

Return to Office Policies

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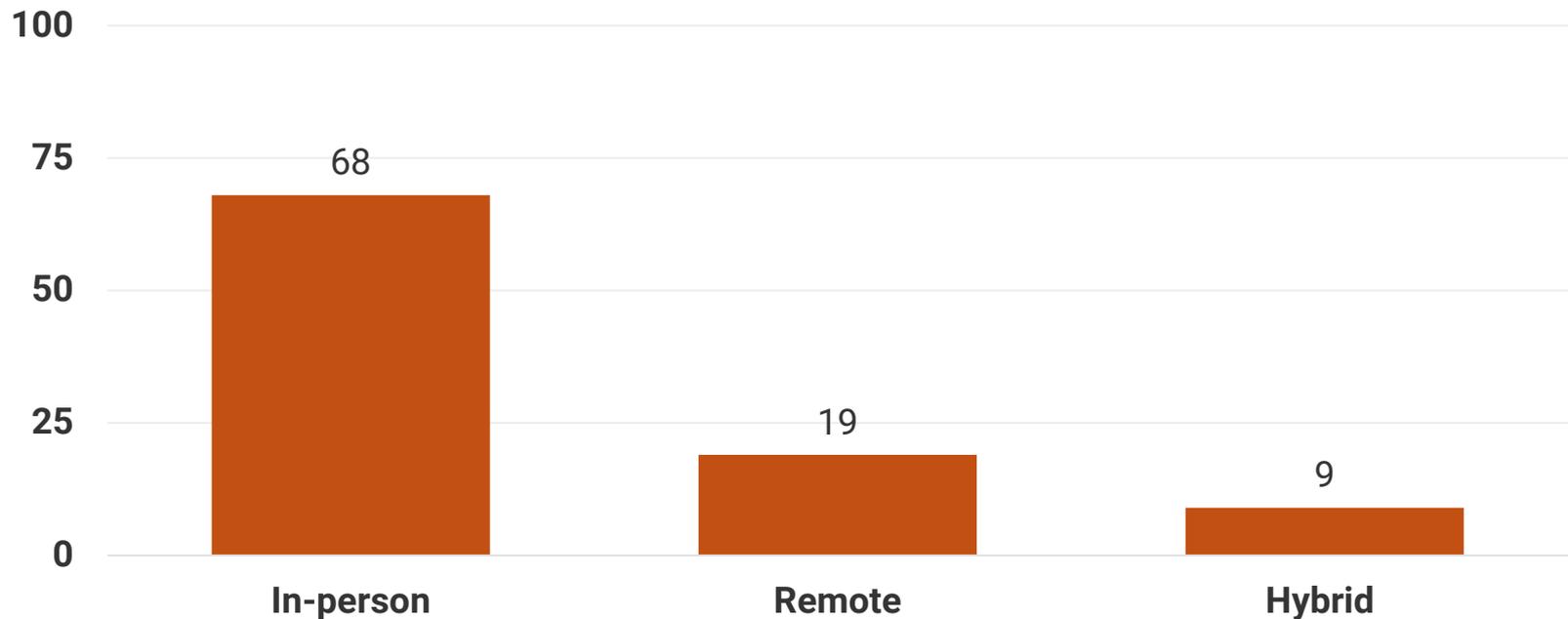


The study is based on two surveys:

- **Human resources representatives at companies where at least 10% of the employees were either fully remote or hybrid.**
- **Adults nationwide, including 1,153 paid employees working in-person, remotely or hybrid.**

Most of the employees surveyed work in-person.

Which of the following describes your current employment status?



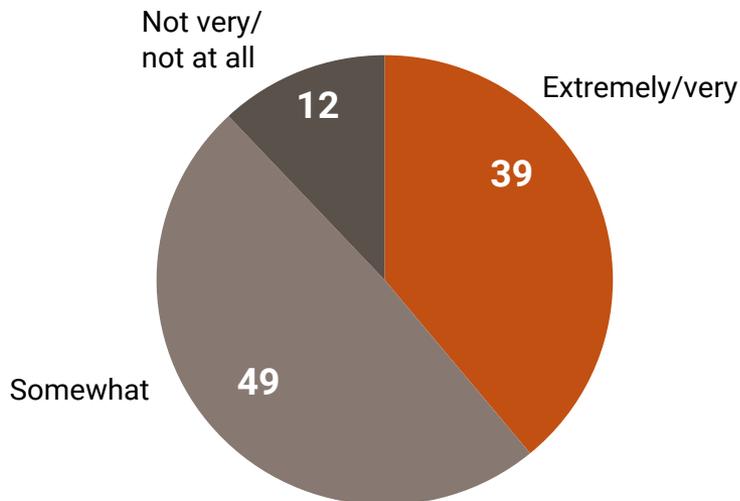
According to HR representatives less than half of employees are described as either happy or comfortable about returning to the workplace.

Questions asked of the 87% of HR representatives where at least 10% of employees who can work remotely, do so at least two days a week:

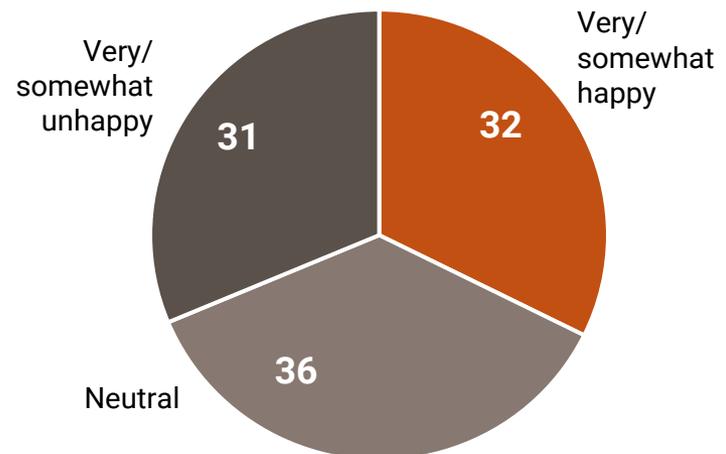
In general, how comfortable do you think employees are with returning to the workplace?

Overall, how happy are your employees about returning to the workplace?

Comfortable



Happy



In a follow-up open-ended question, about a quarter of HR representatives said they thought the loss of flexibility or work-life balance was a top reason for resisting returning to the office full-time. Another quarter said employees have gotten used to working from home, or found it more productive, more convenient, or easier to get things done. And 16% mentioned the length or cost of the employees' commute.

More than 80% of HR representatives said companies shared their return to office policies with their employees. About 8 in 10 said policies were created in consultation with senior management; nearly as many said the same about their hybrid policy. About half said companies worked with HR departments to create the policies. And while about a quarter surveyed their employees about the return to office policy, a third surveyed them about their hybrid policy.

Employees were asked open-ended questions about why they work in-person or remotely.

Sixty-four percent of employees who work in-person all the time do so because of the nature of their job. For example, retail workers, educators, and health care workers need to work in-person.

Among hybrid workers, 30% say their presence in the office at least part of the time is mandated by their employer. Twenty-two percent work in-person part of the time in order to collaborate or bond with their co-workers.

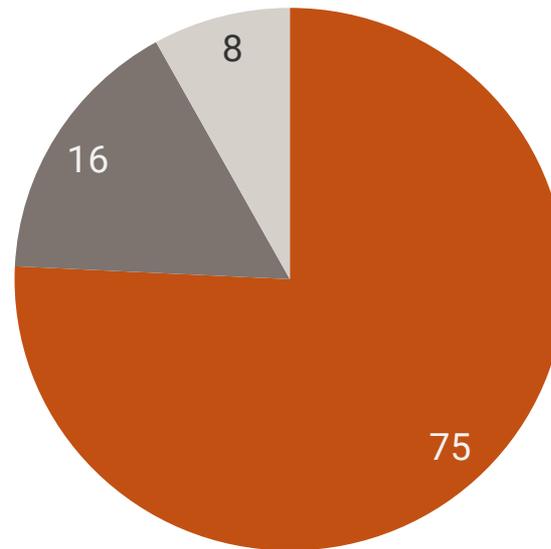
Most employees working in-person say it is a requirement of their employer.

You indicated that you work in-person as a paid employee. Which of the following best describes your employment situation?

■ My employer requires all employees to work in-person.

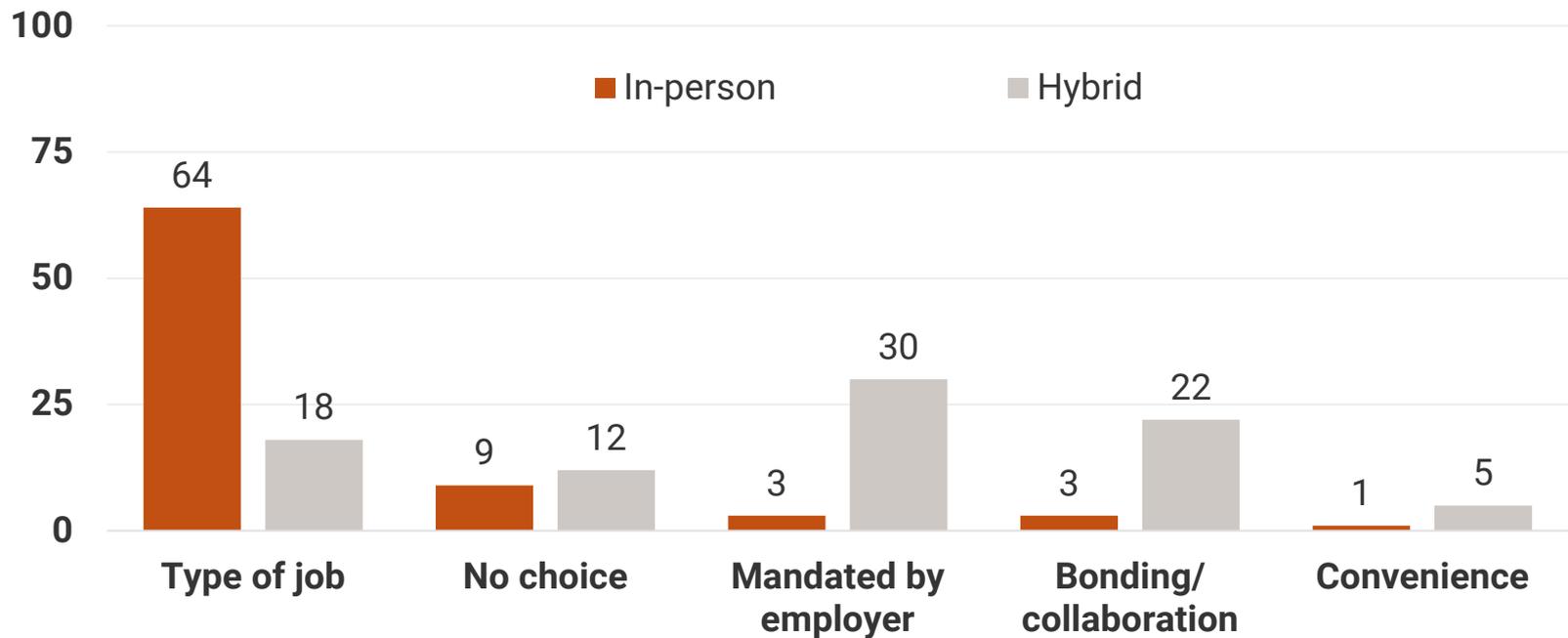
■ My employer allows some employees to work remotely all or part of the time, but I am not eligible to work remotely.

■ My employer allows some employees to work remotely all or part of the time, but I choose to work in-person.



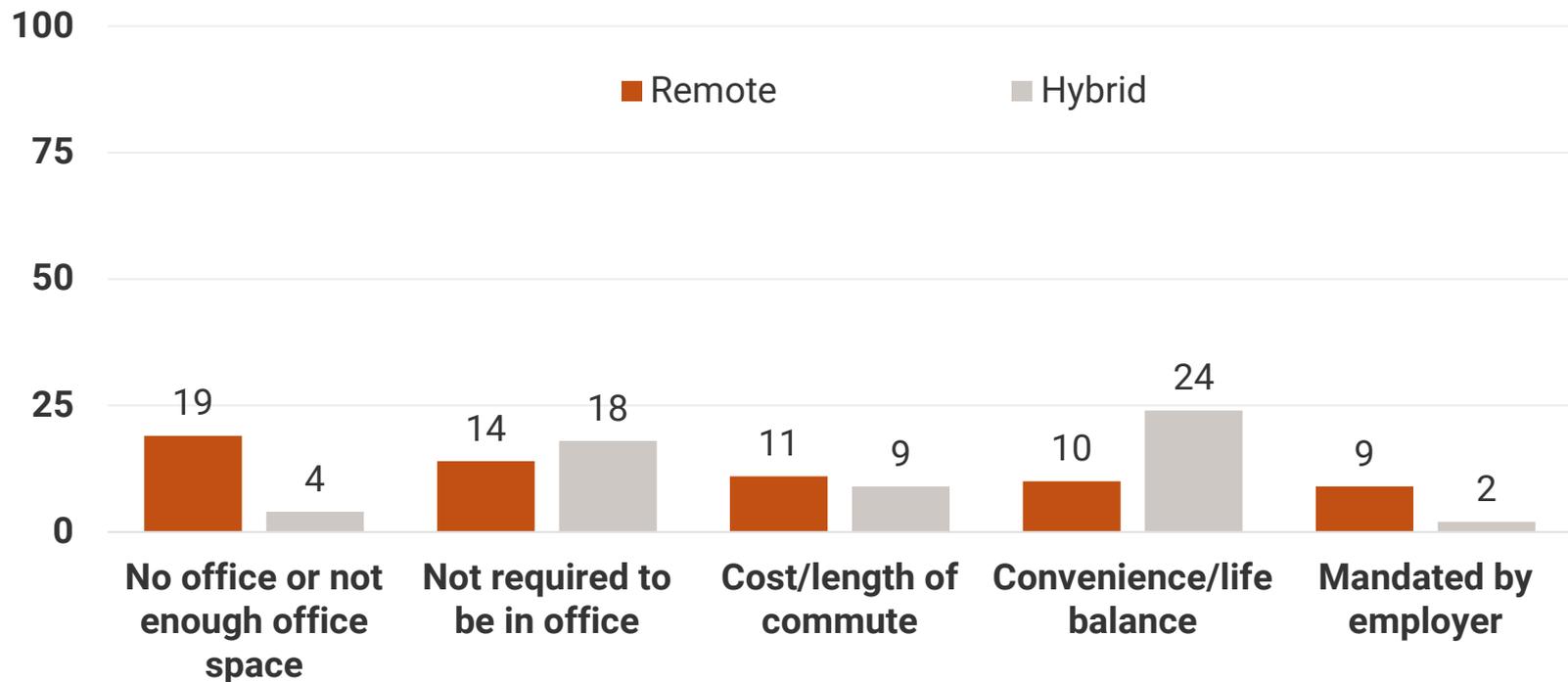
Question asked of in-person and hybrid employees: ***What are the main reasons why you work in-person all or part of the time?***

Open-ended question - Top responses shown.

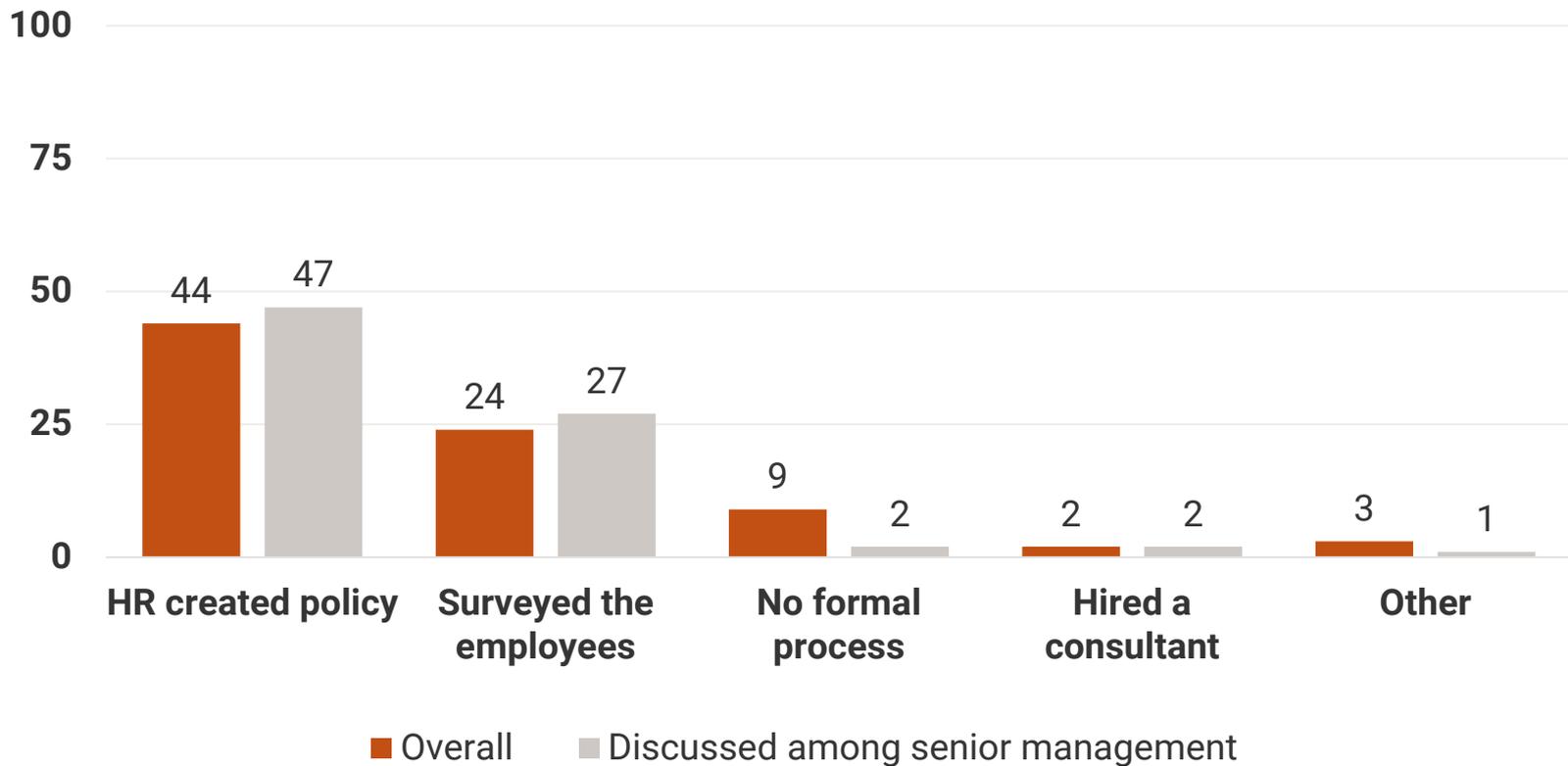


Question asked of remote and hybrid employees: ***What are the main reasons why you work remotely all or part of the time?***

Open-ended question - Top responses shown.



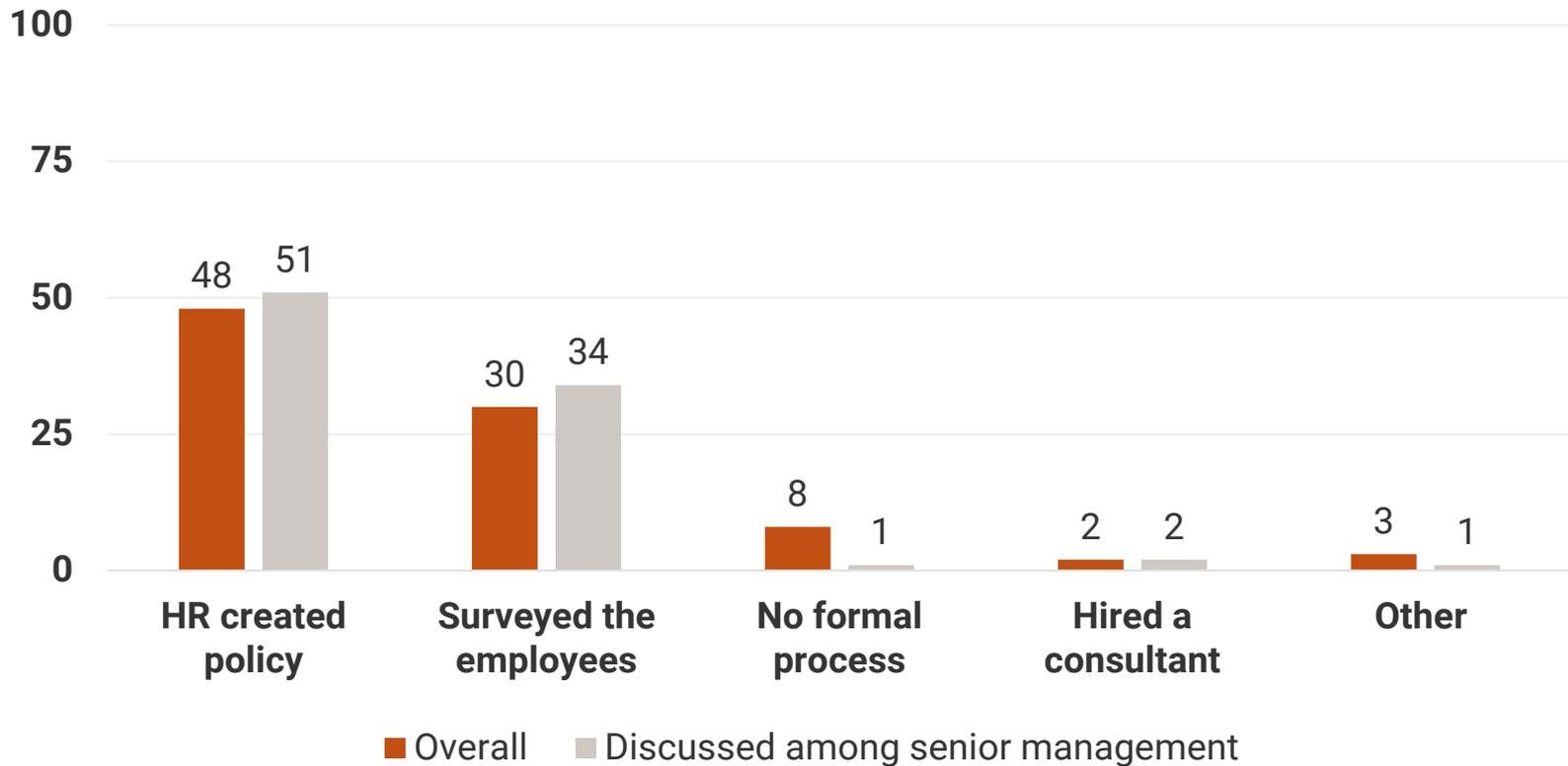
Question asked of the 69% of HR representatives that have a return to office policy for employees who became remote or hybrid because of the pandemic:
How did your company decide its ... Return to Office policy.
 Select all that apply.



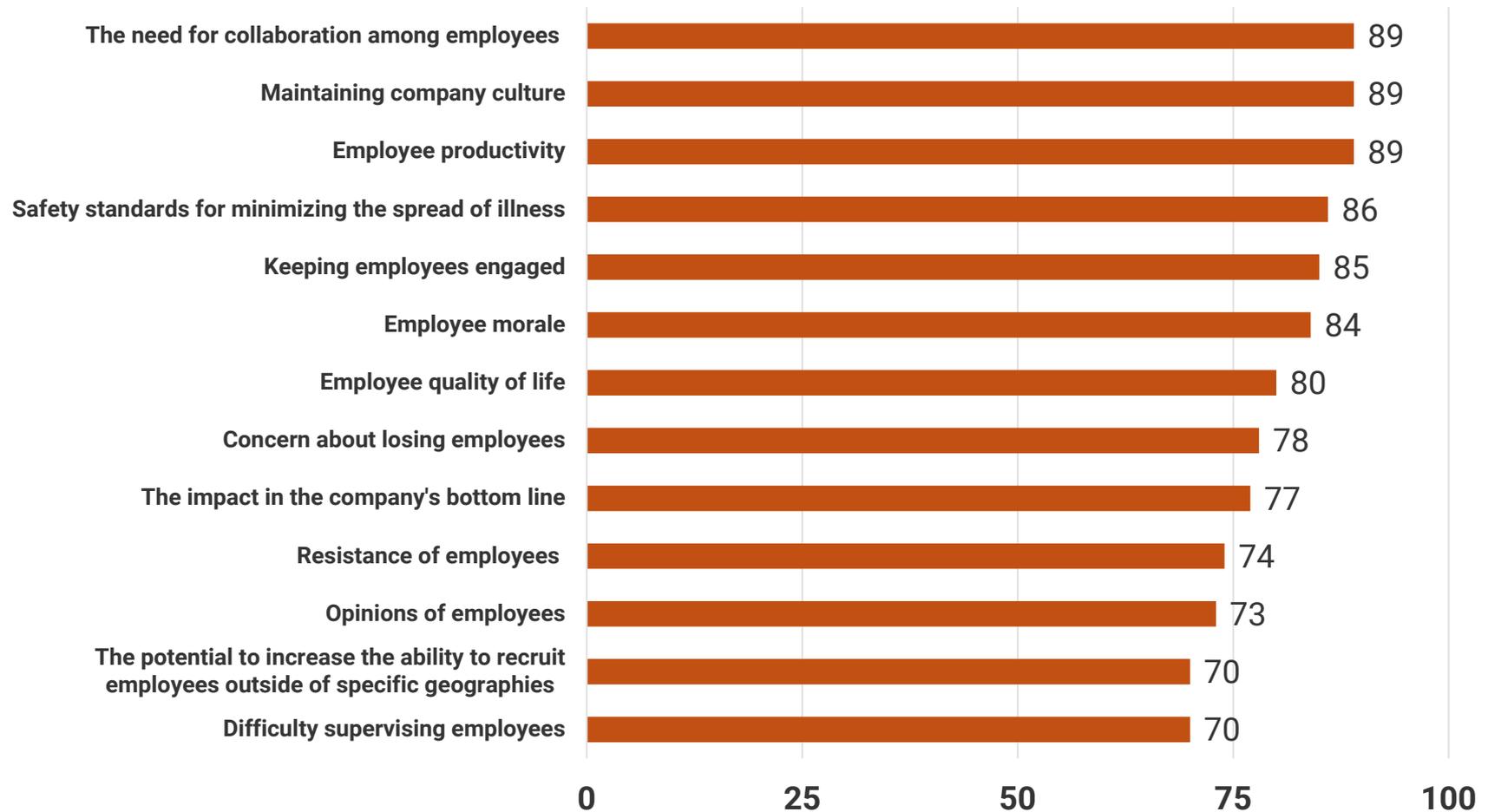
Question asked of the 49% of HR representatives who have employees that are still working either remotely or hybrid:

How did your company decide its... Hybrid policy.

Select all that apply.



Question asked of the 69% of HR representatives that have a return to office policy: ***Which of the following were considered when developing your company's Return to Office policy?***



An open-ended question asked HR representatives what was the biggest challenge to implementing the company's return to office strategy. The most common response was that employees pushed back because people wanted to keep working from home.

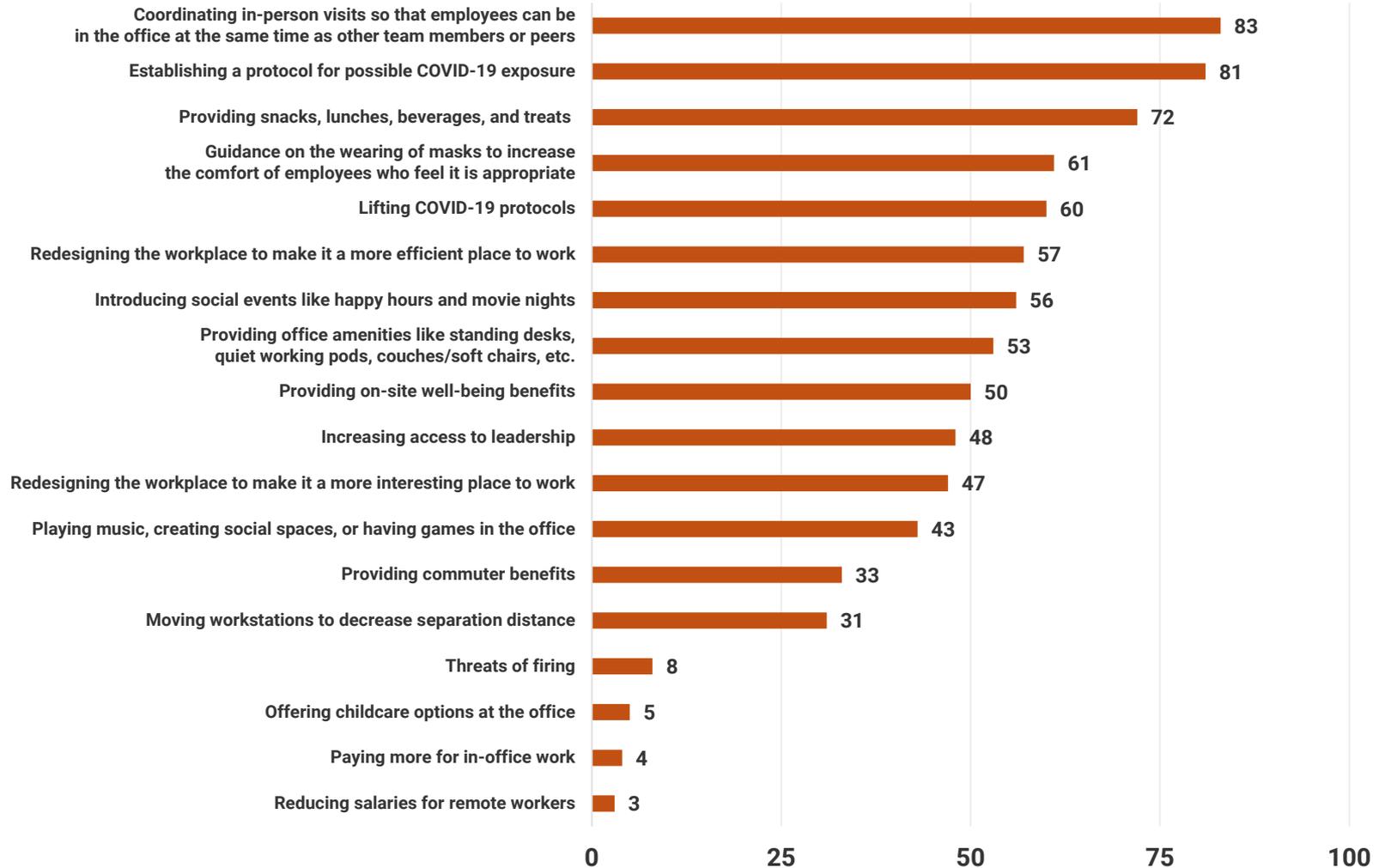
Other reasons included:

- **COVID anxiety**
- **Difficulty justifying the return to office when things were working fine during the pandemic**
- **Differences in branches/teams/roles prevent a one-size-fits-all strategy**
- **Space problem – having room for new employees**
- **Lack of effective leadership**
- **Communication problems/lack of clear expectations**

Few HR representatives think employees at their company who work remotely at least two days a week want to return to the office full-time. A third think they would prefer a full-time remote position, while 60% think employees want to work in a hybrid mode.

Nearly 9 in 10 HR representatives said their employers have not introduced any new policies or incentives to encourage employees to return to the office.

Question asked of the 13% of HR representatives at companies that have introduced new policies or incentives: ***Which of the following is your company doing to get employees back to the workplace?***



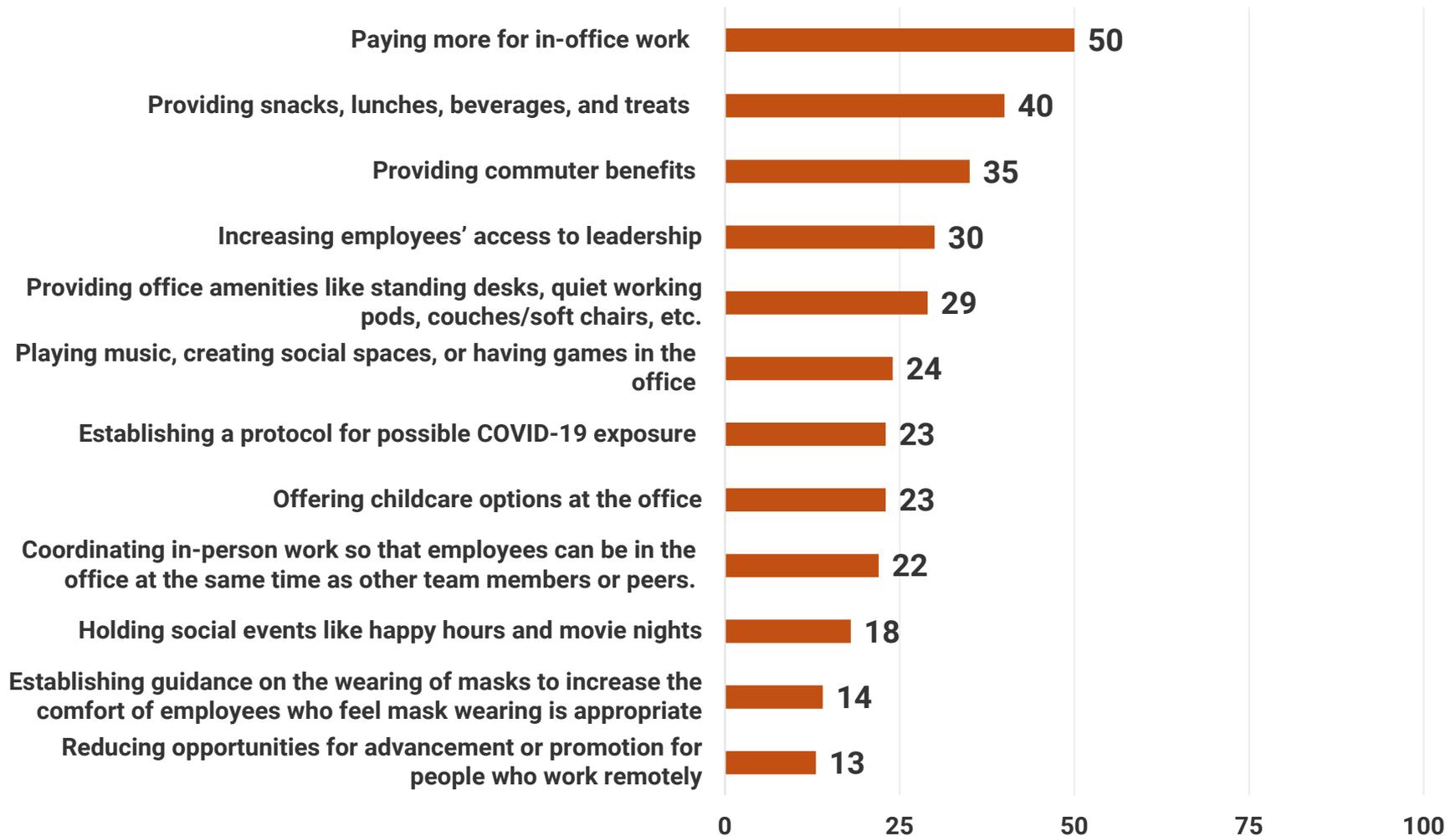
Half of employees working in-person say increased pay for coming into the office would increase their satisfaction.

Among hybrid workers, 55% would consider higher pay for in-person work an incentive to come into the office more often.

Forty-four percent of employees who always work remotely say more pay for working in-person would encourage them to work in-person more often.

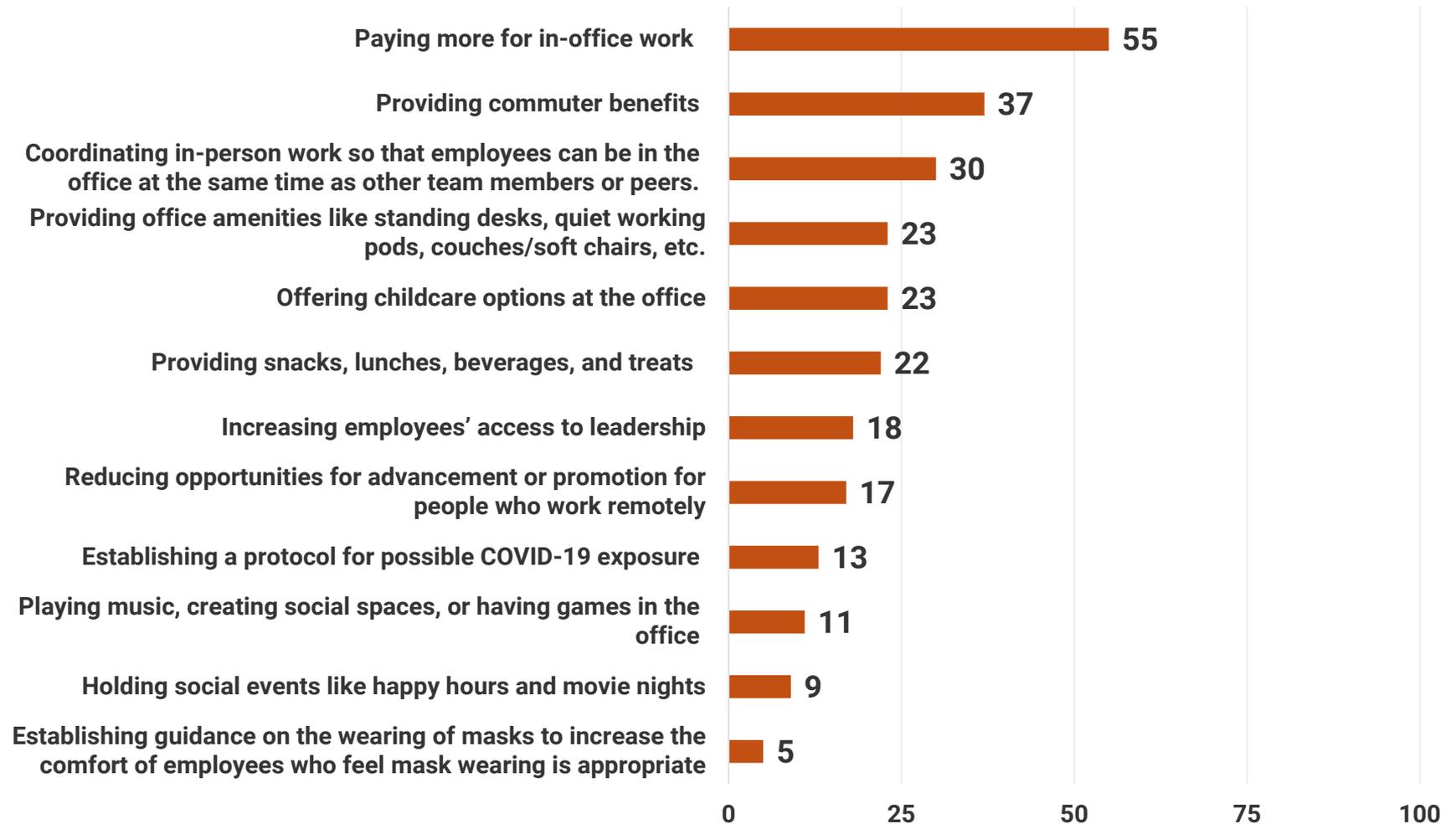
Question asked of in-person employees: ***How much would each of the following policies or incentives increase your satisfaction working in-person?***

Percent who say a lot



Question asked of hybrid employees: *How much would each of the following policies or incentives encourage you to work in-person more often?*

Percent who say a lot



Question asked of remote employees: *How much would each of the following policies or incentives encourage you to work in-person more often?*

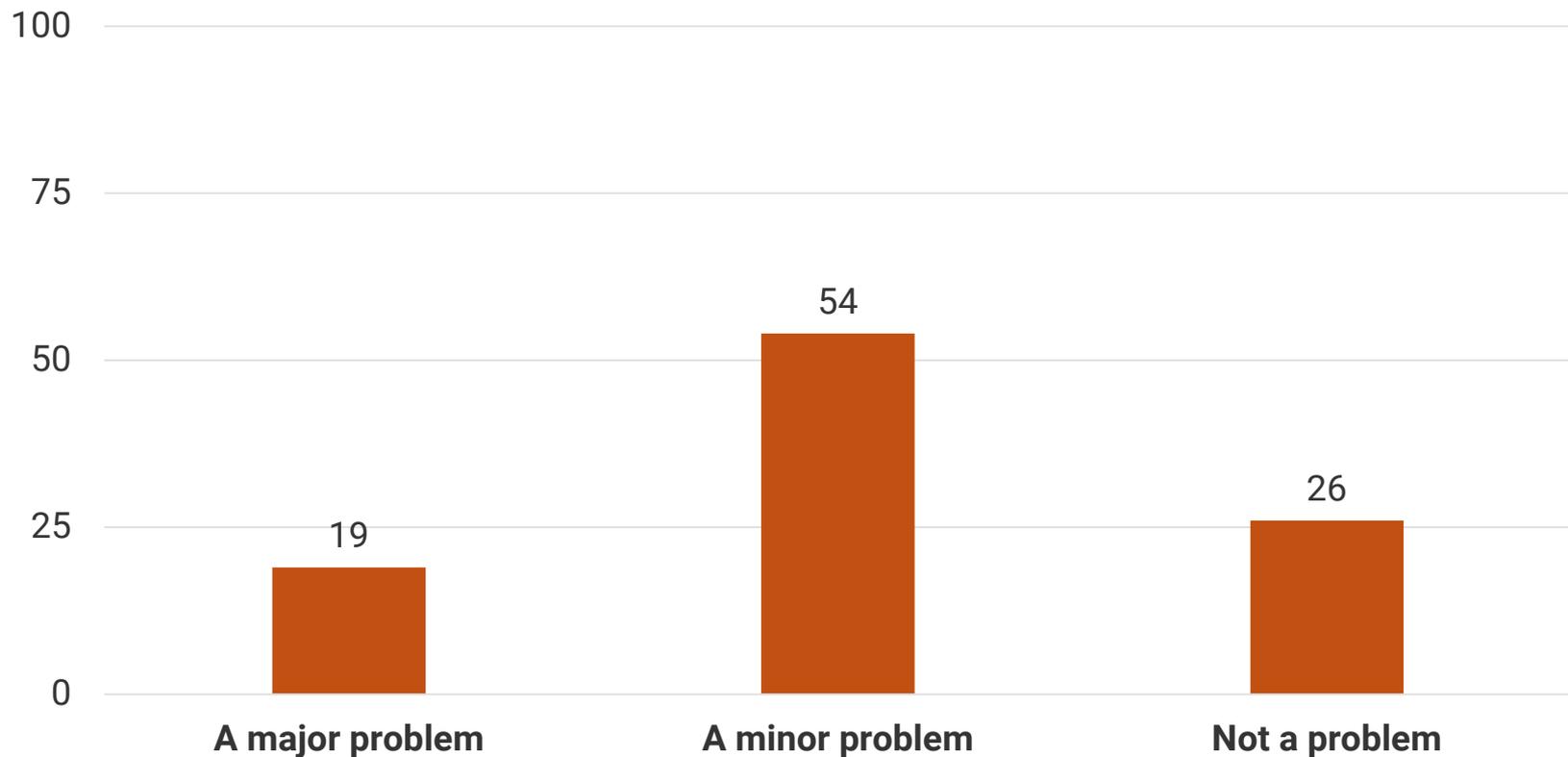
Percent who say a lot



Most HR representatives said companies are having a problem with employee retention. About a quarter said their company is not having retention issues with employees who want to stay remote but whom the company is not willing to let work remotely. But about a fifth said it was a major problem, and more than half indicated it was a minor problem. When asked in an open-ended question for the biggest challenge in planning for or implementing your company's return to office, several people mentioned employee retention.

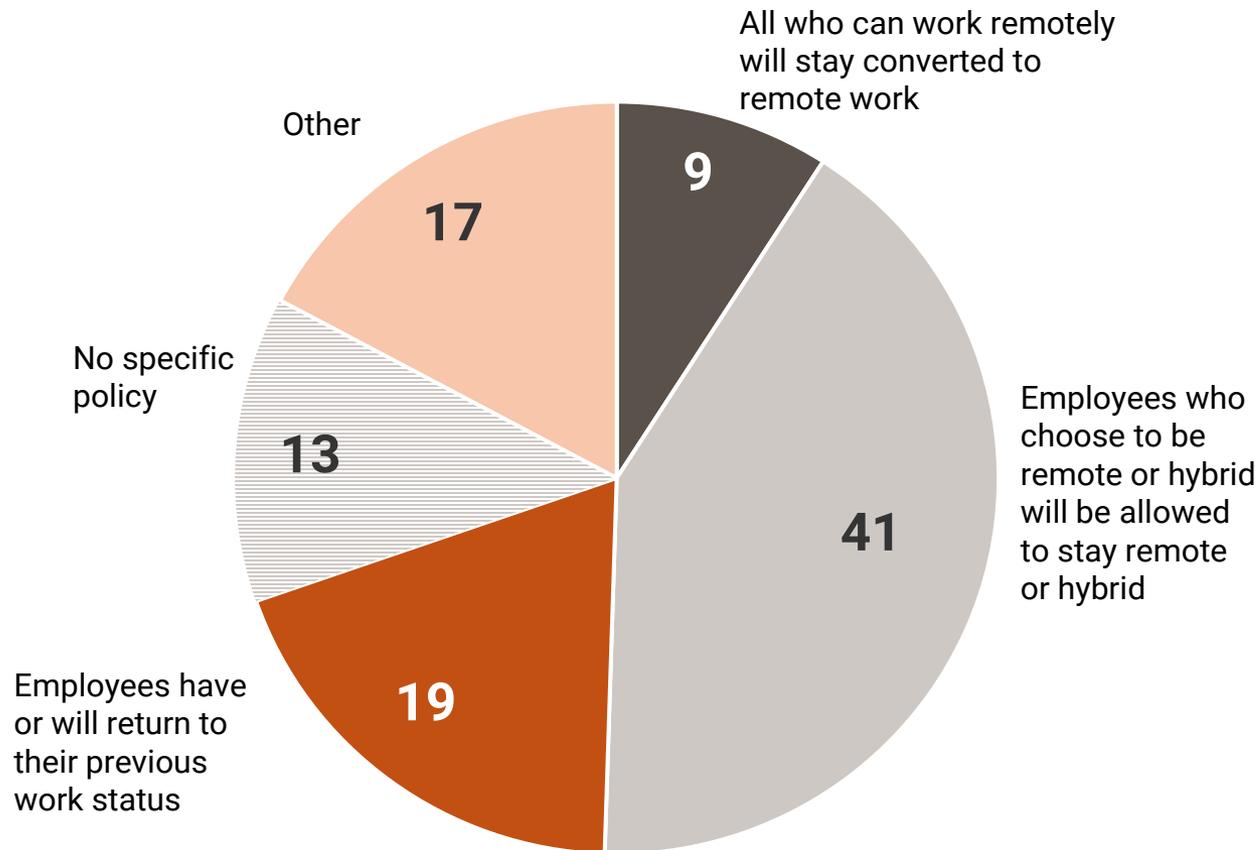
Question asked of the 87% of HR representatives where at least 10% of employees who can work remotely, do so at least two days a week:

How big of a problem is it for your company to lose employees who want to stay remote but whom the company is not willing to let work remotely?



Four in 10 HR representatives said employees who chose to be remote or hybrid would be allowed to stay remote or hybrid, and 1 in 10 said all employees who can work remotely would stay converted to remote work.

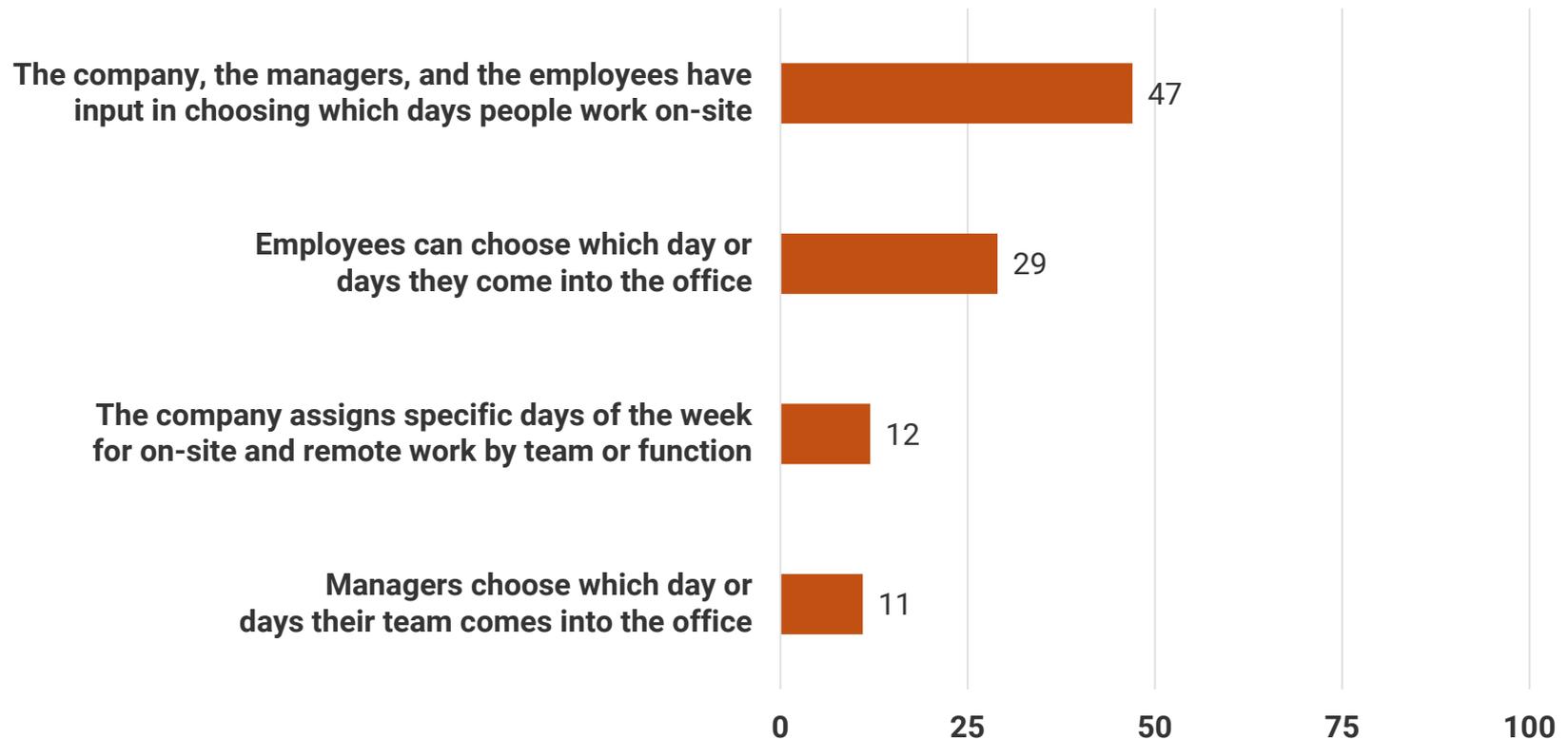
Question asked of the 87% where at least 10% of employees who can work remotely, do so at least two days a week: **Which of the following best describes your Return to Office policy for those employees who became remote or hybrid because of the pandemic?**



Nearly half of the HR representatives said their company had a hybrid policy in which the company, managers, and employees had input in choosing which days people work on-site. Three in 10 said employees could choose which day or days they came into the office. For the rest, the company or manager determined which days were in the office and which were remote.

Question asked of the 50% where employees who were remote or hybrid because of the pandemic, can continue to stay remote or hybrid:

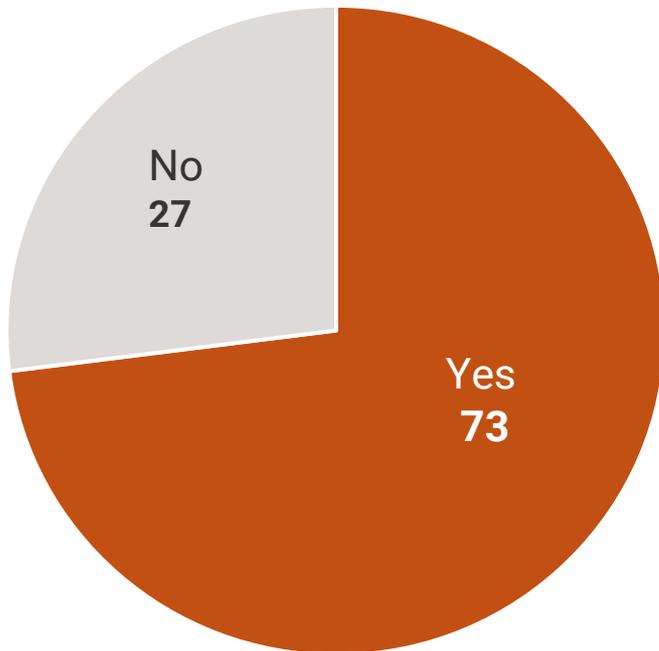
Which of the following best describes your company's hybrid policy?



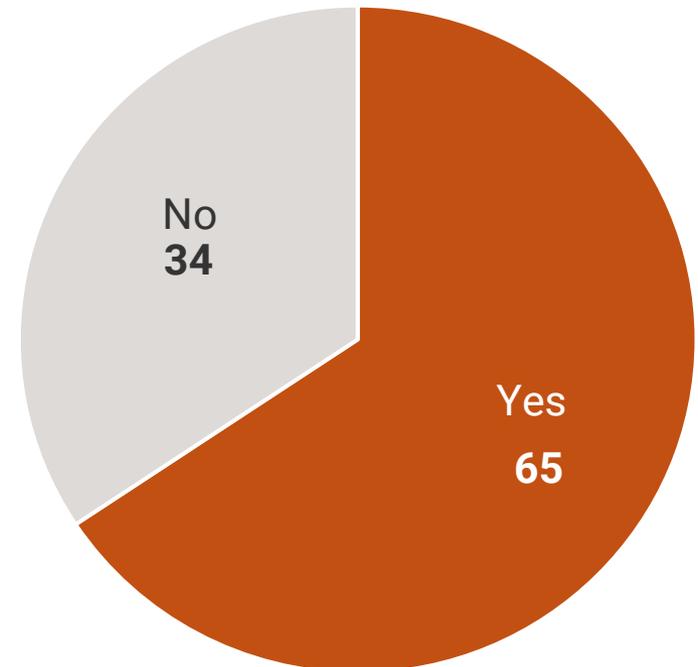
Most HR representatives said their company had plans to respond to employee requests to work remotely and policies that determined who is eligible to work remotely.

Question asked of the 90% where employees worked remotely at least two days a week: ***Does your company have:***

A plan for responding to employee requests to continue to work remotely, including long-term remote work arrangements

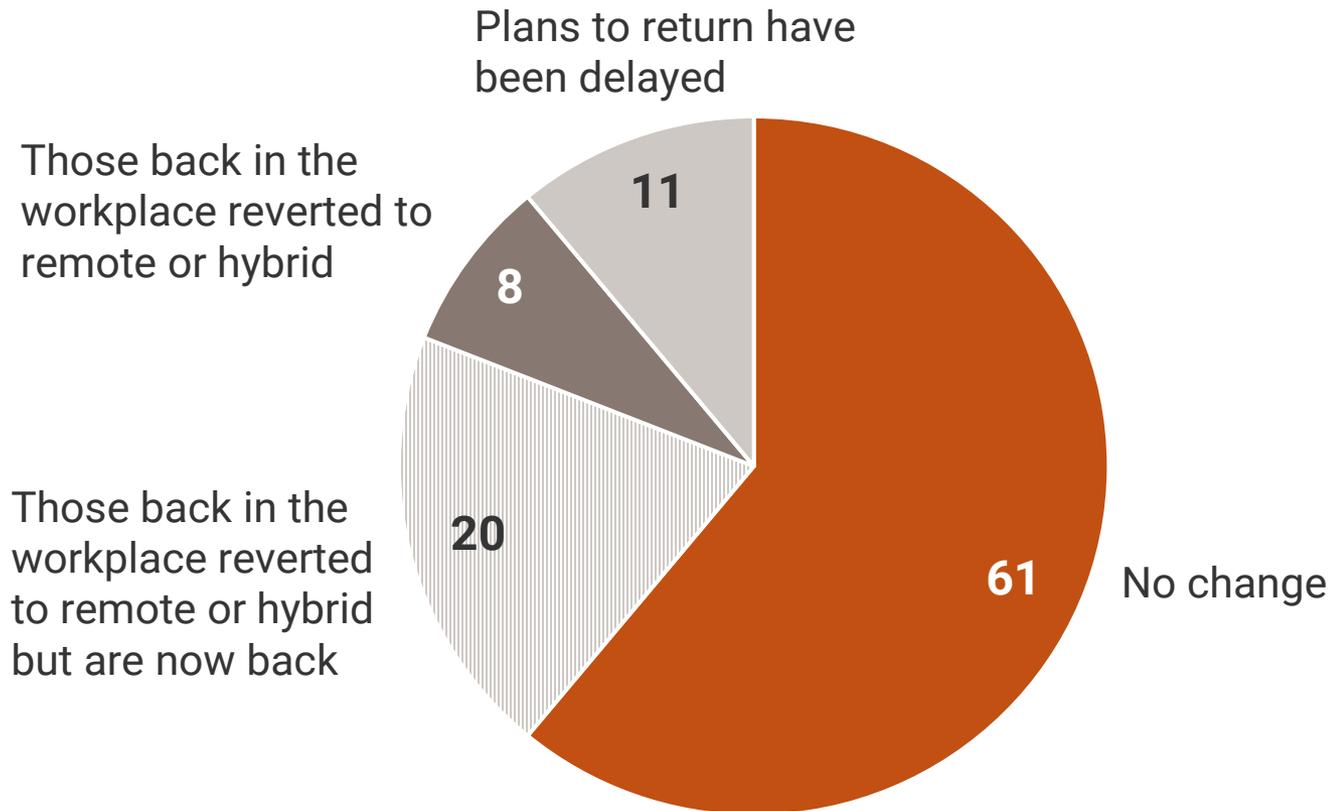


A remote work policy that includes who is eligible to work remotely – and when



Six in 10 HR representatives said there had been no change in their company's plans to return to the office because of any local surges of COVID-19 cases.

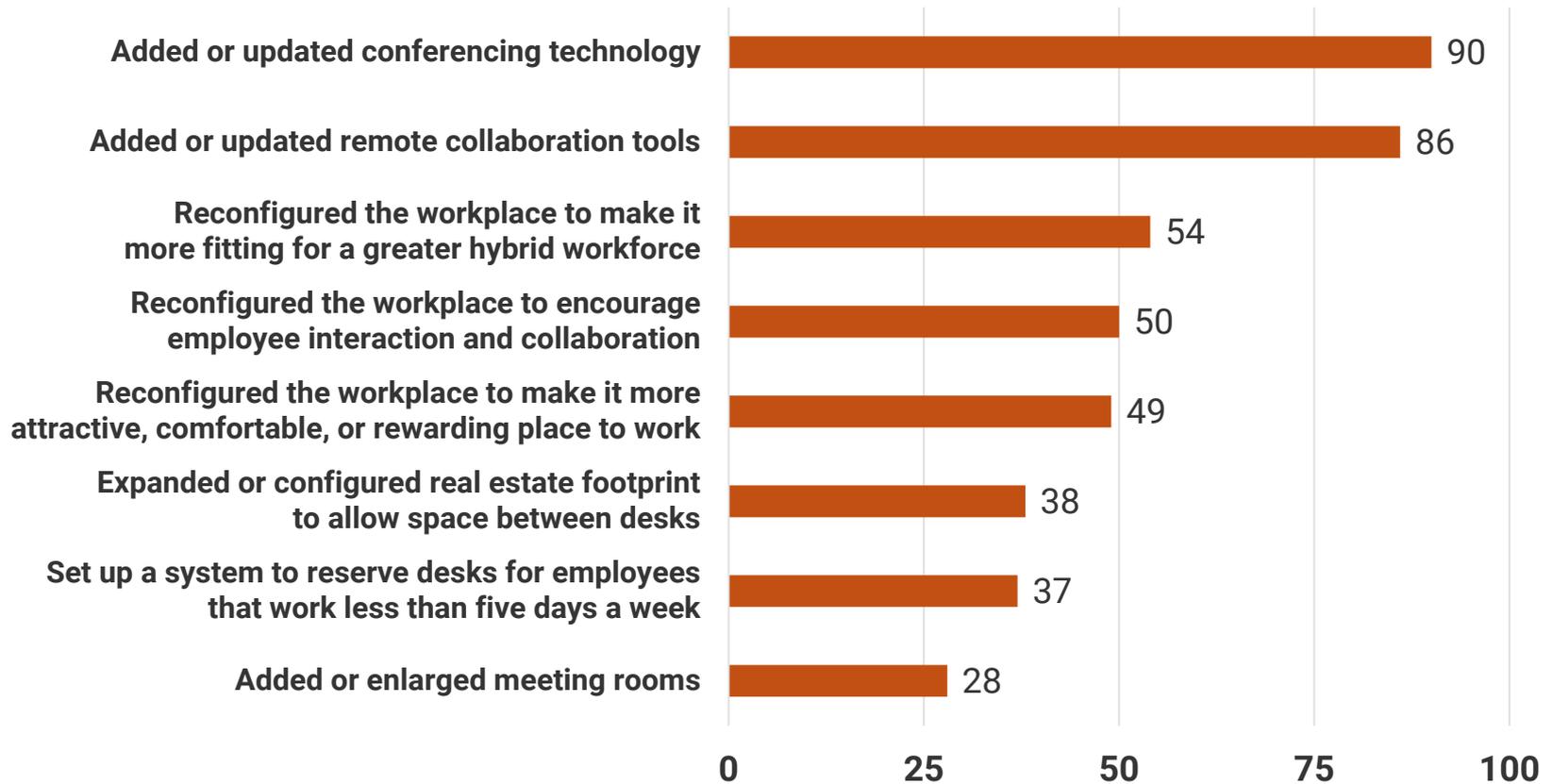
Question: *How have surges in local COVID-19 cases in the past year affected your company's Return to Office plans?*



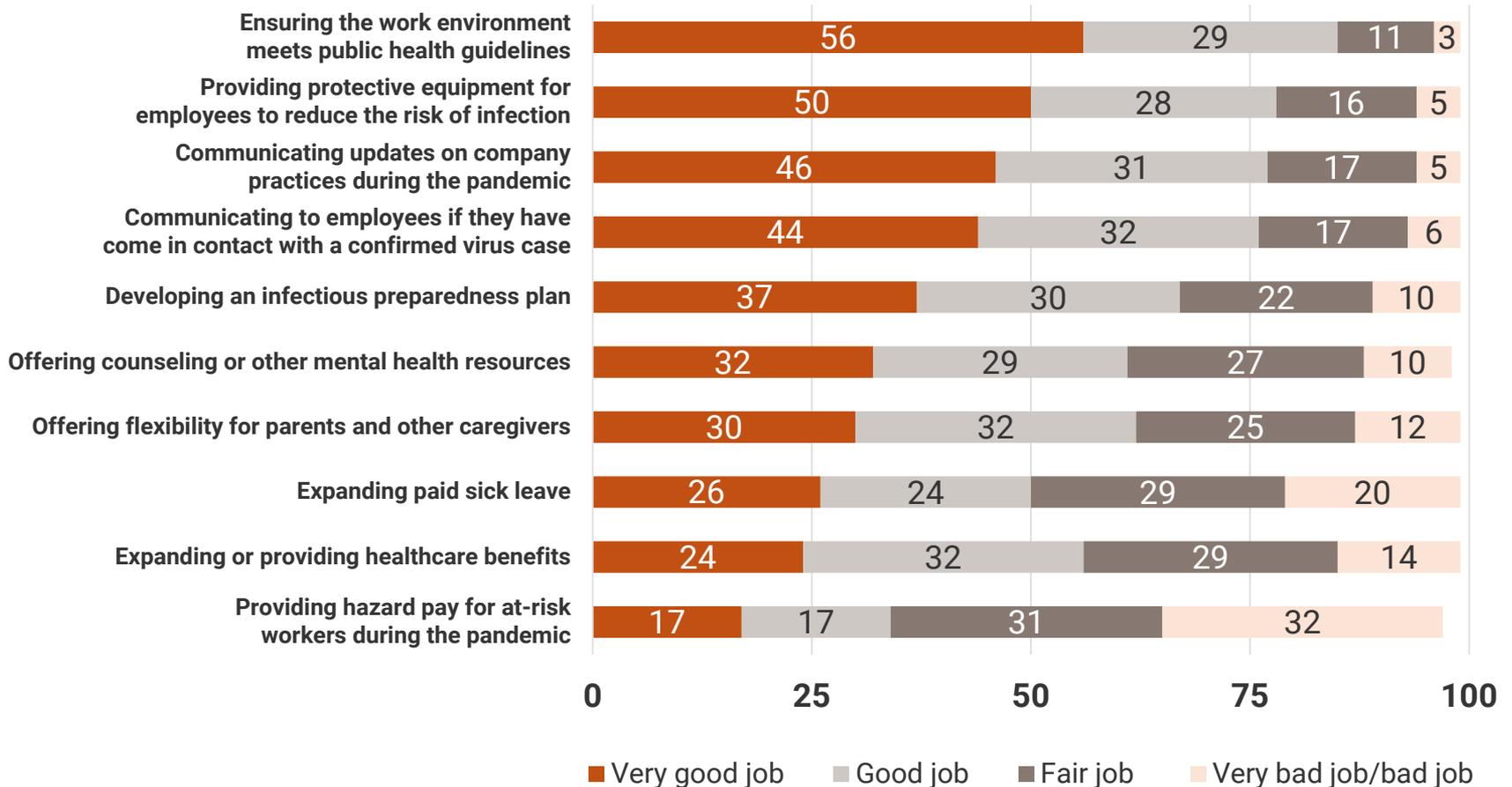
About 7 in 10 HR representatives said their company had not downsized office space because of the pandemic. Of the 27% who did reduce their office space, 71% had less overall square footage and a third had fewer desks. Fourteen percent had cut down on meeting rooms, and 13% had less social space.

However, nearly 6 in 10 said their companies made investments in the workplace since the pandemic.

Question asked of the 58% who said their company made investments:
Which of the following investments has your company made in the workplace because of the pandemic?

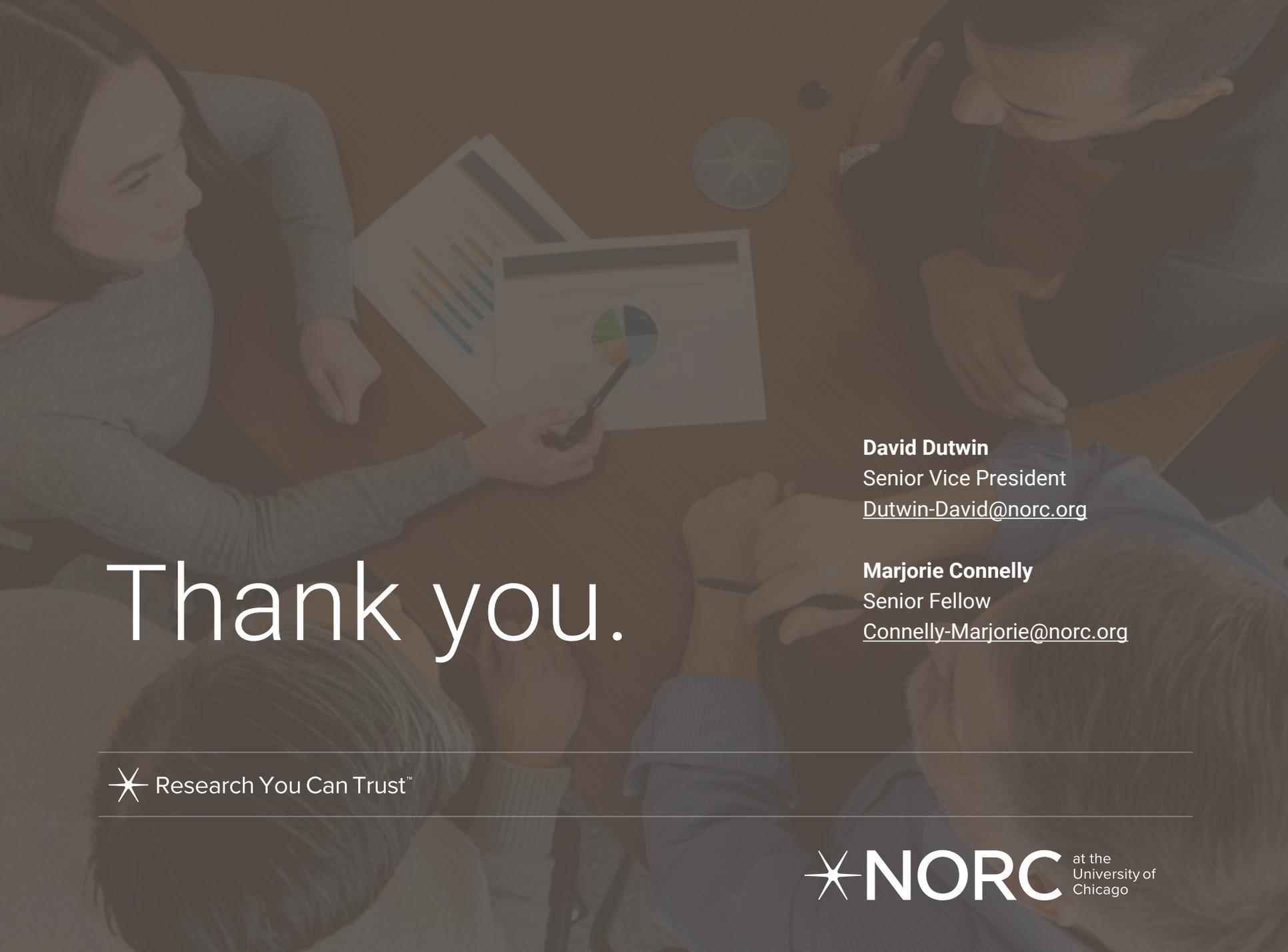


Question: *On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is a very bad job and 5 is a very good job, how would you rate your company for each of the following in response to the pandemic:*



A survey was conducted November 21-December 13, 2022 with 1,099 human resources representatives at companies where at least 10% of the employees were either fully remote or hybrid.

A survey was conducted August 24-28, 2023 and September 7-22, 2023 with a total of 2,242 adults nationwide. The overall margin of sampling error is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points. The survey includes 1,153 paid employees.



Thank you.

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