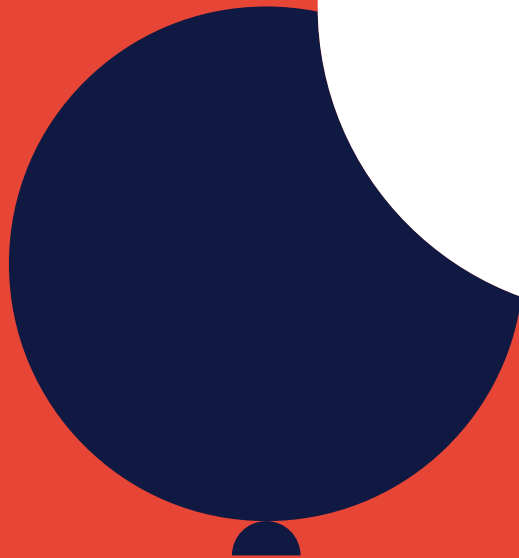
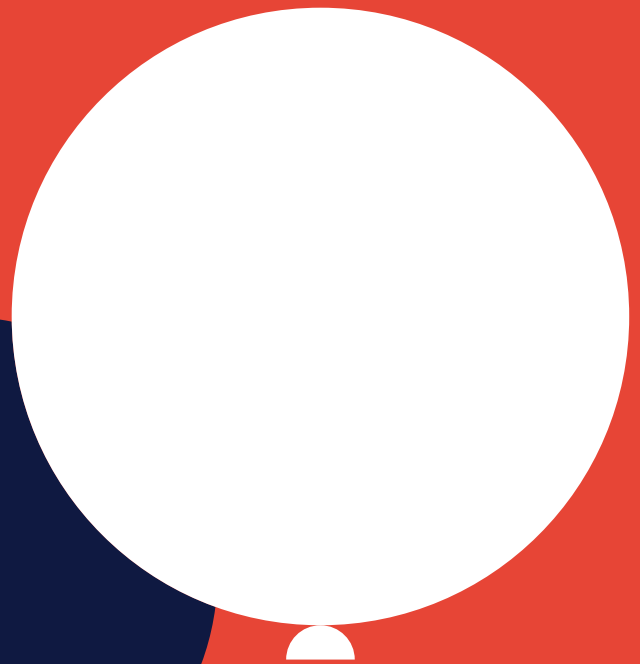
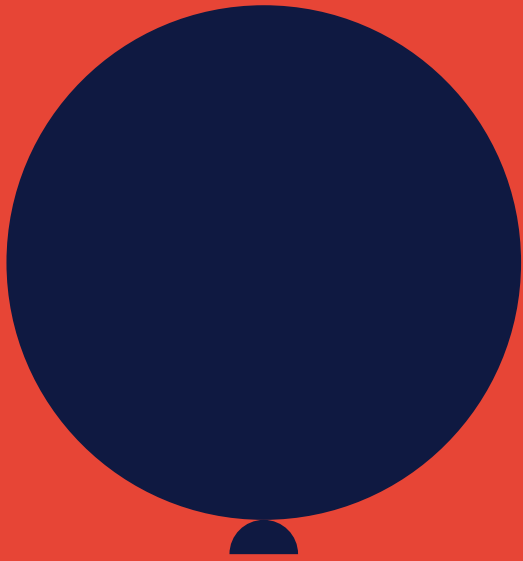


randstad workmonitor 2021 second edition



workforce transformation
through the 'great enlightenment.'

executive



summary.

emboldened and empowered, workers seek new arrangements.

Without question, the pandemic has led to an abundance of unexpected dynamics. Mass global layoffs followed by a surge in hiring in many markets have taken people on an economic roller coaster ride during the past two years. At the same time, however, the challenges of COVID-19 have revealed the resilience of workers everywhere, despite the hardships and life-changing challenges they've faced and continue to battle during this time.

Throughout this period, our Workmonitor research has revealed a variety of noteworthy sentiments among the global workforce. For instance, early on in the pandemic, survey respondents told us that they felt supported by their employers even as workplaces shut down and layoffs cascaded across many labor markets. Later on, a strong desire to return to normalcy was accompanied by a feeling of optimism. In our latest research, another surprising trend has emerged in the wake of the Great Resignation: the "Great Enlightenment."

We found that in spite of the unprecedented disruption and uncertainty brought on by the pandemic, workers around the world appear more assured of what they want in their lives and careers. The concerns and inconveniences they've weathered have profoundly altered their perspectives and desires. Taking charge of their destiny, either in the workplace or at home, has become the defining characteristic for the post-pandemic workforce.



Regardless of gender, education level or age, survey respondents say they are more clear and empowered as a result of what's happened around them. Emboldened by such feelings, they are seeking a new understanding with employers. Among the demands workers seek: more job flexibility, better compensation and skilling to help them remain relevant in a rapidly evolving labor market.

For employers, governments and other organizations, a reckoning with the Great Enlightenment is underway. Already, labor markets around the world are besieged by talent scarcity as millions of workers who were sidelined by the pandemic remain out of the workforce or have had to find jobs in other sectors. For instance, [CNBC reported](#) that of the 3.1 million fewer participants in the US labor market, 63% are women, with half of them age 20 to 34. This indicates that childcare issues continue to pose barriers for some who want to return. Many are opting to care for children and other family members as a sign of reprioritizing their personal obligations. Others see this moment as a time to reassess their career choices and are using it as an opportunity to make changes.

In the UK, [job vacancies ballooned](#) to more than one million in July as a result of greater demand and [a decline in immigrant labor](#) from Brexit and border lockdowns. This has led to troubling consequences such as scarcity of delivery drivers to deliver fuel. And in some Asian countries where labor shortages were already occurring before COVID, an inability to staff production and logistic roles is [impacting the supply chain](#) around the world.



During this period of extreme disruption to the global economy, the shifting sentiments of workers have far-reaching implications for all stakeholders, from employers to policymakers to labor organizations. As we reported earlier this year, after emerging from a long, difficult journey during the pandemic, most workers wish for the normalcy they enjoyed before the crisis. Now, however, their desire to make changes to their personal and professional lives may ensure that the old ways may never come back.



49%

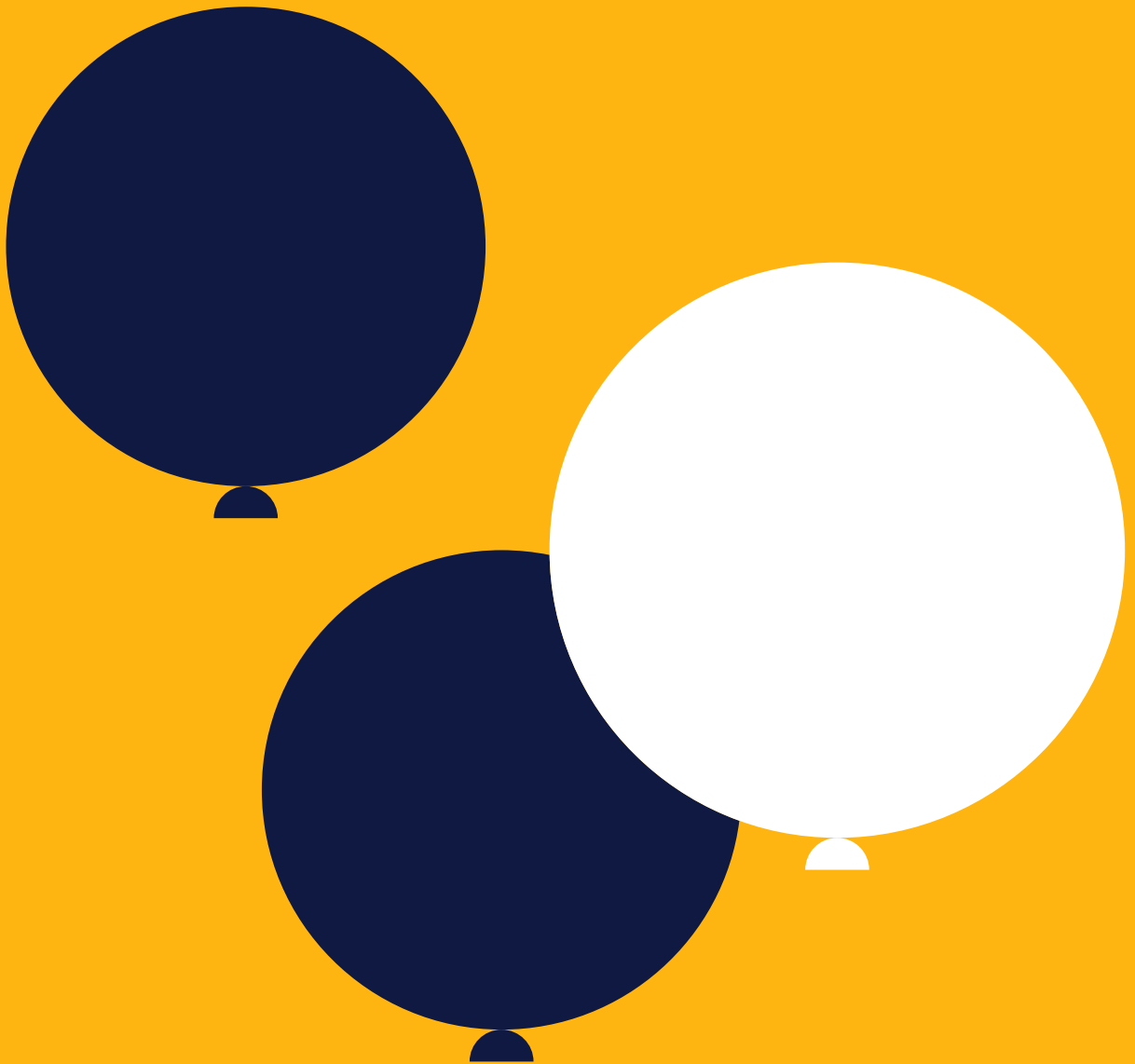
of survey respondents say they are more stressed since the pandemic and will need to make changes to their work life

“How can employers adapt to the shifting expectations of a newly enlightened, empowered and emboldened global workforce? For companies that actively embrace this new social contract and all the obligations that come along with it, they are much better prepared to ensure access to the talent they need for recovery and growth. ”

—Rebecca Henderson,
CEO, Global Businesses &
Executive Board Member



an appetite



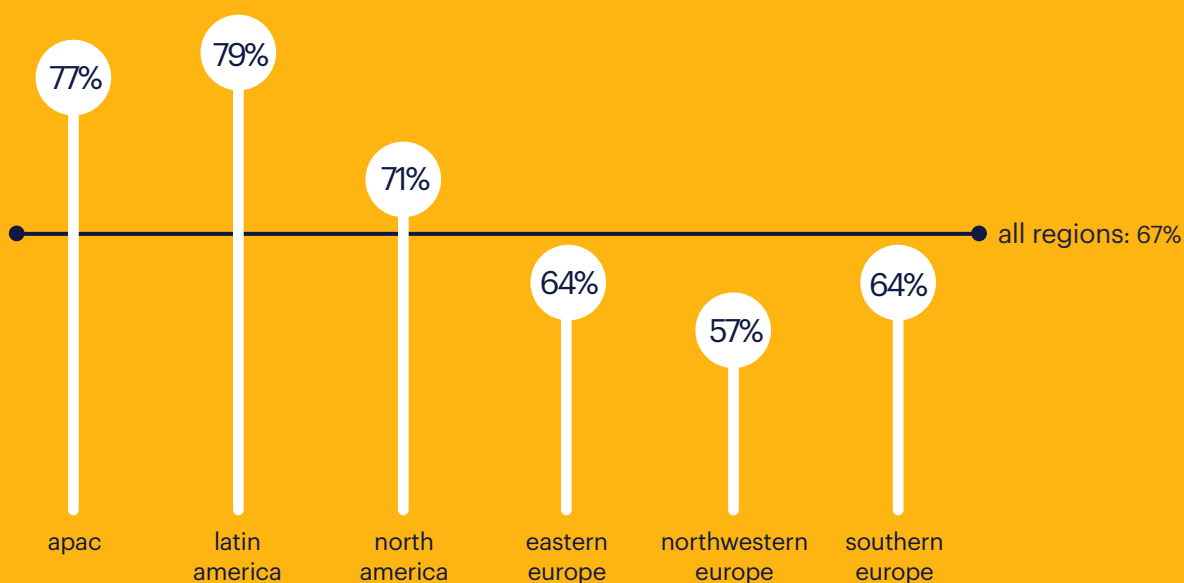
for change.

the global workforce woke and ready for change.

For many around the world, the pandemic has altered their view and notion of community and workplace. Social distancing, lockdowns and other public health mandates have changed the way personal interactions take place between families, friends and co-workers. How they lead their lives, the protocols they've adopted at work and the sacrifices they've endured all have reshaped perceptions and expectations. In just two years, people's habits have permanently changed, and a return to pre-pandemic ways probably won't happen for some time, if at all.

These changes appear to stem from a rise in personal awareness. Nearly three-quarters of those surveyed by Randstad said they have more clarity about their personal and professional goals. By region, workers in Latin America were especially lucid, while those in northwestern Europe were the least sure. The majority in every region, however, said they have gained more clarity since the pandemic started.

globally, 67% feel empowered by the pandemic
to make changes to their work-life balance



A [recent white paper](#) examining the consequences of the 1919 Spanish flu pandemic, which killed 100 million people, may provide clues on how a global crisis can affect behaviors after the pandemic. Our data did reveal people are more introspective and purpose-driven about their career choices, their ability to make changes and, most of all, their personal and professional lives. These are critical developments that have led to the Great Resignation and the consequences resulting from it. Having survived COVID-19 and endured at-home quarantines and isolation from the outside world for months, people today are more certain about what they want.

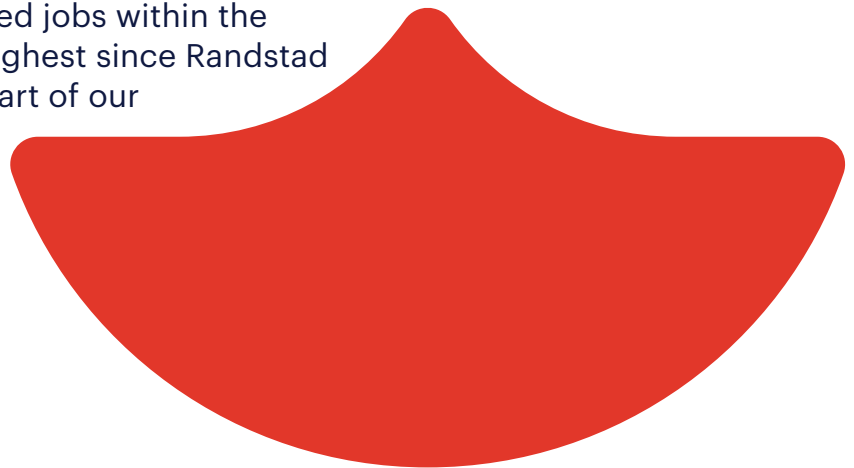
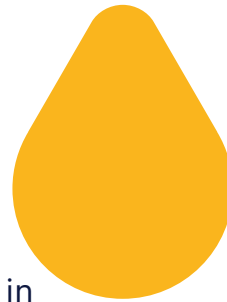
region	have more clarity about personal goals	have more clarity about professional goals
apac	76%	75%
latin america	85%	85%
north america	79%	78%
eastern europe	74%	72%
northwestern europe	64%	62%
southern europe	73%	72%
all regions	73%	72%
by gender		
men	73%	72%
women	73%	72%

These life-changing events may be why so many are now part of the Great Enlightenment. Pre-COVID-19, workers were focused on their daily tasks in the workplace. But with the reflections that have accompanied the pandemic, many are able to take time and reassess their lives and careers — specifically about the organization they work for and whether it offers the employee value proposition they desire. And this will be one of the most important issues facing employers: whether they sufficiently meet those needs.

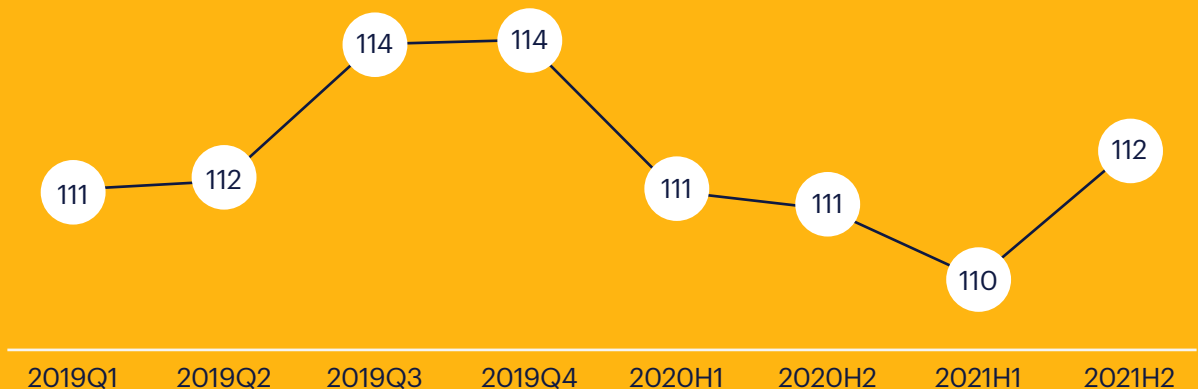
Similarly, two-thirds of those surveyed said they feel the pandemic has empowered them to make changes to their work-life balance, with those in Latin America feeling most empowered and workers in northwestern Europe least so. As recently explained by [Anthony Klotz](#), a psychologist and professor at Texas A&M who coined the term ‘The Great Resignation,’ people during the height of the pandemic were removed from their work-life routine and given an opportunity to reconsider their goals. The pandemic caused many to pose existential questions such as what makes them happy and what is the purpose of their lives. “So in many cases, those reflections will lead to life pivots,” he said in a [recent interview](#).

And many, indeed, have pivoted. Alan Manning, a professor of economics at the London School of Economics, [cites the outflow of immigrants](#) as one reason the UK is facing a labor shortage crisis. He pointed out that many workers have left the country after determining life elsewhere may be better. Even those with settled status may find more opportunities or lifestyles more aligned to their preferences, he suggested. In the US, the [quit rate remains near record levels](#) after climbing to 3.3% in August for the private sector, rising from a low of 1.8% at the height of the crisis.

Our survey data showed that actual job changes in APAC reached a record 36.5% of the respondents — meaning they have changed jobs within the past 12 months. This is the highest since Randstad began tracking mobility as part of our Workmonitor research.



the mobility index of people who have changed their jobs during the past 12 months



Certainly, work stress plays an important role in the choices workers are making about their careers. Throughout the past two years, social isolation, the blurring of work and life while quarantining at home and workday flexibility has led some to work longer hours. [Initial research](#) on remote work showed that workers were putting in more hours as well as stretching their day answering emails or conducting other business-related tasks. More [recent data](#) indicated that while the global workforce has cut back on hours, they are still spending more on-the-job time than before the pandemic.

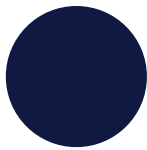
This has led to more stress for workers in some regions of the world. Globally, 49% of those surveyed by Randstad reported feeling more stressed than before the pandemic and plan to make changes to their work-life balance. The problem was reported to be most acute in the Asia Pacific region, with 63% feeling this way. Respondents in northwest Europe reported being the least stressed, with only 39% being overly stressed.

Ironically, the actions of workers seeking change are having a viral impact on their network. More than half said they are inspired by the actions of their colleagues or friends to make changes in their career. This domino effect was strongest in the Asia Pacific region, with 63% saying they have been inspired by others; the region with the lowest response was northwestern Europe.

One of the more notable results from this edition of the Workmonitor is how similar women and men feel. In fact, the percentage of those feeling empowered and clearer about their lives is the same for both sexes. This is surprising since the pandemic has exacted a greater toll on working women than men. Female workers have lost more jobs, income and free time during this period as they've assumed more responsibilities in the home. At the same time, [more men have died](#) from the disease than women, so these different hardships may explain how each gender group is reexamining career and life choices.



region	feel more stressed and plan to make changes to work-life balance	want more job and career flexibility
apac	63%	85%
latin america	53%	87%
north america	50%	76%
eastern europe	48%	74%
northwestern europe	39%	65%
southern europe	45%	72%
all regions	49%	76%
by gender		
men	49%	74%
women	49%	77%



75%

of workers age 25 to 34 say they have more clarity about their professional goals since the pandemic began, the highest percentage of any age group

“With the global workforce having more clarity about their professional goals, organizations need to be absolutely transparent about the benefits they can offer to job seekers and employees. Doing so will provide them an advantage for attracting and retaining top talent.”

—Karen Fichuk,
CEO North America &
Executive Board member



for one Dutch woman, learning to separate work and life during the pandemic was a key lesson.

When the pandemic halted life as most people knew it, the response around the world varied by country. In Northern Europe, governments were at first reluctant to impose strict quarantine measures but when the severity of the crisis became apparent, shutdowns quickly became the new normal as people were forced to live and work differently.

For Yvonne Sijne, adjusting to new circumstances was both challenging and convenient. As a professional working in financial services in the area of forensics, she said the restrictions were jolting at first. In the Netherlands where she lives with her family, the government initially imposed strict rules on leaving home, allowing only essential trips to stores, hospitals and such.



“I was no longer allowed to go to the office, but also for my children, they were suddenly not allowed to go out on the weekend,” she recalled.

Like many other countries, the Netherlands has endured a heavy toll during the crisis. Despite being a small country of only 17 million, it has reported more than 2 million cases of COVID-19, resulting in more than 18,000 deaths. Throughout the pandemic, the disease has come in waves, disrupting people’s lives just when they were becoming acclimated to these challenges.



This had led to extraordinary stress, and Yvonne noted that her family wasn't spared from the pressures of staying at home for long periods of time and being isolated from friends and other family members. Previously, her routine included going to the office daily and working closely with a team that focused on training employees on Detecting Financial Crime area Anti Money Laundering/Customer Due Diligence. Her children similarly led typical lives — attending school and socializing with friends outside of it. During the lockdown, however, her family limited their interactions to just each other, producing a somewhat claustrophobic dynamic in the home.

“It was also very difficult for my kids because suddenly their mom was home all day long, so they missed their privacy as well,” she recalled. “I believe that only our dog was happy that we were at home all the time.”

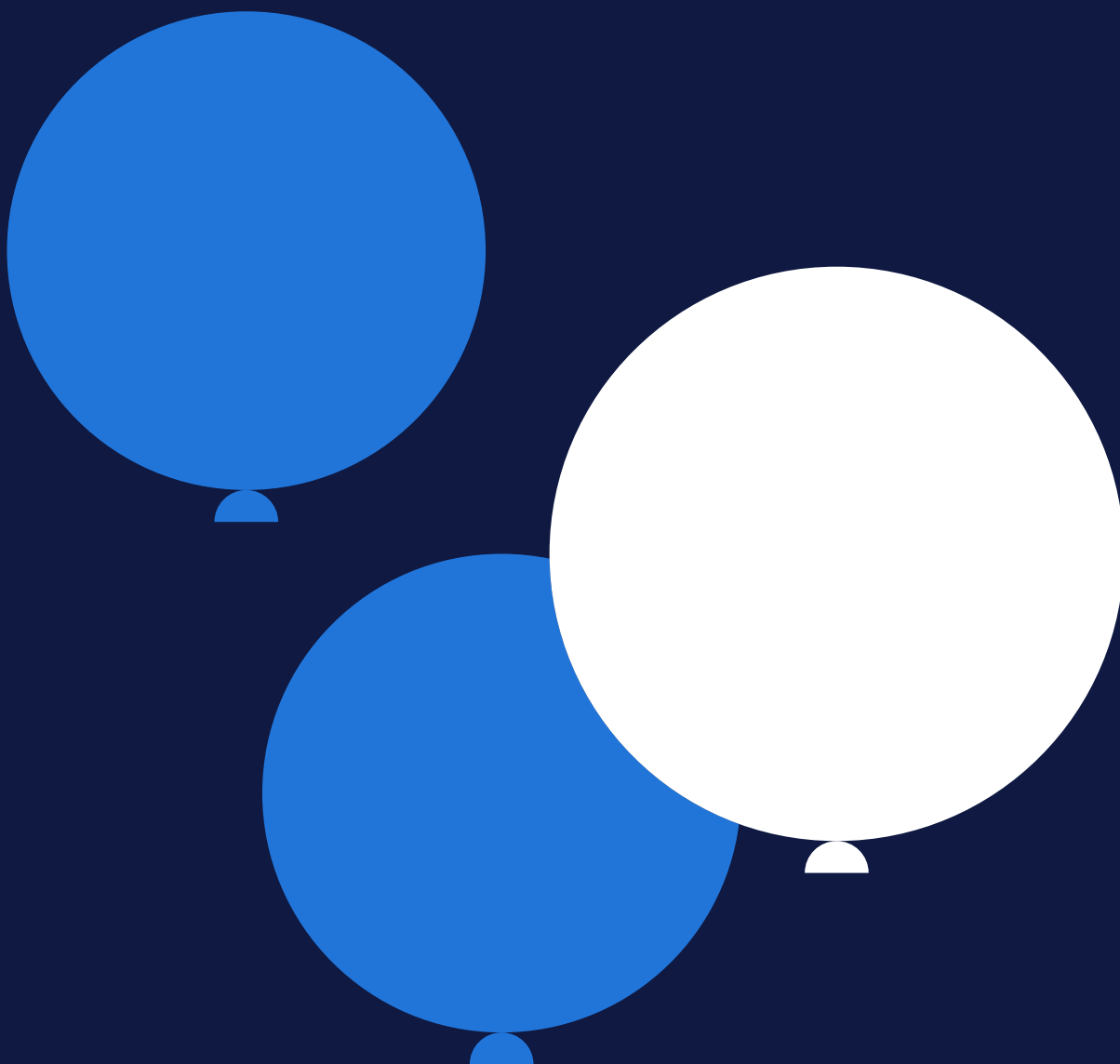
These kinds of challenges, for some, have led to the ‘Great Enlightenment’. During months of quarantine and restricted movement, people around the world have had time to reflect on their circumstances, and this is one reason why they are making changes to their work-life balance. Having emerged perhaps stronger and more determined, some like Yvonne have become more appreciative and introspective.

Yvonne is grateful for the support of her employer, which quickly mobilized at the beginning of the pandemic to provide support for their employees at home. She also acknowledged her own family's ability to cope with difficult circumstances.

“In the end, we all found our own way to deal with these challenges,” she said, adding, “It also made me realize that I have to set clearer boundaries between my work and private life because the overlap between them is greater than ever before. I now understand better than ever how important it is not to take my work home with me or, at least, not to work in my living room or on my day off.”



preparing for



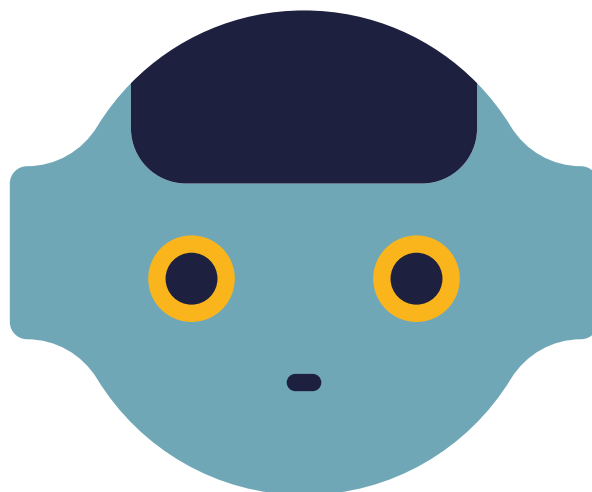
the future.

an urgent skilling mandate to prepare for the future of work.

One of the most significant developments arising from the pandemic is the acceleration of digital transformation. According to a [survey of executives conducted by McKinsey](#) last year, the digital products of these businesses were accelerated by seven years as a result of the pandemic. While this has led to tremendous business opportunities, the crisis has also left many organizations vulnerable to a growing skills gap. It's a view shared by employers and workers alike.

The rapid changes that have occurred in the global economy and labor market have many people worried about their employability in the future. It's one reason why reskilling and upskilling have attracted the attention of organizational leaders everywhere. According to HR industry analyst [Josh Bersin](#), learning and development have become integral to a company's talent acquisition strategy during these talent-scarce times.

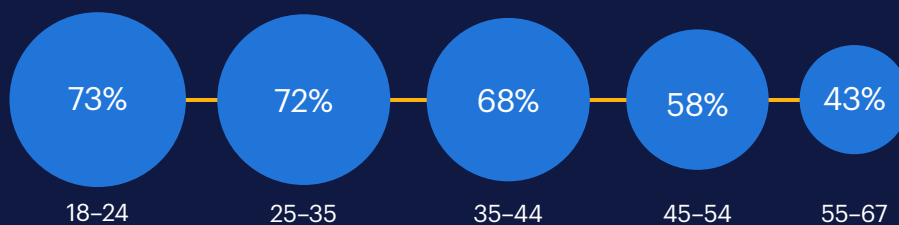
Skilling since the outbreak of COVID-19 has become a pivotal issue around the world. With millions having lost their jobs permanently, these workers must be reskilled to find sustainable and permanent employment. Yet organizations are often ill-prepared to provide this important service to their people, according to the OECD. In its [2021 Employment Outlook](#), the organization pointed out that only about 13% of the training that companies provide aligns with their strategic needs, and much of the learning activities are geared toward worker safety.



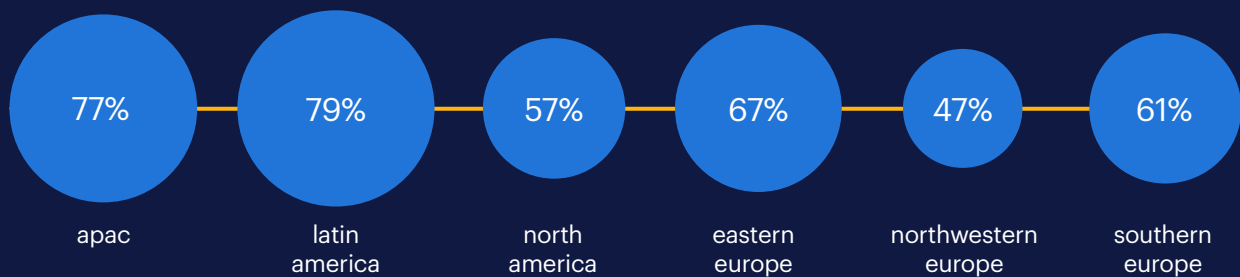
The paradox of our finding is that older workers are less likely to feel a need for more skilling, despite being at greater risk for losing their jobs and staying unemployed for a longer period of time. [Forbes reported](#) that people 65 and older are the least able to work remotely. In the US, a June survey conducted by AARP of mid-career and older working women (age 40 to 65) found that of those who had lost their jobs, 70% were unemployed for six months or more. Since the report, AARP, an advocacy group for older adults, has launched a [skills-building platform](#) for its constituents.

believe more skilling is needed to keep up with labor market changes since the outbreak of COVID-19

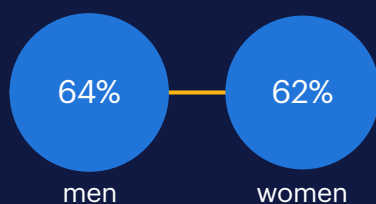
by age



by region



by gender



Regardless of age, however, skilling requirements pose a challenge for all parties involved. According to the World Economic Forum's [Future of Jobs Report](#), half of all employees around the world will need reskilling by 2025. Our data showed that overwhelmingly workers say they need to keep learning throughout their careers, with 80% feeling this way. Again, this sentiment declined with age.

While most people feel they have clarity about their career goals, the same can't be said of their skilling goals. A majority of our survey respondents say change is occurring so quickly that they struggle with which skills to acquire, with 66% of those between the age of 18 and 24 feeling this way. At the other end of the spectrum, just 44% of those 55 to 67 hold similar views.

[A report on the most in-demand skills](#) conducted by Randstad Sourceright in October showed that technology-related jobs are the most sought after around the world. Cloud computing, AI development and analytics are some of the ones that top the list, but employers also want soft skills such as communication, leadership and teamwork, according to [CNBC](#). Vicki Salemi, a career expert at Monster, was quoted as saying: "These skills are timeless and always in demand among hiring managers."

So how will workers determine which skills they need now and in the future? One of the biggest challenges during the pandemic is predicting which sectors will need workers, and the ebb and flow of demand across some industries have made it difficult for workers to determine where their careers will take them. For instance, when travel was closed down early on during the pandemic, many airline employees transitioned to other sectors such as healthcare and customer service. Now, however, airline businesses face a shortage of workers as demand has come back.

The issue of employability has increasingly captured the attention of industry and policymakers. Preparing workers who have permanently lost their jobs due to COVID is a massive undertaking, and data shows that long-term unemployment is on the rise. In fact, according to the OECD, as of the end of 2020 [60% more people had been unemployed for at least six months](#) than before the crisis.



Our data shows that one of the dilemmas facing talent is understanding their employability and how to enhance it for a better future. Because they often can't determine whether their competencies are sufficient for the changing labor market, a majority (two-thirds) of those surveyed say employers and government agencies should provide assessment tests to help them plan for the future. Notably, the sentiments were mostly the same across all education levels, even though respondents with a low level of schooling are most at risk during these transitional times (66% want government and employer involvement). People with high levels of education were most likely (68%) to want assessment support, while those with mid-level education fell in between (63%).

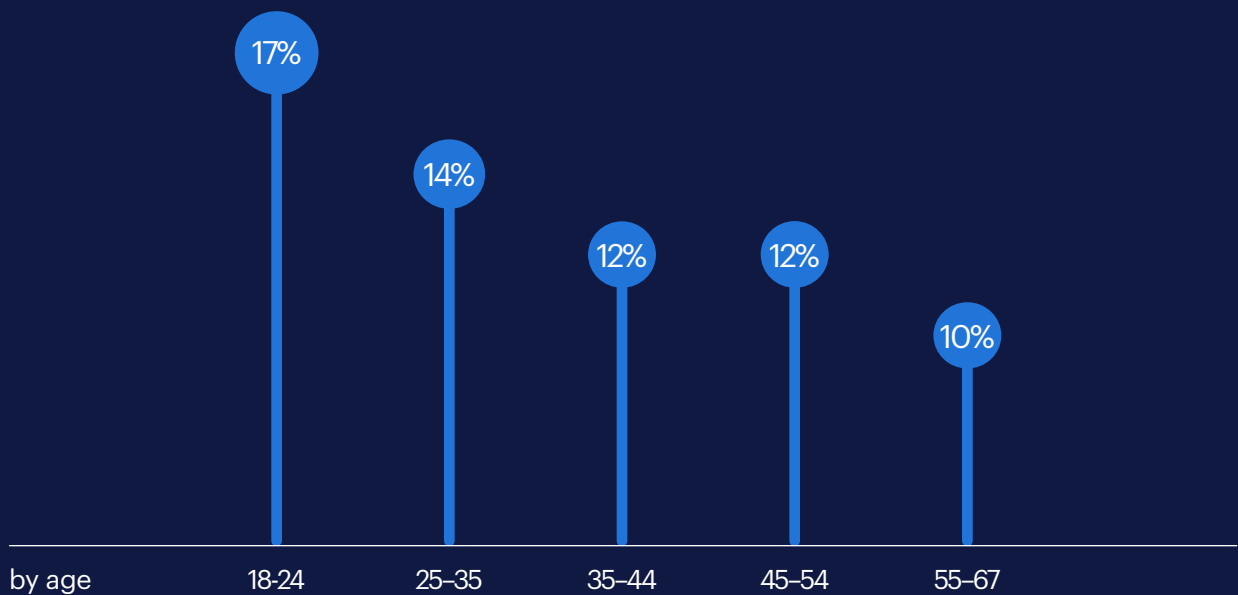
Even if they have not lost a job, a portion of the global workforce said their ability to earn income has diminished over the past year. This was especially true for those with low levels of education, our data revealed. A larger gap was observed among the different age groups, with the youngest workers reporting a fall in their ability to earn.

Indeed, this was a concern raised by the [International Monetary Fund](#), which reported growing inequality between rich and poor countries and between older and younger workers. In an article, the IMF stated: "There is long-standing evidence from many countries that people entering the labor market during a severe recession earn less than the cohorts just before and after them — and that those differences linger for many years. By inducing a massive global recession, COVID-19 has certainly created new inequalities among cohorts of young people."





feel earning ability **has declined during the past year**

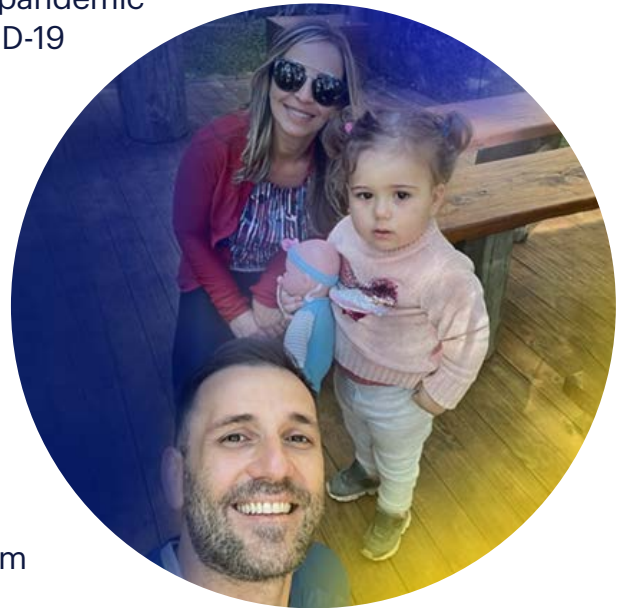


Skilling will likely persist as a challenge to the global economy long after the pandemic has faded. Before the arrival of COVID-19, the skills gap was already growing as numerous workers were losing their jobs due to automation and the growth of the self-service economy. With digital transformation well underway, it is expected that more people, especially the most vulnerable segments of the workforce, will need help acquiring marketable skills.

months of quarantine strengthens family bonding for a Brazilian manager.

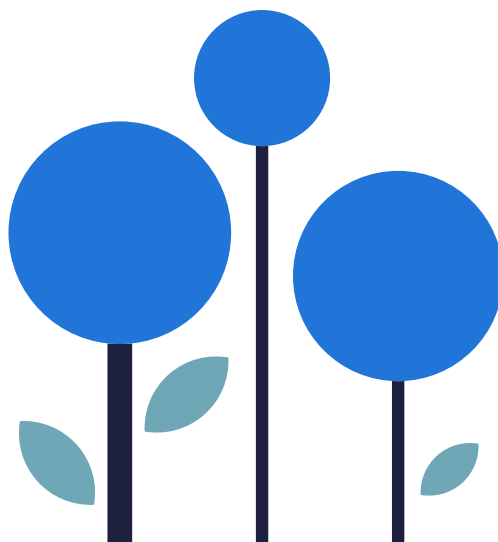
Few countries have been as hard-hit during the pandemic as Brazil, which continues to struggle with COVID-19 even though the number of cases has been trending downward. As the country with the second-highest casualties after the US, Brazil has coped with more than 20 million cases since the outbreak, which has imposed a terrible hardship on its citizens and economy.

For Adiemir Hortega Medeiros, a senior manager with a global consulting firm and the parent of a young child, the months of lockdowns and restrictions have brought numerous challenges personally and professionally. Even so, he expresses an optimism that is common among many of the workers we have surveyed during the pandemic. Despite the toll imposed on Brazilians, he said he has found a bright side to it all.



“I see some positive changes from the pandemic, starting with family cohesion, since we are spending more time in the home,” said Adiemir, who resides in the Sao Paulo area.

Indeed, stories such as his have been shared by workers around the world. Many speak about being able to enjoy family dinners again during the week since they began working remotely, and many are more connected with their children who were quarantined at home. While this can also add stress, the connectedness people feel at home is also part of the Great Enlightenment movement.



Adiemir said that the forces that have reshaped how people think about work-life balance are also leading companies to do the same thing. In his experience with his employer during this time, he said it appears companies are adapting to “a new normal” in which the boundary between personal and professional life has blurred. While for some people this may seem undesirable, Adiemir said he believes it’s part of the transformation of the world of work. “If nothing else”, he added, “the virtual workforce has shown productivity doesn’t have to suffer just because people are working from home.”

“Jobs offering hybrid schedules would give workers the best of both worlds,” according to Adiemir. Even though he is 100% remote, his preference is to be in the office at least part of the time for the opportunity to connect with co-workers. And Randstad’s previous Workmonitor survey revealed most workers feel the same way. With Brazil still struggling with the pandemic, however, he said he will comply with his employer’s guidelines.

To compensate for not having time to connect in the office, he credits support of his employer and those around him during these challenging times. How else is he able to de-stress? “I’m involved in sports, such as judo, and working out at the gym. My family’s support and that of my employer have made a huge difference,” he added.



73%

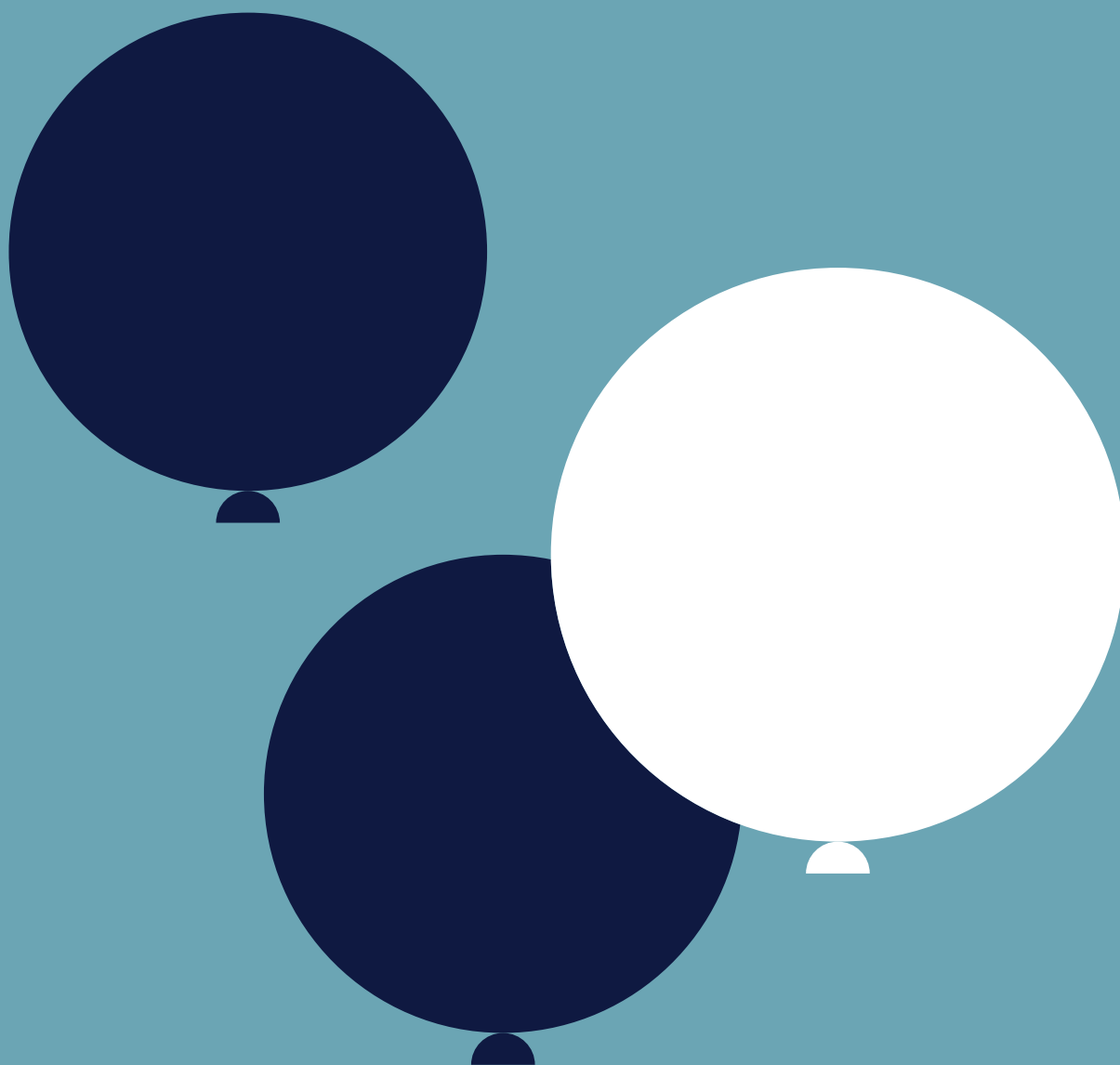
of workers age 18 to 24 want their employer or the government to provide skills assessment tests

“Investing in upskilling their workforce helps employers to regain more talent in the challenging employee oriented labor market. In this way, they ensure they have the skill sets to reach their business goals in today’s transformed economy.”

—René Steenvoorden, CDO & Executive Board member



talent



on the move.

after stagnation a workforce is on the move.

Mobility, in all forms, has been severely curtailed during the past two years. Whether for leisure, work or career, the movement of people is critical to a well-functioning economy and labor market. So when the pandemic initially shut down borders, froze people in their jobs and halted the international exchange of talent, it created pent-up desire in the workforce. The global recession that followed the initial lockdown was severe but short-lived — in the US, it was the shortest on record when it ended in April of 2020. Since then, major economies have been on a hiring spree, and workers again are enjoying career mobility as they switch jobs, employers and even industries in pursuit of a better career.

Our data shows that it has been a dynamic journey for talent, and they are ready for change. Furthermore, as workers consider a career move, they are factoring in things that play into the existential questions they have been asking — considerations such as having meaningful and flexible work, remote schedules, minimal job stress and a safe work environment. Of course compensation remains the most important desire, but non-financial factors may be what differentiates employers in their attraction strategy. All these trends are leading to a new normal for the labor market, according to some business leaders.

“People are making different decisions, they’ve moved to different places,” JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon [said last month](#). “COVID has affected their mindset. There’s more churn. That’s OK and that will normalize over time.”

The prevailing sentiments our data revealed is that a plurality of people (39%) are content with their current situation but open to new opportunities. Another 19% are looking for new roles, plan on retiring soon, recently changed jobs, moved to a different industry or are staying out of the market voluntarily. Only a little more than one-third (39%) say they are happy with their employment and don’t want to change.



recent events and changes in life have led to:

feeling content but still open to new opportunities if they align with personal/professional goals	39%
feeling content but does not plan to change jobs	37%
searching for a new job	14%
deciding to retire sooner	2%
changing jobs in the past three months	2%

With so many anxious to change their lives, it's not surprising that a [record 4.3 million Americans quit their jobs](#) in August. Seeking higher wages, better working conditions and more job flexibility, many workers are demonstrating they are serious about making changes. Similarly, across Europe, rising wages have left employers in EU member states fiercely competing for workers at all skill levels. Andrew Watt, head of the European economics unit at the Macroeconomic Policy Institute at the German trade unions' Hans Böckler Foundation, told [Politico](#) that "Wages will have to increase in these sectors to get people back into tough, low-paid jobs." In South Korea, the healthcare sector is under tremendous pressure as workers quit or take leaves of absence after dealing with months of stress battling COVID-19.

For some, the perception of fair wages is what's driving their decision to make career changes. And organizations are going along with demands for more money. [A survey of CFOs](#) by Gartner showed that a majority (60%) said their organizations experienced wage inflation in the second quarter of this year. And Oxford Economics reports that [pay for wealthy earners](#) is growing well above its pre-pandemic average. It is perhaps because of data like this, and the fact that many workers are inspired by the actions of friends and co-workers, that people are leaving their jobs for better pay.

When asked about whether they have received a promotion, 10% who said they did also pointed out they have not received a pay raise with it. Another 12% who were promoted said their compensation has not improved, but they anticipate a raise later this year. Only 18% reported receiving an increase in their salary after being promoted. This has led to some resentment.



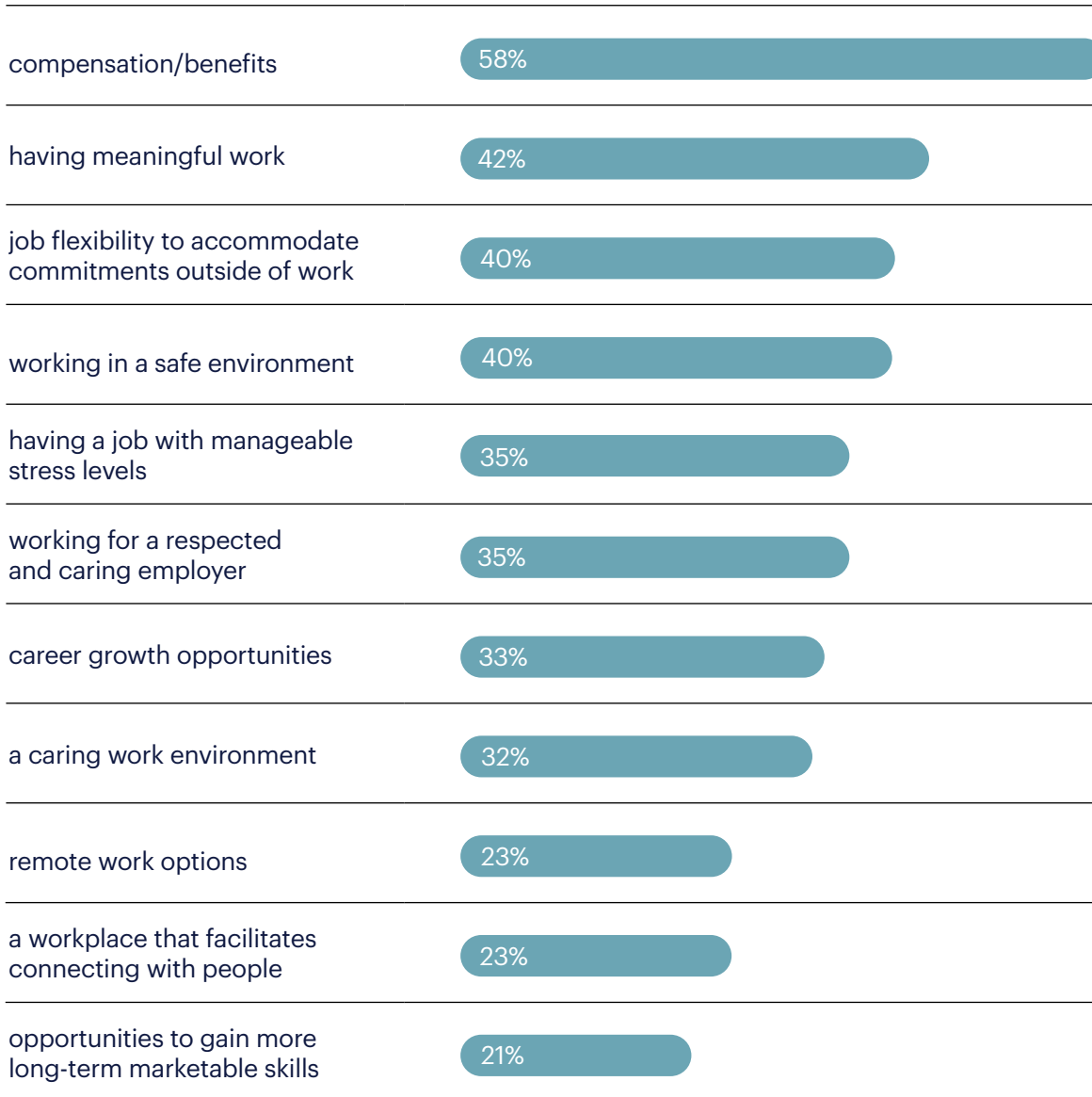
Most respondents surveyed by Randstad (54%) expressed feeling poorly compensated for their skills and are looking for another job. This was more true of men than women, and especially so among younger workers. The group most feeling undercompensated are those between the ages of 25 to 34 (cited by 62%) while the oldest group (55 to 67) was least likely to feel this way (39%).



Compensation, however, was just one of several factors that is driving workers to change jobs or careers. Having spent the past two years as remote workers, some have become acclimated to flexible workdays that accommodate their personal schedules and goals. So when employers began mandating on-site presence for their workforce, some workers simply refused and quit their jobs. [One survey](#) found that 40% say they would quit their job if forced to go back into the office full time.

Our data showed that about one-quarter surveyed said having remote work options is the most important consideration in their career choices (notably, this was least important to the youngest group of workers). Overall, a greater number (39%) want job flexibility, while 35% say a job with manageable stress level is most important. After good compensation and benefits, meaningful work (42%) is the most important consideration.

the most important considerations driving work/career choice are:



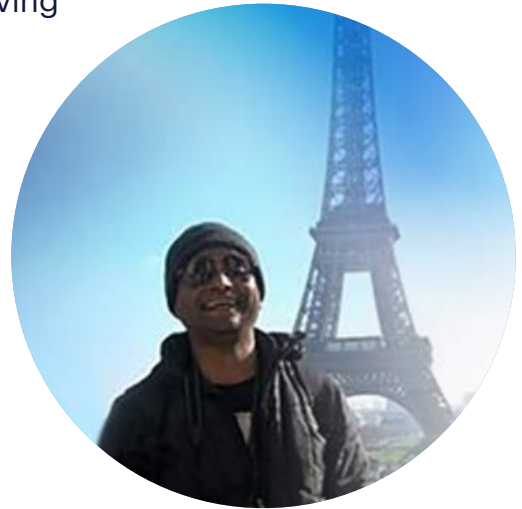
As talent scarcity rises, employers will need to consider the shifted priorities of their workers and job seekers. Ensuring they can offer a workplace that meets their workers' needs will be pivotal to acquiring and retaining the talent needed to help them grow during the recovery period ahead.



the value of life, family and friends is the key takeaway from the pandemic for one Indian worker.

The pandemic has led to many tragedies around the world, with millions of lives lost. For Rajesh Sinha, the toll of COVID-19 hit close to home. The operation manager based in Bangalore, India, lost friends and colleagues to the deadly disease. Having witnessed and survived such devastation, he has grown more appreciative of the people around him.

“I do feel we have more clarity now since the pandemic began. The pandemic has taught us the value of life, family and friends,” he said. Rajesh said he is fortunate to have been spared from the disease itself, especially in a country with among the highest number of fatal cases. With more than 34 million cases reported, India at one point of the pandemic led the world in daily deaths. So it’s easy to understand why Rajesh has developed a new perspective since the outbreak began. Shaped by the need to quarantine and how the world of work has evolved, he said he now lives and works differently.



For instance, he limits his time in public, on mass transit or in the office. This was difficult early on during the pandemic, especially because it was challenging to coordinate with colleagues virtually. “Initially it was really annoying and very tough to connect with the team,” he recalled. “However, I adjusted within a month or two.”



Being at home offered him a sense of relief and comfort, he said, because he was surrounded by the people closest to him. This outlook is commonly shared among those surveyed by Randstad in our newest research, and it reflects a reprioritization process undertaken by many during the Great Enlightenment. For those who have suffered personal losses, as well as those who have emerged mostly unscathed, the pandemic has created a time of reflection that has led to personal and professional changes.

Rajesh said the biggest changes he experienced during this time have been adjusting to new ways of working and flexible schedules, followed by more time with family. Also, limiting the time he spends in public settings has drastically changed his daily habits.

The support of his employer has also helped Rajesh cope with the stress and uncertainty of the pandemic. "I am fortunate to have a very helpful and supportive reporting manager," he said. He now realizes that while an attractive compensation is a hallmark of a good employer, other attributes such as company culture and supportive co-workers are also important considerations.



27%

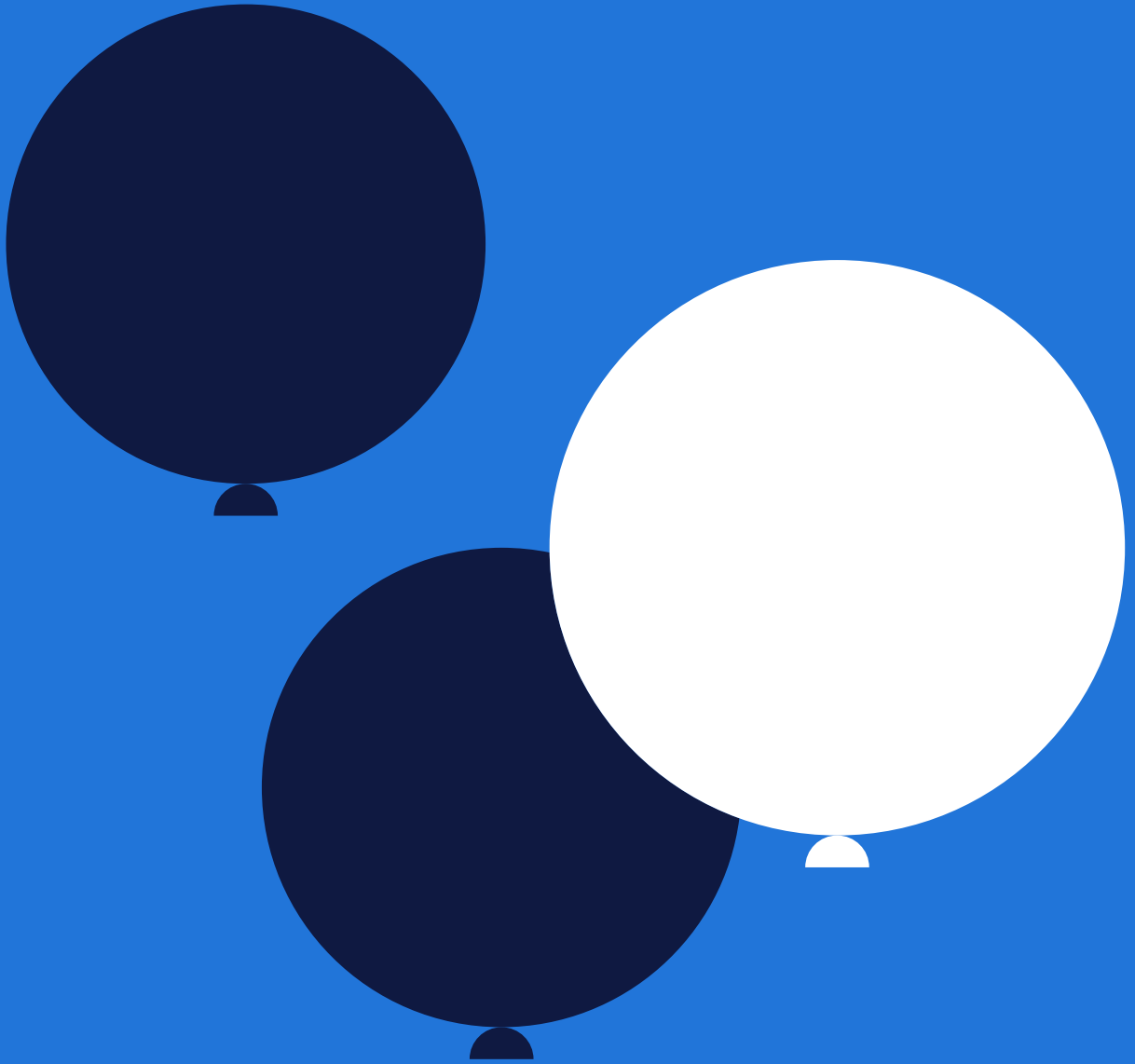
of highly educated workers say having remote work options is the most important consideration driving their career choices

"Remote work has been embraced around the world, so as companies consider reopening their offices, they need to develop a sensible return policy that meets the needs of the workforce while ensuring collaboration and innovation are not negatively affected in the future."

—Chris Heutink,
Executive Board member



action



is needed.

with changing expectations, a time for action.

Our data shows that after a life-changing event like the pandemic, expectations around personal and professional goals have been permanently altered. As people become more enlightened about their wants and needs, they are ready and eager to make changes that will bring these aspects of their life into alignment. The social contracts that existed no longer apply, which means for all parties involved new agreements must be drawn.

What does this mean for employers around the world? One of the most important ways in which organizations can earn the loyalty of talent is to demonstrate empathy. This is not an easy task, but our Workmonitor survey from a year ago found that most companies are sufficiently competent at it. A majority of workers surveyed then said they felt emotionally supported by their employer. Those sentiments may still exist, but a year later expectations have shifted. With a majority of workers feeling they are not fairly compensated for their skills, this can pose significant retention challenges for many companies.

With so many quitting their jobs during this time, offering a competitive wage is simply table stakes. Companies must continue to deliver on the employee value proposition that matters the most to their talent, whether that's an effective remote work policy, flexible working hours, skilling support, career growth opportunities or something else. This requires regular workforce surveying, commitment by C-level leaders to deliver on the needs voiced by their workers and feedback scoring on the outcomes of any initiative. During this time of exceptional workforce fluidity, the most important consideration is listening to what workers desire.

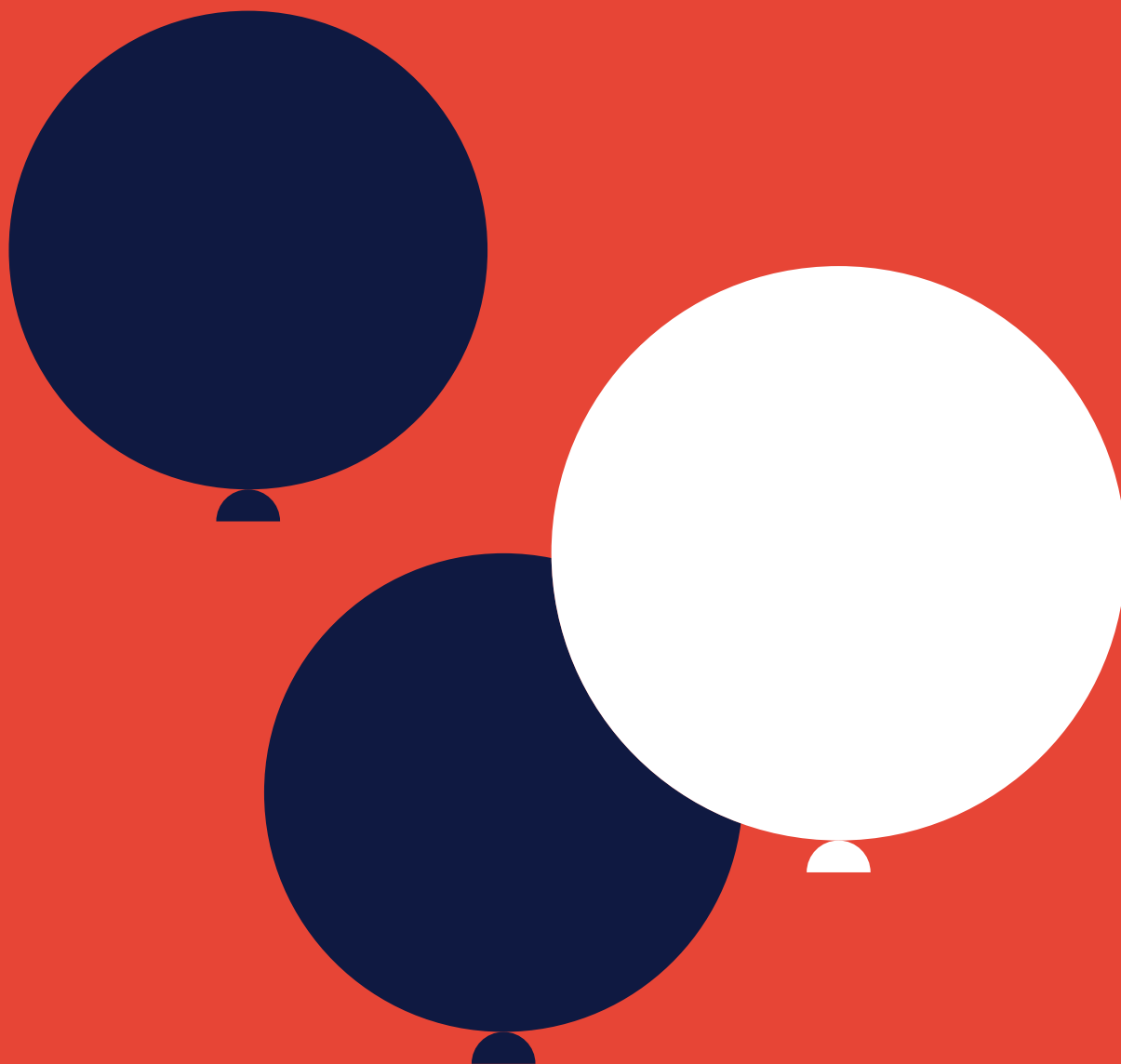


Employers cannot deliver on this new social contract alone. Policymakers must also consider how their workforce has evolved and craft policies that also serve their constituents well. Mandating family leave, offering tax incentives for childcare and providing more social support for working women are some of the measures undertaken by some governments around the world. Political leaders in most markets have led their citizens well so far into the pandemic by passing job retention schemes and massive welfare benefits, but the next phase in this journey requires more nuanced and considered responses that require large investments and cooperation with the private sector.

The lesson here is that the global crisis has forever altered the views of the current generations of workers. This dynamic follows the pathology of past pandemics. However, today's world of work is vastly different from the time of the last world health crisis that occurred in 1918. Any coordinated responses to mitigate the aftermath must account for that.



job switching



activities.

high level of job-switching activities in second half of 2021.

Earlier this year, our research showed that workers were eager for change. A large percentage either recently made changes in their careers or were actively looking to switch jobs. This data gauged survey respondents' satisfaction with their jobs, their appetite to change employment and how many have actually done so in the past six months.

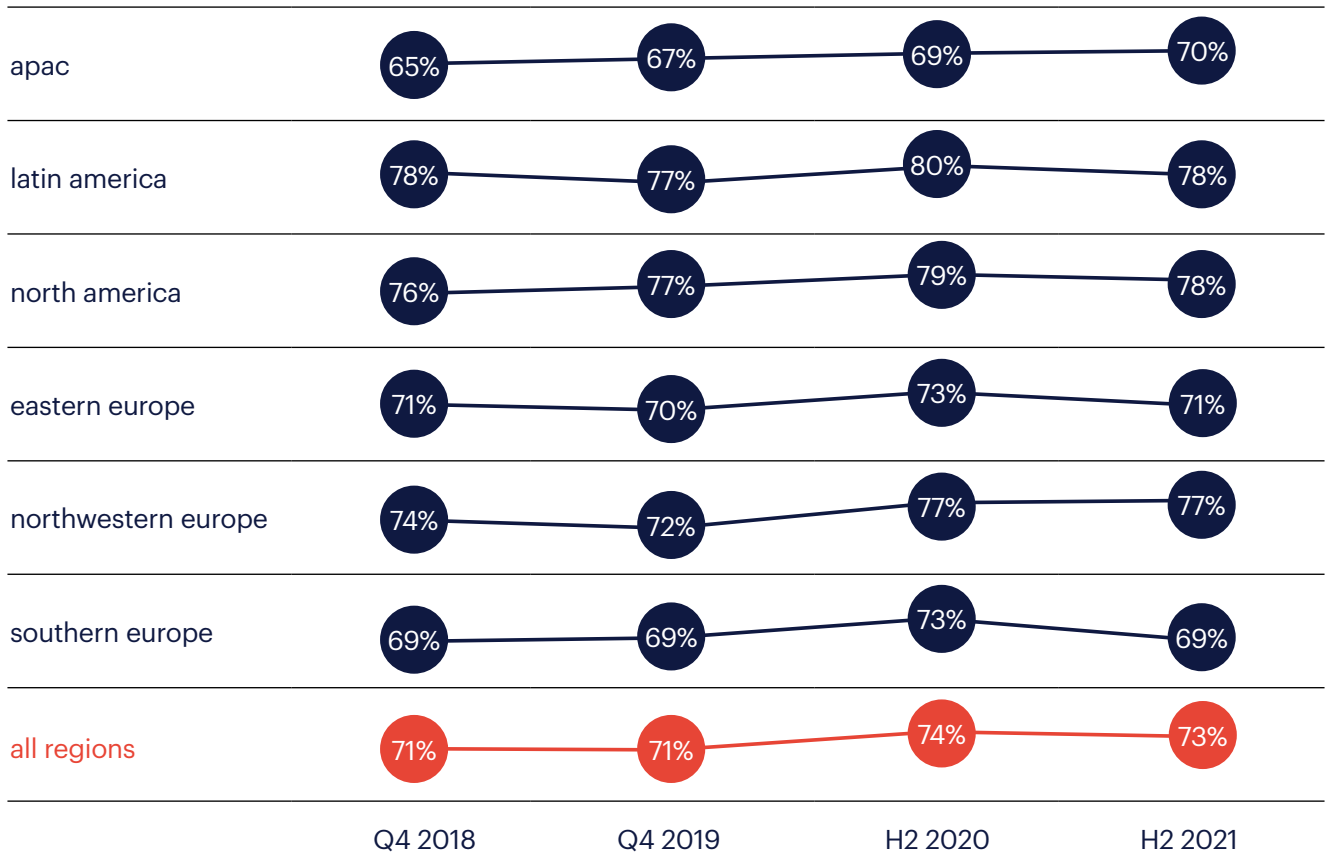
Our latest data shows that there continues to be a high level of interest in career changes, even though nearly three-quarters of respondents say they are satisfied with their jobs. In the Asia Pacific region, nearly 40% say they are looking for a new job, while only one-quarter are doing so in northwestern Europe. Workers in Asia Pacific also changed jobs at a higher rate than any other region. Those in northwestern and eastern Europe, similarly, showed the least amount of movement in the second half of 2021.

Our research showed that sentiments for changing and looking for jobs very much reflected those expressed in 2019. After a tumultuous 2020, the global economic recovery seems to indicate job-changing behavior has returned to pre-pandemic levels.



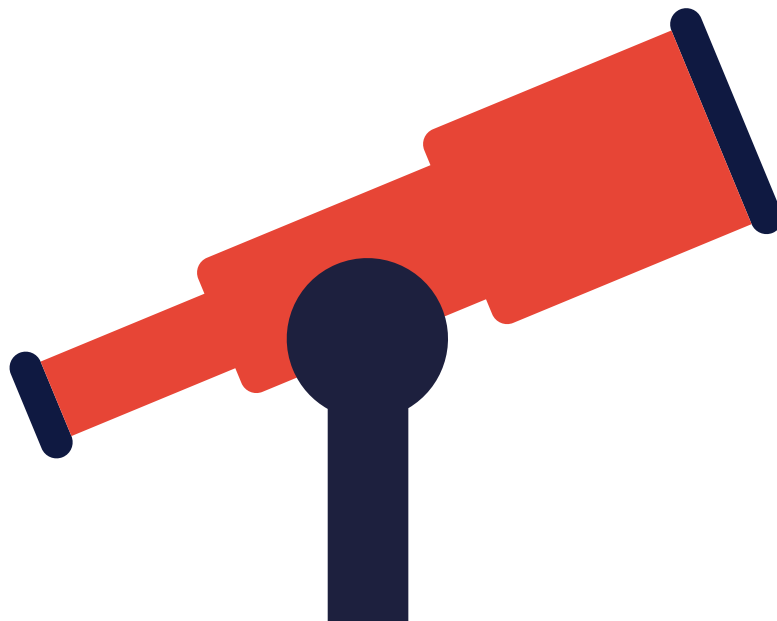
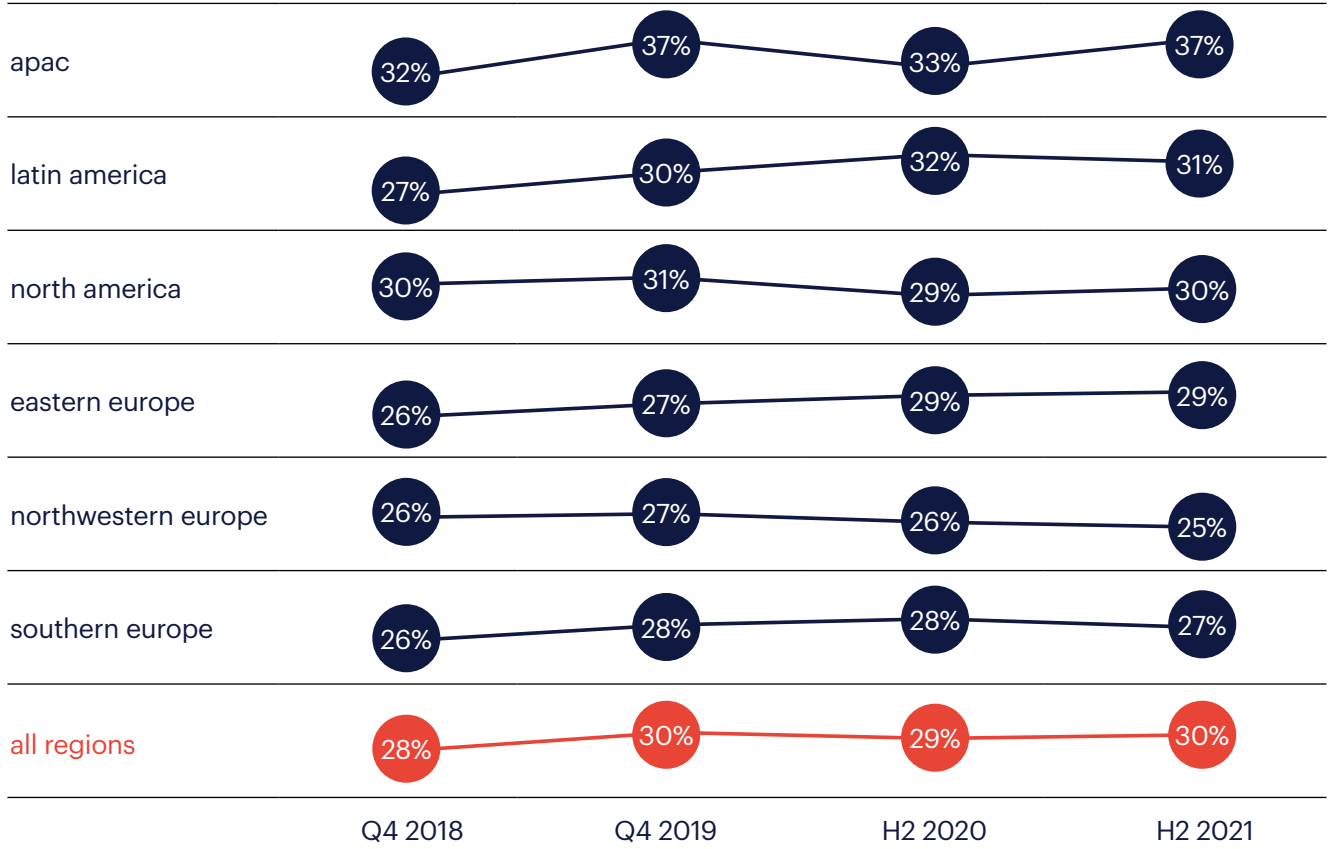
Our data shows that over the past four Workmonitor surveys, the level of satisfaction has changed little. In the fourth quarter of 2018 and 2019, the rate was at its lowest but jumped in 2020. In our latest survey, the rate has declined just slightly.

job satisfaction



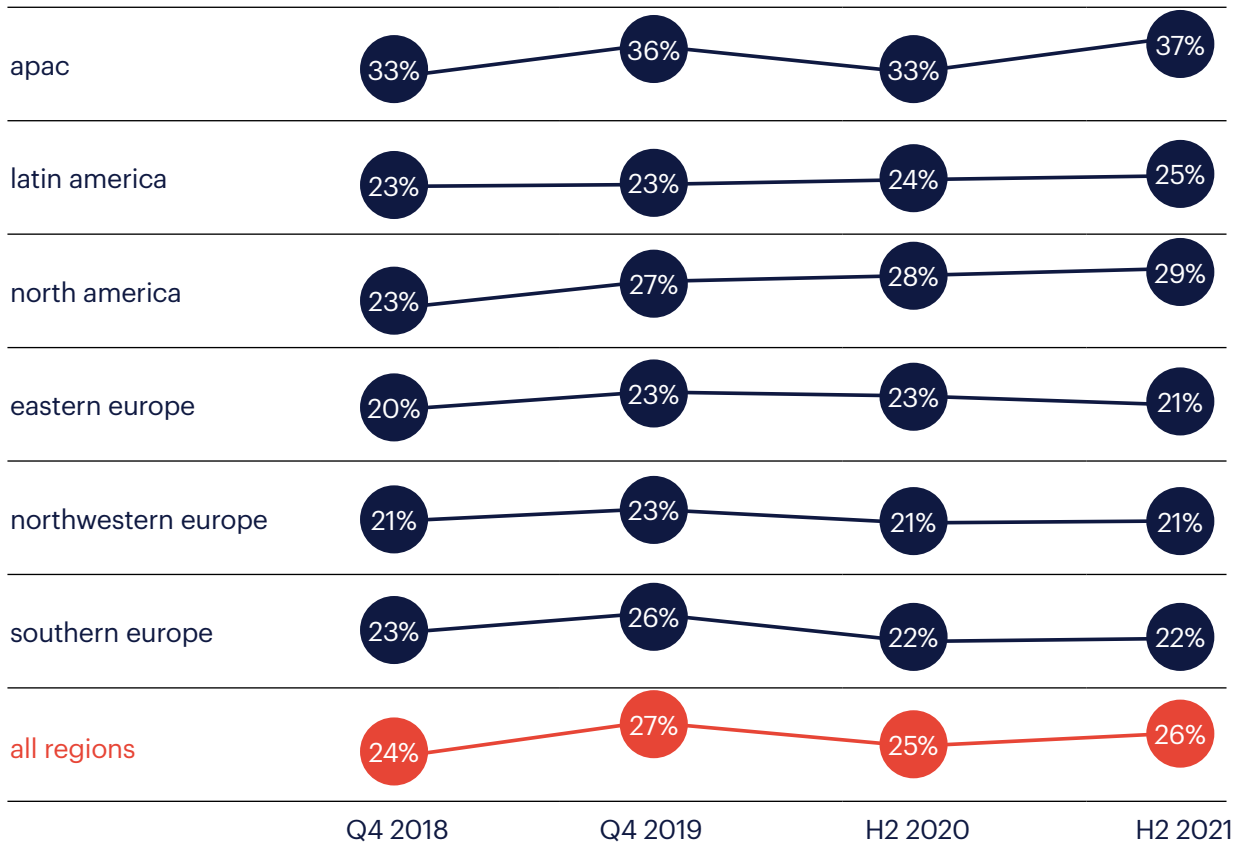
Similarly, the percentage of those seeking work has increased by 1%, matching the same level as in 2019. In Asia Pacific, a significant increase was observed.

looking for a job

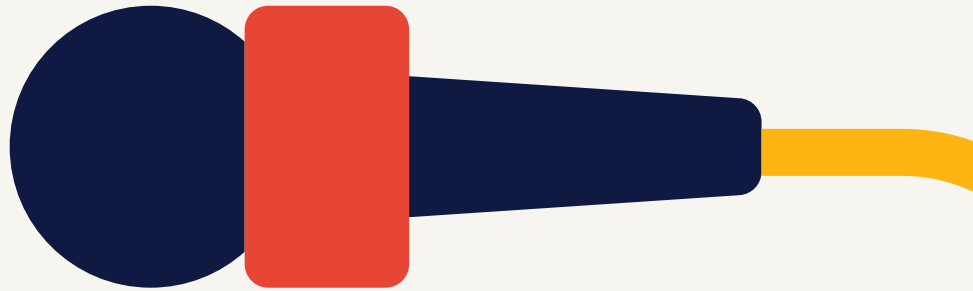


The number of those who actually changed jobs rose slightly, but in Asia Pacific, that figure rose considerably and surpassed the level recorded in 2019. All other regions showed either static or minor switching activity.

actual job change



about the randstad workmonitor.



The Randstad Workmonitor was launched in 2003 and now covers 34 markets around the world. The study encompasses Europe, Asia Pacific and the Americas. The Randstad Workmonitor is published twice a year making both local and global trends in mobility visible over time.

In addition to the rotating set of themed questions, the survey also addresses job satisfaction, captures the likelihood of an employee changing jobs within the next six months, and provides a comprehensive understanding of sentiments and trends in the job market.

The study is conducted online among employees aged 18 to 65, working a minimum of 24 hours a week in a paid job (not self-employed). Minimum sample size is 800 interviews per market. The Dynata panel is used for sampling purposes.

The second full survey of 2021 was conducted in 34 markets from August 23 to September 12, 2021.

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