KARRIKINS
GROUP

6 FAQs on evolving your work environment

Aren't we losing important parts of our culture by continuing to work remotely?

The short answer is yes, you are probably losing parts of your culture. How important those parts are is up to you. It is likely that there were outdated routines, rituals, beliefs, assumptions, and ways of working that have been disrupted, and letting them go is a good outcome. Now is the time to think about how you can **bridge the important parts of your culture into an evolved workplace**, and let go of some of the legacy parts that aren't as necessary as you might think.

Challenge yourself to consider how your culture could be enhanced rather than lost as you evolve the work environment.

How do you mentor, grow, and develop people who aren't physically present?

There's no way around it, this will require **leaders to level up in new ways**. Remote and hybrid workplaces depend on technology channels to create real-time connections and interactions that advance work outcomes. Leaders need to learn new ways of leading and workers need to learn new ways of working to stitch it all together. It takes different skills to see, hear, and experience people contributing in a more technology-dependent culture. Whatever tools you choose, they need to be integrated into the day-to-day work experiences in ways that provide visibility, connection, and support.

Challenge yourself to listen to your own internal narrative about using technology platforms for connection, and test to see if it is positive or negative.

What's the difference between leading a fully remote team and a hybrid team?

Everyone remote is a great leveler and is actually an easier situation to be in than a hybrid one. Moving into a hybrid model, where some people are in the office and some are not, will introduce new complexities, including the risks of perceived (or real) favoritism, miscommunication, and FOMO across the team. Leaders will have to be attentive to these concerns, and work to prevent unproductive cliques from forming while also watching out for individuals being isolated from participation because of perceived location limitation.

Challenge yourself to think about how you might have hidden preferences that will impact your interactions going forward.

Is location flexibility a reward, a right, or a requirement?

It is all of the above. Some people might perceive flexibility in workplace as something that has to be earned. Others might see it as a choice everyone deserves, and in some cases it is a requirement to access talent or customers in certain areas. Once it is safe to return to a shared work environment, you will need to create clarity around how your belief about flexibility impacts others on your team.

Challenge yourself to be very clear about your deeply held beliefs about location that are influencing your expectations about the work environment.

Won't getting everyone back into the office quickly help us to get back to normal?

You can't pretend that COVID-19 didn't happen. There is no going back to what normal used to be at this point. It is imperative to fully appreciate the learnings and progress that your organization made and not try to just "go back". Focus on **developing a vision of the future that reflects all the resilience** that have been demonstrated by employees and customers. Your people will be excited to hear that you are looking forward instead of backward.

Challenge yourself to get very clear about what you want to keep from this experience to move forward and communicate energy and excitement for what comes next.

What will happen when existing teams with a history of working together in real life need to integrate new team members who they've never met in person?

This is where things may get really tricky, especially for hybrid teams. Team members who have a history of working together will have a different level of connection and trust based on their in-person experiences. It will be especially important to **onboard new people with processes that provide the opportunity for one-on-one connections with other team members**. This includes making sure they have the chance to work together on specific deliverables and outcomes with legacy team members.

Challenge yourself to think about creative ways to include new team members in ways that help them to form the necessary connections with colleagues they may only know virtually.

> **Answering these questions and more are important steps to take as you evolve your workplace design.**

Don't let the lessons of COVID-19 go to waste.

Connect with us to schedule a complimentary live 30-minute *4Cs Assessment™* of your customers, colleagues, culture, and company. One of our consultants will work with you to further understand what makes sense for your team or organization going forward. Say *hello@karrikinsgroup.com*.