

As hybrid offices continue to evolve, JLL report uncovers path forward for global occupancy planning

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Four years following the pandemic, a new survey from JLL (NYSE: JLL) finds that hybrid working is now the most common workstyle globally, with 87% of organisations operating with a hybrid program today. Hybrid work has proven to have a lasting impact and is here to stay. JLL's new [2024 Global Occupancy Planning Benchmarking Report](#) outlines how hybrid programs are actively shifting to accommodate a greater variety of work activities and how companies can look at occupancy planning and workplace design more holistically to reflect these changes. By investing in new technologies, leveraging utilisation data and prioritising individual and private seating, companies can ensure they are effectively reflecting the workplace's changing needs.

Leveraging JLL insights and accumulated data from more than 85 organisations representing nearly 625 million square feet across 12 industries globally, the benchmarking report offers best practices for how companies can use their workspace as an asset to attract and retain top talent. Critical to the success of a hybrid workplace is the ability to plan and manage fluctuating weekly occupancy patterns. With nearly 50% of companies intending to expand their hybrid program policies in the next three years, there is a unique opportunity to create a more dynamic workplace that integrates facilities management, space planning and technology into decision making.

"There is no one-size-fits-all approach to occupancy planning in a hybrid workplace," said Neil Murray, CEO, Work Dynamics at JLL. "Utilisation data is key to unlocking the value in an organisation's hybrid program, and we are seeing companies reach for technology more frequently to inform how to best use their space, and leverage occupancy data to do so more dynamically and intelligently."

Data-driven workplace management

JLL's recent report [Is hybrid really working?](#) explored how the drivers behind hybrid programs can vary broadly, from optimising space utilisation (79%) to wanting to improve employee experience (60%) or support changed workstyles (59%). Regardless of an organisation's motivation to adopt a hybrid program, JLL's new research shows an increase in companies tracking utilisation data, followed by occupancy/vacancy data and density data, as workplace planning and management becomes more complex.

Accurate space data has always been a critical part of successful workplace planning and management; however, the proportion of companies tracking utilisation to inform planning has risen to new heights, with 76% of companies tracking utilisation data, up from 54% in 2017 and 66% in 2022. Utilisation continues to become more accurate as technology for sensors and badge tracking improves, providing a more holistic understanding of space usage. These insights help companies better understand and use their space in various ways, with 72% of companies using utilisation data for planning and 44% using it to determine hybrid program styles.

New tech paves the way for dynamic hybrid workspace

Despite the rise in importance and accuracy of utilisation data globally, organisations' target utilisation rates are significantly higher than their actual utilisation rates. Technology can help close this gap through integrated occupancy sensors for workstations and collaboration spaces, real time analytics and AI capabilities to unlock efficiencies. With that, many organisations have invested in technology to enable the adaptation of their physical spaces to better support hybrid programs, with 43% of organisations implementing IT modifications for hybrid working, and 39% investing in enhanced conference room technology.

Alternatively, vacancy rates, which have historically been used as a key benchmark in occupancy planning, have proven to be less helpful amid increased seat sharing and use of collaboration spaces. Workplace density also continues to be a driving metric for clients looking to optimise portfolios for planning and space design, as organisations face increasing pressure to reduce footprints and operational costs.

As organisations assess utilisation, vacancy and density globally, these metrics continue to inform changes across workspaces, including the increasing number of shared and open workstations and focus spaces, and decreasing number of dedicated and enclosed workstations and collaboration spaces. With hybrid programs continuing to stabilise and move from employee-incentivised to more employer-led policies, accurate data and new technologies will continue to serve as a crucial guide to digitising buildings and enabling more holistic occupancy management systems.

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