



# What U.S. Job Seekers Want in 2021: D&I and Remote Flexibility Among Work Preferences

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# Introduction

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A new study of nearly 209,000 workforce participants in 190 countries, including more than 6,300 workforce participants in the United States, conducted by Boston Consulting Group (BCG), The Network, and Appcast, looks at from where and when people want to work, what they value most in an employment relationship, and how they view potential employers in the context of environmental responsibility and diversity and inclusion.

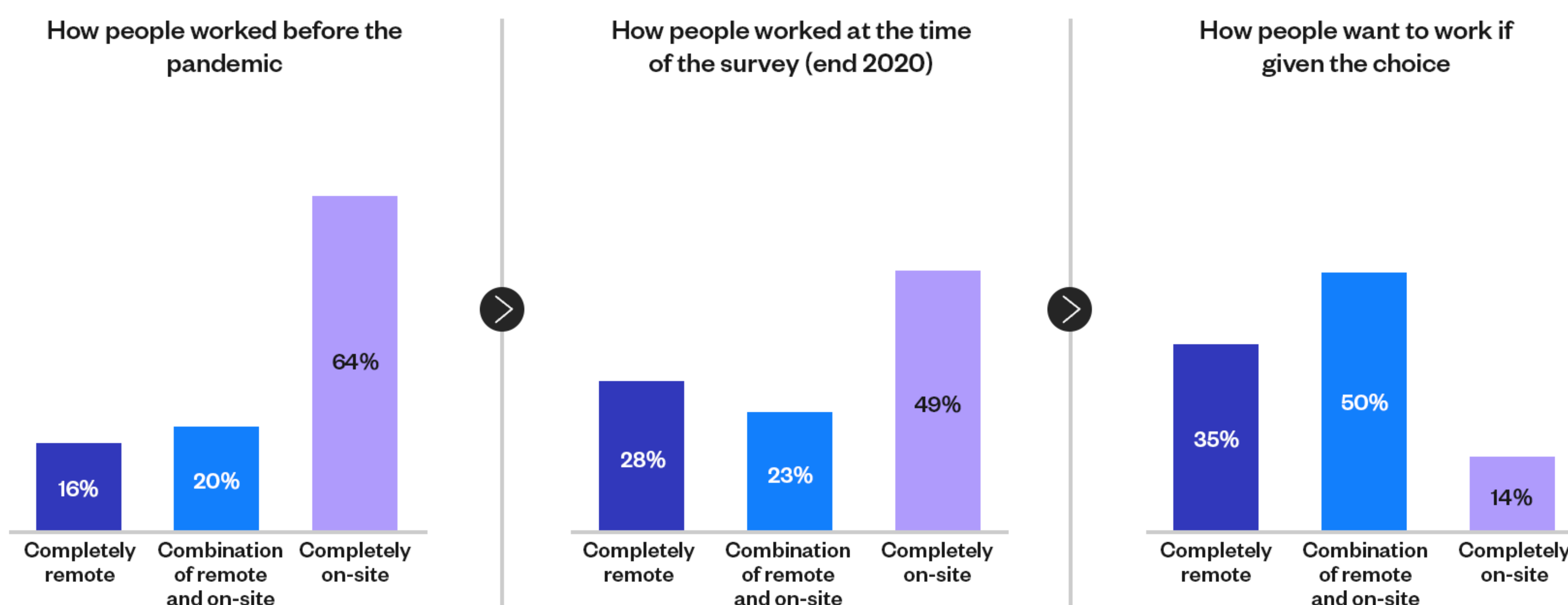
Given the importance of these issues, Appcast decided to dive deeper into the U.S. data to understand the implications for U.S. employers. Here's what we found.

## Working Mode: Remote, On-Site or Combination

The new study explores from where people worked before the pandemic, during the pandemic, and from where they want to work going forward, if given the choice. Even [as other recent studies](#) show that employers prefer on-site or a combination of remote and on-site work arrangements - and are gearing up for a return to these working modes - the new study from BCG/The Network finds that 35% of U.S. workers remain interested in completely remote opportunities.

Also, while 64% of people in the United States worked completely on-site before the pandemic, only 14% prefer this work location.

### Working mode before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic in United States



Source: BCG/The Network

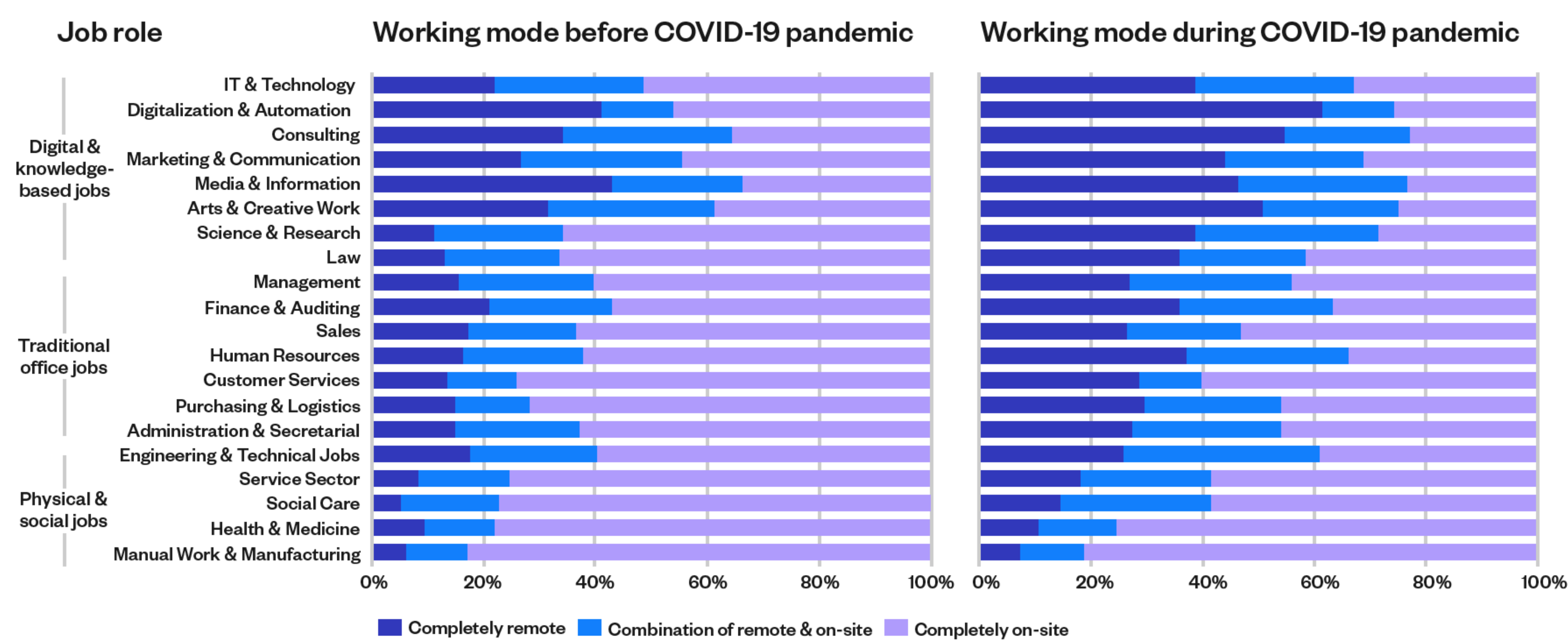
Implications for recruiting and hiring: Employers and job seekers may not align when it comes to remote flexibility, which could make attracting top talent difficult for employers preparing for a return to the traditional workplace.



As might be expected, remote work varies depending on job role – some roles lend themselves more easily to remote work. However, several roles that prior to the pandemic had a limited number of completely remote workers have seen a notable increase in these workers during the pandemic.

Granted, employers could argue that this was out of necessity, but there is also the contrary viewpoint, that people have effectively performed these roles remotely for at least a year.

Working mode before and during the pandemic by job role in United States

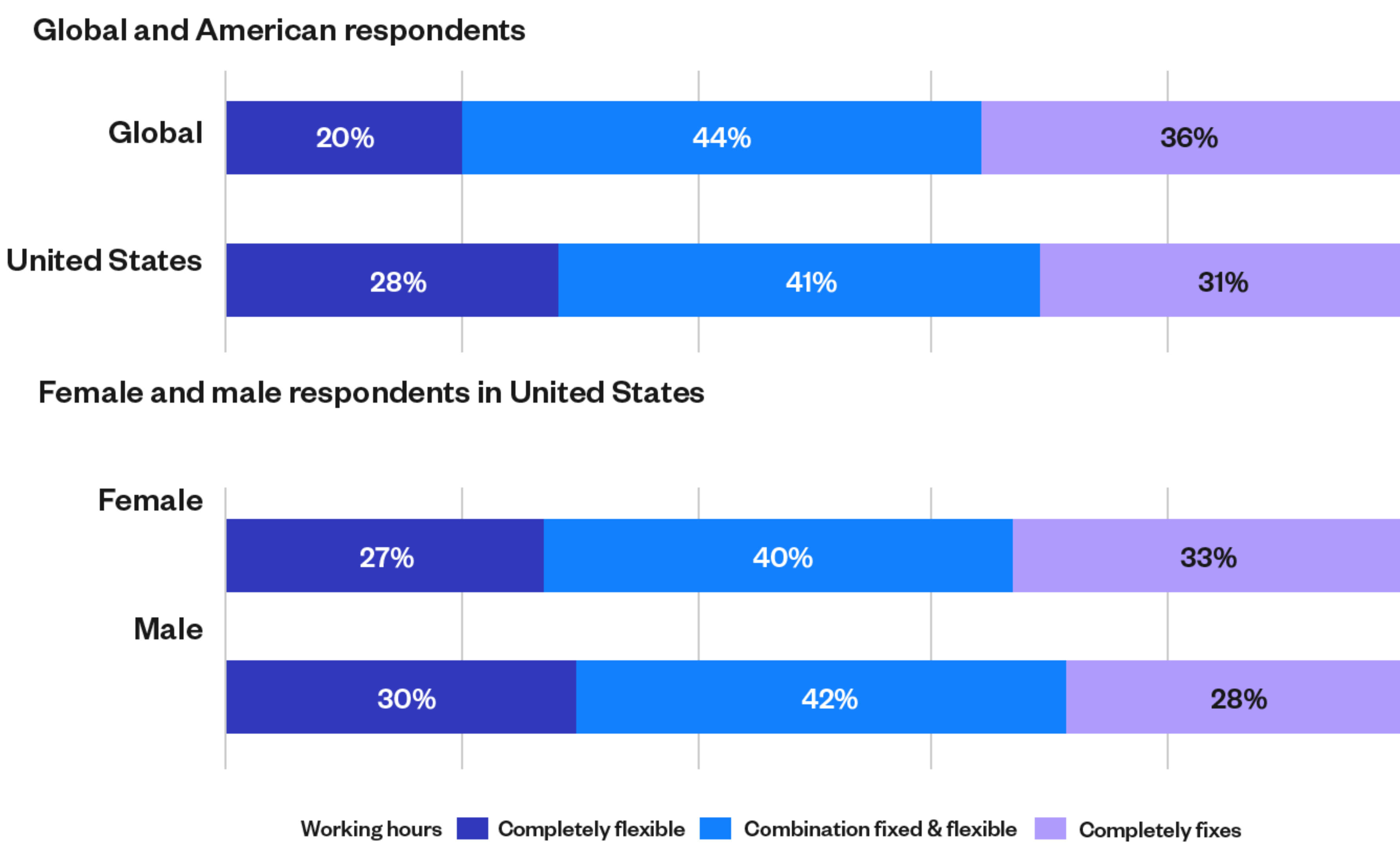


Source: BCG/The Network

Implications for recruiting and hiring: When recruiting for certain roles that have been and could continue to be performed remotely, employers may want to remain flexible regarding location and highlight this flexibility in job ads.

Workforce participants aren't only interested in where work gets done, they want a say as to when. In fact, only 31% of U.S. workforce participants want a fixed work schedule.

Desired flexibility in when work gets done



Source: BCG/The Network

Implications for recruiting and hiring: Because flexible work hours appeal to a large majority of the workforce, employers that offer this option should highlight it in job ads and elsewhere.



## Workplace Attributes

In just two years, there have been major changes in what matters most to workforce participants. The pandemic moved the desire for work-life balance in the U.S. from third to first place, while financial compensation moved from sixth to third place. Amid widespread furloughs and layoffs, job security jumped from seventh to second place.

Bottom line: Work-life balance, money, and job security now matter more to U.S. workforce participants.

It's also noteworthy that "flexible schedules and workplaces" made the list in 2020 and wasn't on the list at all in 2018. Meanwhile, "learning and skills training," which was in tenth place in 2018, wasn't in the top 10 in 2020.

What U.S. workforce participants value

Rank	United States 2020	United States 2018
1	Good work-life balance	Good relationship with superior
2	Job security	Financial stability of employer
3	Financial compensation	Good work-life balance
4	Financial stability of employer	Good relationship with colleagues
5	Good relationship with superior	Company values
6	Appreciation for your work	Financial compensation
7	Good relationship with colleagues	Job security
8	Company values	Appreciation for your work
9	Flexible schedules & workplaces	Interesting job content
10	Interesting job content	Learning & skills training

Source: BCG/The Network

Implications for recruiting and hiring: Job ads and other recruitment marketing material should address job seekers' concerns.



## Corporate Social Responsibility

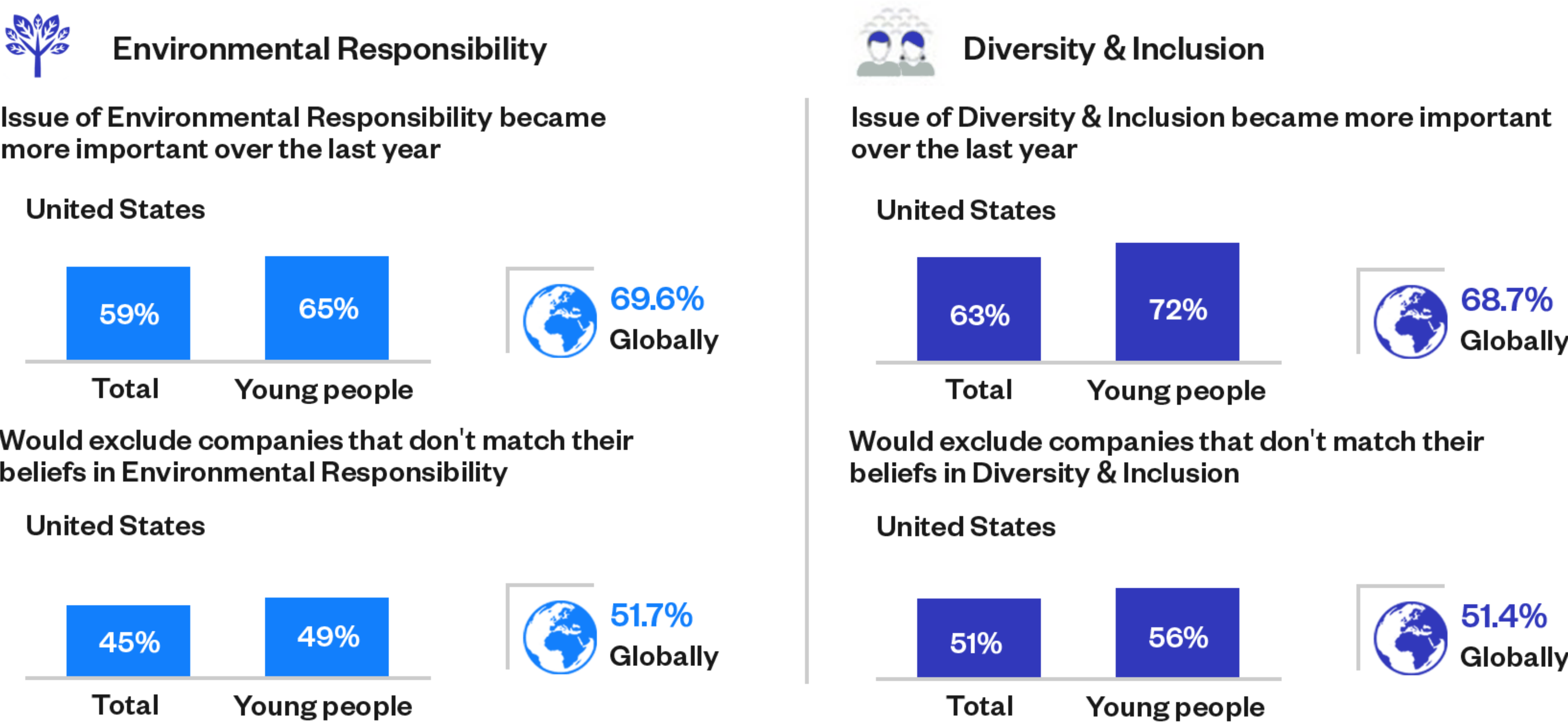
Workforce participants also care about corporate social responsibility, as it relates to the environment and diversity and inclusion.

A majority of workforce participants indicates that both issues have become more important over the last year. As the following charts show, for young people, defined as people under 30 years old, the issues take on even greater significance.

When it comes to diversity and inclusion, a majority of workforce participants, regardless of age, would exclude companies that don't match their beliefs from their job search. U.S. worker preferences do not appear to be quite as intense about corporate environmental responsibility.

Interestingly, global workforce participants have stronger opinions on both issues in comparison to U.S. workforce participants on average. But younger U.S. workers are more committed to diversity and inclusion than their older U.S. counterparts and global workforce participants as a whole.

### Impact of social and environmental crisis on job preferences in United States



*Note: "Young people" are respondents under 30 years old.*  
*Source: BCG/The Network*

Implications for recruiting and hiring: Corporate social responsibility is a significant factor in job seeker attraction.



## Going Forward

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Data that provides insight into job seeker preferences is valuable, because it allows you to objectively assess your organization as a potential employer.

What should you do after you compare your employment offer to study findings?

Although it may not always be feasible to prioritize job seeker preferences when making corporate decisions about social issues, workplace attributes, and working mode, adjustments can often be made to better position your organization.

Meanwhile, if you are already aligned with job seeker preferences in certain areas, you know the old saying: If you've got it, flaunt it. Doing so will help you attract the job applicants you seek.





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contact@appcast.io  
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