



seramount

Talent Solutions for Better Workplaces

Hybrid and Flexible Work

Balancing Business Outcomes, Hiring
Competitiveness, and Employee Engagement

Our webinar will begin shortly

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Using Zoom



Utilize the Chat Button to Add Comments Throughout the Session

Engaging in Chat



Asking a Question



Brief Exit Survey



We'd appreciate your **feedback** on today's presentation.

Meet Your Presenter



Joe Infantino

Senior Director, Research, Seramount

With Deepest Appreciation

Recognizing the 100 Participants in Our CHRO Listening Tour

- 
- Luani Alvarado, Kenvue
 - Lucien Alziari, Prudential
 - Brian Baker, Teneo
 - Bill Baker, Wolters Kluwer
 - Emily Barron, Basic Technologies
 - Ali Bebo, Pearson
 - Karen Bennett, Cox Enterprises
 - Alison Bernard, Dechert
 - Dottie Brienza, Cambrex
 - Josh Bronstein, Bank of America
 - Misty Brown Fischer, Ultimate Medical Academy
 - Helena Bugeja, Transurban
 - Donna Byron, TransRe
 - Elisabetta Caldera, Aegon
 - Kristi Cappelletti-Matthews, VSP Vision
 - Len Carter, FHN
 - Lisa Chang, Coca Cola
 - Abigail Charpentier, Aramark
 - Jennifer Conn, Pharmavite
 - Steve Cunningham, TDIndustries
 - Andrew Davis, Sony Music
 - Lacey Dingman, Federal Reserve Bank of New York
 - Stephanie Doliveira, Sheetz
 - Kevin Dooley, IQVIA
 - Eric Dozier, Lilly
 - Heather Dumas, Ardent Mills
 - Lauren Duprey, Takeda
 - Larry Durham, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
 - Mario Ellis, Beacon Health Systems
 - Anne Erni, Audible
 - Julie Everitt, Standard Chartered
 - Peter Fasolo, HRPI
 - Javier Feliciano, Meritage Homes
 - John Ferguson, NASCAR
 - Lorraine Field, Sonora Quest Laboratories
 - Greg Flores, Retired, formerly of Pilot Flying J
 - Michael Fraccaro, Mastercard
 - María Laura García, Tecpetrol
 - Myra Gregorian, Seattle Children's Hospital
 - Andrea Haan, World Insurance
 - Harry Harden, Sonic Automotive
 - Michelle Hargis Wolfe, University of Arkansas
 - Christy Harris, CCC
 - Denise Haselhorst, Chargebee
 - Linda Ho, Seismic Software
 - Yolanda Hutchins, PCORI
 - Ed Hutner, Deltek
 - Renuka Iyer, PhRMA
 - Tonya Jackson, Lexmark
 - Melissa Jones, CSAA Insurance
 - Rachel Kay, Hearst
 - Aimee Kennedy, Battelle Memorial Institute
 - Simon King, Daiichi Sankyo
 - Shane Koller, Ancestry
 - Stephanie Kramer, L'Oréal
 - Nickle LaMoreaux, IBM
 - Janis Leigh, Giant Eagle
 - Catherine LeSki, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
 - Bei Ling, Wells Fargo
 - Jackson Lynch, Sunnova
 - Mallory Martino, Wella
 - Tom Mathews, formerly of Cree
 - Linda Matzigkeit, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta
 - Matthew McCarthy, formerly of Ben & Jerry's
 - John-Anthony Meza, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
 - James Momon, formerly of 3M
 - Mary Moreland, Abbott
 - Susan Muigai, TransUnion
 - Michele Nolty, Olive Tree Holdings
 - Andrew Ortiz, Cedars Sinai
 - Steve Pemberton, Seramont
 - Marjorie Powell, AARP
 - Sue Quakenbush, Dynatrace
 - Scott Redfearn, Protiviti
 - Tim Richmond, AbbVie
 - Michael Rogers, Alight Solutions
 - Faith Rottman Johnson, TEKsystems
 - Bala Sathyanarayanan, Greif
 - Don Schneider, AlixPartners
 - Kim Scholes, Aldridge Pite
 - Lesley Sepanloo, American Institutes for Research
 - Jeanna Shapiro, Grant Thornton
 - Dalithia Smith, Oatey
 - Donna Smith, The Jewish Board
 - Ola Snow, Cardinal Health
 - Amy Steadman, Midpen Housing
 - Mark Steiman, CHOC
 - Mari Steinmetz, Kohls
 - Bill Strahan, Comcast
 - Albert Taylor, Southwest Gas
 - Gail Thakarar, VNS Health
 - Aisha Thomas-Petit, Horizon BCBS of New Jersey
 - Enrique Toledo, modivcare
 - Sandy Torchia, KPMG
 - Rainia Washington, FINRA
 - Jason Westenskow, Zachry Construction Corporation
 - Cara Williams, Cottage Health
 - Jeanette Winters, 8x8
 - Sean Woodroffe, Lincoln Financial Group
 - Laura Young, Goldman Sachs



1

Advancements in GenAI

*Separating Hype from Reality
and Ensuring AI Readiness*

2

Hybrid and Flexible Work

*Balancing Business Outcomes,
Hiring Competitiveness, and
Employee Engagement*

3

Employee Mental Health

*Quantifying the Challenge and
Prioritizing Strategies*

4

The Evolving Employee- Employer Compact

*Culture, Loyalty, Generations,
and the Gig Economy*

Hybrid and Flexible Work

Balancing Business Outcomes, Hiring Competitiveness, and Employee Engagement

Representative Listening Tour Responses

“ Our executive team hasn't come to a consensus on hybrid work and unfortunately the longer you wait to take action, the harder it is to take action.”

“ Monitoring productivity and days in the office is a big time suck for my team. This is an entirely new mandate. No one worried about this pre-pandemic.”

“ I think some things are harder to replicate virtually – culture, the apprenticeship model, relationship building. We're working to make hybrid as effective as possible.”

Diverging Opinions on Future of Hybrid Work



CEOs Think the End Is Near

83%

of CEOs believe there will be a full RTO¹ in the next three years, up from 64% in 2023

7%

of CEOs believe fully remote work will be the norm in the long term

Workforce Believes It's Here to Stay

58%

of staff believe a hybrid model will become more common than other models

4%

of CEOs say they will prioritize bringing workers back to the office full-time



Amazon employees were required to return five days per week at the start of 2025



Spotify keeps "Work From Anywhere" policy, emphasizing employees "aren't children"



JPMorgan Chase mandated full-time return to office in 2025, ending hybrid for 40% of workers



Pinterest's "PinFlex" allows employees to work from anywhere within their country or region

Sources: Crist, "[The future of work, according to employees](#)," *HR Dive*, April 8, 2024; Golden, "[Employers willing to pony up for in-office work, Robert Half says](#)," *Fortune*, May 13, 2024; Royle, "[Amazon's 5-day in-office mandate pushes 73% of surveyed staffers to consider quitting](#)," *Fortune*, Sep. 30, 2024; Maruf, "[Just 4% of CEOs are prioritizing bringing workers back into the office full time](#)," *CNN*, Jan. 10, 2024; Williams, "[CEOs are secretly plotting against hybrid work and pushing for a 5-day office return by 2026](#)," *Fortune*, Oct. 16, 2023; Seramont interviews and analysis.

1) Return to office.

Hybrid Has Reached Steady State

Majority of Employers, Staff Consistently Utilizing Flexible Options

Broad Uptake of Flexible Work

90%

Of employers offer hybrid work arrangements

81%

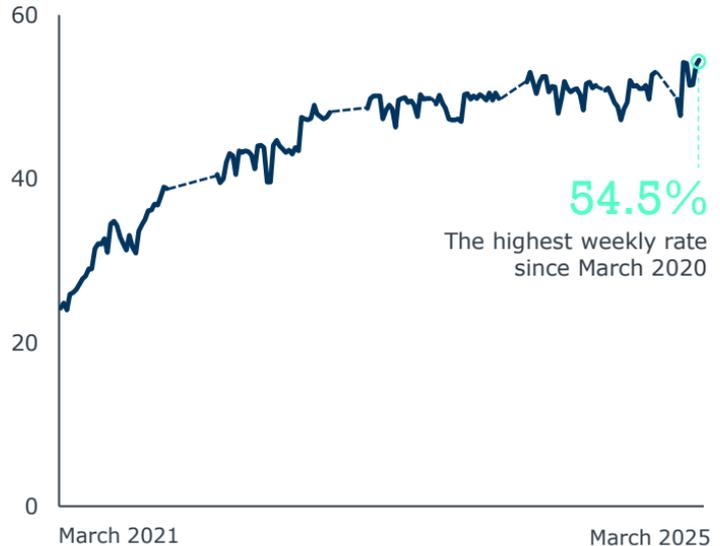
Of remote-capable employees work in hybrid (55%) or exclusively remote (26%) positions

22%

Reduction in square feet of office space per employee

Average Weekly Office Occupancy in Top 10 US Cities

Measured by Badge Swipes, 2021-2025¹



54.5%
The highest weekly rate since March 2020

1) Excludes Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, and 4th of July

Diversity of Approaches Across Companies

Hybrid Policy and Execution Span a Wide Spectrum



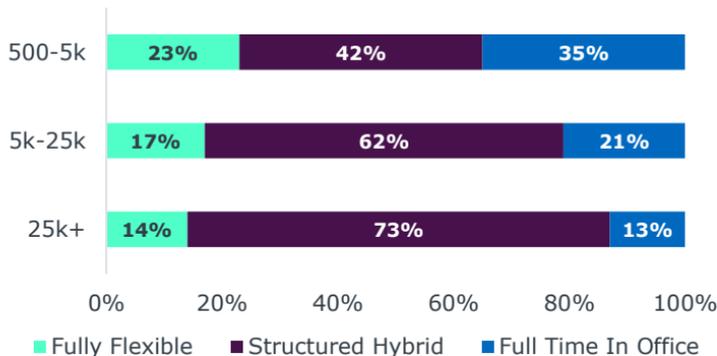
89%

Of structured hybrid companies require 2-3 days per week in office

2.76

Average days per week in office for structured hybrid companies

Prevalence of Flexibility Arrangements by Company Size



Sources: "The Flex Report Q4 2024," Flex Index, May 2024; Gratton, "Seven Truths About Hybrid Work and Productivity," MIT Sloan, Aug 14 2024; Seramount interviews and analysis.

Yet, Concerns About Downstream Impact Remain



C-Suites Continue to Relitigate Hybrid's Potential Threat to Finances, Culture

Areas of Potential Hybrid Impact Executives Raise Most Often



“Every time a company announces its return-to-office policy, we get dragged into the same debate all over again. Honestly, I'm tired of rehashing it. We need to align on a policy that works and move forward.”

CHRO, Seramount listening tour

What the Data Definitively Shows (Part 1)

Hybrid the No. 1 Impact on Hiring

#1

Flexibility is effectively tied with compensation as the top factor when choosing a job

83%

Of recruiters say remote work has improved the quality of the applicants they attract

23%

Increase in the average time needed to fill job vacancies following the implementation of return-to-office mandates, while hire rates fell 17%

Hybrid a Significant Retention and Engagement Driver

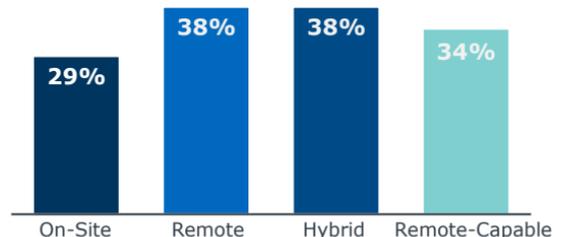
#2

Flexibility is the second most important reason why employees stay in a job

80%

Of employers lost talent to RTO¹ mandates, with a 14% increase to avg. turnover rates

Percentage of staff reporting feeling engaged



Sources: Burleigh, "Most recruiters say that remote work has improved the quality of their talent pool," *Fortune*, 2024; Crist, "1 in 5 US workers say they're ignoring return-to-office rules," *HR Dive*, 2024; Crist, "RTO mandates lead to 'brain drain' attrition, researchers say," *HR Dive*, 2024; Morse, "Companies committing to hardline RTO mandates might be gearing up for a brain drain," *Fortune*, 2024; Pendell, "Frontline Workers Want Flexibility Too," *Gallup*, 2023; "Workforce 2024," Korn Ferry, 2024; Seramont interviews and analysis.

1) Return to office.

What the Data Definitively Shows (Part 2)

Employees Willing to Trade Compensation for Flexibility

8%

The average pay decrease employees are willing to take for flexible work arrangements

\$30,322

The amount commuters could save annually by working locally four days a week rather than commuting to a city center daily

59%

Of employers say they would pay up to 20% more for workers to come to the office 4-5 days a week

Organizations Report Minimal Impact on Equity

10%

Of CHROs say promotions and big projects will be more available for in-office staff



Before a stricter return-to-office policy, Dell attempted to encourage an in-office culture by limiting internal job mobility for remote employees, but 50% chose to stay remote

57%

Of non-remote-capable employees say they are “not at all” bothered that other workers are allowed to work from home some days

Sources: Axon, [“Dell said return to the office or else—nearly half of workers chose ‘or else’,”](#) *Ars Technica*, 2024; Dixon, [“Yet another reason to ditch the RTO mandates: the traditional commute defies logic,”](#) *Fast Company*, 2024; Golden, [“Employers willing to pony up for in-office work, Robert Half says,”](#) *HR Dive*, 2024; McGlaflin and Burleigh, [“Some CHROs are treating remote and hybrid workers like ‘second class citizens’—but it’s a strategy likely to backfire,”](#) *Fortune*, 2024; Pendell, [“Frontline Workers Want Flexibility Too,”](#) *Gallup*, 2023; Seramount Interviews and Analysis.

What the Data Definitively Shows (Part 3)



Hybrid Shown to Boost Productivity, Impact of Remote Work Mixed

8%

One study found employees were 8% more efficient working from home in 2021 compared to working from the office before COVID. Another study found hybrid workers are equally or 1% more effective than their in-office peers.

60%

Of employees go into the office for connection, while only 15% go for focus work

-18%

Fully remote data-entry staff in India were 18% less productive than those consistently at the office

No Connection Between Hybrid and Company Financial Performance

1 in 3

Only 1 in 3 executives who have instituted full RTO¹ believes that return-to-office mandates have “even a slight positive impact on productivity”

S&P 500®

Return-to-office mandates had no statistical impact on financial performance or stock prices of S&P 500 companies. Interestingly, there was evidence of the inverse connection. Dipping stock prices were a strong predictor of RTO mandates.

Sources: “[Are bosses right to insist that workers return to the office?](#),” *The Economist*, 2024; Bloom et al., “[One Company A/B Tested Hybrid Work. Here’s What They Found](#),” *Harvard Business Review*, 2024; Duarte, “[5 years into the remote work boom, the return-to-office push is stronger than ever—here’s why](#),” CNBC, March 23, 2025; Elliott, “[Return-to-Office Mandates: How to Lose Your Best Performers](#),” *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 2024; Smith, “[Office trends: Less space, more space sharing](#),” *Fox Nebraska*, 2024; Seramount interviews and analysis.

1) Return to office.

What the Data Definitively Shows (Part 4)

Staff **Mental Health** Far More Impacted by Interactions than Work Arrangements

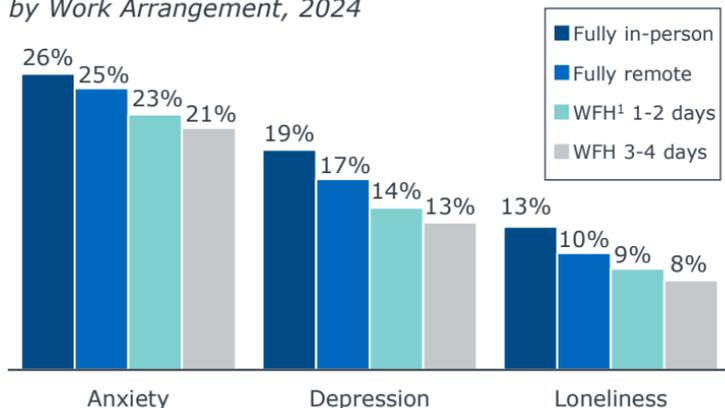
27%

of employees working from home in 2021 found it hard to unplug

16%

of employees working from home in 2021 experienced loneliness

Prevalence of Loneliness and Risk for Anxiety, Depression by Work Arrangement, 2024



Making Pre-COVID Activities the Virtual Norm

A study of 1,000 knowledge workers in 20+ industries found absence of specific social activities is a more significant driver of loneliness than work arrangement, including:

- Happy hours
- Employee resource groups
- Volunteer opportunities
- Holiday parties

Diminishing Returns

There was no difference in loneliness between those who worked 2 days vs. 5 days in the office.

Sources: Hadley and Wright, "We're Still Lonely at Work," *HBR*, 2024; "[New neuroscience research debunks argument that remote employees can't form strong connections with colleagues](#)," *Fortune*, Dec. 13, 2023; "Remote Workers Aren't Lazy — They Need Empathy.," *Entrepreneur*, Oct. 15, 2024; "Social Determinants of Mental Health," Integrated Benefits Institute, 2024; Seramount interviews and analysis.

1) Work from home.

Making Hybrid Work for You

Effective Flex Work Requires Smart Policies, Investments in Programming

Training for Effective Hybrid Teams



Only **21%** of hybrid employees have received training for working in a flexible environment.

KPMG organizes training into distinct pathways for working and leading in a hybrid environment, focusing on hybrid feedback, upward management, communication channels, and etiquette.

Getting Early Career Staff to the Office



Cox attracts younger employees to the office with optional "**Moments that Matter**," experiences that aim to build a foundation for early career professionals to thrive.

Programming includes learning and development opportunities, networking with peers, colleagues, and executives, as well as formal mentoring.

Intentional Hybrid Workplace Experience



CSAA employs a full-time **People and Culture Specialist** to oversee their flexible work strategy.



Dynatrace has a formal **Workplace Experience Team** accountable for ensuring the use of space makes hybrid and distributed work as effective as possible.

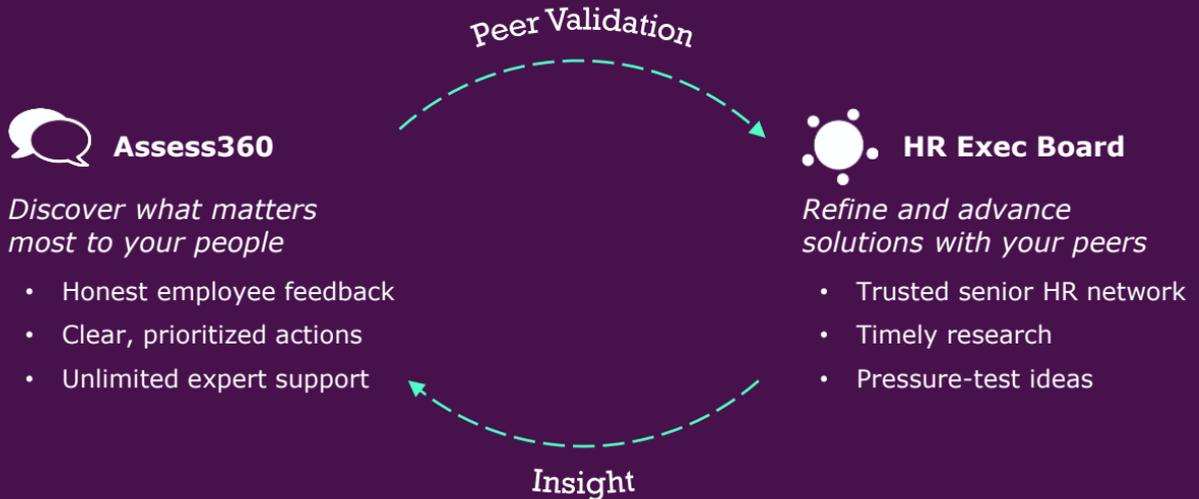
Designated In-Office Days



Only **34%** of hybrid workers have guidelines on which days or times are designated for on-site work.

Research from Stanford University shows a so-called "anchor day" approach achieves benefits of both hybrid, in-person work and leads to a **3-5%** productivity boost.

From Employee Voice to Collective Action



Two Solutions to Help You Turn Pressing Challenges into Opportunities for Growth

How Can Seramount Help Your Organization? Take Our Poll

I'm interested in...

- 1 Receiving a copy of today's slides and recording.
- 2 Connecting with someone about how employee listening can build a hybrid strategy that sticks.
- 3 Learning more about the HR Executive Board community.
- 4 Registering for Seramount's upcoming HR and Talent webinars.
- 5 Receiving a copy of the guide "RTO Without Regret: HR's Guide to Reduce Friction, Retain Talent, and Rebuild Culture."



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