

A return on your investment.

Your physical office and its role
in employee collaboration.



CONDECO

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Introduction.

As vaccination programs all over the world continue apace, businesses are starting to look beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and towards how they can grow and succeed in the future.

How their employees operate day-to-day is a vitally important part of this. While remote working has been a necessity for many workers throughout the pandemic, opinions are divided as to whether it should be retained in the longer term. But however a business feels about remote work, they must recognize that some of their workforce will feel more positive about it than others.

This is why a flexible, technology-led approach that combines the best of office and remote working is so critical. But despite this, it can be difficult to quantify whether such a major change – and the solutions that power it – is worth the return on investment.

As you'll read in this guide, technology-driven hybrid working has rich potential to drive savings and efficiencies in a variety of areas, to the point where larger corporations can save millions of dollars a year. You'll discover why hybrid models are the way forward, the key elements of defining office ROI, how to maximize it, and how technology can help.

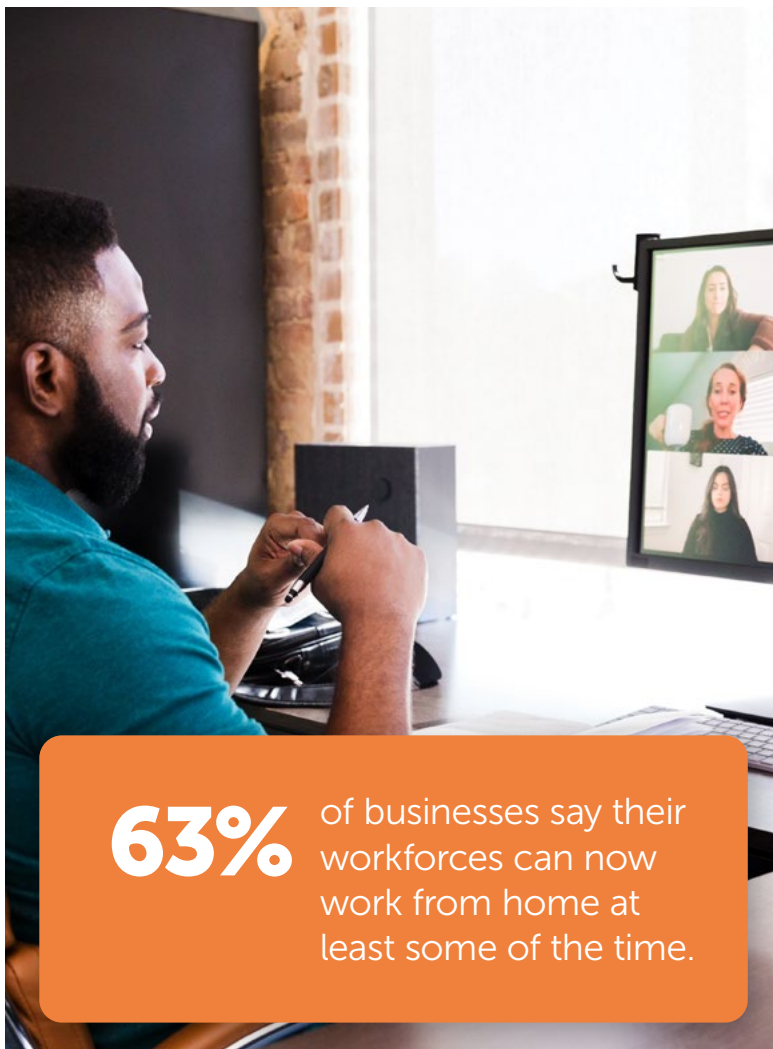
Market view.

Why a return to the office is important.



The COVID-19 pandemic forced millions of office workers all over the world into working from home for long periods of time. For some employees, this arrangement has worked better than it has for others, and so would like to keep it long-term. The same applies to some employers, for a variety of different reasons.

However, every company and every employee will have different needs, and so the right balance will need to be struck. For many organizations, this balance will be one that incorporates elements of both office and home-based working. Gartner research, conducted at the end of 2020, found that 63% of businesses say their workforces can now work from home at least some of the time.¹



For each organization looking for the best way forward, many different factors need to be taken into consideration. And in each one, there are two sides to the story:

Costs

Reduced demand for office space means real-estate costs can be cut. But does this generate hidden costs in home-working equipment for employees and security risk?

Employee well-being

Some employees may like the flexibility of working remotely, and the benefits to their work-life balance. But is this suitable for all employees, and will others suffer mentally through isolation and stress, or physically through an unsuitable home office environment?

Culture

Companies with a remote-first working model may gain a good reputation for employee flexibility. But does this come at a cost to culture and teamwork, as employees find it harder to socialize and forge relationships?

Productivity

Employees may find it easier to focus in their own working environment. But do they have access to all the tools and functionality they need to do their jobs just as well as they could in the office?

All these double-edged points demonstrate that from an employer's perspective, the conversation around whether employees should work wholly or partially remotely long-term is more complex than it may seem. As there are pros and cons on each side, the best balance can perhaps be found in a 'hybrid' working model, where employees work from home or an off-site location some of the time but have access to physical office space as and when they need it.

Employers need to define a hybrid working model that works for their specific business needs and workforce demographics. Establishing what this model looks like, and putting in place the framework and technology to implementing it, is key to maximizing overall business return on investment (ROI) in the future. The next section of this guide will look at how this can be achieved.



Did you know?

Office space occupancy costs in Singapore rose by 17.3% in 2019 alone, and costs rose by an average of 3.6% globally to reach record levels.²

Three core elements of office ROI.



1.

Productivity.

In any decision around working models and real estate in the future, the workforce should always be front of mind. Ultimately, they are the people doing the day-to-day work that drives revenue and growth, and they need to be supported as much as possible to do so to the best of their ability.

A clear trend has emerged in terms of where office and remote working better serve different areas. Leesman's research has found that 55% of employees say working from the office is better for highly collaborative work, while 61% say working from home is preferable for highly individual work.³

For tasks that employees undertake independently, giving them time and space to work how they wish to work is relatively straightforward. But when collaboration is required, things become more complicated. While collaboration tools like Zoom and Microsoft Teams have appeared to solve the problem of bringing people together virtually, they fall short in a number of key areas:

55%

of employees say working from the office is better for highly collaborative work.

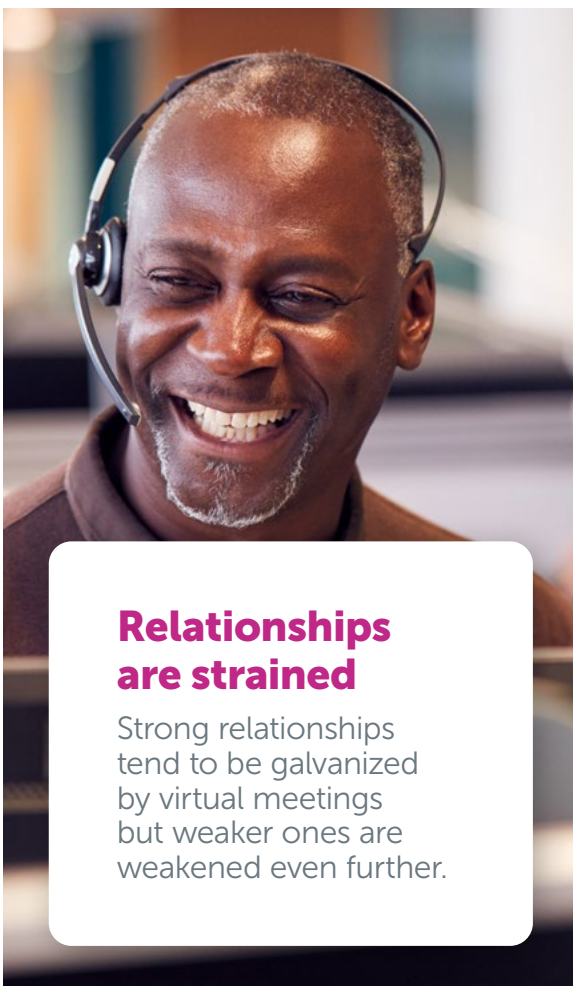
61%

say working from home is preferable for highly individual work.



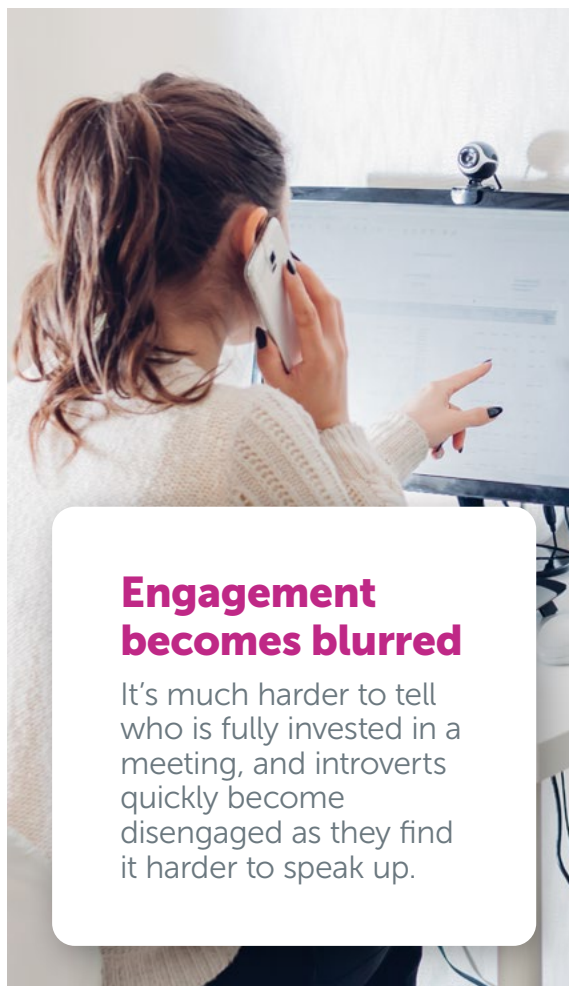
No substitute for real life

Virtual meetings remove important nuances like body language and make free-flowing conversation more difficult.



Relationships are strained

Strong relationships tend to be galvanized by virtual meetings but weaker ones are weakened even further.



Engagement becomes blurred

It's much harder to tell who is fully invested in a meeting, and introverts quickly become disengaged as they find it harder to speak up.

A hybrid working model, therefore, helps to deliver the best of both worlds. If employees are given the choice of where they can work and when - for example, from home for individual tasks but attending the office for meetings - they can flex how they work to maximize their productivity. It may also be the case that productivity is not only boosted in practical terms: employees will feel more motivated and empowered in their work if they know they can make those choices independently.

Making this happen for a large workforce, all of whom have different needs and commitments, is a major undertaking. It's also a task where measurement is important, so that employers can understand how people work, how spaces are used and how well arrangements are working, so that refinements can be made in the future. Integrated technology will be critical to achieving this.







2. Employee experience.

COVID-19, and the huge changes it has generated for the world of work, has brought employee well-being and mental health into sharp focus. It explains why 80% of American workers would consider leaving their current job for a new one that gave more focus to their mental health.⁴

With so many people isolated from seeing their colleagues in person (not to mention many of their friends and relatives), supporting people through the pandemic and beyond has become an essential part of business culture. Long-term, employees must have a way of meeting up with their colleagues on at least a partial basis.

The reasons for this are many:

-  **Better teamwork and collaboration**
-  **Stronger working relationships**
-  **Improved mental health through human interaction**
-  **Training and education supporting career progression, and more.**

However, employers must navigate some key challenges in order to facilitate this:

Safety

Employers will be expected to create COVID-secure office environments for some time to come, and employees will want to be reassured that attending the office is safe.

Work/life balance

Employees must be able to manage their family and personal commitments, and ensure that the lines between work and home are not continually blurred.

Flexibility

Employees will need consistent access to the tools and functionality to do their jobs fully, wherever and whenever they're working.

Workspace layouts

Defining different flexible areas for different types of work activity make office environments clearer and easier to manage, helping to encourage employee engagement with the office.

Technology can play a major part in addressing each of these points under a 'hybrid' working model. Workplaces can be mapped out with a variety of different 'shared' workspaces, which are then made available to employees to reserve for use at the times they require them. This allows employers to create layouts that are flexible, clear and safe for employees, and allow employees to blend office and home work in a way that suits their personal circumstances.

Crucially, with more choice and control available to them, employees should feel more relaxed and positive about their work, making them happier and more productive. This is how technology can be used in a way that maximizes ROI from an employee well-being perspective.



3.

Real estate.

The changing world of work is forcing countless organizations to review the make-up of their physical real estate. With more employees working from home at least partially, and demand for physical space, therefore lower, many companies are looking at cutting back by leaving some premises, or reshaping what they have to better suit their needs.

However, ongoing real estate ROI is about much more than the actual savings that can be made, even though these can potentially be considerable. Any decisions around future real-estate needs or configurations should be made in the wider context of its role and value to the business and to the workforce. There are many different ways in which this can be done: according to JLL, 55% of major corporates say they want to reshape the workplace experience to enhance collaboration, 48% to drive innovation, and 42% to retain and attract talent.⁵



55%

of major corporates say they want to reshape the workplace experience to enhance collaboration.



48%

to drive innovation.



42%

to retain and attract talent.

As such, the following considerations need to be taken into account:

Driving connections

Enabling employees to access and reserve the office space they need, when they need it, fitting it with their individual needs and when coworkers are also in attendance to collaborate.



Nurturing collaboration

Supporting formal and informal engagement between individuals, teams and departments, including water cooler/coffee machine moments that help build a strong culture.



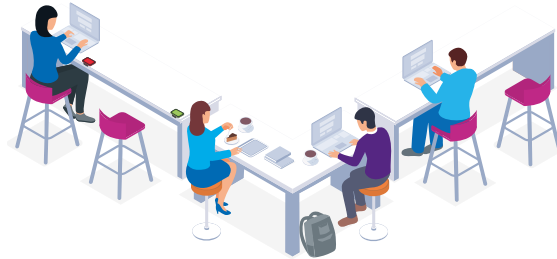
Managing occupancy

Ensuring there is enough availability of each type of space for the whole workforce, and taking the opportunity to reduce energy costs and carbon footprint in the process.



The way of doing this is to shift the role of the office away from a daily destination for work and towards being an occasional destination for communication and innovation. This will allow:

Individuals who cannot work from home to access quiet spaces as needed.



Important physical collaboration between teams and groups to be accommodated.



Internal events that promote company culture (such as town halls and socializing) to be supported.



Everyone to be able to work in the way that best suits their needs and productivity, and to feel more positive about doing so.

Underpinning this approach should be technology that allows each employee to secure the spaces they need at the times they need them, and gain full visibility of how they can coordinate their work with others. This will help maximize the effectiveness of the repurposed real estate, and maximize ROI as a result.

Maximizing ROI.

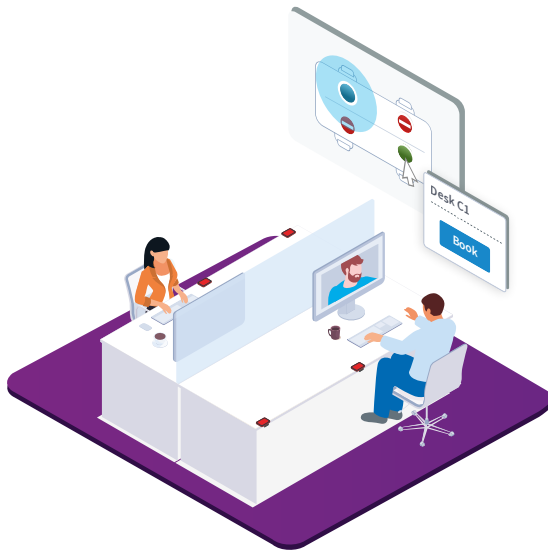
And how technology can help.

A technology-led working model designed to support employees and maximize ROI will require a number of different technologies: for example, Microsoft 365 and collaboration tools like Teams and Zoom. However, it also needs these technologies to be integrated and brought together in a way that delivers seamless, stress-free user experiences, however, wherever and whenever employees are working.

This table sets out the three-step process to putting the new working model in place, the goals at each step, and how technology can help support those goals:

Step 1

Immediate & Reactionary.



Goals

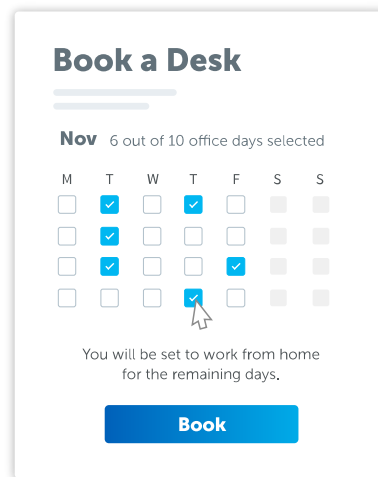
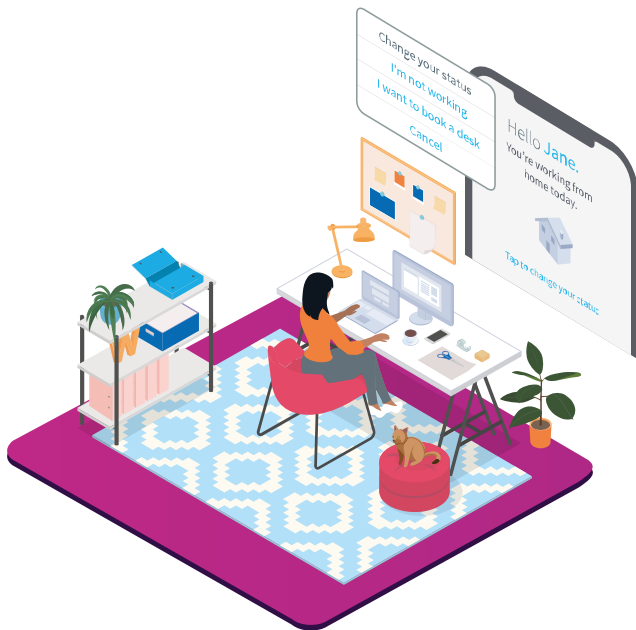
- ✓ Reduce real estate
- ✓ Transform flexible working policies
- ✓ Adopt virtual communication tools

Technology and integration

- Deploy hybrid working model supported by integrated workspace management
- Enable advance booking of office workspaces
- Equip meeting spaces with video conferencing for virtual participation
- Reshape workplaces and reduce workspace count

Step 2

Planning & Reflective.



Goals

- ✓ Consider employee needs
- ✓ Facilitate a safe return to the office
- ✓ Consider the technology ecosystem
- ✓ Embrace the increased importance of collaboration space

Technology and integration

- Empower employees with control on how and when they work
- Space out workstations to comply with distancing needs
- Open meeting spaces for advance booking by employees

Step 3

Reality & Control.



This process is best undertaken with the support of an expert partner, who not only understands the needs and considerations of the changing world of work, but can provide an integrated workspace management solution to bring every element together.

Condeco.

Workspace management that makes financial sense.



Our integrated solution for workspace management scheduling can help businesses bring all the changes and possibilities of a new way of working onto a single platform. Operating across web, mobile apps for Android and iOS, and an add-in for Microsoft Outlook, every employee, workstation and meeting room can be given their own schedule, coordinated with every other schedule.

How Condeco supports flexible working.

Employees are in control

Each employee can check availability of the spaces they need for individual work or collaboration, and book them at any time and wherever they are, giving them the choice to work the way they want.

Total visibility

As well as checking workspace availability, employees can check the schedules of their coworkers and plan ahead to collaborate face-to-face.

Safety and security

Health-related requirements such as social distancing and contact tracing can be managed within the platform for rapid response and peace of mind.

Full integration

The Microsoft Outlook add-in means meeting and workstation bookings can automatically sync with the calendars of all bookers and attendees.

How we're helping to deliver on our customers' ROI.

✓ **Ease of use**

Our technology saves time and effort by bringing total management of employees' working arrangements into a single platform.

✓ **Reshape and refine**

As business needs change and analytics tools uncover insights about new trends, the floorplans within our software can be adjusted to suit new layouts and to slim down real estate.

✓ **Productive means happy**

With all employees able to define a way of working that suits them, and all business functions accommodated everyone is motivated and empowered to work harder.

✓ **A selling point to talent**

Flexibility and employee satisfaction derived from workspace technology-led work can help employers retain existing employees and attract new talent.

Summary.

It may seem that the benefits that can be found through technology-led hybrid working are relatively minor and difficult to quantify. The truth, however, is somewhat different.

Once an organization can put in place the right hybrid working strategy for its needs, and then implement the workspace management solution to support it, the results can be transformative. Research from Global Workplace Analytics⁶ has underlined the huge scale of the potential savings and efficiencies, especially for larger corporations:

More efficient real estate: a business with a workforce operating at home 50% of the time can cut its office space by 25%, and make savings of \$1.9million per 1000 employees per year.

More productive: according to Global Workplace Analytics, employees operating with their preferred amount of remote working find 4.6 days of extra productivity a year.

Smaller employee turnover: a company able to improve culture and cut voluntary turnover by just 10% can save \$512,000 per year per 1000 employees working remotely half the time.

More environmentally friendly: GWA research has found that 100 employees working remotely two days a week for one year saves an average of 154,000 vehicle miles traveled and 390 barrels of oil burned.

To help you define the way forward that's best for you, follow the key tips in this handy checklist:



Define what success looks like

Work out how new working models can be adopted in ways that best complement your business needs and workforce



Calculate the scale of what's possible

Use the Condeco ROI calculator to establish the approximate scale of your return on investment



Engage your workforce at every stage

Keep the feelings of your employees front and center, in order to get their buy-in for the changes ahead



Implement technology to make it happen

Deploy a workspace and scheduling management solution that can blend office and remote work seamlessly, and can flex as your business evolves

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Transform the way you work.

Condeco Software is the global leader in workspace scheduling technology. We provide software to over 2000 of the world's biggest brands that encompass pioneering scheduling solutions, helping more than five million employees organize their working arrangements safely. To learn more about Condeco innovation, visit

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