As organizations prepare their workplaces of the future, new work models will fall on a spectrum depending on four dimensions: work, worker, team, and organization. Each dimension has key questions to consider when building and refining work models over time.

**Ask yourself and your team…**

1. **WORK: Jobs/Tasks**
   - ✓ What is the degree of collaboration required to get work done? Do all tasks require the same degree?
   - ✓ How frequently does information need to be exchanged to work effectively?
   - ✓ Must work be done at a specific location or time?
   - ✓ Do customers/clients require face-to-face interactions?

2. **WORKER: Employee Preferences/Skills**
   - ✓ Does the employee have the technology, communication and time management skills to work independently and effectively from anywhere?
   - ✓ What level of in-person, social interaction is preferred to remain engaged and productive?
   - ✓ To what degree do personal circumstances, such as health concerns, commute time, and caregiving, require flexible time and location for work to get done?
   - ✓ Is the remote work environment adequate and free from distractions?

3. **TEAM: Manager/Team Dynamics**
   - ✓ Does the manager have the skills and experience to manage distributed teams?
   - ✓ What are the team’s aggregate work preferences?
   - ✓ Are team members co-located or dispersed across geographies/time zones?
   - ✓ How much collaboration needs to happen synchronously vs. asynchronously?

4. **ORGANIZATION: Leadership/Culture**
   - ✓ How centralized and well-documented are decision-making, procedures, and flexible work policies?
   - ✓ Are organizational and industry norms oriented more around in-person or remote-first interactions?
   - ✓ Is the technology infrastructure adequate to support new ways of working?

**Things to consider…**

- How will you evaluate and adapt work models over time as business requirements and employee preferences change?
- How much autonomy will each business unit have to determine how best to support team performance?
- How will you train leaders in managing hybrid teams, and invest in the tools of coordination that will help your teams succeed?
- How will you ensure inclusion and fairness as you consider employees’ work options? What steps will you take to mitigate proximity bias and avoid creating a two-tiered workforce?
- How will you onboard both new and returning employees and create shared experiences among distributed teams?
- How will you assess performance and gather data on your employees’ needs and preferences, engagement and productivity, and sense of belonging?
- How will you help employees focus on their well-being and mental health to prevent burnout?
- How will you acknowledge uncertainty and communicate routinely at all levels of the organization?

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New Work Models: Mapping Readiness & Preferences

Consider each dimension as you refine work models across the spectrum. Adjust the slider as you analyze factors within each dimension. Note the action steps required to fully assess readiness and preferences and keep in mind the competing demands of individuals and teams, job requirements and preferences.

**1. WORK**
- **Degree of collaboration**
  - In-Person: Highly collaborative
  - Hybrid: Independent work
  - Remote: Independent work
- **Information exchange**
  - In-Person: Frequent, informal
  - Hybrid: Infrequent, formal
  - Remote: Anytime, anywhere
- **Location/time-dependence**
  - In-Person: Location and time-specific
  - Hybrid: Anytime, anywhere
  - Remote: Anytime, anywhere
- **Client/customer interaction**
  - In-Person: Face-to-face required
  - Hybrid: Remote-first support possible
  - Remote: Remote-first support possible

**Action:** Conduct a thorough evaluation of how jobs/tasks should be done to meet business objectives.

**2. WORKER**
- **Technical/remote-work skills**
  - In-Person: Lower degree of technical skills
  - Hybrid: High degree of technical skills
  - Remote: High degree of technical skills
- **Communication style**
  - In-Person: Prefer informal, in-person communication
  - Hybrid: Proactive communicator
  - Remote: Proactive communicator
- **Level of supervision**
  - In-Person: Direct supervision required
  - Hybrid: Minimum supervision needed
  - Remote: Minimum supervision needed
- **Preferences/circumstances**
  - In-Person: Work as social, few competing demands
  - Hybrid: At risk, multiple non-work demands
  - Remote: At risk, multiple non-work demands
- **Work setup/environment**
  - In-Person: Fixed location, poor remote setup
  - Hybrid: Optimal setup, distraction-free
  - Remote: Optimal setup, distraction-free

**Action:** Assess employee readiness. Survey employees to understand skills, preferences and circumstances that will help drive engagement and productivity.

**3. TEAM**
- **Degree of team-based work**
  - In-Person: Highly collaborative and interdependent
  - Hybrid: Independent workers
  - Remote: Independent workers
- **Aggregate preferences**
  - In-Person: Majority in-person
  - Hybrid: Majority remote
  - Remote: Majority remote
- **Location/dispersion**
  - In-Person: Co-located in one/few locations
  - Hybrid: Geographically dispersed
  - Remote: Geographically dispersed
- **Work hours/coordination**
  - In-Person: Fully synchronous required
  - Hybrid: Asynchronous possible
  - Remote: Asynchronous possible

**Action:** Assess manager readiness. Train, support, and create incentives for managers to manage a more distributed workforce.

**4. ORGANIZATION**
- **Degree of centralization**
  - In-Person: Centralized decision-making, processes
  - Hybrid: De-centralized decision-making
  - Remote: De-centralized decision-making
- **Physical space/real estate**
  - In-Person: Limited ability to reduce/re-design footprint
  - Hybrid: Can reduce/re-design footprint
  - Remote: Can reduce/re-design footprint
- **Flexible Work Policy**
  - In-Person: Formal policy not updated, in place
  - Hybrid: Clear guidelines and policies
  - Remote: Clear guidelines and policies
- **Digitally-enabled**
  - In-Person: Poor tech infrastructure, low resources
  - Hybrid: Tech-enabled, adequate resources
  - Remote: Tech-enabled, adequate resources
- **Culture/norms**
  - In-Person: Face-to-face, in-person highly valued
  - Hybrid: Remote-friendly culture & norms
  - Remote: Remote-friendly culture & norms

**Action:** Assess organizational readiness. Pilot a phased re-entry. Collect data on retention, mobility, productivity, mental health, and inclusion/belonging among all populations. Evaluate and iterate.