| **CISCO**

Lenovo Digital Workplace Solutions

Work without limits

How Lenovo and Cisco are igniting flexibility with simpler, smarter solutions for hybrid teams.

Contents

Hybrid is the norm – not the exception

The stabilization of hybrid working into a standard part of the working model – and employee offering – is complete. Office attendance sat at 30% below pre-pandemic levels in 2023,[1] while there is little evidence to suggest employees are keen to revert to entirely office-based arrangements. One study suggests as much as 98% of employees desire some form of remote working opportunity within their role.[2]

60% of remote-capable employees want a hybrid work arrangement[3]

Even a drive by some employers to encourage a return to the office has had little impact on the material need for effective hybrid working solutions. Even staff working from offices typically need to collaborate directly with colleagues working elsewhere – so virtual meetings continue to be the norm.[4]

You need to ensure your IT solutions are ready for a hybrid future

It's impossible to know how the demands placed on your infrastructure by growth, diversification, or staff expectations will change in the future. But it's a good bet that hybrid working will continue to be an important piece of your employee offering and business model.

This eBook outlines the growing case for hybrid working, and how we can help you to build an IT operation around the needs of a modern, hybrid workforce.

1. McKinsey
2. Work Well Remote
3. Gallup
4. HBR

Why hybrid works for people and business

If Hybrid is the new working standard, it brings with it a wide set of advantages to your enterprise, starting with a happier and more empowered workforce.

## 1. Free, productive employees

People can balance their professional and personal commitments, with plenty of evidence to indicate higher job satisfaction, reduced mental load, and better retention. Work molds to the style of the person doing it rather than the other way around, so people can focus on outcomes instead of arbitrary, task-based workflows. In fact, studies suggest staff who work remotely part of the week are just as productive – and as likely to be promoted – as entirely office-based employees.[5]

2. Lower overheads

When the office is less central to the way your business operates, it gives you an opportunity to look at alternative ways of managing your physical spaces. You could reduce or removing permanent offices or consider cheaper partial or temporary arrangements – any combination of which could help reduce spend and build a more sustainable long-term financial approach.

3. Flexible collaboration

Connection is important in any job. People need to have access to the support and expertise of others to deliver the best response to business challenges. With flexible and virtualized working, you can create a unified global team, where great minds and views aren't siloed by a lack of proximity.
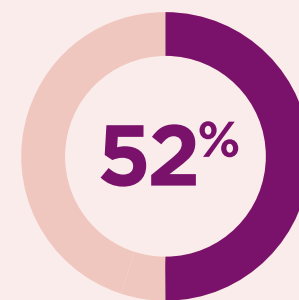
52% of employees say they get work done faster when working remotely[6]

4. Less burnout, higher retention

Hybrid working is a construct through which you can find the right balance between business and employee needs. Extra hours when timelines are tight can be offset elsewhere more easily, to reduce stress and make schedules more flexible. That means employees are less likely to burn out and be more willing to stick around.

The advantages are there to see

Staff wellbeing, stronger connections and better productivity – hybrid work done right can give your business a lot.

But that doesn't mean there are no challenges. Of course there are, and these will need to be overcome for a better, more harmonious work environment.

5. Hybrid work is a win win win for companies workers
6. Fores

Hybrid isn't without challenges

Effective hybrid working requires you to first consider how it might make life harder for staff and leadership. From security concerns to technological preparedness, here are five challenges to consider if hybrid working isn't done right:
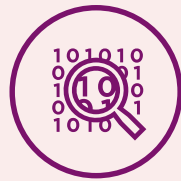
While the evidence suggests productivity is maintained – and even enhanced – **with hybrid working, the ability to monitor and measure it is more difficult.** You can't see employees every day to make a subjective judgement on their work. Around half of businesses have implemented some form of monitoring technology to mitigate this loss of in-person visibility.[7]

Some employees may feel alienated from the day-to-day process of feedback and self-expression, with less direct access to their managers. It's important that you can give people ways to raise problems and act, with consistent oversight of progress and progression.

73% of executives view remote workers as posing a greater security risk than office-based equivalents. **There is a clear, urgent and ongoing challenge for IT and Security teams to maintain a reliable security posture across more endpoints, networks, and locations than were needed previously.**

Managing teams has changed completely. **Leaders must orchestrate work and collaboration virtually, to ensure people are engaged and on-track.** This requires new forms of communication – and adaptation of skills by people who may have a lot of experience working within the old, office-based model.

It's important that all employees – no matter where they are based – have the same collaboration experience as they would face-to-face, in the office. Enabling equity of contribution in meetings between in-person and remote participants is vital to ensure that people feel heard and don't have a sub-par experience.

You cannot rely on employees to have a professional, comprehensive technology setup at home, unless you provide one. **Slow internet connections, limited access to resources, and problems onboarding and operating tech all lead to lost productivity and prevent staff from being their best.** Empowering teams who work away from the office must be a priority – with the right solutions and devices to optimize performance.

15% of remote workers say they struggle with collaboration and communication when working remotely[8]

$4,072 is lost per year in labor costs per employee due to having to fix technical issues[9]

7. Forbes
8. Buffer
9. Ivanti

Rightsized, adaptable IT is imperative for effective hybrid working

Effective hybrid work means employees must be able to communicate easily, share information, and work without interruption wherever they are. These factors are particularly important for enterprises with operations in different regions.[10]

We can identify five key baseline priorities for employees to be able to work well – all of which sit under the responsibilities of your IT and Operations functions.

10. Forbes

1. Seamless collaboration

Choosing and consolidating the right tools for your teams is an essential part of maximizing everyone's contribution and ensuring equity of experience wherever people work. You need clarity over the channels you use, as well as clearly defined processes for things like version control, quality assurance, and accountability for storing work.

2. Connectivity

If your people can't connect to systems, they can't work. While you can't guarantee that home broadband coverage will be good for every employee, you can hold up your end of the bargain by providing networks and devices that offer reliable, robust connectivity.

3. Secure access

Security is always on the IT team – and this is even more acute in a hybrid arrangement. You can provide training and best practice guidance, but some people will always be less observant and savvy than others. You must ensure the foundation of your storage and data sharing architecture is solid, to reduce your exposure to human error and carelessness. Plus, you must do it without limiting access to mission-essential systems.

4. Equity of experience

By raising the floor of your hybrid working readiness, you can create a baseline level of access, security, and productivity for every employee. You must ensure onboarding is as smooth as possible, from device provisioning to remote management and lifecycle efficiency, through to ensuring people are enabled to do their job brilliantly.

5. Reliable support

Your teams can work more confidently and productively if they know that – when anything does go wrong – they have a fast, consistent support network that will resolve an issue fast. Ensure that any partnerships you build can maintain productivity and IT functions across hybrid working models.

The answer:
unified, modern and comprehensive solutions designed for the task

As a responsible business, you need to deliver on these priorities – and do it in a way that can be consistently scaled and adapted as your business changes. **Consolidated, flexible solutions can help you cut unnecessary complexity from IT workloads and build a hybrid working model that works well for all your users.**

You need to be able to generate, use, and monetize insights from your IT data – such as metrics around meeting participation and productivity – to enhance efficiency. This will enable you to refine the way people work – such as simplifying meeting agendas and prioritizing people's time better. **It's important to see IT as a source of best practice and insight, as well as a resource to be optimized.**

Another change in mindset you can make is to see technology as a tool that must adapt to users, not the other way around. By 2028, nearly 80% of departments will include remote workers,[11] so **the experience of using technology must be totally transposable between locations, devices, users, and workloads.** You can't afford to provide a bespoke IT setup for every user, so **the technology foundations must be flexible enough to enable that individuality by design.**

Consolidating IT provision, vendors, and supplier ecosystems is a valuable first step to take. **With simple, secure, managed IT services, you can ensure the hardware, software, and support are in place from the moment an employee joins your business.** So, they can be their best and have a great experience from day one.

11. Work Well Remote

Lenovo and Cisco: accelerating innovation and unlocking value

In 2024, we announced a strategic partnership with Cisco. Our goal is straightforward. Together, we'll simplify work, optimize enterprise infrastructure, and clear the way to a secure, scalable, and AI-ready hybrid IT model.

By pairing Lenovo's innovative DWS managed services with secure networking and collaboration tools from Cisco, we have built a modern, intelligent hybrid work portfolio that can enable your teams to work effectively anywhere.

One provider, with everything you need to get the best from each employee, while keeping control of IT spend, enhancing security, and supporting collaboration.

Our solutions

The partnership initially focuses on two core offerings: TruScale Meeting Rooms as a Service (MRaaS) and TruScale WorkSmart. These are designed to simplify and enhance productivity at every level, to help you run your hybrid teams efficiently.

TruScale Meeting Rooms as a Service

TruScale Meeting Rooms as a Service is a fully managed solution that brings together Cisco's suite of Collaboration Devices with end-to-end support and monitoring services from Lenovo. It makes it easier to set up, access, and work together during meetings. With interoperable tools and a streamlined user interface, everyone can contribute equally, without having to contend with complex tasks or IT workarounds.

Lenovo's proactive monitoring helps to ensure a seamless conferencing experience and makes deployment straightforward, by resolving issues promptly and maintaining performance.

TruScale WorkSmart

TruScale WorkSmart is a unified solution for an efficient, employee-centric hybrid working environment. Delivered through Lenovo Care of One, you can tailor environments to distinct employe personas, providing a truly personalized experience that matches what employees need from their environment.

Personalize without compromising on safety or productivity, with robust security across office-based, mobile, and remote workers' devices and applications. Together we help you to ensure the very best hybrid working experience, all delivered as a managed service, through one joint solution, with one bill for IT.

You can learn more about the partnership and our joint solutions here.

Why as-a-Service?

A purpose-built solution delivered as-a-Service by a single vendor is an effective alternative to building your own in-house solutions or splicing together capabilities from multiple vendors. With a comprehensive blend of hardware, software, and managed services, Lenovo and Cisco give you all the tools to:

Deliver equitable employee experiences, with consistent, centralized technology, management, and support

Optimize productivity, by reducing the burden of managing infrastructure and freeing up time to focus on strategic initiatives and collaboration

Protect data and performance with state-of-the-art collaboration solutions that are secure by-design and work seamlessly across a hybrid environment

Manage costs with minimal upfront investment and managed services that enable you to scale and add infrastructure capacity in line with demand

Simplify complexity by consolidating your vendor ecosystem and buying everything you need through a single, managed service that is easy to track and offers seamless support across every user and solution

Future-proofing your business

Workplace technology will continue to develop, offering new possibilities for your employees and competitors. By working with industry leaders, you can put your business first in line to take advantage of new technologies like AI, while derisking these innovations with reliable cybersecurity and dedicated IT support.

By streamlining how your teams work, collaborate, and innovate with proven, fit-for-purpose solutions, you can combat the challenges of operational complexity, employee burnout, and inconsistent outcomes that can otherwise hinder a hybrid working model.

Simplify the work environment and create a reliable foundation for cross-enterprise collaboration, with the guaranteed performance and as-a-Service simplicity that only this partnership can deliver. Put your employees first and create a future-ready, hybrid workplace today.

Ready to improve your hybrid work environment?

Talk to us.

Contact your Lenovo Service representative for further information.

Lenovo | CISCO™