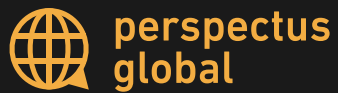


FINDING TALENT IN A TOUGH MARKET: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN MODERN BRITAIN



perspectus
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INTRODUCTION

Objectives

At a time of geopolitical uncertainty and in the midst of an unprecedented labour shortage, UK firms are finding it increasingly hard to fill and retain workers in skilled vacancies. In fact, the ONS reports that there are 1,225,000 vacancies in the UK in November 2022¹ - leading to what they describe as “a historically tight labour market”.

As companies struggle to recruit and retain staff, we wanted to provide an employee's eye view of the issues at stake.

By polling 2,000 British office workers, we take a journey through modern working life and the possible path to an improved career situation. We look at what triggers a job hunt, where people look for new opportunities, the recruitment process itself and what employers need to do to retain staff once they've joined the team.

There are opportunities for recruiters and employers to learn from the research and listen to the voices of the people they would like to attract, and shape their processes and operations accordingly.

Methodology

A combination of desk research, qualitative and quantitative research was used to create this report.

Overall, 2,005 online quantitative interviews of UK based office workers were undertaken between 19 and 23 November 2022.

For an expert's view, we interviewed psychologist [Debbie Martin](#), who has an MSc in Positive Psychology from Bucks University, 20 years experience in the field, and is presently a Director of employee experience at consultancy, Flourishing Potential.

We also interviewed [David Head](#), Executive Coach and Mentor at Accelerating Experience, who has 20 years executive search experience followed by 10 years as an Executive Coach.

Key themes

- ***It's hard to say goodbye: why do people leave jobs?***
- ***The recruitment hoops: are there too many?***
- ***Job 'must haves': what drives employee retention in modern Britain?***

1. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/jobsandvacanciesintheuk/november2022>





PART ONE:

IT'S HARD TO SAY GOODBYE: WHY DO PEOPLE LEAVE JOBS?

Money Matters

Forbes reported in July 2022 that, according to a study by the Pew Research Centre², US workers who switched jobs got an average salary increase of 10 percent, and those who stayed put got a loss of just below 2 percent.

Our study reveals that moving jobs to get a pay rise prevails on this side of the pond too, as the primary reason that people start looking for a new role is to earn more money (42 percent).

Interestingly, 46 percent of women said that wanting a pay rise was the main driver for looking for a new job, compared to 38 percent of men. This might be linked to research showing that men are twice as likely to ask for a pay rise than women, as reported in an HR Review article from September 2021³.

This begs the question - why are employees not able to progress in their roles and receive promotions which lead to pay rises? To retain valuable staff - especially female ones - employers need to offer personal development plans, annual pay reviews and listen to their staff when they bring up remuneration. If not, the result could be the loss of experienced staff and potentially costly recruitment campaigns.

2. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ethansteinberg/2022/07/28/want-a-pay-rise-switching-jobs-matters-much-more-amid-soaring-inflation-report-finds/?sh=1021629e2b54>

3. <https://www.hrreview.co.uk/hr-news/men-more-likely-to-ask-for-a-pay-rise-compared-to-women/137844#:~:text=Newpercent20researchpercent20findspercent20thatpercent20male,inpercent20comparisonpercent20topercent20femalepercent20colleagues>



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In my experience, people generally leave bosses rather than companies.

David Head
Executive Coach and Mentor
Accelerating Experience



The value of feeling valued

The second most common reason that people decide to change jobs is that they don't feel valued by their bosses (38 percent).

“In my experience, people generally leave bosses rather than companies,” says David Head. “At a lower level, junior and middle level employees, this is related to wages because a little money goes a long way, so if the boss hasn't put in place a salary structure or development plan, it's easy to see why the boss and money would be the key factor. As people progress and reach more senior levels, I think it will become more about relationships and if you have had enough of your boss, you will go.”

There is no hiding place in the modern workplace for poor staff practices, so it was no surprise that a bad manager (36 percent) and being overworked (32 percent) were the next most common reasons why people look to move jobs.

It's plain to see that employers have to run a tight ship in order to retain workers - as a badly organised company (27 percent), not getting on with colleagues (21 percent) and concerns about job security (20 percent) also scored high on the list of reasons to change jobs.

There was a significant gender split, with women (45 percent) much more likely to want to move if they don't feel valued than men (33 percent).

Similarly a bad manager is more likely to make women (40 percent) jump ship than men (30 percent).

Overall, it's clear from this that to retain staff, companies must make their employees feel valued. This may be more difficult than it first appears and deserves much thought from recruiters and employers.

If any further incentive was required, 78 percent of workers said they felt they would be more productive in a job where they felt valued.

“People feel valued at work by having a sense of how their role directly contributes to the purpose of the organisation” says Debbie Martin, Director of employee experience at consultancy Flourishing Potential. “They also want to receive recognition by peers or managers for the effort they put into their role and the value they generate. Feeling like a valuable member of the team who is appreciated for their contributions is essential to staying and being productive in a post.”



PART TWO:

THE RECRUITMENT HOOPS: ARE THERE TOO MANY?

The search

Once someone has made the decision to start looking for a new job, how do they start?

The initial job search mainly takes place online with over 90 percent of people saying their first stop is a web search, LinkedIn, social media or recruitment sites.

A third of the youngest cohort of 18 to 29 year olds turn to social media to look for a job - nearly three times more than the over 45s. This suggests that recruiters in the future must have a well maintained social media presence.

Also, the youngest group were more than twice as likely to turn to LinkedIn (35 percent) than the over 45s (17 percent).

Only 23 percent of people began their job search by contacting a recruiter - which indicates clear room for growth.

WHERE DO PEOPLE LOOK FOR A NEW JOB?

	JOB WEBSITES	55%
	RECRUITMENT WEBSITES	41%
	LINKEDIN	25%
	SOCIAL MEDIA	24%
	RECRUITMENT AGENCIES	23%
	DIRECT TO COMPANIES	19%
	TRUSTED CONTACTS	18%
	FAMILY MEMBERS	16%
	TEMP AGENCIES	13%

Wage transparency

With several states in the US making it a legal requirement for employers to publish salaries on job ads, a backlash against the vague phrase 'competitive salary' is gaining momentum in the UK.

In fact, a recent study by Talent.com revealed that 79 percent of Brits believe it should be a legal requirement in this country to publish salaries⁴.

Perhaps it's no surprise then, that this survey revealed that companies which omit salaries on their job adverts risk missing out on valuable job applicants.

In fact, one in five UK workers polled said that they would definitely not apply for a job with no published salary, while 57 percent would be less likely to apply.

Overall, 90 percent of people believe that salaries should be included in job advertisements.

Of those, half (50 percent) said it was a waste of time applying for a job if you don't know what the pay will be, 44 percent believe that publishing salaries make companies more transparent, the same number (44 percent) said it's the most important element of a job so it needs to be displayed, and a quarter (25 percent) claim that publishing salaries in job adverts helps battle the gender pay gap.

The writing seems to be on the wall - if your salary is so competitive, why don't you publish it? It's likely that companies that don't take heed face bigger recruitment challenges than those who do.

4. <https://www.hrgrapevine.com/content/article/2022-11-10-could-new-laws-force-firms-to-put-salaries-in-their-job-ads-pay-discrimination-starts-with-the-advert>

The interview

When jobs are found and applications are made, the next step for successful candidates is the interview stage - and one clear theme that came up in the research was that the latter stages of recruitment can turn off potential employees.

60 percent of respondents said that they had been made to jump through too many hoops at the interview stages of a job, including "work for free" or having numerous rounds of interviews for a post.

Shockingly, HALF of all respondents have said no to a job they liked the look of because of how this stage of recruitment was handled.

"I've heard horror stories about people having to do eight interviews before getting jobs," says Debbie Martin. "I actually think it's not the number of interviews that is the problem, it's the fact that people aren't clear about that at the start. If you know there's going to be four interviews then you can prepare yourself for it but if they keep adding on stages, that's a lot of extra aggravation.

"If employers keep adding on tasks or interview stages, this brings up a level of distrust, and you start to think 'do they really want me?' or 'am I being set up to fail?'

"It tends to be larger corporations with more bureaucracy, whereas start ups and more nimble organisations are much quicker to make offers - and I think this does mean that the more bureaucratic organisations are losing out on a lot of talent."

Plainly stream-lining the application process and adding more transparency are ways in which employers can hire better candidates.

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I've heard horror stories about people having to do eight interviews before getting jobs.

Debbie Martin
Director, Flourishing Potential





PART THREE:

JOB 'MUST HAVES': WHAT DRIVES EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN MODERN BRITAIN?

It seems it's safety first for younger workers, as the study found that Gen Zs put feeling safe in their role at the top of their job 'must haves' (42 percent), above a competitive salary (39 percent), feeling part of a team (38 percent) and having a good boss who has your back (33 percent)

A further third (33 percent) said in-job training was essential for them, 29 percent would expect an annual bonus, and 23 percent said that doing a job that had a positive impact on the world was important.

"Young people are much more driven by purpose, whether that's a social conscience or a desire to improve themselves," says David Head. "If they don't have something like that to bite into, they'll leave and they'll leave much more quickly than older generations.

"There are a lot of articles written about younger people being the "snowflake generation", they're much maligned, but I think the fact that they'll quit and move on so quickly shows that they are empowered and they believe in themselves."

Every other age group put a competitive salary top of the list, and the older the respondent, the more important the salary was: 30 to 44 year olds - 54 percent; 45 to 59 year olds - 55 percent; 60 plus - 65 percent.

Being part of a team was an important 'must-have' too, with 42 percent of respondents saying that it is an essential part of working life, more important than even a good boss (41 percent) or finding your job interesting (39 percent).



“The fact that being part of a team scores so highly doesn't surprise me,” continues Debbie Martin. “Belonging is very important. Many of us live in a world where we no longer have the strong communities at home, where neighbours can look after kids or everyone will flock round if something goes wrong. And rightly, or wrongly, work has begun to fill some of those gaps. Colleagues at work and that environment will be filling in spaces left by a more atomised society.”

Allowing employees to buy into the structure of the working environment is something that should be encouraged as it can clearly drive retention.

And this can't be done with many simple extras. Perks such as 'having a fruit bowl in the office' or 'free yoga sessions' scored much lower with four and five percent respectively on the list of desirable workplace options.

However, the chance to upskill was important for 32 percent, while feeling you're doing good was important to 23 percent and remained level across all ages. And company transparency was important to 22 percent of respondents.

19 percent say it's essential to have a remote working pattern, 19 percent would insist on a personal development plan, and more than one in 10 (11 percent) would expect to have a mentor.

Companies should put team away days on the back burner, as only seven percent of employees say this is a must have - half day Fridays are much more important to modern workers (16 percent).

Our research shows that there are ways to encourage staff retention, but it's clear that the days of cheap perks are over.

Allowing people to progress with training inside a company which is transparent is much more important. Particularly if the modern workers feel comfortable and secure. These are much more essential to British workers in 2022.

TOP 20 JOB 'MUST HAVES'

ACCORDING TO MODERN BRITS



SUMMARY

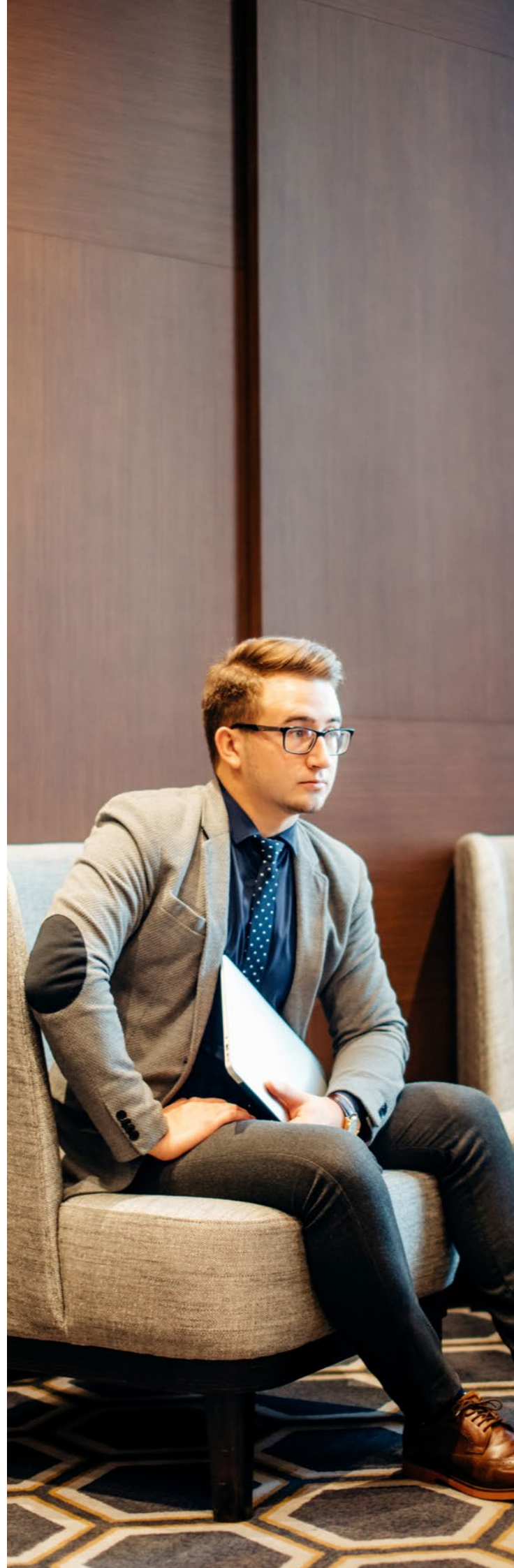
The pandemic, the Great Retirement, quiet quitting, Brexit - just some of the reasons for the present tight labour market conditions. Whatever the factors, employers need to adapt in order to recruit and retain staff.

Our research shows that employers should be prepared to lose staff if they are not valued. If they are poorly managed, not given purpose or a chance to grow in their roles, people will be less productive and will ultimately quit.

And if there is no internal structure to allow people to earn more as they grow within their companies, looking for a new job to get a pay rise will continue to be the norm.

The data also shows that employers are less likely to find good replacements unless their recruitment strategy is streamlined and transparent. Poor clarity in job adverts will impact their ability to reach the largest pool of applicants, and after that setting too many challenges will rule out half the possible talent.

And finally, to retain the workers they want, they must go beyond simple perks and gimmicks and instead offer real progression, teamwork and a sense of belonging.





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