

The Future of the Office

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 Kimball International

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Without question, the pandemic has been the most significant event in our lifetime. If there's a silver lining to recent events, it's that people have had time to reflect on what matters most, both in life and at work. Where are employees netting out?

Kimball International partnered with Kuchar to find out.

Our survey targeted employees who report to (or reported to prior to the pandemic) their company's physical office space.

To qualify for the survey, respondents must be age 25 and up, live in the United States, and currently work for a company that has or had a physical office space prior to the pandemic.

All told, we received more than 1,300 qualified responses.

82%

of respondents said they will want their company to take precautions to stop the spread of germs and contagions, even after the threat of the pandemic is over.

56%

said they would like to work from their company's office at least half of the time.

87%

said job satisfaction is the same or has increased since working from home.

52%

said teamwork is the reason they want to return to the office.

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Work From the Office Life

In the future, what do you want from your company's physical office space?

"A place I can go for occasional large group meetings. Loungey work areas for individual work."

1

Cleanliness, safety,
and social distancing

2

Better design with different
places to safely work

3

My own dedicated
work space

"My own personal workspace either within an individual office or tall enough cubicle walls to feel like I can delve in and focus on individual workflow."

"I want to see my coworkers."

"I want it to be a place of peace and bring me joy."

Understanding the Employee Mindset

81%

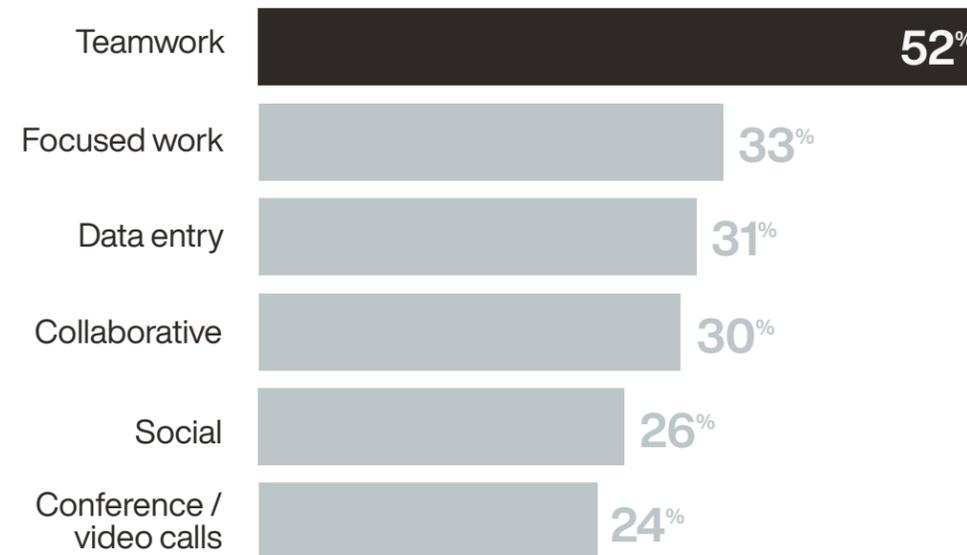
of respondents said they were more likely to go back to the office if it was more easily commutable by car.

Prior to the pandemic, what was your typical mode of transportation used to commute?

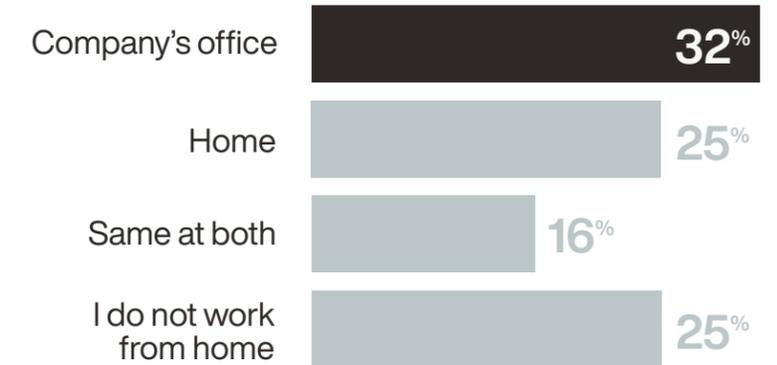
85%

Personally Owned Vehicle

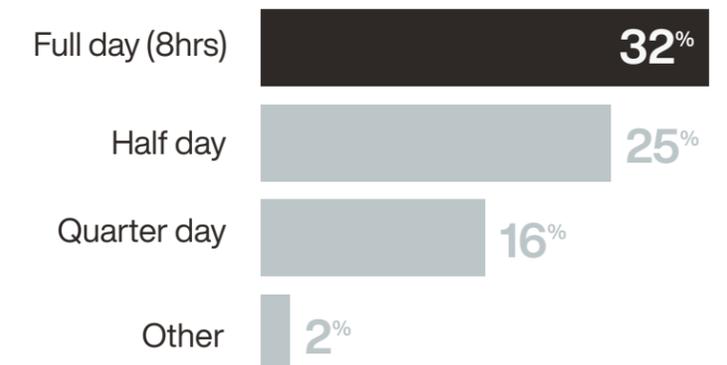
What types of activities or tasks would you prefer to complete while working from your company's office?



Do you have better focus while working at your company's office or while working at home?



When you return to your company's physical office, what will be your ideal time spent in the office daily?



Understanding the Employee Mindset

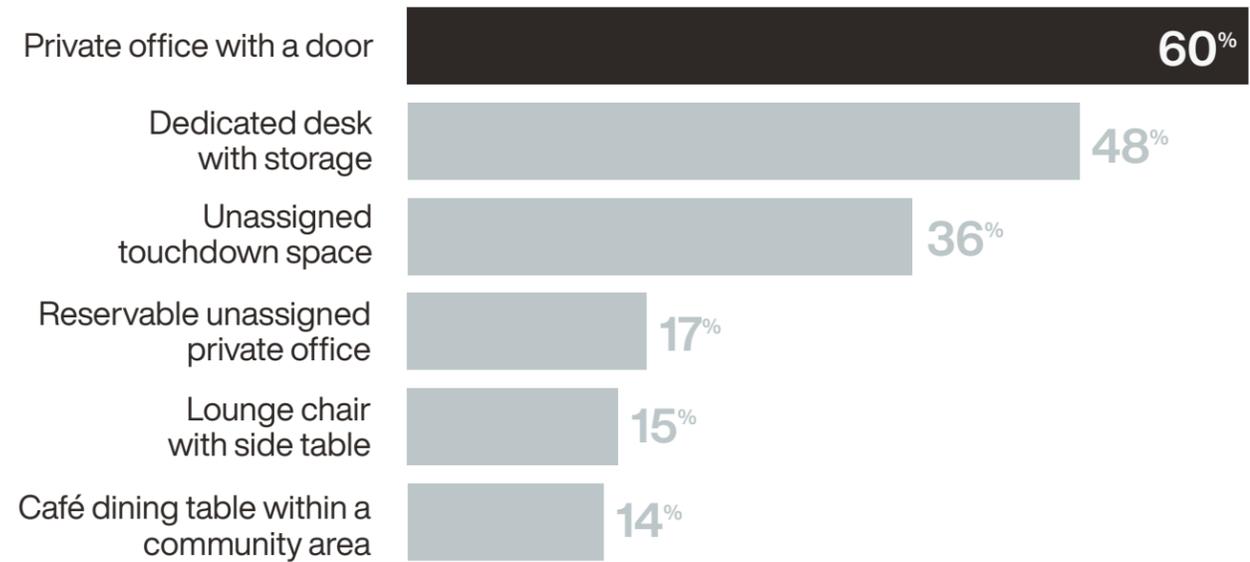
60%

would prefer a private office with a door.

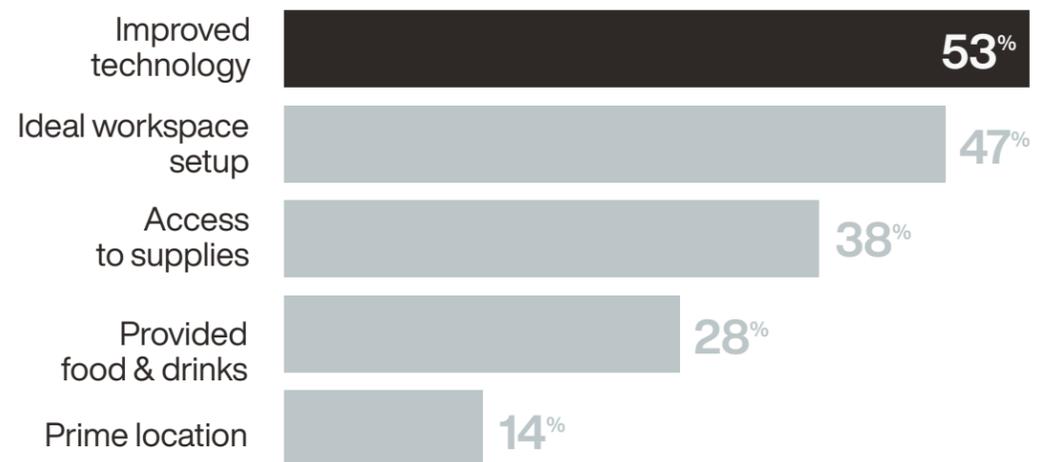
48%

would prefer a dedicated desk with personal storage.

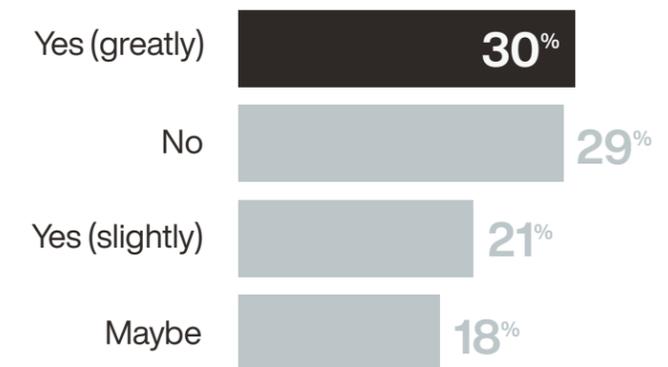
What company workspace would you most prefer?



What would make you more likely to return to your company office?



Would working alongside a team of 5 people affect your decision to either work from home or the office?

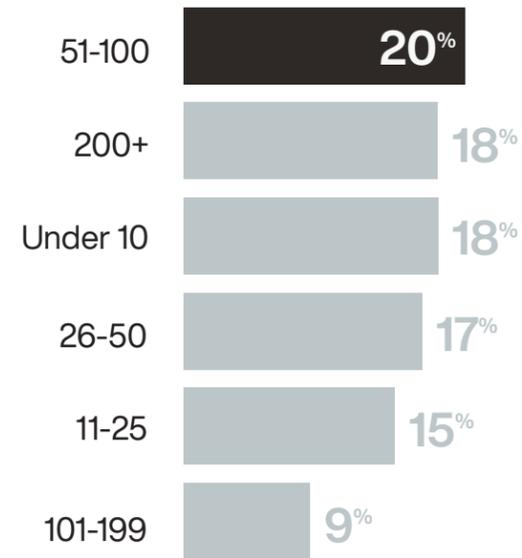


Understanding the Employee Mindset

82%

of respondents said they will want their company to take precautions to stop the spread of germs and contagions, even after the threat of the pandemic is over.

How many employees work at your office?

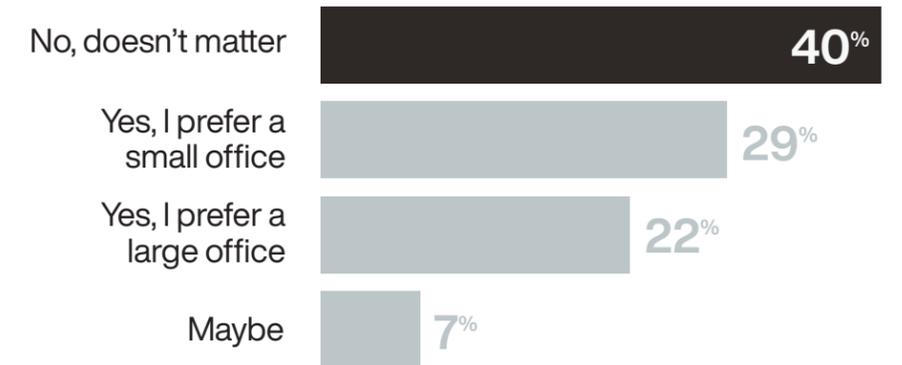


When returning to your company's office, how important would it be to have an assigned desk that only you would use?

7.9

Average Rating
(Scale 1-10)

Would the number of employees impact your decision to go to the office?



The Office of the Future Will Be Purpose-Driven

Research shows that most employees want to work at least two-to-three days in the office. Well-located, thoughtfully designed, and tech-enabled physical spaces will be keys to employee engagement and productivity.

Source: Fast Company

Shifting to Hybrid Ways of Working Will Make the Office More Important Than Ever.

Workspaces will need to be designed to support the kinds of interactions not possible with remote work.

Organizations will need to resize their office footprint creatively to suit the given purpose and offer a portfolio of space solutions, including: owned space, standard leases, flexible leases, flex space, co-working space, and remote work.

Source: McKinsey & Company

The future office will serve as the hub for productivity, collaboration, maintaining culture, and in-person connectivity.

Considerations to enhance sanitation, safety, and physical distancing will be at the forefront.

An emphasis on enhanced audiovisual capabilities to accommodate remote teams.

Source: Fast Company

The Flexible Office

As a new way of working begins to take hold, companies will need to adopt a flexible mindset around working from home, office footprint, and employees wanting both focused and collaborative spaces within the office.

There will be more emphasis than ever before on company values, and how their physical space responds to these values. Office culture, location, and organization will play a large role in determining the footprint the company needs as well as types of spaces within the office.

Adaptable Design

Organizations that flex to their employees' changing needs will have the advantage. This means being able to read how workers are settling into the "new normal" and meeting them where they are, sometimes on the fly. Moveable elements such as modular furniture or space dividers and screens will be critical.

Hybrid Work

Companies and their employees will become adept at balancing working in the office with working from home. In daily practice, the workplace will become a central hub for employees to connect, socialize, and collaborate.

Reduced Footprint

Work-from-home employees will cause office footprints to shrink. At the same time, employees will experience a tradeoff between working from home and having a dedicated desk. They can also expect less desk space than before the pandemic.

Defined Spaces

Employees will need spaces designed for collaborative meetings as well as places to escape to focus on individual tasks. A surprise to some, Kuchar's research indicates that people will depend on the workplace as a place for focused work as much as for collaboration.

Work-From-Home Life

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Work-From-Home Life

What do you miss
most about working
at the office?

1

Socializing and
camaraderie
with coworkers

2

Teamwork/collaboration

3

Furniture, supplies, and/or
interior design that's more
conducive to productivity

“The work environment
and comfort in the office.”

“I've missed having all the
office space and organization
and being able to interact with
other people face to face.”

“Separating
home and work.”

Work-From-Home Life

How satisfied are you from working from home?

7.1

Average Rating
(Scale 1-10)

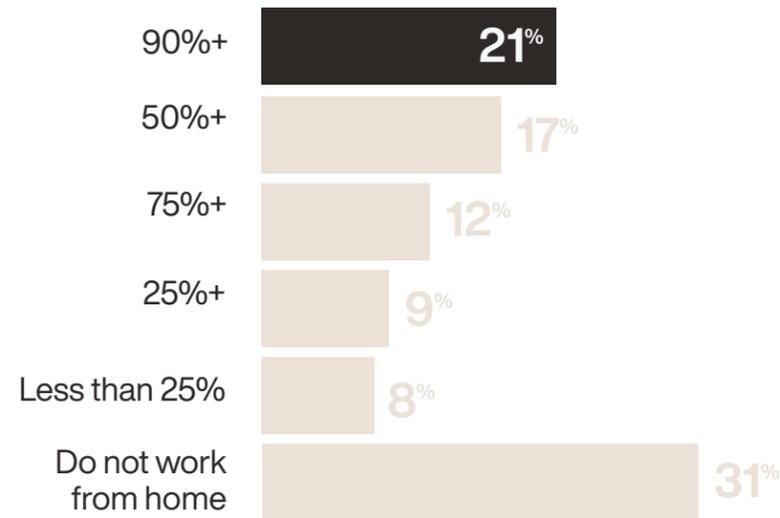
28%

Very Satisfied
(10)

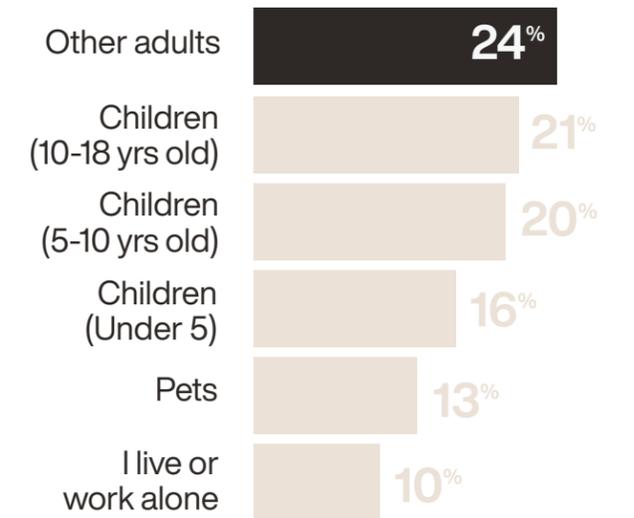
30%

Do not work from home

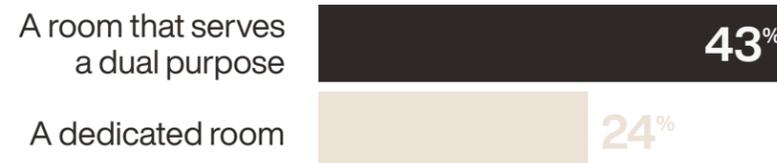
How often are you currently working from home?



While working at home, are other members of your household also there?



What is your home office setup?



Work-From-Home Life

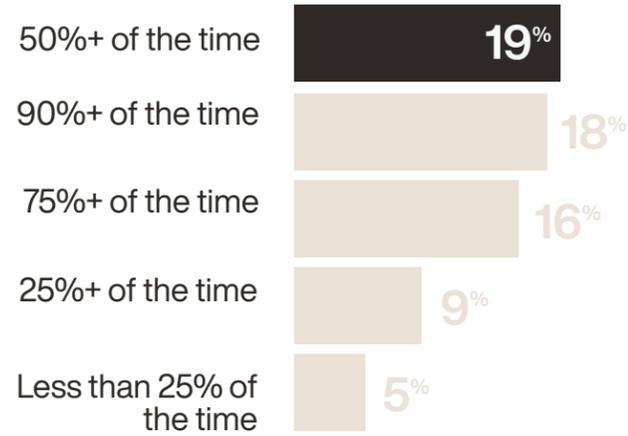
87%

said job satisfaction is the same or has increased.

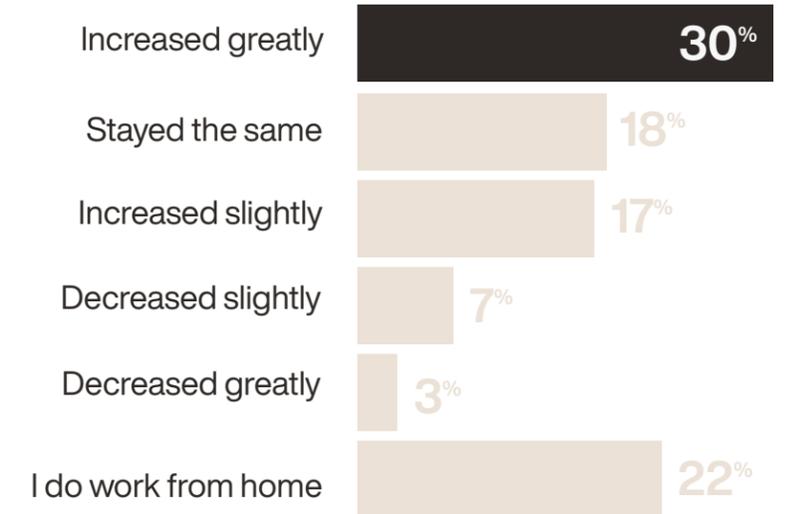
56%

said they would like to work from their company's office at least 50% of the time.

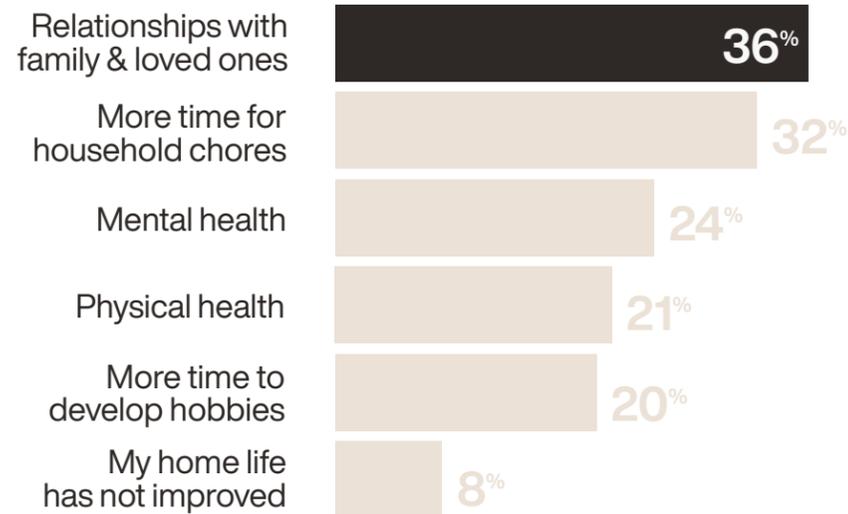
How often are you able to focus working from home?



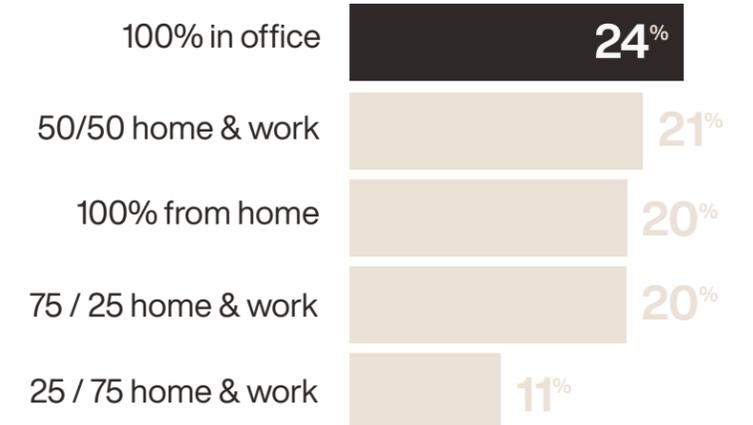
Has the flexibility of working from home increased your job satisfaction?



What, if anything, has improved about your home life while working there?



What would your ideal balance be between working from home and working at the office?



Always Looking Forward

In a time of unprecedented change, we have an equally momentous opportunity to shape the future of work. Let's make the most of it.

Let's start by planning offices around their inherent strengths: bringing people together in physical space and supporting the kind of interaction and productivity not possible when working remote.

Most of all, let's place a premium on safety and flexibility. Workers will thrive when given choice over how and where they can be most effective.

Looking for assistance?

Whether you would like to retrofit an existing space, or are in need of flexible solutions designed to meet people where they are, our team is here to help.

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