

Can we revive office culture post-pandemic?

Worker Preferences Barometer, an international study conducted by JLL and released by Tétris Design & Build, has revealed that while the traditional 9-5, five-day work week may be a thing of the past, offices will still play a leading role in the way we do business.



Emma Luyt

The study, which surveyed 3,300 office workers across 10 countries, showed that 79% of the workforce aspire to be back in the office at least once a week, up from 74% last October, highlighting the declining appetite to work solely from home as homeworking fatigue sets in. 37% feel more productive at home, down from 48% last April. However, 63% of workers do not want to be office-bound, showing preference for a hybrid style of working from both home and the office or third-party locations such as coworking lounges and coffee shops.

While the disruption in workflow due to Covid-19 has had a negative impact on business over past year, it has also paved the way for innovative working solutions and new ways of achieving a good work-life balance – a top priority for millennials and Gen Z. Emma Luyt, co-CEO of JLL sub-Saharan Africa and MD of Tétris Design & Build, is excited by the opportunity for strategic workplace design and bespoke office fit-outs as a means to refresh and re-engage with returning staff, and believes the innovation it demands will bring enormous future value to the office sector.



Why the office will conquer WFH in the end

9 Feb 2021



Key insights from the research:

- Work-life balance is the number one workforce priority, ahead of salary. Over 80% of the workforce want to be able to choose their working hours in the future.
- Homeworking fatigue is growing. Over 60% of the workforce want to keep the possibility of alternating between different places of work in the future with two days a week outside the office being the new optimum.
- A homeworking learning curve has developed. Expectations regarding homeworking frequency in the future are

directly linked to the intensity of the habit today as 58% of employees working one to two days a week from home currently want to do so in the future.

- Productivity at home is declining, but it's not translating into stronger satisfaction with the office. Just 47% say they are satisfied with their office today.
- Quality of life is not fulfilling without a rich social life; it is not only about time management. 61% of the workforce are craving 'real' human interactions with colleagues.
- Long-lasting homeworking is hiding a heavy social and mental toll. More than ever before, companies are being held responsible for the physical, mental and social health of their employees. 48% of the workforce feel overwhelmed by a huge mental load.
- Sociodemographic and household profiles are having a strong impact of the work from home experience. 57% of Gen Z workers feel under pressure; half of them are worried about their job.
- An outstanding office is the best way to have your people back. 69% of people highly satisfied with their office environment strongly miss their office. The number is only 5% among those who are not fully satisfied with their usual work environment.



5 main reasons why the office really still matters

16 Oct 2020



Luyt says that business leaders need to get back into the office to protect and grow their business culture and nurture younger teams who require office infrastructure and connection to perform, but a rethink of corporate workspaces is necessary if business owners want to get employees back and working productively. "Company owners are looking for workspace solutions that can foster inclusivity and co-working while providing quiet spaces for thinking and doing," she says.

Undeniably, putting employees first is key to creating experiential workspaces that improve performance, retain current staff and are effective in attracting future talent. "Aesthetics will become more important in the future office. It is crucial that the post-pandemic office is attractive, comfortable and visually interesting."

The office will become the primary place of work again, according to Luyt, but only on condition that the experience meets the new demands of the workforce. "The months to come will see a 'flight to quality', with top employers acknowledging the new workforce expectations through an in-depth rethinking of their approach to work, the workforce and the workplace."