

Hybrid Work In the Age of AI

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Introduction

Hybrid work, where employees work and collaborate both in-person and remotely, is quickly becoming the standard for many businesses. As hybrid work continues to take hold, we wanted to explore the current state of hybrid meetings along with the potential of audio, visual, and generative AI to improve the collaboration experience.

Emergence of Hybrid Work as the New Norm

With the rise of hybrid work, there's an increasing demand to make virtual meetings more efficient and effective. We explored the state of hybrid work, virtual meetings, and worker perception of them with 1000 employees in a variety of positions, across a range of company sizes in the U.S., Canada, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe. Respondents included were those that reported they attended at least one hybrid meeting in a typical week. Overall, 60% of potential respondents contacted qualified for this criterion, meaning a majority of the workforce participates in hybrid meetings.

Sample respondents were distributed across work situations from "office-based," to "hybrid," to "remote."

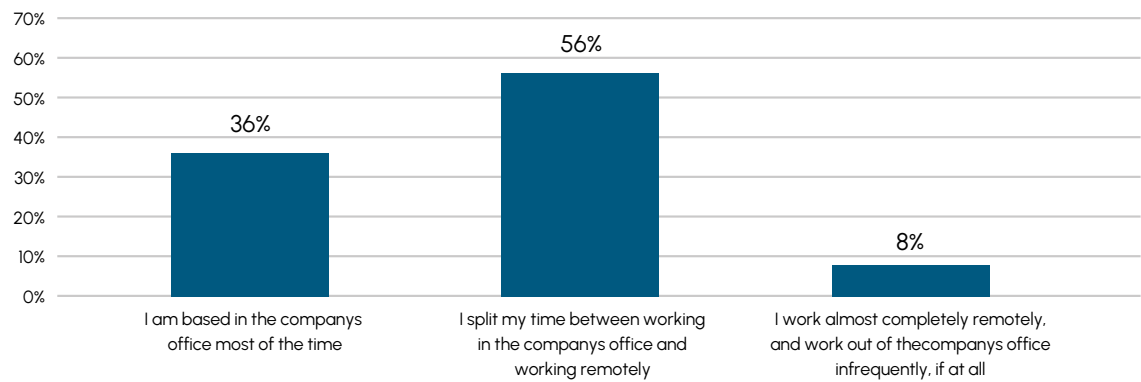


Figure 1: Distribution of sample across main workplace situation

As organizations navigate through the complexities of managing how and where people will work, it's clear that hybrid work schedules are still in high demand from employees. 73% of respondents agree with the statement "I'd prefer to have a hybrid work schedule versus working in the office full time," with 42% reporting they "strongly agree."

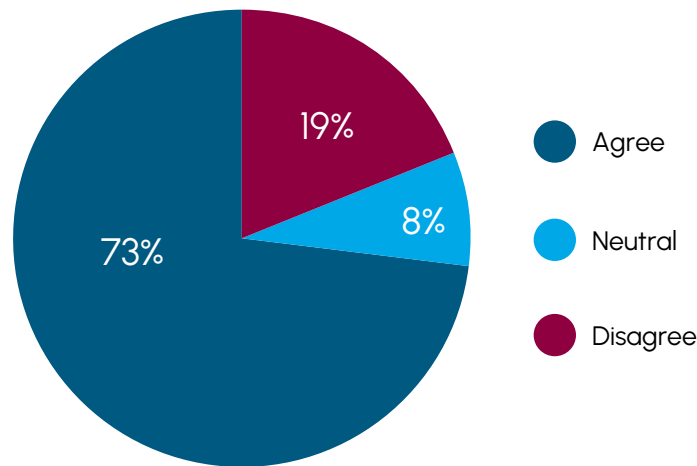


Figure 2: Distribution of sample across main workplace situation

Current State of Virtual Meetings in a Hybrid Work Environment: Insights from the Data

Hybrid meetings are cited as the most productive meeting type by fully remote, hybrid, and office-based workers. Interestingly, feedback from survey respondents suggests that workers have developed distinct preferences based on their working situations. Office-based respondents tend to believe more in the efficacy of office meetings than hybrid or remote workers, while respondents in hybrid and remote situations lean towards hybrid meetings. We see in the chart below that when asked which type of meeting is most productive, 43% of office workers cite "office-based" meetings as the most productive, while only 24% of "hybrid workers" and 11% of "fully remote" workers agree.

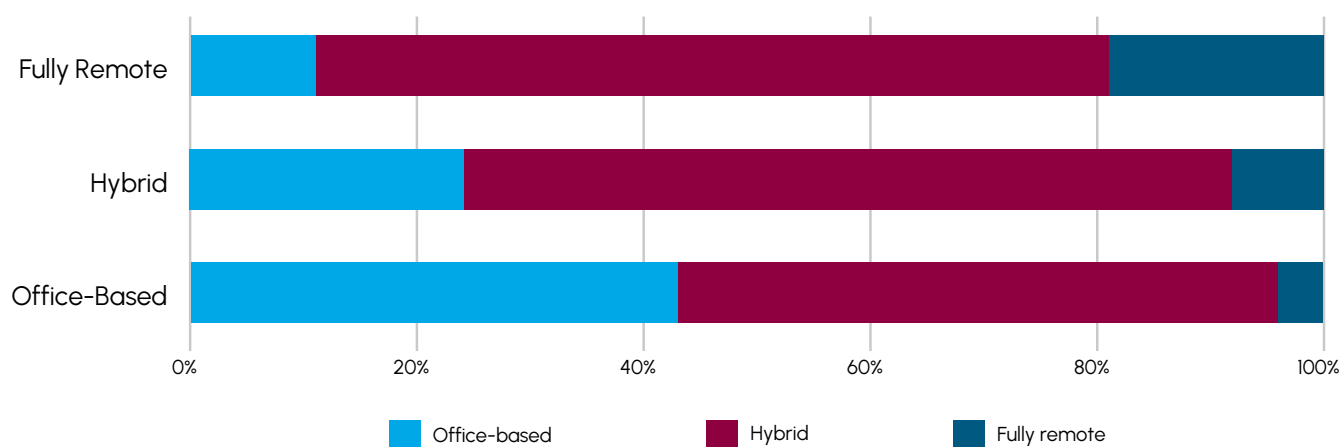


Figure 3: Distribution of respondent ID of "most productive" type of meeting across work situation

Among those who indicate they attend hybrid meetings, a substantial 76% report they attend up to five. It's clear that hybrid meetings are a significant part of the professional landscape.

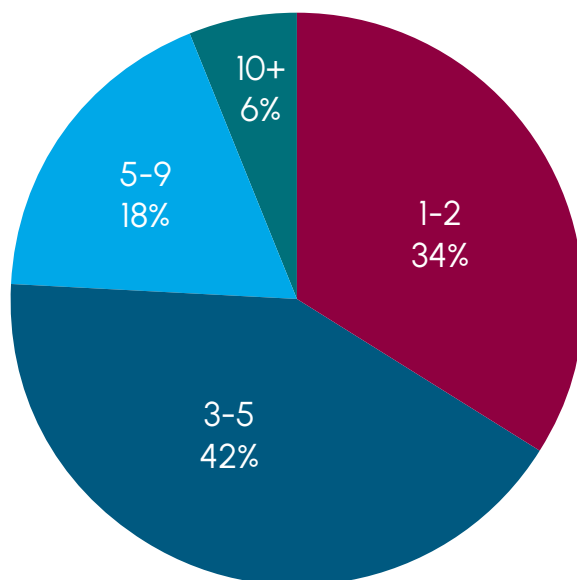


Figure 4: Percentage of respondents responding to "How many hybrid meetings for your company do you participate in during a typical week – hybrid meeting attendees?"

Technological Challenges and Potential Areas of Improvement

While hybrid meetings are commonplace, technological obstacles to productivity or non-technical obstacles to productivity that could be resolved using technology suggests there's room for improvement. A [recent survey](#) that we conducted revealed that large organizations of 1,000 or more employees lose 93 minutes per week on average per worker due to technology issues and management of virtual meetings which translates to \$3-5 million in productivity loss per year. Approximately 40% of users have raised concerns over audio quality and around a third feel that video quality could be enhanced, whether they are experiencing the hybrid meeting in an office or from a remote location. Time inefficiency stands out as a challenge across both office-based and hybrid meetings.

The Promise of AI in Elevating the Hybrid Meeting Experience

AI presents a promising solution, especially in addressing productivity challenges. Most notably, AI's potential in organizing meeting notes and managing time-sensitive information can be a game-changer. Over half of the respondents are eager to incorporate AI to refine the hybrid meeting experience, indicating a positive trend towards embracing technological advancements.

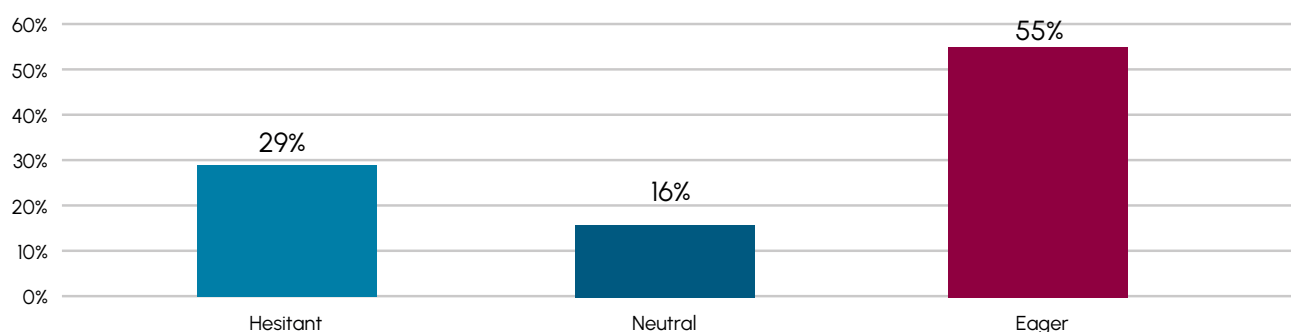


Figure 5: Respondent projected eagerness to try AI tools introduced by their company to improve the Hybrid meeting experience

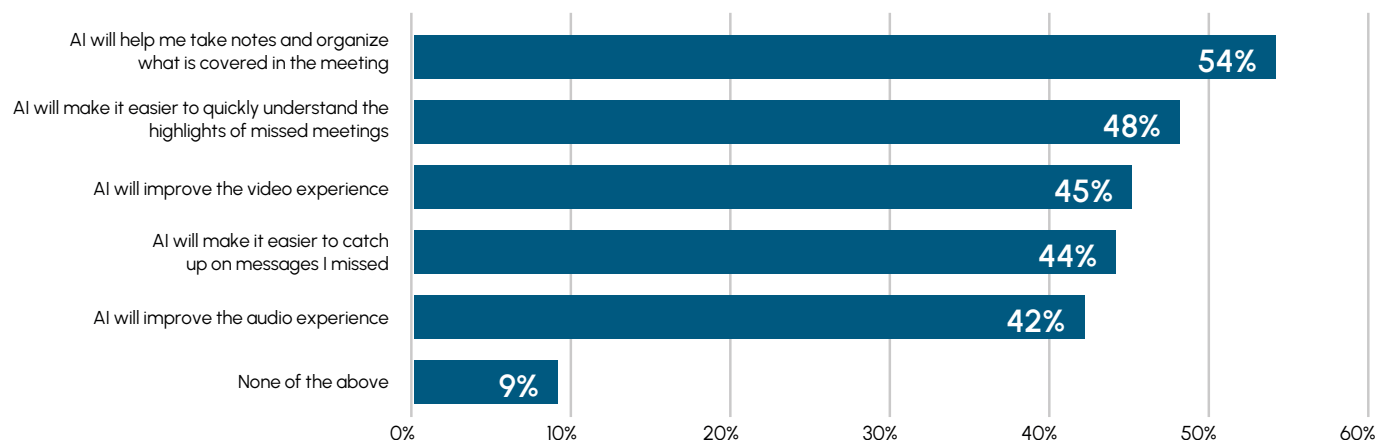


Figure 6: Respondent projection of how AI designed to improve the Hybrid meeting experience will help them personally



Addressing AI Concerns: Trust and Transparency

However, trust remains a barrier. 40% of those hesitant about AI cite concerns over transparency and the unknown realm of AI's handling of their data. This highlights the importance of transparent AI practices and clear communication about its functionalities, as well as selling features and benefits more than underlying technology. This is particularly important with AI as the mistrust that can accompany it as a newer technology with well-advertised potential.

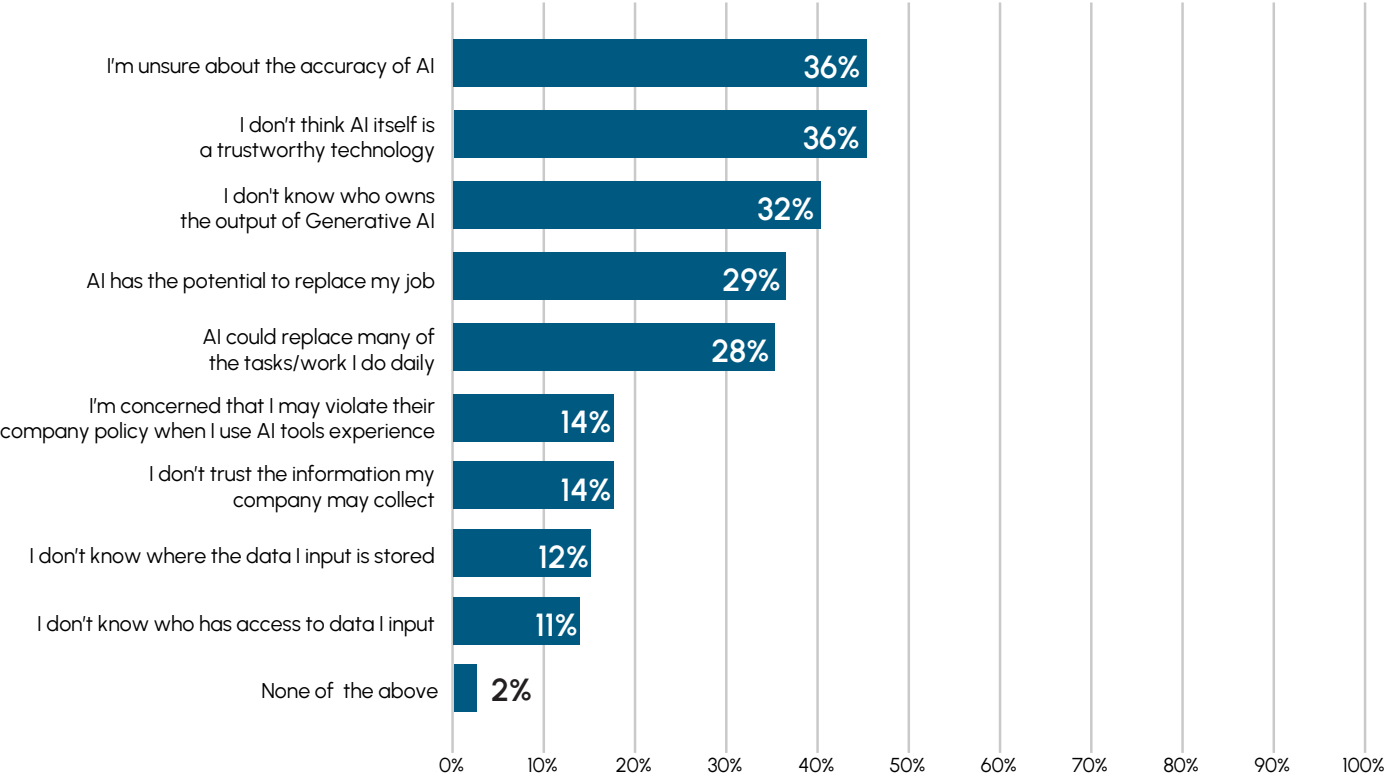


Figure 7: Reasons respondents provide for being hesitant about AI based improvements to hybrid meetings, among the 29% of respondents that expressed hesitancy.

Importance of Promoting User Benefits Over AI-First Promotion

Promoting the tangible benefits that result from meeting summaries and noise removal can be more appealing to employees, ensuring a more positive reception. Recall that increased productivity is a key expectation that respondents expressed with respect to the introduction of AI tools for hybrid work. Below, we see a pattern of what respondents anticipate for each of the types of features AI can deliver.

Respondents have a positive response when it comes to the prospect of AI when it is couched in delivering specific features; 61% expressed eagerness to embrace "meeting summaries," while 55% cited "background noise removal" as a welcomed feature.

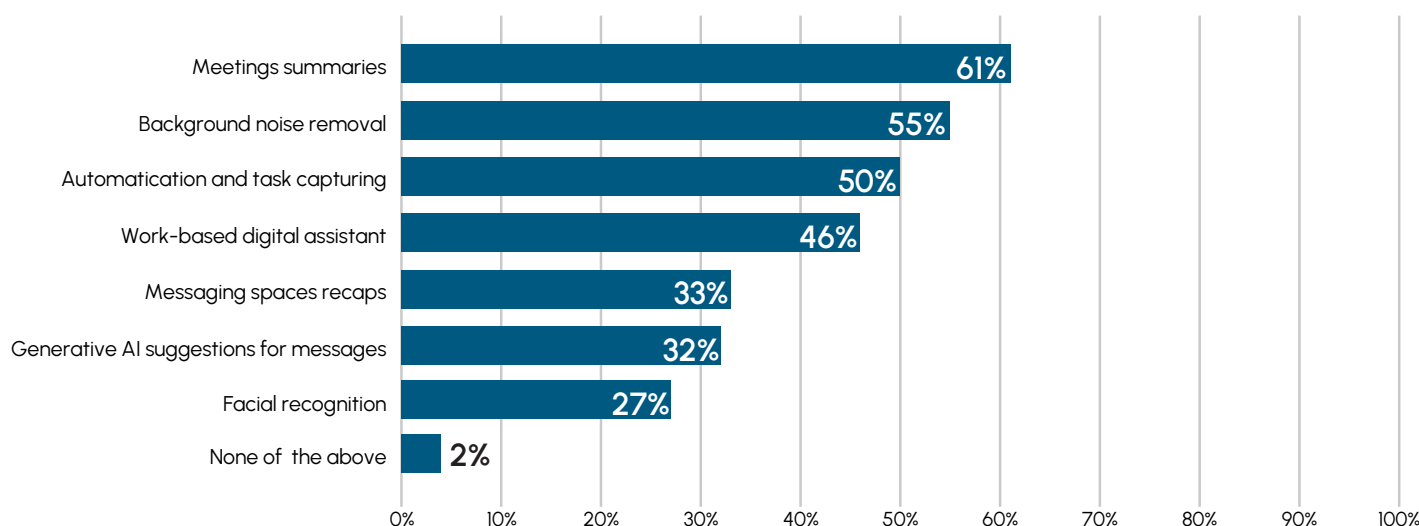
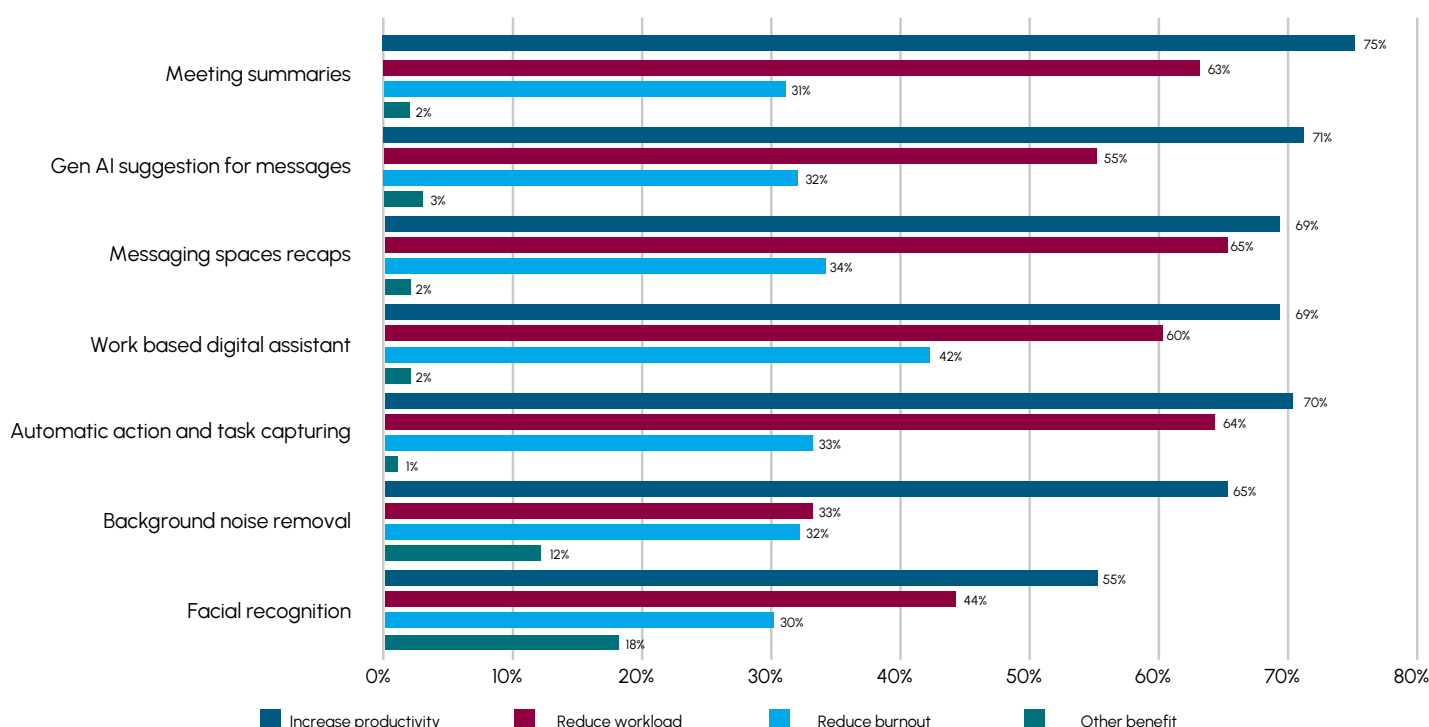


Figure 8: AI Tech Respondents indicate they are eager to adopt

Below, for each of the features that respondents felt positive about, we see that "productivity" is a key driver behind their expectations.



The Future: Cinematic Product Concept and Its Benefits

In line with the idea of presenting features over technology itself, we tested a concept with respondents that simulated a “cinematic” approach to presenting meeting participants as they speak. In the cinematic meeting model, multiple cameras are directed by AI to provide the best view of an individual speaker or a group of people involved in a conversation. The model presents remote workers with a dynamic video experience and provides them with in-room context like body language and facial expressions that could otherwise be missed in a generic meeting room with a single camera setup. The cinematic product concept brings a fresh perspective to hybrid meetings. Interestingly, 96% believe they would benefit from cinematic meetings and it would make it easier for them to follow the conversation (65%), make them feel more connected to coworkers (60%), and it would reduce their meeting fatigue (47%) and cognitive load (39%). We believe with this response, it's an avenue worth exploring further.

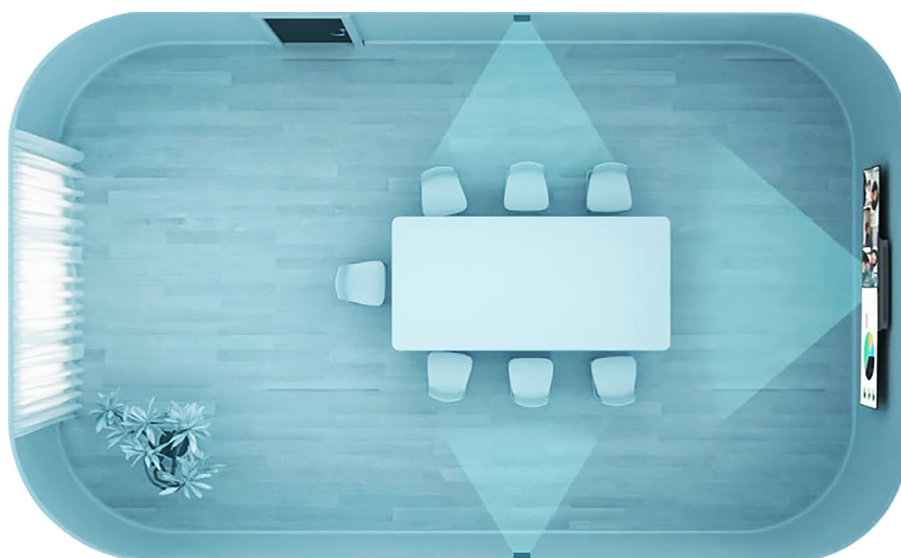


Figure 10: Cinematic visual concept presented as a video on survey

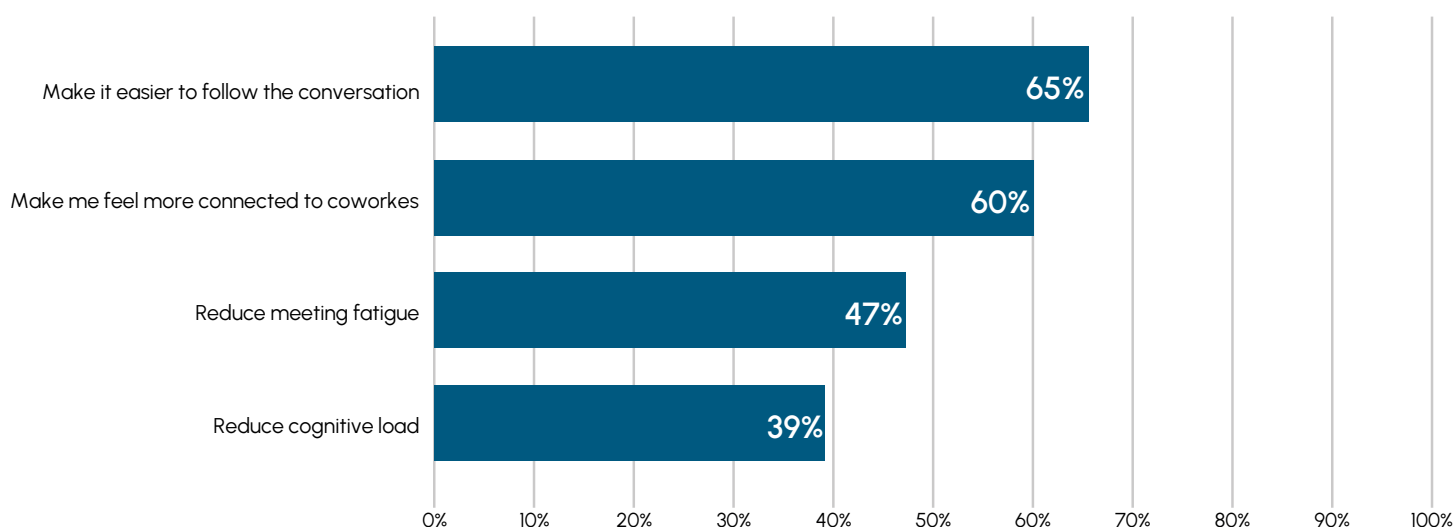


Figure 24: Respondents ID of benefits to cinematic innovation in hybrid meetings presented on survey.

Conclusion

Hybrid work and virtual meetings supported by AI and other technological advancements can be the key to fostering a productive, flexible, and inclusive work environment. By addressing concerns and focusing on tangible benefits, businesses can optimize this new norm to its fullest potential.

Recommendations

- 1** Promote the tangible benefits of AI to gain more acceptance among employees.
- 2** Consider implementing the cinematic product concept for better engagement in hybrid meetings.
- 3** Ensure transparent AI practices to build trust among employees.
- 4** Prioritize improving the audio and video quality of hybrid meetings through AI-enhanced software and hardware.

With these steps, companies can fully harness the potential of hybrid meetings, ensuring increased productivity and enhanced employee satisfaction.

Appendix

Sample

Figure 12: Sample - type of work provided by respondent

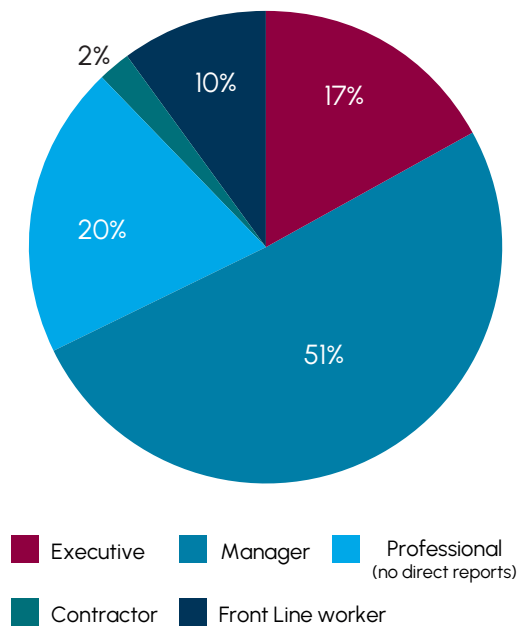


Figure 13: Sample – company role of respondent

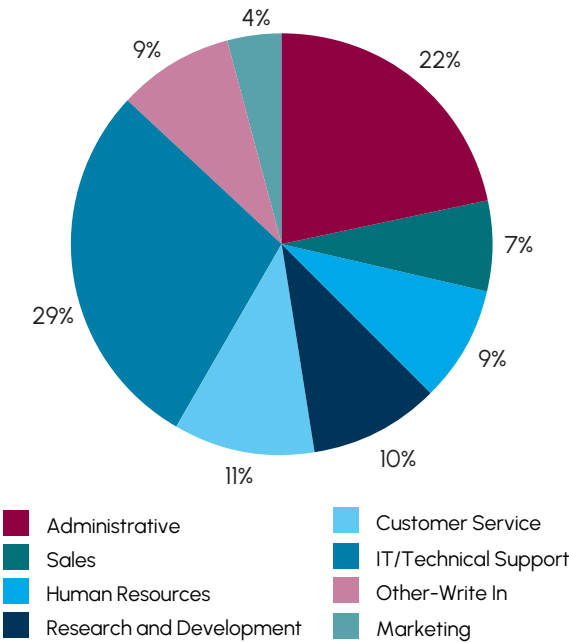


Figure 14: Sample - company size - by worker

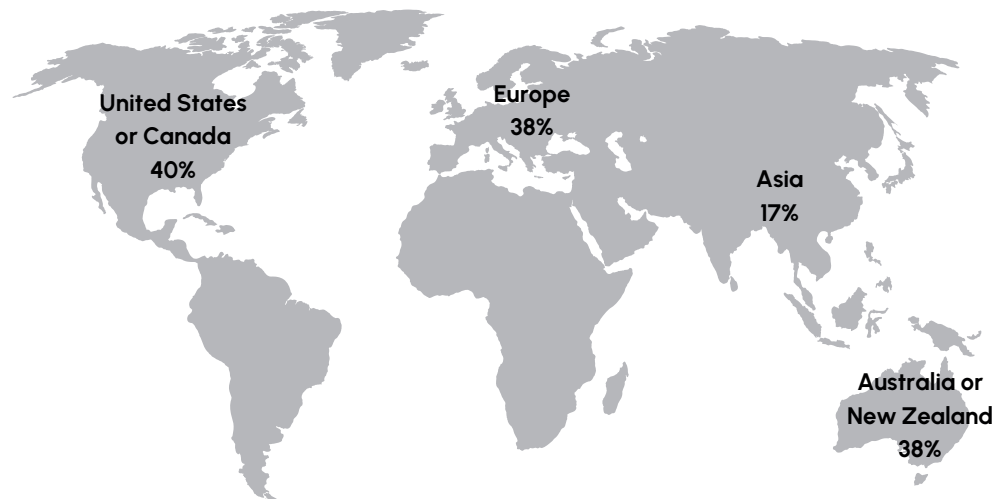
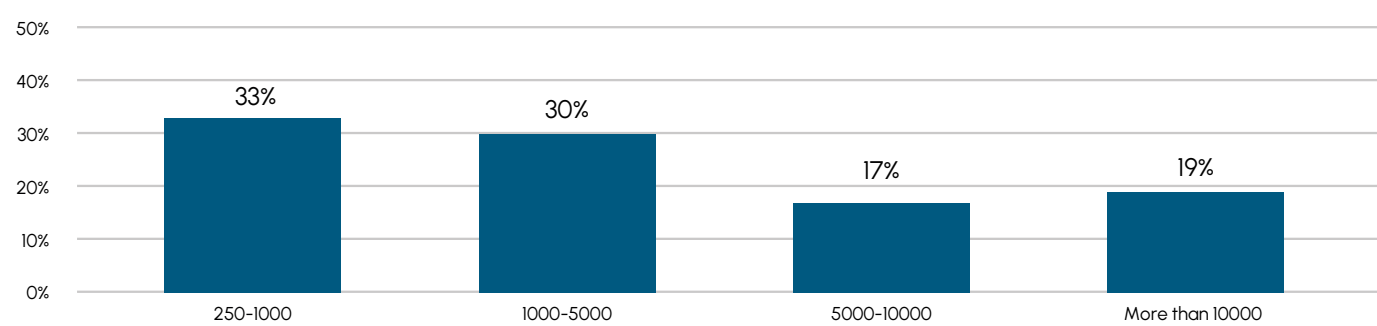


Figure 15: Sample - location of respondent

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