

GLOBAL WORKPLACE SURVEY 2025

the **Work**place reset



Entering a new era of workplace.



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The future is here. Gone are the days of building workplaces in blind anticipation of growth. Today's workforce desires an experience that is intentional, aligned, and purpose-driven—and one that continuously adapts to their evolving expectations. This transformation requires physical and conceptual shifts in how we approach, allocate, and utilize the workplace.

But how did we get to this point? In the past two decades, the landscape of work and the workforce has undergone a profound transformation. Since the Gensler Research Institute's inaugural 2005 UK Workplace Survey—which pioneered the measurement of the workplace's impact on productivity, brand recognition, recruitment, and creativity—the nature of work has experienced seismic shifts. Yet, the workplace itself has struggled to keep pace.

Our ongoing explorations of the physical workplace give us the opportunity to reflect on and inform this continuous change and evolution. This report presents the results of our most recent global survey of over 16,800 full-time office workers across 15 countries and 10 industries. Our aim was to uncover what employees value most, what they need, and how workplaces can be better designed to support all types of in-person work. Taking a human-centered approach, we delved into how employees feel about various aspects of their organization and workday—from office design and available space types to team dynamics, desired amenities, and preferred work environments beyond the traditional office setting.

To navigate the future of the workplace, we must first understand its past.

Two decades ago, the digitally connected world of work was just getting started. The years 2005–2009 marked the beginning of a more connected and digital workplace, ushered in by the transformative launch of the iPhone in 2007, which laid the foundation for mobile work. Cloud computing enabled real-time collaboration across multiple locations, social networking platforms (like Facebook) took hold, and file-sharing platforms (like Dropbox and WeTransfer) changed how we share and collaborate.

Beginning in 2010, we saw a digital transformation. Slack introduced asynchronous collaboration to the workforce. It revolutionized the efficiency of workplace communications through a platform of sharing information and ideas. The “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) movement reflected a shift toward personalization and flexibility to work beyond the office.

In 2009, former *New Yorker* editor Tina Brown coined the phrase “gig economy” to describe the wave of independent contract work, and by 2016, such platform-based work became mainstream.

Remote tools, like Google Meet and Microsoft Teams, matured, and AI automation made early inroads in workplace processes.

And then the pandemic struck. The period from 2020–2023 was truly unprecedented as organizations sought to remain productive

while allowing their employees to isolate themselves at home and adapt to remote work. The global work-from-home experiment accelerated workplace evolution and rapid technology adoption, such as Zoom and digital collaboration platform Miro. Combined with a strong economic rebound in 2022–2023, empowered employees, also spurred the “Great Resignation” as worker priorities changed drastically. During this time, attitudes toward physical presence in the office evolved, with many organizations recognizing that productivity and collaboration could thrive in remote and hybrid environments. As a result, companies embraced more flexible work arrangements, leaning into hybrid models to attract and retain talent.

However, by 2024, economic uncertainty and a tighter job market prompted many organizations to reconsider their approach. Companies that had previously embraced hybrid schedules began to re-prioritize in-person work, emphasizing physical presence as a key factor in workplace culture and operations.

And that brings us to the present—a time of rapid and profound transformation. Employers continue to experiment with hybrid models, while AI-assisted collaboration is reshaping the very nature of work across industries. Amid these shifts, one thing is clear: Work, the workforce, and the workplace will never be the same.



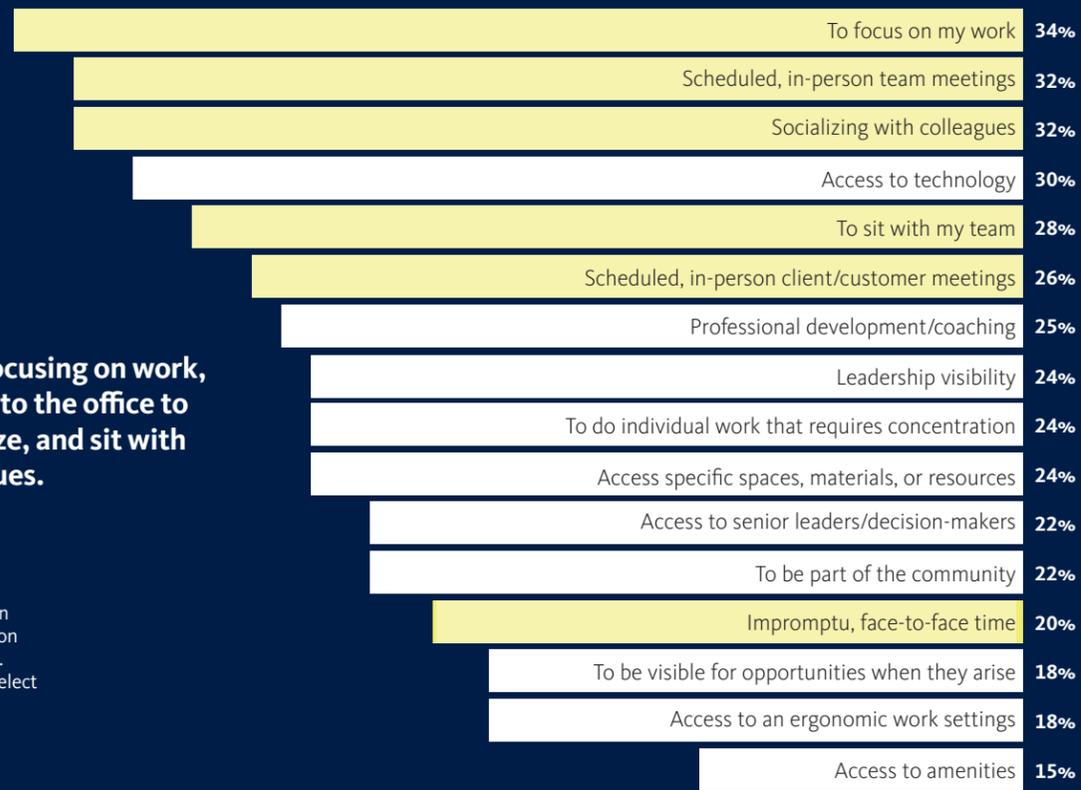
Workplace effectiveness was declining when the pandemic hit. Some work modes rebounded; others still lag.

Since 2008, Gensler has measured workplace effectiveness based on five work modes: working alone, working with others virtually, working with others in-person, learning, and socializing. Effectiveness ratings, on a scale from 1 (least effective) to 5 (most effective), vary across time, countries, seniority, and industries. Post-pandemic, workplaces have improved slightly but haven't returned to pre-pandemic effectiveness. On average, from 2024 to 2025, effectiveness ratings for each work mode declined slightly across 15 surveyed countries. This stasis is concerning, given rapid changes.

Good design starts with the workforce in mind, creating workplaces that support individual and collective work, foster in-person activities, and adapt to technological change and an aging workforce. It means designing high-performing workplaces where organizations and employees achieve shared goals together.

Aside from focusing on work, people come to the office to meet, socialize, and sit with their colleagues.

The percentage of respondents who identified each option as an important reason to come to the office. Respondents could select five options.

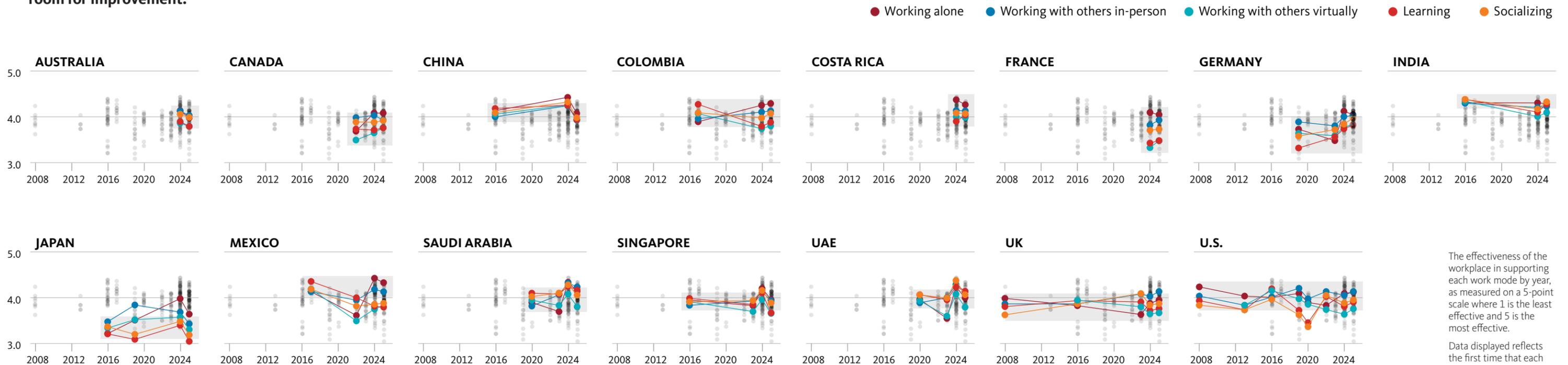


Human connection and collective work are fundamental elements of getting work done.

Our data show that in the U.S., since the pandemic, time spent working with others in-person has increased, and socializing has nearly doubled. This trend holds true in most surveyed countries. These shared experiences build relationships, establish cultural norms, and sustain community. Notably, 80% of respondents have made meaningful connections at work with people of different ages, and 78% with coworkers at varying role levels.

Three of the top five reasons for coming to the office include meeting, socializing, or collaborating with colleagues. Socializing remains a top priority across all generations, fostering personal and professional fulfillment. Nearly three in four employees feel respected, valued, and encouraged to share ideas. Additionally, 82% reported a high level of belonging and community with their colleagues, reflecting strong workplace cohesion.

Space effectiveness by work mode continues to have room for improvement.



The effectiveness of the workplace in supporting each work mode by year, as measured on a 5-point scale where 1 is the least effective and 5 is the most effective. Data displayed reflects the first time that each country was surveyed.

The physical workplace is improving, but incremental change is not enough.

Newer offices have better spaces for working together, but struggle with keeping them available.

Newly remodeled post-pandemic workplaces (within three years or less) are outperforming older spaces in several key areas. In the overall office environment, the percentage of employees who feel they have a choice in where they work has risen from 64% in pre-pandemic offices to 76% in recently remodeled workplaces. Additionally, newer offices score higher on ratings of key environmental factors, such as lighting, air quality, temperature control, and cleanliness.

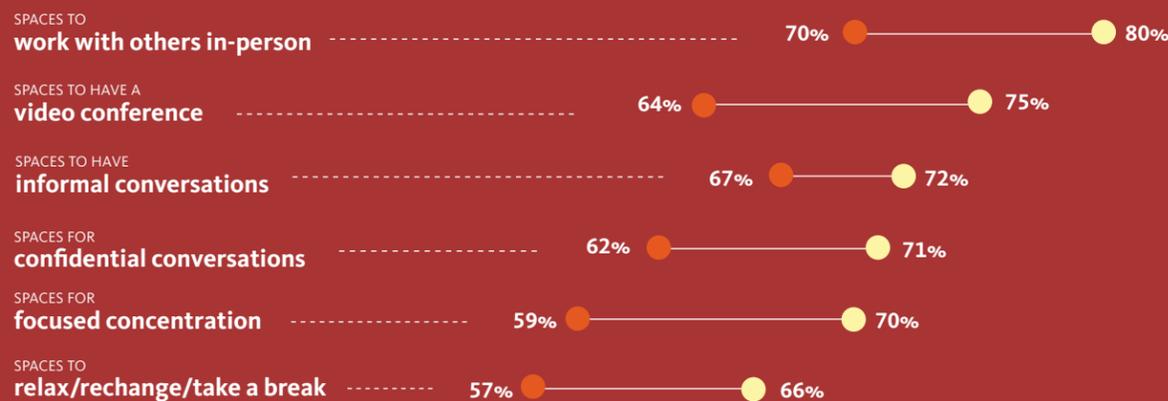
This shift is also accompanied by enhancements in workspace functionality: Newer office designs have improved access to spaces for critical work activities. Working with others in-person has particularly benefited from these improvements. In newer office spaces, the proportion of employees who find it easy to find space

to engage in face-to-face interactions has risen from 70% to 80%. The availability of video conferencing capability, places to have informal conversations, and spaces to hold confidential conversations has also improved.

Despite these advancements, employees choose where to work with others based primarily what space is available. In fact, when choosing a space, availability is more important than comfort, privacy, or convenience. It's essential for organizations to provide not only a variety of space types, but also an adequate number of them. By intentionally aligning their work activities with the right spaces, employees could unlock significant improvements in both work experience and performance.

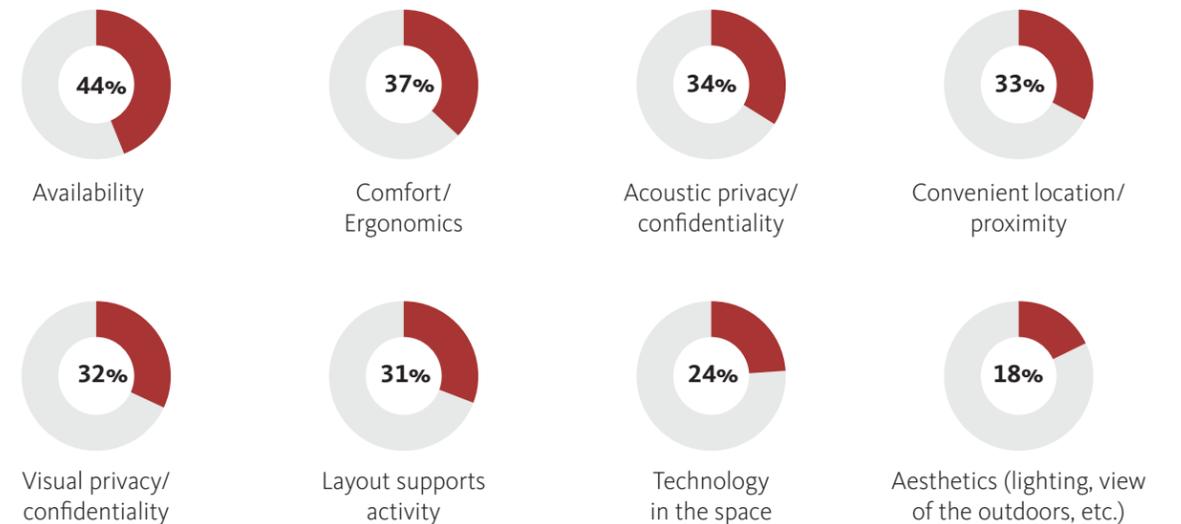
Ease of finding spaces to work within the office environment has improved post-pandemic.

The percentage who agree or strongly agree that the following spaces are easy to find in their workplace environments, segmented by those in pre- and post-pandemic spaces.



Employees make their choices on where to work with others based on what spaces are available.

Among respondents who make decisions about where to work with others in the workplace, the percentage who selected each option as a factor for how they decide where to work with others in the office.



KEY FINDING ONE

Recently remodeled offices offer improvements for both group and individual work.

Post-pandemic renovations have improved how employees work together and alone. Enclosed meeting rooms in post-pandemic offices feature more effective technology to support working with others in-person, while the size and layout of individual workspaces have also been enhanced.

However, noise disruptions remain a key issue in both individual work areas and enclosed meeting rooms. At workstations, the primary sources of noise are coworker conversations and foot traffic, with about one-quarter of employees also distracted by sounds from nearby meeting or collaboration areas.

Enclosed meeting rooms in newer spaces present additional concerns. The most common complaints include a shortage of both larger and smaller rooms, external noise disturbances, and a lack of speech privacy. Other challenges include inconvenient distances from workstations, poor acoustics, inadequate outlets, and suboptimal furniture or layouts.



+8%
Layout of individual workspaces

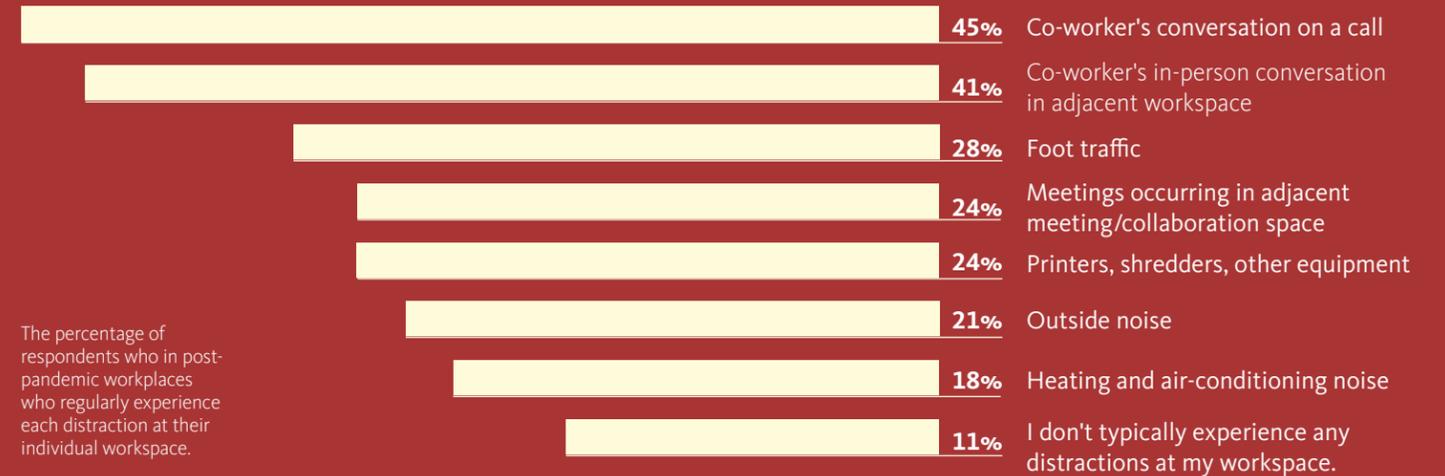
+7%
size of individual workspaces

+8%
technology to support group work in enclosed meeting rooms

Comparing ratings of post-pandemic spaces to pre-pandemic spaces.

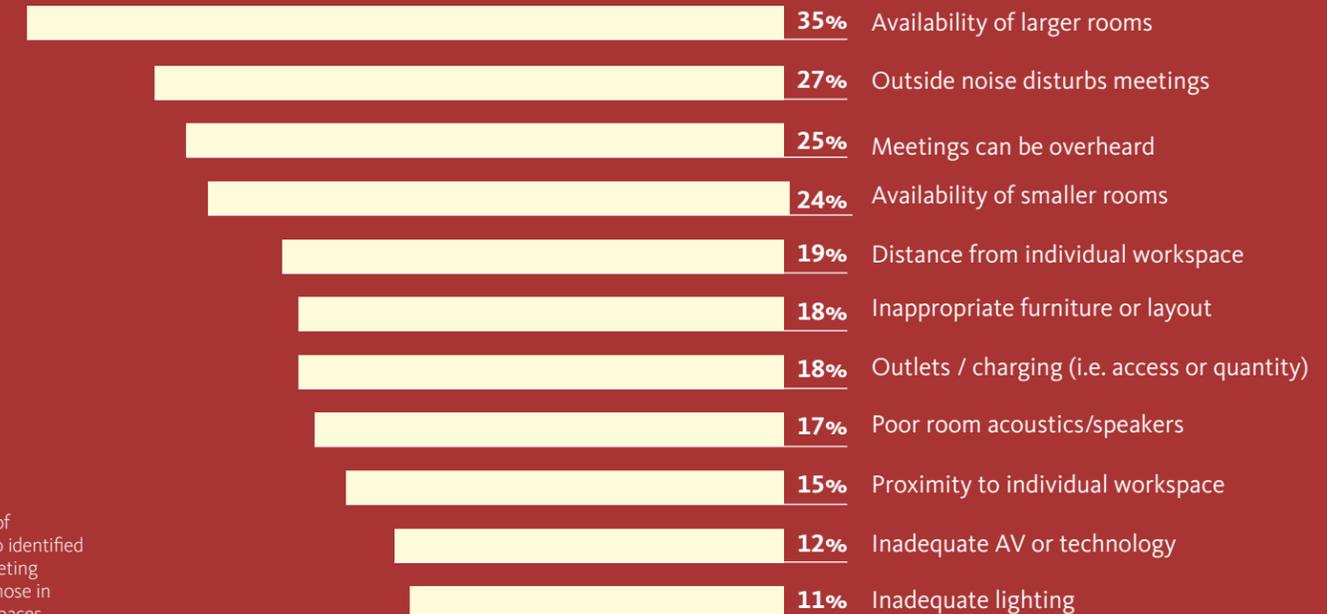
Layout and size of individual workspaces have improved, but distractions and noise are still problematic.

DISTRACTIONS IN INDIVIDUAL SPACES



In meeting spaces, technology has improved, yet availability and noise remain concerns.

ISSUES IN MEETING SPACES



Employees are looking to move past the corporate workplace experience.

Employees' preferences are shifting from business-like settings to nature retreats and creative lab experiences.

The percentage of respondents who selected each option to describe their current and ideal workplace experience.

BUSINESS HUB
A formal place that feels business-like, efficient, and professional

31% Employees are over twice as likely to work in corporate-style settings than to want them.

● Current workplace experience ● Ideal workplace experience

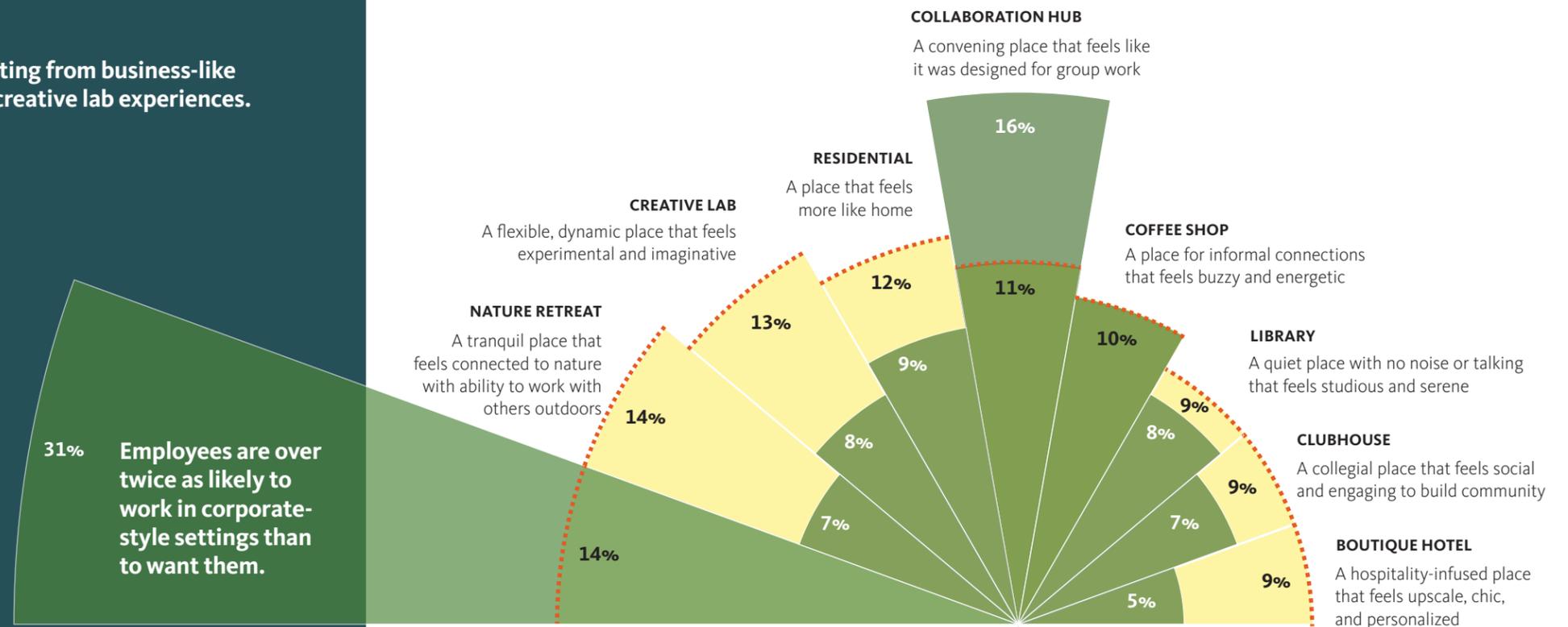
The majority of people in the global workforce want more than traditional office settings.

Globally, only 38% of employees strongly agree that their workplace provides a great experience. While this percentage varies by country, age, role, and industry, it has significant implications for employee engagement and retention. Involving employees in the design of their workplaces is an opportunity to move the needle. Just 21% of respondents working in updated spaces felt meaningfully included in the decision-making process for their remodel, redesign, or update, while 29% felt little to no involvement. This raises an important question: What do employees truly want from their workplace experience, and how can organizations better meet their needs?

A clear gap exists between the way employees describe how their current workplace experience feels, compared to the experiences they seek. Most employees described

their current workplace as traditional business hubs, collaboration hubs designed for group work, or coffee shop experiences. However, when asked to describe their ideal workplace experience, respondents ranked nature retreats, creative labs, and residential experiences alongside formal business settings as top choices.

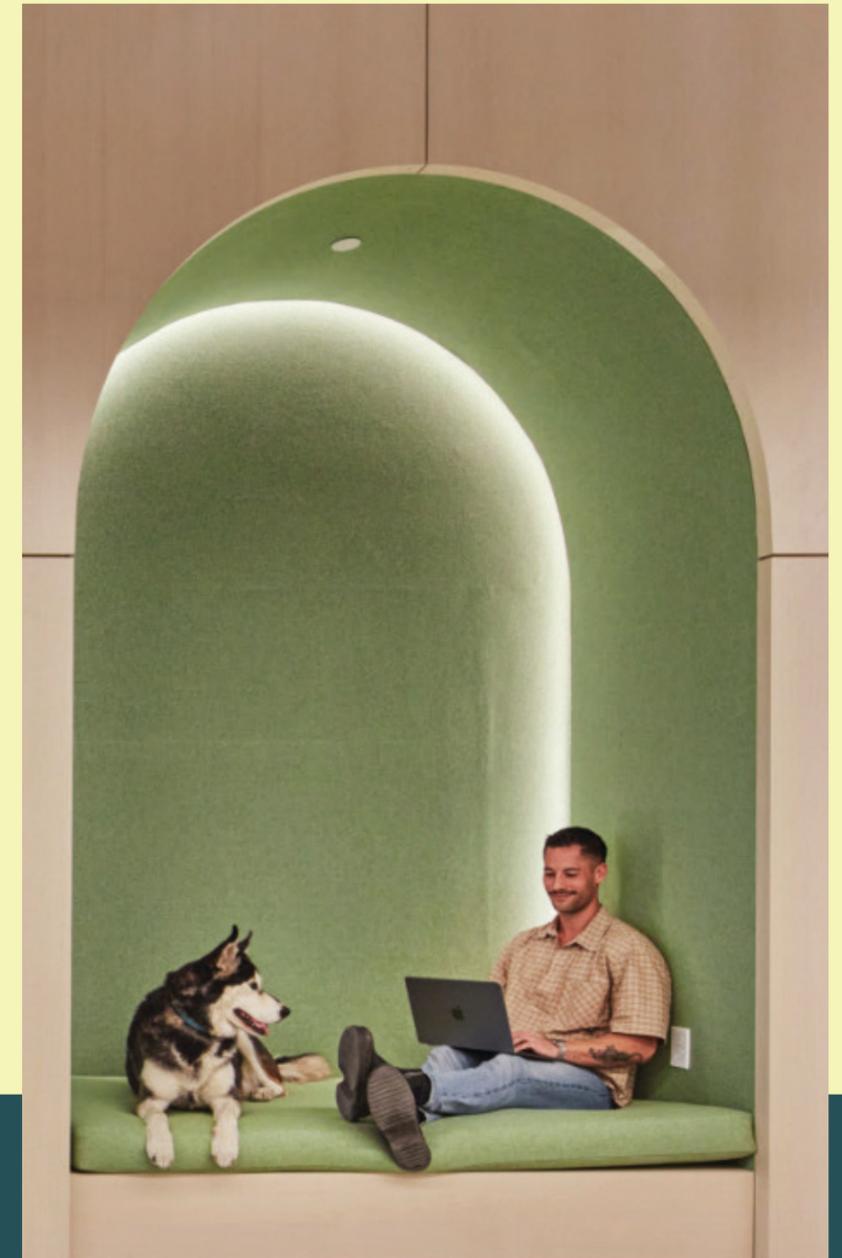
There is also a growing preference for collegial clubhouse spaces and workplaces that feel either like home (residential) or hospitality-infused (boutique hotels). This shift highlights a desire for dynamic, collaborative environments that also promote well-being, comfort, and a sense of play. Notably, these preferences remain consistent across age groups, suggesting that employees of all generations are reimagining their ideal workplace beyond traditional office settings and envisioning a wider array of experiences.



Leverage spaces within the workplace and beyond the office to offer the experiences employees value.

Amenities are no longer optional—they are important components of a workplace experience. Employees value a diverse range of workplace amenities beyond their individual workstations and conference rooms. The most sought-after amenities include food hall spaces (including cafes and markets) and work cafes/coworking areas. This highlights the importance of social spaces where employees can take breaks, collaborate informally, or grab a quick refreshment. Lounges and rest/nap spaces further suggest that employees seek informal areas to relax and recharge throughout the day.

Since noise and distractions remain a challenge in many offices, the demand for quiet/deep focus areas and rooms reflects the need for spaces that support concentration. Additionally, employees express a preference for outdoor workspaces, emphasizing the growing desire for access to fresh air, natural light, and a connection to nature while working. These trends underscore the importance of designing workspaces that balance social, functional, and restorative spaces.



Within the workplace, employees prioritize a diverse range of spaces that cater to connection, productivity, and well-being.

The relative ranking of the spaces employees selected as most important to have beyond their individual workplace and meeting rooms. Respondents could select five options.

RANK

- 1** Café, Market/Food hall
- 2** Work café/Coworking area
- 3** Lounge/Hub
- 4** Rest/Nap space
- 5** Quiet/Deep focus area
- 6** Focus room
- 7** Outdoor workspace
- 8** Phone/Video room
- 9** Library
- 10** Fitness area/well-being center
- 11** Project/War room/Dedicated team room
- 12** Innovation hub
- 13** Immersive technology space
- 14** Reflection/Meditation space
- 15** Tech-free area
- 16** Touchdown/Alternative individual workspace

KEY FINDING TWO

The workplace experience extends beyond the client's office space or building into the surrounding neighborhood.

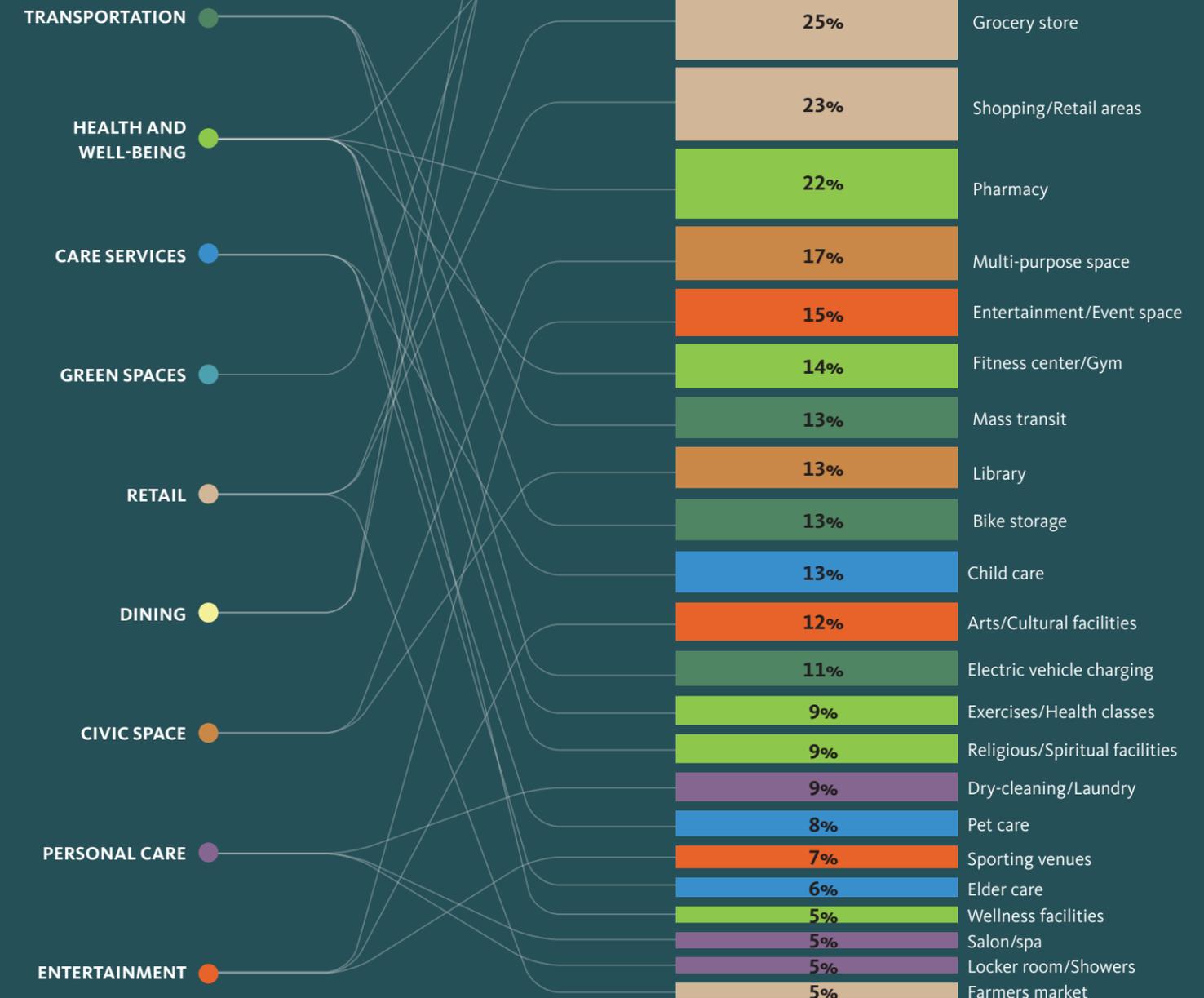
Our data shows a strong relationship between work experience and office location—96% of those who strongly agree their workplace provides a great experience are also satisfied with their office's neighborhood, compared to 55% who don't agree.

The most desired neighborhood amenities span multiple categories, with coffee shops and restaurants/bars ranking highest, highlighting the importance of dining options. Green spaces, medical/health facilities, and grocery stores reflect employees' desire for well-being and lifestyle convenience. Retail shopping and pharmacies further emphasize the need for accessible everyday services. This data reinforces the shift toward work environments that integrate lifestyle, convenience, and holistic well-being.



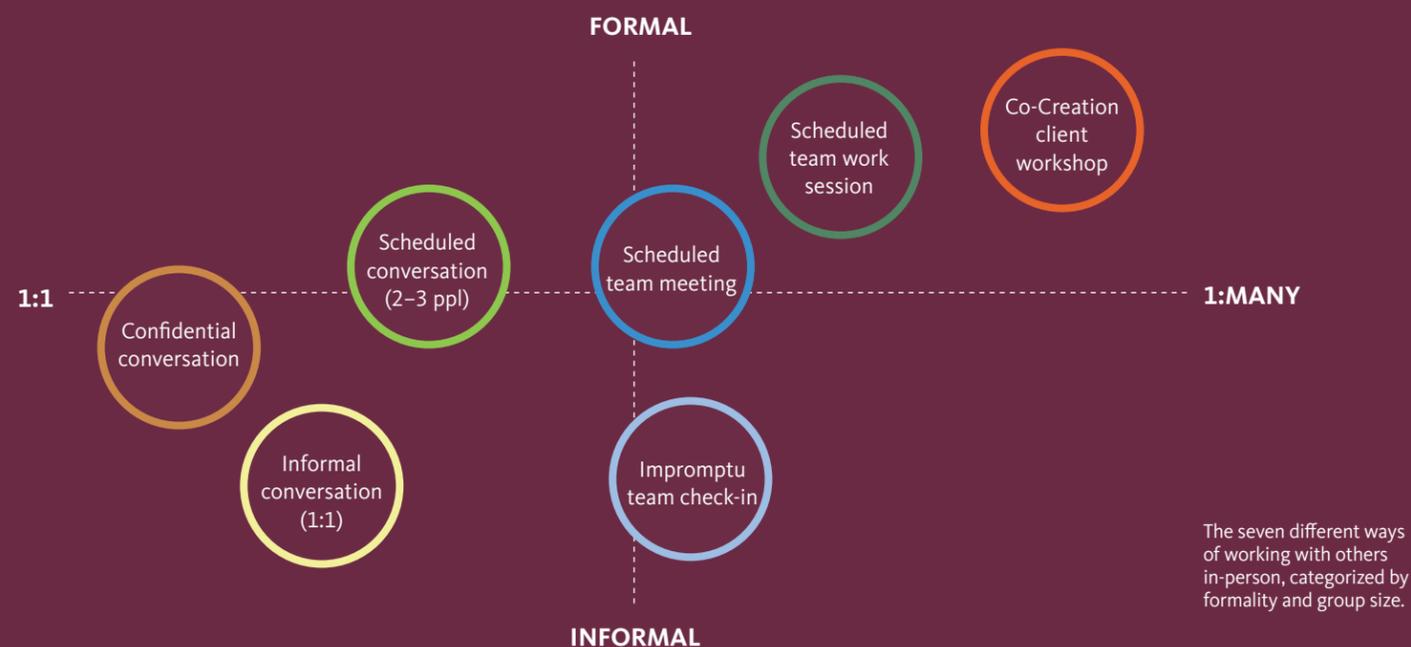
At the neighborhood level, employees value a wide range of amenities that allow them to dine, recharge, shop, and take care of their physical health.

The percentage of respondents who selected each amenity as important to have on-site or nearby their workplace. Respondents could select five options.



Great workplaces play a crucial role to effectively enable working together in-person.

These seven ways of working with others in-person can be categorized by group size and levels of formality/informality.

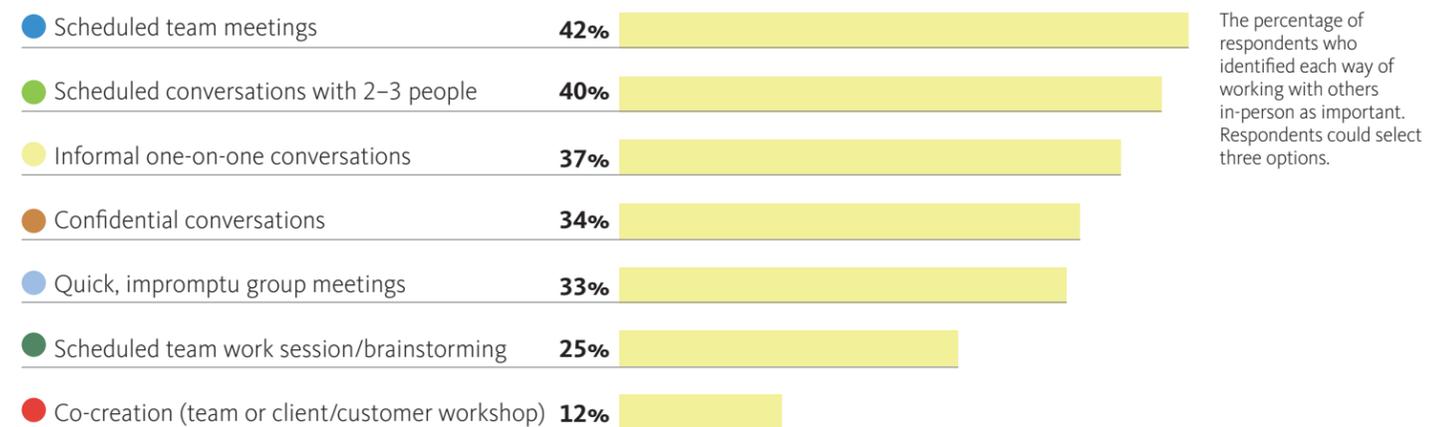


We identified seven key ways of working together in person, varying in both size and levels of formality.

To better understand how employees connect and work together in the office, we identified seven different types of in-person interactions: informal one-on-one conversations, scheduled conversations with 2–3 people, confidential conversations, quick impromptu group meetings, scheduled team meetings, scheduled team work sessions, and co-creation workshops. These seven modes of in-person collaboration can be categorized by group size and level of formality, ranging from planned to spontaneous interactions and from one-on-one to larger group sizes.

Among these, scheduled meetings remain the primary reason employees come to the office, with 42% of respondents citing team meetings as a key interaction. Beyond formal meetings, employees feel that conversations of all types (scheduled, informal, and confidential) are a crucial way to work with others in-person. Creating spaces to foster these conversations is essential. Additionally, the prevalence of quick, impromptu group meetings highlight the value of unplanned exchanges in facilitating teamwork and idea-sharing.

Scheduled team meetings lead efforts to work together in-person, but conversations—both planned and spontaneous—also matter.



The traditional conference room is no longer the ideal location for all ways of working with others.

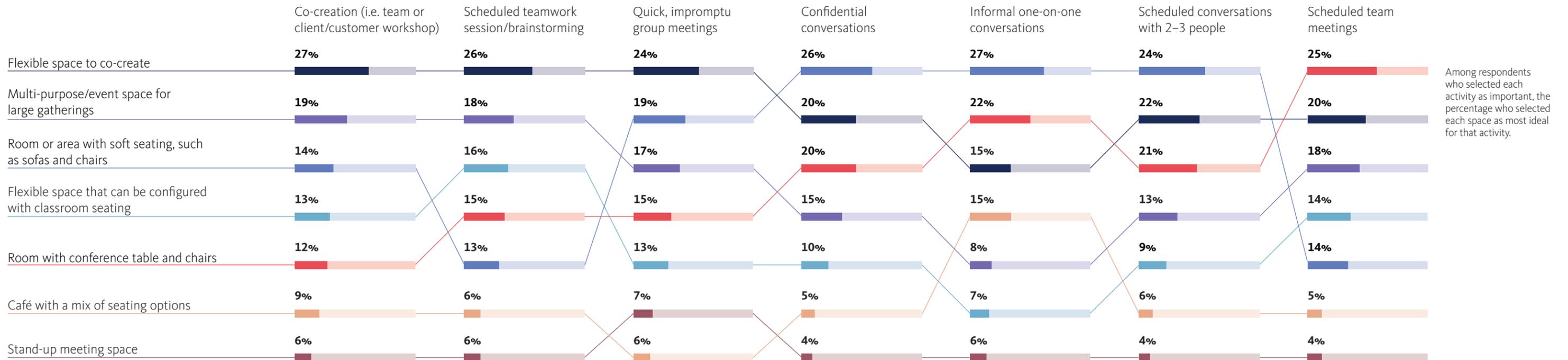
Beyond scheduled team meetings, traditional conference rooms with a table and chairs are no longer the go-to choice for in-office interactions. Instead, the most effective spaces vary by the type of activity, with flexible co-creation spaces ranking among the top three preferences for nearly all in-person teamwork activities. Additionally, rooms or areas with soft seating have become the preferred setting for a variety of interactions, including group discussions, one-on-one conversations, confidential meetings, impromptu gatherings, and creative brainstorming sessions.

Analyzing the data by industry, flexible co-creation spaces emerge as the preferred choice for in-person work activities—except in the government and nonprofit sectors, where traditional conference rooms with chairs are ranked as the top choice for supporting their in-person work needs. This shift underscores the growing demand for comfortable, adaptable environments in the workplace.



Flexible space to co-create is the most popular space for scheduled team meetings in most industries.

The most effective spaces for in-person collaboration vary by activity.



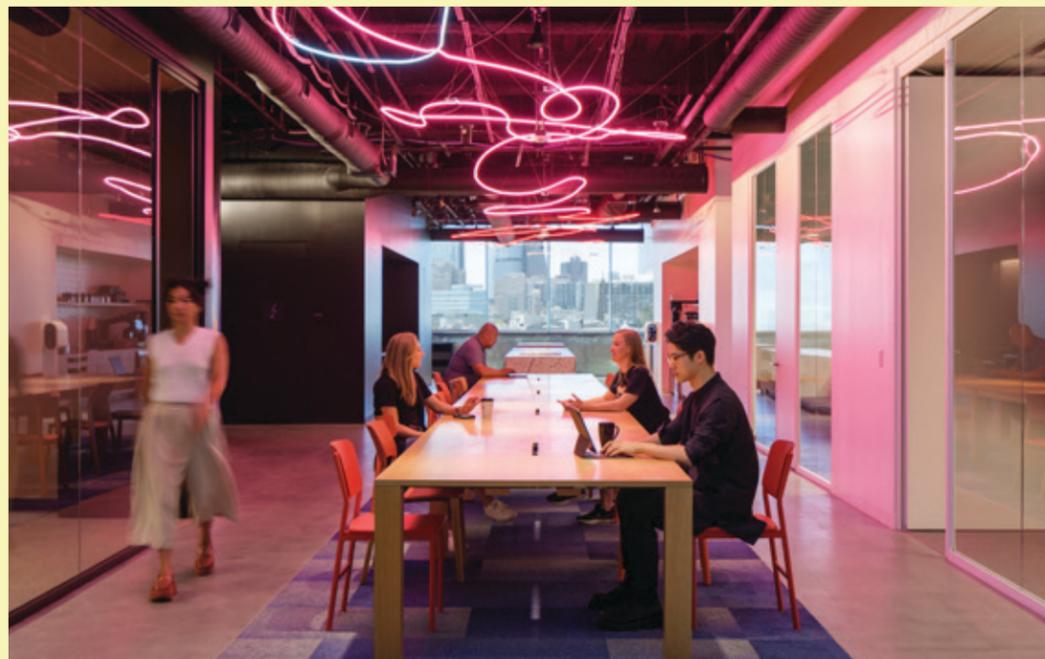
KEY FINDING THREE

Providing a great workplace experience positively influences an employee's behavior, engagement, and relationship with their company.

Employees who strongly agree that their workplace provides a great experience are significantly more likely to engage in activities that foster working together in-person, creativity, and personal growth than those who disagree or feel neutral. For instance, 70% of employees in higher-rated workplaces report experimenting with new ways of working, compared to just 14% in lower-rated workplaces. Similarly, those with great workplace experiences are 3.7 times more likely to take time to reflect and 2.6 times more likely to engage in impromptu meetings with colleagues.

Beyond day-to-day activities, workplace experience also influences employees' emotional well-being and motivation. Employees with a great experience are more than twice as likely to feel happy while working and to put in extra effort beyond their job description. They also report higher levels of purpose, meaning, and energy than those who disagree or feel neutral.

From an organizational perspective, the design of the office environment plays a critical role in business success. Employees in workplaces that offer a great experience are 3.6 times more likely to feel that their office space helps attract and retain top talent. They are also significantly more likely to believe the overall design of their workplace inspires new thinking, reflects their company's brand, and makes them feel valued.



90%

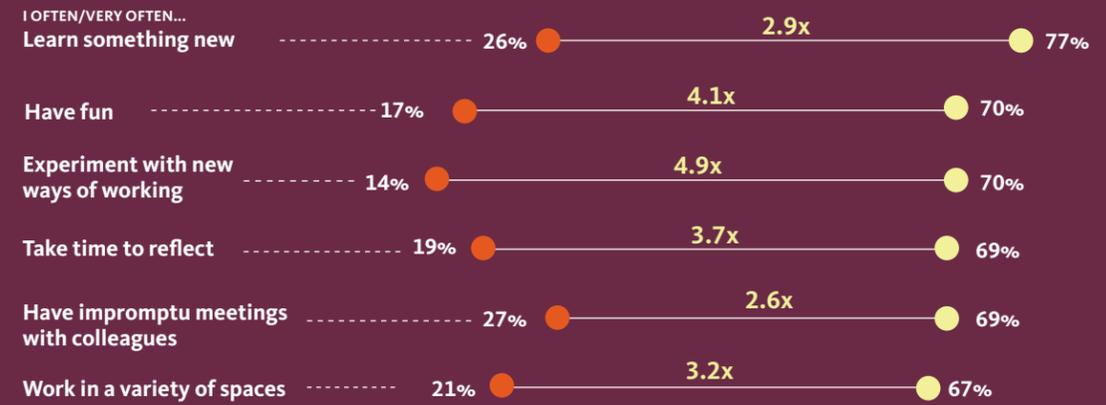
of employees in workplaces that offer a great experience express pride in their organization.

1.5x

Employees in great workplaces are 1.5 times more likely to stay with their company for the next year.

People who have a great workplace experience are more likely to experiment with new ways of working and work in a variety of spaces.

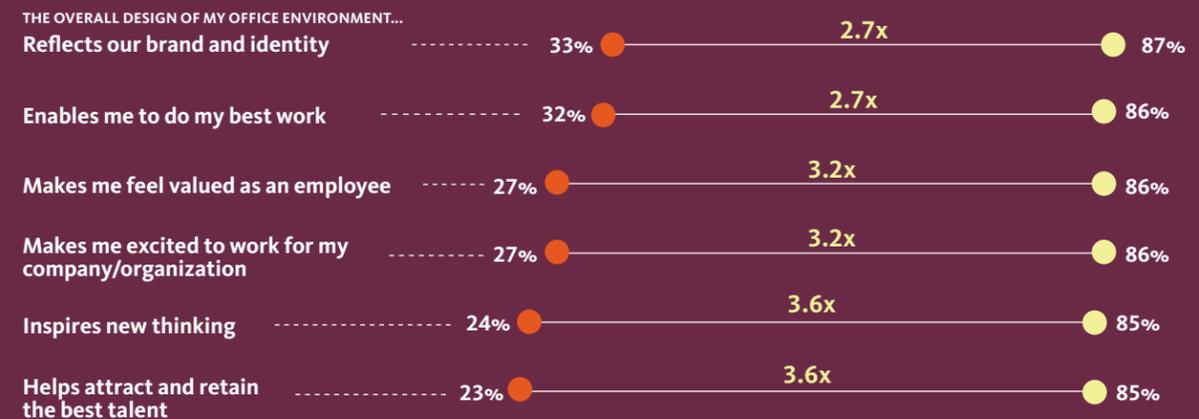
● Not great experience ● Great experience



The percentage of respondents who often or very often do each activity at the office, segmented by those who agree their workplace provides a great experience and those who disagree or feel neutral.

A great workplace experience positively benefits employees and organizations.

● Not great experience ● Great experience



The percentage of respondents who agree with each statement about the overall design of their office environment, segmented by those who strongly agree their workplace provides a great experience and those who disagree or feel neutral.

The best workplaces enable the workforce to do their best work.



A workplace that doesn't work isn't a *workplace*. We've reached a pivotal moment in workplace evolution. Incremental improvements are no longer enough to meet the evolving needs of today's workforce. A clear gap exists between the current workplace experience and what employees value, affecting engagement and overall organizational success. To remain agile in an increasingly volatile market, organizations must rethink the return on investment they expect from their workplace.

Fix the non-negotiables.

While newer offices show progress, persistent challenges—such as noise, distractions, and availability of spaces to work—remain. Addressing these issues requires a strategic approach to both individual and shared spaces. Noise-reducing design strategies and materials, designated quiet areas or focus rooms, and better sound insulation are essential. Technology should be seamlessly integrated, with sufficient outlets and appropriate AV equipment. Employees should be able to focus on their work—not on navigating physical workarounds.

Design for purposeful abundance.

Currently, decisions about where people work together in-person are driven by space availability rather than suitability. It's essential to not only offer a diverse range of workspace types that enable employees to select the most appropriate environment for their activities but provide enough of these spaces to be available when needed. Genuine choice stems from having real options. By understanding how the workforce really works, we can design spaces that are purposeful and empower employees.

Craft unique, shared experiences.

The value of the workplace goes beyond work—it's a place for employees to come together for a shared purpose. Engage employees to identify what experiences matter most. Empowering employees to co-create solutions fosters buy-in and ensures the workplace truly meets their needs.

Embrace continuous change.

A well-designed workplace is more than a physical space—it is a strategic driver of engagement, creativity, and retention. High-performing workplaces motivate employees, boost productivity, and strengthen organizational culture. Prioritizing workplace experience delivers measurable returns, making it a necessity rather than a luxury. But great workplaces don't just happen; they require continuous evolution. Designing for flexibility ensures that spaces can adapt to both planned and unforeseen changes. Regular assessment and refinement are crucial to keeping pace with shifting workforce expectations.

Ultimately, the workplace is a dynamic tool for productivity, culture, and well-being. By addressing persistent challenges, prioritizing employee needs, and embracing flexibility, companies can create workplaces that do more than function—they inspire. A workplace that evolves alongside its people is not just an investment in real estate—it is an investment in the long-term success of an organization and its employees.

The Workplace Performance Index® (WPIxSM)

How we measure design impact on our projects

The Workplace Performance Index (WPIx) is an online diagnostic tool to measure workplace performance. Since 2008, the WPIx survey has been a pioneering tool exclusively developed by Gensler to empower clients in making informed design decisions.

Unlike traditional programming surveys, the WPIx gathers data from all employees, and benchmarks results against Gensler's comprehensive global research data, ensuring precise insights and actionable recommendations tailored to each project. With customizable features, intuitive interface, and robust analytics, the WPIx scales effortlessly from individual workplaces to global real estate portfolios. Updated annually with data from the Gensler Research Institute's workplace research, clients can easily compare their performance across countries and industries, gaining a competitive edge in design strategy.

Unlocking Workplace Potential™

Comprehensive understanding

A 15-minute customizable survey diagnoses how and where employees work, how they use space, and identifies what works/doesn't work, and what people value most.

Scalable

Immediate results can be filtered by department/group, building/site/campus, country/region, role or tenure. This helpful approach is suitable for single workplace projects or global portfolios.

Comparative analysis

Benchmark results by county, industry, or global high-performing workplaces from Gensler's research for competitive insights.

Actionable reporting

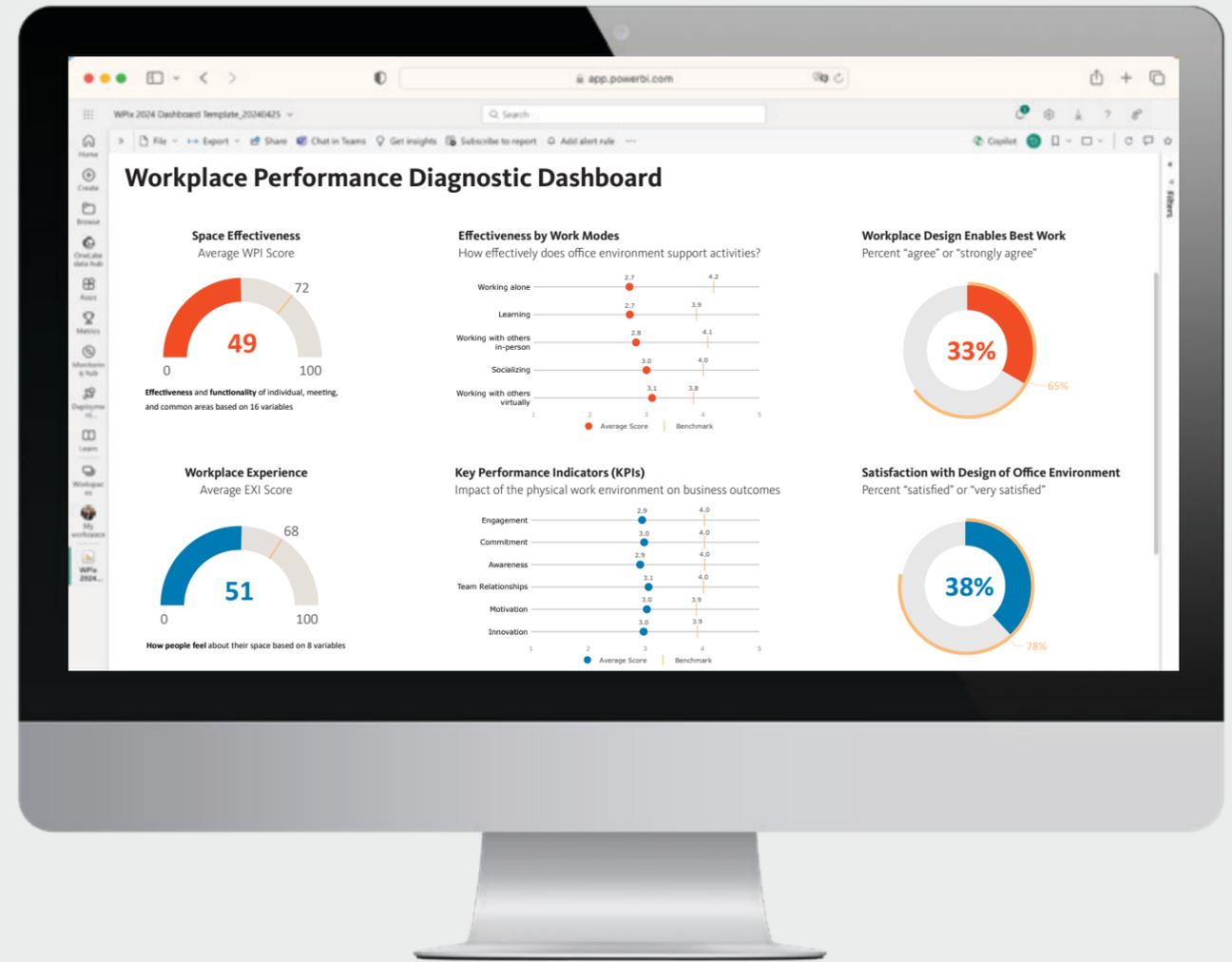
Robust analytics deliver practical insights to inform design decisions and mitigate risk.

Annual reporting

Future workplace change is identified by comparing to latest research and benchmarks.

Design impact

Post-occupancy surveys measure the design impact on work behaviors, key metrics, and outcomes.



766,663
respondents

101 million
data points

78+
countries

24
languages

Methodology

Data for Gensler’s Workplace Survey were gathered via an anonymous, panel-based survey of 16,809, office-based workers in 15 countries, conducted online between August 24 and December 3, 2024. Survey respondents were required to be employed full-time in one of 10 industries, work from an office environment at least some of the time, and work for a company, organization, or firm with at least 100 total employees (50+ for legal). Respondents were recruited by a third-party research platform, with whom we worked to ensure balanced distributions across gender, age (18+), and geography. Multiple checks were put in place to manage response validity. The survey could be taken in U.S. or UK English, French, Spanish, German, Arabic, Simplified Chinese, or Japanese. The median survey completion time was 24.8 minutes.

All survey respondents answered questions about their general workplace behaviors, experiences, and preferences for the physical work environment, as well as ratings of effectiveness, functional features, and service and amenity offerings. Respondents also answered

questions regarding their sense of engagement, autonomy, team dynamics, belonging, commitment, and well-being. Respondents were anonymous to Gensler, and the workplaces and office spaces evaluated were not necessarily designed by Gensler.

Statistical analyses primarily consisted of comparing results and measures of association to assess the direction, magnitude, and both the statistical and practical significance of relationships between two or more groups. These included ANOVA and t-tests to compare group means and pairwise z-tests at a 95% confidence level for percentages. The margin of error is +/-3% for each country-specific subsample.

Historical Data

This report references results from previous Workplace Surveys conducted by Gensler, dating back to 2005. Data from three regional reports conducted between 2016 and 2019 were disaggregated for the analysis in this report. For specific details about the methodologies of previous studies, please refer to their individual reports, available for download on Gensler.com.

Sample Descriptions

Company size	
40%	100–999 employees
40%	1,000–9,999
13%	10,000–99,999
7%	100,000+

Role	
15%	Administrative staff
9%	Technical staff
22%	Professional staff
26%	Manager
13%	Director
14%	Senior leadership

Gender	
57%	Male
43%	Female

Age range	
29%	18–29 years
24%	30–39 years
18%	40–49 years
13%	50–59 years
16%	60+ years

Industry breakdown	
16%	Financial Services
16%	Technology
14%	Consumer Goods
12%	Government/Defense
11%	Management Advisory
11%	Media
7%	Energy
5%	Sciences
4%	Legal
3%	Not-for-Profit

Country	
7%	Australia
7%	Canada
7%	China
6%	Colombia
3%	Costa Rica
7%	France
7%	Germany
7%	India
7%	Japan
7%	Mexico
7%	Saudi Arabia
7%	Singapore
6%	UAE
7%	UK
7%	U.S.

Last time the physical office environment was redesigned, modified, or updated	
30%	3 years or less
35%	3-5 years
19%	6-10 years
8%	More than 10 years
8%	I don't know

Percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest whole number.

For more information on how and where employees work, filtered by country, age, role, and industry, please see our website at www.Gensler.com.

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