

The challenges of hybrid and remote work

“In addition to social and emotional challenges, hybrid work can bring about a range of organisational difficulties, particularly in the areas of communication, coordination, and task management.



Introduction

The ReWork Project aims to enhance employees' efficiency and well-being, in remote work context, particularly among disadvantaged or underrepresented populations. As a first step, the ReWork Project team conducted a survey to collect data across four European countries: France, Greece, Germany, and Spain. This questionnaire was distributed to employees working in various sectors and holding diverse professional profiles.

The objective of this study is to offer a comprehensive overview of **how hybrid work is implemented and experienced across four European countries**, based on over 300 valid responses.

The data reveal that hybrid work is now **a standard mode of work**, with 85.8% of respondents currently working in hybrid arrangements, most often two or three days per week. However, only 65.7% of respondents report that their organisation has a structured policy to support hybrid work, while 17.8% operate under only partially structured frameworks, and 16.5% report no policy at all. This lack of formalisation may lead to **poor communication and inconsistencies in access to resources**.

The survey also reveals **significant gaps in training and upskilling**. Only 19.9% of respondents state that their organisation offers structured training on managing motivation in hybrid environment. A further 21.2% report partial training provision, while the majority (58.9%) report no training at all. This lack of structured training on management motivation may negatively affect long-term performance and employee engagement.

When it comes to perceived challenges, respondents **report strong concerns about social interaction**. The rarefaction of informal relationships and the general deterioration of social dynamics suggest that **hybrid models risk weakening workplace cohesion and collaboration**, especially in terms of informal, and cross-functional communication.

Regarding individual well-being, moderate feelings of isolation and exclusion are reported. Though not predominant, these experiences raise concerns about psychological safety and inclusion.

Organisational challenges focus on the reduction of feedback and discussion opportunities and unclear expectations.

Managerial issues are more visible. Respondents highlight less recognition, fewer development opportunities, and burnout as persistent concerns. The quality of employee–manager relationships is moderately impacted, although work–life balance is largely maintained.

Based on these results, we can say that hybrid work is now an established practice, but its success depends on more than just flexibility. To ensure equity, motivation, and cohesion, organisations must invest in structured policies, formal training on managing remote teams, inclusive leadership, employee recognition, and professional development, all of which are critical to ensure performance and engagement in remote and hybrid work environments.



Challenges of remote work

One of the main challenges of remote and hybrid work is the reduction in social interaction. To better understand this issue in the European context, we begin by examining in detail the perceived deterioration of social relationships in hybrid work environments.



Social interactions and communication

One of the main challenges associated with hybrid work is the deterioration of social interactions and communication dynamics among individuals within companies. The survey shows that many employees perceive a decline in social interaction and communication quality as a significant challenge in hybrid work environments.

The strongest concern emerges around the rarefaction of opportunities to build and maintain personal relationships at work. This reflects a widely shared feeling that hybrid work makes it harder to maintain the informal, everyday interactions that are key to workplace cohesion. Similarly, the overall deterioration of social interactions points to a noticeable decline in social dynamics for many employees.

The degradation of team cooperation and idea exchange and reduced cross-functional communication and collaboration reinforce this trend. Employees appear to experience not only reduced contact, but also a weakening of collaborative energy, particularly across teams and departments.

These results highlight the **social fragmentation in hybrid work context**. While not extreme in every area, the consistently moderate-to-high scores across all indicators suggest that social ties, informal collaboration are under pressure. To maintain a strong organisational culture and team cohesion, companies will need to invest in deliberate efforts to foster connection, especially outside formal meetings, such as during informal events like team-building activities.



Individual feelings

Beyond organisational or relational issues, hybrid work can also affect employees on a more personal level. This category explores how remote or partially remote work may lead to feelings of exclusion, isolation, or vulnerability.

Among the three items, the sense of isolation ranked highest, followed by exclusion and vulnerability. While none of these scores are extremely high, they do indicate that a significant portion of employees experience **some degree of psychological discomfort or disconnection in hybrid environment**.

The relatively lower scores compared to other challenge categories suggest that these issues are less widespread but still meaningful. In particular, feelings of being left out or unsupported may not affect all employees, but for those who do report them, the impact on engagement, motivation, and mental well-being could be significant.



Organisational issues

In addition to social and emotional challenges, hybrid work can bring about a range of organisational difficulties, particularly in the areas of communication, coordination, and task management.

The most prominent issue appears to be the reduction in opportunities for discussion and feedback. This suggests that many employees feel hybrid work limit informal exchanges.

There is also a moderate perception of unclear expectations and priorities, which may arise from inconsistent communication or a lack of structured frameworks in hybrid contexts. This challenge is particularly relevant in companies where hybrid work policies are informal or only partially defined.

Other organisational concerns, such as inefficient use of time, increased conflict at work, decreased productivity, and lesser performance, scored relatively low. This implies that employees do not generally perceive hybrid work as damaging to their output or efficiency, and that the practical functioning of hybrid teams may be more resilient than initially expected.



Managerial issues

Hybrid work also introduces managerial challenges that affect both team dynamics and individual development. The data reveal a set of concerns related to recognition, communication with managers, well-being, and career advancement, these areas are closely tied to the role and presence of leadership.

The most prominent issue in this category appears to be less recognition. This indicates that many employees feel **their contributions are less visible or valued in hybrid work settings**, possibly due to fewer face-to-face interactions or unbalanced visibility across remote and on-site staff. Closely linked to this, the perception of having **fewer development opportunities** and more burnout or fatigue also emerge as key concerns. These results indicate that for a considerable number of employees, hybrid work may limit access to growth pathways and increase mental stress, especially if managerial support is lacking or inconsistent.

Optimising hybrid work : what employees need most

Employees were asked to identify the key organisational practices and cultural elements that would help optimise remote and hybrid work. Their responses provide a clear roadmap for what workers value most in this evolving work model. Across 20+ dimensions, a strong consensus emerged about the following: hybrid work is not just about flexibility in location, it must be grounded in principles of equity, inclusion, communication, trust, and continuous development. To achieve this, employees believe that organisations must move beyond logistical fixes and **actively cultivate a more intentional and inclusive work culture**. This involves formalising hybrid work policies to ensure fairness and clarity in expectations and resource distribution, while actively training managers to lead with empathy, flexibility, and inclusiveness. Employees also call for **more equitable career development pathways through mentoring, feedback, and socialisation opportunities** that are accessible regardless of work location. In addition, companies should reinforce open and respectful communication and maintain safe channels for reporting inappropriate behaviour. Finally, optimising hybrid work also requires recognising employees' diverse backgrounds and personal responsibilities, with targeted efforts to support those who are underrepresented or face structural disadvantages. By responding to these priorities, organisations can transform hybrid work into a model that promotes equity, engagement, motivation, well-being and long-term performance.

Conclusion

This survey was conducted during a period when hybrid work has shifted from an emergency response to a normalised, structured component of work in many organisations across Europe. The data gathered across four countries and diverse sectors reflects a significant evolution in both practices and expectations surrounding remote and hybrid work. Since the disruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic, hybrid work has matured, not only in terms of implementation but also in how employees perceive its potential and limitations.

When asked what would truly optimise hybrid work, employees widely shared a common vision, one that moves beyond flexibility to prioritise fairness, inclusion, trust, and purposeful leadership. The most valued organisational practices include **equal access to information and career development, respectful communication, and targeted support for underrepresented groups**.

In light of these findings, this report does not just document a shift in work modalities, it reveals a broader cultural transformation underway. Hybrid work, as it continues to mature, offers a unique opportunity to rethink how organisations build trust, recognise talent, and support every individual's development, regardless of where they work. The success of this model now relies less on technology or scheduling, and more on companies' ability to foster an effective, collaborative, and formally inclusive remote work culture.