

WHAT WORKERS WANT

FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING AT WORK

What does it mean to thrive at work? According to today's workforce, it means being empowered to grow, nurturing mental fitness and well-being, finding meaning and purpose in their work, and defining success for themselves. ManpowerGroup researched and analyzed responses from frontline, corporate, and call center workers, as well as job seekers to learn what it means to thrive at work. And we've partnered with leading behavior change technology company Thrive to help employers turn insights into action to ensure both organizations and individuals alike are resilient and primed to succeed.

“This is a time of constant change and disruption, but it's also a once-in-a-generation opportunity to redefine how we work and live. Forward-thinking companies need to do away with the zero-sum idea of work and life reflected in the myth of 'work-life balance' by embedding well-being into the workflow itself, and investing in our most important resource: our people.”

— Arianna Huffington, Founder & CEO of Thrive

1. PUSHING THE FLEXIBILITY FRONTIER

Hybrid and remote working paved the way for many workers to enjoy more flexibility.



61%
want to switch to a four-day work week (compressed hours, full effort, full pay)



38%
want to choose start and end times



37%
want to choose where they work (workplace or home) – based on their daily needs



17%
almost one fifth of workers would work a four-day work week for less pay to achieve better balance

Flexibility, not just flexible working, will be a lasting legacy of the pandemic. Employers need to listen, adapt and respond to what workers want now – more than ever before.

2. REWRITING THE RULES OF LEADERSHIP

Workers' expectations of what they want from their jobs, and their lives, have changed dramatically. Leaders need to create workplaces with more flexibility; autonomy; physical and mental well-being support; trust; coaching and development.

WORKERS WANT:

83% A SUPPORTIVE MANAGER

82% A TEAM THEY LIKE AND TRUST

80% LEADERS THEY CAN TRUST

Trust is important for a thriving workforce. Equipping leaders and managers with the right skills to support employees will help organizations to meet individual and business needs.

3. THRIVING – THE HOW TO...

Women and men experienced different challenges through the pandemic, and their specific demands of employers continue to evolve.

WHAT WOMEN WANT



Working with colleagues they trust
Having a supportive manager
Meaningful work
Working for organizations that share their values
Managing mental fitness

WHAT MEN WANT



By offering both men and women the flexibility they need to thrive, employers will have access to the widest possible pool to source and retain the best talent.

4. FORGING A FAMILY FRIENDLY FUTURE

Following the collision of work, school, and home life over the past two years, working parents want more:

SUPPORT TO STAY HEALTHY

56% access to physical fitness resources
54% healthy food options at work

OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN NEW SKILLS

73% at work
26% outside of work

AT WORK

75% career progression
74% meaningful work

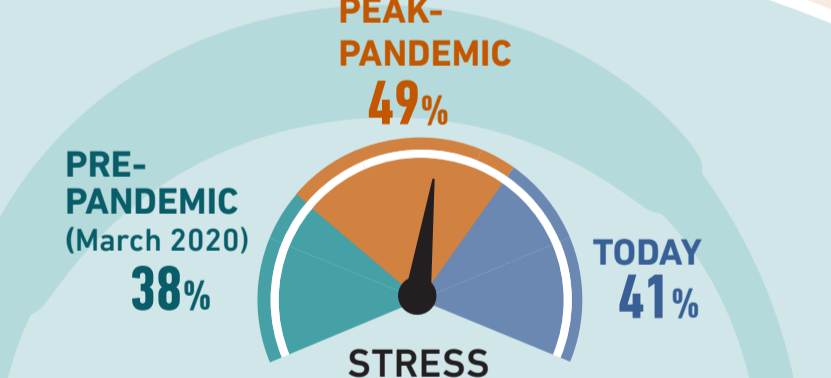
SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVING

55% childcare
52% elderly relatives

A thriving workplace means giving parents the support they need to manage uncertain times with less stress.

5. FIGHTING BURNOUT, BUILDING MENTAL FITNESS

The pandemic moved mental health to the top of the agenda for every company. Workers now want employers to support their mental well-being.



25% of workers want more mental health support from employers to protect against burnout.

YOUNG PEOPLE:

Experiencing greater feelings of being overwhelmed (42%). They are, however, more likely to open up and discuss mental well-being at work, and to seek out the resources they need from employers.

Increasingly, employers will be called on to prevent burnout, build resilience and boost mental fitness. Well-being is no longer seen as a perk, but as an essential strategy for success.

KEY EMPLOYER ACTIONS: SMALL STEPS, BIG IMPACT

Move from surviving to thriving with these Thrive-approved strategies for a healthier and more productive workplace:

START WITH THE ENTRY INTERVIEW

Don't wait for an exit interview to learn what kind of flexibility your employees need. The Entry Interview is a conversation between a new hire and their manager on Day One that starts by asking "What's important to you outside of work and how can we support you?"

ACTIVATE CULTURE CHANGE, STARTING AT THE TOP

Use the power of storytelling and role modeling to give people at every level of the organization cultural permission to prioritize their well-being. When leaders share how they set boundaries and recharge — and celebrate team members who do the same — it ignites a network effect that creates change across teams and entire organizations.

INTEGRATE WELL-BEING INTO EVERY MEETING

Stress is inevitable, but cumulative stress is avoidable. Find ways to embed well-being into the daily workflow to prevent stress from building up and becoming overwhelming. Start team meetings by sharing a personal Thrive Reset created by a different team member. End meetings five minutes early to give people time to recharge before their next task. These small moments can add up to big individual and organizational impact.

PRACTICE MICROSTEPS

Encourage employees to adopt Microsteps — small, science-backed steps to build new healthy habits in the areas that matter most. Explain that there's nothing wrong with aiming big, but we can help ourselves by starting small: taking an actual lunch break, turning a sit-down meeting into a walking meeting, or scheduling time on your calendar for something outside of work that matters to you. Invite leaders and team members to share which Microsteps they're trying and why — as well as what challenges they're facing and where they need support.

CREATE A CULTURE OF COMPASSIONATE DIRECTNESS

Empower employees to speak up, give feedback, disagree, and surface problems, pain points and constructive criticism immediately. When employees share feedback and new ideas, as well as tension points, with compassion, empathy, and understanding, the whole company benefits.

People don't just want to survive, they want to thrive. Workers are demanding more — choice, flexibility, autonomy and well-being. Employers who are willing to stop, listen and, most importantly, take action to attract, nurture and retain the very best talent will win in the most competitive labor market in living memory.