



LiveTiles Global Employee Experience Pulse Check 2021

Introduction

As we approach the endgame of the pandemic, now is an excellent opportunity to take stock, look at what we've learnt from the past eighteen months or so and make changes to deliver better workplaces and change the way employees feel about the organizations they work for. We're consistently finding that senior leaders, HR functions and employees too have a real desire to make work better.

As it stands in late-2021, employee experience – the emotional connection an employee has to their employer based on all the touchpoints they have with them – needs fixing. Our first global survey of over 7,000 employees across seven major economies reveals unsettling levels of dissatisfaction with everything from levels of pay, to the digital workplace, to that sense of connection. Levels of stress and exhaustion are sky-high, and employees feel their wellbeing is not being taken seriously. These worrying results have been accentuated by the pandemic increasing the uncertainty, worry and, according to our survey, workload of many employees.

Some groups and industries are particularly impacted. Our survey consistently shows that both younger employees and the frontline workforce feel stronger levels of dissatisfaction and disconnection than other colleagues. In sectors with a high concentration of these groups such as hospitality, employee experience is effectively broken.

Employee experience is critical. It impacts everything from talent retention to customer service, to profitability. Good employee experience gives you a competitive edge. When you ignore it, there are consequences. Those organizations and sectors that are seeing record numbers of people leaving their jobs, in what some have called "the great resignation", are likely to have an underlying issue with employee experience.

Our survey results make sobering reading, but we're optimistic about the future. Firstly, realizing the extent of a problem can galvanize organizations into action. Secondly, many leaders and HR functions are now focusing more on employee experience, and there is a sense of change in the air and a real desire to improve. We hope the results of this survey help you to think about what you need to do within your organization and start the right conversations.

Let's make 2022 the year we turn the corner on employee experience and start to build better places to work.

About the survey

We surveyed 7,100 employees in October 2021 across seven countries – Australia, Denmark, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, UK and USA. Over 1,000 people were included from each country and responses have been treated as strictly confidential.

Respondents were asked a range of questions relating to their view of employee experience, their current experiences and what they regard as the most important elements of employee experience. In order to successfully segment and analyse the responses, we also requested information about the person completing the survey, their role and their employer.

For several questions, respondents were asked to view a statement such as “I enjoy my work”, and mark the statement out of 10, where 10 means their needs are completely satisfied and zero means none of their needs are satisfied. In our analysis of these responses, we recorded the percentage of respondents responding 9 or 10 to indicate complete satisfaction or agreement with the relative statement. Comparing these figures comprises a substantial part of the analysis of our results. We also noted the proportion of responses scoring 6 or under, interpreting this to mean mild to strong dissatisfaction with each statement.

What is employee experience?

Employee experience is all about the strength of emotional connection an employee feels towards their employer. It's an aggregation of the touchpoints that an employee experiences every working day, as well as the support offered across important points in their career such as when they are promoted or key life moments like starting a family.

Employee experience is very important. It impacts talent retention and attraction, performance, well-being, customer experience and many more aspects of organizational life. It can influence both the bottom line and the power of a brand. Taking a holistic view of how employees actually experience work allows HR functions to understand employees' points of view and allows leaders to make better strategic and tactical decisions.

Many different components, touchpoints and factors make up employee experience. It's not necessarily a straightforward recipe, with ingredients including how much a person is paid, how well they get on with their team, what they do in their role, the recognition they receive, the hours they spend working and whether they identify with the wider mission of the organization.

Although our survey questions touch upon all these specific points and more, we also wanted to better understand employee experience from the employee viewpoint. What do they consider the most important components of employee experience?

Contents.

Introduction	i
About the survey	ii
What is employee Experience?	1
Five key themes	2
Analysis	3
• Day-to-day engagement	4
• Connection and culture	8
• Health and well-being	12
• Pay and job security	14
Next steps: Eight recommendations	16

What is employee experience?

We asked survey respondents to score the relative importance of different statements. Comparing the results makes fascinating reading, showing which areas are considered the most influential. Here, aspects such as job security, workplace flexibility, the ability to enjoy work and pay levels emerge as the most important factors. Elements that perhaps have a more subtle impact on employee experience are ranked less important, including well-being, organizational culture and feeling a sense of connection to wider purpose. When we consider Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, these results aren't surprising, but they do supply an illuminating overview of what employers need to address, as well as providing context for other survey responses.

Employee experience components ranked most to least important by respondents

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. My job is secure.</p> <hr/> | <p>6. My workplace has a good culture and I feel like I belong.</p> <hr/> |
| <p>2. I have the right level of flexibility and work life balance for me.</p> <hr/> | <p>7. My employer cares about my wellbeing.</p> <hr/> |
| <p>3. My pay/remuneration is fair.</p> <hr/> | <p>8. I like my colleagues.</p> <hr/> |
| <p>4. I enjoy my work.</p> <hr/> | <p>9. I feel connected to my workplace (and its mission/values/purpose).</p> <hr/> |
| <p>5. I have the right tools, technology and support I need to do my job.</p> | <p>10. I feel like my work is recognised and valued by my manager/colleagues.</p> |

Questions to consider

- 1.** How do you define employee experience in your organization?

- 2.** What do your employees consider to be the most important areas that impact employee experience?

- 3.** Does your HR function and leadership consider to be the priority areas for employee experience and does their view differ from your employees?

- 4.** Are there any aspects of employee experience that you haven't considered so far that could do with improving?

- 5.** Do you need to do more research to find out what your employees are thinking and how they are feeling?

Five Key Findings

Our survey results reveal several major trends that represent a wake-up call for CEOs, HR functions and other relevant teams.

We need to transform the experience of work

Employee experience in 2021 is in a fragile and uncertain state, with considerable distance between the employee experience that most organizations would like to offer, and the reality of what staff actually feel.

Virtually every response to the survey questions demonstrates the need for action. Well-being and engagement appear to be particularly low; nearly half of staff (47%) told us they are either “fed up”, “stressed” or “exhausted” at work. Responses from 43% of staff suggest they have real issues with feeling ignored or invisible. The majority of employees are simply not happy with their level of pay and flexibility of their job. Fears over job security are rife. Less than a quarter of staff completely agree that they enjoy their work. Overall, we need to fundamentally transform the experience of work, and every organization needs to be on that journey.

The pandemic has bruised employee experience, and ‘the great resignation’ is the result

The need to improve engagement was evident prior to the pandemic, but the events of 2020 and 2021 have put additional pressure on employee experience. The impact of COVID-19 gives some context to the findings of our survey and may explain what commentators have dubbed “the great resignation”, with record numbers of staff voluntarily leaving their posts. For example, in August 2021, a record number of employees (4.1 million) in the US quit their jobs. Our survey suggests a collective mindset where people are preparing to move roles – a huge 37% of employees are actively looking for a new job.

Digging deeper into the data, we can see how the pandemic has negatively impacted employee experience. A key area is job security. In our survey, employees rank this as the most important factor in employee experience, and the fear of losing a job can be incredibly stressful. Our survey also shows there is more strain on employees in their everyday work. Compared to a year ago, over a third (34%) of employees are working more hours during the week, raising to 37% for full-time employees. For more than one in ten employees (11%), this amounts to over 16 additional hours per week! Over a quarter (28%) of employees also agree that their job is harder than it was a year ago, although this is tempered a little by the 17% who regard it as being easier.

Combined with the general stress of the pandemic, this extra pressure has bruised employee experience. We need a fix before the “great resignation” turns from a trend into a deeper, embedded characteristic of the labor market.

We’re collectively failing the frontline

A worrying trend in our survey results is that frontline workers in sectors from hospitality, to healthcare, to retail, to education feel particularly disenfranchised. The pandemic has highlighted just how essential our frontline employees are, but if public perceptions have changed, employers appear to be twiddling their thumbs when it comes to actively improving the employee experience of the frontline workforce.

Frontline workers are not happy. Results for frontline industries tend to indicate the weakest sense of belonging, the least flexible approach to supporting work-life balance, the highest levels of stress and exhaustion and the least effective workplace technology. Frontline employees are also less satisfied with their remuneration. We need to work harder to bridge the divide and ensure the frontline feels engaged and included.

Welcome to Generation Excluded

Responses to the survey uncover the disenfranchisement and disengagement of younger employees. We need to prioritize engaging this group to avoid even more deep-seated issues around employee experience in the future. For example, only 18% of 24- to 35-year-olds fully agree they feel valued at work, and 80% are not satisfied with their connection to their workplace's organizational culture. Meanwhile, only 14% of this group are completely satisfied with their pay.

Employers must act now to cultivate this key demographic, or face issues around talent attention and attraction which could impact them sooner than expected. Nearly half (48%) of 18- to 24-year-olds and 44% of 25- to 35-year-olds would move jobs for a better employee experience, even if it meant lower pay. We need to act to stop a generation feeling excluded from work.

The inhospitable sector

The confluence of all these trends can be seen in some industries, particularly the hospitality sector. This sector has high levels of frontline workers and younger employees and has been severely impacted by COVID-19.

The survey results for this sector are consistently scoring the lowest in employee experience across the globe. 45% of staff report being either "stressed" or "exhausted". 85% feel they are underpaid, and 77% think more could be done on work-life balance. Only 20% are fully satisfied with the well-being support they receive from their employer. Looking at these results, it's no wonder that 45% of hospitality employees are looking for a new job (the highest of any other sector), and less than a quarter (23%) feel confident about their job security. In an industry that thrives on people-centered experiences, leaders need to apply the same care and attention reserved for guests to their workforce.

Questions to consider

1. Is employee experience regarded as a priority by your leadership?

2. Are there groups within your organization who feel they have a lesser employee experience than other groups?

3. Is there more you could do to improve the employee experience of your frontline workers?

4. Do all the generations of your employees feel included and connected within your organization?

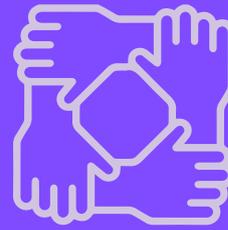
5. In terms of employee experience, how do you compare to similar companies in your sector?

Analysis

In this section, we explore the survey results across four key areas:



1. Day-to-day engagement



2. Connection and culture



3. Health and well-being



4. Pay and job security

Day-to-day engagement

Employee experience incorporates multiple factors, but it's often about how employees feel about their day-to-day work. How do they feel waking up on Monday morning to face the week? Do they enjoy their role? Do they get on with their colleagues? Are they able to balance their working hours and patterns with all the demands of life outside work? We were keen to get a sense of the engagement employees feel at work every day.

Dreary jobs outnumber dream jobs

Everybody wants to love their job, but the unfortunate truth is that only a minority of workers can declare this with conviction. Less than a quarter (24%) of employees agree strongly with the statement "I enjoy my work", with far more (41%) scoring this 6 or under out of 10. There are some interesting country-level differences which may hint at differing cultural attitudes to work. 31% of US workers are completely satisfied with how much they enjoy their work, compared to only 20% in Australia or Ireland.

The male and female viewpoints tell a different story too, with women in Ireland (26% vs 20%), Germany (23% vs 17%) and Switzerland (26% vs 22%) enjoying their work more than their male colleagues.

These figures show that employers must take the issue of workplace boredom, repetitive roles and dreary days seriously. Our survey shows that employees consider enjoying work the third most important factor in employee experience; enjoyment has a major influence on how employees feel about who they work for.



The digital workplace needs improvement

During the pandemic, workplace technology has done all the heavy lifting as we navigate the challenges of remote working. However, our collective reliance on the digital workplace has exposed some cracks. Employees around the world are not satisfied with the technology at their fingertips

Only 29% told us they completely agree (scoring 9 or 10) with the statement “I have the right tools, technology and support I need to do my job.” Worryingly, 35% scored 6 or less, meaning over a third of employees are significantly dissatisfied.

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Segmenting the data shows that full-time employees feel they have less adequate technology and tools, with only 27% declaring complete satisfaction, compared to 41% of gig workers who get to choose the best tools and platforms for the job. Younger employees are also clearly less satisfied with the technology they have; only 24% completely agreed by scoring 9 or 10, while the corresponding result for 55 to 64 year olds is 32%. A common observation is that younger generations expect consumer-grade experiences for their technology, and clearly, not enough digital workplace tools are meeting their expectations.

“We had several attempts at a SharePoint strategy, but it was difficult to push over the line and get our stores to engage with it. It wasn't until I saw LiveTiles that we really had the missing piece in the jigsaw.”

Daniel Hawkins,
Global IT Operations Manager
at Michael Hill Jewellers

“I'm delighted with how LiveTiles drives the experience and is so agile. We plan to track the development of both LiveTiles' and Microsoft's technology roadmap, so we can continue to make [entain.me](https://www.entain.me) the globally innovative and foundational – and, yes, Omnipresent – platform for our company.”

Si Steers,
Digital Lead, Internal Comms Team at Entain

“In a virtual world, we must be more prescriptive. We have to work harder. We talk about the death of the office and how we can run our business virtually now. I don't think people realize that it requires much more work to create those human connections virtually. The famous violinist, Isaac Stern said: music is what happens between the notes, well at work, trust is what's built between the meetings.”

Simon Sinek,
Author



The global workforce wants more flexibility at work

Balancing the demands of work and life outside work has always been challenging, but we were particularly interested to see how the pandemic and subsequent rise in remote and hybrid working has impacted employees' perceptions of this issue. Arguably, working from home or closer to home should provide more flexibility, but it can simultaneously make it harder to delineate between working and non-working hours.

Work-life balance is a massive issue for employees – it's regarded as the second most important factor in employee experience.

It's also clear that significant improvements must be made in this area. The overwhelming response from the workforce is that they want more flexibility; only 28% fully agree with the statement that they have the right level of flexibility and work-life balance. This problem is most acute for full-time workers where only 25% strongly agree, contrasting sharply with those groups who have more control over their working hours, including gig workers (40%) and business owners (50%). These disappointing figures for full-time employees are likely a contributory factor to the current "great resignation" trend, with many voluntarily leaving to seek better roles.

Flexibility at work is an issue which impacts large numbers. 39% of respondents scored 6 out of 10 or less for this question, and the numbers remain relatively consistent across different age groups and income brackets. The stage of life we are at or the remuneration package we receive does not appear to make that much difference.

However, working for a smaller company (with under 20 employees) appears to offer more options for flexibility with working hours. Here, 34% are completely satisfied with their work-life balance and flexible arrangements.

We wanted Newsdesk [their branded intranet] to be great for business and great for fun, and that includes livestreaming Cato's (Creditsafe Group's Chief Executive) DJ nights!"

David O'Reilly,
Head of Group Marketing,
Creditsafe Group

Good colleagues make all the difference

The relationship we have with our immediate team can make all the difference. Thankfully, 35% of employees strongly agree with the statement “do you like your colleagues” - the highest proportion of any question in the survey. This number is higher in some countries, with Denmark (39%), Germany (38%) and Switzerland (36%) leading the way. However, in Australia (30%) an extra team-bonding session may be required. Collectively, 29% of employees scored 6 or less out of 10, indicating that the majority of us are pretty happy with our colleagues.

“It’s been great to build a digital workplace platform that connects everyone across the organization.”

Tariq Maonah
Digital Product Lead at Legal & General



Questions to consider

1. Do employees have options to make their role more challenging or varied, or to get involved in different experiences?

2. Is your digital workplace focused on improving employee experience, and if not, how could it be improved?

3. How are you formalizing the opportunities for flexible work in your organization?

4. Are you considering a hybrid working model for desk-based employees?

5. What opportunities are you offering to frontline employees to help them balance their working and non-working life?

Connection and culture

Questions which employees sometimes ask themselves are “Do I fit in?” or “Am I making a difference?” The answers can reveal a lot about employee experience. We wanted to get a sense of how connected employees feel to their organization. There are a range of influencing factors here, including organizational culture, recognition received from managers and colleagues and how much an individual identifies with the deeper “purpose” of an organization. Our survey questions explore these in more depth.



Organizational culture is creaking

Culture can be all-pervasive and can have a significant influence on whether employees feel they belong to the right organization. Much has been written about how prolonged remote working during the pandemic has eroded culture; we wanted to see how employees feel on this topic as we emerge from the crisis.

The results suggest that there is work to do to rebuild the culture within organizations. Globally, only 28% of employees completely agree that they feel a sense of belonging or have a good working culture; there are also some interesting variations across different countries, with the US scoring 34%, but Australians distinctly underwhelmed at 24%. Women also feel marginally more positive about their workplace culture (30%) compared to men (27%).

There is also variation across different industries. Those in construction (34%) or professional services (31%) are twice as likely to identify with their company culture, compared to mining and quarrying (16%).

Most worryingly, 38% of global employees scored this question 6 or less out of 10, suggesting that many employees feel they don't fit in. Notably, 1 in 20 respondents scored this 0 or 1, indicating that there may be an underlying toxic work culture in play.

Overall, we need to make organizations more inclusive and welcoming – the big question is how? Larger organizations might want to try and evoke the closer-knit culture of smaller organizations: 35% of employees in companies with fewer than 20 employees completely agreed with the statement, compared to 27% working in larger companies.

Companies may also want to pay their staff more. The survey reveals a correlation between remuneration and a sense of belonging. In every country, those in the higher income brackets scored significantly higher when it came to 'complete satisfaction' with company culture, compared to colleagues in lower income tiers.

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44

It is important to me to see that all sections of our 4,500 strong workforce, clinical and non-clinical alike, understand how this organisation works together, celebrating our resilience and being proud of what we do for our communities."

Steven Bagley,
Digital Communications Manager
at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust

There is a strong sense of disconnection

One way that organizations are trying to evoke a sense of belonging is by emphasizing mission, purpose and values. Feeling connected to the bigger picture and sensing that your contribution makes a difference is important, although its influence on employee experience is subtle; employees only rate it as the tenth most important influencing factor on their overall experience.

Results from the survey show only a disappointing minority of employees feel truly connected to their employer, with less than a quarter (24%) completely satisfied. However, employees in some countries feel more connected than others – the US leads the way with 29%, compared to Australia with only 20%.

The reality is, when people are in physical presence with each other, there's a lot less we have to do to make people feel connected, because we're there, because we're with each other. And so, when someone is not physically connected, they're not engaged in that little chit chatter. They're missing some of the decisions that are being made outside the meetings, they're missing the social stuff. And so, they will feel disconnected. We have to work extra hard to ensure that they're included."

Simon Sinek,
Author

Younger employees are the most likely to feel disconnected from their organization's purpose and values, with only 20% of 25- to 35-year-olds agreeing. Australia's younger employees are the most disenfranchised, scoring only 14%; their US equivalents are twice as likely to connect with their employer's mission (28%). Employees in larger companies are also less likely to feel aligned (21%) compared to peers in companies with fewer than 20 employees (30%).

This strong sense of disconnection suggests that employers need to try much harder to communicate a sense of purpose and mission, but also listen to employees so they can influence the direction of the organization.



The transition that we've made has been phenomenal and it feels to me that we won't go back to the way we were."

Heather Andrews,
Employee Experience Director
at Legal & General

Too many employees feel ignored and invisible

Seemingly, a major reason behind employees' disengagement is feeling undervalued and not recognized for their work by their manager or colleagues. Our survey results suggest that in some organizations underappreciation is running rampant. Only 23% of employees are completely satisfied (scoring 9 or 10) with the recognition they receive, while a staggering 43% of employees are dissatisfied, scoring this area 6 or less out of 10.

Feelings of anonymity caused by working for a larger company may have some influence on these worrying results. If you work for a small business, you're more likely to feel very valued (28%), compared to 20% of those working in larger companies. There also appears to be a deeper set lack-of-recognition culture in some industries; for example, only 17% of employees in hospitality feel they are 'completely satisfied' with how they are recognized at work, and it's even worse for miners at 14%. On the brighter side, 30% of those working in real estate, professional services, agriculture and aquaculture, construction and ICT feel they are getting the recognition they need.



People want to feel seen, heard and understood. They want to be recognized for being a human being, not just a cog in a machine."

Simon Sinek
Author

Immediate translation is not just a technology feature. It's a signal to each employee that – even if they're sitting at the kitchen table – they're a vital part of the worldwide organisation and they should be included in the information flow. It's been remarkable to see how, for example, a French-originated story gets commented on by an employee in our Tokyo office."

Cato Syversen,
Chief Executive at Creditsafe Group

Questions to consider

1. How has the pandemic impacted your organizational culture?

2. If your culture has been negatively impacted, what actions can you take to improve and rebuild it?

3. Do you have an organizational purpose and mission or set of values and if so, do employees know about them and take them seriously?

4. Do all your employees feel included and welcomed – how well do you live up to your DE&I commitments?

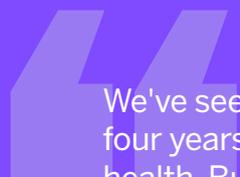
5. What are the five things you could do tomorrow to make employees feel more connected?

Health and well-being

In recent years, HR functions have been focusing more and more on employee health and well-being. The pressures and stresses of the pandemic have forced well-being to centre stage. We wanted to find out how employees are feeling in 2021, and how well-supported they are by their employers when it comes to wellness.

The global workforce rings the alarm bell on stress and exhaustion

When we asked employees how they are feeling, the results were sobering. Nearly half (47%) told us they are either “fed up”, “stressed” or “exhausted” at work, with the remainder (53%) doing “OK” or “good”. While the pressure of the pandemic has likely inflated these numbers, they are a wake-up call for employers. The absences resulting from stress-related illness and employee burnout come at an enormous cost, so well-being must be prioritised for corporate as well as personal reasons. The figures also validate the approach of organizations which are prioritizing well-being initiatives.



We've seen wellbeing in the workplace progress well in the last three or four years and that's everything from physical to emotional to brain health. But it can't be a bolt-on to your day's work. It must be an intrinsic part of the workplace. When you've got happy healthy people who are engaged, you get strong performance.”

Peter Nguyen-Brown,
Livetiles CXO

Digging deeper into the data reveals some of the groups experiencing the most stress. Proportionally, women are more likely to report issues (47%) compared to their male colleagues (41%). Frontline workers, particularly those in customer-facing roles, are also consistently more likely to be “stressed” or “exhausted”. Younger employees aged between 25 and 34 are over twice as likely to report being “fed-up”, “stressed” or “exhausted” (46%), compared to those approaching retirement (22%). While this may be partly down to differing stages of life, it indicates employers must focus on reducing stress and exhaustion across the entire demographic.

Thinking about your experience as an employee right now, which response best describes how you are feeling? (Choosing from Fed-up, Stressed, Exhausted, OK, Good)

Employers need to take employee well-being more seriously

Despite the emergence of well-being higher up on the corporate and HR agenda and the introduction of related programs, our survey strongly suggests much more work is needed. Levels of employee well-being are not in good health.

Despite the emergence of well-being higher up on the corporate and HR agenda and the introduction of related programs, our survey strongly suggests much more work is needed. Levels of employee well-being are not in good health.

Only 24% of employees strongly agree with the statement “My employer cares about my well-being”, although this was higher in some countries (30% in the USA) than others (21% in Ireland and Switzerland). There is also some variation across industry sectors, with the public sector (17%) and hospitality (20%) performing particularly badly. However, small business fare better (33%) - likely a reflection of stronger personal relationships and the need to take well-being seriously in a company with fewer than 20 people.

Of particular concern is the high proportion of employees who don't believe companies are taking well-being seriously; a whopping 45% of all employees scored 6 or lower out of 10 for this question.

This is close to the 47% of employees who told us they are either “fed up”, “stressed” or “exhausted” at work. This is unacceptably high and proves that well-being is an area employers must double down on in the post-pandemic era in order to reduce the potential negative consequences.

“Our strategic vision is Caring for Walsall together and we take that obligation seriously. We have a way to go to completely deploy LiveTiles Intranet, but I know already that the experience of using Reach for our staff and the public has started to improve our communications and develop a stronger and more interactive information flow.”

Steven Bagley,
Digital Communications Manager
at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust

Questions to consider

1. How significant are employee stress and burnout in your organization and do enough people in your company take this seriously?
2. Are there any particular groups within your organization who are experiencing more stress than others and if so, what action can you take to prevent this?
3. Is there more you can do to support health and well-being, perhaps covering some areas such as financial health, or ensuring you identify future issues before they become a problem?
4. Is there more you can do with your digital workplace and technology to support the well-being of your employees?
5. How aware are your employees about company initiatives that support health and well-being?

Pay and job security

Not all industry conversations about employee experience focus on the role that levels of remuneration and job security play in how an employee feels about their employer. We wanted to explore this important factor and reveal the extent to which pay and security influence employees' perceptions of employers.

Underwhelmed and underpaid employees want better wages

Pay is crucial to employee experience – in fact, employees rated it as the fourth most significant factor. When we asked if they agreed that their remuneration package was fair, the results show a disconnect between how employees feel they should be paid and what they actually receive. Only 17% of employees are completely satisfied with their level of remuneration, and over half (51%) are not happy, scoring this statement 6 or less out of 10.

Research consistently shows that women are paid less than men, but the difference in responses between male and females was perhaps less pronounced than expected, with 16% of women feeling completely satisfied compared to 18% of men. However, there are some sharp differences at the country level; in Switzerland and Germany, twice as many women (10%) as men (5%) scored this question 0 or 1, indicating strong dissatisfaction with their salary levels.

As can be expected, there are some differences between industries, particularly those with a frontline workforce. In hospitality, healthcare, transportation and retail, only 15% are satisfied with their salary, while in education and public sector it scores 14% and 16% respectively. Here, the construction industry is a bit of an outlier among frontline occupations, with 22%. Younger employees also tend to be less satisfied, with only 14% of those aged 25 to 34 completely satisfied, compared to 16% of 45- to 54-year-olds and 18% of 55- to 64-year-olds.



Job security is in the front of employees' minds, and many are worried

COVID-19 has played havoc with job security. While furlough schemes and government support have helped many weather the storm, the future remains uncertain, with a fragile global economy and the pandemic still ongoing.

Given this context, it's no surprise that job security is the single most important factor impacting employees' experience of work, with many worried. Just over a third of employees (34%) feel completely satisfied with their level of job security. Understandably, these figures fluctuate quite widely across different sectors, as COVID-19 has impacted industries to varying degrees.

Public sector workers feel the most secure (48%), rising as high as 59% in Ireland and 61% in Germany. In contrast, more physically demanding occupations such as construction feel the least secure, with only 24% fully satisfied with job security.

Meanwhile, over a third of employees (35%) are feeling nervous about the future, scoring this question 6 or under out of 10. Job security continues to be a major issue which influenced some of the other results in the survey, such as those relating to well-being.

We want employees now to not be doing all of those tasks that can actually be automated, and we're on a journey there to say, 'let's free up that portion of your time to actually add value to the organization and let's try and go get into value creation mode,' so self-service hybrid working and the people data (are key) for us."

Tariq Moanah,
Digital Product Lead at Legal and General

Questions to consider

1. How do employees feel about their pay and benefits and how do you compare to other similar companies in your sector?
2. Job security is a difficult issue – how do you communicate with your employees about this topic?
3. The pandemic has contributed to people's feeling of insecurity – are you doing enough to allay any fears about the future?

Next steps: Eight recommendations

1. Listen to how your employees are feeling

Our survey provides a snapshot of how employees in general view their experience at work, but you need to be aware of the specific situation within your organization. Don't rely on your year-old employee engagement survey: as a matter of urgency, conduct fresh research through surveys, polls, discussions, interviews and focus groups. How are your employees feeling right now after the events of 2020 and 2021? What do different groups think, including younger employees and your front-line workforce? How are they coping with hybrid work? Use this data to inform the actions you need to take going forward.

2. Form a cross-functional employee experience task force or team

Creating a task force or team with a mandate to improve employee experience can help drive a sense of urgency. Because everybody impacts employee experience, not just your HR function, ensure you involve a wide group of stakeholders, including your leadership function, HR team, IT partners, communications, risk, real estate and more. Most importantly, ensure your employees are represented within the group, or form a parallel employee action group that represents your diverse workforce. They must be involved to guide your efforts and give your actions legitimacy.

3. Align everyone with a shared strategy and roadmap

Form a strategy based on your data and establish an accompanying roadmap in order to improve employee experience. Here, taking a joined-up and strategic approach is key, so getting a clear consensus across your stakeholders will make a real difference. When everybody is on the same page, it's much easier to drive actions in a coordinated and impactful way.

4. Double down on wellbeing

In our survey, worrying numbers of employees are reporting stress and exhaustion, while many are also distinctly underwhelmed with efforts to support employee wellbeing. This is simply unacceptable. It's time for HR functions and senior leadership to take employee health and wellbeing seriously, and double down on efforts to support the workforce. For this to be effective requires a holistic view that, while providing wellbeing benefits, seeks to tackle contributory issues such as a long-hours culture, inflexible working patterns and pressures that lead to burn-out.

5. Optimize your digital workplace

A loud and clear message from the survey was that digital workplaces aren't delivering sufficiently on employee experience. Technology needs to improve experience, not make it worse. Ensure your digital workplace lessens employee frustration, drives efficiency and reduces the number of systems employees have to access. Groups that are perhaps "digital disadvantaged", such as your frontline workforce, also need tools better suited to their specific context and challenges. Optimize your digital workplace so it can serve your entire workforce and help to reduce app and information overload.

6. Form a permanent body that represents the employee voice

Whatever you do to improve employee experience, it must be sustainable. Continuing to listen to employees is at the centre of any sustainable approach to employee experience. Here, creating a permanent body that represents the employee voice and includes representation from the major sections of your workforce can send a strong signal that you are serious in your intent, and also provide an essential sounding board to give feedback on strategy, initiatives and activations.

7. Mobilize your senior leaders

Senior leaders play a major role in influencing employee experience, not only in opening the doors to make things happen, but through their communications, the example they set, the behaviour they model and the dialogue they start. Align your senior leaders with your employee experience goals and equip them with the skills and tools they need to shift employee experience in the right direction. When employees see a visible change in the way senior leaders behave, it often enacts significant change, and can be engaging and refreshing for leaders too.

8. Cultivate a culture of connection

Our survey reveals a deep sense of disconnection across the global workforce, with many employees feeling like they don't belong or identify with their organization. It's time to reverse this and nurture a culture of connection where employees feel included and respected, and that they are making a difference. Culture change is not an overnight process, so consider this a journey. Adopting a range of initiatives, including listening to employees and changing how leaders communicate, can make a surprising difference. Let's invest in the future and make employees feel part of the bigger picture. What we do today will make a huge difference tomorrow.

Contact Us

Got a question? Send us a message and we'll reach out to you.



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