

the
future
of **work**

**TREND
REPORT**
2022

Are you ready for the future of work in Canada?

The pandemic has completely upended the way Canadians approach work – where it takes place, how we meet, when we log on, and off – and much more. As a result, Canadian employers are learning to adapt to new realities while facing new expectations on workplace flexibility.

Staples Professional, the business-to-business division of Staples Canada, has supported mid-size to enterprise-level Canadian businesses, institutions, and governmental agencies and has a deep understanding of what they need to thrive. In partnership with Angus Reid Group, Staples Professional surveyed office employees and senior decision-makers at businesses of all sizes across Canada to better

understand the current and future landscape of work.

With The Future of Work Trend Report, you'll have recent, relevant knowledge and critical insights from Canada's leading business solutions partner and North America's leading research company – all of which can help your organization successfully navigate the future of remote, hybrid and in-office working and drive your business forward.



Methodology

Study

In partnership with Angus Reid Group, Staples conducted a survey among Canadian office-working employees and senior decision-makers to understand the current and future landscape with respect to remote, hybrid and in-office working.

Sample

The survey sample consisted of employees and senior decision-makers (employers) at companies/organizations with 5 employees or more:

Employer sample: n=505

Employee sample: n=1,010

Field Window

August 15th to 24th, 2022

Reporting Notes

Throughout this report, results are broken out by remote, hybrid and in-office working arrangement defined as follows:

Remote workers: work-from-home/remotely 5 days on the average week

Hybrid workers: work 1 to 3 days in the office in an average week

In-office workers: work in the office 4-5 days in an average week



Current Working Circumstances

Current Working Circumstances

Current state of work – most employees are settling into modes of working that are best for them.

Gone are the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic where most of the workforce was forced into a largely remote working model, in addition to the pre-pandemic days where most primarily worked in the office. White collar **employees are currently evenly split with roughly one-third working remote, hybrid or primarily in-office models.**

Most **employees currently working remote or hybrid prefer their current arrangement**, and those who don't generally want some other configuration of remote / hybrid work – almost none of those currently

working remote/hybrid would prefer to return to a primarily in-office model.

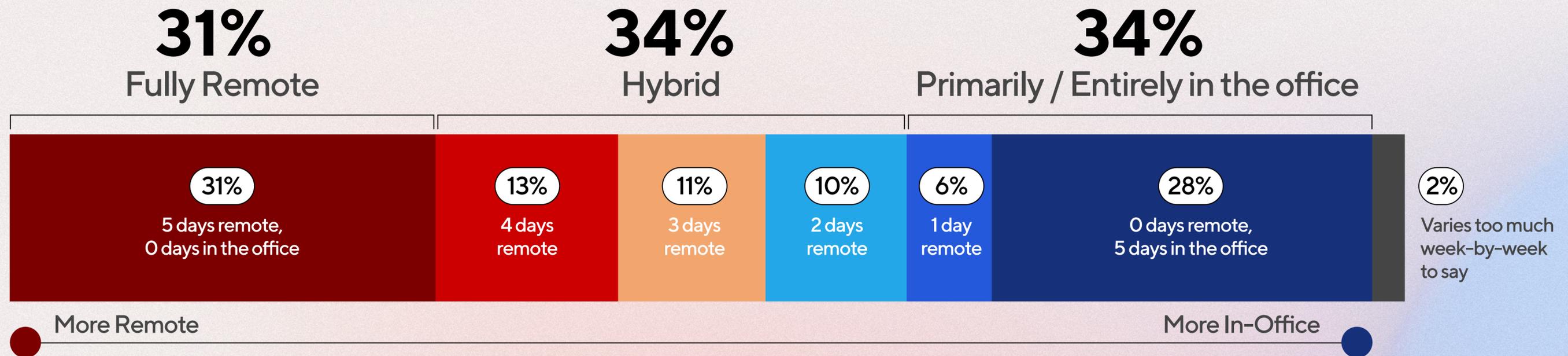
In fact, **remote workers are by far the most satisfied with their current mode of work** and in-office workers the least satisfied. And employers aren't fully appreciating this – employers underestimate how satisfied their remote workers are and overestimate satisfaction at primarily in-office companies.



Working Remotely vs. In-Office (employees)

The distribution of working remotely vs. in-office is fairly even among employees. Approximately one-third are fully remote, one-third are hybrid (work 2-4 days per week remotely), and one-third work primarily or entirely in the office (0-1 days per week of working remotely).

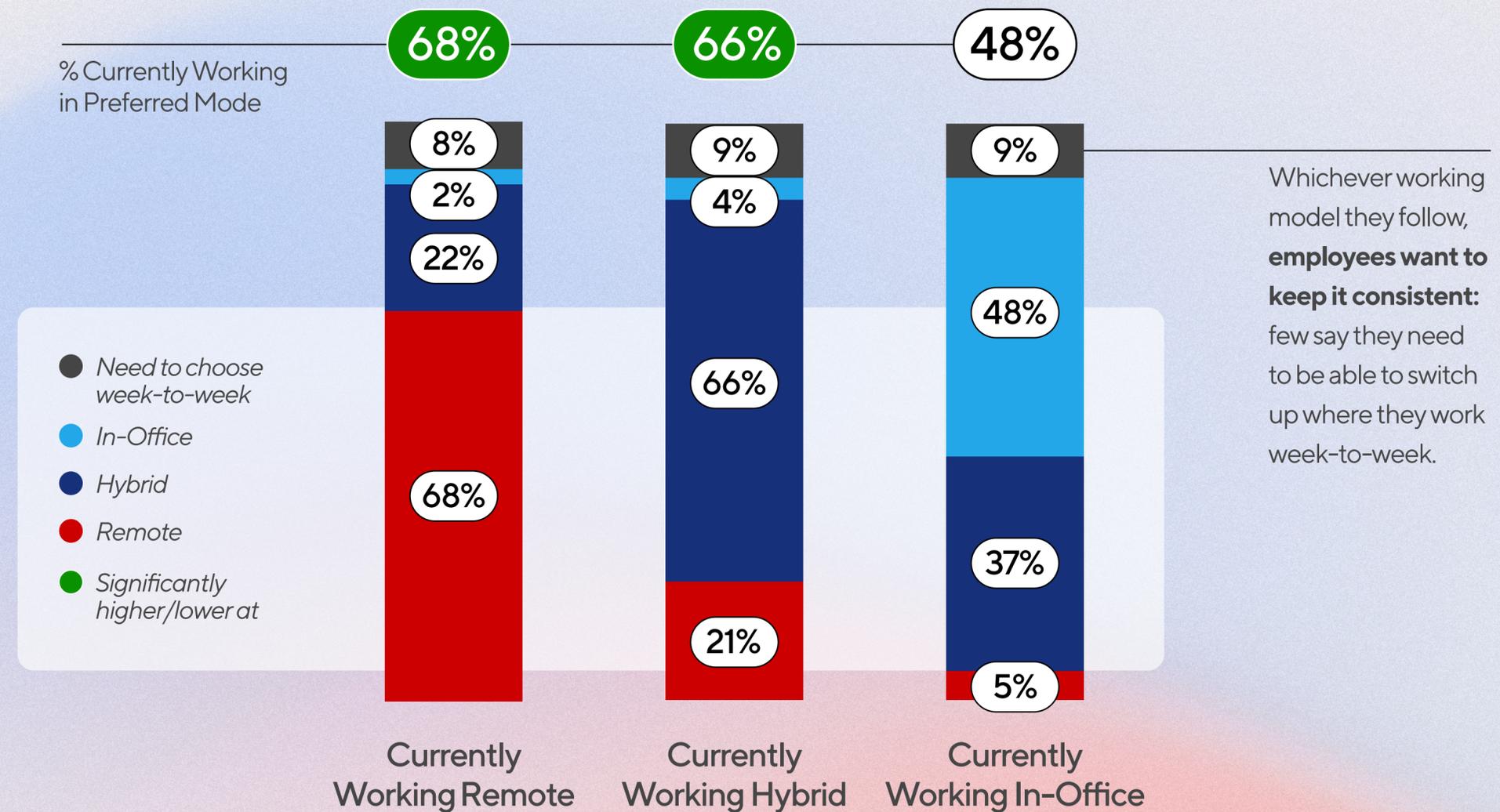
Current Balance of Working Remotely vs. In-office



Working Remotely vs. In-Office (employees)

Most employees currently working remote or hybrid models are happy with their current arrangement, with those who aren't preferring some mix of hybrid/remote work over returning to the office. Meanwhile, half of those working primarily in the office say it's their preferred model, with many eyeing a hybrid model as the better option.

Preferred Balance of Working Remotely & In-office vs. What Employees Are Currently Doing

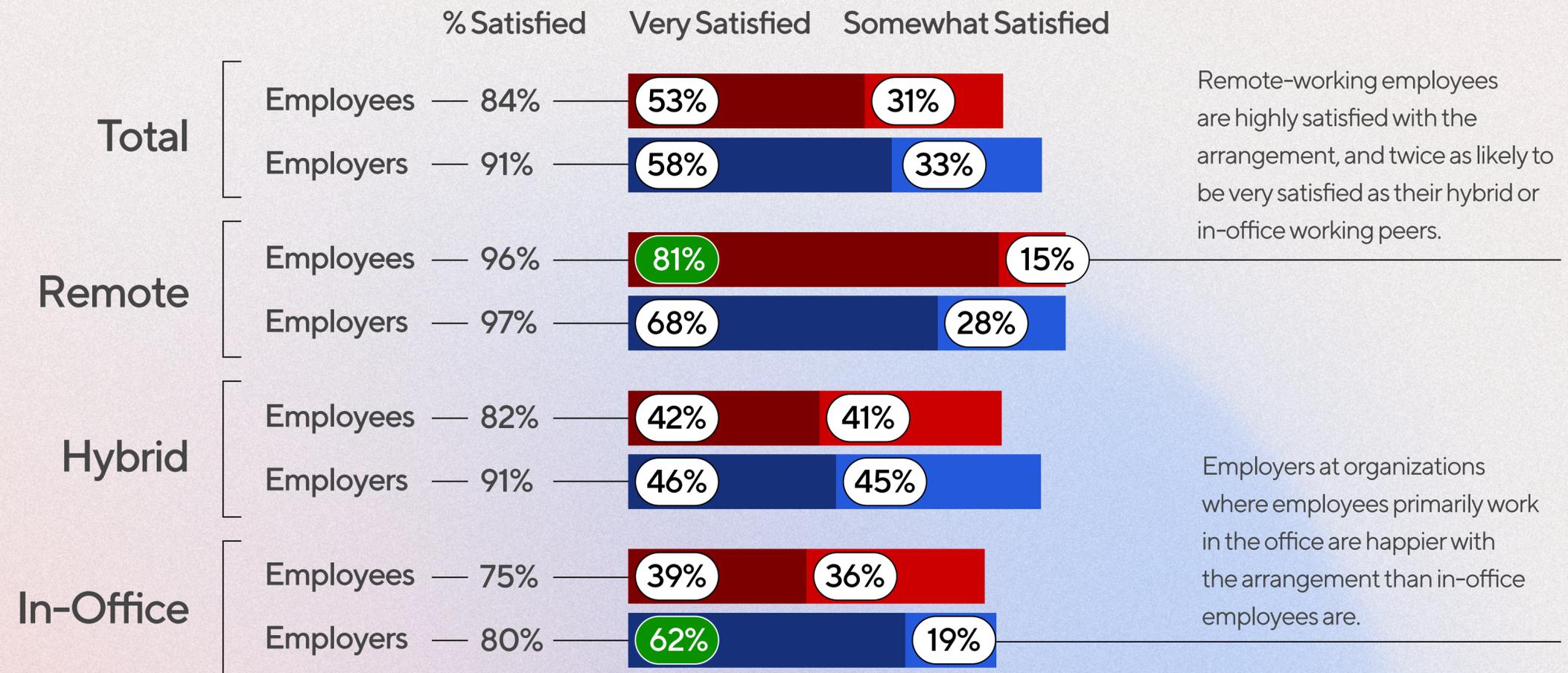


Satisfaction with Working Situation

While Canadian workers are largely satisfied with their current balance of in-office vs. remote workdays overall, employers and employees are notably misaligned in satisfaction with remote vs. in-office working models – employees are happier than their employers with the ability to work remotely, whereas employers are happier than their employees with a primarily in-office working model.

Satisfaction with Working Situation

By current work model



● Significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence

Base: Employees (n=1,010), Employers (n=505)

A2. How satisfied are you overall with the current balance of in-office vs. remote workdays you have at the moment?

A2. How satisfied are you overall with the current balance of in-office vs. remote workdays your company/organization currently offers employees?

Looking Ahead on Remote Work

Looking Ahead on Remote Work

Access to newer modes of working (e.g. hybrid, flex hours, etc.) are becoming crucial for many employees, and this is impacting which companies they will consider for employment.

Employees are carefully watching employers' plans and policies around new modes of working – **most employees say they'd be less likely to consider an employer if they don't provide options for new modes of working** (e.g.: remote, hybrid, flex hours, 4-day work-week).

In fact, half of employees would be much less likely to consider an employer if they don't offer a fully remote option or flex hours.

Meanwhile, **many companies are still lacking a clearly-defined plan for mode of work going forward** – only one-third of employers say their organization has communicated clear plans for remote/hybrid work to their employees for 2023 and beyond.

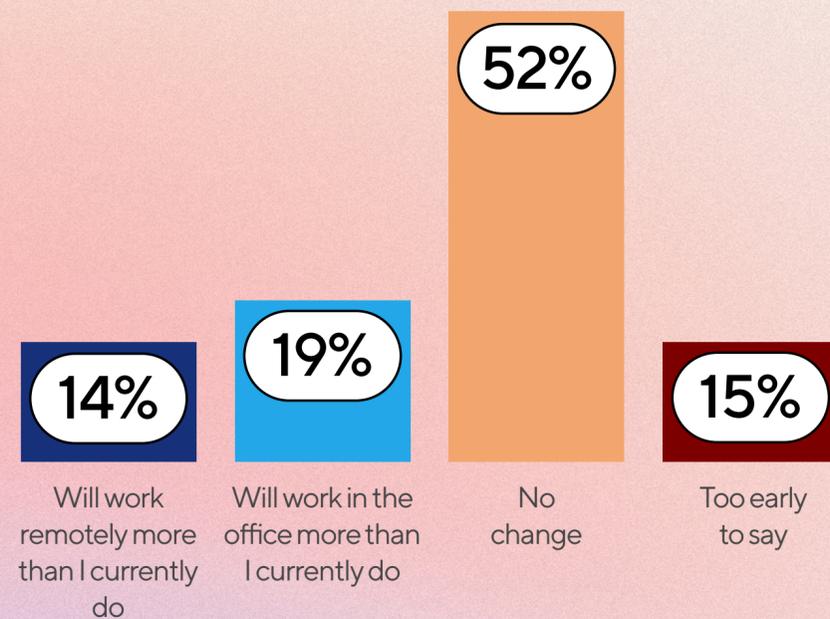
And some employees aren't getting the message: employees are significantly more likely than employers to say no guidelines have been communicated at all.



Expectations for Future Working Situation

Employees don't expect major changes in their mix of remote vs. in-office work over the next 1-2 years. In particular, many employees aren't getting the message about their company's longer term plans for remote working – half of employees say there are no guidelines for 2023+ whereas most employers say at least some guidelines have been communicated.

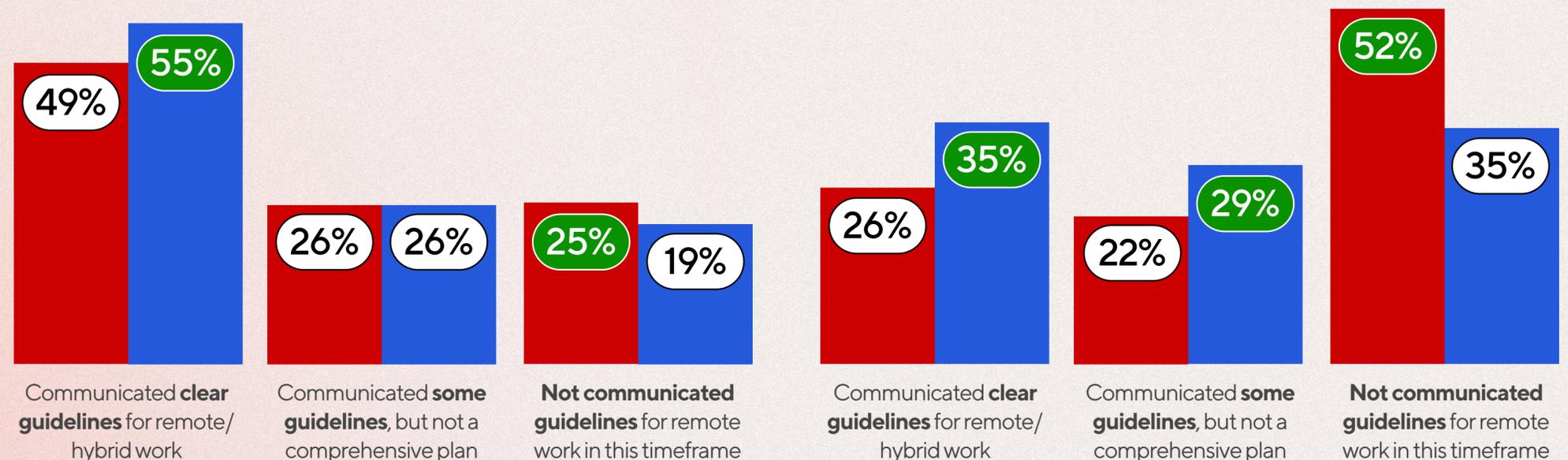
Expected Mix of Working Remotely vs. In-office Over Next 1-2 Years Among Employees



Future of Remote Work Employees vs. Employers

For the remainder of the year

For 2023 and beyond



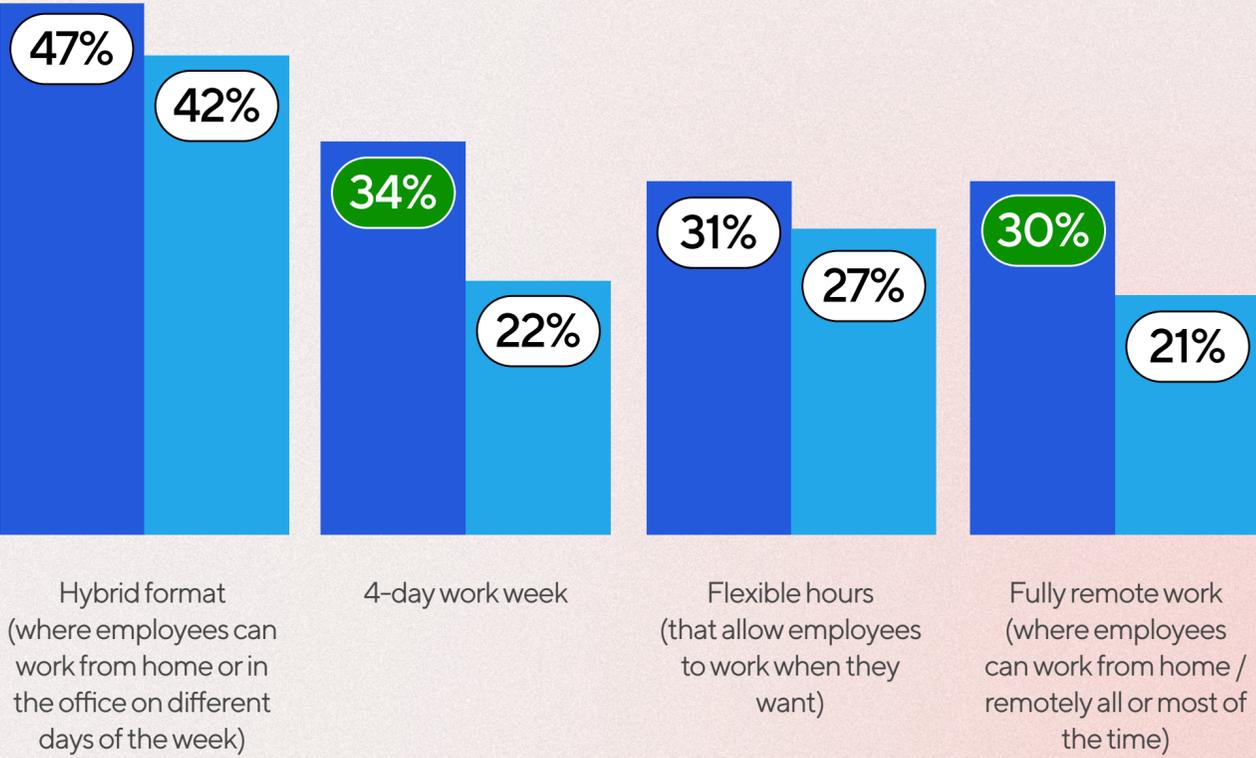
Newer Modes of Working

New modes of working that allow flexibility for when and where employees work have become crucial for a sizeable minority of the working population and some employers may be underestimating its importance. In particular, those currently working remote or hybrid models are more likely to feel these need to become standard going forward.

Future Working Arrangement Offerings

% saying each option is a "must-have" over the next 1-2 years

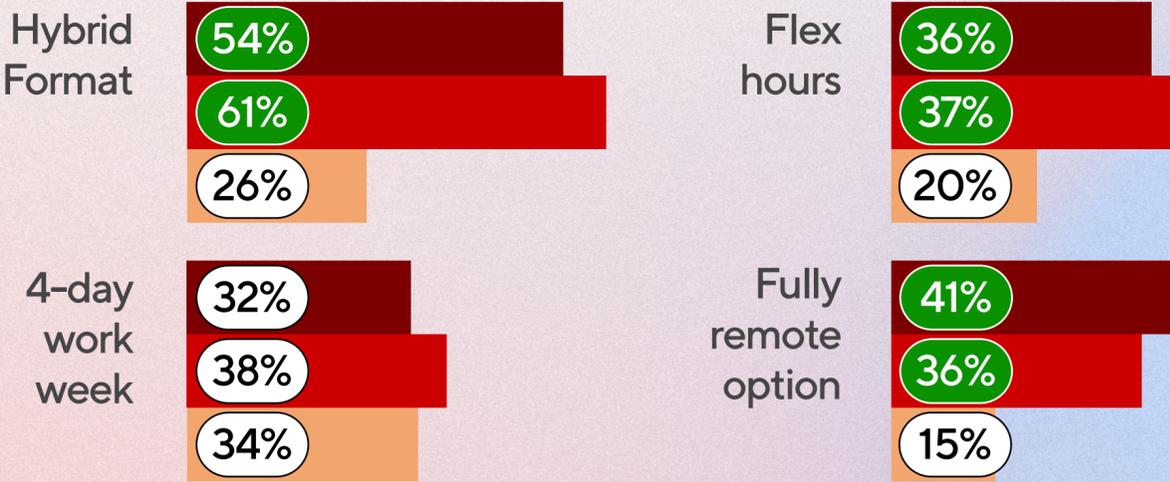
● Employees ● Employers
● Significantly higher/lower at



Future of Remote Work

By Current Mode of Working

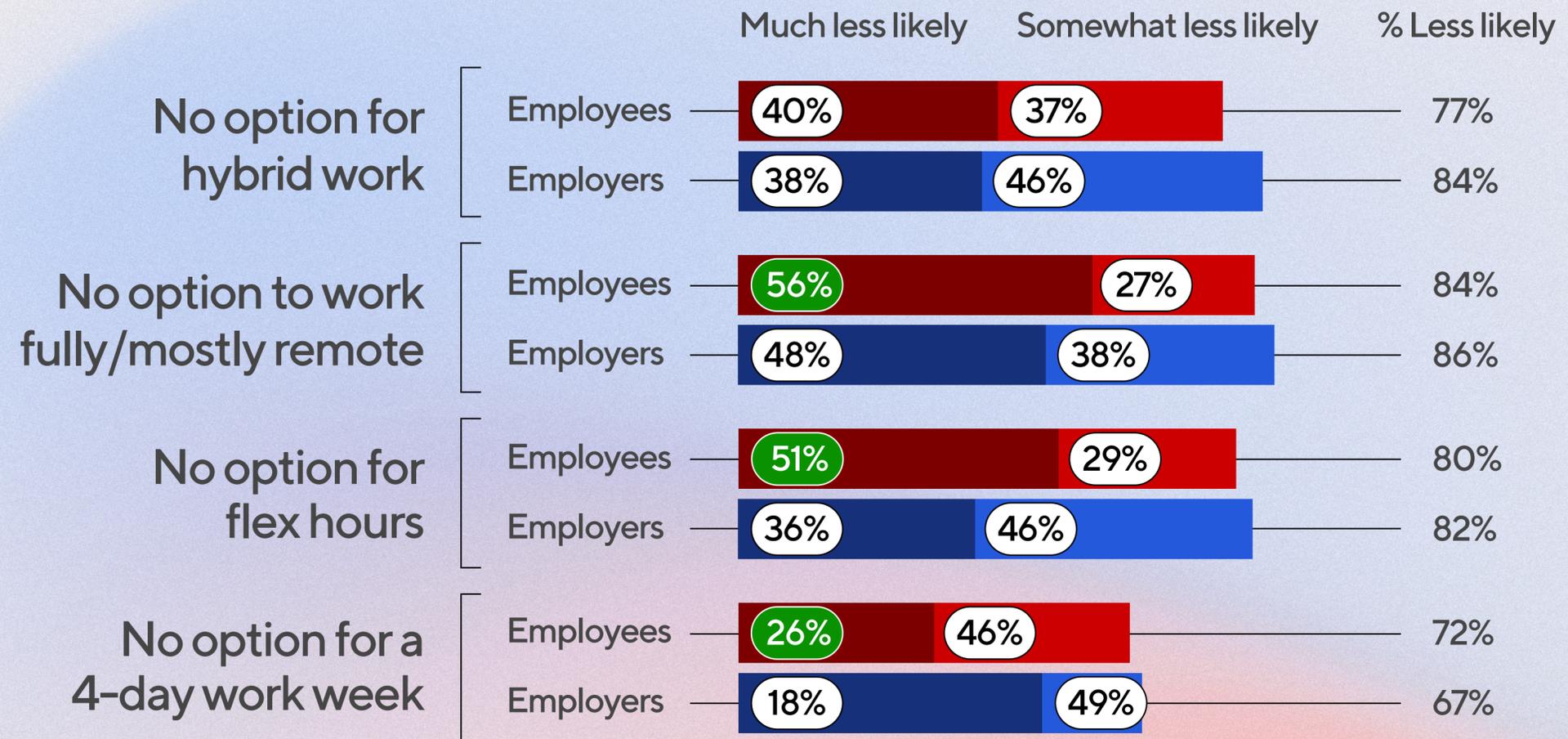
● Remote workers ● Hybrid workers
● In-Office workers



Considerations for New Employment/Recruitment

While employers understand the potential impacts of not offering newer modes of working on recruitment, some underestimate the extent to which these options impact employees' consideration for their company – half of employees say they'd be much less likely to consider a new role if it doesn't allow remote work or flex hours.

Impact of Job Features on Likelihood to Accept Role Employees & Employers



● Significantly higher/lower at

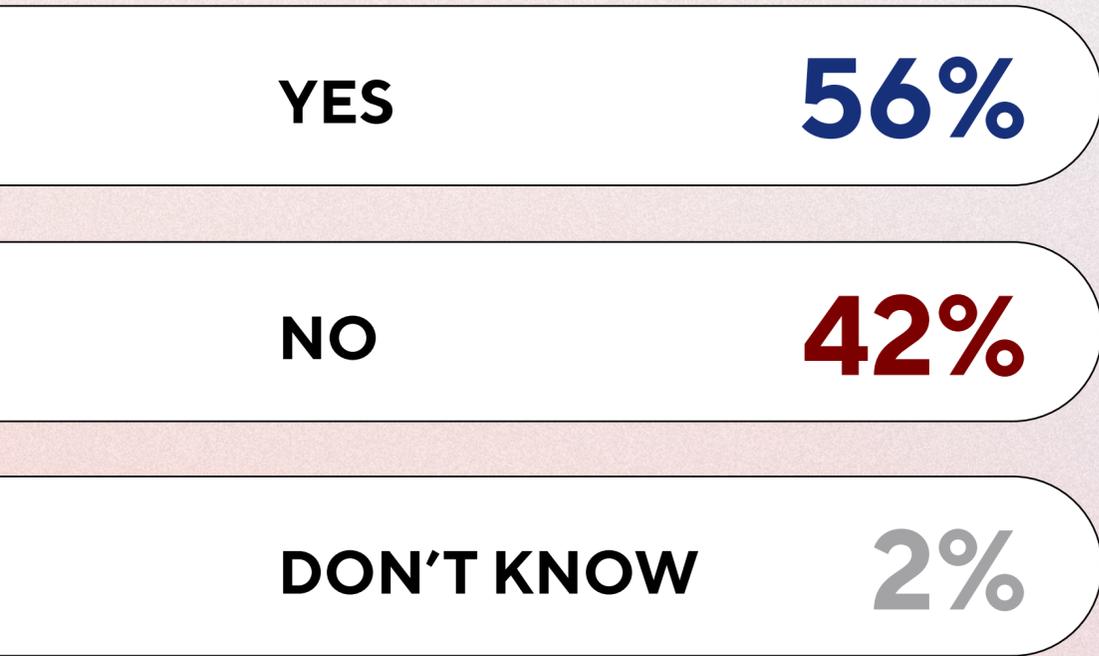
Base: Employees (n=1,010), Employers (n=505)

A18 (Employee). If looking for a new job, to what extent would each of the following impact your likelihood to consider a potential employer/role?
A18 (Employer). If hiring new talent, to what extent do you expect each of the following would impact potential candidates' likelihood to consider a role your company/organization?

Impact of Flex Hours

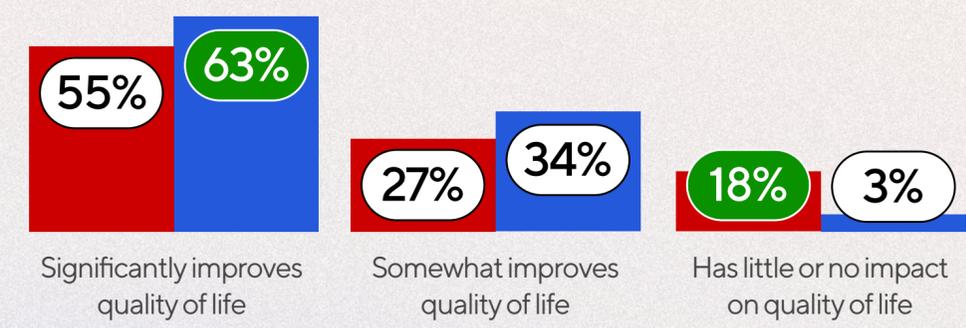
Half of employers offer flex hours for their workforce, and employers and employees are mostly aligned on the quality-of-life benefits flex hours provide. Among those working flex hours, over half say it has a significant improvement in their quality of life.

Are “Flex Hours” Offered to Employees at your Organization?



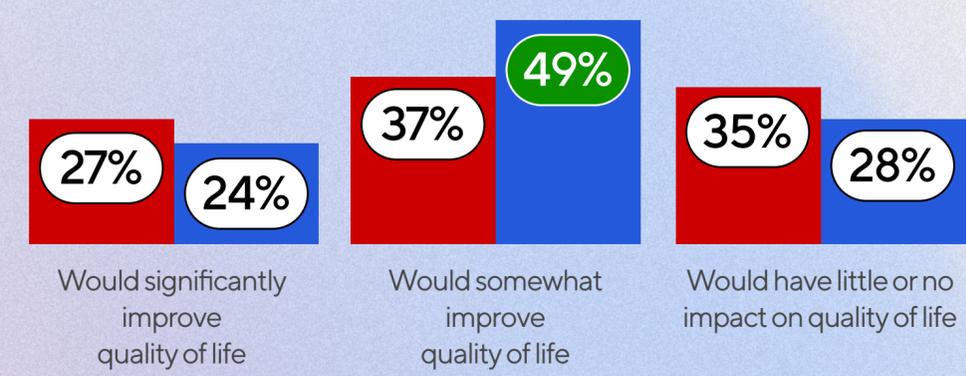
Impact of Flex Hours on Employee Quality of Life

Among remote + hybrid companies/employees who offer flex hours



Impact Flex Hours Would Have on Employee Quality of Life

Among remote + hybrid companies/employees who DO NOT offer flex hours



Working-From-Home Infrastructure

Working-From-Home Infrastructure

Many remote/hybrid employees are making do with or without employer support for their home workspace.

Most (but not all) hybrid or remote employees are happy with the support they've received from their employer to work effectively outside of the office. Seven-in-ten rate their employer as good or excellent, with the other three-in-ten saying their employer has been adequate or poor in getting them what they need. Employers are underestimating the size of that latter group, with only 17% of employers saying their company has done an adequate or poor job.

While only half of remote/hybrid-working employees have a dedicated home office, most are happy with their setup. That said, **the basic necessities for a home office have a large**

impact—one quarter of remote/hybrid employees describe their workspace as simply adequate or poor, and this group is significantly more likely to lack basic elements such as a dedicated desk, adjustable chair or even proper lighting.

Similarly comfort and well-being is a key need and gap in employee's current home office furnishings – over half say that a more comfortable/ergonomic chair or desk would make their home workspace more usable.

Most employees are footing the bill themselves to ensure they have the equipment needed in their home workspace to work effectively – only

19% have received any type of stipend from their employers, and 15% have received furniture. Only one-in-ten overall say they received a stipend that covers all of what they need.



Employer Support for Remote Work

Most remote/hybrid employees feel good about what their employer has provided to allow them to work effectively from home, although employers have a rosier picture of how well they're doing.

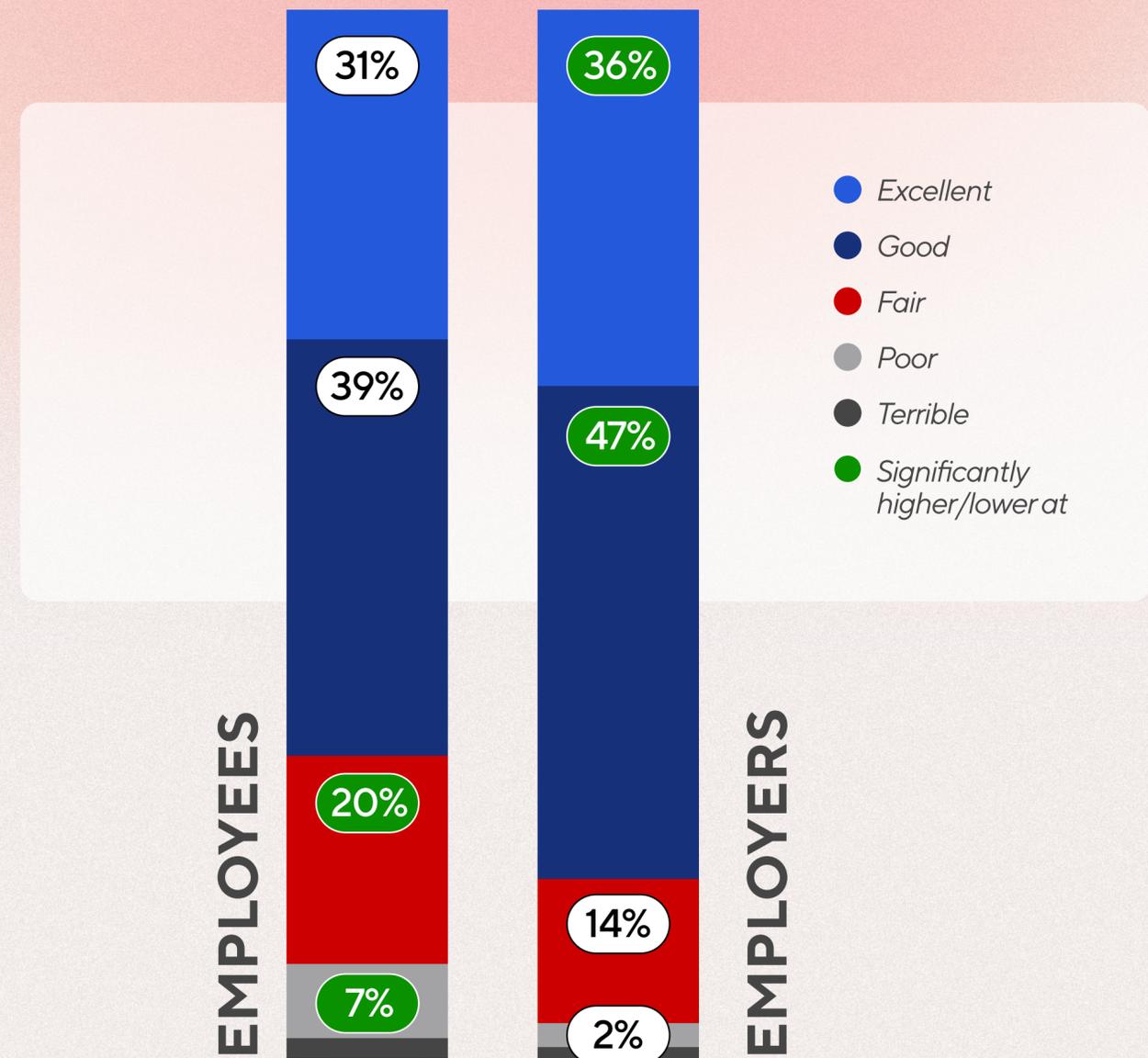
EMPLOYEES 70%

Say their employer has done a good/excellent job at providing what is needed to work effectively remotely.

EMPLOYERS 83%

Say their company has done a good/excellent job at providing what is needed for employees to work effectively remotely.

Rating of Company in Ensuring Needs of Remote/Hybrid Employees are Met



Employee Work-from-Home Setup

Employees have mixed circumstances while working from home, and while not all have a dedicated office, most rate their working-from-home setup highly. Better equipped employees are happier with their work-from-home setups overall, in particular those who say their setup is 'good' or 'perfect' are much more likely to have a dedicated desk, adjustable chair or proper lighting.



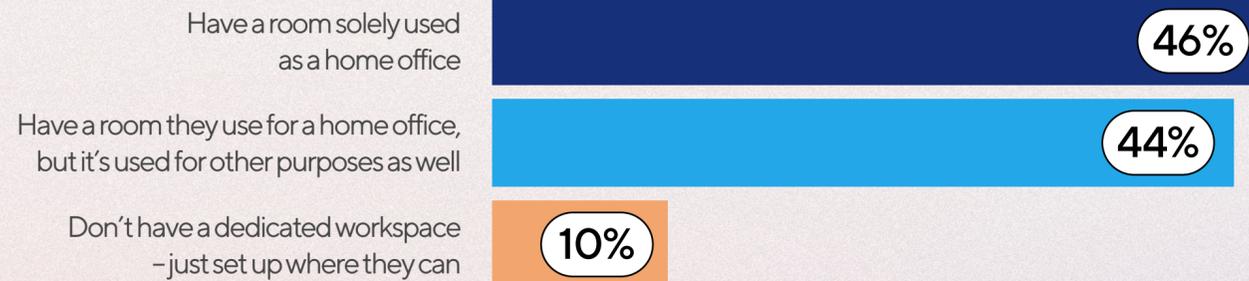
Rating of current home office setup

73%

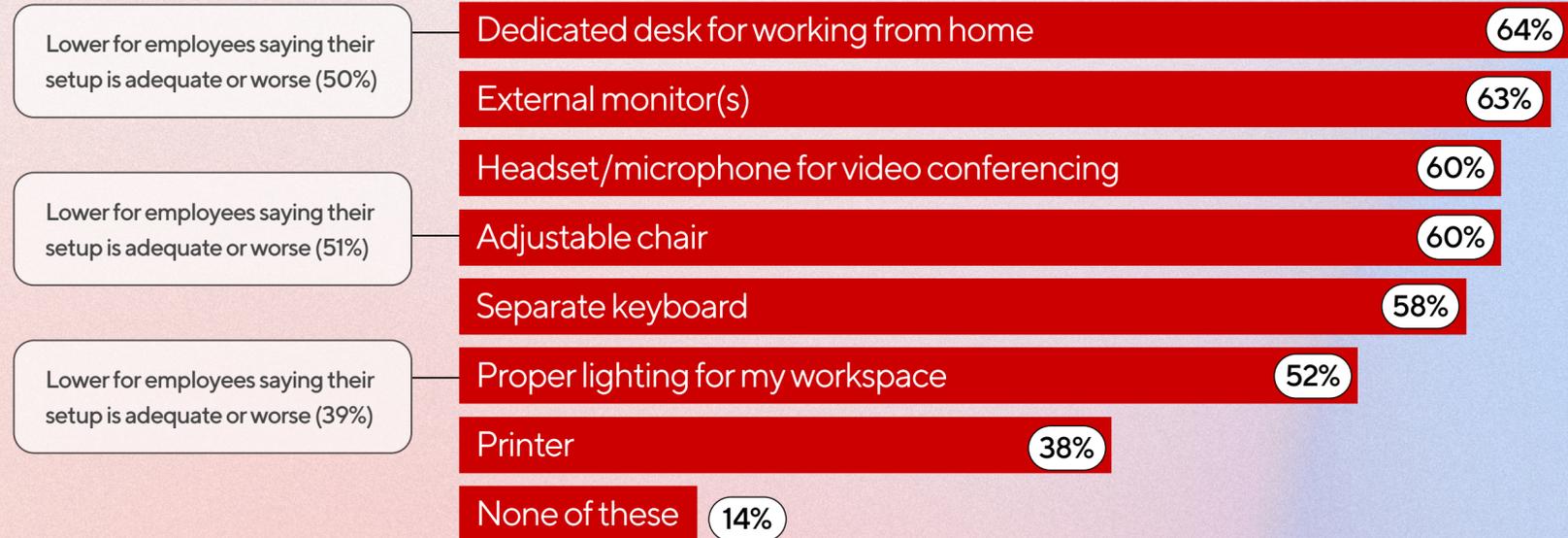
Are happy with their current home office setup

Access to Workspace at Home

Among employees



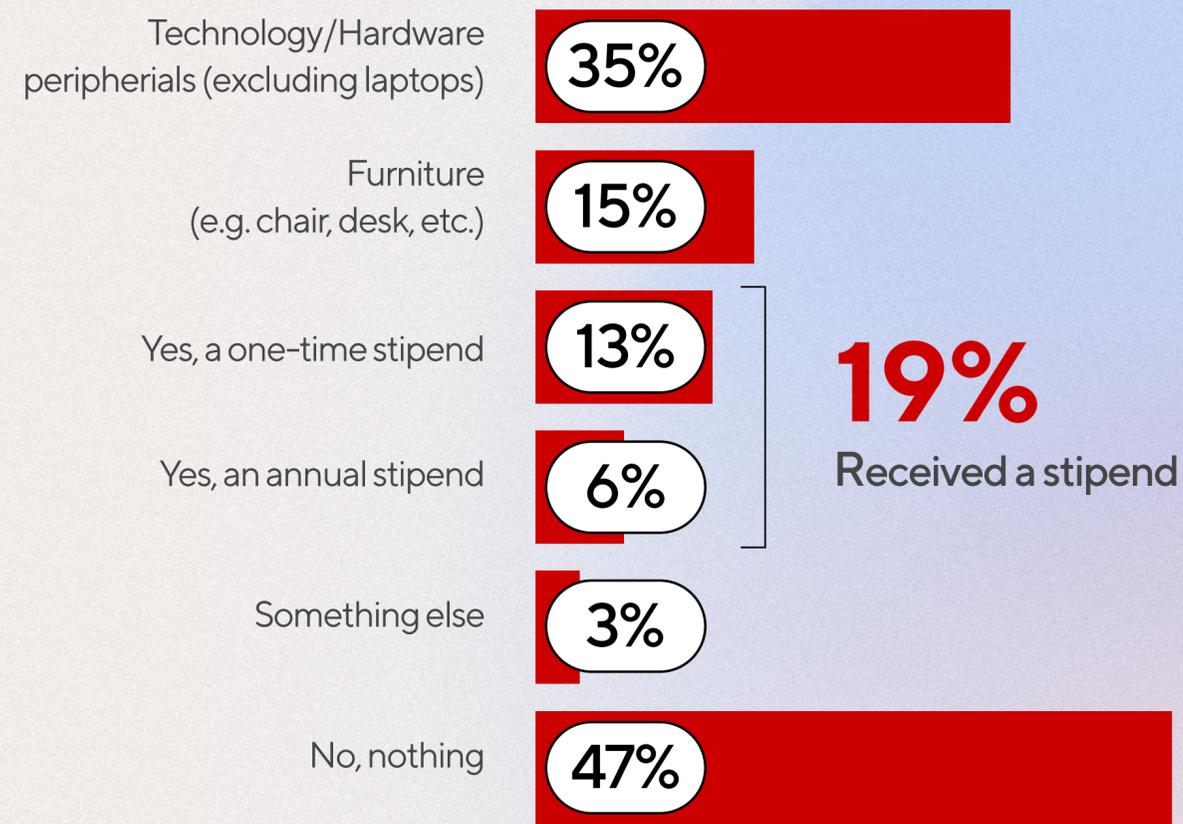
Home Office Equipment Employees Currently Have



Employer Support for Employee Work-from-Home Setup

Stipends for equipping home workspaces are not common, with only one-in-five employees having received one. Furthermore, only half of those receiving a stipend say it covers what they need, leaving one-in-ten employees overall having received sufficient funds to equip their home office.

Employer Supports for Home Workspace Among All Employees



Stipend Coverage Among employees who receive a stipend



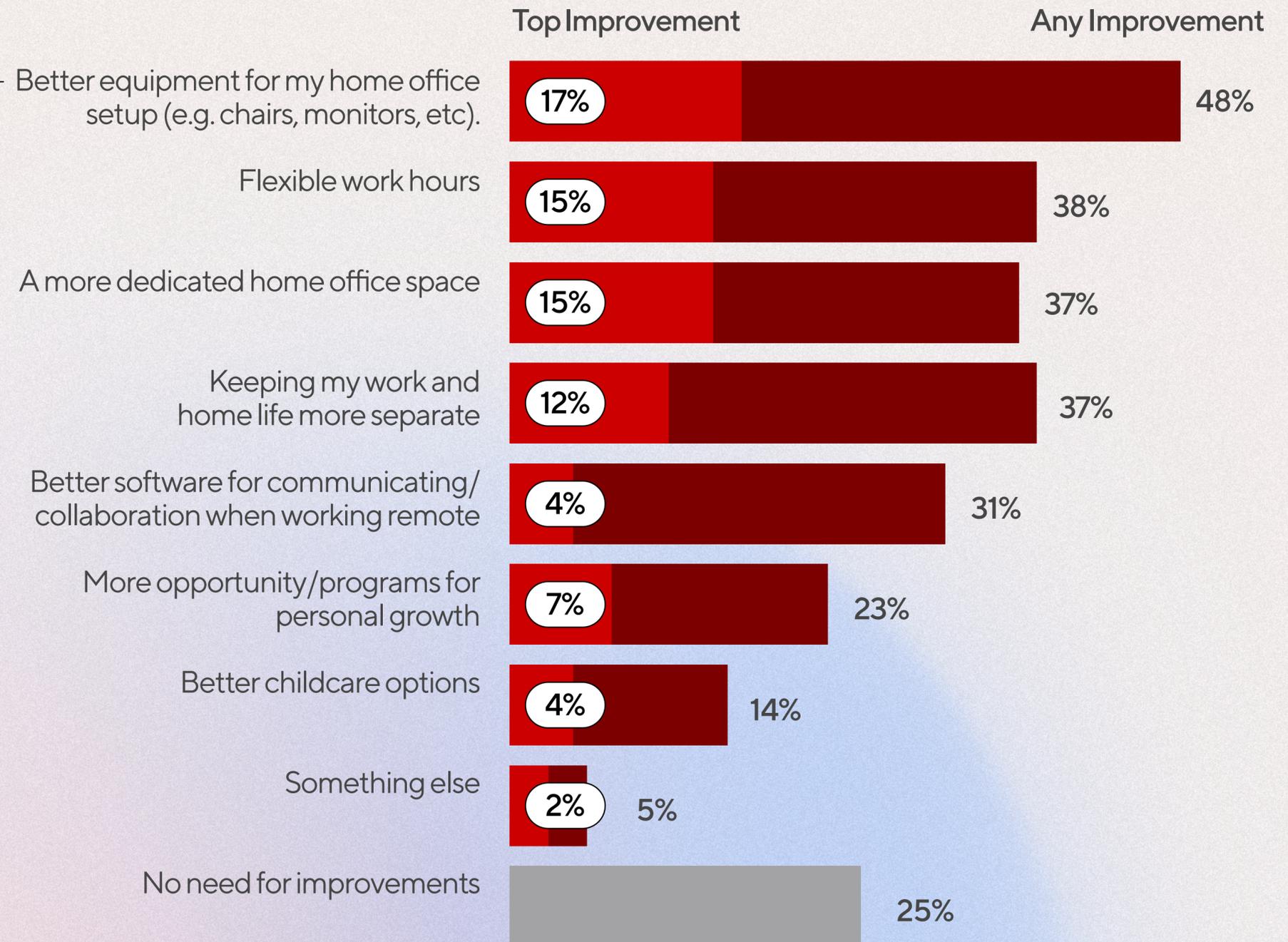
Improvements to Work-from-Home Setup

Improved equipment is the top thing remote/hybrid workers say would improve their experience working from home. In particular, those rating their employers lower in terms of providing them with what they need are substantially more likely to say they need better equipment for their home workspace.

Employees rating their employers low on providing what they need are significantly more likely to **lack basic office equipment** (83%).

Employers are **overstating the need of remote/hybrid employees to keep their home & work life more separate** in addition to having **access to better communications software** – employees are less likely than employers to say these two things would improve their experience.

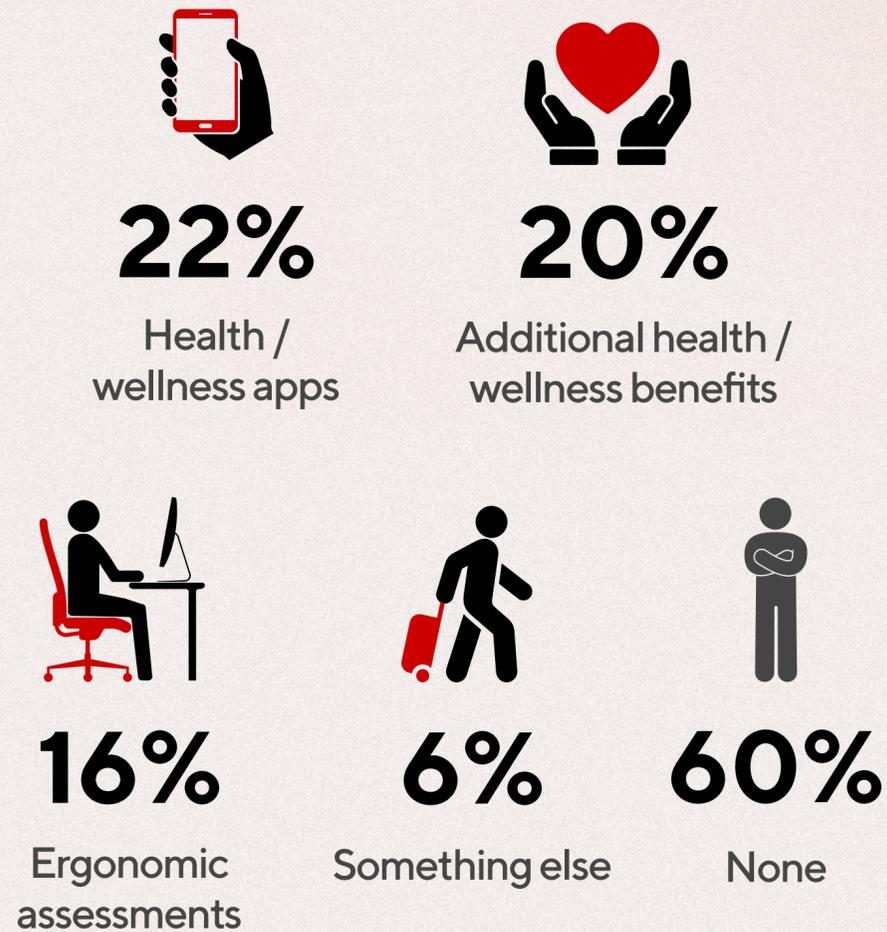
Improvements to Work-from-Home Experience Among Employees



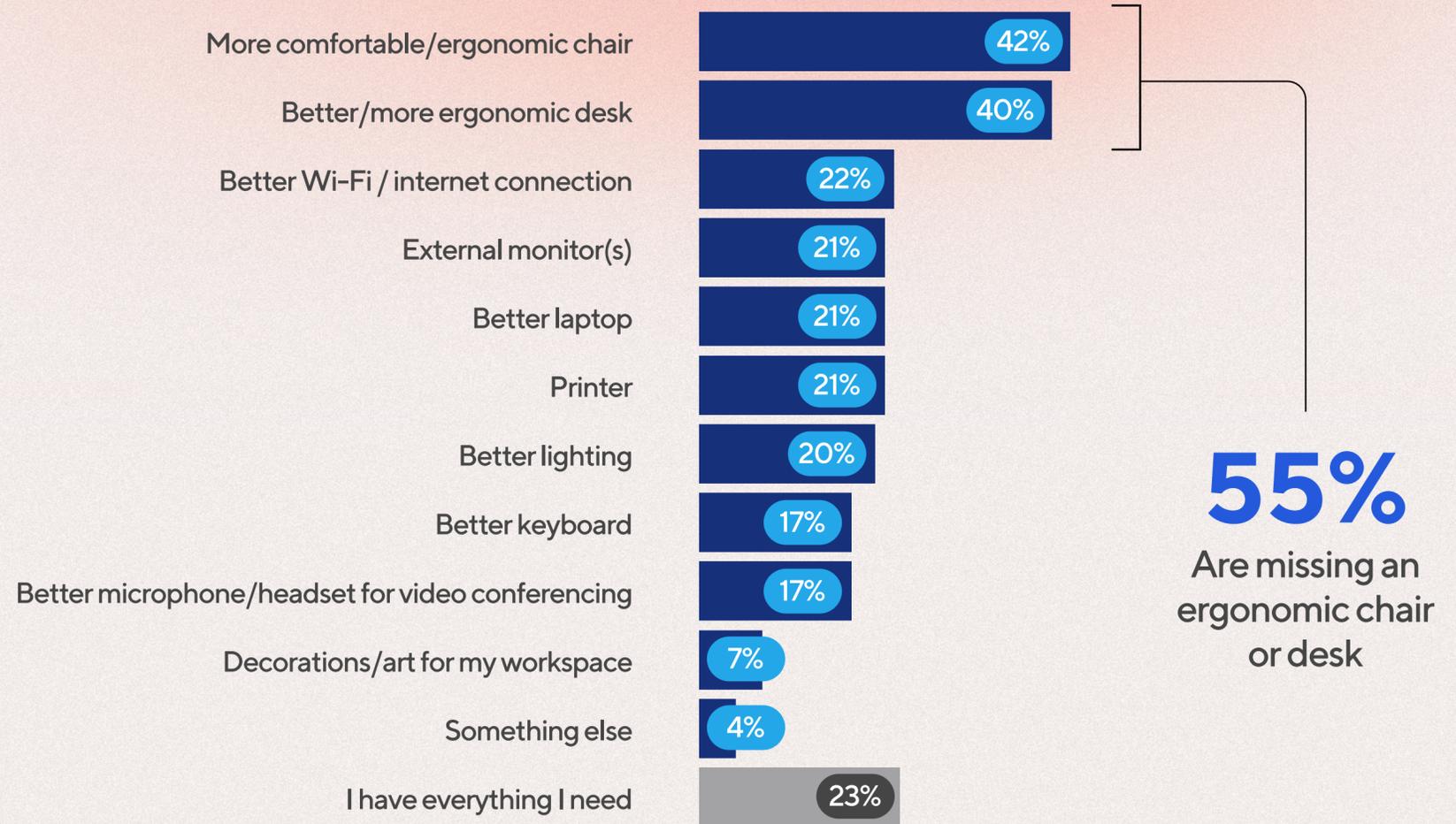
Improving the Work-from-Home Environment

The most common items employees are missing to make their home workspace more usable are more comfortable/ergonomic chairs or desks – over half of employees say they could use one of these. Meanwhile, ergonomic assessments are seldom provided by employers.

Health and Wellness Services Offered by Employer



What Equipment Would Make Home Workspace More Usable



Challenges with Remote Work

Challenges with Remote Work

Remote work is widely seen as a trade-off – time savings better enable employees to manage their work-life balance, while most other challenges employees face are more likely to be made worse than better with remote work.

For remote, hybrid and in-office workers alike, the **top challenges employees are facing are around keeping motivation/morale up and mitigating burnout**, although these challenges are lessened for fully remote employees.

In fact, remote-working employees are noting fewer challenges overall in their day-to-day work life.

Ultimately, for those experiencing challenges, the **impact of remote work is seen as a trade-off by employees and employers alike**

between time saved / more control over their schedule to meet work demands vs. communication/collaboration factors that are seen to be worse when working remotely.

Currently, a **minority of employers are actively addressing these core challenges**, including those that employees feel are made better with remote work. Looking ahead, the current 'tug of war' between time savings with remote work vs. its detrimental impacts is unlikely to change unless employers can find a way to mitigate work-life

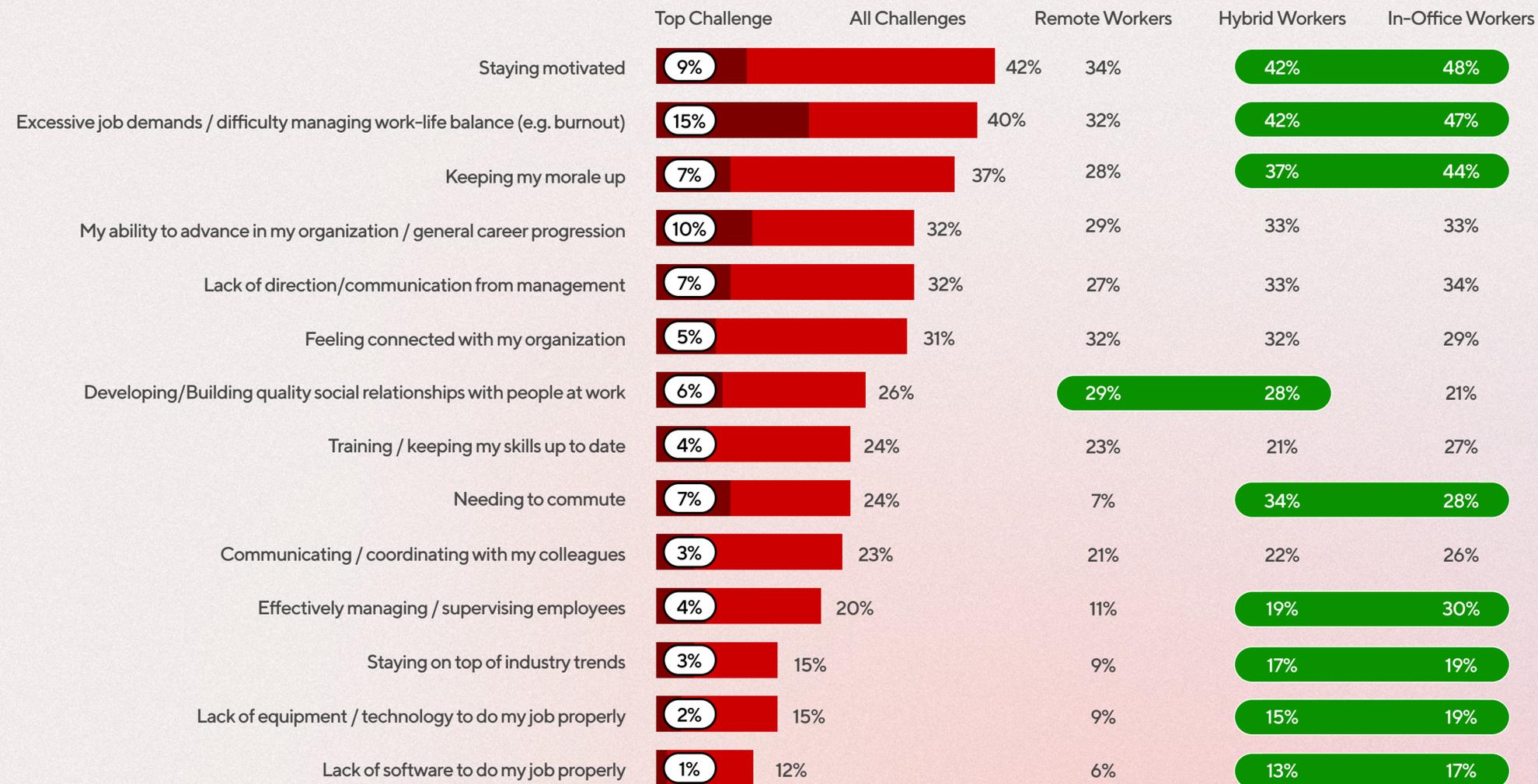
balance concerns when having employees in the office OR improve the communication/collaboration impacts made worse from working remotely.



Biggest Employment Challenges (employees)

Top employee challenges are centered around burnout and morale, although these are less of an issue for those working remotely vs. hybrid or in-office. Whether employees are coming into the office at all on a weekly basis is the primary factor influencing challenges they are experiencing, with hybrid and in-office employees noting a greater number of challenges overall.

Biggest Challenges Employees are Facing at Company



Whether employees are coming into the office on a weekly basis is the primary factor influencing the number of challenges they are experiencing, with hybrid and in-office employees noting a greater number of challenges

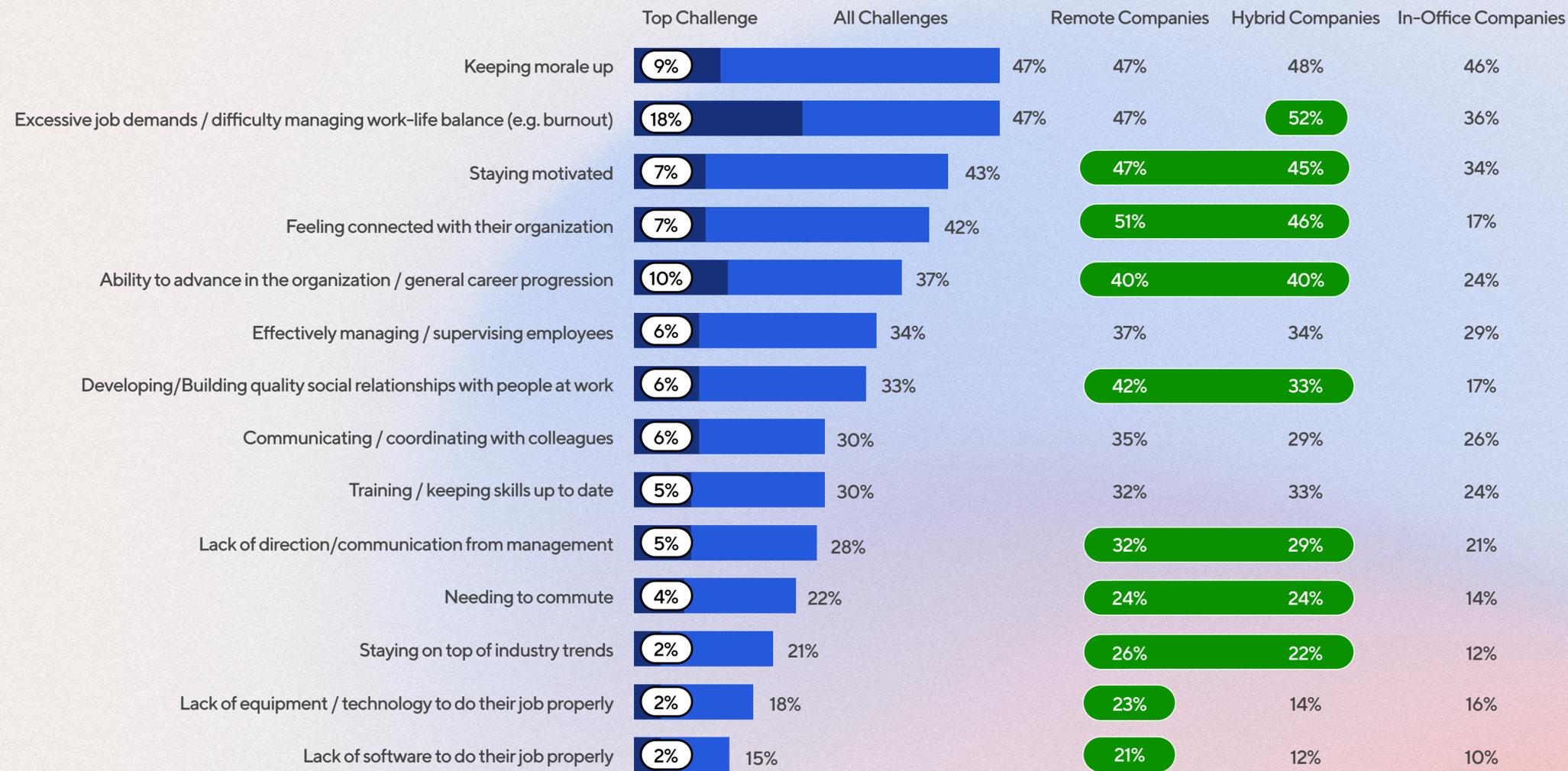
● Significantly higher/lower at at 95% confidence

Base: Employers (n=505)
B1. What do you think are the biggest challenges employees at your company/ organization are currently facing at their jobs?

Biggest Employment Challenges (employers)

Employers are largely in-tune with top challenges employees are facing around morale and burnout. Meanwhile, employers at companies who allow remote work in any form (hybrid or fully remote) are more likely to not challenge their employees' experience than those in the office.

Biggest Challenges Employees are Facing at Company

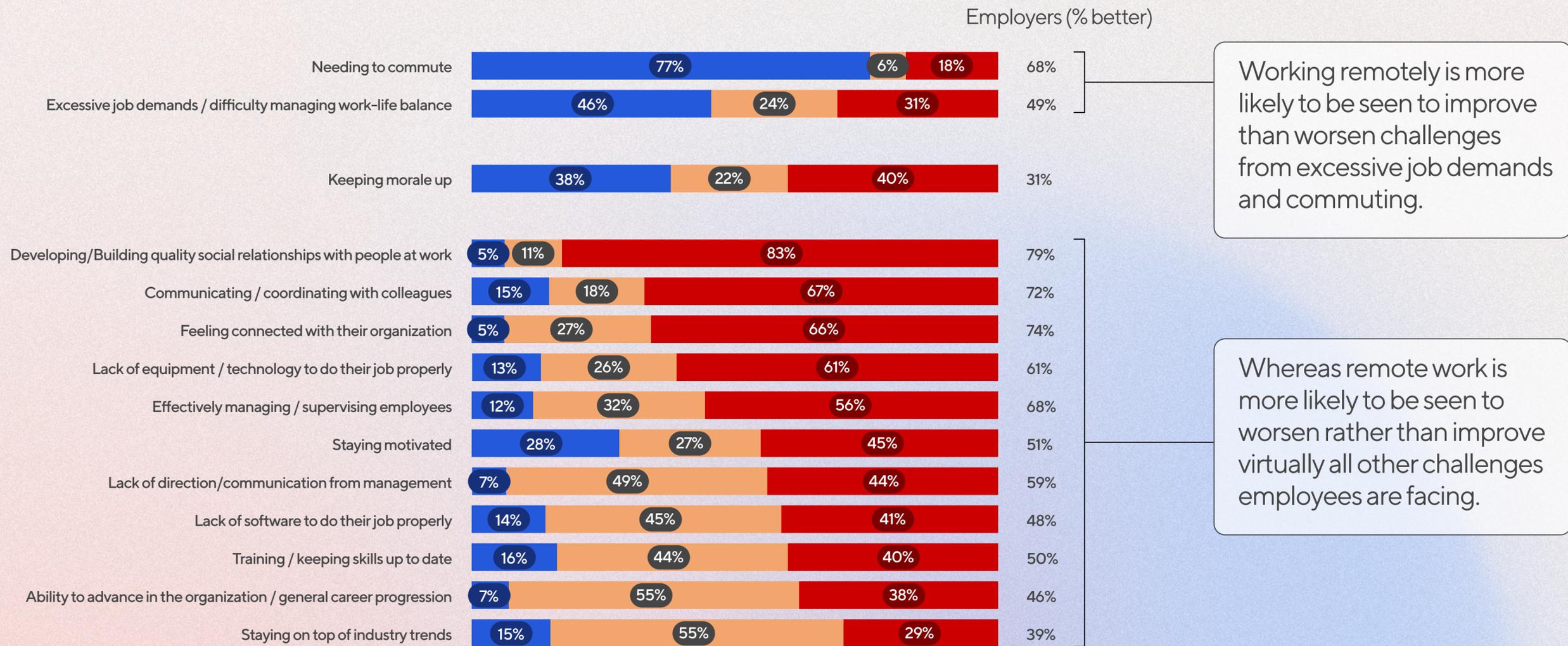


For employers, **offering remote work in any capacity (fully remote or hybrid) is the main differentiator in terms of how many challenges they believe employees are facing** – employers at remote and hybrid-working companies expect their employees are facing more challenges overall.

Impact of Remote Work on Challenges

There are a notable few challenges that remote work is thought to improve more than worsen among those experiencing them. What remote work is most commonly seen to improve is eliminating time spent commuting and managing excessive job demands.

Impact of Remote Work on Job Challenges
Among remote & hybrid employees

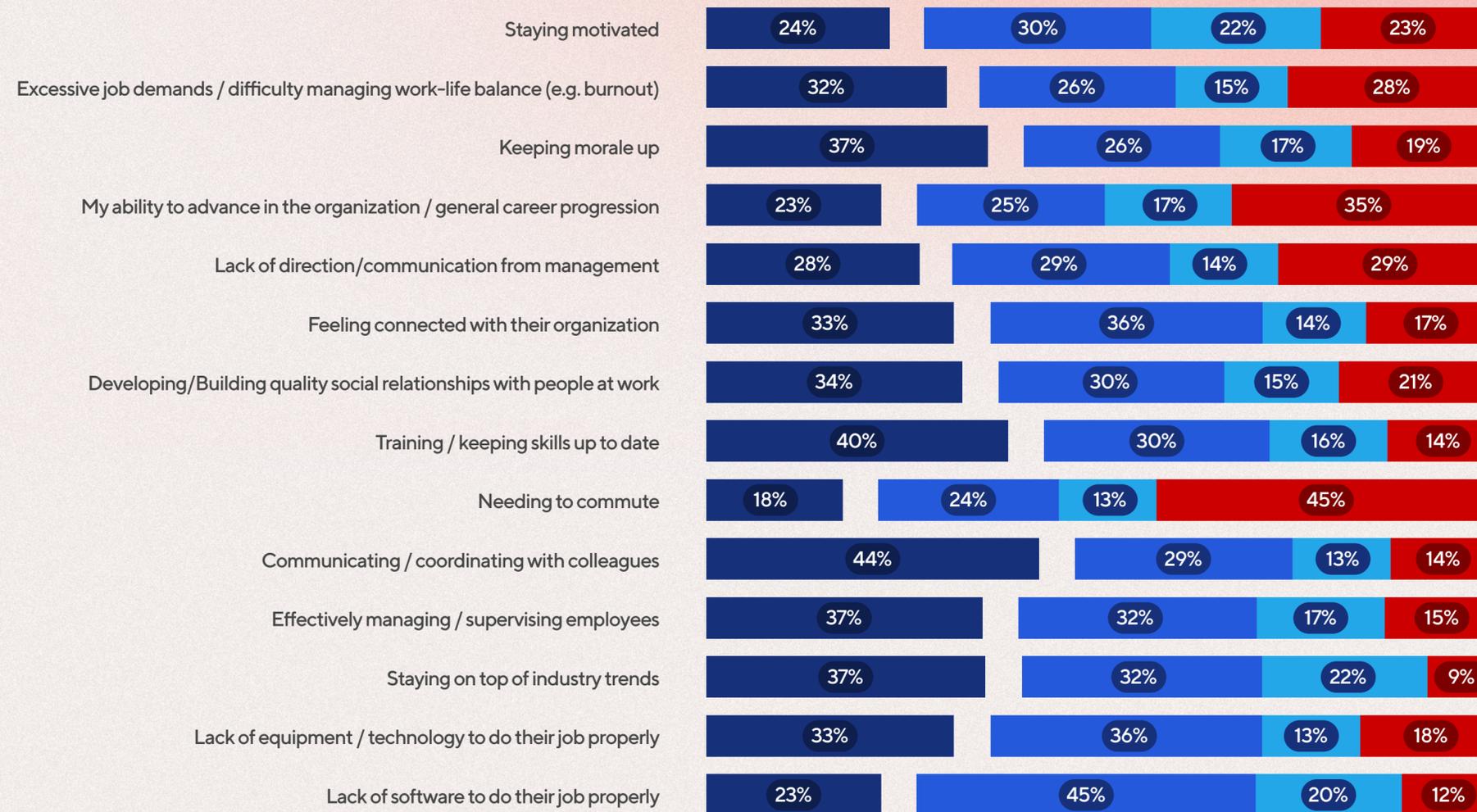


Employer Plans to Address Challenges

Meanwhile, only a minority of employers are already taking steps to address each challenge employees are facing while roughly half plan or intend to do so in the future. In particular, the core challenges of managing burnout, morale and needing to commute are only currently being addressed by 18% to 37% of employers.

Business Plans to Address Employee Challenges

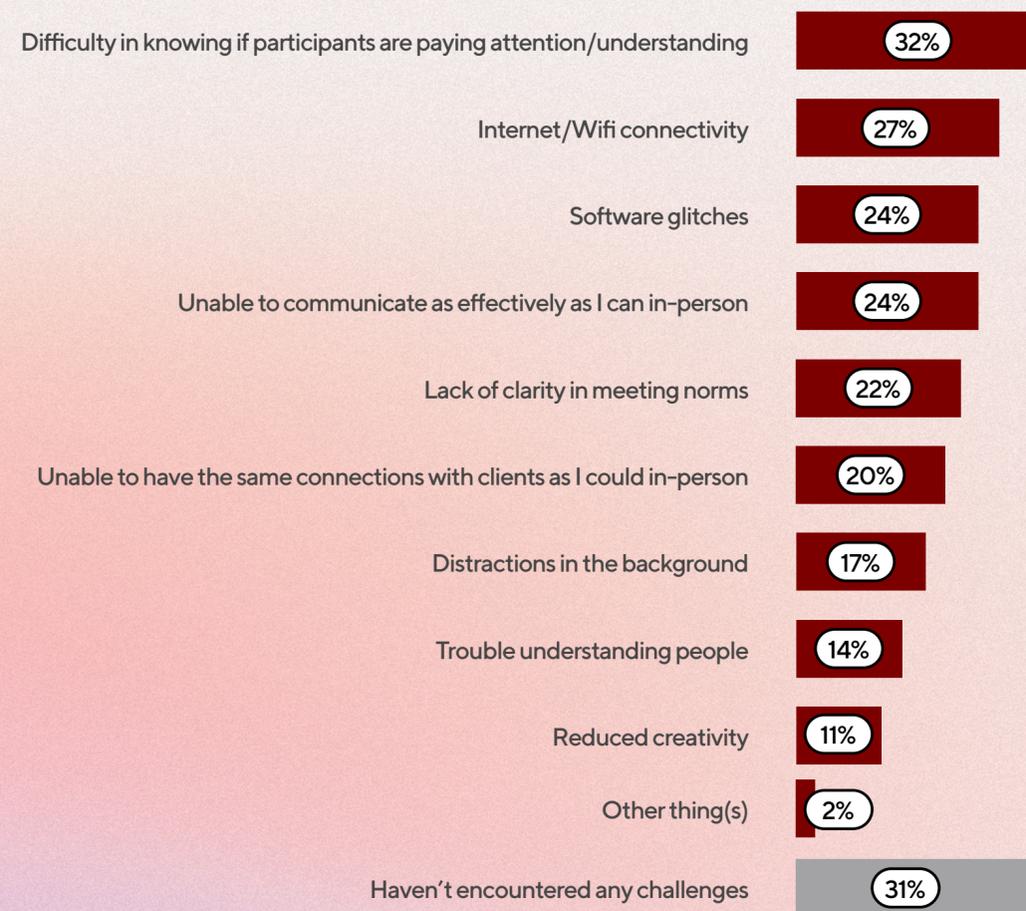
Among employers



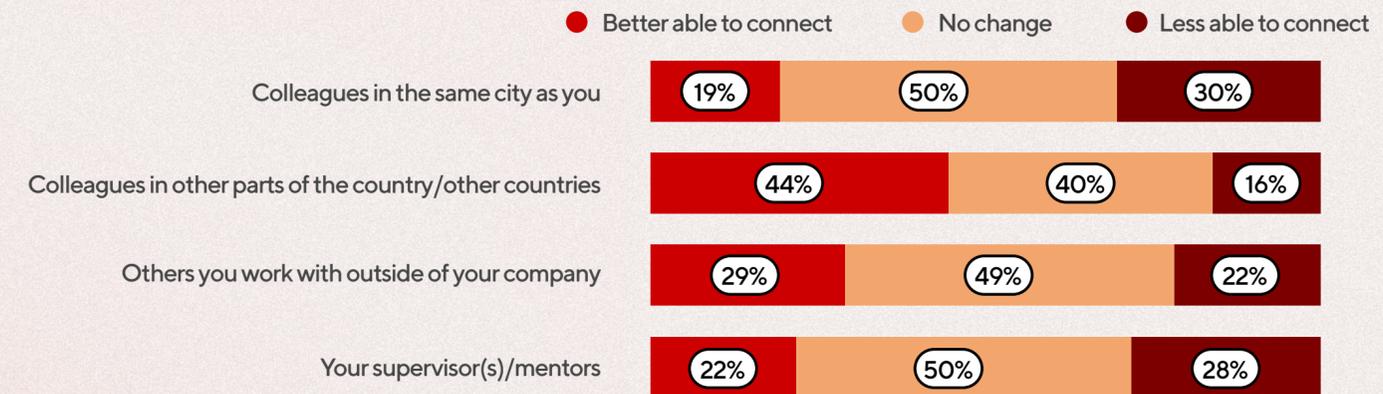
Virtual Meetings

Most employees are continuing to experience persistent issues when videoconferencing, with top problems being centered around being less able to communicate effectively or 'read' their audience along with connectivity or software glitches.

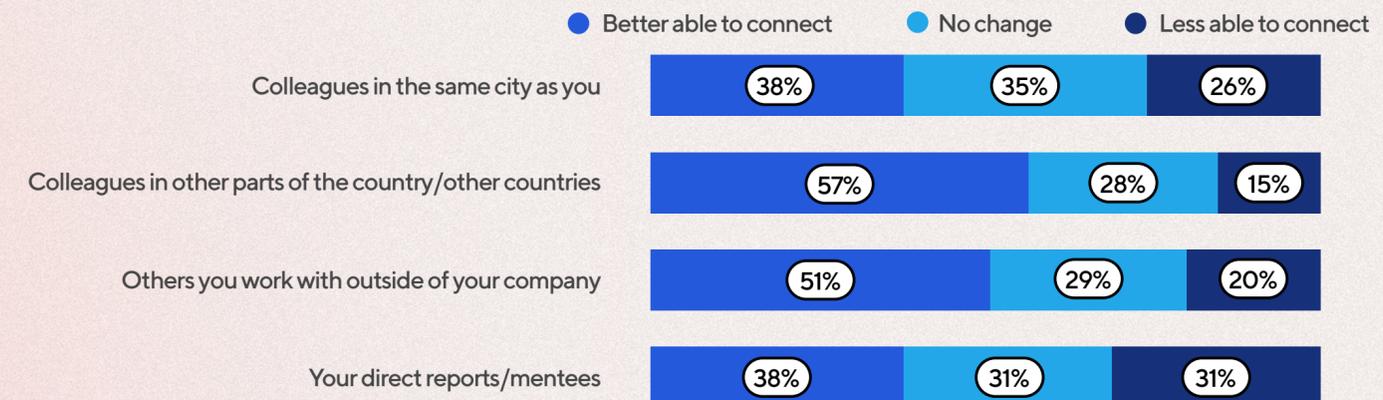
Challenges Encountered with Virtual Meetings Among Employees



Impact of Video conferencing on Ability to Form Connections with Colleagues



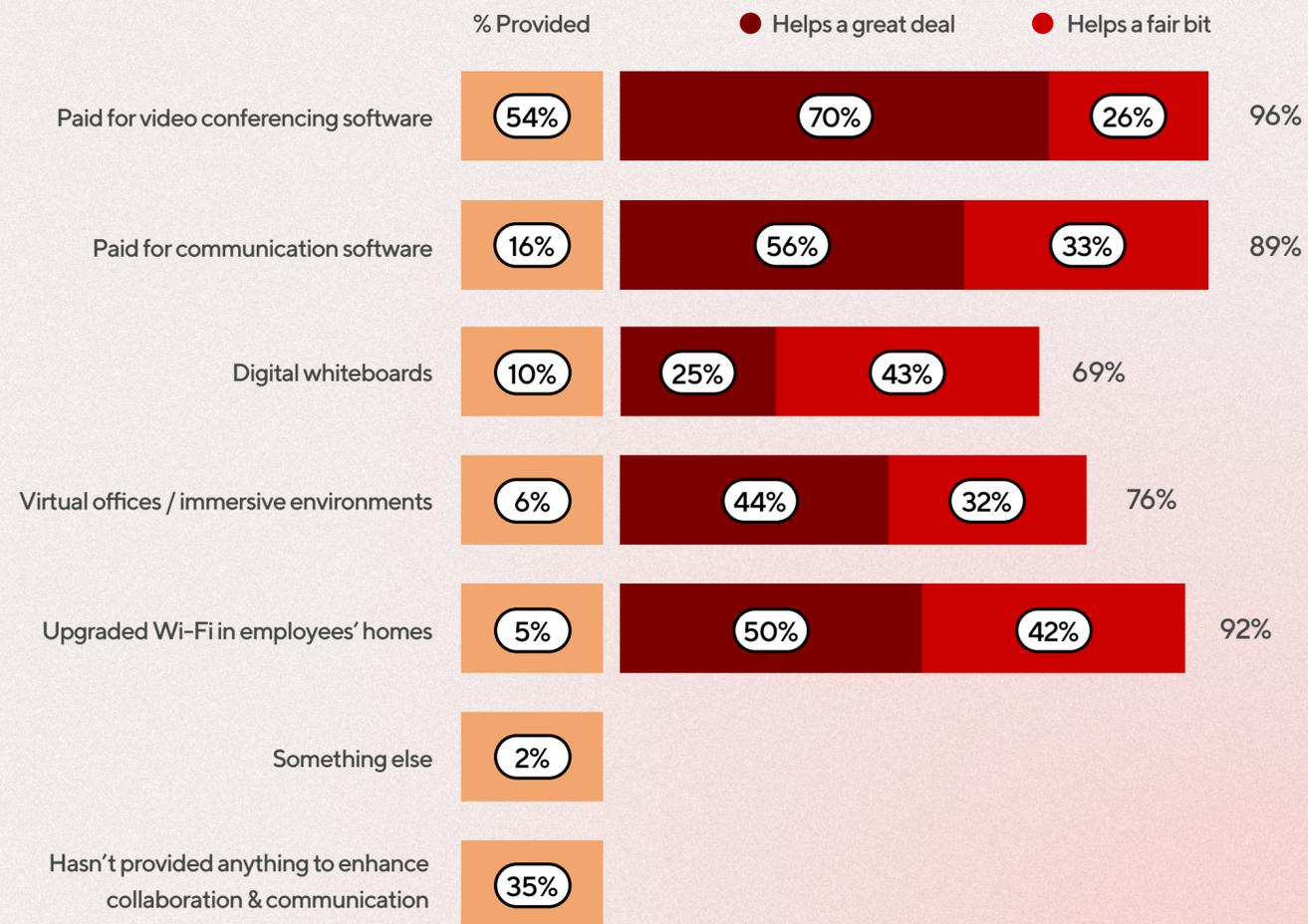
Employers



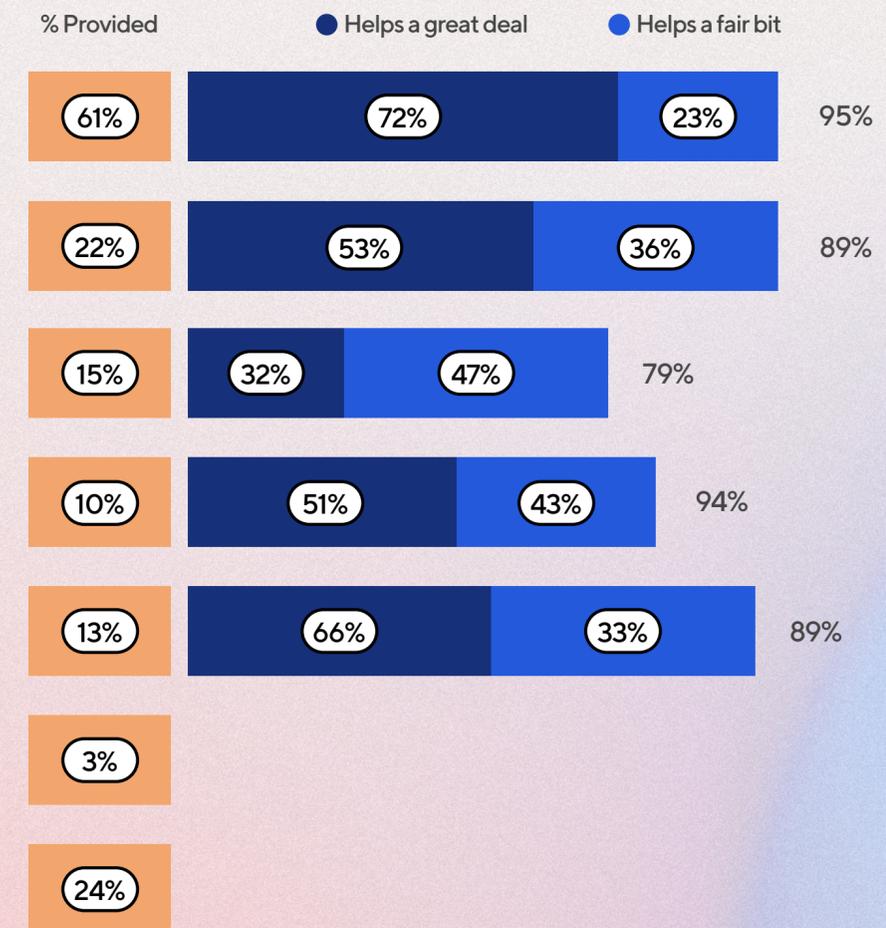
Collaboration and Communication Technology

Most employers have provided their employees with at least one form of software/subscription to help them collaborate and communicate. Paying for video conferencing software is seen by employees as being most helpful, and digital whiteboards the least.

Technology Offered by Employer and Helpfulness Among Employees



Technology Provided to Employees and Helpfulness Among Employees



Base: Employees (n=1,010), Employers (n=505); Bases at Q10 vary by responses at Q9

B9. (Employee) Since shifting to remote/hybrid work environments, has your employer provided you/your colleagues with any of the following to enhance collaboration & communication?

B9. (Employer) Since shifting to remote/hybrid work environments, has your company/organization provided its employees with any of the following to enhance collaboration & communication?

B10. (Employee) To what extent do each of the following help you to connect and collaborate effectively when videoconferencing?

B10. (Employer) To what extent do you think each of the following help your company/organization's employees connect and collaborate effectively when videoconferencing?

Perspectives ● on the Office

Perspectives ● on the Office

Being able to stay productive is top of mind for employees when it comes to heading into the office.

Remote/hybrid employees have more concerns about coming into the office than employers recognize – while employees and employers are aligned on the top concerns of losing time from commuting and impacts on their work-life-balance, employees are significantly more likely to note each of these concerns than their employers.

Secondary to time lost in commute and work-life balance impacts, employees are concerned about distractions in the office environment impacting their productivity.

Employees saying fewer distractions would improve their experience when working in the office are most likely to say having a dedicated office or

a quiet overall office environment would improve their experience a great deal.

Special perks stand out as the top single factor employees say could improve their in-office experience, with being able to choose which days they come in as a close second.

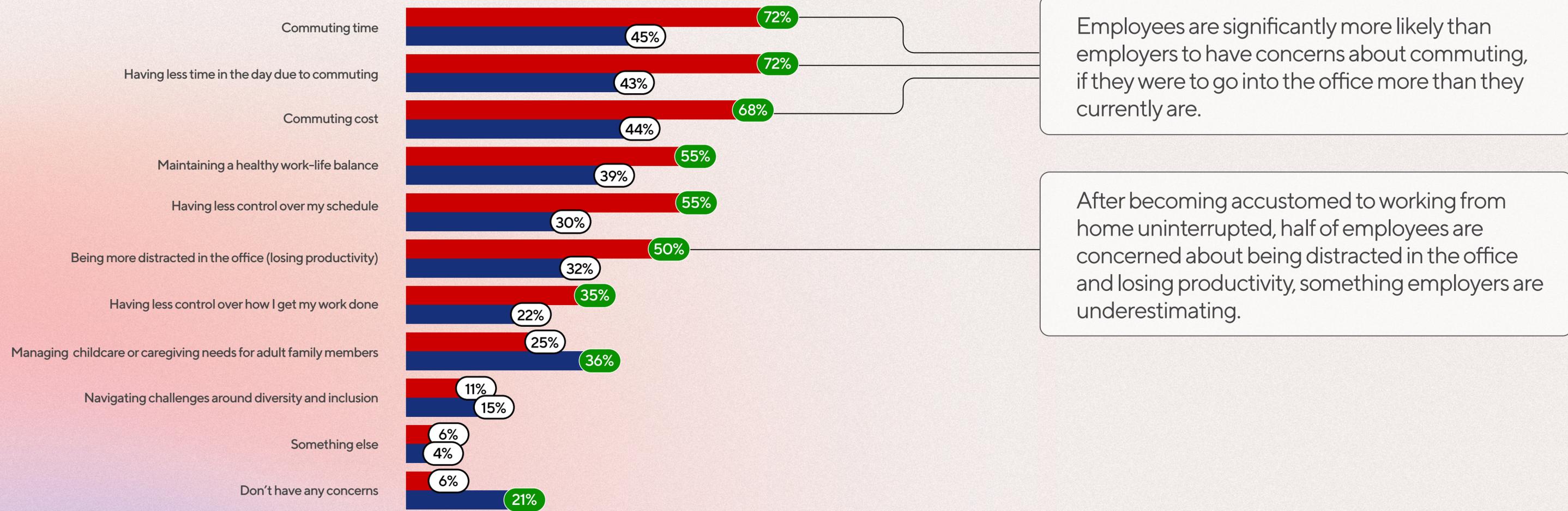
Ultimately with context and understanding of how working remotely can benefit them, employees may have greater expectations going forward to receive recognition from their employers in return for the time and effort invested to come into the office.



Concerns with Office Work

Overall, remote/hybrid employees have many more concerns than employers about working in the office more than they currently are. While concerned about the cost of commuting, employees are most worried about the time lost in transit, which affects their ability to have flexibility in their day and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

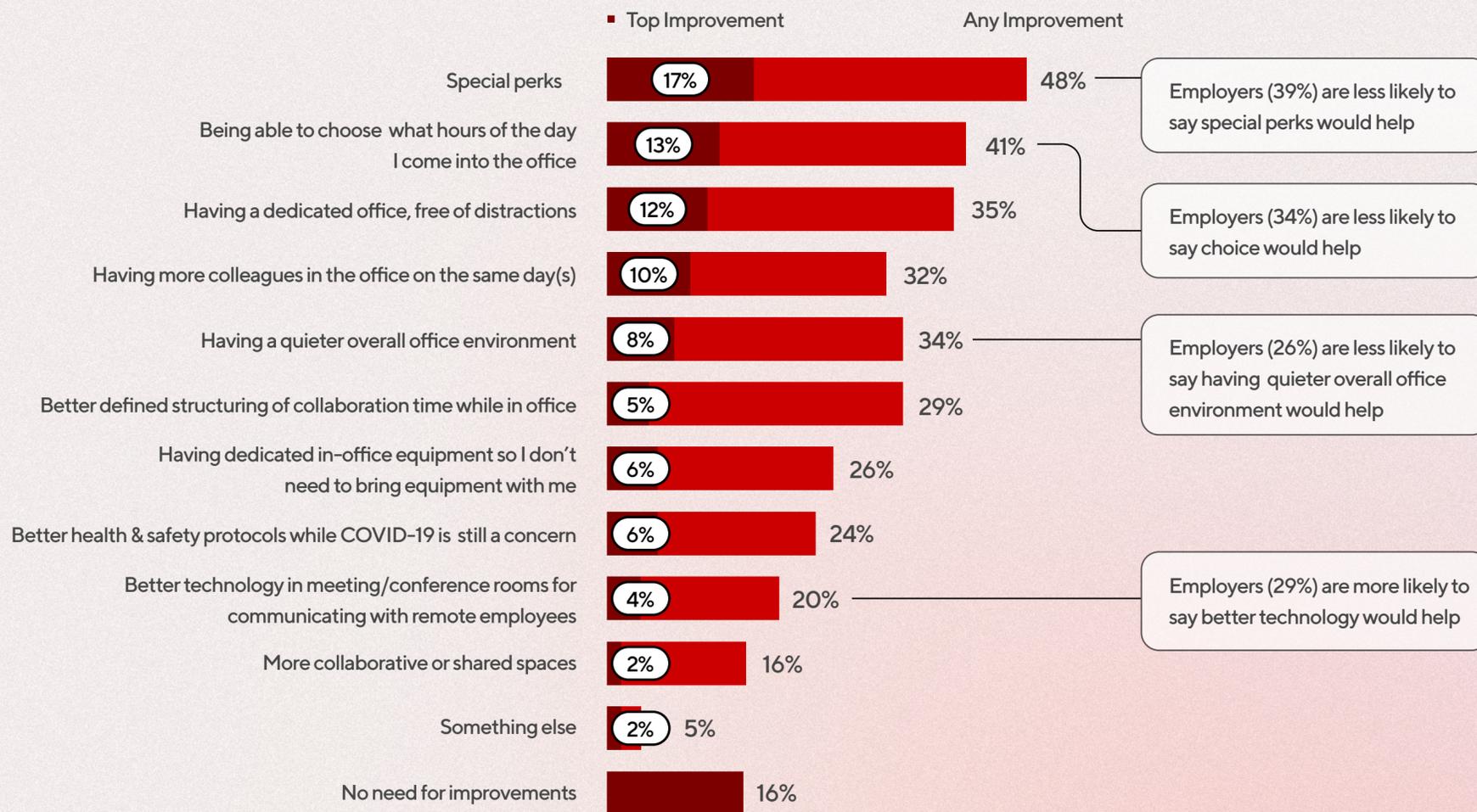
Concerns with More Time in Office
Among Remote + Hybrid Employees (Ranked any)



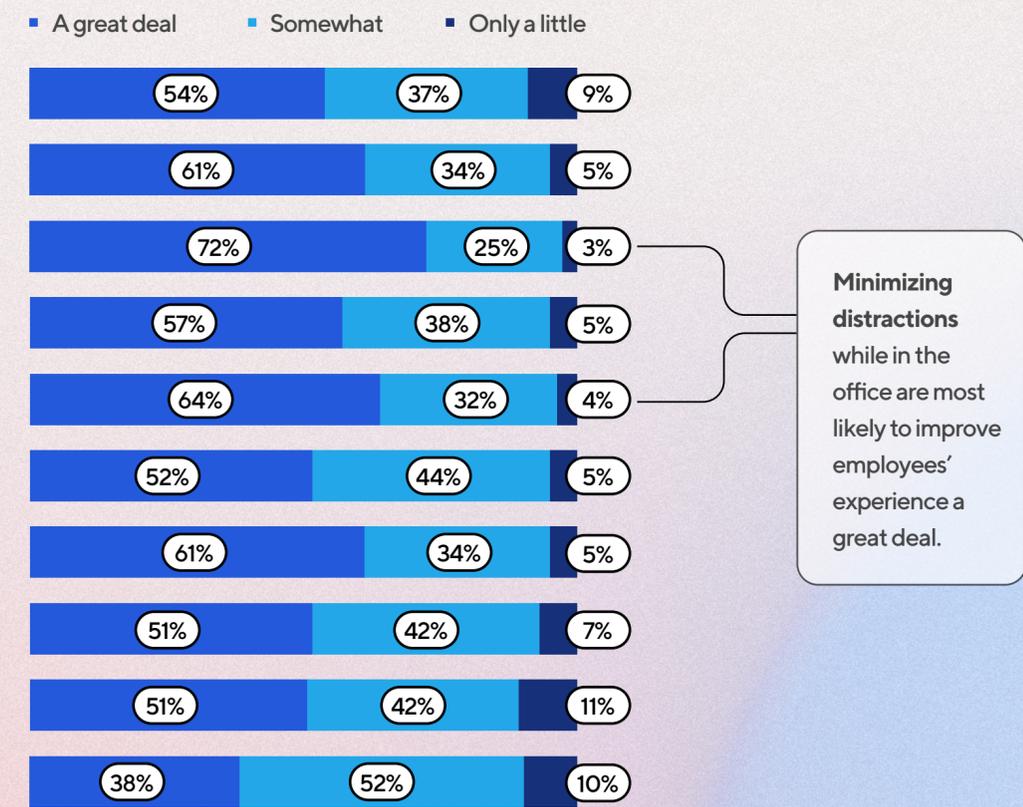
Improvements to Office Setup (employees)

Special perks (e.g. free lunch, social hours, etc.) would be well appreciated by employees coming into the office and employers don't fully appreciate this. In addition to perks, many employees want to minimize distractions to keep their productivity up, and are most likely to say minimizing distractions will improve their experience a great deal.

Improvements to Work In-Office Experience



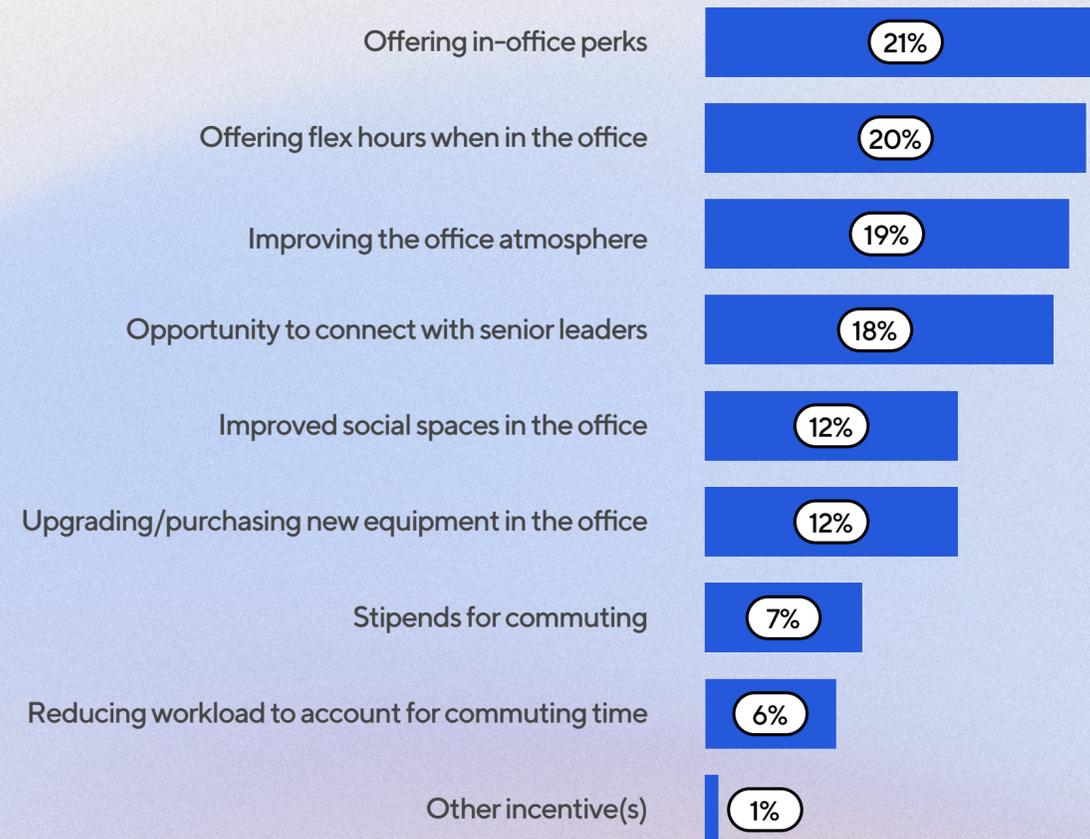
Impact of In-Office Features on Experience



Employer Incentives for Returning to Office

About half of employers have offered incentives to encourage employees to return to the office more often, most notably, offering in-office perks (such as free lunches); something employees say would be most likely to improve their in-office experience.

Incentives Offered to Employees to Encourage Return to the Office

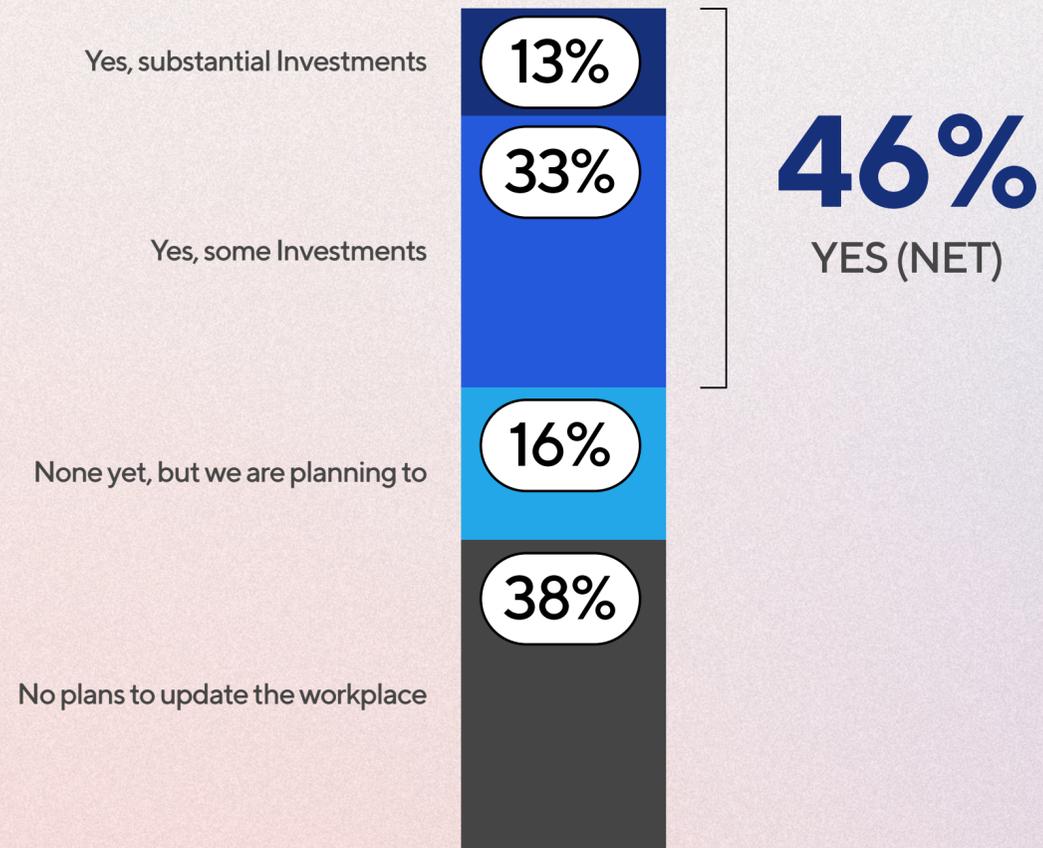


49%
of companies have offered incentives to employees to encourage returning to the office

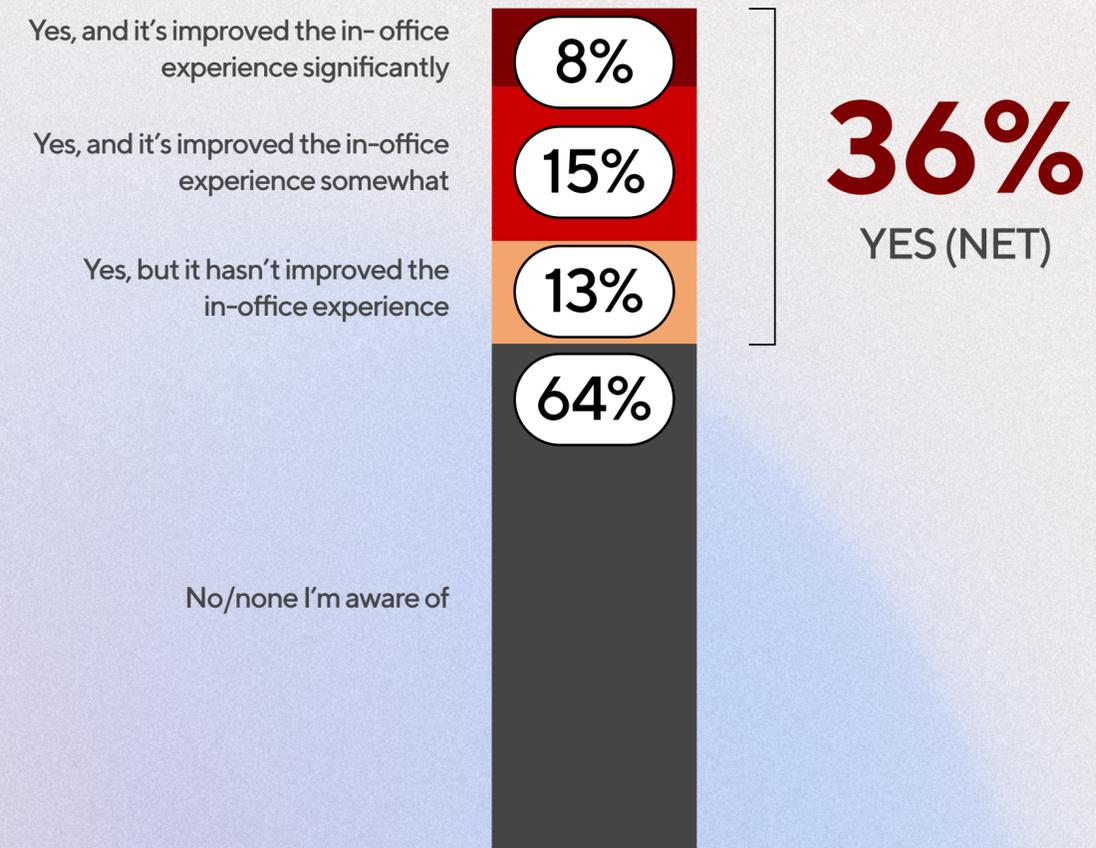
Upgrades and Investment in Office Design

Employees are less likely than employers to say their company has made investments in office upgrades for a new world of work. Of employees who are aware of office upgrades at work, the majority say it has improved the in-office experience.

**Investment in Office Design Upgrades at Company
Among Employers**



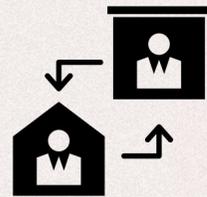
**Investment in Office Upgrades at Place of Work
Among Employees**



Quebec Summary

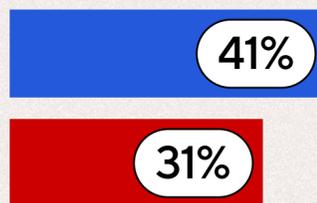
Working Situation – Quebec

Compared to employees in the rest of Canada (ROC), employees in Quebec are the most likely to:



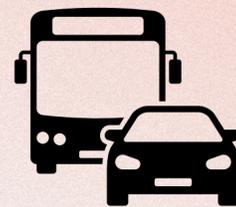
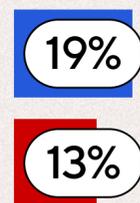
Work as hybrid employees, splitting their time between the office and their homes

41% of Quebec employees are hybrid workers, compared to 31% of ROC



Expect to work remotely more in the next 1-2 years

19% of Quebec employees, compared to 13% of ROC

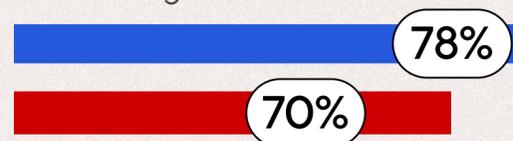


Have concerns about commuting if they were to return to the office

Quebec remote/hybrid employees are most likely to be concerned about commuting time



and having less time in the day due to commuting

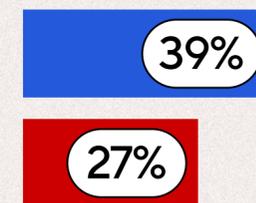


Quebec employees value their flex hours:



Quebec employees are the most likely in Canada to work flex hours

39% of Quebec employees work flex hours, compared to 27% ROC



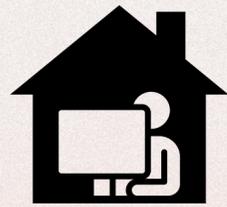
Quebecers would not consider a job with no option for flex hours

83% of Quebecers would be less likely to consider a job with no option for flex hours, compared to 75% ROC.



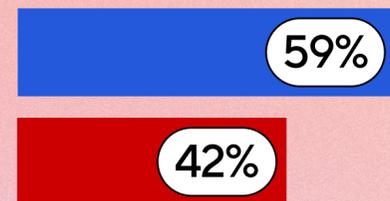
Work-From-Home Setup - Quebec

Quebec Employees are satisfied with their work-from-home setup. They are more likely to:



Have a room in their home used solely as their home office

59% of Quebec remote/hybrid workers, compared to 42% of ROC



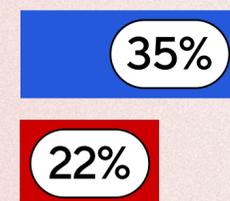
Rate their work-from-home setup as perfect or good

80% of Quebec remote/hybrid workers, compared to 71% of ROC



Say there is no need for improvements to their work-from-home setup

35% of Quebec remote/hybrid workers, compared to 22% of ROC



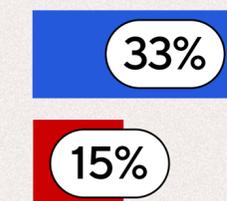
Rate their employer highly in ensuring they have what they need to work effectively from home

76% of Quebec remote/hybrid workers rate their employer as excellent/good, compared to 68% of ROC



Have received a stipend from their company to equip or improve their home office/workspace

33% of Quebec workers have received a stipend (annual or one-time), compared to 15% of ROC

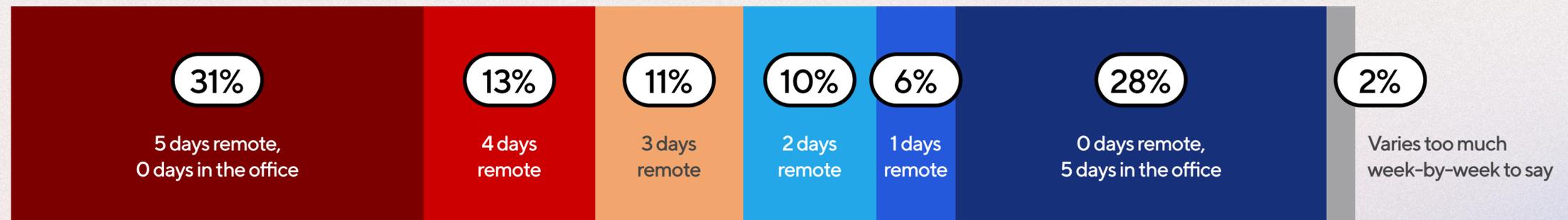


Appendix

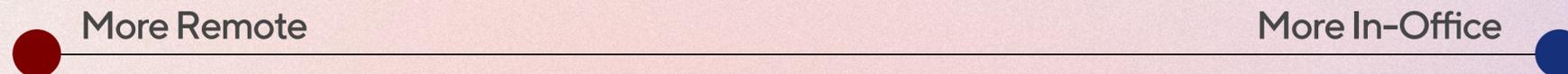
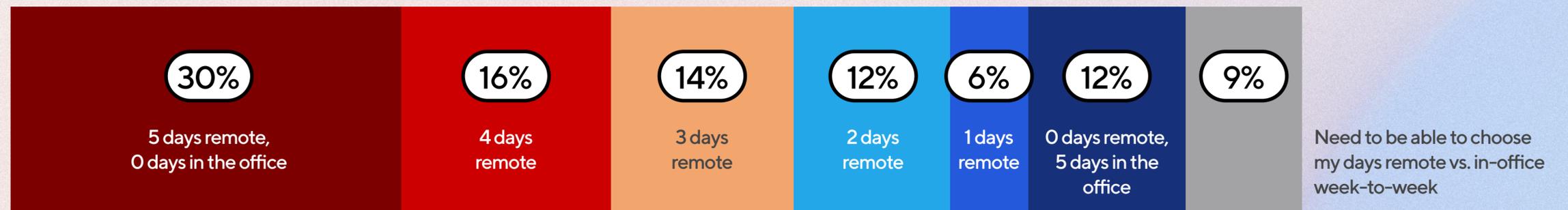
Working Remotely vs. In-Office (employees)

Nearly all employees have a clear idea of what specific balance of remote vs. in-office workdays they would prefer for themselves, with very few saying it needs to be adaptable week-to-week. While a minority of three-in-ten prefer fully remote work, there's a preference for hybrid over in-office work.

Current Balance of Working Remotely vs. In-office



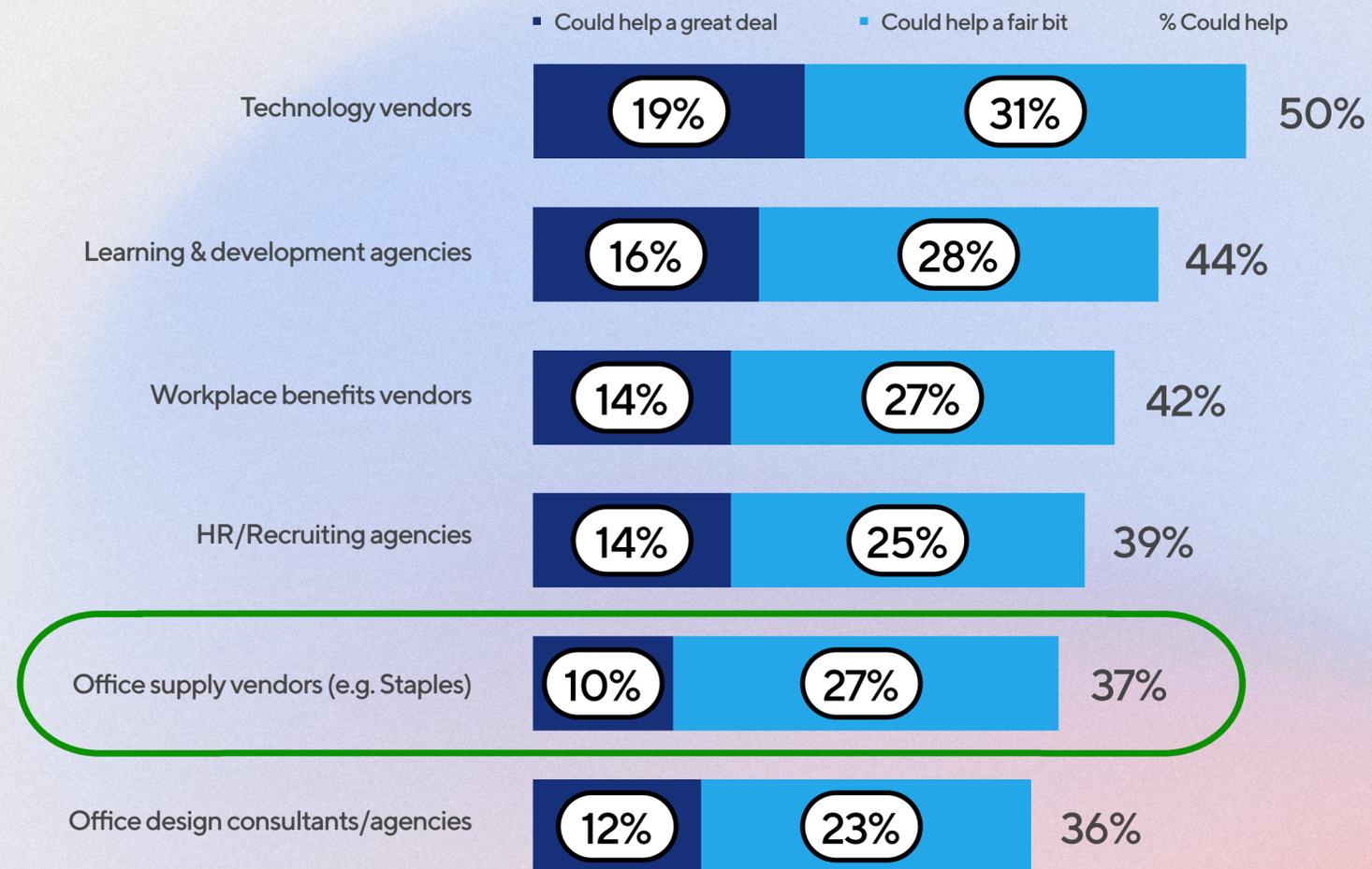
Preferred Balance of Working Remotely vs. In-office



Help With Managing a Hybrid/Remote Working Model

Technology vendors are seen as having the largest potential impact in helping employers at hybrid/remote companies better manage a hybrid/remote working model. Meanwhile, office supply vendors are seen to have an equal ability to help as office design consultants.

**Supplier and Partner Supports to Better Manage a Hybrid Working Model
Among Remote + Hybrid Companies**



● Significantly higher/lower at
at 95% confidence

Base: Remote + Hybrid Companies (n=393)
B15. To what extent do you think each of the following potential suppliers/partners could help your company/organization better manage a hybrid / remote working model?

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**TREND
REPORT**
2022