



## Forget Foosball:

**PEOPLE WANT A BETTER  
PLACE TO WORK, NOT PLAY**

A new survey shows what workplace perks, amenities, services and technology top talent really wants from where they work — and how to deliver.



## WHAT'S INSIDE

<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Rethinking the Workspace: Building a Better Place to Work</b>	<b>5</b>
STEP 1: Getting the Basics Right is Key	<b>7</b>
STEP 2: Creating Quiet & Private Spaces for Heads-Down Focus	<b>9</b>
STEP 3: Prioritizing Functional Amenities & Services in the Workplace	<b>12</b>
STEP 4: Incorporating Tools & Technology that Improve the Workday	<b>17</b>
STEP 5: Offering Employees Community When They Want It	<b>21</b>
<b>Closing Thoughts</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>About Hana</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>26</b>





# Summary

The office has become a key sales pitch for attracting and retaining talent and driving productivity. Driven by a desire to create “people-centric” workspaces, companies have invested in modernizing their office designs, offering workplace perks and amenities and providing in-office services like catered meals and employee events.

But in a new study of 1,000+ U.S. office workers, we discovered these workplace perks are falling flat with employees. Overwhelmingly, people say employers are failing to provide the basic functional features they need to do their jobs effectively and instead prioritizing fun amenities and services that end up being distracting and counterproductive.

We have identified the key things employees truly want from their workplace — and five ways employers can leverage workplace design and perks to help attract and retain talent, improve productivity and turn the office into a better place to work.



# Preface

From in-office gyms and amenity-rich common areas to fruit water and cold brew taps, engaging workplace perks are touted as key ways to attract and retain talent, improve productivity and motivate employees.

This has made for a strong sales pitch. With unemployment at an all-time low, companies have struggled to fill positions. And despite advances in workplace tools and technology, productivity levels have slowed to their weakest levels since the 1970's<sup>1</sup> and plateaued since 2015.<sup>2</sup>

But are trendy workplace designs and fun office perks bringing more employees into the office and enhancing their productivity while there?

Not exactly.

In a study of more than 1,000 U.S. professionals, we set out to identify what people value most in the workspace and what they find most fulfilling at the office. We paid special attention to what workplace designs and which amenities, services and tools people want their employers to focus on most.

Overwhelmingly, we found people are looking for better places to work, not play and reward employers who provide them with the space, workplace perks and technology they need to be productive.

In the following pages, we'll explore five ways to turn the workplace into a powerful tool to attract and retain talent — and bolster productivity.

## The Big Takeaway

People find the most fulfillment in their jobs after accomplishing something — and place a significantly lower value on having fun or socializing at the office. But companies are making it harder for employees to do their jobs by prioritizing fun amenities and social spaces over the functional necessities people need to be productive.



# Rethinking the Workspace: Building a Better Place to Work

Companies have an opportunity to stand out by thinking through the workplace experience holistically and focusing on helping their employees work more effectively.

When asked what is most important in their workday, 83% of people say accomplishing work-related goals ranks highest and 69% of people say they wish their employer would focus on making the workplace more productive.

These statistics represent something that's often lost when talking about workplace design: People go to work to be productive and expect their employers to optimize their workplaces accordingly.

But companies are failing to do this. In our survey, we discovered myriad reasons for this gap — a lack of basic features like privacy and quiet spaces for heads-down focus, outdated offices and technology and too many distracting amenities, to name a few.

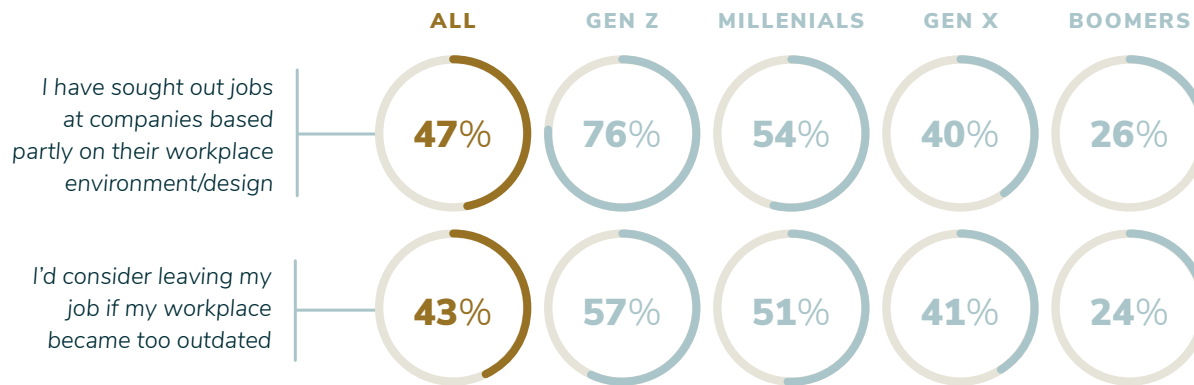


of employees say they enjoy going to the office to accomplish work-related goals

## PROVIDERS OF FULFILLMENT AT WORKPLACE



## WORKPLACE CONSIDERATIONS IN JOB SEARCH BY GENERATION



**In particular, our survey respondents pointed to a key issue in their workplaces:** Employers are prioritizing fun amenities like in-office games and happy hours, open office seating arrangements and shared social spaces at the expense of basic functional needs like ergonomic furniture, modern technology and helpful amenities.

In fact, 75% say key functional workplace benefits like ergonomic furniture, quiet spaces and natural light are important considerations in a job search.

This presents an opening for companies to stand out by creating productive spaces with the right amenities, services, tools and technology.

Let's dive into what this looks like in action.



# STEP 1: Getting the Basics Right is Key

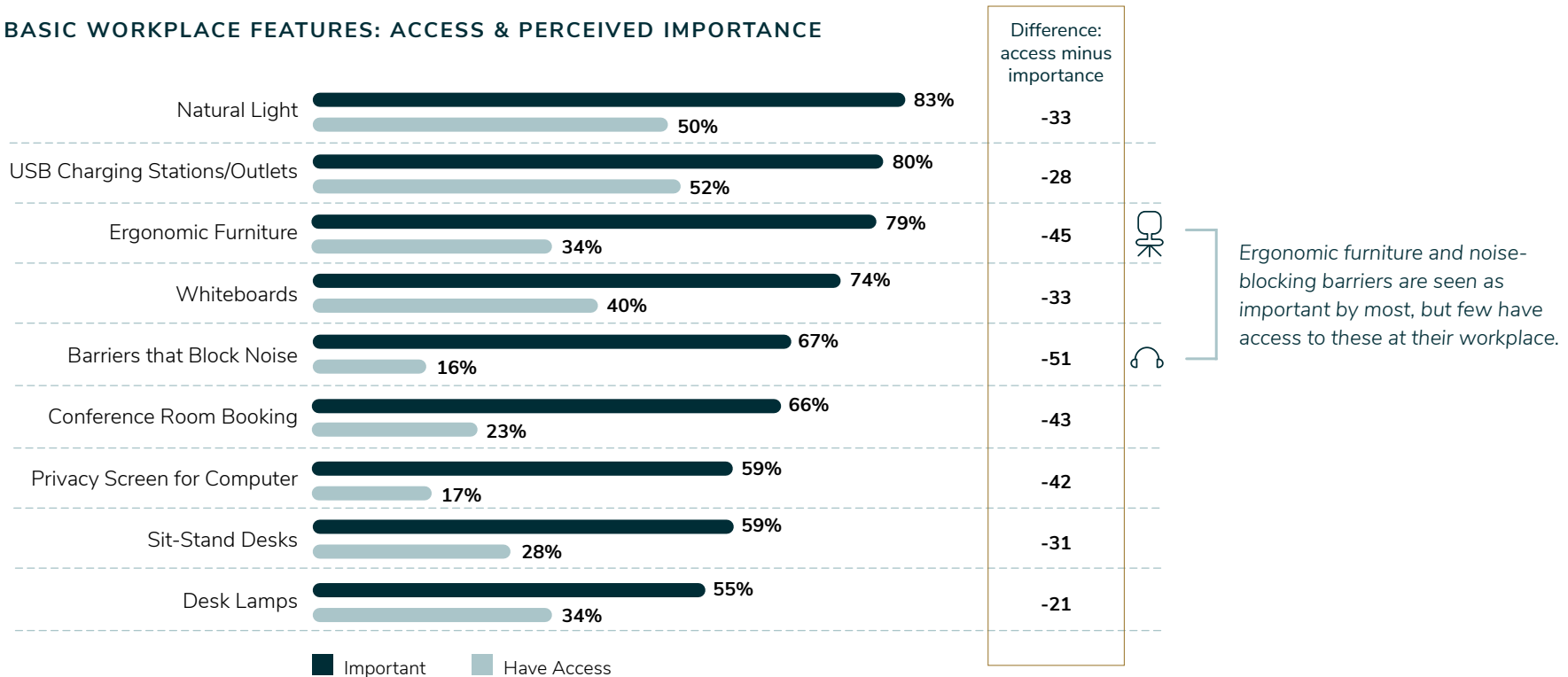
Professionals are hungry for workplaces that get the basics right and cite essential services — like a comfortable workstation and booking a meeting room — as critical to their wellbeing and productivity.

There are concrete benefits for companies that invest in getting the basics right. A Harvard Business Review study found that a high-quality workspace “can reduce absenteeism up to four days a year.”<sup>3</sup>

When asked what some of the most valuable basic workplace features are, professionals listed ergonomic furniture (79%), USB charging stations (80%) and natural light (83%).

But many office workers still lack these core office features. While 79% cite ergonomic furniture and a comfortable workstation as valuable, only 34% have access to it. And while 83% of office workers say natural light is important, only half of office workers have ready access to it

## BASIC WORKPLACE FEATURES: ACCESS & PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE





These are foundational workplace elements that today's office workers cite as being critically important. Yet, the absence of such key workplace features like ergonomic furniture and charging outlets can actively make the office a less comfortable and less productive place to be. .

**This gets at the heart of the issue:** Employees lack the basic necessities they need to do their jobs comfortably and effectively.

**It's important to give employees the ability to customize their workstations to better suit their working style.** In our survey, office workers pointed to the value of things like desk lamps, barriers that block noise, privacy screens and height-adjustable sit-stand desks as being valuable additions.

Sit-stand desks, in particular, are sometimes lambasted as a trendy item — but they carry significant ergonomic benefits.

The typical desk is 30 inches tall. But this is better suited to someone who's over six feet tall, making a height-adjustable desk an attractive way for someone to adjust their workstation to their needs.

**83% of office workers say natural light is the most valuable perk in the workplace.** But natural light can be more difficult for organizations to bring into the entire office, depending on how the space itself is constructed. In instances like these, companies should look to parts of the office that receive natural light — like social areas and the kitchen, for instance — and make use of them.

According to Dr. Alan Hedge, an ergonomics expert at Cornell University, "The best workplace designs...allow daylight to come in and supplement it with artificial lighting in the daytime."

"Natural light is rich in all wavelengths of visible light," he says. "It's hard to recreate that with artificial lights."<sup>4</sup>

## STEP 2:

# Creating Quiet & Private Spaces for Heads-Down Focus

**Employees want their employers to focus on making the workplace more productive by offering more quiet spaces for focused work.**

When we asked professionals what they need to be more productive in the office, the most common answers were “quiet” and “privacy.” In fact, 85% of office employees say having a private space to work contributes to their overall productivity. And having a quiet space is the second most commonly associated workplace feature that professionals say they need to accomplish their goals (“technology” is the first).

Despite this, just 16% of workers say they have access to quiet areas in the office — and strikingly, 27% of employees say they would take a 10% pay cut for more private space in their respective workplaces.

“Researchers have found that environmental noise — background music, city sounds, people’s conversations — leads to a decrease in performance for most people,” according to Fast Company.<sup>5</sup> But these types of noise are relatively easy to tune out. “One source of noise, though, is harder to tune out: intermittent speech.”

**One key stat:** 27% of people say they would take a 10% pay cut to have more privacy in the workplace.

According to Dr. Hedge, intermittent speech, or conversational noise, differs from background noise in a material way. “With conversational noise, you can actually understand something about what’s being said,” Dr. Hedge tells us. “And it’s that meaning that really grabs your attention and distracts you from work.”<sup>7</sup>

This problem is more acute in an open office. But it’s wrong to say it’s impossible to have private and quiet areas in an open office environment — or any office environment, for that matter.

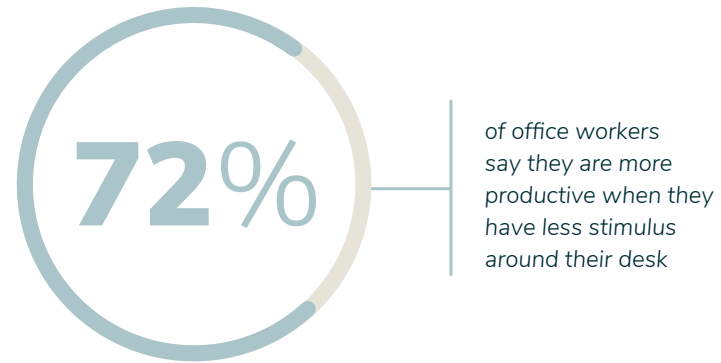
**Private phone rooms and individual focus spaces can help limit distraction in the workplace and offer employees privacy when they need it.** In our survey, office workers highly favored amenities like these with nearly seven in 10 saying private phone and focus rooms are valuable to have in the workplace. Despite this, only 22% have access to them.

By offering private phone rooms and focus rooms, companies give their employees a private and quiet place to work when they need it. They also offer employees the choice to choose their own work environment, depending on the task at hand.

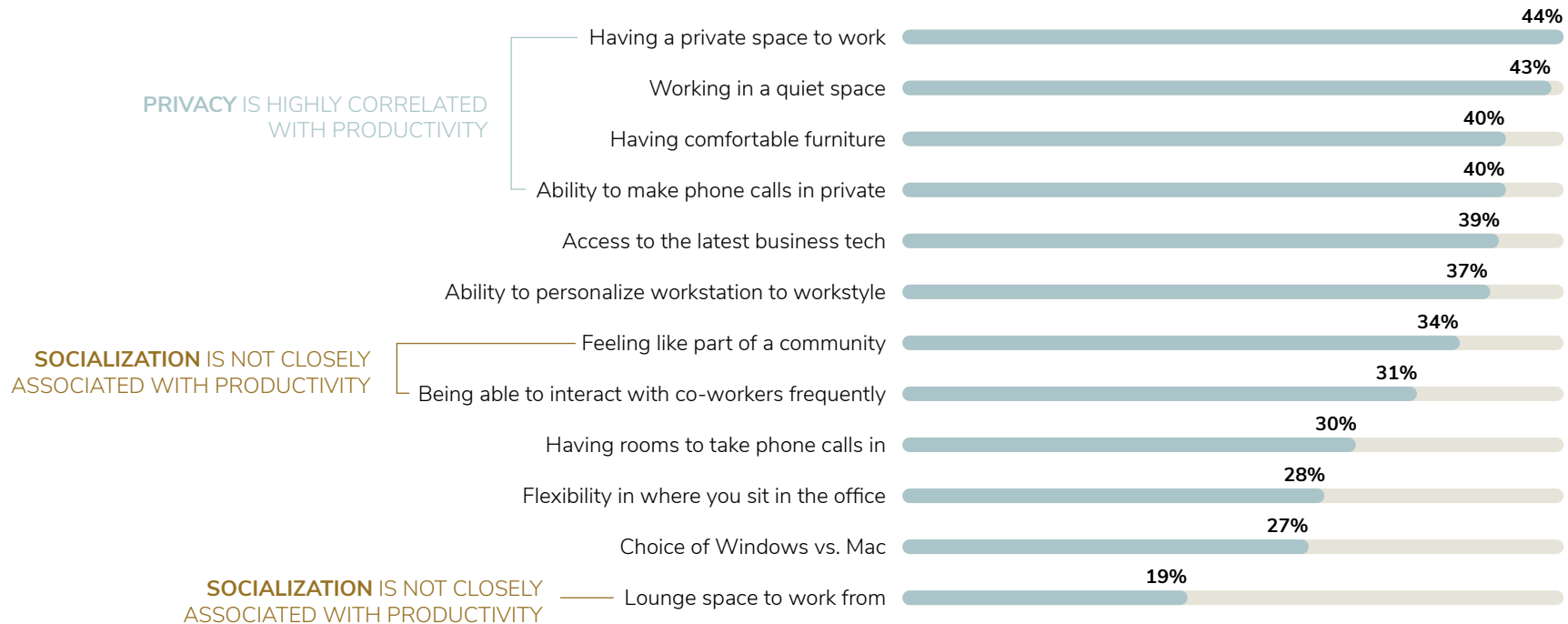


**There are simple and actionable ways to give employees the quiet spaces they need to work effectively.** Over two-thirds of employees say that barriers that block noise are important to have in their workspaces. Yet 84% of employees do not have access to these. Companies have the ability to provide simple amenities like this to improve employee productivity and fulfillment.

More ambitious efforts can also be made. Some companies have seen success in offering fully dedicated quiet spaces including quiet lounges and private huddle rooms where small teams can work together.



### FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE 'A LOT' TO PRODUCTIVITY AT WORK



**Companies can also invest in acoustically treating their workspaces.** Many offices feature a mixture of glass, concrete and wood — in short, materials that promote the transfer of sound. “We tend to build rooms with 90-degree angles,” Dr. Hedge tells us. “When you do that, sound simply bounces around off the walls, ceilings and corners.”

To solve this issue, some office designers are using soft materials like carpets, acoustic baffles and drop ceilings to dampen ambient sound. Small things like investing in desk dividers covered in sound absorbing fabric or hanging canvased paintings on the wall can go a long way towards improving office acoustics.

Some office designers, however, go a step further and invest in sound-masking technologies. “It’s essentially using something like white noise to make the environment noisier,” Dr. Hedge says. “Since white noise has no meaning to it, it drowns out conversational noise and helps reduce the strength of an auditory signal.”

Sound masking technology is a larger investment, but it can work wonders to improve office acoustics in open spaces.



## STEP 3:

# Prioritizing Functional Amenities & Services in the Workplace

Office workers deeply value amenities and services that make the workplace more productive. Despite this, 1 in 5 office workers have no access to key workplace amenities — and 1 in 4 have no access to key workplace services.

Even as trendy workplaces with high-touch amenities garner attention on LinkedIn and in design magazines, they are a distant dream for most office workers.

This underscores the reality for most employees: Companies are failing to provide their workforce with amenities and services.

In our survey, we broke amenities and services into two categories:

- (1) Functional office perks like complimentary snacks and professional services that help people do their jobs
- (2) And fun workplace perks like happy hours and in-office games designed to help employees enjoy spending time at the office

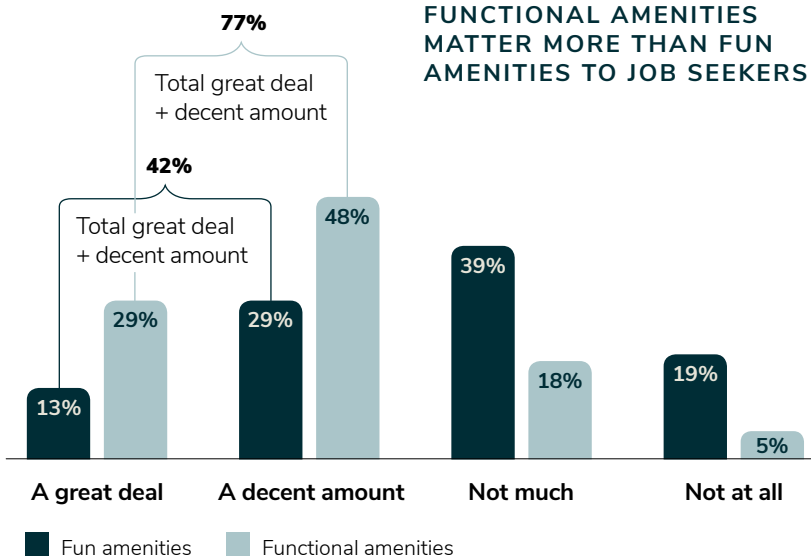
We discovered three key things.

**1. Employees with the right workplace perks are more fulfilled, more productive and more likely to stay at a company.** In our survey, professionals were consistent in their praise for companies that offer amenities and services, citing them as valuable factors in their overall workplace satisfaction, job fulfillment and productivity levels.

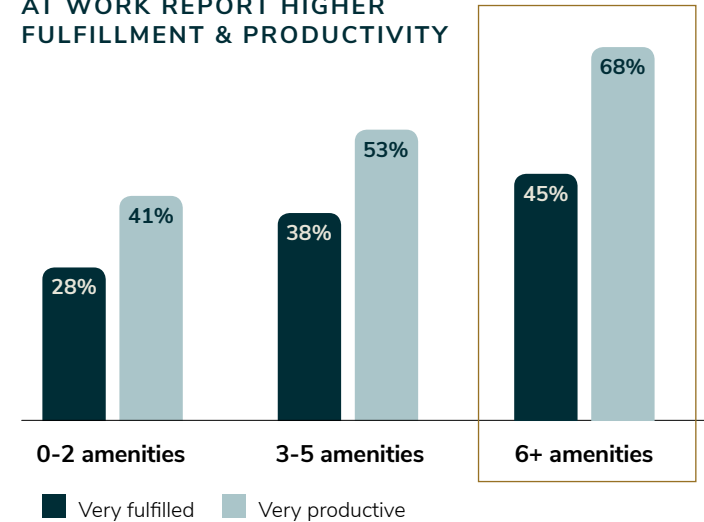
Professionals particularly attributed an abundance of amenities and services as being critical to getting their jobs done with almost 70% saying that having more than six of each resulted in them being very productive.

Workplace perks also play a role in helping company attract and retain talent. Almost 60% of job seekers said workplace amenities play a role in deciding which company to join. Additionally, 78% of employees said the presence of workplace perks in the office made them more likely to see themselves working at the same company in five years.

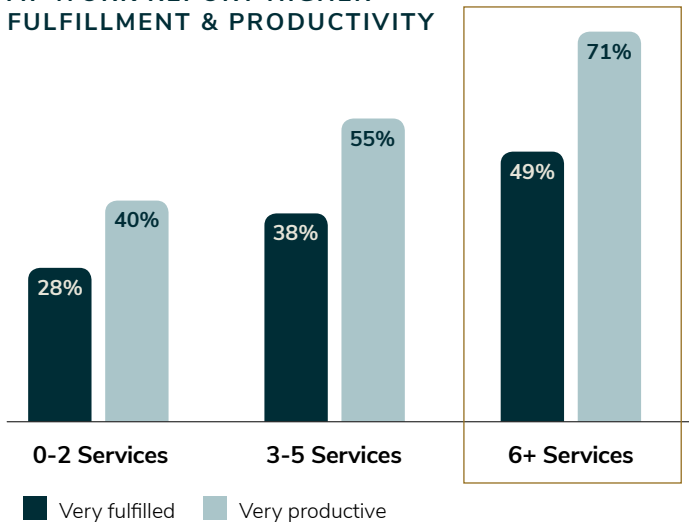
**Employees and job seekers place a higher priority on functional workplace perks over fun office benefits** and specifically value amenities and services that make workplace more productive.



### PEOPLE WITH MORE AMENITIES AT WORK REPORT HIGHER FULFILLMENT & PRODUCTIVITY



### PEOPLE WITH MORE SERVICES AT WORK REPORT HIGHER FULFILLMENT & PRODUCTIVITY



### EMPLOYERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO STAY WITH EMPLOYERS WHO OFFER THE RIGHT WORKPLACE PERKS

“Do you anticipate working for the same organization in five years?”

AMENITIES OFFERED	Yes	No
0-2	72%	28%
3-5	80%	20%
6+	83%	17%

SERVICES OFFERED	Yes	No
0-2	73%	27%
3-5	80%	20%
6+	81%	19%

## 2. Professionals are skeptical about companies that try to make their offices seem fun. Their rationale? The office is a place for work and too many “fun” perks are either less than useful or distracting.

Strikingly, just 44% of office workers say they have time in the day to take advantage of fun amenities like games, free alcohol and social mixers — and, perhaps unsurprisingly, those that do take advantage of these amenities report being less productive during the workday.

This productivity hit isn't just limited to people who take time out of their workday to take advantage of fun office perks. In our survey, 60% of all professionals reported that fun amenities and services make it harder to get work done.

This isn't to say employees don't appreciate companies who strive to make their workplaces a fun and enjoyable place to be. They do. But they want employers to tastefully incorporate recreational perks in the workplace experience — and prioritize amenities and services that help them work more effectively first.

Case in point: Less than half of employees believe that games, in-office happy hours and free alcohol are valuable to have in the workplace, compared to 80% who say more practical office perks like free snack and beverages, and health products are valuable.



# 61%

Of employees are skeptical of companies that emphasize how fun their offices are

# 57%

Of employees say fun workplace perks aren't valuable in the office

# 56%

Of employees say they don't have time to make use of fun office perks during the workday

# 60%

Of employees say fun office perks decrease their productivity in the office



**3. Professionals are hungry for functional (and useful) workplace perks.** Among the most highly valued amenities? Complimentary snacks and beverages, a café space and health products. Yet less than a third of office workers report having any of these three workplace perks.

But to get an idea of how popular amenities like these are, among the 32% of workers who have access to complimentary snacks and beverages, 75% say they take advantage of them multiple times a week.

As for the most highly valued functional services, employees list out tech support, work-provided learning programs and conference room booking — to name just a few. But less than a third have access to these services.

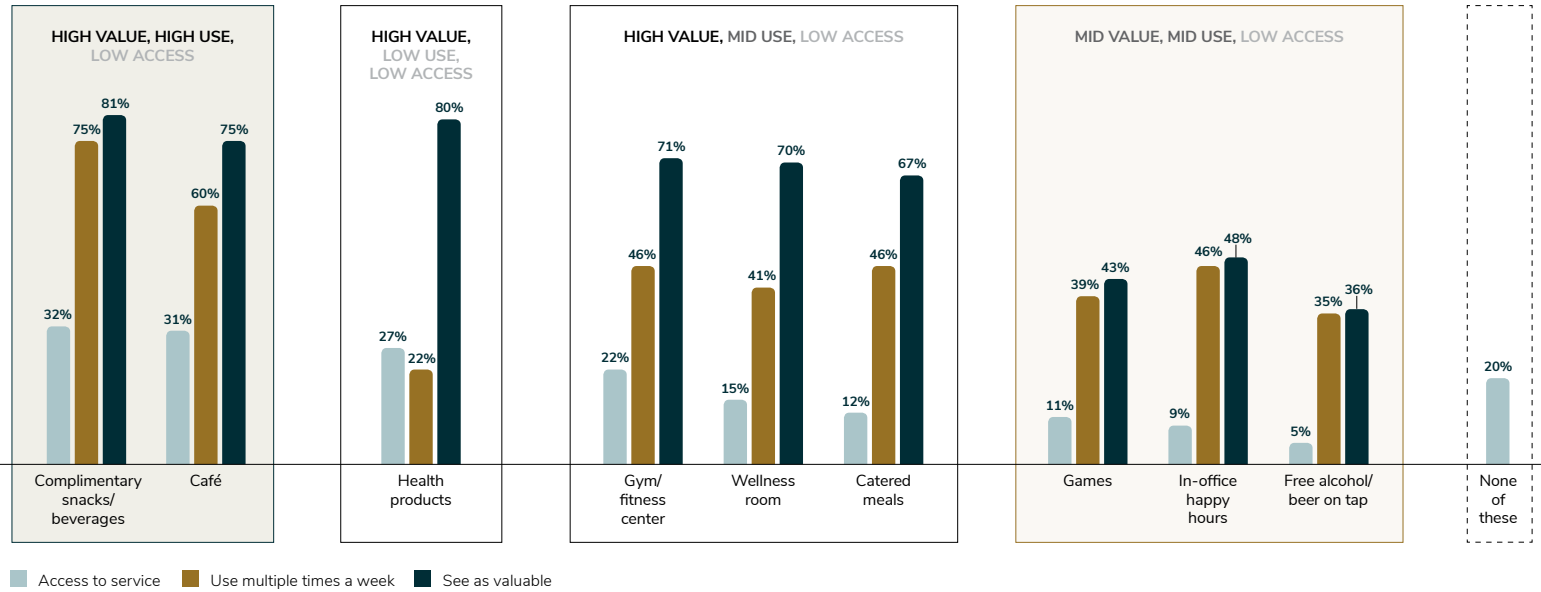
## THE BOTTOM LINE:

People want a better place to work, not play, through access to great technology, food and learning programs.

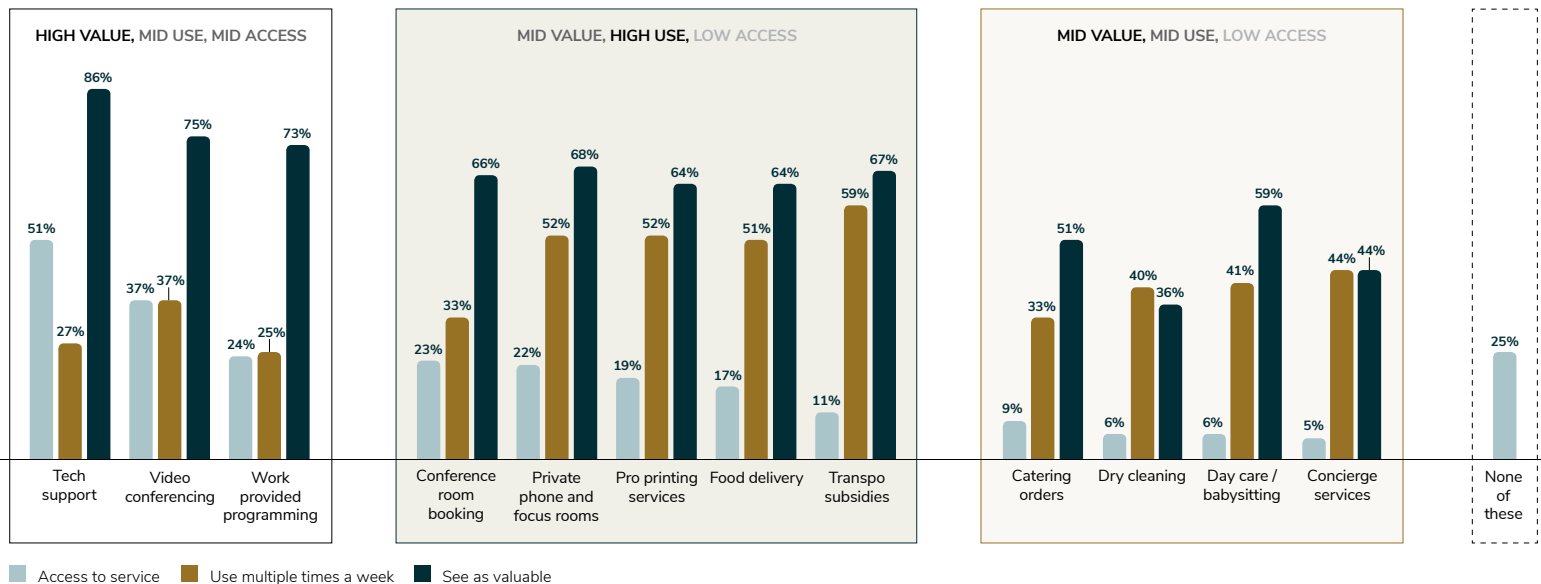


# Professionals Value Functional Amenities over Fun Office Perks

## AMENITIES: ACCESS, FREQUENCY OF USE AND PERCEIVED VALUE



## SERVICES: ACCESS, FREQUENCY OF USE AND PERCEIVED VALUE



## STEP 4:

# Incorporating Tools & Technology that Improve the Workday

Companies are leaving something to be desired when it comes to giving employees access to the tools and technology they need.

Gone are the days when giving an employee a computer, email account and access to Wi-Fi were enough. In today's world, people expect their employers to give them access to tools and technology that improve the workday and help them connect, collaborate and perform.

When we asked employees what they need most to be productive at the office, the number one answer was technology.

In our survey, we came across three instructive lessons for companies looking to find the right mix of tools and technology to empower their employees.

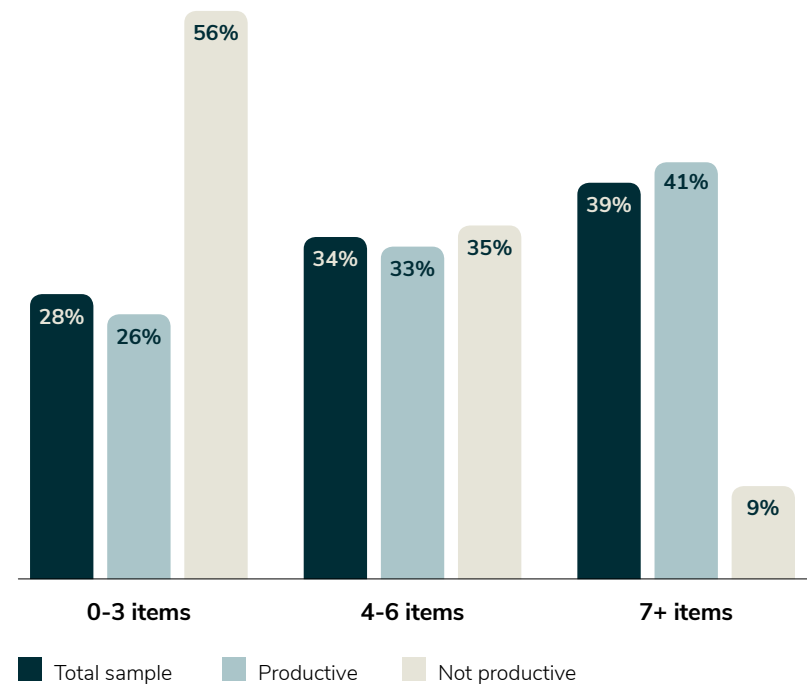
**More tools and technology means more productivity.** Despite some reservations about the types of tools employers offer (more on that in a bit), employees agree that the more tools they have, the more productive they'll be.

In our survey, we discovered that while older workers prioritize physical technology like phones and computers, younger professionals are more concerned about what software and applications they'll have available to them.

Part of this is due to the fact that younger employees assume their companies will supply them with basic hardware and tools. But another part reflects the importance of software in today's work environments.

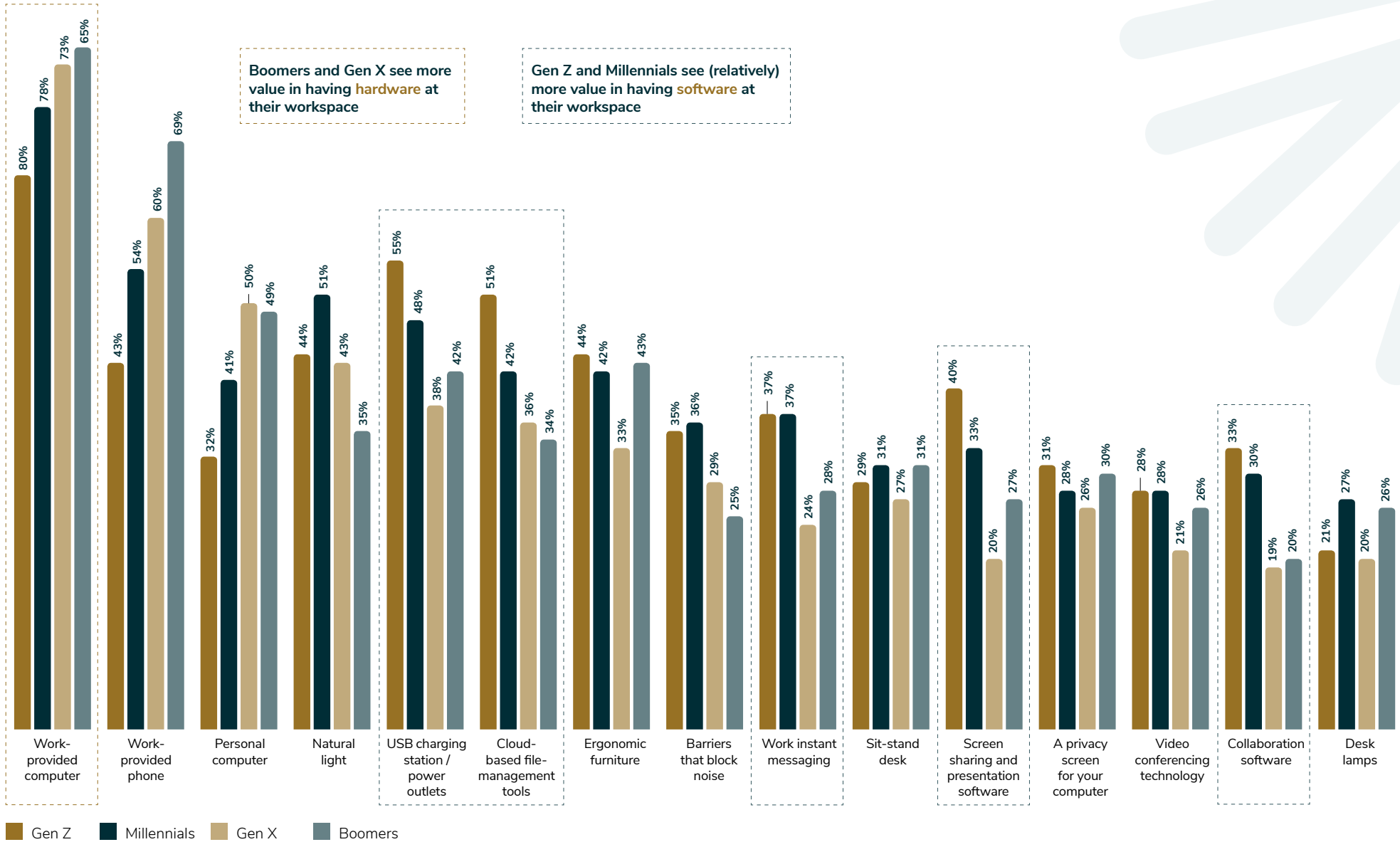
Emails are often complemented by chat applications like Slack and Microsoft Teams, while PowerPoint presentations and Microsoft Word documents are complemented by collaborative software that allows teams to work together more effectively.

EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE ACCESS TO TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY LIKE VIDEO CONFERENCING REPORT HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY



Among office workers, we found a wide appreciation for how all of these tools and technology come together. The consensus was clear: It's not just more for more's sake but having more complementary tools and technology that make the workday easier and more productive.

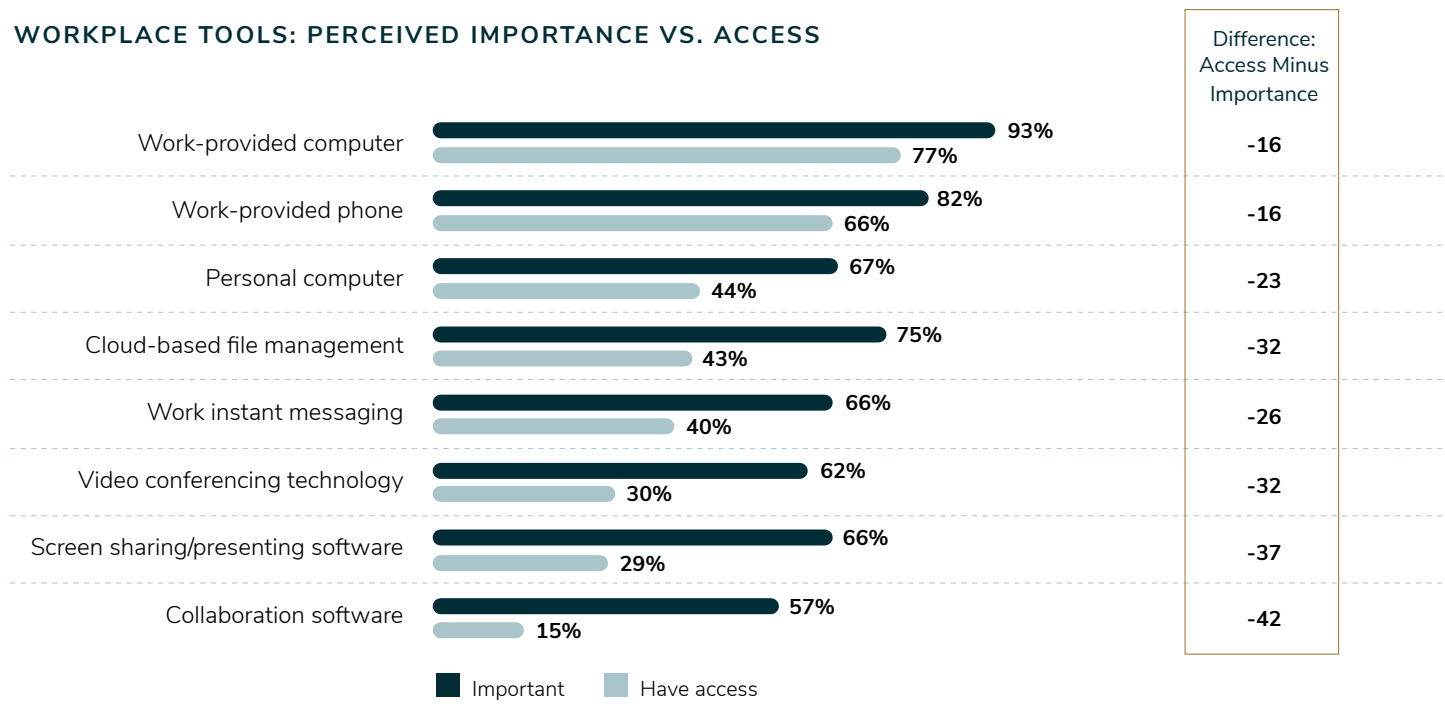
## TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY THAT OFFICE WORKERS CONSIDER VERY IMPORTANT



**It's a digital-first work world, but not enough companies are giving their employees basic tools.** Even as professionals agree that having more tools and technology leads to greater productivity, they also agree that companies aren't supplying what have quickly become basic essentials in today's workplace.

Key software applications like cloud-based file management, chat applications and screen sharing software are just some of the things companies aren't uniformly supplying across the board.

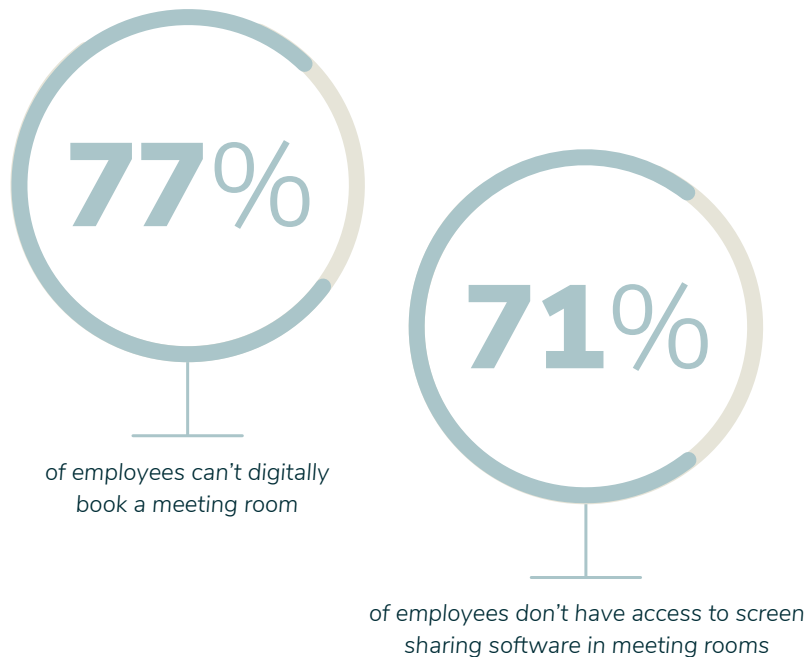
### WORKPLACE TOOLS: PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE VS. ACCESS



In fact, less than half of companies supply these tools in the workplace — just 43% of employees say they have access to cloud-based file management systems (think Google Drive, Box and Microsoft's OneDrive). Additionally, only 40% of office workers say their employer offers a chat application like Slack or Microsoft Teams.



But where the absence of essential workplace tools is most alarming is when it comes to hosting meetings. In our survey, 77% of employees said they couldn't digitally book a meeting room — and 71% said they don't have access to screen sharing software. This makes it harder to arrange group sessions and more difficult to collaborate once you meet.



This makes it harder for employees to connect and collaborate effectively. But these tools are also software applications, which makes it easier for companies to affect significant change and offer their employees useful workplace tools.

**Companies need to think about tools and technology that help employees work outside the office.** “The combination of Wi-Fi networks and mobile technologies now allows you to work in multiple locations,” Cornell University’s Dr. Hedge tells us. “What that means in a company is you have to think of your entire space as a workspace. You also have to think outside the workspace, too.”

This is becoming increasingly important as employees demand greater flexibility to work outside the office. Among professionals, 70% said the flexibility to work remotely is a must-have when considering a new job.

That demand has repercussions for the tools and technology companies offer their workforce. In particular, employees list two tools as critically important: Chat applications like Slack and video conferencing solutions like Zoom.

Both of these tools are useful in the workplace, but they’re especially useful for remote employees. Other tools like cloud-managed file storage are also helpful for remote employees — or employees who are traveling for work. Video conferencing software is another example: Even though 62% of people say it’s a critically important office tool, just three in 10 say they have access to it in the workplace.

With the ability to work remotely standing as the number one consideration among job seekers, companies have room to make it easier for their employees to work outside the office with the right tools and technology.

## STEP 5:

# Offering Employees Community When They Want It

**It's important to balance the social and collaborative needs of your employees with tailored spaces that are optimized to promote productive social interactions.**

When someone chooses to come to the office, they expect to be productive. But they also expect to interact with their colleagues and teams.

Case in point: 55% of employees say they enjoy going to the office for social activity. This want for interaction is particularly acute among younger professionals who see a benefit to networking and creating relationships in the office. 67% of Generation Z and 59% of Millennial workers saying they enjoy in-office events and utilizing communal spaces.

This calls attention to the need to weave social spaces into the workplace. But for savvy companies, it also calls attention to the need to do it thoughtfully.

Pulling from our survey, here are two key takeaways:

**1.** **While there's a want for social interaction at the office, there's a greater want for quiet and productive workspaces.** And in offices that do a poor job of sectioning off social areas and meeting rooms, employees are more likely to end up distracting others as they socialize and meet in the open.

This makes it critical to offer professionals community when they want it through dedicated social spaces.

Key areas like an employee kitchen and in-office café make prime targets for these types of spaces. The important part is offering employees a way to engage with one another without disrupting others who are working.



**2. Optimize open spaces for productive social interactions.** Just because someone's in a social area, it doesn't mean they're not working. In our survey, people pointed to the potential productive upside of social spaces.

50% say having social spaces at the office increases their productivity. This rises among Millennials with 62% saying that social spaces increase their productivity.

For companies, this presents an opportunity to optimize open areas for productive social interactions.

Open lounges can double as impromptu meeting spaces if equipped with laptop tables. And kitchen areas can turn into group collaboration spaces if equipped with a whiteboard and projector.

*“Whether it's a library or lounge within a building or a café-space within a building, a quiet room, a meeting room, more open areas — wherever it is, you have to think through how someone might be using the space and optimize it for that.”*

– Dr. Alan Hedge, Professor of Design and Environment Analysis at Cornell University<sup>6</sup>



# Closing Thoughts

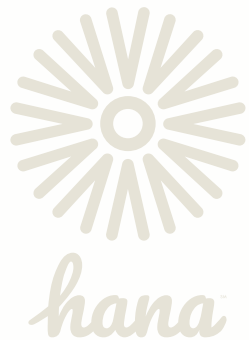
Employees overwhelmingly list productivity as the biggest source of fulfillment at work and want their employers to give them the right environment, amenities, services and technology they need to do their work effectively. While there has been a focus on bringing more fun and recreational amenities into the workplace, people want their employers to focus on building better places to work — not play.

**1. People expect their employers to get the basics right in the office.** It's important to remember the reason people come into the office: to work. As companies invest in their employees, it's critical to focus on basic employee needs like ergonomic furniture and quiet spaces.

**2. Employers that prioritize fun perks over functional workspaces will lose the fight for talent — and the battle for productivity.** Fun perks don't make up for a bad workplace experience. People appreciate employers that offer fun workplace perks but place a far higher value on the functional must-haves they need to be productive. More than 75% of job seekers say functional amenities matter in their decisions, compared to 40% who say fun amenities matter.

**3. Companies that invest in building productive workspaces and giving their employees greater flexibility will win.** In today's job market, people have options when it comes to choosing where they work — and they're more likely to choose companies that focus on building productive workspaces and offering greater flexibility to take control of how they work.





## About Hana

CBRE Hana, LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of CBRE Group, Inc., the world's largest commercial real estate services and investment firm (based on 2017 revenue). Hana partners with real estate owners to develop and operate integrated, scalable, flexible workspaces. Each unit contains office suites (Hana Team), conference rooms and event space (Hana Meet) and co-working (Hana Share). Hana provides property owners increased transparency, control over their asset environment, and a valuable offering for companies that desire to maintain their culture and brand while leveraging the benefits of a flexible space offering. More information is available at [www.yourhana.com](http://www.yourhana.com).

## Methodology

### ONLINE SURVEY

**Audience: 1,002 U.S. office workers who spend at least 50% of their time working in an office setting.**

This report draws on research conducted in partnership with KRC Research. We surveyed 1,000+ U.S. office workers who spend at least half of their week in an office setting to gain insights into what the largest drivers of fulfillment at work and what amenities, services, tools and technology are most beneficial.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> The Brookings Institute. "Productivity Measurement Initiative."  
<https://www.brookings.edu/productivity-measurement-initiative/>
- <sup>2</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Labor Productivity and Costs."  
<https://www.bls.gov/lpc/prodybar.htm>
- <sup>3</sup> Harvard Business Review. "Survey: What Employees Want Most from their Workspaces."  
<https://hbr.org/2019/08/survey-what-employees-want-most-from-their-workspaces>
- <sup>4</sup> Personal Interview. Dr. Alan Hedge. March 2019.
- <sup>5</sup> Fast Company. "How Background Noise Affects the Way You Work."  
<https://www.fastcompany.com/3051835/how-background-noise-affects-the-way-you-work>
- <sup>6</sup> Personal Interview. Dr. Alan Hedge. March 2019.