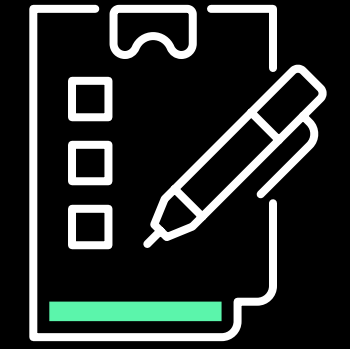


Morgan Lovell



Survey:  
From Challenges  
to Opportunities:  
The Role of the Office  
in Workplace Leadership

November 2023



Imagine stepping into a workplace that not only empowers creativity but also embraces employee's uniqueness. We embarked on a journey to uncover the secrets behind successful modern workplaces by surveying 500 senior leaders in UK businesses. Our mission was to unveil the focal points shaping the contemporary work landscape and reveal the **untapped potential of office design as a strategic tool to conquer the challenges of today's workplaces.**

1:

# The quest for a thriving workplace

## Embracing inclusion and talent

In our survey, we discovered two pivotal priorities captivating the minds of senior leaders today. First and foremost, the paramount significance of workplace inclusion (ranked most important). In addition, recruitment and retention remain front-of-mind for senior leaders, ranking second most important. Attracting and keeping top talent requires more than just allure; it demands an environment that speaks to their needs and desires.

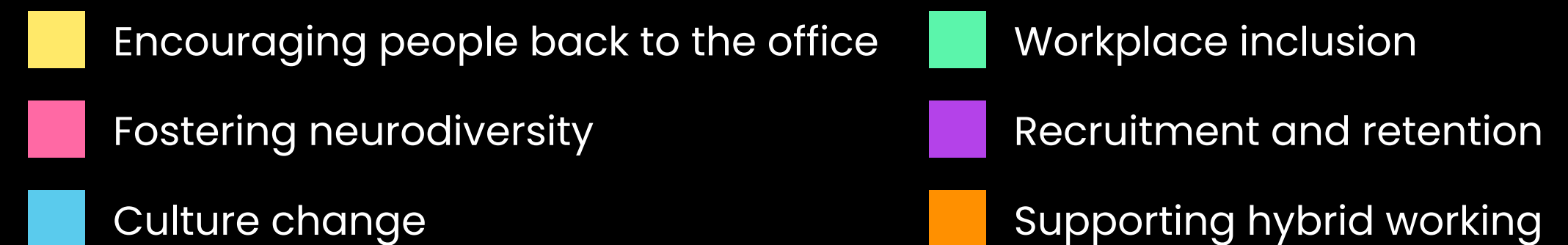
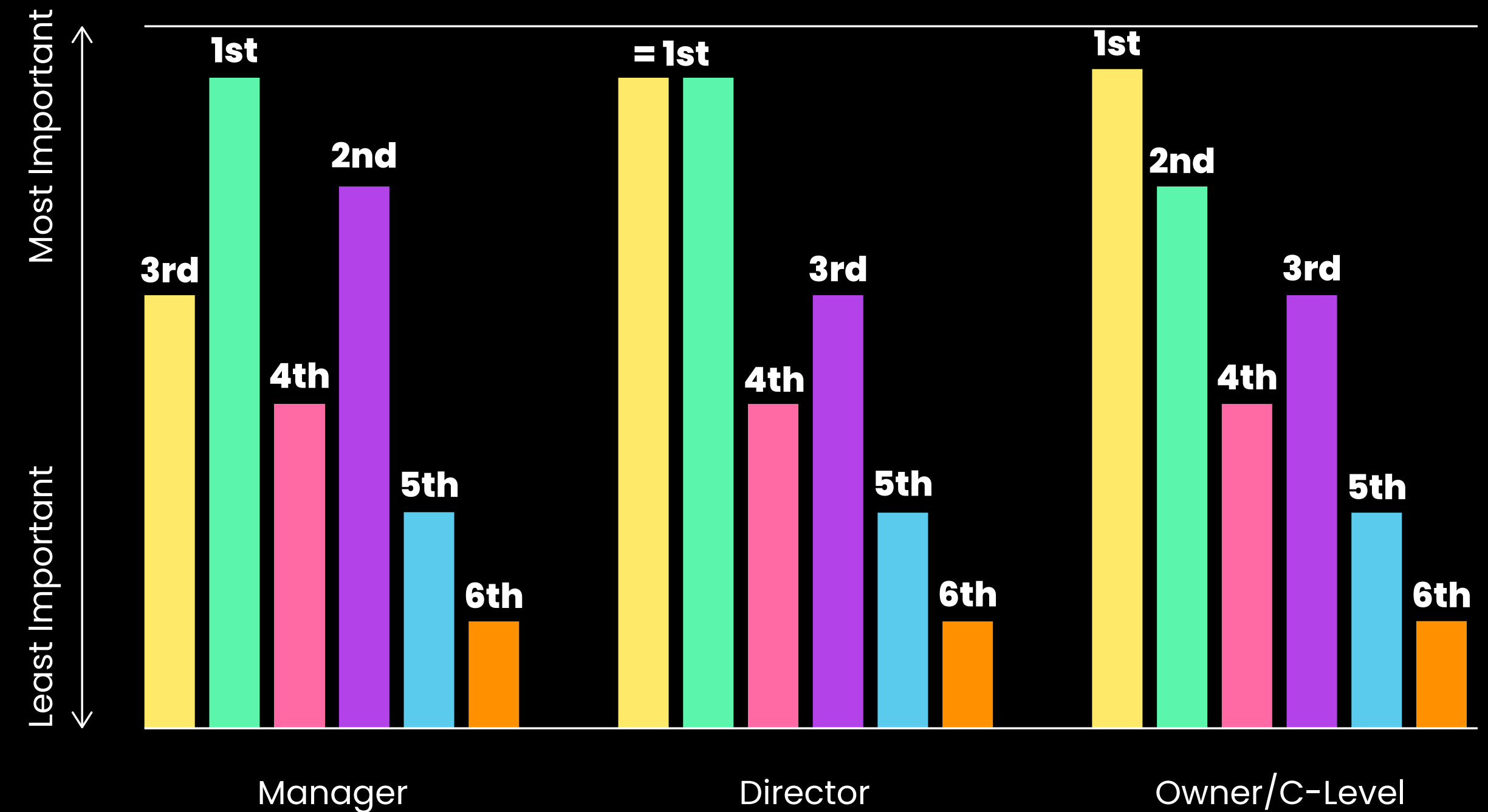
Thinking about your workplace, rank these items in order of importance (1 being most important, 6 being least important)

|    |                                       |   |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|
| #1 | Workplace inclusion                   |    |
| #2 | Recruitment and retention             |    |
| #3 | Encouraging people back to the office |   |
| #4 | Fostering neurodiversity              |  |
| #5 | Culture change                        |  |
| #6 | Supporting hybrid working             |  |

## Diverse priorities across leadership tiers

While all management tiers prioritise workplace inclusion, other concerns take the spotlight for different leaders. Owner/C-Level executives emphasise the return to the office, aligning with their strategic vision. On the other hand, Managers focus more on recruitment and retention, the keys to a thriving team. By understanding this array of priorities, businesses can tailor their strategies and design workplaces that resonate with the distinct needs of each tier, creating a harmonious work environment.

## Importance – ranked by management level



## Empowering people through office design

Delving deeper into these priorities, we found that office design holds the key to unlocking a thriving work culture. A diverse and inclusive environment, with open layouts, quiet zones and communal spaces, sparks creativity, fuels innovation and enhances overall employee satisfaction. Moreover, by adorning the workplace with thoughtful aesthetics and amenities that champion work-life balance, employers leave a lasting mark on potential talents. Wellness spaces, breakout areas and flexible workstations are the beacons that attract the best and brightest.



# Overcoming the challenges

## Daring to face the storms

When we asked the senior leaders to rank the things they told us were important in terms of workplace management against the degree of challenge they faced in delivering, we were met with an interesting set of results.

## The challenge of talent

Recruitment and retention emerged as the most formidable obstacle. Senior leaders acknowledged its significance but also grappled with the intricacies of attracting and retaining top talent in today's competitive job market.

Rank the same items to reflect how challenging they are to address in your workplace (1 being the most challenging, 6 being easiest to address)

|    |                                       |   |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|
| #1 | Recruitment and retention             |    |
| #2 | Culture change                        |    |
| #3 | Supporting hybrid working             |   |
| #4 | Workplace inclusion                   |  |
| #5 | Fostering neurodiversity              |  |
| #6 | Encouraging people back to the office |  |

## The metamorphosis of culture

Culture change stood as the second most prominent challenge, a reminder that meaningful transformations take time and effort. Cultural evolution requires patience, strategy, and nurturing.

## The hybrid puzzle

Supporting hybrid working took the third spot in challenges, perhaps reflecting the complexity of adapting to a flexible and technologically-driven work environment. Seamlessly blending in-person and remote collaboration requires the perfect harmony of people, processes and technology.

## A step towards neurodiversity

Fostering neurodiversity ranked fifth in challenges, signifying the complexities of creating a supportive space for employees with diverse cognitive needs. To build an inclusive environment for all, a multi-faceted approach is essential, involving leadership commitment, training programmes, accessible office design and continuous support.



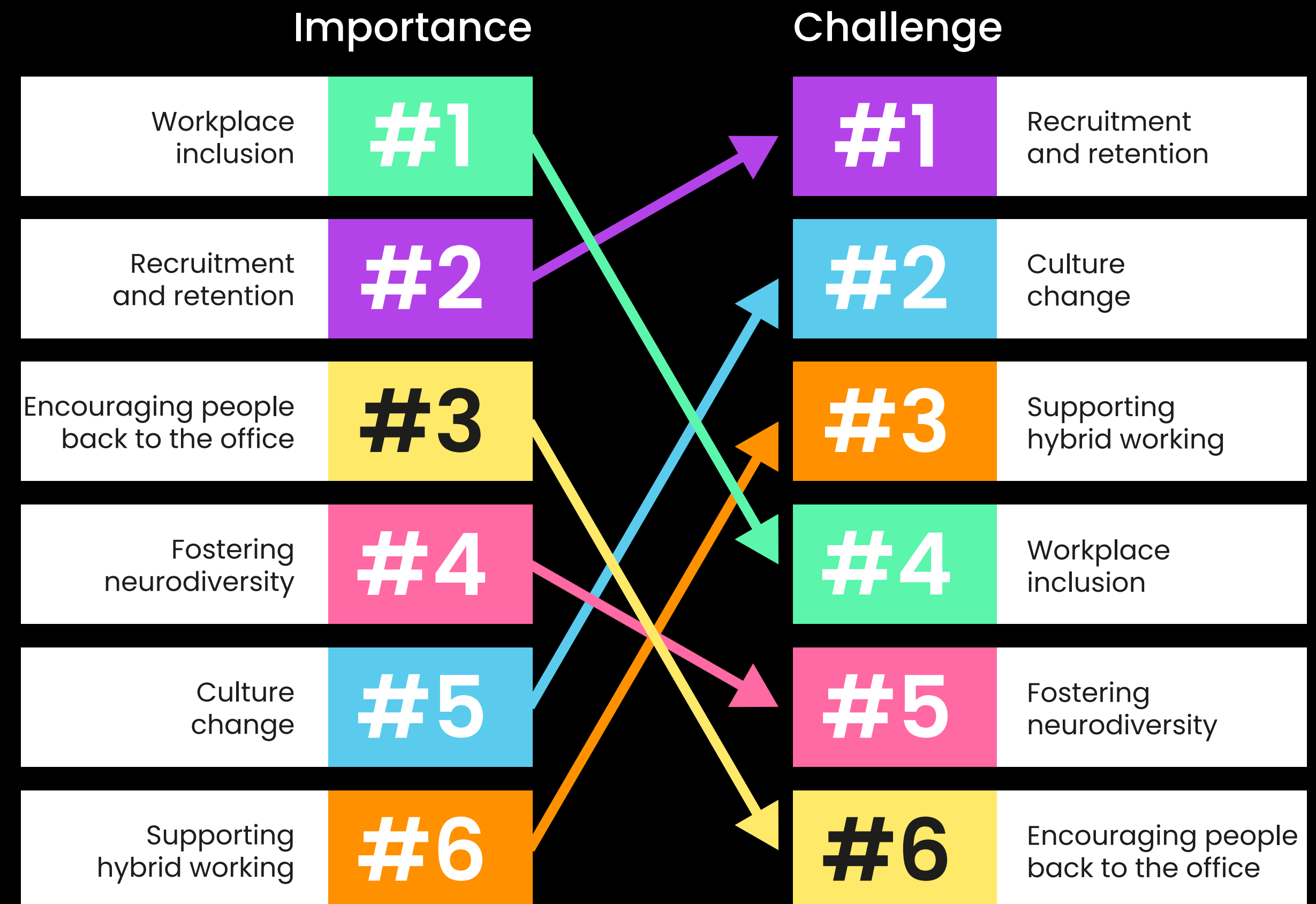
# The importance and challenge conundrum

Is there a link between something that's considered important versus its perceived challenge in delivering on the workplace challenge? Our research highlighted insights between priorities and challenges in workplace management.

## The underestimated challenge

While senior leaders ranked culture change lower in importance compared to other areas – it's a formidable challenge. Why the discrepancy? Change isn't always welcome. In the world of challenges, culture change might be underestimated, but its power, coupled with office design, is an opportunity.

## Important vs Challenge





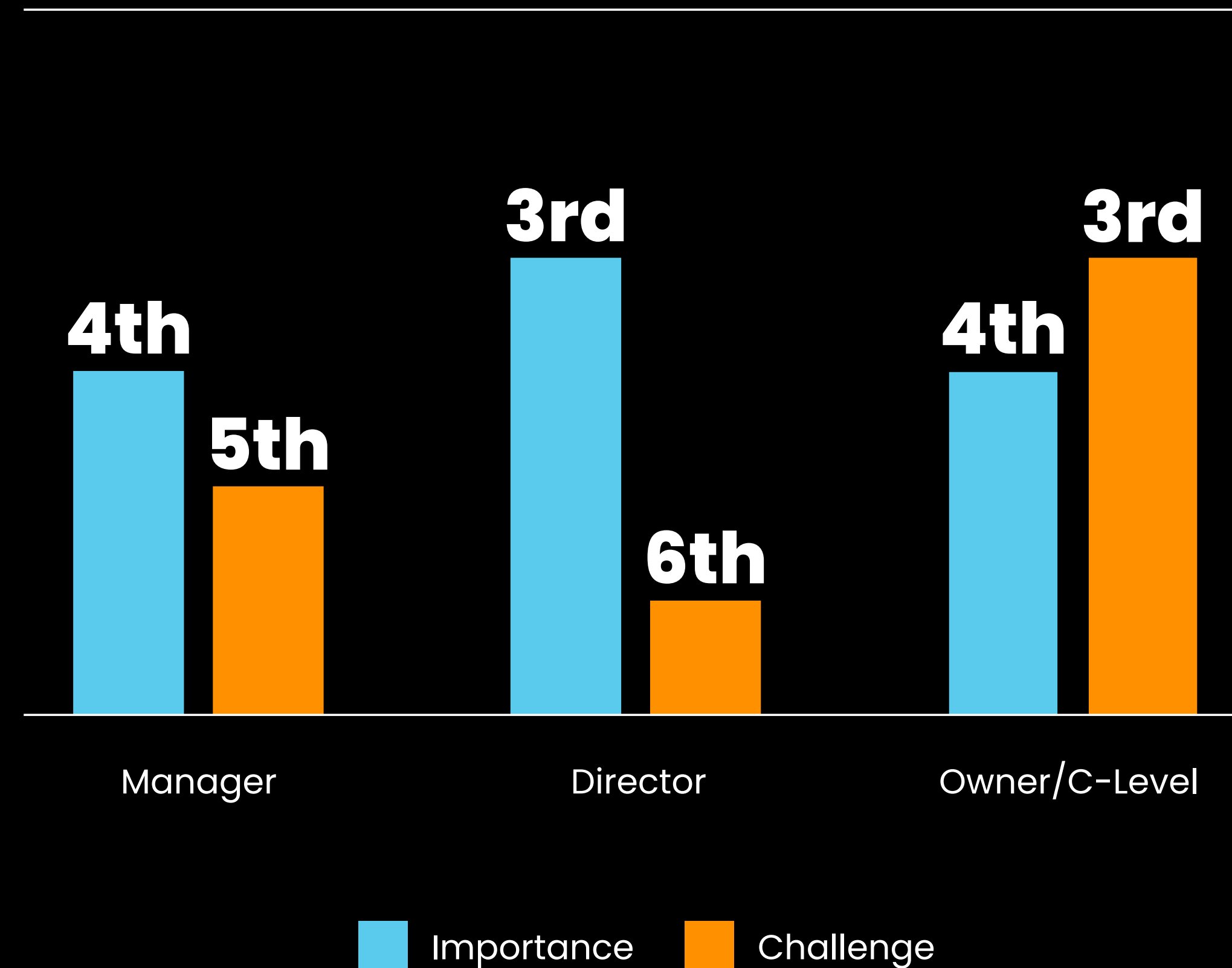
## Unravelling hybrid working

Claiming the third spot in the challenge line-up but landing dead last in importance, supporting hybrid working is a puzzle worth decoding. Senior leaders may be grappling with the logistical and technological adjustments needed to facilitate seamless collaboration and communication in hybrid work environments.

## Nurturing neurodiversity from the top

Recognising the significance of fostering a neurodiverse workforce transcends management levels. However, our data unveils intriguing hierarchal dynamics. Top-tier executives grapple with strategic intricacies, while hands-on managers find a smoother path. Conquering this challenge demands a multifaceted strategy of commitment, training, accessible office design and unwavering support for neurodivergent employees.

## Fostering Neurodiversity by job title

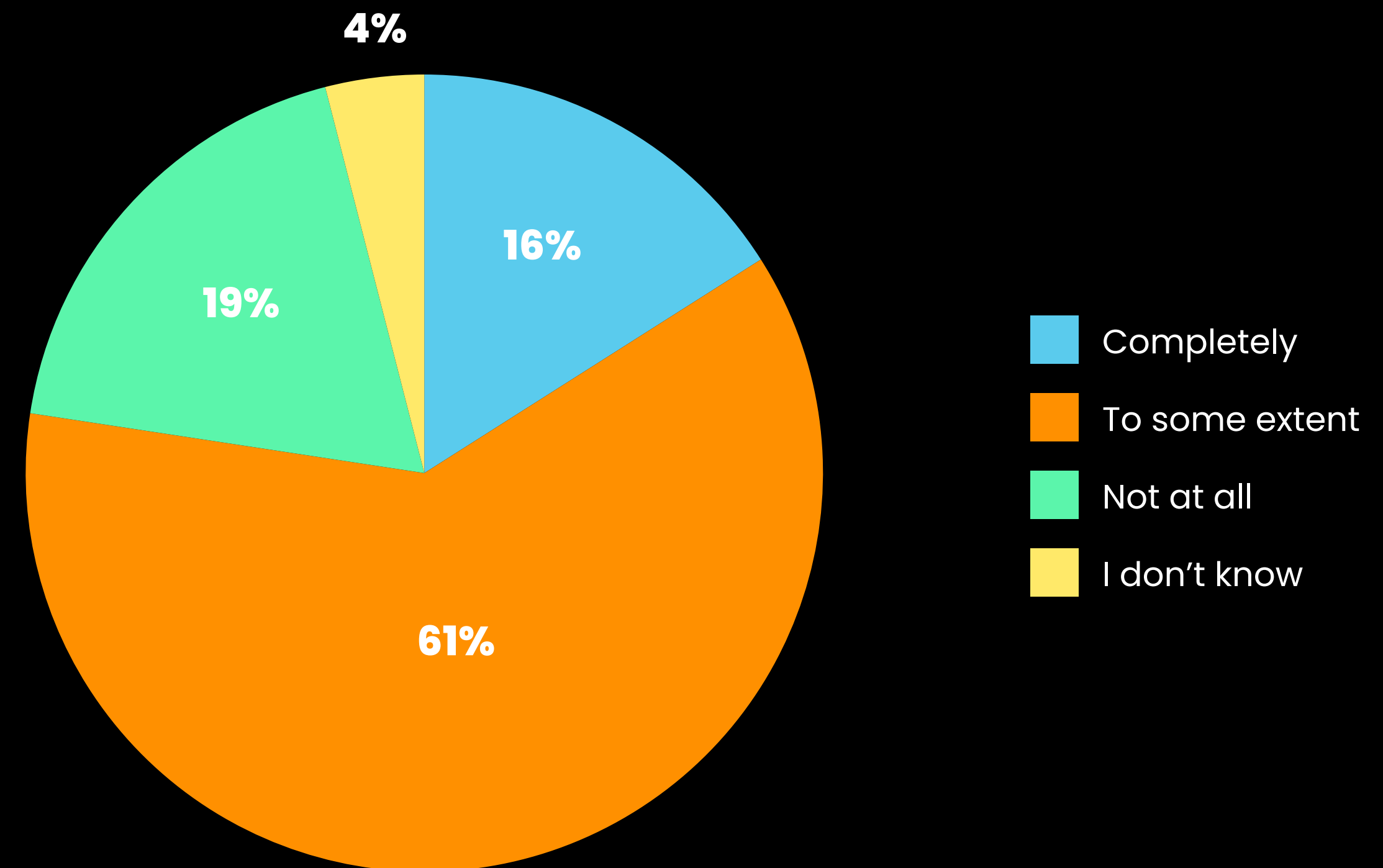


# The office's hidden potential

## Unleashing the office's strategic power

Amidst the challenges and priorities, we found that 77% view the office as a strategic tool to some extent or greater, but their perceptions differ depending on their management level.

Is the office a strategic tool?



## Conclusion

Our research unveiled the priorities and hurdles of 500 senior leaders in UK businesses. Workplace inclusion and recruitment and retention stand as guiding stars on their quest for success. Challenges arise, but through strategic office design, businesses can navigate the stormy seas and emerge as thriving and inclusive havens for talent and creativity. As the workplace evolves, we continue to explore the potential of the office as a strategic tool that can reshape the landscape of modern businesses. Discover more at [morganlovell.com](https://morganlovell.com) and unlock the untapped power of your office today.



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