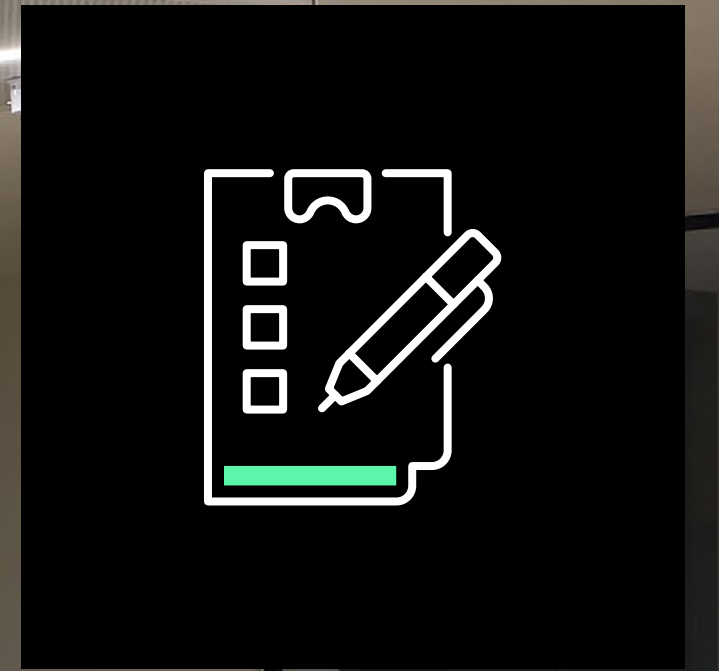


Morgan Lovell



Survey:

# Refurbishing with Purpose: What leaders want versus the employee view

April 2024

[morganlovell.com](https://morganlovell.com)





Our Refurbishing with Purpose survey reached out to 500 office leaders and 500 employees to get to the heart of how office design really influences the way we work and feel about our jobs. With work patterns shifting all the time, we're all asking the same question: **Can a well thought out office refurbishment make us want to come in more often?** We've dug into the views of professionals from different backgrounds to really understand how much our surroundings at work can boost engagement and keep us coming back.



# At a glance

## Spending days in the office

### LEADERS:

**33%** would like employees in 3 days a week



### EMPLOYEES:

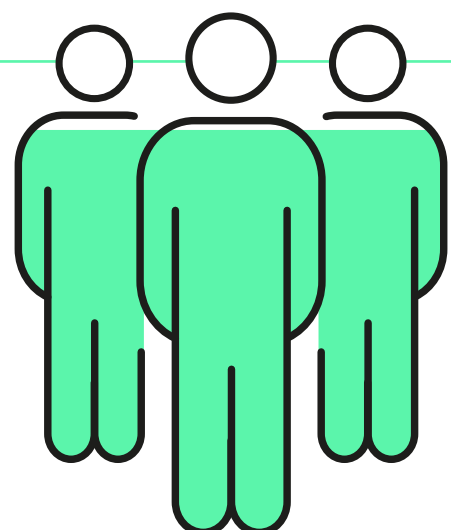


**32%** prefer 1-2 days a week

## Would a reimagined workspace impact time spent in the office?

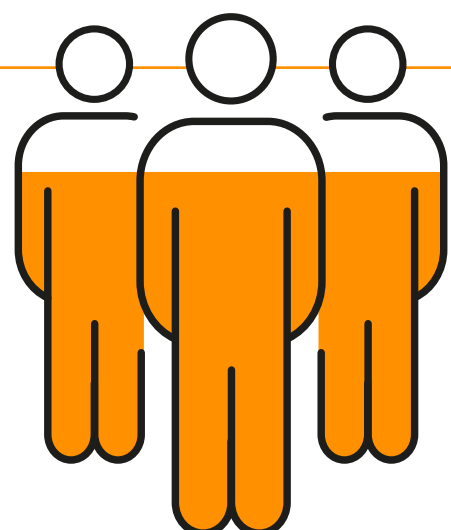
### LEADERS:

**69%** of leaders would refurbish their office if it encourages people to spend more time in the office



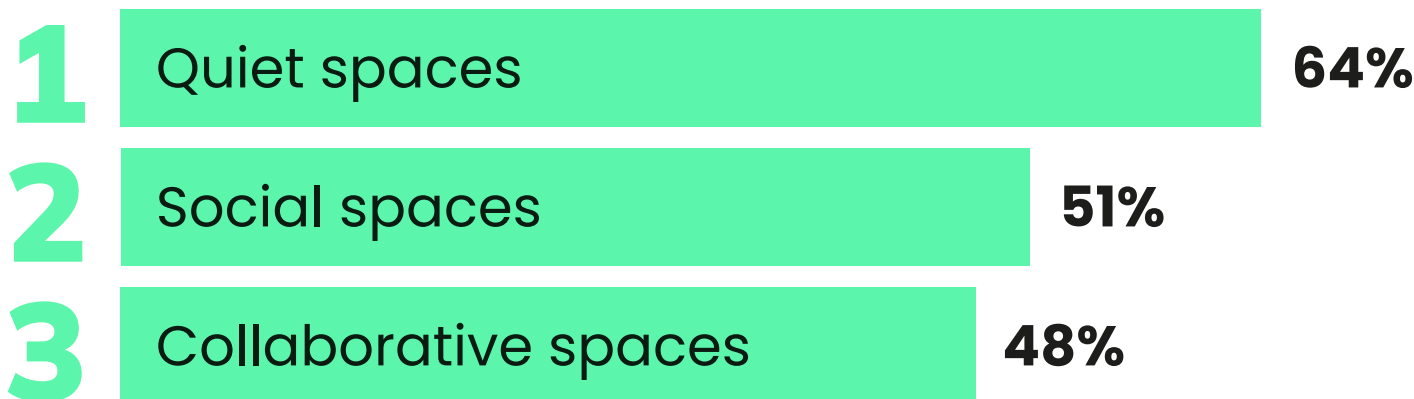
### EMPLOYEES:

**70%** of 18-34 year old employees agree that a refurbished office would draw them back



## Top three most important aspects of the office:

### LEADERS:



### EMPLOYEES:



# Mind the gap

With the rise of hybrid working, we explored what that looks like for ‘days in the office’ and whether what employees want lines up with what employers prefer. The results show a gap in preference between the two groups.

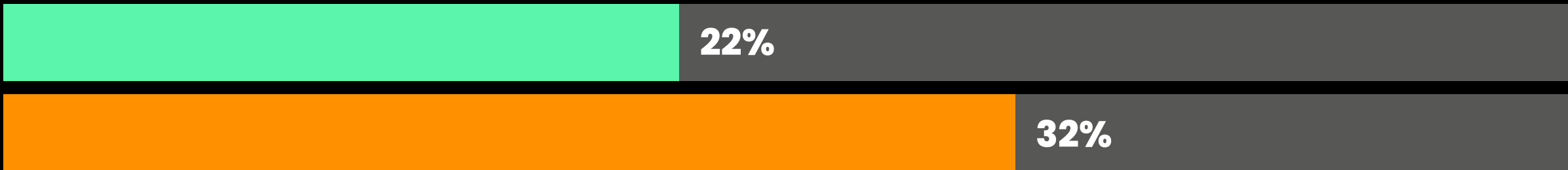
While both want to work in a hybrid way, two thirds of leaders want people in the office three or more days a week, versus an employee preference for fewer days and greater flexibility; 32% opted for one to two days, and nearly 20% valued the option to not set fixed days at all. This indicates a difference in expectations, where leaders lean towards more structured schedules, potentially to bolster collaboration and culture, while employees cherish the autonomy that hybrid work models offer.

Exploring the disparity between employee preferences for office days and managerial expectations unveils an opportunity for dialogue—a chance to align on the benefits of shared office time, from encouraging growth amongst younger team members to optimising collective efficiency.

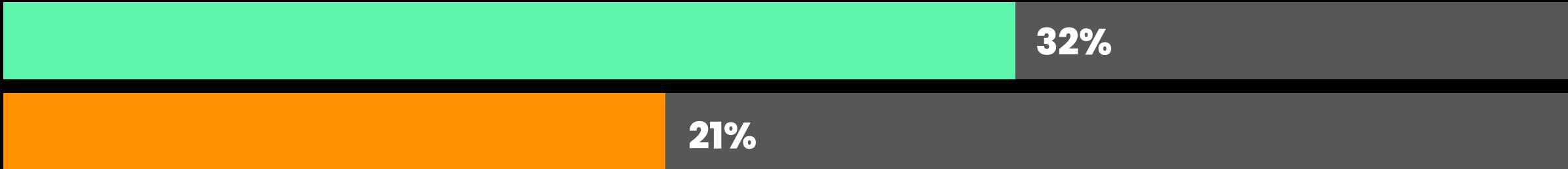
## LEADERS:

How many days a week do you want people in the office?

1-2 days a week



3 days a week



4-5 days a week



Flexible – we don’t set the days

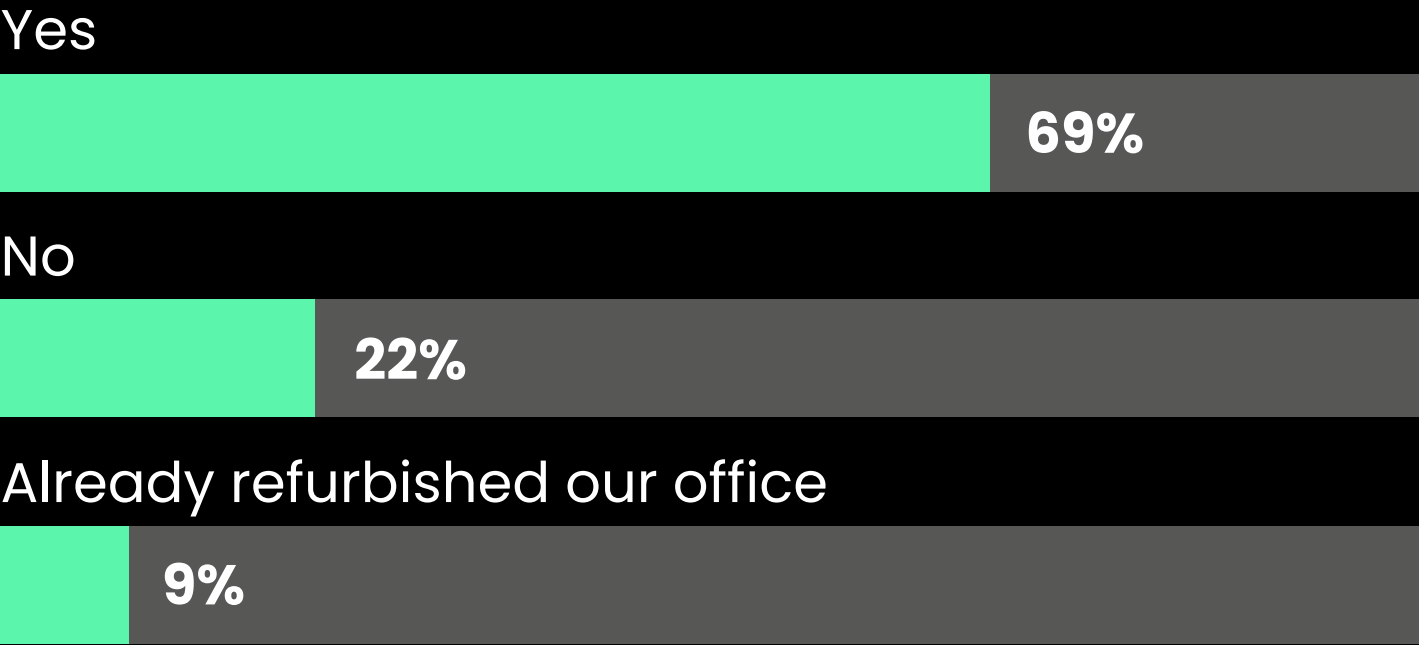


## EMPLOYEES:

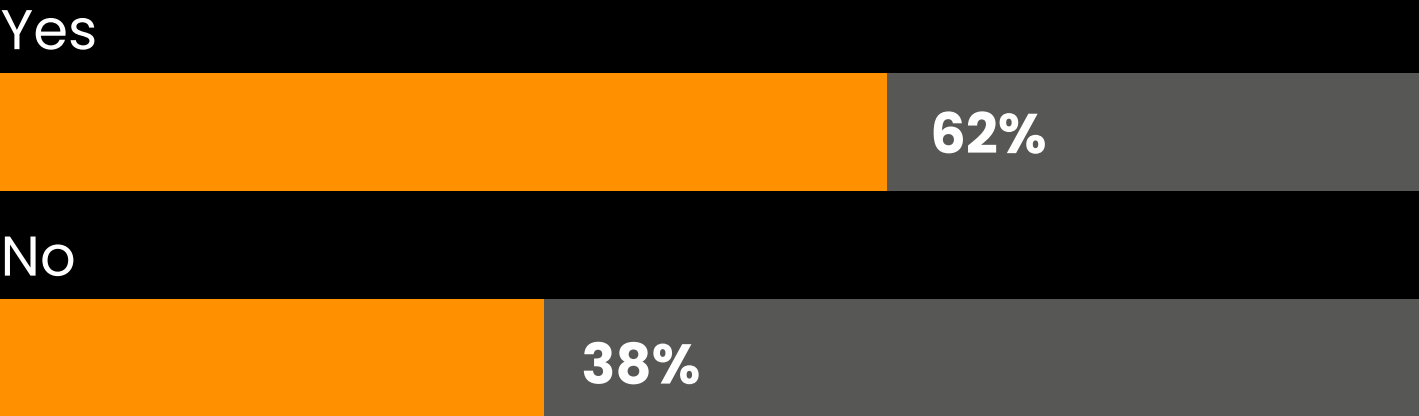
How many days do you want to be in the office?

Could a refurbishment help to encourage employees back into the office more often?

LEADERS



EMPLOYEES



Could a refurbishment help to encourage employees back into the office more often?

When asked, a huge 69% of leaders stated that they would refurbish their office if it encouraged people back and improved recruitment and retention. Could it be the catalyst for bolstering employee return, and enhancing recruitment and retention efforts? The employee response suggests it absolutely could, with 62% giving a resounding yes. That percentage climbs further when we look at the younger demographic. This suggests that offices need to work harder to support their people and that changes to the way we work have left old office formats behind.

Yes, 70%

of employees aged between 18 – 34 said that an office refurbishment would encourage them back into the office.

Only 9% of leaders have acted upon refurbishing their spaces, indicating a potential gap between intention and the action that could sway the return figures in their favour.





# Do workplace wishes differ too?

We asked both leaders and employees what their priorities would be for a workplace refurbishment. This sheds some light onto what's missing from workplaces to make them more attractive and supportive environments.

Leaders are looking for quiet spaces (64%) and collaboration spaces (48%), which could be seen as an endeavour to balance dynamic teamwork with the need for individual concentration.

Employees demonstrate an overwhelming preference for the inclusion of quiet spaces (72%), perhaps indicating a greater need for solitude in a bustling office environment or a carryover from the quietude experienced during remote work that allowed them to focus. It could also reflect the growing number

of virtual calls happening in the workplace that could be distracting without the right set up.

Social spaces are important for both, but more so for leadership (51% vs. 47% for employees), which might be indicative of a leadership focus on nurturing corporate culture and community.

Technology upgrades are highly prioritised by employees (55%), suggesting that they value an infrastructure that supports modern work processes and efficiency. It may also reflect their superior experience of technology outside of the office.

Differences in prioritising wellness spaces (21% for leadership vs. 40% for employees) could reflect a growing employee interest in



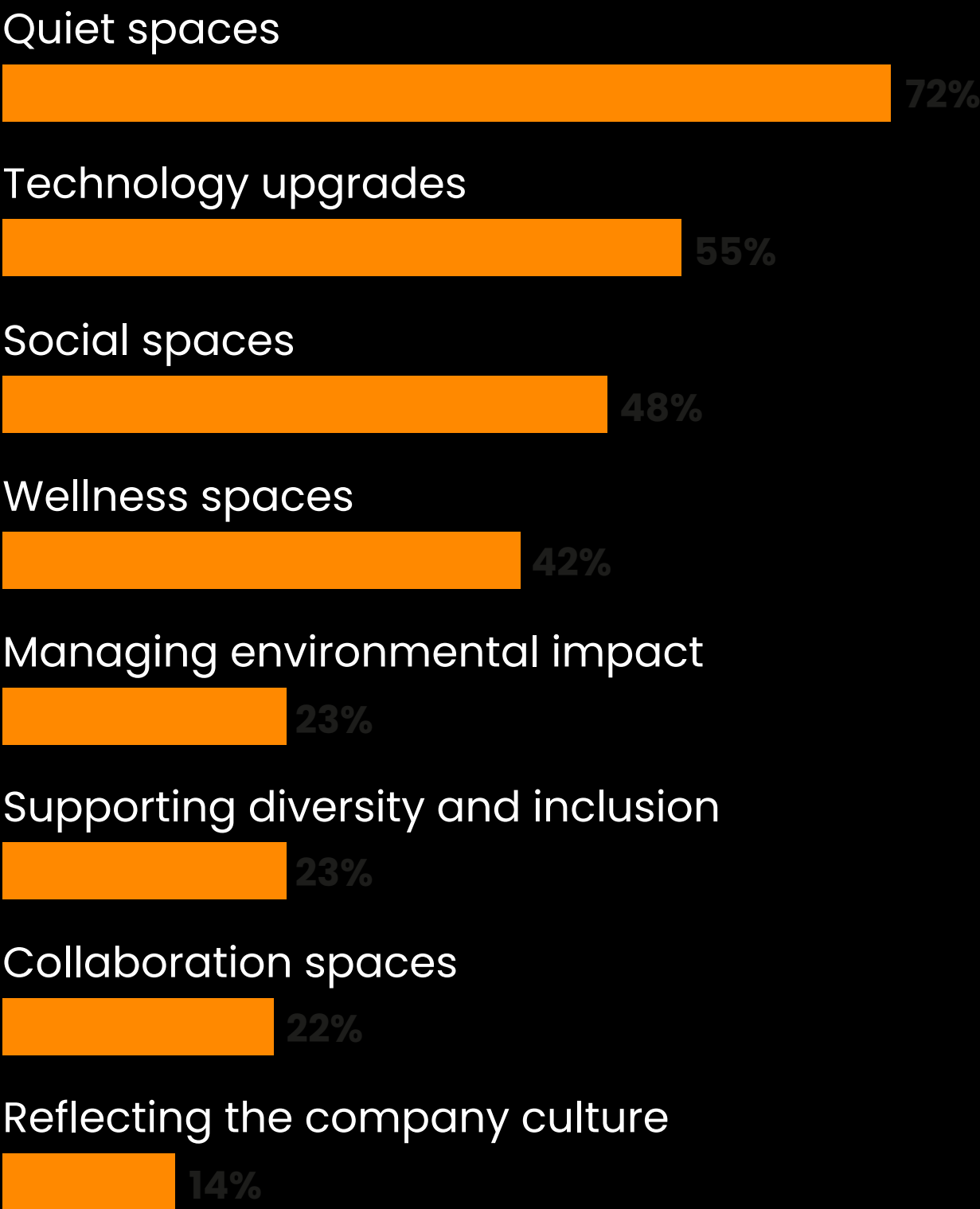
work environments that support their overall wellbeing—a response, perhaps, to the increased blending of personal and professional life and an increased awareness of the importance and impact of wellbeing.

Employees from the healthcare sector buck the top three trend, ranking quiet spaces #1 and tying #2 technology upgrades and wellness spaces. This may be because they need an environment where their people can decompress and reflect the need for a supportive and nurturing environment. From a leadership perspective, directors (as opposed to CEOs and founders) place company culture as the third most important aspect in an office refurbishment project. Interestingly, leaders from public sector organisations see the need to improve technology to serve the needs of the people – placing it #2 (61%).

## What priorities would you have for a workplace refurbishment?



■ LEADERS

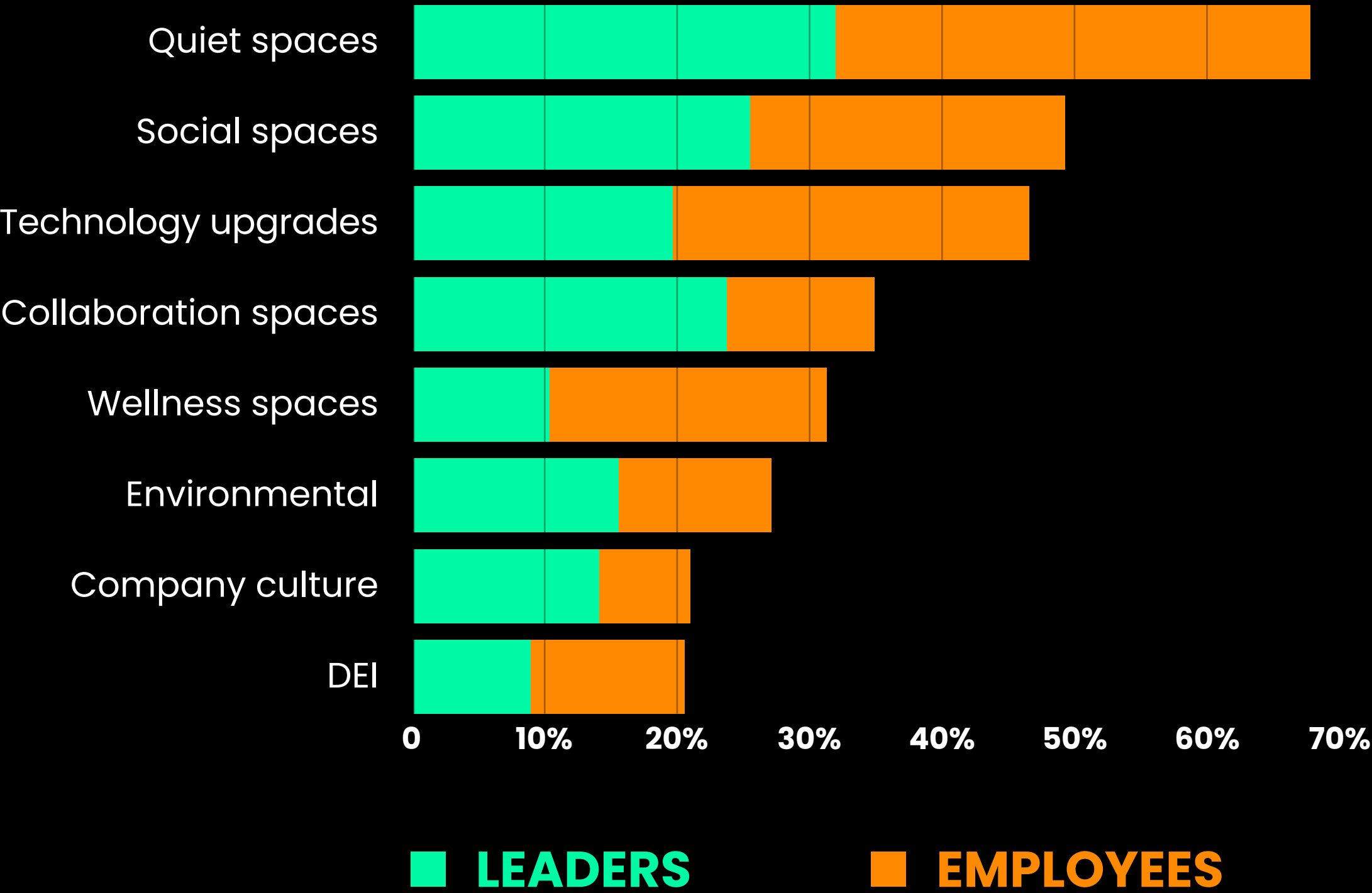


■ EMPLOYEES

The challenge lies in integrating these varied priorities into a coherent refurbishment strategy that fosters a collaborative, innovative and wellness-oriented workplace. This could involve designing multi-functional quiet areas that double as tech-enabled collaboration zones, ensuring a versatile environment that caters to both focused and team work. By doing so, organisations can create a space that is not only physically appealing but also supportive of the diverse needs and working styles of all its occupants. The skill is understanding the optimum blend of spaces for each individual project. No two workplaces are the same, even within the same company portfolio.

**67%**  
of employees in the professional services sector said that social spaces were the most important part of an office refurbishment.

**Putting it all together, these are the most important spaces to consider in an office refurbishment**





# Conclusion:

## A thoughtful redesign can make a difference

This survey into office refurbishment and strategic goals highlights an intersection of strategy, employee wellbeing and organisational objectives. The insights beckon leaders to view office spaces not merely as physical locations, but as strategic tools in sculpting a workplace culture that attracts, retains and inspires talent.

As hybrid policies change and we navigate the evolving landscape of work, the thoughtful redesign of office environments emerges as a beacon for developing an inclusive, engaged and productive workforce.





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