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Business

New survey indicates work-from-home is here to stay

Only 12% of executives with hybrid or fully remote workers plan on a return-to-office mandate in the year ahead. Stanford researchers say the message is clear: Headline-grabbing mandates to return to in-person work “will barely move the needle on WFH.”



Amazon has mandated that workers come back to the office. But a new survey reveals many companies are holding firm on their work-from-home or hybrid policies. | Getty Images

Amazon and AT&T are doing it employees to return to the off



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Of the executives surveyed, only 12 percent who currently have hybrid or fully remote workers reported plans for some kind of return-to-office (RTO) mandate in the year ahead. Many of those planned mandates do not involve a full return to onsite work. Instead, more than a quarter of the planned RTOs will be hybrid in nature, requiring onsite work only one to four days a week.

Stanford economists [Nicholas Bloom](#) and [Steven Davis](#) — senior fellows at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR) who are [leading experts on remote work](#) and collaborators on the monthly Atlanta Fed survey that tracks business expectations — say the research team decided to get a fresh pulse from American businesses on shifts in the work-from-home landscape after Amazon and several other large firms announced RTO mandates last year and speculation of a big WFH pullback rose.

The answer is clear, the researchers stated: The headline-grabbing RTO mandates “will barely move the needle on WFH,” and “U.S. firms do not see any material trend to return to office.”

The researchers calculate that the planned shifts back to onsite work in the year ahead would reduce the overall share of paid workdays that are work-from-home by less than half a percentage point, trimming it from 21.2 percent to 20.8 percent.

The researchers noted that these small reductions in work-from-home may never happen either, because of the struggles firms face when trying to implement RTOs.

Even if the nation falls into a recession, or if unemployment rates double, making for a tighter labor market, the vast majority of executives surveyed said they wouldn’t change their workplace strategies. A downturn in economic conditions would lead to only “a slight decline” in WFH, the survey found.

Taken together, researchers say, the survey findings suggest employers are satisfied with the benefits they are seeing from work-from-home arrangements — reduced floorspace needs, better productivity and lower quit rates.

“Whatever happens in the U.S. economy over the next year, we think working from home is here to stay,” the researchers wrote.

The survey’s results further solidify what Bloom and Davis are finding from their extensive [ongoing WFH research](#) with Jose Barrero of the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México: that the [pandemic-induced revolution](#) of working from home is not waning.

For instance, in the [December 2024 results](#) of their separate survey of American workers (the Survey of Working Arrangements and Attitudes), only 44 percent of respondents said they would comply with a RTO policy requiring fully onsite work. The rest said they would quit or start looking for a new job.

And in a [working paper](#) released in February by the National Bureau of Economic Research, the researchers tackled the variability of measuring work from home across numerous surveys and estimated that as of 2025, work-from-home days account for a quarter of all paid workdays in the U.S.

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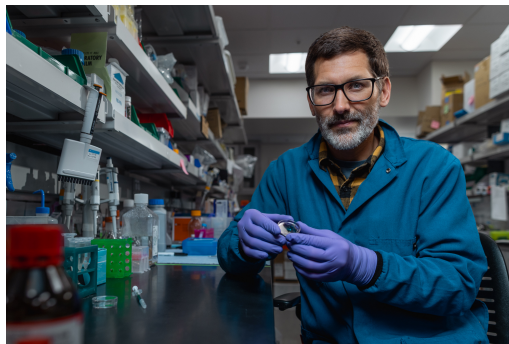
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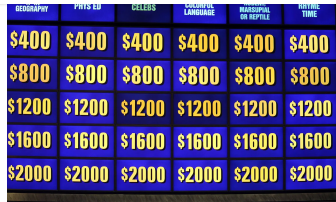
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