

AN FAQ SHEET FOR

Hybrid Workplaces

Q1: What Are Hybrid Workplaces and How Have They Shifted Since COVID-19?

Hybrid workspaces represent a new work paradigm, blending traditional office-based routines with remote work options. This setup grants employees the flexibility to divide their work hours between physical office locations and alternative venues, such as their homes or other remote locations.

This arrangement empowers individuals to choose when and where they work, a concept previously deemed impractical or financially unviable pre-pandemic.



Interestingly, these models quickly became both "convenient" and "financially viable" overnight when the non-disabled world found itself in need. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the concept of hybrid workspaces has evolved significantly. Initially, remote work temporarily responded to health and safety concerns.

However, as the pandemic's impact persisted, organizations began recognizing the potential benefits of a more enduring hybrid strategy. A 2023 report by Zippia revealed that 74% of U.S. companies have either embraced or plan to implement a lasting hybrid work model.

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Furthermore, 44% of U.S. employees prefer this approach, while 51% of employers lean toward it. (“30 ESSENTIAL HYBRID WORK STATISTICS [2023]: HYBRID WORK MODEL, DATA, AND PRODUCTIVITY”)

Additionally, a 2022 analysis from the Economic Innovation Group found that remote jobs saw the largest increase in the share of employees with disabilities, suggesting that remote work can lead to job opportunities across fields. This underscores a positive aspect of remote work for individuals with disabilities, indicating a notable increase in their employment in remote positions. It implies that remote work can provide more inclusive job opportunities across various industries. Moreover, remote work has played a role in achieving record employment rates for Hispanic people with disabilities.

Further emphasizing the positive impact of remote work on the employment rates of a specific demographic group, specifically Hispanic individuals with disabilities. It suggests that remote work arrangements have contributed to higher levels of employment within this particular community.

Q2: What sort of company policies are organizations making around hybrid workplaces since COVID-19? ie- flexible work hours, mask policies, etc.

Many organizations have introduced flexible work hours to accommodate employees' individual needs and preferences. This allows employees to choose when they start and end their workday, within certain parameters set by the company.

Flexible hours acknowledge that employees may have different responsibilities and constraints, such as childcare or other personal commitments. This policy fosters work-life balance and can increase job satisfaction.

Hybrid work arrangements offer flexibility and choice to employees, allowing them to balance remote work with in-person collaboration and access to office resources.

Just to name a few, some examples of major companies that have incorporated their version of a hybrid workplace are Google, Airbnb, and Citigroup. On the next page, you'll find more details on their specific implements of hybrid workplaces.



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Google: Recently implemented a “Work From Anywhere” program; this tech giant is getting people back into the office without cutting them off from work flexibility. They only require individuals to be in the office three days a week, and in addition to their regular vacation time, they’re now offered four weeks to work from anywhere they please. (“WFH Stipends: 104 Companies That Provide Them”).

Airbnb: The company announced in 2022 that it’ll allow employees to live and work anywhere. While employees will still need a permanent address for tax and payroll purposes, Airbnb offers them the flexibility to work remotely in over 170 countries for up to 90 days a year in each location. In a recent interview with Fortune, Dave Stephenson, Airbnb's CFO and head of employee experience, shared that after implementing this policy, the company has seen a 40% increase in revenue. But it's not just about the bottom line. The policy has also positively impacted employee retention, with staff departures dropping to below 10%. (“20 Big Companies That Hire Remote and Hybrid Workers”).

Citigroup: Their policy has changed a few times, but they still have a hybrid policy. Since 2021 they’ve only required workers to be in the office three days a week to help prevent the spread of COVID variants. Most recently, if the employee is vaccinated, they’re asked to appear in the workspace at least twice a week in the US and three times a week in London-based offices. (“20 Big Companies That Hire Remote and Hybrid Workers”).

Q3: Are hybrid workplaces more accessible for people with disabilities? Why or why not?

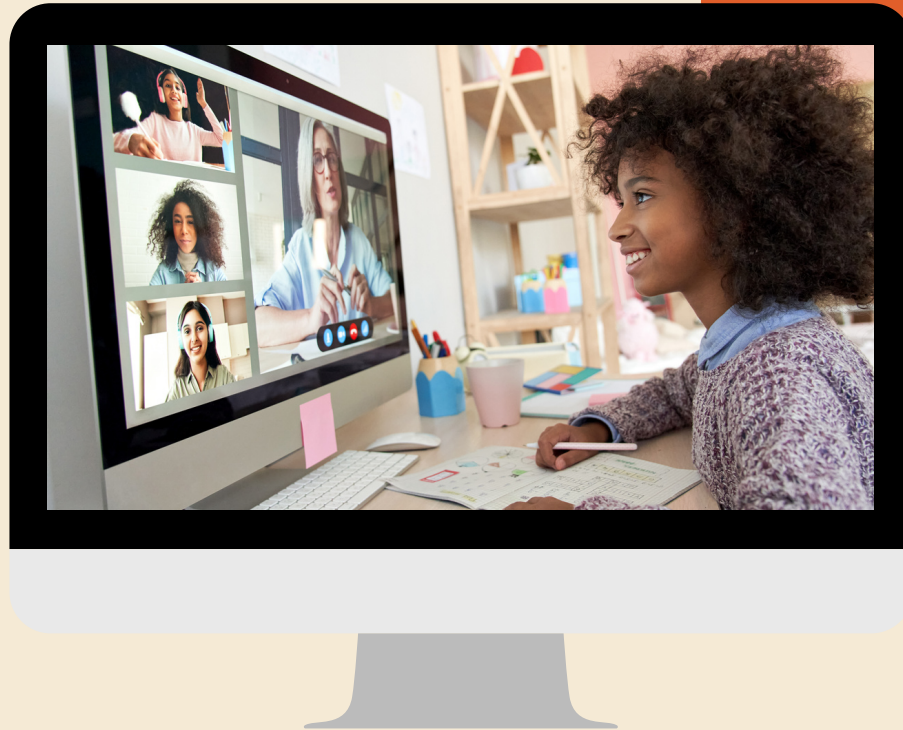


As stated before hybrid work arrangements offer greater flexibility, allowing individuals to choose the work environment that best accommodates their needs. This can be particularly beneficial for individuals with disabilities who may require specific accommodations or have mobility limitations.

For those with mobility impairments or transportation-related challenges, working from home can eliminate the need for daily commuting, making it more accessible.

Hybrid work models also allow for some individuals with disabilities to find it easier to manage larger-scale social interactions, such as conferences, in a remote setting, where they have more control over communication methods. Employees have more control over their immediate work environment in a hybrid setting on days when they can work from outside of the office.

A challenge that may arise is the lack of physical accommodations in the workplace. Companies should offer essential functionalities required by the ADA, such as ramps, accessible bathrooms, reserved parking, and more.



Additionally, less evident features like quiet spaces and adjustable lighting should also be provided. As pointed out by Janeen Baynes-Feinberg, Senior Employment Counsel at HP, who has been working remotely since October 2020, an open-seating design in offices can be incredibly distracting for someone with ADHD. She notes:

“I’ve noticed that on days when I do go into the office, my productivity decreases, and I end up working late into the night at home to catch up.”

This highlights how the ability to work from home has given her a sense of control that wasn’t possible in a conventional office setting, particularly beneficial for individuals with conditions like ADHD. (“How Hybrid Can Make Work More Accessible for People With Disabilities”)

While remote work can provide more control over one's environment, it can also lead to feelings of isolation, particularly for individuals who benefit from regular social interactions or who thrive in a collaborative office setting.



“So far, the only downside I’ve experienced from working remotely is not having in-person interaction throughout the days,”

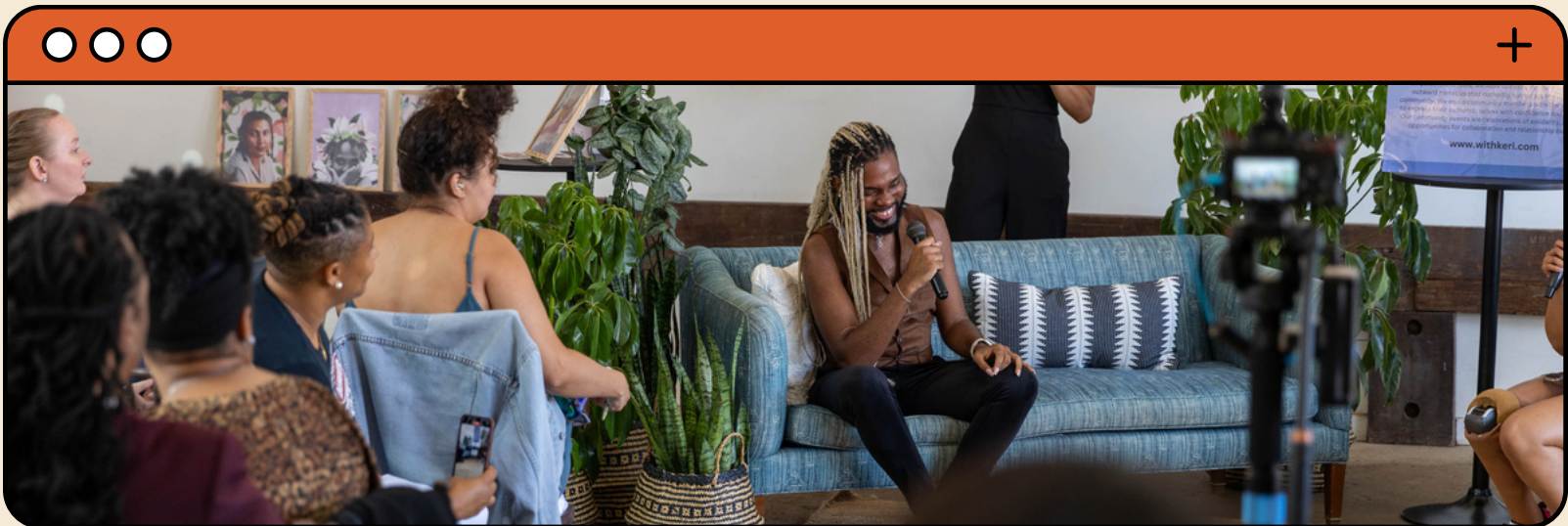
...says Stacey Vizinat, who works as an analyst in the oil-and-gas industry in Louisiana, the shift to remote work during the pandemic has been a welcome change in her life. Vizinat has a disability, diagnosed as Hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos syndrome and Dysautonomia, which causes her daily pain, migraines and other symptoms. She can deal with them more easily in her own home, where she is in control of her surroundings.

According to “Why Remote...” 60% of respondents said that, when working from home, they missed social interactions with co-workers. Thomas Foley, executive director of the National Disability Institute, told Axios that he has “great concerns” for RTO for people with disabilities, highlighting potential challenges such as voicing accessibility concerns in the workplace, and the possibility of encountering discriminatory behavior, whether subtle (microaggressions) or more overt (larger aggressions).

Hybrid work allows for there to be a balance in social interactions according to individual need.

Q4: What do leaders need to consider as we reconstruct the workplace post-pandemic?

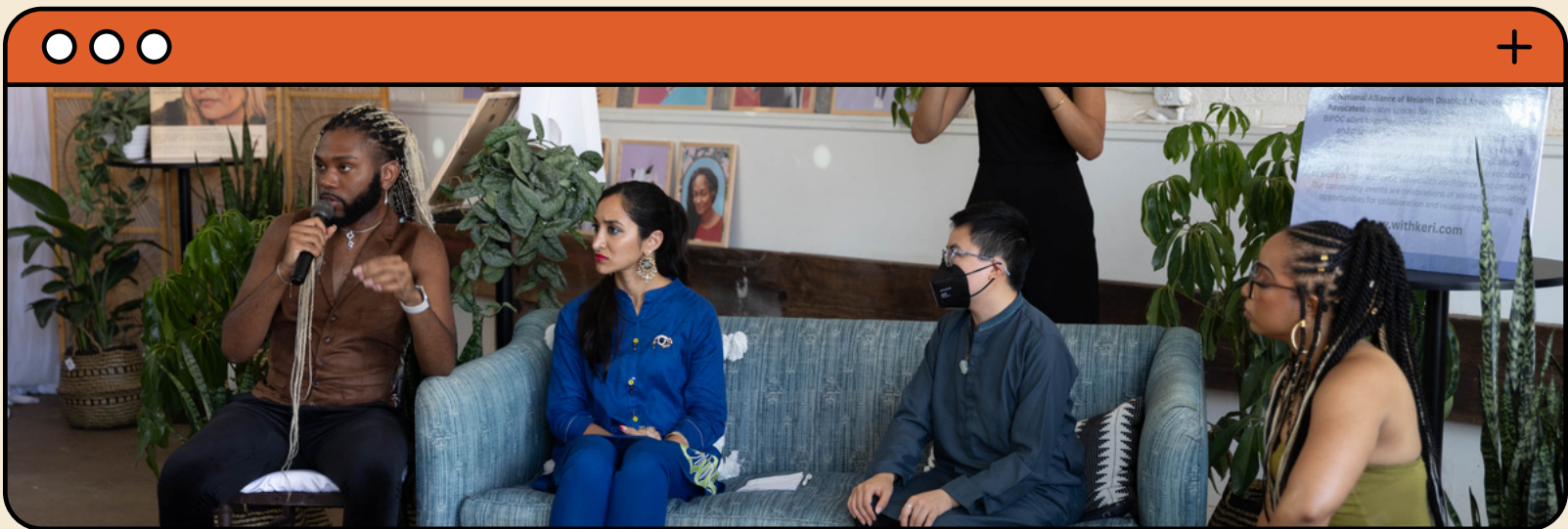
IE- ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS? WORKPLACE VALUES/PRACTICES? ETC.



Flexibility: A team-driven hybrid work schedule allows teams to determine how many days (and which days) they will work in the office or on-site. Every team member comes together to set the work schedule, ensuring everyone is present on days requiring close collaboration. Instead of implementing a set hybrid schedule for the entire company, there needs to be some flexibility throughout so that many can be accommodated.

Technological Accommodations: The tools you use are only as good as your team's ability to utilize them to make their jobs easier. When it comes to creating equal access for team members with disabilities, it's important to audit your software stack for things like closed captioning, recording capability, text-to-speech translation and searchability. Work from home stipends should be provided to offset some billing of internet and electricity along home office equipment.

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Physical Accommodations: Physical accommodations in the workplace. Companies should offer essential functionalities required by the ADA, such as ramps, accessible bathrooms, reserved parking, and more. Additionally, less evident features like quiet spaces and adjustable lighting should be provided.

Intentional Policies and an All-Inclusive Culture: Companies need to remember that social interaction makes up a large part of our days when at work. This should not be forgotten as we move to reconstruct the workplace. This can be done through small virtual activities along with in person. In addition to that make sure it also has an option for discussing accommodations with a HR representative instead of a direct supervisor. This will ensure their internal information security and reduce the burden of advocating and educating for individuals with disabilities.

People with disabilities are not obligated to disclose them according to the ADA. If individuals have disclosed their disability, ask if they could be a resource for reviewing policy decisions so their voice and experience is incorporated. It is okay if they decline.

SOURCES

20 Big Companies That Hire Remote and Hybrid Workers

<https://money.usnews.com/careers/articles/big-companies-that-hire-remote-workers>

30 Essential Hybrid Work Statistics [2023]: Hybrid Work Model, Data, and Productivity

<https://www.zippia.com/advice/hybrid-work-statistics/>

How Hybrid Can Make Work More Accessible for People with Disabilities

<https://garage.hp.com/us/en/impact/hybrid-work-disability-accessibility-technology.html>

"WFH Stipends: 104 Companies That Provide Them"

<https://buildremote.co/companies/work-from-home-stipend/>

"From Day One | for Workers with Disabilities, Hybrid Work Is a Turning Point."

<https://www.fromdayone.co/2022/02/17/for-workers-with-disabilities-hybrid-work-is-a-turning-point/>

"Accommodating Disabilities in Remote and Hybrid Work."

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurelfarrer/2022/03/30/accommodating-disabilities-in-remote--hybrid-work/>

"Hybrid Work Policies: The Future of the Modern Workplace."

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/glebtsipursky/2023/01/21/hybrid-work-policies-the-future-of-the-modern-workplace/?sh=272df487539e>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Including Neurodivergent Workers: Workspace, Work Schedules, and Other Accommodations

<https://askearn.org/page/neurodiversity-accommodations>

Exploring the Possibilities: Disability-Inclusive Hybrid Work Models

[https://production-askearn.org.s3.amazonaws.com/](https://production-askearn.org.s3.amazonaws.com/Disability_Inclusive_Hybrid_Work_Model_Policy_Brief_752339359e.pdf)

[Disability_Inclusive_Hybrid_Work_Model_Policy_Brief_752339359e.pdf](https://production-askearn.org.s3.amazonaws.com/Disability_Inclusive_Hybrid_Work_Model_Policy_Brief_752339359e.pdf)

Work at Home/Telework as a Reasonable Accommodation

<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/work-hometelework-reasonable-accommodation>

Covid's Remote Work Experience Is Slowly Changing Disability Law

<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/covids-remote-work-experience-is-slowly-changing-disability-law>

"Accessibility Barriers, Conflicts, and Repairs: Understanding the Experience of Professionals with Disabilities in Hybrid Meetings,"

<https://doi.org/10.1145/3544548.3581541>



The National Alliance of Melanin Disabled Advocates (NAMED Advocates) creates spaces for Disabled leaders of color and BIPOC allies to gather, learn, connect, and grow around racial and disability justice. Through the use of knowledge and empowerment tools, we work to destigmatize the existing outward narrative that currently surrounds the Disabled community.

We equip community members with the vocabulary to express their authentic selves with confidence and certainty. Our community events are celebrations of solidarity, providing opportunities for collaboration and relationship building. This FAQ sheet was created by Zy-Asiah Gray-Small, and designed by the NAMED Advocates team.

Learn more about the NAMED Advocates here:
<https://withkeri.com/named-advocates/>