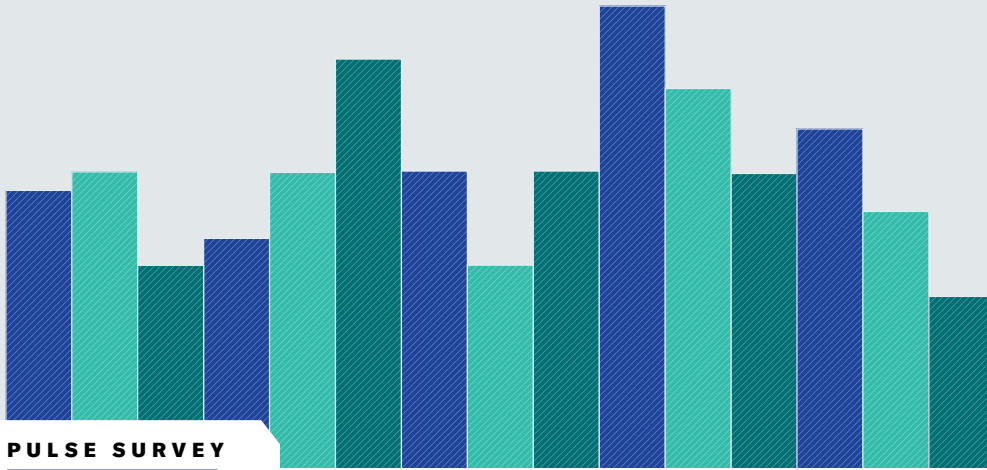




**Harvard
Business
Review**

ANALYTIC SERVICES



PULSE SURVEY

Investing in Travel to Drive Innovation



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Innovation is critical in today's competitive landscape; it's the key to discovering new products and services and driving the improvements that customers expect.

However, in an era of distributed organizations, innovation is becoming more challenging. The rise of remote and hybrid working has reduced the opportunities for the in-person interactions that are so vital for idea generation and creative collaboration.

"Investing in Travel to Drive Innovation"—a research-driven report by Harvard Business Review Analytic Services sponsored by American Express Global Business Travel—explores travel and in-person meetings as critical enablers for innovation. By bringing people together, companies can help strengthen relationships, build trust, and foster empathy—all important ingredients for idea generation and successful innovation.

Investing in Travel to Drive Innovation includes considerations to help enterprises, and individual employees, get the most from their investment in travel and meetings. An effective meeting rarely happens by accident; a strategic approach, with the right planning, infrastructure, and governance, will help you deliver in-person events where your people can be at their most productive and creative.

Four hundred twenty-five business leaders and managers contributed to the research for this report, giving us a great insight into the value that decision makers place on travel and meetings. We hope you find it useful.



Gerardo Tejado Donde
Senior Vice President,
Professional Services
American Express Global
Business Travel

Investing in Travel to Drive Innovation

While companies used to send people to off-sites to innovate and have them come into an office to do their day-to-day tasks, many have begun to realize that those day-to-day tasks might best be accomplished remotely and the innovation and idea generation should happen in person.

“If I am asking people to come into the office or meet face-to-face today, I need to give them a good reason to do so. Asking them to come in so everyone sits behind their own computer to perform their tasks is not a good reason. But innovation and team building are,” says Robert Hooijberg, professor of organizational behavior at the International Institute of Management Development (IIMD) in Lausanne, Switzerland. “When we think about building collaboration, connection, innovation, and dedication to an organization, we see a huge need for people to come together.”

A May 2023 survey by Harvard Business Review Analytic Services of 425 respondents familiar with their organizations’ business travel shows a connection between face-to-face meetings and innovation. Eighty-one percent agree that in-person interactions (meetings, off-sites, workshops) foster greater levels of innovation for the business, with around half (48%) saying that they strongly agree. The value of face-to-face interactions in driving innovation extends beyond intracompany meetings. More than three-quarters (79%) of respondents also agree that in-person meetings are critical for collaborating and innovating with key suppliers or partners.

The ability of businesses to continue to innovate and grow during pandemic restrictions can be credited in part to the rapid uptake of innovative technologies and processes to virtually connect and collaborate with colleagues, customers, suppliers, and partners. But just as importantly, teams were able to draw on relationships and trust that had previously been built in person as a foundation for ongoing problem-solving, creativity, and innovation. “Investments had already been made in creating bonds, and businesses were able to draw on

HIGHLIGHTS



81% of respondents agree that **in-person interactions** (meetings, offsites, workshops) **foster greater levels of innovation** for the business.



79% agree that in-person meetings are **critical for collaborating and innovating** with key suppliers or partners.



70% say an in-person meeting is the **best format for facilitating a successful meeting for brainstorming or innovation**.

Due to rounding, some figures in this report may not add up to 100%.

that credit for a period of time,” says Hooijberg. “But over the next two years, as they continued to withdraw from that metaphorical account, we saw disconnection grow.”

With lockdowns in the rearview mirror, it’s again essential that people come together for the purposes of problem-solving, brainstorming, and innovating. But given how prevalent remote and hybrid working arrangements are within many organizations, meeting in person must be a deliberate choice—and it is one that often requires business travel. For organizations whose investments in the types of travel that foster collaboration, teamwork, and innovation remain lower than pre-pandemic levels or that view travel as a cost center to be managed closely, a shift in mindset—and funding—may be necessary to unlock greater innovation.

“There may be some organizations that are very prescriptive about saying, ‘Unless it’s a sales call, you can’t travel,’” and others who feel they will never go back to traveling the way they were pre-pandemic,” says Cathy Sharpe, director of strategic sourcing, global travel, and expense management services at Illinois Tool Works Inc. (ITW), where travel for internal and external in-person meetings has been increasing. “One element of our business is customer-backed innovation. We wanted to get back to in-person meetings. Partnering with our customers to create unique solutions to improve business is who we are.”

This report underscores the nexus among well-managed business travel, in-person connection, and innovation and outlines the returns companies experience when they invest in bringing people together for the purposes of innovation. It points to the potential deficiencies of a purely cost-containment approach to business travel when it comes to fostering creativity and innovation within the business and in conjunction with customers and partners, and the upside of cost consciousness in the service of supporting business travel for innovation purposes. The report also suggests best practices companies can adopt to more intentionally bring people together to brainstorm, address challenges and opportunities, and come up with new solutions so they can make the most of traveling to meet face-to-face.

The Challenges of Long-Distance Innovation

While many organizations continued to solve problems, create, and innovate at the height of pandemic lockdowns and travel restrictions, it wasn’t easy. The most common negative business impacts of fewer in-person internal meetings (among employees, teammates, new hires, etc.) during the pandemic were collaboration challenges (cited by 53% of respondents), decreased employee engagement (52%), and communication challenges (49%). Similar issues emerge when respondents were asked about reductions in external meetings during the pandemic, with 44% saying their organization experienced



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communication challenges and 42% noting collaboration challenges as a result of fewer in-person meetings with clients, customers, and prospects during the pandemic (the second and third most common selections, just behind “weakened client relationships”). When paired with the internal impacts, these responses show how not getting together in person negatively impacts the collaboration and communication dynamics that foster innovation.

The possible long-term negative effects of not getting together in person to collaborate and innovate are part of the reason the executive team at ITW, a global multi-industry manufacturing company with revenues totaling \$16.1 billion in 2023, was eager to bring people back together when it was reasonable to do so. “We believe that innovation happens more fluidly in person,” says ITW’s Sharpe. The Glenview, Ill.-based company values the in-person workplace model. “We want people to come together face-to-face. Even our suppliers want to see us,” Sharpe says. “It wouldn’t be ITW if we were all sitting at home. That’s why business travel is so important.”

Likewise, employees at Randstad NV made virtual work doable during the pandemic. “We all learned to cope with it, and it taught us that it is possible to create that human-to-human connection that’s necessary to be creative and innovative. There were new rules of engagement along with new collaboration and communication tools,” says Yvonne Moya, global procurement director at the Diemen, Netherlands-based human resource consulting firm. “That said, it’s clear to us that the face-to-face connection is still important. It’s easier to create and be innovative when you’re in one room. Seeing your team members now and then is super essential.”



“People generate more ideas, and more creative ideas, when they meet in the same physical space,” says Melanie Brucks, assistant professor of business at Columbia Business School.

When Face-to-Face Meetings Matter

In light of the challenges of remote meetings, it’s not surprising that the majority of respondents say that when innovation is the goal, meeting in person is the best approach. When presented with a list of different internal meeting formats, seven in 10 respondents (70%) say an in-person meeting format facilitates the best outcome when the objective is brainstorming/innovation. In comparison, around one-quarter (26%) say a virtual/video meeting is the best approach.

How and where people come together is not the only factor impacting innovation, but it plays a significant role. “People generate more ideas, and more creative ideas, when they meet in the same physical space,” says Melanie Brucks, assistant professor of business at Columbia Business School in New York City. Brucks’ research showed that two employees in the same room generate a larger number of good ideas for new products than do those same two people chatting on Zoom. “Other [research] work finds that colocated teams produce more disruptive innovation compared to dispersed teams,” she adds.

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of virtual work tools and processes, but collaboration and innovation are particularly difficult to achieve and sustain without face-to-face interactions, says IIMD’s Hooijberg. “Innovation is about getting creative ideas out of people’s brains, exploring the ways they fit together, and collectively engaging in learning processes to refine and realize them,” Hooijberg and his colleague, Michael D. Watkins, professor of leadership and organizational change at IIMD, wrote in a January 2021 *Harvard Business Review* article. “These require both trust and time together in non-stressed environments.”

Of course, innovation doesn’t just magically occur because people come together in an office conference room, spend time with a supplier, or visit a customer. But meeting in person creates the conditions likely to produce greater understanding, idea generation, and problem-solving.

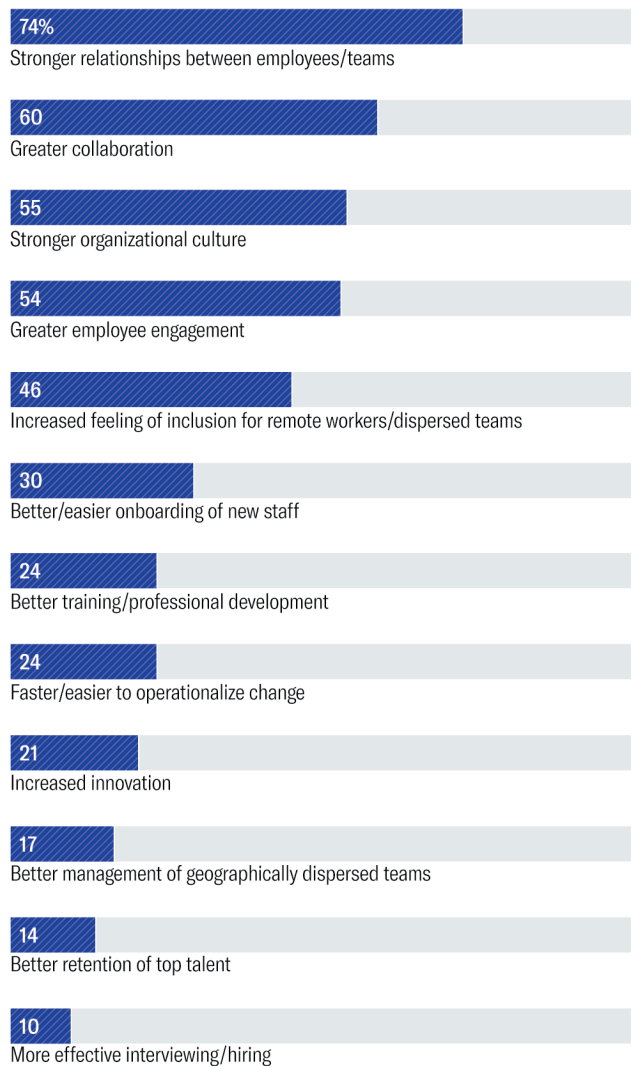
The survey results indicate that bringing people together, whether for internal or external meetings, fosters better relationships, greater collaboration, and increased understanding. The greatest business benefits of meeting in person for internal meetings, according to respondents, are stronger relationships between employees/teams (74%) and greater collaboration (60%). **FIGURE 1** When asked about

FIGURE 1

Attaching a Face to a Name

Stronger relationships between employees/teams is the top business benefit of in-person meetings

What are the greatest business benefits of meeting in person for internal meetings (among employees, teammates, new hires, etc.)? *Select up to five.*



Base: 425 respondents; not shown: None 1%, Other 1%.

Source: Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey, May 2023

the greatest benefits of meeting in person with clients, customers, and prospects, the top answer was building closer relationships with customers (83%) followed by increased understanding of customer needs (76%).

Meanwhile, empathy, which can play a key role in collaboration and innovation, also increases when people spend time together, according to respondents. Eighty-three percent of respondents agree with the statement “As a result of business travel, I have gained greater awareness and empathy toward coworkers and customers,” with a little over half (54%) of this group saying they strongly agree. **FIGURE 2** Around half (49%) of respondents say that empathy for clients or customers is one of the greatest benefits of meeting in person with them.

These results are worth noting, as many innovation experts stress the importance of empathy in successful innovation. That awareness of others and ability to detect their emotions and understand their perspective fuels effective collaboration as well as the psychological safety required to bring new ideas to the table. IIMD’s Hooijberg points to Google’s 2016 Project Aristotle, a two-year data-intensive study of 180 of the company’s working teams, which found that psychological safety was the most important contributing factor to better performance in terms of productivity and creativity. “Empathy is, of course, part of psychological safety,” says Hooijberg. “Psychological safety means that you feel that you can honestly and forthrightly contribute your ideas and concerns, without fear of ridicule or retribution. This is, of course, essential, for people being willing to contribute outside-the-box ideas.”

In addition, building a deeper understanding of the intended audience for an innovation (whether internal users, stakeholders, or external customers)—their experiences, values, feelings, behaviors—is critical to aligning innovation efforts with their needs and desires. “Investing time to build relationships is paramount,” says Sharpe. “Collaboration, trust, and shared risk are key to achieving best results.”

Such innovation is front and center at ITW, which patents and manufactures products in highly competitive markets. “It’s all we think about,” says Sharpe. “Even pre-pandemic, a big part of our culture is shared risk with our businesses. We are told to try, and if we fail, we’re sharing in the risks,” she says. “You have to have good relationships to do that. If we don’t build that trust, we won’t get anywhere. And that all starts with business travel.”

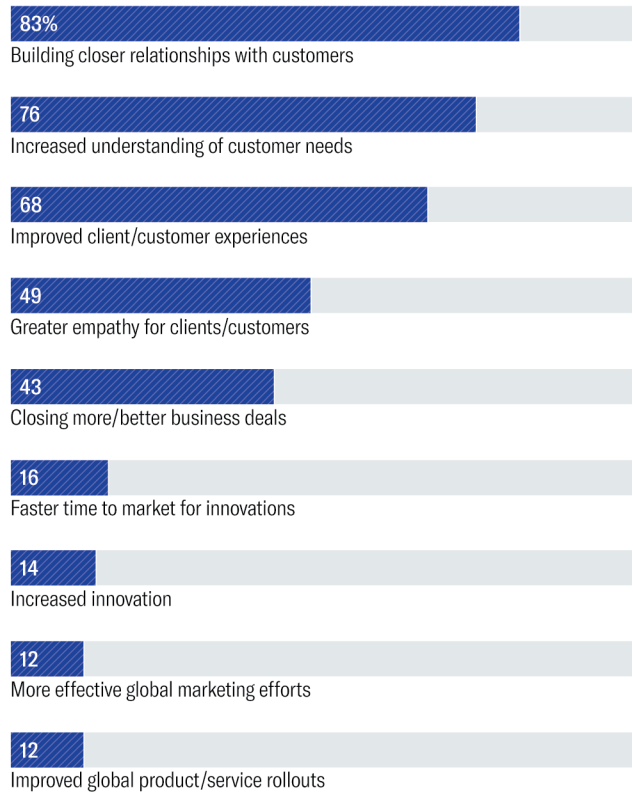
ITW was able to sustain the trust and relationships that underpin its ongoing success for a period of time during the pandemic when its competitors were likewise unable to travel. “But that’s not the case anymore,” Sharpe says. “We jumped right back into the business travel model that we know contributes to making us a strong leader in diversified manufacturing.”

FIGURE 2

In-Person Customer Meetings Foster Connection

Spending time with customers face-to-face boosts relationships and understanding of their needs

What are the greatest business benefits of meeting in person with clients, customers, and prospects? *Select up to five.*



Base: 397 respondents, excluding “Don’t know”; not shown: None 2%, Other 1%.

Source: Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey, May 2023

The Innovation Returns on Business Travel

In some cases, it’s easier to make a business case for travel investment. Spending a couple thousand dollars on a plane ticket and hotel room to close a big customer deal or make a game-changing acquisition has an unassailable financial benefit for a business. The math can be a bit more complicated when it comes to business travel for innovation purposes, but that doesn’t mean the investment doesn’t deliver significant returns.

“Just looking at what happens when I travel, I believe that travel is a business driver for innovation, creativity, and diversity of thought. It helps us connect across cultures and businesses,” says Randstad’s Moya. “It’s hard to put that into a

KPI or calculate an ROI on it. But we 100% believe in the benefit of bringing people together; otherwise, we would have never started traveling again once we came out of the pandemic.”

The majority of respondents believe the benefits of traveling to meet in person with colleagues, clients, and suppliers are more than theoretical. Respondents were presented with three statements about the business value derived from traveling to meet with different sets of stakeholders face-to-face. Eighty-four percent agree their organization realizes tangible business value from trips to meet with clients/customers/prospects in person. Seventy-one percent agree their organization realizes tangible business value from trips to meet with coworkers/other employees in person. And the same proportion (71%) agree their organization realizes tangible business value from trips to meet with suppliers/partners in person.

Despite this recognition of the business value of face-to-face connections, many organizations are failing to invest in some of the types of business travel that foster collaboration, idea generation, and innovation at the same levels they were before the pandemic. Sixty-three percent say traveling to meet colleagues at an off-site (e.g., a corporate retreat) is less than it was compared to the pre-pandemic period, 57% say travel to conferences is happening less than pre-pandemic, 56% say travel to on-site company meetings to bring remote/hybrid workers together in person is lower, and 56% say travel to visit their organization’s other office locations occurs less than it did before the pandemic. It’s not surprising then that lack of support for travel to bring remote workers/teams together ranked second among the biggest travel challenges cited by respondents (23%).

Respondents also report traveling less to spend time with customers and partners, both of which can fuel innovation. More than half (54%) say there is less travel to see suppliers/partners compared to before the pandemic, and 42% report fewer trips to see customers/clients.

Elsewhere, the survey results suggest that a cost-containment approach may be a limiting factor when it comes to business travel for innovation. Limited funding/budget for travel is, by far, the biggest business travel challenge, cited by 52% of respondents. **FIGURE 3** It’s not surprising, then, that the greatest share of respondents (30%) say their travel function reports to finance, more so than operations (17%) or HR (15%). And tellingly, three-quarters of respondents say their organization considers travel a cost center that must be managed closely.

Some companies may be less inclined to fund travel for the kinds of meetings that can move the needle on idea generation or problem-solving versus those with a more direct impact on the top line. Moya understands the challenge, but Randstad continues to fund business travel for innovation. “From a sales perspective, you travel to close that deal. You spend €500 to close a multimillion-dollar deal, and, of course, it makes



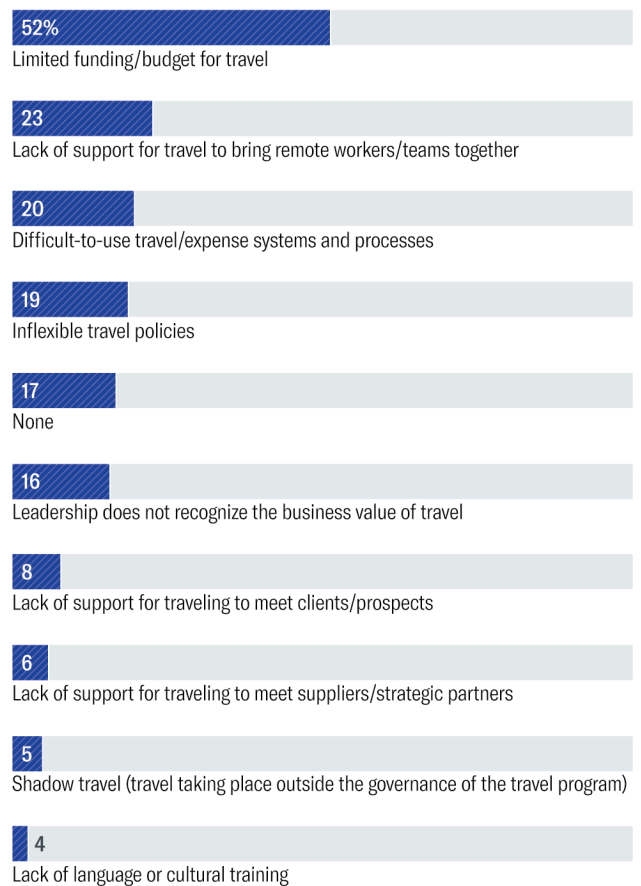
Limited funding/budget for travel is, by far, the biggest business travel challenge, cited by 52% of respondents.

FIGURE 3

Limited Funding Stymies Travel Programs

Restricted travel budgets are by far the leading travel challenge for organizations

What are the biggest business travel challenges for your organization today? Select up to three.



Base: 425 respondents; not shown: Other 5%, Don't know 3%.

Source: Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey, May 2023



“We have cost pressures and work with our partners and our travelers to see what we can do to save costs, but we see travel as an investment in the business and business innovation. There’s a good middle ground where a company can be cost conscious and still get those returns on travel investment,” says Yvonne Moya, global procurement director at Randstad NV.

sense,” says Moya. “But we also see a lot of our budget owners saying I want to bring my team together and invest in that once-a-month or -quarter face-to-face meeting to encourage collaboration and innovation.”

Travel costs don’t have to break the bank and should be viewed as an investment in the future of the business and its continuing ability to innovate. At Randstad, they are. “Of course, we have cost pressures and work with our partners and our travelers to see what we can do to save costs, but we see travel as an investment in the business and business innovation,” says Moya. “There’s a good middle ground where a company can be cost conscious and still get those returns on travel investment.”

While travel budgets remain below pre-pandemic levels at Randstad, part of that situation is a result of encouraging more sustainable and purposeful travel choices. “We’re not doing any more ‘meeting tourism.’ We’re stripping down travel to necessary trips,” Moya says. “But we are also seeing changes in travel patterns. Our day trips are going down, but people are combining more reasons to travel into a single, longer trip and being more purposeful in their planning and reasons for travel.”

At ITW, business travel investments will exceed pre-pandemic levels in 2024. “Our business results were amazing during the pandemic, but in-person collaboration was missed,” says Sharpe, who recently returned from a trip to Korea to meet with colleagues she hadn’t seen in more than three years. “I realize now that I’m back how much easier it is to get to the next level of things, whether it’s strategy or innovation, since we spent that time in person,” she says.

ITW is certainly cost conscious, but there is no question that business travel must happen to drive ongoing innovation.

“We’re organizing travel differently, but nobody is saying don’t put trips together,” Sharpe says. “A large segment of our population are engineers. They have to get together, roll up their sleeves, and put all those creative juices out there. We partner with our clients heavily on innovation, so we value that just as much as any sales call.”

Optimizing Face-to-Face Time

Remote and hybrid working now being so prevalent in many organizations creates hurdles to meeting—and innovating—in person. A total of 65% of respondents say much of their organization works remotely today (3% are entirely remote, 15% are primarily remote with some in office, and 48% say they have an even mix of in office and remote). Around a quarter (28%) are primarily in office with some remote. Just 7% of those surveyed say their organization’s workplace model is completely in office today.

However, there are things companies can do to make the best use of in-person time to boost collaboration, creativity, and innovation. From an infrastructure perspective, companies are making changes to office spaces to better support working together on premises in a hybrid work model. Just under half (46%) of respondents say their organization is updating spaces to better support remote/hybrid workers coming into the workplace (e.g., quiet rooms, hot-desking/flexible seating), and 32% say their organization is updating spaces to better support collaboration/socialization in the office (e.g., huddle rooms). **FIGURE 4**

Randstad made similar renovations to office spaces even before the pandemic. “We have more open meetings spaces, different work areas, team huddle spaces, coffee corners where chats can happen,” says Moya.

While a little more than a third (36%) of respondents indicate that their organization reduced its office footprint (number of offices, size of offices, etc.) in conjunction with its hybrid or remote work model, shrinking office footprints too much can present obstacles when bringing people together to innovate in person. Hooijberg notes that in early 2022, some large companies closed big office headquarters because they thought people could work more efficiently from home. But while remote work may breed efficiency, it’s less likely to yield game-changing innovation on its own. A balance of remote and in-person work is the key, he says.

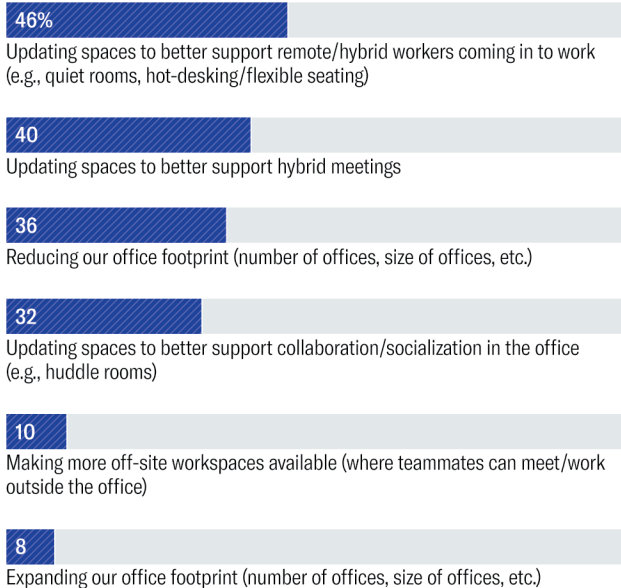
Columbia Business School’s Brucks recommends that managers intentionally map out the kinds of tasks employees work on to identify which require collaborative creativity and which benefit from focused implementation. “From there, managers should design a hybrid work policy that reflects the kinds of work their employees do,” Brucks says. “This could mean asking employees to come in two days a week for dedicated problem-solving time or an innovation week

FIGURE 4

Adapting Office Spaces

Updates such as quiet rooms and huddle rooms support in-person collaboration and innovation

In what ways is your organization adapting its physical office to accommodate hybrid/remote work, if any? *Select all that apply.*



Base: 425 respondents; not shown: None 16%, Don't know 2%, Other 1%.

Source: Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey, May 2023

once a quarter.” Business travel can then be devoted to those innovation opportunities.

For its part, ITW is continuing to invest in physical office space. “We believe that in-person [attendance] is so important,” says Sharpe. “If you close offices, what happens to the innovation that occurs when you happen to see someone in the hallway or lunchroom? You’d have to have an awful lot of meetings to try to recreate those kinds of experiences.”

In fact, bringing people together in person, while essential to innovation, is not sufficient for it. Hooijberg has studied how organizations can make the most of the time people spend in person with one another in order to drive outcomes like innovation. To generate the most value, he says, in-person meetings or experiences should be built to foster purposeful focus, interpersonal bonding, deep learning, unencumbered experimentation, and structured serendipity (building in the opportunity for that unexpected chat that Sharpe describes above).

As important as it is to construct in-person meetings in a way that removes distractions, encourages human

connections, makes room for deeper debate, and creates psychological safety required for risk taking, it’s also critical to carve out on employees’ calendars some unstructured in-person time. This untethered part of the workday on premises is especially effective when the goal is innovation. “Serendipity is stumbling upon something wonderful while looking for something entirely different. And that’s never going to happen in a virtual meeting,” says Hooijberg.

It’s also not going to happen in a formal in-person meeting. It happens at a dinner after the conference or by the coffee machine post-meeting or in the middle of the night before someone heads back in for a second day of face-to-face meetings. “That’s why you need to structure unstructured time” into in-person gatherings, says Hooijberg. That need for open time and availability may call for trips that go beyond the mere pop-in for a specific meeting, since the returns on that less-scripted travel investment can be much greater.

An Innovative Travel Program Can Help

Having a centralized travel program to enable and support business travel for innovation is essential. The survey finds that centralized oversight and governance of travel programs are largely commonplace. An overwhelming majority (89%) of respondents say their organization has formal, centrally managed travel policies. So it follows that very few (16%) say their organization doesn’t have a dedicated central travel function. In addition, around six in 10 (61%) respondents report that their organization uses one travel management company (TMC) across the enterprise, and another 14% say their organization uses multiple TMCs.

At Randstad, which has centralized travel oversight and governance and works with one TMC globally, the most important role the travel program plays today is in ensuring employees can travel with ease when they see the need. The company’s philosophy is that the traveler’s biggest decision is determining whether or not to travel to achieve a particular outcome, not how to make that travel happen. Once they make that decision—say, to bring a team together for brainstorming—the travel program should do the heavy lifting for them. “The biggest challenge for me is designing a program that, from a traveler perspective, is a nonissue,” says Moya. “Once they decide they need to go, it should be easy to book and go and make that trip to contribute to the business. We want to make sure we have the right policy and partner and content and sustainable choices so that travel is a nonissue.” Having a global standardized online travel planning platform with solid self-service options achieves that aim so that traveling employees can pursue their goals.

While Moya can’t yet prove there are better innovation results, there is a sense that business travel to meet face-to-face unlocks faster and more innovative decisions. “We are a



“It’s not either/or; it’s about balance. And when you do make the choice to travel, it’s about making sure that it matters. If you’re going to go for it, go all in,” says Robert Hooijberg, professor of organizational behavior at the International Institute of Management Development.

human capital company. The core of our business is people—our talent and our clients,” Moya says. “So traveling to connect to other humans will always be a part of our business model.”

At ITW, innovation plays a role even in the travel program itself. “We’re entrepreneurs and innovators by nature,” Sharpe says, noting that her travel program was one of the first to implement an online booking tool and to have an integrated travel and expense platform. That early adoption of technology solutions continued during the pandemic and beyond. Finding better ways to manage travel, in partnership with ITW’s TMC, has enabled the company to continue to fund business travel.

“During Covid, we had the time to innovate for our own good and put tools into our travelers’ hands to make better decisions as soon as travel started back up,” says Sharpe, whose team rolled out the new ITW Travel & Expense Toolbox mobile app that centralizes everything traveling employees need, from travel and expense tools to on-the-ground support. “It helped us achieve our goals to minimize costs, utilize value-added services, increase safety, and coordinate 24-hour worldwide assistance and emergency services to ITW’s global traveling workforce,” she adds.

Giving employees autonomy over in-person meetings and business travel is important. “Bringing people together in person could be what sets certain companies apart from the rest,” says Brucks. “However, forcing people to come back to the office full time or participate in frequent travel could cost you talent. The best companies will create an environment where their employees are eager to get together when innovating.”

At ITW, travel discussions and decisions take place between employees and their managers. “We trust employees to make the right decisions, and everyone has been watchful, particularly with the inflation that seized the travel industry,” says Sharpe. “People are innovating in their travel. They’re doing more with less. If they have to go to Australia, for example, they make sure they can complete their objectives and more in one trip to get the most bang for our buck.”

And the results prove it. When ITW benchmarks its average ticket prices and average daily rates against its peer group, it outperforms in terms of costs. “And we don’t manage that

with a stick,” says Sharpe. The results come from empowering employees with tools and information to make the best decisions for themselves and the company.

Conclusion

When innovation is the goal, bringing people together fosters closer relationships and increased understanding and empathy—all essential ingredients for greater collaboration, creativity, and idea generation. Given today’s hybrid and remote work environment, companies must strike the right balance between in-person meetings and interactions and working from home, traveling where it makes sense and eliminating unnecessary trips. They need to achieve this balance to intelligently apply the business travel lever where it adds the most value in driving innovation and optimize their business travel policies and programs to best support their innovation goals.

“It’s not either/or; it’s about balance,” says Hooijberg. “And when you do make the choice to travel, it’s about making sure that it matters. If you’re going to go for it, go all in.”

At Randstad and ITW, business travel for innovation will continue to be prioritized. “For us, the human-to-human connection will always be important, connecting our talent with the work and with our clients,” says Moya. “Even as we embrace digital-first, business travel will play a role. It will be more sustainable and more purposeful, but it will always be there.”

In fact, the pandemic provided a kind of reset for organizations to rethink how they use business travel to drive innovation and build their travel programs back smarter and stronger. “I think with the right intention, business travel can be leveraged better now than ever before,” says Brucks. “As remote work becomes a mainstay in work culture, business travel can be used strategically when innovative thinking is necessary. Business leaders who intentionally think about how to leverage business travel to efficiently connect people when creative thinking is needed will have a competitive advantage by allowing employees the flexibility they desire while also maintaining their innovative potential.”

METHODOLOGY AND PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Harvard Business Review Analytic Services surveyed 425 members of the *Harvard Business Review* audience via an online survey fielded in May 2023. Respondents qualified to complete the survey if they were familiar with their organization's business travel.

Size of Organization

35%
10,000 or more employees

30%
1,000–9,999 employees

10%
500–999 employees

24%
100–499 employees

Seniority

27%
Executive management/
board members

43%
Senior management

22%
Middle management

8%
Other grades

Industry Sectors

15%
Manufacturing

15%
Technology

11%
Business/
professional services

10%
Financial services

All other sectors
less than 10% each.

Job Functions

25%
General/executive management

13%
Sales/business development/
customer service

All other functions
less than 10% each.

Regions

54%
North America

17%
Asia Pacific

15%
Europe

7%
Latin America

6%
Middle East/Africa

1%
Other

Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

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