

Public Relations Firms

RETURN TO OFFICE POLICY

By Agency Size and Region

As of September 6, 2021 (Labor Day)

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Introduction

The most frequent question I have been asked recently is “*What are other PR firms doing regarding the return to office policy?*”

We decided that the timing was perfect to send out our survey, Tuesday, September 7 and have the deadline 3 days later, Friday, September 10.

Incredibly, 128 firms responded in the three days we kept the survey open. We kept a very short window for responses so we could turn around the results in one week, as promised.

What was amazing is how many firms had very different policies. We hope the charts and the verbatim comments from several firms (no names disclosed) will be helpful to you in formulating or modifying your return to work strategy.

Stay Well, Stay Strong

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1. Has your firm had staff return to office or will you be returning this week?

	YES	NO	TOTAL
a. Up to \$3 Million	28	20	48
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	26	22	48
c. > \$10 million to \$25 Million	8	7	15
d. > \$25 Million	9	8	17
Total	71	57	128
	55.5%	44.5%	100%

1. Has your firm had staff return to office or will you be returning this week?

	YES	NO	TOTAL
1. NYMetro	17	15	32
2. DC & Suburbs	8	2	10
3. NE	6	3	9
4. SE	10	9	19
5. Midwest	6	10	16
6. SW	10	1	11
7. Southern CA	8	2	10
8. Northern CA	1	4	5
9. NW	2	0	2
10. Canada	3	11	14
Total	71	57	128
	55.5%	44.5%	100%

2. If YES, will it be

	Full-Time		Modified Remote		Fully Remote but in when needed		Total	
a. Up to \$3 Million	8	28.6%	17	60.7%	3	10.7%	28	100%
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	1	3.8%	17	65.4%	8	30.8%	26	100%
c. > \$10 million to \$25 Million	2	25.0%	6	75.0%	--	0.0%	8	100%
d. > \$25 Million	1	11.2%	4	44.4%	4	44.4%	9	100%
Total	<u>12</u>	16.9%	<u>44</u>	62.0%	<u>15</u>	21.1%	<u>71</u>	100%

2. If YES, will it be

	Full-Time	Modified Remote	Fully Remote but in when needed	Total
1. NYMetro	4	9	4	17
2. DC & Suburbs	2	6	--	8
3. NE	2	3	1	6
4. SE	2	7	1	10
5. Midwest	1	3	2	6
6. SW	1	7	2	10
7. Southern CA	--	6	2	8
8. Northern CA	--	-	1	1
9. NW	--	1	1	2
10. Canada	--	2	1	3
Total	12	44	15	71
	16.9%	62.0%	21.1%	100%

3. If NO, will your plan be

	Permanent remote for all staff		Partial remote with downsizing of offices		Return to office but no date in sight		Total	
a. Up to \$3 Million	11	55.0%	4	20.0%	5	25.0%	20	100%
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	7	31.8%	10	45.5%	5	22.7%	22	100%
c. > \$10 million to \$25 Million	--		3	42.9%	4	57.1%	7	100%
d. > \$25 Million	--		2	25.0%	6	75.0%	8	100%
Total	18	31.6%	19	33.3%	20	35.1%	57	100%

3. If NO, will your plan be

	Permanent remote for all staff	Partial remote with downsizing of offices	Return to office but no date in sight	Total
1. NYMetro	3	4	8	15
2. DC & Suburbs	1	-	1	2
3. NE	1	1	1	3
4. SE	6	2	1	9
5. Midwest	3	5	2	10
6. SW	--	1	--	1
7. Southern CA	--	1	1	2
8. Northern CA	1	2	1	4
9. NW	--	--	--	--
10. Canada	3	3	5	11
Total	18	19	20	57
	31.6%	33.3%	35.1%	100%

Selected Comments

Region 1- NYMetro	
Revenue Category	Selected Comments
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	We have pushed estimated our return to work date back to January. However, we are small enough that if an earlier return date feels right, we are able to do so, and will provide employees with 30 days notice. Additionally, we do sometimes use the office for in person meetings when needed.
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	Our team has significant concerns about the continuing Covid infection rate and since many of them use mass transit to commute where they feel vulnerable to possible exposure, they prefer to wait until after December to return to the office.
c. > \$10 million to \$25 Million	We are starting in office rotation as of 9/7, 2 days in and 3 days remote.
d. > \$25 Million	Voluntary return to office thru January and then 3 days in and 2 virtual
d. > \$25 Million	We had a soft opening in mid-July. Only vaccinated staff can come to the office. On average, less than 10% of our employees are coming to the office on any given day. At some point we will have a more complete reopening, but we don't know yet when that will be.

Region 2- DC & Suburbs	
Revenue Category	Selected Comments
a. Up to \$3 Million	Currently, we're working full-time Mondays thru Thursdays with remote Fridays.
c. > \$10 million to \$25 Million	Two day quarantine and then COVID test after any travel, business or personal.

Region 3- NE

Revenue Category	Selected Comments
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	Anticipating hybrid model, beginning (tentatively) Oct, but moving target based on infection rates/trends locally.
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	We're on a hybrid schedule. Staff may come to the office if they'd like to. No requirement to do so though.

Region 4- SE

Revenue Category	Selected Comments
a. Up to \$3 Million	We're moving to a 3-2 schedule with Monday, Tuesday and Thursday required in office and Wednesday, Friday optional remote. It's working really well!
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	We have small group meetings in the office. But most staff still are in WFH mode. We are requiring fulltime staff to be fully vaccinated.....absent a doctor's/medical excuse or a religious belief to be documented.
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	Since June 1, our team has been back in the office. We have asked team members to spend 60% of their time in the office each week.

Region 5- Midwest	
Revenue Category	Selected Comments
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	We plan to return mid-January 2022, post holiday to a hybrid model.
d. > \$25 Million	We'll go to 3/2 model - 3 days in an office, 2 days work from where you wish - coordinating with teams on which days. Moved from post-Labor day to "some time in 4Q" but keeping it flexible for now.
d. > \$25 Million	We have pushed back our hybrid return to office plan from October 1 to January 1. Our offices remain open on an optional basis until that time.

Region 6- SW	
Revenue Category	Selected Comments
a. Up to \$3 Million	We have adopted a fairly flexible expectation of our team. We want them to feel comfortable and safe with any in-person client meetings they are asked to attend (by the client). We have a couple team members with some health issues that warrant not attending face-to-face meetings and we support those team members.
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	We've been back at the office full-time since January with COVID prevention protocols in place, including no small group meetings in individual offices, masks in common areas and cleanliness procedures. We reached 85% vaccination within a month of the vaccine being available here. Issued a mandate for everyone to provide us with proof of vaccination by beginning of August and have 100% participation. All future hires, including interns, will need to show proof of vaccination prior to beginning work.

Region 7 - Southern CA	
Revenue Category	Selected Comments
a. Up to \$3 Million	In office two days a week / all fully vaccinated / masks on while in office
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	Did a team survey and they indicated an interest in returning up to two days per week.
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	We were prepared to return in August, but . . . Now we are looking at it month by month with a 2/3 day in office and remote rotation. With travel we and a team around the nation, we have been partially remote for more than a decade, so not a big deal.
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	Moving forward, we plan a hybrid approach. No mandated days in the office.

Region 8- Northern CA	
Revenue Category	Selected Comments
d. > \$25 Million	Globally we are open but coming in is totally optional

Region 9- NW

Only two responses and one firm had comment. Confidentiality prohibited disclosure.

Region 10- Canada	
Revenue Category	Selected Comments
a. Up to \$3 Million	At this time, with Covid infection rising, no vaccines for children under 12, potential 3rd booster, there is no desire/interest for staff who require public transit to return to an office. We will organize periodic "hub" gatherings.
b. > \$3 Million to \$10 Million	Our plan is to start back in January 2022 3 days a week for 95% of our team. 5% will stay remote indefinitely
c. > \$10 million to \$25 Million	We are planning a graduated return beginning in October.
d. > \$25 Million	Return to office on a voluntary basis as of Sept 20th in some regions in Canada while others will be decided come October and only with the approval from the respective health bodies in those provinces
d. > \$25 Million	Staff can come to all offices, but no "official" re-opening. We are waiting to see how the different jurisdiction tackle the vaccination mandate and we will make our official policy. Our plan is to have everyone back before the end of November with a hybrid model.