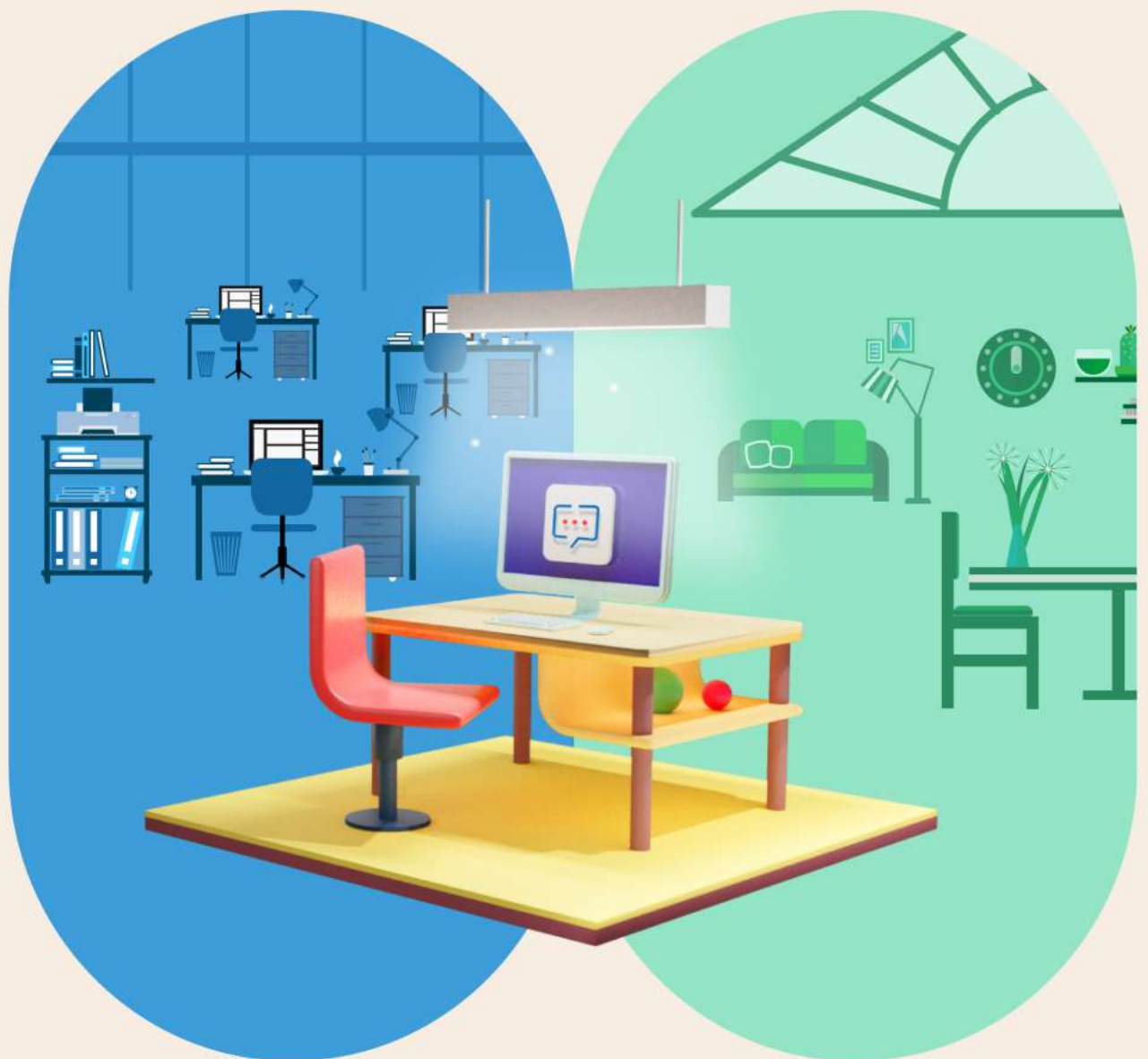


— Whitepaper —

Making the most of



for a hybrid work environment



The future of work:

Hybrid work is here to stay

Let's rewind two years back to 2019 and look at the predominant work culture at that time. While remote work was common enough in some fields, many people still did the daily grind of commuting to work in a shared office space. Fast forward to 2022, and a good majority of offices have adopted remote work culture, or are even moving toward the hybrid work model.

As times are changing and employee needs are evolving, it is important for organizations to adapt to the changes quickly and make their employees feel valued and supported.

According to a study conducted by Deloitte,

43% of the companies surveyed did not permit their employees to work from home or did so only rarely before 2020.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the scene for many fields, forcing all those who could do their work remotely to move to the work from home model for safe social distancing.

Additionally, the same Deloitte study stated that almost

54% of the employees don't want to go back to the office now and prefer working from home.

Since many offices have started slowly opening back up, organizations have to restructure their office culture to work best for both the employees and their company, which is where the hybrid work model can be the best solution.

Limitations of remote work

Any work culture will be challenging if we don't know how to fit in. Whether it's remote, in-office, or hybrid work, employees need guidance and support. While remote work has a lot of benefits, it can also introduce a few major challenges for both the organization and the employees working there.

High reliance on technology

Since remote work means everyone is spread across multiple locations, employees should be provided with the right tools to be able to keep working and remain productive. Without the tools they need, it's harder to collaborate effectively, access the information they need, and get the job done on time.

Difficulty in team building

When teams are all working in the office, it's easier to organize team building activities, but it's not as convenient when it comes to remote work. In cases like onboarding new employees, the lack of in-person interaction and disjointed communication remote work sometimes can make it hard for those new hires to connect with the rest of the team.

Worsened mental health

Most full-time remote workers experience less human interaction, as they generally spend their work hours at home and away from coworkers. This can increase stress and feelings of disconnection, which can affect their mental health.

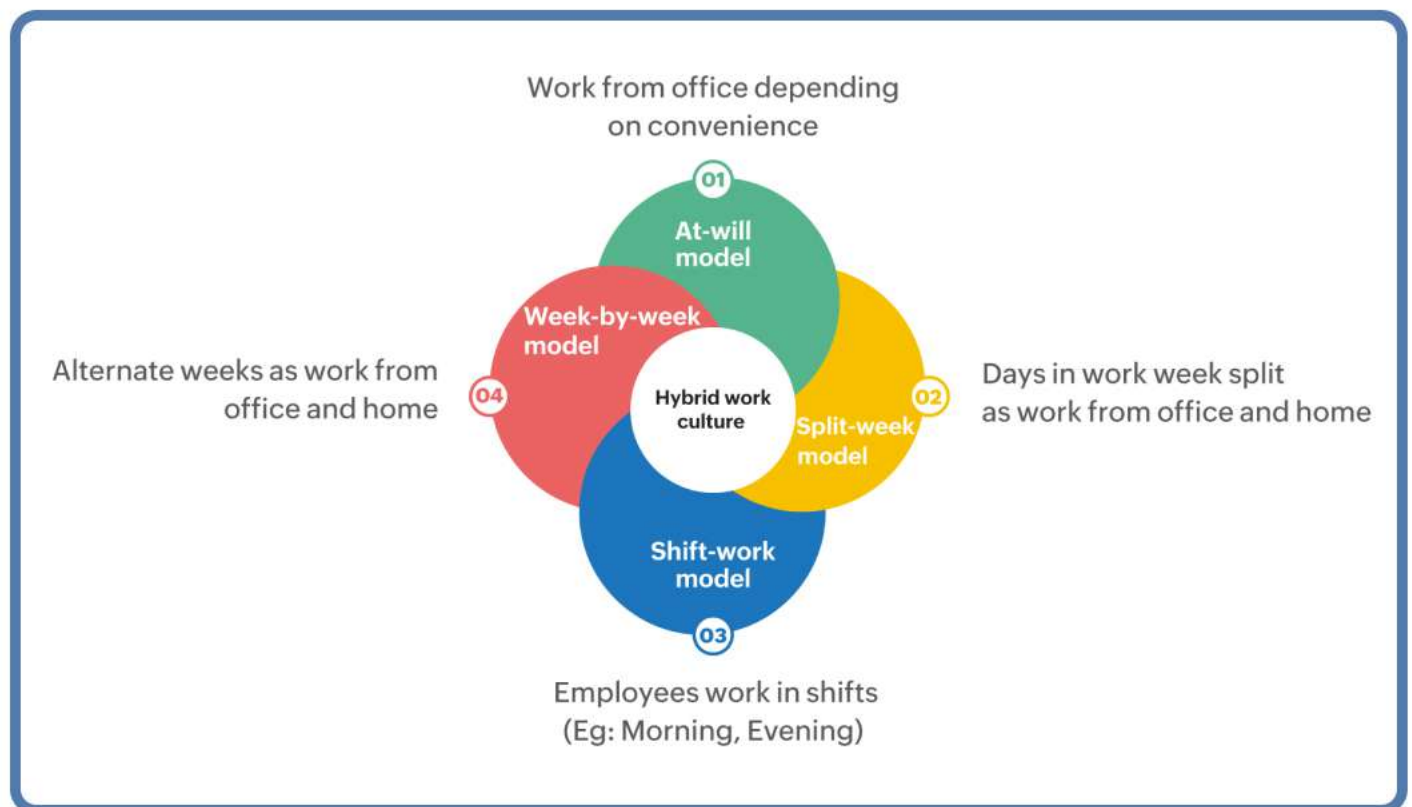
The KFF Health Tracking Poll data says that during the pandemic, a larger than average share of young adults report symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder (56%).

With the COVID-19 pandemic already causing more anxiety and grief than usual, remote work added to the immense stress of lockdown, making mental health a huge concern worldwide.

A closer look at the hybrid work model

It's always good to have the best of both worlds, and hybrid work may turn out to be the best mix of fully remote or fully in-person models. The hybrid work model usually combines working from the office and at home, offering the benefits of both.

With hybrid work, teams are usually composed of a combination of employees working from both the office and remote spaces. Many organizations have already started rolling out this model for their employees and are experiencing huge success rates with respect to employee satisfaction and productivity.



Hybrid work culture can be roughly divided into four categories:

- **“At-will” model:** Employees are provided with the flexibility to come to office depending on their convenience.
- **“Split-week” model:** Work days can be divided into work-from-office days and work-from-home days. For example: employees could choose to work from the office for two days and work from home for the rest of the week.
- **“Shift-work” model:** Many organizations have already been operating in this model where some employees on the team work a morning shift and the rest work in afternoon or evening shifts.
- **“Week-by-week” model:** This model allows employees to alternate weeks working remotely and in the office. This is a great option for employees located far away from the office, as it allows them to consolidate their travel and take alternating weeks off from their commute.

Why is hybrid work preferred?

When employees are provided with the flexibility to choose their own work schedule, they are often more productive. However, while productivity is important, focusing solely on productivity without also establishing a balance could lead to serious workforce burnout. Ideally, the hybrid work model makes it easier for employees to find a balance between work and everyday life.

Making sure your employees are happy and supported increases productivity and reduces employee turnover, and one way to increase employee satisfaction is by offering more flexibility in the workplace. Continuing only with fully in-office work models can lead to employee dissatisfaction and narrow your company’s talent pool. However, as many companies have learned during lockdown these last two years, fully remote work limits human interaction, negatively affects employee mental health, and impedes team building.

Adopting the hybrid work model can allow your organization to strike a balance between these two options, lowering operational costs and giving your employees the flexibility of working from home while also offering the connection and interaction of in-office work.

Overcoming hybrid work challenges with streamlined communication and collaboration



Although hybrid work has the potential to become the business world's new normal and in many ways has proven to be successful, there are some definite pitfalls to address. As we delve into this topic, we'll discuss how to overcome the challenges in hybrid work, and how to communicate and collaborate effectively in that environment.

Possible pitfalls in hybrid working

No proper hybrid setup planning

Planning is a crucial element in setting up your hybrid work model. Without proper planning, you likely won't be able to implement it effectively. Before rolling out hybrid work for your organization, be sure to thoroughly research how other companies are making this work for their business.

For example, at the beginning of 2021,

HubSpot came up with a well-devised plan for how it would be adopting the hybrid work model in its offices.

Employees were allowed to opt for a 3-day in-office, 2-day in-office, or all-remote work style. HubSpot also now offers location-agnostic benefits and perks, and this new model has been working well for them.

It's imperative to be prepared when moving to hybrid work. Since most companies would have employees distributed across locations in this model, proper communication and collaboration are key. A one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work, so you should analyze the must-haves for your organization, create a clear vision for your ideal hybrid work policy, and communicate clearly with your employees so that everyone stays on the same page.

The gap between working from the office and home

Working from home full-time or even most of the week might not offer the same experience as working from the office. Office-based employees are often exposed to unquantified perks and remote workers might feel they are missing out.

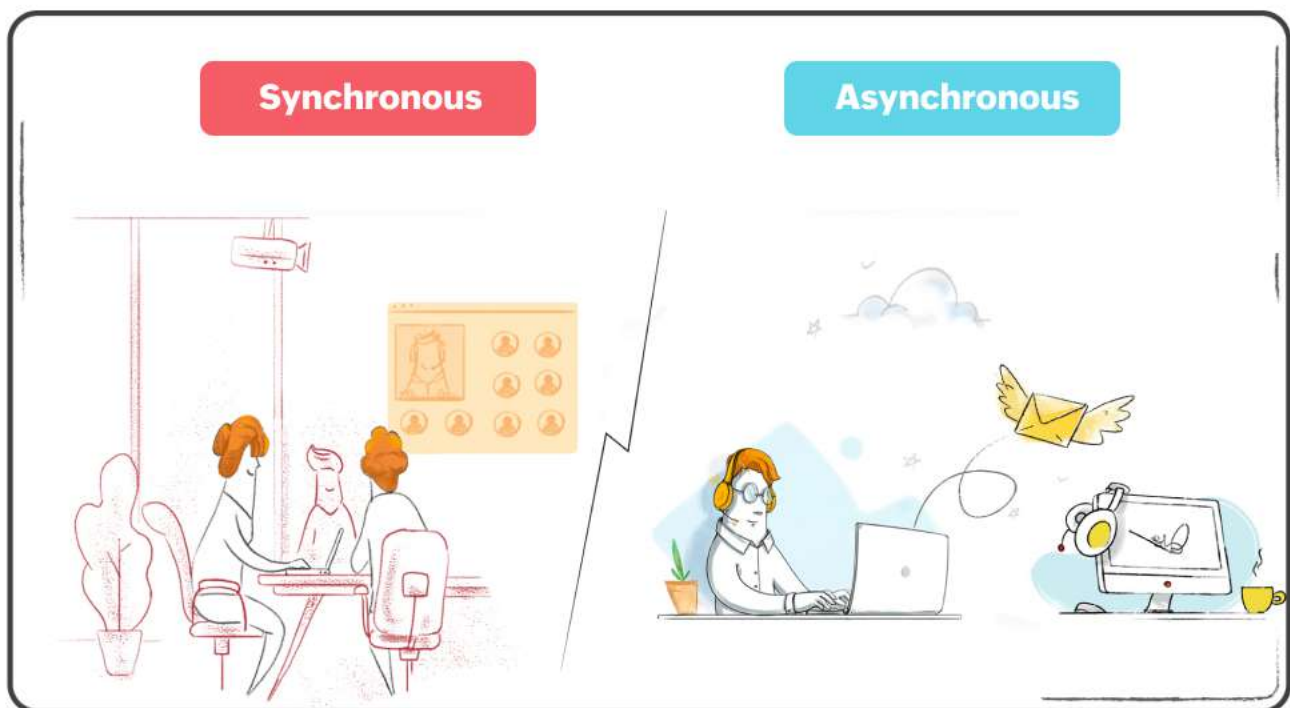
Another important challenge in hybrid work is bringing teams together and nurturing team bonding. When workers often work together in the same location, it's easier to plan team building meals and activities. It isn't quite as easy when those employees are distributed, but team managers can make the effort to plan and schedule activities like multi-player games and unwind sessions using online platforms and video meeting tools.

Not communicating enough

Since communication is the backbone of in-office, remote, and hybrid work, it's better to risk over-communicating and keep everyone in the know so there's no possibility of missing significant tasks or details. To make team communication stronger, it's essential to give your teams the right tools. Just as implementing hybrid work without planning will fail, your entire hybrid work setup is likely to crumble without the proper tools.

Communication and collaboration in a hybrid work model

Hybrid communication involves connecting workers at the office and in remote locations, and as we all know, communication is about much more than just passing on a message. How you communicate, and when you do it matters more. In the context of business and the hybrid work model, communication can be categorized into two types: synchronous and asynchronous.



Synchronous communication involves working together simultaneously, whether you are together or apart. For example, attending a team meeting requires the presence of all the teammates at the same moment to start a discussion. Video conferencing tools and audio calls are a great way for hybrid teams to engage in synchronous communication.

Asynchronous communication involves working alone, whether you are together or apart. For example, coworkers often use email to communicate regardless of the time or their location. You could draft an email any time you want and send it whenever you're ready. The recipient of the email can open and respond to it at their convenience. Here are some things to note while communicating in a hybrid work model:

- While setting up meetings, **double-check the proposed time works for teammates** working from different countries and schedule accordingly.
- Organize inclusive meetings** to make sure all participants in the call feel valued and not left out.
- Keep your meetings efficient** and short so you can spend time on tasks that matter more.
- Always **have an agenda for the meeting**. This helps your team save time and energy.
- Set a target response time for asynchronous communication**. For example, you can set an ideal turnaround time for team emails to make sure everyone can work efficiently.
- Not every meeting has to be an official discussion. You can also **organize fun chats or unwinding sessions**.

Communicate better to collaborate better

Communication helps strengthen team collaboration in a hybrid work model. Employees should be provided with all the necessary communication and collaboration tools to ensure productivity.

But how do you zero down on the necessary tools for communication and collaboration in your organization?

It is important to talk to the employees in your organization to understand their requirements and the struggles they face while trying to collaborate with their co-workers. This is the first step towards streamlining communication and collaboration in your organization. Once you have gathered enough information on the required tools, you can opt for the tools that work best for you.

Using Zoho Cliq for hybrid work



Bringing your entire team together and communicating effectively while working in a hybrid environment can be challenging, but with the right tools, any team can be just as productive and connected as those based in the office.

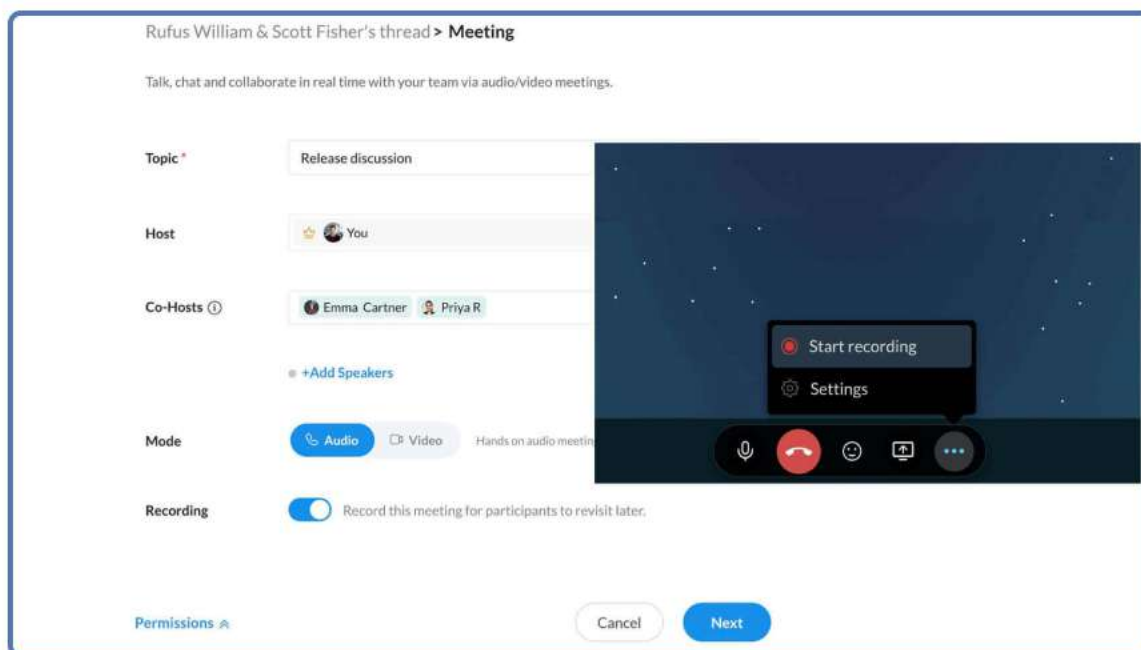
Zoho Cliq, the complete collaboration platform is what you'll need for your hybrid work model. For this new style of work, we've updated Cliq with a set of tools that will help you level up communication and collaboration whether you're in the office or at home.

A superior calling experience

Get an all-round experience with audio and video calls in Cliq.

Record your calls and meetings for future use

Did your teammate miss your weekly meeting and you want to pass along important information discussed on the call? [You can record your audio and video meetings](#), share them with your colleagues, and revisit the recordings whenever you need.



Host audio conferences for a wider audience

Audio conferencing is an efficient way to connect people across locations.

Cliq supports up to 1000 participants in a single audio conference—four times the number of call participants offered by our competitors.



Try out the grid view in video meetings

You can switch between two different views while on video calls with your teammates. In addition to the stage view, which shows only seven participants on the stage, grid view displays screens of all participants as multiple grids with the speaker's video highlighted during the call.



Let other teammates co-host meetings with you

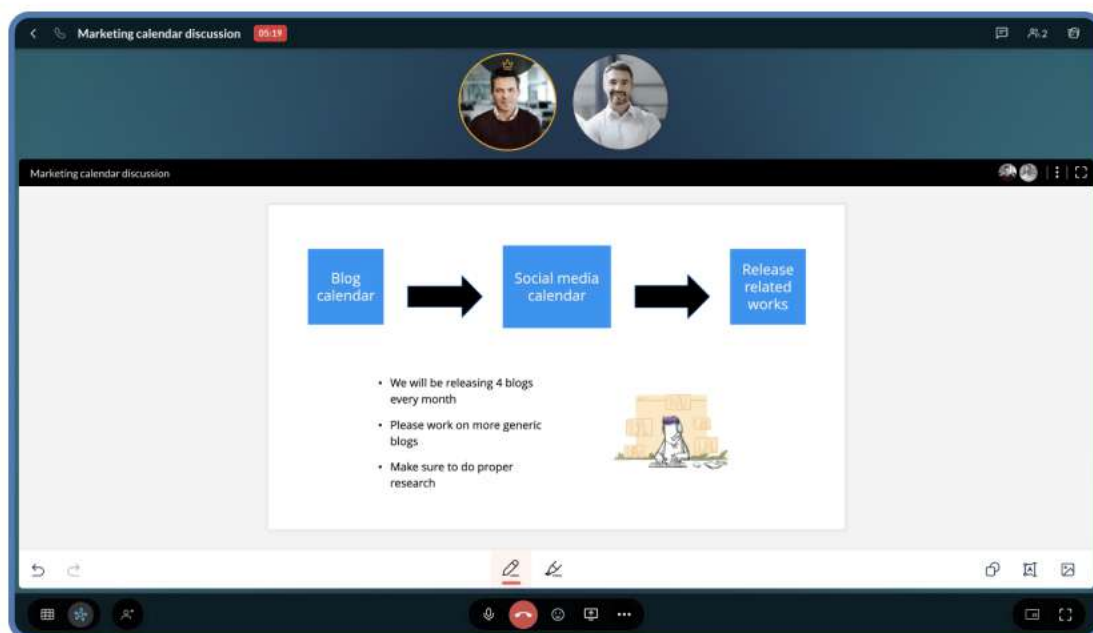
It is always better to have an extra set of hands while hosting meetings online. You can add co-hosts while scheduling meetings or you can make a participant as a host during the meeting.



One of the tricky things about large meetings is there's often someone who forgot to mute themselves adding background noise to your online meetings. In Zoho Cliq, your meeting hosts and co-hosts can simply mute and unmute all meeting participants whenever required.

Collaborate on ideas in real-time using Cliq's Whiteboard

Do you miss your conference room and the flexibility of having a whiteboard to work out all your ideas? Use the virtual Whiteboard during Cliq meetings to support your real-time brainstorming discussions.



With Zoho Cliq's Whiteboard, you can:

- Create multiple whiteboards for collaboration while on a call
- Choose co-hosts, panelists, and attendees for the whiteboard discussion and give them collaborating permissions accordingly
- Share your whiteboard over chat or save it as an image.

[You can learn more about the new Whiteboard feature in Zoho Cliq here.](#)

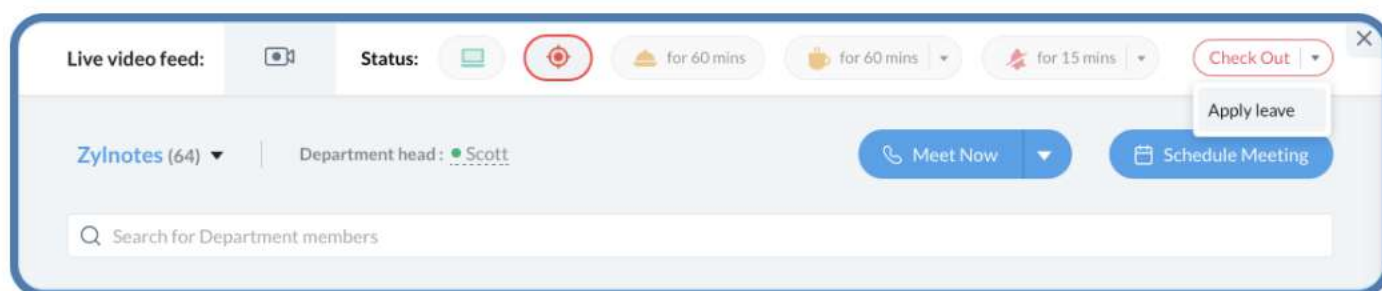
Other fun addition to your meetings

No more messy backgrounds in your video calls. Make use of [Cliq's background effects and video filters for your meetings](#). In addition to this, we have other fun elements like gestures, reactions, and GIFs to our video meetings for you to increase participant engagement.

Integrations to improve your hybrid work process

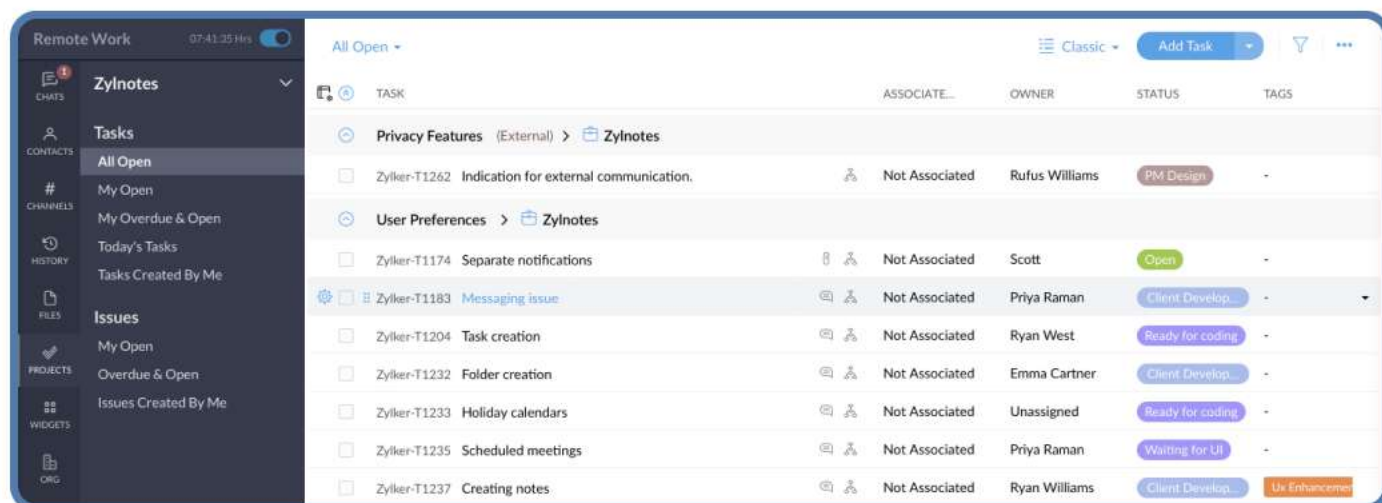
Get employee information from Zoho People

You can integrate Zoho Cliq with Zoho People and view Zoho People's employee information inside Zoho Cliq. You can also [apply for leave from the Remote Work tab in Zoho Cliq](#). This will create a leave request record in Zoho People.



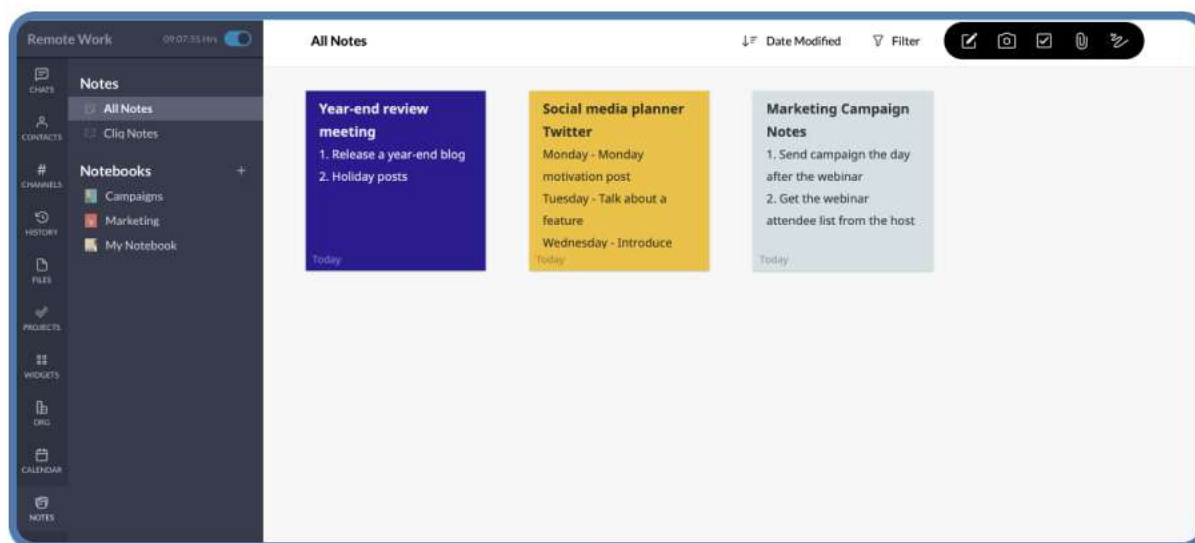
Manage your projects inside Zoho Cliq

Tracking and managing your tasks from a single interface is now possible with the [Zoho Projects-Zoho Cliq integration](#). You can access all your tasks and issues from the Projects tab. You can also map specific projects to channels in Cliq and receive notifications for activities performed in Zoho Projects.



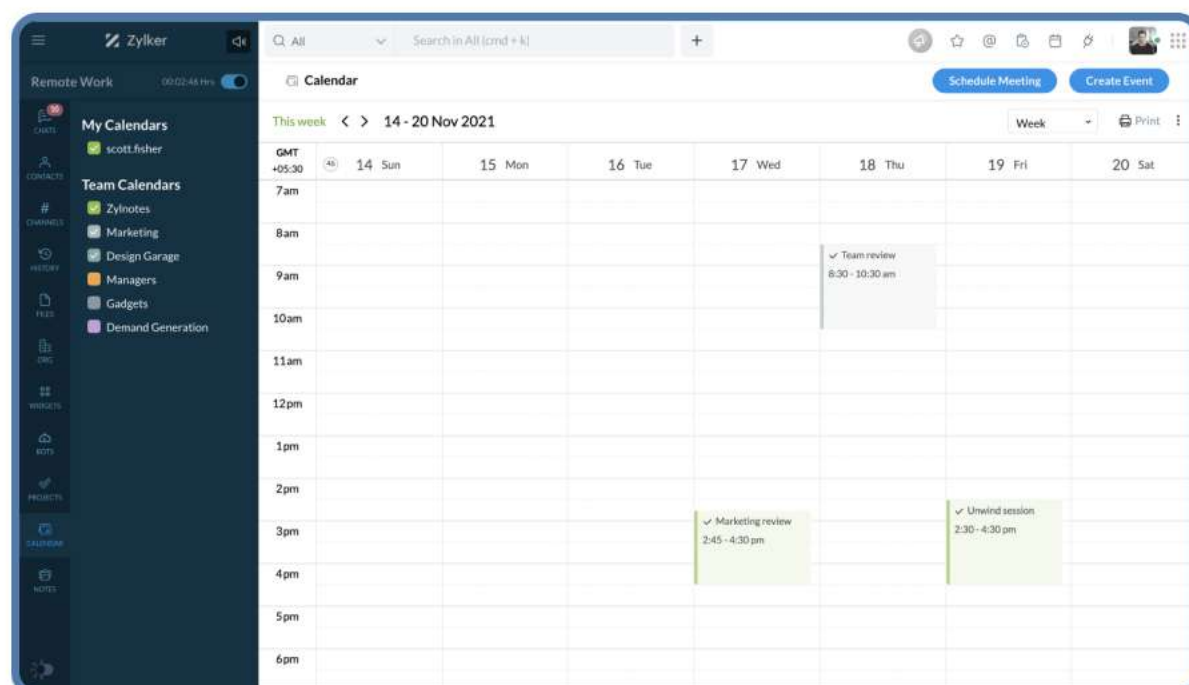
Access all your notes from Zoho Notebooks

The Zoho Notebook-Zoho Cliq integration lets you view and edit all your notebooks from inside Cliq. You can also take quick notes while attending meetings in Cliq, which will also be available under the Notes tab.

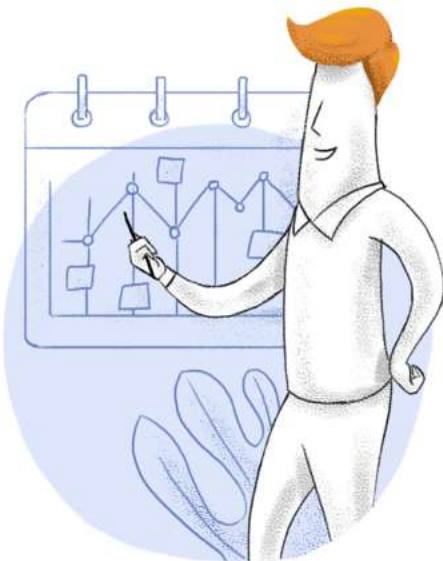


Schedule events and meetings across calendars

You can [view all your Zoho calendars](#) and schedule meetings in your Calendar section inside Zoho Cliq.



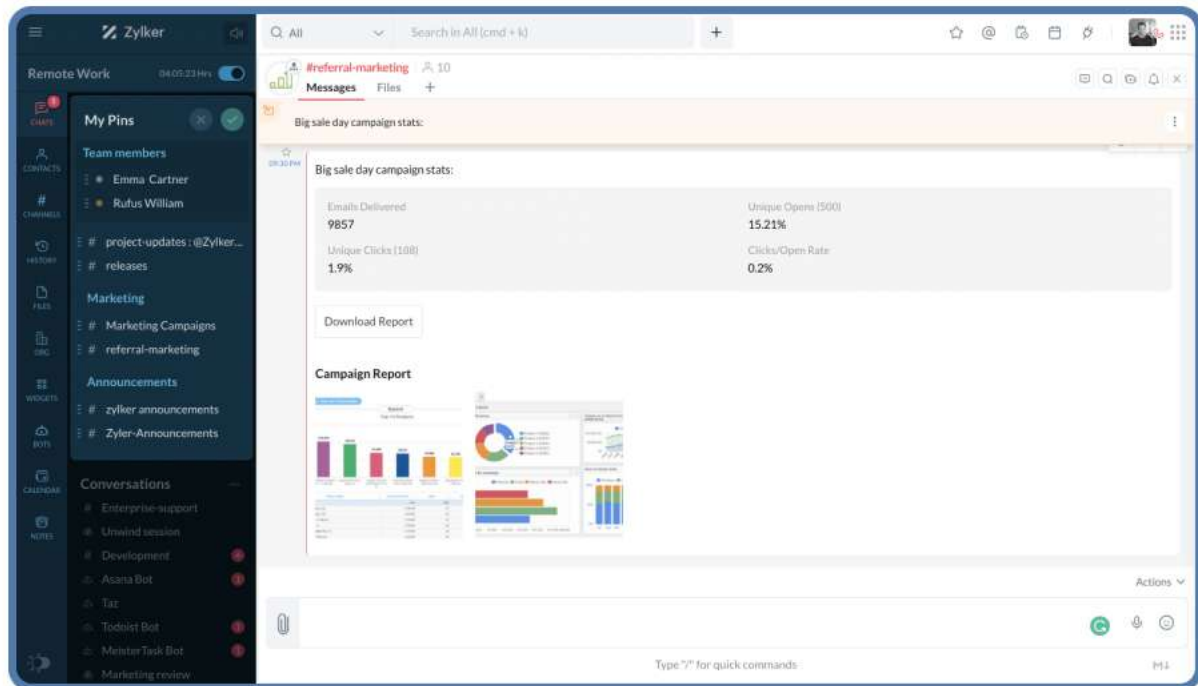
And that's not all!



The hybrid work model is meant to offer better organization, less burnout, effective communication, and more fun. To help your hybrid teams reap the benefits of this unique model, we've added more features to help fine-tune your organization's hybrid work style.

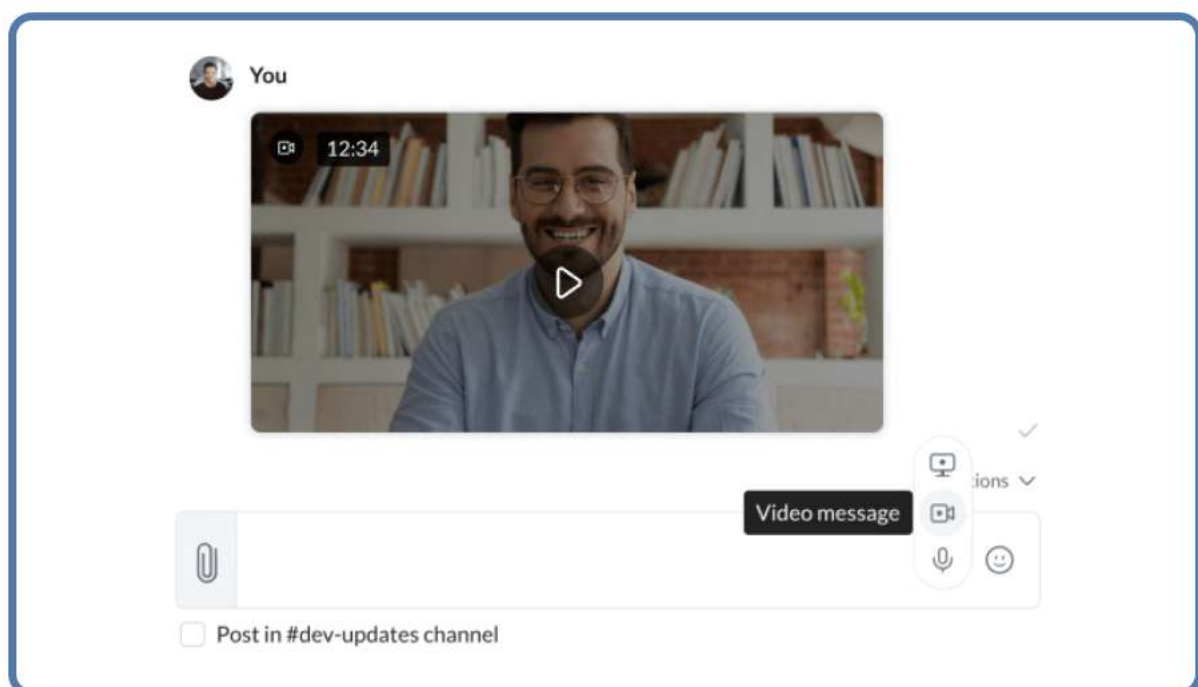
Keep your favorite chats organized

Pin your favorite chats and categorize all your pinned chats into different folders for better organization. This will help keep a proper tab on your important conversations.



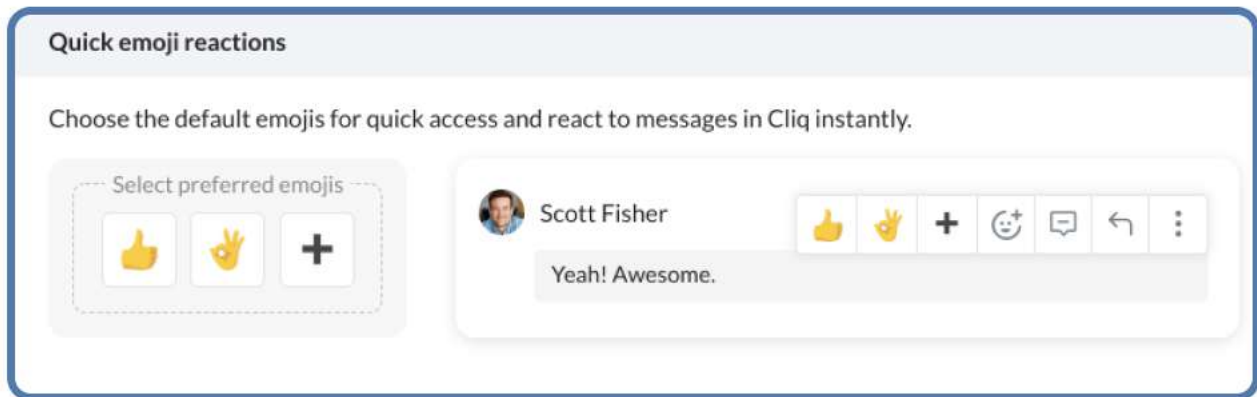
Video messages are the way to go

Sometimes, a meeting could have just been an email. To avoid allowing audio and video meetings to consume a major portion of your organization's work hours, you can now reduce meetings and limit your conversations [by recording and sending video messages through chat](#). You can also record your screen and send it as a message.



More actions and reactions

Do you frequently use the same smiley face or the thumbs up emoji to react to messages? [Set up your favorite three emojis or Zomoji reactions as quick reactions.](#)



Enjoy a complete Cliq experience on your mobile

Whether you're using Cliq from your laptop or your mobile phone, your experience will be seamless. We've made some significant changes to the mobile app to make your Cliq calls as smooth as on the Cliq web app. Enjoy more efficient calls and chats, even while you are on the move.



Zoho Cliq is a business communication tool that helps simplify and streamline your business communication with organized conversations, information that's easy to find, and connecting to the tools you love.

To put it simply, it helps improve a team's overall productivity and, in turn, impacts the business's performance.

Website - <https://www.zoho.com/cliq/>

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