



New research, insights and ideas on your journey to the future workplace

Join the
**WORKPLACE
REVOLUTION**



Welcome

“A new era for the office is in sight - more inclusive and people-centered”



AnnaCarin Grandin
President and CEO of Coor

A new era for the office is in sight which is more inclusive and people-centred, provides more choice and amenity, and pays closer attention to wellbeing and community, this is a few of the conclusions of Coor’s Join the Workplace Revolution 2023 report.

Despite the current economic instability, more and more companies are still planning to go ahead with changes to their workplace – an indication of the importance decision makers continue to attach to the office. In proposing changes, it is essential that companies should do the work of really understanding employee needs and where the company wants to go in terms of workplace objectives. Improving the workplace is vital:

this year’s survey showed that employees, especially younger generations, will change jobs if their expectations are not met. This finding, similar to last year’s result, demonstrates that companies failing to adapt could struggle to attract talent.

The workplace in the post-pandemic era has seen a gradual trend towards a focus on community, collaboration, and social interaction. However, our study indicates that there is also a growing desire to better accommodate individual focus work in the office. This is a tricky balancing, and it calls for many companies to revisit their space distribution.

I am personally convinced that the office will continue to play a crucial role in building success in the future. It is important that we focus on the mental and physical wellbeing of our people in the upcoming years – to achieve this we must start designing flexible and hybrid workplaces with human needs at the centre. You as an employer need to find the model that suits your company best and create an attractive destination with good services where your employees can come for both individualized focus work and collaboration.

Coor’s vision is to create the happiest, healthiest, and most prosperous workplace environments in the Nordic region. Join us on the journey towards the future of workplaces!

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About our survey

Coor's 'Join The Workplace Revolution' survey seeks to understand changes in the Nordic workplace over the coming year from the perspective of both decision makers and employees across Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland.

How have work and the workplace been impacted by new trends over the past year? What's happening inside companies to adapt to change? Continuing on from the success of Coor's survey last year, United Minds conducted a quantitative survey in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland on behalf of Coor, to get an in-depth perspective on how the Nordics are responding to shifts in approach to the workplace and changing expectations in the workforce.

A total of 1,022 responses were collected, with 515 respondents classed as decision makers - company managers who are involved making decisions about the workplace and the way companies are choosing to work - and 507

classed as employees. Of the total number of responses, 251 were from Denmark, 257 were from Finland, 262 from Norway and 252 from Sweden, giving the survey an even split across the four countries as well as an even split between decision makers and employees.

The survey also takes into account the distribution of respondents across various industries and city sizes, with 52% of results taken from respondents in cities with a population bigger than 250,000 and the rest in smaller locations.

The surveys took place between 10-15 January 2023 and were collected by digital questionnaires disseminated via email.



Top insights

What challenges do Nordic companies and their workforces face as the workplace evolves? Here are our key insights – read more about their implications for the office in the following chapters.



25%

...of employees are indicating less likely to come into the office in order to save money on commuting.

And **more than half of decision makers** planning to reduce spending on workplace and community related projects. Clearly the current economic climate is affecting decision makers and employees alike, with cutting spending high on everyone's agenda.

7 IN 10

...decision makers say that they are experiencing challenges in getting employees back into the office in 2023.

This is an **18% point increase** in the number of companies stating that they are struggling to get employees back to the office since our survey in 2022, suggesting that there is growing tension between employee and employers over where people work.

77%

...of decision makers say they will execute or plan general renovations or redistributions of their office spaces in 2023 and 2024.

This may be motivated by the fact that **1 in 3 employees** state that they are willing to leave their job if no changes are made to the office. Despite challenging economic conditions, there has been no decline in employee willingness to resign if the office is not improved.

26%

...of employees listed a reduction in noise levels as the change most likely to tempt them back into the office

And their second most desired change was for better access to quiet space for focused work with **23% of employees** indicating a desire for this change. They also ranked food and beverage services as the services most likely to get them back in the office.

Impact of economic climate

The economic instability of recent months is having an impact on both company decision making and employee behaviours, according to our survey. The general picture, however, is uncertain and contradictory in part.

While the Covid-19 emergency has caused a major reappraisal of working practices since its emergence in March 2020, the past year has seen other influential factors come to the fore – most notably a shift to global economic instability. This has contributed to an increasing sense of uncertainty as companies struggle to get access to materials, manage security concerns and support staff through a challenging period.

A series of destabilizing factors, including a war in Ukraine, supply chain disruption, rising inflation and skyrocketing energy prices provide an unstable economic context that will undoubtedly affect the decision-making of both companies and employees, who are

looking to tighten their belts in the period ahead when it comes to the workplace.

Our survey suggests that 81% of decision makers are preparing to take deliberate action to reduce their spending, with a reduction in energy usage in offices at the top of the list of areas to find cost savings. Sustainability does not currently seem to hold the same priority, suggesting that an interest in cutting back on energy use is a direct consequence of the hike in energy prices and less motivated by a desire to be more eco-friendly. Current economic circumstances have forced companies to reprioritize; their thinking has shifted short-term towards cost-savings rather than environmental concerns.

Company actions due to the decreasing stability in the overall economy:

64%

Investment in energy saving in the office

52%

Reduced spending on community/ personnel related activities in the office

50%

Reduced investments in office modifications/renovations



Employees also show signs of being affected by current economic conditions when it comes to choosing where they work. A quarter of workers indicated a stronger preference for working from home as a consequence of the current economic instability. Saving money on the commute was revealed to be a top concern for workers, second only to saving time on the commute. Furthermore, a reduced price for lunches within the office was also cited as the top service that would make staff come into the office more often. But despite this shift in mindset caused by economic factors, saving on time and work-life balance remain priorities for employees, who appear to value their time above all else. And regardless of signals that the job market is slowing down in response to the current economic turmoil, our study does not indicate that employees are any less likely to resign if their needs in the workplace are not met.

It is worth noting that around 10% of employees in our survey indicated that they would be more likely to come into the office as a consequence of the cost-of-living crisis. This may be related to some staff perceiving an opportunity to save money on bills whilst they are in the office as well as getting access to lunches, snacks and coffees at the office, also helping them save money. If employees live close to the office and their commuting costs are low, they will lose less time and money coming into the office, and experience more of the perks.

How companies manage and support their staff through challenging economic conditions may create the blueprint for how employees engage with the office in the future. Those firms that are creating incentives that address current economic challenges of employees working at home may find that staff are increasingly drawn back to the office.

However, despite a clear correlation between economic uncertainty and employees choosing to work from home, only around a third of companies have a plan to offer direct financial support to their staff through the current period of economic hardship. For companies who are still trying to tempt employees back in the office, not recognizing the role of the economy in staff decision making could be holding them back.

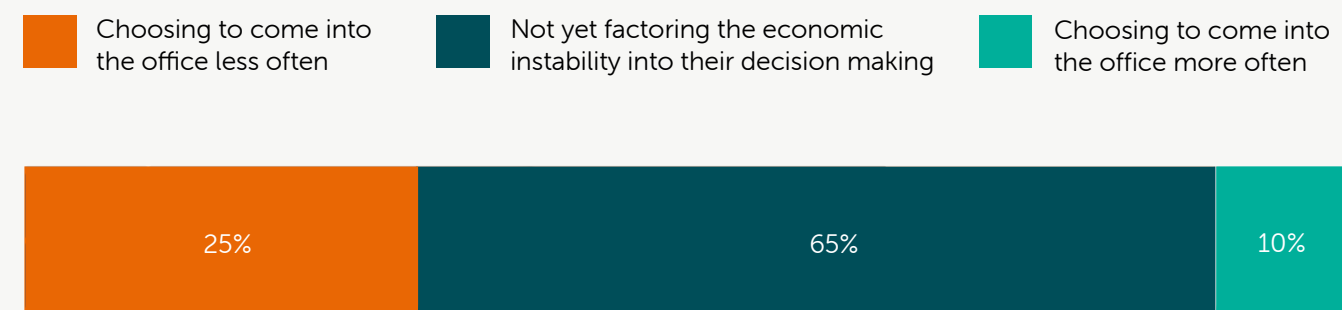
Here, there is a marked difference between countries with 44% of Norwegian companies having a plan to do so while Finnish companies drag their heels – with less than 20% offering support to staff. This discrepancy might not just be about national attitudes: it can also perhaps be explained by Finland’s relative lack of reliance on natural gas, which has been a main driver for price increases. It is not in the same position as other countries in the Nordics.

Clearly the economy is having a knock-on effect on the Nordic workplace, impacting both employees and decision makers and forcing each group to reprioritize and

reconsider their positions for the coming year. There are contradictions on both sides, illustrating a lack of consensus across the Nordic countries and between employees and decision makers, reflecting a sense of uncertainty regarding how long these circumstances will last and what the best way to handle them might be.

But offering a strong policy stance and supporting employees to make certain decisions could help companies set the standard for how they want their employees to engage with them in future, making it a significant time for decision-makers to contemplate their next move.

Cost-of-living crisis is impacting office attendance:



Hybrid work balancing act

Hybrid working is clearly here to stay, but how we design and use the office and treat remote workers are the shifting parameters around which the Nordic workplace is recentering itself.

Our survey last year illustrated how decision makers were struggling to encourage people back into the office and were considering making large-scale structural changes to the workplace in order to achieve this goal. But, as we all know, making large changes to the office can be costly, so is workplace restructuring still on the agenda in 2023? And what priority will the office still take in the Nordic workplace of the future?

Office retains importance

Despite the move to hybrid working and the increasing costs of running an office, the importance of the office does not appear to be decreasing. Only 1% of decision makers stated that they already operate or have plans to operate without a permanent office by 2025, and only 2% of companies had expectations that employees would be in the office less than 1 day per week in 2024. This suggests that in-person interaction is still high on the agenda for companies. However,

circumstances are changing for workplaces and companies are investigating how they can adapt to new expectations.

Our survey suggests that the desire to make changes to current office provisions has only increased, with 77% of decision makers either executing or planning general renovations or re-distribution of their office spaces in 2023 and 2024.

There are some differences between countries, with decision makers based in Finland the least likely to say that they are planning any changes. But overall, our research shows an 18% point increase in the desire by companies to make changes to the office since last year's survey. This is a significant increase, most strongly felt in Norway and Denmark.

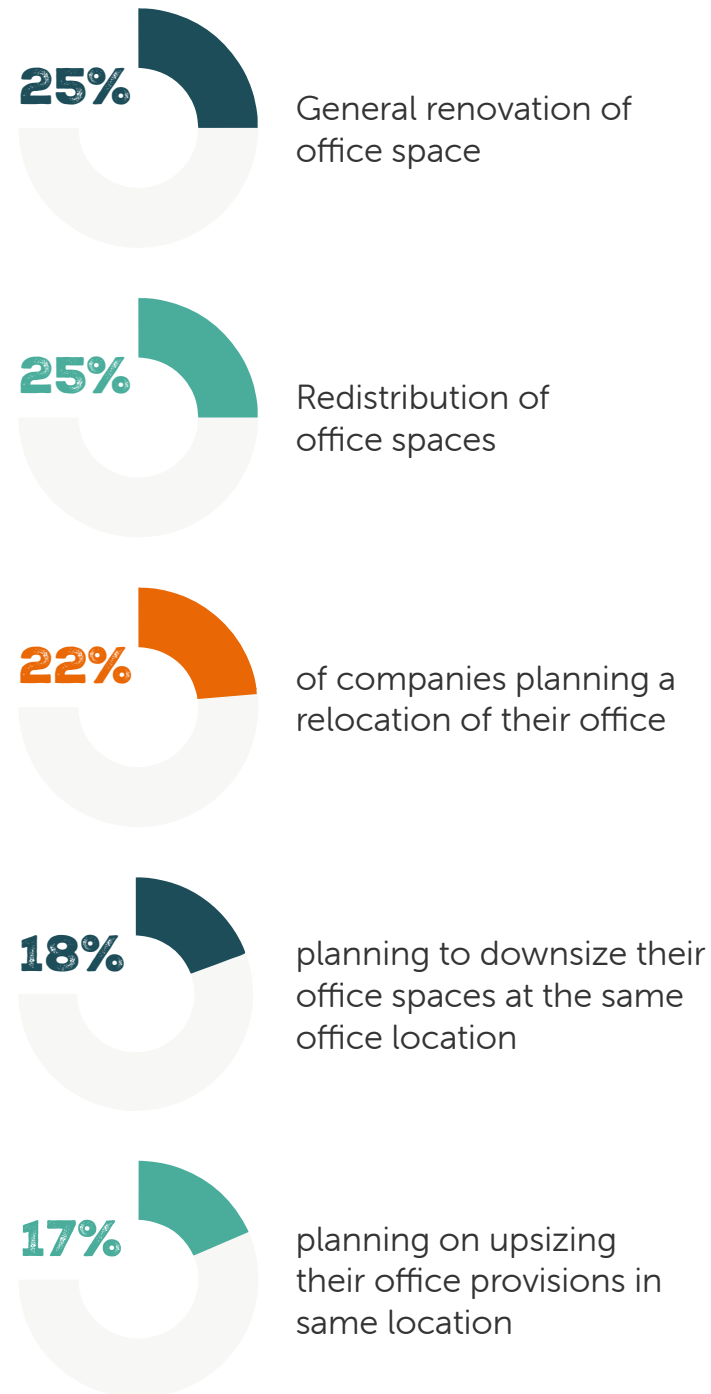
In 2022, around 50% of decision makers cited difficulties bringing people back into the office; in our latest study, this up to 70% and the challenge appears to be slightly greater with younger workers.

Percentage of employers finding it a challenge to bring people back to the office

2022- 52%

2023- 70%

Top 5 structural changes to company offices in the next year:



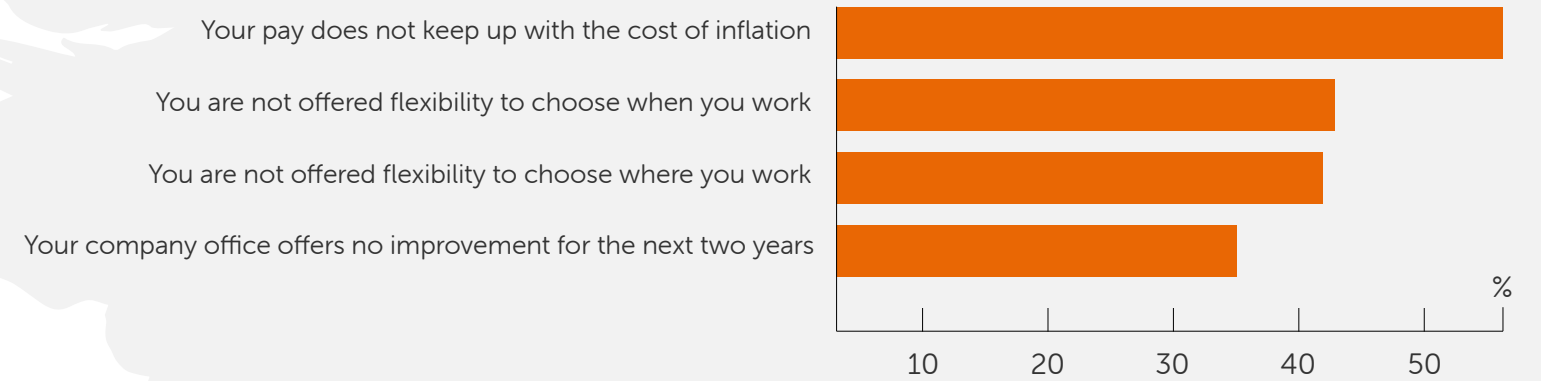
This finding clearly illustrates why decision makers are so strongly considering office restructuring. It also reflects an increased recognition of the importance of the office.

This exemplifies how challenging companies have found it to keep foot-traffic flowing through the office, causing them to recognise how their offices are failing to meet the new needs and expectations of their employees in order to draw talent back into physical workspace.

This attention is duly warranted, as our survey revealed that a third of employees would consider moving jobs if no changes are made to their office in the next year, highlighting that despite the economic climate employee expectations have not decreased, especially when it comes to their office environments. This was highest in Sweden where 40% of employees listed themselves as likely to consider joining another company under these circumstances. It is also worth noting that this has not changed significantly since our last survey, potentially illustrating a struggle on the part of decision makers to understand and address employee needs and a level of employee confidence that continues to run high in the Nordic job market.

However, there is still little consensus on what companies should do, with executives making a variety of different decisions for managing their space. Trying to balance employee needs with cost saving, and with leases on offices

How likely are you to consider another employer if...?



coming to an end, companies are under pressure to find solutions that suit everyone.

Companies are considering relocation, upsizing, downsizing and a variety of other solutions all to the same end. Why are there so many different approaches? A number of factors come into play, but economic conditions clearly play a part.

Energy saving in the office was the highest priority for decision makers in terms of cost-saving initiatives. Reduced spending on office renovations was third on the list with 50% of decision makers suggesting that this was high on their agenda.

Stuck between a desire to save money in an increasingly unstable economy and a need to attract and retain their talent through

investment in their offices and the creation of a better employee experience, there appears to be limited consensus on the right course of action. Instead, companies are taking an individual approach, balancing the financial implications of making changes against employee needs on a company-by-company basis.

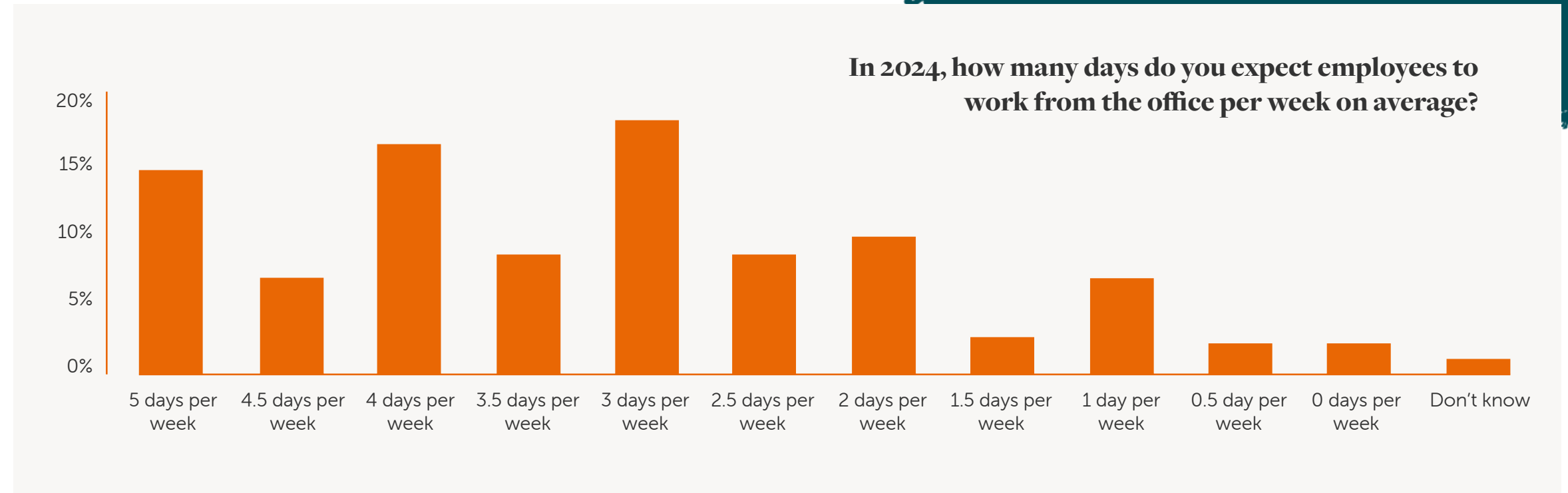
Additionally, different industry sectors have found themselves in different positions in the last few years. Professional white-collar workers may have more opportunities to work from home and, as a result, their companies have downsized their office space. But other sectors have faced other challenges, with businesses pivoting to meet new demands and responding to economic challenges in new ways, requiring different types of space provision.

The future role and challenges of home working

Since the pandemic, working from home at least a few days a week has become the norm, at least for those industry sectors with remote work capabilities. Our survey shows that this has not changed, with decision makers expecting employees to work from the office for only 3.2 days a week on average, with the rest of their time spent working remotely. However, there is still a large amount of variation between individual companies depending on industry sector and the needs of the company.

Although, even small changes to this set-up can make a significant difference. 40% of employees said that they would consider looking for work elsewhere if they were not offered full flexibility to choose where they work. This was highest amongst younger employees, with 53% of employees aged between 18 and 30 suggesting that they would move elsewhere without individual flexibility.

These findings illustrate how choice and control can have a significant impact on workplace satisfaction and employee



experience, meaning that not all work-from-home set-ups are equal. They also mirror the results of a 2023 American research study from the Future Forum, which suggests that companies that adopt flexible working report a better working culture than those with an office-return mandate, as well as higher productivity and employee satisfaction. Such research clearly illustrates a need for many companies to re-evaluate their stance on remote working, which has previously been thought to degrade the connection between team members.

Having flexibility of choice does not mean that young workers want to be remote workers – many companies report that younger workers are the most motivated to come back to the office. Younger employees have different needs and face different challenges than older employees, they are looking for the office to provide connection to a workplace culture, mentoring opportunities and they may have less ideal home-working set-ups than their older counterparts. But, for them, these requirements cannot come at the cost of freedom of choice.

For employees, the perks of working from home are significant: they cite the cost and time lost while commuting into the office as top reasons for working from home, closely followed by a lack of social stress and greater ability to focus. Time spent commuting is considered the most significant reason to stay home, being ranked as a major barrier regardless of country or company size. Home working also offers a level of convenience to people with childcare responsibilities.

Given all the perks, it's not hard to see why employees are drawn towards flexible working options. But just because there are perks, that doesn't mean there aren't downsides, especially as we move into a climate where domestic bills are rising and there is a growing awareness around the importance of tackling employee mental health. Wellbeing and the expense of working from home will be more on the radar of decision makers in the future, and the provision of services for employees working from home is one area that might start to see more attention in the coming year.

Home working also poses a specific risk to company security, with secure data being accessed from a variety of different locations at once via a myriad of different networks. This has led to an increase in security breaches as well as the cost of security breaches. According to a report by IBM, in the last two years the average cost of a security breach has increased by 12.7%, and this cost increases further when breaches are the result of remote working. This is not just a problem for companies with remote workers. All companies, especially those which have invested in new technologies, are coming under more pressure to tighten security.

In our survey, 29% of decision makers placed security, access and control at the top of the agenda for the workplace. This was particularly true for Norwegian companies where 34% of decision makers highlighted security as a major area of importance, making it their second highest concern. This suggests that security is creeping up the agenda for many companies, with a growing awareness around the importance of tightening security protocols with hybrid workers and a need to tighten controls on sensitive data across the board.

Reasons employees give for working remotely/from home instead of the office



More than half of decision makers say that services to support the employee's home working environment is an interesting offer, particularly for workers who are fully remote. There is interest in providing practical support for furniture, technology and lighting, but also with wellness offerings such as a massage therapist, ergonomics consultations and help creating the best indoor climate for individual employees.

Services like these not only ensure that the physical health of employees don't suffer while they are working from home – as problems such as eye strain or back pain could be

exacerbated without appropriate lighting, screens and seating – but also show care and attention is being paid to the mental wellbeing of employees regardless of their presence in the office.

While current uptake of these services is slow, it appears that significantly more decision makers are considering taking steps to improve the home offices of their employees than last year, illustrating a clear shift in thinking about the role companies might play in their employees' home environment.

Tips from us at Coor



1

How to create a compelling strategy for return to office

- Understand your employees' drivers and needs – on-the-job and outside of work
- Define a clear company "reason why" for in-office work and ensure commitment throughout management and especially team managers
- Ramp up community and convenience to counteract employee perceived cost for coming into the office

2

How to make investment drive office presence

- Establish a clear vision for target user experiences at the office and evaluate investments based on their contribution to these experiences
- Do not overlook investments into services and events as sources of potential great impact to company office goals
- Design for flexibility to adapt to changing employee needs and new office amenities

3

Accommodating younger generations in the office without the expense of other employee groups

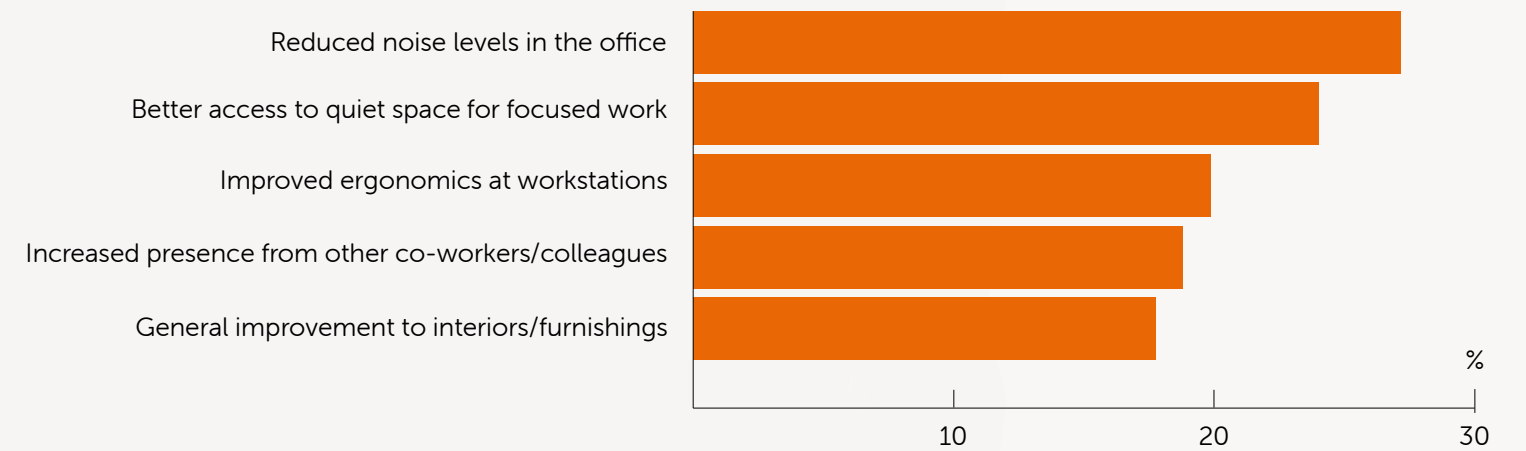
- Regard presence of leaders and mentors as an office amenity
- Ensure a strong company identity in design of the physical surroundings
- Set clear expectations but also invest in close dialogue and involvement

Focus on workplace improvements

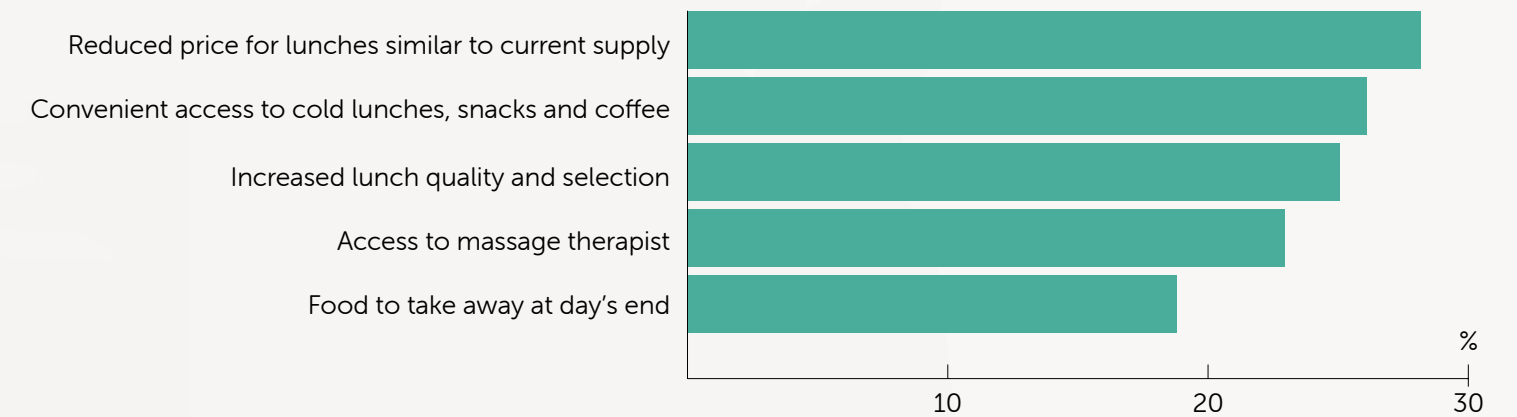
As so many companies look to make changes to their offices, we examine employee needs and aspirations in order to ascertain what improvements will be successful in making the office a more attractive destination for everyday work in the coming years



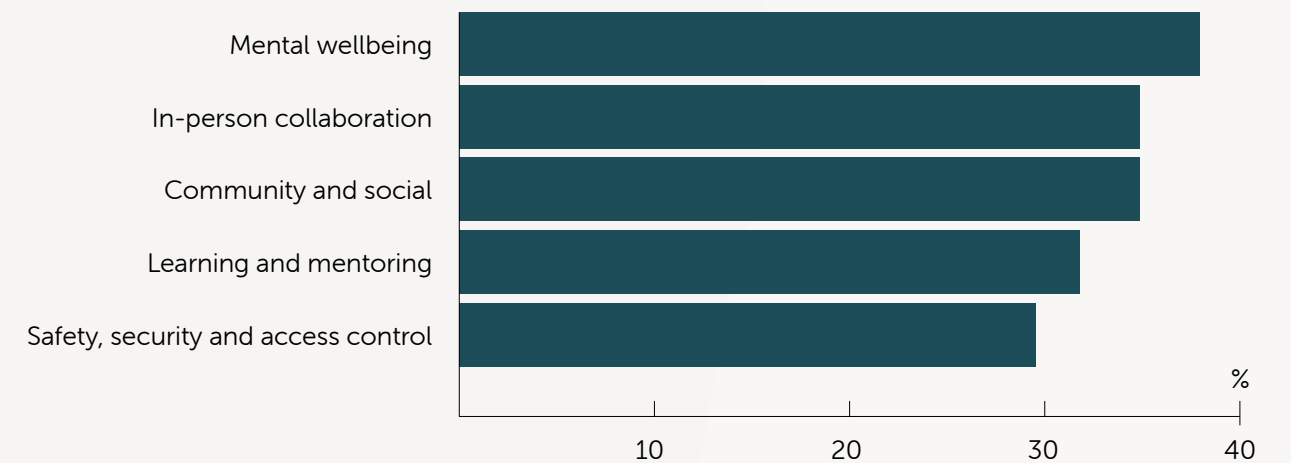
Top five improvements at the office that would increase employee's likelihood of coming into the office:



Top five services most likely to encourage employees back into the office:



The most important areas to address in the office in 2023-24 for decision makers:



Adapting space to different types of work

Currently, the office is widely viewed as the optimum place to come to do group-based activities, to collaborate and to socialize with colleagues.

This illustrates the ways in which the post-pandemic workplace has been transformed into a social hub, with workers doing quiet, focused work at home and venturing into the office for more interactive and dynamic activities.

However, it appears that this is not the workplace ideal for many employees. When asked what would tempt them back into the office, employees overwhelmingly stated that reduced noise levels, better access to quiet space for more focused work and improved ergonomics were the factors most likely to persuade them to brave the commute.

This suggests that current offices are prioritizing collaboration and social space over quiet spaces for focused work, assuming that workers will conduct their quiet work at home.

But is this a correct assertion? Employees with families or lack of access to an office or quiet space at home might prefer to have the option to work quietly and privately in the office. Additionally, if the office is purely set up for collaboration, those employees with less collaborative and dynamic roles will be unlikely to come into the office when the environment doesn't suit their working needs.

Our survey could indicate that the balance of collaborative to quiet space might have swung too far in one direction, leading employees to call for more balance and a wider diversity in the types of spaces offered by the modern office.

This Nordics finding is in line with surveys in other parts of the world. A Steelcase survey of almost 5,000 global office workers across 11 countries found that four of their top five offices priorities after the pandemic were related to privacy and places to do individual work.

Finland is the only exception to this trend of demand for quiet space, but its employee survey is illuminating. Employees in Finland ranked performing individual tasks higher than

collaboration when asked why they are most likely to come into the office. Consequently, they also ranked reduced noise levels as significantly less important to them when asked what changes they wanted to see in their offices in the coming year. This suggests that their offices are better adapted for quiet working and therefore employees have less concerns in this area.

This illustrates how companies need to find the best balance between different types of space within the office for their individual workforce, starting with better understanding the needs of their employees and what kind

of work they want to utilise the office for. Each organisation will require a different mix of spaces according to the type of organisation, industry and employees that they have, but it is clear that this balance is currently not working perfectly for employees across many companies, with a need for more quiet spaces.

Fortunately, this message appears to be getting through to decision makers, with many stating that they are likely to tackle improving ergonomics at workstations and reducing noise levels in the office in the coming year.



Focus on workplace improvements



Focus on mental wellbeing

When asked what aspects of the office were most important for decision-makers to address in 2023, mental wellbeing, socialization and community engagement were cited as the key areas for development. But there were visible differences in responses across the four markets: more than half of Finnish decision-makers will prioritise mental wellbeing while less than a third of Danish decision-makers intend to tackle this area.

Overall, mental wellbeing and socialization make the top five priorities in all four Nordic countries. But is awareness that mental wellbeing and community are high on the agenda transforming into practical action? From our survey, this looks unlikely. When it comes to making cost savings, spending on community and personnel activities in the office was the second most likely area for decision-makers to make cuts, with 52% of

company executives suggesting that they are either likely or very likely to reduce spending in this area.

This result implies that many decision-makers are still stuck in the mindset that providing social or mental health initiatives are 'extras' and a secondary concern after company profits. Yet research shows that levels of burnout amongst workers have risen dramatically in recent years as the pandemic and its aftermath have taken their toll. This can significantly affect company performance and therefore have a knock-on impact on revenue creation.

Without investing in the mental health of employees or tackling some of the barriers to increased employee wellbeing, companies may find productivity levels decreasing as staff take more time off work to recover from

burnout and stress. Increases to the cost-of-living are only likely to exacerbate this issue and put more employees under high levels of stress, making this a poor time to start cutting mental health provisions and social activities.

Investing in the mental health of employees will look different in every company but can make a significant difference to many employees' everyday stress as well as the levels of satisfaction at work. Common examples include creating quiet space for contemplation and meditations, creating a company culture that values time away from technology and encourages taking regular breaks from work, reducing the noise levels in the office, providing healthy and nutritious food and drink options and even providing access to counselling or medical services where appropriate can make a significant difference to employees.

Research by Deloitte demonstrates that there can be a healthy financial return on company investment in mental health within the workforce. At a time when money-saving is on the agenda, perhaps the question decision-makers need to ask themselves is - can they afford not to invest in mental health?

Companies are even considering more large-scale changes to their working patterns in order to improve employee wellbeing including adopting a 4-day working week. In a recent study by Autonomy Research, adopting a 4-day working week was linked with 71% of employees reporting lower levels of burnout and 39% reporting lower levels of stress. Adopting a 4-day working week could be one route towards a more wellbeing-oriented workplace.

Services to boost experience

Services are another significant part of the office experience and can contribute towards the creation of an office culture as well as socialising and wellbeing activities. According to employees, subsidised lunches and convenient access to snacks and coffees are the services that would have most impact on them choosing to work from the office more frequently.

Food and beverage services are by far the most popular services that companies can offer to employees. This may be because providing food helps employees save money whilst also offering an opportunity to socialize within the office as people eat and chat together rather than leaving the office to eat elsewhere. Eating together is an opportunity for 'low-stakes' socialisation and can help foster connection between teams as well as with the wider organisation. Consequently, investing in food and beverage services through increased subsidies, provision of a wider selection of options or better quality of

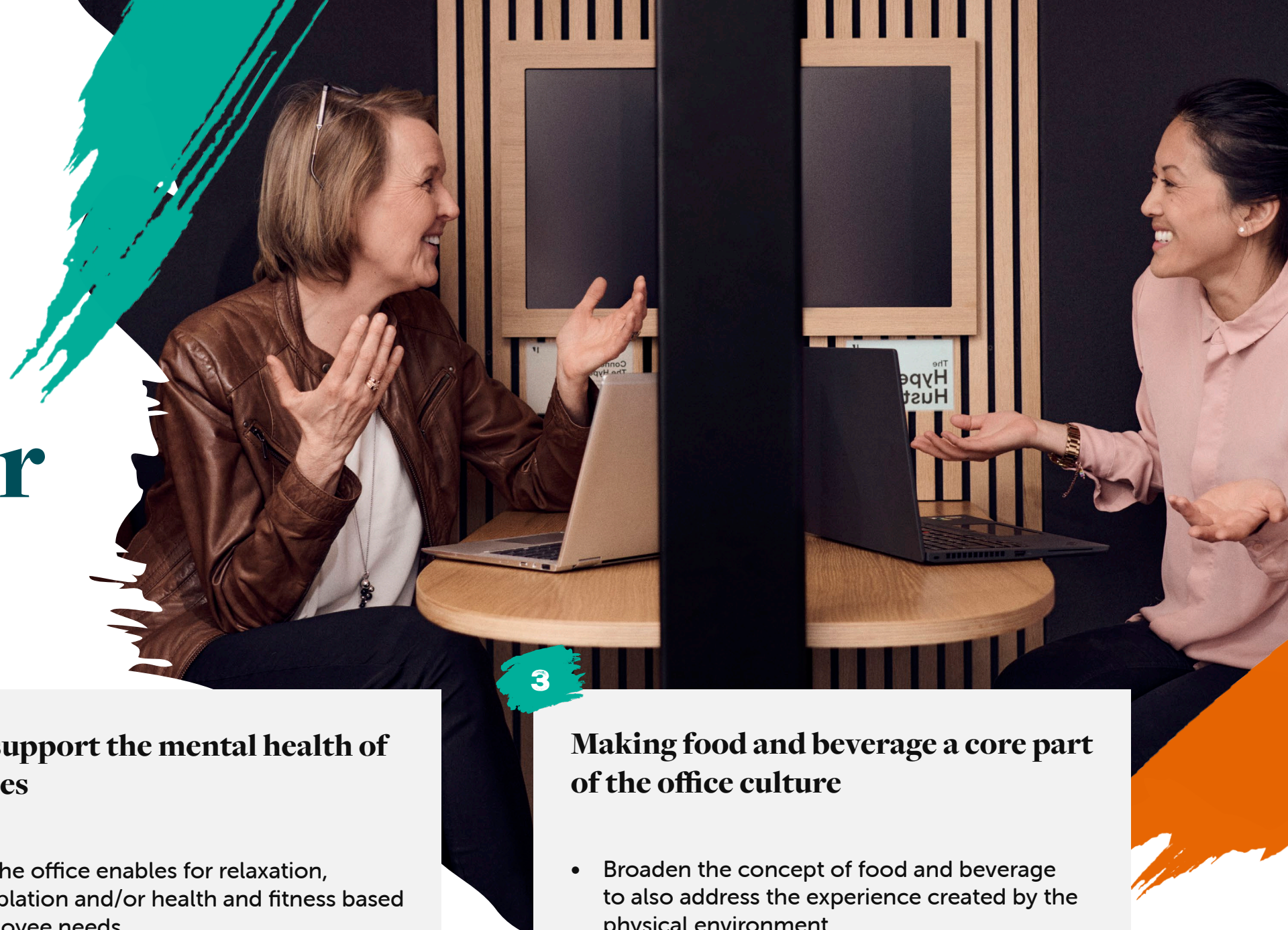
options, could encourage employees back into the office in a more significant way than making office renovations.

Other, more unusual services preferred by employees also connected with the theme of health and wellbeing. Employees ranked access to a massage therapist very highly, which suggests a desire for employers to provide opportunities to relax and unwind during their time at the office.

Services can support an organisation's wellbeing agenda and help companies invest in the health of their employees. Food, physical activities and wellness provisions are clearly high on the employee agenda – and this might make decision makers think twice about cutting such activities, as such a course of action might remove those things that employees most value and lead to a reduction in office attendance.



Tips from us at Coor



1

How to balance between collaboration and focus

- Map out how employees distribute time between activity types in the office – and work with multi-purpose spaces to handle variations
- Consider acoustics, ambience and lighting as important elements in creating different types of work environment
- Think beyond spatial configuration - employee behaviours and the change process are essential to achieve balance

2

How to support the mental health of employees

- Ensure the office enables for relaxation, contemplation and/or health and fitness based on employee needs
- Eliminate damaging behaviours in the office such as a heavy meeting culture or a lack of tolerance for non-work activities
- Expect leaders to drive the change and be present in their employee dialogues

3

Making food and beverage a core part of the office culture

- Broaden the concept of food and beverage to also address the experience created by the physical environment
- Give freedom of choice but provide transparency on nutrition values and environmental impact
- Conduct experiments and engage your employees through tastings and events

Storebrand's inclusive workplace journey

Two key decision-makers at Nordic financial institution Storebrand tell us how their strategy for enhancing experience and supporting people is evolving.

When decision makers were thinking about their hybrid working policy at Nordic financial institution Storebrand, they didn't start by asking how to get people back in the office. Instead, they found it an exciting opportunity to create the workplace of the future, starting with more fundamental questions about their customers and their workforce.

Storebrand's Head of Strategy and People Experience Per Kristian Helland and People Experience Manager Synnove Lunde have been asking different questions about the office experience, such as: How can we organize our work so that we can create the products and services our customers need? How can we create an engaging and inclusive workplace? And how can we ensure that all employees develop and feel a sense of mastery?

As Per Kristian Helland highlights, "It's about realising that getting people back to the office is not success criteria of itself and about understanding how the office is used." He explains how office use has changed in recent months: "In the autumn we found that the use of hot water in the office increased, so we think more people showered at the office." Examples like these show that employee

behaviour might be shifting as a consequence of economic strain, with more people taking advantage of the amenities of the office to cut costs at home.

Helland adds, however, that there was no clear link at Storebrand between people staying at home and the current economic circumstance: "There may be more people staying at home due to economic situation but also maybe more people in the office. Currently, this is more of a case-by-case basis."

Synnove Lunde notes of Storebrand's plans to make changes to the office that they too have seen an increase in need for quiet spaces. "Since the pandemic there have been a few lessons learned, there's a definite increase in desire for focused workspace and we need to understand that different employees and functions have different needs."

Storebrand plan to dedicate generous space for focus work, as well as continue to pilot,



Synnove Lunde,
Storebrand

learn and explore how to best facilitate for hybrid work, both in current offices and when planning for new offices in the future.

But it is not just the physical environment that the company aims to address. Per Kristian Helland highlights the role of culture within the company, arguing that "we have an analytic

approach to how we see our people and recognise that we need to address not only the physical work environment but also the social aspect. People need to be seen as a person and an individual; we take pride in being a company with low staff turnover because we want people to have their full lives with us."

This emphasises the importance of a workplace

that adapts to changing needs over time, supporting employees in different ways throughout their lifetime in order to retain employees. Storebrand offers a wide range of amenities and services to its employees, from health insurance and cabin rentals in Norway to art classes and sports clubs, adapting to the needs of employees in their respective countries across the Nordic region.

"In the autumn we found that the use of hot water in the office increased, so we think more people showered at the office."

Per Kristian Helland, Storebrand

Number of employees: 2,200

Offices sqm (The Nordics): 44,000 sqm

Remote working policy: Trust based.

We call it "dilemma rather than rules", and it is up to each team to discuss how to use the office in their work. Our strategy as such we call "Team based flexibility with office as the core"

These perks are not just for office-based workers but also for people who are less present in the office: "In the pandemic we felt there was a need for supporting people at home and this has continued, but this is based on the judgement of the leader rather than in a prescriptive manner," explains Helland.

Supporting employees doesn't mean a one-size-fits all approach. Storebrand believes that listening to employees needs and understanding the diversity of experience within the workplace can help put support in place to create happy employees and a vibrant working culture.



Per Kristian Helland,
Storebrand

Workplace and wellbeing at Stora Enso

Be ready to change direction to meet new workplace needs, says the Head of Facility Management in Sweden for renewal materials company Stora Enso.

As the Head of Facility Management for Sweden at renewal materials manufacturer Stora Enso, Lars-Gunnar Olsson highlights the importance of companies knowing when to change direction to meet changing needs, emphasizing this as one of the key traits that has kept Stora Enso running as a company for more than 700 years.

He states: "We have struggled as much as anyone else in this current climate to keep the resources we have and to bring in new ones, but when it comes to encouraging staff to come back to the office we do it in different stages than before."

Stora Enso is no stranger to the idea that balance is needed between different spaces in the office, says Lars-Gunnar Olsson. He states that it's important to "find your own combination of collaborative and quiet space, find new technology and adopt to new behaviours to create an inclusive environment. People feel

more connected to their daily tasks rather than to a certain space, so there is no one-size-fits-all approach in this and we need to understand each business and implement local solutions based on the operation's scope. We need meeting areas for different needs as well as social areas, but keeping focused working areas is also important. We are moving into a wider mix of spaces than we had before."

The company also wants to make it easier for employees to reach the office, acknowledging the challenge that the commute presents.

Lars-Gunnar states that Stora Enso "has discussed how to find a purpose-driven angle for employees to get to the office, and in response to this Stora Enso been thinking of new services and new vendors to create a "second-home-feeling". We will enable more charge stations for electric cars as people were previously unable to

charge their car while away from home and in some offices we have "dog guidelines" to enable employees to bring their dogs along to the office."

"We connect this sense of wellbeing to organisational behaviour and management"

Lars-Gunnar Olsson, Stora Enso



Lars-Gunnar Olsson, Stora Enso

Stora Enso is also looking into how people commute to work and are trying to find sustainable and user-friendly ways for those employees taking public transport or other alternatives to make getting to the office easier.

The company has generally adopted a more holistic understanding of workplace wellbeing, he explains: "We even connect our facility management approach to workplace management and organisational behaviour when adjusting our offices and workplaces to suit the hybrid mode of working.

Refurbishing the office and changing the furnishings and interiors will not bring people back to the office by itself – we need to work together with our core business stakeholders to understand the challenges to employees

Number of employees: 9,800 employees in Sweden-Finland 21,000 globally

Offices sqm (The Nordics): 25,000 sqm

Remote working policy: hybrid work allowed – the amount of mandatory office days decided by each line management

and try to find the right combination of methods to support the daily life of teams and individuals for the years ahead.

We had an internal assessment by healthcare professionals and they found that Creating a healthy environment involves many different approaches– we try to create a supportive atmosphere where people feel included and where they are able to speak up and where there is freedom to choose how you work. We aim to be a conscious organisation with clear targets and responsibilities and where leadership based on supportive culture and mentorship. People in organisations like this are proven to be healthier – but it requires a significant amount of effort from leadership to realize this approach to company culture".

Skanska building a community workplace

The modern workplace? It's all about finding balance and the right mix of spaces and services for employees, says the global construction company Skanska.

Development and construction company Skanska has faced up to the challenges of modern working by adapting its working style and workplace to suit new needs. Jonas Daun, Facility Manager for the Skanska HQ in Stockholm, told us that "from a company standpoint we have offices as our main workplace and the main part of our work should be done here. But we allow employees flexibility in terms of coming into the office, and as a result the Stockholm office on most days is at 60-70%

"Now people want something else from the office that they didn't have before"

Jonas Daun, Skanska

capacity compared to before the pandemic and we are slowly raising that amount."

Jonas Daun highlights how needs have changed: 'Now people want something else from the office that they didn't have before, the office should be more cosy and more like home but also have better hybrid meeting capability. This means more smaller rooms with new equipment and video conferencing software, 80% of all our meetings have someone join remotely so these are important to address in the workplace'.

Number of employees: 8,100 in Sweden, 30,000 globally

Offices sqm (The Nordics): 50,000 in Sweden

Remote working policy: At Skanska, we get better together when we get to be together – that's why we believe that our offices, projects and fixed facilities are important places for us, not just for the work that is performed there. Skanska wants to offer the employees the opportunity to work more flexible than before. The flexibility is individually adapted in consultation with the manager.

Daun acknowledges the need for quieter space: 'People want more focused rooms, they want a space to sit in for most of the day. Currently we don't provide that to the same extent that is wanted, but we are looking at how we can deliver this for people.'

Skanska too acknowledges the challenges of the current economic situation. The situation in our environment creates new challenges which force us to think smarter about costs, among other things. Downsizing to smaller offices which meet the needs of a hybrid workforce is the way forward for Skanska, also subletting office space to other companies to save money. The key is creating an office which meets the needs of employees without wasting space and energy.

"We know that people want to collaborate and have social interaction and meetings, but at the same time they also want their desk and their quiet space," says Daun. "It's about balancing it all and finding the right mix for the company." Downsizing doesn't mean less supportive office spaces, he adds. Finding the right mix of workspaces has helped Skanska make the most of the spaces it has and ensure that its offices offer a great workplace experience to employees.



Jonas Daun,
Skanska

When it comes to services, Skanska understands that these have a significant impact on employee experience: for example, the Stockholm office houses a gym and sports facilities and an in-house restaurant, as well as providing coffees, fruit and sandwiches to employees. And these aren't just perks for the office staff. As a company that employs a lot of construction workers who are on-site and unable to work remotely, it also offers construction workers access to the office amenities such as the gym and sports equipment in order to ensure that they too feel a part of the community.

Facing the Future

Given our new data and insights on the needs of employees and the steps decision makers are taking, what does the future of the Nordic workplace look like? And how will the working landscape change to suit this new model?

Overall, it is clear from our survey that change is still in the air in the Nordics. New conditions and external factors are continuing to reshape the modern office and show no signs of letting up. As we look ahead to 2024 and 2025, the workplace begins to look different, with even small changes having a significant impact on employees and decision makers alike.

Offices will remain critical fixtures in the new landscape of work and are likely to find a better middle ground in the kinds of spaces they offer, with a better mix of settings for collaborative and individual focus work. Whilst it might take time to adjust to the new office set-up, people will be able to use the office according to their need rather than for a singular purpose. This will help drive employees back into the office. Organizing the office in this way will provide a better provision of space for workers in different living situations, thereby making the office more inclusive in its approach to space.

Companies are likely to appreciate more the benefit of investing in social and wellbeing activities, and they will become more targeted in their approach. Consequently, the office will also become the hub of more purposeful events and interventions, using attractive services to create moments for the company to gather, create culture and build social capital. Services focused on wellbeing will become the norm, helping companies invest in the physical and mental wellbeing of their employees in a manner that employees can appreciate and value.

Encouraging employees into the office will become less of a battle of wills and more of a discussion, with companies taking the time to understand the needs of employees while they are in the workplace and working towards meeting those needs. Following the lead of organisations like Stora Enso, who are talking the commute through providing electric charging ports and convenient bus timetables, companies will also invest time into understanding the barriers to office attendance and removing them, making pain-points such as the commute more manageable.



More focus on food and beverage services will also play a part in creating an office environment and experience that employees want to be part of. Providing a wider range of high-quality food and drink options can be a central element of the office's appeal and play a role in creating a greater sense of community within organisations.

To gain a higher level of employee satisfaction, companies must get on-board with the idea that creating a culture of trust and allowing employees the freedom of choice in where they work is likely the way forward for many. Whilst company-wide mandates are tempting they can also cause resentment and chase away employees, particularly younger employees who value freedom of choice very highly. But flexibility doesn't mean compromising on workplace-culture, in fact it can have the opposite effect and result in a more dynamic and open culture within an organization.

With hybrid working clearly becoming the norm for many workers, it poses the question: to what extent will employers actually be obliged to offer employees a proper home-



working environment if they also choose to encourage home-working? As the divide between the home and office continues to blur, there might also be consideration of company subsidies for domestic bills related to home working, a complicated issue to resolve but not impossible. This factor might be driven by increased regulation around the responsibility of employers to their home workers and an ongoing economic squeeze. But this will be developed on a country-by-country basis and many uncertainties will have to be overcome to make this a reality.

In these regards, the Nordic office of the future will become more responsive to the differing needs of employees, whether working in the office or remotely, with more consideration of the balance of spaces and amenities that employees require.

The Nordic workplace of the future is close at hand and a quiet revolution is occurring at the current moment, which will shape how we view the workplace for years to come. We'd like you to join us in discussing this revolution – the results of our survey are just the start.

Do you want support in your workplace journey?

For more inspiring reading about the workplace of the future visit [coor.com](https://www.coor.com)

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