



The Positive Way

WAVESTONE

Strategy Brief

MASTERING THE FUTURE OF WORK: BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL HYBRID WORKPLACE



INTRODUCTION

Navigating the Future of Work in Present Times

“The future of work” is a phrase often used by today’s HR and IT leaders, but no one seems to know what the future of work should even look like.

There is still an ongoing debate about the **best** work model, whether it’s entirely back to the office, a completely remote, work from home scenario, or a hybrid in-between. The rather unsatisfactory answer is that it’s likely to differ from company to company.

What is not up for debate is that today’s workforce demands a triple combo of **flexibility, autonomy, and purpose**. They are also willing to leave jobs to find what truly suits them. And, with the IT talent market facing a severe labor shortage, employees have the freedom to search until they find what they want.

Many companies will likely opt for hybrid work as the most suitable model for their needs. An essential ‘future of work’ principle is that **hybrid work is built on flexibility and autonomy instead of strict policies**. This ultimately hinges on trustworthy leaders and employees to make choices that work for them while ensuring a flexible yet robust framework.

3 RECOGNIZABLE TRAITS OF HIGH-PERFORMING HYBRID WORKPLACES

A high-performing hybrid workplace has 3 identifying traits:



Let's take a closer look at what these entail.



1. Productivity is prioritized

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for hybrid working arrangements. Your industry, management style, employee base, and company culture will determine what setup makes sense for you. Instead, the goal should be productivity.

Use digital workspaces to communicate and collaborate. In-person meetings are for recalibration and connection on a level that is hard to duplicate virtually.

With the focus on outcomes, instead of the hours an employee has “clocked in”, top performers and fast workers are more noticed and rewarded accordingly.



2. A strong culture of inclusion

All employees must have equal access to the organization's information and resources to keep work efficient. Transparency is present and actively encouraged in decision-making and processes.

And you need to ensure a level playing field for promotions, recognition, and work opportunities, regardless of whether employees are hybrid, remote, or based in-office.



3. Mutual trust and autonomy between leaders and teams

The ideal hybrid workforce is empowered to collaborate, with a strong culture where innovative ideas are constantly being brought up and executed. Another positive sign is that internally organized “passion communities” exist without needing to be pushed by management.

There is no micromanagement present – leaders delegate responsibilities, not tasks. Employees are held accountable for deliverables but are trusted to know best how to manage their time and work.



5 BENEFITS THAT HIGH-PERFORMING HYBRID WORKFORCES PRODUCE

With careful and strategic implementation, hybrid working can bring many potential upsides, such as:

1

Business value



Using a digital workplace that supports hybrid working will make it easier for employees to use technology to do their jobs. This will help the business leaders make sure that the company is using IT in the best way possible to drive operational excellence, increase efficiency, and spend more time creating value for the company.

Managers have a clearer view of employee activity (thanks to collaboration platforms) on tasks, milestones, and due dates. Rewarding top-performing employees and addressing underperforming ones early then becomes easier.

2

Lower overhead costs



Get rid of legacy workspace layout. Hybrid offices can have dynamic functionality with layouts that support different tasks instead of the classic, dull rows of assigned desks. When a company knows how many employees will be in the office at any given time, you can plan around new occupancy levels and cut down on the cost of rent, office supplies, and other business expenses like utilities.



3

Happier and more productive employees

Adding self-service and automated options drives efficiency, with less frustration dealing with outdated or clunky workplace technology.

Hybrid working also means employees gain the best of remote and in-office working - balancing collaborative, in-person relationships with tasks that require a deep individual focus via remote work.

4

Access to wider talent pools

The organization has the flexibility to hire local talent or source from the global workforce. This approach is particularly useful for skills in high demand (i.e., tech workers), so companies can tap into greater breadth and depth of talent and attract skilled employees across multiple geographies.

5

Company growth

With more efficient employees, revenues naturally rise in turn. This leads to an increased budget to proactively adopt cutting-edge digital tools, which can be used for branding and marketing efforts to appeal to top talent and set the business apart. Companies can also add employee headcount without adding to space costs.



3 CHALLENGES OF SETTING UP AND RUNNING AN EFFICIENT HYBRID WORKFORCE



POINT

1

Increased workplace complexity

To thrive, a hybrid team will need a fully-equipped digital workplace, including different software types and a data collection system. But this requires employees to be well-trained in a large ecosystem of siloed tools. The more tools and programs, the harder it is for employees to maintain control over them.

IT leaders must ensure a qualified team is in place to handle the uptick in digital management and oversight to manage proper security and change controls.



POINT

2

Poor employee cooperation/fragmented teams

With mixed or remote teams, cohesion tends to be lacking. Employees and stakeholders need to feel engaged and part of the business process to continue to care about and invest in its future. Siloed communication in a digital workplace can lead to a decline in productivity and to internal divides that spill over into poor consumer experiences.

Fully remote workers lose out on the mental break of a casual chat with colleagues, impromptu brainstorming sessions, and other opportunities for creativity. If in-person check-ins and meet-ups are not possible, you must find ways to re-engage these virtual employees in the company before they burn out and lose interest.

Another common issue is that without a clear delineation of home and office, employees can struggle to achieve a work-life balance, leading to burnout. Hybrid work can also be tedious, with repetitive scheduled video meetings, and long hours staring at a small laptop screen.



POINT

3

Additional starting and maintenance costs

All employees must be equipped with the right set of technologies and wireless tools (e.g., a headset, video capabilities, keyboard, mouse, mobile lighting) that are easily transferable from the home office to the physical office, or even client locations, to stay connected.

Your organization may require a shift or upgrade of digital workplaces, which also comes with a loss of productivity when you transition your employees onto the platform.

The design of your physical office will also need to be examined, as the purpose of the reallocated spaces and rooms will depend on the new workforce needs. This includes building common areas for breakout sessions, having quiet zones, and designing adaptable meeting rooms equipped for high-quality video conferencing.



5 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN SETTING UP AND MAINTAINING A HYBRID WORKFORCE

To see success in your workplace transformation efforts, you must develop a clear strategy moving forward based on business priorities that support your efficient, ideal workforce.



Point 1

Start with a data-driven approach to build a tailored roadmap

Ensure culture, processes, and technology work together - you must consider digital platforms and tools to implement for productivity and security. HR, marketing, and IT should define and agree on crucial principles (not rigid policies) to guide teams to achieve workplace flexibility.

Put clear hybrid working guidelines in place, including:

- / What days will team members work in-office
- / How remote working will be managed
- / The core “active” hours for remote and hybrid workers to connect
- / How managers should review team members in the hybrid work model
- / How much control are employees given to set their workloads and schedules
- / **CONSIDER:** *Are managers allowed to set the above on a team-by-team basis?*



Point 2

Have clear and efficient communication and information channels set up

Every employee must be able to engage and contribute, regardless of where, when, or how they're working. This is non-negotiable. Leaders come in to listen to the workforce and act on feedback. For team synergy, training should be given to leaders to manage employees remotely and to hybrid workers to develop peer connections remotely.

Plan structured messaging and encourage transparent reporting of project progress. Also leverage digital workspaces and encourage asynchronous input (considering that hybrid working will mean working at different hours or time zones).



Point 3

Provide long-term value to employees

The basics of good management and clear communication still hold true to have the most impact on engagement, commitment, and performance. Equip managers with soft skills to provide adequate support to hybrid teams. Top management plays a crucial role as well-being and mental health advocates and must walk the talk to lead by example.

The key is to find the balance between individual productivity and monitoring burnout. On top of sufficient monetary compensation, organizations should prioritize:



Opportunities to grow and upskill



A safe working environment



A shared set of values and purpose, where the leaders also exemplify the values



Point 4

Determine clearly where the physical office comes in

The physical office is vital in supporting social cohesion, innovation, and professional development.

One question you should ask is: **What activities drive business value and require in-person attendance?** Your answer will determine how often you need face-to-face meetings in your office. Look into data about office utilization, where employees congregate, pain points, and what amenities are used or underutilized.

Use Integrated Workplace Management Systems (IMWS), or create a “smart office” to foresee employee arrivals, supervise attendance, and deploy services when needed. The capabilities should include:

- / A reservation system for half- or full-day office use
- / Identifying nearby colleagues for collaboration
- / Teleworking facilitation
- / Managing and regulating employees who are physically in the office

A smart office can keep employees aware of available office space, schedule cleaning after they leave the reservation, and create and circulate health protocols. There may also be a need to upgrade workplaces with high-quality amenities and tech that employees cannot get from home to attract them. Don't neglect to put the right leaders in place to respond to changes in internal functions (onboarding, performance management, and coaching).



Point 5 Security

As you add more work locations, connections, devices, and communications, you introduce potential entry points for bad actors. You should balance security, which doesn't compromise ease of use and efficiency, with regulation compliance to privacy.

Basic best practices to bear in mind:



Constant software updates



Robust password management



Multi-factor authentication

There is a need for solutions with robust security features, and the company must set security standards and ensure employees adhere to them. You should allocate a sufficient budget for cybersecurity expenditure to ensure employees have secure access to data, people, applications, and resources, as and when needed for work.

Finally, create continuity plans and response procedures in the case of outages.



DIGITAL WORKPLACE MATURITY ROADMAP

Every organization looking to implement a solid hybrid working strategy needs a digital workplace maturity roadmap. Such a roadmap outlines the multiple steps needed to ensure a fully integrated, fluid digital workplace. Look below to see where you stand.

The digital workplace maturity roadmap

Level 1 Nonexistent

- / Digital Workplace Team created
- / Identify IT and business goals



Level 2 Reactive

- / Understand information and the process flow within current workplace
- / Define the gaps and needed enhancements for optimum digital workplace in the current hybrid environment



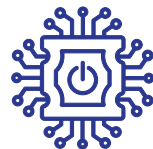
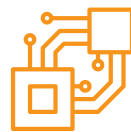
Level 3 Functioning

- / Develop and publish the holistic map of activities needed to achieve digital workplace maturity
- / Identify and standardize on collaboration tools
- / Define workplace options for the digital workplace



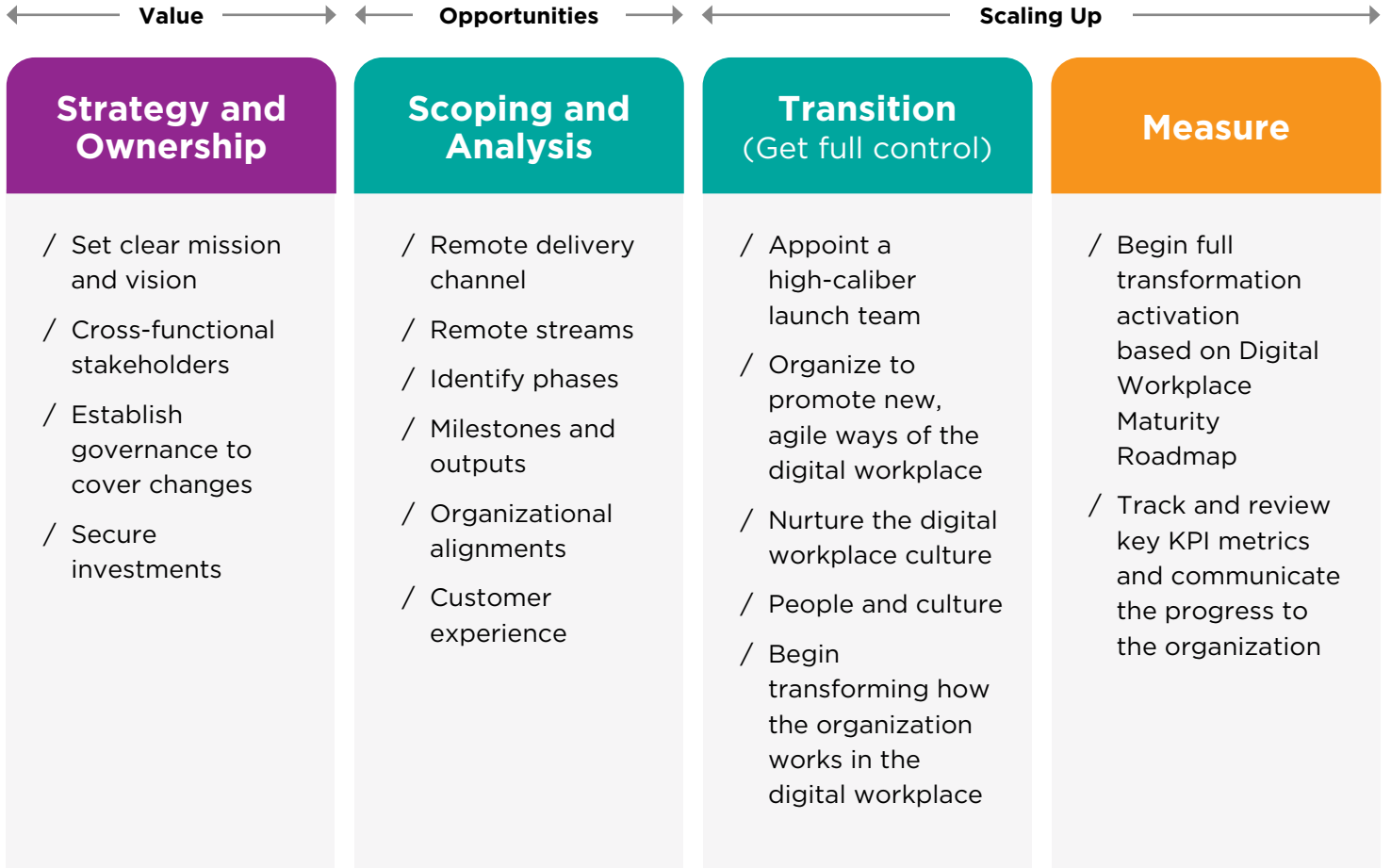
Level 4 Integrated

- / Digital workplace processes fully intergated
- / Key KPI metrics defined
- / Broad support of the digital workplace



Level 5 Fully Integrated

- / The digital workplace drives change
- / Stakeholders perception high
- / Mature digital workplace process inherent to business and IT operating model



FILLING THE CRITICAL TALENT GAPS IN YOUR LEADERSHIP AND IT TEAMS

The success or failure of hybrid work starts with exemplary leadership. Good leaders are vital to building a resilient hybrid workforce: they must develop and communicate principles for success and create a strong culture of care that employees can benefit from, no matter when, where, or how they work.

But senior IT leadership positions can be challenging to fill. You're looking for someone who understands the tech and knows how to build a strategic plan, recruit and manage hybrid teams, deploy governance, and communicate with the executive board.

Wavestone's executive recruiting team understands the nuances of any CIO, CTO, CDO, CISO, vice president, or leadership role you need. Wavestone can also source, select, and place skilled IT professionals to meet your niche technical needs. Through our team of former Executive IT leaders, we are well-connected to high-quality candidates in all facets of IT and understand the right questions to ask to speed up the placement process. We have placed talent for organizations from mid-market to Fortune 100 companies quickly and efficiently.

A team of senior technologists vets our candidates, and we customize our approach for each client to ensure quality outcomes. Digital-first organizations need to establish IT-business governance. Building a reimagined workforce is impossible without reinventing how business and IT work together.

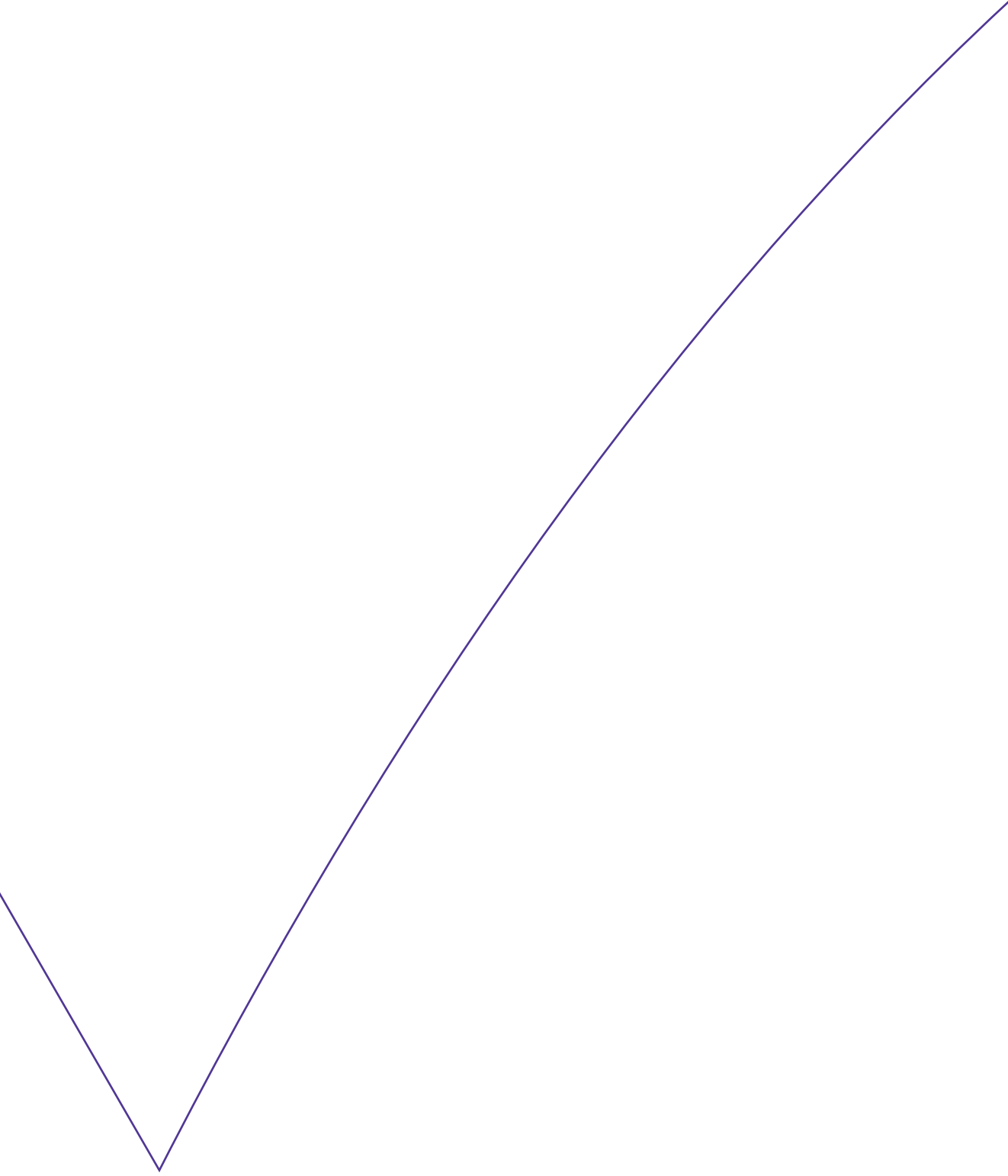
An IT-business governance model provides a decision-rights and accountability framework to encourage desirable IT use behavior. It also ensures that technology positively impacts revenue generation and helps IT leaders shift their focus from operational excellence to business growth and innovation. We have over 3,500 IT and cyber experts with decades of hands-on experience as executives in the field who can lead clients through their digital workplace journey and see it through to realization.



To learn more about how Wavestone can help you build an effective hybrid work environment, or help you fill critical IT vacancies within your team, please call (610) 854-2700, email kerrymmarker@wavestone.com or visit us at wavestone.us.

About Wavestone US

Wavestone US is the North American arm of global management and IT consulting firm Wavestone. We have supported the transformations of more than 200 Fortune 1000 companies across a wide range of industries, leveraging a strong peer-to-peer culture, offering a practitioner's perspective on IT strategy, cost optimization, operational improvements, cybersecurity, and business management. It is our mission to help business and IT leaders successfully deliver their most critical transformations and achieve positive outcomes. We drive change for growth, lower cost, and risk, and create the trust that gives people the desire to act.



The Positive Way

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In a world where knowing how to drive transformation is the key to success, Wavestone's mission is to guide large companies and organizations in their most critical transformation projects, with the ambition of a positive outcome for all stakeholders. That's what we call "The Positive Way".

Wavestone brings together 3,000 employees across 8 countries. It is a leading independent player in the European consulting market. Wavestone is listed on Euronext Paris, and recognized as a Great Place To Work®.