Google Workspace

Navigating hybrid work: a Google Workspace handbook

Best practices for supporting a hybrid work culture

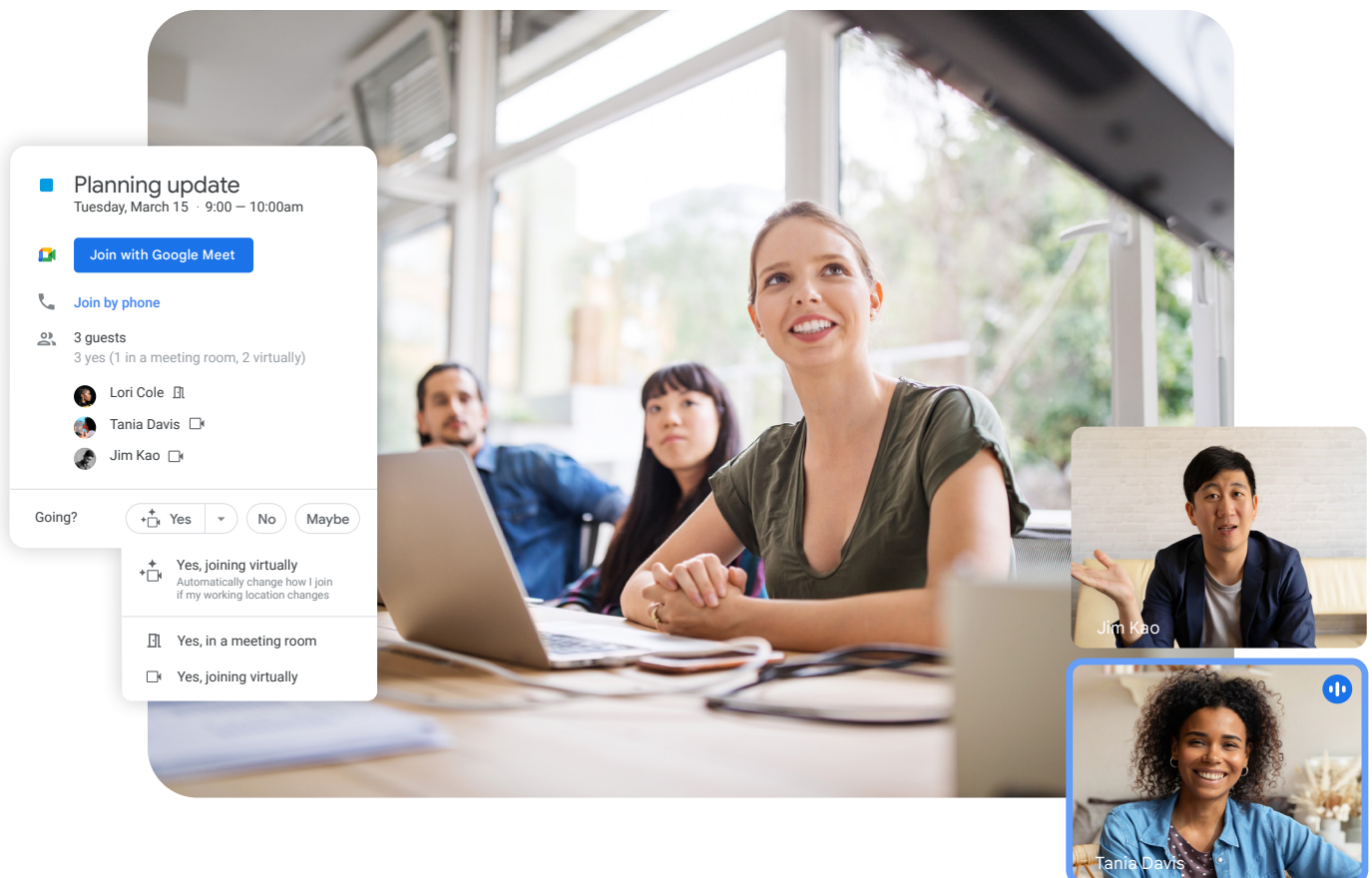**Google** Workspace

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Hybrid: it's about more than where you work

For millions of organizations, hybrid work has become the new normal. But hybrid is about more than just where you work.

→ **How can people in the conference room be better represented in a hybrid meeting?**

→ **How do people working "somewhere else" stay connected with those in the office?**

→ **How can all employees better manage their time and attention?**

→ **How can technology support wellbeing so everyone can maximize their impact?**

Although hybrid work has some unique challenges, Google Workspace has been focused on enabling anywhere, anytime collaboration for well over a decade. In the pages ahead, we share what we've learned about hybrid work in collaboration with our customers. This handbook focuses on tools, techniques, and best practices that seamlessly connect in-office and remote teams.

Key challenges of hybrid work

▦ Work is no longer a place

👥 Human connection is critical

🕐 Time is more precious than ever

📍

76%

of respondents surveyed believe hybrid/flexible work will become a standard practice within their organizations in the next three years.[3]

*This guide highlights existing and soon-to-be released features in Google Workspace to help you plan and implement your hybrid work journey today. **Sign up to stay informed** on Google Workspace product and feature updates.*

What does success look like?

As organizations around the world embrace hybrid work, they're looking to level the playing field across all work and collaboration touchpoints. They want to know how to build connections with their teams and ensure everyone can participate fully, no matter where or how they join a meeting or a brainstorming session.

When **we recently surveyed** Google Workspace customers, they reported their top hybrid work concerns:

- Keeping people productive and engaged, even when they're away from the office
- Preventing meeting fatigue
- Making the hybrid work experience effective for all employees
- Ensuring the in-office experience promotes collaboration

Google is committed to solving these challenges and working on people-first solutions. Our mission is to enable a hybrid work experience that enhances collaboration, strengthens human connection, and increases wellbeing for every employee — wherever and however they work.

Key attributes of hybrid work

Productivity
through anywhere, anytime collaboration

Inclusive engagement
across all hybrid work touchpoints

Wellbeing
through community, culture, and a healthy work-life blend

Strategies for success

✓ **Smart, flexible technology**
Using both software and hardware solutions to seamlessly connect teams

✓ **Reimagining the office for hybrid**
Creating an inspired and inclusive work environment

✓ **Building a hybrid work culture**
Establishing best practices that promote a "hybrid first" mindset

Best practices

Based on Google's own experiments and research, we've put together a set of best practices for hybrid work success. Our approach blends culture, software and hardware tools, and conference-room layouts based on meeting types. While technology can't solve everything, there are concrete ways we can help people use tools to build stronger connections with each other, better manage their time and wellbeing, and achieve more — together.

Boosting productivity through anywhere, anytime collaboration

Hybrid collaboration is fast-moving and fluid. It doesn't just happen in scheduled meetings that span locations; it happens in countless everyday moments, from spontaneous discussions over chat to shared brainstorming documents. Tools must be flexible enough to support both **real-time and anytime hybrid collaboration**. The ability to seamlessly move between modes of communication — like jumping between a shared document, chat thread, and video call with one click — is crucial.

83%

of executives expect to support some level of hybrid (70%) or all remote (13%) work.[1]

💡 Did you know?
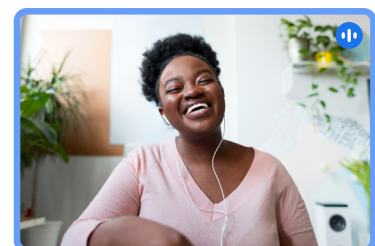
Turning on your video camera during virtual team meetings **creates a better connection**, while minimizing your self-view **alleviates meeting fatigue**. You can also resize, move, or minimize your self-view in Meet based on your preferences.

✓ HOW IT'S DONE WITH
Google Workspace

Collaboration can happen anywhere, at any time.

A team builds a project plan in a **shared Doc** and uses @-mentions with **smart canvas** to bring in relevant people, content, and events.

As team members collaborate, they use a **dedicated space** in **Google Chat** where all the relevant content for the project is organized and discussion happens.

An informal hallway conversation between two colleagues continues and broadens through a group message in **Google Chat** or over **Google Meet**.

A team shares its weekly update in a **topic-based space** to keep their co-workers informed and get feedback.

A group chat seamlessly evolves into a **Google Meet** call with both remote and in-office attendees.

Creating a dedicated space
for teamwork and collaboration

Distributed **teams need a dedicated, shared space** where they can bring their projects to life by connecting the right people, content, and conversations.

Spaces in Google Chat provide a dedicated place for organizing people, topics, and projects. Spaces offer a streamlined and flexible user interface that helps teams stay on top of what's most important. Powered by features like inline topic threading, presence indicators, custom status, and expressive reactions, spaces seamlessly integrate with files and tasks, becoming a new home in Google Workspace for connection and collaboration.

💡 **Did you know?**

Customers can have their admins **turn on Google Chat** if it's not currently available.

✓ HOW IT'S DONE WITH
Spaces in Google Chat

Organize a project
Keep the project team aligned and moving toward a shared goal.

Discuss topics of interest
Have an ongoing conversation about topics that matter to the team.

Stay connected
Evolve ad hoc conversations into a persistent area to share knowledge and collaborate.
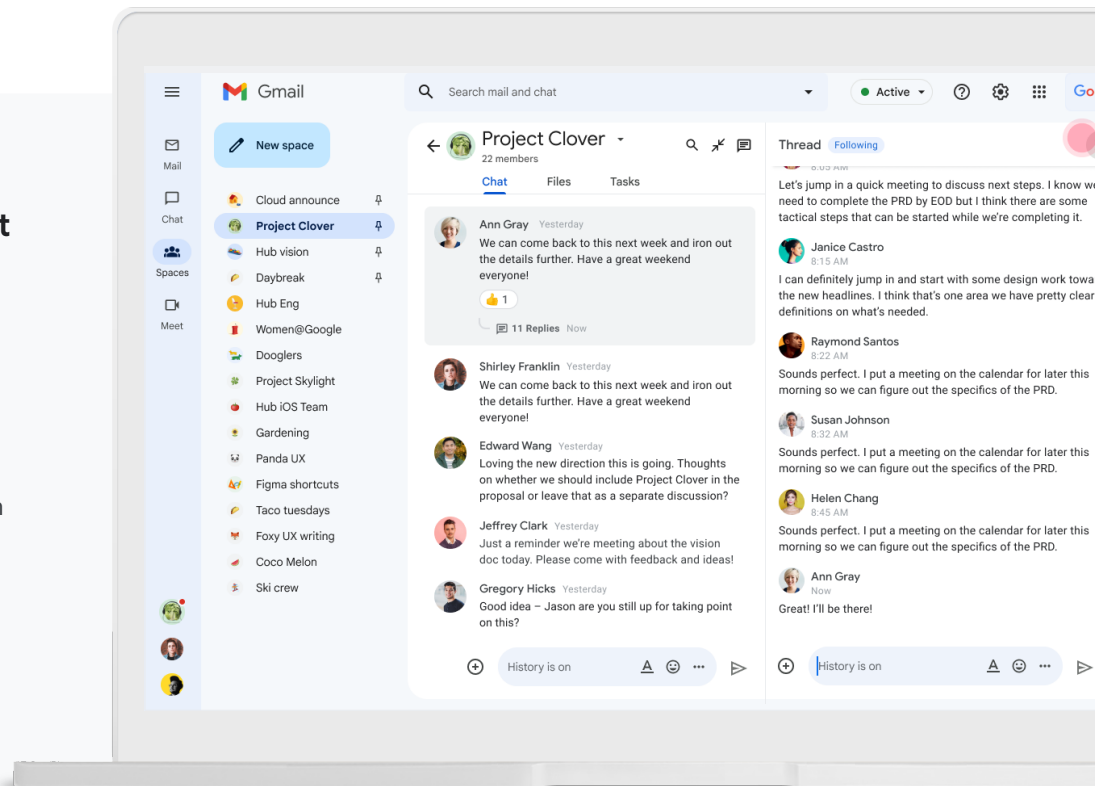
Making meetings hybrid friendly

Google Meet and Meet hardware already include many features that support hybrid work. Successful remote work is supported by Meet features like automatic image enhancement and noise cancellation so you can overcome any spatial challenges, like spotty Wi-Fi, limited cell coverage, or distracting background noise. With Meet hardware features like occupancy detection and voice-activated controls, admins and operations teams can help ensure social distancing and safety protocols in the office. And to keep the focus on what matters most in the meeting, TrueVoice noise cancellation technology on Google Meet Series One hardware removes unwanted sounds in the room while crystallizing human voices.

💡 **Did you know?**

Research shows that once you have **7 people in a decision-making group**, each additional member reduces decision effectiveness by 10%.[2] Learn more about conducting **better video meetings**.

☑ HOW IT'S DONE WITH
Companion mode

Companion mode is designed to seamlessly connect those in the conference room with their remote teammates, giving everyone access to advanced participation features, while leveraging the best of in-room audio and video conferencing capabilities. Users can share their own personal video tile and screen or see presentations up close on a secondary device. And they can chat within the meeting, hand-raise, vote on a poll, post a question in Q&A, or enable captions and translations in their language of choice. They can also "check in"* to the meeting using Companion mode so that everyone on the call can see their name associated with the room they're in. Companion mode is currently supported on web and will soon come to mobile phones and tablets.*

☑ HOW IT'S DONE WITH
Adaptive framing

With **adaptive framing*** for Google Meet, everyone in the physical meeting space can be seen just as well as their remote colleagues. Combining sophisticated cameras with machine learning algorithms, adaptive framing enables continuous framing, speaker tracking, and audience reaction — giving everyone in the meeting the opportunity to put their best face forward.

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5 meeting blueprints
for hybrid work success

Virtual meetings are the glue that has held many **remote teams** together. As businesses and employees adopt hybrid, they need to ensure that every meeting connects all the participants into a single immersive experience that works for everyone.

Based on our own experience at Google, and the experiences of our customers, we've optimized five common meeting types for a hybrid work world:

1. **Relationship building:** One-on-one or small group team-building sessions

2. **Working session:** Real-time collaboration, often using a shared document

3. **Review:** Presenting content and facilitating discussion

4. **Brainstorm:** Real-time idea generation and problem solving

5. **All hands:** Information sharing with a large group of people

♀ **Did you know?**

To minimize distractions for the whole team, **mute your audio when you're not talking**, and make sure noise cancellation and **speech enhancement technology** are turned on.

Google is experimenting with new hybrid meeting configurations.

Blueprint #1:
Relationship building

Ideal for **small groups** or **one-on-ones**, relationship building meetings are a great way to connect around shared work or personal updates and interests. Use them to stay connected with colleagues and customers, to get to know a new team member, or for team-building events.

Participants: 1:1 or 3-15 (broken into small groups)

1+
Working from office

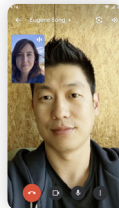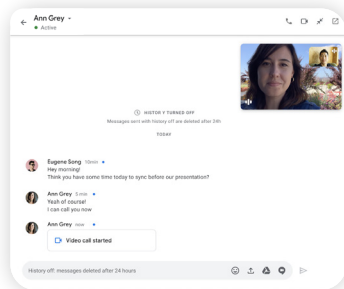**1+**
Working from home

Tools:

Meet

Calendar

Docs

Room and hardware

Laptop, mobile, or tablet for each attendee to actively participate. **Series One Desk 27** for individual remote or small, shared spaces. **Series One** small, **medium, or large room kit or Meet-certified hardware** for in-room participants.

Organizer

Organizers can see how attendees RSVP'd to a meeting invite (in-person vs. remote) in Calendar to coordinate time and place. In hybrid and remote meetings, participants can join from whichever device is most convenient — laptop, phone, or tablet. **Direct call from Gmail** is a fast way to connect for one-to-one meetings, while **breakout rooms** are ideal for splitting up larger groups to encourage small group connections and discussions.

In-room participants

Participants joining directly from the meeting room via **Google Meet hardware** can use the one-touch "Frame people" button for perfect framing in the hybrid meeting. Since the main purpose of this type of meeting is relationship building rather than active work, being able to clearly see one another's facial cues and body language is paramount.

Join by phone
(CH) +41 43 430 94 54 PIN: 877 340 213#

4 guests
3 yes (1 ▣, 2 ◻), 1 awaiting

Lori Cole ▣

Edward Wang ◻

Jeffery Clark ◻

Ethan Lattimore

Going?   Yes ▲   No   Maybe

✓   Yes
▣   Yes, in a meeting room
◻   Yes, joining virtually

Remote participants

Joining from anywhere is seamless, no matter the device or OS, with a Meet code or direct call from Gmail. When on-screen collaboration isn't required, walking meetings using Meet's mobile apps can be a good option to help combat meeting fatigue.

Blueprint #2:
Working session

Working sessions are typically best with **small-group collaborations** — often for the purpose of discussing a document. This can be done by sharing and editing content in a meeting or by joining a meeting directly from within Docs or Sheets.

Participants: 1:1 or 3-15

1+
Working from office

1+
Working from home

Tools:

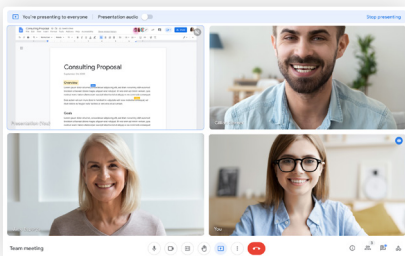Meet | Calendar | Docs | Sheets | Chat

🖥 Room and hardware

Laptop, mobile, or tablet for each attendee to actively participate. **Series One Desk 27** for individual remote or small shared spaces. **Series One** medium or large room kit **or** **Meet-certified hardware** for in-room participants.

👤 Organizer

Whether the meeting organizer is in-room or remote, they can **present the working doc** in the meeting so everyone can follow along.

🗄 In-room participants

During a meeting, participants join directly from the meeting room via **Google Meet hardware.** They can use **Companion mode** to share the links over in-meeting chat for real-time collaboration. Alternatively, they can share the links and attachments in spaces to continue collaborating between meetings, and easily find them in the Files tab in spaces.
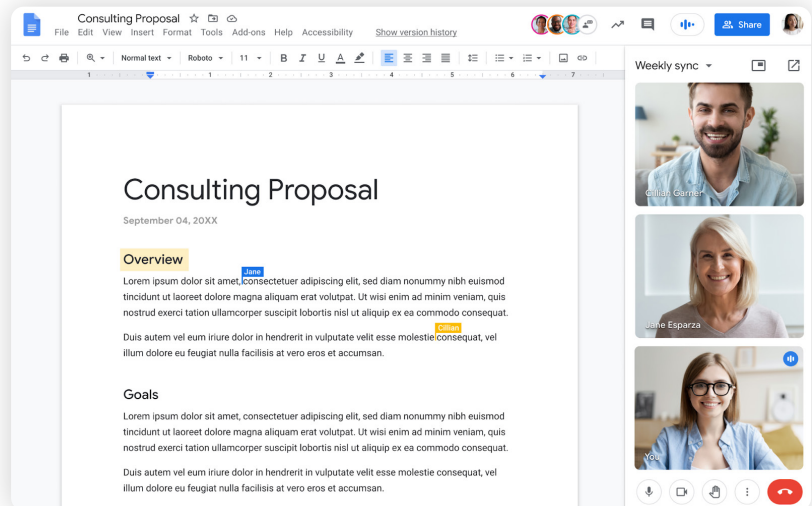
🎥 Remote participants

Remote participants can bring the **meeting directly in Google Docs** so they can see and hear people as they edit together. Remote participants can also use the multi-pin feature to better see content and people during the meeting. In-room attendees can see and share presentations from Companion mode.

💬 Come prepared

To help get the most value from a working session, **share relevant documents** with participants to review prior to the meeting via **Google Chat** or by posting to a space.

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Blueprint #3:
Review

When the main objective is to **present content and facilitate discussions,** review sessions are recommended. This setup works well for presenting documents, slides, spreadsheets, and other forms of content for small to mid-sized groups.

Participants: 3-5 or up to 20 (varies by company size)

3+
Working from office

1+
Working from home

Tools:

Meet   Calendar   Slides   Chat

Room and hardware

Laptop, mobile, or tablet for each attendee to actively participate. **Series One Desk 27** for individual remote or small shared spaces. **Series One medium or large room kit or Meet-certified hardware** for in-room participants. **Series One Board 65 and additional large display** (optional).

Organizer

Organizers can kick off the meeting with the agenda and ground rules, using the hand-raise feature to **facilitate turn taking**, in-meeting chat for comments, as well as posting and up-voting in Q&A to ensure that the most popular questions are answered. They can also **initiate a recording and/or a transcript** to make it easier to summarize and capture action items.

In-room participants

For the best audio and video quality experience, in-room participants can join directly from the meeting room via **Google Meet hardware with adaptive framing**, which helps to frame everyone perfectly, including active speakers and participant reactions. In-room participants can "check in" using **Companion mode** so that everyone on the call can see their name associated with the room they're in. They can also turn on **self-view** so that they can be seen up close. When using Companion mode, raised hands, chat comments, and poll responses are associated with attendee names, making facilitation and follow-ups more efficient.
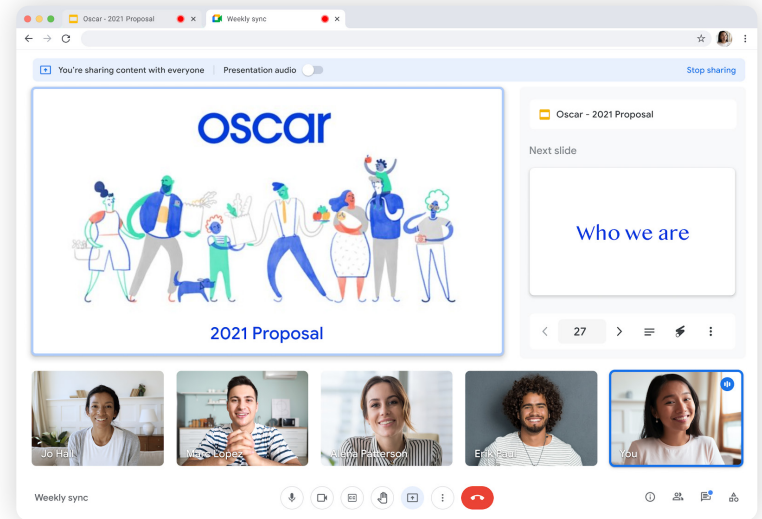
Remote participants

Remote participants can use their laptops to participate via in-meeting chat, hand-raise, and reactions and polls. Remote presenters can use **Slides in Meet** to see their audience's reactions as they present their work.

After the meeting

Share documents, **meeting recordings, transcripts, notes, and action items** in a space for post-meeting follow-ups and to help include teammates with different working hours.

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Blueprint #4:

Brainstorm

Brainstorms are all about creative collaboration. When real-time **idea generation and problem solving** are on the agenda, follow this type of meeting setup to make the most of everyone's time.

Participants: 10-20

3+
Working from office

20+
Working from home

Tools:

Meet

Calendar

Jamboard

🖥️ **Room and hardware**

Laptop, mobile, or tablet for each attendee to actively participate. **Series One** **large room kit** or **Meet-certified hardware.** **Series One Board 65** for interactive whiteboarding.

👤 Organizer

Organizers can opt to use polls to get lightweight feedback from participants in the midst of brainstorming. **Breakout rooms** are ideal for splitting the brainstorm into smaller groups, then rejoining the larger group to share ideas.

📹 Remote participants

Remote participants can bring the meeting directly into the **Jamboard app** so they can see and hear people as they participate in a virtual brainstorm. For the best audio and video experience, they can use **background blur/replace and noise cancellation** to look and sound great to others in the call.
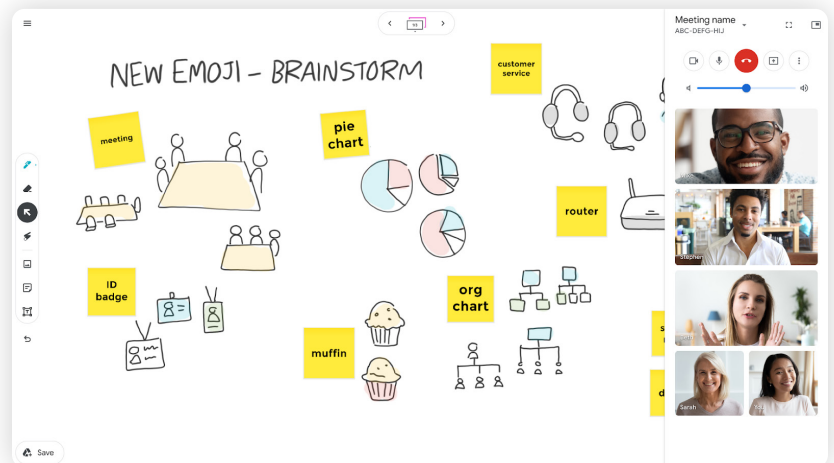
🏢 In-room participants

For the best audio and video quality experience, join directly from the meeting room via **Google Meet hardware** and use **adaptive framing** to frame everyone perfectly, including active speakers and participant reactions. In-room participants can join using **Companion mode** and turn on **self-view** so that everyone on the call can see them up close. For the best collaboration experience, individuals can use **Companion mode** on a personal device to participate in activities, including breakout rooms, keeping everyone in the room together. Use the **Jamboard app** to participate in a virtual brainstorm.

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Blueprint #5:
All hands

When sharing information with a large group of people, an all-hands meeting is the way to go. It's ideal for **bringing larger teams together** to share information and create alignment.

Participants: varies by company size

3+
Working from office

30+
Working from home

Tools:

Meet

Calendar

Slides

Room and hardware

Laptop, mobile, or tablet for each attendee to actively participate. Series One **large room kit or Meet-certified hardware. Large display** to view presentation and people on separate screens.

Organizer

Prior to the meeting, the organizer can set up the event as a livestream in Calendar. During the meeting, they can **share poll results in real time** and see and **moderate hand-raises and Q&As**. Meeting hosts can promote other participants to **co-hosts** in the call or prior to the meeting in the Calendar invite. Hosts can also choose to share the meeting artifacts with co-hosts. Co-hosts can help moderate and manage some of the hosting responsibilities for these high-stake meetings. They can also use moderation controls, such as mute or eject, to keep the meeting safe and on-track. After the meeting, they can review the **attendance report, poll results, and Q&As** along with the recording and transcript. Organizers can enable livestreams for up to 100,000 viewers, both within their organization and other trusted Google Workspace domains, or they can enable public live streaming via YouTube. Captions in English, German, French, Spanish, and Portuguese also make these events more accessible and inclusive.

In-room participants

Via mobile phone, in-room participants can open **Companion mode*** to send a reaction, raise their hand, participate in a team poll, or post a question for the moderators. To better follow along, they can see the active speaker, and **turn on translated captions** in a preferred language.

In-room speaker

For the best audio and video quality experience, they can **join directly from the meeting room hardware**. If the speaker is in a large room of people, they can turn on their laptop camera in **Companion mode** so that their facial expressions and gestures can be seen more clearly by remote attendees.

Remote participants

On individual devices, remote participants can **multi-pin relevant content** such as the room video feed and speaker tiles. From their device, they can easily participate with **chat, Q&A**, **and hand-raise**.

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5 blueprints for anytime collaboration

Often, the best answer for hybrid collaboration isn't another meeting. To get work done and enhance individual and team wellbeing, people need the ability to connect in real-time and work independently on tasks that require deep focus.

Experts call this **asynchronous collaboration**, but we just call it **anytime collaboration**. Google Workspace is designed to unlock a range of powerful, anytime collaboration scenarios to help teams and individuals succeed in hybrid work:

1. **Project collaboration:** Establishing collaboration spaces for projects with multiple participants

2. **Team alignment:** Providing a persistent forum for teams to connect, align, and share

3. **Knowledge base:** Search and find answers from experts

4. **Social communities:** Fostering connection by building communities of shared interest

5. **Organizational announcements:** Enabling easy sharing of updates across organizations
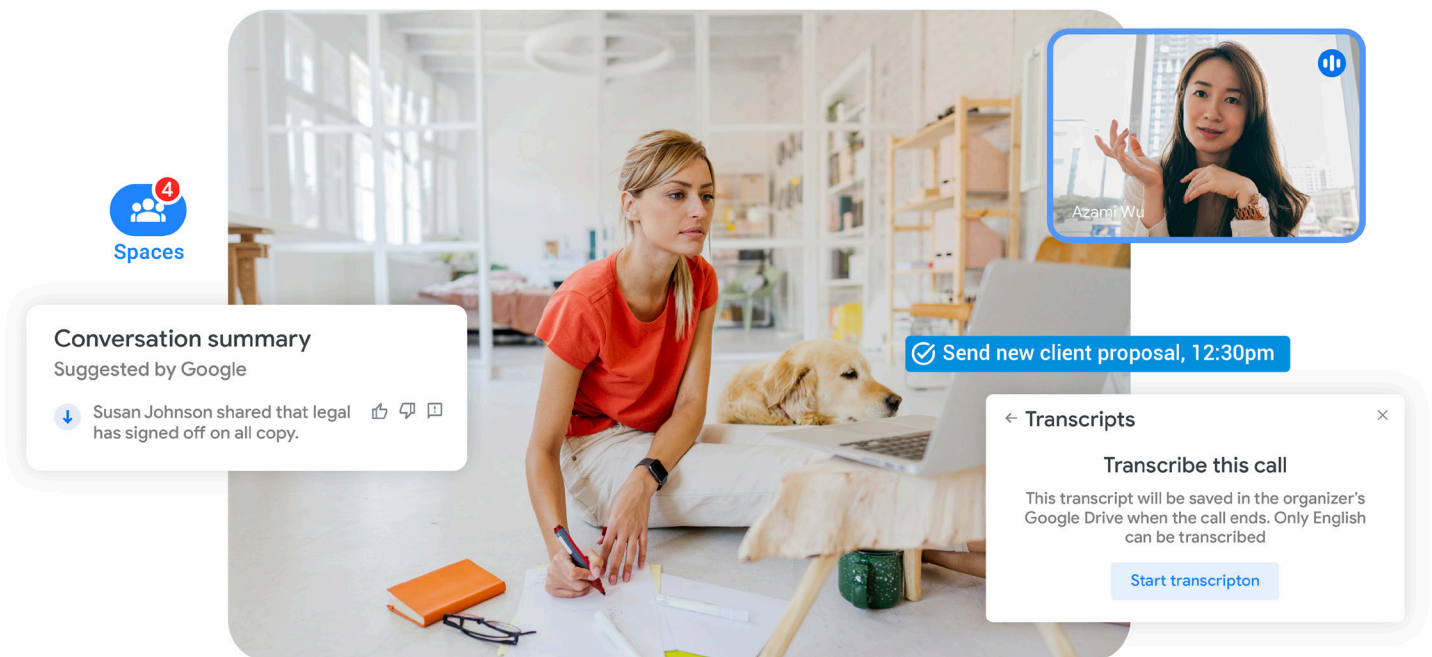
Blueprint #1:

Project collaboration

At project kickoff, establish a space in Google Chat to serve as the **central hub for project communication and resources.** This will give project members a common point of engagement and single source of truth for project decisions.

Participants: typically 3-15+ depending on project scope

15+

Tools:

| Chat | Drive | Tasks | Calendar |

⚡ Pro tip: collaborate with external partners

External agencies, vendors, or partners who are part of a project can be invited to join a space. When setting up the project space, check the box labeled *Allow people outside your organization to join.* Anyone with a Google account can then be invited to join the space (but cannot be added automatically).

⊙ Project kickoff

Use **the space creation menu to set up a new space**. **Add team members** at any time. It's a good idea to **use a descriptive, memorable name** and add an icon to make your space easy to find. You can **restrict access to the space** to ensure that only invited members can join.

🖹 Sharing key documents

Post relevant files to the project space from Google Drive for ongoing reference and shared access. When new files are added, all members of the space will be notified via chat message. **Side-by-side editing of Docs, Sheets, and Slides** makes it possible for teams to collaborate without having to toggle between multiple tools.

📌 Assigning tasks

Project managers can **assign tasks** to team members within the space, including due dates. Assigned tasks will appear in the **Tasks app** and companion bar for easy access, and **task reminders and due dates will appear in Calendar.**
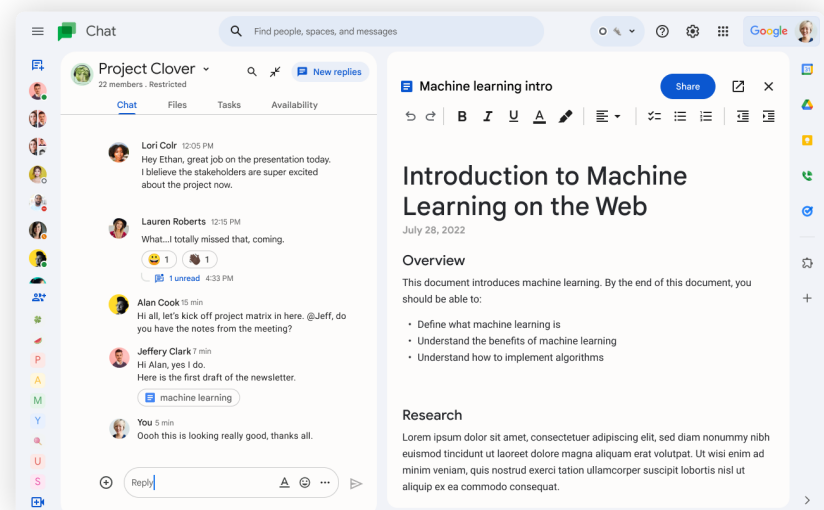
👥 Collaboration and updates

Project members can connect at any time by posting a message in the space. **Conversation history** is enabled by default in spaces (unless changed by your Google Workspace admin), making it easy to search and review the development timeline of work to date. **Conversation summaries** powered by Google AI help team members catch up quickly by providing a bullet-list synopsis of discussions they've missed.

A good practice is to share a **weekly status update in the space**, along with links to updated project timeline documents, often created in Sheets. **Calendar invitations** for project meetings can be created within the space and will appear on individual calendars.

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Blueprint #2:
Team alignment

Set up a space in Google Chat to serve as an **information and collaboration hub** for your team, department, or workgroup, to **build continuity and connection for distributed teams** who may seldom be in the same physical location.

Participants: typically 10-50+

Tools:

Chat   Drive   Tasks

⚡ Pro tip: accelerated onboarding

Improve onboarding for new team members. After adding a new team member to the space, guide their onboarding with assigned tasks, such as reviewing team docs stored in the space, introductory meetings with collaborators, or links to required training. New members can gain a sense of team culture and discover shared interests through conversation in the space.
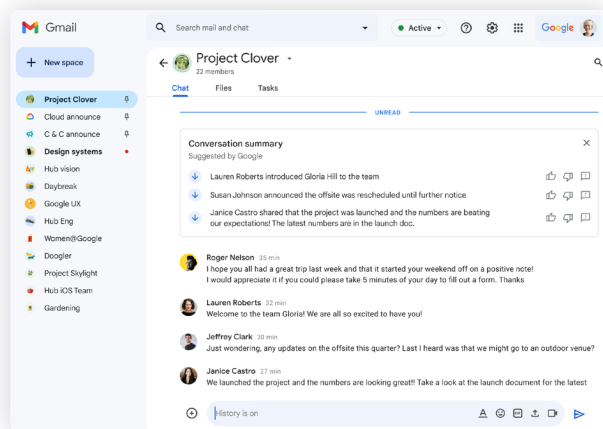
👥 Water cooler

Treat your team space like a virtual water cooler: ask questions, reply to a comment, post funny GIFs, or just say "good morning!" — and keep the conversation organized and easy to browse by responding with **inline threaded replies.** If colleagues are offline, they can still be part of the conversation whenever they connect again, catching up quickly by scanning the **conversation summary**.

📄 Library

Build a **library of essential files** and team documentation. This helps make **team workflow more frictionless** by providing a single reference point for key assets.
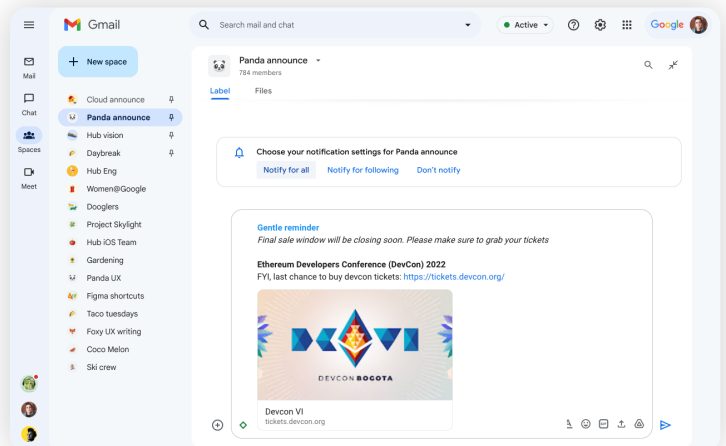
📌 Bulletin board

Share industry news, organization updates, and social opportunities in your team space. This helps **keep the whole team in the loop while building connection and community** through active conversation on topics of interest. **Space managers** should provide ongoing moderation to keep things focused and fun.

Blueprint #3:
Knowledge base

Enable **enterprise-wide access to expert answers** to critical business questions, with real-time conversation and a searchable topic history.

Participants: 10-1,000+

Tools:

Chat   Drive   Docs   Sheets   Slides

🗨 Open forum

Set up a **discoverable space** in Google Chat, with open access for your organization. Potential members can then discover the space via **search results in Gmail**, or be **invited to join with a shared link**.

📋 Curated content

To ensure maximum value, **space managers can curate answers** over time, removing threads with inaccurate information. As the scale of the knowledge base grows, **multiple users can be designated as space managers** to assist with content curation.
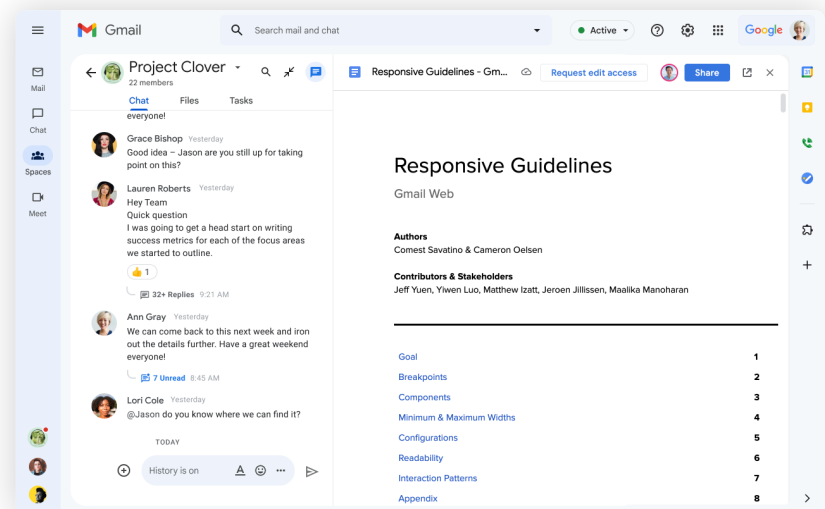
⏱ Real-time or anytime

Members can post questions within the space, tagging specific individual experts if known. **Inline threaded conversations** help keep the space organized, and **powerful search lets users find answers** along with linked supporting materials such as Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, images, PDFs, and HTML links.

Blueprint #4:
Social communities

Build **communities around shared interests** to foster cohesion and connection in your hybrid workforce.

Participants: typically 100-1,000+

Tool:

Chat

👥 Community spaces

Individuals can set up a **discoverable space** in Google Chat, with **open access for the organization**. Space managers can make these spaces discoverable to the organization so anyone can join the communities. Spaces can be established around shared interests such as pets, cooking, fitness, and travel. Organizations can set up communities related to specific buildings, areas, or regions, inviting all members of a particular geographic location to join. **Spaces can accommodate up to 8,000 members,** and this is planned to grow over the coming years.
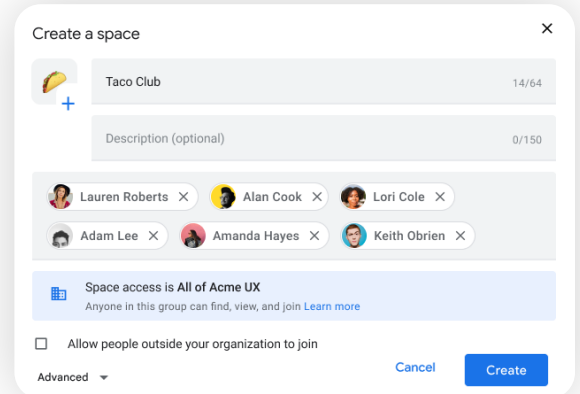
😊 Personal expression

Authentic personal expression is essential for communities to thrive. **Emojis and GIFs** help users bring just the right reaction to a message, while threaded conversations allow groups to deep-dive on specific topics. Users can also post images, giving another way to communicate and connect.
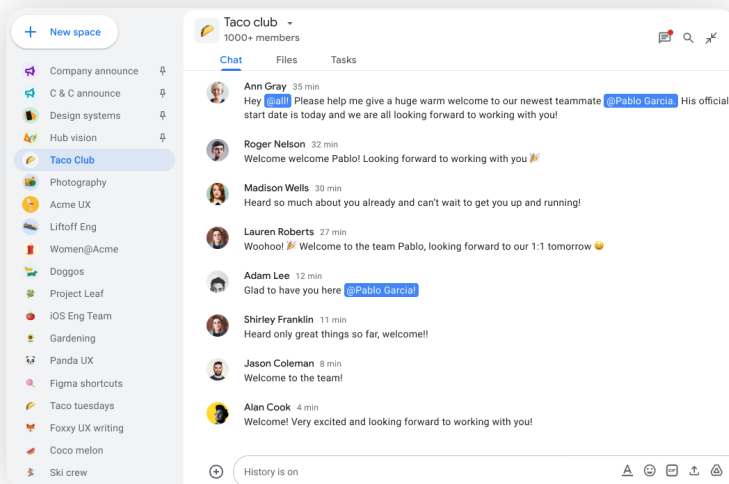
🔒 Ensuring safety

Active moderation is critical to ensure that communities remain safe, positive, and fun. Communities should aim for roughly one space manager for every 500 community members, and global communities should seek to have moderators within active time zones. Establish clear **guidelines for your community** at the start. Space managers have the ability to remove messages that violate community standards, and soon users will have the ability to **flag messages for review.*** To help manage focus and wellbeing, individuals can set **individual notification preferences** for each space.

Blueprint #5:
Organizational announcements

Designated space managers can share **company-wide news and updates** — everything from annual reports to company celebrations — **in broadcast-only spaces** to ensure important messages are reaching teams, with replies limited or disabled.

Participants: typically 100-1,000+

1000+
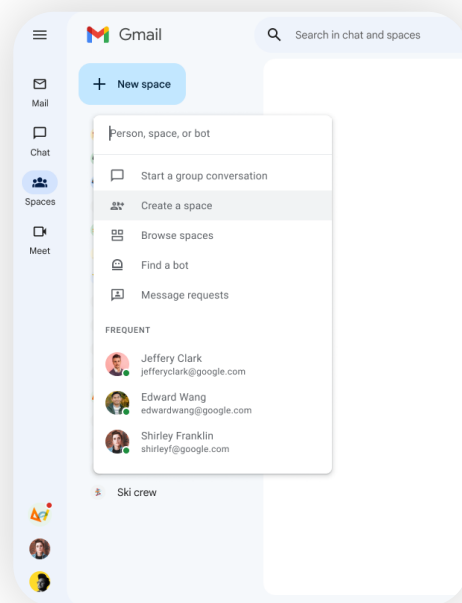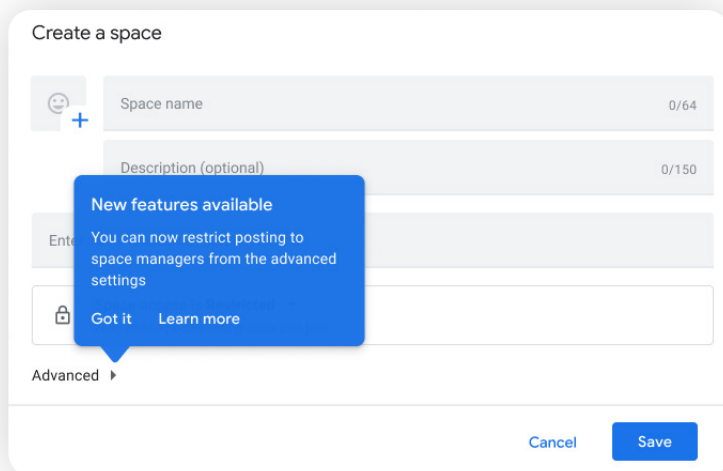
Tools:

Chat   Meet   Drive

📢 Share critical updates

Designated space managers can post to **broadcast-only announcement spaces.** This helps ensure consistent communication across the organization and prevents information from getting lost in the flow of active conversation. Organizations with up to 8,000 members can host their entire workforce in a single space.

Create a space

Space name   0/64

Description (optional)   0/150

New features available

You can now restrict posting to space managers from the advanced settings

Got it   Learn more

Advanced ▸

Cancel   Save

Gmail   Search in chat and spaces

Mail

+ New space

Chat

Spaces   Person, space, or bot

Meet   💬 Start a group conversation

👥 Create a space

🖥 Browse spaces

Find a bot

Message requests

FREQUENT

Jeffery Clark
jefferyclark@google.com

Edward Wang
edwardwang@google.com

Shirley Franklin
shirleyf@google.com

Ski crew

🗂 Augment company meetings

Enhance the experience of company meetings by **providing a persistent location** for official news and supporting documents. This **helps users find information quickly** without having to search their inbox.

Managing time, attention, and wellbeing

With hybrid work, there's an opportunity to take a fresh look at new work habits to better optimize productivity and wellbeing.

Start by communicating expectations about availability and working locations across your team. You can set your **working location** by day, or adjust your availability with **segmentable working hours in Calendar**.

When you set your working location, Calendar makes it easy for you to let others know how you're planning to join a meeting that day, whether it be virtually or in a meeting room. Calendar will also automatically update how you intend to join the meeting if your working location changes. In addition, your colleagues will now see your working location or out-of-office status directly in the guest list section of a Calendar event, so meeting organizers can plan ahead.

In addition to communicating work hours and locations in Calendar, you can also schedule regular blocks of **Focus time** for important tasks while minimizing distracting notifications.

Time insights lets people assess and adjust how they're spending their time against their own priorities and event color categories, and the results are only visible to them — not their managers.

♀ Did you know?

Back-to-back meeting fatigue continues to be a challenge for hybrid teams. Give people a few minutes to reset by scheduling meetings to end 5-10 minutes early. In your Calendar settings window, scroll down to Event settings and click the **Speedy meetings box**.

"We saw employees using chat to help one another — a bunch of new rooms and groups were popping up around topics such as advice on remote working, tips for mental health, as well as jokes, memes, and other light-hearted topics that helped bring people together. We want to do everything we can to support that."

— **Andy Yates**, Head of Strategy, TechOps at ThoughtWorks

/thoughtworks
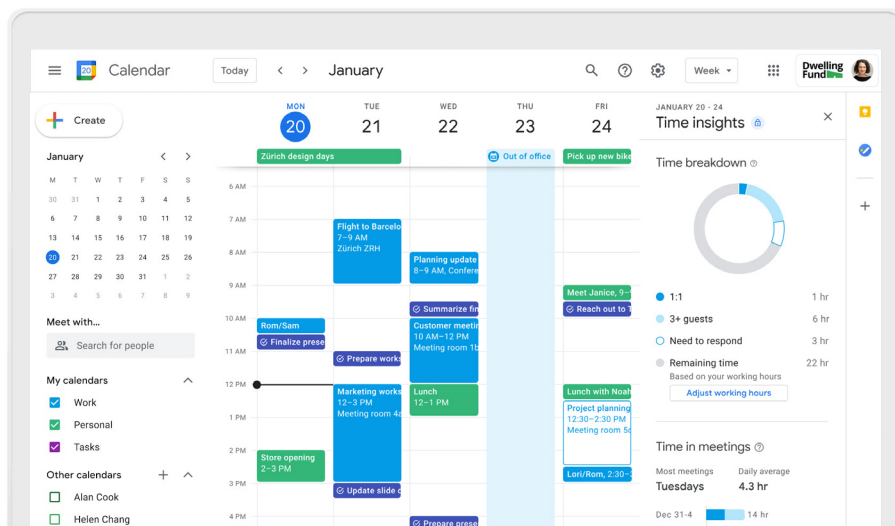
Manage office space more efficiently

Helping the workforce stay productive also means ensuring everyone has access to meeting rooms when they need them. As more people use the office, meeting room availability is a recurring issue.

Make it easy for people to find the right meeting room in Calendar by **setting up meeting rooms and other structured resources in the Admin Console**. For people with permanent desk locations, setting **their main office location** ensures they get room suggestions close to where they sit.

Avoid meeting rooms sitting idle

✓ With **occupancy detection** on supported Meet hardware, facilities managers can monitor room utilization and help enforce room capacity limits for safety.

✓ With **Calendar-based room release**, meeting rooms are automatically released when all but one attendee have declined the event.

✓ Monitor meeting room utilization with the **Room Insights dashboard**, which provides analytics on how your organization uses meeting rooms and other resources.
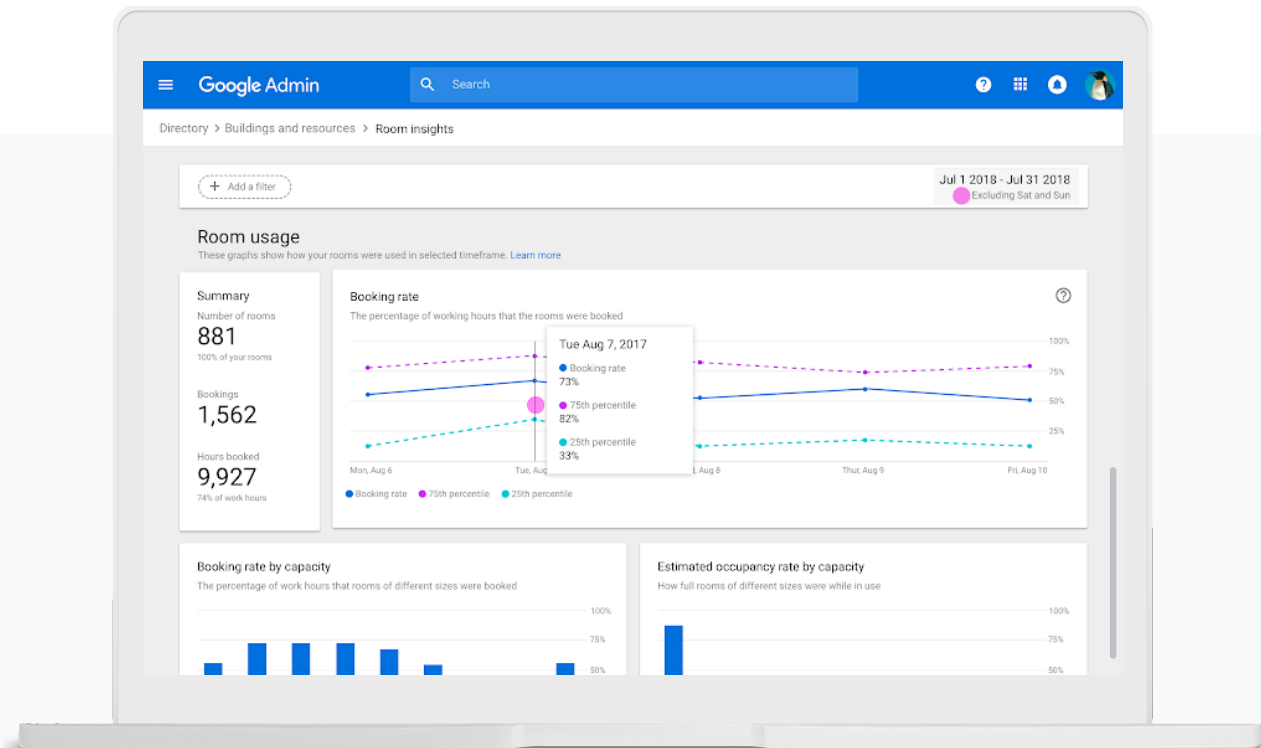
Making hybrid meetings more inclusive
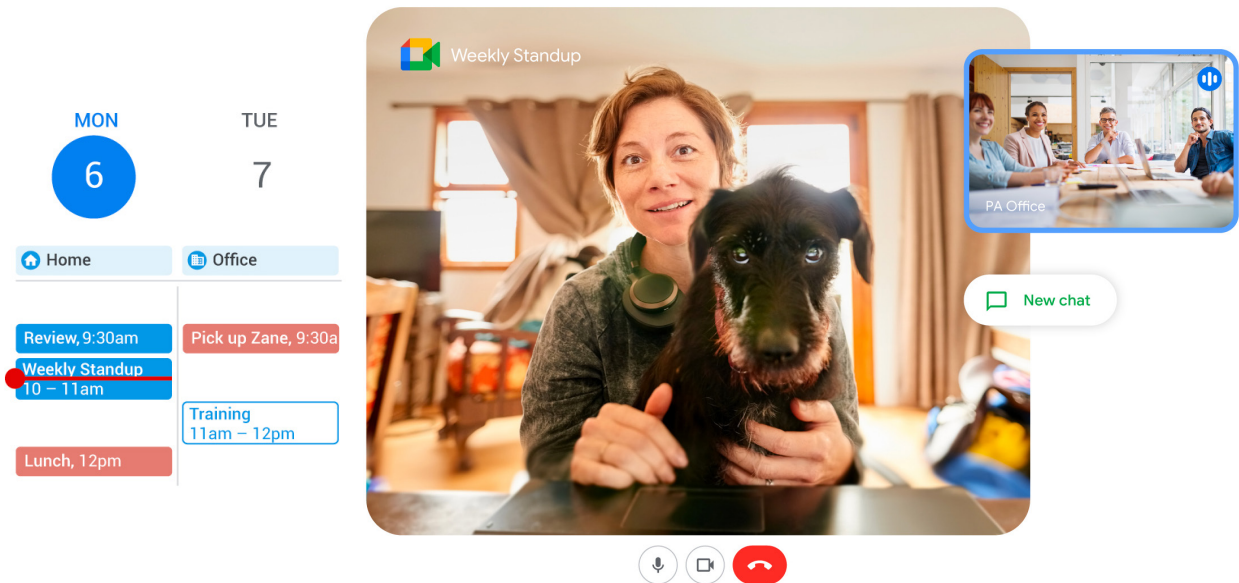
Scheduling meetings

With so many distributed teams and time zones, scheduling a meeting window that works for everyone can be a logistical challenge. Follow a few guidelines to maximize participation:

- Encourage team members to add their **working hours**, **working location**, and **Focus time** into their Calendars so scheduling can take into account things like wellbeing, personal commitments, or childcare.

- Include only those people who need to be a part of the conversation, but cast a wide net. When in doubt, invite people as optional and ask if they'd like to attend.

- Choose a date and time that will work for as many people as possible. With working location, you can also find opportunities when all attendees plan to come into the office. When scheduling with regions in far-flung time zones, alternate which teams have to stay late or start early to make the call happen. You might also choose one day a week when global meetings happen so people can plan around that day. To be mindful of time zone differences while scheduling meetings, you can add other time zones to your **World clock** in Calendar settings.

Google Workspace

Encourage people to specify their location when they respond to the Calendar invite. If they accept, they can do so by choosing "in a meeting room" or "joining virtually." This helps everyone, including the organizer, know what to expect.

Provide an agenda in the Calendar invite at least 24 hours in advance to ensure people can decide whether to join and have a chance to prepare accordingly. Include the goal of the meeting in the agenda, for example: "This meeting will be successful if we leave with four great ideas from the brainstorming session."

Consider rotating the role of facilitator and note taker. This not only lessens the burden on one person, it also gives other people a chance to participate more fully.

"People have been changing the way in which they work; they've been blending their work and non-work life. Our people and culture director calls it work-life integration. When you don't have to cram everything into a normal work day, people seem more comfortable with starting earlier or working later and segmenting their time so they can be most productive in both their personal and professional lives."

— **Linda Humphrey**, Global ICT Services, WWF International

WWF

During the meeting

When done well, hybrid meetings don't feel like two different conversations that happen in the room and remotely. To keep them feeling like a single inclusive experience, consider the following guidelines:

📢 Acknowledge virtual team members when they join a meeting and use the first 5 minutes to connect with the team and check-in. Some teams at Google kickstart their meetings by playing an interesting or inspiring YouTube video or by asking a question of the team (e.g., What was the favorite thing you ate this weekend?).

✋ Encourage attendees in conference rooms to use Companion mode and use the hand-raise feature in Google Meet before speaking in meetings of 3+ people.

🚫 Avoid "in the room" side conversations that may exclude virtual team members.

✏️ Use the Jamboard app instead of a physical whiteboard in the conference room so everyone can view and contribute.

☰ Have the designated note taker create and use a **pre-populated notes Doc from the Calendar invite** and then share it with the attendees. If key participants are unable to attend, consider recording the meeting for them.
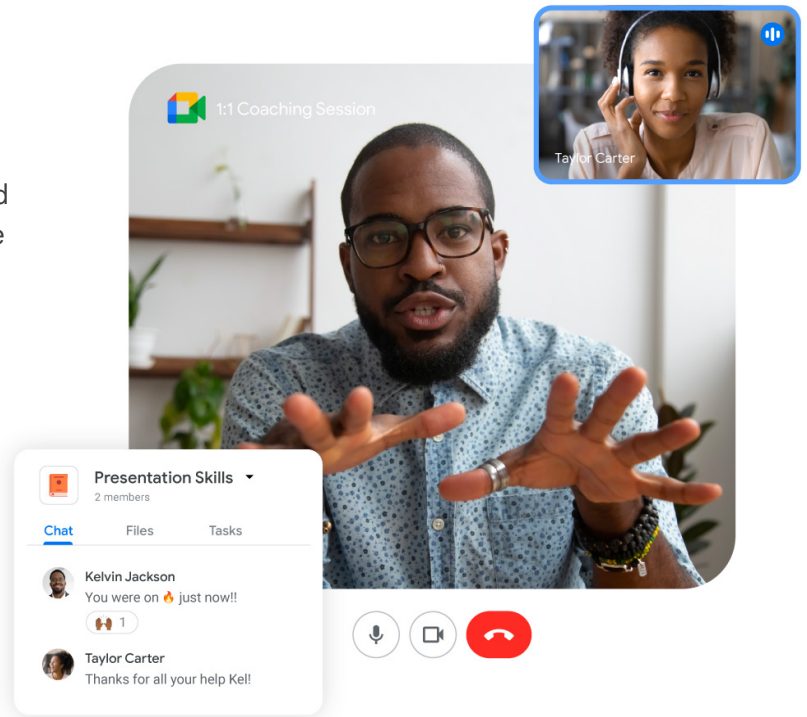
👥 Even with Companion mode, it can be difficult for remote participants to break into the conversation in the room. The facilitator should make space for remote attendees to weigh in frequently.

💬 Provide multiple ways for people to provide feedback. Not everyone is comfortable speaking up in a group meeting, so be sure to solicit feedback in the agenda doc or through Chat, Q&A, and polls.

After the meeting

To make sure meeting attendees feel like their time was well spent:

👍 Send a follow-up note to thank everyone for their time and ask for any additional feedback.

Post meeting artifacts to the relevant space in Google Chat, allowing team members who were unable to attend to review and contribute.

ⓘ Include notes/recordings, action items, and decisions to all relevant parties, especially those unable to attend.

For recurring meetings, poll people once a quarter using **Google Forms** and ask them how the meeting could be made more productive and inclusive. You might even consider an anonymous poll that asks if meetings should change in terms of duration or frequency or even focus.

💡 **Did you know?**

You can create meeting notes directly from the Google Calendar invite. **See how**.

Evolving the workplace and culture for success

Establishing a "hybrid first" mindset won't happen overnight. But by recognizing the need to adapt current working norms and embracing these easy-to-implement measures, hybrid collaboration will eventually become second nature. Below are a few ways Google is reimagining the physical office and some of our best practices for creating a hybrid first work culture.

What is Google solving for?

Our evolving hybrid workplace is about making Google the most effective, creative, and enjoyable place to work. We want to enhance productivity and creativity, strengthen connection and belonging, and increase health and wellbeing. We view designing our hybrid work future as a journey, not a quick fix for a single point in time. Testing and experimenting is a key part of our approach, which we'll continually adapt based on what we learn works best for employees along the way.

Key priorities for Google's hybrid workplace

📹 Empower experience and participation in hybrid collaboration that connects people who are in-person and remote. We're experimenting with solutions such as new Meet features, **Starline**, and a new meeting room called Campfire, where those in the office are interspersed with vertical displays that immersively bring remote participants into a meeting.

👥 Transform offices into "collaboration hubs" with expanded types of reservable team spaces with various layouts and movable furniture, whiteboards, and storage to allow teams the flexibility to work together in a way that best supports their activities.

💻 To support people who may not need a permanent desk in the office, we're experimenting with a prototype desk that automatically adjusts to an employee's preferences with the swipe of their corporate badge.

👤 We're turning some smaller conference rooms into private workspaces that can be reserved, ensuring that people can have dedicated time and space for individual work when they're in the office.

"Airbus has spent the past year thinking about what it actually means to return to work and we're looking to support greater flexibility. In 2020, we held 5.6M virtual meetings and we now have more than 70,000 shared drives where people collaborate. We have changed the way people work at Airbus and that will continue as cloud-based collaboration empowers the hybrid work reality."

— **Andrew Plunkett,** Airbus Vice President, Digital Workplace

AIRBUS

Monitor how hybrid work is going for your organization

✓ **Monitor hybrid work trends that emerge**. **Work Insights** provides an organizational view of how your teams are working (ex. average meeting hours) and using Google Workspace tools.

✓ **Monitor in-office demand** with the **Working location API***, to forecast when people plan to be in which offices.

✓ **Set up "hybrid work discussion" spaces on Google Chat** with key cross-functional stakeholders. This will help to share new issues, data insights, and updates related to hybrid work that emerge across the company.

[1] Based on an internal Google Consumer survey among US full-time information workers; fielded March 25–April 12, 2021.
[2] "Decide & Deliver, 5 Steps to Breakthrough Performance in Your Organization," 2010
[3] "Making Hybrid Work Human: 2021 Global Survey Report," Economist Impact, 2021

Fostering human connection in a hybrid world

Hybrid work doesn't have to be the next great disruptor. It can be a natural evolution of tools and approaches that have served distributed teams for decades. But by ensuring seamless collaboration between those in the room and those working remotely — in meetings and across all the ways that people collaborate — everyone can stay included, connected, and deliver greater impact, together.

Google Workspace helps hybrid teams of any size connect, create, and collaborate, from anywhere, and on any device.

To learn more about how Google Workspace can benefit your team or organization, **contact sales** or **start your free trial today**.

*Feature availability in Google Workspace varies: Companion mode mobile, room check-in, adaptive framing, Working location API, and Chat features including user content reporting, and broadcast-only spaces will be released in 2023.