



ACQUISITION RESEARCH PROGRAM SPONSORED REPORT SERIES

Management Techniques and Practices for Telework and In-Office Work Within the Naval Educational and Training Command (NETC)

June 2025

Sonsiree Lagunas, CIV

Thesis Advisors: Dr. Deborah E. Gibbons, Associate Professor
Dr. Miriam Bergue Alves, Faculty Associate

Department of Defense Management

Naval Postgraduate School

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

Prepared for the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA 93943

Disclaimer: The views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Naval Postgraduate School, US Navy, Department of Defense, or the US government.



The research presented in this report was supported by the Acquisition Research Program of the Department of Defense Management at the Naval Postgraduate School.

To request defense acquisition research, to become a research sponsor, or to print additional copies of reports, please contact the Acquisition Research Program (ARP) via email, arp@nps.edu or at 831-656-3793.



ACQUISITION RESEARCH PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE MANAGEMENT
NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

ABSTRACT

This study identifies management impacts on telework (TW) and return-to-office (RTO) transitions. The literature review identifies factors that support effective management of distributed workforces and transitions from TW to onsite work. These include managerial character traits, communication tools and technology, relationship management, collaboration and engagement, agile responses to evolving policies, and mitigation of RTO challenges. Responding to the U.S. Navy's shift in January 2025 from TW to full-time in-office work and a redistributed workforce, the study documents supervisors' assessments of the benefits and challenges associated with the change. The applications focus on supervisors within the Naval Education and Training Command (NETC), where most people teleworked until they were required to work onsite. The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) data collected in the summer of 2024 indicated that trust, communication, and accountability were strong at NETC; however, the transition created challenges. This capstone presents three literature-informed conceptual models that depict effective management for hybrid teams, in-office management challenges, and best practices for transitioning back to in-office work. The recommendations build on managers' responses to the NETC-RTO survey, offering practical strategies to enhance management practices and optimize hybrid and in-office work environments within NETC's evolving operational landscape.



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sonsiree Lagunas is a Contracting Officer for the Navy, working at a warfare center. She brings a strong foundation in business principles, holding a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an emphasis in Marketing and a Minor in Industrial Organizational Psychology from San Diego State University (2007). Currently, she is expanding her expertise through a Master's degree in Contract Management at the Naval Postgraduate School, with a completion date of June 2025.



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I give thanks to God for His unwavering grace through this journey. His presence illuminated my path during moments of doubt and challenge. I am deeply grateful for my family's love, encouragement and support. To Deborah, Miriam, Kathleen, Lauren and Chloe, thank you for your patience, feedback and guidance. Your insights enriched this work and inspired me to strive for excellence. Thank you all!



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK





ACQUISITION RESEARCH PROGRAM SPONSORED REPORT SERIES

Management Techniques and Practices for Telework and In-Office Work Within the Naval Educational and Training Command (NETC)

June 2025

Sonsiree Lagunas, CIV

Thesis Advisors: Dr. Deborah E. Gibbons, Associate Professor
Dr. Miriam Bergue Alves, Faculty Associate

Department of Defense Management

Naval Postgraduate School

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

Prepared for the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA 93943

Disclaimer: The views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Naval Postgraduate School, US Navy, Department of Defense, or the US government.



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
A.	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	2
B.	ORGANIZATION	2
II.	BACKGROUND	5
A.	PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS TELEWORKING	5
B.	HISTORY OF TELEWORKING IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.....	7
C.	REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL PERSONNEL TO WORK ONSITE	10
D.	NAVAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND	10
III.	LITERATURE REVIEW	13
A.	MANAGEMENT IMPACT ON TELEWORK SUCCESS	14
B.	MANAGERIAL CHARACTER TRAITS	16
C.	COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY	18
D.	RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT	19
E.	COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT	21
F.	AGILE RESPONSE WITH EVOLVING POLICY	22
G.	MANAGER TRAINING AND SUPPORT	24
H.	RETURN-TO-OFFICE.....	28
	1. Challenges.....	28
	2. RTO Strategies and Best Practices	30
I.	LITERATURE-INFORMED CONCEPTUAL MODELS.....	33
IV.	METHODS	37
A.	FEVS.....	37
B.	NETC-RTO SURVEY	39
	1. General Questions about Telework and Returning to Work in the Office.	40
	2. Planned Analysis.....	40
V.	RESULTS	43
A.	ASSESSMENT OF FEVS RELATED TO NETC	43
B.	NETC-RTO SURVEY	48
	1. Qualitative Analysis.....	49



VI.	CONCLUSION.....	55
A.	FEVS AND NETC-RTO SURVEY	55
B.	SWOT ANALYSIS	56
C.	RECOMMENDATIONS	57
D.	LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH.....	58
	LIST OF REFERENCES	59



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Balancing Control and Empowerment Management. Adapted from Cook (2019).	16
Figure 2.	OPM Telework Resources. Source: OPM (2024).....	25
Figure 3.	Training Topics for Supervisors to Help Manage Re-entry Transition Phase. Source: OPM (2024).....	26
Figure 4.	Agency Considerations for a Hybrid Environment. Source: OPM (2024).....	27
Figure 5.	Effective Management for a Hybrid Team	33
Figure 6.	In-Office Management Challenges	34
Figure 7.	Best Practices When Transitioning to Back to In-Office Work	35
Figure 8.	NETC Telework Climate	43
Figure 9.	Employees Who Do Not Telework.....	44



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Telework Memorandums from 2021–2023	23
Table 2.	FEVS Questions Relating to Management and Telework	38
Table 3.	Communication.....	44
Table 4.	Performance	45
Table 5.	Empowerment	45
Table 6.	Trust	46
Table 7.	Collaboration.....	47
Table 8.	Fairness	47
Table 9.	Technology	47
Table 10.	Connections.....	48
Table 11.	Sample Size, Mean, and Standard Deviation for Numeric Items Asked of Supervisors	48
Table 12.	Themes Related to Supervisor’s Pros of RTO.....	50
Table 13.	Themes Related to Supervisor’s Cons of RTO.....	51
Table 14.	Themes Related to Supervisors Responses to Question 2	52
Table 15.	Themes Related to Question 3 Categorized by Supervisor Roles	54
Table 16.	SWOT Analysis	57



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BLS	Bureau of Labor Statistics
DoD	Department of Defense
DOGE	Department of Government Efficiency
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GSA	General Services Administration
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
NETC	Naval Educational and Training Command
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
RTO	Return-to-Office
TS	Telework-situational
SIPP	Survey of Income and Program Participation
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



I. INTRODUCTION

Many private and public organizations have implemented telework, remote work and hybrid work arrangements, integrating onsite and offsite employees. Telework is a well-known concept within the Navy, with many employees actively participating in remote work arrangements or knowing colleagues who do. Telework offers many positive things, such as flexibility, work-life balance, and convenience. Managers often get promoted to lead hybrid teams without receiving adequate training or guidance on how to successfully navigate their new responsibilities. Some have managed remote employees for years yet remain unaware of whether their teams require additional support to thrive. While some argue that this model is manageable and sustainable, others believe that employees working remotely are less productive than their onsite counterparts (Kaplan et al., 2018). This perception persists despite the need for further research to substantiate such claims.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the challenges of remote work as offsite employment surged due to shutdown mandates. Many companies and public agencies lacked preparation to support a fully remote workforce, particularly in roles traditionally reliant on physical office presence. Nevertheless, the urgency to maintain operations compelled employers to adapt quickly and develop solutions to ensure business continuity. For this reason, it is important that managers learn the techniques and practices on how to manage a distributed workforce successfully. Expecting a manager to figure it out alone puts the entire team at risk of failure.

This capstone aims to contribute to management techniques and practices to sustain and improve the effectiveness of telework, in-office management challenges and the transition to in-office work within the Naval Educational and Training Command (NETC). It addresses factors that are known to be important in private and public sectors and apply that knowledge of best practices to NETC. The primary goal is to find the gaps in roles from a manager overseeing an all-in-person team compared to a remote or hybrid team. It focuses on the attributes a manager needs to have to be successful in these roles. Furthermore, it hopes to inspire leadership in NETC to develop training programs built



around both employees and managers, whether they are co-located or distributed across remote locations, to ensure that everyone involved benefits from the initiative, and equip new and current managers with the necessary tools and techniques, empowering them to support their teams and drive success.

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions are addressed through a comprehensive literature review and research findings from two surveys. Questions one and two are addressed through an in-depth literature review, while question three is analyzed using data collected from the two surveys in partnership with NETC.

How can managers ensure collaboration and engagement when overseeing personnel who telework?

- What are the attributes a manager should have to manage a remote or hybrid team successfully?
- What kinds of tools and technology can managers use to best communicate with a remote or hybrid team?
- How are relationships managed effectively with a remote or hybrid team?

What are the essential resources and practices to support effective management of a team transitioning to or from telework and in-office work?

- What support and training are available for federal managers?
- What practices of policy review support excellent management of hybrid teams?
- How can managers navigate the challenges of significant shifts related to telework and in-office work?

How effectively has NETC facilitated telework and return-to-office (RTO) from the perspective of its employees?

- How can NETC improve support for telework and the transition to in-office work?

B. ORGANIZATION

This capstone is organized in six chapters.

- Chapter I provides an introduction of the problems driving the research, the research questions, and the organization of the project.
- Chapter II describes background information and research rationale.



- Chapter III provides a review of the literature related to management of various distributed workforces.
- Chapter IV describes the methodology utilized, the data collected and the analysis method.
- Chapter V presents the results of the analysis.
- Chapter VI provides a summary, conclusion, and recommendations.



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



II. BACKGROUND

Many organizations, private and public, have at one point practiced telework, remote work, and hybrid work arrangements to include onsite and offsite employees. Telework and remote work are both arrangements where the employees perform their job duties away from an office, usually from home. Although sometimes used interchangeably, telework usually refers to a flexible work arrangement which can include the employee required to work some days in-office and other days off-site. On the other hand, remote work is a more permanent arrangement where the employee is not required to show up in person in the office. Combining all three creates a hybrid work arrangement which involves a mix of employees working in-office, teleworking, and remote employees relying on technology to stay connected.

This section presents data from the private and public sectors on telework, remote work, and hybrid work from the early 2000s through January 2025 to illustrate the evolving changes in organizations' work arrangement. This section also includes historical data on telework within the federal government and explains the evolution of relevant laws and guidance.

A. PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS TELEWORKING

There are many benefits to an organization with a distributed workforce. By allowing employees to work in-office or at a remote location such as their homes, the organization has the ability to attract talent from anywhere, can have multiple people working on the same project in different time zones, and overhead costs would be less from not having to maintain all employees in one office (Zakaria & Bliven, 2021). A Linked-In survey of 17,121 people in late 2023 found that 29% of respondents prefer to work fully remotely, and 30% prefer hybrid working arrangements (Borden, 2024). However, before making the decision if teleworking or remote work is an option, the organization must assess which job positions are capable of functioning with this type of work arrangement. Not all positions are a good fit, some positions require the employee to be on-site while others allow the employee to work independently with low amount of collaboration and coordination (Zakaria & Bliven, 2021). According to U.S. Bureau of



Labor Statistics (BLS), the major industry with the highest rates of telework are financial activities and professional and business services (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023a). Furthermore, when developing a telework program, some of the critical factors an organization needs to consider are support from all levels within the organization, providing the tools and technology the employee needs, communication, and trust (Kowalski & Swanson, 2005).

Organizations need to hire managers that either are already equipped to manage a hybrid team or must prepare and train them for the task. With the onset of COVID-19, telework increased substantially, changing how U.S. workers related to their jobs and workplaces in the year 2020. Mandates required social distancing and organizations encouraged more remote or a mix of remote and in-office work for those positions that allowed for this type of work arrangement. Some private and public agencies were not prepared and equipped to support a full-time remote work environment for some positions. However, due to the need to keep operations moving the necessity to prepare and adapt became crucial to employers. As a result, managers were left to figure out how to best manage a team of either fully remote employees or a hybrid group of in-office employees and teleworkers.

More recently, the percentage of teleworking employees in both public and private sectors has decreased with companies and agencies changing policies requiring more in-office attendance. The following statistics show a comparison of the percentages of employees participating in telework at federal agencies. The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), a survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau collects uniquely detailed information about respondents' jobs, particularly in changes in home-based work. According to SIPP, "the percentage of U.S. jobs worked on-site or 'in person' vs. virtual decreased by roughly 10 percentage points between 2019 and 2021, from about 84% to 74 % of all jobs" (Gumber & Burrows & U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, 43% of federal employees engaged in some form of teleworking, down from 46% in FY 2022. Additionally, 75% of telework-eligible federal employees participated in telework in FY 2023, a 12-percentage-point decrease from FY



2022 (Office of Personnel Management [OPM], 2023). According to the Economics Daily: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, across all workers, between July and September 2021, 40.1% of private sectors employees engaged in telework, which dropped to 25.7% by August through September 2022. By August 2023, telework accounted for 14.4% of total hours worked across all employees (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2023b). Federal government workers had a higher telework rate (28.6%) compared to state (20.7%) and local government (8.8%) employees (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2023b). In the private sector 18.9% teleworked, while the self-employed had a telework rate of 17.6% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2023).

The U.S. government survey of federal employees in 2023 found that 14% had a remote work agreement, such that they teleworked every day. Another 23% reported that they teleworked three or four days per week. While 21% worked onsite due to the nature of their jobs, only 4% of respondents reported that they chose not to telework (OPM, 2023). The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reported from a May 2024 survey of 84 agencies, with a total of 2.28 million personnel, that 54% worked full time on-site as their jobs required them to, 46.4% civilians were telework eligible and 10% were remote positions (OMB, 2024). According to OMB (2024), 61.2% of regular working hours were spent in-office by federal telework-eligible employees (excluding remote workers), advancing towards OMB's goal of 50% in-person time.

B. HISTORY OF TELEWORKING IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The government has used various terms for telework, such as “work at home,” “flexible work,” “telecommuting,” and “mobile.” In the year 2000, a law mandated that each executive agency create a policy allowing eligible employees to telecommute as much as possible without compromising performance (Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000). Additionally, the law requires the federal government's primary human resources (HR) and personnel policy authority, known as the OPM, to ensure these policies were initially applicable to 25% of the federal workforce, with 25% more each subsequent year (Section 359 of Public Law 106-346).



On December 9, 2010, the Obama administration established the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010. This law requires “each executive agency to establish a policy and implement a policy under which employees shall be authorized to telework, and for other purposes” (Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, Public Law 111-292). According to the 5 USC Ch. 65: Telework report, OPM is responsible for submitting reports to Congress to address telework programs for each executive agency “no later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this chapter and on an annual basis thereafter” (Telework Enhancement Act, 2010). OPM maintains a website with guidance to federal agencies on workforce policies and benefits and is also responsible to research the utilization of telework by the public-and-private sector entities for recommendations for the federal government. The Telework Enhancement Act states “the term ‘telework’ or ‘teleworking’ refers to a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee’s position, and other authorized activities, from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work” (Telework Enhancement Act, 2010). The act uses the term “telework” and “teleworking” exclusively and does not mention “remote.”

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work and telework in government were steadily increasing following the Telework Enhancement Act, with many agencies implementing telework programs by 2019. In 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, federal agencies needed to shift the federal workforce and were instructed to maximize telework to those that were eligible. In 2021, OPM clarified the distinction between the term “telework” and “remote” and provided further guidance in their *2021 Guide to Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government*. The 2021 guide replaced the content in OPM’s *2011 Guide to Telework in the Federal Government*, where the word remote was used interchangeably with the word telework. According to the 2021 OPM guide, telework and remote work are defined differently.

Telework is an arrangement in which an employee, under a written telework agreement, is scheduled to perform their work at an agency worksite on a regular and recurring basis. Remote work is “an arrangement in which an employee, under a written remote work agreement, is scheduled to perform work at an alternative worksite and is not expected to perform work at an agency worksite on a regular and recurring basis. A remote worker’s official worksite may be within or



outside the local commuting area of an agency worksite.” (OPM, 2024, pg. 11)

OPM further differentiates the types of telework arrangements as routine or situational telework.

1. Routine telework, in which telework occurs as part of an ongoing regular schedule; and 2. Situational telework in which telework is approved on a case-by-case basis and the hours worked were not previously approved, ongoing, and regular telework schedule. (OPM, 2024, pg. 12).

OPM defines hybrid work as “a flexible work model that supports a blend of in-office, telework, remote work, mobile work and/or dispersed teams” (OPM, n.d.).

In 2021 the OMB, which administers the federal budget and is responsible for overseeing federal agencies performance, released Memorandum M-21-25, subject line *Integrating Planning for A Safe Increased Return of Federal Employees and Contractors to Physical Workplaces with Post-Reentry Personnel Policies and Work Environment* (OMB, 2023). The memorandum provided guidance related to “telework, remote work, hours of work, performance management, and labor relations” (OMB, 2023, pg.6). It required all agencies to complete their planning for reentry into the physical workplace by July 19, 2021 (OMB, 2023). During the conclusion of the COVID-19 public health emergency in 2023, OMB released a memorandum in April 2023, M-23-15 Memorandum; *Measuring, Monitoring, and Improving Organizational Health and Organizational Performance in the Context of Evolving Agency Work Environments*. The memorandum defines the work environment as a blend of “personnel policies, talent and workforce performance management strategies; workforce capacity, workloads, work schedules, design of workspaces and workplaces, supportive and assistive technology tools for individual and collaborative work...across management practices and processes” (OPM, 2023, pg. 4). It notes that factors such as “resource allocation, workforce availability, and policy or statutory constraints” can influence work environments affecting organizational health and performance (OPM, 2023, pg. 4). Furthermore, it instructs agencies to 1. revise work environment plans, 2. create routines to evaluate and improve these changes and 3. develop a set of adaptable indicators to monitor progress (OPM, 2023). In 2023, the Stopping Home Office Work’s



Unproductive Problems Act of 2023 (SHOW UP), required federal agencies to reinstate their pre-pandemic telework practices and policies.

Effective January 8, 2024, *DoDI 1035.01 Telework Policy*, issued on April 4, 2012, was cancelled and replaced by *DoD Instruction 1035.01 Telework and Remote Work*. The Department of Defense (DoD) provides information on the eligibility for telework and remote work. Telework is determined by job functions and approved in certain situations such as severe weather and emergency events, remote work arrangements may not be approved unless it meets telework criteria. However, positions that are eligible to telework do not automatically transfer to being suitable for remote work (DoD, 2024). In August 2024, the OMB issued a report to Congress detailing agency in-person attendance, telework policies, and real property portfolio management activities, focusing solely on civilian employees (OMB, 2024). The report benchmarks post-pandemic work arrangements, noting that federal agencies are shifting to a model where telework-eligible teams are generally required to work in-office at least 50% of the time (OMB, 2024). The OMB considers this goal vital for maintaining agency competitiveness while fostering mentorship, learning, and collaboration, aligning with private sector trends.

C. REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL PERSONNEL TO WORK ONSITE

Since 2023, Congress has debated RTO mandates, with Rep. James Comer proposing the SHOW UP Act (2023) to restore pre-pandemic telework policies. Supporters argued that increased on-site attendance improves accountability, oversight, collaboration, and team culture (Elliott, 2024). On January 20, 2025, a mandate by President Trump was issued directing heads of all departments and agencies in the executive branch of government to take the necessary steps to terminate telework and remote work and require employees to return to working in-office on a full-time basis (The White House, 2025).

D. NAVAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND

NETC is headquartered at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida. NETC is the U.S. Navy's primary training authority, overseeing the transformation of civilians into



skilled, combat-ready warfighters through its “street-to-fleet” philosophy. NETC operates over 1,640 subordinate activities, sites, and detachments worldwide. Employing more than 24,000 military and civilian personnel, NETC delivers cutting-edge training in fields ranging from aviation and submarine operations to leadership and ethics, ensuring fleet readiness through innovative, accredited programs. Human resource managers at NETC expressed interest in understanding the attitudes, experiences, and suggestions of NETC personnel related to telework versus onsite work.



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



III. LITERATURE REVIEW

With the increasing adoption of telework during the COVID-19 pandemic and RTO mandates, the Navy continues to adapt its traditional management approaches to support a distributed workforce. Accordingly, management experts agree that flexible work arrangements have a range of benefits: they are a powerful recruitment tool, lower turnover, and provide independence to employees (Spreitzer et al., 2017). Spreitzer et al. contend that for these reasons, the benefits or challenges related to the different approaches should inform management's decisions.

This literature review discusses how managers navigate managing teams in various work arrangements, ranging from hybrid to fully in-office in the private sector and federal government—through a continuum of work arrangements from the early 2000s through January 2025. The first section examines management's impact on telework success. The second section discusses managerial character traits. The third section examines the different perspectives on communication tools and technology a manager may use to communicate with their team effectively. The fourth section addresses relationship management between managers and employees. The fifth section explores collaboration and engagement, followed by agility in response to evolving policy. The sixth section discusses the importance of manager training and support. The final section discusses return to in-office challenges and best practices. This analysis aims to inform future policies and training programs to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the NETC's manager work environment initiatives.

The final section of the literature review presents three models that synthesize the findings and serve as the basis of the data analysis in the subsequent chapters. The first conceptual model explores effective management techniques for a hybrid team. The second model covers in-office management challenges. The third model discusses best practices when transitioning back to in-office work. All three models consider the perspectives from the private sector and the DoD, telework, and in-office work arrangements by focusing on the unique challenges and strategies employed to maintain operational effectiveness and personnel well-being.



A. MANAGEMENT IMPACT ON TELEWORK SUCCESS

Management experts agree that it is important to understand the manager's role when overseeing remote or hybrid teams compared to in-person teams. According to Bell and Kozlowski (2002), "the key characteristics of virtual teams that distinguish them from conventional teams are (a) the spatial distance between team members that restricts face-to-face communication and (b) the resulting use of technological communication to connect team members" (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002, pp.25-26). Bell and Kozlowski (2002) argue that these characteristics hinder primary leadership functions, performance management, and team development. Therefore, managers need to be adaptive and motivational, facilitating coherence within their team (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002). This section explores managers' attitude towards telework, the importance of setting clear expectations, result-oriented performance management and creating an environment of trust.

The success of teleworking is heavily dependent on leadership's support or resistance. A manager's positive attitude towards teleworking can facilitate the effectiveness of telework, while managerial resistance can undermine effectiveness. Moreover, this section highlights how clear, transparent performance management tailored to support a hybrid environment can be more effective than approaches designed for traditional on-site work.

Telework effectiveness depends on overcoming traditional leadership resistance and trading it with a result-oriented management approach. Offstein et al. (2010) note that leadership is the most significant variable in predicting telework success. For instance, Offstein et al. (2010) argue that managerial resistance occurs when managers focus on "conventional and traditional leadership notions that over-emphasize physical interaction tend to interfere with the design and implementation of telework arrangements." Therefore, they contend that managers resist teleworking and that addressing this resistance early helps shift their mindset from managing by physical observation to focusing on results. Similarly, a 2017 Government Accountability Office (GAO) focus group report, in which both teleworkers and supervisors at four selected federal agencies participated, reported that managers hindered telework by prohibiting



employees from joining staff meeting via phone or because their managers believed teleworking contributed to poor performance compared to in-office employees (GAO, 2017).

The lack of managerial support can affect the individual decision to telework. If employees eligible to telework believe their supervisors are not supportive of teleworking and sense negative pressure from the organization, it would be difficult and impractical for them to choose to adopt the option (Choi, 2020). For this reason, the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 requires that federal agencies provide training programs to managers before employees enter into a telework agreement (Telework Enhancement Act, 2010). Additionally, this act directs federal agencies to address managers' resistance to telework and to have top managers train and support other managers for telework programs to be successful (GAO, 2021).

Communicating clear expectations and ensuring fair treatment of on-site employees and teleworkers enhances organizational success by empowering employees to work independently to achieve results. Experts in HR management argue that setting clear expectations, clearly defining tasks and goals, and being available for questions or concerns are key practices when managing remotely, clearly defining tasks and goals, and being available for questions or concerns (Alexander, 2022). Performance management and HR professionals emphasize that whether an employee is in person or on a video conferencing call, managers' communication of expectations and performance feedback is critical (Ayers, 2022). Furthermore, performance management requires a manager to set goals, evaluate progress, monitor performance, identify areas for improvement, communicate with the employee, and coach and mentor the employee regardless of whether the employee is working in the office. Bell and Kozlowski (2002) agree and emphasize the importance of managers anticipating problems, providing clear guidance, and clearly defining team member roles to help employees regulate their own performance.

Several sources discuss the benefits of results-oriented performance management. The OMB advises federal managers to complete an employee's evaluation based on accountability for work results and to not be affected by whether the employee is working



in the office or offsite (OMB, 2021). Cook (2019) argues that managers should empower employees and move away from traditional management and measure employee success by their performance rather than their in-office attendance. Figure 1 illustrates the difference between control and empowerment performance management styles. Managers who follow a traditional management style tend to micromanage and closely monitor employees, cultivating a decrease in motivation and lower job satisfaction from employees (Cook, 2019). On the other hand, an empowered manager gives the employee autonomy over tasks, fostering a sense of responsibility and trust, which allows more engagement and higher job satisfaction.

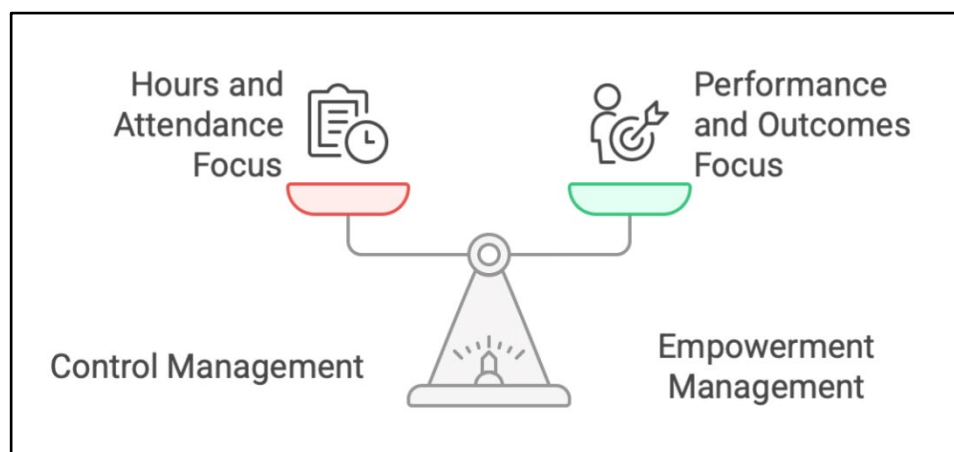


Figure 1. Balancing Control and Empowerment Management. Adapted from Cook (2019).

Similarly, OPM's guidance instructs that managers should base performance measurements on quantity, quality, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness (OPM, 2021). As a result, a supervisor's responsibility is to provide a clear, effective performance plan that is focused and measurable, to provide timely clarification and consistent feedback, and to communicate expectations.

B. MANAGERIAL CHARACTER TRAITS

In the evolving landscape of teleworking, it is necessary to understand the different traits a manager has that make them effective. In this section, I highlight some of the manager character traits a hybrid team manager must have by including insights from different experts in the field of leadership development. Interpersonal traits such as honesty and trustworthiness are vital to lead a cohesive team effectively.

While there is an overlap in the character traits of a traditional manager and a manager of a hybrid team, due to the unique challenges of managing teams virtually, experts have observed that managers with certain traits are more successful when managing a hybrid team. Experts in leader development agree that “transferring leadership skills from managing teams locally to leading people working remotely or around the world is not something that happens overnight” (Scrivener, 2014). For this reason, it is important to understand what traits a manager must possess to succeed. Some experts in the past believed physical attributes such as height, age and gender mattered. However, Lee (2021) disagrees and explains that physical traits are no longer important because they do not transfer to the virtual world. Lee (2021) argues in favor of a modern trait approach model that fits more with the 21st century needs, emphasizing qualities like ambition, determination, ethical behavior, self-assurance, business expertise and charisma.

Additionally, according to Crawford-Marks (2020), managers who have thrived during the shift from in-person to virtual have natural traits such as humility, empowerment, facilitation, trust, empathy, patience, diplomacy, grace under pressure, love for learning, and generosity. Scrivener (2014) agrees that effective leaders in a remote environment use empathy by being transparent and intentionally encouraging team members to understand each other’s differences. Karlene Kerfoot (2010) argues that “the test of effective virtual leadership is the ability to create an inspiring sense of aliveness and community without the benefit of frequent face-to-face contact.” For this reason, managers need to show gratitude and appreciation regularly, offer guidance and support when needed, create opportunities for employees to advance or invest in their growth and development, and allow employees the chance to provide feedback and suggestions so it is not just a top-down process (Alexander, 2022). It is worth noting that these traits are not specific to teleworking. According to Rahaman et al. (2021) leaders achieve better results by demonstrating trustworthiness, fairness, honesty, and gratitude in times of change.



C. COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

Technology has transformed remote work by allowing employees to continue their work from anywhere. Having the essential tools is crucial for the employee's success in accomplishing their work. This section explores the role of technology in a remote environment and focuses on best practices for management.

Technological advancements have allowed people the possibility to connect easily and work from anywhere in the world. Sutherland and Janene-Nelson argue “to work well together online, everyone needs: an effective computer, fast internet, a headset, a webcam, and a reliable video conferencing tool” (Sutherland & Janene-Nelson, 2020). Spreitzer, Cameron, and Garrett add that with “collaborative software, workers can easily collaborate across distances; in fact, virtual collaboration is becoming common even among workers who are colocated” (Spreitzer et al., 2017). When first transitioning from in-office to remote work during the pandemic, one of the biggest challenges for teleworking was having the proper tools such as computers, internet, and phones. Communication and collaboration experts agree that communication tools and technology are important in a remote hybrid environment, and it is important that we invest in quality equipment (Ilag, 2021). Choi agrees that teleworkers need the proper tools and technology to be in the network and to promote active working relationships with supervisors and colleagues (Choi, 2020). The private sector has leveraged video technology for performance reviews, meetings, and impromptu conversations to allow instant communication and collaboration that would typically happen in the office (United States Senate, 2020).

One common misconception for managers is the assumption that one communication method is best and should be used exclusively. Offstein et al. (2010) make this point and argue telework leaders are more effective when they use a variety of communication methods such as web conferencing and phone calls to communicate with teleworkers. Additionally, if the manager lets the teleworker hear their voice, this interaction creates a warm feeling and makes them more human, giving e-mails and texts more meaning (Offstein et al., 2010). Also, proper training in technological methods, virtual communication techniques, and etiquette is important for a manager because it



motivates employees to respond. For example, one-way managers can keep their employees engaged and be respectful of their time is to limit the amount of time spent during teleconferencing and videoconference meetings (Lee, 2021). Furthermore, smiling when speaking is strongly suggested in a teleconference and is an effective technique to encourage communication (Lee, 2021). Scrivener (2014) suggests that “by adopting three distinct leadership actions—‘mitigate the differences,’ ‘extend their reach,’ and ‘leverage the right technology’—great leaders will overcome any challenges.

D. RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Most organizational psychologists agree that effective relationship management is an essential investment for all managers. Teams must respect and trust their managers and vice versa. When face-to-face interactions become limited, a manager can use other strategies to build and maintain trust. This section also discusses the unique challenges a multigenerational team brings and how a manager can take advantage of the differences and find opportunities to build cohesiveness.

A manager needs to invest time in building trust and recognizing their teams’ contributions. Managers must trust that their employees can and are doing the job well, and teleworking employees must trust that their supervisor will treat them equally (Kowalski & Swanson, 2005, p. 243). An empowered management approach involves a manager trusting team members to complete mutually agreed-upon tasks, while a control-oriented style requires the manager’s presence to oversee and direct the employee’s work (Cook, 2019). Although federal policy allows telework for government employees, some managers prohibit it, citing distrust in their staff (Brown et al., 2016). Distrust in management hampers an employee’s performance during telework, with mental health serving as a mediator between trust in leadership and performance results (Jaiswal et al., 2024). If a manager has never managed a remote employee before, it is easy for that employee to feel micromanaged (Alexander, 2022). For this reason, to build a level of trust and a good relationship managers need to focus on the communicated goals set for the employee (Alexander, 2022).

Paying attention to the details of a meeting format, frequency, and interactions can help managers build trust. Having face-to-face interactions helps in building trust and



is essential, but technology can help managers; managers should have regular meetings individually with a team member or with the team and, if possible, consider offsite team events to allow the team to be in a more relaxed environment (Cook, 2019). Additionally, remote managers also need to develop or refine their ability to identify verbal or visual cues from employees to facilitate communication and trust. Lee (2021) argues that communication is generally sender-controlled because the sender decides what and when to send, but in a virtual team environment, communication is receiver-controlled because the receiver can choose when to respond, unlike face-to-face communication, which requires an immediate response. Scrivener (2014, pp. 49–52) argues that “remote leaders need to be skilled in driving results with little face-to-face contact, ‘reading between the lines’ from afar, and engaging, inspiring, and building trust in a team with technology as their main source of communication.” Scrivener (2014) adds that “great leaders overcome the lack of face-to-face contact by using technology effectively, learning how to trust their team, and knowing how to read between the lines virtually.” Engaging with remote employees frequently is crucial, as well as communicating with a purpose and making check-ins with the team meaningful (Alexander, 2022).

Another topic to consider is managing a multi-generational workplace where conflicts may exist due to generational differences. Intergenerational conflict is an issue between younger and older generations because of their different work values, communication preferences, preference for recognition, and perceived enthusiasm, among other things (Jones, 2017, pp. 70–73). Sanner-Stiehr and Vandermause (2017) argue that the characteristics of different generations are very widespread in everyday conversations, and there are perceptions or stereotypes that may result in mutual resentment. According to Jones (2017, p. 3) there are currently four generations in the workplace: (a) Millennials (born 1981–2001); (b) Generation X (born 1965–1980); Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964); and (d) Traditionalists (born 1929–1945). However, there is also Generation Z (born 1997–2012). Additionally, Jones (2017) found that millennials are technology-dependent and prefer communication via technology, while older generations lack technological aptitude and prefer verbal communication (Jones, 2017). Generation Z’s four key drivers are work-life balance, skills, appreciation and recognition (Surugiu et al., 2025). According to a study, Generation Z’s preferred workplace



communication tool was email (90% of the respondents), and the least preferred was the organization's intranet or network (31% of respondents; Janssen & Carradini, 2021). Therefore, communication is difficult due to the differences in communication preference styles. Sanner-Stiehr and Vandermause (2017) argue that generational differences may create opportunities for mentoring relationships. Furthermore, if an employee sees how the combination of generations can enhance the sharing of knowledge and expertise, then there will be mutual understanding and respect.

E. COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Collaboration and engagement are important for effective team performance, whether the manager interacts with the team in person or virtually. This section highlights the need for a supportive environment that benefits both the individual and group dynamic, which can lead to enhanced productivity and job satisfaction.

Collaboration and engagement promote a positive, constructive work culture for employee job satisfaction. HR management professionals and industrial-organizational psychologists argue that less complex tasks, in comparison to more complex tasks require minimal team communication and collaboration (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002). However, due to the amount of sharing and collaboration required for more complex tasks, synchronous communication is important and can be accomplished by managers providing clear, engaging directions using collaboration technology (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002). Additionally, Lang et al. (2022) highlights the importance of fostering both individual and group collaboration to include an environment of psychological safety with interventions such as requesting feedback from employees. Mitchell (2015) suggests that employees are more engaged when they have more frequent and high-quality communication with their virtual managers. According to Bakker and Leite (2010), work engagement is a positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational state opposite of job burnout, and the goal for managers is to create and adjust conditions in the workplace to encourage work engagement. Additionally, engaging in boundary spanning and buffering is important for fostering employee engagement (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002). Bell and Kozlowski suggest boundary spanning reduces employee frustration because the manager connects the team members to the information and resources they need. Additionally, by



buffering, the manager is protecting the team from external distractions and disturbances, fostering an environment that allows the employees to focus, leading to higher engagement (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002).

F. AGILE RESPONSE WITH EVOLVING POLICY

Establishing and implementing organizational policies requires managers to conduct ongoing reviews of existing policies to address an organization's evolving needs. Organizations may move towards greater reliance on telework or may move more towards in-office work. This section addresses the importance of internal controls, such as periodic reviews of policies, telework agreements, and in-office reentry guidance, to prepare and ensure quality controls and accountability from agencies and employees.

A common agreement among organizational and social psychologists is the importance of continuous policy evaluation to keep pace with evolving organizational change. Changing policies is often challenging and may discourage an agency from self-assessing which policies need updates or changes. However, maintaining updated policies and documenting periodic reviews pays off in the long run. Otherwise, without internal controls, any future reporting on the success or failure of telework will lack accuracy (GAO, 2021). For this reason, the Telework Enhancement Act requires the Telework Managing Officer to have specific duties such as “policy development and implementation related to agency telework programs” (Telework Enhancement Act, 2010). Additionally, the Code of Federal Regulations mandates that agencies routinely review the efficacy of their performance management systems and apply necessary upgrades (Performance Appraisal System Requirements, 1995). The federal government has issued multiple memorandums to prepare agencies for change, see Table 1.



Table 1. Telework Memorandums from 2021–2023

Memorandum	Purpose
Integrating Planning for A Safe Increased Return of Federal Employees and Contractors to Physical Workplaces with Post-Reentry Personnel Policies and Work Environment (2021)	Agencies directed to complete their planning for reentry.
FY 2024 Agency-wide Capital Planning to Support the Future of Work (2022)	Agencies directed to develop personnel policies for hybrid, telework, and remote work.
Measuring, Monitoring, and Improving Organizational Health and Organizational Performance in the Context of Evolving Agency Work Environments (2023)	Agencies directed to assess their work environments and plan on how to measure and monitor the organization's performance.

In June 2021, all federal agencies were instructed to make decisions based on lessons learned and evidence for planning to return employees back to more in-person on-site attendance (OMB, 2021). Following, in July 2022, another memorandum required agencies to develop their FY2024–FY2028 capital plans, defining the required real property resources agencies needed to fully implement the future of work, such as determining physical space and online collaboration tools needed (OMB, 2022). Furthermore, in 2023, the memorandum directed agencies to assess, reflect, and update their work environment plan based on previous guidance to describe current operational policies and future changes to those policies to improve the agency's mission delivery (OMB, 2023). Due to evolving policies, the OMB has directed agencies to establish routines to monitor and identify positive and negative outliers to assess and improve the agency's organizational health (OMB, 2023).

In fact, concerns about insufficient monitoring and performance policy review have inspired political action and legal shifts related to monitoring and limiting telework. Senator Joe Manchin and Senator Mitt Romney added to the discussion for a return to more in-office attendance with claims that federal agencies need to review and reauthorize employee telework agreements and monitor employees' work while teleworking. Their bill, introduced in May 2024, proposed telework limitations, annual review and approval of employee telework agreements, and remote monitoring and

evaluation (Back to Work Act 2024, 2024). Additionally, a report by the GAO (2024a) looked at four federal agencies to see how they have evaluated telework. The GAO (2024a) found each agency tracked accurate telework participation rates but recommended that agencies “evaluate their telework programs to identify problems or issues with the programs and make appropriate adjustments and assess the effects of telework on agency performance.” Experts in organizational performance agree that an agency should revise performance management policy by reassessing summary rating patterns, simplifying rating formulas, developing critical performance elements, and implementing quality control processes (Ayers, 2022). Additionally, agencies should incorporate periodic reviews of their policies and plans to establish quality control processes that involve multiple individuals providing feedback (Ayers, 2022).

G. MANAGER TRAINING AND SUPPORT

To succeed in managing in different environments, managers require guidance, training and top management support. This section discusses the guidance and resources currently available to managers in a hybrid telework and re-entry environment. It highlights how top management support is important for current and future managers’ success and professional development.

Management at multiple levels is important and guidance from top management is essential to have an organizational structure that defines the organization’s goal. Günther et al. (2022) suggest that the joint role of human resource management (HRM) and leadership is complementary and have distinct effects on teleworkers’ well-being. Telework-oriented HRM practices reduce social isolation while leadership addresses work-related stress (Günther et al., 2022). Ayers (2022) argues that management of all levels should be held accountable for good performance management (Ayers, 2022). Furthermore, the federal government should not expect supervisors to provide valuable performance standards or for employees to succeed if supervisors do not receive appropriate training (Ayers, 2022). According to DoD Instruction 1035.01 (DoD, 2024) supervisors should participate in telework training before approving telework agreements. OPM provides resources for federal government managers to help them succeed in their role. OPM and the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) have dedicated and



established an interagency site that focuses strictly on telework that includes categories separated by subject, depicted in Figure 2.

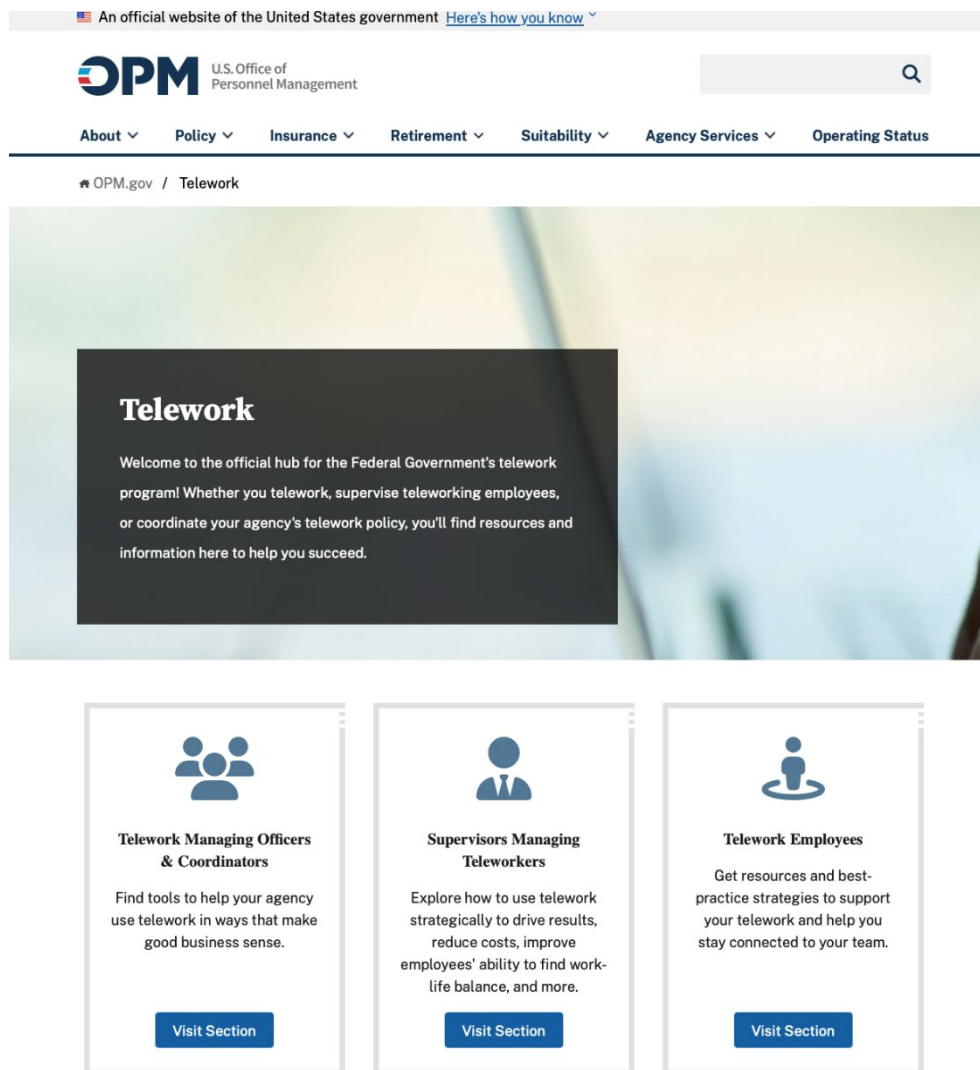


Figure 2. OPM Telework Resources. Source: OPM (2024).

Within the Telework Managing Officers and Coordinators section, there is guidance and best practices for building a telework program, agency roles, performance management, and more (OPM, 2024). The Supervisors Managing Teleworkers section includes subsections discussing results-oriented management, assessing job tasks, and providing maximum flexibility for the team's work schedule. The third section, titled Telework Employees, provides resources and strategies to support a team and stay connected (OPM, 2024). GAO (2024b) reported that managerial support is one of the key practices that ensures a successful telework program. Additionally, OPM has tip sheets

available to provide practices and considerations for preparing agencies for hybrid transitions and more in-office attendance. Figures 3 and 4 show sections of the tip sheets dedicated to supervisors (OPM, 2024).

Training Topics for Supervisors	
Policy and Process Changes	Manage the Transition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Updated policies on telework, remote work, leave, and scheduling □ How to handle accommodations □ How to handle employees who refuse to return to work □ Updated office space policies (e.g., common spaces, conference rooms, hoteling, etc.) □ How to manage staff performance in a hybrid work environment □ Consider what technology is available for employees to host hybrid and virtual meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Change management and resiliency □ How to handle the first day and week back □ Navigate difficult conversations about the pandemic's impact □ Create space for employee adjustment to working onsite again □ Manage employee expectations for the new 'business as usual' □ Consider the logistical and emotional aspects of return for employees (commutes, dependent care, exposure concerns, etc.)
<p>U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT 1900 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20415 workforce@opm.gov https://www.opm.gov/futureofwork</p>	

Figure 3. Training Topics for Supervisors to Help Manage Re-entry Transition Phase. Source: OPM (2024).

Figure 3 is focused on practices and suggestions to consider when employees return to the workplace; although the list has suggestions, the tip sheet does not provide further guidance (OPM, 2024).

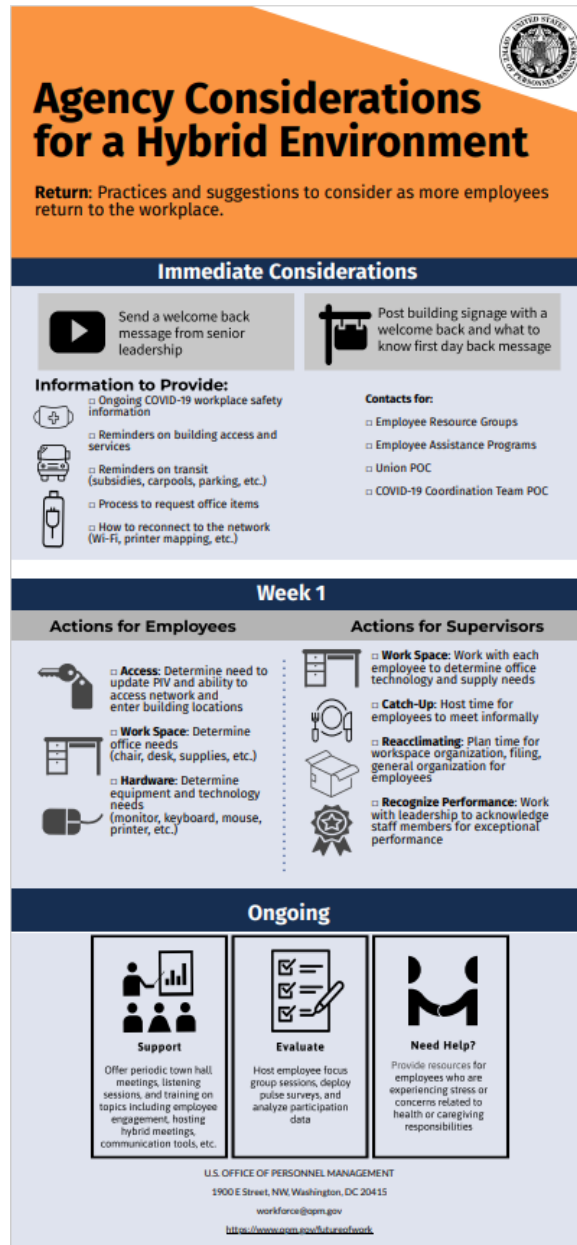


Figure 4. Agency Considerations for a Hybrid Environment. Source: OPM (2024).

On the other hand, the resource shown in Figure 4 is more action-driven by introducing immediate considerations and ongoing recommendations as more employees return to the workplace. Just like the resource shown in Figure 3, this tip sheet does not allow the user to click within the sheet for further guidance (OPM, 2024). Having resources ensures managers are not left alone to figure things out. However, Ayers (2022) emphasizes that training should not stop at frontline supervisors and that all senior

leaders should receive the training, so everyone has the same understanding and expectations.

H. RETURN-TO-OFFICE

From 2023 to 2024, large corporations and government lawmakers have increasingly advocated for a five-day-per-week RTO mandate, which has prompted organizations to consider the challenges and risks of implementing successful RTO policies. This section addresses how RTO mandates may present organizational challenges such as employee resistance and talent retention. Additionally, this section discusses the complexities that organizations need to navigate in an RTO transition to sustain organizational order. Literature does not provide a blueprint or perfect recipe for successfully implementing an RTO mandate. Over the past 10 years we have seen fluctuations between more hybrid and more in-office work. Regardless of whether we are shifting towards or away from telework, the literature suggests that managers get the best results when they clearly communicate their expectations, foster trust, provide support and reinforce accountability.

1. Challenges

Congress has discussed RTO mandates since 2023, when Rep. James Comer proposed the SHOW UP Act, a bill aimed to require federal agencies to reinstate their pre-pandemic telework practices and policies (SHOW UP Act, 2023). The general argument in favor of increased on-site attendance has focused on accountability, oversight, improved collaboration and enhanced team culture (Elliott, 2024). Arguments against increased on-site attendance have included employees feeling forced to return when they have been working effectively from home, employees giving up work-life balance by spending time commuting, and employees feeling that their leaders do not trust them (Elliot, 2024). Likewise, business analysts continue to report on and debate RTO mandates for the private and federal sectors. Recently, JP Morgan Chase informed employees they will be required to work in-office five days a week, shifting from their three-day policy (Ungarino, 2025). Additionally, other large companies that have issued a return to five days in-office mandate include Amazon, Dell and Goldman Sachs (Hubble



Team, 2025). An increase in news coverage regarding federal RTO mandates surfaced after President Trump appointed a new advisory commission, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). DOGE aims to reduce telework and enforce an RTO policy mandating federal employees to attend the office in person five days a week. Some corporate leaders argue that in-person work enhances collaboration and innovation, while other managers admit they cannot manage employees remotely by results and want to reassert control by visual oversight (Vyas, 2022).

Private companies and business professionals recognize that implementing an effective RTO mandate requires leaders to prepare for challenges such as employee resistance, employee morale, organizational costs, and a shift in culture. David Coghlan (1993) explains that resistance is not just about the person being stubborn and unwilling to accept organizational change. Rather, it is natural, and it involves both a cognitive and an emotional element that should be taken seriously (Coghlan, 1993). Returning to the office places pressures on the employees to prioritize appearing productive by their presence over actual performance, which undermines a culture of trust and confidence (Dennison, 2024). Additionally, to mitigate employee resistance, some experts like Rahaman et al. (2021) suggest that direct supervisors play a key role in facilitating smooth change transitions; when leaders foster positive interactions during periods of change, it enhances employees' commitment, thereby decreasing resistance.

Another challenge with RTO mandates is employee morale. There are different ways to measure morale, from casual chats to more formal focus groups. Good managers look forward to engaging with their team and are eager to better support and boost employee morale, while poor managers are disengaged, dread the results of poor performance reviews from their employees, and hope they will go away (Bowles and Cooper, 2009). RTO mandates can affect an employee's morale, for this reason HR professionals agree that employers do not want to trigger damaging morale, and employers should find ways, such as perks, to make the office more appealing (Hirsch, 2022). Accordingly, Bowles and Cooper (2009), recognize morale as a key driver of performance no matter what reason and what resistance it meets (Bowles & Cooper, 2009). Organizational costs are also an important challenge to be addressed in RTO mandates. Within the federal government there is currently no consensus regarding the



most optimal strategy for agencies to forecast future RTO costs. According to a recent OMB report, certain government agencies acknowledge having excess office space and DOGE plans to collaborate with them to sell off unnecessary buildings and consolidate operations into more compact facilities. However, in other agencies where office and parking spaces are limited, employees who oppose RTO mandates argue that leadership should be considering occupancy rates and relocation costs for agencies with limited office and parking spaces.

Business management experts agree that a culture change can result from a change or a crisis from an RTO mandate, which is another challenge to be addressed. Culture is more important than ever, and leaders must attend to corporate culture by having a perception of their organization's current culture and be alert to misalignments when making decisions and enacting change; at the same time they must be ready to adjust the culture to the new situation (Cheng & Grosyberg, 2024). Creating a culture that prioritizes employee well-being can counter negative pushback from employees (Hirsch, 2022).

HR professionals agree that another complexity to navigate when making organizational changes is the risks of employee retention and maintaining employee productivity. A case study focused on three large American tech companies that implemented an RTO mandate reported that the mandate hurt the tenure and outflow of their senior personnel (Van Dijcke et al., 2024). Additionally, HR professionals agree that top performers typically react to RTO mandates by showing interest in leaving (Gartner, 2024). When a disruptive event occurs, many will look to leadership for guidance and direction. If leaders are unprepared and struggling, then progress and productivity may be affected (Bogosian & Byrd-Poller, 2023). Leaders argue that in-office work allows for more productivity, but some executive advisers disagree, stating that using face time as a benchmark to measure productivity is misguided and companies should focus more on outcomes to achieve greater engagement and productivity from their employees (Elliott, 2024).

2. RTO Strategies and Best Practices



Managers need strategic leadership and preparation to have the ability to succeed in an RTO mandate transition without putting the employees or organization in jeopardy. Although companies have received pushback after RTO mandates, there are some lessons learned and best practices to assist an organization in navigating an RTO transition and to ensure a balanced approach for the employee and the organization. Experts in leadership agree that a sudden shift in an organization without the tools or ability to adjust and respond quickly is a classic cause of organizational trauma (Bogosian & Byrd-Poller, 2023). Trauma is frequently connected to how individuals respond to external events, yet it can also manifest within groups and organizations (Bogosian & Byrd-Poller, 2023). Individuals' reactions to change can be positive, negative or indecisive depending on their respective perceptions (Khaw et al., 2023). Therefore, effective strategies for an RTO mandate require proactive planning, transparent and inclusive decision-making, clear communication, and flexible policies (Bogosian & Byrd-Poller, 2023).

HR professionals emphasize that leaders should demonstrate empathy, communicate intentions transparently, create a strategic plan, prioritize employee safety, address mental health, and consider offering flexible work options or additional benefits for office returns (Hirsch, 2022). HR can support leaders by establishing processes to reduce risks and provide resources to prevent employee trauma and organizational harm (Bogosian & Byrd-Poller, 2023). To address adaptive challenges, Bogosian and Byrd-Poller (2023, p.255) suggests the following steps:

1. Identify and name (adaptive challenge) the trauma, e.g., pandemic workplace transitions.
2. Frame the key questions and issues that must be addressed.
3. Protect people by managing the rate and amount of change at one time.
4. Help the workforce transition by orienting associates to new roles and responsibilities needed during the remedy process.
5. Clarify business realities (desired future state) and key values that will guide the remedy process.
6. Maintain organizational non-negotiable norms that must endure and challenge those that need to change, such as collaboration, cooperation and knowledge sharing.

According to executive coaches, regardless of how people feel about the shift back to in-office work, no one believes there will be a positive outcome if the manager



doesn't believe it themselves (Forbes Coaches Council, 2025). Other executive coaches recommend several key strategies to facilitate employees' return to the office. These include allowing employees time to adjust, actively asking them how managers can assist them, being flexible with accommodations, and making an effort to connect with the team members one-on-one (Forbes Coaches Council, 2023).

HR professionals advocate for leaders to reevaluate their policies on how to measure efficiency and productivity, by focusing on tangible results rather than on a visibility-driven performative culture (Dennison, 2024). Ethical leadership in times of organizational change fosters a fair environment and helps to reduce employee resistance (Rahaman et al., 2021). Employers must be attentive to employees' work-life balance to keep them motivated when developing policy changes (Vyas, 2022). Coghlan states "resistance to change has its origins in both the personality and the individual's interaction with the environment" and "is a dynamic activity with both cognitive and emotional elements" (Coghlan, 1993). Additionally, Coghlan (1993) notes that people resisting change should be treated with respect, actively listened to, and understood. Furthermore, Dennison (2024) argues that providing flexibility and hybrid options is a middle ground that can satisfy both employer and employee needs, for example, offering in-office days for team meetings balanced with remote workdays for focused tasks. OPM recognizes that "employees will face challenges transitioning to the post-reentry workplace and agencies are encouraged to work with employees to address specific circumstances to assist them in returning to a post-reentry footing" (OPM, 2024). Additionally, Bogosian and Byrd-Poller (2023) suggest that managers and supervisors should receive training to recognize and address employee concerns or trauma to returning to the workplace.

Transitioning to a five-day per-week in-office working environment presents different challenges to both the employer and employee. Consequently, without strategic leadership and planning, employers risk losing top talent, and those employees who remain may experience low morale due to the shift from their usual routines. While there is no perfect method for the transition, managers need to lead effectively balancing the needs of the employees and the organization. HR and leadership experts agree that some



of the best practices for a smooth transition to in-office work necessitates effective communication, patience, and empathy.

I. LITERATURE-INFORMED CONCEPTUAL MODELS

Telework has been an effective tool for organizations looking to attract top talent and to provide a work-life balance for their employees. The literature shows that the success of teleworking is heavily dependent on leadership's ability to support their employees in a way that allows for maximum flexibility to promote productivity. Some managers are hesitant to allow employees to telework fearing loss of control; this can lead to employees to perceive that their managers want to micromanage them and lack trust in them. However, achieving success requires more than just the manager supporting telework. Managers must receive the training, resources, and support from their leadership to excel. Effectively managing a hybrid team requires a manager to communicate clearly. Figure 5 depicts which areas managers should prioritize when working with a hybrid team.

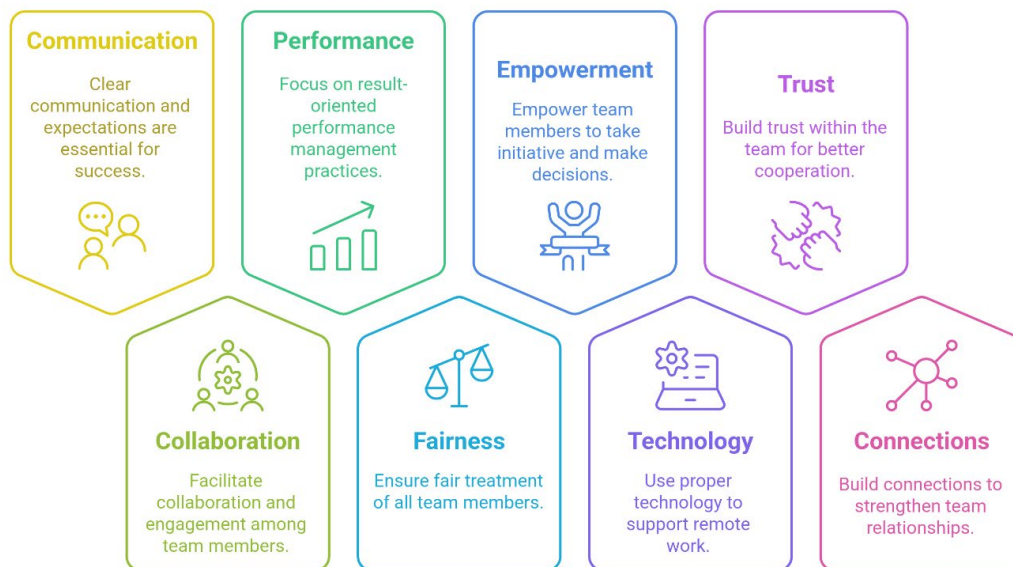


Figure 5. Effective Management for a Hybrid Team

The argument in favor of in-office work often highlights the benefit managers have by monitoring their employees more closely. However, if an organization shifts

from a hybrid work culture to in-office work by removing the telework option and requiring employees to work in-office this shift presents a lot of challenges leaders need to be aware of. Some of the challenges the literature revealed with in-office management are geographical talent limitations. When organizations increase in-office work, they may need to consider how transitioning employees into offices may incur additional operational costs. Figure 6 shows what challenges managers will likely need to identify and respond to in order to support their employees during a return to in-office work.



Figure 6. In-Office Management Challenges

An organization should decide what work environment works best for them. However, if there is a mandate to return to in-office work, managers may achieve a more successful RTO transition by using best practices. Figure 7 depicts a series of steps that help managers apply these best practices.

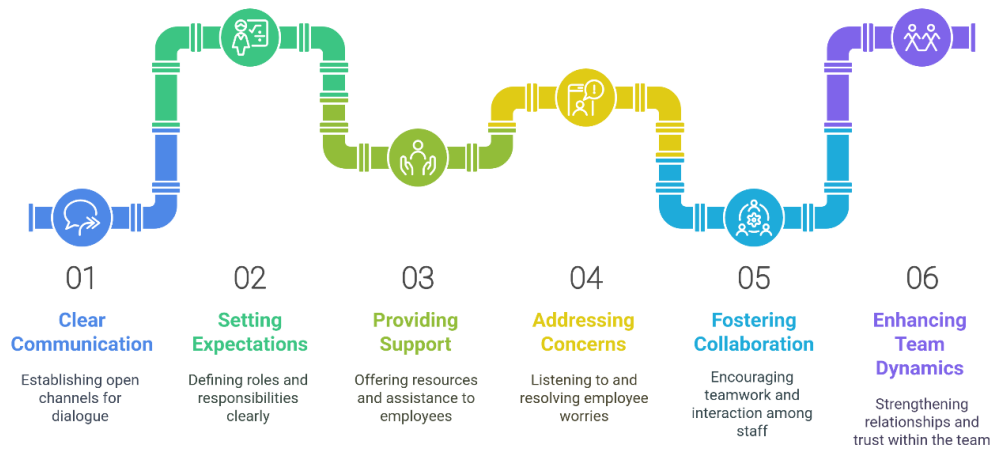


Figure 7. Best Practices When Transitioning to Back to In-Office Work

The breadth of research regarding management in a hybrid or in-office work environment indicates that for any of these work environments to succeed, organizations must carefully assess their policies and processes. Many experts agree that periodic reviews and evaluations are one of the best ways to measure organizational success. Now that these models have been developed, the following chapters apply them to the analysis of survey data collected from the NETC workforce.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



IV. METHODS

In this Chapter I will discuss in detail the methodologies employed to gather and analyze data from two surveys conducted during my research. The first survey is the 2024 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). The FEVS provides information regarding NETC culture and climate before the RTO mandate. With the rapid requirement for federal employees to return to full time in-office attendance, a second survey was designed by a team from NPS to collect data during the period people at NETC were adjusting to the new requirement to work onsite every day. In Chapter V, I discuss the results from both surveys, which tie to my literature review. The cognizant Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined this study was not research in accordance with the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (Common Rule).

A. FEVS

The FEVS is sent via email from OPM to federal employees annually for the purpose of allowing employees to share experiences and perception with their agencies and leadership. The results of the survey are analyzed at federal organization level to provide leadership insight where improvements may be necessary. The 2024 FEVS survey was administered to 1.6 million federal employees during 20 May 2024 – 05 July 2024. A total of 674,000 federal employees responded, corresponding to approximately 41% response rate. The following information was gathered from the NETC 2024 FEVS subagency report, which stated that 91 surveys were completed, a 29.5% response rate for NETC employees. Table 2 presents questions selected due to their relevancy to my proposed model based on the literature review. In addition, I include questions related to the current telework climate at NETC during the survey period.



Table 2. FEVS Questions Relating to Management and Telework

Please select the response that BEST describes your current teleworking schedule.
I am held accountable for the quality of work I produce.
Employees in my work unit contribute positively to my agency's performance.
My supervisor holds me accountable for achieving results.
In my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way.
Employees are recognized for providing high quality products and services.
I know what is expected of me on the job.
I have the autonomy to decide how I do my job.
Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by your immediate supervisor?
My supervisor provides me with performance feedback throughout the year.
In my work unit, excellent work is similarly recognized for all employees (e.g., awards, acknowledgements).
My supervisor treats me with respect.
My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues.
Supervisors in my work unit support employee development.
My supervisor listens to what I have to say.
My supervisor treats me with respect.
I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.
My supervisor provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my job performance.
Senior leaders demonstrate support for Work-Life programs.
Management makes effective changes to address challenges facing our organization.
I have similar access to advancement opportunities (e.g., promotion, career development, training) as others in my work unit.
My supervisor provides opportunities fairly to all employees in my work unit (e.g., promotions, work assignments).
Management involves employees in decisions that affect their work.
Information is openly shared in my organization.
How satisfied are you with your involvement in decisions that affect your work?
How satisfied are you with the information you receive from management on what's going on in your organization?
Employees in my work unit share job knowledge.
Managers promote communication among different work units (for example, about projects, goals, needed resources).
I feel a strong personal attachment to my organization.
I can make decisions about my work without getting permission first.
The people I work with cooperate to get the job done.
I can influence decisions in my work unit.
My organization has prepared me for potential cybersecurity threats.
Managers communicate the goals of the organization.
I have a clear idea of how well I am doing my job.

B. NETC-RTO SURVEY

A survey was created in collaboration with a team from NPS using Qualtrics.¹ The survey was designed to measure employees' experience with telework and perceptions of the Navy's mandate to return to full-time, in-office work. It included items measuring attitudes toward the RTO policy, the value of workplace and schedule flexibility, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and overall morale.

The survey was distributed anonymously by NETC's HR group via supervisors to approximately 340 employees across the HR, Information Technology, R&D and Innovation, and Manning and Manpower teams, all of whom perform critical functions for NETC. While some employees had previously teleworked and others worked in-office due to job requirements, nearly all were co-located with their supervisors at the time of the survey.

The survey was conducted from February 4 to February 24, 2025. The design of the survey featured a comprehensive set of questions, beginning with the following introductory section:

NETC Telework and Return-to-Office Survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. We aim to better understand the benefits and challenges associated with telework and the new return-to-office policy. Your insights will help us evaluate how work schedules and locations may impact the people and productivity in your work unit. We will also appreciate your ideas about how NETC can best support work-life balance while continuing to complete the mission given the new return-to-office policy. Please share your honest thoughts—your responses will remain completely anonymous. The survey is hosted by the Naval Postgraduate School (not NETC), and your answers will not be linked to your identity in any way. As you complete the survey, please reflect on the current work environment within NETC, particularly as we adapt to lower levels of telework across teams and new policy that requires people to work onsite full-time. Your feedback is invaluable, and we appreciate your candid responses. Thank you for helping us shape a better workplace.

¹ Software tool for survey development, administration and results reports.



To ensure anonymity, the survey did not collect demographic details such as rank, sex, or affiliation. However, respondents were asked, “Are you currently a supervisor?” with “yes” and “no” response actions. This response determined routing to tailored questions toward the survey’s end. Supervisors were directed to question about managing the RTO transition, while non-supervisors answered questions about leadership communication and the impact of the RTO policy on morale. All participants responded to two core question blocks: the first on team dynamics and productivity, and the second on individual attitudes and work-life balance. The survey concluded with questions about prior and preferred telework frequency, followed by three open-ended text questions.

1. General Questions about Telework and Returning to Work in the Office.

All participants were asked:

- “On average, how many days per week did you telework in 2024?” with options ranging from 0 to 5.
- “How many days per week would you like to telework?” with options ranging from 0 to 5.

Following these, three open-ended questions were presented:

- “What are the pros and cons of requiring people to work full-time in the office?”
- “What could NETC do to help people adjust to increased hours working in the office?”
- “What other issues or suggestions does NETC need to consider?”

2. Planned Analysis

The purpose of the analysis was to assess the effectiveness of NETC’s telework and RTO mandate, as well as to identify strategies to improve support for telework and the transition to in-office work.

For analyzing open-text responses, I systematically organized the data in Excel spreadsheets, beginning by separating responses from supervisors to allow for targeted analysis. I developed a coding system to categorize responses based on recurring themes, such as team building and morale, communication, flexible scheduling, collaboration and work-life balance concerns. Each response was reviewed multiple times to ensure



accurate theme identification and were refined repeatedly to capture nuances in the data. Quantitative data, such as responses to telework frequency questions, were aggregated in Excel spreadsheets to calculate descriptive statistics, including averages and frequency distributions.

A second coder from the Naval Postgraduate School independently analyzed the open-text responses with the support of NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. The second coder followed a similar process of iterative code development to ensure comprehensive theme capture. After completing our independent analysis, we convened to compare our coding frameworks, discuss discrepancies, and align on a unified set of themes. This intercoder reliability process strengthened the validity of the finding by minimizing individual bias and ensuring consistency in theme interpretation. The results, integrating both qualitative themes and quantitative trends, are presented in the following chapter.



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



V. RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the results of the studies, which are tied into my literature review models. The FEVS results encompass responses from both supervisors and non-supervisors, as these were not separated in the survey data. In contrast, the NETC-RTO survey results will focus strictly on supervisors' responses, as the survey included questions tailored specifically for supervisors, identified based on whether respondents confirmed their supervisory role.

A. ASSESSMENT OF FEVS RELATED TO NETC

The FEVS survey focused on employees' work experience, work unit, organization, leadership, management, satisfaction, experience and workplace flexibilities. Figure 8 provides the results to the question, "Please select the response that BEST describes your current teleworking schedule." The majority of respondents teleworked 3 or 4 days per week, while a substantial minority (nearly 30%) were teleworking 1 or 2 days per week. No one reported teleworking every workday.

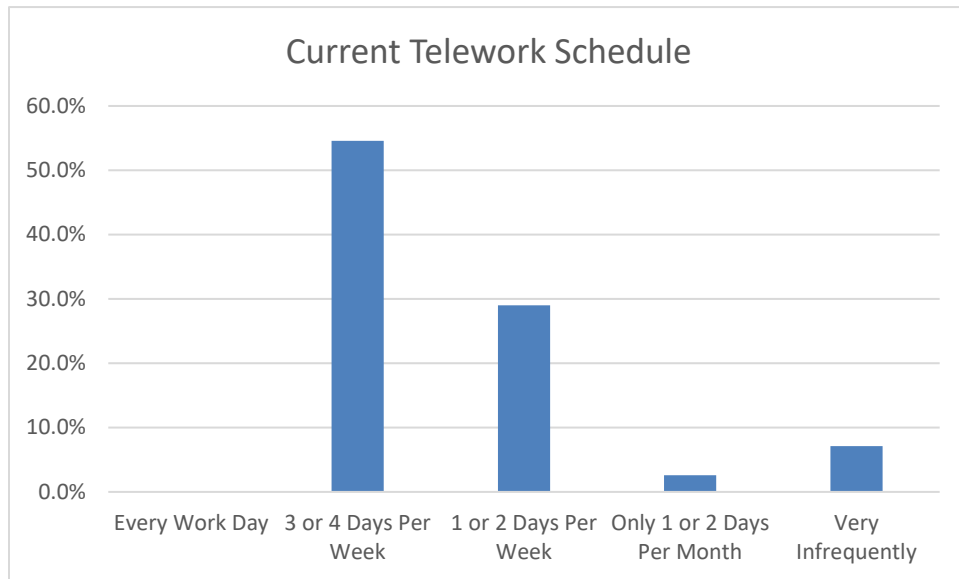


Figure 8. NETC Telework Climate

Figure 9 shows the respondents who did not telework. The majority of them indicated that they chose not to telework (4.2% of the respondents' population). Only 2.5% were constrained by their jobs preventing them from teleworking.

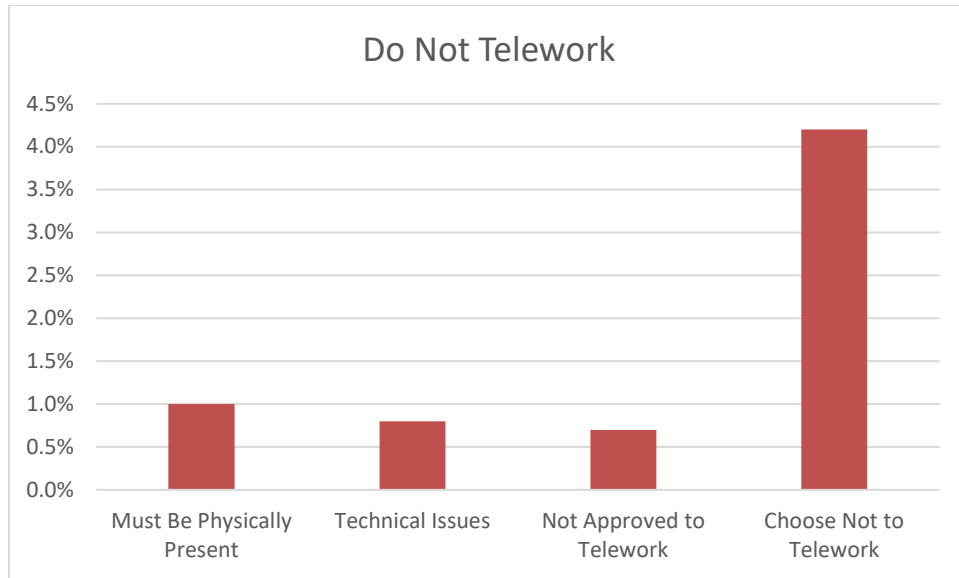


Figure 9. Employees Who Do Not Telework

In Tables 3–10, the survey results are mapped to align with the categories developed in the effective team management model shown in Chapter III Figure 5. The FEVS survey collected responses into three categories which it defined as:

- Positive: Strongly Agree and Agree or Always and Most of the Time or Very Good and Good or Very Satisfied and Satisfied.
- Neutral: Neither Agree nor Disagree or Sometimes or Fair or Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied.
- Negative: Disagree and Strongly Disagree or Rarely and Never or Poor and Very Poor or Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied.

In general, employees' perspectives on communication at NETC were positive. The strongest statement was the employees' feeling heard by their supervisors (89.2% positive). The weakest areas were communication from management about what was happening in the organization (61.7% positive, with 15.3% negative responses). Organization goal communication was moderately strong (70.3% positive), see Table 3.

Table 3. Communication

Communication

Statement	N	Positive	Neutral	Negative
I know what is expected of me on the job.	89	87.20%	9.90%	2.80%
I have a clear idea of how well I am doing my job.	91	86.30%	8.00%	5.70%

My supervisor provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my job performance.	85	79.40%	12.50%	8.10%
How satisfied are you with the information you receive from management on what's going on in your organization?	85	61.70%	23.00%	15.30%
Managers communicate the goals of the organization.	85	70.30%	19.20%	10.50%
My supervisor listens to what I have to say.	86	89.20%	4.60%	6.20%

Responses in Table 4 were consistently positive in performance accountability for work quality (92.2% positive) and results (91.3% positive) are very high, with minimal negative feedback (0.8% and 0.7%). The only exception is 13.5% of the respondents thought they were not adequately recognized for good performance.

Table 4. Performance

Performance Statement	N	Positive	Neutral	Negative
I am held accountable for the quality of work I produce.	90	92.20%	7.00%	0.80%
My supervisor holds me accountable for achieving results.	85	91.30%	8.10%	0.70%
Employees are recognized for providing high quality products and services.	86	72.40%	14.10%	13.50%
My supervisor provides me with performance feedback throughout the year.	85	82.70%	10.30%	7.00%

Table 5 shows a positive response for supervisors supporting employees' development (85.7% positive), and employees feeling some autonomy in decision-making (75.8% positive). Involvement in work-related decisions is weaker (57.0% positive, 22.9% negative), with satisfaction at 64.2% positive and 18.7% negative. The other questions had neutral responses varying from 10.7%–20.10%.

Table 5. Empowerment

Empowerment Statement	N	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Supervisors in my work unit support employee development.	85	85.70%	11.10%	3.20%
Management involves employees in decisions that affect their work.	84	57.00%	20.10%	22.90%



How satisfied are you with your involvement in decisions that affect your work?	85	64.20%	17.00%	18.70%
I can make decisions about my work without getting permission first.	91	75.80%	17.10%	7.10%
I can influence decisions in my work unit.	91	79.30%	10.70%	9.90%

Regarding trust, Table 6 regarding trust shows NETC excels in employees feeling their supervisors supported their work-life balance (87.9% positive). The data also shows that autonomy in job execution (79.1% positive) and trust in supervisors (78.2% positive) are strong. Furthermore, open information sharing is lower (62.0% positive, 24.6% negative), as is confidence in senior leaders' support for work-life programs (62.1% positive, 17.5% negative).

Table 6. Trust

Trust

Statement	N	Positive	Neutral	Negative
I have the autonomy to decide how I do my job.	91	79.10%	14.60%	6.20%
I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.	87	78.20%	11.40%	10.40%
Information is openly shared in my organization.	85	62.00%	13.40%	24.60%
My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues.	86	87.90%	6.10%	6.00%
Senior leaders demonstrate support for Work-Life programs.	85	62.10%	20.40%	17.50%
Management makes effective changes to address challenges facing our organization.	83	65.70%	18.50%	15.80%

Regarding collaboration, Table 7 shows a very strong positive response to team contributions to agency performance (93.5% positive) and cooperation (88.7% positive) are very high, with minimal negatives (1.3% and 2.1%). Knowledge sharing is strong (88.4% positive), but cross-unit communication by manager is less robust (68.4% positive, 15.8% negative).



Table 7. Collaboration

Collaboration Statement	N	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Employees in my work unit contribute positively to my agency's performance.	88	93.50%	5.20%	1.30%
Employees in my work unit share job knowledge.	90	88.40%	9.30%	2.30%
Managers promote communication among different work units.	82	68.40%	15.80%	15.80%
The people I work with cooperate to get the job done.	91	88.70%	9.20%	2.10%

Fairness in Table 8, rated highly positive in supervisors treating employees respectfully (89.2% positive) and providing fair opportunities (75.7% positive), with low negatives (6.2% and 4.2%). However, the recognition of performance differences (56.5% positive, 19.2% negative) and equal recognition (71.6% positive) showed mixed results.

Table 8. Fairness

Fairness Statement	N	Positive	Neutral	Negative
My supervisor provides opportunities fairly to all employees in my work unit.	83	75.70%	20.10%	4.20%
My supervisor treats me with respect.	87	89.20%	4.60%	6.20%
In my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way.	83	56.50%	24.30%	19.20%
In my work unit, excellent work is similarly recognized for all employees.	84	71.60%	18.00%	10.40%
I have similar access to advancement opportunities.	83	75.50%	20.50%	4.00%

Technology was not covered much in the survey. Preparation for cybersecurity threats is exceptionally high (92.1% positive), with no negative responses.

Table 9. Technology

Technology Statement	N	Positive	Neutral	Negative
My organization has prepared me for potential cybersecurity threats.	85	92.10%	7.90%	0.00%



The topic of connections was also not addressed much in the survey. Organization attachment is moderate with 66.1% positive, 15.2% negative and 18.7% neutral responses.

Table 10. Connections

Connections Statement	N	Positive	Neutral	Negative
I feel a strong personal attachment to my organization.	83	66.1%	18.7%	15.2%

B. NETC-RTO SURVEY

The NETC-RTO survey was hosted on Qualtrics and was accessible for three weeks. Of the 128 individuals who started the survey, seven were excluded due to incomplete responses. This left 121 respondents who completed most or all questions, with 28 identifying as supervisors and 93 as non-supervisors. This section will focus on responses from supervisors only.

Table 11 presents the sample size, means, and standard deviations for two numeric questions asked to supervisors. The data provides insights into supervisors' telework habits and preferences at NETC in 2024. The first question had 26 responses with a mean of 2.54 days and a standard deviation of 1.140, suggesting a range of telework frequencies among supervisors, likely influenced by in-person demand or departmental policies. The second question received 25 responses with a mean of 2.52 days. The close similarity between the two suggests that, on average, the actual teleworking days were very close to the desired teleworking days. The standard deviation is 1.358, slightly higher, suggesting a bit more variability in respondents' preference for telework days compared to actual telework days.

Table 11. Sample Size, Mean, and Standard Deviation for Numeric Items Asked of Supervisors

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
On average, how many days per week did you telework in 2024?	26	2.54	1.140
Days Desire to Telework	25	2.52	1.358



1. Qualitative Analysis

This section details the qualitative findings from the NETC survey's three open-ended questions:

1. What are the pros and cons of requiring people to work full-time in the office?
2. What could NETC do to help people adjust to increased hours working in the office?
3. What other issues or suggestions does NETC need to consider?

A total of 101 participants provided responses to at least one of these questions, with 78 identifying as non-supervisors and 23 as supervisors. The number of responses varied per question, as some participants answered all three while others responded to only one or two. I analyzed supervisor responses by identifying recurring themes. Responses deemed unrelated to the questions (e.g., “no suggestions,” “no comments,” “not applicable,” or “blank”) were categorized under the theme “none” and excluded from the tables.

The following presents the qualitative findings from NETC survey's three open-ended questions, analyzing supervisor's perspective on the advantages and disadvantages of full-time in-office work, recommendations for easing the transition in increase in-office hours, and additional considerations for NETC. The thematic analysis highlights management-related insights to guide NETC in refining telework and RTO policies.

1. Question 1: What are the pros and cons of requiring people to work full-time in the office?

There were six themes for pros and nine themes for cons requiring people to work full-time in the office from the supervisor's responses. The themes obtained from analyzing Question 1's responses are described below.

Pros of Requiring Full-Time In-Office Work

- **Collaboration-** Improve ability to work together or communicate face-to-face
Examples: “More readily access to other teams and team member,” “Team collaboration,” “In-person collaboration,” “Improve collaboration and mission focus,” “brainstorming.”



- **Communication-** Enhanced speed or clarity of communication in the office.
Examples: “Faster communication,” “In person communication,” “Quick availability to all personnel,” “Spontaneous communication.”
- **Productivity-** Perception that in-office work boosts output or focus.
Example: “Less distractions from home setting.”
- **Team Building-** Strengthened relationships or team cohesion.
Examples: “The sidebar conversations extend the sharing of knowledge,” “Enhances camaraderie,” Team Building,” “Entire team in same building.”
- **Structure-** Benefits of a defined workplace setting.
Example: “Actually take a lunch break while in the office.”
- **Technology-** On-site technology.
Example: “Many people working off site have network/connection issues.”

Following in Table 12 is a list of the number of times each theme was related to Question 1’s pros of requiring full time in office work from the supervisor’s perspective.

Table 12. Themes Related to Supervisor’s Pros of RTO

Pros of RTO	25
Collaboration	7
Communication	8
Productivity	1
Team Building	7
Structure	1
Technology	1

Cons of Requiring Full-Time In-Office Work

- **Commute-** Time, or stress related to getting to the office.
Examples: “Travel time,” “Commuting time,” “Traffic.”
- **Distractions-** Reduced focus due to office noise or interactions.
Examples: “More distractions in the office,” “Interruptions hamper productivity,” “Constant interruption.”
- **Work-Life Balance-** Negative impact on personal life or flexibility.
Examples: “Less work-life balance,” “Harm the work/life balance,” “Adjustment of work schedules for families.”
- **Cost-** Financial burden of in-office work.
Examples: “Increased expenses (gas, vehicle wear/tear),” “Food budget increase,” “Gas usage increases,” “Increase in expenses - transportation/gas.”
- **Morale-** Decreased employee satisfaction or well-being.



Examples: “Work morale will fall,” “Reduction in morale,” “Stress - driving - more traffic.”

- **Productivity Loss-** Perception that in-office work reduces efficiency.

Examples: “Reduction in productivity due to interruptions,” “Least productive workday,” “Drop due to constant interruption.”

- **Facilities-** Issues with office infrastructure or resources.

Examples: “Lack of facilities to support,” “Not enough desk spaces,” “Shortage of parking,” “poor building conditions.”

- **Health-** Physical or mental health challenges in the office.

Examples: “Being around people who are sick,” “Site safety concerns,” “Increased stress.”

- **Staffing-** Challenges with hiring or retaining talent.

Examples: “Attracting New Talent,” “Hire and retain the most quality staff.”

Table 13 lists the number of times each theme was mentioned related to Question 1’s cons of requiring full-time in-office work, from the supervisor’s perspective.

Table 13. Themes Related to Supervisor’s Cons of RTO

Cons of RTO	42
Commute	5
Distractions	8
Work-Life Balance	6
Cost	3
Morale	3
Productivity Loss	5
Facilities	5
Health	3
Staffing	4

2. Question 2: What could NETC do to help people adjust to increased hours working in the office?

The five themes obtained from analyzing Question 2’s responses from supervisors are:

- **Flexible Scheduling-** Adjusting work hours or allowing telework options.
Examples: “Offering a maxi flex work schedule or 4/10 hour work days,” “Expand the criteria for situational telework,” “Longer transition times to return fulltime to office,” “Let the common sense approach prevail for supervisors to allow Telework-situational (TS) when appropriate.”
- **Facilities-** Enhancing physical office conditions.



Examples: “Continue the office improvements,” “Fix HVAC system,” “Improve material condition of bathrooms,” “Update office furniture.”

- **Training and Communication-** Improving information flow or skills for adjustment.

Examples: “Possible look at some avenues to afford additional ‘on-site’ training opportunities that would make time at office more advantageous,” “Keeping an open mind and reminding personnel to remain flexible and supportive during the policy changes.”

- **Team Building and Morale-** Boosting morale or team cohesion.

Examples: “Have additional morale-building things now,” “Bake-off or bake sale,” “Add team building events.”

- **Health and Well-Being-** Supporting physical or mental health.

Example: “Increase the quality of life, open gym, secure walking path.”

Table 14 lists the number of times each theme was mentioned by supervisors’ responses to Question 2 on how NETC could help people adjust to increased hours working in the office.

Table 14. Themes Related to Supervisors Responses to Question 2

Themes	27
Flexible Scheduling	9
Facilities	9
Training and Communication	3
Team Building and Morale	5
Health and Well-Being	1

3. *Question 3: What other issues or suggestions does NETC need to consider?*

Six themes emerged from analyzing the responses of question 3’s responses.

- **Work-Life Balance-** Concerns and suggestions related to achieving flexibility in work schedules to better balance professional and personal responsibilities.

Examples: “For most there is a line IRT what they are willing to overlook for the sake of supporting the DoD, only because they have to consider the needs of their families too,” “Schedule deviations when necessary.”

- **Facilities and Infrastructure-** Concerns about the physical work environment, including inadequate office spaces, poor building conditions, and insufficient resources (e.g., monitors, ergonomic furniture).



Examples: “Making sure people have work spaces that allow them to be comfortable and efficient,” “Sinus issues are frequent among workers as we are in a poor air quality workspace,” “The Navy on base network infrastructure cannot handle the load. Many NMCI outages as the surge cripples their old network infrastructure.”

- **Productivity and Efficiency-** Comment on how telework impacts work performance. Response noted high productivity during telework.

Example: “We were very productive and effective in our work prior to the reassignment of back to the office.”

- **Health and Safety-** Concerns about the physical and mental health of employees in the workplace, particularly for those with disabilities or those affected by poor environmental conditions.

Examples: “I don’t have a handicap sticker but am handicapped and just coming up a few stairs is extremely painful. If I ever have to park in the front I will have to call out sick,” “Take into consideration individual needs and continue to be supportive of those needs.”

- **Policy and Communication-** Focused on issues related to organizational policies, leadership communication, and the enforcement of telework or RTO mandates. Respondents expressed frustration with unclear communication, rigid policy adherence, and a lack of proactive leadership in addressing telework challenges.

Examples: “NETC leadership needs to get out in front of this issue and communicate more. Just restating what is in the executive orders is frustrating to many of the staff,” “Supervisors are scared to send their staff home with a common sense approach to support the mission with NMCI down due to being worried about retribution for defying the RTO mandate.”

- **Flexible Schedule-** Desire for continued or expanded telework options and concerns about employees exploiting telework policies. Respondents noted that private industry’s telework flexibility could lead to talent loss and suggested structured telework policies to maintain fairness.

Examples: “Possibility some personnel will ‘work’ system to keep teleworking,” “Private industry still allows TW so people will be leaving.”

Table 15 lists the number times each theme was mentioned by supervisors’ responses to Question 3 what other issues or suggestions NETC needs to consider.



Table 15. Themes Related to Question 3 Categorized by Supervisor Roles

Themes	19
Work-Life Balance	4
Facilities and Infrastructure	3
Productivity and Efficiency	1
Health and Safety	3
Policy and Communication	6
Flexible Schedule	2

The main things I found that pertain to telework, hybrid work and RTO from FEVS results are a generally positive employee perspective at NETC across multiple dimensions of workplace dynamics, with notable strengths in communication, performance, accountability, and collaboration. Employees reported high satisfaction with supervisor listening and clear job expectations, alongside strong accountability for work quality and results. Collaboration was a standout area, with a positive number of respondents affirming that work unit contributions positively impact agency performance and cooperation. Trust in supervisors' support for work-life balance and preparation for cybersecurity threats also scored highly. However, areas for improvement included information sharing, cross-unit communication, recognition disparities, communication from management about organizational developments and employee involvement in work-related decisions.

The main things I found from the NETC-RTO survey were that supervisors viewed enhanced communication positively but expressed concerns about office distractions. Specifically, supervisors' responses highlighted collaboration, communication and team building as key advantages of full-time in-office work, aligning with positive communication feedback in the FEVS. However, a substantial portion of supervisors identified communication as a problem in the RTO questions, citing unclear policy communication as a challenge. Additionally, they reported concerns about commuting, work-life balance, and productivity loss. Supervisors suggested flexible scheduling, improved facilities, and clearer policy communication to ease the transition to increased in-office hours, alongside calls for better work-life balance to address RTO challenges.

VI. CONCLUSION

This chapter synthesizes the core findings in response to the research questions, highlighting the critical factors for managers to enhance engagement in teleworking and hybrid teams, as well as fostering agility across diverse work arrangements. It offers actionable recommendations for leaders navigating the complexities of managing hybrid teams and facilitating transitions back to in-office settings. Additionally, it presents concluding insights from the FEVS and NETC surveys, incorporating a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis and targeted recommendations for practice.

Throughout the development of this capstone, the federal workplace has undergone significant and ongoing transformations. Despite the shifts, the imperative for effective management of personnel whether co-located or distributed across remote locations remains paramount. The RTO mandate has not diminished the necessity for high performance and seamless collaboration across distances.

A. FEVS AND NETC-RTO SURVEY

This section compares the FEVS survey and NETC-RTO Survey to evaluate NETC's effectiveness in supporting telework and the transition to in-office work. While the FEVS provides a broad perspective on organizational strengths and weaknesses, the NETC-RTO Survey offers detailed insights from supervisors, highlighting employee experiences and preferences to inform NETC's telework and RTO policies.

The FEVS survey shows NETC strengths is in high accountability, collaboration, and cybersecurity preparedness (90%+ positive). Supervisors are trusted and supportive of work-life balance. NETC weaknesses are lower satisfaction with management communication, decision-making involvement, and information sharing (notable negative responses of 15%–25%). Opportunities for NETC are enhancing recognition consistency, cross-unit communication, and employee involvement to boost engagement and trust.

The NETC-RTO survey shows that on average, supervisors teleworked 2.54 days per week, with a slightly higher desire for telework (1.358 standard deviation),



suggesting a preference for maintaining some telework flexibility. The qualitative analysis across the three open-ended questions reveals varied perspectives on full-time in-office requirements. Supervisors identified some key benefits of in-office work, including collaboration, communication and team building. However, the advantages were overshadowed by concerns. Major concerns included commute-related stress, inadequate facilities, work-life balance, organizational policies and leadership communication. Additionally, supervisors mentioned productivity losses due to distractions, including concerns about staffing. To support the transition to increased office hours, supervisors suggested implementing flexible scheduling, improving office conditions with upgrades like a better HVAC system and updated furniture, and allowing a longer phased transition to ease adjustments. Additionally, they recommended fostering team building and boosting morale to enhance collaboration and engagement. Additional recommendations included transparent policies and clearer communication from leadership to reduce confusion and frustration, as supervisors were concerned that the messaging was just policy statement, not addressing the issues that people are concerned about.

B. SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis presented in Table 16 evaluates the organizational dynamics revealed through the FEVS and NETC-RTO survey results, focusing on internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. Key takeaways include strong foundation of accountability, collaboration, and supportive supervision, tempered by challenges in recognition disparities, cross-unit communication, and perceptions of senior leadership. Opportunities exist to enhance employee empowerment, improve communication channels, and strengthen organization cohesion through targeted recognition programs. However, risks such as employee disengagement, perceived inequities, leadership disconnect, and external competition from other employers pose potential threats that require strategic attention. This analysis highlights the need for proactive measure to build on existing strengths while addressing critical gaps to foster a more engaged and connected workforce.



Table 16. SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
High Accountability and Performance Standards	Decision-Making Involvement
Strong Collaboration	Information Sharing
Supportive Supervisors	Recognition Disparities
Cybersecurity Preparedness	Cross-Unit Communication
Clear Expectations	Senior Leadership Perception
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Enhance Employee Empowerment	Employee Disengagement Risk
Improve Communication Channels	Perceived Inequity
Recognition Programs	Leadership Disconnect
Strengthen Organizational Connection	External Competition (other employers)

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The abrupt transition to full-time in-office work at NETC has revealed significant challenges highlighting the complexities of reversing telework policies. As shown in Figure 7, the Transitioning Back to In-Office Work model shows the importance of careful management to mitigate adverse effects and sustain mission-critical outcomes. Many NETC employees accustomed to the flexibility and work-life balance of telework struggle to adapt to a rigid in-office model, resulting in diminished morale, increased turnover risks, and overburdened resources. Without strategic interventions such as clear communication, supervisory support, and enhanced team collaboration, NETC risks undermining its workforce's productivity and commitment.

Should NETC revert to a hybrid work model, as illustrated in Figure 5, Effective Management for a Hybrid Team, the hybrid model offers a promising framework for balancing employee and organizational needs, as evidenced by its potential to enhance collaboration, accountability, and morale. By adopting supervisor-recommended strategies, such as offering hybrid work arrangements, fostering proactive communication, encouraging team collaboration and upgrading facilities, NETC can better support its workforce during a transition. The hybrid approach mitigates the risks of in-office management challenges such as risk of burn-out, limited recruitment options, decreased employee autonomy, inflexible work arrangements and interpersonal conflicts. Navigating the evolving workplace requires NETC to adopt a nuanced approach that draws on the strengths of full time in-office and telework models.

D. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The FEVS included numerous data points, but the number of supervisors who responded remains unclear, while the NETC-RTO survey only included 28 supervisors. The FEVS was administered when telework, remote and hybrid work arrangements were common, whereas the NETC-RTO survey was conducted during the abrupt transition to full-time in-office work, a period when employees reported heightened stress. This is both a strength and a limitation of this study because the responses captured thoughts and feelings as well as advice related to managing the transition. Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies to assess the impacts of in-office and hybrid work models on morale, productivity, in-office burnout, access to geographically distributed talent, and retention. Such studies would provide NETC with evidence-based insights to optimize workforce management and enhance organizational outcomes.



LIST OF REFERENCES

- Alexander, J. (2022). Three key practices for managing remote employees. *The Driller*, 43(1), 25–26. <https://nps.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/three-key-practices-managing-remote-employees/docview/2628831281/se-2>
- Ayers, R. S. (2022). Yes, federal performance management practices can change. *Talent Development*, 76(6), 54–59. <https://nps.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/yes-federal-performance-management-practices-can/docview/2672397265/se-2>
- Back to Work Act of 2024, S.4266, 118th Cong. (2024). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/4266>
- Bakker, A. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2010). *Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research* (1st ed.). Psychology Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203853047>
- Bell, B. S., & Kozlowski, S. W. J. (2002). A typology of virtual teams. *Group & Organization Management*, 27(1), 14–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601102027001003>
- Bogosian, R., & Byrd-Poller, L. (2023). The return-to-office decision post-COVID: The effects on firm performance. *Rutgers Business Review*, 8(2), 251–275. <https://rbr.business.rutgers.edu/article/return-office-decision-post-covid-effects-firm-performance>
- Borden, T. (2024, January 31). *Is hybrid really the new normal? Here's what the data is showing*. The Work Shift: LinkedIn News. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/hybrid-really-new-normal-heres-what-data-showing-taylor-borden-nrjvf/>
- Bowles, D., & Cooper, C. L. (2009). *Employee morale: Driving performance in challenging times* (1st ed.). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230250789>
- Brown, C., Smith, P., Arduengo, N., & Taylor, M. (2016). Trusting telework in the federal government. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(1), 87–101. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2016.2466>
- Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. (2023a, April 19). *Employees teleworked at least some of the time at 27.5 percent of private establishments in 2022*. *The Economics Daily*. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2023/employees-teleworked-at-least-some-of-the-time-at-27-5-percent-of-private-establishments-in-2022.htm>



- Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. (2023b, September 28). *One out of five workers teleworked in August 2023. The Economics Daily*. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2023/one-out-of-five-workers-teleworked-in-august-2023.htm>
- Chehreh, C. (2021, August 18). Building resiliency into the future of the federal government. *Nextgov.com*. <https://nps.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/building-resiliency-into-future-federal/docview/2562607024/se-2>
- Cheng, J. Y.-J., & Groysberg, B. (2024). Return-to-office decisions: A culture question. *Sage Open*, 4(1), 8–14. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1059601102027001007>
- Choi, S. (2020). Flexible work arrangements and employee retention: A longitudinal analysis of the federal workforces. *Public Personnel Management*, 49(3), 470–495. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026019886340>
- Coghlan, D. (1993). A person-centred approach to dealing with resistance to change. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 14(4), 10–14. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437739310039433>
- Cook, S. (2019). *Making a success of managing and working remotely*. IT Governance Publishing. Figure 1, p. 21. <https://app-knovel-com.nps.idm.oclc.org/s.v?v9HwE00J>
- Crawford-Marks, R. (2020). Top traits of a good virtual manager. *Leadership Excellence*, 37(10), 35–37. <https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/top-traits-good-virtual-manager/docview/2460111603/se-2>
- Dennison, K. (2024, July 10). How return-to-office policies are impacting employees in 2024. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/karadennison/2024/07/10/how-return-to-office-policies-are-impacting-employees-in-2024/>
- Department of Defense. (2024, January 8). *Telework and remote work* (DoD Instruction 1035.01). <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/103501p.pdf>
- Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001, Pub. L. No. 106–346, 114 Stat. 1356 (2000). <https://www.congress.gov/106/plaws/publ346/PLAW-106publ346.pdf>
- Elliott, B. (2024). Return-to-office mandates: How to lose your best performers. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 65(4), 80–82. www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/return-office-mandates-how-lose-your-best/docview/3070032180/se-2



- Forbes Coaches Council. (2023, September 13). *18 key ways managers can help remote workers returning to the office*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbescoachescouncil/2023/09/13/18-key-ways-managers-can-help-remote-workers-returning-to-the-office/>
- Forbes Coaches Council. (2025, January 30). *Managing teams returning to the office with the “HELP Forward” framework*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbescoachescouncil/2025/01/30/managing-teams-returning-to-the-office-with-the-help-forward-framework/>
- Gartner. (2024, January 30). Gartner HR research finds high-performers, women, millennials are greatest flight risks. *Gartner Newsroom*. <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2024-01-30-gartner-hr-research-finds-high-performers-women-millennials-are-greatest-flight-risks>
- Government Accountability Office. (2017). *Federal telework: Additional controls could strengthen telework program compliance and data reporting* (GAO-17-247). Government Accountability Office. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-17-247.pdf>
- Government Accountability Office. (2020). *Federal telework: Key practices that can help ensure the success of telework programs* (GAO-21-238T). Government Accountability Office. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-238t>
- Government Accountability Office. (2024a). *Federal telework: Selected agencies need to evaluate the potential effects on agency performance* (GAO-25-106316). Government Accountability Office. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-25-106316.pdf>
- Government Accountability Office. (2024b). *Federal telework: Interior Can Benefit from Strategic Workforce Planning and Following Key Practices* (GAO-24-107162). Government Accountability Office. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-107162>
- Gumber, C., Burrows, M. (2023). *Home-based workers: 2019–2021*. (Report No. P70BR-184). U.S. Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2023/demo/p170br-184.pdf>
- Günther, N., Hauff, S., & Gubernator, P. (2022). The joint role of HRM and leadership for teleworker well-being: An analysis during the COVID-19 pandemic. *German Journal of Human Resource Management (Online)*, 36(3), 353–379. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23970022221083694>
- Hirsch, A.S. (2022, July 6). 8 ways HR can overcome pushback during the return to the office. *HRNews*. <https://nps.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/8-ways-hr-can-overcome-pushback-during-return/docview/2685466509/se-2>



- Hubble. (2025, February 4). The official list of every company's back-to-office strategy. *HubbleHQ Blog*. <https://hubblehq.com/blog/famous-companies-workplace-strategies>
- Ilag, B. N. (2021). Tools and technology for effective remote work. *International Journal of Computer Applications*, 174(21), 13–16. <https://doi.org/10.5120/ijca2021921109>
- Jackson, L. C., Andrews, D. J., & Smith, R. (2022). The future of teamwork: Facilitating effective team performance in virtual and hybrid work environments in a post-pandemic world. *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting*, 66(1), 1085–1089. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1071181322661455>
- Jaiswal, A., Sengupta, S., Panda, M., Hati, L., Prikshat, V., Patel, P., & Mohyuddin, S. (2022). Teleworking: Role of psychological well-being and technostress in the relationship between trust in management and employee performance. *International Journal of Manpower*, 45(1), 49–71. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijm-04-2022-0149>
- Janssen, D., & Carradini, S. (2021). Generation Z workplace communication habits and expectations. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 64(2), 137–153. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TPC.2021.3069288>
- Jones, G. E. III. (2017). *Millennials in the Workplace: Supervisory response to intergenerational conflict* (Order No. 10638385) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, University College]. ProQuest Central (1968585190). www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/millennials-workplace-supervisory-response/docview/1968585190/se-2
- Kalser, L. (2022). Telework has improved team performance for government workers, research finds. *Healthcare Dive*. www.proquest.com/trade-journals/telework-has-improved-team-performance-government/docview/2705912093/se-2
- Kaplan, S., Engelsted, L., Lei, X., & Lockwood, K. (2018). Unpackaging manager mistrust in allowing telework: Comparing and integrating theoretical perspectives. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 33(3), 365–382. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10869-017-9498-5>
- Kerfoot, K. M. (2010). Listening to see: The key to virtual leadership. *Nursing Economics*, 28(2), 114–5, 118. www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/listening-see-key-virtual-leadership/docview/236937983/se-2
- Khaw, K. W., Alnoor, A., AL-Abrrow, H., Tiberius, V., Ganesan, Y., & Atshan, N. A. (2023). Reactions towards organizational change: A systematic literature review. *Current Psychology*, 42(22), 19137–19160. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03070-6>



- Kowalski, K. B., & Swanson, J. A. (2005). Critical success factors in developing teleworking programs. *Benchmarking*, 12(3), 236–249. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14635770510600357>
- Lang, C. J., Dony, J. A., & Roberts, S. (2022). The future of teamwork: Facilitating effective team performance in virtual and hybrid work environments in a post-pandemic world. *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting*, 66(1), 1085–1089. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1071181322661455>
- Lee, M. R. (2021). *Leading virtual project teams adapting leadership theories and communications techniques to 21st century organizations* (2nd ed.). CRC Press. <https://doi-org.nps.idm.oclc.org/10.1201/9781003119869>
- Mitchell, R. N. (2015). *The correlation between virtual communication and employee engagement* (Order No. 3689661). ProQuest Central (1678081060). www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/correlation-between-virtual-communication/docview/1678081060/se-2
- Office of Management and Budget. (2021). *Integrating planning for a safe increased return of federal employees and contractors to physical workplaces with post-reentry personnel policies and work environment* (M-21-25). <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/M-21-25.pdf>
- Office of Management and Budget. (2022). *FY 2024 agency-wide capital planning to support the future of work* (M-22-14). <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/M-22-14.pdf>
- Office of Management and Budget. (2023). *Delivering on the future of federal work: Strategies for employee engagement and collaboration for the heads of executive departments and agencies* (M-23-15). <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/M-23-15.pdf>
- Office of Management and Budget. (2024). *Report to Congress on telework and real property utilization*. <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/briefing-room/2024/08/09/omb-report-to-congress-on-telework-real-property-utilization/>
- Office of Personnel Management. (n.d.). *Remote work*. <https://www.opm.gov/frequently-asked-questions/telework-faq/remote-work/>
- Office of Personnel Management. (2021). *2021 Guide to telework and remote work in the federal government*. <https://www.opm.gov/telework/documents-for-telework/2021-guide-to-telework-and-remote-work.pdf>
- Office of Personnel Management. (2023). *Status of telework in the federal government: Report to Congress, fiscal year 2022*. <https://www.opm.gov/telework/documents-for-telework/2023-report-to-congress.pdf>



- Office of Personnel Management. (2024). *Status of telework in the federal government: Report to Congress, fiscal year 2023*. <https://www.opm.gov/telework/history-legislation-reports/status-of-telework-in-the-federal-government-2024.pdf>
- Offstein, E. H., Morwick, J. M., & Koskinen, L. (2010). Making telework work: Leading people and leveraging technology for competitive advantage. *Strategic HR Review*, 9(2), 32–37. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14754391011022244>
- Performance appraisal system requirements, 5 C.F.R. § 430.31(b) (1995). <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-5/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-430>
- Rahaman, H. M. S., Camps, J., Decoster, S., & Stouten, J. (2021). Ethical leadership in times of change: The role of change commitment and change information for employees' dysfunctional resistance. *Personnel Review*, 50(2), 630–647. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-03-2019-0122>
- Sanner-Stiehr, E., & Vandermause, R. K. (2017). Can't we all just get along? A dual-theory approach to understanding and managing the multigenerational workplace. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, 17(2), 103–110. www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/cant-we-all-just-get-along-dual-theory-approach/docview/1927102084/se-2
- Scrivener, G. (2014). Managing a remote team. *Training Journal*, 49–52. www.proquest.com/trade-journals/managing-remote-team/docview/1525369221/se-2
- SHOW UP Act of 2023, H.R.139, 118th Cong. (2023). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/139>
- Smith, S. A., Patmos, A., & Pitts, M. J. (2015). Communication and teleworking: A study of communication channel satisfaction, personality, and job satisfaction for teleworking employees. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 55(1), 44–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488415589101>
- Spreitzer, G. M., Cameron, L., & Garrett, L. (2017). Alternative work arrangements: Two images of the new world of work. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 4(1), 473–499. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032516-113332>
- Surugiu, C., Surugiu, M.-R., Grădinaru, C., & Grigore, A.-M. (2025). Factors motivating Generation Z in the workplace: Managerial challenges and insights. *Administrative Sciences*, 15(1), 29. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci15010029>
- Sutherland, L., & Janene-Nelson, K. (2020). *Work together anywhere: A handbook on working remotely—successfully—for individuals, teams, and managers* (1st ed.). <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=6219877>



- Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111–292, 124 Stat. 3165 (2010).
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-111publ292/pdf/PLAW-111publ292.pdf>
- The White House. (2025). *Presidential actions*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/>
- Ungarino, R. (2025, January 15). JPMorgan’s back-to-office mandate faces internal revolt. *Barron’s*. <https://www.barrons.com/articles/jpmorgan-chase-back-to-office-employees-72121f66>
- United States Senate. Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management. (2020). *Modernizing telework: Review of private sector telework policies during the COVID-19 pandemic*: (S. Hrg. 116–283). U.S. Government Publishing Office. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-116shrg41324/html/CHRG-116shrg41324.htm>
- Van Dijke, D., Gunsilius, F., & Wright, A. L. (2024). *Return to office and the tenure distribution*. University of Chicago, Becker Friedman Institute for Economics. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4820135>
- Vyas, L. (2022). “New normal” at work in a post-COVID world: Work-life balance and labor markets. *Policy and Society*, 41(1), 155–167. <https://doi.org/10.1093/polsoc/puab011>
- Zakaria, R., & Bliven, A. (2021). *Past, present, and future of remote work: The swing of a pendulum?* In *SAGE Business Cases*. SAGE Publications, Ltd., <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529767292>





ACQUISITION RESEARCH PROGRAM
NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
555 DYER ROAD, INGERSOLL HALL
MONTEREY, CA 93943

WWW.ACQUISITIONRESEARCH.NET