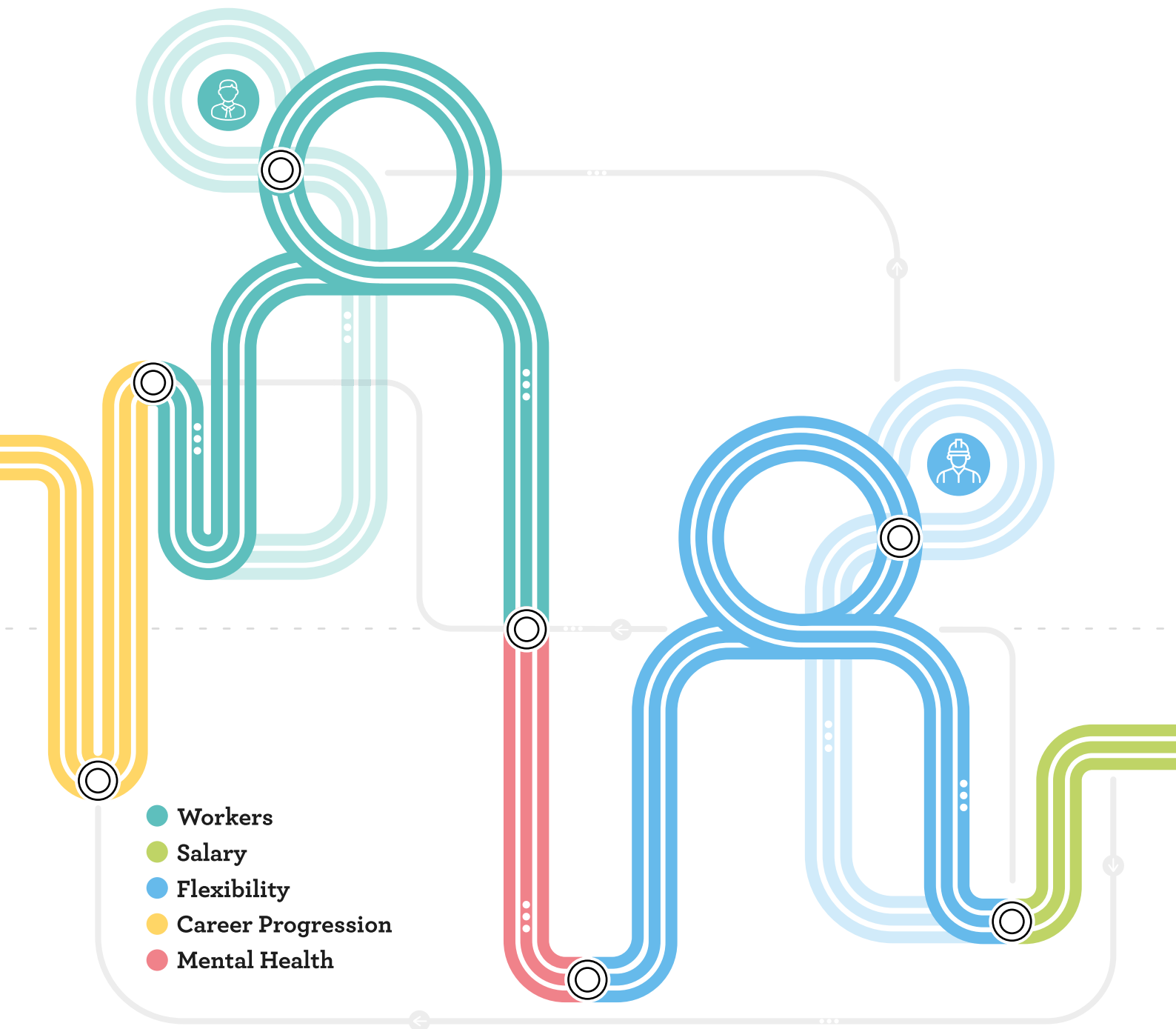




THE ADECCO GROUP

# Global Workforce of the Future

Unravelling the Talent Conundrum



Adecco

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## Unravelling the Talent Conundrum - Summary

# Introduction

In 2020, with the world in general - and the world of work specifically - gripped by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Adecco Group launched Resetting Normal: Defining the New Era of Work, a substantial piece of research that set out to investigate how the new normal would look post-pandemic.

The 2020 research surveyed 8,000 office-based workers, aged 18-60 across eight countries.

That report was followed up with an expanded scope a year later with Resetting Normal 2021. In 2021, the number of respondents increased to 14,800 office-based workers across 25 countries.

The 2022 report, the Global Workforce of the Future 2022, is the third iteration of this research, though the name has changed to reflect the fact that while Covid-19 is still prevalent globally, there are many factors influencing the pace of change currently shaping the future of work.

Each year, the depth of the study and the number of people surveyed has grown. This year is no different.

Importantly, the 2022 research surveyed both office-based and non-office-based workers to highlight any differences between desk workers and non-desk-based workers.

Over 30,000 people were surveyed globally, of which 15,000 were office-based and 15,000 were non-office-based. Respondents must have had a non-desk or desk job, employed by the same employer for at least two months, with contracts of at least 15 hours for non-desk workers and 20 hours for desk workers.

The fieldwork was conducted between 8 April - 30 May 2022 in local languages, with respondents from 25 countries answering a 20-minute online survey.

The results that follow provide insights into the attitudes of the current workforce and offers food for thought to help organisations future-proof their talent.

## Methodology Overview - All Workers

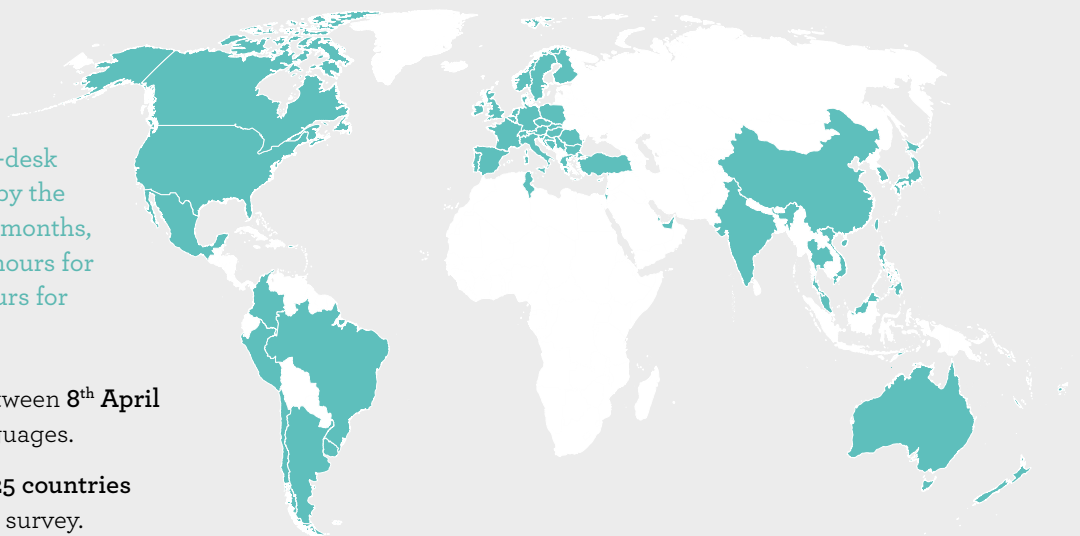
### Workers

(Aged 18-60)

Respondents must have non-desk jobs or desk jobs, employed by the same employer for at least 2 months, with contracts of at least 15 hours for non desk workers and 20 hours for desk workers.

Fieldwork was conducted between **8<sup>th</sup> April & 30<sup>th</sup> May 2022** in local languages.

**34,200 respondents across 25 countries** answered a 20-minute online survey.



#### 2020 Original 8 markets (19,000)

Australia (2,000) Japan (2,000)  
France (2,000) Spain (2,000)  
Germany (2,000) UK (2,000)  
Italy (2,000) USA (5,000)

#### Bel / Ned (2,000)

Belgium (808)  
Netherlands (1,192)

#### LatAm (2,000)

Argentina (234)  
Brazil (666)  
Mexico (1,100)

#### Nordics (2,000)

Denmark (392)  
Finland (474)  
Norway (282)  
Sweden (852)

#### EEMENA (4,000)

Greece (400)  
Poland (1,000)  
Romania (500)  
Slovenia (100)  
Turkey (2,000)

#### Other

Canada (2,000)  
China (2,000)  
Switzerland (1,200)



# 1

## The Great Resignation Uncovered

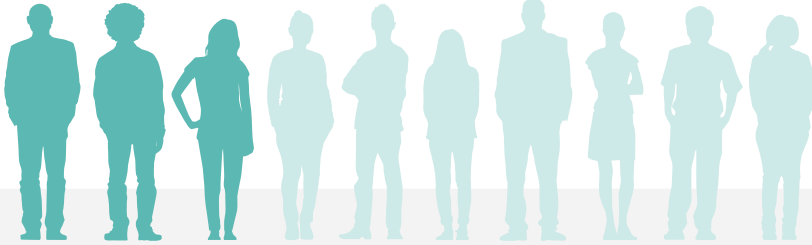
Quiet Quitting, Candidates as Consumers, and the Rise of the #Quitfluencer



## Setting the Scene

Over a quarter (27%) of workers globally will quit their jobs in the next 12 months, and 45% of these are actively keeping a finger on the job market and are applying for new roles or interviewing for them.

2 in 10 respondents say they have been poached by recruiters or by other companies, suggesting that recruiters and organisations are taking advantage of the Great Resignation trend and a global workforce in flux.



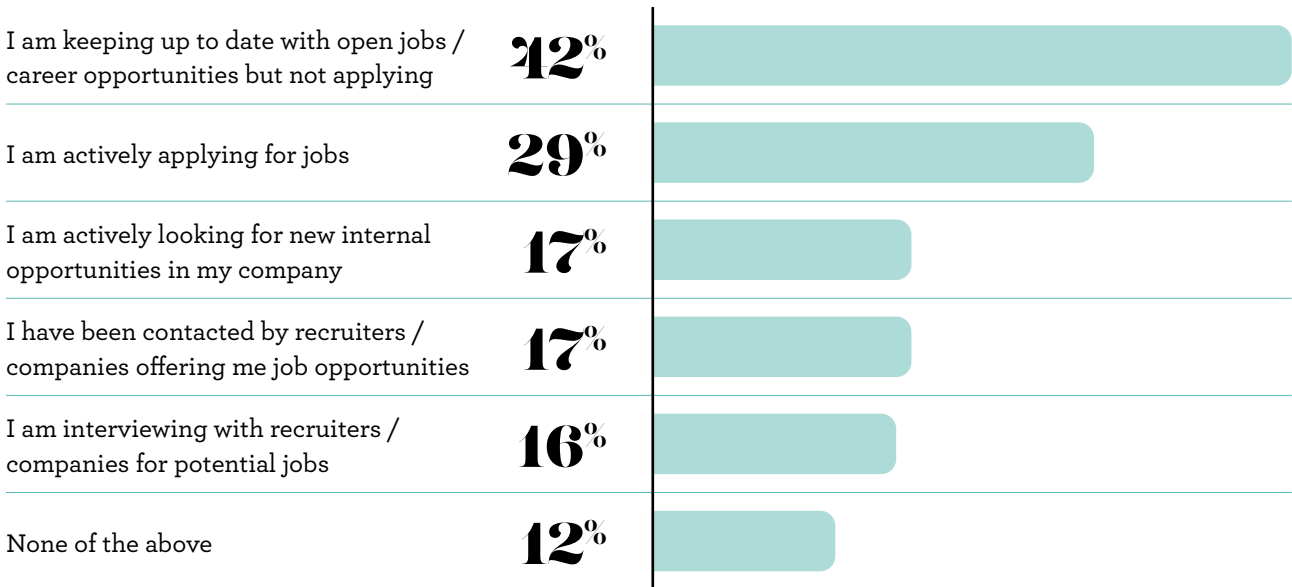
**3 in 10** Want to leave current job in the next 12 months

## Among those looking for change:

45% are actively applying / already interviewing for other jobs

60% are passively looking for opportunities (17% of those are being poached by recruiters)

### % Who are looking for a job change and are doing the following



Q112. You said that you would like to change jobs / career in the next 12 months. Which of the following statements best applies to you? Weighted Base: Those who want to quit/change their jobs in next 12 months, All Workers (n=5,237)

Headline quit rates like this originally sparked the debate around the Great Resignation that has taken place over the last couple of years, and our research suggests this trend is not abating.

However, quit rates are only one piece of the puzzle. The finer details of the widespread movement of talent

cannot be captured in one single data point. This report will explore those intricacies and not only suggest remedies to stem the loss of talent, but also suggest ways that organisations might proactively and effectively future-proof their own talent pipelines.



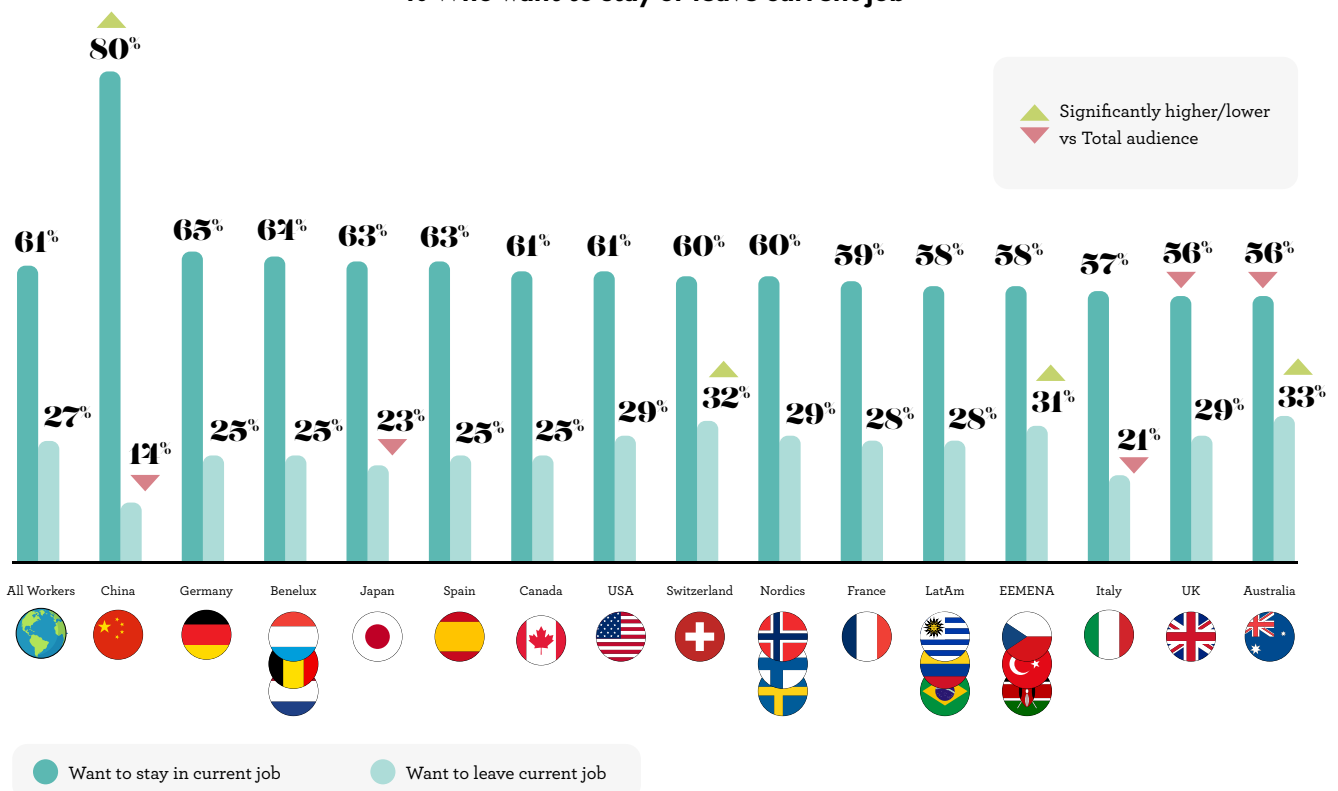
## Hidden Behind the Headlines

Our research focuses on other aspects of the Great Resignation, uncovering interesting geographical trends and the important influence of seeing co-workers quit.

For example, workers in Switzerland, EEMENA, and Australia are more likely to leave their employers in the next year, while 29% of workers in the US say they will leave their job in the next 12 months.

While this might initially suggest particular worker unhappiness in these regions, it should be noted that Switzerland, EEMENA, and Australia are among the countries where workers have the highest sense of job security (76%, 79%, and 78%, respectively, say they are satisfied with their job security), suggesting workers from these regions feel more confident and empowered to consider career changes.

**% Who want to stay or leave current job**



Q26: Thinking about your career plans in the next 12 months, which of the following best applies to you? (NET Agree, T2B) Weighted base: All Workers (n=30,000)

## Defining Success and Satisfaction at Work

Before we dive in, let us first consider the definition of ‘success’ and ‘satisfaction’ at work. What is it employees are looking for?

Throughout our research, we explored different definitions of success and satisfaction with work because while ‘success’ and ‘satisfaction’ can seem black and white, the nuances of a successful working life are more all-encompassing and holistic, and take into account the life of the worker and not just the actual job.

Before considering the survey results, we acknowledge that success and satisfaction are aspirational. But this is important to consider. Organisations often correlate employee satisfaction directly with business outcomes, such as retention or productivity, but workers are more than numbers on a spreadsheet and their human aspirations must be considered in order to rethink talent strategies and build resilient, motivated and engaged teams.



## Satisfaction

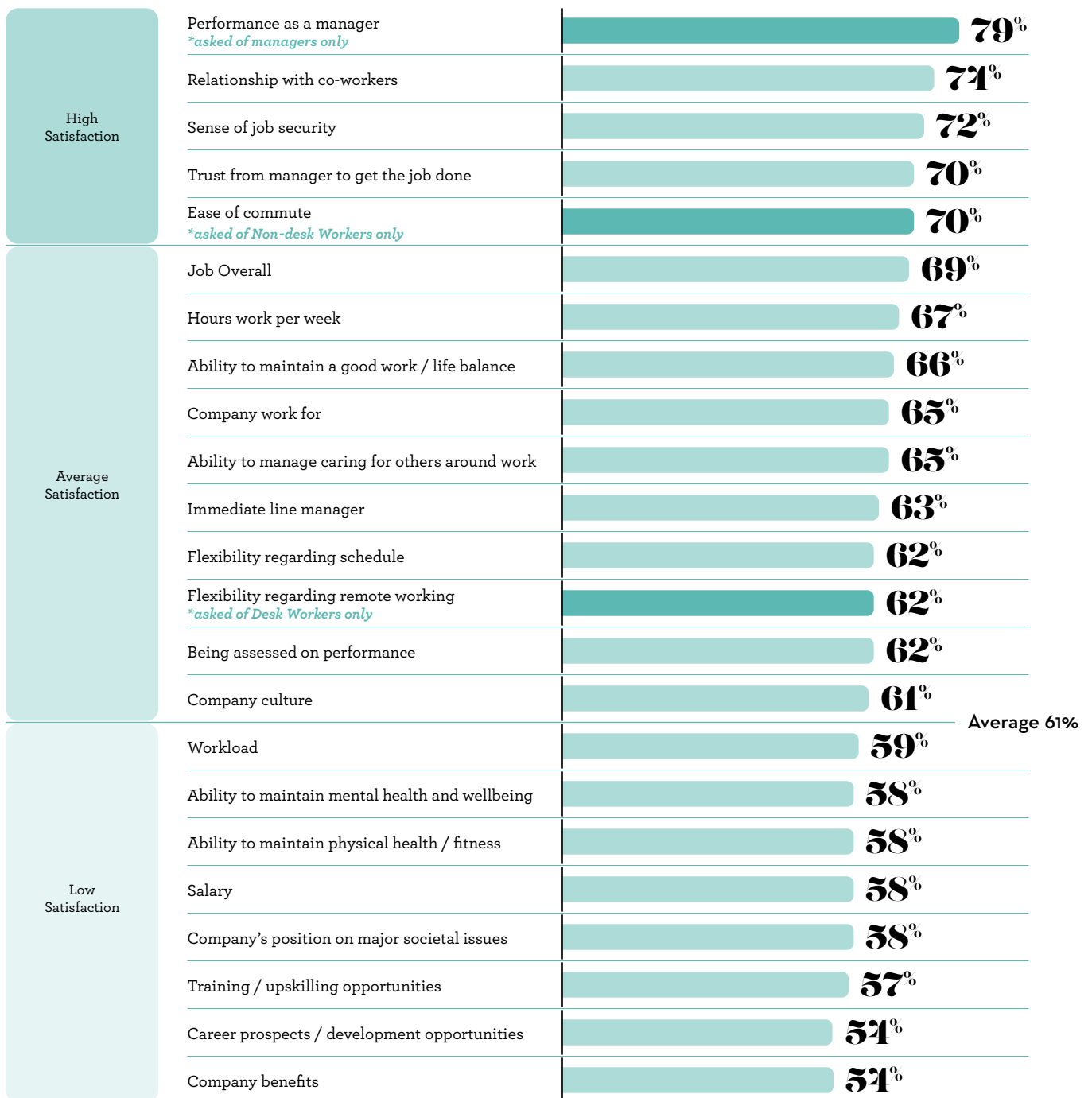
With this in mind, this survey found that globally, job satisfaction is high, with 69% stating they have overall job satisfaction, up from 67% in 2021. Workers are more satisfied in China, Brazil, and Turkey, while workers in Japan, France, Greece, and Italy are among the least satisfied.

Workload, the ability to maintain mental and physical health and wellbeing, salary, career progression, and

upskilling are the areas where workers are least satisfied. Non-desk workers are significantly less satisfied than desk workers with their ability to maintain mental health and wellbeing (52% compared with 65%).

74% of workers are satisfied with their relationships with co-workers, which is the highest rating of any job satisfaction factor.

### % Who say they are satisfied



Q31. How satisfied would you say you currently feel about the following? (NET Satisfied, T2B) Weighted base: All Workers (n=30,000)

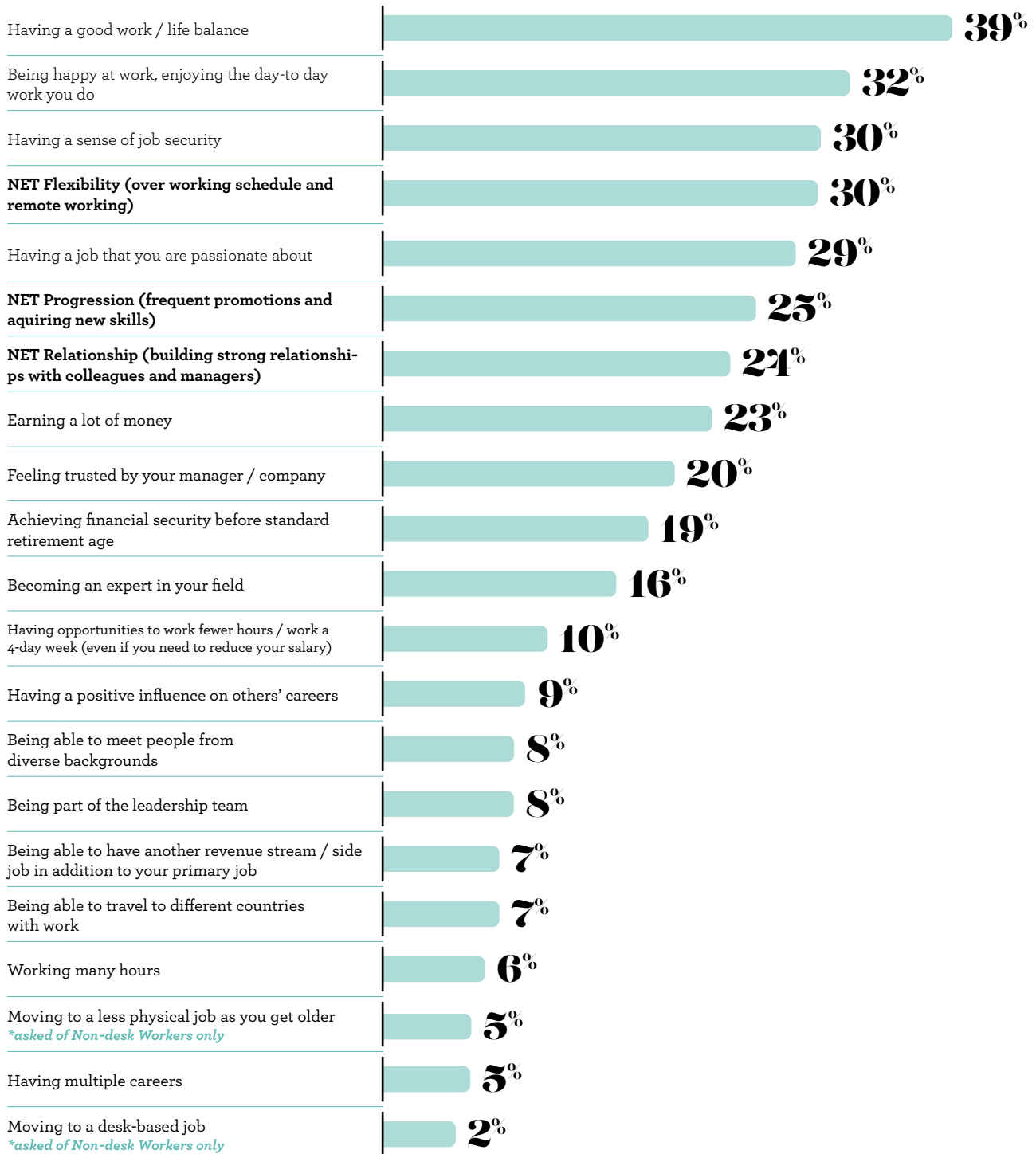


## Success

When considering what defines a successful working life, a good work/life balance, happiness at work, job security, and passion for their work come before money. Work means more to workers than a simple transaction of output for income, and workers understanding of the

impact of work on their broader lives - in other words, it is not possible to perfectly separate work from life, so striking the right work/life balance becomes a key priority.

### % Who say this is what describes a successful working life



Q106: Which of the following best describe a successful working life for you? Weighted Base: All Workers (n=30,000)





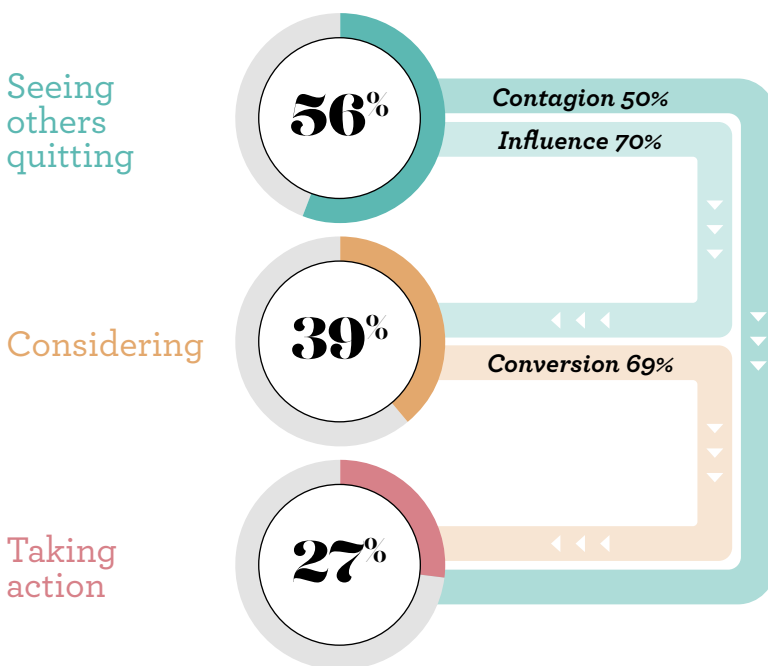
While salary is an important consideration, it is clearly not the only one. Companies must tackle both the financial, aspirational and wellbeing concerns together, in order to help employees make sense of uncertain times, resulting in improved talent retention rates.

## The Rise of the #Quitfluencer

The quitting contagion continues to grow boosted by the rise of so-called *quitfluencers*. Our unique formula breaks down the influence of seeing colleagues quit, resulting in contemplation and/or action.

Quitting sprees trigger 70% of colleagues to consider quitting themselves, and 50% of workers who have seen others quit have acted and decided to quit in the next 12 months.

### % of those seeing others quitting and % Who are considering quitting /quitting in the next 12 months



Q11. Thinking about your current company or network, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? // Q26. Thinking about your career plans in the next 12 months, which of the following best applies to you? Weighted Base: All Workers (n=30,000)

This quitting contagion is more prominent amongst younger generations. Gen Z are 2.5 times more likely to quit if they see others quitting than Baby Boomers. This theme is supported by other research, notably in

[LinkedIn's Workforce Confidence Index](#) published earlier in the year, stating that Gen Z are changing jobs at a rate 134% higher than they were in 2019, while Baby Boomers are switching 4% less.



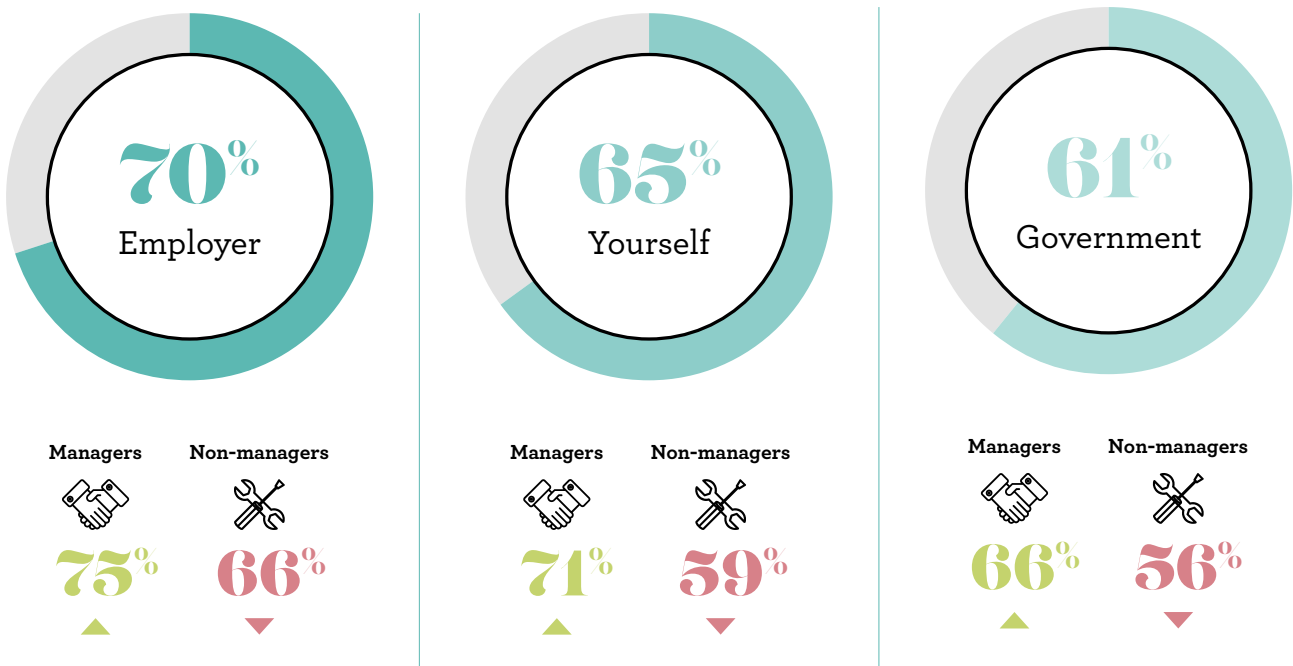
## The Rise of Quiet Quitting

The Great Resignation has unearthed ‘quiet quitting’, a recent viral trend embraced by those who reject the idea that work should be the top priority in their lives, as an attempt to prevent burnout.

Quiet quitting does not appear on the traditional attrition numbers reported by HR departments – but if undetected, it has the potential to promote a toxic culture where workers feel they cannot speak up, and instead decide to disengage.

Companies must watch out for this trend, which may be spurred on when workers see others around them quit. Providing space, coaching, and processes for open and honest conversations is one of the key retention recommendations for employers tackling quiet quitting. Leaders who fail to act could be guilty of ‘quiet firing’. We explore the concerning lack of career conversations and its striking impact on talent retention, in the [Career Progression section of this report](#).

### % Who think the following are responsible for a better working future



Q22. Looking ahead, and thinking about all aspects of working life, how responsible are the following in ensuring a better working world in future? (NET Responsible, T2B) Weighted Base: All Workers (n=30,000); see detailed sub group bases at front of report

## Career Confidence: A Buyer’s Market

6 out of 10 workers (61%) feel confident that they would be able to find a new job in six months or less, even in times of economic uncertainty. Although the looming recession may pour doubt over confidence levels, 54% of workers still believe they hold the power over jobs they can choose.

This is especially seen with Millennials (60%) and Gen Z (58%), who agree that, as candidates, they have more power and options to choose where to work. They put this down to companies struggling to retain and find talent.

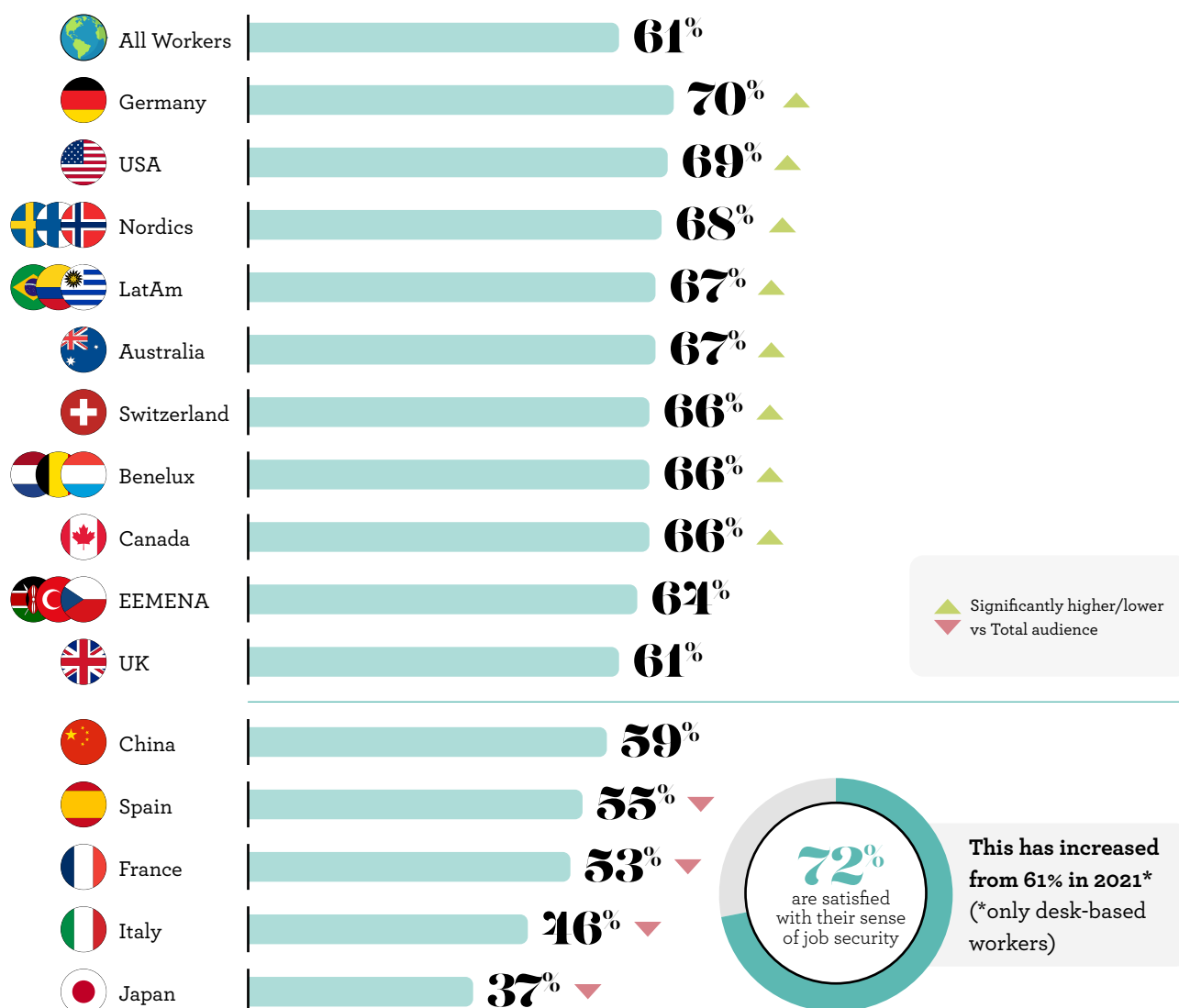
This proves that younger workers personify the ‘candidates as consumers’ mentality more than

other generations, seeming to have a better grasp and exposure of what’s on offer. Strong employer communication strategies have proven to act as talent magnets for attraction and retention of the younger generations.

Globally, most workers (72%) feel secure and are not concerned about losing their job. This has increased significantly from 61% in 2021 (though it must be noted that the 2021 report surveyed only desk-based workers). Italy, Japan, France, and Spain are the countries where workers are the least confident in their ability to find a new job in less than six months.



## % Who think they will find a new job in 6 months or less



Q17. Thinking about the "Great Resignation", in the current climate how long do you think it would take you to find a new job if you wanted to change jobs? Weighted base: All Workers (n=30,000)

This matches our findings from [Closing the Gap: Pathways to a Post-Pandemic Recovery in Labour Markets](#) that found employment levels are strongest in regions such as the US. That particular labour market is looking strong, so workers are likely to feel more confident in their ability to find a new job. In Europe, however, due to factors such as the war in Ukraine

and inflationary pressures, employment levels will take longer to recover to pre-pandemic levels. Workers in European countries where the labour markets are weaker, are right to feel less certain. In fact, [in the Salary section of this report](#), we explore the possibility of a slowing of the Great Resignation trend as a result of workers seeking stability in times of uncertainty.

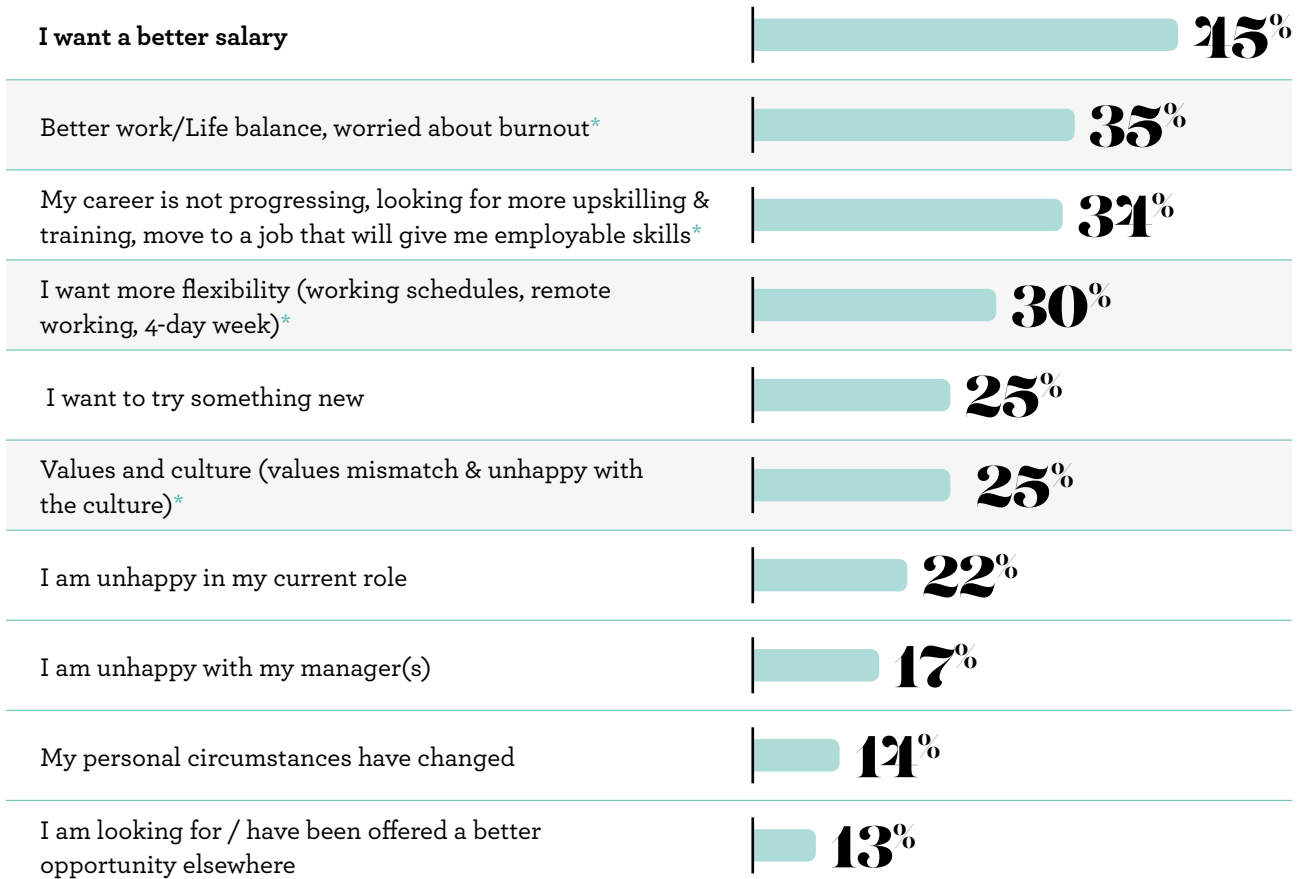


## The Wage Inflation Antidote

Employers might be tempted to tackle tight labour markets, quitting contagions, and worker confidence with higher salaries alone. Salary is the top reason for all workers to change job, with almost half of all those that want to quit in the next 12 months stating that salary

is their main reason. Work/life balance, a desire to try something new, unhappiness in their current job, and lack of career progression also rank highly as reasons to quit.

### % Who want to change jobs in next 12 months



\*These are Nets

When comparing those in office jobs with non-office workers, Salary remains the most important motivation for both.

Both groups share same priorities.

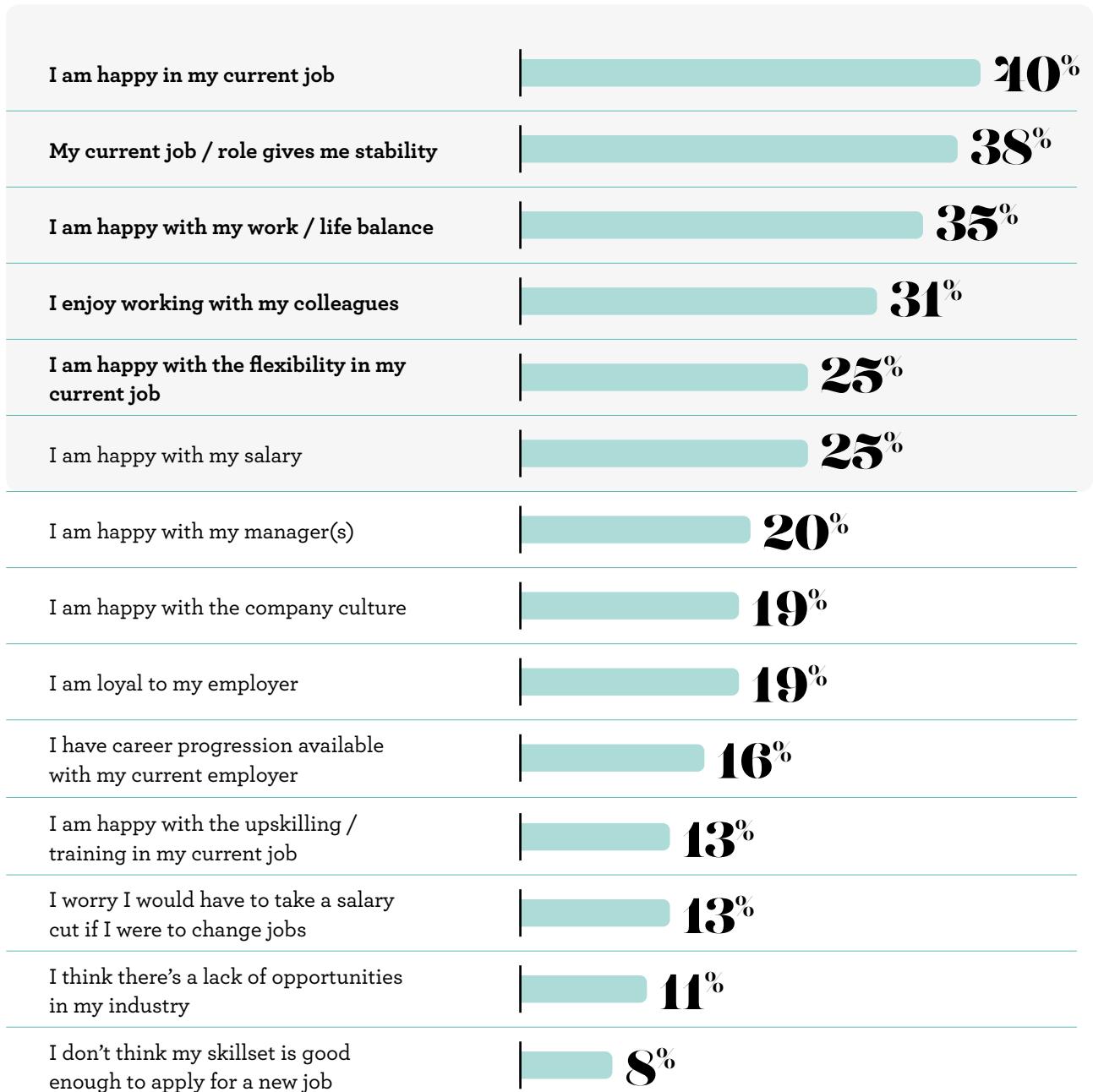
Q113. You said that you would like to change jobs / career in the next 12 months. Which of the following reasons best describes why you would like to make this change? Weighted Base: Those who want to quit/change their jobs in next 12 months; Non-desk Workers (n=2,601), Non-desk Managers (n=810), Non-desk Non-Managers (n=1,565)



However, salary becomes less important amongst workers who are engaged. All workers who say they will stay with their current employer over the next 12 months will do so because **1** they are happy; **2** the job provides stability; **3** they have a good work-life balance; **4** they enjoy working with their colleagues; and **5** because they

have good flexibility in their job. Salary takes sixth place in the ranking. So, while salary is important in attracting a worker to a job in the first place, other factors like development and flexibility rise in importance over time. This means that employers can't rely solely on raising salaries to keep workers engaged.

**% Who want to stay in their job over for the following reasons**



**When workers are engaged, salary takes a secondary role, dropping to 6th priority**

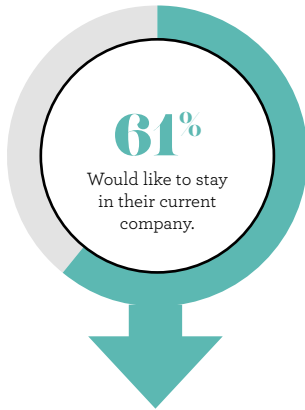
**Comparing Desk-workers and non-desk workers the ranking comes out the same.**

Q114. You said that you would like to stay in your current job / with your current employer. Which of the following reasons best describes why this is? Weighted Base: Those who want to stay in their job; Non-desk Workers (n=7,205), Non-desk Managers (n=2,264), Non-desk Non-Managers (n=4,397)



Employers cannot take for granted workers who are not quitting. 61% of workers globally state they want to stay in their current company in the next 12 months. However, nearly half of those people (44%) will do so under the condition that they will be reskilled and see progression within their job.

### % Who are thinking of doing the following in future



**44%**

Who want to stay at their current company want to progress/upskill for a new job

I would like to stay in my current job

**31%**

I would like to progress in my current company / employer

**17%**

I would like to be upskilled / reskilled for a new job in my current company

**10%**



I would like to take a different job in another company

**9%**

I would like to make a career change

**8%**

I would like to become self-employed

**5%**

I would like to take a career break

**1%**



I would like to retire

**6%**

Q26: Thinking about your career plans in the next 12 months, which of the following best applies to you? (NET Agree, T2B) Weighted base: All Workers (n=30,000), All Non-desk Workers (n=15,000), All Desk Workers (n=15,000)



As companies grapple with wage inflation, this report will outline areas that workers mark as highly important, but where their satisfaction at work is currently the lowest. We believe these are the areas where companies can make an impact to keep and attract talent. Salary is among them, but so are career progression, flexibility, and mental health and wellbeing.

## The Retention Lever Matrix

In the following pages, we will consider what we term 'retention levers'. But before we do so, it is important to highlight the prioritisation matrix used to uncover these levers.

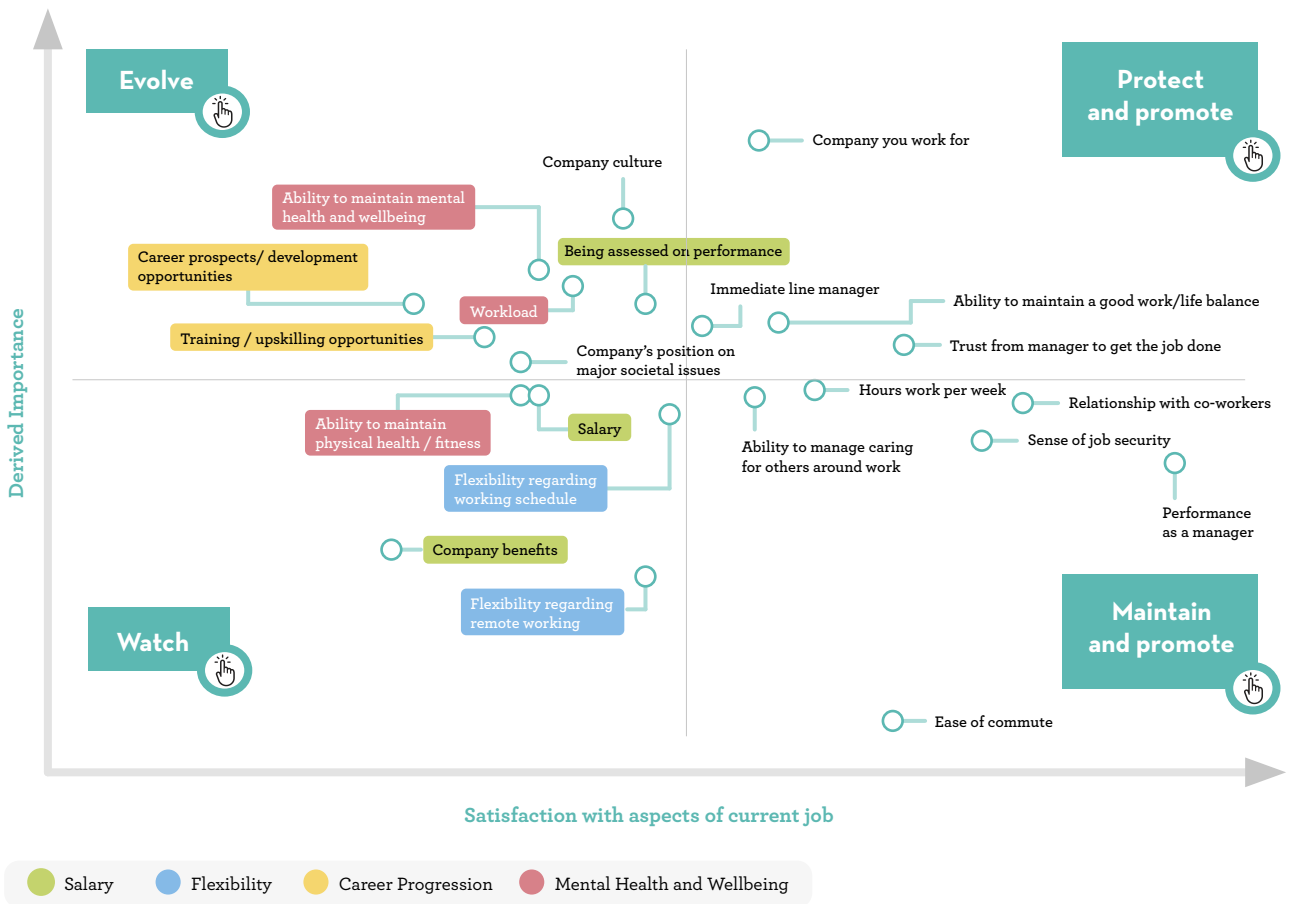
This unique matrix consists of four quadrants that map employee satisfaction and derived importance. The derived importance is calculated using the correlation between the satisfaction towards the job overall and the individual aspects of working life. Areas with a stronger positive correlation to overall satisfaction are more important to workers.

It is based on the patterns respondents use when evaluating satisfaction with the job overall and towards individual aspects of it.

## How to Understand Each Quadrant

Organisations should prioritise their retention efforts according to elements that are of high importance to their workforce, but which also generate low satisfaction amongst workers.

Hover above the quadrants to know more

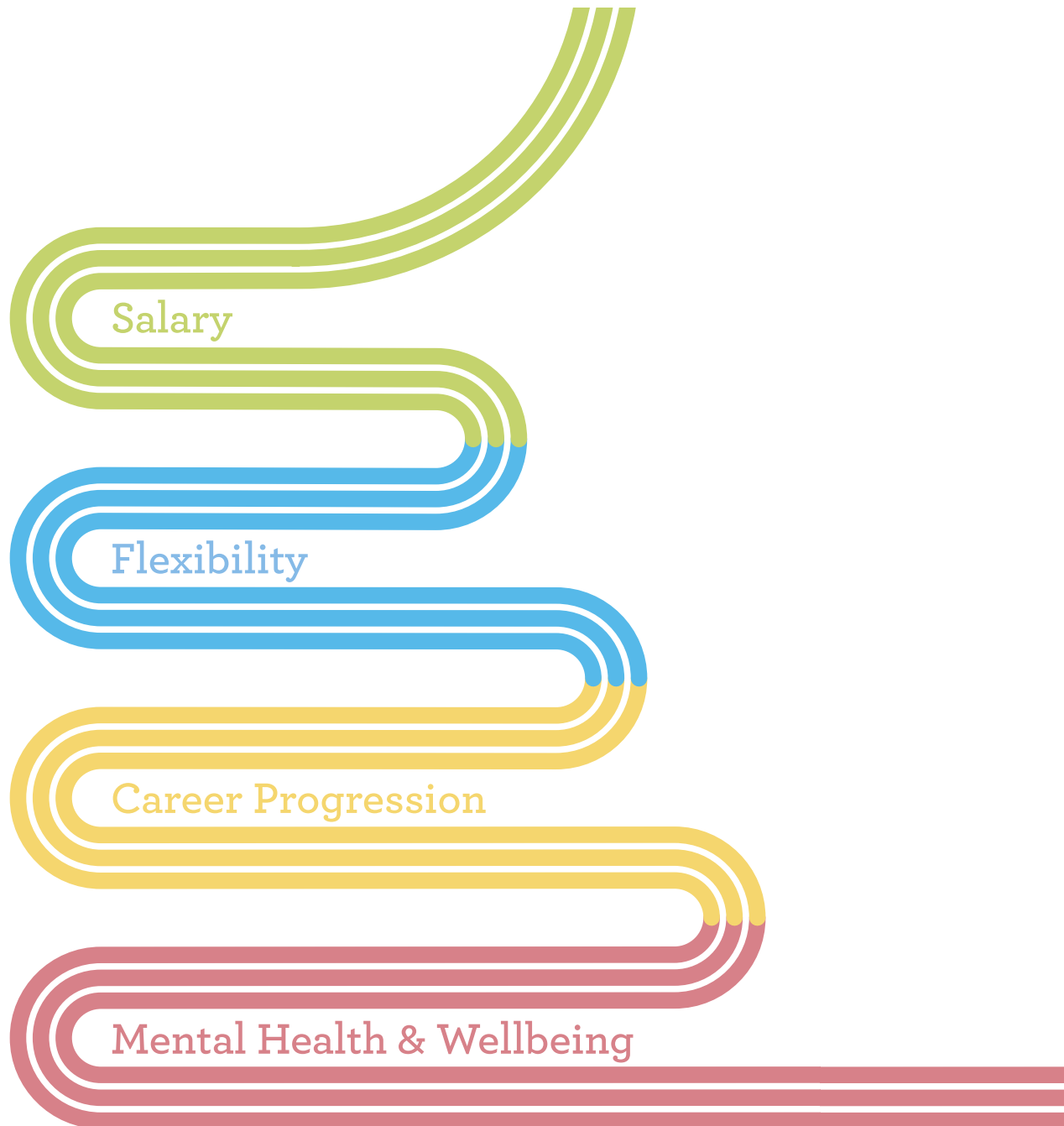


Q31: How satisfied would you say you currently feel about the following? Weighted base: All workers (n=30,000). Satisfaction with aspects of current job = Top 2 box; Derived importance = correlation analysis



When we do this, four retention levers present themselves. Career development and upskilling have the lowest satisfaction scores out of all the elements studied and are firmly in the 'evolve' quadrant. Also from the evolve quadrant, we explore mental health and wellbeing in detail. From the 'watch' quadrant, we will explore two key elements: salary and flexibility.

It is important to note that 'company culture' and 'company's position on societal issues' are of high importance and low satisfaction, and underpin everything an organisation does across their talent management cycle. While we will not cover these topics exclusively, it will be clear how they underlie every element of this report.





# 2

## Retention levers

a/ Salary

A Tool for Attraction, but Not for Retention



## Retention levers | Salary

### The Wage Inflation Trap

Salary is the single biggest reason for workers globally to change jobs. 45% of workers that say they will quit in the next 12 months will do so to get a better salary. However, when workers are engaged and want to stay in their current job, salary becomes less important, dropping to sixth in priority order. Most people, it seems, care about salary when they are at transition points in their careers and they are expected to negotiate, but once this is finalised, salary becomes a secondary consideration that will not keep them in a job.

As companies grapple with attrition, increasing wages has become a quick tactic to attract the right people in the past year. Salaries got better for half of workers globally with the US leading the ranking. But it has quickly become clear that the effect of higher pay alone doesn't have a lasting impact on retention. Our research suggests that organisations should focus on wage inflation antidotes: other factors that are vital for satisfaction and engagement, including career development, flexibility and work/life balance.

#### % Who are making these decisions because of Salary or financial considerations

Salary is the top 1 reason for workers to change job

And in terms of satisfaction it ranks 19<sup>th</sup> nearing the bottom of the list



Ranks 1st followed by a better work/ life balance at 35%



Ranks 6th

Q106: Which of the following best describe a successful working life for you? Q105: Thinking about your current job, what were the reasons you chose this job over another? Q113: You said that you would like to change jobs / career in the next 12 months. Which of the following reasons best describes why you would like to make this change? Q114: You said that you would like to stay in your current job / with your current employer. Which of the following reasons best describes why this is? Weighted Base: All Workers (n=30,000)



## Increasing Salaries for Half of Workers



**Only 4 in 10  
Non-managers**

**Feel their salary is a fair reflection of their work**

% Who agree with the following



- All workers
- Managers
- Non-managers

▲ Significantly higher/lower vs Total audience  
▼

Q109. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about salaries and benefits? // Q31. How satisfied would you say you currently feel about the following? Net Satisfaction with current salary Weighted base: All Workers (n=30,000)



Only half of workers are satisfied with how salary reflects their experience and skillset, the hours they work, and the work they produce - with the latter being slightly lower than the others. Two years after the revolution of hybrid and flexible work, salary and performance measurement processes have not yet transitioned from measuring hours to measuring output.

Organisations should focus on new approaches to understanding worker productivity and ensure that remuneration better reflects measures of output. Coaching and support for leaders is key to this.

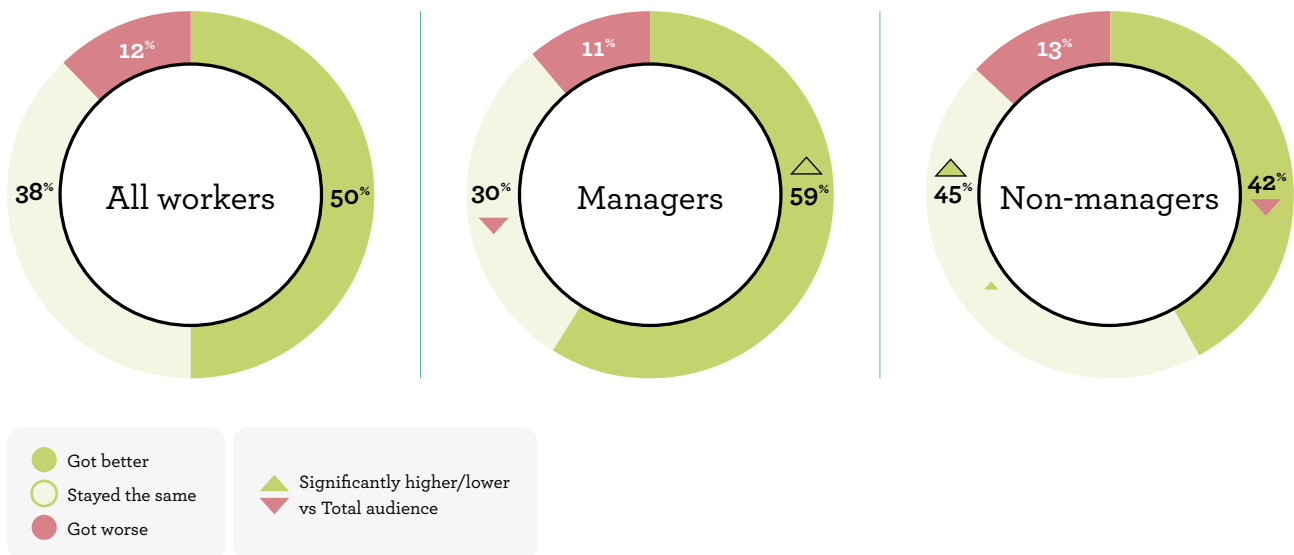
Overall, satisfaction with salary is average, with only half of workers feeling that it is a fair reflection of their work, regardless of the hours versus output debate.

This, in part, could be triggered by the new candidate negotiating power and due to concerns around the rising cost of living and inflationary pressures, which we will explore in more detail below.

Managers are significantly more satisfied with their salary than non-managers (63% vs. 38%). This is not surprising given that 6 in 10 managers said their salaries got better over the last two years, compared with only 4 in 10 non-managers.

This suggests an area of concern for organisations. Companies risk losing their talent pipeline if investment in skills, progression, and salary is focused on managers, and the front-liners at non-management levels are forgotten.

### % Who agree that salaries have got better / stayed the same / got worse

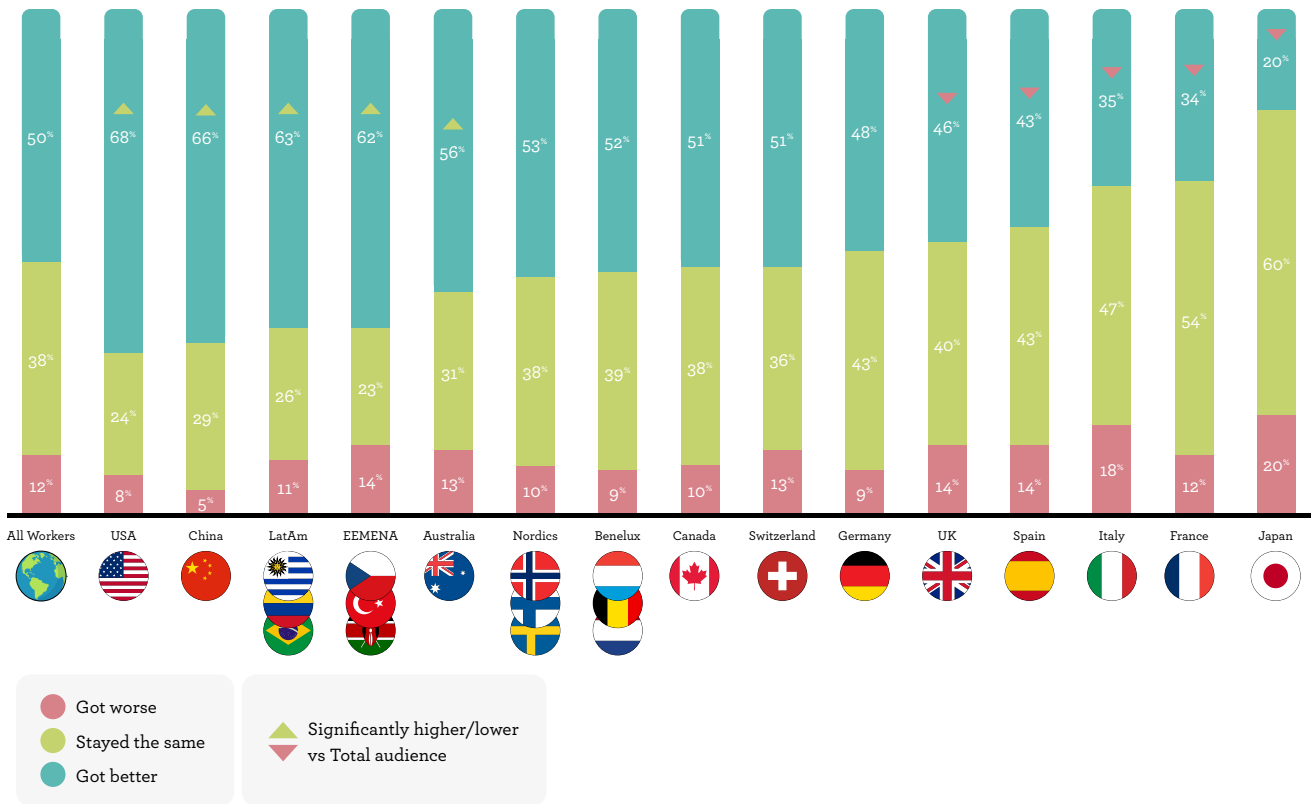


Q108. Thinking about the past 2 years, to what extent has your salary and the benefits you receive changed? Weighted base: All Workers (30,000)



Geographically, salaries in the USA and China have improved the most, while in western European countries and Japan it is most likely that salaries have stayed the same.

### % Who agree that salaries have got better / stayed the same / got worse



Q108. Thinking about the past 2 years, to what extent has your salary and the benefits you receive changed? Weighted base: All Workers (n=30,000)

## Recession Fears to Slow Great Resignation

Even with the high sense of job security, increasing salaries, and numbers of people quitting, workers' fears of an impending economic recession might slow down the Great Resignation trends in the coming months.

Workers are looking for sources of additional income to combat concerns around the rising cost of living and geopolitical uncertainty, with 61% of workers globally saying they are worried that their salary is not high enough to deal with rising rates of inflation. As such, and amidst current inflation rates, non-office workers are looking for additional sources of income (or a new job with a higher salary).

Economic concerns about inflation are not going anywhere, with 3 in 5 workers worrying about the current economic climate impacting their jobs; this is felt more than ever by non-desk workers.

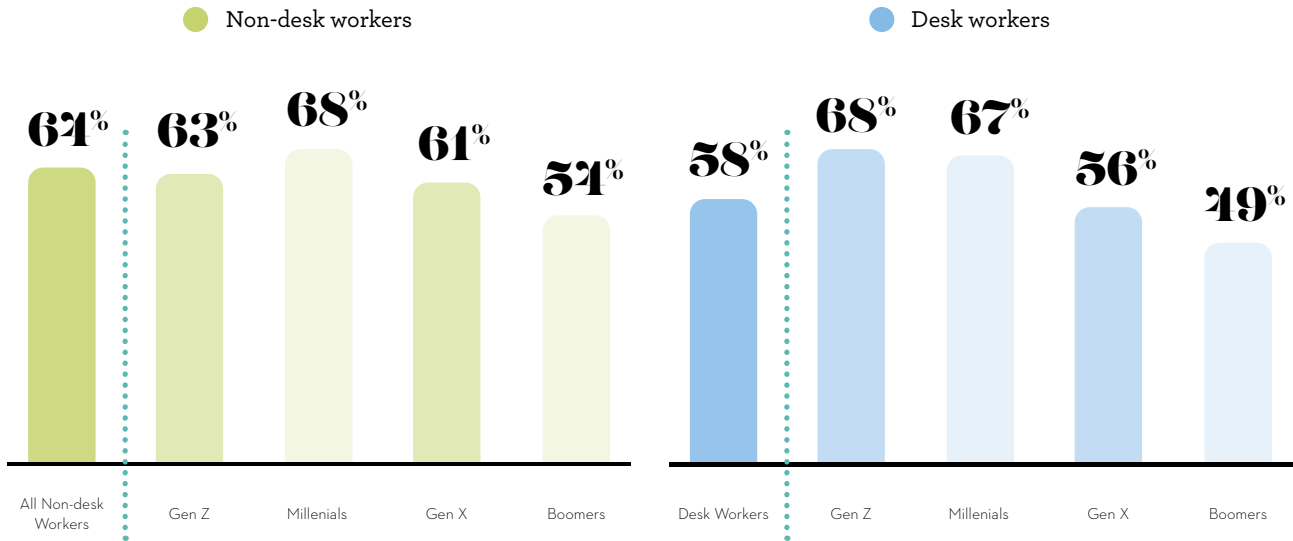
Meanwhile, current geopolitical tensions are adding fuel to the fire, with survey recipients admitting that the impact of the war in Ukraine is impacting their work and job security, with only one quarter of all workers saying they are not worried about the current situation in Ukraine.

Economic uncertainty has resulted in workers being pushed to take on extra work to make ends meet. Over half of non-desk workers surveyed state that the impact of inflation means that they are more likely to look for a second job, with 4 in 10 non-desk workers admitting to having worked cash-in-hand. Over 40% of Gen Z and Millennials have admitted to this, compared with 14% of Baby Boomers.

These findings predict a slowing in the Great Resignation trend over the next 12 months, as workers look for security in times of uncertainty.

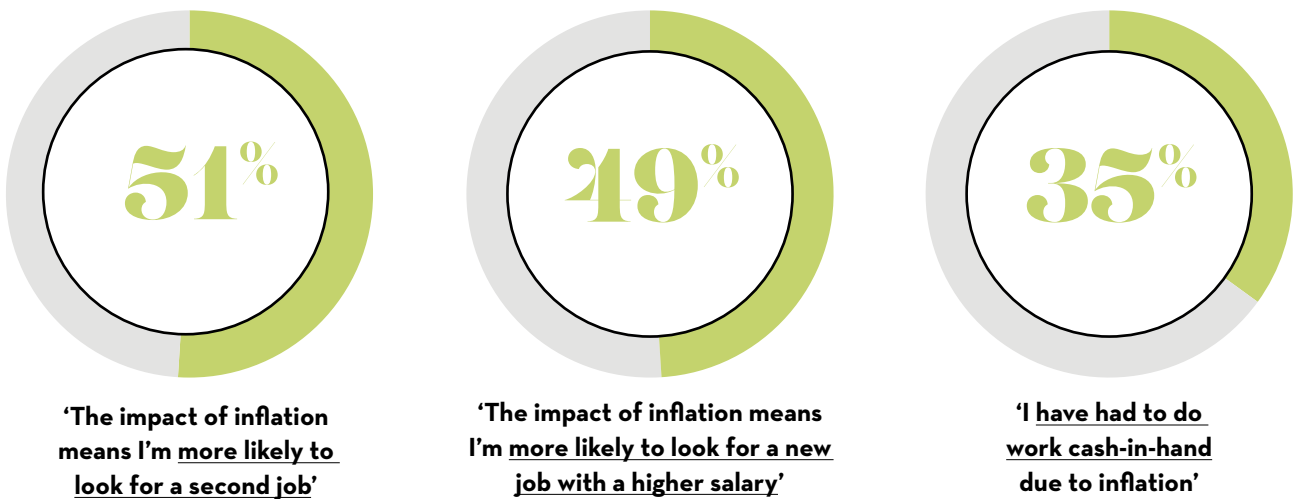


### % Who worry their salary is not high enough to deal with current rates inflation



Q108. Thinking about the past 2 years, to what extent has your salary and the benefits you receive changed? Weighted base: All Workers (n=30,000)

### % Who would do the following



Q109. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about salaries and benefits? Weighted base: All Non-desk Workers (n=15,000)

### Say they worry the current situation in Russia / Ukraine will impact my job / the job market negatively



Q116. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about recruitment? Weighted base: All Workers (n=30,000), All Non-desk Workers (n=15,000), All Desk Workers (n=15,000)



## Key Takeaways

1

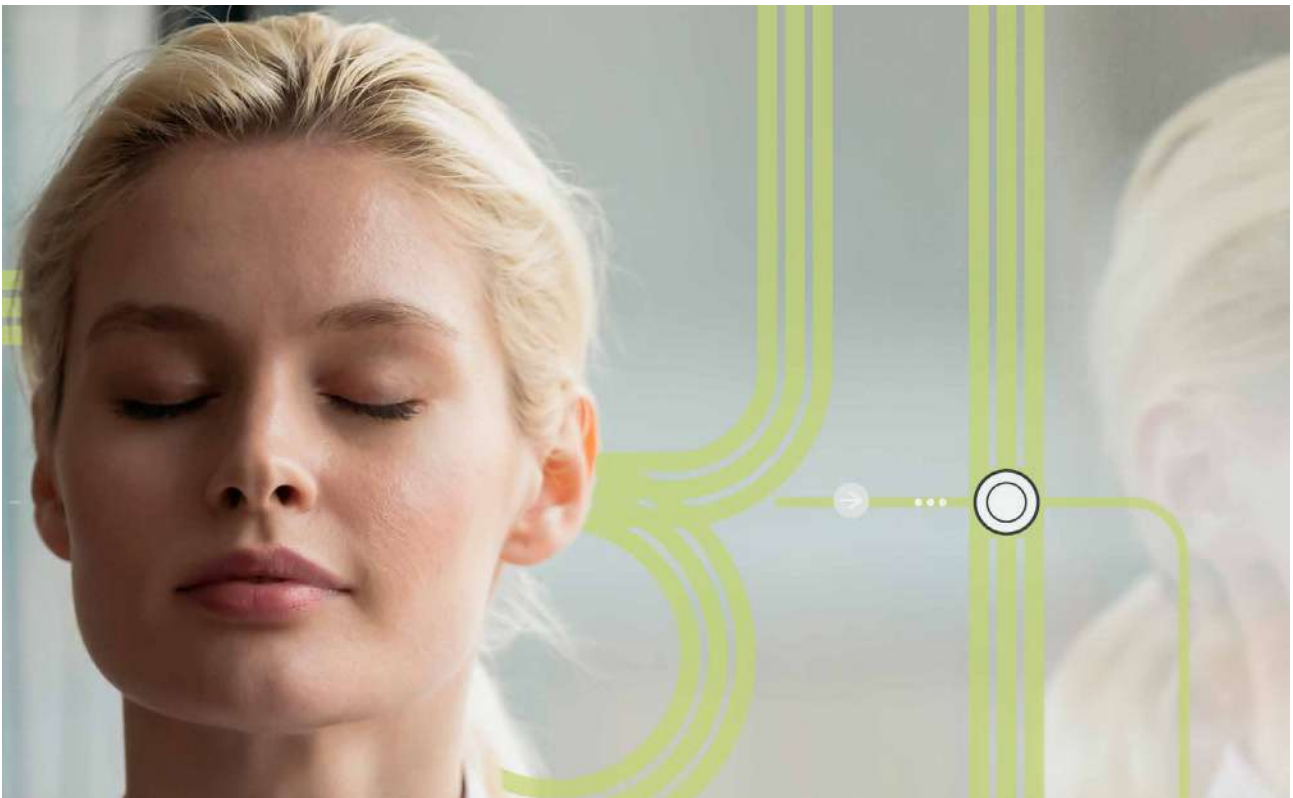
Organisations need to ensure that salaries for open roles remain competitive in times of extreme economic and political uncertainty, partnering with experts who use labour market data at their disposal to understand the benchmarks.

2

Employers need to better make the link between pay and performance. Instead of over-focusing on hours worked, organisations should invest in coaching, technology, and analytics to set output goals, measure and compensate workers for their skillset, experience, and output more effectively, especially at the non-manager level at the bottom of the talent pipeline. Performance management is key to support a transparent and output-based conversation with workers.

3

Despite the threat of talent scarcity, organisations should not focus on attraction to the detriment of retention. Workers who are staying with their current employer have serious demands too, namely career progression. Furthermore, salary should not be the sole focus for talent retention. Workers, specially non-managers, need to feel engaged, and employers need to also consider the other retention levers, namely flexibility, employee wellbeing, and career progression, to secure their talent pipeline.



# 2

## Retention levers

b/ Flexibility

The Continuing Demand for Autonomy





# Retention Levers | Flexibility

## A Key Priority

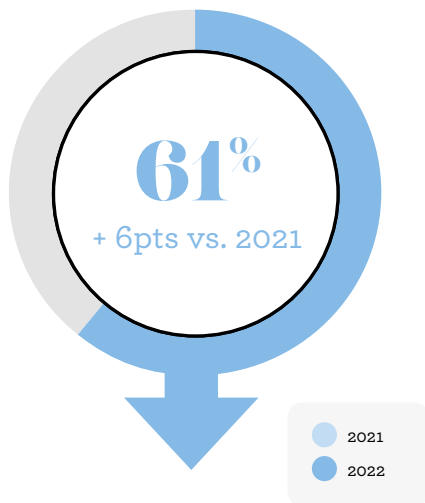
Flexibility has clearly become a prominent issue over the last three years, as the pandemic led to mandatory work-from-home policies where workers proved they could be as productive at home as in the office. But it would be a mistake to view this as only a recent issue: the desire for flexibility came long before the pandemic, which served more as a catalyst rather than an initiator of calls for greater flexibility at work. Flexibility has long been a key to attracting and retaining the best talent, and workers'

demands for more autonomy and choice about how to get work done are only increasing.

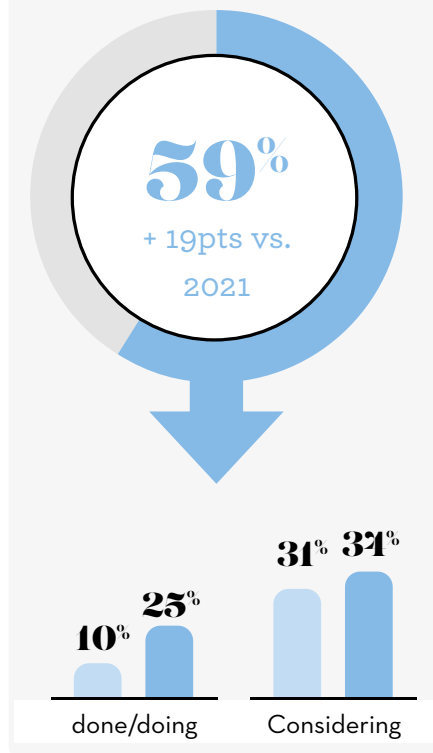
This is supported by the data, as 6 in 10 desk-based workers are considering or have already moved jobs as a direct result of having more flexibility; this represents a year-on-year increase of 19 percentage points in workers who are prioritising or have already prioritised flexibility. Flexibility, then, is a key retention lever.

### % Who are making changes to the way they work

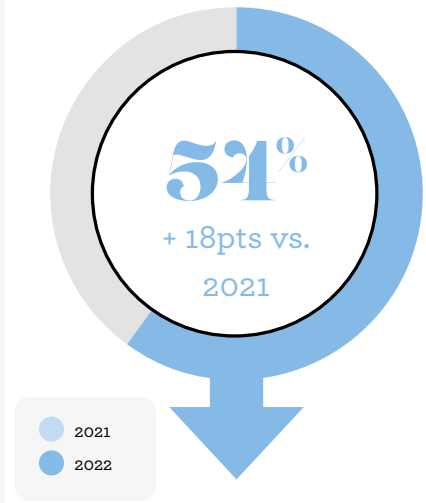
Making changes to their home / property to make remote working easier



Moving to a job with more flexibility around working hours / schedules



Reducing hours worked, moving to a 4-day week, even if they're paid less



Q33: Have you done or considered doing any of the following in response to the changes in working life over the last 2 years? Weighted base: All Desk Workers (n=15,000)



## The Pendulum Perspective

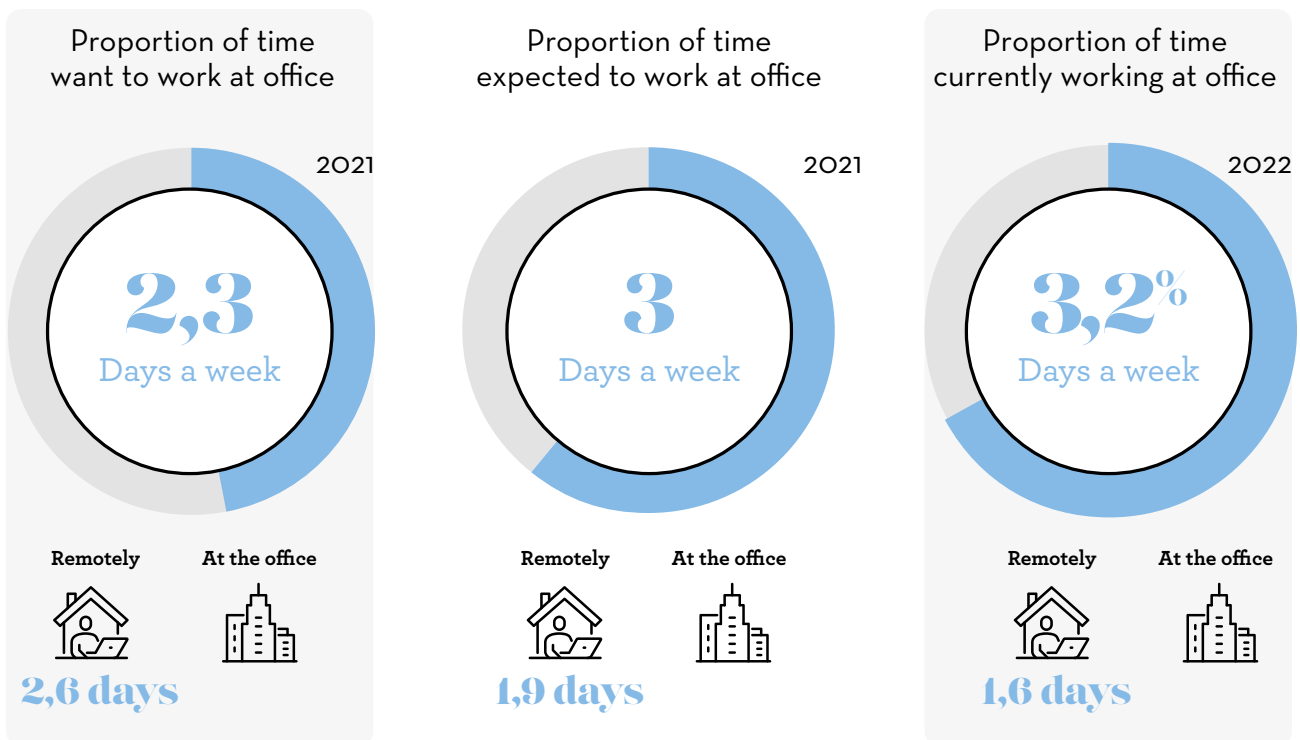
The pendulum is swinging back towards companies taking control over the amount of flexibility workers have on setting their (desk-based) working schedule.

Apple's former director of machine learning, Ian Goodfellow, made headlines in May 2022 when he resigned over the tech giant's return-to-office policy, becoming one of the most high-profile figures to take a

step that many are considering (especially in industries that didn't suffer significant productivity declines in the pandemic, such as the tech industry).

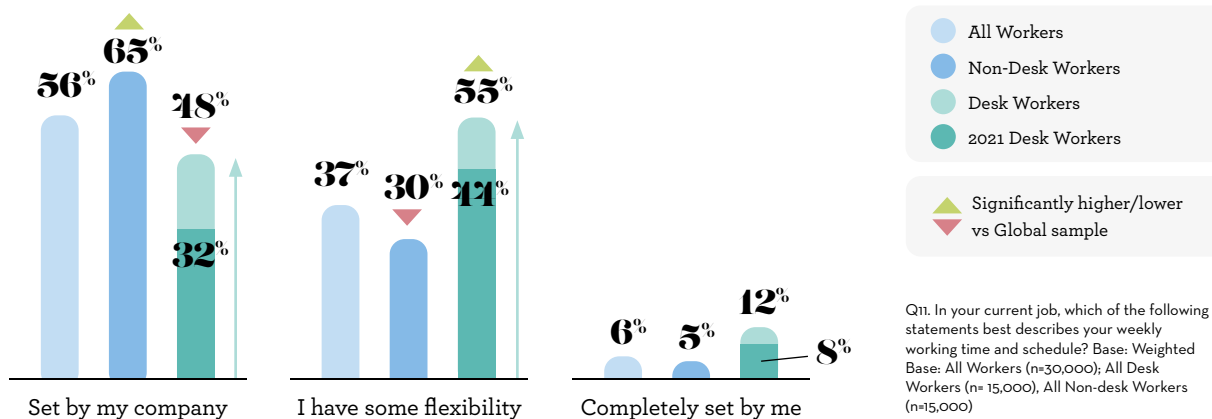
Organisations should be careful, as the reality of hybrid work (3.2 days spent working from the office each working week) is not meeting workers' desires (2.6 days at home).

### % Of time worked in the following locations in the average week



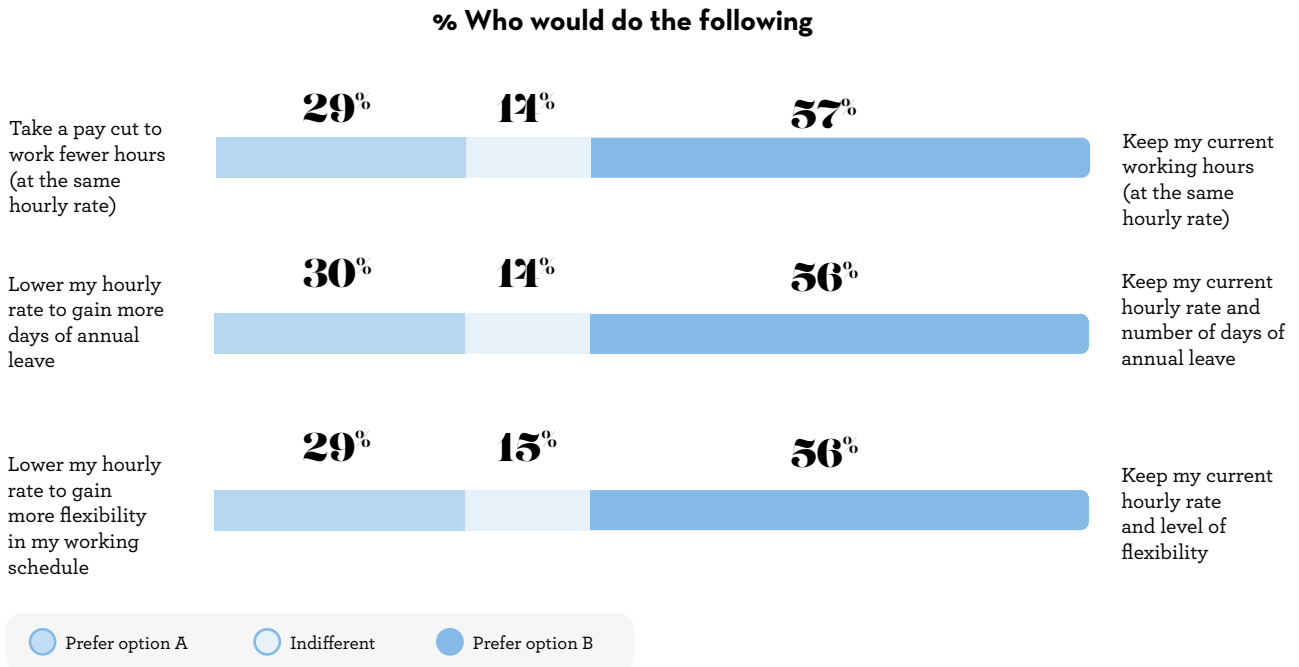
2022,Q101. Thinking about your current role, what proportion of your time do you spend working in the following locations in an average week? 2021,S10: Thinking now to DURING the Coronavirus outbreak when changes / restrictions on where you work were put in place, what proportion of your time did you spend working in the following locations in an average week? 2021,S9: Thinking back to BEFORE the Coronavirus outbreak, what proportion of your time did you spend working in the following locations in an average week? 2021/2022,Q10. How many hours per week would you say you work on average in your current role? Weighted Base: All Desk Workers 2022 (n=15,000); Unweighted Base: All Desk Workers 2021 (n=14,800)

### % Who say their working schedule is set by their company/by themselves



## Flexibility - a Luxury for the Few

Flexibility has a price, though, and one that non-desk workers cannot afford – only 3 in 10 non-desk workers would compromise on salary to gain flexibility. This becomes a major barrier to a four-day week, as 51% of workers who took a four-day week stated that this came with a pay cut.



Q205. We are now going to show you a series of statements showing different working options. Please read both statements and then indicate which one you prefer if you were given these two work options (NET Agree T3B; NET Agree B3B). Weighted Base: All Non-desk Workers (n=15,000)

Those likely to be in a more financially secure situation are able to make this compromise. When it comes to a four-day week, 76% of workers who have that option take it, with leaders (67%) much more likely to take the four-day week option than non-managers (19%).



## Barriers to a Four-Day Week

Interest in a four-day working week has grown alongside the demand for greater flexibility, with many organisations discovering that it is a powerful differentiator in attracting the strongest hires, acting as a kind of talent magnet.

In June 2022, the world's largest pilot of a four-day week launched in the United Kingdom, encompassing 3,300 workers across sectors over a six-month period. Similar pilots and trials are being launched across the world, which demonstrates how seriously the four-day week concept is being examined.

Currently, only 42% of desk-workers have the option of a four-day week, but only 32% make use of it, with 75% of those taking up the option saying they suffered no loss of productivity as a result. The demographics most likely to use the four-day week option are Gen Z and people in leadership roles. This suggests that a four-day week can be a crucial factor in retaining not only an organisation's current leaders, but also the leaders of the future.

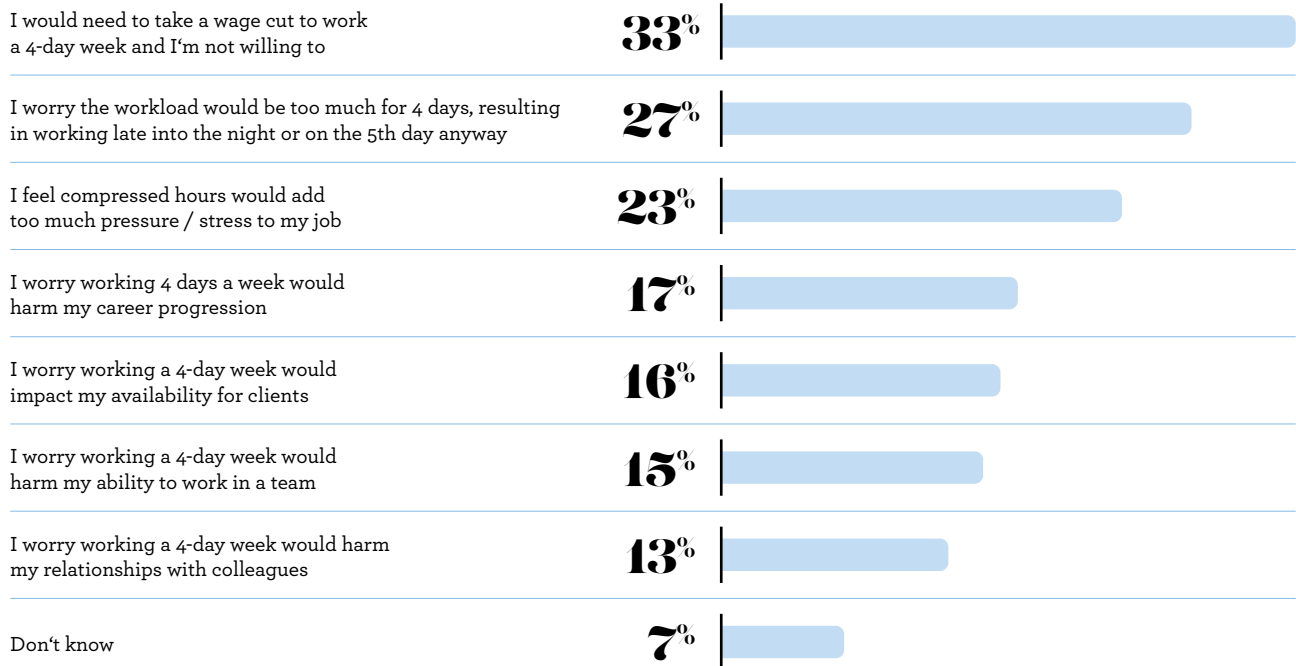
Appetite for a four-day week among workers is strong, with 68% saying all companies should offer the option. A slightly higher proportion (71%) of surveyed workers believe that governments should do more to regulate flexible working schedules, while 70% say that a four-day week would improve their mental health with no negative impact on productivity.

This all makes a strong case for introducing the option of a four-day week, but we should be mindful of the barriers.

A cut in pay is involved in 51% of cases, which dissuades a fifth of people from taking up the option. Many also fear that they will inevitably end up dealing with work-related issues, effectively unpaid, on their free day, while others worry that they will be expected to deal with a five-day workload in just four days. This points to the need for an approach that is flexible enough to address individual concerns while also providing clarity on demands and expectations.

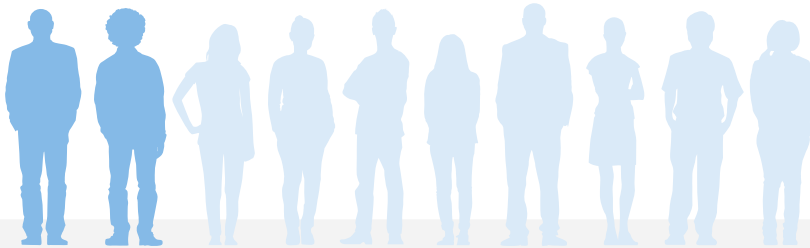


## % Reasons for not taking up the 4-day week option



Of those working a 4-day week

51%  
Did take a pay cut



2 in 10

Of those working a 4-day week use their 5th day for work

Q121: You said you do not take up the option to work a 4-day week. Which of the following best describes why you do not take up the 4-day week option? Weighted Base: Those that do not take up the 4-day week option, Desk Workers (n=1,554) / Q119a: You said you always / sometimes work a 4-day week. Did you take a wage cut to do this? Weighted Base: Those who work a 4-day week, Desk Workers (n=4,646)



## Key Takeaways

1

Workers continue to demand autonomy over working hours, working location, time off and scheduling, and organisations need to tread carefully when taking back any more control over flexibility.

2

The 4-day week is becoming a strong retention and attraction strategy. But When offering four-day working weeks, organisations should actively address some of the key barriers to ensure inclusivity for all workers, for example establishing effective boundaries to ensure the fifth day is unimpeded.

3

Automation of repetitive tasks via technologies such as AI and machine learning will play an important role in this shift, with IT systems and technologies allowing collaboration and seamless hybrid working.



# 2

## Retention levers

c/ Career Progression

Stuck in the Middle: Are Middle Management on the Road to Nowhere?



## Retention levers | Career Progression

### Parity in the Pipeline?

31% of workers state that the primary reason to quit is a lack of progression and re- and upskilling opportunities, leaving companies in danger of losing their talent pipeline.

**44%** Who want to stay at their current company want to progress/upskill for a new job

With satisfaction levels differing between the two, it seems non-managers might be falling through the gaps at the expense of their more senior counterparts. Only 40% of non-managers say they are satisfied with their career prospects at their company, compared with 70% of managers.

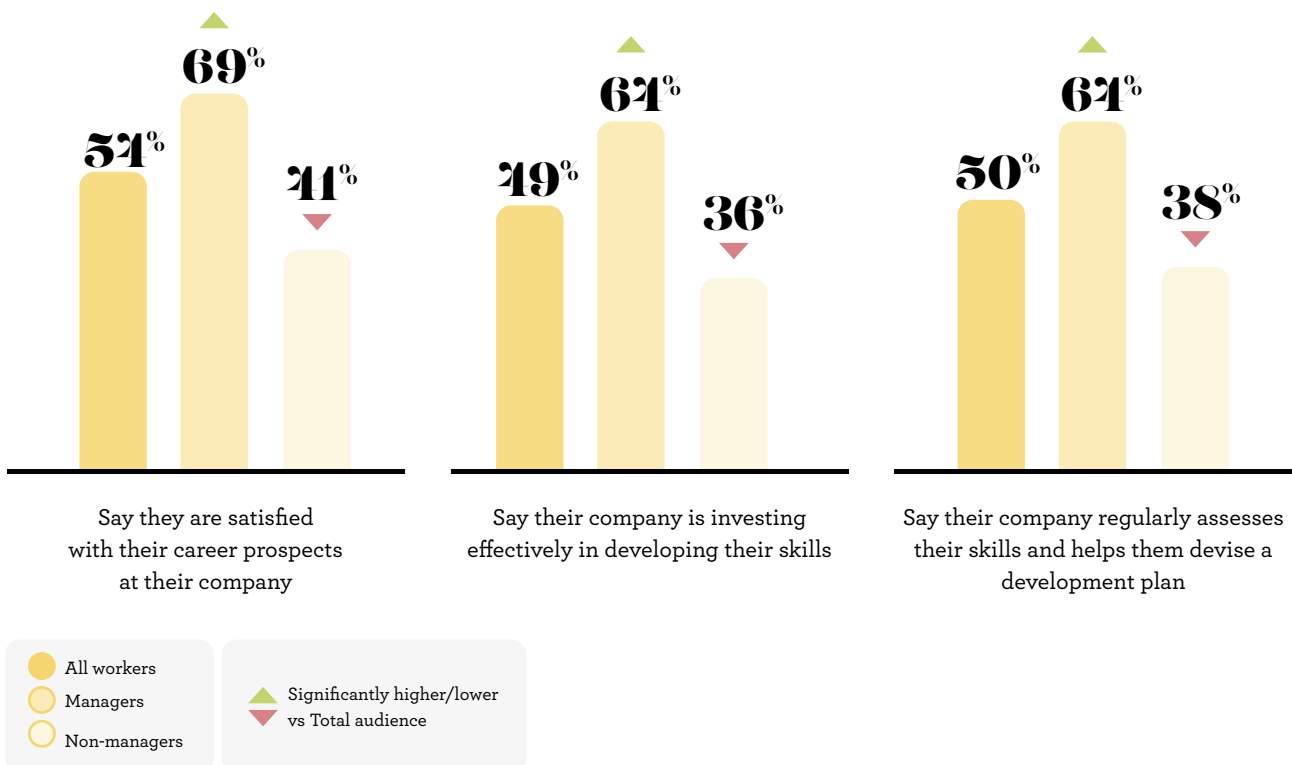
Similarly, only 36% of non-managers (compared with 64% of managers) say their company is investing effectively in developing their skills, a worryingly low statistic for a demographic who are likely to be impacted the most by the reskilling emergency.

Companies are at risk of losing their talent pipeline as most of their efforts are focused on managers' development, skills, and rewards, instead of non-managers who report much lower satisfaction and exposure to opportunities.

Companies are struggling to find and retain talent. Salary and career progression (including career conversations, internal mobility, and skilling opportunities) are highly important for all workers and where satisfaction is at its lowest levels. We see that salary has increased much more for managers than for non-managers, but also see managers having much more exposure to training opportunities and career progression conversations (60% vs. 40%).

Those that have more career conversations also see more internal opportunities and are encouraged to grow internally in their current company. It seems that non-managers are the forgotten piece of the puzzle.

### % Who are satisfied with career prospects and company investment and assessment of skills



Q31. How satisfied would you say you currently feel about the following? (NET Satisfied, T2B) // Q7. Thinking about how well-equipped you currently are for work, how far would you agree or disagree with the following? (NET Agree) Weighted base: All Non-desk Workers (n=15,000)



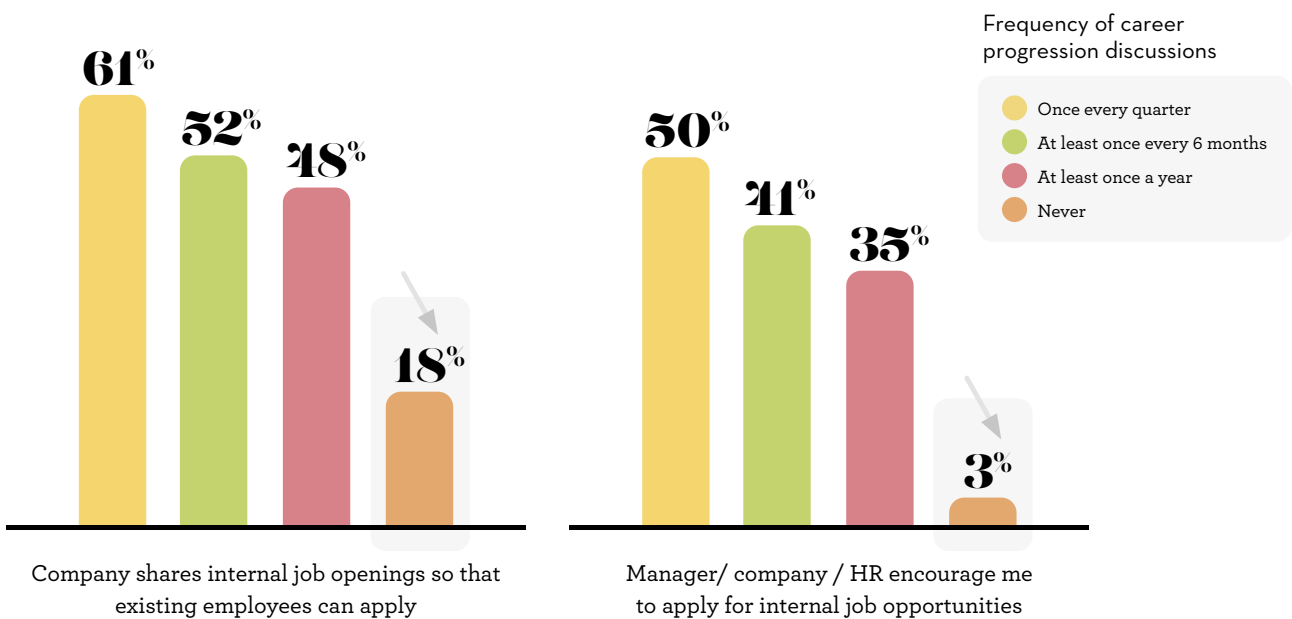


## Silence is not Golden

Career conversations are a critical part of career progression and retention, yet almost a quarter of the workforce have never had a career progression conversation in their current job. A lack of exposure to career progression conversations means, in turn, that there is a lack of awareness and encouragement to apply for internal opportunities for workers.

Those having frequent career conversations are 3 times more likely to be encouraged to apply for internal job opportunities. However, 23% of workers have never had one.

**% Who say company often shares internal job openings/opportunities frequency of career progression discussions**



Q125: Which of the following apply to you? Weighted Base: Those that have had a career progression discussion: at least once per quarter (6,273), at least once every 6 months (9,275), at least once a year (11,759), Never (2,015)

## Internal Mobility for Future Resiliency

Internal mobility is a key component for talent retention. Enabling people to progress and develop - in any direction - within the organisation itself ensures they are more likely to remain into the future. Without the possibility to grow, they will look for opportunities elsewhere.

It is incumbent on employers to make internal mobility a priority to ensure their business is future-proofed and their employees are satisfied. 70% of workers agree that organisations should train, upskill, or develop existing

employees for different roles across the organisation before hiring external candidates.

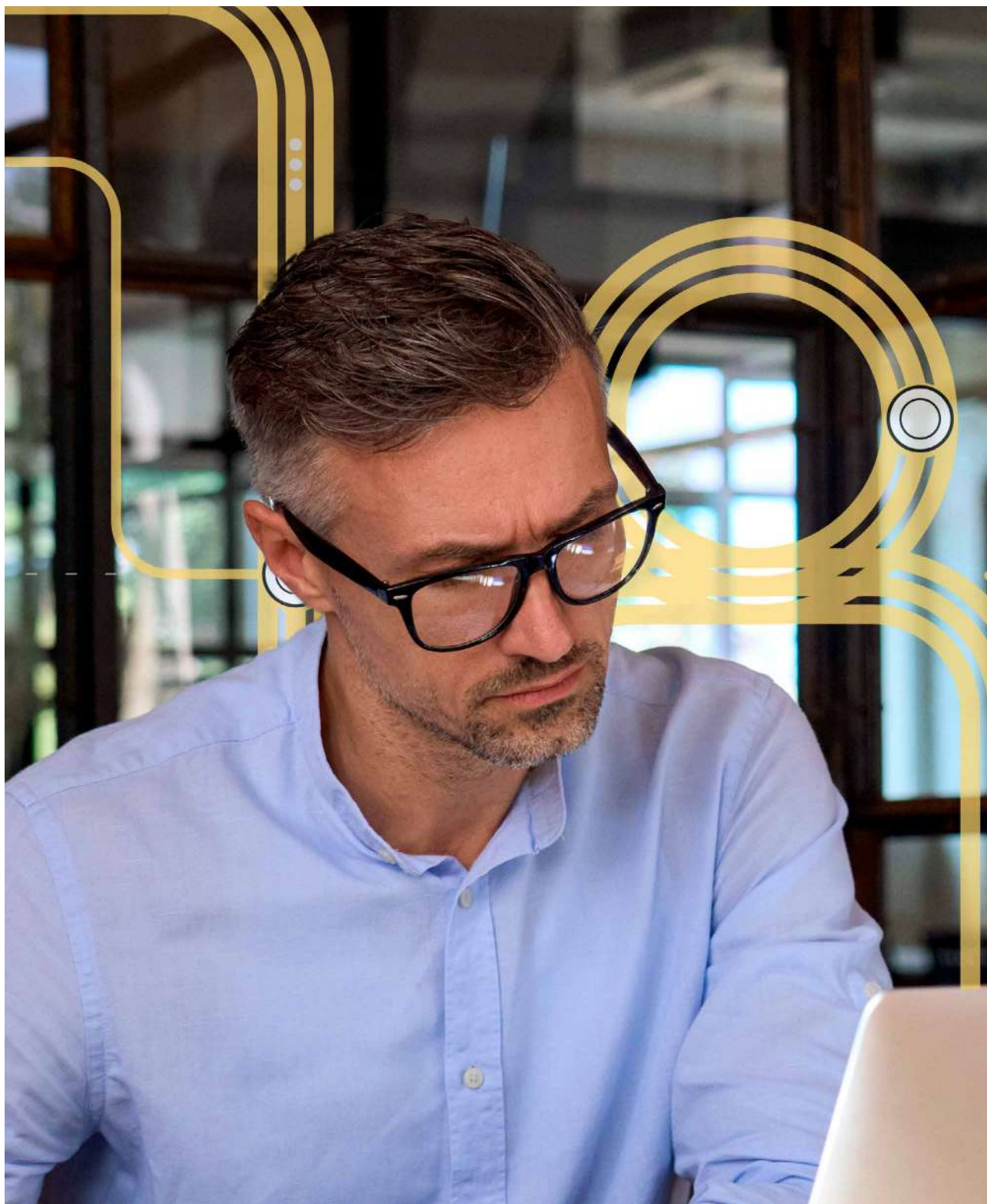
But employees require the support of their managers to find new internal roles, as evidenced by the relationship between internal mobility and career conversations above, and by the fact that only 17% of workers globally are actively looking for new opportunities within their current organisation over the next 12 months.



## Reskill or Risk a Talent Exodus

77% of workers say they have a skills gap. This is particularly prominent for those not in managerial roles; only 36% of non-managers say their company invests and assesses their skills.

Younger generations feel this skills gap more prominently (Gen Z, 86% and Millennials, 84%). Workers' needs must be met by companies, which need to invest in reskilling employees - particularly at the non-management level.



## Key Takeaways

1

Organisations must urgently address dissatisfaction with career development opportunities, especially for non-managers. Focusing on career conversations and performance reviews is a great place to start.

2

Coaching leaders to have the right performance conversations with colleagues, to create attractive career paths with transparent benefits, can help address expectations and increase retention. Coaching for non-managers can help avoid quiet quitting.

3

Organisations struggling to find the right skills in the job market must invest in skills mapping, reskilling, and upskilling. Development of workers, especially at non-management level, is vital. Not only will it increase their satisfaction, but it will future-proof the business and create a talent pipeline of skilled workers. Organisations must be mindful of departments 'talent hoarding' and promote a culture of internal mobility.



# 2

## Retention levers

d/ Mental Health and Wellbeing  
Rethinking Wellness Programs: Believe in Leave

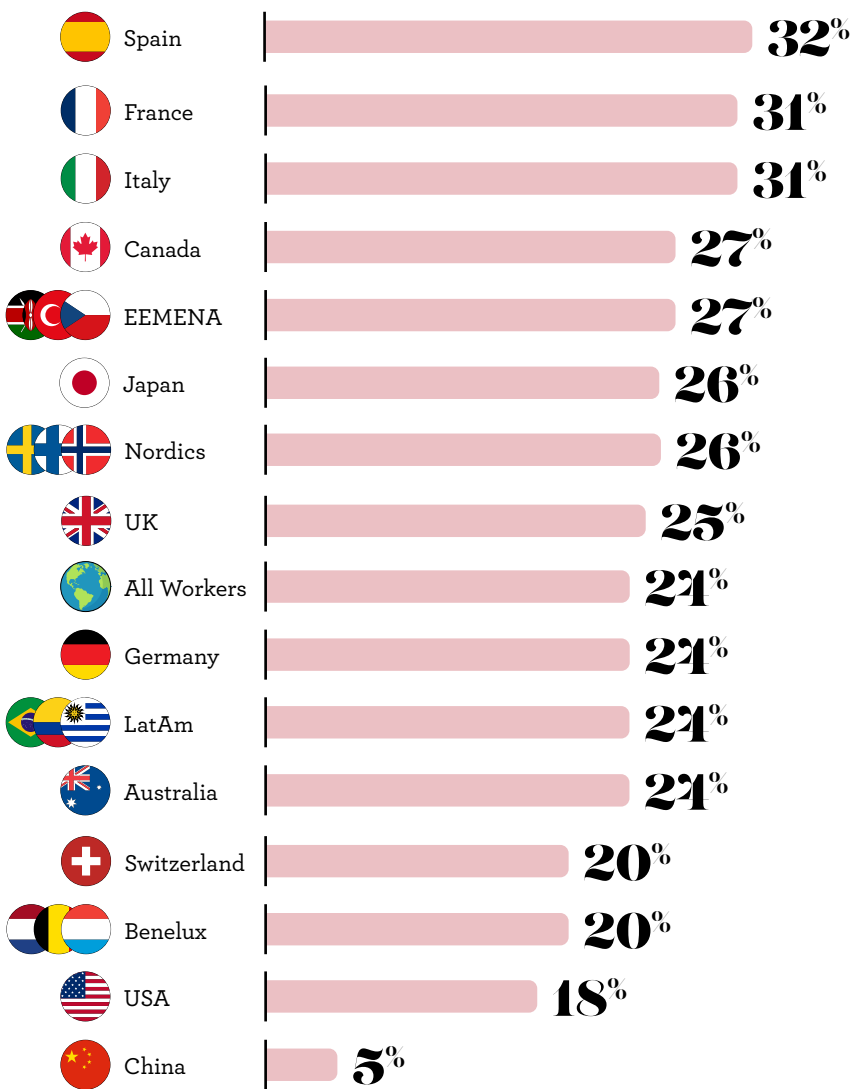


# Retention levers | Mental Health and Wellbeing

## Burnout and Balance

Although mental health has improved since 2021, a quarter of all workers say that their mental health has become worse over the past year, and burnout continues to be a global and universal issue, spanning all respondents regardless of age, nationality, or gender. Spain, Italy, and France are the countries where mental health has worsened the most, with non-managers feeling it the most.

**% Who say their mental wellbeing has worsened over the last 12 months**

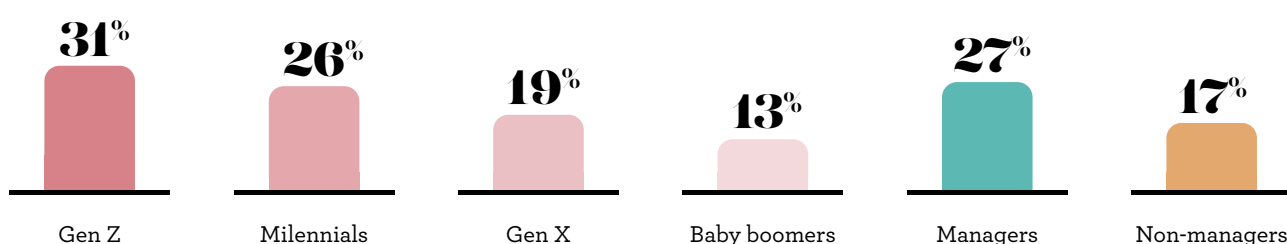
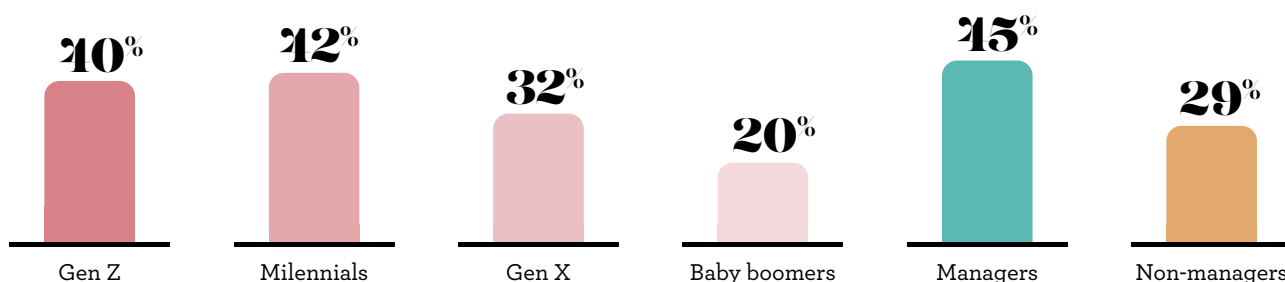
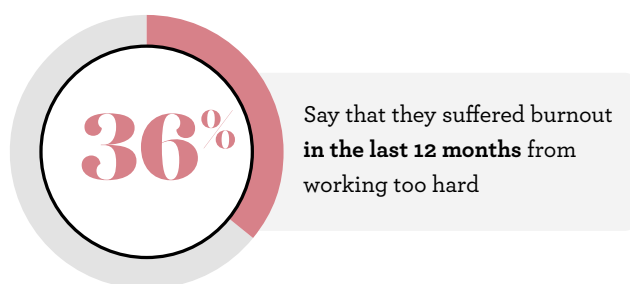


Q6.Thinking about the following aspects of your own working life, which do you feel have got better during the last 12 months, and which have stayed the same or got worse? (NET Worse)  
Weighted base: All Workers (n=30,000)

Burnout is still a cause for concern for half of the workforce. Workers want jobs where they feel less burned out and have a better work/life balance, with 35% saying they will quit in the next 12 months due to concerns with work/life balance and burnout.



## % Who say they have suffered with burnout



Q130. To what extent would you agree or disagree on these statements surrounding burnout? (NET Agree) All Workers (n=30,000), All Non-desk Workers (n=15,000), All Desk Workers (n=15,000)

Half of workers globally (49%) are worried about burnout in the future, and their fears are justified. Almost 4 in 10 workers (36%) say they have suffered from burnout and almost 1 in 4 have taken a career break in the last 12 months due to burnout. This is reported more highly in Gen Z (40%) than Baby Boomers (20%).

This should concern companies because an emotionally drained workforce is not only detrimental to individuals but can also have a high cost in terms of productivity and morale, as well as encouraging toxic environments where people quietly quit.

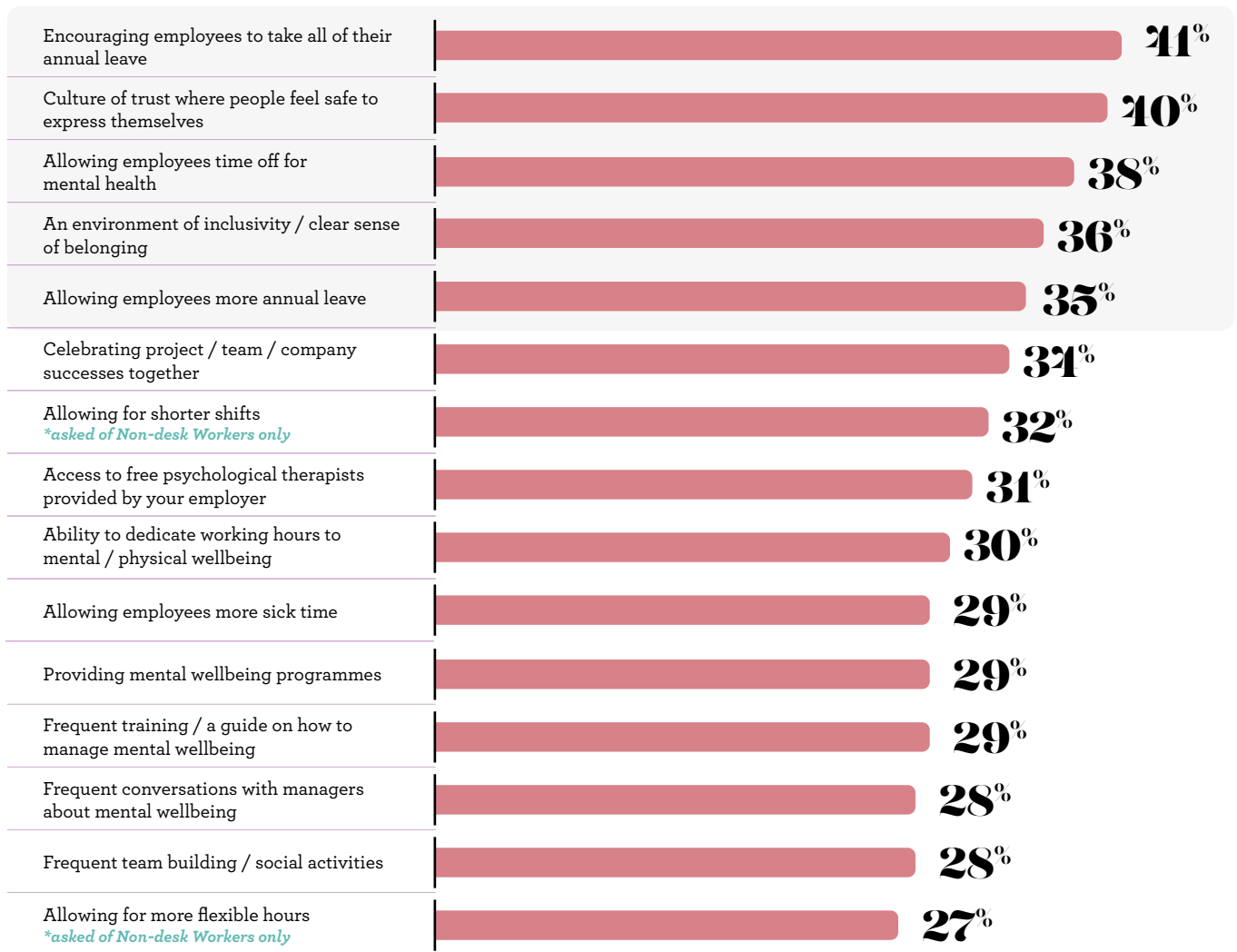


## Worker Wellbeing Must-Haves

While companies that introduced meditation, yoga and wellbeing programs should be applauded, to deal with burnout organisations must do three things. Firstly, encourage their people to take all of their annual leave entitlement, secondly, enable workers to take time off

to address mental health concerns and, finally, create a culture of safety and trust. These are the things that workers say are the most important must-haves to support their mental wellbeing and are the lynchpins of an effective corporate wellbeing strategy.

**% Who feel these are must haves to support workers with mental wellbeing**



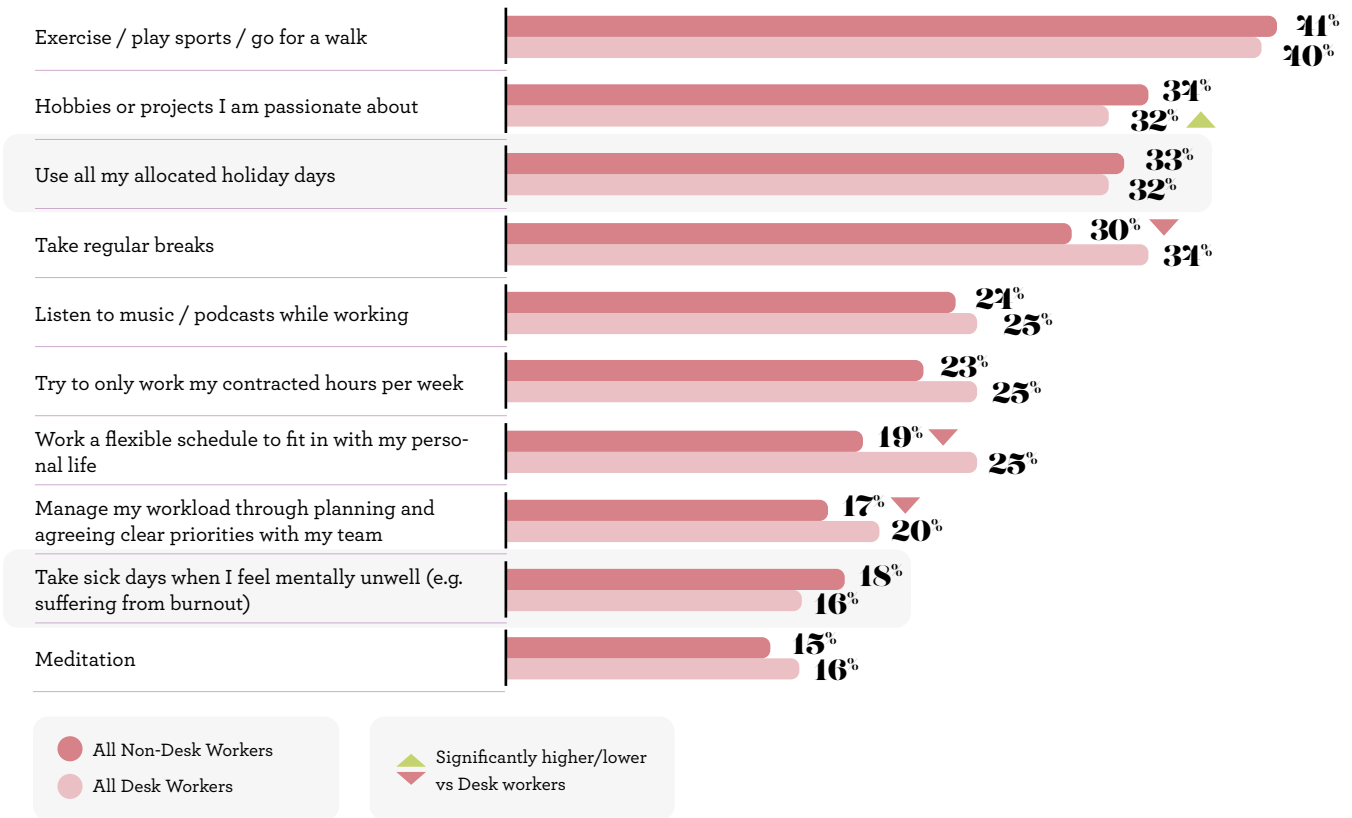
Q133. Which of the following actions would you find beneficial to support workers with mental wellbeing? (NET Must Have) Weighted base: All Workers (n=30,000)



## The Dissociation Deficit

Only 33% of workers use all their allocated holiday days to maintain their mental wellbeing. Employees are not taking their full leave, despite productivity arguments for doing so, while 1 in 2 workers worry about burnout in the future.

% who do the following to maintain their mental health wellbeing



Q132: Which of the following do you do personally to maintain your mental health and emotional wellbeing? Weighted base: All Workers (n=30,000); see detailed sub group bases at front of report

Though speaking about mental health has become much more normalised in recent years, the reality of accepting it is far from here. This is supported by a recent **LifeWorks** statistic stating that 93% of Americans are hesitant about how mental health conditions are treated by their employers.

Employers need to be mindful of this, particularly in the current economic situation where added stresses, such as a looming recession and geopolitical concerns, may take an extra toll on employees.

While 61% of managers believe their employer addressed mental health and wellbeing problems well, only 33% of non-managers think so.

The stigma surrounding mental health in the workplace is still prevalent and more action needs to be taken by organisations to break the taboo so that workers can access the support they need.

## Sick Leave and Mental Health

While discussing mental health has become much more normalised, only 17% of workers take a sick day when feeling mentally unwell, and only 3 in 10 workers use all of their allocated holidays to maintain their mental health and wellbeing. It seems that while employers are talking the talk, they are yet to create environments where employees can walk the walk.





## Key Takeaways

1

Encouraging workers to take their full annual leave, creating a culture of trust and safety, and allowing sick leave for mental health are the top three must-have measures companies should implement to support workers' wellbeing.

2

Managers and workers alike need to be coached and encouraged to initiate conversations around mental health and wellbeing. Coaching programs will help leaders and workers prioritize wellbeing and prevent quiet quitting.

3

Using technology and big data for employee wellbeing can help companies have more visibility into burnout warning indicators, and raise flags for managers to start the conversations.



# 3

## Future Perspective The impact of Mega Trends



## Economic and Geopolitical Worries

While labour market trends vary between geographies, a few stand out for their global impact - we term these megatrends. Workers across the world and in every sector are (or will be) affected by the growth of the gig economy and the transition to a green economy, as well as the closely related tech-driven trends of automation, AI, and digitalisation.

In a similar vein, the whole world is affected to some degree by economic and geopolitical uncertainty, with recovery from the economic impact of Covid-19 still shaky, and all set against a backdrop of the conflict in Ukraine and rising tensions elsewhere. While we do

not consider these to be specifically labour market megatrends, we included them in our research as they are vital external factors for understanding worker concerns.

We asked non-desk-based workers whether they were apprehensive about these ongoing megatrends, namely the gig economy, the transition to a green economy, and the move toward digitalisation and automation, and we asked them to assess the impact it would have on their job. We also asked them if they were worried about economic and geopolitical uncertainty. The results proved illuminating.

## Instability is the Major Concern

Globally, workers are more worried by economic and geopolitical instability than the megatrends reshaping the world of work (the green transition, the gig economy and tech trends). Economic instability stood out, with 57% citing it as a concern; geopolitical issues were cited by 46%, just ahead of the most worrying megatrends (the gig economy and automation, at 43% each).

It is no surprise that economic concerns are the outlier here, with workers concerned about inflation as well as the impacts of the conflict in Ukraine, both of which feed into rapidly rising costs of living.

But surprisingly, there is less apprehension about the key labour market megatrends. Only 36% of non-desk-based workers reported concern about the transition to a green economy, despite recognising that it may require them to undertake significant reskilling. This may

represent growing recognition of the need for action on the climate crisis, but it also reflects the fact that we are at an early stage of this transition, when the precise impact on jobs and skills remains largely unknown. Further consideration of this is given in the Adecco Group's white paper [Skills for the Green Economy: Why Investing in People is Key](#).

A similar story can be seen with the other megatrends. Automation and the gig economy are the greatest cause for concern, as workers see these as a potential risk to their roles and livelihoods, but they still rank lower than geopolitical and economic instability. It is worth noting, though, that concern around each megatrend rises when workers are asked to assess the impact it would have on their job. This points to a need for employers to be proactive in reskilling and upskilling their people to be ready for the changes ahead.



## % Who worry that megatrends will have the following negative impacts

Megatrend that is the biggest threat to the following:	Economic uncertainty	Geopolitical uncertainty	The gig economy	Automation	Artificial Intelligence	Digitalisation	Transition to green economy
... will make it a lot harder for me to find jobs in the future	48%	51%	61%	60%	59%	57%	54%
... will force me to learn new skills	46%	48%	58%	62%	63%	66%	60%
... will force me to consider a change career	41%	41%	51%	51%	52%	51%	50%
... will make my skill set less relevant to the job market	31%	39%	53%	56%	56%	54%	50%
... will make me lose my job	29%	37%	45%	48%	48%	47%	46%

Q219: You said you are worried about the impact of [megatrend] on your job. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?(NET Worried T2B) Weighted Base: All Non-desk Workers (n=15,000)

## The Re- and Upskilling Emergency

While workers are less worried about the megatrends than geopolitical and economic issues, this doesn't mean that they are complacent. Non-desk-workers have a clear understanding that these trends will require them to develop new skills, with a full two-thirds (66%) saying that digitalisation will force them to learn new skills. AI and automation follow closely behind at 63% and 62%, respectively.

These high percentages indicate that workers have thought about the long-term impact of megatrends and, in some cases, have considered a change of career as a result.

Employers strive to retain their strongest talent, and in the context of change brought about by these trends, that means making reskilling and upskilling a key part of every company's retention strategy.



## Geographical Disparities

Of course, the global figures only give us a broad picture. Breaking down the results by geographical region reveals that these concerns are being felt to different degrees, with Australian workers expressing the highest levels of concern overall.

Other geographical disparities reflect specific concerns in that part of the world. For example, workers in Latin America are the most worried about economic instability by some margin (72%, compared with the global average

of 57%), likely a result of that region's historical struggles with high inflation. Meanwhile, Chinese workers are the most concerned about geopolitical uncertainty, reflective of growing tensions around the status of Taiwan.

Employers, especially multinationals, should note that these concerns are felt to varying degrees in different geographies - this means a one-size-fits-all approach is likely to be inadequate.

### % Who are worried about the following megatrends

Top 3 worries per country/region	All Workers	Australia	France	Germany	Italy	Japan	Spain	UK	USA	Canada	China	Switzerland	Nordics	Benelux	LatAm	EEMENA
Economic uncertainty	57%	67%	53%	53%	60%	36%	65%	48%	56%	54%	59%	60%	72%	53%	54%	64%
Geopolitical uncertainty	46%	61%	40%	43%	51%	23%	53%	35%	45%	42%	59%	44%	57%	43%	41%	55%
The gig economy	42%	58%	37%	34%	49%	19%	53%	32%	41%	39%	57%	40%	57%	40%	31%	48%
Automation	42%	59%	38%	33%	37%	22%	47%	33%	44%	39%	58%	46%	53%	40%	31%	47%
Artificial Intelligence	39%	58%	36%	28%	33%	21%	40%	31%	43%	38%	57%	43%	46%	37%	25%	45%
Digitalisation	37%	60%	31%	27%	30%	21%	42%	31%	41%	34%	56%	39%	42%	37%	26%	43%
Transition to a green economy	36%	57%	32%	26%	25%	17%	41%	26%	40%	35%	56%	36%	43%	35%	27%	42%

Q218: To what extent are you worried about the impact that the following "megatrends" will have on your job? By "megatrends" we mean powerful, transformative forces that could change the global economy, business, and society. (NET Worried T2B; NET Not worried B2B) Weighted base: All Non-desk Workers (n=15,000)

## How Should Employers Respond?

Employers have very little ability to directly address the areas of greatest concern, namely geopolitical and economic uncertainty, but they hold significant power to change how workers feel about them. Those megatrends will mostly impact workers' long-term employability and prospects if they let their skillset become obsolete. But workers who have the skills they need and regularly keep them up to date remain in control of their working future and will feel better equipped to cope with instability and uncertainty.

For employers, this means assessing the extent to which each megatrend will impact workers in the organisation,

and ensuring they have skills and competencies they will need in the future. Globally, 70% of all workers see employers as having the greatest responsibility for ensuring a better working future, so it is incumbent on organisations to step up and prove to workers that their company is the best possible place to get ready for the future of work. If your strongest talent cannot access opportunities to reskill and upskill within your organisation, they will find them elsewhere, whether that means a career change or a move to a competitor.



# Key Takeaways

1

Despite the climate change and the rise of automation, workers' main concerns are in fact geopolitical and economic uncertainty. Organisations should be prepared to foster transparent conversations about the impact of this uncertainty on their organisation and their workers' employability to support them in times of flux.

2

The acute crisis felt from a post-pandemic recovery, the conflict in Ukraine and rising tensions in Taiwan should not distract organisations from the substantial dangers to employees' longer-term employability posed by other megatrends.

3

Employers are seen as most responsible to ensure a better working future. As such, organisations must begin to invest in the skills for the future, including those needed for the green economy.



# Unravelling the Talent Conundrum

# **Summary**



## Background

Set against a backdrop of the world of work in transition following the Covid-19 pandemic that brought enforced lockdowns, work from home policies and a deep re-evaluation of workers' priorities, this report set out to investigate workers' new attitudes towards work and offer effective solutions to companies struggling with talent attrition. In the third iteration of this annual survey, 30,000 workers, both desk-based and non-desk-based were interviewed.

While headline results such as "27% of the global workforce are planning to quit in the next 12 months" support the continuation of the Great Resignation, there are subtleties behind this that paint a more complex picture. Despite reporting a high sense of job security, workers' concerns over geopolitical unrest and the

looming economic recession show signs of the Great Resignation potentially slowing down.

**The report uncovers potential strategies for companies to attract new talent, retain their existing talent and, more importantly in a time of scarcity and uncertainty, to build their own talent pipelines.**

To do this, we created a unique matrix consisting of four quadrants. This formula maps employee satisfaction and derived importance of key aspects of work, thereby underlining high-impact areas that employers need to prioritise to ensure an engaged and future-proof workforce, namely: Salary, Flexibility, Career Progression and Upskilling, and Wellbeing.

## Salary Balance - A Tool for Attraction, but Not for Retention

Salary is the number one reason for workers to quit their jobs in the next 12 months. As companies grapple with attrition, and inflation worries grow, increasing wages has become a quick tactic to attract the right people in the past year. However, higher pay alone does not have a lasting impact on retention. While salary is important, our matrix unearthed areas that organisations should focus on as antidotes to wage inflation. We termed these areas 'retention levers'.

With almost half of workers feeling that their salary is not a fair reflection of their work, companies need to

fully transition to linking pay with performance, rather than focussing on hours worked. Similarly, and in a time of talent scarcity, companies should not concentrate on attraction to the detriment of retention. Having a future-proof, skilled and engaged talent pipeline is key for organisations to navigate the changing economic environment.

Workers who are staying with their current employer see salary as a secondary priority, but their engagement should not be taken for granted.

## Flexibility - The Continuing Demand for Autonomy

With companies starting to encourage staff to spend more time in the workplace, the results of this survey highlight that workers continue to demand autonomy over working hours, working location, time off and scheduling.

6 in 10 desk-based workers are moving or have already moved jobs as a direct result of having more flexibility; this represents a year-on-year increase of 19 percentage points in workers who are prioritising or have already prioritised flexibility. In fact, 30% of workers that are planning to quit their jobs this year state flexibility as their main reason.

Offering a four-day week is a growing trend amongst companies aiming to attract talent, especially in China,

the USA and Benelux, but it's currently only available for 42% of desk-workers globally, and it usually comes with a pay-cut and workload stress.

Flexibility continues to be a key retention lever and organisations need to tread carefully when taking back control over workers' autonomy setting working schedules and location.

For non-desk workers, though, flexibility has a price that not everyone can afford - only 3 in 10 non-desk workers would compromise on salary to gain flexibility. Companies looking at retaining and attracting non-desk-based workers should provide more autonomy on choosing shifts, working days and holidays.





## Career Progression - Stuck in the Middle: Are Middle Management on the Road to Nowhere?

31% of workers state that the primary reason to quit is a lack of progression and re- and upskilling opportunities, with the younger generations feeling this skills gap more prominently (Gen Z, 86% and Millennials, 84% say they have a skills gap).

Furthermore, only 4 in 10 of non-managers say they are satisfied with their career prospects and skills investment at their company, compared with 7 in 10 managers.

As such, career development opportunities, especially for non-managers, must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

**The report reveals that workers who have less career conversations** show lower satisfaction in their current job and **are significantly less aware and encouraged to apply for internal job opportunities.**

Given that **almost a quarter of the workforce have never had a career progression conversation in their current role**, leaders need to be provided with tools, processes and

coaching to have the right performance conversations with their teams.

Additionally, organisations must be mindful of departments 'talent hoarding' and promote a culture of internal mobility. 70% of workers agree that companies should upskill and develop internal employees before hiring externally. But there are clear barriers to internal mobility that need to be addressed: firstly, as explained, making workers aware of internal opportunities through career conversations; secondly, providing adequate training opportunities to progress into new roles; and thirdly, reducing friction for workers looking to move into new roles across the company.

Again, in a time of talent scarcity, organisations must invest in skills mapping, reskilling, and upskilling programs. Development of workers, especially at non-management level, is vital to build talent pipelines.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing - Rethinking Wellness Programs: Believe in Leave

With half of workers globally (49%) worried about it, burnout continues to be a global and universal issue, spanning all respondents regardless of age, nationality, or gender. 35% of respondents say they will quit in the next 12 months due to concerns with work/life balance and burnout.

However, only 33% of workers use all their allocated holiday days to maintain their mental health and wellbeing. And only 17% of workers take a sick day when feeling mentally and emotionally unwell. Workers are not taking their full leave or sick leave, despite productivity arguments for doing so.

It comes as no surprise that workers have started embracing 'quiet quitting' to protect themselves against burnout. Undetected by traditional attrition reports, this trend can cause damage to the corporate culture promoting a toxic

environment where workers don't feel safe to speak up, and instead decide to disengage.

It is time to reboot corporate wellbeing programs to offer more effective initiatives. While wellbeing training, meditation and yoga can have positive impacts, workers want specific measures focused on incentivising the use of their full annual leave, creating a culture of trust and safety, and allowing sick leave for mental health.

Managers and workers alike need to be provided with specific processes, coaching and incentives to initiate conversations around mental health and wellbeing. Coaching programs will help leaders and workers prioritise wellbeing and prevent quiet quitting.

## Future Perspectives - The Impact of Megatrends

While workers are mindful of megatrends such as the transition to the green economy, and the rise of automation and the gig economy, it is clear that economic instability and geopolitical issues are the things worrying workers the most.

However, even though workers are less worried about the coming megatrends, they do have a clear concern that these trends will require them to develop new skills, with a full two-thirds (66%) of non-desk workers saying that digitalisation will force them to learn new skills.

Employers are seen as most responsible to ensure a better working future. As such, organisations need to recognise that while they cannot directly affect economic instability and geopolitical issues, they can lessen these concerns by having transparent conversations with workers. Companies must also increase focus on mapping and investment in the skills for the future, including those needed for the green economy.





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