

New Work Models: Evaluating in Four Dimensions

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 **adapt employee development and networking opportunities** so they don't rely on face-to-face interaction?

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?

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

<i>Degree of collaboration</i>	Highly collaborative	Independent work
<i>Information exchange</i>	Frequent, informal	Infrequent, formal
<i>Location/time-dependence</i>	Location and time-specific	Anytime, anywhere
<i>Client/customer interaction</i>	Face-to-face required	Remote-first support possible

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



2. WORKER

<i>Technical/remote-work skills</i>	Lower degree of technical skills	High degree of technical skill
<i>Communication style</i>	Prefer informal, in-person communication	Proactive communicator
<i>Level of supervision</i>	Direct supervision required	Minimum supervision needed
<i>Preferences/circumstances</i>	Work as social, few competing demands	At risk, multiple non-work demands
<i>Work setup/environment</i>	Fixed location, poor remote setup	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

<i>Degree of team-based work</i>	Highly collaborative and interdependent	Independent workers
<i>Aggregate preferences</i>	Majority in-person	Majority remote
<i>Location/dispersion</i>	Co-located in one/few locations	Geographically dispersed
<i>Work hours/coordination</i>	Fully synchronous required	Asynchronous possible

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



4. ORGANIZATION

<i>Degree of centralization</i>	Centralized decision-making, processes	De-centralized decision-making
<i>Physical space/real estate</i>	Limited ability to reduce/re-design footprint	Can reduce/re-design footprint
<i>Flexible Work Policy</i>	Formal policy not updated, in place	Clear guidelines and policies
<i>Digitally-enabled</i>	Poor tech infrastructure, low resources	Tech-enabled, adequate resources
<i>Culture/norms</i>	Face-to-face, in-person highly valued	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.