

# Sustainable, Future-proofed and Connected. The Office Beyond 2021

A WIREScore REPORT

**WiredScore**



## **INTRODUCTION**

### THE ROLE OF THE OFFICE IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

What the future of work looks like may have been an ongoing discussion for many years, but the events of the past year massively accelerated its implementation.

We have seen that large-scale remote working can work, and that company operations don't grind to a halt just because teams are at home. Now, as life tentatively starts to open up, employers need to entice workforces back to the offices by offering great, sociable and collaborative spaces that offer better experiences than they can get at home.

The pandemic has also changed tenant workplace priorities. This change in occupier demand will open up a two-way dialogue between the landlord and occupier, outlining new expectations and deliverables. For landlords, that means working with their tenants to make changes to workspaces that will attract employees back to the office. What's more, they've got a relatively short period of time to adopt a collaborative approach, even if the actions they take will play a major role in shaping demand beyond 2021.



“With COVID-19, I believe our industry will be challenged to get users to return to their offices and I think now more than ever we need to develop and operate smart buildings. It’s vital that we find a way to get tenants safely back, while creating a seamless and inspirational experience, that gets them excited to be back in their spaces.”

Jesse Carrillo, Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Hines

## **WHAT DO WE WANT FROM OUR OFFICES?**

To understand what offices need to deliver, WiredScore surveyed office workers across Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the UK and the USA. These were people who had spent large parts of the previous twelve months predominantly remote, many would have left their places of work in March 2020 and not been back since.

While the results showed that location still tops the priority list, they also revealed three key trends landlords should consider to improve the appeal of their buildings and deliver a better tenant experience.

## Tech enabled spaces

After a year at home surrounded by all the conveniences of personal technology and an accelerated and significantly increased reliance on digital services, four-fifths (80%) of employees say that it is important for them to work in a technologically advanced office. What's more, 26% expect their office to have the latest in cutting-edge technology in place.

What do they want that technology to do? Help them work. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the vagaries of home WiFi services and the impact they have had on remote working experiences, the quality of digital connectivity was very important to them. In fact, it was only topped by location as the most important factor for employees heading back to the office.

## Enabling collaboration and community

Culture is a top priority for one-third (33%) of employees when going back to the office, with many excited to take advantage of their building's community and services.

Indeed, when asked what smart office features employees would be most likely to use upon their return, nearly a third (30%) highlighted colleague engagement solutions that help them to find out who's in the office and where, and a fifth were keen on local engagement opportunities, such as networking, community or volunteering events.

## The sustainability factor

With the rise in concern for how sustainable life is, the eco-credentials of where we work are coming under renewed scrutiny.

This bears out in our own research: three fifths (63%) of respondents said that working in an environmentally sustainable office is very important to them, with 18% going so far as to state they would not work in a building that was not sustainable and would even take a pay-cut if needed to move to a company operating from one.

Employees aren't happy simply knowing their office has been built sustainably. With in-life operations accounting for almost half of all carbon emissions contributed by the built environment, they want to take an active role in optimising how efficient and sustainable a building is. More than one-third (38%) of employees plan to take advantage of environmental information and control systems (such as digital control of temperature, lighting and air quality dashboards) to help keep their building a sustainable and healthy place to work.



“At British Land, we’ve seen sustainability rise up the priority list of occupiers over recent years and will only continue to grow in importance. Forward-looking occupiers are now asking for smart building capabilities which help them create better experiences for their employees and also help deliver on their own sustainability targets.”

Sally Jones, Head of Strategy, Digital and Technology, British Land

## **THE LANDLORD OPPORTUNITY – SUSTAINABLE, FUTURE-PROOF AND INSPIRATIONAL TENANT EXPERIENCES**

This is where the landlord opportunity lies – in delivering inspirational tenant experiences through sustainable, future-proof offices that people want to work in (rather than have to).

The seamless integration of technology throughout smart buildings will be critical to providing the office experience that tenants and their workers want and expect, while also benefitting building owners and operators. Furthermore, the continuous opportunities to use its data to automate, optimise and improve building performance over time will ensure offices don’t just meet tenants’ needs today, but will continue to do so for years and decades to come.

## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

WiredScore commissioned Opinion Research to survey 1,502 office workers in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, UK and USA in February 2021.