

Apple's September return to office could lead to industry-wide mandates

Article



The news: Apple will require corporate employees to return to the office for three days per week, [per](#) Bloomberg.

Why it's worth watching: Big Tech set the precedent for remote work at the start of the pandemic. As restrictions ease in various cities, expect them to once more lead the charge in

return-to-office mandates after months of delays. In Apple's case, it delayed returning to the mothership in May.

- Apple's earlier return-to-office mandates were met with [disdain](#) from employees resisting a return to corporate offices.
- **76% of Apple workers said they were dissatisfied with the return-to-work policy**, according to an April survey conducted by Blind, [per](#) Fortune. **Fifty-six percent** said they were thinking about leaving the company because of it.
- The current climate of economic uncertainty and industry-wide hiring freezes and job cuts give employers like Apple leverage over ambivalent employees. In context, Apple just [laid off](#) 100 recruiter contractors, a sure sign of hiring slowdowns.
- Apple CEO **Tim Cook** acknowledged the upcoming austerity during a recent earnings call, noting the company would be more "deliberate" in its spending.
- Apple, like many Big Tech companies, is preparing for its busiest and most profitable quarters, punctuated by a string of product releases and culminating in the holiday shopping season, requiring all hands on deck.

The long road to normalcy: More than two years after the coronavirus pandemic began, the world has transformed to accommodate a large remote workforce, mostly made possible by following Big Tech's lead and using their solutions and strategies.

- The current [economic uncertainty](#) could expedite staff returning to in-person work, while the [tenuous job market](#) could result in wider employee compliance.
- Considering that work relationships are a function of proximity, remote workers could be cut off from longer-term development, [raises](#), and promotions.
- Big Tech has been [expanding](#) its real estate footprint, amassing office space as part of its expansion.
- Companies need to fill these spaces to justify the expenses and to propagate their distinct company culture, which they were unable to do during the pandemic.
- "For all that we've been able to achieve while many of us have been separated, the truth is that there has been something essential missing from this past year: each other," Cook [told](#) Apple employees in June 2021.

What's next? Barring any COVID-19 outbreaks, **expect other Big Tech companies to announce similar return-to-office mandates in September.** The migration back to the workplace will likely happen in hybrid three-days-per-week increments as employers and employees manage their way around a new normal.

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