Future of Work Study

Executive summary outlining the 2022 research findings

FOUNDRY

All signs point to the hybrid model as the future of work, dialing up pressure on organizations to foster new forms of collaboration while reinventing employee experiences and evolving how they define the workplace.

Those were the topline takeaways from Foundry's 2022 Future of Work study, which canvassed 401 IT and business leaders to better understand the workplace impact of the pandemic and to chronicle how organizations plan to move forward with remote and hybrid work.

The work from home (WFH) shift has had far-reaching implications for organizations both during and after the pandemic. Sixty-nine percent of respondents to the Foundry survey said the changes have influenced how they plan for office space, tech staffing, and overall staffing while 62% were motivated to create new, more efficient workflows and processes in response to pandemic-era changes. Almost a quarter (72%) connect the shift to work from home to a more positive view of remote workplace policies overall.

The pandemic forced a sweeping embrace of some hybrid work structure—94% of survey respondents had fully remote employees or some combination of remote and in-office personnel. Companies with over 1,000 employees were more likely to maintain a combination of remote and in-office employees with 49% anticipating a hybrid future compared to 33% for SMBs (<1,000 employees). Retail (20%), government (10%), and service (10%) sector entities were far less likely to have sanctioned remote or WFH employee status over the course of the pandemic, the research found. Conversely, companies in the high-tech sector were more predisposed to greenlight remote-only employees, at 46% compared to less than a third overall (30%).

69%

of IT decision-makers agree that the work from home shift is impacting how they plan for office space, tech staffing and overall staffing

Two years into the pandemic, over a third of responding companies (37%) currently expect the majority of their workforce to continue with some form of remote work while roughly a quarter (26%) say the bulk of those planning to work in office will return safely in the near future. Going forward, the model of choice is heavily weighted towards hybrid work (41%), with larger firms more fully committed compared to smaller shops of under 1,000 employees which are likely better positioned to give up office space to embrace a fully remote model (35%) or keep their office and embrace an office only environment (32% vs. 25% enterprises). With the tide turning to hybrid work, employees will be expected to be in office an average of 2.2 days, the research found.
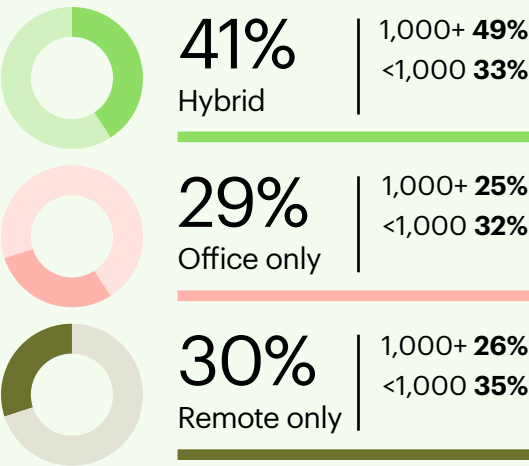
Pandemic sparks workplace changes

In addition to the discernable shift towards hybrid work models, the pandemic period brought other lasting changes to enterprises operations and strategies. Digital transformation efforts kicked into high gear as a result of pandemic effects—a scenario cited by 67% of respondents to the 2022 Future of Work study. To accommodate the changes introduced by new work models, 65%

2.2 days
is the average hybrid employees will work in the office

Status of the workplace

	41% Hybrid	1,000+ **49%** <1,000 **33%**
	29% Office only	1,000+ **25%** <1,000 **32%**
	30% Remote only	1,000+ **26%** <1,000 **35%**

of survey respondents initiated efforts to maintain a hybrid workforce, 53% focused on maintaining a remote workforce, and half ramped up efforts to ensure IT employees could work effectively remotely.

With swaths of employees and critical business processes operating outside of the traditional enterprise perimeter, security became a top priority. Sixty-three percent of organizations say that the adoption of new security solutions for remote work is a long-lasting impact due to the pandemic and more than half (53%) confirmed greater investment in security and risk management capabilities. Thinking about balancing the needs of teams split between remote and in-office work, maintaining secure systems and process is one of the top three concerns IT decision-makers have. IT executives were more likely to raise concerns about maintaining

Long lasting changes accelerated by the pandemic

Maintaining a hybrid workforce

65%

Adoption of new security solutions for remote work

63%

Maintaining a remote workforce

53%

Greater investment in security and risk management

53%

Maintaining a remote IT workforce

50%

Increased investment in technology to improve customer/employee experience

49%

secure systems and processes in the hybrid work era (43%) as did companies with less than 1,000 employees (42%).

To address concerns, 60% of respondents have or plan to invest in enhanced security controls such as multifactor authentication, endpoint detection and response, and VPN. Across industry sectors, healthcare ITDMs are more likely to invest in enhanced security solutions (72%), followed by financial organizations (65%).

Automation of business processes also increased during the pandemic and is expected to remain a permanent mode of operations. Overall, 46% of companies surveyed reported greater automation of core business processes, even higher among respondents in the services sector (68%). Increased automation of IT processes also ranked high on the agenda, cited by 45% of respondents, and again higher among companies in the services industry, at 56%.

With health and safety a key concern during and after the pandemic, companies are taking a number of measures to upgrade facilities and protect employees' well-being. More than a quarter (26%) of respondents invested in enhanced HVAC and air circulation/cleaning technologies along with touch-free and paperless document management capabilities (22%). Digital signage solutions were brought in by 18% to inform employees of health and safety initiatives while 18% leveraged space planning tools to ensure social distancing and touch-free facilities

60%

plan to invest in enhanced security controls to address hybrid work concerns

technologies such as lighting and door-opening sensors in addition to voice-activated elevators. Automation of IT processes (37%) and business processes (35%) also continue to play a key role in keeping employees safe, and more than a quarter (27%) of companies have introduced online training services to keep employees in the loop on these measures.

Creating new experiences

With in-person interaction at risk during the pandemic, companies turned attention to driving new experiences for both customers and employees. Nearly half (49%) of companies surveyed said that remote and hybrid work has changed how customers choose to interact with them, with education (65%), high tech (57%), and the services (61%) sectors feeling the most significant impact. Only around a quarter (26%) of respondents said they didn't experience differences in how customers engage.

49%

agree that remote and hybrid working has changed how their customers choose to interact with them

Forty-nine percent of survey respondents said they were increasing investment in technology to improve customer and employee experiences. Acceleration of analytics and AI/machine learning initiatives were a priority for 26% of

Top three concerns related to hybrid work

1. Ability to efficiently collaborate
2. Employee and/or IT staff morale and burnout
3. Maintaining secure systems and processes

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respondents, an investment likely to fuel new insights and ways of interacting with customers and employees.

There were significant concerns about how the shift to hybrid work would impact employees. Collaboration remains a major issue, with more than half (51%) calling out the challenge and respondents in manufacturing (72%) and retail (80%) especially concerned about how to best facilitate employee-to-employee interactions. With personnel spread across on-site offices and remote locations, there were active concerns about how to create a parity experience—in fact, 40% of respondents confirmed it's challenging to create an equitable and collaborative meeting experience for hybrid teams.

In addition, 33% of respondents were grappling with how to effectively host hybrid meetings while 30% were concerned about reduced employee productivity and the ability to provide proper IT support (23%). In particular, managing an

IT team in a hybrid model came up for 16% of respondents, especially those in government entities (41%). Overall, 73% of IT decision-makers say they have changed how they managed their IT team. Only 7% of respondents to the 2022 Future of Work survey said they had no concerns or no plans for instituting a hybrid workforce.

To address challenges, 54% of respondents were investing in enhanced collaboration and meeting tools, "hoteling" applications to enable employees to reserve desk space (31% - increases to 42% for enterprises and is 19% for SMBs), and room scheduling systems software (19%). End-user experience management tools, wireless devices and headphones, and presence technology were also called out as tools aimed at creating new experiences.

To facilitate interaction among hybrid IT teams, companies were pursuing a number of strategies. Forty-six

Top technology investments to improve employee experience

54% Enhanced collaboration/meeting tools

31% Hoteling applications to enable employees to reserve desk space (increases to **42%** for enterprises and decreases to **19%** for SMBs)

19% Room scheduling systems software

42%

of IT decision-makers agree that the work from home shift has made it easier to recruit for open positions and find necessary talent

By workplace structure
Primarily remote-only **64%**
Primarily office-only **20%**
Primarily hybrid **39%**

percent were increasing use of project management and collaboration tools, 33% were improving onboarding and training strategies, and a quarter were leaning into overcommunication tactics to ensure work gets done effectively.

Impact on talent

With all the talk of the "great resignation" and the on-going IT talent crunch, the WFH shift has had a hiring upside as more companies are open to geographic flexibility and fully remote hires. Nearly half (42%) of survey respondents said the shift to WFH has made it easier to recruit for open positions and find necessary talent, notably higher (64%) among companies that have committed to a fully remote business model.

62%

of organizations plan to guarantee flexible work options to stay competitive in the marketplace

Nevertheless, major challenges persist, both for recruiting and retaining talent. Almost a third (32%) of respondents voiced concerns about "proximity bias," the impact that remote working could have on employee career success, a sentiment that was higher among respondents at enterprises (38%). Morale and burnout among employees was another major factor, cited by 47% of respondents. There were also worries that hybrid work could affect diversity and inclusion efforts, cited by 16% of respondents.

With the number of job options increasing, companies must also introduce measures to stay competitive in order to attract and retain the best talent. Here, the top strategies were guaranteeing flexible work options (62%), improving wellness offerings (37%), and increased compensation (35%).

One much-discussed option that isn't on the table for most responding organizations is the four-day work week. Sixty percent of survey respondents dismissed the idea, primarily due to decreased availability for customers and clients, cited by 69%.

With the future of work clearly established as hybrid, companies have a mandate and an opportunity to reimagine how and where they work. The right strategy, buttressed by the right technology, can empower businesses and employees to be more innovative and efficient while striking better work-life balance.

About the survey

In its first year, Foundry's Future of Work study was conducted to better understand the workplace impact of the pandemic over the past two plus years and how organizations are planning to move forward, especially as it relates to remote and hybrid work. The study was fielded through May 2022 and is based on the responses of 401 IT decision-makers, mainly located in the United States (96%).

Examining the marketplace

Research is an invaluable way for marketers to better understand customers and prospects, with the goal of building quality connections. At Foundry this is one way we are focused on building bridges between tech buyers and sellers. Our first-party relationships with the most important tech buyers and influencers around the world, allows us to apply value across our customers marketing stack. Our research portfolio explores our audiences' perspectives and challenges around specific technologies — from analytics and cloud, to IoT and security — and examines the changing roles within the IT purchase process, arming tech marketers with the information they need to identify opportunities.

To see what research is available, visit FoundryCo.com/tools-for-marketers. For a presentation of full results from any of these studies, contact your Foundry sales executive or go to FoundryCo.com/contact-us.

Buying process

Each year we take a deep dive into the enterprise IT purchase process to learn more about who is involved and who influences decision-making, what sources purchasers rely on to keep up to date with technology — and throughout the purchase process — and how they want to engage with the vendors they are working with. Visit FoundryCo.com/customerjourney for more information.

Role and Influence of the Technology Decision-Maker

This survey is conducted to gain insight into the evolving role and influence of IT decision-makers in today's corporations. The research identifies key decision-makers and examines their involvement during each stage of the tech purchase process and the primary influences and information sources they rely on.

Customer Engagement

This survey examines the role content consumption plays in the purchase process for major technology products and services, and provides insights for tech marketers to map their engagement touch-points to customers' information needs. The survey looks at how a wide variety of content types are consumed, discussed and shared throughout the stages of the tech purchase process and how that maps to marketing and sales alignment.

Technology insights

Each year we explore the technologies that are top of mind among our audiences to understand the business challenges, drivers, and adoption within the enterprise. These research studies are designed to help IT marketers understand what their customers are focused on and where the market is moving.

Role and priority studies
- CIO Tech Poll: Tech Priorities
- State of the CIO

Technology-specific studies
- Data & Analytics
- Cloud Computing
- Digital Business
- Security Priorities

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