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I don't want to be a hybrid worker and I definitely don't want to be remote. I want to feel part of a team, to work collaboratively, to be connected through my work and my communications with my clients and colleagues. So where do I fit in?

It's not a trick question, to me the first issue we have to overcome is the problem statement. Are we actually asking the wrong question with this transformation Rubrik cube? **To hybrid or not to hybrid?**

When I caught up with my colleague **Sarah Thorne COO of The Return Hub**, a people strategy specialist, she astutely pointed out the negative connotations we may have before we start our transformation. The language we are using implies compromise from the start. Hybrid: something that is a mixture of two very different things. Not an evolution surely? Remote: far away, lonely, isolated. What is left? Flexible working implies hours rather than practice and relates to a HR function.

Why not focus on agile working. Agile: being able to deal with new situations and change quickly and successfully. Agility is fundamental to successful business structures, to growth, so why not associate it with the people working methodology as well as the business/product/sales plans. Redefine the future of working without compromise.

What would an agile plan look like?

Sarah referenced some of the inventive projects her clients were piloting.

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Simple practical solutions to agile working are bound to win. Some of the key take home's are to engage the stakeholders in the change. Sounds obvious enough, but if it is left to the middle managers to decide what agile means to that team, worker insight could be lost and silo's can be created”.

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Making generalisations about working patterns could be counter-productive. Focus on the key work methodologies of the team and wider culture.”

If a team was entirely office based previously, reflect on what the real wins were from being in close proximity to colleagues. We have seen a significant investment in team connections and wellbeing over the past 15 months. If your team are invested in the culture of how rather than where they work, keep that powerful connection in sight however your agile plans unfold.”



● Office ● Off site ● Agile

Re-purpose your office

I have seen some commentary setting out the case for fixed office space being essential for people to *“learn their craft”*. Further that there is a direct connection between a desk space and mentoring taking place. If only it were that simple. The kind of training and culture habits that win and keep staff don't depend on a desk. People inspire people not buildings. The team not the office is where investment is needed. So maybe re-purpose your office for your agile work plan. Ensure the time spent there is not the same as it was pre-pandemic. Use it for connecting, collaborating, training and sharing not a 9-5 task with a commute.



The technical journey

The average law firm has advanced their technology road map by 3 years in 12 months. Whether limping or striding through the transformation journey, I am inspired by the leap of faith taken by so many. It hasn't just been about finding out what Microsoft Teams can do or redirecting post, the changes have been fundamental and innovative. Moving to new cloud-based solutions, using collaboration platforms and investing in process/document/workflow automation.

The journey must not stop now the filing cabinets and printers can become available again. Re-purposing the office also means the use of technology, hardware and software that once called the office it's home. Empower workers by supplementing their agile working with agile technology. Don't compromise on technology which was built around a physical location..

Start and finish with joy

Finally, why not start and finish your plans with joy?

I always thought I had OCD, in my work place I need symmetry, clean lines, but I also crave colour and natural light. After reading [Ingrid Fetell Lee's book Joyful](#), I was both relieved and inspired to improve my surroundings and those of others. It contains some superb insight into the surprising power of ordinary things to create extraordinary happiness, who would not want some of that in their office space? We all deserve to live fuller healthier, joyful lives and if your agile work plan can embrace some of that all the better.

Want to talk more on transformation? Check out www.elawvate.co.uk find me on Linked in or send me a joyful email jane@elawvate.co.uk Dynamic digital transformation of SME legal services by re-thinking the improbable and reinforcing the possible.

Need inspiration on your people strategy?

www.thereturnhub.com is where you will find Sarah and team who advise on and implement practical strategies that companies can use to target, assess, hire and support returning talent.

