HubStar gatherings of US and UK workplace leaders reveal latest challenges shaping the future of hybrid work

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The latest challenges shaping the future of hybrid work were identified during a recent series of roundtable events in the US and UK hosted by HubStar, a leader in dynamic workplace management technology.

HubStar's latest *Workplace Connect* events, in London and Boston, brought together top workplace leaders for in-depth discussions on the future of hybrid work. The attendees in each city offered perspectives from Corporate Real Estate (CRE), Workplace Experience, IT, HR, and more.

While topics had a different flavour in each city, it became clear that workplace leaders around the world share similar struggles when it comes to today's hybrid work environment.

"The roundtable discussions confirmed that the hybrid format is continuing to bring about significant changes to in-person attendance, office culture, and even the purpose of the modern office," said Steve Vatidis, HubStar's executive chairman.

The biggest issues were found to be:

1. Traditional RTO mandates are not delivering the results organizations had hoped for.

The *Workplace Connect* events revealed that return-to-office (RTO) mandates without enforcement tend to result in declining compliance over time – with employees needing both incentives (carrots) and accountability (sticks) to return to the office consistently.

Many workplace leaders are having to face the challenge of balancing enforcement of RTO mandates with enhancing workplace experience to attract and retain the best talent.

There has also been a significant shift in what employees value to encourage in-person attendance and engagement. Higher attendance can be driven by factors such as the provision of better amenities, the availability of bookable spaces that enable people to work alongside favourite colleagues, and the introduction of convenience-oriented scheduling (such as Friday training days).

2. Accurate data is workplace leaders' best friend – when they can get it.

Attendees emphasised the critical role of accurate data in making key workplace decisions, but many are struggling with incomplete pictures.

Gaining accurate attendance data is now seen as essential for leadership buy-in and for making adjustments to workplace strategy. There is also wider recognition of the growing importance of implementing sensors and Wi-Fi-based utilization technology to fill data gaps, with AI insights also used to help provide a fuller data picture.

3. The role of the office is still in flux.

Attendees agreed that we may be witnessing the last generation of an all-human workforce in the office. With AI automating more transactional work, offices may transition into experience-driven gathering spaces for collaboration, training, and social interaction. This transformation has immediate implications for space planning.

In the short term, there is a growing need for the functionality and design of the office to replicate the key comforts of remote setups to attract increased workplace attendance.

4. Many traditional workplace metrics are no longer relevant in the hybrid age.

Organizations are increasingly having to face the challenge of deciding which metrics best reflect hybrid workplace success and which human-centric metrics should be used to define and measure productivity in the hybrid office.

5. The challenge of meeting corporate goals for downsizing space whilst enhancing employee experience and maintaining a high-performance culture.

For full details of the many significant takeaways from the roundtable discussions in Boston and London, a free copy of HubStar's *Workplace Connect Q2 2025 Report* can now be downloaded HERE.

Workplace leaders interested in attending the next Workplace Connect roundtable event in their city, should email stefania_vatidis@hubstar.com to be added to the waitlist.