Success in the hybrid workplace

Using people-first strategies
to drive business growth

RICOH

The modern workplace.
Putting people before place.

The landscape of the modern workplace has undergone a significant transformation with the rise of the hybrid workforce. As businesses adapt to this new paradigm — operationally and culturally — they're navigating a range of complexities, while simultaneously seeking to capitalize on the potential advantages it offers. In this eBook, we explore how business leaders are putting their people first to drive enhanced collaboration, culture, performance, security, compliance, and sustainable business practices.

We know that hybrid work is here to stay. We also know that managing that workforce effectively is critical to success. According to Gartner®, human-centric design is "a model that puts people at the center of work."[1] Their research has shown that organizations with a human-centric model in place are nearly 4 times more likely to see high employee performance.

4x
higher employee performance

[1] Gartner. Human-Centric Work Models Proven to Drive Performance the Most. By Graham Waller, Dana Stiffler, Jennifer Carter, Rob O'Donohue, Lily Mok, Alexia Cambon. 7 November 2022.
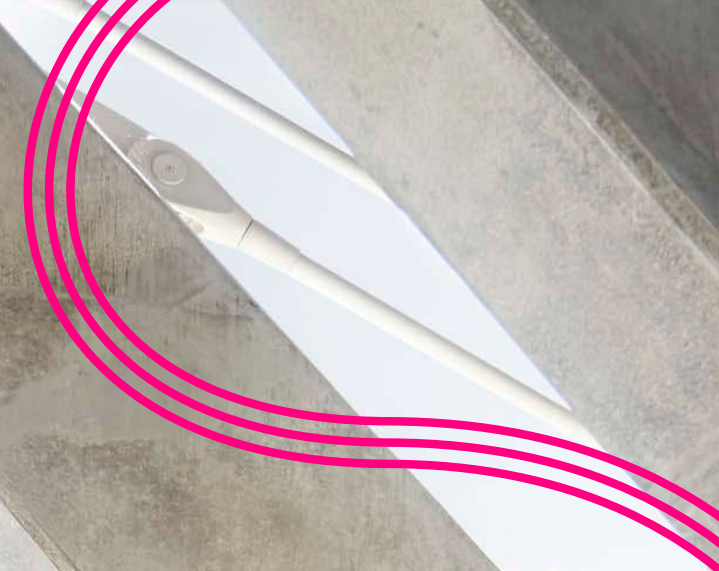
The challenges mount.

C-suite leaders are navigating a rapidly evolving, increasingly competitive market while contending with an entirely new kind of workforce characterized by:

- "Demand for flexibility and autonomy in their work. Employees who have workplace autonomy are 3.8 times more likely to achieve high performance." [2]

- Quiet quitting, a portion of the workforce which Gallup estimates to be at least 50%[3]

- A rise in the impact of sustainable business practices — workers feel strongly about a company's mission and values, with 70% of workers prepared to leave if their company had an unfair gender pay gap and 68% saying the same about a lack of a diversity and inclusion policy[4]

- The rise of the "side hustle,"[5] a workplace trend in which more than half of Gen Zers, half of Millennials, and 40% of Gen Xers are currently engaged

- Historically low unemployment rates

50%
Portion of the workforce who are "quietly quitting"

70%
Portion of the workforce prepared to leave if company had unfair gender pay gap
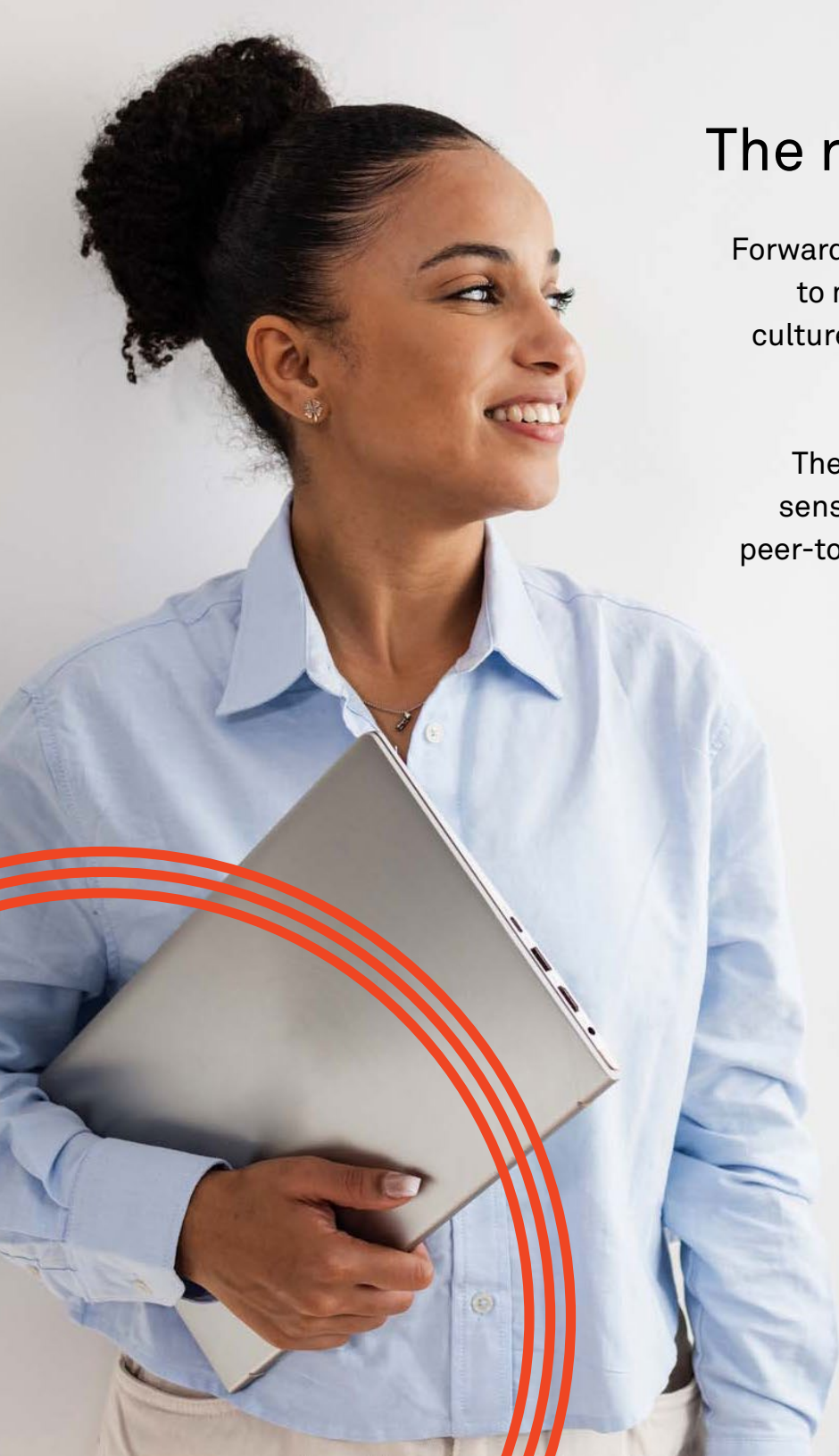
50%
Portion of Gen Z workforce engaged in "side hustle"

[2] Gartner. Think hybrid work doesn't work? The data disagrees. November 21, 2022.
[3] Gallup. Is quiet quitting real? September 2022.
[4] ADP Research Institute. People at Work 2022: A Global Workforce View. April 2022.
[5] Bankrate. Survey: 39% have a side hustle, and 44% believe they'll always need one. March 2023.

The response? A people first workplace.

Forward-thinking leaders are taking a people-first, human-centric approach to managing their hybrid employees. How? By creating and reinforcing a culture that prioritizes a balanced working/personal life for each employee through empathy, flexibility and collaboration.

They understand that maintaining employee connections and creating a sense of inclusivity, collaboration, and teamwork are critical, whether it's peer-to-peer, manager-to-peer, manager-to-manager, or in group dynamics.

First and foremost, however, they understand that a people-first model requires commitment to empowerment, training, technologies and tools. It also takes a higher-level commitment to building a culture that encompasses and fosters the principles of CSR, ESG and DEIB. These principles demonstrate an organization's focus on making people and planet a priority.

68% workers would leave if their company lacked a diversity and inclusion policy

Now, let's explore how a people-centric model drives satisfaction, performance and revenue, backed by findings from Ricoh's 2023 Global Customer Discovery Report.

1 | Communication and collaboration

One of the foremost challenges faced by employers with a hybrid workforce is effective communication and collaboration. In fact, in Foundry's 2022 study, more than half of employees surveyed cited effective collaboration as a major challenge. With teams dispersed across various locations, ensuring seamless information exchange becomes more complex. Moreover, striking a balance between in-person and virtual meetings becomes crucial to maintaining team cohesion and engagement.

>> **Actions to take**

- Invest in robust technologies that foster collaboration in real-time and on a project basis
- Design innovative meeting spaces that connect people from any location
- Ensure everyone has secure access to the tools and information they need to be productive, anywhere

50%

of employees cite effective collaboration as a major challenge[6]

[6]Foundry Future of Work Study 2022. June 23, 2022.

2 | Building engagement and sustaining culture

Great cultures leverage their organization's unique mission, purpose, and values — all of which contribute to strengthening their identity, inspiring their employees, and delivering on their brand promise to customers. A great culture is, indeed, what sets an organization apart from its competitors. But without adequate support, resources, and opportunities for professional growth, remote employees face feelings of isolation, reduced work-life boundaries, and distractions. They may also feel disconnected from the company's values and mission.

> **A sense of belonging and inclusion must be a focus for employers. It ensures that all employees, regardless of their background and experiences, can be connected with equal opportunity and create a healthier, more successful future together.**[7]

» Actions to take

- Provide employees with the autonomy to work flexibly
- Empower employees to reach their potential with innovative tools and data insights
- Create accessible and inclusive spaces that encourage employees to connect with one another
- Make sure diversity and inclusion are key components of your recruiting practices
- Leverage communication technologies for team building activities and regular check-ins to foster a sense of purpose and belonging

[7] Fortune. The key to hybrid work productivity? Getting the ROI of your commute right. February 8, 2023.

3 | Increased productivity and performance

About three-quarters of all U.S. companies are in the process of adopting a hybrid work model.[7] Now, managers need to learn how to maximize hybrid work productivity by determining what employees can most effectively work on at home, and what to focus on when they come to the office.

While matching workers with tasks might seem simple, it isn't. Without proper guidance in this area, middle managers will often shoehorn traditional office-centric methods of working into hybrid settings. Leaders must recognize and address the reality that misaligning remote workers with activities can result in lower productivity, engagement, and morale, which hurts the company's bottom line, as well as employees' well-being and career success.

So, given the obstacles, can workers truly be more productive when working from a location of their choosing? Studies have shown that working in an environment that suits individual preferences, reduces commute time, and presents fewer distractions can enhance a worker's focus and efficiency — and with them, productivity.

Study reveals manager perspectives on hybrid work[8]

51% agreed that working from home improves employee concentration

**62%** agreed that it increases motivation

76% believe that it increases productivity

>> Actions to take

- Design a flexible, seamless work experience that enables employees to access tools from any location
- Automate processes to empower workers, drive efficiency and optimize outcomes
- Manage and leverage information to enable data-driven strategies that drive growth and minimize risk

[8] Forbes, S., Birkett, H., Evans, L., & Chung, H. (2022). Flexible Working and the Future of Work. Retrieved from Equal Parenting Project.

4 | Cybersecurity and data protection
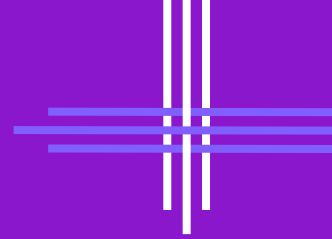
Unsecure home and remote networks are considered by most organizations to be their top security risk, largely due to an inability to extend corporate security to virtual office environments.

❝ 62% of organizations offering remote work suffered a data breach that could have been prevented if the employees had been coming into the office. ❯❯ – Foundry Future of Work Study

Robust security measures must be implemented to safeguard sensitive information, and policies communicated to remote workers to ensure adherence to security protocols. While most security experts agree there is no single solution that provides ironclad protection against cyberattacks and data breaches, they also agree that securing data begins with a multi-layered security strategy.

❯❯ Actions to take

- Build a plan to orchestrate security across people, processes and technologies
- Implement end-to-end protection that includes endpoint, network, application and data security based on zero-trust authentication
- Educate and empower employees with cybersecurity training
- Ensure your IT team has the expertise and resources to secure, support and enable flexible work

To maintain an engaged, productive workforce, leaders must provide hybrid employees with a seamless, secure work experience, as well as the training essential to data protection. Additionally, as cyberthreats become increasingly sophisticated and costly — in terms of both financial and reputational damage — cybersecurity takes on even greater importance in building trusted business-to-business relationships. With data as an organization's most valuable asset, companies cannot afford to work in partnership with an organization that does not have robust cybersecurity measures in place.

5 | Compliance

Compliance is a challenge even in the best of circumstances, and a hybrid workforce adds an entirely new layer of regulatory hoops for an organization to jump through. A recent survey by Deloitte reveals that regulatory issues are often cited among the top three challenges employers face when implementing remote or hybrid work strategies.[9]

Further complicating compliance is the increased scrutiny that third-party vendors and partners continue to face from customers and regulators monitoring their handling of proprietary data.

For starters, a chief consideration, among many, is how to maintain a culture of compliance across a borderless workplace when, historically, this has been done with employees working together, side by side. Then, organizations must consider the numerous types of remote work, with each type potentially involving its own regulatory considerations.

>> Actions to take

- Cultivate a compliance mindset that lives across the entire organization
- Identify, classify, structure and clean up data to eliminate risk
- Adhere to an information governance framework to improve operational data efficiency, ensure compliance and gain valuable insights
- Prepare a disaster response plan that supports compliance and mitigates impact

[9]Deloitte. Global Remote Work Survey. 2022.

6 | Sustainable business practices

Another shift associated with hybrid work is the growing importance of sustainable business practices.

Although environmental impact has been a focus area for many years, there is a rise in activity around diversity and inclusion, with organizations looking to see how they can improve digital accessibility and enhance the diversity of thought and culture.[10]

Business frameworks such as CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance), and DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) are becoming increasingly important across the entire commerce ecosystem as shareholders, investors, clients, customers, and workers demand greater accountability from companies and organizations. Those demands include, but are not limited to:

- **Employee well-being:** Offering employees the opportunity to avoid commutes and work in a location of their choosing can lead to reduced stress levels and improved work-life balance. This, in turn, can lead to an increase in job satisfaction, productivity, and retention.

- **Environment:** By adopting sustainable practices, such as eliminating the need for daily commuting, a hybrid employee is contributing to a reduced environmental footprint. An employer may contribute to reducing the carbon footprint created by its office space.

- **Cost savings:** Remote work reduces expenses. For the employee, the costs associated with travel to an office, and, for the employer, the costs associated with maintaining office space.

- **Social responsibility:** A commitment to social causes and frameworks, such as CSR and DEIB, fosters a positive company image, strengthens relationships with stakeholders, and attracts socially conscious employees and customers.

- **Global talent pool:** A company's position on sustainable business practices enhances its ability to attract talent. In fact, 66% of respondents in one study noted that a company's mission and core values must align with their own when applying for a job[11]

>> Actions to take: Sustainable practices give meaning to work and build a positive perception in the marketplace. In recent years, sustainability has become an essential component of doing business, from attracting top talent to attracting new customers. Beyond benefiting the planet and society, sustainability measures correlate with financial performance, according to a Bain & Company study.[12]

[10] Ricoh Customer Discovery Report 2023.
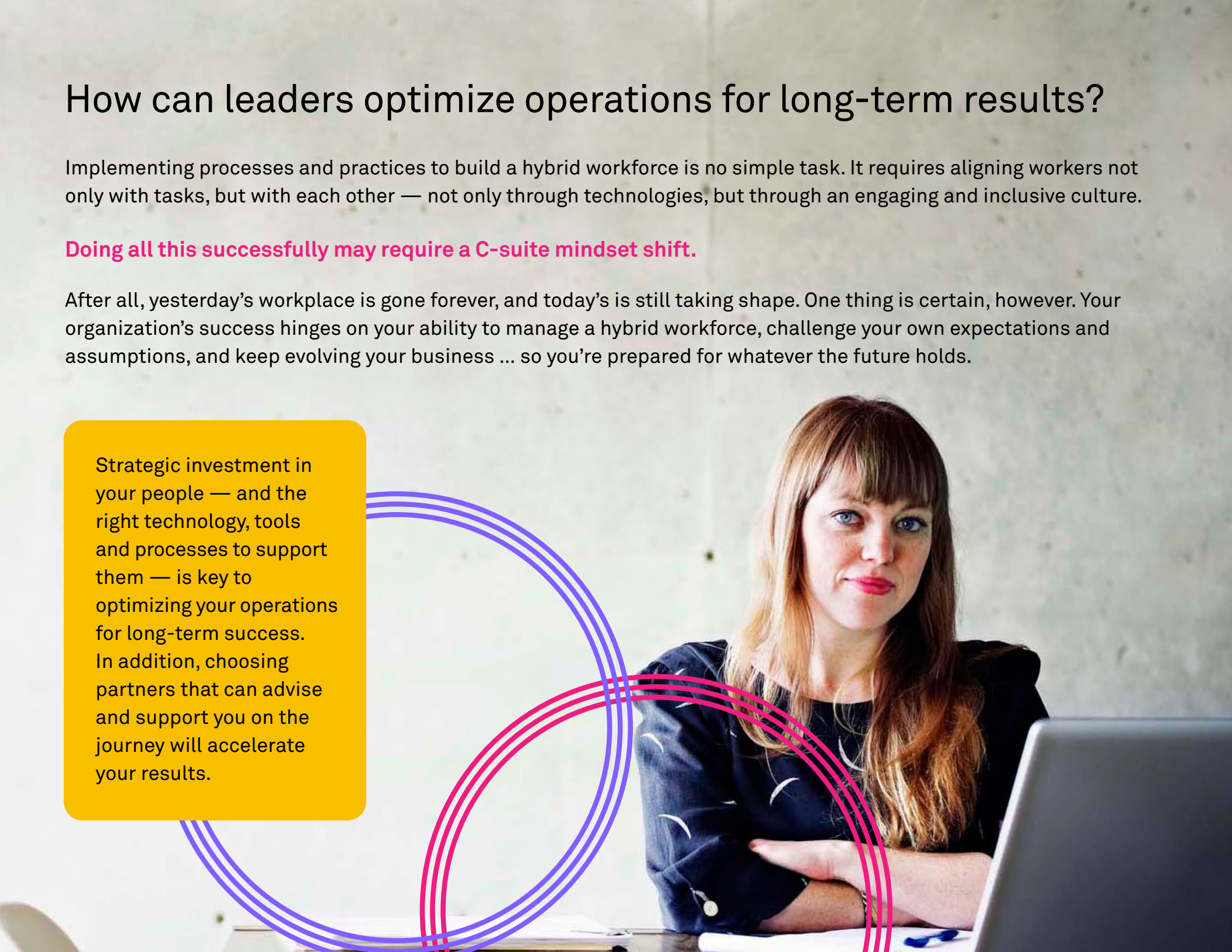[11] ICIMS. 3 sustainability initiatives to help attract and retain talent. April 22, 2022.
[12] Bain & Company. Do ESG efforts create value? April 17, 2023.

How can leaders optimize operations for long-term results?

Implementing processes and practices to build a hybrid workforce is no simple task. It requires aligning workers not only with tasks, but with each other — not only through technologies, but through an engaging and inclusive culture.

Doing all this successfully may require a C-suite mindset shift.

After all, yesterday's workplace is gone forever, and today's is still taking shape. One thing is certain, however. Your organization's success hinges on your ability to manage a hybrid workforce, challenge your own expectations and assumptions, and keep evolving your business … so you're prepared for whatever the future holds.

Strategic investment in your people — and the right technology, tools and processes to support them — is key to optimizing your operations for long-term success. In addition, choosing partners that can advise and support you on the journey will accelerate your results.

Your partner in building connections

Ricoh works with organizations of all sizes and across industries to drive modernization and create efficiencies that support collaboration, teamwork, technology integration, and results-based process improvement.

Our people are customer obsessed, and we thrive on making meaningful connections among data, systems, and people, and partnering with our clients to uncover and make strategic use of their information.
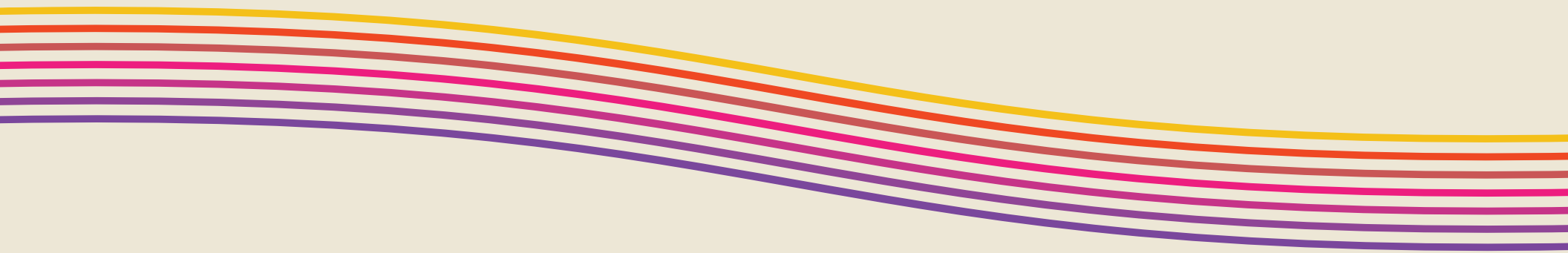
Our agnostic approach means we don't favor one technology, solution, or team for service delivery. Instead, we take a human-centered, custom approach to bring the best people, technologies, and partners together to solve our clients' challenges. If you'd like more information or to explore solutions for your business, we're ready to talk.

About Ricoh

At Ricoh, we are unlocking the power of our customers' information, processes, and abilities so they can respond to change and provide the best possible experiences for their employees and customers. By unleashing the full power of trapped information, organizations can unlock the full potential of their people, respond to change with actionable insights, and create more meaningful human experiences.

For further information, please visit www.ricoh-usa.com

RICOH