

How to make the most of hybrid working to advance your career

While workers' return to the office is still a slow process and many offices may never go back to a pre-Covid five-day week, ambitious employees can use this to their advantage.



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Linda Trim, Director at Giant Leap, one of South Africa's largest workplace design consultancies said: "The rules for maximising office face time with the bosses are about to get more complicated as many companies gear up to reopen offices in the coming months.

"Many employers plan to let staff decide what days - and how many - they come into the office. But for ambitious workers, that means strategising what in-office days will get you noticed the most and how to maximise the time to your career's advantage."

The consensus among many of the businesses we work with shows that when workers show up to the office matters.

“Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are shaping up to be peak office face time days. Mondays are for those looking for an extra jump on colleagues in getting more alone-time with senior leaders — though it isn’t a sure thing those managers will always be there.

“Fridays are arguably the most negligible, but a jackpot office day if it is just you and the top boss,” Trim noted.

“Or, you could follow this basic rule: Your boss’s schedule is your schedule.”

While the mice are away

Another strategy, Trim added, is to simply come in as much as possible. Though many companies say they are letting workers keep some degree of flexibility, it is inevitable that employees with the most in-person access to leaders will get the first crack at promotions. In a hybrid work world, those coming in as much as possible have another advantage: plenty of co-workers will still be away.

“It’s better that other people are not there and you’re not fighting for attention,” Trim said. That is particularly the case if you tend to be more introverted. “You don’t have to go out of the way to make contact with senior people,” Trim added.

“Getting that face time, it’s a visual reminder you exist in the company outside of your team. The next time they are thinking about a new project, you’re closer to the top of their mind than others.”

But teams matter too in the hybrid working world.

“To show off your talent and skills, it is better for employees to also periodically coordinate office appearances with their teams for optimal collaboration, rather than only ever showing up on their own schedules,” Trim noted.

“Your success should be coordinating with everyone else. An achiever is defined differently as we move into the future. It’s not going to be just who comes on site every day but the person who can work and lead effectively across different places.”

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