

Amazon exec says in-office work ‘is better’—research paints a different picture

Article

The news: Despite Amazon’s reputation for being a data-driven company, its SVP of Video and Studios, Mike Hopkins, said during a recent internal meeting that “no data” was used to

support its return-to-office mandate.

- “It’s time to disagree and commit. We’re here, we’re back—and it’s working. I don’t have data to back it up, but I know it’s better,” Hopkins said, per [Insider](#).
- Frustrated employees vented on the company Slack channel, with one commenting, “What embarrassingly poor leadership,” while others questioned the accuracy of the “no data” claim.
- Hopkins’ statements follow Amazon implementing a [strict return-to-hub policy](#) in addition to its earlier return-to-office mandate.

What the data shows: There is research on return-to-office requirements, but contrary to Hopkins’ claim, it doesn’t point to better outcomes.

- **42%** of companies with return-to-office mandates witnessed a higher level of employee attrition than they anticipated, and **29%** are struggling with recruitment, according to Unispace, per [Fortune](#).
- **76%** of employees are ready to quit if their employers abandon flexible work schedules, and **42%** say they’d reject roles that lack flexibility, according to a Greenhouse report.
- A Federal Reserve survey found that shifting from a flexible work model to a traditional one is as unpopular as a **2% to 3%** pay cut.

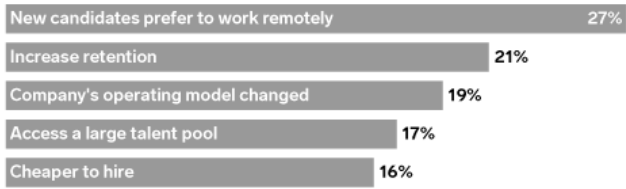
An underlying tension: The ecommerce giant doesn’t like remote work, but it likely benefits from it. **The rise of flexible working arrangements could be helping keep a recession at bay.** It’s contributing to greater job access and reducing costs for both employers and employees, which in turn bolsters consumer spending.

Not committed: Amazon might be unconcerned about attrition but it does expect quality, loyalty, and commitment from workers it wants to retain.

- An influx of Amazon employees venting on the **Blind** app about a punishing corporate culture and a tendency for employees to cry at their desks is an indicator of a troubled workforce.
- Amazon could take steps to bolster the employee dedication it needs to stay competitive by seeking employee input about return-to-office challenges and adjusting policies accordingly.

Reasons Senior Executives and Managers Worldwide Hire Remote Workers, Aug 2022

% of respondents



Source: Infosys, "Future of Work 2023," March 14, 2023

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