A woman with voluminous, curly, light brown hair is smiling and looking towards the left. She is wearing a grey, short-sleeved, textured knit sweater. She is sitting at a white desk in an office setting, with a window in the background showing a grid pattern. The overall atmosphere is bright and professional.

**STAPLES®**

**Workplace  
Survey 2017**

**The Office, and What Workers  
Want Out of it, is Changing.  
Is Your Business Keeping Up?**

The Staples Workplace survey is a comprehensive study of office workers  
and business decision makers in the United States and Canada.

[www.staples.com](http://www.staples.com)

Businesses are made up of people. And the success of a business, big or small, depends on hiring the best people and keeping them happy and productive.

The office environment is a major factor in that talent retention, one that doesn't always get enough attention. In fact, Staples recently found that 21 percent of employees would take a 10 percent pay cut to work in a nicer environment.

Our relationships with the places we work have changed dramatically. Workers are no longer content with a nondescript cubicle and few amenities. We want to be invested in our place of work and we want the companies we work for to be invested in us.

But of course, the workforce isn't monolithic, and different generations across different industries have varying wants and needs. Companies trying to meet these needs, often find mixed success. Our Workplace Survey took a look at what's working, and what's not, and how Staples can partner with employers to better meet the changing needs of a diverse workforce to keep businesses thriving.

**Neil Ringel**

President, North American Delivery, Staples



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# Snapshot: A New Normal for the Workplace

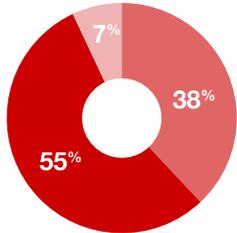
## INSIGHT #1

Working remotely is an expectation, not a perk



of U.S. employees spend all their time at the office

The remaining time is spent working from home, co-working spaces, public places, traveling or in the field



Q Does your employer offer dedicated working remotely days?

- No
- Yes
- Don't know

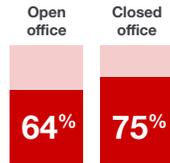
... yet 43% of employees say the ability to work remotely is a **must have**

**14.6M** 

of American office workers utilize co-working spaces

## INSIGHT #2

Open offices could be driving workers to work remotely



Average time spent working in office

Employees in open office plans are on site 64% of the time vs. 75% when in a closed office

**37%** of people in an **open office** say the layout **causes distractions**

**28%** of people in an **closed office** say the layout **causes distractions**



**57%** say working remotely removes office distractions

Q Which of the following most closely represents your feelings about working remotely?



## INSIGHT #3

Lack of private space leads to distractions

The most common distractions are induced or exacerbated by a lack of private space, such as...

- Overhearing coworkers' conversations
- Overhearing co-workers' personal phone calls
- Working in high-traffic areas
- Working near someone who is angry or upset

**55%** of employees say they've **gone outside** to take a phone call

**35%** of workers say the design of their office space **creates distractions** that make it difficult to focus on work

“Today's dynamic workforce requires that companies rethink their workspace to adapt to the changing demands of its employees. Finding the right balance between collaborative and private workspace provides the flexibility employees need to work in an environment that maximizes their productivity.”

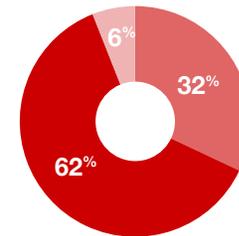
Susan Kill | VP of Furniture

## INSIGHT #4

Flexible seating makes workers feel more connected



of workers say being able to sit in **different locations** deepens their connection to their employer

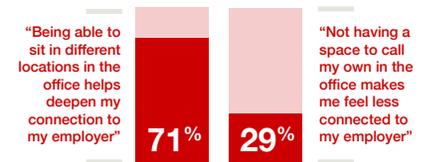


Q Does your office workplace offer agile seating (hotdesking)?

- No
- Yes
- Don't know

Those who work in **healthcare, finance and tech** are most likely to have agile seating

Of those with flexible seating, only 29% say not having a space to call their own in the office makes them feel less connected to their employer



# The Modern Office is a Misnomer

“Going to the office” just doesn’t mean what it used to. In fact, only 32% of survey respondents say they spend all their time in an office. Flexible working arrangements are becoming the norm.

For most, this means the ability to work remotely. Forty-three percent of employees see the ability to do so not as an occasional perk, but a must-have. Nearly 4 in 10 employers allow their employees to work remotely, and 49% of those who offer it allow it at least once a week. Those who work in tech and finance are most likely to be given dedicated days to work remotely.

Some of this is generational: Millennials spend 67% of their time at the office, compared to 74% for boomers (who are more likely to have a private office.)

Looking past Millennials to Gen-Z, companies should be prepared to accommodate more employees working remotely as these younger, “unplugged” generations join the workforce.



**43%**

OF EMPLOYEES

Say

WORKING REMOTELY IS A MUST-HAVE

**32%**

OF EMPLOYEES

Spend

ALL OF THEIR TIME IN THE OFFICE

## Top 5 tips for working remotely\*:



Block out distractions



Set goals



Take breaks



Be prepared



Have a routine

\*Answers sourced from survey respondents who said they worked from home, a public or co-working space

# Shared and Dynamic Workplaces are a Growing Trend

The new definitions of the workplace aren't limited by office and the home. Co-working spaces – such as WorkBar – are not limited to a few forward-thinking tech companies. Approximately 14.6 million US employees are working from such spaces. 25% of millennials say they're doing so at least occasionally.

Another trend is “dynamic” space, things like “hotdesking,” where employees don't have permanent seating. Nearly a third of employees work in a setting that offers agility seating, and of those, 71% say it deepens their connection to their employer. Those who work in healthcare, finance, or tech are most likely to have agility seating.

Employees who work from co-working spaces or have agility seating likely have fewer options for personalizing their space. They could benefit from products and services that help them customize their space, as well as stay organized – since they don't have a permanent workspace.



Approximately 14.6 million American office workers are utilizing co-working spaces



**32%**

of employees say their companies offer dynamic seating

“The growth of dynamic workspaces among US businesses is being led by a changing culture within the workplace and the need to maximize workspace density. As the mobile workforce continues to evolve, companies are leveraging co-working space as a way to fuel collaboration while providing the flexibility that employees demand, and that employers must provide to attract and retain top talent.”

SUSAN KILL | VP Furniture, Staples

# Distracted Employees are a Problem in the Workplace

One term came up over and over again during the survey – distraction.

Over a quarter (27%) of employees often experience at least five different distractions in the workplaces.

These “distracted employees” tend to be younger employees (46% of millennials fit into this category) and are more likely to work in open office settings (45% of all distracted employees).

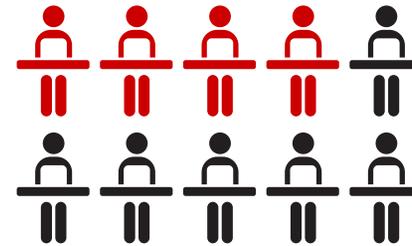
Distracted employees grade the office almost a full letter grade lower than their counterparts, and those who have taken a mental health day (see findings on page 10) are also more likely to be distracted.

All in all, it seems that distracted employees have an overall worse work experience than those who are less distracted.



of distracted employees call this work environment “loud,” the most common complaint.

More than half of employees have went outside to take a phone call, and nearly 4 in 10



wear headphones to block out noise.

The most common distractions are induced or exacerbated by a lack of private space:

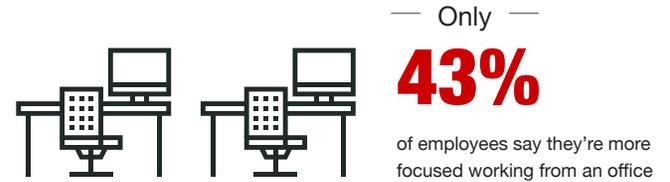
- 1 Overhearing coworkers' conversations
- 2 Overhearing co-workers' personal phone calls
- 3 Working in high-traffic areas
- 4 Working near someone who is angry or upset

# Open Offices Increase Collaboration – and Distractions

More workers in an open office described their environment as collaborative (53%) over closed office workers (38%). But they also were more likely to describe the environment as distracting (37% vs 28%).

In addition, distractions in the office are driving people to work remotely – 57% of workers say working away from the office removes distractions. Workers in a closed office environment spend 76% of their time in the office, as opposed to 64% for closed offices.

- It's important that employers strike the right balance between encouraging collaboration while still providing private spaces. The inclusion of more private spaces may encourage employees to see the office as a place where they can focus, and therefore increase productivity.



“The open office may have gone too far and could ultimately get in the way of itself. While employees in open offices are more likely to think of their office culture and environment as transparent, distractions - like regularly overhearing co-workers' personal conversations - have become unavoidable. These distractions have the potential to hinder productivity, increase stress, and drive employees away from the same offices that were designed with the intention of fostering collaboration.”

MODUPE AKINOLA | Ph.D., Associate Professor of Leadership & Ethics  
at Columbia Business School

# Gap Between What Workers Need and What Employers Offer

Employers who are not already allowing employees to work remotely are going to have to be prepared to offer it or risk losing out in the talent war. If employers oppose or can't allow employees working remotely, then they will at least need to provide office environments that encourage employees to be there.



**43%**

of employees say the ability to work remotely is a must-have. Yet only...



**38%**

of employers allow employees to work remotely

**71%**

of employees say flexible seating deepens their connection to their employer. Yet only...



**32%**

of workers say their office allows it



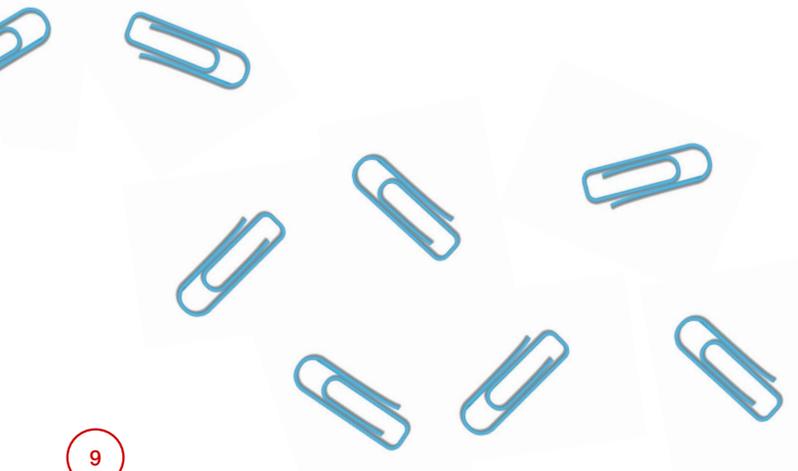
**80%**

of employees believe that employers have a responsibility to keep employees mentally and physically well. Yet only...



**23%**

of employers have a dedicated wellness room



# Stress and Work Go Hand in Hand

Expectations for employees aren't limited to workspaces and supplies. 80% of employees believe that employers have a responsibility to keep them mentally and physically well.

And work definitely has an effect on employees' well-being. "Stressful" is the most common negative attribute employees give their workplace.

Employers should be taking measures to reduce the amount of negative stress that employees experience. This expectation means that those who do not risk losing out in the talent war.



**44%**

of employees have taken a mental health day. Workers in the education field are most likely to do so, and women are more likely to do so than men (52% vs 37%)



**76%**

of employees agree that stress at work depletes health and vitality and



**64%**

agree that it inhibits learning and growth.

# What Makes a Wellness Room Work

One way companies can meet expectations concerning health is a wellness room. Yet, only 23 percent of employers have one. Those who work in healthcare, finance, and tech are most likely to have wellness rooms in their workplace.

Employees with access to a wellness room grade their workplace higher overall (3.0 vs 2.6, out of 4). Those that already have wellness rooms likely could benefit from improving them by adding elements to make them more comfortable, private, and sanitary.

## Most desired aspects of a wellness room:

-  Comfortable seating
-  Power outlets
-  Refrigerator
-  Privacy
-  Lock on the door

**“An effective wellness space should, above all else, serve as a place to escape from the daily stress of the workplace. Whether a nursing room, meditation space, or exercise room, these spaces reflect the culture of the company and are increasingly becoming key drivers in the pursuit of top talent within a competitive hiring landscape.”**

SUSAN KILL | VP Furniture, Staples

# Office and Facilities Managers Feeling Left Out

Office and facilities managers are often the glue that holds their respective office together. Yet they're often feeling underappreciated and misunderstood. Managers generally feel positively about their jobs, but the one negative they're likely to feel is undervalued. Only 8% of facility managers and 13% of office managers say their fellow employees completely understand what they do.

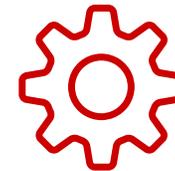


**43%**

of office and facility managers say they have more to contribute to their company, but are not given the opportunity to do so

**54%**

of office managers and...



**60%**

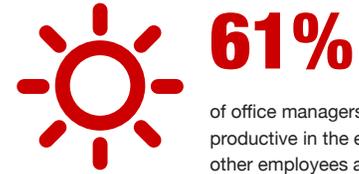
of facilities managers say they've been given educational opportunities by their employers

# Poor Understanding of Roles Affects Performance

Those distracted employees we mentioned earlier? They're distracting office and facility managers too.

40% say it's easier to get work done around vacation seasons. In fact, only 54% of requests office and facilities managers receive are appropriate for their job role.

Providing tips and training on how to better manage other employees and advocate for themselves would help them work more efficiently.



61% of office managers say they're most productive in the early morning before other employees arrive

## Inappropriate things managers have been asked:

1

"To be Santa Claus at the Christmas party."

2

"To explain complicated tax situations while I'm trying to work."

3

"The printer is jammed. Asking the status on HR items. Telling me the cleaning people are terrible. Complaining about our location. Asking me if I got their email right after they send it."

4

"Plane tickets to come back from the Dominican."

5

"Can you bail me out of jail?"

6

"To be allowed to sleep in the bathroom."

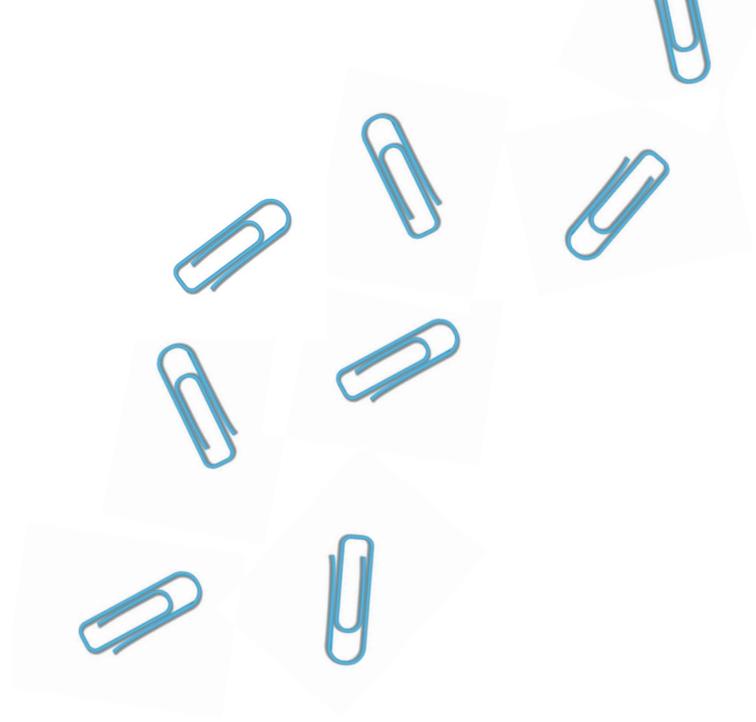
# Methodology

The Staples Annual Workplace Survey was conducted by KRC Research on behalf of Staples. 1,004 full-time employees and 200 office managers and facilities managers were surveyed in the U.S. and Canada.

# About Staples

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Staples brings technology and people together in innovative ways to consistently deliver products, services and expertise that elevate and delight customers. Staples is in business with businesses and is passionate about empowering people to become true professionals at work. Headquartered outside of Boston, Mass., Staples operates primarily in North America, with additional offices in South America and Asia. More information about Staples is available at [www.staples.com](http://www.staples.com).



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