



Desk Dread: 3 Reasons Employees Are Dodging the Office

Why employees need better tech and smarter spaces to thrive in the modern workplace



Flexibility, disrupted

In today's hybrid offices, two-thirds of workers face disruptions and distractions. There aren't enough workspaces. The technology is out of date. It's unpredictable, noisy, and stressful, and hybrid workers struggle to be productive. Workers want more from their companies to help them thrive in the hybrid office.

The workplace remains in a state of flux as companies navigate the new realities of hybrid and return-to-office (RTO) models. Employees want consistency, and many companies are still learning how to ensure that workers have flexibility without compromising a reliable in-office experience.

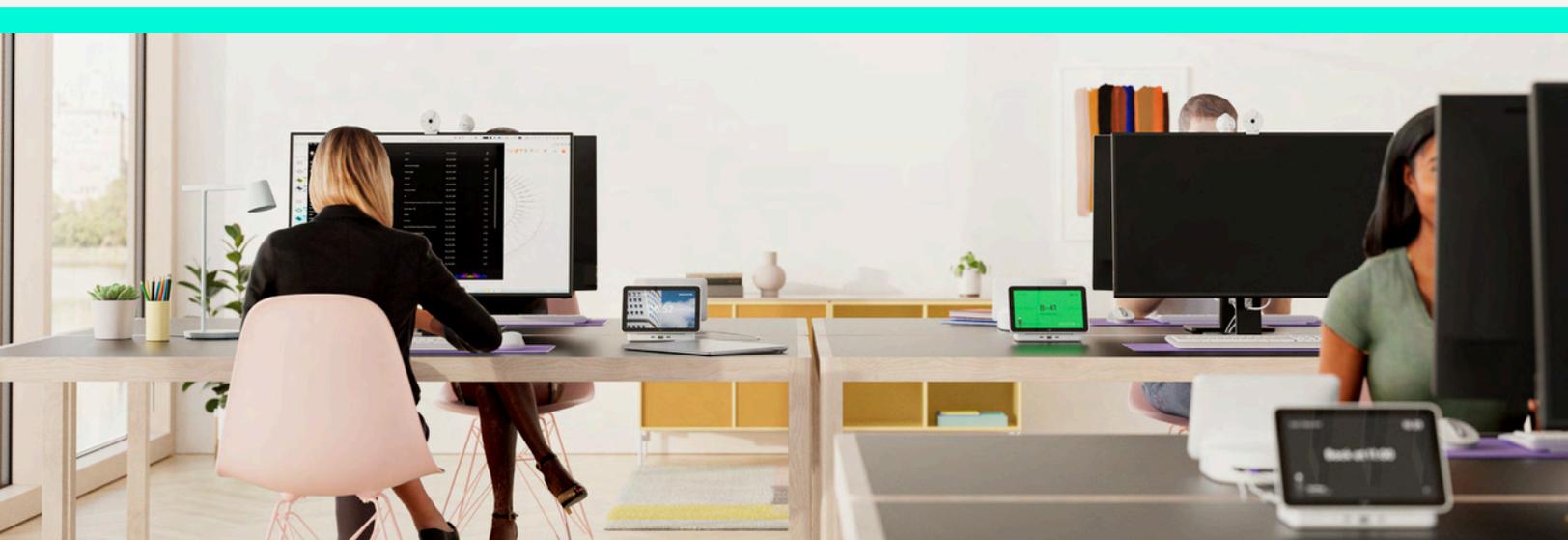
In 2024, Logitech embarked on a global survey effort to investigate the key challenges employees face in the hybrid office, and to identify what companies can do to deliver a better work experience. We partnered with independent research firm Workplace Intelligence to survey 600 U.S. HR leaders and 1,350

employees in the U.S., U.K., Germany, France, Australia, and Japan. What we found is that many hybrid workers are frustrated, identifying a lack of necessary workspaces and poorly performing technology as key pain points in their experience.

Through this research, we found the most employees enjoy some aspects of working in their company's offices, but around two-thirds struggle with disruptions and find their company's office distracting. And while it's no surprise that workers are distracted at work, a closer look found that many view going into the office as a hassle and some are even faking illnesses or family emergencies to avoid the office altogether.

As many companies push for a return to office (RTO), many hybrid employees share workspaces, technology, and equipment (what some call flex desking or hotdesking), making their experience unpredictable and at times unreliable. Each day, workers might find themselves at a different desk, in a new area of the office, using unfamiliar monitors, keyboards, and communication systems. They often don't have access to what they need, or find that what they *do* have access to doesn't actually work.

For companies looking to unlock the full potential their hybrid workforce, now is the time to assess what's working and what's not. To thrive in their roles, hybrid employees need both flexibility and consistency — and with better technology and equipment, along with more predictable and comfortable workspace arrangements, these employees will be poised to succeed.

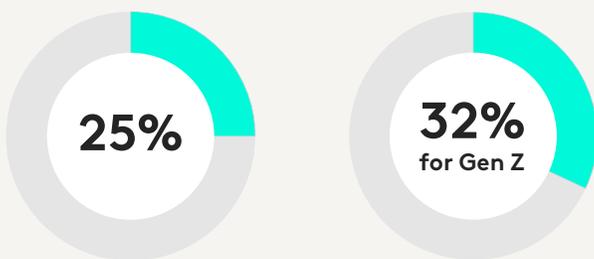


Space Scarcity and Technology Gaps Discourage Office Attendance

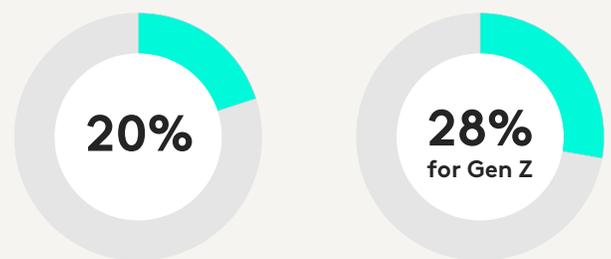
More than two-thirds (68 percent) of employees say they go into the office about as often as their company expects them to. However, some employees are avoiding the office altogether due to their less-than-optimal experience there.

To avoid going into the office, hybrid workers admit they've done the following:

Faked an illness

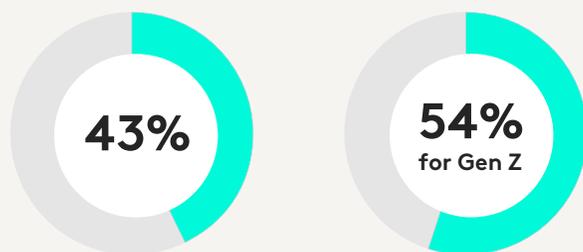


Pretended to have a family emergency



This trend is even higher among Gen Z workers, signaling that younger generations are especially affected by workplace annoyances. Indeed, more than half of Gen Z workers (54 percent) say they avoid coming into the office after taking time off, compared to 43 percent of their peers.

Have avoided coming into the office after taking time off



And while HR leaders estimate that 64 percent of their hybrid employees look forward to coming to the office, in reality only 34 percent of hybrid workers say they do, indicating a disconnect between employees and their workplace leaders.

But, what exactly are employees struggling with — and how can employers help?

HR leaders estimate that 64% of their hybrid employees look forward to coming to the office. In reality, only 34% of hybrid employees actually look forward to coming in.

In the next section, we explore the top challenges for hybrid workers, which include:

<p>Pain point 1</p>  <p>Technology issues</p>	<p>Pain point 2</p>  <p>Getting set up</p>	<p>Pain point 3</p>  <p>Workspace challenges</p>
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Barrier #1: Overcoming tech issues

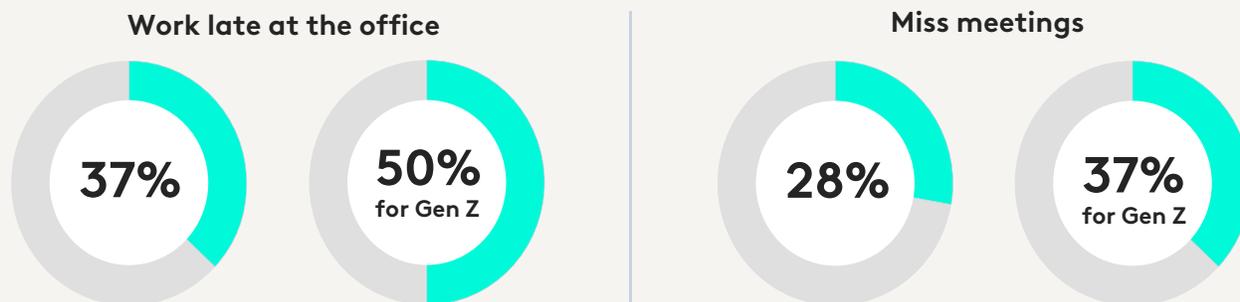
Technology issues plague 63% of workers when they go into the office, and nearly 1 in 4 might quit as a result.

Office technology can attract employees to come into the office — but it can also be a source of frustration. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of the employees we surveyed say they face technology issues on days when they go in, including difficulty connecting to Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, broken and outdated equipment, or trouble with video conferencing tools.

An alarming six out of ten workers say their company's outdated technology — such as webcams, headsets, monitors, and keyboards — negatively affects them at work, worsening their productivity and wasting their time. And people are experiencing other adverse outcomes as well, including working late to make up for lost time and missing meetings.

Again, we see that younger employees are most keenly impacted by in-office challenges. For Gen Z workers, who might have higher expectations of their technology than their older colleagues, failing or broken equipment can be especially problematic, making it difficult for them to bring their best selves to work.

Poorly performing equipment has caused hybrid employees to:



Nearly a quarter (23 percent) of hybrid employees are seriously considering finding a job with a company that provides more up-to-date technology and equipment. This number rises to 30 percent among Gen Z workers.

HR leaders clearly recognize that there is an issue: 73 percent admit their employees don't have all the technology and equipment they need, and 67 percent report that at least some of their equipment is outdated, including laptops and computers, phone systems, and conference room systems.

Workplace leaders also shared that they see a clear correlation between poorly performing equipment and lost productive time. More than half (55 percent) believe their employees are losing one hour or more of productive time each day due to broken technology in their company's office.

23% of hybrid employees— including 30% of Gen Z — are seriously considering quitting their job in favor of a company that provides better tech.



Barrier #2: Setting up their workspace

On average, hybrid employees report that it takes them 25 minutes to find a desk and set up their workspace.

For workers who don't have access to a permanent workspace of their own, getting set up is a daily source of irritation. In fact, half say they're frustrated with this process and 26 percent dread having to set up their workspace.

Employees report that on average, it takes them 25 minutes to find a desk and get set up. For some team members, including those who say their company doesn't offer enough workspaces, this process takes them over 40 minutes.

This means that an employee who goes into the office three times a week could be spending nearly 1.5 hours each week on non-productive tasks. Over the course of a year, this adds up to 78 hours — or nearly two full work weeks — of lost time. Dealing with technology alone takes employees about 15 minutes, signaling that in-office tech is especially slowing workers down.



It takes hybrid workers 25 minutes to get set up in the office, including:



Locating an available desk



Finding & setting up technology & equipment



Cleaning & organizing their workspace



Connecting to Wi-Fi

A negative set-up experience affects the rest of the workday

With so many hybrid workers starting their day from a place of frustration, the impacts can be felt throughout the workday. Around a quarter of employees say the set-up process negatively affects their discretionary effort as well as their productivity.

Workers say a poor set-up experience:

26%

Starts their day off on the wrong foot

24%

Makes them not want to go "above and beyond"

23%

Worsens their productivity and efficiency



51%

of workers are frustrated with their experience getting set up in the office

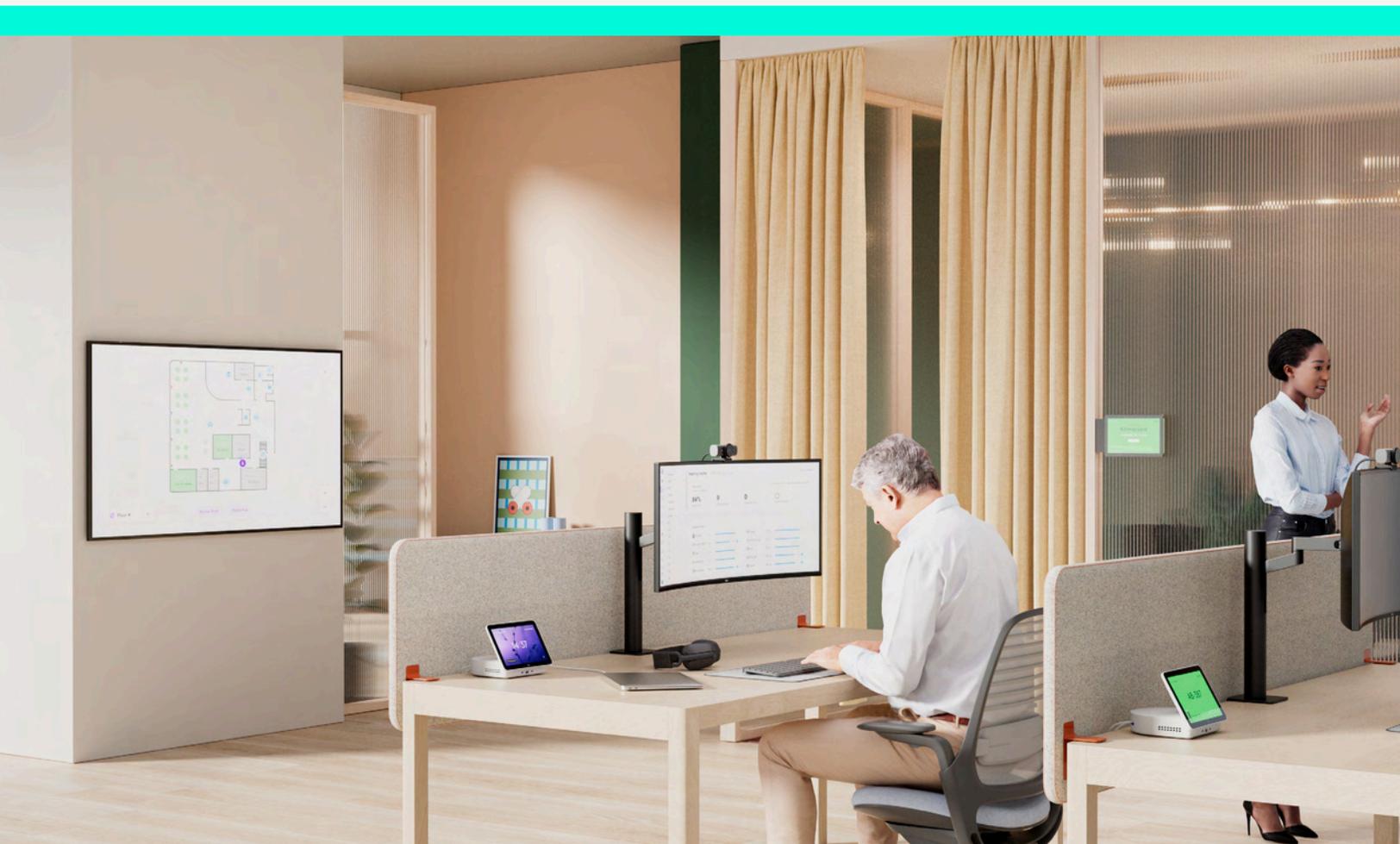
Barrier #3: Hunting for a Workspace

Over half of hybrid employees don't have access to all the workspaces they need.

Underlying workers' struggle to get set up is another key problem: 51 percent say they don't have access to all the workspaces they need. Private workspaces are especially at a premium, according to 46 percent of employees who say their companies need to add more quiet spaces and 37 percent who would like more individual desks and cubicles.

Because of the scarcity of workspaces, 31 percent of employees say they've had to arrive early to find a good desk. A smaller number (13 percent) have witnessed verbal fights break out over desks and 7 percent have verbally fought with someone themselves.

Nearly 1 out of 3 employees say they have to arrive early to get a good desk.



Again, HR leaders appear to be largely aware of these issues:

80%

acknowledge their employees experience challenges finding a desk or workspace.

67%

admit that there are not enough workspaces for everyone in the office.

65%

report that their employees get distracted in the office.



Still, 68 percent of HR leaders think that their team members are more productive in the office, while only 38 percent of employees agree — an indication that workplace leaders may not truly recognize just how much their team members are struggling.

It's important to note that the solution may not be so simple as to "add more desks" or "find a bigger office space." Utilization seems to be at the heart of the issue, with 70 percent of HR leaders reporting that some areas of their office are not well-utilized; for example, certain spaces are crowded sometimes or empty at other times.

68% of HR leaders think employees are more productive in the office, but just 38% of employees agree.

Three steps to a better work experience

Hybrid workers struggle daily with challenges related to their workspaces, in-office technology, and the set-up process. The fact that nearly a quarter of workers are considering quitting due to bad technology reveals that this is an urgent matter — one that hybrid organizations should aim to address as soon as possible.

And while it may not be shocking that some employees fake being sick to avoid the office, this behavior hints at much more serious underlying workforce problems. Absenteeism is both a result and driver of low motivation and engagement, which means employees who avoid the office may also struggle with poor job performance.

It's telling that nearly all HR leaders (99 percent) admit they're taking steps to motivate their employees to spend more time in the office. Leaders clearly recognize that their hybrid work experience isn't living up to employees' standards, but some may be overlooking — or unable to invest in — key areas where they should invest more resources and effort.

In the next section, we explore three steps leaders should consider in order to move the needle on office attendance, ensure workers can be optimally productive, and avoid costly employee turnover:



Step 1



Invest in
better technology

Step 2



Enhance the
office layout

Step 3



Improve the
set-up process

Step 1: Invest in better technology

37% of workers would go into the office more often if the technology were more reliable.

As we look ahead to the future, one of the most impactful actions leaders can take is to provide up-to-date, reliable technology and equipment. This can help workers transition more seamlessly between home and in-office work, ensuring they can get set up and begin working regardless of where they're located.

Upgraded technology can also motivate employees to spend more time in the office, rather than avoiding it. In fact, over a third (37 percent) of employees say they would go into the office more frequently if their company provided reliable technology.

For younger workers, the impact of modern technology is even more significant. Over half (53 percent) of Gen Z workers say they would go to the office more if better tech were available, underscoring once again how important reliable, up-to-date technology is for the workforce of the future.

The good news is that nearly half of HR leaders (48 percent) say they're already taking steps to ensure their employees have more consistent access to reliable technology. But to drive broad change that sets all hybrid employees up for success, more workplace leaders will need to invest in updated equipment for their workforce.



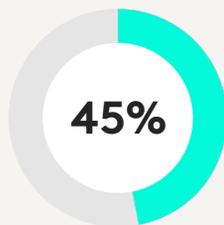
37% of employees — and 53% of Gen Z — say they would go to the office more if there were more reliable tech and equipment.

Step 2: Enhance the office layout

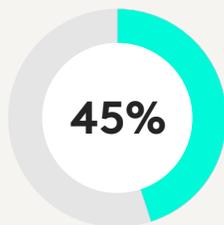
45% of employees would go into the office more often if their company made improvements to their workspace.

In addition to improvements to technology and equipment, workers are yearning for a better office layout that meets their needs. In particular, workers want more quiet spaces and the ability to move around during the workday.

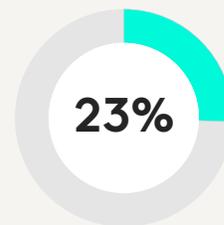
Hybrid workers say they would go into the office more often if:



There were quiet places to work



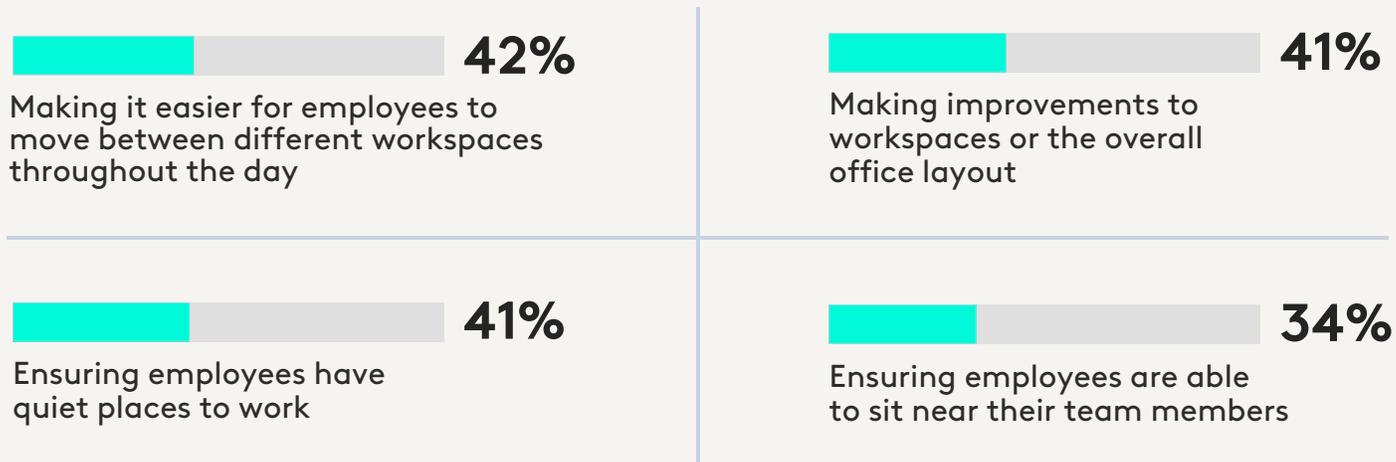
Their companies made improvements to workspaces or the office layout



They could easily move between workspaces



While some HR leaders are rethinking their office layout, many have yet to address this key issue. In our research, only around four out of ten (or less) reported that they're taking the following steps:



This is where technology, such as sensors and data analytics, can help identify which spaces are most often used—like focus pods, collaboration hubs, or breakout zones—while pinpointing empty spaces that can be reconfigured to better meet employee needs.



Step 3: Improve the set-up process

Employees say they'd go into the office more often if it was easier to get up and find a workspace (51%) and if they knew their team members would be there (37%).

In addition to broader investments in office technology and workspaces, desk booking technology specifically can offer solutions to some of the biggest challenges that HR leaders and hybrid employees face today. For employees, desk booking tech makes the desk sharing experience consistent and predictable. For workspace leaders, self-service models save time on space planning.

For workers who don't have access to a permanent workspace, desk booking software makes it possible to choose a desk ahead of time, with some technologies allowing workers to filter by equipment, location, and type of working space, as well as to see whether their colleagues will be in the office and where they'll be located.

Currently, only 32 percent of employees say their companies use desk booking software, suggesting that adoption of this technology remains limited. Employers that don't use desk booking technology are generally relying on low-tech solutions, such as sign-up sheets or requiring teams to discuss seating arrangements amongst themselves.



Additionally, many HR leaders are using attendance tracking systems that don't allow them to see where employees are sitting in their offices, making it difficult to assess office and desk usage. More than three in five leaders (61 percent) say they use a manual sign-in sheet to track attendance. Desk booking can provide an opportunity for leaders to track both attendance and desk usage — key data points that can help workplace leaders design more effective workspaces.

Attendance Tracking

HR leaders say they use the following to track employee attendance in the office:



Wi-Fi logins
71%



Location apps
61%



Badge swipes
59%

61% also say they use a manual sign-in sheet to track office attendance, suggesting that many are still relying on outdated tracking systems.



All the HR leaders we surveyed agree that there are important benefits to desk booking technology, both for their company as well as their people. Those who use this software are able to:



Optimize office space

59%

Track which desks and workspaces are most utilized

54%

Provide data on where specific teams tend to work, and when



Reduce costs

58%

Determine how much space employees use

53%

Harness usage data for flexible seating arrangements

47%

Downsize office space to reflect actual needs of the team



Support hybrid workers

53%

Help with the transition between remote and office-based work

46%

Decrease stress by improving consistency

44%

Provide workers with the opportunity to better collaborate across teams



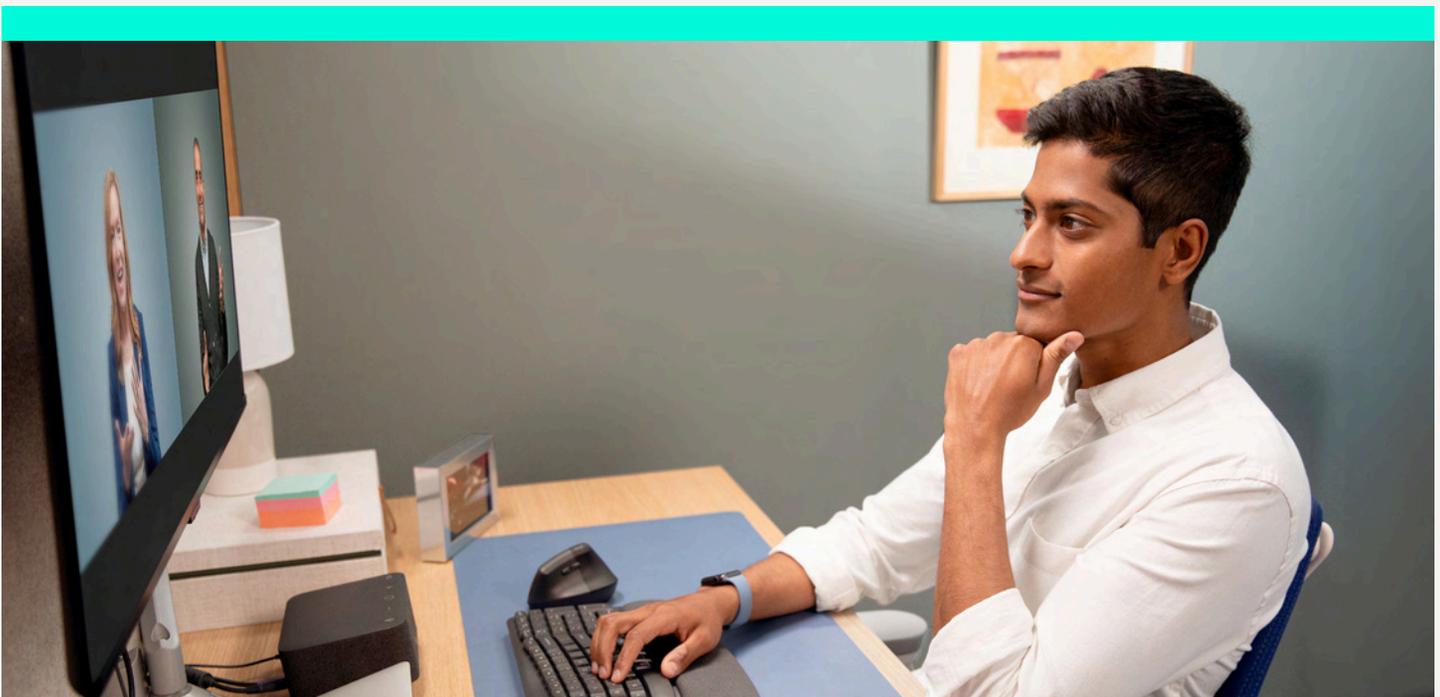
Increase resiliency

57%

Help employees become more flexible to layout and seating changes

54%

Give leaders better data to equip office space decision-making



Shaping the workplace of tomorrow

In the years to come, a fusion of home, on-the-go, and the physical office will continue to be a defining feature of the future of work. For workplace leaders, now is the time to determine whether their hybrid office will be a space of frustration or fulfillment for their workforce.

Through our research, we heard the voice of hybrid workers loud and clear. They need more reliable, up-to-date equipment. They need a consistent, quiet workplace. And they need to know that when they go to the office, they will have what they need to be productive, happy, and successful.

While there are many actions HR leaders should consider to ensure that their offices fulfill these needs, a key first step is leveraging desk booking technology. Software like Logitech Desk Booking can both give workers control over their workspace needs and help HR leaders track and understand those needs, allowing them to remain agile and sensitive to the challenges their workers face.

Looking ahead, there's no doubt that the workplace will continue to evolve and shift in ways we can't yet foresee. But workers will always need to strike a balance between consistency and flexibility, and HR leaders must prepare today to make sure workers have what they need to connect, innovate, and thrive tomorrow.



Methodology

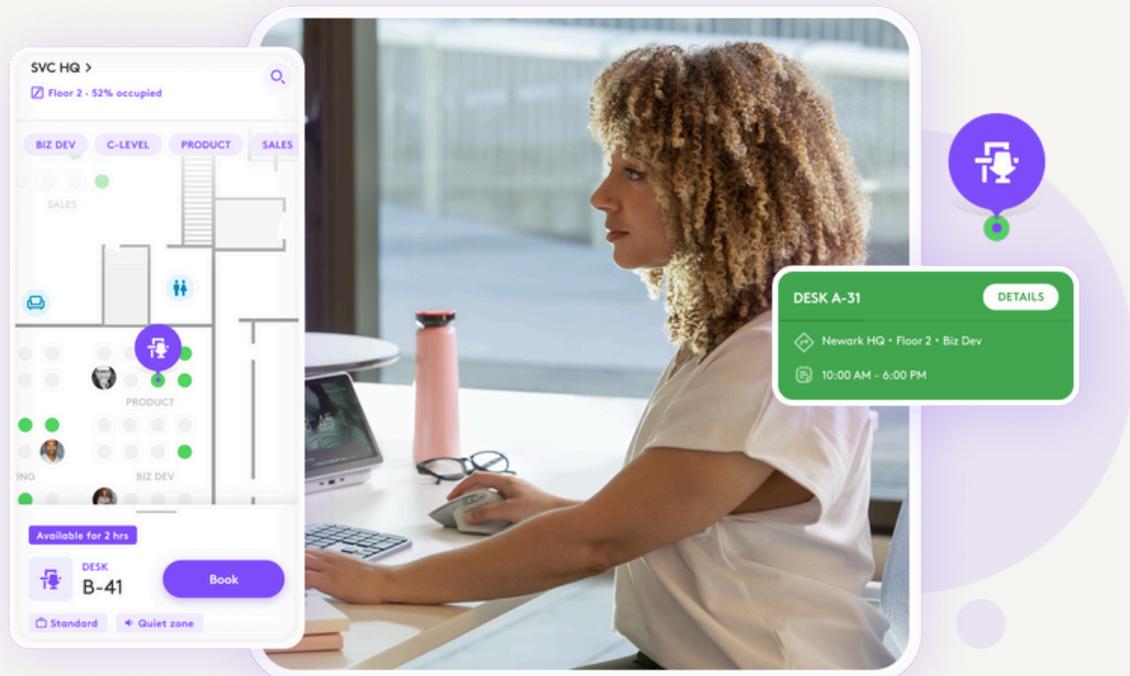


Research findings are based on a survey conducted by Workplace Intelligence and Walr, and funded by Logitech, between April 25 and May 31, 2024. The survey audience included 600 U.S. HR leaders whose companies operate globally, and 1,350 employees from the U.S., U.K., Australia, Germany, France, and Japan.

Panel participants were recruited through a number of different mechanisms, via different sources, and have completed on average 300 profiling data points prior to taking part in any surveys. Respondents were invited to take part via email and were provided with a small monetary incentive for completing this survey. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation.

Bring employees to the hybrid office with Logitech Desk Booking

We've explored the key pain points of the hybrid office and steps HR leaders can take to address them, including making the desk booking process smoother to create an office environment attractive enough to bring employees back to the office. Logitech Desk Booking provides a platform for employees and HR leaders to foster a more collaborative, personalized hybrid work experience.



Logitech Desk Booking is a flex desking application that makes it simple to find the right desk, with the right tools at the right time and with the right people. It allows employees to:



Find the perfect desk within seconds:
Filter by equipment, location, and type of working space to find the ideal seat.



Connect with coworkers:
See who's already onsite and who's planning to come in. After reserving a desk, notify coworkers and coordinate through in-app messaging.



Locate people and places:
Accurate maps of your office make it quick and easy to find desks and coworkers.

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