

The future workplace of SMEs

A research in the ongoing experiences of the pandemic on the hybrid
workplace strategy for Dutch SMEs

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Colophon

Title

The future workplace of SMEs: A research in the ongoing experience of the pandemic on the hybrid workplace strategy for Dutch SMEs

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Preface

During the bachelors of Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences, it became clear that architecture was not my core interest and that the relation between people and the Built Environment had been my interest. At first sight, this showed that the master track Management in the Built Environment of the master Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences was an obvious choice for me after my bachelors.

The experience we all lived during the covid-19 pandemic pushed my interest to investigate the consequences the pandemic has had in the workplace. World-wide large corporations and commercial surveys investigated the steps taken by large corporations. While local media referred more often to SME organizations' financial troubles due to the pandemic. For which reason, I focus my research on the understudied niche of SME organizations in the ongoing experiences in the covid-pandemic.

I would like to thank my mentors Hilde Remøy and Paul Chan from the TU Delft for their continued support throughout the one-year graduation research. Furthermore, I would like to thank my thesis mentor René van Dijk from CBRE as a sparring partner towards creating a more concrete study. In addition, a thank you to all individuals at CBRE that have provided me with support during my thesis time. Moreover, I would like to express my gratitude to all interviewees for their participation.

Finally, a deep appreciation for the support and courage I have received from close friends, family and partner during this journey.

Enjoy the read!

Ethan Speijer

ABSTRACT – The Dutch government implemented strict regulations to reduce the spreading of the virus and highly encouraged travel restrictions and to work from home if possible. As a result, organizations were forced to adapt and implement remote working. These implications became the norm for close to two years. Consequently, the needs and preferences of employees and employers have changed indefinitely. Employees displayed a positive experience with remote working, which has left organizations questioning whether their current real estate aligns with the desired workplace strategy. Many CEOs during the pandemic said they would cut down their office space by 69%. A year later, this has already changed to 21%. However, 51% of those CEOs also said they would invest in collaborative space. The majority of media and research directs its focus on large corporates and leading commercial landlords. Consequently, there is more uncertainty about the role of the future physical office for middle-smaller organizations (SMEs). SMEs make up 67% of the Dutch workforce and are essential for the Dutch economy. Despite their importance, SMEs have remained understudied in the ongoing experiences of the pandemic. Moreover, SME resource constraints likely limit the support for their future workplace transition. Creating a workplace that supports the organization thoroughly is a complex process. Therefore, this study aims to research how organizational components are used by Dutch SMEs transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy.

Preliminary interviews and literature provided insight into the propositions in each organizational component on how Dutch SMEs are transitioning to form a proposition. This help structure the basis for which next, a holistic multi-case analysis was used to examine the SME in each organizational component in a hybrid workplace strategy. Lastly, a proposition performance analysis to understand how each component performed.

The research findings provided insight into SMEs' adoption of organization components in their hybrid strategy. The main motivator for SMEs to keep using a hybrid workplace strategy is to support the employee's desire. Employers are hesitant to provide complete flexibility and remain involved to ensure that their employees continue to use the office as their primary workstation. In addition, employers seem worried about losing their organizational sense of belonging and desire more collaboration. Furthermore, SMEs focus their resources in either their conventional office or in the home office. Very realized thoroughly included both locations.

To ensure SMEs implement a successful hybrid workplace strategy and utilize their input resources as much as possible, SMEs need to prioritize an employee-orientated approach in each organizational component. Furthermore, adequate physical resources are essential in both the conventional office and the home workplace. While the physical environment is critical, focusing on the behavioral environment will most impact people's productivity.

KEYWORDS – Hybrid strategy, workplace strategy, Alignment, Corporate real estate, organization change, workplace change, employee, added value.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted every aspect of society and the economy. The Dutch government implemented strict regulations to reduce the spreading of the virus and highly encouraged travel restrictions and work from home if possible (RIVM, 2021). Reaction to shock is rarely straightforward and usually requires several phases before finding a reshaped equilibrium (CBRE, 2022a). Nearly two years later in the ongoing experience of the pandemic, organizations are yet to rethink their office use for the future.

Before the pandemic, Flexible working was already a trending topic in corporate real estate management. Flexible workspace & collaborative work concepts were possible due to rapid technological advancements, evolving workspace needs and knowledge-based work (Harris, 2015). The growing interest in flexible working due to the pandemic is being explored by many academic studies and organizational research. However, the majority of research has a focus on larger organizations and leading commercial landlords. Consequently, there is more uncertainty about the role of the future physical office for middle-smaller organizations (SMEs). SMEs are a vital part of the global economy and compose the majority of firms in organizations in Europe and Northern America. In Europe, SMEs account for 99 percent of all companies and provide 67% of all jobs, contributing significantly to the EU GDP (Street et al., 2017).

To understand the procedures and methods of CRE, it is crucial to have a precise definition. Unfortunately, as the several disciplines that make up CREAM have expanded, their distinctions have become more blurred (Haynes et al., 2017). Relatable, the evolution of the workplace and the continues change of preference and needs, make understanding the workplace complexities increasingly difficult. Haynes (2008) created the 8 “organizational component” model to assist CRE managers form a clearer overview of the complexities of the workplace.

In conclusion, the post-pandemic lasting impact has pushed companies to rethink their business needs and office use to ensure the effective use of their real estate.

The research question is: How are organizational components used by Dutch SMEs transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

To answer the main research question, five sub-questions were formed and are defined in the synthesis later in this executive summary.

Framework

Central to this paper is the 8P framework of Haynes (2008). Haynes (2008) Created a framework for evaluating how well the office environment supports the office occupiers in their work process—assuming that the office occupiers have “connectivity” with their office environment. This research uses the framework of Haynes (2008) to study SMEs in transition to a hybrid strategy, and the framework components (organizational components) are used in this process. See the framework below (Figure 13):

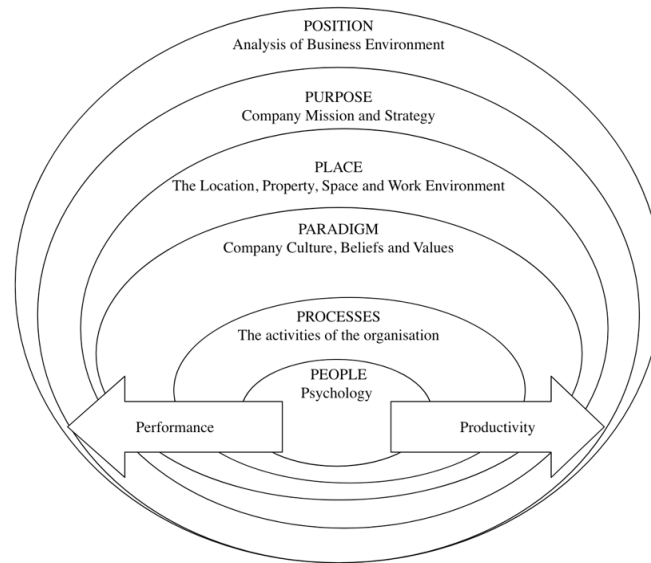


Figure 1 8 P's Real estate connectivity – the alignment model (Haynes, 2008)

Methods

First, the preliminary interviews and related literature are analyzed to form an proposition on how Dutch SMEs use organizational components in making a transition to a hybrid strategy. A holistic multi-case study is explored for this empirical research's second and main phase.

This research is based on how SME are making a transition to a hybrid workplace in the ongoing experiences of the pandemic. The research makes use of propositions due to the fact that SMEs remain largely understudied in the field of CREM. Over the years, the understudied niche has been recognized resulting in an increase available research. Enough information to create an understanding of the unique characteristics of SMEs and how these unique characteristic may influence to applicability of CREM tools created for larger organizations. The preliminary study forms the basis for which the semi-structured interviews are made.

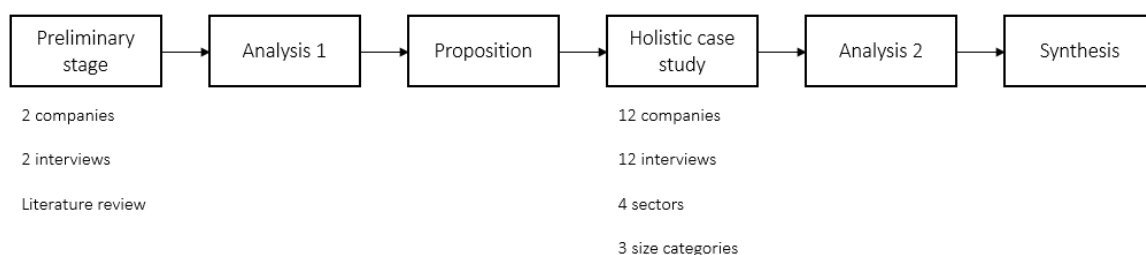


Figure 1 Empirical research design

Synthesis

The sub-question were answered by observing the data gathered from the case studies.

5.1 What drivers and barriers do Dutch SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

A summarized table was formed defining the drivers and barriers of the different case studies.

Drivers

It was clear that the primary drivers for the SMEs to transition to a hybrid workplace strategy was due to the preference of the employees. A select few organizations further developed on the potential benefits the organization could gain from implementing a hybrid workplace strategy. These benefits included for example an additional workplace for concentrative work, the ability to grow as an organization but maintain a smaller office and more.

Barriers

Many barriers related to the challenged the organizations faced during the pandemic lockdown, the social difficulties of remote working. A sense of belonging was a recurring importance for most. Further, some organizations had trouble motivating employees to return to the office more frequently and required to use policies. In addition, remote working limit the amount of tacit learning taking place physically at the office.

5.2 What differences exist between SME sizes and business categories in transition to a hybrid strategy?

Classic business services

Majority of the classic category made us a centralized hierarchal structure relating to a more traditional office setting, which uses an open layout for employees and a dedicated room for management. In other words, an office that could be considered a more one size fits all, with minor adjustments made to it in the ongoing experiences of the pandemic. Further, all classic business service cases studied provided support for the homework environment.

Modern business services

The Modern business service was characterized to be more developed in the office environment and makes use of a more flat organizational structure. In terms of the results from the case studies, this was similarly observed. Most modern business service organizations had a flat organization that translated back into the workplace. Two organizations used an activity-based workplace strategy, another on their way to transition their workplace and to make large investments. The last organization remained to adopt a standard open office layout. Interestingly, only one organization provided full support in the remote workplace. The remaining organizations either did not, or limited their budget or items that they would provide.

Retail business services

All three retail business services used a standardize workplace and a centralized hierarchal structure. All three of the case studies do all attempt to create a flat organizational feeling. Two of the three organizations provided support remotely.

Small, medium and medium-large

It was difficult to conclude many patterns do the small organizations, each organization was very unique of one another in terms of their workplace strategy. All organizations did recognize their size helped their organization to being agile. Similarly said for the medium organization, each recognize they are still fairly small and agile that these organizations could easily adjust their real estate when any issue would arise. Although the increase did challenge the management of people and requiring more support of staff such as HR. For the medium-large organization, naturally the hierarchical structure increased complexity in addition to the management of people.

5.3 What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

Higher performing organizational components

From the proposition performance table results the Position, Purpose, Processes and People performance positively in respect to the proposition defined by the literature reviews and explorative case studies.

Lower performing organizational components

The performance component was the only component which strongly performance negative in comparison to the proposition.

5.4 Significant organizational components and themes

The interview discussions, findings and answers to the sub research questions unveil interesting themes that open interesting topics for discussion. The following themes linked with the component are presented will be the basis for the discussion.

- Workplace connectivity
 - Communication, the behavioral environment – Purpose
 - Office vs. home workplace, the physical environment – Purpose/People
- Measuring - Performance
- SME alignment – Productivity

Discussion and conclusion

The research has some success in uncovering interesting topic for discussion, these themes as mentioned above in 5.4 were thoroughly examined with information from the literature review, data from the case study and personal interpretation.

The combination of the answers obtained from the sub- question and the theme discussions formed the answers for the main research question. Overall, the research exposed that SMEs use organization components in many ways. Different uses are related to different industries and or sizes of the SME. Each organization is unique, and a one size fits all limits the potential. It has become evident that one component can create a larger impact than the other. An SME making a transition to a hybrid strategy is advised first to create an understanding of its position and purpose. The *position* examines the SME concerning evaluating the internal strengths and weaknesses with the external market, helping form an actionable real estate plan for the coming years. The *purpose* determines the motive and complements the *position* component strategizing the future plan considering the business strategy, real estate, human asset, and the organizational DNA. These elements are thoroughly examined in the following organizational input components *process, place, paradigm* and *people*, and support the *purpose* components. Prioritization of these four components is advised with a people-first approach. Finally, this leaves the remaining two output components of the framework: *performance* and *productivity*. *Performance* should be considered the first component by the SME to create a starting point of improvement. Further performance measurements should be used proactively; alignment is not a one-time thing. Lastly, *productivity*, measured in terms of output per employee, understanding how well the SME supports employees in both the physical and behavioral environment both in the conventional office and virtually as required for the use of a hybrid workplace strategy.

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1.0 Research Introduction

1.1 Motive

The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted every aspect of society and the economy. The Dutch government implemented strict regulations to reduce the spreading of the virus and highly encouraged travel restrictions and work from home if possible (RIVM, 2021). Organizations were forced to adapt and implement remote working or face the consequences. As a result, the pandemic induced a structural shift in the commercial real estate. Reaction to shock is rarely straightforward and usually requires several phases before finding a reshaped equilibrium (CBRE, 2022a). Nearly two years later in the ongoing experience of the pandemic, organizations are yet to rethink their office use for the future.

Real estate accounts for one of the highest expenditures for an organization. Organizations have realized that corporate real estate (CRE) can play a more prominent strategic role. Furthermore, an organization seeking a competitive advantage are prompting real estate professionals to take on a new position (Arkesteijn, 2015). Companies are changing how they do business in response to globalization, an influence that transforms the workplace into the workspace, and change in the environment of macroeconomic forces (Arkesteijn, 2015). Real estate is no longer purely seen as a cost, and organizations seek alignment of their real estate with the overall business objective (CBRE, 2017).

Before the pandemic, Flexible working was already a trending topic in corporate real estate management. Flexible workspace & collaborative work concepts were possible due to rapid technological advancements, evolving workspace needs and knowledge-based work (Harris, 2015). The aftermath of the covid-19 pandemic made a global introduction to working from home, creating a significant shift in the traditional business operation. According to a survey executed by CBRE (2021), employees who had to work from home due to the pandemic stated they would quit their job rather than return to the office full-time. Organizations are compelled to rethink their corporate real estate business model to the post-pandemic lasting impact. Moving forward, what is sure is that work cannot and will not return to the way it was before. A significant change is made in the way we are going to divide our time between the office, home and elsewhere (CBRE, ND)

The growing interest in flexible working due to the pandemic is being explored by many academic studies and organizational research. Companies such as CBRE, KPMG, and JLL have created hybrid tools, flexible working, workspace models and surveys for flexible working. However, the majority of research has a focus on larger organizations and leading commercial landlords. Consequently, there is more uncertainty about the role of the future physical office for middle-smaller organizations (SMEs). SMEs are a vital part of the global economy and compose the majority of firms in organizations in Europe and Northern America. In Europe, SMEs account for 99 percent of all companies and provide 67% of all jobs, contributing significantly to the EU GDP (Street et al., 2017).

In addition, when considering corporate real estate function within the organization, there are no "one-size-fits all" (CoreNet, 2015). CoreNet (2015) defines "workplace strategy" as aligning an organization's workplace to support its strategic business goals while optimizing real estate performance. Companies that operate in different corporate settings and external environments are expected to have an extraordinary impact. It has been clear that organizations can adapt when needed, although different organizations require a "tailor-made" strategy to realign the workplace strategy optimally (CBRE, ND).

To understand the procedures and methods of CRE, it is crucial to have a precise definition. Unfortunately, as the several disciplines that make up CREAM have expanded, their distinctions have become more blurred (Haynes et al., 2017). Relatable, the evolution of the workplace and the continues change of preference and needs, make understanding the workplace complexities increasingly difficult. Haynes (2008) created the 8 “organizational component” model to assist CRE managers form a clearer overview of the complexities of the workplace. The model evaluates how well the office environment supports the office occupier in their work processes. For this research, the model is used to form an understanding how a hybrid workplace strategy supports the occupier in their work processes.

In conclusion, the post-pandemic lasting impact has pushed companies to rethink their business needs and office use to ensure the effective use of their real estate.

1.2 Problem statement

The past two years COVID-19 pandemic disrupted society and exposed the fragility of many economic systems. Throughout the pandemic, we witnessed high uncertainty and potential for excellent change post-crisis. Organizations worldwide were forced to adapt and facilitate remote working. Consequently, the pandemic induced a significant structural shift in the commercial real estate industry.

Before the pandemic in 2019, the office for national statistics in the UK revealed that although over 30% of workers had the option to work remotely, less than 6% actually did so on a regular basis. National Statistics UK claims that under COVID, this increased to 48%. 61% of respondents to a similar study by the Chartered Institute for Personnel & Development reported working remotely. (Phillips, 2020). Post-lockdown, lifting restrictions, organizations continue to puzzle over their workplace strategy.

At large organizations, the understanding of the requirement for a more flexible strategy is clear. The pandemic has displayed a positive experience with remote working. A survey of KPMG's CEO outlook survey (2021) uncovered that 21% of CEOs planned to, or have already cut down, office space. Compared to 2020, we observed a significant decrease when CEOs said that 69% would reduce office space. On the contrary, many CEOs stated they would consider increasing investments in shared office space. CEO Sundar Pichai announced the return of approximately 140,000 of its employees to the office (Google, 2021). Different approaches are being used. A big question remains, what the office environment requires for the new way of working?

As stated in the introduction, SMEs have been an essential source of job creation and output growth for Europe. It is known that when compared with larger corporations, SMEs usually have a more straightforward structure and are less financially resourceful (let it be human assets, real estate or IT infrastructure) (Cragg, 2011). Nevertheless, a growing body of evidence shows that firms that use data collection and analysis, target setting, and performance-focused human resources are more productive than those organizations that do not (Forth & Bryson, 2019). This is in line with the covid pandemic, which creates a -significant shift, demanding new adoption of the workplace for the new way of working. The possibility of hybrid working is a significant shift in an organization's structure, and an aligned strategy can significantly influence its performance (Jouirou & Kalika, 2004). The incorrect management and alignment between the firms' goals and objectives with real estate during and after the transition towards a hybrid workplace could worsen the organization's performance compared to pre-covid.

1.3 Research aim & objectives

This research builds onto existing knowledge of SME organizations and workplace change. The pandemic has had a distinct impact on every organization including larger corporates and smaller-medium sized organizations. Each organization can be considered unique, for which reason a organization requires more than a one-size-fits-all solution. Although the workplace remains a complex environment, fortuitously, modern CRE theories provide lots of insight that support managers in aligning the workplace with the organization. Nevertheless, reaction to shock is rarely straightforward and usually requires several phases before finding a reshaped equilibrium. The pandemic compelled a widespread of remote working, resulting in a rise of a hybrid working strategy. Although, organizations have yet to understand the final requirements and preferences for their future workplace.

The aim of this research is to create an understanding how SME organizations are making a transition towards a hybrid working strategy. The research develops on the drivers & barriers SME face during their transition to a hybrid workplace strategy. In addition, how size and the nature of the SMEs business category may show difference in that transition. This in order to, provide knowledge to SME's that want to implement a hybrid workplace strategy and an insight on which organizational components are most important in a hybrid workplace strategy to ensure performance and productivity.

For this the following objectives have been formed:

1. A literature review on Organization components, workplace strategies, hybrid working and CRE alignment, to form a conceptual framework to explore the transition towards a hybrid workplace strategy.
2. Explore the challenges of a hybrid workplace on an SME organization.
3. Create an understanding of the desired workplace of an SME.
4. Analyze how organizational components are used by SME using a hybrid strategy.
5. Obtain knowledge that can help improve SME opting to use a hybrid strategy.

1.4 Relevance of the research

1.4.1 Societal relevance

The Dutch government introduced measures due to the covid-19 pandemic that restricted the use of the office environment globally—many organizations were forced to temporarily rearrange the workplace from office to remote working. Before the pandemic, the trend of remote working already existed. The pandemic has introduced remote working on a mass scale and affected the desire of office workers influencing both the internal and external environment of the office. Many organizations have yet to understand the correct strategy for their organization. Many organizations will feel the effect in the long term, and shifts are expected in their business strategy or way of doing business. Therefore, adopting the workplace strategy is crucial to ensure an alignment of the organization's workplace and the hybrid strategy. The user is key to implementing the correct strategy. Remote working is here to stay. "Employees have stated if a policy is created forcing the workforce back to the office every day, they will seek another job that does have this flexibility" (personal interview). In addition, attracting talent in a tight labor market that demands flexible work arrangements weakens the option for a complete return office-based strategy (CBRE, 2022b). Many large organizations have set up a team with the organization to lead the organization towards a strategy fit for them. Smaller companies may not have the capacity of a larger organization to execute research for the right strategy. For this reason, this research paper will focus on adding knowledge to the field of hybrid working for SME organizations and how best to support these organizations.

1.4.2 Scientific relevance

The effects of the covid-pandemic have redefined the workplace. It has affected both the internal and external environment of the office. These shifts and expected changes are discussed widely in the market— a growing need for a relevant scientific approach to the ongoing effects of the pandemic. Although the research on the flexibility of the office is not new, the pandemic has created more desire for the subject. Much research is now related to larger corporates, and little is known about how SME organizations are moving forward post-pandemic. Given the current circumstance, this research provides scientific knowledge on how well the organization's workplace aligns with the needs of its users. For this, the 8P framework of Haynes is used to study SMEs concerning the organizational components and create an understanding of which are most significant. At the end of this paper, a reflection is given of the 8P framework.

1.5 Main research question

Regarding the problem statement, review on previous research, the aim and objectives as discussed in the introduction, the main research question is as follows:

How are organizational components used by Dutch SMEs transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

To answer the main research question, the following sub-questions are formulated:

1. What tools are applicable to analyze how Dutch SMEs transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy? And what are organizational components

Purpose: To explore alignment tools in literature that can be used to study an Dutch SME organization in transition to a hybrid workplace strategy. Define the eight P organizational components that of Haynes (2008).

Method: A Literature Review

2. How are Dutch SME expected to use organizational components transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

Purpose: Developing a reference point to measure how SMEs are performing in a hybrid workplace strategy.

Method: A Literature Review and case studies

3. What drivers and barriers do Dutch SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

Purpose: Create an understanding of the drivers and challenges hybrid workplace of an SME.

Method: case studies interviews

4. What differences exist between SME sizes and business categories in transition to a hybrid strategy?

Purpose: Creating an understanding how size and category may influence the transition to hybrid strategy for different SMEs.

Method: case studies interviews

5. What organizational components are most under(performing) for Dutch SMEs transitioning hybrid workplace strategies?

Purpose: uncover influential themes from the results that may be interesting for SMEs to pay attention to in their transition to a hybrid workplace.

Method: case studies interviews

2.0 Methodology

The research comprises seven main chapters to help understand how SME organizations transition to a hybrid study using the organizational components. The following chapter will elaborate on the methodologies used to answer the main research question.

2.1 Research Strategy

This research will have both explorative research and a qualitative approach. The overall research is explorative, as there has not been much research on hybrid tools and their applicability to Dutch SMEs. Explorative interviews will be done with professionals in the field of CRE/workplace strategies. The transcription of these interviews can be available in the appendix. The research question will be answered utilizing qualitative research in the form of case studies.

2.2 Research approach

This research uses a multi-case study to produce knowledge on how Dutch SMEs use organizational components in transition to a hybrid workplace. This is an empirical study conducted through qualitative research—Specifically, an applied thematic analysis (Guest et al., 2012). The data collected from the multi-case study will be analyzed and focused on identifying and describing implicit and explicit ideas, that is, the 8P organizational components of Haynes (2017). This way of collecting data and then deriving generalizations is defined as an inductive research strategy (Blaikie, 2005). Inductive logic aims to describe the nature of regularities and networks of regularities in social life (Blaikie, 2005). This research is based on a ‘how’ question, the nature of the social phenomenon being investigated, and a qualitative approach is suitable. Qualitative data is often collected as words rather than numbers, simplified, and analyzed. These are generalized, in other words (Blaikie, 2005). Thus, the most important findings from the case studies are obtained from words. Although a proposition is formed to help strengthen the findings and relations of each case study. The use of the proposition is explained further in this chapter.

2.3 Research design

The empirical research is setup in two stages (Figure 2). First the preliminary study that aims to explore how organizations in the Netherlands are transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy in the ongoing experience of the pandemic. The explorative study will help form a the basis for the main holistic multi-case and contribute to the semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, the preliminary study will be used to develop a proposition of how Dutch SMEs use the 8P organizational components in a hybrid transition. The exploration and propositions are based on an explorative theoretical study and interviews with real estate management professionals from two large organizations on how they transitioned to a hybrid strategy. In the explorative interviews, two real estate managers from different large corporate organizations in different sectors were interviewed with the guidance of a semi-structured interview protocol. After analyzing the interviews, the finding, in combination with the explorative literature review, will contribute to forming the propositions on How Dutch SMEs are using organizational components in their transition to a hybrid strategy. In summary, the preliminary study will contribute to preparing the semi-structured interview protocol used for the primary case studies and form an proposition providing a proposition for the second stage of the empirical research of this paper.

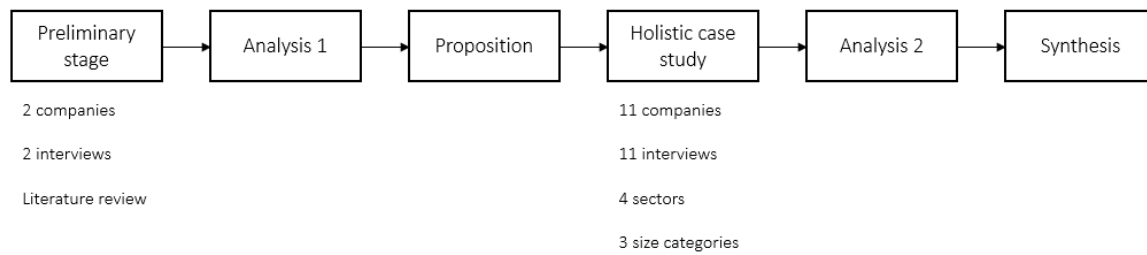


Figure 2 Empirical research design

Yin (2018) defines four types of case-study design (See Figure 3) categorized into single-or multiple case designs. Of these two categories, there is a distinction between holistic and embedded case studies. Of this categorization, this research makes use of a holistic multi-case design. Themes and a form of hypothesis/proposition may be necessary for a holistic multi-case study but should be subordinate to the understanding of the case (Scholz & Tietje, 2002).

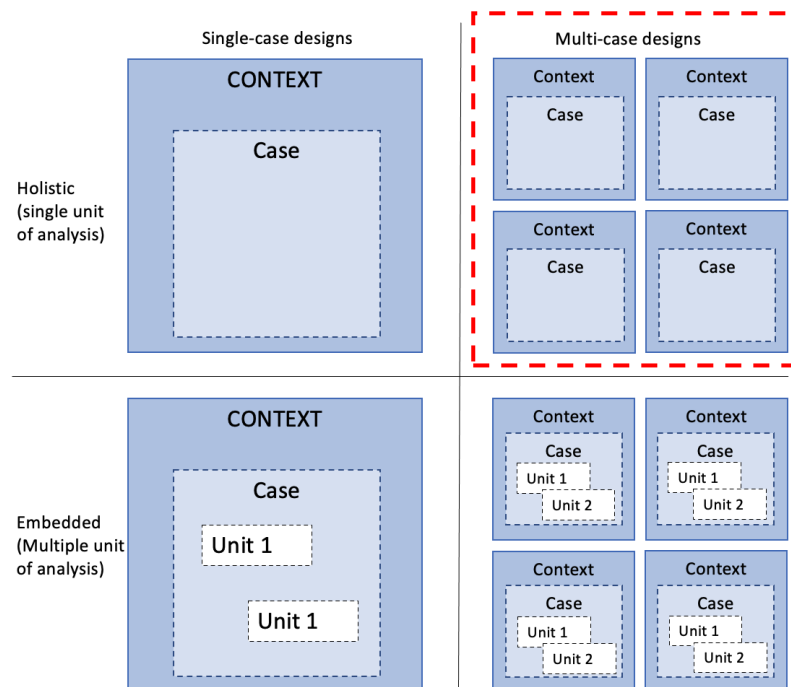


Figure 3 Case study research design – Holistic multi-case design. illustration from (Yin, 2018)

Case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' and 'why' questions are posed. Case studies are most suitable when the boundaries of a complex social phenomenon and its context desire an understanding (Yin, 2018). In the context of this research, the 8P organizational components are a complex social phenomenon, and the context is the transition to a hybrid strategy. The holistic multi-case study comprises eleven single-case companies. One interview is conducted with the real estate manager of each case company.

2.4 Case study Criteria

The corporate real estate management of Haynes (2008) makes use of 8P organization components to understand better how well the workplace supports the office occupier in their workplace. Therefore, the organizational components are used to investigate how Dutch SMEs use organizational components in their transition to a hybrid workplace strategy. A single-case study would be possible, but the one case study could not represent other Dutch SME organizations. Thus, a holistic multi-case design was selected. A graduate research position at a real estate firm was pursued to gain access to case studies and provide knowledge on the subject in relation to previous hybrid workplace projects. An agreement with CBRE Netherlands was made to pursue the topic.

The companies are selected based on the criteria illustrated in Table 1 below. Case study criteria are vital to producing good research that is consistent and feasible.

ITEM	REQUIREMENT	EXPLANATION
LOCATION	The selected cases are located in the Netherlands .	Selecting the country for the case study is based on the process of data gathering, and most accurate by conducting in the native language. Moreover, different countries could complicate the findings due to political, social, and economical differences.
ORGANIZATION	Small – medium size organizations 10 – 250 employees	The niche selection for this study is based on SME organizations. SME include Micro, Small and medium . Micro however has been excluded as more often these organizations do not have a office. A hybrid strategy as defined in this research requires the organization to make use of an office.
	Category sized division: Small 10-50 Medium 51-100 Medium- Large 101-250	Defined by Dutch SME association (MKB.nl) are Micro, (1-10), Small (11- 50) and Medium- large (51-250). Given we do not use Micro organizations for this study, and the size range of the medium category is large, a split has been made of 51-100 employees and medium- large of 101-250 employees.
MATURITY	Organizational age of +3 years	Organizations younger than 5 years will have very different priorities than those who have set foot on the ground and can be classed as a mature organization. A young organizations strategic planning is parsimonious rather than comprehensive, they rarely have a thorough business plan. A business strategy is the key first step to be able to create a real estate strategy.
INTERVIEWEE	The employees role at the organization should have an understanding or be involved with the real estate management	SME organizations compared to Large corporates often do not employee a real estate manager. Thus, often the HR, owner or facility manager is involved in the decisions around the real estate of an SME organization. The interviewee should be one of the afore described positions.

BUSINESS CATEGORY	A selection of three different organizations. Classic business services, modern business services and retail.	The selection of companies are of business categorized that function within knowledge intensive fields. Knowledge workers have the flexibility of choosing their working location, let it be remote or at the office. Further, different categories may react different to willingness of change within the workplace.
OFFICE/WORKPLACE	Make use of a hybrid workplace strategy	In order to be able to study how SME organizations are making a transition to a hybrid workplace strategy, the organization must have already implemented a hybrid strategy.


Table 1 Company selection criteria


2.5 Case study selection


The initial intention was to use the network of CBRE to select and contact organizations for the research. CBRE globally produces a lot of research regarding the office occupier sentiment outlook. CBRE Netherlands does this similarly for the Netherlands. However, the surveys executed in the Netherlands by CBRE were mostly of larger corporates. Given the focus on Dutch SMEs, few would qualify for this research. Few organizations from their research just class as medium-large SMEs, the remaining case study organizations were sourced through the author's personal network. All interviews were conducted with interviewees unknown to the interviewer to ensure any bias to the research.

After applying the criteria as presented above in Table 1, 11 organizations were selected. The initial intention was nine organizations—three organizations per category (see color-coded categories in Table 2) and size. However, more organizations became available during the contracting process. As the focus of this research is primarily focused from an organizational perspective, the interviews are conducted with employees that are strategically involved with the hybrid strategy of the organization. When looking at SME organizations, this does not always have to be a real estate manager. The names of the organizations have not been shared due to confidentiality reasons. Thus, each organization has been given a label, as shown in Table 2 below:

Organization category selection and color code:

 Classic business services (Legal, Finance, media) – The classical business service is characterized by employees congregating together in the same physical space for at least 40 hours per week to produce work for their business. These organizations have a strongly centralized organization (decision-making from the top level). Management may be stricter regarding remote working flexibility, and many businesses are likely to continue to operate in a traditional manner (Fayomi & Sani, 2022). Similarly, the workplace may need to reflect hierarchy and status - an office for management and shared offices or open office space for the remaining workforce. An interesting finding would be understanding how more classical business services reflect the need for change required for a hybrid workplace strategy.

 Modern business services (Consultancy, IT services, Design) – Modern businesses are characterized by a more contemporary organizational design, in which employees are given power and autonomy to make decisions and implementations. Modern organizations are more likely to have reacted to the demand for rapid innovation, becoming more flexible, distributed, and collaborative (Fayomi & Sani, 2022). These organizations made a transition not just in the ongoing experience of the pandemic but have likely commenced the transition to a flexible work environment before the pandemic. As aforementioned, modern business services are likely to provide a workplace that supports flexibility and collaboration, a strategy such as an activity-based workplace. The nature of the modern ethos is likely more suited to the required need to transition to a hybrid workplace strategy.

 Retail - A business service sector that has significantly been affected by the pandemic but has also been under pressure economically the last years. As result of the financial crisis lasting towards 2014, retail has been the only business sector for which rent prices did not grow (Van Leeuwen, 2022b). Retail required to be very agile to the large movements in the market, let it be covid, digitalization and the economic difficulties (Van Leeuwen, 2022a). For a majority of retail the pandemic sector were troubled by the empty shopping streets and forced closures due to the lockdown. On the other hand, the pandemic resulted in a significant growth in e-commerce (Van Leeuwen, 2022b). Given the significant growth of e-commerce retailers and the challenges they

faced in the hectic conditions during the pandemic, it would be interesting to see how these organizations are transitioning to a hybrid strategy.

Label	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Sector	Financial services	Consultant	Consultant	Financial services	3D Design	Retail	consultant	retail	Media	Financial services	Retail
Inter-viewee	Associate/- HR	People/- Culture team	Co-founder	Associate	Co-founder/- HR	HR/- facility manager	People/- operations	HR/- facility manager	Facility manager/- project leader renovation office	Team Manager	HR/- facility manager
Size	Small	Small	Small	Small	Small	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium Large	Medium Large	Medium Large

Table 2 The case study organizations and description

The company criteria concerning the selected companies can be found below in Table 3:

Item	Requirement	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Location	The selected cases are located in the Netherlands .	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Size	Small – medium size organizations 10 – 250 employees	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Interviewee	The employee's role at the organization should have an understanding or be involved with the real estate management	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Business category	A selection of four different organizations. Classic business services, modern business services and retail .	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Office/workplace	Make use of a hybrid workplace strategy	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Table 3 Criteria test case companies

Of the selection, only one fell outside the criteria, company D. The organization, has nine employees, which fell below the criteria of size. However, it was unnecessary to exclude company D from the study due to falling below the criteria by one employee, as the organization uses an office space and has implemented a hybrid workplace strategy.

2.7 Research tactics

The research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of How SMEs use organizational components in the transition towards a hybrid workplace strategy through a qualitative research method. The use of exploratory interviews will aid in obtaining an in-depth comprehension of their transition to a hybrid strategy post-lockdown from an organizational point of view.

The interviews follow a semi-structured manner, where a protocol including a series of questions guides the interview. The interviewees were offered the opportunity to build on their response from the first structured questions with follow up questions. As a result, the interviewee had the occasion to go more in depth on certain parts. Case study data collection follows a formal protocol. However, specific information that may become relevant to a case study is not readily predictable (Yin, 2018). Thus, probing the interviewee for additional information is key to better understanding the structured themes. The real-world subject can be derived from the lengthy interviews, for which the researcher and participants collaborate to create a more in-depth understanding. In total, 11 interviews were conducted through the holistic multi-case study.

2.8 Data collection

The benefit of using a multiple holistic case study design is the multiple data sources. No two cases are identical, which will increase the potential of coming across a broader range of issues. Further, it can increase the accuracy of the findings (Yin, 2018). As noted here before, the interviews are semi-structured with the assistance of an interview protocol. The interview protocol is guided by the themes based on the 8P organization component of Haynes (2008). The structured themes will help understand how these organizations use organizational components in their transition to a hybrid strategy across the multiple case studies. The replication of the themed interview protocol across the different cases can assist in creating patterns.

The interview protocol included an introduction of the interviewers' research purpose and an introducing of the interviewee. This included a small introduction of the interviewee, their position, how long they worked at the organization, and their responsibilities. From here, the main body is guided by the 8P themes. At the end of the interview, the interviewee is given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the topic, the interview itself, or any item they believe is important for the research that may have been missed during the interview itself.

The interviews are conducted using Microsoft Teams in both English and Dutch, depending on the native language of the interviewee. Microsoft teams have a built-in transcriber and recording function to collect the dialogue of the interview. The transcripts must be checked for inaudible sentences of which the software is not able to transcribe. The recordings and transcripts are then used to analyze and interpret the findings.

2.9 Data analysis – Thematic analysis

The data obtained are transcribed and coded using the software, Atlas Ti. Codes enhance the interview's meaning through pattern detection, theme creation, and analysis (Saldaña, 2021). As defined by Saldaña (2021), the approach used for interview analysis is the method of ground theory, a systematic approach to qualitative research analysis. The thematic analysis consists of multiple analysis stages, leading to the final developed 'Themes' resulting from the research data (See illustration Figure 4 below).

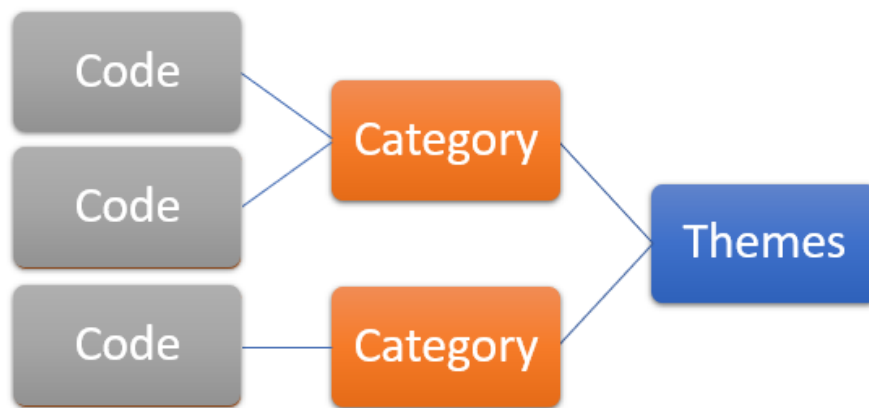


Figure 4 Thematic analysis illustration based on (Saldaña, 2021)

The codes created in Atlas Ti will help develop meaning to the themes from the interview data collected. Quotes and codes are gathered and connected to the related 8P organizational component themes to develop theories to help answer the main research question on how Dutch SME organizations are using organizational components in the transition to a hybrid strategy.

Three code groups were created for this research to help answer the sub-questions and main research questions. In the main research question of this research paper, three main group themes are of significance. See below the main research questions and, in bold, the significant code groups.

How are **organizational components** used by Dutch SME making a **transition** to a hybrid strategy?

First, the main group code for this research is the **organizational components** classed as the *component code*. These themes are based on the eight P organizational components of Haynes (2008). The **transition** to a hybrid strategy will help create an understanding of CRE alignment for Dutch SMEs, developing an understanding of the necessary phases in forming an hybrid strategy. The literature review covered the alignment building blocks defined by Arkesteijn & Heywood (2021). Transition is classed as the *alignment code*. Lastly, the **how**. The motivation code group uncovers this category. This group is divided between the drivers and barriers for the transition to a hybrid strategy. This creates an understanding of why and **how** the Dutch SME transitioned to a hybrid strategy. See below Table 4 for the group codes overview for this research.

Code group categories		
Component code	Alignment blocks	Motivation code
1.1 Position	2.1 Business strategy	3.1 Drivers for hybrid working
1.2 Purpose	2.2 Real estate strategy	3.2 Barriers for hybrid working
1.3 Paradigm	2.3 Making a workplace strategy	
1.4 Place	2.4 Implementing strategy	
1.5 Processes		
1.6 People		
1.7 Performance		
1.8 Productivity		

Table 4 Overview categorization codes for transcript data review

2.10 Data plan & ethical considerations

Data analysis

A data plan was used following the guidelines of the TU Delft. At the start of this research, a plan was created on the TU Delft online DMP portal. This plan was developed during the research process and completed before the first interviews.

Ethical considerations

The following ethical considerations are considered when conducting this research; Validity, voluntary participation and consent, confidentiality and FAIR Data principles. See explanation below

Validity

The research design quality is tested by the case study tactics and design by Yin (2018). The case study is tested through construct validity, external validity and reliability. Due to the nature of the research being exploratory, Internal validity is not evaluated. Internal validity is only for explanatory or causal studies (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) recommends that the interview is replicated across the different case studies with the help of an interview protocol to help match patterns through the different case studies. It is more challenging to create a statistical generalization with case studies. The research values are therefore presented in the form of themes and descriptions, which are then generalized (Yin, 2018).

Voluntary participation and consent

Gained informed consent is asked from all persons that have taken part in the case study were asked during the recording to give their consent to be able to record the interview, make a transcript, analyze and use the data collected for this research. The participants had been informed in advance of the nature of the case study and research. This is done through an introduction email formally inviting the individuals to partake in the research. This is briefly repeated in the introduction of the interview itself, with official informed consent during the interview.

Anonymity and confidentiality

All data has been anonymized along the General Data Protection Regulation principle (GDPR) guidelines. The steps are necessary to protect those participating from harm or any deception in the study from the participant. Furthermore, protecting privacy and confidentiality ensures participants are not put in any unwillingly undesirable position, such as being placed on a list to receive future requests on follow-up studies. The steps taken to meet GDPR are; interview data is stored on OneDrive business cloud optimized for GDPR and only accessible by the research team. Recordings deleted after one year of graduation, anonymized transcripts, and the interviewee's company are anonymized. The only aspect mentioned is the sector the company operates in, the size of the organization and the work function of the interviewee

FAIR Data principles

The FAIR Data principle is an ethical approach to enhance the reusability of the collected data (Wilkinson et al., 2016). The completed thesis research will be publicly available through the Delft University of Technology's educational repository at <https://repository.tudelft.nl/>. The research is also published in English, a language that is appropriate for representing information and is commonly used in academia.

3.0 Literature review

This section contains a literature study related to the main research topics. The relevant topics related to the research question include Hybrid workplace strategy, Organizational characteristics, Dutch SMEs, Corporate real estate management, and CRE alignment. Most of the theories available around Corporate real estate management are fit for larger corporations. First, the theories available will be explored, which will then be related to the context of this research.

3.1 A strategy in CRE

Strategy originates from military conflict where well-informed leaders could control events, and the superior strategy enabled one war-ring party to beat the other. In the modern business environment, strategies started to take shape around the 1950s as organizations realized the benefits of cooperation and competition. Strategies gained the role of achieving a competitive advantage for an organization (Henry, 2018). Companies recognize a constant change in how they do business due to external factors such as globalization, technological advancements, and the constantly shifting environment of macroeconomic forces. To maintain a competitive advantage, an organization should follow a strategic management process determining their goals and objectives to be translated into policies and plans to achieve those goals (Gibler & Lindholm, 2012).

Over the years, the definition of strategy further developed. Chandler (1962) states, "A strategy determines the long-term object of an organization, the plan of approach and the location of the resource needed to implement these objectives". Chaffee (1985) explained that a strategy has four specific characteristics: First, the strategy is about both content and process. Secondly, the strategy includes both analytical and conceptual modes of thought. Third, the environment and organization cannot be seen as separate. Lastly, strategy exists on multiple levels within the organization – For the whole, for the business unit, activities, and position. Towards the later 20th century, Buzell & Gale (1987) specify strategy as the allocation of resources. Seth & Thomas (1994) believe strategy integrates an organization's goals, policy, and actions into a coherent whole. Mintzberg (1987) created a framework of the 5 P's: Plan – consciously intended course of action, Ploy – Specific manoeuvre to outwit competitors, Pattern – consistent patterned stream of actions. Position – locating the organization within a competitive environment, and perspective – the cognitive state of mind held by decision-makers of the organization (Vande Putte, 2021a).

When we consider today's business environment, we see a change into a dynamic, uncertain and unpredictable environment due to the rapid developments of technologies and competition of different levels (Stoyanova & Angelova, 2018). Today's fast-moving environment will mean that competitive advantages last for a shorter than they used to. Rapid change is the new norm (McGrath & Gourlay, 2013). Real estate can be considered a dynamic resource that not only affects the organization but also impacts the people, physical space and performance. Therefore, real estate can be identified as a strategic resource contributing to the organization's performance (Kaluthanthri, 2019).

3.2 Workplace strategy

Corenet (2015) defines “workplace strategy” as the process of aligning an organizations workplace to support its strategic business goals, while optimizing real estate performance.

Corporate real estate management

The covid pandemic induced a structural organizational shift in commercial real estate. Post-pandemic has left organizations to rethink their office use for the future and are compelled to adopt their business models to remain competitive (CoreNet, 2015). In line with companies changing the way they do business in response to globalization influences, the workplace is transforming into a workspace and constantly shifting environment of macroeconomic forces (CoreNet, 2015). The management of the office workplace is done through corporate real estate management (CREM). To secure competitive advantage, performance measurements and monitoring should be used to ensure the match between the business and real estate strategies (Lindholm A.L & Gibler k, 2005). For this research, we define CREM as “CREM integrates, directs and supports the strategic alignment of all business processes and underlying business assets, including human capital, with the land, buildings and working environments of an organization.” (Haynes et al., 2017). Many definitions can be found in CREM on added value. The definition by John et al. (2008): “Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long-term: which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment, to meet the needs for markets and to fulfil stakeholder proposition” is the referred to by Haynes (2017), of which his framework is central to this research. The framework will be developed upon in chapter 3.6 The 8P framework.

CREM is still considered an emergent management discipline (Heywood et al., 2009). CREM's most considerable challenge is reducing the gap between the high speed of business and the slow speed of real estate (Heywood & Arkensteijn, 2017). Over the years, the real estate manager's role shifted from a task manager, which has a technical focus, to a business strategist, where the manager anticipates trends central to the management of CRE (De Jonge et al., 2009). Joroff et al. (1993) (De Jonge et al., 2009) divided the transition over the years into five step (see Figure 5). Towards the latter stage in the 1990s, CREM started to develop the link between an organization's strategy and the real estate strategy as a performance measurement system (PMS). In the twenty-first century, organizations started to experience change. The technological revolution changed the work processes, influencing the workplace's design and management. As a result, flexibility became inherent with new technologies introducing separation of work, the activity, and the location of work resulting in the impact on the demand for change in the workplace (Gibson & Luck, 2006). Organizations have realized the importance of CREM and how CRE can play a more prominent strategic role. To meet the challenges organizations face today, companies need an efficient and productive work environment to improve their competitive position in an ever more competitive marketplace (Lindholm & Leväinen, 2006).

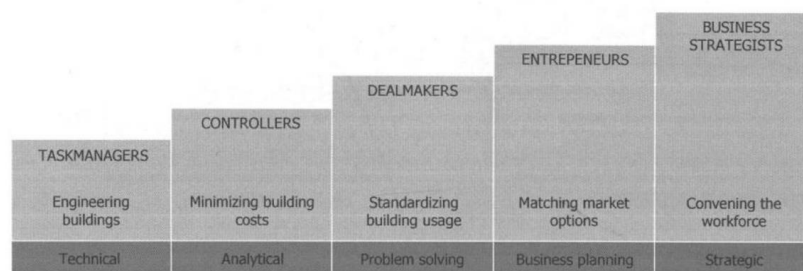


Figure 5 The changing role of corporate real estate management in five stages based on joroff et al., (1993) (De Jonge et al., 2009)

Workplace trends

In the past three decades, the workplace has significantly developed. Much of this change has been the result of increasing technological advancements. The introduction of the internet/wifi allowed the workplace to become more mobile (Greene and Myerson, 2011, p24). A well-presented “The Evolution of the desk” (Harvard innovation lab, 2016) illustrates how the past 35 years, our everyday surrounding has transformed from something tangible to virtual (see Figure 6). Digitalization has wholly recontextualized the tools we use in the workplace. As a result, the corporate work style and workplace have developed from a solo desk space (e.g. office cubicles) and the main meeting space to a beyond building working from multiple locations, collaborative space, meeting and social space, and shared flex desk space (Harris, 2015).



Figure 6 Evolution of the desk (Harvard innovation lab, 2016)

Real estate is evolving from being an asset to being a resource leading a shift in the focus from “managing the building” to “managing people”. Consequently, the workplace is transforming from a solitary workplace to a flexible and collaborative space with a better user experience and a higher service level (Harris, 2015). Figure 7 illustrates how desk space used to be most of the total space required in the office. By 2015, the need for desk space decreased, and the demand for informal and formal meetings for more collaborative work increased. Many organizations are opting for further development of collaborative space and even looking beyond the building. With the abrupt workplace change due to covid, a significant shift was made in working beyond the building. It is impossible to predict what the long-term impact will be. The pandemic has rapidly increased the desire to working beyond the building, and many organizations are creating policies guiding a form of hybrid working. CBRE (2022) predicts that future office formats will likely dedicate much more space for collaboration. They predict that the traditionally densely packed office space models will need to de-densify in the future to accommodate greater separation between work settings, more space for collaboration, and a more significant amount of social and amenity space (Horner, 2022).

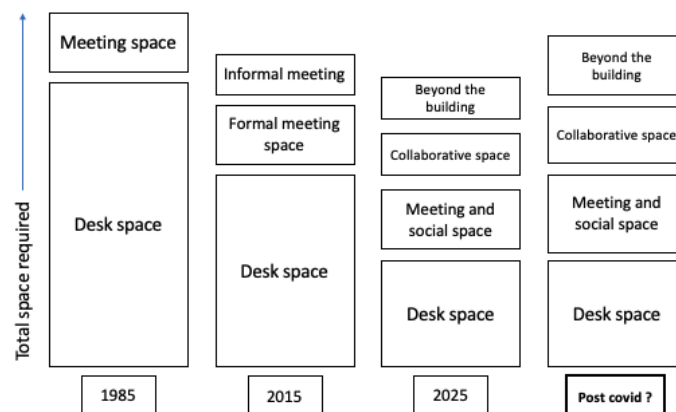


Figure 7 The changing palette of work setting plus own illustration post-covid (Harris, 2015)

The nature of organizations and their changing operational environment can result from new developments and trends creating demand. As trends evolve, the demands of the workplace progress (Harris, 2015). Organizations have realized that corporate real estate can play a more prominent strategic role. Furthermore, an organization seeking a competitive advantage are prompting real estate professionals to take on a new role (Arkesteijn, 2015). According to van Ree (2002), the performance of an organization depends to a great extent on meeting the generic performance criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, flexibility, and creativity. Traditionally performance measurement of corporate real estate was primarily focused on cost reduction. This was seen as short-term thinking and lacked strategic focus (Riratanaphong, 2013). Gradually, performance management moved towards a more strategic approach to adding value to the organization and its stakeholders (Jensen et al., 2014). Van Ree (2002) similarly concluded that performance measurement changed from focusing on just the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization to a modern performance measurement establishing a broader set of criteria (see Table 5) (Riratanaphong, 2013).

1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective
	Efficient	Efficient	Efficient	Efficient	Efficient	Efficient	Efficient
		Productive	Productive	Productive	Productive	Productive	Productive
			Flexible	Flexible	Flexible	Flexible	Flexible
				Creative	Creative	Creative	Creative
					Sustainable	Sustainable	Sustainable
						Smart	Smart
							?

Table 5 Performance criteria organizations should meet (Van Ree, 2002)

As performance measurements moved towards a more strategic approach, the perspective on how real estate adds value to the organization continued to develop over time. Previous strategies showed that added value was cost based focused. More recent strategies show that added value of CREM relates to workplace performance and productivity (Riratanaphong, 2013). A study by Lindholm and Leväinen (2006) on the value-added attributes of real estate showed the demand for more efficient utilization of space and higher workplace productivity that led to organizations seeking strategies for managing their facility (Riratanaphong, 2013). Development towards the importance of workplace change contributing to added value corresponds to the performance criteria in Table 5 of the added value of accommodation.

3.3 CRE workplace alignment

The definition of corporate real estate alignment is perceived differently by many in literature. Osgood (2004) defines *strategic alignment* as a framework for directly linking real estate initiatives with core business strategy and measuring organizational results. Heywood (2011) defines *alignment* as bringing things that differ or could differ into harmony, such as organization-real estate strategy and creating agreement between them. Monique Arkesteijn (2019) states that alignment of CRE is one of the activities parts of CREM and is referred to as CRE alignment. Then and Tan (2010) define alignment as “Alignment in an active sense implies moving in the same direction, supporting a common purpose, being synchronized in timing and direction, being appropriate for the purpose and in a passive sense the absence of conflict”. Their definition is based on Kaplan and Norton (2006) who state: “alignment is NOT a one-time event” and further develop that by its very nature, alignment requires across organizational boundaries, demanding a proactive management approach (Then et al., 2014). There are many more alignment models and definitions, although the above definitions provide a sufficient introduction of Corporate real estate alignment.

Due to the difference in perception of CRE alignment, Heywood and Arkesteijn (2017) explored twenty existing alignment models to try and deepen their understanding of CRE alignment and concluded that only a few in literature specifically define alignment, including the references mentioned in the introduction here above (Monique Arkesteijn, 2019). For this reason and the nature of this research, CRE alignment will combine different viewpoints of alignment and personal experience. Workplace alignment can be seen as part of CRE alignment as alignment occurs on different organizational levels (Arkesteijn & Heywood, 2021). This research has an organizational perspective focus on how a hybrid workplace strategy can be aligned with organizational components. To get a good understanding of what is required of the alignment, the paper of M. H. Arkesteijn & Heywood (2021) did extensive research into 14 CRE alignment models and traced four “building blocks” and 12 components that are necessary to model CRE alignment (Figure 8). Block 1: understand corporate strategy, which relates to the current workplace strategy. Block 2: Understanding real estate performance. According to M. H. Arkesteijn (2015), alignment as an act of doing is most evident in block 2. Block 3: Making a real estate strategy. Lastly, block 4: implementing a real estate strategy which would result in this research as the hybrid workplace strategy.

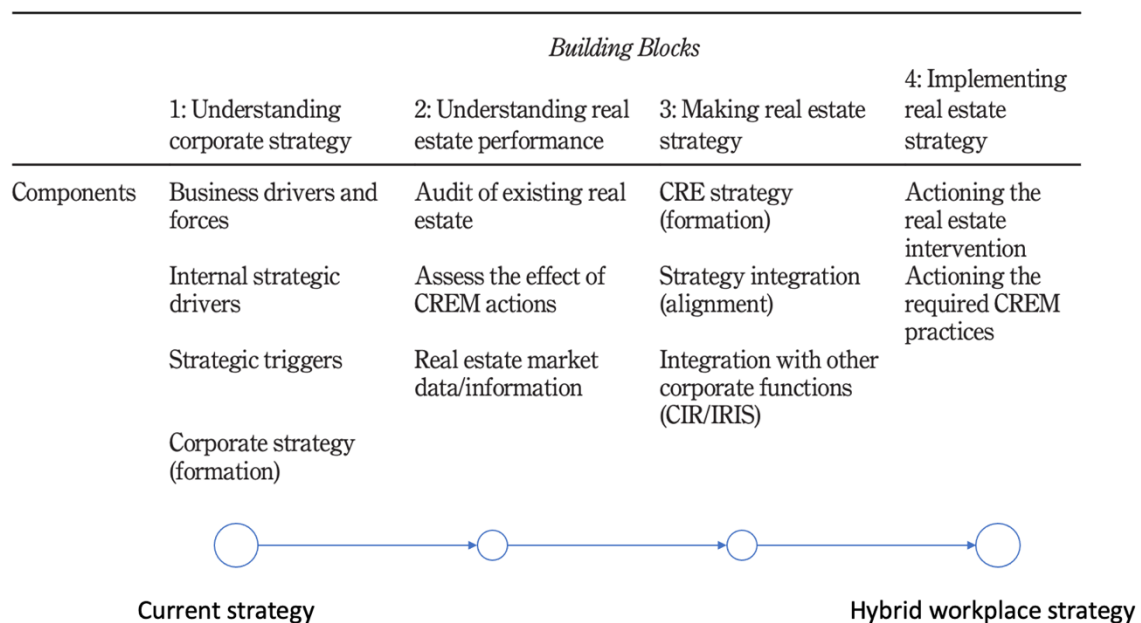


Figure 8: CRE alignment building blocks and components + own illustration below (Arkesteijn et al., 2017)

3.4 The Dutch SME

In the Netherlands, 99.6% out of the total of 864.000 Dutch companies are small and medium-sized organizations. These organizations account for 67.2% of the total employment in the Netherlands (Statistica, 2021). Accordingly SMEs are a noteworthy portion of organizations that contribute to the economy of the Netherlands.

CREM and strategic alignment is well known in the corporate world. It has been documented since the 1980s by numerous researchers and continues to be an essential issue faced by executives (Jouirou & Kalika, 2004). Existing tools for performance and instructions for their implementation have been primarily developed for large firms with considerable financial resources. Compared to large corporations, SMEs have fewer financial resources, less technical expertise, and may lack management skills (Jouirou & Kalika, 2004). In other words, a typical small business is resource-constrained, limiting greater performance. Resource constraints also can limit development options (Street et al., 2017).

International Business Machines Corporation (IBM tech) observed the organization's growth of information technology (IT) and sourced Henderson & Venkatraman to create a study to explore maximizing performance with the IT implementation process (Vande Putte, 2021b) Henderson & Venkatraman (1989) developed a conceptual model, the strategic alignment model, to address the dynamic environment of IT and for the strategic management of IT. During the course AR1MBE030 TU Delft (2021), the applicability of the strategic alignment model was adopted by looking to maximize performance with the real estate implementation process instead of IT. Street et al (2017) studied the applicability of the strategic alignment model to SMEs. A lot can be learned from the combination of the adopted strategic alignment model and the study related to the applicability of the strategic alignment model to SME organization. In addition, the literature result can bring insight on the applicable of the strategic alignment of SME and their real estate. This research explores how Dutch SME organizations use organizational components to transition to a hybrid strategy. Due to the changing demands in the ongoing experiences of the pandemic lockdown, SMEs must re-align their business and real estate strategy.

Researchers have identified the importance of strategic planning and planning time horizons. Although, due to fewer resources, SMEs usually do not have the tools to strategize a plan properly. Strategic planning is as vital for an SME as it is in a larger organization, even though SMEs tend to have shorter time planning horizons (Street et al., 2017). The study also indicates that in smaller organizations, the number of employees makes it simpler for leaders/owners to coordinate their strategy planning and communicate their strategic objectives. In addition, the leader has less work to "sell" the strategic plan to employees. The more knowledgeable the leader has about the firm, the more likely a better and more informed strategic decision can be made in the operational and tactical areas. Moreover, the leadership styles SME owners utilize reflect how likely they are to create specific behaviors that are regarded as necessary for success (Mihai et al., 2017). The owner's presence (usually the manager of an SME) is felt directly by his employees, and as a result, his management style and leadership affect them directly (Mihai, 2015).

Many SMEs in the Netherlands are micro-size. These are companies that are of size less than ten people (0-9 employees) (Statistica, 2021). Due to the characteristics and size of a micro firm, many may not have a real estate portfolio, so the scope of this research has been narrowed down to small-medium-sized organizations (10-250 employees). Furthermore, an SME's maturity is also important for this research. For a young SME, strategic planning is parsimonious rather than comprehensive for an SME. An SME rarely has a business plan. Often SMEs would focus on getting a new product on the market or service to market quickly than conducting a thorough market analysis (Street et al., 2017). For this reason, a research refinement would have to be implemented for a minimum of 5 years of operation.

Size	Number of employees	AND Annual revenue	AND/OR Annual balance sheet
Medium	Less than 250	Max. € 50 million	> or = € 43 million
Small	Less than 50	Around € 10 million	> or = € 10 million
Micro	Less than 10	Max. € 2 million	> or = € 2 million

Table 6: Defined size categorization of the Dutch SME (MKB Nederland)

In the Dutch workplace, seven hierarchical systems are important. Usually, all systems exist in every organization, yet one culture is always dominant. The systems depend on the organization and differs from department to department or from team to team. The difference is healthy, as this keeps one cautious of the other (De Vuijst, 2015). Four of the seven systems are most relevant to this study (De Vuijst used by TIAS, 2018):

- Culture of power – The boss decides, and all know who the boss is. The boss acts as the organization's leader, not to be liked but to win.
- Bureaucratic culture – The leader has the authority and determines what is right and what is not.
- Competitive culture – The leader is the controller that arranges opportunities to score. Those that shine and claim success will be rewarded.
- Egalitarian culture – Also considered as the Polder model. This model is a process of decision-making based on consensus, solving problems via dialogue with every part having an equal say. The boss, in this context, is the social leader with an eye on everyone, inclined to fix what is broken.

Likert (1961) identified four different leadership and management systems (Mihai, 2015):

- Explorative – Unidirectional communication from top to bottom. Managers would command and control their subordinates through fear and intimidation.
- Benevolent – Similar to explorative, but instead employees rewarded for employee loyalty and performance. In addition, more bidirectional communication although was limited to information the managers wanted to hear.
- Consultative – Employees consulted on minor choices, but communication from bottom to top is filtered. Significant decisions left to the top.
- Participative – Encouraged bidirectional communication and actively involving their employees in the decision-making process.

The first two of Likert (1961) can be categorized as autocratic leadership styles, and the last two as democratic styles and represent the bases of the laissez-faire (delegative) leadership styles (Mihai, 2015). These will be the leadership styles used to define the organization's hierarchy.

1. Autocratic leadership – between the two studies mentioned above, the autocratic leadership style can be derived from a culture of power, bureaucratic culture, explorative & benevolent. This is a leadership style with excessive control from the leaders, with little regard for employee well-being.
2. Democratic leadership style – Emphasis the importance of input from team members. The owner/leaders consider their employees' decision-making process, opinions, desires, and needs. It is the more appropriate leadership style for a more developed company, in which employees are mature enough to be part of the decision-making process but still need some form of guidance. This form of leadership style relates to the egalitarian culture.

3. Laissez-faire leadership style – Involvement of the leader's with subordinate's activities is minimal. Employees are given complete autonomy and responsibility over their work, and they are expected to make decisions and handle problems on their own, with little to no supervision from their superiors.

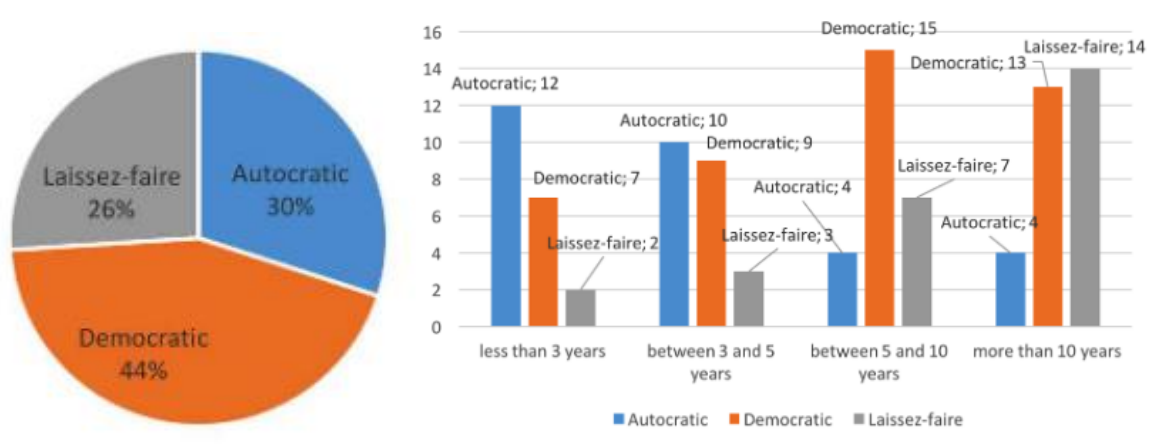


Figure 9 (left) Distribution of leadership styles among Dutch SME's (Mihai, 2015)

Figure 10 (right) Relation with Dutch SME maturity and leadership style (Mihai, 2015)

Research, in general, recognizes that the leader/owner of an SME is usually the key person in its strategy setting and operation (Stonehouse & Pemberton, 2002). This is due to the direct influence of the owner on his/her employees. Figure 10 displays that the majority of matured SMEs in the Netherlands are of democratic or laissez-faire leadership styles. In other words, this can be described as a flatter organization where its supervisors and employees are equals. For such organizational structures, Haynes et al., (2017) suggest an office that needs flexibility, uniformity, and support informal connectivity.

3.5 Hybrid working

Hybrid working is a term that has become increasingly popular since the covid pandemic. This crisis has led many more organizations and employees to get acquainted with working from home. Post-pandemic lockdown studies have shown an increase in the amount of employees working from home. This can be explained by the fact that most of the workforce perceived a positive experience in the form of work efficiency, control, and work-life balance. As a result, organizations are moving towards a hybrid way of working. Consequently, organizations are moving towards a hybrid way of working (Appel-Meulenbroek et al., 2022). Halford (2005) was one of the first to define hybrid work as working both from home and an organization site; before the popularity of hybrid working, teleworking covered both employees working fully from home or those working in a hybrid way. Hybrid working used to be referred to in the context of team collaboration with co-located and virtual members (Appel-Meulenbroek et al., 2022). For this paper, Hybrid working combines office working and remote working—a navigating combination of the two formats (see Figure 11).

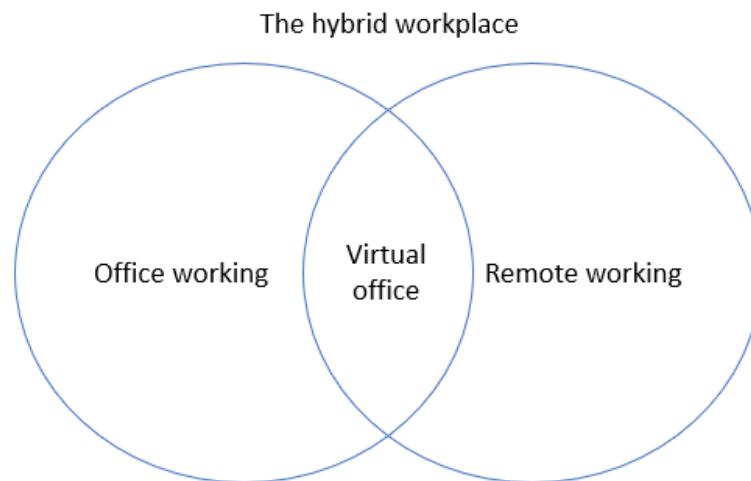


Figure 11 Hybrid working (author illustration)

Drivers for remote working

New ways of working have garnered more attention due to technological advancements. Subject to how the hybrid strategy has been implemented, the organization can benefit greatly if done so correctly. In an increasingly competitive market, there is a shift to an information economy and a war on talent who desire access to a higher degree of flexibility. In addition, the reach for talents has increased as employees would not have to commute long distances daily, nor would employees need to travel during rush hour. Many researchers have studied the benefit of remote work in the past decades. The following are a few of the more significant reasons for an organization to consider a hybrid strategy (Ferreira et al., 2021):

- Work-life balance
- Time management/Flexibility
- Fewer distractions/workers focus
- Increased productivity and moral
- Enhanced worker autonomy
- Higher level of job satisfaction
- Reduced overall costs
- Increased organizational effectiveness

Barriers for remote working

The transition to hybrid working requires considerable organizational change for all types of organizations, much of which is yet to be utilized fully. In an increasingly competitive market, organizations must learn to navigate change to survive and not risk being left behind. Thus, organizational change is both necessary and inevitable for those seeking to keep up with the market, but it does not always guarantee success (Borg & O’Sullivan, 2021). A hybrid strategy can be costly if not appropriately aligned with all aspects of the organization. The following are a few of the more significant barriers to a hybrid strategy (Ferreira et al., 2021):

- Feeling isolated/lack of physical interaction
- Balance of work, family, and personal life problems
- Communication problems
- Reduced employee collaboration
- Virtual communication limitations (non-verbal aspect of a conversation)
- Needed discipline
- Technology dependency problem
- Challenges in maintaining team cohesion
- Management challenges

Requirements for remote working

Implementing a hybrid strategy includes specific internal and external requirements for the office. During the pandemic, quick solutions had to be created to work remotely. Many organizations upgraded their virtual meeting capabilities to enhance the communication between employees. In the short term, this was sustainable. Most organizations that could work from home were going through the same dramatically altered working conditions (Franken et al., 2021). In the conventional office, adequate physical resources (work surface and storage, office equipment, and up-to-date IT) are required to execute a basic job function. In the home office, these facilities can be considered as important. Mostly, the IT facilities are provided by employers, however less often adequate furniture is provided. In addition, having adjustable furniture and equipment within the workplace was related to higher workplace satisfaction (Fan Ng, 2010). A proper strategy is required in the long term, as this includes a significant organizational shift. The following list shows some important requirements from an organization for a hybrid strategy:

- IT system supporting remote working (virtual meeting tools, cloud file sharing system ect.)
- IT Support and efficiency in providing timely advice
- Job equipment
- Adjustment to organizational paradigm
- An office layout aligned for a hybrid strategy, team meeting rooms of sufficient size and equipped properly for video-conferencing. In addition individual calling rooms.
- Proper management in regards to tacit learning (face-to-face unconscious learning)

Discussion

Enabling remote working in a workplace strategy can bring many benefits to an organization, such as a better work-life balance, higher job satisfaction, fewer distractions, and increased productivity. Nevertheless, adding an external office environment comes with additional challenges, such as balancing work-family life, reduced collaboration, and communication problems. Furthermore, from the literature reviewed above, it is observed that a hybrid strategy could be costly if not implemented correctly. Thus, an organization ought to reflect on the drivers and barriers of a hybrid strategy in order to successfully make use of a hybrid workplace strategy.

3.6 The 8P framework

Haynes (2008) Created a framework for evaluating how well the office environment supports the office occupiers in their work process—assuming that the office occupiers have “connectivity” with their office environment. He states that “Workplace connectivity” can collectively be physical and behavioral. High performance is created when the office environment aligns with the occupier. In terms of the framework, high performance and productivity is created when 8P’s are all in alignment. This research uses the framework of Haynes (2008) to study SMEs in transition to a hybrid strategy, and the framework components (organizational components) are used in this process. Haynes (2017) update his framework to include 10P organizational components. Due to the complexity of the applicability of literature tools to SMEs, it was decided to maintain the 8P framework. See the framework below (Figure 13):

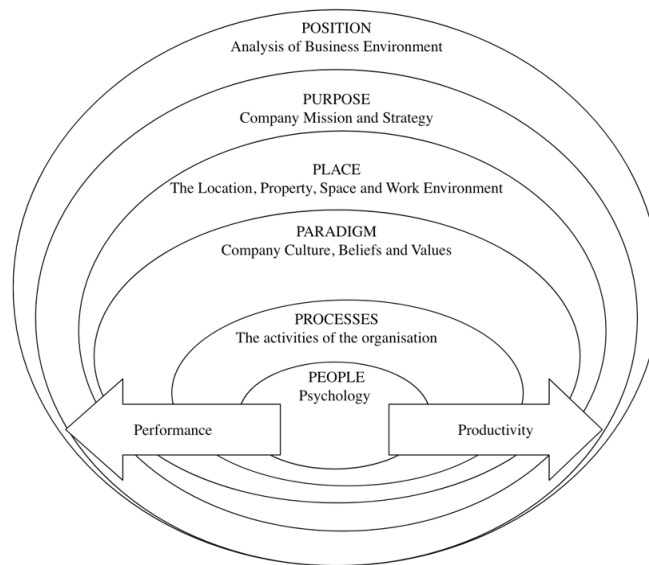


Figure 13 8 P’s Real estate connectivity – the alignment model (Haynes, 2008)

To gain a better understanding of the 8P’s, each factor has been elaborated on below (Haynes, 2008):

Position

The position factor reflects an organization's perspective on its commercial environment. Position establishes the framework in which CRE decisions are made. This requires understanding the ‘drivers for change’ in the business environment. Position can refer to the business environment relative to its competitors or the organization's position in the business cycle. For example, a growing organization has different needs than a restructuring organization. (Haynes et al., 2017). In the modern day, the business environment is a fast and complex dynamic environment that challenges the stability of a company to remain healthy and future-proof. For an organization to uphold a competitive advantage, it must remain conscious of the external drivers, issues, and trends in the market. The *position* of an organization transitioning towards a hybrid strategy can be observed as a restructuring of the organization. To evaluate the potential impact of main drivers for change in the business environment, strategic analysis tools commonly used include PESTLE analysis, SWOT analysis and competitor analysis.

Several significant trends have had an impact on the way people work. The complex dynamic around globalization, emerging technologies, and increased demand for flexibility require CRE managers to

think proactively instead of reactively. These developments reflect the restrictions of the office environment, giving the office worker flexibility to work in various environments. The office has evolved towards a more flexible style. These drivers for change offer an opportunity to rethink the way work is undertaken. The following trends have been identified (Harris, 2012):

- The workplace has become of fundamental importance for strategic success
- Technology advancements allow office workers the flexibility to work from a range of different work environments.
- A Real estate strategy for more efficient and effective use of the valuable and expensive property
- Workforce are both virtual and physical. More space use attention is required for team collaboration and meeting space.
- The workplace is increasingly used to convey the corporate culture and objectives to employees and clients.

As a result of the trends listed above, Haynes (2017) believes that within the context of workplace management, one of the most significant developments that are taking place is the movement from a more open-plan office towards an activity-based workplace. Haynes (2017) is particularly enthusiastic about this development as it begins to recognize the diversity of people within a knowledge-based office and what support from the workplace is required. When considering the transition towards a future workplace, following the trends mentioned above demands specific requirements from the workplace. Haynes (2017) reference to a study by Ratcliffe and Saurin (2008), who identified issues relating to the future workplace. The most potential issues for the future workplace will be that:

- “Individuals will be increasingly networked, connected virtually and more loosely connected to the corporate organization.”
- “Formal work environment will need to be highly collaborative to facilitate the virtual networks.”

For which the workplace must be:

- Highly technology enabled
- A strong sense of community

Position in a hybrid workplace strategy for a Dutch SME

An organization going through change is one of the more important moments for an organization to create an understanding of the current internal strengths and weaknesses with the external market circumstance. This can be used to examine the current real estate and help create a future proof plan. A hybrid strategy will bring additional challenges to the workplace, such as connectivity as mentioned above. By acknowledging the internal and external market, examining the current workplace and creating an understanding of the necessities a hybrid workplace strategy asks of from your organization in particular, only then an organization can create a actionable real estate strategy for the coming years.

Purpose

The *purpose* is an addition to the position component of the 8P framework. *Purpose* relates to the organization's aims and objectives, mission, vision, and future direction. In other words, the reason why an organization has concluded a future business direction and how they will achieve these steps. For a CRE manager, understanding the corporate strategy, that is, the purpose, and aligning that with its real estate is essential. Lindholm and Nenonen (2006) state that, generally, an organization's strategy could be one of two things: to increase revenue growth or profitability. This leads to seven possible generic real estate strategies to support the purpose of the organization: The increased value of an asset(s), promotion of marketing and sales, increased innovations, increased employee satisfaction, increased productivity, increased flexibility, and reduce costs.

The first part of this theoretical study introduced the definition of strategy. As mentioned, many authors have defined strategy in a form that the definition would suit their study. Haynes (2017), for his framework and study, referred to the definition of the strategy defined by John et al. (2008) as:

“Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long-term: which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment, to meet the needs for markets and to fulfil stakeholder proposition”

Real estate remains one of the higher expenditures for an organization. Organizations have realized the importance of CREM and how it can play a more prominent strategic role. Real estate was previously considered a financial burden, which has now developed to be a tool to align and strengthen other business functions within an organization. Organizations thus seek to achieve a competitive advantage by prompting real estate professionals to take on a new role (Arkesteijn et al., 2015). In addition, ignoring CRE does not only prevent the organization from obtaining its potential benefit, but it can also develop negative effects on the organization. Because real estate is a costly resource, reducing costs is often the strategic approach. A focus on unit costs and building conditions rather than the overall costs and business outcomes is potentially a reason that CREM still needs to capture full strategic attention (Appel-Meulenbroek & Haynes, 2014).

Organizational *paradigm* is an important aspect when considering a real estate strategy for an organization. That is the identification and understanding of the beliefs and values of the organization. (Haynes et al., 2017). The abrupt transition to remote working during the pandemic presented clear challenges related to the organizational *paradigm*. This was not as clear initially, but once the organization had to maintain hybrid working upon partial return to the office, organizations realized a different atmosphere (Interviews, personal communication, May 2021). Research shows that organizations committing to remote work for the first time will face many more challenges than upgrading their IT, allowing for a hybrid office. For example, their approach to personnel development is due to the need for more opportunities to share tacit learning from and with colleagues and managers. The current adoption of hybrid working has evidently shown that employees have had a positive experience with the flexibility to work remotely. These positive experiences may be challenged when neglecting the reduced opportunity for personal development and career progression (Delany, 2021).

Furthermore, human asset remains the highest expense for an organization. A slight increase in the productivity of employees is much more beneficial than a slight reduction in real estate costs. The type and quality of space greatly impact the employee's working experience, which in turn can affect productivity. The workspace provided for work, interaction, collaboration, and rest can be the linking component between real estate and human resources. In addition, the workspace can affect attracting and retaining talent (Haynes et al., 2017).

Purpose in a hybrid strategy

When it comes to the transition towards a hybrid strategy, three elements are most significant for an organization undergoing change: The strategy, real estate, and human assets of the organization (Haynes et al., 2017). Given the significance of the human asset, a slight increase in productivity goes a long way for the organization compared to a reduction of real estate expenses. Thus, it is beneficial to consider a correctly aligned strategy by analyzing the physical environment (workplace and its amenities) and the behavioral environment (employee interaction).

Paradigm

Paradigm further develops upon the *purpose* component by examining corporate and real estate strategy differently. Paradigm examines the organization regarding mission, value, micro-culture, and orientation. Haynes (2017) describes this as the organization's DNA. A prominent aspect of *paradigm* is understanding how an organization functions, its leadership style, and how employees use the workplace. Furthermore, *paradigm* can often be conveyed through company branding, not just its marketing or logo, but reflecting the ethos (spirit) of the organization. Real estate is a powerful element in communicating and facilitating an organization's brand identity to its employees and clients. Thus, the *paradigm* of an organization can be considered an important component that real estate should be aligned (Haynes et al., 2017). “Culture eats strategy for breakfast” is a famous quote by Peter Drucker (NA), pointing out that no matter how detailed your strategy, its efficacy will be held back by team members if they share a poor culture. For CRE managers, if a workplace is not aligned with its people's culture and the work they do, the organization's **purpose**, **position** and **paradigm** are likely to fail (Haynes et al., 2017).

The *paradigm* is one of the more complex components of the 8P framework to analyze. Many factors, including intangible factors, shape *paradigm* considered the “unwritten rules” that are part of highly abstract mental constructs and subconsciously handed down by generations and leaders within the organization. To create an understanding, these “unwritten rules” should be translated into something more tangible (Haynes et al., 2017). Haynes (2017) identified several principle components to do so. A manager should define the organization's paradigm through its mission, vision, values, personality, beliefs, and brand identity to identify any mismatch between these components and the organization's assets, ensuring proper alignment.

Internationally, cultural differences can be significant in the way an organization functions. Hofstede (1980) did a comprehensive study on how values and behaviors in the workplace are influenced by culture. Hofstede created a model of national culture consisting of six dimensions. For this research, we are explicitly looking at SMEs in The Netherlands. Haynes (2017) gathered examples of countries with high and low scores from the model of Hofstede, where The Netherlands characterized as “Flatter organizations, supervisors and employees as equals” with the tip for CRE manager's office need flexibility and uniformity and support informal connectivity.” As stated earlier in this paper, research showed that matured SMEs in The Netherlands could be characterized similarly to larger organizations. However, researchers recognize that the leader/owner of an SME is usually the key person in its strategy setting and operation. This would mean SMEs can be characterized as more centralized organizations, where their office must reflect hierarchies and status. This is more the case for younger SMEs (Mihai, 2015).

Paradigm in a hybrid strategy

Paradigm is creating an understanding of how the organization works. These are partly written and unwritten rules of the organization. In the short term, organizations have had to radically alter how and where employees were working in response to the covid pandemic. In the long term, we see organizations permanently transitioning toward the “new normal.” When implementing a hybrid

strategy, an organization will have a shift in its paradigm. The SME needs to identify the components of its organizational paradigm: its mission and vision, national characteristics, organizational personality, values and beliefs, and brand identity. By creating a better understanding of the critical areas, managers can proactively adapt to in transition to ensure any disconnect between the components that have been identified (Haynes et al., 2017).

Processes

Office processes have significantly developed over the past few decades in response to the changing nature of work. Chapter 3.2 Workplace strategy workplace trends developed on how there has been a movement from individuals working in a cellular office to teams working in an open-plan environment. These days, the workplace needs to support people interaction and collaborative working. A correct balance that fits the organization is required to ensure this freedom is not a distraction. Understanding the work processes is needed to establish a correct workplace strategy in that the real estate and processes are aligned.

The aim of changing the workplace can be related to diverse goals and drivers, which in turn, can influence employee productivity and job satisfaction. Any change due to work patterns, organizational structure, technological advancements or the need for a cultural change could be a reason for a change in the workplace (Riratanaphong, 2013). Currently, a significant shift is considered by many organizations due to the impact of the covid pandemic. As mentioned in the introduction, the pandemic has influenced the workplace from office to remote, which today has left a permanent mark on the fundamental principles of the workplace as many have expressed their desire to work from home (Smite et al., 2022). The possibility of hybrid working is a significant shift in an organization's structure, and an aligned strategy can significantly influence its performance (Jouirou & Kalika, 2004). An organization would primarily change the workplace to reduce costs, promote efficiency, or improve performance (Riratanaphong, 2013). The workplace can be considered a tool that support the organizational objectives (De Jonge et al., 2009).

To realize a real estate strategy that enhances and boosts the organizational objective, it is important to stress the importance of the relationship between the people (user) and the real estate strategy. Wamelink & Remøy (2019), during the course AR2R036 re-design (TU Delft, 2019), introduce a framework that stresses the relation in a development project of the actors involved, the real estate strategy and performance. Much like when developing a real estate strategy, relations can be found between performance, the actors engagement and the strategy. A change in one element, will affect the other. See Figure 14.

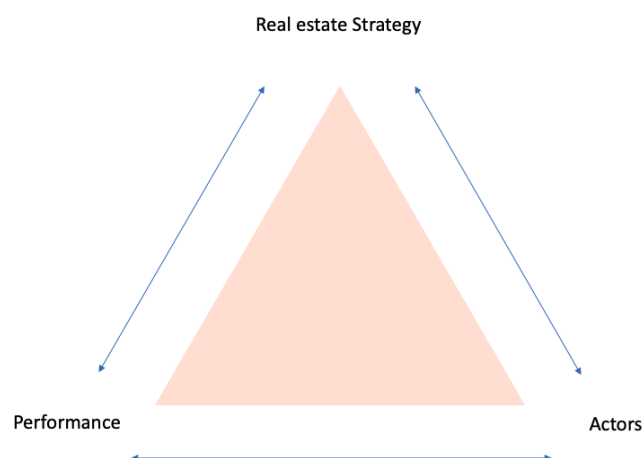


Figure 14 Real Estate Strategy relations (Remøy & Wamelink, 2019)

For this research, the real estate strategy will relate to the SMEs hybrid workplace strategy with the perspective of the organizational components. The actors are directly affected by the strategy and, therefore, will affect the performance. The actors represent the office employees and owners of the SME. Performance is reflected how the desire and experience of the actors is perceived in the hybrid strategy.

Processes in a hybrid workplace strategy

For this research, the development and possibilities of working beyond the building are significant. The growth of online working introduced agility in the workplace, describing more mobile, technology-enabled workstyles (Greene & Myerson, 2011). The office has distributed and can be divided into three locations: working in the office, working virtually (interaction and collaboration without face-to-face or one-way communication) and working out of the office (Homeworking, hotel, during transport, café etc.) (Haynes et al., 2017). The aforementioned have been developments of the past few decades. The pandemics' influence on the workplace has pushed a demand beyond the office. Figure 15 illustrates the change in components of the distributed workplace. An SME with a more traditional office layout considering implementing a hybrid workplace strategy must understand the individual process work. Which working process should be executed where? What is the most appropriate allocation of space provision when in the workplace? Further, an open-plan office is increasingly recognized as an office solution based on false premise that all work activities can be undertaken in on particular environment. This view supports that a traditional office has a utilization of 60-70 per cent, meaning that 30 per cent of the office is not utilized. An activity-based solution will allow office occupiers to choose the most appropriate environment to undertake a particular task.

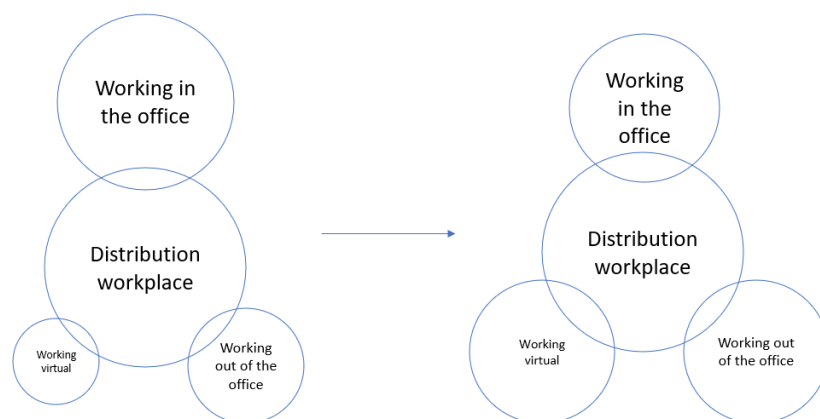


Figure 15 changing components of the distributed workplace (Haynes et al., 2017)

Place

The *place* component in context with the 8P framework is related to the macro-factors, the internal and external components. The virtual and physical workplace are both significant in a hybrid workplace strategy. The internal components relate to the building and the workplace strategy. External component relates to the physical location. The starting point for strategic space planning is identifying the organizational demand—the size of the organization's demand for adequate space.

The pandemic has created an abrupt change in the workplace. Organizations in the ongoing experience of the pandemic lockdown may need help with the correct strategy for their organization workplace. As Riratanaphong (2013) states, any change in the workplace pattern, organizational structure, and/or technological development can result in the demand to change the office. Many organizations are planning a switch to some form of hybrid working. The pandemic has left many with a positive experience with remote working. A survey of KPMG's CEO outlook survey (2021) uncovered that 69% of CEOs from large corporates in 2020 planned to, or have already cut down,

office space. Compared to 2021, the study observed a large decrease for the desire to decrease office space, a decrease to 21% of CEOs stating to decrease office space. Furthermore, many CEOs stated they would consider increasing investments in shared office space. A major question remains, what the office environment requires for the new way of working? Below is an illustration of the current office place and demand for hybrid workplace match post-pandemic (Figure 16):

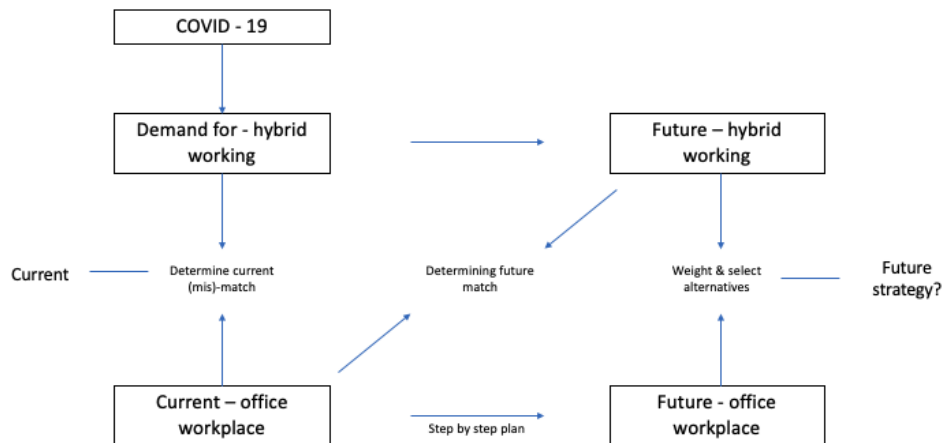


Figure 16 Office match hybrid working own illustration based on DAS Framework (De Jonge et al., 2009)

For many organizations, in the opinion of Haynes (2017), the starting position is based on the real estate market. Organizations are influenced by the deals that can be negotiated, and let the supply determine the location, form, and specification of the space solution. Nevertheless, this is not a strategic solution. The strategy should be led by the organization's demand (in particular, its occupiers). The relocation of a large corporate organization can have less pressure than for SMEs. For example, relocating an office building for a large corporation may only affect 5-10% of its real estate portfolio. However, the office building may be the only real estate asset for an SME. Regardless of the above, it is still important to create an understanding of the demand of the organization (organizational and business) which matches the supply (building and workplace) (Figure 17).

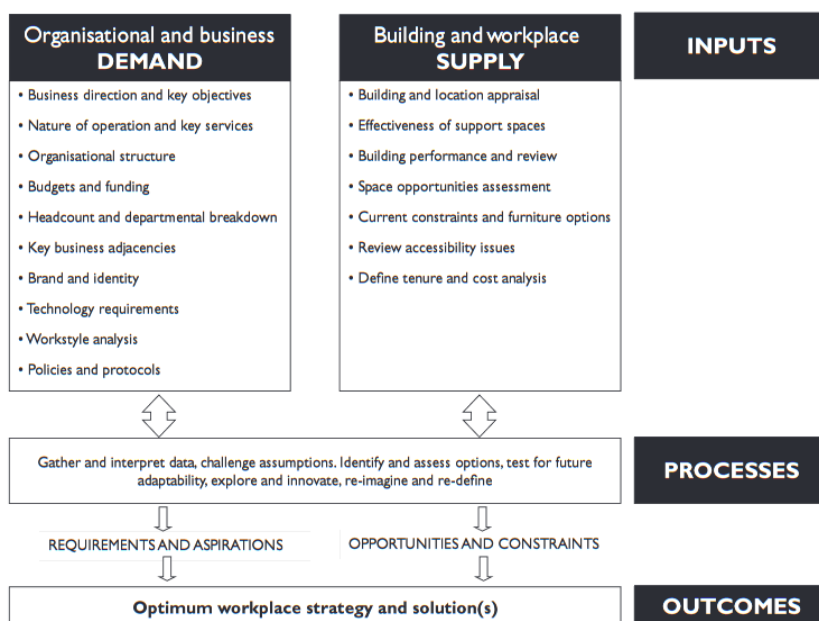


Figure 17 Demand and supply diagram (Haynes et al., 2017)

Place in a hybrid workplace strategy

Figure 17 is a great tool Haynes (2017) selected to determine an organization's demand and supply. The elements within the diagram will need to be aligned with the requirements of a hybrid strategy. This will include similar details from the **Purpose & Paradigm** components of the 8P model.

People

Many differing needs and preferences exist when considering a strategy for the office user. The 'one size fits all' open office has been proven not to work, given the complexities and differences around users. It is required to understand the office and workplace environment from the user's perspective in order to align with the workplace. The people component is central to the 8P framework model and important for the overall success of alignment.

Generations

The changing demographics have made it possible for some offices to be composed of up to four generations working together. Each generation will have its propositions and requirements of the workplace. The four can be categorized as follows (Haynes et al., 2017):

- Born 1922-1945: Veterans, silent or traditionalists
- Born 1946-1964: Baby boomers
- Born 1965-1980: Generation X workforce
- Born 1981-2000: Generation Y workforce. The new generation is also referred to as the Gen Y, Millennials, or Echo boomers.

CRE managers must consider and understand the different generations' requirements to ensure maximum productivity. The office environment should allow for interaction and collaboration between different generations. When considering a hybrid strategy, the younger generations are much more acquainted and flexible with the new technology available and are used to being constantly virtually connected. Whereas older generations, the traditionalists and baby boomers are less. Haynes (2017) created a table presenting the workplace characteristics of the different generations (Table 7).

	Veterans (1922-1945)	Baby boomers (1946-1964)	Generation X (1964-1980)	Generation Y (1981-2000)
Work ethic and value	Work hard Respect authority Sacrifice Duty before fun Adhere to rules	Workaholics Work efficiently Crusading causes Personal fulfilment Desire quality Question authority	Eliminate the task Self-reliance Warrant structure and direction Skeptical	What's next Multitasking Tenacity Entrepreneurial Tolerant Goal- oriented
Work is ...	An obligation	An exciting adventure	A difficult challenge A contract	A means to an end Fulfilment
Leadership style	Directive Command and control	consensual Collegial	Everyone is the same Challenge others Ask why	To be determined
Interactive style	Individual	Team player Loves meetings	Entrepreneur	Participative
Communications	Formal memo	In person	Direct Immediate	E-mail Voicemail

Feedback rewards	and	No news is good news Satisfaction in a job well done	Don't anticipate it Money Title recognition	Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing? Freedom is the best reward	Whenever I want it, at the push of a button Meaningful work
Messages motivate	that	Your experience is respected	You are valued You are needed	Do it your way Forget the rules	You will work with other bright, creative people
Work and family life		Ne'er the twain shall meet	No balance Work to live	Balance	Balance

Table 7 Workplace characteristics (Haynes et al., 2017)

Personality factors and their impact on collaborative teams can also be distinctive among the *people* in the workplace. Oseland (2012) adopted the Big Five factors model to link personality types to preferred collaboration spaces (see Table 8). Before making significant adjustments to their real estate portfolio and transitioning to hybrid working post-covid, some larger corporates used personality color coding within teams to understand the correct approach of collaboration between teams and team members (interview 2022). It is impossible to create one strategy to fit everyone in the organization, so that a more fit strategy can be considered per department/team depending on the size. Due to the number of *people* for an SME, it is simpler to coordinate their strategic planning and communicate their strategic objectives to one another. In addition, it is easier to communicate them to employees, and leaders have less work to “sell” the strategic plan to employees (Street et al., 2017).

Personality types	More	Less
Openness	Face to face meetings (F2F) Brainstorming Stimulating New spaces	Formal Familiar Conforming Traditional spaces
Conscientiousness	Planned Formal Well-organized Minuted meetings	Impromptu informal meetings Quick interactions
Neuroticism	Well-planned formal meetings with advanced notice	Comfortable with large, impromptu or informal meetings
Agreeable	Large meetings with structure to help gain group consensus	Unstructured F2F meetings were they can challenge/derail
Extroversion	Large-group F2F, informal meetings and stimulative spaces	Written communications, small groups, teleconferences and subdued spaces.

Table 8 Big Five personalities table Oseland (2012)

People in a hybrid workplace strategy

The workplace equilibrium will shift when creating a hybrid strategy, as illustrated in the *processes* component. The work distribution will shift between remote and office work. Facilities to support working at home will be required to support hybrid working, and a good understanding of collaboration and interaction is needed that suit different generations of workers. The extra dimension of remote working and the situation at home can also significantly impact workers' productivity and performance. Their marital status, family situation, and space at home for office use can all have an impact. It is important to proactively analyze the requirements of employees to ensure that requirements and propositions are met. Furthermore, in transferring knowledge from older to younger workers (tacit learning), an important element of learning in the office environment is overhearing their older colleagues' conversations. Remote working can challenge tacit learning in the office environment (interview 2022).

Performance

The *Performance* component is one of the two outputs of this model—*performance as a focus of* both in absolute and relative terms. CREAM professionals require both efficient and effective provisions. Efficiency can relate to cost reductions or achieving the intended result with the least resources and how well the organization performs compared to market competitors. Effectiveness demonstrates the added value to the organization and the capacity to improve results utilizing the same resources. An organization should attempt to thoroughly understand its real estate performance, as an underperforming assets is costly and wasteful for an organization (Haynes et al., 2017).

Performance can be measured, propositioned, or calculated. The data collected can be compared or propositioned, both internally and externally. Internally comparison of the organization itself over different periods and externally comparing with other organizations/competition. For the real estate sector, propositioning tends to focus on performance outcomes. Classically this would be focused on price per m2 or total occupancy cost per m2 rather than more abstract business processes. The results must be compared to something to give propositioning its meaning and value. Internally against progress over a time period and externally with other organizations. Propositioning is not simply about measuring. It aims at improving performance. Furthermore, propositioning should be used to achieve competitive advantage rather than copy and catch up (Haynes et al., 2017). Performance measurements such as propositioning can offer many benefits including (Haynes et al., 2017):

- A driver to achieve improvements as all business continue to strive to be the best
- Improvements could directly or indirectly (such as employee satisfaction- higher productivity) lead to costs reductions
- Transparency

In practice, measuring performance is not a universal process, and each organization will likely make use of a tailored performance measurement to their business operation better understand their real estate performance in the context of their own business. However, gathering comparative data for external propositioning may not be available or applicable. Thus, managers often choose from five important real estate performance measurements. An example is given for each (Haynes et al., 2017):

- Cost – occupancy costs per workstation
- Efficiency – Amount of space per person
- Utilization – Utilization of meeting rooms on a daily/weekly basis
- Quality – Occupier satisfactions indicators
- Environment – overall building performance (BREEAM)

Performance in a hybrid strategy

For an SME to understand how their real estate and organization are performing after implementing a hybrid strategy, the organization needs to be able to measure the impact of the transition. Performance measurements should be collected before the new strategy to use as internal propositioning data. Moreover, the SME should clearly understand the organization's goals and objectives and that the performance measurements are within context.

Productivity

Productivity is the second output of the framework. The component has increasingly become the top of most organization agenda, but developing a productive work environment requires incorporating all the components. According to Haynes (2017), the workplace can be productive only when all components are in alignment. The Productivity component is composed of two parts: the physical and behavioral environments. The physical environment relates to the office layout and occupier satisfaction & well-being. The behavioral environment relates to how office users interact and work activities match the workplace. Haynes (2017) study explores how a balance can be achieved by

allowing environments to facilitate interaction between colleagues without causing distractions to other colleagues.

The physical productivity

Measuring productivity in the physical environment appears to have yet to be a universally accepted means of measuring productivity. Nonetheless, the self-assessed measure of productivity is better than no measure of productivity. A vast amount of research is focused on the connection between the work environment and productivity. The attempts that have been made fall into two main categories: Office layout and office comfort. Gensler's (2005) research showed that a better working environment would increase employee productivity by 19%. In his same study, he also concluded that 79% of professionals say the quality of their working environment is vital to their sense of job satisfaction. Haynes (2017) quoted in his study that "Poorly designed offices could be costing British business up to £135 billion every year." identifying a clear motive for research linking productivity and office layout.

The behavioral productivity

This element is less tangible than measuring the *productivity* of the work environment. The behavioral environment develops upon the social context of the office—the balance between positive interaction in the office and negative distractions. There is a strong correlation between the social context and the physical office environment. This is further developed below.

Concentration vs communication

A "one-size-fits-all" strategy is not the solution for a workplace strategy. For example, the open plan led to cost reductions but, for some organizations leading to a reduction in productivity. The balance between positive interaction in the office and negative distraction needs to be explored. The office environment acts as a conduit for knowledge creation and transfer. In addition, the office needs to facilitate collaborative and individual work with a balance between the two (Haynes et al., 2017). A study by Brenner and Cornell (1994) investigated this topic by evaluating employees' willingness to tradeoff between designed office environments for common, collaborative, and personal space. His research showed that privacy diminished over time in the experiment due to the team becoming connected. Becker and Steele (1995) concluded the importance of the organization's processes when designing the physical workplace to align correctly with the organization's strategic goals. Any desired change to the organization and workplace *paradigm* could be strategically used or serve as a deliberate catalyst for change.

Interaction vs distraction

Both concentrations vs. communication and interaction vs. distraction are strongly contradicting elements. Olson's (2002) study examines workplace qualities that most affect employees' individual performance, team performance, and job satisfaction. He concluded that individual distraction-free solo work had the highest effect on employee performance. The second highest workplace quality was the facilitations supporting spontaneous interactions. The two contrasts are essential for a productive office environment. Usually, a workplace strategy favors one of the two. For example, an open plan is more prone to more frequently distracted employees by other people's conversations. Mawson (2002) argues that employees become increasingly efficient the longer they can concentrate without being distracted. With the above, it is important to create an office space that supports sufficient interaction without increasing distractions.

Productivity in a hybrid strategy

The implementation of a hybrid strategy will create a shift in the workplace's physical and behavioral environment. The physical and remote offices each favor one of the two factors. Both are essential for the organization and, thus, affect the organization's productivity. "Online working does have a handicap, that you can't see left in the corner of your eye for a moment. What happens in a certain corner and what you can respond to." (Interview, personal communication, May 2021). The non-verbal interacting changes the way a meeting takes place and can result in a different outcome. In addition, the distance between colleagues is more significant. Employees cannot simply walk over for

a quick question. Employees are less likely to make contact for small queries (Interview, personal communication, May 2021). Managers responsible for the transition to a hybrid strategy have challenging tasks at hand, maximizing the interaction component while at the same time attempting to minimize the distraction component. According to Haynes (2017), finding the correct balance is done by adopting the occupier perspective. A people-centered approach to understanding the office environment is most appropriate for office workers with varying tasks.

3.7 Theoretical framework and conclusion

The introduction bring to light the motive to investigate how Dutch SME are making a transition to a hybrid workplace strategy. The introduction is defined by a combination of explorative literature study including online newspaper articles, scientific research publications and corporate research publications. This review helped define the main aim of the research. A set of sub-questions were formed to guide the structure of the essay and answer the main research question.

The theoretical research followed the introduction and is guiding by the first sub-question of this research paper defined in chapter 1.5. From the theoretical research, the following primary relations come to light: The relationship between the organization of the SME, the employees, and the hybrid strategy is all part of creating the workplace strategy. The key elements presented in the introduction and the findings from the literature review make up the research framework Figure 18 below:

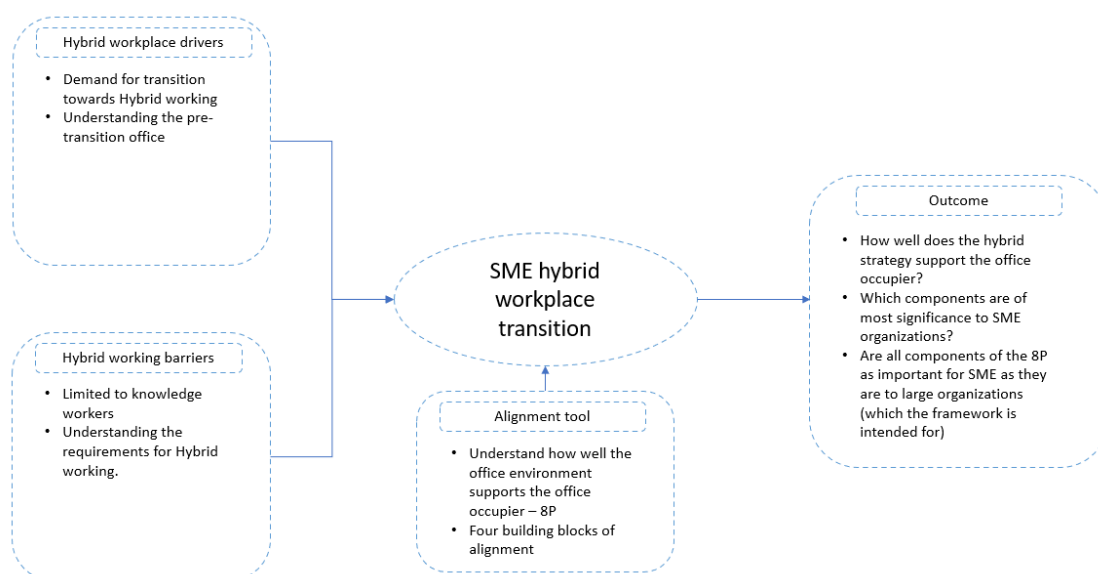


Figure 18 Research framework

The first sub-question is answered with the collection of data for the literature review, specifically:

Sub-question 1: What tools are applicable to analyze how Dutch SMEs transition to a hybrid workplace strategy?

The sub-question revealed several important themes required to elaborate in the literature review, including strategy, workplace, CRE alignment, the Dutch SME, hybrid workplace, and organizational components. The transition to a hybrid workplace strategy is central to the main research question and highlights the importance of the sub-question, first the need for alignment. An introduction is given on the topic of alignment and expressed in the four building blocks (Arkesteijn et al., 2017). Second, the connection with a hybrid workplace strategy unveiled the importance of the employee and the organization. The framework of Haynes (2008) was interpreted as the most suitable theoretical framework on which this research is based, as it evaluates how well the office environment supports the office occupiers in their work process, considering the physical and behavioral environment. This framework thus allowed the inclusion of the hybrid strategy setting in the study.

4.0 Empirical research results

This chapter explores the findings of both the preliminary study and the holistic multi-case study. The identities of the interviewees have been anonymized, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Any quotes used from interviews executed in Dutch have been translated into English.

First, the preliminary interviews and related literature are analyzed to form an proposition on how Dutch SMEs use organizational components in making a transition to a hybrid strategy. A holistic multi-case study is explored for this empirical research's second and main phase. The results will be used in chapters 5 and 6—the findings, conclusion and discussions.

4.1 Preliminary study results – Proposition (expectation)

The preliminary interviews were held with two employees from two case studies. The transcript was coded in Atlas Ti. The results, in combination with the literature review, are used to create an proposition analysis that will be used to examine the results gathered from the main case study of this research. In addition, the preliminary study will form a basis for which the semi-structured interviews are made.

This research is based on how SME are making a transition to a hybrid workplace in the ongoing experiences of the pandemic. The research makes use of propositions due to the fact that SMEs remain largely understudied in the field of CREM. Over the years, the understudied niche has been recognized resulting in an increase available research. Enough information to create an understanding of the unique characteristics of SMEs and how these unique characteristic may influence to applicability of CREM tools created for larger organizations. The follow will further develop on how the proposition is made.

4.1.1 Results

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the proposition is based on explorative interviews and a literature review. First, the explorative interviews consist of two large corporates in the Netherlands. The interviews were executed with real estate managers who were interviewed near the post-lockdown. The results will contribute to understanding the preliminary steps that organizations are making in their transition toward a hybrid workplace strategy. Second, the literature review will contribute to understanding how tools used in CRE designed to analyze large organizations are applicable to SME organizations. The alignment tool Haynes (2008) used centrally in this research is used to examine how Dutch SMEs are making a transition to a hybrid workplace strategy. The literature of Haynes et al. (2017) is expressed in detail in the literature review chapter 3.6 The 8P framework. The authors of Haynes et al. (2017) are CRE professionals active with CREAM for many years. Their expertise is related to major real estate organizations, and they continued to observe large organizations during their research. Haynes published the first iteration of the model in 2007 Haynes et al. (2017). In combination with literature such as Street et al. (2017) on the applicability of the strategic alignment model to SME organizations and related research expressing key characteristics of Dutch SMEs, a proposition can be formed of how each organizations components is expected to be used by Dutch SME in transition to an organizational component.

The full overview of results can be found in **Appendix B – Preliminary** . The 8P components below represent a summarization of the proposition outcome of each component used by Dutch SME in a hybrid workplace strategy based on the preliminary explorative interviews and literature review:

4.1.2 Proposition

Proposition Position

Both SMEs and large corporates operate in the same business environment. Having fewer employees can make competing with larger corporates challenging (Street et al., 2017), but all require recognizing the complex dynamic around globalization, emerging technologies, and increased demand for flexibility. It is expected that SMEs are well aware of their external market, naturally, as a necessity of surviving as an SME (Lindholm & Leväinen, 2006). More likely, the focus is strategically business-related and less understanding related to real estate. Literature further revealed that SMEs tend to have shorter planning horizons (Street et al., 2017).

For this reason, major investments are only expected for some SMEs, and a more common adoption of open space offices is predicted. Thus, minor adjustments are anticipated to support a hybrid workplace strategy, including updating IT and necessary equipment, such as a laptop, to work remotely. Lastly, a sense of belonging may be more challenging for the smaller organization. For example, a small SME will notice a significant absence if 50% of employees work remotely (Personal communication, May 2021). Thus, more strict policies and desires are expected for employees to work at the office majority of the week.

Proposition Purpose

A business strategy is significant for any organization and is expected by SMEs to be defined. The maturity of an SME will have a significant effect on the comprehensiveness of its business strategy plan (Mihai, 2015). As mentioned in the *position*, SMEs will more likely be challenged with resource constraints (Jouirou & Kalika, 2004). It is expected that SMEs will have limited resources to aligning a real estate strategy with the business strategy. A “one size fits all” is more likely to be adopted, reflecting a standard physical environment at the office and less attention to the behavioral environment. In the hybrid workplace, considering the one size fit all workplace use, little support is expected in both the physical and behavioral environment.

Proposition Paradigm

The key person of an SME usually is the owner/leader, having a big influence on the organization (Stonehouse & Pemberton, 2002). The more mature, however, the more likely the organization adopts a flatter organization that supports more respect between management and employees (Mihai, 2015). It is challenging to generalize *paradigm* as each organization will be very different due to leadership, mission and values, micro-culture, and orientation. A modern business service category is expected to offer more flexibility and uniformity and support informal connectivity than a more traditional business service. Further, the complexities around remote working can significantly affect the experience at the office and challenge the sense of belonging. Most likely, SMEs use policies to ensure more office work. Brand identity is expected to be a simple approach to creating a sense of belonging.

Proposition Processes

Due to SMEs abundance of resources, a more generalized workplace strategy is expected. Employees will likely be provided laptops and software such as Microsoft teams to support the hybrid working strategy. Further, little adjustments have been made to the office apart from IT equipment. A fully equipped second workstation at home is likely unrealistic to resource constraints.

Proposition Place

SMEs are most likely to have their office located strategically related to their business service, a place that is close to clients. Moreover, SMEs are expected to refrain from making radical decisions to reduce office space or relocate in the aftermath of the pandemic. Stability is a comforting factor for SMEs (Street et al., 2017), and currently due to the ongoing experience of the pandemic lockdown there remains an uncertainty in the correct workplace strategy. Consequently, in a hybrid strategy, no major changes are expected by SMEs. Furthermore, it is expected that SMEs will benefit from acquiring talent from a further distance.

Proposition People

The size of an organization will likely affect selectivity in its recruitment process. The majority of SMEs can be classed as growing organizations. Physical collaboration to enhance tacit learning is a big desire. Lastly, SMEs will likely be financially challenged to provide a fully supported home working station due to resource constraints.

Proposition Performance

Given the high cost of office space, an SME is expected to use some performance measurement. This will likely be a tailored measurement related to costs per workstation, efficiency per m², utilization, and or quality.

Proposition Productivity

All SMEs are expected to try to enhance the work environment for maximum productivity. Although it is not expected that smaller SMEs will have a real estate manager to help implement a strategy and that the owner & management/HR will coordinate to make a real estate strategy that supports a balance of concentration vs. communication and interaction vs. distraction (Stonehouse & Pemberton, 2002). It is expected that the owner will support a respectful communicative environment between management and HR/employees in sharing ideas to better the workplace and not an autocratic decision from one person.

The size of SMEs it is likely to show that achieving productivity is more easily attainable for a small organization than that of a large organization.

4.1.4 Proposition table

Each organization proposition as defined in the 4.1.1 is used to form a proposition table for examining the main empirical research on how Dutch SMEs are using organization components to make a transition to a hybrid strategy (Table 9).

8P Components	Proposition simplified
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focused on short-term goals and objectives. - An open office workplace layout, no major update since hybrid strategy. - Standard IT update to support hybrid working. - Office focused strategy, strong demand for office work. Use a policy to ensure employees work at the office. - Virtually poorly connected
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A well-defined business strategy is expected. (Link with maturity criteria case studies). Real estate strategy less well defined. - Simple office layout – “one size fits all” concept.
Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modern organization & retail, flat organization. - Traditional organization, centralized structure. - The younger the organization, the more control from its leadership. - Limited to understanding their organizational culture – use of a one size fit all concept. - In the hybrid strategy, more office focused rather than remote to manage disconnect.
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update IT system for hybrid strategy. Incl laptop and necessary software. - Little change to workplace to support hybrid processes
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little change to office portfolio - Strategically located to the business service - Benefit from distance increase talent pool due to hybrid working.
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little home work station support - Selective in recruitment for good fit. - Remote working a desire from employee and not the organization.
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tailormade performance measurements
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical office supported in the hybrid strategy. Less supported remotely. - Behavioral support at the office. Little support remotely.

Table 9 The research proposition per 8P organizational component

In the next chapter the case studies are examined in relation to the proposition created in the chapter above. An explanation will be provide in how the comparison is made, and what these results are used for in this research.

4.2 The case studies

As described in the chapter 2.0 Methodology, holistic multiple case studies are used to gain an understanding on how SME organizations are making a transition to a hybrid strategy to develop enough information to uncovering significant findings related to the organizational components defined by Haynes (2017) and possibly develop an advice for SME in transition to a hybrid strategy.

The following chapter will be guided by the sub-questions defined in the 1.0 Research Introduction 1.5 Main research question (1.5 Main research question. The findings will first be handled in this structure case by case. The collective data will then be used to answer the sub-questions in 5.0 Synthesis.

The case studies have been strategically selected based on the following criteria: The organizations size, SME organizations that use a hybrid strategy and the presence of variety of sectors. As the focus of this research is from an organizational perspective, the interviews are strategically conducted with employees involved with the hybrid strategy of the organization. Within SME organizations, this does not always have to be a real estate manager. The names of the organizations have not been shared due to confidentiality reasons. Thus, each organization has been given a label as show in the Table 2 in chapter 3.4. A repeated table can be found below:

Label	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Sector	Financial services	Consultant	Consultant	Financial services	3D Design	Retail	consultant	retail	Media	Financial services	Retail
Inter-viewee	Associate/- HR	People/- Culture team	Co-founder	Associate	Co-founder/- HR	HR/- facility manager	People/- operations	HR/- facility manager	Facility manager/- project leader renovation office	Team Manager	HR/- facility manager
Size	Small	Small	Small	Small	Small	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium Large	Medium Large	Medium Large

Table 10 The case study organizations and description (repeat of table 6)

A full summary of all case descriptions are provided in Appendix A – Case study interviews full summary. In this chapter, an abstract summary is given for each organization with a table illustrating how each organization use the 8P in their hybrid strategy.

The 8P proposition table comparison

Chapter 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 define the proposition formed by the preliminary study as a purpose to examine the sub-question “What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategies?” and is answered throughout the different case studies with the use of a table. This table contains the 8 components, a detail on how each company embraces each component, and a comparison on how the company situates itself in relation to the proposition. In the comparison column, if an O is noted, it signifies that the company situates itself close to the proposition. If a negative (-) or more is noted, it means that the company situates itself below the proposition. Finally, if a positive (+) or more is noted, it means that the company situates itself above the proposition. If a company performs positively in relation to a component, it means that the component is more thoroughly developed in comparison to the proposition. On the contrary, if a company performs negatively, it means that the component is under developed in comparison to the proposition. Later, in chapter 5.3 a master comparison table containing the performance of all companies in relation to the components is developed in order to answer this sub-question.

4.2.1 Company A

Introduction

The interview with company A was conducted with the associates. As the company is a small organization of 15 people, 3 people with the same position in the organization take on the HR tasks. Together with the founder, they are responsible for the wellbeing of its employees and real estate management. Company can be classed as a classic business service, which are known to have autocratic/democratic leadership style. Pre-covid, company A did not make use of remote or hybrid working. It is the pandemic crisis that introduced remote working to the organization and influenced the leader of organization to continue making use of the benefits a hybrid strategy would bring the organization. The employee pushed the organization to use a hybrid strategy for flexibility reasons, in order to be able to work remotely. In addition, this type of organization is known for working long hours when deadlines are near, and remote working has allowed task to be completed at home.

What drivers and barriers do the SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

Within Company A, both the organization and the employees desired a hybrid strategy. The main drive was that employees of the organization desired the flexibility remote working brings and the better balance between work and family life. The organization trusts that its employees can decide for themselves whether their task requires them to work from home or at the office and uses no specific policy to regulate the amount employees working from home. However, an unwritten rule within the organization, which is part of its paradigm, is that the organization encourages teamwork at the office and prefers their employees to come to the office when possible.

The owner came to recognize that the organization could also benefit from the flexibility of hybrid working as IT development increased the ease of virtual communication. “We don’t travel across the country for a meeting of 30 minutes, we now make use of a virtual meeting” (Personal communication, 28 September 2022).

The organization has not noticed any difficulties with any sense of belonging to the organization, as they have during the lockdown. Company A recognizes the importance of working at the office, especially for those newer to the organization: “The line between employees is shorter, it is more efficient for learning and questioning” (Personal communication, 28 September 2022).

Company A is limited for further expansion of their workforce in their current office space. Nevertheless, a hybrid strategy to fix this is not an option and there is a preference for fixed work stations. There is also no desire for large corporate flex office layout. Furthermore, company A does limit their recruitment radius within the region of Amsterdam and ask new recruits to live close to the office.

How does the SMEs sizes and business categories reflect in transition to a hybrid strategy?

Company A maintains a mysterious lowkey image. They market on word of mouth. This is also reflected in their website, with a company logo and an image of their office portraying an exclusive design with very little detail. “We are a boutique, a fireplace banker, old school sit by the fireplace and discuss what needs to be done. We execute what needs to be done” (Personal communication, 28 September 2022). The hierarchy is centralized and clearly defined autocratically. Although, due to its size, the organization can be considered more flat from a social perspective. The distance is not far between those starting in the organization and those higher up. Seniors have their own office with a glass wall that reflects transparency. All other employees have a fixed desk in a shared room.

Employees are well connected physically and virtually. Besides email and Microsoft teams, company A uses WhatsApp on multiple levels socially as well as professionally. Further amenities include a kitchen and conference/meeting room. Company A has a dress code required when presenting to clients, virtually or in person. These items all add to the culture within the organization and the image the employees belong to.

The recruitment is very selective. Company A looks for similar profile that understand the culture for the type organization and business sector. The organization does have different generations of workforce, however, given the democratic leadership style employees have to respect the hierarchy. All employees fall within the generation X and Y.

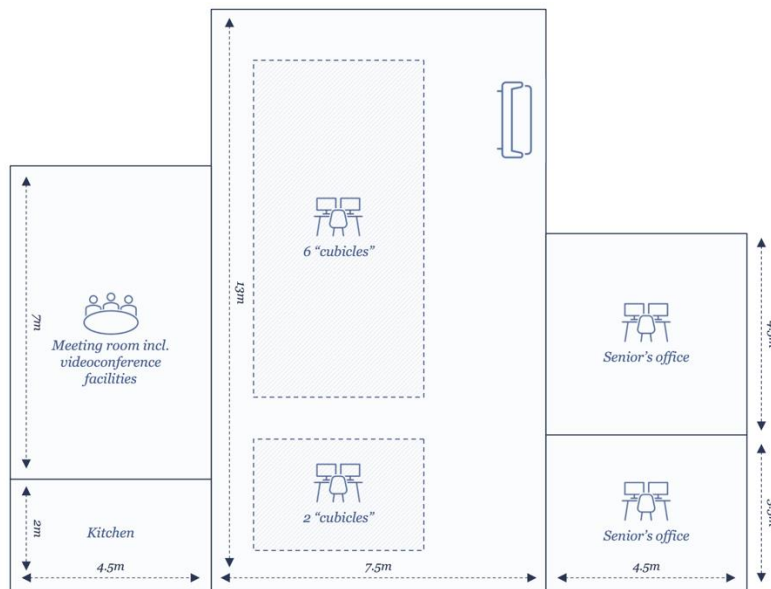


Figure 19 Office layout Company A

What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategies?

Component	Company A	Comparison
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A matured organization with well-defined goal and objective, specifically focused short-term goals and objectives. (The organization is slowly outgrowing the office, long-term no decision has been made yet) - Transitioned to a hybrid strategy due to influenced management that observed the benefits in addition to employment desire. - No change in layout due to hybrid working - Strong demand for spending most hours at the office 	O
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The strategy, paradigm are both well-defined. The organization is A boutique office with “secretive” identity. - An open office fixed desk layout, translating the hierarchy. Glass office illustrating transparency. - No policy for hybrid working. 	O
Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A matured organization with a centralized hierarchy - Written and unwritten rules form a clear brand identity. A strong sense of belonging. - Hard working culture, drive for working together. - Hybrid strategy office focused 	O
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopted a hybrid strategy transition due to organization and employees preference. Owner sees benefits such as video conferencing for short meetings. - Little change to the workplace & processes post-lockdown. - Update IT system from teleconferencing to video conferencing. 	O
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic location for the business service. Clients, employee talent and outsourcing services. - No beneficial use for distance increase talent pool 	O
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selective recruitment. Small organization desires a match in addition to qualification and background. - Full supported home working station - Desire for remote working from both organization and employees. Employers motive is benefits due to clients using more conferencing meetings, still a desire for majority working at the office. 	+
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small organization, no official HR staff. It is a shared responsibility by employees. No performance measurements executed of its real estate. Close line communication, if there is an issue with the Real Estate, it is easily communicated. A solution will be considered. 	- -
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization is limited in the office to fully support a hybrid strategy. Limited meeting and call rooms to execute virtual calls. Home working provides the organization pure concentrative space. The office a combination of collaboration vs. concentration. - Even though centralized organization, responsibilities are shared, collective decision making. 	+

Table 11 Organizational component of Company A

4.2.2 Company B

Introduction

Company B is a tech consultant based in Amsterdam founded in 2016. The interview was conducted by an employee part of the culture team. The culture team is responsible of creating an attractive working environment, recruit new employees, and keep phenomenal people. Company B is an organization of around 30 employees.

Company B is in transition from startup image to a more matured company. Company B has recently downsized and reshaped its image. Previously, it was a startup located on campus, employing many students. Now the organization is trying to make use of the advantages students provide but give off the image of a matured organization. “Highly educated students that often know better and are not afraid to express that information. But we don’t want to profile ourself as a student organization” (Personal communication, 5 October 2022). Due to its working nature, the organization made use of hybrid working pre-covid and had already identified the benefits it could bring to the organization. The organization is very free and flexible in the use of hybrid working. Nevertheless, Company B has focused a lot on the layout of the office to motivate its employees to work in the office, as it is not the idea that employees work remote the whole week.

What drivers and barriers do the SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

Most employees are part-time workers/students who require the flexible days and hours to execute their work. The organization fully switched to a hybrid strategy post-lockdown. There is no strict policy in place forcing employees to come to the organization. Having no policies, everything is about freedom, trust and responsibility- The organization expects in return from its employees is passions, pleasure and achievement. It wants to avoid blocking free choice: “Some companies force employees to come on two specific days to the office, if it happens these two are very inconvenient days for a specific employee, bad luck. This can create an unsatisfactory situation” ” (Personal communication, 5 October 2022).

The organization does have a preference for office work and a culture team was created to motivate employees to work at the office as much as possible. The type of work requires employees to work together. While it can be done virtually, it is much more efficient physically. Another challenge the organization has encountered going remote is that the social aspect is not sustainable remotely. Furthermore, having invested in a brand new office, the organization was unable to finance two different fully equipped work stations.

How does the SMEs size and business categories reflect in transition to a hybrid strategy?

The organization is classed modern business service as part of the case study criteria. The hierarchy is very flat. The founder and manager steer the firms direction, but socially are very approachable. The office layout reflects the flat hierarchy as there is no specific office for management. The office makes use of an activity based workplace strategy. Flex tables located in an open office but separate from acoustic activities to ensure concentration. Seating corners for informal meetings, calling booths, a lunch area and an office playground (See Figure 20 below). All employees have their own laptop and at the office they can easily plug and play on the available flex work desks. At home, some employees have been provided an office desk and chair, however, this is not standard for all. If employees really financially need, the organization is always open for options.

The organization makes use of little office performance measurements. In combination with observation and employees satisfactory survey, the organization decides actions needed in the office. Company A does recognize that given the size of the organization it is agile to come with solutions.

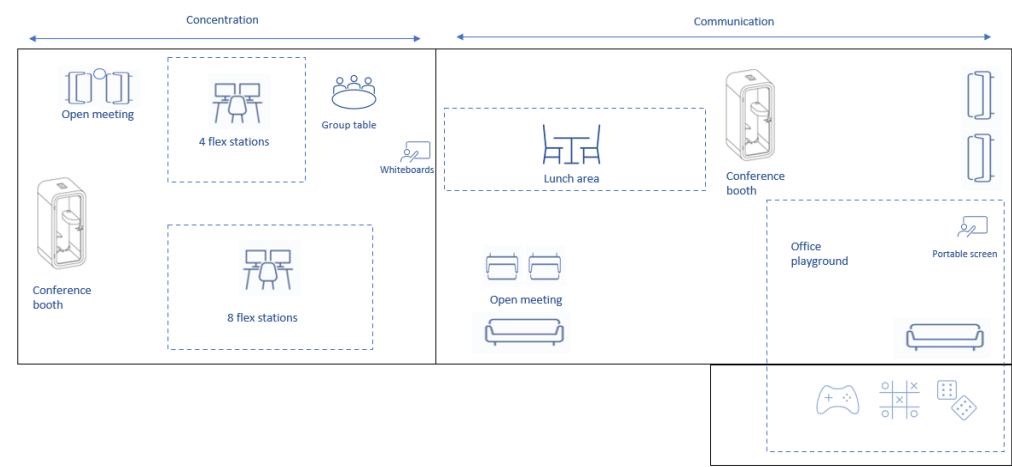


Figure 20 Office layout (visual estimation) Company B

What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategies?

Components	Company B	Comparison
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orientated on short and long-term goals and objectives - Recent relocation, organizational transition for maturity. Startup up campus office too Scale up/ grown SME. - Strong demand for office work for sense of community, but provide lots of flexibility. 	++
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission and vision & strategies well-defined. - Well-balanced work environment. Focus on behavioral and physical environment for physical office. Behavioral environment socially supported - Proactive alignment real estate to support their business process – Culture team to ensure the real estate supports the business activities. - No specific policy for hybrid working 	++
Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modern organization – flat organization. - Young organization but a flat organization with respected shared duties. - Strong sense of brand identity, creating organizational belonging. - Majority generation Y employees. 	+
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to date IT system. New office with brand new facilities. Calling booths for virtual meetings, work station, collaboration facilities and formal and informal meeting spaces (Meeting rooms rentable or informal seat corners). – Activity based office space. - The organization already used a hybrid strategy prior to the pandemic. Updated and better software improved their hybrid working. 	+
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New office, although not far from original office location. Same strategical orientation for talent acquisition, business services. - Benefit form distance increase talent pool. Although prefer employees to live in closer proximity to the office. 	+
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little home work station support - Selective in recruitment for good fit - Hybrid strategy prior to pandemic, flexibility is necessary due to working together with students. 	O
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Makes use of employee satisfaction surveys, and actively use it to look for ways to improve. The real estate is part of the survey. Satisfaction related to concentration vs. communication. - Culture team (take care of all HR + extra) track performance. KPI's for work but no detailed performance measurements on efficiency of office use. 	+
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity based work place, with still focus on the on creating a working station for concentrative work. Split office between more formal and informal office use. Large investment in the office new office. Physical environment little support remote. Behavioral environment support socially. 	+

Table 12 Organizational component of Company B

4.2.3 Company C

Introduction

Company C a Dutch smart industry engineering consultancy. The organization was founded in 2018 by 3 individuals. The meeting was conducted with one of the founders. The interviewee was also responsible for the office accommodation and hybrid strategy of the organization. The organization currently consists of 40 employees and is continuing to grow. Company C in its operative nature is very hybrid. Most of the employees work 3 days at the client on-site and remaining either at the office of company C or remote at home. Although the organization is young, it is an organization with clear goals and objectives, well defined strategy and a good understanding of its business environment and its business cycle. The organization currently makes use of two office locations in Amsterdam and Arnhem. For the future, the organization wants to open an office in Rotterdam, Hengelo and Eindhoven. All aspects of purpose components are covered by company C. The strategic values, real estate management, and the human asset which is clearly a priority. Talent acquisition is what sets the company apart and is very important. The organization has created a brand identity, which comes back virtually and physically. All employees get a starter pack of Company C gadgets, a laptop and a company car. On everything, the logo and colors are represented.

What drivers and barriers do the SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

The organization and its employees both desire a hybrid strategy. A hybrid strategy is ideal for the way the organization operates as they work as a consultant for other companies. Hybrid lines of communication are necessary for the organization to support their employees. The employees themselves desire the option to be able to work remotely once or twice a week which is a driver for the organization to use hybrid working. If you limit this possibility, you can limit your talent pool for recruitment.

From the interviewee it was understood that the organization itself does not see many barriers for hybrid working. A challenge noticed was that the client may not be as flexible with remote working. Usually the organization would try to find a solution in this sense to ensure a good work balance for their employees.

Furthermore, socially could be challenging, working remote to long, or if the connection with the organization is lost, employees could become socially troubled/depressed. Each employee has a field manager they report to on a professional and personal level to help solve these issues. Given that most contact hours are with clients, the organization organized fun gatherings such as industry lab days, which is a way to connect all experience employees have at different locations and look at problems together. It's a culture of knowledge sharing, enthusiasm and entrepreneurship which the organization is very proud of.

How does the SMEs sizes and business categories reflect in transition to a hybrid strategy?

The organizations hierarchy is based on three levels. The directors, the team managers and professionals. It is a flat hierarchy with an aim to maintain a small company feeling, where everyone is very easily accessible.

Due to the smaller size of the organization, a selective recruitment process is used for the people it hires in addition to the industry. An applicant is selected for technical engineering consultancy

focused on Smart industry, the organization seeks those “cut from the same wood. A sense of belonging is important for the organization.

What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategies?

Values	Company C	Comparison
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short & long term goals and objective. Growing organization, structured plans for expansion. - Headquarter office + strategic satellite office. No major hybrid strategy updates to the office. Place for training and work. (Employees work majority at contracted companies) - Sense of belonging is important. Real estate is not part of that strategy (strategically done so). 	+
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission and vision made. Well-defined aligned strategies. - Real estate strategy aligns with the current requirements of the organization. Office features the purpose for full-time management & administration use and training purpose - Not a one size fit all concept. - No specific policy for hybrid working. Also depended on the client organization. 	+
Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modern flat organization feeling, decision process still all part of the owners, so centralized. They do try to create very easy connection lines with employees and management. 3 levels-owners, field managers and employees. - Young organization, managed by co-owners. Tri co-owners share responsibilities running the organization. - Important brand identity to have sense of belonging, as real estate is used differently. – Human asset focused not real estate. - Apart from management, majority young generation Y employees. 	++
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little change to processes due to hybrid strategy. Flexibility work destination already existed prior to pandemic. - Office are flex office, used if desired by employees. Majority of the time used employees are outsourced to clients and work at location. Own office mainly for training purposes. 	O
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No need for change to office for hybrid strategy. - Strategic location for talent pool and clients 	O
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Important HR people management aspect. Field managers, professionally but also personally. - Full supported work station at home - Selective recruitment for good fit “Cut from the same wood”. - Desire from employees for home working. 	+
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focused human asset performance. - Little or no performance measurements real estate. 	O
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large focus to support the human asset in the hybrid strategy, little at the office itself. Sense of belonging is important – brand identity, team outings. 	+

Table 13 Organizational component of Company C

4.2.4 Company D

Introduction

Company D is a private equity firm in Amsterdam. The organization was founded in 2012. Company D is a smaller sized organization of 9 employees. The interview was conducted with one associate who is responsible for the office and people well-being. The nature of its work forces to Company D to have a good understanding of the market and tools required to create a competitive advantage. This translates back to how the organization knows to run its own venture. In addition, the organization works with advisors and external parties. The past 1.5 years the organization doubled in size, however, they believe the organization will not continue to exponentially grow. Given the age and growth, the organization has matured.

Company D made use of a hybrid strategy before the pandemic, the fact the organization works with portfolio companies required to be flexible in where employees could work, but was limited to an office. The pandemic has pushed the organization to allow more remote working days. In the past, employees made use of remote working as often employees worked after dinner as well. This could have to do with family situation etc.

What drivers and barriers do the SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

The drivers for the organization is the desire for flexibility in the location the employees can operate from, either on the road or at the office with still the preference to work most of the time together at the office. Home working adds an extra workplace for pure concentrative work.

They recognize that for those new to the organization it is important to be at the office as much as possible shortening the line between younger and older employees within the organization for tacit learning purposes. A lot is missed if employees do not work from the office. "It is very inefficient if for every small question or issue it is required to plan a team meeting." (Personal communication, 13 October 2022). In addition, spontaneous communication would be missed: "It could be someone is discussing a topic that happens to be something you can relate to and could quickly connect on the topic and give your feedback." (Personal communication, 13 October 2022). Further, many situations require team collaboration.

A challenge the organization recognizes is that the current office layout is limited in space for multiple employees working on a hybrid call simultaneously. This helps if 2 or 3 employees happen to be working remotely.

How does the SMEs sizes and business categories reflect in transition to a hybrid strategy?

The company is a classic business service as of the case study criteria. The company has a triangular organizational hierarchy. Two partners at the top of the pyramid, investment director below, investment managers, analyst etc. The organization has a clear democratic structure known by its employees. Yet due to the size of the organization, content related there is an obvious difference but communicative reach professionally it feels like a flat organization. Everyone in the organization is accessible at any time. The hierarchy is translated back into the office layout. The partners have their office. The remaining employees have a fixed desk in a large room. The office is split with glass walls. It is all very transparent.

As it is a small organization, measuring the real estate is not difficult for the organization. We can see that the office is at its maximum capacity. This is not the intention for the organization, but all desks are used. As soon as the organization would like to expand further, they need to come up with a solution. A potential is to make use of flexible working desks and more remote working. However, it is not the preferred option. The organization wants a fixed desk for all employees.

What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategies?

Values	Company D	Comparison
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focused on short-term and long-term goals. - Short term strategy real estate - Have a lot of knowledge and tools available creating goals and objectives. - Updated IT to support the hybrid strategy - Demand for majority office work. 	O
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong strategies. - Real estate strategy short term - Simple use of virtual communication, whatsapp group use for employees. 	+
Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Centralized structure. Defined responsibilities and respectable decision process. - Small organization – makes it feel like a flat organization. No oversimplified statements, substantive questions and answers. - Office translates the hierarchy. Management office, employees in open-office fixed desk. - Mixed generation workplace - No specific policy for hybrid working - Hard working culture, drive for working together. 	O
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated IT system. – all laptops, telecommunication – videoconferencing. - Little change to workplace processes. Home working used for concentrative work. Majority of the time at the office. 	O
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little change to office layout - Strategically located to clients, talent pool and outsource services. - No benefit desired by distance due to hybrid strategy. - Hybrid strategy not used for expanding the organization with lower flex rates. Preferred to relocate. No long-term strategy yet. 	O
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desire for home working from employees. - Selective in recruitment for good fit. Most employees have similar student backgrounds. - Remote working a desire by employees. - Full supported work station at home. 	+
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measurement done visually, small organization. - No further real estate performance measurements. 	- -
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong desire for close sense of belonging. Small organization. - Organization benefits from hybrid working for different elements of working. Communication vs. concentration. - Collective strategic decisions. 	D

Table 14 Organizational component of Company D

4.2.5 Company E

Introduction

Company E is a 3D visual engineering organization founded in 2006 as a student startup. The organization has a total of 13 employees divided between two divisions, sales and production. The interview was conducted with one of the owners of the organization. Part of his responsibility is XKP's creative responsibility and HR tasks. Company E owns their office. It was purchased on the basis the organization could still grow.

Company E did not use hybrid working before the pandemic. They had to become creative during the lockdown to be able to work remotely due to the IT systems required for 3D modelling. For this reason, the organization can continue to work in a hybrid manner, however, it is not yet ideal.

What drivers and barriers do the SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

The driver for working remotely is mainly due to the preference of employees. Before the pandemic, remote working seemed not possible. Nevertheless, new IT systems were developed to allow the office to continue to operate in a hybrid form during the lockdown, which are still used now.

The organization uses a citrix login system which allows you to remotely access the computer. Nevertheless, this is a challenge as the desk in the office becomes unavailable when remotely connecting through citrix.

Furthermore, socially can be a big issue. The employee that are working at the organization are computer developers. If an employee is working behind their screen the whole day and returns home and does the same may affect the well-being of the employee: "During remote working, well-being is an important theme, people make a lot of social contact at the office, if you take this aspect away, people can worsen and worsen by first spending the day behind a screen for work and continuing to spend their evening behind a screen. People get more worse and worse" (Personal communication, 21 October 2022).

Further, the organization does find it challenging to keep track of working hours. Previously employees were asked to be at the office 8 hours a day in return for their salary. Remote this is more difficult to track. The organization is still looking for ways.

How does the SMEs sizes and business categories reflect in transition to a hybrid strategy?

Company E is a smaller organization. It is one of the modern business services within the case study criteria. The leadership comes from the co-owners. A democratic leadership style. The co-owners do however try to coordinate with their employees to run the organization. The organization makes use of a management team, this includes an individual from all departments within the organization to communicate how each department is progressing and where they need assistance. The above has been translated into the office layout. The co-founders have their own office. The remainder of the organization are positioned on the work floor split between the two departments.

Company E is selective its recruitment process. The characteristics/type of person is important for the organization. Not just talent. Given that it is a small organization, if there is a mismatch between team member it quickly effects the atmosphere within that team.

Company E is a growing organization. Till now the owners of the organization managed to take care of the HR tasks. They are aware that with a growing organization, it has become more challenging: “We are growing, but we are slowly reaching the limit and the way we are managing the organization. The organization is scaling and for sure there will be a change required to continue operating the organization in the coming years.” (Personal communication, 21 October 2022). Currently, agreements and tasks are communicated verbally which becomes more challenging when the organization is growing. Company E thus recently hired someone to start creating a new system for the organization.

What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategies?

Values	Company E	Comparison
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short-term goals and objectives. - Matured organization, progressively growing. Purchase office strategically for growth. - Update IT to support hybrid strategy. Challenging step due to nature of the work requiring heavy duty IT systems. - Demand for remote working desire from employees. 	O
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proactively navigating and strategizing for their hybrid strategy. Soon to define policies for hybrid working. - Open-office design with fixed work stations. (Fixed desks - larger computers required for the type of work) - Virtual communication professionally focus. 	O
Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modern organization. Centralized organization, leadership comes from the owners, but do have a management team to help run the organization. - Brand identity being developed and more strongly supported in the real estate. - Majority of employees young generation Y. Management more Generation X. 	+
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update IT system to allow for hybrid working. Laptop accessibility by login in on office workstation remotely. Meeting rooms equipped with video conference rooms. – Not an easy step for the organization. - Sales team processes have modernized. No more at location. 	+
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little adoptions made to the layout of the organization. Addition concentration/calling rooms created to ensure no distractions on the work floor. - Strategically located due to talent. The municipality also supported SME to locate themselves in the city by providing subsidies. - Talent pool is extended by hybrid strategy. 	O
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-owners share responsibility HR. Large focus on well-being professionally as well as personally. - Selective recruitment procedure - Socially little support in the remote environment. - Remote working a desire from the employees. - No fully supported work station at home. Do ask employees to 	O

	share their homeworking location and discuss with them to see how the organization can assist. Financially difficult for the organization to create two workstations.	
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small organization, so do not use tools to measure performance. Co-owners created a management group with individuals from all departments to discuss any issues. - No performance measurement for the real estate - Composed a management team for employee engagement on hybrid strategy. 	-
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A real estate strategy that aligns with the business strategy. However, only sustainable due to the small size. Reaching management limitations. Productivity could be affected. Remotely, the organization is a little absent and could benefit from more focus in the hybrid strategy. 	O

Table 15 Organizational component of Company E

4.2.6 Company F

Introduction

Company F is an online retail with advisory. The organization was founded in 1994. An organization that can be classed as a matured and stable organization in the market. In total the organization has 50 employees and continues to grow due to the significant push in the online market as result of the pandemic. The real estate will slowly reach its limit of growth in terms of available spots and the manner in which they strategically use the office. Company F does however have no intention to use a hybrid strategy to decrease the flex factor per work place. Long-term no strategy has yet been made for their real estate. The interview was conducted with the HR manager also responsible for the office management.

What drivers and barriers do the SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

The main driver for adopting a hybrid strategy is due to the desire of employees. While the majority of employees do work most of the time at the office, those that did want to work remote could do so 2 days of the week. Nonetheless, team meetings are preferred in person. When an employee has to find a solo work location for concentration, often the home work place is used. This creates a distance that makes someone a little less reachable for quick queries

The difficulties due to team/employee connectivity are limited because of the policy the organization uses leading to the majority of employees working most of the days at the office.

How does the SMEs sizes and business categories reflect in transition to a hybrid strategy?

The hierarchy for Company F is perceived as a flat organization. “Only on paper do we really have a difference in hierarchy, otherwise it is perceived as a flat organization” (Personal communication, 13 October 2022).

The office layout reflects the organization *paradigm*. The general characteristics/understanding and hierarchy of the organization can be recognized in the layout. The directors have their own office, the sales team are located in a large room and the remaining part of the organization in an open office space. The sales personnel spends a lot of time on the phone communicating with (potential) clients, making necessary for them to have their own noise barricaded space. “If I would have take this call at my desks, my colleagues would have not appreciated it.” (Personal communication, 13 October 2022). The work floor is a location for communication but also important for concentration. Lengthy hybrid calls are preferred not on the work floor.

Company F does however have no intention to use a hybrid strategy to decrease the flex factor per work place. Long-term, no strategy has yet been made for their real estate.

What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategies?

Values	Company F	Comparison
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the older organization in the case study group. - Focused on short & long term strategy - Strong demand of employees for office work - Use hybrid since post-lockdown 	O

	- Update IT systems for hybrid use.	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission and vision defined. Proactively using strategies to meet goals and objectives. - Real estate strategy more short term based - Recently a big organizational change – updated brand identity - Makes use of an open office with fixed desks - Make use of a hybrid work policy. 	O
Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Centralized on paper, still management for decision process. Flat organizational feeling. - Recently updated the organizational brand identity. Creating a stronger brand identity translated back into the real estate. - More office focused in hybrid strategy. 	O
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little change to process due to hybrid strategy - Updated IT system for hybrid use. – no limitations to where employees work. Video conferencing tools in larger meeting rooms and calling booths. 	O
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No major updates to workplace layout post-lockdown. - Headquarter located where organization originated. Strategically based for logistical location. - Benefit from residing distance increase for employees and talent pool due to hybrid working. 	O
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization fully supports remote working station on all necessary equipment. - Not necessary strict criteria for their recruitment. - Remote working is pure desire from employees. 	+
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance measurements are human asset focused. - No real estate performance measurements. Observative manner. 	- -
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization is strengthening organizational belonging through its rebranding. The office has recently been redeveloped but no significant changes due to the pandemic lock-down. The office offers physical support in both office and remote. Behavioral less supported socially. 	O

Table 16 Organizational component of Company F

4.2.7 Company G

Introduction

Interview with company G was conducted with the Operations director. For this organization, the operations director is responsible for the running of the organization and work satisfaction of their employees. Hybrid working strategy is part of the operation director's responsibility. Company G is a strategic design consultancy in Amsterdam. The organization consists of 54 employees in total and was founded in 2009. Company G has grown of the last years. Since the 2018 taking on a brand new office building, the organization grew from 25 to 54 employees. Company G does not have a clear idea of what the future holds in terms of growth. Currently they are stable and matured. Company G understands its small size and is adaptive in pushing the organization forward. The organization has made a transition to hybrid strategy since the pandemic and has transitioned to look for ways to fully use the potential of their hybrid strategy: "We do lots of workshops, customer interviews, research and co-creative design sessions and idea creation sessions. Before we believed this was only possible face-to-face. The pandemic presented & created ways to do this online. We now use Miro a lot in combination of face-to-face at the right moment." (Personal communication, 11 October 2022).

What drivers and barriers do the SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

The hybrid strategy is a desire by the employee, but also a benefit for the organization. In the hybrid strategy the organization asks those working 5 days a week to limit their home working days to 2 days a week, however, it is not defined as a policy. Employees are given the responsibility. The organization provides a well-designed workplace that stimulates employees to make use of the office. "We are a People first organization, It make people a lot happier not having to go back 100% to the office." (Personal communication, 11 October 2022).

The challenge the organization recognize in a hybrid strategy, is the connection. Virtual collaboration is not perceived the same as physically. A conflict in a work process for example is resolved differently, in a virtual situation these issues are set aside and result in worsening a problem. In addition, witnessing someone working in the office more often can be quickly sensed as the employee that is working harder than someone working remotely. The more employees work at the office, the stronger the sense of team building and hard and effective working is perceived.

How does the SMEs sizes and business categories reflect in transition to a hybrid strategy?

The organization is classes as a modern business service and has a flat organizational structure. Company G understands its paradigm as how they collaborate between each other, how they collaborate with clients and the unwritten rules within the organization. The organization tries to create a specific culture/paradigm. The organization recruits' people that fit their culture, an organization that likes collaboration, a lot of the work requires collaboration to find solutions for their customers. The average age of the organization is 30 people, with a few outliers. There are different teams within the building, administrative and financial employees and those with a design background (the majority). This showed some divide however some personal attention solved this issue. Company G is big on their brand identity, and believe it creates a sense of belonging for all in the organization. It is not simple a design of its office or letterhead design, also gadgets. Fun ways to live the brand identity

The brand identity and designing as mentioned above is very visible in the office. It also is practical. The office was designed pre-covid. Post-covid we adjusted also include more hybrid calling facilities including phone booths, concentration and calling rooms. It is easy for the organization to adjust when

required as they are the main tenant of the building. Moreover, the office presents plenty of space for communication and concentration. See Figure 21 Office layout company G (visual estimation) below of the layout

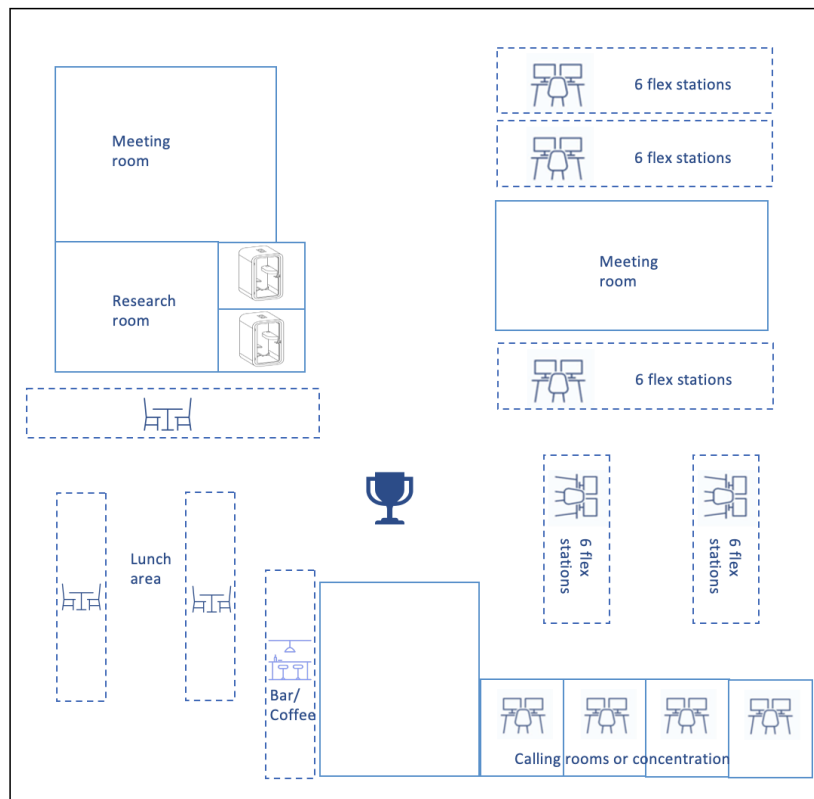


Figure 21 Office layout company G (visual estimation)

In terms of performance measurement, the organization moved to a new location and had to create a understanding how much space and workstations were required. This was the only real performance measured done in terms of real estate. They did recognize that they are a small organization and flexible to change.

What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategies?

Values	Company G	Comparison
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matured organization. Short-term goals and objective defined. Long-term also part of strategy, real estate subleased available for expansion. (understands it is a small organization and agile orientated) - Makes use of an activity based workplace. – No major update to the workplace since pandemic. - Made the transition to a hybrid post-lockdown. - Already supported hybrid strategy in terms of IT support. Improved software has created progress for the possibilities virtually. - Although flexible, strong desire for working at the office for sense of community. 	++
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well-defined mission and vision. Real estate strategy is based on the business strategy and are proactively aligned. 	++

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity based office concept - Make use of a hybrid work policy. Max 2 days remote working. 	
Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modern organization. Flat organization. - Selective in their recruitment to fit the type of people at the organization. - Mixed generations. Majority of generation X & Y - Strong brand identity. Also present in the real estate. - Preferred office working community 	+
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update IT systems, significantly software unlocked many possibilities virtually for the organization. - Fully further supported in hybrid strategy. - Office layout little change. More added calling booths to support hybrid meetings. 	++
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategically located for their business service, talent pool. - Leased large office, subleased for possibility to continue to expand. - Benefits from increased talent pool. Amsterdam expensive for living, it is understandable for those buying house for example to move outside of Amsterdam. 	+
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desire for hybrid working is from the employees. - Assists in establishing home working station. Screen and chair, no desk. If really needed employees can apply for “werkkostenregeling uitkering”. - Strong HR for people support. People first organization. - Strongly supports behavioral environment at the office and virtually 	++
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make use of employee satisfactory surveys, but feels limited with the progress they can make in regards to. - Used real estate performance measurement to create an understanding for need of space due to relocation. This was a short-term measurement. - Long-term no real estate measurement. 	+
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization supports both physical and behavioral environment at the office or remotely. Social communication strong both virtually and physically. Office layout strong in terms of the physical environment and full support in the home work station. 	++

Table 17 Organizational component of Company G

4.2.8 Company H

Introduction

Company H is a retail organization for workwear/clothing located in province of Gelderland. The interview was conducted with the HR manager of the organization. The HR manager is responsible for the office. Company H is an organization of 52 employees. The organization was founded in 2013 and can be considered a matured organization in terms of management. Although stable over the last couple years, the company has grown significantly over the last few years. If the work pressure continues to grow, so will the organization. The organization reached a total of 100 employees. Do to restructuring the organization operates with 52 employees. The core from which the organization wants to continue to grow. With the restructuring the organization has redefined their business goals and objectives. These are both short-term and long-term based. A new brand identity has been developed to strengthen these goals together with the organization. Since the pandemic, the organization made a shift to hybrid working. The organization has recently made a large investment in their office and brand identity. This is yet to be rolled out.

Company H has a policy in place for their hybrid strategy. Employees work 20% in total remotely. Monday and Wednesday are compulsory, to ensure the whole team is together. The organization makes use of hybrid working for the desire of its employees. If it was up to the organization, it would be 100% back to the organization. At first it was challenging for the organizations to return more to the office, thus the policy in place.

What drivers and barriers do the SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

Company H, as a result of its quick growth required a hybrid strategy to operate until the company moved recently to a new office. The organization grew significantly during the pandemic due to their online presence with at the peak around 100 employees. Once the lockdown passed, employees made use of the office in shifts. This pushed the organization to move to a new location. The new office included a new office layout. Now the organization has downsized a little to 53 employees, meaning there is currently plenty of the space in the office for continued growth.

The organization makes use of a hybrid strategy due to the desire of the employee. If it was up to the organization itself then employees would be working at the office as much as possible. Therefore, to ensure collaboration a policy of 20% remote working and Monday and Wednesday compulsory at the office is used. For flexibility and wellness, if someone happens to have a one of reason the organization does not mind mind. Just not every week.

A challenge the organization experienced was actually getting employees to return more to the office, which resulted in the above policy.

How does the SMEs sizes and business categories reflect in transition to a hybrid strategy?

Company H is an online retail, and thus part of the retail category of this case study criteria. The size of the organization puts the case study in the medium size category. The organization has a flat hierarchy. This is also translated in the office, all employees together on one floor. The organization through their hybrid strategy ensure that the organization continues to build together, ensure that teams grow together. All department communicate closely to one another. For the organization it is important to cooperate and together share the responsibility for success, which makes the organization who they are.

Organization H provides a complete workstation for at home, including screen, chair, mouse, keyboard etc., everything necessary.

What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategies?

Values	Company H	Comparison
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short term goals and objectives - Open office workplace, no major updates to the office since their hybrid strategy - Strong demand for office work, use policy to do so. 	O
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategies are defined. Real estate supports the business strategy. No major adjustments due to hybrid strategy. - Open office layout - Makes use of a policy for their hybrid strategy. "20% in total remote, Monday and Wednesday fixed days for the whole organization at the office" 	O
Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flat organization feeling. Management has their own transparent office connectable to the work floor. The rest is open work floor layout. - Matured organization. Operating for almost 10 years, shared responsibilities. - In the hybrid strategy, the organization supports the physical and behavioral environment. 	O
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update IT system at the office. - Software to support also virtual environment. Slack is used for both professional and personal subjects. - Little change to processes due to hybrid working. - Hybrid policy does help to plan certain processes to take place at work. Most team meeting will be held on Monday and Wednesday due to compulsory working days. 	+
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Office strategically located logistically - Office recently relocated for growth. Have since restructured and downsized. Now a matured organization growing slowly. The real estate can support this growth. - Benefit from residing distance increase for employees and talent pool due to hybrid working. 	O
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fully supported homeworking station - Not necessary strict criteria for their recruitment. Looking for employees fit to do the job. - Remote working desire from employees. Organization does realize the benefits for efficiency. 	+
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On the short term, during organizational growth changes, the organization measured office usage. A correct strategy was desired and use of their real estate required better understanding. On the long-term no performance measurements are made. 	+
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization is strengthening organizational belonging through its rebranding. The office has recently been redeveloped but no significant changes due to the pandemic lock-down. The organization offers support in both physical and behavioral environment in both office and remote. 	+

Table 18 Organizational component of Company H

4.2.9 Company I

Introduction

Company I is a media group in the Netherlands producing a daily paper. The organization has in total 200 employees. The interview was conducted with the Customer contact and logistics. In this role the employee is responsible for the renovation of their office accommodation.

This organization was founded in 1971 and has a longer history. Thus, the business cycle of this organization can be classes matured. The organization has a long history, and have had to keep up with many obstacles and innovations along the way. Currently, the organization is renovating their office for the future. The organization growth is mature, and consider the organization stable. The renovation team includes younger employees to ensure a desired future workplace for the newer generations.

The office organization moved to a hybrid strategy post-pandemic. The organization has a policy in place that 60 – 80% of the time employees are required to work at the office. The remaining can be from a remote location.

What drivers and barriers do the SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

The driver for the organization to use a hybrid strategy was due to the preference of its employees. The pandemic has pushed the organization to work remote, and continue seeing the benefit of doing so for its future. Especially younger generations will desire the flexibility. A strong step forward for the organization is including newer generation for innovation of their renovating office accommodation.

A challenge the organization experiences is getting employees to return more to the office, which resulted in creating motivators. The organization is motivating people to come to the office by providing lunch, a € 21 budget is available to be spent in the office canteen. Furthermore, the costs for work travel is paid for. The organization is considering to increase travel compensation.

How does the SMEs sizes and business categories reflect in transition to a hybrid strategy?

The organization is classed a classic business service, it is also the largest case study of the selection, classed as medium-large. Therefore, the organization structure becomes a little more complex. The organizational structure of company I considered their organization fairly flat, on paper there is a clear hierarchy associated with the necessary responsibilities. A centralized matrix structure. Those higher up management of the organization make themselves approachable. The organization more be considered a matrix organization. This consists of managers responsible for certain departments or parts and the product responsible who are integrally responsible for the result of certain products. They communicate throughout the organization. The structure of the organization and the translation back into the organization is not very evident. Management are still in separate closed office rooms and the remaining in the office garden. The office garden consists of flex work stations

Large part of belonging for the organization comes from the type of news the organization brings and how they present themselves to their clients. This is mainly done through their digital presence as a media company. Further, the organization can be considered a little self-critical: “Often we are good

at naming the things we are not good at, and not so much on the things we are good at” (Personal communication, 6 October 2022).

Another challenge, is that currently employees require to workplaces, one where employee can make virtual meetings and one which support collaboration. The organization is looking for solutions.

What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategies?

Values	Company I	Comparison
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the older organizations within the case study. Short-term and long term goals and objectives defined. Both for the business strategy and for its real estate. - The organization uses an open office workplace and management offices. - Up to date IT system to support hybrid strategy 	+
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A more matured organization. Mission vision and fit strategies have been formed. - Desire to create a future proof real estate strategy to support the organization better. A team of different generations are asked to shape their future strategy + external party (CBRE - WPS) to build that strategy. - Current office is an open office layout, that was recently adopted. The Office used to locate all team in small shared office spaces. 	+
Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization is a more traditional business service. A centralized hierarchy is still present. The organization is moving towards a more desired feeling. On paper it is still a centralized hierarchy. Management is looking to become more approachable. - Multi generations work at the organization. Older generations do listen to younger generations, they recognized they are important for growth and the future of the organization. 	+
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated IT system for the hybrid strategy. - Changes are being made. Little change to layout due to pandemic. Changes are however desired. Hybrid strategy is included, but also future real estate strategy to better support the business strategy. - Behavioral environment is a challenge the organization is working on. The current office building layout challenges correct collaboration, Island are created and the large open office floor create acoustic issues not all employees are fit to handle when working. - Organization is incentives employees to come work at the office by providing a budget available for lunch and increasing travel compensations. 	+
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes are being made to the office. Company I is owner. Looking to sublease unused space and better align real estate strategy to support business strategy. - Located where originally was founded. Currently more symbolic is presumed. Only issue is bad accessibility for public 	+

	<p>transport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benefit from residing distance increase for employees and talent pool due to hybrid working. 	
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supported home work station by providing a budget. Employer slowly becomes owner of the purchased working station. This is a limited budget of 500 euro every 5 years. - Selective criteria for talent acquisition and make use of characteristics tests to ensure a well combined team. One that is diverse and does not conflict. - Remote working is desire from employees. 	+
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization measures performance on multi fronts. The real estate is noticed not to being aligned with the organization. This demanded change. A team is form to manage this process. - Further consultants are used to help develop their workplace strategy. - A tailormade performance measurement is used. 	+
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A clear hierarchy is in place to run the organization, teams are created to gather correct data to for a collective decision process for the correct organizational strategies including the business and real estate strategy. 	+

Table 19 Organizational component of Company I

4.2.10 Company J

Introduction

Company J is an IT organization operating in the financial sector. The organization was founded in 2016. IT organization can be classed as one of the modern business services. The interview was conducted with one of the team engineering managers. Under his responsibility are people issues, technology related issues and team collaboration. In addition, the team manager is responsible how the team operates in the hybrid strategy.

The organization is a young organization, however has grown quickly over the years. The most significant growth was made in the pandemic. The organization provide online financial services, at first a startup, and now classed as a scaleup. The business cycle can still be described as a growing organization. The growing has matured and has become more steady. Currently 126 employees work at the organization.

Company J used to be a fully remote working organization. A hybrid strategy was used prior to the pandemic, and during the pandemic they made a complete shift to a remote organization. The organization continued with a remote working strategy post-lockdown. Team managers had much more control and contact with those under their lead, thus were the team managers responsible for the people they manage. Company J eventually moved to a hybrid strategy, the organization realized that some contact is required for creating a better sense of belonging, and assure type of interactions take place that don't happen virtually. The office space they have now can hosts approximately 30-40 people. "Currently we have half the seats available to host everyone at the office, so a hybrid strategy is essential." (Personal communication, 10 May 2022).

As the organization functioned in a fully remote situation, the technology available fully supports the strategy. The essential change was to create a stronger sense of community and solve the limited tolerance employees had from working from home.

What drivers and barriers do the SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

The organization is one of the few that experimented by going fully remote post-lockdown. It already made use of hybrid strategy before the pandemic. It is both and employees desire and organizational strategy for which the organization is using a hybrid strategy. Furthermore, it was the desire of employees that wanted to move to a hybrid strategy from the fully remote situation.

Barriers for more remote working was the social difficulties of working at home. Employees lost complete sense of belong: "At one point employees no longer recognized who worked for the company. Another employee resigning saying he hated the remote working, completely alone behind a screen never seeing my colleagues. This was really bad." (Personal communication, 10 May 2022).. To create a stronger sense of community and solve the limited tolerance employees had from working from home, a hybrid strategy was required. The organization does recognize that meeting online is different and team meet ups at the office help strengthening that team. Further, due to the nature of the work employees need to execute, significant amount of collaboration is unnecessary. A lot of tasks are based on solo programming.

How does the SMEs sizes and business categories reflect in transition to a hybrid strategy?

Company J is classed modern business services and medium-large sized based on the case study criteria. The organization has a very flat hierarchy, only four levels exist – CEO, CTO, team leaders and professionals. Company J has a strong mix of talent including developers, cloud engineers and customer service specialist that strive for the same ambition. This mission and vision is well defined by the organization. Not only to its employees, but what the organization represents publicly. The organizations has strategized its real estate strategy over the last years. From moving completely remote to return to a hybrid strategy. The organization makes use of a flexible office space provider in Amsterdam. A fixed location hired from the provider, however, flexible for future change. Ideal for a new hybrid strategy, adaptable to the preference of the employees.

What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategies?

Values	Company J	Comparison
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A young organization that grew quick. Short term and long term goals and objectives defined. - Make use of an activity based workplace layout. - Updated IT system. Tried to create a fully remote workplace. Eventually transitioned to a hybrid strategy because of the social aspect. - No strong demand for office work particularly. Social aspect is to assist employees. 	+
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A well defined business strategy and aligned real estate strategy for their hybrid strategy. The office is used to solve issues the organization faced in their full remote strategy. - Make use of an activity based workplace - No particular policy for hybrid strategy. Team leaders are responsible for employee well-being and desire for office work. 	+
Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diverse mix of individuals, culturally from different countries. Majority of the employees are generation X and Y. - Makes use of flat organization. Only four levels – CEO, CTO, team leader and employees. - Hybrid office balanced. 	O
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The office use an activity based workplace layout. Calling booths, seating corner for meetings and conference rooms are all available. - All processes can be done remote or at the office. - Socially the organization transition to a hybrid strategy from a remote strategy. Sense of belonging was unsustainable. 	+
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexible office provider, If needed for growth many options are available. - Small office for the size of the organization. - Strategically located due to talent pool. - Benefit from residing distance increase for employees and talent pool due to hybrid working. 	+
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fully support workstation at home. Majority of work hours are at home. - Not necessary strict criteria for their recruitment. Looking for employees fit to do the job. Looking for a large diversity 	+

	<p>of people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hybrid strategy is organizational. Both a desire from employees and the organization. 	
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance measurement human asset orientated. - Limited performance measurements for the office. The demand can be measured due to reservation system to make use of the office. This is limited to the work stations. 	O
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization supports both physical and behavioral environment at the office or remotely. Social communication strong both virtually and physically. Office layout strong in terms of the physical environment and full support in the home work station. 	+ +

Table 20 Organizational component of Company J

4.2.11 Company K

Introduction

Company K is a retail organization for wellness and fitness supplying both online and stores located all over the Netherlands. The headquarters is located in Amsterdam. The interview was conducted with the HR/facility manager of the organization. Company K is an organization of 140 employees.

The organization was founded in 1998 and will exist 25 years in 2023. The organization can be interpreted as a matured organization in the market. Although, the pandemic resulted in many changes for the organization. The physical retail operation was put under pressure: “The stores were quiet, we were allowed to keep the stores open, however, if there is no one on the street, nothing happens. On the other hand, in our online presence we grew a lot” (Personal communication, 14 October 2022). Company K grew online significantly due to the pandemic. This growth required new employees, “Yes we definitely grew, a whole new team, actually pretty much a whole new organization” (Personal communication, 14 October 2022). For this reason, the hybrid strategy needs policies to guide the remote working possibilities to ensure a connected organization.

What drivers and barriers do the SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

Company K makes use of hybrid strategy due to the desire of the employees. They recognize the freedom and desire.

The organization has recently grown significantly and updated their brand identity. A new CEO to push the organization strong into the future. Managers recognized that a hybrid strategy has to ensure that the organization needs to strengthen its belonging/connectivity between employees in their hybrid strategy due to the number of new employees and new strategy. The organization has created a hybrid strategy policy for fixed office working days. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday are the days the whole organization is present at the office. Wednesday and Friday employees are free to use these as remote working days if desired.

Challenging and finding a correct balance communication vs concentration is important: “Of course an open office does have its challenges. It is allowed to be fun, but it should also be a place that ensures people can work”

How does the SMEs sizes and business categories reflect in transition to a hybrid strategy?

The layout represents the flat organizational hierarchy. The office is divided between majority of employees located in an open office floor. The management have their own office connected to the open office floor. This creates a transparent work environment. Furthermore, the customer service department are placed in their own large room to ensure that they do not disturb the others within the office.

People involvement at the office and fixed office working days is a strong driver for the organization to create connectivity. Socially in this sense employees are very much support. The office layout itself supports this.

What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategies?

Values	Company K	Comparison
Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization exists almost 25 years. Short and long term business goals and objectives are defined. - Real estate strategy short and long term strategy - An open office workplace layout - Updated IT system to support hybrid strategy. Remote limited to laptop. - Demand from the organization is more office work. Many new employees require more physical development at the office. 	+
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization has recently redefined strategies moving forward. A new brand identity. Further a big growth in the organization with new employees. Business strategy has moved to create a larger online presence. - A policy is used to ensure more office work for new and growing organization. - Open office workplace layout. 	+
Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large shift has taken place in the organization. New CEO, many new employees. - Large business restructuring, including new brand identity. Make use of monthly organizational events to help push the organization. - A flat organizational feeling. - Policy in place for fixed days at the office. Employees have two days of the week they may work remotely. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday employees work at the office. - The organization supports physical and behavioral environment at the office. Remotely, the physical and behavioral environment are less supported. 	O
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No major changes to office processes due to hybrid strategy. - Updated IT systems to support hybrid working. Mainly limited to Laptops 	O
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open office layout, updated facilities to support hybrid strategy - Supports office growth. - Do benefit from more a larger radius employment. However, a desire for office work is important. - Strategically located in terms of logistics for production. Not ideally located for public transport. 	O
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little home work support. If there is a significant struggle the organization will look for ways how they can assist. - Desire for remote working is from employee. 	O
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment satisfaction survey. - Human asset performance measurements - Real estate measurement is minimal - Real estate performance measurement limited to their retail stores 	O
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A clear hierarchy is in place to run the organization, teams are created to gather correct data to for a collective decision process for the correct business strategy. Real estate strategies are used (new office plus brand identity to create sense of belonging) but no performance measurements linked. 	O

Table 21 Organizational component of Company K

5.0 Synthesis

The findings of each case are cross-examined. A cross examination is explored through the three sub-questions that were formed for this research. First the motives and challenges are explored for Dutch SMEs in transition to a hybrid workplace. Second, a cross examination to find the differences and similarities between SMEs of different size and business services which are based on the selected criteria of this research. Lastly, the cross examination explores how SMEs perform in comparison to the SME proposition formed in this research. Altogether, the findings will help generalize an understanding of how Dutch SMEs use organizational components in transition to a hybrid strategy.

5.1 What drivers and barriers do Dutch SMEs encounter transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

The Table 22 below represents the drivers and barriers the organizations in the case studies encountered in their transition to a hybrid workplace. A generalized answer has been formed below for both drivers and barriers:

Drivers

From the case study research, it was clear that the primary motivation for these SMEs to transition to a hybrid strategy was due to the desire of the employees. This was mentioned in all case study interviews. A select few understood that a hybrid strategy could be beneficial to the organization. In particular, Case studies A and D see a hybrid strategy as beneficial because the office is less adapted for concentration, and solo concentrative tasks are ideal to be executed at home remotely. These organizations do understand that the home office does have to be thoroughly equipped for employees to work remotely in an effective manner.

Furthermore, case C, H, and J strategies required a hybrid strategy as their office space cannot host all employees at all times. Company H, in the meantime, relocated to a larger office to ensure all its employees have a fixed workstation at the office. Case C and J will continue to use a hybrid strategy as a benefit to be able to operate using their current office, as in a traditional setting, the companies would have outgrown the office. It is interesting to note that most of the organization's leaders desire most of the work to take place physically at the office.

Barriers

Many of the barriers mentioned in the interviews reflected the challenges the SMEs faced during the pandemic lockdown. The central theme that SMEs perceived as a challenge was the social difficulties. In this aspect, company I is particularly interesting. Company I continued to use a full remote strategy post-lockdown until the organization realized that a full remote strategy was not sustainable for the organizational belonging and social well-being of its employees. An important struggle to mention that transpired from the interviews was that some SMEs needed help motivating the employees to return to the office fully. Policies were implemented to allow for a maximum of 2 remote working days per week. Some organizations took this a step further by creating fixed working days in the week to ensure as many contact hours of their employees physically together. This brings into question the freedom vs. controlled policy.

Further, remote working does limit the amount of tacit learning. During the interviews, most SMEs expressed that, from their organizational point of view, they prefer to have most of their working days at the office. Especially for new employees, the learning curve is perceived faster when they work physically at the office.

Many of the SMEs did not provide a fully supported workstation at home. A majority of the SMEs said this was due to financially not being able to provide a heavily invested work place at the office in addition to a fully equipped workstation at home. However, all of the SMEs did collaborate with employees on how they could assist if the lack of proper homework equipment was troubling for certain employees.

An interesting finding is that most SMEs still see the office as the main workplace for their organization. It is only company J that first made a hybrid strategy.

Case:	Drivers	Barriers
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main driver is the desire of employees. - Company A also desires the benefits of hybrid working. Flexibility of finishing small tasks after hours and less wasted time on small meetings with clients that do not require a physical setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficult communication for small queries. - Decrease of tacit learning. Especially important for employees new to the organization and who have just taken on a new role. - Office is limited to space for hybrid calls. A full office will affect productivity.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main driver is flexibility for the employees. Required by students working at the organization especially. - The desire for a hybrid strategy is from the employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company B struggles with freedom vs. policies to ensure that employees come to the office. Sometime struggling to get employees to come to the office while having made a large investment in the office to motivate employees to work at the office. - Struggling to budget a second work station at home. - Collaboration is required for many tasks.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combination of organizational and employee desire to use hybrid working. - Use of flexible office. Very agile office use, flex office operator and can adopt its plan or strategy quick. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees outsourced to clients may have to accept workplace strategy of the client. This could mean no remote working. - Social connectivity with the organization remains a challenge. Although Company C uses many tools for their human asset.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main driver is the desire of employees. - Lots of collaboration with clients on small issues. Hybrid strategy increases the communication possibilities. - Home working adds that additional space to the office for concentrative work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficult communication for small queries. - Decrease of tacit learning. Especially important for employees new to the organization and who have just taken on a new role. - Office is limited to space for hybrid calls. A full office will affect productivity.
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main driver is the desire of employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complex IT systems difficult to use remotely. - Remote working will occupy the office desk as well due to citrix system - Developers need to mix activities for

		<p>social reasons. Working at home all day behind a screen and then continuing to do so at night will cause problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trouble with monitoring work hours remotely. - Financially troubling to also support full remote working station.
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main driver is the desire of the employees. - Home working adds that additional space to the office for concentrative work. - All types of work can be done either at the office or remote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited barriers. Policies are used to ensure more days at the office during the week. Limited loss of connectivity due to remote working 1 or 2 days.
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People first organization – focus on desire from the employees. - Organizational benefit as well. Provide many online workshops as a result of more hybrid working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video conference filters out the non-verbal communication. - Issues resolvable is not the same virtually.
H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main motive is desire of employees. - Organization required a hybrid strategy before moving to new office for more space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many new employees, requirement of many contact hours at the organization. - Challenging to motivate all employees to want to come back to the office more. Some employees really enjoyed remote working and did not mind just 1 office day. - Not all employees were pleased with policy of fixed working days.
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main motive is the desire of the employees. - Strategically looking for the future workplace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivating employees to come to the office. Use lunch budget and extra travel allowance.
J	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both the organization's strategy and desire for employees are drivers to enforce hybrid strategy. - Organization attempted fully remote. - Hybrid strategy required with number of employees able to use the office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social constraints the more remote your strategy is. - Office registration not always used properly by employees to reserve a spot at the office. - Different desires by different employees in teams.
K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main motive is the desire of the employee. - New organizational shift, future office includes hybrid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many new employees, physical hours together are needed. Make use of a fixed working day policy. - Not all employees were happy with a fixed working day policy, so left the company due to all the changes and requirements.

Table 22 Summarized results drivers and barriers case studies

5.2 What differences exist between SME sizes and business categories in transition to a hybrid strategy?

Chapter 2.5 Case study selection presents the criteria on which the case studies have been selected and grouped. See Table 2 in chapter three with an overview of the case studies. Each size and business category will be discussed below to answer the sub- question:

SME Business service categorization

Classic business services

Case studies A, D, I, and J are classed as classical business services. Three of these four case studies, case study A, D, and use an open-office layout with management in dedicated rooms and the workforce in an open office. These offices similarly made use of a more autocratic centralized hierarchal structure. The three case studies are selective in the type of employees they hire or strongly consider personality types when assembling teams to create a sense of belonging. Case studies A and D made little change to the workplace in transitioning to a hybrid strategy. The workplace lacked space for taking conference calls, resulting in employees taking calls at their fixed working desks in the open office on a busy day. Acoustically, this could affect the productivity of employees at the office due to the distraction resulting from these calls. Company I recognizes how real estate can play an important role in increasing productivity. Company I has a team consisting of young and older employees from the organization that is responsible for the real estate strategy. The three case studies have in common that they have a preference for their employees to work at the office as much as possible.

Case study J is the opposite of the other case studies regarding the paradigm. Ultimately, Company J tries to create a very flat organization. The workplace hosts an activity-based layout, flex tables, and a hybrid first strategy. The online environment is more significant than the office for Company J. Nevertheless, the organization understands that a sense of belonging to an organization is more challenging to maintain in an online environment. Overall, the components are more aligned with a hybrid strategy than for case studies A, D, and I.

All case studies in this category provide support for the homework environment. Case studies A, D, and J provide employees with all equipment necessary for a complete home working station. Case I provides a budget to support the home workplace. In addition, employees are asked to fill out a survey providing details on their remote workplace to provide guidance for necessary equipment and create an understanding that employees indeed have an appropriate work environment to execute their daily work activities.

Modern business services

The modern business service category comprises case studies B, C, E, and G. Case B and G have a very flat hierarchy. These firms have a better aligned real estate strategy with their business strategy. They both use an activity-based workplace strategy, hosting multiple tools to support hybrid work situations. For cases C and E, the owners have more control over the organizations decision-making process. On paper, they have a centralized, hierarchical structure, but both organizations attempt to create a flat-feeling organization. Both (co)owners of the two organizations aim to be very approachable and opt for a level of respect to cultivate employees to share their thoughts on decisions related to the organizations future, ensuring a democratic process. Case E uses an open-office layout. The designers are restricted to a fixed desk due to the heavy IT facilities required for their business service. The organization invested heavily in a new office and provided a well-supported layout for collaboration and concentration. Meeting and call rooms are available to ensure no distractions from

hybrid meetings. Company C naturally has a hybrid strategy due to the way the organization functions. Most employees are outsourced and work at client destinations. Thus, the organization uses regional offices used for training purposes, team days, and administration.

Of all four case studies in this category, only company C provides a fully equipped workstation for remote working at home. Company E does not provide its employees with remote working stations. The organization invested heavily in its office facility and cannot bear the financial burden of a second workplace for people at home. Similarly, company B invested a significant amount in its office. The financial burden was not feasible to create two workplaces. Both organizations provided a well-equipped office with the intention that employees would desire to use the office as much as possible during their working hours. Lastly, company G supplies sufficient workstations at home, including a chair and screen.

It was perceived from the interviews for the modern business services that they were much more strategic in terms of their real estate. All organizations had a long-term real estate strategy. Let it be an investment for growth, subleasing to ensure a growth possibility, a very flexible office, or maximizing the hybrid working to limit the office space required.

Retail business services

The retail business category comprises the remaining case studies F, H, and K. The retail category scored close to the proposition, and All three case studies use a more standardized workplace strategy. In all three cases, the owners/management have more control over the organizations decision-making process. On paper, they have a centralized, hierarchical structure, but all attempt to create a flat-feeling organization. The office layouts are similarly more standardized office layout that matches their hierarchy. This entails an open office with management having their own office. The major difference between these case studies is that company K does not facilitate a workstation for people at home. The other two do facilitate a home workstation.

Discussion business category differences Dutch SME

In chapter 2.5 Case study selection, a brief introduction was provide for selecting the different business service categories. Literature defined classic business services as an organization where employees are likely to congregate most of their weekly working hours at the physical office. Further a strong centralized organizational structure and desire the element of control wanting to maintain a traditional office. Modern business services can be characterized by their more contemporary organizational design, in which employees are given power and autonomy. Modern business services provide more flexibility and are reactive to employee demand. Retail is part of a business service that has always been around, a business service that over generations has had to adopt due to all kinds of rapid innovations, economic difficulties and currently the ongoing experience of the pandemic.

When looking at the case studies and the result obtained, it was indeed observed that classical business services tend to maintain a more traditional structured office, a centralized hierarchy and a standard office layout. Furthermore, the majority of the classic business cases had a preference for their employees to congregate majority of their working hours at the office. All four case studies provided a full fitted workplace at home. The modern business service was considered more divided in their business and real estate strategy, yet all cases did have a desire for the characteristics of a modern business services, that being, a flat-feeling organization. On paper half the organizations reflected a centralized organization, although according to the interviewees this did not reflect the flat hierarchical feeling that is present at their office. Interesting to see is that not all modern business cases supported a fully equipment home work station. The retail, similarly to the classical business service opted for a more standardized workplace and centralized hierarchy. Although, all did have the desire of a flat-organization. For which it could be considered a mix of the classical and modern business service. The majority did provide a fully equipped workstation at home. Looking at the three different business service, an interesting finding is the difference between the extent to which

organizations provide support for a remote workplace. This is further developed in the 6.0 Discussion with literature

SME size

Small

The first five of the eleven case studies presented in the Table 2 belong to the small SME criteria. The *purpose* of cases A, C, and D is to be and remain a small SME or medium. Neither of these organizations have the intention to grow towards a large organization. Cases B and E did not express that they had a preference to stay a small organization. The majority of the case studies do not make use of a performance measurement for their real estate. Only company B makes use of an employee satisfactory survey that includes questions related to the office. Company E did create a management team with employees from all teams to help the organization make strategic decisions together. All of the organizations recognize that they are a small organization that is agile and can easily adjust the real estate if it does not align with the business strategy. In Cases A, C, and D, the HR and real estate responsibilities are shared by employees or executed by owners of the companies. Company E recognized that, due to the growing of the organization, an HR employee was required. Company B had a well-defined culture team coordinating the people aspect.

It was difficult to conclude many patterns do the small organizations, each organization was very unique of one another in terms of their workplace strategy. All organizations did recognize their size helped their organization to being agile.

Medium

Case F, G, and H class as the medium sized SMEs. Similarly, these organizations recognized they are still a small organization that is agile and can easily adjust the real estate when any issue arises. The increase in the number of employees does introduce differences between people within the organization. The increase of employees did show more requirements in managing the people, creating a understanding of their requirements and the ease of communicating the strategies to employees.

Medium-Large

Lastly, case I, J, and K class as the medium-large SMEs. There is a large diversity in people, age, and cultural backgrounds, especially company J which has 126 employees having over 32 different nationalities. Complexities with regards to organizational structure seem to be similar to the other organizations apart from company I. Company I makes use of a matrix structure with clear hieratical levels. Case I and J seems to perform well with the majority of the organizational components.

Discussion size category differences Dutch SME

Looking at the different sized case studies it has become evident that the complexities of managing and supporting its employees increases the larger the organization. It is therefore that the larger companies were more likely to employee a real estate manager, or create a shared management group to facilitate the complexities around the office workplace and support the employees. An observation could be made linking back to literature and the characteristics of SME that strategic alignment is positively related to the number of employees. This is further developed in the 6.0 Discussion with literature.

5.3 What organizational components are most (under)performing for the SME transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

Table 23 below presents an overview of the performance results against the proposition that was formed for this research. Overall, the performance of the proposition was perceived more positively. The proposition could be considered more as a minimum proposition of how SMEs should use organizational components in their transition to a hybrid workplace.

Higher performing organizational components

From the table, we can observe that the higher performing organizational components were *position*, *purpose*, *processes*, and *people*. The SMEs were expected to have short-term focused business and real estate strategies. From the results, case studies B, C, G, I, J, and K showed that they perform higher for *position*, mainly due to the long-term strategies formed for their real estate. Many of the organizations subleased part of their real estate for the potential of growth or make use of flexible office operators that provide flexibility in the office requirements.

In the *purpose* component an observation is made on the strategy, the real estate, and human asset. A workplace strategy that supports both the physical and behavioral environment goes a long way in supporting the human asset. Looking at the SMEs and the proposition, it was expected that all organizations would have a strong business strategy. The real estate strategy was expected to be more of a one size fit all concept. Curiously, the results uncovered that case studies B, C, D, G, and I are both physically connected in the workplace but also virtually. Some of these case studies make use of tools such as slack, where employees can share subject such as their animals, parental advice, or other social related topics. For smaller organizations such as case study D, this could be staying virtually connected simply through WhatsApp groups, one with the entire organization, and another with the younger generations.

In the *processes* component an examination is made how the SMEs adopted methods to improve operating in a hybrid workplace strategy. The high score for the *processes* related to the fact that a few SMEs adopted a hybrid strategy not only due to the desire of their employees but also to strengthen the organization with tools that optimize efficiency in ways that are now possible due to a hybrid strategy. In addition, the layout supported the physical environment but also virtual environment (communication professional and social).

The *people* component was observed as the most significant performing component. It was clear that most organizations recognized the importance of the human asset for the organization. It was further understood that the workplace strategy had a significant impact on the human asset. Providing a standard workplace at the office was the proposition. Many of the case studies supported their employees remotely as well. In addition, many of the organization looked for ways to strengthen connectivity in their hybrid strategy by using communicative tools such as slack to support professional and social forms of communication virtually. This was a way to strengthen a sense of belonging to the organization of the employees. Further, it was interesting to observe that some organizations that made large investments in the office workplace to support the required flexibility of hybrid working made less investments in providing a supported remote homeworking station.

Lastly, the *productivity* component. Even though many of the case studies did not perform high in the majority of the input organizational components, many organizations were still able to produce create a higher value for their productivity. Some small adjustments that support the human asset can have a high impact on the productivity for an SME.

Lower performing organizational components

A significantly lower performing organizational component is the *performance* components. Only a few of the SME case studies made use of any form of real estate performance measurements to be able to understand progression in their transition to a hybrid workplace strategy. The SMEs that do use a form of measurements did due to the relocation of their office and their need for an estimation of the necessary space. On the long-term, only company I uses a customized form of measuring their real estate and strategy adopting the workplace for improvement.

Overall, the *productivity* component performed positively vs. the proposition within the case studies. When observing the difference between the small categorized case studies, it was noticed that 4 of the 5 case studies were positively perceived with a single positive performance measurement. However, 2 of these case studies performed stronger overall in the organizational components. Company A & D, each scored neutrally in position, purpose, paradigm, processes and place, a single positive in people and a double negative for performance. These organizations still scored a single positive for productivity. Case study B, performed higher in position, purpose, paradigm, processes, place, and performance, but neutrally in the people component. Company C, similarly to B, scored positively in most organizational components, yet both their productivity resulted the same as A & D. Although, A & D did not score positively in all organizational components, the SMEs supported their employees in the most essential elements in their hybrid workplace strategy. Each of these organizations provides a fully supported home working station. Further, their size makes it easier for the organization to support the employees in the office with the necessary physical resources to support the job basics. No complex office strategies were required to achieve similar results. Company B, as the larger sized small SME, makes use of an activity based workplace, essentially proven in literature to be positively related to improvement of productivity for today's knowledge workers, but does not support their employees the adequate workstation at home.

Values	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	-	+
Position	O	++	+	O	O	O	++	O	+	+	+	0	8
Purpose	O	++	+	O	O	O	++	O	+	+	+	0	8
Paradigm	O	+	++	O	+	O	+	O	+	O	O	0	6
Processes	O	+	O	O	+	O	++	+	+	+	O	0	7
Place	O	+	O	O	O	O	+	O	+	+	O	0	4
People	+	O	++	+	O	+	++	+	+	+	O	0	10
Performance	--	+	O	--	-	--	+	+	++	O	-	6	5
Productivity	+	+	+	+	O	O	++	+	+	+	O	0	10

Table 23 Collective case study proposition result

5.4 Significant organizational components and themes

Significant organizational components and themes

The interview discussions, findings and answers to the sub research questions unveil interesting themes that open interesting topics for discussion. These themes are based on organizational components observed from the organizational components performance vs the proposition (Table 23).

It can be observed that all there is a strong link between the different components. Organizations that tend to perform stronger in a few of the components, the other components are observed to perform higher as well due to the overlap. Even though, the answers provided for sub question 5 in subchapter 5.3 on the previous pages have shown that among the case studies the *position, purpose, people, performance & productivity*. The latter four unveil interesting themes for the following chapter. *Position* is largely linked to the external environment and internally the steps taken in the other components. The following themes linked with the component are presented will be the basis for the discussion in the next chapter:

- Workplace connectivity
 - Communication, the behavioral environment – Purpose
 - Office vs. home workplace, the physical environment – Purpose/People
- Measuring - Performance
- SME alignment – Productivity

6.0 Discussion with literature

The previous chapter provided a comparative discussion of the results from the cross-case analyses. In particular, subchapter 5.4 uncovered interesting themes from the synthesis that form the basis for the following discussion chapter. Given that these themes have been produced by using an existing corporate real estate management model, the results are further strengthened by comparing them with literature. Finally, the results form the basis for answering the main research question.

Communication, the behavioral environment – purpose

Workplace connectivity is an essential element in a hybrid strategy. Employees in the future workplace will increasingly network virtually and be more loosely connected to the corporate organization. The formal work environment must be highly collaborative to facilitate the virtual networks Ratcliffe and Saurin (2008). The proposition is for SMEs to pay little attention to virtual communication, which is necessary to ensure a good business operation. The case studies showed that a few took this a step further.

Case study B, G, and K: Each case study has taken steps to facilitate communication on different levels. The three case studies use programs such as Slack or similar (cloud groupware) supporting organizational communication. Company G, for example, uses Slack for social communication allowing employees to communicate on multiple channels for information, food, animals, and other personal desires employees wish to share with their colleagues. The other two organizations make a similar approach.

Company C: Currently uses google tools and WhatsApp to communicate with the employees. However, the organization understands that communication is vital, especially in a hybrid strategy. For this reason, the organization has invested in a customer communication service (CRM). CRM will allow better client communication and connect the organization on multiple levels. Employees can create multiple channels of communication of interest for both professional and social purposes. This will bring the organization virtually a place where employees can talk about hobbies, plan events and have a place for a general chat.

The smaller sizes case studies from the selection, cases A & D, use WhatsApp for social communication on different hierarchical levels. One with all employees, including owners, and another with just the younger generations within the company. Professional communication is done through Microsoft teams.

In the case studies mentioned, only company K used a policy in addition to facilitating the virtual behavioral environment. This can be related to the rapid organizational growth requiring physical collaboration to strengthen employee relations. Company G asks its employees to limit their remote working days to 2 days a week, although it is not a defined policy. Similarly, most case studies mentioned above prefer their employees to work most of the week at the office. The remaining organization did not use virtual communication tools when asked during the interview. However, they implemented policies to ensure that their employees would work the majority of the week at the office.

The transition to a hybrid workplace introduces many challenges regarding ensuring organizational belonging, maintaining team cohesion, employee collaboration, and management (Ferreira et al., 2021). From empirical research, most case studies related at some point during the interview to their pandemic lockdown experiences. Multiple case studies referred to difficulties with social organization belonging. A possible interpretation for office return work policies is to ensure that organizations maintain their sense of belonging and paradigm. Ensuring a correct strategy for the behavioral environment can greatly impact the employee. Human asset remains the highest expense for an

organization; a slight increase in employee productivity goes a long way for the organization compared to reducing workplace expenses (Haynes et al., 2017). The office distribution between working in the office, working virtually from home, or other remote locations must be included in the behavioral environment strategy. The case studies showed a divide between using a more thorough behavioral environment strategy or a policy to bring employees as much as possible back to the office. It is difficult to judge the correct strategy. However, it is clear that the demand for flexibility from office users is growing.

Real estate is shifting from being an asset to being a resource leading a shift in the focus from “managing the building” to “managing people”. Consequently, the workplace is transforming from a higher solitary workplace to a flexible and collaborative space with a better user experience and a higher service level (Harris, 2015). Although many SMEs may have yet to realize a workplace strategy that supports the behavioral environment both at the office and virtually, it is clear that the desired trend is for employee flexibility. On the other hand, employers desire to preserve the office as the primary work location and commonly use a policy to enforce more office work, limiting employee flexibility. While the physical environment is an essential component of office design, it has been identified that the behavioral environment, more than the physical environment, has the most impact on people's perceived productivity (Haynes, 2008).

Lastly, implementing a hybrid workplace strategy will shift the organization's *paradigm*. By ensuring that the physical and behavioral environment is strongly supported in the hybrid strategy and aligned to how the organization functions, the organization *paradigm* formed over the year could be maintained.

Office vs. home workplace, the physical environment – people

An interesting observation was made from the cross-case analysis of how different organizations made different financial choices implementing their office and/or home workplace. It was observed that case studies A, D, F, and H did not make major changes to their current office post-pandemic lockdown and used a generalized open office. However, due to the desire of the employee still transitioned to a hybrid workplace strategy. They provided their employees with a completely remote working station at home to support the hybrid strategy. On the other hand, case studies B, E, and K all recently made large investments in either a new office ready for the future or adaptation due to a hybrid workplace. However, less support was provided, equipping employees with a remote working station—accordingly, the theme office workplace vs. home workplace.

A hybrid strategy can bring many advantages to an organization and its employees if executed correctly. Working from home is an additional physical environment that could provide employees with a place of concentration, better work-life balance, enhanced worker autonomy, and higher job satisfaction. The office-home combination could increase time management/flexibility, thus reducing costs and increasing organizational effectiveness (Ferreira et al., 2021). In a hybrid workplace strategy, each location can play its role necessary to support the organization. From the empirical research, it was observed that the majority use an open-office concept still with fixed desks and can assume that a few organizations have yet to adopt their future strategy. Short-term adjustments formed the current strategies. Organizations that could work remotely during the pandemic lockdown made quick alterations. In the ongoing experiences of the pandemic, a long-term approach is yet to be developed. Each organization is unique, and a fit strategy is required. In a hybrid workplace strategy, the home workplace will automatically serve as a fixed working desk (CBRE, 2022). SMEs should consider making the office a collaborative focus and emphasize concentration work at home.

SMEs that use a hybrid workplace strategy must understand that the home office is part of the workplace. The office setting requires adequate physical resources to support job basics. All SMEs managed to support their employees in their conventional office, but some limited the support in the home office. Having adequate physical resources may be even more important to the home office (Fan Ng, 2010). The influence of the office work environment on employee productivity has been

researched extensively (Haynes et al., 2017). Its applicability certainly extends to the home workplace, and thus it could be advised that SMEs pay attention to the home office to ensure productivity.

Measuring – performance

Real estate is one of the more costly assets for an organization, and the organization will likely try to benefit as much as possible from this expense. From the proposition propositions, we assumed that most organizations would use tailored performance measurements for their real estate. However, the case studies unveiled that few SMEs made use of real estate performance measurements. Those that did use a real estate performance measurement were short-term based. Company I was the only organization that used long-term measurements related to the organization, thoroughly examining its future real estate strategy. Notably, this is the largest organization of case studies. Case studies B, G, and H, all used short-term performance measurements to understand space requirements due to relocation or redevelopment of their office. This already provides some form of proposition from which these organizations can develop.

Most SMEs use an intangible form of performance measurement. "We are a small organization; if we feel that the office has an issue or is overcrowded, we can think about a solution" (Personal communication, 11 October 2022). Although intangible contributions are strategies such as increasing innovation, when developing a performance measurement system, a tailor-made system requires valid and reliable measures that match the objectives of available data and resources (Lindholm & Leväinen, 2006). As mentioned above, the reference could relate the SME's small size to more likely use measuring in the form of "feeling". From company I, it was perceived that the increased size added complexities and consequently referenced a more tangible form of real estate performance measurement.

For an organization to recognize if its real estate is supporting the organization to its fullest potential, the organization requires a thorough understanding of the performance of its real estate and assets. Underperforming real estate is wasteful and costly. Only by ensuring that the real estate is fully utilized and functional can an organization maximize the benefit of its real estate. Performance needs to be measured or calculated and is the opening role of a CRE manager (for corporates). Further, performance is not simply about measuring performance. It concerns improving performance (Haynes et al., 2017).

Before an organization considers change, it should understand the driver for the change. For many case studies, the driver was related to the desire for flexibility related to home working. This change requires not just a change in allowing employees to do so but should be a driver for change in the workplace to support the hybrid workplace strategy. In addition, performance measurement is crucial to know that the change has been beneficial. To add on, strategic alignment is a framework directly linking real estate initiatives with the core business strategy and measuring organizational performance (Osgood, 2004). Alignment is not a one-time event (Then & Tan, 2010), and understanding the real estate performance is one of the building blocks required for alignment defined by M. H. Arkesteijn & Heywood (2021).

SME alignment - Productivity

Reflecting on the theme discussions above, the size of the SMEs seemed to define the level and form of the in-depth alignment process used. Case studies A, D, E, and F scored poorly against the proposition for their performance component. From the case studies, an observation was made that most of the SMEs used an intangible form of measuring through "feeling" and believed this to be enough. Curiously, none of the SMEs performed negatively against the proposition regarding their productivity component. This could relate to SMEs' "smallness" effect in relation to strategic alignment (Street et al., 2017). Even though approximately half of the SMEs used a standardized open-office workplace but did provide adequate physical resources in the home office. It was still perceived that these organization still supported their employees sufficiently in the physical and behavioral environment to support productivity compared to the organizations that invested heavily in their office but neglected the home workplace.

Street et al. (2017) indicate that dynamic capabilities development becomes more challenging with increases in organizational size. The smaller the number of employees, the stronger the strategic alignment; the greater the number of employees, the weaker the strategic alignment. From Street et al (2017), this research exchanged IT with real estate. The degree of strategic alignment is negatively related to their real estate resource position: The smaller the required real estate will result in a stronger strategic alignment. Comparatively, larger real estate will add more complexities and weaken strategic alignment. The above argues that SMEs with fewer employees and smaller real estate sizes may increase the likelihood of a stronger alignment.

According to Haynes et al. (2017) an organization's main assets are commonly its real estate and human resources and that the presented theoretical framework aims to capture the need to establish 'asset alignment' leading to 'asset productivity'. Given the importance of human resources and considered the highest cost for most organizations, the **people** component has deliberately been placed at the center of the 8P framework of Haynes (2008) chapter. A similar observation was made in the case studies that certain organizational components and priorities outweigh others. Thus, SME organizations should prioritize the human asset in its work processes. Steps to support the human asset such as, adequate physical resources are essential both at the office and remotely. Once the basic needs of the human asset are supported, the organization can develop on the remaining components to push performance further and obtain higher productivity from its real estate. Similarly as mentioned before, the physical environment is an essential component of office design, but it has been identified that the behavioral environment, more than the physical environment, as the most impact on people's perceived productivity (Haynes, 2008).

7.0 Conclusion

This research used a theoretical framework that by Haynes (2008) developed that assists CRE professionals in creating a more transparent overview of the complexities of the workplace by dividing it into eight organizational components. The model attempts to evaluate how well the office environment supports the office occupiers in their work processes, underpinning that the office occupier has connectivity with their office environment. The model is ideally applicable to studying a hybrid workplace as connectivity considers both the physical and behavioral environment. Hybrid working introduces an extra level of challenges regarding the loss of connectivity.

Essentially, the model aims to provide CRE managers with an overview of how to align the organizational components. The goal of this research is to understand how Dutch SMEs are transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy using the eight components defined in the model. The literature by Haynes (2017) provides a checklist of measurement that can give SMEs insight into how well their organization is aligned. Further, this paper can give SMEs insight into how comparable organizations are performing in terms of hybrid strategy.

The research inquired eleven case studies using a holistic multi-case approach. The interview discussions provide an overview of how the SME cases use the eight P components, evaluating any difference between the cases through a cross-case analysis and relating to the literature provided by Haynes (2017). The following chapter is an overview of the essential findings and an answer to the main research question:

How are organizational components used by Dutch SMEs transitioning to a hybrid workplace strategy?

The empirical research uncovered that the primary motive for SMEs to use a hybrid workplace strategy in the ongoing experience of the covid pandemic is their employee's desire. For most, minor supportive adjustments were observed in their hybrid strategy. However, a select few further developed the benefits a hybrid strategy could bring the organization. They were not explicitly related to improving workplace efficiency but to gaining better access to its external market. For example, hybrid working unlocks accessibility through virtual video meetings and limits the loss of time due to travel. The most significant barrier SMEs face in their transition to a hybrid workplace is the reduction of employee interaction. Employers believe they are challenged with a loss of organizational belonging and perceive that reduced interaction will limit the learning curve for newer employees.

An interpretation from the research is that the SMEs are strategically short-term focused in their hybrid strategy, unsure of what the future workplace will require. For the majority, simple steps have been made in the office layout and were limited to an upgrade of IT to support the hybrid workplace strategy. These organizations understood the importance of supporting their people in the home environment, being human asset-focused, and ensuring well-being. On the other hand, A few SMEs had heavily invested in their office layout but could not do the same for the home workplace due to financial limitations to support a second workplace. A form of outweighing the importance of the conventional office over that of the home workplace.

SMEs need to understand the importance of both the office and home workplace. Both settings require adequate resources to support essential job functions. Strategically priorities must first support the human assets in its primary job process. Further, the SME can consider making improvements in the physical environment. Although the physical environment is an essential component of office design, the behavioral component, more than the physical environment, has the most impact on people perceived productivity. Once the basics are taken care of, the SME should consider further developing its hybrid workplace strategy to increase productivity. In a hybrid workplace strategy, an SME should

facilitate professional and social communication in the office and virtual work environment. They are taking it a step further, understanding that real estate has adapted from being a place of managing the building to managing people, being a solitary workplace, to a flexible and collaborative space.

An organization's *paradigm* will shift due to implementing a hybrid workplace strategy. Understanding the organization's DNA is important. Knowing how the organization functions, the correct strategic form can be applied in both the physical and behavioral environments. By doing so, the barrier of losing a sense of belonging, which worries SMEs by adapting to a hybrid strategy, could be solved and provide a more robust and flexible supported organization.

Multiple points above imply real estate importance and what it could provide an organization. Real estate is the second most costly expense for most organizations and is considered wasteful if not utilized to its fullest potential. A substantial finding revealed that the majority used either a short-term or no real estate performance measurement to help justify how well their real estate supports their organization. Let alone does the SME understand if their adaptation to a hybrid strategy improved support for the organization. If not done so already, the first step an SME should take is to create a measured basis from which point an SME could further develop. Alignment is not a one-time thing; thus, an organization should always look for ways to improve.

The characteristics of SMEs distinguish them from large corporates. SMEs differ due to their liability of smallness' including size, resource characteristics, short-term focus, and leadership/ownership characteristics. The liability of smallness can be considered an advantage for SMEs, as the smaller the organization, the stronger and easier it is to align strategically. Each organizational component is vital in providing a complete workplace strategy. However, the case studies revealed that SMEs have more flexibility to which extent each organizational component is used due to their smallness. Alignment for an SME is more easily achievable, but a prioritization of components is required to ensure resource inputs are utilized effectively.

Overall, the research exposed that SMEs use organization components in many ways. Different uses are related to different industries and or sizes of the SME. Each organization is unique, and a one size fits all limits the potential. It has become evident that one component can create a larger impact than the other. An SME making a transition to a hybrid strategy is advised first to create an understanding of its position and purpose. The *position* examines the SME concerning evaluating the internal strengths and weaknesses with the external market, helping form an actionable real estate plan for the coming years. The *purpose* determines the motive and complements the *position* component strategizing the future plan considering the business strategy, real estate, human asset, and the organizational DNA. These elements are thoroughly examined in the following organizational input components *process*, *place*, *paradigm* and *people*, and support the *purpose* components. Prioritization of these four components is advised with a people-first approach. Finally, this leaves the remaining two output components of the framework: *performance* and *productivity*. *Performance* should be considered the first component by the SME to create a starting point of improvement. Further performance measurements should be used proactively; alignment is not a one-time thing. Lastly, *productivity*, measured in terms of output per employee, understanding how well the SME supports employees in both the physical and behavioral environment both in the conventional office and virtually as required for the use of a hybrid workplace strategy.

8.0 Recommendations

The research is a thesis research limited by time, the context and methods used. For this reason a recommendations for further research is formed.

The time constraint for the research required to limit the amount of case studies and interviews. An higher number of case studies would have increased the validity of the results. In addition, a holistic approach was used. An embedded multi context analysis will further increase the validity of the research by interviewing different people within the SMEs.

This research was conducted in the societal and economical context of the Netherlands. For future recommendations it would be interesting to consider SME organizations located outside of the Netherlands. Not only the country itself, but potentially broadening the type of organizations.

The methodology used consisted of a qualitative study of eleven case studies each studied through a holistic approach. It was decided to interview an larger amount of case studies as SME organizations remain understudied, and first a more broad insight is required before a deeper study can be defined on the topic. Often it is more interesting in a quantitative research to select fewer organizations but examine these organizations in more depths. However, the size limited the ease of interviewing multiple employees related to the real estate and that either the owner or HR employee that would be related to the organizations real estate and strategy. The research was executed from an organizational point of view. It would be interesting to consider an embedded multi case study, interviewing multiple employees, including the owner, HR/real estate manager and an employee working in the organization. This way a better insight can be given on how the organizational believes line up with that of the users. Further, a quantitative approach is necessary to analyze the validity of the research.

The theoretical understanding of aligning organizational assets and values is relatively new. In addition, research on the workplace in the ongoing experiences of the pandemic has taken much attention, yet research has only just begun. This research has no definite answers to the current challenges SMEs face, but more as an inspiration and shed light on topic which can be used as an initial starting point for further research. During the research, many changes were observed due to the high uncertainties of the workplace in the ongoing experience of the pandemic. Thus is it important for owners and real estate manager to keep up to date with new research.

The 8P or 10P framework of Haynes et al. (2017) was used as a basis to analyze the organizational components of Dutch SMEs. The workplace consists of many complexities, and the framework could be considered a great theoretical tool to help analyze an organization. The book of Haynes et al. (2017) is a very detailed guide bringing to light the different characteristics of an organization and its workplace. For this research it is difficult to determine how well the theoretical framework aligns with practical reality based on large organizations. However, with a focus on SME organizations, given the limitations of resource and most-likely the absence of a real estate professional, examining the SME was limited to the available information from the interviewee. For this reason the 8P model from Haynes (2008) was used and not the more recent and complex 10P model. Further, this resulted in a gap between the academic and professional practical world. It was part of the researchers responsibility to try and align the two worlds.

9.0 Reflection:

Topic reflection

The research was executed as a graduation thesis for the course Management in the Built Environment master track of the Master Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences at the TU Delft. Management in The Built Environment (formerly Real Estate housing track) engages with the managerial dimensions and process of the built environment and the construction industry (TU Delft. N.D.). In other words, looking at the relations between people and real estate. Students as part of their graduation theme are able to select one of three Urban Area Development, Design & Construction Management and Real Estate Management (REM). The latter formed the basis of this research. Real estate managing is the ongoing process of aligning the built environment and the needs of the users, and happens at all scales of the built environment, for all types of users, and for all real estate contexts (AR1MBE030, 2021). In 2022, the course was revised. The literature was adopted and updated to bring a different shape to the course. However, in the previous course, the 10P model formed the basis of the course REM. It was perceived that this would be a great tool and basis for the research I was interested in. The niche of trying to understand how SMEs evolve in the ongoing experience of the pandemic.

The graduation company CBRE saw interest in the investigation topic. CBRE produces themselves research on office occupiers. This is a mix of SME and larger corporates. However, little was yet known in the ongoing experiences for the workplace of SMEs. Therefore, the organization was very much interested in assisting to develop a growing understanding on the topic. Furthermore, it was very useful to have contact with professionals in the field for advice and keep up to date with developments in the market.

From a personal perspective, now more than ever is the relevance of REM momentous for the workplace. The last decade already showed a large shift in needs and preferences from office users. The increasing globalization, technological advancements and the effects of the pandemic continue to push the development of office requirements to meet the needs and preferences of the office user.

Professionally the theoretical topics such as real estate management could be considered sometimes lacking. Especially the more recent tools produced. I would hope to be able to take the experiences I have gained for this research forward in my professional career, and further continue to keep up with developing research and continue to apply this professionally.

Personal reflection

Process up to P2

The course AR3MBE100 was observed as a rapid deep dive into the desired research topic. Within a week or two the research direction had to be clear. For me this quite quickly took shape towards REM during the first few contact moments with the elected mentors for the graduation lab. A motivating topic and a lot of relevance with the current ongoing experiences with the pandemic. Something I myself could quickly connect to. Furthermore, I saw SME as an interesting niche for an interesting research. The niche continued being a something of interest during my theoretical research reviews. Although it is a fast moving environment, I was able to create my goals and objectives for the research.

During the build up towards P2, I recognized quickly the importance of creating a plan and committing to that plan. During your studies you are given deadlines throughout your courses. During

your thesis, you need to organize those deadlines yourself to ensure you maintain on schedule for the deadlines in the meantime. In the initial stages of the thesis process, personal deadlines were not considered as important as they should have been. Time flies! First lesson has been learned by the stage of P1/P2. Although I do believe this part to be the most difficult, as you are designing your research you will execute for the remainder of the academic year. Till now I been able to further develop my knowledge in the field of Real estate management, specifically CREM, alignment, workspace and hybrid working. I am excited to further gain knowledge on the topic during the explorative interviews and case studies. I would like to thank my mentors for helping me thus far develop my research topic. In addition, I look forward to the coming challenges I will come across during my thesis, I am sure there will be plenty. Lastly, I am enthusiastic for the latter part of my graduation process, which will conducting the research and doing my internship at CBRE.

Processes towards P4

Upon having completed the P2, the literature review and the methodology still required finalization, especially on the report itself. The P2 presentation showed a process ahead of what I manage to produce in the report itself. For P3 this was observed similarly. The process of acquiring interview case studies was initially a little difficult. The contact points were still a little unclear how to make the connection to the SMEs. Once contacts were established, making the arrangements of interviews went relatively smooth. All the interview went well. The first two interviews did show some adjustments were required to help ensure all required information could be gathered. For the first two, contact was made a second time to ask some additional questions. All participants showed an interest in the topic and asked if the results could be shared to help them create a better understanding of what competitors are doing. All interviews were conducted in a space disconnected for other people/employees, ensuring that the interviewee could speak freely. Knowing that the data would be anonymized helped to further encourage an open conversation. All interviewees were observed to be very polite.

Designing the way the results had to be presented was a difficult process. In addition, the manner in which I had to decode the interviews. Over 13 interviews of data was an overwhelming amount of information. To ensure the correct themes were observed was a difficult process. Further the 8P model used of Haynes could be observed as a broad framework including many overlapping elements. Defining which information was relevant for which component was a very lengthy process. During one of the mentor sessions at the early stages of processing the data I was asked if I had found some interesting findings. My mentors just alone from my facial expression observed I was challenged with the amount of information. Eventually the conversation did lead to some interesting themes that could be developed upon.

I was very lucky to be able to execute my thesis at a real estate company such as CBRE. My working days usually took place at their headquarters in Amsterdam. When working on my thesis, I was free to use any of their office location, including the office in the Hague located within a 12 minute bike ride from my personal residence. Further, I observe that I was lucky to be able to write my thesis during the ongoing experience of the pandemic and not during the pandemic lockdown. Being able to have spontaneous interactions at work or at the university entailed many small topics which I could further develop upon in my research.

Towards P5

Upon completing P4, the report and feedback from the entire mentor team will form a strong basis working towards the final P5 graduation presentation. The weeks building up to P5 will focus on adopting the feedback and creating a research that will be both academically readable but also on a societal level. Furthermore, the report still has some loose ends that require finishing. Lastly, the report could be written more compact and improve the readability.

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Appendix A – Case study interviews full summary

Company A

The interview with company A was conducted with the associates. As the company is a small organization of 15 people, 3 people in the organization of the same position take on the HR tasks for the organization. Together with the founder, they are responsible for the wellbeing of its employees and real estate management. Company can be classed as a classic business service, which are to be known to have autocratic/democratic leadership style. Pre-covid company A did not make use of remote or hybrid working. It is the event of the pandemic that introduced remote working to the organization and influenced the leader of organization to continue making use of the benefits a hybrid strategy would bring the organization. In addition, the industry is known for working long hours when deadlines are near, remote working has allowed task to be completed at home. The following 8P's are used to develop on how the organization A is making use of hybrid working.

Position

Company A is an organization founded in 2015. A matured organization that is slowly growing. Currently the organization has 15 employees and are increasing by 1 or 2 people a year. The company has no intention of become an organization of 50-100 employees. "We explicitly don't want to become a large organization; we maintain a mysterious lowkey image. We gain network through word of mouth" (Personal communication, 28 September 2022). Internally Company A has a clearly defined stage of business cycle. A stable organization in terms of growth. Employees are well connected physically and virtually. Besides email and Microsoft teams, company A uses WhatsApp on multiple levels socially as well as professionally. Externally company a must seek it complete advantage. As mentioned in the introduction, company A because of the pandemic, identified and reacted to major trend changes in the business market. This being that IT development increased the ease of virtual communication. "We don't travel across the country for a meeting of 30 minutes, we now make use of a virtual meeting" (Personal communication, 28 September 2022).

Purpose

The strategy, culture and human asset are well defined in the organization. A boutique office in Amsterdam, a defined traditional presentation and sense of belong for its employees. The hierarchy is clearly defined autocratically, however, given the small organization very close in communication. The distance is not far between those starting in the organization and those higher up. Seniors have their own office with a glass wall that reflects transparency. All other employees have a fixed desk in a shared room. Further amenities include a kitchen and conference/meeting room. The office is however limited for further expansion. On the long-term, a strategy still needs to be defined for expansion. The building does allow for temporary hire of larger conference rooms when required.

Paradigm

Company A makes use of a hybrid strategy. There is no specific policy in place. The organizations does however stimulates its employees to spend most hours in office. This is especially important for those newer to the organization. "The line between employees is shorter, it is more efficient for learning and questioning" (Personal communication, 28 September 2022). Furthermore, as mentioned in Purpose, Company A maintains a mysterious lowkey image. They market on word of mouth. This is also reflected in their website, with a company logo and an image of their office portraying an exclusive design with very little detail. "We are a boutique, a fireplace banker, old school sit by the fireplace and discuss what needs to be done. We execute what needs to be done" (Personal communication, 28 September 2022). Company A has a dress code required when presenting to

clients, virtually or in person. These items all add to the culture within the organization. The image the employees belong to. The organization has a centralized hierarchy. Although, due to the size of the organization, socially the organization can be considered more flat.

Processes

From a work execution perspective all work that would be done in the office could also be done from a remote location. The organization trusts that its workplace can decide individually whether the process requires them to work from home or at the office. The organization prefers and expects their employees to come to the office when possible. If a task requires solo concentration, the home office can be used. The desired flexibility such as needing to receive a package or other practical matters to work from home is given to the employees.

Little change was made or believed necessary in regards to layout of the office for company A. See **Error! Reference source not found.** for the layout of company A. All “cubicles” are equipped with two screens and plug and play laptop connection. A small recreational couch area, a kitchen, a meeting/conference room and two Senior office units with transparent glass wall. The conference room is equipped with videoconference facilities to allow for multiple people in the room to be able to speak. The users are limited to sharing one meeting room when required to make virtual calls or at their own work desk.

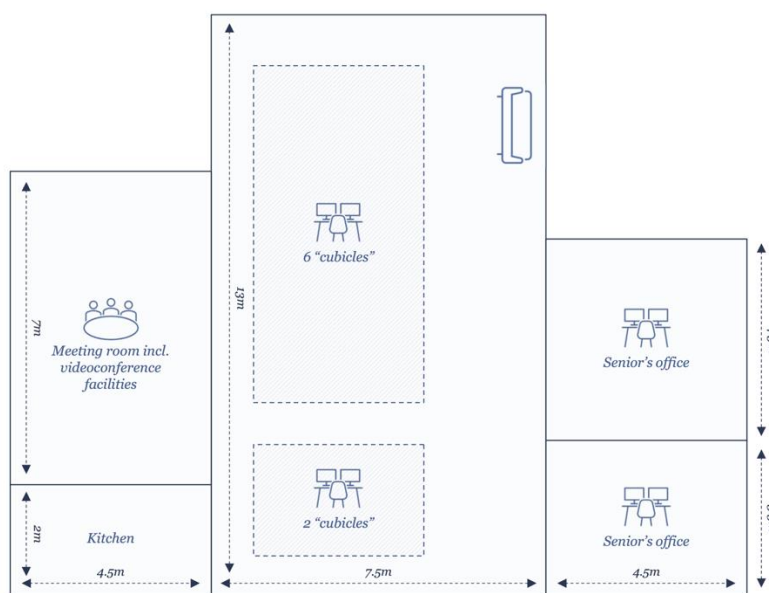


Figure 22 Office layout Company A

Place

The office is located in Amsterdam. This is strategically done by image of the organization and its location to clients. Company A does limit their recruitment radius within the region of Amsterdam. It is specifically asked of those they seek to recruit.

People

The recruitment is very selective. Company A looks for similar profile that understand the culture for the type organization and business sector. The organization does have different generations of workforce, however, given the democratic leadership style employees have to respect the hierarchy. All employees fall within the generation X and Y. Both desire a balance work and family life. It is

clearly understood that there is a need for more flexibility, and notice the benefits it has for the organization and its workforce. Working from home 1 or potentially 2 days a week is possible but now more.

All employees have been given a fully supported workstation at home to ensure employees can be as productive at home as in the office. The organization is small enough to easily express any issues with home situations to be able to act on the issue.

Performance

The organization does not use any form of propositioning let it have been before any adjustments implementing the hybrid workplace or re-evaluating annually. Neither does the organization official use an employee satisfaction survey. If there is an issue, it is very easy to communicate it to the senior managers.

Productivity

Creating a satisfactory workplace for employees goes a long way. Company A provides a high standard workplace both at the office and remotely at home. This goes a long way in terms of well-being and satisfaction. The office is still using it traditional layout. Fixed workplace stations, separate senior office. With the transition of the hybrid office, little adjustments or renovations have been made to include calling booths, concentration workstations or considerations in regards to concentration vs communication & Interaction vs distraction.

Company B

Company B is a tech consultant based in Amsterdam founded in 2016. The interview was conducted an employee part of the culture team. Culture for this company is responsible to create an attractive working environment, attract higher developing and keep phenomenal people. In addition, culture team is responsible for recruitment, onboarding of new employees. Further, ensure correct salaries are paid to employees. Company B is an organization of around 30 employees.

Position

Company B is in transition from a startup image to a more matured company. Company B has recently downsized and reshaped its image. Previously, a classed startup located on a startup campus, employing many students. Now the organization is trying to make use of the advantages students provide but give off the image of a matured organization. “Highly educated students that often know better and are not afraid to express that information. But we don’t want to profile ourself as a student organization” (Personal communication, 5 October 2022). The organization made of hybrid working pre-covid and had already identified the benefits it could bring to the organization. The organization is very free and flexible in the use of hybrid working. Company B has focused a lot of attention to the layout of the office and to motivate its people to work in the office. It is not the idea that employees work remote the whole week. Further, the organization supports communication physically and virtually.

Purpose

Company B is fairly advanced in regards to creating and understanding of major trends within the market. A culture team to help push the organization to a competitive advantage in regards to flexibility, IT technology, office workplace layout. The culture has a focus on both its culture, strategy and human asset. Physical environment is well balanced between communication vs concentration. Employees can chose between the two. It also stimulates the behavioral environment both physically in the office layout and virtually through different communicational matters.

Paradigm

The workforce of company B is diverse. The average age within the organization is very young. This is due to close link they keep with the university in Amsterdam. It is a international team with different cultural backgrounds. The organization makes use of personality tests to create an understanding of the employees’ characteristics. Furthermore, the organization has a mix of full-time and part-time employees. The combination asks for flexibility. The office ensures a well-connected environment. An identity of belonging for its employees. The organization does not track the work employees do remotely, it’s based-on trust and output. Deadlines need to be met.

Currently the organization is trying to stimulate as much as possible through their office facilities to get its employees to come into the office. Company does not intend to ever become fully remote. The type of work requires employees to work together, virtually it can be done, but physically this is much more efficient. The organization has no rules, everything is about freedom, trust and responsibility. What organization expects in return from it employees is passions, pleasure and achievement.

Processes

The office is divided between a flexible office section and an office playground (See Figure 20 below). This is a great combination of concentration & communication and boost of spontaneous interaction. A well-defined allocation for different processes for in the office. “We have a focus work area and a creative chill area. An area for creative thinking and idea development. This is also the area

for lunch.” (Personal communication, 10 May 2022). For a hybrid call, the office provides two calling booths. If those are full, any location within the communication area is available to use for an online meeting. Further company B has the option to rent rooms on an hourly basis if extra meeting rooms are required. Company B makes use of these rooms when hosting clients.

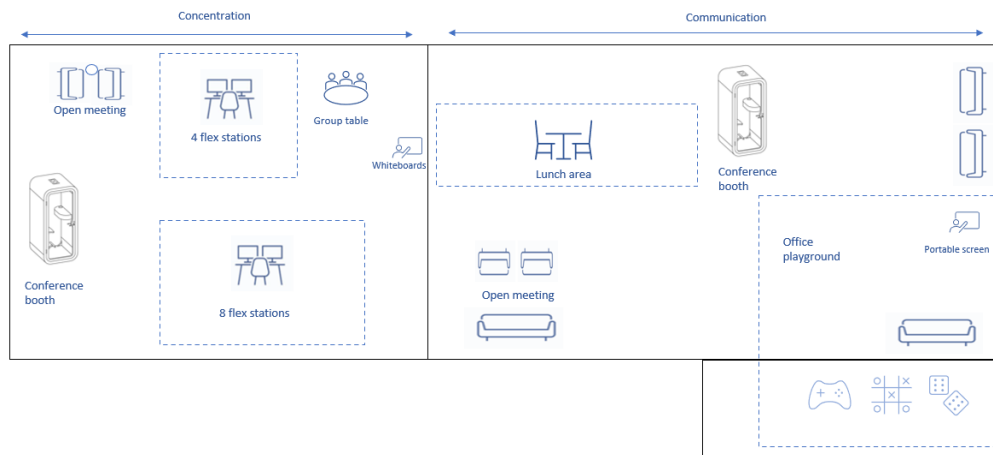


Figure 23 Office layout (visual estimation) Company B

For hybrid collaborations, Miro is used to develop ideas. Furthermore, Slack is used for both professional and social communication. Almost all digital communication is done through Slack in different subgroup and different topics.

Place

Company is located in Amsterdam close to the university. Located in a brand-new office that translates the culture and values to its clients. Many developers reside in the Amsterdam and the proximity to the university locates the company close to its talent pool.

A hybrid strategy has allowed for a larger recruitment radius; however, we do see a difference in part-time and fulltime employment. We do expect people to come to the office. This is a little more difficult for those that live in Maastricht or Groningen.

People

Company B focused their investment in the office and less remotely at home. All employees have their own laptop and at the office they can easily plug and play on the available flex work desks. We have in certain situations provided office desk and chairs, however, this is not standard for all. If employees really financially the organization is always open for options.

Performance

Company B does use performance measurements when it comes to the office. If it is recognized that two phonebooths is inefficient, we can add additional units. A small office which makes it easy to communicate and recognize these issues. Company B does make use of job satisfaction surveys every 6 months, this does include questions related to concentration at the office. They try to use this to continue to better the organization

Productivity

Company B workplace stimulates communication, concentration and spontaneous interaction. It offers great flexibility for employees to work remote. They do not define an amount but do try to

motivate for more office use. In the remote setup, the remote work station is not provided by the organization. They invested in a very detailed physical office to attract their employees to come to the office. This could have effect on the productivity for the days that employees do work remote.

Company C

Company C a Dutch smart industry engineering consultancy. The organization was founded in 2018 by 3 individuals. The meeting was conducted with one of the founders. The interviewee was also responsible for the office accommodation and hybrid strategy of the organization. The organization currently consists of 40 employees and is continuing to grow. Company C in its operative nature is very hybrid. Most of the employees work 3 days at the client on-site and remaining either at the office of company C or remote at home.

Position

The organization is still young. In the past 3 – 4 years the organization has grown to 40 employees, and is continuing to do so. It is clear it is a growing organization. Although the organization is young, it is an organization with clear goals and objectives, well defined strategy and a good understanding of its business environment and its business cycle. The organization currently makes use of two office locations in Amsterdam and Arnhem. For the future, the organization wants to open an office in Rotterdam, Hengelo and Eindhoven. The workforce is supported both virtually and physically. Given that the employees work at the clients at least 3 days of the week, a strong sense of community/belong is challenging. Company outings, company branding and active communication ensures the employee do feel an apart of company C.

Purpose

All aspects of purpose components are covered by company C. The strategic values, real estate management and the human asset. The mission and vision are clearly defined and have a strong understanding of major trends, strive to meet needs of the market to fulfil client's proposition and the organization seeks a have a competitive advantage. The human asset is clearly priority. Talent acquisition is what sets the company apart. Attracting and maintaining talent is thus very important. Since the pandemic, the organization understood the talent market desires flexibility. Asking a 5 day a week at the office limits the talent pool. Furthermore, the organization provides a lot of training tools and access to exhibitions for developing its human asset. They do this to an extent, working for their competitors, the employees would miss out on many opportunities.

Paradigm

Company C is a flat organization. The organization tries to ensure everyone is easily approachable. That an employee feels equal to his/her manager. Even if the organization continues to grow, the idea is to keep the organization as flat at possible.

The organization is selective on the people it hires, an application selection process given that the organization is a technical engineering consultancy focused on Smart industry, the organization seeks those "cut from the same wood". These are usually highly educated individuals coming from HBO or WO technical institutes. A technician is often less social; however, they should be able to introduce themselves, pitch an idea etc. The talent they seek are technical enthusiasts. Not just work related but often those who seek a technical hobby as well. Company C uses a model to examen those applying to work at company C but also use this model to further develop their employees on the different components of this model. The organization wants to be a Dutch organization at heart. The people

that work at Company C mostly are from the Netherlands and reside in the Netherlands. The organization did not want to remotely outsource programmers to get the job done.

Besides, being cut from the same wood, a sense of belonging is important for the organization. Given that most contact hours are with clients, the organization organized fun gatherings such as industry lab days. A way to connect knowledge of all experience employees have at different locations and look at problems together. It's a culture of knowledge sharing, enthusiasm and entrepreneurship. Something that organization is very proud of.

Lastly the organization has created a brand identity, this comes back virtually and physically. All employees get a starter pack of Company C gadgets, a laptop and a company car. On everything, the logo and colors are represented.

Processes

The organization currently communicates through Google tools and WhatsApp. The organization is setting up a CRM system to manage more aspects of the organization virtually. This includes team communication, collaboration, client data, integration with social media and planning.

The office is full-time used by management, recruitment and administration. Part-time by the field employees, as they use facilities of the client. Training takes place at the office or organizational gatherings. A large aspect is thus virtually arranged. If desired, an employee can always work at the office when not at the client.

Place

Company C is a little different than most organization from the study. Most employees are in the field at the client 32 hour or more per week. The office is used solely for training and team gatherings. The office is equipped to host 5 – 10 people. For the company this is enough on a day to day basis. For training purposes and or organizational gatherings the company can book additional space to host up to 30 – 50 people. The organization would never work all together in one location.

Company C makes use of a flexible office concept for both their office in Amsterdam and Arnhem. These offices are mainly used by management, recruitment and administration. Once every month or two the organization hosts industry lab day. This to share knowledge and arrange a fun activity for the organization. For these occasions the office can rent additional space for a day to host a larger group.

The organization is expanding, they are looking to open an office in Rotterdam, Hengelo and Eindhoven. These are tactically located close to technical institutes good for talent acquisition and extends the reach to clients. A location such as Eindhoven would be beneficial as some of the major technical smart industry companies are located here. Such as TomTom, Philips etc.

Lastly, due to a hybrid strategy the organization does see that the acquisition radius and client reach is extended. Driving a longer distance 3 days a week is much more sustainable than every day.

People

Company C does see the desired need for flexibility from the employees. For attracting and maintaining talent allowing the flexibility for remote working is needed. This could be 2 days or the week. For the organization however, 4 or 5 days a week is a no go. Largely as their employees work in the field, this requires contact time.

Given the little contact hours the employees make at the office of Company C, it is challenging to ensure all areas of the 'People' component are covered. "All field employees have a field manager. Continues contact, listening and looking at the personal perspective. How is the person doing, how are

they running things, any challenges, how is the energy? Are there out of the ordinary particularities that play in someone's life. Once these items are covered we look at the content of the project. If there is room, we always try to look for personal development." In addition, safety, how is the client taking care of you. The organization looks from different perspective how people are doing.

The organization has also made a budget available for employees to create a work station at home. Chair, desk, screen what ever employee may require can be requested.

Performance

Performance measurements are focused on the users. The organization looks at output and its quality. If these are not up to standard we look at how employees can develop themselves to ensure they are delivering up to standard. The office, locations are small. It is easy to create an understanding if more space is required. The flexible office concept allows for growth.

Productivity

Company C stimulates communication and spontaneous interaction virtually. Once every 1 or 2 months a more detailed contact moment between field employees to share knowledge. Employee development is a strong area for Company C. A lot of training that develop on the model the organization has created. Furthermore, a mission is to ensure the on-field employees build experience over multiple projects and progress in their career. By this the employer hopes to boost productivity.

Company D

Company D is a private equity firm in Amsterdam. The organization was founded in 2012. Company D is a smaller sized organization of 9 employees. The interview was conducted with one of associates whom shares the responsible for the office and people well-being. The office is classed a classic business services.

Position

The organization is small and consists of 9 employees. The organization invest in Dutch SME organizations. They collaborate and improve the organizations which is then sold again a few years later. The nature of this work forces to Company D to have a good understanding of the market and tools required to create a competitive advantage. This translates back to how the organization knows to run its own venture. In addition, the organization works with advisors and external parties. The past 1.5 years the organization doubled in size, however, they believe the organization will not continue to exponentially grow. As investing continues to grow, so will the work. In this manner the organization will calmly grow. Given the age and growth, the organization has matured.

Company C made use of a hybrid strategy before the pandemic, the fact the organization works with portfolio companies required to be flexible in where employees could work, but was limited to an office. The pandemic has pushed the organization to allow more remote working days. In the past, employees made use of remote working as often employees worked after dinner as well. This could have to do with family situation etc.

The organization hybrid working was not new for the organization. Recent years did show a significant development in telecommunication which have been updated in the office. Further, the organization has different spaces within the office that support hybrid working.

Purpose

As explained in the Position component, the purpose can be considered well defined due to the nature of work done by Company D. Strategy, mission and vision, goals and objectives are defined. The organization is small and adaptive. The office allows for concentration and collaboration. They recognize that those new to the organization it is important to be at the office as much as possible shortening the line between younger and older employees within the organization for tacit learning purposes.

Paradigm

Company D is carefully growing over the years. The employees are of similar backgrounds, “It’s a kind of old boys network, all personnel come from similar background and similar style of study days.” (Personal communication, 13 October 2022). Thus, the organization tries to ensure there is a social belonging.

The company has a triangular organizational hierarchy. Two partners at the top of the pyramid, investment director below, investment managers, analyst etc. The organization has a clear democratic structure known by its employees. Yet due to the size of the organization, content related there is an obvious difference but communicative reach professionally it feels like a flat organization. It is not accepted to start shouting out oversimplified statements. The questions are required to be substantive and anything you argue you can require to be able to backup. Then everyone in the organization is accessible at any time.

The hierarchy is translated back into the office layout. The partners have their office. The remaining employees have a fixed desk in a large room. The office is split with glass walls. It is all very transparent.

As a sense of belonging, brand identity is applied in the office, the logo is represented in the office itself and on equipment/tools. Virtually, the organization has a corporate presentation defining who they are, how they work and their track record. This is for the introduction to the client. Further, The organization has its Friday afternoon drinks, two times a year a team outing with activities. Further with the portfolio organizations every year a outing.

Processes

As defined in *position* and *purpose*, company C works a lot with Dutch SME within their portfolio. For this reason, part of the process takes part at the client, in the office or virtually. For collaborative work, it is preferred to work in the office. When requires to set a meeting for 8 people and to create a understanding their progress, it is much easier for the organization to make use of a virtual meeting for which after everyone can go back to work. This is usually with portfolio companies and not internally in the organization. For individual concentration work that requires an undisturbed environment, remote working is ideal. The office is still an open environment which could make it difficult to work without being disturbed now and then. The office is limited in the available calling booths/meeting rooms. Thus, if all employees are at the office, it can get very busy. Furthermore, the office has a larger meeting room equipped with a videoconferencing setup to host 8 people to be part of that meeting or call. There is no large difference between before and after the pandemic in terms of change to the office, technology did require an update. Before Teams, the office made use of the tradition conference call dial in setups.

The develop on the above, Teams is the professional communication tool within the organization. This is really used for the substantive things. In addition, there is a whatsapp group with the whole organization for quick small question within the organization and a social chat with the younger employees in the organization. For collaborative work, no matter physically or virtually, Company D makes use of RT. This tools allow for easy collaboration in a sort spreadsheet environment. Especially in a hybrid setup this is efficient. Before this meant a lot of different document version and unnecessary extra integrations when collaborating on documents at the same time.

Company D pushes it employees to work from the office. A lot is missed if employees do not work from the office. "It is very inefficient if for every small question or issue it is required to plan a team meeting." (Personal communication, 13 October 2022). In addition, spontaneous communication would be missed: "It could be someone is discussion a topic that happens to be something you can relate to and could quickly connect on the topic and give your feedback." (Personal communication, 13 October 2022). Further, many situations require team collaboration.

Place

Company D has one office located in the Amsterdam. Amsterdam and Zuidas are key locations for Company D. Many of the advisors they collaborate with are located here. Further the location is easily accessible by car. Company D works together with many clients from all over the Netherlands, having to in addition travel to the center of the city is just less efficient. Further, the surrounding is fairly calm, it is easy to park. A discreet location.

For the organization, the distance from the main office has not necessary extended the recruitment radius. Most employees live in Amsterdam. The partners in neighboring residential cities but not far from Amsterdam.

People

Company D provides all its employees a screen for at home, however there is no budget made available for the remaining necessities such as desk, chair to create a complete working station at home.

Performance

Measuring the real estate is of an intangible form, it not difficult for to see how the office is supporting. We can see that the office is at its maximum capacity. This is not the intention for the organization, but all desks are used. As soon as the organization would like to expand further, they need to come up with a solution. A potential is to make use of flexible working desks and more remote working. However, it is not the preferred option. The organization wants a fixed desk for all employees.

Productivity

Company D stimulates communication, and spontaneous interaction both physically and virtually. When the office becomes busy, which is often, concentration becomes a little difficult. “I notice on days it is busy, it is just more difficult to concentrate” (Personal communication, 13 October 2022). The organization make use of multiple ways to connect their employees virtually in the hybrid strategy and ensure the office stimulates to the productivity of the organization. Further to stimulate communication, the organization has lunch daily together for those at the office.

Company E

Company E is a 3D visual engineering organization. The organization can be classed as one of the modern business services. Company E was founded in 2006 as a student startup. The organization has a total of 13 divided between two divisions, sales and production. The interview was conducted with one the owners of the organization. Part of his responsibility is XKP's creative responsibility and HR tasks.

Position

Company E is a growing organization. Till now the owners of the organization managed to take care of the HR tasks. They are aware that with a growing organization, it has become more challenging: "We are growing, but we are slowly reaching the limit and the way we are managing the organization. The organization is scaling and for sure there will be a change required to continue operating the organization in the coming years." (Personal communication, 21 October 2022). Currently, agreements and tasks are communicated verbally. In a small organization this worked, the more we grow the larger the challenge of keeping track. Specially for someone new joining the organization, to understand their system takes time. It is inefficient. The pandemic has increased those problems even further. Change is required. Company E thus recently hired someone to start creating a new system for the organization.

Company E did not use hybrid working before the pandemic. They had to become creative to be able to work remotely due to the IT systems required for 3D modelling. For this reason, the organization can continue to work in a hybrid manner, however, it is not yet ideal. The desk is unavailable at the office if the employee works remotely due to a citrix login system which allows you to remotely access the computer.

Company E owns their office. It was purchased on the basis the organization could still grow. Physically the office is created to have location for concentration, communication and collaboration. Virtually Company E has Slack and Miro for professional communication. Socially the organization has yet to find ways, till now management has been too busy to focus on these elements.

Purpose

Company E can be classed as a growing organization and are aware of the position they are in. A strategy has been implemented for the organization the coming years to support its growth. The real estate is part of this growth. Company E owns its real estate with in mind enough space for at least the coming years to continue to grow. As mentioned in the *position* component company E has started to outgrow its operating system. For this the organization has recruited someone.

Currently company E does not have any policies in place for its hybrid strategy. They understand the desire of flexibility. Some employees prefer to work remotely than others. This is usually related to the distance one has to travel. To get away from a system that the organization needs to keep track, The organization intends to implement a policy that employees based on a 40 hour working week employees can make use of one remote working day. This is a fixed day to help coordination and planning with others.

Company E has invested a lot in creating a good workplace for its employees. All facilities are there to create a good workplace that supports communication, concentration and spontaneous interaction. The organization does find it challenging to host the same in the remote workplace. "For a small company it is difficult to financially cover and a expensive work station at the office and an additional well designed workstation at home" (Personal communication, 21 October 2022). However, they do

try to support their employees in how they could establish a better working station. Employees are asked to share an image of their home office to ensure their well-being.

Paradigm

Company E is a smaller organization. The leadership comes from the co-owners. A democratic leadership style. The co-owners do however try to coordinate with their employees to run the organization. The organization makes use of a management team, this includes an individual from all departments within the organization to communicate how each department is progressing and where they need assistance. The above has been translated into the office layout. The co-founders have their own office. The remainder of the organization are position on the work floor split between the two departments.

Company E is selective its recruitment process. The characteristics/type of person is important for the organization. Not just talent. Given that it is a small organization, if there is a mismatch between team member it quickly effects the atmosphere within that team. Further, by creating a standard, and organization that collaborates well and presents itself well to the clients, it more likely the client will be happy collaborating with company E. The workforce of company E is a good mix in age. On average most are young, a few who just had their first born and the co-owners as the eldest within the organization. Most important is that employees enjoy the work which connects the team and that people match. Socially the organization has activities to help develop a connected team. At the office all employees have lunch together. Furthermore, they have weekly drinks with the team to create one organization.

Brand identity is something company E is working on. Virtually the organization has a strong image and track record. One of the strategies to bring stronger belonging to the organization is using the real estate. Company E plans to write the core values of the organization on the walls of the office and company logo.

Processes

The physical office layout is designed to help communication, collaboration and concentration. The sales team and development team are split, one due to the nature of work creates noise, the other is much more focus concentrating work. In these locations are still to noise for an employee, there are available spaces for concentration work and meeting rooms for more collaborative work or virtual meetings. Working with 3 on a hybrid call each individually in the office does create problems at the office. There are not enough call rooms to facilitate this, currently they have 4 available. There is one meeting room with a screen and camera to support these meetings. Although the availability is limited. Lastly, due to the fixed desktops, the organization has available tablets at the office for video conferencing purposes.

Company E did not use hybrid working before the pandemic. The pandemic introduced ways of being able to work remotely that the organization did not thing was doable. 3D visual modelling requires heavy duty graphical power, the organization has desktops and fixed desks for the developers. During pandemic lockdown a citrix system was installed to log into these systems remotely. This way the organization could continue developing 3D models from a laptop station using the heavy duty machines located at the office. Currently, this system has not changed meaning that the desk at the office becomes unavailable at the office whether the employee works remotely or physically in the office due to a citrix login system which allows you to remotely access the computer. In the future, a server system could solve this issue, for now that would be a financial large step.

For the sales department, the nature of its work has changed a lot the last few years. “We no longer do sales visits like the old-fashioned salesman, having a coffee everywhere. This has completely become

virtual” (Personal communication, 21 October 2022). The office hosts the modern form of sales. This is virtual.

Socially the office has made a corner for relaxation, a football table. A place employees can take a break, or where the organization can host drinks on Fridays afternoon.

Place

The office of company E is located in Rotterdam. They own their real estate. This is an office of 450m². Enough space for the organization to grow in the coming years. The office is well accessible by public transport. The location was interesting for company E to set up its organization in Rotterdam, as Rotterdam was incentivizing SME's to locate themselves in their city by paying part of the investment costs. Furthermore, Rotterdam and surrounding is a great location for acquiring talent due to the educational institutes. The radius has extended for the talent pool from which they hire. Although they do cap travel time of 1 hour.

People

The pandemic created many changes for the organization. The co-owners and management team had to find way to operate remotely, and eventually hybrid. Given that the organization made use of heavy duty desktops created a challenge to do this remotely. The organization managed to find a solution. Well-being was important in the sense of the work station remote. Financially it is a trouble to support, however, the organization does feel responsible and is trying to find ways to assist employees to ensure a good working station.

During the pandemic the organization had trouble connecting employees socially. Company E make use of professional tools such as slack and Miro to communicate. Socially they don't use the tools to share topics of interest for example. Further they do keep attention on wellbeing of their employees, to ensure that employees outside of work have activities that provide enough social contact. “During remote working, well-being is an important theme, people make a lot of social contact at the office, if you take this aspect away, people can worsen and worsen by first spending the day behind a screen for work and continuing to spend their evening behind a screen. People get more worse and worse” (Personal communication, 21 October 2022).

Company E does not provide their employees a remote working stations. The organization invested heavily in their office facility and cannot bear the financial burden of a second workplace for people at home. They do ask employees to take a picture of their home working station, to ensure they have a good workplace remotely. According to the interviewee this revealed that some employee did not at all have an appropriate workplace remotely. They try to consult with those employees and see how they can assist.

Performance

For the co-owners to maintain and understand the performance of the organization, they have a management team that comes together to discuss all topics around each department. Given the size of the organization verbal communication is believed to be enough. In the future if they do continue to grow, surveys will probably be used. This could relate to the real estate and ways to develop.

Further, the organization does find it challenging to keep track of working hours. Previously employees were asked to be at the office 8 hours a day. In return you have a salary. Remote this is more difficult to track. The organization is still looking for ways.

Productivity

Company E stimulates communication, concentration and spontaneous interaction physically. Virtually there are communicative tools available professionally, but keeping the employees connected socially in a hybrid environment is still challenging. The office environment is well developed to ensure productivity. Ways to do this remotely for the organization has been difficult.

Company F

Company F is an online retail with advisory. The organization was founded in 1994. An organization that can be classed as a matured and stable organization in the market. In total the organization has 50 employees. The interview was conducted with the HR manager also responsible for the office management. The interviewee had recently joined the organization, before the HR responsibilities were shared by employees at the organization.

Position

Although company F is a matured organization that has been around since 1994, the organization is continuing to grow. In the last year for an organization of now 50 employees 6 vacancies had been filled. To keep a competitive advantage, the organization made changes the last couple year. The organization has a new brand identity which they recently introduced, still day by day they the image, persona/belonging is increasing due to the changes. "All employees are really proud of the new brand identity." (Personal communication, 13 October 2022).

The organization recently made a large investment in their office and brand identity. A strong step forward to keep up with the complex market dynamics and emerging technologies. The physical adjustments required for a hybrid workplace were minimal. The hierarchy is reflected in the layout, directors have their own office, the rest on a open office floor with fixed stations. To support to remote work station, company F provides a fully equipped workstation at home. All employees received a work laptop instead of desktops to give more flexibility. Given the above, the hybrid strategy is supporting communication, collaboration & concentration. Mostly professionally and not socially.

Purpose

As mentioned in *position* the company F has recently gone through an organizational transition. Redefining its brand identity, mission and vision, strategies. The future is clear in terms of objectives and goals. The real estate has been adopted and further investing in the human asset. The pandemic however did change the desires of employees. The introduction of a hybrid working strategy was implemented as an after effect of the pandemic. The organization has recently moved to a new office, since the use of hybrid working, the layout has had little change. The large meeting room has been equipped with a videoconferencing camera and screen. The other meeting rooms have a screen for presentations but not video conferencing setup. In the home environment employees received a fully supported workstation to a satisfactory workplace which in turn invests towards higher organizational productivity.

Paradigm

The *position* and *purpose* component both have indicated that company F has recent been through an organization change. The organization has redeveloped its brand identity. It is something the employees and directors are proud of and by doing so are creating a stronger belonging to the organization. To further stimulate a belonging, the organizations provides each department a budget for team activities/dinners. In addition, as a whole organization, Christmas event and 'Sinterklaas'. On a more daily basis, the organization has its own canteen where employees can have lunch together. Every Friday the company F hosts a afternoon drinks to finish the working week.

The organization has an understanding of its organizational personality, the persona perceived by the interviewee within the is more professional "People here are quite serious." (Personal communication, 13 October 2022). The organization does not use any virtual communication tools to connect its employees socially. All tools are focused for professional use.

The hierarchy for Company F is perceived as a flat organization. “Only on paper do we really have a difference in hierarchy, otherwise it is perceived as a flat organization” (Personal communication, 13 October 2022).

The organization moved towards a hybrid strategy due to the preference from its employees. From the interviewee perceived that majority of the employees do work most of the time at the office. However, those that did want to work remote could do so 2 days of the week. Difficulties perceived due to team/employee connectivity are limited because of the policy the organization uses and that majority work most of their days at the office.

Processes

The office layout reflects the organization *paradigm*. The general characteristics/understanding and hierarchy of the organization can be recognized in the layout. The directors have their own office, the sales team are located in a large room and the remaining part of the organization in an open office space. The sales personnel spend a lot of time on the phone communicating with (potential) clients. This is a noise process and require their own noise barricaded space. The remaining teams are allocated on the main office work floor. “If I would have take this call at my desks, my colleagues would have not appreciated it.” (Personal communication, 13 October 2022). The work floor is a location for communication but also important for concentration. Lengthy hybrid calls are preferred not on the work floor.

Further is there no specific limitation to the type of work that limits the location an employee wants to work from. According to the interviewee, team meetings are preferred in person. When a employee has to really find a solo work location for concentration, often the home work place is used. This creates a distance that makes someone a little less reachable for quick queries.

Place

The office is strategically located for logistical reasons. This is where the organization originated and grew to a strong logistics hub for not only Company F but also other larger organizations. A lot of the employees live close to the office. Currently the organization is still growing. However, the real estate will slowly reach it limit of growth in terms of available spots and the manner in which they strategically use the office. Company F does however have no intention to use a hybrid strategy to decrease the flex factor per work place. Long-term no strategy has yet been made for their real estate.

People

The age difference at company F is quite diverse. Given the size of the organization, this has not been a major issue on how the organization operates and communicates. The hybrid policy also limits an easy that are created due to remote working because of the limiting days.

The remote workplace is equipped with all facilities to create a fully functional workstation. This includes a screen, desk, chair and desk required amenities.

Performance

To ensure employees are working their hours at the office, company F makes use of a registration system for when you start your day. Employees are expected to make their 8 hour day so to speak. This stimulates employees in the hybrid strategy to ensure they stick to their working hours. This stimulates no more or less hours to be working. This is a way for the organization to measure the working hours employees make. Further the organization does not measure performance for its real estate. The organization is small, and does recognize it cannot grow to much. A different hybrid strategy where flexible desk stations are to be used instead of fixed desks is not desired however.

Productivity

Company F has recently hired a HR manager to help strengthen alignment of systems in the organization. Not necessarily due to change of the hybrid strategy, but more related to reorganization and change of brand identity. Further, in general to take over all HR task and proper facility management required for the organization. Management is thus improving, to ensure a good understanding of the need of the employees within an organization is important. Till now the HR tasks were shared and not thoroughly implemented. This can result to improve/maintain productivity for its employees.

Company G

Interview with company G was conducted with the Operations director. For this organization, the operations director is responsible for the running of the organization and work satisfaction of their employees. Hybrid working strategy is part of the operation director's responsibility. Company G is a strategic design consultancy in Amsterdam. The organization consists of 54 employees in total and was founded in 2009.

Position

Company G has grown of the last years. Since the 2018 taking on a brand new office building, the organization grew from 25 to 44 employees. Currently, the office does not have a clear idea of what the future holds in terms of growth. Currently they are stable and matured. Company G understands its small size and is adaptive in pushing the organization forward. The organization has made a transition to hybrid strategy since the pandemic. "We do lots of workshops, customer interviews, research and co-creative design sessions and idea creation sessions. Before we believed this was only possible face-to-face. The pandemic presented & created ways to do this online. We now use Miro a lot in combination of face-to-face at the right moment." (Personal communication, 11 October 2022). Furthermore, company G makes use of creative way to keep the organization connected physically and virtually. Physically the office is created to have location for concentration, communication and collaboration. Different spaces that connect well. Virtually Company G connects through a social platform Slack. Furthermore, the organizations has many team trips and weekly afterhours drinks.

Purpose

Company G has well-defined its strategy and mission & vision. The operations team is there to also push on all fronts for the organization to gain a competitive advantage. Company G themselves believe the world is made better by design. From a starting point, this is already evident in their office. A design minded organization feels more relevant and enjoy their work more.

In the hybrid strategy the organization asks those working 5 days a week to limit their home working days to 2 days a week, however, it is not defined as a rule. Employees are given the responsibility. The organization provides a well-designed workplace that stimulates employees to make use of the office. "We are a People first organization, It make people a lot happier not having to go back 100% to the office." (Personal communication, 11 October 2022). The hybrid strategy is a desire by the employee, but also a benefit for the organization. Not only does it increase satisfaction, but the organization can also hold webinars and more online interactive workshops.

Paradigm

Company G understand culture as how they collaborate between each other, how they collaborate with clients and the unwritten rules within the organization. The organization tries to create a specific culture. The organization recruits' people that fit their culture, an organization that likes collaboration, a lot of the work requires collaboration to find solutions for their customers. The average age of the organization is 30 people, with a few outliers. There are different teams within the building, administrative and financial employees and those with a design background (the majority). This showed some divide however some personal attention solved this issue.

Company G is big on their brand identity, and believe it creates a sense of belonging for all in the organization. It is not simple a design of its office or letterhead design, also gadgets. Fun ways to live the brand identity. Multiple was to create a strong community. This is also translated into the online world. "We use slack with multiple channels, for information, food, animals ect." (Personal communication, 11 October 2022)

Processes

As mentioned in purpose, company G has a strong believe in design. For their organization this starts with the brand identity and the office. The brand identity is very visible in the office. It also is practical. The office was designed pre-covid. Post-covid we adjusted also include more hybrid calling facilities including phone booths, concentration and calling rooms. It is easy for the organization to adjust when required as they are the main tenant of the building. Moreover, the office presents plenty of space for communication and concentration.

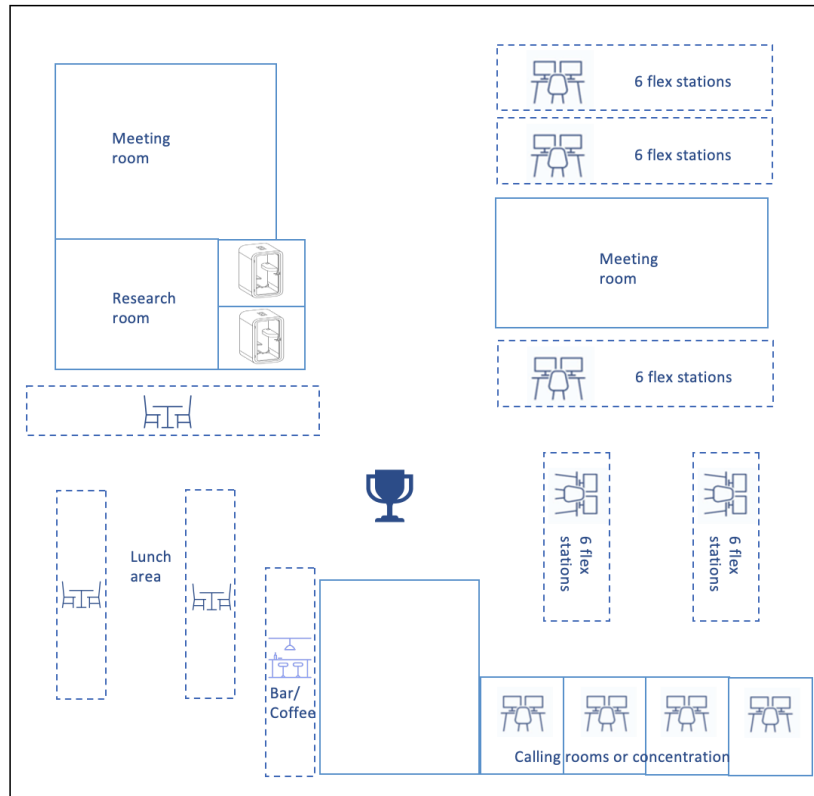


Figure 24 Office layout company G (visual estimation)

The organization allows for hybrid working, employees are free to steer when virtual is fine and when a face-to-face is required. Miro has unlocked a lot of potential virtually, webinars and brainstorm sessions could easily be executed through Miro. However sometime the eye-to-eye contact is just necessary. A lot of the work involves collaboration, lots of tool are provided to the employees to be able to this virtually (software) and physically. Finally, Company G advice new employees to work at the office in order to create a better understand of the organization and what they stand for. In addition, learning better from others.

Place

Company G has leased a complete building in Amsterdam with the flexibility to sublease other parts of the building. Since they moved in the building, the company subleased space to 4 different companies. With growth the organization has reclaimed space in the building and only subleasing to 2 other organizations. The current setup, the office is never 100% fully used. However, if the pandemic didn't create the shift towards more remote working, most likely we would have had to ask more of the sub-tenants to leave the building.

The radius in which we hire has become larger, not just because of hybrid working. Housing market has a lot of influence. City such as Amsterdam is very costly. In addition, the work they take on has become more international, not necessarily requiring Dutch speaking employees.

People

Company G tries to assist their employees to create a satisfactory homework environment. They provide their employees each a screen and a chair. They do not provide a working desk. However, through the “Werkkostenregeling uitkering” company G can provide extra to their employees at the end of each calendar year. They provide information through their wiki information page how employees can apply for additional necessities.

Performance

In terms of performance measurement, the organization moved to a new location and had to create a understanding how much space and workstations were required. This was the only real performance measured done in terms of real estate. They did recognize that they are a small organization and flexible to change.

Further they do make use of a work satisfactory survey. Which is carried out annually and used as input to continue developing on the organization’s strategy.

Productivity

Company G stimulates communication, concentration and spontaneous interaction both physically and virtually. They do their best to connect their employees virtually in the hybrid strategy and ensure the office stimulates to the productivity of the organization.

Company H

Company H is a retail organization for workwear/clothing located in province of Gelderland. The interview was conducted with the HR manager of the organization. The HR manager is responsible for the office. Company H is an organization of 52 employees.

Position

The organization was founded in 2013 and can be considered a matured organization in terms of management. Although stable over the last couple years, the company has grown significantly over the last few years. If the work pressure continues to grow, so will the organization. The organization reached a total of 100 employees. Do to restructuring the organization operates with 52 employees. The core from which the organization wants to continue to grow. With the restructuring the organization has redefined their business goals and objectives. These are both short-term and long-term based. A new brand identity has been developed to strengthen these goals together with the organization. Since the pandemic, the organization made a shift to hybrid working. The organization has recently made a large investment in their office and brand identity. This is yet to be rolled out.

Purpose

The organization has defined its mission and vision. Thus, strategies clear to achieve its goals. The organization has designed a brand identity, translated in letterhead, letter type, signatures, format. Company H has a policy in place for their hybrid strategy. Employees work 20% in total remotely. Monday and Wednesday are compulsory, to ensure the whole team is together. The organization makes use of hybrid working for the desire of its employees. If it was up to the organization, it would be 100% back to the organization. At first it was challenging for the organizations to return more to the office, thus the policy in place.

Paradigm

The organization has a flat hierarchy. This is also translated in the office, all employees together on one floor. The organization through their hybrid strategy ensure that the organization continues to build together, ensure that teams grow together. All department communicate closely to one another. For the organization it is important to cooperate and together share the responsibility for success, which makes the organization who they are.

In terms of hybrid, the organization uses slack to communicate virtually. Slack has multiple channels for different subject.

Processes

Client services are the only located in a separate room from the rest of the organization due to the need for calling. To ensure not distraction to the rest. In term of hybrid working, the organization can see a preference difference between the developers and marketing that prefer to work more remote, where the client service department prefer the office. All processes in the office of Company H could be done both remote and the office. The preference is for the organization to do so in the office. Some tasks just require in person communication. The HR prefers for example to have a job interview in person. Fixed contact hours due to their hybrid policy may help the organization better balance the processes that should take place at the office and which can be executed at home. Although the desire for remote working comes from the employees, the organization does recognize that an undisturbed day at home can really be efficient. A day at the office could be less productive.

The office layout does support different aspects of hybrid working. The office is equipped with calling booths, and meeting rooms. In addition, the client service department have their own allocated room away from the office garden, to ensure no disturbance. In addition, there are allocated room for more concentrated work. The office garden also includes some leisure facilities for when they are on break, such as a football table.

Place

The company moved recently to a new office. The organization grew significantly during the pandemic due to their online presence with at the peak around 80 employees. Once the lockdown passed, employees made use of the office in shifts. This pushed the organization to move to a new location. The new office included a new office layout. Now the organization has downsized a little to 53 employees, meaning there is currently plenty of the space in the office for continued growth.

The use of hybrid working has not extended the region they look for recruitment. They prefer their employees at the office. They consider around 1 hour to be the limit. This in relation to preference for working in the office.

People

Organization H provides a complete workstation for at home, including screen, chair, mouse, keyboard etc., everything necessary.

The organization makes use of a hybrid strategy due to the desire of the employee. If it was up to the organization itself then employees would be working at the office as much as possible. As mentioned, this is translated in a policy of 20% remote working and Monday and Wednesday compulsory at the office. For flexibility and wellness, if someone happens to have a one of reason we don't mind. Just not every week.

Performance

The company measured office usage post-pandemic, During the downsize of the organization, they notice that one floor was enough. This could save them a lot of costs. It was beneficial to measure the office usage. In addition, other facilities around the office such as supplies. Further no use of performance measurement on long term are used.

There is no official worker satisfaction survey used. The organization tries to create a fun and efficient office that employees would enjoy and motivate them to come to the office.

Productivity

Company H stimulates communication, concentration and spontaneous interaction both physically and virtually. They do their best to connect their employees virtually in the hybrid strategy and ensure the office stimulates to the productivity of the organization.

Company I

Company I is a media group in the Netherlands producing a daily paper. The organization has in total 200 employees. The interview was conducted with the Customer contact and logistics. In this role the employee is responsible for the renovation of their office accommodation.

Position

This organization was founded in 1971 and has a longer history. Thus, the business cycle of this organization can be classes matured. The organization has a long history, and have had to keep up with many obstacles and innovations along the way. Currently, the organization is renovating their office for the future. The organization growth is mature, and consider the organization stable. The renovation team includes younger employees to ensure a desired future workplace for the newer generations.

The office organization moved to a hybrid strategy post-pandemic. The organization has a policy in place that 60 – 80% of the time employees are required to work at the office. The remaining can be from a remote location.

Purpose

Company I has been around for more than 50 years, strategically the organization has been strong to its competitors. An adaptive and strong lasting mission and vision. Given the age of the organizational, the paradigm has been built over time. The organization does recognize a cultural split between the newer generation and older generation. In addition, the organization recognized divide between teams, “We see islands within the company that work past each other now and then, large part of the reason we seek a new office” (Personal communication, 6 October 2022). A strong step forward for the organization is including newer generation for innovation of their renovating office accommodation.

The pandemic has pushed the organization to work remote, and continue seeing the benefit of doing so for its future. Large part due to preference by its employees.

Paradigm

The organization is on the larger scale of the SME. Thus, the organization structure becomes a little more complex. The organizational structure of company I can be considered fairly flat. Those higher up management of the organization make themselves approachable. The organization more be considered a matrix organization. This consists of managers responsible for certain departments or parts and the product responsible who are integrally responsible for the result of certain products. They communicate throughout the organization. The structure of the organization and the translation back into the organization is not very evident. Management are still in separate closed office rooms and the remaining in the office garden. The office garden consists of flex work stations

Large part of belonging for the organization comes from the type of news the organization brings and how they present themselves to their clients. This is mainly done through their digital presence as a media company.

Further, the organization can be considered a little self-critical: “Often we are good at naming the things we are not good at, and not so much on the things we are good at” (Personal communication, 6 October 2022).

Processes

The current layout of the building is diverse. A large part of the building is the large garden. We do notice that for example the editorial team have too little space for focus. “The large garden size of space, climate and acoustics is not fit for everyone. Some are provoked by the surrounding and simply experience too much happen around them to be able to focus on work” (Personal communication, 28 September 2022). The new concept the company is looking for is an open layout that tackles acoustic issues but pushes for collaboration. In addition, provide concentration areas for focus work. A challenge is how to create hubs for department plus an area for focus work without creating that everyone is taking two workplaces.

Virtually the organization communicates through Microsoft Teams. All tables of flexible workplace and plug and play through a laptop. This was already the case before the pandemic. Since the pandemic the organization equipped its larger meeting rooms with screens, camera and microphone for hybrid calling. The organization further supports their employees in their homeworking environment.

Those new to the organization, it maintains important to learn. In a hybrid situation this does get challenged.

Place

The office is located at their old factory print location, and own this property. This is a key location of the origin of the organization. Now the media has digitalized. The location is not very efficient in terms of public transport. Due to hybrid working, the organization does benefit from a larger recruitment radius.

People

The organization tests employees of their characteristics. This is done to ensure a well combined team. One that is diverse and does not conflict.

The organization is motivating people to come to the office by providing lunch, a € 21 budget is available to be spent in the office canteen. Furthermore, the costs for work travel is paid for. The organization is considering to increase travel compensation.

The organization collaborates to support the home working environment. The organization asks to communicate their situation through a form, to discuss possibilities and help best support this through an allocated budget € 500 every 5 years or the organization pays for the facility such as an office desk and chair for which the employee takes 20% ownership every year.

Performance

As mentioned above, the organization makes use of multiple performance measurements for the real estate and employees. For the real estate due to understanding the need for renovation, tests are done to look at office usage efficiency.

Productivity

A clear hierarchy is in place to run the organization, teams are created to gather correct data to form a collective decision process for the correct organizational strategies including the business and real estate strategy.

Company J

Company J is an IT organization operating in the financial sector. The organization was founded in 2016. IT organization can be classed as one of the modern business services. The interview was conducted with one of the team engineering managers. Under his responsibility are people issues, technology related issues and team collaboration. In addition, the team manager is responsible how the team operates in the hybrid strategy.

Position

The organization is a young organization, however has grown quickly over the years. The most significant growth was made in the pandemic. The organization provide online financial services, at first a startup, and now classed as a scaleup. The business cycle can still be described as a growing organization. The growing has matured and has become more steady. Currently 126 employees work at the organization.

Company J used to be a fully remote working organization. A hybrid strategy was used prior to the pandemic, and during the pandemic they made a complete shift to a remote organization. The organization continued with a remote working strategy post-lockdown. Team managers had much more control and contact with those under their lead, thus were the team managers responsible for the people they manage. Company J eventually moved to a hybrid strategy, the organization realized that some contact is required for creating a better sense of belonging, and assure type of interactions take place that don't happen virtually. The office space they have now can hosts approximately 30-40 people. "Currently we have half the seats available to host everyone at the office, so a hybrid strategy is essential." (Personal communication, 10 May 2022).

As the organization functioned in a fully remote situation, the technology available fully supports the strategy. The essential change was to create a stronger sense of community and solve the limited tolerance employees had from working from home.

Purpose

Company J has a strong mix of talent including developers, cloud engineers and customer service specialist that strive for the same ambition. This mission and vision is well defined by the organization. Not only to its employees, but what the organization represents publicly. The organizations has strategized its real estate strategy over the last years. From moving completely remote to return to a hybrid strategy. The organization makes use of a flexible office space provider in Amsterdam. A fixed location hired from the provider, however, flexible for future change. Ideal for a new hybrid strategy, adaptable to the preference of the employees.

Paradigm

Company J has a large diverse mix of employees, not only in talent but also in nationality. 32 different nationality to be exact. This is a large diversity for an organization of only 126 employees. Yet the organization does have a more Dutch organizational hierarchy. "It's a flat organization. I see this kind of structure more often in the Netherlands.". The interviewee interpreted that the organization has 4 layers. CEO, CTO, team managers and all below. In terms of flat organization, all employees at different levels are easily approachable.

The organization has a recently held a new marketing campaign introducing the organizations new public identity. The public identity is significantly present online as their client communication and transactions are online. The office space used by the organization is provided by a flexible office

operator, this limits the possibilities for the organization to reflect their colors in the office. The office does provide the necessary amenities for an optimized hybrid workspace.

Processes

As mentioned above, company J makes use of a flexible office operator. This could be considered a risk diverse method of using office space. It brings a lot of flexibility in terms of growth potential but also if an organization would be required to downsize. Furthermore, addition temporary spaces could be rented out if required. A flexible office operator usually provides an office that supports a modernized organization. In this case, company J can benefit from an office that supports communication, collaboration and concentration. The office can host up to 40- 50 employees, making a hybrid strategy critical for the way the organization makes use of the office. Amenities include 8 calling booths, large room for customer service department, meeting rooms equipped for videoconferencing and the open office floor. The building itself further provides space for a coffee area, and more recreational areas.

Company J is a hybrid first organization. Employees execute majority of their work in a remote environment. This is due to the virtual business environment in which the organization operates. In the current hybrid strategy, most employees work from home. Team meetings are organized at the office to ensure a better social belonging to the organization. Furthermore, employees themselves can use the office anytime if there is space available. The organization tries to push employees to go to the office at least once a week, preferably twice contributing to the social aspect of the organization. This deemed very difficult when the organization made use of a fully remote strategy.

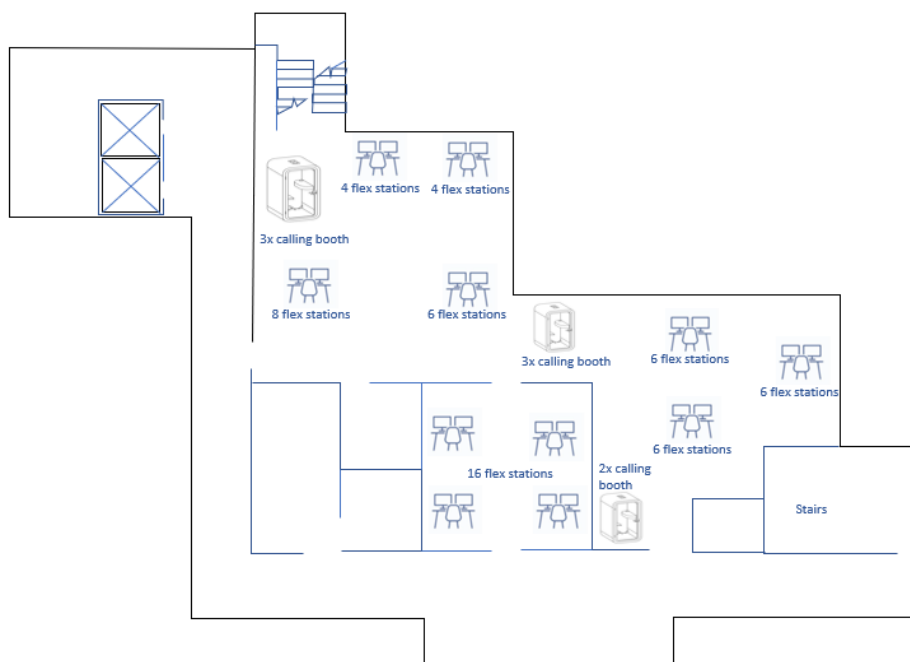


Figure 25 Office layout company J (visual estimation)

Place

The office is located in Amsterdam. A majority of their employees live in Amsterdam. It is a strategic location in terms of talent. Amsterdam is a known hub for developers. The office is ideally located for public transport, bike and easily accessible by road. The interviewee did see that making use of a hybrid strategy enlarged the radius from which the organization would recruit and employees would live. "Anywhere in the Netherlands is technically possible" (Personal communication, 10 May 2022).

For employees to want to make use of the office, employees use an app to register and claim a place to work for the (half)day. This way employees can guarantee they have a working station at the office. This does cause issues if employees forget to register. “We have had moments that people forget or don’t bother to register themselves in the app” (Personal communication, 10 May 2022).

People

Company J tried to maintain a all remote organization post pandemic lockdown, socially and the belonging to the organization pushed company J to return to a hybrid strategy: “At one point employees no longer recognized who worked for the company. Another employee resigning saying he hated the remote working, completely alone behind a screen never seeing my colleagues. This was really bad.” (Personal communication, 10 May 2022). In the hybrid strategy, employees are asked to come to the office once or twice a week to help create a stronger belonging. Moreover, the organization ensures that teams organize events such as team dinners and activities. “So we often organize a dinner or activity, if we don’t do something, you don’t have team but just a bunch of individuals” (Personal communication, 10 May 2022).

The organization in total has 32 nationalities. The diverse cultural backgrounds can have a big difference in working styles. Company J is organized in team, thus, any difficulties in regards to cultural difference can be managed by the team leader.

To facilitate employees in their remote environment, especially if employees spend majority of their working time remote, employees can request all the equipment required. For the interviewee himself this was very little, however, some require all items, chair, desk, screen etc.

Performance

A hybrid environment can be challenging to track the performance of its employees. Company J makes use of development journal. The organization uses an agile development process, “A stand up in which everyday employees report what they have worked on, the issues that have become visible and discuss a target for the coming day/days” (Personal communication, 10 May 2022). For the organization it is however difficult to understand how an employee makes use of his time. “It could be that a goal has been set for the day. The employee could finish in 4 hours and play games the rest of the day. However, being a micro manager is not really 21st century, it also about trust. In the end, those that show the work, a potential promotion is Infront of them. The incentive is to develop in your career.” (Personal communication, 10 May 2022).

Furthermore, performance measurements are limited for the real estate. The organization makes use of a booking system to claim a spot at the office. This way they can see the demand for the office. If it is always full, then the organization can consider to move to a larger space. If the calling booths are always over crowded, the organization can react. As mentioned earlier, some employees do not always use the office registration correctly. Especially for quick uses of the calling booths.

Productivity

The organization has challenged the barrier in which the organization could operate remotely. As a result, the organization recognized the organization belonging and social difficulties of working completely remote was very difficult. This had major effects on employee satisfaction and as a result affecting the productivity for the organization. A hybrid strategy was the perfect solution, those who desire more office could do so. Increased amount of team activities and rebranding to strengthen the mission and vision of the organization. The rebranding is more virtually represented and not in the office due to the flex office operators designs.

Company K

Company K is a retail organization for wellness and fitness supplying both online and stores located all over the Netherlands. The headquarters is located in Amsterdam. The interview was conducted with the HR/facility manager of the organization. Company K is an organization of 140 employees.

Position

The organization was founded in 1998 and will exist 25 years in 2023. The organization can be interpreted as a matured organization in the market. Although, the pandemic resulted in many changes for the organization. The physical retail operation was put under pressure: “The stores were quiet, we were allowed to keep the stores open, however, if there is no one on the street, nothing happens. On the other hand, in our online presence we grew a lot” (Personal communication, 14 October 2022). Company K grew online significantly due to the pandemic. This growth required new employees, “Yes we definitely grew, a whole new team, actually pretty much a whole new organization” (Personal communication, 14 October 2022). For this reason, the hybrid strategy needs policies to guide the remote working possibilities to ensure a connected organization.

Company K is working towards a strong sense of community, IT supporting the hybrid strategy at the office and a laptop for employees at home. However, the organization does not a budget for a fully equipped homeworking station.

Purpose

Company J has been around for almost 25 years, strategically the organization could be considered strong to its competitors. Even though, the organization has recently developed a new brand identity, which has yet to be officially launched. In addition to, company J has a mission and vision creating a strong sense of belonging and purpose for the organization.

As mentioned in the *purpose* component, the organization has recently transitioned significantly. Firstly, the hybrid strategy has been adopted since the pandemic. The organization made the transition to a hybrid strategy as a result of the demand of the employees, this was observed through a employee survey. Secondly, the HR/facility managers have recognized that a hybrid strategy has to ensure that the organization needs to strengthen its belonging/connectivity between employees in their hybrid strategy due to the number of new employees. The organization has created a hybrid strategy policy for fixed office working days. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday are the days the whole organization is present at the office. Wednesday and Friday employees are free to use these as remote working days if desired. The organization understands the desire for remote working, but does see the necessity of ensuring collaboration. This strategy does however result in an quiet office on Wednesdays and Fridays.

The office layout of company J supports collaboration, communication and concentration. Further, the layout represents the flat organizational hierarchy. The office is divided between majority of employees located in a open office floor. The management have their own office connected to the open office floor. This creates a transparent work environment. Furthermore, the customer service department are placed in their own large room to ensure that they do not disturb the others within the office.

Paradigm

Company J has had a large organizational change. Partially due to the after effect of the pandemic, which lead to the adoption of a hybrid strategy but also a significant growth due to the online retail growth. As a result, a new experience CEO has been recruited to push the organization and create a

larger competitive advantage. A new brand identity resulting in stronger sense of belonging and strengthened strategies to ensure as an organization the goals and objectives are reached.

As mentioned, the organization was founded in 1998. The organization has a history, unwritten rules that have developed over the years. This will most likely have developed organizational values and belief and organizational personality. Half of the office personnel are new to the organization. It takes time for these employees to get to learn the in-and-outs of the organization: “Many new employees requires time for adjustment and team building. A form of building that relationship” (Personal communication, 14 October 2022). The hybrid strategy accounts for connected working strategy. Bringing in half a new workforce with create a paradigm shift: “When an organization has this many new employees, it will definitely change an organization” (Personal communication, 10 May 2022). In addition, some employees left the organization due to the significant change, as some employees believed the new style did not quite suit them anymore.

Virtual communication is more focused on professional communication. No communities of any such that employees can share about certain topics etc.

Moreover, monthly the organization organizes a townhall event, the whole organization gathers for this event. The townhall event includes a presentation of the achievements made that month followed by a drinks after workhours. The townhall is a powerful tool to ensure that the organization keeps the employees up to date, enlighten each other what other departments are busy with and strengthen the short term and long term goals.

Processes

Company K recently expanded its office due to the recent growth. With the new office, the organization made some changes to the layout. A real estate strategy to support the organization shift of growth, paradigm change and hybrid working change. Previously, all teams were placed in office rooms fitting max 3 to 4 per room. With the expansion, the organization moved all employees to a large work floor. The office rooms now function as meeting rooms/conference rooms and a concentration workspace. The previous layout did not enforce spontaneous interaction: “The office use to have many little islands due to the divided offices. We really wanted to get rid of this. The new layout really supports more collaboration and nice spontaneous conversations when you quickly pass someone.” (Personal communication, 14 October 2022). A balance communication vs concentration is important: “Of course an open office does have its challenges. It is allowed to be fun, but it should also be a place that ensures people can work” (Personal communication, 14 October 2022). The meeting rooms and concentration workspace support ensure a well-balance workplace.

Furthermore, any important meetings such as feedback from a manager should be done at the office and not remotely. The non-verbal communication in those moments are important.

Given the fixed office day working policy the organization uses in its hybrid strategy, most teams organize their meetings on these days to ensure that these meeting take place in a physical setting. Smaller meetings will still take place in a hybrid setting on any of the working days.

Place

The main office is located in Amsterdam. This was the original location of where company K operated since 2012. Originally the organization was founded in Haarlem. The office in Amsterdam became available and seemed like a viable relocation in regards to the logistical advantages. It is With the expansion of the office, the organization hired extra space next to the original location. In addition, the location has free parking in front of the office. Public transport on the other hand is not ideal. Most employees do however have their own form of transport.

The current office should support the growth outlook for the next 2 to 5 years. If the organization would continue to grow at that stage, new options would need to be considered. Ideally, they would change office location and not adopt their hybrid working strategy. Possibly a location more ideal for public transport.

People

People involvement at the office and fixed office working days is a strong driver for the organization to create connectivity. Socially in this sense employees are very much supported. The office layout itself supports this.

The virtual office is less well supported due to budget limitations for the remote work station of all employees. The organization does however try to support employees if they really struggle to do so themselves and meet employees halfway financially.

Performance

Company K makes use of several forms of performance measurements. For the adoption of the hybrid strategy the organization made use of a survey to find out the desire for both office working and remote working. The result presented a clear desire for both. Given the additional new workforce, the organization itself would prefer all employees to be at the office.

Furthermore, due to the townhall the organization tracks performance on a team level basis. Team managers have feedback sessions on a more individual basis.

Performance measurements in regards to the office are minimal. The retail side of the organization is however profitable. This is a costly part of the organization and each physical retail should be profitable.

Productivity

Overall company K stimulates a hybrid strategy that stimulates communication, concentration and spontaneous interaction. This is especially so in the physical office environment. Virtually as mentioned in the *people* component, the organization has given limiting support. The hybrid strategy is strong in creating a sense of connection due to fixed office days. Overall the organization stimulates for a productive organization.

Appendix B – Preliminary proposition

Position

The trends around the workplace have significantly developed over the past decades. The correct workplace layout can have a significant impact on the productivity of an organization. Larger corporates have come to recognize these benefits, many seem to consider an activity-based workplace strategy the correct approach. This was the case for both explorative interviews: “We are making use of an activity based workplace since 2014” (Interview, personal communication, May 2021). Remote working was already a possibility, although the supporting IT available then was not great: “We used skype before the pandemic and not yet teams, remote working was not new, just transition took a very long time. The pandemic really pushed the development” (Interview, personal communication, May 2021). These steps reflected the office's evolution towards more flexibility, the growing importance of alignment and performance, and maintaining competitive advantages in the fast and dynamic business environment. CREM is important for a large organization to ensure proper alignment is achieved.

CREM is less represented within SMEs. A typical finding in research on SMEs is resource constraints (either human, asset or financial capital) that could limit greater performance. Hiring CREM personnel is therefore expected to be less likely, especially the smaller the organization. This will reflect how SMEs will develop their workplace strategy. A new and growing organization will require its personnel to be at the organization. A more mature organization/team can be more flexible regarding a hybrid workplace strategy. That sense of a strong community is essential. A larger corporation can implement a hybrid strategy more easily without losing a sense of community. Decreasing 40-50% of employees at the office for a large corporate is less significant than doing so for an SME.

Proposition Position in a hybrid strategy of an Dutch SME

Both SME and large corporates operate in the same business environment, having less employees can make it more difficult to compete with the larger firms, but the complex dynamic around globalization, emerging technologies and increase demand for flexibility is recognized by all. It is expected that SME are well aware of their external market. Naturally due to necessity of surviving as an SME. It is expected that this knowledge is strategically business related and less knowledge related to the real estate. Literature further revealed that SME tend to have shorter planning horizons. For which reason, no major investments are expected for most SME and the current most commonly adopted open space office and have made little adjustment to the office due to the implementation of a hybrid strategy. An updates IT is required to make use of a hybrid strategy, therefore, it is expected that all employees will have to necessary equipment such as a laptop to be able to work remote. Lastly, sense of community will be a big challenge the smaller the organization. An small SME will notice a significant absence if 50% of employees work remote. Thus, more strict policies and desires are expected for employees to work at the office majority of the week.

Purpose

As already mentioned in *position*, the business environment is a fast and dynamic environment and organization should remain conscious of the external drivers, issues and trends in the market. Business strategy has been a widely research phenomenon since the mid 20th century. Large corporate will thoroughly define their strategy, long term and short mission & vision and aims & objectives. CRE managers can use this to create and align the real estate strategy to support the corporate strategy. SME tend to have more focus on immediate issues rather than a longer view on business

growth. A business strategy is thus usually more simple than a large corporate, especially in terms of long term objectives. A significant barrier to the success of an SME, is an undeveloped business strategy. Moreover, researchers in CREM are showing that a small increase in productivity of employees is much more beneficial than a small reduction in real estate costs. The type and quality of space has impact on the employees experience, and in turn affect on productivity. The more developed real estate workplace strategy are being adopted by large corporates, but as mentioned in *position* SME resource constraints limit the extent to which they use their real estate to improve productivity.

Proposition purpose in a hybrid strategy of an Dutch SME

A business strategy is of significance for any organization and is expected by SME to be defined. The maturity of an SME will have a significant effect on the comprehensiveness of their business strategy plan. Similarly to *position* and to resource constraints, it is expected that SME will pay less attention to aligning a real estate strategy with the business strategy. A “one size fits all” is more likely to be adopted. Due to the size of the organization, a standard strategy is to be expected for the physical environment at the office, and minimal attention to the behavioral environment. In the hybrid workplace, little support is expected in both the physical and behavioral environment.

Paradigm

The organizational DNA of a large corporate can be difficult to understand. There are many different divisions and office locations: “There is a big cultural difference between our colleagues in the field and those working at the headquarters.” (Interview, personal communication, May 2021). An organizations paradigm is created over time, unwritten rules but also the mission and vision of the organization. Making change is a difficult process, large corporates will proactively ensure that any disconnect of certain components are managed. It is additionally as important for SME to ensure there is a good understanding how the organization operates, creating a sense of belonging etc. It is much easier for an SME to coordinate their strategic planning and objectives. SME are much more adaptable in this sense. SMEs fewer employees may increase the likelihood of alignment. Furthermore, organizational hierarchy can have a significant influence on the organizations paradigm. With a focus on the Netherlands for this research, a common structure is a flat organization. For SME in the Netherlands maturity can indicate a lot on the proposition for its leadership style. Usually the leader/owner of the organization is the key person in the strategy and operation, thus a direct influence on the his/her employees. Research has shown that a more mature organization will have a flatter operating style and more shared responsibilities. SME leaders/owners will not have everything ready at hand to effectively run a business. A business will develop overtime and a proactive management is essential to manage alignment between all business components. A good understanding of the organization is important.

Proposition paradigm in a hybrid strategy of an Dutch SME

Given the key person of an SME usually being the owner/leader, they have a big influence on the organization. The more mature however, the more likely the organization adopts a flatter organization. It is difficult to generalize paradigm as each organization will be very different. A modern category is expected to offer more flexibility, uniformity and support informal connectivity than a more traditional business service. Further, due to the complexities around remote working, can effect the experience at the office significantly, and can challenge to sense of belonging. Most likely policies will be used to ensure more office work. Brand identity is expected to be simple approach to creating a sense of belonging.

Processes

The transition to a hybrid strategy demand change in the workplace. The trend for flexibility and agility of the workplace has developed significantly the last decade. Technology advancement push possibilities of remote working. “Our organization makes use of an activity based workplace, so convenience of when we come to the office and what activity we execute where was already possible. Before the pandemic we used skype, this has improved a lot since the pandemic with the use of Microsoft teams.” (Interview, personal communication, May 2021). An activity based strategy supports a hybrid strategy, additional adjustments are made to include video conferencing rooms.

Proposition processes in a hybrid strategy for Dutch SME.

As relatable to all the mentioned organizational components as above, SME have access to fewer resource, a more generalized workplace strategy can be expected from an SME. It is expected that employees will be provided with laptops and software such as Microsoft teams to support the hybrid working strategy. It is expected that the little adjustments have been made to the office apart from IT equipment. A second work station at home is most likely to not realistic to resource constraints.

Place

The place component will be very different for large corporates and SME. Large corporates will be more challenged with matching office and hybrid workplace as based on the DAS framework. The aftermath of the lockdown led CEO to make statement that they would cut down office space. A hybrid strategy can be used to create a higher flex factor of the amount of the space used per employee. The explorative interviewee indicated their office was used for 60-70%, however, reducing their office space they were not going to do based on assumptions. The organization was waiting to make the transition. CREM professional will use tools to determine the optimum workplace strategy. SME usually make use of one main office, it is much more troublesome for a SME to relocate or make significant changes as this affects the entire organization. Adjustments however are more easily implemented due to the size.

A hybrid strategy does increase the range from which companies can source talent. A larger distance is more realistic due to having less frequent office work days.

Proposition of place in a hybrid strategy for Dutch SME

SME are most likely to have their office located in strategic locations for the operation of the office. A place that is close to clients. Moreover, SME are expected to not make radical decisions to reduce office space or relocate as aftermath of the pandemic. Stability is a comforting factor for SME (Street et al., 2017), and currently there is a lot of uncertainty to the correct workplace strategy. It is expected no major changes are made to the office portfolio of SME due to the hybrid strategy. Furthermore, it is expected that SME will benefit from acquiring talent from further distance.

People

Many factors are related to the *people* component. Larger organizations will usually have a more diverse typology of people within the organization. SME are smaller, a sense of belonging and fit is crucial. From the explorative interviews the organization made use of color profiling to help create an understanding the requirements of employees, in addition a tool is provided to help align ways of communication between colleagues and create a sort of agreement.

The amount of remote working in addition challenges the tacit learning process for employees new to the organization. They desire more than others to be able to work at the office and pick up from their colleagues. SME are usually organization that continue to grow. A new team requires the need for physical collaboration.

It can be considered a more strategic approach for a large corporate to make use of hybrid strategy. Thus, budget availability for a home work station is expected. For SME organization most likely the desire is from the employee.

Proposition people in a hybrid strategy for Dutch SME

It is expected that the smaller the organization, the more selective the organization will be in its recruitment process. Majority of SME can be classed as a growing organization. Physical collaboration to enhance tacit learning is more likely desired.

It is expected that SME organizations will provide less support for a fully supported home working station due to resource constraints.

Performance

The proposition for the *purpose* and *position* components indicate that major organizations are expected to have a clear well defined business strategy. Real estate continues to being one of the most costly assets for an organization. As defined in the literature by Haynes (2017), most organization will tailor a performance measurement fit to their organization. Given that most organizations matured organizations will have a business strategy, an aligned real estate strategy can be made.

Proposition of performance in a hybrid strategy for Dutch SME

Given the large cost of an office space, it is expected that an SME will use some sort of a performance measurement. This will most likely be a tailored measurement related to costs per workstation, efficiency per m2, utilization and or quality.

Productivity

A hybrid strategy creates a big shift in the workplace physical and behavioral/social environment: "Online working does have a handicap, that you can't see left in the corner of your eye for a moment. What happens in a certain corner and what you can respond to." (Interview, personal communication, May 2021). The non-verbal interacting changes the way a meeting takes place and can result in different outcome. In addition, the distance between colleagues is greater, you don't simply walk over for a quick question. You are less likely to use the phone for small queries (Interview, personal communication, May 2021). Furthermore, concentration vs communication and interaction vs distraction are key contradicting elements of the workplace. For both Corporate and SME it is a challenge. CREM especially in need for change is an important field. There are benefits that arise from sharing knowledge and responsibility for alignment decisions, someone that SME can learn from and adopt.

Proposition of productivity in a hybrid strategy for Dutch SME

Given the importance of real estate and the strategy used to ensure productivity, all organization are expected to try enhance the work environment for maximum productivity. It is not expected that smaller SME will have a real estate manager to help implement a strategy and that the owner & management/HR will coordinate to make a real estate strategy. A workplace strategy that supports a balanced concentration vs communication and interaction vs distraction. It is expected that the owner and HR/employees will communicate and allow for flow of ideas to better the workplace to support the hybrid strategy and limit the decision process in regards to alignment from one person (Street et al., 2017).

Appendix C – Informed consent case studies interviews

Research: SME use of organizational components in transition to a hybrid strategy

Institutional: TU Delft

Interviewer: Ethan Speijer

Please tick the appropriate boxes

Taking part in the study

		Yes	No
1	I have read and understood the study information dated [DD/MM/YYYY], or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I understand that the information will be captured as an audio-recorded interview, with the purpose of transcribing and analysing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Use of information in the study

		Yes	No
4	I understand that information I provide will be used for academic purposes for the graduation project and corresponding presentation at TU Delft, unless indicated that certain information is confidential.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, [e.g. my name or e-mail address], will not be shared beyond the study team and will be destroyed when this study is complete.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	I understand that the transcript will not identify me by name but will use the study code and that the original digital recording will be erased once the accuracy of the transcript has been confirmed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	I agree that my information can be quoted in research outputs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I understand in case that this research will be published, I will not be identified as a participant in this research in any publication.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Future use and reuse of information by other researchers

9	I understand that the information will be captured as an audio-recorded interview, with the purpose of transcribing and analyzing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Signature:

Name of participant:

Date:

Appendix D – Interview protocol

Draft interview protocol

SME workplace users (workplace users)

Interview: Ethan Speijer

Delft University of Technology – Faculty of Architecture | Management in the built environment

Student number: 4273834

Graduation organization: CBRE

Interviewee:

Duration: 45-60 min

Introduction (5 min)

Start recording – Teams and **phone**

Informed consent (permission to use information interview. Brief explanation about use of data, Anonymized) -

To start the interview, could you introduce yourself?

Your role in the organization is **xxx** . Can you indicate what responsibilities you have in this position?

Main questions (40 min)

Position , purpose & paradigm (15 – 20 min)

Can you tell us something about your organisation?

How old is the organization?

How many employees?

What type of real estate does the organization use?

is the organization still expanding?

Mission and vision

ect

How do you define hybrid working?

Have you been using hybrid working for a long time, when did you implement hybrid working?

What were the drivers of organizations to make the switch to hybrid working?

What did you see as barriers to switching to hybrid working?

Next question is about organizational paradigm – The following questions will be a context to try to understand the culture.

How would you describe organizational DNA?

How would you describe your organizations characteristics? – hierarchical(flat, central, competitive) , friendly, cooperative, age

Do you have a specific brand Identity – CBRE everything green, office garden, presentation.

Has the company defined a mission and vision? So the ambition and objective of the company.

How is organizational culture supported in organizations real estate? (try to discuss much of this above)

How does the culture collide with the organizations real estate?

Can you tell the same about how it is supported and clashed in your hybrid works?

Brand identity is also something important for organizational culture. How do you see this in your real estate and hybrid strategy. So in person as well as online.

How do you see hybrid works reflected in your mission and vision in the long term? Goals and object reflected in the hybrid strategy.

Processes (10 min)

Which processes and activities remain in the office and which are remote? Why?

How are these processes supported in your hybrid strategy?

Have other IT systems (cloud, communication ect) been set up or adapted for hybrid work?

Has the real estate strategy been largely adopted to support hybrid works?

Have any adjustments been made at the office for hybrid work supports

Place (5 – 10 min)

Is there a specific reason for choosing your office location?

Organizational requirements:

Business Direction and Goals

Organization size

Ask for effective space

brand identity

budget

Technology requirements

Having implemented a hybrid working strategy, do you see that this allows you to hire people from a large radius from the location?

People (5 – 10 mins)

How are the personal needs of employees taken into account in the hybrid strategy?

Welfare

Ownership over performance

Empowerment (authorization)

Colleague relations

Age differences (different generations)

Does the organization support remote working? (possibly answered earlier)

equipment ect

Performance and productivity (5 – 10 min)

Do you have a customized performance measurement that includes the performance of your real estate? If so, how do you use this data? (Do you use surveys for work environment satisfaction, for example. This can be lighting, ventilation, but also concentration to distraction, collaboration, etc.)

Cost – occupancy costs per workstation

Efficiency – Amount of space per person

Utilization – Utilization of meeting rooms on a daily/weekly basis

Quality – Occupier satisfactions indicators

Environment – overall building performance (BREEAM)

How does the organization look at employee productivity? Are there focus point to support and improve productivity?

Closing interview – (5 min)

Thank you for your participation

Are you interested in the results of this research?

Possibly ask Tim if he knows some SMEs that I can ask for an interview.