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**FIRM MANAGEMENT**

# Nearly 80% of Remote Workers Think They'd Be Fired for Saying No to the Office

Almost 60% of employers say they would be content with employees resigning rather than returning to the office.

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Almost 80% of remote workers believe **their employers would fire them** if they said “no” to a return-to-office mandate.

However, nearly 60% of employers say they’d be content with employees resigning rather than returning to the office. That’s according to a survey of 800 workers and 200 business leaders by OSlash, a productivity software company.

Big-name companies like Apple Inc. and Peloton Interactive Inc. are leading the charge, setting Labor Day as their latest deadline for corporate employees to be in the office at least three days a week. The push has driven a wedge between workers and their bosses, with many rank-and-file employees reluctant to give up the flexibility and autonomy they enjoyed during the pandemic.

Stories of employee resistance are circulating on social media: One of the most popular posts on the subreddit r/antiwork this month described a worker replying all to a company-wide message with, **simply, “no.”** On Monday, New York Times offered employees branded lunchboxes to welcome them back to the office. The gesture fell flat as more than 1,200 pledged to work from home to protest the mandated return and to pressure the company to negotiate with the union over returning to the building.

For employers who want to sweeten the deal, more money, flexible scheduling and free food were some of the most popular incentives workers said would lure them back, OSlash found. Alternatively, four out of five of employees would be happy to take a pay cut to continue working from home, with Gen Z workers the most willing to do so.

Employers polled say they’re prepared to offer flexible scheduling, with 60% saying they would offer hybrid options to employees disinclined to return to in-person work. While 20% said they would continue to let their employees work remotely if challenged, almost the same portion said they would fire workers who refused to return to their desks, making outright refusal a risky proposition. At the same time, over 10% of business leaders admitted using a return-to-the-office mandate to terminate employees without having to lay them off.

For those still resisting: the survey found that more than one-third of employers see remote workers as more expendable than those on site.

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