



Managing a thriving hybrid organization

Top-line report, October 2021

Introduction

What will it take for organizations to thrive as hybrid workplaces?

This is the question that businesspeople from across the world discussed on June 24th and September 9th, 2021. They opened their computers and logged on to an online dialogue platform to create actionable insights together. Insights that you can use to create the best hybrid workplace for you, your employees and colleagues, now and in the future.

More than 90% of the participants were optimistic that organizations will be able to thrive in a hybrid model. In analyzing the two online dialogues, a clear pattern emerged of four main action areas to stimulate thriving hybrid organizations. On the following pages, we will explore these action areas in-depth and give practical and concrete examples of how organizations can implement them. Every piece of advice and information in this document is the result of the wisdom of the crowd - "Crowdsourcing".

Hybrid work

We use the term "hybrid work" to describe a workplace with employees who have the opportunity to work either in the office or remotely.

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"I THINK THAT EVERYBODY SEES THE POSITIVE CHANGE IN THEIR PERSONAL LIVES, SO THE MOTIVATION IS VERY HIGH"

PARTICIPANT

What it will take...

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WORK IS CHANGING ALREADY FOR SOME TIME. COVID GIVES US A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO REDEFINE WORK AND THE WAY WE ORGANIZE. A LOT OF QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT DOING THE SAME WORK (MEETINGS, ALLOCATING WORK, ET CETERA) IN A VIRTUAL WAY. THE OPPORTUNITY IS TO CHANGE THAT OLD WAY OF WORKING. COVID IS AN ACCELERATOR.

PARTICIPANT

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1. New ways and methods of working.

By adopting simple habits such as daily check-ins and check-outs, organizing team events, creating online social connecting moments,...

2. New (soft) skills to learn.

Soft skills have become increasingly important in the workplace, but with the shift towards hybrid organizations, they became critical. Emphasis should be put on developing competencies such as facilitation skills, coaching skills, listening skills, and new management styles.

3. New organization rules.

There is an acute need for redesigning and, above all, clarifying the rules in this new type of organization. New rules around performance, presence and working times are needed more than ever.

4. New organization culture.

By creating an organizational culture where innovation, co-creation, and empowerment are at the core of everything we do and where deep work on trust and trusting your employees is needed.

1. New ways and methods of working.

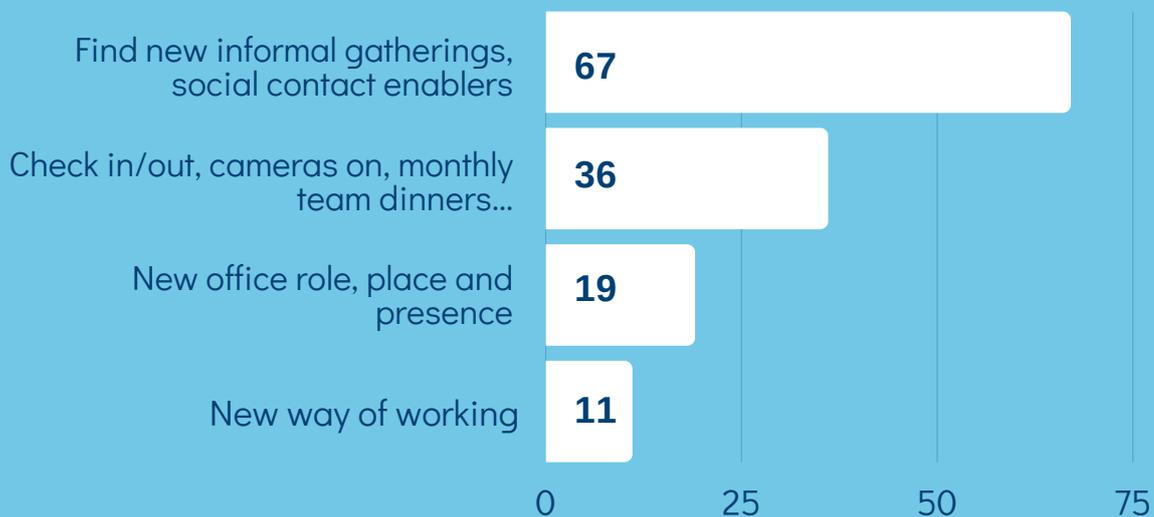
The consensus of the dialogues is that leaders will need to focus on both hardwiring and soft-wiring their organizations for a successful hybrid transition. One of the hardwiring actions that needs to take place is adopting new ways and methods of working with teams. Defining a new role for the office and determining clear rules with every individual in mind appears to be essential. People now want not only more efficient work but also a more personalized way of working.

Our participants agreed on a few methods that can bring about a new way of working. However, the most important aspect appeared to be the ability of the organization to create a new type of informal gatherings to encourage the social contacts in a hybrid organization.

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ALLOW AND OFFER
EMPLOYEES MULTIPLE
WAYS TO CONNECT
WITH EACH OTHER”

PARTICIPANT

ADOPT NEW HABITS AND METHODS



Graph 1: The votes of support for statements concerning the adoption of new working habits.

2. New (soft) skills to learn.

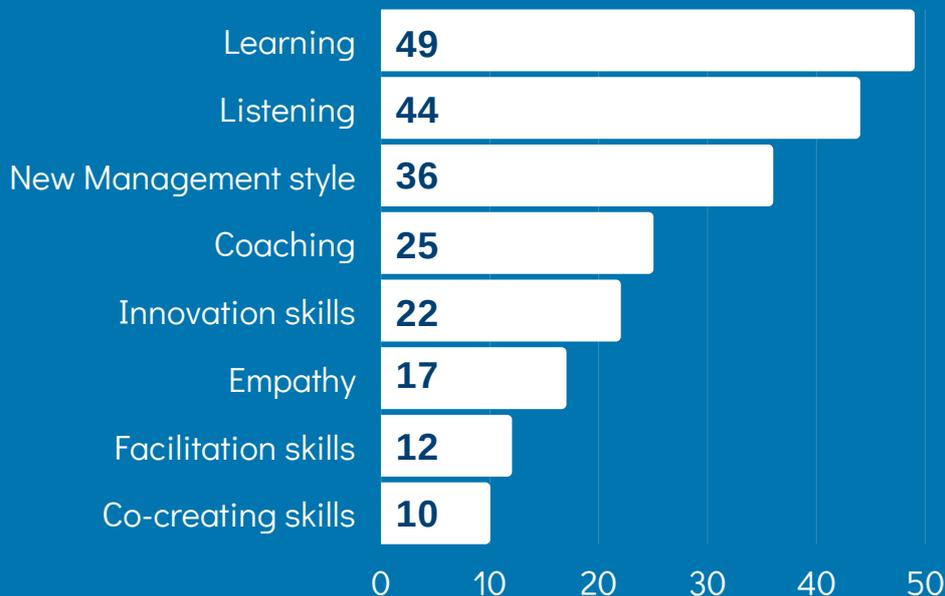
“
PROVIDE TRAINING,
GOOD PRACTICES.
AND INVEST IN
EMPATHETIC
ABILITIES.”

PARTICIPANT

Soft skills have increasingly taken on importance in the past decades, but, with a shift towards more hybrid organizations, soft skills have become an essential requirement for an organization to thrive.

When asking about the specific skills that managers and leaders need to develop, it was clear that we are no longer in a "command and control" paradigm. Continuous learning and training on new ways of working as well as innovation skills are crucial for all employees. Managers and team leaders need to learn how to listen, co-create and facilitate sessions, both online and offline. A new management style geared towards coaching and empowering employees seems to be what will make organizations thrive in hybrid.

DEVELOP SPECIFIC SKILLS



Graph 2: The votes of support for statements concerning which skills are a priority for hybrid work.

3. New organizations rules.

Rules need to be redefined. Tools need to be adapted. Clarity and transparency on those new rules and processes is key for employee acceptance and onboarding.

What also stood out in our analysis is the demand of employees for a differentiated policy.

"IN ADDITION TO LISTENING AND TRUSTING, MANAGEMENT MAY NEED TO DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO PROVIDE FRAMEWORKS, CLARITY AND DIRECT COMMUNICATION."

PARTICIPANT

Organizations who want to thrive in hybrid will need to adapt and give more choices and more independence to their employees to opt for different working styles and schedules, while making it very clear what the expectations are for everyone, what the new rules of the office are, etc.

REDESIGN ORGANIZATION RULES



Graph 3: The votes of support for statements concerning new rules for the organization.

4. New organization culture.

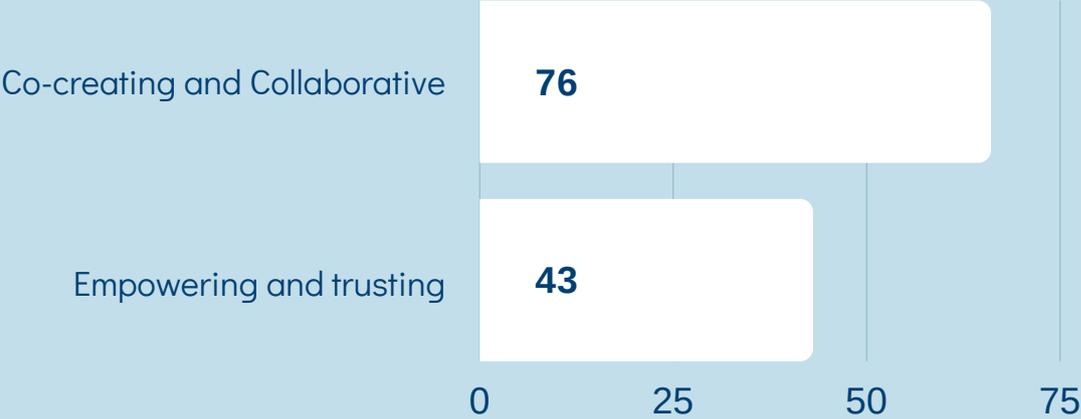
A last area where soft-wiring of the organization is needed is in a renewed organization culture. A thriving hybrid organization is a place where collaboration and co-creation are core values and where every employee feels empowered by and engaged in their work.

“TRUST THEIR [LEADERS] EMPLOYEES TO MANAGE THEMSELVES.”
PARTICIPANT

“LISTEN AND IDENTIFY SEGMENTS AND SPECIFIC HYBRID SOLUTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS, NOT ONE SINGLE POLICY FOR ALL.”
PARTICIPANT

Management needs to learn how to trust their employees. This is an important condition for a thriving hybrid organization, but it cannot happen unless it's part of the culture of the organization. Establishing a trust-based relationship and believing that your employees don't need to be controlled in a physical office environment to be productive is essential to a hybrid organization.

RENEW THE ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE



Graph 4: The votes of support for statements concerning the culture needed for a hybrid organization.

Conclusion

Our two international dialogues on "Managing a thriving hybrid organization" took place at a crucial moment for organizations worldwide. The crisis that organizations had to face in 2020-2021 forced us to re-imagine the future of work. And it is now very clear that a hybrid organization model is being adopted by many.

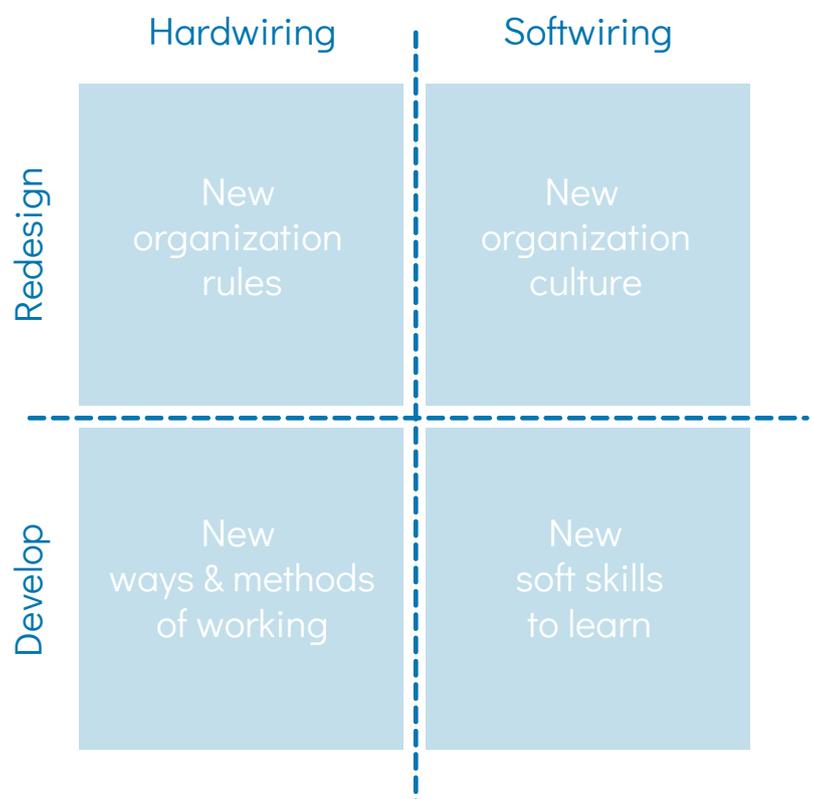
We wanted to keep the conversation open and provide a space for managers to discuss what they see are essential changes and adaptations needed for their organizations to thrive.

Four main areas of action were apparent.

On the hardwiring side, a redesign of clear organization rules is needed as well as the development of new ways and methods of working.

On the soft-wiring side, organizations will need to redesign their culture and, as we've seen, co-creation with all employees is necessary for this step.

In addition, new soft skills will need to be developed in the successful manager of a hybrid organization team.



Methodology

Our online dialogue platform places participants into overlapping small virtual groups to allow the anonymous sharing and evaluation of ideas in writing. The process involves a real-time moderated conversation, in this case two 45 minutes sessions in June and September 2021.

In the conversations, participants make statements, and these are marked by others in terms of level of agreement or disagreement. Strongly supported ideas move on to be evaluated by more participants. The result is qualitative insights on a quantitative scale. You get a picture of where participants agree and disagree, where there are tension areas, statistics about the levels of agreement and a transcript of the discussions which can be analyzed in depth.

Want to know more?

If you want the full data from the online conversations or a personal walk-through of the report, we would be more than happy to have a virtual cup of coffee with you. Also, if you have questions about the our platform and our methodology, do not hesitate to reach out.

Share your reflections with us!

We would love to hear your reflections and thoughts reading this.

If you have ideas, comments, questions or suggestions for future reflection moments, please reach out to us, at:

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