

The Future of the “Office”: How the Workplace is Evolving as a Result of the Pandemic

Including: How companies are leveraging food delivery to transition into office, remote, and hybrid work



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How and why some companies are going back to brick-and-mortar workspaces.



02 **Work From Anywhere: Transitioning to Fully-Remote**

How and why some companies are adopting remote work – and how to do it right.

03 **Flexible Office: Hybrid Remote and In-Office Schedules**

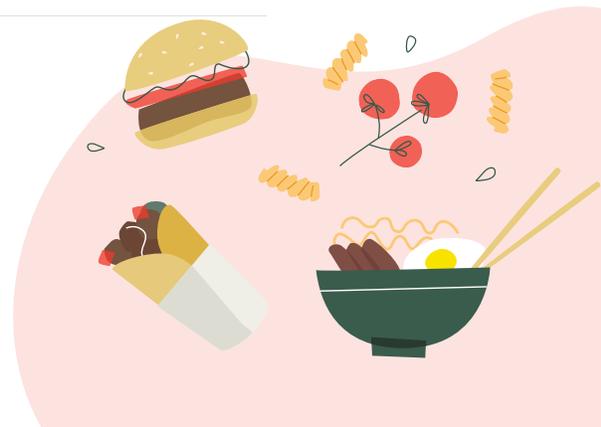
Hybrid work: the best of both worlds?

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Introduction: Entering the New Era of Work

As employers begin to plan for a post-COVID-19 world, many workplaces are under pressure to identify what's next. It's clear that following the coronavirus pandemic, work will undoubtedly never be the same. We've long moved past the idea of the "new normal" – recognizing that in today's ever-evolving landscape, flexibility and adaptability are more important than ever.

Some companies found a successful rhythm working from home. Others have either been in the office, or see the value in migrating back to the office in the coming months. Regardless of what is right for your organization, the lockdowns that mandated remote work are no longer in place, so many businesses are determining a way to move forward after getting a taste of work-from-home life.

With mass vaccinations and restrictions loosening, many HR professionals and leaders are faced with answering the following question: how will you operate as the pandemic subsides?

As you weigh options like returning to the office, remaining remote, or adopting a hybrid model letting employees split time between remote and office locations, we want you to know: [DoorDash for Business](#) is here for you. Our food benefits are thoughtfully designed for the modern workplace, helping businesses boost employee happiness and productivity in and out of the office.



Here's how we make work simple, regardless of location:



DashPass for Employees

A new kind of benefit, DashPass for Employees lets you offer employees numerous choices from top restaurants in their area, all with free delivery and reduced service fees on eligible orders. They can order on and off the clock, giving them time back in their days and helping to increase focus and engagement.



Expensed Meals

You set the budget, employees, and ordering hours. We handle the rest — with no receipt wrangling required. Your employees enjoy delicious food wherever they are, keeping them sustained through meetings and project deadlines.



Group Orders

Whether you're in the thick of an all-hands meeting or enjoying a casual Friday, Group Orders make feeding an office crowd simple. Employees can easily add all of their orders to one cart, hassle-free. Your food arrives labeled, individually packaged, and fresh.



Employee Gift Cards

For town halls, employee appreciation days, or just because, DoorDash for Business Employee Gift Cards are a great way to provide for your employees and acknowledge their hard work.

A recent DoorDash for Business survey found that

78%

of employees believe food benefits would have a positive impact on their company culture¹.

All of our offerings are designed to enrich in-office, hybrid, and remote workplaces, and (most importantly) help employees feel connected in a time full of isolation and nonstop changes. What will those changes look like for your company?

As you prepare for your company's future, we've compiled emerging trends and return-to-work plans. We'll look at how other companies are adapting—along with tips to make the transition period a bit easier. Let's explore the future of the office as workplaces adapt to the next phase of COVID-19 and beyond.



PART I

Back to Business: Returning to the Office Full-Time

For some companies, working from home provided challenges and was less conducive to productivity than the way things were before. Some companies just run more smoothly with everyone on site - driving stronger communication and in-person collaboration across teams. That's why many businesses are planning to go back to the office permanently.

For one, remote work can make it difficult for new employees to integrate with their teams. It can also make jobs that require a great deal of face time feel more distant and less engaging —

44%

of employees have experienced video call fatigue² since the pandemic began.

For some larger or highly cross-functional organizations, executives feel a return to the office is necessary to promote collaboration, creativity, and productivity³.



At first, returning to the office may require a little creativity as COVID-19 concerns persist. If you plan on reopening your office, you may wish to implement added safety guidelines and procedures, such as:



- ✓ Requiring temperature checks at the entrance to your office building
- ✓ Providing personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks and face shields to employees upon entering the building
- ✓ Enforcing social distancing
- ✓ Placing hand sanitizing stations at frequently-trafficked office areas
- ✓ Frequently disinfecting workspaces, like meeting rooms and cubicles
- ✓ Encouraging sick employees to stay home

Guidelines change daily depending on national guidance, new variants, and COVID rates in your area, so it's important for your HR team to stay up-to-date on CDC and local guidelines.

A return to the office may help certain companies feel more connected and rebuild a strong culture among employees who miss the communal aspect of their jobs. As you transition back to the office, consider how you can bring people together and help them assimilate to their new (old) routine.

76% In fact, 76% of employees miss eating and socializing with colleagues, according to a recent survey conducted by DoorDash for Business⁴.

DoorDash for Business [Group Orders](#) are a way to bring your team together at mealtimes or fuel meetings when you're back in the office. Orders arrive individually packaged and labeled to help employees enjoy their meal safely.

Some major companies have decided the office is here to stay (for now, that is). Apple CEO Tim Cook recently shared that Apple employees will be largely returning to the office in the future, remarking that innovation and collaboration can't be planned on a video call⁵. Amazon has invested in new office headquarters and created upwards of 3,500 jobs, also citing the ability to collaborate and better train new employees as reasons for the move⁶.



PART II

Work From Anywhere: Transitioning to Fully-Remote

For other companies, remote work has allowed their employees and their culture to thrive. The pandemic only proved that they could exist entirely remote – and do it well. Several major companies have led the charge, like outdoors and sports retailer REI, which made waves for selling its newly-formed corporate headquarters to give employees the choice of working from anywhere⁷. Similarly, Twitter has encouraged its employees to stay remote, no matter what happens with the pandemic⁸.

These companies have found that, if their employees can be just as productive working remotely – and potentially happier, too – then there’s nothing keeping them in the office. Prior to the pandemic, the average employee spent 225 hours per year (or over 9 full days) commuting to and from work⁹. That’s time that adds stress to employees’ lives and impacts their productivity and efficiency.

Now, many employees have come to enjoy the freedom and flexibility that remote work can provide.

44%

of employees report they want to continue working remotely because they prefer it (not just because they have to)¹⁰, as of January 2021.

Interestingly, a 2020 DoorDash study of 1,000 working Americans found that 80% of respondents consider the ability to eat at any time one of the top advantages of working from home¹¹.

Talent acquisition professionals also see remote work as a way to attract top talent from around the country or globe—removing some of the geographical barriers that can prevent skilled workers from applying to your company.

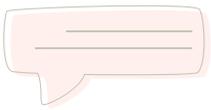
The key to a successful remote workplace lies in maintaining a shared culture and encouraging work-life boundaries. Though many employees do find freedom through remote work, the pandemic has overloaded them with information and caused some to feel like they're always "on." Here are some ways to help:



63%

of employees have seen the number of meetings on their calendar increase, and 60% have found their working hours go up¹².

One of the best ways to help them manage this is to encourage setting working hours on the calendar ([Google Calendar](#) has a "working hours" feature that lets employees add this to your schedule so no one books meetings outside those hours).



Remind employees that email requests don't require responses once the workday ends. Lead by example: ask managers and executives to refrain from sending after-hours emails, too.

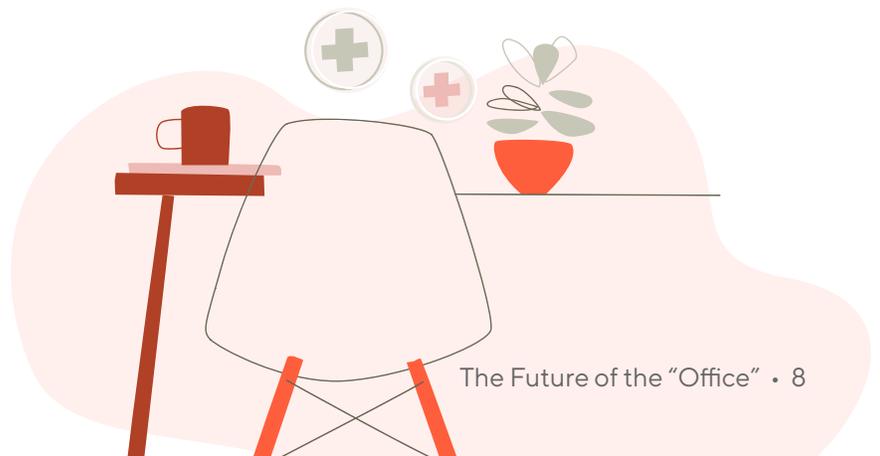


Keep employees in touch through various virtual events – including ones with a non-work theme. During the pandemic, companies adapted by hosting virtual pet shows where employees could show off furry friends, starting book or movie clubs, or hosting happy hours or virtual meals¹³.



Give employees the gift of time and nourishment. Offering a [DashPass for Employees](#) subscription to remote employees is another way to support them. It lets them order high-quality, nourishing food with free delivery and reduced service fees on eligible orders, so they can put lunch on autopilot, spend less time preparing food, and enjoy their meal when it arrives.

Remote work doesn't have to be isolating. It has allowed many companies to thrive – even beyond the pandemic.



PART III

Flexible Office: Hybrid Remote and In-Office Schedules

Many companies have seen success with a remote work model, but recognize the value of intentional co-location, face-to-face collaboration, and in-person brainstorms. Thus, offices are adopting a hybrid model where employees spend part of their time working from home, and the remaining time working from an office.

A recent Gartner survey found that

82%

of company leaders plan to allow remote work at least some of the time¹⁴.

In the same PwC survey, **only 5%** of executives were on board with full-time remote work, **while the majority of respondents (29%) felt 3 days a week in-office presented a happy medium.**

A PwC survey corroborates these results:

83%

of executives feel the shift to remote work has been successful¹⁵ as of January of 2021.



So far, the hybrid work model is manifesting in a few key ways:

Office Hoteling



Hoteling (also known as hot-desking) is similar to treating the office like a coworking space. Rather than having a permanent desk of their own, employees will schedule their use of workspaces or desks and show up on the assigned day. This model allows employers to maintain flexibility, limit the amount of workers in a given space, and reduce real estate costs as more workers can work safely in less space.

Employees' Choice



Some companies are letting their staff members choose whether they'd like to remain remote or come into the office full-time. With this model, employees still work on teams together whether they're in the office or at home. Some companies may require remote employees to come into the office from time to time for meetings.

Remote Fridays



Other companies are treating remote work like a benefit, offering remote Fridays to allow employees greater freedom as they head into their weekends. You may even choose to let employees work a half-day or institute “flex hours” on Fridays, or provide DoorDash for Business [Expensed Meals](#) – which lets employees order anytime, anywhere with a budget you set – to cover their lunch hour.

As for how hybrid work is playing out at companies so far?

Citigroup is planning to reopen its offices in July at 50% capacity, allowing employees to work remote at least part of the time¹⁶. Meanwhile, law firm Allen & Overy plans to let teams come in and out of the office – possibly for weeks at a time – as their project needs demand¹⁷.

These models may continue to evolve as more employees become vaccinated. For now, many of these hybrid models still take into account COVID safety and restrictions on gathering.





PART IV

Maintaining Balance — Whether Together or Apart

No matter how you decide to evolve your office, support your employees and help them through this time of transition. Consider that your plans for reopening may impact employees, communication, and continuity at your company. Your updated plan will likely require employees to adjust the new routines they've adopted, and it's important to be accommodating and understanding as you work through these changes.

So many lives have changed since the start of the pandemic — people have moved to new cities, grown their families, and been forced to make significant adaptations to their lives. Hold an open dialogue with your employees about how their needs have changed and what that means in relation to the future of your business.

What employees crave most is balance, flexibility and equitable treatment. Especially as a result of the pandemic, employees are struggling with their mental health and work-life balance.



Since 2020, workdays are now 7-32 minutes longer on average, with fewer breaks¹⁸.



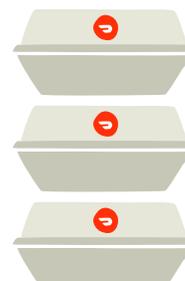
The “always on” mentality of remote work has also taken a toll on your team, even if they're headed back to the office. **So how can you satisfy the need for work-life balance as you ease into the new normal?**

Rethink Workplace Benefits

During the pandemic, many companies have considered reevaluating their benefits packages in line with changing cultural and geographical needs. It's clear that many of the old benefits – discount programs, gym and recreation center memberships – are less relevant now that employees have moved, adjusted to new schedules, and developed new priorities.

57% of senior leaders report that their companies are considering benefits that support employees in work and life¹⁹

– but it's easier said than done to determine what your staff really needs. Think about perks that help employees on an everyday basis, like childcare, flexible hours, and even food.



85% of employees said regular food delivery would increase their job satisfaction, and **75% feel food would make them more productive at work**, according to a recent DoorDash survey²⁰.

From [Expensed Meals](#) to [DashPass for Employees](#), DoorDash solutions help your employees worry less, feed their families with ease, and stay nourished throughout their day.

Facilitate Connections

Two-thirds of employees report feeling social isolation amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which can lead to anxiety, depression, and other conditions that affect work and employees' overall wellbeing²¹. Employees want to be connected to the people they work with. They want to take part in your shared culture – and feel like their contributions are valued. It's important to bridge these gaps, especially in a hybrid or remote setting.

Feeling connected to colleagues, supervisors, and to the company itself is also a key factor in employee engagement.



Engaged employees have 17% higher productivity, leading to 24% less turnover, and realize 21% greater profitability²² – so it’s well worth your while to help them feel like they’re part of something.

As you think about how to facilitate connections in the next phase of your workplace, consider implementing regular team building opportunities, whether virtual or in-office. These could include:



Host Zoom team building activities.

[Zoom](#) meetings (or your preferred video conferencing app of choice) are a great way to get facetime while apart. Consider hosting creative [virtual events and activities](#) like workout classes, trivia night, webinars, and more. Or, schedule periodic happy hours and arrange DoorDash for Business [Expensed Meals](#) so everyone can share drinks and/or bites together.



Throw holiday parties and special events.

As the world begins to open back up, you can start to program in-person events. Even if you’ve gone fully remote, you can host off-site holiday parties, conferences, and meetings. Or, fly employees out to your office (or a rented space) for quarterly planning meetings – and be sure to incorporate team-building activities into the schedule.



Encourage cross-channel dialogue.

What happens to watercooler conversations if there is no watercooler? It’s not impossible for remote employees to achieve the same level of banter as their office counterparts. Simply designate #watercooler or #icebreaker channels on [Slack](#) where all of your employees (whether remote, office, or hybrid) can share friendly communication, jokes, fun facts – or anything that gets the conversation going.

A top-down view of a desk with a white keyboard, a silver pen, and a lined notebook, all set against a solid orange background.

PART V

Navigating the New Normal

Making decisions about the future of your workplace is a tough call. The main thing you can do is to make your employees feel informed and heard during this period. COVID-19 forced them to adapt to new routines, face new sources of stress, and in some cases, move cross-country. Many parents are still dealing with children at home.

As things start to firm up, it's important to set expectations, communicate your plan, and identify the timelines your plan will be in place by.

It's no secret that food is one of the most powerful ways to bring people together, reduce stress, and improve overall happiness. If there's one way you can make employees' lives easier as you transition, it's making sure they never have to worry about the stress of preparing food.

For every work setting, there's a [DoorDash for Business](#) solution that keeps employees nourished and focused. Whether it's [Expensed Meals](#) that help them power through Zoom meetings, [Group Orders](#) for that first day back in the office, or a [DashPass for Employees](#) subscription that gives staff flexibility between remote and office days, food is the benefit that gives back.

Let us help your employees adjust to the new normal – whatever that looks like for you.

[Get DoorDash for Business](#)

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