



# RETHINKING WORKPLACE STRATEGY

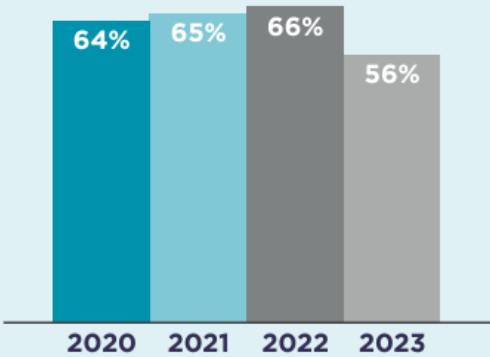
# Introduction

It's time to rethink the workplace. As the hybrid worker has evolved to leverage a blend of office, home and alternative places, the office's role has transformed. It has a new purpose: to foster collaboration and build community. However, research from our Experience per Square Foot™ (XSF) survey showcases that traditional pre-pandemic office environments are ineffective in supporting this - leaving employees discouraged and companies challenged to improve the use of the office. In our most recent XSF research, overall workplace experience dropped 10 percentage points, marking the first-ever decline. If we want to reverse this trend—and improve workers' well-being, engagement, and productivity—organizations must develop new workplace strategies that align with the new ways that people work and with the drivers of the employee experience.



# 10 point drop in experience

XSF EXPERIENCE INDEX





## Adaptability and Flexibility

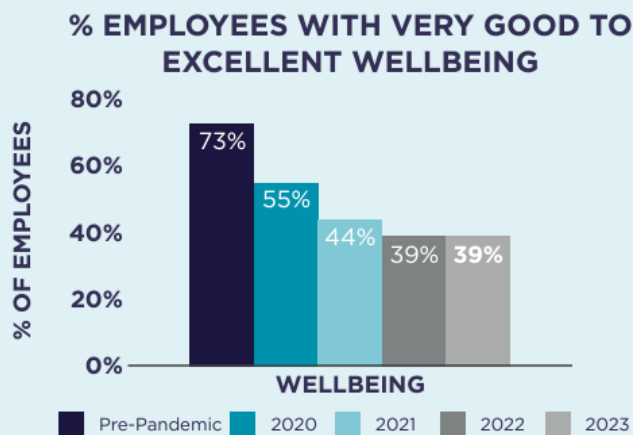
One of the most significant lessons learned over the past few years, is the required need for flexibility in the workplace. Organizations have learned to pivot to remote and other flexible working arrangements, embracing hybrid models and workplace ecosystems that embrace home, in-office, and alternative workspaces. A well-defined workplace strategy can facilitate seamless transitions between remote and in-person work, ensuring continuity in operations while empowering employees to optimize productivity and achieve work-life balance. Thoughtful, flexibly designed space is critical too. We must think about how the space will be utilized, even as organizations change over time. Demountable partitions, multipurpose rooms and moveable furniture are the basic blocks of the flexible office.



## FOCUS ON WELL-BEING

There is a critical link between employee well-being and organizational success. Remote work brought about new challenges, including isolation, burnout, and blurred boundaries between work and personal life, all of which have significantly lowered our collective well-being. Our research reveals that only 39% of the workforce has “very good” to “excellent” well-being. Workplace strategies must prioritize employee well-being by fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment, which entails incorporating mind-friendly design principles and implementing policies and practices that promote work-life balance, mental health support, and opportunities for social connection. Creating workplaces where people can connect for mentoring, peer-to-peer learning, and social events is critical. By prioritizing employee well-being, organizations can enhance engagement, productivity and retention, and ultimately drive long-term success. Wellness-focused ideas include wellness rooms, greenspaces, standing desks, active workstations, flexible fitness, nutritional support, ergonomic workstations, access to natural light, wellness tech apps, and flexible work arrangements. It also includes more support for work-life integration, such as childcare assistance and access to employee assistance programs. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), which share purpose, social spaces, and events that encourage interaction across the organization are also great ways to foster internal community support.

With neurodiverse conditions becoming more widely recognized, mind-friendly design concepts that incorporate circadian lighting, temperature control, air quality, acoustics, use of color, wayfinding, and inclusive technologies help create environments where everyone can thrive.



Source: C&W Experience Per Square Foot™ survey, results from Q1 2019 - Q4 2023

Wellbeing includes survey respondents who reported “Very Good” or “Excellent” wellbeing. Productivity is an index including multiple metrics and includes survey respondents who “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” that **they can focus and collaborate effectively.**



# Seamless Technology Integration

Digital technologies have revolutionized the way we work. As organizations embrace remote and hybrid work models, the integration of technology into workplace strategies becomes paramount. From collaboration tools and project management platforms to virtual communication solutions, technology enables seamless collaboration and connectivity regardless of physical location. A robust workplace strategy leverages technology to optimize workflow efficiencies, streamline communication and facilitate remote collaboration, thereby empowering employees to perform at their best regardless of their work environment.



# Space Optimization and Design

Remote work has prompted organizations to reevaluate their physical workspaces and office layouts. Through our XSF research, the purpose of the office has shifted from what was traditionally focused on individual workspaces to places that prioritize and support community and collaboration. The XSF research highlights today's challenge, where barely half of the employees feel their current office supports this new purpose. Workplace strategies must now balance their focus on optimizing space utilization with redesigning office environments to meet this new purpose and the evolving needs of employees.

## TRADITIONAL WORKPLACES FALL SHORT

% of people who believe their office supports its top 3 purposes:



Source: C&W Experience Per Square Foot™ survey results from January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023; n = 8,914

Going forward, communal office space will double to foster creativity, innovation and collaboration. This may involve implementing flexible seating arrangements, creating a variety of designated collaboration zones, and integrating health and wellness programs. Organizations can provide great work experiences by creating environments that inspire creativity, collaboration and innovation, and by reimagining space design through a lens of flexibility, functionality, and employee well-being. This is critical for both attendance and performance. Empowering workers by providing places that are stimulating and inspirational, while fostering work that requires privacy and concentration, is a careful balancing act.



## Resilience and Future Preparedness

Workplace strategies must prioritize resilience by fostering agility, adaptability, and contingency planning. This includes diversifying remote work capabilities, investing in digital infrastructure and developing robust crisis management protocols. By proactively anticipating and addressing potential challenges, organizations can navigate future disruptions with greater resilience and confidence, ensuring continuity in operations and mitigating risk.

From embracing flexibility and prioritizing employee experience, productivity, and well-being to integrating technology and optimizing space design, workplace strategies must evolve to meet the demands of the evolving workplace. By adopting forward-thinking approaches that prioritize resilience, organizations can not only weather the challenges of today but also thrive in the uncertain landscape of tomorrow.





# 6 KEY STRATEGIES FOR A SUCCESSFUL WORKPLACE

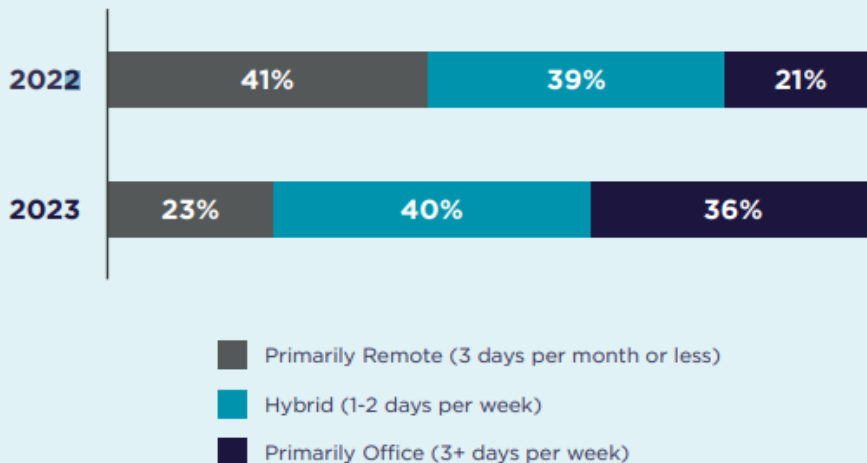
## 1. Embrace Flexible Work Arrangements

Hybrid is now the most preferred work style. As a result, organizations are embracing flexible work arrangements that allow employees to choose where they work, whether it's from the office, remotely, or a combination of both. This flexibility accommodates the diverse preferences and circumstances of employees, enabling them to achieve a better work-life balance.

Flexibility is paramount, as our XSF Research shows that employees who maintain location and schedule flexibility have a significantly higher workplace experience and engagement score.

What are organizations doing to accommodate and foster performance in the new workplace?

### WORKING PREFERENCES TOOK A MAJOR SHIFT TO THE OFFICE IN 2023





## 2. Create a Technology Strategy

With the rise of remote and hybrid work, organizations are integrating technology solutions to facilitate seamless collaboration and communication among hybrid teams. This includes investing in video conferencing tools, project management platforms and virtual collaboration software to ensure that remote workers remain connected and productive.

## 3. Redesign Your Office Space

Many organizations are reimagining their physical office spaces to better accommodate hybrid work models, mind-friendly design concepts and the new office purpose. This may involve implementing flexible seating arrangements, creating dedicated collaboration zones, and providing amenities that support both in-person and remote work. The office "as a club" is a concept that offers collaborative and lounge spaces as well as spaces that balance quiet and private zones.

## 4. Consider Hot-Desking and Hoteling

Many companies are downsizing their spaces, with the average reduction of space hovering around 30%. To meet this target, optimizing space utilization to accommodate a fluctuating number of in-office employees, organizations are adopting hot-desking and hoteling practices. These approaches allow employees to reserve desks or workstations as needed, promoting flexibility and collaboration while minimizing real estate costs. To accommodate more workers in less space on peak days, hot-desking—including laptop bars, casual seats, workstations, focus rooms, and enclosed offices—is a good solution.

Health and safety measures: Prioritizing health and safety measures in the workplace may include enhanced cleaning and sanitation procedures, and providing larger desks with more space between work stations.

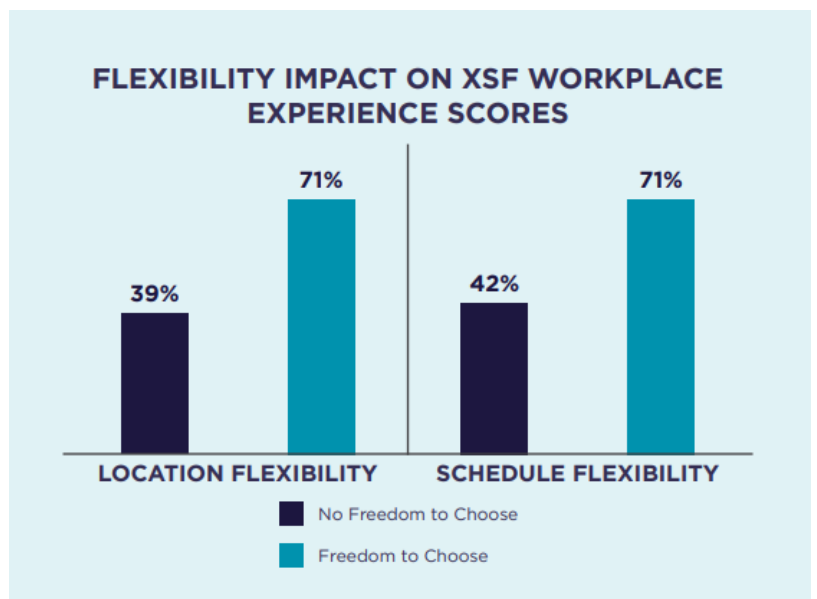


5. Invest In Communication and Collaboration Tools

To foster effective communication and collaboration among hybrid teams, organizations are leveraging a variety of communication tools and platforms, including instant messaging apps, video conferencing software and project management tools that enable seamless interaction and information sharing regardless of employees' physical locations.

6. Engage Change Management Experts

Organizations are providing education, training and support to help employees navigate the challenges of hybrid work. This may include guidance on best practices for remote collaboration, time management strategies for remote workers, and resources to support employee well-being and mental health. It may also include manager training to help optimize distributed team performance and ensure teams know how to make the most of their time together.





## TOTAL WORKPLACE @ CUSHMAN AND WAKEFIELD

**We focus on people and place strategies that foster productivity, improve the workplace experience and wellbeing, increase effectiveness, optimize value, mitigate cost, and reduce risk.** We help clients solve the complex challenges encountered at the intersection of business and real estate: we analyze the company's image, culture, leadership, budgets, assets, and business direction — and focus on what makes every company successful: its people. We are equally experts in real estate (buildings and land) and can assess strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. **We help clients make better real estate occupancy, investment, and corporate business decisions.**

**Total Workplace advises clients on today's business and real estate priorities,** which include new approaches to creating best-in-class hybrid workplace environments, change management, occupancy and investment portfolio alignment, land and building asset optimization, and broader real estate strategies. Our specialists focus on the key asset classes that you own and occupy (office, industrial, retail, hotel, and development land). While we work for and with a vast client base of local, national, and global corporations, our extensive public sector client roster includes leading hospitals, post-secondary institutions, transit authorities, not-for-profit organizations, cities and towns, and government entities at all levels.

Our multi-disciplinary team draws from our global platform of best practices and thought leadership that address our clients' specialized business needs. Our transformative process results in strategies that set organizations apart and ultimately drives business success. This is how we add value.

# WE DIDN'T COME THIS FAR JUST TO COME THIS FAR.

● Better never settles

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It also receives numerous industry and business accolades for its award-winning culture and commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), sustainability and more.

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