

Bachelor Graduation Project

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Cultural Readiness for Modern Work Environments

**A Design Management Approach to Address
Cultural Gaps in Modern Work: Making
Hybrid Work More Human-Centered**

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Abstract

This bachelor's thesis explores the systemic area of fostering self-actualization in contemporary work environments, the ability for individuals to find purpose and exercise autonomy in their roles. While these needs exist across all work models, the shift toward hybrid and remote work has amplified existing cultural gaps, making them more visible and urgent.

The study examines how organizations can move from control-based systems to cultures that enable intrinsic motivation, trust, and continuous learning. It asks how teams can redefine productivity as something personally meaningful, and what conditions are needed to support that shift.

Findings show that although structural flexibility is often granted, the cultural foundations necessary for healthy work environments are frequently lacking. Participants described experiencing a lack of trust, feeling disconnected from purpose and excluded from shaping their work.

These findings led to the creation of an adaptable facilitation card toolkit, designed to promote more adaptive, human-centered, and sustainable ways of working through gentle nudges. Rather than offering a single, one-size-fits-all solution, the toolkit acknowledges the systemic interconnectedness of work environments. It aims to foster the emergence of change by encouraging reflection, dialogue, and small-scale experiments. By doing so, it supports the strengthening of work cultures built on trust, leadership, purpose, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation. Ultimately, this approach seeks to make work environments more human-centered, especially enabling hybrid work settings to thrive.

Keywords: *Cultural Gaps, Self-Actualization, Intrinsic Motivation, Trust-Based Work Culture, Autonomy, Purpose*

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Glossary

A

Autonomy

The ability of employees to exercise control over how, when, and where they complete their work, fostering ownership, responsibility, and intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Asynchronous

In asynchronous environments, team members don't need to be online simultaneously to collaborate. This approach relies on async communication methods like emails, project management tools, and recorded video calls, allowing remote employees to complete tasks independently of specific hours.

B

Bureaucracy

refers to organizational structures characterized by rigid hierarchies, standardized procedures, and control-based oversight. In hybrid work, lingering bureaucratic mindsets can undermine autonomy and trust (Reeves et al. 2020).

C

Continuous Learning

The ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for personal or professional growth. In organizations, it supports adaptability, innovation, and resilience (Senge, 1990).

H

Human-Centered

An approach that considers humans as part of a larger living system, expanding beyond individual needs to include social, environmental, and planetary wellbeing. This thesis draws on life-centered principles to support systemic, sustainable change in work culture.

Hybrid Work

Describes work models that combine in-office and remote work, offering flexibility in how employees organize their work time and location. It amplifies cultural gaps related to trust, purpose, and collaboration if not intentionally supported (Steelcase, 2022).

I

Intrinsic Motivation

Refers to the internal drive to engage in work for its inherent satisfaction and meaning, rather than external rewards. It thrives when autonomy, competence, and relatedness are supported (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

L

Learning Organization

An organization that facilitates the learning of its members and continuously transforms itself by encouraging openness, experimentation, and reflective dialogue (Senge, 1990).

O

Organizational Culture

Refers to the shared values, beliefs, behaviors, and practices that shape how work is performed and how individuals interact within the organization (Schein, 2010).

Organizational Models

Refers to the overarching system design that defines decision-making, power distribution, and work structures, such as hierarchical, flat, networked, or sociocratic models.

P

Purpose

The sense that one's work contributes meaningfully to a larger goal or value. In this thesis, purpose is seen as a driver of intrinsic motivation.

S

Self-actualization

The process of realizing one's full potential through meaningful, self-directed work. In hybrid settings, it involves personal growth supported by organizational structures that encourage autonomy, purpose, and continuous learning.

T

Trust

In this thesis, trust refers to the mutual belief between employees and leadership that individuals act responsibly and with integrity, allowing flexibility without over-surveillance or rigid control (Steelcase, 2022).

Introduction

The Systemic Area

Hybrid work is no longer a short-term response to crisis, it is an **evolving reality shaping organizational life**. Literature on post-pandemic work cultures shows that hybrid models are exposing a **growing gap between formal organizational design and the lived experience** of employees (Bilderback & Kilpatrick, 2024; Steelcase, 2022). While the adoption of flexible tools and policies is widespread, motivation, cohesion, and adaptability remain fragile.

The Complexity of Hybrid Work

Hybrid work has evolved from a temporary crisis response to a strategic organizational model, blending remote and in-office work arrangements. However, research indicates that while hybrid work offers structural flexibility, it often lacks the cultural support necessary for it to thrive. Hybrid work is not only a coordination of two physical spaces, home and office, but a complex interplay of physical, digital, social, and temporal dimensions (Vartiainen & Vanharanta, 2024). These multiple spaces create opportunities but also pose challenges, particularly around maintaining motivation, connection, and purpose.

Recent studies highlight that while flexible work arrangements can enhance autonomy, they can also worsen feelings of isolation and disconnection if not culturally supported (Steelcase, 2022; Leesman, 2024). The absence of shared rituals, psychological safety, and a sense of collective purpose can transform flexibility from an asset into a liability (Bilderback & Kilpatrick, 2024). Hybrid work environments thus require not only structural flexibility but also cultural coherence to support employee well-being and performance.

Leadership and Trust in Hybrid Work

Trust is a foundational element in hybrid work, but it cannot be imposed. Bateson (2021) emphasizes that trust is not simply a state of mind but an emergent property of relational dynamics.

Trust in hybrid environments is built through consistent actions, transparent communication, and a culture that encourages psychological safety and shared learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Conversely, a lack of trust can lead to control-based management practices, which undermine motivation and engagement (Steelcase, 2022).

Leadership is a critical factor in hybrid work environments, as it directly influences trust, motivation, and psychological safety. Effective leadership in hybrid settings involves more than task management; it requires creating an environment where employees feel trusted and empowered (Senge, 2006). Leaders who foster open communication, recognize employee contributions, and provide clarity around expectations are more likely to maintain team motivation and cohesion (Vartiainen & Vanharanta, 2024).

Intrinsic Motivation and Purpose

Intrinsic motivation, the drive to engage in activities for their inherent satisfaction, is a critical factor in sustaining employee engagement, especially in hybrid settings. According to Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), intrinsic motivation is supported by three core elements: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In hybrid work environments, autonomy is often provided structurally (e.g., flexible hours), but without a supportive culture that fosters trust and recognition, it can quickly become superficial (Laloux, 2014).

Purpose is another critical factor influencing motivation. Employees who see how their work contributes to broader organizational goals are more likely to feel engaged and motivated (Maslow, 1943). The transition to hybrid work, however, can disrupt this alignment. According to McKinsey & Company (2023), the absence of clear communication and visible leadership in hybrid settings can diminish employees' sense of purpose and connection to the organization's mission. Therefore, creating a sense of purpose requires not only clarity in communication but also an environment where employees can connect their tasks to meaningful outcomes.

The Role of Communication and Learning

Communication is not just a transactional process in hybrid work but a foundation for building trust, alignment, and shared understanding. Research shows that in hybrid environments, communication must be clear, regular, and multi-directional to maintain team cohesion (Senge, 2006; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Informal communication channels, such as virtual coffee breaks or peer mentoring, can mitigate the loss of spontaneous interactions common in traditional office settings Buła et al. (2024).

In addition, organizations that support continuous learning are more resilient in hybrid contexts. Senge (2006) describes learning organizations as those that build capacity for change by aligning personal mastery, shared vision, and systems thinking. Hybrid work environments can enhance learning if they provide opportunities for reflection, feedback, and experimentation (Bateson, 2021). However, without a culture that values learning, employees may experience hybrid work as isolating rather than empowering.

Challenges of Traditional Work Models

The transition to hybrid work has revealed the limitations of traditional bureaucratic models, which are characterized by control, standardization, and rigid hierarchies. As Reeves et al. (2020) argue, these models are increasingly misaligned with today's dynamic environments, which demand adaptability, innovation, and decentralized decision-making. "Bureaucracies are inherently ill-suited for these new imperatives: static organizational rules inhibit adaptation; top-down hierarchies are predicated on forecasting and planning rather than experimentation and learning" (Reeves et al., 2020, p. 3).

Building on this critique, Bateson (2022) introduces the concept of ready-ing, which emphasizes that instead of imposing change through rigid structures, organizations should focus on creating the conditions that allow change to emerge organically. This perspective shifts the role of leadership and design from directive control to nurturing environments in which transformation becomes possible.

Research Gap

Much research has explored the challenges of remote and hybrid work, workplace and leadership culture, and digital transformation. However, many studies tend to address these aspects in isolation, focusing on factors like technology use or employee well-being without fully examining the complex interplay among cultural, structural, physical, and digital factors.

This thesis adopts a systemic approach, recognizing that these elements are deeply interconnected. It highlights how cultural aspects of hybrid work, such as autonomy, trust, and intrinsic motivation, are influenced and shaped by structural and digital factors. By understanding these relationships, organizations can more effectively navigate the transition to hybrid work environments and foster conditions for sustainable success.

Research Intent and Boundaries

This thesis explores the cultural dimensions of hybrid work environments, with a focus on understanding how organizations can create positive, human-centered, and sustainable work cultures. The main question guiding this study is: **"What are the key aspects an organization must explore when building a positive work environment, and how can these be addressed strategically to foster a broader cultural shift?"**

The research draws on insights from knowledge workers primarily in corporate and creative roles, who are engaged in hybrid work settings. Although the findings are informed by these participants, they are not confined to a single organization or sector, providing a broader understanding of cultural dynamics in diverse work environments.

This study is exploratory in nature, emphasizing cultural factors such as autonomy, trust, and intrinsic motivation, elements that are critical for thriving in hybrid work contexts. While the sample size is limited due to time constraints, the research aims to highlight systemic cultural insights rather than provide a prescriptive solution, offering a foundation for understanding the cultural foundations that make hybrid work more meaningful and sustainable.

Biases and Role Reflection

To reflect on my role in this process, I drew on Deepa Iyer's (2022) Social Change Ecosystem framework. Three roles especially shaped how I approached and interpreted the research:

- As a Weaver, I connected insights across my research. I identified patterns between the social, digital, physical, and temporal dimensions of hybrid work, recognizing how interdependence between these “spaces” shapes motivation, purpose, and trust. This role helped me move from isolated pain points to a systemic view of workplace culture.
- As a Storyteller, I focused on making lived experiences visible. Through narrative framing and thematic synthesis, I made sense of what people said about their work. This role allowed me to translate complex, sometimes contradictory experiences into a coherent understanding of what makes hybrid work either empowering or depleting.
- As a Builder, I translated insight into intervention. The card-based prototype I developed is not a fixed solution, but a structure meant to support small shifts in mindset, reflection, and team dialogue. This role helped me move from analysis to action, designing something tangible that could support self-actualization and trust in a flexible and participatory way.

Research Process

Learning Journey

Figure 1 visualizes my learning journey as well as the design research process throughout this project. It traces five iterative cycles, from exploration to transformation, showing how insights evolved through learning, sense-making, and participatory design.

Key Learnings: Understanding hybrid work as a dynamic system, not just the combination of home and office spaces. Seeing the importance of continuous learning and adaptability in organizations facing constant change. Moving from focusing on technical fixes to recognizing deeper cultural and relational challenges.

Key Learnings: Listening to lived experiences revealed a richer, more human perspective on hybrid work. Engaging with both employees and experts highlighted the importance of relational dynamics and cultural context. Diverse perspectives helped refine the research focus.

Key Learnings: Understanding the complex interdependence between leadership culture, trust, intrinsic motivation, internal communication, adaptability, continuous learning, and cross-collaboration, and moving away from viewing them as isolated challenges to recognizing them as part of a deeply connected cultural system.

Key Learnings: Shifting from emerging themes to lived experiences helped ground the research and make the complexity and interconnectedness more visible.

Key Learnings: Using participatory design to develop meaningful and human-centered interventions for systemic change. Shifting from fixed outcomes to flexible nudges emphasized the importance of creating conditions for change rather than prescribing it. Understanding systemic change as a layered process highlighted the role of small, adaptable interventions over one-size-fits-all solutions.

Figure 1
Learning journey and design research process across five iterative cycles.
Note. Figure created by the author.

Design Research Process

1. Cycle Exploring

- Engaging with literature
- Framing systemic area
- Defining research methods
- Developing research question

2. Cycle Engaging

- Conducting interviews and qualitative surveys
- Engaging in learning and reflection cycles
- Engaging to understand the system
- Reframing systemic area

3. Cycle Synthesis

- Analyzing collected data
- Identifying Themes and Patterns
- Formulate key findings
- Thematic Analysis and Triangulation
- Fostering understanding through visualizations and maps
- Defining areas of opportunities
- Reframing research question

4. Cycle Sensemaking

- Engaging in sense-making cycles
- Implementing feedback and learnings
- Engaging with further literature
- Conducting cultural probes
- Defining performance specifications

5. Cycle Transforming

- Co-designing possible interventions
- Refine intervention
- Prototyping the intervention
- Testing the intervention
- Implementing feedback
- Reflecting and evaluating performance specifications

1. *Cycle*

Exploring

The aim of this phase was to build a foundational understanding of the systemic conditions that shape contemporary, specifically hybrid work environments.

Engage with Literature

This research method focused on identifying patterns related to organizational models, such as bureaucracy and learning organizations, as well as key concepts like trust, leadership, autonomy, and organizational culture.

Beyond providing a theoretical foundation, the engagement with literature served as a dynamic tool throughout the research process.

This process was further enriched by access to relevant literature provided by experts from Vitra, which offered additional perspectives and insights. The literature helped identify areas for further investigation, guided the design of primary research, and supported the validation of findings. By continuously engaging with these resources, the research approach was refined, ensuring a deeper understanding, adaptability, and alignment with existing knowledge.

Participants: -

2. Cycle

Understanding

This cycle aimed to uncover lived experiences of hybrid work across different perspectives. The goal was to understand how social connection, productivity, autonomy, learning, engagement and purpose show up in daily work.

Qualitative Surveys

Qualitative surveys were conducted to further explore key dimensions of hybrid work identified in the literature, including social connection, physical workspace, productivity, learning, and knowledge sharing.

These dimensions were chosen because they represent critical factors that influence employee well-being, motivation, and the capacity for adaptation and innovation, while playing a pivotal role in shaping and sustaining organizational culture within hybrid environments.

Participants:

- 15 Hybrid employees across various fields

Interview

While the qualitative survey focused on employee experiences, this interview provided a complementary viewpoint, offering insights into how these factors are lived and experienced by leadership.

By examining hybrid work through the lens of a Change Manager, this interview strengthened the research by bridging the gap between employee experiences and leadership strategies, revealing how cultural coherence, motivation, and adaptability are maintained at a strategic level within the organization.

Participants:

- 1 Change Manager of an int. org. (hybrid)

Informal Interviews

These informal interviews provided a third perspective, enriching the research with practical, field-based observations. The discussions aimed to connect and refine the previously identified themes, revealing how they are experienced, interpreted, and applied by professionals who directly engage with them in their work environment.

This perspective strengthened the research by bridging theoretical insights with practical expertise, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the investigated topics.

Participants:

- 4 Experts in workplace design from Vitra

3. Cycle

Synthesis

This cycle focused on synthesizing data across all sources to identify systemic patterns and themes. Through iterative clustering and triangulation, key insights were framed, highlighting the interdependence of trust, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation.

Thematic Analysis and Triangulation

The thematic analysis was used to cluster and code the collected qualitative data from interviews, qualitative surveys and expert discussions, as well as cultural probes in a later cycle. Through triangulation the data was systemically analyzed. This method allowed for the identification of recurring patterns and key themes, such as the interdependence of trust, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation.

By cross-referencing these insights with existing literature, the analysis validated the findings, ensuring that they were grounded in both theoretical knowledge and practical experiences. Table 1 provides a summary of these findings, each supported by existing literature.

Table 1
Summary of Emerging Research Findings from Thematic Analysis and Triangulation [table content continues]

Legend:

- QS:** Qualitative Survey with 15 employees working hybrid from various fields
- IN:** Interview with a change manager from an international, hybrid organization
- EV:** Informal interviews with 5 experts from Vitra
- CP:** Cultural Probes with 3 employees working hybrid from various fields

Summary of the Emerging Research Findings / Thematic Analysis and Triangulation			
Guiding Research Question: "What are the key aspects an organization must explore when building a positive work environment, and how can these be adressed strategically to foster a broader cultural shift? "			
Theme	Finding Summary	Supporting Quotes	Supporting Literature
Trust & Transparency	Trust is foundational for hybrid work, enabling autonomy, collaboration, and psychological safety. Yet it is often undermined by inconsistent leadership signals and fragmented communication. Without clarity and follow-through, employees may feel disconnected or hesitant to take initiative, eroding the very conditions hybrid work depends on.	EV: An employee at Vitra emphasized that for a hybrid work environment to be effective, it must be grounded in trust, respect, and a sense of humanness. These values need to be actively demonstrated and nurtured by leadership and management in order to create a culture where hybrid work can thrive. QS: "The biggest challenge I see is trusting in employees working from home. Self-discipline is essential for remote work, some take advantage and are less productive, which creates unfairness for colleagues who maintain their productivity." CP: "I feel a lot of energy when I think about the trust and responsibility that has been given to me."	Hybrid work requires trust in employee initiative and maturity. "You cannot simply say 'trust is needed' and hope it will be formed. Trust is the result of relational possibility, not a mental state to adopt. It must be allowed to shape as is possible in the particularities between people" (Bateson, 2022). Research suggests that remote work requires high levels of trust and autonomy. Trust between managers and employees is fundamental to the success of remote work. Leaders who trust their employees and give them autonomy are more likely to see higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity (Felstead & Henseke, 2017)

Table 1 (continued)

Summary of the Emerging Research Findings / Thematic Analysis and Triangulation			
Guiding Research Question: "What are the key aspects an organization must explore when building a positive work environment, and how can these be addressed strategically to foster a broader cultural shift? "			
Theme	Finding Summary	Supporting Quotes	Supporting Literature
Intrinsic Motivation	In hybrid work environments, intrinsic motivation is essential for engagement and adaptability . However, it can only thrive when supported by autonomy, trust, and a culture that values self-direction, conditions often missing in bureaucratic work models.	<p>CP: "I find meaning in the moments where my input is being taken into account, whether that's during brainstorming sessions or when I'm asked to independently lead a piece of a project, especially when I can see (with a delay of course) some elements of my ideas come to life in projects."</p> <p>"In our hybrid environment, meaningful work can only happen in my opinion when clear purpose and ownership is attached to tasks."</p> <p>IN: "I am a super believer that we always learn and ongoing learning. But you are the one who does it. I can push you to the unit but if you don't go the unit, then it's up to you."</p> <p>EV: Adapting to (office) changes requires an open mindset and intrinsic motivation. Employees who are able to reflect on their role within the change and manage their own expectations are more likely to adapt successfully.</p>	<p>Personal ownership and intrinsic motivation are foundational for meaningful organizational change. People are more likely to adapt and engage when they feel internally aligned with the process, not externally pressured. As Senge (2006) noted, "The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels" (p. 4).</p> <p>Self-determination and proactive learning are essential traits in remote and hybrid work settings. A learning-supportive culture is built around autonomy, self-responsibility, and personal initiative. Successfully shaping organizational culture in the remote work era requires committing to continuous learning, adapting to new challenges and challenging traditional norms to embrace innovative working methods (Bilderback & Kilpatrick, 2024)</p>
Leadership Culture	Leadership plays a critical role in shaping cultural adaptability . Control-based approaches can hinder change. Effective leaders model trust, care, and vulnerability , creating space for learning and psychological safety . When these conditions are present, employees are more likely to embrace new ways of working and engage in self-directed growth.	<p>QS: "Organization enforces in-office work for control, which I view as toxic, especially since the hybrid policy previously improved my productivity and well-being."</p> <p>IN: "Like any organization, you will see that their values is to work as a team and to care about people. So i care about them, I have my challenges but I make sure that we as a team we can count on each other."</p> <p>EV: Insights from a Vitra employee indicate that the success of adapting to a new office environment is strongly influenced by an organization's culture and leadership style. It can take six months to a year for employees to fully adjust to a redesigned workspace and use it to its full potential. Organizational culture plays a key role in shaping how smoothly change is embraced and integrated.</p>	<p>Transformational leadership fosters motivation and a shared sense of purpose, which is particularly vital in hybrid and evolving work environments. Transformational leadership, characterized by motivational influence, is effective in remote environments, as it fosters high-quality relationships and common goals, aiding in overcoming virtual communication challenges (Purvanova & Bono, 2009)</p> <p>Perceptions of productivity have evolved in hybrid work environments, shifting the focus from visible activity to meaningful outcomes. Employees are increasingly evaluated based on their achievements rather than their physical presence. As noted by Bilderback and Kilpatrick (2024), "presence is measured by engagement and productivity rather than physical visibility," highlighting the need for organizations to adapt their performance assessment criteria to align with the realities of remote and hybrid work models.</p>

Table 1 (continued)

Summary of the Emerging Research Findings / Thematic Analysis and Triangulation			
Guiding Research Question: "What are the key aspects an organization must explore when building a positive work environment, and how can these be addressed strategically to foster a broader cultural shift? "			
Theme	Finding Summary	Supporting Quotes	Supporting Literature
Internal Communication	Collaboration in hybrid environments relies on transparent communication and relational trust . Without shared dialogue and access to information, team dynamics weaken. Informal conversations and spontaneous exchange remain essential and must be intentionally supported.	QS: "Getting to know colleagues improved communication and made work easier" "Casual conversations strengthens collaboration and shows interest and appreciation" "Reduced transparency on workloads, causing frustration when overloaded" EV: An employee from Vitra emphasized the essential role of communication in fostering innovation within hybrid work environments. She observed that some individuals were reluctant to share knowledge with colleagues, as possessing information was perceived as a source of personal power and leverage. According to her, effective hybrid collaboration is only sustainable when trust is present, and trust, in turn, can only develop through open and consistent communication.	Transparent communication is essential not only for clarity but for cultivating a deeper sense of mutual trust . In hybrid environments, this becomes even more critical, as physical distance can amplify uncertainty and misunderstanding. "Communication is the tool that helps to build trust. Hybridity is an arrangement that is prone to confusion... Maintaining a good communication culture would be of great help to the hybrid workplace" (Smith et al., 2019, as cited in Iqbal, Khalid, & Barykin, 2021, p. 35) Communication shapes the structure of workplace relationships and social networks. Research shows that "advice networks reflect the communication of expertise and the flow of knowledge and information" (Krackhardt, 1990, p. 355).
Physical & Virtual Workspaces	The physical office must offer purpose and spaces that foster connection and belonging , complementing what remote work alone often cannot: relational depth, team cohesion, and shared identity.	CP: "I feel the most connected to my team and company overall when I am in the office and I find myself just doing my tasks when I work from home without much thought about the larger company." IN: "I see people resistant to go back to the office if they have to. I think everyone got used to this work environment.....In our organization we need to go to the office three times a week, but that does not automatically mean that I see them or interact with them." QS: "Office feels like a standard 9-to-5 job where i want to leave as quickly as possible" "A physical workspace helps separate work and leisure " "I dont go to the office if no team members are present." "The main reason I go to the office is to socialize."	Creating a workplace that fosters human connection and belonging is essential in today's hybrid environment. What people really want is to feel valued and feel a sense of belonging to their organization... The office can be a vehicle for communicating values and creating a community at work where people feel they belong. (Steelcase, 2024) Nora Bateson expands on this relational dimension. Relational possibility, not mandated 'trust' or 'collaboration', must be nourished to allow true engagement and belonging. (Bateson, 2022) "To conclude, hybrid working challenges employees' bonds to the organisation and to each other, but with an outstanding workplace , you can help maintain this social fabric by supporting the informal and collaborative dimensions of work" (Leesman, 2024, p. 27)

Table 1 (continued)

Summary of the Emerging Research Findings / Thematic Analysis and Triangulation			
Guiding Research Question: "What are the key aspects an organization must explore when building a positive work environment, and how can these be addressed strategically to foster a broader cultural shift? "			
Theme	Finding Summary	Supporting Quotes	Supporting Literature
Work-Life Boundaries	Flexibility in hybrid work supports well-being by reducing commuting stress and allowing employees to better manage caregiving responsibilities and personal routines. However, this flexibility can also blur the line between work and personal life , shifting stress into the home and extending working hours. Without clear norms and boundaries, the benefits of flexibility risk turning into pressure, overwork, and reduced recovery time.	IN: "I was struggling mentally and physically because I wasn't sleeping normal hours anymore. (due to meetings in dif. time zones). I would wake up already overwhelmed because I felt like I had to catch up." QS: "Weaker work-life separation, leading to stress during breaks and evenings" "More likely to work overtime without the need to leave the office" "Less socializing and increased solitude" "The flexible work schedule and saved time working from home allows for more time for hobbies and family." "Less stress attending early meetings (e.g., 08:00) from home without arranging childcare in advance"	"The lack of physical separation between work and personal life can sometimes lead to longer working hours and increased stress" (Felstead & Henseke, 2017) The flexibility of remote and hybrid work models has been particularly beneficial for employees balancing caregiving responsibilities. A systematic literature review highlighted that "employees appreciate the ability to manage personal and professional responsibilities more effectively, leading to better work-life balance and reduced stress levels" (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2023)
Cross-Team Collaboration	Cross-functional collaboration in hybrid settings often remains surface-level , limited to task-based exchanges. Spontaneous, trust-driven interaction between departments is rare , as hybrid structures reduce informal touchpoints. Without intentional design, collaboration across teams becomes transactional rather than relational.	EV: An employee from Vitra explained that physical separation between departments, such as being on different floors, can hinder cross-functional collaboration and knowledge sharing by creating barriers to spontaneous communication. QS: "Work-related contact with all teams but mostly superficial" "Getting to know colleagues improved communication and made work easier" "I prefer team members sitting together rather than full desk-sharing"	Cross-functional collaboration requires visibility, alignment, and accessibility across departments. Physical separation, such as being on different floors or buildings, can result in organizational silos. "When physical or structural barriers reduce interaction , collaboration suffers and communication loops break down, ultimately limiting innovation and performance" (Leesman, 2024) Hybrid work can complicate cross-functional collaboration when organizations operate under inconsistent systems, policies, or platforms across locations. This fragmentation disrupts information flow, creates extra administrative burdens, and hinders transparency. "Organizations must adopt harmonized digital systems and workflows to reduce barriers to collaboration , particularly when teams are geographically dispersed or functionally siloed" (Iqbal et al., 2021).

Note. Table created by the author based on primary qualitative data and supported by existing literature.

System Barriers and Interdependencies

Following the thematic analysis and triangulation, a deeper pattern of interconnected challenges began to emerge. While individual findings offered insights into trust, autonomy, motivation, and communication, a broader systemic picture took shape, one that went beyond isolated themes and pointed toward deeper, structural dynamics. It became increasingly clear that the barriers to effective hybrid work are not rooted in tools or policies alone. Rather, they stem from a lack of cultural readiness.

The synthesis of this qualitative research, combined with supporting literature, revealed the following systemic barriers, reflecting the interdependent nature of hybrid work culture:

Trust is fragile, particularly in hybrid settings. It **depends on leadership** consistency and **open communication**, and is easily undermined by oversight-heavy practices.

Intrinsic motivation is difficult to sustain without visible impact, feedback, or alignment between individual values and organizational goals.

Collaboration becomes fragmented without informal **relational spaces** and **shared cultural practices** that support dialogue and connection.

Work-life flexibility risks becoming unsustainable without clear **boundaries and mutual respect**, leading to stress, blurred roles, and emotional fatigue.

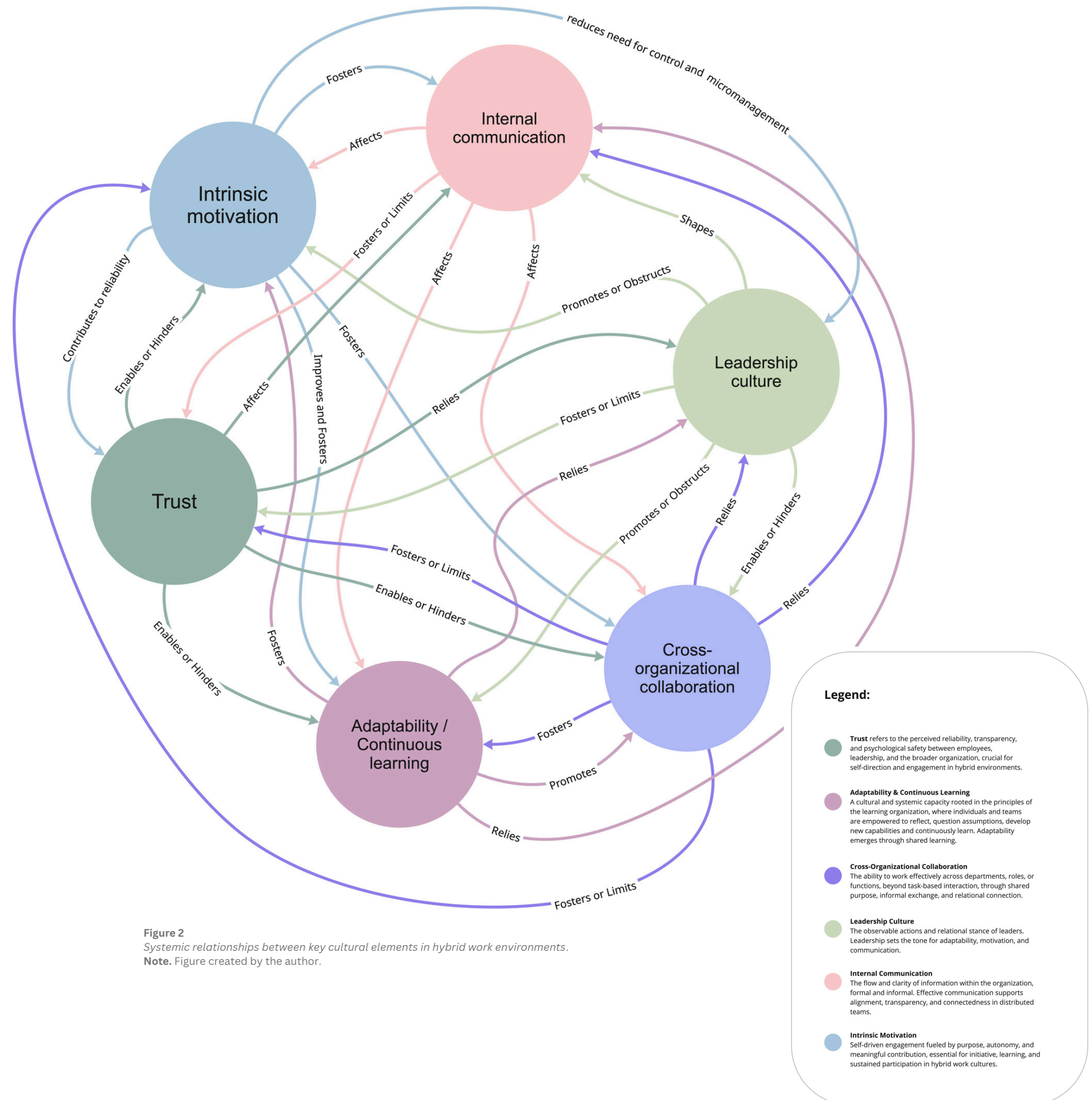


Figure 2
Systemic relationships between key cultural elements in hybrid work environments.
Note. Figure created by the author.

Figure 2 provides a visual representation of those interconnected themes that emerged, and how they each affect one another.

4. Cycle

Sensemaking

After identifying key patterns and themes, which led to the development of areas of opportunities, this phase aimed to deepen their understanding and validate the findings through further research.

Reframing of the Systemic Area

Building on these insights, a reframing of the systemic area emerged. Rather than viewing hybrid work environments only as physical or digital spaces where tasks are executed, the research revealed them to be complex cultural systems, rooted in relational and motivational dynamics. This shift in understanding was shaped by recurring patterns identified across interviews, surveys, cultural probes, and literature, all pointing to the need for deeper cultural alignment in how modern work environments, particularly hybrid models, are structured and experienced.

Such systems must support self-actualization, foster intrinsic motivation, be grounded in trust, and enable individuals to thrive. These are not secondary qualities, they are essential in any modern work model and especially critical in the evolving context of hybrid work.

Autonomy, for example, may appear present through flexible hours or remote options, yet is often absent culturally. Employees might have control over their schedules but still lack recognition, trust from leadership, or opportunities to take initiative and contribute meaningfully. Similarly, motivation is weakened when productivity is measured by presence or oversight rather than by purpose, ownership, and impact. Individual purpose and engagement suffer when contributions are disconnected from broader goals and when it remains unclear how one's work contributes to the bigger picture.

These issues do not exist in isolation, they are deeply interconnected conditions that shape how employees experience motivation, engagement, and a sense of purpose. Communication challenges were rarely about tools or platforms; rather, they reflected a lack of shared norms and informal relational structures. Leadership gaps pointed to a systemic absence of trust, recognition, and psychological safety.

Ultimately, the research revealed that hybrid work environments tend to amplify existing cultural misalignments. The research shows that without intentional cultural alignment, structural flexibility alone is not enough.

This reframing lays the foundation for identifying where meaningful change can occur, positioning culture, rather than structure, as the key system lever in shaping the future of hybrid work.

Areas of Opportunity

Building on this understanding, that the challenges of hybrid work are not isolated but deeply interconnected, shaped by cultural, structural, and relational dynamics that influence the overall work experience, four areas of opportunity emerged. Each presents a concrete and actionable pathway for enabling a systemic shift toward more human-centered, adaptable, and sustainable hybrid work environments.

Table 2
Summary of Identified Areas of Opportunity and Their Linked Themes

Area		Opportunity	Linked Themes
1	Trust & Leadership	There is an opportunity to foster a leadership culture grounded in trust and transparency. By establishing clear communication, encouraging openness, and leading by example, organizations can create an environment where purpose and motivation can thrive.	<i>Linked Themes: Trust & Transparency, Leadership Culture, Intrinsic Motivation</i>
2	Autonomy & Purpose	There is an opportunity to align organizational systems, such as processes, structures, and regulations, to support self-direction, promote meaningful ownership of work, and maintain a balance between flexibility and structure. This alignment can foster autonomy and a sense of purpose, enhancing intrinsic motivation and promoting healthy work-life boundaries.	<i>Linked Themes: Intrinsic Motivation, Trust & Transparency, Work-Life Boundaries</i>
3	Communication & Collaboration	There is an opportunity to strengthen communication and collaboration structures within hybrid work environments, enabling transparent knowledge sharing, informal dialogue, and spontaneous cross-functional interactions. This shift can move organizations beyond transactional updates, fostering shared meaning-making, continuous connection, and deeper collaboration.	<i>Linked Themes: Communication Practices, Cross-Team Collaboration</i>
4	Meaning of Workspace	There is an opportunity to enable collective learning and adaptability within both physical and virtual workspaces. This involves supporting team-based learning, experimentation, and reflective practices. Beyond simply enhancing productivity, this approach can foster social connections, shared sense-making, informal knowledge exchange, and adaptive collaboration.	<i>Linked Themes: Physical & Virtual Workspaces, Cross-Team Collaboration</i>

Note. Table created by the author based on findings from thematic analysis and triangulation.

Cultural Probes

The area of autonomy and purpose was selected as the central focus for the continuation of the design research process. This decision was grounded in both practical and conceptual considerations: it allowed for the development of a tangible, human-centered prototype within the given timeframe, with minimal stakeholder barriers, and it was deeply rooted in participant insights, particularly where learning, motivation, and boundaries intersected.

To build on this foundation, additional literature was explored to further strengthen the understanding of motivation, autonomy, and purpose in contemporary work environments. These expanded insights helped inform the next research step: the use of cultural probes to explore how these themes manifest in the daily realities of hybrid work.

The probes were structured as a set of three digital cards, used over the span of three days. Each day, participants were invited to reflect on a specific question presented on the card. This lightweight and flexible format allowed for ongoing, reflective engagement, capturing rich personal experiences tied directly to the previously identified themes. The responses provided a deeper, more grounded understanding of how autonomy and purpose are experienced, or challenged, within everyday hybrid work contexts.

The insights gathered were then analyzed and integrated into the thematic analysis and triangulation process, further supporting and validating the emerging patterns.

Participants:

- 3 Hybrid employees across various fields

5. Cycle

Transforming

This phase focused on developing a design intervention guided by performance specifications rooted in prior research. Using participatory design methods, the process explored potential systemic shifts through an iterative approach. Prototyping and feedback loops played a central role and were actively shaped by stakeholders.

Performance Specifications

Based on the chosen area of opportunity the following performance specifications have been created. They serve as the foundational design criteria for the intervention, providing clear guidelines that ensure the proposed solution is rooted in design research. To enhance clarity and ensure their fulfillment, each specification is accompanied by potential measures and example indicators.

Table 3
Performance Specifications, Shifts, and Indicators for Change

Performance Specification	What needs to Shift	Indicators for Change
Enable Self-Actualization through Autonomy and Purpose The design intervention should enable employees to pursue meaningful, self-directed growth by embedding autonomy and purpose into daily practices. It should cultivate the conditions that allow individuals to act with agency, make sense of their role in the bigger picture, and evolve toward their full potential.	Does the intervention allow individuals to act with agency and are they able to connect their work to their individual purpose?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals describe feeling more ownership over their growth• Activities connect personal goals to team/org mission• Tasks can be shaped by the employee
Cultivate a Supportive Culture for Intrinsic Motivation The design intervention should cultivate a work culture where intrinsic motivation is sustained, not depleted. This includes psychological safety, trust, recognition of initiative, and flexibility to explore, reflect, and take ownership, especially in hybrid and asynchronous work settings.	Does the intervention foster psychological safety, initiative, and self-driven engagement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People report taking initiative without being asked• Reflection or sharing practices are normalized• People feel safe admitting what they don't know
Foster Learning-Driven Structures over Control-Based Systems The design intervention should foster decentralized, reflective, and learning-oriented work structures that support adaptability and innovation. Rather than reinforce hierarchical control, the intervention should strengthen systems that allow hybrid teams to learn, co-create meaning, and grow together.	Does the intervention shift away from centralized control toward decentralized learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision-making is shared or distributed• Teams adapt rituals or tools based on shared reflection• Failure is seen as a growth opportunity, not a risk to avoid

Note. Table created by the author. Based on design research and thematic insights to define success criteria for the intervention.

Design Strategy

Why it Matters

The conducted research highlights a pressing need for a cultural shift in modern and evolving work environments. While organizations have structurally adapted to new ways of working, many remain entrenched in bureaucratic models. This misalignment between structural flexibility and cultural rigidity creates tensions that hinder trust, autonomy, and intrinsic motivation, elements essential for sustainable and human-centered work cultures.

What needs to Shift

Organizations must reevaluate their understanding of work by redefining what it means to be productive and successful. This involves setting new parameters and metrics that align with contemporary work practices. By doing so, organizations can foster environments that are more adaptable, innovative, and attuned to the needs of their workforce, thereby promoting a culture that supports continuous learning and meaningful engagement.

Strategic Vision

The intention of the intervention is to initiate and support cultural readiness within organizations. Recognizing that cultural shifts do not occur overnight, the strategy focuses on creating conditions that enable change to emerge organically. This involves designing interventions that provide space for reflection, experimentation, and dialogue, allowing individuals and systems to become receptive to transformation. By nurturing this readiness, organizations can move towards cultures that are more resilient, inclusive, and aligned with the evolving nature of work.

Co - Design

To translate the performance specifications into an actionable design intervention, a co-design workshop was conducted in collaboration with experts from Vitra. This workshop marked the transition from research-driven insights to practical design exploration, using participatory design methods to develop potential interventions. The process was guided by a combination of the Three Horizons Framework (Curry & Hodgson, 2008) and the Contextual View Framework (Hugentobler, 2022) I integrated both frameworks to create a structured approach for envisioning and rethinking modern work environments. This integration was visually represented in Figure 3 on page 58/59, where the original Contextual View diagram is complemented by a Three Horizons table layered beneath it, forming a cohesive tool that bridges temporal visioning with systemic reflection.

The session began with an introduction to the developed performance specifications, and served as a solid foundation for understanding the current reality (*Seeing the System*). Participants were then invited to reimagine an idealized future (*Rethinking the System*) through a "What If" exercise, where they were encouraged to ideate future scenarios. These scenarios were intentionally exploratory, promoting creative thinking beyond existing constraints.

Following this ideation phase, the scenarios were analyzed to identify which components could be addressed immediately or in the near future. This reverse-engineering approach allowed participants to trace each scenario back to its core needs, revealing patterns for potential systemic shifts toward a preferred future (*Changing the System*).

These patterns were then synthesized into the following key components:

Redefining Productivity: Moving away from traditional metrics to focus on meaningful outcomes.

Rethinking Leadership: Shifting from directive management to leadership that fosters trust, autonomy, and purpose.

Beyond Bureaucracy: Challenging rigid organizational models to support flexibility and empowerment.

Encouraging Self-Actualization and Awareness: Creating opportunities for personal growth and reflection.

Space for Purpose, Reflection, and Experimentation: Designing environments that promote meaningful engagement and innovation.

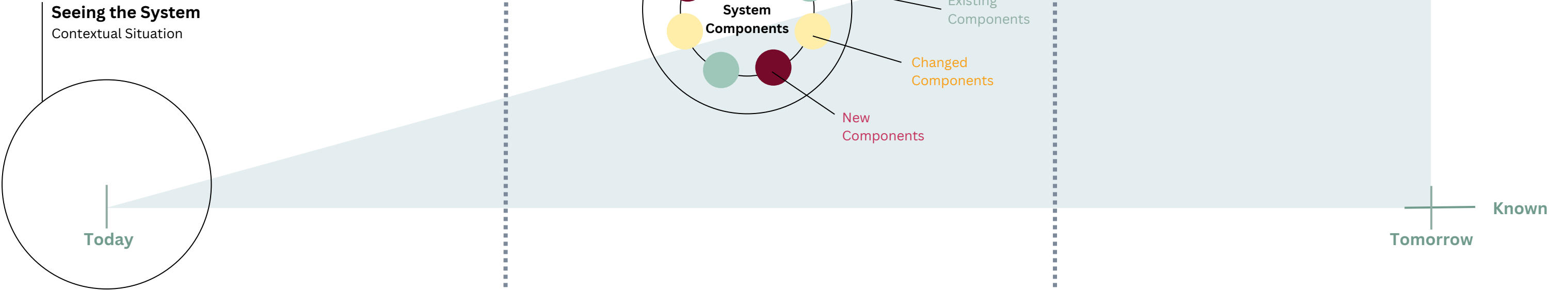
These foundational elements clarified the cultural and structural shifts needed for a more human-centered work environment, and were crucial for the development of a meaningful prototype for the design intervention.

Participants:

- 2 Experts in workplace design from Vitra

Framework Analysis

Figure 3
Adapted Contextual View framework combined with the Three Horizons model.
Note. Adapted from Design Management Practices 5: Systems Oriented Design by Hans Kaspar Hugentobler (2023), Hochschule Luzern – Design & Kunst. Minor visual adjustments made under academic fair use for educational purposes. The framework has been extended with a Three Horizons interpretation to support strategic reflection and design analysis.



Seeing the System Horizon 1

This phase represents the current reality, capturing the system in its existing state and context. It aligns with Horizon 1 of the Three Horizons framework, focusing on the present core business. It explores what is happening today, identifying current needs and challenges.

Research Finding Theme 2 Intrinsic Motivation:

In hybrid work environments, intrinsic motivation is essential for engagement and adaptability. However, it can only thrive when supported by autonomy, trust, and a culture that values self-direction, conditions often missing in bureaucratic work models.

Area of Opportunity:

There is an opportunity to align organizational systems, such as processes, structures, and regulations, to support self-direction, promote meaningful ownership of work, and maintain a balance between flexibility and structure. This alignment can foster autonomy and a sense of purpose, enhancing intrinsic motivation and promoting healthy work-life boundaries.

Changing the System Horizon 2

This phase bridges the present and future, examining both the existing system and the desired future. It identifies the key components that need nurturing or transformation to support a shift toward an idealized future. This aligns with Horizon 2, where emerging practices and interventions begin to reshape the system. It provides the foundation for designing actionable changes.

A few examples:

Existing Components:

- Physical workspaces that align with the needs of hybrid work environments
- Digital platforms that align with the needs of hybrid work environments

Changed Components:

- Designated time for rituals and reflection on topics like motivation and purpose during meetings
- Changed processes that allow for more autonomy and self-actualization

New Components:

- Collective awareness and reflection about existing and preferred organizational culture
- New metrics for how productivity and success is measured

Rethinking the System Horizon 3

This phase envisions an idealized future reality, unbound by current constraints. It aligns with Horizon 3, where new possibilities and visionary ideas are imagined. This space allows for speculative thinking, where "What If" scenarios can be explored, presenting a vision of a transformed system aligned with desired outcomes.

What If examples from the co-design workshop:

- “...employees were free to decide which project to work on?”
- “...nothing was a secret but a source to participate and contribute?”
- “...allow meaningful rituals?”
- “...learning would be considered as the new work?”
- “...there are no organizations?”
- “...purpose was a currency or a symbol of status/wealth?”

The Design Intervention

Following the co-design workshop the first prototype was developed: a facilitation card set titled ***Ready to Thrive in Modern Work Environments?***

This prototype emerged directly from the synthesis of the systemic components identified in the co-design process and builds on the core research insights, highlighting the need for autonomy, intrinsic motivation, trust, and purpose in today’s hybrid work settings.

The intention behind the card set is to create space and time for culture to emerge organically. It is designed to support teams in becoming more aware of their relational and motivational dynamics by offering guided opportunities for reflection, conversation, and subtle cultural shifts. Rather than imposing a prescriptive model, the card set acts as a gentle nudge, encouraging small, meaningful adjustments in how individuals relate to their work, each other, and the broader organizational culture.

The prototype is intentionally lightweight, playful, and flexible. Its “game-like” structure helps teams engage without feeling burdened by another task. Instead, it offers a guided, exploratory format that can be adapted and used on each team’s own terms. While the cards are designed to spark group dialogue, they can also be used for individual reflection, allowing participants to engage with the questions at their own pace and in their own context.

To ensure its relevance and usability, the card set went through two iterative feedback rounds. The first iteration was conducted in collaboration with the innovation team at Vitra. The second iteration involved a review and discussion with two academic tutors, one specializing in psychology and the other in behavior design. Additionally, valuable feedback was gathered from hybrid employees, who contributed reflections based on their lived experiences. These iterations helped refine the language, tone, structure, and usability of the intervention, making it both context-sensitive and grounded in practical needs.

The Prototype

The Prototype consists of a set of two different types of cards:

Reflection Cards:

These cards include open-ended questions centered around four core themes: autonomy, trust, intrinsic motivation, and purpose. They are designed to invite individual or team reflection and can be used in a variety of settings, from team check-ins and retrospectives to personal journaling prompts or leadership development sessions. The goal is to create space for shared sense-making, emotional awareness, and values-driven alignment.

Experiment Cards:

Inspired by Future Labs¹, these cards offer behavioural challenges or team experiments. Each invites a team to try out a new behavior, mindset, or interaction, not to fix culture, but to start actively shaping it. Each experiment encourages reflection through a debrief prompt, helping teams move from action to learning.

¹Future Labs are exploratory spaces designed to make abstract futures tangible through experimentation, storytelling, and prototyping. They are used to actively test and shape emerging cultural or organizational dynamics (Paice & Malakhatka, 2023).

First Iteration Cycle

The first iteration cycle of the prototype was conducted with **two experts with a background in human sciences** to refine the concept and explore its potential impact. Feedback was collected from **Dr. Arnaldo Perez, a clinical assistant professor** at the University of Alberta with expertise in behavior change and qualitative research, and **Luana Caselli, a neuroscientist and psychologist with a background in cognitive science, biostatistics, and scientific communication**. Their diverse academic and practical experience provided a valuable lens for evaluating both the design and the behavioral foundations of the intervention, and offered the opportunity to question underlying assumptions and explore the prototype’s limitations and possibilities. Through their feedback, several critical insights emerged that reshaped the direction of the design.

Prototype Limitations

Consider what would prompt individuals or teams to engage with the card set in the first place. Without an existing awareness of cultural gaps or a perceived need for reflection, the cards might go unused.

In response, the idea of a “Getting Started” subset was proposed, an **introductory set of cards** designed to help surface implicit cultural dynamics and raise awareness before deeper engagement. This recognized that **every organization already has a culture**, whether intentionally shaped or not, and that cultural change begins by uncovering what is already present.

The feedback also emphasized the importance of emotional connectedness in shaping culture. Two interrelated concepts were highlighted: **alignment**, where employees understand and believe in the organization’s culture; and **connectedness**, where individuals identify with and care about that culture. Both are fostered not only through physical proximity, but through emotional closeness and intrinsic motivation.

In addition, a meaningful connection was made to the **four pillars of well-being**, awareness, connection, insight, and purpose, based on the framework by Davidson (2012). These were suggested as a valuable lens for deepening the prototype’s relevance.

As a result, the idea emerged to create four optional sub-sets of cards, each **aligned with one of the well-being pillars**, offering targeted prompts and reflective questions. This would strengthen the prototype’s potential to support not only cultural alignment but also individual and team well-being, further reinforcing the motivation behind using the cards.

Finally, the feedback helped refine expectations regarding the prototype’s potential outcomes. While reflection can increase awareness and reveal opportunities for change, it may not directly lead to greater intrinsic motivation or autonomy.

This led to a stronger emphasis on how the tool is communicated. **The card set is not a singular, recipe-like solution or quick fix, but rather a lightweight, flexible resource designed to spark cultural dialogue** and create the conditions for new ways of working to emerge and evolve over time.

Second Iteration Cycle

The second iteration cycle of the prototype was conducted in collaboration with **Vitra and members of their innovation team**, which includes professionals from diverse backgrounds such as product management, design, and engineering. This multidisciplinary group actively tested the prototype and provided practical feedback informed by their experience designing and working within contemporary work environments.

Prototype Limitations

Participants reported a lack of guidance on how to act upon the reflections generated by the cards. They expressed a need for clearer recommendations or prompts for action to help teams move from insight to implementation. Additionally, participants noted that some of the concepts used in the cards, such as “purpose,” “courage,” or “performance”, were abstract and could be interpreted differently by individuals.

To address these points, the idea of integrating **short prompts or recommendations alongside each reflection card was considered**, offering tangible next steps for individuals or teams. Furthermore, the suggestion to **develop a facilitator handbook** emerged, aimed at **guiding users in interpreting results and using the tool more effectively**. A **glossary of key terms** was also proposed to establish a common understanding of central concepts, ensuring greater alignment across diverse users and contexts.

Clearer instructions are needed. Participants found that the structure of the card flow was at times difficult to follow. Additionally, while some questions were engaging, others were seen as too general, with the connection to hybrid work not always being explicit.

It became clear that the cards should not only address the nature of hybrid work specifically, but also **acknowledge that cultural gaps exist across all work environments**, and tend to be amplified in hybrid settings. This needed to be communicated more clearly in the content and structure of the tool.

Overall, all participants could imagine using mentioned seeing themselves using the prototype not only in team settings but also in private, individual reflection.

As with the first cycle, this iteration served as a meaningful learning loop. It emphasized the importance of clarity, contextual relevance, and guidance for application. The feedback led to refinements in structure, wording, and framing, strengthening the overall usability and impact of the prototype.

General Feedback

General feedback was gathered through informal conversations with three hybrid workers from different professional backgrounds. Overall, they expressed that they could see themselves using the tool and recognized its potential to make a meaningful impact in team settings. Additionally, they shared suggestions for further reflection questions they would find relevant, which were incorporated into the next iteration of the prototype. One concern that emerged during these conversations is outlined below as a potential limitation:

Prototype Limitations

The potential risk was noted, that the card set could be forgotten or left unused over time, especially if it is not meaningfully integrated into daily routines or existing team habits. Without guidance on how to embed the cards into everyday work life, the tool might simply linger in office spaces without generating lasting impact.

To address this concern, the prototype was re-evaluated through the lens of **behavior design, with a focus on integration and visibility**. One approach involved placing the card set in communal areas, such as break rooms or near coffee machines, **where informal interactions naturally take place**. This increases the likelihood of spontaneous engagement. In addition, simple **usage guidelines** were considered to support teams in understanding when and how to use the cards, encouraging their adoption as part of regular team rituals or reflective practices. These adjustments **aim to enhance the intervention’s longevity by embedding it into familiar routines and shared environments**.

Scenario

To illustrate how the intervention can be naturally embedded into everyday work life, Figure 4 presents a possible scenario from two perspectives: one of a hybrid worker working from home, and one working in the office. This example shows how the reflection cards can be introduced during existing routines, such as morning meetings or spontaneous moments like coffee breaks, to spark dialogue and awareness.

This is just one possible scenario. The intervention is intentionally flexible and can be adapted to fit each team’s specific needs and rhythms. In addition to the reflection cards, experimentation cards are also part of the set. These could be used during team days in the office, offering a playful yet structured way to test new ideas and strengthen cultural learning through shared action.



Figure 5
Mockup of the final prototype showing the card box, reflection card, and experimentation card.
Note. Image created by the author using AI-generated elements.

In Office Workday

08:00 AM Arrive at the office and settle in. Check agenda and prepare for meeting.	08:30 AM Join team meeting in the office. Virtual colleagues join online.	09:20 AM End of the meeting: leadership selects a reflection card and reads it aloud. Team spends 10–15 minutes discussing it together.	09:45 AM Work block: analyze data for report and collaborate with teammate in person.	10:30 AM Coffee break: heads to the break room and sees a reflection card sticker on the coffee machine. Reads it and begins thinking about its question quietly.	12:00 PM Lunch with colleagues. Informal talk leads to continued discussion on the reflection card stuck to the coffee machine.	13:00 PM Deep work: designs a concept deck and reviews feedback from clients.	03:00 PM Short alignment meeting with project team. Shares a short, informal update on how the reflection card manifested in today’s workday.	04:30 PM End of workday: Wrapping up to leave the office.	
08:00 AM Start of the workday at home and prepare for team meeting.	08:30 AM Join team meeting via video call. Meeting includes updates and coordination.	09:20 AM End of the meeting: leadership selects a reflection card and reads it aloud. Team spends 10–15 minutes discussing it together.	09:45 AM Solo work: writing, responding to client emails, focused project tasks.	10:30 AM Take a quick break and put in a load of laundry.	11:30 AM Lunchbreak: prepare a quick meal for the kids over.	12:30 AM Resume work: attend a virtual check-in with a colleague.	2:00 PM Individual reflection moment: a thought about the chosen card in the morning meeting comes up.	03:30 PM Finish work tasks: finalize slides for upcoming presentation.	05:00 PM End of workday.

Home Office Workday

Figure 4
Example timeline showing how the intervention could be integrated into both in-office and home office workdays.
Note. Figure created by the author.

Why this Intervention?

It was not the intent to provide an universal fix, but to create space for for participation, reflection, and gradual cultural shifts in modern work environments, especially within hybrid, where existing cultural gaps are often amplified. Rooted in research and shaped through iterative feedback, the prototype offers a lightweight, adaptable way to begin transforming work culture from within. Table 4 summarizes the rationale behind the intervention, its connection to research, and how it supports systemic change over time.

Table 4
Strategic Rationale Behind the Intervention and Its Systemic Impact

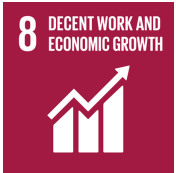


The Intervention	Rooted in Research	Performance Specifications	How does it Transform the System?	Ripple Effect of Systemic Transformation
<p>“Ready to Thrive in Modern Work Environments?” is a flexible card-based facilitation tool designed to spark reflection and cultural dialogue within organizations. The prototype is lightweight, adaptable, and can be used individually or in teams. It encourages self-awareness, shared meaning-making, and bottom-up cultural alignment in modern work environments, specifically hybrid, where cultural misalignments are often amplified.</p>	<p>Literature: Research shows that systemic change requires creating the conditions for readiness and reflective engagement, rather than enforcing top-down solutions (Beatson, 2023).</p> <p>Additionally, learning organizations thrive when individuals are empowered to reflect, take ownership, and adapt in complex environments (Senge, 2006).</p> <p>Primary: In hybrid work environments, intrinsic motivation is essential for engagement and adaptability. However, it can only thrive when supported by autonomy, trust, and a culture that values self-direction, conditions often missing in bureaucratic work models. (Finding Summary 1)</p> <p>Leadership plays a critical role in shaping cultural adaptability. Control-based approaches can hinder change. Effective leaders model trust, care, and vulnerability, creating space for learning and psychological safety. When these conditions are present, employees are more likely to embrace new ways of working and engage in self-directed growth. (Finding Summary 3)</p>	<p>1. Enable Self-Actualization through Autonomy and Purpose By prompting reflection on personal values and team dynamics, the cards support autonomy and help individuals connect to broader purpose.</p> <p>2. Cultivate a Supportive Culture for Intrinsic Motivation The tool can help to foster psychological safety and openness by creating space for honest dialogue and recognition of individual contributions.</p> <p>3. Foster Learning-Driven Structures over Control-Based Systems The intervention encourages participatory reflection and peer learning, helping shift away from hierarchical norms towards more adaptive, relational and human-centered work environments.</p>	<p>The intervention reframes modern work environments as adaptive and relational cultural systems. It shifts the organization from reactive or control-based models to self-aware, reflective, and learning-driven cultures. It supports bottom-up transformation and nudges the system toward intentional cultural readiness.</p>	<p>The intervention begins by gently nudging teams to reflect on core cultural themes such as purpose, autonomy, trust, and motivation. In this early stage, it does not aim for change, but to offer space, a low-barrier entry point for dialogue and shared awareness.</p> <p>As reflection becomes more frequent, these conversations begin to influence everyday practices. Individuals and teams start experimenting with how they communicate, make decisions, and relate to their work, gradually integrating cultural shifts into their routines.</p> <p>Over time, these shifts become normalized and embedded, shaping the way work is understood and experienced across the system. Because these themes are deeply interconnected, systemic change unfolds gradually, emerging not from one-off actions, but through repeated, small-scale interactions that accumulate into shared understanding and meaningful transformation over time.</p>

Note. Table created by the author to summarize the intervention’s theoretical foundation, design logic, and potential for systemic change.

Alignment with UN SDG Targets

The research as well as the intervention aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), supporting broader efforts toward decent work, inclusive decision-making, and cultural well-being. The table below outlines how the intervention contributes towards towards which specific SDG targets.

Table 5
Alignment of the Intervention with Selected UN Sustainable Development Goals

SDG Target	Relevance to the Intervention
<div><p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p></div> <div><p>8.3 - Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services</p></div>	<p>The intervention encourages teams to reflect on and shape their own work culture. By supporting intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and purpose, it fosters more productive, creative, and collaborative environments. It promotes bottom-up innovation and self-management, which are essential to sustainable, decentralized models of work aligned with this SDG.</p>
<div><p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p></div> <div><p>8.5 - By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value</p></div>	<p>The tool promotes decent work by helping teams surface and improve cultural dynamics that impact inclusion, well-being, and fairness. It contributes to work environments where people feel seen, valued, and connected to their purpose.</p>
<div><p>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p></div> <div><p>16.7 - Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p></div>	<p>The card set is rooted in participatory design and invites diverse voices into conversations about culture. It strengthens inclusive decision-making by making space for reflection, dialogue, and shared understanding across all levels of a team or organization.</p>

Note. SDG target descriptions adapted from the United Nations (n.d.). Sustainable Development Goals. [Note. Table created by the author to summarize the intervention's theoretical foundation, design logic, and potential for systemic change.](#) Relevance statements authored by the thesis author.

Implementation

Paul Hawken’s Evaluation Questions

The next steps to bring the intervention to life would involve continued iteration, real-world testing, and thoughtful integration into organizational contexts. These actions are outlined in Implementation Plan Table 6. To further assess the systemic relevance and long-term impact of the intervention, it was also evaluated through the lens of Paul Hawken’s regenerative framework.

Does it create more life or reduce it?

It creates space for human growth, emotional intelligence, and purpose-driven work, supporting life-affirming systems.

Does it heal the future or steal the future?

By fostering cultures of trust, collaboration, and learning, the intervention prepares teams for more adaptive and sustainable futures.

Does it enhance human well-being or diminish it?

The card set is rooted in intrinsic motivation and reflection, which support psychological well-being and reduce burnout.

Does it serve human needs or manufacture human wants?

It serves core human needs like belonging, autonomy, and meaning, rather than promoting external validation or productivity at all costs.

Does it promote fundamental human rights or deny them?

It enables inclusive participation and dialogue, helping surface and address inequities in hybrid work environments.

Does it provide workers with dignity or demean them?

It fosters environments where people are heard, seen, and valued, promoting dignity through trust and shared purpose.

Implementation Plan

Table 6
Implementation Plan for Advancing the Design Intervention

Step	Action	Who	How	When	Where	Why
1	Finalize the card set (content, language, visuals)	Me, in consultation with Vitra design & innovation team	Integrate feedback from both iteration cycles and feedback	Immediately post-thesis	Remotely and shared working sessions	To ensure the tool is grounded in real user needs and ready for broader testing
2	Develop final materials (facilitator guide, glossary, “Getting Started” subset)	Me, with optional input from Vitra experts	Write, design, and test usability of support materials	Month 1–2 post-thesis	Remotely and shared working sessions	To support effective use of the tool
3	Build digital and printable formats for scale	Me, with optional tech/design support if needed	Create printable templates and find material and place to print	Month 2	Adobe, Figma, or Canva for templates, printshop for print	To make the intervention physical
4	Plan and launch a real-world pilot within Vitra	Me, in coordination with team leads or HR at Vitra	Propose structured pilot with check-ins and reflection sessions	Month 3–4	Vitra office or hybrid teams	To observe long-term use and gather data in an applied context
5	Collect data and monitor implementation	Me, with support from pilot participants	Surveys, interviews, observation of usage patterns	Ongoing during pilot	In-person or virtual	To assess impact, barriers, and opportunities for improvement
6	Refine and package toolkit for wider distribution	Me, possibly with support	Final polish, design assets, and toolkit packaging	After pilot	Remote work and design tools	To prepare the intervention for organizational adoption or public release
7	Explore opportunities for long-term integration or scale-up	Me, with possible outreach to Vitra or other organizations	Present concept, pitch for adoption or integration	Following successful pilot	Organization meetings, industry events	To embed the tool into real-world cultural and team development processes

Note. Table created by the author to outline concrete next steps for piloting, refining, and scaling the intervention post-thesis.

Personal Reflection

Personal Reflection

Writing this thesis was one of the most transformative learning experiences in my journey as a design management student, and it beautifully tied together and refreshed my learnings over these three years. Beyond the research and prototyping, it was an exercise in navigating a topic that felt intangible, sitting with complexity, and trusting an iterative process that didn't always offer immediate clarity. I began with a strong desire and curiosity to explore modern work environments and their influence on organizational culture and human well-being. I quickly confirmed my assumption that designing for culture is not about fixing a problem, but about creating space for emergence, reflection, and relational change, because of its deeply human and interconnected nature.

As a designer, I've grown in my understanding of design not as a solution engine, but as a way to make systems more visible, human, and responsive. I learned to see the value of gentle, collaborative interventions rooted in real experiences over fast, top-down solutions. Through interviews, co-design, and iteration, I became more sensitive to how culture shows up in everyday habits, language, and relationships. The card-based tool created through this process is not a final answer, but a starting point, a nudge toward reflection that helps teams move at their own pace, with the aim of making work environments more human-centered. This mindset shift, from solution to invitation and transformation, was one of my most important learnings.

I also developed new competencies in participatory design, facilitation thinking, and behavioral framing. Working with people from diverse backgrounds taught me to adopt different perspectives. This influenced how I approached the intervention, not just as a tool, but as something shaped by when, where, and how it would be used in daily work life. I learned to consider what conditions shape action and how small shifts can lead to systemic change. It was a pleasure to work with curious and open collaborators, especially the team at Vitra, whose input will continue to inspire my future design practice.

Throughout this process, I had to confront my own biases and habits of thinking. I challenged my assumptions constantly, allowing insights to guide the next step, even when it deviated from my original path. I tend to be drawn to structure and planning, but this project reminded me that meaningful design often emerges from uncertainty and dialogue. I began to see not only feedback, but also every moment of uncertainty or setback as a learning opportunity, shifting my perspective from viewing obstacles as barriers to recognizing them as openings for growth and insight. Over time I even started to appreciate and enjoy these moments as part of the journey.

It was a genuine pleasure to follow my curiosity and keep learning, especially in a space where design, systems thinking, and human behavior intersect. This project taught me to design with humility and clarity, knowing that even small interventions can ripple through a system when placed with care, openness, and respect for the people within it.

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Academic Aids

Academic Aids

Task	Description	Tool
Transcription of Interviews	Transcription of interview recordings to text based format	MS Teams
Survey distribution	Used to distribute the qualitative survey and collect responses from participants. Analysis was conducted independently.	Jotform
Research workspace & synthesis	Used as the central workspace throughout the thesis. All data collection, thematic analysis, clustering, and mapping were conducted in Miro.	Miro
Visual mapping & prototyping	Used for visualizing maps and designing elements of the prototype (e.g., card set).	Canva
Citation management	Used to ensure correct citation formatting in APA 7 style.	Scribbr
Language & grammar support	Used for spelling, punctuation, and grammar checks.	Grammarly
Spelling support & writing assistance	Used for grammar suggestions and spelling refinement.	ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-4, 2024 version)
Feedback generation	Used to simulate feedback from experts with different disciplinary perspectives throughout the thesis (e.g., behavioral psychologist, design strategist).	ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-4, 2024 version)
Text refinement	Assisted with improving text clarity and tone, to ensure reader flow across all thesis sections.	ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-4, 2024 version)

Academic Aids Continuation

Task	Description	Tool
Draft development	Used to co-develop rough drafts based on specific prompts, research insights, or academic criteria.	ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-4, 2024 version)
Structuring & coherence	Supported the structuring of complex and vast text information.	ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-4, 2024 version)
Literature summarization	Assisted in summarizing complex academic texts to support and accelerate the research process. Key insights and findings were extracted collaboratively and then cross-checked by me, allowing for a more efficient engagement with literature without compromising accuracy.	ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-4, 2024 version)
Visual Mockup Generation	Supported the creation of a realistic mockup of the final prototype, including the card box and facilitation cards. Design decisions such as wording, layout, and color scheme were directed by me and implemented through iterative prompting and visual refinement.	ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-4 with image generation, 2024 version)
Creation of Research Plan	Used to create the research plan.	Excel

While these tools were a valuable support throughout the thesis process, all research design, data analysis, thematic analysis, critical evaluation, and synthesis were conducted independently by me. This includes the development of research questions, interpretation of findings, design of the intervention, and all strategic decisions related to the structure and direction of the project. All content was created with careful consideration, and any tool-based assistance, such as summarizing or spelling support, was critically reviewed and refined by me to ensure originality, accuracy, and academic integrity.

Affidavit

The Affidavit of Authorship

I, Jennifer Moser, hereby declare that the attached Bachelor's Thesis titled "Cultural Readiness for Modern Work Environments", consisting of approximately 5801 words (excluding titles, title pages, subtitle pages, table of contents, figures, tables, bibliography, academic aids, affidavit, appendix) as defined in the Design Management International Bachelor's Graduation Project Guidelines, is entirely my own work. I have indicated all sources, whether printed, digital, or personal, that were consulted during the research and writing process. Any quoted sections are clearly marked, and full source references are provided.

I further confirm that I have acknowledged the names of all individuals who contributed to the composition of this thesis. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, no part of this work has been previously published or submitted for any other purpose.

Zürich, 22nd of May 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Moser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Jennifer Moser

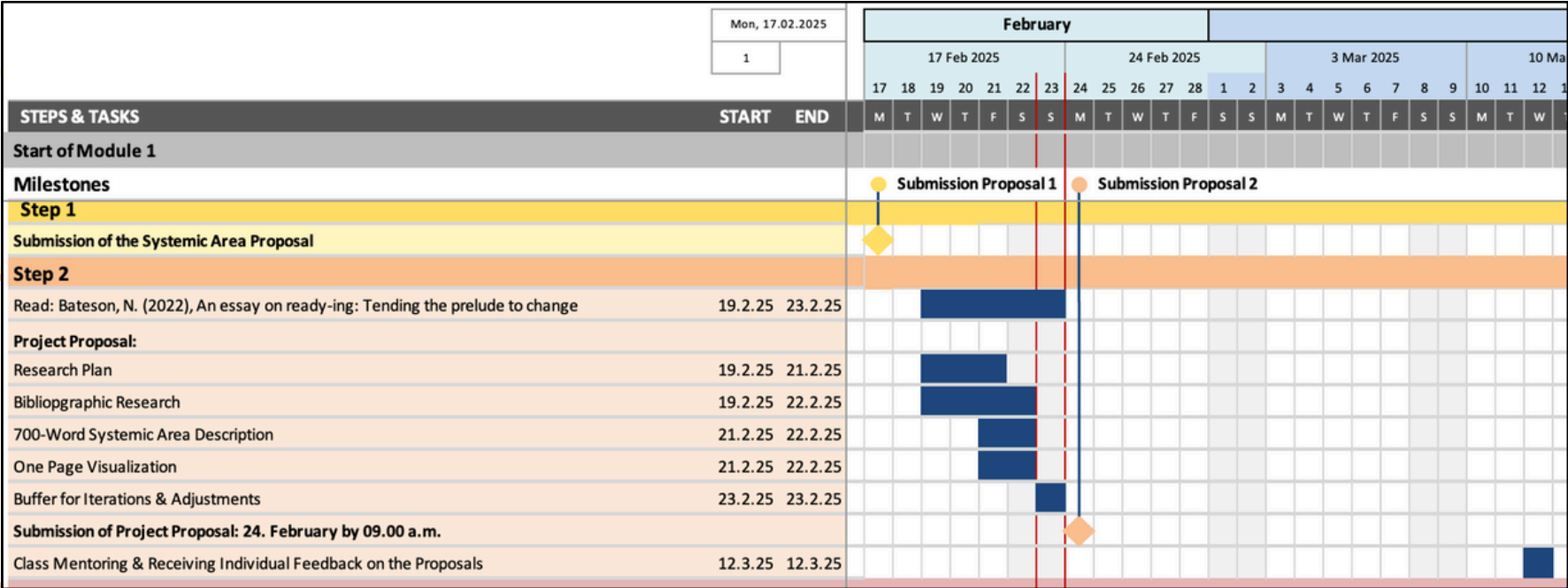
Appendix

Research Plan and Timeline

Collaboration Partner: Vitra International AG

Step 1: Preparation
01.02.25 - 17.02.25
Submission of the systemic area proposal.

Step 2: Preparation
19.02.25 - 24.02.25
Submission of the project proposal.



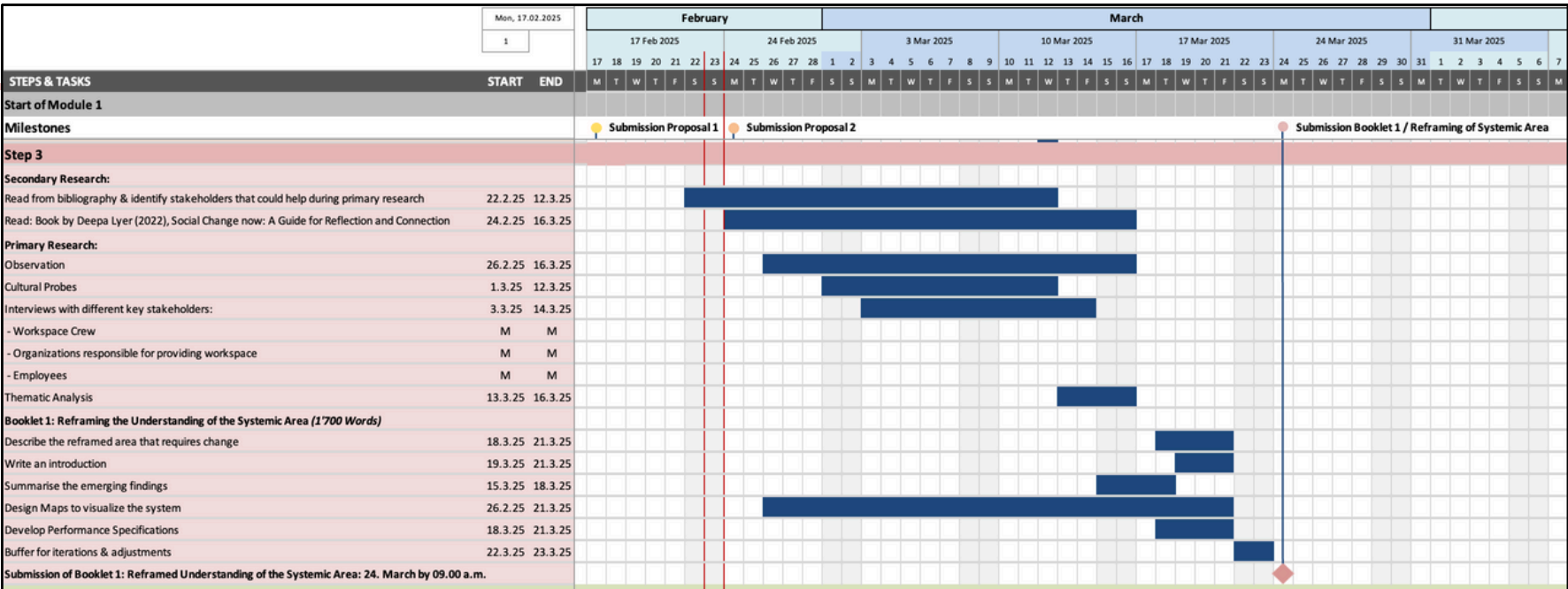
Step 3: Research Phase
22.02.25 - 24.03.25
Submission of the reframed systemic area.

Desk research:

- Bibliographic research

Field research:

- Observations
- Interviews
- Cultural probes
- Thematic analysis



Research Plan and Timeline

Collaboration Partner: Vitra International AG

Step 4: Intervention

24.03.25 - 24.04.25
Submission of the
intervention.

Collaboration with stakeholders:

- Co-designs
- Prototype & Test

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Step 5: My Design Process

24.04.25 - 23.05.25
Submission of the
design process.

Visualize & reflect on learnings. Combine all booklets.

[illegible]

Research Plan and Timeline

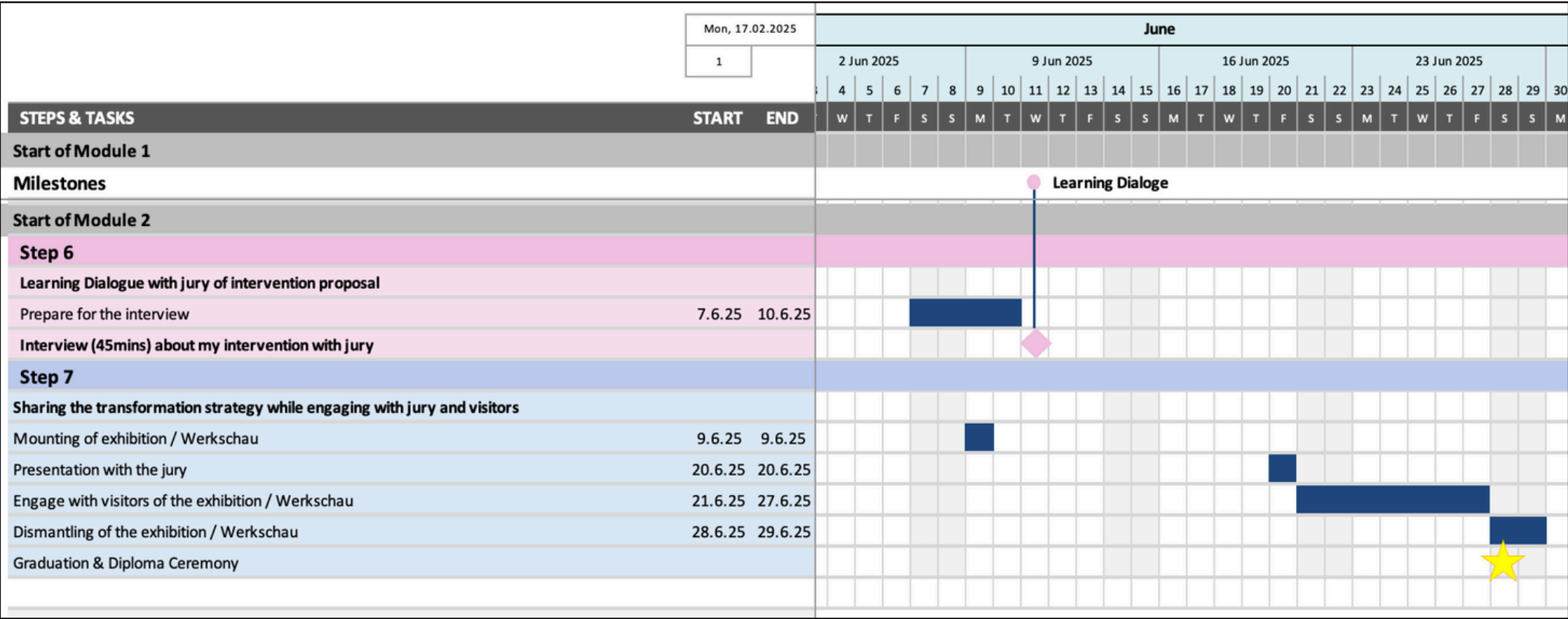
Collaboration Partner: Vitra International AG

Step 6: Learning dialogue
07.06.25 - 11.06.25
Interview with Jury

Prepare for a learning dialogue.

Step 7: Werkschau & Graduation
09.06.25 - 29.06.25

Mounting the exhibition, engage with visitors and attend the graduation ceremony.



Please find the complete research plan in the Appendix, fig. 1

Complete, Excel

Mentor: Nicolo Luppino
Collaboration Partner: Vitra International AG



Interview Guide

Due to data protection and confidentiality considerations, the full interview transcript will not be included in this document. However, the interview guide outlining the questions asked is provided to ensure transparency of the research process.

Interview guide with Change Manager:

Working in a hybrid environment, especially with an international team, is a significant shift from the traditional model where everyone was always on-site in one office.

1. From your perspective, what are the key challenges you encounter in this hybrid work model?

2. What elements do you believe are crucial for making a hybrid work environment successful?
(e.g. technical elements? type of culture? organizational structure?)

3. What role does the physical office play in your organization? How is the office primarily used, and what factors make it valuable for both the organization and its employees?

4. From your experience, what qualities, skills, or mindsets have you observed in employees or team members that help make a hybrid work environment successful?

5. What do you think are the key skills or attributes, both from employees and employers, that are needed to thrive in this model? For example, how important are traits like intrinsic motivation, openness to learning, or adaptability?

Qualitative Surveys

Planung

Antwortdatum

März 6, 2025 9:48 AM

In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?

Planung

How many days of the week do you work?

80%

How often do you work from home in a typical week?

Hybrid (2-3 days in the office per week)

What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?

hohe Flexibilität / individuelle Bedürfnisse abdecken

What are the biggest challenges you have encountered while working in a hybrid environment, and why? (e.g., communication, collaboration, work-life balance, career progression, team dynamics)

Die Teamdynamik wie vermutlich auch die Karriereentwicklung kommt kürzer dafür nachbarschaftliche Freundschaften.

How has hybrid work influenced your daily work routines and productivity? Have you noticed any differences in how you manage tasks compared to working fully in-office?

Im HO ausgelassener als im Büro. Büro ein 0815 Job um schnellstmöglich rauszukommen. Im HO ein bisschen individueller und entspannter. Produktivität ist im Büro leicht höher. Kann ohne Stress an Sitzungen wo um 0800 starten Teilnehmen ohne die Kinder vorgängig abzugeben oder anderweitig umzuschauen.

How has your organization supported employees in the transition to hybrid work? (e.g., policies, initiatives, workplace re-design, etc.) What has been particularly helpful or what is missing?

Es gibt eine beschränkte Anzahl Arbeitsplätze daher automatisch ins HO gewechselt. Arbeitsplätze sind im Büro nicht so sexy. Sie möchten das man einen Tag im HO bringt. Es wurden Arbeitsgeräte ohne Diskussion zur Verfügung gestellt um ins HO zu Arbeiten.

How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work set up?

I feel just as connected to my organization as before, regardless of hybrid work
I don't feel the need to be highly connected. I focus on my work and prefer to keep interactions minimal.

How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?

Ich habe mit allen Teams Arbeitsbedingt Kontakt aber eher Oberflächlich.

What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?

Ein physischer Arbeitsplatz hilft, Arbeit und Freizeit besser zu trennen. Strukturierter Arbeitsalltag

How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?

Alle zwei Wochen Bürositzung virtuell. 1x in der Woche vor Ort um an Infos zu gelangen. Via MST bei Projektsprechungen. Schulungen, Weiterbildungen etc. werden stark gefördert und Unterstützt (direkt bei der Geschäftsführung)

Thank you very much for participating! If you would like to add anything else, feel free to do so below:

Wir dürfen nur noch einen Tag ins HO☺

Financial Industry Portfolio Manager Discretionary

Antwortdatum

März 7, 2025 2:20 AM

In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?

Financial Industry Portfolio Manager Discretionary Private Mandates

How many days of the week do you work?

100%

How often do you work from home in a typical week?

Hybrid (2-3 days in the office per week)

What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?

- No time spent commuting
- Capabilities of looking after pets/family
- Breaks can be spent more productively

How has hybrid work influenced your daily work routines and productivity? Have you noticed any differences in how you manage tasks compared to working fully in-office?

- Cheaper food
- No wearing of suits/uniforms
- Better hardware when working compared to office computers

What are the biggest challenges you have encountered while working in a hybrid environment, and why? (e.g., communication, collaboration, work-life balance, career progression, team dynamics)

- Less stress due to busy work environment
- Presentation of processes, i.e. when training new joiners.
- Less socializing/solitude.
- Less transparency who's doing what, which can be unnerving when being overloaded with work.

How has hybrid work influenced your daily work routines and productivity? Have you noticed any differences in how you manage tasks compared to working fully in-office?

- Technical problems often can only be resolved by going to the office and consulting IT from there
- Less separation from work (stress during lunch breaks and in the evenings)
- Less time in the morning between getting up and starting work
- Less time being spent on breaks out of fear of colleagues thinking I was not working
- More prone to working overtime (no need to go home earlier)

How has your organization supported employees in the transition to hybrid work? (e.g., policies, initiatives, workplace re-design, etc.) What has been particularly helpful or what is missing?

- No policy really stood out to me except Credit Suisse's program to bear much of the costs for home office equipment.
- Hard to say what is missing.

How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work set up?

I feel less connected to my direct team compared to when working fully on-site
I rarely interact with colleagues outside my team or department
I feel a weaker sense of belonging to the organization since moving to hybrid work

How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?

Several times a week. Benefits are socializing, learning what is happening in other parts of the organization but most importantly I often learn of processes/software that help me make my life easier

What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?

Socializing is the main pro for me for going to the office. Arguments for me that would make going to the office more attractive to me:

- Ability to taking my dog to work
- Childcare close to work and subsidized by work
- Ordered or subsidized meals at work
- Break rooms with sleeping abilities
Frequent meeting on teams, team chats, company-internal online courses and trainings, IT support and HR Support

How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?

Treuhand

Antwortdatum

März 6, 2025 9:49 AM

In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?

Treuhand

How many days of the week do you work?

80%

How often do you work from home in a typical week?

Hybrid (2-3 days in the office per week)

What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?

Flexiblere Arbeitsorte und Zeiten.
Kein Arbeitsweg wenn im Home-Office.

What are the biggest challenges you have encountered while working in a hybrid environment, and why? (e.g., communication, collaboration, work-life balance, career progression, team dynamics)

Kommunikation und Zusammenarbeit gestaltet sich manchmal schwieriger.
Technische Probleme.

How has hybrid work influenced your daily work routines and productivity? Have you noticed any differences in how you manage tasks compared to working fully in-office?

Durch die ruhigere Arbeit im Home-Office geschehen weniger Fehler. Qualität ist besser. Man ist weniger abgelenkt.

How has your organization supported employees in the transition to hybrid work? (e.g., policies, initiatives, workplace re-design, etc.) What has been particularly helpful or what is missing?

Unsere Unternehmung stellt PC bzw. Laptop zur Verfügung. Infrastruktur für die Arbeit zuhause wird von der Unternehmung gestellt. Wir erhalten keine weitere Unterstützung für die Arbeit zuhause (z.B. Schreibtisch, Toner etc.)

How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work set up?

I feel somewhat connected to my direct team, but communication is less frequent than before
I feel a weaker sense of belonging to the organization since moving to hybrid work
I don't feel the need to be highly connected. I focus on my work and prefer to keep interactions minimal.

How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?

Ich führe wenige informelle Gespräche mit meinen Arbeitskollegen. Für die Arbeit empfinde ich diese nicht als relevant.

What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?

Büroräume sind wichtig um Kunden zu empfangen. Infrastruktur wie Drucker etc. ist vor Ort.

How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?

Wir haben ein monatliches Kader-Meeting. An diesem Meeting werden alle wichtigen Infos mitgeteilt. Schulungen werden extern noch vorgenommen. Arbeitgeber zahlt diese Weiterbildung.

Public Transport, product manager

Antwortdatum

März 6, 2025 10:09 AM

In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?

Public Transport, product manager

How many days of the week do you work?

50%

How often do you work from home in a typical week?

Hybrid (2-3 days in the office per week)

What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?

Time for myself (concentration, do administrative stuff, sleep longer)
See the team, have meetings in person, technical devices (printer etc)
Home: Motivation
Hybrid: Time Efficiency, Concentration

What are the biggest challenges you have encountered while working in a hybrid environment, and why? (e.g., communication, collaboration, work-life balance, career progression, team dynamics)

I feel more relaxed at home but excited when I go to the office

How has your organization supported employees in the transition to hybrid work? (e.g., policies, initiatives, workplace re-design, etc.) What has been particularly helpful or what is missing?

A lot they even make offices more attractive (working hubs, coffee stations, collaboration spaces, etc)

How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work set up?

I feel just as connected to my organization as before, regardless of hybrid work
My organization actively fosters connection through events, informal meetups, or collaboration tools

How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?

Every time that I work, I have partners from other companies

What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?

Good air, air conditioning

How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?

Video chat

Qualitative Surveys

Sustainable Fashion, Catalogue Manager

Antwortdatum

März 6, 2025 10:24 AM

In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?

Sustainable Fashion, Catalogue Manager

How many days of the week do you work?

80%

How often do you work from home in a typical week?

Hybrid (2-3 days in the o ce per week)

What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?

- saving time of commuting to get some additional sleep in the morning & free time in the evening
- digital communication works well via slack, asana & email
- flexibility of time allocation

What are the biggest challenges you have encountered while working in a hybrid environment, and why? (e.g., communication, collaboration, work-life balance, career progression, team dynamics)

- doing enough breaks at home, I tend to get into a work ow and forget to take breaks
- getting ready for the day, staying in cozy clothing
- not leaving the house, less movement
- immediate reaction to pressing issues, not as easy to communicate quickly, one has to basically call

no support really

How has your organization supported employees in the transition to hybrid work? (e.g., policies, initiatives, workplace re-design, etc.) What has been particularly helpful or what is missing?

I feel just as connected to my organization as before, regardless of hybrid work

I don't feel the need to be highly connected. I focus on my work and prefer to keep interactions minimal.

How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work se tu p?

during lunch and sometimes in between, not too much

How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions,

or do you find them less relevant to your work?

What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?

I go to the o ce for our weekly meeting & delegating/ coordinating tasks with the intern is easier on site

Brand Consulting

Antwortdatum

März 6, 2025 10:36 AM

In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?

Brand Consulting

How many days of the week do you work?

100%

How often do you work from home in a typical week?

Mostly in-o ce (4+ days in the o ce per week)

What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?

Während Analyse-Phasen während Projekten ist sie Ruhe vom eigenen Zuhause für die Konzentration sehr förderlich. Es gibt keine ständigen Unterhaltungen oder Telefone, welche die Konzentration stören.

Für mich sind es die sozialen Kontakte und der direkte Austausch mit den Arbeitskollegen.

What are the biggest challenges you have encountered while working in a hybrid environment, and why? (e.g., communication, collaboration, work-life balance, career progression, team dynamics)

Bei Themen wo ich viel Fokus benötige ist das Homeo ce super, ansonsten bin ich gerne im Büro und arbeite dort auch am e zientesten. Im eigenen Zuhause ist man noch eher geneigt dazu abzuschweifen.

How has hybrid work influenced your daily work routines and productivity? Have you noticed any differences in how you manage tasks compared to working fully in-office?

Es gab nie wirklich eine Übergangsphase, ist schon lange etabliert.

How has your organization supported employees in the transition to hybrid work? (e.g., policies, initiatives, workplace re-design, etc.) What has been particularly helpful or what is missing?

I feel less connected to my direct team compared to when working fully on-site

How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work se tu p?

Da wir ein kleines Unternehmen sind gibt es jeden Tag eine Bereich übergreifende Ka eepause, welche für mich sehr wertvoll ist und ich oft viel über laufende Projekte lernen kann.

How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?

Ich habe Zuhause kein Zimmer, welches speziell als Büro dient, daher bevorzuge ich die Arbeit vor Ort

What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?

Ich wende mich dann an meinen Teamlead oder direkt an den Chef

How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?

Content manager

Antwortdatum

März 6, 2025 10:59 AM

In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?

Content manager

How many days of the week do you work?

20%

How often do you work from home in a typical week?

Always (fully remote)

What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?

Ich kann dann arbeiten wann ich will und kann wäsche machen, sport treiben ohne in die peakstunden zu kommen, kann spazieren gehen und kann fokussiert arbeiten

ich nde informale konversationen nden gar nicht statt. ich kann personen aus meinem büro gar nicht kennenlernen.

What are the biggest challenges you have encountered while working in a hybrid environment, and why? (e.g., communication, collaboration, work-life balance, career progression, team dynamics)

ich bin produktiver weil ich nicht abgelenkt werde

How has hybrid work influenced your daily work routines and productivity? Have you noticed any differences in how you manage tasks compared to working fully in-office?

es gab keinen überang, ich war von anfang an zuhause

How has your organization supported employees in the transition to hybrid work? (e.g., policies, initiatives, workplace re-design, etc.) What has been particularly helpful or what is missing?

I feel well connected to my direct team and communicate with them regurarly

How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work se tu p?

gar nie

How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?

Ich nde zuhause gibt es keinen "cut". Ich kann nicht aus dem Büro laufen und die arbeit ist fertig, ich bin immer noch in meinen eigenen vier wänden

What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?

Ich schreibe meiner Che n auf Whatsapp.

How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?

Public Transport

Antwortdatum

März 6, 2025 11:21 AM

In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?

Public Transport

How many days of the week do you work?

80%

How often do you work from home in a typical week?

Mostly in-o ce (4+ days in the o ce per week)

What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?

Privat- und Berufsleben vereinbaren, z.B. Haustiere, Kinder, etc. Wenn ich zwischendurch mit meinem Hund spazieren gehen kann, bin ich danach auch wieder produktiver bei der Arbeit. Kommunikation läuft grundsätzlich über Teams sehr gut. Und doch fühlt man sich vom Team etwas abgeschnitten.

What are the biggest challenges you have encountered while working in a hybrid environment, and why? (e.g., communication, collaboration, work-life balance, career progression, team dynamics)

Im Homeo ce bin ich produktiver und ich fühle mich ausgeglichener

How has hybrid work influenced your daily work routines and productivity? Have you noticed any differences in how you manage tasks compared to working fully in-office?

Homeo ce ist freiwillig, weshalb sie sich nicht nanzieil einbringen. Es darf aber bis zu 40% von Zuhause aus gearbeitet werden.

How has your organization supported employees in the transition to hybrid work? (e.g., policies, initiatives, workplace re-design, etc.) What has been particularly helpful or what is missing?

I feel somewhat connected to my direct team, but communication is less frequent than before

How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work se tu p?

Im Büro quatschen wir viel auch über private Sachen. Im Homeo ce ist dies nicht der Fall

How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?

Ich arbeite gerne vor Ort

What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?

Wöchentliches Teammeeting, sehr dringende Sachen werden direkt über Teams oder Mail kommuniziert

How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?

Qualitative Surveys

Sanitär/Recycling/Düngemittel - Vertrieb & Pr...

Antwortdatum	März 6, 2025 2:47 PM
In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?	Sanitär/Recycling/Düngemittel - Vertrieb & Projektmanagement
How many days of the week do you work?	50%
How often do you work from home in a typical week?	Mostly in-o ce (4+ days in the o ce per week)
What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?	Flexibilität ist der größte Vorteil. Ich spare Arbeitswege und kann praktisch von überall und zu jeder Zeit arbeiten. Regelmäßige Check-Ins, JF und Telefonate sind gut, um sich mit anderen abzus timmen. Wir nutzen Online-Tools wie Mattermost, Zoom und Next Cloud, steigen aber bald komplett auf Microsoft 365 um. Mural wird auch genutzt für kollaboratives Arbeiten. Außerdem LexOffice als Buchhaltungssoftware. Ich weiß oft nicht, was vor Ort los ist. Daher muss ich oft nachfragen, wenn ich nicht weiß, ob bestimmte Dinge auf Lager sind oder wie der Fertigungsstand ist etc. Außerdem muss ich andere beauftragen, etwas vor Ort zu erledigen, was ich auch selbst tun könnte, wenn ich da wäre. Wenn man sich dadurch weniger im Unternehmen auskennt, könnte das natürlich auch Auswirkungen auf die Karriere haben. Mir tut es gut, wenn ich meine Arbeit nicht zu einer ganz bestimmten Zeit an einem bestimmten Ort erledigen muss, sondern auch an mein Privatleben, anderen Verpflichtungen und mein Energielevel/Biorhythmus anpassen kann. Natürlich sollte ich bei Meetings (online) anwesend sein, aber das ist okay. Wenn ich immer zu einer bestimmten Zeit im Büro sitzen müsste (wie ich es auch schon hatte), würde ich weniger eizient arbeiten, da ich in bestimmten Phasen nicht gut arbeiten kann. Außerdem kann ich nicht in jedem Umfeld arbeiten. Ich muss auch die Möglichkeit haben, mich zurückziehen zu können Da es noch ein junges Unternehmen ist, gibt es von Anfang an Hybridarbeit. Am Anfang hatten wir nicht mal ein Büro und auch jetzt wurden nicht alle Leute gleichzeitig ins Büro passen.
How has your organization supported employees in the transition to hybrid work? (e.g., policies, initiatives, workplace re-design, etc.) What has been particularly helpful or what is missing?	
How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work setu p?	I feel well connected to my direct team and communicate with them regularly I feel well connected to colleagues outside my immediate team (cross-team collaboration) My organization actively fosters connection through events, informal meetups, or collaboration tools
How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?	Ich denke, solche Gespräche kommen in der remote Arbeit weniger vor. Meist gibt es diesen Austausch, wenn man sich mal vor Ort trifft. Ich unterhalte mich aber immer sehr gern mit meinen Kolleginnen. Ich denke, solche Interaktionen lassen uns stärker zusammenwachsen.
What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?	Vor Ort gibt es physische Materialien, die ich für meine Arbeit nutzen könnte. Es ist einfacher, Aufträge zu koordinieren, wenn man sieht und hört, was vor Ort los ist. Außerdem mag ich die Crew und treffe sie gern. Büros sind ich aber nicht so relevant. Ich brauche einfach einen ruhigen Arbeitsort mit bequemen Sitzmöbeln und einer angenehmen Temperatur. Es gibt mehrere Handbücher für Arbeitsabläufe und Tools, die im Unternehmen genutzt werden. Außerdem kann man die Kollegen einfach fragen.
How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?	Manchmal werden Workshops durchgeführt bzw. Präsentationen gegeben, wenn es etwas Neues zu Vermitteln gibt. Einmal im Monat gibt es ein Treffen für die gesamte Crew, in der jede Abteilung Neuigkeiten vorstellt.

Publishing, i'm a graphic design assistant

Antwortdatum	März 6, 2025 10:02 AM
In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?	Publishing, i'm a graphic design assistant
How many days of the week do you work?	20%
How often do you work from home in a typical week?	Mostly in-o ce (4+ days in the o ce per week)
What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?	I like the exibility it gives me. I feel like i'm equally productive, but more comfortable. I'm someone who needs a change in scenery and being in the same office every day is not my thing. However seeing coworkers face-to-face from time to time is also crucial and super nice Mostly coordination of schedules. I notice with hybrid models that schedules between the people on the team don't align. Also for example my boss does her days at home on different days than me, so I never see her in person anymore I mostly feel more productive working from outside the office. In the office I tend to do more "arbeitszeitbetrug", whereas at home or somewhere else I want to be as efficient and productive as possible so I can go on to do other things afterwards They don't really support hybrid work that much. I'm not allowed to work hybrid anymore. I feel like they pick and choose who's allowed to work remotely and who isn't, which is really unfair. My boss for example is the creative director, and without her the company would be fucked. So they allow her to work hybrid to keep her at the company. But other people like me aren't allowed to work from somewhere else anymore. They used to have 25 days a year where people are allowed to work from somewhere else, but this has been revoked since 2025. Many people are now unhappy because of this, because it actually worked really well productivity and employee well-being wise. The president of the company wants to feel in control over the employees so he wants them all in the office when they're working, and this is honestly super toxic, the 25 days a year policy was a huge advantage for many people and a huge benefit for working at this company, so it's a shame they revoked it. How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work setu p? I feel well connected to my direct team and communicate with them regularly I feel just as connected to my organization as before, regardless of hybrid work Quite often. We have a "ritual" of a 10 o'clock break every day where everyone takes a break at 10:00 in the community kitchen. This is the perfect setting to talk to people outside your immediate team. I do notice most people talking to their team members regardless, but it's a good possibility to interact with others, which is nice. I like these interactions because even though these people aren't in my team, it's good to still know who's around, since we often need to contact people from other teams and it's good to have a more personal connection to them already when you text them over teams. I like the office space in general. We all have our own desk and I like that I can keep my things there and personalise it a little bit. I wouldn't want to go to the office if I didn't have a feeling of authority over my sitting area. I also really like the plants and natural sunlight we have there. Something stupid that makes me like working on-site less, is the bad coffee hahaha. I like having a coffee when I'm working and the coffee machines at work make horrible coffee. I'd rather sit at a cafe where I can actually have good coffee hahaha Over teams (and outlook). Everyone in the company (its an international company with over 6000 employees) is reachable through teams. Announcements and other information is always shared there, so everyone (regardless of time zones) can see the same information at all times. We also have regular training opportunities which we get informed about over outlook. You can inform your manager and sign up to all these trainings. This way you can learn new things and develop your skills. I have personally not done such trainings (yet) tho Good luck with your project jenny!!! feel free to reach out if you need any help <3 - Chris
How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?	
What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?	
How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?	

Stromproduktion; Jr User Adoption Specialist

Antwortdatum	März 6, 2025 9:48 AM
In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?	Stromproduktion; Jr User Adoption Specialist
How many days of the week do you work?	20%
How often do you work from home in a typical week?	Hybrid (2-3 days in the office per week)
What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?	Ich schätze die Flexibilität sehr, wenn ich Termine habe, kann ich diese ohne Probleme wahrnehmen. Da die Hälfte meines Teams in Madrid stationiert ist, sind wir so oder so sehr gut vernetzt über Kommunikationsplattformen. Der Austausch funktioniert meistens sehr gut. Wir arbeiten agil, das heisst wir haben jeden Montag ein Meeting, wobei wir unsere Prioritäten für die Woche kommunizieren. Da können wir auch Themen besprechen, welche uns Schwierigkeiten machen und uns im Team austauschen. Dies ist sehr wertvoll in meinen Augen. Zudem haben wir intern eine sehr kollegiale Kultur, dies erleichtert sehr den Austausch mit vielen. Aufgrund meines kleinen Pensums und der Distanz gehen oftmals trotzdem noch Infos verloren oder so mir vorbei. Und wenn die Arbeitslast momentar sehr hoch ist, ist es auch schwerer zu kommunizieren. In Meetings geht das sehr gut, aber manchmal, wenn man einfach schnell eine Nachricht per Teams Chat schicken möchte, geht es sehr lange bis man eine Antwort erhält. Dies ist natürlich einfacher, wenn man einfach zu jemandem ins Büro gehen kann. Ich merke auch, wenn wir uns dann endlich in Person sehen, ist die Kommunikation viel effektiver. Die Tools helfen schon sehr, aber in Person ist es trotzdem noch etwas ganz anderes. Ich habe einen ziemlich weiten Arbeitsweg. Wenn ich also von zu Hause arbeiten kann, kann ich mir sehr viel Zeit sparen. Dies ermöglicht es mir auch, mehr Schlaf zu bekommen, mehr Ausgleich zu bekommen mit Fitness Besuche und auch einmal andere Pläne zu machen. Der soziale Austausch fehlt mir jedoch hingegen. Wir haben jeweils Donnerstags Team-Tag, das heisst, wir sehen uns alle im Büro. Das ist sehr schön, jedoch reist man da sehr viel und ist meiner Meinung nach etwas weniger produktiv. Wenn ich jemanden nur einmal in der Woche sehe, habe ich mehr zu erzählen. Den Übergang habe ich nicht mitbekommen. Ich kenne die Firma nur so. Jedoch fand ich es anfangs ein bisschen schwer Anschluss zu finden, da niemand im Büro war. Wir hatten dann einige Monate später ein Mitarbeiter Event mit allen aus dem Team und dort habe ich dann alle kennen gelernt. Dies hat mir meine Arbeit einfacher gemacht, weil mich zuvor die Leute auch nicht gekannt hatten. Nun ist es einfacher, mit den Leuten zu kommunizieren. I feel well connected to my direct team and communicate with them regularly I feel less connected to my direct team compared to when working fully on-site I feel well connected to colleagues outside my immediate team (cross-team collaboration) My organization actively fosters connection through events, informal meetups, or collaboration tools
How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?	Ich würde sagen ich habe relativ viel Kontakt zu Menschen ausserhalb meines direkten Teams. Ich bin aber auch sehr abhängig von diesen Menschen, darum Pflege ich den Kontakt auch sehr. Mir fällt zudem auch auf, dass ich mehr Kontakt mit den Spaniern hab, als mit den Schweizern. Ich denke aber, dies ist etwas kulturell bedingt. Ich bin zuhause nicht so gut ausgestattet wie im Büro, dies spricht definitiv für die Büroräume. Der Stahitsch ist auch sehr attraktiv. Wenn ich aber weiss, niemand von meinem Team ist im Büro, nehme ich den Weg auch nicht auf mich. Die Leute und der Arbeitsweg ist für mich fast wichtiger. Da ich nur im kleinen Pensum arbeite, ist es mir grundsätzlich wichtig, am Arbeitsplatz zu erscheinen, um mich nicht zu absorbieren. Wir haben extrem viele Plattformen. Dies ist intern ein grosses Problem, da die Leute nicht mehr wissen, wo sie Infos herholen sollen. An dem arbeiten wir gerade intern. Wir erstellen eine neue Wissensplattform, wo man neues Wissen aneignen kann, Informationen teilen kann und auch Kurse besuchen kann. Die Firma unterstützt dies sehr. Grundsätzlich bespreche ich das mit meiner Chefin und sie macht dann die Abklärungen mit dem Budget. Meist wird aber vor allem mündlich Wissen ausgetauscht oder über unsere zentrale Kommunikationsplattform. Wir verwenden auch Teams in MS Teams für konkreten Wissensaustausch für spezifische Themen.
How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?	

Schulleitung

Antwortdatum	März 6, 2025 3:53 PM
In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?	Schulleitung
How many days of the week do you work?	80%
How often do you work from home in a typical week?	Mostly in-o ce (4+ days in the o ce per week)
What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?	Flexibilität, fokussiertes Arbeiten zu Hause, Informationsaustausch und soziale Kontakte im Büro Kommunikation, Zusammenarbeit Zu Hause weniger Ablenkung. Eignet sich für mich gut um konzeptionelle Arbeiten zu erledigen oder Dokumente und Tools zu erstellen. Arbeit gerat ins Stocken, wenn ich auf Informationen von Mitarbeitenden angewiesen bin. Wenig Unterstützung bei der Ausstattung des Arbeitsplatzes, auch keine finanziellen Abfertungen. I feel somewhat connected to my direct team, but communication is less frequent than before Selten. Es fördert die Zusammenarbeit und ist ein Zeichen von Interesse und Wertschätzung am Gegenüber. Im Büro bekomme ich mehr mit was um mich herum läuft. Über verschiedene Kommunikationskanäle, SharePoint, Mail, Telefon
What are the biggest challenges you have encountered while working in a hybrid environment, and why? (e.g., communication, collaboration, work-life balance, career progression, team dynamics)	
How has hybrid work influenced your daily work routines and productivity? Have you noticed any differences in how you manage tasks compared to working fully in-office?	
How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work setu p?	
How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?	
What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?	
How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?	

Qualitative Surveys

IT, Change Manager

Antwortdatum	März 7, 2025 1:29 AM
In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?	IT, Change Manager
How many days of the week do you work?	100%
How often do you work from home in a typical week?	Hybrid (2-3 days in the o ce per week)
What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?	I appreciate the exibility of the hybrid model, as it allows me to better manage personal responsibilities, like scheduling appointments (for a handyman or the like) or handling household tasks (quickly vacuuming in my 15-minute break? Yes please). This is already hard enough in a single household to begin with, where you can't count on another person to maybe be around or help out. I can't imagine how single-parents are feeling about that. Even though my commute is only about 30 minutes, working remotely also saves valuable time for hobbies or errands after/before the working hours.
What are the biggest challenges you have encountered while working in a hybrid environment, and why? (e.g., communication, collaboration, work-life balance, career progression, team dynamics)	Additionally, having the choice to work in di erent environments helps me stay productive and balance focus work with collaboration in the o ce. I haven't faced signi cant challenges with hybrid work – I see it as a positive. While reaching someone can occasionally take longer, my role involves cross-team and cross-department "collaboration"/communication, so even in the o ce, I wouldn't always be able to connect with everyone in person. E ective communication tools (skype, teams, mails) help bridge this gap, making hybrid work just as e cient.
How has hybrid work influenced your daily work routines and productivity? Have you noticed any differences in how you manage tasks compared to working fully in-office?	Hybrid work hasn't changed how I approach my tasks, I work the same way at home as I do in the o ce, even when meetings and workshops are involved. The main di erence is the social aspect: on-site days make work feel more "human" through casual interactions and team bonding. While I might get slightly less done on those days, the balance of productivity and connection makes hybrid work a great mix for me overall.
How has your organization supported employees in the transition to hybrid work? (e.g., policies, initiatives, workplace re-design, etc.) What has been particularly helpful or what is missing?	I haven't been at the organisation long enough to experience the transition to hybrid work, but I suppose the open workspaces (instead of individual o ces) seem to support the exible work style.
How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work se tu p?	<div>I feel well connected to my direct team and communicate with them regurarly</div> <div>I feel well connected to colleagues outside my immediate team (cross-team collaboration)</div> <div>My organization actively fosters connection through events, informal meetups, or collaboration tools</div>
How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?	I wouldn't say I engage in informal conversations with colleagues from other departments regularly, but it happens occasionally. Extra courses or events, like the Women's Day event I attended recently, provide opportunities to meet new people. Even if we don't stay in contact, it creates a sense of familiarity, which means you might greet each other in the cantine but not necessarily have a deep conversation. It's like a shallow networking, to get your face out there.
What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?	unlike many, I'd actually prefer having my own o ce. I concentrate better in a quiet, personal space without distractions.
How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?	That's a lot of questions in one! I think it depends on the company size. At the federal o ce, we have our own platform with various training courses, both work-related and beyond – like learning about sleep, SCRUM, work life balance or managing personal nances. There are many online (GoodHabitz) and on-site options. If there is something missing, we see who we can turn to to ask for more. We also get regular emails from the CEO about major updates, and the intranet serves as a central hub for company news. Additionally, screens on every oor help keep us informed about key topics. I hope that somewhat answers all your question Good luck and lots of motivation!
Thank you very much for participating! If you would like to add anything else, feel free to do so below.	

Informatik, ICT System Engineer

Antwortdatum	März 6, 2025 11:25 AM
In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?	Informatik, ICT System Engineer
How many days of the week do you work?	100%
How often do you work from home in a typical week?	Hybrid (2-3 days in the o ce per week)
What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?	Ich schätze die Flexibilität und Abwechslung. Ich kann z.B. am morgen früh HomeO ce machen und kann so ein bisschen länger schlafen, auch wenn ich schon früh Calls habe. Danach kann ich ins O ce wechseln und habe keinen Morgenverkehr mehr. Am meisten schätze ich jedoch, dass ich mir den Arbeitsweg sparen kann (was bei mir für beide Wege dann doch ca. 1,5 -2h ausmachen kann). Seit der Einführung von Teams (während Corona), funktioniert der Austausch über Chat, Video-Calls (wir nutzen auch meistens das Bild) und der Austausch von Files über OneDrive / Sharepoint, funktioniert das hybride arbeiten bei uns sehr gut. Ich nde die Abwechslung gut, weil ich den Austausch mit den Kollegen vor Ort auch sehr wichtig nde. Es gibt aber auch Arbeiten, die ich lieber allein und ohne grössere Störungen von zu Hause machen will (z.B. Schreibarbeiten / Konzepte / Dokumente erstellen, usw).
What are the biggest challenges you have encountered while working in a hybrid environment, and why? (e.g., communication, collaboration, work-life balance, career progression, team dynamics)	Die grösste Herausforderung aus sicht der Firma ist das Vertrauen gegenüber den Mitarbeitern. Eine gewisse Selbstdisziplin nde ich schon zwingend wenn man zu Hause arbeiten darf. Es gibt jedoch Mitarbeiter die nutzen das aus und arbeiten nicht so produktiv zu Hause. Dies wiederum nde ich gegenüber den Kollegen sehr unfair. Aus das Einahten von den Vorgaben (z.B. mind. 50% im O ce) ist eine Schwierigkeit. Es gibt Leute, die nden immer eine Ausrede und/oder besorgen sich Arztzeugnisse um nicht ins Büro kommen zu müssen (Rückenprobleme, Unfallbedingte schmerzen, oder ähnliches). Das Thema Krankheit ist auch so ein Fall. Immer wieder hört man, ich fühle mich nicht gut, bin Krank und arbeite heute von zu Hause. Das nde ich gar nicht gut... Klar, man meint es gut und man will nicht ins O cie kommen, weil man niemanden anstecken will. Da ist ja gut soweit. Aber wie produktiv oder konzentriert arbiete ich denn zu Hause wenn ich mich unwohl fühle oder krank bin? Ich nde, wenn man Krank ist, ist man Krank. Dann arbeitet man nicht... ging früher auch nicht. Wenn es irgendwie ging, ging ich zur Arbeit, und wenn es nicht ging, blieb ich zu Hause. Ansonsten, funktioniert der Rest bei uns sehr gut. Kommunikation und Zusammenarbeit funktioniert sehr gut.
How has hybrid work influenced your daily work routines and productivity? Have you noticed any differences in how you manage tasks compared to working fully in-office?	Für mich kein Unterschied bei der Bewältigung. Selbstdisziplin ist wichig. Ich denke ich bin produktiver geworden, weil ich viele Arbeiten ohne Störungen (z.B. Grossraumbüro) erledigen kann. Ausserdem habe ich jetzt eine Wohnung die nicht mehr so nahe am Arbeitsort sein muss. Das ist nur dank HomeO ce möglich
How has your organization supported employees in the transition to hybrid work? (e.g., policies, initiatives, workplace re-design, etc.) What has been particularly helpful or what is missing?	Bei war HomeO ce vor Corona nur bedingt möglich, eigentlich fast gar nicht. Das hat schlagartig geändert. Den Arbeitsplatz mussten wir selber organisieren / gestalten. Da ist jeder selber verantwortlich. Wir haben jedoch alle mobile Devices (Laptop, Handy, usw). Am Anfang war alles noch recht schwierig beim 1. Lockdown, doch unsere Firma hat sehr schnell MS Teams eingeführt, was alles viel einfacher machte.
How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work se tu p?	<div>I feel well connected to my direct team and communicate with them regurarly</div> <div>I feel well connected to colleagues outside my immediate team (cross-team collaboration)</div> <div>I feel just as connected to my organization as before, regardless of hybrid work</div> <div>My organization actively fosters connection through events, informal meetups, or collaboration tools</div>
How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?	Wir arbeiten in einem Grossraum-Büro. Ausserdem habe ich auch geschäftlich mit anderen Teams of zu tun. Als langjähriger Mitarbeiter p ege ich aber auch immer wieder ungezwungenen Kontakt zu denen Mitarbeitern die ich schon lange kenne.
What role do office spaces play in your hybrid work experience? For what reasons would you prefer working on-site, and what factors would make it more attractive or beneficial?	Der soziale Austausch ist nach wie vor wichtig. Auch der Team-Zusammenhalt. Miteinander Mittagessen gehen oder auch einfach so mal ein privater Schwatz ist immer gut. Ausserdem bekommt man im Büro manchmal auch wichtige Informationen, wenn andere etwas am diskutieren sind und man es mit einem Ohr hört. Ich nde es aber nach wie vor wichtig, dass die Arbeitsplätze innerhalb vom Team beieinander bleiben. Ein reines Desk-Sharing nde ich da schon problematisch. Wenn man nicht beieinander sitzt, sind alle Vortelle vom Vorort-Arbeiten weg.
How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?	Bei uns wird vieles Dokumentiert oder im Ticket-System festgehalten. Fachliches Know-How im Team tauschen wir meistens Vor-Ort oder in den regelmässigen Team-Calls aus. Weiterbildung ist ansonsten jedem selber überlassen. Wir haben jedoch für allgemeine Organisatorischen Angelegenheiten ein sogenanntes LernBistro (mit Lernvideos). Dort werden viele Informationen geteilt. Fachliche- oder Spezialisten-Ausbildung muss man dann halt extern machen. Heutzutage meistens auch in einem Video-Training.
Thank you very much for participating! If you would like to add anything else, feel free to do so below.	Viel Glück bei der BA :-)

Consulting, Technology

Antwortdatum	März 6, 2025 12:15 PM
In which industry or field do you work, and what is your job title?	Consulting, Technology
How many days of the week do you work?	100%
How often do you work from home in a typical week?	Hybrid (2-3 days in the o ce per week)
What do you appreciate most about working in a hybrid model? What factors work well for you, including tools, policies, or practices?	Flex ib el
What are the biggest challenges you have encountered while working in a hybrid environment, and why? (e.g., communication, collaboration, work-life balance, career progression, team dynamics)	Networking
How has hybrid work influenced your daily work routines and productivity? Have you noticed any differences in how you manage tasks compared to working fully in-office?	Konzentrierter von zu Hause aus
How connected do you feel to your organization and your coworkers in a hybrid work se tu p?	I feel well connected to my direct team and communicate with them regurarly
How often do you engage in casual or informal conversations with colleagues outside of your immediate team (e.g., in other departments or different functions)? What benefits do you see in these interactions, or do you find them less relevant to your work?	Zu wenig
How is knowledge and information shared in your company while working in a hybrid model? How do you personally stay informed and continue learning? If you need to develop new skills or gain knowledge, where do you turn for support, and how does your organization facilitate learning?	Intranet etc

Tematic Analysis & Triangulation

Informal Interviews with Employees from Vitra

Thematic Analysis for Conversational Interviews with Employees from Vitra as the Experts				
Research Question: "What are the key aspects an organization must explore when building a positive work environment, and how can these be adressed strategically to foster a broader cultural shift?"				
Category	Theme	Primary Research	Findings	Literature
Redefining Work Environment and Organizational Adaptability	Workplace as a driver of intrinsic motivation, a sense of belonging and fostering human connection	<p>An employee described the concept of their "Club Office" as a timely response to evolving workplace needs. This office model centers around people and their interactions, placing emphasis on shared spaces that reflect the company's identity. The aim is to foster a sense of belonging and support common goals. When employees return to the office, the focus is on connecting with colleagues, gaining new insights, and prioritizing personal encounters over virtual exchanges (Employee at Vitra, personal communication, March 2025).</p> <p>In practice, Vitra observes that organizations often request consulting services when they face challenges such as accommodating more employees with limited space, implementing desk sharing, or improving internal collaboration. A key focus is also placed on enhancing employee well-being through thoughtful office design. Additionally, companies aim to differentiate themselves from competitors by creating attractive work environments that help retain and attract talent. There is a growing hope that improved physical spaces will encourage employees to return to the office. More broadly, organizations are becoming aware that their work environments must adapt to better align with a changing world of work, reflecting a shift in how work itself is perceived (Employees at Vitra, personal communication, March 2025).</p> <p>Employees at Vitra noted that different generations bring varying expectations and associations with the physical workspace. While older generations often prefer private offices and associate them with career status and hierarchy, for e.g. in professions like law, younger generations tend to reject traditional, hierarchical structures and seek more flexible, collaborative environments. These differing behaviors, expectations, and needs present a challenge that organizations must navigate and reconcile when designing future workspaces. ... (Employee at Vitra, personal communication, March 2025).</p>	The workplace is increasingly recognized not only as a functional space but as a cultural and emotional anchor that shapes belonging, motivation, and connection . Organizations are rethinking office design to prioritize human interaction, identity, and well-being , especially as hybrid work has made the return to the office more intentional. Shared spaces such as "Club Offices" are designed to promote informal encounters, collective purpose, and emotional connection among employees. At the same time, generational differences in expectations regarding hierarchy and space challenge companies to design environments that are inclusive, adaptive, and reflective of evolving values around work and community .	<p>Creating a workplace that fosters human connection and belonging is essential in today's hybrid environment. "What people really want is to feel valued and feel a sense of belonging to their organization... The office can be a vehicle for communicating values and creating a community at work where people feel they belong" (Steelcase, 2024)</p> <p>Viewing the workplace as a collection of vibrant, flexible neighborhoods helps organizations build trust and foster deeper human relationships. "When the workplace is conceived as a community, made up of diverse neighborhoods, it helps people by creating a sense of belonging and higher levels of trust among teammates... ways to build social connections and learn from one another" (Steelcase, 2024)</p> <p>Aesthetic and environmental qualities of the office play a critical role in motivating people to work and feel part of something meaningful. "Schöne Räume machen glücklicher, produktiver, kreativer und motivieren mehr zur Arbeit" [Beautiful spaces make people happier, more productive, more creative and more motivated to work] (Röther, 2012) .</p> <p>Social learning, rooted in physical environments that enable spontaneous interaction, reinforces belonging and motivation. "People seek wilderness areas and urban parks for scenery and contact with nature... [in the workplace] social interaction and greenery contribute to comfort, creativity, and productivity" (Fitzgerald & Danner, 2012)</p>
	Adaptability through continuous learning and skill development through organizational support	<p>Insights from a Vitra employee indicate that the success of adapting to a new office environment is strongly influenced by an organization's culture and leadership style. It can take six months to a year for employees to fully adjust to a redesigned workspace and use it to its full potential. Organizational culture plays a key role in shaping how smoothly change is embraced and integrated (Employee at Vitra, personal communication, March 2025).</p> <p>Another employee added that for a hybrid work environment to be effective, it must be grounded in trust, respect, and a sense of humanness. These values need to be actively demonstrated and nurtured by leadership and management in order to create a culture where hybrid work can thrive (Employee at Vitra, personal communication, March 2025).</p>	Adapting to new work environments, whether through spatial redesigns or hybrid work structures, requires more than physical changes; it depends on the organization's culture, leadership approach, and support for continuous learning . Employees need time, guidance, and psychological safety to embrace new ways of working, with adaptation often taking several months. Trust, respect, and humanness are essential cultural elements that must be actively modeled by leadership to cultivate a supportive environment. When these values are present, employees are more likely to engage in self-directed learning, develop new habits, and successfully integrate into evolving workplace settings.	<p>Transformational leadership fosters motivation and a shared sense of purpose, which is particularly vital in hybrid and evolving work environments. "Transformational leadership, characterized by motivational influence, is effective in remote environments, as it fosters high-quality relationships and common goals, aiding in overcoming virtual communication challenges" (Purvanova & Bono, 2009)</p> <p>Trust, respect, and human connection must be actively cultivated by leadership to enable sustainable hybrid work systems. "Leaders must also build trust and establish a sense of belonging among team members to prevent feelings of isolation" (Bryant & Kazan, 2012; Wang et al., 2020)</p> <p>A supportive organizational culture plays a foundational role in ensuring that transitions, such as adapting to redesigned office environments, are embraced effectively. "Organizational culture plays a key role in shaping how smoothly change is embraced and integrated" (Bello et al., 2024)</p> <p>Learning organizations foster environments in which people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire. Senge explains that such organizations are "continually expanding their capacity to create their future" by nurturing a culture of shared learning, reflective dialogue, and systems thinking. "Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we re-create ourselves... This, then, is the basic meaning of a 'learning organization', an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future" (Senge, 2006, p. 14).</p>
	Need for intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation to foster a culture of transparency and trust	Adapting to (office) changes requires an open mindset and intrinsic motivation. Employees who are able to reflect on their role within the change and manage their own expectations are more likely to adapt successfully. However, this process also depends heavily on leadership. Without visible support and alignment from leadership, employees are unlikely to fully engage with or follow through on the transformation (Employee at Vitra, personal communication, March 2025).	Successfully navigating change in the workplace, such as adopting new office concepts, relies heavily on employees' intrinsic motivation and self-awareness . Individuals who can reflect on their role and take ownership of their adaptation process are more likely to embrace transformation meaningfully. However, intrinsic motivation alone is not enough. Leadership plays a critical role in setting the tone through consistent communication, transparency, and visible commitment. Without this alignment and trust from leadership, even motivated employees may disengage , highlighting the importance of a culture where motivation is supported by example, not just policy.	<p>Intrinsic motivation and trust-building must be fostered organically—not enforced. As Bateson writes, "One cannot simply say 'trust is needed' and hope that trust will be formed. The relationships are not changed at that level... Rather, they are opened to the possibility of second-order trust when the possibility of communication itself is changed" (Bateson, 2022, p. 991)</p> <p>Personal ownership and intrinsic motivation are foundational for meaningful organizational change. People are more likely to adapt and engage when they feel internally aligned with the process, not externally pressured. "The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels" (Senge, 2006, p. 4).</p>
Flexibility in the Hybrid Work Environment	Impact of flexible locations and work schedules on productivity, work-life balance and job satisfaction	Insights from an employee at Vitra suggest that perceptions of productivity have shifted significantly in recent years. For example, working from a couch or at a bar is no longer questioned as unproductive, what matters more is the outcome, not the setting. At the same time, the boundaries between work and home have become increasingly blurred. The employee emphasized that while flexibility in location is important, the design of the home should still feel like a home, and the office should maintain its identity as a workspace to avoid complete overlap between professional and personal environments (Employee at Vitra, personal communication, March 2025).	The rise of flexible work locations has redefined how productivity is perceived , shifting the focus away from where work happens to the quality of outcomes . Traditional markers of professionalism, such as sitting at a desk, are giving way to more fluid understandings of what effective/productive work looks like. However, as work increasingly blends into personal spaces, the need for clear physical and psychological boundaries becomes more important . Maintaining a distinct identity for both the home and office environment supports work-life balance and prevents the erosion of personal well-being. Thoughtful spatial design therefore plays a key role in sustaining satisfaction and productivity in flexible work models.	<p>As a result, the design of work environments plays a critical role in shaping job satisfaction and well-being. "Studies have shown that in order to feel 'comfortable', workers should be able to make their space their own... This sense of control can produce satisfaction and comfort, and it improves productivity" (Rioux, 2013, as cited in A2_p401-419)</p> <p>hybrid work challenges office design to create environments that remain meaningful and productive. "While hybrid working offers flexibility, it comes with the potential risk of a decreased shared organizational identity. The workplace needs to work even harder now to leave a lasting impression on its users, ensuring that even after the shortest of visits, employees will carry with them the effects of pride" (Leesman, 2024)</p> <p>Perceptions of productivity have evolved in hybrid work environments, shifting the focus from visible activity to meaningful outcomes. Employees are no longer judged by where they work but by what they achieve. "Presence bias... can be exacerbated in a remote work environment, where managers may find it challenging to assess performance based on direct observation. Overcoming presence bias requires a shift in mindset, where performance is assessed based on results and outcomes rather than physical presence" (Franken et al., 2021)</p>
Inclusive Communication and Collaboration in Hybrid Environments	Inclusive and transparent communication systems to build trust	An employee from Vitra emphasized the essential role of communication in fostering innovation within hybrid work environments. She observed that some individuals were reluctant to share knowledge with colleagues, as possessing information was perceived as a source of personal power and leverage. According to her, effective hybrid collaboration is only sustainable when trust is present, and trust, in turn, can only develop through open and consistent communication. (Employee at Vitra, personal communication, March 2025)	Transparent and inclusive communication is fundamental to building trust in hybrid work environments. Without it, collaboration can be undermined by power dynamics tied to information hoarding, where knowledge is treated as leverage rather than a shared resource. For innovation and collaboration to thrive, communication must be consistent, open, and grounded in mutual respect . Trust is not a given, it is built through daily practices of information exchange, shared dialogue, and clarity. In this context, communication becomes not just a tool, but a cultural foundation that shapes how teams connect and succeed .	<p>Transparent communication is essential not only for clarity but for cultivating a deeper sense of mutual trust. In hybrid environments, this becomes even more critical, as physical distance can amplify uncertainty and misunderstanding. "Communication is the tool that helps to build trust. Hybridity is an arrangement that is prone to confusion... Maintaining a good communication culture would be of great help to the hybrid workplace" (Smith et al., 2019, as cited in Hybrid Workplace - The Future of Work)</p> <p>Communication shapes the structure of workplace relationships and social networks. Research shows that "advice networks reflect the communication of expertise and the flow of knowledge and information", and the strength of these networks is influenced by how people share knowledge across digital and face-to-face channels (Krackhardt, 2003, as cited in Wu et al., 2023)</p>
	Balancing cross-functional collaboration	An employee from Vitra explained that when different departments are physically not aligned, for example if the departments are on different floors, it becomes difficult to see and support cross-functional collaboration and knowledge sharing. This lack of alignment can create barriers and limit communication between teams (Employee at Vitra, personal communication, March 2025).	Physical and organizational misalignment between departments can hinder cross-functional collaboration and knowledge sharing. When teams are separated, whether by floors, systems, or workflows, it becomes harder to maintain visibility into each other's work and foster spontaneous interaction . These barriers can lead to siloes, communication and missed opportunities for collaboration. In hybrid or flexible environments, deliberate strategies are needed to bridge these gaps and ensure that collaboration is not left to chance but actively supported through spatial, digital, and cultural design .	<p>Cross-functional collaboration requires visibility, alignment, and accessibility across departments. Physical separation, such as being on different floors or buildings, can result in organizational silos. "When physical or structural barriers reduce interaction, collaboration suffers and communication loops break down, ultimately limiting innovation and performance" (Leesman, 2024)</p> <p>Successful collaboration is not just about technology, it requires alignment in purpose, access, and structure. "The hybrid workplace introduces both opportunities and challenges... Leaders must ensure that remote and on-site workers experience a shared identity and common purpose" (Effective Hybrid Workplace Culture, 2023)</p> <p>People-environment research shows that the physical environment directly shapes the potential for human interaction. "Environmental settings affect the frequency and quality of unplanned interactions, which are often essential for cross-functional learning and collaboration" (Després & Piché, 2017)</p>

Tematic Analysis & Triangulation

Interview with a Change Manager of an International Organization

Thematic Analysis for Interview with a Change Manager of an International Organization				
Research Question: "What are the key aspects an organization must explore when building a positivel work environment, and how can these be adressed strategically to foster a broader cultural shift? "				
Category	Theme	Quotes from primary Research	Findings	Literature
Redefining Work Environment and Organizational Adaptability	Workplace as a driver of intrinsic motivation, a sense of belonging and fostering human connection	"I see people resistant to go back to the office if they have to. I think everyone got used to this work environment....In our organization we need to go to the office three times a week, but that does not automatically mean that I see them or interact with them." "Sometimes I go to the office in Switzerland just to see the team. That way they know that I'm approachable and available." "My organization encourages us to go to the office through social activities.....I think it's important to go to the office because after a while if you work 100% from home you become a bit isolated....I think after a while that doesn't do well for your mental health." "You pick up stuff that you wouldn't if you are working from home." "When I am in the office I see my colleagues that I normally wouldn't have any direct contact with. So that relationship gets closer through informal conversation, even if we just get a coffee. It makes us connect closer and you will hear things that otherwise at home I would just be in my bubble." "If (the hybrid work environment) has become a lifestyle, people got used to it and the values have changed." "-...I think (being able to work from home) is important. But my vote is for the hybrid work environment because of these human interactions that (with only remote) you wouldn't have."	Challenges of Balancing In-Office Requirements and Employee Preferences: While organizations may require employees to be in the office three days a week , employees feel that these mandatory days do not necessarily mean they will meet everyone in the office. This creates frustration, as in-office days often fail to facilitate the connection employees seek. The hybrid model creates a tension between organizational needs and the desire for more flexibility , as employees may not see the value in being physically present when they do not have the opportunity to meet and engage with their teams. In-Person Interaction in the office as Key for Trust and Relationship Building: Meeting in person remains critical for employees to connect with colleagues, build trust , and overcome the barrier of being perceived as "unapproachable" . Human interaction is seen as the main reason to go to the office, as it helps foster a sense of belonging and creates stronger working relationships. Informal conversations contribute to relationship-building, which employees believe is difficult to achieve through digital communication alone. Hybrid Work as a New Lifestyle and Shifting Organizational Values: The transition to hybrid work has become ingrained as a lifestyle , and employees now expect a balance of remote flexibility and in-person interaction . This shift in work culture reflects a change in organizational values , where autonomy and flexibility are seen as essential, but the need for human connection and social engagement remains a critical element for employee motivation and well-being.	Returning to the office does not guarantee reconnection or belonging. "The absence of a shared physical space can make it difficult to foster a unified organizational identity and shared values" (Aga et al., 2021). Additionally, "office mandates can feel toxic if perceived as a loss of autonomy, especially after hybrid models proved effective" (Bilderback & Kilpatrick, 2024) Leadership visibility remains critical in hybrid cultures. "Leaders must adapt to remote work's demands, prioritizing empathy, trust, and flexibility" (Antonacopoulou & Georgiadou, 2021) Research confirms that social isolation in remote work can harm well-being. "Physical separation from colleagues can result in isolation and disconnection, impacting motivation and commitment" (Wang et al., 2020) "Organizations must proactively create opportunities for social interaction and team building... to maintain a sense of community" (Dinh et al., 2021) Face-to-face encounters boost inter-team connection. "Office interactions allow employees to form unexpected relational bonds that foster cross-functional learning and emotional cohesion" (Grojean et al., 2004) The hybrid model has reshaped assumptions about work, relationships, and motivation: "It's not just the space that has changed, but the values and expectations around presence and engagement" (Steelcase, 2022) Hybrid work is often a preferred model for balancing autonomy and connection. "The flexibility of hybrid work, when paired with opportunities for in-person interaction, fosters well-being, motivation, and retention" (Haque, 2023) Nora Bateson expands on this relational dimension: "Relational possibility, not mandated 'trust or collaboration', must be nourished to allow true engagement and belonging" (Bateson, 2022)
	Adaptability through continuous learning and skill development through organizational support	"Like any organization, you will see that their values is to work as a team and to care about people. So I care about them, I have my challenges but I make sure that we as a team we can count on each other."	Management plays a crucial role in fostering a trusting and supportive environment , which is essential for continuous learning and skill development . By prioritizing the well-being and success of employees, leaders can create a culture where teamwork and mutual support are foundational. This can enable employees to adapt to challenges and continuously develop their skills, knowing they can rely on their colleagues and the organization for guidance and resources.	A learning-supportive culture is built around empathy, flexibility, and shared responsibility. "Leadership is crucial in fostering a positive remote work culture. Leaders must adapt their management styles... providing support and resources for their teams to succeed" (Antonacopoulou & Georgiadou, 2021) Continuous learning is a collective, not just individual, process. Bateson (2022) refers to this as transcontextual mutual learning: "Children, parents, teachers, employers, workers... are all mutually learning to continue life as we know it." This perspective aligns with organizations that foster team-based learning cultures , where "people are encouraged to support each other's development, especially when facing shared challenges" (Akdere & Egan, 2020) Theories such as Social Exchange Theory support the idea that mutual care and dependability enhance trust and learning in organizations. "Trust and collaboration: Enhance communication and collaboration by building trust through transparent interactions and mutual support" This builds the groundwork for adaptability: "When the relationships are built on trust and shared values, employees are more open to learning, feedback, and experimentation" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, Self-Determination Theory)
	Need for Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation to foster a culture of transparency and trust	She mentioned that the key skills needed to thrive in a hybrid work environment are: being proactive, communication, engage in continuous learning, intrinsic motivation, team spirit and care about people. "I am a super believer that we always learn and ongoing learning. But you are the one who does it, I can push you to the unit but if you don't go the unit, then it's up to you." "So this is proactiveness that I am talking about...you are taking the lead of you."	Intrinsic Motivation and Proactiveness as Key Drivers of Trust and Transparency: A culture of transparency and trust is best fostered when employees are driven by intrinsic motivation , the willingness to take initiative , engage in continuous learning , and contribute to the team spirit . While management can provide guidance and resources, the ultimate responsibility lies with the individual to stay proactive and lead their own development. This mindset supports a culture where employees are empowered to take ownership of their growth, contributing to a more transparent and trust-based environment.	Self-determination and proactive learning are essential traits in remote and hybrid work settings. A learning-supportive culture is built around autonomy, self-responsibility, and personal initiative. "Successfully shaping organizational culture in the remote work era requires committing to continuous learning, adapting to new challenges and challenging traditional norms to embrace innovative working methods" (Bilderback & Kilpatrick, 2024) Hybrid work requires trust in employee initiative and maturity. "You cannot simply say 'trust is needed' and hope it will be formed. Trust is the result of relational possibility, not a mental state to adopt. It must be allowed to shape as is possible in the particularities between people" (Bateson, 2022). Fostering proactive behavior is not just an individual trait but a system-supported outcome. "To compete on the rate of learning... organizations must support human ways of working that foster imagination and higher-level cognition rather than rote decisions. This includes supporting proactive behavior and learning autonomy" (Laloux, 2014, as cited in Boston Consulting Group, 2021).
	Flexibility in the Hybrid Work Environment	"I was in Australia and my boss was in London. That is a time zone difference of 12 hours. It was really hard for us to connect." "I wake up and there are like 30 different interactions back and forth because it was something urgent, so they just made a decision between themselves." "I would wake up already overwhelmed because I felt like I had to catch up." "I was struggling mentally and physically because I wasn't sleeping normal hours anymore. (due to meetings in diff. time zones)" (Talking about an employee working part time) "She told me openly that she doesn't feel much accomplishment because she feels that she's catching up at the time." She mentions that living in different locations adds to the complexity because she can not show her appreciation in person. "From a manager perspective, it is challenging to manage someone working part time" (making sure they can stay up to date).	Impact of Time Zone Differences on Communication and Decision-Making: Time zone differences can significantly disrupt communication and decision-making processes , especially for employees working globally. Employees often find themselves catching up on decisions made in their absence, leading to delayed responses and missed opportunities for effective collaboration. Strain on Well-Being Due to Irregular Schedules: The need to work across multiple time zones often results in disrupted sleep schedules , contributing to physical exhaustion and mental health challenges . Employees report waking up overwhelmed due to the pressure to catch up on work, which affects both their work-life balance and their ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle . Part-time employees in hybrid work settings often experience a sense of catching up with their workload, which can lead to feelings of lack of accomplishment . This struggle can negatively impact job satisfaction and work-life balance , as employees may feel disconnected from the pace of full-time colleagues. Additionally, managing part-time employees remotely presents challenges for leadership, particularly in ensuring they stay up-to-date with team progress and maintaining effective communication .	Research confirms that irregular working hours can result in negative well-being outcomes. "Nonstandard work schedules are associated with reduced sleep quality, increased stress, and long-term health effects" (Bolino et al., 2021) Part-time employees may experience reduced fulfillment and difficulty staying updated, especially when working remotely. "Flexible workers may be perceived as less engaged or productive due to lower visibility, despite comparable output, which negatively affects their sense of contribution" (Priya et al., 2022). Flexible work schedules offer autonomy, but time zone differences and asynchronous communication can increase stress and reduce cohesion. Employees often feel overwhelmed when catching up on missed updates and excluded from urgent decision-making. "Remote work may improve flexibility but also leads to challenges when teams are spread across time zones, creating stress and reduced cohesion" (Weil et al., 2021).
Inclusive Communication and Collaboration in Hybrid Environments	Adapting to personal needs	"You can be I am gonna pick up my kid, and I am gonna look after my dog. I am gonna spend quality time with my kids. So I think it is important....But my vote is for a hybrid work environment because of the human interactions."	Hybrid work allows employees the flexibility to manage personal responsibilities , such as childcare and pet care or spending more quality time with family while still maintaining work commitments. This flexibility supports a better work-life balance . However, despite the advantages of personal adaptation, human interaction is still valued. The hybrid work model seems to offers the best balance between personal needs and collaboration with colleagues.	Hybrid work models offer the necessary structure to balance autonomy with social engagement. "The evolution of work-life balance and flexibility norms is another significant aspect of the transition to remote work... Organizations are redefining norms to prioritize work-life balance. They recognize that employees who feel supported in managing their personal and professional lives are likelier to be engaged, satisfied and productive" (Palumbo et al., 2021) The option to work from home supports employees' ability to manage daily responsibilities, while periodic office presence helps maintain a sense of connection and collaboration. "Remote work challenges traditional values emphasizing physical presence and fixed working hours, requiring a more dynamic and responsive approach that supports fluctuating workloads and employee needs" (Shet, 2024).
	Inclusive and transparent communication systems to build trust	"So the communication is open and transparent. I think you will build trust and I dont think you can do anything without trust." "I think the challenges in working with different nationalities and cultures is, that some things get lost in translation....We express things in different ways....You need to be mindful about how to manage that." "Over time and experience you get to know the kind of person, you understand." "Sometimes you express yourself differently in different languages. In my mother tongue I express myself different because I express exactly how I feel. And sometimes, if I talk english, I may not be super accurate..It goes back to my point that sometimes it gets lost in translation." Language and communication affects the knowledge sharing. "We do all trainings and documents in english, and now I have been told we need to create the same training in 6 languages...We need to find someone who actually checks if the translation is accurate..It adds complexity to working, and being remote adds to that complexity." "Communication is the foundation for a positive work environment...when you have all honest communication and openly, I think we can all trust each other."	Open and Transparent Communication Builds Trust and is the foundation for a positive work environment : Transparent and honest communication is essential for building trust in hybrid work environments. Trust cannot be established without open dialogue, where information is shared freely and without hidden agendas. This type of communication fosters a positive work environment and allows teams to work together more effectively, as trust serves as the foundation for collaboration and decision-making. Cultural and Language Differences Impact Communication: When working with a diverse team that spans multiple cultures and languages, misunderstandings can occur due to differences in language expression and cultural nuances. Employees may express themselves differently in their native language , which can sometimes result in information being lost in translation when communicated in a second language. This adds complexity to knowledge sharing , particularly when the organization requires translations of training materials and documents into multiple languages.	Transparent communication fosters psychological safety, encourages open dialogue, and is essential for building trust in remote and hybrid work environments. Effective communication must be honest, regular, and multi-directional to create a foundation of mutual understanding. "Enhance communication and collaboration by building trust through transparent interactions and mutual support" (Blau, 1964, as cited in Bilderback & Kilpatrick, 2024) Communication is not only about clarity, but also about connection. Leaders play a pivotal role in shaping communication culture by modeling behaviors that reflect empathy and openness. "Influential remote leaders communicate clearly and frequently, set clear expectations and provide support and resources for their teams to succeed" (Dinh et al., 2021) In cross-cultural and multilingual teams, inclusivity in communication becomes even more critical. Misunderstandings due to language or cultural differences can disrupt collaboration and hinder knowledge sharing. "Organizations must actively promote inclusivity by ensuring that remote work policies and practices are accessible and equitable and by fostering a culture that celebrates diversity and encourages sharing diverse perspectives" (Siri et al., 2022)
	Balancing cross-functional collaboration	There are different policies and internal systems based on certification of the organization. This does not only include different holidays but also adds a barrier to work transparent, as the systems are not equally accessible. "I (as her boss) do not have access to her data....The HR is not the same and I do not have visibility to that." "Things are not standardised organization wide." "This impacts the day-to-day because we have to spend a lot of time managing." "(In a previous organization that she worked at) My manager would be able to access everything, we were using the same system, so even for her it was as if we were working in the same location even tho we were in different countries, but the system was the same."	Impact of Location-Specific Policies and Holidays on Collaboration: Differing policies and holidays across locations create barriers to effective collaboration, as these discrepancies complicate synchronization and access to resources . The lack of standardized policies across regions makes it difficult for teams to work seamlessly together. Standardization and Transparency in Cross-Functional Collaboration: In organizations where systems are standardized across locations, there is greater transparency and ease of collaboration . Having the same system for all teams, regardless of location, allows managers and employees to work as if they were in the same place , which promotes a clearer understanding of goals and performance. Standardized systems contribute to greater visibility and a more efficient and transparent work environment.	Inconsistent access to tools and HR systems across countries or subsidiaries can reduce managerial visibility and weaken coordination. The literature emphasizes that "successful hybrid arrangements depend on shared access to resources, coordinated technologies, and clear communication standards, regardless of physical location" (Vartiainen & Vanharanta, 2024). Hybrid work can complicate cross-functional collaboration when organizations operate under inconsistent systems, policies, or platforms across locations. This fragmentation disrupts information flow, creates extra administrative burdens, and hinders transparency. "Organizations must adopt harmonized digital systems and workflows to reduce barriers to collaboration, particularly when teams are geographically dispersed or functionally siloed" (Iqbal et al., 2021). A study by Wu et al. (2023) showed that mismatches in technology usability perceptions among hybrid employees negatively affected collaboration and advice-seeking ties. "When individuals experienced friction with digital platforms or lacked alignment in their use, relationships deteriorated, especially across different departments and units" (Wu et al., 2023).

Tematic Analysis & Triangulation

Qualitative Survey with Employees from various Organizations

Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Surveys with Employees from various Organizations (15 Participants)				
Research Question: "What are the key aspects an organization must explore when building a positive work environment, and how can these be addressed strategically to foster a broader cultural shift?"				
Category	Theme	Quotes from primary Research	Findings	Literature
Redefining Work Environment and Organizational Adaptability	Workplace as a driver of intrinsic motivation, a sense of belonging and fostering human connection	"Office feels like a standard 9-to-5 job where i want to leave as quickly as possible" "A physical workspace helps separate work and leisure" "I feel a reduced sense of belonging to the organization in hybrid work" "Office setting allows for picking up useful information from discussions" "Digital tools are helpful, but face-to-face interactions remain superior" "Working on a small workload percentage makes in-office presence important to stay engaged" Social interactions are key motivators for office attendance: "I dont go to the office if no team members are present." "The main reason I go to the office is to socialize" "Standing desk is a major advantage of the office"	Social Interaction Drives Office Engagement: The physical office remains crucial for social interactions , which are key motivators for employees to feel connected and engaged. Many employees report that the primary reason for coming to the office is to socialize and connect with team members, which fosters a sense of belonging and team cohesion. The lack of in-person interactions in hybrid setups leads to increased solitude and a weakened sense of belonging to the organization. Physical office as separation of Work and Leisure: The physical office helps create a clear boundary between work and personal life , supporting employees in maintaining work-life balance . While home offices offer a quieter environment and fewer distractions, they blur the line between work and leisure, making it harder to disconnect from work and causing stress during breaks and in the evenings. Workplace Design for Intrinsic Motivation: Specific features of the office, like standing desks , enhance employee well-being and motivation . In-office presence is especially important for those with smaller workloads , helping them stay engaged and productive . The physical office environment should contribute to foster intrinsic motivation by offering the right balance of flexibility and structure .	Research suggests that traditional office settings can sometimes create a rigid, transactional work experience. "The office must evolve beyond a place of work to a space that fosters collaboration, engagement, and social interaction to retain employees" (Steelcase, 2022) Studies confirm that a dedicated workspace helps with psychological detachment from work. "Employees who work in a dedicated office space report better work-life balance and mental separation from professional tasks compared to those working in hybrid or remote environments" (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) Informal, unstructured office interactions play a key role in information-sharing. "Being in a physical workspace enables spontaneous knowledge exchange and peer learning, which are harder to replicate in virtual environments" (Dinh et al., 2021) Research supports the idea that digital communication cannot fully replace in-person collaboration. "While digital tools facilitate connection, non-verbal cues and spontaneous interactions in face-to-face settings enhance team cohesion and trust" (Schlenkrich & Upfold, 2009) Studies indicate that part-time or hybrid workers benefit from physical presence. "Employees with reduced work hours may struggle with engagement and inclusion in remote settings, making periodic in-office attendance essential for collaboration" (Garg & Ranga, 2024) A case study found that "employees cite social interactions and team engagement as the primary reasons for returning to the office, emphasizing the importance of workplace connection" (Steelcase, 2022) Workplace ergonomics contribute to employee well-being and motivation. "Access to ergonomic office equipment, such as standing desks, improves employee health and job satisfaction, making the office environment more appealing" (Kossek et al., 2015)
	Adaptability through continuous learning and skill development through organizational support	"Strong support and promotion of training and further education (directly from management)" "Internal online courses and trainings" "Employer covers the cost of further education" "Company offers a "LernBistro" with learning videos for organizational topics" "Knowledge-sharing discussions happen primarily verbally or through the official communication platform" "Company fosters connection through events and tools" "Company is developing a new knowledge platform for learning, information sharing, and courses" "Strong company support for acquiring new skills"	Ongoing support for training and professional development is crucial in hybrid work environments. Employees should have access to internal courses, online learning platforms , and development resources to expand their skills and stay adaptable in an ever-changing work landscape. Management plays an important role in promoting and encouraging opportunities for self-driven learning and growth , which can help employees adapt to new challenges and evolve with the organization's needs. Spaces to exchange knowledge and stay informed about organizational developments enables a continuous flow of information that supports both individual and team success, fostering a collaborative culture even in remote settings. In hybrid work environments, access to learning resources, such as internal online courses, training sessions, and learning videos , provides valuable opportunities for employees to develop job-related skills and professional growth . While the focus on role-specific learning can support career advancement and effective contribution , the opportunity for intrinsic, self-directed learning , can be crucial for adaptability and innovation . It is unclear wether employees have equal opportunity to pursue intrinsic, self-directed learning outside of their immediate job requirements .	Research highlights the importance of management-driven learning initiatives. "Organizations that actively encourage continuous learning and skill development through managerial support see higher employee engagement and retention rates" (Schaufeli et al., 2002) Company-sponsored education is linked to higher job satisfaction and career progression. "Organizations that invest in employees' professional development, including tuition reimbursement and sponsored courses, foster a culture of continuous learning and improve workforce adaptability" (Kossek et al., 2015) Knowledge hubs and e-learning initiatives contribute to workplace learning. "Corporate learning platforms, featuring videos and interactive training modules, enhance accessibility to knowledge and create a more self-directed learning environment" (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) Research highlights that "effective knowledge-sharing in hybrid organizations relies on structured communication platforms that support both synchronous and asynchronous interactions" (Felstead & Henseke, 2017) Social engagement plays a key role in learning and collaboration. "Hybrid organizations that incorporate team events and interactive tools see higher knowledge retention and improved cross-functional collaboration" (Bartsch et al., 2020) A structured knowledge-sharing system is essential for continuous learning. "Developing centralized learning platforms enhances skill-building, reduces knowledge silos, and ensures consistent access to learning resources" (Choudhury et al., 2021) Research underscores the link between company-sponsored skill development and organizational success. "Organizations that prioritize employee skill development through structured learning programs and mentorship see stronger innovation and adaptability" (Greenberg et al., 2007)
	Need for Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation to foster a culture of transparency and trust	"The biggest challenge I see is trusting in employees working from home. Self-discipline is essential for remote work, some take advantage and are less productive, which creates unfairness for colleagues who maintain their productivity." "Hybrid work and sick days create issues, some work from home while feeling unwell, but productivity in such cases is questionable" "Organization enforces in-office work for control, which employees view as toxic, especially since the hybrid policy previously improved productivity and well-being."	Intrinsic motivation and self discipline is key in hybrid work settings, where employees should feel driven by personal growth and work satisfaction rather than just external rewards or supervision. For hybrid work to be successful, leaders must foster a culture of trust and flexibility , allowing employees to manage their work in a way that best suits their needs and responsibilities. This is a shift from traditional control-based management. Employees , on the other hand, need to stay disciplined and motivated on their own, maintaining productivity without constant supervision. Both leadership and self-discipline are key to creating a successful hybrid work model.	Research suggests that remote work requires high levels of trust and autonomy. "Trust between managers and employees is fundamental to the success of remote work. Leaders who trust their employees and give them autonomy are more likely to see higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity" (Felstead & Henseke, 2017) However, there is concern that some employees might take advantage of remote settings. "Presence bias, the tendency to equate workplace visibility with productivity, plays a significant role in performance evaluations, potentially disadvantaging remote workers" (Priya et al., 2022) Research supports the idea that forcing in-office work can erode trust and morale. "Organizations experiencing a 'trust recession' due to physical separation must work proactively to rebuild trust rather than enforce in-office mandates, which can create disengagement and attrition" (Steelcase, 2022) Moreover, "hybrid work policies that offer autonomy and flexibility have been shown to improve both productivity and employee well-being, making mandatory in-office policies counterproductive in some cases" (Dowling, 2022) Senge's work emphasizes that learning organizations thrive on trust and shared vision rather than control . He states that "organizations that instill intrinsic motivation and self-leadership among employees are better equipped to adapt to changing work environments" (Senge, 1990). This aligns with research showing that excessive control mechanisms in hybrid work can erode engagement and creativity .
Flexibility in the Hybrid Work Environment	Impact of flexible work schedules on productivity, work-life balance and job satisfaction	"I appreciate the high flexibility" "Breaks can be used more productively" "I have a more structured work routine in the office" "Weaker work-life separation, leading to stress during breaks and evenings" "More likely to work overtime without the need to leave the office" "Less socializing and increased solitude" "The flexible work schedule and saved time working from home allows for more time for hobbies and family."	Increased Flexibility and Productivity: Flexible work schedules are highly appreciated by employees, as they allow for a better work-life balance . The ability to adjust work hours gives employees the freedom to use breaks more productively , and the saved time from commuting offers more opportunities for personal activities, such as hobbies or family time . Employees value the flexibility to organize their days in a way that best suits their personal and professional needs. Challenges with Work-Life Separation: While flexibility offers benefits, it also presents challenges, particularly in terms of work-life separation . Employees report that the lack of a clear boundary between work and personal life leads to increased stress during breaks and in the evenings. The freedom to work overtime without the physical need to leave the office contributes to blurred boundaries , which can negatively impact employee well-being and overall productivity. Social Isolation and Reduced Interaction: Flexible work schedules contribute to a reduction in socializing and increased solitude , as employees may spend more time working remotely or on their own. While the flexibility is appreciated, the absence of informal office interactions can lead to feelings of isolation and weakened team dynamics , impacting collaboration and overall morale.	Research on remote and hybrid work confirms that flexibility is a key driver of job satisfaction. "Studies have shown that remote work can lead to higher job satisfaction due to increased autonomy and flexibility" (Golden et al., 2006) Hybrid work studies indicate that "some employees prefer structured office routines, as they provide a clear separation between work and personal life, leading to a more disciplined workflow" (Kossek et al., 2015) The blurring of boundaries between work and personal life is a common challenge. "The lack of physical separation between work and personal life can sometimes lead to longer working hours and increased stress" (Felstead & Henseke, 2017) Research highlights that remote and hybrid employees are at risk of overworking. "Employees often find themselves working beyond traditional hours due to the absence of clear physical boundaries between home and office workspaces" (Sha et al., 2020) A study on remote work culture found that "physical separation from colleagues and the workplace can lead to isolation and disconnection, impacting motivation and commitment" (Wang et al., 2020) Work-from-home policies have been shown to positively impact personal time. "Remote work allowed employees to better manage family responsibilities and personal commitments, leading to improved work-life balance and higher job satisfaction" (Choudhury et al., 2021) A study found that "employees working remotely often experience improved productivity during breaks, as they can engage in short personal activities or relaxation without office distractions" (Choudhury et al., 2021)
	Location flexibility	"No time spent commuting" "Capability of looking after children/animals at home" "IT issues often require on site support" "I experience less stress at home because the office is a busy work environment" "Prefers working on-site due to lack of a dedicated home office space" "No clear separation between work and home because i can't physically leave the office to disconnect from work"	Benefits of Location Flexibility for Personal Life: Location flexibility provides significant benefits, allowing employees to avoid commuting , which saves time and reduces stress. Additionally, the ability to look after children or pets at home enhances work-life balance and allows employees to manage personal responsibilities without disrupting their work schedule. Employees appreciate the autonomy that location flexibility offers in balancing both professional and personal commitments. Reduced Stress in a Home Environment: Many employees experience less stress working from home compared to the busy office environment . The home setting offers a quieter, more controlled space that can foster greater focus and well-being. However, this benefit is sometimes offset by the lack of a dedicated home office space . Challenges with IT and Work-Life Separation: IT issues often require on-site support , which can create disruptions in the remote work experience. Additionally, without the ability to physically leave the office, employees find it difficult to disconnect from work , leading to blurred lines between work and home life. The lack of clear separation can cause feelings of being "always on" , increasing stress during breaks and evenings.	A study on hybrid work found that reduced commuting time significantly enhances employee well-being and productivity. According to research, "the elimination of commuting time has led to increased job satisfaction due to fewer workplace distractions and greater autonomy over work schedules" (Mustajab, 2024) The flexibility of remote and hybrid work models has been particularly beneficial for employees balancing caregiving responsibilities. A systematic literature review highlighted that "employees appreciate the ability to manage personal and professional responsibilities more effectively, leading to better work-life balance and reduced stress levels" (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2023) The blurring of work-life boundaries is a well-documented concern in hybrid and remote work settings. According to research, "without a physical boundary between work and home, employees often struggle to mentally disconnect from work, leading to longer working hours and increased stress" (Felstead & Henseke, 2017) The lack of adequate home office setups remains a major challenge for some remote workers. One study found that "employees with dedicated home office spaces report higher productivity levels compared to those who work from shared spaces or temporary setups" (Bick et al., 2023) Research on remote work and employee well-being supports this claim, stating that "remote employees often report reduced stress levels due to a quieter, more controlled work environment, free from the constant interruptions and noise commonly found in office settings" (Dinh et al., 2021)

Thematic Analysis & Triangulation

Continuation...

Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Surveys with Employees from various Organizations (15 Participants)				
Research Question: "What are the key aspects an organization must explore when building a positive work environment, and how can these be addressed strategically to foster a broader cultural shift? "				
Category	Theme	Quotes from primary Research	Findings	Literature
	Adapting to personal needs	"Homeoffice allows for more individuality and a more relaxed work style" "Less stress attending early meetings (e.g., 08:00) from home without arranging childcare in advance"	Adapting Work to Personal Needs for Better Well-Being: Home office flexibility allows employees to tailor their work environment to their personal needs , offering more individuality and a relaxed work style . For example, employees report less stress attending early meetings (e.g., 08:00) because they don't have to arrange childcare in advance. This flexibility supports a better work-life balance by reducing logistical challenges and allowing employees to adapt their work schedule to fit personal responsibilities, possibly improving well-being and productivity .	Research highlights that remote work enables employees to personalize their work environment, contributing to a more comfortable and self-directed approach to work. According to a study on hybrid work, "employees who work remotely often report higher job satisfaction due to the increased autonomy and ability to create a workspace that suits their individual preferences" (Felstead & Henseke, 2017) Similarly, studies have shown that "employees appreciate the ability to tailor their work style to their personal needs, which enhances productivity and overall well-being" (Bloom et al., 2015) Research on workplace flexibility found that "parents working remotely experience less anxiety regarding childcare arrangements, as they have greater control over their schedules and can adapt to family needs more easily" (Kossek et al., 2015)
Inclusive Communication and Collaboration in Hybrid Environments	Inclusive and transparent communication systems to build trust	"Reduced transparency on workloads, causing frustration when overloaded" "Weakened team dynamics since hybrid work" "Shorter breaks due to concern about colleagues' perceptions" "I feel a weaker connection to direct team" "Casual conversations strengthens collaboration and shows interest and appreciation" "Collegial company culture facilitates easy communication" "Due to a small workload percentage (arbeitspensum) and distance, some information is missed" "High workload makes communication more difficult" "Getting to know colleagues improved communication and made work easier" "Too many platforms create confusion about where to find information" Different communication based on people's cultures and nationalities.	Challenges with Communication and Transparency: In hybrid work environments, reduced transparency about workloads and tasks can lead to frustration when employees feel overloaded. Additionally, the distance and small workload percentages contribute to missed information , making it harder for employees to stay informed. This lack of transparency can weaken team dynamics and make communication more difficult, especially when employees are juggling high workloads. Importance of Casual Conversations and Team Bonding: Casual conversations and informal exchanges play a crucial role in strengthening collaboration and fostering a sense of appreciation and connection within teams. Despite the rise of digital communication tools, face-to-face interactions remain essential for maintaining strong team dynamics, particularly in hybrid settings where employees may feel a weaker connection to their direct team. Cultural and Communication Platform Challenges: Cultural differences can lead to varied communication styles, and the overload of platforms can create confusion about where to find important information. The complexity of navigating multiple communication tools can hinder effective collaboration, especially when employees have different cultural approaches to communication.	Research on hybrid work highlights that remote employees often struggle with workload visibility. "The absence of transparent workload distribution can lead to uneven task allocation and frustration among employees who feel overloaded" (Kahlow et al., 2020) Hybrid work arrangements can challenge traditional team cohesion. "Virtual meetings, emails, and instant messaging have replaced traditional face-to-face interactions, altering team dynamics and reducing spontaneous collaboration" (Schlenkrich & Upfold, 2009) Research suggests that informal conversations are crucial for workplace relationships. "Casual, unstructured interactions facilitate collaboration and foster a sense of appreciation among employees, strengthening team bonds" (Dinh et al., 2021) Hybrid workers with reduced hours may struggle with information gaps. "Employees who work part-time or remotely may miss crucial updates, leading to reduced engagement and operational inefficiencies" (Garg & Ranga, 2024) Research suggests that excessive workloads hinder effective communication. "Heavy workloads often limit employees' ability to engage in meaningful workplace discussions, reducing collaboration and trust" (Newman & Ford, 2021) Social interactions positively impact workplace communication. "Regular virtual team-building activities and informal chat groups help maintain a sense of community, improving overall communication" (Yue et al., 2021) Cultural differences impact workplace communication. "Variations in communication styles across cultures can lead to misunderstandings in remote and hybrid teams, requiring organizations to adopt inclusive communication strategies" (Bartsch et al., 2020)
		Balancing cross-functional collaboration	Limited Cross-Functional Interaction: In hybrid work environments, cross-functional collaboration often remains superficial , with rare interactions between teams. While employees may have work-related contact across teams, these connections are often limited to specific tasks or projects, preventing deeper collaboration and relationship building. Challenges with Hybrid Work and Availability: Hybrid work creates misalignment in team members' availability , making it difficult to coordinate effectively. Even when employees are in the office, cross-team collaboration primarily relies on digital communication , limiting spontaneous interactions and slowing down real-time problem-solving. Preference for In-Person Collaboration: Many employees express a preference for having team members physically present in the same workspace, rather than engaging in full desk-sharing . Physical proximity is seen as essential for stronger collaboration and more effective team dynamics, as it allows for easier communication and immediate problem-solving.	Hybrid work environments often create surface-level interactions between teams without fostering deeper engagement. "While digital tools facilitate basic communication, they do not always support the kind of rich, spontaneous exchanges that build strong cross-functional relationships" (Kahlow et al., 2020) Research suggests that physical proximity enhances teamwork. "Co-located teams often report higher cohesion and better informal knowledge exchange compared to those using shared or hot-desking models" (Bick et al., 2023) A hybrid work study found that "even when employees are on-site, digital tools remain the default method of communication, reducing the benefits of in-person presence" (Richter, 2020) Research highlights the scheduling challenges in hybrid work settings. "Misalignment in hybrid teams can result in difficulties coordinating meetings and collaboration, requiring more structured communication practices" (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007)
		Equal access to opportunities	Employees express worry that Hybrid work can hinder career development , as less familiarity with the company and weakened in-person interactions may limit visibility and access to career growth opportunities . The lack of regular office presence can impact networking and mentorship , potentially affecting advancement within the organization.	A literature review on remote and hybrid work found that "employees who spend less time in physical office spaces may struggle with developing a deep understanding of the company's culture and strategic priorities, which can hinder their integration into key projects and leadership tracks" (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) Research highlights that hybrid and remote work environments may create barriers to career progression. "Remote employees often face challenges in career advancement due to reduced visibility and fewer informal interactions with leadership, which are crucial for promotions and professional growth" (Van Zoonen & Sivunen, 2022)

Triangulation Summary

Legend:

QS

Qualitative Survey with Employees

I

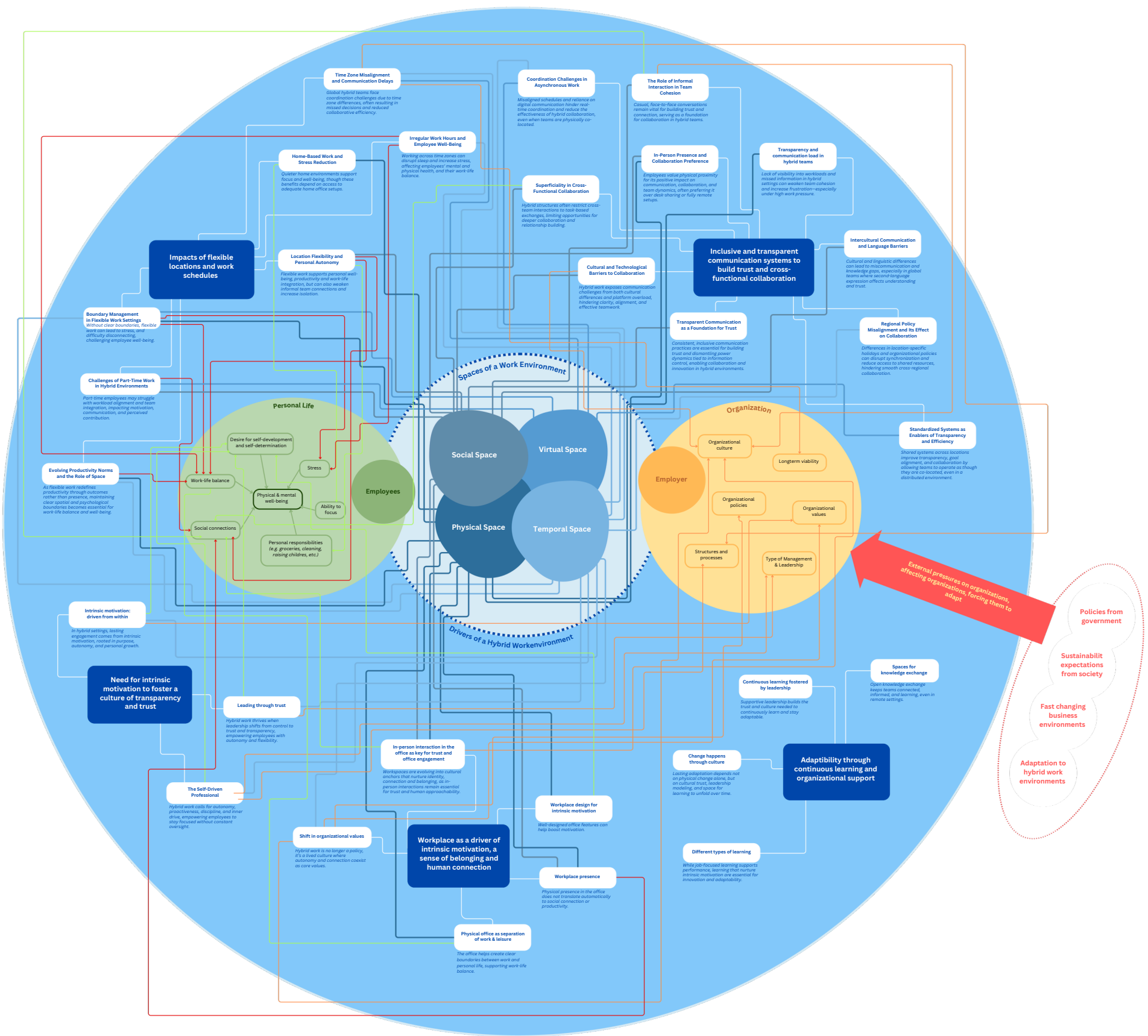
Interview with Leadership Position

EV

Experts from Vitra

Summary of the Emerging Research Findings / Thematic Analysis			
Research Question: "What are the key aspects an organization must explore when building a positive work environment, and how can these be adressed strategically to foster a broader cultural shift?"			
Theme	Finding Summary	Supporting Quotes	Supporting Literature
Trust & Transparency	Trust is foundational for hybrid work, enabling autonomy, collaboration, and psychological safety. Yet it is often undermined by inconsistent leadership signals and fragmented communication. Without clarity and follow-through, employees may feel disconnected or hesitant to take initiative, eroding the very conditions hybrid work depends on.	<div><div>EV</div><div>An employee at Vitra emphasized that for a hybrid work environment to be effective, it must be grounded in trust, respect, and a sense of humanness. These values need to be actively demonstrated and nurtured by leadership and management in order to create a culture where hybrid work can thrive.</div></div> <div><div>QS</div><div>"The biggest challenge I see is trusting in employees working from home. Self-discipline is essential for remote work, some take advantage and are less productive, which creates unfairness for colleagues who maintain their productivity."</div></div>	<p>Hybrid work requires trust in employee initiative and maturity. "You cannot simply say 'trust is needed' and hope it will be formed. Trust is the result of relational possibility, not a mental state to adopt. It must be allowed to shape as is possible in the particularities between people" (Bateson, 2022).</p> <p>Research suggests that remote work requires high levels of trust and autonomy. "Trust between managers and employees is fundamental to the success of remote work. Leaders who trust their employees and give them autonomy are more likely to see higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity" (Felstead & Henseke, 2017) However, there is concern that some employees might take advantage of remote settings. "Presence bias, the tendency to equate workplace visibility with productivity, plays a significant role in performance evaluations, potentially disadvantaging remote workers" (Priya et al., 2022)</p>
Intrinsic Motivation	In hybrid work environments, intrinsic motivation is essential for engagement and adaptability. However, it can only thrive when supported by autonomy, trust, and a culture that values self-direction, conditions often missing in bureaucratic work models.	<div><div>I</div><div>"I am a super believer that we always learn and ongoing learning. But you are the one who does it. I can push you to the unit but if you don't go the unit, then it's up to you."</div></div> <div><div>EV</div><div>Adapting to (office) changes requires an open mindset and intrinsic motivation. Employees who are able to reflect on their role within the change and manage their own expectations are more likely to adapt successfully.</div></div>	<p>Personal ownership and intrinsic motivation are foundational for meaningful organizational change. People are more likely to adapt and engage when they feel internally aligned with the process, not externally pressured. "The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels" (Senge, 2006, p. 4).</p> <p>Self-determination and proactive learning are essential traits in remote and hybrid work settings. A learning-supportive culture is built around autonomy, self-responsibility, and personal initiative. "Successfully shaping organizational culture in the remote work era requires committing to continuous learning, adapting to new challenges and challenging traditional norms to embrace innovative working methods" (Bilderback & Kilpatrick, 2024)</p>
Leadership Culture	Leadership plays a critical role in shaping cultural adaptability. Control-based approaches can hinder change. Effective leaders model trust, care, and vulnerability, creating space for learning and psychological safety. When these conditions are present, employees are more likely to embrace new ways of working and engage in self-directed growth.	<div><div>QS</div><div>"Organization enforces in-office work for control, which I view as toxic, especially since the hybrid policy previously improved my productivity and well-being."</div></div> <div><div>I</div><div>"Like any organization, you will see that their values is to work as a team and to care about people. So I care about them, I have my challenges but I make sure that we as a team we can count on each other."</div></div> <div><div>EV</div><div>Insights from a Vitra employee indicate that the success of adapting to a new office environment is strongly influenced by an organization's culture and leadership style. It can take six months to a year for employees to fully adjust to a redesigned workspace and use it to its full potential. Organizational culture plays a key role in shaping how smoothly change is embraced and integrated.</div></div>	<p>Research highlights the importance of management-driven learning initiatives. "Organizations that actively encourage continuous learning and skill development through managerial support see higher employee engagement and retention rates" (Schaufeli et al., 2002)</p> <p>Transformational leadership fosters motivation and a shared sense of purpose, which is particularly vital in hybrid and evolving work environments. "Transformational leadership, characterized by motivational influence, is effective in remote environments, as it fosters high-quality relationships and common goals, aiding in overcoming virtual communication challenges" (Purvanova & Bono, 2009)</p> <p>Perceptions of productivity have evolved in hybrid work environments, shifting the focus from visible activity to meaningful outcomes. Employees are no longer judged by where they work but by what they achieve. "Presence bias... can be exacerbated in a remote work environment, where managers may find it challenging to assess performance based on direct observation. Overcoming presence bias requires a shift in mindset, where performance is assessed based on results and outcomes rather than physical presence" (Franken et al., 2021)</p>
Communication Practices	Collaboration in hybrid environments relies on transparent communication and relational trust. Without shared dialogue and access to information, team dynamics weaken. Informal conversations and spontaneous exchange remain essential and must be intentionally supported.	<div><div>QS</div><div>"Getting to know colleagues improved communication and made work easier"</div><div>"Casual conversations strengthens collaboration and shows interest and appreciation"</div><div>"Reduced transparency on workloads, causing frustration when overloaded"</div></div> <div><div>EV</div><div>An employee from Vitra emphasized the essential role of communication in fostering innovation within hybrid work environments. She observed that some individuals were reluctant to share knowledge with colleagues, as possessing information was perceived as a source of personal power and leverage. According to her, effective hybrid collaboration is only sustainable when trust is present, and trust, in turn, can only develop through open and consistent communication.</div></div>	<p>Transparent communication is essential not only for clarity but for cultivating a deeper sense of mutual trust. In hybrid environments, this becomes even more critical, as physical distance can amplify uncertainty and misunderstanding. "Communication is the tool that helps to build trust. Hybridity is an arrangement that is prone to confusion... Maintaining a good communication culture would be of great help to the hybrid workplace" (Smith et al., 2019, as cited in Hybrid Workplace - The Future of Work)</p> <p>Communication shapes the structure of workplace relationships and social networks. Research shows that "advice networks reflect the communication of expertise and the flow of knowledge and information," and the strength of these networks is influenced by how people share knowledge across digital and face-to-face channels (Krackhardt, 2003, as cited in Wu et al., 2023)</p>
Physical & Virtual Workspaces	The physical office must offer purpose and spaces that foster connection and belonging, complementing what remote work alone often cannot: relational depth, team cohesion, and shared identity.	<div><div>I</div><div>"I see people resistant to go back to the office if they have to. I think everyone got used to this work environment...In our organization we need to go to the office three times a week, but that does not automatically mean that I see them or interact with them."</div></div> <div><div>EV</div><div>Employees at Vitra noted that different generations bring varying expectations and associations with the physical workspace. While older generations often prefer private offices and associate them with career status and hierarchy, younger generations tend to reject traditional, hierarchical structures and seek more flexible, collaborative environments. These differing behaviors and needs present a challenge that organizations must navigate and reconcile when designing future workspaces.</div></div> <div><div>QS</div><div>"Office feels like a standard 9-to-5 job where i want to leave as quickly as possible"</div><div>"A physical workspace helps separate work and leisure "</div><div>"I dont go to the office if no team members are present."</div><div>"The main reason i go to the office is to socialize."</div></div>	<p>Creating a workplace that fosters human connection and belonging is essential in today's hybrid environment. "What people really want is to feel valued and feel a sense of belonging to their organization... The office can be a vehicle for communicating values and creating a community at work where people feel they belong" (Steelcase, 2024)</p> <p>Hybrid work is often a preferred model for balancing autonomy and connection. "The flexibility of hybrid work, when paired with opportunities for in-person interaction, fosters well-being, motivation, and retention" (Haque, 2023) Nora Bateson expands on this relational dimension: "Relational possibility, not mandated 'trust' or 'collaboration', must be nourished to allow true engagement and belonging" (Bateson, 2022)</p>
Work-Life Boundaries	Flexibility in hybrid work supports well-being by reducing commuting stress and allowing employees to better manage caregiving responsibilities and personal routines. However, this flexibility can also blur the line between work and personal life, shifting stress into the home and extending working hours. Without clear norms and boundaries, the benefits of flexibility risk turning into pressure, overwork, and reduced recovery time.	<div><div>I</div><div>"I was struggling mentally and physically because I wasn't sleeping normal hours anymore. (due to meetings in dif. time zones). I would wake up already overwhelmed because I felt like I had to catch up."</div></div> <div><div>QS</div><div>"Weaker work- life separation, leading to stress during breaks and evenings"</div><div>"More likely to work overtime without the need to leave the office"</div><div>"Less socializing and increased solitude"</div><div>"The flexible work schedule and saved time working from home allows for more time for hobbies and family."</div><div>"Less stress attending early meetings (e.g., 08:00) from home without arranging childcare in advance"</div></div>	<p>The blurring of boundaries between work and personal life is a common challenge. "The lack of physical separation between work and personal life can sometimes lead to longer working hours and increased stress" (Felstead & Henseke, 2017)</p> <p>The flexibility of remote and hybrid work models has been particularly beneficial for employees balancing caregiving responsibilities. A systematic literature review highlighted that "employees appreciate the ability to manage personal and professional responsibilities more effectively, leading to better work-life balance and reduced stress levels" (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2023)</p>
Cross-Team Collaboration	Cross-functional collaboration in hybrid settings often remains surface-level, limited to task-based exchanges. Spontaneous, trust-driven interaction between departments is rare, as hybrid structures reduce informal touchpoints. Without intentional design, collaboration across teams becomes transactional rather than relational.	<div><div>EV</div><div>An employee from Vitra explained that physical separation between departments, such as being on different floors, can hinder cross-functional collaboration and knowledge sharing by creating barriers to spontaneous communication.</div></div> <div><div>QS</div><div>"Work-related contact with all teams but mostly superficial"</div><div>"Getting to know colleagues improved communication and made work easier"</div><div>"I prefer team members sitting together rather than full desk-sharing"</div></div>	<p>Cross-functional collaboration requires visibility, alignment, and accessibility across departments. Physical separation, such as being on different floors or buildings, can result in organizational silos. "When physical or structural barriers reduce interaction, collaboration suffers and communication loops break down, ultimately limiting innovation and performance" (Leesman, 2024)</p> <p>Hybrid work can complicate cross-functional collaboration when organizations operate under inconsistent systems, policies, or platforms across locations. This fragmentation disrupts information flow, creates extra administrative burdens, and hinders transparency. "Organizations must adopt harmonized digital systems and workflows to reduce barriers to collaboration, particularly when teams are geographically dispersed or functionally siloed" (Iqbal et al., 2021).</p>

Systemmap



Cultural Probes

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Cultural Probe

Exploring Purpose, Intrinsic Motivation and Autonomy in the Hybrid Work Environment

Bachelorthesis Project
Jennifer Moser
Design Management, HSLU

Welcome!

Thank you for participating in this cultural probe , a design research method used to explore personal experiences through reflection. Your perspective is incredibly valuable and will help me better understand how motivation, energy, and meaning show up in your day-to-day hybrid work life.

This research is part of my bachelor thesis, where I explore how organizations working in hybrid environments can **cultivate cultures that support intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and a deeper connection to purpose.** The goal is not to find a one-size-fits-all solution, but to discover insights that could lead to small, meaningful shifts in how we experience work.

There are no right or wrong answers, this is about your experience. Feel free to be honest, creative, even playful. Most importantly: share what matters to you.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can reach me at:
Whatsapp: 079 884 34 44
E-Mail: jennifer.moser@stud.hslu.ch

Thank you so much for your time and thoughts.
Kind regards,
Jenny

How it works

This cultural probe is designed as a short reflective journal to help you share your personal experience. It includes three open-ended questions, which you can respond to whenever it fits best into your routine, there's no pressure to complete it in one sitting.

You're invited to take your time, reflect honestly, and share whatever feels meaningful to you. This is not a test, there are no right or wrong answers. **Your unique perspective will provide valuable insights for my research.**

You're also welcome to include photos, voice recordings, or spontaneous thoughts.

There's no one correct way to participate , you can fill it out digitally, print and handwrite, or even send photos of your answers. Whatever format suits you best is perfect.

Please complete and return your entry by April 23rd.
Thank you again for being part of this!

Meaningful Work

What does meaningful work look or feel like to you in your current hybrid work environment?
Think about motivators, lived experiences and values.

Energy Givers/Takers

Can you describe a task or moment at work recently that gave you energy, and one that drained it?
Think about what made it uplifting/draining.

Motivators

If your team reflected on what motivates each other more openly, what kind of questions or conversations would you find helpful or exciting?

Final Inputs

Feel free to use the space on the next page for your personal comments, reflections or inputs, that you would like to share.

Room for personal Reflection

Thank you!

You made it to the end of the cultural probe!

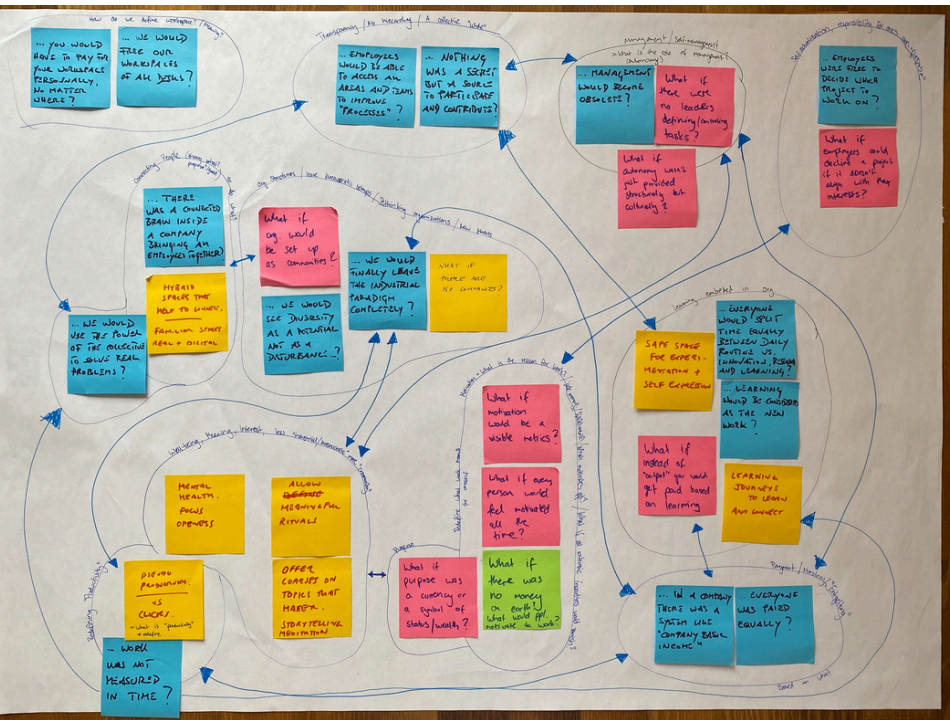
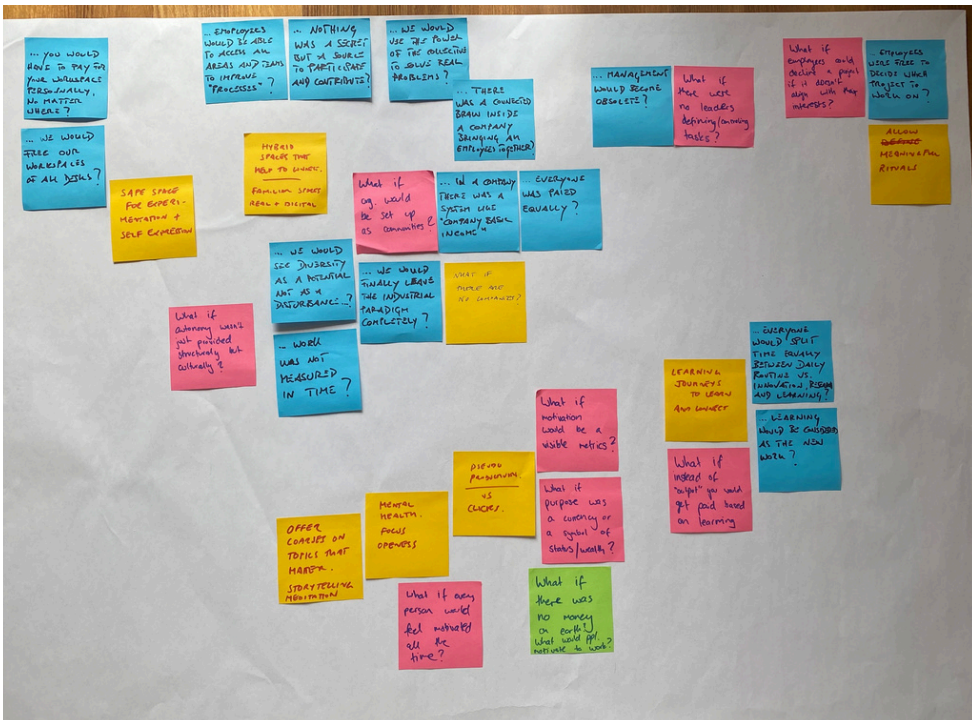
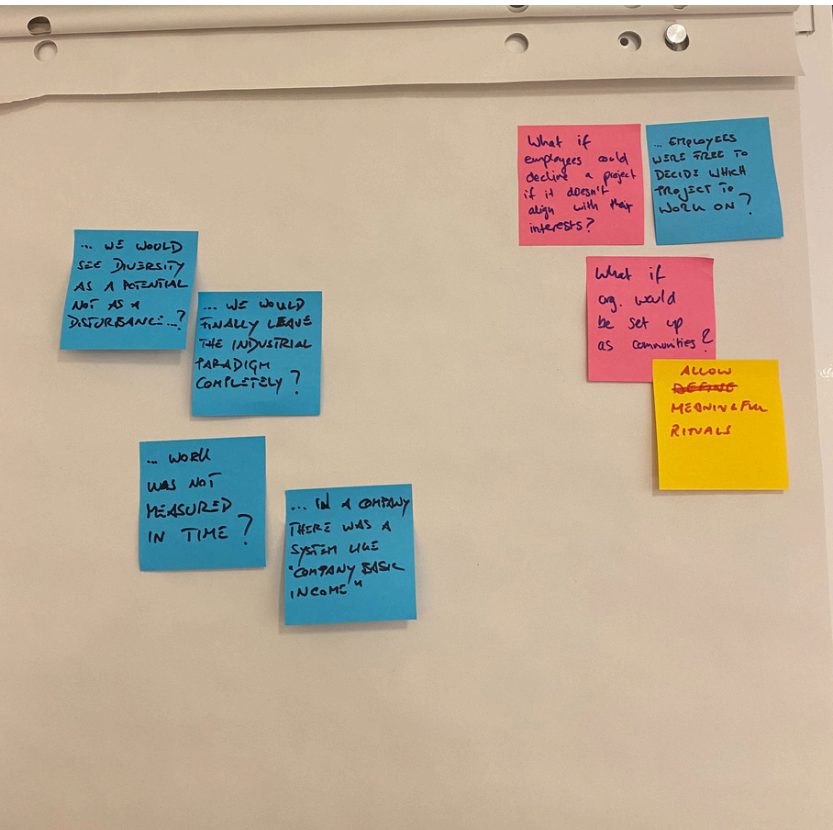
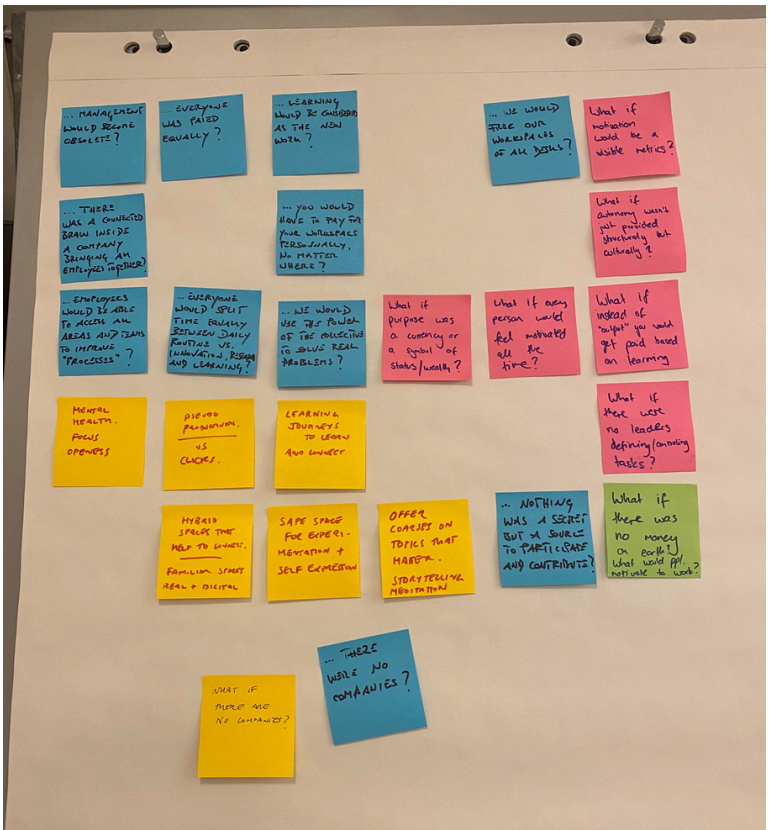
Once again I would like to thank you for participating and sharing your valuable experiences with me.
If you have any further questions, thoughts, or feedback, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please return the completed cultural probe in the format of your choice back to me, via Whatsapp: 079 884 34 44, or E-mail: jennifer.moser@stud.hslu.ch

I wish you all the best!
Jenny

Materials from Co-Design

Before and after clustering.



First Prototype Document

Leaflet

This is a draft version of the text that will be included in the accompanying leaflet for the card set. It explains how the cards can be used, who they're designed for, and the idea behind them. Any feedback on clarity, structure, or tone is greatly appreciated, especially in terms of how well the purpose and usage of the cards comes across.

1. Why these Cards exist

These cards were created as part of a design research project exploring how organizations can foster cultures that support purpose, intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and trust, elements that are essential not only for engagement, but for long-term adaptability, well-being and future-ready work cultures.

What the research revealed is that while autonomy is often provided structurally, through flexible hours or remote work policies, it is rarely supported culturally. Many employees can technically organize their own schedules, but without shared rituals, psychological safety, or supportive leadership, autonomy can begin to feel isolating. The absence of intentional, human-centered structures often results in people feeling disconnected from their teams, and even from the purpose of their own work.

At the same time, outdated, bureaucratic ideas of productivity still linger in many organizations. Work is often measured by visibility or control, mouse clicks, availability, immediate responsiveness, rather than meaningful contribution, trust, or energy alignment. In this context, autonomy and trust becomes fragile, purpose gets lost, and motivation relies on extrinsic factors instead of intrinsic.

Especially in hybrid environments, where interactions are more fragmented, these gaps become even more visible. People lose sight of how their individual values, energy, and work connect to the broader goals of their team or organization. At the same time, trust, both in leadership and among team members, is critical for navigating complexity, and change. Yet trust isn't something that can be mandated. It must be cultivated through daily practices, open communication, and shared reflection.

2. Why it matters

In response to these findings, these cards were developed as a gentle nudge, not to fix culture, but to help shape it. They don't offer one-size-fits-all solutions, but instead open small, accessible spaces for new conversations, shared insights, and experiments to emerge. The cards are a starting point for reflection, connection, and change, designed to spark subtle shifts in how teams relate to their work, their motivation, and to one another.

Hybrid work has the potential to enable more human-centered, adaptive ways of working, but it doesn't happen automatically. These cards are one invitation to help it take root.

Picture from Pinterest for inspiration

Reflection Cards (Questions)

Below you'll find a few example cards from the reflection set. This is an early-stage prototype designed to explore both the content and potential use of the cards. While the primary focus is on evaluating the relevance and clarity of the questions, feedback on the visual design, tone, and overall usability is also very welcome. However, it was not yet the main focus.

Reflection Cards

Topic: Purpose

"When do you feel that your work matters – to you, to others, or to the organization?"

Reflection Cards

Topic: Purpose

"If you could shift one small thing in your daily work to feel more aligned with your values, what would it be?"

Reflection Cards

Topic: Intrinsic Motivation

"When do you feel most driven to learn or grow in your work?"

Reflection Cards

Topic: Intrinsic Motivation

"What type of task energizes you, even if no one is watching?"

Reflection Cards

Topic: Autonomy

"What decisions do you wish you could make more independently?"

Reflection Cards

Topic: Autonomy

"What kind of freedom helps you do your best work?"

Reflection Cards (Questions)

Reflection Cards

Topic: Trust

"How does your team show trust, or withhold it, in daily routines?"

Reflection Cards

Topic: Trust

"What makes it easier or harder for you to speak openly about challenges?"

Experimentation Cards (Tasks)

Below you'll find a few example cards from the experimentation set. This is an early-stage prototype designed to explore both the content and potential use of the cards. While the primary focus is on evaluating the relevance and clarity of the questions, feedback on the visual design, tone, and overall usability is also very welcome. However, it was not yet the main focus.

Experimentation Cards

Experiment: Redefine Productivity

Choose a day where, instead of measuring success by output, you measure it by energy, curiosity, or connection.

Debrief: What changed?

Experimentation Cards

Experiment: Reverse Check-In

Start your next meeting by asking: "What's one thing that felt meaningful last week?"

Don't mention deadlines or tasks.

Experimentation Cards

Experiment: Personal Purpose Prompt

Invite team members to finish this sentence in a shared doc or whiteboard: "Right now, the purpose of my work feels like..."

Experimentation Cards

Experiment: Shared Experiment Space

Invite your team to co-create a space, digital or physical, where small experiments, ideas, or curiosities can be shared.

At the end of the week: Did someone try something? What did we notice? What's or worth exploring further?

Experimentation Cards

Experiment: Future Culture Prototype

As a team, pick one element of your ideal future work culture (e.g. more trust, more playful collaboration, deeper focus time). Now ask: "What would that look like if we tried it just for one week?"

Debrief: What felt different? What did we learn about what's possible now?

Experimentation Cards

Experiment: Micro Gratitude Round

Close a meeting by naming one thing someone did that reflected purpose, courage, or care, not performance.

Thank you for taking the time to explore my prototype, your feedback means a lot!

I'm especially interested in your thoughts on how this idea could live and evolve in real work environments. Feel free to share any reflections, suggestions, or reactions, everything helps shape the next iteration.

A few guiding questions for your feedback:

- How do you imagine this being used or implemented within an organization?
- How would you feel if your manager introduced these cards to your team?
- Would you recommend these cards to your own manager or colleagues?
- What aspects work well in your eyes, and what feels unclear or unhelpful?
- Are there other topics you would like to see included?
- What do you think about the card format, how does it feel to you as a medium?

Thank you again for being part of this process!

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