



CUSHMAN &
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VANTAGE POINT



WORKPLACES REIMAGINED: FROM COST CENTER TO PERFORMANCE LEVER

What today's workplace experience means for
performance, engagement and choice





The office no longer creates value by default. It earns it by supporting focus, connection, learning and energy. As organizations balance cost pressures and return-to-office expectations, workplace experience has become a critical lever for engagement, performance and long-term results.

As leaders push for stronger outcomes in 2026, the question is no longer whether the office matters, but how it delivers value for both people and the business.

THE WORKPLACE IS AT AN INFLECTION POINT

Cost and efficiency still drive many real estate decisions, but leaders increasingly recognize that the workplace influences how people perform and engage. This creates tension. Experience is rising as a strategic priority, yet many workplace strategies still default to utilization and attendance over outcomes. The risk is clear: Strategies that overlook experience and wellbeing will struggle to sustain performance over time.

“The office no longer creates value by default. It earns it by supporting focus, connection, learning, and energy.”

WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP



Source: Experience per Square Foot™ (XSF), Global Aggregate 2020-2024



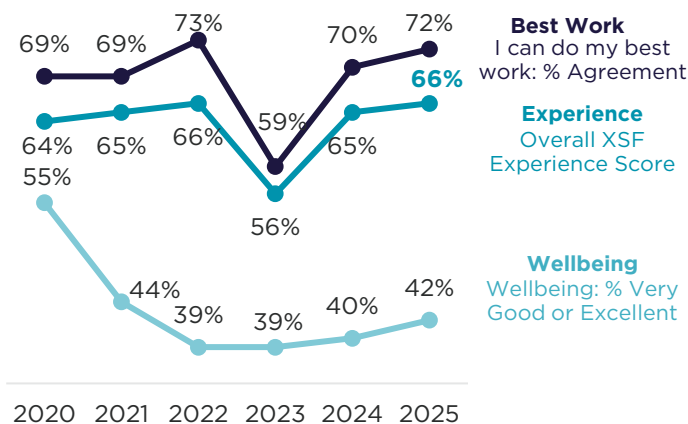
EXPERIENCE TRENDS

Strong Performance Masks a Persistent Well-being Gap

Many employees report that they can focus and get work done. But how people feel throughout the workday tells a different story. Well-being continues to lag experience and performance, pointing to a workplace that supports output more effectively than energy or renewal. Over time, that gap becomes harder to ignore.

“Productivity without energy is difficult to sustain.”

EXPERIENCE, BEST WORK, AND WELL-BEING COMPARISON



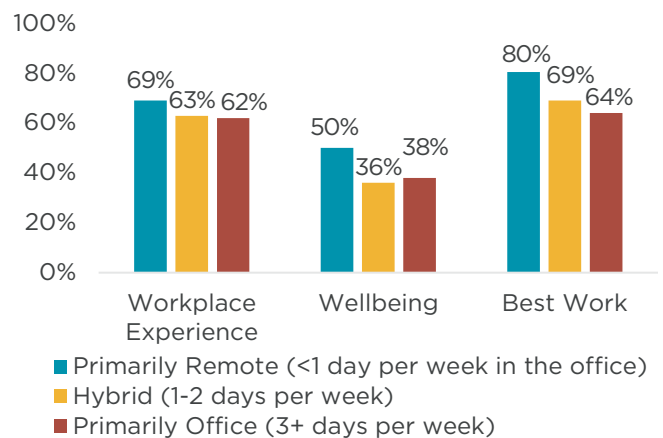
Source: C&W Experience Per Square Foot™ survey results from Q2 2020 – Q4 2025. Overall Experience (2020 n=41,872; 2021 n=22,522; 2022 n=7,578; 2023 n=9,012; 2024 n=11,212; 2025 n=13,255); Best Work (2020 n=41,874; 2021 n=20,226; 2022 n=2,214; 2023 n=3,408; 2024 n=9,775; 2025 n=12,832); Wellbeing (2020 n=140; 2021 n=17,665; 2022 n=4,496; 2023 n=7,230; 2024 n=8,774; 2025 n=12,673)

ATTENDANCE ALONE DOES NOT CREATE VALUE

More time in the office does not automatically lead to better outcomes. Employees who spend more time on-site do not consistently report better experience, performance or well-being. While many now come in seeking connection, collaboration and learning, many workplaces fall short of delivering that value. Attendance translates into value only when it is purposeful and chosen. Flexibility and autonomy support stronger outcomes; mandates without meaningful workplace improvements create friction.

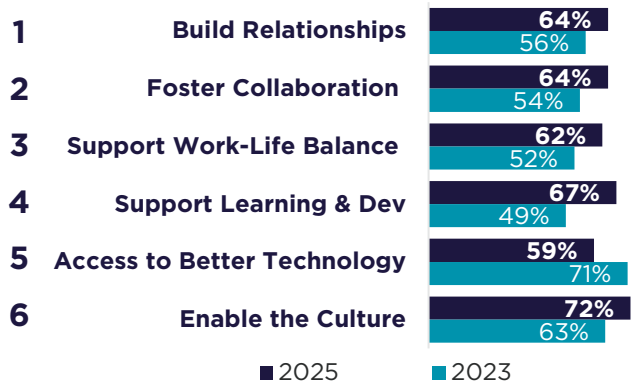
“Work patterns are evolving faster than workplace policy”

OUTCOMES BY WORK MODEL AND FLEXIBILITY



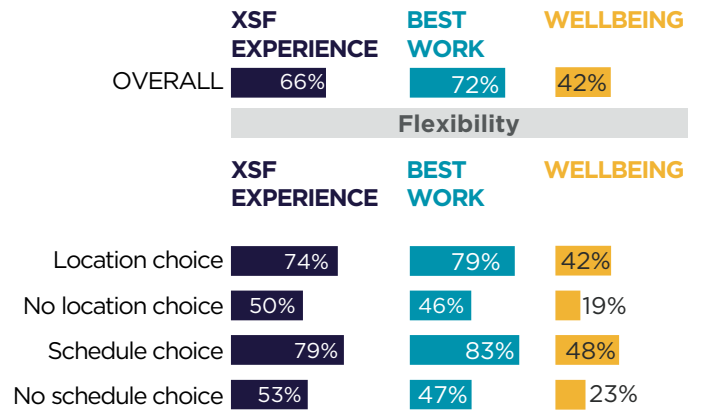
Source: Experience per Square Foot™ (XSF), 2024-2025, n = 8,492

% OF EMPLOYEES WHO SAY THEIR WORKPLACE “SUPPORTS OR STRONGLY SUPPORTS” THE STATED PURPOSE



Source: C&W Experience Per Square Foot™ survey results 2024 – 2025. Purpose of the Office (2024, n = 10,757; 2025, n=12,644). Support the Purpose of the Office (Relationships n=6,476; Collaboration n=5,370; Work-Life Balance n=3,371; Learning & Development n=2,997; Technology n=2,960; Company Culture n=2,642)

CHOICE IS THE REAL DIFFERENTIATOR






Source: C&W Experience Per Square Foot™ survey results from Q1 2025 – Q4 2025. XSF Experience Scores (Overall n= 13,255; Location choice n=820; No location choice n=155; Schedule choice n=674; No schedule choice n=193); Best Work (Overall n= 12,832; No location choice n=135; Schedule choice n=638; No schedule choice n=171); Wellbeing (Overall n= 12,673; Location choice n=624; No location choice n=145; Schedule choice n=527; No schedule choice n=173)

A FEW DRIVERS MATTER MOST

Not all workplace investments deliver the same return. Workplace performance gains are concentrated in a small set of drivers. Culture and connection consistently rise to the top, followed by factors that support focused work, reduce friction, and help employees feel energized throughout the day. These are often practical—not flashy—investments, but they deliver outsized impact.

RANKED DRIVERS HIGHLIGHTING CULTURE AS THE TOP WORKPLACE DRIVER

	EXPERIENCE	BEST WORK	WELL-BEING
1	Reflect Company Culture 	Reflect Company Culture 	Energize The Workplace
2	Energize The Workplace	Provide Spaces For Focused Work	Reflect Company Culture 
3	Provide Spaces For Focused Work	Improve Commuting Convenience	Provide Spaces For Focused Work
4	Minimize Noise	Provide Quiet Spaces	Ensure Thermal Comfort
5	Improve Commuting Convenience	Minimize Noise	Offer Social And Active Areas

Source: C&W Experience Per Square Foot™ survey results from Q1 2025 – Q4 2025; Top drivers determined using regression analysis of 35 workplace features across 11 companies. The five features shown had the strongest impact on best work.

PORTFOLIO DECISIONS NEED A PERFORMANCE LENS

Experience varies widely across portfolios. Utilization shows where space is used, but not where it creates value for the employee or the business. Experience data adds that missing dimension, strengthening footprint decisions—whether to invest, fix, consolidate or exit—based on the human and business value each location delivers. Viewed through a performance lens, quality takes on a new meaning. The most effective organizations direct investment toward locations that deliver strong experience and address those that do not. This reframes flight to quality by clarifying that quality is not defined by market reputation alone, but by employee outcomes that signal a location’s ability to support both experience and performance.

Amenity strategy should reflect employee priorities, not just market conventions.



AMENITIES AND CONVENIENCES EMPLOYEES VALUE MOST

-  **Free snacks & beverages**
-  **Onsite café / pop-up restaurant**
-  **Fitness center**
-  **Onsite bar**
-  **Pet daycare**
-  **Green space**
-  **Recreation area / game room**
-  **Health & wellness support**
-  **Personal care services**
-  **Relaxation / meditation room**

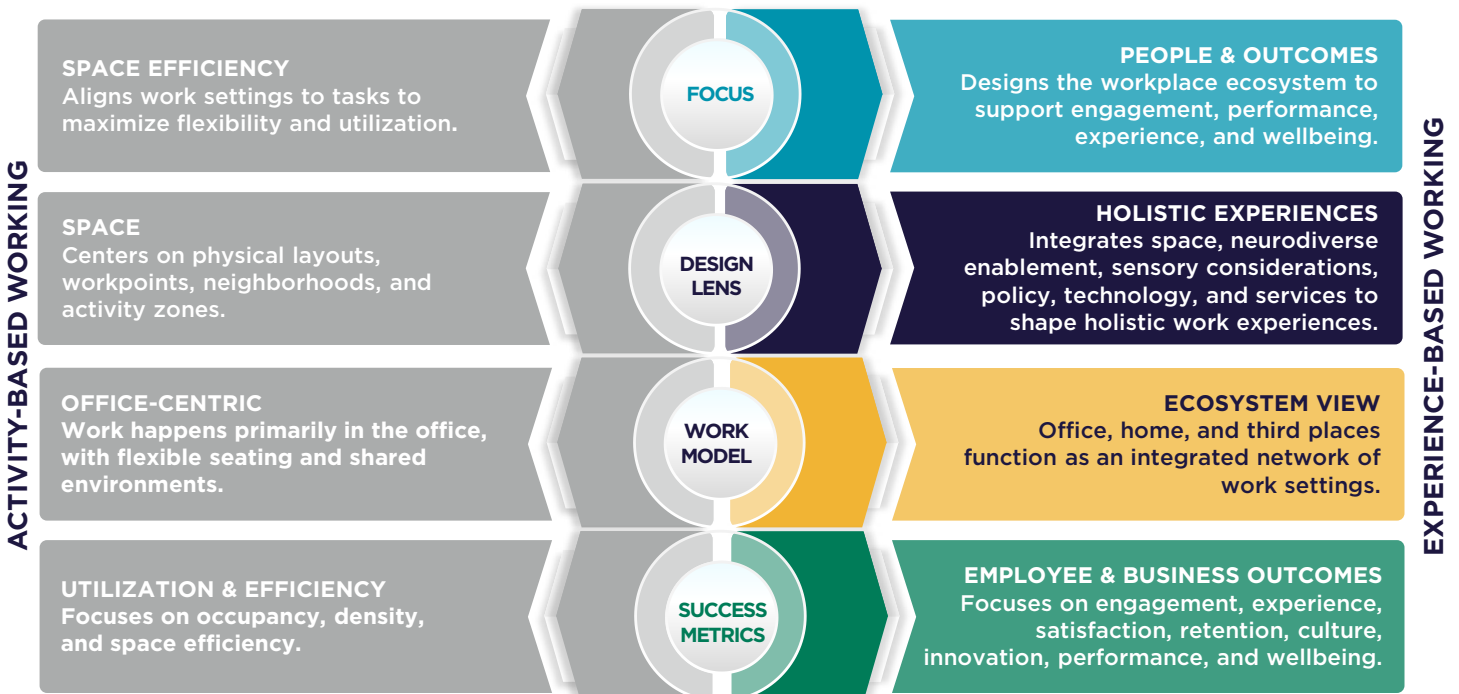
Source: C&W Tenant Experience Survey powered by Experience Per Square Foot™ results from Q1 2023 – Q2 2024; n = 1,131 representing 122 tenants across 6 buildings. Statistical analysis used to measure employee preference for 30 building amenities.



FROM ACTIVITY- TO EXPERIENCE-BASED WORKING

Employees choose where to work based on the experience each setting enables. Designing for activities alone is no longer enough. Experience-based working brings space, technology, services and policy together into a coordinated system focused on the employee outcomes that matter most.

ACTIVITY-BASED WORKING VS. EXPERIENCE-BASED WORKING





WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

- Workplace experience is a performance lever, not a soft consideration.
- Attendance expectations must be paired with targeted workplace investment.
- Experience and engagement move together, reinforcing the workplace as a business asset.
- A small number of drivers deliver outsized returns; culture, enabling focused work and an energizing workplace matter most.
- Portfolio and design decisions must prioritize performance, not efficiency alone.
- The future of the workplace is experience-based, not activity-based.

“The workplaces that win are the ones people choose because they help them do better work.”



Experience per Square Foot™ (XSF) is Cushman & Wakefield's workplace experience diagnostic that measures employee outcomes (experience, best work and wellbeing) and uses driver analytics to pinpoint the workplace factors that most influence those outcomes—so leaders can prioritize investments with confidence.



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ABOUT CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD

Cushman & Wakefield (NYSE: CWK) is a leading global commercial real estate services firm for occupiers and investors with approximately 53,000 employees in over 350 offices and nearly 60 countries. In 2025, the firm reported revenue of \$10.3 billion across its core service lines of Services, Leasing, Capital markets, and Valuation and other. Built around the belief that Better never settles, the firm receives numerous industry and business accolades for its award-winning culture. For additional information, visit www.cushmanwakefield.com.

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