

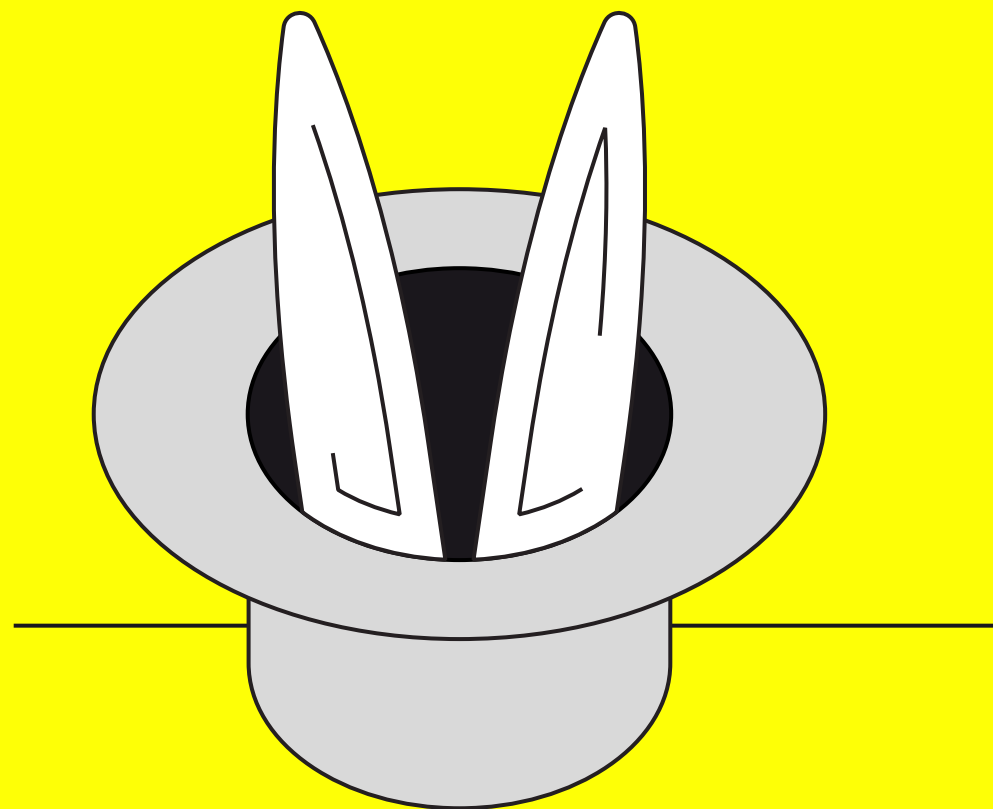
How to Design a Post-Pandemic Workplace

Read our guidelines and protect your workforce.

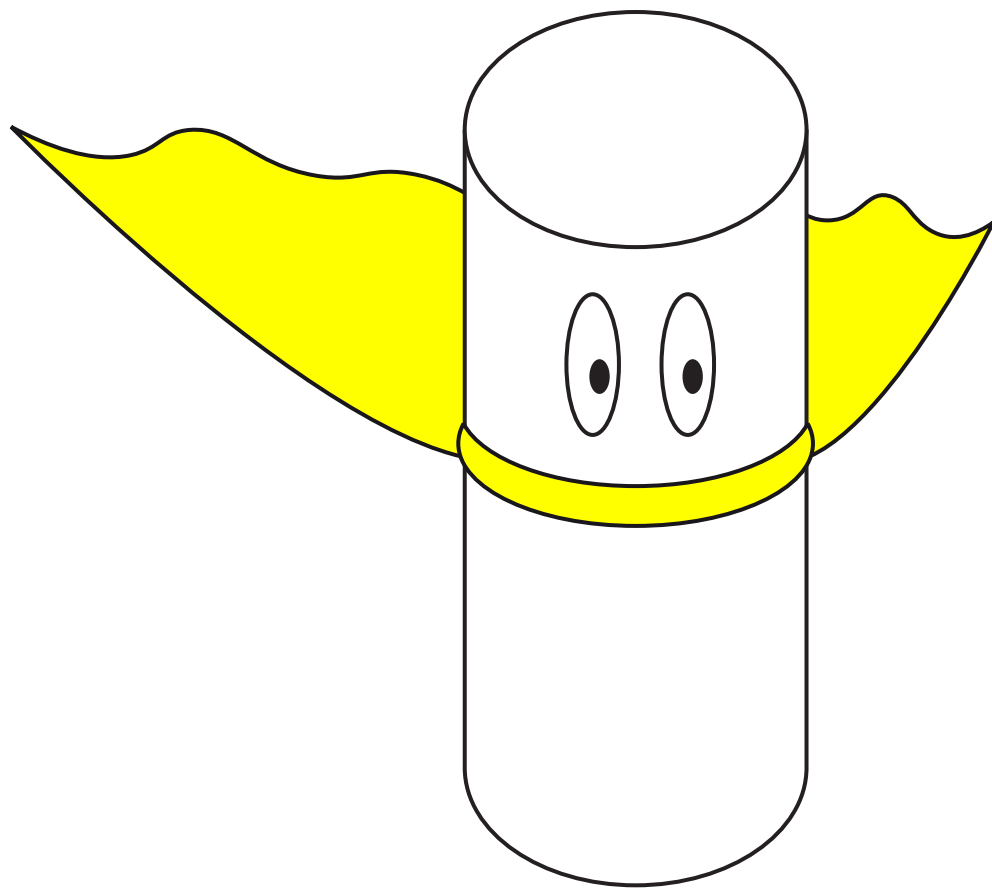


A few insights

- Hybrid working is expected to become the new normal.
- Even if you could work entirely remotely, you should meet in-person occasionally.
- The 7 elements of a successful hybrid working model include communication, culture, leadership, technology, space, staff and mental health.
- When employees work from home, it's essential to assist them with their home office set up.
- The post-pandemic office will feature different work zones, including a focus room, collaboration room, meeting room and relax room.



New reality, new opportunities



How we work tomorrow will not be how we worked yesterday. In other words, when the current health crisis is resolved, we won't be returning to the same places we left behind. So, what can we expect?

The truth is we have been trending toward a hybrid working model for years now. COVID-19 just accelerated its arrival. It's goodbye to the long daily commutes and 9-to-5, on-site office work. Welcome flexible hours, re-designed spaces, and work from anywhere!

If you want to implement a successful hybrid workplace transition, you'll require a clear strategy. To make it easier, we prepared some practical tips for a post-pandemic work environment.

Let's start at the beginning.

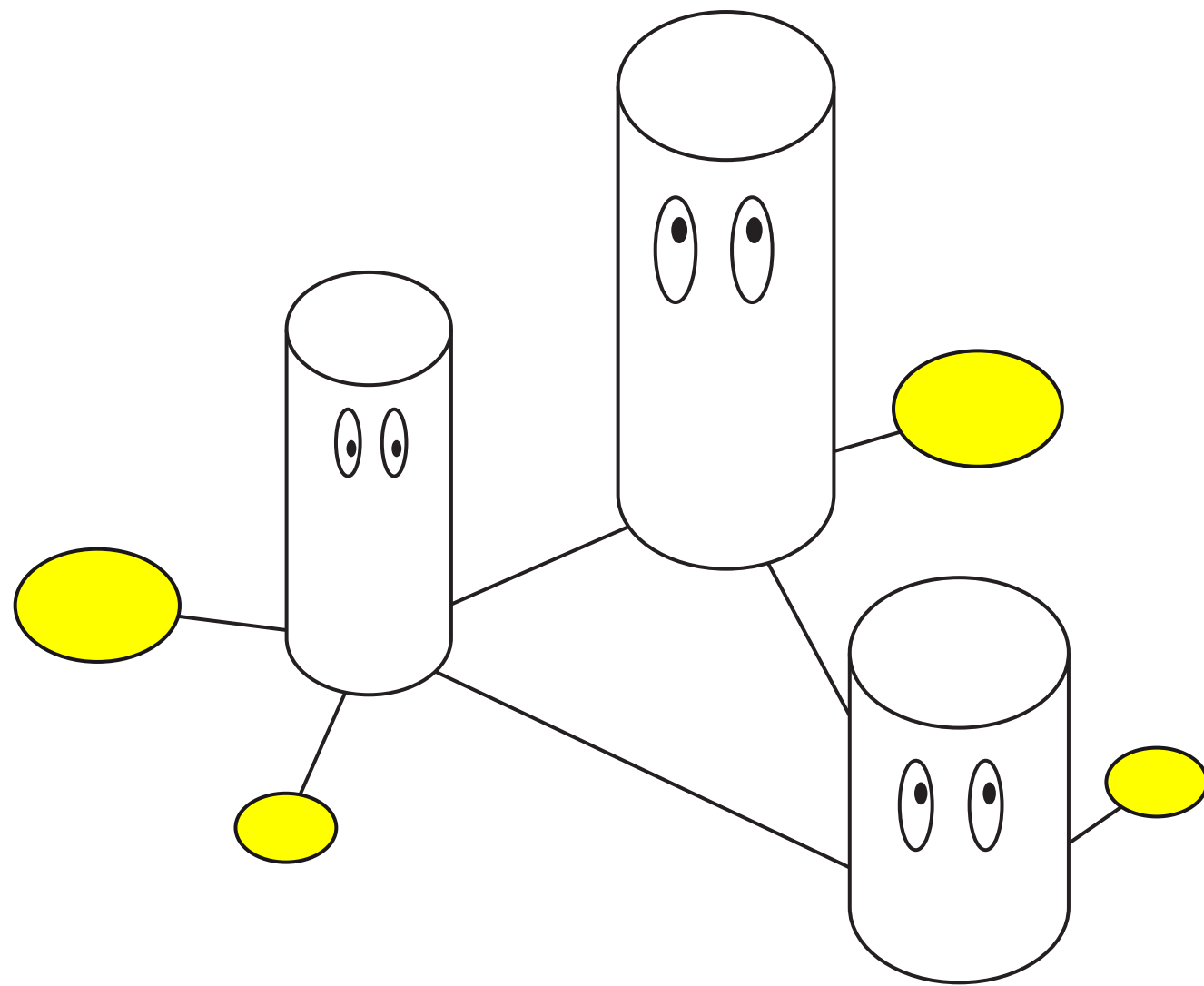
What is hybrid working and why does it matter?

Hybrid working means you have the flexibility to work from wherever is optimal for you and meets the needs of your business. What matters is not where you are but how productive and comfortable you are in your environment so you can be inspired to work well.

In hybrid teams, some employees might be working in central offices, while others are working remotely, alternating between different spaces depending on responsibilities, tasks and preferences.

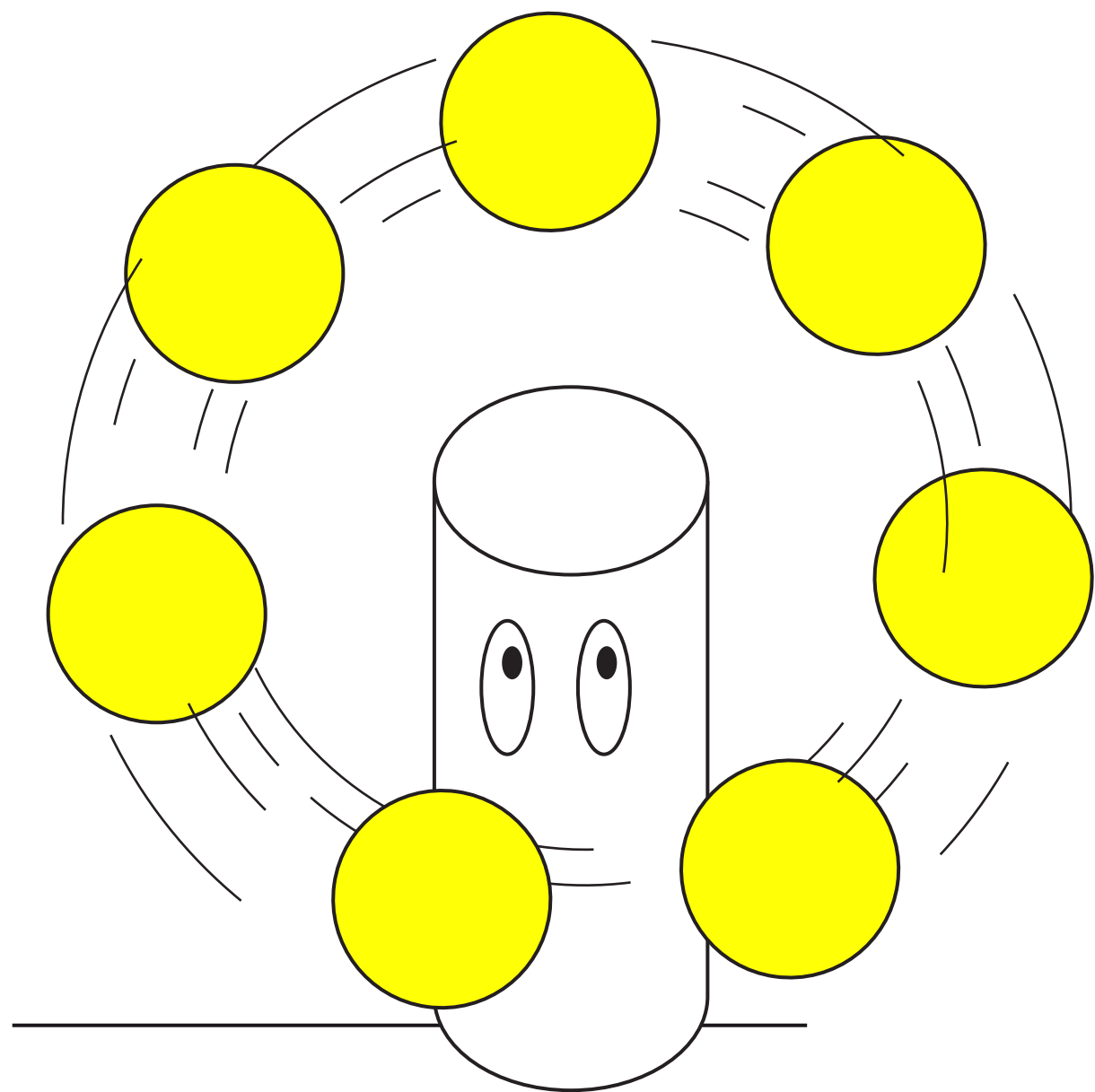
Hybrid working has broad support. According to a survey by PwC¹, more than half of employers (55%) expect that their workers will work remotely at least one day per week even after COVID-19 is no longer a concern. Almost three quarters (72%) of their workers would like to work from home two days a week. This suggests that while we have embraced home working, we still want to go to the office sometimes. Why? To collaborate, change scenery, focus, and, let's be honest, to socialize a bit.

Fun fact: Over 40% of employees felt that they became more productive when they started to work from home due to the pandemic.



1. PwC's US Remote Work Survey. Available at: <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/library/covid-19/us-remote-work-survey.html>

What do you need to consider with hybrid working?



Communication

Hybrid working requires new channels of communication. Some employees will be working from home, so you can't rely on face-to-face communication anymore. You need to ensure all employees get the same information. Nurture both formal and informal exchange between co-workers.

Culture

Hybrid working can challenge the established company culture that gets developed when people are physically present. It's essential to maintain a sense of belonging in all your workers. Shared values and the company's vision can be relayed in many ways; for example, by distributing a team newsletter, celebrating work successes and personal milestones (e.g., birthdays, anniversaries, baby showers etc.), creating groups with shared hobbies, encouraging distance sharing.

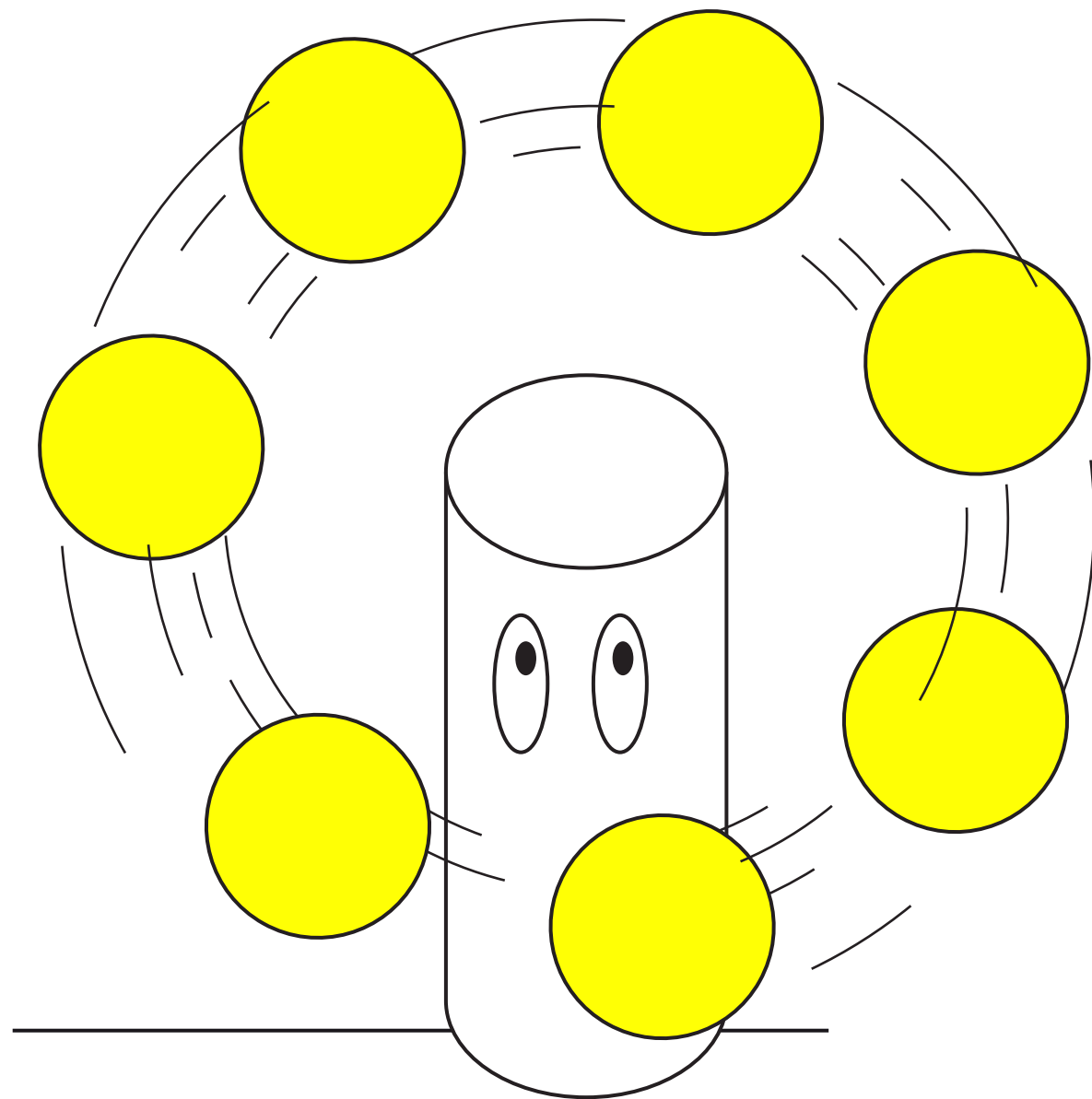
Leadership style

New times call for new leadership styles. Autocratic managers might find it hard to accept new work practices. This is the era of visionary and sustainable leaders who trust their employees and empower them to reach their goals.² Of course, you need to set some achievable goals and hold your employees accountable. But, you also need to provide them with the tools and space and lead by example.

Expert Tip: As a manager, ensure each staff member has a task or a project and a deadline to finish it by. However, they can organize work according to their preferences and inspiration spikes, as long as it gets done. Jobs can be tracked with Time tracking apps; for example, Toggl.

2. Zhang, T., Avery, C.G., Bergsteiner, H. and More, E. (2014). The relationship between leadership paradigms and employee engagement. *Journal of Global Responsibility*, 5(1), 4-21. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JGR-02-2014-0006>

What do you need to consider with hybrid working?



Space

To design the hybrid office, you need to consider different factors, including how much time people will spend at work and how many fixed vs shared workspaces you need to plan for. You might discover that you don't need so much office space anymore and redirect those funds into other areas.

Technology

Technology is at the centre of a hybrid office, facilitating work as well as supporting safer practices; for instance, through touchless technology. Good examples of new technology include apps for booking desks for the days you will come to work and using different sensors throughout the building, such as air sensors and temperature checks.

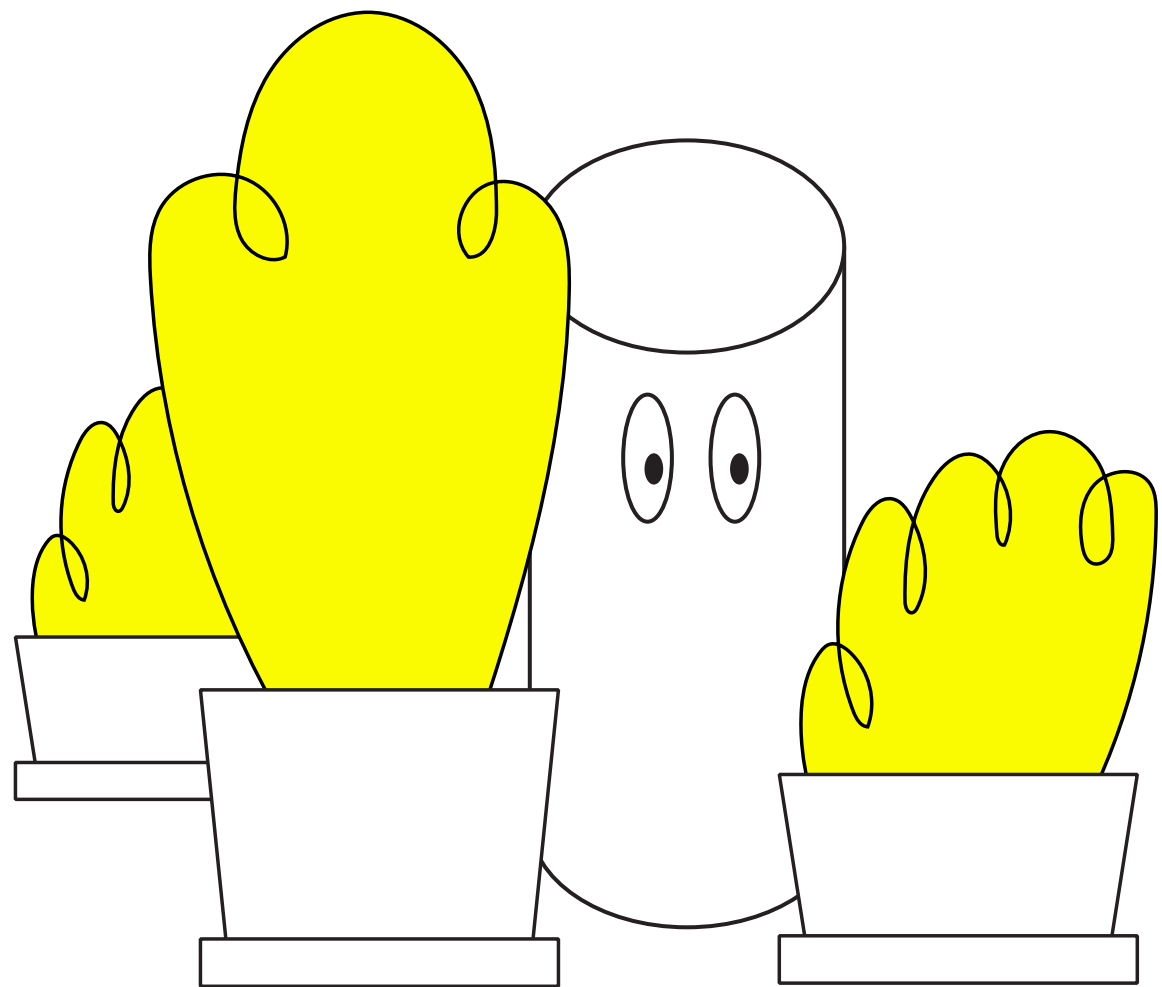
Staff

Experts predict that we can expect a new staff member - Chief Wellbeing Officer. We will also need more people to support work from home, such as HR staff and technology departments. What's good about hybrid working is that you can attract new talent, regardless of their location and time zone.

Mental Health

Last but not least, consider your staff's mental health, including the potential anxiety of returning to work. Online exercise and yoga classes or access to an on-site gym facility might help people relax, bond and maintain their health.

The home office set-up



When your workers work from home, they are still your workers and you have a duty of care. In fact, it is probably a good idea to have a standardized checklist that ensures the home office is safe and risk-free.

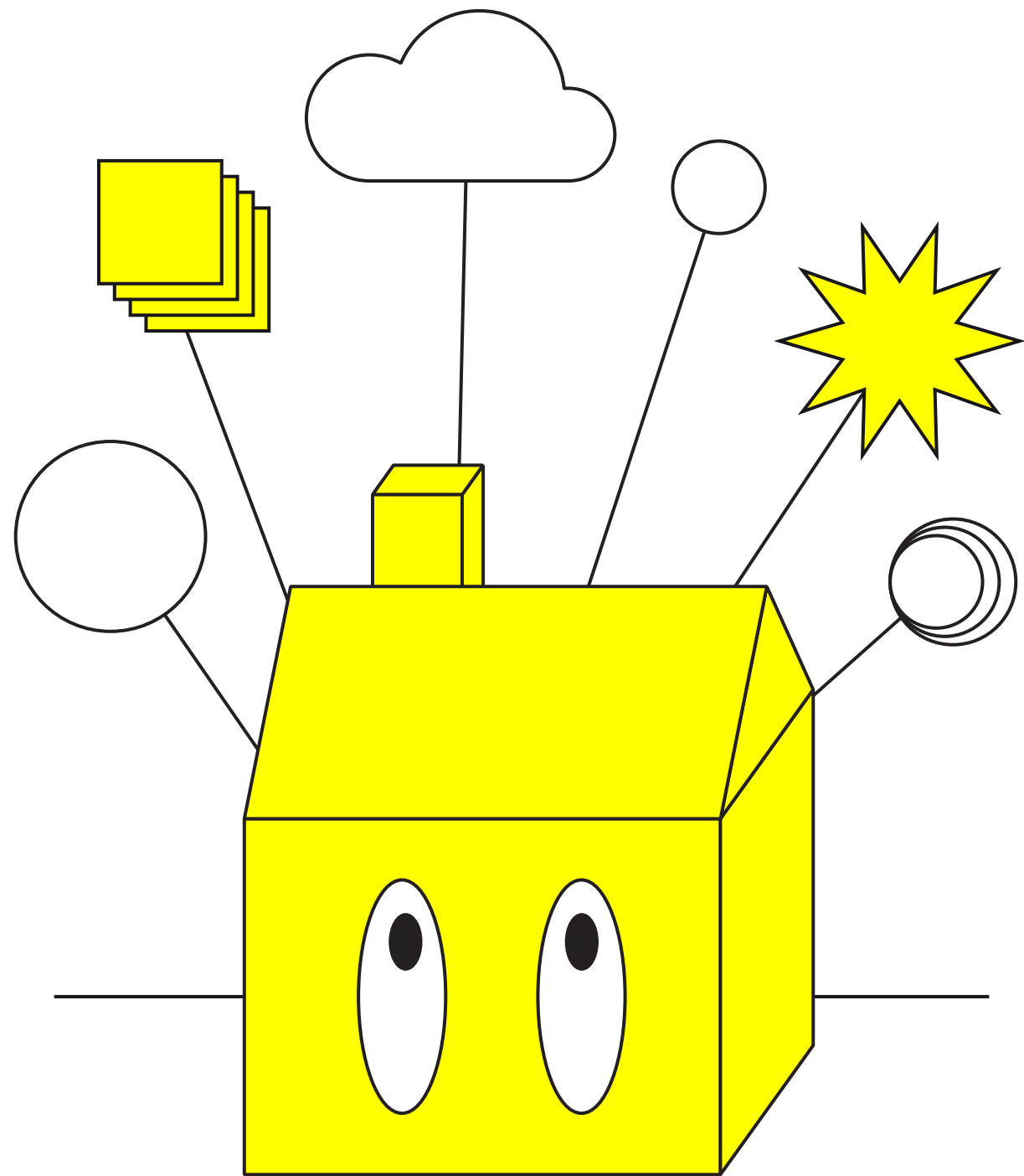
Some companies are subsidizing their employees' home office transformation to ensure they have the right conditions for work, including:

- good lighting (see our previous brochure Lighting in the Office)
- ergonomic office chair
- desk (consider standing desk extenders)
- noise-cancelling headphones
- ergonomic keyboard
- high-speed internet access
- printer/scanner or multipurpose machine
- greenery

Fun fact: Scientists confirmed that people working in offices enriched with plants have higher work satisfaction, better ability to concentrate and increased subjective perception of air quality.³

3. Nieuwenhuis, M., Knight, C., Postmes, T., & Haslam, S. A. (2014). The relative benefits of green versus lean office space: Three field experiments. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 20(3), 199–214. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xap0000024>

Your office space is changing



In the new office, you will have to design task-specific work zones. We suggest designing the following:

Focus room

Offers privacy and is designed so workers can focus on their work without outside distractions.

Collaboration room

This is where workers can meet and share ideas; it can feature flying desks, modular furniture and should allow for physical distancing.

Meeting room

Used for external meetings and equipped with technology, such as large video screens and smart cameras.

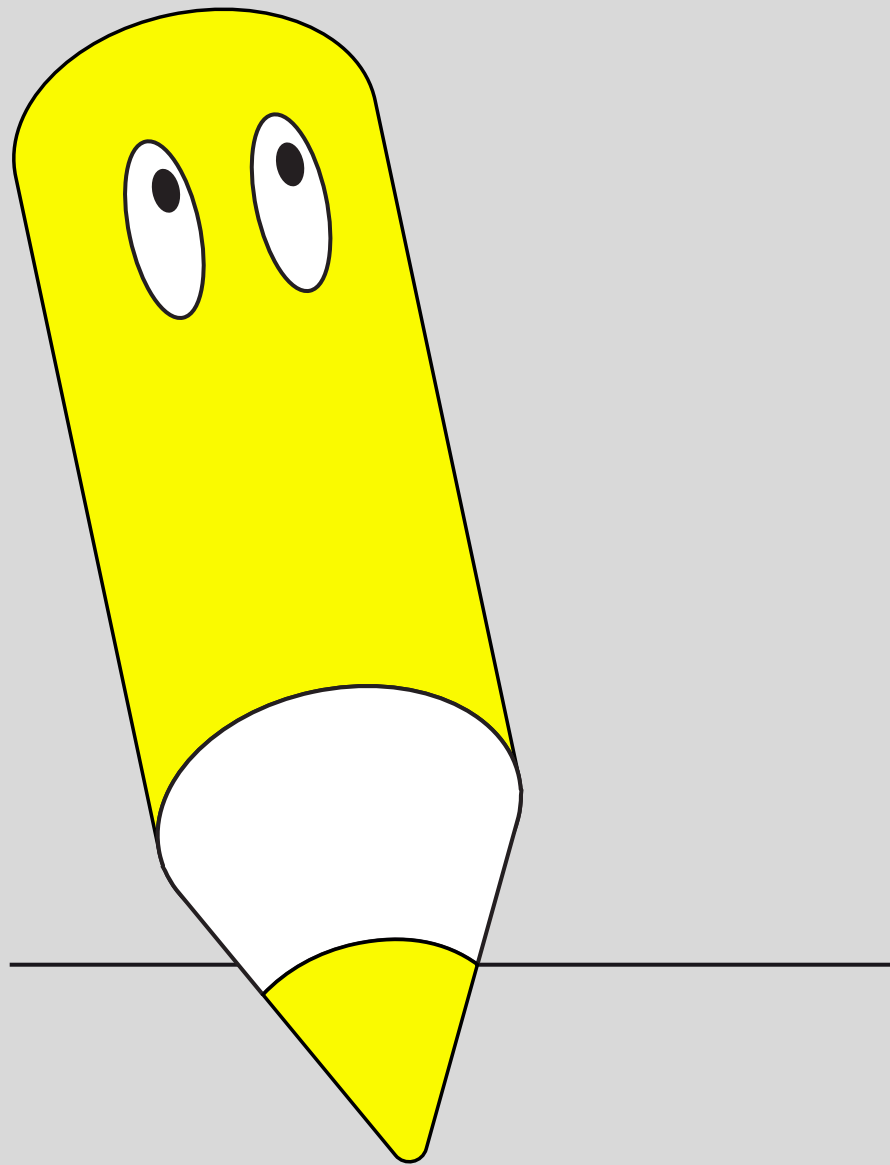
Relax room

Offers a soothing vibe; can be large, warm and dynamic, with greenery and soft music.

Expert tip: Add a pivot space to your office – this is a multifunctional area of your office that can be used by employees and clients.

What can we offer you?

We can help you with your floorplan review, look for creative furniture and design solutions, focusing on wayfinding design and installation, as well as assist you with a post-pandemic technology makeover that will support a safer work environment. Feel free to contact us for more information.





Camac Group Ltd.
160 Kemp House, City Road, London
EC1V 2NX

Contact
hello@camacspace.com
+44(0)-7497769333



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