

The Modern Workplace and its Impact on Women in Commercial Real Estate

The Opportunities and Challenges of Remote,
Hybrid, and Flexible Work



The global business network advancing
all women in commercial real estate.

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Executive Summary

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, remote and hybrid work arrangements for most companies were generally the exception, not the rule. When the pandemic forced closures of offices around the globe, workers and employers found that working from home had distinct advantages, including a better work/life balance and flexibility for when work gets done, plus more productivity.

Fast forward to 2026, and numerous organizations and companies across the world have embraced remote and hybrid work as part of their business model. “Hybrid work has created opportunities for many women by providing greater flexibility and making it easier to balance professional and personal responsibilities without stepping away from ambitious careers,” said Elena Pérez, head of Spain-Centralis Group in Madrid.

The focus of this research paper is how the global workforce has been affected by hybrid and remote work, and in particular how such work arrangements have impacted commercial real estate (CRE) companies, women, and industry professionals. In the commercial real estate space, many companies offer a variety of work arrangements from fully remote offices to hybrid opportunities to everyone in the office five days a week.

“The issue is not hybrid work itself but how organizations manage it,” Pérez said. “Leaders need to ensure that high-profile projects, client exposure, and advancement opportunities are allocated intentionally rather than through informal

proximity. Flexibility should not come at the expense of visibility. The goal should be to make access to opportunities more inclusive, not more dependent on who happens to be in the office.”

This research paper will also explore the challenges—and benefits—women in commercial real estate experience in hybrid work environments. “Many women have to flex between work and home life,” said Kassie Inness, president of Metonic Real Estate in Omaha, Nebraska. “If a woman is working remotely two or three days a week while her male counterparts are physically in the office five days a week, those casual, unstructured conversations where deals are brainstormed and tasks are delegated happen without her.”

In the following pages of this publication, you will gain insight into how hybrid work options can benefit women and all professionals in commercial real estate. You will also learn from case studies of CRE companies of all sizes across the globe, and how employers can support professionals and their career advancement regardless of work location, including:

- Scheduling in-office meeting days
- Proactively providing mentorship and sponsorship opportunities for women
- Adding (meaningful) communication and meetings
- Making your commitment to flexible work clear; and
- Having transparent promotion criteria. ■



Introduction

The idea of telecommuting has its roots in 1973 during the OPEC energy crisis. Companies began to recognize that requiring hundreds of employees to commute to large corporate headquarters was not a viable long-term model.¹ Around that same time, former NASA engineer Jack Nilles developed the idea of telecommuting via a network of small offices close to people's homes that they could easily access by walking or biking. Technology took several decades to make Nilles' idea feasible on a larger scale, as seen in this century's many forms of working from alternative locations.

A recognized expert on the future of work, Prithviraj Choudhury, the Lumry Family Associate professor at Harvard Business School, reminds us that "remote and distributed work has been around for decades. If you count the number of days that people were working remotely in the United States, the number was hovering around 5% of all working days," he said in a January 2026 article for the London School of Economics

and Political Science (LSE). The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic accelerated working from home. "Since the pandemic, that number has shot up to about 30% of all working days, which is a very, very large increase in a short period of time." Choudhury noted that the "number has been surprisingly stable in almost all major Western economies."²

Today, Regus research found that more than half of employees (54%) across the world spend at least half the week not working at their company's offices.³ While over the past few years, many large corporations have announced with great fanfare a return to the office, on average, a little more than a quarter (26%) of full, paid days were worked at home in May 2026, down slightly from the 27% notched in 2025 and not far off from the roughly 30% in 2022.⁴ Turns out, rates of remote work seem "to have reached a new equilibrium, with far more people working from home at least part of the time than before the pandemic."

(1) <https://www.regus.com/en/the-impact-of-remote-working-on-commercial-real-estate>

(2) <https://www.lse.ac.uk/research/research-for-the-world/economics/remote-jobs-are-transforming-work>

(3) <https://www.regus.com/en/the-impact-of-remote-working-on-commercial-real-estate>

(4) <https://www.wsj.com/economy/jobs/work-from-home-is-here-to-stay-even-if-some-ceos-dont-love-it-5bd6690a>

Defining Hybrid and Remote Work

A 2023 survey by Leesman found that 94% of workers across the globe favor hybrid working.⁵ In the U.S., nearly a fifth of the workforce works remotely, with around 16% of companies operating with a fully remote staff.⁶ Argentina has one of the highest percentage of employees who telecommute on a regular basis (60%), followed by the U.S. (59%) and South Africa (56%).⁷

The highest percentage of remote workers were those between the ages of 24 and 35, which suggests that younger employees prefer the autonomy and flexibility remote work offers. That mindset could impact businesses who want to both retain and attract talent from this group.⁸

Hybrid work offers flexibility, balance and autonomy by emphasizing employee choice while retaining a connection to a physical workspace. In New Zealand, an annual employee survey by 2 Degrees found more than half (51%) said they were more productive because of hybrid work.⁹ The Manpower Group Employment Outlook Survey 2024 noted 37% of companies with flexible work policies were better able to retain talent as well as expand candidate pools when hiring.

Heather Rinkol, now vice president of business development, has been fully remote since 2013 when she started at Banc of California's National Small Business Lending. "Working remote has allowed me to be more present and available to my family while also focusing on my career," Rinkol said. Weekly Teams meetings plus bi-weekly check-ins with her director keeps her connected and visible to leadership. ■

Remote work means working from an alternative location. For many employees, this means working from their home on a full-time basis.

Hybrid work means working from an alternative location as well as in-person at an office. As its name suggests, hybrid blends the traditional onsite office work with the modern convenience of working from alternative locations, including home.¹⁰

Companies with a set hybrid work schedule often have more success than those without a defined schedule. The most common hybrid work schedules are:

- **Alternate weeks:** one week in the office, the next at a remote location
- **Split week:** fixed days the company picks, partial choice with company and employee selecting in-office days, full choice with workers choosing which days to come in as long as they meet the minimum in-person days set by the company
- **Shift hybrid:** employees pick which part of their day is in the office
- **Half-hybrid:** splitting the workday between home and office
- **50:50 schedule:** half a month remotely and half in the office
- **3/2/2 schedule:** employees are in the office three days, work remotely for two, then have two days off
- **4/1 schedule:** employees in the office four days, remote for one
- **Cyclical hybrid:** mostly remote, but teams convene at the office on a set schedule
- **Remote-first:** mostly remote with office space available¹¹

(5) <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20231207-the-permanently-imperfect-reality-of-hybrid-work>

(6) <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/remote-work-statistics/>

(7) <https://www.regus.com/en/the-impact-of-remote-working-on-commercial-real-estate>

(8) <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/remote-work-statistics/>

(9) <https://employerbranding.news/leveraging-hybrid-work-attract-top-talent/>

(10) <https://www.circles.com/resources/how-hybrid-work-impacts-the-workplace-experience>

(11) <https://archieapp.co/blog/hybrid-work-examples-and-practices>



The State of Flexible Work in Commercial Real Estate

Those in commercial real estate who work fully from home or alternative locations say they don't want to go back into the office full time. Lorri Schulte, founder and CEO of Schulte CRE Services in Sacramento, California, is one of those who works fully remote. "I quit my job and started my own firm in 2023 in part because of being forced back into the office," she said. "Personally, I have not seen remote work impact my career or those in my network who also work remotely."

"As appraisers with site inspections, we will never be 100% in office, and that's something that drew me to the profession," added Rachele Cagle, commercial appraiser at Rally Appraisal in Iowa City, Iowa. "I was very against making the internal roles come back 100% in office. Most of them are women and it makes it harder to be a working mother."

Hybrid work opportunities constitute the majority of alternative work options available to employees around the world. Robert Half's 2026 benefits and perks survey found that 88% of U.S. employers offered workers some hybrid opportunities with 25% of employers providing hybrid options to all employees.¹² Hybrid continues to reign supreme among job seekers, with

55% ranking it as their top choice with workers evenly split among those wanting 1-2 days vs 3-4 days in the office. According to Robert Half's survey, senior-level roles had more flexibility in work arrangements, but options exist across all levels of experience.

According to JLL's biannual future of work survey, the majority of businesses (56%) favor a hybrid workplace, while 44% want employees at the office full time.¹³ On average, workers go into the office about 30% less frequently than they did prior to the pandemic. According to an Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) 2026 report, hybrid work remains the clear preference globally. Similar to 2025, 75% of respondents globally prefer hybrid work over fully remote or fully office-based models.¹⁴ The fully remote and hybrid working arrangements give some workers a better balance between work and home and offering remote or hybrid options gives businesses another benefit to offer prospective employees.¹⁵

Hybrid work comes in many shapes and sizes in CRE, with companies tailoring their hybrid schedules to fit their clients and business. "Previously, our company was full-time in-office but moved to hybrid since 2020,"

(12) <https://www.roberthalf.com/us/en/insights/research/remote-work-statistics-and-trends>

(13) <https://www.jll.com/en-ae/insights/hybrid-work-balancing-office-and-remote-environments-for-business-success>

(14) <https://hr.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/news/workplace-4-0/workplace-ikigai/hybrid-work-to-dominate-but-intentional-office-days-will-define-careers-report/131438440>

(15) <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/real-estate/our-insights/flexible-works-enduring-appeal-affects-workers-employers-and-real-estate#/>

said Kassie Inness, president of Metonic Real Estate in Omaha, Nebraska. “Most of our team is on a 4/1 or 3/2 schedule.” Team members are allowed to work remotely Wednesdays and Fridays, with in-office meetings scheduled for Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

At Savills’ London office, the requirement is roughly three days per week in the office, a change from the five days a week with zero flexibility pre-pandemic. “It’s very flexible by team, and the hybrid work arrangement has enabled me personally to get more out of my life outside of work, which has strengthened me as a person and made me more ready for leadership opportunities,” said Sarah Thorley, an associate director with Savills.

Other companies designate a specific remote workday for all employees. “While we have two fully remote employees, we’re mostly in-office, but can work from home whenever needed,” said Lindsey Cannon, managing director at Quest Site Solutions in Greenville, South Carolina.

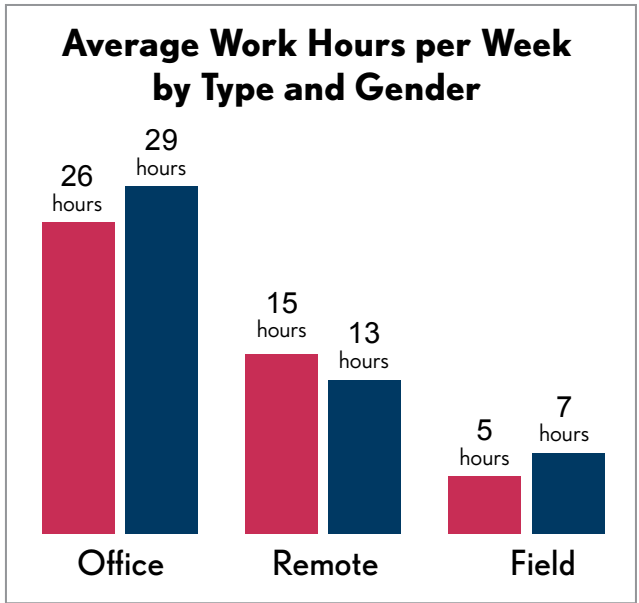
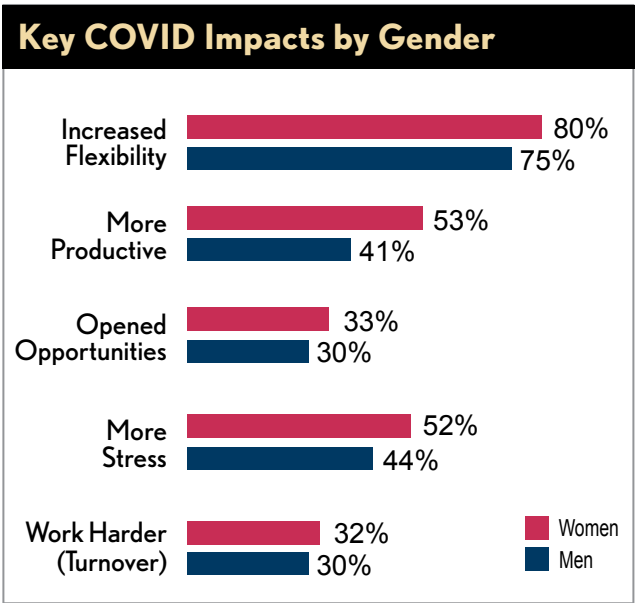
Some companies allow more hybrid options for specific company roles. For example, the accounting department at N3 Real Estate in Southlake, Texas, works from home four days a week while the remaining employees may work from home on Fridays. “Success in

CRE means constantly learning new things or adapting to deal-specific situations. Therefore, it is very difficult to be excellent at CRE in isolation,” said CEO Brenna Wadleigh, whose company has a hybrid work policy.

What CREW Network Research Reveals

Women in particular benefit from more flexibility with hybrid and remote work options. According to the 2025 CREW Network Benchmark Study Report, commercial real estate professionals now spend a little more than half of their time in the office. Seventy-five percent of men and 80% of women reported more flexibility in their work, although women worked more remotely with an average of 2.5 hours more per week than their male counterparts.

The 2025 benchmark study found that remote and hybrid work arrangements post-pandemic mostly benefited mid-level professionals, followed by senior-level leaders and those at the VP/partner level with entry-level employees experiencing fewer options for work flexibility. Overall, the 2025 study revealed that women have disproportionately leaned into the opportunities afforded by increased flexibility, while men spent more time in person at the office or in the field.



Impact of Post-Pandemic Working Conditions by Career Level						
	Self-Employed	Entry-Level	Mid-level/Associates	Senior-Level	VP/SVP/Partner	C-suite
Increased Flexibility	69%	65%	86%	80%	79%	73%
More Productive	52%	45%	54%	51%	53%	50%
Opened Opportunities	37%	30%	36%	34%	28%	38%
More Stress	44%	40%	52%	52%	52%	49%
Work Harder (Turnover)	29%	20%	31%	34%	32%	31%

The study found that the higher the career level, the more flexibility women had in their jobs. Eighty-six percent of mid-level/associates had the most flexibility while entry-level employees (65%) and self-employed workers (69%) had the least.

In addition, the benchmark study found that women in commercial real estate in the U.K. averaged the most remote hours per week with 17, followed by the U.S. with 16 and Canada with 14. U.S. women in CRE logged the most hours in the office per week with 27 hours, with Canadian women close behind at 26 hours in the office. U.K. women in CRE spent 23 hours in the office per week on average.

Benefits and Pitfalls of Hybrid/Remote Work

As with many workplace policies, remote and hybrid work has its benefits and pitfalls for both companies and workers. “Hybrid work has been great for women,” said Carol Schillne, senior vice president with ORION Investment Real Estate in Scottsdale, Arizona. “I commend a hybrid model because it does foster and encourage better work/life balance and family growth, which are important drivers to employee happiness and results.”

Greater flexibility is a top reason most people enjoy hybrid work. “I think hybrid work has changed the workplace for the better when it comes to women’s

advancement, especially for working moms who want flexibility to be available for their kids,” said Cagle.

For Lisa Lackovic, in architectural sales for Endicott Clay Products in Fairbury, Nebraska, her hybrid work schedule helps her be out in the community more. “Influential relationships with my customers have improved due to my flexibility,” she said.

Hybrid and remote work options also help with inclusion, “especially through enabling women to continue in roles when they require flexibility, such as returning after maternity leave,” said Christopher Early, sales director at Freshwave in London.

Another major benefit of hybrid and remote work to companies is the ability to embrace global talent without geographic limitations. Companies can expand hiring pools across borders, giving them access to global talent.

Increased productivity is another advantage to hybrid work. A 2024 study of Chinese workers at Trip.com found that employees who worked remotely two days per week had just as high production levels and were just as likely to be promoted as their fully in-person peers.¹⁶ A U.S. study found that employees cited higher productivity levels (44%) and improved access to focus (42%) as top benefits to hybrid work arrangements.¹⁷

Many employees cite better work/life balance with hybrid arrangements, with employees able to tailor their

(16) <https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2024/06/hybrid-work-is-a-win-win-win-for-companies-workers>

(17) <https://www.surveymonkey.com/learn/employee-feedback/remote-hybrid-work-statistics/>

working hours to match their personal commitments. This autonomy and flexibility often lead to more satisfaction with their jobs and lower overall stress.¹⁸

"I have more opportunities to chase because I can put in the time from home," said Stephanie Lemieux, director of property management at York Realty Inc., in Edmonton, Alberta. "Moms are typically the first call from the school or from our kids. Having flexibility allows me more opportunity to be there for both work and family, thus creating a better balance in my life."

But hybrid work has its negative aspects as well. One reason D.W. Kozera, Inc., in Baltimore, Maryland, doesn't allow remote work is that "we have not seen it be successful with mentoring junior staff," said President Shana Carroll. In addition, leadership can lose sight of remote workers. "When discussing remote work at various industry meetings and events, I have routinely heard senior leaders state that *remote people have jobs, but in-office people have careers*," said Carroll.

That mindset can be especially present in higher-level executives or older generations. "In a lot of CRE firms, there is still very much an undercurrent of an old-school mentality about butts-in-seats and leaders being in the office before people arrive and staying until their employees are gone for the day," said Allison Taggart, vice president of property management for Pacific Coast Commercial in San Diego, California, who works in the office full-time. "When my company was calling people back to the office after the pandemic, they said that if you decided to stay remote, then you might miss out on the ability to be promoted."

Women have always faced unique challenges to ascend to leadership positions within commercial real estate, issues that hybrid and remote work sometimes exacerbate. "Hybrid and remote work have fundamentally changed leadership opportunities for women in CRE—and visibility matters immensely,"

said Inness. "CRE is an industry historically built on relationship capital, networking, and the 'meeting after the meeting.' When you shift to a remote or heavily hybrid model, the dynamics of how influence is traded and how leaders are chosen shift completely. 'Out of sight, out of mind' is a real threat."

Some hybrid workers feel disconnected from the workplace while some companies prioritize presenteeism over purpose. "Hybrid employees shouldn't have to be in the office to be seen," said Elena Pérez, head of Spain-Centralis Group in Madrid. "Visibility should come from contribution and impact." For example, when assigning projects, "managers should consciously look beyond who is physically present and ensure opportunities are distributed fairly," she said.

Shaping the Labor Market

To Prithwiraj Choudhury, the Lumry Family Associate professor at Harvard Business School, hybrid and remote work is rewiring the labor markets along with communities around the world. When employment is decoupled from a physical location, work-from-anywhere "alters long-standing patterns of migration and 'brain drain,' showing consequences not only for workers and employers, but also for smaller towns that have historically lost people and opportunity."¹⁹

A 2025 McKinsey & Company survey found that 17% of workers quit their jobs for more flexible work arrangements, a top priority for those wanting hybrid arrangements. Companies can use remote and hybrid work as a tool to attract and retain talent alongside other flexibility offerings (including flexible scheduling or more time off).²⁰

Those who prefer alternative work options don't fall into one demographic. For example, the McKinsey & Company study discovered that those with higher levels of education and income "were more likely to

(18) <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news/does-the-hybrid-work-model-work-in-a-country-like-india-the-pros-and-cons/articleshow/114248879.cms>

(19) <https://www.lse.ac.uk/research/research-for-the-world/economics/remote-jobs-are-transforming-work>

(20) <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/real-estate/our-insights/flexible-works-enduring-appeal-affects-workers-employers-and-real-estate#/>



prefer remote work models and also more likely to work remotely.” In addition, the survey found that women without children at home wanted to work from home more than their male counterparts, showing that childcare flexibility isn’t the driving factor for remote work.

Pérez posited that where a person is in their career can determine the efficacy of hybrid and remote work. “Early-career professionals generally benefit from spending more time in the office,” she said. “Mid-career professionals often value flexibility the most, while senior professionals usually have greater autonomy to decide where they can be most effective.”

Hybrid Best Practices

Overall, the long-term success of hybrid work rests on how companies intentionally design their policies.²¹ However, the best practices surrounding hybrid and remote work are as varied as the people who work those schedules. Here are some of the industry standards CRE companies have employed to help their hybrid and remote workers succeed.

Recognize hybrid employees are at different career levels. For example, early-career professionals often benefit more from structured mentoring and frequent feedback. “Employees may be at different

stages of their life, so they value flexibility more to manage their family obligations and commitments,” said Aman Bhatti, director with Asset Management in Calgary, Alberta. Her company requires employees to be in the office four days a week. “Some may be pursuing professional certifications and higher education as well, which could mean they require more time away from the office.”

Build mentorship programs with hybrid and remote workers in mind. Hybrid and remote work arrangements might impact younger employees differently than older ones. New research shows the benefit to younger employees who work in proximity to more senior colleagues.²² Professionals who are new to the industry frequently face challenges acquiring skills when working remotely because of fewer opportunities for informal observation, spontaneous questions, and hands-on guidance from experienced colleagues. Mentorship programs can be invaluable for career growth and companies should leverage technology for these opportunities through virtual meetings and connections.²³

Establish clear communication methods. Regular check-ins and continuous feedback can help management stay aligned with their teams as well as

(21) <https://www.lse.ac.uk/research/research-for-the-world/economics/remote-jobs-are-transforming-work>

(22) <https://www.wsj.com/economy/jobs/work-from-home-is-here-to-stay-even-if-some-ceos-dont-love-it-5bd6690a>

(23) <https://www.avepoint.com/shifthappens/blog/empowering-career-growth-in-a-hybrid-world-strategies-for-leaders>

refine their approach in real-time to ensure the model works for everyone.²⁴ Frequent one-on-one meetings with managers and teams, both in-person and online, can facilitate stronger communication. “Communicate as much as possible through email, meetings, calls, happy hours, etc.,” recommended Steph Guy, principal at Alvine in Omaha, Nebraska.

Design meaningful in-person office time. Rather than have in-office time look the same as work-from-home time, companies should make in-person time meaningful in order to support retention and career growth for all employees.²⁵ Schedule anchor days when everyone comes to the office for special training sessions. Remember that spending quality time together is more beneficial than daily interactions, so add staff activities, such as team lunches to anchor days.

Set clear expectations with specific deliverables. Having a hybrid or remote workforce can be successful if companies set clear expectations and boundaries as well as outline exact deliverables. Leadership should adopt a trust-based and outcome-oriented management style with remote or hybrid workers.²⁶

Provide training. To have a successful hybrid or remote work model, companies should ensure they close the digital skills gaps for remote tools and platforms through training. But the training shouldn’t stop with technology or skills. Teaching managers how to lead scattered teams is also crucial to building team success.

Staying Visible

Hybrid and remote work have significantly changed the nature of visibility, meaning leadership no longer has in-person observations or cues to provide information on how teams function in the workplace. Instead, focus on communication and outcomes to create visibility.²⁷ For example, when team leads manage workers spread across various time zones, they can’t rely on knowing work is progressing by who is in the office and when. Instead, monitor progress via milestones and other measures of success.

Accountability needs to more focus on results over physical presence. Developing leaders for this context requires moving beyond traditional models that emphasize supervision and control. Leadership development needs to focus on judgment, communication discipline, and the ability to lead through influence with accountability anchored in clear results and outcomes rather than authority.

Hybrid models have also opened up leadership opportunities by lowering dependency on location. “Leaders need to look beyond who is most visible in the office and ensure opportunities for women to demonstrate their potential through mentoring, client exposure, industry participation, and strategic projects,” said Pérez. “Some of the best leaders are not those with the fewest responsibilities outside work, but those who have learned to balance multiple responsibilities while bringing energy, empathy, and purpose to everything they do.” ■

(24) <https://www.surveymonkey.com/learn/employee-feedback/remote-hybrid-work-statistics/>

(25) <https://hr.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/workplace-4-0/workplace-ikigai/hybrid-work-to-dominate-but-intentional-office-days-will-define-careers-report/131438440>

(26) <https://lpsonline.sas.upenn.edu/features/rise-remote-work-challenges-and-opportunities-businesses>

(27) <https://sea.peoplesmattersglobal.com/article/strategic-hr/leading-without-walls-how-hybrid-work-is-redefining-leadership-development-in-the-digital-age-49265>



How Hybrid Work Impacts Women

Women face unique challenges when it comes to hybrid and remote work but being out of the office can also level the playing field and create safer environments. For instance, women who work remotely or on a hybrid schedule often face fewer microaggressions and bias.²⁸

Hybrid or remote work allows women to work in a safe environment and to speak up more. “The Zoom bubbles on the screen don’t assign a head at the table, so this creates more visibility when women speak rather than taking a seat at the back of the room. On Zoom, people are forced to listen and are less inclined to talk over you,” said Jennifer Dorgan, director of development and entitlements at Allen Matkins in Irvine, California.

Barrier or Leveler?

Some studies show that remote workers receive fewer promotions than their in-person colleagues. A 2024 study by Live Data Technologies found that those who worked remotely received 31% fewer promotions than those who worked in the office either fully in-person or hybrid. The study also discovered remote workers received fewer mentorship opportunities, “a gap that is especially pronounced for women.”²⁹

Compounding the problem, close to 90% of CEOs surveyed said they favor in-person employees when it comes to assignments, promotions, and raises. Other recent research has tied in-person work with the more likelihood of raises, bonuses, promotions, plus other benefits such as more visibility or plum assignments.³⁰ The Women in the Workplace 2025 report by McKinsey & Company in partnership with Lean In found that women working remotely are penalized when it comes to promotions while men are more often not. A third of women who mostly work at an alternative location received a promotion over the last two years, compared to more than half of their female colleagues who worked mostly in the office.³¹ However, for men, there was little difference in promotions or sponsorships no matter where they worked.

Another key finding from the Women in Workplace 2025 report is that “only half of companies are prioritizing women’s career advancement, ... [which] includes a decline in remote and hybrid work options, formal sponsorship, manager advocacy, and career development programs.” The study focused on women in corporate America and Canada.

(28) <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/you-are-enough/202401/hybrid-work-is-an-equity-issue>

(29) <https://www.wsj.com/lifestyle/careers/layoffs-remote-work-data-980ed59d>

(30) <https://today.ucsd.edu/story/is-the-return-to-office-leaving-women-behind>

(31) <https://womenintheworkplace.com/>

This “flexibility stigma” impacts women earlier in their careers, as entry-level women who work remotely “are nearly 1.5 times less likely to be promoted than women at the same level who work in the office. In contrast, entry-level men are promoted at similar rates regardless of where they work. It appears that when women tap into remote or hybrid work arrangements, coworkers often assume they are less engaged and productive.

Hybrid and remote work have made it more difficult for women to receive leadership opportunities and stretch assignments, or to develop influential relationships. “The perceived lack of profile and possibly commitment to the business, particularly a law firm, has a negative impact on women, especially because it’s more difficult to demonstrate leading by example or to raise their external and internal profiles,” said Laura Holdaway, partner and head of real estate finance at Mills & Reeve LLP in London and Cambridge, U.K. She works a hybrid schedule, spending no less than half her time in the office.

“Women aspiring to leadership positions often face additional challenges in hybrid or remote work environments, where reduced visibility can limit access to information networking, mentorship, and high-profile assignments that are critical for career advancement,” added Alison Topp, architect and medical planner with RDG Planning & Design in Omaha, Nebraska.

Making the Case for Hybrid Work

The remote work bias disappears for hybrid workers, with no discernible difference in promotion rates between those who are fully in person and those who come in less than five days a week. The American Management Association (AMA) and the Management Centre

“The remote work bias disappears for hybrid workers, with no discernible difference in promotion rates between those who are fully in person and those who come in less than five days a week.”

Europe (MCE) conducted a survey of U.S. employees on this topic. AMA/MCE survey respondents cited many advantages for hybrid work, particularly for mid-career women. Forty-eight percent said it had improved company culture, plus 79% indicated it assisted with balancing work and personal commitments, improved quality of life (73%), and gave them better job satisfaction (70%).³² Women aged 35-54 reported they achieved more productivity through hybrid work (65%) than their male counterparts (57%). Mid-career women said that remote work improved their ability to balance work and personal commitments (87% vs. 75%). Overall, survey participants said the benefits of working from an office were underwhelming, with less than half saying it “helped with visibility to senior leaders (42%), coaching and development (36%), productivity (37%), and job satisfaction (26%).”

Inclusive promotion criteria is an essential component of any hybrid or remote work arrangements, and businesses should design policies focusing on performance, contributions and skills over being physically in the office.³³ “Too often, leadership is still associated with visibility, availability, and physical presence. Yet some

(32) <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-hybrid-work-affects-career-advancement-ziyyf>

(33) <https://www.avepoint.com/shifthappens/blog/empowering-career-growth-in-a-hybrid-world-strategies-for-leaders>

of the most impressive professionals I know are women who successfully balance demanding careers, family responsibilities and personal commitments while remaining highly engaged, positive, and focused on developing others around them,” said Pérez with Spain-Centralis Group.

Overall, the perspective of employers needs to shift if companies allow hybrid work. “Employees shouldn’t be held back because they opted for hybrid work that the company allows,” said Bhatti with Asset Management. “That said, employees working from home should actively communicate their progress on projects and deliverables on a regular basis, so their performance doesn’t go unnoticed.”

Responsibilities Outside of Work

Hybrid work gives many professionals a chance to keep working while juggling children and other home responsibilities. According to new findings from International Workplace Group (IWG), two-thirds of the U.K. women surveyed “reported flexibility as crucial to advancing their careers, and more than three-quarters wouldn’t accept a role without hybrid options.”³⁴ Sixty-four percent also said that hybrid working has enabled them to remain in the workforce by more effectively balancing caregiving duties.

“For female talent, flexible working is a catalyst for growth,” added CEO Mark Dixon with IWG. “The findings [of IWG] suggest that hybrid working creates beneficial circle; when women are empowered with flexibility and access to professional workspaces closer to home, they gain clearer pathways for progression and stronger engagement—and, in turn, businesses gain enhanced collaboration, innovation, loyalty and productivity.”³⁵

Visible or Invisible?

Professionals across every age group and career position support hybrid work, according to the 2024 AMA/MCE survey. However, the survey “uncovered evidence of unsettling discrepancies ... between how men and women are benefiting from the new, more fluid work arrangement.”³⁶

For example, the AMA/MCE survey discovered more young men than women indicated they were advancing by working from the office with male colleagues significantly more likely to derive key benefits from in-office work. Early-career men tended to spend more time in the office than women with 52% of males 25 to 34 working in person at least four days per workweek compared to 46% of females in the same age bracket. These early-career men also “widely believed that they are getting ahead by working in the office.”

Being not seen in the office can negatively impact a woman’s career path. Some women who work remotely or hybrid have found limited access to stretch assignments, sponsorship opportunities, or relationship building occasions—all of which are critical for advancing into leadership positions.

“Not being visible enough to the upper management or leadership when discussions are occurring or not being available enough when they are remote, are challenges women in CRE face within a hybrid or remote work model,” said Guy with Alvine, which is fully in-office but offers flexibility as needed. “It is also harder to build relationships remotely than it is to maintain them, so if you don’t have a foundational relationship with in-office colleagues, that makes it harder for the in-office staff to remember what the remote or hybrid staff don’t know.”

To Natalie Widen, preconstruction manager at Kjellstrom and Lee Construction in Richmond, Virginia,

(34) <https://www.hrleader.com.au/business/27895-the-effect-of-flexible-working-on-women-s-career-outcomes>

(35) <https://www.siliconrepublic.com/careers/flexible-work-creates-opportunities-for-women-report-iwg-international-workplace-group>

(36) <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-hybrid-work-affects-career-advancement-ziyyf>

hybrid and remote work options can erase ways to interact and gain knowledge from colleagues. “We are fully in office, something that hasn’t changed since 2020, and while there are certainly days when I could be head down on my own and not talk to a single person, I would lose the benefit of hearing other people’s conversations

throughout the day if I worked remotely,” she said. “Even just being in the same room and listening to people discuss things can be so beneficial, especially to our younger teammates. I encourage them to attend as many meetings and gatherings as they can to listen and absorb from others.” ■



Family Leave Policies

Many countries provide workers with some kind of family or parental leave. Parental leave is generally available in the 38 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries³⁷ and falls under three categories: maternity, paternity, and parental leave. Family caregiving leave encompasses time off to care for a child at home or for a family member who is ill.

Maternity leave: This gives paid, job-protected leave to working mothers before and after childbirth and, in some countries, after adoption. Thirty-three OECD countries currently offer some sort of paid maternity leave for an average of 16 weeks.³⁸

Paternity leave: This provides working fathers with paid, job-protected leave during or shortly after the birth of a child. Twenty-six OECD members give workers paid paternity leave for an average of two weeks.

Parental leave: This gives paid, job-protected leave to working mothers and fathers around the time of childbirth and in some countries after adoption. Twenty-four OECD countries provide such leave for an average of 45 weeks.

Child caregiving leave: This provides paid, job-protected leave that allows at least one parent to provide short-term care to a sick child or care to an infant at home. This is sometimes called home care leave. Thirty OECD members have paid child caregiving leave benefits specifically for parents with children under the age of 12. Some countries give the same level of benefits for parents of children up to age 18.

Family caregiving leave: This gives employees paid, job-protected leave to provide care for a family member with a short-term, non-serious illness, or longer-term serious and/or terminal illness. Nineteen OECD countries provide this benefit with differing leave periods and pay. ■

(37) Countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development include Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

(38) https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/PFL6-Final_.pdf

Snapshots of Hybrid and Remote Work Across Commercial Real Estate

What does hybrid and remote work look like in commercial real estate? Here are four case studies from diverse companies across the globe that offer remote and hybrid work arrangements.

Kensington Vanguard National Land Services LLC

Headquarters: New York, United States

of employees: 250

of employees who work a hybrid schedule:

2 of 10 in the company's Richmond, Virginia office

In 2020, most employees worked remotely, but that slowly evolved to have some hybrid employees and some full in office. "More senior employees have the ability to work remotely without supervision along with those in business development," said Elizabeth Steele, vice president of business development for the commercial title insurance company. Today, two out of the 10 employees at her Richmond, Virginia, office have a hybrid schedule that is set by the company. "We require those hybrid employees to be in the office Tuesday through Thursday, with remote options for Mondays and Fridays," she said. Administrative and other support roles need more in office time to serve as "boots on the ground," she said.

VISIBILITY

One or two days per week where all employees are in the office for meetings and collaboration is key to keeping hybrid colleagues connected. "Having Teams meetings or Zoom calls do not substitute for in-person collaboration," Steele said.

NETWORKING

"Developing soft skills is difficult without in-person interaction," Steele pointed out. "It is also nearly impossible to build a solid network without being physically present in networking situations."

IMPACT

In-person interactions provide a more nuanced assessment of someone's traits and characteristics. According to Steele, fully remote workers often aren't seen enough, and that can decrease their opportunities for promotions and other leadership opportunities.

PIPELINE

Hybrid workers should be kept aware of leadership opportunities along with their fully in-person colleagues. "Set up metrics for evaluating performance that do not penalize a hybrid worker," Steele said.

EVOLUTION

Steele herself thinks the office "is and will be the best and most efficient place to get work done. However, hybrid work should be available because life is not always predictable."



Studio 84 Consultancy Limited

Headquarters: Bristol, United Kingdom

of employees: 6 to 10

of employees who work a hybrid schedule: All

The office follows a hybrid model that allows individual employees to develop their own hybrid schedule. “We are very fluid and adapt on a weekly basis, so whilst some family/childcare commitments are a little more rigid, everyone tries to adopt a level of flexibility when it comes to in-office work,” said Jessica MacKie, owner and founder of Studio 84 Consultancy Limited, which provides workplace strategy, design and change management in CRE.

VISIBILITY

MacKie has a short checklist to ensure hybrid employees remain visible and connected to advancement opportunities. First, make sure hybrid technology is plentiful and seamless to use. Second, create “clear boundaries around attendance to ensure ‘in person’ does not have an easy ‘opt out’ option,” she said. Third, introduce etiquette and behaviors that promote equality between hybrid and office-based roles.

NETWORKING

As MacKie noted, “it is often the in-person ‘in between’ moments that build the strongest bonds and relationships, which can be the foundation of career growth and networking for newer professionals.” Because these moments don’t exist in remote work, “everyone has to make the effort to create more frequent, purposeful, and intentional activities to compensate.”

CAREERS

As a manager with employees at different career stages in a hybrid environment, MacKie recommended “creating a ‘belonging’ department, which helps all colleagues at every level.” Department tasks include introducing hybrid-relevant and connection-focused key performance indicators to organizing social events and mentoring schemes. “Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that everyone feels that they belong and are connected regardless of location,” she said.

IMPACT

MacKie observed that “women who are caregivers are probably the most negatively affected. They may opt for the hybrid/remote opportunities more frequently because this enables them to juggle other commitments. For some, this may appear to reduce their visibility to the organization and therefore, they may be left behind when these opportunities for promotion or leadership arise.”

EVOLUTION

According to MacKie, hybrid and remote work will continue to ebb and flow in the commercial real estate industry. “I think hybrid will remain but the volume of time in the office versus other locations will flex as organizations navigate different scenarios.” She also points to artificial intelligence as “likely to have a significant impact on this with roles and tasks changing as tech rapidly evolves.”

CHANGE

For hybrid and remote work to succeed, MacKie would like to see better boundaries in place to ensure there is an equal expectation for all hybrid colleagues. “A common theme when I work with hybrid organizations is that each department plays by their own rules, and as a result, depending on the managerial preference, some are left behind,” she said.



JLL

Headquarters: London, United Kingdom

of employees: More than 113,000 globally, with 3,330 in the U.K.

of employees who work a hybrid schedule: Most

At JLL in London, the hybrid work arrangement is 50% time in the office and 50% working from an alternative location, although some teams are full in-office and others are on client sites or traveling frequently. The hybrid schedule allows for more flexibility in scheduling workday hours. Most employees opt to be in the office Monday to Thursday, with Fridays being an alternative work location day.

JLL's Phoebe Geake has more than 10 years of experience in the industry and adjusted her schedule after having children. "I am in charge of a national team now, so I have more travel across the U.K. and sometimes across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, which I work into my schedule and offset long travel days with days at home."

"Teams which are more male heavy such as capital markets generally have more pressure on being in the office, but property management, which is predominately female, had more flexible working patterns in place before COVID."

VISIBILITY

To keep hybrid employees connected and visible, Geake recommends booking key training in advance to enable all to attend in person. Also, "make anything in the office supercharged for being with people and not doing tasks you can do remotely," she said.

NETWORKING

"Networks do not all have to be built over after-hours events or at large functions," she said. "Participate in mentoring-led virtual sessions where you can speak to senior people in the industry, then break off with others. Seeing networking as actually building relationships with people you work with could elevate it on your list of priorities."

CAREERS

Best practices for managing employees at different career strategies in a hybrid environment include being considerate when scheduling team or regular meetings to avoid times and days when people are not generally available, such as Fridays or first thing in the morning. "Celebrate those who do juggle [work and home] and highlight it as a valued skill to deliver, and give output-based praise," Geake said.

IMPACT

Be strategic and use time in the office to cement relationships with colleagues and clients. "Leadership has different ways of showing up. Many employees want to follow leaders, not dictators," Geake said.

CHALLENGES

Geake pointed out that "the values of your direct manager or decision maker may be a persistent barrier for women in leadership roles, whether in the office five days a week or fully remote. Regular one-on-one meetings with leadership and executive coaching would be beneficial to women in hybrid settings to stay in the leadership pipeline."



Aménagement 77

Headquarters: Seine-et-Marne, France

of employees: 19

of employees who work a hybrid schedule:

All are eligible after probationary period

At this public development and real estate company, employees can work up to two days per week at an alternative location. Teleworking may be reduced if meetings or operational requirements require employees to be onsite. The company sets the framework, while employees organize their remote working days with their manager according to operational needs.

“Hybrid work is easier to implement for business development, sales, legal, administrative, and financial and project coordination,” said Lydie Benko, director of business development and innovation. “It is more difficult for roles that require a regular onsite presence, such as construction management and technical inspections.”

VISIBILITY

Career development is based on performance, skills, and contribution rather than physical presence. “Clear objectives, regular communication, and equal access to information and development opportunities are key to ensuring fairness in a hybrid work environment,” said Benko.

NETWORKING

Aménagement 77 does not allow new employees the option for hybrid work until they have completed six months with the company. “This onboarding period allows them to fully immerse themselves in the organization’s culture, understand our ways of working, build relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, and benefit from day-to-day guidance and information learning,” Benko said. “Once this foundation is established, hybrid work can be introduced more effectively.”

IMPACT

Aménagement 77 adapts hybrid work to both the employee’s level of experience and operational needs. “More experienced employees have access to hybrid work, although many prefer to work from the office,” Benko said.

PIPELINE

Benko pointed out that Aménagement 77 doesn’t consider hybrid work as specifically challenging to women’s advancement. “The key is to ensure equal access to responsibilities, visibility, mentoring, and career development opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender or work arrangement,” she said.

EVOLUTION

Benko also sees AI as the biggest transformer of the industry, automating many administrative and analytical tasks, thus giving organizations greater flexibility in how work is organized. “However, commercial real estate remains a people-oriented business, built on trust, negotiation, and collaboration. Therefore, face-to-face interactions will continue to play an essential role,” she said.

CHANGE

As a small organization with a 98% female staff, Benko sees “career advancement is primarily driven by skills, commitment, and performance rather than by work location.”



An Action Guide

For both employees and employers, leveraging hybrid and remote work is essential to retaining key talent. Companies that plan their hybrid and remote work policies carefully will reap the benefits of having an engaged workforce in and outside of the office. The successful businesses will be those who rise to the hybrid and remote work challenge today with an eye to the future.

For Companies

Whether you already offer hybrid and remote work options or will do so in the future, following these best practices can ensure all employees stay connected and productive. “Flexibility is no longer optional; it is fundamental to harnessing and unlocking female talent in the workplace,” said Fatima Koning, COO at IWG.

► Set in-office meeting days.

Successful remote and hybrid work environments provide multiple ways for employees to build connections with one another and with clients. “Bring the whole team together monthly for events and happy hours,” advised Kassie Inness, president of Metonic Real Estate in Omaha, Nebraska. “Schedule larger quarterly events to ensure consistent touch points with the larger group.”

► Proactively provide mentorship and sponsorship opportunities.

One of the most impactful changes in advancing women in the industry would be to create more intentional pathways for sponsorship and leadership visibility. “In a relationship-driven industry like commercial real estate, hybrid work can limit access to the informal interactions where opportunities often originate,” said Carol Schillne with ORION Investment Real Estate. “Organizations should ensure women have meaningful access to

decision makers, client relationships, and leadership opportunities regardless of where they work.”

“One way to do this is to invite junior associates to networking events with more senior leadership,” said Inness. Being proactive in connecting women with senior leaders who can advocate for their advancement as well as ensuring they receive access to high-visibility projects and leadership opportunities is essential to more women advancing into leadership.

► Add more (meaningful) communication and meetings.

“Make sure everyone is included in all team meetings and activities by having the Teams and Zoom meetings available to everyone,” said Brenda Karp, vice president of business development for The Breeden Company in Richmond and Virginia Beach, Virginia. “While face-to-face is key in building confidence and relationships, you must be intentional and make the effort in a hybrid or remote environment.”

► **Have transparent promotion criteria.**

This will benefit not only remote and hybrid workers, but also fully in-office staff too. “Organizations can help keep women in leadership pipelines in hybrid settings by ensuring equitable access to high-visibility projects that incorporate the promotion criteria,” said Alison Topp, architect and medical planner with RDG Planning & Design in Omaha, Nebraska. “Basing perceptions of work quality by office presence puts those who work from home at a disadvantage from the start. Performance metrics for success should be the same. This requires supervisors to ensure consistent communication with all teammates.”

► **Make your commitment to flexible work clear.**

While not all positions are suitable to hybrid or remote work, strive to make flexibility equitable for all employees—without impacting compensation or advancement opportunities. Managerial or departmental discretion could undermine workplace equity. There can often be pressure on employees to become better at navigating an unequal system instead of asking leaders to redesign the system.

For Women

Flexible work has both supported and stalled women in commercial real estate. “Hybrid and remote work have provided more invisible flexibility versus stigmatized special work hours or accommodations for women,” said Kaitlin Zarro, partner at Katz Day in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Here are a few ways women can successfully navigate hybrid work—and even leverage it to advance in their CRE careers.

► **Communicate intentionally and often.**

Women working remotely or hybrid must be intentional about communicating with teammates and clients. “It is important to be available and visible, even if that is making sure your camera is on during meetings,” said Steph Guy, principal at Alvine in Omaha, Nebraska.

► **Seek out a mentor or sponsor who can advocate for you.**

Having regular career development conversations with mentors and sponsors can help you identify and leverage advancement opportunities. Discuss your goals with your direct manager as well. “Connection and relationship building are hard for most people in person, and both of those are substantially harder behind a screen,” said Stephanie Lemieux with York Realty Inc.

► **Take advantage of in-person opportunities in your office and with fellow employees.**

Access to knowledge transfer and learning from peers can be essential to women aspiring to leadership positions within CRE. “Now that I am hybrid, I

definitely think that coming into the office most days has helped me learn more from my coworkers and get selected for more difficult projects,” said Rachele Cagle, commercial appraiser at Rally Appraisal in Iowa City, Iowa. “I’m at the front of mind since they are seeing me regularly. I do think it’s harder to advocate for yourself and leadership potential with people that you don’t see that often.”

Making a concentrated effort to absorb the company culture is also essential to anyone working hybrid or remote. “It’s very difficult to learn a company’s culture or to build connections without in-person opportunities,” said Allison Taggart with Pacific Coast Commercial.

► **Be visible when your company leaders are in-office.**

Make adjustments to your hybrid schedule to be more available during these potential encounters. Being visible creates opportunities to build relationships, demonstrate your contributions, and gain access to informal conversations that can influence your growth and advancement.

Conclusion

All professionals have benefited from the increase in workplace flexibility, allowing for more remote and hybrid work arrangements. According to the 2025 CREW Network Benchmark Study Report, commercial real estate professionals spent 56% of their time in the office that year, with women working remotely more than men. Just over half of the women surveyed (53%) reported increased productivity tied to flexible work arrangements, but in-office employees tended to receive more promotions than their remote or hybrid counterparts.

“Over the next five to 10 years, hybrid work in commercial real estate is likely to become more structured and intentional, with organizations balancing flexibility with office-based roles while maintaining onsite requirements for property operations and tenant-facing functions,” said Topp. “Advances in technology, data analytics, and workplace management tools will further support hybrid collaboration, while companies increasingly focus on maintaining employee engagement, productivity, and equitable career development across both remote and in-person work environments.”

The good news for women is that the future of work is no longer only defined by where employees perform their jobs. More companies are fostering inclusion and collaboration among in-person, hybrid, and remote workers, building a stronger workforce by doing so. But while flexible work arrangements have opened new doors for many women, persistent barriers remain for advancement and recognition opportunities. To close those gaps, leaders need to ensure they are evaluating outcomes based on performance over physical presence while offering all employees access to career-building opportunities. The companies that do so will be well poised to attract, develop, and retain top talent in today’s highly competitive workplace. ■

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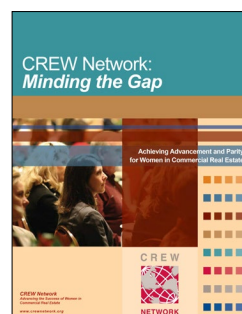
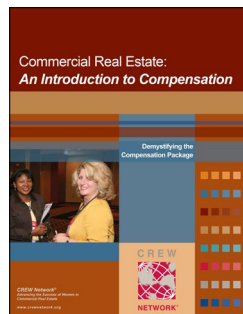
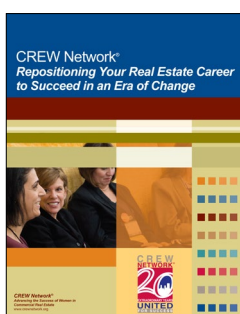
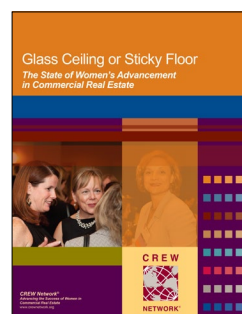
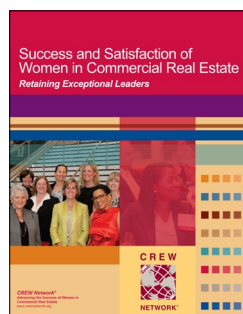
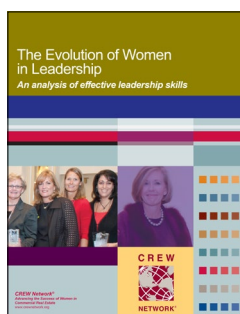
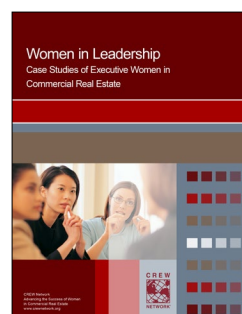
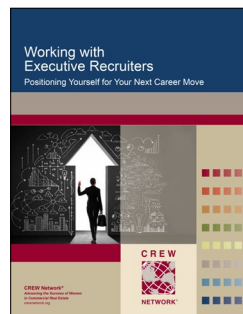
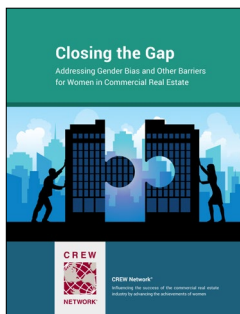
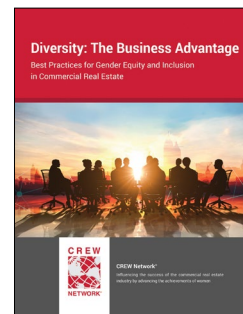
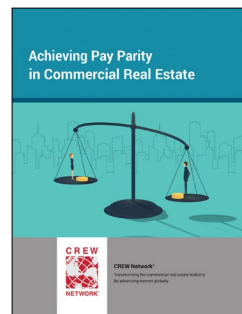
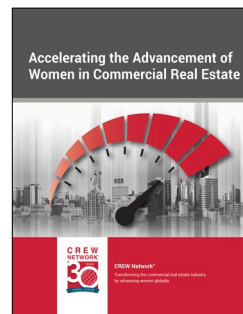
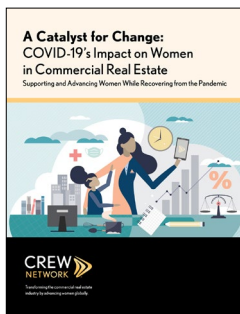
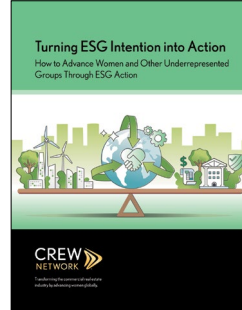
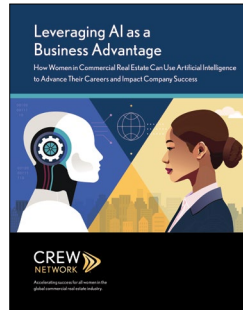
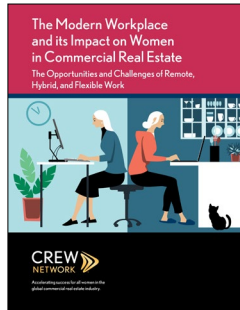
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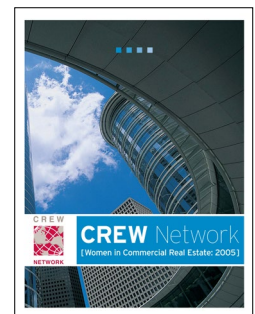
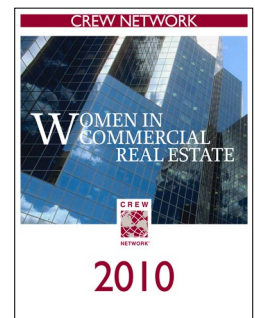
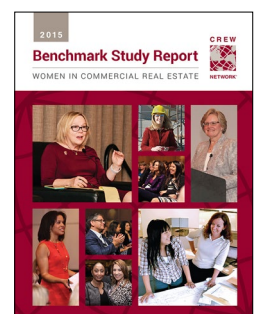
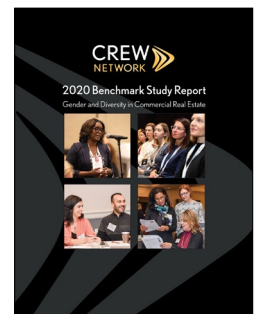
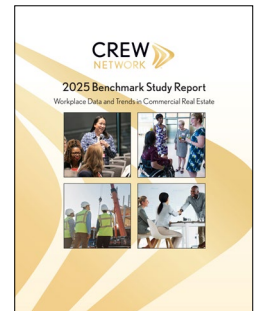
CREW Network Research

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