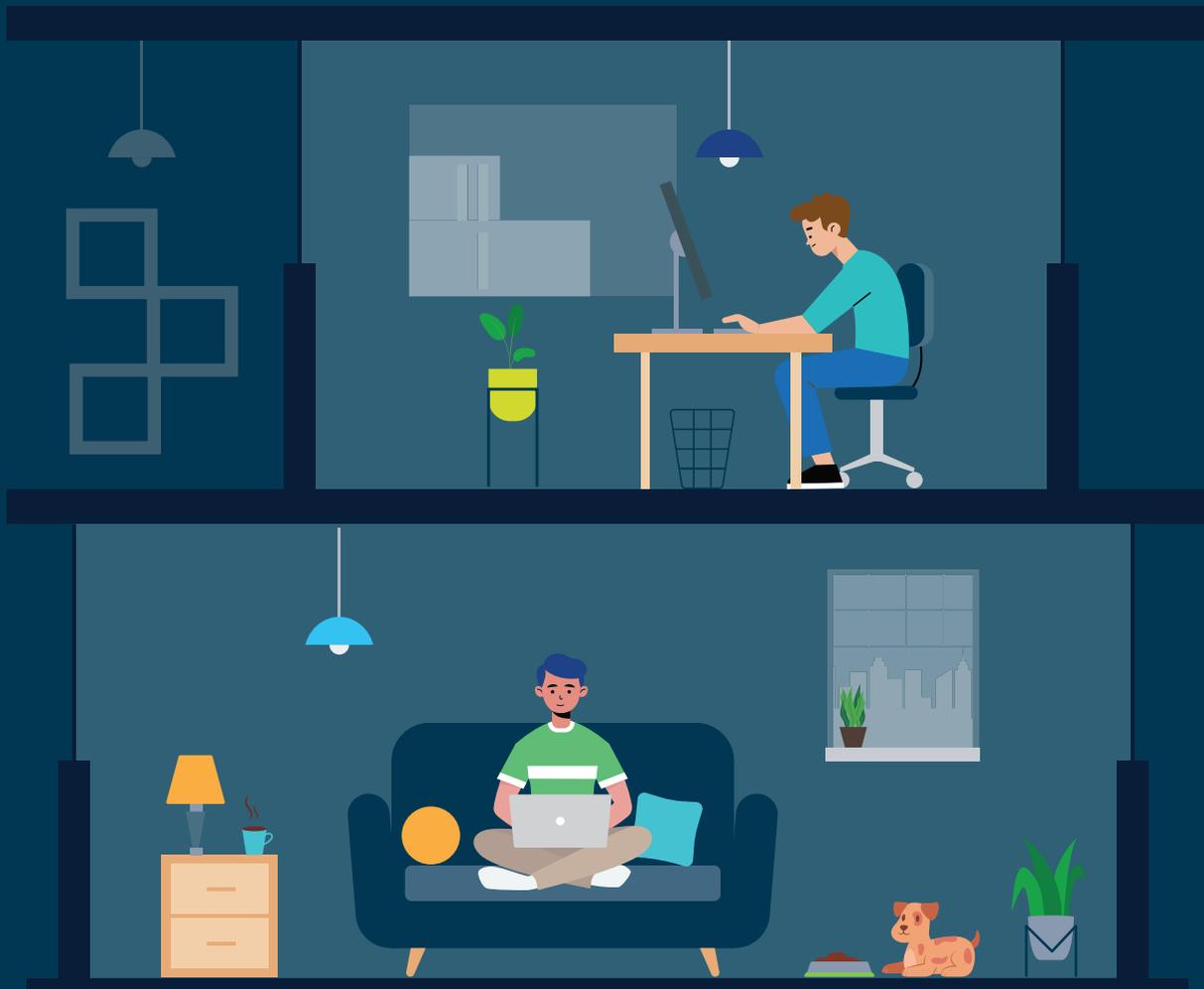# veris

A definitive guide to ensure a successful 'Great-Return'

Implement the right collaborative work strategy for your hybrid workplace

Introduction

Veris is a high growth start-up that offers integrated modern workplace solutions.
This growth comes on the back of great passion for developing and delivering seamless, secure and intuitive digital experiences that make workplaces inviting and invigorating.

With the pandemic having transformed workplaces in a manner like never before, developing robust hybrid working strategies has been the top priority for us. Interactions with over 1000 workplace enablers, across sectors and roles have allowed us to gather rich and real-time insights into the key challenges and needs that post-pandemic workplaces are experiencing. The top 4 of these unmet challenges are as follows:

01

How to attract employees back to the workplace

02

Ways to automate & implement flexible work

03

How to offer a unified employee interface for all workplace amenities & services

04

Need to derive space & service usage patterns for intelligent decision-making

Despite the singularity of these challenges, they are intertwined. Together, their resolution is essential to create workplaces that evoke confidence in the enablers and the employees for their successful return to work journey.
This e-book is intended to bring to light the acknowledgment of these challenges and their resolution. We encourage our fellow enablers to make the most of the findings that are herewith presented.

Attract your employees back to the workplace
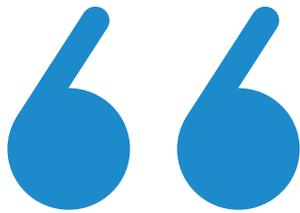
> " Being around a group of people who are working toward a common mission reinforces that goal for everyone in the workplace.
>
> **Art Markman, Ph.D. in Psychology**

The Contentious Debate

The motivation to return to work has been dramatically impacted by the pandemic. There seem to be two, almost opposing groups. Those who propagate "work from home" and those who champion the idea of "work from the office".

The line that divides the two groups is the one that has been of historical significance in any organization (but especially the bigger ones): tenure.

Detailed interactions with independent contributors, teams, team leads, executives and workplace consultants have highlighted how 'tenure' has a key role to play dividing houses.

The following diagram explains this point better.
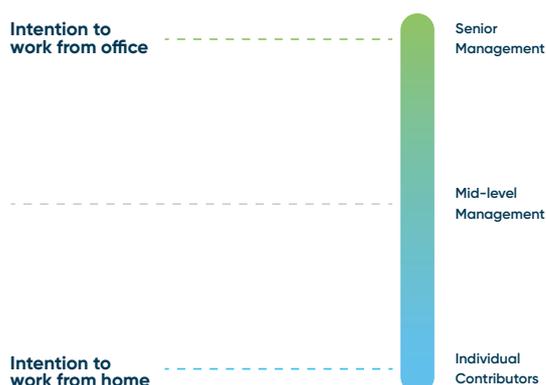
The senior management that has been in the organization for a longer tenure is primarily concerned with incentivising people to return to office. However, the independent contributors and workers (with varying degrees of tenure) have expressed their desire to continue to work from home.

But this is not a simple case of 'old' versus 'new' (or independent) association with the organization. There is a very important variable factor at play: job roles.

When looked through the lens of job roles, one can appreciate the divided perspectives better.

- Roles that require **individual work and no external contribution to complete a task.**
- Roles that require **specialized equipment available only on office sites.**
- Roles **that require collaboration and meeting with internal and external members.**
- Roles **that require coordinated work among colleagues.**
- Roles **that require collaboration to develop ideas for individual tasks.**

Intention to work from office ---------- Senior Management

Mid-level Management

Intention to work from home ---------- Individual Contributors

One thing that is evidently clear from these factors is that collaboration, ideation and seamless coordination are key in deciding which job role is better managed from the office and which one is managed just as well from home.

Thus, it is not as simple to say that the senior, tenured leadership is exerting the younger, less tenured or independent workers and execs to return to office.
What can be said is that there is a need to devise a plan that ensures employees return to work keeping in mind their job roles.

This will work as a strong rationale for the employees from the enablers to return to work because it would be centered around their work as opposed to being associated with tenured diktat.

Following is a representative sample grid for how the plan for employee return to work can look like for different job roles.

The Advancing Workspace
Hybrid Work Facilitation

Where tasks are performed

Office

Hybrid/ Flexible

Home

Individual work | Advanced tools | Social connection | Networking | Collaboration

Nature of work

Source: allsteel office

Plan for The Relevant Comeback

Equipment is only available on-site	In-Office work	In-Office work	In-office work
A few software and hardware tools are available remotely	Hybrid work	Hybrid work	In-office work
All tools are available remotely	Work from home	Hybrid work	In-office work
	Connects with colleagues to exchange information	Connects with colleagues to work closely on specific projects	Connects with colleagues to develop relationships and work deliverables

Survey conducted with workplace enablers (1001–5000 employees) by Veris

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A successful return to work has to be streamlined and segmented at the beginning.

Who should come to the office?

One of the key ways to initiate a successful return to office by determining which sections of the work force should come to office based on the following criteria

- Segment the workforce into purpose oriented cohorts

- Based on the segments the workforce needs to be divided in the following Cohorts:
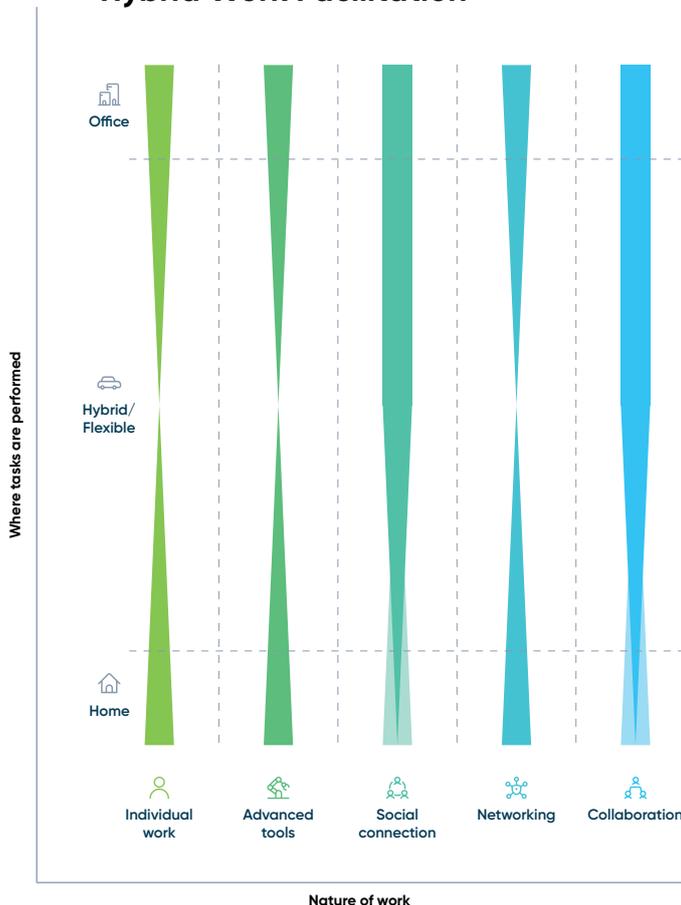
Remote   Hybrid   Office

The tools required to complete this segmentation: surveys, interviews, polls as well as data analytics to analyze and assign weightage to various factors.

Engage multiple stakeholders such as leadership, clients, managers, employees and vendors for a seamless transition.

Devise a Plan tailored for each Cohort

	Remote First	Hybrid	Office First
Cohorts	Employees primarily working from home office, visiting offices for events, meetings and collaboration less than once a week.	Employees working from office for 2 to 3 days a week, primarily coming along with their teammates to collaborate in-person	Employees working from office for 4-5 days a week, firmly anchored to workspaces for work.
Objective for Workplace	Need physical workplace to connect, share and engage with stakeholders occasionally.	Need Workplace for collaboration, engagement, meetings, unwinding. Workplace should act as an attractor for socializing, collaboration and specialized work.	Need workplace to thrive and succeed at their goals. Workplace is a critical enabler for productivity, innovation and collaboration.
Workplace Design	• Ensuring necessary equipment is available at home • Flex offices in multiple areas closer to homes • Collaboration spaces • Engagement activities	• Ample Flexi Desks • Flexible Team Zones • Meeting Rooms with video conferencing • Smaller huddle rooms • Collaboration spaces • Focus pods, phone booths • Event venues • Unwinding facilities • Digital lockers	• Fixed desks with right Amenities • Dedicated cabins, labs, workshops • Focus pods, phone booths • Larger meeting rooms • Event venues • Unwinding facilities
Technology	• Video conferencing, team chat, project management, document collaboration tools • Workplace experience tools for hassle free office visits & deliberate interactions • People & culture management tools • Tools for remote engagement, team building, performance review, virtual events, rewards & recognition	• Video conferencing, team chat, project management, document collaboration tools, • Workplace experience tools for hassle free office visits & deliberate interactions • People & culture management tools • Employee scheduling • Desk booking, room booking softwares • Space management • Occupancy sensors • Digital signage	• Space management • Occupancy sensors • Digital signage • Video conferencing Equipment for rooms
Return to Work Plan Organizations should effectively craft & communicate its return to work policy to all employees	• Organizations should partner with flexible spaces to allow for occasional workplace visits, meetups and events. • Deliberate interactions, both formal as well as casual should be planned on a regular basis virtually and in-person.	• Leadership should allow enough flexibility to team managers and employees within broad policy guidelines to figure out what works best for them. • Effectively use workplace experience tools to plan & manage hybrid work at a team level.	• Regularly monitor utilization and collect feedback on experience. • Ensure regular health screenings, vaccination, contact tracing and incident management. • Regular interaction between office first, hybrid and remote first cohorts to preserve culture and camaraderie. • Experience tailored to individual needs.

Automate & implement hybrid work

"

In a hybrid working world, there are fewer opportunities for informal or chance meetings. That's an issue because the exchange of organizational knowledge and collaboration is dependent on those forums. So, the challenge for the organization is to find ways to use technology and digital tools to make those previously casual and opportunistic interactions more deliberate in a work-from-anywhere model.

Piyush Mehta, Chief Human Resources Officer, Genpact

Hybrid that is skewed towards deliberate collaboration

Hybrid by its very definition is a blend, a confluence of diversity.

With diversity comes differences and the need to purposefully and mindfully create channels of collaboration that can enable it. This diversity is established not just by location but also by the nature of work.

Gartner has presented this form of diversity through four work modes.


Source: Gartner

As organizations are moving to a hybrid model of work, it becomes critical that all four modes are given equal access for more and better collaborations within the organization.
While it is true that every organization will intuitively resonate more with a particular kind of mode or modes, the rest cannot be alienated.

Especially after the pandemic, the employees are voicing their dissonance with 'silo mentality', 'lack of networking and connection' impacting their productivity and motivation.

65%

of employees feel that the silo mentality is prominent in their workspace and is resulting in ineffective collaborations.

71%
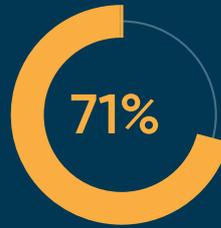
of employees state that they are experiencing difficulty in networking and making connections with their teammates.

The question is: how can organizations embrace these different work modes better?

The simplest answer lies in addressing the main theme. That is, togetherness.

While there will always be a certain percentage of the workforce that can work alone and apart, a majority is still bound by the need to interact, coordinate, collaborate and ideate on a regular basis.

Thus, the emphasis needs to be placed on how togetherness can be ensured regardless of whether employees are working together, together or working together, apart.

Working Together, Together

The administration should provide people with compelling reasons to choose the office and the workplace experience should justify the effort, time, and cost to commute for employees as well as provide the best interaction of their day whenever they are in office.

The Harvard Business Review found the ideal hybrid work schedule to be just one or two days in the office per week. Leadership should allow enough flexibility to team managers and employees within broad policy guidelines to figure out what works best for them.

There is no optimal answer and this should be left

for the teams to decide based on their goals and challenges. Employees should be able to view office schedules for their colleagues, managers and other stakeholders in order to plan their office visits and make best use of their in-office time.

Working Together, Apart

For people working together, apart, the interactions will take place digitally keeping in mind their remote status. The management should streamline the scheduling process in a way that interactions between employees can take place without interfering with the personal schedules. The employees should be scheduled on certain days of the week on an optimal time slots.

While devising a hybrid plan for this segment, the administration should take into consideration the interferences that will take place during virtual collaborations while also giving ample time for informal meetings for better communication and networking.

A quick guide to implement hybrid strategy

	Considerations	Technology
Safety & Compliance	• Include risk management and mitigation plans to contain any potential contagion • Implement mandatory health screening checks & safeguards for all occupants adhering to local regulations • Take necessary consent, waivers and approvals from data subjects to collect and process the data	• Enterprise risk management tools • Automated health screening & self assessments • Vaccination trackers • Physical access control & visitor management • Thermal screening equipment • Periodic tests & detection kits • Contact tracing tools
Workplace Planning	• Prepare a location-wise, well-phased plan to increase office occupancy & smooth rollout of workplace services • Implement a hybrid policy for employees & team managers to plan their office days in advance • Share visit plans within the company for a productive experience for teams • Define occupancy limits and contingency plans	• Workplace scheduling software • Space management softwares • Employee engagement & communication tools • Digital twin of the office floor plans and other amenities • Internal knowledge base for hybrid policies and guidelines
Scheduling & Workplace Experience	• Implement a flexible hybrid policy that allows employees or teams to choose who comes to office and when. • Avoid top-down mandates as they rarely result in a positive work experience. • Implement desk & room booking tools to manage flexible seating plans as well as collaborative meetings • Schedule events, workshops, town halls keeping in mind occupancy as well as workplace service availability • Implement dedicated helpdesks and concierge service for employees to seek help related to workplace services • Ensure that systems are working in sync for a seamless experience for employees.	• Employee scheduling • Space booking, meal booking • Event management • Facility ticketing tools • Workplace chatbots • Integration platforms

Offer a unified employee interface for all workplace amenities & services

"

In order to build a rewarding employee experience, you need to understand what matters most to your people.

Julie Bevacqua, President, Rise People

By 2030, GenZers and millennials will comprise 58% of the workforce in the world and a glaring 75% in North America. This means that the demand for automation, mobile workflows, AI-backed services will only rise, making it imperative to streamline the digitization process. The current rise in demand for felxible schedules and streamlined interactions is an opportunity for the organizations to not just embrace the hybrid work model but construct your organization around it.

workforce prefers everyday admin tasks to be done digitally.

53%

Workforce prefer access to cafeteria services online.

55%

Bring back the charm in admin services

One of the biggest challenges of the hybrid model has been to provide plenty of room for collaboration and flexibility of work schedules
Digital interactions form the backbone of hybrid, be it for formal or for informal work interactions.
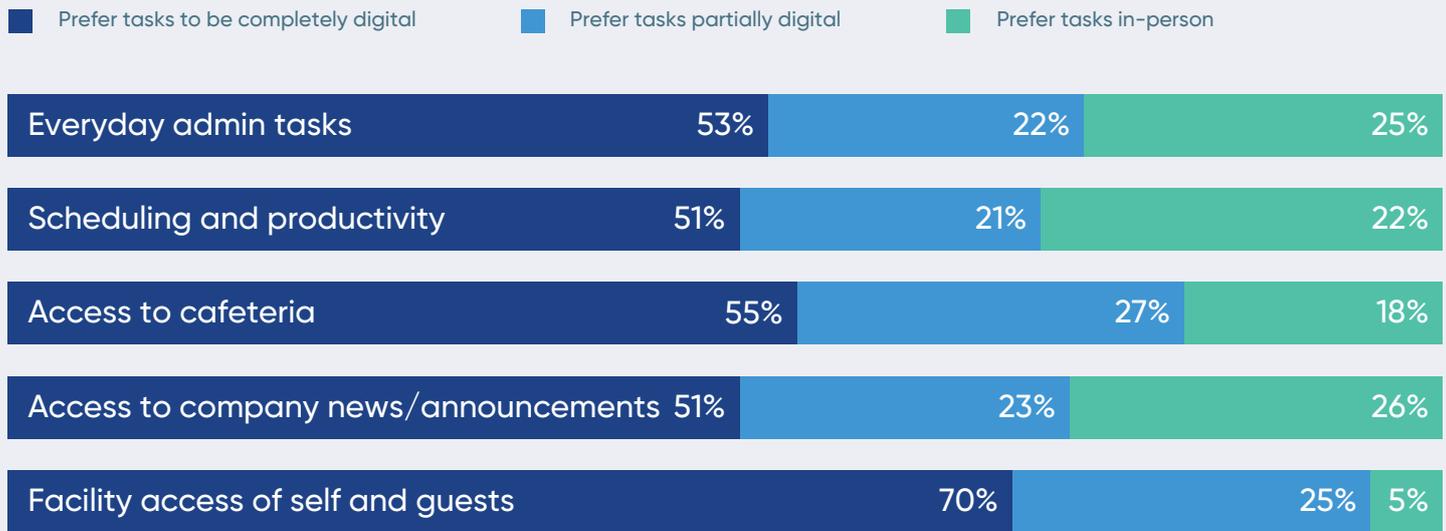Consider the following:

indvidual contributors want the productivity and scheduling to be done online.

51%

Consultants, managements want IT and desk support, system updates to be conducted online.

51%

Work schedules, status updates, and other everyday tasks can be made digital

- ■ Prefer tasks to be completely digital
- ■ Prefer tasks partially digital
- ■ Prefer tasks in-person

Category	Completely digital	Partially digital	In-person
Everyday admin tasks	53%	22%	25%
Scheduling and productivity	51%	21%	22%
Access to cafeteria	55%	27%	18%
Access to company news/announcements	51%	23%	26%
Facility access of self and guests	70%	25%	5%

Survey conducted with workplace enablers (1001–5000 employees) by Veris

These data points are not only indicative of the need for digital interventions to succeed at hybrid, instead they are indicative of an important question:

How to ensure seamlessness of digital interventions in providing the optimum return-to-work experience?

This question is actually a two pronged one because it not only evokes the need to ensure that the **'new' digital hybrid interventions are seamless** but also impels the need for ensuring that the **'existing' physical and digital interventions (that employees are used to) are seamlessly integrated with the 'new'.**

This leads to a harder hitting question: **is there really a way to seamlessly marry the 'existing' with the 'new'?**

The answer is yes. And the solution is: an amalgamation of digital and physical work experiences via an integrated employee experience app.

Bringing the integrated employee experience app to life for all workplace amenities & services

Multiple tools, technology and processes that get introduced may be overwhelming for the employees on their return-to-work journey. The integrated employee experience app works as a unified, single window to address all of employees' workplace needs.

Bringing the integrated employee experience app to life for all workplace amenities & services

Steps	Considerations	Technologies
Central Repository	• Create a central repository of all workplace information, policies, services and tools • Arrange everything on a company intranet or webpage for employees to see • Get buy-in from all stakeholders and vendors to enable integrations	• Company intranet or knowledge • management • BPM or workflow builders • Active directory, SSO • Enterprise asset management
Unified Platform	• Craft user specific journeys that can help reduce friction from workplace • Bring in Unified Workplace platforms and onboard the services & processes • Modify and simplify the processes wherever possible • Onboard all systems on a single platform • Ensure that all systems are well integrated with enterprise system of records such as AD, SSO and asset management	• Unified workplace platforms • Installed workplace technology Software • Enterprise chatbots • Enterprise integration platforms • Prototyping tools • Application analytics • Feedback management
Seamless Experience	• Merely bringing all services on a single platform in not enough.The organization needs to: • Ensure superior and uniform experience for all services interfaces	• Enable user journeys across services via single intefaces for example: user should be able to plan their day, book desk & indicate meal preferences on a unified space rather than going to 3 separate apps.
Accessibility & Ease of Use	• Conduct periodic assessment of app usage and collect feedback for constant improvement	• Ensure that the unified apps are available and accessible to employees from most mobile devices & browsers

Derive space & service usage patterns for intelligent decision-making

> *Success in a hybrid work environment requires employers to move beyond viewing remote or hybrid environments as a temporary or short-term strategy and to treat it as an opportunity*
>
> **George Penn, Vice President, Gartner**

One size doesn't fit all

There is no cookie cutter hybrid work model that works for every organization. A variety of factors are at play in deciding the one that suits your organization the most - namely, the workforce strength of the organization, the nature of the sector/industry, the processes and protocols in place, past experience with a particular kind of work model, leadership decisions etc. Thus, the resulting success of a chosen work model is linked deeply with these variables.

However, there are a few common determiners that organizations at large take in account while adopting a new work model and hybrid is no exception to these.

The common ground

There are three determiners that have stood out in interactions with execs, functional heads from different sectors. These are as follows:

Access to Talent and Human Resources

Productivity and Efficiency- Individual and Collocated

Cost to maintain the optimal infrastructure

Internal & External Collaboration

Optimizing hybrid workplace efficiency

✕ veris

			Talent Acquisition	Productivity	Real-estate cost	Internal & External Collaboration
Mostly On-Site	Limited Work, 1-2 primary sites	Senior management and leaders are located in 1-2 sites	👥👥	👥👥	👥👥	👥👥
Mostly Hybrid	Partially Remote Work, 1-2 primary work sites	senior management and employees spend most of their time at 1-2 work sites.	👥👥	👥👥	👥👥	👥👥
	Partially remote work, different work sites	Proportionate office sites with leadership equally dispersed in all locations.	👥👥	👥👥	👥👥	👥👥
	Multiple sites	Senior management and employees dispersed across small work sites at different geographies	👥👥	👥👥	👥👥	👥👥
	Remote work with flexible workspaces for collaborations	No work sites with co-working spaces for collaborations	👥👥	👥👥	👥👥	👥👥
Off-site/ remote work	Remote work with no office sites		👥👥	👥👥	👥👥	👥👥

An overview of the rubrics to keep in mind before adopting to a new work model

Steps	Considerations & Technologies
Define Goals	• Define business objectives/KPI that you need to achieve from the hybrid Work Eg. improving employee experience, deducing real estate Costs • Identify clear matrices for measuring your progress
Set Stage for Data Collection	• Leverage individual softwares & systems to record, generate and analyze usage data • Use surveys & feedback and data analytics & BI tools to map the progress
Collect Insights	• Make assumptions, hypotheses and Models Build data visualizations around it • Measure Progress periodically
Feedback & Action	• Collect qualitative feedback from all stakeholders • Get buy-in from leaderships based on data-backed insights • Reiterate till you get the desired objectives

World's most comprehensive Workplace Experience Platform

About us

For over 5 years, large scale enterprises & Fortune 500 companies have been choosing Veris solutions to create smart, secure & modern workplace experiences for their employees & guests. Named as one of the fastest growing companies in this space by G2, we take pride in having on-boarded over 600,000 employees & over 50 Million visitor check-ins

Future Ready

Want to be ahead of the curve? Our solution uses the best technology- AI, IoT, Blockchain for hybrid work

Scale Ready

A single large office or many offices spread across multiple cities or even continents? We got you covered

Integration Ready

Want a unified solution or just one module? No issue. We integrate with existing infrastructure seamlessly

Privacy Ready

Infosec plays big? We rank high on VAPT tests, GDPR, SOC2 compliance, Fortune 500 IT approval

Services

Visitor Management

With Veris Welcome, roll out a red carpet for your visitors with stringent compliance to your company policies.

- Superfast check-in
- Privacy driven face recognition
- Aditional Amenities for Guests
- Scale to multiple custom journeys

Hybrid Work

With Veris, unlock the new ways of hybrid working by making every resources just a click away.

- In-app Health evaluation
- Space bookings via 3D maps
- Easy in-office collaborations
- Work-culture adaptability

Unified Experience

Access all services from a single app. Integrate existing service providers without any hassle.

- Unified services under one app
- AI based chat assistance
- Personalized suggestions
- Hassle-free time management

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Get ready for hybrid 3.0
Talk to our workplace specialists today

Nestlé   ☀ RBS   genpact   BOSCH   SAMSUNG   JLL   BAIN & COMPANY   BMW   BCG

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