



# 2023 FUTURE OF WORK REPORT

---

Get insight into what really matters  
to the modern office worker

[tangoanalytics.com](https://tangoanalytics.com)

# Introduction

---

As workplaces around the world have embraced hybrid and remote work models, many employers have experienced tension between their desire to have workers back in the office and their need to keep those workers happy. Even some of the world's largest, most prestigious employers have had to walk back their return-to-office plans in reaction to employee responses.

This has fueled a global conversation about how much value a company's physical office space truly contributes to work. Although [studies](#) have shown that remote work has had little impact on productivity, many employers and thought leaders argue that this shift may have other harder-to-measure consequences, such as loss of innovation or weakening of company culture.

After a year of reporting on the ongoing conversation about hybrid work in "The Future of Work" newsletter, Tango conducted a study of hybrid, remote, and fully in-person office workers throughout 2022. The study explores the assumed link between a physical campus and strong company culture, differences in how employees experience common workplace challenges, and employee preferences about where and how they work.

The Future of Work study asked office workers to self-select whether they work fully in-person, fully remote, or a hybrid arrangement, and then separated them into distinct tracks based on these groupings. The tracks used a combination of Likert scale questions, ratings, and free responses to gauge their sentiment and experience with their current work arrangement.

## Here's what we'll cover in our report on the study's findings:

- [Company Culture](#)
- [Work Preferences](#)
- [Workplace Challenges](#)
- [Campus Amenities](#)
- [Desk Reservations](#)

## But first, here are some of the most interesting findings:

- Fully in-person respondents were least satisfied with their employer's company culture
- All three groups wanted their employer to provide access to an office
- Most fully remote employees claimed hybrid work was their ideal model
- In-person workers struggle more with interruptions and privacy than remote workers
- Childcare was the least important amenity to respondents
- Most employers with hybrid workers are wasting space on dedicated workstations

# Remote work's impact on company culture

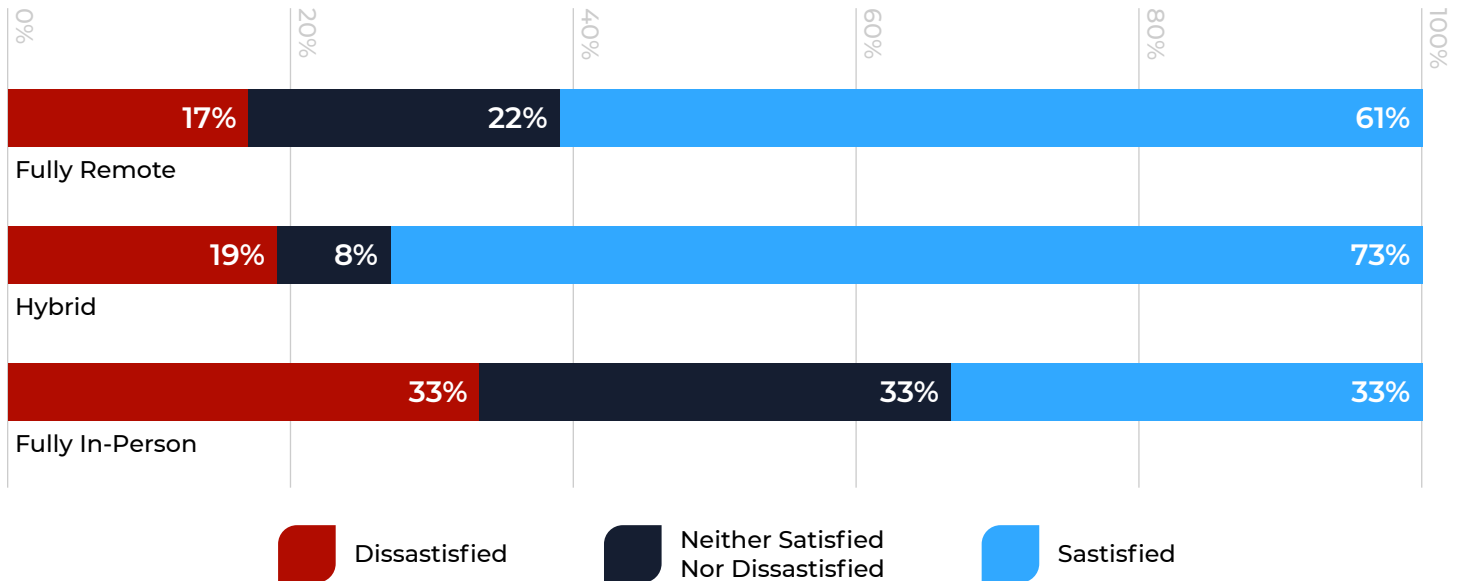
Company culture is notoriously difficult to define and measure, but it's also been a centerpiece of the conversation around the value that physical office space contributes to a business. Part of the difficulty in defining and quantifying company culture lies in the fact that employees in the same office (and even on the same team) can have very different perceptions of their employer's company culture based on their personal experience. Employers can influence company culture through business decisions, goals, policies, and practices, but every employee contributes to the company culture as well.

This makes company culture highly subjective, and it isn't inherently positive. So for the purposes of this study, we asked fully remote, hybrid, and fully in-person employees to rate their satisfaction with their employer's company culture, and to rate the degree to which they agreed with the statement, "Working on campus is necessary for a strong company culture."

Here's what we found.



## How satisfied are you with your company's culture?



### Fully in-person employees were least satisfied with their employer's company culture

One of the main arguments for bringing employees back to in-person offices has been that these shared workspaces are the key to experiencing company culture. If you're physically encountering your coworkers, you're more likely to interact with them. And an employer can have greater influence on your experience with the company if they design the physical space you occupy while working.

But again, company culture isn't inherently positive. This may be why **just one-third of fully in-person respondents reported that they were satisfied with their employer's company culture**—equal to the respondents who were dissatisfied with their employer's company culture.

By contrast, **61% of fully remote employees reported being satisfied with their employer's company culture**, including 28% who were very satisfied. (Only 17% were dissatisfied.)

Interestingly, the group most likely to report being satisfied with their employer's company culture was hybrid workers. **Nearly three-quarters of hybrid respondents reported being satisfied (73%)**. Less than one in five hybrid respondents reported being dissatisfied (19%).

There are several possible reasons for this response from the various groups.

In our free-response section, fully remote respondents shared what they liked best about working remotely. While the lack of commute came up most frequently, respondents also noted that they felt safer from racism and sexual harassment when working from the comfort of their homes. One respondent specifically noted, “I have endured lots of racism and sexism in the office.”

This theme has come up in conversations around company culture and remote work before: given the choice, marginalized groups are most likely to opt out of in-person work in favor of remote employment. Remote and hybrid workers are less likely to have negative interactions with coworkers. And these negative interactions are inseparable from an employee’s experience of their employer’s company culture. The employees a company hires, the behavior they exhibit, and the company’s tolerance (or lack of

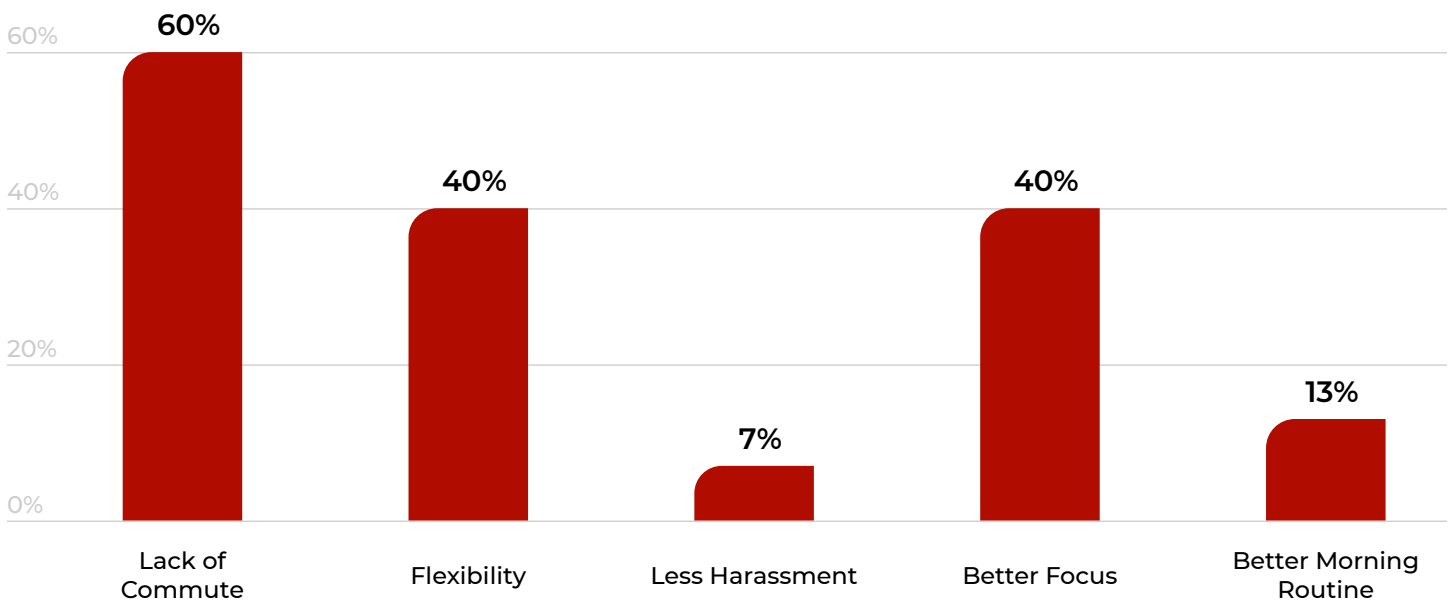
awareness) of this behavior all contribute to company culture.

Additionally, it’s worth noting that an employer’s work-from-home policy also reflects their company culture. Flexibility is one of the most desired qualities in an employer today, and it’s difficult for an employer to claim that flexibility is part of their company culture without offering the ability to work remotely at least part of the time.

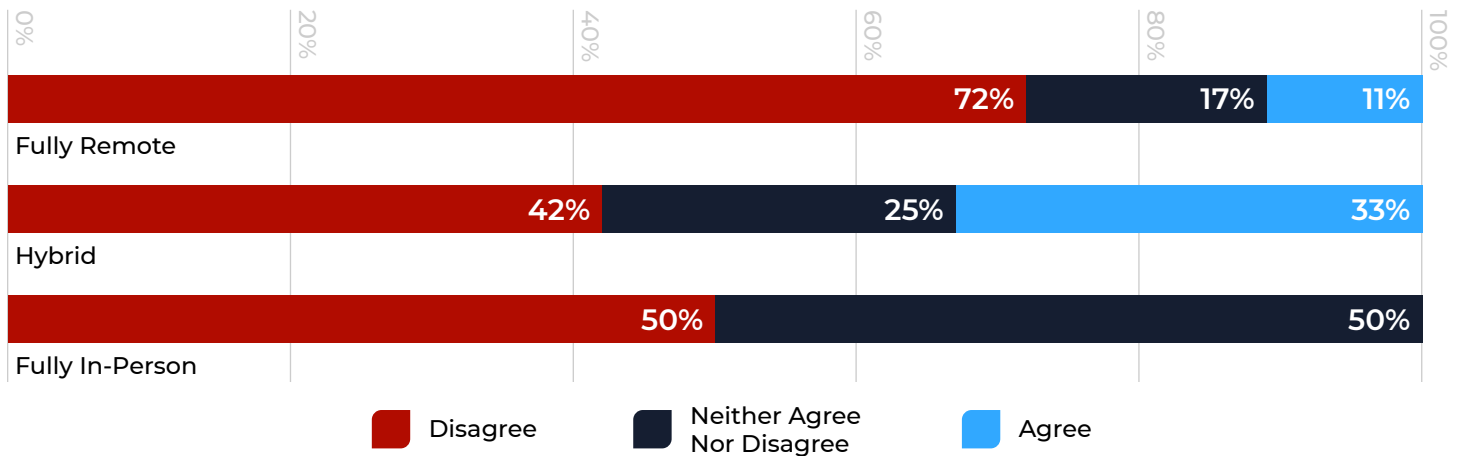
It may be surprising that hybrid employees were most satisfied with their employer’s company culture, but as we’ll discuss in our review of workplace satisfaction in the next section, most employees prefer to have a campus they can physically access when they want, and hybrid employees get the benefits of both remote and in-person work.

## What do you like best about working remotely?

Free response question, percentage of responses that mentioned the following:



## "Working on campus is necessary for a strong company culture."



## Hybrid employees were most likely to link working on campus with strong company culture

Most fully remote and fully in-person employees disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "Working on campus is necessary for a strong company culture." However, 58% of hybrid employees agreed with the statement, including 35% who strongly agreed.

Half of the fully in-person workers we surveyed disagreed with the statement, and just one-third agreed. Seven out of ten fully remote employees disagreed, while just 11% agreed.

Not a single fully remote respondent strongly agreed that working on campus is necessary for a strong company culture. One-third strongly disagreed.

Since most of our fully in-person respondents weren't satisfied with their employer's company culture, it shouldn't come as a shock that they didn't believe working in-person is what makes company culture strong. In fact, their presence in the office could easily exacerbate frustrations with their employer's company culture by increasing the frequency of negative interactions.

Fully remote employees reported higher satisfaction with their employer's company culture than their fully in-person counterparts, and they don't do *any* work on a company campus. For them, company culture has nothing to do with campus. Their experience with the company is based on decisions, policies, goals, practices, and digital interactions with colleagues.

Hybrid employees were most likely to be satisfied with their employer's company culture and most likely to agree that working on campus is necessary for a strong company culture. This may seem odd if working on campus increases negative interactions as well as positive ones, but again, as we'll examine below, most employees want some access to a physical campus.

Additionally, [socialization](#) has been one of the touted benefits of the return-to-office and a core component of company culture. Hybrid employees are in the unique position of having the flexibility to get work done at home and use their time on campus to collaborate and socialize with the coworkers they want to connect with. Whether time in the office is based on a predetermined schedule or employees coordinate it among themselves, this is often a crucial time for collaboration that can be difficult to replicate digitally.



# Work Preferences

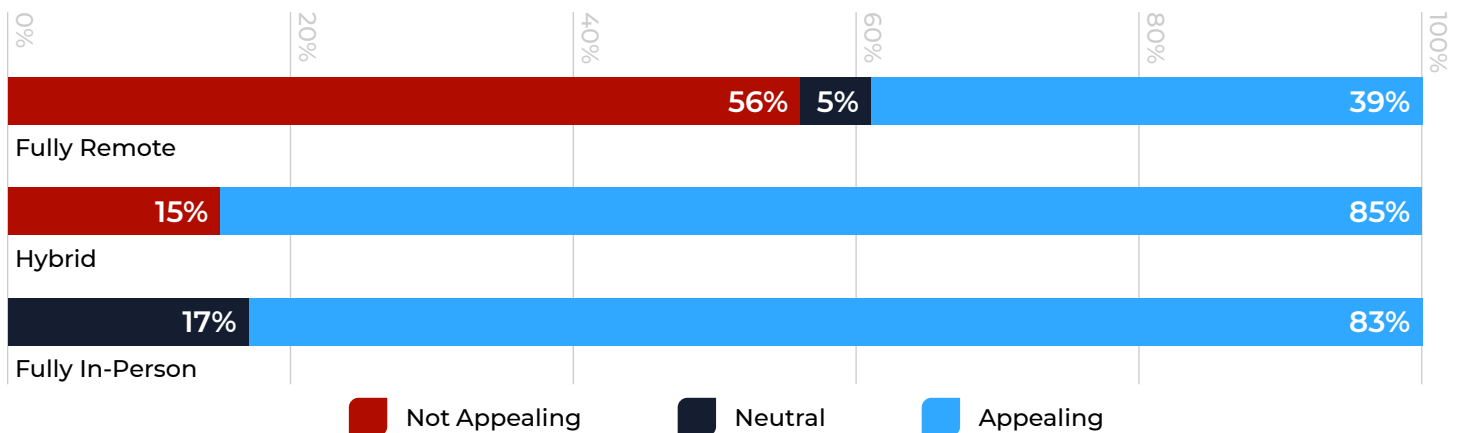
The conversation about remote work versus working on campus often involves conflict between employee preferences and employer preferences. For the purposes of our study, we wanted to know how appealing remote work was to fully in-person employees, how appealing access to a company office space was to remote and hybrid employees, how often employees would ideally like to be on campus, and how satisfied employees were with their employer's approach to remote work.

Past studies, like [Jabra's Hybrid Ways of Working report](#), have noted that what “flexibility” really means is giving employees the autonomy to decide when and how they work. We wanted to see how satisfied these distinct groups were with how they work now, and what they'd like to be different in their ideal work arrangement.

Here's what we found.



## How appealing is it for your employer to provide an office you can access?



### All three groups wanted their employer to provide access to an office

Whether an employer owns their own office space or rents one of the various kinds of coworking spaces available today, offering a physical campus can give employees access to equipment they may not have at home, and it can serve as a central location for collaboration. Not everyone wants or needs this to be productive and effective, but a sizable percentage of respondents from each group indicated that it was appealing to them.

The vast majority (83%) of fully in-person respondents claimed that it was appealing for their employer to provide an office they can access. Two-thirds of them claimed that this was very appealing to them. None of these respondents felt it was not important. This makes sense, since these employees are more likely to have jobs that have at least some duties that cannot be performed remotely. For example, some of these respondents worked in job functions like facilities maintenance and design and construction. Additionally, since these employees don't currently do any work remotely, it may be harder for them to imagine doing their job from somewhere else.

A similar percentage of hybrid employees expressed interest in their employers providing access to an office (84%). However, less than one-third (31%) claimed

it was very appealing. Just 12% indicated that it was not appealing.

Fully remote employees showed the least interest in their employer providing access to an office, but 38% still indicated that it was appealing to them, including 17% who indicated that it was very appealing. However, 56% claimed that access to an employer-provided office was not appealing.

This could reflect that fully remote employees have stronger feelings about the value of *not* being in the office. In our free response asking fully remote employees what they liked most about working remotely, 60% of the responses mentioned not having to commute to an office. It's also possible that fully remote employees are more likely to live further away, making it more difficult to access the benefits of an office. If someone got a job with a company in another state or several hours away, the commute would be more disruptive, and a rented coworking space is unlikely to provide the benefit of in-person interactions with colleagues.

Interestingly, when asked about the ideal frequency that employees would like to come into an employer's office, most fully remote employees indicated here that they would like at least *some* access to an office.



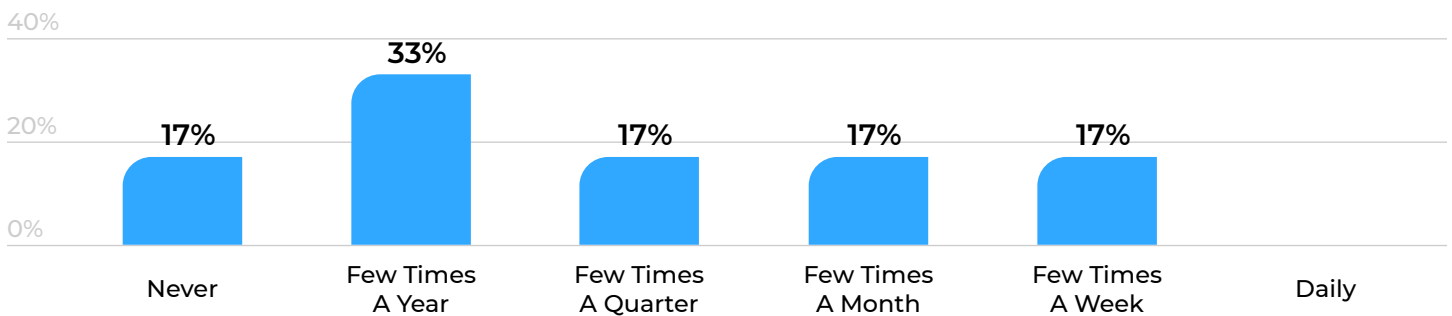
## Most employees claimed hybrid work is their ideal model

Over the last few years, employers have wrestled with deciding which jobs can be performed remotely, and which roles require at least some time on campus. Employers and employees haven't always agreed about where to draw the line or how to strike the balance between in-person and remote days.

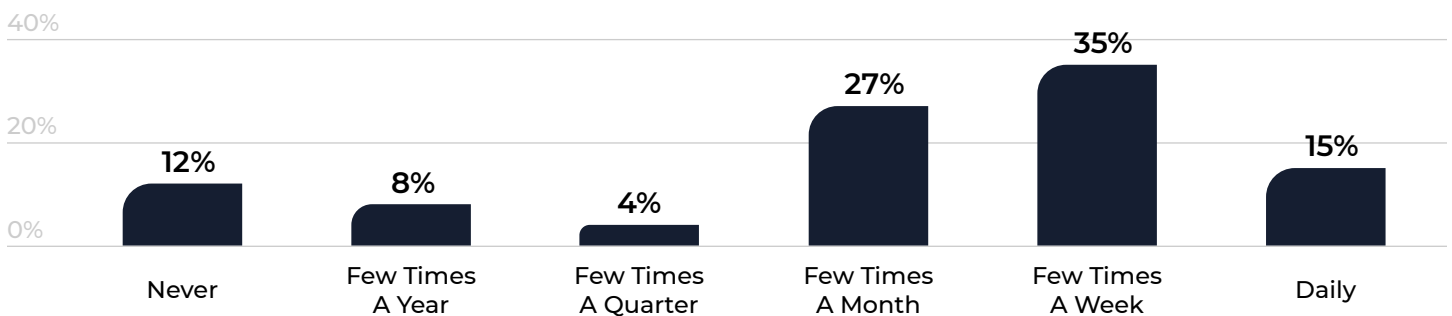
Given the choice, most respondents—whether they're remote, hybrid, or fully in-person—said they'd prefer to work in a hybrid work model. We asked each group how often they'd work from their employer's office "in their ideal situation."

### In your ideal situation, how often would you work from the office?

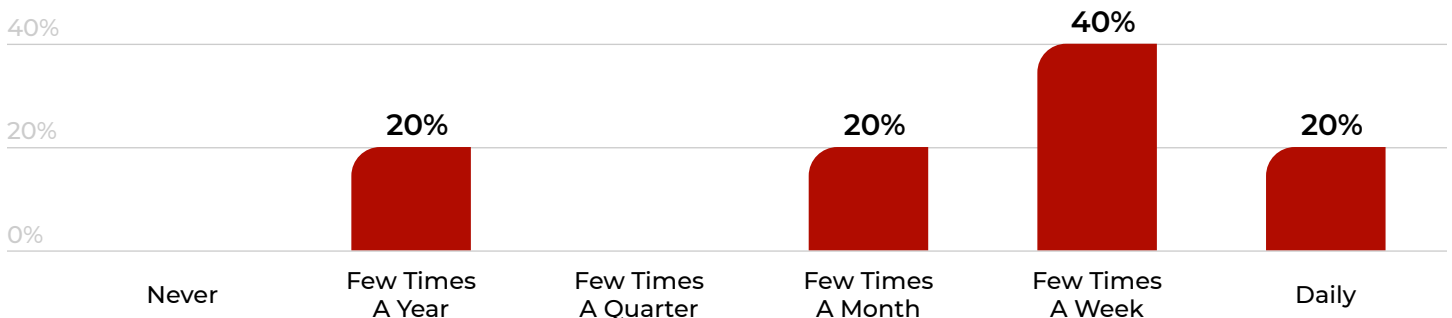
Fully Remote:



Hybrid:



Fully In-Person:



Just 20% of fully in-person employees we surveyed claimed they'd like to come in daily. Four out of ten said they'd prefer to come in a few days a week. The rest said their ideal frequency would be somewhere between a few times per year to a few times per month. However, none of them said they'd prefer to never come into the office.

Interestingly, 15% of hybrid employees said they'd prefer to come in daily. This doesn't necessarily mean they'd be giving up on the hybrid model, but they certainly crave frequent time in the office. A little more than one third of the hybrid employees we surveyed (35%) said they'd prefer to work in the office a few days per week. About one in four (27%) said they'd prefer to come in a few times per month. Just 12% said they'd prefer to never work from their employer's office.

Fully remote respondents were the most split. While none of them indicated that they'd prefer to come into the office daily, 83% said that their ideal situation would involve working from their employer's office at least a few times per year, and one-third claimed they'd like to come in at least a few times per month.

This supports [Jabra's findings](#), where employees who had the greatest degree of autonomy to choose where and how they work were most likely to say they'd prefer a hybrid model. While some employees wanted to work in the office daily and others never wanted to come in, the general desire was for flexibility to work from the office *sometimes*.



# Workplace Challenges

An office is optimized for office work. A home or coffee shop is not. So a prevailing assumption in the dialog about remote work has been that working remotely would amplify common workplace challenges. Can employees find the privacy they need if they share a small space with family or roommates? Will they face more interruptions if they have the ability to run errands and do other activities throughout the workday? How will they connect with coworkers or get the visibility they need with superiors to have a

successful career? Do they even have room to work, or the equipment they need to be productive?

We asked fully remote and fully in-person employees to rate common workplace challenges on a scale of one to seven, with one indicating that it was not at all challenging and seven indicating that it was very challenging.

Here's what we found.



## In-person employees reported having less privacy than remote workers

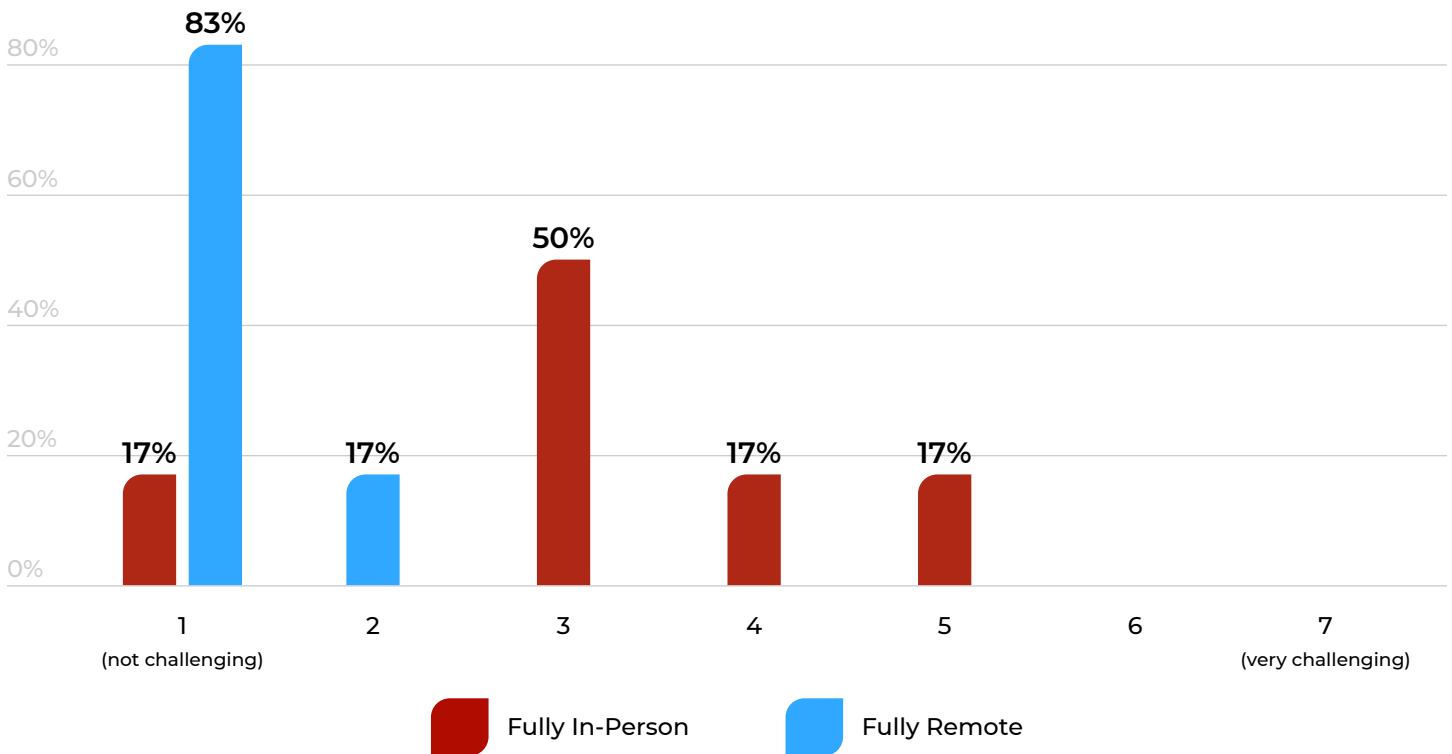
As employers have insisted that the office allows employees to be more productive and have crucial interactions with coworkers, a common response from workers has been that they actually experience the most interruptions in the office.

For some, it's that they can't resist talking to coworkers and being social. For others, it's that their colleagues won't leave them alone long enough to be productive.

When you're more accessible to coworkers—and they're more accessible to you—it makes sense that you'd experience more interruptions.

Not to mention, most remote workers have set aside space where they can work alone, while in-person workers may have to work in large open spaces with little privacy. Seven out of ten remote workers reported that they work from a dedicated home office, while the remainder worked from another multi-purpose space in their home.

### How challenging is privacy in the workplace?

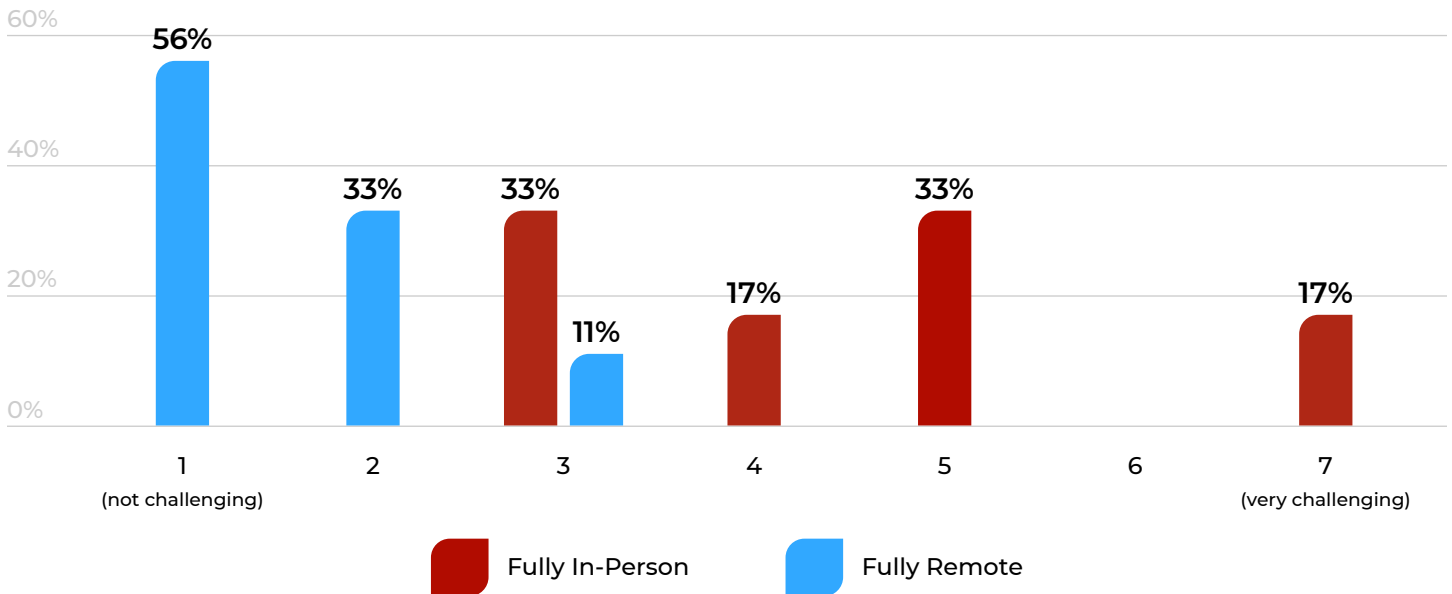


## In-person employees reported having more interruptions than remote workers

Of all the workplace challenges we asked employees about, the greatest difference was in the degree to which remote and fully in-person employees reported struggling with interruptions and finding enough privacy.

83% of remote respondents reported that finding enough privacy is not at all challenging, while just 17% of fully in-person respondents said the same. Half of our fully in-person respondents claimed that frequently experiencing interruptions was challenging, including 17% who indicated it's very challenging. By contrast, 55% of remote workers reported that it was not at all challenging.

### How challenging are interruptions in the workplace?





## Remote workers reported having a (slightly) easier time connecting with coworkers

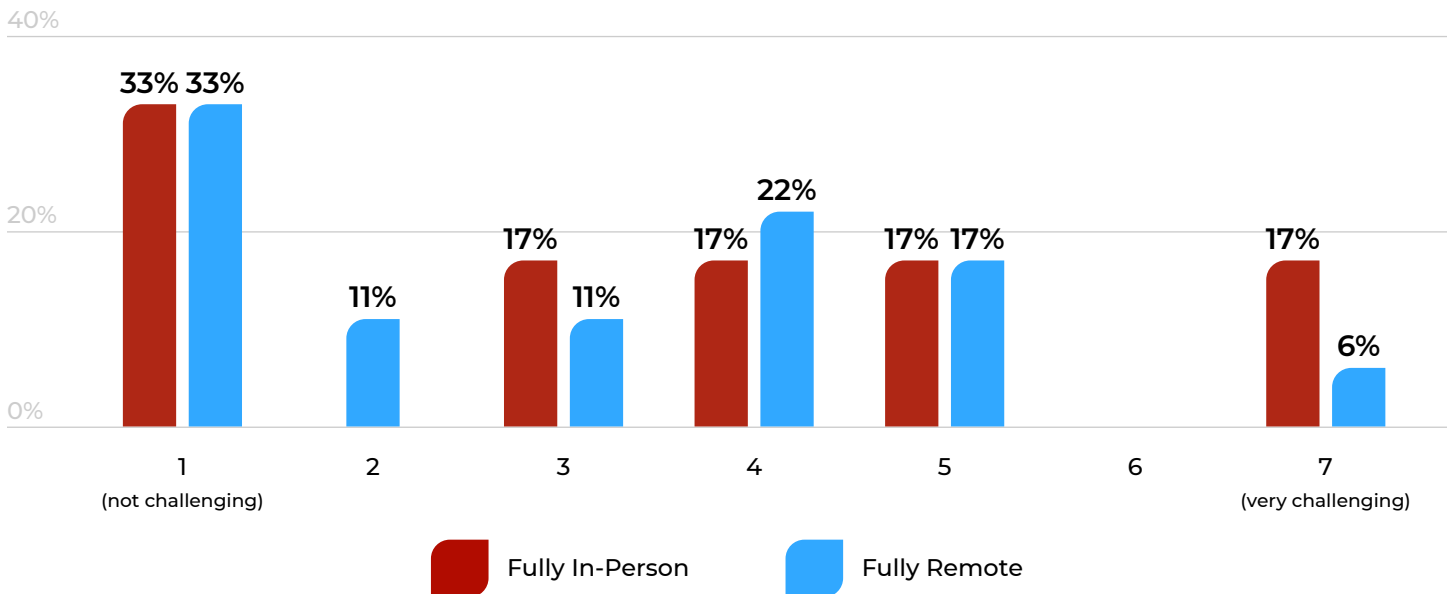
While digital tools are making it easier for remote and distributed teams to socialize, and new solutions continue to emerge, this is still the area where remote workers reported the greatest difficulty. However, they still rated it lower than fully in-person respondents.

Just 6% of remote workers reported that connecting with coworkers is very challenging, and one third claimed it was not at all challenging. Everyone else fell somewhere in between, giving it an average score of 3 out of 7. By contrast, 17% of in-person employees reported that connecting with coworkers is very

challenging, and again, one third claimed it was not at all challenging. On average, in-person workers rated this challenge 3.5 out of 7.

The challenge of connecting with coworkers may be based more on an employee's personality than where they work. But it's also possible that in general, remote workers *are less concerned* about connecting with coworkers. They don't spend the majority of their time *around* their coworkers, so the challenge may not affect them as much.

## How challenging is it to connect with colleagues?



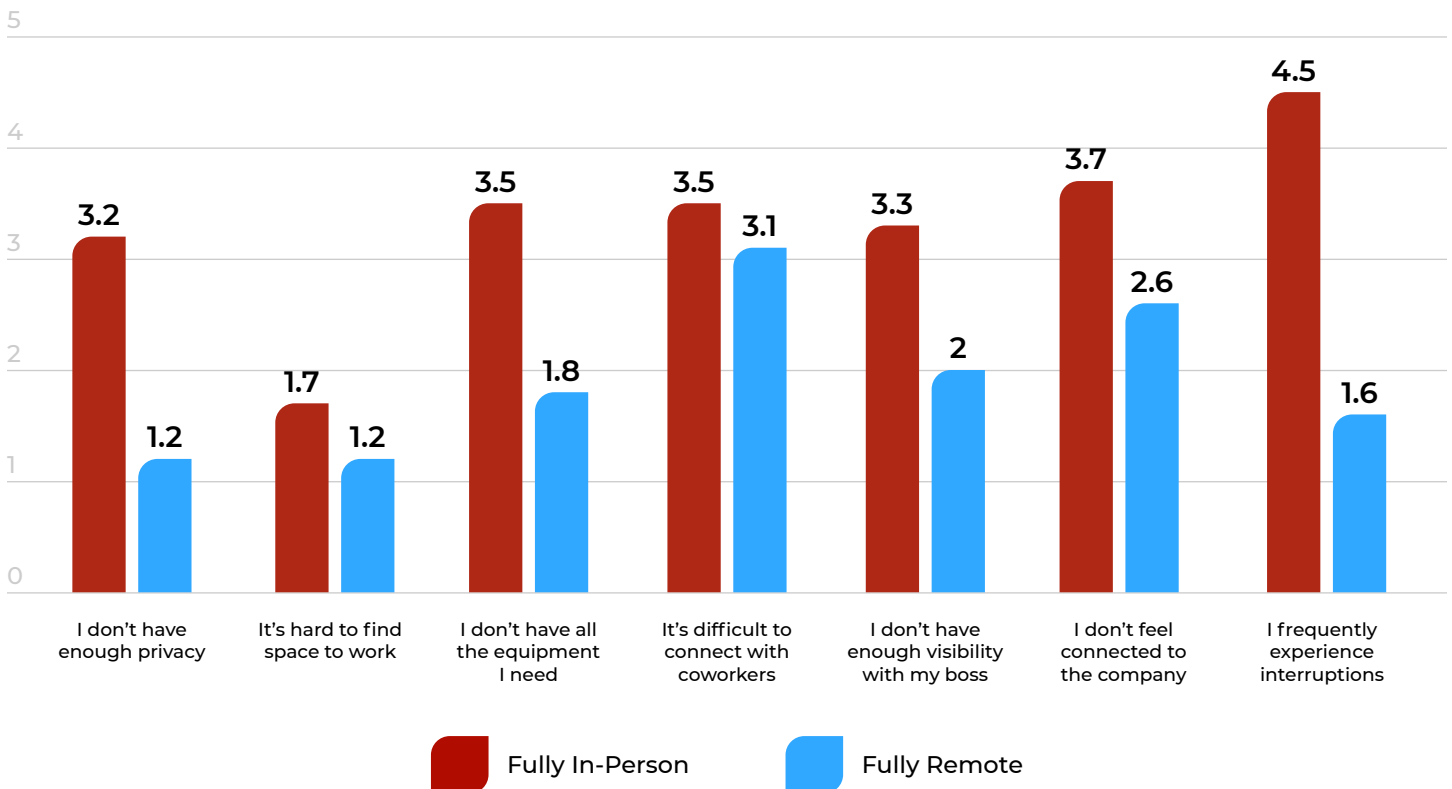


## Remote workers found other workplace challenges less difficult than fully in-person workers

The greatest gaps in how remote and fully in-person workers rated workplace challenges were in interruptions and privacy, and remote workers found connecting with coworkers more difficult. Across the board, remote workers gave lower average ratings to other workplace challenges than in-person workers. Notably, finding space to work was the one challenge neither group found particularly challenging. Fully in-person respondents gave the challenge an average rating of 1.7 out of 7, while fully remote respondents gave it an average of 1.2 out of 7.

Remote workers reported having a significantly easier time getting the equipment they needed than in-person workers. They rated this challenge an average of 1.8 out of 7, as opposed to fully in-person workers, who rated it 3.5 out of 7. This could be because employers with remote workers are doing a good job equipping them, but it's also possible that the roles of fully in-person respondents (which, again, included job functions like facilities maintenance and design and construction) required them to have access to more specialized and difficult-to-obtain equipment than remote workers.

### How would you rank the following workplace challenges?



Another challenge we examined was visibility with superiors. Advocates for the return to the office have argued that remote workers are losing valuable face time with their managers and bosses, which could negatively impact their ability to advance in the company. Just 6% of remote workers felt this was very challenging, as opposed to 17% of fully in-person employees. On average, remote workers gave this challenge a 2 out of 7, while fully in-person employees gave it a 3.3 out of 7. While remote workers have no physical access to their bosses, that clearly doesn't seem to be holding them back.

A worker's visibility with their boss completely depends on their role and their personal initiative. A fully in-person employee may not have duties that require them to interact with a boss. Their location may make it impossible for a boss to see them without going out of their way to do so. Meanwhile, with so much office communication happening via digital channels, remote workers can still have similar opportunities for meaningful interactions. They just can't expect their boss to take them out for lunch. It's also possible that remote workers simply found visibility with their bosses to be less important,

especially when weighed against the benefits of working from home.

The one remaining workplace challenge we explored was feeling connected to the company. For both groups, this was the second-highest rated challenge. Remote workers gave it an average of 2.6, while fully in-person workers gave it an average of 3.7, respectively. But while the average ratings make it seem equally challenging to both groups, the reality is that remote workers were far more divided about this challenge. About 44% of remote workers felt that this wasn't a challenge at all, as opposed to 33% of fully in-person workers. This also means remote workers who *did* find it challenging tended to rate it as a more significant challenge than their in-person counterparts.

This could be an indicator that for some people, physically occupying an employer's office does contribute to their sense of connection to the company. However, considering how fully in-person employees rated this challenge, an employee's role and daily duties could certainly have an impact as well.

# Campus Amenities

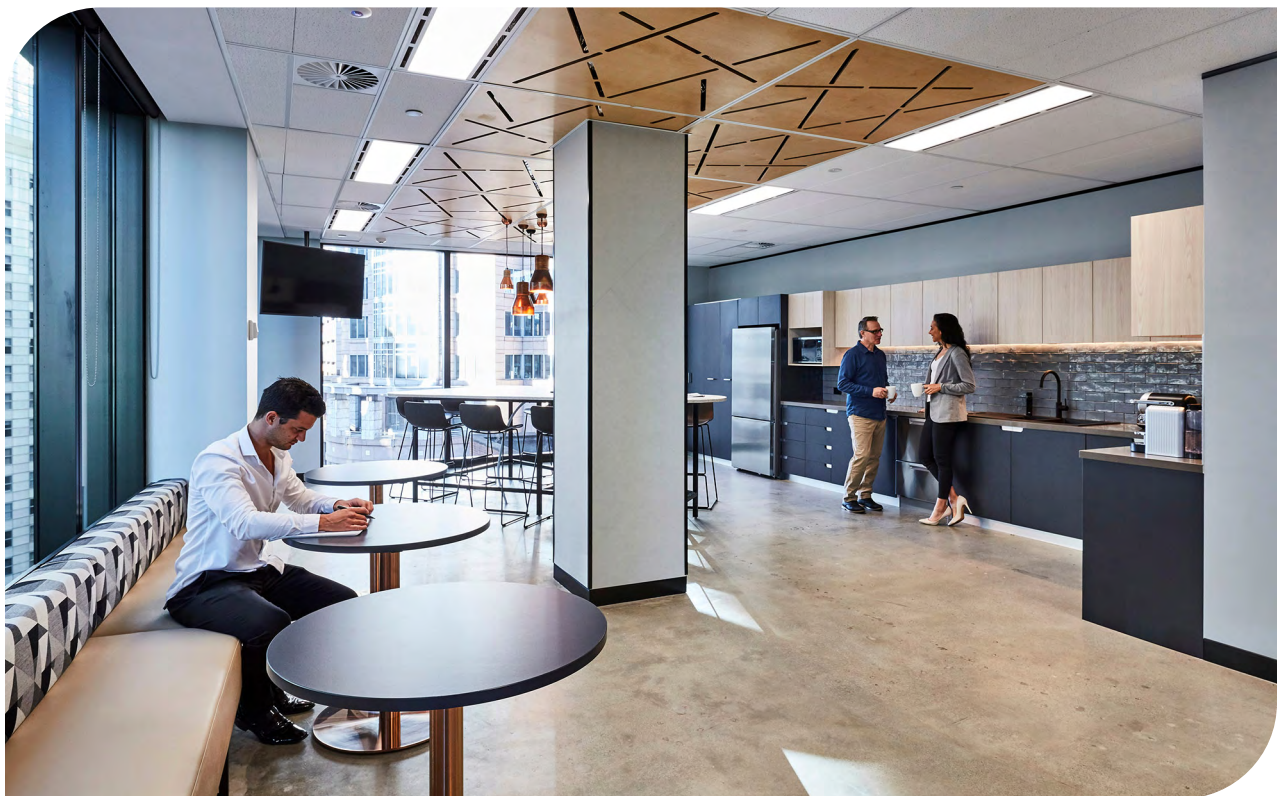
In the past, the right amenities have been a major driver for employee recruitment and retention. Over the years, some businesses have developed reputations for resort-like campuses that their employees don't want to leave. But right now, many employers are struggling just to get employees in the door.

Amenities can fall in and out of fashion. Recently, amenities like childcare and wellness rooms have received a lot of attention. But it's vital that employers

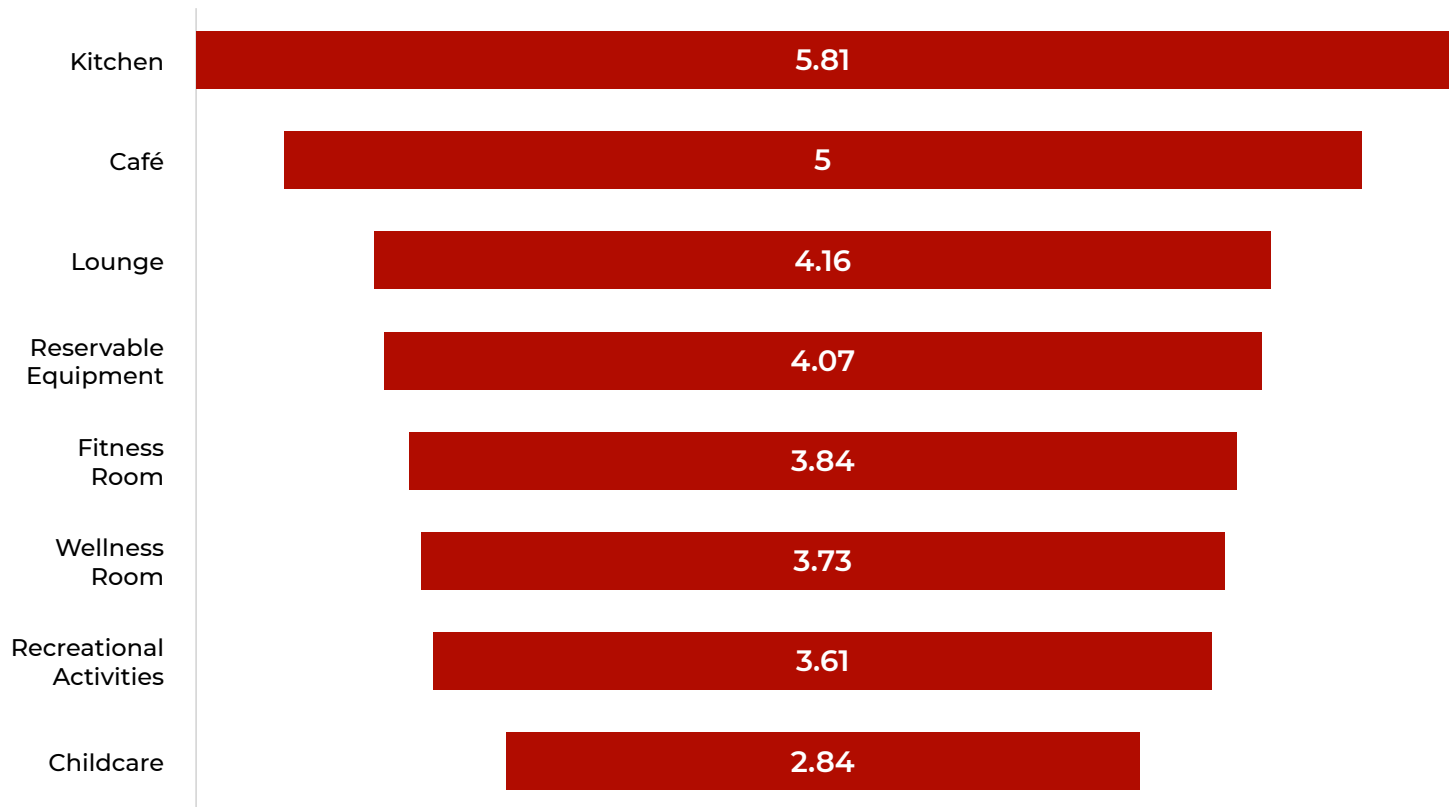
focus their efforts on optimizing their space for their unique employee population.

For the purposes of our study, we asked respondents to rate the importance of kitchens, lounges, cafés, fitness rooms, wellness rooms, recreational activities, reservable equipment, and childcare from one to seven, with one being "not important" and seven being "very important." We also asked respondents to share which amenities their employer offers.

Here's what we found.



### Importance of amenities (average rating):



### Kitchens and cafés were the most desired amenities

Out of all the amenities we asked about, kitchens received the highest average score: 5.8. More than half of all respondents (56%) rated it very important. Whether a respondent's employer already provided a kitchen had little impact on how they rated its importance.

If people are going to work from an employer's office, it makes sense that such a large percentage of them would want a designated location to store, prepare, and eat lunch. **Yet 28% of respondents said their employer doesn't have a kitchen.**

Renovating an existing space to accommodate kitchen appliances certainly isn't easy, but as employers consider new office buildings, it will be valuable to recognize the appeal this amenity holds for fully in-person and hybrid employees alike.

Cafés were the second-most desired amenity, with an average rating of 5 out of 7. Nearly one third of respondents (29%) said a café was very important to them. Since employers have emphasized that time in the office is a crucial opportunity for collaboration, networking, and face-to-face interaction, it makes sense that workers place greater importance on a space designed for socialization.

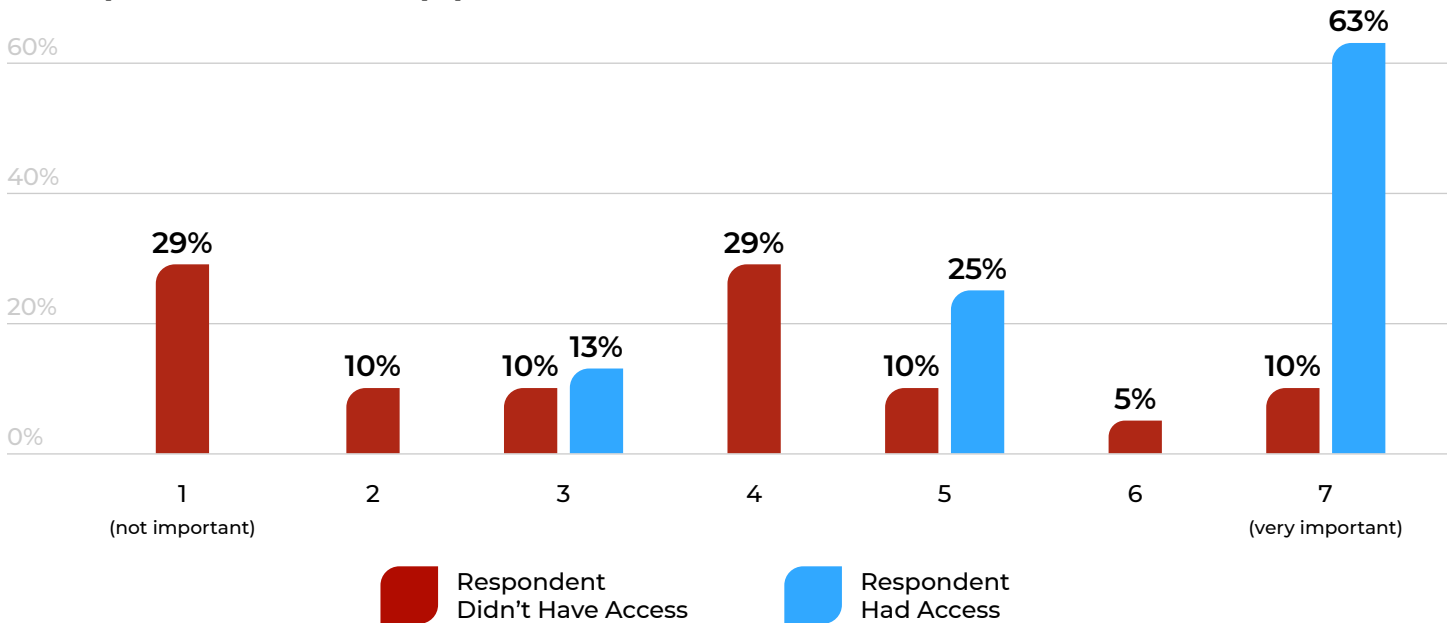
## Workers with access to reservable recreational equipment were significantly more likely to say it's very important to them

Some employers provide workers with reservable equipment like bikes, kayaks, disc golf sets, e-scooters, and other personal transportation devices or recreational equipment. Workers who had access to them were far more likely to say it was very important than workers who did not.

Among workers who said their employer didn't provide reservable equipment, just 10% said that it was very important to them. By contrast, 62% of workers whose employers provided reservable equipment said that it was very important to them.

Access to these amenities clearly seems to influence how likely employees are to value them. But it's also possible that employers who offer reservable equipment are more likely to attract employees who value these amenities. Furthermore, a population of employees who value reservable equipment may be more likely to influence their employer to provide them over time. If half your employees are asking you to invest in a relatively low cost amenity, it's pretty easy to oblige them.

### How important is reservable equipment?





## Childcare was least important to respondents

Childcare is one of the most expensive amenities to implement because it requires additional dedicated employees, continual investment in supplies and enriching activities, and comes with significant liability. However, it's also an amenity that receives a lot of attention, as working parents with young children have few childcare options—especially affordable ones.

Obviously, this is an amenity that is going to matter most to employees who need it, and it will have very little importance to employees who don't have young children and don't plan to have them in the near future.

In our study, childcare received the lowest average scores from respondents. Workers gave it an average rating of 2.8 out of 7—almost a full point below the next lowest-rated amenity. Two thirds of all

respondents said employer-provided childcare was not important to them. Still, 13% said it was very important to them.

Notably, childcare was also the least *available* amenity for our respondents. Just 3% said that their employer provided it. This means that even if many of our respondents had young children, nearly all of them would have already had to make other childcare arrangements. So if their employer started providing childcare, it wouldn't necessarily change anything for them.

Additionally, many parents are very particular about childcare. Some wouldn't use an employer-provided childcare solution even if it were helpful or more affordable, as their standards or preferences may be different than their employer's.





# Desk Reservations

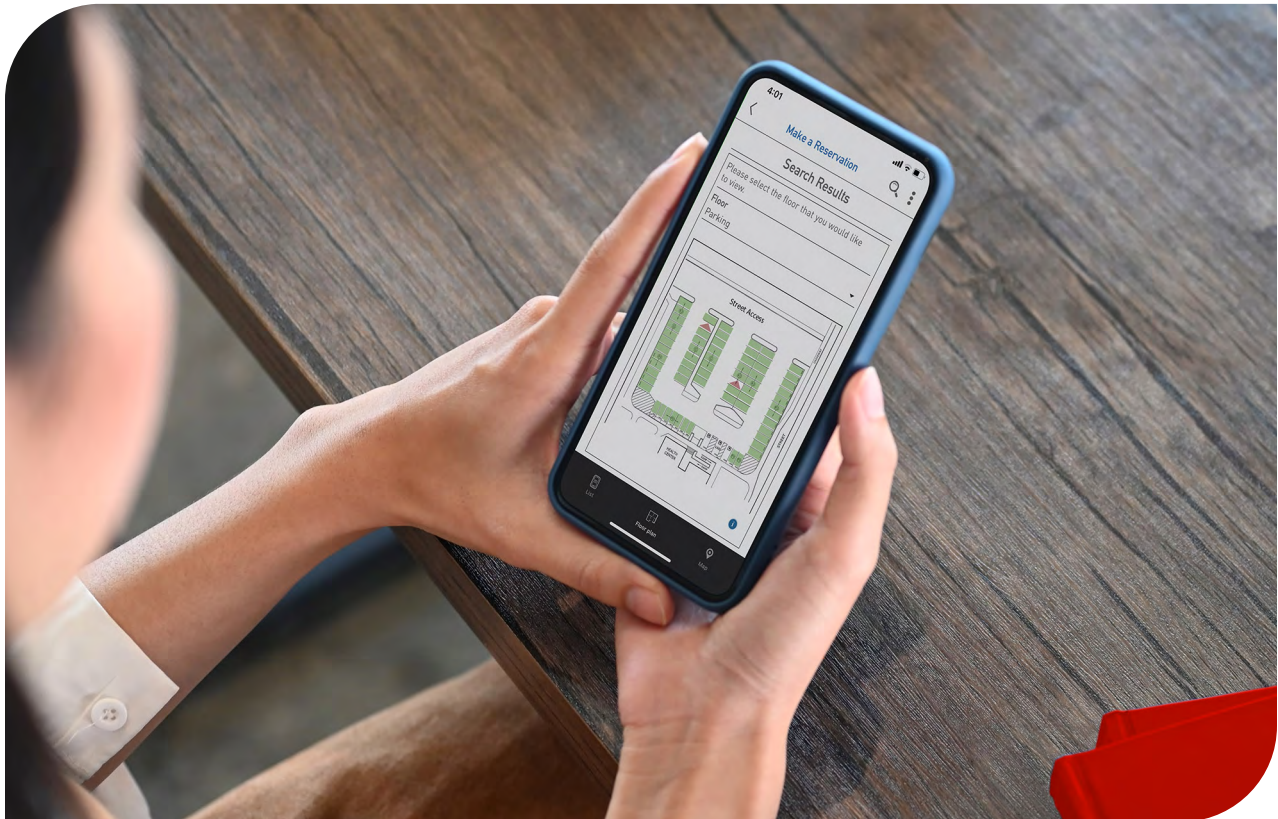
Whether employees have assigned days in the office or flexibility to choose when they come in, [hybrid workplaces](#) have to accommodate an employee population that changes throughout the week. Most hybrid employers handle this with desk reservation software, also known as office hoteling software.

Zeroing in on hybrid workers, our study asked respondents about their employer's approach to office reservations.

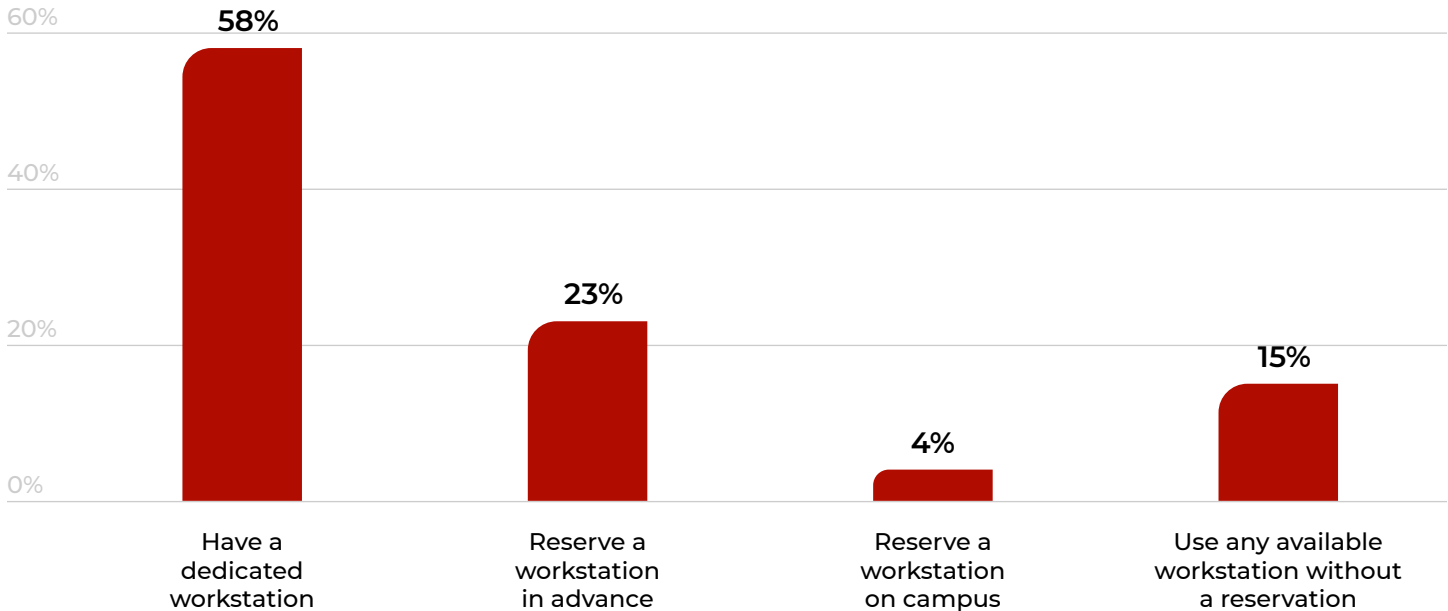
We asked respondents to share how they find a workstation on the days they work in the office. We wanted to know if they:

- Have a dedicated workstation in the office
- Reserve a workstation in advance
- Reserve a workstation when they arrive at the office
- Use any available workstation without a reservation

Here's what we found.



## As a hybrid employee, when you do work on campus, how do you access a workstation?



### Most hybrid workers reported having a dedicated workstation at the office

More than half of the respondents (58%) shared that they have a dedicated workstation on campus. About one in four (23%) reserve a workstation in advance. 15% use any available workstation without a prior reservation (also known as hot desking). And just 4% reserve a workstation when they arrive at the office.

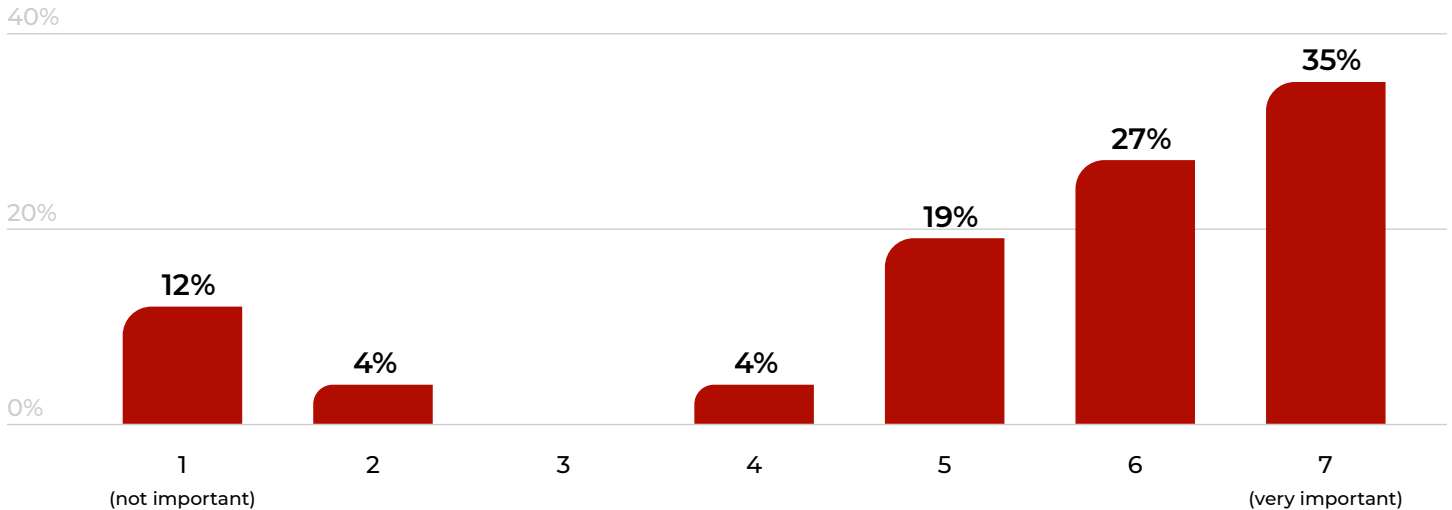
Each of these solutions has pros and cons, but it's interesting that most employers have opted to provide hybrid employees with dedicated workstations. Dedicated workstations are usually the least efficient way to manage your office space. Even if hybrid workers have assigned days that they come into the office (allowing multiple employees to use the same workstation on different days), dedicated workstations will inevitably sit vacant. You'll always have employees out sick, on vacation, or otherwise unable to come into

the office on days they're assigned. **In other words, there's always going to be some wasted space.**

Hot desking, is where anyone can book a workstation when they arrive at the office, so long as it's unoccupied. Employees don't know where they're going to work until they get to the office, and groups may have difficulty finding space they can use together.

But if you have the necessary capabilities to let employees reserve a workstation, in most cases, it makes more sense to offer this capability from an employee's work computer or phone. That makes it easier to coordinate reservations with colleagues, and where people work won't be a surprise every time they get to the office.

## As a hybrid employee, how important is it for you to work near particular colleagues?



## Most hybrid employees care about who they work next to

Whether employees have teams they regularly collaborate with or simply work friends they enjoy being around, employers need to recognize the importance of these groupings.

Some pairings don't necessarily enhance a worker's productivity or create synergy, but even inter-departmental groupings have value, as employees get more exposure to (and understanding of) other aspects of the business. And of course, when people regularly get to work with people they enjoy being around or who make them feel comfortable, they're less likely to leave an employer for another company.

We asked respondents to rate from one to seven how important it is for them to work near particular coworkers, with one being not important and seven being very important. **Three fourths of our respondents (76%) claimed that working near particular coworkers was at least somewhat important.** More than one third (41%) said it's very important. The average rating was 5.1 out of 7.

Giving employees the ability to work next to particular coworkers can have a significant impact on employee satisfaction, and depending on the context, it could improve productivity as well. If a team of accountants, developers, marketers, or customer service reps are sitting next to each other, it's a lot easier for them to collaborate on problems and quickly verify information—especially if they're working on the same tasks and processes or using the same tools. Increasing the distance in the office between employees who want or need to work near each other can make collaboration less convenient, and therefore less common.

**Note:** Increased opportunities for collaboration can also contribute to the frequency with which employees experience interruptions in the office, as we discussed in the workplace challenges section above.

# Future of Work Newsletter

The Future of Work Report 2023 was born out of our ongoing coverage of the modern workplace. In our monthly newsletter, The Future of Work, we regularly discuss the latest stories and research surrounding hybrid work, space management, and the corporate office. **Sign up for the newsletter**, and we'll summarize the news, so you don't have to read it all.



## About Tango

Tango is a leading provider of Integrated Workplace Management Systems (IWMS). Thousands of businesses use our tools to manage and optimize their space, facilitate office hoteling reservations, optimize their facilities maintenance processes, and organize their lease portfolios. Our customers include some of the most prestigious organizations in the world, and we regularly partner with leading corporate consultants to equip businesses with the insights they need to make informed decisions.

**[Learn more about Tango.](#)**