



# 6 TIPS FOR CREATING THE IDEAL HYBRID OFFICE SPACE

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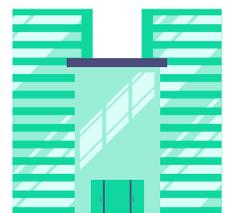
We're in the middle of a work revolution. In the last three years, everything we have come to know about how we work and the way we work, has changed.

Many of us have set up an entire office at home. We're not coming into the office 9-6, 5 days a week anymore. We've gotten used to seeing our colleagues in 2D, not 3D.

So if the way we work has changed, and our working habits are being revolutionised, shouldn't our office space reflect that? Shouldn't our office space change, so that it mirrors how we, as employees and as companies, have changed?

We think it should. Because as it looks right now, our offices are not being used to its maximum potential — they're not optimal for the future of work.

And here's three reasons why:



### **1) Not everyone comes into the office any more**

The pandemic has made it starkly clear, that remote work works. Employees do not have to come into the office every day, all day, in order for a company to run smoothly. They can perfectly well work from their own homes, a coworking space, or even a café, and still be as productive (or even more!) than at the office.

This means that not every employee is constantly in the office at once. Our office capacity no longer hits maximum every day.



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# HYBRID WORK



## 6 TIPS FOR CREATING AN IDEAL HYBRID OFFICE SPACE

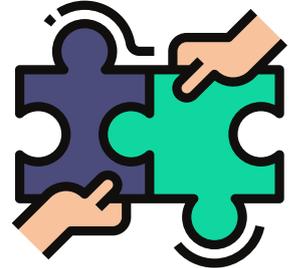
### 2) The office focus is collaboration



Since not everyone comes into the office anymore to mainly sit at their desk, that means the office functionality has changed. It is now a place where you go in order to meetup with colleagues. It is a place where you intentionally want to gather with co-workers so that you can discuss projects or tasks.

So, an office has to reflect that the main utility for offices is no longer just desk work, it is actually a space for collaboration.

### 3) Work is a hybrid encounter



As employees are splitting up time between remote and in office work, it can mean that meetings and discussions might happen in a hybrid setting. We have also gotten used to talk to clients, customers, or leads over video conferencing.

Our office space must reflect that new reality in terms of technology, but also in terms of facility set up. The office has to facilitate this new working way by equipping its areas with the proper hybrid set up.

So then, if our office space is no longer optimal for this new way of working, for the future of work, for hybrid work — what exactly does a company need to do, to make it so? Here's where this Guide comes in to help. We want to give you the necessary tips and steps in order to ensure that your new transition is being reflected in all areas of your work, including the office.



Before you start, you need to think about the bigger picture. Don't just start reshuffling desks and letting everyone come into the office and choose where they want to sit. This new transition will take a bit of time and brainstorming, in order to ensure that it works efficiently, effectively and easily.

### 1) Give yourself time

Change can take time. Rushing a huge remodelling like this will only make it fall apart in the long term, as you won't have thought through necessary steps. That means, give yourself one-three months (depending on your decision) to really think about what this new office space should look like.



Create a committee that includes people from different departments to rethink what the office space should look like. Think about asking consultants and manufacturers about their opinions. Does different lighting make a difference? Ask a lighting company. Does proximity boost collaboration? Research the sociological impacts. Is an open floor plan better for productivity? Talk about it with an architect.

Also ensure you are asking your employees what they prefer. Not everyone has to give their opinion and be part of the decision-making. Too many cooks in the kitchen spoil the broth.

But collecting data and feedback from employees might make you think about things you would not have considered before. Maybe a disabled worker would appreciate easier access. Maybe the IT department would like quiet places to work in. Maybe younger workers would be thankful for more proximity to higher ups.

Once you have collected this data, you can discuss it with the task force. And then you can make the appropriate decision how much your current office space needs to change.



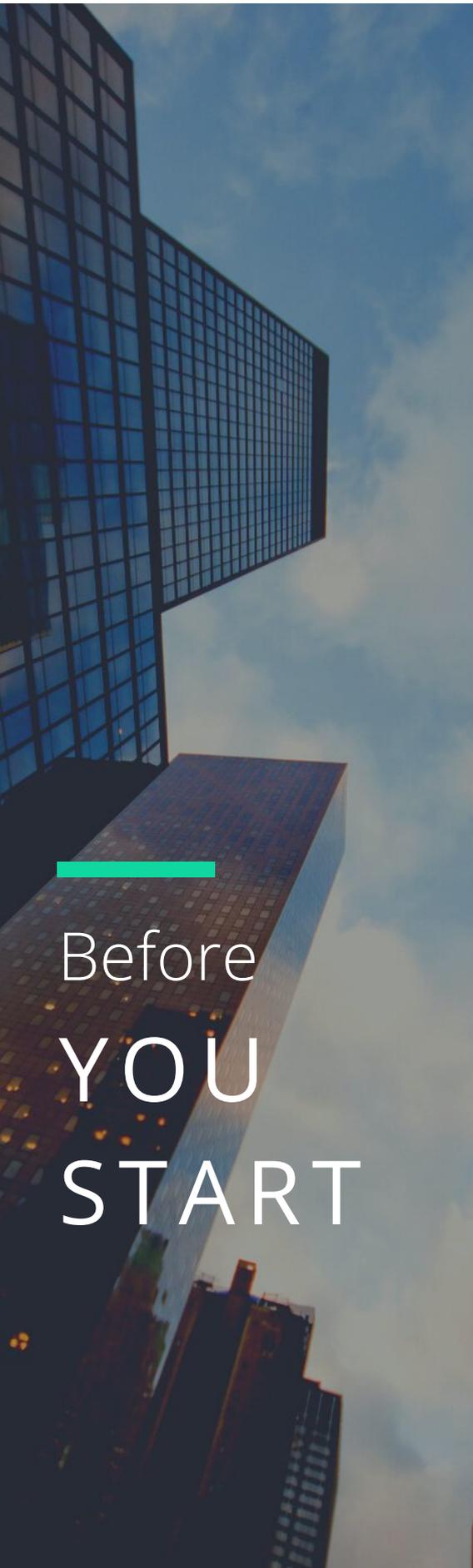
## 2) Ask the right questions

Now that you know to take time, you also have to ensure that you ask the right questions. To yourself, the task force, and employees.

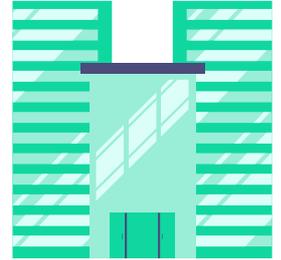
Asking the right questions can make you understand comprehensively, what it is your company and workers actually need from this new office space. So consider asking the following questions:

- What should my new hybrid structure look like?
  - How often should they come in to the office, and how often should they work from home?
- How many employees do I want in the office?
  - What are the current COVID-19 regulations, how many are allowed in the office at once?
  - Do I want to downsize the office to reflect this?
- What balance between in-person and remote work do I want?
  - What is it that employees are demanding?
- How frequently do meetings take place?
  - Are these meetings usually hybrid? Which team has the most need for meeting spaces?
- How regularly do people have individual calls?
  - Do they take these at home or in the office?
  - Is there a department that has more individual calls than others?
- Is the point to remodel or to reduce space?
  - Will we restructure the current office, or do we want to reduce our entire space?
- How do we ensure booking processes remain fair?
  - How do we facilitate desk sharing and make it fair for everyone?
- Are there individual needs that we need to cover, now that we have the resources to change office spaces?
  - Accessibility, gender-neutral toilets, etc.

Before  
**YOU**  
**START**



### 3) New office vs. restructuring current office vs. coworking space?



You might come to the realisation that the current office space that you have, is just not right for the concept you're envisioning, or for the direction that you want to go to.

This might be because the current floor plan would have to change completely to reflect your new vision. It might also be because you are realising that the office space is just too big for the type of desk sharing that you want to create.

So, that might mean looking for an entire new office complex to move your company into. But it might not. Maybe you realise that you can completely remodel the office with the current space that you have.

This option might need an architect to help you renovate the office, or an interior designer to help you envision this change.

You also have the option of reducing the office space completely, and think about giving the option of coworking space memberships. Whichever option you decide to go with, have a think about what that means, and how that affects your next steps.

If you do decide to remodel your current office or move into a new office, we have some tips that, we think, will be quite useful in this transition.

# TIP 1

## RETHINK WHAT THE OFFICE SPACE IS ABOUT

Many companies have realised, that the definition of our office space, the way we defined it before the pandemic, just doesn't quite fit any more. We just don't come into the office to sit at our desks all day. Many of us can perfectly well do that (and prefer to do that) from home — with some peace and quiet.

So instead, we come into the office to get back that longed for social interaction again. We realise our collaboration and creativity have slacked, since we are only communicating with our team two-dimensionally. So, the office has become a space, where we can finally get back that in-person brainstorming that brings out such great ideas.

### **But then, what is the office really about?**

- It's no longer a place to actually work at a desk from 9-6
- It's become a place for collaboration and meeting up with colleagues
- It's a space where we can find social interaction again

### **So, what does that mean for our office restructuring?**

What is important, is to have spaces that reflect all these changes in our perception of office space. Create spaces where workers can do just that: interact, collaborate, meet. That means focusing on areas where people walk past one other and stop to chat. Areas designated for brainstorming. Areas where people can hold meetings and collaborate.

Maybe that means considering an open floor plan, where employees are more visible and less segregated. You can also think about the possibility of mingling all employees together, and not have them separated by department (in our opinion, this always brings some interesting innovation). Areas such as the kitchen or lunch tables also start having more significance again.

Whatever it is that you recreate, have in mind that this is the new reason why people come into the office, and your space should reflect that.

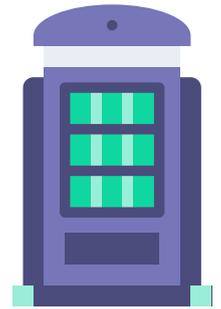
The beauty of redesigning your office, is that you can let it reflect your new type of working. Mirroring the reasons why people come into the office. Before, we might have thought of office spaces split by department. Now we might think about creating different workspaces for different tasks.

Have a designated area with meeting rooms (don't forget that hybrid IT set up). Have a space where people can jump into a call booth for virtual meetings. Create a zone with desks, where colleagues can book and share spaces (more in our next tip). If people need spaces to brainstorm and collaborate, have rooms designated for that work. Include the right set up, with whiteboards or glass windows, so that people can draw up ideas and plans.

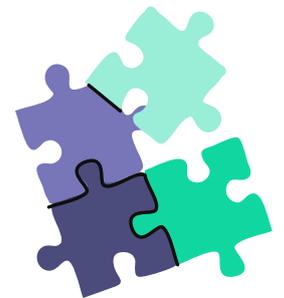
Have different types of chairs and sitting arrangements. Maybe two colleagues want to have a more informal chat on a couch — make that available. Other workers might prefer standing desks for their circulation. So, that needs to be made accessible too.

Think about striking a balance between openness and privacy. Of course, it's great to have an open concept to reflect equality and collaboration. But some workers also like and prefer their privacy. Or they simply need it for certain meetings or tasks (also think about confidential documents). So ensure that you can find a balance between these two concepts in your work space.

Having different types of workspaces for different tasks and work activities will enable everyone to find the best space to not only be more productive or motivated, but also to get done what they need to get done that day. At the end of the day, you might have to write a report in the morning and brainstorm a new idea in the afternoon. Your workspace should reflect that.



### **CREATE CALL BOOTHS**



### **BUILD CREATIVE ZONES**



### **IMPLEMENT DESK SHARING**

## **TIP 2**

# **UTILISE YOUR WORK SPACES**

## TIP 3

# USE “HOT DESKING”

The hottest new concept in town is “Hot Desking”. Some might also know it as Desk Sharing or Flex-Desking. Whichever term you use, it's essentially an office space organisation system where workers use a physical workstation at different times.

The concept is simple in theory, but companies sometimes find it difficult to implement. The idea is that you have a certain number of desks that are available to all employees. These desks are not fixed to one employee, like they often used to be. Instead, anyone can book the desk in advance and use it for the day, or for a certain number of hours.

The benefit? You can downsize the number of desks in general (which can save you costs), and desks are not left empty, when the worker does not come into the office that day.

Apart from that, research has also shown that switching up your workstation on a daily can actually keep those workers refreshed and focused. It also boosts collaboration, as workers might have the opportunity to work alongside different team members. This allows for small chat to maybe lead to creativity or innovation.

But how is it done, you ask? One of the best ways to implement Desk Sharing is to invest in a Desk Sharing tool (like Seatti!). With integrated floor plans, a tool like this can show you: how many desks are accessible in the office, how many are available on a given day, who has already booked them, who will be in the office, and where they will be sitting.

With an organisational tool like that, it is much easier to book a desk, room, or space for some hours or day and get to work. Because desk sharing should not mean that employees have to spend the first 20 minutes looking for a place to sit in the office. It should also not mean that employees have to drive back home because they could not find a place to sit in the office.

# TIP 3

## USE "HOT DESKING"

In terms of implementing Desk Sharing, you have to think about two things:

### 1) CREATE A DESIGNATED SPACE FOR HOT DESKS

Will you be implementing an open concept floor plan? Or will you still have certain rooms? Either way, you have to decide where these shared desks will be available. And to whom they will be available.



### 2) RESTRICT CERTAIN AREAS TO DESK SHARING



Maybe some rooms cannot be used by all, because they contain confidential information, that is only available to certain people. For example, the legal department or HR. You can still implement desk sharing in these areas, but just restrict the booking to certain employees.

Or some offices, such as for executives, will not be available for desk sharing at all. These will then be left out of the desk sharing tool completely.

## TIP 4

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### SET UP HYBRID MEETING ROOMS

In our previous Guide ([How to make your IT Set Up Hybrid Optimal](#)) we already spoke about creating an optimal IT set up for hybrid meeting rooms. But of course, for the IT set up to be set up, you also have to ensure that there are spaces for hybrid meeting rooms.

As a reminder — what are hybrid meetings? Meetings in which participants can participate from remote work (at home, or wherever they are), and those who are in the office. Some will be in the room and some will be on a screen.

So apart from tech, what is needed for such a room? Well, you have to create these spaces in the first place. And what we suggest is to make all meeting rooms hybrid optimal. We could be prone to not equip all rooms with hybrid IT set up, as some meetings might spontaneously take place in these rooms, if in-office workers decide to organise one.

But remember that it is extremely important to try to ensure equality across all types of workers — both remote and in-office employees. That means, all meeting rooms at least have to have the option of being hybrid optimal. Which means, creating an all-around set-up for all types of meetings.

Think about where you want these spaces to be: in the middle of the office area, far apart from the other open concept desks? What do you think would work best? Should they be equipped with glass walls, to ensure a continuous working flow? How big do they have to be, and should there be different sizes? What type of seat set up should be inside — couches, desks, chairs?

These are all questions that you need to think about and discuss with your task force. Depending on that, you can start recreating these meeting rooms. Of course, always equipped with the right tech.

## TIP 5

### CREATE 1:1 PLACES

Some people might decide to come into the office only for purposes of meetings and collaborate on projects together. But you should not assume that is the case for everyone. Consider the fact that some individuals still want to come to the office almost daily because they like the idea of an office space — it helps them separate it from their private life, for example.

So, you have to ensure that there are certain facilities that also reflect this type of worker. One of the main things that, then, is needed (especially in the case of remodelling to open concept), is designated 1:1 areas.

This means, designated areas in which workers can have some privacy and silence. We're not talking about bathrooms, but rather areas where they can have a call with an important client, or a virtual conference that they have to listen into.

We suggest creating calling booths in your office. Think of them as little telephone cabinets, that any worker can sit in to take a remote or hybrid call.

This means they need three things:



#### **SUITABLE SOUND PROOFING**

So that noise from the outside does not come in and the caller's voice is heard clearly



#### **APPROPRIATE LIGHTING**

So that the person is visible (and looks flattering) on their call



#### **DIVERSE PLUGS**

So that everyone in the booth can continue to charge their devices

# TIP 6

## CONSIDER ACOUSTICS



Something that you might not immediately think about is: What are the acoustics going to be like in your new work space? Sound is crucial in an office. You want to have enough to create that buzz, which is now the reason employees want to come into the office. But you want to avoid creating so much that employees lose focus.

One thing you can do to mute sounds are, for example, using carpets instead of wooden floors, as well as sound-absorbent material on the ceiling and furniture in more private areas — or designated areas for a “Quiet Zone”.

In areas that are meant to be for socialising or chatting, use less sound-absorbent materials. This will create that louder buzz that you want in an office. For example, in the lunch area, kitchen or common areas.

You can also consider having speakers with lounge music for certain areas, such as creative zones, or eating areas. Or at least the possibility of plugging in a phone and having music play in areas. Some people work better with music!

Lastly, in meeting rooms and call booths, you want to consider investing a little extra for sound proofing. Maybe a confidential meeting is going on, or, contrastingly, maybe outside noise should not be heard on a call for concentration purposes. So ensure that walls or windows are sound proofed so that these workers can work in peace.

# CONTACT US

We're always happy to tell you more about the future of work or help you implement your new hybrid working model.

We're just a click or a call away whenever you need us. We'd also be very happy to share our tool with you, which we believe is the simplest and most efficient way to facilitate hybrid work.



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To find out more information about our fully integrated Microsoft Office 365 Management tool, visit our website!

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To learn how our tool works, you can book a demo with one of our team members and see for yourself!

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