

New XY Sense Study: Noise and Meeting Room Shortages Undermine Office Productivity Despite Collaboration Benefits

Global survey reveals 60% of office workers struggle with noise, 54% regularly can't access meeting rooms

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, October 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new global study from occupancy intelligence company XY Sense reveals the productivity benefits and pitfalls of teams returning to the office. The global survey of 554 full-time workers across the United States, United Kingdom, and Asia-Pacific finds strong support for in-office collaboration, mentoring, and social connection— but a majority still struggle with meeting room shortages and excess noise.



The Benefits of Office Time

Despite the popularity of working from home in the wake of the pandemic, a majority of employees do agree on the value of office time:

80% say office time improves social interaction and well-being

75% believe working in the office enhances learning and mentoring opportunities

72% agree office time enables better work-life balance and separation

71% report that spending time in the office makes collaboration easier

Factors Impeding Productivity

However, employees also highlighted widespread obstacles to positive workplace experience:

Noise: 60% say open-plan noise disrupts focus at least twice weekly; over a third face it daily.

Meeting rooms: 54% can't find a room at least twice per week; in the US, 43% struggle daily.

Air quality: 57% experience air quality issues multiple times weekly, with similar levels for

temperature and humidity.

Collaboration vs. capacity: 51% spend more time in meetings than pre-COVID, but offices lack the space to support this shift.

"Employees know the office has value — they want to connect, learn, and collaborate. But when noise, poor air quality, or a lack of meeting rooms get in the way, those benefits disappear," said Shivaun Ryan, Global Head of Customer Success & GM Americas, XY Sense. "The real opportunity for workplace leaders is to design spaces that reflect how people actually work in 2025, so offices can deliver on the true productivity promise of RTO."

What Workers Want

When asked what would improve their likelihood to join or stay with a company, workers prioritized the following office elements:

Advanced workplace technology (75%)

Better office location with access to amenities (72%)

Public transportation access (69%)

Office aesthetics (68%)

For day-to-day improvements to their current workplace, employees ranked noise control, better Wi-Fi and technology, comfortable furniture, and improved air quality as their top priorities.

Environmental Commitment Matters

Building sustainability is also top-of-mind: 60% of workers say their employer's commitment to reducing environmental impact is very or extremely important, particularly in APAC (66%).

Creating Offices that Deliver ROI

The study strongly reinforces the importance of having reliable workplace usage data to help real estate and workplace teams meet individual and team needs and create more productive and inviting workspaces. By understanding needs, and existing behaviors, companies can proactively plan and deliver better office environments.

"Every company — and every team within it — works differently. Our data shows there's no such thing as a one-size-fits-all workplace. It's time to move beyond the outdated 'open plan for everyone' playbook and design functional spaces based on how teams actually work. If you're investing millions in real estate and facilities, but that space is actively working against productivity, you're eroding your own ROI." said Alex Birch, Co-founder and CEO of XY Sense.

The complete study is available without charge at <https://xysense.com/the-workplace-pulse>

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