



# The future of work is hybrid

Here's what that will look like

# Executive summary

---

*The overall goal of a hybrid model is to meet the wide range of needs that employees may experience in any given workweek or workday—from the need to focus or collaborate, to the need to balance work with family commitments.*

It's been over a year since the COVID-19 pandemic began, forcing millions of people around the globe to work from home and creating a new normal that has permanently upended the world of work. Many employees have enjoyed the benefits of remote work, including more time with family and less time spent commuting or preparing for the workday. However, workers have experienced drawbacks as well—distractions at home, a lack of face time with colleagues, diminished work-life balance, and a tendency to work more hours.

As more people get vaccinated and we begin to round the corner on the pandemic, employees and companies are looking ahead at what will come next. And this is where a hybrid model comes in. In a hybrid workplace model, employees have the ability to work in different spaces, including corporate offices, coworking spaces, public spaces, and from home. The approach will vary from company to company, but the overall goal of a hybrid model is to meet the wide range of needs that employees may experience in any given workweek or workday—from the need to focus or collaborate, to the need to balance work with family commitments.

To learn more about how the future of work will be shaped by a hybrid approach, WeWork partnered with independent research firm Workplace Intelligence to conduct a blind survey of 1,000 C-suite and 1,000 non-C-suite employees. The survey examined the benefits, drawbacks, and requirements of the hybrid model, its financial implications, how it relates to corporate real estate strategy, and employee and C-suite perceptions of it.

The results revealed that most workers expect to continue working from home at least a few days a week, and businesses intend to support this arrangement because productivity has generally not declined due to remote working. However, people also desperately want to have spaces outside of their home to work from, and companies recognize this need.

The survey revealed that while employers recognize the benefits of a hybrid model, they'll have to adapt for it to be effective in the long run. The shift to hybrid will require companies to rethink their corporate real estate portfolio and office space design. They'll also have to reconsider their expectations about when employees are getting their work done, since employees want schedule flexibility and have long found the traditional 9-to-5 workday to be outdated and counterproductive to their overall quality of life.

Perhaps most importantly, we learned that when employees gain the flexibility they yearn for, their companies benefit from higher productivity, engagement, and loyalty. Employees' desire for greater control, flexibility, and freedom in where and when they work is at the very core of hybrid. It may have taken a pandemic to reveal that giving workers what they want is actually beneficial for the bottom line—but now that companies have taken the leap, the future of work is bright. And the future is hybrid.

## Methodology

Research findings are based on a blind survey conducted by Workplace Intelligence and Savanta, Inc. between February 11–February 19, 2021. Survey respondents were not aware that WeWork was the research sponsor. The survey audience included 1,000 C-suite and 1,000 non-C-suite employees who were working full-time, at least 18 years of age, and living in the U.S. Respondents were recruited through a number of different mechanisms and sources, and had completed on average 300 profiling data points prior to taking part in this survey. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation.

## Demographics

In order to get a comprehensive understanding of this topic, survey respondents were well-represented across multiple domains: gender, age group, income and education level, household size, geographic location, company size, job role/type, and industry.

---

## Key findings

# 64%

Of employees would pay out of their own pocket for access to an office space

# 75%

Of employees would give up at least one workplace benefit or perk for the freedom to choose their work environment

# 79%

Of the C-suite plan to let their employees split their time between corporate offices and remote working, if their job allows for it

# 76%

Of the C-suite say they're likely to give their employees a stipend to work from home or a coworking space

# 1 out of 2

Employees would prefer to spend 3 days a week or fewer in the office, and when they do go in, they want to be there 5 hours a day or less

# 2X

After COVID-19, employees who are more satisfied and engaged want to spend 2X as much time in locations other than their home or corporate office than their less-engaged colleagues

# The “new normal” is hybrid

## Here’s what that will look like

In the new hybrid workplace model, employees will have the ability to work from multiple environments in any given week, and they may also split each workday between different locations. An employee might start their day working from home, then go into an office or coworking space to meet with colleagues. In fact, over half (53%) of the employees we surveyed say they want to work in an office 3 days per week or fewer after COVID-19. When they do go into a physical workplace, 50% of employees say less than 5 hours per day is ideal.

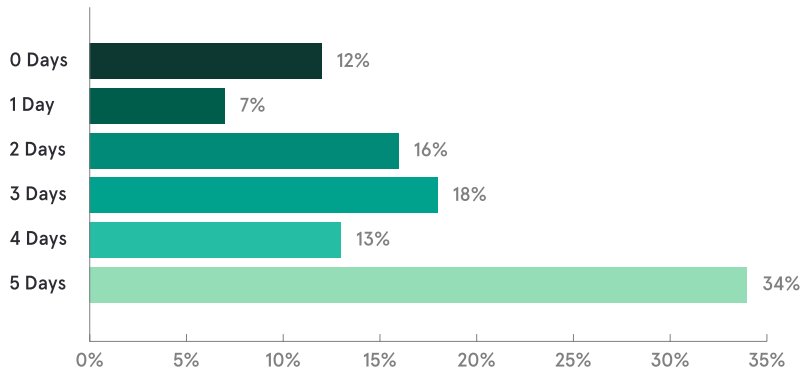
53%

of employees want to work in an office 3 days per week or fewer

EMPLOYEES

If given the option, how many days each week would you work in an office?

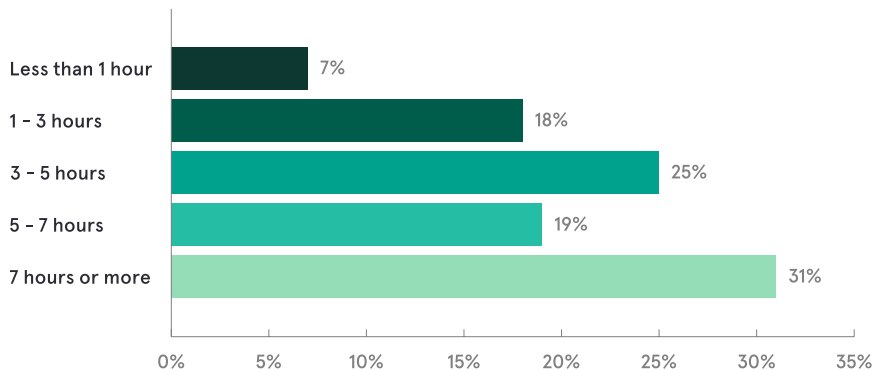
TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000



EMPLOYEES

On days when you go into an office, what is the ideal number of hours in a day that you would benefit from working there?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000



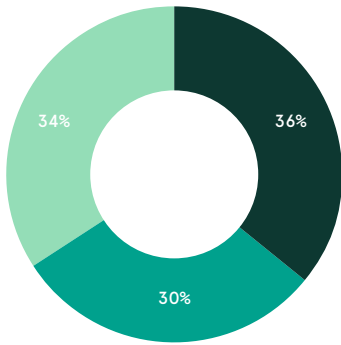
50%

of employees say less than 5 hours per day is ideal, when they do go into an office

EMPLOYEES

After COVID-19, what percentage of your work time would you prefer to spend in the following environments?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000



- Company HQ
- Working from my home
- Other locations

*Other locations include a company satellite office, coworking/flexible shared office space, or a public third space like a library or cafe*

With respect to their work location, employees intend to split their time almost evenly between their company HQ, home, and other locations such as satellite offices, coworking and flexible shared spaces, or public “third spaces” like a library or cafe. Company expectations align with employee preferences: the C-suite would like employees to spend about half (53%) of their time in an office (e.g., HQ or satellite office) and about half (47%) of their time working from home or another public space.

For employers, there will certainly be logistical challenges. These include challenges in integrating different work locations and accommodating hybrid workweeks, while maintaining a high level of security as well as a cohesive corporate culture. But as our survey revealed, the benefits of hybrid make it decidedly worth the effort.



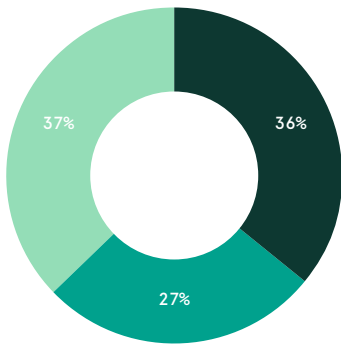
## A hybrid approach is linked to better workplace outcomes

**EMPLOYEES**

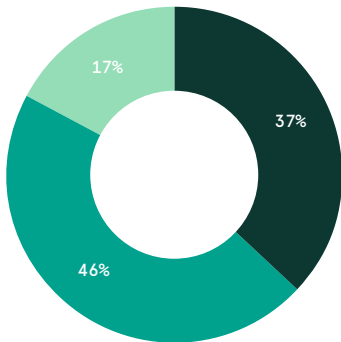
After the COVID-19 pandemic, what percentage of your work time would you prefer to spend in the following environments?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000

Employees who are satisfied, engaged, and likely to recommend their company:



Employees who are unsatisfied, disengaged, and unlikely to recommend their company:



- Company HQ
- Working from my home
- Other locations

*Other locations include a company satellite office, coworking/flexible shared office space, or a public third space like a library or cafe*

Before and during COVID-19, employees who are highly satisfied, engaged, and likely to recommend their company split their time differently than those who report low levels of workplace contentedness. Compared to their less satisfied and less engaged colleagues, they’ve spent 50% more time in locations like satellite offices, coworking spaces, or public “third spaces,” and about one-third less time at their company HQ.

After the pandemic, these differences are likely to become even more notable. Most employees say they want to work from home more often—but highly satisfied and engaged employees want to spend much more time at locations outside of their company HQ (37%), and much less time at home (27%) than their less-engaged peers. Workers with low satisfaction and engagement want to spend just 17% of their time at other locations and 46% of their time at home.

For employers, the message is clear: Employees who report high levels of positive work-related sentiments have had access to hybrid arrangements for some time. But after the pandemic, people’s desire for hybrid will increase—and employers who don’t offer hybrid options will be missing out on an opportunity to improve key business outcomes. For example, Gallup finds that companies with a high level of engagement report 22% higher profitability, 21% higher productivity, and up to 65% less turnover.

**2X**

After COVID-19, employees who are satisfied, engaged, and likely to recommend their company want to spend 2X as much time working in locations like satellite offices, coworking spaces, and public third spaces, than their less-engaged peers.

EMPLOYEES

What do you believe are the biggest benefits of a hybrid model?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000

SELECT TOP THREE

- 62% Better work-life balance
- 49% Control over my schedule
- 48% Save money on commuting costs
- 48% Less stressful work environment
- 45% More time with family
- 28% More socialization
- 6% There are no benefits

C-SUITE

SELECT TOP THREE

- 52% More flexibility
- 49% Higher levels of productivity
- 42% Higher employee engagement
- 37% Freedom of choice
- 32% Easier to manage employees
- 29% More socialization
- 24% Lower physical real estate costs
- 24% Attract/retain talent
- 4% There are no benefits

## The benefits and drawbacks of hybrid

The vast majority of employees (94%) and the C-suite (96%) agree that there is at least one benefit to hybrid work arrangements. Among employees, better work-life balance is the number-one benefit by far, selected by nearly two-thirds of respondents. Other benefits include having more control, less stress, and more time with family, as well as lower commuting costs.

Among the C-suite, the top three benefits are more flexibility, higher productivity, and higher employee engagement. However, while it's evident that the C-suite recognizes the importance of a hybrid model for business success, the survey results suggest that leaders would benefit from learning more about the wide spectrum of benefits offered by hybrid.

Both employees and the C-suite noted several drawbacks of hybrid, mostly centered around the challenges of remote work. About half of employees say it can be difficult to manage their time and focus when working remotely, and they also find the lack of oversight to be an obstacle. The drawbacks mentioned by the C-suite echo these concerns. Over a third of the C-suite say it can be difficult to manage employees, they worry about decreased productivity due to distractions at home, and they feel there's less human interaction.

While these concerns are certainly valid, they're more reflective of the current state of work rather than the after COVID-19 reality. As employees transition back to spending a greater percentage of their time in an office, coworking space, or other location, it's likely they'll likely find the right balance that works for them and their employers.



## Control and flexibility are at the core of hybrid

Our survey found that nearly all employees (95%) want some level of control over how, where, and when they work. While the desire for control is nothing new, the way in which COVID-19 delivered a high level of location and schedule control is certainly unique. Almost overnight, millions of people were forced to begin working from home. Businesses were also forced to accept the sudden shift to remote work, even if they were hesitant about the outcomes.

Fast-forward one year later, and most companies have done a complete 180. Research from PwC finds that 83% of employers now say the shift to remote work has been successful for their company (up from 73% in June 2020). In our survey, nearly all (96%) of the C-suite surveyed say they're willing to give their workers some level of control, having seen firsthand the benefits of remote work during the pandemic.

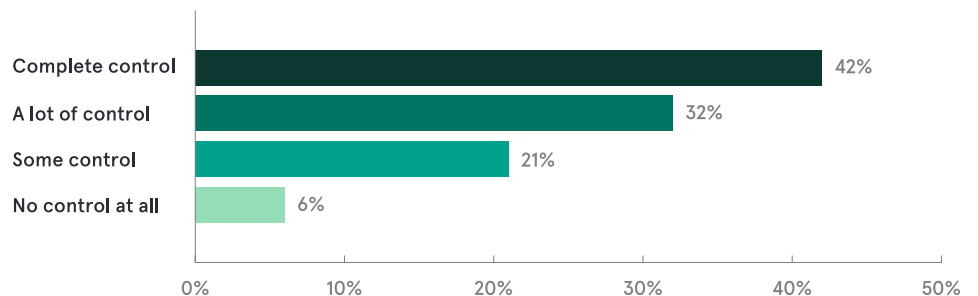
95%

of employees want some level of control over how, when and where they work

EMPLOYEES

How much control do you want to have over how, when and where you work?

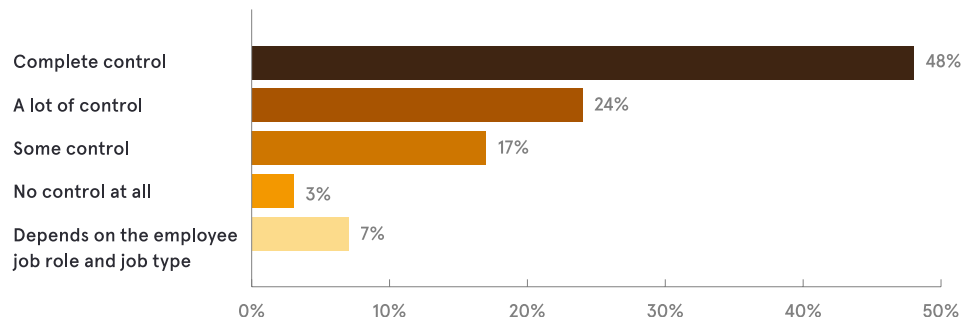
TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000



C-SUITE

How much control are you willing to give your employees over how, when and where they work?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000



96%

of the C-suite is willing to give their employees some level of control over how, when and where they work





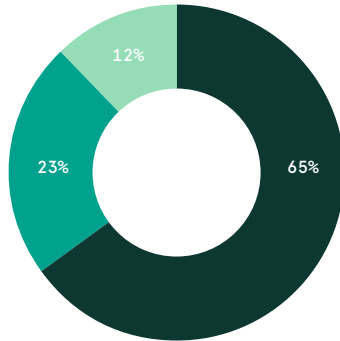
Respondents were also asked about splitting employees' work time between corporate offices and remote working after COVID-19. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of employees say they want their employer to allow them to split their time between different locations. However, an even greater percentage of the C-suite—79%—say they plan to let their employees split their time in this way.

Based on these findings, it appears that employees have nothing to fear when it comes to losing the freedom and flexibility that they've come to appreciate during the pandemic. And as we now know, this flexibility is beneficial for workers and companies alike.

**EMPLOYEES**

Do you want your employer to allow you to split your time working in your corporate offices and remote working after the COVID-19 pandemic?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 893  
Includes only employees whose jobs can be done remotely

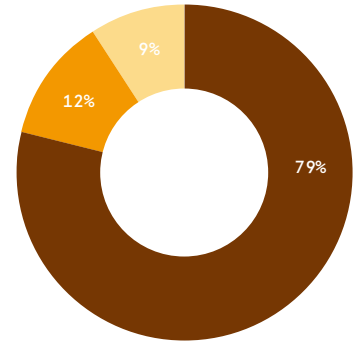


- Yes
- No
- Undecided

**C-SUITE**

Do you plan to let your employees split their time between your corporate offices and remote working after the COVID-19 pandemic?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000



- Yes
- No
- Undecided



EMPLOYEES

What employee benefits and perks would you give up for the freedom to choose your work environment?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

- 29% Flexible work schedule
- 27% Wellness programs
- 26% Cash bonuses
- 25% Learning & development opportunities
- 25% Healthcare coverage
- 24% Time spent working from home
- 23% Paid time off
- 20% Retirement benefits
- 25% I wouldn't give up anything

## The value of flexibility

One of the most surprising findings from the survey is that employees want flexibility so much that they'd be willing to give up some of the most valuable benefits and perks they receive from their employer. In fact, 75% would give up at least one benefit or perk, including healthcare coverage, cash bonuses, and paid time off, for the freedom to choose their work environment.

75%

of employees would give up at least one benefit or perk for the freedom to choose their work environment

A closer look at the data reveals that between 20 to 25% of employees would be willing to sacrifice each individual benefit or perk. But when you consider that over 1 in 4 workers would give up cash bonuses or healthcare benefits—which are very real, tangible benefits—in exchange for the freedom to choose their work environment, it's apparent that these findings are in fact quite astounding. And they underscore the immense value that employees place on having flexibility in how and where they work.

But are employers willing to make comparable sacrifices for a hybrid model? The answer is a resounding yes, according to our survey. Over one-third of the C-suite say they're already providing employees with a stipend to use a flexible workspace or coworking space of their choice (39%), or a stipend to work from home (32%). And over three-quarters of the C-suite (76%) say that, in the future, they're likely to give their employees this type of stipend.

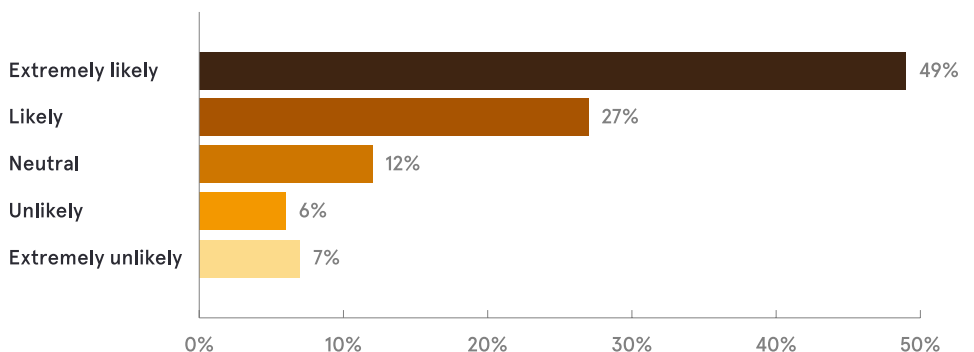
C-SUITE

How likely are you to give your employees a stipend to work from home or a coworking space?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000

76%

of the C-suite are likely to give their employees a stipend to work from home or a coworking space



## The value of office space

EMPLOYEES

What do you value most in going to an office space?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

- 50% Ability to focus on my work
- 43% Collaborating with my team
- 38% Socialization
- 37% Ability to be creative
- 33% Having a dedicated space to meet with clients
- 33% Access to onsite resources (IT support, receptionist, etc.)
- 24% Access to a variety of areas (Huddle rooms, lounges, etc.)
- 22% Access to onsite amenities (Cafe, fitness center, etc.)
- 16% Free food and drinks
- 4% I don't value having access to an office space
- 3% None of the above

At the core of a hybrid model is the ability for employees to combine working from home with working from an office or other location. The employees we surveyed cited a number of benefits of a physical office space, including the ability to focus and collaborate. Indeed, respondents highlighted multiple ways in which the office supports interactions with colleagues and clients—a key aspect of our day-to-day work lives that many people have missed during the pandemic.

What was most remarkable is that employees find office space so valuable that nearly two-thirds (64%) said they would be willing to pay for it out of their own pockets. Not surprisingly, this percentage is higher (80%) among employees in the highest income bracket (those earning more than \$200,000 per year). However, even among those in the lowest income bracket (earning \$30,000 to \$60,000 per year), 49% say they would pay some amount of their own money for access to office space.

64%

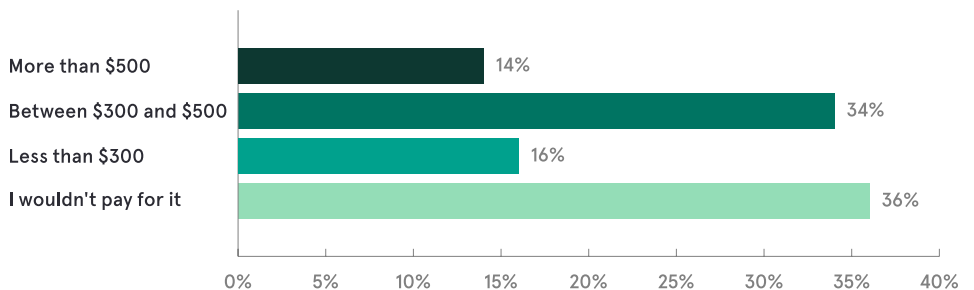
of employees would pay out of their own pocket for access to an office space

The takeaway here is clear: Employees are desperate to have a physical place to work, away from the stresses and distractions of home. They also miss all of the other perks of an office—from opportunities to socialize, to access to on-site resources and quiet spaces. As companies reopen their offices and start to bring the new hybrid model to life, it's critical that they consider the needs of their workforce and deliver spaces that meet (or exceed) employee expectations.

EMPLOYEES

If your employer doesn't provide you with access to office space in a location of your choice, how much would you personally pay for it per month?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000



## What types of companies are using hybrid the most?

*The C-suite is more likely to adopt a hybrid approach if they work for large urban companies.*

Just like any workplace trend, the new hybrid model is likely to be adopted by the most forward-thinking companies before it makes its way into the broader world. Use of hybrid also hinges on certain factors which affect employees' ability to work remotely—for example, industry or occupation type.

Our survey revealed that the C-suite is more likely to consider hybrid beneficial and more likely to adopt a hybrid approach if they work for companies that are larger, in urban locations, in the pre-startup stage, and in industries like financial services and software & technology.



*The hybrid model is already a widely accepted approach.*

For example, overall, 87% of the C-suite considers flexible workspace options to be a benefit or perk for their employees. But when we compare the percentages among companies with the traits listed above with companies on the opposite end of the spectrum, the difference is notable.

Similar findings are reflected throughout the survey, in questions related to current and future use of hybrid strategies. However, it's important to note that even among companies with comparatively low use of these strategies, the perceptions around the benefits of hybrid are still quite positive. This points to the fact that while only some organizations are employing a hybrid model right now, it's already a widely accepted approach.

**C-SUITE**

Do you consider flexible workspace options a benefit or perk for your employees?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000

**87%**

Overall, 87% say "Yes"

Large companies 500+ EMPLOYEES	96%	vs.	Small companies < 200 EMPLOYEES	75%
Urban	93%	vs.	Rural	80%
Pre-startup	96%	vs.	Mature	79%
Financial services	94%	vs.	Travel & Hospitality	71%

**C-SUITE**

Do you plan to let your employees split their time between your corporate offices and remote working after COVID-19?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000

**67%**

Overall, 67% say "Yes"

Large companies 500+ EMPLOYEES	76%	vs.	Small companies < 200 EMPLOYEES	49%
Urban	76%	vs.	Rural	54%
Pre-startup	86%	vs.	Mature	50%
Financial services	79%	vs.	Travel & Hospitality	46%

## What types of employees have gravitated toward hybrid?

*Employees are more likely to want a hybrid arrangement if they are younger, highly educated, and well-compensated.*

Similar to the C-suite, employees are more likely to use and desire a hybrid arrangement if they work for companies that are larger, located in urban locations, in early stages of development, and in certain industries. However, there are some notable demographic differences among employees who prefer a hybrid workstyle.

For example, 65% of all employees say they want to split their time between corporate offices and remote working after COVID-19. But employees are more likely to want this degree of flexibility if they are under 25 years old, have a master’s degree or higher, and make at least \$150,000 a year. Gender and household size also play a role in employee preferences, with men and those in larger households reporting a greater desire to split their time between different locations.

The survey did not uncover many notable differences between introverts and extroverts with respect to their overall desire for hybrid. This is because the hybrid model offers the best of both worlds: remote work, which may generally be more appealing for introverts, and in-person work, which offers opportunities for interaction that more closely align with extroversion.

However, having a place to work outside of your home isn’t just about socialization or collaboration. As previously highlighted, the employees we surveyed cited a wide range of benefits of an office space, including a greater ability to focus and enhanced creativity. And these are benefits that matter to all employees.

### EMPLOYEES

Do you want your employer to allow you to split your time working in your corporate offices and remote working after COVID-19?

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 1000

65%

Overall, 65% say “Yes”

18-24 years old	71%	vs.	55+ years old	46%
Master’s degree or higher	75%	vs.	High School degree	50%
\$150,000+ income	75%	vs.	< \$60,000 income	58%
Introverts	70%	vs.	Extroverts	67%

## The future of work is hybrid

As we emerge from an unprecedented year of change and challenges, it's clear that work as we know it has been forever transformed. Remote work has proven to be overwhelmingly successful; however, there are numerous benefits provided by offices and other locations that simply can't be replicated in the home environment. There's no question that a hybrid approach will be the way forward for the vast majority of companies—it offers the flexibility and freedom that workers want, and benefits businesses too. Now it's up to companies to pave the way, by offering the right spaces, tools, and resources to help employees be successful.



## About WeWork

WeWork was founded in 2010 with the vision to create environments where people and companies come together and do their best work. Since opening our first location in New York City, we've grown into a global workplace provider committed to delivering flexible solutions, inspiring, safety focused spaces, and unmatched community experiences. Today, we're constantly reimagining how the workplace can help everyone, from freelancers to Fortune 500s, be more motivated, productive, and happy because that's how tomorrow works.

If you're interested in learning more about WeWork's hybrid space solutions please visit [wework.com/contact-us](https://www.wework.com/contact-us) or call (646) 389-3922



## About Workplace Intelligence

Workplace Intelligence, LLC is an HR research and advisory firm helping leaders adapt to trends, drive performance, and prepare for the future. Our mission is to create more intelligent workplaces using data based insights. For more information visit [workplaceintelligence.com](https://www.workplaceintelligence.com) and [linkedin.com/in/danschawbel](https://www.linkedin.com/in/danschawbel).

