



Stop Mandating
Attendance.
Start Earning It.

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Introduction:

From Default to Destination

The office is no longer a default. It's a decision.

The organisations seeing the strongest attendance aren't enforcing it.
They're earning it.

They're aligning their teams, creating clear purpose for in-office time, and delivering experiences that genuinely add to the workday. This shift is critical for the bottom line; in 2025, global employee engagement fell to just 20%, a low that cost the global economy an estimated \$10 trillion in lost productivity*

This guide explores how to shape a workplace people want to be part of: one that feels relevant, inclusive, and worth the commute.

* <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/349484/state-of-the-global-workplace.aspx>.

01

Understanding What Teams Value Now

The expectations of work have shifted—and so has what people need from the office. From Hub Australia's Love Where You Work Report, our members told us:

- **Connection, redefined:** Traditional social norms like after-work drinks are declining in value; connection needs to be more inclusive and activity-based. In fact, 65% of employees now cite relationship building as their primary motivator for returning to the office*
- **Inclusion, expected:** Employees expect a visible, ongoing commitment to inclusive and accessible workplace experiences. While team inclusion rose to 56% in 2025, a significant gap remains at the management level, where only 35% of workers feel their direct manager is inclusive.** Only 24% of employees at typical Australian workplaces report a great deal of trust in their leadership, compared to 59% at Best Workplaces.^
- **Wellbeing, built in:** Employees are looking beyond perks for environments that reduce pressure and support wellbeing. In 2025, 46% of Australian workers reported experiencing burnout, with nearly half stating their performance has suffered as a result***
- **The shift in social connection:** Activity-based experiences (like workshops or collaborative events) are proving more popular than traditional formats like after-work drinks.

* <https://www.cbre.nl/insights/reports/2024-2025-global-workplace-and-occupancy-insights>

** <https://www.dca.org.au/research/inclusion-at-work-index-2025-2026>

*** <https://www.mindyourhead.org.au/why-burnout-is-rising-in-australian-workplaces-and-how-to-protect-your-mental-health/>

^ [Great Place To Work, The Great Divide: Inside Australia's Best Workplaces, 2025.](#)



02

What High-Performing Workplaces Are Doing Differently



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Leading organisations aren't leaving attendance to chance. They're designing for it.

From Square Meters to Shared Moments: The Death of Desk Density

The traditional office was designed for density—prioritising how many people could fit on a floor. Today, leading organisations have inverted this metric: **75% of global firms now prioritise employee satisfaction and experience over traditional desk-ratio benchmarks***

This shift reveals that the office is no longer a storage facility for workers, but a high-performance tool where:

- **Experience is a performance driver:** Leading organisations link workspace experience to engagement, productivity, and retention, not just attendance. Australian Best Workplaces achieve 94% customer service excellence compared to just 62% at typical workplaces — a 32 percentage point gap.[^]
- **Time together is intentional:** Top-performing employees spend office time on collaborative, social, and learning activities, while individual work often shifts elsewhere. Data shows only **17% of desks** are now used for more than five hours a day^{**}
- **Variety and access increase engagement:** Team members report higher satisfaction when they have access to a range of experiences, spaces, and activities throughout the day.
- **The environment is intentionally programmed:** Organisations are actively designing how the office is used day-to-day, rather than leaving it to individual choice. Currently, **59% of organisations** are increasing investment in office fit-outs to move toward these "activity-based" concepts^{***}

* <https://www.cbre.nl/insights/reports/2024-2025-global-workplace-and-occupancy-insights>

** <https://xysense.com/workplace-utilization-index/>

*** <https://www.ashb.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/IS-2025-127.pdf>

[^] [Great Place To Work, The Great Divide: Inside Australia's Best Workplaces, 2025.](#)

03

Turning Strategy into Everyday Experience



Alignment & Coordination: Create clarity around when it matters to be in.

- **Anchor days:** Align on 2—3 consistent in-office days to remove the risk of coming in to no one. Tuesdays are currently the global peak for office use, seeing 51.5% utilisation*
- **Purposeful work:** Structure office days around high-value activities—like team stand-ups or collaboration blocks—rather than individual desk work.

Team Culture & Rituals: Give people something to come back for.

- **Team Rituals:** Regular, predictable moments owned by the team—like a weekly lunch—create a rhythm people don't want to miss. These can increase an employee's sense of meaningful work by 16%**
- **Visible Leadership Presence:** Leaders consistently in-office on key days reinforces that in-person time matters. With manager engagement at a global low of 22%, this modeling is essential***

Experience & Activation: Make the day feel different to working from home.

- **High-value programming:** Host guest speakers or knowledge shares so teams can attend and learn together. Fun is the number one driver of wellbeing across all generations in Australian workplaces—employees who experience fun at work are 190% to 220% more likely to report high wellbeing levels.^
- **Unexpected moments:** Layer in surprise and delight elements—like treat trolleys or pop-up activations—to create energy.

* <https://xysense.com/workplace-utilization-index/>

** <https://www.uctoday.com/employee-engagement-recognition/digital-team-rituals-hybrid-work/>

*** <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/349484/state-of-the-global-workplace.aspx>

^ [Great Place To Work, The Great Divide: Inside Australia's Best Workplaces, 2025.](#)



04

Designing for Wellbeing (Not Just Productivity)

The best workplaces support the whole person to address the **61% of Australian workers** currently reporting burnout symptoms*

- **Wellbeing micro-moments:** Introduce short, accessible experiences like chair massages or 15-minute resets.
- **In-office recharge:** Practical, high-value offerings like health checks or flu shots that are easier to access in-office than remotely.
- **Start-of-day boosts:** Simple touches like breakfast or coffee on arrival make the commute feel worthwhile.

* <https://www.foremind.com.au/post/employee-burnout-statistics>



Conclusion:

Make It Worth the Commute

People come in when the experience feels worthwhile. That comes down to three things:

- **Alignment** — knowing when to be there.
- **Purpose** — knowing the time is being used intentionally.
- **Experience** — feeling the day is valuable and different from a standard workday.

Australian Best Workplaces outperform typical organisations by 41 percentage points in psychological safety, 30 points in retention, and 32 points in customer service excellence.[^]

When these work together, the office becomes a place people choose.

[^] [Great Place To Work, The Great Divide: Inside Australia's Best Workplaces, 2025.](#)



How Hub Australia Brings This to Life

At Hub, we support you in bringing these workspace experiences to life through:

- **Experience design** to shape how your office is used intentionally.
- **Regular programming**—from guest speakers to social club events—to create consistent reasons to come in.
- **Activations and rituals** that turn moments into culture.

Ready to love where you work? Get in touch with Hub Australia to discuss how we can create the perfect experience design for your business.



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