Managing hybrid teams: leading practices for implementation

March 2023

Let's get started!
Where are you working from today?

We are living in confusing times

OPINION
PETER COY

A Strong Signal That Recession Is Looming

SUCCESS · ECONOMY

Amid recession fears, American companies still want to hire bigly. Job openings jumped to 11 million in December.

BY **PAUL WISEMAN** AND **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**
February 1, 2023 at 10:31 AM EST

BUSINESS

The Companies Conducting Layoffs in 2023: Here's the List

Alphabet, Microsoft, Goldman Sachs, 3M and Salesforce are cutting positions amid recession fears

SUCCESS · WORK-LIFE BALANCE

A recession could add more fuel to America's quiet quitting fire

BY **MEGAN LEONHARDT**
February 23, 2023 at 11:32 AM EST

HOME > ECONOMY

More than half of US workers want to quit their jobs in 2023, a new survey shows

- We hear daily about economic uncertainty and a potential for a US recession
- There is more and more news about planned layoffs, and it is not limited to the Silicon Valley
- At the same time, the unemployment rate fell to a 53-year low of 3.4% in December 2022 and there were 11 million job openings!
- In this environment, 4 million Americans quit their jobs every month since July 2021
- A labor trend called "quiet quitting" picked up in fall of 2022

Sources:
Coy, Peter. "A Strong Signal That Recession Is Looming." *New York Times*, 21 December 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/21/opinion/inverted-yield-curve-recession.html
Wiseman, Paul. "Amid recession fears, American companies still want to hire bigly. Job openings jumped to 11 million in December." *Fortune*, 1 February 2023, https://fortune.com/2023/02/01/december-jolts-report-job-openings-11-million/
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Leonhardt, Megan. "A recession could add more fuel to America's quiet quitting fire." *Fortune*, 23 February 2023, https://fortune.com/2023/02/23/recession-could-fuel-quiet-quitting/
Tan, Huileng. "More than half of US workers want to quit their jobs in 2023, a new survey shows." *Business Insider*, 19 January 2023, https://www.businessinsider.com/great-resignation-linkedin-us-workers-considering-quitting-2023-1

Where the competition for talent is expected to remain fierce, even amid economic uncertainty
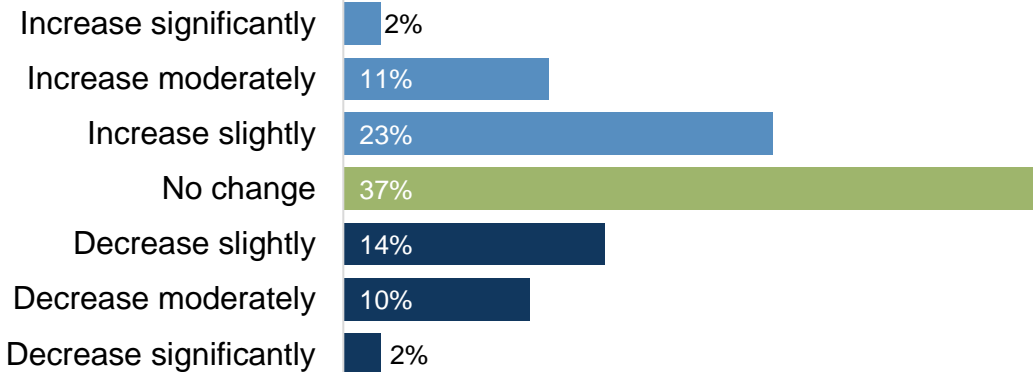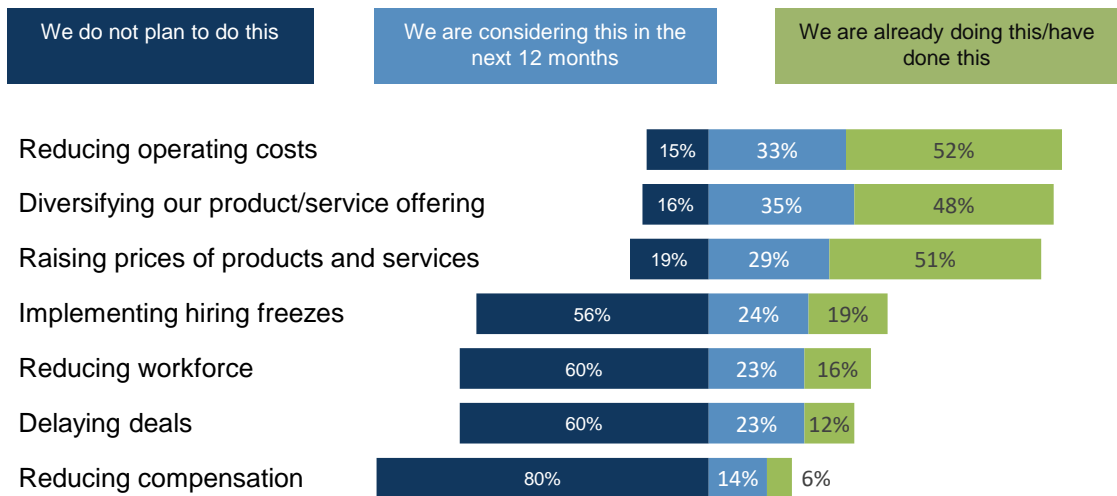
Thus, keeping workers happy and engaged should be a mission-critical priority.

In the current environment, CEOs report cutting costs and spurring revenue growth-but most don't plan to reduce workforce or delay deals

CEOs expect current employee attrition rates to continue largely unchanged

Question: Which of the following options best describes any action your company may be considering to mitigate against potential economic challenges and volatility in the next 12 months?

Question: How do you believe employee resignation/retirement rates in your company will change in the next 12 months?

We do not plan to do this	We are considering this in the next 12 months	We are already doing this/have done this

	We do not plan to do this	We are considering this in the next 12 months	We are already doing this/have done this
Reducing operating costs	15%	33%	52%
Diversifying our product/service offering	16%	35%	48%
Raising prices of products and services	19%	29%	51%
Implementing hiring freezes	56%	24%	19%
Reducing workforce	60%	23%	16%
Delaying deals	60%	23%	12%
Reducing compensation	80%	14%	6%

Increase significantly	2%
Increase moderately	11%
Increase slightly	23%
No change	37%
Decrease slightly	14%
Decrease moderately	10%
Decrease significantly	2%

Note: Percentages shown may not total 100 due to rounding.
Source: PwC's 26th Annual Global CEO Survey

So, what do workers want?
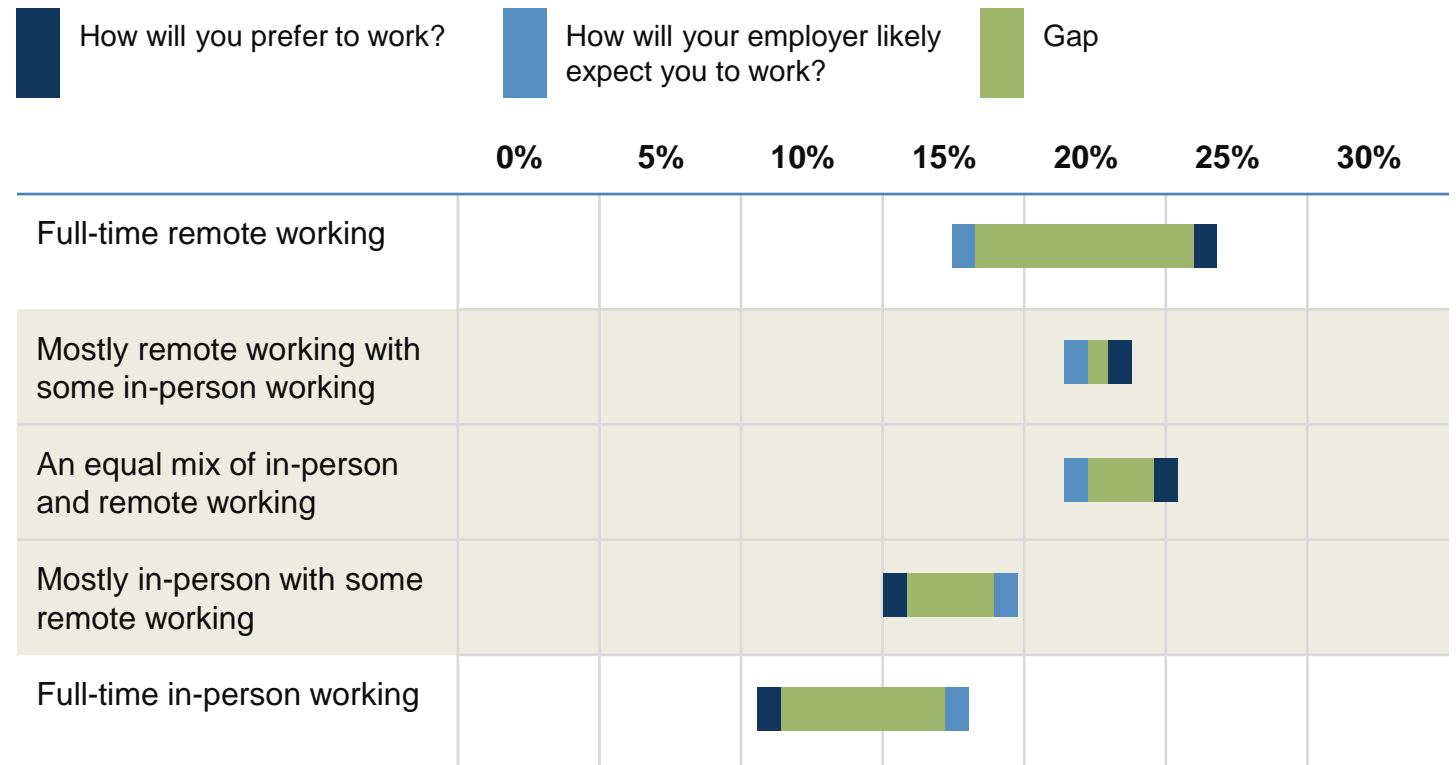
Per PwC's 2022 Hopes and Fears Survey:

Employees who said they're extremely or very likely to look for another job are less likely to:

- find their job fulfilling
- feel they can be their true self at work
- feel fairly rewarded financially
- feel their team cares about them
- feel that their manager listens to them

Flexibility makes hybrid work models succeed

Expectations for their current job roles 12 months from now

Legend:
- How will you prefer to work? (dark blue)
- How will your employer likely expect you to work? (light blue)
- Gap (green)

Chart (horizontal axis 0% to 30%):

Work model	Data
Full-time remote working	employer ~15%, gap to ~25% preferred
Mostly remote working with some in-person working	~18% range, small gap
An equal mix of in-person and remote working	~18–20% range, small gap
Mostly in-person with some remote working	preferred ~13%, gap to employer ~17%
Full-time in-person working	preferred ~10%, gap to employer ~14%

Why is hybrid work the right thing to do?

Many business leaders remain skeptical about the effectiveness of hybrid working and will require employees back in the office full time.

A hybrid working model is critical to attracting a diverse workforce, including three groups in particular, driving innovation and growth:

Women who are primary caregivers	People with varying health needs	People facing economic housing limitations
• Attracting and retaining women with caregiving responsibilities has always been an issue	• Commuting as a barrier to many millions of people with some form of disability	• Even prior to pandemic, a steady increase in the length of commutes due to affordability issues in the neighborhoods around the offices
• Exacerbated by the pandemic when millions left the US workforce due to school/childcare closures	• Remote working can be an enabler to integrate into the organization and contribute more easily	• Many workers effectively excluded because they cannot afford to live within reasonable commuting distance
• Many women express strong desire for flexible working arrangements to help balance childcare and commuting	• Not all disabilities are physical: 18% of Americans has a diagnosed anxiety disorder and a daily commute may be a challenge for them, esp. if relying on public transportation	• This creates hiring obstacles for workers especially from racially/ethnically diverse communities
• The hybrid work model supports the needs of working women by removing or mitigating challenges that are career and/or quality of life impediments	• While contemporary workplaces often cater to neurodiversity (access to quieter/private spaces), many spaces are still challenging to those with heightened sensitivities	• A hybrid work model allows for less frequent and more tolerable commutes

Let's level set: what is hybrid work?

Hybrid work is a flexible work model that supports a blend of in-office, remote, and on-the-go workers. It offers employees the autonomy to choose to work wherever and however they are most productive. (Webex)

Hybrid work is a flexible working model where employees work partly in the physical workplace, and partly remotely – at home or from another workspace. (Qualtrics)

Hybrid work describes when people work together, both online and in person, at any time from anywhere—at home, remotely, or from an office. (Microsoft)

Hybrid work describes a work model where employees are expected to attend the office at least one day per week while being permitted to work from a location other than the office some of the time.

Hybrid work models vary; for example, offering employees the individual choice or orchestration or scheduling of days in the office for an entire organization or team.

Hybrid work can sometimes refer to space, as in "hybrid workplace," which describes an office that is able to support interactions that successfully include in-person and remote employees.

(Gartner)

If you allow hybrid work, how many days in the office do you mandate per week, if any?

a) 1
b) 2
c) 3
d) 4
e) Other
f) 0 (We do not mandate any days in the office)

How to implement hybrid work?

What do you need to think about to set up the hybrid work right for your team?

Assess where and how work can be done

Set up a team plan

Establish a hybrid meeting etiquette

Provide manager training

Watch out for proximity bias

Don't forget about health and well-being

Assess where and how work can be done

Six Cs Framework by PwC

Each "C" can be mapped to give you an idea of space needs.

Collaboration
Brainstorming ideas, developing plans, and solving problems with colleagues.

Community
Socializing with team members, building community, nurturing relationships

Commitment
Making decisions and committing to actions, inspiring others to act

Communication
Sharing information, giving status updates, answering or following up with clients.

Coaching
Developing employees, providing feedback, motivating others

Creation
Time spent "heads down" crafting content, driving analysis, doing research

We need to think of **offices as tools** as we would of any digital tools that will enable us to do remote work. And if we think of offices as tools, we think of them as tools for collaboration purposes, and innovation purposes, we go there when we are about to do some ideation or some creative work, not just to do the things we would normally do from home.

To treat the office as a tool and **not as a destination** is a **mindset shift** that's going to be really helpful in using the space in a way that's productive for all.

To go into the office to stare at a screen all day the way you would at home is not helpful. In fact, **people resent that.**"
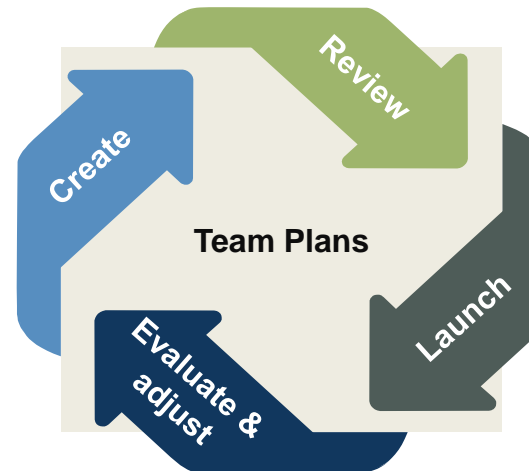
Prof. Tsedal Neely, Harvard Business School*

* Ignatius, Adi. "Tsedal Neely on Why We Need to Think of the Office as a Tool, with Very Specific Uses". *Harvard Business Review*, 14 January 2022, https://hbr.org/2022/01/tsedal-neeley-on-why-we-need-to-think-of-the-office-as-a-tool-with-very-specific-uses

Set up of a team plan

Managers can create, implement and adapt a team plan to address the strategic goals, team needs, and worker experience factors

Create

- Identify key milestones and strategic activities for which the team would benefit from in-office interaction
- Identify and incorporate technology solutions to support the engagement and inclusion of all team members in daily communications, meetings and team activities
- Create team-level guidelines for rotating opportunities and supporting team (e.g., scheduling individual weekly check-ins)
- Solicit ideas for the plan from team members to create a sense of ownership

Review

- Connect with your direct senior leader to review your plan and solicit feedback
- Iterate as necessary

Launch

- Highlight the development process to emphasize inclusion
- Determine where your team plan will 'live' and what the process will be to keep it fresh
- Reiterate that there is no one-size-fits-all solution

Team Plans

Create → Review → Launch → Evaluate & adjust

Evaluate & adjust

- Periodically review your plan with your team and adjust as necessary
- Establish feedback loops (pulse checks)

Empower managers to bring the hybrid work model to life by building a team plan that considers the following key elements

- Understand your team's space needs based on work performed
- Understand what your team needs to be successful
- Determine what flexibility looks like for your team
- Determine how technology can support your team

11

Establish a hybrid meeting etiquette

Physical attendees

- **Repeat questions/comments** from the in-person audience so that virtual attendees can stay engaged.
- In person team members are critical for **capturing follow-ups** or other forms of 'water cooler talk' that virtual attendees/facilitators cannot hear or participate in.
- An "in person" participant can **login as if they were attending the meeting remotely**. It helps to have someone who is in the physical room monitoring any connectivity or audio issues that might occur.

Virtual attendees

- Virtual attendees should have **cameras on to increase engagement**.
- Use the **raise hand feature** to ask questions or clarifications.
- **State your name** at the start of every session to give everyone a chance to be heard.

Facilitators (virtual or physical)

- Be **strategic** about **microphone/ camera placement** so that virtual attendees can hear and see as much as possible.
- **Schedule breaks!** Virtual attendees will need to time for lunch/bio breaks etc. If camera fatigue is a concern for longer meetings, schedule 'camera-on' energizers throughout the session.
- Confirm at least 1 team member is in the room to **assess body language** and social cues. This is especially important if the facilitator is virtual.

Provide manager training – sample topics

Prepare managers to continue leading with integrity, accountability, inclusion and clarity in the hybrid workplace

Adapting to change

Supporting Your Team Through Change

How to support your team as they move through the universal stages of change. Includes various resources proven to effectively aid the transition.

Mental Health and Self Care

Tools to empower leaders with the importance of an emotionally healthy workforce. Making the business case for self-care and its impact on retention and higher levels of engagement.

Make Technology Work for You

Tips on how to use digital tools and apps (Outlook, Teams, Google Chat, Zoom etc.), to communicate availability, location of work, etc., to create a healthy and productive life/work integration

Leading with integrity

Effective Listening

Leading practices that encourage active listening techniques in different work environments.

Being an Inclusive Leader

Insights on how to lead/work with others who have differing circumstances/abilities/ perspectives/backgrounds/genders, etc.

The Art of Effective Feedback

Formal and informal feedback; leader to individual contributor and peer to peer. Virtual observation/ feedback.

Lead with Flexibility

How to flex your leadership style - identifying what level of support and direction is needed, accounting for hybrid team dynamics

Working together

Inclusive Collaboration

How do I interact and collaborate with team members in a global, inclusive workforce from an empathic, professional, hybrid working environment.

Meeting Etiquette Leading Practices

Sequenced one-page tips and reminders for meetings in a virtual/hybrid world (before, during and after)

Creating a Culture of Accountability

Scenario-based. What does accountability look like in a hybrid world? (May leverage "5 Behaviors of a Cohesive Team")

Watch out for proximity or distance bias

When some are working remotely while others are in the office, it's important to mitigate our brain's natural tendency to put more importance in things and people that are closer to us than farther away*

If you are a manager	If you are a team leader or team member	Build team culture and relationships virtually
• Be **deliberate** about **forming relationships** equally with all your direct reports, no matter how often they are in the office. For example, hold virtual coffee chats with reports working often remotely to create a personal connection. • Consider **all your direct reports** when assigning projects or promotions. Pick the most effective or talented person for the job, not just the closest in proximity. • If you have questions about a project or a business issue, **go to the "right" person** to get the answer instead of going to the closest person.	• **Enable virtual attendees** to participate equally in team meetings. • Insist on **using video** conferencing software so everyone has a virtual seat at the table. • **Proactively invite remote** people into the discussion. Leverage virtual whiteboarding software so everyone can contribute to a brainstorming session. • Be aware of **time zone differences** and equally share the pain of early morning or late-night meetings.	• Be **overly communicative** about your team's roles, goals, and values. • Make sure your workers can participate in **social activities remotely** even if the activity is scheduled to be in person (provide a virtual meeting link and monitor engagement if possible). • **Jump start relationships** by getting together in person when the team is initially forming.

Don't forget about health and well-being!

Organizations can focus on **creating safe spaces for mental health discussions** and shared guidance on how to activate available mental and emotional support resources to help their people when they need it most.

Prioritize

- Mental health as a consistent, company-wide town hall agenda topic
- Well-being continuously highlighted in comms strategy
- Well-being is a leadership skill that is formally developed
- Well-being questions as part of your global employee survey

Support

- Cash incentives to take PTO
- Free access to premium apps
- Tele-therapy through medical plans and apps
- Well-being coaching sessions
- Incentivized well-being rewards platform
- Caregiver sabbatical (20% pay + benefits, up to 6 months [leave of absence)

Educate

- Collaborate with internal and external specialists experts (webcasts, trainings)
- Story sharing/citizen-led conversations
- Well-being coaching sessions
- Published toolkits, guidance and resources

Empower

- Encouraging your people to share their authentic stories
- Encouraging regular 1:1 check-in calls with peers and leaders
- Online virtual communities plus local support groups
- Everyday flexibility and more support for formal options such as reduced schedule, compressed work weeks, leaves of absence, etc.

Health and Well-being

Thank you

Appendix

Sample template for team plan

Populate specific actions and behaviors needed to enable team success. Refresh team plan quarterly, as needed.

Team elements/makeup	Manager Name/Sign-off	Sr. Leadership Name/Signoff

• Consider factors such as:
  – BU/Group
  – # of Team Members
  – Team geography
  – Team sentiment		

	1 Collaboration	**2 Community**	**3 Commitment**	**4 Communication**	**5 Coaching**	**6 Creation**
Standards & Guidelines*	• Problem-solving methods • Directions & expectations on working hours	• Social events norms and best practices - in-person, virtual, and hybrid • Focus on employee well-being	• Team feedback forum • Proactive leadership outreach • Modeling leading practices	• Use of chat, email, and video • Efficient meeting guidelines (e.g. agenda, minutes, attendance)	• Revised hybrid training policies and credits • Virtual performance appraisal and feedback guidelines	• Leading practices on developing, saving, and distributing material in-office vs. home
Routines*	• Standing team meetings (e.g. daily, weekly) • Problem solving sessions with real-time collaborative tools (e.g. whiteboards)	• 5 mins of meeting to share personal story • "Day in the office" • Celebrating success virtually	• Virtual leadership town-halls • Standing leadership communication times	• Team meeting cadences • Project team engagement • Client engagement	• Regular feedback sessions (monthly 1:1) • Hybrid training and development	• Product access and storage rules, version control • Feedback sessions and regular reviews
Tools & Technology*	• Collaboration tools and suites	• Video conferencing tools	• Video conferencing and live chat tools	• Consistent/standard use of chat, email, call and video conferencing tools	• Virtual and interactive training tools	• Individual tools and software • Cloud-sharing tools • Collaboration tools

* Illustrative examples of Standards, Guidelines, Routines, Tools and Technology

Sample template for team plan

Team success – Use the space below to turn your strategy into action

#	Action	Owner	Participants	Method/Tech	Date
1	*Example: Host team lunch and learn once a quarter*	*Team member*	*All team members*	*Leverage MS surface Hub to connect virtual and in-office team members*	*4/25/2023*
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					