

The image features a woman and a man in blue work uniforms. The woman is holding a white tablet, and the man is pointing at the screen. They are standing in front of a blurred background of industrial machinery, including orange overhead cranes and a control panel with various buttons and switches. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

workforce  
SOFTWARE

THIRD ANNUAL

# Global Employee Experience Study

The Urgent Call to Action and  
Roadmap for Large Employers



# Table of Contents

3	Executive Summary
4	Hearing from Dissatisfied Workers
5	The Best Insights to Improve Retention May Come from the Most Dissatisfied
6	Employees Who Don't Have Scheduling Flexibility Are More Likely to Leave
7	Stagnant Career Advancement Lowers Employee Advocacy
8	Unengaged Employees Don't Feel Valued by Their Employer
9	The Price of Failing to Act Can Be Far-Reaching
10	Global Employee Experience Survey Results
11	Job Training
12	Scheduling
13	Employee Recognition
14	Communications
15	Employee Feedback
16	Urgent Call to Action for Employers to Improve
17	The Growing Importance of Experience in the Eyes of Employees
18	Recommendations for Improving Employee Experience
19	Embrace Mobile Technology to Manage a Digitally Savvy Workforce
20	Give Employees Control Over Their Schedules
21	Ask Employees for Feedback and Show Them They've Been Heard
22	Conclusion
23	The Cost of Waiting to Act Is Greater Than You Think
24	About WorkForce Software & Survey Approach
25	Methodology



# Executive Summary

Market leaders continuously seek innovations to create competitive advantage, but maintaining this edge is difficult without an engaged workforce. While talent acquisition remains a priority for many, organizations have renewed their focus on retention to optimize labor investments and realize a return on transformation initiatives.

The Third Annual Global Employee Experience Study provides an analysis of employee experience perceptions resulting from surveying employees and managers, including a focus on hourly shift workers. Compared to the 2021 and 2022 studies, **2023 results reveal that gaps in perception on how well employers are meeting the needs of their employees are closing on many fronts.**

Given the significant number of dissatisfied employees indicated by the survey results, it's clear that **many employees are not receiving the support they want in critically important areas**, including scheduling flexibility, access to a unified training experience (through a mobile app or otherwise), and user-friendly communications tools that provide access to the information they need most to be effective in their jobs.

As organizations weigh decisions on how to best retain their workforce, **the results of failing to act are a significant number of people expressing dissatisfaction with their work experiences.**

This year's study highlights the urgent call to action for employers to invest in modern workforce management solutions integrated with operational communications to meet the demands of employees while optimizing operational performance and meeting business and financial goals.

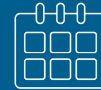
## Key Findings



Employees and employers agree more than ever on what needs improvement, but the lack of action on those improvements continues to cause strain on employees' work/life balance.



Most employees have expressed a need for consistent training and easy access to relevant information in the flow of work from their mobile devices to do their jobs effectively.



Employers recognize schedule flexibility as important but lack systems that allow for shift-swapping, adequate planning, and general adaptability to changing personal circumstances.



Employees continue to use social media and other non-official messaging platforms to manage schedules and communicate with coworkers, creating security risks and communication overload.



Examining the sentiment of dissatisfied employees highlights the necessity of action and points to important improvements in experience that could deliver real value for employees.

# Hearing from Dissatisfied Workers

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What We Can Learn from Their Sentiment to  
Improve Employee Experience



# The Best Insights to Improve Retention May Come from the Most Dissatisfied

We should not misunderstand the shrinking perception gap between managers and employees as an indication that employee experience problems are solved. While our results show real progress in how managers understand the needs of their employees, they also indicate that the underlying problems that created poor employee experience remain. The consequences of inaction can have a significant impact on business outcomes, retention, and employee well-being.

While working to improve experience in important areas, employers will need to address barriers—such as older, on-premises software and manual processes including spreadsheet-based scheduling—before they can make improvements. Digitizing these processes enables the kind of employee experience that everyone wants and can often be funded by reductions in unproductive labor costs.

While it can be challenging to know which investments will have the most impact, dissatisfied employees have made clear the experience features they want changed. Sometimes, the best ideas come from the most vocal dissenters. By examining our 2023 survey questions through the lens of these employees, we better understand the factors that cause their dissatisfaction.

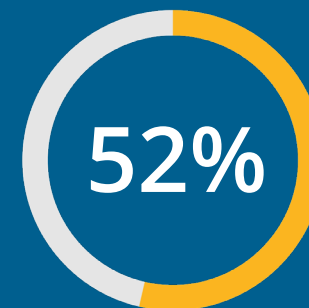
Based on our survey, unhappy employees have three common characteristics:



open to leaving their place of work in the next six months



don't feel valued by their employer



struggle to maintain work/life balance due to poor communication technology

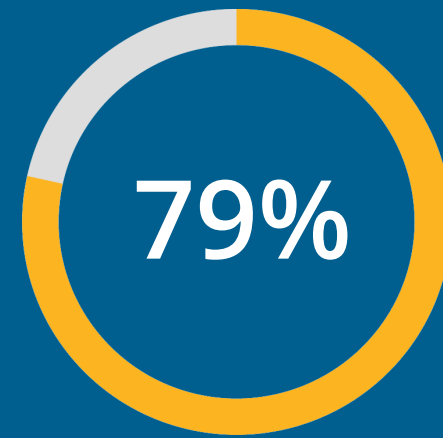
# Employees Who Don't Have Scheduling Flexibility Are More Likely to Leave

Scheduling flexibility remains a top priority, especially for deskless workers, with clear implications for job satisfaction and employee retention.

Scheduling determines how effectively labor is allocated and impacts employee sentiments about work/life balance and well-being. A significant majority of dissatisfied employees strongly desire an employer that provides scheduling flexibility, and many are willing to leave their current job to find one.

Employees favor employers willing to accommodate their personal needs. While some dissatisfied employees have scheduling software, over half still rely on outdated practices like paper timesheets and manual shift-swapping.

Many employers are not using workforce management tools to forecast labor demand or enable staff control over their own schedules. Without desired flexibility, employees struggle to balance work with life needs. Giving staff autonomy over their time can dramatically boost engagement.



**want to work for an employer offering scheduling flexibility**

**62%**

don't see their schedule more than a week in advance

**41%**

can't swap shifts with other employees

**73%**

open to leaving in the next six months



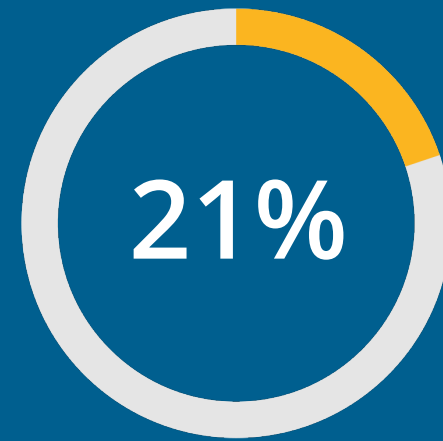
# Stagnant Career Advancement Lowers Employee Advocacy

Dissatisfied or disengaged employees who believe they will fail in their current organization are less likely to encourage others to apply at their company. For many deskless workers, including growing numbers of digital natives, success depends on the ability to advance their skills as part of an ongoing career path.

A significant majority of dissatisfied employees prefer working for an employer that provides easy access to training, preferably via mobile devices. Yet only a small fraction have this option, despite instant access to information being commonplace in their personal lives. This discrepancy exacerbates employee frustrations.

It's unsurprising then that over half of dissatisfied employees feel their employer doesn't offer adequate training. Barriers to effective upskilling can make HR digital transformation initiatives more difficult, especially if many employees believe they lack the tools to improve.

Investing in frontline staff development enhances capabilities and nurtures their intrinsic desire to contribute, innovate, and excel. Employees who feel supported through training opportunities are also more likely to recommend their employer to others.



have access to  
training digitally

53%

prefer to access  
training through a  
mobile device

35%

don't agree that  
their employer  
trains them properly

30%

would not  
recommend their  
employer

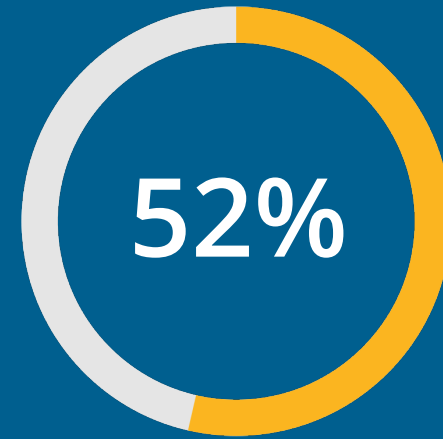
# Unengaged Employees Don't Feel Valued by Their Employer

Effective communication between managers and employees and among team members is fundamental for an engaged workforce and influences how valued employees feel by their employer. While many organizations rely on mobile communication, a significant portion of dissatisfied staff say this technology still hinders work/life balance.

Though many real-time communication options exist, they often lack consistency, security, efficiency, and record-keeping. Many employees lack the convenience of using a single app for critical work information, such as scheduling, PTO, and pay. Most interactions between teammates and managers occur across fragmented platforms such as messaging apps and social media, leaving many dissatisfied employees to navigate inconsistent engagement.

Further, a significant majority do not feel valued or recognized by their employer. This is surprising given the focus on employees in recent news and the fact that employee recognition costs nothing.

Dissatisfied employees are given little opportunity to voice frustrations, with some only being asked for feedback annually or not at all. An integrated platform provides desired features such as flexibility, on-demand information, learning, and connections to employers and each other.



**say technology used to communicate  
makes it hard to maintain a positive  
work/life balance**

**40%**

don't agree that their  
employer recognizes  
their contributions

**46%**

say work interactions occur  
on a mix of messaging or  
social platforms

**39%**

don't feel valued by  
their employer



# The Price of Failing to Act Can Be Far-Reaching

The survey results highlight the value of addressing areas of employee concern, such as scheduling flexibility, access to training, feedback mechanisms, recognition, and improved communication technology.

By taking specific action to address these needs, employers can increase satisfaction, engagement, and retention by improving the work environment. The sentiment data of dissatisfied employees ready to leave their role indicates expectations that their needs be met. Failing to address employee experience concerns can reverberate across an organization, impeding operations and business continuity.

Continuing with legacy or manual workforce management tools or methods could mean wasted resources, escalating overtime costs, and employee burnout. Outdated processes contribute to decreased employee morale and retention rates while increasing the risk of non-compliance costs. This all undermines strategic initiatives and impedes the ability to reach desired business outcomes.

The repercussions when an employee leaves can include these costs to replace them:

**\$4,425**

average cost for full-time employee



of employee's base salary

**\$10-\$500**

background check screening

These figures don't include the additional costs of the hours lost, disruption of operations due to missed work, loss of expertise, or damage to a company's reputation.

- The Cost of Hiring an Employee: Explanation and Formula, Upwork<sup>1</sup>

# Global Employee Experience Survey Results

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Perceptions of Importance Are Aligning,  
Bolstering the Need to Make Investments for Change



# Job Training



## Innovation Insight

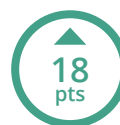
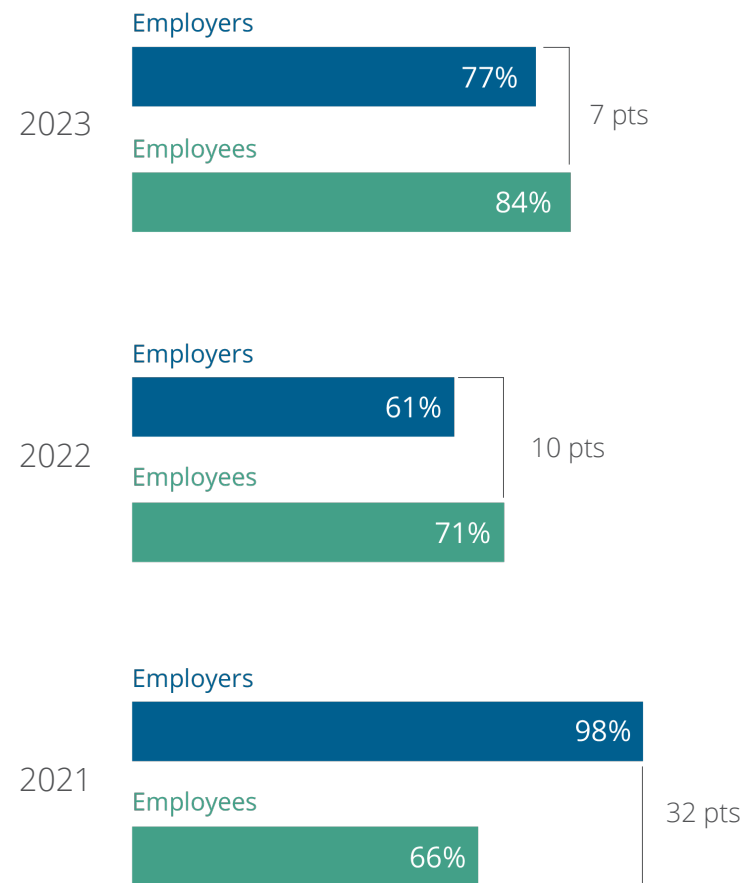
Invest in your workers to enhance their skills and nurture their intrinsic desire to contribute, innovate, and excel. Deliver micro training when and where work happens with an easy-to-use mobile app to keep their skills sharp.

Given that **most employees (84%) and employers (77%) in 2023 are aligned on the importance of easy access to information and training for effective job performance**, it's clear this is an important factor shaping workplace experience.

Year over year, mobile access is the preferred method of receiving training and information. In 2023, 55% of employees and 59% of managers expressed this preference. But **the percentage of employees with access to training on their mobile devices remains low (at 22%) and 56% receive training through analog methods**, highlighting a key opportunity for change.

Even though both sides agree on the need, organizations remain hampered in their efforts to provide the necessary technology for easy access to training and information.

*All other things being equal, I would choose to work for an employer who provided easy access to information and training for my job over one who did not.*



In 2023, employees rate the importance of easy access to job training and information 18 points higher than in 2021, underscoring the urgency for employers to offer mobile capabilities.

# Scheduling



## Innovation Insight

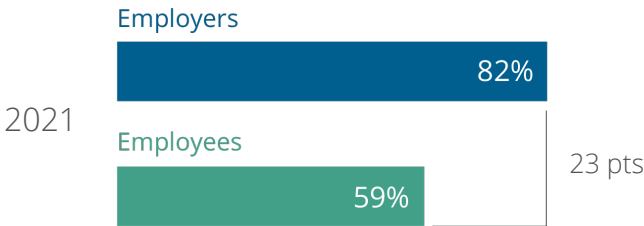
Scheduling control is one of the most important aspects of employee experience. Enable scheduling flexibility, where company requirements can be blended with employee data such as personal leave, available hours, and even skill level.

Our 2023 survey findings show that 84% of employees and 78% of employers recognize the importance of scheduling flexibility. **However, 31% and 29%, respectively, report that their companies do not offer flexible scheduling,** suggesting many organizations lack the technology or resources to support it.

While employees have observed some improvement in access to online scheduling, **a substantial portion (40%) of employees still need to contact their managers via email, SMS, or messaging platforms to obtain schedule information.** This reliance on “shadow IT,” including social media accounts and personal email, poses cybersecurity risks for organizations and does not support data control or the ability to adequately plan.

Most deskless workers place high value on their work/life balance and want to work for organizations who offer scheduling flexibility—and they’re not afraid to switch jobs to find an employer who meets their needs.

*All other things being equal, I would choose to work for an employer who offered more flexibility in scheduling over one who did not.*



The importance of flexible scheduling for employees has grown by 25 points in the last three years, from 59% to 84%, making it an urgent imperative for employers to enable.



# Employee Recognition



## Innovation Insight

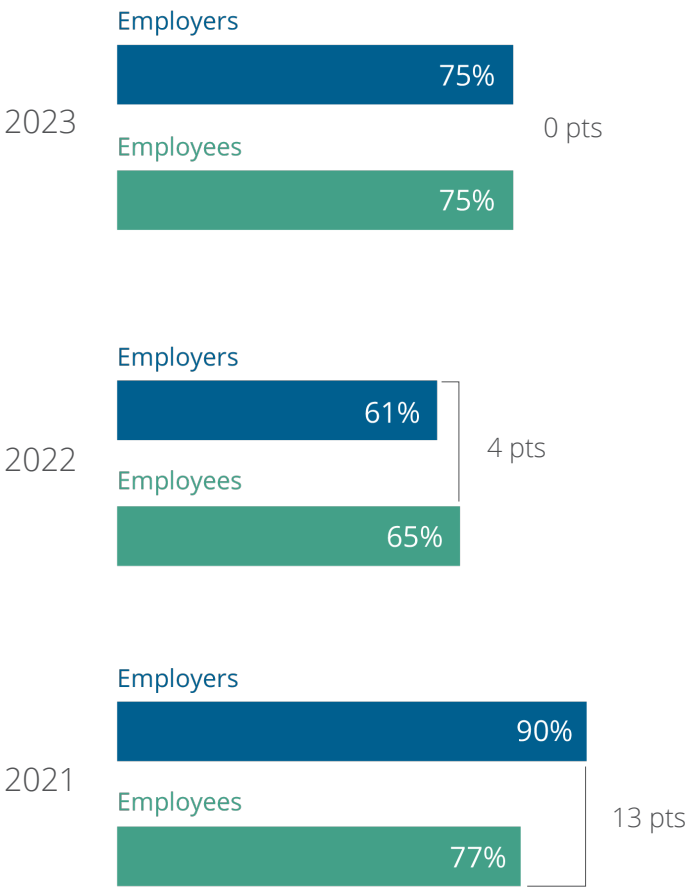
Recognizing employee achievements is a relatively low-cost action that can contribute to better engagement and optimized workflows. Establish consistent recognition opportunities to celebrate employees for their successes.

Recognition for a job well done can improve an employee's sense of value and lead to a more fulfilling work experience. It is encouraging that 2023 results show that so many employees and employers agree that employee recognition is happening in the workplace.

Our findings show that 60% of employees are somewhat/very likely to consider changing jobs in the next six months. Additionally, while 66% of employees agree or strongly agree that they feel valued by their employers, **this leaves over one third of employees (34%) who do not feel valued by the same**. Similarly, 25% report that their employers do not recognize their contributions. For employers with large employee populations, that can represent a significant number of people at risk of leaving if they don't feel appreciated.

Spotlighting and rewarding employee achievements is vital for sustaining motivated and efficient employees and minimizing the danger of fatigue. This boosts engagement, morale, and job satisfaction, making employees more likely to stay.

*My employer recognizes my contributions.*



The 2-point decrease, from 77% to 75%, in employees who feel their employer recognizes their contributions indicates the need for better strategies to recognize employee achievements.

# Communications



## Innovation Insight

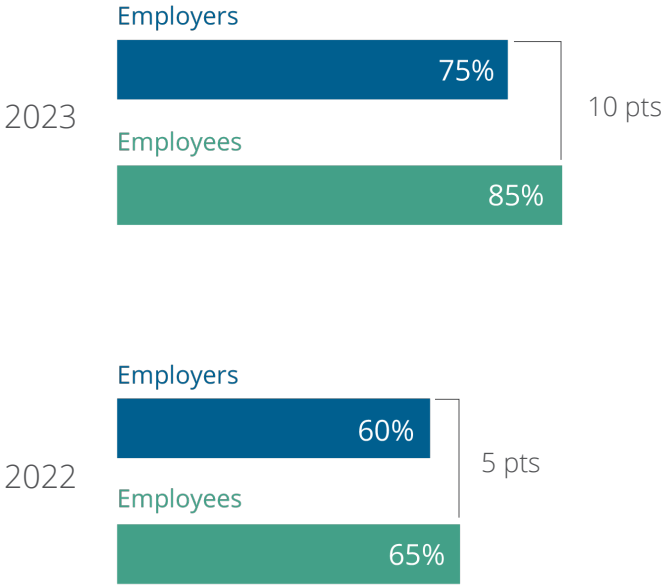
Most people want to do a good job and feel like part of the team. Two-way communication through secure, consumer-grade digital tools help teams get company updates, reach each other, collaborate, and get answers fast.

It's strong progress that 85% of employees and 75% of their employers believe communication and collaboration between them is important. Yet this year's study revealed that **46% of employee communications still occur over unsecured, non-integrated channels** such as SMS text messages, messaging apps, email, and social media—and managers are fully aware of the problem.

When employees use unsecured technology to communicate about confidential matters, transmit sensitive information or documents, or collaborate with colleagues, they expose the organization to data breaches, compliance violations, and intellectual property leaks. Establishing secure, enterprise-grade options for messaging, file sharing, and collaboration is crucial to avoid these operational threats.

Moreover, **46% of employees report that the technology used for communication hampers their ability to maintain a positive work/life balance.** Organizations who find the best way to balance security and efficiency with the employee need for real-time operational communications can improve labor optimization, improve employee retention, and adapt faster to changes than those without it.

*All other things being equal, I would choose to work for an employer who makes it easy to communicate and collaborate with other employees and my manager over one who did not.*



The significance of integrated communications for employees has grown by 20 points since 2022, from 65% to 85%, highlighting the need to balance security and real-time communication.

# Employee Feedback



## Innovation Insight

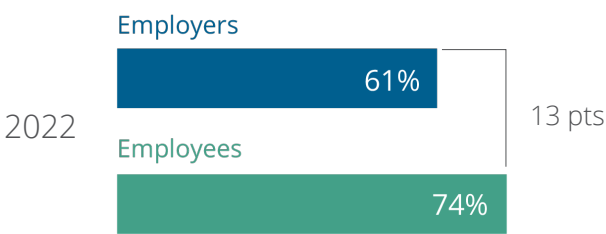
Employees want to be heard and want their feedback to influence company decisions. Use mobile-enabled tools to run sentiment surveys on topics such as unplanned overtime or extended work hours.

This year's study demonstrates that employees and employers both view employee feedback capabilities similarly, and with high importance. **80% of employees would choose an employer who regularly asks for feedback over one who doesn't.**

Market leaders know that the secret to maintaining their advantage includes an investment in activating the power of their employees, which requires an engaged workforce. Regularly asking for and acting on their feedback can go a long way in showing workers that they are valued and their needs are being addressed.

Organizations that ignore engagement actions place their operational goals at risk, as high turnover results in the loss of valuable employee input and missed optimization opportunities from the people who are closest to the work.

*All other things being equal, I would choose to work for an employer who asked for my feedback on a regular basis over one who did not.*



Asking for regular feedback is rated high by employees, 74% in 2022, and 80% in 2023 showcasing the need for employers to establish dedicated, consistent feedback loops.



# Urgent Call to Action for Employers to Improve

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Employee Perceptions Are Pointing the Way to the Biggest Areas of Opportunity

# The Growing Importance of Experience in the Eyes of Employees

Over the last three years, our study findings have shown clear gaps in employee and employer perceptions of the ability to deliver capabilities that create a good employee experience. Since our first report in 2021, the perception gap for many of the issues has shrunk dramatically.

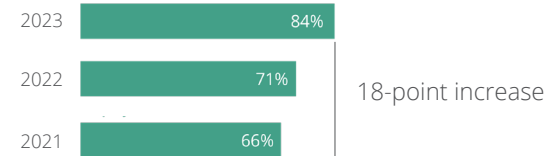
This increasing alignment in perception shows that employers and employees now view these fundamental experience elements with similar degrees of importance. Likewise, our results indicate significant growth in the importance of these elements for employees. For instance, the overall percentage of employees who recognize the importance of flexible scheduling has increased by twenty-five points. Even with the small margin changes seen in feedback, most employees (80%) agree this is an important element of employee experience.

The only experience aspect that saw a point decrease was the percentage of employees who feel their employer recognizes their contributions. Though the change may seem nominal, it indicates the need for stronger organizational efforts to recognize employee achievements.

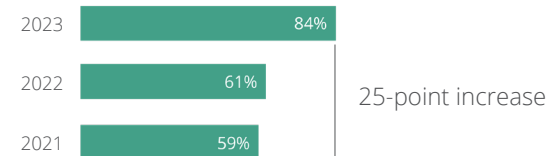
This is an urgent call to action for employers to make investments that improve these agreed upon experience challenges. For organizations, responding to issues that matter to their employees holds significant value—often in the form of tangible business cost benefits, including improved retention, productivity, and greater customer satisfaction.

Now that employers recognize the importance of employee experience, it is imperative that organizations meet employee needs with actions that address the underlying problems contributing to their dissatisfaction.

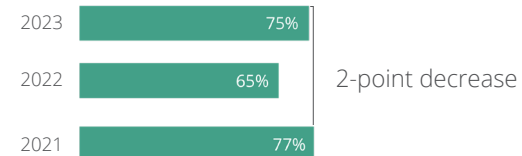
## Prefers Easy Access to Training and Information



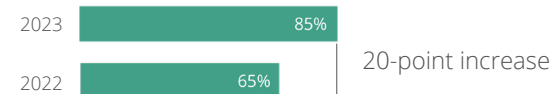
## Wants Employer Who Offers Scheduling Flexibility



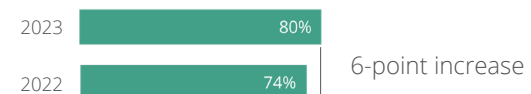
## Feels Employer Recognizes Contributions



## Prefers Easy Communication and Collaboration



## Would Choose Employer Who Asks for Regular Feedback



# Recommendations for Improving Employee Experience

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Roadmap to Meet the Urgent Need for Change

# Embrace Mobile Technology to Manage a Digitally Savvy Workforce

For the growing population of digital native employees, communication is nearly synonymous with mobile platforms. This generation relies on the convenience, accessibility, and real-time nature of mobile messaging, information access, and social media. Workers feel more engaged when work-related information is literally at their fingertips.

The IDC Report “New Perspectives on Intelligent Workforce Management for the Manufacturing Industry” reinforces the point that frontline workers require seamless, automated access to the right business tools and technologies to do their jobs effectively and collaborate with the larger organization.<sup>2</sup>

Our survey results demonstrate that while employers are using mobile technologies to communicate with their employees in real time, few businesses offer an integrated platform and instead rely on a mix of applications, social media tools, and manual methods. While decentralized mobile communications can enable faster and easier team collaboration, they also can create confusion and lead to new security vulnerabilities.

Seamless mobile integration becomes a more critical concern as organizations push to re-skill and upskill their employees and to adapt more rapidly to business changes or disruptions. Mobile technology offers a means of communicating and training a digitally native and deskless workforce in the flow of work—making training less disruptive—based on an employee’s scheduled tasks or real-time needs. With their familiarity and comfort with mobile tech, the digital native workforce is primed to take advantage of these capabilities.

“

All workers, and especially those on the frontline, deserve and need mentorships, training, and career guidance at the time and place work happens.

”

— IDC Research



# Give Employees Control Over Their Schedules

When properly implemented, schedule flexibility is a win-win. Workers gain greater work/life balance while businesses gain workforce agility. This does not diminish how difficult it is to make scheduling flexibility a reality. Our survey results show that many employers currently lack the tools necessary for a deskless workforce to indicate availability preferences, swap shifts, select desired hours, or modify their schedules to balance work/life demands.

Gartner analyst Dana Stiffler suggests that offering flexible work arrangements is now table stakes for frontline staff and “is the most effective investment for reducing attrition and second-most effective investment for recruitment, but least likely to be used.”<sup>3</sup>

Flexible scheduling also equips organizations to seamlessly scale up staffing to meet fluctuating customer needs. Implementing on-demand scheduling systems gives managers the tools to automate scheduling activities and allow employees to fill open shifts via mobile apps. Enabling shift swaps between employees also helps organizations cover higher demand periods while offering employees greater autonomy over their schedules.

Demand forecasting and robust communications ensure proper staffing levels are scheduled proactively while keeping workers updated on changes. The key is leveraging technology, incentives, and processes to build a flexible framework. With the right scheduling flexibility, organizations can align labor to the needs of the business while offering greater work/life balance for employees.

“

Flexibility is the most effective investment for reducing attrition and second-most effective investment for recruitment, but least likely to be used.

”

— Gartner

# Ask Employees for Feedback and Show Them They've Been Heard

While there can be multiple reasons why a disengaged employee leaves their job, there is little an organization can do to influence this outcome if they can't recognize the symptoms. As the workforce continues to change, companies must leverage data to identify changes in worker behavior and implement real-time feedback channels to engage with employees to address their needs.

The “2023 Future of Working and Learning Report” by Executive Networks highlights that among the top five reasons frontline workers leave their roles, 49% point to stress and burnout and 30% leave due to lack of career advancement and development opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

Organizations should prioritize gathering regular employee feedback through pulse surveys, digital interactions in the flow of work, and digital channels. This allows them to identify areas of strength to continue building upon as well as pain points to address. By regularly soliciting employee input and rapidly translating insights into action, organizations can stay ahead of trends and optimize performance.

Listening and responding to the workforce while celebrating wins fosters a culture of transparency, employee personal growth, and high performance. Organizations must recognize worker achievements. Praise for a job well done is meaningful when delivered proactively, sincerely, and specifically.

“

Employees expect employers to support all aspects of their well-being, from physical to financial to social/emotional, along with career development.

”

— Executive Networks

# Conclusion

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# Conclusion

The results of this study show that employers are actively listening to their employees and coming to a greater understanding of how their organizations are delivering the quality experiences employees expect. While understanding employee needs is a start, real progress comes when putting that insight into action.

*Deskless workers have indicated the kind of change that they want to see—true scheduling flexibility, integrated communication and self-service options, on-demand training in the flow of work, and consistent opportunities for feedback and recognition.*

Many organizations have accelerated their digital transformation initiatives and begun to rethink their workplace practices in light of employee expectations. Given the pace of these advancements, those who don't invest in digital solutions to improve experience may find that their competitors have already turned this capability into a market advantage.

Modern workforce management solutions with integrated operational communications enable organizations to meet the demands of new generations of workers to optimize operational performance and meet business and financial goals.

As better employee engagement continues to serve as a business advantage—for attracting and retaining talent, as well as creating organizational resilience—providing the experiences employees expect and deserve should be a strategic priority.

## The Cost of Waiting to Act Is Greater Than You Think

To make the greatest impact on employee experience, it's time to change the legacy systems that manage employee pay, time, schedules, and communications. Don't miss out on prioritizing investments in modern workforce management solutions to accelerate improvements in employee retention and productivity. Your hard-dollar savings can be reapplied to fund other areas of your HR transformation—on average, as much as \$12.24 for every dollar invested.

[Fill Out the Time Is Money Calculator](#)





# About WorkForce Software & Survey Approach

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## About WorkForce Software

WorkForce Software is the #1 rated workforce management solution for large, global employers and the first to deliver integrated employee communication capabilities. The company's WorkForce Suite adapts to each organization's needs—no matter how unique their pay rules, labor regulations, and schedules—while delivering a breakthrough employee experience at the time and place work happens. Enterprise-grade and future-ready, WorkForce Software is helping some of the world's most innovative organizations optimize their workforce, protect against compliance risks, and increase employee engagement to unlock new potential for resiliency and optimal performance. When your employees include deskless or hourly workers, unionized, full-time, part-time, or seasonal, WorkForce Software makes managing your global workforce easy, less costly, and more rewarding for everyone.

For more information, please visit [wfsaustralia.com](https://wfsaustralia.com).

WorkForce Software's solutions are also available through our global reseller, SAP. To learn more, please visit [wfsaustralia.com/partner/sap/](https://wfsaustralia.com/partner/sap/).

## About Pollfish

Pollfish offers a next-generation polling platform that helps brands get a direct line to consumer thinking. With Pollfish's advanced sampling approach and real-time DIY platform, companies can enjoy faster access to reliable consumer insights. The cutting-edge software, coupled with Pollfish's unparalleled global network of respondents, allows fast access to high-quality consumer data and provides an easily usable analytics dashboard that allows straightforward data interpretation, allowing companies to make well-informed business decisions.

To learn more about their innovative approach to market research, visit [pollfish.com](https://pollfish.com).

## Methodology

Employees:

1,684

Employers:

1,701

Questions:

28

Countries:

17



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#### Sources

<sup>1</sup> The Upwork Team. "The Cost of Hiring an Employee: Explanation and Formula." Upwork. (Sep 29, 2022). Retrieved September 26, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Anu Mehta and Amy Loomis. "New Perspectives on Intelligent Workforce Management for the Manufacturing Industry." IDC. (2023, June). Retrieved July 1, 2023

<sup>3</sup> Dana Stiffler. "Well-Being and Flexibility are New Table Stakes for Today's Frontline Workforces." Gartner. (2022, Dec 02). Retrieved August 28, 2023.

<sup>4</sup> "The 2023 Future of Working and Learning Report: Shifting Employee-Employer Dynamics." Executive Networks. (2023). Retrieved August 28, 2023.