Cultural Implications of *Flexible* Working Models

Allison Bruce
& Joyce Gorospe

AGENDA

Study Focus

Overview of Company Personas and Flexibility

Specifics on Culture

Managers Role

HR Practices

Future Implications
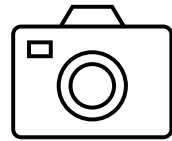
Q&A

ILR CAHRS

CAHRS RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Allison Bruce
MILR '24

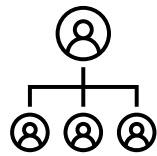

Joyce Gorospe
MILR '23

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Snapshot of Flex Models: How are companies adopting flex models and what are the general cultural implications?

Manager's Role: How has the manager's role changed as a result of flex models and how has it shifted to continue driving culture and performance?

HR Practices: To what extent have HR practices changed as a result of flex models and organizational culture?
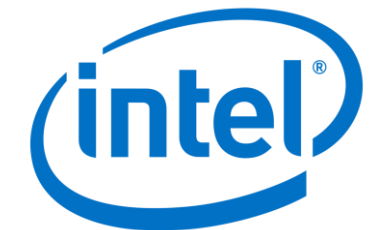
METHODOLOGY

21 Leaders

18 Partner Companies

9 Industries

BIG THANK-YOU to CAHRS members!
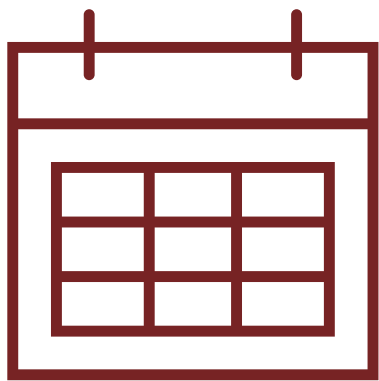
OVERVIEW OF FLEXIBLE WORK MODELS
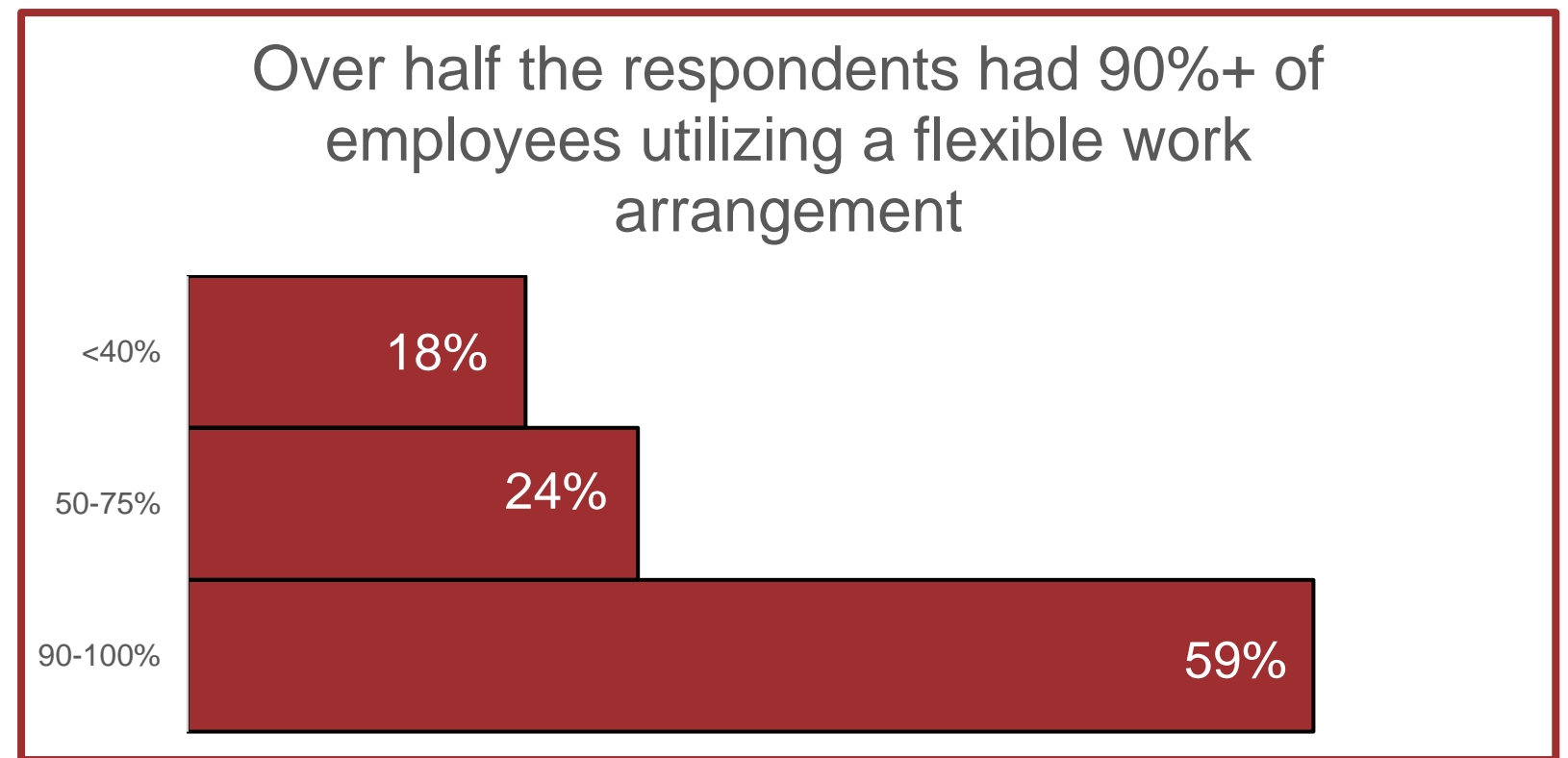
FLEXIBILITY TYPES + UTILIZATION
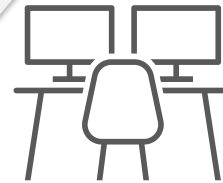
95% Location

95% Schedule

53% Compressed

11% Other

Over half the respondents had 90%+ of employees utilizing a flexible work arrangement

<40%	18%
50-75%	24%
90-100%	59%

COMPANY PERSONAS

On-Site

In a few companies, employees were asked to be onsite **4+ days a week** and the company leads with a "office first" mindset.

Hybrid

In most cases, based on role, employees were given a primary work location: remote, hybrid, fully in office.

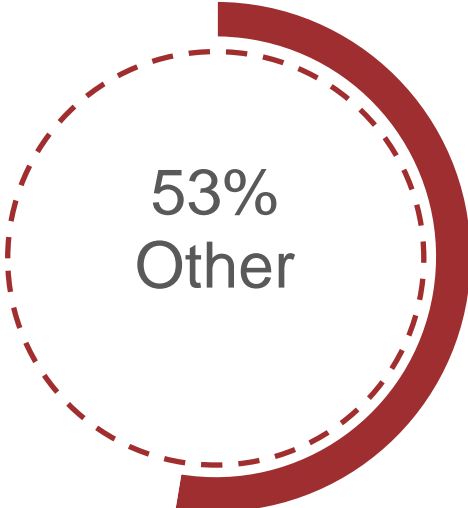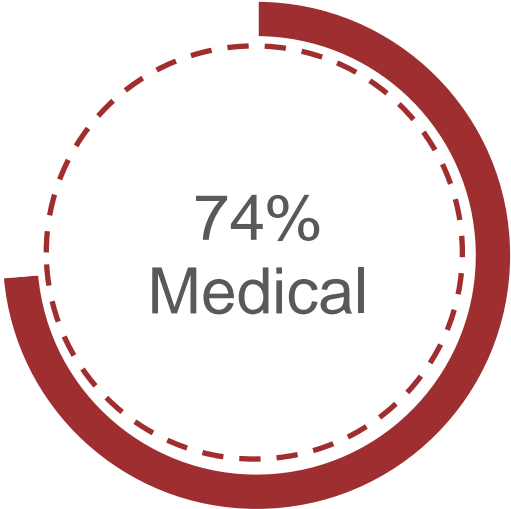Minimum expectation in person generally **2-3 days per week**

Fully Flexible

With few exceptions, all employees could be fully remote.

No minimum days expected per week.

DECISIONS and EXCEPTIONS

74% Medical

63% Caregiving Responsibilities

58% Family Required Relocation

53% Critical Talent

26% Exceptional Performance

53% Other

OUTLIERS !

Measuring quarterly or biweekly vs weekly

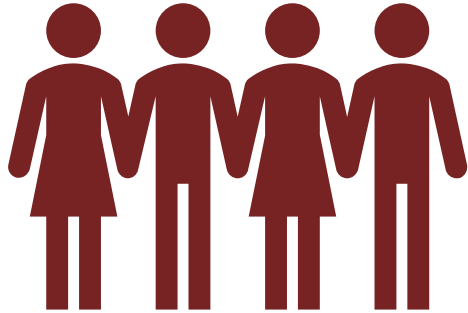Application of flex models in traditionally 'on-site' roles

Work anywhere policies
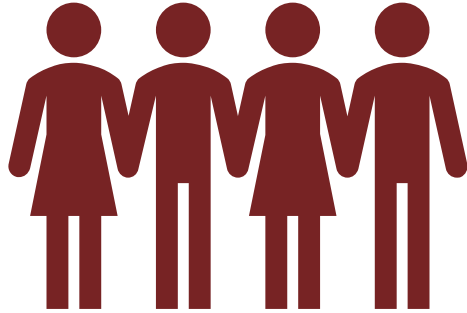
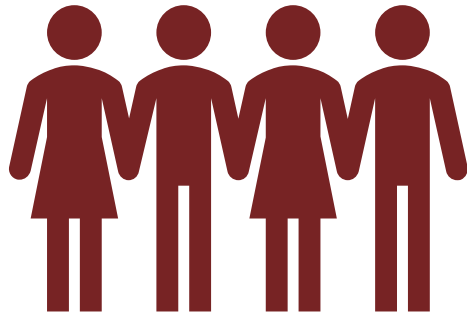Approval process regardless of role

EMPLOYEE PERSONAS

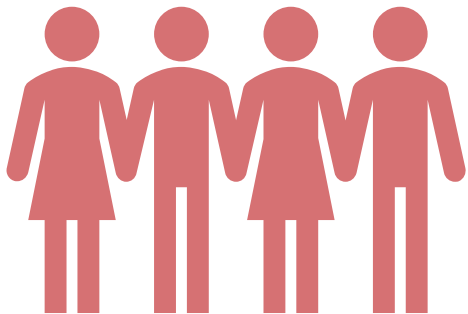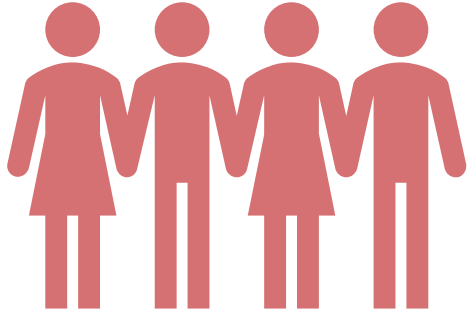Developmental Benefits in Returning

New Hires

Early in Career

Long Tenure

Personal Challenges/ Preferences in Returning

Generational Preferences

Flexible Natives
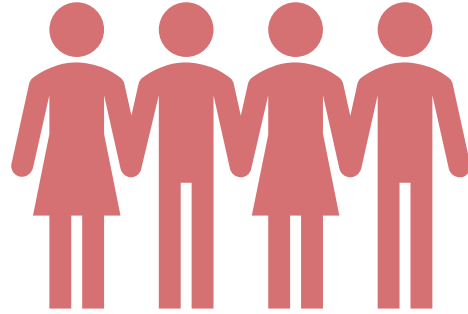
Caregivers

CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

MACRO VIEW
OF
CULTURAL IMPACTS

Evaluation of Beliefs and Perceptions on Cultural Impact: results show greater than 50% overall positive impact

To what extent do you believe flexible work has impacted your company culture?

Extremely

Not at all

What is your perception of the overall impact of flexible work on your company culture to date?
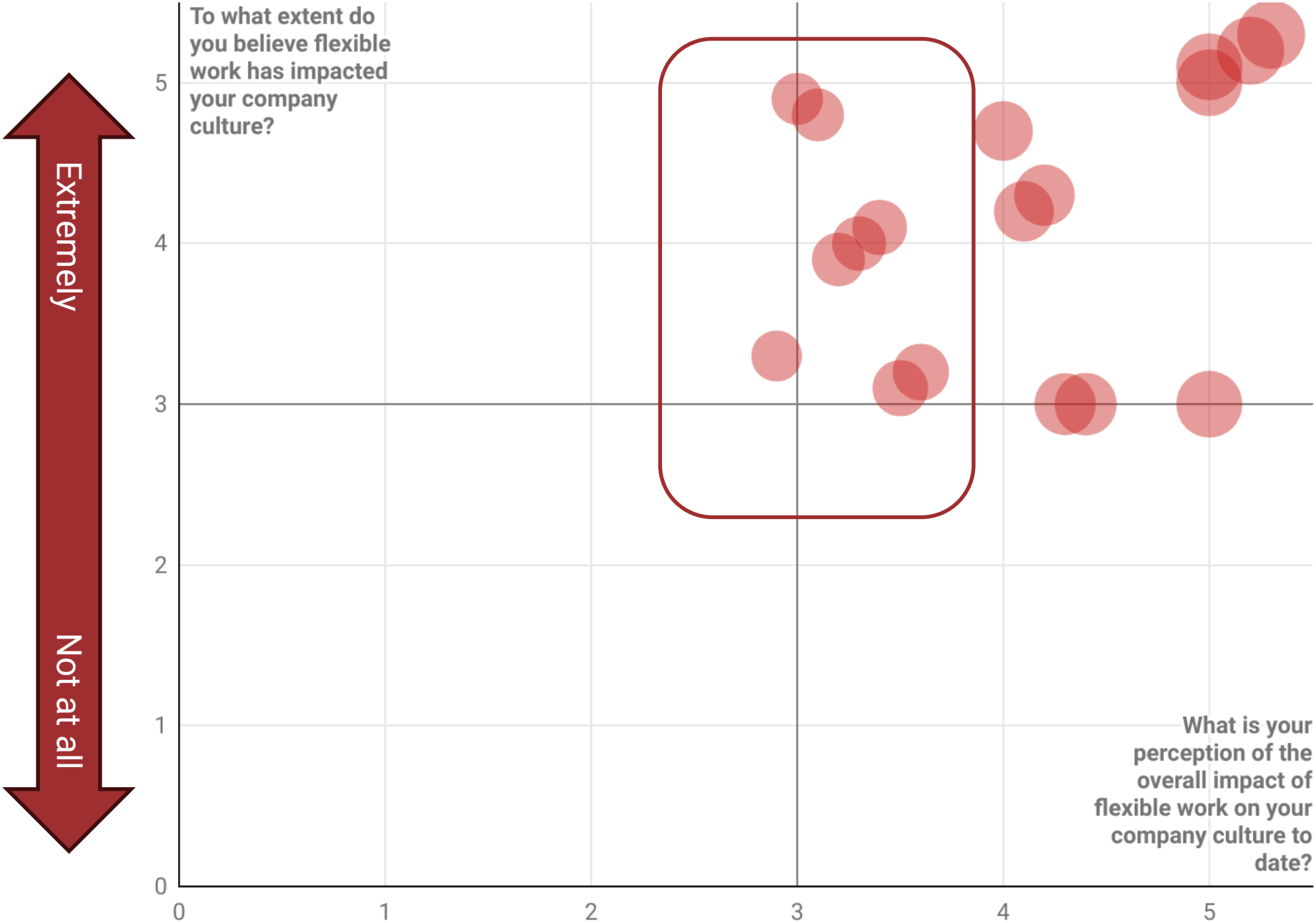
Source: CAHRS • Created with Datawrapper

Extremely Negative   Extremely Positive

CHALLENGES, BENEFITS and TOOLS

Benefits

Higher retention, work life balance, employee satisfaction

Customization for individual needs or preferences

Employee Value Proposition

Challenges

Managing exceptions or entitlements

Collaboration, assimilation, integration

Change management and accountability

Measurement Tools

Hybrid-Experience Surveys, Manager Impact Index

Event sense of connection tracking

Organization Network Analysis, badge swipes

Engagement scores are generally up and measuring productivity continues to be challenging.

SHIFTING EXPECTATIONS FOR **MANAGERS**

Emotional Infrastructure: Empathy, Mental Health

Self-Awareness

Ensuring equity across teams

Soft Skills: Awareness, Empathy

Bring people together and maximize time

Intentional connections among employees across geographic and generational boundaries

Engagement, Belonging, & Connection

Manager's Role

Talent Management & Development

Coaching vs Managing

Exercise good judgement

Leading by example

Agility & Change Management

Managing distributed teams

Navigating grey areas

14

HR PRACTICES

Talent & Performance Management
- People leaders need to be true leaders not just process experts
- Manager playbooks & guides
- Incorporate in office time into the 'how' of performance evaluations

Offering Meaningful Benefits & Rewards
- Child and Elder Care
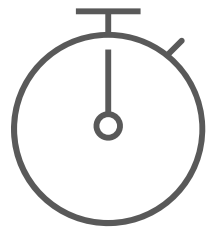- Reimbursements, Home-Office

Compliance
- Navigating dynamic state and national laws
- Perceived fairness on policy application

Engagement & Inclusion
- Capitalizing on the *Moments That Matter*
- Affinity groups and mentorship programs
- Planned regular in-person events
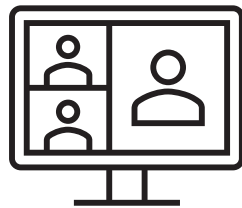
ENGAGEMENT, BELONGING, and CONNECTION

Start Now

Don't wait for the organization to rollout recognition or engagement activities, create ones that work for your team
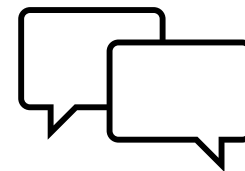
Update Work Location

Update instant messaging system to reflect your work location for that day so team members know if they can find you in office

Inclusive Meetings

Host meetings either all in person or remote to provide the same experience for everyone

Non-Work Chats

Provide teammates with a space to share their hobbies or interests and find common ground with their peers
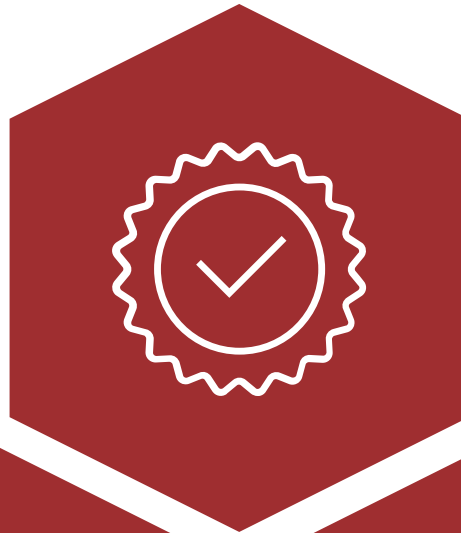
16

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Accountability

"How" of Performance Reviews
Self Accountability

Proximity Bias
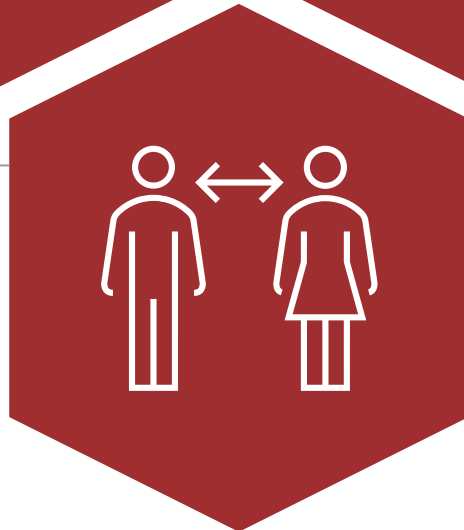
Providing Consistent Feedback
(engagement surveys, 1:1s,
career conversations)

Impact on Career Progression
and Development

Trust & Autonomy

Managing for Outcomes

Communication

Line of Sight: How their work
contributes to business goals

Expectation Setting

MOMENTS THAT *MATTER*

| Different for Everyone | Weak Ties Are Being Lost |

01 Standard Team In-Office Days

Allow for customization by manager or team

02 Foster Employee Connection

Coffee hours or regular huddles

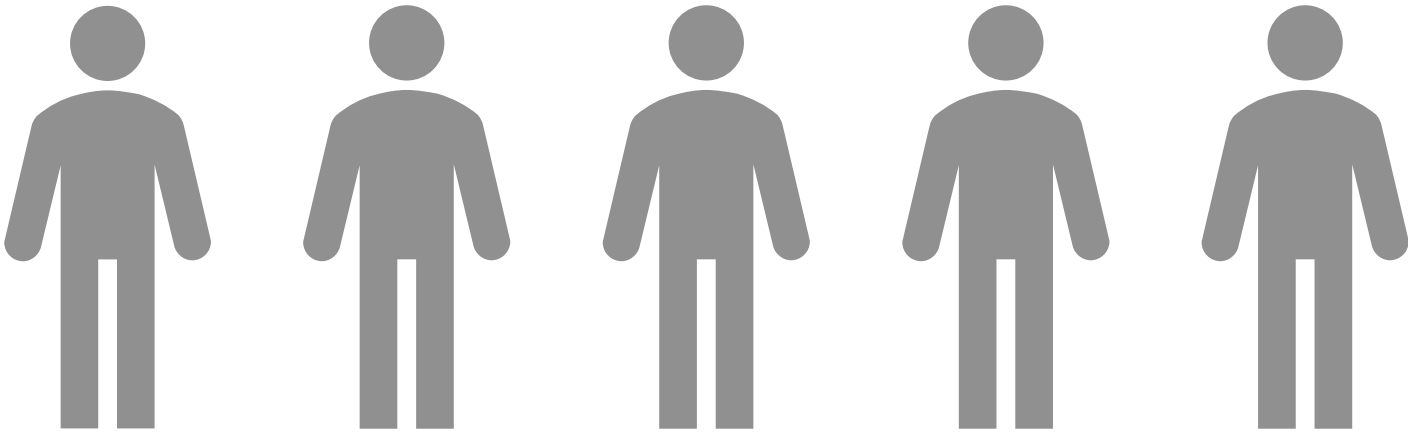## 03 Strategically Scheduling Meetings
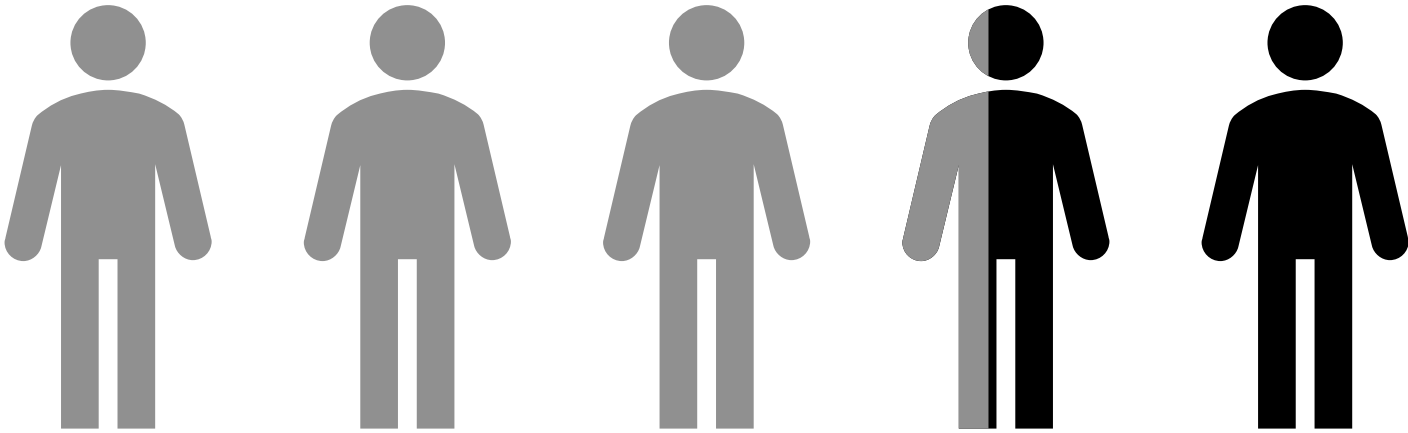
Minimize virtual meetings on in person days

FUTURE OF FLEXIBLE WORK

EMPLOYEE AWARENESS and MESSAGING

84% of respondents indicated their teams were moderately or extremely aware of their flexible working models they plan to use in the future.

Minimize the Change

Inclusive Messaging

GEOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES and PHYSICAL SPACES

Britain Remote 6 Days/Month

South Korea Remote 1.6 Days/Month

Japan Remote 2 Days/Month

United States Remote 5.6 Days/Month

Germany Remote 4 Days/Month

Taiwan Remote 2.8 Days/Month

Australia Remote 5.2 Days/Month

Argentina Remote 3.6 Days/Month

South Africa Remote 3.6 Days/Month

Office attendance: 30% below pre-pandemic

Data graphics: The New York Times, Where in the World Are People Back in the Office? September, 2023
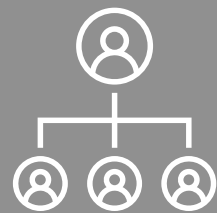
KEY TAKEAWAYS: THE FUTURE OF FLEXIBLE WORK

"Building the plane while flying it"

Balance the business and individual while keeping in mind the external market

Impacts to the employee

Pulse on managers

Legal implications and fair work laws

Ongoing research on the impact of the work models

22

Q&A

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Thank you!

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