Adaptive Spaces

2026

Asia Pacific Office Occupier Survey

Office Demand in the Age of AI: What Leaders Need to Know

REPORT

CBRE RESEARCH
SEPTEMBER 2026

Office Demand in the Age of AI: What Leaders Need to Know

Companies show strong desire to increase office space

50%

expect office portfolios to increase in size over next three years

Up from 32%

in past three years

REASONS

01. Highest office attendance since pandemic

88%

say staff attend the office at least three days per week

Up from 75%

In 2025

02. Less aggressive workplace transformation targets

70%

want to keep desk sharing ratios below 1: 1.5

43%

expect workstation size to be above 100 sq. ft.

03. Demand for best spaces and locations for talent

48%

target office space in CBD locations

85%

prefer Grade A buildings

04. AI's impact on space demand yet to be seen

56%

expect AI to have neutral impact on office demand

25%

require more space because of AI adoption

01

Office attendance and utilisation reach highest levels since pandemic

Office attendance increases as 88% of firms report staff working from office at least three days a week

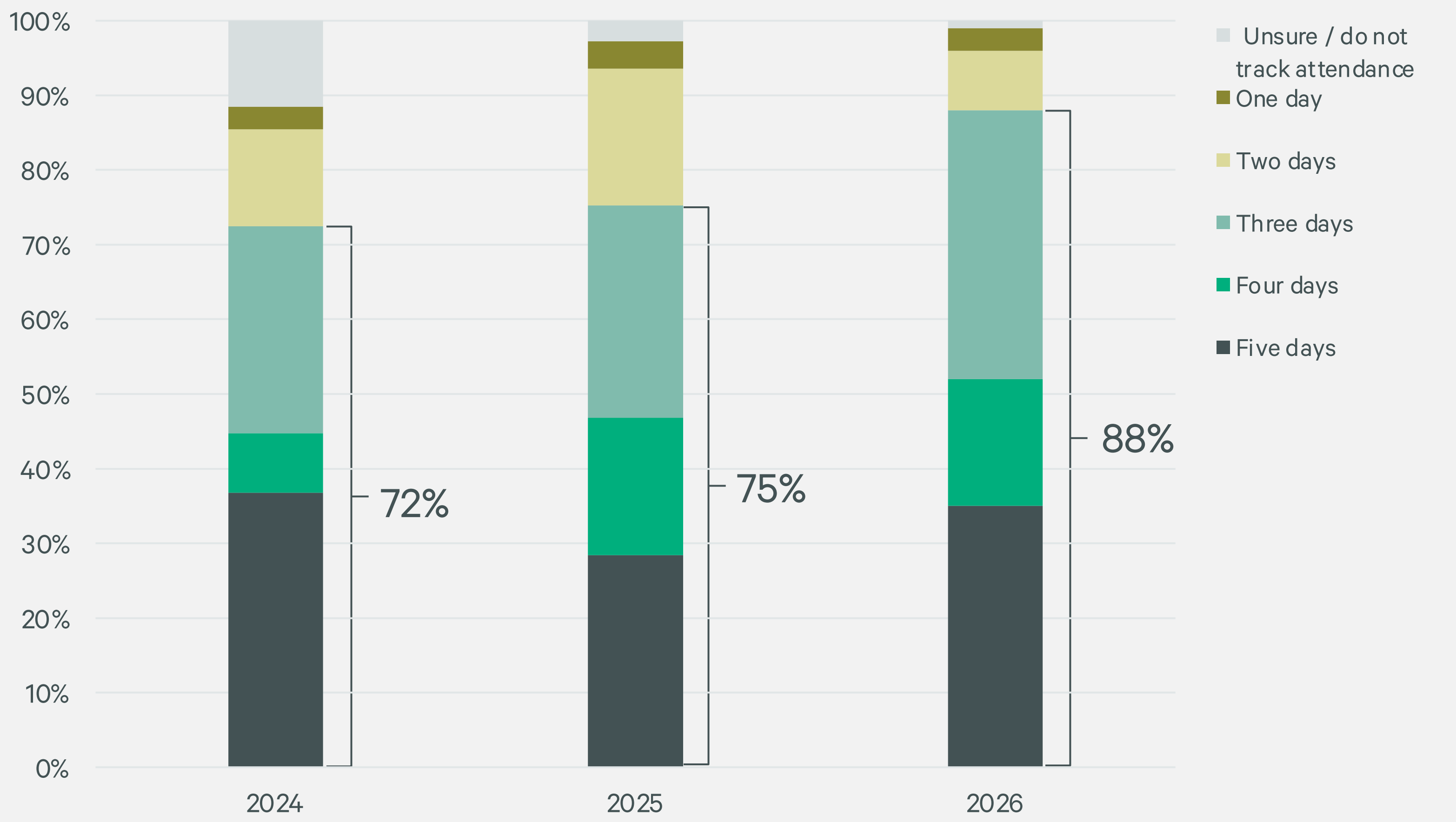
Office attendance in Asia Pacific now stands at its highest level since the pandemic, with 88% of respondents reporting that employees work from the office at least three days per week, an increase of 13 percentage points from 2025.

Improved office attendance is being driven by stricter return-to-office requirements and a sustained effort by management to increase employees' office presence.

Some 35% of respondents report a five-day office week or full work-from-office status. This is a much higher ratio than in the U.S., where CBRE's 2026 Americas Office Occupier Sentiment Survey found just 15% of firms reported a five-day office week.

Figure 1: Actual Office Attendance in a Typical Week

In the past three months, how many days per week did your employees work in the office?



Note: N=95.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

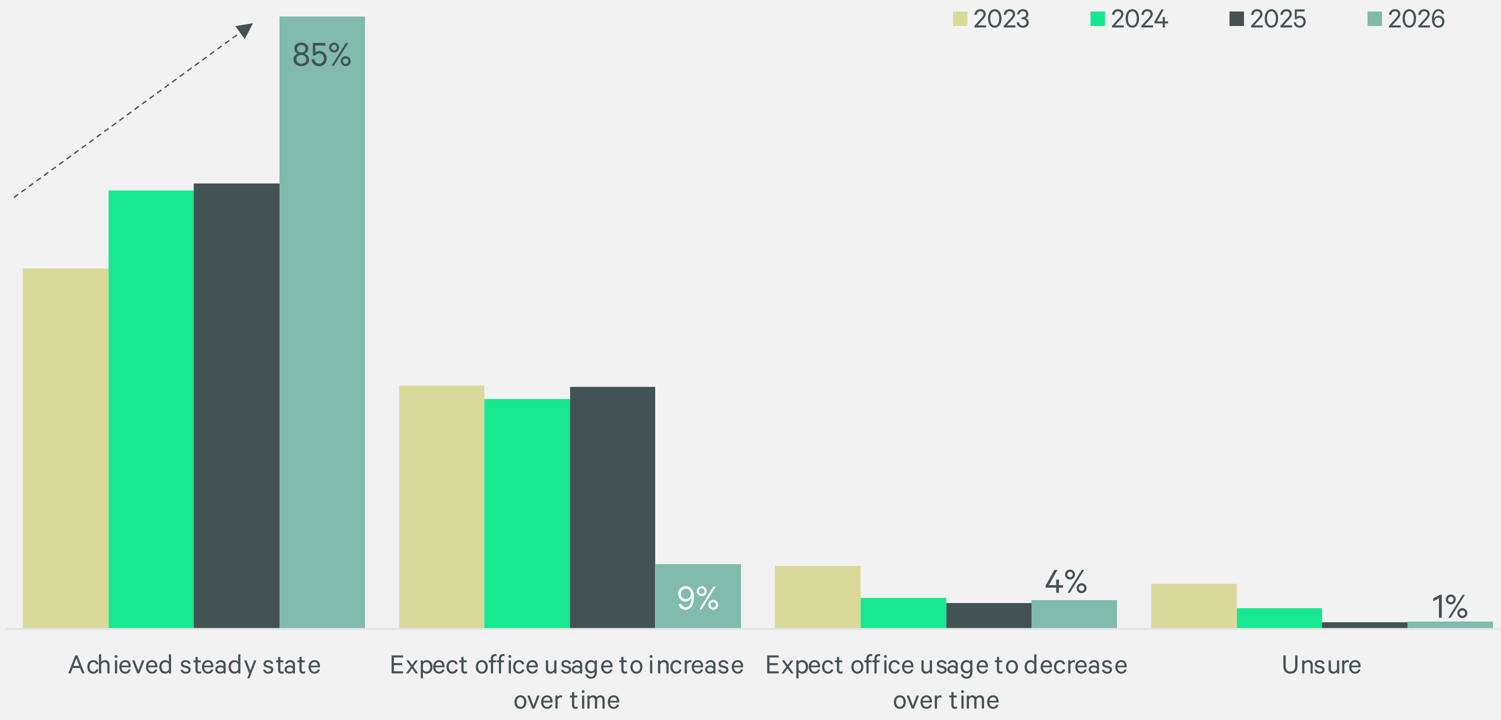
Most companies believe office attendance has achieved a steady state

The return to high levels of office attendance led 85% of occupiers to indicate that current attendance levels represent a steady-state position, up significantly from 62% in 2025 and the highest reading since the pandemic. Only 9% expect office usage to increase further.

These findings illustrate that while hybrid working is here to stay, the physical office remains essential to driving employee engagement and connectivity.

With hybrid working arrangements having reached a state of maturity, occupiers now possess accurate and better data to accurately plan their future space requirements.

Figure 2: Acceptance of Current State of Office Attendance
Is your current office attendance level a steady state position?



Note: N=95.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

Office utilisation rates continue to increase

Improved office attendance is driving higher workplace utilisation. 66% of occupiers reported average utilisation rates of above 60% this year, up from 60% in 2025 and 45% in 2024. Gains have been driven by a steady increase in occupiers operating within the 61%-80% utilisation range, indicating stronger day-to-day workplace usage across portfolios.

Peak utilisation has become a more relevant metric for occupiers to plain space demand. The share of occupiers reporting peak utilisation above 80% remained relatively unchanged at 54% in 2026.

As space utilisation increases, occupancy pressures are re-emerging, especially for firms that have rationalised space in recent years. A key challenge for occupiers is managing higher workplace utilisation without compromising the employee experience; a scenario that is prompting a new phase of workplace transformation focused on balancing space efficiency with workforce needs.

1. Average utilisation = Average occupancy on a normal day.
Peak utilisation = Maximum turn up rate on busiest day.
An office utilisation rate of over 80% is a benchmark to ensuring a vibrant and efficient office for a peak day.

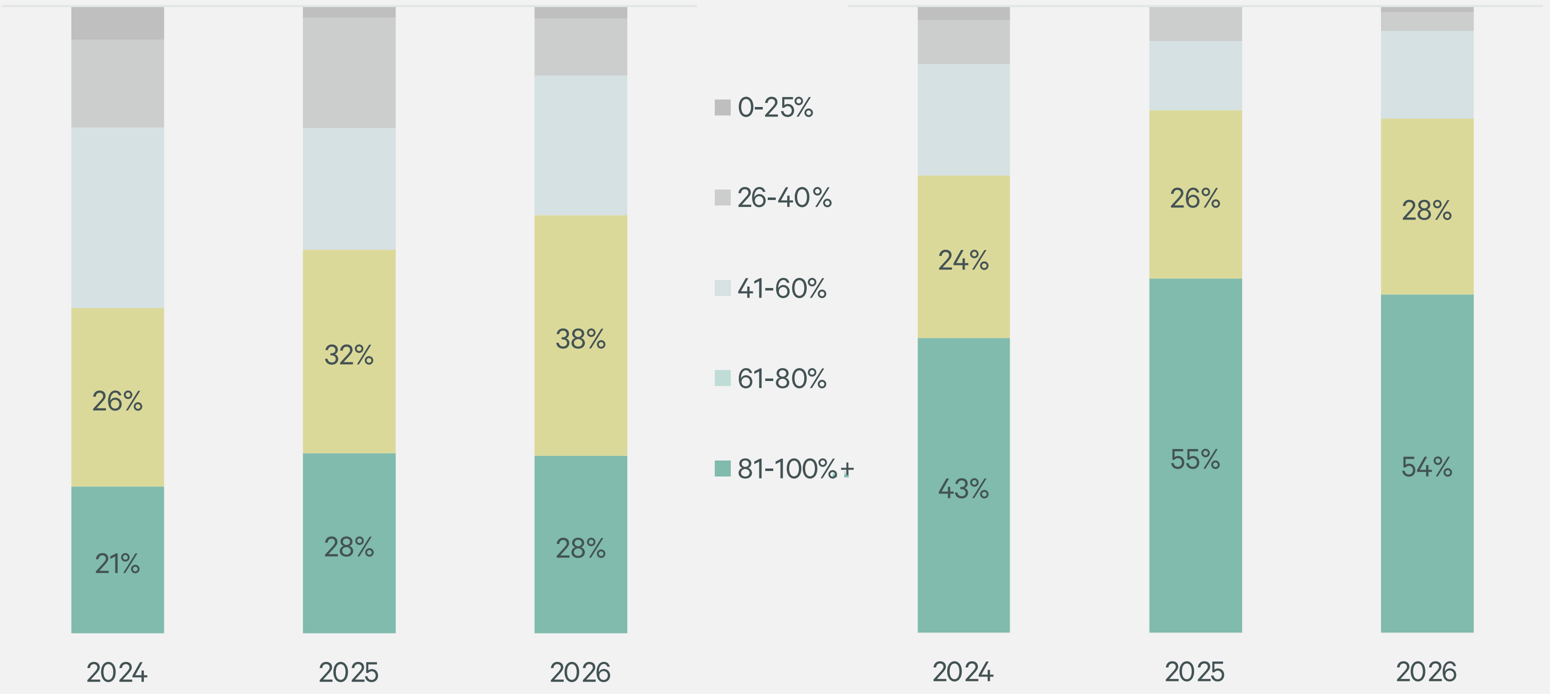
Figure 3: Office Utilisation Rates Across Portfolios
What has been the average and peak office utilisation rate across your portfolio in the past three months?

[1]Average Utilisation

Average utilisation was the prevalent metric used before the pandemic, when fixed desks were more common, but is less relevant in today's unassigned workplaces

[1]Peak Utilisation

Peak utilisation (maximum turn up rate on busiest day) is the key metric driving seat and space forecasting



Note: N=95, The option to select "unsure" was not included.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

02

Occupiers pursue workplace transformation but adopt less aggressive targets

Workplace transformation tops occupiers' agenda

Occupiers' need to balance greater efficiency with workplace effectiveness is clearly reflected by their stated portfolio priorities for the next three years.

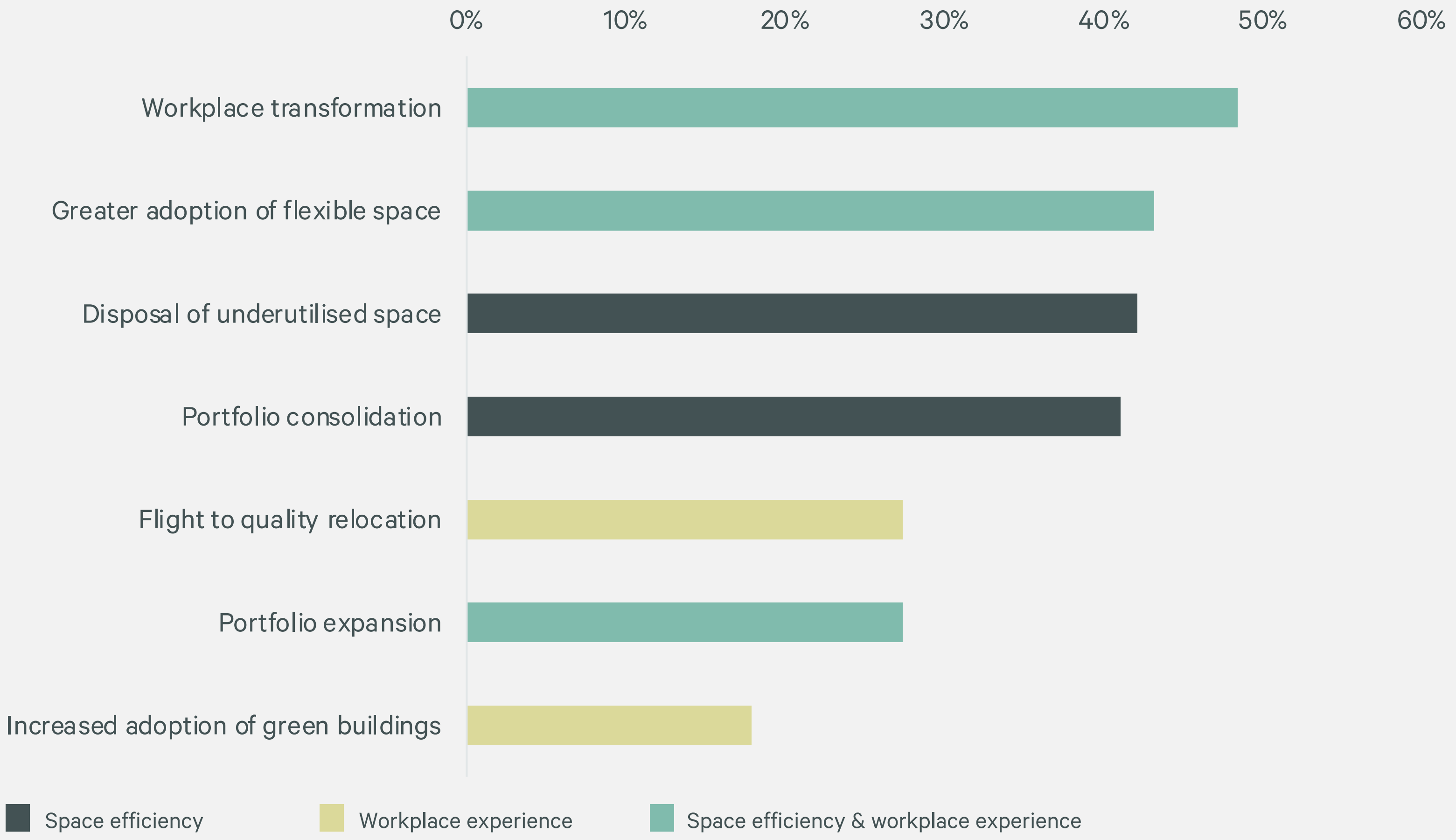
Nearly half of occupiers identify workplace transformation as a top priority, while 43% plan to expand their use of flexible space, including flexible seating, within their workplace. Such initiatives are primarily aimed at optimising existing workplaces and enabling higher utilisation while preserving a positive employee experience.

Efficiency remains firmly on the agenda, however, with 40% of occupiers prioritising the disposal of underutilised space and portfolio consolidation. While occupiers wanting to dispose surplus space are more likely to consolidate their portfolios and improve workplace efficiency, portfolio consolidation is more commonly associated with concentrating employees in fewer, higher-quality locations, rather than materially cutting portfolio size.

These priorities highlight a delicate balancing act; occupiers remain focused on improving efficiency through optimisation and consolidation, but recognise the risks of excessive space utilisation.

Figure 4: Portfolio Strategies Occupiers are Likely to Prioritise Over Next Three Years

Which real estate portfolio strategy is your organisation likely to prioritise in the next three years?



Note: Multiple selections allowed. N=95.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

Firms shift from fixed desks but loosen aggressive desk sharing ratio targets

The percentage of occupiers adopting fixed desk seating arrangements fell from 51% in 2025 to 43% in 2026; a trend set to continue as only 34% expect to retain fixed desk policies in the next three years.

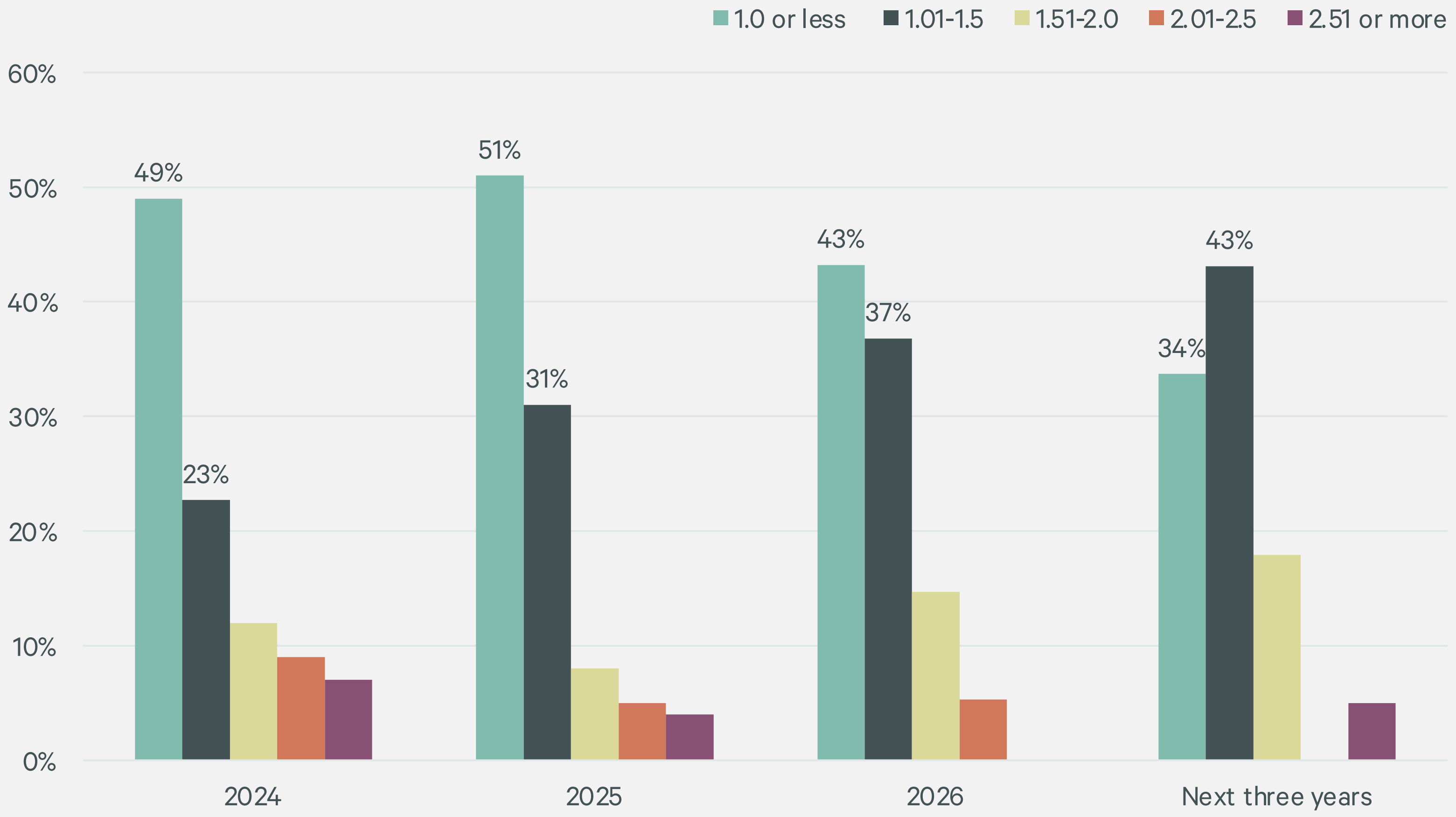
Despite the move to unassigned seating, staff-to-desk sharing ratios will largely stay within the 1-1.5 range in the coming three years as occupiers ensure sufficient space is allocated to staff to provide an attractive workplace experience.

With appetite for aggressive sharing ratios (over two staff to one desk) having almost halved in the past year, occupiers are clearly cognisant of the fact that excessive desk sharing can undermine collaboration, damage workplace satisfaction, and obstruct attendance targets.

By leveraging advanced technologies and AI-assisted analytics, occupiers can manage occupancy more effectively through better forecasting, occupancy analytics and attendance planning.

Figure 5: Change in Staff-to-Desk Sharing Ratio Over Time

What is your actual and targeted employee-to-desk sharing ratio for your office portfolio?



Note: N=95.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

Stronger preference for larger workstations

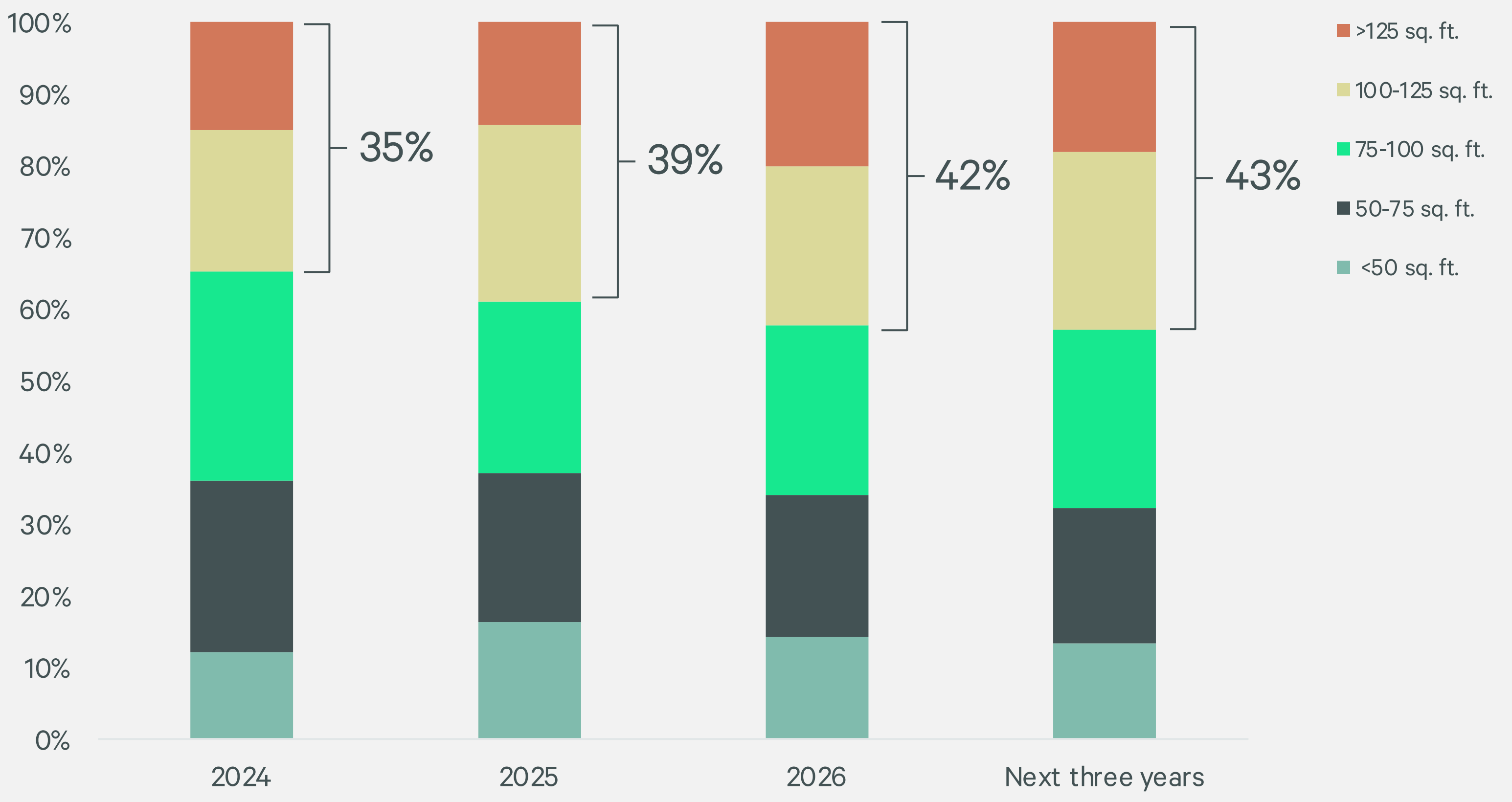
The gradual shrinkage of desk sizes witnessed in Asia Pacific in recent years appears to be reaching its limit. Allocations of 100 sq. ft. or more per workstation increased from 35% of firms in 2024 to 42% in 2026 and is expected to rise only marginally over the next three years. At the same time, demand for smaller workstations continues to moderate.

This indicates that future efficiency gains are more likely to come from smarter workplace management, utilisation planning and moderate desk sharing ratios, rather than further reducing desk sizes.

Occupiers' focus is shifting from how much space each employee occupies to optimising workplace performance to ensure staff are excited and motivated to use it.

Figure 6: Preferred Size Per Workstation

What is your standard office size per desk?



Note: N=445 (N=95 for regional, N=350 for China)
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

Workplace redesign aims to improve employee experience

As well as de-densifying workplaces and expanding workstation sizes, occupiers are looking to increase certain types of space.

These include collaborative space and small meeting rooms, demand for which is expected to increase the most in the next three years as occupiers seek to enhance team collaboration and communication.

With firms also looking to promote information interaction, networking and employee wellbeing, more space will be allocated to social and communal purposes such as cafes, wellness zones and breakout lounges.

The next priority is ensuring sufficient sound-proof focused space for employees requiring deep concentration or isolation. The increase in virtual meetings also necessitates more private phone booths.

The least popular format is large meeting rooms, reflecting a shift from large formal meetings to smaller, more frequent interactions.

While fewer firms intend to allocate more space to tech infrastructure, TMT occupiers plan to allocate additional space for testing labs, edge computing equipment and enhanced power and cooling infrastructure.

Figure 7: Expected Changes to Workplace Settings in the Next Three Years

How do you expect the amount of each type of workplace space to change in the next three years?

Spaces to increase

53% Collaborative space

52% Small meeting rooms

48% Social / communal space

43% Sound-proof / focus space

Spaces to reduce

19% Large meeting rooms

24% Tech infrastructure

Note: N=445 (N=95 for regional, N= 350 for China). Figures represent the percentage of respondents wanting to increase a certain type of space.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

03

Flight to core remains prominent but balancing occupancy costs is key

Flight to core appetite remains strong but occupiers balance quality with cost

Office flight-to-quality remains a key trend across the region as occupiers continue to demonstrate a strong preference for locations and buildings that support talent attraction, employee experience and workforce mobility. Nearly half of respondents expect their portfolios to be located in CBDs over the next three years. While Grade A assets are preferred, most opt for standard rather than top tier buildings in the segment, reflecting a desire to balance asset quality with occupancy costs.

Occupiers' presence in Grade B and lower-quality stock is expected to decline further; a trend most evident in gateway markets such as Sydney, Singapore and Hong Kong SAR, where leasing demand remains concentrated in CBD locations and high-quality buildings.

Exceptions can be found in India, where demand has spilled over to well-connected secondary business districts due to the lack of prime CBD space. In mainland China, emerging business hubs and new CBDs are attracting demand for modern and high quality office stock offering superior connectivity and lower occupancy costs.

Figure 8: Portfolio Location (today vs. next three years)
Where is the majority of your office portfolio located today versus in the next three years?

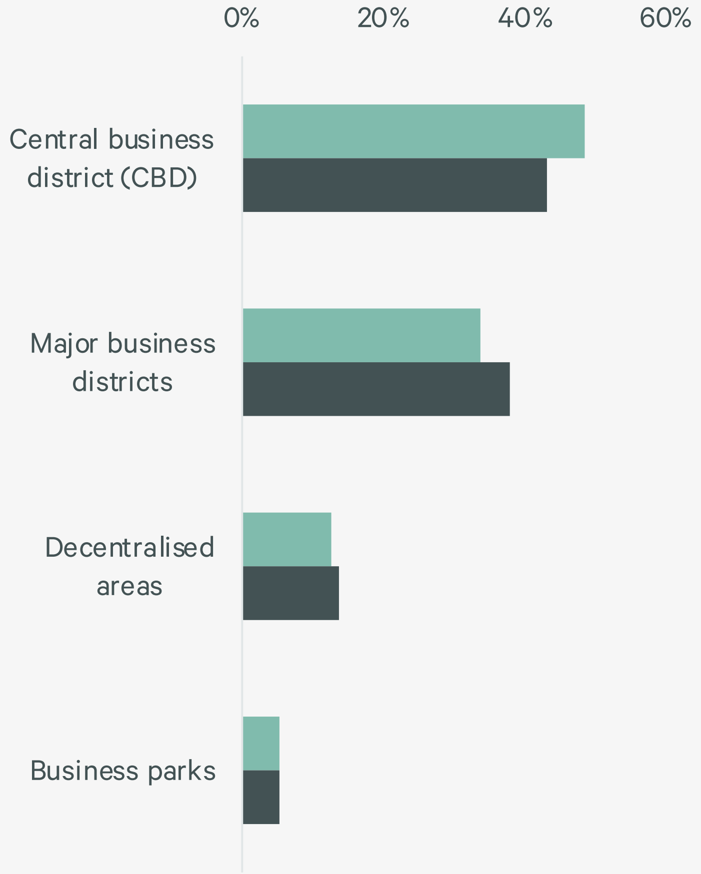
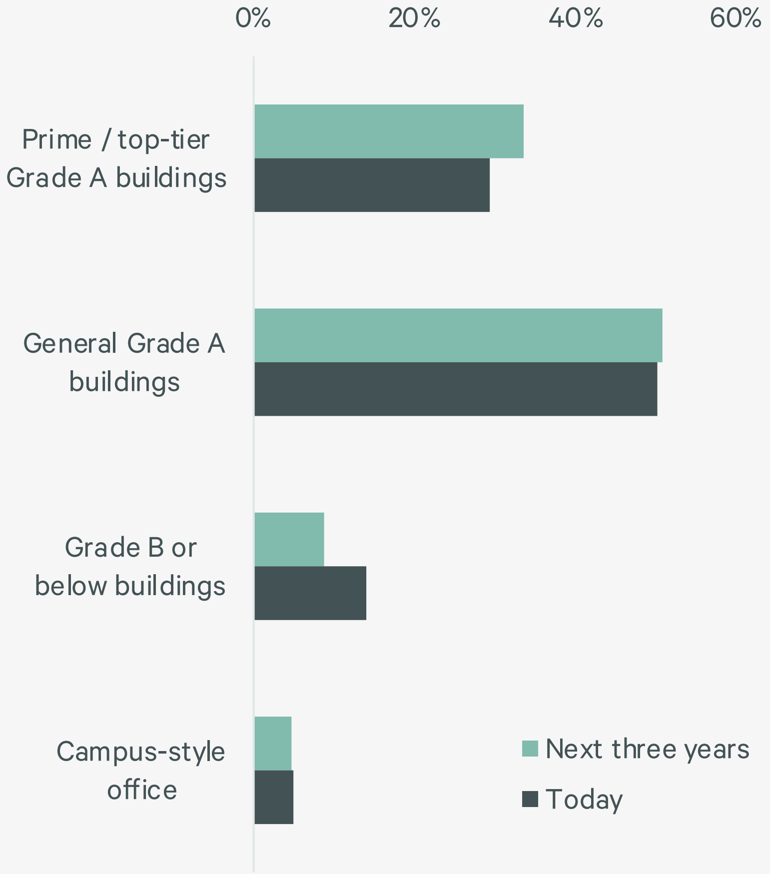


Figure 9: Building Quality (today vs. next three years)
How would you describe the overall building quality of your office portfolio today versus in the next three years?



Note: N=95.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

Transportation named top criteria influencing location choice

Occupiers aiming to achieve an optimal balance of quality, accessibility and affordability are adopting a more disciplined approach to flight-to-quality.

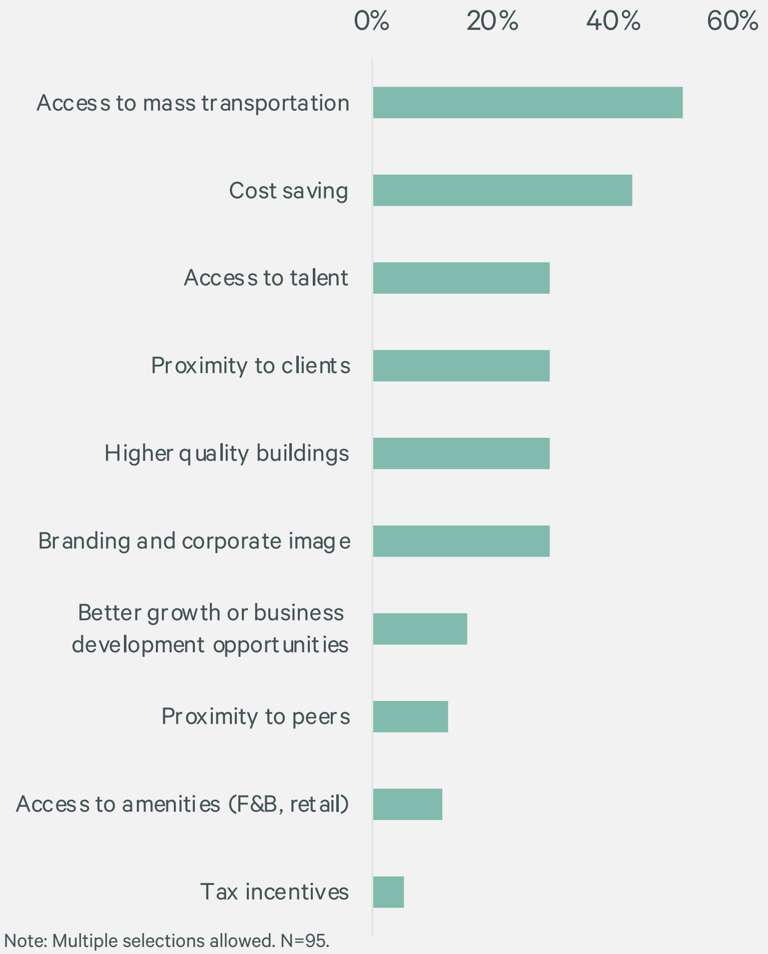
Although access to mass transportation (52%) remains the top driver of location decisions, cost saving (43%) ranks second, edging out traditional factors such as access to talent, proximity to clients and business growth opportunities.

This indicates that flight-to-quality is evolving into a value-driven strategy; one that is exerting an increasingly prominent influence over how occupiers approach portfolio upgrades. Rather than simply relocating to the most prestigious buildings, some firms are adopting more creative leasing strategies to maximise value from their real estate.

In mainland China, where office rents have been in a downward cycle for several years, occupiers expect rental savings of at least 20% when relocating, even when upgrading into higher-quality space. In other markets, smaller occupiers with lower budgets are targeting turnkey solutions and fitted space to reduce upfront capital expenditure while still achieving their desired office upgrade.

Figure 10: Main Driver(s) of Portfolio Changes in Location

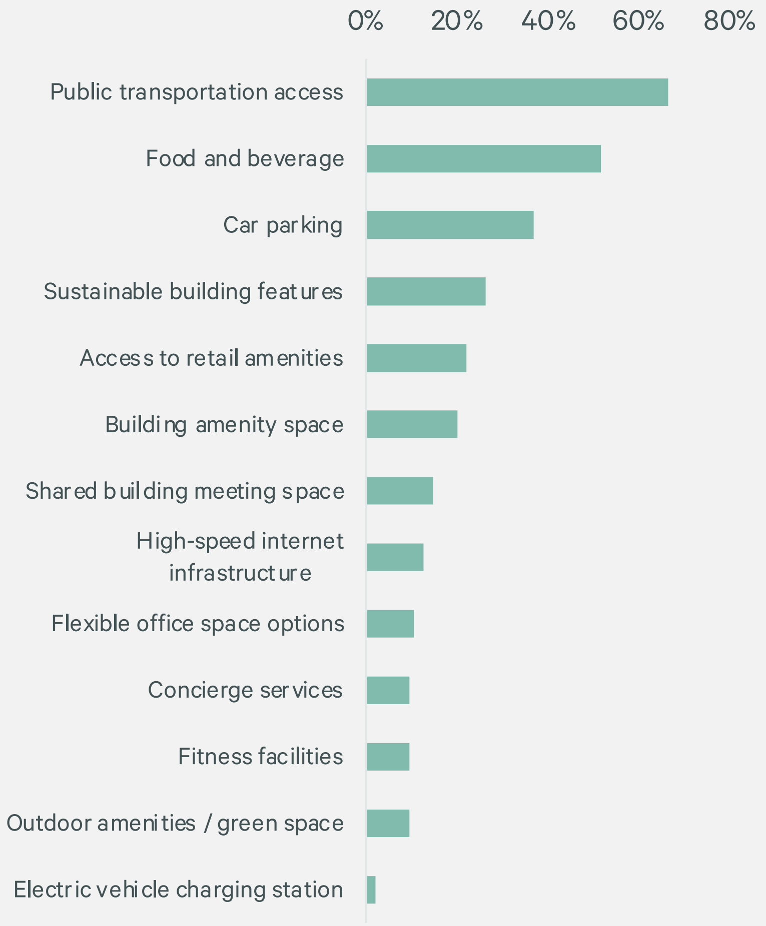
What are the main drivers of your office portfolio location over the next three years?



Note: Multiple selections allowed. N=95.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

Figure 11: Most Desired Building Features and Amenities

What are the most sought-after building features and amenities for your organisation?



Sustainability focuses on green building certification and energy savings

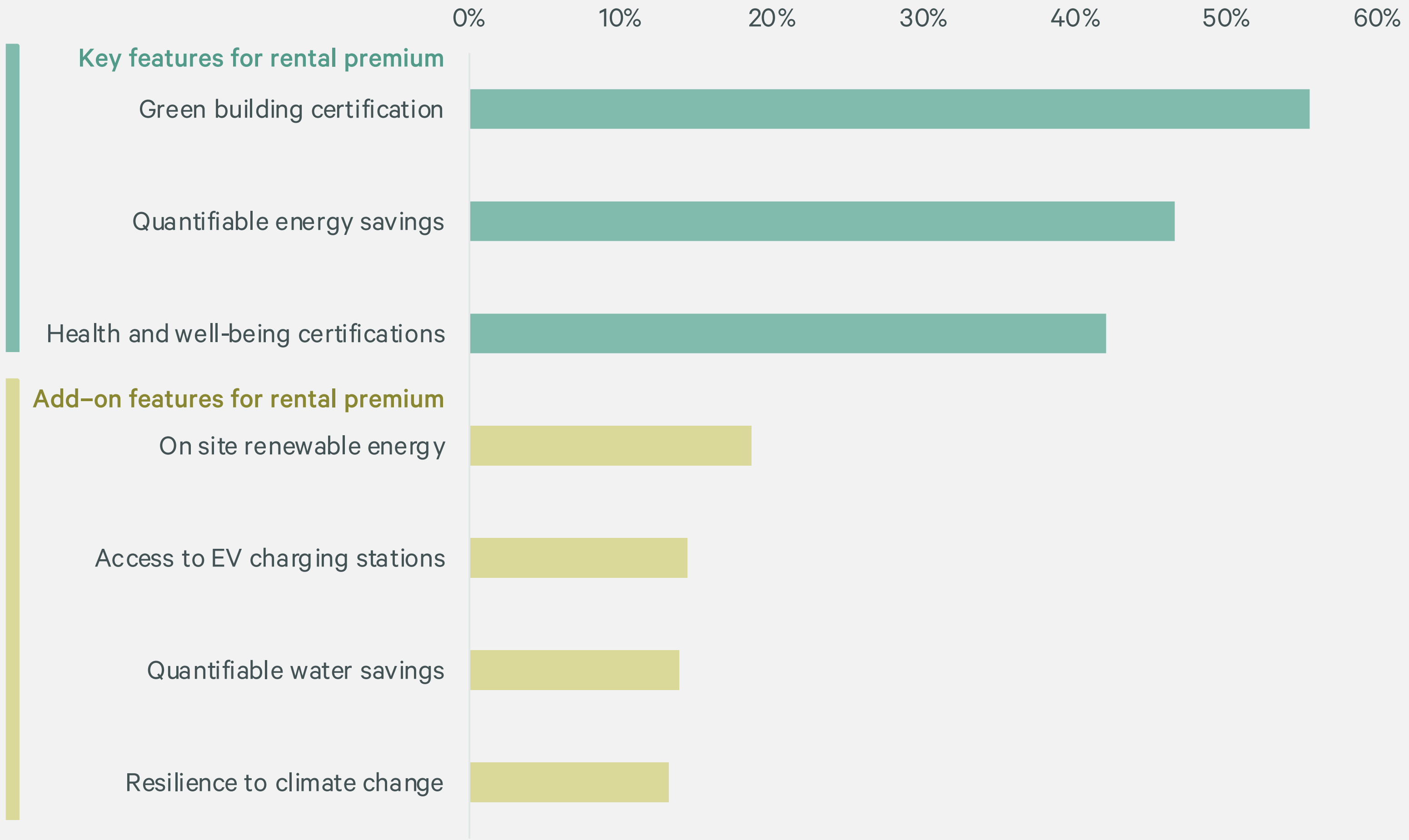
Occupiers are becoming more selective about the sustainability features they are willing to pay a rental premium for. Green building certification remains most valued, followed by quantifiable energy savings and health and wellbeing certification, reflecting a preference for features that support ESG targets while delivering measurable operational or workforce benefits.

Recent volatility in global energy markets has heightened awareness of utility cost risk, prompting occupiers to prioritise buildings that can demonstrate measurable reductions in energy consumption and operating expenses. The challenge is not merely improving efficiency, but also converting it into measurable financial value through smart building technologies and data-driven performance management.

Although a green rental premium continues to exist, it remains modest, with most occupiers willing to pay less than 5%. Sustainable buildings are increasingly viewed as a baseline expectation, with premiums reserved for features that can deliver quantifiable business value.

Figure 12: Sustainability Features for Which Occupiers Will Pay a Rental Premium

Which sustainability features in offices are your organisation willing to pay a premium for?



Note: Multiple selections allowed. N=445 (N= 95 for regional, N=350 for China)
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

04

AI's impact on corporate real estate operations outpaces its effect on office demand

AI integration into corporate real estate operations accelerates

AI adoption within corporate real estate operations has gathered significant momentum over the past two years, with occupiers rapidly moving to implementation following an initial exploration phase.

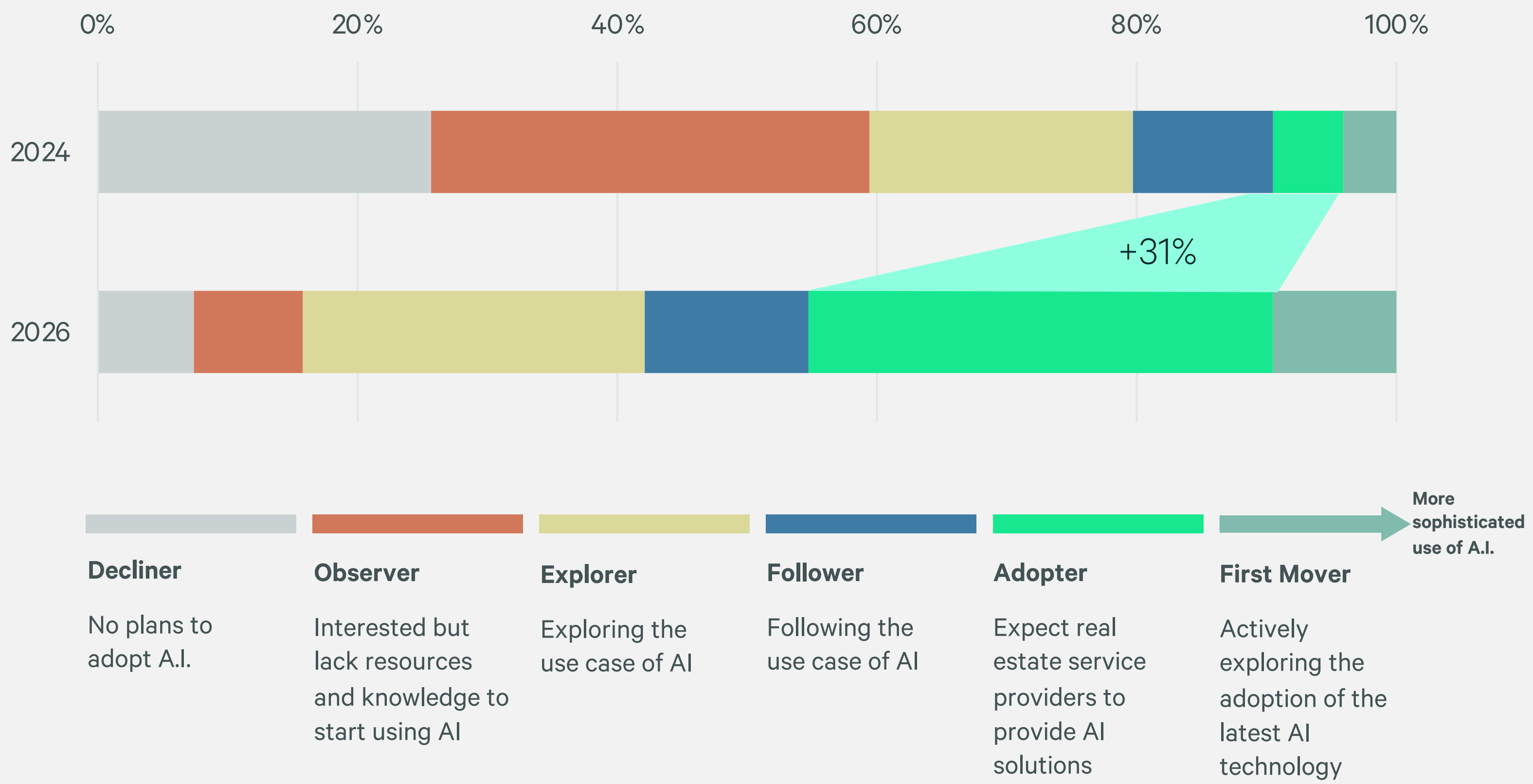
Some 36% of respondents – a substantial increase from just 5% in the 2024 survey - described themselves as AI adopters, as they expect service providers to offer them AI solutions.

In contrast, only 10% said they are actively exploring adoption of the latest AI technology; a figure that reflects the necessity of outsourcing AI solutions.

With the usage of Large Language Models (LLMs) having surged over the past 12 months, only a limited number of respondents have no plans to adopt AI for their corporate real estate functions (7% in 2026 vs 26% in 2024).

Figure 13: Approach to AI for Corporate Real Estate Operations

Which of the following statements best describes the approach to AI for your corporate real estate operations?



Note: N=95.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

AI reshapes occupier space utilisation and portfolio planning

The return to the office has seen occupiers grapple with higher space utilisation, stronger employee demand for attractive workplace experiences and mounting pressure to improve portfolio efficiency.

AI deployment is helping address many of these challenges, with occupiers harnessing the technology to deliver more accurate forecasts, better utilisation insights and superior workplace analytics.

Occupancy management (62%) and portfolio planning and forecasting (56%) were identified as the most viable areas for AI usage. Lease administration and facilities management also rank highly as large volumes of operational and contractual data remain difficult to analyse efficiently and at scale.

Rather than simply automating administrative tasks or replacing human decision-making, AI is viewed as a tool to improve how occupiers manage real estate more intelligently by identifying trends, anticipating future demand and making faster, data-driven decisions about their portfolios.

Figure 14: Approaches to AI for Corporate Real Estate Operations

In which areas do you see the most potential for applying AI to your corporate real estate operations?

Most potential

62% Occupancy Management

56% Portfolio Planning & Forecasting

44% Leasing Contract Management

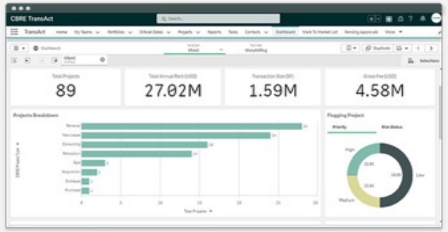
44% Facilities Management

CBRE (service provider) Tools for Adopter

Occupancy Metrics

Portfolio Summary

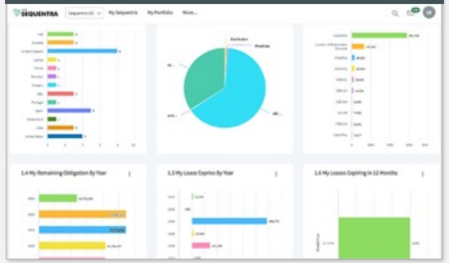
- Transact – Transaction management
- Vantage Analytics – Portfolio analytics with AI



Lease Insights

- Sequentra – Lease administration

Analyse Data & Documentation

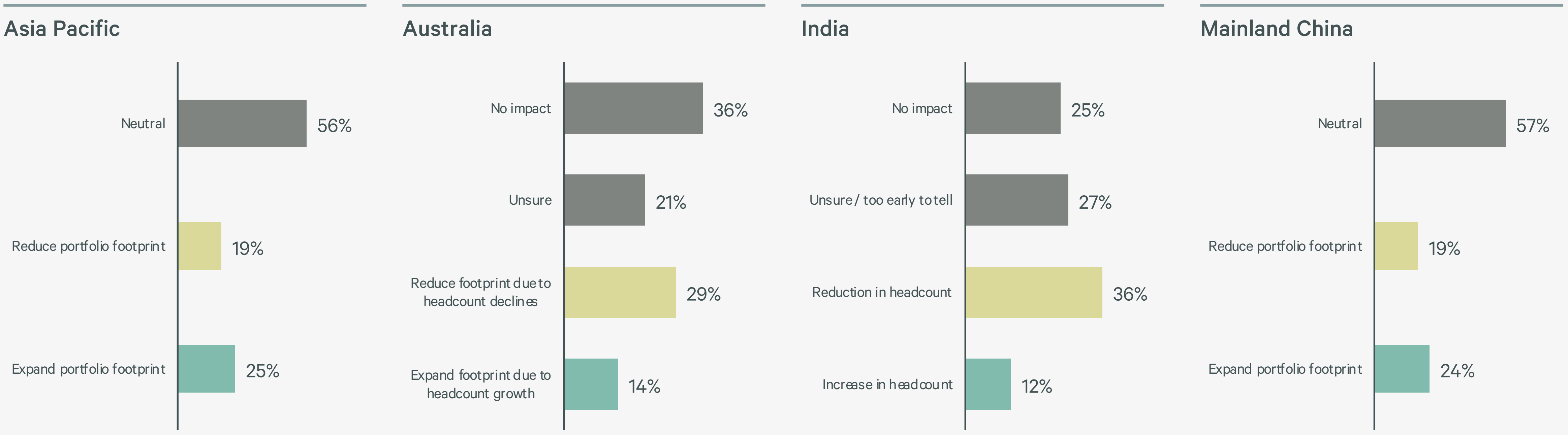


Note: Multiple selections allowed. N=95.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

AI and office demand: too early to tell

No impact / unsure
Negative impact
Positive impact

Figure 15: AI Impact on Corporate Real Estate Portfolios / Headcount



Note: Single selection allowed. N=95.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

Note: Single selection allowed. N=16.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

Note: Single selection allowed. N=168.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

Note: Single selection allowed. N=350.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

The AI impact on office demand remains uncertain

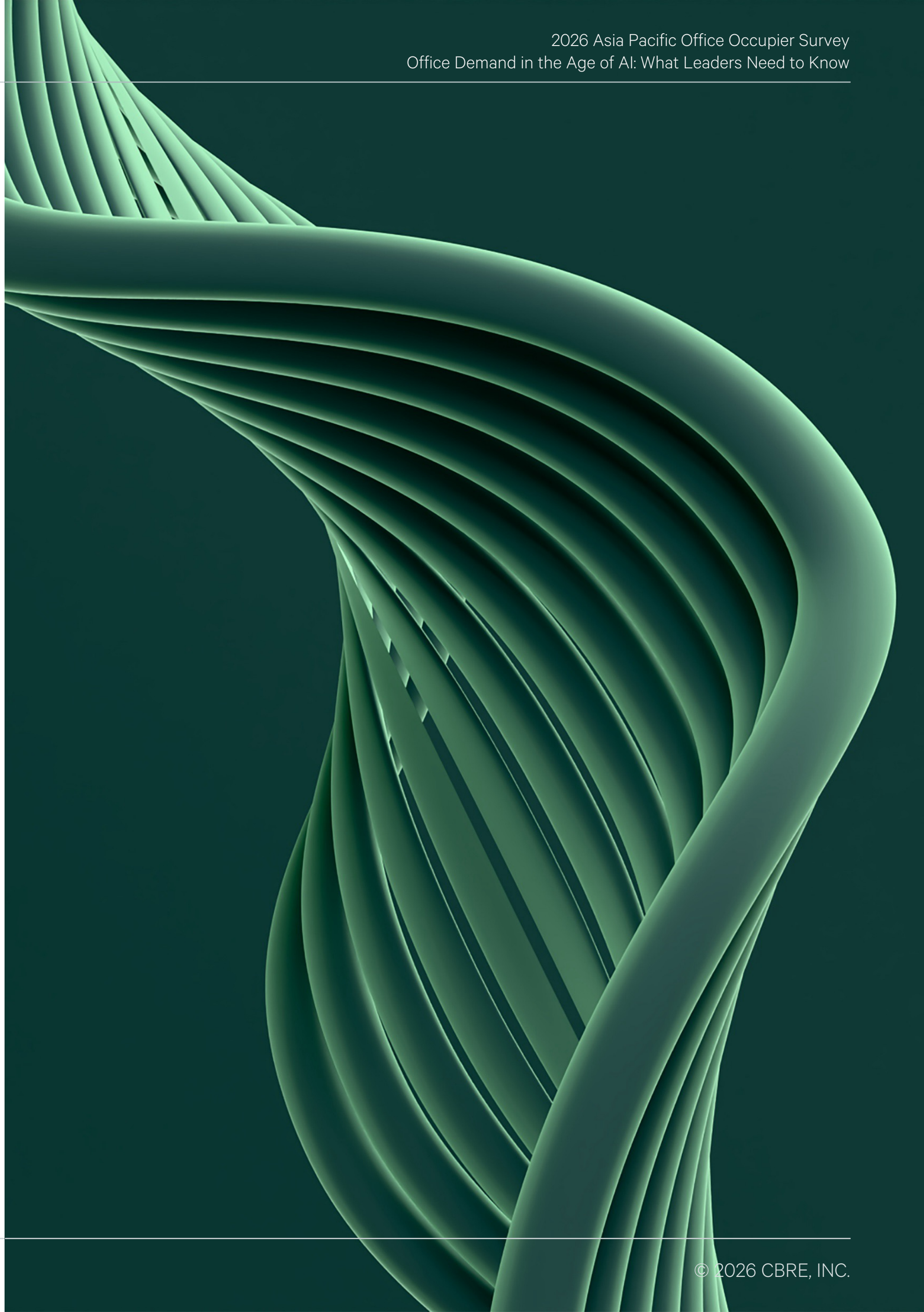
While AI adoption is accelerating rapidly across corporate real estate functions, the impact of AI on future office demand remains unclear. Among occupiers with pan-Asia Pacific portfolios, 56% believe AI will have no meaningful impact on their office footprint or consider it too early to make an assessment.

Expectations of portfolio expansion (25%) and contraction (19%) remain broadly balanced, suggesting that occupiers are still evaluating the long-term implications of AI before committing to structural and potentially significant real estate decisions.

Views vary across the region. In India, where demand from Global Capability Centres (GCCs) remains robust, 64% of occupiers hold a neutral-to-positive view toward the impact of AI on the workforce. In Australia, while 29% of respondents expect AI could reduce office requirements through lower headcount, the timeline for such an impact to emerge is unclear.

Occupiers' day-to-day challenges and priorities remain focused on improving the workplace experience in response to higher office attendance and the need to augment talent attraction and retention. This on-the-ground reality contrasts with prolonged media speculation surrounding AI-driven disruption to office demand; a natural consequence of their excessive focus on potential job displacement caused by AI.

Positive impacts of AI on the Asia Pacific office market witnessed thus far include the creation of new forms of business activity, new occupations and new sources of leasing demand. In Singapore and mainland China, for example, AI companies continue to expand with many opting to lease space in top office buildings in prime locations.



05

Occupiers expect net portfolio growth to gain momentum

Significant increase in expansion appetite

Following several years of portfolio rationalisation, occupiers hold a more optimistic view toward future office demand. Half of respondents expect their office portfolio to expand over the next three years, up from just 32% during 2022-2025, while the proportion anticipating contraction has fallen from 30% to 18%.

Part of this shift reflects lessons learned from the post-pandemic adjustment phase, when some larger occupiers aggressively reduced their office footprint in anticipation of the widespread and permanent adoption of hybrid working.

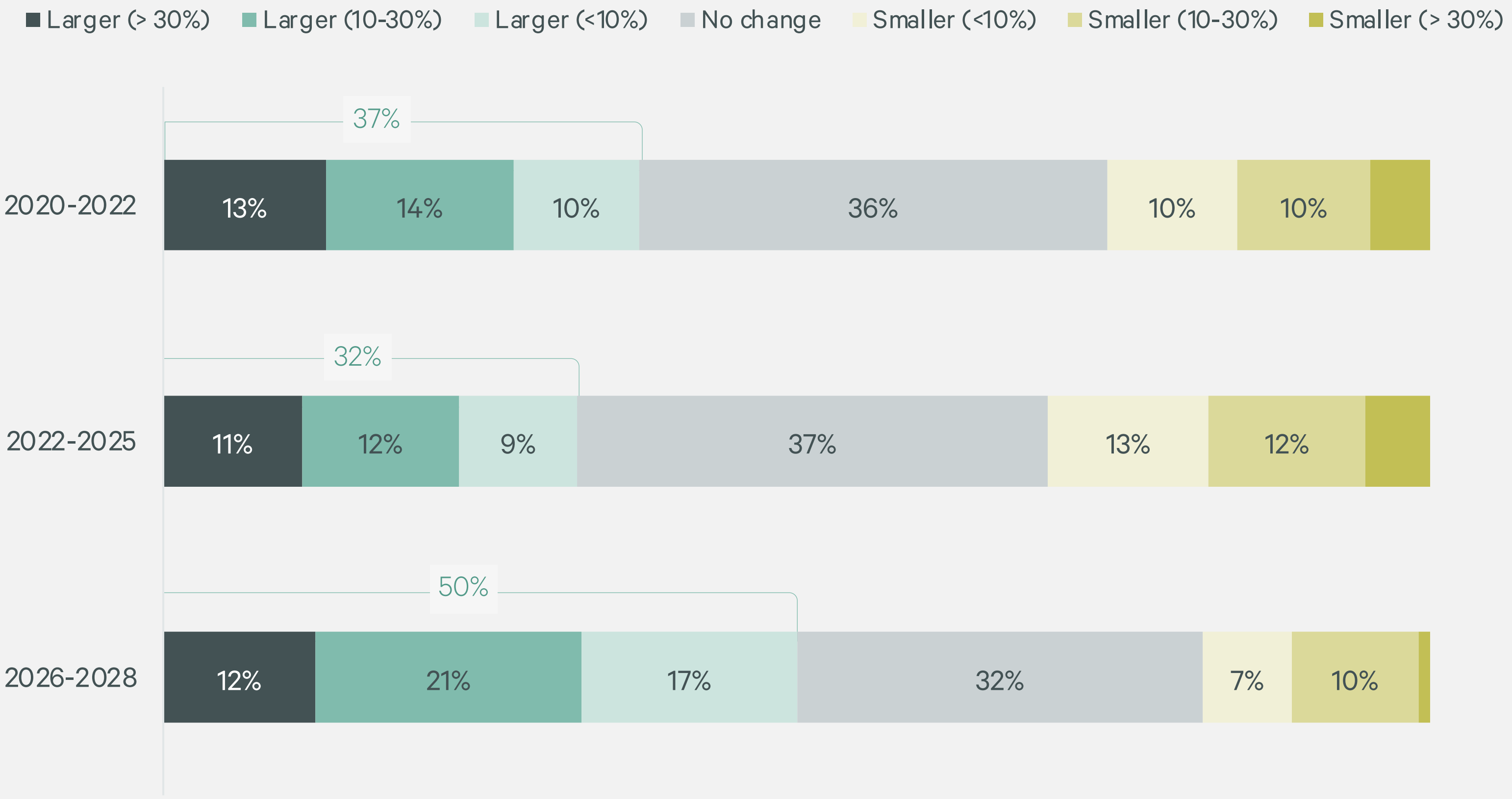
With attendance and utilisation having since recovered, occupiers found themselves operating in increasingly dense environments, creating a need to secure additional space to accommodate returning employees.

Expansion sentiment is particularly strong in India and Japan, where robust demand is obstructed by tight availability. Mainland China respondents also exhibit expansionary demand, led primarily by technology and new energy firms, albeit at a more measured pace than elsewhere in the region.

Occupiers are not simply seeking more space; they are demanding better-performing space. Future growth will be directed towards higher-quality, more productive workspace, while lower-value space will be rationalised.

Figure 16: Occupiers' Appetite for Space in Previous Three Years vs. Over Next Three Years

How has your office portfolio size changed over the past few years, and how do you expect it to change over the next three years?



Note: N= 651 (N=95 for regional, N= 350 for China and N=206 for India).
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

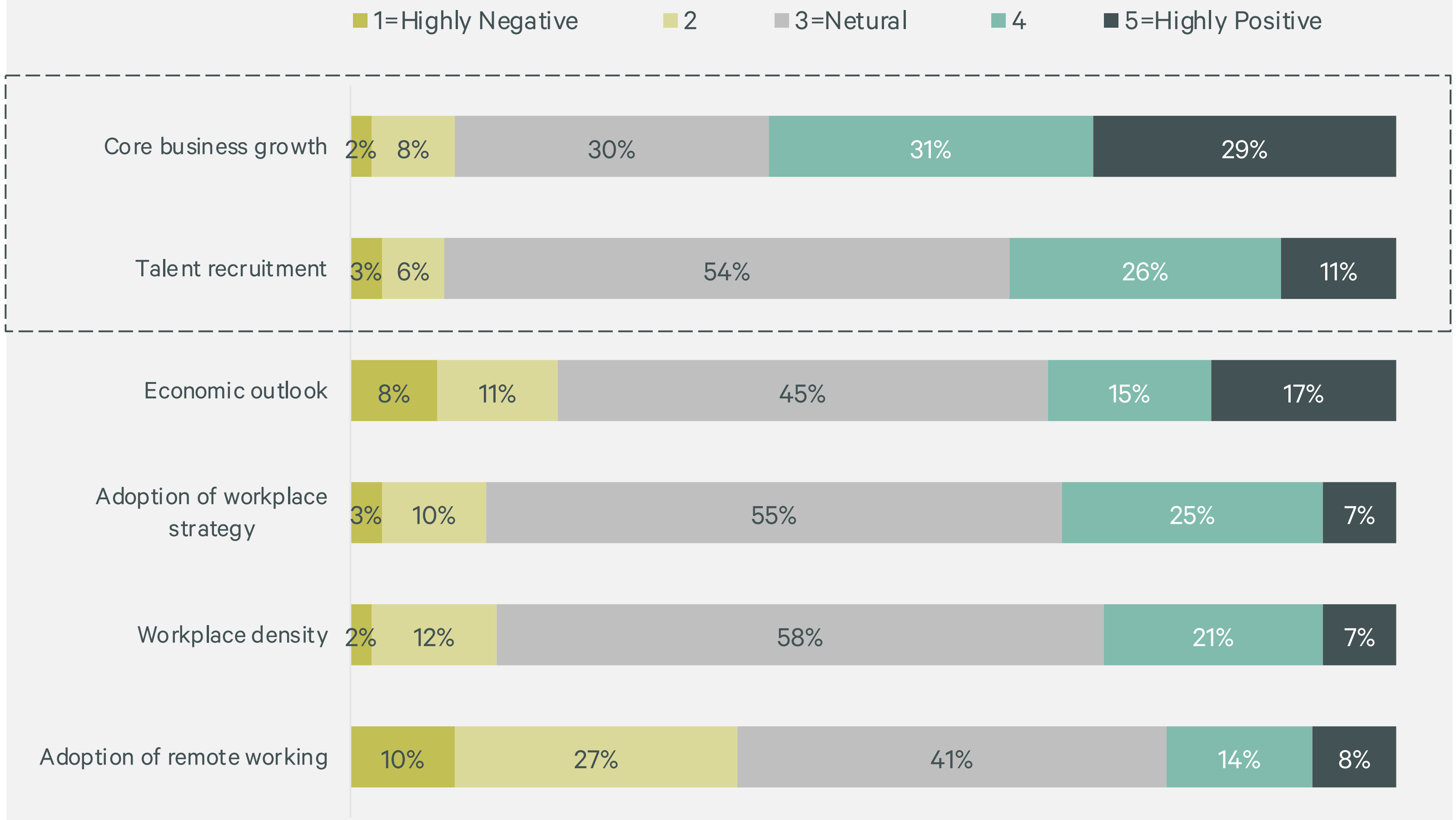
Short-term expansion to be driven by business growth and talent attraction

Despite challenges around AI adoption, hybrid working and evolving workplace strategies, Asia Pacific occupiers remain broadly optimistic about business performance and workforce growth. Nearly 60% expect business growth to drive portfolio expansion over the next 12 months, while one-third anticipate a rise in headcount, supporting a healthy outlook for office leasing activity.

While remote working remains the most significant downside risk to portfolio growth, the region's higher office attendance, elevated space utilisation and stricter return to office mandates leaves limited scope for occupiers to materially reduce office footprint through remote working initiatives.

Although demand fundamentals remain supportive, the supply landscape is tightening as new stock moderates in many mature markets. At the same time, occupiers in developing markets such as India continue to face tight availability of quality office space in core locations. As a result, occupiers seeking premium buildings in core locations will need to engage earlier and plan requirements further in advance to secure their preferred options.

Figure 17: Factors Impacting Portfolio Size in Next 12 Months



Note: N=445 (N=95 for regional, N=350 for China)
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

06

Recommendations

Actions for Occupiers

Optimise workplace design for higher attendance

- Avoid pursuing efficiency through implementing aggressive sharing ratios (i.e. above 1:1.5)
- Reassess workspace standards instead of further reducing desk sizes
- Reallocate space toward collaboration, focused work and high-utilisation settings

Harness technology and AI to improve portfolio decisions

- Deploy AI tools via service providers to improve forecasting, utilisation management and occupancy planning
- Move from periodic workplace reviews to data-driven portfolio management
- Leverage workplace analytics to improve space utilisation without compromising employee experience

Selectively expand and upgrade portfolios

- Channel investment to locations and assets that deliver the best balance of quality, efficiency and value
- Dispose of underutilised space to improve overall portfolio efficiency

Actions for Landlords & Investors

Create amenity-rich and experience-led buildings

- Improve the arrival experience through direct transport connectivity, weather-protected access, intuitive wayfinding and hospitality-led lobbies
- Install high quality F&B, retail, wellness and communal features in and around the property
- Create vibrant shared spaces that support collaboration, networking and community building
- Refurbish ageing office space to improve building quality

Invest in smart building technology

- Leverage occupancy and usage data in common areas to optimise amenity provision, building operations and service delivery
- Strengthen digital infrastructure through high-speed connectivity and resilient telecommunications capabilities
- Enhance energy performance and building operations through smart building platforms and automation

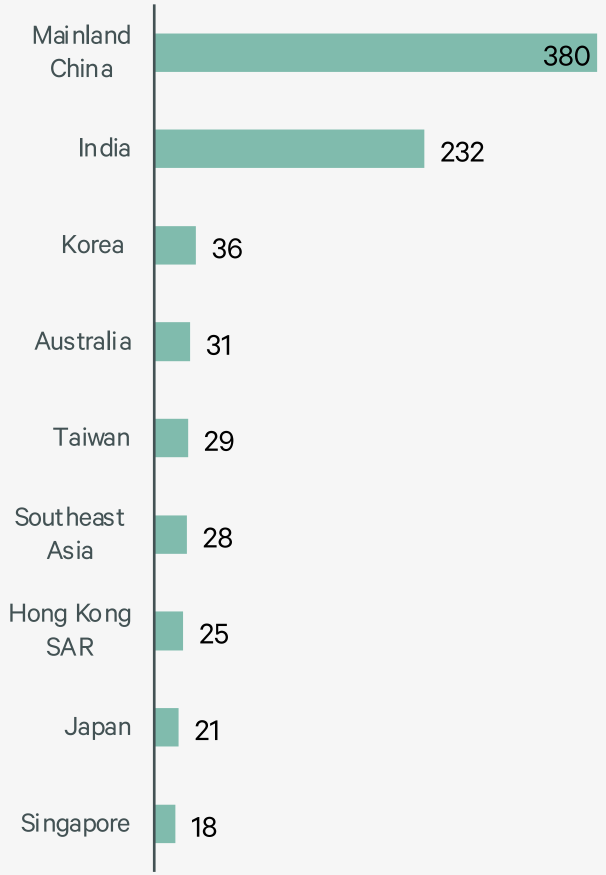
Offer flexible leasing and occupancy solutions

- Partner with flexible space operators to support occupiers' changing office requirements
- Increase availability of fitted and turnkey office solutions

Survey Profile

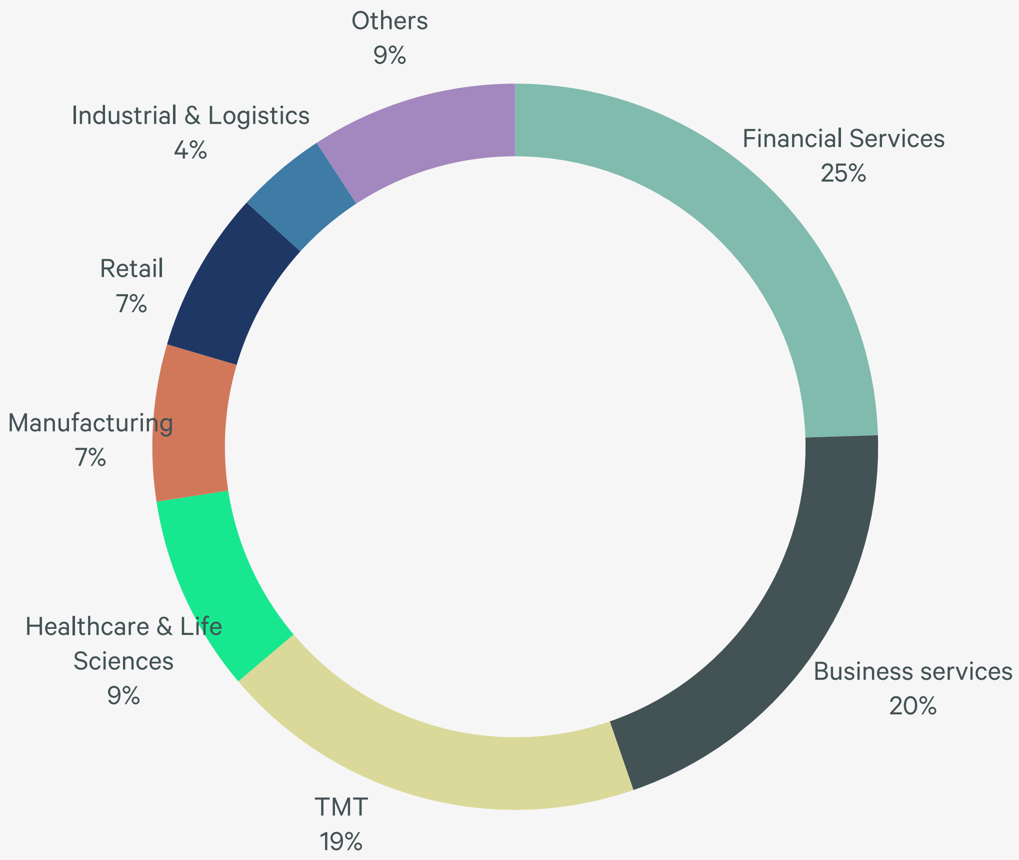
- CBRE's 2026 Asia Pacific Office Occupier Survey was conducted between May 26, 2026, and July 10, 2026.
- A total of 651 responses were received.
- Most responses were obtained from the Asia Pacific regional survey while additional responses were obtained from individual surveys conducted in mainland China and India.
- Responses from the mainland China and India surveys are weighted by 25% reflecting these markets' share of Asia Pacific Grade A office stock.

Respondents by Market Covered



Note: Multiple selections apply.
Southeast Asia refers to the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand.
Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

Respondents by Industry



Source: CBRE Research, August 2026.

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