

The Future of You

A Cebr report for Lenovo | January 2022

Lenovo

 Windows 11



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London, January 2022.





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Executive Summary

Cebr has been commissioned by Lenovo to conduct a study into the future UK workplace. This “Future of You” report builds on the findings of the 2018 Cebr report “Lenovo Connect – New ways of working”, analysing in particular what UK employees would like to see from their employers and workplaces.

A bespoke survey of 2,000 UK employees sheds light on the priorities for workers, tracking how these have changed in recent years as well as looking ahead to the future. This analysis is complemented by four interviews with business leaders, gauging their perspectives on the future of work in the UK. Finally, recommendations are drawn for employers as they adjust to accommodate for the employee of the future and new ways of working.

The post-pandemic workplace: taking stock since the last report



The Covid-19 pandemic period has seen a significant acceleration in **remote and flexible work**, which is welcomed by a majority of employees.



Concerns remain over a shift in **responsibility for technology towards employees**, as well as the effects of remote working on wellbeing.



A return to full-time office work is **both unlikely and undesired**.



Nonetheless, there are indications that the period has improved employers’ trust in their employees, and a shift to remote or hybrid working presents businesses with opportunities to downsize office space whilst maintaining a focus on collaboration.



Evidence on worker productivity under remote or hybrid working models is inconclusive, but **a fall in productivity is unlikely**.

The Future of You: employee survey



Results from a survey of over 2,000 UK employees show that the **top five job characteristics that the average UK worker would like to see in an employer are:**

a good work-life balance (perceived as important by 95% of workers); job security (94%); a respectful working atmosphere (92%); receiving a competitive salary (92%); and having clarity in what is expected in their role (92%).



Remote working is becoming increasingly important to workers, rising from 21% importance ten years ago to 54% today, climbing further to 62% in ten years’ time.



The job characteristic with the largest generational divide is the opportunity for career progression within a job, which is seen as important by 90% of Generation Z workers, compared to only 60% of older workers.

Executive Summary

The Future of You: employee survey



Many characteristics that are most sharply increasing in importance are common to all employees, irrespective of age. These include **businesses having a focus on environmental sustainability, facilitating remote and flexible working, and having an emphasis on diversity and inclusion.**



Whilst 31% of employees do not currently feel that they have a good work-life balance, **this would be crucial for 66% of employees in their decision to apply for a job.**



81% of Generation Z employees said that they think technology will have a positive impact on workers in their industry in the future, compared to 63% of baby boomers.



36% of workers who said that technology will be important believed that it would significantly benefit their career if they trained to use these technologies. 8% of these workers even said that they are at risk of losing their job if they do not retrain.



A key theme that is emerging for employees is changing patterns of career progression, from older workers who tend to stay at their employers for longer, to younger workers who might be more likely to switch employers more regularly. Baby boomers expected to work for 12 years for their first employer when they started their careers. In comparison, Generation Z expects to work for an average of three years for their first employer.

Recommendations

In light of the findings of the bespoke employee survey and interviews of business leaders, Cebr makes the following recommendations to businesses:

1

Facilitate a good work-life balance

2

Purpose as well as profit

3

Offer technology training

4

Champion honesty, respect and communication

Views from business: case studies



Four case studies of UK business leaders reveal the key trends that will emerge in future workplaces.



The interviews with business leaders highlight the importance of digital fluency. While not everyone has to be a coder, future employees will need to work alongside systems that are powered by AI, data science, the Internet of Things, and connected objects. This will require an ability to look under the hood of technology being used.



With regard to flexible working, discussions with business leaders suggest that **businesses that are eager to return to pre-pandemic practices are likely to suffer a degree of alienation** amongst their workers and worsened prospects for hiring top talent.



The importance of not fearing new technology is highlighted in the case studies. It is noted that **there will always be sufficient new opportunities for work and we should not shy away from progress** over concerns about a turbulent but temporary period of transition.

1

The post-pandemic workplace: taking stock since the last report



The pandemic-induced shift to remote working is likely to make lasting changes to the traditional office-based work model.

In 2018, Cebr conducted research for Lenovo in this area as part of the “Lenovo Connect – New ways of working” report, analysing the experiences of firms that implemented remote work in the pre-pandemic period.¹ Developments since then, not least the Covid-19 crisis, have reinforced many of the findings and recommendations of the report. This section explores more recent findings and evidence on this topic to draw conclusions on the outlook for the future workplace.

1.1

Outlook on the future of remote working: employees

Employees’ perspectives

Considering the evidence on how workers feel about working from home, Lenovo conducted an online survey from mid-January to mid-February 2021 asking both employees and IT decision makers about the effects that working from home (WFH) has had on them.² Employees’ reaction to WFH has been largely positive; roughly 70% of employees were satisfied with their job when working remotely.

Looking ahead, most employees surveyed stated that they did not wish to return to working from the office (WFO) every day. In particular, younger employees stated they would prefer spending more than half of their working days at the office, whilst older employees would prefer the opposite. Similarly, a Microsoft study found that younger employees have a stronger preference for hybrid working models.³

1 “Lenovo Connect – New ways of working”, Cebr (2018)

2 “The Future of Work and Digital Transformation”, Lenovo (March 2021)

3 “The New Future of Work”, Microsoft (2021)

Worker productivity

The effects of WFH on worker productivity was an existing research topic before the onset of the pandemic. For example, using data from Germany, Beckmann and Rupietta (2016) found that remote working has a positive effect on worker effort.⁴ The study also found that WFH was associated with more unpaid extra hours, a common theme across more recent studies analysing the effect of remote working during the pandemic. Similarly, a study by Lenovo in July 2020 indicated that a majority of employees felt more productive working remotely, compared to working from the office.⁵

Microsoft's 2021 research found that average self-reported productivity did not change during the pandemic. Beneath the overall average, though, heterogenous effects were identified; whilst 34% of employees stated worsened productivity, this was balanced by an equal share reporting improved productivity. Individuals in the sample that had been employed at their firm for a relatively shorter time were more likely to report a reduction in their productivity. However, a common caveat with such surveys is that they measure self-reported productivity, which is a subjective indicator.

4 "Working from home: What is the effect on employees' effort?"; Beckmann, Michael; Rupietta, Kira (2016)

5 "Technology and the Evolving World of Work. Global Research Study", Lenovo (July 2020)

Technology



Lenovo's 2021 research found that 79% of employees "have become their own IT person" after starting to work remotely.

This means that they were predominantly personally in charge of installing their workstations and fixing potential issues. Despite this, for most workers, technology-related issues have not become more common since the move away from solely office-based work. Nonetheless, the main obstacles that employees face when working remotely are slow or unstable internet connections.

A further finding in this area is that personal expenses on technology have increased during the pandemic WFH period. According to Lenovo's 2020 study, UK

employees spent an average of £271 to upgrade their technological equipment, with 39% of those buying new equipment stating that they had not been reimbursed or had received only partial reimbursement for this. On the other hand, Microsoft's 2021 study cites evidence of hesitancy among employees to spend large funds on improving their workspaces, in the anticipation of a post-pandemic return to WFO. Thus, if remote working becomes a more permanent feature than anticipated, it may be reasonable to assume that (personal) spending on technology will increase further.

Wellbeing

The majority of employees in Lenovo's 2020 study stated that WFH has caused them issues with regard to separating their work from their personal lives. This is more pronounced amongst younger workers. Similarly, more than half of workers aged between 18 and 34 reported that a difficulty switching off from work has caused them mental health issues. Additionally, the lack of physical and social interaction has resulted in anxiety and related issues. According to the 2021 Microsoft study, which had similar findings, the root cause of this could lie in a lack of physical and geographical separation between work and leisure time.

Furthermore, employees reported physical issues following the shift to WFH. Lenovo's 2021 survey found that over 70% of employees experienced problems such as back and neck pain. Findings from the 2021 Microsoft study suggest that these problems can be attributed to the required speed of the transition to remote work during the pandemic, leaving little time to set up adequate workspaces at home. As such, if WFH or hybrid models continue in the post-pandemic period, employees and employers should be able to work together to solve this by installing adequate home working equipment.

Finally, amidst the growth of telecommunications technology, which have facilitated the large-scale shift to WFH during the pandemic, Microsoft's study identified evidence of video conferences being particularly fatiguing for workers.

1.2

Outlook on the future of remote working: **employers**

Employers' perspectives

A 2020 study by Arup found that the shift to WFH necessitated by the pandemic removed many barriers and concerns that employers previously had with regards to remote work. One of these barriers was a lack of trust by employers of their employees. Requiring greater levels of trust in order for businesses to remain operational, the experiences

of the pandemic may have longer-lasting impacts on areas beyond working location arrangements, including flexibility with respect to caring responsibilities. Other cited barriers to WFH were security concerns and technological limitations stemming from employees having insufficient equipment.

The changing office

With a greater fraction of workers working remotely at any given time, many firms will no longer feel the need to rent office space large enough to accommodate all of their staff at once. If this comes to pass, the post-pandemic work environment will be characterised by smaller office buildings, implying potentially significant cost savings for businesses.

Nonetheless, if offices are no longer strictly required for work, their social function may take on a more prominent role. Lenovo's 2020 study found that employers are not satisfied with the lack of social interaction with their colleagues under WFH arrangements. In its 2018 report, Cebr suggested that, with greater remote working, offices would increasingly be used for social aspects or for collaborative tasks.

This was echoed by the 2020 Arup study, emphasising the office as a space for collaborative work, whilst standard tasks can be completed remotely. For business leaders that particularly value collaborative work, such benefits from in-person work may not be outweighed by the cost savings from downsizing.

An alternative development that might see a downsizing of traditional centralised office spaces is the growth of co-working spaces. No longer required to attend a specific central office, employees could instead collaborate within and across different local hubs. This could enable businesses to save costs while granting their employees the greater freedom to choose where to locate.

In its 2018 report, Cebr suggested that, with greater remote working, offices would increasingly be used for social aspects or for collaborative tasks.



2

The Future of You: employee survey

Having examined recent evidence on the state of play for UK workplaces, this section turns to focus specifically on the perspectives of UK employees on the future workplace.

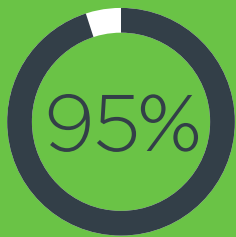
This is informed by a survey of over 2,000 UK employees, gauging their opinions on what matters most to them. A spotlight is given to employees from Generation Z, who will play an increasingly important role in the labour market in the years to come.

2.1

Priorities for UK workers

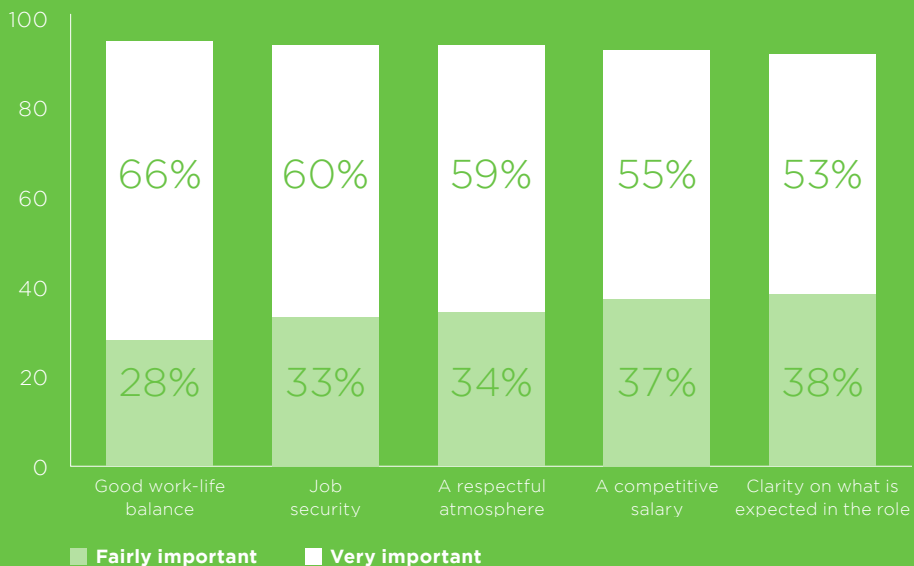
In order to capture the top priorities of UK workers today and over time, a survey of over 2,000 UK employees was conducted for this report. A core aspect of the survey presented respondents with 31 job characteristics and asked them to rate their importance. All individuals who were in work ten years ago were additionally asked about their priorities at the time, and those judged likely to still be in the labour market in ten years were asked about their expected future priorities. A full list of all job characteristics, as well as their rank in terms of importance – defined as the percentage of workers viewing the given characteristic as ‘fairly important’ or ‘very important’ – is presented in Appendix A.

The results reveal that the top five job characteristics for the average UK worker today, presented in Figure 1, are: establishing a good work-life balance (perceived as important by 95% of workers); job security (94%); a respectful working atmosphere (92%); receiving a competitive salary (92%); and having clarity in what is expected in their role (92%). These five characteristics are also viewed as 'very important' – to be interpreted as a factor that would determine whether they apply for or accept a job offer – by the highest proportion of employees. A full table with the percentage of respondents finding each characteristic 'very important' is given in Appendix B.



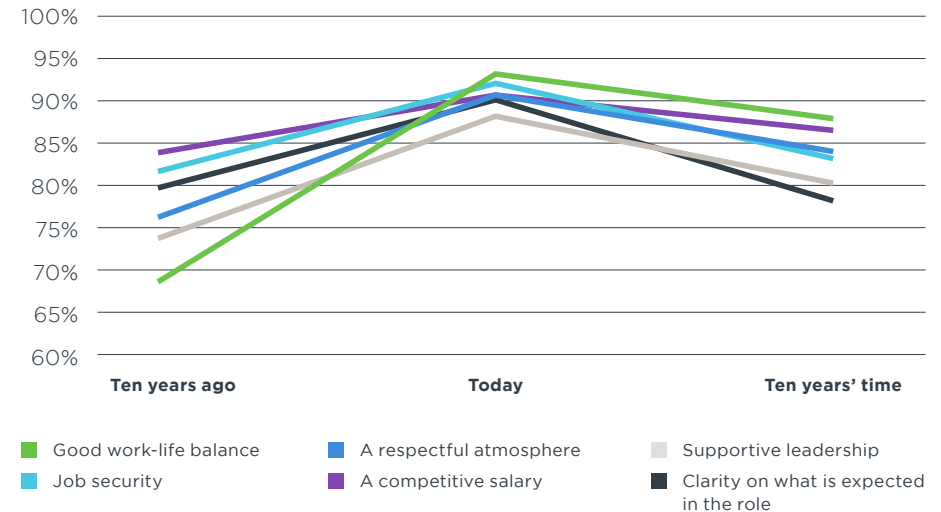
Today establishing a good work-life balance is perceived as 95% important for the average UK worker.

Figure 1: Top five job characteristics for UK employees today (% of respondents)*



Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

Figure 2: Job aspects of the greatest importance for UK employees, over time*



*Importance measured by the percentage of respondents deeming each characteristic 'fairly important' or 'very important'. For each time period, at least the top five characteristics are included.

Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

The survey results illuminate the changing relevance of different characteristics over time. As shown in Figure 2, whereas a competitive salary was perceived as important by the highest proportion of workers ten years ago, this has now been overtaken by achieving a good work-life balance, job security and a respectful working atmosphere. As such the average worker can be seen to have become relatively more focused on non-financial aspects of work compared to ten years ago.

Following this, receiving a competitive salary is expected by those who will still be in work in ten years' time to return to a top position, ranking second in terms of importance.

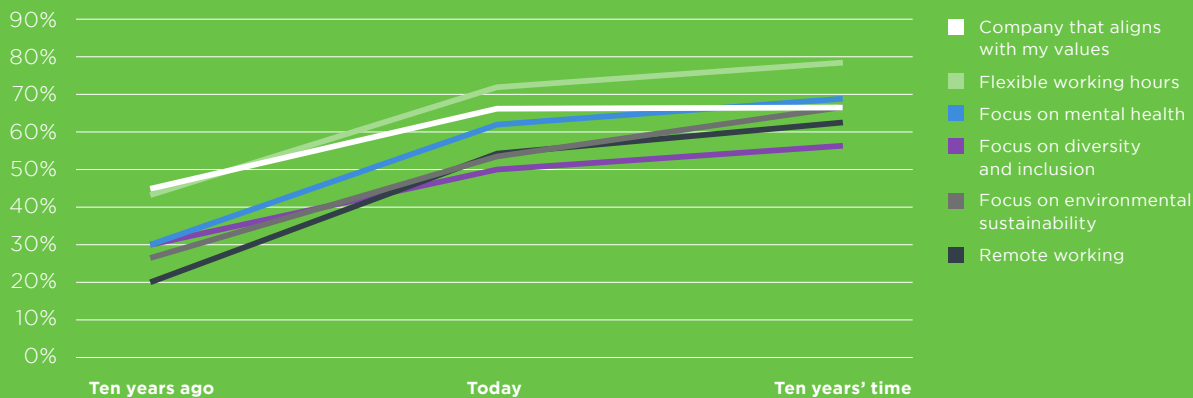
Studying the results by the change in importance over time, the characteristic increasing the most over the 20-year period is the opportunity to work remotely. As shown in Figure 3, this rises from 21% importance ten years ago to 54% today, climbing further to 62% in ten years' time. That is, the average worker today attaches 33 percentage points more importance (more than twice as much) today than ten years ago and is expected to attach a further 8 percentage points of importance to this in ten years' time (almost three times as much as ten years ago).

Following this, working for a firm that places a focus on environmental sustainability rises by 40 percentage points over the time horizon, more than doubling in importance from 27% ten years ago to 66% in ten years' time. This is closely followed by working for a firm that places focus on mental health, which rises by 38 percentage points over the 20-year period. Whilst still not the most important of aspects for workers in ten years' time, these factors reflect important and fast-moving changes in the labour market and societal attitudes more broadly. All of the fastest-growing characteristics increase from being perceived as important by a minority of employees ten years ago to being important to a majority in ten years from now.

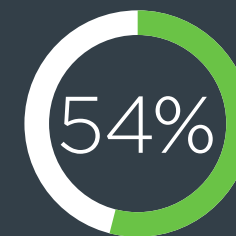
Meanwhile, the largest reductions in net importance over the 20-year period are seen in the characteristics of career progression, a social atmosphere and human interaction, which fall by 6.5, 5.5 and 3.8 percentage points, respectively. Nonetheless, these characteristics are expected to remain important to 58%, 64% and 62% of workers in ten years' time, respectively.

These results highlight the changing attitudes to work which employers need to take into account. Career progression and human interaction are being replaced in importance by factors such as flexible working hours and mental health support. Companies that react in line with the changing desires of employees are likely to succeed in attracting the best candidates.

Figure 3: Job aspects expected to see the greatest increase in importance for UK employees from ten years ago to in ten years' time*



* Importance measured by the percentage of respondents deeming each characteristic 'fairly important' or 'very important'
Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis



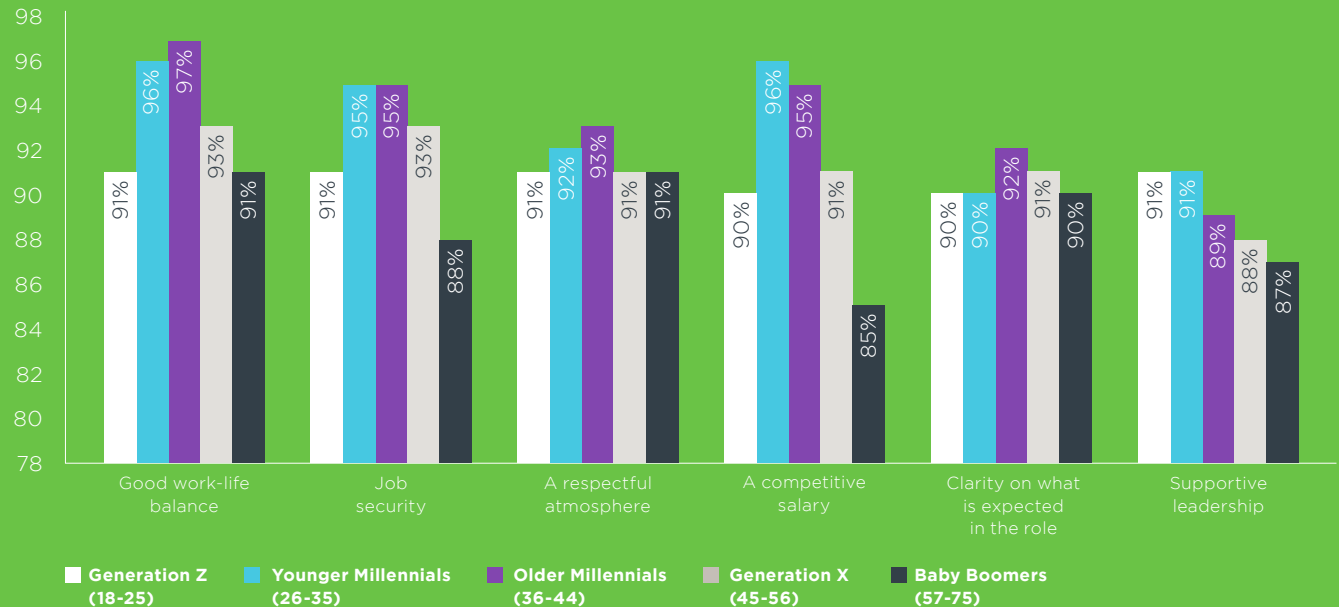
The opportunity to work remotely has changed in importance from **21% ten years ago**, to **54% today**, and climbing to **62% in ten years time**.

2.2 Generational perspective

The survey results also provide an intergenerational perspective of the UK labour market. Such results are likely to be of relevance to businesses that wish to look ahead and secure the long-term health of their organisation.

Results from the survey show that respondents from Generation Z currently least frequently have any management responsibilities. Whilst this is true for 28% of Generation Z employees, the share rises sharply to 52% and 64% for younger and older millennial workers, respectively. For Generation X and baby boomer employees, this percentage subsequently falls slightly to 56% and 45%, respectively. Given that today's junior employees will be tomorrow's managers, employers may wish to place focus on the desires and values of those within Generation Z, in order to attract the right talent and boost satisfaction. Survey results showing the relative importance that employees from different generations attach to various job characteristics provide insight into such emerging trends.

Figure 4: Most important job characteristics for UK employees today, by generation (including top five for each, ordered by overall importance).



Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis



From today's perspective, achieving a good work-life balance is the characteristic with the single or joint highest importance for each generation, as shown in Figure 4.

Three further characteristics see a joint highest importance score (91%) for workers from Generation Z (defined as those currently aged between 18-25): job security, working in a respectful atmosphere, and having supportive leadership. Meanwhile, for younger millennials (those aged between 26-35), receiving a competitive salary sees the joint highest score (96%).

For older millennials (aged between 36-44), a good work-life balance is the single highest scoring factor (97%). Employees from Generation X (aged between 45-56) attach joint highest importance to job security (93%). Finally, employees from the baby boomer generation (aged 57-75) most frequently value having a respectful atmosphere in their workplace alongside a good work-life balance (91% importance).

Studying the results by comparing the importance of job characteristics between Generation Z and older generations reveals that the youngest generation currently in work values 65% of the characteristics more than older workers do. A full explication of such generational differences is given in Appendix C.

As depicted in Figure 5, the characteristic with the largest generational divide is the existence of opportunities for career progression within a job, which is seen as important by 90% of Generation Z workers, compared to 60% of older workers. The next starkest divide between Generation Z and older workers is the importance associated with a focus on diversity and inclusion, with respective percentages of 71% and 48%. This is followed by opportunities for continuous learning and training, where respective percentages of 86% and 66% are observable. These areas, among others, represent particular aspects that employers hoping to make their businesses attractive to the future workforce are likely to benefit from investing in.

Figure 5: Top five job characteristics with the greatest divide in importance between Generation Z workers and older workers today.

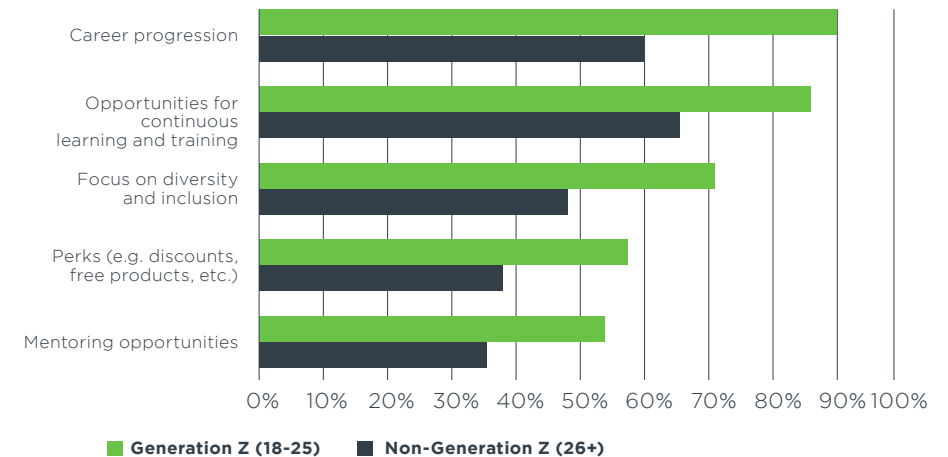
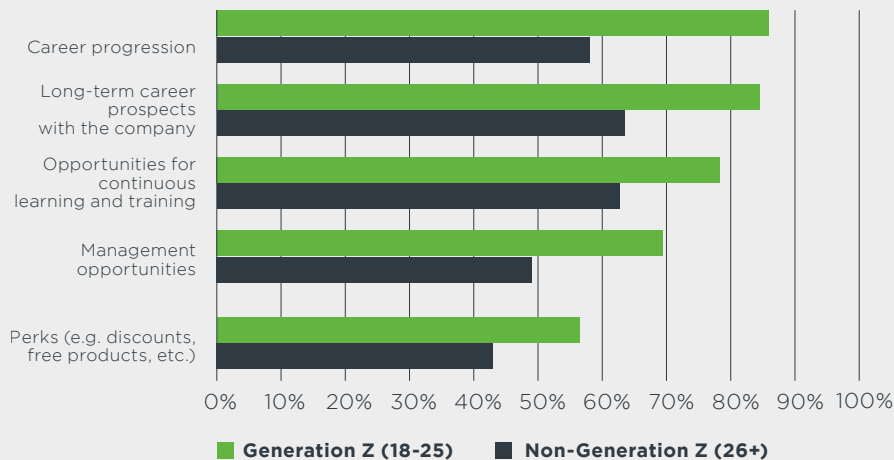
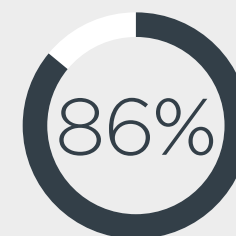


Figure 6: Top five job characteristics with the greatest divide in importance between Generation Z workers and older workers in ten years' time



Performing the same analysis of the results on the importance of characteristics in ten years time reveals that career progression is expected to remain the area of the greatest generational divide, as shown in Figure 6. 86% of Generation Z workers expect to find progression important in ten years, compared to 58% of older workers. Following this, a fall in the proportion of non-Generation Z workers valuing long-term career prospects with a firm between today and in ten years time causes a generational divide to open on this characteristic. A divide is also expected to emerge in terms of the management opportunities available to workers, as well as the perks that employers provide. These are therefore areas that employers hoping to remain attractive to the future workforce may wish to stress further in the coming years.



of Generation Z workers expect to find progression important in ten years.

The results by generation can also be assessed in terms of the characteristics expected to rise the most in importance over time. As can be seen in Figure 7, the characteristic witnessing the steepest increase in importance among Generation Z employees in the next ten years is the opportunity to hold equity in a business (increasing by 20 percentage points). This does however remain important to a minority of employees from this generation in ten years' time.

The remaining characteristics seeing the sharpest absolute increase in importance in the next ten years are all perceived as important by a majority of Generation Z employees today.

These notably include:

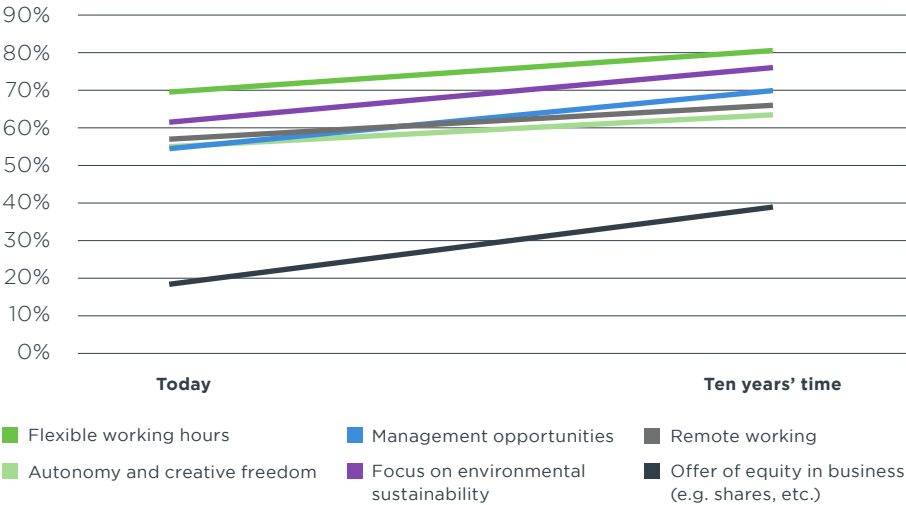


Management opportunities
(increasing by 15 percentage points)



A company focus on environmental sustainability (14 percentage points)

Figure 7: Six job aspects that are expected to see the greatest increase in importance among Generation Z employees between today and in ten years' time (10-year period).

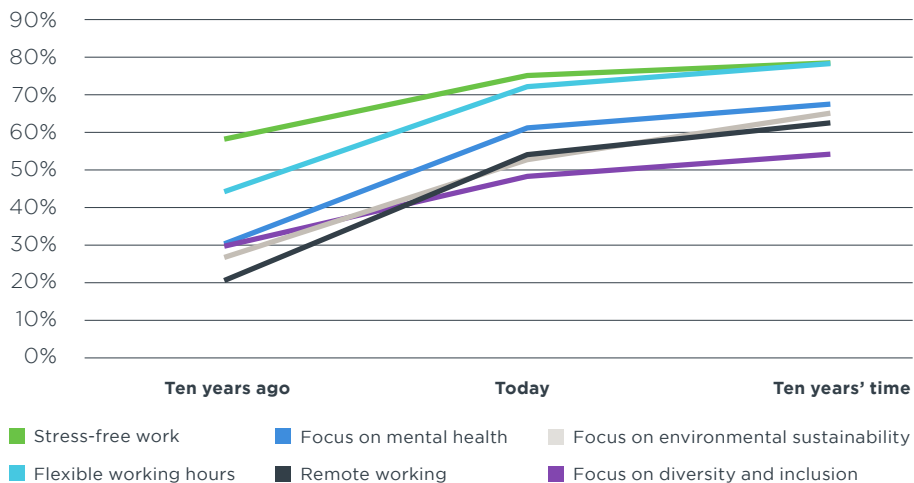


Performing the same analysis for non-Generation Z employees, presented in Figure 8, reveals both generational differences and similarities in the changes in values and preferences relating to work. For non-Generation Z, the steepest expected increase in importance in the next ten years is associated with a focus on environmental sustainability, with a 12-percentage point increase expected over this period. This is slightly below the increase expected by Generation Z workers and starts from a lower base of 48% today. The next-largest expected increase in the next ten years among non-Generation Z workers is seen with regard to receiving an offer of business equity. This rises by nine percentage points from 26% today (above Generation Z), to 35% in ten years' time (below Generation Z). Following this, the importance attached to remote working is expected to rise from 54% today to 62% in ten years, largely in line with Generation Z. Other notable increases are seen for business focus on diversity and inclusion, mental health, and stress-free work.



Therefore, similar themes can be identified in the emerging priorities for Generation Z workers as well as those for workers of all ages, suggesting that businesses should pay attention to such areas, regardless of the age structure of their organisation. These similarities include businesses having a focus on environmental sustainability, facilitating remote and flexible working, and having an emphasis on diversity and inclusion. Nonetheless, the expected increases for Generation Z are typically larger, strengthening the case for investing in these areas as the generation rises in seniority and influence over time.

Figure 8: Six job aspects that are expected to see the greatest increase in importance among non-Generation Z employees between ten years ago and in ten years' time (20-year period)*



* Results cover employees from the millennial (younger and older) generation, Generation X and Baby Boomers. Those from the Baby Boomer generation were not asked about their job preferences in ten years' time.

Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

Finally, focusing more narrowly on the share of employees that finds a given characteristic 'very important', defined as an aspect that would be crucial for them to apply for a job or accept an employer's offer, the characteristics with the highest scores on this measure remain in line with those on overall importance.

The most intergenerational variation in the extent to which a job characteristic is viewed as 'very important' is seen for career progression opportunities and long-term prospects with a company, both of which perhaps unsurprisingly see a fall in importance with age. The next most intergenerationally variable aspect is the provision of opportunities for continuous learning and training, which also sees a fall in this measure of importance with age; whilst 41% of Generation Z employees would not apply for a job without such opportunities, this is the case for 30% of millennial employees, 19% of Generation X employees, and only 15% of baby boomer employees.

Other job factors see a non-linear relationship between high importance and age. With regard to opportunities for remote working, 28% of Generation Z workers and 25% of baby boomer workers would not apply for a job that does not offer this flexibility. Meanwhile, this is true for 35% of millennial employees and 31% of Generation X employees. Similarly, the percentage of employees that would not apply for a job that does not allow them to have autonomy and creative freedom rises from 15% of Generation Z employees to 23% among millennial workers, but subsequently falls to 18% for Baby Boomer workers.



25% of baby boomer workers would not apply for a job that does not offer this flexibility.

2.3

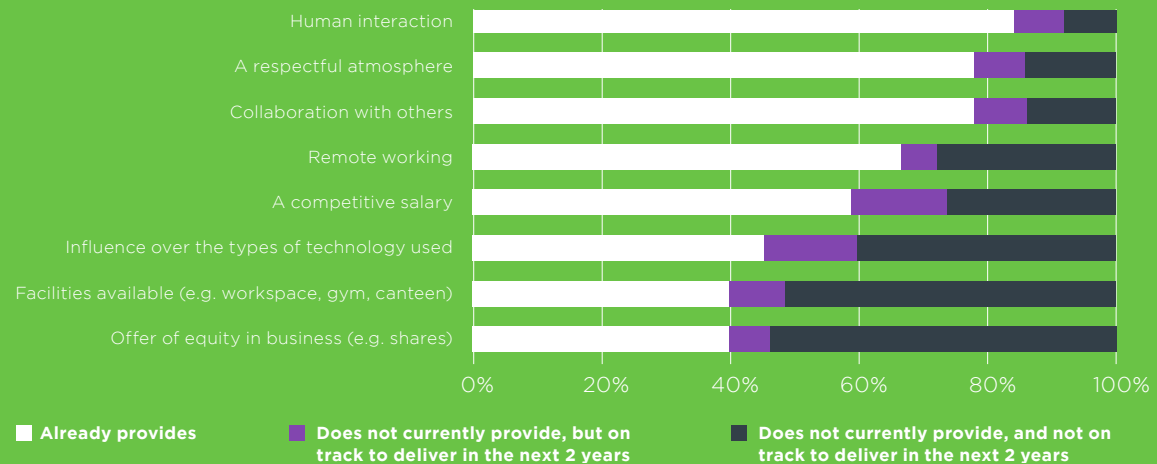
Gaps between desires and the reality of work in the UK today.

Further survey results reveal employees' assessments of the characteristics that their current employer provides. These results are given in full in Appendix D, with select characteristics presented in Figure 9. This shows that, whilst 78% of employees feel that their current employer provides a respectful environment, only 59% feel that they receive a competitive salary.

Where respondents noted that their current employer does not provide a given job characteristic, they were also asked about whether their employer is on track to deliver the given characteristic within two years.

This shows that, for example, among the 33% of respondents that don't currently have access to remote working opportunities, the vast majority (28% of all respondents, or 83% of those currently without remote working) do not feel that their employer is on track to deliver this in the next two years. Meanwhile, only 36% of those who are currently lacking a respectful atmosphere think that their employer is on track to resolve this in the next two years.

Figure 9: Distribution of UK workers who feel that their current employer provides select job characteristics (including top and bottom three characteristics that employers currently provide)



Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

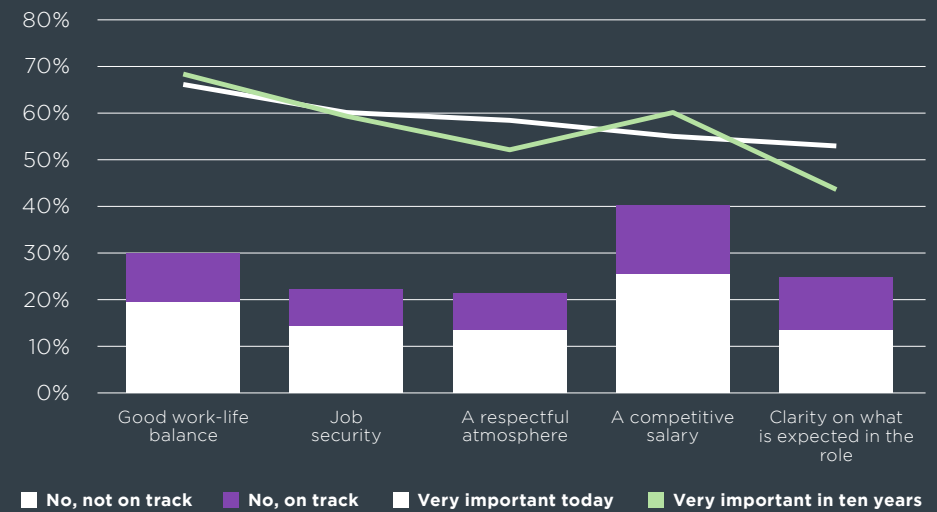
Comparing these findings with the results on job aspects that employees find important, existing and future gaps can be identified between employees' desires and what employers provide. For this, the percentage of respondents noting that each job aspect is 'very important' is used, which was defined to respondents as a factor that would determine whether they apply for a job or accept a job offer.

The existence and severity of such gaps is firstly assessed from the perspective of all employees. Across all of the job characteristics listed, 29% are not currently provided by a percentage of employers that exceeds the percentage of respondents viewing the characteristic as 'very important'. This indicates a potentially costly gap for those employers who fail to provide these aspects. In the following, potential gaps are highlighted by focusing on job characteristics that over half of employees feel are crucial when selecting a job.

As shown in Figure 10, one such potential gap can be seen with respect to having a good work-life balance. Whilst 31% of employees do not currently feel that they have a good work-life balance, this would be crucial for 66% of employees today and 68% of employees in ten years in their decision to apply for a job. As such, those employers currently failing to facilitate a good work-life balance for their employees may wish to focus on this as a priority as a means of sustainably attracting talent in future. The 10% of employees who currently feel that their employer is on track to deliver a good work-life balance in the next two years does however reduce the severity of this for those business leaders already attempting to address this area.

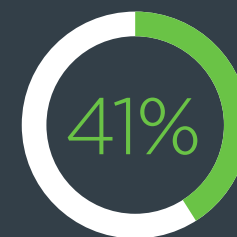
Meanwhile, 41% of employees do not currently perceive their salary to be competitive, which would be a crucial factor for 55% of employees today and 60% of employees in ten years' time. The results also suggest that business leaders could benefit from focusing on improving their employees' job security, creating a respectful atmosphere and providing clarity in what is expected of their employees.

Figure 10: Percentage of all respondents that feel their current job does not provide given select job characteristics and the percentage finding each characteristic 'very important'*



* Characteristics are selected that are 'very important' to at least half of employees today or in ten years. "No, not on track" refers to the percentage of employees that don't currently feel that their employer provides the given aspect and is not on track to deliver this in the next two years. "No, on track" refers to those who feel that their employer will deliver the aspect in the next two years.

Source: YouGov survey, Cebir analysis

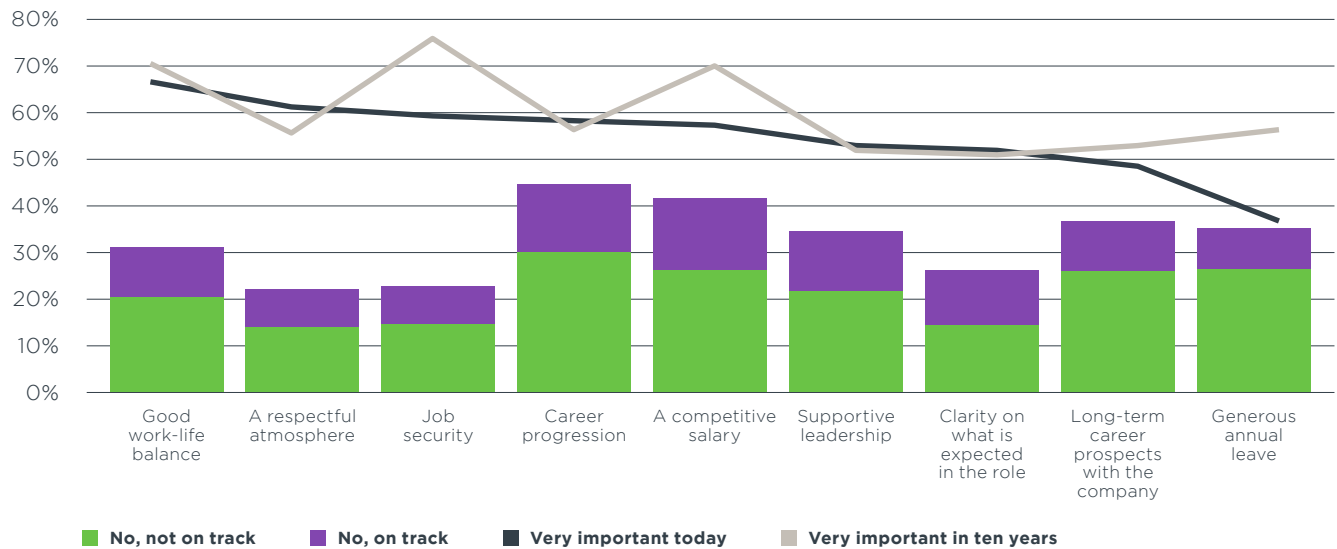


41% of employees do not currently perceive their salary to be competitive.

Performing the same analysis based on the characteristics most important to Generation Z workers today and in ten years provides insights for businesses that particularly wish to future-proof their working offer. As shown in Figure 11, as well as the aspects outlined for employees from all generations, particular potential gaps for Generation Z exist with regard to career progression, having supportive leadership, as well as long-term career prospects and receiving generous annual leave.

Looking ahead, the previously outlined gap with respect to receiving a competitive salary is starker for Generation Z employees, 70% of whom are set to find this a crucial factor in ten years' time.

Figure 11: Percentage of all employees that feel their current job does not provide select job characteristics and the percentage of Generation Z employees finding each characteristic 'very important'*



*Characteristics are selected that are 'very important' to at least half of Generation Z employees today or in ten years. **Source:** YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

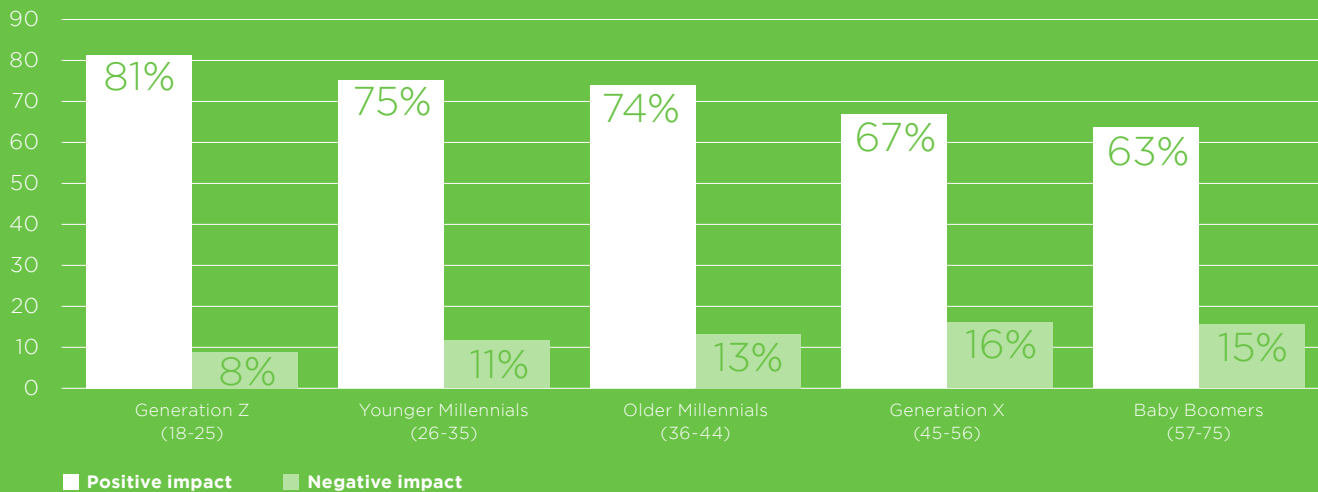
2.4

Technology in the future workplace

Our survey explored the extent to which technology will impact the future of the workplace and employees. There is much uncertainty surrounding the impacts of technology on skills and employment. As such, we asked British employees if they think technology will have a positive or negative impact on workers in their industry in the future, and the results were overwhelmingly positive.

As shown in Figure 12, younger generations have a more positive attitude to technology. 81% of Generation Z employees said that they think technology will have a positive impact on workers in their industry in the future, with 31% feeling it will have a very positive impact, compared to only 8% believing it will have a negative impact. As generations rise with age, employees are less positive about the effects of technology, although the vast majority still believe that there will be mostly positive impacts of technology. 63% of baby boomers said that they think technology will have a positive impact on workers in their industry.

Figure 12: Share of employees who think that technology will have a positive or negative impact on workers in their industry in the future, by generation.



Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis



Younger generations have a more positive attitude to technology.

The results by industry show that employees in the IT & telecoms and finance & accounting sectors are the most optimistic about the impacts of technology on workers in their industries, with 87% and 79% of employees reacting positively for each industry, respectively. At the other end of the spectrum, employees in the hospitality & leisure and retail sectors were least positive, with 55% and 58% saying they think technology will have a positive impact on workers in their industry, respectively. Hospitality and retail employees are most likely to see elements of their jobs automated over the coming years and so could see a reduction in the number of jobs available. Despite this, the majority of employees are still positive about technology.

Increasing seniority also lends to increased confidence in the impacts of technology. As shown in Figure 13, managers are more likely to say there will be positive impacts of technology than workers in non-management positions.

Considering the types of technology that will be valuable in the future workplace, employees were most likely to say that advanced software systems (41%) and automation (31%) will be important in the future workplace in their industry, as shown in Figure 14. This is followed by artificial intelligence (30%), the internet of things (26%) and blockchain (14%).

Looking at the top five technologies that will be most important to future workplaces, in Figure 15, the level of importance assigned to each technology tends to increase as employees become more senior. This is particularly prominent for artificial intelligence, where 26% of employees with no management responsibility think this technology will be important in the future workplace compared to 39% of senior managers or directors below board level.

Figure 13: Share of employees who think that technology will have a positive or negative impact on workers in their industry in the future, by management position.

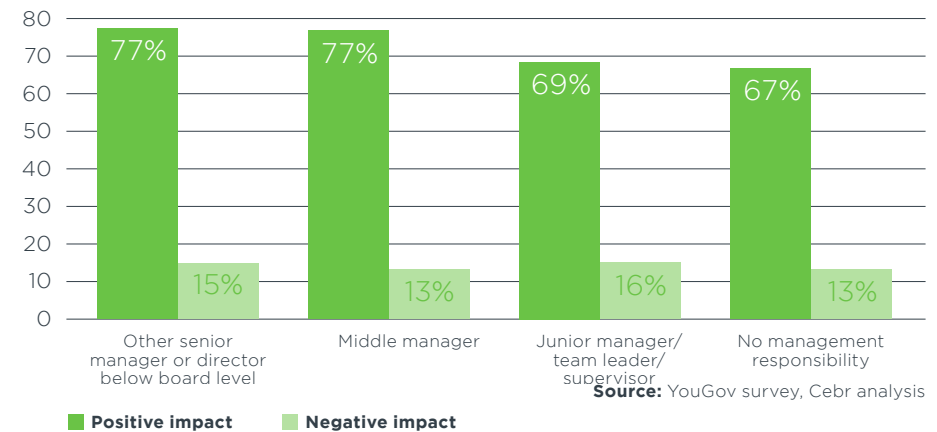
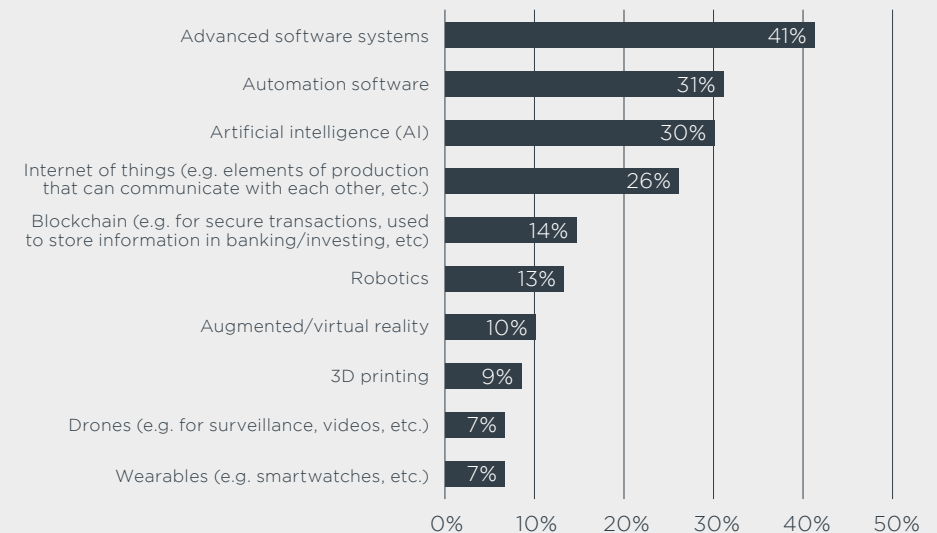
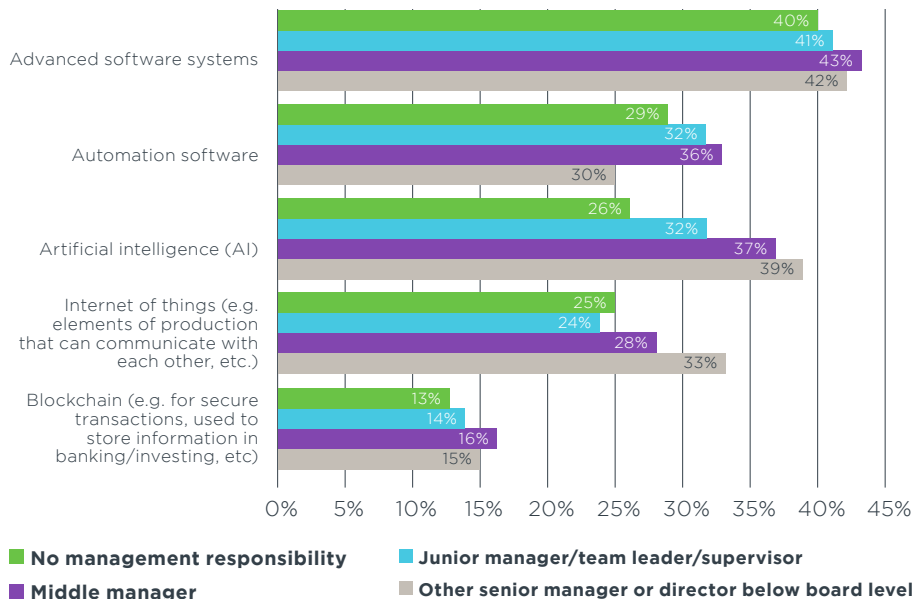


Figure 14: Share of employees who believe the following technologies will be important in the future workplace in their industry.



Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

Figure 15: Share of employees who believe the following technologies will be important in the future workplace in their industry, by management responsibility of respondent.

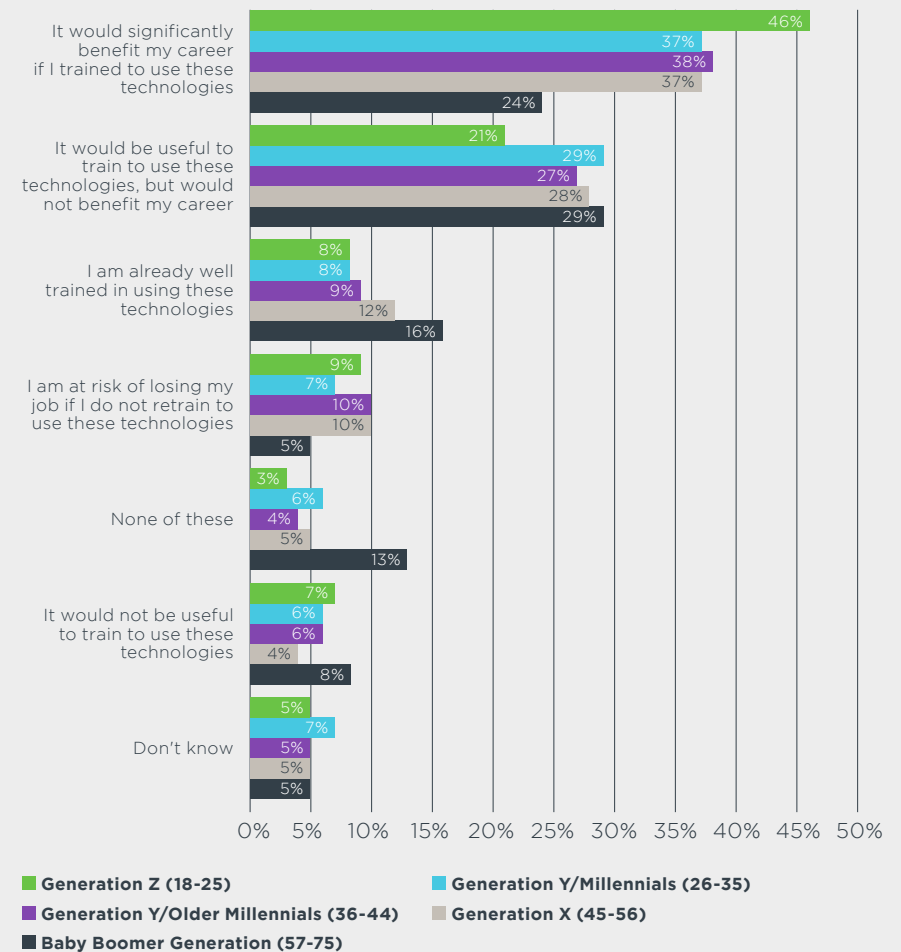


Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

Given that technologies will play an increasingly important role in the workplace of the future, many workers are likely to have to undertake training to be able to use these technologies effectively. 36% of workers who said that technology will be important believed that it would significantly benefit their career if they trained to use these technologies. A further 28% said that it would be useful to train to use these technologies, but it would not benefit their career. 8% of these workers even said that they are at risk of losing their job if they do not retrain to use these technologies.

From a generational perspective, employees from Generation Z who said that technology will be important more frequently believed that technology training would significantly benefit their career than older workers, as shown in Figure 16. However, this group less frequently said that they are already well trained in using such technologies than older workers.

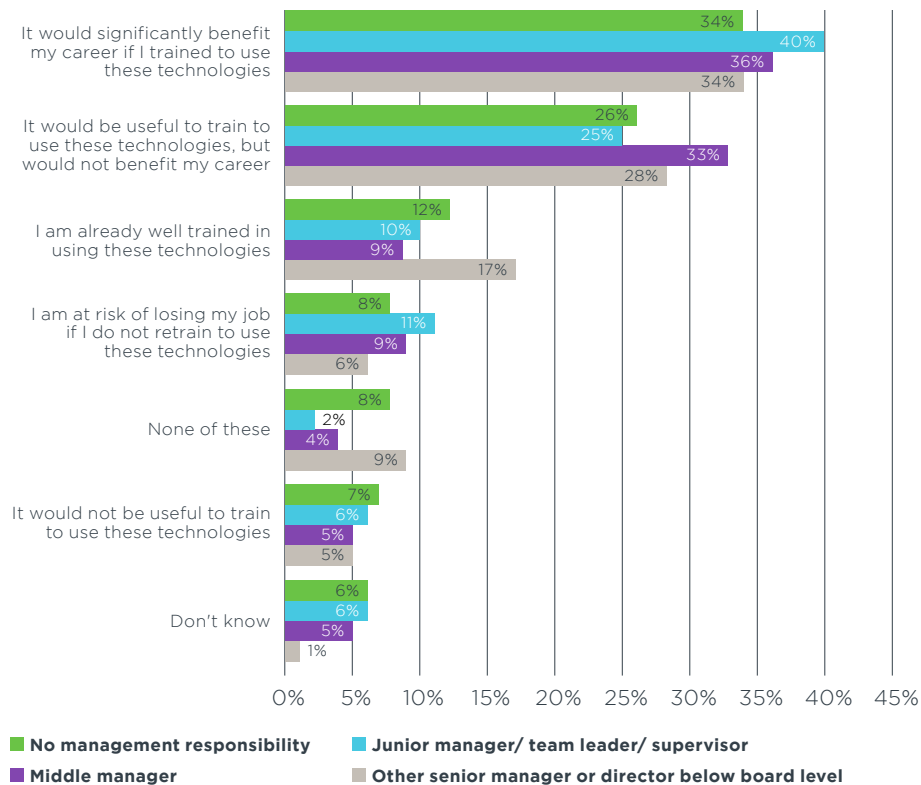
Figure 16: Share of workers who believe technology will be important in the future workplace that agree with the following statements, by generation.



Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

Considering these results by seniority in Figure 17, junior managers, team leaders and supervisors are most likely to say that it would significantly benefit their career if they trained to use these technologies, with 40% saying so. This group was also most likely to say that they are at risk of losing their job if they don't retrain to use these technologies. This group of employees are still fairly early in their careers but have achieved management positions are also most likely to see training in using technologies as important for further career progression.

Figure 17: Share of workers who believe technology will be important in the future workplace that agree with the following statements, by management level.



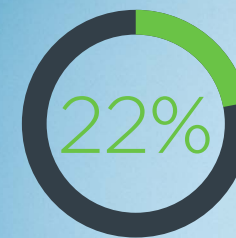
Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

2.5

Skills and management of the future

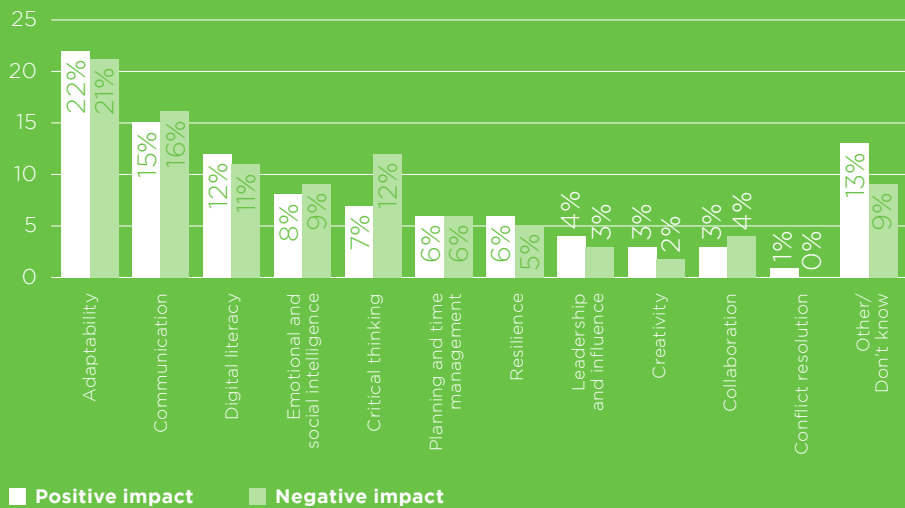
As well as the technological abilities needed for the future workplace, other softer skills required for the workplace of the future are likely to change over the next decade. Employees were asked to select the skill that they think will be most important in 10 years' time, and 22% selected adaptability – the most popular option, as shown in Figure 18. Furthermore, 15% selected communication and 12% selected digital literacy.

While only 7% of employees selected critical thinking as the top skill that will be most important in the workplace in a decade, 12% of Generation Z think this. This suggests that this generation – which will produce the leaders of future workplaces – sees this skill as particularly crucial.



22% of employees think adaptability will be the most important skill in 10 years time.

Figure 18: The skills employees think will be most important to the workplace in a decade.

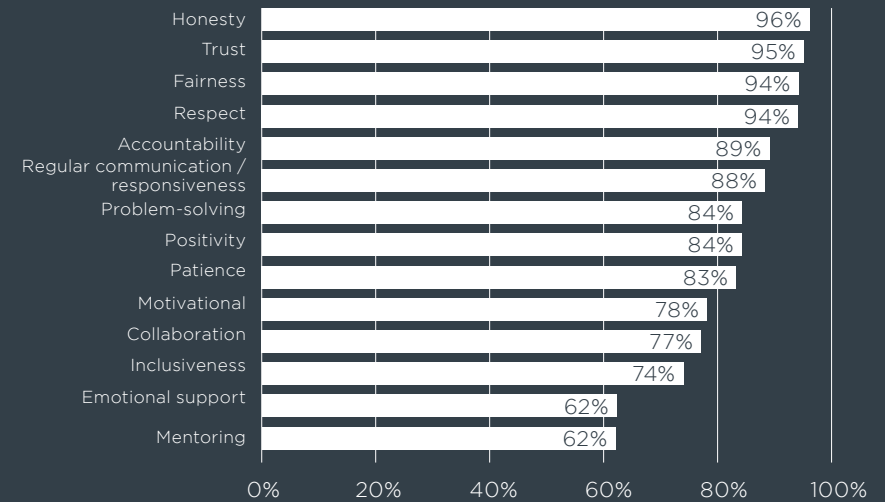


Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

We also asked what soft skills employees would like to see in the people managing them. Although all the soft skills listed in the survey, as shown in Figure 19, were regarded as important by respondents, honesty, trust, fairness and respect were regarded as the most important, with more than 90% of employees citing these attributes as significant. Emotional support and mentoring by managers are regarded as less important, with only 62% saying each of these factors are important in a manager.

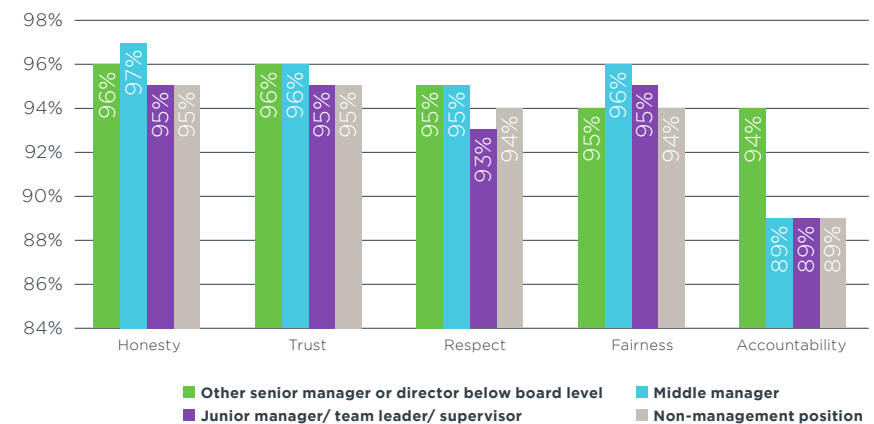
Of the most important factors employees would like to see in their managers, as depicted in Figure 20, accountability sees a relatively large discrepancy in how important it is considered to be by employees of varying seniority. Whilst 94% of senior managers and directors below board level said that accountability was an important characteristic for their manager to possess, this was the case for only 89% of other employees.

Figure 19: Share of employees regarding the following factors as important to see in someone managing them.



Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

Figure 20: Share of employees regarding the following factors as important to see in someone managing them, top factors split by management position.



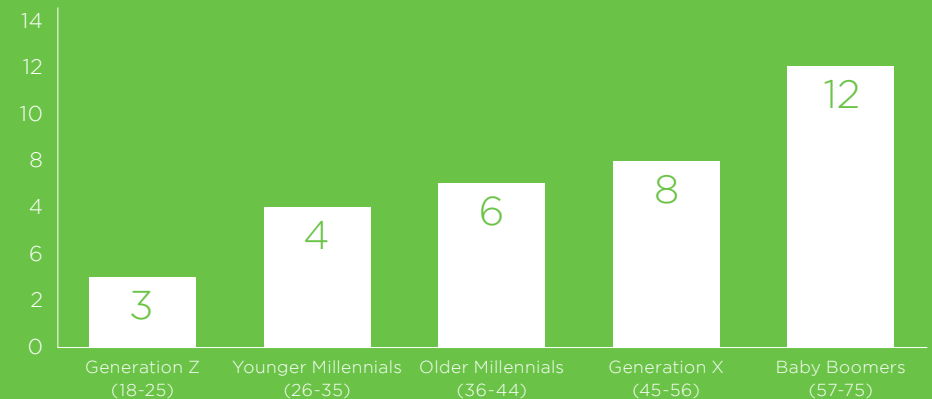
Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

2.6 Careers of the future

A key theme that is emerging for employees is changing patterns of career progression, from older workers who tend to stay at their employers for longer, to younger workers who might be more likely to switch employers more regularly or engage in self-employment. This is linked to the rise of the individual and a desire of younger generations to control their career more by changing employers, as opposed to a worker's career being dependent on their long-term employer.

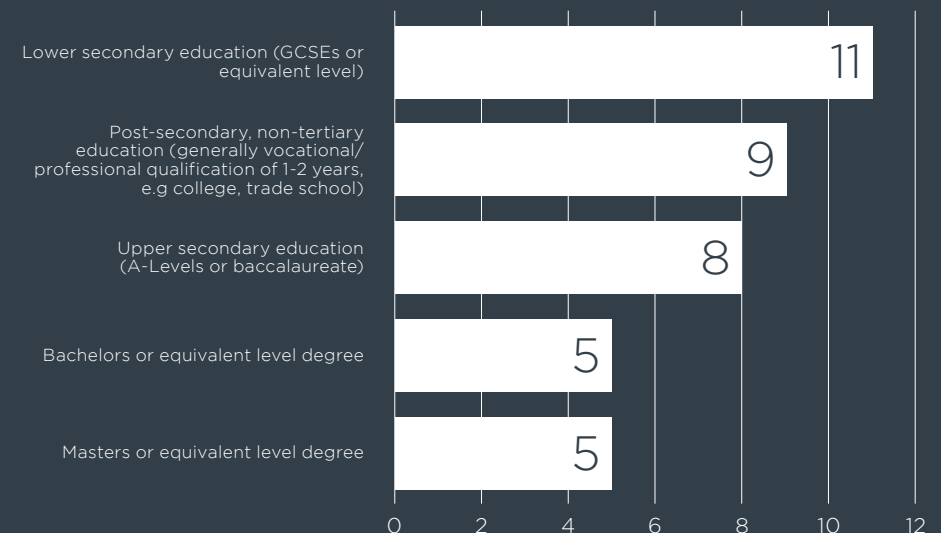
Figure 21 shows that baby boomers expected to work for 12 years for their first employer when they started their careers. In comparison, Generation Z employees expect to work for an average of three years for their first employer. Interestingly, employees with higher education levels also expected to work for shorter lengths of time for their first employer. As shown in Figure 22, individuals who left school after their GCSEs said that they expected to work for 11 years at their first employer, on average. Meanwhile employees with a master's degree said that they expected to work for their employer for four years on average. This difference may be due to workers with higher education levels having more ambitious career expectations, resulting in faster job switches in a bid to achieve a promotion.

Figure 21: How many years workers expected to work for their first employer for at the start of their career, by generation.



Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

Figure 22: How many years workers expected to work for their first employer for at the start of their career, by education level.

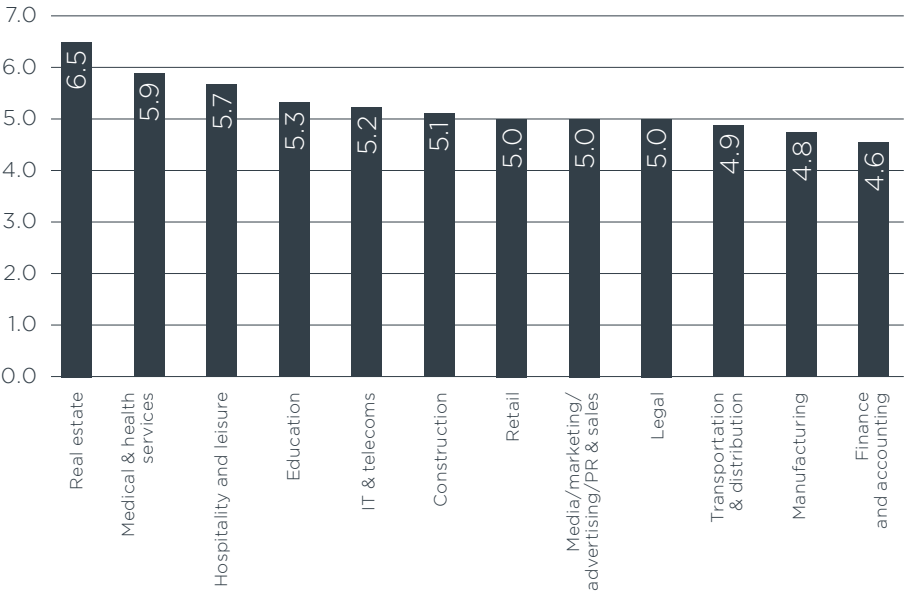


Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis



Survey respondents were also asked for the number of employers they have previously worked for, including their current employer. As depicted in Figure 23, real estate is the industry with the highest average number of existing employers per worker, at 6.5, followed by medical & health services at 5.9. Meanwhile, in the finance & accounting industry people had the lowest average number of employers, at 4.6.

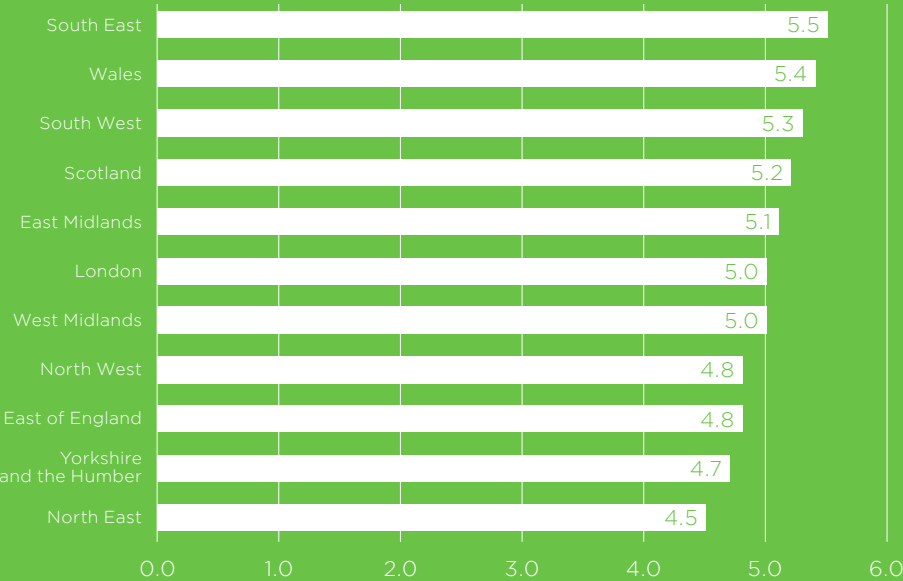
Figure 23: Average number of employers per worker, by industry.



Source: YouGov survey, Cebir analysis

The survey results also reveal variation in the average number of employers by region, as shown in Figure 24. Employees in the South East reported to have previously worked for the most employers, with an average of 5.5 employers including their current one. Meanwhile, workers in the North East registered 4.5 existing employers on average, implying that workers in this region stay at employers for longer periods.

Figure 24: Average number of employers per worker, by region.



Source: YouGov survey, Cebir analysis

3

Views from business: case studies



3.1

Business Forecaster

Cebr interviewed Shivvy Jervis, Business Forecaster and Founder of FutureScape 248, a forecasting lab that helps organisations and governments to embrace human-centred innovation.

As a futurist, Shivvy studies the intersection of digital advances, scientific discoveries and neuroscience.

What three adjectives would you use to describe the future UK workplace?



Inventive

Future businesses will need to embrace the potential of 'the basement founders' culture of self-starting investors, according to Shivvy. This encourages in-house invention and more risk-friendly thinking.



Shapeshifting

Shivvy believes that the future workplace will require flexibility and be much more fluid than it is today. This will necessitate a greater degree of adaptability from businesses and employees.



Human

Digital transformation, Shivvy notes, is still seen by many organisations as solely an 'IT challenge'. She sees this as a flawed approach, as human capital should be a higher priority: investing in people and ensuring upskilling.

How do you think the post-pandemic workplace will be different from today?

Leadership and career progression

From the perspective of leadership in the future workplace, Shivvy believes that the pandemic has prompted and accelerated the rise of the 'moral economy'. This has forced leaders to reassess the values that they and their organisations stand for. Businesses in future will have to go beyond standard CSR initiatives and truly engage with matters of sustainability and their responsibilities to the communities in which they operate.

Shivvy also emphasises the importance of leaders embracing the rise of non-linear career timelines to best support their workforce and promote talent development. This may involve workers having multiple entry points to a new role or moving to entirely different divisions within the company (with the support of upskilling) rather than traditional linear career progression, which can hamper talent and create the common feeling of 'being stuck' or dissatisfied with one's job.

Finally, Shivvy believes that the pandemic has allowed hidden, unsung leaders to emerge within organisations, including those who may have missed chances to step into leadership roles prior to the pandemic. Virtualisation, she says, has been a great equaliser, allowing talent that might have gone unnoticed before to be recognised and removing some of the nepotistic behaviours associated with traditional work environments.

The physical workplace

Shivvy believes that organisations will benefit greatly from maintaining aspects of flexible working in the post-pandemic world, with employees remaining at least as productive and fulfilled. Fulfilment, she says, isn't just a nicety, but ultimately affects the bottom line of a business. A blended working model can more broadly invest in the holistic wellness of workers. In industries where this is not a possibility, the physical workspace will likely need to be adapted to account for those individuals who may be more exposed and vulnerable to disease. Additionally, a hybrid model allows those who might have been previously displaced from work, or unable to commit to five working days in the office, to have a new 'shot' at a job. This could for instance include those experiencing unavoidable circumstances such as being a single parent, suffering from a mental disability or poor mental health, or a physical disability.

Technology

Technological advances, Shivvy emphasises, will augment our workplaces in many ways and must work in sync with people, with digital engineering required to keep human needs central. One example of this is adaptive or 'emotionally aware' AI (artificial intelligence), referring to algorithms with an understanding of the situational contexts of what is being asked of them by the humans with whom they interact. For instance, software already exists that quietly runs in the background of a computer and quickly learns how the user interacts with different programs and knowledge capture. Such software can quickly learn how to automate tedious processes, freeing workers to focus on vital decision making that only humans can do and leading to a significant increase in productivity.



Should workers fear technological advancements in automation and AI?

Starting with the negative aspects to this question, Shivvy notes that is true that AI will displace certain jobs. However, this is nothing new, as AI has been evolving for decades. The issue, she believes, has only come to the forefront recently with increasing media attention and headlines portraying AI as an existential threat, with the robots are coming' rhetoric.

Instead of fully displacing workers, Shivvy explains that, in enough cases, algorithms will be trained to perform aspects of our jobs with greater efficiency. Research, she adds, has shown that AI creates as many jobs as it displaces. However, the opportunities that are created are likely to be more concentrated in the fields of technology or top leadership, roles which may be a challenge to fill. Nonetheless, Shivvy sees the benefits that AI can provide in augmenting the workplace, strongly outweighing any potential risks.

Which skills do you think will be most useful in the future UK workplace?

Digital fluency

Whilst not everyone has to be a coder, Shivvy believes it will be essential for future employees to work alongside systems that are powered by AI, data science, the Internet of Things, and connected objects. This will require an ability to 'get under the hood' of technology being used and manage these tools.

Data interpretation

There is likely to be growing demand for people who can make sense of data and identify patterns within datasets.

Augmented information

This involves the use of augmented reality to create more immersive interactions with information and, according to Shivvy, has been proven to improve brand loyalty and employee retention.

Soft skills

Shivvy believes that AI systems are unlikely to be able to replicate human consciousness, empathy, intuition and negotiation within the next 20 years. Therefore, understanding the nuances of conversation and motivating others will remain valuable human skills in an increasingly automated world.

Ethics

There has already been a notable increase in demand for data ethicists, who address the ethical and moral use of data within organisations. This, Shivvy believes, will continue alongside a greater focus on rolling out ethically sound products.

Shivvy's recommendations to UK business leaders that are looking to attract talent and boost employee satisfaction.



Purpose as well as profit

Leaders should find ways to demonstrate to their existing and potential future workforce that profit is not the sole business objective. In order to do this, they must ask themselves what the impact of their business is on wider society. Emphasising financials might help in the hiring of impressive recruits, but a relentless focus on this is likely to lead to elevated churn and worker turnover.

Flexible working

Embed flexible forms of working rather than viewing it as a Covid-specific element that will eventually recede. This can be done whilst maintaining forms of in-person contact, with their associated benefits.

Data

Every company needs to be a digital or data company in some respect and should think and position themselves as such.

Think like a Futurist

Shivvy urges leaders to adopt some of the approaches that forecasters employ daily: planning on non-linear trajectories; moving towards digital experimentation; thinking like an inventor; and scenario planning with multiple signals, signs and situations in play, versus solely the internal business view.

3.2

Founder of flexible working platform for parents

Cebr also interviewed Louise Deverell-Smith, founder of Daisy Chain, a platform connecting parents with flexible family-friendly employers.

Daisy Chain aims to help parents find work that fits around childcare upon re-entering the labour market, as well as those in employment who are unhappy with its flexibility. Before setting up Daisy Chain, Louise worked in recruitment for over ten years and saw first-hand the lack of flexibility on offer for parents.

What three adjectives would you use to describe the future UK workplace?



Progressive

Successful businesses in the future workplace, Louise emphasises, will talk to their staff and listen to what they expect from their employer. A more consultative approach will bring more progressive hiring, with organisations reflecting a much broader range of voices from society.



Cooperative

The shift towards technology seen during the Covid-19 pandemic brings with it benefits, Louise argues, but throws up new challenges. With less time spent face-to-face, the businesses that survive and succeed in future will foster strong relationships via technology platforms.



Bold

The pandemic period has seen much uncertainty for many, necessitating brave decision-making. Whilst the post-pandemic period will likely see a return to more stability, Louise believes that one legacy will be that bold decision making in the face of new uncertainty provides success.

What does Daisy Chain's growth reveal about changing business attitudes?

Daisy Chain's initial clients in 2017 already understood the benefits of offering flexible working to their staff, whether it be in remote working for part of the week, staggered starting times, or even part-time work. However, in the period since then, Louise has observed growing interest from other employers, followed by a step change during the Covid-19 period. Businesses, she says, now know that flexible working does work, are increasingly willing to discuss the topic with their staff and state it proudly and clearly when advertising job openings. This, she expects, will represent a permanent shift, as businesses themselves learn by doing and embrace the comprehensive benefits of flexible working.

How do the values and desires of workers differ between generations?

Work style and technology

Among the youngest generations, Louise expects that workers will not want to work 40 hours per week in the office again. Having been brought up with technology, they understand its upsides and downsides. Meanwhile, she envisages a greater hesitancy to work completely remotely among older workers, partly due to lower digital fluency. Most of the parents that Louise works with are older millennials (30-40 years old), a group has generally been introduced to modern technology and social media later in their careers.

Nonetheless, with a long time remaining in their careers, she thinks that this group will have to – and ultimately will be able to – embrace changes in technology and working practices. Within a cooperative and trusting environment, she envisages a role for workers with more confidence and knowledge in such areas supporting those who do not, helping to bridge any gaps.

Corporate values

Louise explained that candidates from younger generations increasingly expect their potential employers to communicate their values as an organisation. Compared to those from the older millennial generation, younger candidates value messaging on diversity and inclusion, as well as sustainability and environmental protection.

Career progression

Among the candidates she meets with Daisy Chain, Louise seldom finds people who prioritise long job tenure or wish to stay in one job for the rest of their career. This, she notes, was a greater priority for previous generations. Louise meets many freelancers, who, after becoming parents, enjoy the benefits of having control over when, where and with whom they work. This could include, for example, taking a break over the summer months, in line with childcare commitments. She also highlights the benefits of moving between industries, facilitated by the increasingly transferable nature of skills in the modern economy, and notes increasing enthusiasm about this among Daisy Chain's clients.

Parenting

Whilst Louise noted that 98% of the candidates on Daisy Chain are women, her ambition is for the platform to be used by mothers and fathers equally. This is something that she expects to change among younger generations with the growth of flexible working. Louise believes that the Covid-19 period has had a positive influence on the gender divide in the household, with more fathers enjoying spending time in the home. Now that flexible working has been proven to work for many, and social attitudes towards the maternity-paternity balance are shifting among younger generations, she anticipates growth in interest in flexible working opportunities among fathers, as well as mothers.

What challenges could businesses face in the transition to the future workplace?

Louise believes that businesses that are eager to return to pre-pandemic practices are likely to suffer a degree of alienation amongst their workers and worsened prospects for hiring top talent. As such, companies should not set as a goal to return to normal, instead talking to their staff and seeking out success stories from other businesses operating in their own and other sectors.

Which skills do you think will be most useful in the future UK workplace?

Louise feels that innovation, leadership and complex problem-solving will be at the core of the skills required in the future workforce. On the latter, in an increasingly technology-driven world, it will be important for workers to be able to interact confidently with data and solve problems arising from the digital sphere.



**Louise's
recommendations**
to UK business
leaders that are
looking to attract
talent and boost
employee satisfaction.

Communication and trust

Leaders should promote discussion from across their organisation about employees' preferences, highlighting success stories of what works well in different working models. It's also crucial to foster mutual trust with workers and a cooperative environment, particularly in remote working models.

Broaden recruitment

Businesses must shake up their discussions around talent and expand their recruitment channels to wider groups, including those looking for flexible opportunities. They should be forward-looking with their hiring, considering the skills needed for success in future as well as those needed today.

Invest in technology

Ensure that everyone in the organisation has appropriate equipment to feel comfortable working remotely and flexibly.



3.3

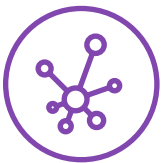
Product marketing manager at Microsoft

Cebr interviewed Robert Epstein, product marketing manager in the Microsoft 365 product group. As part of this, he supports Microsoft's clients with their management of Windows and the suite of Office applications.

Given the helpful tools and technology that Microsoft provides in the area, Robert is also a member of a team looking closely at hybrid work, experimenting with and communicating the tools that can support this.

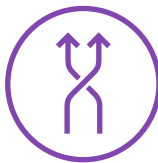


What three adjectives would you use to describe the future UK workplace?



Digital

For Robert, digital is an obvious choice. He envisages a continued transformation, with communication and processes within organisations becoming increasingly digital. This, he anticipates, extends beyond traditional knowledge workers to classic front-line workers.



Flexible

People now want to work from a variety of locations, as well as have flexibility with respect to the hours that they complete their work in. Managed most importantly by the outcomes that they drive, flexibility allows workers to feel more empowered and achieve a better work-life balance.



(A)synchronous

Whilst much work will still be done by workers at the same time, either in the office or remotely, new forms of communication and collaboration will allow them to add value at different timelines. More asynchronous working will be driven by collaborative documents, instant messaging and group chat capabilities.

How has the pandemic influenced Microsoft's product offering?

Robert describes an acceleration of Microsoft's existing journey in the cloud-first provision of technology services. He draws on Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella's quote that each month of the pandemic has seen a year's worth of digital transformation, adding that the organisation has responded incredibly quickly with product development. Robert sees this reflected in the number of users of Microsoft Teams, which has

grown from 40 million to over 144 million over the pandemic period to date. Looking forward, he particularly highlights the role of Teams as a platform for getting work done. As well as a means of communication, he describes Teams as an open platform and a collaborative document store and knowledge door, with many organisations integrating solutions within it to create a full workflow platform.



Microsoft Teams has grown from 40 million to over 144 million over the pandemic period to date.

Should workers fear technological advancements in automation and AI?

People should not fear technological advancements, Robert says. Despite the enormous growth in digital technology throughout the pandemic, UK unemployment remains low and job vacancies are at record highs. He uses the example of manual elevator operators, a job that was widespread in the 1950s, but that people wouldn't dream of entering today. In his view, new technologies have always caused displacement, but also provide new opportunities for job creation. Robert feels that removing repetitive tasks allows focus to be shifted to promoting collaboration and building more creative and inclusive workplaces. Nonetheless, he stresses the importance of continuous learning in helping workers to stay up to speed with the technology that they need to get their jobs done.

As it will be organisations that adopt the best technology and work practices for them, Robert sees it as crucial that they communicate the benefits of the changes they make and create an inclusive culture. Not least because of the speed of modern technological change, he adds that such regular cross-organisation communication is vital in ensuring that employees remain connected to each other and their company, its mission, customers and partners.

Which skills do you think will be most useful in the future UK workplace?

Robert believes that the core skills important today will remain so in the future. These include the ability to solve problems, to build great products and services and to be strong communicators. He sees technology as an empowering tool but believes it will be people who drive innovation and creativity, and build products and services.

Robert adds that most people have proven their ability to be adaptable and use technology to get their work done over the Covid-19 period. Nonetheless, as businesses increasingly incorporate elements of software in future, workers will need to understand more about the software development process. This could be as citizen developers, building new digital tools using low-code/no-code solutions, or simply for communicating with developers building software.



Most people have proven their ability to be adaptable and use technology to get their work done over the Covid-19 period.

What challenges could businesses face in the transition to the future workplace?

In the short-term, Robert sees potential challenges in the shift from remote to hybrid working. For example, tensions with respect to workers wishing to stay working fully remotely. More broadly, once a hybrid balance has been established, he highlights the issue of maintaining the networks that promote, for example, informal learning, mentoring and the development and understanding of company culture. Challenges are also present in the sphere of technological, as well as cultural, connectivity. This, Robert stresses, is not just with respect to traditional office workers, but also for those who work in industries such as logistics, wholesale, leisure, retail and travel, where many felt digitally disconnected from their broader organisations even prior to the pandemic.

How do the values and desires of workers differ between generations?

Contrary to suggestions that older workers are typically less technology competent, Robert points to the Covid-19 period as evidence of clear adaptability among all ages. Not just in the work sphere, the human need to socialise meant that the barrier to technology adoption was lower than previously thought. Furthermore, whilst older millennial and Generation X workers might typically be less confident with mobile technology, he believes that the durability of the traditional PC environment reflects its value in maintaining productivity within a hybrid working model. This has come despite suggestions that mobile tablets had spelled the death of the PC, which could risk a generational divide.

Looking forward, Robert does however, see a potential generational divide in the readiness for further technological developments, for instance with the growth of low-code/no-code platforms for software creation. A further area in which he identifies a generational divide is the expectation among younger workers that businesses actively promote diversity & inclusion and sustainability. With a move toward hybrid working and more dispersedly located workforces, he sees commitment to broader societal issues as of growing importance to younger prospective employees.



Robert's recommendations to UK business leaders.

Overcommunicate

After a challenging pandemic period, it is important to listen to your people create the right wellbeing programs, encompassing both physical and mental health. Regular communication from leadership is crucial to ensure that people feel supported and connected to each other and to the company.

Invest in workplaces, wherever they are

Provide your workforce with effective technology set-ups, including high-quality PCs, in a way that best suits individual needs. The PC, Robert says, is the new office. Issuing quality devices will attract the right staff and make them feel that they can get their work done effectively. Alongside this, maintaining investment in office-based meeting technologies is also crucial in ensuring that work remains fully inclusive in a hybrid working model.

3.4 Co-founder of VR/AR company

Cebr interviewed David Sime, co-founder of Riot Digital and specialist in Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR).

Founded in 2020, Riot (Realities in Internet of Things) connects VR and AR with onsite sensor technology and big data analytics, providing solutions for a variety of industries including oil & gas, logistics, medicine and education. David is also a lecturer, working with Google and the Chartered Institute of Marketing to deliver training on the applications of emerging technologies.

What three words would you use to describe the future UK workplace?



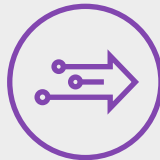
Distance-free

David sees that distance and travel will no longer be an issue in the future workplace, with digital means of communication making the world of work a smaller place. This will allow much more flexibility and efficient use of time.



Collaborative

Distance will also reduce between different specialists. The world of work will be too fast-moving for workers to be siloed, with collaboration key in keeping up. There will also be greater two-way interaction between people and machines.



Ever-evolving

With every collaboration between workers and machines in future, the tools at our disposal will evolve along with our understanding. This will make the tools more fit for purpose and enhance the two-way process of communication.



How will tools similar to those provided by RiioT digital shape the everyday life of the future worker?

David highlighted the core application of RiioT's VR, AR and IoT (Internet of Things) tools in the oil & gas industry. This typically involves installing IoT sensors on oil rig equipment and communicating with these via immersive VR and AR environments. This enables the identification of problems on-site and remote inspection and diagnostics, so that issues can often be resolved while typical disruption times, costs and safety concerns can be avoided. Whilst such solutions might seem highly specific to the industry, David emphasises the broader benefits of the technological approach championed by RiioT across all industries.

Indeed, RiioT is already active in the fields of education, healthcare, construction and transport, with plans to expand further. This involves innovations such as web-based VR systems providing 3D classrooms for anybody in the world on any device; the conversion of medical CT, MRI and ultrasound scans in 2D into immersive volumetric models and holograms; and external or interior models of structures and buildings that collect data and use predictive analytics to prevent accidents.

David envisages innovations such as these eventually becoming an integral aspect of everyday life in all industries. He likens this to the growth of the computer and mobile phone, which one day were largely restricted to high value projects and clients, but today are ubiquitous and continuously evolving according to our need. Similarly, whilst RiioT's projects at this stage are typically highly specialised and big-ticket, David sees these innovations expanding exponentially and becoming a part of everyday life, whether it be VR holidays or intelligent navigation guidance through contact lenses.

Part of the reason that such innovations will become ubiquitous, according to David, is that humans are programmed to experience things in 3D. For example, he notes that VR classrooms see four times the learner retention and engagement than 2D education and training interactions, as much less brainpower is expended in the process of engaging.

What challenges could businesses face in the transition to the future workplace?

In smoothing the transition to the future economy and workplace, David sees connectivity as the current limiting factor. In order to work as intended, the solutions that he is working on (for example the immersive remote management of oil rig and offshore windfarm equipment) typically necessitate the transmission of very large amounts of data with low latency to remote areas.

Improvements, David notes, have been seen in this area with developments in 5G, aided by the growth of low earth orbit satellite systems and backhaul networks. Nonetheless, connectivity to high-speed 5G is not a possibility in many areas – a barrier for businesses that could otherwise benefit from such innovations.

Should workers fear technological advancements in automation and AI?

David foresees the growth of artificial intelligence as a collaborative rather than exclusionary trend. Rather than a division between human and machine, he sees humans having an active role in the development of intelligence. He emphasises the two-way learning process between humans and machines, using

an example of prosthetic limbs. Whereas one VR technology could be used to train people to use these limbs and another to improve their effectiveness, these functions could be combined in more advanced technology so that the limb can learn the person whilst the person learns the limb.



David's recommendations to UK business leaders.

How do the attitudes of workers differ between generations, particularly with regard to technology?

David has generally not witnessed generational divides with regard to technology. Whilst younger people naturally have greater neuroplasticity, he sees that the developments seen over the past 20 years have meant that everybody has had to learn fairly constantly. Rather than age, David attributes the mentality of different professionals to friction against new technology. He also refers to uncertainty and inexperience as factors driving discomfort around new technologies, but that this is quickly overcome through immersion and creation of familiarity. With greater exposure in the years to come, and a greater focus on continuous lifelong learning, he sees a subdual in such points of friction.

Indeed, many of the solutions provided by Riio digital revolve around immersive learning and training, which, David notes, achieves their given educational aim but also allows the user to become more familiar with more advanced technologies in the process. An example of this is immersive technology with augmented aspects allowing a specialist surgeon to train many other surgeons from across the world on a specific procedure. Not only does this teach the surgeons the intended procedure, but it also has the power to familiarise a whole generation of (perhaps older) surgeons with the technology, whilst allowing the technology itself to develop, until it could one day potentially be used for remote VR surgical practices.

Champion honesty and collaboration

David emphasises the rapid speed of development and the rise of uncertainty in his industry and the future workplace more broadly. Given this, he sees the key to success being an honest approach that admit gaps in knowledge and seeks out information from those with greater expertise in a specific area. Interdisciplinary collaboration rather than siloed competitiveness, he says, will separate the winners from the losers.

Do not fear new technology

David notes that, despite the concerns of the 19th century Luddites, the growth of automated looms did not leave behind a mass of unemployed weavers. There will always be sufficient new opportunities, he says, and we should not shy away from progress over concerns about a turbulent but temporary period of transition.

4

Recommendations

Results from the survey of 2,000 UK employees conducted for this report showed that the importance of having a good work-life balance has risen sharply in the last ten years.



The wide-reaching findings of this report point to a number of recommendations for employers as they adjust to accommodate for the employee of the future and new ways of working. These will enable businesses to remain competitive in a changing world, maintaining employee satisfaction and attracting top talent in a sustainable manner.

Facilitate a good work-life balance

Results from the survey of 2,000 UK employees conducted for this report showed that the importance of having a good work-life balance has risen sharply in the last ten years. Ranking eighth in importance out of the listed various job characteristics ten years ago, this now is the most important factor to the average UK worker today and is expected to remain at first place in ten years' time. Whereas just over one-third of employees would not choose an employer that did not offer a good work-life balance ten years ago, this is the case for two-thirds today, with an expected further rise in the next ten years. Results also show that it is also the single or joint highest characteristic in importance for all generations today. This is likely also reflected in the importance attached by employees to working for a firm that values mental health, which has risen from 30% ten years ago to 62% today.

As such, businesses that wish to secure their long-term success would benefit from closely examining how well their workers feel they can balance their work and non-work commitments. Whilst the optimal response will vary between businesses, the finding of Lenovo's 2020 study that remote working has caused (especially younger) employees to struggle separating their work from their personal lives suggests that offering a mixture of home and office work will help in the short-to-medium term. Embracing flexibility in working hours will also enable businesses to attract and maintain the top talent, irrespective of non-work commitments.

Purpose as well as profit

The survey results also reveal that working for a firm that values environmental sustainability has risen steeply in importance for workers in the past ten years. A majority of employees now see this is an important factor, almost twice as many as ten years ago. Meanwhile, in ten years' time, 36% of all workers and 46% of Generation Z workers say that they feel they will not choose a firm that does not value sustainability. Furthermore, an increasing expectation of firms to value diversity and inclusion is observable, a deciding factor for 28% of all workers and 43% workers in ten years' time, when applying for jobs. Therefore, firms that proactively respond to such questions of purpose are likely to remain attractive in the future workplace, securing their economic position for tomorrow as well as today.

Offer technology training

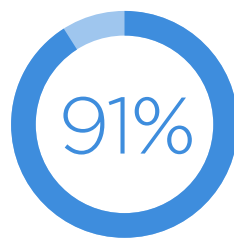
The overwhelming consensus from discussions with business leaders is that technology does not represent a threat to the future workplace. Results from the employee survey also show that 70% of workers think technological advances will have a positive impact on their industry, with a higher share among younger workers. Nonetheless, ensuring that the future worker is able to reap the net benefits that technology can provide will require businesses to invest in their workers' skills. This will enable them to remain adaptable, the most commonly noted characteristic that employees think will be important in the future workforce.

68% of employees today feel that it is important that their company provides opportunities for continuous learning and training, up from 62% ten years ago. Among those who think that technology will be important in their industry in the future, 36% feel that technology training would significantly benefit their career. Firms that fail to recognise this real and growing need are likely to struggle in their ability to attract and retain top talent and secure their future amid rapid technological change.

Champion honesty, respect and communication

Finally, and a common theme throughout the previous recommendations, successful firms in the post-pandemic workplace will emphasise communication, respect and honesty. Maintaining these soft skills is likely to represent a short-to-medium-term challenge in an increasingly digital environment but may be enabled through technology itself over a longer time period. 91% of workers today find it important that their workplace has a respectful

atmosphere, and over 90% value each of the characteristics of honesty, trust, fairness and respect in their managers, the highest proportion for any management characteristics. In a future workplace characterised by fast-paced technological change and more disparate working, finding innovative ways to communicate and maintain a human element to work will be crucial for cohesion, common purpose, productivity and ultimately business success.



of workers today find it important that their workplace has a respectful atmosphere.

5

Conclusions



This report has explored the future UK workplace from a number of perspectives. Within this, a particular focus has been placed on what UK employees want to see from their employers and workplaces as the post-pandemic 'new normal' emerges.

A bespoke survey of 2,000 UK employees sheds light on the priorities for workers, looking backwards as well as forwards to identify trends in what employees value most.

Having job security, a respectful working environment and a competitive salary remain priorities for workers over time, featuring in the top four characteristics ten years ago, today and in ten years' time. Looking at the factors that are expected to notably increase in importance in ten years' time compared to ten years ago, the opportunity to work remotely rises the most, almost tripling in terms of the percentage of workers that find this important (from 21% to 62%). This suggests that a return to full-time office work is both unlikely and undesired, in line with the findings of other studies.

The survey results also provide a generational perspective on the question of the priorities of the UK workforce. Many characteristics that are set to increase in importance most sharply in the next ten years are common to all employees, irrespective of age. These include businesses having a focus on environmental sustainability, facilitating remote and flexible working, and having an emphasis on diversity and inclusion. Nonetheless, the expected increases for Generation Z are typically larger, strengthening the case for investing in these areas as this generation rises in seniority and influence over time. Results also show changing patterns of career progression among younger workers, who expect a shorter tenure with their first employer than was the case for older workers in their first job.

Shining a spotlight on the role of technology in the future workplace, the survey results show that employees generally feel optimistic about advances in this area. This optimism is stronger among younger workers and provides evidence against the view that workers fear technology-driven job destruction. Nonetheless, the results show that a sizeable proportion of workers feel their career would benefit from technology training.

In order to complement the findings of the employee survey, Cebr conducted four interviews with business leaders and experts. Among others, the case studies highlight the importance of data and digital fluency in the future workplace. Common themes also included the importance that businesses do not attempt to return to pre-pandemic norms, instead embracing more flexible and hybrid working models. Finally, all four interviewees provided a net positive view on the effects of technology on the workforce and workplace of the future.

Finally, in light of the findings of the bespoke employee survey and interviews of business leaders, Cebr has made four recommendations to businesses that are looking to secure their success in the future workplace. These suggest that businesses: facilitate a good work-life balance; pursue purpose as well as profit; offer technology training; and champion honesty, respect and communication.

The findings of this report therefore provide a roadmap for forward-looking businesses that wish to remain in touch with the future worker. It is such firms, successfully adapting with changes in priorities and perspectives, who will attract and maintain the top talent in the post-pandemic workplace.

6

Appendices

The following table lists the proportion of survey respondents perceiving different job characteristics to be important (either 'fairly important' or 'very important'). Results are provided with respect to self-reported preferences ten years ago, today and in ten years' time.

JOB CHARACTERISTIC	TEN YEARS AGO		TODAY		IN TEN YEARS	
	Rank	Net important	Rank	Net important	Rank	Net important
Good work-life balance	8	69%	1	94%	1	88%
Job security	2	82%	2	93%	4	84%
A respectful atmosphere	4	77%	3	91%	3	84%
A competitive salary	1	84%	4	91%	2	87%
Clarity on what is expected in the role	3	80%	5	91%	7	79%
Supportive leadership	5	74%	6	89%	6	81%
Generous annual leave	6	70%	7	84%	5	84%
Stress-free work	14	58%	8	75%	9	78%
Flexible working hours	20	44%	9	72%	8	78%
Receiving feedback on my work	11	65%	10	71%	14	65%
A sociable atmosphere	7	70%	11	70%	15	64%
Up-to-date technology	16	51%	12	70%	13	66%
Long-term career prospects with the company	10	65%	13	69%	16	63%
Opportunities for continuous learning and training	13	62%	14	68%	18	62%
Company that aligns with my values	18	45%	15	66%	11	66%
Human interaction	9	66%	16	65%	19	62%
Career progression	12	64%	17	63%	21	58%
Autonomy and creative freedom	19	44%	18	63%	20	60%
Focus on mental health	25	30%	19	62%	10	69%
Collaboration with others	15	54%	20	61%	22	57%
Remote working	31	21%	21	54%	17	62%
Focus on environmental sustainability	28	27%	22	53%	12	66%
Well-known and respected organisation	17	50%	23	51%	24	50%
Focus on diversity and inclusion	26	30%	24	50%	23	56%
Digital skills training	22	40%	25	46%	25	49%
Management opportunities	21	41%	26	43%	26	49%
Perks (e.g. discounts, free products)	23	35%	27	40%	27	42%
Mentoring opportunities	24	34%	28	37%	28	40%
Influence over the types of technology used	29	23%	29	30%	31	34%
Facilities available (e.g. workspace, gym, canteen)	27	27%	30	30%	30	35%
Offer of equity in business (e.g. shares)	30	22%	31	26%	29	36%

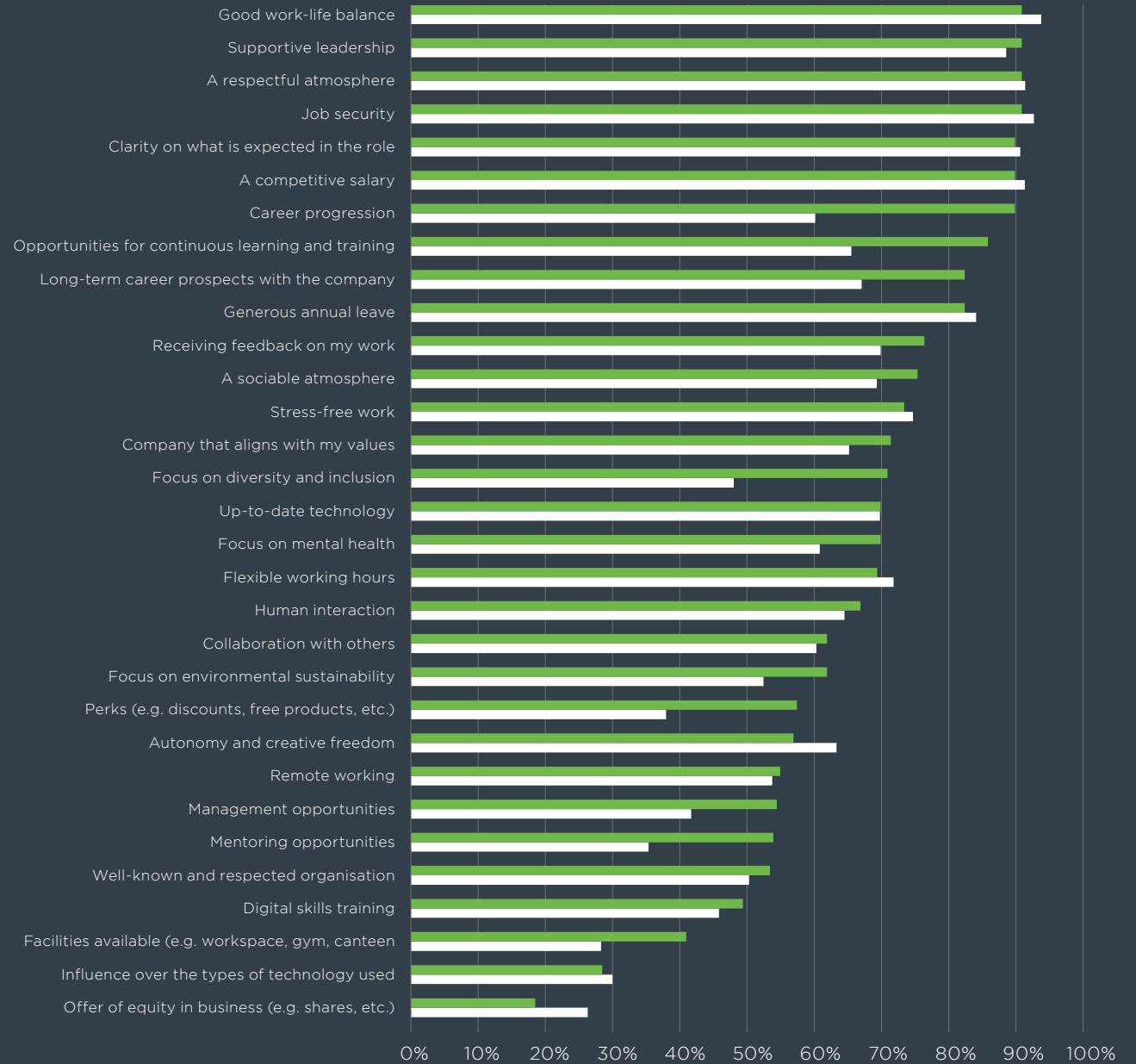
Appendix B

The following table lists the proportion of survey respondents perceiving different job characteristics to be 'very important'. This was defined to respondents as representing a characteristic that would be a crucial factor for them in deciding whether to apply for a job or accept a job offer. Results are provided with respect to self-reported preferences ten years ago, today and in ten years' time.

JOB CHARACTERISTIC	TEN YEARS AGO		TODAY		IN TEN YEARS	
	Rank	Net important	Rank	Net important	Rank	Net important
Good work-life balance	5	34%	1	66%	1	68%
Job security	1	50%	2	60%	3	59%
A respectful atmosphere	4	36%	3	58%	4	52%
A competitive salary	2	45%	4	55%	2	60%
Clarity on what is expected in the role	3	40%	5	53%	9	44%
Supportive leadership	6	32%	6	49%	7	44%
Generous annual leave	7	28%	7	37%	5	49%
Flexible working hours	15	19%	8	35%	6	47%
Stress-free work	12	22%	9	31%	8	44%
Remote working	26	10%	10	31%	10	41%
Long-term career prospects with the company	9	27%	11	29%	14	31%
Career progression	8	28%	12	27%	16	28%
A sociable atmosphere	11	27%	13	26%	19	25%
Receiving feedback on my work	14	22%	14	25%	21	25%
Opportunities for continuous learning and training	13	22%	15	24%	20	25%
Human interaction	10	27%	16	24%	22	24%
Company that aligns with my values	18	17%	17	24%	13	32%
Focus on mental health	22	11%	18	24%	12	35%
Up-to-date technology	19	14%	19	23%	15	29%
Autonomy and creative freedom	20	14%	20	20%	18	26%
Collaboration with others	17	17%	21	19%	24	21%
Focus on diversity and inclusion	23	11%	22	19%	17	28%
Focus on environmental sustainability	28	8%	23	15%	11	36%
Well-known and respected organisation	16	18%	24	14%	26	19%
Management opportunities	21	14%	25	14%	23	22%
Digital skills training	24	10%	26	12%	25	19%
Perks (e.g. discounts, free products, etc.)	25	10%	27	10%	27	14%
Mentoring opportunities	27	9%	28	9%	29	13%
Influence over the types of technology used	31	7%	29	7%	30	12%
Offer of equity in business (e.g. shares)	29	8%	30	7%	28	13%
Facilities available (e.g. workspace, gym, canteen)	30	7%	31	6%	31	11%

Appendix C

Figure 25: Percentage of Generation Z employees and non-Generation Z employees currently finding given job characteristics 'fairly important' or 'very important'.



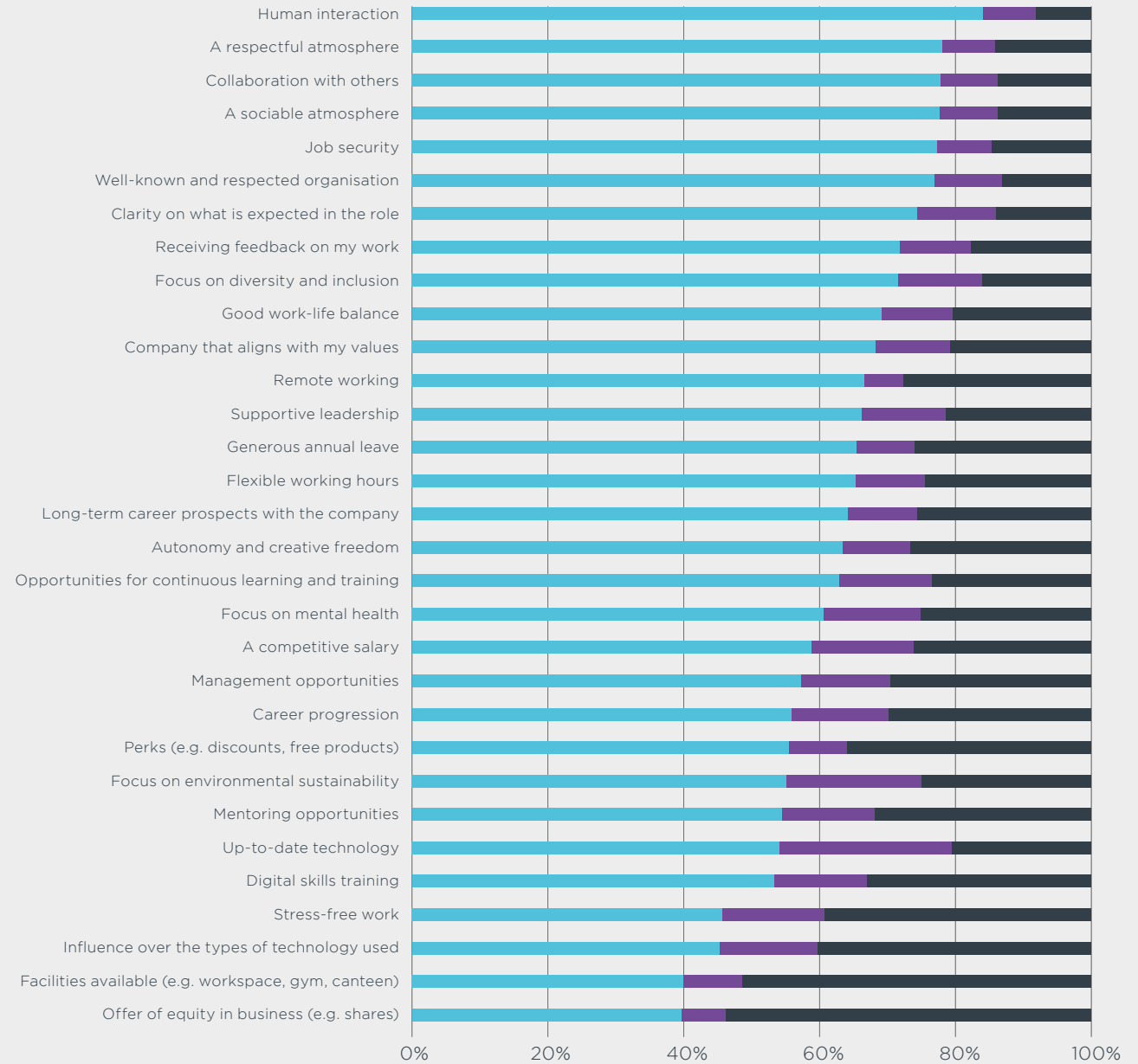
Source: YouGov survey, Cebr analysis

■ Generation Z (18-25)

■ Non-Generation Z (26+)

Appendix D

Figure 26: Percentage of employees stating that their current employer: (i) provides a given job characteristic, (ii) does not currently provide it but is on track to deliver it in the next two years, or (iii) does not currently provide it and is not on track to deliver it in the next two years.



Source: YouGov survey,
Cebr analysis

■ Already provides

■ Does not currently provide, but on track to deliver in the next 2 years

■ Does not currently provide, and not on track to deliver in the next 2 years



Lenovo