The Future of Work is Hybrid
In 2020, companies nationwide shifted to remote work at the drop of a hat.

For the most part, this work transition has been a surprising success. Despite countless distractions from children and the general drain of living through a pandemic, workers — who had the ability to work from home — were generally more productive, enjoyed greater flexibility and by December 2020 even underlined being happier than the same time in 2019.

As employees return to the office, they want to continue to enjoy a flexible work environment. According to CTA's Annual *Future of Work Study*, 89% of tech executives say flexible work arrangements are the most important employee benefit and 65% say they'll hire more employees to work remotely.

During the pandemic, companies defaulted to a remote-first approach. As employees start to return to the office, organizations must be intentional in helping employees understand where and how work happens. If your organization is planning a hybrid approach to give employees the flexibility of working from home and coming into the office certain days of the week, there are some considerations to create a successful work environment.

Prioritize Asynchronous Communication and Digital Platforms

There are a host of technology platforms for asynchronous communication and collaboration to maintain a remote-first approach. CEO of Klaxoon Matthieu Beucher, explains, "When we're all remote, we know everything is remote-first. If some people are in the office and some aren't, processes can become muddled and hurt productivity. As the adoption of

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hybrid work becomes widespread, tools like Klaxoon will level the playing field so teamwork can thrive while still allowing anyone to contribute from where they do their best work." Another example would be to set the precedent for meetings that if one attendee is remote, then all attendees join via a platform rather than having some employees in a conference room and some attendees join on a screen which can hinder communication.

Leadership sets the Example

When the CEO and management is always in the office, they're setting the expectation that's where the action is — and it becomes the center of gravity. Encourage a culture that does not resort

back to the presenteeism trap of the employees that show up in person are viewed as the most productive. In a survey of 10,000 employees by the Becker Friedman Institute for Economics at the University of Chicago, more than 80% reported being just as, if not more efficient working from home. The pandemic remote work period forced us to focus on outcomes and results, not time logged on email, and that culture needs to continue for a successful hybrid environment.

Rethink the Physical Office

With employees that can work from home a few days a week, the reasons that employees will come into the office will change. The office may still be used for brainstorming, onboarding, relationship building and sensitive conversations. Nicholas Bloom, Stanford University Professor of Economics, even suggests having employees come to the workplace on the same two to three days for collaboration. Home time can be for deep work and other asynchronous tasks that workers find to be more productive when done from home.

Although many companies have announced that they will eventually return to work with a hybrid approach, creating a successful hybrid work environment takes time and intentionality to be successful. ∎