

# What Really Happens When Workers Are Given a Flexible Hybrid Schedule?

Who goes into the office and when largely depends on where employees fall on the org chart.

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Designing your ideal schedule and negotiating it with your boss has never been easier.

The Covid-19 pandemic has redrawn corporate policies such that most major companies now offer employees the flexibility to work both from the office and from home. [BlackRock Inc. mandates three days per week in person](#), and [Apple Inc.](#), which this month [postponed its planned Feb. 1 office return indefinitely](#) because of disruptions from the omicron variant, has chosen three specific in-office days: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

But while employees crave face time and prioritize productivity, they also lean toward looser options than the somewhat structured hybrid schedules on offer. Preferences vary: Extroverted teammates, gnarly commutes, and child-care duties can easily tip hybrid schedules toward home or office. Humans have work rhythms, however, and the patterns of the herd are telling—and surprisingly consistent. Here's what we found after consulting dozens of workers:

**Two days in office.** When given a choice, most rank-and-file office workers favor two days a week in the office. Some prefer to have those days back-to-back, but the majority separate the days. “I love coming in, because it’s easier to brainstorm face-to-face with colleagues,” says Brandon Muratalla, account supervisor at Murphy O’Brien, a Los Angeles-based public relations firm that requires only twice-monthly appearances. He comes in on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. “It’s much more effective for me to train junior employees or new team members in office, when they can learn from me while sitting side-by-side. It’s easier to establish company culture in person.”

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The employees who like three days per week are predominantly managers, client-facing employees, and those with highly people-heavy jobs. “I always try to go in on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays,” says Bartek Boniecki, head of people at biometric photography company [Passport Photo Online](#), based in Białystok, Poland. “It gives me more strength to start the week this way, and I get into work mode faster.”

Executives intending full office returns had better take note: Of all the employees polled, only one person preferred five in-office days, because of home conditions that aren’t conducive to working.

**In-office days vary.** Employees say they to choose their in-office days based on the needs of the organization. Jenna Carson, partner at personal finance website [Money Lucid](#), chooses to go to work on Mondays and Fridays, when she says her industry is busiest. “It benefits the company.”

Richard Ford, co-founder of corporate tax firm [Hart Accounting Services](#) in Ontario, requires staffers to appear twice a week. “Lately, I’ve noticed a shift toward Thursdays becoming popular,” Ford says, which he thinks helps his team finalize that week’s tasks in person. Many client meetings also tend to be scheduled on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, which pulls in client-facing workers.

With a bit of prodding, employees indicate that their choices are largely dictated by their personal lives. Ford himself likes in-office Wednesdays so he can pick up his kids after school. Marc Bromhall, founder at South African storage-price information service [StorageBuddy](#), partially plans around post-work activities. “Thursday is a social day, meaning that I’ll often meet friends for drinks after work.”

Sharon van Donkelaar, chief marketing officer of [Expandi](#)—a LinkedIn adviser—built her schedule around online professional education courses. “I personally love my schedule,” she says. “I appreciate the time I get to focus on my classes and assignments. I wouldn’t be able to if I was working a regular schedule.”

**Productive Mondays are in.** If you thought people were slacking off at home, think again: Workers choose the place where their Mondays will be most productive. This means that project-based people like to crank out work from home. Digital marketing firm

Structured Agency requires that employees appear at a staff meeting Wednesday at 2 p.m. and is otherwise flexible. The office is quiet on Mondays. “Our open-door policy has shown us that employees do some buckling down on Mondays to get started on their weekly objectives,” says managing director Nick Shackelford. Employees with social or team-based jobs tend to come to the office on Mondays.

**At-home Fridays are popular.** If the pandemic has brought one definitive weekly habit, it’s starting Fridays early at home—and ending early, to peel off for the weekend by early afternoon. But this is not possible for people at companies that are busy on Fridays. “My boss requests that I work Mondays and Fridays in office, because those are the two busiest days of the week,” says Thomas Hawkins, content manager at Electrician Apprentice HQ.

Popularity of at-home Fridays has created a subset of workers who enjoy the quiet of mostly empty offices. “Fridays are usually the hardest day to keep motivated, so a fresh change of scenery energizes me and makes me even more excited to get home,” says Carson, who works “early until late.”

**Office days are longer.** Pandemic upheaval has not shaken the concept of 9-to-5. Even staffers coming in for only one morning meeting tend to stay all day, though they predominantly slip out after seven or so hours, rather than eight or nine. Beyond those in-house days, some workers’ hours are becoming increasingly non-traditional. “Some of our staff work 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., some work mornings and evenings,” says Devon Fata, chief executive officer of web design company Pixoul, which requires employees to appear in the office for two weekly meetings. “I have one employee who exclusively works overnight hours with the exception of those meetings.”

**CEOs are still adjusting.** “As CEO, I’m the office more than anyone,” says Fata. He’s far from alone. “For me there’s no limit to my work in the office,” says Marilyn Gaskell, founder of search engine True People Search. “Sometimes I go early, sometimes I work in the office until late. I work long hours to ensure everything is on track.” Her employees no longer log the same hours—but they do invite her to relax. “They call me over to have lunch with them.”