

NEW HIRE



TALENT TEAM



5 WAYS IT IS STRENGTHENING TALENT RETENTION

A Whitepaper by Electric

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Workplace upheaval isn't over yet.

From the abrupt shift to remote work in early 2020, to the gradual transition to a hybrid model, employers have faced momentous change in the past 18 months.

Now, they face a new challenge: retaining top talent. It's an employee's job market, and the traditional perks of the past are no longer sufficient to retain staff, much less attract new hires.

To compete, employers must alter their perception of technology as a facilitator of work, and harness its full potential to build new and more authentic organizational cultures. With the right infrastructure in place, companies can meet and exceed employee expectations, and empower teams to do their best work yet.

Electric surveyed 294 IT decision-makers at small-to-medium sized businesses to find out how technology is powering today's work environment, and where they are currently investing in the context of the "Great Resignation."

Read on for five key insights into how technology will influence employee productivity and contentment in 2022.

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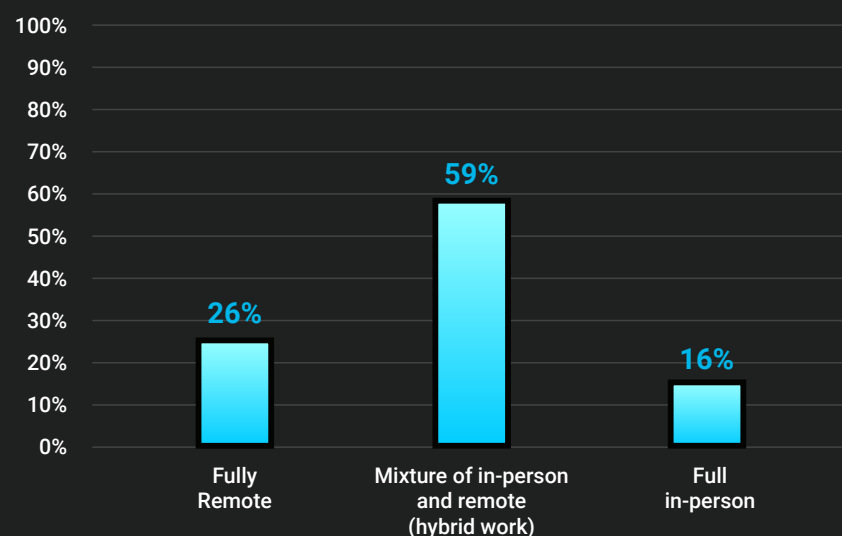
- *Remote Workers Require Continued Support*
- *The Hybrid Model Presents New Challenges*
- *Security and Mobile Device Management Remain a Priority*
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1. Remote Workers Require Continued Support

As employers navigate a return to the office and the shift to a hybrid model, it's crucial that remote workers don't get left behind.

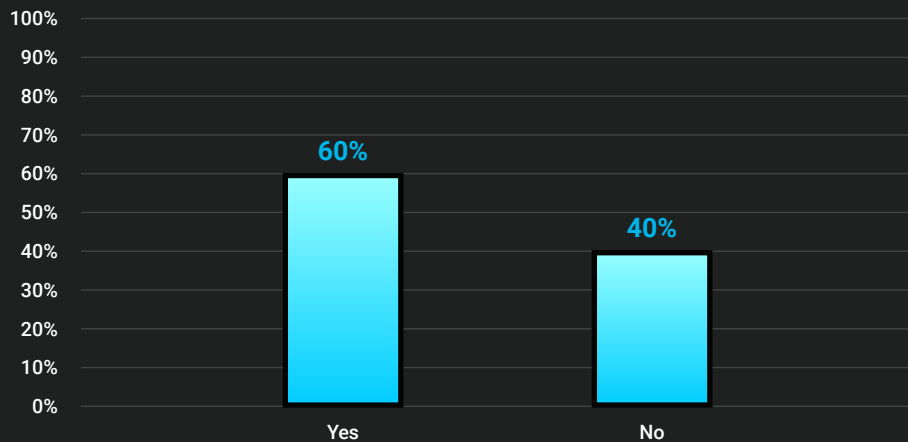
26% of respondents to our survey said their organization is still working fully remote, while the majority (59%) have now shifted to a hybrid approach. Workers are undeniably coming back to the office in increasing numbers, but it's worth noting that 85% are still working from home either some or all of the time.

How is your organization currently operating?



The need to support employees in their work outside the office has not subsided. Yet, only 60% of respondents said their employer currently offers a stipend or reimbursement for home office expenses incurred by employees.

Does your organization offer a stipend or reimbursement for outfitting employee home office setups?



In the context of today's job market, employers can't afford to neglect the basics. Aside from an ergonomic desk setup, providing adequate technical equipment and support will contribute significantly to an employee's job satisfaction, as well as their ability to perform remotely.

Employers should be flexible in their approach to subsidizing home offices, and employees should be empowered to choose the accessories that meet their needs. Whether it's additional monitors, noise-cancelling headphones, a wrist-friendly mouse and keyboard, or an upgraded Wi-Fi package, workers should not have to take a financial hit in order to do their job comfortably and efficiently.

42%

of employees say they lack essential office supplies at home, and one in 10 don't have an adequate internet connection to do their job.¹

The good news is, many employers appear to be cognizant of the continuing need to contribute to workers' home office environments. When asked where their organization plans to invest to support hybrid work initiatives in the next year, respondents' top choice (43%) was "home office peripherals."



Linda Ong
CEO & Founder
CULTIQUE

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We've seen a bigger paradigm shift in the last 20 months than in the last 20 years. It used to be that your life had to revolve around your work. Now, with the advent of distributed workplaces, the work has to fit around our desired lives.

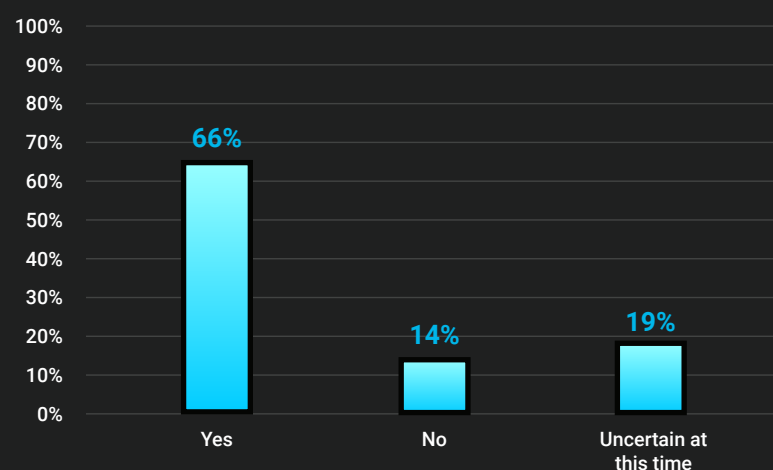
¹ <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work>

2. The Hybrid Model Presents New Challenges

While a certain degree of remote work is here to stay, it appears that a hybrid model is the firm preference for a majority of employers.

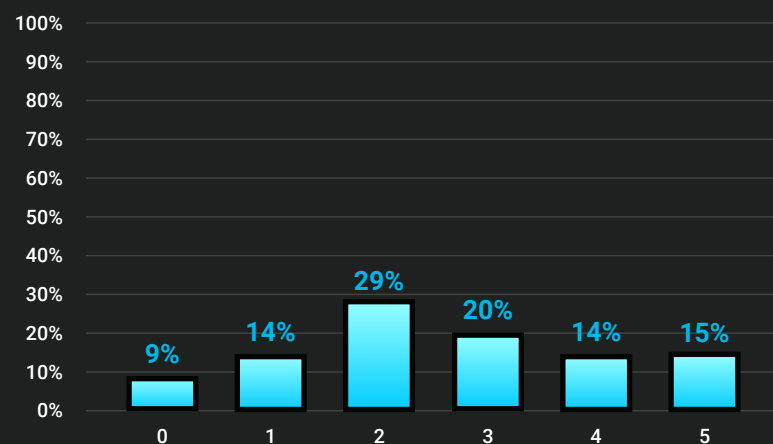
Only 14% of survey respondents said their organization has no plans to require employees back at the office in some capacity in the future. Two thirds said there will be some expectation to return, while 19% remain unsure.

If you're currently operating either hybrid or fully remote, does your organization have any future plans to require employees back at a physical office in any capacity?



Currently, the majority of those working under a hybrid model are attending the office two days a week, with three days a week being the second most common arrangement.

How many days per week are employees currently expected to report to a physical office location?



Interestingly, a significant proportion of employers plan to spend on office spaces (42%) and in-person gatherings (32%) over the coming year. While this investment in reacquainting teams and improving workspaces is to be welcomed, it's important that organizations don't fall back into old habits when it comes to employee engagement.



Linda Ong
CEO & Founder
CULTIQUE

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We've all heard of the Great Resignation. What's happening in the workplace is part of a larger conversation outside of the workplace, and it's causing people to recalibrate their lives in a very existential way. The only way to engage people in the culture right now is to meet them where they are. Before, jobs were the shiny object that everyone wanted. Now, the people are the shiny objects and organizations have to go after them. People are negotiating and navigating the relationship between life and work, and life is winning. Employers have to recognize that.

Today's workers seek out flexibility and work-life balance over superficial perks and office gimmicks. Technology plays a crucial role in facilitating this flexibility, and the hybrid model now presents a new set of considerations for workers who have previously been fully remote.

For employees working between home and the office, it's impractical and cumbersome to transport larger accessories such as monitors or keyboards back and forth. Aside from the inconvenience, this is a recipe for lost equipment in transit, and lost time as employees backtrack to retrieve forgotten belongings. Likewise, accessing systems, apps, and tools should be seamless, regardless of where an employee chooses to work on any given day.

For the hybrid model to succeed, employers must ensure workers aren't unfairly burdened with the logistics involved in working from multiple locations throughout the week.

3. Security and Mobile Device Management Remain a Priority

With the transition to a hybrid model, cybersecurity and mobile device management are top of mind once again for organizations.

After the uptick in cyber attacks targeting newly remote workers in 2020, businesses must now assess the risks that come with a partial return to the office. Hybrid workers now have the choice to work in locations that are neither their homes nor their offices, whether it's a dedicated remote working hub or the cafe down the street.

From exposure to device theft while employees are in transit, to the threat of attacks via public networks, employers have a new set of risks to contend with. In this context, it's unsurprising that 40% of organizations plan to invest in cybersecurity in the coming year, and 30% plan to spend on upgrading their IT infrastructure.

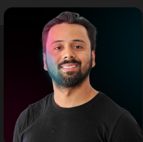
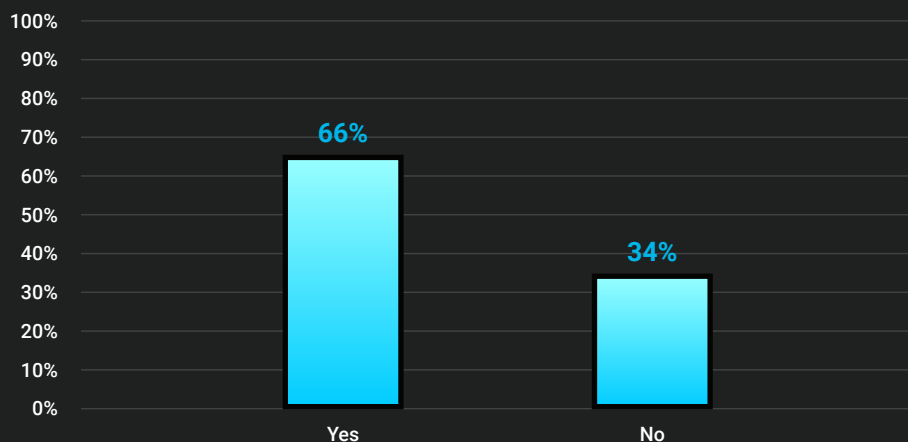
For employees currently working outside the office in any capacity, 66% of survey respondents said they connect to a VPN when accessing company resources. While this likely represents a significant increase in VPN usage compared to 18 months ago, adoption should ideally be much higher given the now established nature of remote work.

Likewise, when it comes to mobile device management, a relatively small majority (66%) of organizations are using software to monitor, manage, and secure company devices, while 71% allow employees to use personal devices for work purposes.

40% of organizations plan to invest in cybersecurity.

30% of organizations plan to invest in upgrading IT infrastructure.

Do you monitor, manage, and secure company-owned devices with mobile device management (MDM) software?



Gabriel Sierra

Senior IT Service
Desk Manager
Electric

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It's crucial that organizations have mobile device management policies in place to ensure system security. I would always recommend the use of MDM software to remotely monitor, manage, and secure mobile devices - not only does this keep devices healthy and up-to-date, it also eliminates manual and potentially confusing IT tasks for individual employees.

As with other aspects of remote and hybrid work, employers should assume responsibility for the management and expense involved in device maintenance and cybersecurity. Assigning technical duties to non-technical employees or implementing ineffective software will not only hamper productivity, it's likely to lead to errors and potential exposure to attacks.



**Marcin
Kleczynski**

CEO
Malwarebytes

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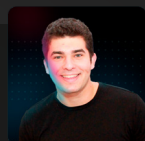
Security that's difficult to use or that creates friction for a user in the course of doing their job will ultimately result in an attempt to bypass it. Don't make your own user an enemy by implementing security software that doesn't work well or that brings up more alerts than necessary.

4. Better Communication and Collaboration is Needed

The rise in remote and hybrid work prompted an accelerated uptake of collaborative tools, but distributed communication is yet to be perfected.

Few have escaped the need for drastic adjustments in our workplace interactions. The vast majority (81%) of companies say they have now implemented new communication and collaboration tools to support a hybrid model.

In the early transition to remote work, employers scrambled to enable continued communication via tools like Zoom and Slack. Many companies simply stopped there, while others innovated to reap the benefits of more sophisticated forms of remote collaboration - such as access to a wider talent pool and a reduction in needless meetings.



Matt Redler

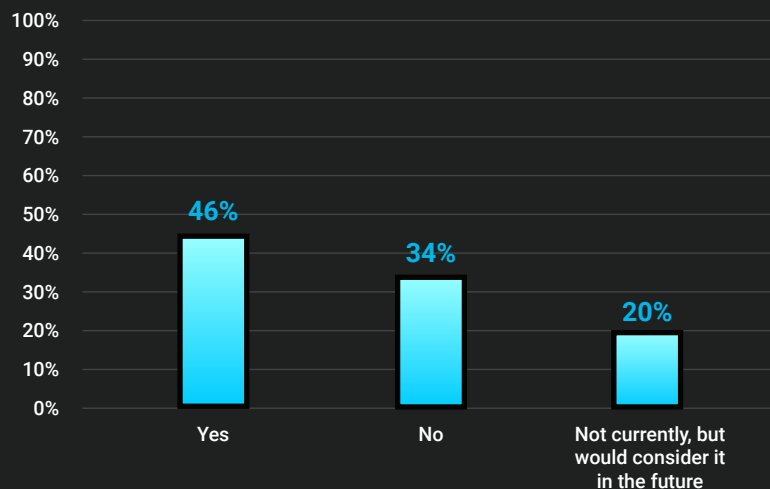
Co-founder &
CEO
Panther

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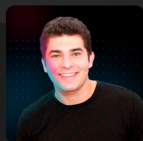
Now that we've separated this idea of physical location from economic opportunity, we'll start to see companies optimize their roles to hire the best person, no matter where they live. We need new processes that eat time zones for breakfast. That boils down to lots of asynchronous communication such as recorded videos and documentation, versus just calling meetings every time a decision needs to be made.

With new methods of collaboration, comes a new dynamic in the employer-employee relationship. One such example is the way we monitor and measure performance. In our survey, 46% of organizations said they are currently using software to track employee productivity, and a further 20% said they would consider it in future.

Do you currently leverage any platform or software to track employee productivity?



Rather than viewing technology solely as a means to track employees while they are out of physical sight, these new tools should be seen as an opportunity to embrace a more trust-centered approach to people management.



Matt Redler
Co-founder &
CEO
Panther

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We shouldn't take the way that we worked in the past and copy paste it to the way we're working today. Specifically, we should focus more on an outcome-based mindset rather than an input one. In an office culture, the amount of hours you worked was the currency. The management style was making sure people were there from dawn to dusk. In a distributed environment, it's more about empowerment and helping everybody do their best work.

The increased availability of communication and collaboration tools also has to be balanced with the pressure employees may feel to be “always on.” The incidence of burnout increased dramatically throughout the pandemic, with remote employees being more likely to experience symptoms than their in-office colleagues. While uncertainty may have held workers back from leaving stressful work environments in 2020, this is no longer the case. Organizations that fail to respect employees' right to switch off risk losing top talent to more mindful employers.

One in five workers say their employer doesn't care about their work-life balance. **54%** feel overworked, **39%** feel exhausted.²

² <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work>

5. IT is Now Integral to Culture and Employee Experience

IT has shifted from purely being a facilitator of work, to an integral component of company culture and the overall employee experience.

In the race to retain employees and attract new talent in a competitive job market, employers need to shift their perception of the role IT plays within their organization.

From the very beginning of the employee journey, the quality of onboarding can form a lasting impression. As new hires navigate your tools and supports, and established employees seek to grow and progress with the resources available to them, IT directly impacts their experience.



Maria Lees
Director of IT
Jamf

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You should be engaging with new employees from the moment an offer is accepted. Be prepared and ensure they're set up for success with all of the equipment and tools they need from day one...You invested a great deal of time and resources in finding the right person for your team. Now that they've started, show them you're committed to helping them achieve success in their new role.

In a distributed work environment, technology enables team bonding, inter-departmental collaboration, and professional mentoring and growth. Executed well, it can help employees find a sense of connection, both to their organization and to one another. Fostering inclusivity and building a strong hybrid culture simply isn't possible without the supporting technology.

However, while technology has the power to enrich the workplace experience and make an employee's job infinitely easier, it also has the ability to hinder performance and induce stress and exasperation. 35% of all employees say they are frustrated with their organization's technology and 44% say that technology either does nothing to enable them to be happy in their job or makes their work harder.³

There also appears to be a significant gap between leadership's perception of how user-friendly their technology is, and the reality of the employee experience. 90% of C-suite executives believe their company pays attention to people's needs when introducing new technology, but only about half (53%) of employees say the same.⁴

35%

of employees are frustrated with their organization's technology.

Workers are becoming less and less willing to put up with arduous technical workarounds, outdated equipment, or archaic software. In the context of the Great Resignation, employers must not overlook the role that technology plays in their organization's culture, and the effect it may be having on their employees' job satisfaction.

³ <https://www.eaglehillconsulting.com/insights/new-technology-change-employee-engagement/>

⁴ <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/services/consulting/library/consumer-intelligence-series/tech-at-work.html>

IT as a Strategic Driver of Talent Retention

While most organizations focus on the efficiencies and security that technology brings, it's easy to overlook the impact of IT on your employee experience.

It's understandable. As an employer, managing even the basic IT needs of one employee is a challenge. Managing an entire company's technology in a way that enriches the employee experience and cultivates a strong organizational culture? It's impossible to do alone.

At Electric, we're building a world where you can view, manage, and purchase all of your IT needs in one place. Within a centralized platform, you can deliver seamless employee onboarding experiences, reduce unnecessary IT spend, and boost your team's productivity and satisfaction in their roles.

The way we live and work has changed irreversibly. To fully grasp the opportunities that now lie ahead, you need flexible technology that makes evolution effortless.

IT powers hybrid work. Electric powers IT.

[Get in touch to learn more about our solutions.](#)

SOURCES

- <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work>
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