

May 2021

Embracing the hybrid workplace

Your guide to the new era of work

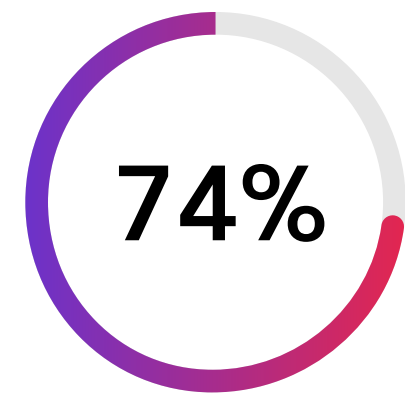
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by CISCO

Paving the way to the future of work

We're entering a new era of work. The recent shift to remote working has driven humanity to reimagine how businesses and teams operate when in-person meetings aren't possible. Organizations are now examining how to move forward – from establishing flexible working arrangements to ensuring a safe return to the office. Despite the challenges, we now have a unique opportunity to fundamentally improve how people work – wherever they are. The path forward is the hybrid workplace.



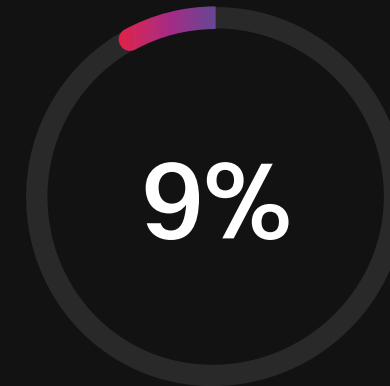
74% say their businesses will in some ways emerge stronger after COVID-19.

[Read the global workforce survey](#) 



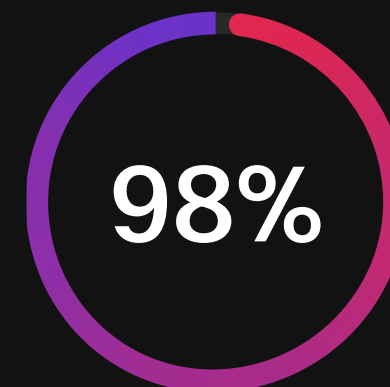
Trends point to a hybrid workplace.

These trends are driving us toward a new hybrid work environment – an approach that supports a blend of in-office and remote workers while providing people with the flexibility to choose where and how they'll work.



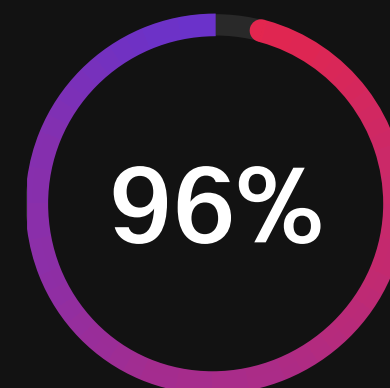
Flexibility is king for the foreseeable future.

Only 9% of the global workforce expect to fully return to the office after offices reopen.



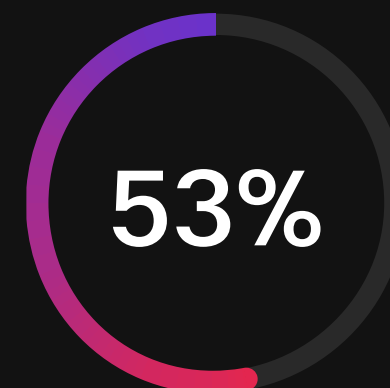
Virtual collaboration is no longer a “nice to have.”

98% believe they will have meetings with participants joining from home going forward.



Intelligent workplaces are needed.

96% want to improve their work environments with intelligent workplace technology.



Office footprints will be optimized.

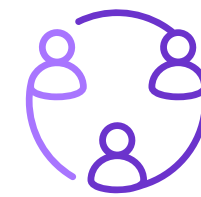
53% of large organizations are planning to reduce their office footprint.

What is the hybrid workplace?

A hybrid workplace provides flexible and seamless collaboration from anywhere. While the benefits are clear, this shift requires a change in the experience people have when working from home or in the office.

A foundational requirement for the hybrid workplace is to provide employees with feature-rich, intuitive collaboration tools to message, meet, call, share content, and collaborate from any space.

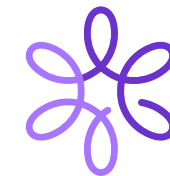
Benefits of the hybrid workplace:



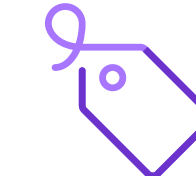
Improved employee experience and productivity



Expansion of the talent pool and ability to retain top talent



Greater organizational flexibility and agility



Optimized real-estate expenses

“We now know that you don’t have to be in the office every day to be effective and get your work done.”

– Participant in Freeform Dynamics survey

Building a hybrid workplace

Home is the new collaboration hub.

The home office is an extension of the corporate office. In the hybrid workplace, it's more important than ever that people can work from anywhere with access to tools that support productivity and collaboration. Employees who work remotely, or switch between home and the office, need to be enabled with collaboration software and purpose-built devices to ensure high-quality teamwork and a seamless experience wherever they are.

Offices serve a unique purpose.

Despite drastic changes, the office is here to stay. It serves as the central hub for people to participate in rich collaboration experiences, build rapport with colleagues, and connect to the work culture and community. With a hybrid workplace model, you can expect a rotating cast of office workers. Technology is needed to assist them in finding available spaces to work and collaborate, while providing a safer working environment. A decreased office footprint provides the opportunity to extend technology-driven, intelligent experiences in every space.



The 3 phases of the hybrid workplace

Each of these phases brings the opportunity to build the foundation for the hybrid workplace and transition in an agile and scalable manner.

The hybrid workplace blueprint

Support remote employees.

94%

of employees want tools to improve their meeting experience at home.

Plan a safe return to the office.

97%

of employees want changes to make them feel safer at work.

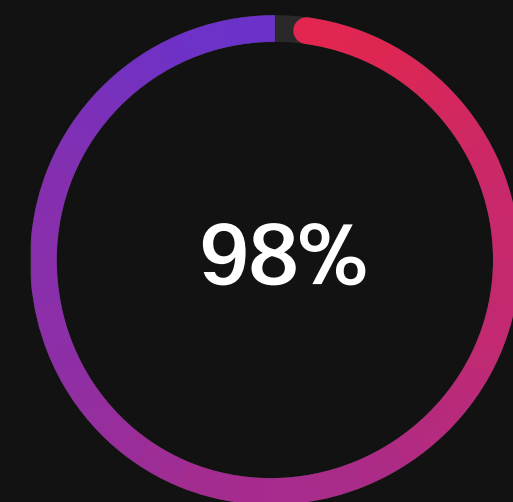
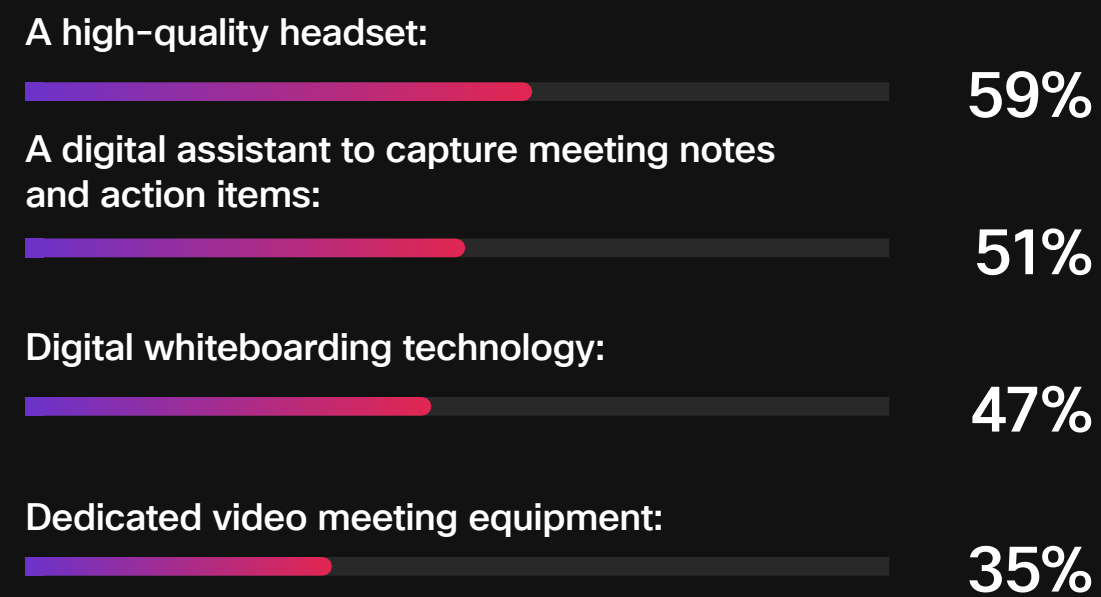
Deliver intelligent workplace experiences.

96%

indicate they need intelligent workplace technology to improve work environments.

Bridging the home office to the HQ

Top devices and capabilities that would improve at-home meetings include:



of people experience frustration with video conferencing while working from home.

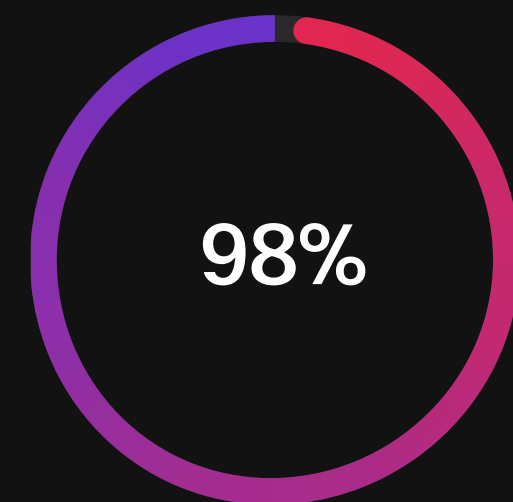
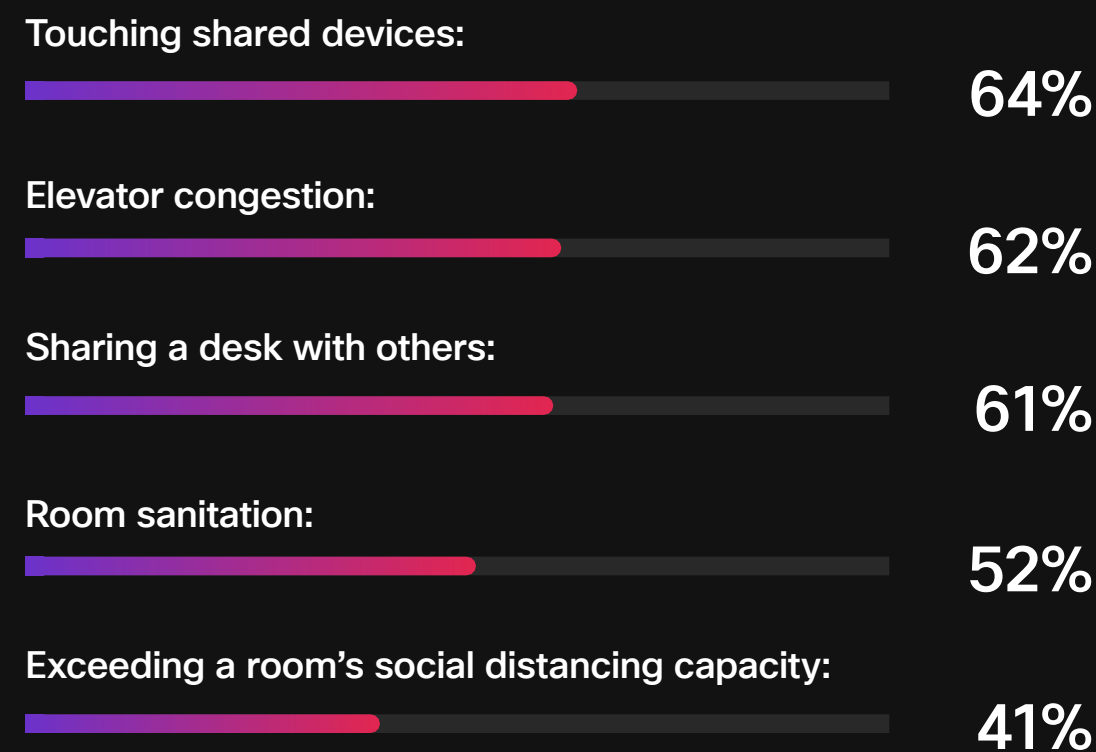
Virtual collaboration powered by artificial intelligence (AI) can provide an even better experience than in-person meetings, but it takes the right tools. While many organizations believe a laptop is good enough, it's apparent that immersive experiences matter.

The most important choice for powering remote teams is choosing the right collaboration platform. When looking for the right solution, consider the experience. Can people easily switch between messaging, calling, and meetings? If a whiteboard is created, can it be accessed by the entire team, anywhere? Can people expect the same experience from technology whether they are at home or in the office? Are there AI capabilities that reduce distractions, remove friction, capture action items, and provide the information people need when they need it?

Intelligent workplace technology can vastly improve the collaboration experience. From AI-powered noise suppression to dedicated collaboration devices that untether the meeting experience from the laptop, the home office is no longer a second-rate work option.

Planning the return to the office

Top concerns about working in an office include:



of employees want changes to make them feel safer before returning to the office.

As organizations take a hard look at how to modify their environments to support employees as they return to work, video conferencing devices not only play a large role in connecting distributed teams, but they also provide intelligent capabilities that can help inform workers of guidelines, provide alerts when the capacity of a room is exceeded, and even notify workers of the last time the room was cleaned. AI-powered experiences, like those from enterprise-grade digital assistants, are in demand to deliver zero-touch experiences in meeting rooms and common areas.

Sensors, AI, and advanced analytics can be leveraged to create a safer and healthier work environment as well. Intelligent screen messaging helps direct foot traffic, thus avoiding overcrowding and contamination risks. In addition, these capabilities provide valuable usage insights for IT, HR, and facility managers, helping drive workplace optimization.

Building intelligent workplaces for a future-ready office

Providing remote workers with the right technology and ensuring a safe return to the office are essential to business continuity, but the organizations that emerge stronger from the pandemic are the ones that are thinking strategically, with a long-term vision for the future of work. Building the foundation for the hybrid workplace in the first phases will ensure that your organization is well positioned to adjust and excel in the years to come.

Intelligent workplace solutions from the Webex® platform support the modern workforce. From the home office to the boardroom, displays, sensors, AI, and automation deliver technology-driven experiences and accelerate transformation to keep workers safe and productive.



What does the future hold?

Even though the situations we face will continue to evolve, our research shows what people want now and in the future. They want technology to help them throughout their day. They want to connect to the company and the culture. They want flexibility.

The hybrid workplace is the path to extending flexibility while providing technology-driven experiences, optimizing real-estate costs, and winning the talent war.

The workplace is wherever you are – it's your home office, it's on the go, and it's the flexibility to choose where and how you want to work. While the future isn't clear, the opportunity is.

**The hybrid workplace is here.
Are you ready?**

[Find the device that's right for you](#)

[Contact the experts](#)

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