

EST10 Survey Report.
September 2022



“*I learned, however, that the loss of balance is ultimately more painful than the giving up required to maintain balance. It is a lesson I have continually had to relearn. As must everyone, for as we negotiate the curves and corners of our lives, we must continually give up parts of ourselves. The only alternative to this giving up is not to travel at all on the journey of life.*

M. Scott Peck



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Executive Summary



Balance in life is the theme of our latest survey! Flexibility, well-being, and balance are the main drivers of our workforce right now. Nothing new, you might say. But it is a quandary. In pursuing flexibility at work, are we, by default, forgoing the balance we also crave? According to the survey, flexible work arrangements are highly sought after and indeed offered (67.3% of workplaces). Yet, of those surveyed, 44.7% work over 40 hours a week, with nearly 10% working above 50 hours a week.

In 2016, to protect the work-life-balance of its workers, the French government passed a law, 'the right to disconnect', stipulating companies cannot require employees to be available for workplace communication [outside of regular working hours](#). Today's flexible work is not just working from home; it is

the freedom to work anywhere and anytime. How does this meld with what was deemed a work-life-balance only six years prior?

This survey, our 4th since launching in September 2020, could not be timelier. The first report considered the immediate implications of COVID-19, with the following two surveys capturing the emergence and adjustment. Now we examine our evolved working world. More accustomed to our new environment, we view our workplace through a different lens, with renewed expectations.

Post-pandemic, adjusting to the new norm and it would seem change is our constant. If we thought 2022 would settle and return to some normality, we were in for a surprise. The war in Ukraine and the change

of government in Australia have introduced a new level of uncertainty. Layer our record low unemployment rates, [the lowest in 48 years](#), rising CPI, and a possible economic downturn and our resilience muscle is being tried and tested - once more.

This candidate-driven market is reflected in the survey results, with almost 60% of respondents stating they would leave their current job if presented with a new one. As managers, business owners and employees, how do we meet the job and career needs of our employees and candidates whilst also ensuring the offers and compromises are not too great to bear?

And the talk of a recession? It might loosen up the availability of job seekers, but the shortage of qualified workers will remain. Securing your

existing talent should be front of mind. As for employees, how do you remain employable and future-proof your career? The lesson learnt for us all is not to become too comfortable or complacent. Always be moving forward!

With that in mind, this report is designed to help you identify what employees really want. By inviting our network of clients and candidates to participate in the survey, we have gathered valuable insights. We hope this report will assist in making decisions to create a strong and ever more resilient future workforce.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roxanne".

Roxanne Calder
Managing Director

Key Findings From 2022

We thought summarising the key findings from our September 2022 survey would be beneficial.

- Most notable was that 70.4% of respondents received a pay rise in the last 12 months
- 46% of respondents were offered flexible work arrangements in the past year who did not previously receive it
- Surprisingly, 58.7% would leave their current role if presented with a new job
- Nearly 80% stated being happy in their job
- Interestingly, 12% of people who left their role in the past 12 months regret doing so
- Of course, flexibility is a much talked about topic, and 73% consider flexible work arrangements to be in their top 3 work benefits
- And 59% say salary is in their top 3 most important factors for selecting a job
- A significant proportion, 28% received salary increases of between 6% to 20%
- Nearly 16% of companies now offer additional leave as part of their benefits plan
- Only 8.8% listed COVID safe offices in their top three most important benefits



Market Insights

These market insights are designed to accompany our survey results, providing context and information on the current employment landscape.

Australia has the lowest unemployment rate in 48 years. [At 3.5%](#). It is also described as close to full employment, meaning not enough job seekers to fill our vacancies. The latest statistics, as of August 2022, show 487,700 people unemployed and just [470,900 vacancies](#). Whilst positive for jobseekers, offering ample career opportunities, progression, and salary increases, it places businesses under significant pressure.

Recruitment and retention are made increasingly difficult, as talented candidates are receiving multiple job offers.

The competition continues to be fierce. Headhunting is also on the rise. What used to be reserved for senior executive positions is now occurring at every level. For employees not used to being wooed, it can be a flattering proposition too hard to resist. My advice to employers is to keep very close to your team, be present and on the lookout for the signs and signals.

As always, ensure your recruitment process is aligned with the market, i.e., once presented with a resume, have all your interviews conducted ideally within 3 days. A process any longer risks losing your candidates to other job opportunities. Throughout all interviews and every part of your process, be sure to demonstrate your unique employee proposition. Some companies are reporting hiring processes of [less than 48 hours](#); that is

how quick the market moves!

The untapped talent pools. I cannot help but bring your attention to what could be sitting under our noses, the often-overlooked workforce – the youth, older workers, and return-to-work parents. Youth unemployment remains above the general [unemployment rate at 8.4%](#). Often fresh to the world of employment but with an ingrained aptitude for technology, our youth offer a unique opportunity. Older workers are at the other end of the spectrum, frequently overlooked, yet experience has helped them to hone their soft skills, offering invaluable insights built over a lifetime in the workplace. And let us not forget return to work parents. Did you know, many return-to-work mums have opted to set up their own businesses when faced with a lack of flexibility

and [opportunity in the employment market?](#)

The permanent market

Since the beginning of the year, permanent recruitment has ramped up enormously. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) last updated in August 2022, there were 32,800 vacancies in the administrative and [support services industry](#). This is also reflected in the number of job ads posted with SEEK and the recent reporting of record levels. There are signs of this levelling with a small month-on-month [decline for June](#). All this says the competition to secure talent remains tough. Despite the current economic uncertainty within Australia and all that is occurring globally, it is unlikely we will see any significant change



on the talent and skills front in the immediate future.

Companies are being nimble in addressing the talent shortage. With the ongoing costs of empty seats, alternative solutions must be sought. Redistributing responsibilities, upskilling existing employees, internal promotions, increased reliance on technology, and the use of a temporary workforce are just some strategies utilised. This is not a fix-all solution though. I urge businesses to be mindful of the impact of the increased workloads on teams and to keep well-being at the forefront of their thinking and strategies.

Further exacerbating the permanent recruitment market are inflation and wage increases. [With inflation expected to reach 7.75%](#) at the end of the year, everyone is feeling the pressure. Employees and job seekers

are seeking out higher salaries to accommodate for increases in living costs, and employers faced with their own cost pressures, unwilling or unable to meet the salary expectations, may lose out. It's an agonising predicament for all.

The great resignation

Along with the great reshuffle, the great resignation has been reported of ad nauseam within the media. First coined by Anthony Klotz, in the US, the impetus behind it is quite different to Australia's story. Whilst the great resignation has not been as severe; nonetheless, businesses are reeling from the repercussions. The ABS report that 80% of vacancies are due to resignations/replacements, up from 76% for [the same period last year](#). Listening to the wants and needs of your current workforce is just as

important as attracting new recruits. If it is a pay raise your employees seek, consider the cost to source, hire and train a replacement in your mulling.

The temporary market

Offering breathing space and relieving the pressure, the temporary recruitment market is being heavily relied upon for short-term solutions. It assists in addressing delays that come with appointing permanent hires in this tight market.

With borders and travel open to all, the availability of working holiday visa holders is increasing.

If looking to fill a permanent role, a temporary to permanent strategy is not recommended. Put simply; you significantly reduce your talent pool and selection. If, however, due to

the amazing matching ability of your EST10 consultant, the temp sourced for you as a short-term measure fits the bill, do not hesitate to transition them to a permanent role. To note, whilst someone is temping with you, they may also be seeking a permanent role and thus be active on the market. We cannot take for granted the market, candidate commitment, and job security needs.

In addition, if your temporary employee has in-demand skills and is a great cultural fit, hold on to them as long as possible. Daily, we see candidates extended in their assignments, some initially starting in a two-week role and quickly extending to 6 months. Many working-holding visa holders seek 6-month assignments. If you can offer this, it may provide some breathing time to secure your long-term employee.

The Survey Results...



Whom we asked



We invited all our clients and candidates to participate in our survey.

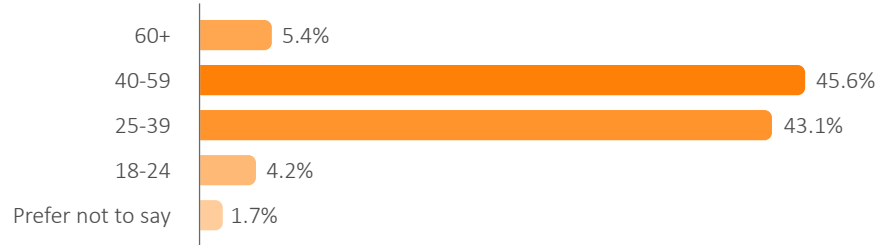
Almost 90% of the responses were from those aged 25-59, and more than 80% were permanently employed. Roles included executive assistants, personal assistants, office administrators, human resource managers, chiefs of staff, business owners, recruitment managers, and executives, with 69% of respondents working in administrative support roles.

Just 36% of respondents had been with their current employer for 3 or more years. In contrast, 40% had been with their employer for less than a year.

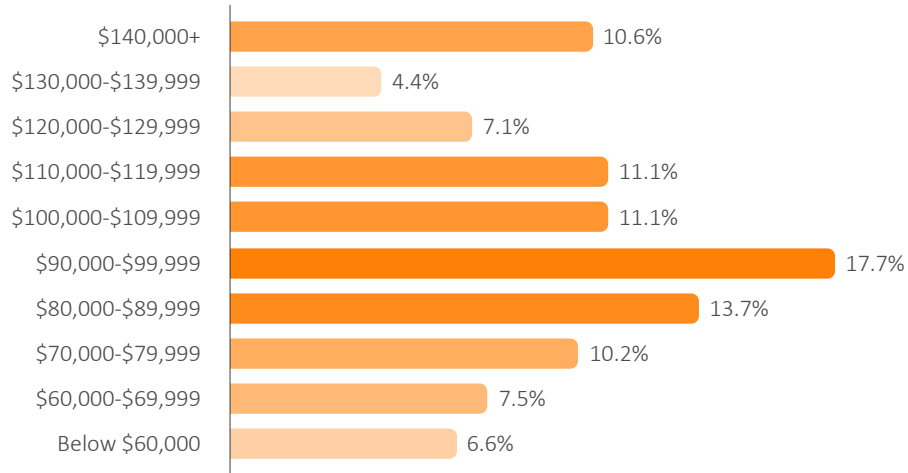
What is your employment status?



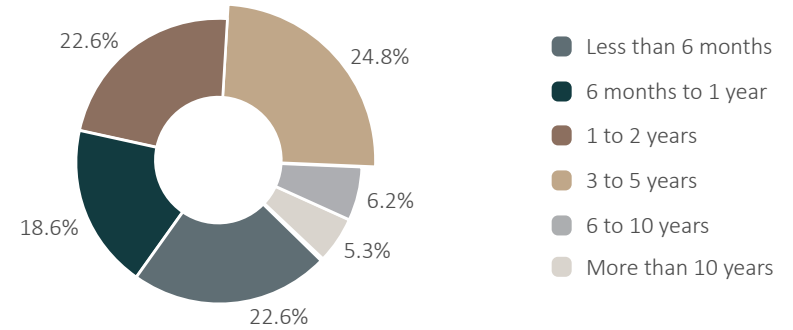
What age bracket are you in?



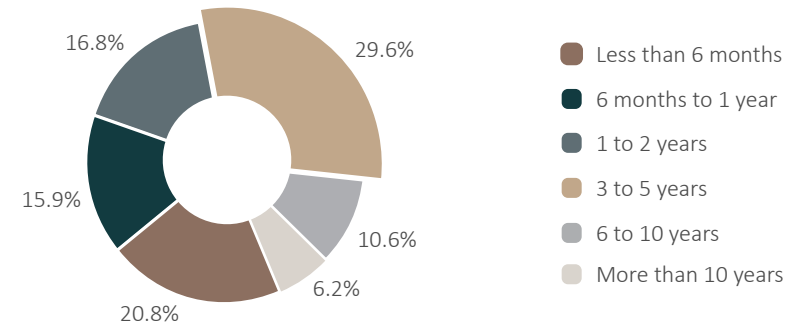
What bracket does your annual base salary fall into?



How long have you been in your current role?



How long have you been with your current company?

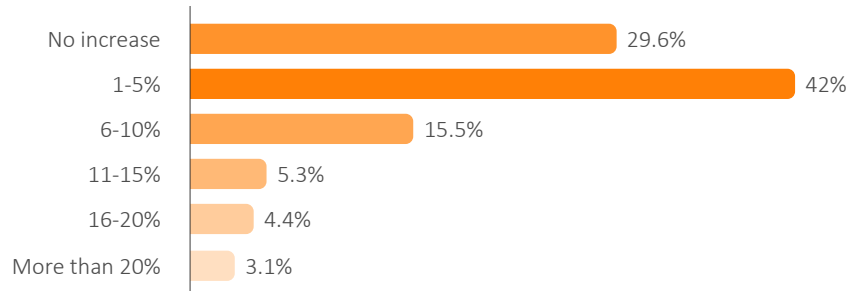


Salaries are increasing

More than 70% of respondents received a salary increase in the last 12 months. On average, this was an increase of 1-5%, and 7.5% of people received an increase of over 15%. Our previous survey in Sept 2021 saw only 49.1% receiving a salary increase. A reflection of the times, with rising costs of living and the heightened competition for talent.

For guidance on average salaries for administration roles, we recommend our [latest salary guide](#) – both temporary rates and permanent salaries are covered!

Over the last year, how much has your salary increased by?



More, more, more... benefits

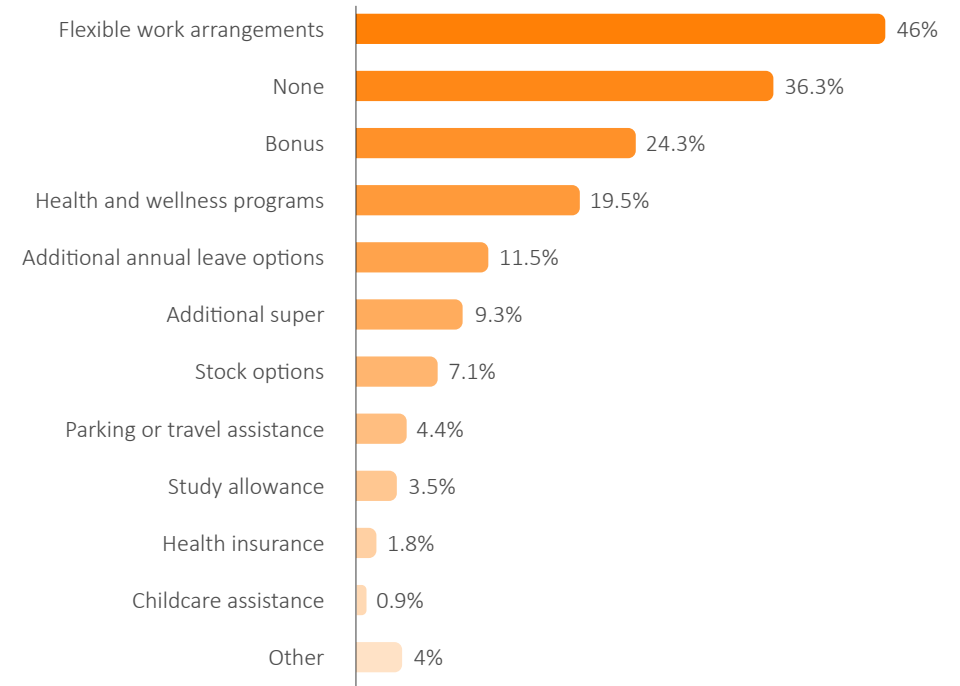
Flexible work arrangements are the number one benefit people seek. 73% rated it important, followed by a performance bonus (57.5%) and additional annual leave (36.3%). Not all companies offer these benefits. Comparatively, of those surveyed, 67.3% have flexible working arrangements, 36.7% offer a performance bonus and 15.9% offer additional leave.

Highlighting the increasing importance of benefits, close to 45% of respondents had some form of additional benefit offered within the last 12 months. Flexibility was the most common, followed by bonuses and health and wellness programs. With balance being key, the focus on well-being is high. This is especially the case as we see increased workloads in the absence of new and replacement hires.

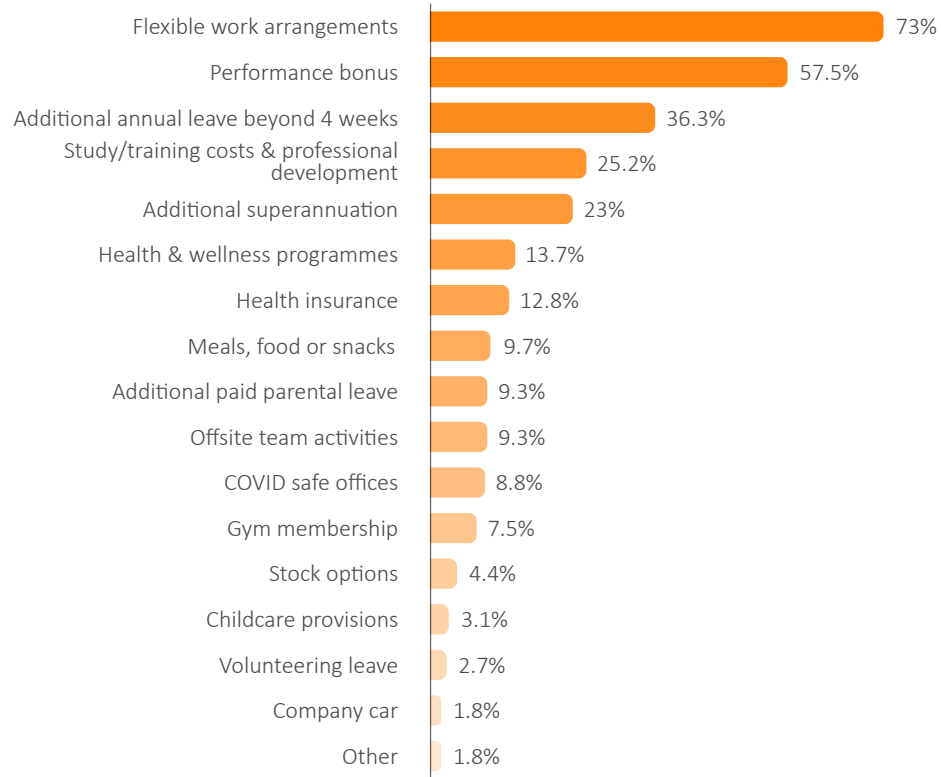
Salary increases are not always possible. We always encourage employers to have a strong value proposition with authentic, lived values. In addition, employees need a sense of purpose and connection to the job, business, and people they work with. Given the high percentage of those surveyed who would consider leaving their job despite being 'happy', perhaps purpose at work needs further consideration.



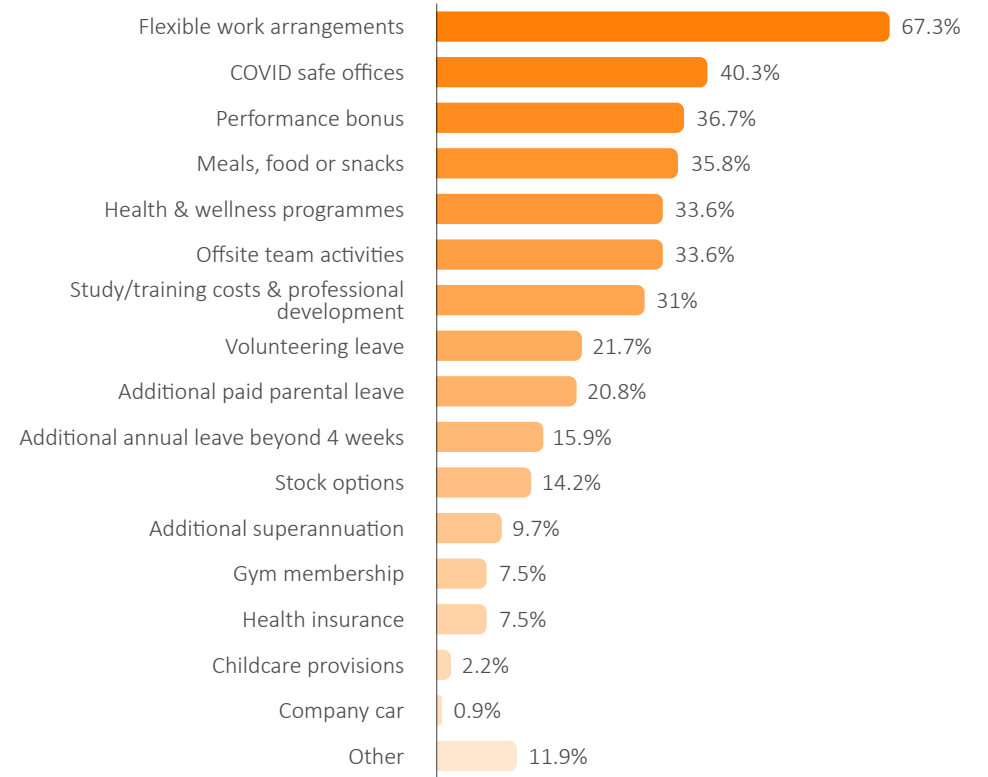
Over the last year, what additional perks & benefits have you received that were not offered previously?



What three benefits are most important to you?



What benefits does your company offer?



Being happy at work does not equal committed

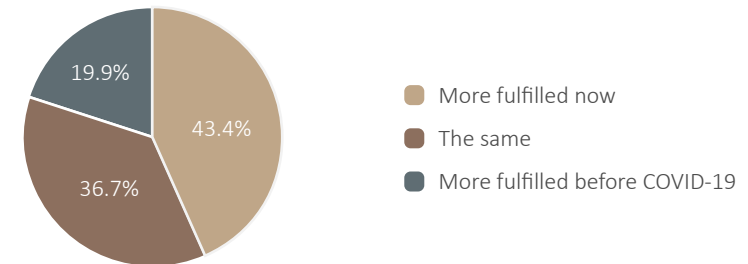
Overall, most people were satisfied in their roles, with more than 80% of respondents feeling as fulfilled or more fulfilled than before the pandemic and close to 80% being happy in their current job.

This figure has increased 14% since our April 2021 survey! However, this does not translate to commitment to their jobs, with well over half stating they would leave if presented with a new opportunity. Additionally, of those who moved jobs in the last 12 months, 12% felt they should have remained in their role, and 8.4% thought they had made the wrong choice for their new role or company.

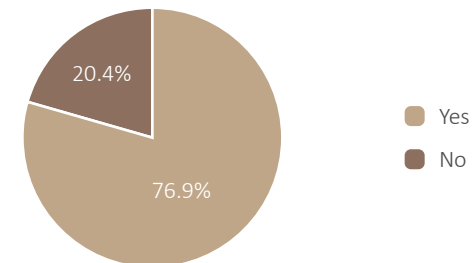
What does this mean for you as an employer?

1. Retention of staff is essential – be across wants/needs/frustrations. It also assists in negating the possibility of headhunts and other opportunities.
2. There is also an opportunity – the boomerang employee! Consider reaching out to employees who have left. If they are part of that 12%, they might just take you up on your offer to return.
3. Instead of exit interviews, conduct ‘staying interviews.’ What do they like and love about their job? It has a dual function – it provides you with valuable intel and is a great positive psychological reinforcement!

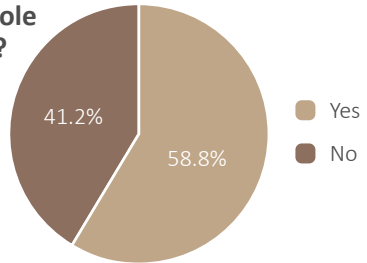
Are you more fulfilled in your career now or before COVID-19?



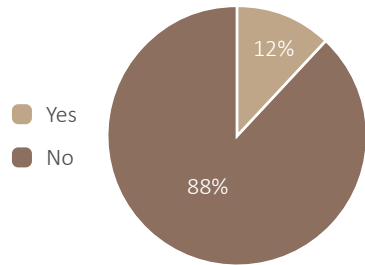
Are you happy with your current job?



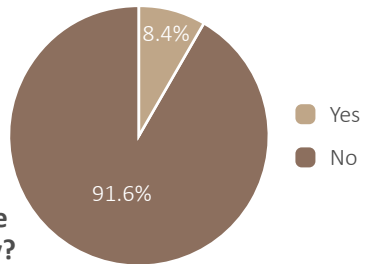
Would you leave your current role if presented with a new role?



Looking back, would you prefer not to have left your previous job?



Looking back, do you feel you may have made the wrong choice of job/company?



Flexibility - the good & the bad

We have touched on flexibility throughout the report, but it is such an important topic that we want to provide as much insight as possible.

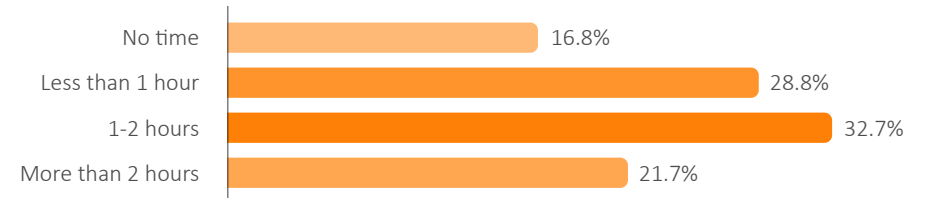
Of the companies offering flexible work arrangements, more than half introduced it within the past year. So, what does flexibility look like for your employees?

For most (72.1%), flexibility is at least some form of working outside of the office. Approximately half of the respondents currently spend more than 50% of their time away from their office base. The flexibility to choose their work location is also critical. An 'only working from home' option is not the goal for most. More respondents would like a hybrid of both office and home. People may be warming to a full office return, as last year, just 7.5% of the respondents wanted to work only in the office, increasing to 12.4% this time around. We are monitoring this trend and will see how it develops; the pandemic and the lockdowns changed people's responsibilities and priorities, often not by choice. It takes time for many to revert to more normalised living and working situations.

There was a slight decrease in the time spent working outside normal hours. Could this reflect the employees adjusting to flexible working and implementing boundaries? Perhaps the best lesson learnt from remote working and as we continue to seek and refine that elusive balance is boundaries.



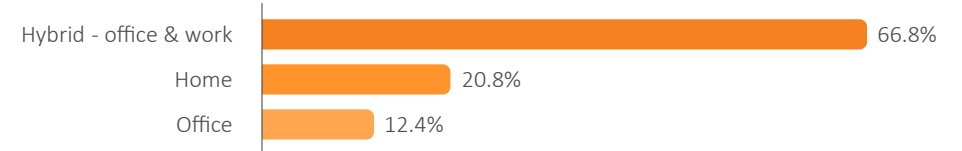
On average, how much time per day are you spending outside of your 'normal' office hours? - i.e. checking emails or logging in



On average, how many hours do you work per week?

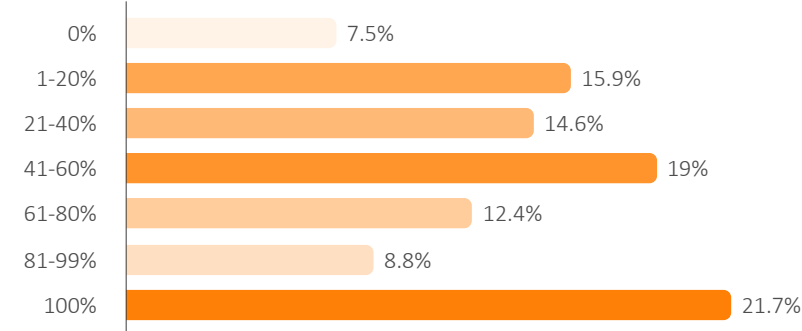


Where would you prefer to work from?

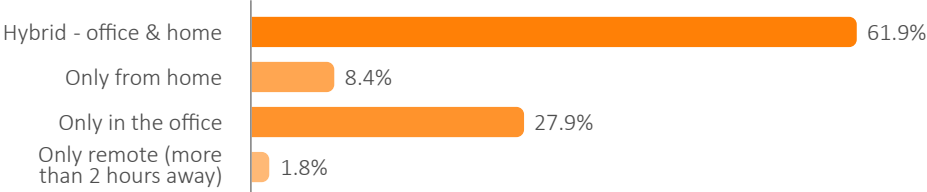


Where to find talent

On average, what % of your time do you spend working from your company office?



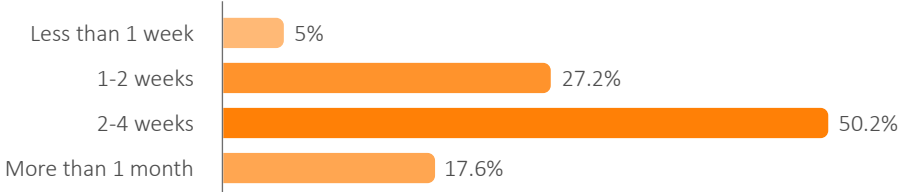
Where are you currently working from?



If you are hiring, then an expert agency is your best friend! We might be biased, but the survey results show 68% of respondents would use an agency when looking for a new job, and more than 40% found their current job through an agency. Do not discount the value of your connections though, as 26.5% found their current job through their network.

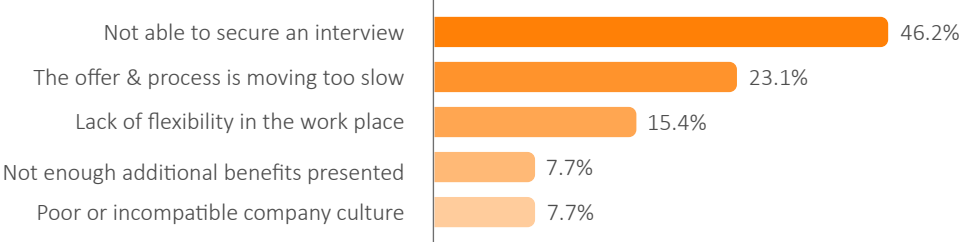
Finding roadblocks in securing talent? It could be that your process is moving too slow – 23.1% of our respondents cited this as their biggest challenge in finding a role. Most expect their whole job-seeking process to take 2-4 weeks, and just 17.6% expect it to take longer than 1 month.

When applying for a new role, how long do you expect the process to take from submitting your application to being offered a position?

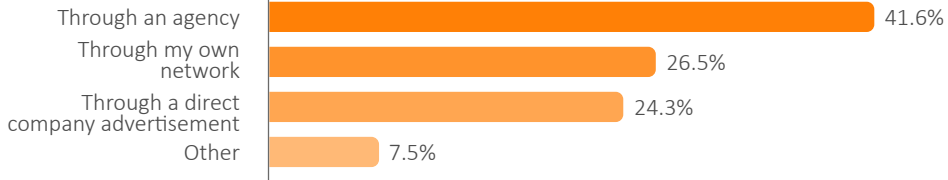


Tell me what you want, what you really really want

What is the biggest challenge in securing a role?



How did you find your current job?



If you were looking for a new job, where would you look?



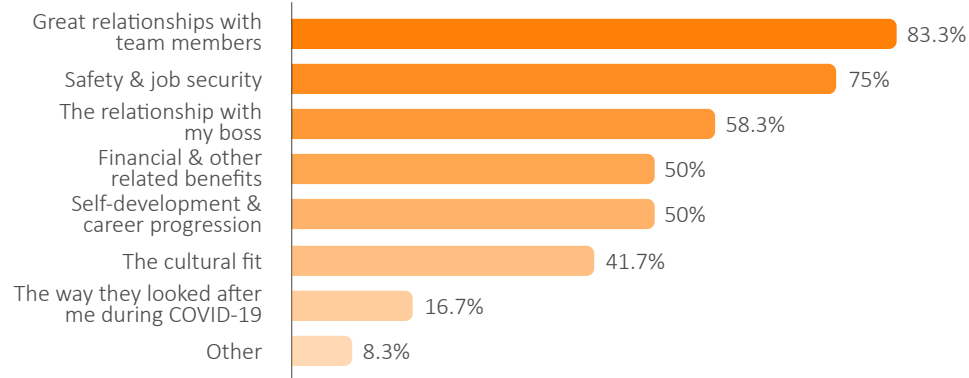
Salary... when choosing a job, salary was overwhelmingly important, with 59% of respondents highlighting it in their top 3 most important factors. Second to that was company culture closely followed by having a good boss. People and culture are the initial attractions people have to a company, and our survey results highlight it is also what keeps people. 83.3% said their great relationships with other team members kept them loyal!

When it comes to the aspects respondents did not consider as important, surprisingly, it was career advancement, length of commute and diversity and inclusion. Many responses stated though, that all aspects were important! Your employee value proposition needs to be all-encompassing.

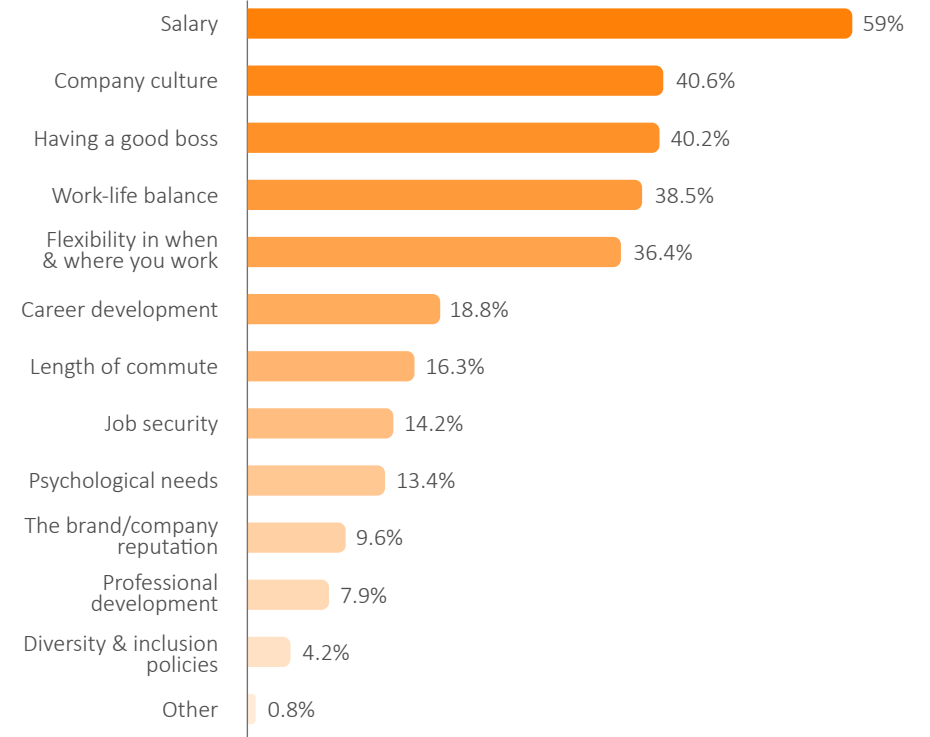
Mental health, life without stress and work-life balance are all pertinent issues right now and are reflected in our survey results. Respondents considered these more essential than wealth building and career progression. Professional development, company brand, and reputation were also low on the priority list.

Based on our results, it seems clear that while salaries are a high priority, the relationships and bonds employees create with coworkers and bosses are strong anchors. Knowing the significance of this finding can help businesses better evaluate how to appeal to these values.

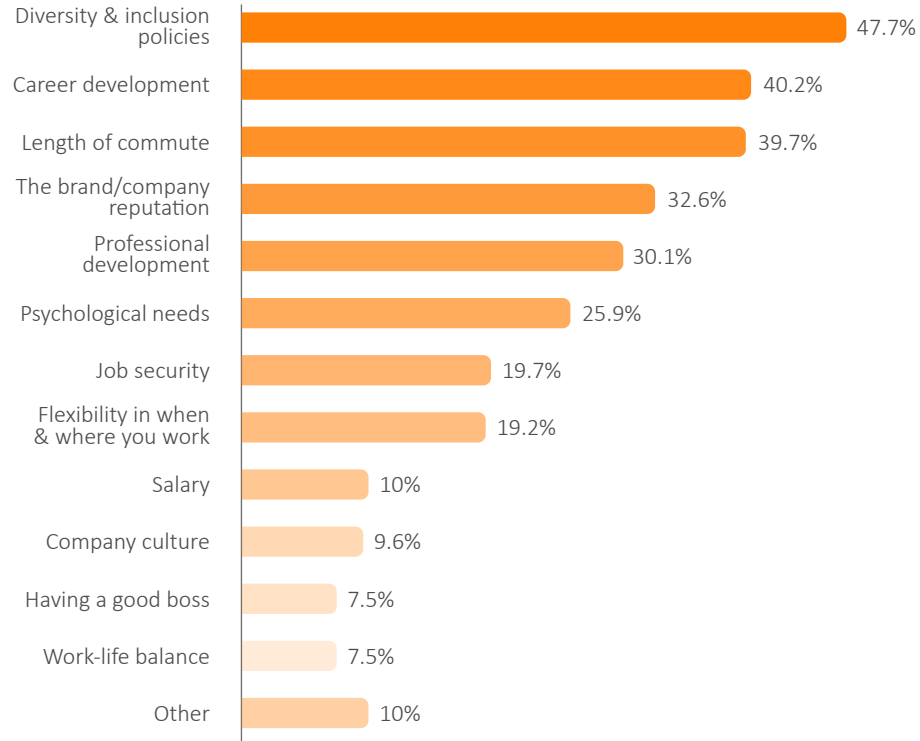
What keeps you loyal to your current employer?



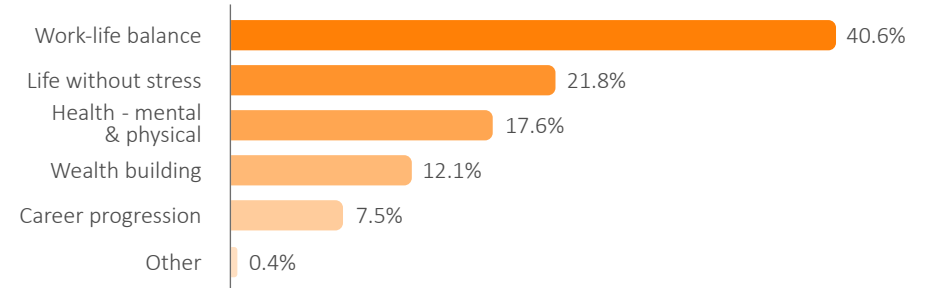
What three aspects do you consider the most important factors in choosing a job?



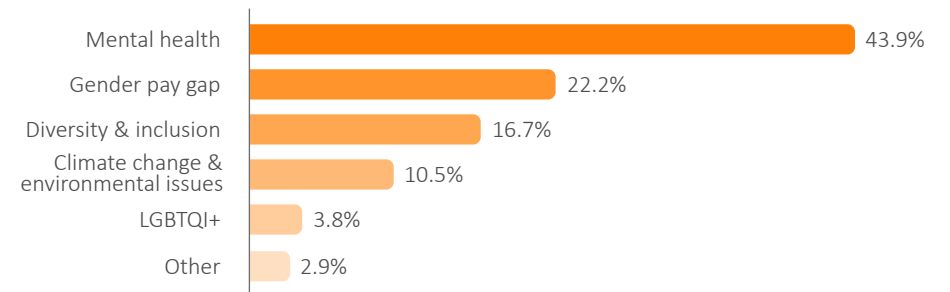
What three aspects do you consider the least important factors in choosing a job?



Which of the following are most important for you right now:



What issues or agendas are most important to you in the workplace?



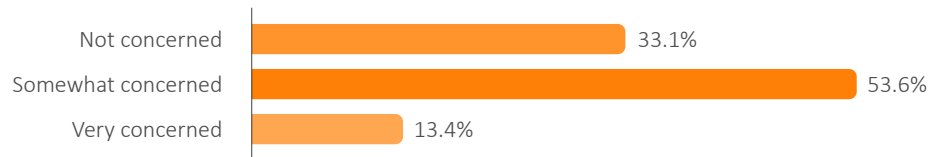
A problem shared is a problem halved

The final topic for us to touch on is the current economic situation. 98.3% of respondents were either very concerned or somewhat concerned about the rising cost of living. Additionally, 67% were concerned or very concerned about an economic downturn affecting employment. Consider strategies to support job security and alleviate some of these concerns. Acknowledging and discussing can help!

To what degree are you concerned about the rising cost of living?



To what degree are you concerned an economic downturn will affect you employment?



Key Takeaways...

In just 12 months, comparing data from our past surveys, we see shifts in sentiments, most notably with happiness in our roles! The desire for flexibility continues with a high emphasis on the choice of work location.

Economic conditions and cost of living concerns are on everyone's mind. Salary is the most important consideration when choosing a new job. Keep close to existing employees and if increases cannot be offered, consider other benefits; performance bonus, work-from-home opportunities and additional leave etc.

Hiring processes need constant refinement. Job seekers expect to find new roles within a matter of weeks, so if you are interviewing at week two of their journey, your process better be quick and convincing.

It is good to remember an employee's happiness does not guarantee commitment. With headhunts on the rise, if offered a better salary or additional benefits their heads may be turned. Keep communication open, checking if needs are being heard. As businesses, we cannot always meet all of the requirements, but being heard can play an important role.

Finally, the availability of candidates will alleviate somewhat, although the skills shortage will not disappear anytime soon. With the aging population, lower birth rates and migration issues, we are faced with a complex long-term challenge. We can, however, keep optimistic, change and adapt to meet new market demands and play an active role in creating our own destiny and future.

Who is ESTIO

We are specialised boutique recruiters for the administration space. But we are more than that. We're your unique recruiter. The way we consultant, recruit, mentor and look after our clients and candidates is unlike anyone else. We are proud to be challenging the recruitment industry norms by offering flexibility, innovation, and unparalleled service levels to your recruitment experience. We lead the way when it comes to a fresh approach or looking at novel or new methods. Complex recruitment puzzles, difficulties, or cryptic hiring problems- that is our speciality!

We stop at nothing to get the best administrative talent, offering a completely personalised, consultative service for every role we recruit. But we do not just help you find the best candidate for your role; we also help our high-quality candidates land the jobs of their dreams.

Finally, our recruitment process is distinct. We dig deep to understand your brief, to better source and match your dream candidate. As a boutique agency, we're not tangled up in red tape; we are efficient, nimble and make things happen. We are thorough and go beyond the skills listed on a CV. Our candidates are matched to the job description and your business's values, dreams and office culture using our insightful and innovative 7 attributes for employability model.

We love who we are, what we do and how we do it. I hope you feel the same way about your experience with us!

“*My interest is in the future because I am going to spend the rest of my life there.*

Charles Kettering”





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