

# Big Tech's struggle to bring its workers back to the office

Article

**The news:** Big Tech companies are struggling to implement post-pandemic return-to-work strategies as growing numbers of employees demand greater flexibility for staying remote.

**More on this:** Though firms have differed on their specific strategies, many have been forced to backtrack recently to appease worker opposition to returning to the office.

- **Google** revealed a **revised** return-to-work strategy in which 20% of employees will be full-time remote, 20% working from an office other than where they were assigned, and 60% returning to their original office several days per week—a **departure** from Google’s previous stance, which would’ve required all employees to be in-office three days per week.
- **Facebook** **announced** it would expand its remote work eligibility to all levels of employees ahead of the planned September reopening of its offices at half capacity. Facebook has previously **said** employees relocating to more affordable areas may be forced to take a salary cut.
- **Apple** employees are **pushing** back against a recent memo from CEO **Tim Cook** informing staff they’d be **required** to return to the office three days per week starting in early September.
- **Amazon** walked back initial **plans** to return to an “office-centric culture” by the fall, in favor of giving corporate employees the **option** to work remotely up to two days per week.
- **Meanwhile**, others like **Spotify**, **Twitter**, and **Dropbox** have either adopted Work From Anywhere strategies or have promised employees they can work remotely “forever.”

### **The bigger picture:**

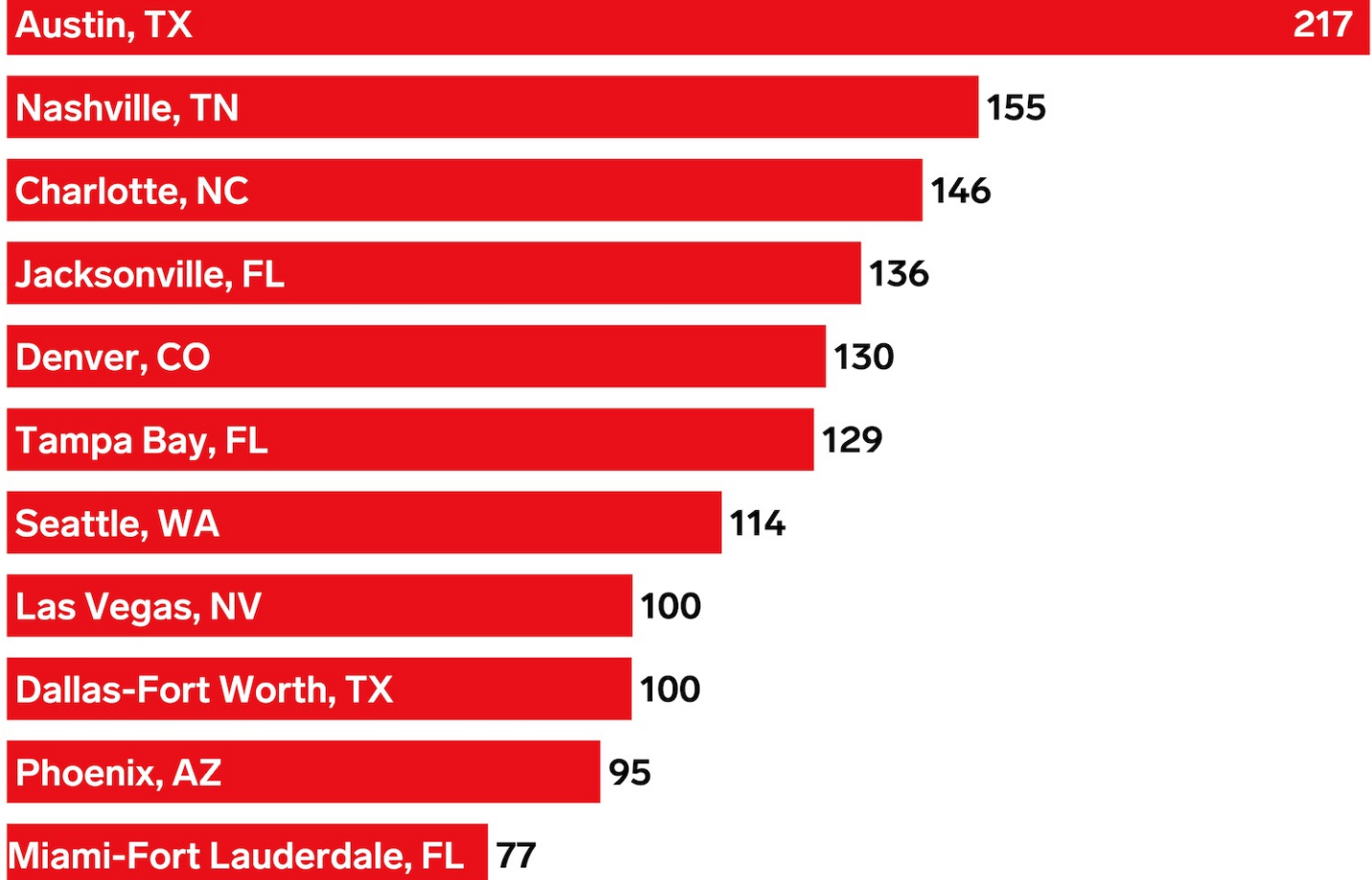
**The bigger picture:** Efforts to return to physical offices are in tension with tech workers’ **growing** preference for remote work—a trend that’s playing out across the US workforce generally. In many cases, workers would rather quit than go back to the office: **39%** of US adults said they would **consider quitting their jobs** if their employers weren’t flexible about remote work, **according to** a May Morning Consult/Bloomberg poll. In April 2021 alone, the Labor Department reported that a record **4 million US workers** quit their jobs, **per** NPR.

At the same time, significant portions of tech’s workforce have already **abandoned** the industry’s major geographical hubs and flocked to more affordable cities like **Austin**, **Nashville**, and **Charlotte**. Keep in mind, this isn’t just a tech issue:

**The dilemma:** Growing preferences for remote work and hiring surges during the pandemic have left Big Tech companies in a tricky position. Tech **giants** have already **collectively** spent **billions** in recent years on lavish new campuses to accommodate a rapidly **growing** workforce. On the other hand, a refusal to accommodate workers’ desire for flexibility in where they live and work could leave Big Tech vulnerable to losing top talent to rivals less committed to the need for a physical office.

# Austin Leads the Tech Worker Exodus

Net flow of tech workers per 10,000 existing ones, 2020–2021



Source: LinkedIn via Bloomberg

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