ManpowerGroup®

WHAT WORKERS WANT

From Surviving To Thriving At Work

In partnership with THRIVE

Introduction

What does it mean to thrive at work? According to today's workforce, it means being empowered to grow, nurturing mental fitness and physical well-being, finding meaning and purpose in their work, and defining success for themselves.

The world of work has irrevocably changed; the seismic shifts caused by the pandemic have accelerated trends that have been building for some time. Talent is now in extremely short supply, leading to intense competition.

And we don’t see this abating any time soon. Demographic shifts are exacerbating the situation, ensuring that in-demand workers will have the upper hand for the foreseeable future. Fair wages and stability will always be important, but they are increasingly hygiene factors. Workers expect more – from their working lives, and from their employers. Well-being, both emotional and physical, is now firmly front and center when it comes to workers’ priorities.

People don’t just want to survive, they want to thrive – and they are willing to vote with their feet, as evidenced by the great resignations, great reshuffles and great reprioritization of recent months. Employers need to listen, rethink and act to attract and retain talent in the most competitive labor market in living memory.

THRIVE

> 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

ManpowerGroup researched and analyzed responses from over 5,000 frontline, corporate, and call center workers, as well as job seekers, across five countries (Australia, France, Italy, United Kingdom and United States) to learn what it means to thrive at work. We took it a step further by partnering 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.

KEY FINDINGS

1 PUSHING THE FLEXIBILITY FRONTIER

2 REWRITING THE RULES OF LEADERSHIP

3 THRIVING - THE HOW TO...

4 FORGING A FAMILY FRIENDLY FUTURE

5 FIGHTING BURNOUT, BUILDING MENTAL FITNESS

1 PUSHING THE FLEXIBILITY FRONTIER

Flexibility For All

> A thriving workplace is one that supports the whole human and puts employee well-being and mental health first. People want life-work integration, acknowledging the truth that we bring our whole selves to work. The desire for flexibility is a desire to recalibrate our relationship between our lives and our work.

— Arianna Huffington, Founder & CEO of Thrive

Employees across all sectors, at all levels, are demanding more choice and autonomy over when they work; choosing start and end times to their working days, and being offered choice over shift patterns to fit around individual needs.

Flexibility, Not Just Flexible Working, Will Be A Lasting Legacy Of The Pandemic

We might not have the final conclusion of what it will look like yet, but we've experienced the biggest ever pilot of new work models, the results of which will have a lasting impact on how, where, when and why we work.

92%

of all people now see flexibility as important to their working lives

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

At a time where 74% of employers are reporting difficulties in hiring – a 16 year high – listening, adapting and responding to workers' needs beyond the paycheck will become a differentiating factor in attracting and retaining talent.

My Work, My Way: Workers Want Choice

FLEXIBILITY DRIVES BUSINESS SUCCESS – Organizations offering flexibility of when, where and how much employees work define **55%** of their workforce as being high performers, compared to only **36%** in organizations with a standard 40-hour working week.

FLEXIBILITY IS WANTED BY THE MANY, NOT JUST THE FEW – 60% of the workforce has been onsite at work for the past two years, while many knowledge workers experimented with remote and hybrid models. **Fairness, equity and inclusion** are increasingly important to business leaders. To avoid further polarizing an already polarized workforce, we need to explore flexible opportunities for all, such as a choice of shifts, preferred teams and working hours.

IT'S TIME TO SHIFT TO A HUMAN-CENTRIC WORKFORCE – Moving away from the workplace-centric models of the past will increasingly determine business success. Factoring in flexibility, empathy and collaboration will enhance the employee experience and increase productivity.

EMPLOYERS SHOULD MEASURE PERFORMANCE BY OUTPUT, NOT HOURS – Presenteeism does not equate to business success. Setting clear performance objectives, offering opportunities for upskilling and establishing a supportive work culture will reap greater **rewards**.

2 REWRITING THE RULES OF LEADERSHIP

Changing Expectations

> Workers are increasingly demanding that their workplaces stand for something beyond profit. They're looking for cultures of authenticity and trust, and leaders who model and nurture these qualities. Too many leaders still buy into the misguided notion that urgent or chaotic times require them to be in constant motion and always on, or that they somehow have to match the frenetic pace of the moment. In fact, the opposite is true. The best way to lead a company forward, gain trust, and connect meaningfully with employees is for leaders to also look within and connect with themselves.

— Arianna Huffington, Founder & CEO of Thrive

Workers' expectations of what they want from their jobs, and their lives, have changed dramatically. This is transforming the relationship between employees and business leaders. People are demanding meaningful, purpose-driven work while contesting conventional working norms. Businesses that are purpose-led and open to supporting workers' needs, encouraging **"the individual as a whole"** at work, will lead the way.

What Workers Want From Leaders

To ensure work is net positive for their people, leaders need to give more: **flexibility; autonomy; physical and mental well-being support; trust; coaching and development**.

WORKERS WANT:

- **83%** A supportive manager
- **82%** To work with people they get along with and trust
- **81%** To feel motivated about the work they do
- **80%** A leader they can trust
- **74%** To find meaning in their daily work
- **69%** To know their work contributes positively to society

Trust & Support: Leadership Begins In the Middle for a Thriving Workforce

Success in addressing workers' needs will be closely linked to managers. Once dubbed the "frozen middle," managers are the glue that connects an organization. The role of middle manager has been tested to the extreme over the past two years – requiring empathy, wellbeing support and coaching – often at a distance and during times of stress and uncertainty. Having been pushed to adopt brand new work models at breakneck speed, managers were expected to maintain productivity while monitoring (virtual) presenteeism and delivering business results.

While it's **rare to have the innate ability to manage**, these skills can be learned. Upskilling managers to manage the employee experience and deliver on the employee value proposition through **coaching and development versus task management** will improve business performance.

Creating a culture of trust and psychological safety for employees, through empathetic and effective management, is a prerequisite for a thriving workforce.

Equipping leaders and managers with the right skills to **'model, coach and care'** for employees will help organizations navigate this transformational shift and find solutions that meet both individual and business needs.

THRIVING – THE HOW TO...

How Women and Men Thrive

> Both men and women are rejecting the myth that burnout is simply the price we have to pay for success.

— Arianna Huffington, Founder & CEO of Thrive

Women and men both experienced challenges through the pandemic but they were markedly different, and their specific demands of employers continue to evolve.

What Women and Men Want

WHAT WOMEN WANT		WHAT MEN WANT
82%	Working with colleagues they trust	77%
77%	Having a supportive manager	71%
73%	Meaningful work	69%
69%	Working for organizations that share their values	65%
60%	Managing mental fitness	54%
49%	More flexibility at the start and end of the day	42%
44%	More support for physical fitness	48%
43%	More healthy eating options at work	46%
41%	More flexibility to help prevent workplace burnout	34%
34%	More time off to help fight burnout	35%
18%	More career coaching and development	25%
18%	More flexibility to reduce pollution / negative impact on the planet	21%

A Thriving Workforce Is a Diverse Workforce

Women represent **39%** of the world's total working population and now make up the majority of graduates, yet they are still not able to fulfil their potential as less than **one third of managerial and leadership positions** are held by women.

Since February 2020, in the U.S. alone, almost **1.1 million women** have left the labor force, demonstrating the impact of the pandemic on women's working lives, with women also reporting higher levels of **burnout** than men.

There's a strong business case for gender diversity. Gender-diverse teams drive higher revenues, offer better opportunities to a wider talent pool, and out-perform less diverse counterparts by **25%.** Companies with more women in leadership roles also **perform better**.

For organizations to succeed at a time where labor is scarce, employers must commit to closing the gender representation gap across all levels. By offering both men and women the flexibility they need to thrive, employers will have access to the widest pool to source and retain the best talent.

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FORGING A FAMILY FRIENDLY FUTURE

Rebalancing Work for Parents

> Before anyone had heard of COVID-19, children were in the midst of a growing mental health crisis. Then came virtual school, isolation, and more time spent on screens and social media. We might be entering a new phase of the pandemic, but the challenges parents are facing are definitely not diminishing. Of course, these are stressful times for everybody. We all want to be the best parents we can be for our children. Parenting has never been easy, and it was a challenge even before family life, work and school began happening under the same roof for millions of people around the world.

— Arianna Huffington, Founder & CEO of Thrive

Having experienced the collision of work, school, and home life over the past two years, many have re-evaluated their lives and priorities and are demanding change. **Parents** have left their jobs in greater numbers than non-parents over recent months.

Nurturing Parents

Flexibility is the top demand amongst parents and choosing when they start and finish work is a key factor, but parents want more. In the wake of the pandemic, many are more tuned into the importance of balance, well-being, acceptance and belonging at work — and the need for support from employers for both mental and physical health.

PARENTS ARE DEMANDING:

SUPPORT TO STAY HEALTHY

56% Want access to physical fitness resources (vs. 37%*)

54% Want healthy food options at work (vs. 37%*)

AT WORK

75% Want career progression (vs. 65%*)

74% Choose meaningful work (vs. 68%*)

SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVING

55% For childcare (vs. 52%*)

31% Care for elderly relatives (vs. 37%*)

OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN NEW SKILLS

73% At work (vs. 63%*)

26% Outside of work (vs. 20%*)

*represents non-parents

Parents: Prioritize My Priorities

Parents are asking for employers' support to better redress the balance of home/working lives to enable them to thrive. It's no longer just about hiring the individual, employers need to cater to what workers want for themselves and their families. A thriving workforce means giving parents the support they need to manage uncertain times with less stress. Creating solutions that support sustainable employment and nurture parents' potential requires strong leadership, innovative thinking and close collaboration with parents.

FIGHTING BURNOUT, BUILDING MENTAL FITNESS

Supporting Mental Well-being

> The pandemic made it impossible to ignore what was already a growing mental health crisis. The task now is to move from awareness to action. It's about helping people spot the warning signs of mental health challenges so that they can seek the help they need, make the changes they need to make, and live the lives they want - not just the lives they settle for.

— Arianna Huffington, Founder & CEO of Thrive

The crisis put mental health high on public and corporate agendas and workers now expect employers to support their mental well-being and provide opportunities to build mental fitness. The focus is on prevention versus cure.

Raising Awareness, Protecting Workers

PEAK-PANDEMIC (March 2020 – March 2021) **49%**

PRE-PANDEMIC (March 2020) **38%**

TODAY 41%

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

YOUNG PEOPLE: Are 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.

Destigmatize To Thrive

The need to shift mental health in the workplace from taboo to 'talked about' is real. Despite growing awareness of the importance of managing our mental well-being, and **increased investment** in mental health support at work since the crisis began, 29% of workers have not tapped into mental health resources at work or are unaware that these exist.

Mental health awareness is high amongst young people, and they may **provide the solution**. Younger workers tend to be more open about mental health issues, laying the foundation for open conversations and providing valuable insights for employers looking to better support mental well-being. Working with young people could be a valuable route to creating sustainable and practical solutions to support mental fitness for the entire workforce.

Organizations need to do more to lead the charge and destigmatize the topic. This will require ongoing investment and we'll see a rise in Chief Mental Well-being Officer roles. To some extent this is uncharted territory for the business world, but taking time to understand workers' needs and experiment with support models will lead to better health for individuals and businesses alike. Increasingly well-being is seen not as a perk, but as an essential strategy for success.

Key Employer Actions: Small Steps, Big Impact

THRIVE

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.

Help Workers To Thrive

People don’t just want to survive, they want to thrive and as we've seen with the Great Resignation, they're willing to vote with their feet. Workers are demanding more – more choice, more flexibility, more autonomy, more well-being. The legacy of workers’ wants and shifting workplace dynamics will outlast the pandemic recovery. Employers who are willing to stop, listen and take action to attract, nurture and retain the very best talent will win in the most competitive labor market in living memory.

For more information visit: **https://web.manpowergroup.us/what-workers-want**