

Hybrid struggle: 53% of professionals would start new job hunt if they had to work more days in-office

2 years ago



53% of UK professionals would start looking for a new job if they were told they'd have to work more days in the office – despite 27% of employers wanting professionals in the office more.

The findings are from a recent poll of 2,000 UK professionals & employers conducted by specialist international recruitment company [Robert Walters](#).

This comes as a [recent survey](#) by KPMG found that 63% of UK CEOs predict a full return-to-office by 2026.

Despite this – according to the Robert Walters [2024 salary survey](#), hybrid-working remains in the top three most desired benefits across every professional field.

[Chris Eldridge](#), CEO of [Robert Walters UK](#), comments:

“The pandemic not only opened the door to hybrid-working but made it a mainstay in many companies. It also proved that there just isn't a one-size-fits-all option when it comes to ways of working and keeping productivity levels up across a workforce.

“Leaders attempting to jump the gun and implement a full return-to-office are quickly going to run into trouble – as it's clear that many professionals won't readily give up the flexible working routines that they've spent the last 3-4 years getting comfortable with.”

“Our research shows that gone are the days where employers competed for talent on salary alone – so

having a clearly defined hybrid working model will be a key 'benefit' to leverage for candidate attraction and retention this year, particularly where hiring budgets remain stringent."

Full RTO not expected – yet

Over a quarter (27%) of employers do want to see their employees in the office more – despite this, 73% of company leaders have said they would not issue a full return-to-office yet, even if it wouldn't impact retention.

Chris comments: "There is a balance to strike with flexible working. If more days in office are what companies want – the onus is on senior leadership teams to make the office the heart of their work community and inform professionals of what can be gained by returning."

Office deterrents

The poll found that the main factors deterring professionals from spending more days in office were; associated costs (46%), disruption to their work-life balance (28%), long commutes (16%) and too many distractions at work (10%).

Chris comments: "With inflation still high and ongoing concerns over the cost of living, spending money on the commute to work, buying lunch amongst other expenses presents yet another key obstacle for professionals returning to the office.

Primary issue in the 2024 workplace

45% of professionals stated that 'changes to hybrid-working' will have the biggest impact on workplaces this year – before changes to rewards & benefits schemes (20%), advancements in generative AI (19%) and effective leadership (16%).

Chris comments: "Whilst our research indicates that professionals are anticipating changes to the way we work this year, hybrid-working isn't something employers can just take away without offering some incentive or compromise."

Office attractions

Indeed, over a third (36%) of professionals stated that coming into the office more helped them with their weekly routine. Other advantages they cited were brainstorming with colleagues (26%), in-person meetings (24%) and more facetime with senior figures (14%).

Chris comments: "The benefits of working in the office are clear – just by being a more familiar face around the office, on-hand to help or engage with your colleagues on projects and being recognisable to senior leadership can hold you in good stead for half-year promotions.

"There are a host of other benefits such as exposure to new skills, gaining mentorship from senior colleagues and generally feeling more connected to the workplace culture and community."

Chris Eldridge shares his top three ways to get employees back into the office:

1. Assisting with employee spend – things like subsidising travel, providing breakfast or lunch packages

are low-cost incentives that make a huge difference to professionals' daily costs and budget.

2. Upscale mentorship/training opportunities – having a mentorship programme or additional training opportunities in the office provides a significant draw for professionals looking to upskill.
3. Organise brainstorming sessions or interactive Q&As with senior figures – having a more open, collaborative, and communicative culture can be a big draw for professionals returning to the office – as it is something many will want to get involved with.