



Navigating employee motivation and behaviours in 2022

The employer field-kit

Insights from the 2022 Australian workforce study on talent attraction and retention.

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Introduction



Globally we find ourselves in the most competitive and imbalanced employment market many of us will see in our lifetimes.

As a result, there are big challenges ahead in both recruiting and retaining the right talent. The right talent are people who are aligned to your company's purpose and values, and who contribute positively to its ongoing success. To meet these challenges, as employers we need to completely reassess the ways we attract, hire, engage and develop talent. It will require a much **more employee-centric** and individually tailored approach that aims to truly understand people and deliver on their needs, as opposed to the traditional one-size-fits-all methodology normally adopted by employers.

From an employer perspective, you want to find the right talent for your business to ensure you grow, and build sustained competitive advantage. And in the tight labour market we currently find ourselves in, you need to be attuned to what is important to talent.

In this whitepaper we examine current research, as well as findings from our 2022 White Collar Worker Study, which Compono commissioned with YouGov.

We discuss the leading and lagging indicators of talent acquisition, retention and development. Leading indicators refer to the factors that influence and drive the results or outcomes you want, while lagging indicators refer to the outcomes you want - how successful you were in hiring the 'right' talent, developing talent in the 'right' way to remain competitive, and keeping the 'right' talent to ensure you embed the culture you want. The causal chain of leading and lagging indicators are simple; by focusing on the leading indicators, you will take care of the lagging. However, this is easier said than done, and knowing where to start or what leading indicators to focus on can be difficult. Put another way, knowing exactly **what drives and motivates employees** in the current market can help guide you to implement the right tactics to achieve your outcomes. This whitepaper will help you, as an employer, understand what to do and what to focus on to ensure you navigate the challenging waters of the current employment landscape.

About Compono's White Collar Workers 2022 Study

Compono, in collaboration with YouGov, conducted an online research study in early 2022 to better understand the employment landscape. Specifically, to uncover what motivates employees in the workplace and what drives them to change jobs and how this information can be used to help employers to hire better and engage talent more effectively. Survey respondents comprised a nationally representative sample of **1016 Australians aged between 18 and 70+ years who worked in a professional job in an office setting** with businesses with three or more employees. Respondents ranged from clerical level employees to managerial level employees. The survey sample provided an even cross-section of white collar workers: 51% male and 49% female; 31% aged between 18 and 34, 41% between 35 and 49; and 28% 50 and older. From a generational perspective, **7% were Generation Z, 47% Millennials, 34% Generation X and 12% Baby Boomers.**

Generation Z

7%

Millennials

47%

Generation X

34%

Baby Boomers

12%

About the Author

Rudy Crous

Co-Founder, Compono



As a Corporate Psychologist, Rudy has guided businesses on how to improve their company culture, competence and workforce behaviours to help them excel in their mission and objectives. Passionate about people and intrigued by their relationship with work, Rudy saw a disconnect in organisational design and the way people like to work. This led to Compono being born. Utilising technology to bring best practice approaches, science and academia into the world of work.

“

I wanted **every** organisation to have access to the knowledge and framework used by **organisational psychologists** and **neuroscientists** to help them design their companies proactively. It's important to use systematic, standardised, scientific approaches when it comes to talent acquisition, development, and retention and Compono offers this in its suite of products and solutions.

Rudy believes that both companies and people are living organisms with their own unique personalities and circumstances that impact their journey. Both need to go through various stages of growth, introspection and guided development to achieve their full potential. With Compono there is now an intelligent platform where companies and talent can find each other based on aligned values and purpose, and develop together in a more proactive and strategic way. Compono is there from the beginning of an individual's work journey to the end. Providing companies with the right

intelligence and interaction for individuals to have greater fulfillment in their careers and companies to more cohesively work with and develop their people. Rudy specialises in Organisational Change and Culture Management, Operational Strategy and Planning.

He is a Registered Psychologist and holds a Bachelor of Business Management (HR & IR), Bachelor of Science Psychology (Hons), Master of Organisational Psychology, and PhD Organisational Psychology (Candidate).



07

The Great Attraction



In June 2022, Australia's unemployment rate fell to 3.5%¹, and the Reserve Bank of Australia predicts that "a further decline in unemployment and underemployment is expected over the months ahead"². That is the lowest Australian unemployment rate in almost 50 years and is likely to lead to increased pressure on wages and for the continued war for talent to intensify.

At the same time, we are seeing a significant increase in staff turnover across all sectors, which industry pundits have dubbed the 'Great Resignation'. The Australian Bureau of Statistics found that the number of people indicating they expect to change jobs in the next 12 months was higher than pre-pandemic levels at 699,000 people in February 2022 (5.2% of employed people, compared with 4.9% of employed people in February 2020).³

Our own White Collar Workers 2022 Study bears that out.

86%

of Australian workers would consider or are considering leaving their current employer within the next 12 months.

With so many Australian workers potentially looking for a new role, there's a **great opportunity** to attract new talent to join your organisation. Some people are calling it the Great Poach and the Great Rehire⁴, but we like to think of it as the '**Great Attraction**'.

That's because it's important to focus on the motivational factors that will attract potential candidates to come and work for your organisation, and what you need to do to successfully hire the right people.

Online employment job board Seek has observed an increase in candidate job search activity - people online looking at potential jobs - but the number of applications per job is down⁵. That's a sign that the job candidates are there, but that the job ads aren't matching their expectations or aren't enticing enough to attract them away from their current employer.

The first step to **increasing your chances of hiring the right talent** is to stack your candidate pipeline by attracting more people to your roles. This means screening candidates in, not out. The purpose of a job ad is to attract talent to your company; screening them in. The purpose of your talent acquisition (TA) function is to filter out the unsuitable candidates. Your job ad should never be used to filter candidates out; while the person might not be right for the advertised job they could be a match to another role in your company.

Moreover, in the tight talent market we currently have, you might need to negotiate on some of your key selection criteria and accept that there is no such thing as the “**perfect candidate**”. You have to give your TA choices around who is best to hire and what the minimum criteria are that you are willing to accept or that defines baseline success for the role.

You have **three choices**:

1

Due to lack of talent, simply hire anyone that remotely looks like they can do the job. That’s the old “I need bums on seats” tactic - a popular tactic that has shown time and time again to **fail**.

2

Filter through the CVs and wait and wait and wait some more until you find that perfect candidate, that needle in the haystack that would be the dream employee - which we all know **doesn’t exist or takes too long to find**.

3

Hire the person with the right **attitudes** and **attributes** that might not have all the technical skills, experience or qualifications but will fit your organisation and its **culture**. This is the person that you can train and upskill on the job and develop their career journey while in your business. These are also likely to be the employees who are hungry to develop themselves and thus **commit to your business for longer** because you showed trust and believed in them.

Moreover, your job ad needs to talk about the **Employee Value Proposition (EVP)** of your company. The EVP is what separates your workplace from everyone else's and defines that you understand what's important to candidates and why working at your company is the best decision they can make and how it aligns to their motivations.

In our **White Collar Workers 2022 Study**, when we asked workers what **key benefits or incentives** they would need to be offered to consider accepting a new role, the top three must-haves were:

above-standard benefits



48%

flexible working hours



44%

a flexible 'work from home' policy



44%

Other common must-haves included an inspiring manager (43%), location of the workplace (31%), formal learning and development for career development (23%) and profit-sharing benefits (21%).

[See Table 1 below.](#)

While above-standard benefits rated the highest, this wasn't just about pay. It was about the complete package of benefits offered; for example, more than four weeks' annual leave, medical/health insurance paid for by the company, rostered days off, more than 10% superannuation, access to mental health services, etc.

Key benefits / incentives for a new workplace

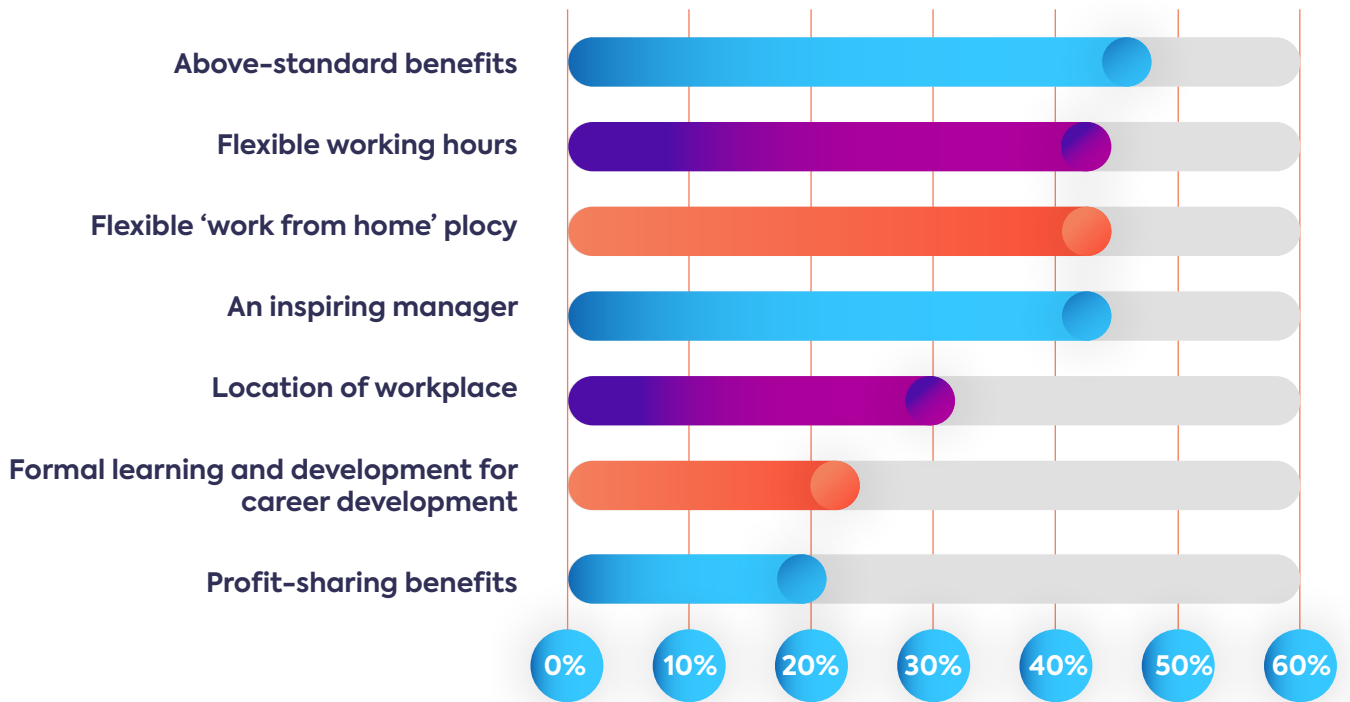


Table 1: Key benefits/incentives for a new workplace

Our findings align well with a recent study from research firm Gartner, which found that the top three drivers of attraction for Australian workers are **work-life balance, location and compensation**.⁶ If your EVP, or job ad, doesn't differentiate on these and other key motivational factors, and provide candidates with a more attractive proposition than their current role, they aren't likely to apply.

In the following section we will look at some of these motivational factors that drive talent to leave their current roles.

Flexible Working and Side Hustles

The attraction of flexible work arrangements and work-life balance shouldn't be underestimated. The return to the **office mandate** imposed by an organisation can be the catalyst for **serious attrition**. A tweet from the CEO and founder of Firstbase, an all-in-one remote work provisioning company in the US, sums it up:

“

From a CEO:

“Every time a competitor mentions return to office our recruiters reach out to their people. We've hired 15+ of their engineers in the last 2 months.” So easy.⁷

Countless studies have found that flexible working has become a **non-negotiable employment condition** for many employees. For example, in **HubSpot's 2022 Hybrid Work Report**, 36% of workers said they would rather make a regular visit to the dentist than work in an office five days a week.⁸

“Global research from IWG showed that 72% of office workers would prefer long-term flexibility over where they're based rather than extra money,” said Damien Sheehan, country head for flexible workspace provider IWG in Australia. IWG's survey of over 1000 Generation Z workers found that 42% would forgo a pay rise between 6-20% in favour of having a hybrid work environment, while 21% would turn down a pay rise between 10-20% in favour of hybrid work arrangements.⁹

Flexible working also might need to encompass an employee's other pursuits, or “side hustles” to which they are sometimes referred. We know that since the pandemic, workers have been spending an increasing amount of time developing skills and knowledge in different areas. Our own research bears that out, with one in two (50%) Australian white-collar workers saying they have undertaken ventures since the start of the pandemic.

Of those, 70% have been furthering their education with external studies, 48% starting a new business and 40% starting a new ‘side hustle’.

[See Table 2 below.](#)

Ventures undertaken since the pandemic

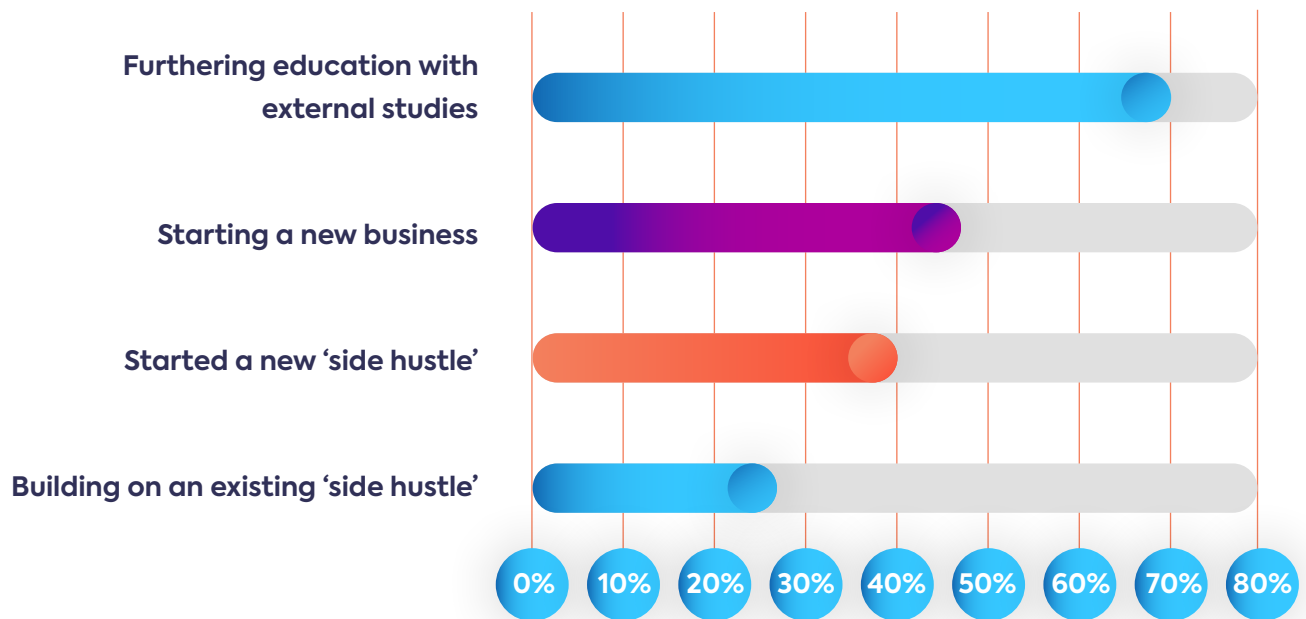


Table 2: Ventures undertaken since the pandemic

Flexible work conditions give people personal freedom to grow and it moves the employer-employee conversation away from the traditional thinking where employers “own” employees and have all the power in the relationship. Instead it is about **empowering employees** to be creative and follow their own passions beyond their typical job description or employment agreement. In many cases this could also be very advantageous to the company, especially if what they are working on could be incorporated in the business. At the very least it’s an outlet for employees to help them remain more committed to your company. It’s important not to see it as a distraction; see it as a way for your employees to express themselves and you gain the benefit of their improved wellbeing, creativity and upskilling.



Location

Location as the second biggest attractor is in part related to work-life balance, so it's no surprise that the dissatisfaction felt about returning to the office has a lot to do with the commute. Even pre-pandemic research, like the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey report from 2019,¹⁰ backs this up:

“ The HILDA Survey reveals that a long commute to work impacts people’s satisfaction with their jobs. Those who spend a long time getting to and from work each day are more likely to be dissatisfied with their job overall, as well as with their working hours, flexibility to balance work and non-work commitments, and salaries. In addition, people who have a longer daily commute are more likely to expect to leave their jobs in the next 12 months than those who spend less time getting to and from work.

Location as an attractor is either due to work’s proximity to home (or actually working from home!) or some desirable features about the location itself; for example, being close to different forms of public transport and other conveniences like food and retail outlets.

If we can combine two positives in flexible working and location, we have the **ultimate attractor**; the ability to work from home for at least some of the week, plus a physical workplace that meets the prospective candidate’s idea of a desirable location.

However, as an employer we can take location as a negative variable out of the equation all together.

The rise of flexible and remote working is enabling organisations to potentially recruit workers from wherever they are based. In Gartner’s global Remote Workforce Survey in 2021,



A good example is Atlassian, who introduced its “TEAM Anywhere” policy in August 2020. This allows its thousands of global employees to relocate to another city or country where the company has an established presence and accommodating time zone.¹²

Atlassian has stated that it is **looking to hire an additional 5,000** Australian employees in the next few years - which is going to be a challenge in the current labour market locally.

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We believe when we make the decision on TEAM Anywhere that it unlocks an entirely new pool of not only Australian talent, but global talent in ways that I don't even think we can fully imagine yet. It's going to require effort and we're prepared to put it behind it. But we know that those 5,000 people are out there.

Amy Glancey, Atlassian's Chief of Staff ¹³

At **Compono**, we've also adopted an **international hiring policy** particularly for our technical staff, largely because there is a shortage of skills here in Australia and we have realised that the right person can be just as successful and productive in their role working remotely. To date, we have had **huge success** in hiring staff in NZ and as our business grows we will be looking beyond the APAC region.

Money

You will need to be competitive on salary, because money can't be dismissed; after all it is still the number three driver for employees to choose to work for a company in Gartner's December 2021 survey¹⁴ and comprises elements of above-standard benefits, the top 'must-have' for a new role in our White Collar Workers 2022 Study (**see Table 1 above**). In fact, with the recent interest rate hikes and cost of living skyrocketing, you cannot underestimate how important it is to pay competitive salaries. What makes matters challenging, however, is that many well capitalized employers are already offering significantly above-market salaries, with which many other businesses cannot compete. Money is important, but if you can't compete with the **astronomical salaries** some companies are paying, perhaps it would be wise to hire from other markets (as discussed above) or look to some of the other motivating factors and double down.

For most of us, our personal identity is tied to our job, and knowing that fact can help employers to more successfully attract and hire the right candidate. Understanding the basic psychology of what motivates someone to work for, say, a betting agency versus a not-for-profit can help you craft your EVP or communicate more successfully to candidates that are truly interested in or aligned with your business and its purpose.

Finding the Right Candidate

As employers, we want to **get hiring right**. If we get it wrong, it can be very costly – both in direct and indirect costs, damage to your organisation’s culture and reputation. Getting it right means finding the right candidate, not necessarily the perfect candidate. As we covered above (see page 9), we can do that by hiring the person with the right attitudes and attributes that might not have all the skills and qualifications but who are hungry to join your business and evolve their careers.

It’s important in your job advertisements that you keep the requirements as **open** as possible and not to be too prescriptive (screen in, not out); in many cases the skillsets you are looking for might lie outside the traditional industry sectors you are used to targeting. **Attitude and personality** characteristics, although difficult to evaluate, are key to predicting job and team performance – and research backs this up.

“

Organisational culture (leadership styles, behaviours, values, and traditions) matters and 90% of employers indicate that identifying candidates with good culture fit is an important part of the selection process. Meta-analytic results have shown that employees with higher levels of culture fit have greater job satisfaction, show more organisational citizenship behaviours, and are less likely to leave an organisation. Since job satisfaction also relates to job performance, employees with greater culture fit also perform better on the job.¹⁵

We agree that one of the key criteria to a successful hire is whether they are a **good cultural** fit and share the organisation’s values.¹⁶



External Reputation

The external reputation of your organisation can also play a key role in attracting talent. While it's a critical component to retaining staff which we cover in more detail below (see further page 20), a great EVP creates a positive perception of your company with external candidates, or what U.S. HR expert Josh Bersin calls an **"irresistible organisation"**. "Employees are migrating from 'crummy jobs' to 'better jobs' and from 'companies that don't seem to care' to 'companies that really really care.' And for many workers this means moving to companies with opportunities for growth, promotion, and even a new industry."¹⁷

With a great EVP, your employees become great external advocates for your organisation and can be your best recruiters.

That advocacy can be taken a step further by implementing a formal employee referral program (ERP). The advantage of hiring candidates through an ERP is that your employees know your vision and your culture, so they're not likely to recommend someone who isn't already a good fit. More than just a monetary reward, most employees also know that a good referral reflects well on them, and is a positive influence on their own career development.

Your **reputation** as an employer is critical, so it's also important to be practising 'candidate care' throughout the recruitment process. That means treating your unsuccessful candidates **just as well** as you treat the successful ones. A bad experience is more likely to be shared than a good one and will directly affect how talent views and rate your company.



Talent acquisition is a long game...until it isn't

Theoretical approaches to competing for talent in a post-COVID world are one thing, but if you don't practically optimise your processes, and do things smarter, better and faster, it's not going to be of much use.

LinkedIn's data shows that, as of May 2021, the average hiring journey is **almost seven months** long, with approximately 40 interactions along the way.¹⁸ LinkedIn recommends that you can attract top talent by openly sharing your workplace policies, and by encouraging your employees to be advocates of your organisation and re-sharing your content because, post-pandemic, the needs of employees have shifted.

However, everything speeds up once you are in the active recruitment phase.

\$10,500

63 DAYS

Once a job is advertised, organisations can take up to 63 days on average¹⁹ to fill vacant roles at an average cost of \$10,500 (and over twice as much for C-level executives).²⁰

In a competitive recruitment market, in that time it takes you to fill the role, chances are your top candidates will be fielding job offers from other companies. The hiring process has historically started with shortlisting candidates based on technical skills and qualifications, before evaluating them for non-technical fit – i.e. cultural alignment and attitude. An **'intelligent recruitment'** approach, which augments human assessment with computer technologies, provides the capability to reduce recruitment hire without compromising on hiring the right people.

80%

Organisations using a solution like Compono Hire have reported cutting time to hire by 80%.²¹

Key here is that if you can't offer the right candidate the job within a reasonable timeframe, **someone else will**. Assuming you can, then once your candidate has accepted the role, there's still a big risk that they can take another offer, so pre-onboarding engagement is key.

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Talent Retention



Talent Retention

In the current employment market, **retaining the right talent** is equally as important, if not more important, as attracting the right talent. That's because these people are already in your business, forming and evolving the very fibre of your company's culture. There are social relationships amongst employees that you couldn't even fathom, forming the glue that holds the workplace together and keeps your business running. These people have deep knowledge and understanding of your company, your products and services, and are also very likely to know how to make your company an even better place to work.

Thus, understanding how to retain them is one of the most important and strategic things you can do; if you don't retain the right talent, you will find yourself in the unenviable position of not only having to hire new talent to grow your company, but also spending time and money on replacing top talent, onboarding them, and building new relationships. That all takes considerable time, which is **time that you don't have** given the labour market.

Chances are, as an employer, you've been trying your best just to keep your company going during COVID. The balance has shifted from staff being furloughed to now being in the driver's seat, and it's important that you recognise this new psychological contract with employees. If there is a misalignment between the employer and the employee on expectations, which could be around any number of factors, that's going to lead to higher satisfaction and most likely attrition rates.

Our **White Collar Workers 2022 Study** found that the top three reasons for an employee to consider leaving are:

- job role dissatisfaction (30%)
- feeling undervalued (29%)
- being offered a dream role elsewhere (28%)

These are followed closely behind by lack of work flexibility (27%), lack of career development opportunities (26%) and being unhappy with pay (25%).

See Table 3 below.

Employers must address each of these as quickly as possible to **prevent mass exodus** of staff. To try and stay ahead of the curve, it's important to review the following on a regular and ongoing basis:



check in with your employees that their role meets their expectations, as well as changes in their own personal and professional circumstances;



recognise and reward employees for their work and achievements;



have conversations and establish plans with your employees about their career paths and future learning and development goals; and



keep a weather eye on wage growth and market salaries.

Top reasons to leave current employer

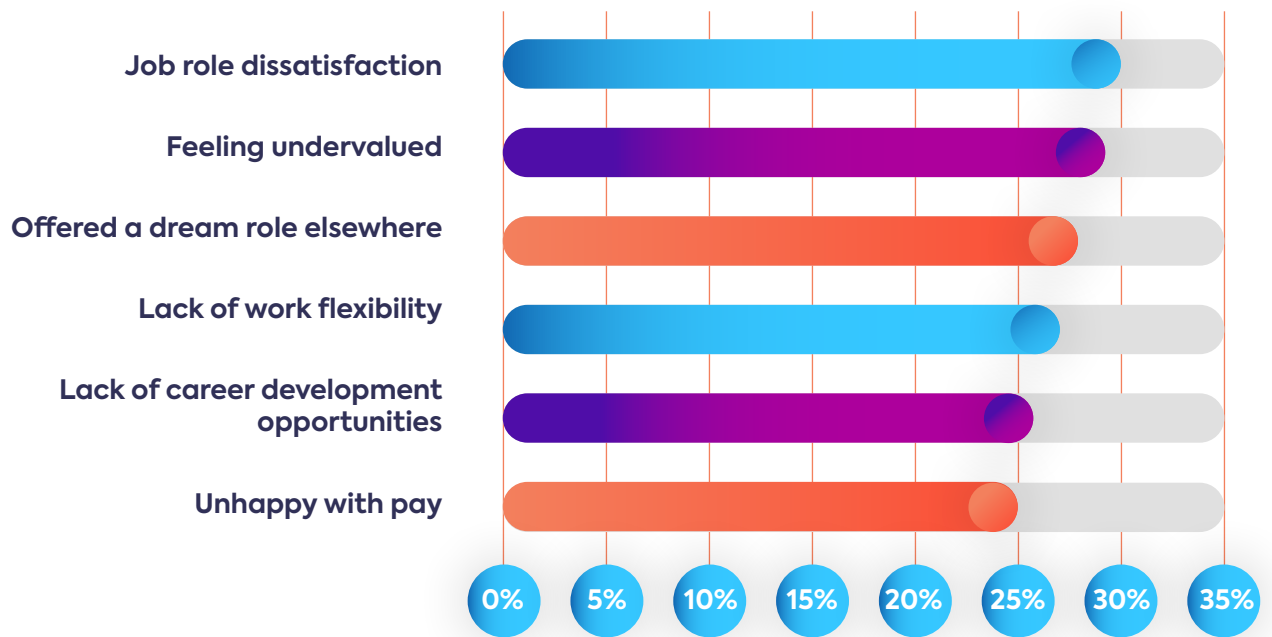


Table 3: Top reasons to leave current employer

In addition to the regular hygiene activities you need to be undertaking as part of maintaining your side of the psychological contract, there are some broader strategies on which you need to execute that are just as critical to retention. We feel the two most important to focus on are your **staff training and development** programs, and how you align your staff around your **corporate culture**. We'll discuss each of these now in more detail.

Nurturing Talent

As discussed above, our survey revealed that the top two reasons for white collar workers leaving their current employer are job-role dissatisfaction (30%) and feeling undervalued (29%). If you are demonstrating a genuine commitment to the development of your own people by investing in their training, and offering them opportunities to take on new roles and projects within the organisation, you are more likely to see higher engagement and retention rates in return. Investment in training and development also addresses any potential skills gaps that are becoming increasingly difficult to recruit from the job market and better prepares your organisation for the skills you will need tomorrow.

Employees are looking to better themselves and become subject matter experts in their fields, so to better retain staff it's up to employers to provide them with **ongoing career and development pathways**, otherwise there is a greater chance they will lose them to a more attractive proposition in the market.

Learning and development budgets are generally tight and the costs of third party training and certification can be expensive. It's important that we become good at identifying on which specific external courses we should be sending our people, and augmenting this with other learning and development opportunities that can be delivered internally or are free.

In his book [The Hard Thing About Hard Things](#), Ben Horowitz, one of Silicon Valley's most respected and experienced entrepreneurs says sending people on external courses isn't always the answer. In fact, companies should train their people themselves and it is their manager's job to do so.

There's a good illustration from Horowitz's book on the impact internal training can have on productivity:

“

Even if they were made aware of low productivity among new employees, most CEOs think that they don't have time to invest in training. Andy Grove does the math and shows that the opposite is true: Training is, quite simply, one of the highest-leverage activities a manager can perform.

Ben Horowitz, American Entrepreneur

Consider for a moment the possibility of your putting on a series of four lectures for members of your department. Let's count on three hours preparation for each hour of course time – 12 hours of work in total. Say that you have 10 students in your class. Next year, they will work a total of about 20,000 hours for your organization. If your training efforts result in a 1 percent improvement in your subordinates' performance, your company will gain the equivalent of 200 hours of work as the result of the expenditure of your 12 hours.”²²

Developing your own training sessions and courseware also means that you are delivering far more targeted, relevant content for your own business, and you are also building and retaining your own intellectual property and subject matter expertise that can be reused and contributes to the knowledge base of the business. The companies that do this really well are creating a 'university' within their own organisation, both in terms of content and the manager 'teachers' who deliver it.

Cultural Fit and Building Workplace Value

Regularly check in with your staff and find out what they value about working at the organisation, what works and doesn't work for them in the workplace, why they stay and why they leave. Key to this is getting a **regular** temperature check of your company climate and culture - understanding how your company operates and whether your culture is moving in the right direction. Doing so will help you identify the gaps between your current culture versus desired culture and help you to proactively identify initiatives to help bridge the gap. Left to their own devices, organisations will develop cultures in an organic and haphazard way. Cultures that develop organically sometimes just get it right. However, most of the time, at some point problems start to arise and performance suffers.

The bottom line for leaders is that if you don't become conscious of the cultures you are embedding, those cultures will ultimately manage you, and the road to recovery is long and hard.

As business leaders, we need to have a clear idea of what we want our cultures to be and understand how to go about establishing it to enable the desired employee and business outcomes.

The rewards for creating a positive and more aligned workplace culture is well worth it for both employees and employers. Having employee input into the process and creating alignment with them will lead to stronger workplace relationships, increased performance, and more **engaged and motivated employees**. Most significantly, employees will have greater workplace relationships, job satisfaction and loyalty to the company, saving future costs on rehiring and retraining.

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Three take-aways



For many organisations, talent shortages are making it difficult for talent acquisition teams to keep up with the demands of the business. In the U.S., Josh Bersin puts that underperformance down to the fact that only one in four companies are recruiting in an optimised way today.²³ In today's tight labour market, we believe that underperformance also extends to employee retention strategies, putting a greater emphasis on what organisations need to be doing better to keep their top talent.

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We just haven't got enough workers. We're on a recovery path but we have hit our capacity constraints.

Paul Bloxham, HSBC's chief economist in Australia.²⁴

So here are three important takeaways from this whitepaper.



1

Know who you are, so you know who to hire

In a competitive employment market, it's next to impossible to find the perfect candidate for the role you are advertising. You need to negotiate on what a 'good' candidate looks like; the right fit for your organisation could mean different things. While it might be difficult to find the exact skills you are looking for, it's important that you don't negotiate on behavioural fit or cultural alignment.

To do that successfully, you need to:

- evaluate your organisational culture,
- decide what defines success in the role, and
- ensure that you **embed** these into your **hiring** benchmarks as part of your recruitment and selection processes.

Alignment of the applicant to the culture of the organisation is the 'psychological contract' we enter into in the recruitment process, a process that can be assisted by technology. Good technology, such as **Compono Hire**, brings together academia and best practice, combining human psychology, AI, and organisational data to help **predict your best next employee**.





2

Cast the net wide, and act with speed

You need to stack your candidate pipeline, the quality of the people you shortlist, and the speed of hiring and onboarding successful applicants.

Integrated technologies can assist in optimising these processes:

- by broadcasting job ads at scale,
- accessing databases of existing talent pools, and
- using AI to increase your chances of finding a **great match** in values, job requirements and culture.



3

People insights enable better workforce performance

Employee engagement and building workplace culture and value are critical to your retention strategies, but the psychological contract you have with your people is not a fixed construct; it's undergoing constant evolution.

Science, data and academic models can be applied to help you understand how your business and people strategies align. That allows you to evaluate:

- the relationship between your organisation's current and desired culture,
- the attitudes and beliefs held by your people, and
- the effects of these in the workplace to build a **higher performing workforce**.

Employee engagement can be supported with tailored learning pathways that enable people to grow, develop skills, and fulfil their career development needs.



Appendix

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