and the HR department have to ensure that this connection is strengthened by keeping them engaged, sharing company goals and appreciating and rewarding their work.



CULTURE

The 'Company Culture' refers to the shared values, goals and attitudes of the employees which are conveyed by their daily behaviour with each other. In the post-pandemic workplace, the existing company culture must be reimagined to inculcate the changes brought about by the pandemic as well as ensure that your employees are aware of these changes. This kind of inclusive interaction helps them realize that they are a crucial part of the system and improve their engagement with the company.



COLLABORATION

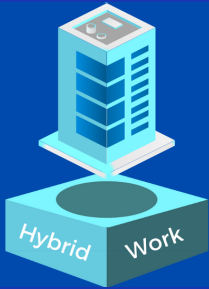
'Collaboration' refers to teamwork which is such a crucial part of modern offices that we cannot imagine an office without teams. Collaboration needs to be reinforced as a part of the 'work from office' initiatives since it helps foster trust and boosts productivity. Collaboration also helps them in connecting as a team, which would help in reducing social isolation as an added advantage.



CREATIVITY

According to Wikipedia Growth investing is a style of investment strategy focused on capital appreciation.[1] Those who follow this style, known as growth investors, invest in companies that exhibit signs of above-average growth,.

Even if the share price appears expensive in terms of metrics such as price-to-earnings or price-to-book ratios.[2][3] In typical usage, the term "growth investing" contrasts with the strategy known as value investing.



HYBRID WORK MODEL

Hybrid working makes a strong case for itself in such a scenario. It acts as a compromise between working from home and the office. Hence, it is better to start with a hybrid work environment rather than ordering your employees to come to offices every day. As an HR, you will surely earn brownie points for it while the employees will also get time to adjust to commuting daily to their offices.



OVERCOMMUNICATE

The power of communication cannot be overstated in any business. Effective communication can be the main differentiator between a project being completed on time and endless discussions. Hence, before calling your employees to work from the office, start informing them about the changes in the employee policies regarding the workplace.



TRAINING

Since the world has been working from home for almost one and a half years now, it is quite natural that your employees would have forgotten how things worked before the pandemic. Hence, it is always ideal to have refresher training before implementing work from the office structure. For example, they might be required to submit their daily work status via email currently, which was an added requirement due to remote working.

TEAM-BUILDING



The most important aspect of an office is the physical manifestation of the proverb: Two heads are better than one. This is the reason why companies prefer to delegate tasks to teams rather than individuals. Every successful company out there knows this simple fact and hence, applies it effectively to form teams, delegate tasks and even have contests to determine the best ones.

CONCLUSION

Motivating employees to come back to the office is not an easy task. Hence, one needs to ensure that several factors are considered before asking them to come back. They might have gone through several other things during the pandemic such as the loss of a loved one or change of jobs or even depression due to the pandemic. Hence, being their employer, you need to understand that all of these factors could have impeded their performance and hence, asking them to come back to work suddenly is not the way to go.

A graphic of a computer monitor with a black screen and a white bezel, set against a dark teal background. The screen displays the text "Back @ office" in a white, handwritten-style font, with the "@" symbol in green.

Back @ office