

WORK ENVIRONMENT WHITEPAPER

This whitepaper presents a SWOT analysis of the three most common work environments in today's modern workplace: fully in-office, fully remote, and hybrid.

It explores the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with each model to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact each scenario may have on both organizations and their employees.



Executive Summary

As the modern workplace continues to evolve, the question of where work should take place is a topic of ongoing debate. The three dominant models (fully in-office, fully remote, and hybrid) each come with their own set of distinct benefits and drawbacks.

Selecting the right model is a critical decision that requires a careful balance between organizational goals, employee satisfaction, and long-term retention. Our SWOT analysis breaks down the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of each model, offering valuable insights to help organizations identify the path that best supports their goals and supports a thriving, engaged and happy workforce.



Whitepaper includes analysis on 3 physical work scenarios:



- Fully In-Office Work
- Fully Remote Work
- Hybrid Work

Fully In-Office Work



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STRENGTHS

Employees collaborate more effectively in person, with higher engagement in brainstorming, relationship-building, and learning on the job. In-office settings also boost productivity, meeting preparation, and access to informal managerial feedback, which many remote and hybrid workers feel they miss out on.

• Collaboration

- People in close physical proximity of one another are three times as collaborative (1)
- 58% of government employees (15% of the national workforce) report that brainstorming is better done in-person (9)
- 23% of workers find building relationships with remote colleagues harder than building relationships with in-office colleagues (2)

• Onboarding New Hires

- 60% of workers report that being around coworkers as the best way to learn a job (1)

• Preparation and Productivity

- Fully in-office employees are 10% more productive compared to fully remote workers (15)
- 60% of hybrid workers report preparing more for in-person meetings than online meetings (1)

• Management Interaction

- More than 68% of managers think remote and hybrid workers miss out on impromptu or informal feedback opportunities;
- 48% of remote and hybrid workers agree (5)

Fully In-Office Work

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WEAKNESSES

Many employees prefer remote or hybrid work, with 95% wanting some level of flexibility and 46% willing to quit if forced back to the office full-time. In-office work is associated with higher stress, commuting time, and expenses, while remote work enhances work-life balance and is perceived by many as more practical than returning to the office for traditional or real estate-driven reasons.

• Retention Rates

- 46% of hybrid and fully remote workers report that they would quit their job if they had to go back to work in an office full-time (2)
- 56% of working professionals know someone who has or would quit if forced back into the office full-time (7)

• Employee Dissatisfaction Leading To Disengagement and Weakened Culture

• Desire for remote work options

- 95% of workers desire some form of working from home online, at least part-time (2).
- 54% of employees want to work fully remotely (2)
- 41% of employees want to work a hybrid schedule (2)
- 5% of employees want to work fully in the office (2)

• Increased Commuting

- European and US workers combined save on average, 72 minutes a day (from commuting, going out to buy lunch, etc.) when working remotely (2)
- US workers save, on average, 55 minutes per day (from commuting, going out to buy lunch, etc.)

• Increased Stress

- 59% of in-office workers reported increased stress from 2023 - 2024, compared to 36% of fully remote employees, and 44% of hybrid employees

• Less work-life balance

- 71% of remote workers report not going into an office helps them balance between their work and personal lives (2)

• Negative Perception

- Employees view a fully in-office requirement is being driven by traditional expectations or a desire to fill empty real estate rather than actual business needs (1)
- 75% of office workers think that their employer is requiring in-office work because of traditional work expectations (9)

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OPPORTUNITIES

A fully in-office model offers unique opportunities to strengthen organizational culture and foster spontaneous collaboration. In-person environments naturally support mentorship, team bonding, and real-time problem-solving, which can accelerate innovation and employee development (1). Companies also see the office as a space to reinforce corporate identity and values - elements that are harder to cultivate remotely (1). According to Harvard Business Review, face-to-face interactions are especially valuable for creative work and complex decision-making, where non-verbal cues and immediate feedback enhance outcomes (2).

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THREATS

Remote work flexibility is a top priority for job seekers, often ranking above salary, with 38% unwilling to accept a job requiring full-time office work. The vast majority (95%) prefer some level of remote work, making rigid in-office policies less attractive to potential employees.

• Unattractive To Job Seekers

- The ability to work remotely has become the most important aspect for many jobseekers, ranking even higher than salary (1, 2)
- 38% of workers said that requiring them to work in the office full-time would make them decline a job offer (1)
- 21% of U.S. jobseekers (equivalent to 1 in 5 potential employees) report more flexible working schedules and locations as a main priority for choosing their next job (1)
- 95% of workers desire some form of working from home online, at least part-time (2)
 - 54% of employees want to work fully remotely (2)
 - 41% of employees want to work a hybrid schedule (2)
 - 5% of employees want to work fully in the office (2)

Fully Remote Work



STRENGTHS

Remote work boosts talent retention, with nearly half of employees unwilling to stay in jobs that eliminate work-from-home options, while also saving companies up to \$10,600/employee in overhead costs. Employees benefit from time and financial savings, improved well-being, and greater job satisfaction, with 95% preferring some form of remote work and 70% finding it enhances focused work.

• Talent Retention

- 56% of working professionals know someone who has or will quit their job if required to return to office full time (2)
- Almost 46% of workers with jobs that can be done from home say they would be unlikely to stay at their current job if no longer allowed to work from home (7)

• Companies Save Money

- Save up to \$10,600 per employee who works remotely by not having to pay for overhead costs (2)

• Employees Save Money

- European and U.S. workers combined save (on average) 72 minutes a day (from commuting, etc.) (2)
- Average employee saves \$42 a day when working from home compared to going into the office (2)
- The average employee can save up to \$12,000 per year by working remotely due to reduced expenses like gas, office clothes, and lunch (2)

• Focused Work

- In 2023, 70% of remote workers polled said working remotely made it easier to do focused work and avoiding distractions (2)

• Employee Satisfaction

- 95% of workers desire some form of working from home online, at least part-time (2)
 - 54% of employees want to work fully remotely (2)
 - 41% of employees want to work a hybrid schedule (2)
 - 5% of employees want to work fully in the office (2)
- Improved employee well-being
 - 93% agree that working remotely has had a positive impact on their mental health (2)
 - 90% say it has had a positive impact on their physical health (2)
 - 71% of remote workers believe that remote work helps their ability to balance their work and personal lives (2)

Fully Remote Work

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WEAKNESSES

In-person fosters collaboration and stronger relationships, with remote employees facing challenges in onboarding, career visibility, and feeling connected - 55% workers struggle with coworker relationships, and 60% worry about missing opportunities. Additionally, remote work raises concerns for managers regarding productivity, IT support, and informal feedback, while employees admit to engaging in non-work activities like social media (75%) and online shopping (70%).

• Collaboration

- Coworkers within proximity to one another are 3 times more likely to collaborate (1)
- 58% of US government employees (15% of the national workforce) report that brainstorming is better done in-person (9)

• Onboarding and Training New Employees

- 36% of remote workers found their onboarding experience at a new remote company confusing, feeling under-trained, disoriented, and devalued (2)

• Engagement in Non-Work Activities (When Working Remotely)

- Social media: 75%, Online shopping: 70% and Watching shows: 53% (10)

• Culture and Team Erosion

- 23% of workers find building relationships with remote colleagues harder compared to in-office colleagues (2)
- 55% of fully remote workers said it's hard to feel connected to coworkers (1)
- 68% of managers think remote/hybrid workers miss impromptu or informal feedback - 48% of remote/hybrid workers agree (5)

• Manager Perception of Productivity

- 44% of managers say employees are only just as productive or less productive when working remotely compared to in the office (1)
- 63% of employees feel concerned that managers view in office employees as harder working and more trustworthy than remote (7)

• IT Support

- IT support is a top concern for 34% managers when managing remote employees (7)
- 20% of managers have IT concerns about their remote employees (8)
- 13% of workers say they have inadequate equipment (1)

• Employee's career advancement and visibility (proximity bias)

- 19% of remote workers believe fully remote work negatively affects their career (2)
- 60% are concerned that working remotely will mean they have less of a say at work and miss out on opportunities (2)
- 37% of workers in 2023 said one of their biggest challenges of working remotely was getting recognized by leadership (7)
- 28% of workers in 2023 said one of their biggest challenges working remotely was getting promoted (7)
- 28% of remote workers said working remotely has been harmful to their career growth (1)

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OPPORTUNITIES

The desire for remote work has become a critical priority for a vast majority of job seekers, outweighing salary requirements. A significant proportion of individuals actively seek flexible work and would decline job offers that mandate full-time in-office. This strong preference creates a valuable opportunity for companies, enabling them to access a broader and potentially global talent pool transcending traditional geographical limitations and allowing them to attract skilled professionals who prioritize location flexibility. In fact, over 95% of workers desire some form of remote work.

• Wide Talent Pool Attraction

- Ability to work remotely has become the most important aspect of a job for many jobseekers, often ranking more than salary (1,2)
- 21% of U.S. jobseekers report more flexible working schedules and locations as a main priority for choosing their next job (1)
- 95% of workers want some sort of remote work during the week (8)
- 38% of workers said that requiring them to work in the office full-time would make them decline a job offer (1)
- Access to a global talent pool of job seekers, as opposed to only local applicants

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THREATS

A significant majority of IT managers (60%) express concern that remote work arrangements, including hybrid models, elevate the risk of data breaches for their organizations. This likely stems from the challenges of maintaining robust security protocols outside the controlled office environment, as home networks may be less secure and using personal devices for work could introduce vulnerabilities.

• Data Security Concerns

- 60% of IT managers are concerned that employees working remotely increases the likelihood of a data breach security incident (11)

Hybrid Work



STRENGTHS

Hybrid work models balance collaboration and productivity, with in-person interactions fostering brainstorming while remote work enhances efficiency—90% of hybrid workers feel equally or more productive. Additionally, hybrid arrangements improve employee engagement, satisfaction, and talent retention, with workers feeling more connected to company culture and better work-life balance.

• Collaboration

- People in close physical proximity of one another are three times as collaborative (1)
- 58% of government employees (15% of the national workforce) report that brainstorming is better done in-person (9)

• Productivity and Efficiency

- 77% of those who work remotely at least a few times per month show increased productivity (1)
 - 30% do more work in less time (1)
 - 24% do more work in the same period (1)
- Hybrid workforces are 5% more productive compared to fully remote or fully in-person workforces (1)
- 64% of hybrid employees report more efficient work (1)
- 52% of hybrid workers report higher productivity (1)
- 90% of hybrid workers say they feel equally or more productive when working in a hybrid format (7, 8)

• Employee Engagement

- 36% of hybrid employees are engaged in their work, compared to just 30% of fully on-site employees (1)

• Company Culture

- Hybrid employees feel the most connected to their organization's mission and purpose (34%), compared to fully on-site or fully remote employees (1)

• Employee Satisfaction

- 95% of workers desire some form of working from home online, at least part-time (2)
- 76% of hybrid employees identify an improved work-life balance as a key perk of their work arrangement (1)
- 61% of hybrid employees report less burnout (1)

• Talent Retention

- Resignations can decline as much as 33% with a three-day in-office hybrid schedule (13)
- Hybrid employees are more likely to recommend the workplace to others

• Onboarding New Hires

- 60% of workers report that being around coworkers as the best way to learn a job (1)

Hybrid Work

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WEAKNESSES

Managers perceive remote and hybrid workers as potentially missing out on informal feedback, with 44% believing they are just as productive or less productive than in-office employees. Additionally, remote workers engage in non-work activities like social media (75%) and online shopping (70%), while 63% worry that managers view in-office employees as more dedicated.

- **Impromptu Feedback**

- 68% of managers think remote and hybrid workers miss out on impromptu or informal feedback opportunities - 48% of remote and hybrid workers agree (5)

- **Manager Perceptions**

- 44% of managers say employees are only just as productive or less productive when working remotely compared to being in-office (1)
- 63% of employees feel concerned that managers view those in the office as harder working and more trustworthy than their remote counterparts (7)

- **Engagement in Non-Work Activities (When Working Remotely)**

- Social media: 75%, Online shopping: 70% and Watching shows: 53% (10)

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OPPORTUNITIES

Remote and hybrid work options are highly attractive to job seekers, with flexibility ranking above salary and 38% declining offers that require full-time office presence. While 95% of workers desire some remote work, only 5% prefer fully in-office roles, making flexible work arrangements a key factor in talent attraction and retention.

- **Attractive To Job Seekers**

- The ability to work remotely has become the most important aspect of a job for many jobseekers, ranking higher than salary (1,2)
- 38% of workers said that requiring them to work in the office full-time would make them decline a job offer (1)
- 21% of U.S. jobseekers (equivalent to 1 in 5 potential employees) report more flexible working schedules and locations as a main priority for choosing their next job (1)
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- **Data Security Concerns**

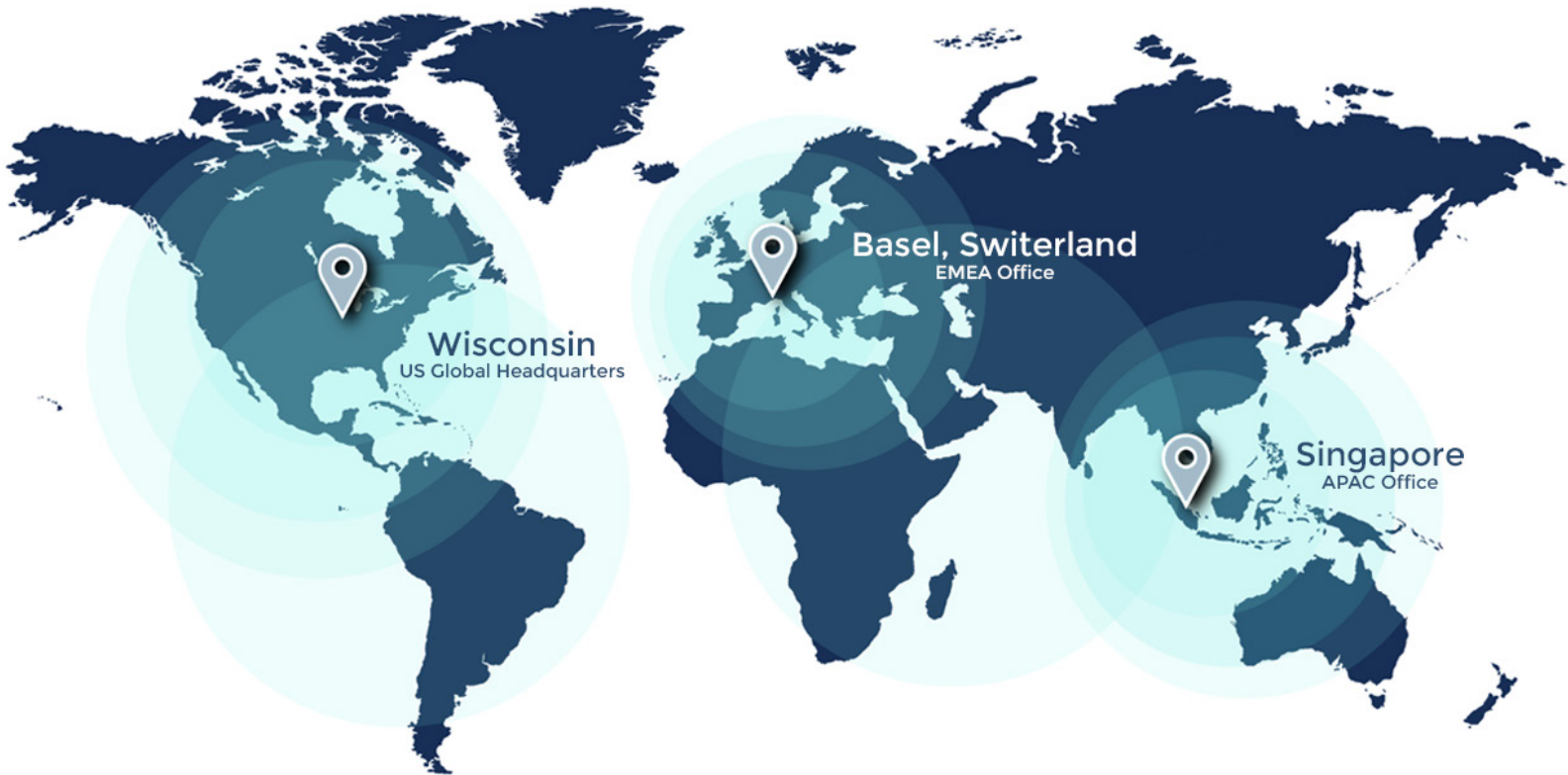
- 60% of IT managers are concerned that employees working remotely increases the likelihood of a data breach security incident (11)

Summary

Strategically reviewing the three most common workplace models fully in-office, fully remote, and hybrid and determining the best option for both your business and employee satisfaction and retention is critical into today's market.

This whitepaper - through a SWOT framework, offered insights into how each approach can influence organizational success and employee well-being, ultimately leading a company to make a well informed decision.





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We are dedicated to Advancing Lives Forward® by providing white-glove service for employers and their global workforces.

With a proprietary technology suite, WHR strives to offer cost-effective relocation benefits without compromising empathy, ethics, or service.

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