



ACHIEVING THE BALANCE

Why HYBRID WORK is the future for modern workforces

Modern technology is enabling a major shift in the way people work. The new mindset that has emerged post-pandemic will permanently reconfigure the workplace.¹ With it, will come new challenges.

Many reports suggest that hybrid work is here to stay.² The pandemic has proven that organisations can trust their people to be productive, wherever they are. It has also provided an exciting opportunity, as many organisations have concluded that their existing working model was out of date and required optimising for the new world of work.

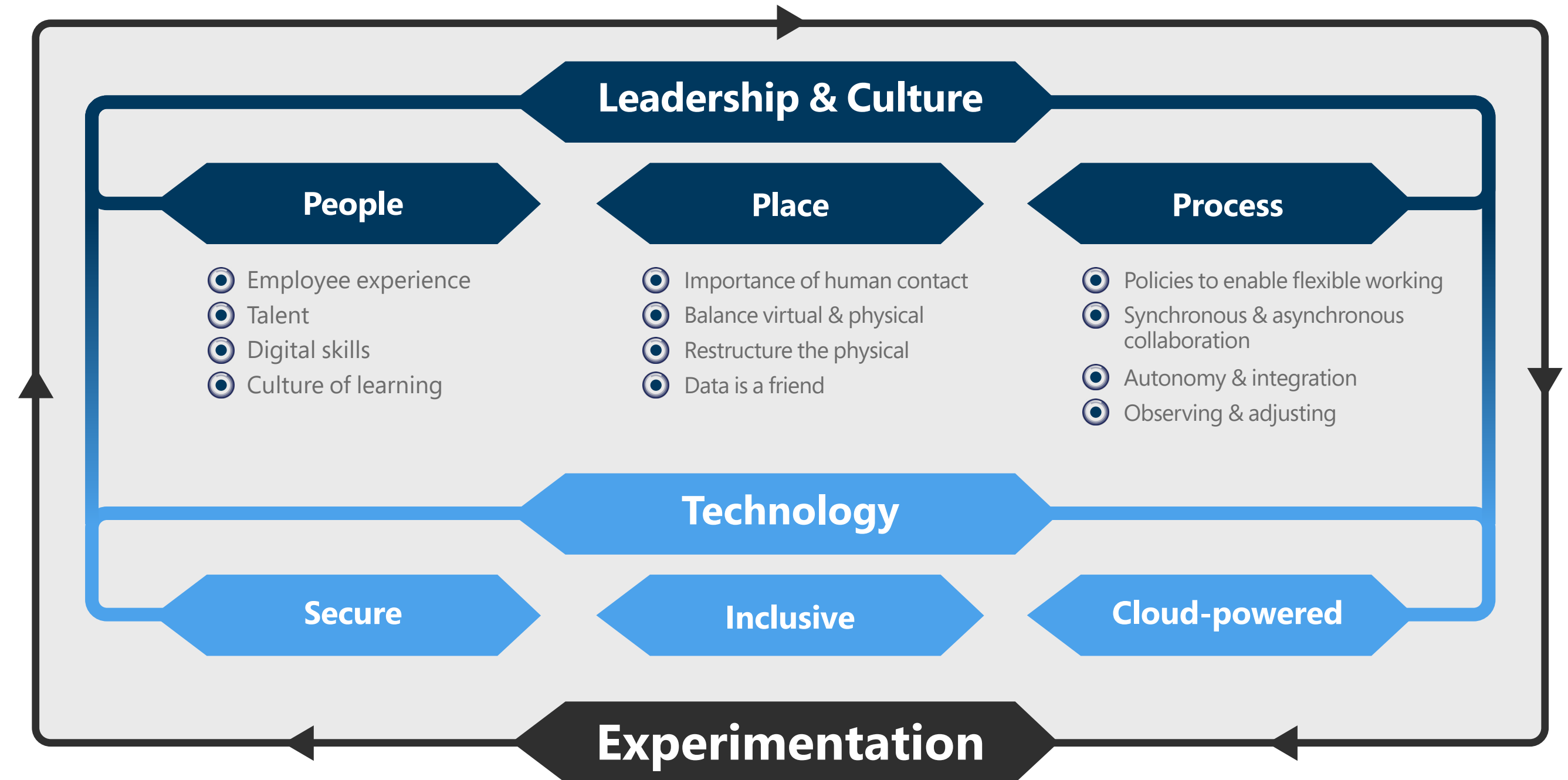
We believe in now combining the best of the digital workplace and the physical workplace. Empowering people with the flexibility and autonomy of remote work, while enabling the vital human connections of the traditional workplace experience. With advances in cloud-based technology, virtually all employees can now stay connected, almost wherever they may be, feel included and achieve their full potential at work.



A Framework For Hybrid

The shift to hybrid work is a strategic business opportunity for every organisation – one that requires a new operating model that must align with corporate culture and employee priorities. But effective hybrid working won't just happen. It will need a well-conceived strategy that is adaptable to cater for the variety of individual and organisational needs found in UK workplaces. Get the strategy right and organisations could create competitive advantages for many years to come.

An effective approach to hybrid working can focus on three key areas – **people**, **places** and **processes**.

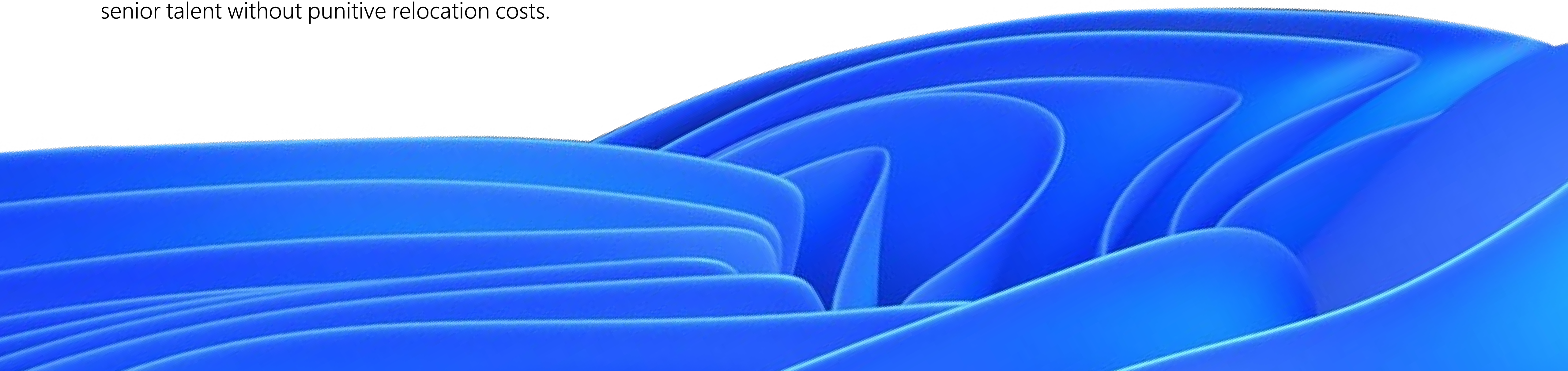


Putting the wellbeing of your **people** at the heart of a hybrid work strategy will be critical. Employee expectations have changed for good, with 71 percent of UK workers wanting flexible remote work options to remain post-pandemic.³ Businesses must have empathetic leaders and prioritise individual wellbeing to help people be their best. And it's important to embed an always-on culture of learning and training, so employee skills remain relevant and up-to-date, benefitting both the individual and the organisation.

Attracting and retaining talent is a critical part of hybrid working. Microsoft research suggests 40 percent of the UK workforce have considered leaving their current employer in 2021.⁴ This pool of talent will be attracted by a flexible, diverse working culture with opportunities to learn and innovate. As a hybrid organisation, you can also hire national and international senior talent without punitive relocation costs.

With regards to **place**, managers have a responsibility to balance the needs of the virtual and physical workplace, to ensure equality and inclusion. This probably means restructuring the workspace and investing in digital tools. For example, cloud-enabled AV solutions such as Microsoft Teams Rooms can foster a greater sense of inclusion for almost all workers, while interactive screens can be placed in both meeting and social spaces for enhanced collaboration. Individual employees will also need access to high-quality personal PCs and AV devices, such as speakers or smart screens.

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Technology can enable the culture for hybrid work and Microsoft leads the way by transforming business **processes** to drive innovation. Today's agile organisations are moving their people to the cloud as quickly as possible, digitising business processes from operations to sales, and mandating 'Zero Trust' security from cloud to edge. The Zero Trust model assumes breach and therefore explicitly verifies every data-access request. It also gives users only the permissions needed to complete their job. Zero Trust is one of the ways in which the cloud makes everyone more secure – while providing a seamless experience from anywhere.

This new flexibility needs to develop without threatening security or data-compliance protocols. Devices that support the Intel vPro® platform can enhance performance, productivity, security and manageability via hardware-based functionalities like Intel® Hardware Shield and Intel® Active Management Technology (Intel® AMT). By investing in modern technology, organisations can support hybrid working effectively, while also reducing costs.

As organisations become hybrid and the office no longer dominates, the digital employee experience becomes the employee experience. Employers will need to be careful that their version of the hybrid workplace is equally engaging in both the physical and virtual space, with measures taken to avoid either office or home workers seeming more visible than others. It will be important to deliver an inclusive experience where everyone attending the meeting is a first-class participant. Microsoft Teams Rooms and Teams-enabled personal devices (such as a good headset, the right webcam and Teams on a mobile) can help achieve this goal.



Hybrid work – enhancing productivity, enabling collaboration

Having people in different locations can impact on productivity, particularly if inefficient technology is a contributing factor. A Forrester Consulting study⁵ found that SMBs using Microsoft 365 for Business improved productivity by an hour per user every week. Microsoft 365 is an integrated platform designed to support people, places and processes in modern businesses. It equips SMBs with tools equal to enterprise-level technology – including cloud tools that support real-time collaboration from anywhere – but with administration streamlined for their needs and costs that don't break the bank.

Microsoft 365 Business empowers almost all team members to contribute their best and, by giving them the right tools, make them more productive. Its collaboration tools, such as Microsoft Outlook and Teams, encourage communication and closer teamwork. And Microsoft Viva (within Teams) supports staff mental wellbeing through a personalised dashboard that lets you schedule breaks, 'virtual commutes' and mindfulness exercises.

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Windows 11 also enhances productivity with useful features like Snap Layouts, Snap Groups and Desktops, which let you multitask more easily and stay on top of what you need to get done. In short, by staying connected, employees can accomplish more and be more productive, both individually and as a group.





Enabling hybrid meetings with Microsoft Teams Rooms

Most meetings in the future will be a blend of physical attendees and remote participants. Microsoft Teams Rooms has a critical role to play in the new hybrid work environment. It seamlessly brings together different workspaces – the home office set-up, the office and places where you work on the go. It's easy to use, flexible, scalable and it has multi-layer security.

Microsoft Teams Rooms technology brings together people, places and processes. You can harness innovative solutions that transform your meeting spaces with a rich collaborative experience that feels like you're there and, even when you're not and are attending remotely, everyone stays connected and can accomplish more together.

Meetings are easy to start with a seamless one-touch join system and with touchless meeting join, people can join and share content via their PC or mobile devices. Teams Rooms helps both remote and in-office participants stay engaged and productive with icons enabling gestures and hand-raising.

People working remotely don't need to worry about their in-office colleagues collaborating on whiteboards out of frame. Intelligent capture shares the whiteboard's contents with everyone. And with the help of AI, the camera blurs anyone standing in front of the whiteboard. Microsoft Teams Rooms ensure an inclusive and equitable meeting experience for virtually all, almost wherever you attend the meeting from.

Driving security in the hybrid workplace

Security is a priority and critical for any business, more so with organisations that embrace hybrid working. The changing nature of work, with people in different locations, brings with it vulnerabilities that expose devices, users and content to more and new risks.

Organisations need to understand these risks, install the right controls and apply them to enable the distributed workforce to operate efficiently, and to ensure system and data integrity. Not doing so could have serious consequences.

Government research reports 65 percent or nearly two-thirds of medium-size business had security breaches in the year to March 2021.⁶ With hybrid working, employees may use a variety of devices and that can increase potential security breaches through human error or targeted attacks, such as ransomware demands. 73 percent of IT leaders told Computing⁷ they thought device security would become a bigger challenge in years ahead.

What's needed is an integrated approach that can connect people, apps and data across different locations and devices. One which deploys the right tools and controls.

Microsoft 365 Business Premium gives you visibility and control over potential threats to devices. It lets users access systems in a secure way, from anywhere. It offers multi-factor authentication (MFA), which can prevent up to 99.99 percent of identity attacks. And it can also help prevent users from accidentally leaking information unintentionally.

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Microsoft 365 comes with Microsoft Defender, a comprehensive cloud-based security suite including Microsoft Defender Antivirus, which, among other services, deletes malicious attachments and warns if a link is potentially dangerous. Specially tailored for SMBs, Microsoft 365 security features consistently perform highly in independent tests.⁸

Secure remote and hybrid working is best underpinned by a Zero Trust approach, in which both identity and device are verified and tested before a user is granted access to resources. The entire Microsoft product portfolio supports and implements Zero Trust. Companies can further drive effective security procedures by establishing mandatory employee awareness training.



Better tools for hybrid IT management

As working models evolve and change, the challenge of managing IT systems frequently increases. And managing the IT estate can become unwieldy and hard to control. Only four percent of IT leaders felt that device management challenges wouldn't increase much over the next 12 months in a survey by Computing.⁹ A developing hybrid organisation that doesn't have its IT management in order and has out-of-date hardware and software could experience increasing costs and security risks.

Windows Autopilot can help IT managers. It's a cloud-based tool that makes it quicker and easier for IT to seamlessly deploy, configure and manage devices with Microsoft Intune. It's ideal for organisations transitioning to hybrid working because IT managers don't need to spend time creating images or making in-person visits, which geography can sometimes make impractical.

Autopilot also allows IT administrators to control administrator accounts and customise the set-up experience. And they can use it to remotely reset, repurpose and recover devices as needed, making it simple to adapt IT to changing circumstances.



Introducing the Intel vPro platform

The costs of IT management are growing. But hybrid organisations can invest now in new devices which deliver long-term savings and help avoid costly downtime. Devices with Intel vPro technology can help achieve this.

With each technology component designed and specifically tuned for professional grade, IT can be confident with tools to enhance everyone's productivity, help secure their business data, remotely manage critical devices, and build their fleet on a reliable platform. The Intel vPro platform provides an enterprise-grade level of performance, security, manageability, and stability on a single integrated and validated platform.

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For example, now that many workers are working remotely, they are running collaboration tools along with office applications. For workers performing office productivity tasks while participating in a video conference, the 11th Gen Intel® Core™ processor does its work 35 percent faster. When performing video editing, thanks to the Intel® Iris® Xe graphics engine, 11th Gen Core vPro mobile processors are 2.3 times faster than 10th Gen processors.¹⁰

The office is now almost everywhere. With PCs on the Intel vPro platform, IT can be almost everywhere too. The Intel vPro platform brings complete remote manageability to your entire organisation – and can even allow for access to devices outside the corporate firewall, or to those with a non-responsive OS. In addition, extensive testing of the hardware components in your PCs ensures that almost all brands of devices built on the Intel vPro platform deliver a reliable and stable foundation for smoother fleet management and global refresh cycles.

Finally, with the introduction of the Intel® Evo™ vPro® platform brand, premium laptops are built to deliver the best thin and light laptop experience for business.¹¹ Designed to provide 9+ hours real-world battery life, fast charging, and remarkable responsiveness, all without having to sacrifice business-class performance.

Hybrid work – looking forward

Effective organisations are implementing a hybrid working model which aligns with their strategy, company culture, leader vision and employee priorities. One of the driving forces will be technology that enables the entire team to work better than before.

As SMBs plan ahead, they need robust, simple systems with the latest tech to help them face the future and succeed. Transitioning to a hybrid organisation is an iterative process, so company leaders should set goals and experiment to get the balance right for their on-site and home workers. But by focusing on people, places and processes, organisations with vision can make hybrid work, work.



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