

Hybrid Work Policies Reinforce 'Caste System' Among Lawyers and Staff

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Vincent McGuinness and Michael Schmidt spoke with *The American Lawyer* about the challenges law firms face with hybrid work. Many law firms have begun asking employees to return to the office, but not all office attendance expectations are equal.

"Just because remote operations sufficed under extreme circumstances when firms had to comply with pandemic-era distancing requirements doesn't mean remote work is the best way for a law firm to function," said Mike. "We certainly did a very good job of getting the staff to have what they needed at their remote locations to assist themselves and the lawyers they were working with, but it doesn't mean it was the most efficient way of doing this, whether it was litigation support, document support, filing or responding to phones. Many of those functions have gone back to being in-person functions," he said.

"The firm offers completely remote working conditions for some information technology staff because the industry tends to support that. It would be hard to retain people if we didn't allow remote work situations. Their job tends to be less in terms of interface with paralegals, lawyers, and clients. Their absence in the office is not as acute," said Vince.

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