

# Hybrid Work and Employee Performance: Evidence-Based Recommendations for Knowledge- Work Organisations

|                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Document type</b>      | Business Report           |
| <b>Subject</b>            | Human Resource Management |
| <b>Academic level</b>     | Postgraduate              |
| <b>Referencing style</b>  | Harvard                   |
| <b>Approx. word count</b> | 815                       |

*Illustrative academic sample for learning and portfolio demonstration. Not intended for submission as a student's own assessed work.*

# Hybrid Work and Employee Performance: Evidence-Based Recommendations for Knowledge-Work Organisations

---

## Executive summary

Hybrid work is best treated as a work-design decision rather than a universal employee benefit. Recent evidence indicates that well-designed hybrid arrangements can improve retention and satisfaction without reducing performance, but outcomes depend on task interdependence, managerial practices, autonomy and social connection. A large randomized trial at Trip.com found that working from home two days per week reduced quit rates by around one-third while producing no detectable deterioration in performance or promotion outcomes (Bloom, Han and Liang, 2024). Meta-analytic evidence also suggests modest overall benefits of remote-work intensity, alongside competing pathways through autonomy and isolation (Gajendran et al., 2024). This report recommends structured hybrid schedules, outcome-based performance management, deliberate collaboration days, equitable access to progression opportunities, and periodic evaluation using employee and business metrics.

## Evidence base

The strongest recent evidence challenges the assumption that hybrid work necessarily damages productivity. Bloom, Han and Liang (2024) used a six-month randomized controlled trial involving 1,612 graduate employees and found improved job satisfaction and lower attrition with two work-from-home days per week, while performance reviews, promotions and coding output did not worsen. This design is important because randomized allocation provides stronger causal evidence than cross-sectional preference surveys. However, the study was conducted in a technology-intensive firm and therefore should not be generalized to all occupations without considering task requirements.

## Benefits: autonomy, concentration and retention

Hybrid work can create resources that support performance. Gajendran et al. (2024), synthesising 108 studies, found small beneficial associations between remote-work intensity and outcomes including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, supervisor-rated performance and turnover intentions. Their dual-pathway model is useful for practice because it explains why the same arrangement can generate both benefits and costs. Greater autonomy may improve motivation, whereas isolation can weaken social connection. Diary evidence also suggests that work-from-home days can improve performance indirectly through concentration and engagement (Toscano, González-Romá and Zappalà, 2025). The

practical implication is that organisations should protect focus time rather than merely replicate office routines through continuous online meetings.

### **Risks: isolation, coordination and uneven employee experience**

The main risks are not captured by a simple productivity metric. Toscano, González-Romá and Zappalà (2025) found that social isolation could undermine work engagement even when concentration benefits were present. Earlier pandemic evidence likewise showed mixed effects: some workers reported higher productivity but lower meaning or health-related difficulties (George et al., 2022). Telework satisfaction has also been linked to both well-being and self-reported performance, indicating that the quality of the work arrangement matters as much as its formal availability (Blahopoulou et al., 2022). Hybrid policies can therefore become inequitable if managers reward physical visibility, if junior employees lose informal learning opportunities, or if collaboration becomes fragmented across locations.

### **Recommendations**

First, organisations should define hybrid eligibility by task characteristics, not seniority or managerial preference alone. Roles requiring sustained concentration may benefit from predictable home-based focus days, whereas activities involving intensive coordination, onboarding or creative integration may require shared office time. Second, managers should assess outputs, service quality and agreed objectives rather than presence. Third, teams should coordinate anchor days so that office attendance has a clear collaborative purpose. Fourth, organisations should protect career equity by monitoring access to stretch assignments, mentoring and promotion across work-location patterns. Fifth, employees need adequate digital tools, ergonomic support and norms that limit meeting overload. Finally, leaders should evaluate hybrid work using retention, absence, engagement, performance, collaboration quality and employee well-being, rather than relying on anecdote.

### **Implementation challenges**

Implementation quality is especially important for managers. A policy that allows remote work but leaves meeting norms, decision rights and information access unchanged may simply transfer office inefficiencies into digital channels. Hybrid teams can also produce proximity bias when managers interact more frequently with employees who are physically present. To reduce this risk, documentation should be accessible by default, decisions should be recorded, and important meetings should not depend on informal conversations that exclude remote colleagues. New employees require particular attention because tacit knowledge and social networks are harder to acquire without deliberate onboarding. Mentoring, scheduled shadowing and purposeful office days can partially replace lost informal contact.

## Evaluation metrics

The organisation should evaluate the policy as an intervention rather than a permanent entitlement that is never reviewed. A balanced dashboard could track voluntary turnover, absence, employee engagement, objective or supervisor-rated performance, collaboration delays, customer outcomes and promotion rates by work pattern. Employee surveys should distinguish autonomy, concentration, isolation and workload rather than collapsing experience into a single satisfaction score. Data should be reviewed by role and demographic group to detect unintended inequality. A six- to twelve-month review cycle would allow policy adjustment while giving teams enough time to establish stable routines.

## Conclusion

The evidence does not support a return-to-office policy based on the assumption that hybrid work inherently reduces performance. Equally, hybrid work should not be treated as automatically beneficial. Its value depends on intentional work design. Organisations that combine autonomy with coordinated collaboration, fair performance systems and active social support are more likely to obtain the retention and satisfaction benefits identified in the literature without sacrificing business performance.

## References

- Blahopoulou, J., Ortiz-Bonnin, S., Montañez-Juan, M., Torrens Espinosa, G. and García-Buades, M.E. (2022) 'Telework satisfaction, wellbeing and performance in the digital era: Lessons learned during COVID-19 lockdown in Spain', *Current Psychology*, 41, pp. 2507-2520. doi:10.1007/s12144-022-02873-x.
- Bloom, N., Han, R. and Liang, J. (2024) 'Hybrid working from home improves retention without damaging performance', *Nature*, 630, pp. 920-925. doi:10.1038/s41586-024-07500-2.
- Gajendran, R.S., Ponnappalli, A.R., Wang, C. and Javalagi, A.A. (2024) 'A dual pathway model of remote work intensity: A meta-analysis of its simultaneous positive and negative effects', *Personnel Psychology*, 77, pp. 1351-1386. doi:10.1111/peps.12641.
- George, T.J., Atwater, L.E., Maneethai, D. and Madera, J.M. (2022) 'Supporting the productivity and wellbeing of remote workers: Lessons from COVID-19', *Organizational Dynamics*, 51(2), 100869. doi:10.1016/j.orgdyn.2021.100869.
- Toscano, F., González-Romá, V. and Zappalà, S. (2025) 'The influence of working from home vs. working at the office on job performance in a hybrid work arrangement: A diary study', *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 40, pp. 497-512. doi:10.1007/s10869-024-09970-7.

*Source note: References were selected from peer-reviewed academic journals and publisher records. The sample is written as an original illustrative example and does not reproduce article text.*