The COVID-19 pandemic forced organizations around the world to take part in the largest remote working experiment we have ever faced. The pressure on IT and DevOps teams to enable this shift was huge. Now, those same teams are facing their next big challenge—permanently supporting the world of hybrid work.

The hybrid model promises the best of both worlds: the connections and experiences of in-person with the flexibility and freedom of remote work. But for IT and DevOps teams, it also brings more disruption. The technological, structural, and cultural changes required for successful hybrid working are significant. To explore what the new reality of hybrid work means, we asked 813 IT and DevOps professionals for their views. This report details the key findings.

How are we working today?
Organizations are shifting to hybrid working in considerable numbers. More than half (53%) have either already adopted hybrid working or are planning to move to a hybrid model.

- 33% work entirely from home and will remain so
- 29% work entirely from home, but will move to a hybrid model
- 24% have a hybrid approach and work a portion of our time from home

The one certainty is that, after many decades of working one way, there is change ahead. The majority (69%) of respondents think that hybrid working is here to stay, with a further 10% seeing fully remote working as the future.
Hybrid is driving technology adoption and spend

To empower employees to perform their best in a hybrid model, the experience of work must be frictionless. Employees want to move seamlessly between home, the office, or any other location, using whatever device they prefer. This is driving greater adoption of technology as digital transformation is sharply accelerated.

What tools do you expect to see increase in use as a result of hybrid working?

- 63% – Collaboration tools (Microsoft Teams, Slack, etc.)
- 69% – Video conferencing tools (Zoom, WebEx, etc.)
- 36% – Project management tools (Asana, Hive, etc.)
- 47% – Storage tools (Google Drive, etc.)
- 42% – Password/authentication (Okta, 1Password etc.)
- 34% – Asset management tools/software (Ivanti, ManageEngine, etc.)

As technology adoption increases due to hybrid working, IT spend is subsequently shifting. The biggest spending priority is IT infrastructure, followed by security as organizations look to lock their widening perimeters down. Not surprisingly, collaboration and video conferencing tools are also getting more of the budget.

Due to hybrid work, which areas are getting the most IT budget spend/priority?

- 41% IT infrastructure
- 16% Security
- 11% Collaborative work management solutions
- 11% Video conferencing solutions
- 09% Cloud enablement

The impact of hybrid work on ITOps and DevOps teams

So, what does this rapid digital transformation of our workplaces mean for ITOps and DevOps teams? Like other teams, they stand to reap the benefits of hybrid working. The increased flexibility, avoiding the daily commute, and a better work-life balance are all noted as plus points.

What benefits do you see/expect to see from hybrid work?

- 46% – There will be more flexibility in my life
- 42% – I will have a better work life balance
- 38% – There will be more time back in my day (e.g. no commute)
- 33% – I will have more time to manage my workload
- 34% – The opportunity to spend more time with my family
- 29% – My mental health will improve
- 24% – More time to start a family (kids, pets, etc.)

But despite the benefits, because of the role that IT and development play in enabling hybrid work, there is also much greater pressure on these teams. 68% believe that their work will stay the same or become more complex as a result of the hybrid model. Only 32% think it will make their work easier.

How will hybrid work impact your work?

- 23% – My work will be much more complex
- 21% – My work will be somewhat more complex
- 24% – My work will stay the same
- 20% – My work will be somewhat easier
- 12% – My work will be much easier
Specifically, survey respondents are worried about difficulties collaborating and a potential increase in workload. There are also concerns that hybrid work will make it harder to be promoted and rewarded by an employer.

What concerns do you have about hybrid work?
• 23% – It will be harder to collaborate
• 22% – My workload will increase
• 21% – It will be harder to be recognized and get a raise/promotion
• 21% – My office culture will suffer
• 20% – My team will be less productive
• 19% – It will be a less secure environment
• 16% – It will be harder to be innovative
• 16% – There will be a higher risk of burnout

Digital workplaces create greater support needs
Supporting a distributed workforce also creates new demands. On top of supporting new hardware, IT services and applications need to be consistently available and free of disruption. Teams need to be able to deliver remotely, and there is greater demand for more technology enabled collaboration. IT user support policies are changing as a result.

How are teams having to adapt their IT user support policies to accommodate hybrid working?
• 45% – Remote support and remote-management tools
• 45% – Provisioning equipment to home workers and/or supporting employee-provided equipment
• 40% – Cloud enablement of all software possible
• 40% – Enabling multiple forms of collaboration (e.g. scheduling, whiteboard and availability tracking)
• 34% – Appropriate security for distributed work
• 28% – Aiding facilities in modernizing building technologies to avoid touch-heavy surfaces
• 27% – Extended support desk hours
• 25% – Work-specific user training

Making hybrid work successful:
Culture, health and pay
Against this backdrop of transformation, organizations need to make other adjustments to ensure the positive aspects of hybrid work are sustained while negative outcomes are minimized. This includes a cultural shift that embraces better and more transparent communication protocols.

What does your department need to invest in to sustain a culture of hybrid work?
• 45% – Establish flexible and effective top-down, bottom-up and horizontal communication
• 36% – Create a support system for staff that helps ensure mental wellbeing
• 32% – More visibility and accessibility to leaders
• 30% – Greater transparency
• 27% – A shared sense of purpose
• 26% – Establishing protocols for disagreement/conflict
• 25% – More accountability

The impact on mental health of new modes of working should also be a key consideration for organizations. Respondents are looking for more openness around mental health issues as well as more material support.

What do organizations need to invest in to better support mental health?
• 36% – Creating a more flexible and inclusive culture
• 36% – Online mental health support resources (videos, apps, webinars, articles)
• 34% – Making talking about mental health with your colleagues a norm
• 34% – Clearer information about where to go for support and training
• 31% – Reduce out-of-pocket costs for employee mental health services
• 25% – Online therapy options
• 25% – Provide employees with a dedicated coach/mentor
• 25% – Provide stipends to encourage exercise
When it comes to rewarding staff in a hybrid model, there are clear concerns from our respondents. Organizations should be particularly wary of this, given there is already an industry battle for the top talent in full flow. Recognizing the contribution of skilled staff and retaining them will be critical.

**Are you concerned about promotions/raises with being a hybrid employee?**

- 42% – No, my work speaks for itself
- 38% – Yes, if my boss doesn’t see me at work, others might be promoted before me
- 20% – Maybe, I wasn’t until I read this question

**Recruitment in the future hybrid workplace**

Taken together, respondents believe the changes brought about by hybrid working are going to have an impact on how IT professionals are hired. Many of these changes are positive—including widening the search area for talent and attracting a higher caliber of candidate.

**How will hybrid working change IT recruitment?**

- 40% – Organizations will expand search to different areas/time zones to look for top talent
- 30% – Hybrid will take away some employee bargaining power (salary, benefits, etc.)
- 32% – Hybrid will help organizations attract a higher caliber of candidate
- 31% – Hybrid will create more opportunities for Dev professionals
- 29% – There will be increased competition for jobs

**Embracing real-time and automated work in a hybrid world**

Hybrid working will deliver benefits to all employees. A better work-life balance and more flexibility at work are welcome; however, organizations should also take heed of the warning signs revealed in this research. ITOps and DevOps functions must adapt to make hybrid working successful, or it could mean the opposite of what’s intended and see burned out teams working longer hours to support a greater workload.

In a hybrid world, where we are all more reliant on digital tools and services, there is a growing need for real-time digital operations. The volume of digital incidents and outages will inevitably increase, but in an effective hybrid environment, this should not translate to more pressure on ITOps and DevOps teams. To ensure this is the case, organizations need to transform for a hybrid future now by investing in real-time digital operations solutions and increasing the use of automation to reduce the impact on support teams.

*813 respondents from the UK, Australia and the U.S, in IT and development roles – survey conducted May 2021.*

---

**About PagerDuty**

PagerDuty, Inc. (NYSE:PD) is a leader in digital operations management. In an always-on world, organizations of all sizes trust PagerDuty to help them deliver a perfect digital experience to their customers, every time. Teams use PagerDuty to identify issues and opportunities in real time and bring together the right people to fix problems faster and prevent them in the future. Notable customers including GE, Vodafone, Box, and American Eagle Outfitters. To learn more and try PagerDuty for free, visit pagerduty.com. Follow our blog and connect with us on Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Facebook.

Learn more about PagerDuty at pagerduty.com.