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# New ways of organising work

*Hybrid working, a means of  
transforming human relationships  
and how work is organised*

*November 2021*

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## EDITORIAL

At the very start of the crisis, Cigref kicked off a significant collaboration exercise with some leading names in France's digital ecosystem: Numeum (resulting from the merger between Syntec Digital and Tech In France) and Syntec Conseil. Our collective assessment was that ***digital technology has been one of the main shock absorbers of the economic crisis and that it will be the main driver behind recovery, subject to certain conditions that we have endeavoured to pinpoint.***

The result of this collective work is the “**Digital Agenda**”, co-signed by our three associations, which constitutes a first in France in the history of our sector of activity.

This Agenda's proposals have three goals: resolve the crisis, revive the economy and act for the future, in the light of the initial lessons learned from this crisis that we have been experiencing for 18 months now.

The “New Ways of Organising Work” working group was set up to deal with one of these proposals, “Inventing New Forms of Work”. It allowed us to share a lot of feedback, collect good practices and project ourselves into the new work organisations that now seem to be essential. We hope that this collection will shed light for your thinking.

**Corinne Dajon**, Member of the Group Management Board in charge of the organisation and information systems at AG2R LA MONDIALE,  
Vice-President of Cigref,  
co-pilot of the “New Ways of Organising Work” working group

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## OVERVIEW

Overall, remote working during the Covid-19 crisis was a good experience which allowed everyone to **reinvent how they work, lead and use collaborative tools** and to project themselves into the future. This period was an important cultural revolution but which, to be sustainable, must be able to **anchor itself in a framework that, while certainly more flexible, is well orchestrated**.

The **productivity gains** of remote working teams and the continuation of the majority of projects organisations were carrying out during lockdown periods tend to reinforce the idea of organisations possibly moving towards a **hybridisation of working methods** between on-site presence, mobility and working from home over the long term. However, **the limits** of remote working are not inconsiderable, such as the lack of face-to-face meetings that impacts working groups, innovation and attachment to the company. But these findings stem from a particular situation, the health crisis linked to Sars-Cov-2, which admittedly allowed for a full-scale test but in a restrictive, brutal and long context. A balance remains to be found to make the most of this unique experience and make working methods more flexible.

Today, the findings are quite interesting: the **social collective**, essential to work, has **found new value**, the massive take-up of digital tools has generated a rapid and unique **increase in skills**, **workspaces** have been redesigned so as to be more suited to a variety of work situations and, finally, the **concepts of autonomy, confidence and meaning at work** are more than ever key indicators of **organisations' attractiveness**, ensuring that employees remain **committed and motivated**. However, two main pitfalls should not be underestimated: the natural, increasing **weariness** of teams working remotely, on the one hand, and the sometimes silent **loss of a sense of belonging** to the group or company, on the other. These two risks underscore the importance of collectively defining organisations' **meaning and values** and the necessary **symmetry of attentions<sup>1</sup> between customers and employees**.

The conviction shared by the participants of the Cigref-Numeum working group is that it is necessary to **learn the lessons and benefits of this exceptional period** to initiate a sustainable transformation towards large-scale hybrid working methods by integrating all the challenges that still arise.

This report is accompanied by a **best practices guide** which, while far from exhaustive, aims to give information to better respond to the challenges posed by hybrid working methods, organised around six structural aspects:

**1 Organisation of teams**

**2 Managerial practices**

**3 Workspaces**

**4 Collaborative tools**

**5 Security and cybersecurity**

**6 Quality of life at work**

<sup>1</sup> A concept meaning that the company develops the same quality of relationship with its employees as it does with its customers.

## INTRODUCTION

*“A business without an office is like a nation without a territory [...] Behind our screens, we produce. Face to face, we build. A completely remote working team can create mercenaries, very strong in their profession but without social affiliation. But companies aim to build relationships. It is even a major player in social cohesion.”<sup>2</sup>*

Cigref has partnered with Syntec Numérique and Tech In France (now Numeum) to **support organisations in their transformation into hybrid working methods** aimed at ensuring better coordination between forms of remote, mobile, and on-site working.

These hybrid ways of working offer many challenges such as the ability to unite the group while improving autonomy, how to define the governance of “hybrid” teams, the use of collaborative tools, the role and place of remote management, training, reorganisation of workspaces, IT security and – lastly – well-being at work and the management of psychosocial risks.

The health crisis has led to the emergence of these **many challenges**, which most organisations have brilliantly overcome. But are the adaptations implied by the crisis doomed to **be converted into structural transformations of organisational models** or will they fade away as the threat of other crises recedes?

The Cigref - Numeum working group is convinced that it will be impossible to return to the working methods from before this serious global crisis and that it is now necessary to lay the bricks for the future ways of work.

Thus, using the observations made by the digital players represented by the two associations, this report attempts to describe **the meaning, the value, the benefits as well as the points of attention related to organisations’ shifts to hybrid ways of working.**

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Serge Assayag, Onepoint Partner, Management Consulting, by Jean-François Arnaud in *Challenges*, “Comment convaincre ses salariés de revenir au bureau?”, 3 July, 2020 [Online: [https://www.challenges.fr/entreprise/vie-de-bureau/comment-convaincre-ses-salaries-de-revenir-au-bureau\\_717489](https://www.challenges.fr/entreprise/vie-de-bureau/comment-convaincre-ses-salaries-de-revenir-au-bureau_717489)] (in French)

## 1. MAJOR FINDINGS

Remote working during the first lockdown was generally a good experience for companies whose sector of activity was not directly affected by the crisis. It allowed everyone to reinvent how they organised their work, how they led meetings, how they used collaborative tools and how they projected themselves into the future. This period was an important cultural revolution but which, to be sustainable, must be able to anchor itself in a framework that, while certainly more flexible, is well orchestrated. The working group raised several major questions which implicitly reflect the major projects to be undertaken in order to define this framework and organise these new forms of work.

### 1.1. EMPLOYEES

We note a **strong appetite** from employees for remote working **despite the exhaustion** observed over the long term, which can entail psycho-social risks. Remote working is not tenable in such a heavy and restrictive way in the long run. Nevertheless, several studies and surveys (such as that from [ANACT](#)) note that more than 80% of workers who were able to work remotely during lockdown want to continue to do so after the crisis. Surveys carried out internally in organisations reveal the same figures. Employees expect **more flexibility and autonomy** after this experience, which entails rethinking how workspaces are organised, what working methods are used, how things are managed, the collective agreements in force, etc. Organisations' experiences give an idea of the benefits and limitations of remote work.

What remote work has improved:

- **The time saved** by not commuting results in less fatigue and longer working hours,
- **“Deep” work** is easier with a not insignificant improvement in the quality of concentration,
- **Teams working remotely bonded** in a way that could offset the loss of a sense of belonging to a site. Geographical distance is no longer seen as an obstacle to working together,
- Employees appreciate the **autonomy** that is left to them.

The limits of remote work:

- Teams can be **less stimulated** and suffer from a lack of informal exchanges,
- How the company **culture** is spread needs to rethinking,
- **A sense of belonging** to the company is more difficult in the long term and even more dependent on the relationship with the manager and the team,
- For service providers, **the relationship with clients** is less natural,
- Remote work can also entail **psychosocial risks** ranging from hyperconnectivity that leads to fatigue for some and reaches burn out for others, a risk of isolation, social disruption or a total lack of meaning at work (“brown out”),
- Not all **work conditions** are suitable to everyone's environment and personal situation,
- Poor remote working conditions can **impact motivation and harm the relationship with the company**. Attention should also be paid to new hires.

### Feedback from AG2R LA MONDIALE The positive impacts of the evolution of remote work

In 2018, AG2R LA MONDIALE wanted to extend the practice of remote work through a collective agreement signed unanimously by the representative trade unions and general management. This agreement allows the group's employees to work remotely up to two days per week, if their job allows and on a volunteer basis under certain conditions, including for part-time employees.

Remote work fosters a better work-life balance, with less time spent commuting, and it helps to develop autonomy, empowerment, and trust in teams as well as simplify operating methods. Thus, the company chose a gradual rollout and provided support for all employees and managers through e-learning modules and face-to-face workshops to help teams to project themselves into this new way of working and to adapt their operating methods.

Before the health crisis, 3,800 employees worked remotely on a regular basis and, according to an internal study, 96% of employees were satisfied with this deployment.

The rollout of remote work contributed to a fast response to the consequences of the health crisis: an employee equipment policy that promotes mobility, remote or hybrid meetings, collaborative tools, etc. A balance has been found to adapt to this unprecedented situation which has resulted in widespread remote work for all (which had never been imagined) and to ensure the continuity and quality of the relationship with our clients while protecting employees' health. The role and place of service providers were integrated into the exceptional work arrangements made during the lockdown periods.

*Corinne Dajon, Member of the Group Management Board in charge of the organisation and information systems, and Monique Mackiw, Deputy HR Director*

## 1.1. MANAGEMENT

**Managers were more or less shaken in the performance of their duties** depending on whether their cultures were organisational, hierarchical or matrix. Some saw it as a loss of control and performance measurement and wondered whether they were going to be able to manage remotely and lead collective intelligence through collaborative tools. One of the shared observations is that there may be a lack of training for managers on collaborative digital tools. In remote work, it is essential to know how to use these tools to foster team spirit because this way of working strengthens and compartmentalises manager-team relationships. Before the health crisis, managers had conversations with each other every day in different places of the company. These informal exchanges were a way for employees to spontaneously meet each other and have a discussion. With the widespread use of remote work, it is clear that there has been a decline in the spontaneous exchanges between the organisation's structures.

The role of leader has been greatly impacted: information is no longer just top-down but bottom-up. Managers must think ahead in order to organise better, learn to trust and reassure, gauge commitment and know the issues of concern at the moment, which is much less obvious when remote.

In addition, the feedback differs on the issue of **access to information**. Some note a decline in informal exchanges and regret the disappearance of transversal or cross-organisational communication, which has the effect of compartmentalising the manager-team relationship. Others observe that informal

exchanges have become formalised and that information is more structured thanks to the good use of collaborative tools. But is this enough to have the right amount of information and to manage well? The whole challenge lies in finding the right balance between control and trust. During the lockdown period, the role of management had to shift more towards coordinating and motivating teams, which also raises the question of the manager's crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging to the company.

### Feedback from DEVOTEAM Manager Guide: managing autonomy

A guide for managers was drafted to better support management in this transition towards hybrid working methods. This guide is called "*Managing autonomy to succeed in the new reality of hybrid work*".

#### **Six essentials have been laid out for managers:**

1. Define clear objectives,
2. Instil an environment of trust: managers must be inspiring and benevolent leaders and not fall into micro-management and over-control,
3. Have regular sessions for feedback,
4. Be in touch with the group as a whole,
5. Respect employees' working hours,
6. Recognition: managers must make an effort to give *feedback* with each positive result or initiative since there is no longer the ability to do it in the informal way that is specific to the office environment.
7. To develop autonomy and confidence, managers must set objectives and indicators so they can gauge whether these objectives are achieved, have a support roadmap and ask employees how they will organise themselves to achieve their objectives and, if necessary, give them advice, which has a much greater impact than ordering them to organise themselves in a specific way.

#### **Management rituals:**

- **Group ritual:** must allow each employee to feel they belong to a group, to express themselves, to review the team's objectives, and to deal with important subjects for the company.
- **Individual ritual:** must allow for a review of the progress on individual objectives as well as give advice, arbitrate between priorities, make the employee's contribution to the team feel worthwhile, motivate them, give meaning and perspectives.
- **Informal communication ritual:** meet on subjects that are not necessarily professional (hobbies, holidays), allows employees to develop other types of relationships, which is appreciated.

*Jean-Luc Gallice, Employee Experience Director*

## 1.2. WORK GROUPS

Remote work assumes a relationship of trust between employees and managers. Some companies formalise this bond of trust in their remote work charter, allowing everyone to commit to the same instructions.

To continue operating remotely, the work group must be more structured and better organised. Discussions and meetings must be optimised, efficient, clear, transparent and get to the point. This has the effect of increasing the standards for meetings, but with better efficiency and sometimes shorter durations.

Regarding company - service provider relationships, remote work implies being attentive to:

- Keeping a simple relationship, even at a distance, when the company and the service provider know each other well (this is less true when the two parties don't really know each other);
- Have a more agile relationship that devotes more time to the substance and less to the logistics.

On the other hand, speaking does not always allow for a detailed understanding of the issues and can allow weak signals to go unnoticed. The informal relationship is also difficult to maintain; even an informal "Team Coffee" becomes something formal. Therefore, one thing that is certain is **that it is necessary to continue face-to-face meetings to maintain the group dynamics of work.**

#### Feedback from Maisadour Adopting and generalizing Teams

Teams has been widely rolled out to all employees. Numerous training courses and information sessions were held by a network of ambassadors within all our businesses. Teams has been widely adopted and its use continues to grow, even now that the periods of lockdown have passed.

Teams fosters remote work in that it facilitates immediate and continuous contact via audio, video or instant messaging, depending on the circumstances or the types of exchanges. We have noticed a drop in email traffic for our internal discussions.

Teams was also used for social occasions: we have set up CafTeams for informal discussions between teams.

*Olivier Cail, Director of IT and Transformation*

### 1.3. WORKSPACE

The workspace has become a central issue in the evolution of work organisations. While the "Flex Office" no longer receives universal approval, there is widespread thinking about how to more or less adapt the company's facilities. Organisations are considering making meeting rooms more modular and offering **more digital equipment**, allowing better interaction with people working remotely. Some plan to provide collaborative tools and equip all meeting rooms with videoconferencing devices. The reorganisation of work can also result in some physical **offices being removed** to be replaced by remote work or third-party spaces, thus saving money on facilities and services.

#### Feedback from ENEDIS Adapting facilities to new ways of working

When remote work became widespread during the health crisis, our department (IT) had already been undergoing a relocation project. The new premises had been chosen and the interior layout and the furniture ordered; we could no longer make major modifications to adapt our premises to the new uses linked to remote work.

However, the teams in charge of the project were able to adapt and offer us equipment more in line with our new working methods:

- From digital whiteboards and videoconferencing systems in every meeting room to agile stand-up spaces (although designed for face-to-face meetings)
- Spaces for creativity and innovation with modular furniture
- Social spaces equipped with a TV; some even have a “web-café” system where you can have coffee with our colleagues present on other Enedis sites.

These adaptations help to prepare the office for the main activities that will take place there in the future (sociability, creativity, innovation) as well as maintain team spirit by facilitating communication between employees working on site and remotely.

*Sophie RIVIERE, Management support*

New on-site workspaces must be designed to allow a different type of activity from remote work. One of the benefits of bringing teams back to the site is sociability. The company’s premises may be transformed in a more radical way than before into **places for sharing and socialising**, which in itself constitutes **an attractiveness factor**.

### **Feedback from the Pôle Emploi IT department Workspaces to benefit employee recognition and belonging**

Our organisation began thinking about our workspaces in the autumn of 2019. With 13 sites spread across the whole of France, with 50% of the workforce already working remotely and a remote work quota of up to two days per week, the question of hybridisation is naturally present. Most teams are agile, accustomed to scrums and other forms of face-to-face planning and synchronisation ceremonies, and encountered the complexity of dealing with mixing the “on site and the remote” and of adapting spaces to the needs of internal employees and other occupants of our spaces.

Therefore, we are launching a whole needs analysis process and opening up to what already exists to work with employees to define how our spaces will look in the future.

After about fifteen “Learning Expeditions”, 70 pieces of feedback from internal initiatives, field surveys by doctoral students & ergonomics experts, the creation of *personae* (fictitious characters bearing the characteristics of a target group), and here we are, able to identify the spaces to be set up. These are varied spaces that take into account activities (especially the distribution of the needs to focus and collaborate) as well as individual needs (inherent in personalities) and corporate culture.

How can we offer a variety of work positions while giving value to everyone’s individuality in the organisation and spaces? For us, the answer is the following: for each internal employee, their place, their desk, their chair, their IT equipment. These key points of reference that contribute to employees’ feeling of recognition and belonging are the basis of the approach.

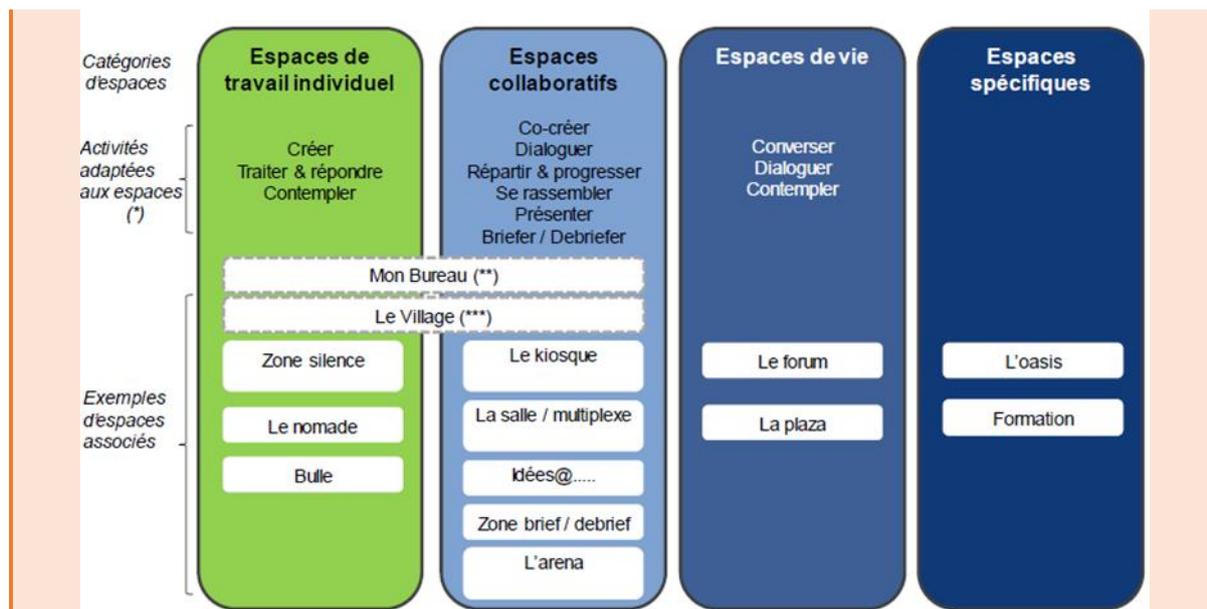


Figure 1: Work spaces at Pôle Emploi's IT department

(\*) Herman Miller standard typology

(\*\*) the office is above all an "individual" workspace, but it can be used for certain collaborative activities as part of an individual office or a shared office

(\*\*\*) project bullpens allow you to alternate between collaborative and individual activities by offering different suitable spaces

Before implementing a new remote work agreement which will certainly lead to more than 90% of our workforce carrying out their jobs outside our offices (at the employee's home, at any other private residence such as a country home or house of a third party, or in a third place) up to three days a week, the question arises of the regularity and of the space to be allocated to each worker. We have voluntarily decided to keep a quality space for each of our internal employees (even though they will be present less often) and to focus on the space dedicated to visitors to our sites.

For service providers or travelling workers, there is no reason for an anchor point or attachment to the place. Allocating them a designated space thus appears obsolete. However, they need to find workspaces close to our internal employees in line with the co-created activities.

A better organisation of their presence (for service providers in particular) is a major challenge for the coming period. Nomadic spaces, kiosks as well as workspaces shared between these profiles within the offices allocated to internal employees are all differentiated proposals that will allow us to take advantage of our spaces in line with the different needs.

To gradually acclimate to these new space proposals, we are working closely with the local teams in charge of the sites as well as with the occupants at each new installation or space adjustment to explain the places and uses. Their operating principles are then reiterated in posters.

*Aline Renan, Head of IT Department Workspaces*

## 1.4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Discussions are underway to change collective agreements around remote work. Here, it is essential to remember the existing rules and points of attention. Apart from the context of a health crisis, there are two alternatives for setting up remote work:

- Setting up a **charter** or **collective agreement** that lays out how to accept, the conditions for ending, and the methods of inspecting working hours and determining the time when the employer can contact the employee,
- Outside any agreement/charter, a simple **exchange of consent**, by email for example, is sufficient.

In addition, it is recommended to involve the staff representation bodies in implementing remote work when it comes to a decision affecting employment conditions.

Some points of attention should be noted regarding the obligations of employers and employees:

- The employer has the same obligations as in the office;
- Concerning the working environment and working conditions, the employer must ensure that all the conditions are met to work in good conditions. Employees can request payment for the cost of an office chair, screens, etc. In addition, the right to rest for employees, the right to log off, and all the rules of labour law remain applicable in remote work;
- One of the practical questions of management concerns how to monitor performance remotely. This monitoring, however it is exercised, must meet the principles of relevance and proportionality in relation to the desired goal, and must be the subject of prior consultation with staff representatives;
- The place of remote work should be defined: any accident during remote work is presumed to be a work accident, hence the importance of determining the place of remote work;
- In addition, the space used by the employee must be compliant and respect all safety rules;
- Broken equipment must be reimbursed and replaced, for example using insurance. The employer must also ensure that the employee's home insurance includes remote work;
- The employer must ensure the employee's home is electrically compliant;
- All the costs incurred to carry out their work, including remotely, are considered as business expenses (such as the purchase of ink cartridges, for example);
- An employee is not entitled to compensation for the simple fact that they are working remotely,
- While the employer has an obligation to provide equipment, some employees prefer to work on their personal equipment, but this is likely to pose problems in terms of security. Employees must be aware of the risks and penalties incurred;
- Restaurant meal vouchers are still valid in when working remotely. URSSAF's position is clear and provides that remote workers must receive meal vouchers, but the judges could adopt a different position: for example, they have already adopted the criterion of distance from home from the workplace as being able to justify a differentiated allocation of meal vouchers;
- The porosity between professional and personal life, for some, can become dangerous (isolation, hyperconnectivity, musculoskeletal disorders, tendonitis, etc.). The employer is likely to be held liable if an adequate system of prevention is not put in place.

## 2. HOW WILL WORK BE ORGANISED IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

### 2.1. HOW CAN WE DEFINE IT?

Many organisations are considering the near future where **working methods will become more flexible and “hybrid”**. For this, we need to think of a better way for the forms of **remote, mobile and on-site work** to interact, depending on the activities and the desires of employees and managers.

Some refer to the new forms of work as **“Flex Work”**: the purpose is not to give a strict framework to how work should be organised, but to allow everyone to work from different places (at home, in third places, on site) with different working methods and tools depending on their needs and activities. In this setup, employees have greater autonomy and more easily use their “soft skills”. Communication skills will most likely be a key success factor for this “Flex Work” in the sense that communication between teams and with customers has become vital when working remotely.

The **geographical distribution of employees will be more extensive**: the health crisis has changed mentalities, and many are looking to move away from the cities and the Paris region in particular. But this risks changing the relationship with the company because work also serves to develop social cohesion. Therefore, it is necessary to be able to promote these collectives in a way that stands out, either by “materialising” moments to meet in third-party spaces or by reconfiguring the premises so that they are truly conducive to work group meetings, by being more modular and user-friendly, for example.

This new organisation **gauges work more by results than presence**. The period of remote work forced by the Covid-19 crisis has shown that productivity has not been impacted. It is important to capitalise on the beneficial lessons of this experience.

According to Frédéric Petitbon, consultant on management issues, change management, and trust management at PwC, interviewed as part of the working group, four distinct organisational models may emerge:

1. **The boomerang company**: After adjusting, business returns to normal. Some companies assume that tomorrow, the organisation must become exactly “as it was before”, by emphasising the importance of premises, modes of sharing knowledge and skills based on setting examples and direct relationships, socialisation in the office, etc.
2. **The 100% digital company** that breaks with market practices. This would mainly concern very process-heavy professions. Some companies would make this choice for certain roles that lend themselves to it. Physical exchanges would become rare. This would correspond more to companies that are not of French culture.
3. **The Agora company**: The company considers that remote work is not a target in itself. We accept coming back to the office, which is truly designed to be comfortable and enhance collaborative work.
4. **The hybrid company**: the company accepts that there are good reasons to come to the office; otherwise, employees will be either at home, in a third place, or at the customer’s facilities. One of the challenges is to know how to ritualise management and collaboration in these hybrid working methods. These hybrid working methods will of course depend on the company’s activity. Those who produce material goods do not have the same opportunities as service companies. Companies share a major concern about the risk of creating new forms of unequal

treatment between those who will be eligible for remote work and those who will not because of their activities.

According to PwC's work, it appears that French companies are mainly oriented towards **agora or hybrid models**. The financial sector (banking and insurance) is mostly opting for the hybrid mode. Some companies regret that there is a high probability that they will return to the **boomerang** mode. This is due in particular to a reluctance on the part of general or middle management.

### Feedback from Futuribles

#### How will work be organised in five years' time? Prospective scenarios

Futuribles is an association which aims to develop forward thinking and help its members to integrate medium and long term visions as a tool to support decision making. In 2020, Futuribles launched a working group on the subject, "How will work be organised five years from now?". Its objective is to draw up forecast scenarios for the medium term concerning the outcome of the health crisis and its impact on working methods.

Six key questions structured the thinking:

- What place will remote work take? How?
- How will work groups and their leadership evolve?
- What forms does work automation take in industry and services (robotisation, robots, algorithmic work management, etc.)?
- Will social utility be a criterion in the evolution of remuneration, recognition and career promotion?
- What changes will there be in worker training?

From these questions, four scenarios were built. Each scenario aims to present a range of possibilities based on shared assumptions.

#### **Scenario 1: All are independent service providers in short-term organisations**

This first scenario assumes that the crisis will lead to the destruction of salaried jobs which will be replaced either by self-employed workers or by an increase in automation. Companies will take care to ensure their solvency by looking to become more adaptable, either by automating or by resorting to services rather than salaried jobs. The regulations will support this movement and will become more flexible in terms of employment contracts (renewal of fixed-term contracts, etc.).

The risk for companies in this scenario is that by working on a project basis, the company is diluted, progressively losing its identity, shared values, and corporate culture. But corporate strategies can offer a "shared culture" to counter the risk of losing its identity, for example by retaining talent using benefits (health insurance, remote work, etc.) and training.

#### **Scenario 2: Heterogeneous work organisations and statutory inequalities**

In this second scenario, work organisations are very heterogeneous with a very large statutory inequality:

- Employees show a strong desire for more autonomy,
- Public authorities encourage remote work for environmental reasons, in particular to avoid congestion in metropolitan areas,
- In this scenario, a certain number of companies undertake a very profound change in how work is organised by integrating more collaborative governance models, giving more

autonomy to employees. At the same time, there is resistance to change from certain traditional organisations that do not wish to question their way of working, highlighting the fact that with remote work, there is a risk of dispersal of the business.

### Scenario 3: Flexicurity and flexibility of work organisations

In this third scenario, the crisis is used as an opportunity to rethink the relationships of work organisations in the long term. While a certain number of changes were forced, it nevertheless accelerated certain transformations. Organisations take this opportunity to rethink working methods and renew social dialogue. In this context, the ecological reorientation of business activity will also require reorganisations in the value chain and in work processes. A mechanism for securing career paths and promoting certain professions will become essential. Career trajectories will become increasingly bumpy, and there will be a real issue of professional training, hence the neologism of “flexicurity” to manage career changes. Significant investments are being made in training, seen as a national priority, to ensure the supply and demand for skills match up. Certain essential careers are promoted.

### Scenario 4: Companies in survival mode and job insecurity

In this fourth scenario, there is no in-depth reform of the way work is organised. Companies experience a loss of activity, which leads to waves of layoffs and rising unemployment, which could lead to a platformisation of the economy, high job insecurity, and the development of a local circular and informal economy.<sup>3</sup>

*François de Jouvenel, Executive Director*

In the remainder of this report, we insist on **the ways of implementing a hybrid organisation** because it corresponds to a general trend and because it poses more organisational challenges.

## 2.2. HOW CAN WE DEPLOY IT?

To segment and organise these new hybrid forms of work, organisations prefer to think in terms of “nature of activities” rather than “business units”. Thus, companies are starting to organise themselves to identify “**telerobust**” and “**telefragile**” activities<sup>4</sup>, terms used by Olivier Sibony, affiliate professor at HEC Paris:

- “**Telerobust**” activities lend themselves well to remote work: all those which are formalised and very process-oriented (rather than hierarchical), in particular for 100% digitised processes and for tasks that require concentration, while relying on collaborative tools and rituals.
- Other activities are “**telefragile**”: these are activities for which employees need to be physically on site to carry out collective work, innovation and creativity, which often require informal exchanges and convivial moments, making it possible to launch new projects and new activities. Finally, new arrivals must be on site as well, to facilitate their integration.

<sup>3</sup> The informal economy refers to all the activities that produce goods and services that escape government scrutiny or regulation. (Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Informal\\_economy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Informal_economy))

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.xerficanal.com/strategie-management/emission/Olivier-Sibony-Telerobuste-ou-telefragile-le-teletravail-peut-detruire-l-entreprise\\_3748650.html](https://www.xerficanal.com/strategie-management/emission/Olivier-Sibony-Telerobuste-ou-telefragile-le-teletravail-peut-detruire-l-entreprise_3748650.html) (in French)

Thus, organisations are engaging in in-depth reflection on various subjects essential to establishing a hybrid work organisation:

- **Work groups**, in a context of the extended company and hybrid work methods, must be preserved and maintained with strong support. Management plays an essential part in this. It can organise moments of group belonging, offer simple and effective tools for managing attendance on site, and encourage regular get-togethers.
- **Training** in long-distance relationships is essential, especially for managers. They should be trained in the collaborative tools essential to leading teams, and management should be guided towards an understanding of hybrid ways of working. **The manager will play a stronger role in employees' sense of belonging to the company.**
- **Collaborative tools** also require a lot of adjustment and learning. There is still a lot of shadow IT, however. It is essential to try to bring these practices back into a corporate standard.
- The **security issues** when working remotely (cybersecurity and protection of asset information) are crucial and require increased awareness and communication around security risks, and best practices should be implemented by ensuring that these issues are properly understood by employees.
- **Include** everyone in these new forms of work: employees with disabilities (physical as well as cognitive) should be offered ergonomic accommodations or adaptations of videoconferencing tools, for example. Similarly, employees in unstable or isolated situations should be paid special attention.
- **Service providers** and **freelancers** also work within this hybrid framework and must find the right balance between belonging to their own organisation and the privileged relationship with their customers.
- **Adaptation of remote work agreements** vis-à-vis the hybrid organisation: "Flex Work" is a way of rethinking how work is traditionally organised. This term refers to the variety of organisational possibilities within different teams or even entities. However, the rules will not be the same for everyone, depending on their activities, job skills and the work context.
- **Workspaces of the future** will have to be all the more attractive, with spaces dedicated to collaboration and creativity and others dedicated to thinking or remote communication.

Depending on the activities concerned, the future organisation will have to include the following components:

- Equipment for working remotely with collaborative tools onboard.
- A reorganisation of the premises to promote exchanges and collaboration.
- Cross-functional leadership and process-based management (which takes precedence over hierarchical organisations in silos).
- Easy access to remote work.

For the majority of organisations, **the crisis was a catalyst for the digital transformation**, not only in terms **acculturation to tools** but also the **coordination of business transformation factors**. In the example from Caisse des Dépôts presented below, all the transformation programmes that were previously isolated in silos by department or activity came together in a shared reflection to think about the post-crisis context. This holistic approach is essential to defining the scope of tomorrow's working methods.

### Feedback from Caisse des Dépôts

#### Rolling out remote work: carrying out a transformation plan that coordinates all departments

“The important point is **to have a very coordinated, holistic approach to all the vectors of transformation**. Before the crisis, all transformation plans were carried out in parallel without operational coordination: there was a managerial transformation plan, a digital transformation plan, an operational performance programme, a real estate programme, social agreements, etc. What is new since the health crisis is that **all transformation programmes are synchronized through bimonthly coordination** with an overall vision approved by the Executive Committee and a very coordinated agenda, particularly in terms of communication. In tandem with the manager of the managerial transformation programme, **the CIO coordinates transformation programmes**. This choice is backed up by the experience of digital transformation projects and plans. There is no committee, no meta-project; this is a “flat” coordination between peers. **An agile organisational philosophy is therefore preferred** in this coordination, which is based on the principle of subsidiarity: only subjects that are transversal to the transformation plans are dealt with, without directly managing the subjects which only fall under a particular plan and for which there is *ad hoc* governance. The transversal coordination body has direct access to the Executive Committee and calls on it in an *ad hoc* way for any structural decision.”

*Patrick Laurens-Frings, CIO*

### 2.3. WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED BENEFITS?

The benefits linked to changing working methods could be **cultural, operational, financial, reputational or human**. As we have seen, employees are asking for more hybrid and flexible work, which has led to a reflection from a cultural and organisational point of view on what it means to belong to the corporate culture, the ability to combine skills and how to collaborate in a more transversal manner. From an operational point of view, these hybrid forms of work should help to **further optimise processes and promote collective and individual performance**. The expression “at work” will no longer mean “at the office”, and the company will no longer have a geographical anchor but instead several reference points: companies that have extended or “fragmented” in this way may find benefits in terms of **costs**, and employees in terms of **quality of life and autonomy**. Finally, the gains are also human, the objective being to meet the increasingly important requirements of a better balance between work and private life and thus to improve the quality of life at work, which is also a factor of the company’s **attractiveness** in itself.

### 2.4. SUPPORT THE RETURN TO THE OFFICE IN A CONTEXT OF THE HYBRIDISATION OF WORK

The question of returning to the office, while the health crisis has been going on for more than 18 months now, is delicate. Depending on the organisational culture, regular remote work has become more or less a norm. Therefore, the question is emerging of how to make organisations’ sites more attractive so that they are suited to hybrid working methods, where 30 to 60% of the workforce is present simultaneously instead of 100%. Each company must determine their own methods to find the best possible balance between massive return on one side and gradual return on the other. Below, we lay out the main steps to support a return to the office that is as serene as possible because, beyond

the solely logistical aspects, it is also essential to pay attention to the psychological pitfalls that returning to the office can entail:

- **Reconnect with the company** by encouraging them to come back at least once a week and plan regular physical meetings by team, or make rotations in the offices so that everyone can see each other from time to time while respecting health rules. Outside lockdowns, offices are generally occupied at 30 to 50% of their capacity. However, we must remain vigilant because some find that, in trying to organise where the teams are positioned, we recreate processes that can be cumbersome and counterproductive, and “dividing” the organisation does not encourage interaction.
- **Negotiate remote work agreements** with the unions, with several possible “formulas”:
  - Regular remote work,
  - Occasional remote work,
  - For exceptional circumstances (health crises).
- **Define the meaning** that we want to get out of returning to the office: what does coming in to the office have to offer that goes beyond remote working? Managers need support in giving meaning to a return to the office.
- **Appoint a team of health officers** that is responsible for communicating and reiterating the rules so that, from a health point of view, the organisation is not at fault.

Attention should also be paid to the following issues:

- **Commitment** and motivation, which employees found easily with the effervescence of open-plan offices and the momentum of on-site groups, were difficult to maintain for some who were working exclusively remotely. Some organisations have implemented best practice guides to help managers maintain relationships during periods of strict remote work. The lack of commitment can result in a drop in productivity and a fear of returning to the site.
- **Psychological distress**, which can be one of the causes of the lack of commitment. The debate around psychological well-being at work is more topical than ever. “Brown outs”, a lack of meaning at work, is an increasingly frequent phenomenon, creating demotivation, even dropping out. This is a significant risk with the spread of remote work, hence the need for companies to bring their collective identity to life and to recognise individual contributions to give meaning to the tasks performed by employees. Some organisations have set up a **network of “benevolents”**, trained employees spread over several sites who work to identify employees who may be in particular difficulty. Managers are also key players, and they are normally very aware of these psychological subjects. They must be the first to listen. Lack of proximity is a huge barrier to picking up weak signals, but **you have to be more attentive to one-on-one relationships, feedback and recognition**. We should also not hesitate to seek advice from occupational medicine. The manager is the first person who can take into account the difficulties of returning to the office. The second actor is the group: everyone should pay attention and take care of the others.
- **Autonomy and performance**: on average, performance has increased with remote work, but you have to be careful about the long-term effect of strict remote work. Moreover, how can we manage the right to log off, in global corporations, with colleagues on other continents and staggered schedules? To address this problem, some organisations have incorporated the right to log off into their remote work agreements. In addition, unions and management have agreed to raise awareness, train and empower people, which is a chance to reiterate the basic rules on working time.

- **Onboarding new arrivals or support for internal mobility:** Put in place managerial best practices to onboard new collaborators and employees working in the organisation in the best possible conditions. This is a subject that can pose a problem for managers. Uniting newcomers around a common vision for the company can be a good way to welcome and bring people together. Then, regular contact with the teams and face-to-face meetings are also essential in order to ensure the spread of this “corporate culture” and the inclusion of the newcomer in the work group.

### 3. BEST PRACTICES

All organisations define best practices in order to provide the best possible guidance and support for teams and managers in moving towards more hybrid working methods. The working group wished to share the best practices resulting from their experience.

This shared repository of best practices is broken down into six major structural aspects that represent the major challenges posed by the implementation of a hybrid work organisation:

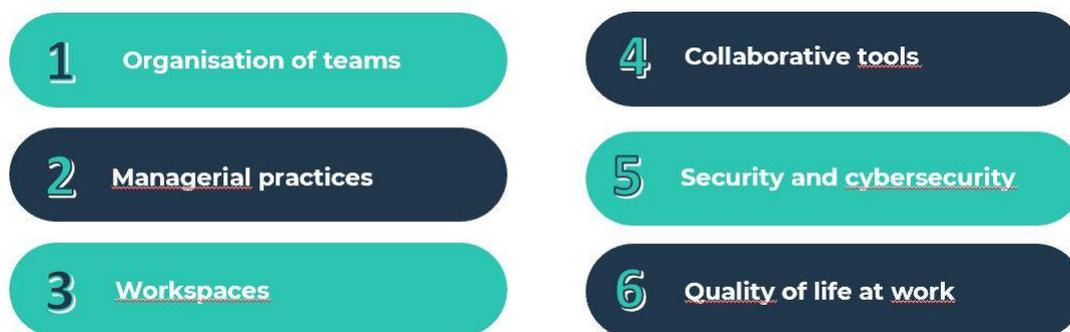


Figure 2: Structural aspects of the shared repository of best practices

This repository, available in the table attached to this document, details the questions that arise in each of these categories and the suggestions for best practices to best support organisations in their transformation into hybrid working methods. Each organisation should take up and adapt these best practices to their own environment and scope. The table leaves two columns almost empty: one to appoint a lead who can be responsible for a particular category, and the other for comments.

#### Feedback from PwC

#### Best practices for consultants working remotely: individual, collective and managerial practices

With the teams' feedback, we have identified best practices for consulting at an individual, collective and management level:

##### 1. Individual best practices

- Organise your time to be more efficient
  - Block out time slots to focus on substantive tasks and avoid responding to requests on the fly
  - Set the hours of your day in agreement with your team or management to avoid requests too early or late in the day
  - Take regular breaks and schedule or require a five-minute break between meetings.
- Adapt your remote work and habits
  - Know and respect the recommendations for ergonomic positions when at your desk
  - As much as possible, have a space dedicated to remote work at home
  - Respect the three golden rules of a remote meeting: camera on, microphone off and ask before speaking.
- Take care of yourself despite any isolation
  - Organising sports sessions is highly recommended
  - A daily 20-minute walk outside to get some fresh air

- Fight isolation by organising e-coffees with colleagues.

⇒ More information on: [Be Well Work Well](#)

## 2. Best practices for working in teams/on assignment

- Keep interaction within the team
  - Have an assignment kick-off where you explain everyone's role and the rules (routines, working hours, roles, etc.)
  - Have a daily meeting of 15 minutes maximum to coordinate
  - Create a team chat group to say hello in the morning and share information on a daily basis
  - Plan weekly e-coffees with colleagues
  - Organise together to meet on site on the same day (if possible).
- Review how you organise your meetings
  - Avoid telephone conversations that are too long (two hours maximum) and have a precise meeting agenda to be as efficient as possible
  - Leave 5 to 10 minutes of buffer between two meetings
  - Take advantage of collaborative workshop tools: Klaxoon, Mural, etc.
  - Use information centres to facilitate information sharing
  - Ask meeting participants to turn their cameras on so that you can monitor their level of attention and understanding.
- Work more flexibly
  - Make collaborative documents (committee support deliverables, etc.) systematic through the company's or the client's collaborative suite
  - Prefer instant messaging for less complex exchanges (but don't require an immediate response)
  - Agree on the production deadlines for deliverables
  - Organise interactions with colleagues outside the assignment
  - Make the most of discussion time outside the assignment.

## 3. Management best practices

- Maintain team cohesion
  - Schedule regular individual morning coffees with your team
  - Have a short huddle meeting each week, with team members taking turns as the lead to stay informed of how the practice is being applied
  - Have a huddle each month to share BU information
- Management presence should be supportive and unintrusive
  - Have regular but short catch-up meetings with the project team: one minute of coordination each morning in a stand-up meeting may be enough
  - Have one-on-one calls with the PwC team to measure progress, approve priorities and unblock situations
  - Also, listen to employees about "real life", their concerns and their expectations
  - Accept that not everyone can be reached every minute of the day.
- Maintain contact with customers despite the distance
  - Hold occasional "e-coffee corners" with the client by preparing a specific topic for discussion (about 20 minutes)
  - Share news with your customers over multiple channels (LinkedIn, SMS, etc.)

**Frédéric Petitbon, Partner**

## CONCLUSION

Over the past 18 months, the crisis has shown that **companies were mostly well equipped to organise remote work** for their work group, employees and service providers. The results were pleasantly surprising in terms of productivity and skills development in collaborative tools. It helped to overcome some stubborn preconceived notions about the efficiency of remote work.

Even though this experience was forced on everyone and remote work has its limits, companies want to **capitalise on the lessons of this critical period** to get the most out of it. They are wondering about the changes in their practices, and some are already undertaking concrete actions to **establish a more hybrid and flexible organisation with regard to working methods**: reviewing collective agreements or remote work agreements, empowering employees, training, coordinating large-scale transformation plans, and adapting workspaces are just a few examples. This supposes a fundamental study of the relationship to work and the company, the impact of these organisational models on working together, how teams are managed, how workspaces are transformed and, finally, well-being at work.

**These many challenges push organisations and their stakeholders to reinvent themselves, even innovate**, within a collective which has shown its value and tenacity in the face of the crisis. Designing the future way of working also means taking part in the collective construction of a more sustainable and resilient world, where environmental and health issues are as intertwined as the economy and the environment must now be.



Achieving digital success to help promote the economic growth and competitiveness of its members, who are major French corporations and public administrations, and users of digital solutions and services

Cigref is a network of major French corporations and public administrations set up with a view to developing its members' capability to acquire and master digital technology. It is a unifying player in the digital society, thanks to its high-quality thinking and the extent to which it represents its members. Cigref is a not-for-profit body in accordance with the French law of 1901, created in 1970.

To achieve its mission, Cigref counts on three business units, which make it unique.

#### **Belonging**

Cigref speaks with one voice on behalf of major French corporations and public administrations on the subject of digital technology. Its members share their experiences of the use of technology in working groups in order to elicit best practices.

#### **Intelligence**

Cigref takes part in group discussions of the economic and societal issues raised by information technologies. Founded nearly 50 years ago, making it one of the oldest digital associations in France, it draws its legitimacy from both its history and its understanding of technical topics, giving it a solid platform of skills and know-how, the foundation stones of digital technology.

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Cigref ensures that its member companies' legitimate interests are known and respected. As an independent forum in which practitioners and actors can discuss and create, it is a benchmark recognised by its whole ecosystem.

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Numeum aspires to have digital technology serve people, with a founding ambition: to act in the service of responsible digital technology for all. Numeum will be jointly chaired by Pierre-Marie Lehucher and Godefroy de Bentzmann, previously chairmen of Syntec Numérique and TECH IN France.

**Numeum's commitment is based on four pillars:**

1. Speak with one voice and be the meeting point of the digital ecosystem at the service of average people.
2. Embody digital France in Europe and the world by strengthening our presence and our actions in Brussels in order to become the voice of French digital technology at the European level.
3. Coordinate the entire ecosystem to promote synergies between digital players and ensure the link between all digital companies from the various regions in France and their representative structures.
4. Strengthen and increase service to all digital companies by offering them the support they need for their growth, by reinforcing actions for employment in the digital sector, attractiveness, training, the place of women and, more generally, for all societal and environmental issues.

**Governance of Numeum**

The new union is organised into two colleges: a Services college, made up of IT consultancies, and a Solutions college, made up of software publishers and platforms. Numeum will be co-chaired for one year by Godefroy de Bentzmann, ex-president of Syntec Numérique, and Pierre-Marie Lehucher, ex-president of TECH IN France. The Board of Directors met for the first time in July 2021.