

Apple's spaceship campus blasts to the past with in-office requirement

Article

The news: Big Tech is increasingly facing a disgruntled workforce as employees push back against demands that they [return to the office](#).

- **Apple** employees sent a [letter](#) to company executives this week criticizing its **Hybrid Work Pilot**, which will require them to be in-office three days a week starting later this month, [per](#) Gizmodo.

- The letter accused the company of devaluing worker flexibility and creating a policy “driven by fear” of losing control over the workforce.
- **76% of Apple workers** said they’re dissatisfied with the return-to-work policy, according to an April survey conducted by Blind, [per](#) Fortune. **Fifty-six percent** said they’re thinking about leaving the company because of it.

How we got here: After two years of the coronavirus pandemic, the world has changed to accommodate a large remote workforce. Companies that now want employees back in offices are pushing against a new reality that prioritizes flexibility and less commuting.

- Although companies justify in-person policies by claiming it fosters more collaboration, **Apple employees have complained about a “siloeed” environment** where people have few opportunities to interact beyond their core teams.
- In addition to Apple workers resisting loss of remote work freedoms, back to-office also means **back to battling traffic**, which can amount to hours of time lost every day.
- Although office [perks](#) like free food, swag, and ping pong may have been desirable in the past, changed expectations and aspirations have elevated remote work on the perk hierarchy.
- From Big Tech’s perspective, its real estate spending [sprees](#)—including Apple’s **\$5 billion Apple Park** campus—need bodies to justify the expenses. Additionally, companies like Apple, **Google**, and **Microsoft** are likely enacting their in-person policies because of a desire to carve a distinct company culture.

A more tech-focused path: It’s ironic that companies that helped enable the shift to a more distributed workforce are going against the grain of their tech creations—and potentially productivity.

- Although research about the costs and benefits of remote work are mixed, one [study](#) found that **employees who work from home are 13% more productive than office workers**, [per](#) Observer.
- With the backdrop of [organizing](#) tech workers and many [considering](#) other employment, Big Tech could instead stay on the cutting edge of innovation by improving remote working technologies while still retaining talent.

The opportunity: In the event that Big Tech decides to stay the in-person course, smaller businesses, startups, and those [outside](#) of Silicon Valley and other tech hubs could gain an

edge by attracting talent with more enticing fully remote arrangements.

US Adults Who Currently Work from Home or From Another Location, Feb 2022

% of respondents

Work entirely from home



Work mostly from home, but sometimes from another location



Work from home half of the time and from another location half of the time



Work mostly from another location, but sometimes from home



Work entirely from another location



Note: ages 18+ who are full/part-time employees

Source: YouGov, "The Economist/YouGov Poll," Feb 11, 2022

273779

eMarketer | InsiderIntelligence.com