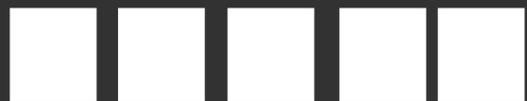




Smart Hybrid.

Our Blended Model.

HYBRID GUIDE 2026 EDITION



“ Create a workplace that makes working from home a tough choice.



The last two years have seen a shift towards mandated returns to the office, and a maturing of the office/home model.

The irony of creating a guide like this is that we are still writing about ways of working as though we are puzzling to understand what's best. We have been wrestling with that since at least the 1960's and from the early 2000's the office landscape has been in a state of almost permanent beta. The global pandemic precipitated a need for rapid change (and turned the word Hybrid into an overworked cliché).

There were 3 key strands of change – the biggest was change of place (we all fled the offices), then change of communication, and the other; change of management style.

What didn't need to change much was software and hardware (although there was a run on laptops for the laggards) – in other words the remote technology had been there for a while, but the attitudes in management hadn't been ready for us to work remotely.

But now, a few years in, we have settled into the rhythm of life with less office, logging on remotely and joining more meetings on Teams or Meet, but many individuals are reporting that they don't get that caffeine kick of success and purpose. **Have we forgotten what we loved about our jobs.**

Industry is beginning to harden its stance on attendance - which opens the debate on what is ultimately the right balance - is this presenteeism/micromanagement by stealth, and what is lost through working those days elsewhere?



Many **LinkedIn** influencers argue that flexibility and work-life balance are critically important for employee satisfaction and retention.

The office becomes a magnet rather than a mandate.

Everyone loves being in the winning team, and the best teams have their culture, rituals, insignia, gathering points, etc.

A successful organisation is no different, and a 2024 workplace even more so; make 100% sure you know what your team need from the environment before designing it. They are definitely not coming to the office to work at the same desk all day – but neither are they there to ‘collaborate’ 24/7.



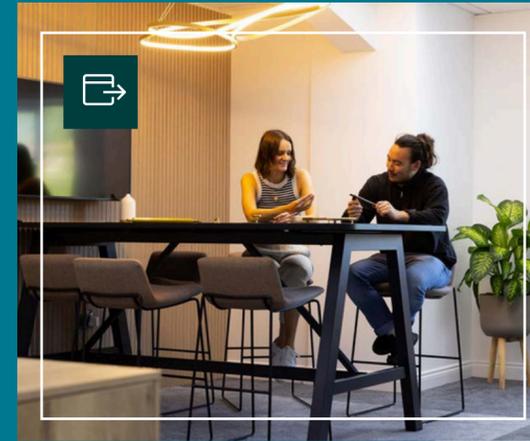
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Blended Working

Rebalancing the psychological contracts in society.



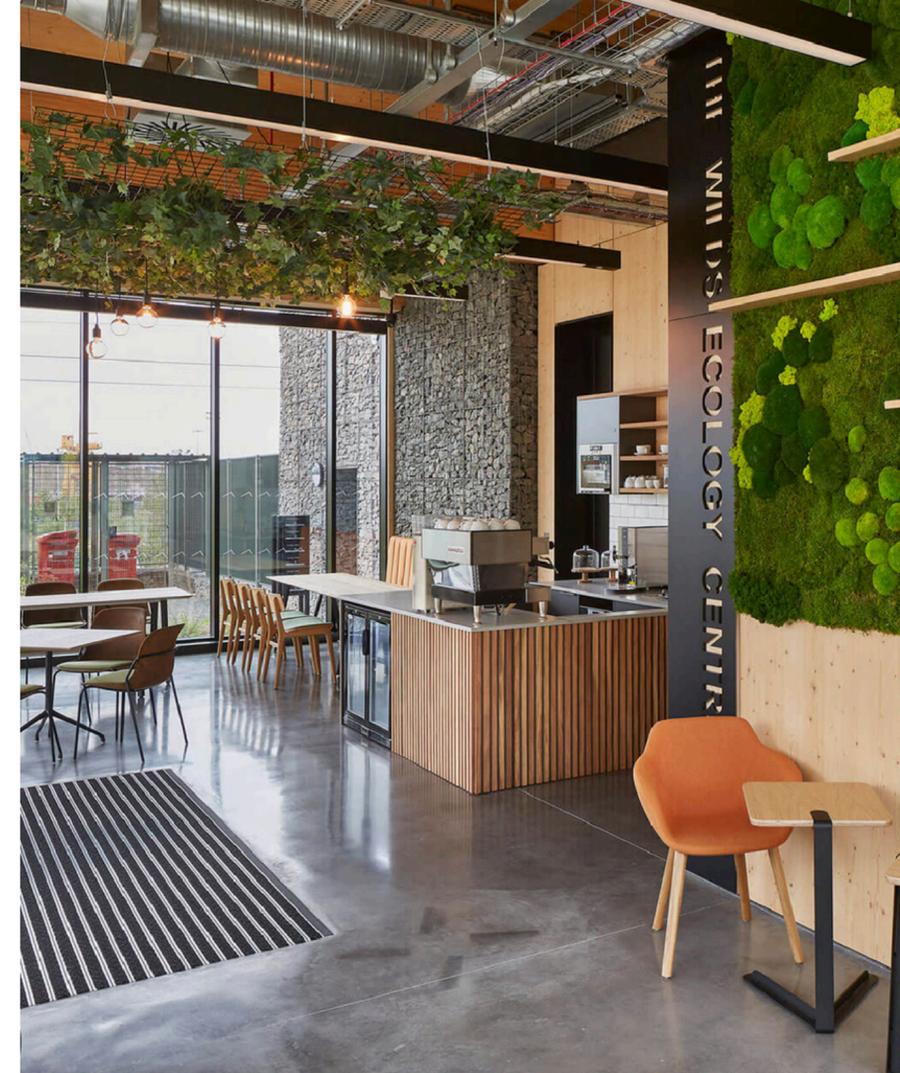
From the employee's perspective there are several positive aspects to home-working, such as increased work-life balance, flexibility, and improved well-being.

With the additional financial relief of less commuting and reduced childcare costs. Overall, the sentiment still favours remote working for prioritising choice and autonomy.

However, stacked against these benefits is a growing discord of negatives: about isolation, collaboration challenges, and career progression, missing spontaneous interactions, mentorship, (these last three of particular importance to more recent starters), and company culture.

This has many benefits of convenience (and was necessary while there was a risk of infection) but can have a significant knock-on effect in customer satisfaction, team culture and company performance, as **a recent report on the UK Government's Whitehall** shows.

 Read the **The Telegraph** report here.





Benefits for the Individual

Certain types of personality profiles work best in groups together; they draw their energy from other people and do their best work in a team, and so certain departments are more likely to embrace office-based days.

The general consensus is that employees will be able to focus more and therefore be more productive when empowered to set their own working pattern. Another benefit is the additional leisure time, previously spent on the daily commute. **LinkedIn report** that professionals value flexible working, skills development opportunities and work-life balance above all else. However, there is also the counter-argument - distractions and the home setting with the potential to erode personal productivity, while **Mind highlight that issues surrounding well-being and mental health** are still an important consideration for employers.

And then there is the steep increase in meetings (and the time this wastes), needed to replace the informal conversations in an office environment; remote working requires more co-ordination. A significant factor for new team members is learning the company and gathering up imparted knowledge. The best experiences are from face-to-face encounters, and while a hybrid work pattern is better in this instance than fully remote, they could miss meeting people for weeks just because they attend on different days.

 Read the **LinkedIn** report here.

 Read the **Mind** report here.

For the individual, a hybrid approach provides a level of autonomy to map one's week, while still guaranteeing to your manager that you will show up in the office.





Benefits for the Organisation



For a number of areas in industry, hybrid working has had a neutral or even beneficial impact; allowing for recruitment and attraction of talent from a wider area (especially in younger generations), and studies show that in some instances hybrid working and flexible working arrangement yielded increased productivity and retention.

However, these gains are somewhat offset by other challenges that remote working presents, such as issues with productivity and motivation, difficulties in infusing the company culture, and a significant area of concern: a national decrease in innovation, problem-solving, and efficient collaboration.

Being present in the office is not necessarily the miracle cure for all these issues, but it will start to address a number of them. While a few companies occupy the same space as they did before the pandemic (and so probably haven't woken up to the massive energy drain that their office represents), many organisations are working towards a trigger opportunity such as a lease expiry in the near future.

 Read the **FT** report here.

This presents an opportunity for a reset; as blended working patterns are likely to be here for a while, the amount of space your organisation needs will be different, as will the way the space is utilised.

Making assumptions based on your present layouts or usage could be very poor judgement. **Now is the time to start a People & Place Study to gather fresh and reliable data.**

 Read the  article here.

Staff wellbeing improved by 79.9% and increased productivity increased by 48.3% according to statistics from 2021, from employees being allowed to work from home.





Hybrid Working

The Case **For** & **Against**



There are four key benefits to hybrid working, some of which benefit employees, some the employer, whilst others can present advantages to both.

1. Greater flexibility

A flexible attitude to work can contribute to higher levels of personal productivity and increased employee engagement.

2. Reduction in commuting

Previously an accepted part of working life, fewer days commuting to the office can save employees money, as well as reducing their stress levels & carbon footprint.

3. Wider talent pool

Employers have the ability to hire talent from a wider geographical radius.

4. Employee happiness and wellbeing

A higher degree of autonomy can improve employees work/life balance, increasing happiness and therefore staff retention.



The negatives for hybrid working come down to four main areas: Trust, communication, worker discord, and the need for a fit-for-purpose-office space.

1. Trust

A critical aspect of hybrid working success depends on trusting relationships between employee and employer, through strong management and clear policies.

2. Technology

Infrastructure must be in place to enable employees to work seamlessly in different locations. Security measures and employee wellbeing are important considerations.

3. Fully on-site workers

There will always be some roles which are not suitable for hybrid. It's important to be aware that hybrid working can cause discord with these workers.

4. Fit for purpose office

Physical offices must offer a range of spaces to meet the needs of employees, including collaboration, breakout and wellbeing areas, quiet zones, pods and meeting rooms.



Case Study Obex Protection Ltd.

OBEX Protection Ltd, a leading manufacturer of innovative building cladding products, embarked on a transformative journey to establish a new headquarters in addition to their existing facility in Worcester.

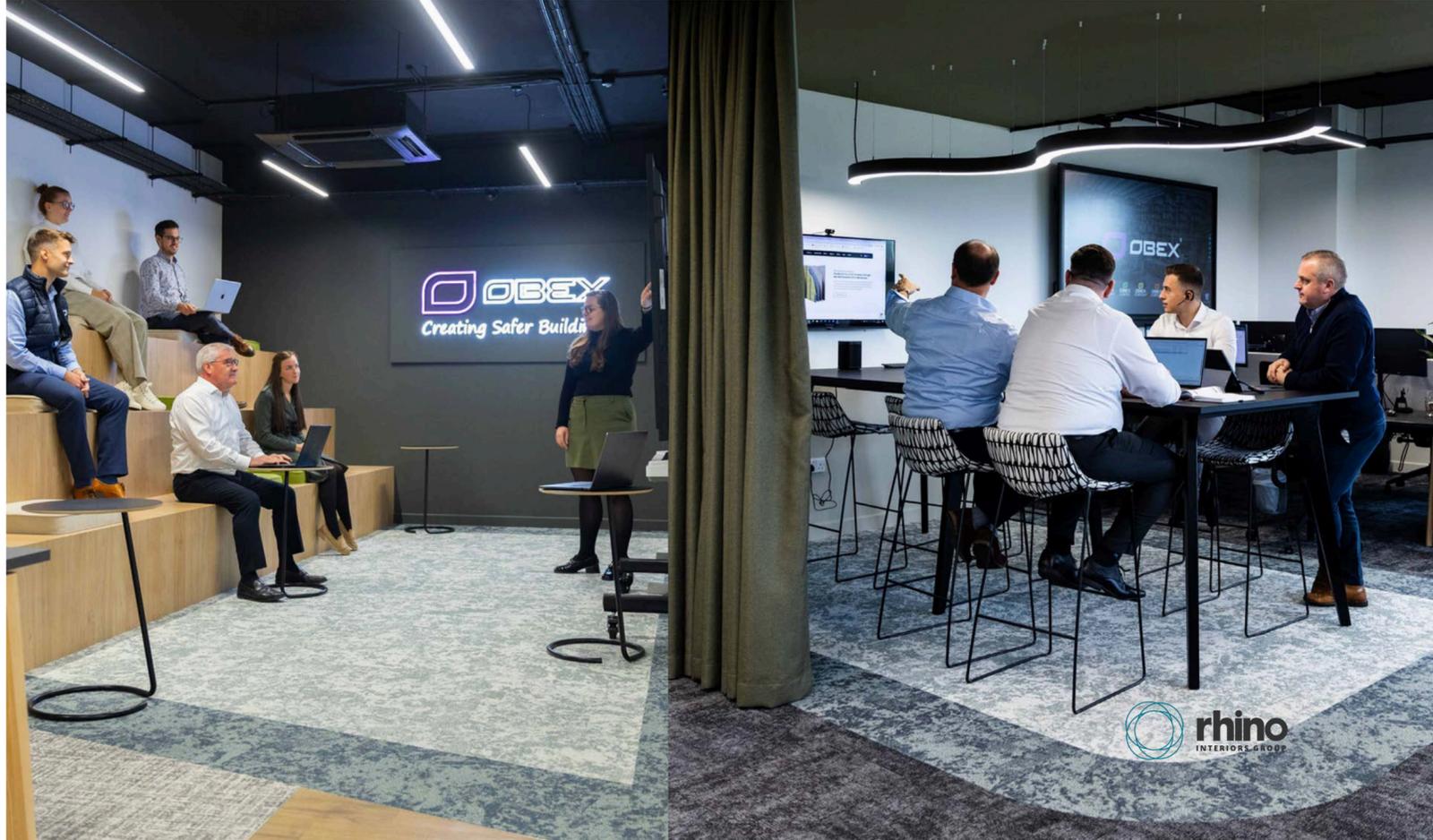
With a commitment to reflecting their remarkable growth and creating a dynamic workplace for their dedicated team, OBEX selected Rhino to create and deliver this new space. The project commenced with the installation of a two-tiered mezzanine floor, doubling OBEX's office space on the ground and first floors and creating a new storage area on the second floor. This design allows for potential future expansion of office space. The environment includes a range of working spaces, including dedicated meeting rooms, private offices and collaborative meeting zones for informal discussions.

Agile furniture solutions give flexibility, with private booths available for online meetings or focused working. Strategically positioned coffee stations also serve as versatile collaboration and meeting hubs.

The outcome of this nine-week transformation is a stunning workplace that epitomises OBEX's vision and ongoing evolution. The new space not only caters to the company's current operational needs, but also sets the stage for their future growth.

Project Scope
Location: Worcester
Type of project: Design & Build
Size of project: 10,400 sq ft
Client sector: Manufacture of building cladding products
Timescale: 8 weeks

View case study on the website.





Case Study Invertek Drives

Invertek Drives in Welshpool is a global leader in the design and manufacture of Variable Frequency Drives, used to provide energy-efficient solutions across a broad range of industries.

The former warehouse has been repurposed into a new Customer Experience Centre to entertain guests travelling from overseas. It includes demo rooms for Invertek's products, as well as offices, breakout spaces and entertaining areas.

The careful selection of materials in the design creates a sense of balance and harmony, incorporating natural wood, wool and planting, which soften the matt black industrial metal staircase and balustrade. The new Customer Experience Centre with its stunning double-height atrium and grand staircase is a place Invertek are proud to show their clients.

“ Rhino has completely transformed this from an empty industrial space to the vibrant destination that it is today. Our clients are blown away with the facilities that we have here. Rhino not only met, but they exceeded my expectations. They made the whole project a pleasure from start to finish.

Nigel Evans Invertek Drives (2023)

Project Scope

Location: Welshpool

Type of project: Shell & Core, CAT, A & B

Size of project: 20,000 sq ft

Client sector: Technology/Engineering

Timescale: 19 weeks





Summary

The concept of a “new normal” has been redefined repeatedly in recent years, with significant shifts in our work environments - be it remote, hybrid, or flexible - making it easy to feel overwhelmed. New workplaces must be flexible.

Dictating the return to the office, in our opinion. In fact, in our opinion that would be a very counter intuitive step given the mobility and connectivity that tech provides.

Furthermore, it is essential for employers to recognise the long-term global impact that Covid has had on our lives: close to 1 billion people globally now suffer with a mental health disorder, and the issues with non-Covid illnesses which have gone undiagnosed are swelling daily. People increasingly need the sanctuary of their own space, as well as finding it more conducive for focus work. So, balancing the hybrid expectations of employees against business needs in an unpredictable economy is no mean feat!

As every organisation has a unique DNA, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to hybrid working, nor to creating the perfect hybrid workspace.

It is shaped and configured – and, indeed, ever-evolving – to reflect the circumstances and human capital of the time. The organisation’s workplaces become campuses where teams can gather for on-boarding, to exchange knowledge, collaborate and utilise facilities, interwoven as another location together with a home facility in their flexible schedules.

Rhino’s approach to creating the perfectly crafted environment is evidenced-based through our **Workplace Consultancy service**. Through a series of surveys, interviews and workshops we gather data on what is working, and what is not. We conduct a unique ‘People & Place’ study, gaining qualitative and quantitative data to help us to thoroughly understand your business and employees - drilling into where the friction is in the operation, and how they score for operational efficiency.

With this base of data and anecdotal evidence we can then test the buildings available to construct models and options for discussion.

Rather than paint you into a corner when the world takes the next unexpected turn, we invest the time to understand your business in a way that ensures our solution is deep and resilient enough to fulfil your current needs, and flexible enough to accommodate future change.

**In June 2023
29% of people
were hybrid
workers, up
from 4.7% pre-
pandemic in
2019.**



 Read the  article here.



Get in touch



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