

# FUTURE WORKPLACES – THIS IS HOW WE WANT TO WORK

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83%

... feel that creative internal meetings are best held at the office.

70%

... appreciate having fewer business journeys due to working at home more.



66%

... believe they will work remotely one or more days a week.

# INTRODUCTION



here has never been so much debate about what the future workplace will look like.

During the 2020 pandemic year, as office workers suddenly began working from home, our digital possibilities became much more apparent, and many of us realized that work was not necessarily a place, but something we do.

when we meet in a shared workplace. Most want to continue working from offices in the future.

**The big question** is how much will we work from home in “the new normal”? How will offices change? What facilities do we need there? It’s clear that the way we work in the future will demand flexible solutions. Coor’s operations in workplace strategy – Coor Advisory – wanted to know more, so we asked over 500 Nordic companies. We have summarized the results of this and previous studies for you on the following pages. We hope they will help guide your company on its journey to the future workplace. ●

35%

... believe they will not need as much office space in the future.

65%

... say they are more productive and work more effectively from home.

17%

... more have acquired a dog in 2020 than in 2019. Yet another reason to value the flexibility of working from home.





# BENEFITS OF WORKING FROM HOME



Key reasons to continue home-working, according to our respondents:

Many people feel that working from home makes it easier to achieve a good work-life balance. Avoiding business journeys or commuting to and from the office saves a lot of time and benefits the environment.

“We have shown that remote working can also be effective.”

Research Proxify



“Working remotely has forced us to become more digital. Many people were unaware of the possibilities.”

Large Swedish industrial company

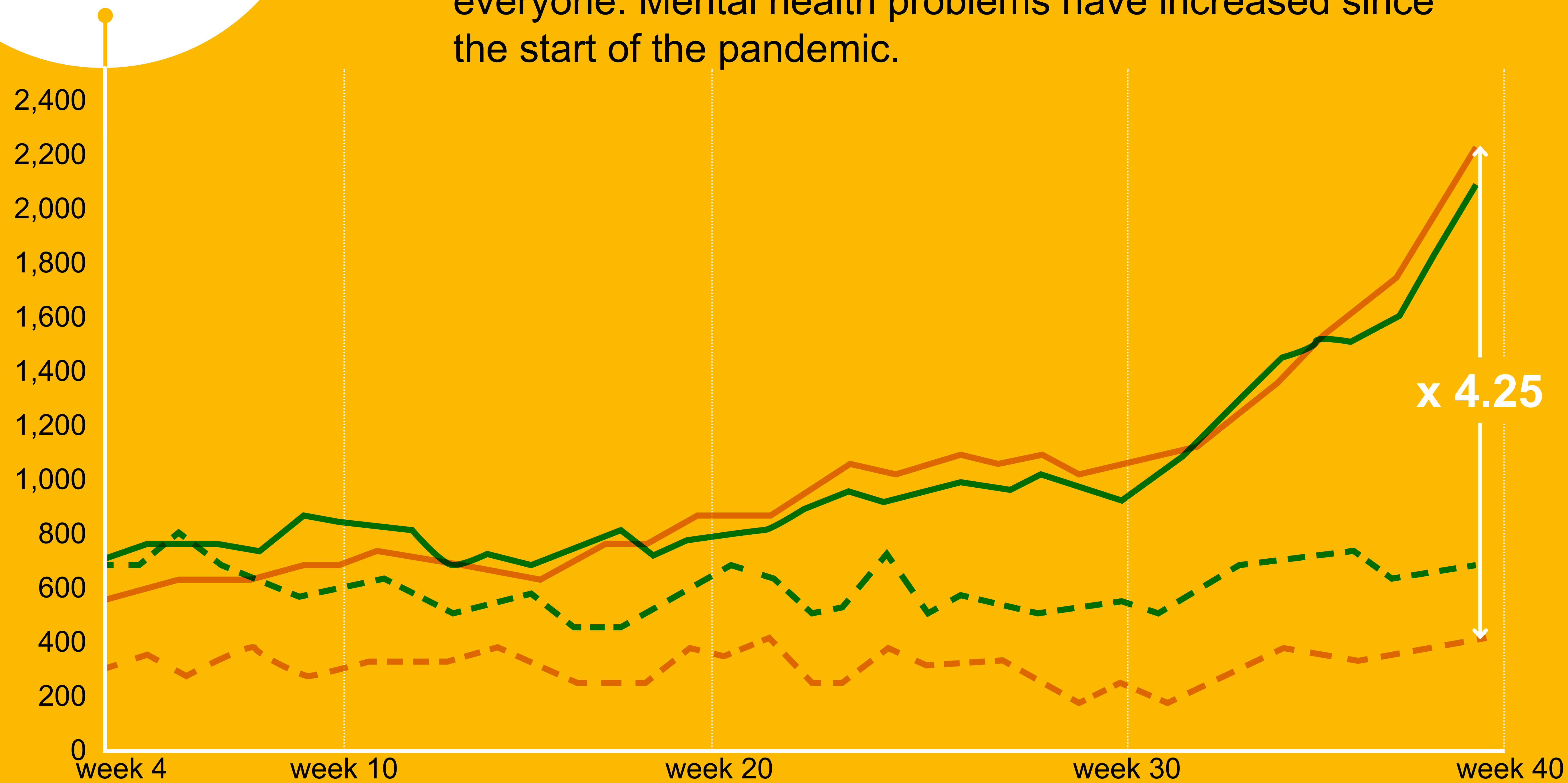
## Coor’s workplace expert comments:

“Working remotely was a growing international trend before the pandemic, but surprisingly many office workers still had little or no experience of working from home. Advances in technology and digitalization have created opportunities and increased the flexibility of our working lives. New routines have been established for sustainable working and more people are comfortable with the technology, so many people can see the benefits of working from home more even after the pandemic.”



# CHALLENGES OF WORKING FROM HOME

Reasons for sick leave among employees in Sweden, per 100,000 employees:



Although working from home improves the working lives of many people, we should also be aware that it does not suit everyone. Mental health problems have increased since the start of the pandemic.

- Mental health problems 2020
- - - Mental health problems 2019
- Physical health problems 2020
- - - Physical health problems 2019

## Coor's workplace expert comments:

“For some groups, working from home has been harder than for others. New employees find it difficult to build networks, become familiar with the corporate culture and develop a sense of belonging with a new employer. The sharing of knowledge from experienced colleagues or with colleagues working nearby, which happened spontaneously in the office, has been a challenge for some.

This has created a barrier to the sense of community and belonging. Management face big challenges to come up with initiatives that remove this barrier. Examples could include virtual social events and more frequent, shorter meetings of a more social nature, in teams or individually, as well as encouraging real-life meetings in the office with close colleagues, or virtual coffee with interesting people you do not normally work with.”



# DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES – DIFFERENT MOTIVES

It is likely that we will continue working from home to some degree after the pandemic. There are positive aspects for companies and employees alike – although their motives differ.



## Companies

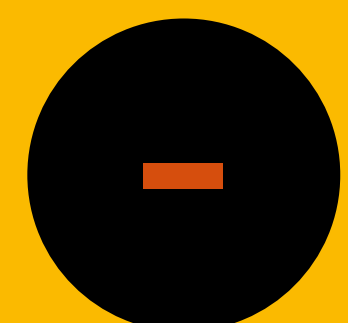


### Strong reasons

- Working remotely has worked better than expected and has led to increased productivity.
- Allowing for flexible solutions is good for a company's brand.

### Secondary reasons

- Cost savings.
- Security issues are not a problem any more thanks to advances in technology.



### Not so good

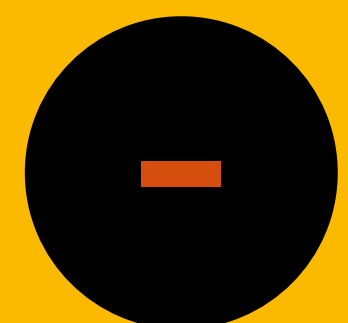
- May be a negative impact on corporate culture; some meetings and relationship-building are more difficult.

## Employees



### Strong reasons

- Working from home saves time, since there are fewer business journeys and less commuting to and from work.
- Better productivity and efficiency.
- Lifestyle changes and adjustments due to being able to work from home, such as improvements to the home office or buying a pet.



### Not so good

- Social needs. Many people miss small talk at coffee time.
- Impact on physical and mental health. Surveys show some people have felt worse, but many organizations are taking proactive steps to tackle this issue.

## Coor's workplace expert comments:

“Another reason why working from home is likely to be more common even after the pandemic is the development of digital tools and their rapid uptake, as we have seen over the past year – for example tools that make it easier to hold workshops and creative brainstorming sessions, and monitor progress on projects. But we do not see quite the same level of enthusiasm in the digital sphere as we do in real life, so digital tools do not completely replace real-life collaboration, but they are definitely here to stay, and are a good substitute when real-life meetings are not possible.”



# BENEFITS OF OFFICES

Five important reasons why we should continue working from the office, according to our companies:

Working from home has its advantages – but there are some tasks we do better at the office. Personal development and wellbeing are also key elements in getting better at what we do, and we need the office for that.



“We need offices. Our employees feel that the creativity that normally arises in meetings does not find the same outlet in virtual meetings. We can’t be as innovative, which is vitally important.”

Medium-sized Swedish media company

“It would not surprise me if in the future we come to the office just to find inspiration or be social.”

Spokesperson, Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO)

## Coor’s workplace expert comments:

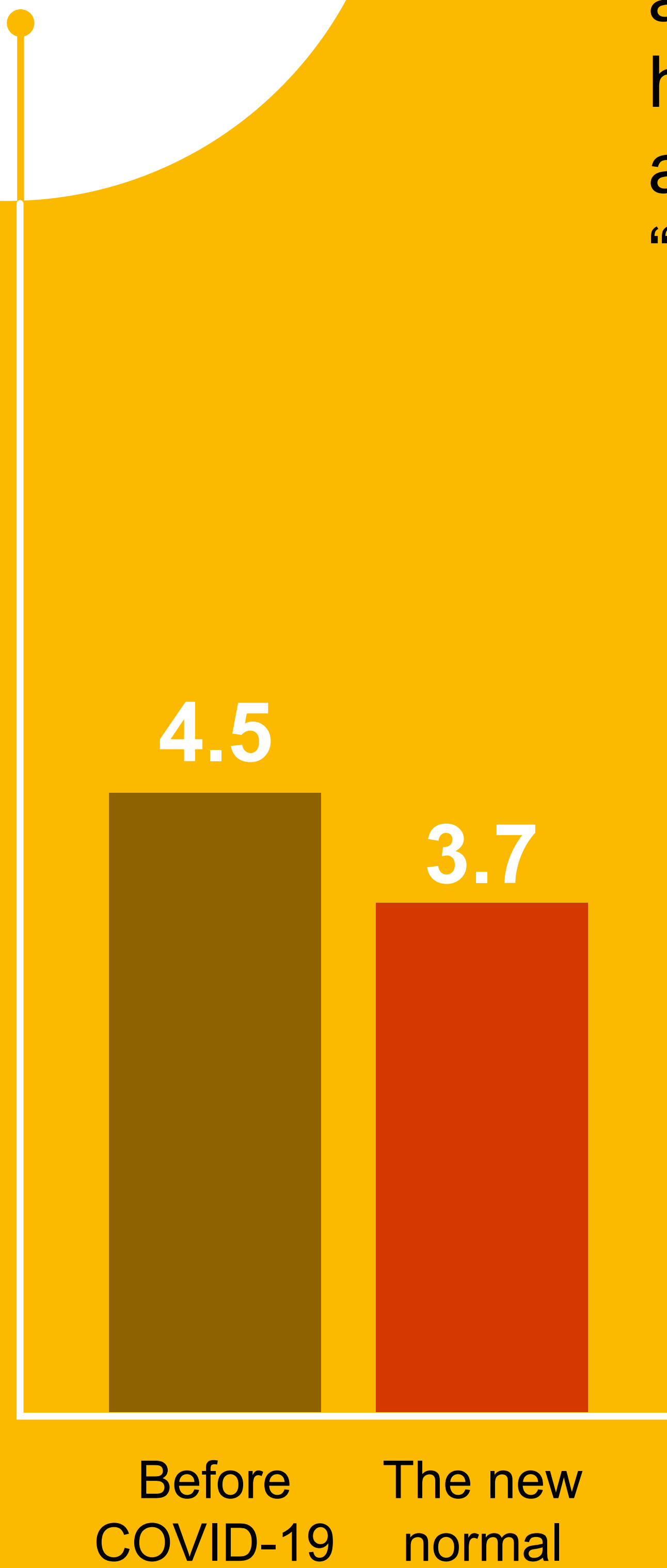
“The purpose of the real-life workplace will change somewhat in the future. We see the role of the workplace shifting from just being practical working environments and spaces where we can work productively, to acting more as hubs for innovation, building relationships and passing on culture. The workplace will be the place that employees choose over home to maintain their wellbeing, simplify their routine, and get inspiration from colleagues. The workplace is also increasingly seen as a showroom for building credibility for a company’s products and services, for solidifying collaboration with new partners and strengthening customer relations.”





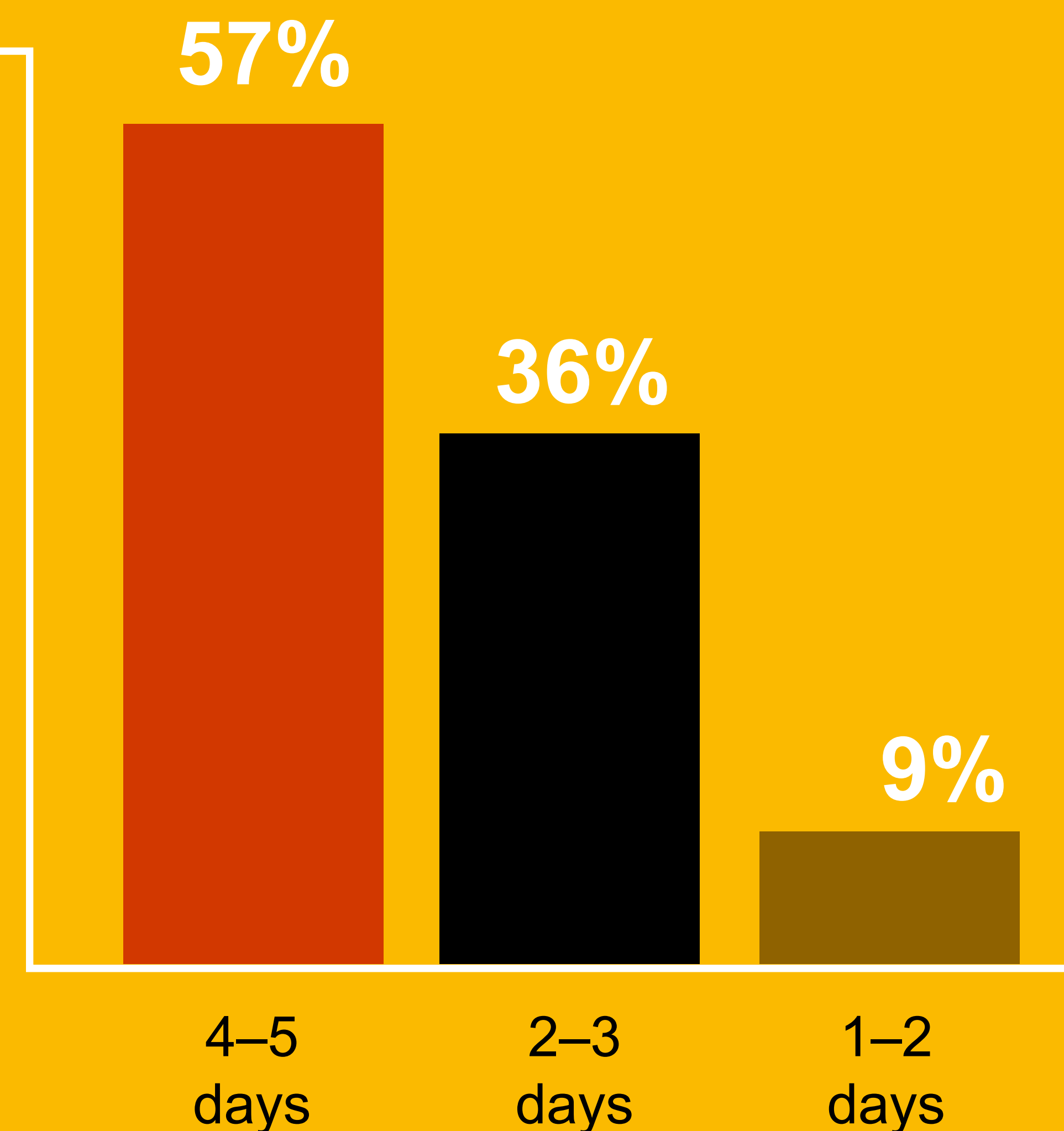
# THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE OFFICE

Number of days we expect to work at the office each week, on average



There are many signs that working remotely will become a natural part of our routine. But the office will continue to have an important role. Our respondents believe that on average they will work from home 1.5 days a week in “the new normal”.

Number of days we expect to work at the office each week, percentage of answers, %



# 66%

... expect they will work one or more days from home.

“We’re currently changing our policy on working remotely from one day per week to two days, maybe even three days for some roles.”

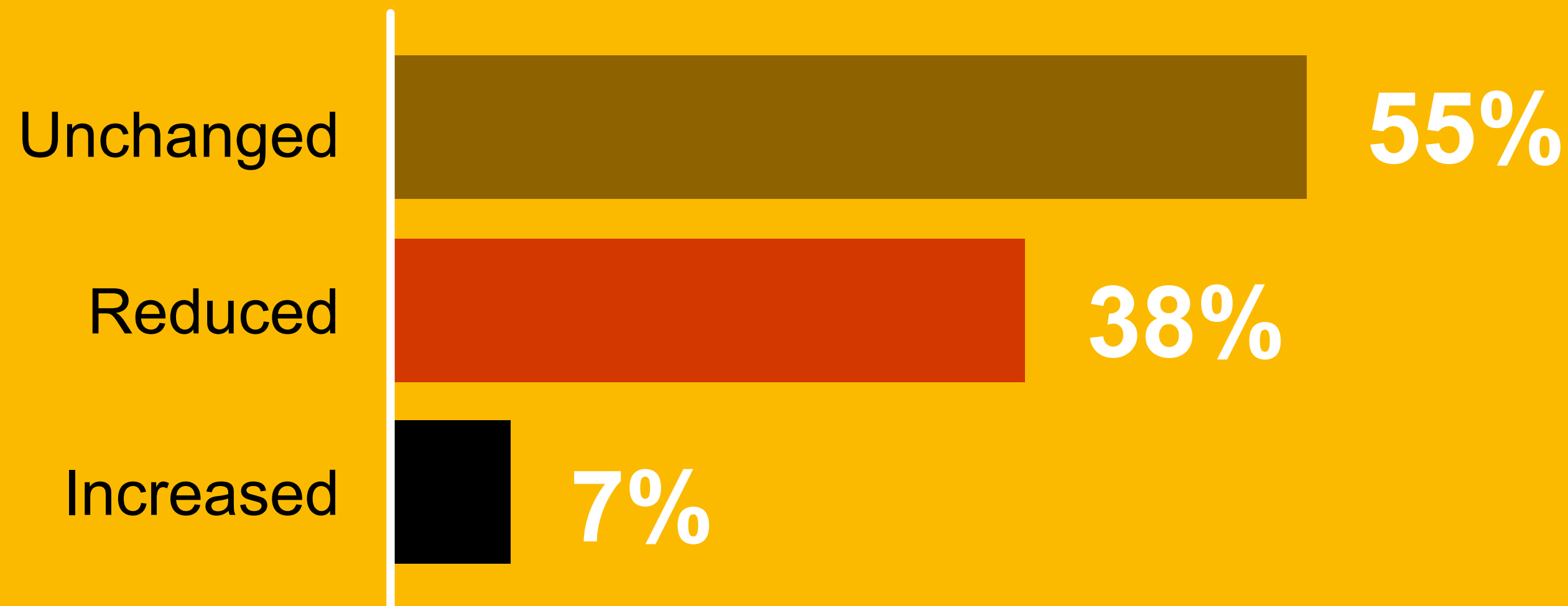
Head of FM, global financial and professional services company

# CHANGES IN OFFICE SPACE

Phases in the development journey of the workplace

A future that entails more working remotely also means smaller offices – but a greater need to meet for a sense of community and inspiration. Companies believe they will reduce their office space by 10–20 percent on average.

Expected change in office space:



Spring 2020

**PANIC PHASE**  
Large differences exist in the degree of working from home between different industries.

Fall 2020

**STABILIZATION OF TRANSITION TO WORKING REMOTELY**  
Most organizations have completely switched to working from home.

Spring 2021

**DEVELOPED STATUS**  
New, long-term ways of working have taken shape.

The future

**THE NEW NORMAL**  
35 percent of companies will reduce their office space, on average by 10–20 percent.

“Companies are still researching their need for office space in the future. But a 10–20 percent reduction seems realistic to many.”

Property expert

**Coor’s workplace expert comments:**

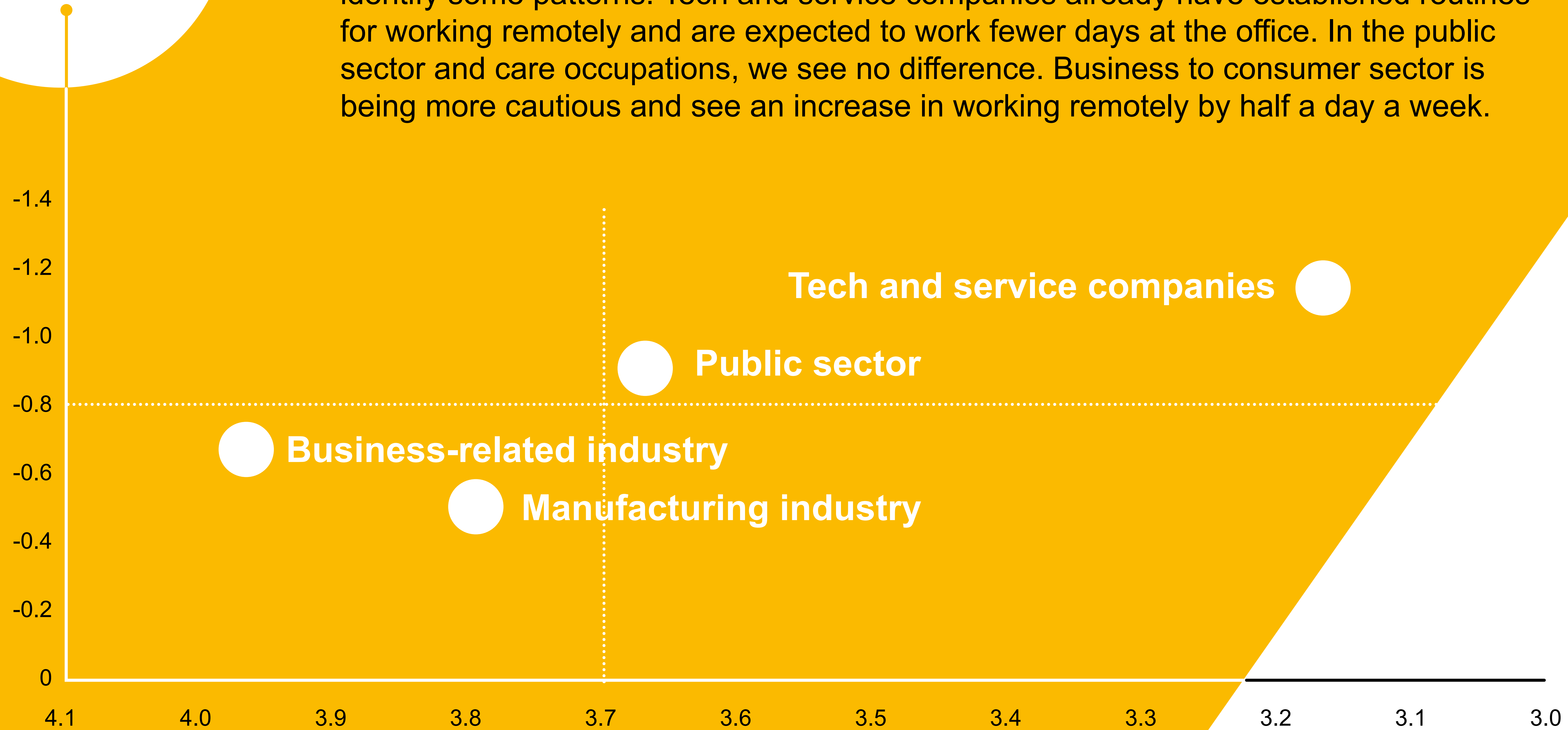
“Before deciding on big reductions in office space, find out how the existing space is used and what your employees’ needs are, by talking to those concerned and analyzing utilization data. You can now get sensors for this purpose. There are also sensors that can be installed at entrances and exits to monitor movement patterns, as well as sensors that measure air quality at the workplace. By considering the needs of the business first, the company is likely to be rewarded in the long run with employees who are happier and even more productive.”



# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INDUSTRIES

Reduction in days at the office in the new normal:

By looking at different types of industry and their location – urban or rural – we can identify some patterns. Tech and service companies already have established routines for working remotely and are expected to work fewer days at the office. In the public sector and care occupations, we see no difference. Business to consumer sector is being more cautious and see an increase in working remotely by half a day a week.

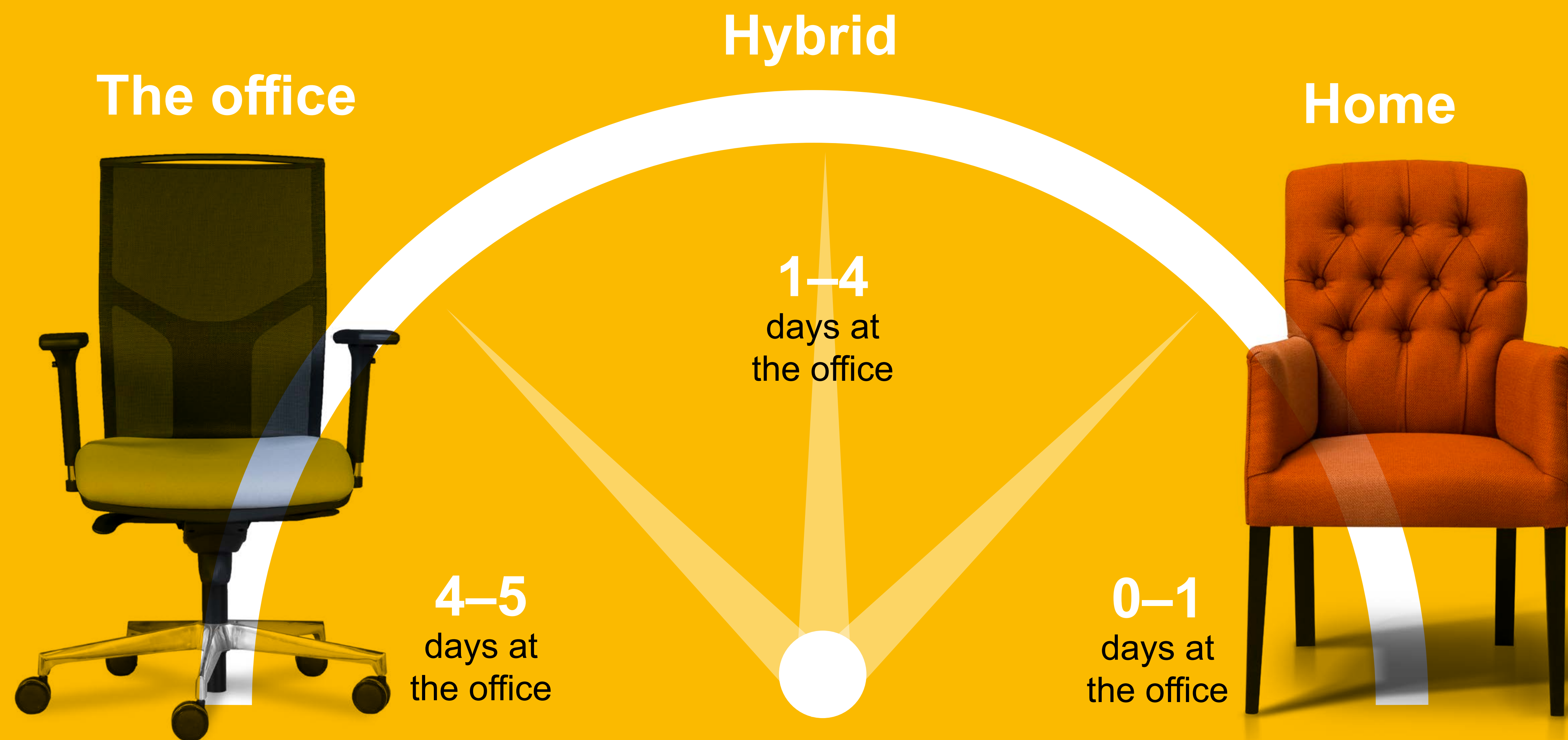




# THE FUTURE WORK-PLACE IS HYBRID

Where does your company fall on the scale?

The majority of companies believe that future workplaces will be hybrids, and most still believe in regular office hours. Few roles will be entirely office-based or home-based. Some companies will be making major changes in everything from working methods to corporate culture, while others see it simply as a way of reducing costs. In other words there will be many variations.



“People value flexibility and being able to work from home or a summer cottage on certain days, but we are also looking at ways to increase opportunities to share office space (flex offices) in smaller towns in Sweden.”

Head of FM Danske Bank



# THE OFFICE WILL LOOK DIFFERENT

There are many indications that most people want to continue working at the office in the future. But their needs differ, and we need to meet them with new solutions that work for all employees. Our new workplaces need to put people first.

Changing the use of spaces:

Office spaces are expected to change like this:

- ↓ Desk spaces
- ↓ Common spaces near desks
- ↑ Reception
- ↑ Meeting rooms
- ↑ Kitchens
- ↑ Wellness spaces, e.g. gym
- ↑ Social spaces

## COMMON SPACES

More space for teamwork in open, flexible spaces and digital conference rooms. It has to be easy to work together! To reduce sound levels there will be quiet spaces and dedicated rooms for video calls.

## SOCIAL SPACES

Several social meeting spaces, such as work cafés, restaurant, library, game room and wellness spaces.

## FLEXIBLE SPACES

Flexible and multifunctional spaces that can be reconfigured to suit different working needs.

## INTEGRATED SPACES

Integration between real-life and virtual spaces. Workplaces are adapted for new technology, with opportunities for virtual, digital collaboration, 360-degree cameras, interactive digital whiteboard walls, etc.

## SPACE PLANNING

Intelligent space planning that optimizes pre-booked spaces, so that employees with similar roles or collaboration needs sit close together.

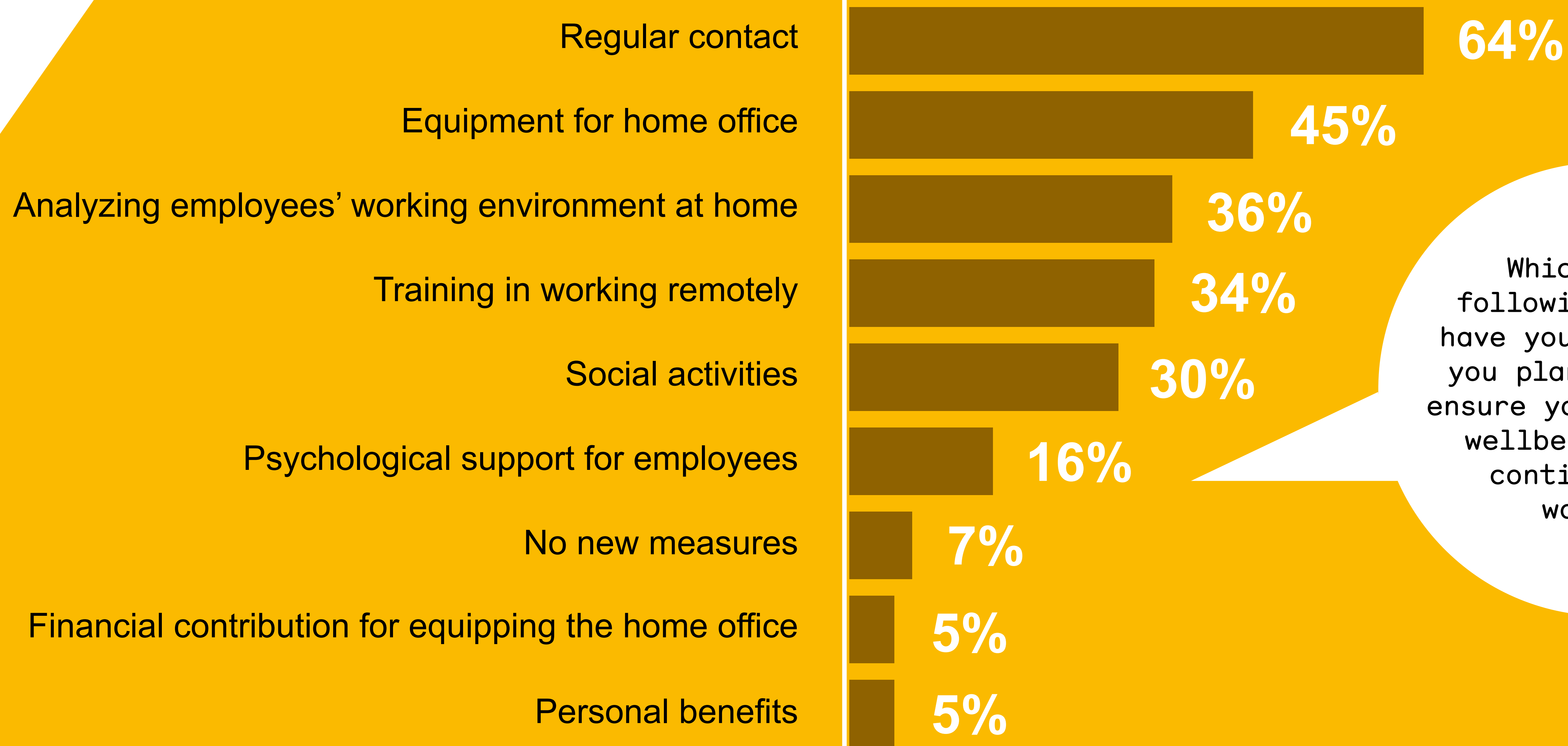
What are your needs and what purpose do you want your future workplace to fill?



# HYBRID MANAGEMENT

Concrete measures to support more remote working:

Working from home can mean challenges for employers and managers, particularly in the manager's daily task of leading, monitoring and showing consideration for colleagues. We see companies working proactively to tackle the effects of increased working remotely.



Which of the following measures have you taken or do you plan to take to ensure your employee's wellbeing if they continue home-working?

## Coor's workplace expert comments:

"There is real commitment among our clients, and many are working hard to support their colleagues as much as possible with their physical and mental wellbeing at the home office. Among other things we have seen increased demand for ergonomic furniture for the home office, and we have partnered with a supplier of height-adjustable desks and ergonomic chairs that we can offer our clients' employees."



# OUR TOP ADVICES:



Most employers are now wondering which direction they should take. They want to meet employees' wishes for flexibility and more working from home, and at the same time preserve and maximize the benefits to the business of working at the office. We do not believe in forcing employees back.

Flexibility can give you a competitive edge in the fight for skilled employees. Instead, our top advice is to give the workplace its own special appeal. In addition to being practical, having the right lighting, a healthy indoor climate and ergonomic furniture, there are other ways to persuade employees to come to the office:



## 1. An office tailored for hybrid working

Conference rooms set up with user-friendly technology to include and involve employees who choose to work remotely. One good approach is to provide additional support in the form of instructions and a "tech specialist" who can give support if needed. Several smaller,

bookable rooms for holding undisturbed virtual meetings without distracting colleagues in the office. Many companies may also need to increase or extend their space to include bookable and non-bookable "project rooms" and other spaces for collaboration.

## 3. Working environments that inspire and contribute to wellbeing

We see a growing number of office environments that are inspired by restaurant and hotel interiors. The office should be seen as a welcoming and energizing space that reflects the corporate culture. Nature in the form of plants, trees and light that contribute to our wellbeing could be incorporated in the interior in a natural way. It will be more common to create mindfulness rooms, yoga studios and light therapy at the office – all to promote a sustainable working routine.

## 2. Benefits and services that simplify the routine

The time that commuters feel they save by working at home should be compensated for with something else that makes them feel they are saving time or gaining something of value. It could be breakfast, a well-prepared lunch or a gym and changing room at the office. Being able to take home a good, affordable meal after work, or do two hours of exercise per week during working hours are also good examples.

## 4. Build a sense of community through events and happenings

A lively workplace that encourages interaction and spontaneous meetings, and helps to spread attendance over the days of the week. Examples could include inspirational talks, launch events for newly created office spaces or a restaurant/

café at the office. Or a variety of competitions/tournaments, tasting sessions and theme days, such as a "barrista day", when all employees are served first-class coffee by a barrista when they come to work in the morning.





If you would like support and advice on developing the workplace of the future, do not hesitate to contact us.



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