The
Flex Report

Q1 2024

Flex Index
PRESENTED BY scoop

Table of Contents

About the Flex Report

Happy Birthday to Flex Index! For the last 12 months, we've been tracking the flexible work trends that matter most to you. Of course, we couldn't do it without the 8,000+ companies on Flex Index, who collectively employ over 100 million employees across 60,000 offices in the United States and abroad.

To say that 2023 was a year of change is an understatement. We observed big firms like Nvidia, Microsoft, and Target decide to lean more toward hybrid work arrangements, while major players like Goldman Sachs and Tesla called employees back to the office full-time, garnering plenty of media attention for their plans.

Despite the attention-grabbing headlines regarding the return to the office, Flex Index tracked a steady increase in flexible work last year. At the beginning of 2023, 49% of U.S. companies were requiring employees to work in person full time. By the end of the year, that number dropped to just 38%, an 11 percentage point change.

What's in store for 2024? So far, it looks like more debate. UPS recently announced a return to full time in office. At the same time, new research on 137 of the largest U.S. companies found that return to office mandates did not result in significant improvements to firm performance.

In this report, we examine the current state of flexible work in the U.S. at the start of 2024. We also explore brand new analysis on the relationship between employee sentiment and work location flexibility, both in aggregate and in critical areas like culture and compensation.

Key Findings

1 Flexibility is growing in prevalence

65% of U.S. companies (on an industry-weighted basis) now offer work location flexibility. That's a 14-point increase from a year ago, marking a significant shift in C-level attitudes and corresponding policies around flexible work.

2 Structured Hybrid continues to rise in prominence

Only 20% of companies a year ago embraced a Structured Hybrid model, where employees were expected in the office a certain amount of the time. 32% of companies do now, a 12 percentage point increase.

3 Bosses want employees onsite about half the week

Not much has changed regarding required time on site, with Structured Hybrid companies expecting roughly 50% of employee time to be spent in the workplace and 50% of time spent working remotely.

4 Flexible companies outperform on employee sentiment

Companies offering work location flexibility significantly outperform Full Time In Office companies on employee sentiment. Fully Flexible firms, in particular, outperform on work-life balance, culture, and values, despite a common C-Suite belief that culture is built in person.

5 Face time means more opportunities

Employees at Structured Hybrid companies say they have better career opportunities than their peers at Fully Flexible or Full Time In Office companies. Overall employee sentiment tips toward Structured Hybrid when companies reach 20k+ employees or more.

6 Looking for flexibility? Go west (and northeast)

You're most likely to find flexible work arrangements at smaller companies in the West or Northeast part of the U.S., and in industries like Technology, Finance, and Professional Services.

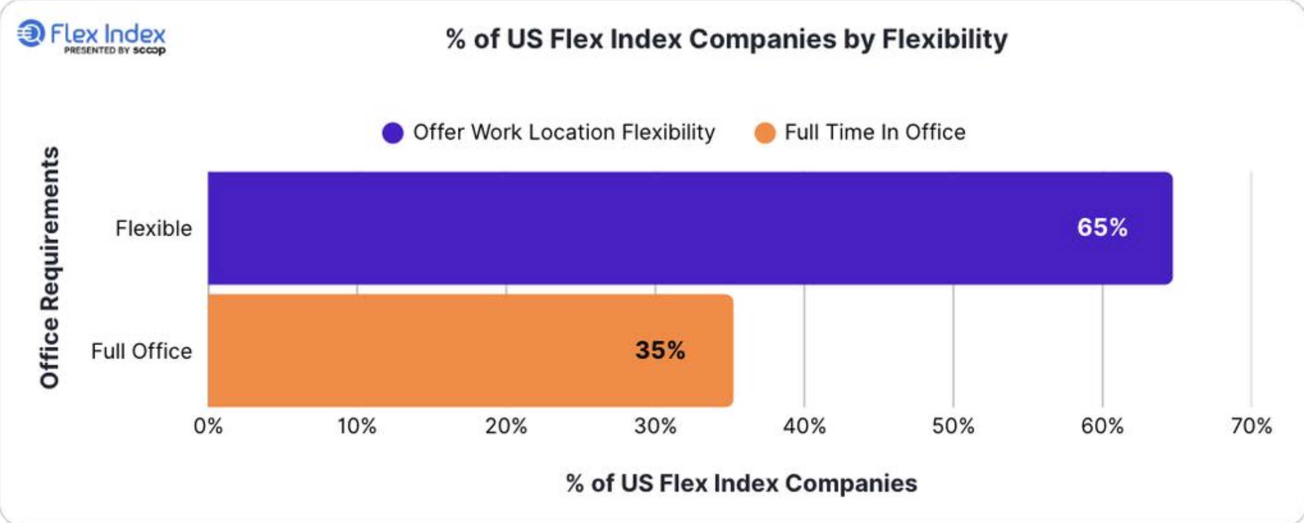
Spotlight on...

Adoption of Work Location Flexibility

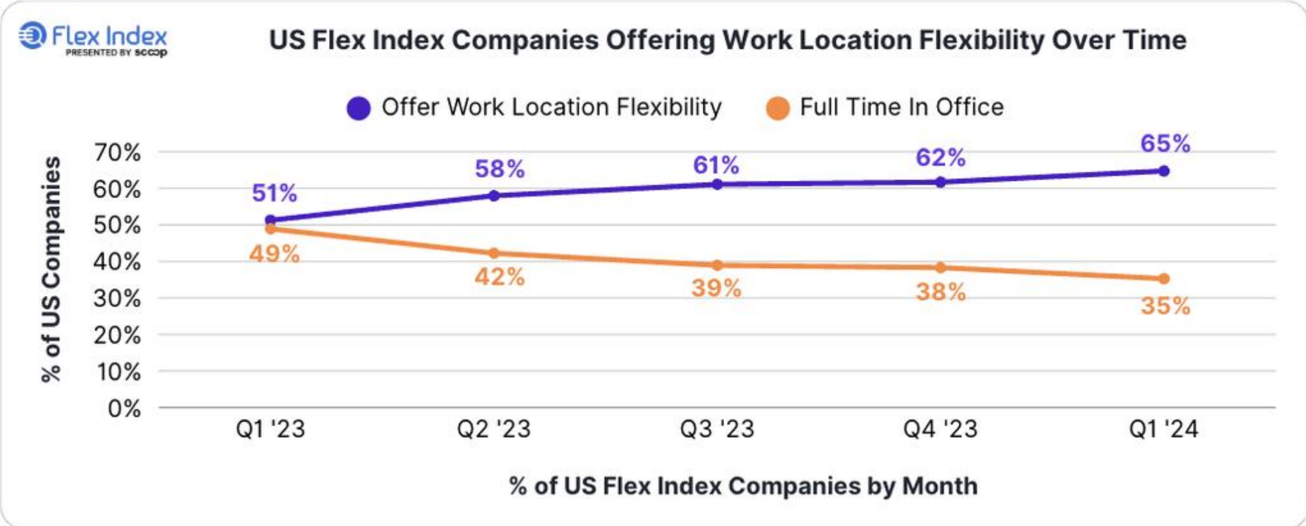
ADOPTION OF WORK LOCATION FLEXIBILITY

Over the last year, we've observed a significant shift in U.S. companies offering work location flexibility. 65% of U.S. companies now offer work location flexibility on an industry-weighted basis, up 14 percentage points since Q1 2023. 35% of U.S. companies require Full Time In Office for corporate employees.

Is this the end of the downward slide of full time in office work, or will we see a continued trend down in the coming quarters?



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements for companies with headquarters in the US, N = 5,859 companies. Flex Index data has been re-weighted using the Current Population Survey industry data to better approximate the US working population. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).



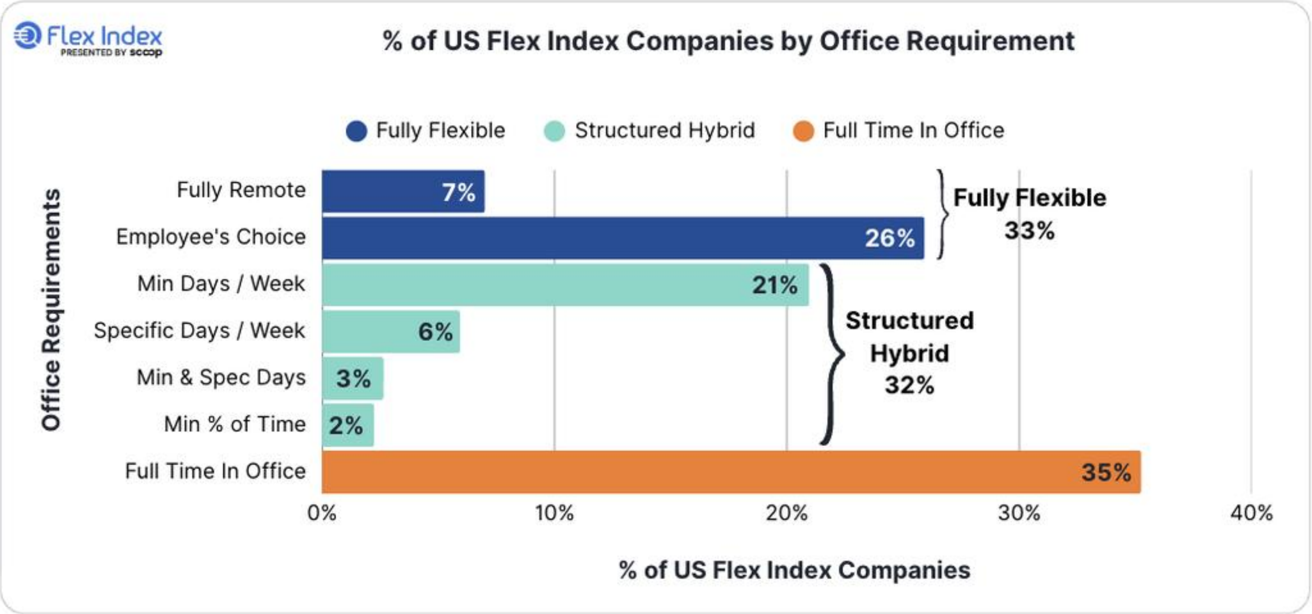
Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements for companies with headquarters in the US, N = 5,859 companies. Flex Index data has been re-weighted using the Current Population Survey industry data to better approximate the US working population. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

OFFICE REQUIREMENTS

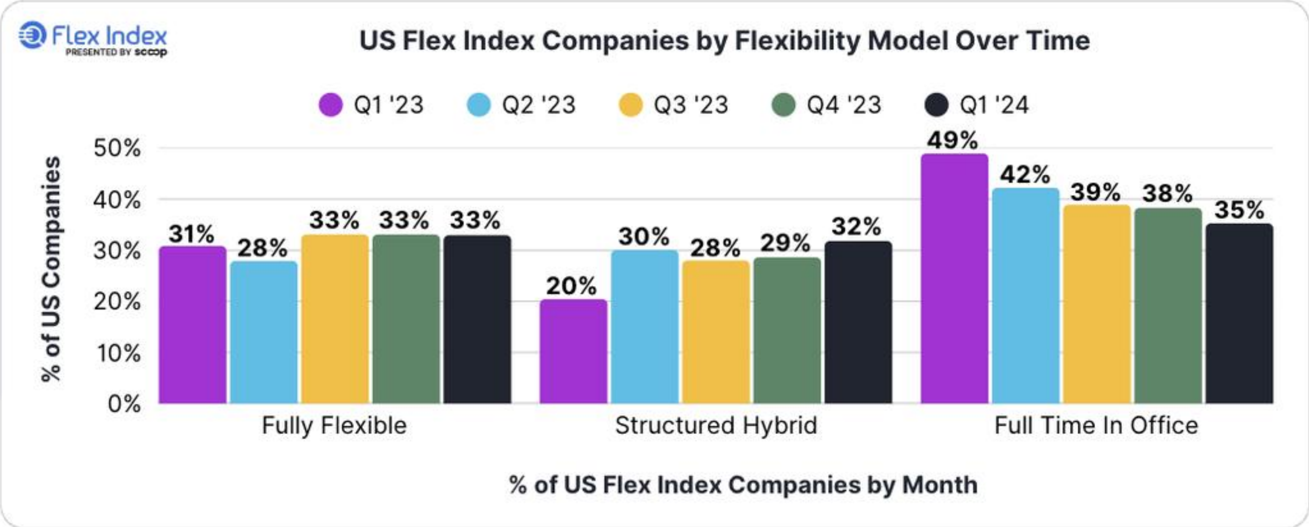
There's nearly an even three-way split on work location flexibility for U.S. companies.

- 33% of firms are Fully Flexible, meaning their employers do not require office time
- 32% are Structured Hybrid, with employees required on site a set amount of the time
- 35% of companies require corporate employees to be Full Time In Office

Structured Hybrid is the fastest-growing model, with 32% of companies choosing it now, a 12 percentage point increase from last year.



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements for companies with headquarters in the US, N = 5,859 companies. Flex Index data has been re-weighted using the Current Population Survey industry data to better approximate the US working population. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

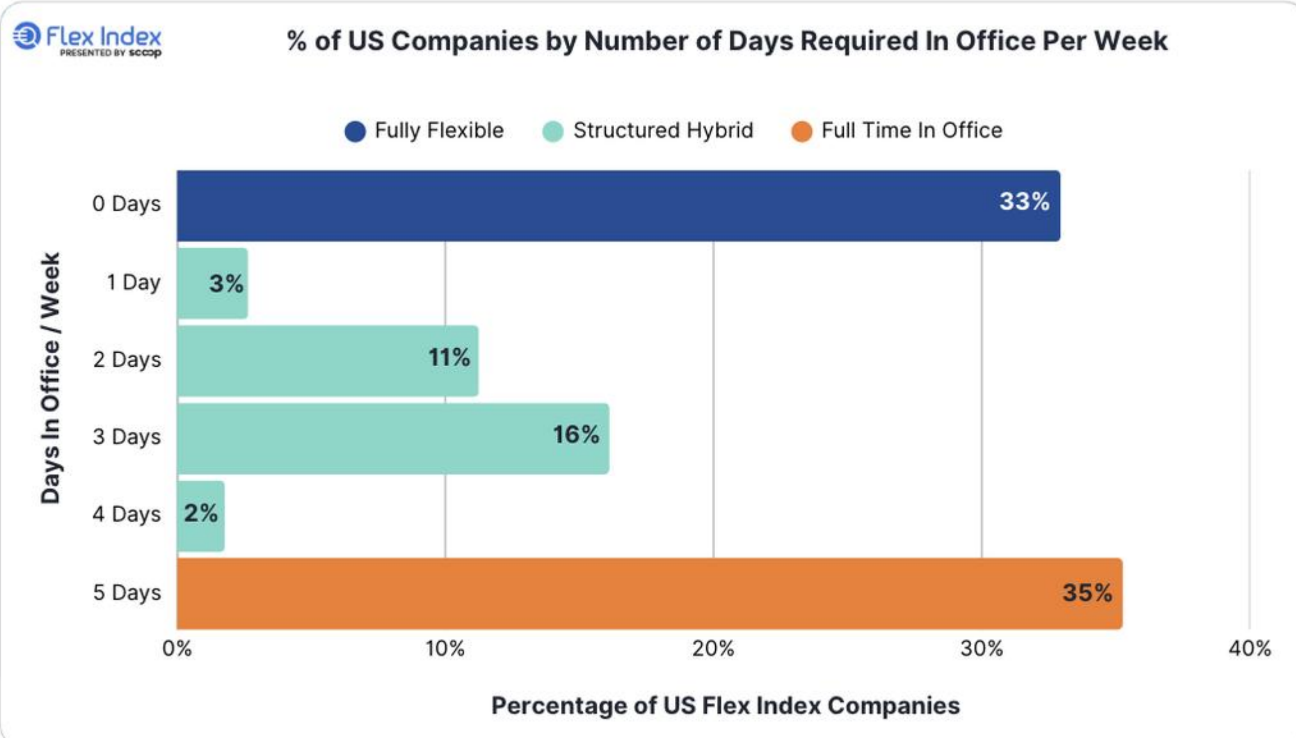


Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements for companies with headquarters in the US, N = 5,859 companies. Flex Index data has been re-weighted using the Current Population Survey industry data to better approximate the US working population. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

TIME REQUIRED IN OFFICE

Required time in office is pretty polarized across companies. 33% of U.S. companies require no time in office; 35% require full time in office.

The remainder of U.S. companies (32%) require 1-4 days / week in the office on average. Within that group, 2-3 days / week required in office is most common.



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements for companies with headquarters in the US, N = 5,859 companies. Flex Index data has been re-weighted using the Current Population Survey industry data to better approximate the US working population. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

Key Insight

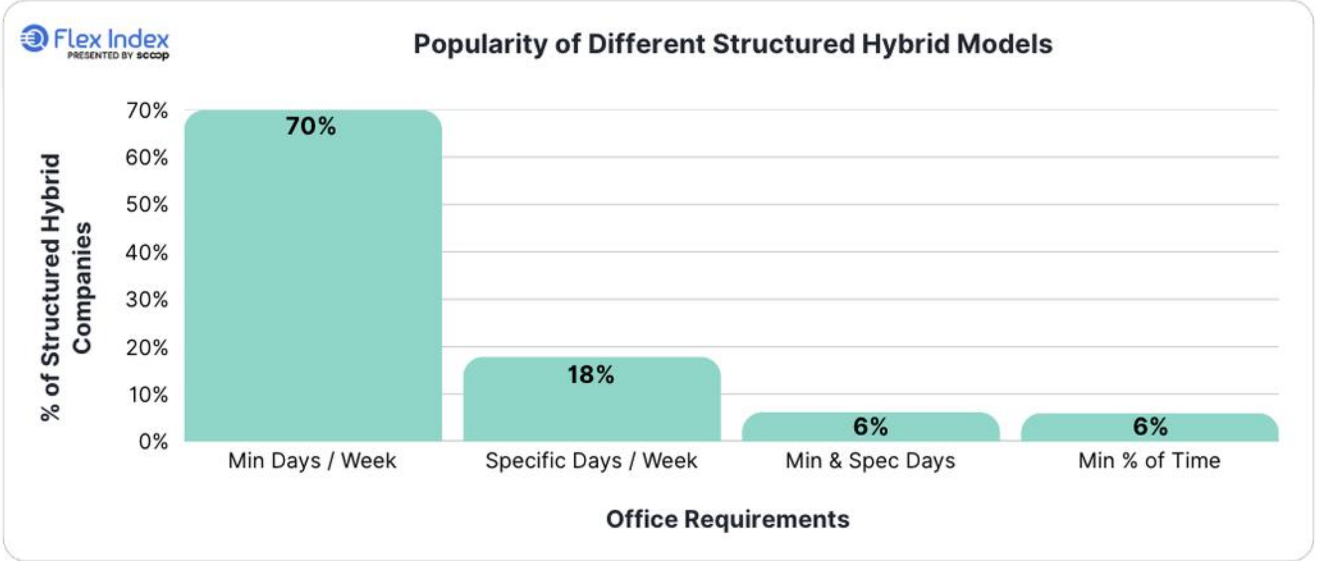
If you join a Structured Hybrid company, you should expect to spend 2-3 days per week in the office. It's pretty rare to be required in office for one day or four days per week; only 3% of U.S. companies on an industry-weighted basis require one day per week in office, and 2% require four days per week in office.

Regardless, as a job seeker, it is wise to confirm expectations on time spent in the office during the hiring process. There may be a different expectation for the specific department you're joining or role you're exploring.

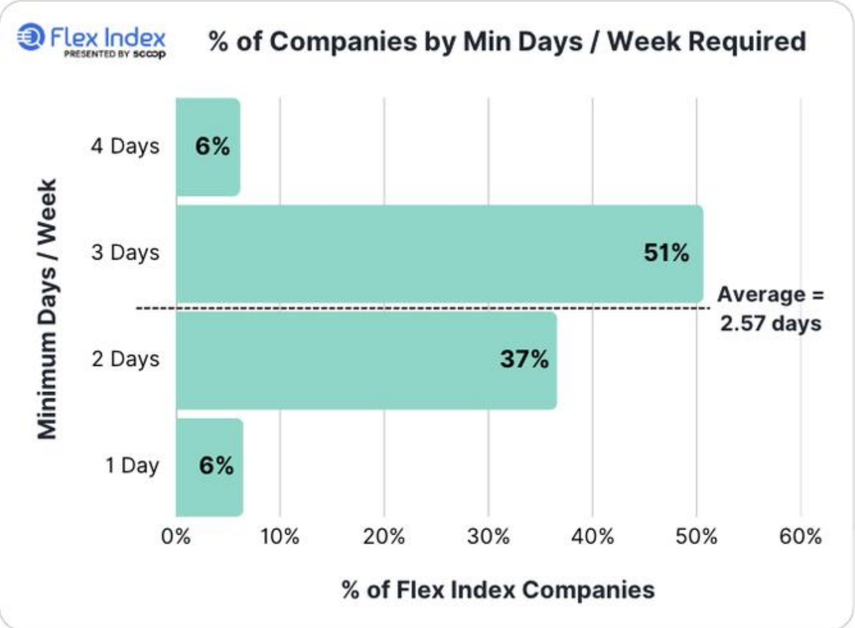
STRUCTURED HYBRID: DAYS / WEEK REQUIRED

Structured Hybrid employers continue to prefer Minimum Days / Week above all other Structured Hybrid models.

70% of Structured Hybrid companies have a minimum time component to their policy; 18% opt for mandating specific days per week only.



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on US companies with Structured Hybrid office requirements. N = 1,700 companies. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on US companies with a min day / week office requirement. N = 1,275 companies. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

Good to Know

88% of companies with a Min Days / Week policy require 2-3 days.

If you require one day or four days per week, you're a bit of an outlier. It may be worth a fresh look at your policy to decide how you want to position relative to your peer set.

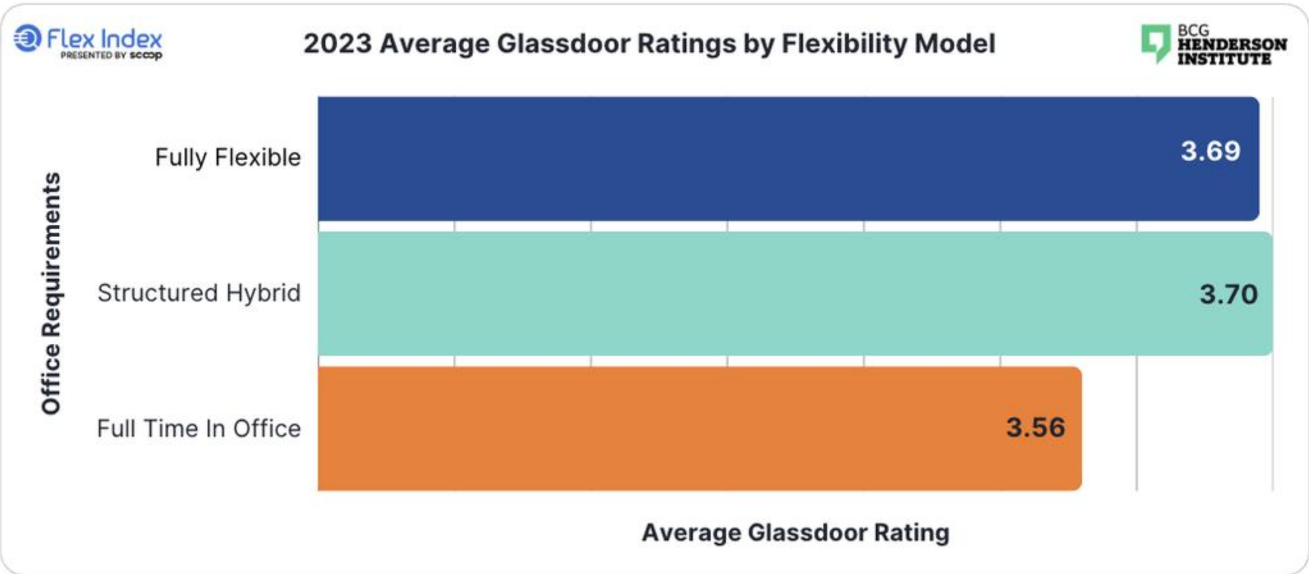
Spotlight on...

Office Requirements & Engagement

OFFICE REQUIREMENTS & EMPLOYEE SENTIMENT

In this quarter's report, we're excited to introduce a new data set that tracks employees' feelings about their work arrangements. We collaborated with Boston Consulting Group to analyze ~450k Glassdoor ratings across 554 public companies to explore the relationship between employee sentiment and flexibility.

On Glassdoor, employees can rate their employer from 1-5 on several dimensions; each finding presented here is statistically significant at a minimum 95% confidence level.



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on public company office requirements. Boston Consulting Group analysis on Flex Index public company Glassdoor ratings from 2023. N = 554 public companies; 447,635 individual Glassdoor ratings. Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

💡 Key Insight

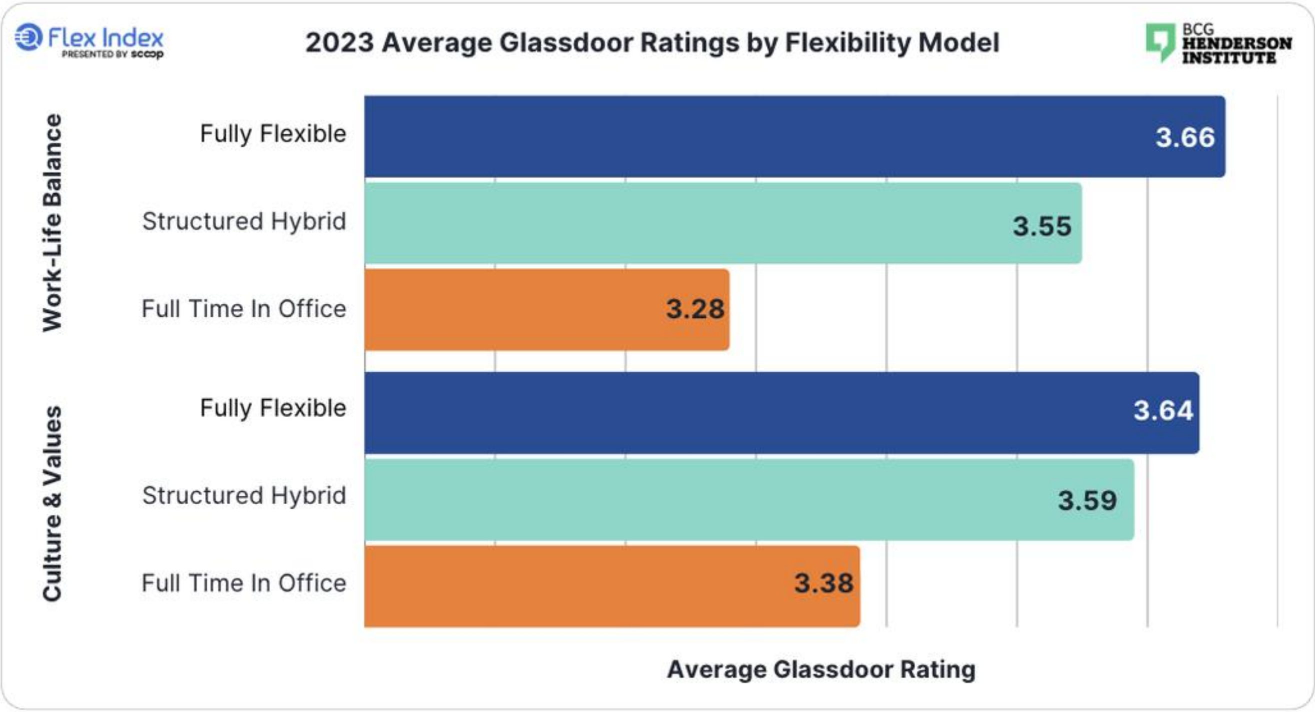
On average, Structured Hybrid and Fully Flexible public companies outperform their Full Time In Office peers on employee sentiment. While a 0.13-0.14 score difference might not seem like a lot, across hundreds of thousands of Glassdoor surveys it represents a material difference in perspective on employers.

While there is no meaningful difference between Fully Flexible and Structured Hybrid companies on average, there are interesting variations in sentiment by company size which we explore in the coming pages.

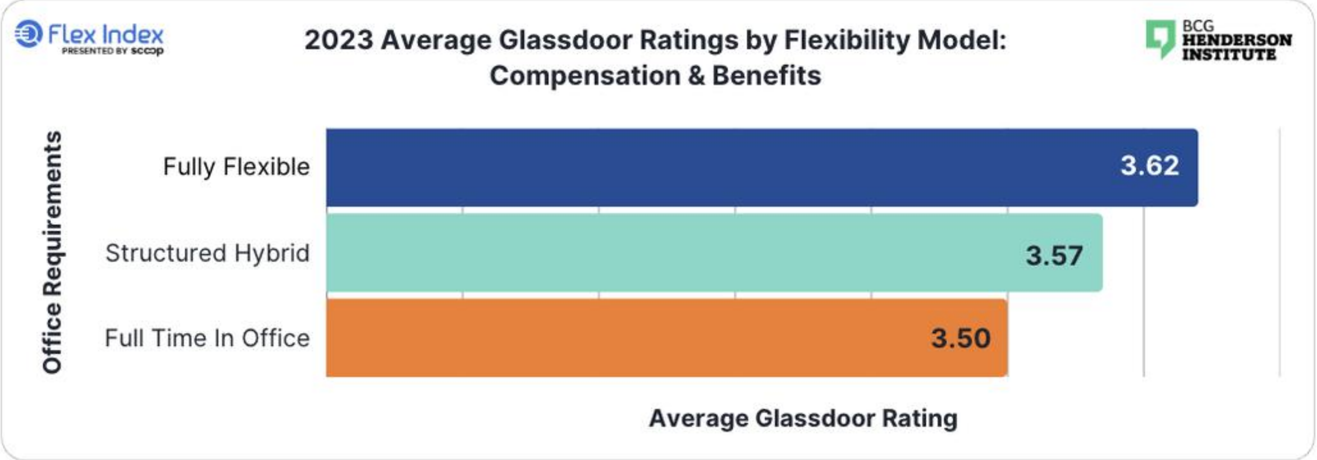
OFFICE REQUIREMENTS & EMPLOYEE SENTIMENT

Unsurprisingly, Fully Flexible companies outperform Structured Hybrid and Full Time In Office companies on Work-Life Balance. What may be surprising is that flexible companies rate their company more highly on Culture & Values, despite many C-Suite executives believing that culture can only be built in the office.

When it comes to Compensation and Benefits, prior research found that employees view the ability to work remotely like an 8% pay increase. Glassdoor ratings support that finding; flexible employers significantly outperform on perception of compensation & benefits.



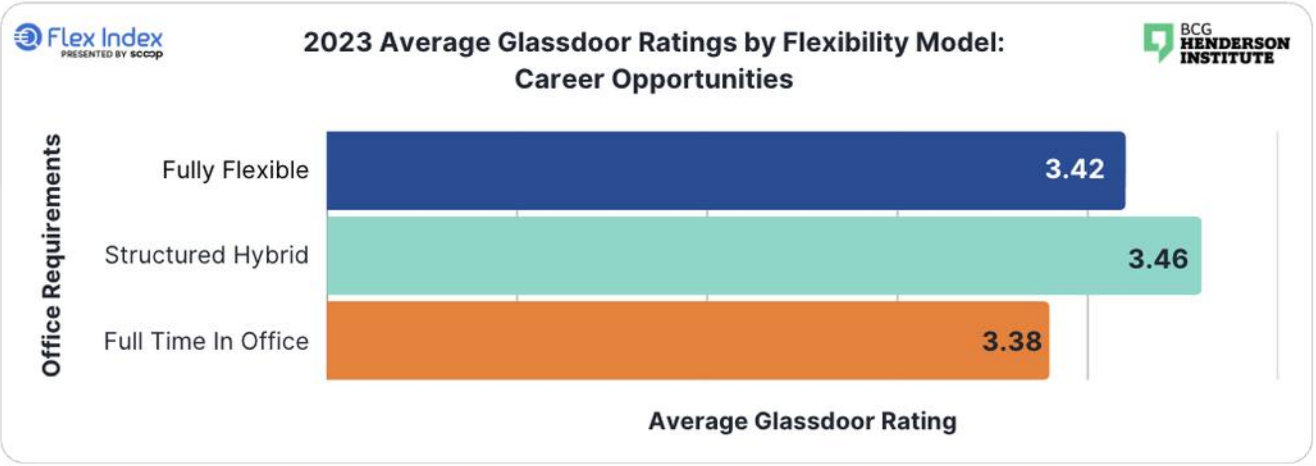
Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on public company office requirements. Boston Consulting Group analysis on Flex Index public company Glassdoor ratings from 2023. N = 554 public companies; 447,635 individual Glassdoor ratings. Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on public company office requirements. Boston Consulting Group analysis on Flex Index public company Glassdoor ratings from 2023. N = 554 public companies; 447,635 individual Glassdoor ratings. Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

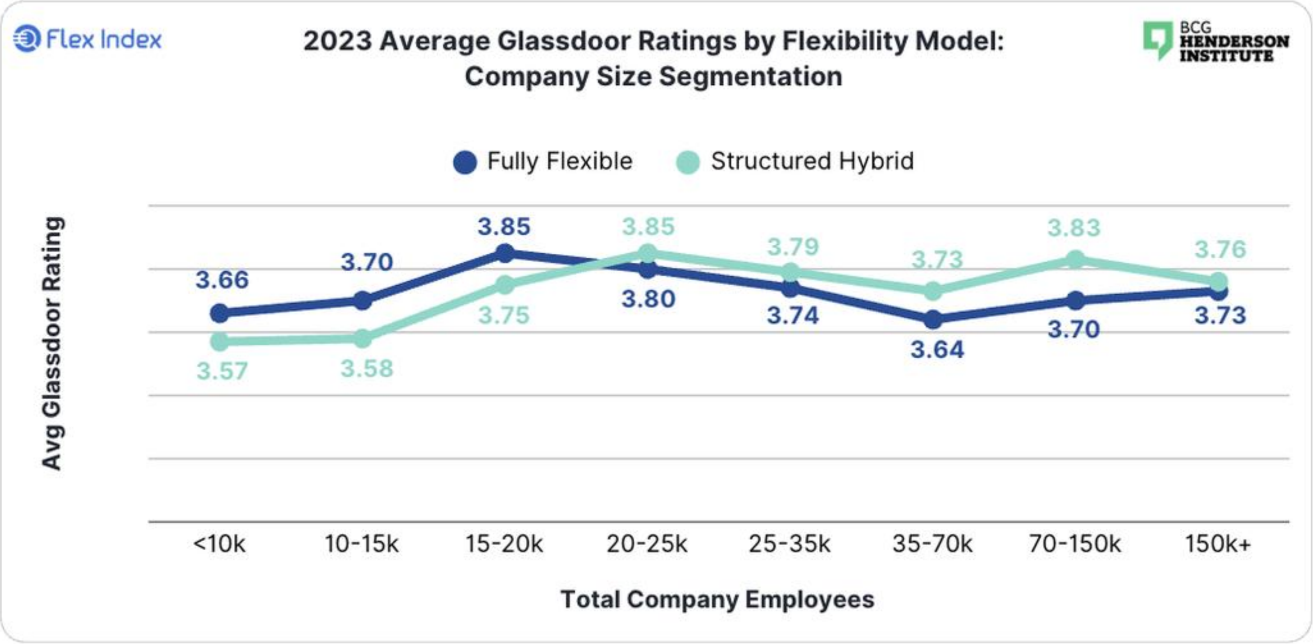
OFFICE REQUIREMENTS & EMPLOYEE SENTIMENT

Structured Hybrid employers outperform Fully Flexible and Full Time In Office employers on career opportunities. That may be driven by a balance of in-office time for mentorship and training with remote time for heads down, deep thinking work.



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on public company office requirements. Boston Consulting Group analysis on Flex Index public company Glassdoor ratings from 2023. N = 554 public companies; 447,635 individual Glassdoor ratings. Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

Interestingly, the sentiment gap between Fully Flexible and Structured Hybrid varies by company size. For firms under 20k employees, Fully Flexible companies have stronger employee sentiment. Above 20k, Structured Hybrid starts to win out, perhaps reflecting value in more structure as companies grow to meaningful scale.



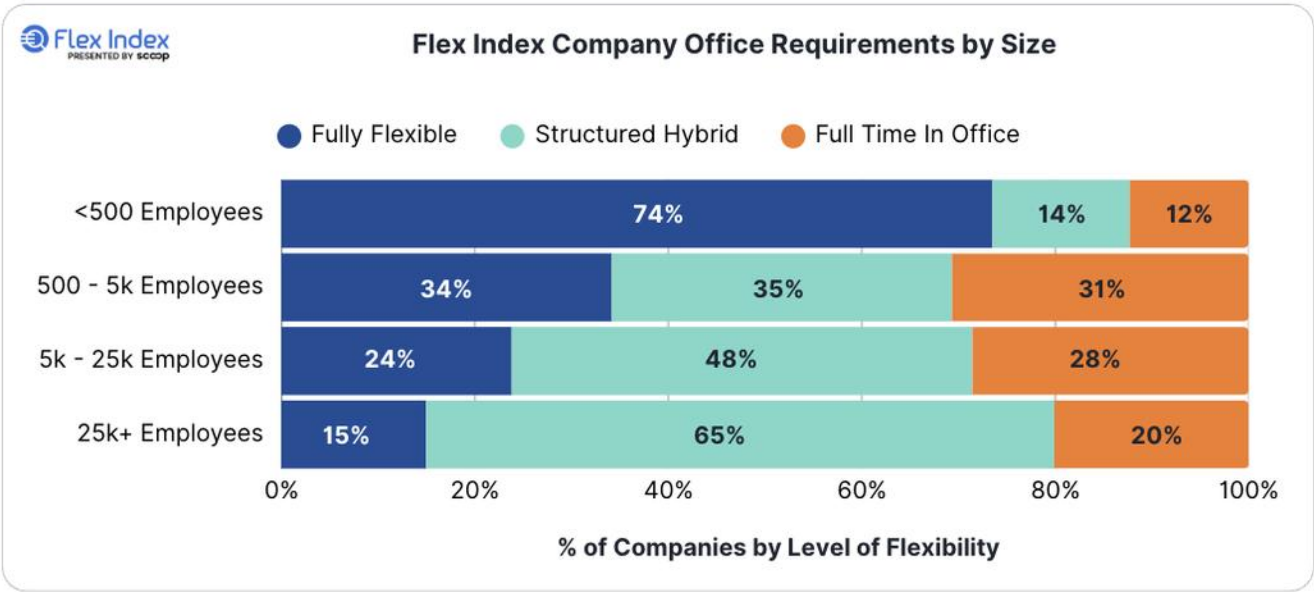
Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on public company office requirements. Boston Consulting Group analysis on Flex Index public company Glassdoor ratings from 2023. N = 554 public companies; 447,635 individual Glassdoor ratings. Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

Flexibility by Company Size

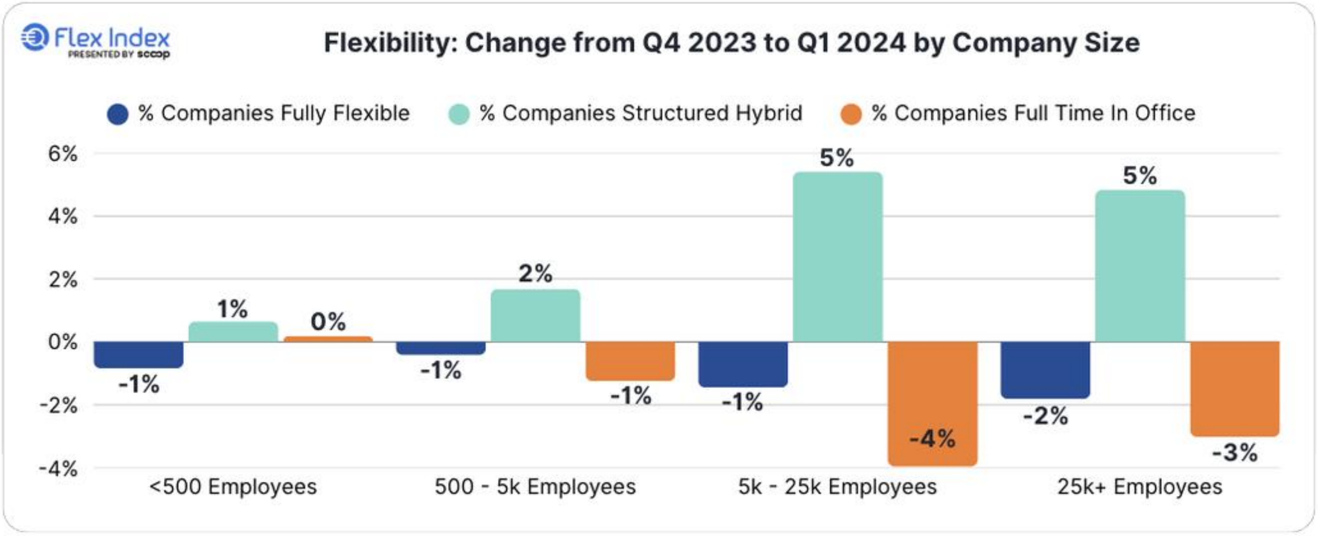
FLEXIBILITY BY COMPANY SIZE

Smaller companies tend to be more agile and less complex by nature, so it's not surprising that they remain overwhelmingly Fully Flexible. We've observed that **some smaller firms are relocating to suburban locations**, others are scaling back on square footage, and still others are going permanently remote.

On the other end of the spectrum, the largest employers in America continue to shift away from Full Time In Office and toward Structured Hybrid models. Structured Hybrid grew to 48% of companies sized 5-25K employees, and 65% of companies with 25K+ employees.



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements. N = 5,668 companies. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

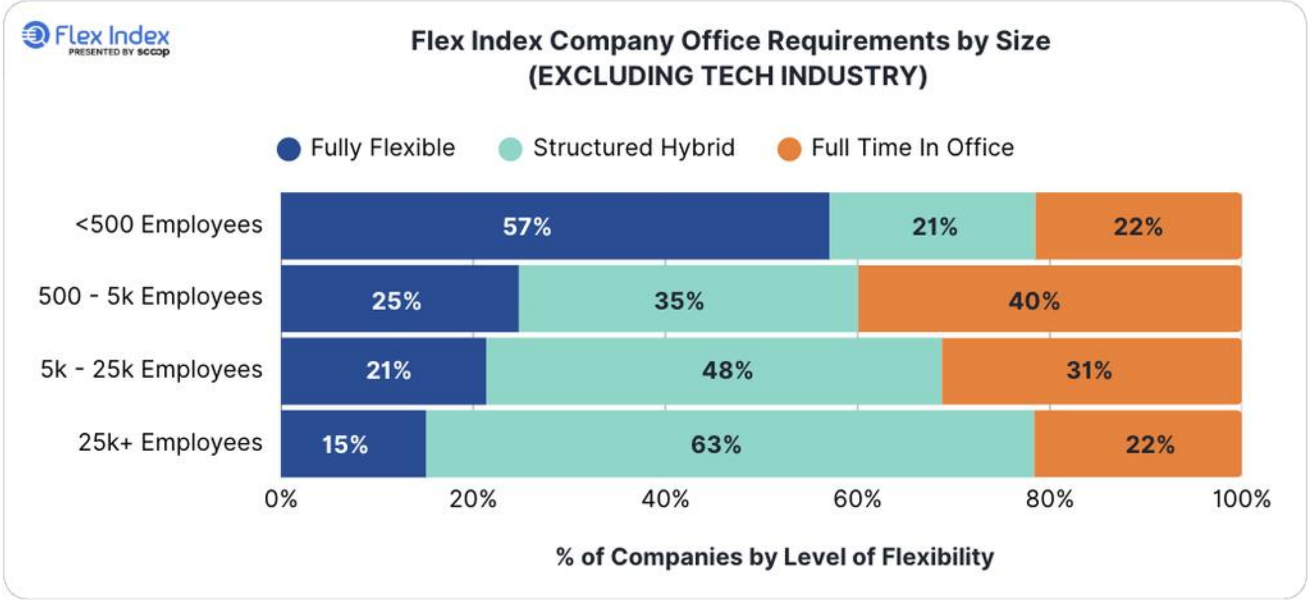


Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements. N = 5,668 companies. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

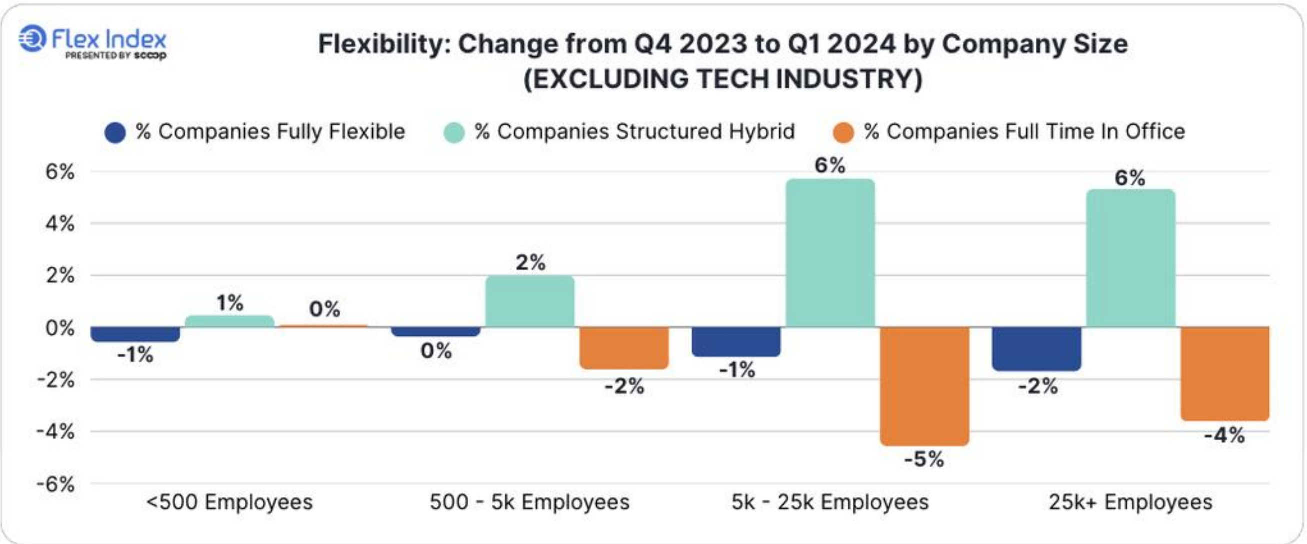
FLEXIBILITY BY COMPANY SIZE (EXCLUDING TECH INDUSTRY)

There's no industry bias here — even when you remove Technology firms from our dataset, which retain a near-universal preference for flexible work, small companies still tend to be Fully Flexible.

In contrast, larger firms opt for Structured Hybrid. Looking at all companies excluding Tech, the shift to Structured Hybrid is even more pronounced. Companies with 5k+ employees shifted six percentage points toward Structured Hybrid in the last quarter.



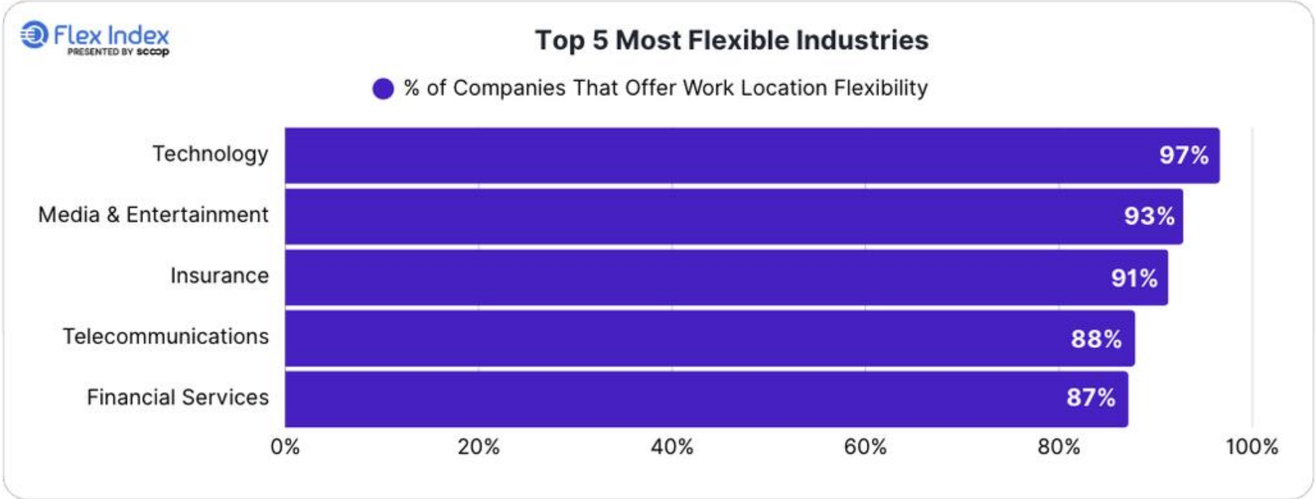
Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements. N = 3,747 companies. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).



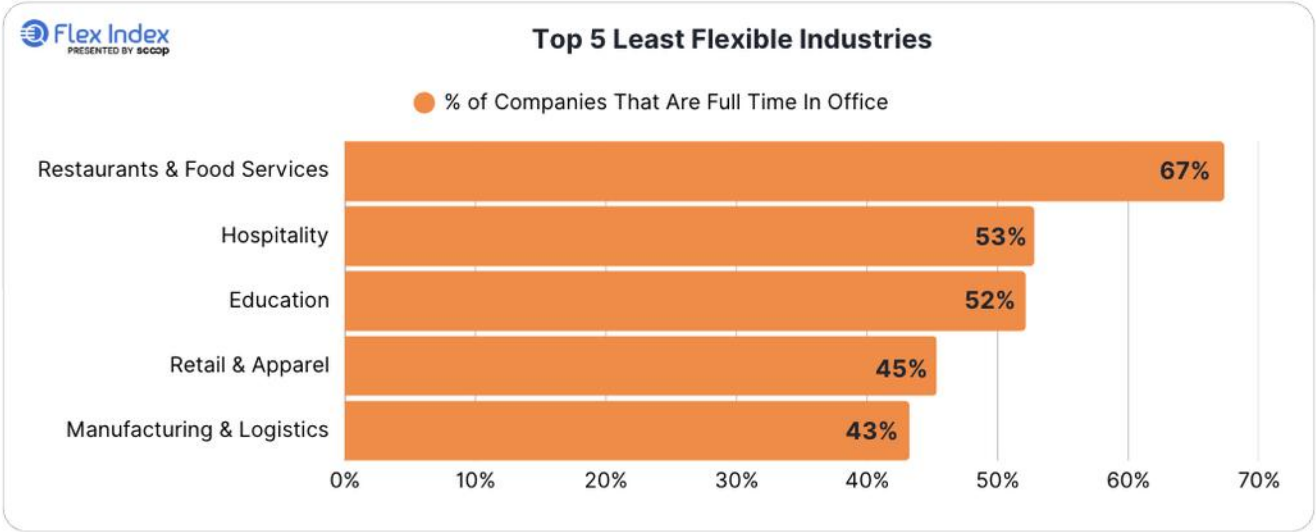
Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements. N = 3,747 companies. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

Flexibility by Industry

FLEXIBILITY BY INDUSTRY



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements. N = 5,795 companies. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements. N = 5,795 companies. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

Most Flexible

The Technology industry (97% flexible) continues to lead on flexible work, with Telecom in the fourth spot (88%).

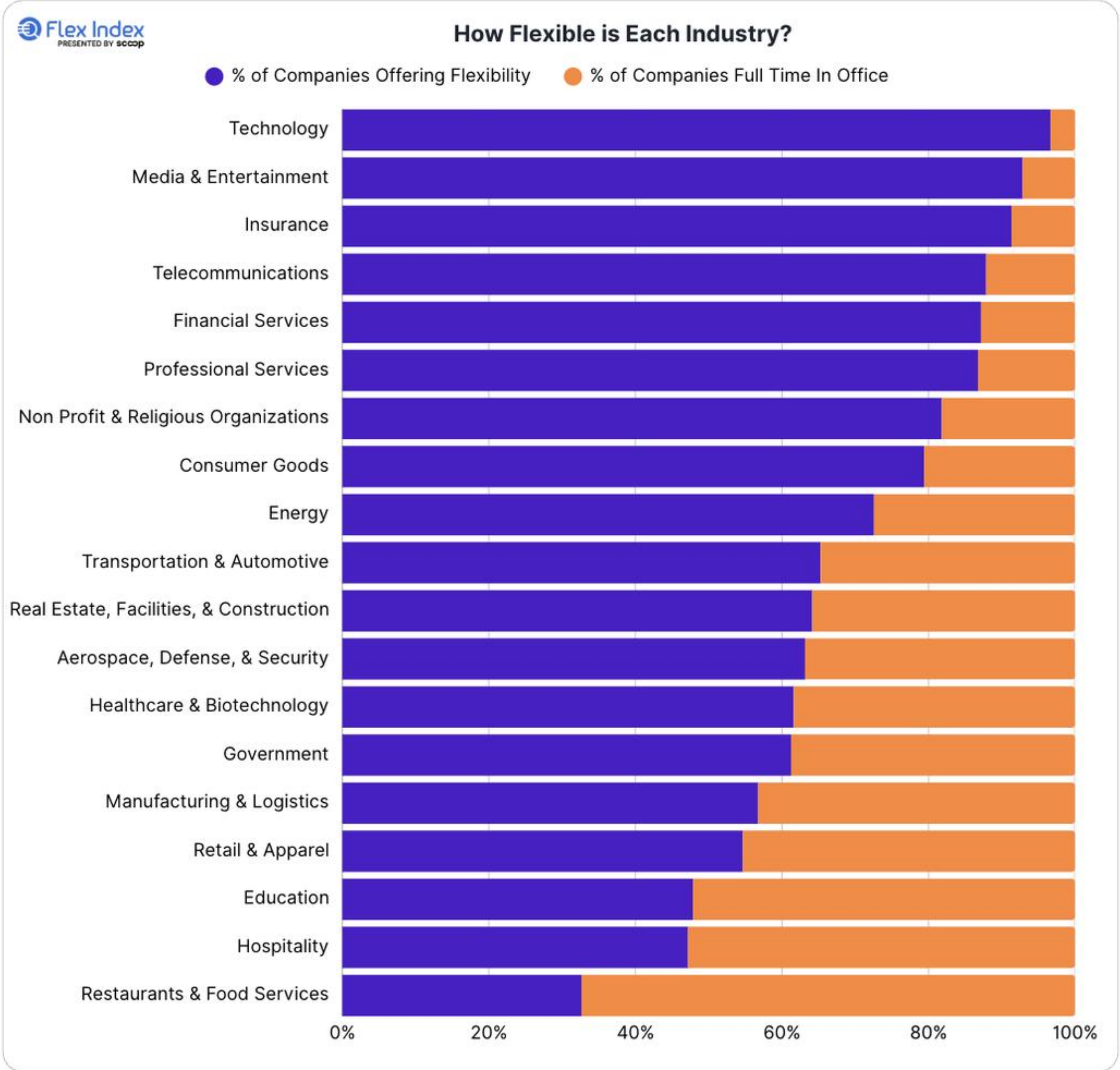
Insurance (91%) and Financial Services (87%) are both in the top five, with Media & Entertainment (93%) the other top five entrant.

Least Flexible

Restaurants & Food Services companies are by far the least flexible; 67% of those firms require Full Time In Office.

Other companies that require foot traffic to be successful lean toward Full Time In Office, including Hospitality (53%) and Retail & Apparel (45%).

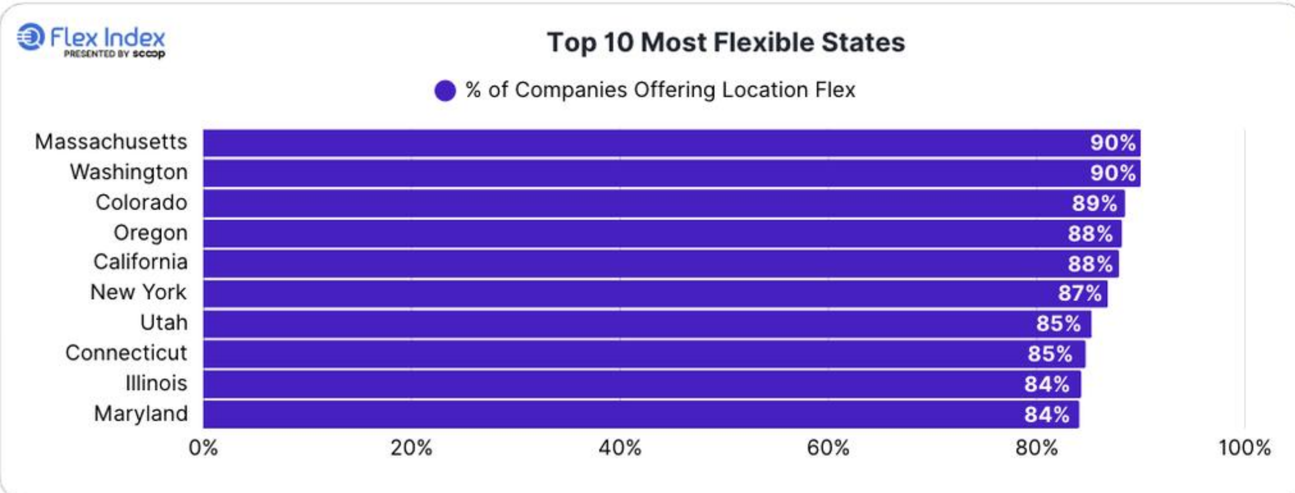
FLEXIBILITY BY INDUSTRY



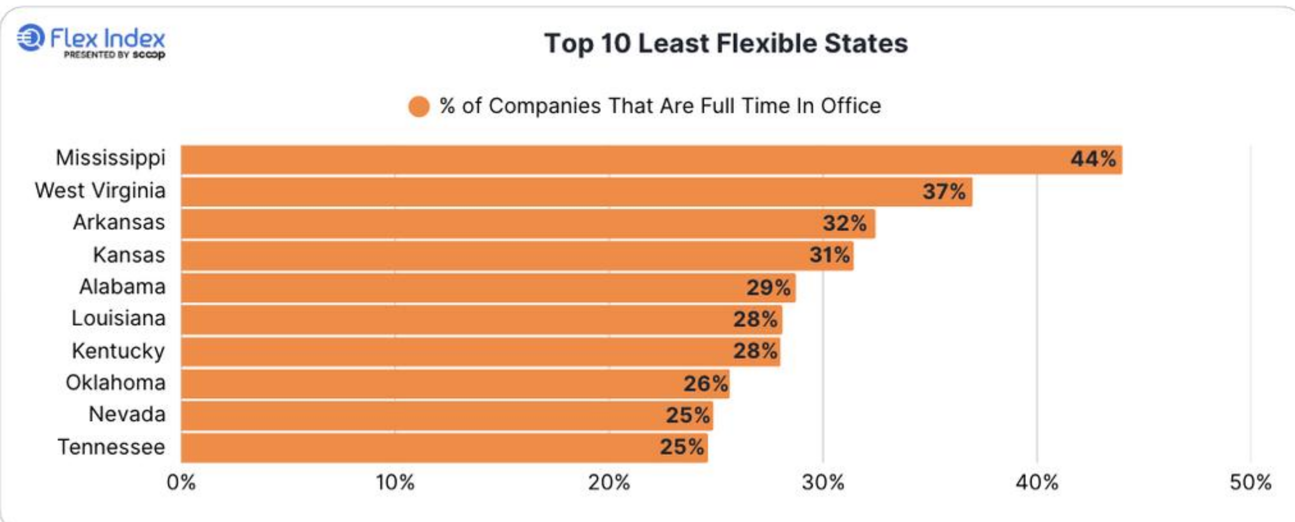
Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements. N = 5,795 companies. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

Flexibility by State & Metro

FLEXIBILITY BY STATE



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements; People Data Labs data on firm employment by metro. N = 47,049 State data points.



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements; People Data Labs data on firm employment by metro. N = 47,049 State data points.

Most Flexible

Massachusetts takes the top spot of most flexible states with 90% of companies offering work location flexibility for their corporate employees.

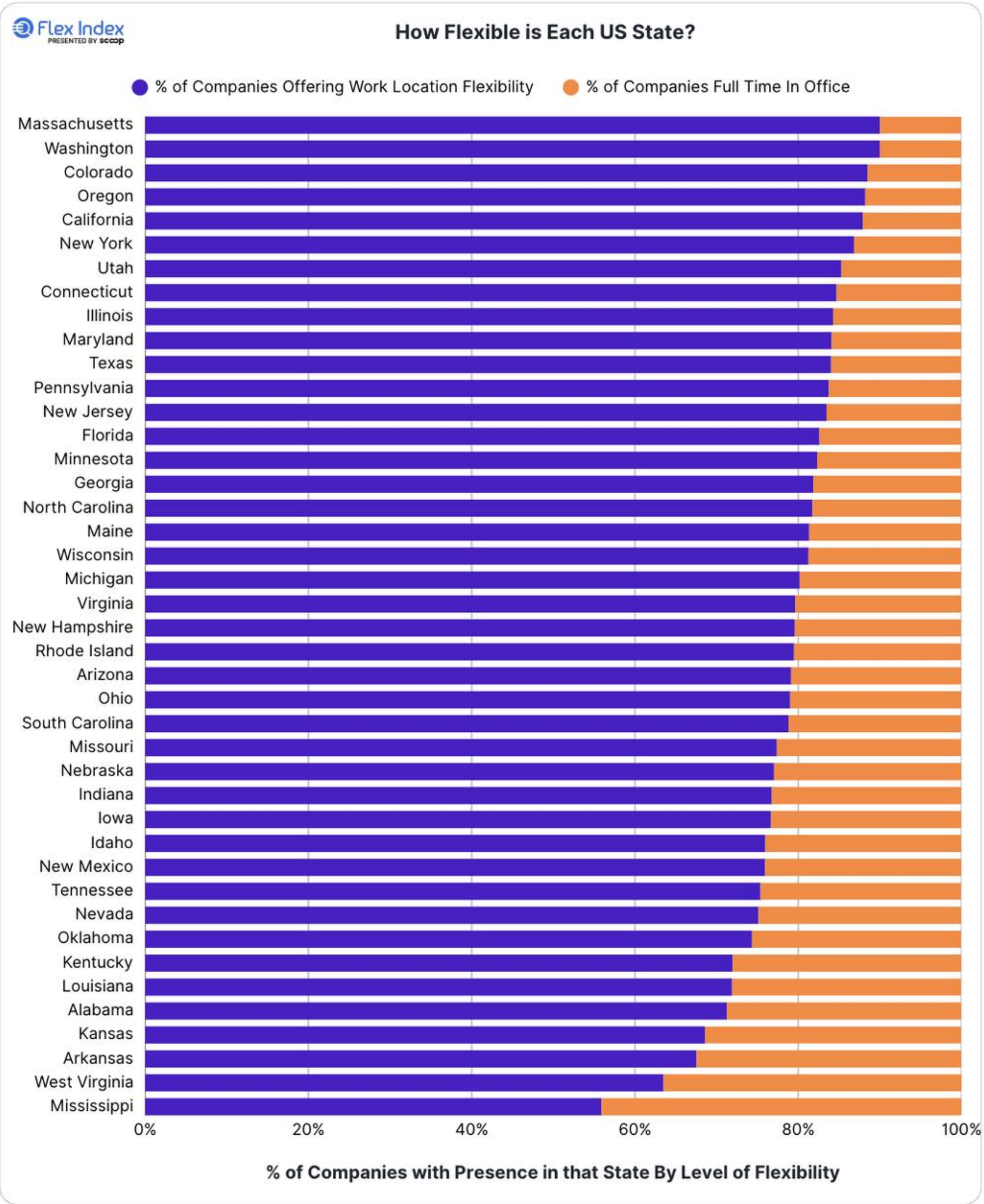
Most of the top 10 states are in the West and Northeast; Illinois is the lone midwest entrant.

Least Flexible

Mississippi takes the crown as the least flexible state. 44% of employers in Mississippi require Full Time In Office for their corporate employees.

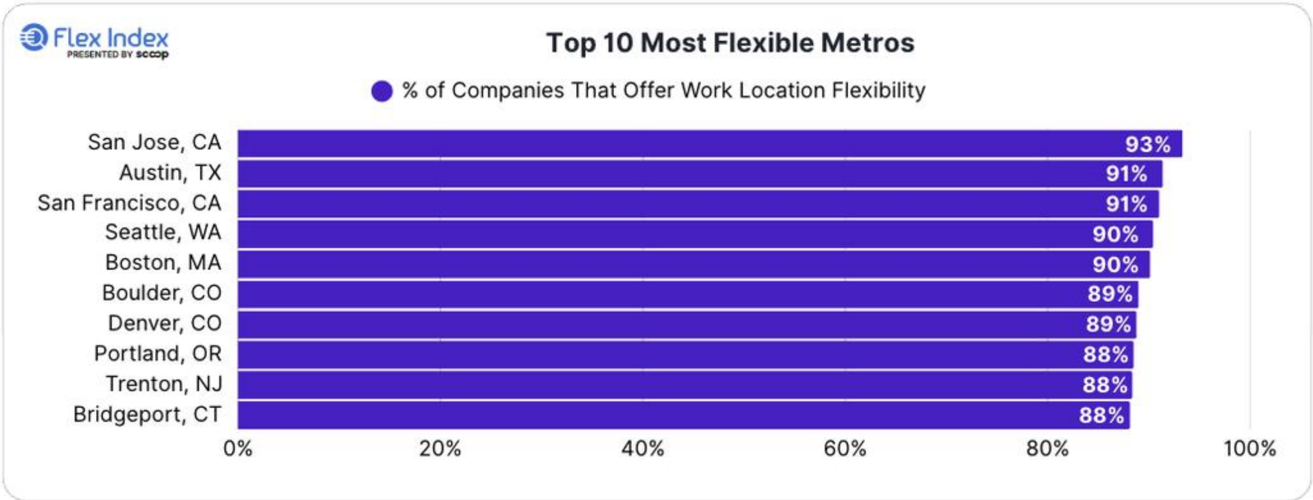
The South as a whole tends to embrace work location flexibility at lower levels. West Virginia, Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Tennessee are also on the top 10 least flexible states list.

FLEXIBILITY BY STATE

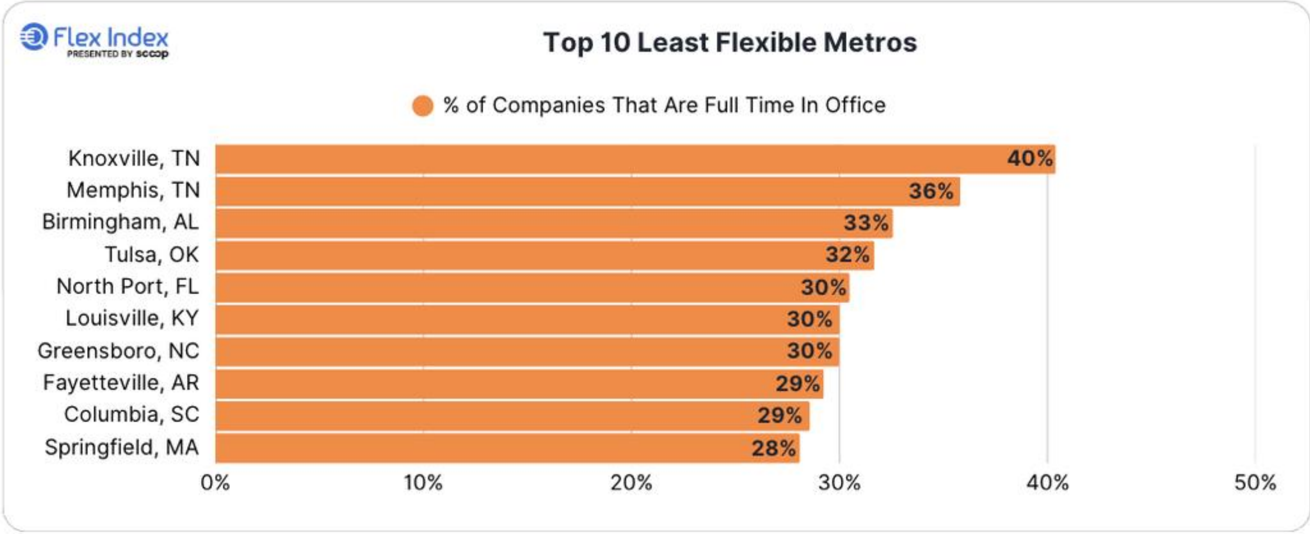


Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements; People Data Labs data on firm employment by metro. N = 47,049 State data points. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

FLEXIBILITY BY METRO



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements; People Data Labs data on firm employment by metro. N = 63,862 metro data points. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements; People Data Labs data on firm employment by metro. N = 63,862 metro data points. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

Most Flexible

The Bay Area leads the way on flexibility! San Jose takes the top spot; San Francisco makes the top three.

Metros in the West and Northeast dominate the top 10 most flexible metros list. Colorado has two entrants (Denver and Boulder); Austin is the lone entrant in the South.

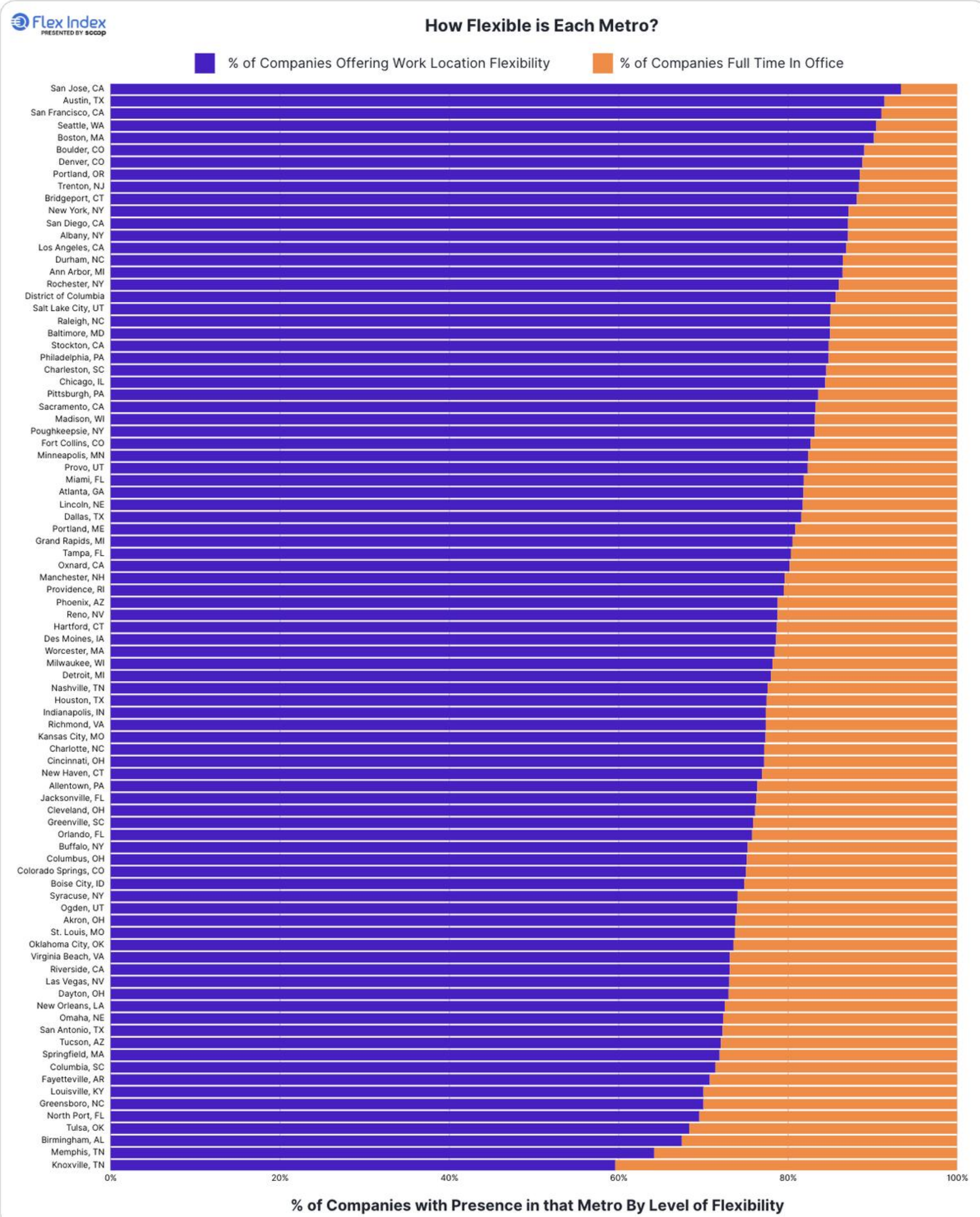
Least Flexible

The South continues to lag behind other parts of the country for flexible work; nine of the ten least flexible metros in the country are in the South.

Tennessee holds both the number one and number two spot on the least flexible metro list. Knoxville is the least flexible metro in the country, followed by Memphis.

FLEXIBILITY BY METRO

Share



Source: Flex Index (flex.scoopforwork.com) employee surveys and publicly available data on company office requirements; People Data Labs data on firm employment by metro. N = 63,862 metro data points. The Flex Index is presented by Scoop (scoopforwork.com).

In Closing

In Closing

A year into the Flex Index, and one of the biggest takeaways we've observed is that the U.S. continues to get more flexible.

Just 35% of companies require their employees to come into the workplace full-time, down from 49% 12 months ago. On the other hand, 65% of employers now offer work location flexibility, with roughly half requiring some time in the office and half requiring no office time at all.

Structured Hybrid models are the biggest beneficiaries of this pronounced shift away from Full Time In Office work. These models have grown quickly in popularity, going from 20% of companies in Q1 2023 to 32% in Q1 2024. They've also become the dominant model for employers with 5k+ employees. Will we see further shift toward Structured Hybrid in 2024, especially for large companies who are currently Full Time In Office?

When it comes to how much employees value flexibility in their employment, leaders can find clues in Glassdoor ratings. Companies that offer work location flexibility significantly outperform their Full Time In Office peers on employee sentiment. Full Time In Office companies also tend to lag across critical categories like Culture & Values, Compensation & Benefits, and even Career Opportunities.

2024 promises to be a fascinating year with new twists and turns in flexibility trends. We're excited to see what happens and will be here with the latest data and insights.