



The New Social Contract

How the changing workplace has shifted
employee and employer expectations



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TRUE Global Intelligence,
the in-house research practice
of FleishmanHillard, fielded
an online survey of full-time
and part-time workers in the
United States (n=1,500).

methodology

Because of the high unemployment rate driven by the pandemic, we included workers who are currently out of work but are planning to work again in the future. These constitute 12% of our sample.

The survey excluded self-employed workers and was fielded from Dec. 11-16, 2020.

Some numbers included in the report may not appear to sum due to rounding.

Methodology Note

In this report, we focus frequently on the top of our survey scales – people who are very satisfied with their job versus unsatisfied, social contract elements that are very important versus somewhat important and social contract elements that describe workers' experiences very well versus somewhat well. This is because most workers are some degree of satisfied, all social contract elements are some degree of important and most job experiences are at least OK if not ideal. By focusing on the top of the scales, we can identify the highest priorities and the areas for improvement. Moreover, just as no employee wants to be merely somewhat satisfied with their job, employers too should aim for the top.

The Industrial Revolution changed not just the relationship between people and their work but the very rhythm and cadence of their daily lives. For centuries, lease-holding small farmers paid rent to a landed gentry.

Seemingly overnight, in the sweep of human history, these farmers and craftsmen became employees working for employers in exchange for wages. The clock and the boss replaced the sun and the season as the governors of people's working lives, which for many was 14 hours a day, six or seven days a week, from before the age of 10 through a shorter life expectancy than what had been enjoyed by their parents and grandparents. The turmoil and conflicts generated by these changing relationships continue to impact our daily lives and culture, from the 18th- and 19th-century political philosophies that are still relevant today to the outsized place the yeoman family farmer holds in the American imagination.

When work changes, society changes.

Whatever historians end up calling the revolution that has taken the United States from an industrial to a post-industrial society and economy, 2020 brought into sharp relief the societywide upheaval wrought by changes that appeared to be isolated to certain places and people: the declining value of employees' brawn, the hollowing out of local economies in places that had been supported by a single industry, the stagnant wages for many, the decline of union membership, the loss of jobs to competition from overseas and, more importantly today, to automation. These have destabilized lives, and when enough lives are destabilized, so is society.

So fundamental is the relationship between people and their work – between employee and employer – that we don't believe we're overstating our case when we describe this relationship as the New Social Contract. In the face of these trends and forces, the imperative now, for society no less than individual employees and employers, is to craft a New Social Contract that reflects the needs and hopes of the American workforce in this yet-unnamed economic epoch.

executive summary

Every organization creates its own culture within the larger culture surrounding it. Just as the larger culture isn't something anyone dictates, workplace culture is more than just the formal structures and rules established by an employer. It is the cumulative impact of the most junior to the most senior employees. Positive cultures lead to happy employees, and happy employees foster positive cultures. Therein lies the relevance of job satisfaction.

In the data that follows, we show that most workers are satisfied with their employment: as few as 12% are outright dissatisfied, with another 21% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Another third are somewhat satisfied, and the last third are very satisfied. These categories at the extremes – the very satisfied and the unsatisfied – demonstrate just how much satisfaction impacts a workplace.

Very satisfied workers go the extra mile, make sacrifices for their coworkers and the organization, and care about delivering quality to their clients and customers and success to the organization. They promote the business to others. They take greater responsibility for themselves and each other. They are proactive. They lower the cost of doing business while increasing revenue through innovation and improved productivity.

What drives satisfaction? Engagement.

While pay and benefits are important to everyone, very satisfied employees are more likely to experience positive engagement with their employer – honest communication, leaders who do and say what they mean, and feeling part of an organization driven by values.

Top Findings

In the New Social Contract between employees and employers, workers are looking for more than just tangible benefits, like quality healthcare and paid vacation. Instead, they are looking for something more elusive – trustworthy and honest communication from both leaders and companies. **Three of the five most important elements of the employee-employer relationship are communication-driven, with “receiving accurate and honest communications” ranking as the top element for employees.**

Why do communications matter in the workplace? Although this question has been the topic of endless opinion pieces by communications professionals, it continues to surface again and again when asked to justify communications work to clients. **Our survey reveals communications is a key differentiator for employee satisfaction, with nearly two times as many very satisfied employees saying they receive accurate and honest communications when compared with the average employee.** Similarly, unsatisfied employees are almost three times less likely than the average employee to say they receive accurate and honest communications.

The transition to work-from-home and online learning in Spring of 2020 served to highlight and deepen the ongoing struggle for working parents to balance family and job needs at the same time. **Although this struggle disproportionately affects women who are parents, nonparents and men are also regularly called upon to balance family and job needs at the same time, with more than 50% of men and nonparents reporting this is a regular occurrence.** This will be important for employers to keep in mind going forward as the workplace becomes both more flexible with respect to working from home and more inclusive.

Current Job Satisfaction

satisfaction

Only a third of workers are very satisfied in their jobs, with another third somewhat satisfied. We view this “somewhat” category as negative, as it is neither what workers want to be nor what employers strive for when trying to attract and retain employees.

Among those dissatisfied, many workers show signs of what others have called “unengaged” workers whose attitude toward work makes it difficult to motivate them.

High levels of satisfaction appear to be driven by communication between employees and employers (opportunities to give feedback, sincerity from management), shared values and opportunities to advance in their career.

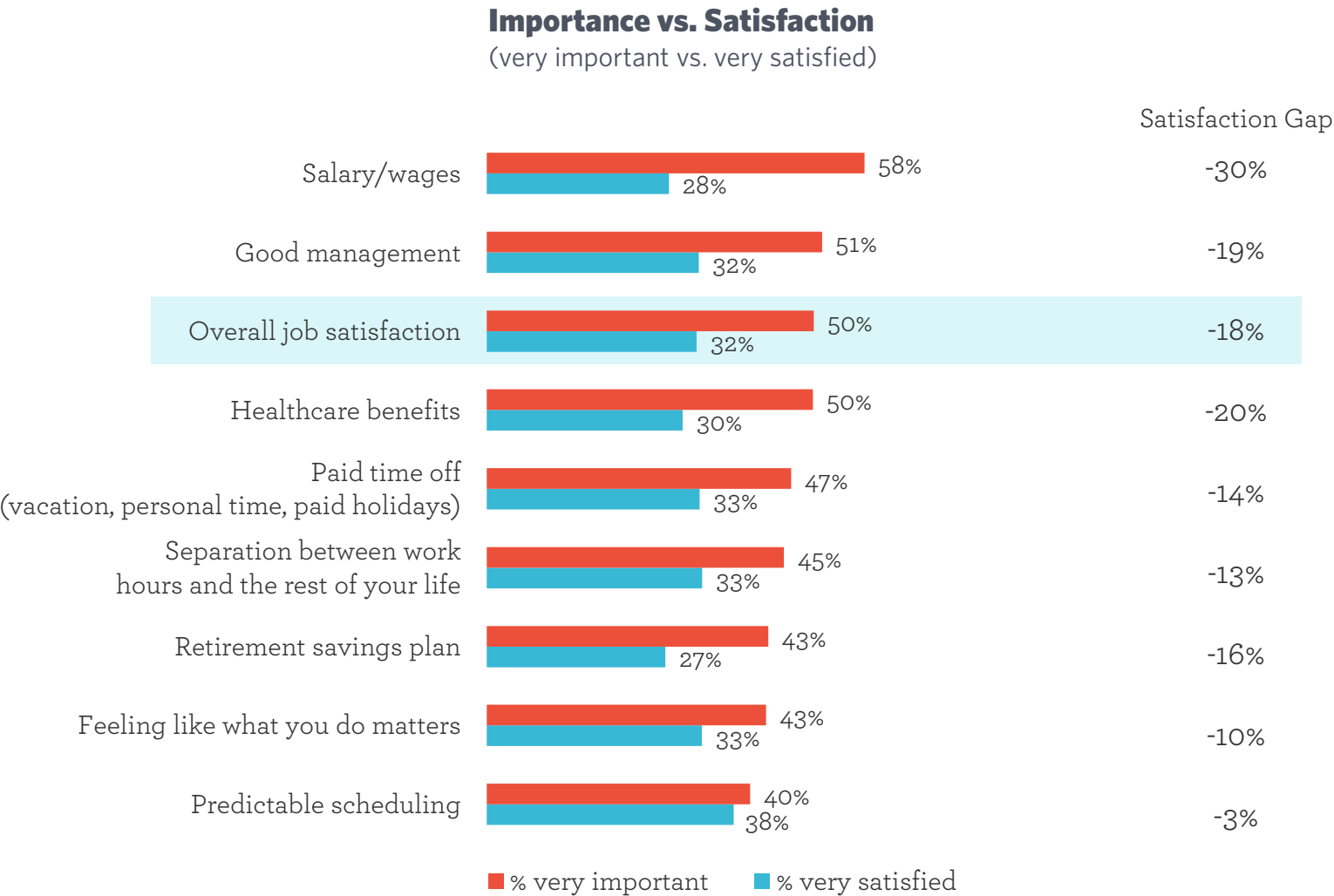
Although satisfaction is one of the most important job aspects, employees' experiences of job satisfaction fall short



Q4. How important or unimportant are the following aspects of work in general to you?

Q5. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your current (or most recent) work/employment?

Focusing on what's very important, the gap is even wider, meaning many are falling even shorter than what they should be aiming for



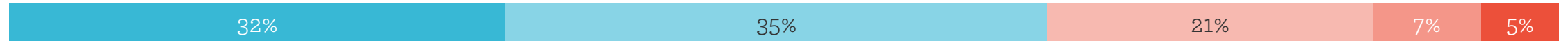
Q4. How important or unimportant are the following aspects of work in general to you?

Q5. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your current (or most recent) work/employment?

Who is satisfied or not satisfied with their job?

Overall Job Satisfaction

■ Very satisfied ■ Somewhat satisfied ■ Neutral/Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ■ Somewhat dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied



More likely to fall into these categories

- Work location changed during pandemic
- People who were working in an office prior to the pandemic
- IT workers
- Boomers
- Workers who are rewarded for doing extra
- Financially secure
- Politically progressive
- Parents

◀ Very satisfied employees are likely to stay at their employer two years longer (8.4) than other employees (6.9).

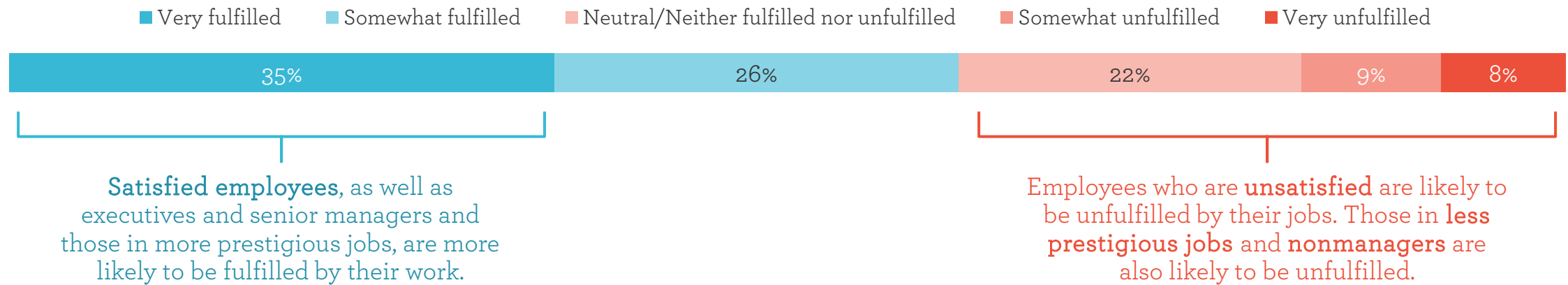
These apathetic workers are less likely to find any of the job attributes or experiences important and are less likely to put in any extra effort. Which came first – did job dissatisfaction make them apathetic, or are they dissatisfied because they're apathetic? Most likely both.

More likely to fall into these categories

- Restaurant and education workers
- Nonmanagement
- Work location didn't change during pandemic
- Workers whose coworkers, managers and employers rarely or never go above and beyond
- Workers who are not rewarded nor expected to do extra
- Workers who cannot, or can just barely, cover their monthly expenses
- Workers who can't cover an unexpected \$400 expense with cash or a credit card
- Job lacks social prestige
- Insecure in their job
- Struggling to meet work and personal obligations during the pandemic
- Considering leaving the workforce
- Income has declined during pandemic
- Politically moderate
- Workers who display apathy

Job fulfillment is slightly less common than satisfaction

Overall Job Fulfillment



More than half, but not all, of very satisfied employees are very fulfilled, indicating that although satisfaction and fulfillment go hand in hand, one does not guarantee the other.

Q5a. Please use the sliders to answer each question using a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 means not fulfilled at all and 100 means completely fulfilled.

Elements of the New Social Contract

the new social contract the experience

Three of the five most important elements of the employee-employer relationship are communication-driven. In fact, more common benefits such as health coverage come in third in importance behind accurate and honest communication and clear job responsibilities and expectations. Workers want to be engaged by their work and employer.

There is a flatness to the work experience. When asked how well the New Social Contract elements describe their work experience, the percent reporting “very well” registered between 30% and 39% for 26 of the 29 elements. This suggests few shades of grey in the average person’s work experience.

Among the least common descriptors are “an organization that holds employees at all levels accountable” and “opportunities to advance and grow my career.” These represent a significant challenge to employers as these experiences matter more to workers.

Overall, comparing the importance of the contract elements to worker experiences, there are significant gaps, with the most important elements registering some of the largest gaps. This gap is made up by workers who experience these elements “somewhat,” but this leaves a lot to be desired in competitive markets and on such fundamentals as “receiving accurate and honest communications.”

In the New Social Contract, accurate and honest communications with employees is increasingly important for organizations

Top Five Most Important Social Contract Elements

Showing % Very Important

Receiving accurate and honest communications	62%
Clear job responsibilities and expectations	60%
More common benefits such as medical coverage, help saving for retirement, paid time off for vacation and sick time	58%
Working for leaders who mean and do what they say	57%
Having the tools, training and resources I need to do my job	57%

“By saying accurate and honest communication is the most important thing they need from their employers, workers are telling us there's a trust issue in their relationship with their employer. While there's always been an imbalance in the trust dynamic between employer and employee, that's difficult to maintain in an age of de facto transparency.”

- Ryan Tandler, Vice President TRUE Global Intelligence

Q6. How important or unimportant are these to you?

Less important elements are still very important to large minorities of workers

While these are not *as high* a priority, to most workers these are of some degree of importance and should not be ignored or devalued. Something that is very important to a third of all workers is consequential, even if it's not as imperative as other priorities.

Bottom Five Important Social Contract Elements

Showing % Very Important

Perks, like free snacks in the break room or product discounts	30%
Less common benefits such as expanded mental health and wellness (free counseling, wellness apps, etc.), ample parental leave, time off for caregiving, savings on caregiver expenses and paid time off for volunteering	35%
Opportunities to collaborate with people in other departments or on other projects	39%
Working for an organization with values similar to mine	46%
Understanding how my work contributes to the organization's success	46%

"We have to contextualize perks and benefits within the whole workplace. Would you rather have access to a wellness app or a working environment and culture that make it easier to live healthy and well?"

- Ryan Tandler, Vice President TRUE Global Intelligence

Q6. How important or unimportant are these to you?

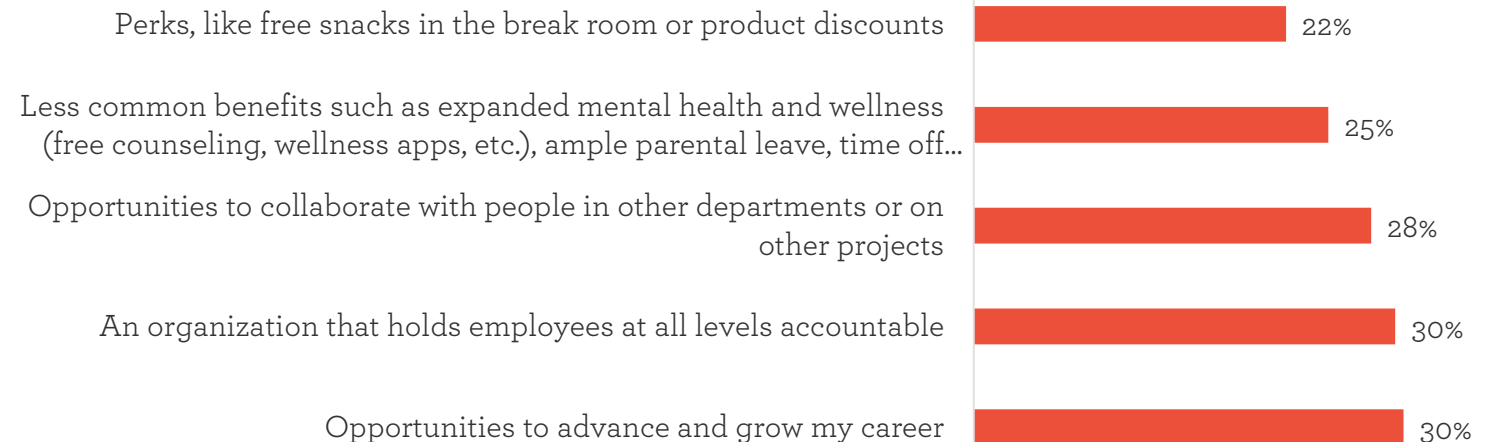
Across 29 positive aspects of work, none exceeds 39% in describing employees' work experience very well

The rank ordering of the bottom five descriptors suggests many workers don't have experience with less common benefits and perks, which may influence how important they think they are.

Top Five Best Descriptors of Work Experience



Bottom Five Best Descriptors of Work Experience



Q7. How well does this describe WHAT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED with your CURRENT work/employment in the past six months/MOST RECENT work/employment in the past six months?

However, the gap between the most important elements and the work experience is wide, and widest on the most important elements

New Social Contract Elements	% saying Very Important	% saying Describes Very Well	Gap
Receiving accurate and honest communications	62%	32%	-30%
Clear job responsibilities and expectations	60%	36%	-24%
More common benefits such as medical coverage, help saving for retirement, paid time off for vacation and sick time	58%	35%	-23%
Working for leaders who mean and do what they say	57%	32%	-26%
Responsible business practices	57%	36%	-22%
Having the tools, training and resources I need to do my job	57%	37%	-20%
An organization that holds employees at all levels accountable	56%	30%	-26%
A manager who cares about me and is committed to my success	55%	36%	-19%
Being trusted with the flexibility to manage my work and home life in a way that works for me and my organization	55%	35%	-20%
Feeling accepted for who I am and having a sense of belonging in the organization	54%	36%	-18%
Working for an organization committed to doing great work for its customers and other stakeholders	53%	39%	-14%
Being able to completely be myself	52%	36%	-16%
Confidence in the organization's ability to change as needed to be successful for the long term	52%	31%	-21%
Confidence in senior leaders' vision for the future of the organization	52%	32%	-20%

The smallest gap is on the least important elements, suggesting employers are succeeding more on elements workers prioritize less

New Social Contract Elements (cont.)	% saying Very Important	% saying Describes Very Well	Gap
Clear boundaries – the ability to not think about my job when I am not on work time	51%	36%	-15%
Opportunities to improve skills that matter to me	51%	33%	-18%
A manager I like	51%	37%	-14%
Being trusted to work from home whenever I want, as long as I get my work done well	50%	37%	-13%
Opportunities to advance and grow my career	50%	30%	-20%
Working for a successful organization	49%	38%	-11%
Working for a purpose-driven organization with a set of defined values	49%	33%	-16%
Working for an organization committed to doing good and giving back	49%	36%	-13%
An active commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion for employees, customers, suppliers, business partners and others	47%	32%	-15%
Having the opportunity to provide feedback on decisions and knowing my feedback is heard	46%	33%	-13%
Understanding how my work contributes to the organization's success	46%	34%	-12%
Working for an organization with values similar to mine	46%	31%	-15%
Opportunities to collaborate with people in other departments or on other projects	39%	28%	-11%
Less common benefits such as expanded mental health and wellness (free counseling, wellness apps, etc.), ample parental leave, time off for caregiving, savings on caregiver expenses and paid time off for volunteering	35%	25%	-10%
Perks, like free snacks in the break room or product discounts	30%	22%	-8%

Q6 & Q7

COVID-19 launched a new era for employee communicators ... and new opportunities to drive employee satisfaction

Since “COVID-19” entered the world’s vernacular, employee communicators have seen their influence grow within their organizations, receiving expanded access to the corporate strategy table. With such access sometimes comes the opportunity to influence decisions related to the allocation of resources in support of important components of the New Social Contract, such as the introduction of new benefits, policies or learning and development opportunities, all of which can fuel employee satisfaction. Communicators should stay vigilant for these opportunities and counsel their organization’s leaders accordingly when given the chance.

Yet, even when focusing on internal communications in the traditional sense, employee communicators have the ability to make a big difference on employee satisfaction levels within their organization. This can be achieved by committing to providing employees with accurate and honest communications, which workers cited as the most important element of the social contract (62%). Communicators also have a responsibility to remind leaders to do the same, as 57% of respondents said working for leaders who mean and do what they say is a very important element of the social contract. To determine how well your organization is doing in these arenas, consider adding questions about these topics to your next employee engagement survey, if they’re not included already.

Satisfaction and the New Social Contract

the new social contract pure satisfaction and

What contract elements separate **very satisfied employees** from workers in general?

The benefit of:

- Working for a purpose-driven organization with a set of defined values
- Receiving accurate and honest communications
- Working for leaders who mean and do what they say

What contract elements separate **unsatisfied employees** from workers in general?

The lack of:

- Working for an organization with values similar to mine
- Receiving accurate and honest communications
- Confidence in the organization's ability to change as needed to be successful for the long term

In other words, when it comes to worker satisfaction, companies succeed and fail on how well they communicate with their employees.

There is a direct connection between the most important elements of the New Social Contract and job satisfaction

What New Social Contract elements make very satisfied workers different from all workers?

% describes experience with current/most recent employer very well

	Among All Employees	Among Very Satisfied Employees	This Is X Times Higher <i>Than All Workers</i>
Working for a purpose-driven organization with a set of defined values	33%	63%	1.9
Receiving accurate and honest communications	32%	60%	1.9
Working for leaders who mean and do what they say	32%	59%	1.8
Understanding how my work contributes to the organization's success	34%	62%	1.8
Working for an organization with values similar to mine	31%	57%	1.8
Confidence in the organization's ability to change as needed to be successful for the long term	31%	56%	1.8

Q7. How well does this describe WHAT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED with your CURRENT work/employment in the past six months/MOST RECENT work/employment in the past six months?

Failure to realize these elements of the New Social Contract is even more strongly associated with dissatisfaction

What New Social Contract elements make unsatisfied employees different from all workers?

% describes experience with current/most recent employer very well

	Among All Employees	Among Unsatisfied Employees	This Is X Times Higher <i>Among All Workers Than Unsatisfied</i>
Working for an organization with values similar to mine	31%	11%	2.9
Receiving accurate and honest communications	32%	12%	2.7
Confidence in the organization's ability to change as needed to be successful for the long term	31%	12%	2.6
Working for a successful organization	38%	15%	2.5
Opportunities to collaborate with people in other departments or on other projects	28%	11%	2.5
Working for a purpose-driven organization with a set of defined values	33%	14%	2.4

Q7. How well does this describe WHAT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED with your CURRENT work/employment in the past six months/MOST RECENT work/employment in the past six months?

Employees' desire to work for a purpose-driven organization with values aligned to one's own could impact a company's ability to recruit and retain top talent

Purpose and values never have been as important as they are today – both for businesses and the employees who work there. Employees and consumers have a growing expectation that businesses articulate their positions on the environment, social issues and other matters – and then take actions to back up those statements.

Businesses that haven't articulated their purpose or values to date likely will be asked what they stand for, if they haven't already, and should consider codifying this language to guide the organization forward. More important, though, organizations should be prepared to act in alignment with their purpose and values.

Internal communicators should look for ways to weave purpose- and values-focused content into company communications regularly to remind employees what the organization does and does not stand for. Storytelling can show employees embracing these values in their day-to-day work, a dedicated awards program can formally celebrate the employees who champion the purpose and values, and evaluating employees and managers based on how well they live the purpose and values can create a new level of accountability and help desired behaviors take root more quickly.

If information about the organization's purpose and values isn't easily accessible on its website, in recruiting materials and across its social platforms, the company may miss out on top talent seeking out a purpose-driven organization for their next career move.



Going Above and Beyond

Two-thirds of workers report going above and beyond in their job always or often, but they are less generous in viewing their coworkers, manager and employer in the same light (approximately 45% for each). This reflects a common dynamic in which most people rate themselves above average in a category, a statistical improbability.

There is a notable correlation between observing managers and employers going above and beyond and the same behavior among workers, an example of leadership importance as a trait.

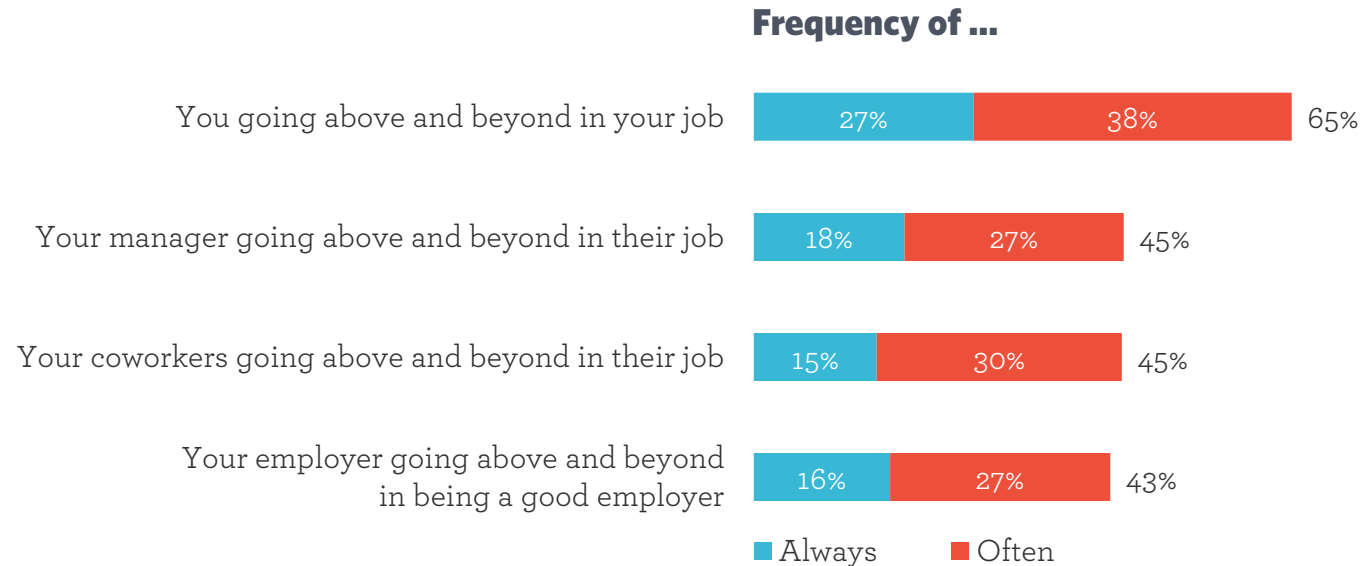
The benefits of better leadership in this are very clear – 83% of workers are very or somewhat willing to go above and beyond, and approximately 70% believe their coworkers, managers and employers are as well. Compared with reported frequency, this indicates a significant amount of slack that can be filled with appropriate leadership and rewards structures.

Not surprisingly, 63% of very satisfied workers are very willing to go above and beyond, but the behavior of going above and beyond has a much stronger impact on satisfaction when it is observed in leaders.

- 40% of those who go above and beyond always or often are very satisfied with their job.
- This figure rises to 51% and 53% among those who observe this behavior in their managers and employers, respectively, always or often (45% for coworkers).

frequency + willingness
above and beyond

Employees are heavily invested in their jobs, with more than half saying they regularly go above and beyond in their job ...



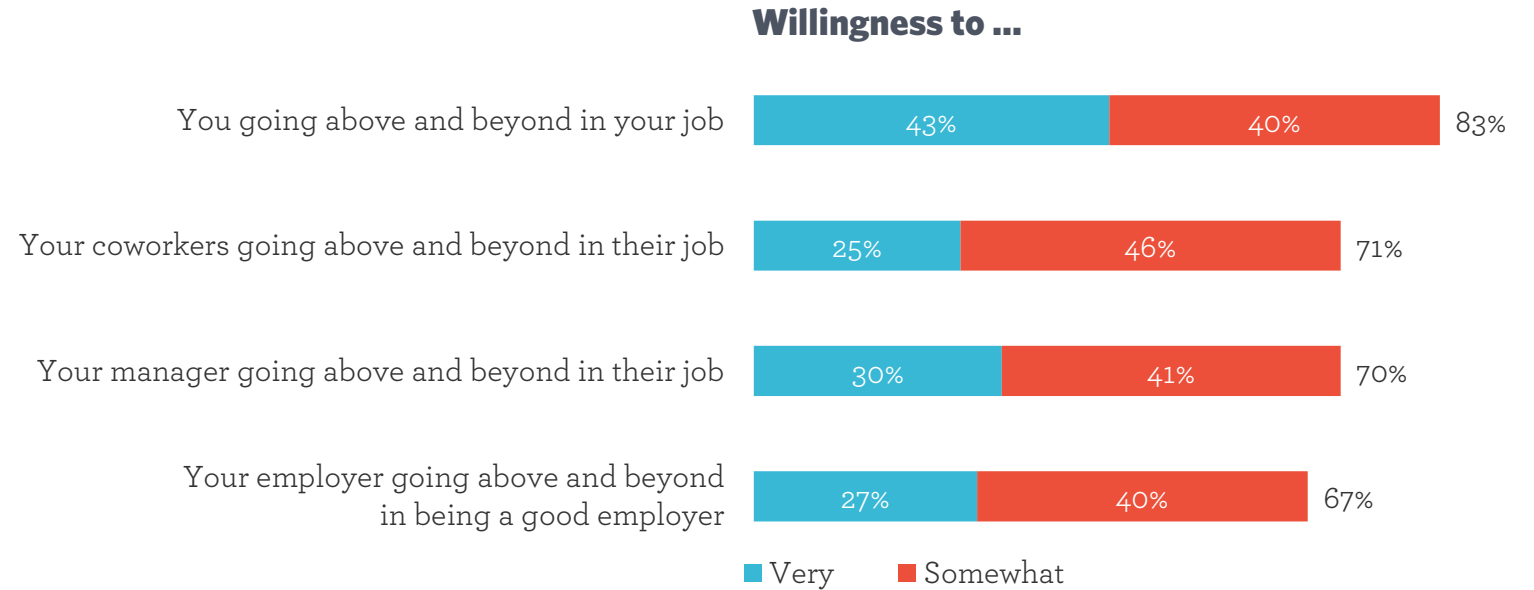
As employees advance, they are more likely to rank themselves as going above and beyond their job responsibilities. Seventy-two percent of executives and senior managers report they regularly go above and beyond, while only 69% of middle and lower managers and 61% of nonmanagers report they do so.

Even more than perceiving their coworkers as going above and beyond, workers are likely to go above and beyond when they see managers and employers modeling the behavior. This is a clear example of the impact of leadership.

Similarly, there is a relationship between observing others going above and beyond and satisfaction. Forty percent of those who go above and beyond always or often are very satisfied with their job, and this number rises to 51% and 53% among those who see the same behavior in their manager and employer, respectively (45% for coworkers).

Q9. On average, how often does each of the following occur?

... although even more
are willing to do so



Interestingly, we see that executives and senior managers are more willing as well, but not as willing as other management and nonmanagers.

While the majority of executives and senior managers are willing to go above and beyond (80%), even more middle and lower managers (86%) and nonmanagers (82%) are willing to do so.

Q10. On average, how willing are each of the following are to go above and beyond?

When an organization goes above and beyond for its employees, they will return the favor

Employers are eager to find employees who will be wholly committed to the organization and go above and beyond to advance its strategic imperatives. The good news for employers is that 65% of very satisfied employees say they currently go above and beyond in their job, but 83% say they are willing to do so.

This indicates untapped potential that can be fueled further by delivering more for employees. By prioritizing the following elements of the New Social Contract, which employees said are very important to them, an organization has the potential to get more from its workers.

- Receiving accurate and honest communications
- Clear job responsibilities and expectations
- More common benefits such as medical coverage, help saving for retirement, paid time off for vacation and sick time
- Working for leaders who mean and do what they say
- Having the tools, training and resources I need to do my job

Conducting an audit of these elements of the New Social Contract can help communicators determine how well the organization is doing in each of these areas and then develop plans to enhance the company's focus on these items, as appropriate. A combination of an employee survey, focus groups and a review of existing materials and resources can quickly offer a look at the status quo and what needs to evolve.

Going the Extra Mile

above and beyond ways of going

Some ways of going above and beyond directly aid in the company's efforts to communicate to existing and potential employees.

- 48% regularly advocate for their employer as a great place to work
- 40% promote employer decisions even if they don't agree
- 40% encourage appropriate behavior among coworkers

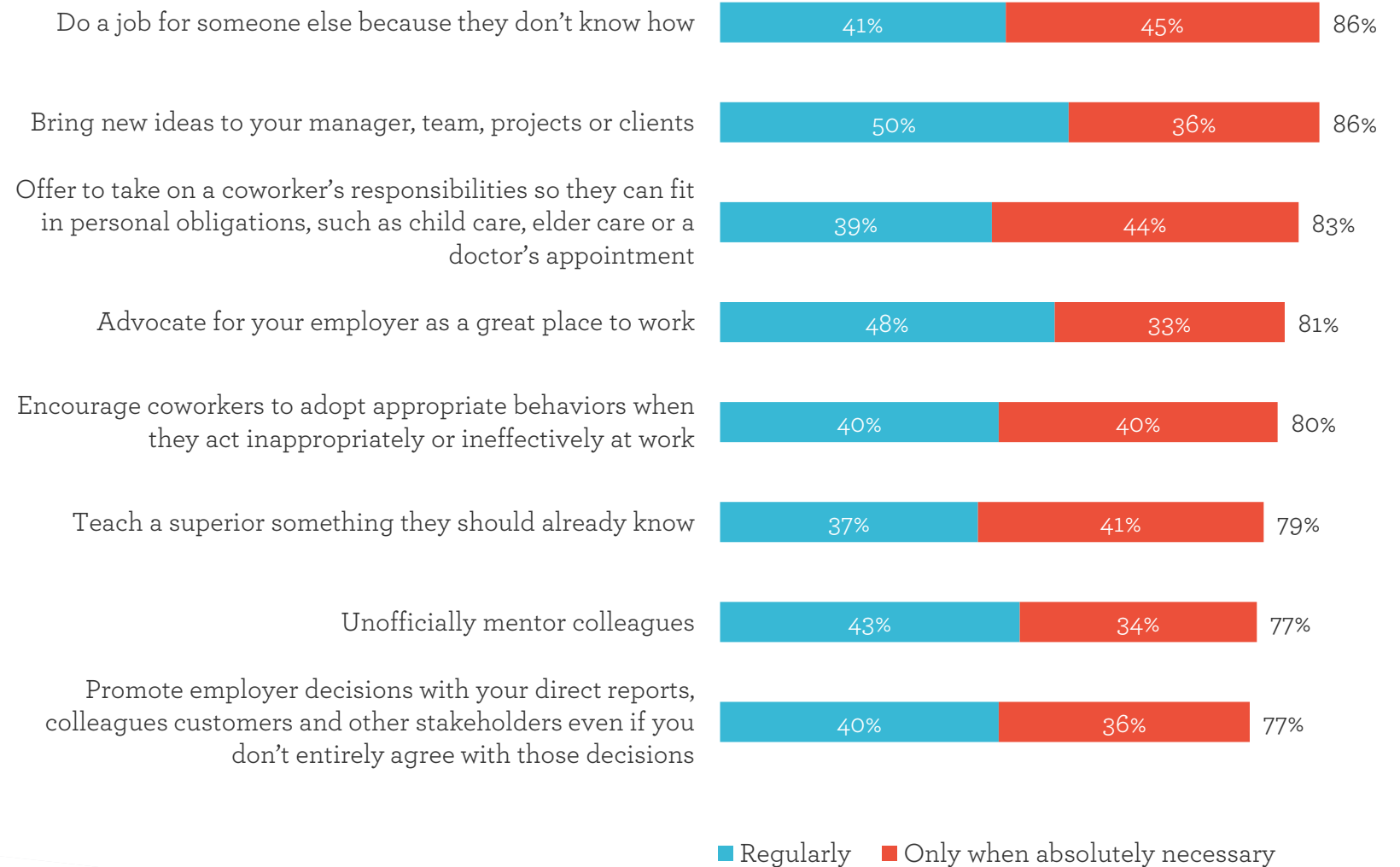
And some help the company by helping other workers by:

- Bringing new ideas (50%)
- Stepping in to do a job when someone else can't (41%)
- Covering for someone who has a personal obligation to attend to (39%)
- Unofficially mentoring colleagues (43%)

In every case, more workers report being expected to do these than report being rewarded for doing so.

Employees regularly bring new ideas to their teams and go above and beyond to help coworkers

Ways of Going Above and Beyond



Q11: How often do you do each of the following?

More employees are willing than are able to mentor colleagues, present new ideas and take a coworkers' responsibilities

	I Am Able to Do This	I Am Willing to Do This	Neither
Do a job for someone else because they don't know how	59%	55%	14%
Bring new ideas to your manager, team, projects or clients	56%	57%	16%
Teach a superior something they should already know	55%	50%	19%
Encourage coworkers to adopt appropriate behaviors when they act inappropriately or ineffectively at work	53%	50%	21%
Unofficially mentor colleagues	52%	54%	21%
Offer to take on a coworker's responsibilities so they can fit in personal obligations, such as child care, elder care or a doctor's appointment	52%	55%	18%
Advocate for your employer as a great place to work	50%	49%	22%
Promote employer decisions with your direct reports, colleagues, customers and other stakeholders even if you don't entirely agree with those decisions	49%	45%	24%

Q12: Regardless of whether this is something you do or not, please indicate if you are willing to do this, able to do this or neither. Please select both "able" and "willing" if both apply.

Employers expect their employees to help encourage appropriate behavior

Definition of “reward” used in survey:

“By ‘reward,’ we mean any kind of reward, such as additional recognition, consideration for promotions and raises, or even a monetary reward.”

	I Am Expected to Do This	I Am Rewarded for Doing This	Neither
Bring new ideas to your manager, team, projects or clients	47%	30%	33%
Encourage coworkers to adopt appropriate behaviors when they act inappropriately or ineffectively at work	47%	23%	35%
Do a job for someone else because they don’t know how	44%	26%	37%
Offer to take on a coworker’s responsibilities so they can fit in personal obligations, such as child care, elder care or a doctor’s appointment	41%	29%	37%
Promote employer decisions with your direct reports, colleagues, customers and other stakeholders even if you don’t entirely agree with those decisions	40%	27%	38%
Unofficially mentor colleagues	40%	25%	41%
Teach a superior something they should already know	40%	25%	41%
Advocate for your employer as a great place to work	38%	24%	45%

Q13: Lastly, here is the same list again. This time, please indicate whether your employer expects you to do this, rewards you for doing this, or neither.

Very satisfied workers are more likely to advocate for their employer inside and outside the organization

Very satisfied workers are more likely to step up across the board to support their coworkers and employers even in the absence of rewards.

Among employees who <i>do this regularly</i> and ...	Go Unrewarded for It	Are Willing to Do It and Are Unrewarded for It
Advocate for your employer as a great place to work	34%	10%
Bring new ideas to your manager, team, projects or clients	33%	12%
Encourage coworkers to adopt appropriate behaviors when they act inappropriately or ineffectively at work	28%	8%
Offer to take on a coworker’s responsibilities so they can fit in personal obligations, such as child care, elder care or a doctor’s appointment	27%	7%
Promote employer decisions with your direct reports, colleagues, customers and other stakeholders even if you don’t entirely agree with those decisions	27%	8%
Do a job for someone else because they don’t know how	29%	9%
Unofficially mentor colleagues	30%	9%
Teach a superior something they should already know	25%	7%

“We defined ‘reward’ downward to include even verbal recognition, and still many who are regularly going the extra mile are not being rewarded. That’s concerning, especially when remembering even these smaller percentages represent millions of workers. Rewards and recognition counter burnout, which is responsible for much of the focus on mental health in workplaces.”

- Ryan Tandler, Vice President TRUE Global Intelligence

Red text indicates very satisfied employees more likely than unsatisfied employees to do this.

Q11-Q13

Rewarding and recognizing desired behaviors can encourage more employees to go the extra mile for their colleagues, their team and the company

A significant number of employees report going the extra mile for their employer without being rewarded for doing so, which means organizations have a valuable opportunity to improve how they are rewarding and recognizing their workers for engaging in these important activities – especially since many workers feel there is an expectation that they do these things, despite the lack of reward.

Fortunately for employers, reward and recognition programs can take any number of shapes and sizes. Not all reward programs must involve a formal award, presentation ceremony or significant investment from the organization. Equipping and coaching managers to spot and publicly celebrate desired behaviors within their teams – and holding managers accountable for doing so – can go a long way in helping employees feel appreciated, with minimal investment from the company. Storytelling across internal – and, as appropriate, external – channels also can have a big impact on making employees feel valued while also showcasing the behaviors that the organization would like others to embrace.

Workers also appreciate praise from their colleagues, so establishing turnkey peer-to-peer recognition mechanisms, such as customizable email templates, cards and certificates – and encouraging workers to use them to celebrate one another – can help encourage more employees to go the extra mile for one another, their team and the organization overall.

Making Sacrifices



sacrifices making

The most common sacrifice workers make is balancing taking care of family and job needs at the very same time, with 58% regularly doing this.

- This includes 51% of people who do not have children under 18 and 54% of men.

Other common sacrifices include working outside normal hours (42% do this regularly), working on days workers are supposed to be off (36%), spending money and time on professional development and office supplies (28-31%), and skipping personal obligations for work (26%).

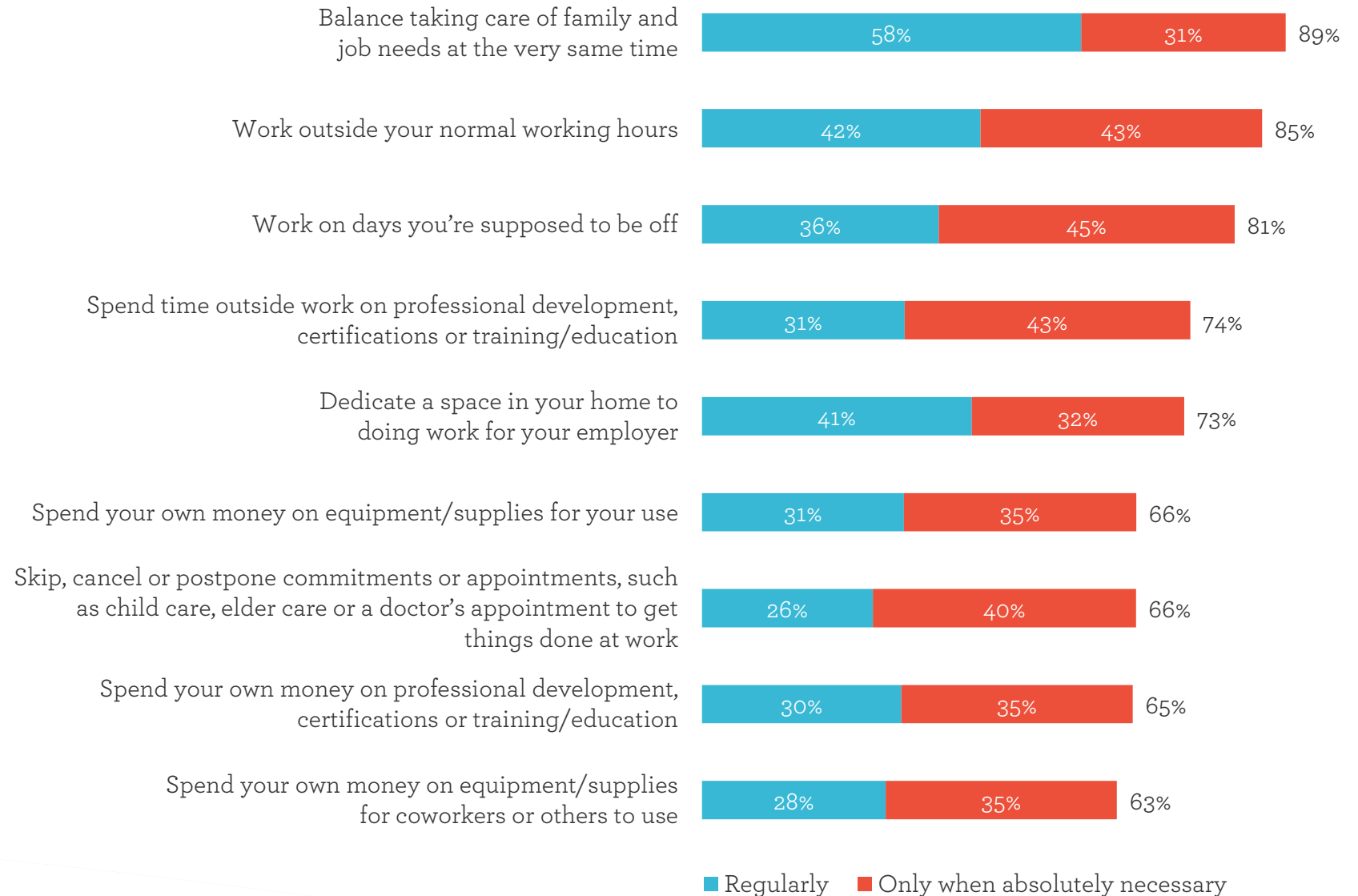
Problems arise because:

- The expectation to make these sacrifices consistently outpaces being rewarded, even when reward is defined as recognition for doing it.
- Many of those who do these things regularly are not in a position to do so. For example, 20% who regularly balance work and family simultaneously aren't able to do it, meaning they somehow manage, and 14% are spending money on equipment and supplies despite being unable to do it, meaning they are likely spending money they can't afford to spend.

The importance of job satisfaction is underscored by the interplay of these dynamics – very satisfied employees are more likely to be willing to make all of these kinds of sacrifices even if they're unrewarded.

Employees are regularly called on to make personal sacrifices for work

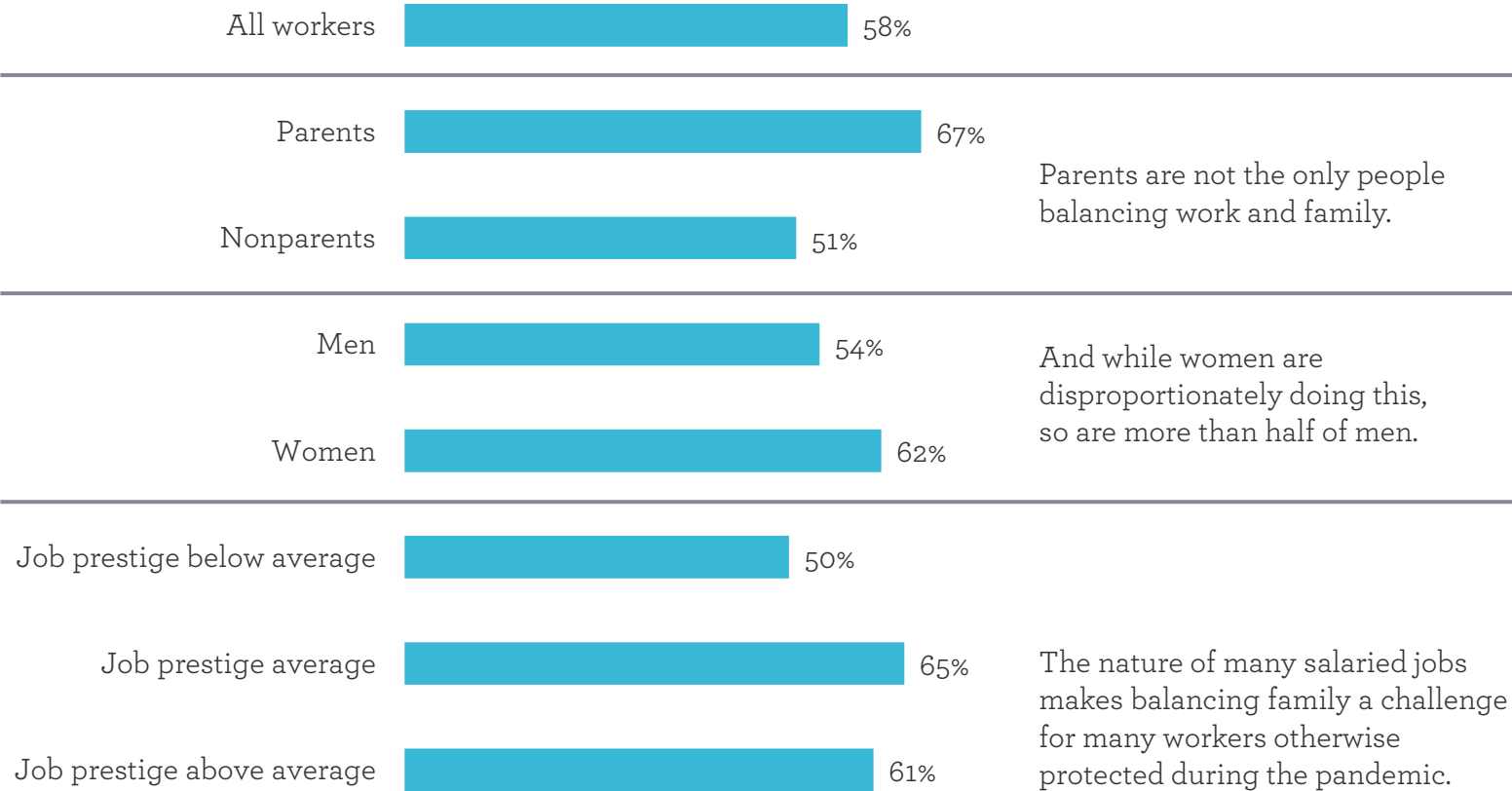
Ways of Sacrificing



Q11: How often do you do each of the following?

The narrative of balancing work and family needs to include workers who aren't parents, men and those who hold more socially prestigious jobs as well

Regularly balances taking care of family and job needs at the very same time



Q11: How often do you do each of the following?

There is a gap between ability to sacrifice for work and willingness to do so

In many instances, workers report regularly undertaking these activities despite indicating they are not able to, suggesting they lack adequate resources, knowledge or guidance yet manage to do these things anyway.

	I Am Able to Do This	I Am Willing to Do This	Neither
Work outside your normal working hours	57%	53%	17%
Balance taking care of family and job needs at the very same time	57%	51%	16%
Work on days you're supposed to be off	54%	52%	19%
Spend time outside work on professional development, certifications or training/education	49%	47%	24%
Dedicate a space in your home to doing work for your employer	48%	46%	25%
Skip, cancel or postpone commitments or appointments, such as child care, elder care or a doctor's appointment to get things done at work	43%	42%	31%
Spend your own money on professional development, certifications or training/education	42%	39%	32%
Spend your own money on equipment/supplies for your use	42%	38%	34%
Spend your own money on equipment/supplies for coworkers or others (such as students, if you are a teacher) to use	37%	34%	40%

Q12: Regardless of whether this is something you do or not, please indicate if you are willing to do this, able to do this or neither. Please select both "able" and "willing" if both apply.

Few sacrifices are rewarded, least of all child care

Definition of “reward” used in survey: “By ‘reward,’ we mean any kind of reward, such as additional recognition, consideration for promotions and raises, or even a monetary reward.”

	I Am Expected to Do This	I Am Rewarded for Doing This	Neither
Balance taking care of family and job needs at the very same time	49%	25%	32%
Work outside your normal working hours	42%	33%	32%
Work on days you’re supposed to be off	38%	35%	33%
Dedicate a space in your home to doing work for your employer	38%	24%	42%
Skip, cancel or postpone commitments or appointments, such as child care, elder care or a doctor’s appointment to get things done at work	38%	21%	45%
Spend time outside work on professional development, certifications or training/education	36%	28%	41%
Spend your own money on professional development, certifications or training/education	32%	24%	50%
Spend your own money on equipment/supplies for your use	27%	25%	52%
Spend your own money on equipment/supplies for coworkers or others (such as students, if you are a teacher) to use	27%	24%	53%

Q13: Lastly, here is the same list again. This time, please indicate whether your employer expects you to do this, rewards you for doing this or neither.

Satisfied workers are more likely to make sacrifices willingly even if they go unrewarded

Between 1 in 10 and 1 in 5 employees make these sacrifices even though they aren't able to, meaning they're putting work before themselves and family in these instances, and very few are rewarded for it.

Among employees who <i>do this regularly</i> and ...	Go Unrewarded for It	Are Willing to Do It and Are Unrewarded for It
Balance taking care of family and job needs at the very same time	43%	10%
Dedicate a space in your home to doing work for your employer	30%	7%
Work on days you're supposed to be off	23%	9%
Spend your own money on equipment/supplies for your use	21%	5%
Work outside your normal working hours	28%	9%
Skip, cancel or postpone commitments or appointments, such as child care, elder care or a doctor's appointment to get things done at work	18%	5%
Spend your own money on equipment/supplies for coworkers or others (such as students, if you are a teacher) to use	18%	5%
Spend your own money on professional development, certifications or training/education	20%	6%

"Employers need to recognize when employees are doing more than they're able to. The pandemic has brought a lot of attention to these dynamics and forced some issues, but we've also seen good employees dropping out of the workforce or disengaging. Even just from a competitive standpoint, if one company will pay or reimburse for a worker to set up a home office and another won't, all else equal, that's not a hard decision for workers debating their next career move."

- Ryan Tandler, Vice President TRUE Global Intelligence

Red text indicates very satisfied employees more likely than unsatisfied employees to do this.

Q11-Q13

Understanding
employee engagement
and satisfaction levels
today will help
businesses optimize
their employer brands
to attract the best
talent for tomorrow

The New Social Contract is about give and take – from the organization itself and the workers who drive its success. As with any healthy relationship, there must be balance. If employees feel they are giving more than ought to reasonably be expected, engagement levels will drop, as will employee satisfaction, and soon those workers may be looking for another place to work.

With more and more employers offering new degrees of flexibility and virtual working options as a result of the pandemic, this stands to create a breadth of new opportunities for workers who no longer need to live in the same geography as their employer. Conversely, this could create major staffing woes for organizations who do not sufficiently hold up their end of the social contract.

To help ensure an equitable arrangement for all, employers should pay close attention to employee engagement and worker sentiment through their employee engagement survey, pulse surveys and focus groups ... and quickly implement plans to address areas of concern that are emerging.

Similarly, businesses should be thinking about making a concerted effort to strengthen their employer brands so they are best positioned to retain the top talent they have today, and attract new workers in search of better opportunities.

questions

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