

ARTICLE | Evolving Workforces

2024-2025 CBRE Global Workplace & Occupancy Insights

Part 3: Effective Hybrid Programs: The Experience

About the Series

CBRE's 2024-2025 Global Workplace & Occupancy Insights is a five-part series that explores trends across major office occupiers, providing valuable insights for organizations seeking to align their workplaces with business needs and cultural objectives. [Part 1](#), "Companies prefer metrics that measure effectiveness, rather than efficiency," explored how organizations are increasingly prioritizing workplace experience as a crucial factor in real estate success. In parts 2 and 3, we explore how effective workplaces require strategic hybrid programs, which have increased in adoption by 30% over the past four years. [Part 2](#), "Effective Hybrid Programs: Policies and Common Characteristics," outlined the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of various hybrid program models. In this article, Part 3, we explore the tactical tools needed to transform office policies into reality.

Introduction

CBRE's 2024-2025 Global Workplace & Occupancy Insights series found that 92% of organizations surveyed have created definitive workplace policies that range in expected time in the office. Whether the policy includes a mandated requirement or employee choice guidance, an intentional strategy and workplace experience is required to shift employee workstyles to a new way of working and hybrid work patterns. Focusing on workplace experience delivery will drive business benefits, including attracting and retaining talent, boosting organizational performance and maximizing return on strategic investments



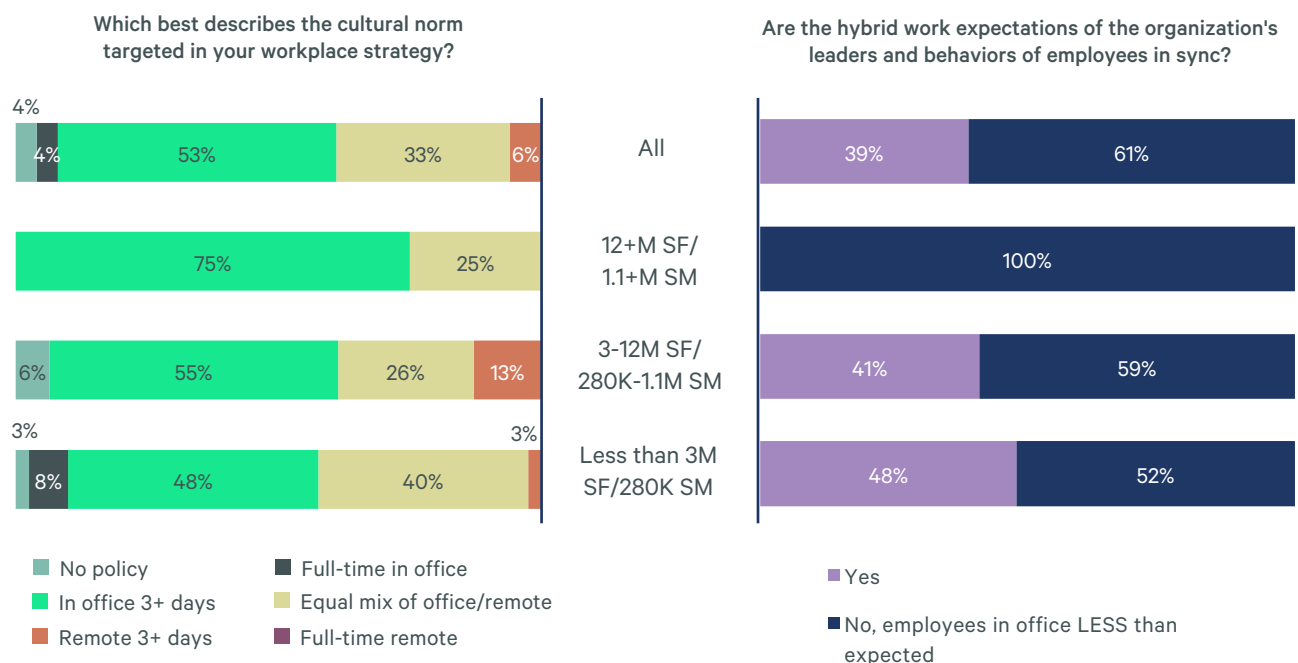
Organizations with
policies that include
expected time in office

92%

Hybrid Program Implementation & Resetting the Workplace Experience

When implementing a hybrid program with a desired number of in-office workdays, expectations of leadership and employee behavior are moving closer but are still not fully aligned. Ninety percent of organizations would like employees to work in the office at least two days per week. However, a majority (61%) of those organizations state that employee office use is different from leadership expectations.

FIGURE 1: Aligning Hybrid Work Expectations and Behaviors



Source: CBRE Workplace & Occupancy Benchmarking Program, 2024.

To magnetize the office environment for employees, employers must thoughtfully implement a hybrid program and workplace experience. Great workplace experiences don't just happen; delivering this vision requires a strategic plan and sustained measurement framework. Great on-site experiences require optimized physical spaces, digital enablement, seamless operations that provide convenience and connectivity, and organizational change management to shift to a new way of working.

Strategies for Enhancing the Workplace Experience

Short Term

Conduct a needs assessment. Engage employee feedback through direct conversations, interviews, focus groups and surveys to understand employee and team workstyles, challenges and expectations regarding hybrid work. Analyze job roles across teams to determine the main behaviors in the office and what workplace considerations need to be updated to effectively operate in the new office model. Conduct an operational review to understand service delivery opportunities from process, resourcing and technology changes to key touch points in the employee journey. Leverage the findings to evaluate the gap between current and target site experience and prioritize workplace initiatives that drive retention.

Employee attendance improves when company leadership effectively communicates the value proposition of the office.



Communicate the drivers and the “why” behind new workplace policies.

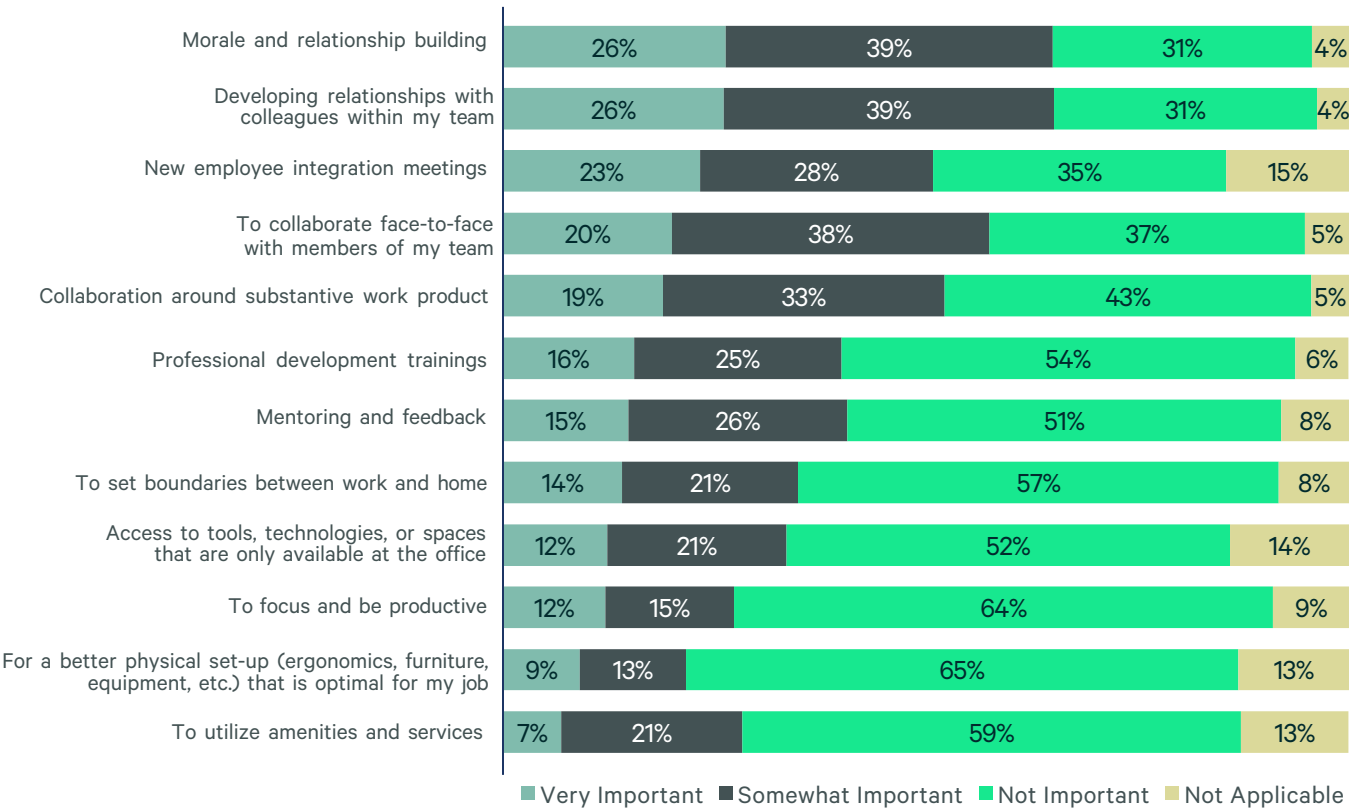
Employee attendance improves when company leadership effectively communicates the value proposition of the office. CBRE’s 2023 Office Attendance study found that 57% of companies that clearly communicated the value of the office reported that employees were in the office more than three days per week, while only 41% of companies that did not communicate any value proposition saw such attendance levels. Set practices in place and communicate expectations clearly to employees and teams. Outline expectations for communication channels, availability and performance by addressing key questions, such as how many days or what days should people be on-site? What activities are better suited to do in-person vs remotely? What tools and practices will teams use to coordinate working at the office together? How will performance be evaluated?

Promote the greatest amenity of your office: the people. One single physical amenity is unlikely to drive widespread office attendance, so the focus should be on the greatest amenity, the opportunity to be with other people. According to CBRE's [2024 Americas Office Occupier Sentiment Survey](#), the primary factors that employees consider crucial for returning to the office are morale and relationship building with colleagues. Notably, 65% of participants rated these aspects as somewhat to very important. With predictable utilization, organizations that have core office days may easily plan for regular attendance across all teams. Organizations that allow employees to choose their days may require additional planning to encourage all teams to work in the office together. Operations teams can host company-wide events such as all-hands meetings or social experiences that foster a sense of community, leverage employee business groups, support social causes and showcase local partners. Encourage team leaders to schedule team days or regular meetings at the office to encourage face-to-face collaboration and develop relationships across the team and organization.

Employees who consider morale & relationship building with colleagues as a primary factor for returning to office

65%

FIGURE 2: How important is it to be in the office for the following reasons?



Source: CBRE Workplace Sentiment Survey, 2024.

Lead change by example. Twenty-seven percent of companies report having consequences for not following hybrid policies, up from 8% in 2023, though only about half enforce them regularly. Policy adherence starts with leadership; leaders should model the behavior they want to see across the company. If leaders don't show up in the office, work in alternative spaces or use office amenities, employees won't either. Begin by training the leadership team on the value proposition of the office, the company's approach to hybrid and importance of demonstrating desired behaviors. Equip these leaders with talking points, FAQs and other collateral to make it easy for them to communicate value and expectations to their teams. Encourage executives to schedule time on their calendars to walk the floors, visit the café or conduct a staff meeting in a collaboration space to increase visibility across all spaces.

Create a collaboration of operational partners. Building an effective workplace experience requires cross-functional input and cooperation. Gathering feedback and input from business partners and employees along the way will let you know if the changes you are making will resonate with the business. The most successful implementations occur when there is collaboration and partnership between HR, IT, Communications and CRE. By working collectively to understand workplace personas and solve workplace needs, these teams can create a more integrated and seamless experience.

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Long Term

Reset office requirements based on evolving needs and workstyles.

Ninety-eight percent of companies report midweek workdays (Tuesday through Thursday) have the highest space utilization, while lowest attendance occurs on Mondays and Fridays. These office attendance patterns influence the types of spaces employees require, the buildings companies prioritize and how space is managed. Improve office requirements and design that reflect employee workstyles by creating spaces that support how employees and teams work. Many organizations include a mix of individual space for privacy for focus and video-conferencing calls, collaborative meeting space and flexible event and social space.

Companies reporting that midweek workdays have the highest space utilization

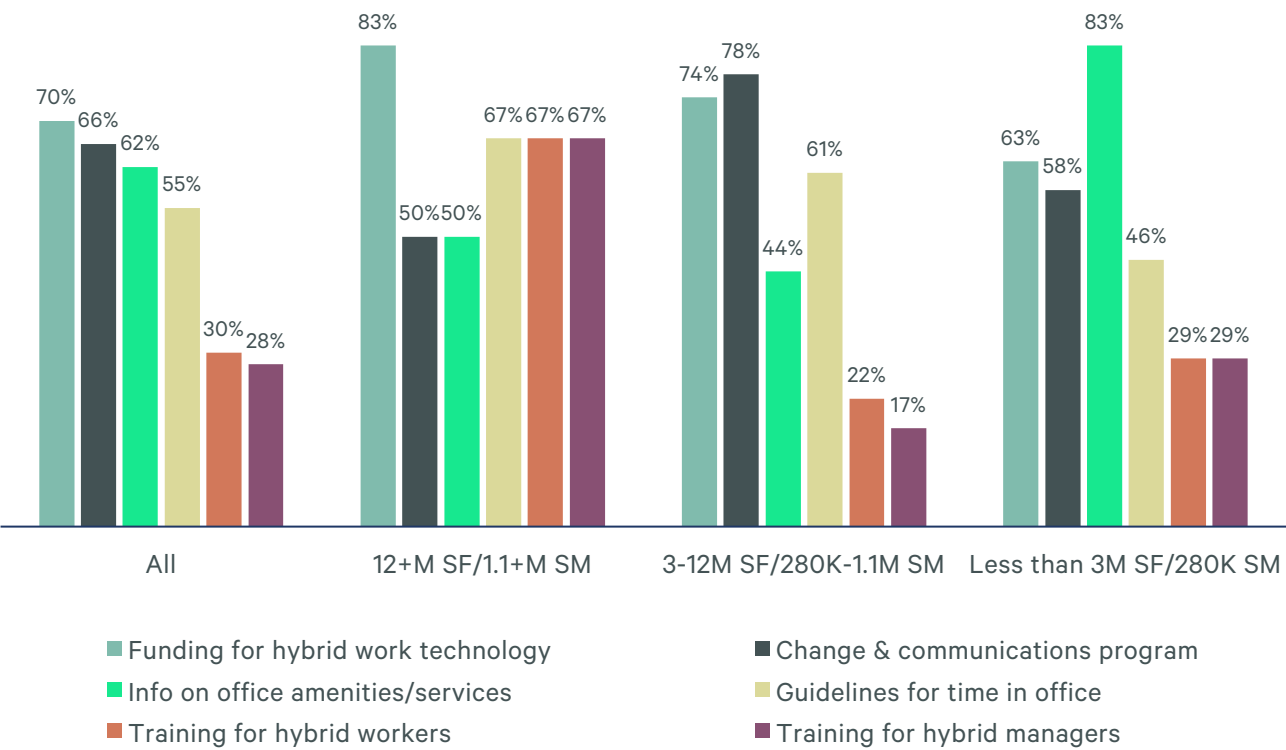
98%



Ensure seamless access to necessary tools to collaborate across distributed work settings.

Seventy percent of organizations support their hybrid work program with enhanced technology to solve key employee needs. Invest in technology that provides seamless collaboration in all work settings at the office, particularly in conference rooms where meeting participants can be split across in-person and remote environments. Meeting room technology fundamentals include upgrading all rooms in the office with consistent video-conferencing equipment (display screen, control device, conference software license and peripheral devices such as camera and microphone). Presence awareness is equally important to delivering on the employee value proposition, so teams are enabled with when and where colleagues are onsite, driving productivity and connectivity.

FIGURE 3: Which of the following is included in your hybrid program?



Source: CBRE Workplace & Occupancy Benchmarking Program, 2024.

Change benefits, policies, amenities and services to offset the commute.

Redefine amenity programs that target employee priorities. Support convenience services with solutions that save employees time, like onsite access to food or restaurant-quality food delivery, subsidized EV charging and commute programs, and partnerships with local organizations and vendors. Understanding employee preferences and how they change over time ensures the amenities and services onsite are relevant. CBRE's 2024 data shows that organizations prioritize similar food and convenience amenities such as full-service dining (55%), free parking (24%), and well-equipped kitchenettes (21%), as these factors significantly influence employees' decision to work in the office.

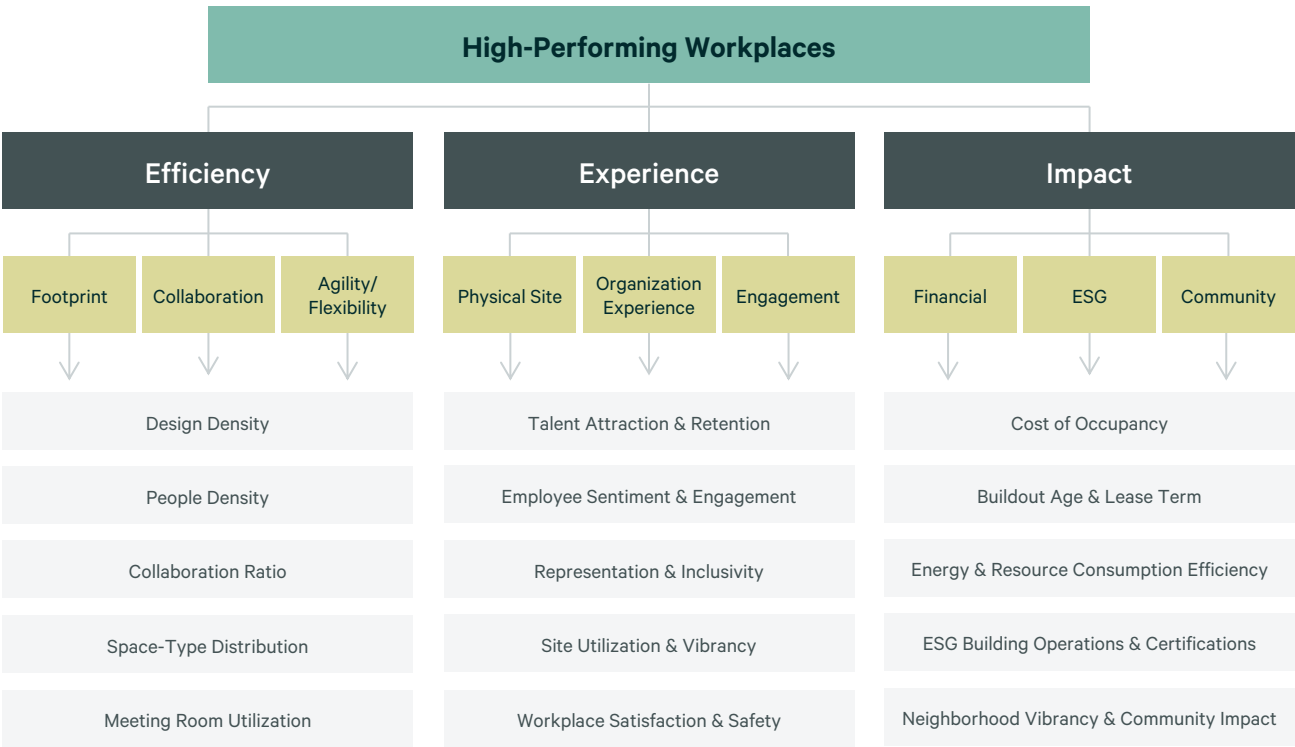
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Measuring Workplace Performance

In [Part 1](#), we examined how occupiers have shifted their focus from traditional metrics to effectiveness metrics like utilization and employee satisfaction. With effectiveness indicators gaining prominence, the need to measure workplace performance requires new metrics that focus on a holistic view of site and employee experience.

CBRE has created a new workplace performance scorecard to understand the impact of workplace experience investments, benchmark how companies compare to industry peers, and sustain consistent standards. This scorecard looks beyond traditional real estate metrics to examine the broader impact the office has on employee experience, business priorities and financial impact.

FIGURE 4: Sample Workplace Performance Scorecard



Source: CBRE Workplace, 2024.

Workplace effectiveness measures how well the combined physical and organizational work experience supports the company's business and cultural goals. By measuring the impact of the work experience on employee and business performance such as workplace satisfaction and talent retention, we can understand the true value and return-on-investment (ROI) of workplace investments.

The scorecard examines three key domains for evaluating workplace effectiveness:

01. Efficiency

Assessing how the space supports employee office workstyles is critical to a successful workplace plan. Measuring workplace planning metrics across sites and benchmarking against portfolio, regional or industry peer metrics are imperative to drive both productive space access and an optimized real estate footprint.

02. Experience

Maximizing the workplace experience provides a seamless on-site experience that magnetizes employees and improves organizational connectedness. Measuring a successful on-site experience goes beyond utilization metrics with additional employee sentiment, recruiting/attrition metrics and facility operations metrics to provide a holistic view on site satisfaction.

03. Impact

Organizations set business objectives for their key priorities across financial, environmental and social initiatives. The scorecard evaluates the costs of elevating the current site experience to deliver a clear understanding of which elements have the best ROI related to business priorities.



Conclusion

Investing in workplace and employee experience is not merely an outcome of the hybrid work era; it is a requirement for organizations aiming to thrive in a dynamic business environment. Organizations must secure leadership buy-in and active engagement to implement and sustain a successful hybrid program. The combination of visible leader support and behavior, physical space requirements and related workplace experience investments ultimately drives new attendance policy adoption and success.

By creating a strategic plan and measuring the impacts of workplace experience initiatives immediately and long term, organizations can make intentional decisions ensuring that investments yield tangible returns in site performance and employee effectiveness.



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