

POLL RESULTS

MANY CANADIAN OFFICE WORKERS STRUGGLE WITH PRODUCTIVITY AT HOME

27 MAY 2020



The COVID-19 pandemic has forced most office workers to find ways to work from home. While many companies reported good initial productivity, GWLRA wanted to understand how that has evolved. Poll results revealed that many office workers are struggling with productivity, and most desire a to return to the office once COVID-19 is resolved.

Most office workers have found things to like in these unusual times, whether avoiding a commute, spending more time with family, or being able to do focused work more effectively. Yet, in social media and in regular news reports, as well as from our own experiences video-conferencing with colleagues and industry peers, we could observe how working from home has also created productivity challenges with many longing for the office.

To put numbers behind anecdote, GWLRA commissioned a short poll with Abacus Data over the May 14-18 period. On GWLRA's behalf, Abacus reached 771 office workers, asking them two questions.¹ First, how has productivity been in recent weeks. Second, do they want to return to the office post-pandemic, and if so, how often?

Forty percent overall have found working from home less productive. An additional 22% have only found it more productive because they are working longer hours. In normal times, these extra hours are not necessarily available as people have other interests and activities in their non-quarantined lives. We therefore could conclude that work-from-home will not be as successful once COVID-19 resolves.

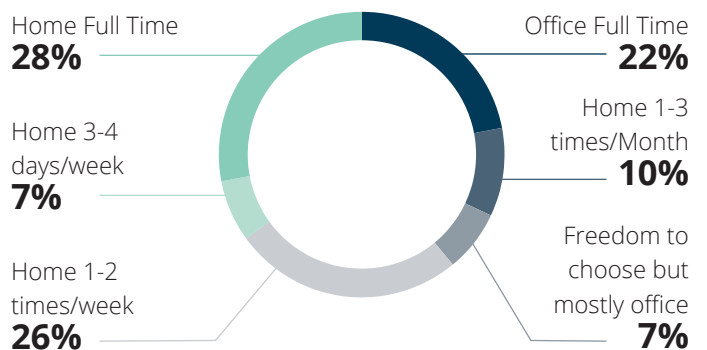
Approximately 65% of office workers want to return to the office between 3 and 5 days per week, with an additional

7% wanting to be in the office 1-2 days per week. This suggests that most office workers will still need access to a desk and workspace—office space will still be in demand.

Translating that into future office demand trends is tricky. As explored in a previous Research Note, company productivity and success benefits from office workers interacting with each other in formal and informal ways, in person, at the office.²

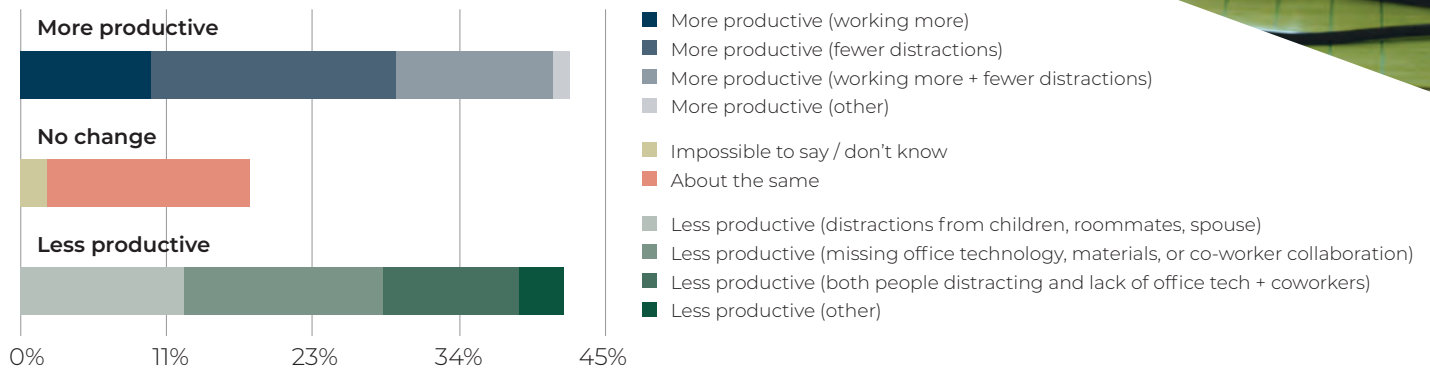
This self-reported data on productivity and eagerness to return to the office provides further evidence that office space will have an important role to play post COVID-19.

Canadian office worker post-COVID-19 workplace preferences. Blue=mostly/fully office

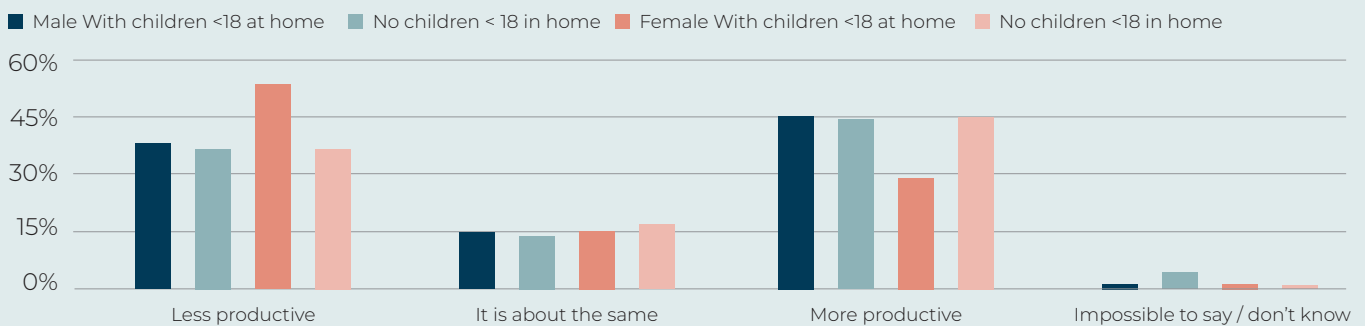


Canadian Office Workers Reasons for Increased or Decreased Productivity.

Data: Abacus Survey May 14-18 2020.

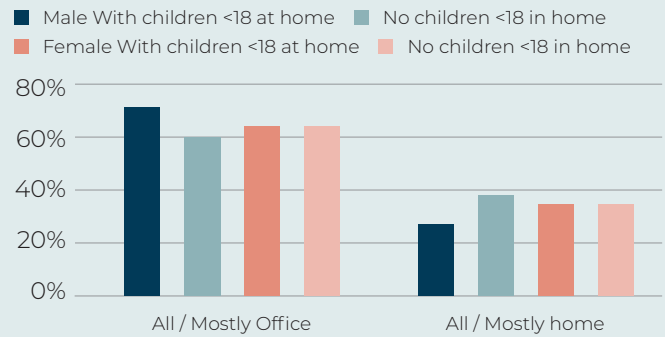


Canadian office worker productivity during COVID-19 by parenthood status and gender



Noteworthy: The female parents of children under 18 were far more likely to report being less productive at home than working from the office, offering the presence of family members as the reason for their lower productivity. Male parents reported similar productivity as both men and women without children at home. When children return to schools and daycares, women's productivity may improve. This said, parents of both genders—but especially men—are more likely to want to work entirely or mostly from the office once COVID-19 is resolved.

Workplace preferences of office workers by parenthood status and gender



1 Abacus Data, Survey of 771 office workers conducted May 14-18, 2020. Margin of error is +/- 3.52, 19 times out of 20.

2 GWLRA, *Office Space Plays a Key Role in Productivity* 20 May 2020. Accessed at gwlrealtyadvisors.com/research

3 On this home-life balance topic, also see Rachel Feintzeig, "It's OK to Miss the Office During the Coronavirus Lockdown." *Wall Street Journal* 18 May 2020

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