

# The New Productivity Playbook:

## Five Priorities for a Hybrid Era



# The New Productivity Playbook: Five Priorities for a Hybrid Era

## **Project Director**

Stephanie Larson, PhD

## **Designer**

Mary Thrift

©2025 by EAB. All Rights Reserved • [eab.com](http://eab.com)

### **LEGAL CAVEAT**

EAB Global, Inc. ("EAB") has made efforts to verify the accuracy of the information it provides to partners. This report relies on data obtained from many sources, however, and EAB cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided or any analysis based thereon. In addition, neither EAB nor any of its affiliates (each, an "EAB Organization") is in the business of giving legal, accounting, or other professional advice, and its reports should not be construed as professional advice. In particular, partners should not rely on any legal commentary in this report as a basis for action, or assume that any tactics described herein would be permitted by applicable law or appropriate for a given partner's situation. Partners are advised to consult with appropriate professionals concerning legal, tax, or accounting issues, before implementing any of these tactics. No EAB Organization or any of its respective officers, directors, employees, or agents shall be liable for any claims, liabilities, or expenses relating to (a) any errors or omissions in this report, whether caused by any EAB Organization, or any of their respective employees or agents, or sources or other third parties, (b) any recommendation by any EAB Organization, or (c) failure of partner and its employees and agents to abide by the terms set forth herein.



# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Executive Summary .....	4
Priority 1: Redefine Outcomes and Communicate Metrics with Transparency .....	7
Priority 2: Equip Managers to Lead with Intention, Inclusion, and Connection .....	10
Priority 3: Harness AI Without Losing Engagement .....	12
Priority 4: Activate Well-Being as the Engine to Efficiency .....	16
Priority 5: Translate Listening into Measurable Change .....	18
The Financial Case for Hybrid Excellence .....	19
Conclusion: Measuring What Matters .....	20

# Introduction

Organizations are facing a pivotal moment. Decisions about hybrid work and productivity made today will determine whether organizations can attract, engage, and retain top talent tomorrow. To better understand how leaders are navigating this moment, Seramount conducted a nine-month listening tour with more than 100 Chief Human Resources Officers (CHROs). Their insights revealed a clear theme: Leaders are grappling with uncertainty as they try to balance flexibility, accountability, and performance in a rapidly shifting work environment.

With nearly 50% of CEOs naming productivity as their number one priority, many leaders are implementing strict attendance policies in pursuit of performance ([IBM, 2023](#)). Yet [Seramount research](#) shows that while 90% of employers have implemented some form of RTO policy, more than half of employees say these policies have hurt their job satisfaction. This widening gap between employer pressure and employee experience poses a real risk at a moment when talent decisions will determine future competitiveness.

From a talent and retention standpoint, the stakes of maintaining hybrid work are clear ([Seramount, 2025](#)): Flexibility is now the top factor employees consider when choosing a job—ranked above compensation—and the second most important reason they stay. Employees report they would accept, on average, an 8% pay cut in exchange for greater flexibility. [The Wall Street Journal](#) has even described strict RTO mandates as “a layoff without layoffs,” warning that missteps made now around hybrid flexibility could undermine culture and talent pipelines when the labor market tightens again.

In other words, supporting hybrid work is now a business imperative. Well-designed hybrid models consistently enhance engagement, retention, and well-being, key drivers of organizational performance. According to [McKinsey](#), 83% of employees cite the ability to work more efficiently and productively as a primary benefit of working remotely, underscoring the clear upside of flexible work. Likewise, an [MIT Sloan Management survey](#) reported that 61% of HR leaders say hybrid work has improved productivity, while only 15% perceive a decline. In a study that lasted six months with over 1,500 hybrid employees, [Stanford researchers](#) found that hybrid work improved job satisfaction, increased retention rates by a third, and demonstrated productivity rates equal to those of in-office models when compared over two years of review. With evidence this strong, it raises an important question: *If hybrid work supports performance, why does “productivity” remain at the center of executive anxiety and public discourse?*



Put simply, the debate over hybrid productivity stems less from performance shortfalls and more from perception. Before the pandemic, few organizations systematically measured how and where work created value, leaving today's judgments shaped by visibility bias and assumption rather than evidence. Measuring productivity in distributed settings is undeniably complex, but that complexity makes transparency even more essential. When employees feel valued, trusted, and connected, they are more productive. Research across sectors shows that output has held steady or improved under hybrid models, yet a lingering lack of trust continues to influence how productivity is perceived.

[MIT Sloan's research](#), for example, found that while the majority of HR leaders believe hybrid work has improved productivity, 15% still perceive a decline, a small but significant share that fuels skepticism in workplace culture.



When employees feel **valued**, they perform at their best. **Culture** is the bridge between **flexibility** and **productivity**.

These studies reveal that hybrid work hasn't created a productivity problem; rather, it has exposed a measurement one. Many organizations remain uncertain about hybrid performance because legacy metrics—time in seat, output volume, and visible activity—were built for an in-office era. As [Deloitte](#) and [MIT Sloan](#) note, assessing productivity now requires a broader lens that reflects and captures how value is created in a distributed, digital workplace. The innovation that drives true productivity often comes from focused thinking, team energy, and creativity, activities that organizations have never systematically measured ([HBR, 2021](#)). To sustain hybrid excellence, leaders must redefine productivity by blending outcomes and collaboration with inclusion and well-being, making those metrics clear and embedded in culture throughout the entire workforce.

Understanding this distinction is critical for today's HR leaders. Productivity can no longer be inferred from proximity or monitored through keystrokes, and relying on outdated signals will only deepen mistrust and talent loss. The future of measurement demands transparency and collaboration, and the companies that excel are those that invite employees to help define what truly fuels creativity and connectedness.



# Executive Summary

Hybrid work succeeds when productivity is defined through shared understanding rather than surveillance. HR teams must move beyond activity tracking toward frameworks that combine data and human experience to sustain productivity in the hybrid era. Modern measurement anchored in outcomes and culture can cut through outdated assumptions and make visible what the evidence already proves: Hybrid excellence works.

To move beyond visibility- and output-based metrics, this insight paper offers HR teams five priorities for building clarity and momentum

based on the latest research and market insights. Organizations that thrive in this moment are the ones that bring employees into the conversation, making clear how productivity is defined, measured, and supported. When leaders understand how work actually gets done and where friction arises, they can evolve expectations, systems, and norms in ways that feel credible to employees and meaningful for the business. This depth of insight not only makes measurement more reliable but also reveals new levers to strengthen performance across the organization.



# Five Priorities for Hybrid Excellence



## **Redefine Outcomes and Communicate Metrics with Transparency:**

Shift from presence-based metrics to outcome frameworks that capture results, creativity, and collaboration. When employees understand what good work looks like and how their contributions are measured, transparency replaces guesswork, strengthening alignment.



## **Equip Managers to Lead with Intention, Inclusion, and Connection:**

Enable managers to listen well, act visibly, and create trust in a hybrid environment. When employees experience consistent communication and meaningful connection with their managers, they feel supported and seen, driving higher accountability.



## **Harness AI Without Losing Engagement:**

Measure both efficiency gains and motivation risks to ensure AI enhances, rather than diminishes, human contribution. When employees collaborate with technology designed to support—not replace—their judgment and creativity, they adopt it with confidence and deliver higher-quality work.



## **Activate Well-Being as the Engine to Efficiency:**

Track energy, focus, and burnout risk alongside output to sustain long-term performance. When employees feel their well-being is protected and their workload is manageable, they bring more energy and resilience to their work, directly improving productivity.



## **Translate Listening into Measurable Change:**

Use structured listening to uncover what helps or hinders productivity in real time and then close the loop by acting on those insights visibly. When employees see their input shaping expectations, tools, and ways of working, trust grows—and so does performance.



## PRIORITY 1



# Redefine Outcomes and Communicate Metrics with Transparency

[Deloitte's "Productivity+" research](#) argues that leaders must use a framework of efficiency when measuring productivity, the ability for employees to focus their time and energy on work that drives business results. This framework positions productivity as a function of outcomes and experience, recognizing that sustainable performance depends on both. Echoing this emphasis, [research by RAND](#) finds that performance metrics that account for engagement, autonomy, and well-being best measure employees' capacity to be efficient and impact long-term results.

To achieve these results, organizations must communicate with transparency, making the standards for productivity visible and shared. In practice, transparency around expectations enables employees to see how their work connects to business outcomes, strengthens collaboration across locations, and sustains the capacity that drives long-term performance ([Cappelli & Nehmeh, 2025](#)). Flexibility—regarding when and where work happens—works only when everyone has a shared understanding of which outcomes matter (i.e., deliverables, projects completed, KPIs, performance goals, etc.) and which behaviors help fuel good performance (i.e., responsiveness, collaboration, planning, etc.).

To sustain excellence within flexible work arrangements, business leaders must redefine productivity through the following interconnected outcomes:

- **Business impact** measures the results, quality, and innovation that advance strategic goals.
- **Collaboration** captures how teams connect, share knowledge, and generate new ideas across locations.
- **Engagement** reflects the energy, focus, and well-being that enable long-term efficiency and effectiveness.

## Implications for Leaders

- **Define What Good Work Looks Like:** Establish clear, outcome-based expectations and performance goals for all roles, aligning individual goals with business impact.
- **Make Metrics Transparent:** Present performance metrics transparently to the entire workforce and revisit them regularly through open dialogue to ensure goals, progress, and accountability remain shared, not hidden or assumed.
- **Listen and Adapt:** Continuously gather feedback to refine measures of productivity and ensure they reflect evolving work realities and employee experience.

## Key Takeaway

Transparency fuels culture, and culture powers **productivity**.

## CASE IN POINT:

# Rebuilding Clarity Through Ways of Working That Strengthen Performance

The CEO of a midsize organization set priorities for 2026, and one of the biggest was to boost productivity. Part of the reason this priority rose to the top was a belief that productivity had never fully returned to pre-COVID levels, despite new tools, hybrid flexibility, and larger teams. That challenge was compounded by the fact that a large portion of the company had been hired during the pandemic, meaning many employees had never experienced the organization's original in-office rhythms, expectations, or informal norms. Leaders were trying to reset habits with a workforce that didn't share the same baseline.

Before rolling out any new expectations, they needed to understand how these norms would land and what was actually getting in the way of productivity day to day. With Seramount's help, they ran an [Employee Voice Session](#) with their full Leaders Committee, about 1,000 senior leaders across the business. They shared an outline of the company's new "Ways of Working That Strengthen Performance" and asked leaders to be candid: What felt clear, what felt unclear, and what simply wouldn't work given the way the organization operates today?

What they heard was incredibly revealing. Leaders weren't pushing back on the intent; rather, they were surfacing the cultural and operational friction points that would quietly derail the rollout if left unaddressed:

- **Meeting overload:** too many standing meetings, too little focus time, and no shared norms around what requires a meeting.
- **Conflicting priorities:** teams being pulled in multiple directions without clarity on what truly matters.
- **Inconsistent modeling:** leaders weren't always demonstrating the behaviors they wanted others to adopt.
- **Vague expectations:** habits that sounded lofty but didn't translate into daily behaviors.





What made this discovery phase so powerful was not just what leaders surfaced but how they surfaced it. Rather than unveiling the “Ways of Working That Strengthen Performance” as a top-down directive, the organization intentionally brought employees into the process from the start. Leaders and managers were encouraged to challenge assumptions, name friction points, and explain what would or wouldn’t work in real workflows. This active engagement helped build early buy-in by making employees part of the solution, not passive recipients of a “top-down” directive. Doing so also ensured that everyone understood the why behind the focus on productivity, removing skepticism and preventing the rollout from stalling. These insights became essential inputs, allowing the organization to refine the habits so they were not only aspirational but practical, clearly defined, and culturally aligned.

Based on these insights, the organization’s leaders revised their habits, defining how teams could “boost productivity with purpose” by focusing on three dimensions of performance:

- **Business impact** was measured through clear priorities, accountability for results, and aligning talent to high-value work.
- **Collaboration** was strengthened through shared norms such as “talk instead of type,” intentional office in-days for innovation and relationship-building, and consistent communication across distributed teams.
- **Engagement** was reinforced through transparent, flexible policies, such as accountable hybrid scheduling and wellness flextime programming that supported energy and focus without compromising outcomes.

By making expectations explicit during firm-wide meetings, the organization rebuilt trust, reduced ambiguity, and established a shared foundation for hybrid excellence. Continuous feedback mechanisms now inform quarterly reviews of work habits and hybrid policies, keeping measurement transparent, inclusive, and responsive to change.



## PRIORITY 2

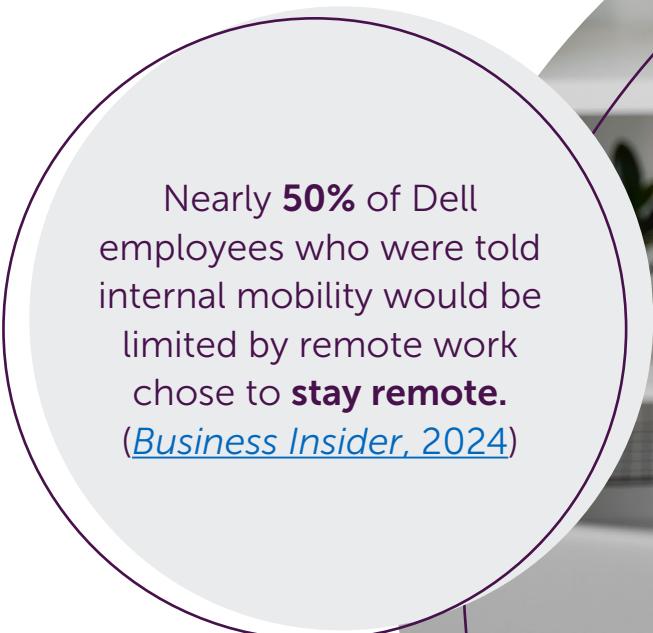
# Equip Managers to Lead with Intention, Inclusion, and Connection

In today's distributed, digital era, the role of a manager has never been more important. Without daily visibility, employees depend on clarity, consistency, and authentic connection to understand expectations and feel supported. When those touchpoints fade, trust erodes, especially for early-career employees who rely on structured feedback and guidance to grow ([HBR, 2025](#)). Strong hybrid cultures emerge not simply from flexibility itself but from managers who ensure that expectations, opportunities, and recognition remain fair and transparent across all work arrangements.

Yet many leaders still struggle to translate trust into practice. In a [recent SHRM survey](#), 67% of managers overseeing remote employees admitted believing remote workers are more replaceable than those on-site, an assumption that signals a deeper management challenge around trust and visibility. These assumptions have measurable consequences: A [2025 University of Warsaw study](#) of 1,000 UK managers found that fully remote employees were 10% less likely to be promoted and 6.5% less likely to receive pay increases than equally performing office-based peers, evidence of enduring proximity bias. When poorly designed and executed, hybrid models can also amplify inequities in access for employees from historically excluded groups, groups that often experience greater inclusion and autonomy when working remotely.

Effective managers recognize how proximity and proficiency biases shape who is seen, supported, and developed ([Seramount, 2021](#)). Those trained to mitigate these imbalances—through equal access to information, inclusive performance reviews, and culturally aware communication norms—help sustain fairness, trust, and performance across diverse teams.

Closing this accountability gap requires intentional connection. The spontaneous hallway conversation no longer exists, but great leaders create its digital equivalent, using tools such as Slack or Teams to check in often, celebrate wins, and make time for reflection, not just transaction. Many teams now pair formal feedback systems with short “relationship maps” that capture how employees prefer to give and receive input. [Gallup](#) finds that a single 15-to-30-minute meaningful conversation each week on goals, well-being, and recognition is enough to prevent disconnection and strengthen performance.



Nearly 50% of Dell employees who were told internal mobility would be limited by remote work chose to **stay remote**. ([Business Insider, 2024](#))



Finally, effective hybrid leadership also means helping teams manage focus and energy. [Recent Microsoft findings](#) show that managers who collaborate with their employees on task prioritization have the greatest impact on overall employee experience. While modeling work-life balance and fostering supportive team cultures remain important, prioritization is the differentiator. Managers who help their teams build in time for uninterrupted focus and reflection, manage cognitive load, and normalize boundaries reduce burnout while amplifying engagement and productivity ([Deloitte, 2024](#)).

### Implications for Leaders

- **Train managers to lead with clarity:** Advise them to set expectations, communicate consistently, and provide regular, meaningful conversations.
- **Reinforce trust through transparency:** Equip managers to recognize and counter biases that limit visibility and advancement while strengthening team connection.
- **Foster strong habits of focus:** Encourage practices that help employees prioritize tasks, set boundaries, and sustain mental energy.

### Key Takeaway

Hybrid success hinges on managers who inspire **trust**, build **connection**, and lead with **purpose**.



## PRIORITY 3

# Harness AI Without Losing Engagement

Artificial intelligence is transforming how organizations work, but the productivity story is more complex than efficiency gains. A [2025 Nature study](#) found that while AI collaboration improved task performance, it also reduced productive engagement, lowering employees' sense of focus, ownership, and cognitive energy. [Harvard Business Review](#) reports similar findings, noting that employees who rely heavily on AI tools experience greater loneliness and lower well-being, as technology replaces many of the human interactions that give work meaning. This dual effect—higher output but diminished engagement—has been called the "AI productivity paradox." When executed without attention to engagement, automation can erode motivation, connection, and purpose, the human forces that sustain long-term performance.

Without deliberate design, AI adoption becomes fragmented and reactive, making productivity harder to measure and progress harder to scale. [McKinsey's 2025 "State of AI" report](#) warns that organizations that rush implementation without clear parameters risk uneven results, employee fatigue, and even financial and reputational risk. Research suggests that successful AI transformation requires structured experimentation—testing use cases, capturing learning, and scaling what works to build both trust and impact ([HBR, 2026](#)). When intentionally designed, AI can enhance meaningful work. Generative AI, in particular, can remove friction,

clarify purpose, and free people to focus on creative and collaborative tasks ([HBR, 2024](#)). For leaders, the challenge is not merely adopting AI at scale but doing so with design that deepens focus, curiosity, and long-term engagement.

Too often, organizations use AI as a digital assistant rather than a strategic collaborator. To unlock its full potential, leaders must treat AI as a thought partner—a junior employee that helps clarify priorities, test ideas, and amplify human judgment. In [The AI-Driven Leader: Harnessing the Power of AI for Smarter Decisions](#), Geoff Woods offers a practical framework called "CRIT": context, role, interview, task. Users can provide detailed context about a situation, assign AI the role of an expert in their industry, let it interview them to deepen understanding, and define the task they want it to perform. Woods encourages leaders to start small but think strategically, using AI to test ideas and assumptions, simulate stakeholder reactions, and improve decision quality. Here at Seramount, we [reinforce this approach](#), showing that organizations embedding experimentation achieve faster learning, higher confidence, and stronger performance outcomes.



## Implications for Leaders

- **Model strategic experimentation:** Start small, scale what works, and make leader-led learning the foundation of enterprise AI adoption.
- **Use AI as a thought partner:** Encourage employees to embrace a learning mindset and apply frameworks such as CRIT to clarify priorities, test ideas, and strengthen decision-making.
- **Pair automation with engagement:** Track how AI influences motivation, fulfillment, and focus, not just output or efficiency.

## Key Takeaway

The future of **hybrid success** belongs to leaders who use AI to elevate human judgment while protecting the human performance drivers that sustain **long-term productivity**.



CASE IN POINT:

## Scaling AI Adoption to Unlock Innovation

Building on its earlier success redefining hybrid work through clear norms and shared expectations, the same global organization and Seramount partner demonstrated how intentional design can make AI adoption both effective and engaging. Leaders applied the same principles of accountability and communication that anchored their hybrid work habits, turning technology into another avenue for connection and continuous learning.

### What the organization did:

- Activated AI access across the firm to streamline workflows and reduce time spent on routine tasks
- Launched firm-wide learning and enablement programs that built employee confidence and capability in using generative AI tools
- Encouraged leaders across functions to share use cases, demonstrating how they applied AI in real work scenarios and creating open forums for peer learning and collaboration
- Positioned AI as a “junior colleague” that amplifies human judgment rather than replaces it, reinforcing a culture of innovation grounded in trust and transparency



### Results after one year:

- 94% of staff completed generative AI training
- 90% of employees used generative AI tools monthly and nearly 80% weekly
- 1,600 custom AI applications were developed to streamline work and boost efficiency
- Time previously spent on routine tasks was redirected to higher-value collaboration, innovation, and professional growth

By embedding automation into a culture already defined by collaboration and accountability, the organization transformed efficiency gains into deeper engagement and collective problem-solving



## PRIORITY 4

# Activate Well-Being as the Engine to Efficiency

Behind every productivity metric lies a consistent truth: Well-being determines output. Employees who are healthy—physically, mentally, and financially—are more focused, innovative, and resilient. Yet global engagement has fallen to its lowest level in a decade. [Gallup's "State of the Global Workplace"](#) report finds that global engagement declined to 21% in 2024, estimating that low employee engagement costs the global economy \$8.9 trillion. Loneliness has also become a defining workplace risk. Gen Z employees, in particular, report high rates of isolation and disconnection, underscoring that social well-being is now as critical to performance as physical or mental health ([Addiction Center, 2025](#)). [Public health researchers](#) find that for companies with 1,000 employees, burnout can cost up to \$21,000 per employee or roughly \$5.04 million per each organization. [Seramount research](#) echoes these findings, showing that chronic stress among leaders and employees erodes focus and trust, with burned-out workers 63% more likely to take sick days and 2.6 times more likely to leave their employer.

Addressing this crisis requires redesigning how work is measured and managed. Hybrid and digital work has blurred boundaries and intensified workloads, leaving many organizations focused on short-term output rather than sustainable capacity ([HBR, 2023](#)). Mental health strategies must shift from reactive treatment to systemic prevention, embedding well-being into culture, structure, and leadership accountability ([Seramount, 2024](#)). Preventive systems that track energy, focus, and workload

balance alongside output can reveal where teams are overextended before productivity suffers.

Inclusion plays a central role in this equation. [Seramount research](#) shows that burnout disproportionately affects women, caregivers, employees of color, and other employees from historically marginalized groups, groups that often experience greater psychological safety and autonomy in hybrid arrangements. When flexibility narrows or workloads rise unevenly, these employees face amplified strain. Conversely, inclusive cultures—where workloads are balanced, advancement pathways are clear, and belonging is reinforced—serve as protective factors against burnout and have a direct impact on business outcomes ([McKinsey, 2023](#)). Preventive design is essential: Employers who offer targeted benefits and schedule flexibility help employees balancing dual caregiving responsibilities maintain energy and productivity ([Spring Health, 2024](#)). Even small, timely gestures of appreciation measurably increase morale ([HBR, 2021](#)), and employees who feel trusted and valued maintain higher energy and deliver stronger outcomes ([Gallup, 2024](#)).



Well-being and recognition, in other words, are not soft benefits; they are critical inputs to performance. Leading organizations are moving from wellness programs to well-being systems, redesigning flexibility with energy as a top priority. They integrate emotional, physical, and financial health into the flow of work, introducing wellness hours, volunteer opportunities, and financial coaching while also reaffirming caregiver support and flexibility ([HBR, 2025](#); [Seramount, 2025](#); [SHRM, 2023](#)). Seramount research identifies Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) as one of the most effective structures to institutionalize connection, especially in hybrid and remote environments. These initiatives share a measurable outcome: higher engagement, lower attrition, and stronger organizational loyalty. When well-being becomes part of how work is designed—not an optional perk—it drives the energy, security, and purpose that sustain productivity.

### Implications for Leaders

- **Measure energy, not just output:** Incorporate well-being indicators—focus time, workload balance, and team energy—to identify early burnout signals.
- **Design to sustain energy:** Equip managers to recognize early signs of overload and address systemic stressors through capacity and culture.
- **Redefine flexibility for impact:** Offer wellness hours, volunteering, and financial well-being programs as core components of work design, not discretionary perks.

### Key Takeaway

The strongest performance systems measure energy as carefully as output because **well-being drives productivity**.





# Translate Listening into Measurable Change

Across these five imperatives, we've outlined ways to track and refine productivity. Yet even with better metrics, productivity is ultimately something we feel. Employees and leaders alike sense it through momentum, meaning, and the satisfaction of seeing their work make a difference. The challenge for organizations is to translate those signals into systems, measuring not only what people produce but how they experience the work that produces it.

As technology, culture, and expectations evolve, measurement must evolve too. The organizations that thrive treat productivity as something to reassess, illuminating what good work looks like and how it's recognized. When employees understand the why behind performance standards, measurement becomes alignment, not surveillance. Listening then completes the loop, ensuring that metrics reflect lived experience. Research shows that when people believe their voices influence decisions, engagement and discretionary effort rise ([Gallup, 2024](#)), while failing to close that loop erodes trust ([Seramount, 2025](#)).

Feeling that one's work makes a positive difference drives excellence. By listening to how employees experience their work, leaders build systems that are transparent, trusted, and adaptive. In the end, productivity is sustained not by oversight but by shared purpose.

## Implications for Leaders

- **Revisit performance frameworks:** Regularly test whether metrics still capture the value and experience of work.
- **Communicate openly:** Make performance data transparent, invite employee feedback on how it's applied, and show how that input drives improvement.
- **Model adaptability:** Adjust goals and workflows as work evolves, and make those changes visible so employees see evolving productivity standards as part of continuous learning.

## Key Takeaway

**Productivity** is both measured and felt, and the organizations that **listen, learn, and adapt** will sustain it.



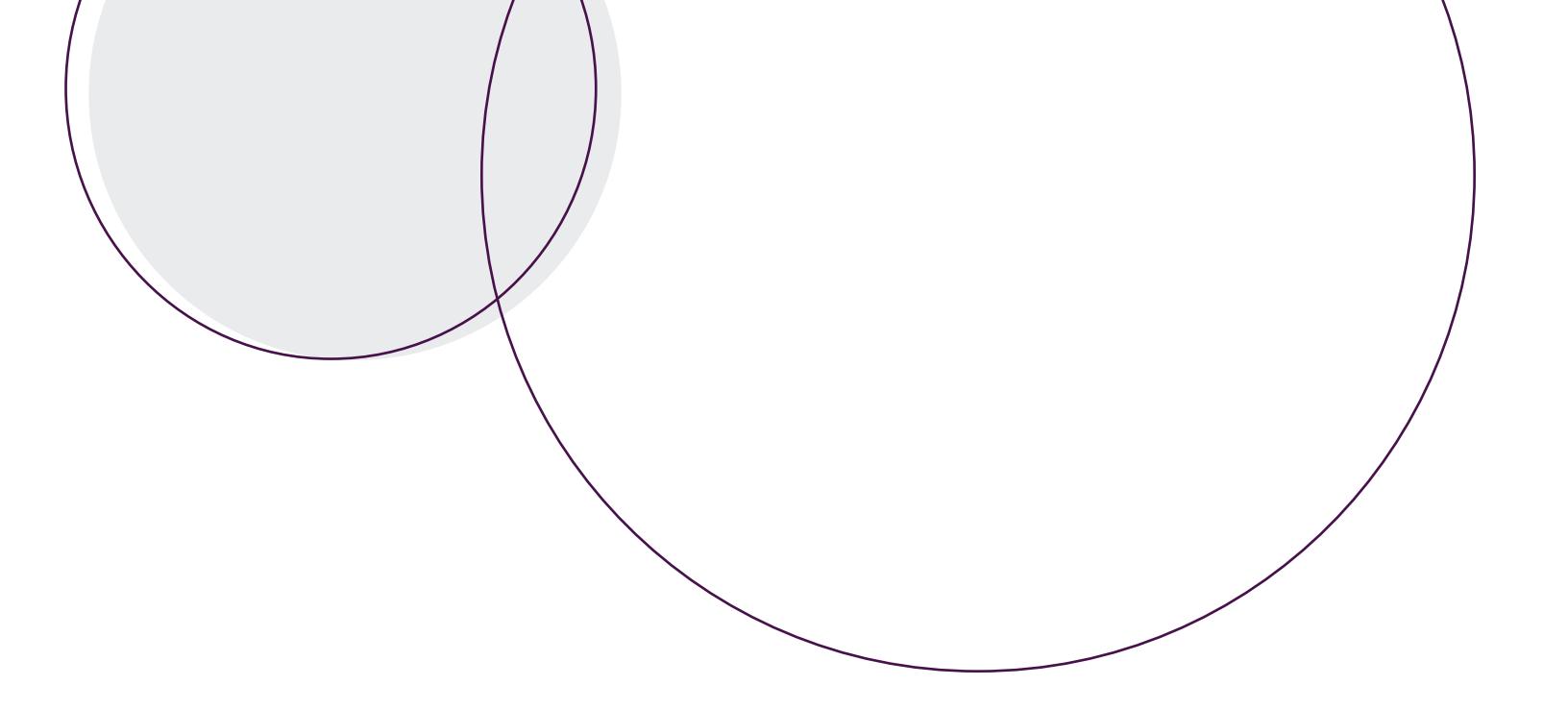
# The Financial Case for Hybrid Excellence

Finally, flexible work pays measurable dividends. When hybrid models are intentionally designed with these five priorities in mind, the financial upside is clear.

- **RTO mandates raise turnover.** Firms that imposed RTO mandates saw about a 13% increase in employee turnover, with the effect strongest among women, senior leaders, and highly skilled employees. Typical replacement costs an average of 30% of annual salary per departure, compounding the loss of talent and institutional knowledge ([Ding et al., 2024](#); [Seramount, 2025](#)).
- **Hybrid design cuts quits.** Employees working in a structured hybrid model are 33% less likely to quit than their fully in-office peers, with no decline measured in productivity ([Bloom et al., 2023](#)).
- **Burnout is expensive.** Chronic stress and burnout are estimated to cost U.S. employers \$125–190 billion annually in health care expenses and lost productivity ([Gallup, 2024](#); [Goh et al., 2016](#); [Seramount, 2025](#)).
- **Inclusion drives returns.** U.S. organizations miss out on an estimated \$1.05 trillion annually from higher turnover, lower productivity, and reduced customer satisfaction when they fail to build inclusive workplaces, particularly for caregivers and employees from historically marginalized groups who strongly prefer hybrid and remote work ([Forbes, 2023](#)).
- **Well-being lowers turnover.** Organizations investing in employee well-being consistently report lower attrition and higher engagement ([APA, 2022](#); [HBR, 2025](#); [SHRM, 2023](#)).
- **Hybrid saves on real estate.** Firms that redesign for hybrid work could achieve 10–20% cost savings in real estate operations ([McKinsey, 2024](#)).

## Bottom Line:

Hybrid excellence connects purpose with performance, improving productivity, optimizing costs, and reinforcing culture.



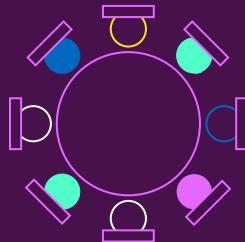
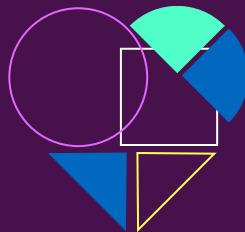
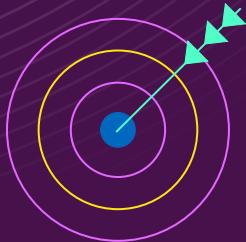
## CONCLUSION

# Measuring What Matters

At the core of RTO debates is a deeper crisis surrounding what we mean by productivity and how to measure it. Organizations cannot manage what they cannot define, and in the hybrid era, productivity is not always visible. Experts' research all points to the same conclusion: The most successful organizations are those that redefine productivity around outcomes, inclusion, and energy.

For CHROs, this is both a challenge and an opportunity. The future of work will belong to leaders who treat measurement as transparency, not surveillance; who balance data with dialogue; and who co-create definitions of productivity with their people. Hybrid work is not an experiment to control but a system to refine, one built on trust, clarity, and shared purpose.

**Hybrid work can expose organizational weaknesses or showcase excellence. The difference lies in what leaders choose to measure and how they choose to act.**



## Insight-Powered Solutions Trusted by Talent and HR Leaders

### TALENT SOURCING

#### Identify, Engage, and Hire Top Early Career Talent

Branding and recruiting platform that surfaces engaged, prepared candidates more efficiently, effectively, and at scale

### ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGY

#### Uncover the Real Levers to Unlock Enduring Employee Engagement

Actionable intelligence into the employee experience powered by innovative technology and over 40 years of workforce data and insights

### RESEARCH AND ADVISORY SERVICES

#### Set Strong DEI Foundations and Build Adaptable Roadmaps

Expert guidance rooted in research and experience to support and advance your strategic talent and DEI priorities in every environment

### LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

#### Create a More Resilient, Connected Workforce

Impactful content designed and delivered to inflect productivity and positive behavior change at every level

---

We partner with **600+** corporations, government entities, and nonprofits **globally**.

---

Including **~50%** of the Fortune 100 and **~25%** of the Fortune 500.



202-747-1000 [seramount.com](http://seramount.com)

39893