



Workers Spending in Business Centers May Have Changed Forever



The pandemic caused a major disruption of the typical five-day workweek and the daily commute – and, subsequently, spending by workers at restaurants, convenience stores and central-city shopping. Although some people are voluntarily returning to the workplace for various reasons and more companies are demanding it, a hybrid-work schedule is becoming the norm for many employees and employers.

According to a January 2023 Morning Consult survey, 23% of respondents said they “currently do most of their work remote,” 12% hybrid and 63% in person. When asked how they “prefer to do most of their work,” 27% said remote, 25% hybrid and 46% in person. 35% are currently working some days remotely but 52% would prefer a remote/hybrid schedule.

Research from Placer.ai shows hybrid work in five major US markets peaks from Tuesday through Thursday and is less Mondays and Fridays.

The Placer.ai research revealed several other trends about which workers are returning to the office. In four of the five markets in the table below (Boston, Chicago, New York and San Francisco), more of those on-site workers lived within a few miles of the business center. In Houston, however, many more of these workers commuted 10 or more miles.

Workers from one-person households were more likely to have returned to the office than multi-person households. Many parents welcomed the need to work at home during the height of the pandemic so they could care for and be with their children more. This trend suggests workers from multi-person households prefer remote or hybrid work more than single workers.

The likely permanence of these trends suggests restaurants should promote more lunch specials and retailers should incentivize workers’ shopping trips during Tuesday and Thursday.

Hybrid Work Pattern in Five Major US Markets, Q1 2023

Market	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.
Boston, MA	14.8%	18.5%	19.7%	18.8%	14.5%
Chicago, IL	14.6%	18.0%	18.9%	18.7%	14.9%
Houston, TX	16.0%	21.2%	21.3%	19.9%	14.6%
New York, NY	14.3%	19.5%	19.6%	19.4%	14.2%
San Francisco, CA	14.4%	19.1%	18.7%	18.7%	14.7%

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