

85 percent of WeWork's white-collar employees don't think Adam Neumann's \$1.7 billion exit package is fair

Half of those employees fear they'll be laid off, according to a Recode survey of users on a workplace discussion app.

By [Rani Molla](#) | [@ranimolla](#) | Oct 28, 2019, 10:50am EDT



WeWork employees are worried about the future of their work. | Drew Angerer/Getty Images

WeWork employees are upset with the state of affairs at the coworking company, which has gone from one of the most promising public stock offerings of 2019 to near implosion in a matter of months.

Nearly half of WeWork's white-collar workers think they're going to be laid off, according to a survey of 200 WeWork employees Recode conducted through the anonymous workplace-discussion app Blind. That's higher than reported estimates of impending layoffs, which pegged layoffs at about a third of tech and general staff alike. WeWork employs around 14,000 people, including about 1,500 tech workers. The Wall

will happen soon.

Blind users tend to skew more toward software engineers and other white-collar workers and thus are more likely to represent WeWork's tech workforce than people who help with WeWork's daily on-site operations. Cuts to these positions will make WeWork's insistence that it's a tech company even more tenuous.

To make matters worse, the SoftBank rescue package includes an unprecedented \$1.7 billion exit package for WeWork's CEO and founder Adam Neumann, who was forced to step down in September after his poor judgment and self-dealing helped stall the IPO, which was supposed to happen that same month. It left the coworking company in desperate need of more funds.

A whopping 85 percent of WeWork employees said this severance isn't fair, according to the Blind survey. Just 15 percent thought it was fair.

What white-collar WeWork employees say

Yes	No
Is Adam Neumann's \$1.7B exit package fair?	
14.9%	85.2%
Have you made a major financial decision based on your estimated income or equity from WeWork?	
35.3%	64.7%
Do you think your employment will be terminated as part of WeWork's impending layoffs?	
46.1%	54.0%
Do you believe in WeWork's vision?	
61.7%	38.4%

Source: Survey of 200 WeWork employees by Blind

recode BY Vox

When an employee asked about Neumann's payout in a tense all-hands last week, WeWork's new executive chair Marcelo Claire said, "[Adam] had total autonomy for good or for bad, to do anything that he wanted, and Adam has agreed to relinquish all his votes in favor of the board. ... And that has a price and we thought that's going to be a great investment to basically put the company back into our hands for us to be able to run it without having somebody with a gun, always basically voting shares 10 to 1."

companies.

While Neumann was able to sell about \$1 billion in stock, the Wall Street Journal reports that the stock options for more than 90 percent of current and former employees are worth less than they paid for them.

More than a third of those who responded to the Blind survey said they made a major financial decision (buying a house, planning a family, etc.) in part based on their estimated income or equity from WeWork.

Still, more than half of those surveyed, 62 percent, said they still believe in WeWork's mission. Presumably they're referring to the rise of coworking and flexible real estate as part of the future of work and not WeWork's much-derided mission in its S-1 filing to "elevate the world's consciousness."