

ADP Research Institute® Reveals Pandemic-Sparked Shift in Workers' Priorities and Expectations in New Global Study

Job satisfaction and security, pay and progression, work-life balance and company values make up the total package of what workers want

ROSELAND, N.J., April 25, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- The world of work is experiencing a transformation driven by the COVID-19 pandemic's ability to reshape the employment landscape, dominate economic activity and revolutionize the workforce. This year's "[People at Work 2022: A Global Workforce View](#)" report from [ADP Research Institute](#) (ADPRI) identifies the key emerging and escalating workforce trends uncovered in a global study of workers, as employers continue to adjust their approach to manage amid changing dynamics.

In its annual study, ADPRI's survey of more than 32,000 workers, including the gig economy, from 17 countries, uncovered both the remarkable global consistency of employee sentiment on the transformed workplace, as well as the pandemic's unique impact in local markets. In a period of sustained disruption and uncertainty, the findings expose the seismic shift in employee expectations of the workplace as compared to pre-pandemic. The study reveals a new prioritization among employees that extends beyond salary and a few perks to a complete package that aligns with their personal values, redefines what job security means, prioritizes their well-being and encourages flexibility. These findings, among a long and varied list of needs and expectations, can help to guide employers in their approach to deliver on what the workforce deems most important.

"The pandemic signaled a paradigm shift as today's workers re-evaluate the presence of work in their lives, and the stakes have never been higher for employers," said Nela Richardson, chief economist, ADP. "Our research highlights the extent to which employees' views of work changed, now prioritizing a wider and deeper range of factors that are more personal in nature. With recruitment and retention among the most business-critical issues, these revelations offer both a challenge and an opportunity for employers as they seek to keep workers engaged and fulfilled."

[People at Work 2022: A Global Workforce View](#)

The following are key takeaways from the report:

Workers want change: re-evaluating importance of job security and business ethics. COVID-19 triggered a re-evaluation of what job security means to workers, with many wanting more from their employers. Workers are evaluating personal wellbeing and life outside work more than ever before. They are seeking greater remote work options, increasingly interested in a company's ethics and values – and are ready to go elsewhere if they don't align with their own.

- Seven in 10 workers (71%) say they have considered a major career move this year.
- Feelings toward flexibility and work-life balance are not limited to parents (74%) who would like to arrange working hours to be more flexible, followed closely by 68% of non-parents.
- Pay equity is important: 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.

Job satisfaction and outlook: employees have high expectations. Optimism for the outlook of the workplace, though slightly below pre-pandemic levels, is robust with workers upbeat on their thoughts toward work.

- Nine in 10 (90%) workers are satisfied in their current employment, though they could be happier: nearly half of workers (41%) say they are only "somewhat satisfied".
- Hopes are high for pay raises, with more than six in 10 workers (61%) anticipating a pay raise in the next 12 months, and more than four in 10 (43%) expect a promotion; these feelings of better pay and progression feed into how positive they feel about the future.
- When asked to describe their levels of optimism, almost nine in 10 (88%) put themselves in the optimistic category, with responses similar across age groups and genders, North America being the only region where workers feel more optimistic today (85%) than prior to the pandemic (79%), with more flexible changes in the workplace a likely driver of improved sentiment.
- Looking ahead, workers want a durable career: nearly a quarter of workers (23%) disclosed they are actively trying to change their job and/or move to a "future proof" industry where skills are in higher demand long-term, where they see the best career development prospects and strongest earning potential.

Pay and benefits: salary is a priority, but it's not all that matters. Pay is still a top priority for workers, although half of workers would trade a pay cut for work-life balance. This importance placed on pay and desired flexibility, many believe, could help to mitigate the amount of unpaid overtime workers believe they are contributing without compensation.

- When asked what's most important in a job, (63%) of workers placed salary at number one.
- In fact, three quarters (76%) say they are prepared to ask for a salary increase if they feel it is deserved, likely driven by a number of workers who believe they are giving away the equivalent of more than a working day (8.5 hours) of unpaid overtime each week.

Mental health: stress is increasing and work is suffering. While workers are surprisingly upbeat surrounding job satisfaction and outlook for the next five years, stress at work has reached critical levels, exasperated by a trend that was already in motion prior to the pandemic. The impact on workers professionally, as well as personally, is profound and employers have taken notice by striving to find ways to support their workforce.

- Nearly seven in 10 (67%) workers say they experience stress at work at least once a week, up from 62% pre-pandemic. In fact, one in seven (15%) feel stressed every day.
- Key sources of stress include length of the working day (28%), problems with technology (26%) and concerns over job security (25%).
- This stress is boiling over into their job performance, as a staggering 53% believe their work is suffering because of poor mental health.
- Thankfully, as employers take initiative to support their workforce, seven in 10 workers (70%) admit they feel supported by their managers when it comes to mental health at work, with three quarters (75%) who say they feel supported by their colleagues.

Remote work and living arrangements: people poised to make a move. Remote and hybrid work are now an established feature of the working world, blurring the distinction between home and the workplace. This shift from the traditional 9-to-5 office-based model cannot be undone and has long-term implications for the jobs market. As companies – and employees – re-evaluate their approach to the workforce, it is clear that having a flexible approach is key, as there are advantages and drawbacks to both exclusively, whether fully remote or fully in office.

- Two thirds (64%) of the workforce would consider looking for a new job if they were required to return to the office full time. In fact, contrary to assumptions, younger people (18-24-year-olds) are the most reluctant (71%) to return to the workplace full-time.
- If it came to it, employees are prepared to make compromises if it meant more flexibility or a hybrid approach to work location with more than half (52%) willing to accept a pay cut – as much as 11% – to guarantee this arrangement.
- Two-tiers of working sentiment are emerging. Those working from home are more inclined to say they are optimistic (89%) about the next five years compared to their peers (77%) reporting to an office, are more satisfied with employment compared to those on-premise (90% versus 82%), and almost half (46%) believe working from home has made it easier to be a working parent, though a quarter (25%) say it has made it harder. Yet, there is a balance, as those working from home are more likely to feel their work is suffering due to poor mental health compared to their colleagues in the workplace (55% versus 36%). Those working from home are also more prone to working longer hours, as much as an extra 8.7 hours per week.

Two years post-pandemic, workers are thinking harder than ever before about what they really want out of work and life and are reassessing, and in some cases, inverting ideas around what they are worth, what job security means and what they want from their employers. For additional findings and deeper context to the worker perspective in ADP Research Institute's report, "[People at Work 2022: A Global Workforce View](#)," visit [ADPRI.org](#).

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