

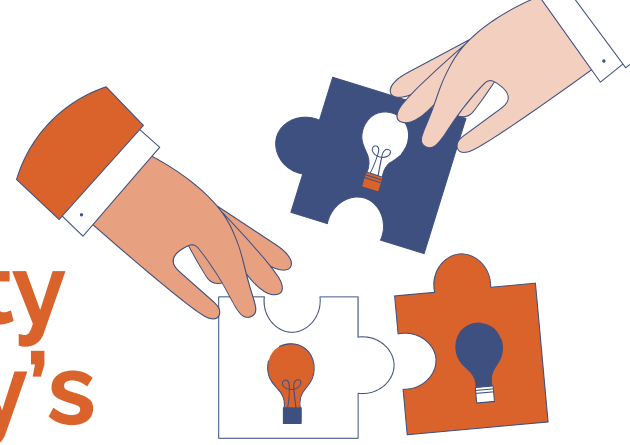
**Empresaria**

# The Future of Productivity: What Drives Performance, Loyalty and Growth in Today's Workforce?





# What drives performance, loyalty and growth in today's workforce?



The world of work is changing. Technological advancements from AI and automation to data-driven decision-making are reshaping industries, workflows, and employee expectations at a scale never seen before. At the same time, global economic uncertainty, heightened competition, and shifting market dynamics are putting intense pressure on businesses to do more with less, as well as to achieve everything at a faster pace.

For leaders, the challenge is increasing. Traditional models of employment are being disrupted. Full-time roles are giving way to more flexible, project-based work. Meanwhile, a new generation of professionals is entering the workforce with fresh attitudes toward career, purpose, and balance. Fewer employees are staying in one place long term, and with the pace of business more unpredictable than ever, organisations are under pressure to deliver quick solutions that support performance, retention and growth, even as business priorities continue to evolve.

The challenge is no longer just attracting or retaining people, it's about creating the conditions that enable employees to thrive, stay connected, and deliver value in an increasingly fluid world of work.

While productivity remains essential, how it is achieved looks very different today. In a hybrid, tech-enabled environment, performance isn't just fuelled by compensation alone, it's influenced by strong leadership, a clear sense of direction, an inclusive culture, and an employee experience that is responsive to both personal and professional needs.

Our recent research, combined with external market insights, explores what is shaping workforce performance today. We examine what's driving employee loyalty, engagement and output, and how organisations are responding.



# Employees are searching for purpose and growth, not just a paycheque

Employee loyalty is no longer defined by tenure or pay rises alone. Professionals are making career decisions based on purpose, flexibility and a sense of alignment, and many are willing to move if those needs aren't met.

In our survey of 3,800 professionals, 73% said they are actively exploring new opportunities. While 60% cited better pay as a reason to leave, just as many pointed to limited career growth or a lack of work-life balance. Nearly half (44%) said poor cultural fit would be a dealbreaker.

Career progression is a big driver. More than 55% said limited progression would prompt them to leave. Flexibility and work-life balance were equally influential, with many seeing them not as perks, but as baseline expectations.



**People want meaning, not just money**



**Growth opportunities shape commitment**



**Flexibility is now expected, not optional**



This data highlights a broader trend across industries: employees aren't just looking for jobs, they're looking for a place where they feel they belong, where their work matters, and where they can grow in their career. They want to understand how they fit into the organisation's future, and they're more likely to stay when their values, ambitions and lifestyles are acknowledged and supported.

Research from the [Achievers Workforce Institute](#) supports this, revealing that more than half of employees would switch jobs for better values alignment, and nearly half would remain in a position where they feel consistently recognised. What's clear is that long-term commitment doesn't happen by default. It's built through everyday experiences that reflect strong culture, opportunities to grow, and a clear sense of purpose.



# Culture and recognition are key to retention and performance

A strong culture isn't defined by mission statements or values pinned to a wall. It's experienced in the everyday moments, how people are recognised, how leadership communicates, and whether actions match up with what the organisation says it stands for. Yet many employees don't feel that connection.

Our survey results revealed that only 12% say they always feel appreciated for their work. More than a third say recognition happens only sometimes, if at all. Over half of employees told us that being recognised regularly would directly increase their loyalty to their employer.

**54%**

**say regular recognition would increase their loyalty**

**38%**

**say recognition happens only sometimes, if at all**

**12%**

**of employees say they always feel appreciated for their work**

According to [Gallup and Workhuman's research](#), employees who receive high-quality recognition are 4 times more likely to be engaged and are 45% less likely to have left after two years. When employees feel their effort is noticed, trust, commitment and accountability are built. When it's missing, even the most engaged people can start to disengage and ultimately, leave.

Culture is also shaped by what an organisation stands for beyond the day-to-day. 60% of employees say a company's environmental and social commitments influence whether they choose to stay or join, but only 15% feel very well informed about those goals.

That disconnect matters. When values aren't communicated clearly, or when people can't see how their work connects to something larger, the sense of purpose starts to erode. And with it, the foundations of loyalty and performance. To engage and retain your people, culture must be something employees experience, not just read about on the website.



# Hybrid work can boost performance, but it takes more than a policy

Flexible work is now a standard expectation. More than half of the employees in our survey told us that access to hybrid or remote options makes them more likely to stay with their employer. But flexibility alone isn't enough. What really matters is how connected, included and supported people feel, wherever they work.

The majority (77%) told us that hybrid or remote work has improved their productivity. At the same time, it comes with trade-offs. Just over half (52%) cited the lack of face-to-face interaction as a concern, and one in four said they rarely or never feel truly connected to their teams.

The data shows hybrid work can boost performance, but it takes more than just a policy. It works best when teams stay connected, communication is consistent, and leaders make sure everyone's efforts are seen and valued. [Gallup's 2025 Remote Work Paradox study](#) echoes this: remote employees often report higher engagement but also experience greater emotional strain when hybrid models lack structure and support. Successful hybrid work doesn't happen by chance. It takes intention, creating regular moments of connection, recognising remote contributions, and focusing on impact rather than attendance.



At the same time, more organisations are revisiting their flexible work policies and asking employees to return to the office. While collaboration and culture are often cited, research suggests the real issue is trust. As [Forbes](#) notes, many return-to-office mandates are less about productivity and more about control. When employees feel trusted to manage their time and deliver results, they're more likely to stay motivated and engaged.

A recent [Pew Research](#) study found that 46% of employees said they would be unlikely to stay with their current employer if flexible work options were taken away. The data shows flexibility matters to employees and trust plays a big part in how committed they feel.

77%

of employees say hybrid or remote work has improved their productivity

25%

say they rarely or never feel truly connected to their team

52%

cite lack of face-to-face interaction as a concern

50%

say access to hybrid or remote options makes them more likely to stay with their employer

# Employees want more than direction, they want transparency

Trust from employees towards leadership has become just as important as the trust leaders place in their people. As organisations navigate constant change and rising expectations, employees are no longer satisfied with direction alone. Employees want to be informed not only about business outcomes but also about the rationale behind decisions, company priorities, and how their roles contribute to the bigger picture.

Our survey results highlight specific areas where transparency is falling short. Just 15% of employees say they feel well informed about their organisation's ESG goals, and 60% want more visibility into how pay equity and promotion decisions are handled.



The importance of communication is clear. In our survey, 81% of employees said transparent communication from leaders is essential to building a strong workplace culture.

Mental Health America's 2024 study supports this, with just 47% of employees feeling their organisation communicates clearly, a factor closely linked to psychological safety and day-to-day motivation.

When people trust what they're hearing from leaders and feel safe to contribute, they're more likely to remain engaged and committed.





# Upskilling is critical for building a stronger, more adaptable workforce



Although businesses are navigating constant change and juggling countless priorities, learning and development (L&D) cannot be an afterthought. Upskilling is critical, not just for retention, but for building a stronger, more adaptable workforce that can keep pace with the future of work.

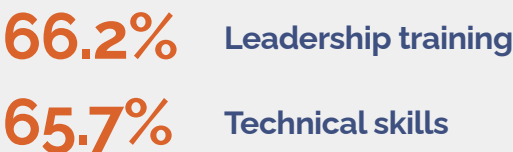
Our survey revealed that most are already comfortable using new technologies:



But confidence isn't the same as feeling supported. Just 11% of employees say they're very satisfied with the development opportunities offered by their employer. And this matters when it comes to loyalty:

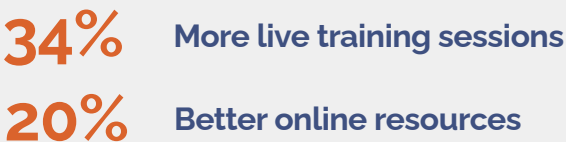


Today's professionals want more than generic learning paths. They're looking for targeted development that aligns with their goals and the changing demands of their roles. The top priorities include:



Plus: Certifications, soft skills, mentoring, and cross-functional projects

As AI becomes more embedded in daily work, employees are asking for practical support, not just tools, but guidance to use them well. Their top requests include:



Plus: Clearer policies and expectations around tech and data use



# Creating the conditions for people to perform



Productivity in today's workplace is shaped by experience. When people feel connected, trusted, and set up to succeed, performance follows.

Our findings highlight a consistent truth: employees thrive when the right conditions are in place. The most successful organisations aren't just reacting to change, they're designing environments where people can do their best work.

This means shifting the focus from short-term retention strategies to long-term employee experience, one built on trust, inclusion, recognition and opportunity. According to Gallup, engaged employees show 23% higher profitability, while research from McKinsey shows that employees who experience strong career development are more than twice as likely to stay with their employer long term.

To support high-performing, loyal teams, leaders must double down on five critical areas:



Visible & transparent leadership



Culture-driven engagement & recognition



Competitive, flexible & fair reward strategies



Future-focused learning & development opportunities



Connection across hybrid work environments

Ultimately, the organisations that succeed in 2025 and beyond will be those that understand: **performance is personal. It's not just about metrics, it's about meaning.**



# About Empresaria

**Established in 1996, Empresaria Group plc is a global specialist staffing and solutions group with operations spanning six diverse sectors across 15 countries and serving even more.**

Driven by our passion for the staffing industry, we are committed to positively impacting the lives of people, while delivering exceptional talent to our clients globally. Listed on the London Stock Exchange's AIM segment, we are committed to excellence in staffing, providing tailored talent solutions that meet our clients' unique needs. Our service offerings include Temporary and Contract Staffing, Permanent Placement, Executive Search, Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO), Outplacement, and Outsourcing.

**For more information about Empresaria and our recruitment brands, as well as the services we provide, learn more [here](#).**

