



# Making Flexible Working Models Work

Insights from our “What the Flex?!” surveys of office-based employees

AUGUST 2023



# Of the office-based workers surveyed, 85% reported that their organization has adopted a hybrid model—but the definition of hybrid varies

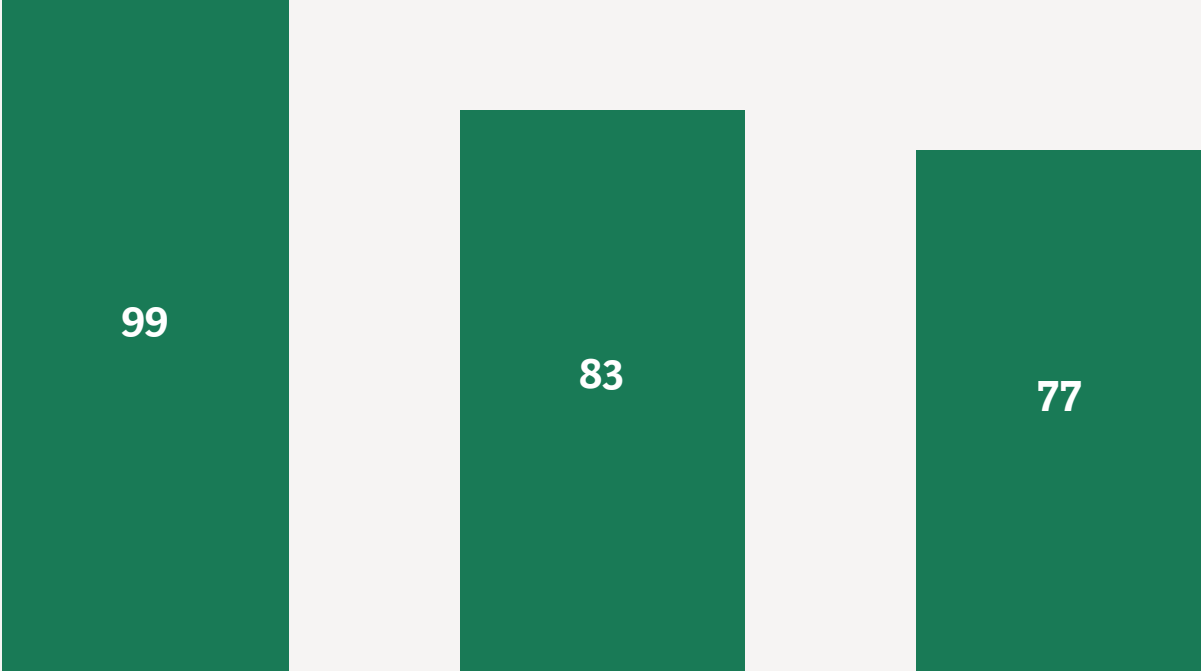
Question: What is your organization’s policy for where you work?



Sources: BCG “What the Flex?!” employee surveys, conducted March 2023 through May 2023; BCG analysis.  
Note: “Office-based” defined as employees who can potentially work from anywhere with a laptop and the internet.

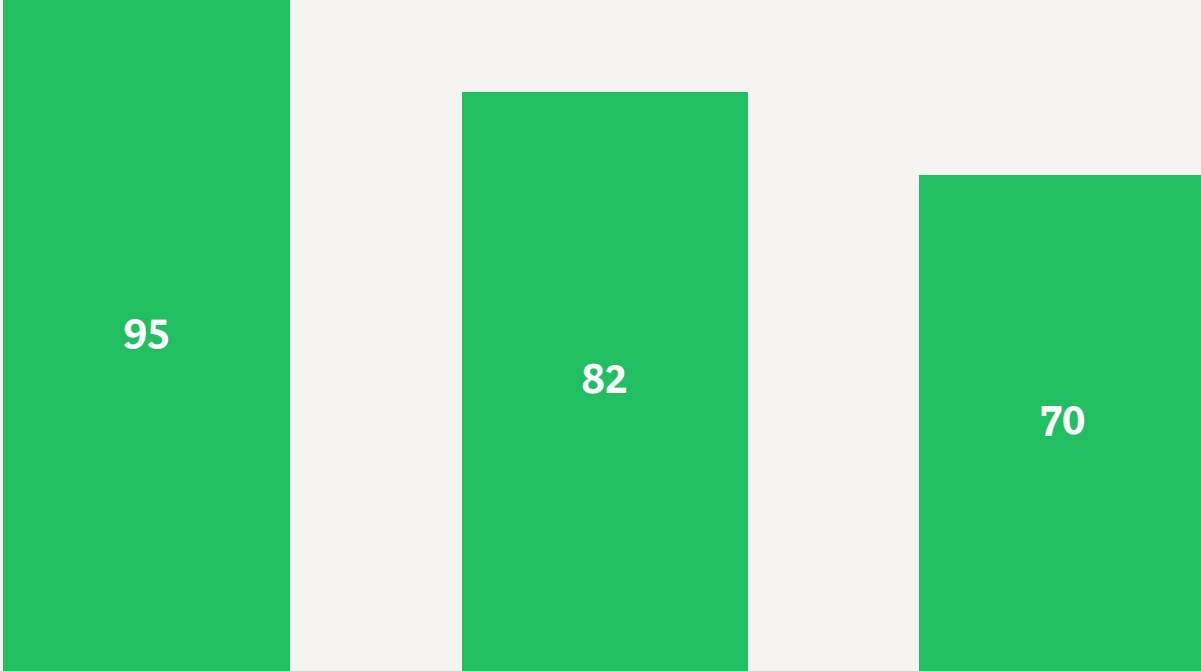
# Prescribed hybrid models lead to lower levels of compliance and satisfaction

COMPLIANCE<sup>1</sup> WITH THE WORK MODEL POLICY (%)



Hybrid: only key events in person      Hybrid: days vary each week      Hybrid: set days of the week

SATISFACTION<sup>2</sup> WITH THE WORK MODEL POLICY (%)



Hybrid: only key events in person      Hybrid: days vary each week      Hybrid: set days of the week

■ Compliant with the policy      ■ Satisfied with the policy

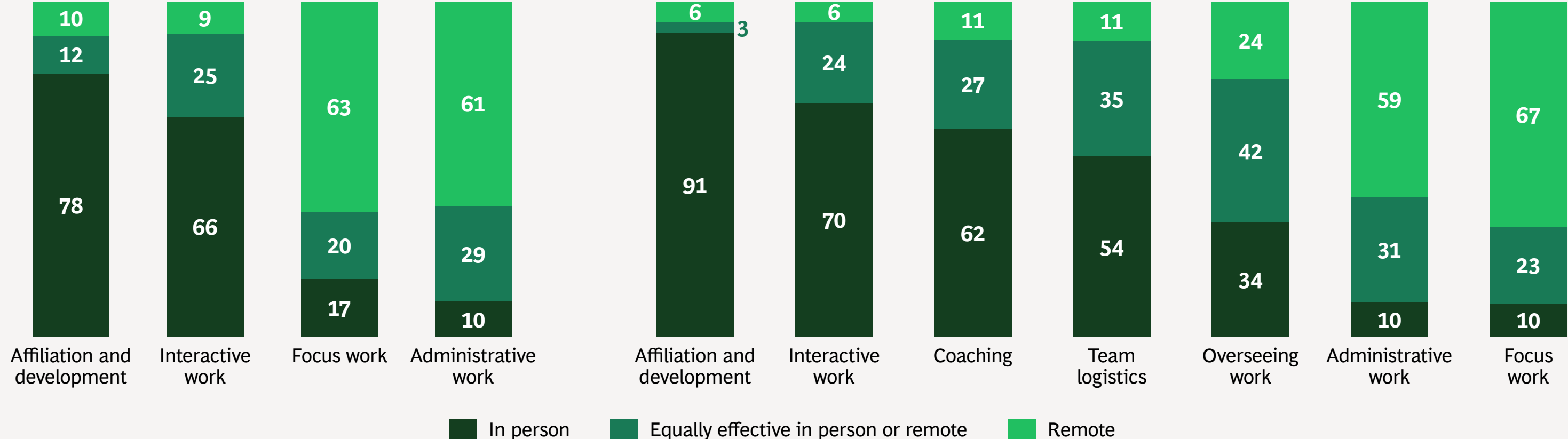
Sources: BCG “What the Flex?!” employee surveys, conducted March 2023 through May 2023; BCG analysis.  
<sup>1</sup>Respondents were asked “Where did you actually work last week?” <sup>2</sup>Respondents were asked “How satisfied are you with the arrangement for where you work?” and assigned “Satisfied” if they responded with “Very satisfied” or “Somewhat satisfied.”

# Employees want to be in the office for interaction, affiliation, and development—and remote when they need to focus

**Question: Given the option, where do you do your most effective work? (by category)**

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS (%)

MANAGERS AND EXECUTIVES (%)



**Sources:** BCG “What the Flex?!” employee surveys, conducted March 2023 through May 2023; BCG analysis.

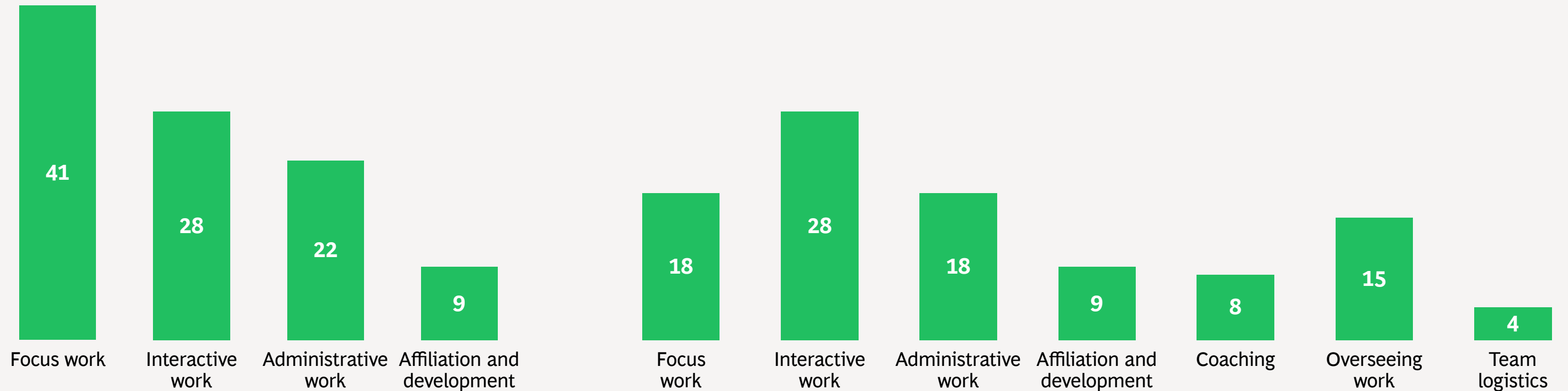
**Note:** “Administrative work” defined as, e.g., emails, scheduling meetings, maintaining files; “affiliation and development” defined as, e.g., training, social events, internal networking; “focus work” defined as, e.g., analysis, writing reports, planning work; “interactive work” defined as, e.g., meetings, collaboration, spending time with clients; “coaching” defined as, e.g., giving feedback, performance reviews (question asked to managers and executives only); “overseeing work” defined as, e.g., reviewing work, conducting team meetings (question asked to managers and executives only); “team logistics” defined as, e.g., onboarding new hires, affiliation activities (question asked to managers and executives only).

# Time allocation is a critical factor in determining how people work—and different roles have different needs

**Question: What proportion of your time is spent on each task category?**

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS (% OF TOTAL TIME)

MANAGERS AND EXECUTIVES (% OF TOTAL TIME)



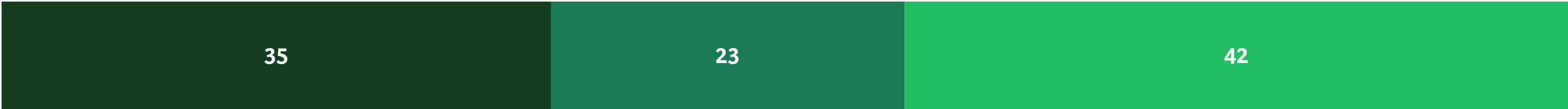
**Sources:** BCG “What the Flex?!” employee surveys, conducted March 2023 through May 2023; BCG analysis.

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# Both employees and managers believe they should be in person at least one-third of the time

## The ideal location based on preference and average time spent by type of work<sup>1</sup>

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS (%)



MANAGERS AND EXECUTIVES (%)



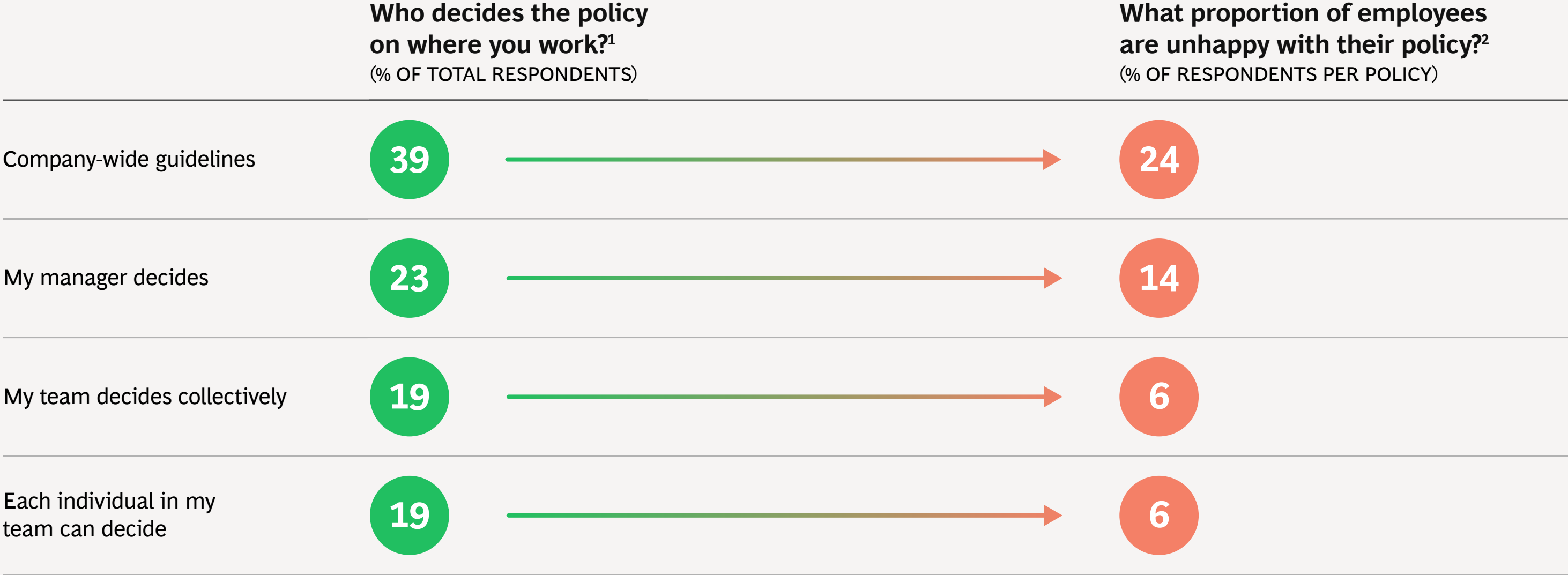
■ In person   ■ Equally effective in person or remote   ■ Remote

Sources: BCG “What the Flex?!” employee surveys, conducted March 2023 through May 2023; BCG analysis.

Note: Task categories surveyed: “administrative work” defined as, e.g., emails, scheduling meetings, maintaining files; “affiliation and development” defined as, e.g., training, social events, internal networking; “focus work” defined as, e.g., analysis, writing reports, planning work; “interactive work” defined as, e.g., meetings, collaboration, spending time with clients; “coaching” defined as, e.g., giving feedback, performance reviews (question asked to managers and executives only); “overseeing work” defined as, e.g., reviewing work, conducting team meetings (question asked to managers and executives only); “team logistics” defined as, e.g., onboarding new hires, affiliation activities (question asked to managers and executives only).

<sup>1</sup>Responses for “What proportion (%) of your work time is spent on each task category?” were multiplied by responses for “Given the option, where do you do your most effective...” for each task category listed.

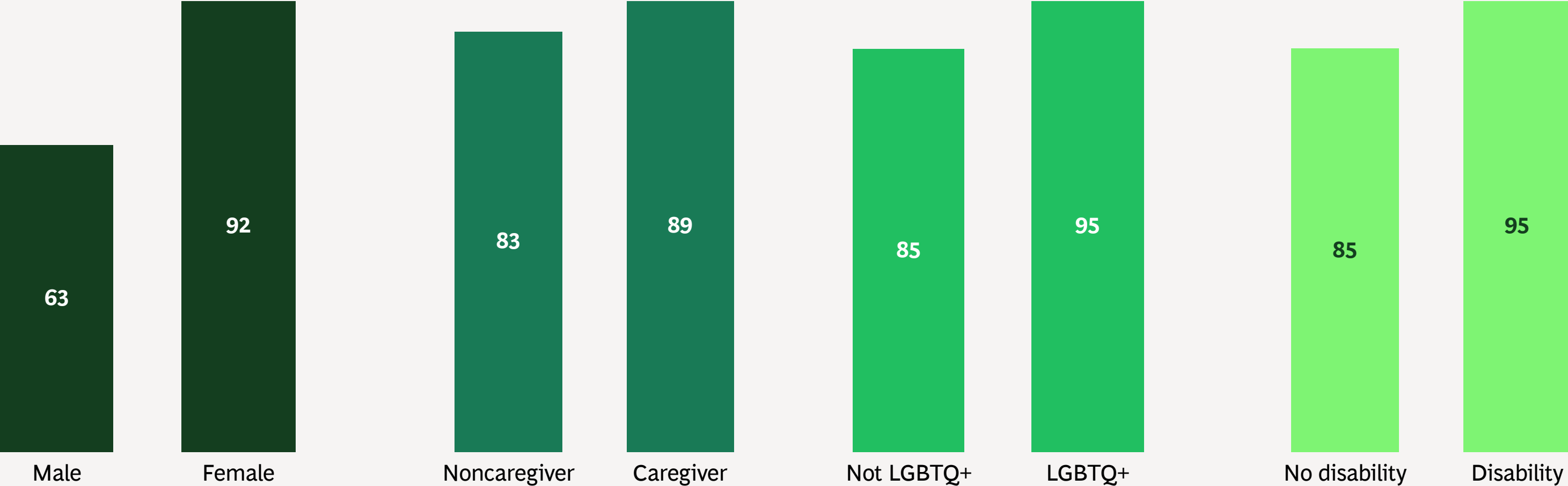
# Employees are more likely to be dissatisfied when work model policies are decided by company leaders or managers



Sources: BCG “What the Flex?!” employee surveys, conducted March 2023 through May 2023; BCG analysis.  
<sup>1</sup>Respondents were asked “Who decides the policy on where you work?” <sup>2</sup>Respondents were asked “How satisfied are you with the arrangement for where you work?” and assigned “Dissatisfied” if they responded with “Somewhat dissatisfied” or “Very dissatisfied.”

# If you care about diversity, equity, and inclusion, you should care about flexibility

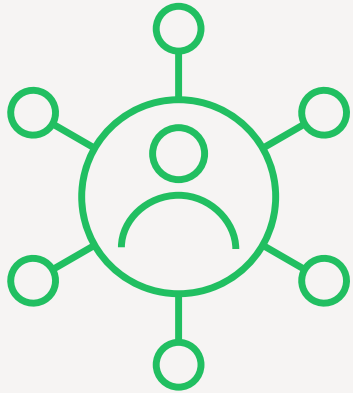
**Question: My flexible work options are very important or important in driving my decision to stay in or leave my job**  
(% OF RESPONDENTS)



Sources: BCG “What the Flex?!” employee surveys, conducted March 2023 through May 2023; BCG analysis.



# Many employees believe their organizations aren't putting in the effort to make flexible work *work*

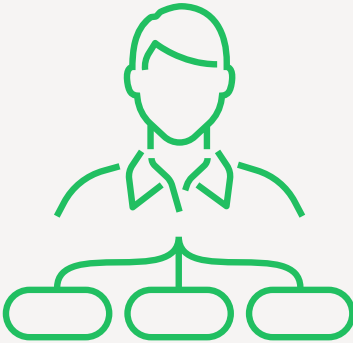


### Supporting employees

My organization provides me with resources and training to support my employees to work flexibly



of managers and executives disagree or are neutral

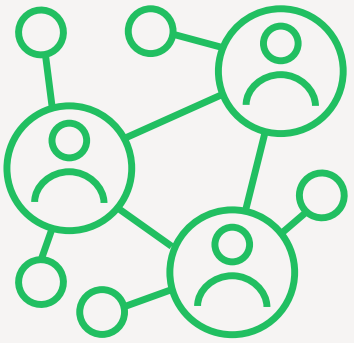


### Modeling flexible work

My senior leaders are role models for flexible work



of all respondents disagree or are neutral



### Adapting the model

My team regularly reviews and adapts our work model



of all respondents disagree or are neutral

Sources: BCG "What the Flex?!" employee surveys, conducted March 2023 through May 2023; BCG analysis.

# A broad range of office-based employees responded to our survey

# 1,576

Total respondents

## Diversity

% OF RESPONDENTS

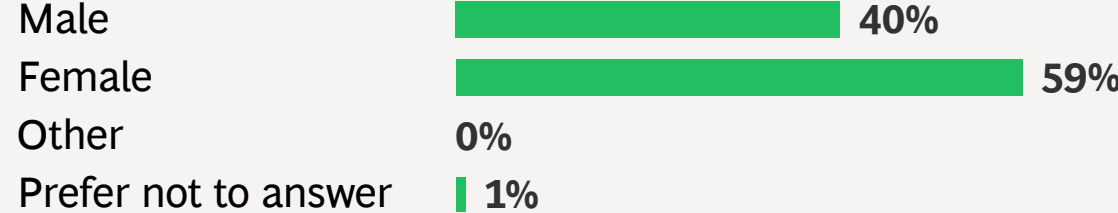
- 38** Child caregiver
- 8** Adult caregiver
- 18** Ethnic minority
- 4** Disability
- 7** LGBTQ+

## Role

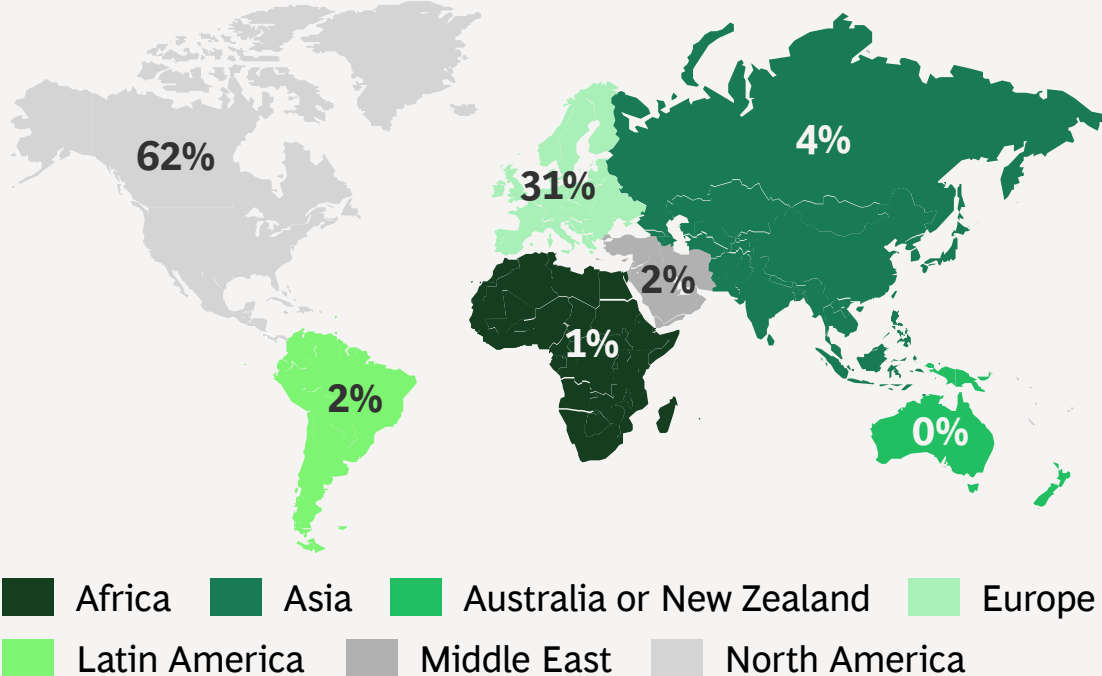
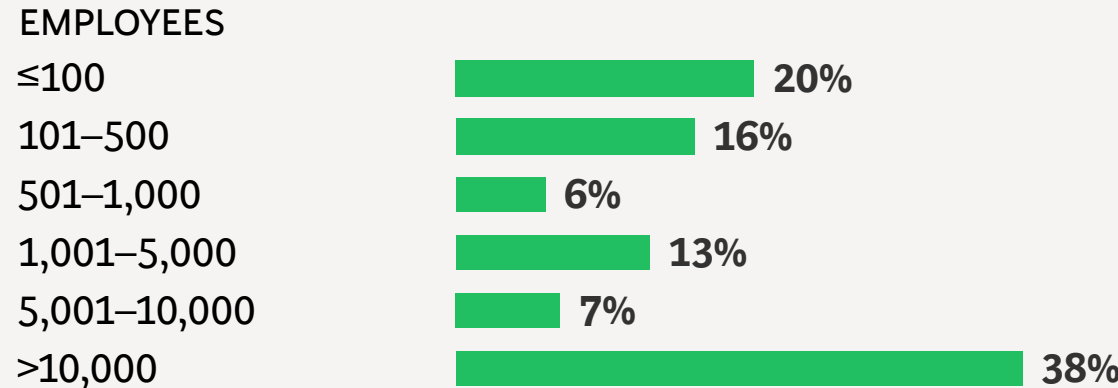
% OF RESPONDENTS



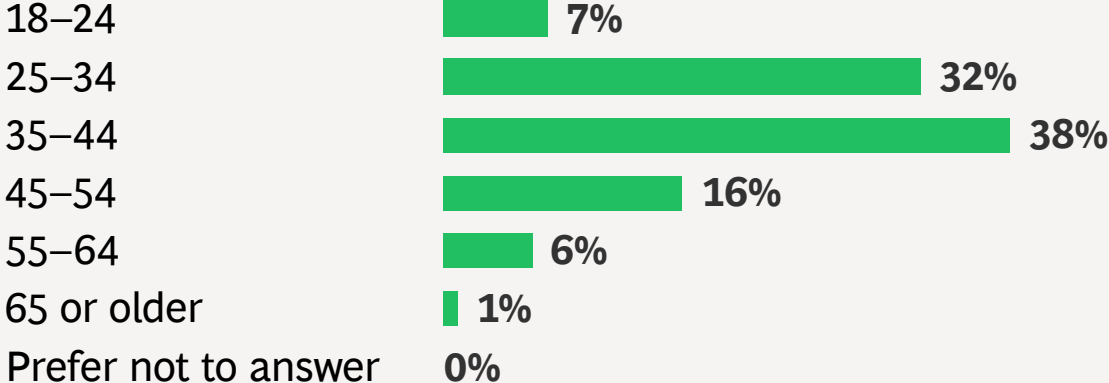
## Gender



## Company size



## Age



Sources: BCG “What the Flex?!” employee surveys, conducted March 2023 through May 2023; BCG analysis.