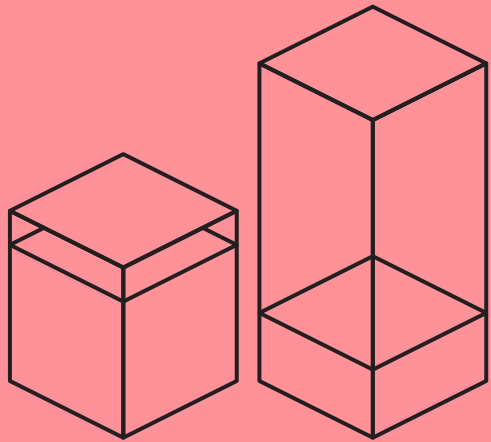# Hybrid working: managing a dynamic office occupancy

Make flexible use of your office and avoid strong peaks and gaps

Foreword

After working from home, hybrid working is becoming the new normal: there is hardly a business around that is not considering this workspace concept. Hybrid working, if implemented properly, offers major advantages. This way, you can save tens of per cent on property and energy costs, among other things. However, implementation also involves various challenges. One of the main ones: how can you reduce as much office space as possible and at the same time prevent your office from being overcrowded?

As we will explain, this can be achieved by spreading staff dynamically throughout the week, using smart office tools.

In this white paper, we will first explain the role of the office in the post-COVID era, why it is necessary to create the ultimate office experience and how both hybrid and activity-based working are rising from the ashes of the COVID crisis.

We will then zoom in on dynamic staff distribution: how do you avoid a situation in which everyone works at home on Monday and comes to the office on Thursday? We explain how this can be achieved using smart office tools such as an office capacity calculator, an admin portal for analytics and the ability to book desks, meeting rooms and shifts in the office.

After providing tips on how to achieve the ideal dynamic occupancy, we conclude with an explanation of how to optimize your office using data.

After reading this, you will understand exactly what the challenges of hybrid working are and which tools can help you to reap all the benefits of this working concept.

Dive in and enjoy.

Sander Schutte
CEO of Mapiq

Contents

The office: the driving force behind your business growth

For a long time, the office was the only place where people could carry out their work, because all technology was location-specific. The corona crisis – the biggest working-from-home experiment ever – showed that we can also be productive at home. Yet there are hardly any organizations that will be switching to 100% remote working once the pandemic is over. The future of the office is hybrid, as businesses are indicating en masse.

Hybrid is also the future. This is because the office is the place to:

Work	
Meet	
Learn	
Mentor	
Be inspired	

This means that the best decisions are made in the office, and that is why we build the corporate culture there.

Research by McKinsey has also shown that a lot of activities are much more effective when they do not take place remotely, but face to face. This can include mentoring, building relationships with customers and colleagues, negotiating, making crucial decisions and all activities relating to innovation, problem solving and creativity.

COVID has thus by no means made the office redundant. Instead, it must be given a central role in your strategy to achieve business growth.

The ultimate office experience

At the kitchen table or a desk in the children's room, in a co-working space or coffee shop: we now know that employees can work anywhere. So they need to have good reasons to come to the office. Of course, you can force them to come to the office for x number of days a week, but it is much better to entice them with the ultimate office experience.

How do you do that? For example, the office must facilitate collaboration by making it easy for you to locate colleagues and book meeting rooms when you need them. Are there no fixed workspaces? Then you need to be able to book desks, meeting rooms and shifts at the office quickly and simply. Finally, the office should also inspire. In order to meet all these requirements, you need smart office technology.

Are you investing in the ultimate office experience? This will pay off in reduced operation cost, increased employee wellbeing, improved staff turnover, better cooperation, higher productivity and beating your competitors in the war for talent.

Meet the smart office

A smart office is a flexible, high-tech working environment where technology supports employees to work smarter, better and faster. This smart ecosystem consists of a number of technologies that connect users to the building and the existing IT infrastructure.

In a smart office, aspects that have traditionally been separated - such as parking, access management, facility management, Wi-Fi, lighting and audio-video - work together flawlessly. Wi-Fi and sensors are used to collect data and give users real-time feedback.

These enable employees to - for example - book available desks and meeting rooms that suit their activities, locate colleagues and control the light and temperature.

Organizations benefit from having a smart office by improving efficiency. Data insights give management an understanding of how employees use their office, so they can reduce underutilized space and balance their office occupancy over time.

Trending work models

Successful implementation of hybrid working, in which employees work at the office for a number of days and at home for a number of days, is currently a hot topic and the main concern of many organizations. A suitable way to structure hybrid working is through activity-based working. Initially, implementing these work concepts requires time, effort and investment, but in the long run, they bring significant savings in, among other things, real estate and facility costs in return.

Inspired by the current revolutionary changes in the office world, Studio Banana has come up with four purposes of the office for hybrid working:

1
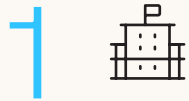
The flagship store

Employees come here with colleagues to have fun and come up with ideas for new projects. Compare this to a real-life flagship store: nowadays you can order everything online, but in a flagship store you experience things that you cannot experience on your smartphone or laptop.

2

The Grand Bazaar

A place full of inspiration and excitement, with a touch of chaos where necessary. As in the bazaars of Istanbul and Cairo, transactions are central to this model. Employees come to the office to exchange knowledge, work together and build things with others. This type of workspace has all the necessary tools, technologies and facilities that people do not have at home.

3

The school

This model posits the working environment as a school and employees as pupils. The work experience is primarily a learning experience. According to this view, employees are not only compensated in the form of salary, but also in terms of intellectual progress.

4

The spa

In the spa model, which focuses on the well-being of employees, most work is done at home. When do you visit a spa? When you are exhausted and want to recharge your batteries. In the past, you went home to relax after a long day at the office, but in the spa model, this is exactly the opposite. Employees go to the office to relax, socialize and connect with colleagues.

Hybrid working: the best of both worlds

Soon after the outbreak of the pandemic, it became clear that many companies would be moving towards hybrid working – and implementations are now under way or have even been completed. The hybrid model brings together the best of two worlds.

At home (or in a co-working space, coffee bar or wherever) employees can focus optimally and save on travel time, while the office is the perfect place for working together and meeting both colleagues and business contacts.

A study by the Boston Consulting Group revealed that some 40 per cent of businesses indicated that at least one-third of employees will work remotely after corona. Deutsche Bank, for example, wants employees to work from home two days a week, and Facebook has even said that half of its staff will work remotely in the next decade.

Introducing hybrid working has many implications. Among other things, it calls for a new office design (which is more focused on working together and coming together) and a different management method. A tricky point – and the raison d'être of this white paper – is that you cannot simply get rid of office space. This is because that leads to a risk of overcrowding and a growing resistance to hybrid work as a new work concept.

But it also offers great opportunities. First, you can minimize office space without affecting productivity or the office experience of employees. This is high on the list of priorities of many managers: a survey by McKinsey, for example, shows that companies want to reduce their office space by about 30 per cent on average. Do you want to scrap the right square meters? Then you must be able to make decisions based on data from smart office technology.

In fact, productivity can actually increase through hybrid working. This is because people are encouraged to take more responsibility. And because they are not being micromanaged, they become more confident, independent and decisive in their activities.

The five flavors of hybrid

What kind of hybrid organization do you want to be? If you are planning to embrace hybrid working, there are five flavors to choose from. Which flavor you go for has consequences for real estate and recruitment, for example.

● Standard
● Optional

1

The office as standard
The classic workspace concept: (almost) all employees work four or more days a week at the office. Working from home is sometimes possible, on an individual basis. We often see this flavor among businesses that have a lot of face-to-face contact with customers or whose management believes that productivity is highest when there is a physical presence.

2

Local hybrid
With the local hybrid option, people work two to four days a week at the office. Everyone is allowed to work from home a few days a week, except people with jobs that are considered essential to the office (such as receptionists). Some businesses have rules, for example, that everyone must be at the office at least one day a week.
This approach – currently the most popular – is particularly suitable for organizations that believe that personal collaboration is essential for productivity and/or company culture, but also want to give employees the freedom to work in different places.

3 Remote-friendly

Employees work zero to four days at the office, and the guidelines may vary by business or department. Again, everyone is allowed to work from home, except for essential office-based jobs. The office is primarily designed for cooperation. The difference between local hybrid and remote-friendly is mainly in the recruitment policy. Local hybrid businesses hire mainly local people, while remote-friendly organizations are open to applicants from all over the world. Remote-friendly is mainly chosen by businesses that see hybrid as a weapon in the war for talent, but still want to offer opportunities to work together face to face at the office.
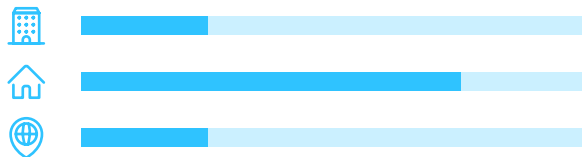
4 Remote first

With remote first, working at the office is completely optional; working from home is the default mode. There are no geographical restrictions on hiring talent. This flavor is mainly chosen by businesses who believe that they can be just as productive when everyone is working remotely, but still want to keep an office for things such as personal collaborations, company events or physical storage. Many remote-first businesses are massively scaling down their office space or moving to smaller satellite offices without headquarters. There is no minimum number of office days, but sometimes there is a maximum number due to the limited office space.
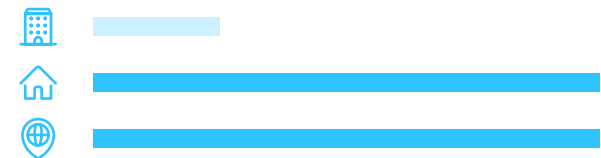
5 Fully distributed

Businesses that have implemented fully distributed working no longer have an office at all. Employees can work wherever they want, always. This flavor is most often seen in tech companies. A well-known example is Automattic, which makes the website software WordPress.
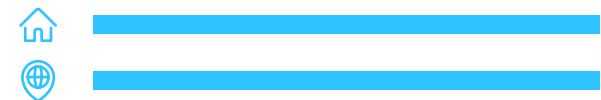
Activity-based working in a hybrid model

Activity-based working (ABW), which has been around since the 1980s, has seen a huge surge in popularity due to the massive switch to hybrid working. This working concept assumes that activities such as focusing, working together, phoning and socializing all place different demands on our working environment.

Within ABW, employees have no fixed workspaces, but are given the freedom and flexibility to decide for themselves where to carry out their activities. Brainstorming and collaboration can take place in meeting rooms, socializing in social areas, making phone calls in call booths and focusing at desks or in quiet rooms.

ABW is a suitable way to realize hybrid working. Because you have no fixed workspaces, you can avoid empty desks, scale down office space considerably and thus save tens of percent in real estate and facility costs. In addition, productivity can increase. Are employees working in a place that is precisely tailored to their activities?


This improves motivation, creativity, concentration, commitment and cooperation.

It is a bit of an open door, but an ABW environment is most suitable for jobs with varied activities. After all, if someone is sitting at a desk all day, ABW adds nothing. On the other hand, consultants, managers and people with creative jobs – all of whom alternate working together with PC work – benefit the most from ABW.

No matter what roles people have, the following advantage always applies. Do people no longer have a fixed workspace? This will bring about a cultural change: it is no longer automatically assumed that you are not working if you are anywhere other than at your desk. And if people are more mobile within the office, this promotes cooperation and information flows more freely through your organization.

Hybrid challenges: spreading your office occupancy
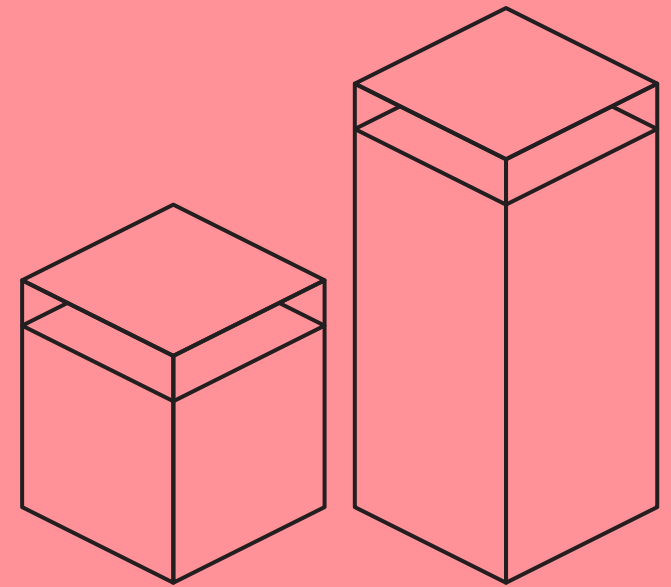
Businesses that decide to switch to hybrid working and scale down office space quickly come across a number of stumbling blocks. How do you manage office occupancy when you have fewer workspaces than employees? And how do you prevent everyone from working at home on Monday and coming to the office on Thursday?

This is where dynamic planning of office occupancy comes into play. This concept involves anticipating flexible use of the office and business growth by spreading the presence of employees at the office as much as possible throughout the week. This not only prevents people from being unable to find a place to work, but also avoids unnecessarily high property, facility and energy costs due to inefficient use of the office.

Prior to COVID-19, most businesses had a reactive rather than a proactive approach to their office occupancy. Decisions on workspace changes were usually directly related to the fact that there would be more or fewer employees present. The hybrid revolution rather demands a more dynamic approach, with smart office tools playing a key role.
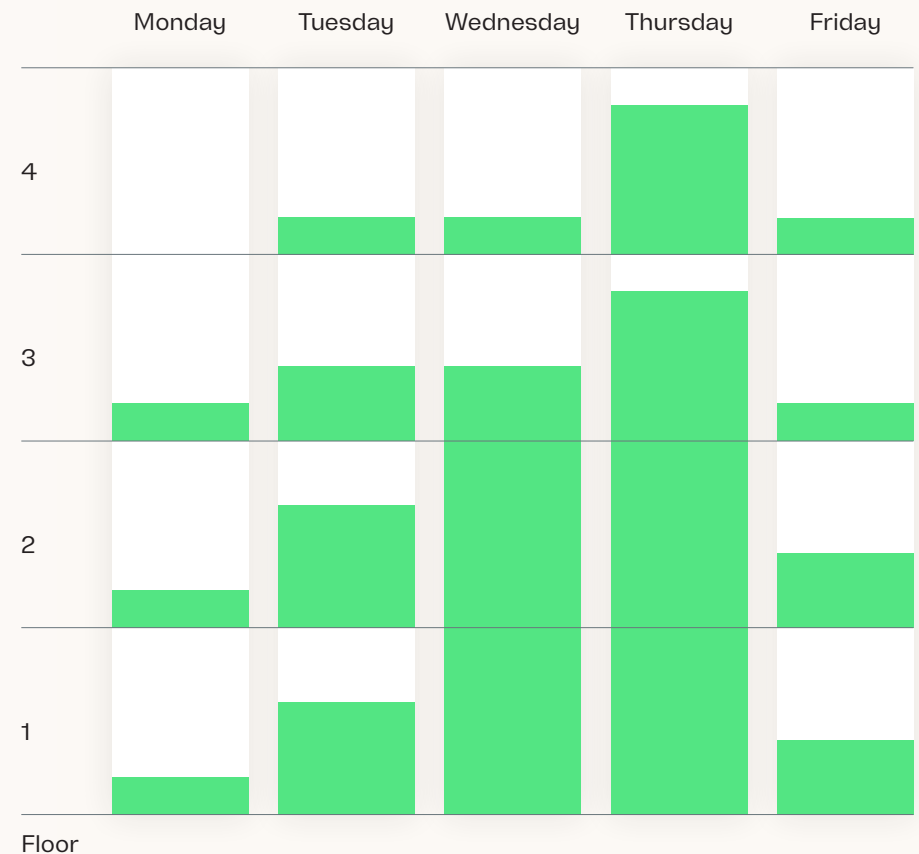
**If traditional models of
office occupancy are used**

Anticipating a dynamic office occupancy

What is the biggest challenge of the switch to hybrid working? For most organizations, it involves finding the right balance between using as little office space as possible while still offering employees the best office experience.

It may seem a simple and obvious solution to create daily attendance lists. In practice, however, such a system does not work. Last-minute cancellations undermine efficiency and are detrimental to the autonomy and flexibility of employees. Moreover, because the threshold for coming to the office is raised, fewer spontaneous meetings take place.

Do you assign fixed workspaces based on shifts? Then you are also ignoring the fact that people perform different activities and often move around within the office. A fixed workspace is never optimal for all activities, and people meet fewer colleagues from outside their own department.

Dynamic office occupancy management in a smart office, offers a way out. Giving employees control over their work environment makes it easier for management to anticipate their needs. Through a smart office app, employees can book shifts, workspaces and meeting rooms themselves, based on real-time availability.

As a result, vacant workspaces remain limited and no-shows are a problem of the past. But before you introduce any tools, you need to have a workplace concept in place that is designed around flexible use of your office. Let's take a look into the best options.

Workplace concepts for efficient, hybrid working

Desk hoteling versus hot desking

There are basically two workspace concepts that enable hybrid working and efficient use of the office space: hot desking and hoteling. Both have their advantages and disadvantages.

Hot desking

In hot desking, workspaces are allocated or occupied on a first-come, first-served basis. Desks, tables, and chairs have no permanent "owner," and workers use whatever is available that fits their needs. One of the biggest concerns about hot desking from employees is finding space near their colleagues or finding a preferred spot in general. Hot desking becomes even more difficult if you have fewer desks than people. If you want to successfully implement this flexible model, having a reservation tool to book a workspace in a dedicated area is crucial.

Desk hoteling

In desk hoteling, workspaces are reserved ahead of time via a booking app or service. The starting point is that, just like in a hotel, you have a fixed location for the whole day. Hoteling offers security, but at the expense of flexibility and spontaneity since these arrangements tend to be more static and don't change as often as hot desking arrangements.

First-come, first-served

No fixed desks, tables, chairs

Flexibilty

Reserved ahead

Fixed location for the day

Security

Whether you choose to go for hot desking or hoteling, a seamless booking system with real-time availability of workspaces at the office is essential.

So what works the best?

Based on Mapiq's customers, who have adopted a sharing desk policy, a combination of hot desking and hoteling seems to be a good compromise. For example, you can dedicate 70% of your desks for hoteling and 30% to hot desking.

You can also consider reserving a number of permanent workspaces for people who are at the office on a daily basis.

Whether you choose to go for hot desking or hoteling, a seamless booking system with real-time availability of workspaces at the office is essential. That also allows you to gather insights on how your space is used and make even better data-driven decisions. But most importantly, you need to provide your employees with a sense of comfort.

30% Hot desking

70% Desk hoteling
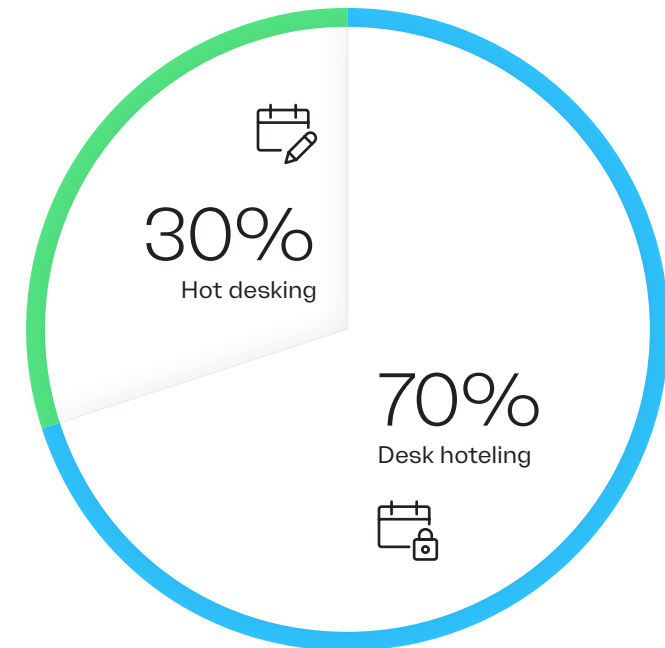
Smart office tools for successful hybrid working
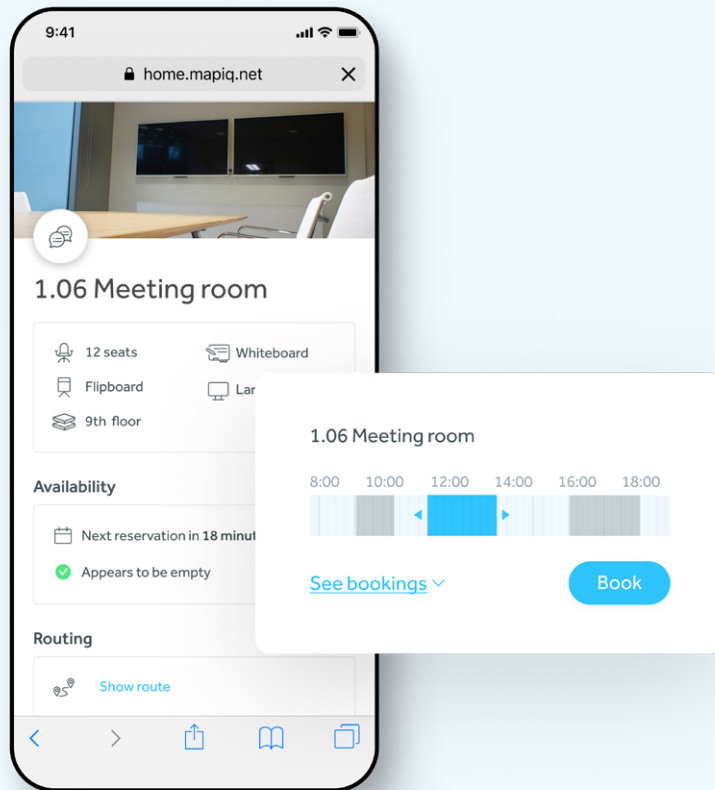
Once you have chosen the workspace concept, it is important to implement technology that ensures an evenly spread office occupancy. Because thanks to the latest technology, controlling the flexible supply and demand in the workplace is no longer a struggle. Smart office tools have made hybrid working possible, finding the sweet spot between efficiency and flexibility.

Real-time occupancy data lets employees can instantly find and book suitable workspaces for their activities and share facilities with colleagues via a smart office app.

Matching employees with available facilities also allows for dynamic staff distribution. If there are fewer workspaces than employees, there is a risk of overcrowding, and finding a workspace can become a time-consuming and frustrating task.

Smart office tools ensure that office occupancy is evenly distributed throughout the week and that employees can find and book a suitable workspace in no time.

Let's take a look into the most trending tools, which are all part of Mapiq's smart office platform:

Office capacity calculator

What is the optimum office capacity? This depends, among other things, on the activities and personal preferences of the employees. And as long as we are still dealing with this pandemic, capacity will be limited by social distancing measures. Using a special calculator, you can quickly calculate what the optimum office capacity is on a given day.

Office shifts

If employees can book a time slot at the office without a specific workspace, you maintain flexibility and people can spontaneously take a seat at a desk or come to the office for just a few meetings. This tool is commonly used in hot desking.

Desk booking

For hoteling, it is necessary that employees can book a specific desk in advance. This is, as it were, a flexible form of assigned seating. Do you combine desk booking with workspace sensors that indicate availability? Then both hot desking and activity-based working become possible, as you can see live in the app which desks and other workspaces are available.

Room booking

Employees should be able to find and book available meeting rooms quickly and easily. Thanks to sensors, such a smart office tool provides a real-time overview of available meeting rooms and encourages the organization of ad hoc meetings. In the app, users can see which rooms are available and, as manager, you can indicate which meeting rooms can be booked at any given time.

Team alignment

A platform with social functionalities allows employees to coordinate their office hours and locations. So they always know which colleagues are coming to the office when and where they have booked a workspace. Matching bookings with those of team members allows them to work together effectively.

Occupancy data insights

A smart office provides detailed insights into occupancy. For example, desk sensors provide real-time insight into desk occupancy. Using all the occupancy data, you can make changes that save space or improve productivity.

Twice as many employees as workspaces

A good example of dynamic office occupancy planning using smart office tools is Deloitte's The Edge building. Since there are twice as many employees as workspaces, employees must be able to easily find free workspaces, book meeting rooms, check room availability and view occupancy rates.
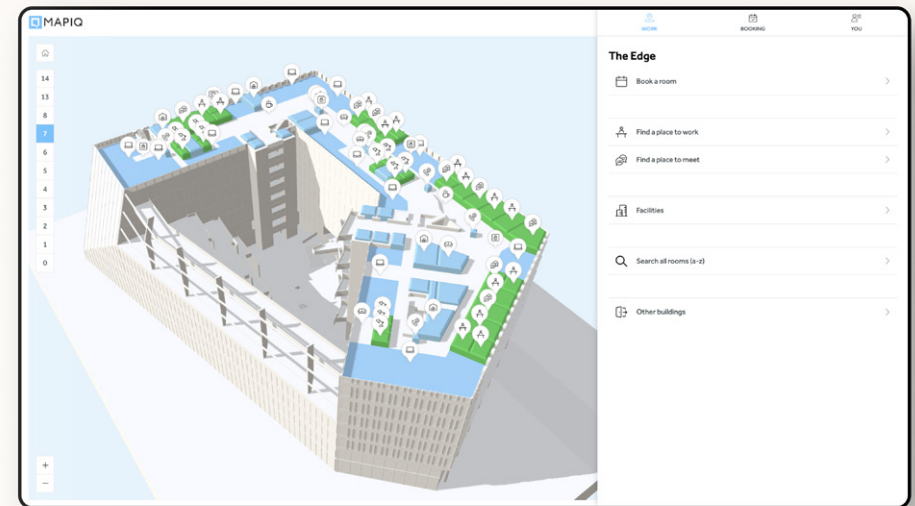
Deloitte asked Mapiq to develop a smart office platform that supports the activity-based way of working and in which all data is collected centrally. The Mapiq system connects all other building systems as well as 23,000 sensors and iBeacons, and provides the input for Deloitte's Mapiq platform with interactive floor plan.

This smart office platform allows employees to easily navigate the building, locate colleagues, find available workspaces and book work areas such as meeting and conversation rooms. They can also use the app to control AV equipment and smart lockers.

As a result, 2,850 employees can easily work in the building with 1,080 desks. The Edge, one of the most innovative buildings in the world, has also led to a 400 per cent increase in the number of job applications, a 40 per cent reduction in absenteeism and the highest BREEAM sustainability score ever (at the time): 98.3 percent.

Spreading your workplace occupancy with data

Smart office technology enables you to measure almost all aspects of the office and its use. Sensors can register, for example, whether a workspace is used frequently, how many people are present in a room and how many no-shows there are for a meeting room.

Using a smart office platform will give you detailed insights in your workplace occupancy. Examples include peaks in occupancy and the average demand for and availability of workspaces and meeting rooms. Responsive building technology therefore ensures that the office and its managers not only teach each other how the space is currently being used, but also how it can be optimized.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4	■	■	■	■	■
3	■	■	■	■	■
2	■	■	■	■	■
1	■	■	■	■	■

Floor

Office attendance post-Covid using activity based working and dynamic scheduling

Making data-driven decisions

With the insights gained, you anticipate changing employee needs, make data-driven decisions and make informed strategic choices about the space. In this way, you can increase occupancy rates, reduce operational and facility costs, share facilities, save energy and increase security.

You will also be able to identify problems and unnecessary expenses, calculate your workspace ROI and discover good practices that you can apply to other offices in your portfolio.

Do you combine data with employee feedback?
Then you will be able to adapt workspaces to the needs of employees in near-real time and draw up smarter cost-saving strategies.

What does that process look like?
The foundation on which you build is the collection of high-quality raw data. Based on this data, you can analyze how the workspace is performing and draw up KPIs. Making a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the data is crucial. You use these insights to make decisions that can have a major impact on business results, both positively and negatively.

Thanks to smart office data, you can see, for example, where the hotspots are, and the blind spots where nobody goes. On this basis, you can eliminate the right amount of square meters, i.e. those with the lowest occupancy rate. That way, you save on property and facility costs and make better use of the space you have left. Furthermore, by looking closely at the actual use of the space, you can minimize energy consumption. Because you base your assessment on the actual use of the office, you can take all these measures without affecting the work experience of your employees.

Long story short
Smart office technology not only helps you give employees the best office experience and spread office utilization evenly across the week, it also enables you to understand how your office is being used and make smarter choices when it comes to space optimization.
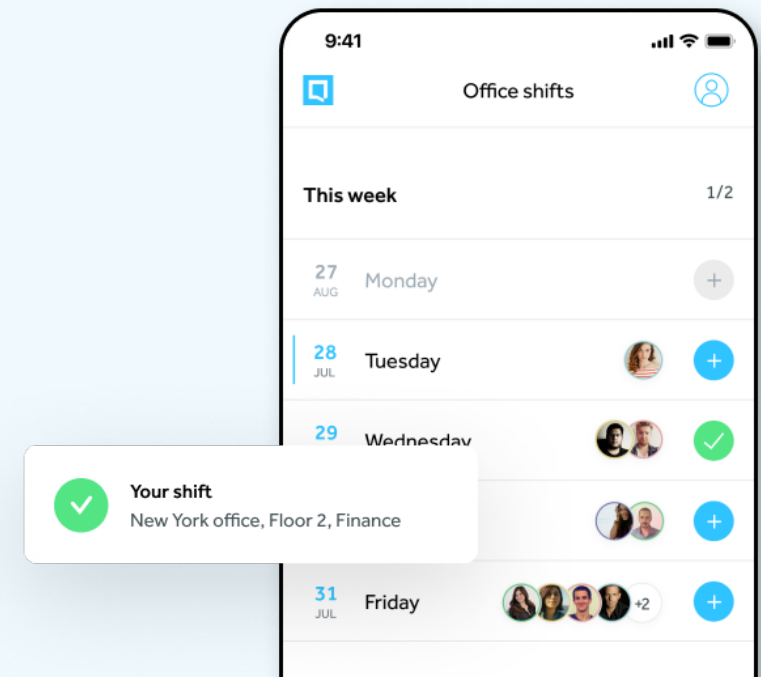
A smart office for successful hybrid working
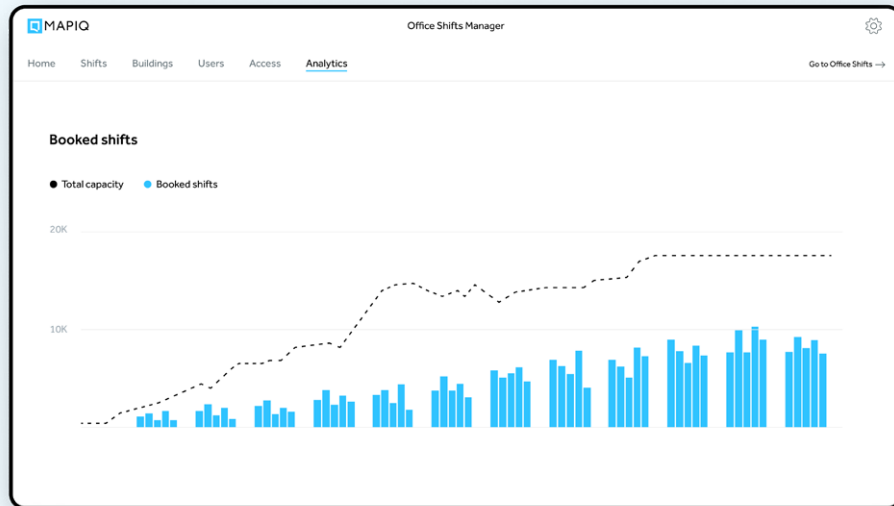
Technological developments have made activity-based working and hybrid working possible; smart office technology is the basis for managing it.

Thanks to sensors and the real-time sharing of occupancy data, employees can easily find and book suitable workspaces for their activities *and* share facilities with colleagues via smart office apps such as Mapiq.

Mapiq also allows for dynamic workplace occupancy management. If there are fewer workspaces than employees, there is a risk of overcrowding, and finding a workspace can become a time-consuming and frustrating task. Mapiq ensures that office occupancy is evenly distributed throughout the week and that employees can find and book a suitable workspace in no time.

Final tips for successful hybrid working

Are you going to use smart office tools to find the optimal balance between as little office space as possible and the ultimate office experience? Perhaps you will find inspiration in the following six tips.

2

Define different groups

After understanding how the days of your employees look like, you can start defining different user groups. Who needs to have the possibility to come into the office at any time?

3

Set a minimum and maximum number of office days

Worth considering: set a maximum number of days at the office per week. Of course, this can vary for different user groups or even for different offices. A minimum number of days, for example, is good for employee engagement and building company culture, while a maximum is a logical choice if you have a remote first or remote-friendly policy and limited office capacity. A maximum number of days also creates a sense of urgency for employees to actually come in on the days they have booked. This helps you anticipate an expected occupancy from a facility management perspective.

1

Map the employee journey

Clichéd but true: good preparation is half the battle. Think carefully beforehand about which activities different employees have to do. What does their work week look like? What do they need to be successful at work? Design your hybrid work model and real estate strategy around the needs of your teams

4

Bring teams together

Do you want team members or people with certain functions to see each other regularly? Then make sure they can align their days at the office. When offering the option to book a shift or desk, give employees insight in when their team mates are coming in and where they will be.

5

Guide the cultural change

When you implement a hybrid working model, it necessarily involves a fairly radical change in corporate culture. So guided clear guidance: how can employees get the most out of your new workplace strategy? Which elements should they keep in mind?

6

Evaluate and improve your strategy

After launching your new hybrid work model, make sure to keep track on how employees use the office. Analyzing occupancy data helps you identify trends in your workplace occupancy. For example, on Mondays some floors might be completely empty. Whilst on Thursday, the office is packed. Spread your workplace occupancy during the week by providing certain benefits on the least popular times or days.

MAPIQ

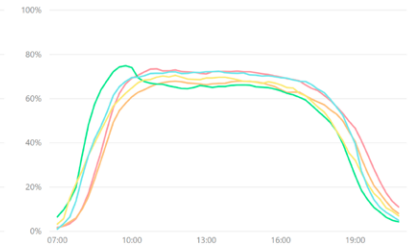Your average occupancy during the day

Here is the meeting room occupancy per floor during the day
● Floor 2 ● Floor 3 ● Floor 4 ● Floor 5 ● Floor 6
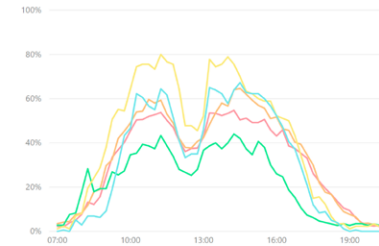
... and the workplace occupancy per floor during the day
● Floor 2 ● Floor 3 ● Floor 4 ● Floor 5 ● Floor 6

Enter the next chapter of work

Mapiq can be integrated with numerous building management systems, devices, applications and sensors. Because Mapiq is Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), updates are carried out automatically and you do not need to worry about local servers.

Our platform is used by such well-known businesses as Deloitte, Danone, Unilever and ENGIE.

Or in other words: Mapiq flexibilizes your office, maximizes your occupancy and optimizes employee wellbeing.

MAPIQ

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MAPIQ

Get in touch

Find out how you can build the smart office of the future with Mapiq's simple, smart, and social tools.

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