

Leadership Future Work Survey Report

March 2021

vocon.

As we stretch into nearly one year of remote work, business leaders are looking toward new realities of the post-pandemic world. Organizations will need to rethink and reconfigure their workforces to balance evolving business needs. The pandemic has created an opportunity for organizations to reengage with the workforce and reinvent their workplaces to support new and different ways of working.

The biggest hurdle leaders will face in recovery is the tension between preparing for a return to previous activities and routines while also embracing a new reality and keeping their culture alive and their people engaged and connected. Vocon conducted a survey to gather feedback from the business leader perspective around how their remote work experience changed and learn more about the plan for employees after the pandemic.



High Level Themes – What We’re Seeing...

Concerns for company culture and people top the list

As organizations strategize their path forward, leaders have major concerns around preserving their company culture and building coworker relationships. Leaders developing flexible work policies will have to ensure their workforce is skilled in balancing remote and in-person work, while remaining connected to the corporate culture as well as each other.

The hybrid work model requires a new paradigm.

The global experiment in remote working has proven it can be part of a viable work policy. A majority of leaders across industries plan to institute work policies that accommodate both in-office and remote/virtual work as we move through and beyond the pandemic. This hybrid model requires consideration of an employee’s overall work experience many have not yet addressed. Leaders must define the new purpose of their corporate work centers and how they will maintain a strong and enduring culture through these changes.

Uncertainty about the future.

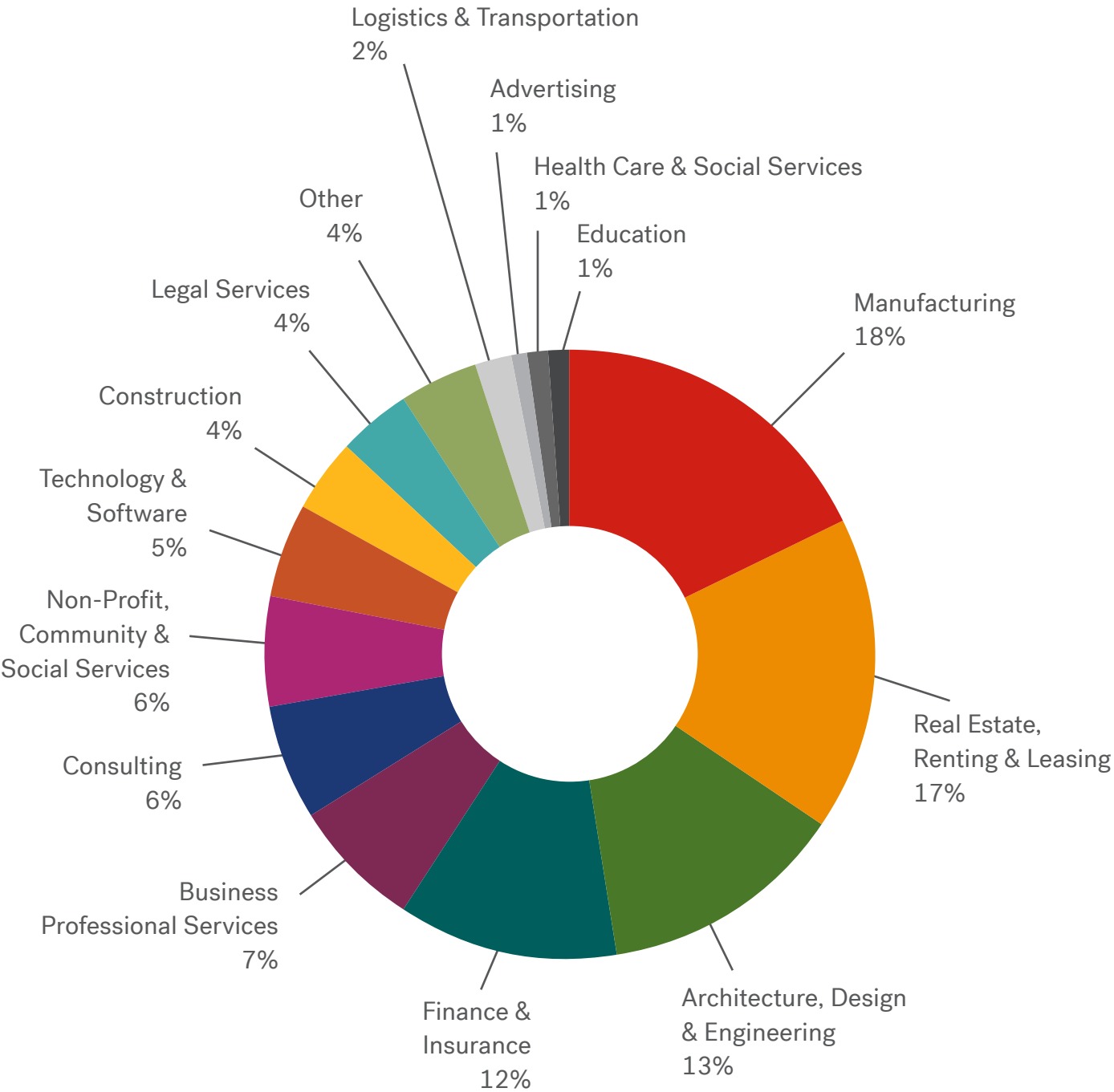
How do you plan ahead when the future is unknown? This is a question many leaders are asking as we continue to navigate changes brought on by the pandemic. Some organizations have developed their interim plans, while others are unsure of when and how they will return to the workplace. Despite the uncertainty, leaders tell us they are embracing the unknown. Successful organizations will be those that are willing to experiment, pilot and pivot to a new course more quickly than they had before.

Sampling of Survey Respondents

Number of Business Leader Respondents: 100

Number of Employees Represented: 950,000

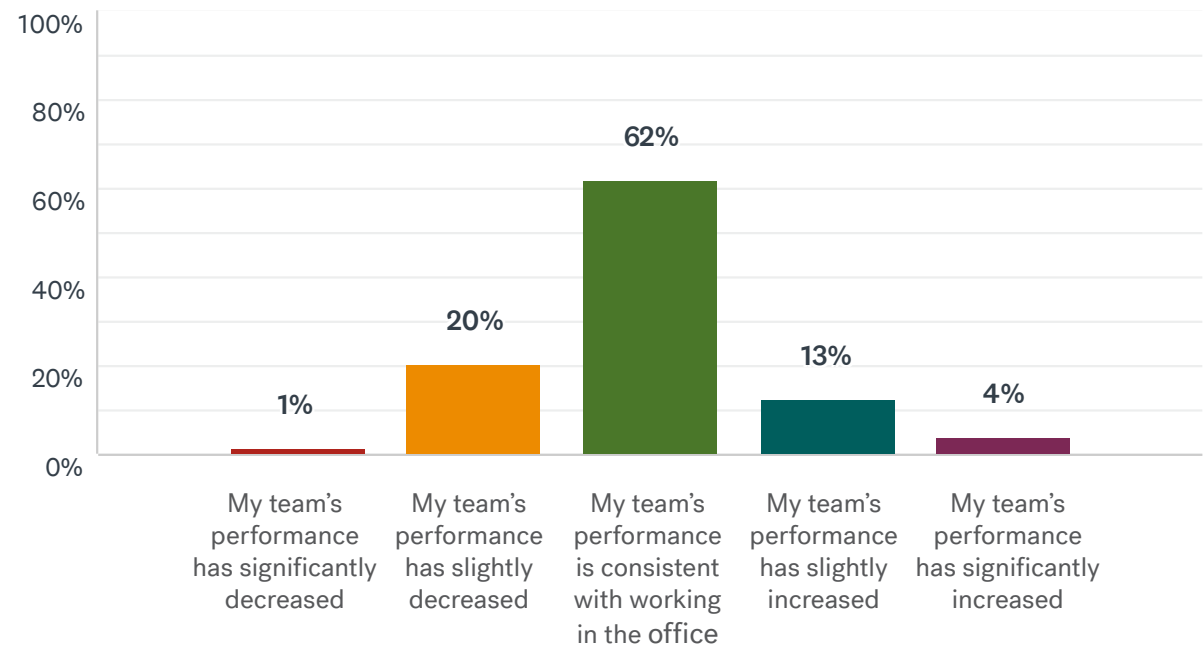
Industries:



Connection to Culture, Learning & Development

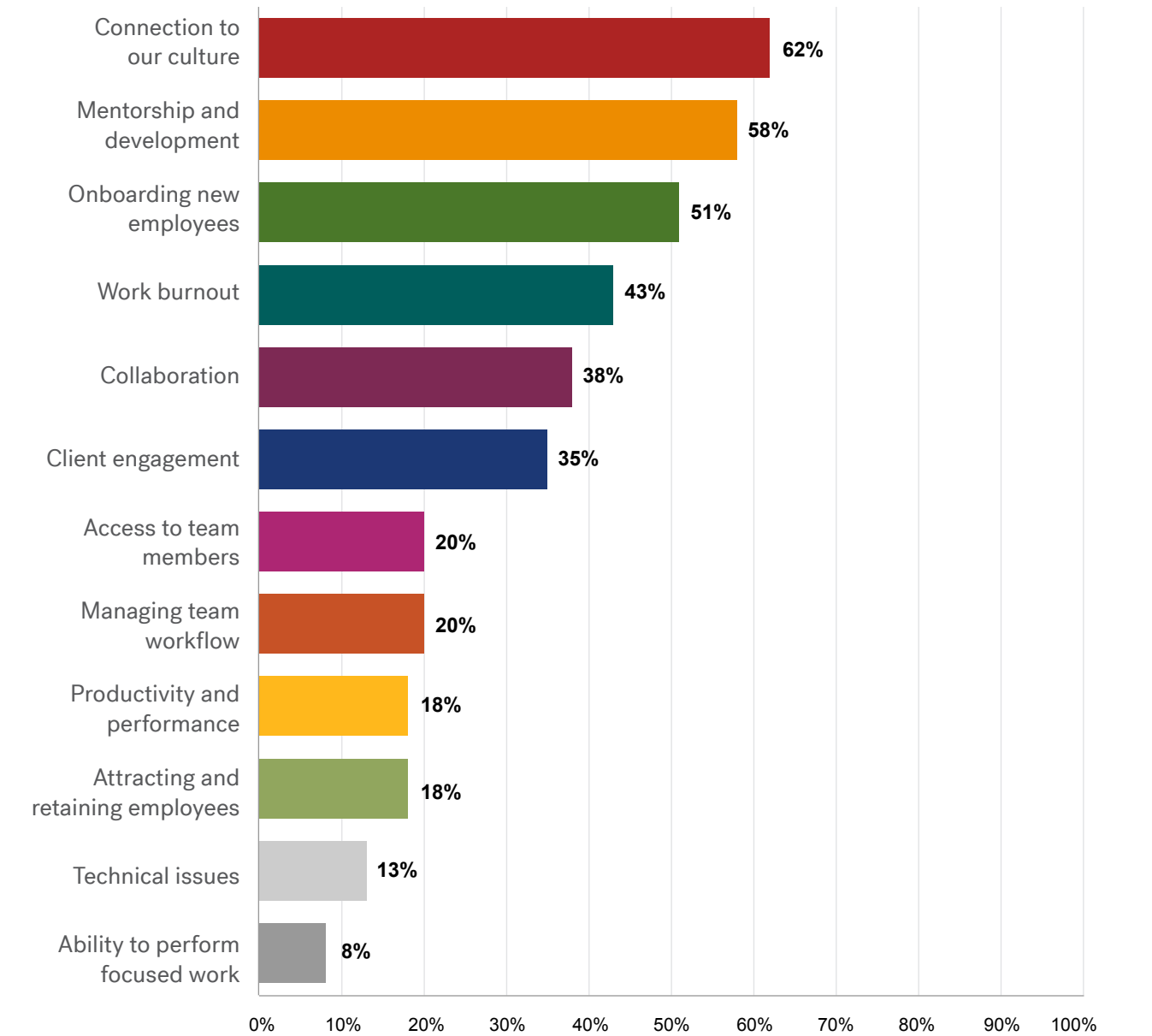
Nearly 80% of leaders are satisfied with their team’s productivity. However, challenges surrounding connection to culture and the development of employees and new hires remain a concern. Technical issues and ability to perform focused work are no longer a challenge for organizations. It’s the cultural and development side of things that will need to be a focus in the design of the workplace moving forward to help bridge that gap.

How would you rate your team’s work performance while working remotely?



“I’m surprised our productivity has been so strong, but a big concern is around the development and training of younger professionals.”

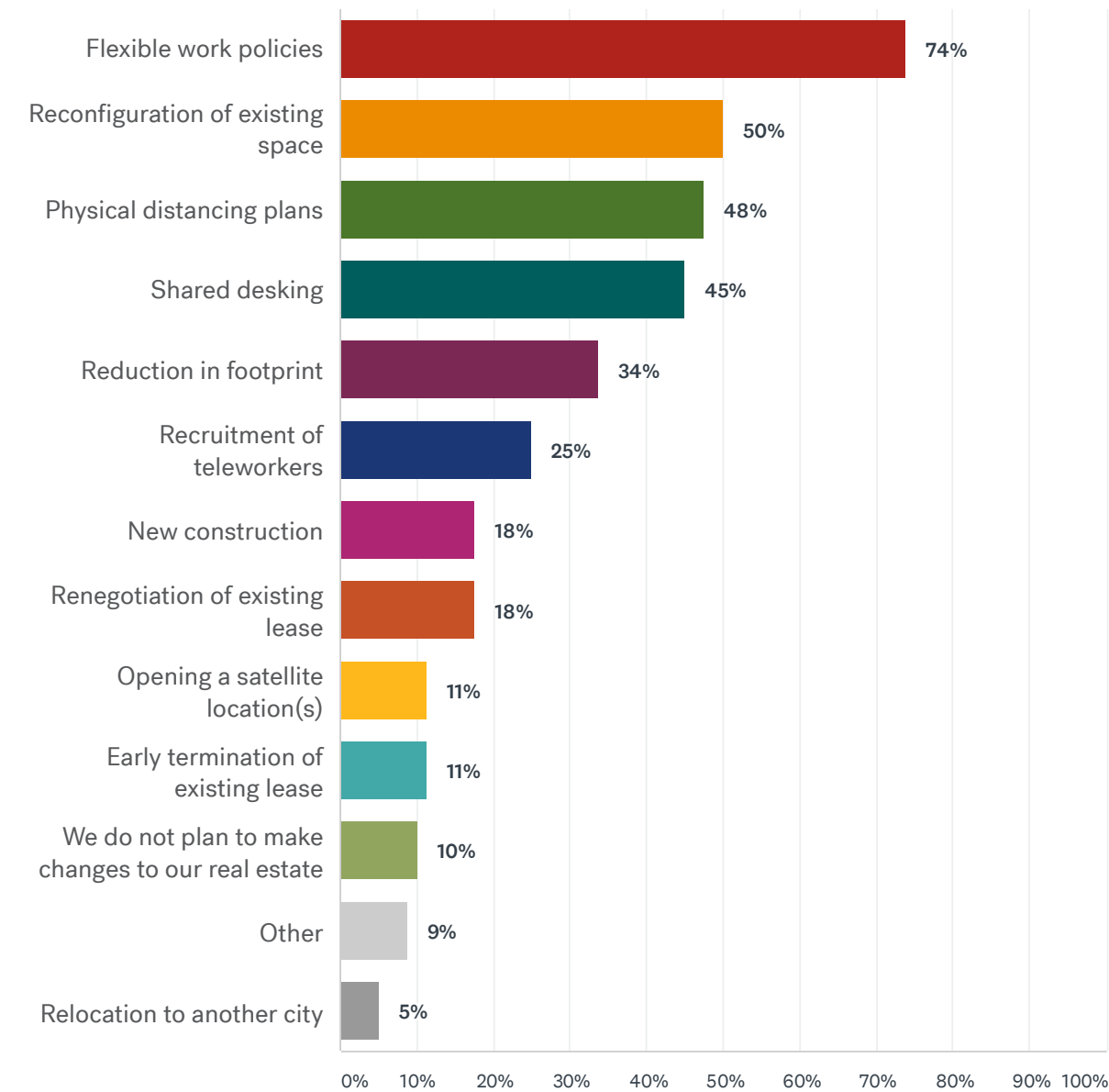
What challenges is your organization facing as the pandemic continues?



A Flexible Approach to Work

Flexible working continues to catch on as a viable alternative to spending 100% of the workday in the office or at home. Nearly 75% of leaders now say they plan to make flexible working a permanent option for employees. Financial and legal industries have the highest portion of leaders planning to implement flexible work (92%) as well as shared desk policies (75%) and plan to reduce their real estate footprint (83%).

What actions are you considering to optimize your real estate portfolio as a result of the pandemic?

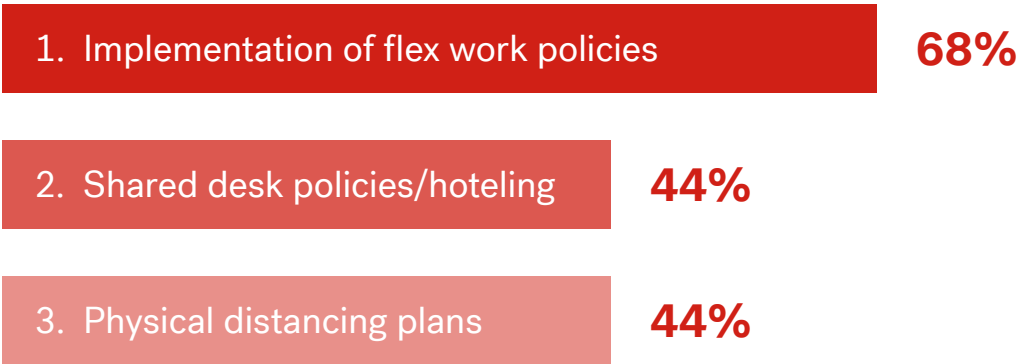


“The WFH movement may continue to accelerate as the workplace shrinks and continues to become more dense. In the future we need balance and choice, with adequate space for collaboration as well as privacy.”

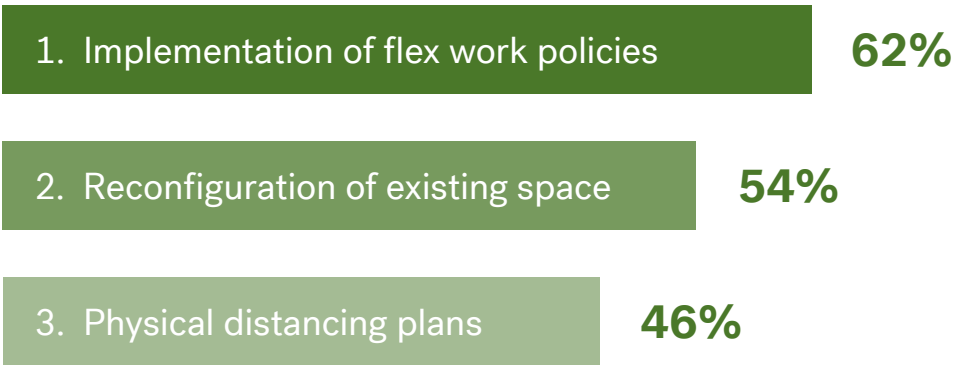
A Flexible Approach to Work by Industry

Leaders reported their priorities for optimizing their real estate portfolio as a result of the pandemic. Here’s how their top three responses varied based on industry:

Creative Industries (Arch/Design, Consulting, Tech/Software)



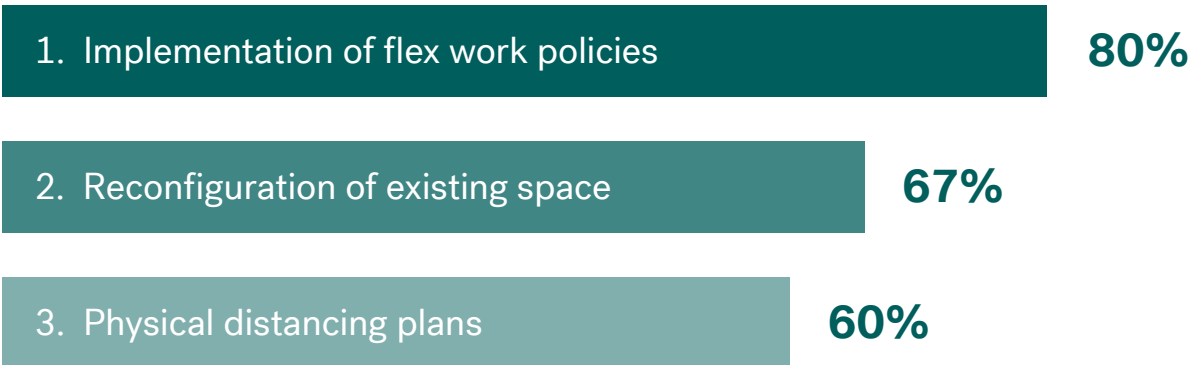
Real Estate & Leasing



Financial & Legal Industries



Manufacturing

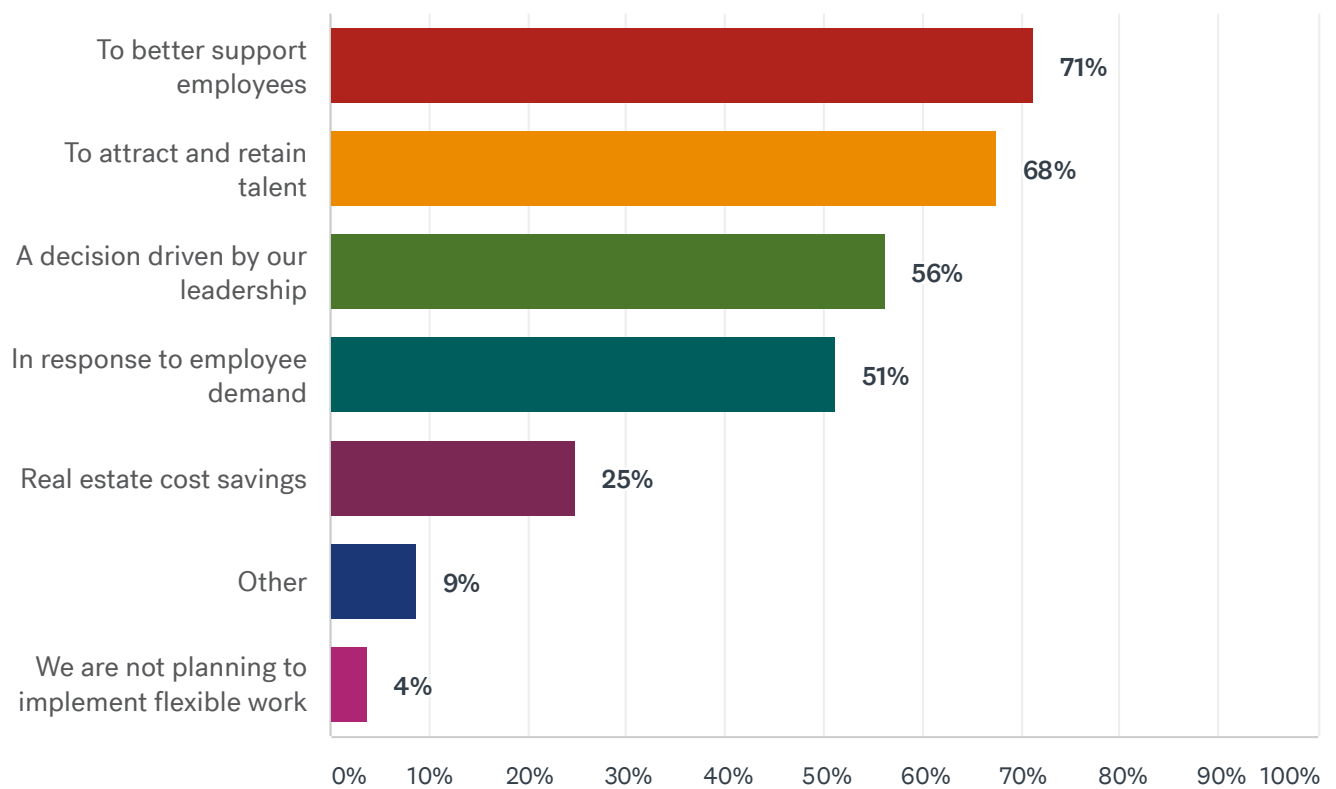


The Hybrid Work Experience

The nature of work is changing for businesses across industries. For creative firms, implementing flexible work policies is a way to better support how employees are working, whereas for traditionally conservative Financial and Legal firms, offering flexible work is considered a tool to attract and retain top talent as well as an opportunity for real estate cost savings.

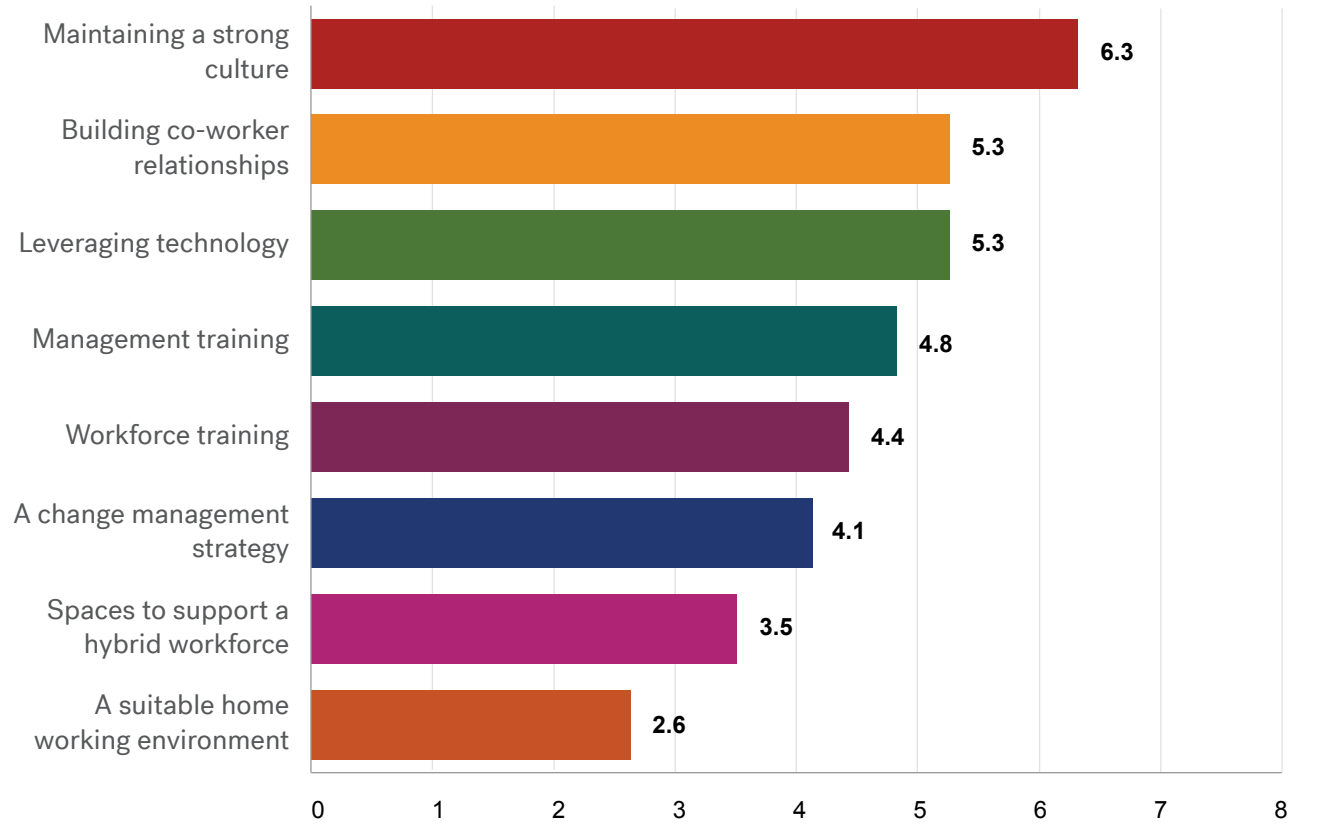
When creating a hybrid work experience, maintaining culture, building employee relationships and leveraging technology are at the top of the list of priorities for business leaders. Management training is also becoming a topic of conversation as organizations are increasingly investing in training and resources to help leaders manage team workflow in order to help maintain employee wellbeing and avoid work burnout.

What factors are influencing your decision to implement a flexible work policy?

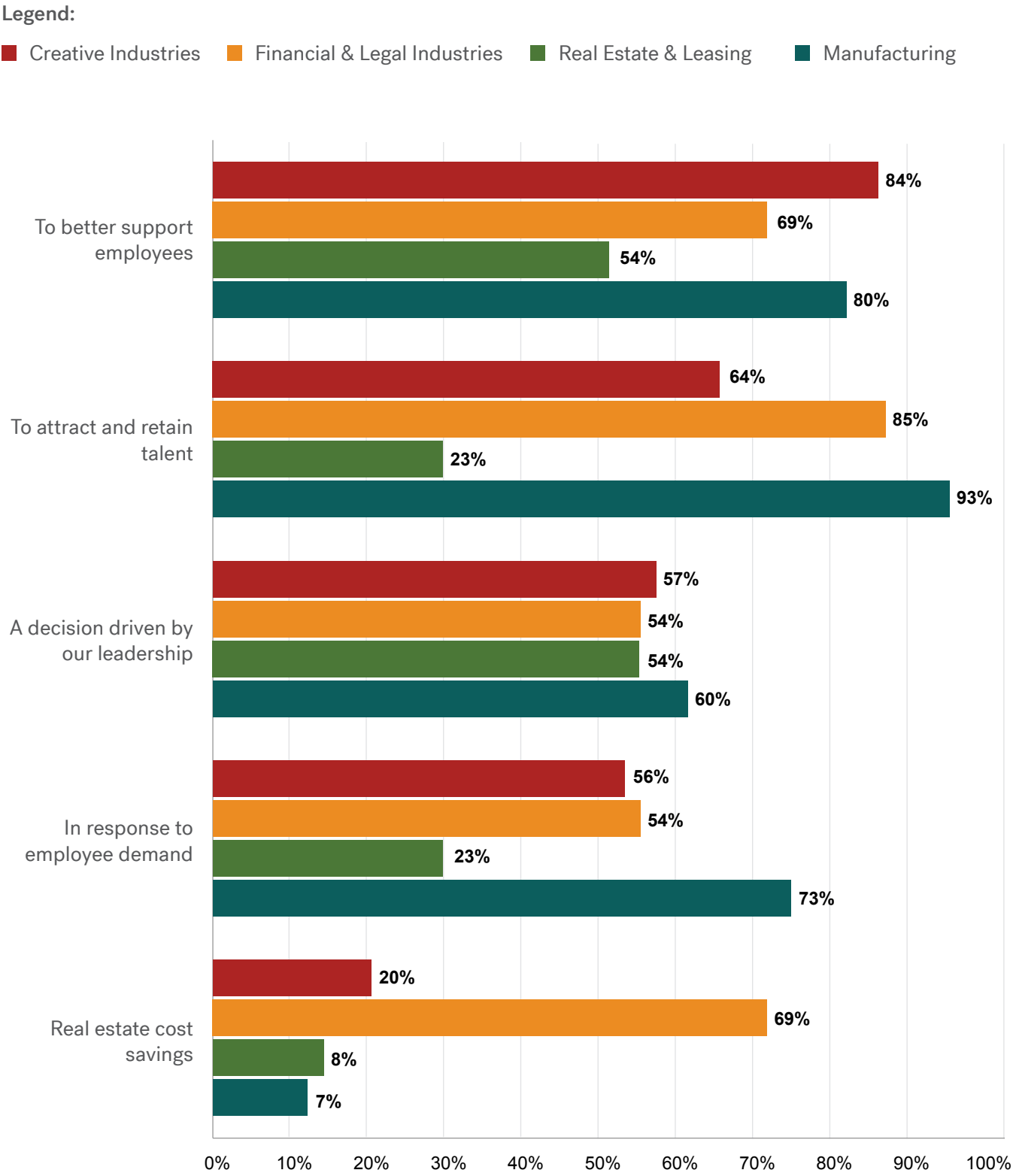


“The biggest issue with working from home is the impact of burnout and mental wellbeing. People are working longer hours and feel they cannot disconnect.”

What factors are most important in developing a hybrid work strategy?



Factors influencing implementation of a flexible work policy by industry



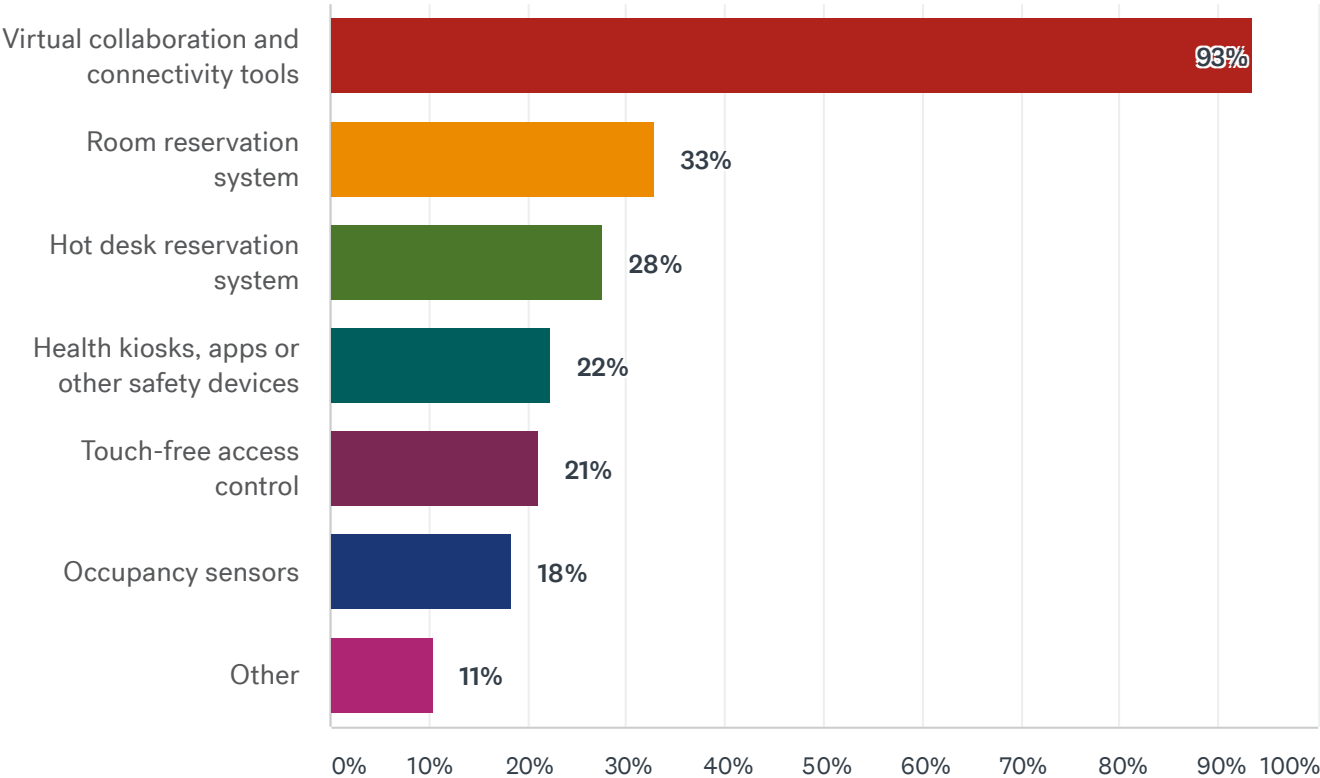
“Our preference moving forward will be to have the option to work remotely when it makes sense. Choice and optionality will be key to our success in the future.”

Preparing for the Hybrid Work Experience

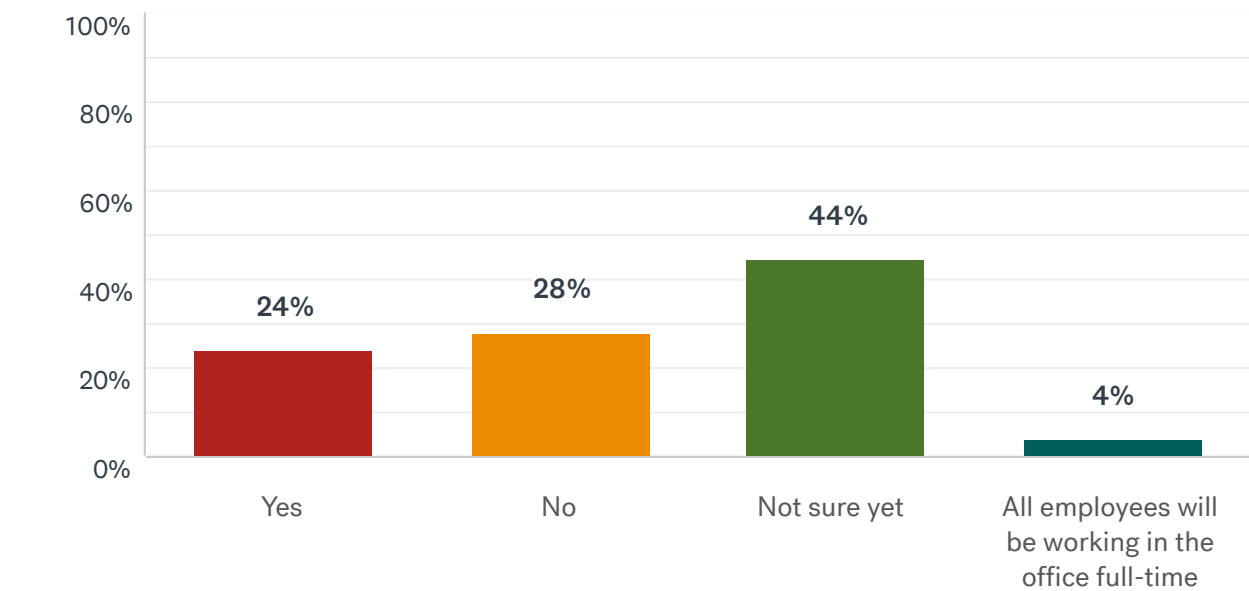
How organizations will build an infrastructure to bolster technology and their people will be paramount in the future. It is evident that companies are putting a premium on technology to keep teams connected. There is a need to bring a human approach to work to create a well-connected environment for both in-office and remote employees.

In addition to collaborative tools, organizations will implement conference room and hoteling reservation systems to help create a seamless experience.

What technology do you plan to make a priority in support of your workforce?



Will your organization provide home office equipment or a stipend to your remote employees to help them create a more effective home working environment?



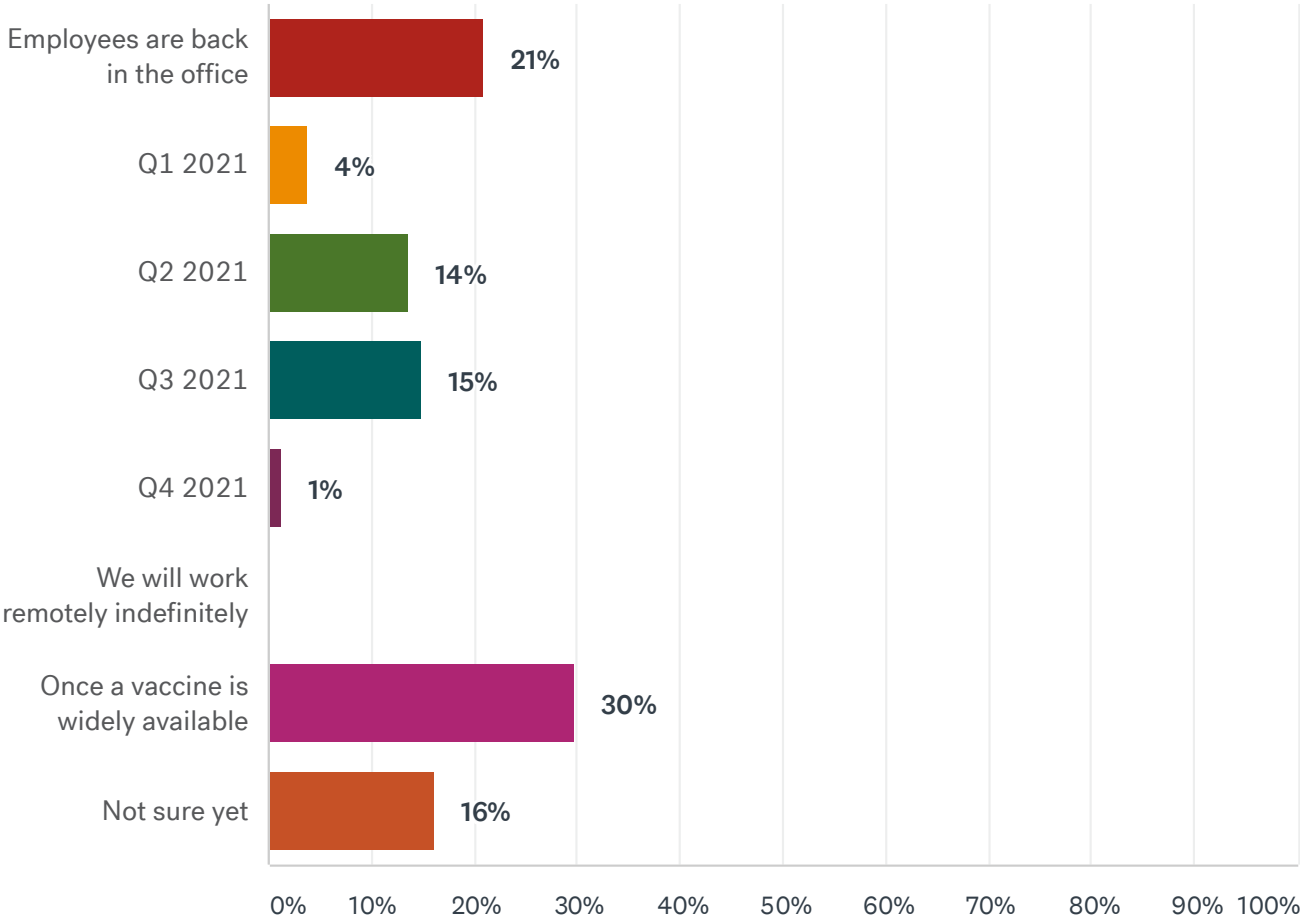
“Utilizing the proper technology will be critical to staying connected with clients and team members both in the office and when working remotely.”

Return to Work

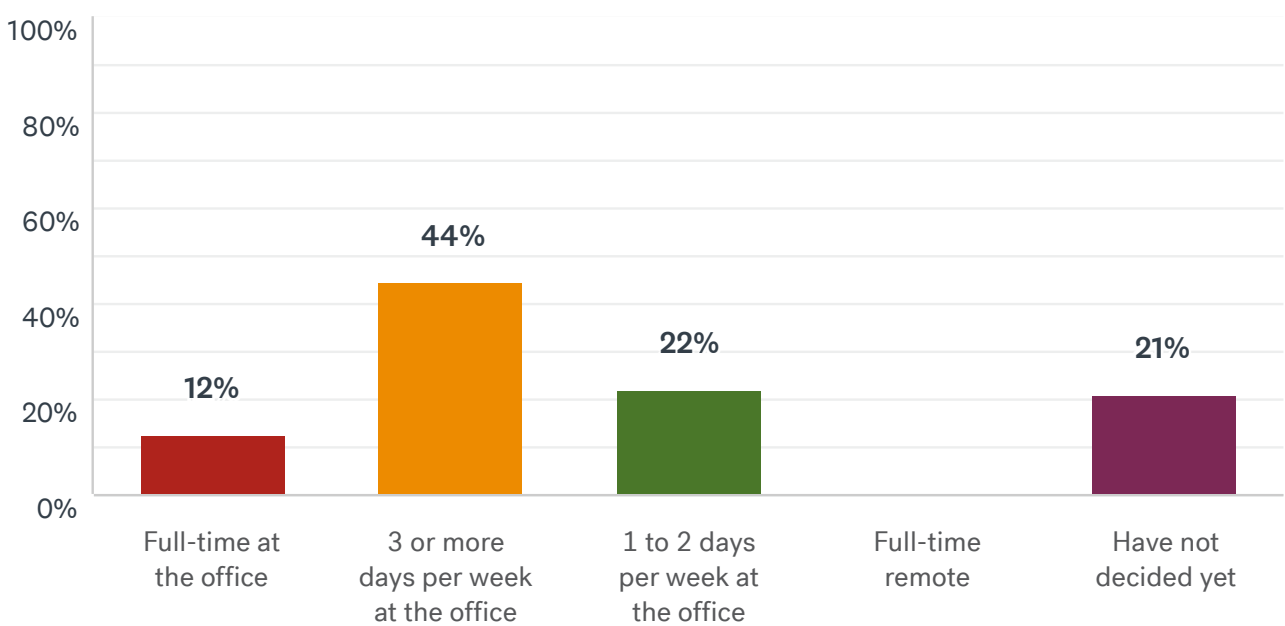
Our research reveals a level of uncertainty about when and how return to work will happen. Some claim employees are already back in the office, while others are either unsure or don't expect to come back until a vaccine is widely available.

Our research also identifies a hybrid future where 66% of leaders will provide a balance of in-office and remote work during the week. Most leaders (44%) anticipate employees working in the office majority of the time, but will be given the option to work remotely the rest of the week.

When do you expect to return to the office?



Post COVID, how often do you anticipate employees coming into the office?



Sample Schedule of Working in the Office vs. Work from Home

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
In the office	Work from home	In the office	Work from home	In the office



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