

Post-Pandemic Workplace Trends: Sustainable Strategies for Attracting Employees and Enhancing Engagement

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered workplace dynamics, with remote work becoming the norm for many employees. As organizations attempt to transition back to in-office operations, they face considerable resistance from employees who value the flexibility and convenience of working from home. While existing research highlights the benefits of remote work, such as improved work-life balance and greater autonomy, it also emphasizes the challenges organizations encounter in re-establishing employee engagement within office settings. However, there is a noticeable gap in exploring specific workplace trends that can effectively encourage employees to return to the office while enhancing their engagement and retention in a post-pandemic world. This study aims to bridge that gap by identifying sustainable workplace trends—such as office peacocking (making offices look aesthetic and pleasant enough to lure employees back to the office) and coffee badging (the act of making a brief appearance at the office for a few hours before promptly heading out)—that can attract employees back to the office and foster higher levels of engagement and retention. This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Semi-structured interviews and surveys are conducted with employees across diverse industries to gain in-depth insights into emerging workplace trends and their impact on employee engagement, employee attraction and retention. This research also aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), contributing to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by fostering inclusive and productive work environments, and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) by encouraging innovative and sustainable office designs. By adopting environmentally-friendly workplace designs and prioritizing employee well-being, businesses can enhance engagement while supporting global sustainability goals. This approach not only improves organizational resilience but also strengthens employer branding in a competitive talent landscape.

Keywords: Employee engagement; Employee retention; Workplace trends.

