



People at Work 2022: A Global Workforce View


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Executive summary




More than two years since the onset of the COVID-19 virus, workers and employers continue to be rocked by the forceful winds of the pandemic, which has destroyed numerous old certainties. At the same time, the economic and political landscape has become extremely challenging amid issues such as rising inflation and supply chain delays. All of which combines to create a formidable mix of pressures that will affect businesses for some time to come. Against this backdrop, the sentiment and needs of the global workforce today are changing rapidly. It is imperative that employers understand the drivers and potential impact of this shift, so that they can attract and retain talent to create stronger, more resilient businesses.

Key findings include:



1 Workers want change: re-evaluating the importance of job security and business ethics



Seven in 10 workers (71%) have contemplated a major career move this year, and there's a sense that they're questioning what job security means post COVID-19. Today, workers are thinking about more than just a steady paycheck. The pandemic has put personal wellbeing and life outside work into even clearer perspective than ever before, and intensified the desire for

more amenable working conditions, including greater flexibility, remote work options or better organizational culture. Workers are increasingly interested in a company's ethics and values. Employers beware: three quarters (76%) would consider looking for a new job if they discovered their company had an unfair gender pay gap or no diversity and inclusion policy.



2 Job satisfaction and outlook: employees have high expectations

Workers are surprisingly upbeat about how they feel about work. Nine in 10 (90%) say they feel satisfied in their current employment, although they could be happier still: a sizable proportion are only 'somewhat satisfied'. Optimism about the outlook for the workplace, while still slightly below pre-pandemic levels, is also robust. Hopes are high for pay raises, with more than six in 10 workers (61%) anticipating one in the next year, and three quarters (76%) prepared to ask for one if they feel they deserve it.

However, meeting pay demands may not be enough to stop an exodus of talent: the drive to change jobs or move into industries believed to be more resilient to economic shocks and downturns is accelerating.

3 Pay and benefits: salary is a priority, but it's not all that matters

Salary is seen as the most important factor in a job, and two thirds of workers (65%) would like more hours for more pay. Yet workers are still effectively giving away the equivalent of more than a working day (8.5 hours) of

unpaid overtime each week: less than in 2021 but still more than pre-pandemic. Since seven in 10 (71%) would like more flexibility as to when they work, such as condensing hours into a four-day week, continuing to do so much extra time may be unsustainable. Although pay is a priority, around half would accept a pay cut if it meant improving their work-life balance or to guarantee flexibility in how they structure their hours – even if they still worked for the same amount of time each week. This reinforces the idea that employers may need (and want) to make a trade-off between pay and other factors to keep workers content and fulfilled.

4 Mental health: stress is increasing and work is suffering

Stress at work is at critical levels, with 67% of workers experiencing it at least once a week, up from 62% pre-pandemic. One in seven (15%) feel stressed every day. The impact on workers professionally, as well as personally, is likely to be profound, especially as mental wellbeing is under strain in other ways too, due to the pandemic. A staggering 53% believe their work is suffering because of poor mental health – clearly an untenable situation. Most employers are doing their best to support

staff, with wellbeing days off, stress management breaks, and counselling among the initiatives being tried. However, amid such intense and sustained pressure, questions persist around what else employers can do to minimize stress triggers and ease the burden more generally.

5 Remote work and living arrangements: people poised to make a move

Forcing people to return to the workplace full-time unnecessarily could backfire: two thirds (64%) would consider looking for a new job if this happened. Many are contemplating relocating and a substantial minority have already done so. Concerns that employers may overlook remote workers in favour of their colleagues in the workplace are unfounded. In fact, the reverse is true: remote staff feel more recognized and rewarded for their efforts and supported in their careers. Almost seven in 10 say they are paid fairly for their skills and role, compared with less than half of their peers in the workplace. Employers who are over-compensating by focusing on remote workers at the expense of others may need to redress the balance as a matter of urgency.