The advantages of

THE HYBRID WORK MODEL

What is a hybrid work model?

The **hybrid working model** is a location-flexible arrangement that allows people to combine on-site and off-site work as they and their employers see fit. Following the lifting of COVID-19 lockdowns worldwide, a wide range of hybrid arrangements have emerged, granting employees flexibility that was seldom offered before.

Generally speaking, it gives professionals dramatically increased flexibility around their work patterns. A hybrid work arrangement means establishing a different relationship with the office environment, taking a people-focused approach to work requirements, and reconceiving the workplace as an ecosystem of networked workers, rather than one specific location.

Many large corporations around the world have announced that they will allow more workers to continue working from home post-pandemic, including **Microsoft**, **Google**, **Facebook**, and **Twitter**.

As we all reimagine the future of work, the benefits of remote and hybrid work for employees and employers are becoming clear.

We set out to understand the value of hybrid work, and its impact on people's general feelings toward their places of work, productivity, and wellbeing during the pandemic. To do this, we surveyed 1,000 UK-based full-time employees aged 18+ across all industries who had continued working full-time throughout the first COVID-19 lockdown. This survey followed a study we conducted in the US which explored attitudes and opinions about remote work and productivity.

Our goal was to understand the value of hybrid work for people and their employers. We asked professionals to tell us about their feelings about HR, changes in their productivity, and any impact on their mental health and **wellbeing**. Let's break down the survey results.

What are the different types of hybrid work models?

We found four different hybrid model examples being offered to employees: at-will, split weeks, shift work, and week-by-week.

1. The at-will model

2. The split-week model

3. Shift work

4. Week-by-week

1 The at-will model

This model enables people to choose the work arrangement that works best for them on any given day. It's particularly useful for those who want to come into the office when they need to meet someone or require a quiet place to work for the day. Several companies have set up a process of placing a request to "work at the office (WFO)" to ensure that social distancing requirements are met.

2 The split-week model

The second model splits the week between working from **home** two to three days a week and working on site two to three days a week. This model was seen among the highest proportion of people. Companies using this model generally split up the week between different departments; for example, the marketing team comes into the office on Mondays and Wednesdays, while customer support comes into the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This hybrid model enables managers to stay in touch with their teams and allows for face-to-face group meetings at a regular cadence.
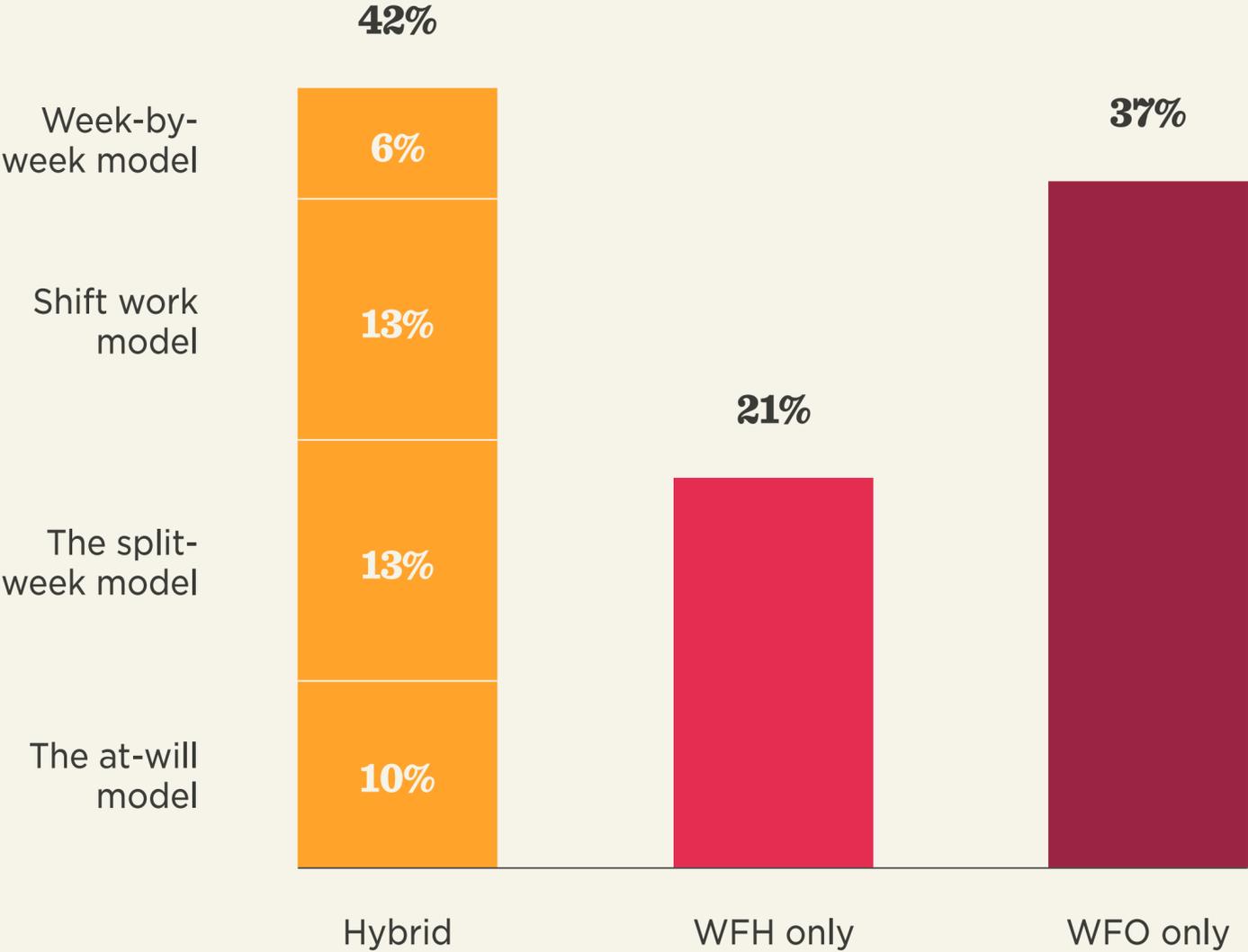
3 Shift work

In the third model, team members work in shifts, alternating between working from home and working morning or evening shifts on site. This is a more difficult model to work with because many people don't like shift work and find it hard to get in very early in the morning or to work late at night. A hybrid model based on shift work often requires people to set up additional childcare arrangements on top of the ones they already have.

4 Week-by-week

Finally, the fourth model sees people alternating between working from home and on-site on a weekly basis. This variation is used to allow large teams to use office space together at the same time and meet up for reviews, deadlines, and updates. The different types of hybrid work models being offered to people often differ according to industry or role.

Hybrid, WFH, and WFO arrangements

42%

Week-by-week model | **6%**

Shift work model | **13%**

The split-week model | **13%**

The at-will model | **10%**

21%

37%

Hybrid | WFH only | WFO only

* HiBob research – Hybrid work models

Benefits of hybrid work models

The wide adoption of hybrid working models isn't merely down to chance, but has been driven by the considerable benefits they offer to people, companies, and the environment.

They promise:

- Increased flexibility and productivity, with less time spent commuting

- The versatility to use office space for collaborative projects and to build inter-team relationships

- Smaller office footprints, reducing company overheads

- An expanded talent pool, granting access to a **global workforce**

Crucially, hybrid working also improves worker satisfaction rates, which is important to remain competitive in today's recruitment market.

Working hybrid increases productivity

Whether your people are writing code, on a call solving a customer's inquiry, or trying to conduct a team meeting, their time is valuable, and they (usually) want to perform well. Some feel more productive when working from home, while others feel more productive when working on-site. Productivity at home can be affected by many factors, such as available workspace and whether there are children or other distractions that hinder their ability to get work done.

Over the past few months, people have had to adjust to a new reality: working from home even if they had never done so before, homeschooling their children when schools were under lockdown, and working side by side with significant others and roommates while being on video calls. This has been a period of change, stress, and uncertainty.

When asked about their general productivity while working from home, we found that 48 percent of employees felt productive when working from home, while 52 percent did not feel the same.

We found an interesting uplift in feelings of productivity among those working from home who were able to go into the office at will—the most flexible of all of the work arrangements.
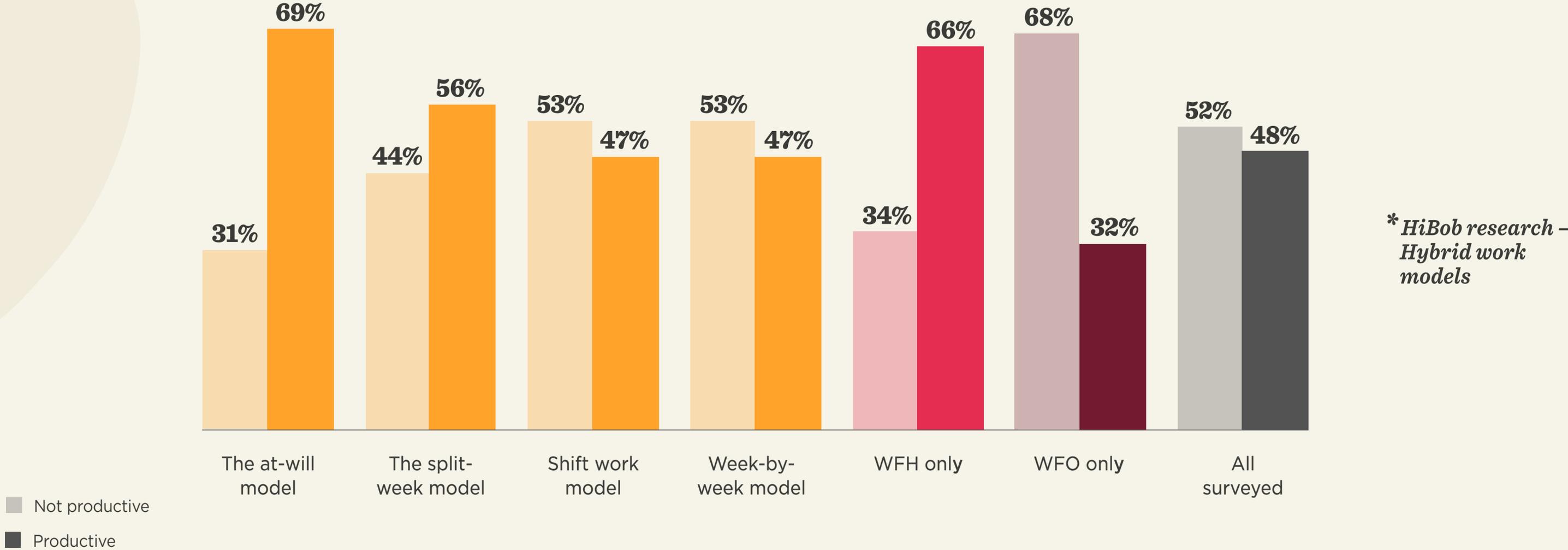
These professionals choose to work on site perhaps for a change of scenery, to collaborate with their team face to face, or to avoid situations that aren't conducive to deep work (think daytime construction). This at-will hybrid arrangement has helped them to be productive.

Like people that were able to work hybrid, team members **working exclusively from home** also reported high levels of productivity, with 66 percent reporting being productive or very productive.

Focusing on those working on site only, the data shows that 68 percent of them did not feel productive working from home during the period that they were forced to. This may be due to the nature of their work, and which is why, following lockdown, they **returned to working on site**.

Productivity

How productive have you felt working from home?

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	Not productive	Productive
The at-will model	31%	69%
The split-week model	44%	56%
Shift work model	53%	47%
Week-by-week model	53%	47%
WFH only	34%	66%
WFO only	68%	32%
All surveyed	52%	48%

Flexible hybrid options increase job satisfaction

The nature of our work has changed since the pandemic, and so has our job satisfaction. We found that while 53 percent of survey respondents overall reported being satisfied with their jobs, 47 percent of employees have not felt satisfied with their jobs since the pandemic began. These results reveal that there is a lot of work to be done to improve job satisfaction during these times—and, according to what we have learned about hybrid work satisfaction, more flexible arrangements could be the solution.

Employees that can work in a hybrid model are more satisfied with their jobs than those working at home exclusively or on site exclusively. Sixty-five percent of the employees that could work from home and on site at will were satisfied with their jobs, while only 53 percent of those working on site exclusively and only 57 percent of those working from home exclusively were satisfied with their jobs.
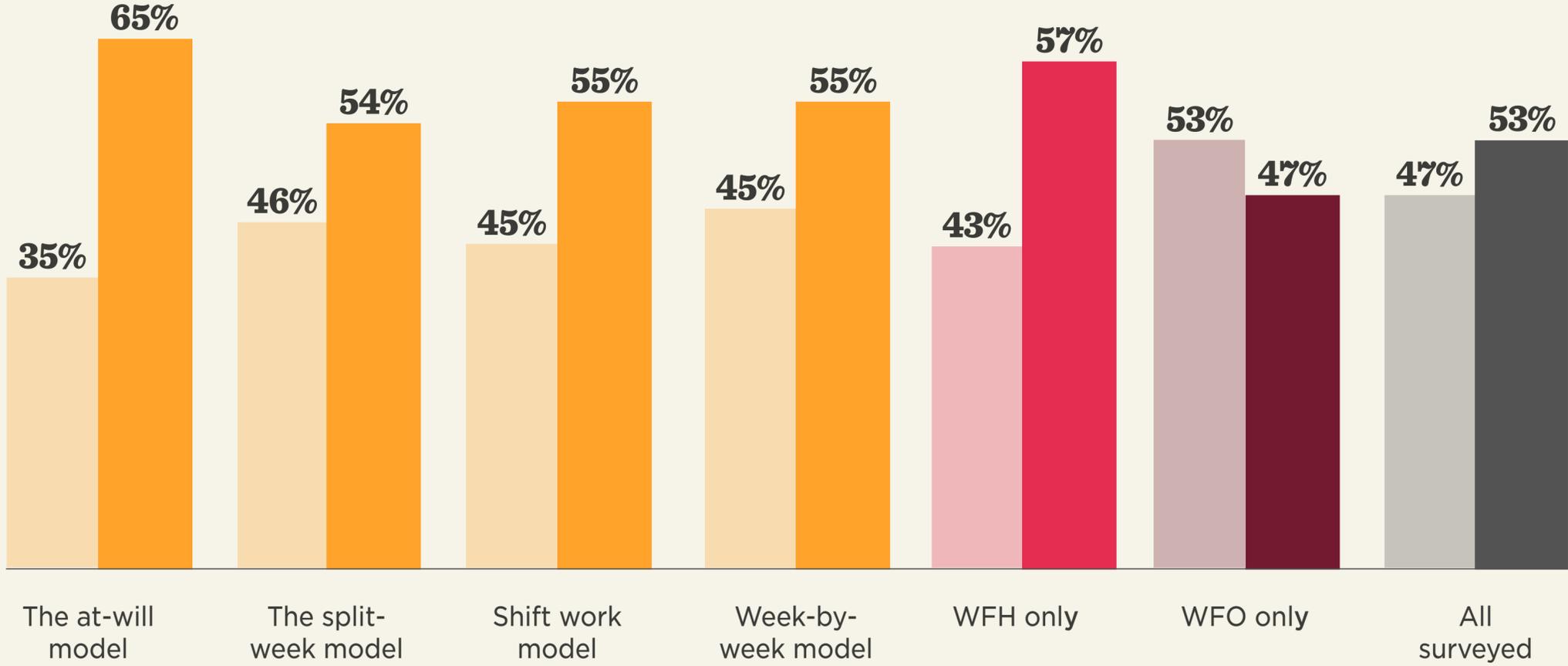
Hibob's conclusion:

This high level of satisfaction felt by employees with the at-will policy can be attributed to the sense of freedom that they have regarding *where* they work.

Workplace flexibility is positively associated with increased productivity and job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction

How satisfied are you with your job since the pandemic began?

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Not productive

Productive

Hybrid work models improve mental health and wellbeing

There's no doubt that COVID-19 has had a deep impact on mental health worldwide. Isolation, health concerns, and economic uncertainty have together caused a staggering 27 percent drop in self-reported **mental wellness** in the workplace across all segments and populations.

When asked about their wellbeing and mental health at work since the pandemic began, our survey revealed that only 48 percent said that they are doing well. This shows that the overall state of wellbeing at work is not generally positive and people are suffering—especially when compared to pre-pandemic wellbeing levels when only **34 percent** of employees rated their mental health as not good.

People look to HR to provide them with a safe working environment and to ensure that they are comfortable and well taken care of at work, especially during these difficult times.
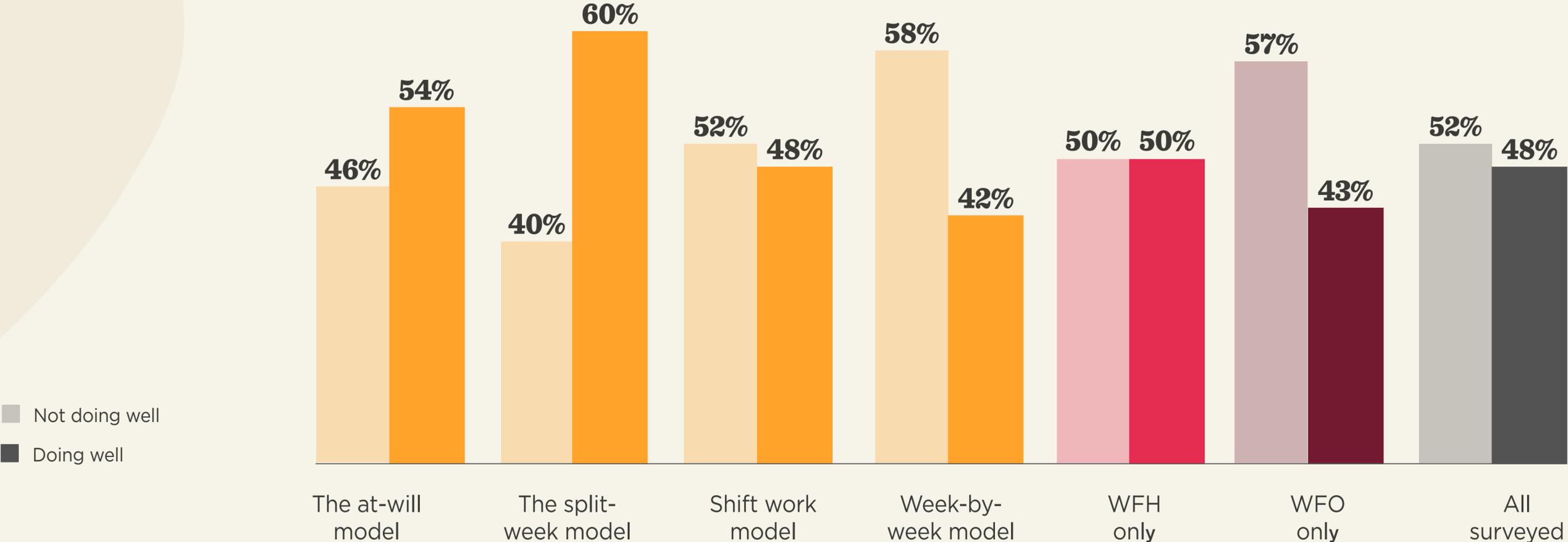
Offering flexible workplace solutions is an example of how HR can help team members remain productive and relieve uncertainty and anxiety.

We found that 60 percent of employees splitting their week between working at home and working on site and 54 percent of employees working from home and on site at will reported that they were doing well, while only 50 percent of employees working exclusively at home and 43 percent of employees working on site said that they were doing well.

Hybrid work models have had a positive impact on wellbeing and mental health at work since the pandemic began and HR teams leading this initiative have succeeded in increasing the general wellbeing of their teams.

Wellbeing

How would you rate your overall wellbeing and mental health at work since the pandemic began?

The at-will model: 46% Not doing well, 54% Doing well
The split-week model: 40% Not doing well, 60% Doing well
Shift work model: 52% Not doing well, 48% Doing well
Week-by-week model: 58% Not doing well, 42% Doing well
WFH only: 50% Not doing well, 50% Doing well
WFO only: 57% Not doing well, 43% Doing well
All surveyed: 52% Not doing well, 48% Doing well

Legend:
- Not doing well
- Doing well
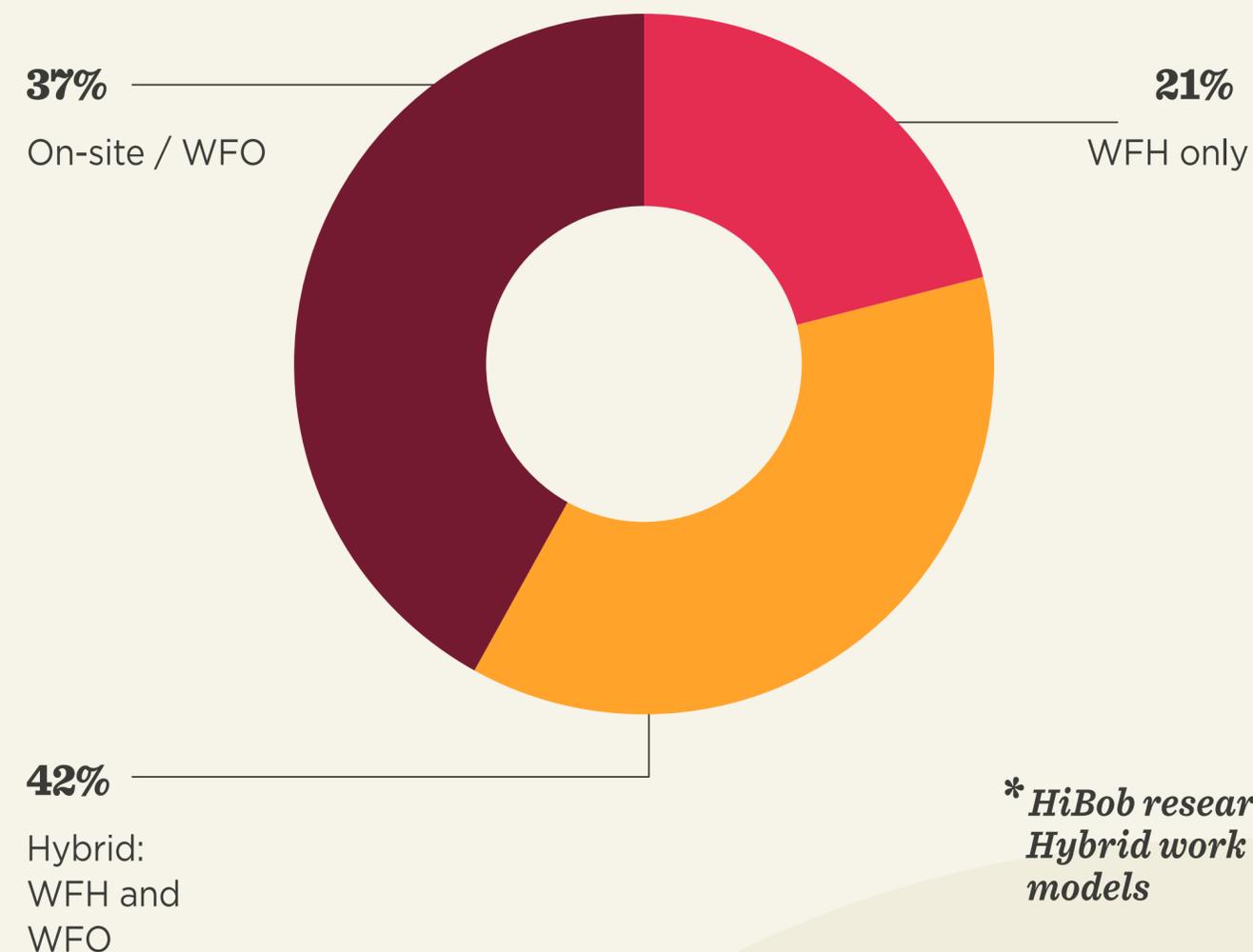
* HiBob research – Hybrid work models

Who's working from home?

Of the 1,000 survey respondents, 21 percent were working exclusively from home, 42 percent were working according to a hybrid framework, and 37 percent were working on site.

A total of 63 percent of people working full-time were working from home at least part of the time, which shows that there has been a significant change in the world of work compared to how people worked before the pandemic.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, UK employers have begun offering their people many different kinds of work arrangements. For those embracing hybrid working, **several different models** exist that support local social distancing and COVID-19 standards, while also providing a flexible working environment.

Post-lockdown work status

37%
On-site / WFO

21%
WFH only

42%
Hybrid:
WFH and
WFO

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Hybrid work
models*

Expectations of HR teams regarding hybrid arrangements

Since the pandemic began, **HR has taken center stage**. HR leaders have developed policies that support safe, productive workplaces and arrangements for WFH, hybrid, and on-site models.

All at once, HR teams became responsible for finding solutions for overcoming social distancing requirements, adhering to local hygiene and safety requirements, and communicating changes and policies to their people quickly and efficiently.

According to our survey results, employees working hybrid tend to feel that their HR teams have adapted better to the pandemic's effects on their companies.

They feel more supported than both those who are working from home exclusively, and those fully on site. Of all the hybrid team members, those working at home who could work at the office at will felt the most supported.
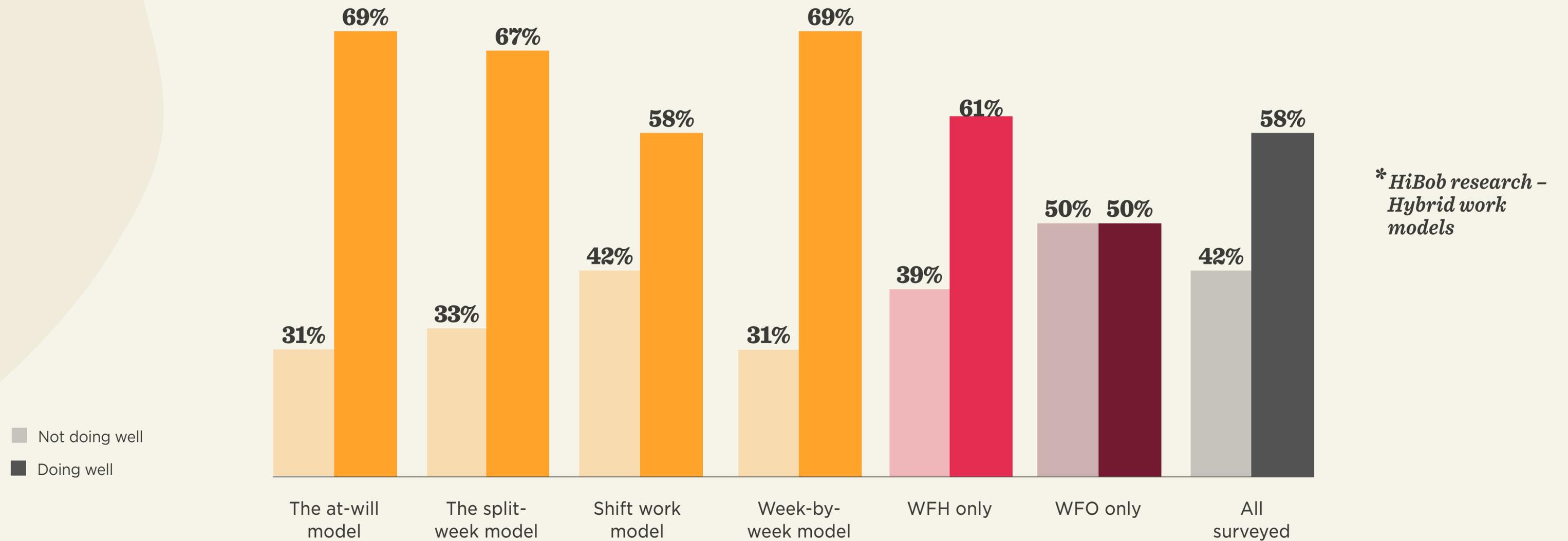
Hibob's conclusion:

People who are trusted to come to work based on their own judgment (at will) appreciate the flexibility it affords them to do their jobs well and to navigate through these complex times.

HR support

How do you feel your HR team has supported and adapted to the pandemic's effects on your company?

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Not doing well
Doing well

The at-will model	The split-week model	Shift work model	Week-by-week model	WFH only	WFO only	All surveyed
31% / 69%	33% / 67%	42% / 58%	31% / 69%	39% / 61%	50% / 50%	42% / 58%

Similarly, hybrid workers were more confident overall when asked about HR's ability to address COVID-related **remote work** concerns. People able to come into the office at will showed the highest level of confidence in their HR teams; conversely, those that were working on site exclusively felt the least confident toward their HR team.
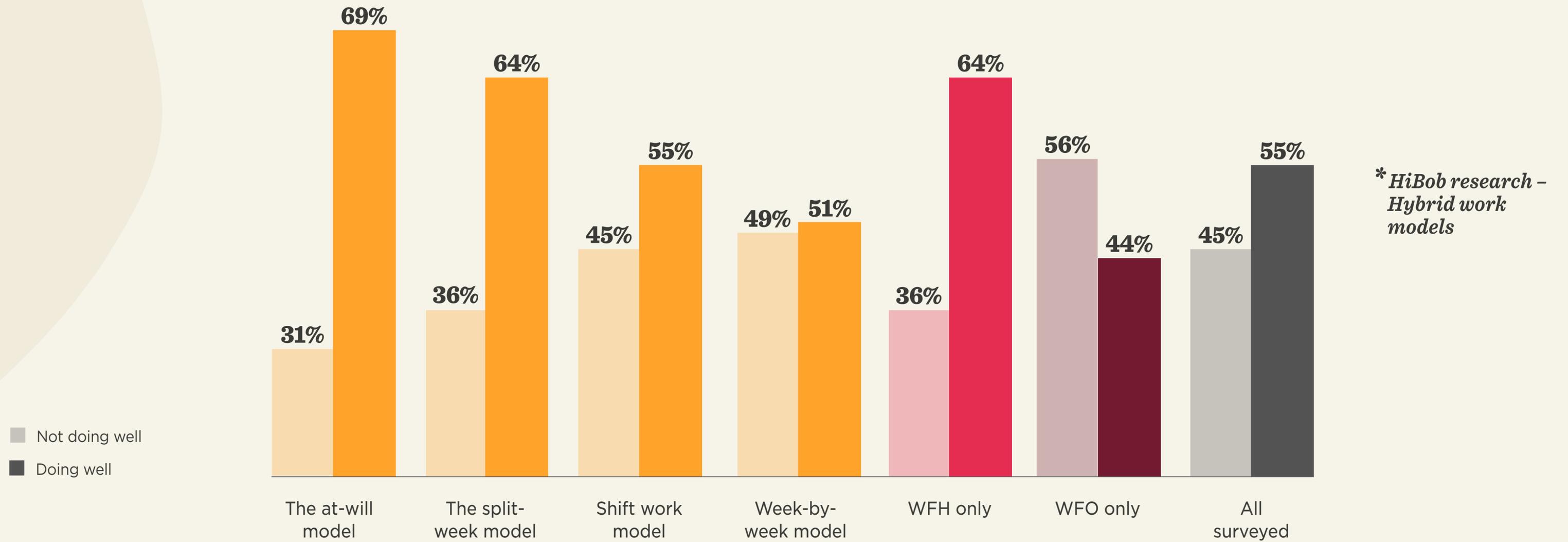
Hibob's conclusion:

Employees working on site full-time are less likely to trust their HR leadership because, regardless of the dangers inherent to working on site during a pandemic, they're forced to work on site as usual.

Confindence in HR

How confident are you in your HR team's ability to address COVID-19 remote work concerns?

69% The at-will model
31% The at-will model

64% The split-week model
36% The split-week model

55% Shift work model
45% Shift work model

51% Week-by-week model
49% Week-by-week model

64% WFH only
36% WFH only

56% WFO only
44% WFO only

55% All surveyed
45% All surveyed

*HiBob research – Hybrid work models

Not doing well
Doing well

Hybrid work model best practices

To develop an effective hybrid work model you need to make sure your people can choose where they want to work—without sacrificing the team-building interactions that support a healthy company culture.

Here are a few of the biggest things to consider when planning your hybrid work model:

1. Expand your work community into the virtual sphere

Digital communication platforms have become common in the modern workplace. These don't only facilitate more effective collaboration between hybrid employees, but also help you to protect and evolve your work culture.

That means you shouldn't solely rely on these tools for completing work tasks; instead, think about how you can ensure those working from home feel connected and part of your team.

Encourage casual conversations and consider scheduled check-ins to make sure everyone feels **engaged and happy at work**.

2. Embrace asynchronous communication

Modern business tools are built specifically to support flexible work patterns. Encourage your people to share the information others need on specific threads, so that team members can then complete their tasks in their own time, and consider taking on project management software that enables easy tracking.

Status updates, questions, and information sharing can then happen asynchronously, enabling everyone to work without interruption
or having to stay glued to video calls throughout the day. It will also help relieve your managers from micromanagement—freeing up their time and building greater trust with your people.

3. Consider different needs, and make space

It's inevitable that people respond differently to **hybrid work practices**, so it's important that you provide the support they might need. Reconfiguring your benefits systems to protect fairness, hosting virtual happy hours, and providing regular one-on-one meetings with managers are great ways of keeping everyone engaged and making sure you're the first to hear of any issues.

How do I build a hybrid work culture?

Building an effective hybrid work culture should always start with your people. Here are the best steps to take:

1. Carry out a survey

Speak to your people and find out what they think. Which type of hybrid arrangement would work best for them? Do teams across your business have different needs or preferences? It's inevitable that some people will prefer flexibility, whereas others may wish to have fixed touchpoints to connect with their teams and to be able to plan around a more predictable schedule.

2. Protect opportunities for spontaneity and collaboration

"Water-cooler" chats are often said to be the backbone of productive work environments, with complicated questions, problems, and even negotiations sometimes more easily resolved in sidebar conversations than in official meetings.

Opportunities to catch up with colleagues are also a key part of building a supportive culture and a sense of shared purpose, both of which contribute to a happier, more productive culture. Protect these interactions by encouraging virtual private chats or by scheduling enough time for teams to connect in person.

3. Focus on inclusivity, empathy, and trust

Encouraging open conversations about your hybrid work model as you develop it is key to empowering your people to **engage** with the way they work. Creating dialogue will give them space to discover their most productive work patterns, and also make them feel able to build connections with colleagues in the virtual sphere. In that way, your shared sense of company culture will expand, existing beyond the walls of the office.
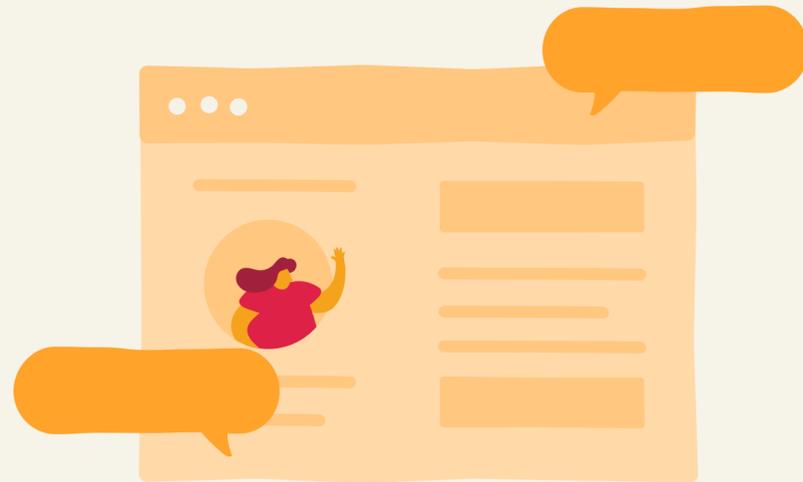
4. Use the right tools

Organizations use hybrid work best when they bring the office together with the virtual world. That means **using digital tools** that make communication and collaboration easy and keep people looped into conversations, wherever they might be working from.

How HR tech supports the hybrid work model

A hybrid work model naturally makes it trickier to keep track of your workforce and day-to-day HR practices.

Taking on an **HRIS** can be a great way of maintaining contact and making sure your strategy is able to flex and evolve as needs change:

It Can:

- Facilitate **flexible benefits packages** that give your people freedom to adjust their benefits to suit their needs

- Make it easy to schedule, track, and analyze information gathering at routine feedback meetings and via team- or company-wide surveys

- Provide managers with everything they need to monitor where their team members are each day, and to make sure progress is being made on key tasks

- Make managing vacation and training days far more straightforward, no matter how dispersed your teams may be

Conclusion

COVID-19 made working from home a necessity overnight, whether we preferred working that way or not. Companies have been tasked with providing flexible solutions for their employees to enable them to continue working safely and effectively while adhering to social distancing and lockdown restrictions.

Clearly, there are many working models available, with their relevance depending on the nature of your business. However, our research has found that companies able to offer their employees hybrid models of working, combining working from home and working on site, are the most likely to enjoy success. These arrangements allow them to provide optimal work conditions for their people, expanding **work culture** beyond the office and making space for professionals to truly flourish and grow.

We found that employees who are working hybrid have a more positive view of their company and HR team, both in terms of their ability to adapt to the pandemic and to specifically address their remote work concerns. They also feel more productive while working at home, which is likely due to a healthy balance between working from home and going into the office. They have **higher job satisfaction** and report better wellbeing and mental health at work since the pandemic began than employees who are working exclusively from home or on site.
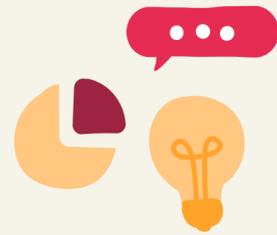
In these trying times, companies need to adapt to the new reality, but first and foremost, they need to listen to their employees and ensure that their needs and wellbeing are taken care of, to ensure a safe, healthy, and productive future.

Meet Bob

At HiBob, we've built a modern HR platform designed for modern business needs—today and beyond.

We focused on building something robust yet intuitive and easy to use, which has led Bob to be the platform of choice for thousands of fast-growing modern, mid-sized organizations.

In a short time, Bob can be deployed to enable communication, collaboration, and connectivity that drives stronger engagement, productivity, and business outcomes.

For managers

It provides access to data and insights to help them lead more effectively and streamline processes.

For HR

It delivers automation of many common processes, allows greater oversight and visibility of the business, and centralizes all people data in a secure, user-friendly environment.

For people

It's the tools and information they need to connect, develop, and grow throughout their journey.

Now is the time to make smarter decisions
when it comes to your people and organization.

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To learn more about HiBob and our data-driven
tools, get in touch with us at contact@hibob.com

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