



THE IN-OFFICE EDGE

LEVERAGING IN-OFFICE ENGAGEMENT FOR CAREER GROWTH

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Leveraging In-Office Engagement for Career Growth

In today's hybrid work environment, the office is more than just a physical space—it's a resource for connection, learning, development, and culture. As a real estate company, we understand that the office must now support people and organizations in meaningful ways, whether they visit frequently or occasionally.

In this brief, we'll explore the value of in-office time for career growth through the lens of proximity bias, leveraging face-to-face interactions, and utilizing the office to strengthen professional development and networking. In-person engagement helps build stronger networks, sharpen skills, and support career advancement.

We'll share how intentional in-office time can enhance relationships, foster collaboration, and create learning opportunities, ultimately supporting career and professional goals.



Proximity Bias Impact to Individuals

“Out of sight,
out of mind.”

“There’s some
proximity bias
going on,”

- Nick Bloom,
Economist at
Stanford
University (WSJ)

Proximity Bias:
The tendency for
employees who are
physically present in
the office to be
viewed as more
engaged, dedicated,
and competent
compared to their
remote counterparts,
regardless of actual
performance.

Proximity bias, often unintentional, can significantly shape how management perceives engagement and commitment. To counter this in hybrid environments, it’s essential to leverage the office to maximize in-person interactions. These face-to-face opportunities enhance career growth and visibility, which are crucial for professional development.

Data indicates that even when productivity not visibly evident, biases can cloud perceptions of contributions. One way to mitigate challenges of proximity bias can be to leverage the office as a resource to improve connections for better relationships and growth.

Ideas to maximize in-person office impact:

- Attend meetings in-person
- Set aside time to catch up with colleagues
- Walk around and engage with others
- Greet colleagues and make introductions
- Participate in informal conversations
- Join or initiate networking opportunities.
- Attend or lead team gatherings.
- Share ideas and collaborate on projects.



96% of US executives admit they’re more likely to notice the contribution of employees in the office vs. remote.
(2022 Envoy survey of 1,000 employees & 250 executives)



85% of leaders say the shift to hybrid work has made it harder to trust that employees are staying productive
(2022 Microsoft study of 20,000 people in 11 countries)



71% of HR leaders & 62% of business leaders agree that in-person workers benefit from proximity bias
(Executive Networks global survey of 1,300+ HR & business leaders, knowledge, and frontline workers)

PERCEPTIONS ON REMOTE WORK

Management Perspectives

According to research from Future Forum (Forbes), skepticism and negative perceptions has been common among older leaders in their 50s and 60s, many whom have spent the majority of their careers evaluating performance based on physical presence. “There’s some proximity bias going on,” says Nick Bloom, an economist at Stanford University who studies remote work and management practices, of the challenges facing remote workers (WSJ).



90% of CEOs report **prioritizing in-office workers** for career-advancing projects, raises or promotions.

(KPMG online survey of 1,325 CEOs of large companies via Wall Street Journal)



Remote workers were **promoted 31% less frequently** in past year than in-office employees.

(Analysis by Live Data Technologies via Wall Street Journal. Note: hybrid workers coming into office ~3 days per week had similar promotions as 100% in office workers).



72% of supervisors prefer their staff working in the office.



67% of supervisors consider remote workers more **easily replaceable** than onsite workers.



42% of supervisors said they would sometimes **forget about remote workers** when assigning tasks.

(A 2021 Study by SHRM Society for Human Resource Management revealed negative perceptions of remote work via Forbes)

Remote Job Postings Stay Elevated, *but Show Signs of Stabilization*

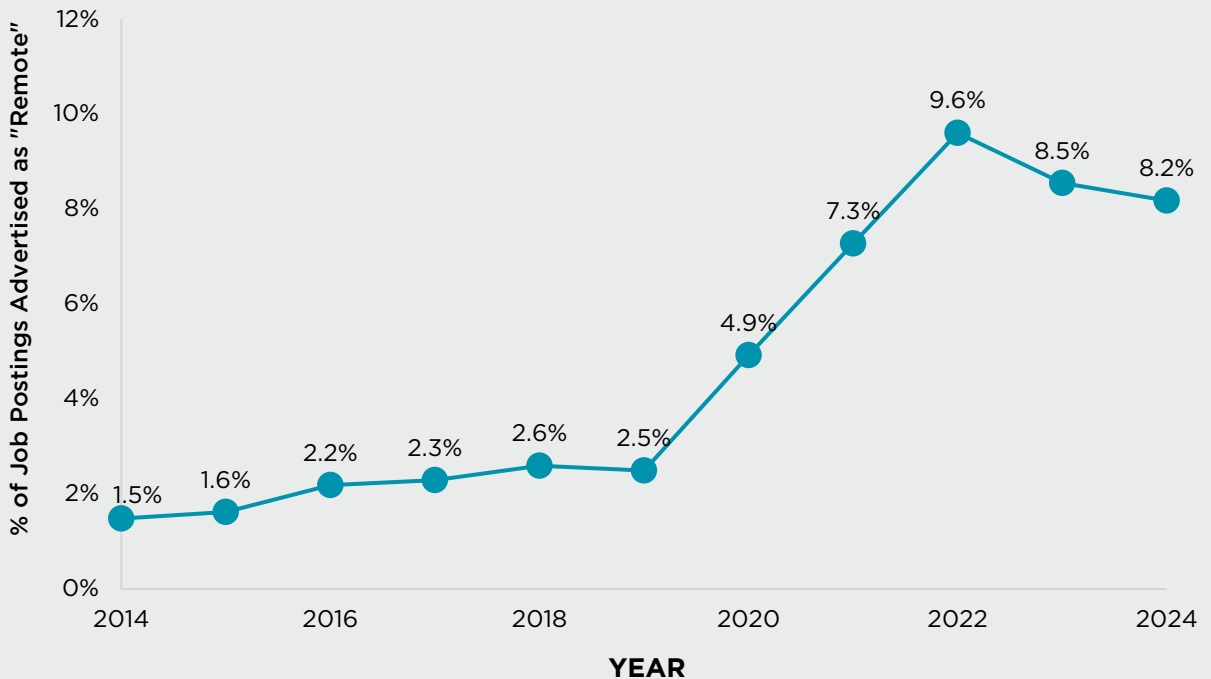
Key Takeaways

1 Remote job postings peaked in 2022 and continue to exceed pre-pandemic levels.

2 While remote job postings have slightly declined from their peak, they still represent a significant share of the job market.

3 This trend suggests a market adjustment, signaling a potential stabilization toward a new normal.

% of Office-Using Job Postings Advertised as "Remote"



Source: LightCast job postings data for office-using, full-time, remote employees in the US from January 2014 to August 2024. In accordance with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, office-using employment includes the following occupation sectors: Information, Financial Activities; Professional and Business Services; Education and Health Services; Other Services; and Government.



Maximizing In-Office Presence for Career Growth

“Remote work can be costly for young women trying to build their skills,”

- Emma Harrington, assistant economics professor at the University of Virginia and co-author of a study on Fortune 500 software engineers.

LEVERAGING IN-OFFICE ENGAGEMENT FOR CAREER GROWTH

Face-to-face time in the office can quickly provide a sense of the company culture, etiquette, how work is done, and how people interact. This is particularly significant for new hires, those new to the workforce, or those in a new role.

In-office presence offers key benefits that support career advancement that seasoned employees might overlook. These benefits include visibility to management, networking opportunities, spontaneous interactions, visual cues, and skill development. Together, these elements enhance professional growth and foster dynamic work environments where knowledge is actively shared.

While remote work can replicate some of these experiences, many occur more organically and authentically in person, with less fatigue and planning. In person, it's easy to see if someone is available for a question, run into a leader in the hallway, or read visual cues face-to-face. These interactions are vital for career growth, making in-person presence essential for young professionals and new hires. Intentional in-person time allows them to immerse themselves in company culture, build meaningful relationships, and develop essential skills such as client and customer presentations through face-to-face interactions



75% of employees with in-person mentors report greater job satisfaction and career advancement according to the American Society for Training and Development (Forbes)



74% of decision makers believe face-to-face interactions strengthen relationships among employees and teams. Survey of 425 business decision makers by Harvard Business Review Analytic Services sponsored by Amex GBT



Workers are less effective building relationships with colleagues through videoconferencing vs. face-to-face based on 2021 study through InterCultural Communication Edge (Buchan, Adair, Chen, Russel)



Software engineers at a Fortune 500 company received 22% more code feedback working in the same office vs. remote. Female engineers received 40% more and male engineers 18% more feedback than remote counterpart. (Emanuel, Harrington & Pallais)

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