



Office Insights 2022

A deeper look into the workplace trends
impacting companies and their employees.



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A Note from the Research Team

This report examines the changing landscape of workplace experience trends in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. To gain up-to-date insights from corporate real estate and HR executives, HqO commissioned leading analyst firm Verdantix to undertake independent, anonymized phone interviews with 50 executives in corporate real estate, workplace, facilities management, and leading HR roles based in the USA, Canada, and EMEA. All respondents hold senior positions and work for firms with more than 1,000 employees. Verdantix asked these respondents about their evolving working model, real estate plans, business priorities, technology investment plans, and future vision for the office and hybrid working. To learn more about Verdantix, visit their website at <https://www.verdantix.com/>.



Foreword



by Thijs van der Burgt,
Vice President of Product at HqO

We're in the midst of a workplace revolution.

For most, this isn't a huge surprise. In seconds, a simple news search can lead you to thousands of articles about the Great Resignation and the return to office. However, these headlines make it easy for the average reader to gloss over what's *really* happening behind the scenes of the workplace.

Sure, we can assume that people are quitting their jobs just so they can work remotely, or because they want better compensation. These high-level observations about employees are accurate to some extent, but they omit important details that employers need to attract and retain talent in today's market — such as *why* this is happening now, and the concrete strategies that go beyond quick fixes to set companies up for *long-term* success.

The truth is, the state of the workforce — and consequently, the workplace — is much more complex than any one headline can cover.

To prove this, let's turn to emerging workplace trends. There are a few that have significantly changed employee expectations for the office, ranging from the boom in hybrid work models

to the consolidation of real estate as a result. In my opinion, however, the most important trend involves digitization and consumerization in the workplace — or, said in a better way, **“digitizing consumer experiences.”**

The majority of working individuals have now experienced some level of consumer technology in their everyday lives. Think about it: our personal technology stack is as diverse as it is functional. We have interconnected smart home systems, smart phones, smart watches, and even smart cars. We can even manage them all from one hub, like Siri or Alexa. And yet, as “normal” as these technologies have become, they are still largely new to the office. In fact, office buildings haven't upgraded their consumer experiences in decades.

As a result, people get frustrated. They become disengaged with their workplace. They can't find ways to be as productive at work as they are in their personal lives. They expect easy connections between their screens, building entry, and conference room reservations. Yet, all of these individual elements — which have become opportunities for employers to create a better, more enjoyable workplace — are often disparate and lacking. We've only just recently started to see these challenges be addressed through the implementation of building apps, and more purpose-built workplace or employee experience apps.

The digitization of consumer experiences also brings about another important trend: workplace data and analytics. If employers are going to start using technology to improve their employee experience, they are also going to want to know if they're investing in the right areas. Because data and analytics are so important to the current market, working with technology partners that combine native functionality with deeply integrated solutions (known as APIs) will make or break a company's success.

This is because APIs achieve a few things. First and foremost, they centralize data from across the workplace to reveal patterns and relationships between people and space. Secondly, they provide real-time insights that empower

employers to be iterative and thoughtful in their investments. Are your conference rooms always overbooked? You might need to expand your collaboration-focused spaces. Is your on-site gym empty? Maybe that's not the amenity your employees are looking for.

The more such technology evolves, the more data it produces. And the more data it produces, the more value it provides to employers. Commercial real estate has quickly taken note of this, pushing strongly towards more analytics capabilities such as predictability and prescriptive analytics for the workplace.

You also can't talk about trends (or data, for that matter) without discussing personalization. There are infinite new ways of working that cater to every individual's unique expectation of how they want to work. Sadly, most traditional office spaces are ill-equipped to meet these demands, be it through physical office design, policy, or technology infrastructure. Additionally, employees have grown accustomed to working from home for a very long time because of the COVID-19 pandemic. They are now looking for versatile working environments that help them produce their best work — both in and outside of the physical office.

This combination requires flexibility and personalization at scale. Fortunately, the same technology that can streamline workplace functionalities can also power flexible, digital-to-physical work environments — helping employers take a stance in the “War For Talent” through workplaces that are more productive, supportive of work-life balance, and engaging. With the right strategy, the office becomes a place people want to be, instead of a place people *have* to be.

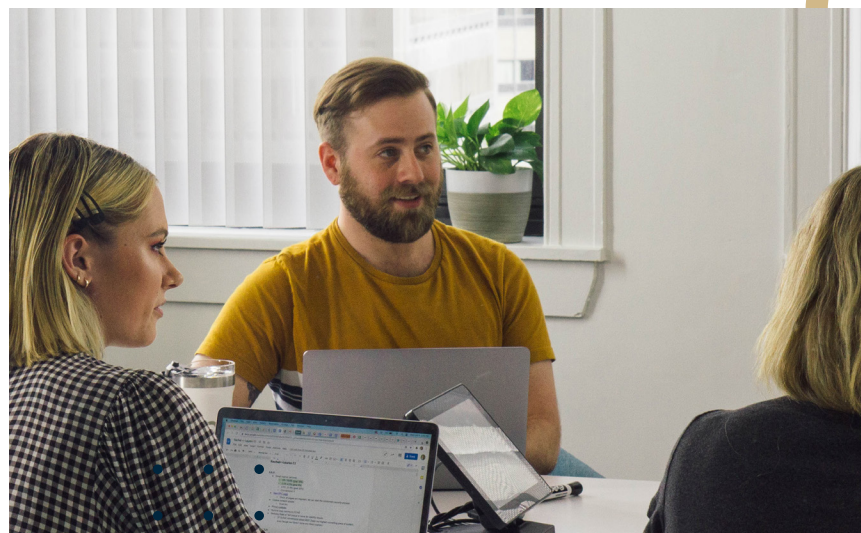
And, last but not least, there is a growing need to align employees with their company's purpose. In particular, this has proven to be a mission-critical piece to the puzzle when it comes to engaging and retaining the younger workforce. Millennial and Gen Z employees, who comprise the majority of the workforce, are more progressive

than ever. Data supports that they actively seek out workplaces that match their personal values. So, by using technology to further support and promote ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) initiatives, companies can foster a true sense of belonging and community among their employees.

No matter how you look at it, employee expectations are constantly evolving. In fact, their preferences change faster than most policies or governments can keep up with. The solution to this resides in your partnerships; the more employee preferences and demands fluctuate, the more employers will require a well-positioned technology provider to match their pace.

Regardless of your strategy, we must all remember the most important sentiment shaping the future of the workplace: workplace experience is all about people. It encompasses the people you work with; the people who sell coffee, food, or other services in and around your neighborhood; and the people who maintain and operate your building. Every individual counts, and the more open we are to learning and understanding them, the better off we will be as an industry.

At this moment in time, we've only just scratched the surface.





Chapter 1

The State of Work



2022: A New Frontier

The more the workforce changes, the more companies have to adapt.

Work models and environments look very different now than they did in late 2019, when the COVID-19 pandemic instilled mass uncertainty in commercial real estate (CRE) markets across the globe. Since then, decision-makers in charge of real estate investments have been in a state of constant flux, trying to determine the best ways to ensure employee safety while also keeping their [businesses afloat](#).

Initially, there was a mass shift towards full-time remote work. Some of the first companies to make this move were large [technology companies](#) like Google and Apple. However, as time progressed and the pros and cons of fully remote work became more realized — especially to organizations who were not well-positioned to make this transition — many of the same companies expressed a need to leverage physical office space again. Currently, the industry is embracing strategies that involve bringing workplace hospitality, flexibility, and hybrid models to employees; this still [gives individuals choice](#) over how and where they want to work, but also optimizes existing (and new) real estate investments and leases.

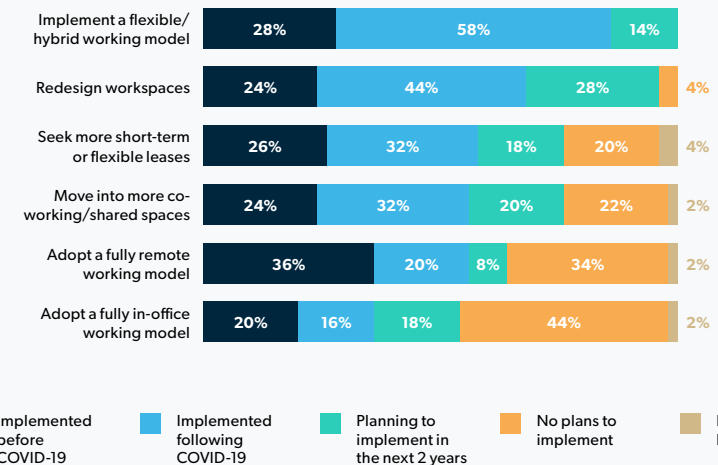
In part, these emerging strategies are also due to the Great Resignation. Now that the workforce has grown accustomed to a more modern way of working, there is no turning back for companies who strive to remain competitive. If they don't adjust their offerings, they risk being unable to attract and retain talent. These combined happenings have resulted in a collective focus on the overall workplace experience, and the role that physical office space plays in that experience.

We can understand where companies stand now, in early 2022, by turning to the data. Out of the employers we polled, 34% have already downsized their real estate portfolio, and an additional 42% plan to downsize in the next two years. However, this does not mean all is bleak for physical office space.

Because of their intent to downsize, employers also expressed a desire to view and manage their existing spaces to match employee needs in more modern and efficient ways. In fact, 86% of employers have already implemented a flexible/hybrid working model since the beginning of the pandemic, with the remaining 14% planning to implement it in the next two years. Similarly, 68% of employers have redesigned their workspaces to support employee needs, while 28% plan to implement redesigned spaces in the next two years.

Said in another way, there is currently **more than double** the focus on both flexible/hybrid working models and redesigning office space than there was before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Which of the following working strategies will you look to implement as part of your post-COVID working model?



Focusing on Employee Experience

[Cresa](#) is the world's leading occupier-centric commercial real estate firm. The company serves as a partner to tenants and specializes in the delivery of fully integrated services such as transaction management, project management, corporate solutions, portfolio strategies, and more to make businesses better and achieve the best possible results. To get their take on the trends impacting employees and the state of work, we sat down with Vicki Keenan, Principal at Cresa Boston.



Thank you so much for joining us, Vicki! To kick things off, tell us a little more about Cresa as an organization.

Absolutely, it's an interesting story. Cresa was founded in 1993, when a company called Avalon Partners formed an alliance with four other commercial real estate firms. Each of them had roughly 20 years of experience, and what they realized was that there was inherent conflict in the business — the model was broken. They set out to create a company that leveled the playing field, so to speak, by exclusively representing corporate occupiers and organizations. Now, Cresa has roughly 1,200 employees and 80 offices across the globe. We also have a [partnership](#) with Knight Frank.

Can you speak to your role within the organization?

I'm a Principal in the Boston office. I lead our consulting practice group, which is a purpose-built group of multidisciplinary experts who work in partnership with traditional brokers. We help our clients develop holistic real estate strategies that are very data-driven, and help them make important decisions around their real estate. For example, within the team we have experts in financial analytics, workplace strategy, change management, communications, and labor analytics. We assemble the right combination of resources to consult companies about workforce strategies, talent acquisition, and retention. And then, of course, there is data analytics. I think some corporate users don't realize how data-rich their real estate environments are. We have a team that is dedicated to mining all of that data and using that to develop meaningful insights.



That's incredible. Did you work in real estate before Cresa?

Yes! I've been in the business for about 25 years. I spent the first half of my career on the Principal or landlord side of the business. I was very fortunate to have great mentors and meet some amazing people at companies like the Beacon Properties, Equity Office, and The Blackstone Group. I worked on the redevelopment, leasing, and asset management of commercial office buildings and lab space in Boston and throughout the country. For the latter half, I spent much of my career doing what I'm doing now, which is consulting clients on their real estate strategies. We discuss how the work environment needs to look, feel, and behave to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization.

Based on your experience, have you noticed a shift in corporate companies focusing more on employee experience as a business initiative? How does this differ from more traditional real estate roles?

Definitely, it's very interesting. Traditional real estate roles are centered around facilities management. That is purely the maintenance and management of what I'll call physical real estate, or the tangible aspects of the workplace. Those roles are still critical and remain intact, but organizations are now bringing another voice to the table — another pillar within the organizational chart with a different set of expertise — that's dedicated to the workplace and employee experience.

This model provides an advocate for the employee experience, which encompasses all of the touchpoints (both tangible and intangible) that workers have with their organization. It's not just keeping the lights on and keeping the building clean. It's making sure employees have the access, tools, and training to seamlessly engage with the workplace and the organization as a whole, whether they're within the four walls of an office or logging on remotely.

We're seeing so many organizations adopt hybrid and flex models, and many corporations are now starting to engage with third party consultants or services to meet these needs.

What does a frictionless experience look like for an employee?

Think about walking into a really nice hotel, right? You're greeted by a beautiful lobby with lots of different seating choices. You can get a cup of coffee, sit down, and have a quiet conversation with someone. You're also greeted by somebody who can help you with anything that you need, whether it's your dry cleaning, ordering food, making reservations, finding a place to park, or taking care of your dog — you name it. Corporate organizations are heading in this direction, where they're curating workplace experiences that evoke the ease and comfort of a high-end hotel.



Why do you think these changes are happening in the industry?

I think there are three main reasons behind the changes we're seeing. Number one goes without saying — it's COVID, right? We've all realized that work can and should happen where people can do it most effectively. It doesn't always have to be sitting at a desk in an office. The second reason is that the labor markets have shifted dramatically: the power paradigm has transferred from employer to employee. That shift has empowered employees to dictate flexibility choices around the workplace. They have a lot of options and opportunities, and we're seeing these kinds of changes play out across industries. Now, employers need to create an employee experience that is attractive to not only keep existing talent, but also attract new talent in a competitive labor market.

The third reason is completely fascinating to me. The younger demographic in the workforce consists of digital natives. I think about this a lot because I have two kids in this category. Their whole social construct, in some ways, has been built through computer screens and mobile devices. They're very comfortable in that digital consumer space. Because of this, the focus has to shift from the traditional, physical workplace model to a blending of the physical and digital environments.

We've seen that a lot on our end as well, especially about the expectations of technology in the workplace as a standard. What types of tools and resources do dedicated experience roles need to address these challenges?

At the end of the day, the tools and resources are going to be very different for every organization. The ways people interact with their workplace and communicate what they do will most likely vary, but they will still need really good technology to connect them. Platforms like HqO are an incredible opportunity for

people to engage their workforce in ways they never have before. We're all in on this experiment, and I don't think we've even scratched the surface in terms of where we're headed. Workplace experience technology has become an essential tool to measure the performance of the workplace from all angles and perspectives and, ultimately, help people do their jobs. We can leverage the programs and resources to measure your workplace initiatives and then iterate on them based upon recurring feedback and findings.

Very true. Besides technology, what do employers need to establish a true employee-centric company?

First and foremost, workplace services roles need access to different functions within the business. Historically, real estate has reported up to finance. That's key, but you also need access to HR to understand policies and procedures. HR is critical in terms of implementing the benefits that promote a good employee experience. You need access to leadership, business units, stakeholders, and the voice of the employees through initiatives like pulse surveys that can identify the gaps and continuously improve the employee experience.

This kind of culture that fosters interaction and visibility across teams and disciplines is really important. Organizations that do this are inherently seeking to understand the true nature of work, how it influences the success of the organization and the individuals who work there, and how to provide an environment that is great not only for their employees, but for their clients as well.

Additionally, they're focused on designing and delivering a truly frictionless workplace for the digital natives I mentioned earlier. These organizations are all about connecting people and providing the workplace and the tools to spark those connections. Not just from a workplace productivity standpoint, but from a social standpoint as well. We're not one-dimensional. Sometimes that gets lost, and organizations forget that their employees want to feel connected to their local communities and the industries in which they work.



If you were to give advice to an employer who is brand new to all of this, where would you suggest they start?

Number one: start now. I think that a lot of people feel overwhelmed and don't know where to begin. I would say find a partner, like Cresa, who can guide you through the steps. Don't be afraid to do the uncomfortable work around being introspective. Look under the hood and find out where the gaps in your organization really are. It could be leadership. It could be policy or culture. Once you identify them, we can start developing solutions to fill those gaps.

Thoughtfully facilitated discussions with the right people in your organization can help you get to the problems pretty quickly. From there, work collaboratively to create a very realistic, very measurable tactical execution plan to address the concerns. Think about the little things with big impact. It's like the chocolate chip cookies on Southwest Airlines, you know? Don't try to tackle everything all at once, because it can be overwhelming and daunting. If you pace yourself and work on incremental improvements, it'll begin to add up naturally. Employees will start to see those little things and it will create big change.

Where do you see the workplace in 5 to 10 years?

If I'm being completely honest, it's going to take us a few more years to really understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, hybrid work, remote working, and all of those related trends. I can tell you, however, what I hope it's not. I hope the physical workplace doesn't go away. We can't completely replace face-to-face connections with technology. It makes me sad to even think about, because in-person interactions are so important. When people have one-on-one moments with each other, whether it's in a work or social setting, there's this vulnerability created that allows people to more freely share ideas — whether they're half-baked, extreme, or even a little crazy. When people feel vulnerable to do that, that's

where innovation comes from. If we don't have that in 5 to 10 years, I don't know where we'll be as a society, or where organizations will be in terms of innovation, ideation, talent, and culture.

I couldn't agree more. Is there a final discussion point you'd like to end this interview with?

Sure thing. We are engaged with many organizations, both domestic and international, to help them understand what their future of work looks like. Everything we do revolves around planning and strategizing with executive leadership and stakeholders across the organization. We partner with organizations even after we've established a plan to discuss things like change management and internal and external communication. This is important in today's world, because a lot of organizations are developing plans and policies and then not following through. We can outline a plan to educate and inform employees, a step that is often overlooked but essential to the process. Technology also helps with this, because it's a constant opportunity to engage with and educate your employees. If you want to hit the pin on your employee experience plans, make sure you follow through and seek that extra engagement.

To learn more about Cresa, visit them at <https://www.cresa.com/>.





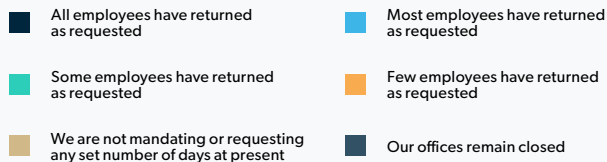
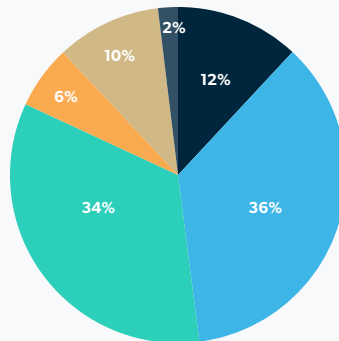
Chapter 2

Addressing the Return to Office



Occupancy & Attraction

Where your offices have re-opened, to what extent have you been successful in bringing employees back to the office?



In the same way employers are investing more time and money into physical office spaces, employees are also predominantly back to using these spaces.

48% of employers indicate that most or all of their employees are already back in the office, and an additional 40% indicate that some or few employees have returned back to the office.

At the same time, specific strategies are being implemented to establish value in the office and attract and retain employees. During our interviews with employers, two key themes arose: enhanced employee engagement efforts and improved employee benefits.

Survey highlights for employee engagement strategies — which are often led by dedicated Workplace Experience Manager roles — include:

- » *We are organizing different activities and creating an entertaining working atmosphere to create less stress among our employees.*
- » *We are creating a digital workplace that makes employees productive. It's a key success factor to any business.*
- » *We organize different kinds of events and programs such as health awareness events with free lunch, talk shows where we invite our employees to come and discuss certain topics, and more.*

Likewise, popular employee benefits strategies include:

- » *We are taking care of the medical expenses of our employees.*
- » *We are offering competitive benefits and bonuses, and have revised our leave policy.*
- » *We implemented a cafeteria service to offer a free lunch program.*

These engagement strategies contribute to the individual employee experience, but are also part of the overall workplace experience. Workplace experience goes beyond employee experience to enable employees to control their experience wherever they work.

When enhanced, it has the power to connect employees with each other, the company they work for, and the workplace, wherever it may be. Success in these types of experiences ultimately fosters increased productivity, creativity, and satisfaction.

Experiences

- » Perks
- » Events
- » Learning
- » Surveys & Feedback
- » Easier Commuting

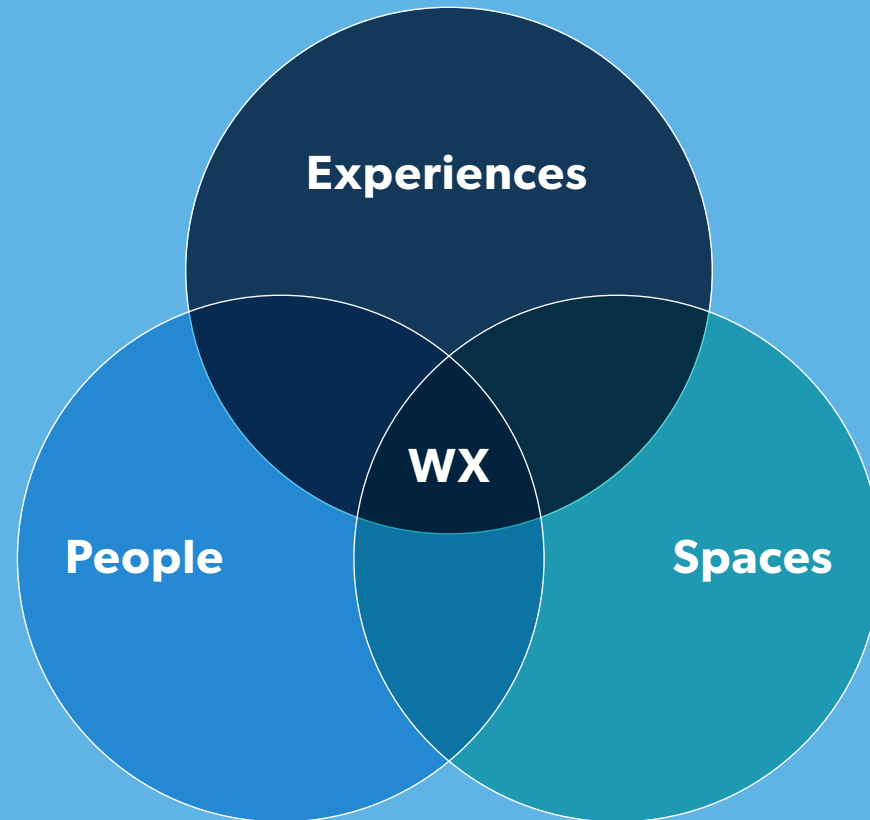
People

- » Communication
- » Health & Wellness
- » Identify Issues

Spaces

- » Access Control & Security
- » Manage Visitors
- » Request Services
- » Wayfinding
- » Utilization
- » Room & Desk Booking

Workplace Experience



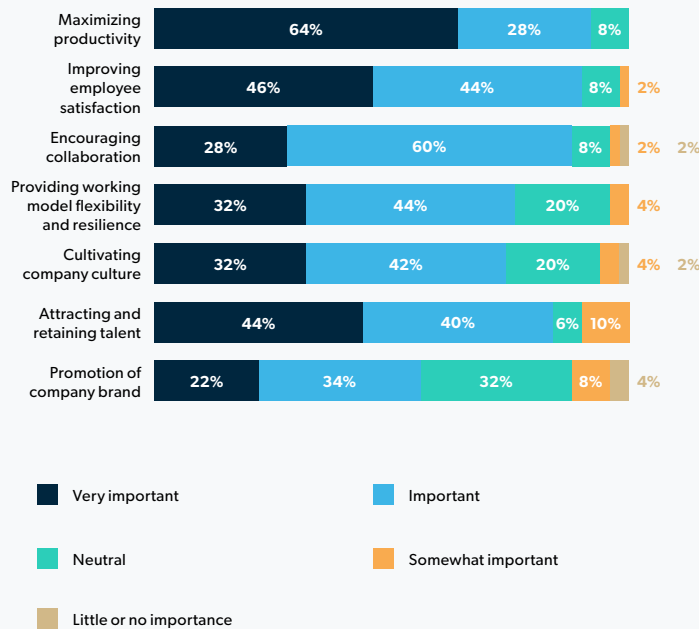
Workplace experience (WX) connects employees with each other, their companies, and the workplace through experiences that enable them to be more productive, effective, and connected to their company.

Employer vs. Employee Demands

The most important thing employers can do to succeed in today’s market is to align organizational demands with employee demands, while still ensuring that employees are empowered to define the ways they prefer to work.

When asked about which initiatives are most important to employers for retaining office space, 92% stated that maximizing productivity is very important or important. This was followed by 90% stating that improving employee satisfaction is very important or important, and 88% stating that encouraging collaboration is very important or important.

How important are the following initiatives to your business when retaining office spaces?



This data resonates with employers investing in the physical office to improve the overall workplace experience: 36% of employers note that increasing productivity is the most important benefit of having a workplace experience strategy.

Thus — between improving productivity, employee satisfaction, and collaboration — employers are most focused on enabling the workforce to do their best work.



We also polled employers on the key value drivers required to attract and retain talent in today's market. 82% reported that company benefits such as private healthcare, dental plans, pensions, and commuter benefits are either very significant or significant to employees. Similarly, 78% reported that offering a dedicated employee wellness program is very significant or significant.

On the physical space and policy side of the workplace, 76% of employers believe that workspaces that accommodate a variety of activities, such as collaboration, are very significant or significant, and 76% of employers believe that flexible working models that give employees the ability to choose how, when, and where they work are very significant or significant. **Today's employees care most about their general well-being, as well as flexibility and work-life balance in the office.**

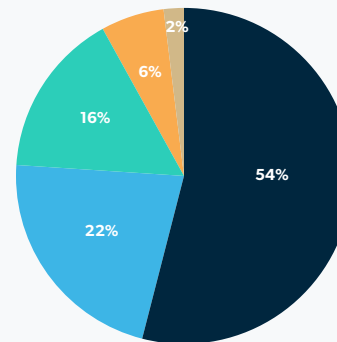
Current employee expectations may be of little surprise to those watching the industry evolve over the past few years, but can tell employers a few important things about the workforce. First and foremost, employee safety, hygiene, and well-being have been top of mind since the beginning of the pandemic — making initiatives that address these needs table stakes in the modern office.

Though communicating health and safety to employees is critical to address first, it also leaves ample room for employers who have already begun to prioritize these factors to focus on enhancing workplace flexibility, collaboration, and experience initiatives. In fact, 68% of employers believe that investing in dedicated employee and workplace experience tools is very significant or significant to attract and retain talent.

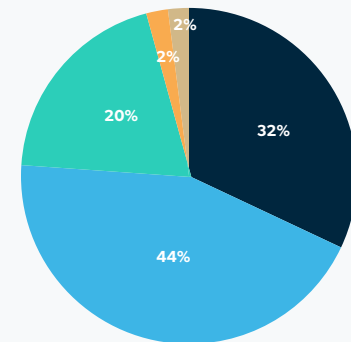
A well-designed end-to-end workplace experience solution will accommodate and accomplish each of the above value drivers in the modern office. As technology evolves, we expect this percentage to grow significantly over time.

How significant are the following factors in helping your business attract and retain talent in the workforce?

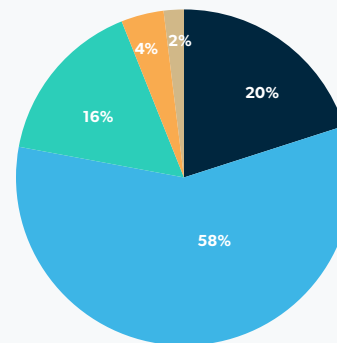
A flexible working model which gives employees to choose how, when and where they work



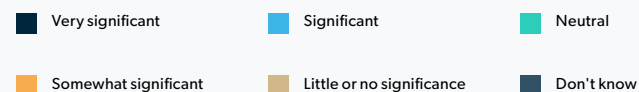
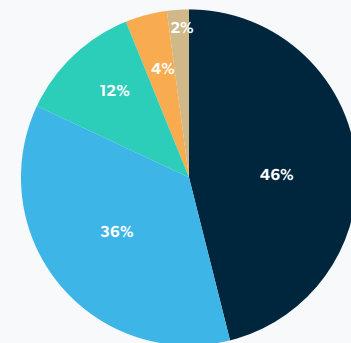
Workspaces that can accommodate a variety of activities (e.g., collaboration, conference rooms, etc.)



Offering a dedicated employee wellness program



Company benefits such as private healthcare, dental plans, pensions and commuter benefits



Challenges to Hybrid

Before we dive into the specific strategies and tools employers are using to meet their goals, we need to discuss the challenges associated with the hybrid work model.

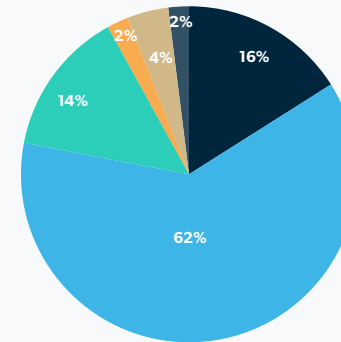
Despite it being the most favored approach to work in 2022, hybrid can be difficult to achieve in an effective, sustainable manner — especially for those organizations who were not set up to transition into hybrid working prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Not only do 52% of employers claim that dispersed working poses a very significant or significant challenge in establishing efficient communication channels across their teams, but an additional 78% see too many disconnected tools as a very significant or significant challenge to achieving an effective hybrid working model. The same respondents (66%) cite that the general lack of awareness of available tools and services is also a very significant or significant hindrance with hybrid work environments.

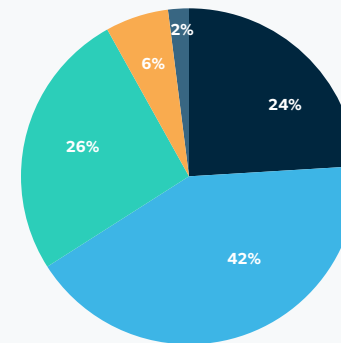


How significant are the following practical challenges in achieving an effective hybrid working model?

Too many different or disconnected tools to manage the in-office experience



Employees' lack of awareness of available tools and services



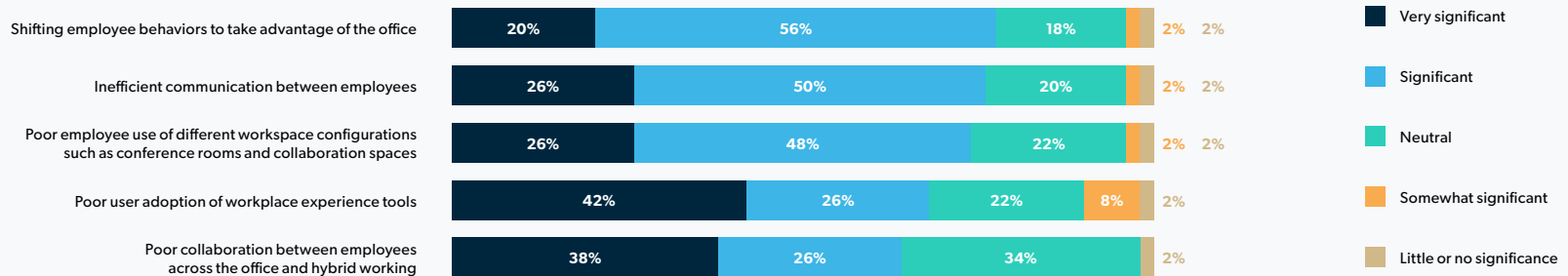
Many employers, however, already understand what they need to do to maximize their office spaces and investments, as well as achieve an effective hybrid working environment.

56% of respondents say that it is a significant need for them to shift employee behaviors to take advantage of the office, 50% say it is significant for them to address inefficient communication between employees, and 48% say it is significant to encourage employees to use different workspace configurations, such as conference rooms and collaboration spaces.

These findings contextualize why many employers, including several HqO clients, have begun to hire dedicated Workplace Experience Managers. Firms with roles who can spend time specifically addressing new-age challenges (like those mentioned above) will see a higher [return on investment](#) (ROI) in their physical office spaces, as well as a higher ROI on their digital tools, services, and other offerings.

Ultimately, keeping employees engaged with their physical workspaces, despite the need for hybrid work models, yields higher results: 52% of employers either strongly agree or agree with the sentiment that companies are more likely to succeed when employees spend more time in the office.

How significant are the following behavioral challenges to maximizing office use in a hybrid working environment?





Chapter 3

Workplace Solutions



Experiences & Digital Tools

The most important thing an employer can do in 2022 and beyond is invest in tools that are built to enhance workplace and employee experiences.

72% of employers agree or strongly agree that workplace experience and engagement tools will be a critical element of successful offices in the future. These tools are the main value-drivers behind hybrid working environments, which an additional 72% of employers agree or strongly agree are equally as important to employees as other workplace benefits such as annual leave and healthcare.

The most commonly implemented workplace experience tools support a variety of functions in the workplace. 76% of employers have already invested in room and desk reservation tools, 74% have already invested in a dedicated employee experience mobile app, and 74% have already invested in employee feedback and support tools.

Many employers are already seeing the benefits of these technology capabilities. 44% plan to invest further into room and desk reservation tools, and 34% plan to invest further into location services, such as wayfinding and occupancy details.

The engagement opportunities created from workplace experience tools are endless — whether the function in question is mobile access, resource booking, food ordering, space monitoring, or more. Not only can experience tools power the flexible workplaces that employees desire, they can also gather important feedback and behavioral data that enables employers to continue to iterate on their workplace investments.

These connections and insights will lead to higher levels of talent attraction and retention, as well as establish an intrinsic value in the office that will encourage employees to return and take advantage of their firm's competitive resources.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

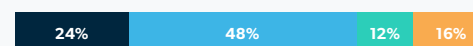
Employees now value a hybrid working as being equally important to other benefits such as annual leave and healthcare



Workplace experience and engagement tools will be a critical element of successful offices in the future



Employees now value a hybrid working as being equally important to salary



In the next five years, most businesses will return to a pre-COVID five-day office model



In the next five years, a four-day working week will be the norm



Employees can be successful both in terms of productivity and career progression whilst working from home full time



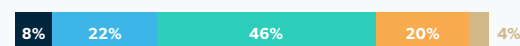
When more employees spend more time in the office, companies are more successful



Hybrid working is making decision-making more time consuming



In the next five years, most businesses will move to a remote first office model



WX Managers Take Center Stage



Employers implementing digital tools and strategies to support a hybrid workforce are quickly realizing that they need more than traditional building or company leadership to manage modern employee experiences.

Employee experiences — which workplace experiences contribute to — can be defined as the holistic measurement of employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity.

Historically, employee experience has been included in key HR responsibilities such as performance, compensation, health benefits, and trust in leadership and management. Now more than ever, the experiences employees have with their workplace (and the bond created with the people and places that connect them to their company) are critical to the overall employee experience.

HqO has been working closely with clients on this shift since the pandemic, noting that companies are carving out more purpose-built roles to fulfill the functions of the workplace and employee experience. They are doing this by hiring dedicated Workplace Experience (WX) Manager titles to ensure that their work environments are truly personalized, effective, and more than just a place to work.

Workplace Experience Manager Goals

For employers, Workplace Experience Managers have very specific roles and functions. They are focused on achieving the following three goals for their company:

- » Elevating workplace experiences
- » Attracting and retaining talent
- » Optimizing workplace spend

Traditionally, workplace experiences and investments have been managed at the landlord and property team level. In those scenarios, facilities management would work with building owners to improve amenities, such as on-site fitness centers, and differentiate the workplace.

The impacts of the Great Resignation, however, accelerated the need to prioritize these workplace elements on an individual employee level. In today's talent market, it is easier than ever for employees to quit jobs and seek other employment that provides better accommodation (such as flexibility and hybrid work), compensation and benefits, and alignment with workplace culture and purpose.

Workplace Experience Manager Responsibilities

If you look at the companies leading workplace and employee experience, you'll start to see some common themes of what these roles typically consist of. For example, let's take a look at The Walt Disney Company — a company known for creating “magical” and engaging experiences.

Though every company has a slightly different take on the responsibilities of the role, the general concept is the same: Workplace Experience Managers are advocates for the people of a given company, and need to place their employees at the center of every office strategy to reflect the needs of their unique building communities and elevate the overall workplace experience.

“Some Workplace Experience Managers I've spoken with are focused on preparing for employees to return to the office for the first time in years by planning a new office set up and ensuring all supplies and snacks are covered. Others are gathering feedback from employees to plan for upcoming in-person social events. In both scenarios, understanding and incorporating what employees need and want will both excite them and make them feel safe and heard, because they were included in the process and the experiences are tailored to them.”

Ashley Colella,
Senior Product Manager at HqO

Disney has both Workplace Experience Managers and Directors. Previous job descriptions for the company have covered the following corporate functions and more:

- » Supervise all facility-related activities including cleaning, pest control, HVAC, plumbing, and electrical and fire Life Safety systems
- » Partner with Security to manage access control and security systems
- » Maintain vendor relationships, invoices, and the purchase and procurement of certain projects
- » Lead Disney's return to office initiative, and prepare all local offices for a safe return that ensures compliance with The Walt Disney Company's workplace requirements
- » Oversee the workplace management ticketing system
- » Coordinate office events
- » Drive employee engagement through connectivity, work experience, and office/workplace management
- » Partner with other Workplace Experience roles and the Corporate Real Estate team on space planning and expansion projects
- » Manage food and beverage programs
- » Compose and release frequent site-wide communications
- » Develop and manage programs that enhance the overall people experience
- » Embody and influence company culture, values, and act as an ambassador for people-building
- » Seek and analyze market research to develop broad subject knowledge and benchmark programs
- » Utilize information related to office usage to take actions based on the interpretations of that data

Workplace Experience Manager Impacts

To achieve their many responsibilities, Workplace Experience Managers are also stewards of workplace experience technology.

In fact, buildings that leverage a dedicated Workplace Experience Manager role alongside HqO's technology can see the following results:

- » Workplaces with either HqO sponsored programming, custom programming, or both see (on average) a 225% increase in Weekly Active Users (WAUs) compared to customers with only static content and no digital programming.
- » Workplaces with HqO-sponsored programming see a 34% increase in WAUs compared to customers that don't opt in.
- » Workplaces that run custom programming in addition to HqO-sponsored programming see an 8% increase in WAUs compared to HqO-sponsored programming only.



These results can be realized due to several important aspects of workplace experience technology, which are elevated due to one differentiator: purpose.

Combining a dedicated Workplace Experience Manager and a purpose-built product allows companies to enhance the employee (and workplace) experience at scale. Technology allows these roles to tap into important resources and committees across the company, and then translate those back to the physical workplace to establish fully connected experiences.

Access to experiences employers never had before — such as digital programming and office analytics — also helps companies move closer to their people and remain agile as employee needs (and the Workplace Experience Manager role itself) evolve over time.





Chapter 4

The Future of the Workplace



Key Takeaways

When looking towards the future, employers have differing opinions on the role of the office. 62% of respondents think that in the next five years, most businesses will return to a pre-COVID five-day work model. However, 58% of respondents think that in the next five years, a more flexible, four-day work model will become the norm.

Though the future work week is still up for debate, one thing is certain: it's an employee's market.

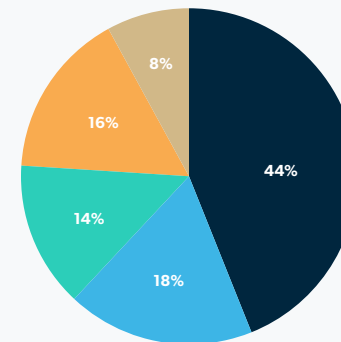
This means that for companies to stay competitive, they will need to place a higher, modern emphasis on the employee and workplace experience. Based on our research, the following themes will be the drivers of corporate success:

- » An ongoing focus on health, safety, and hygiene in the workplace
- » More flexibility in both workplace policy and the workplace floor plan (after all, 72% of employees now value hybrid work as being equally as important as salary)
- » The implementation of digital tools, such as workplace experience platforms, to match the consumerism already present in employees' lives
- » The usage of workplace data and analytics to establish an iterative, constantly improving office strategy
- » The hiring of dedicated Workplace Experience Manager roles to champion these efforts and give employees what they seek in the market

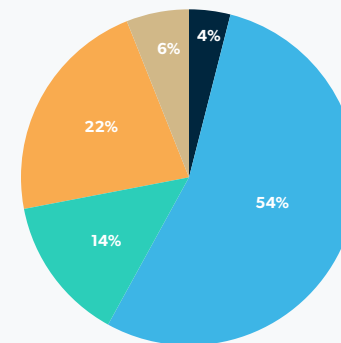
Want to learn more about the data in this report, or interested in taking your workplace experience to the next level? [Schedule a consultation](#) with HqO today.

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

In the next five years, most businesses will return to a pre-COVID five-day office model.



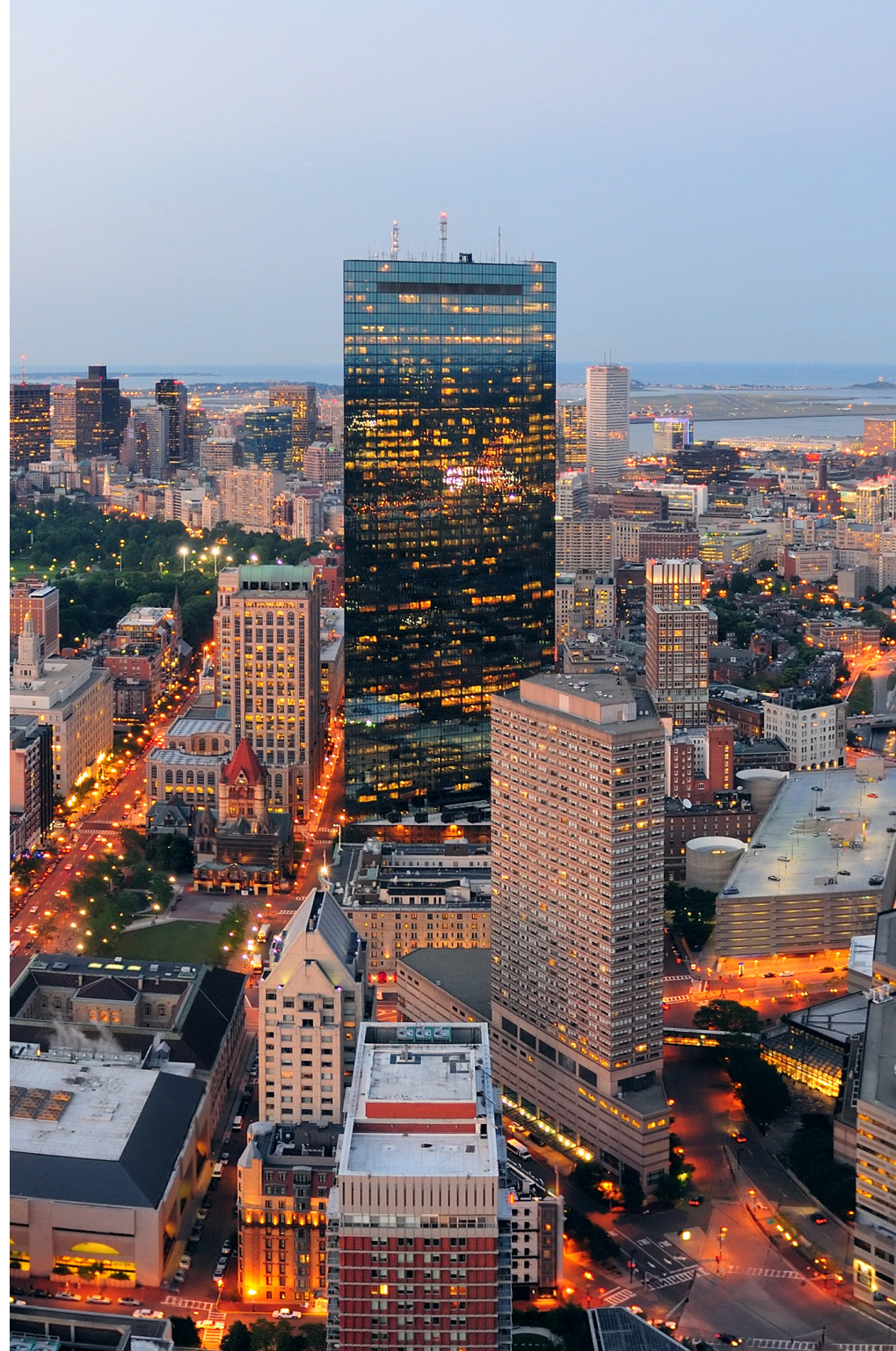
In the next five years, most businesses will return to a pre-COVID five-day office model.



About HqO

HqO is transforming how people connect with each other and the places they work. The HqO Workplace Experience Platform makes it easy for companies and commercial property teams to create modern workplaces through world-class amenities and services that allow people to thrive and produce the best results. Active in over 250 million square feet in 25 countries, 57% of the Fortune 100 rely on HqO to enhance their workplace experiences, improve employee satisfaction, and drive operational excellence. For more information, visit

<https://www.hqo.com/>





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