

The future of work:

How to be an
organisation
that thrives

How being successful in the future
means doing better by people,
society and the environment

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Introduction

In this whitepaper I present an array of inspiring opportunities for organisations to innovate in ways that benefit their employees, society and the environment - this is what is needed for them to truly thrive in the future.

What is classed as "success" for an organisation has changed and continues to change. Purpose, kindness to people and sustainability are among key areas which are being used by employees and citizens to evaluate organisations, and they determine the extent to which an organisation can gain their respect and loyalty. Organisations need to have a clear reason for being, and to show they care so that they can attract and retain customers and a talented and productive workforce. This, of course, is what drives financial success.

In this research I ask what people want and need from their employers (via an online survey of 1,042) and I review the literature and speak to experts in the areas of workplace wellbeing, diversity and inclusion and sustainability to find opportunities for moving forward. Finally, you will find case studies of inspiring and best in practice organisations from around the world.

You can expect answers to these questions:

- » Where should organisations be focusing their energies to be best placed for a successful future?
- » How can organisations increase staff motivation, focus and productivity levels?
- » What are the benefits to organisations of focusing on the health and wellbeing of staff?
- » What should organisations be doing to look after their staff and to get the best out of them?
- » What can be done to create an effective working culture?
- » How and why should organisations contribute towards making the planet a better place?
- » How are organisations innovating and what inspiring case studies are there that can be learnt from?



Throughout this report you will find case studies of organisations who are working in kinder, more equal, and sustainable ways.

I present inspiration for organisations to do better business by focusing on looking after their employees, creating positive and inclusive cultures, and being purpose driven and sustainable. And by doing so enjoy the rewards of a happy, motivated, focused, and productive workforce.

I hope that after reading this whitepaper you look to the future with renewed optimism and positivity, confident in the knowledge that organisations doing better by their employees, society and the environment is synonymous to them thriving in the future.

Key findings

The survey results paint a bleak picture of the current situation in the workplace – low levels of happiness and poor mental health.

63%

do not consider themselves to be happy in their work



57%

55% say their mental health is 'low' or 'so-so'



64%

do not consider their level of motivation to be good

55%

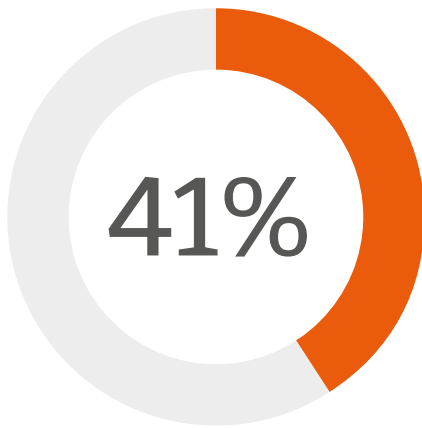
do not consider their level of focus to be good

44%

do not consider their level of productivity to be good

Key findings

The potential repercussions of this are huge when it comes to performance in the workplace:



...of the entire global workforce could be considering handing in their resignation (Microsoft 2021).

Benefits of a happy and healthy workforce, according to Government founded organisation Investors in People, which exists to make work better, include:

- » Lower levels of staff absence and associated costs
- » Lower staff turnover, and associated recruitment and training costs, as well as knowledge loss and breakdown of workplace networks and relationships
- » Increased productivity
- » Effective working relationships
- » More creative workforce
- » Better respected brand and more easily able to attract talent

There is further evidence to support investment in mental health and wellbeing:

“Mental health problems in the UK workforce cost employers almost £35 billion”.

Centre for Mental Health (2017)

“For every £1 spent on supporting people’s mental health, employers can get £5 back on their investment.”

Centre for Mental Health (2020)

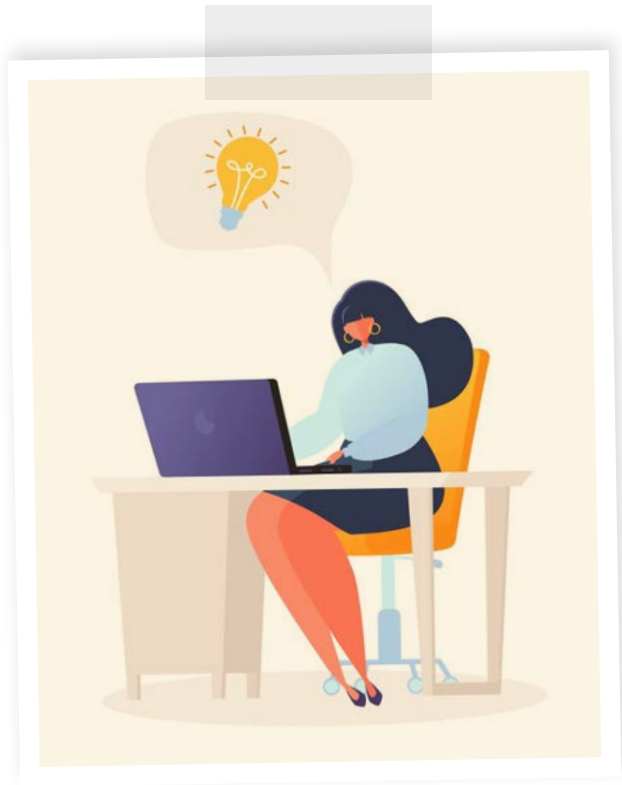
“Companies with high levels of wellbeing outperform the stock market by 2-3% a year.”

London Business School study

Key findings

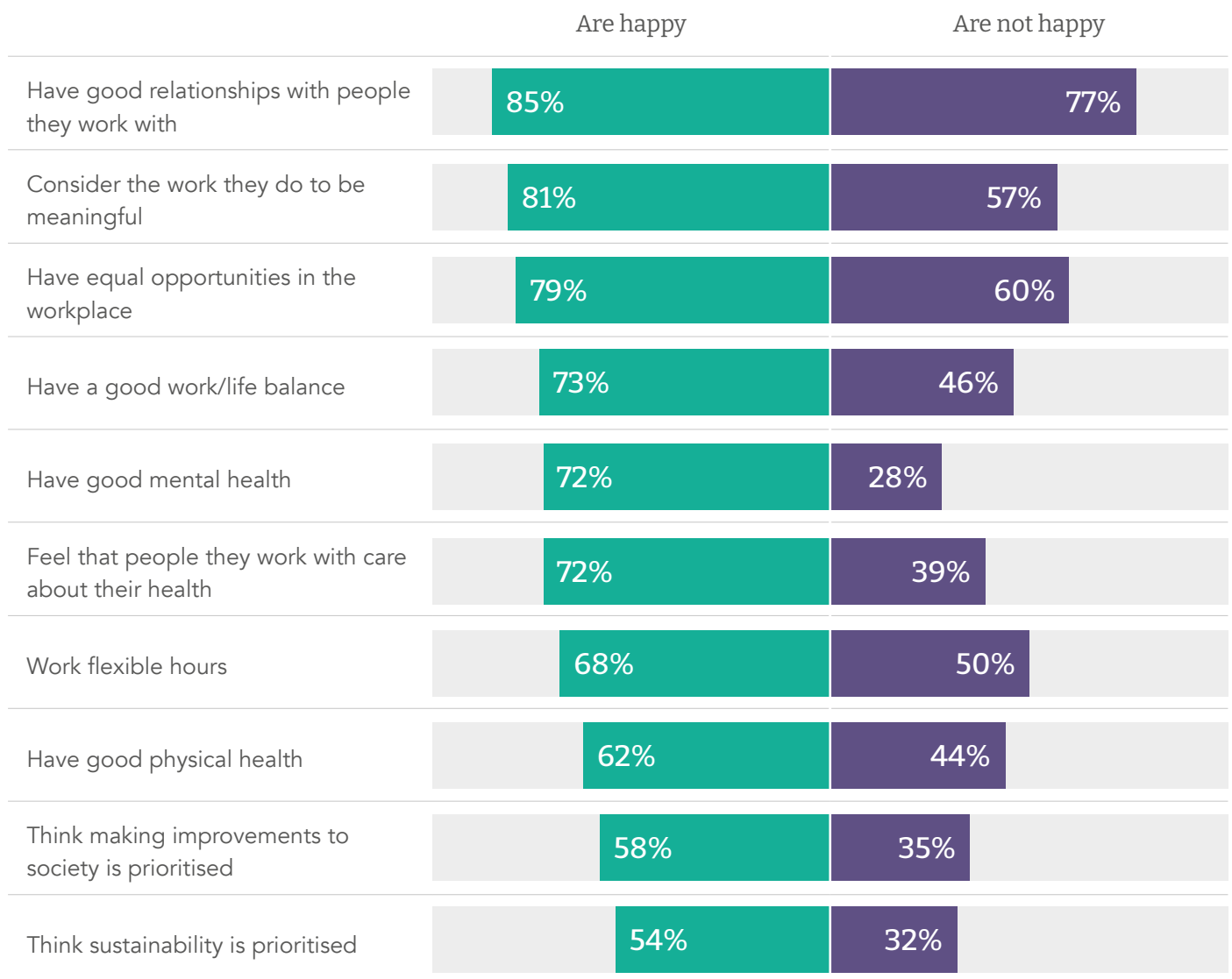
This research shows those who are happy at work are much more likely to perform well, they report higher levels of motivation, focus and productivity. Almost 7 in 10 of those who are happy at work say they are motivated and focused, only 1 in 6 of those who are not happy at work say they are motivated and only a third who are not happy report focus. Three quarters of those who are happy work productivity, compared to less than half of those who are not happy.

	Those who are happy at work	Those who are not happy at work
Motivation	68%	17%
Focus	68%	33%
Productivity	75%	46%



Key findings

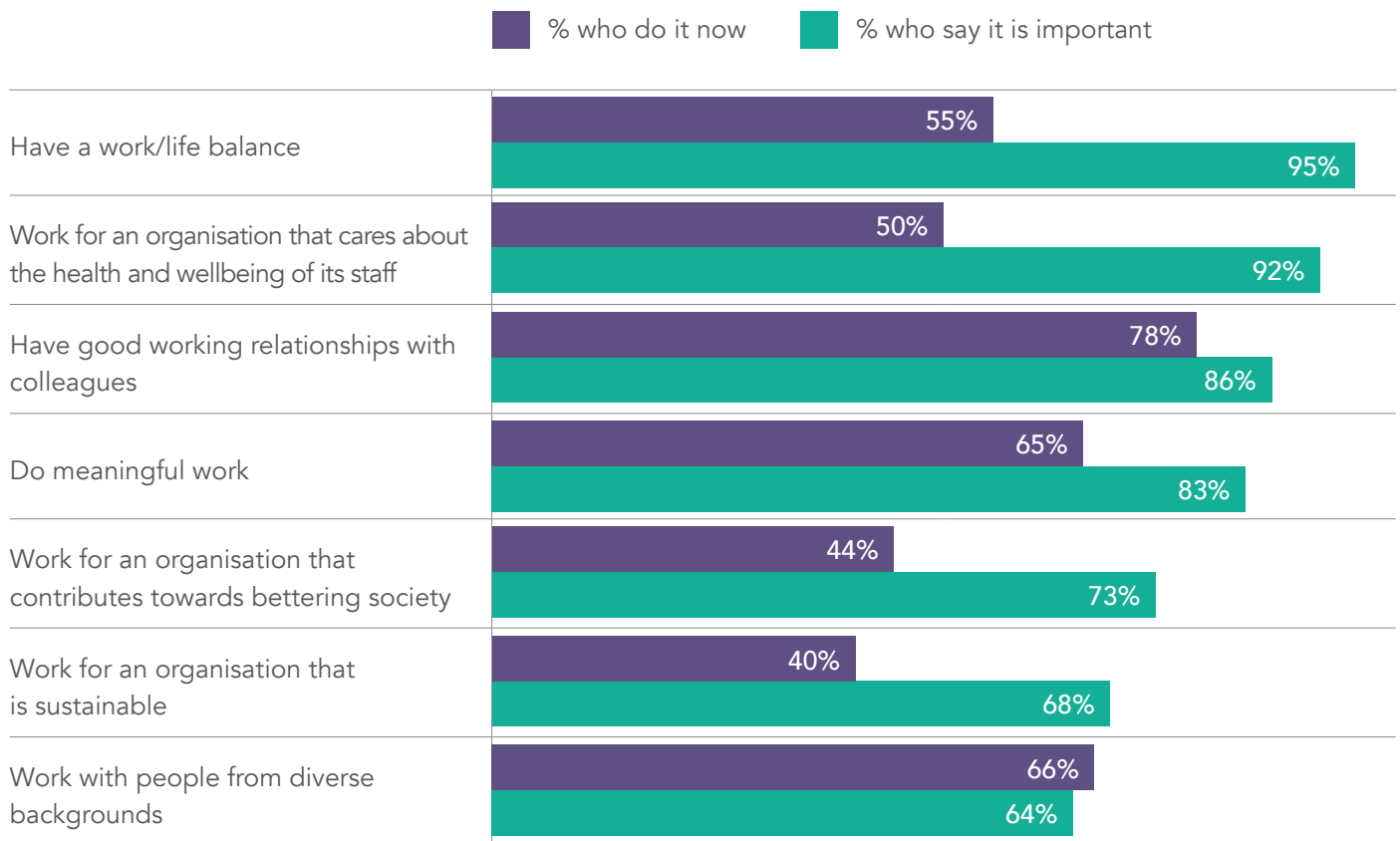
Those who are happy have good relationships with people they work with, they consider the work they do meaningful, they have equal opportunities in the workplace and they have a good work/life balance. Their mental health is more than 2.5 times as high as those who are not happy at work, they are likely to feel that people they work with care about their health and that the organisation they work for cares about sustainability and making improvements to society.



Key findings

Organisations can focus on addressing employees' unmet needs to make them happier. In all but one area employees' experience in the workplace falls short of their hopes and the difference is particularly marked in the 2 areas that are most important - work/life balance and working for an organisation that cares for the health and wellbeing of its staff.

There is also a gap between employee wants and the reality in the areas of relationships and the extent to which work is felt to be meaningful, and for an organisation that prioritises sustainability and improving society.





“Our current economic system is on its head. Money has become an end in itself rather than a means for what really counts: a good life for all.”

Christian Felber, Co-founder of the Economy for the Common Good movement



The need for change is being recognised and championed from the top down. The Wellbeing Economy Alliance, a partnership of over 200 individuals, organisations, governments, academics, communities and businesses, promote a forward-thinking definition of success with the goal “an economy in service of people and the planet”.

Also, The Economy for the Common Good champion a new economy based on human dignity, social justice, transparency, and environmental sustainability. They have worked with more than 1600 companies who have seen increased financial profits through focusing in these areas (profits which can be used to strengthen companies, generate income, and to ensure the long-term financial security of the owners and employees).

They have seen meaningful changes in the areas of development and acceptance of long-lasting sustainable products, creation of good and meaningful jobs, the humanising of business interactions, and the creation of environmental and climate policy.

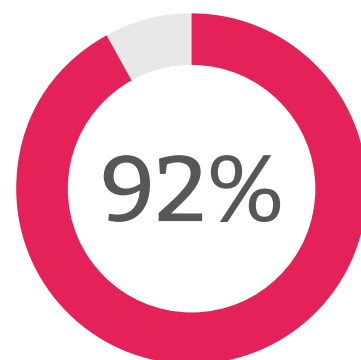
By setting goals in the areas set out in this report, and holding themselves accountable to achieving them, organisations can hope to run successful organisations through being a great place to work and having a positive impact on society and the planet.

“Doing good is good for business.”

Diego Isabel La Moneda, Co-founder and Director, NESI Forum of New Economy and Social Innovation

Health and well-being

Less than half of us are happy at work and levels of poor mental health are shockingly high. Organisations should be addressing these issues for moral reasons, and because it makes business sense.



...say that an organisation caring about the health and wellbeing of its staff is important to them when it comes to working for or with an organisation

50% feel that people they work with don't really care about their health

58% are not very likely to talk to people they work with about their health and wellbeing

48% think there is more that can be done to look after their health at work



“Having your employees at their best and fully engaged is a business issue – it’s not just a nice to have”.

Susan Podlogar, Johnson & Johnson



57% say their mental health is 'low' or 'so-so'

49% say their physical health is 'low' or 'so-so'

38% have high levels of stress/ anxiety

This research shows those with good mental health are more likely to report higher levels of productivity, motivation and focus.

	Good mental health	Poor mental health
Productivity	66%	49%
Motivation	49%	25%
Focus	58%	36%

“Their employees need to be fit for the future and that’s how they will be fit for the future”.

Sara Maude, Managing Director, The Mind Solution

Sara Maude, Managing Director of The Mind Solution, works with organisations from all over the world to help them to look after their employees and get the most out of them (the two things go hand in hand). She said looking after employees “is crucial for the bottom line”.



“A healthy workforce is a happy workforce, which translates into a productive workforce”.

Suzy Glaskie, Functional Medicine Health Coach, Peppermint Wellness

Suzy Glaskie, founder of Peppermint Wellness, says that because people are working longer hours and often from home, work and home life have become blurred. She explains this 'always on' culture of working in the evenings is not allowing people to get the respite and rejuvenation needed to recharge their batteries and have energy to work efficiently. It also stunts employees' ability to think creatively.

"People aren't getting up from their laptop to make proper food; they're just snacking throughout the day.

...Work/life boundaries have been blurred by the pandemic, and sleep is badly affected - partly because so many people are missing a crucial window to unwind after work before going to bed. Exhaustion and lack of quality sleep lead to more pressure, less productivity, getting more behind and put staff on the road to burnout.

...Being always on isn't good for us - the human brain simply isn't designed to work like that and it's affecting us on every level."

Suzy Glaskie, Functional Medicine Health Coach, Peppermint Wellness

She says employers need to work out how employees can do their jobs and have the time to get the rest, sleep and nourishment they need. This is necessary so that our brains and nervous systems can work properly, and so that we can maintain healthy blood sugar levels - essential for productivity at work.

Anglian Water adopted the Workwell Model from Business in the Community, the UK-based charity and business lobbying group and achieved great success:

“The model put employee wellbeing at centre stage in boardroom discussions. It helped improve employer brand and customer engagement. It reduced staff absence and raised productivity. We were soon able to demonstrate the benefit consistently outstripped investment – for every £1 we spent, we got £8 of benefit back.”

Peter Simpson, Chief Executive Officer, Anglian Water

“What would help you to look after your health at work?”

Less time pressure for doing work:

“Managers keeping a closer eye on workloads and earlier proactive interventions when it is obvious people are stretched too far”.

Female, 35-54, Energy/Utilities industry, UK

“Less workload within the given hours”.

Male, 18-34, UK

“Changes to work culture to reduce meeting numbers”.

Female, 18-34, Business/Consultancy/Management industry, UK

More time to look after themselves:

“More opportunities for healthy eating in the workplace, also tools that schedule meetings to be 55 mins so allow for natural breaks in between the constant video call hopping that we currently endure”.

Male, 35-54, Computing/IT industry, UK

“Current work creates very sedentary lifestyle and poor diet choices due to time demands”.

Male, 35-54, Engineering/Manufacturing Industry, UK

“More exercise time”.

Female, 18-34, Computing/IT industry, UK

“More breaks”.

Female, 55+, Healthcare industry, North America

Relaxing and comfortable spaces to do this:

“More relaxed environment, provide resources and spaces to relax during breaks away from desks”.

Male 35-54, Computing/IT industry, UK

“Making workspaces more mentally suitable not just boring white walls. People need to feel in a comfortable environment”.

Female, 18-34, Engineering/Manufacturing, UK

“Creating breakout and relaxing spaces within offices. Google or Space10 is good at this”.

Male, 18-34, Property/Construction industry, UK



The survey reveals a lot of pressure on time, employees have high workloads, and lots of meetings, and are struggling to get their work done, let alone find time and space to look after themselves.

Suzy recommends organisations strive for a culture that enable employees to make small, realistic changes to their day to day lives. For example encouraging walking meetings and calls, because of the positive effect of movement, fresh air and time spent in nature on wellbeing. Walking clears the brain and allows solutions to problems to present themselves.

Suzy and Sarah advocate conversations about mental health at a strategic level, alongside an ongoing programme of mental health training, and access to a centralised source of wellbeing resources. Promoting these within an organisation demonstrates commitment to the issue.

Encouraging regular check-ins between colleagues and managers is crucial to building relationships based on trust, so that people feel safe and secure enough to open up and be honest, with the knowledge they will be listened to with empathy, and without blame or judgement.

“We need to be asking people how they are doing, what we can do to make their life easier, and actually follow through”.

Suzy Glaskie, Functional Medicine Health Coach, Peppermint Wellness

A culture of communication around and support of mental health and wellbeing:

“Support network for discussion of health matters”.

Female, 35-54, Computing/IT industry, UK

“Promoting being able to talk about your wellbeing, having dedicated break times”.

Female, 18-34, Accountancy/Banking/Finance industry, UK

“I have a friend who works for a company that do regular wellness checks with their staff. I thought this was great”.

Female, 18-34, Sales industry, UK

“If people understood that mental health is an issue and that work life balance is important for motivation within work”.

Female, 18-34, Marketing/Advertising/PR industry, UK

Sara says organisations should have a bespoke approach to looking after their staff, which is specific to their unique workforces' needs. She recommends an ideal place to start is looking at HR data, and staff surveys can also be used to ask employees questions in order to be able to understand how to best support them. Establishing what issues exist, what is needed and to putting benchmarks in place are the next steps Sara suggests taking. For example, is there an issue with high staff turnover or sick rates? Are employees struggling to focus? Do sales figures need to increase? Benefits and perks can then be designed to suit needs and wants.

Organisations have a role to play in providing a secure environment and the resources needed for people to support themselves and each other. Ongoing communication, and inspiring coping mechanisms will result in happier, healthier and more productive employees who work together well as a community.

CASE STUDY

HUDSON™

"The mental wellbeing of our staff is imperative to us".

John Hudson, Group CEO, Hudson Outsourcing Ltd

Global provider of tendering and recruitment services, Hudson, ensure their workplace is a supportive environment where employees can share concerns or issues confidentially. They have a wellbeing room which is a space where employees can unwind and bond with other team members in a calm environment. They also have a wellbeing programme and their staff are offered one-to-one wellbeing chats with a dedicated inhouse

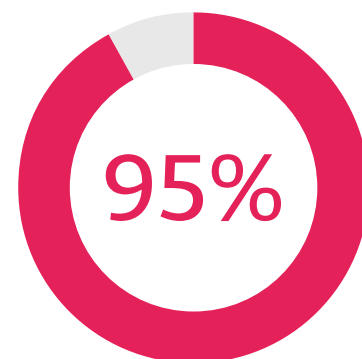
mental health advocate. This member of staff has undertaken training in mental health awareness, mental health first aid and mental health advocacy in the workplace. The chats are confidential and offer employees time to chat about any issues or worries, such as problems with health, relationships, work, money and so on. The chats are designed to alleviate any pressures staff may have and create a safe space for them to talk.

"Most people spend most of their time at work, so if they're going to look after themselves it needs to be at work, there is no time otherwise".

Kate Brown, Founder, Calm at Work

Kate Brown is founder of Calm at Work which offers holistic therapies such as massages and meditation to improve wellbeing in the workplace. She believes employers should be actively looking after employees by encouraging them to take time out of their working day for treatments paid for by their organisation. She has found that, as well as reducing physical pain, her treatments result in a 39% reduction in feelings of stress, and a 36% increase in ability to relax.

Work/life balance



44%

say their work/life balance is 'low' or 'so-so'

34%

do not have people around them who have a good work/life balance

...say a good work/life balance is important to them, but more than half do not describe the balance they are achieving as good.

Having a good work/life balance means employees can maintain their mental and physical health and work efficiently and productively.

	Good work/life balance		Poor work/life balance	
Happy at work		49%	29%	
Have high levels of stress/anxiety		27%	51%	
Motivation		41%	29%	
Productivity		62%	50%	
Focus		51%	39%	
Physical health (they have more time for exercise)		59%	41%	
Mental health		60%	25%	

“What do you think organisations should be doing to be better places to work?”

Ensure staff can achieve a work/life balance:

“A more positive culture overall that is management led, setting the example of a healthy work/life balance. It’s absolutely possible, (I’m doing it) but seems rare for reasons I do not understand. The vast majority work long hours, rarely take annual leave and openly work weekends such that it’s become the norm”.

Female, 35-54, Science/Pharmaceuticals industry, UK

“Creating a strong work life balance”.

Female, 18-34,
Environment/Agriculture
industry, UK

74% of those who have good work/life balance say they see people around them who have a good work/life balance, only **55%** of those who do not have good work/life balance see people around them who do.

Organisations need to create an environment where staff can achieve a good work/life balance. For this to become engrained in the culture, senior members of staff need to set an example.



“Employers need to prioritise their employees’ work-life balance, time-out and health”.

Courier (2021)

“Organisational culture is experienced more than articulated”.

Courier (2021)

“What do you think organisations should be doing to be better places to work?”

Tasked based rather than time-based work:

“I would love to see a shift away from logging hours worked and towards focusing on tasks done. There are lulls and peaks in a lot of office work, especially my field and where there is nothing to be done, it would be great to just be able to leave instead of twiddling thumbs. Equally, it could motivate people to work harder if they could leave when X task is done as opposed to at 5pm”.

Non-binary, 18-34, Higher Education, UK

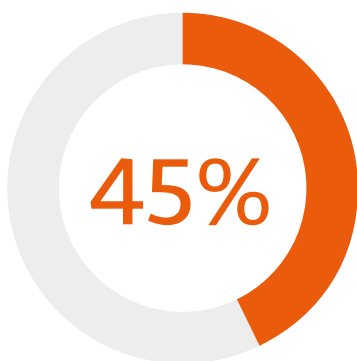
“Destroy the culture of presenteeism”.

Female, 18-34,
Accountancy/Banking/
Finance industry, UK



“It's important there isn't an expectation for people to respond to an email as soon as it is sent, to prevent an 'on call' feeling. This needs to be led from the top down, if bosses send emails at 11pm, others follow suit”.

Suzy Glaskie, Functional Medicine Health Coach, Peppermint Wellness



...say the flexibility of their working hours is 'low' or 'so-so'

Courier Magazine's 2021 'Work Smarter' issue talks about the benefits of asynchronous communication, where employees have space to work, choosing when to connect to others. There is not a culture of needing to reply instantly to communications, instead they are able to concentrate on their work, be productive and take time to give considered responses to the communications they receive. Muting email and slack notifications outside of office hours is another policy some companies implement.

Offer flexibility:

"I think flexibility is important. Allowing workers to work from home as well as in the office can help with mental well-being".

Male 18-34, Media/Digital industry, UK

"Have more flexibility with working hours and remote work".

Male, 18-34, Accountancy/ Banking/Finance industry, North America

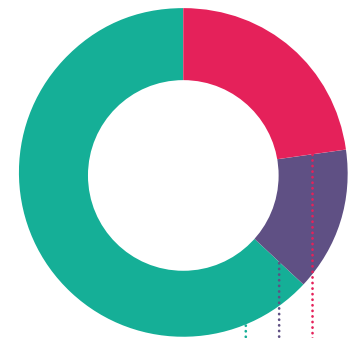
"I think organisations should be offering flexible working to all employees. I think the last year has shown this is possible and cost effective. Some thought should be given to a 4 day week as well."

Female, 18-34, Accountancy/Banking/ Finance industry, UK

"Providing those with more flexibility to be responsible for themselves and their work. I sometimes have all my work done for the day by 12pm, but other days I work until 7pm, I think having the opportunity to not commit to exact working hours would be preferred as I could be so much more productive and have a better work-life balance".

Female, 18-34, Public services/Administration, UK

Would you rather work...



At home

23%

In an office/ central location

14%

Combination of both

63%

Flexibility is hugely important to workers and implementing it in the workplace will reduce stress levels and improve happiness and productivity.

Making it easier for employees to work around life:

"Allowing flexible working so that people can work around their families. It's quite stressful having kids and trying to work".

Female, 18-34, UK

"They should be more understanding of the individual needs and circumstances of their employees".

Female, 18-34, Retail industry, UK

"I think flexible working is important, many people have children or other caring responsibilities and a regular 9-5 in an office is too restrictive".

Female, 18-34, Computing/ IT industry, UK

“Please give the name of any organisations you can think of who are already doing well in this area”

“Hoxby because it’s a B Corp, it’s a community and has the mission to change the world of work to fit around life”.

Female, 35-54, Marketing/
Advertising/PR industry,
Europe

“Give employees more freedom as to how they want to work (e.g. Google)”.

Female, 18-34, UK

“Offer flexible working as standard. Microsoft are already doing this well”.

Female, 35-54, Computing/
IT industry, UK

CASE STUDY



“We spend so many hours at work we forget to live. I gave everyone time to do hobbies, and the freedom and space to be with their children.”

Nicola Millington, Founder, FP
Comms

Nicola Millington, Founder of FP Comms, says that as a result of her and her employees working a 28 hour week they have space to think, productivity has increased, clients are happier, staff retention is high, they have a high referral rate and a waiting list of clients. They work when works for them and block out time in their diaries for their personal life. They also schedule meetings 3 days in advance so that there are no last minute surprises and they do not have meetings on Fridays, instead they enjoy focusing on checking in with and investing time in their relationships with clients and journalists.

CASE STUDY University of Strathclyde

The University of Strathclyde won an award for the best COVID-19 response from work-life balance charity Working Families.

Policies include: Friday rest and recuperation days where staff did not need to be available for work, meeting-free Fridays, flexible working options, career breaks and extended annual leave.

“As we move out of the pandemic into the ‘new normal’, we are determined to use what we’ve learned to benefit more of the UK’s 13 million working parents. When employees have more control over their time, we see improved engagement and retention, as well as better organisational performance”.

Jane van Zyl, Chief Executive of Working Families

“I often used the rest days to get out walking when it was a bit quieter than at weekends and meet free Fridays meant less screen time and prioritising my own personal development”.

Laura Reaney, Forensic Scientist & Teaching Associate, University of Strathclyde

CASE STUDY 4 day working week movement

Working a 4-day week, while receiving the same remuneration as previously for 5 days, has been shown to raise workplace engagement and productivity.

A better work-life balance, with more time to spend on themselves, reduces stress levels and burnout and improves peoples’ relationship with work. There is less pressure to squeeze

the rest of life around 5 days spent at work and people work more efficiently.

The movement is gaining in momentum as benefits are being realised. For example, those with care responsibilities are more likely to be able to work, and there are environmental benefits to people not commuting into work so often.

“It’s possible to measure productivity in terms of outputs”.

Andrew Barnes, Founder, 4 Day Week Movement

People, relationships and community

86%

say it is important to them that they have good working relationships with colleagues

77%

say a community feel among colleagues is important to them when it comes to working for or with an organisation

22%

do not have good relationships with people they work with

Those who have good relationships with people they work with are more motivated, productive and focused at work.

	Have good relationships		Do not have good relationships	
Motivation		38%	21%	
Productivity		58%	38%	
Focus		48%	29%	

Sara Maude says organisational transformation needs to start from inside each individual person. People can be equipped with the knowledge they need to understand themselves better, to communicate effectively and to build strong relationships; leading to increased productivity.

This is also the conclusion of research by Opinionium which shows that of those HR decision makers that reported an increase in productivity during the pandemic, 67% said that people strategy is a priority at their business. Only 7% of those that said people strategy was not a priority reported an increase in productivity.

Sara says that left unchecked, those who are struggling internally can put pressure on the resources of the team and productivity, and more areas will fail.

“You can give people, and leaders in particular, the tools to understand themselves and the people they are leading... to drive behavioural change by understanding the brain, enabling them to transform how they lead, how they work, and how they live”.

Maureen Chiana, Neuroleadership & Resilience Consultant, The Mindsight Academy

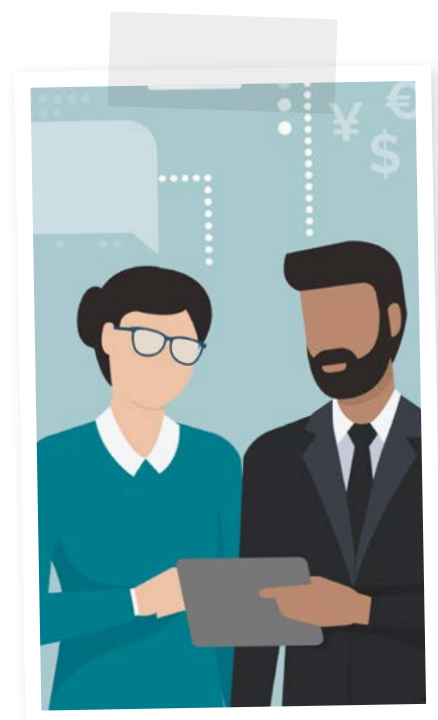
Neuroleadership & Resilience Consultant Maureen Chiana and Sara Maude both advocate equipping employees, managers and leaders with knowledge they need for self-improvement and for developing better and more efficient relationships. Investing in personal growth helps people to understand others and to communicate more effectively.

“One of the biggest drivers of stress is the manager you are reporting to”.

Gallup (2021)

“Our research shows the role of a manager is vital”.

Mona Balasubramanian, Gallup



“What do you think organisations should be doing to be better places to work?”

Better communication between employees and employer:

“Managers listening to staff”.

Female, 18-34, Hospitality/
Events industry, UK

“Regular one on one meetings”.

Non-binary, 18-34, Creative/
Arts/Design Industry, UK

“I think they should be listening to their workers needs more”.

Male, 18-34, Accountancy/
Banking/Finance industry,
North America

“In organisations people are chasing results and forgetting they are dealing with people. When you flip this you find people are able to work better, they are more calm when they are working, and when they are more calm, they can solve problems easier and they can make better decisions – you get the best out of them”.

Maureen Chiana, Neuroleadership & Resilience Consultant,
The Mindsight Academy

Maureen sees a lot of leaders, managers and organisations who really need to understand how to lead with emotional intelligence, by focussing on the people and running an organisation that is more human. Training managers in how to do this is key.

“Stress is the survival response, and it’s our ability to respond to the situation based on our thinking and mindset that makes the fundamental difference”.

Sara Maude, Managing Director, The Mind Solution

Mona Balasubramanian of Gallup, who is an expert in improving workplace culture talks about how employee satisfaction is about addressing basic human needs, and again, line managers play a key role in this. She also says improving self-awareness is key to creating leaders that embody 4 traits needed by employees - trust, compassion, stability, and hope. Trust is garnered through being kept informed about what is going on, compassion by wellbeing being cared for, stability through being well prepared to do their job, and hope through leadership communicating a clear plan of action.

“What do you think organisations should be doing to be better places to work?”

Showing gratitude and caring:

“Focus on people before profit”.

Male 18-34, Creative/Arts/Design Industry, UK

“Caring more for their staff. It's important to make your colleagues and employees feel wanted and recognised”.

Female, 18-34, Hospitality/Events industry, UK

“Making the needs of their staff a priority, showing gratitude”.

Female, 18-34, Arts/Design Industry, UK

“Being asked if I'm OK and taking action if I'm not”.

Female, 35-54, Healthcare industry, UK



“Human beings want to be appreciated, we want to be heard”.

Maureen Chiana, Neuroleadership & Resilience Consultant, The Mindsight Academy

The research clearly demonstrates people want to be heard, and to feel cared about and supported.

Promoting a sense of community/ building relationships among employees:

"Making an effort to create healthy relationships within the workplace".

Female, 18-34, Arts/Design Industry, UK

"Ensuring that there is good staff morale. I also think team building is so important".

Male, 18-34, Teacher/ Training/Education industry, UK

"Promoting a more family feel in the working environment - not having managers who feel like they are above and worth more than colleagues".

Male 18-34, Property/ Construction industry, UK

"Keeping it friendly and fun whilst still being professional".

Male, 18-34, Hospitality/ Events industry, UK

"More social activities among colleagues".

Male, 18-34, UK

Creating opportunities to bring people together and for them to build relationships and a community who are working together to achieve a common goal are key.

Put employees at the forefront of strategy:

"Have transparent, people orientated values and hold themselves accountable against them".

Female, 35-54, Science/ Pharmaceuticals industry, UK

"Involve the staff in their decision making and ask their opinions".

Female, 18-34, Accountancy/Finance/ Banking industry, UK

"When we are creating a task or a goal and everyone feels included, then they have ownership. Asking people their views is very powerful, when you do that people will go out of their way to give you more than you have asked from them".

Maureen Chiana, Neuroleadership & Resilience Consultant, The Mindsight Academy

"Organisations such as Google and Innocent famously offer more casual working environments and flexible hours, meaning that if someone's mental health takes a drop they have a loving and strong work environment around them to help build themselves back up".

Male, 18-34, Computing/IT industry, UK

It is important for collaborative goal setting within organisations. By asking everyone to contribute to strategy setting, they are onboarded and invested in working together to achieve success.

CASE STUDY


COOPER PARRY


“We listen to our people, we put them first, and then we let the magic happen. It’s as simple as that”.

Cooper Parry

Accountancy firm Cooper Parry pride themselves on their fresh, forward-thinking and people-focused attitude to work. They put their employees front and centre, prioritising providing

opportunities to learn and grow fantastic, letting them work when they want to work, enforcing boundaries around emails, and creating award winning work-spaces. Every week they send out a survey to find out how everyone is so that any issues can be solved as soon as possible. Every six months they also do the Gallup Q12 Engagement Survey, and they also do the annual Best Companies survey which helps them measure engagement

against the whole of the UK. As a result they attract talented people to work for them who are happy and engaged in their work.

“Our Learning & Development programme offers a huge range of ways to get involved, open your eyes to bright, new ideas and become a better version of yourself.”

CASE STUDY



“We want to show the world that you can build a successful business that cares about more than just profit. That means looking after people and the planet as much as we look after our bottom line, and leaving things better than we find them”.

A role in their office is an “Office and Culture Specialist” who is “responsible for creating a healthy and inspirational environment, helping people work better and go home happier”. They hold regular company get-togethers, including a weekend away in the summer and a party at Christmas. And they offer their staff a range of perks that aim to ease their employees’ work stresses – such as flexible working hours, free breakfast, free on-site gym, a yoga club and subsidised massages. They also have mental

health resources available to all staff, including a confidential employee assistance program which allows anyone who works at Innocent to talk to someone 24 hours a day.

There is even an opportunity for 3 staff members every 3 months to win an Innocent Scholarship worth £1,000 to do something they have always dreamed of. They run volunteering days too, and they give 3 people a year an extra week’s holiday to work with one of their not-for-profit foundation projects.

Diversity and inclusion

64%

say working with people from diverse backgrounds is important to them when it comes to working for or with an organisation

33%

do not agree that equal opportunities exist in their field of work

34%

do not agree that there are people from diverse backgrounds in their field of work

Diversity and a culture of inclusion, where everyone feels able to be themselves in the workplace, are hugely important. Among those whose workplace is diverse motivation, productivity and focus are higher.

	Workplace is diverse	Workplace isn't diverse
Motivation	39%	28%
Productivity	59%	50%
Focus	48%	38%



“We are less when we don't include everyone”.

Stuart Milk

Research by Viacom showed that 4 in 5 young people believe their generation will be less willing to put up with injustice and inequality than previous generations.

“What do you think organisations should be doing to be better places to work?”

Create diverse working environments:

“I think you need a diverse management pool, different ages, backgrounds, sexes, which actually represent a cross section of society, because a company is a concentrated microcosm of society, and can make youngsters change their views and ideas”.

Gay female, 35-54,
Creative/Arts/Design
industry, UK

“Creating diverse working environments where everybody can feel together working towards their goals”.

Male 18-34, Computing/IT
industry, UK

“Hire more people from different backgrounds to promote diversity”.

Gay male, 18-34, Hospitality
industry, UK

“Inclusion can be measured by a sense of belonging, connection and community at work... An organization that has mastered inclusion is one where people feel encouraged to bring their “whole selves” to work. Between voicing diverse points of view and finding a sense of connection to others, this is what makes inclusion real”.

Forbes

“Inclusive workplaces are six times more likely to be innovative and twice as likely to meet or surpass financial goals”.

Deloitte (2018)

Diversity and Inclusion consultant Patricia Gestoso talks about the value of diverse minds in the workplace, their ideas and innovations prevent products and services super serving some groups and failing to serve others.

She says diversity and inclusion needs to be considered in sales, marketing, product development, customer service, and supply chain, “to increase market share, reduce attrition, and become more sustainable”. For this to be successful, a culture of diversity and inclusion should be established. This determines the behaviours of your employees, who in turn dictate your product, customer service, and user experience.

Diversity among your executive team and board is key, as is exploring the opportunities to diversifying your potential target user to uncover untapped market needs or an unfair advantage of your offering.

“If your website is not accessible, you are excluding a significant percentage of the global population, which not only threatens disabled people’s rights to the same opportunities as abled people, but also has consequences for your business”.

Georgia James, Siteimprove

Patricia also warns that whilst incredibly worthwhile, hard work needs to be put into managing diverse teams to get the most out of them.

“[Diverse teams] bring unparalleled value to the business but, if you want to really get the most out of them, you need to purposely design strategies, initiatives, processes, and ceremonies that proactively address the friction that comes with having different skills, experiences, and viewpoints”.

Patricia Gestoso, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant

“As business leader, you’re setting the work culture from the top... From the diversity and inclusion perspective, those should include adopting processes that mitigate bias in hiring and promotion, enforcing inclusive behaviours, monitoring the distribution of stretch projects among staff, a robust harassment and misbehaviour policy, and tracking and reducing pay gaps across different demographics”.

Patricia Gestoso, Diversity and Inclusion Consultant

“A commitment to product inclusion can’t just live within one team. It needs to be embedded and prioritized across the company. In 2019, we trained leaders across product areas at Google on our approach to product inclusion, to ensure they’re considering a diverse population during each step of product development, from ideation to launch”.

Annie Jean-Baptiste, Head of Product Inclusion, Google

“What do you think organisations should be doing to be better places to work?”

Promote equality:

“Providing equal opportunities for all employees regardless of race/ gender identity/sexuality etc”.

Non-binary, 18-34, Retail industry, UK

“Equal opportunities/training schemes for people from disadvantaged backgrounds (not a reliance on Oxbridge candidates for jobs)”.

Female, 35-54, Business/ Consultancy/Management industry, UK

“They should be helping minorities have the same opportunities at work”.

Female, 18-34, Business/ Consultancy/Management industry, North America

“Make sure there is no bias or unfairness in the workplace”.

Bisexual Female, 18-34, Creative/Arts/Design industry, UK

An inclusive culture:

“Stronger attitude of tolerance and respect for its employees”.

Bisexual male, 18-34, Retail industry, UK

“People feel included when they are treated “equitably and with respect”.

Deloitte

“Please give the name of any organisations you can think of who are already doing well in this area”

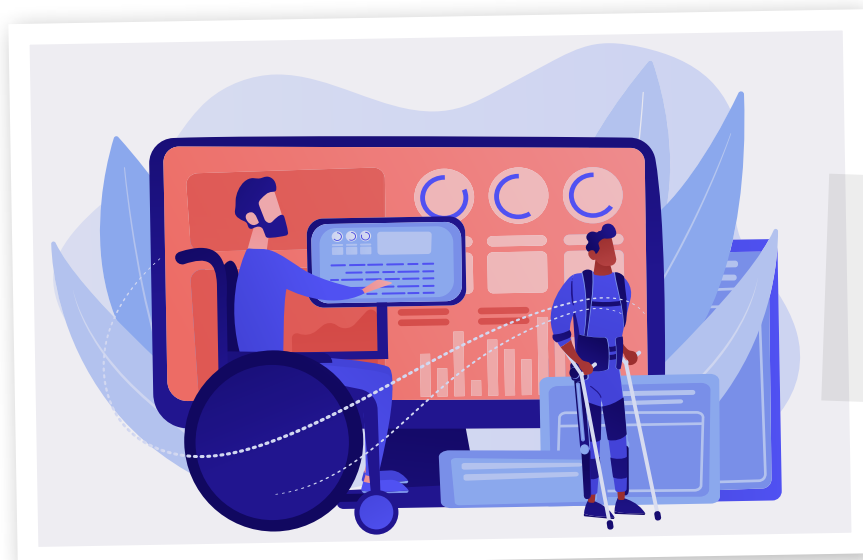
“I think Sky UK has a good talent acquisition program to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds”.

Male 18-34, Retail industry, UK

CASE STUDY [Tech Inclusion Partnership](#)

The Tech Inclusion Partnership is made up of a team of diversity and inclusion thought leaders from large UK employers in the digital space (including Dassault Systèmes, Accenture, IBM, Microsoft, and Siemens).

It's aim is to share best practises and challenges, and explore how collaboration between partner organisations can accelerate equity, diversity and inclusion in the tech industry.



Meaningful work

83% say it is important to them to have the opportunity to do meaningful work



35% do not feel they do meaningful work



40% say sustainability is prioritised in their line of work

44% say making improvements to society is prioritised in their line of work

	Think their work is meaningful	Think their work isn't meaningful
Motivation	44%	16%
Productivity	63%	41%
Focus	52%	29%

The huge gap between workers desire to do meaningful work and the extent to which they currently feel the work they do is meaningful, can be lessened through communicating organisational goals that show commitment to contributing to society and being sustainable.

“What do you think organisations should be doing to be better places to work?”

Have a positive impact on society and the environment:

“Add positive society and environmental impactful programs to their work”.

Female, 18-34, Marketing/
Advertising/PR industry, UK

“Actively contributing to the betterment of society and the environment”.

Male 35-54, Accountancy/
Banking/Finance industry,
North America

“Conduct effective CSR which can provide eternal benefit to the needy society and environment”.

Male, 18-34, Accountancy/
Banking/Finance industry,
UK

Give staff opportunities to do fulfilling and impactful work:

“Making sure employees can be creative and fulfilled with their work”.

Male 18-34, Marketing/
Advertising/PR industry, UK

“More fulfilling work”.

Male 35-54, Public services/
Administration, UK

NESI Forum recommend we “rethink jobs to express our full human potential and purpose at work”, giving individuals the power to make an impact. Employees can be asked what is important to them, and given opportunities to work towards something they believe in and that makes a difference. In this way their potential can be maximised – they will be motivated, focused and productive in their work, furthering organisation success.

CASE STUDY



"We always think about how even the smallest things can make a positive difference to the world. We care - it's what we're known for. And it's why we're a great place to build a career with purpose".

Consumer goods company Unilever, advocate an holistic approach to wellbeing to "support employees to be the

best they can be". Their aim is for each of their employees to be in a sustainable state of feeling good and functioning well as a 'whole-human'.

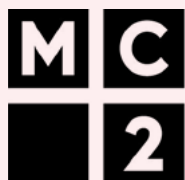
"Promoting the mental well-being of our employees is vital... by listening and responding to the emotional needs of our employees, we give people a better chance of fulfilling their potential."

They are "committed to promoting mental health within [their] business, and beyond". They are founding partners of Heads Together in the UK, an initiative that combines a campaign to tackle stigma and change the conversation on mental health, with fundraising for a series of innovative mental health services.

They have a global Well-Being Steering Committee, who have created a four-pillar Well-Being Framework to address the physical, mental, emotional and purposeful well-being of employees. They feel strongly that a sense of purpose is essential in order for employees to be happy at work, so each employee is given the opportunity to reflect on what they want from their career.

"When you work at Unilever you can bring your own purpose to life through the work that you do... You will work with brilliant people who will help you contribute to the world and become a better you".

CASE STUDY



Manchester-based communications agency MC2 is fully owned by its employees. Since every employee is a partner in the business, they all have an equal interest in its future.

This is far more motivating for employees that working solely to keep shareholders happy. A partnership model means shared aims common future goals and opportunities to make an impact.

Contributing towards society

73% say it is important to them to have the opportunity to work for an organisation that contributes towards bettering society



44% do not think making improvements to society is prioritised in their line of work



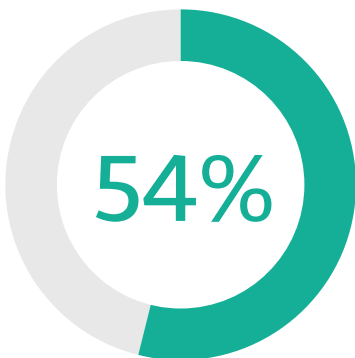
Those who think making improvements to society are prioritised in their line of work are more motivated, productive and focused.

	Improvements to society prioritised	Improvements to society not prioritised
Motivation	48%	25%
Productivity	64%	50%
Focus	55%	37%



“What is your company’s core reason for being, and where can you have a unique, positive impact on society? Now more than ever, you need good answers to these questions.”

McKinsey & Company (2020)



...of young people are actively involved in social movements and campaigning for change (Viacom).

According to research conducted for the Stanford Social Innovation Review, consumers are becoming increasingly conscious and they expect companies to lead with purpose, by embedding social and environmental impact into their reason for being. There is a need for organisations to be clear on what they stand for, and why. A clear purpose which explains why an organisation is essential can be communicated via their mission statement.

This makes sense when we look at the bigger picture too. Economist Kate Raworth talks about the need to invest in the human, natural and social wealth that sustains us. Everyone contributes towards society – making improvements to society and our planet for the future. This includes better care and protection of the natural environment, reverence for animals, pursuit of human justice and the movement towards a humanity that is more aware.

Research by Viacom shows 54% of young people are actively involved in social movements and campaigning for change. They are optimistic about their potential to create change and this plays out with their interactions with businesses, they will seek out products and services offered by those whose values match theirs.

What do you think organisations should be doing to have a better impact on society?

Donating time, money and resources to community initiatives:

"Give back to society and help them in the form of employment, donations and events".

Male 18-34, Engineering/
Manufacturing industry,
North America

"Donating more of their time or finances to their immediate communities".

Female, 18-34, Charity/
Voluntary industry, UK

"Looking at the local area they are located in and seeing if there was any way they could help, even if it is allowing an employee or two to go out to an elderly persons garden or similar".

Male, 35-54, Retail industry,
UK

CASE STUDY [SEO Travel](#)

Travel digital marketing agency, SEO Travel donate 100% of their profits to charity. Director Tom McLoughlin said the pandemic shone a light on the hard work the team was putting in and raised the question more than ever of 'why?'. He landed on the idea to give all of the profit away and since education was important to them they decided to donate it to education charities.

He admits they did also think the change could benefit them from a business perspective, "stability became the chief motivator, not financial gain, and we believe this model will allow us to grow, offer a better service for clients and create a more

stable and enjoyable place for us to work, not just provide support for the fantastic charities we partner with".

They have created a set up that all stand to gain from and promoting the initiative has helped them to win new clients, given a boost to their team and enables them to attract top new talent to work for them.

"Clients understand our story and want to work with us more than an agency whose only motivation is more money in the pockets of its owners".

"We're all working towards a shared goal and we know there

is a cause bigger than ourselves that will benefit from doing great work and growing the business".

"Genuine social and environmental responsibility is more important than ever for candidates when searching for where to work, and I'm confident it will help us find people that are a great fit for the team as it's clear what our values are, and therefore makes alignment much easier throughout the recruitment process".

Sustainability

68% say an organisation that is sustainable is important to them when it comes to working for or with an organisation



60% do not think sustainability is prioritised in their line of work



Motivation, productivity and focus are higher among those who consider sustainability to be prioritised in their line of work.

	Think it is prioritised	Do not think it is prioritised
Motivation	48%	27%
Productivity	67%	49%
Focus	54%	40%

A YouGov survey found that almost 6 in 10 grocery shoppers would pay more for environmentally friendly products. This increases to almost 7 in 10 among Gen Z. Research by Kin&Co shows that a similar percentage of people think that the responsibility of climate change sits with CEOs.

The words 'eco', 'sustainable' and 'ethical' are synonymous with 'right' and 'correct' and will drive organisation success as people increasingly seek out ethical products, services and employers. There is an increasing appetite to purchase products that are responsibly sourced. And businesses will increasingly want to work with other like-minded businesses; for example, clothing brand Patagonia won't work with clients who are not aligned with their ethics.



“There’s a growing awareness of the impact that our personal choices at the shops has on the environment, it’s no coincidence that we’ve seen such sharp increases in sales of ethical products and services”.

Rob Harrison, Ethical Consumer

“Business leaders are increasingly realizing the power of sustainable business strategies in not only addressing the world’s most pressing challenges but driving their firms’ success”.

Harvard Business School Online

What do you think organisations should be doing to have a better impact on the environment?

Putting sustainability first:

A new type of business called B-Corporations are legally required to consider their impact on all stakeholders including employees, community, and the environment; their mission is to become a community of leaders who drive a global movement of people using business as a force for good. B-corps understanding of business performances supports a concept known as 'the triple bottom line', whereby the performance of an organisation is measured in terms of positive impact on society and the environment, rather than purely on financial performance (the standard bottom line).

"I think they should understand their impacts and ways to improve them".

Male 18-34, Accountancy/
Banking/Finance industry,
North America

"Considering the environment in every decision they make. Moving to green options for energy usage and trying to be a leader in their field".

Female, 18-34, Engineering/
Manufacturing industry, UK

"Putting sustainability over a larger profit and investing in new initiatives which help the environment even though it may require more effort".

Female, 18-34, Public
Services/Administration, UK

Reducing waste:

"Recycling and reducing use of single use plastic".

Female, 18-34, Teacher/
Training/Education, North
America

"More sustainable packaging and products".

Female, 18-34, Retail
industry, UK

"At the bare minimum have recycling programmes in place, use reusable tools and materials and be held accountable for their poor actions against the environment".

Female, 18-34, UK

Using cleaner energy/ using less energy:

"Cut emissions in production".

Male, 35-54, UK

"Being cleaner with their energy and doing little things to help like turning off lights and PCs when the office is closed".

Female, 18-34, Business/ Consultancy/Management industry, UK

"Aim to be carbon neutral. Encourage use of public transport, or perhaps electric company cars".

Male 18-34, Hospitality/ Events industry, UK



Powerful top-down initiatives, such as UK Plastics Pact (which brings together businesses, UK governments and NGOs to tackle plastic waste and increase recycling) means organisations will feel the pressure to innovate in the area of sustainability and waste. Also, visibility of issues around sustainability will continue to increase, and people will increasingly expect alternatives and look down upon less environmentally friendly options.

The likes of Burberry, TK Maxx and H&M are supporting a circular economy, in which products are reused. Charitable organisations such as The Ellen McArthur Foundation are emerging to work with cities and businesses to promote this kind of economy, where waste and pollution are limited, products and materials are kept in use and what has been lost through manufacturing is put back.

The Climate Pledge, a cross-sector community of organisations, individuals, and partners, working together to solve the challenges of the climate crisis, calls on signatories to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2040. Organisations who have signed the pledge can communicate this, like a badge of honour.

Setting goals:

“Operate as sustainably as possible, support environmental programmes as part of their business KPIs (triple bottom line) and keep contributing to the conversation via press”.

Female, 35-54, Marketing/
Advertising/PR industry,
Europe

*“Articulating sustainability/
betterment goals”.*

Female, 18-34, Retail
industry, UK

*“Have initiatives and goals
that would make them more
sustainable”.*

Male 18-34, Engineering/
Manufacturing industry,
North America

CASE STUDY

BURBERRY

“As a purposeful, values-driven brand, we are committed to being a force for good in the world”.

Luxury fashion brand Burberry communicate their aims to reduce their environmental footprint and meaningfully support their global communities, while setting market leading standards and pioneering innovative solutions to create real system change.

They have a team of more than 30 in-house sustainability experts who work on their environmental and social programmes, including setting ambitious targets.

They are on track to achieve 100% renewable electricity, carbon neutrality across their energy usage, and they measure the impact each of their collections has on the environment and people – this includes sustainability of materials and packaging, respecting and safeguarding the rights of everyone in their supply chain, and restore and repair services.

“We recognise that the long-term success of our business depends on investing in the environmental sustainability of our operations, the resilience of our supply chains and our management of climate change impacts. Our future depends on it.”

Methodology & references

1,042 respondents completed a 5 minute online survey on the future of work between 23rd June and 20th July 2021. This includes 1,005 from the UK and a further 37 from elsewhere around the globe. All %s reported are statistically significance tested at a 99% confidence level.

Interviews with the following experts were carried out from June to August 2021:

- » Sara Maude, Managing Director, The Mind Solution
- » Maureen Chiana, Neuroleadership & Resilience Consultant, The Mindsight Academy
- » Suzy Glaskie, Functional Medicine Health Coach, Peppermint Wellness
- » Kate Brown, Founder, Calm at Work
- » Nicola Millington, Founder, FP Comms
- » Laura Reaney, Forensic Scientist & Teaching Associate, University of Strathclyde
- » Tom McLoughlin, Director, SEO Travel

While thorough, the research and expertise shared in this whitepaper is not exhaustive. References/ further reading:

General

- » "And Now For the Good News", Ruby Wax, 2020
- » "How to thrive in the next economy", John Thackara, 2015
- » [Over 40% of workers are considering quitting their jobs - Big Think](#)
- » [Theory behind ECG – Economy for the common good \(ecogood.org\)](#)
- » [NESI-FORUM-MAGAZINE-v11-media.pdf](#)
- » [America's Plastic Hour Is Upon Us | American Academy of Arts and Sciences \(amacad.org\)](#)
- » Gallup State of the Global Workplace 2021 Report

Health & well-being

- » [The power of wellbeing | How investing in staff delivers dividends \(investorsinpeople.com\)](#)
- » [Reaping the benefits of a focus on wellbeing | Financial Times \(ft.com\)](#)
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- » <https://www.stylist.co.uk/life/careers/best-uk-companies-supporting-staff-mental-health-awareness-innocent-smoothies/207271>

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- » ["Friday is the New Saturday: How a Four-Day Working Week Will Save the Economy", Pedro Gomes, 2021](#)
- » [Whitepaper 2019 — 4 Day Week Global – The Future of Work](#)
- » [Kickstarter Is Moving to a 4-Day Workweek - Inc. — 4 Day Week Global – The Future of Work](#)
- » https://www.forbes.com/sites/charlestowersclark/2021/06/24/will-the-four-day-week-have-its-day-post-pandemic/?fbclid=IwAR2PNtv1NhAzMv7CwvYiqw2PyT_pz_4o6z6-nbZtutH7uPEUC-Ok0JhyYqM&sh=1a3cc21970d5

- » https://qz.com/work/2023522/the-four-day-workweek-is-finally-catching-on/?fbclid=IwAR3Kq72NA9Qq2SYUtW8S46PhYsf2qP_xNUkyErFPmI0IJjEXjtKscGhiRo
- » [Strathclyde wins national award for Best COVID-19 response | University of Strathclyde](#)
- » <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/covid-four-day-working-week-tsar-peter-cheese-wfh-b942145.html>

People, relationships & community

- » [The Value of Belonging at Work \(hbr.org\)](#)
- » <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/257501/charge-work-stress-starting-managers.aspx>
- » https://hr.personio.de/hubfs/EN_Downloads/202104_HRStudy_UK1.pdf
- » <https://www.pwc.com/co/es/publicaciones/assets/millennials-at-work.pdf>

Diversity and inclusion

- » [How are you losing business today by skipping diversity and inclusion in business operations and how to fix it | Patricia Gestoso](#)
- » <https://shecancode.io/blog/unlocking-change-with-ethical-and-inclusive-design>
- » <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2019/02/04/what-an-inclusive-workplace-actually-looks-like-and-seven-ways-to-achieve-it/?sh=aa97045316b2>
- » https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/4209_Diversity-and-inclusion-revolution/DI_Diversity-and-inclusion-revolution.pdf
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- » [Corporate purpose: Shifting from why to how | McKinsey](#)
- » https://ssir.org/articles/entry/leading_with_purpose_the_new_business_norm#
- » <https://insights.viacomcbs.com/post/young-people-around-the-world-stand-up-for-equality/>

Contributing to society

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- » Travel SEO Services, SEO for Travel Websites & Travel Companies | SE

Please **visit my website** to join my mailing list and receive emails (from time to time) about my latest research.

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Sustainability

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- » <https://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/>
- » <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/the-uk-plastics-pact>
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