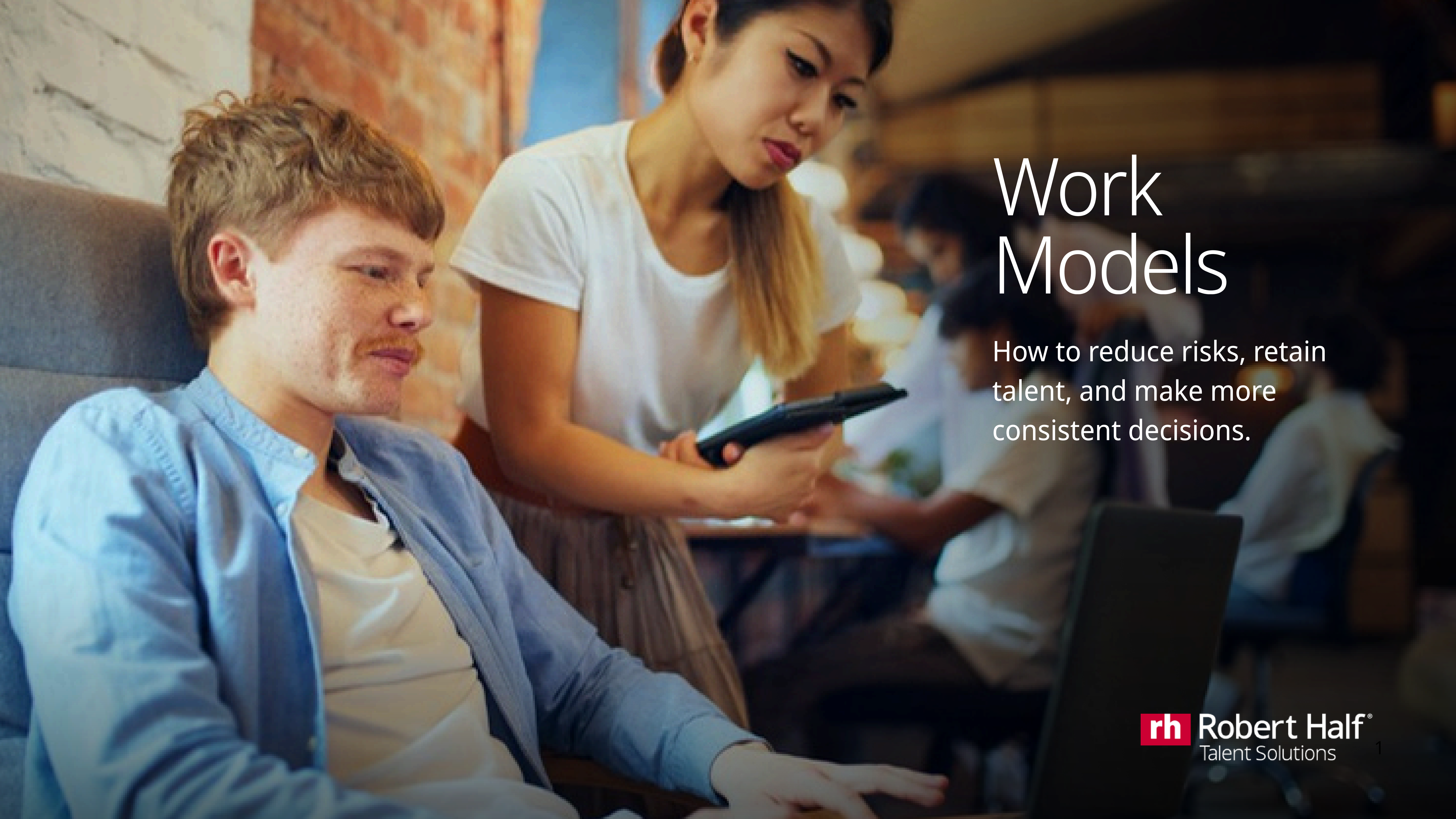

Work Models

How to reduce risks, retain talent, and make more consistent decisions.

Robert Half®
Talent Solutions

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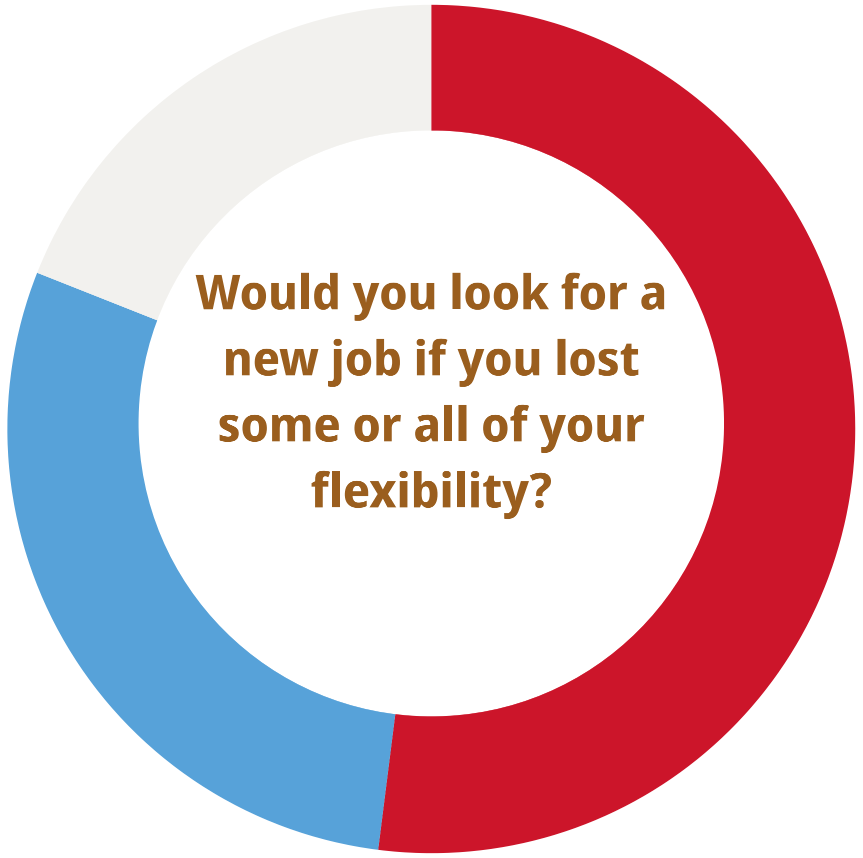
The debate about work models is focused on the wrong question

While companies debate how many days professionals should be in the office, the more relevant question is another: how to balance the needs of the business with the expectations of talent.



52% Yes

29% No

19% I don't know

More than half of professionals say they would consider changing jobs if faced with a loss of flexibility, signaling that the issue has ceased to be merely an operational matter and has begun to influence career decisions.

This does not mean, however, that there is an ideal model for all companies. Different sectors, functions, and operational contexts require different levels of physical presence, collaboration, and autonomy.

Preference versus practice: where the real tensions arise

Flexibility has become a priority for many professionals. Even so, organizations face the challenge of balancing individual expectations, operational needs, and business objectives.

The result is a scenario where there is not always alignment between the work model desired by professionals and the one actually adopted by companies.

Understanding these differences is fundamental to assessing the risks of attraction, retention, and engagement.

Throughout this material, we will see that the most successful organizations are not necessarily the most flexible or the most face-to-face. They are the ones that manage to align criteria, communicate expectations clearly, and make decisions consistent with their strategy.

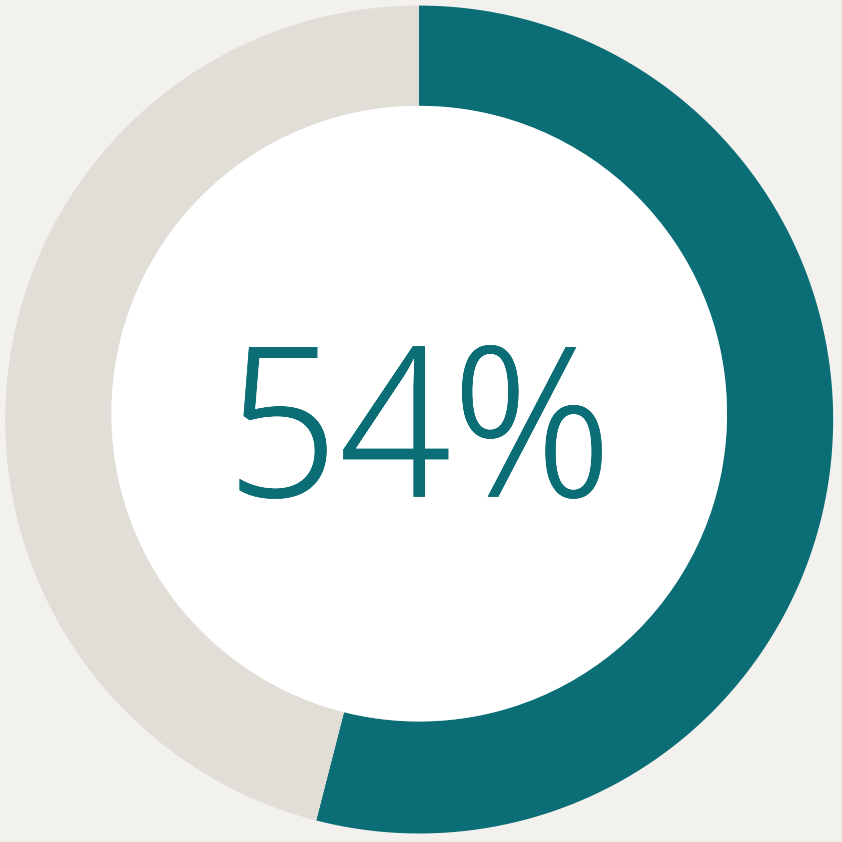
Working Model	Professionals' preference	Model adopted by companies	Tension level*
Hybrid with flexibility	41%	17%	**High**
Hybrid with pre-defined in-person days	35%	39%	**Low**
100% remote	16%	7%	**Average**
100% in-person	8%	37%	**High**

The greater the difference between the professionals' preferences and the model adopted by companies, the greater the level of tension.

The return to in-person learning and the risk of talent loss

The discussion about work models has gained relevance because it has begun to directly impact how professionals evaluate career opportunities and decide whether to stay with or leave an organization.

Flexibility has become part of the value proposition offered by companies, especially in knowledge-intensive roles and in more competitive sectors.



Managers believe that increased physical presence raises the risk of turnover.

The impact is not uniform: more contested and digital areas tend to react with greater sensitivity.

See how benefits impact the value proposition for professionals.

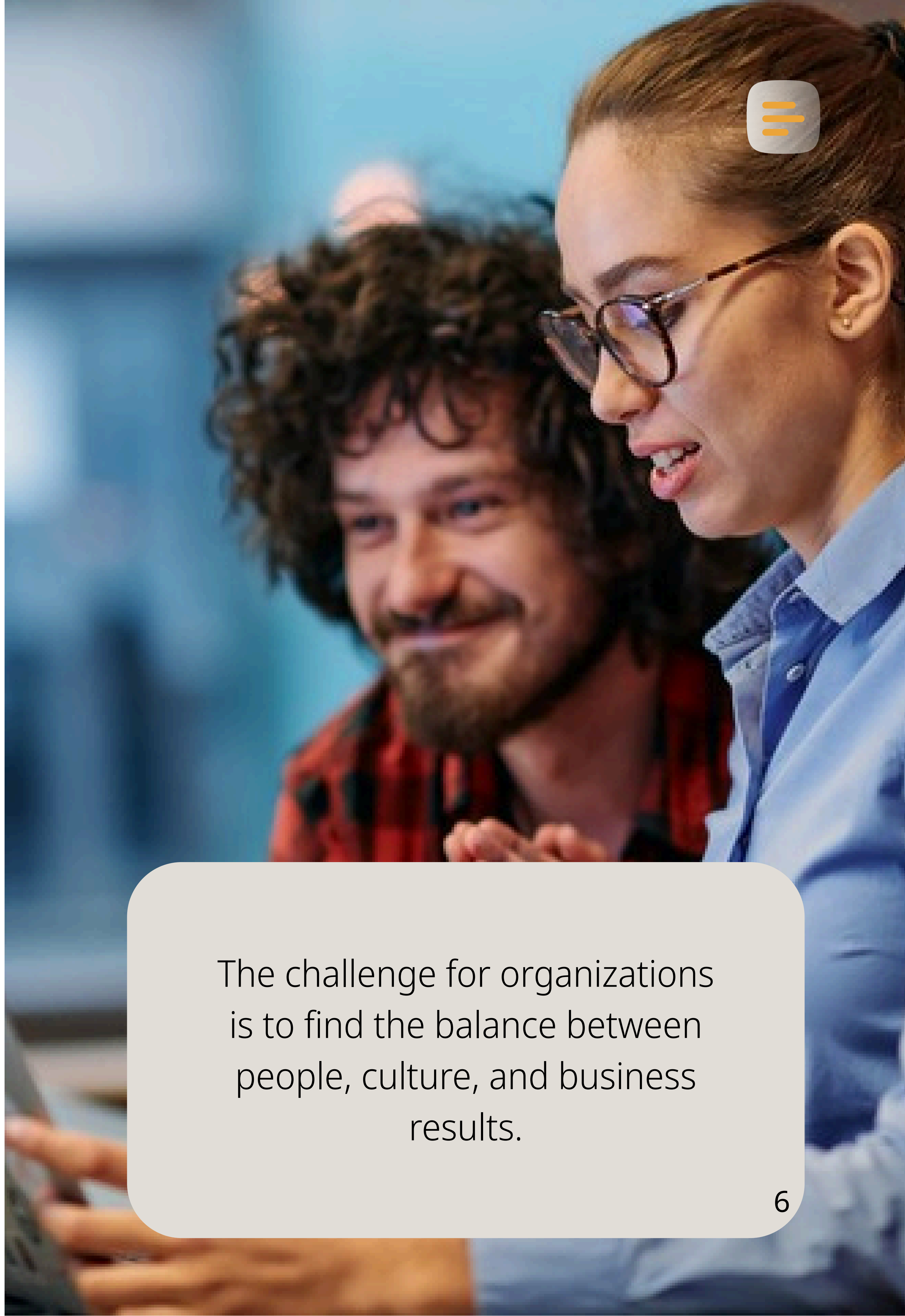
Click here

Why are companies increasing their physical presence?

Despite concerns related to attracting and retaining talent, many organizations have been increasing their requirements for physical presence in recent years.

This decision reflects a growing perception that certain aspects of organizational dynamics are strengthened when teams share more face-to-face time, especially in activities that depend on intense collaboration, integration between areas, professional development, and building organizational culture.

- **68%** strengthening organizational culture
- **63%** improved communication and collaboration
- **59%** need for integration and supervision
- **50%** increased productivity
- **34%** pressure from global leadership



The challenge for organizations is to find the balance between people, culture, and business results.

The invisible cost of ambiguity

Professionals tend to accept different models when they understand the reasons behind them. Resistance usually arises when rules seem inconsistent, change frequently, or are applied unevenly across departments and teams.

1. Unclear decisions
2. Frequent exceptions
3. Loss of internal trust
4. Disengagement and talent turnover

When criteria are transparent, expectations are aligned, and decisions are communicated consistently, organizations increase their chances of gaining adoption and alignment, even in contexts that require greater in-person interaction.

Most common impacts:

- Loss of talent due to increased mobility
- Fall in engagement
- Increased hiring costs
- Devaluation of in-person time

Download the Robert Half study on Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health in the Workplace.

Click here

The business context influences the work model

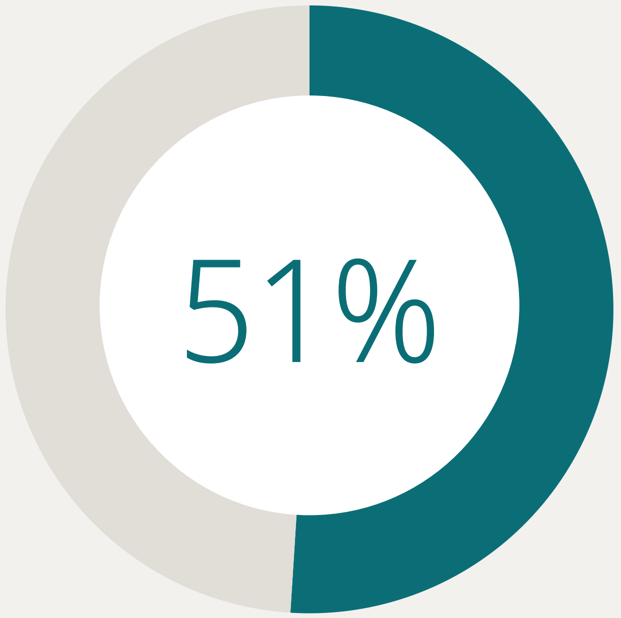
While some companies expand their physical presence to strengthen collaboration, culture, and development, others manage to operate with higher levels of flexibility without compromising their results.

Two dimensions help structure this decision:

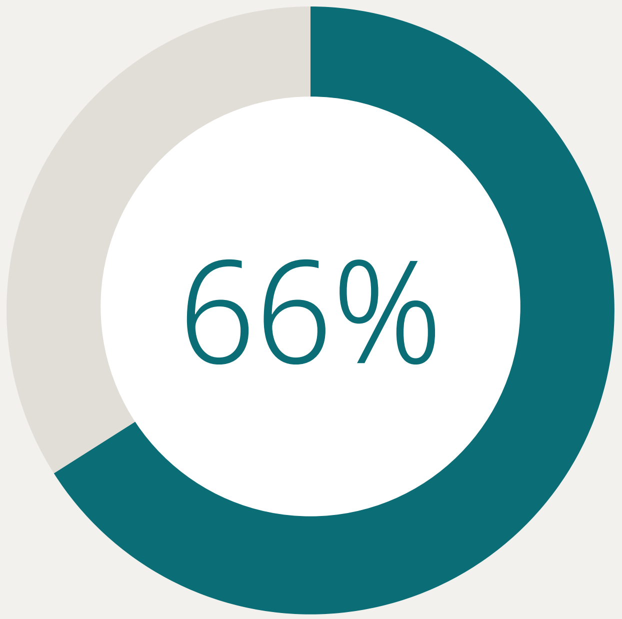
- the level of predictability of the business
- the level of collaboration required

The organizational context is not homogeneous. The combination of these dimensions allows for the organization of different work contexts.

Most companies operate in intermediate scenarios:



They consider their business environment moderately predictable.



indicate a high need for in-person collaboration.

Four contexts, different needs for presence

High

Need for collaboration

Low

Intensive coordination

- Short decision cycles
- Frequent alignment between areas
- In-person presence to reduce risk

Favors: more frequent in-person presence

Structured alignment

- Clear integration routines
- Sustained culture and collaboration
- Purpose-driven in-person presence

Favors: structured hybrid model

Adaptive autonomy

- Highly accountable experts
- Decentralized decision-making
- Focus on strategic priorities

Favors: flexible hybrid model

Structured autonomy

- Sustainable distributed model
- Deliverable-driven performance
- Physical presence is not a determining factor.

Favors: remote model (high flexibility)

Low   Predictability   High

Different sectors, different presence needs

The discussion about work models is heavily influenced by the sector in which the company operates and the operational constraints inherent to each sector.

Three major industry standards

More flexible	Intermediate presence	Higher in-person presence
Technology Financial Services and Insurance Services	Industry Agribusiness Oil & Gas Logistics Retail Education	Construction and Engineering, Automotive Energy (generation, transmission and distribution) Healthcare Mining and Steelmaking

Note: The Robert Half survey received responses from professionals in 14 sectors of the economy. The table above considers the average number of in-person days per sector, taking into account all areas of the company.

Explore the analysis by sector.

Click here

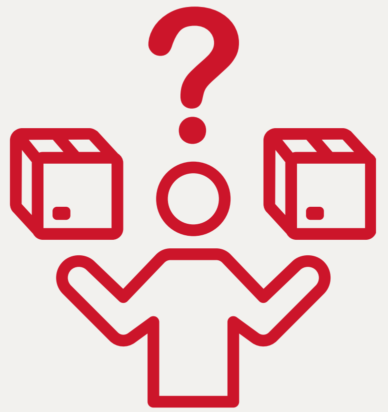
Two models coexist within the same company

In many cases, corporate and operations operate at different levels. While operations tend to remain more in-person, corporate offices experience greater pressure for flexibility.

On average, the data shows that:

- Corporate roles average 3.8 in-person days.
- Operations average 4.6 in-person days.

Sector	Corporate (avg. in-person days)	Operations (avg. in-person days)
Technology	3.2	3.2
Financial Services and Insurance	3.3	3.8
Industry	3.3	4.9
Agribusiness	3.4	4.9
Services	3.3	4.1
Oil & Gas	3.6	4.5
Logistics	3.6	4.6
Retail	3.6	4.9
Healthcare	4.0	4.7
Automotive	4.0	4.8
Energy (generation, transmission and distribution)	4.1	4.9
Mining and Steelmaking	4.1	4.7
Education	4.2	4.4
Construction and Engineering	4.8	4.9



In some sectors, the distance between the two realities is small. In others, the operation requires significantly higher levels of physical presence.

The debate centers on whether the criteria used to define these differences are clear, consistent, and understood by professionals.

As different models begin to coexist within the same company, the importance of communication and expectation management grows.

The way these differences are explained can be as relevant as the model itself.

When the work model conflicts with the reality of the business

The research shows that different contexts demand different levels of in-person interaction. This doesn't mean that companies should replicate the predominant practice in their sector, but it indicates that decisions that are too far removed from operational reality can have significant consequences.

When the work model becomes detached from business reality, direct risks arise for productivity, collaboration, and retention.

What happens when the work model is not aligned with the context?

Scenario 1

More in-person than the business reality demands.

Possible consequences:

- Restricting access to talent
- Increased difficulty of attraction
- Higher rejection of proposals
- Loss of competitiveness in highly demanded roles

Main risk: loss of ability to attract strategic professionals.

Scenario 2

More flexible than operational reality allows.

Possible consequences:

- Coordination difficulties between teams
- Slower decision-making
- Reduced supervision
- Impacts on execution

Main risk: loss of operational efficiency.

Scenario 3

Differences between areas without clear criteria.

Possible consequences:

- Perception of unequal treatment
- Perceptions of unfairness
- Reduced trust in leadership
- Increased risk of turnover

Main risk: cultural erosion and loss of engagement.

Organizational maturity: what differentiates the most prepared companies

The success of the work model depends less on the format adopted and more on the organization's maturity to sustain decisions over time.

More mature companies are able to operate different models because they define criteria, communicate decisions, and manage exceptions consistently. Less mature companies tend to frequently change work models in an attempt to solve structural problems that are not related to the work itself.

Levels of Maturity in Work Model Management

LOW MATURITY	**HIGH MATURITY**
Reactive decisions Unclear criteria Sporadic communication Informal exceptions Frequent changes Focus on control and presence	Structured decisions Consistent criteria Transparent communication Clear rules Sustainability over time Focus on performance and autonomy

Maturity results from consistency between criteria, communication, and the ability to sustain decisions over time.

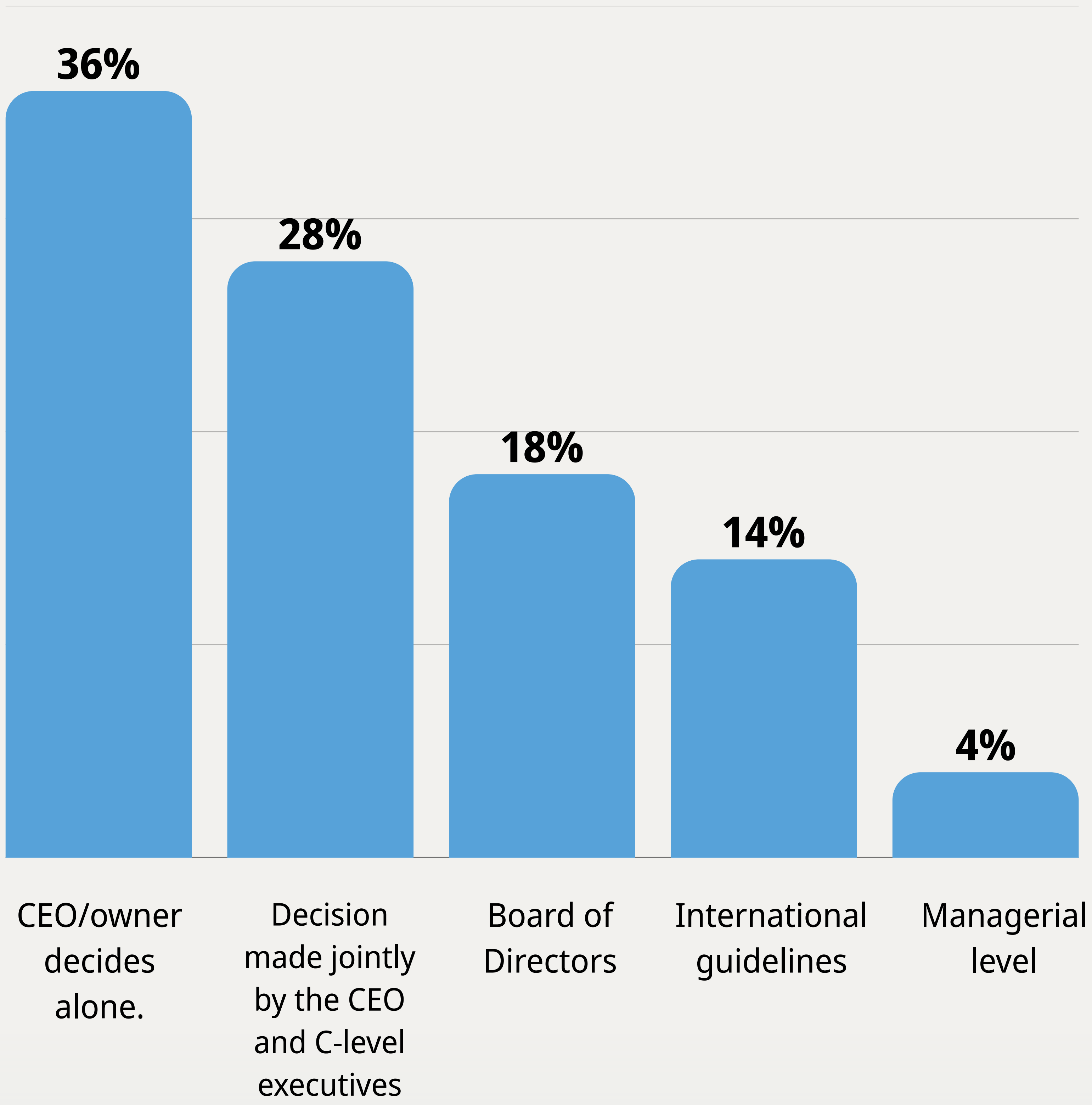
Who decides the work model?

Work models have moved to the agenda of senior leadership, reflecting their impact on talent, culture, and performance.

Research results show that decisions related to physical presence and flexibility are concentrated primarily at the highest levels of the organization, reinforcing the strategic nature of the issue.

82%

Decisions regarding work models are concentrated in senior leadership.



How to use data to make better decisions

Data doesn't replace decision-making, but it makes choices more informed and consistent.
Before revising policies or increasing in-person requirements, it is important to consider some fundamental questions.

Where is the greatest risk of turnover today?

Which areas concentrate critical talent and greater sensitivity to decisions about work models?

What is the current business context?

Is this a time for predictability or for transformation?
How does this impact the need for alignment and collaboration?

Why is in-person interaction truly indispensable?

In which activities does physical presence generate clear value (e.g., innovation, onboarding, cultural rituals)?

Where are the main expectation gaps?

What discrepancies are already appearing between what is expected and what is practiced, before they become critical?

Is the leadership prepared to sustain the model?

Can managers lead hybrid teams, measure performance by deliverables, and maintain engagement without resorting to attendance-based monitoring?

Transforming data into criteria is what differentiates mature decisions from reactive decisions.

How to transform the work model into a lever for attraction and retention

	Retaining	Attracting
Internal resources	• Clearly communicate the criteria and logic of the model • Ensure consistency in application across areas • Periodically review the model based on results • Train leaders to manage hybrid teams • Continuously monitor perception and engagement	• Integrate the work model into the candidate's value proposition • Clearly position the model in the selection process • Align recruitment discourse with operational reality • Use the work model as a differentiating element • Reduce uncertainty in job offers (clarity of rules and flexibility)
External resources	• Support model review based on market benchmarks • Identify sustainable flexibility practices by sector • Support leadership training for new management models • Map turnover risks associated with the adopted model • Support employee engagement and experience initiatives	• Adjust the model based on market intelligence and talent • Structure proposals aligned with candidate expectations • Support negotiations based on real data • Assess the perceived competitiveness of the model • Access critical profiles with higher flexibility requirements

The competitive advantage is not the work model

The competitive advantage lies in the ability to make decisions that are consistent with the reality of the business and to support them with clarity, consistency, and confidence.

"Deciding on work models means defining where the company can and cannot be flexible, and where it cannot afford to make mistakes. The clearer this choice is, the lower the risk and the greater the ability to execute."

Vitor Silva
Market Director at Robert Half

Methodology

This material combines research, market trends, and interpretations to offer a practical insight into the work models adopted by companies and the expectations of professionals.

The methodology includes:

• **ICRH Survey**
Proprietary research by Robert Half that assesses the perceptions of employed and unemployed professionals and leaders regarding priorities, motivators, benefits, trust, intention to stay, and expectations related to work.

• **Sectoral research**
Online research developed by Robert Half and conducted between March and April 2026. 289 professionals and leaders from 14 sectors of the economy participated in the study:

Industry (n=44)	Services (n=17)
Construction and Engineering (n=32)	Health (n=13)
Energy (n=31)	Technology (n=13)
Logistics (n=30)	Agribusiness (n=11)
Mining and Steel (n=25)	Education (n=11)
Retail (n=24)	Oil & Gas (n=11)
Automotive (n=21)	Finance and Insurance (n=6)

Sectoral results should be interpreted considering the differences in sample size. Comparative analyses show greater robustness in sectors with a larger number of respondents, while results from segments with lower participation should be considered indicative of trends.

The results presented reflect the participants' perceptions at the time of data collection and should be interpreted considering the specific characteristics of each sector and organization.

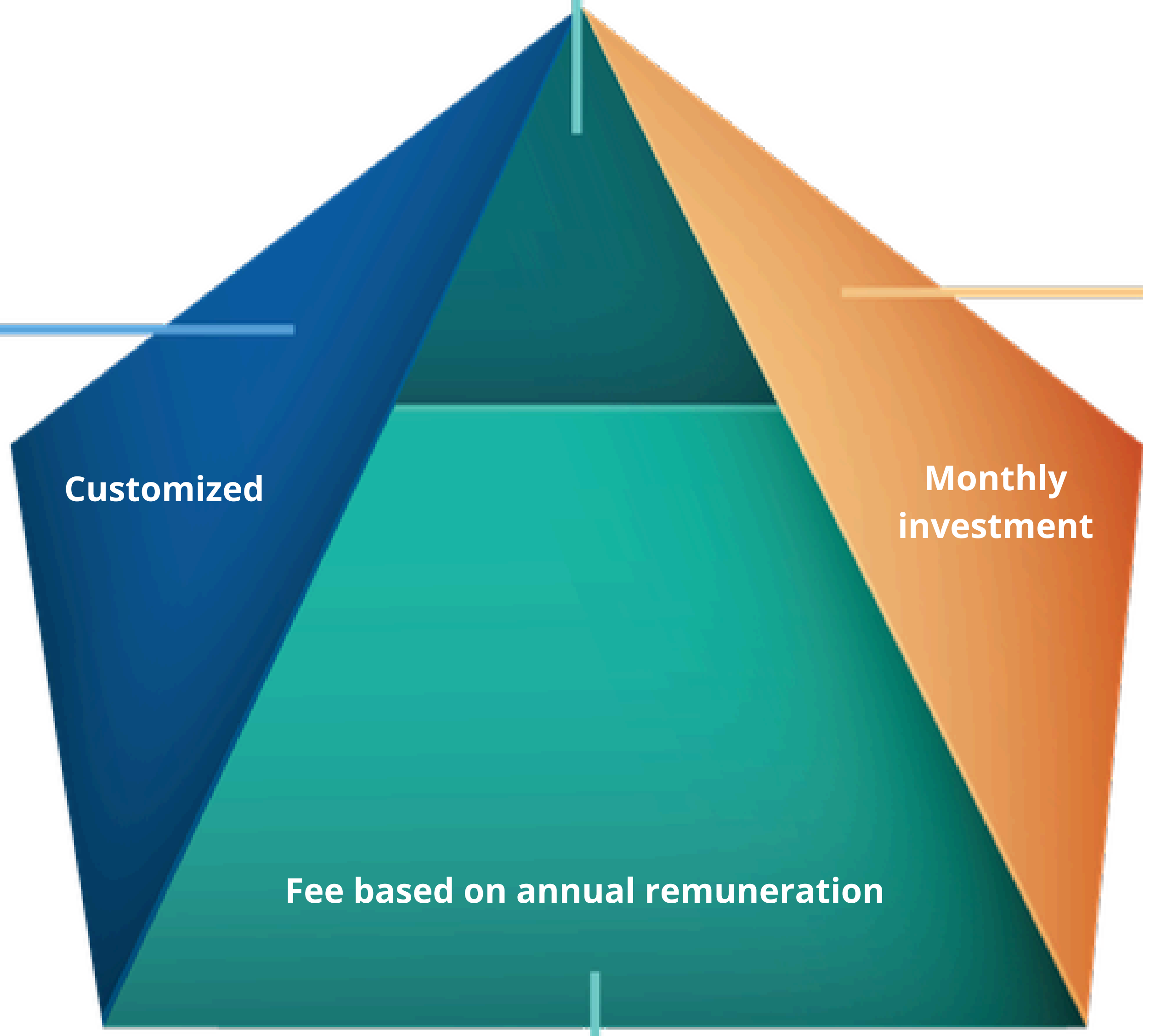
• **Robert Half expertise**
Analyses and interpretations based on the experience of Robert Half, a global leader in specialized talent solutions and business consulting.

Robert Half Solutions

Robert Half offers talent solutions through various services for companies across different industries.

Executive Search

For organizations that recognize that a robust process can significantly impact their direction, we offer a tailor-made approach for sourcing, assessing, and recruiting key professionals.



Consulting

We offer deep consulting expertise, objective insights, and collaboration to help companies tackle challenges and seize opportunities.

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Through Protiviti, a Robert Half company, we can build high-performing teams that adapt to meet your business needs and goals while providing expert consulting.

Project-based hiring

Management Resources: We allocate specialized professionals to areas of corporate strategic leadership.

Staff Loan: A process in which we allocate skilled professionals to perform transactional corporate routines in the areas of finance, accounting, taxation, auditing, and technology.

Permanent Recruitment

Strengthen your company in the long term by hiring professionals or teams on an indefinite-term basis.

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Robert Half Solutions

Robert Half offers talent solutions through various services for companies across different industries.

Rely on the experience of market-specialized consultants and the unique advantages of Robert Half:

Communication: our way of working, proprietary tools, and technology allow us to maintain constant contact with our clients and candidates, keeping them informed at every stage of the recruitment process.

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Match: We work without exclusivity, presenting the most suitable professionals for our clients' needs.

Speed: Candidate selection decisions are made through a collective decision-making process among several consultants, allowing us to present candidates quickly, as a large team is working for each position or project.

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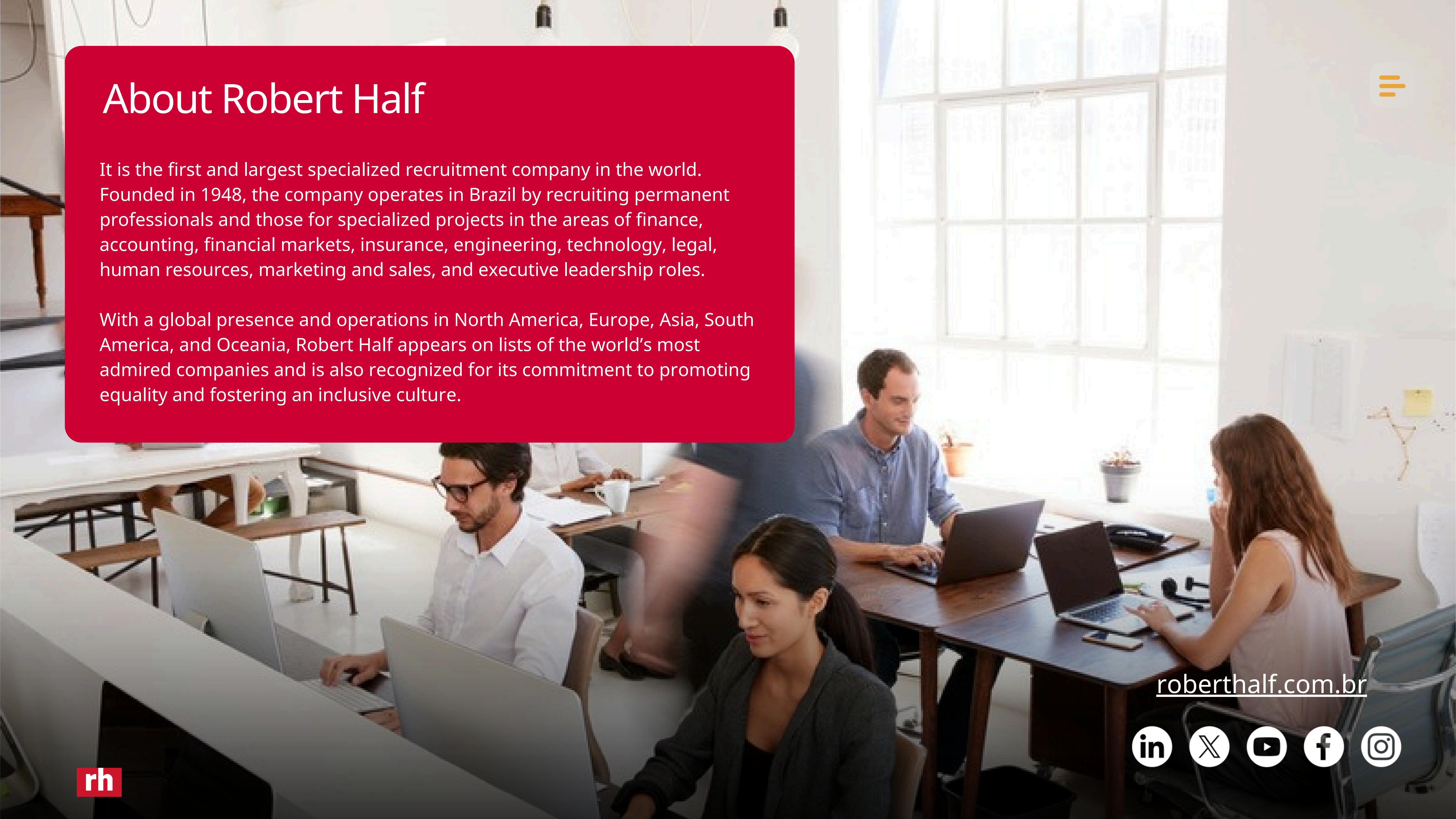
About Robert Half

It is the first and largest specialized recruitment company in the world. Founded in 1948, the company operates in Brazil by recruiting permanent professionals and those for specialized projects in the areas of finance, accounting, financial markets, insurance, engineering, technology, legal, human resources, marketing and sales, and executive leadership roles.

With a global presence and operations in North America, Europe, Asia, South America, and Oceania, Robert Half appears on lists of the world's most admired companies and is also recognized for its commitment to promoting equality and fostering an inclusive culture.



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