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**Freedom within a Framework:
A framework for shaping the hybrid Way of Working**

May 2022¹

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¹ With many thanks Rob Middendorp for reviewing

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Introduction

All over the world, many employees have worked from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the Netherlands with a working population of 9.7 million people (CBS, 2021), there were approximately 4 million employees working from home during this period. The expectations are that those employees want to or have to continue to (partially) work from home after the pandemic (NSVP, 2021; Kanne et al., 2021). For instance, recent research of the Adecco Group among 15,000 employees showed that globally 53% of the employees want a hybrid working model (Constantin, 2021). This is the result of our experiences during COVID-19 pandemic, which have influenced the way we view work, both from an organizational perspective and an employee perspective. To clarify, employees have shown that they can productively work from home (Awanda, Lucas, Becerik-Gerber, & Roll, 2021) which has led to the realization of employers that the amount of office space can be reduced (Boland, De Smet, Palter, & Sanghvi, 2020; Strielkowski et al., 2021) and that traveling costs can be saved. At the same time, employees have experienced that they can save commuting time (Boland et al., 2020), which in turn leads to more time for family and friends. Moving forward both as organizations and individual employees, we cannot undo ourselves from the experiences of the past years. Although finding a balance between work and life demands was challenging for most employees when they had to work from home due to COVID-19 measures (Galanti et al., 2021), both these employees and their employers have also experienced the benefits from working from home. This has led to an outspoken need to revise the way of working post-pandemic, or in other words: organizations need to navigate what to keep from the way of working before the pandemic and what to integrate as lessons learned during the pandemic and move forward. Although some employers may have thought that in the after-pandemic phase, we would all return to work as before the pandemic, organizations are now

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becoming more and more aware how demands and expectations of their employees have changed because of employees' experiences during the pandemic. Such demands and expectations are based on a combination of the benefits of working from home and at the same time the benefits of working in the office. In parallel, employers themselves have also experienced the (financial) benefits and challenges of the working from home during the pandemic. This results in a situation where both organizations and employees are searching for a way to reshape the way of working together for the period after the pandemic, reshape into a hybrid way of working.

HR plays a prominent role in the discussion on shaping the work and employment systems in the organization and is faced with the challenge of aligning the changing organizational and employee needs. Various authors have described the historic evolution of the HR role in organizations, moving from a transactional starting point towards a contribution that is aimed more at contributing to the on-going processes of innovation and change that characterize modern organization. Such a transformational role of HR is mentioned for example by Lepak, Bartol & Ehrhardt (2005) and Ulrich & Dulebohn (2015). In the current timeframe, facilitating a transition towards hybrid ways of working is a clear example of such a transformation contribution of the HR role.

Notwithstanding that HR professionals have an important role to play in the discussion of shaping the hybrid, we need to be aware that many HR-professionals have been heavily involved in the crisis response during the pandemic for their organization, which primarily focused on providing the right information regarding the COVID-19 measures and enabling employees to work from home by facilitating employees with the right tools (Roy, 2021). At the current, more progressed stage of the pandemic, where we seem to be entering a post-Covid stage, there is now more time and space to rethink the way of working from a sustainable perspective, as HR

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progresses from a survival mode to a development mode. Despite the fact that this so-called survival mode was new for HR-professionals, this development phase is even more new, exciting and challenging. And the major question that is now showing on the horizon is how to shape the hybrid way of working.

To answer this question, we have created a collaboration between Tilburg University, Veldhoen + Company and HR practitioners from several companies². We believe that alone you can go faster but together you can come further. Our starting point was a shared need for insights into the challenges that organizations face while shaping the future way of working, in order to strengthen the role of HR professionals in leading this discussion within organizations. HR-professionals have had an important role during the pandemic; however, their role is going to be even more important in the post-pandemic phase (Anjum et al., 2022). During three roundtables, HR professionals shared issues, opportunities and challenges they faced while leading conversations on the future ways of working in their organizations.

The main aim of this paper is to present a framework that organizations, and HR professionals in specific, can use while leading the conversations to shape their hybrid ways of working, aimed at aligning organizational and employee needs. What follows is a general framework was needed, which can be used to start and guide the conversation about the future way of working within organizations. It is clear that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for shaping the future way of working. Therefore, our goal is to provide a conceptual framework to get the future

² We would like to give special thanks to the OUTPUT Board and Veldhoen + Company for collaboratively organizing an online meeting on ‘the role of HR in the future way of working’ and all Tilburg University HRS alumni that attended this meeting. In addition, we would like to thank all HRS alumni that were involved with the focus groups that evolved from this meeting. Your openness during the focus groups, as well as your involvement with the development of our model, was inspiring and formed the starting point of this paper.

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way of working conversation started. Within this framework, there is also the necessary freedom to reach an optimal solution within almost all organizations.

Before we go to the framework, we briefly summarize the challenges that HR professionals face in shaping the hybrid ways of working in order to understand what type of guidance a conceptual framework should provide. Next, the framework is presented, and all its constituent parts are introduced one by one. We conclude with a summary of the main take away messages and discuss some of the main implications for practice.

Hybrid Way of Working and the associated challenges for the HR profession

We started with the given knowledge that we may expect employees to work from home more often after the pandemic (NSVP, 2021; Kanne et al., 2021). During the pandemic employees were forced to work-from-home if this was feasible given their function (Hasteer, 2020). Even though employees have struggled in the beginning of the pandemic, employees became used to working from home and some of these employees found out that working from home is not that bad and they even started liking it (Anjun, et al., 2022). However, at the same time many employees have experienced that the workday has become virtualized and that there is a need for social and physical contact to some extent, resulting in diverging needs of employees to work from home or from the office (Van Veldhoven & Van Gelder 2021). Thus, employees have experienced both the benefits of working at the office and working from home and in the ideal situation they want to have the freedom to find a combination of working from home and working at the office to create a win-win situation for themselves.

Not only have employees potentially changed their mind regarding working from home, but organizations have also changed their views on working from home as well. Pre-pandemic

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organizations focused on enabling employees to be mobile (e.g., by facilitating lease cars) and working from home was the exception. Because of the COVID-19 measures, organizations had to deal with a situation where, if possible, employees worked from home. As a result, organizations have seen the benefits of employees working from home for instance reduced traveling costs that should be paid, and less office space is needed meaning a major cost saving.

As both employees and organizations have experienced the benefits of a working-from-home policy, there is a need to reshape the way of working. Therefore, organizations are looking into new ways of working, referring to a situation where work will be partially executed from home and partially from the office (i.e., hybrid working). While zooming in on the concept of hybrid working, the HR professionals in our roundtables outlined different elements or areas of hybrid working. After a discussion on what the future way of working is, we described **the hybrid way of working** as “executing work duties partially at the office and partially at another location outside the office, which can be at home or any other location”³. In this sense, hybrid working is seen as the new way of working, as it may be beneficial for the employer in terms of reducing costs and increasing productivity. For employees, hybrid working is expected to be beneficial as it results in less commuting and more freedom to execute your work duties when- and wherever you prefer. Shaping the future way of working means a new work culture, new policies, new communication styles, and new rules and regulations. Thus, HR professionals face all kinds of challenges while shaping the hybrid way of working, not to mention that they also have to consider the changed needs of employees. The renewed way of working poses a huge challenge for organizations on how to shape this future way of working, while addressing different perspectives

³ In research we define this way of working as Telework and ICT-based mobile work (TICTM) see Eurofound 2020

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and their associated challenges. During the roundtables we started with identifying the challenges that organizations and HR-professionals are facing.

The first challenge that was addressed by the HR practitioners, is the tension between accommodating blue-collar work (i.e., production work) and white-collar work (i.e., knowledge work). In our roundtables, the HR practitioners indicated that it felt unfair to focus primarily on white collar workers. In order to understand why our paper and conceptual framework mainly focus on white collar workers, we zoom in on our responsibility as HR professionals. From that viewpoint, HR is responsible for both the health and well-being of employees. In other words, we have to take care of our employees. For blue collar workers, the attention of health and well-being is focused on physical safety. For white collar workers, the attention of health and well-being is currently focused primarily on physical safety (i.e., regulations for desk heights, chairs, light, etc.), but should now also be focused more on supporting mental tasks or mental safety. Accommodating health and well-being of blue-collar workers is something that organizations have paid attention to more extensively within the past, as it is regulated within laws and regulations. For white-collar workers, however, the swift change to remote work on such a large scale makes attention for mental safety more relevant than before. The high level of virtualization, the fact that employees move less, and have a high mental pressure, poses a big concern for white-collar workers (Guler, Guler, Gulec, & Ozdoglar, (2021). That is the reason that we dedicate explicit attention to knowledge workers and facilitate the conversation on what the future way of working should look like for these workers. This does not mean that our model can only be applied on white collar workers. We strongly believe that certain elements also apply for blue collar workers.

Secondly, the HR professionals indicated a challenge relating to the question on how employers can keep employees engaged and increase their sense of belonging to their organization,

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when working digitally all across the globe. Thirdly, the HR professionals indicate that they face the challenge on how to shape the future way of working in an inclusive way. What happens, for instance, when we cannot offer all employees the liberty to work from home, due to constraints related to their job content? How can we optimally take into account individual differences in shaping the future way of working in a fair way?. And fourthly, HR professionals face the challenge of managing external factors that continue to impact and shape the way of working within our organization. The answers to each of these challenges and their related questions may differ for different employers, yet they share the fact that they require employers to balance the needs of individuals, teams, organizations and their respective contexts. This is why we believe the starting point for addressing these challenges and questions should be a constructive conversation within the organization, with explicit attention to its context. Therefore, the goal of this paper and our conceptual model is to empower HR professionals to address these questions by starting a constructive dialogue on hybrid working within their organization. In Table 1, we share an overview of the questions related to these challenges that HR professionals are currently facing and will continue to face in the future.

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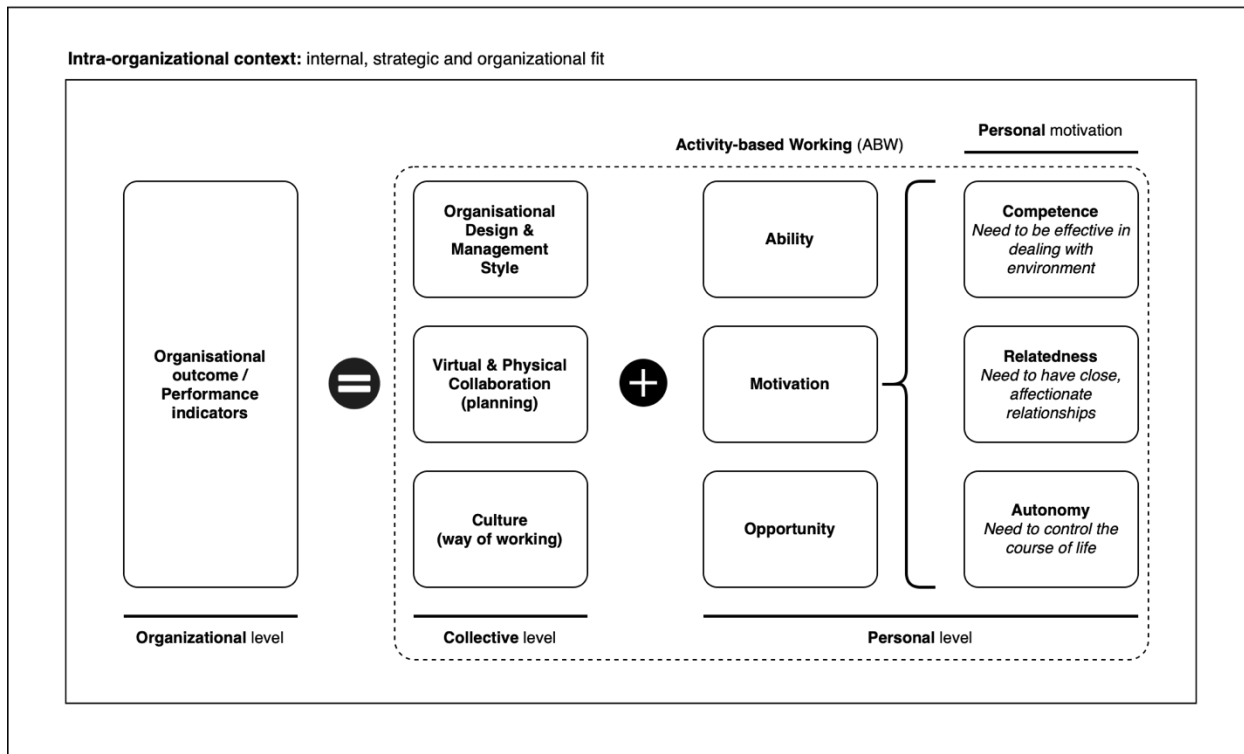
Table 1. Challenges that HR professionals face in shaping the hybrid way of work.
Organizational context: It seems impossible to come up with a new way of working for both blue- and white-collar workers at the same time. How are we going to do that?
On a collective level: How do we ensure (local) embedding within the organization of this new way of working?
On a collective level: How do we facilitate an inclusive climate in the future of work?
On a collective level: How can we find a balance between working from home and virtual collaborations? Who is responsible and who will make these decisions?
On a collective level: What type of leaders do we need in the future?
On an individual level: How do we ensure that the future way of working is also successful in the long run?

Now that we have reviewed the challenges of shaping hybrid working for the HR profession, we can move on to presenting a framework (Figure 1) that includes the elements that need consideration from the HR profession, while aiming to shape hybrid work. At the core of the framework, HR needs to pay attention to both collective and individual factors in the organization in order to achieve positive organizational outcomes. These two elements need to be aligned in a sophisticated way, and "activity-based hybrid working" is proposed as an operationalization of how to achieve this. Finally, the shaping of hybrid ways of working needs to be placed into the wider intra-organizational and environmental context. We will now address each of these elements one by one.

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Figure 1 – Conceptual model for shaping the hybrid way of working (Way of Working Canvas)

Environmental context: sectoral, institutional and cultural fit



The framework for Shaping the hybrid Way of Working

Organizations are organized with a view to an outcome or to deliver a particular performance. Every organization is different and so are employees and their personal needs and preferences. Based on a survey data from Parry and colleagues (2021) 12 percent do not want to work from home at all, 75 percent of the respondents want to work partly remote and partly at the office, and 13 percent want to work fully from home. The same pattern in preferences is found by Back and Hensher (2020) respectively 20% of the workers is not willing to work from home, 58% want to work from home to some extent, and 23% want to work fully at home (>5 days). This makes shaping the future way of working a big challenge. In order to organize and facilitate hybrid

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working, there need to be some rules and regulations or to put it differently organizations have to decide what kind of hybrid working culture they want to facilitate.

In order to do so, organizations should start with outlining their preferred **organizational outcomes or performance indicators** a hybrid working culture should contribute to the overall success of the organization. We see that most organizations are nowadays focusing on shaping hybrid ways of working as a goal itself. However, we want to emphasize that shaping the hybrid way of working is the means to an end, which is organizational success. When organizational outcomes or performance indicators are clearly formulated organizations can start considering factors at both the collective and individual level. Those factors will be discussed more elaborately below.

Collective level

At the collective level, organizational goals are facilitated by strategy execution outcomes in terms of organizational design and management style (coordination), successful collaboration in the organization (planning elements), and the organizational culture (way of working; Levenson, 2019), all essential for organizational success. Firstly, *organizational design and management style* (i.e., coordination within the organization). This refers to the formal structure of the organization and the lateral structures and processes needed to get the work done. The organizational design and management style has an impact on achieving outcomes because it touches upon topics like the allocation of decision rights or the operation of an autonomous team (Buchanan, 1994; Mueller, Procter, & Buchana, 2000; Sherman & Schultz, 1999). Next to this, *collaboration* is key as work has to be executed which consists of a specific workflow and interdependencies among the different roles to achieve an outcome. The shift toward working remotely hit this modus operandi of collaboration, because the in-person collaboration was

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replaced by virtual collaboration. Due to this sudden change, the planning of collaboration is a key factor that needs to be considered in the discussion on the future way of working. Lastly, the *organizational culture* is relevant to consider because group norms about how the work gets done and which makes each organization unique. Furthermore, the underlying group dynamics play an important role in collaboration and achieving outcomes. Renewed norms and thereby, a renewed organizational culture, are essential factors in shaping the future way of working.

Personal level

At the personal level, an individual's performance and well-being is determined by three factors: ability, motivation and opportunity. In the so-called AMO-theory, Appelbaum and colleagues (2000) explain that employees need to have the *ability* (i.e., skills and knowledge), *motivation* (i.e., willingness) and *opportunity* (i.e., compatibility with organizational systems) to contribute to organizational goals, in order to achieve performance. These three elements arise in the way we shape hybrid working as well. Employees may determine where to work, based on where they are most capable, willing or able to perform. Resulting from this, organizations need to find a way to optimally balance these personal level factors.

In particular, the motivational aspect of the AMO-framework is important to pay attention to while shaping the future way of working, as this reflects the willingness of employees, which organizations obviously want to optimize. To illustrate, you may recognize that some employees are highly willing to get to the office whenever needed to execute their tasks, whereas others may make more calculated decisions and may feel less willingness to travel to the office, with a perfectly good home office at hand to perform well. Deci and Ryan (1991) have introduced the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as a framework for explaining individual level motivation, which explains that an individual's motivation stems from three basic psychological needs: *the*

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need for autonomy, the need for competence and the need for belongingness. You may recognize these needs in the way we balance our needs to work from home or from the office. When you experience a strong need for autonomy, you would be most motivated to work in an environment that allows you the autonomy to determine your own work hours and workplace. For instance, you may want to work from home and start at 10 AM, because you want to head to the gym before work. Furthermore, we strive to feel competent at our jobs and strive for a way of working, which most facilitates our competencies (e.g., a three-screen desk at the office may be preferred over a laptop at the dinner table at home). Lastly, we strive to feel like we belong to the group of people we work with. After spending some time remote working, you may recognize a need to reconnect with your colleagues by a digital call or by meeting up in the office. Besides the fact that these factors matter for individual employees, these factors are highly relevant for organizations to consider, as they directly influence the motivation of employees to perform. Therefore, we believe that in shaping the future way of working, the key personal level factors to consider are ability, motivation (based on the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness) and opportunity.

Aligning personal and collective level factors: activity-based hybrid working

Within the organization and job design literature, fit is an important concept, as a good fit is assumed to lead to individual and organizational performance. Fit refers to the alignment of two or more factors within the organization. In organizational literature, several types of fit are defined. In this section we describe the person-organization fit, which can be seen within our conceptual model as the fit between the collective (organization) and personal level (person), resulting in outcomes at the organizational level.

Person-organization fit refers to the degree of fit between the values of an individual employee and organizational values, or in other words the match between what individual

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employees want in an organization (Chatman, 1989). In more detail a match between the person (employee) and the organization is realized when an organization is in the position to fulfill employee's needs, desires, and preferences (Kristof, 1996). In our model we have described the personal level as a shortlist of what employees want, outlining their underlying motivational needs (need for competence, autonomy and relatedness), and the abilities employees and opportunities employees have within an organization. On the other hand, this should be set out against the values of an organization, which we describe as the coordination (organizational design and management style), planning (collaboration – virtual vs physical), and the culture within an organization. The basic idea is that individuals 'search' for organizations to fulfill their needs, desires, and preferences and that, if an organization does not offer this, employees will leave the organization. Therefore, organizations should optimize this person-organizational fit, in our model represented as a fit between the collective and personal level.

Applying this to the new way of working, we see that during COVID-19, we went from a low pace workspace (face-to-face) to a high pace workspace (virtual). We experienced both advantages and disadvantages of working from home and employees may have new motivational factors that drive our performance and well-being resulting in a call for agility from the employee, which differs per individual and may also differ over time. Thus, employees' needs, desires, and preferences (personal level factors) have changed because of the COVID-19 situation. However, on the other hand organizations are looking for predictability and stability in their way of working. This brings the discussion on the table on the need for stability from the organizational side versus the need for agility from the employee side. Therefore, organizations should pay attention to recreate a fit between stability and agility although this is a big challenge.

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In the end, business results are achieved by achieving team performance, which is achieved when employees are performing well. This means that to achieve business results, employee needs should be satisfied to facilitate optimal functioning. So far, most organizations agree upon this statement and look into details on how to facilitate their employees. During the pandemic we have experienced that for some tasks we prefer to work from home to have a better focus and for other tasks it is more preferred to work at the office. Thus, organizations have to organize work based on activities, called activity-based working. Facilitating activity-based working aimed at facilitating employees to function optimally, we have to understand the different types of work activities and their according characteristics (see Figure 1).

Work activities can on a higher level be classified into activities that need *a deep focus*, meaning work activities require concentration, focus, and attention or in activities that require a *wide focus* referring to activities which require less concentration, focus, and attention. Getting disturbed by colleagues is fine in wide focus activities, whereas this is undesired for deep focus activities.

Furthermore, work activities can be classified in terms of the *degree of collaboration*. When work duties require collaboration with others, referring to synchronous activities, it requires coordination, consultation, brainstorming, and decision making for which face-to-face meetings are more preferred than online meetings. While work activities that are executed by an individual employee, referring to an asynchronous work activity, does not require personal contact at the same time. Collaboration still can be the case asynchronous (i.e., using email or instant messaging).

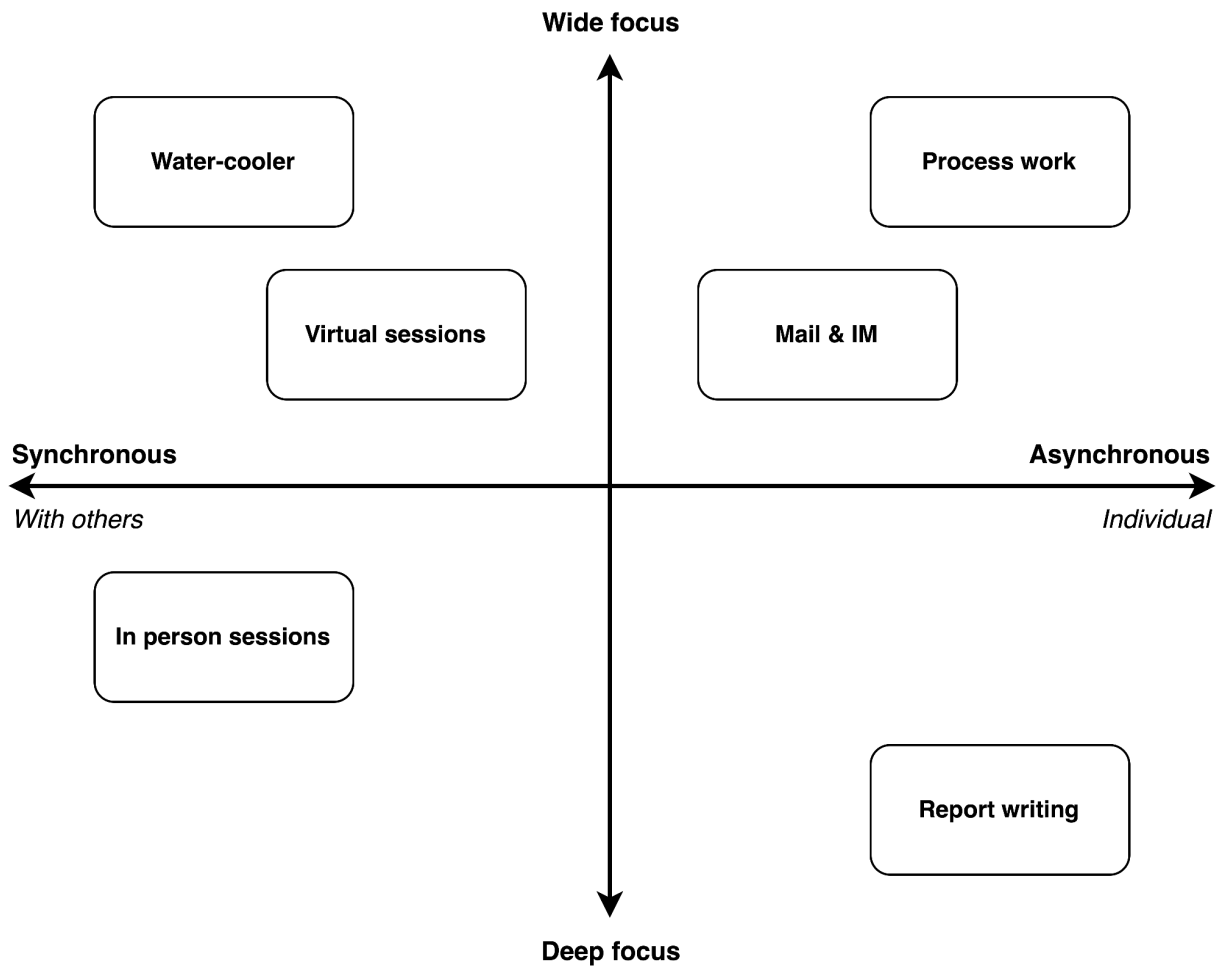
Respecting the characteristics of activities can bridge employee and organizational needs by focusing on what is needed to perform optimally. Overall, this means that based on the characteristics of activities (i.e., deep focus vs. wide focus, synchronous vs. asynchronous)

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determines employees preferred working space. Let's describe the four different quadrants in more detail. First, tasks with a wide focus that should be executed with others can take place virtually or at the watercooler, this could be activities like providing informal updates regarding a project, checking in formally by a colleague whether everything is under control. Second, activities that are done with others but that require a deep focus should take place in person. These are for example strategy meetings in which personal contact is preferred. Third, work activities could also require a deep focus, but those activities can be executed on your own, for instance writing a report or preparing a presentation. Last, there are tasks that we can do solely and require a wide focus like checking your email. Based on this classification organizations and managers should understand what an employee or team needs to execute those different activities.

Using those quadrants to classify work activities, will help to answer questions like where, when, what, how and who to execute tasks. At the same time, this framework will help to understand why some employees prefer to and can work from home more often compared to other employees. Aiming at facilitating a work environment where employees can perform at their personal best, this classification asks for a differentiated approach.

Figure 2 – Activity based working



Intra-organizational and environmental context

Next to the person-organization fit, other fits contribute to organizational performance: respectively internal, organizational, and strategic fit, all described by Wood (1999). First, *internal fit* refers to the alignment between HR practices. HR practices can blend together, in other words the impact of a combination of HR practices can be greater than the impact of the pay-off of those individual practices combined thus 1 + 1 can become 3. In order to achieve this synergy between

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HR practices, organizations should focus on the alignment between HR practices. For instance, training and development focused on group functioning and team performance in combination with a reward system focused on individual performance will blend less and will thus be less successful in terms of organizational performance than the combination of training and development and a reward system both focused on team performance.

The *organizational fit* refers to the degree that HRM practices are aligned with the business strategy in general. As we continue to be impacted by hybrid working, business strategies are adapted. When embracing hybrid working within the business strategy, we engage in a rigorous system change, which requires HR managers to adapt certain HRM practices to align with this strategy. For instance, in hybrid working, the traditional performance management systems are no longer viable and need to change. Performance needs to be evaluated with more attention to output instead of process and the related HRM practices need to be adapted accordingly. As an example, training needs to align with the renewed knowledge, skill and ability needs of the business strategy, by training managers to evaluate output-related performance.

The *strategic fit* refers to the degree that the HR strategy is integrated in the business strategy, so whether it is an official part of the business strategy. If this is the case it is assumed that more attention will be paid on the aims and goals formulated in the HR strategy compared to situations where the HR strategy is not part or is only a small part of the business strategy.

All factors described above are intra organizational factors, which means that those factors play a role *within* the organization. Still, the environmental context also influences the way organizations operate as for instance rules and regulations determine and influence the way organizations (must) organize work. In Wood's model (1999) this is described as the *external fit* referring to the alignment between the organization and external contextual factors. The underlying

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argumentation can be traced back to the institutional theory stating organizations should be financially successful but next they should pay attention to the legitimacy to survive (e.g., Boon et al., 2009). Gaining and sustaining legitimacy in the environment is important on different levels respectively sector level, institutional level, national and cultural level.

First on a *sector level*, organizations are well aware of their pool of talent and where to find it. In some cases, organizations even move their location physically in order to get access to their pool of talent. The option of working from home impacts the level playing field on a sectoral level. Due to the absence of geographical limitations organizations have access to a bigger pool of talent. This also works the other way around. Employees have access to a bigger market and profit arbitrage advantage.

Second on an *institutional level*, organizations have to follow rules and regulations determined by all kinds of institutions. This means that organizations have to deal with both pressure from competitors and from institutions, leading to decisions on how to differentiate in order to survive and compete. At the same time, rules and regulations result in similarities between organizations, since all organizations have to follow similar laws and regulations. In short, it is important to find a fit between an organizational strategy and the rules and regulations that the organization has to abide by. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic the Dutch governance decided to require employees to work from home if possible. This means that organizations have to follow these instructions even though their original plan could be to work from home only twice a week.

Third and lastly, organizations have to consider their national and *cultural context* as (implicit) rules and regulations might differ between countries and cultures. On the one hand, labor

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laws differ in each country, which could influence the way organizations have to operate. On the other hand, cultural etiquettes and practices could differ and are thus important to take into account.

Discussion and conclusion

We have reviewed the various challenges that HR professionals face in shaping the hybrid way of working, and next we presented a framework that captures the essential elements that need to be addressed when aiming to shape how the organization is going to arrange hybrid working. We propose that the optimal way to move forward towards hybrid working is to engage in a constructive conversation, in which balancing the needs of both the individual and collective are key, while using an activity-based approach, and while considering the contextual factors that matter for this new mode of work and employment.

On the individual level, we strive to address questions such as: ‘How do we balance the distribution of workload (i.e., ability and competence)?’, ‘Do we have clear rules of engagement (i.e., level of autonomy)?’, ‘And how do we maintain the connectedness with the organization (i.e., relatedness)?’. While formulating the answers to these questions however, organizations need to strive for an appropriate fit with relevant factors at the organizational level, considering the need for organizational stability. Organizations have to ask relevant questions with different angles related to their HR and business strategy. From an operational point of view, questions related to planning are relevant such as: ‘How do we distribute activities in time (i.e., operational level, relating to planning)?’. From a tactical angle, organizations have to ask themselves questions related to organizational design like: ‘How do we distribute our activities in space?’. From a strategic point of view, organizations can ask questions related to their culture such as: ‘What are the fundamental values that we have moving forward, and what is needed to maintain these over

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time ?'. The key factor in addressing these questions is finding a fit between the individual and organizational needs and preferences. In order to achieve this, we propose organizations consider activity-based working by classifying work activities based on their required focus and required (absence of) collaboration. Using the four quadrants that are proposed in this study, organizations can answer questions like where, when, what, how and who to execute tasks. Aiming at facilitating a work environment where employees can perform at their personal best, this classification asks for a differentiated approach.

To determine the level of differentiation we state that in particular the identification of needs should be done on a team level in which the manager plays an important role. A manager's main responsibility is to ensure that individual employees are able to perform optimally and, at the same time, that team performance is optimized. In addition, a manager can identify which elements level are needed on the collective level to facilitate employees or teams while complying operational, tactical, and strategic considerations as described above.

In addition, we state that the organization should ensure that the intra-organizational context fit is taken into account. For a good internal fit, organizations should check whether the facilitation of hybrid working practices is a coherent set of HR practices. Moreover, organizations should ensure that the future way of working-HR practices are aligned with the overall business strategy, referring to the organizational fit. For the strategic fit, organizations can integrate the HR approach for hybrid working into the business strategy to create for instance competitive advantage by differentiating yourself as an organization from other competitors by the way you organize hybrid working. At the same time, there are restrictions as organizations have to conform themselves to factors in the environmental context. There are simply unscripted rules at the sectoral

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level, laws and regulations that refer to the institutional context, and simply norms, values and manners determined by the culture in a country or region that organizations must adhere to.

Our model for shaping the future of HR has several important implications for practice. First, both organizations and HR professionals can use this framework as a starting point to identify needs and preferences at the individual, team, and organizational factor. Second, identifying work tasks based on the quadrants will help to clarify and group the needs of individual employees and can be used as a general guideline indicating why a differentiated approach is required. Third, we stimulate organizations to take into account the broader context (i.e., intra-organizational and external context) preventing them from tunnel vision. Lastly, this framework will help to start the conversation about the future way of working and stimulate employees, managers, HR professionals and organizations to see hybrid work not only as an end, but also as means to an end (e.g., achieve organizational outcomes, performance outcomes, and well-being outcomes).

Overall, we hope that, although many elements apply also for blue-collar workers, we have created more awareness for taking care of the mental health of white-collar workers by providing a framework aimed at organizing the future way of working. And remember: There is no one-size-fits-all solution: our goal is to get the conversation started!

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