

# Workplaces



## NEW CAPITAL ONE WORKPLACE SURVEY SHOWS EMPLOYEES WANT FLEXIBILITY; MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

by Rob Kirkbride



2019 Work Environment Survey

**Work is hard and takes a toll on employees. That's why Capital One's Work Environment Survey shows 87 percent of employees agree it's important that employers create spaces and programs to support mental health and well-being.**

The results of the survey also show the idea of mental health and conversations around it are shifting away from closed door discussions to public forums, including the office. The results from the extensive survey were released this week. It is the third year Capital One has surveyed the state of the workplace and the second time the results have included a slice of the workplace from across the country. The survey is not Capital One employees. The respondents come from across industries, job levels and generations in the workplace.

The results aren't necessarily surprising, but they are certainly enlightening, especially the number of respondents who want and expect mental health support in the office. According to the results of the survey, nearly all employees agree it's important companies provide spaces and programs to support mental health and well-being. Flexibility continues to play an important role in fostering employee well-being with two in three saying flexible hours promote satisfaction at work.

Stefanie Spurlin, vice president of Workplace Solutions at Capital One, said several topics jumped out of the survey this year that have been themes or subtle themes over the last few years. "But what really emerged this year was the need for a dynamic and adaptable workplace ... so flexibility and choice have been the tenets of workplace strategy, definitely for Capital One, really since we embarked on this journey years ago," she said. "Those continue to be foundational elements."

According to the survey, 77 percent of employees say they want collaborative spaces and 88 percent say they want focused spaces. The trick, Spurlin said, is finding the right balance. The need for spaces to connect and space to unwind affects the well-being of workers.

"This year, what I really think came across loud and clear, and we may spend a lot of time talking about, is the desire for well-being to be a part of that integrated or holistic experience, including mental health," Spurlin said. "And I think we saw that — what really rose to the top of different rankings across the data of different elements for amenities that folks are looking for, as well as design elements, (the idea of mental health support) those really pop to the top."

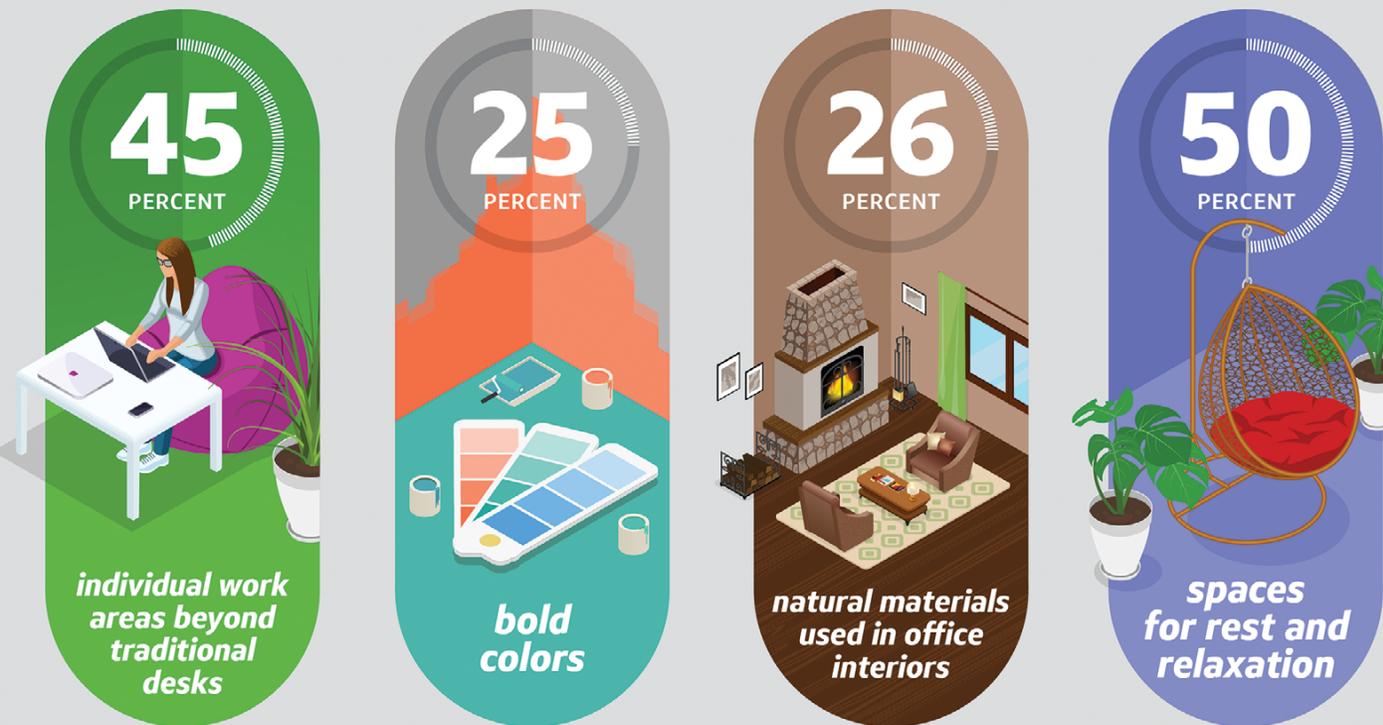
## *Which of the following design elements, if a*



Connections to nature in the workplace can improve well-being, according to the survey, yet few offices have them. More than one third (36 percent) of employees say they have no connection to nature in their workplace, despite indicating various types of connections (visual, physical or material) would improve their productivity and well-being. Second to flexible schedules, over half of employees (53 percent) cite access to natural light as a mental health resource that would improve their satisfaction at work. Forty-two percent would like to have quiet spaces in the office to unplug.

The rise in mental health and wellness comes from increased stress and anxiety that technology and the global workplace have brought to younger generations

*any, would you like to see in your workplace?*

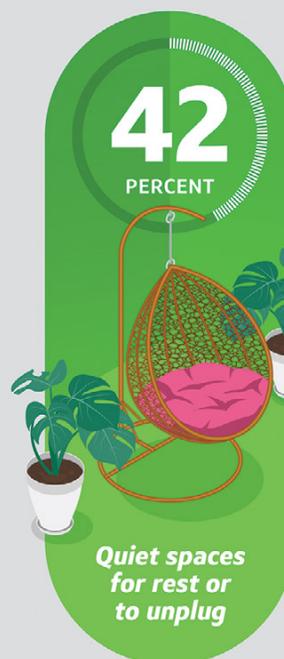


**CapitalOne** 2019 Work Environment Survey

who have only worked in that environment, said Lindsey Pollak, a multigenerational workplace consultant who worked with Capital One on the survey.

“Another factor is that there is less stigma to seeking mental health support and talking about having mental health concerns,” she said. “It’s unclear from the data and experts whether we’ve had the same numbers all along, but people just didn’t mention it. A lot of millennials and Gen Zs are much more comfortable doing so. This is really, I think, demonstrated on college campuses. There’s been a 30 percent rise in the past few years of students accessing mental health services. And I think in office environments, where many of the employees have college degrees, they’re coming out of a higher education environment where they had that access and

## Which well-being or mental health resource



expect that their employers will provide it. Again, it benefits everyone. But I think it's being driven, to a large extent, by the rise of the younger generation in office environments."

Design certainly matters. This year's data shows thoughtfully designed office spaces are still top-of-mind for employees: Nearly all employees say they perform better in well-designed workplaces. Employees continue to say good workplace design drives them to be more innovative and productive.

And design is still equally or more important than location. For the second year in a row, a majority of employees — 54 percent — say workplace design is as important, if not more important than workplace location. The number jumps to 64 percent among mid-level employees.

## What would improve your satisfaction at work?



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Flexibility doesn't just apply to design: employees' highest priority is finding companies with flexible schedules and physical flexibility in the workplace. However, some shifts in year-over-year data suggest employers need to remain adaptable and foster dynamic workplace design to accommodate employees' changing preferences.

Nearly three in four employees say it's important for their company's workplace design to be flexible. According to the survey, 65 percent say they are more productive when they change their physical location while working, and 73 percent say they have their best ideas when they're able to use flexible workspace options. Eighty-one percent of employees ranked a flexible schedule in their top two reasons to stay with a company, up 8 percent from last year.

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Regionally, there are some similarities and differences.

Employees in New York are seeking creative and dynamic workspaces that support their health and well-being. More than half (51 percent) say having access to healthy food and beverage options would support their satisfaction. That compares to 43 percent nationally. Though just 34 percent nationally, 40 percent in New York would like to see on-site health centers and wellness programs. In New York, 23 percent say they would like their employer to offer spaces for creativity (19 percent nationally); 23 percent would also like to see artwork and creative imagery in the workplace.

In Washington, D.C., workplaces should prioritize flexible arrangements that allow employees to collaborate with their colleagues. Seventy-nine percent in D.C. say they are able to work better when there are spaces for collaboration. Thirty-two percent say they would like more spaces for collaboration.

Flexible workplace design is critical to employee success and productivity, and Chicagoans feel even more strongly than national respondents. Sixty-eight percent say they are more productive when they change physical location while working, compared to 65 percent nationally. Adaptable spaces enable Chicago's professionals to perform better at work. Eighty-three percent agree they work better when their workplace provides spaces for collaboration, compared to 77 percent nationally. Ninety-one percent agree they work better when they have space for focused, heads-down work, compared to 88 percent nationally. Connections to nature in the workplace are popular in Chicago. Fifty-two percent of Chicagoans agree a physical connection to nature, like outdoor spaces for working, would improve their productivity and well-being at work, compared to 45 percent nationally.

In Dallas, 30 percent want to see additional spaces for collaboration, compared to 22 percent nationally. Employees in Dallas want increased resources for virtual collaboration as more and more look to work remotely. Twenty-eight percent expect virtual collaboration tools from their next employer. Eighty-four percent agree real-time collaboration tools improve their job performance and success at work. Eighty-six percent agree video meeting and conferencing would also improve their performance. Nearly all agree (91 percent) they are able to work better when their workplaces are well-designed.

Workers in San Francisco value environmental programs and health and wellness more than others. Forty-one percent expect access to on-site healthy food options (29 percent national and 36 percent across all regions). Thirty-eight percent expect access to alternative desks (26 percent national and 35 percent across all regions). Thirty-two percent expect access to on-site fitness centers (24 percent national). These perks play an important role in talent retention in San Francisco. Forty-six percent say health amenities are a top-two perk that would make them stay with a company, following flexible schedules (82 percent, up 11 percent from 2018). Natural elements in the office also improve well-being and productivity. Forty-one percent in San Francisco said a material connection (natural materials, indoor plants or water features) in the office would help well-being and productivity, compared to 31 percent nationally.

There is definitely room for improvement. Nearly two in three employees agree companies cannot encourage innovation unless their workplace design and environment is innovative, however, more than half (56 percent) say their company's current workplace design and environment doesn't encourage them to be innovative. This is compared to 60 percent in 2018, suggesting companies are making strides in creating the kinds of workplace environments people want to see.

"The survey is a great tool, one of the tools, for us to capture data across the industry to really understand the continued evolution of workplace strategy," Spurlin said. "Capital One's workplace strategy focuses on flexibility for all different types of work styles, which at the end of the day, provides an ideal environment for our associates to thrive and create the best products and tools for our customers."

The Capital One Workplace Environment Survey was conducted by Morning Consult among 3,608 office professionals who are employed full-time in an office setting in the U.S. The survey includes 1,000 national respondents: 518 from Chicago, 520 from Dallas, 512 from D.C., 517 from New York City and 541 from San Francisco. The survey was conducted from an online panel April 18 to May 6. The margin of error for national respondents is +/-3 percent and +/-4 percent for each of the city DMA results. **WPM**