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+ CLARK

LEADING TODAY'S
**MULTI-GENERATIONAL
WORKFORCE**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The leaders of today are in a unique position. They could find themselves managing teams of four or more generations, with employees ranging from 18 to 80. This increasingly multigenerational workforce has huge implications for employers: how do you attract, retain and manage employees of such widely differing ages, who are likely to have different priorities, skills and preferences?

With Millennials and Generation Z very much in the spotlight, many employers will be focussing on how to cater to the needs of younger generations. They'll want to do their homework as they may feel unfamiliar with what younger people want from their jobs and organisations.

However, the most radical change in terms of age in the workplace is the fact that people are living and working longer than ever before. The retirement age has risen steadily over the past decade and will hit 67 by 2028. We need this growing army of older workers: by 2022, 14.5 million jobs will be created, but only 7 million younger workers will enter the workforce, leaving a gap of 7.5 million that will need to be filled. But a lot of talent remains untapped because older people are not being given access to the opportunities they deserve.

All of this means that employers must focus on the needs of every generation and understand what it is that people really want from their jobs.

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Do different generations want different things?

To help employers, we decided to research the challenges of managing a multi-generational workforce as part of our ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We felt that a 'one size fits all' approach to management was unlikely to be effective, so we set out to learn more about the individual wants, needs and expectations of the different generations working today.

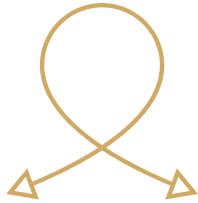
We did this by commissioning an in-depth analysis of the views of 1,500 UK employees across the Private and Public Sectors, split by age, gender and employment status.

In this report, we have brought together the key findings of our research. They suggest that the wants and needs of the generations are wide-ranging – for example, Baby Boomers and Generation X are most interested in flexible working, while Generation Z is more interested in career opportunities. However, we also found substantial common ground – for example, all generations prefer face-to-face communication. As well as looking at the differences between generations, we have also analysed the results by gender and sector.

Diversity makes organisations more successful

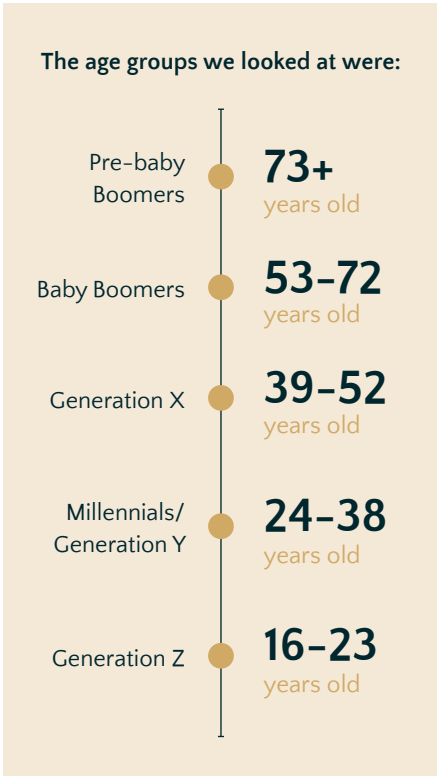
So, why is all of this important? Employing a diverse workforce – including people of all ages – has been shown to make your business more successful. A reputation for diversity and inclusion helps you attract and retain talent, and organisations that hire and promote worthy candidates – regardless of their age – are more successful than those that don't.

Our research also showed that people think working with other generations is a big positive: 53% of those surveyed said they have learned a lot from other generations, 35% said they have been able to teach colleagues of different generations, and an additional 35% said they have achieved more consequently. This was encouraging as our 2017 report – 'Inspiring inclusion in the workplace' – had found evidence of a potential 'us vs them' mentality, with more than a third of employees (37%) not believing that employees of all ages are offered equal career opportunities.



A reputation for diversity and inclusion helps you attract and retain talent, and organisations that hire and promote worthy candidates – regardless of their age – are more successful than those that don't.

Having multiple generations in the workplace brings clear benefits, but it is a challenge for leaders to get the balancing act right in terms of how they manage employees from different age groups. It is only by getting this right that they will reap the benefits of the modern workforce, tapping all of the skills and perspectives that the different generations have to offer.



THE KEY TO HAPPINESS: FLEXIBLE WORKING

The good news is that more than two-thirds of the people we surveyed described themselves as happy or very happy at work. We asked what factors – other than salary – are most important to workplace happiness, and flexible working was a clear winner at 33%.

It was also the benefit that people are most uncomfortable asking about during a job interview (18%). It's no surprise that flexible working is important to many employees and lots of organisations now have agile working policies in place, with technology enabling flexible working patterns. Clearly, there is more that can be done – not just to make jobseekers feel comfortable asking about it, but also to actively promote your approach to flexible working as part of the recruitment process.

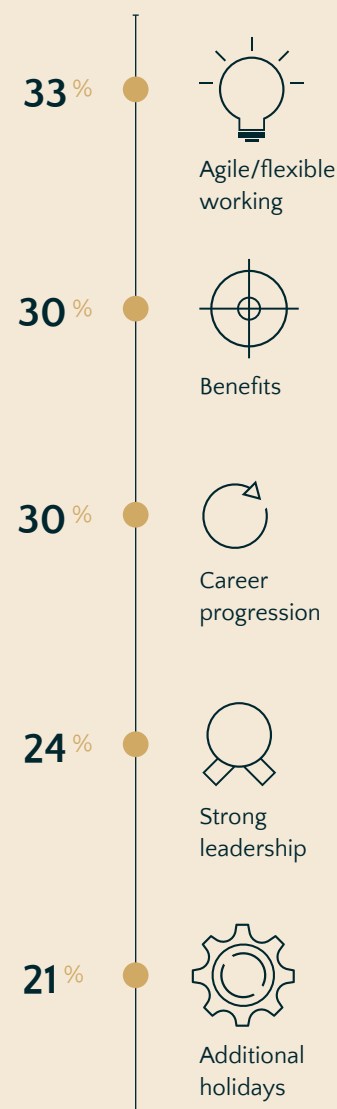
After flexible working, we found that the most important factors for employee happiness were benefits such as gym membership and private healthcare (30%) and opportunities for career progression (30%). Encouragingly, just 5% believe that money is the only important thing.

Other non-monetary benefits that employees felt least comfortable asking about were holiday entitlement (13%) and career break opportunities/sabbaticals (13%).

We also asked employees what their biggest workplace frustrations are. While 9% don't have any, the top gripes were poor leadership/ bad bosses (29%), workload (25%) and irritating colleagues (24%).

There is more that can be done – not just to make jobseekers feel comfortable asking about it, but also to actively promote your approach to flexible working as part of the recruitment process.

Other than salary, what factors are most important to your workplace happiness?



Differences between the generations

Perhaps unsurprisingly, flexible working was most important for Generation X (37%) and Baby Boomers (37%) as they are more likely to have children, ageing parents and other responsibilities at home. Technology has also enabled older, less mobile generations to access the workforce in ways that they may not have been able to previously.

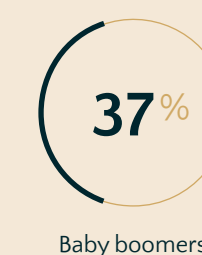
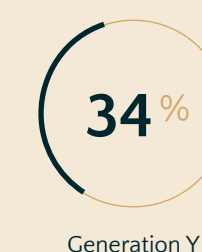
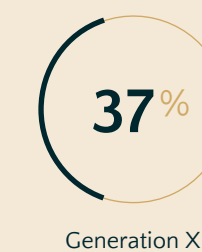
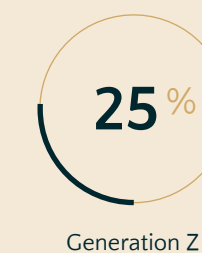
People at the start of their careers – Generation Z – say that career progression opportunities (33%) are more important than flexible working (25%). Despite not placing a premium on flexible working, Generation Z employees are also less shy about asking for it; 18% of them are uncomfortable asking about flexible working opportunities, as opposed to 22% of Generation Y and 21% of Generation X.

However, Generation Z employees are more uncomfortable about asking for things in general; only 7% said they'd be comfortable asking anything vs 42% Baby Boomers. This may suggest that the older people get, the more forthright they are about asking for what they want at work. Therefore, employers may get value from proactively engaging younger candidates to find out what it is they really want from a role.

Corporate social responsibility commitment was found to be more important for younger generations (11% of Generation Z vs 5% of Generation X), who are often very aware of social and ethical issues and keen to work for organisations that contribute to society.

On the other hand, the overall reputation of an organisation becomes more important the older people are. Twenty-three per cent of Generation X said this is an important factor in their workplace happiness, compared to just 14% of Generation Z.

The importance of flexible working across the generations:



WILL A ROBOT TAKE MY JOB?

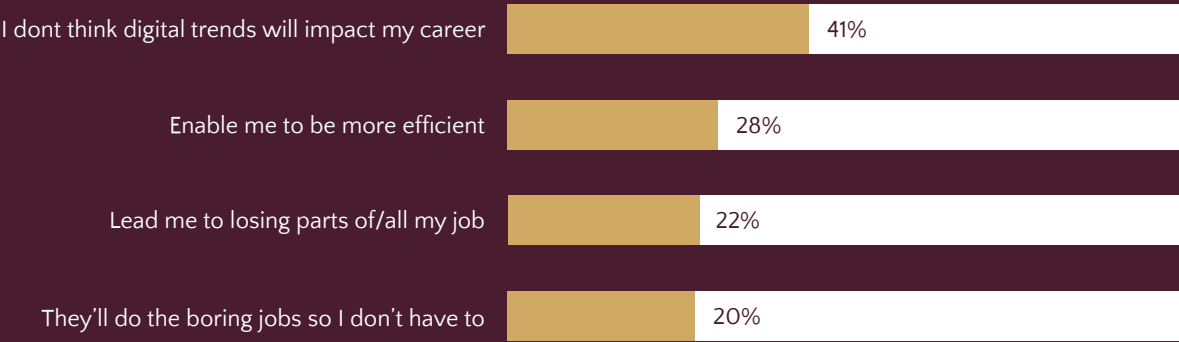


With technology playing a very different role in the lives of different generations, it makes sense that each group has different concerns around digital trends in the workplace.

Whether technology will lead to widespread unemployment has been a hotly debated topic in recent years, but little attention has been paid to generational nuances in sentiment towards the rise of artificial intelligence (AI). Yet, with technology playing a very different role in the lives of different generations, it makes sense that each group has different concerns around digital trends in the workplace.

We asked people whether AI, chatbots and the like would take their jobs. More than one in five (22%) believe technology will lead to them losing part/all of their jobs; conversely, 41% believe it won't impact their career. More than a quarter (28%) believe it will make them more efficient, with a fifth (20%) saying AI will do the boring jobs so that they don't have to.

How do you think digital trends like AI and Chatbots will impact your career?



Being open about your company's digital strategy and presenting the wealth of evidence that shows that – far from stealing jobs – robots will be able to enrich and improve working lives is one way to do this.

Younger generations more pessimistic

Generation Z is most pessimistic. Our research found that more than double the number of Generation Z (31%) employees than Generation X and Baby Boomers (both 14%) think that digital trends will lead to them losing part or all of their job.

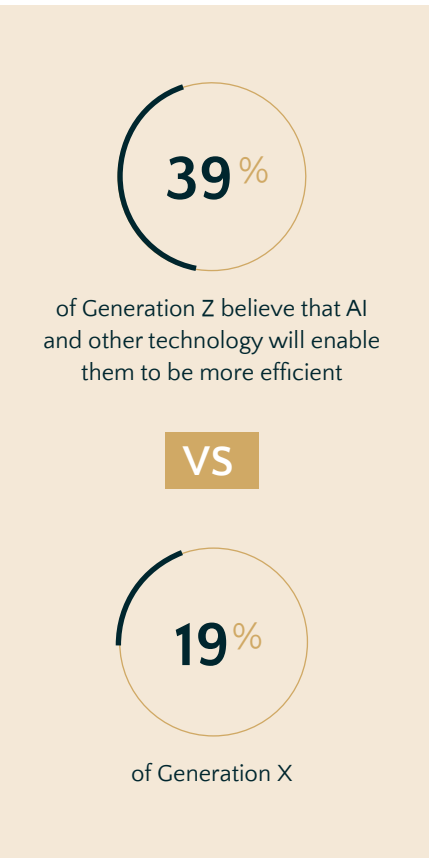
Only 19% of Generation Z and 27% of Millennials don't think that digital trends will affect them, compared to a huge 58% of Generation X and 63% of Baby Boomers.

Why such a big difference? The older generations may have more confidence in the value that they contribute to their organisations. They also have shorter careers ahead of them than the younger generations, so may believe that technological advances will not radically alter their roles and industries in the working time they have left.

The picture is not all negative for the younger generations. Twenty-nine per cent of Generation Z believe that AI and other technology will leave them with more fun jobs, and 39% think that it will enable them to be more efficient, as opposed to 19% of Generation X.

Employers should be aware of the varying concerns of the different generations so that they can address them proactively and appropriately. Being open about your company's digital strategy and presenting the wealth of evidence that shows that – far from stealing jobs – robots will be able to enrich and improve working lives is one way to do this.

Upskilling across all generations will also be key to ensure that employees are ready for the future world of work. In a recent Adecco survey of 1,000 board level and senior decision-makers, 62.5% said that learning additional skills was the most important element in future-proofing jobs, while 33% said it was key (if not the most important element).



THE TRUTH IN GENERATIONAL STEREOTYPES



There is no shortage of stereotypes about different generations in the workplace, from younger employees being less loyal to older generations shying away from the use of technology. But is there any truth in these stereotypes – and do they help or hinder those managing a multi-generational workforce? This section will consider several prevalent stereotypes and whether our research confirms or contradicts them.

Stereotype 1: Younger generations are job hoppers

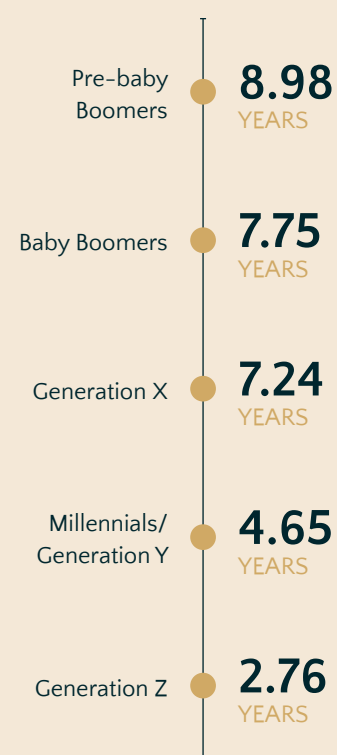
Younger generations are often portrayed as job hoppers who won't be committed to your company for the long term – instead staying just long enough to learn some new skills before moving on to their next role.

The research supported this idea. On average, Generation Z employees would like to spend 2.76 years in any one role, compared to Baby Boomers who would like to spend 7.75 years.

Sixty-one per cent of Generation Z said they would like to be at a company two years or less. Twenty-six per cent would like to spend under a year in any one role – something almost unheard of for Generation X (4%) or Baby Boomers (2%). Just 2% of Generation Z would like to spend 10 or more years at one company.

When looking five years into the future, almost half (47%) of Generation Z see themselves at a new organisation in a higher role vs 31% of Millennials and 7% of Baby Boomers.

How long on average would you like to spend at each company in any one role?



Do generational stereotypes help or hinder those managing a multi-generational workforce?



Stereotype 2: Older generations prefer face-to-face communication, while younger generations prefer digital

This was borne out by the research to an extent. All generations still prefer face-to-face communication with their immediate line manager, but face-to-face chats were nearly twice as popular with Generation X (60%) than with Generation Z (33%).

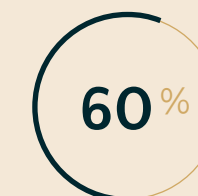
Email was fairly popular with both Generation Z (12%) and Generation X (10%), but there was more of a difference when it came to text messaging. Eleven per cent of the younger generation prefer texting, compared to 2% of Generation X.

Social media is part of life for Generation Z, so it's not surprising that 13% of them would use it to find their next role (in fact, the only surprise may be that this figure was not higher). Millennials – who are nearly as reliant on technology as Generation Z – scored a surprisingly modest 7% for using social media to find their next job, while only 2% of Baby Boomers would use it.

Overall, preference for technology-based methods of communication added up to nearly half (49%) for Generation Z, while it was just 17% for Baby Boomers.

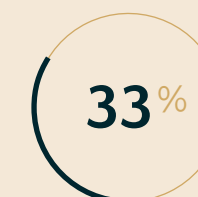
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What is your preferred method of communication with your line manager?



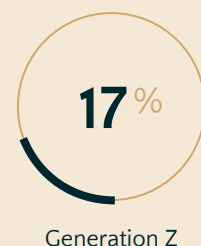
of Generation X prefer face-to-face communication with their immediate line manager

VS

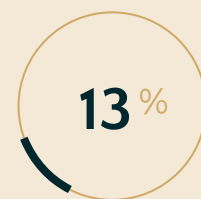


of Generation Z

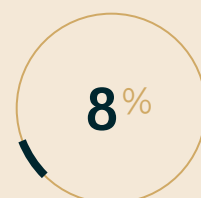
How important is social scene to your workplace happiness?



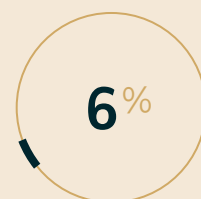
Generation Z



Generation X



Generation Y



Baby boomers



Stereotype 3: Younger generations value a sociable work environment more than older colleagues

Nearly double the number of Generation Z workers (16%) said the people they work with are the most important factors driving their desire to work, compared to Generation X workers (9%). In terms of the importance of the social scene, it was selected by 17% of Generation Z, while just 6% of Baby Boomers and 8% of Generation X employees chose it.

Interestingly, not everyone in Generation Z is keen for a work social life: 13% of Generation Z say that forced activities/ socials are their biggest non-monetary workplace frustration (vs 6% of Generation X). This shows an interesting dichotomy. Some Generation Z want socials and some don't – and some want socials as long as they are not forced. Somewhere in there is a fine line for employers to tread.

We generally recommend that businesses ignore stereotypes as there may be significant similarities between the needs of different groups, as well as variations within groups. However, these findings show that there are some important generational differences that businesses should understand and act on.

Some Generation Z want socials and some don't – and some want socials as long as they are not forced. Somewhere in there is a fine line for employers to tread.

EMPLOYEES WANT STRONG LEADERSHIP

We found that only 57% of people think that their manager understands them, while 55% think that their manager understands their motivations. Most concerning of all, only 55% of people feel that their manager knows how to get the best out of them. To compound the issue, poor leadership was cited as the biggest workplace frustration for employees.

All of this raises issues for managers in terms of lack of efficiency, unhappy staff and the likelihood that they may leave. Therefore, it is imperative that leaders get to know every individual and what makes them tick; their management style preference; and, ultimately, how to get the best out of them as an individual and as part of the team.

This applies across all the generations. Even if Generation Z employees and Millennials are likely to spend less time with your organisation, they need to be just as efficient as other generations. Therefore, managers need to ensure that they understand the needs of employees

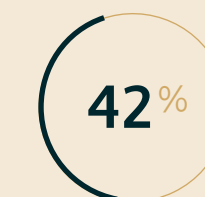
of all ages and tackle any issues head on, rather than allowing poor relationships to take root.

When people were asked how they prefer to be managed by their immediate boss, there was no clear preference for a certain management style, illustrating the complexity of managing in the modern world.

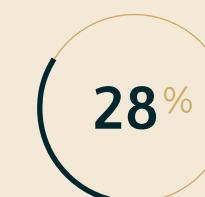
The majority (42%) of people said that they liked to be 'given responsibility'. Encouragingly, this desire for autonomy also increases with age (30% of Baby Boomers vs 19% of Generation Z), while the need to be given instruction decreases (12% of Baby Boomers vs 27% of Generation Z) as people grow in confidence and acquire more skills in the workplace.

Generation Z and Millennials, on the other hand, are keen to learn and receive support in the form of mentoring (33% and 34%) and coaching (31% and 28%).

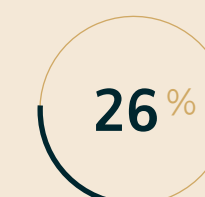
How do you prefer to be led by your line manager?



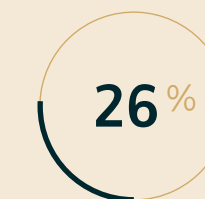
Given responsibility



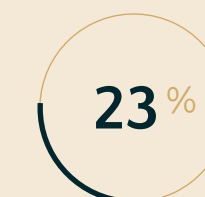
Mentored



Democratic/
collaborative decisions



Given autonomy



Coached

How well does your line manager understand the following:

You



Your motivations



How to get the best out of you



COACHING VS MENTORING

What is the difference between coaching and mentoring? The figures in our research suggest that people may not know the difference between the two.

Mentoring is generally a long-term relationship that focuses on your career and personal development. It is usually carried out by someone more senior in your organisation who helps you as and when needed, on a relatively informal basis.

Coaching on the other hand tends to be a short-term process that is more structured. It is designed to focus on a specific issue and/or achieving specific goals. The coach may not have expertise in their client's role or industry.

DO MEN AND WOMEN WANT DIFFERENT THINGS?



The answer is yes and no. Many of the differences that we found between the genders were subtle, but they can still hold useful clues for managers about how to understand team members and manage and communicate with them effectively.

According to our research, women value a strong leadership style, preferring to be mentored (31%), coached (25%) or given instruction (23%) at work. Just 22% of women like to be given autonomy.

Men, on the other hand, prefer to be given autonomy (30%). Twenty-four per cent prefer to be mentored, 20% prefer to be coached and 17% of men like to be given instruction.

Regarding workplace happiness, women are looking for greater agile/flexible working (35% vs 32% of men), while men tend to be more concerned about the reputation of their organisation (22% vs 18% of women). Women rate irritating colleagues (26%) and lack of communication (22%) higher than men as workplace frustrations.

Preferences in terms of communication were similar, with half of women (50%) preferring face-to-face chats, compared to 46% of men. However, 6% of men prefer instant messaging vs just 2% of women.

Nine per cent of women said that maternity/paternity leave was the benefit they would be least comfortable asking about, vs 5% of men.

In terms of the effect that AI, chatbots and the like could have on their careers, women were reasonably confident that they would not be affected (45%), and 38% of men thought they would not be affected.

Finally, 36% of women would use job boards as their first port of call when looking for a job vs 25% of men. Men are more likely to use their network (16% vs 13% of women) and LinkedIn (8% vs 5% of women). Networking and using LinkedIn are similar, suggesting that women may be missing opportunities in this area.

Other than salary, what factors are most important to your workplace happiness?

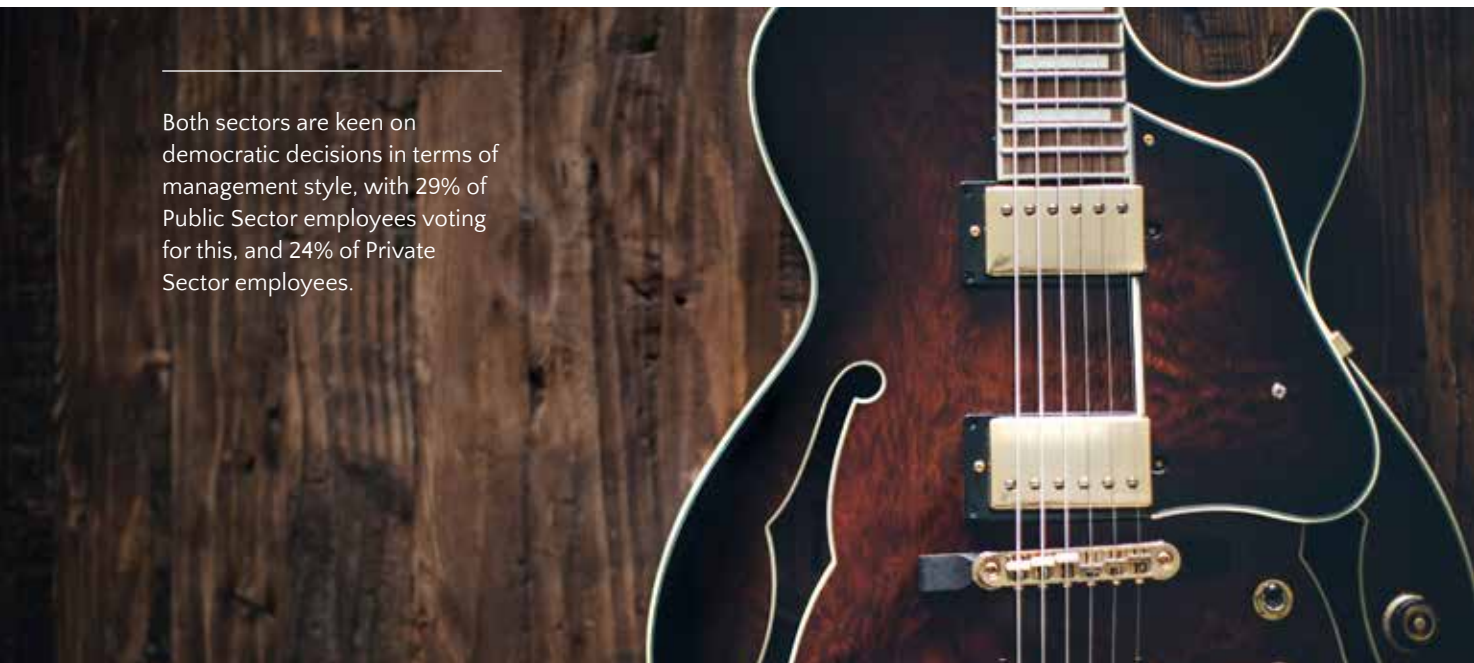
35%

women are looking for greater agile/flexible working

VS

32%

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS BROADLY ALIGNED



Both sectors are keen on democratic decisions in terms of management style, with 29% of Public Sector employees voting for this, and 24% of Private Sector employees.

The research findings were similar for the Public and Private Sectors, with some interesting nuances. In terms of workplace happiness, 70% of people in the Public Sector said they are happy, compared to 66% of Private Sector employees. As for what makes them happy, people in the Public Sector value strong leadership (27%) and the culture of the organisation (17%), while Private Sector employees cite benefits (33%) and reputation (23%).

Perhaps understandably, frustrations in the Public Sector stem mainly from workload (28%) and lack of resources (19%). Twelve per cent of people working in the Private Sector do not have a major frustration at work, as opposed to 6% in the Public Sector.

When we asked what they would be least comfortable asking about in an

interview, 27% of Private Sector staff said they would not be uncomfortable asking anything, as opposed to 19% in the Public Sector. Social events were an issue for the Public Sector, with 13% saying they would be uncomfortable asking about them (as opposed to 6% of the Private Sector).

Both sectors are keen on democratic decisions in terms of management style, with 29% of Public Sector employees voting for this, and 24% of Private Sector employees. Public Sector staff are also less focused on autonomy, with 12% wanting others to make decisions vs 7% in the Private Sector.

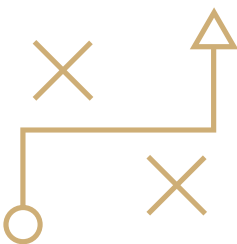
Despite low scores for both sectors (8% and under), Public Sector employees feel their managers understand them, their motivations and how to get the best out of them more than employees in the Private Sector.

Communication preferences were similar, with 51% of Private Sector staff preferring informal chats and 45% of Public Sector staff. People in the Public Sector do seem to prefer email, however, with 14% choosing this option as opposed to 9% of Private Sector staff.

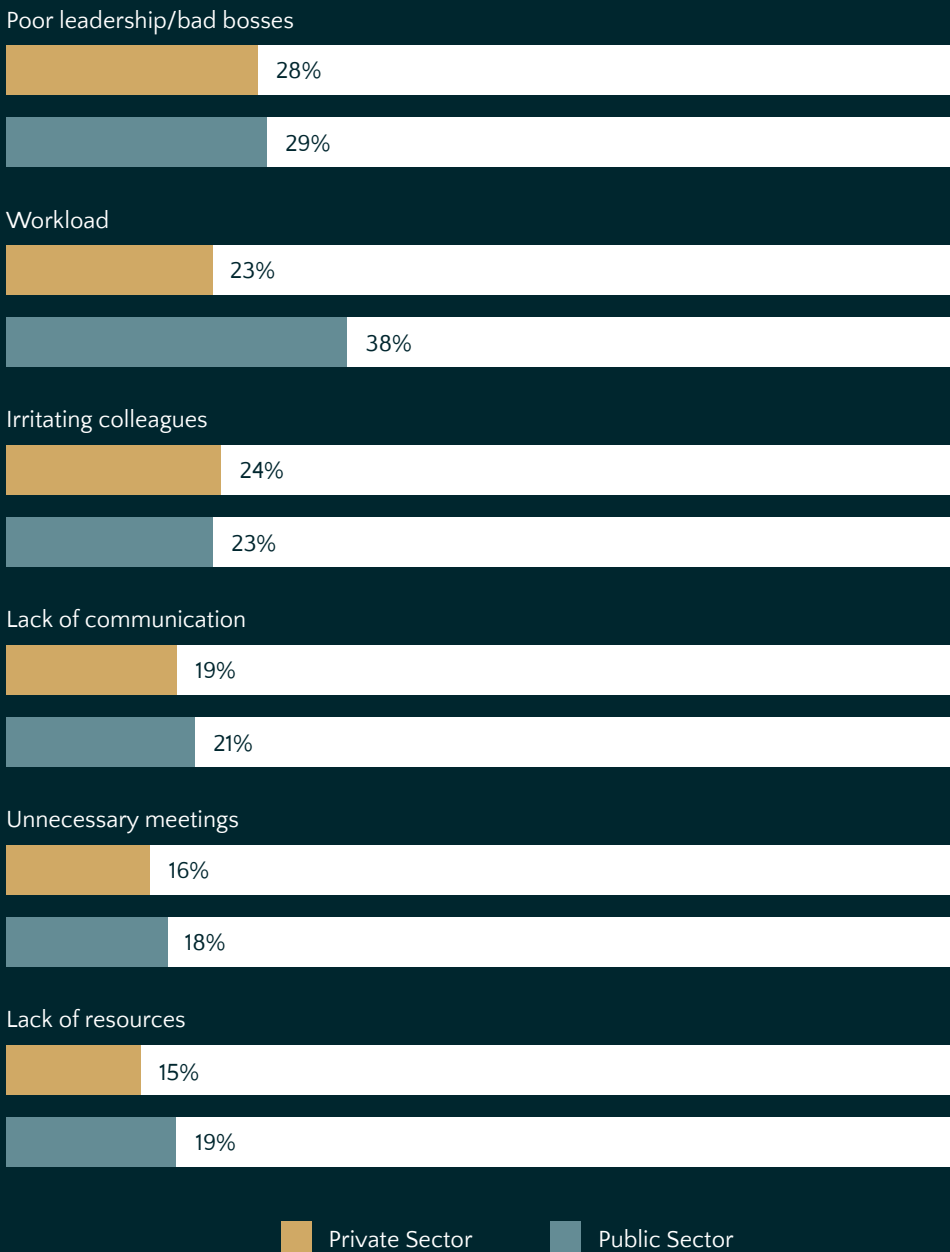
Interestingly, people in the Public Sector seem more comfortable using social media, with 9% saying they would use it to look for a new job, as opposed to just 4% of people in the Private Sector.

Both sectors seem fairly confident that their jobs will not be replaced by robots, with 44% saying they don't think their careers will be affected in the Private Sector and 38% in the Public Sector. The Public Sector employees were also relatively upbeat, with 24% thinking that AI and robotics will take boring jobs off their desk.

Both sectors are keen on democratic decisions in terms of management style, with 29% of Public Sector employees voting for this, and 24% of Private Sector employees. Public Sector staff are also less focused on autonomy, with 12% wanting others to make decisions vs 7% in the Private Sector.



What are your biggest non-monetary workplace frustrations:



TOP TAKE-HOMES FOR EMPLOYERS

The findings in this report show a range of differences between employees of different generations – and genders and sectors – that managers can use to hone their management and communication styles. Most importantly, employers need to understand their individual employees if they are to manage them effectively and increase efficiency.

Most importantly, employers need to understand their individual employees if they are to manage them effectively and increase efficiency.

1. When people were asked what made them happy at work – other than salary – the three top answers by some margin were flexible working, benefits and career progression opportunities. Therefore, employers should prioritise offering or improving these non-monetary benefits and actively promoting them, especially when interviewing candidates.
2. When we asked about the biggest non-monetary frustrations, poor leadership/bad bosses, workload and working with irritating colleagues were the top complaints. As an employer, you should take what steps you can to mitigate these; for example, honing your leadership style, balancing/reducing workloads and encouraging your team to work well together.
3. With large numbers of employees worried that robots will replace part or all of their job, employers should be open about their digital strategy and educate staff about how artificial intelligence can enrich and improve working lives. Encouraging staff at all levels to upskill will also help employees get ready for changes in the workplace.
4. Learn what you can from generational stereotypes. For example, if a Generation Z employee is likely to be with you for two years or less, how can you develop them, grow their skills so that they are successful and then support them in their next move – you never know, they may come back.
5. With a disappointing 57% of employees feeling that their manager understands them, working hard to understand every individual in your team, what motivates them, what leadership style they respond to, and what communication style they prefer is clearly paramount – particularly as employees are frustrated by poor leadership.
6. While we found fairly minor differences regarding what makes men and women happy at work, the leadership and communication styles they prefer provide useful hints for managers. For example, we found that substantially more men (30% vs 22%) than women like to be given autonomy at work.
7. The differences between the Public and Private Sector results may inform you about which elements of your organisation to promote. For example, knowing what people in each sector value most – benefits and reputation for the Private Sector, leadership and culture for the Public Sector – can provide a useful focus for interviews.

OTHER STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

Supporting employee health and well-being: people can carry on working for longer if they receive the right support, and employers are willing to make – often minor – adjustments to facilitate their ongoing participation in work.

Building an inclusive and age-diverse culture: employers need to develop a working environment that fosters age diversity and doesn't tolerate bias based on age, even if it is unconscious. Employers should also collect workforce data on a regular basis to help them prepare for future resourcing needs.

Providing training and development support: all employees, regardless of age, need training and development support to keep their skills up to date and enable them to plan the next stage of their career.

Helping employees balance work and caring responsibilities: employers need to think more creatively about the kind of support and flexibility that employees in this position may need.

Managing retirement: everyone's circumstances and attitudes towards retirement are different and arrangements should be tailored to individual needs as far as possible.

Tailoring solutions to suit individual need and training managers: ultimately, it's the relationship that an individual has with their line manager, and the level of support they receive, that is likely to influence their decision to stay at or leave an organisation.



EMBEDDING CHANGE IN YOUR ORGANISATION

It is crucial that organisations do not just focus on quick wins when it comes to attracting, retaining and managing the best talent of all ages. In order to reap rewards over the longer term, leaders constantly need to evolve and strive to get the best out of their teams.

This shouldn't be a tick-box exercise. Embracing diversity and inclusion is much more far-reaching and has to happen at a cultural level within your organisation.

All of this will be hard work, but the results will be worth it. Employing a diverse workforce has been shown to make businesses more successful. The Adecco Group's 'Unlocking Britain's Potential' report found that 69% of employers believe those companies with a diverse workforce are best placed to succeed in the future. That's what we want to help you to achieve.



GET IN TOUCH

It can be difficult to know where to start, or how to improve on what you're already doing. That's why we're positively encouraging you to get in touch. Ask for help. Use us as a sounding board. We can arrange a meeting – or a telephone call if you're time poor – to discuss strategy, and how we might be able to help you in shaping your mental health policy from an attraction and retention perspective. We don't profess to be all-out experts in the intricacies of these conditions, but we are championing mental health in the workplace as part of our diversity and inclusion drive.

We believe that together, we can make a real difference.

CONTACT US

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