



**SIRVA**<sup>®</sup> Worldwide  
Commercial Moving

## The Workplace of the Future

*How work-from-home hybrid offices and a more mobile workforce could affect mobility strategy as the physical and digital workplace of the future evolves.*

**This white paper addresses the impact  
of the following points on mobility strategy:**

- ▶ Transformational Change .....2
- ▶ The Evolving Hybrid Workplace .....3
- ▶ Optimizing Office Space .....6
- ▶ Culture and Purpose .....9





## Transformational Change



Adaptability has always been a hallmark of thriving companies, and 2020's unique challenges are driving change in organizations worldwide, including the way we use and view our workplaces. Though remote work was already increasing before the COVID-19 pandemic, it's now ubiquitous in the corporate world and will have lasting effects on workforce mobility in the workplace of the future.

As we'll demonstrate in this white paper, in the near future a hybrid workplace model — with a workweek that includes both work from home and in-office days — will emerge as a balance of both worlds for some employees and employers; flexible scheduling, high productivity and in-office team collaborations will combine for optimal results.

The rapid shift to remote work has revealed, in many cases, an employee preference for the flexibility and life balance that working from home provides. But the forced pivot has also required corporate mobility professionals to quickly adapt remobilization plans to meet shifting employer organizational challenges and goals as well as adjust employee communication and culture requirements.

A variety of competing forces and trends will influence workplace mobility in the coming decade, creating lasting effects on the workplace that can't yet be predicted with accuracy. In [PWC.com's \*Workforce of the future: the competing forces shaping 2030\*](#), trends reshaping society and the world of work include, among others, technological breakthroughs, potential shifts in global economic power, resource scarcity and climate change.

## The Evolving Hybrid Workplace

The abrupt pivot to work from home amid a pandemic required swift and revolutionary changes to how most corporate offices work. Yet COVID-19 just hastened an already evolving trend toward the flexibility of remote working for all businesses, making it economically essential.

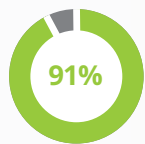
However, after months of purely remote operations, employees and employers alike began missing key benefits provided by a physical office, such as a greater sense of stability, access to resources, company culture, and in-person collaboration. Following that realization, blended schedules of working from home a few days a week and traveling to the office for a couple of days a week are gaining in popularity.

A [Stanford survey](#) indicated that 55% of U.S. workers want a mixture of home and office working. [In the U.K.](#), the percentage of employees who work from home is expected to double from 18% pre-pandemic to 37% post-pandemic, and in China, employment experts expect to end up with a 60/40 split of in-office and remote work.

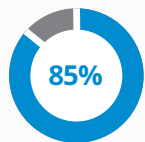
## Digital is Here to Stay

As employees worldwide begin returning to the office part-time and with staggered schedules, the benefits of adapting to a digital world remain clear. Consider the stats in Figure 1:

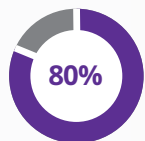
FIGURE 1



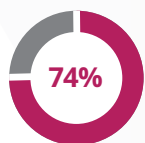
**91%** of global organizations now support work from home, up from 63% before the outbreak.



**85%** of businesses believe greater location flexibility has led to an increase in productivity.



**80%** said that when faced with two similar employment offers, they would turn down the one that didn't offer flexible working.



**74%** of CFOs intend to shift some employees to remote work permanently.

Sources: [Poly's Hybrid Working: Creating the "Next Normal" in Work Practices, Spaces and Culture](#) and [The International Workplace Group Global Workspace Survey](#)

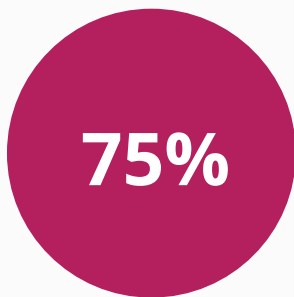
Employees embracing the hybrid model are mobile, connected, can work anywhere and continue to collaborate and be productive no matter their location.

In the Forbes article [\*It's Official: The Future of Work Is Distributed\*](#), author Hovhannes Avoyan writes, "Leaders need to stop thinking of the workplace as a physical space that is occupied during office hours. A glance across the digital landscape reveals how we all now reside in an always connected environment. Employees now connect to virtual office environments to collaborate, communicate and connect with their colleagues, irrespective of geographical locations."

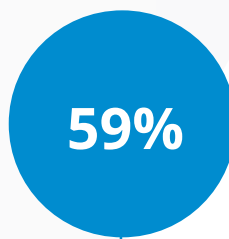
### Uncertainty Complicates Planning

The continuing COVID-19 impact on global and domestic operations creates uncertainty for most organizations, including in mobility planning, initiating employee relocations, and workforce management, according to the [\*SIRVA Q4 2021 Mobility Outlook Survey Results\*](#).

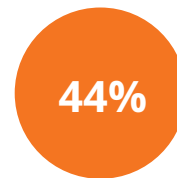
SIRVA recently surveyed 162 global organizations regarding the potential impacts of COVID-19 on 2021 mobility volumes and relocation support packages. The survey gathered insights about the pandemic's impact on move volumes, business segments and alternative relocation types (e.g., virtual assignments). The survey results include:



Unsure what percentage of the traditional mobile employee population would be affected if a work-from-home program was implemented in lieu of physical relocation



Unsure if their organization will implement a work-from-home program in lieu of physical relocation for some or all of employee population in 2021



Unsure who will be responsible for the cost if a work-from-home employee receives relocation benefits

## Adapting to a Digital-First Mindset

If more workplaces commit to a hybrid model in the near term, mobility providers will have to adapt their resources and options to meet those new demands and evolving expectations.



That likely will mean expanding their portfolio of services to include support for remote workers and a more extensive geographic territory. For those mobility providers with a Commercial Services division, it could also mean assisting with the delivery and retrieval of company property in remote locations and digital onboarding and offboarding of employees. The days of highly clustered employees may be gone.

Such a major shift will come with complications beyond the mere need for innovative technology. Organizations will benefit from the guidance of experienced mobility providers that will help to address these complications and changes efficiently.

For companies working on a remobilization strategy as countries move to reopen, the webinar [Remobilizing a Global Workforce](#) can help outline practical guidelines and best practices. Key takeaways include:

- Strategies to align mobility program structure with organizational changes and operating adjustments
- Considerations to help evaluate readiness to remobilize
- Guidelines and best practices to design a strategy

## Measuring Success

Each company will evaluate how success will be measured, whether through assessment of employee retention and recruiting, HR and IT expenses, overall company productivity, or bottom-line results.

Technology and the resulting ability to collect data allows for this assessment. It also allows employees, remote or on-site, to manage their mobility needs in a cost- and quality-controlled model with global direct-delivery options. Localized service and purchasing are fading as companies expand and define their global footprint.

Relocation management companies will be required to meet the above needs in the face of change and technology will be a significant differentiator; for example, SIRVA has technology solutions that are already in place to help organizations offer digital-first mobility solutions that keep the needs of impacted individuals in mind. Decision-makers are encouraged to contact us at [conciierge@sirva.com](mailto:conciierge@sirva.com) to learn more about how our many platforms and programs can provide mobility solutions, or contact [commercialmoving@sirva.com](mailto:commercialmoving@sirva.com) regarding CommercialConnect™, which enables real-time, fully-automated order placement, tracking, inventory control, and invoicing to provide customers with a 100% touchless program for their commercial needs.

## Optimizing Office Space

As companies rethink the organization of offices and headquarters, HR leaders need to evaluate the impact of each work trend on their organization’s operational and strategic goals, according to the Gartner article [9 Future of Work Trends Post-COVID-19](#). One of the points the article focuses on is an expected increase in organizational complexity.

“After the global financial crisis, global M&A activity accelerated, and many companies were nationalized to avoid failure. As the pandemic subsides, there will be a similar acceleration of M&A and nationalization of companies,” the article notes. “Companies will focus on expanding their geographic diversification and investment in secondary markets to mitigate and manage risk in times of disruption. This rise in complexity of size and organizational management will create challenges for leaders as operating models evolve.”

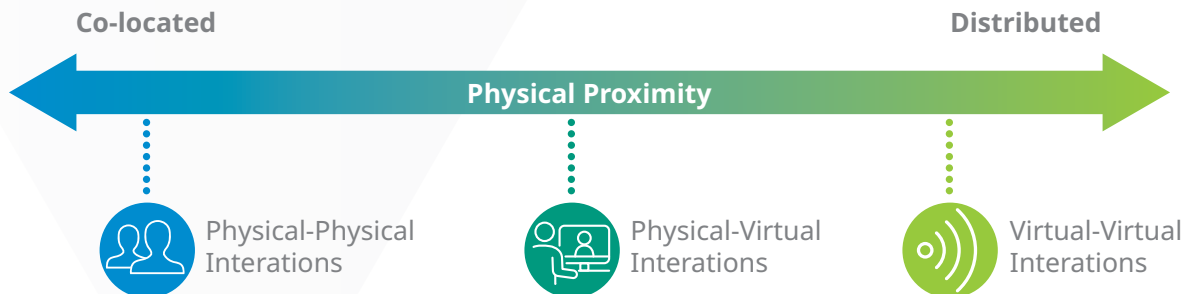
## How and Where We Work

Adding to that larger shift is a new vision of where work gets done, with “organizations today appearing to have an unprecedented window of opportunity to shape what ultimately becomes the future of work,” according to the Deloitte Insights report [What is the future of work? Redefining work, workforces, and workplaces](#).

While work once required people to collaborate in person in an office environment, digital communication, collaboration platforms and changes in society and the marketplace have set the stage for more distributed teams.

According to the same Deloitte Insights report, “Organizations are now able to orchestrate a range of options as they reimagine workplaces, from more traditional co-located workplaces to those that are completely distributed and dependent on virtual interactions.” See Figure 2.

FIGURE 2  
**Workplaces Are Also Shifting**



Source: Deloitte Analysis

## Coworking Spaces and Satellite Offices

Along with rethinking working patterns and encouraging better collaboration through technology, another key to developing a hybrid workplace is optimizing investment of office space.

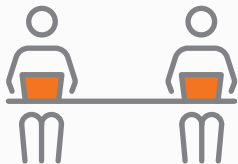
According to [Poly's Hybrid Working report](#), that means re-evaluating underutilized office spaces that can drive up real estate costs and offer little return on investment. Per the report, companies should “prioritize investment beyond the office walls to create flexible, collaborative, technology-enabled personal workspaces anywhere.”

FIGURE 3  
**3 Ways that Hybrid Workspaces Will Evolve**



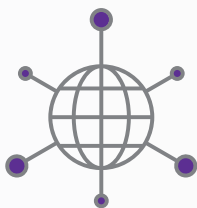
### Enterprise Home Set-Ups

As home working is embraced in the long-term, employees' makeshift set-ups will become more professional home working spaces with the enterprise-grade technology that they need to work effectively.



### Co-Working Spaces

Co-working spaces allow remote and flexible employees to work alongside other people without ties to a specific desk or location. These spaces can deliver better choice, flexibility, and offer a more cost-effective way for businesses to operate.



### Satellite Offices

There's an obvious benefit to ridding the P&L of overheads by shutting or downscaling office space. Rather than using large, city center offices, businesses will look to smaller “satellite” offices dispersed across more locations.

That can include coworking spaces, defined as arrangements in which workers from different companies share an office space, which were already expected to increase more than 40% worldwide before 2020's COVID-19 lockdown, as shown above. Workplace hubs at the edge of cities allow group collaboration and social connections with colleagues and others, leading to cross-fertilization of ideas, with resulting innovation.

Another trend that could contribute to decentralized high-density office spaces is an increase in satellite offices. [Research from Gartner](#) shows 13% of CFOs have already made cost reductions in real estate. Rather than using large, city center offices, businesses will look to smaller “satellite” offices across more locations.



## Fit for Remobilization

According to the SIRVA blog post [Global Workforce Remobilization During COVID-19](#), key considerations before making remobilization decisions to a more distributed or hybrid workforce include:



Evaluating the need for increased employee support



Adapting technology and enhancing the employee experience



Weighing shifts in mobility program and relocation service priorities



Establishing data collection procedures on how to measure effects of rapid change during relocation



Considering immigration and travel implications



Re-evaluating insurance and health care coverage

Mobility policies and processes should be adapted once decisions are made regarding the above considerations. For additional resources for COVID-19 or other crises or disasters, see [Playbook for Mobility Management During Crises and Disasters](#).

“Long gone are the physical office locations and structured work environments of the ‘90s and early 2000s,” says John Anderson, SIRVA’s Vice President of Commercial Development. “The workplace must be both functional and culturally supportive to the whole employee experience.”

As a result, quality mobility providers must know how to handle 30-foot conference tables and physical office locations as well as sit/stand desks, foosball and pool tables, Anderson says. Companies that are myopically focused on only commercial moving may lack the skills to handle these items that have, until recently, been confined more to the household moving market.

These services must be available at a global level, as localized procurement strategies require an exponential number of vendors and can cost companies up to 50% more to manage than a proper global, single-sourced program.

## Culture and Purpose

Changing the physical workplace should not be seen as simply an opportunity to increase efficiency or reduce real estate costs. As teams become more distributed, organizations will need to rethink how they foster both company culture and team connections. Both bottom-line [business performance](#) and [innovation](#) are inextricably linked to workplace culture.

Deloitte's article [What is the future of work?](#) notes that for employers, this suggests a need for more strategic focus on creating connections and community as workplaces become more virtual.

## Culture and Communication

The more things change, the more company culture matters, so it should be a leadership priority. Workplace shifts will affect an organization's culture of mobility and talent recruiting in addition to the company's overall potential for innovation and bottom-line results.

"People will want to work for leaders who inspire their purpose — enabling them to be the best they can be," says Stephane Charbonnier, Chief Human Resources Officer at L'Oréal USA, in the Unily report [Future of the Workplace 2030+](#). Key points from the report:

- While culture can't be engineered, it is essential for organizations to provide the framework, the ground rules and, most importantly, their vision — a purpose beyond profit and productivity.
- Integrate culture into digital operations. Make the most of technology. With dispersed workforces, virtual collaboration can be more inclusive if done correctly.
- Digital and physical workplaces must be aligned and transparent so that communications are clear and consistent and both employee and employer see the benefits.

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**"An institution with a positive culture that is in sync with its vision will make better decisions, faster."**

—*Seth Godin*, Author and Marketing & Business Expert

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FIGURE 4  
**Future of the Workplace 2030+ | The Evolutions of Culture**



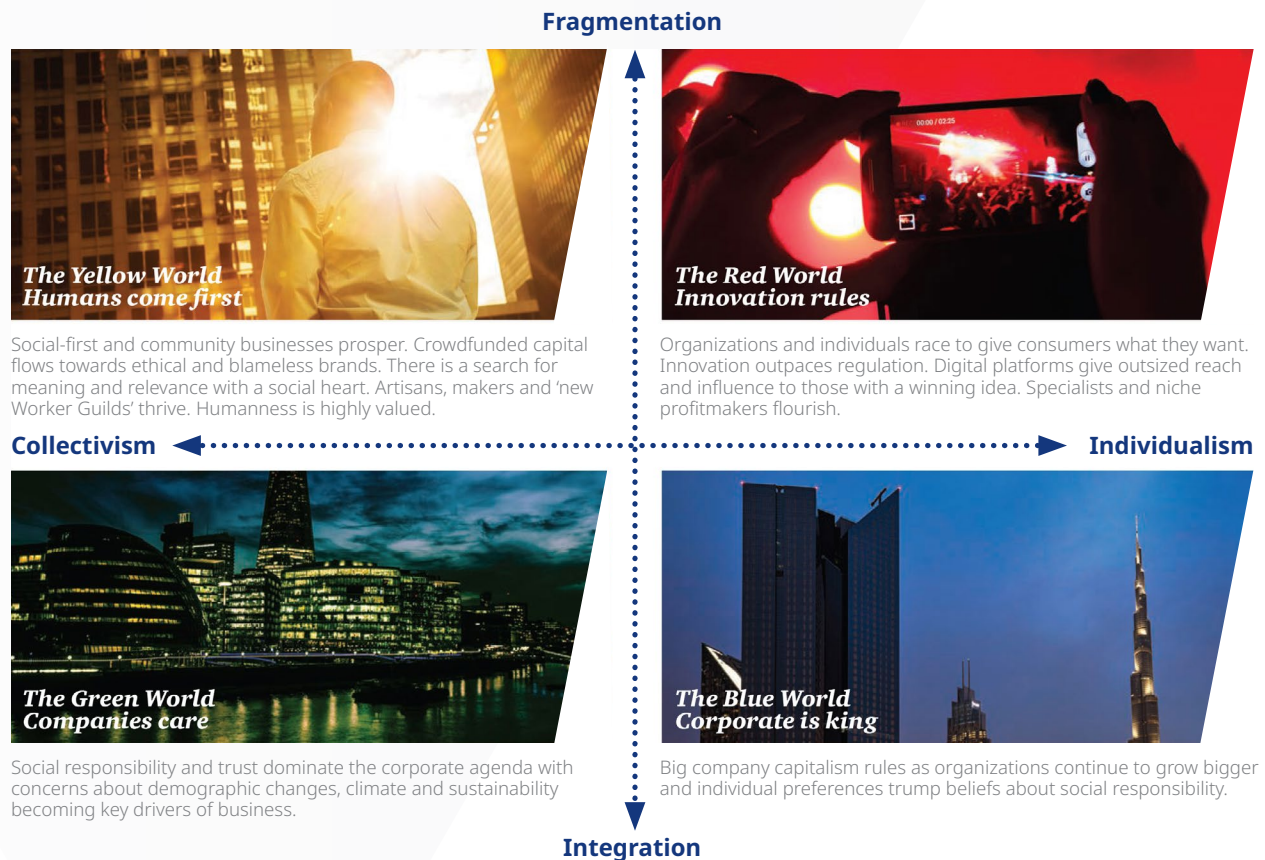
Source: The Unily Report

## Competing Forces for the Workplace of the Future

Though current trends can allow planning for the near future, organizations shouldn't take forecasts too literally. Leaders will need to remain flexible and open to optional cultural scenarios as the workplace continues to evolve in the next decade.

Returning to *PWC.com's Workforce of the Future: The Competing Forces Shaping 2030*, dominant forces that could shift the outcome include a question of what comes first: people, the environment, innovation, or capitalism and profits?

FIGURE 5  
**The Four Worlds of Work in 2030**



Source: <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/services/people-organisation/workforce-of-the-future/workforce-of-the-future-the-competing-forces-shaping-2030-pwc.pdf>

## Global Responsibility and Sustainability



Future-focused organizations realize that it is good for business — and talent recruiting and retention — to focus on doing good in the world. It is relevant to ask: How can we be better, more sustainable, and fairer?

In the previously mentioned PWC.com [Green World](#) scenario, workers and consumers show loyalty toward organizations that do right by their employees and the wider world.

This developing trend indicates a widening of purpose from “profit for shareholders” to consideration of stakeholder needs and global responsibility and sustainability.

Social responsibility is already going mainstream. Consider [energy industry trends](#) as an example:

- In 2019, the world financed \$282 billion of renewable capacity, with onshore and offshore wind leading the way at \$138 billion followed by solar at \$131 billion.
- New electric generating capacity in 2020 will come primarily from wind (44%) and solar (32%).
- Wind and solar are set to contribute 48% of generation by 2050.
- China is aiming to reach 28.2% renewable energy in 2020.

The Fast Company article, [10 ways purposeful business will evolve in 2020](#), notes that one key reason for activation of purpose is the war for talent. People of all generations want to [work for more than a paycheck](#).

Organizations that link purpose to their employer brand strategy will attract and retain the strongest talent.

### How Will Your Workplace of the Future Look?

Competing forces are at work. But many envision a workplace of the future that spans multiple smaller, less city-centered physical locations in combination with the continued embrace of flexible work-from-home schedules. These transformational changes could have a lasting effect on corporate mobility strategy, talent recruitment and retention, as well as company culture.



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## About SIRVA, Inc.

SIRVA Worldwide Relocation and Moving is a global leader in moving and relocation services, offering solutions for mobility programs to companies of every size. With 75 owned locations and more than 1,000 franchised and agent locations in 177 countries, we offer unmatched global breadth supported by localized attention and innovative technology that strikes the right balance of self service and human support. From relocation to household goods and commercial moving and storage, our portfolio of Brands (SIRVA, Team Relocations, Allied, northAmerican, & SMARTBOX) provides the only integrated moving/relocation solution in the industry. By leveraging our global network, we deliver a superior experience that only a “one-stop shop” can provide.

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