

# The workplace experience problem is rarely just the workplace

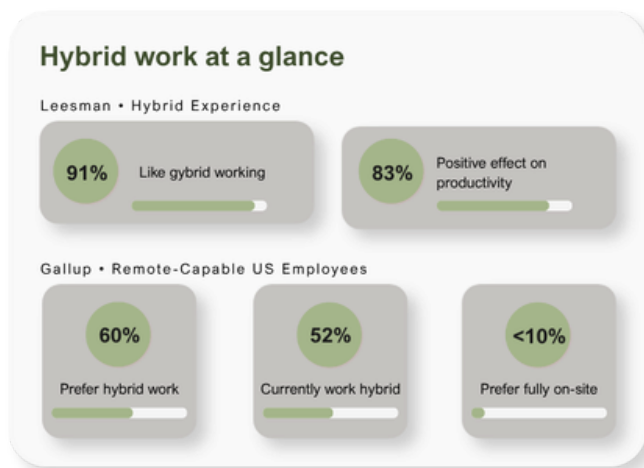
Workplace experience is about far more than the office. It is the combined effect of the environment, technology, processes, leadership and culture that shape how people work each day. When these elements work together, work feels easier. When they do not, even simple tasks create unnecessary friction.



# Work Has Changed. The Friction Has Followed.

Hybrid work is no longer temporary. It is an established part of working life.

Research shows that 52 per cent of US employees in remote-capable roles currently work in a hybrid arrangement. Six in ten prefer hybrid work, while fewer than one in ten want to work entirely on-site. Among hybrid workers surveyed by Leesman, 91 per cent like the arrangement and 83 per cent believe it improves their productivity.



The more useful question is no longer whether people should work from home or the office. It is whether they can work effectively wherever they are.

That requires more than a laptop and Microsoft Teams. Employees move between locations, systems, communication channels and different ways of working. Each transition can create friction: meeting rooms that will not connect, multiple “final” versions of the same document, unofficial workarounds and processes that take eleven steps when three should be enough.

Individually, these problems can appear minor. Together, they shape the everyday experience of work.

**Sources:** Gallup Hybrid Work Indicator and Leesman, *The Hybrid Future*.

# Small Frustrations Are Rarely Small

Poor workplace experiences rarely result from one deliberate decision. They build gradually: a system that does not integrate, an extra manual step, another policy or a spreadsheet created to track the process the official system was meant to manage.

Employees adapt by creating shortcuts, local copies, personal checklists and unofficial workarounds. The work continues, so the organisation assumes the process is working.

Often, it is only working because people are quietly compensating for poor design. This hidden effort consumes time, creates inconsistent outcomes and introduces additional barriers for new starters, people with disability, neurodivergent employees and anyone who works differently.

Eventually, the workaround becomes part of the job.

# Engagement Is an Outcome, not a Poster

Employee engagement cannot be created through better communications, recognition programs or an annual survey followed by several colourful charts.

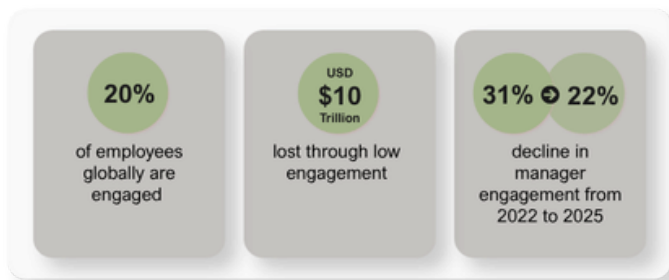
It is shaped by everyday experiences. Can people find what they need? Do systems support the work? Are decisions explained? Can employees access the workplace, tools and content without repeatedly requesting adjustments? Do leaders listen when problems are raised?

These interactions determine whether people feel trusted, valued and able to contribute. Global employee engagement fell to 20 per cent in 2025, its lowest level since 2020. Low

engagement cost the global economy an estimated US\$10 trillion in lost productivity. Manager engagement also fell sharply, from 31 per cent in 2022 to 22 per cent in 2025.

Managers connect organisational ambition with operational reality. When they are overwhelmed, unsupported or disengaged, that experience quickly reaches the people they lead.

**Source:** Gallup, *State of the Global Workplace 2026*.



## A Good Workplace Is a Connected System

Improving workplace experience requires organisations to look beyond individual initiatives and consider the whole system of work. That system has four connected dimensions.

### Physical

The environment should support different activities, bodies and sensory needs. People need accessible spaces to focus, collaborate, meet privately, learn and connect. The office should have a purpose beyond confirming that the organisation still owns one.

### Digital

Technology should make work easier, more accessible and more connected. Systems should work together, information should be easy to find and employees should understand which tools to use.

More technology does not always mean less

friction. Sometimes it simply gives the confusion a newer interface.

### Procedural

Processes should reflect how work is actually performed. This means examining handovers, approvals, duplicated data entry and the unofficial steps employees use to keep things moving.

A process may look direct on paper while feeling considerably less direct to the person following it.

### Cultural

Culture determines whether people feel safe asking questions, raising barriers and suggesting improvements. It shapes trust, flexibility, communication and how routinely adjustments are supported.

Culture is not separate from workplace experience. It is revealed through it.



# People Need Different Things From the Workplace

There is rarely one ideal workplace experience.

Some people concentrate better at home. Others need the structure, equipment or social connection of the office. A lively collaborative space may energise one person while distracting or exhausting another.

Leesman found that 45 per cent of employees work remotely to concentrate, while half attend the office to connect and socialise. Both can be true.

The goal is not to prescribe one place or way of working. It is to give people sensible choices based on their role, activities and needs, supported by clear expectations and dependable processes.

Gallup found that hybrid arrangements developed collaboratively by teams are more likely to be considered fair and beneficial. Yet only 11 per cent of employees experience this shared approach. Flexibility works best when it is designed, not merely permitted.

**Sources:** Leesman, *The Hybrid Future* and Gallup Hybrid Work Indicator.



A good workplace does not make everyone work the same way. It gives everyone a fair chance to work well.



## Accessibility Makes Workplace Experience Better

Accessibility is often treated as a separate compliance activity, considered after the office, system or process has already been designed.

That misses the broader opportunity.

Accessible and universally designed workplaces are generally clearer, easier to navigate and more adaptable for everyone.

Captions help people in noisy environments. Plain English makes unfamiliar information easier to understand. Flexible working supports people managing disability, caring responsibilities, health conditions and long commutes. Consistent digital structures help screen-reader users and anyone trying to find a document before a meeting begins.

Accessibility encourages better design because it requires organisations to consider a wider range of people and circumstances from the beginning.

It shifts the question from “Can most employees use this?” to “Who might we be excluding, and why?”

That is a far more useful question.

## Start by Observing How Work Really Happens

Improving workplace experience does not always require a major transformation. Start by observing everyday work and identifying where unnecessary effort has become normal.

Look for:

- Repeated workarounds: Tasks the intended process cannot complete.
- Disconnected systems: Information that must be copied, re-entered or reconciled.
- Inconsistent experiences: Processes that vary by location, manager or personal knowledge.
- Accessibility barriers: Physical, digital or procedural obstacles to participation.
- Unclear ownership: Recognised problems that no one is responsible for resolving.
- Change fatigue: New initiatives introduced before earlier changes are embedded.
- Hidden dependencies: Work that relies heavily on one person’s knowledge.

The goal is not to compile complaints. It is to identify what makes work harder and prioritise the improvements that will make the greatest practical difference.

## Better Work Should Feel Easier

A strong workplace experience does not mean everyone is delighted every minute. Work will still bring pressure, competing priorities and the occasional meeting that should have been an email.

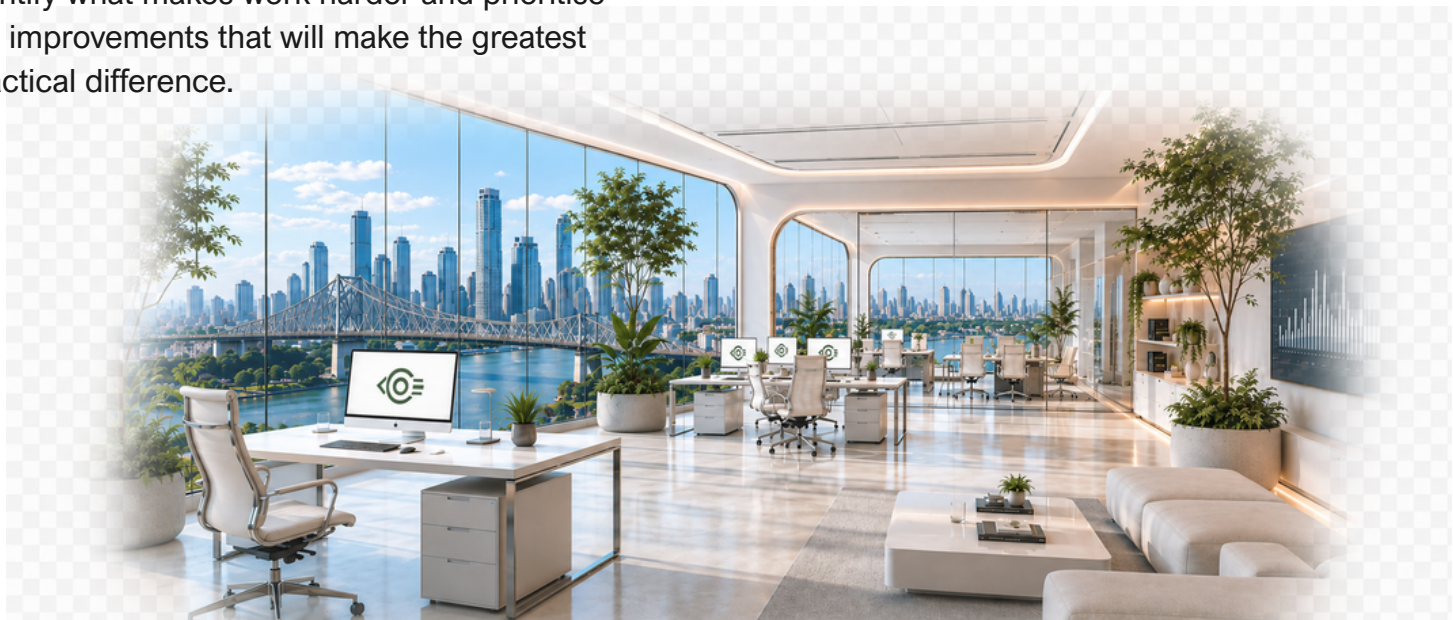
It means the organisation is not making work harder than it needs to be.

People can find what they need. Technology helps rather than interrupts. Processes make sense. Work environments provide genuine choice. Accessibility is built in, and managers are equipped to lead well.

Most importantly, people are not expected to compensate for poor design.

Workplace experience is not about perks or a more attractive office. It is how an organisation enables people to participate, contribute and succeed.

The best workplaces do more than look good. They remove friction, include more people and make good work easier.





Better workplace experiences begin by understanding where work has become harder than it needs to be. BlindSpot Solutions helps organisations uncover friction across environments, technology, processes, accessibility and culture, then turn those blind spots into practical improvements that make good work easier.



“How do we create a workplace that makes good work easier for everyone?”

[Explore Workplace Experience](#)