



Salesforce Executive Says In-Office Work Is Critical to Tech Giant's Profitability

Chief Operating Officer Brian Millham Found Productivity Dropped When Employees Were Remote



Salesforce Chief Operating Officer Brian Millham said in-person work is critical for the tech company's future growth. (Salesforce)

By **Katie Burke**

CoStar News

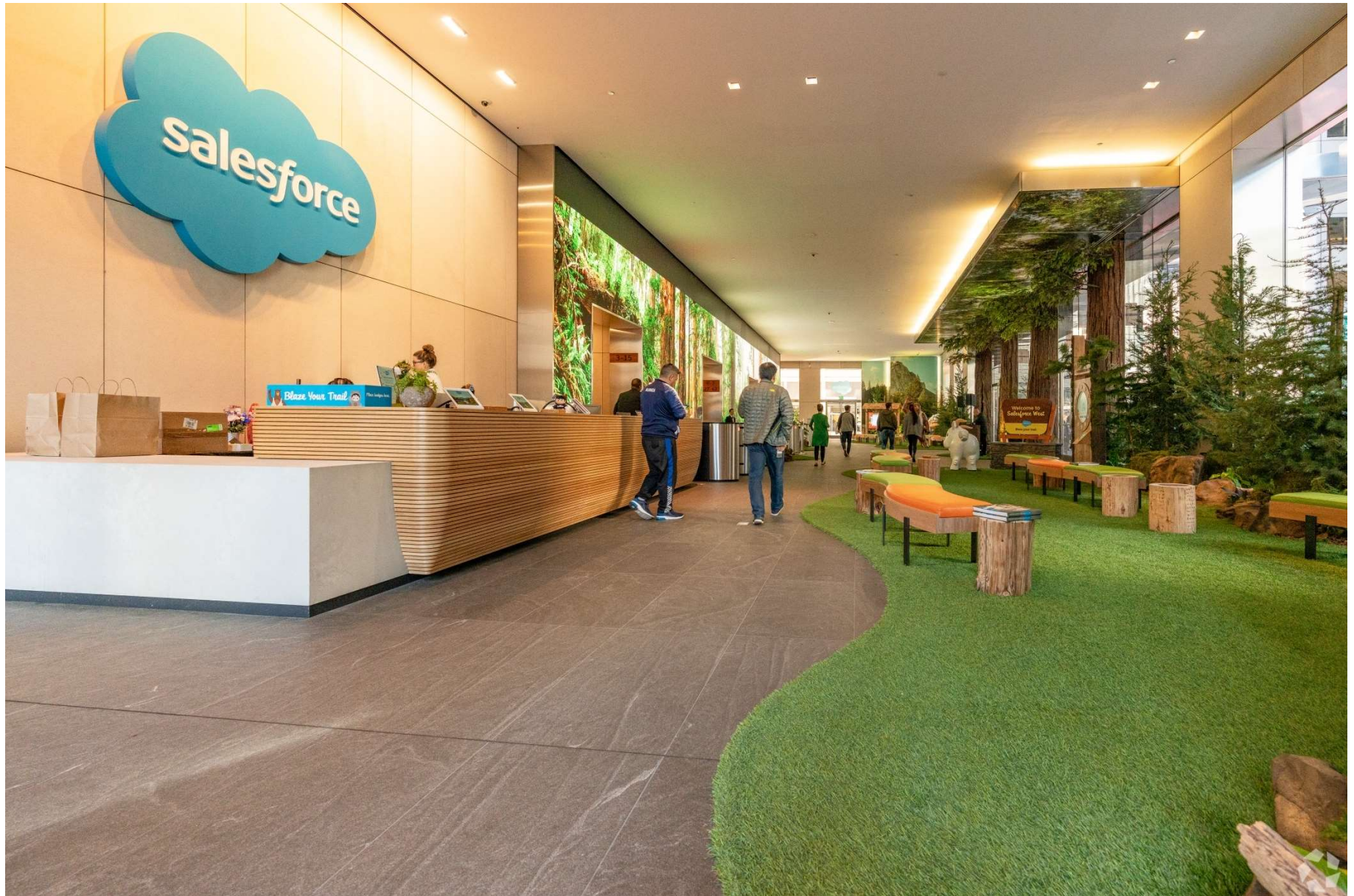
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Brian Millham, whose software company is all about maintaining relationships through technology, wants his employees doing more in-person work.

Millham, the chief operating officer of Salesforce, said working face to face is a critical component to the tech giant's aggressive focus on profitability and productivity as it tries to turn around a nearly year-long deceleration of its business. It's a very low-tech message coming from the world's biggest maker of software to manage sales leads and customer relationships.

The sentiment is also an about-face for a company that only a year ago had been among the most vocal in its adoption of a fully remote policy, arguing "the nine-to-five workday is dead."

Millham told analysts on the San Francisco-based company's latest earnings call that "during the pandemic, we saw productivity drop among our account executives who were working exclusively from home. I believe when our people are together, they're better learners, collaborators, and networkers. It also reinforces our performance culture."



Salesforce adopted a hybrid work policy in early 2021 in response to the pandemic, a policy that had been expected to become a permanent fixture for the software giant. (CoStar)

A lot has changed since Salesforce rolled out the policy in early 2021, a shift Millham said requires the tech company to adapt to fend off mounting activist pressure and bolster its focus on profitability overgrowth.

"Productivity is a big component of our growth strategy going forward," the COO said of new mandates such as requiring sales and service employees to be in the office for a minimum of four days a week. "Getting together in person is accelerating enablement and driving our performance and productivity."

Salesforce is among a growing pool of tech companies walking back their remote-work policies, asking workers to head into the office on a more frequent basis as they try to reverse slowing revenue growth. Tech giants, in particular, have faced increased scrutiny over the past several months for the growth-at-all-costs approach that has long been associated with generous employee perks and benefits.

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However, with many tech companies now adopting severe cost-cutting measures, popular remote and hybrid-work policies at Amazon, Meta, Tesla and Twitter, among others have been revised to require more in-person days.

At Salesforce, the shift appears to be working. The company said its revenue grew a better-than-expected 14% to \$8.38 billion in the three months ended Dec. 31, 2022. Salesforce is predicting that revenue for the current quarter will come in between \$8.16 billion and \$8.18 billion, up roughly 10% from the year-ago quarter.

"We're laser focused on performance, productivity, and accountability of all of our teams," Millham said of the company's renewed focus on profitable growth.