Paris, 25 November 2026

Social connections, mental health, the need to breathe: what employees really expect from their workplace

Far from being a burden, the office remains an essential hub for coming together… provided it also offers spaces to take a breather and recharge. This is the key finding of a survey conducted by Covivio amongst more than 2,200 employees working in seven of its office buildings in the Île-de-France region, Lyon and Bordeaux. The workplace is now recognised as much as a driver of social connection as it is a space that must offer places of tranquillity.*

- ***A major mental health issue: 58 per cent of respondents report a high level of mental strain, but 76 per cent believe that their working environment can help to alleviate it.***
- ***The collective experience is highly valued: one in two employees sees the office primarily as a place for meeting and interacting, compared with just 15 per cent who view it as an obligation.***
- ***The hybrid paradox: for 27 per cent of employees, it is the mix of working from home and the office that makes them want to return to the workplace, just ahead of the atmosphere and the sense of community (25 per cent).***

High mental workload: 76 per cent of employees believe their office building can help alleviate it

Compared with previous surveys conducted by Covivio on its buildings, this one reveals a new expectation amongst employees: **a deep-seated need for spaces where they can recharge their batteries.**

Indeed, those surveyed report a significant mental load: 58 per cent of them rate it at 7 out of 10 or higher.

In light of this, the office building emerges as a practical ally: **three-quarters (76 per cent) of occupants believe that their building's spaces and services can help alleviate this mental load.**

Four key factors favoured by occupants

Among the measures that would most improve occupants' daily lives, the aspect of wellbeing stands out:

- **The need for quiet spaces to take a breather and recharge (22 per cent): quiet rooms, spaces to switch off, rest rooms, phone booths, etc.**
- **Wellbeing, sport and health facilities (21 per cent)**

- **A more varied range of catering options tailored to individual schedules (20 per cent)**
- **Services that free up time, such as concierge services, dry cleaning or parcel collection (16 per cent)**

"The fact that more than three in four employees see the building as an ally in combating mental strain confirms the importance of office spaces in our clients' HR and workplace wellbeing strategies. Performance in the office cannot be imposed; it goes hand in hand with caring for individuals. In our buildings – which combine gyms, green outdoor spaces and concierge services – the average recommendation score of 8.2/10 reflects a high level of satisfaction with the working environment," explains **Stéphanie La Sala, Director of Client Relations and Property Management at Covivio.**

The hybrid paradox: working from home makes you want to return to the office

Whilst the working week in France is stabilising at around 3 to 4 days in the office, the figures reveal a positive cycle: more than one in four employees (27 per cent) say that it is the mix of working from home and in the office that makes them want to come to work, just ahead of the connection with their colleagues (25 per cent). A flexible hybrid policy is therefore emerging as the best way to encourage attendance at the office.

What employees come to the office for is primarily the interactions with colleagues and the key 'moments' of a typical day. In an environment where isolation is a growing concern, **the office reaffirms its key role with a strengthened social function: one in two respondents (50 per cent) sees it first and foremost as a place for meeting and exchanging ideas**, compared with just 15 per cent who view it as an obligation.

'As hybrid working becomes the norm, the office is reinforcing its role as a place for collaboration, interaction and co-creativity. Our responsibility as a property developer is to design vibrant buildings that foster these social connections. For example, spontaneous encounters are cited by nearly a quarter of employees as their favourite part of the day. Conversely, the emerging need for quiet spaces (ahead of catering and entertainment) is a new trend in the feedback from our occupants and shows that the building must offer a balanced solution: stimulating collective energy whilst preserving pockets of tranquillity in an increasingly overstimulating and overconnected world," comments **Marielle Seegmuller, Director of Operations at Covivio.**

Team Builder, Sprinter, Zen Master or Explorer: which type of colleague are you in the office?

Presented in the form of a quiz, the survey identified a profile for each respondent based on their answers. The Team Builder, who comes to the office primarily for the sake of others, tops the list with 42 per cent of respondents.

The Team Builder (42 per cent) comes out on top. They embody collective energy, seek out interaction and bring the building to life.

The Sprinter (32 per cent) is the second most common profile and is the most prevalent in highly dynamic service sector environments. Pragmatic by nature, they use the services on offer — such as the concierge service and fast food — to boost efficiency.

The Zen Master (16 per cent) turns their workplace into a space to breathe, prioritising comfort, sport, *healthy* options and moments of calm.

The Explorer (10 per cent) turns everyday life into an experience, guided by curiosity and spontaneity as they take part in the activities and try out the new offerings.

These findings have led Covivio to rethink its spaces and services, as well as their adaptability. They also highlight the diversity of profiles that need to be catered for. Finally, they provide valuable insights for the group's operational teams, enabling them to adjust the range of services and the layout of the spaces.

"This survey, carried out directly on site by Covivio's Customer Relations teams, provided a unique opportunity for the teams to meet with more than 2,200 occupants. This close relationship clearly illustrates the group's belief in 'living property': behind every office space, there is a team that listens to its clients," concludes **Stéphanie La Sala.**

***** Methodology

A self-reported survey carried out between September and October 2026 by teams from Covivio and Wellio amongst 2,237 employees occupying seven office buildings in the Île-de-France region, Lyon and Bordeaux (CB21, Silex2, SO POP, MASLO, Art & Co, Urban Garden and Cité Numérique).

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ABOUT COVIVIO

Thanks to its partnering history, its real estate expertise and its European culture, Covivio is inventing today's user experience and designing tomorrow's city.
A preferred real estate player at the European level, Covivio is close to its end users, capturing their aspirations, combining work, travel, living, and co-inventing vibrant spaces.

A benchmark in the European real estate market with €24,2 bn in assets, Covivio offers support to companies, hotel brands and territories in their pursuit for attractiveness, transformation and responsible performance.

Build sustainable relationships and well-being, is the Covivio's Purpose who expresses its role as a responsible real estate operator to all its stakeholders: customers, shareholders and financial partners, internal teams, local authorities but also to future generations and the planet. Furthermore, its living, dynamic approach opens up exciting project and career prospects for its teams.

Covivio's shares are listed in the Euronext Paris A compartment (FR0000064578 - COV), are admitted to trading on the SRD, and are included in the composition of the MSCI, SBF 120, Euronext IEIF "SIIC France" and CAC Mid100 indices, in the "EPRA" and "GPR 250" benchmark European real estate indices, and in the ESG FTSE4 Good, DJSI World & Europe, Euronext (Sustainable World 120, Sustainable Euro 120, CDP Environment ESG France EW, SBF Top 50 ESG, SBT 1.5°), Stoxx ESG, Ethibel and Gaïa, and has received recognition and ratings from EPRA BPRs Gold Awards (financial reporting and sustainable development), CSA S&P (top 10%), CDP (A), GRESB (91,7/100, 5-Star, 100% public disclosure), ISS-ESG (B+) and MSCI (AAA).

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Financial part:BBB+ / Stable outlook by Standard and Poor's