



scitex | SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL RECRUITMENT[®]

New Zealand 2024

Employment and Career Insights for Better Mondays

The Scitex Workforce Report:

Employee insights to accelerate your organisational performance

**Scitex are on a mission
to engineer**
better mondays

We are pleased to release our inaugural survey results aimed at helping employers shape and confirm their future employment plans.

The survey findings that follow were collected via Scitex's inaugural Aotearoa Workforce Survey.

This survey took place in 2024.



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Foreword

We Surveyed:

1,630 Employees

63 Business Leaders

Created in collaboration with our communication and research partners, this inaugural report provides an overview of the emerging workplace trends for 2024 and 2025.

Drawing from our survey, engaging with over 1,600 local employees and 63 business leaders across various generations and industries across New Zealand, we examine the factors motivating employees to stay or leave their roles, while addressing key workplace themes aimed to help your organisation engineer better Mondays for your business, and current and future employees. We are excited to share this data and other relevant insights, through the inaugural edition of this report.

As we look towards 2025, there's a palpable sense of optimism tempered with some realism. We anticipate a gradual but steady revival in business activities, with hiring expected to rebound as the year unfolds, and as inflation continues to settle.

Flexible working remains a critical discussion point for 2024, and beyond. The past few years have served as a period of experimentation with different working models; hybrid work becoming somewhat of a norm for many organisations (where practical).

At Scitex, we're continuously refining our approach to achieve an optimal balance between office presence and flexibility, aiming to enhance productivity and cohesion within our teams; we currently operate two days per week together from the office and the remainder remotely, supported by strong adoption and comprehension of various cohesive digital technologies.

The evolution of workplace environments to accommodate more home-like comforts alongside efficient workspaces reflects a broader shift towards a hybrid working model, which has been well received, despite some challenges in maintaining team dynamics. This remains a serious consideration for organisational leaders and those hiring employees; as you'll see later, based on our survey, it's the top ranked benefit you can offer employees.

The record **surge in net migration** across the last year (+128,900 net migration across the year to October 2023, softening to +111,100 to the year ending March 2024) has made some impact in the job market – though many sectors or roles requiring specific skills and experiences remain largely unchanged.

With changes to Visa settings being brought through, we expect net migration to continue to slow, or at minimum become more targeted (from a skillset perspective) in the near term. We expect the pendulum to swing in the other direction by 2025, with more talk of talent shortages in certain spaces, post visa setting adjustments.

Another significant legislative change occurred in 2023, with the **reintroduction of the 90-day trial period for all employers**. This provides both employers and employees with a safeguard and flexibility, fostering a more adaptive hiring process without undermining other employment protections. This adjustment encourages a more inclusive hiring strategy, possibly easing the path for candidates who might not meet every criteria, but who may meet some.

Despite gradually increasing unemployment rates (4.3% to March 2024, up from 4.0% in December 2023; still beneath the OECD rate which remained unchanged at 4.8%, as at January 2024) and strong general candidate availability, **finding the right talent with the right skills for technical roles, remains a challenge in many sectors**, highlighting the importance of a clear purpose, strong employer brand as well as benefits in attracting and retaining skilled professionals. While there was a spike in 'candidate walk-ins' – those approaching companies off the street for low-skilled roles – more technical, specialised or skilled roles are often still harder to fill. Our focus is not only on attracting talent but also ensuring you retain the valuable team members we've helped you engage, by ensuring the offers made to those candidates really match their personal needs and what's readily available to them on the market.

After extremely strong wage growth in 2021 and 2022, **wage inflation slowed in the back half of 2023** after advertised salaries soared up +4.7% (based on Seek advertised salaries; 12-month period ending May 2023). We expect wage inflation to come back in line with national inflation levels, which are expected to drop back into the 2-3% range by the end of 2024. Salary increases, year to date, have often been more strategic and targeted (versus generic, across the board), to drive retention of key talent, or to secure key departments, skills or relationships.

As we advance through 2024 and into 2025, we remain cautiously optimistic. Here's to a year of bold and successful endeavours in an evolving scientific & technical landscape, and to enjoying your Sunday nights while looking forward to the week ahead.

Better Mondays everyone,

Gareth Robertson

Managing Director, Scitex

gareth@scitexgroup.com



Why do employees stay?

Is my job taking me somewhere?

Amongst the 1,630 employees, there was a clear group of themes which emerged. When considering why they would choose to stay with an employer, candidates feel like they are progressing and that they fit with their team & Manager.

Career progression is the number one reason for staying: Do employees feel like their current role is leading to a future opportunity (whether in your organisation, or externally)? Do employees feel like they are advancing their skills and or future? Can they see tangible progress or improvements being made?

Gelling well with their teammates and their Manager is also critical, both for day-to-day enjoyment, but also short, and long-term career performance.





Why do employees leave?

Is my role or employer in jeopardy?

Our research highlighted reasons employees will consider searching for other opportunities.

Firstly, especially amongst those in lower skilled roles, there is a sense of being **underpaid and undervalued**.

Sometimes this stems from genuine wage level issues versus industry or alternative job benchmarks which employees are aware of. And sometimes it's because they have taken a pay cut to accept a new opportunity for other areas of personal gain. Alternatively, it can be out of frustration in their own progression against milestones which were promising higher wage levels. In any case, feeling underpaid is the most common reason staff look to leave their current employer.

Both during the pandemic and over the last 6-12 months as the economy softened, many companies have recalibrated their future plans, restructured or downsized their teams or cut critical budgets. All these factors create concern for employees, who value **stability and certainty** at a

micro level (themselves, their peers, their role, their Manager and support systems, their career plan etc.) and macro level too. *Will our organisation be operating in 5 years? Are we financially viable? Will my project continue to progress? Will we be acquired and transformed? When will my role be made redundant?*



Flexibility is the strongest currency: the top benefit you can offer

57% of employees rated flexible work & consistent WFH (work from home) opportunities, as one of their top three benefits.

We are seeing candidates reduce salary or forgo higher salaried positions, for roles that better fit their life and offer more flexibility.

We have seen a significant increase in the level of candidate enquiry around both the location of a job opportunity (i.e., commute distance from home) and approach to the company working style (office-based, work from home, or hybrid = the commute frequency each week); the amount of time spent commuting; more time away from family or hobbies or other responsibilities, were elevated as key concerns. Every 60 minutes employees save in commuting means significant additional time with family, a good workout at the gym, a coffee with a loved one or finally getting that all important haircut – it makes

a tangible difference to people who are considering new opportunities.

Many companies have begun utilising a four-day week (sometimes 10-hour days) as an employee perk and retention strategy. #workschoolhours is also a rising movement, based on similar principles enabling workers to marry up their family and work life, to maximise their performance and engagement in all aspects of life.



57% rated flexible work and work from home opportunities as a key benefit



AI is already making ripples

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (as part of Industry 4.0) has captivated the world over, causing both excitement and alarm, and raising important questions about its potential impact on the global economy. Tools like Meta AI, Chat GPT and Google's Gemini have become familiar terms to many but it's a world much deeper than just those well-known AI brands.

Kristalina Georgieva, currently Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, penned an article [here](#) which neatly encapsulates some of the key challenges, as well as the vast opportunities that AI will bring to world economies, organisations and their employees. In the same article, Georgieva also shares that AI could impact 60% of jobs in advanced economies (40% for emerging markets and 26% in low-income countries).*

[Analysis](#) of the workforces of eight major economies by McKinsey & Company found that in just 6 years, 1 in 6 workers (and, by extrapolation, potentially over 630,000 NZ workers) may have to change jobs because of AI.

Training and development are elevating as key areas for investment; our survey showed that 1 in 2 employers are investing tangibly in training and development – potentially something that will need to be reviewed, with AI in mind.^

**Boosting AI skills
could lead to a
41%
rise in
productivity**



(Source: AWS & Access Partnership)

* <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2024/01/14/ai-will-transform-the-global-economy-lets-make-sure-it-benefits-humanity>

^ <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-the-future-of-work>



AI through a local lens

If your business is not leveraging Artificial Intelligence you're in the minority says Justin Flitter, Founder of NewZealand.AI.

“ In the last 18 months more than 1 Billion people have used Generative AI tools, making GenAI the most rapidly adopted general purpose technology in history. In a recent report published by AWS around 90% of New Zealand employees surveyed predicted their career would benefit from the use of AI tools, and that employers were willing to pay up to 30% more for employees with AI skills. In contrast 70% of employers were unable to find the necessary talent, highlighting the vast gap in practical AI skills.

AI is not an optional thing, everyone should be using AI tools at work everyday. Like email, utility GenAI tools like Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT, Google Gemini and others are proven to boost workforce productivity by up to 5 hours a week. (Source: Genesis Energy Microsoft Copilot Case Study)

In the Scitex Workforce Report, what employees want most is Career Progression. We like to think of this as Sustainable Career Development. A process of continual learning, where no one gets left behind. Up-skilling your people with new AI skills will boost your business performance, increase their job satisfaction, and ensure they're equipped to take on new roles in your business or depart in high regard for your company and ready to take on a new challenge.

What we do, and how we work is always evolving. AI is accelerating the pace of change. And that can be challenging for many. As business leaders it's our job to demystify the complex and bring everyone along the AI journey with us. We call this 'Innovating at the pace of trust'. It's vital employees know how AI works, its benefits and limitations. That this new technology is not here to replace us, but to supercharge our potential. ”

Justin Flitter
Founder, NewZealand.AI
<https://newzealand.ai/>

Future Hiring: AI is already influencing our hiring plans

We asked our employer cohort which roles they anticipate will be the most difficult to recruit for – i.e. who will be the most ‘in demand’ in the next 5 years?

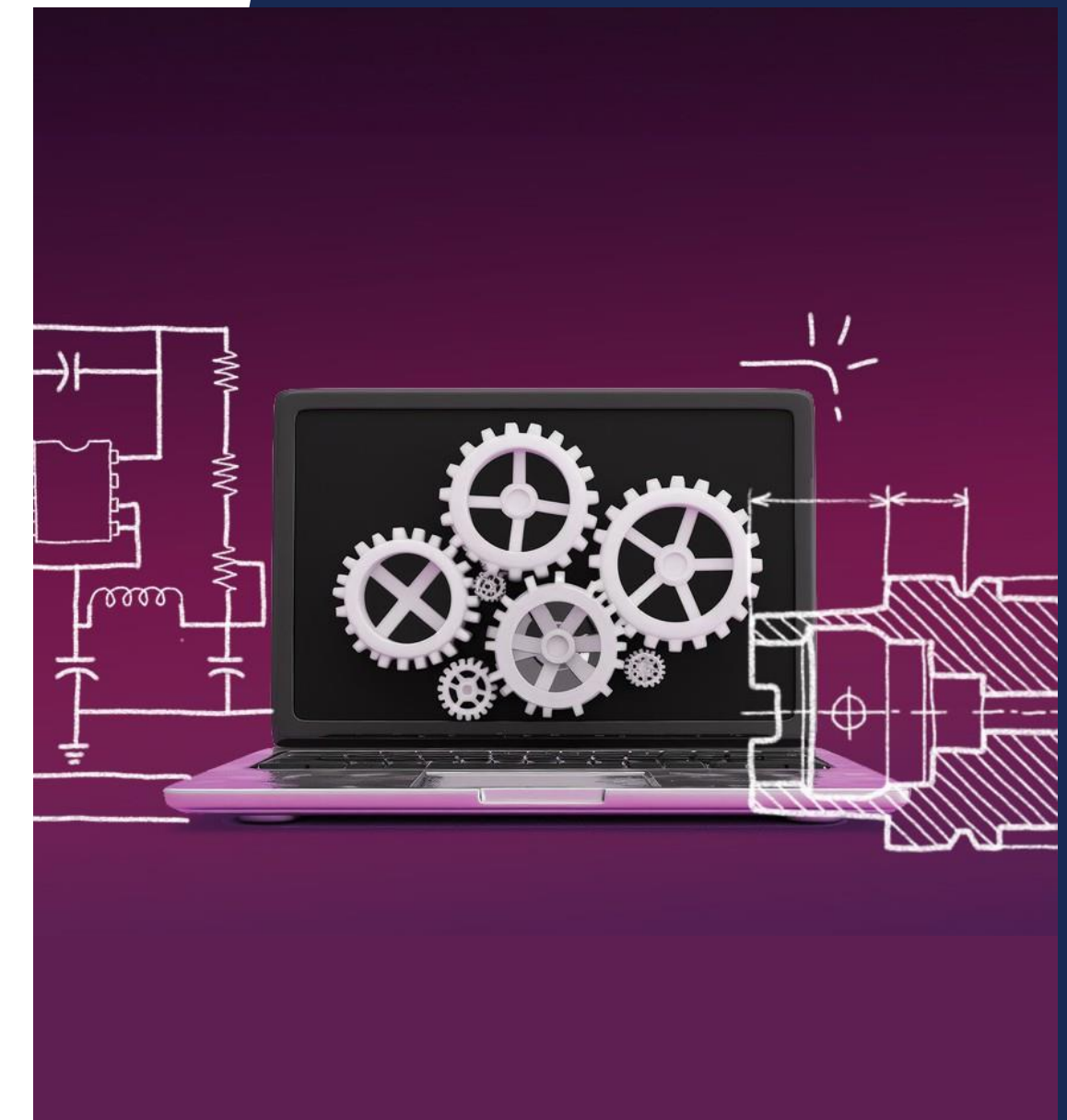
Unsurprisingly, the rise and rise of new technologies is central to their recruitment needs:

Discipline: Engineering

Across a range of areas: electronics, controls, mechanical, design, software, quality, project, specialist operators & production workers) – largely driven by the expected technological change, and the skills needed to embrace and leverage advancing technologies will be the most in-demand areas.

Soft or transferable skill: Adaptability

With the level of technologically-driven change we are starting to see the expectation for employees to be able to pivot and effectively embrace change, or update their skill sets, will become even more crucial.



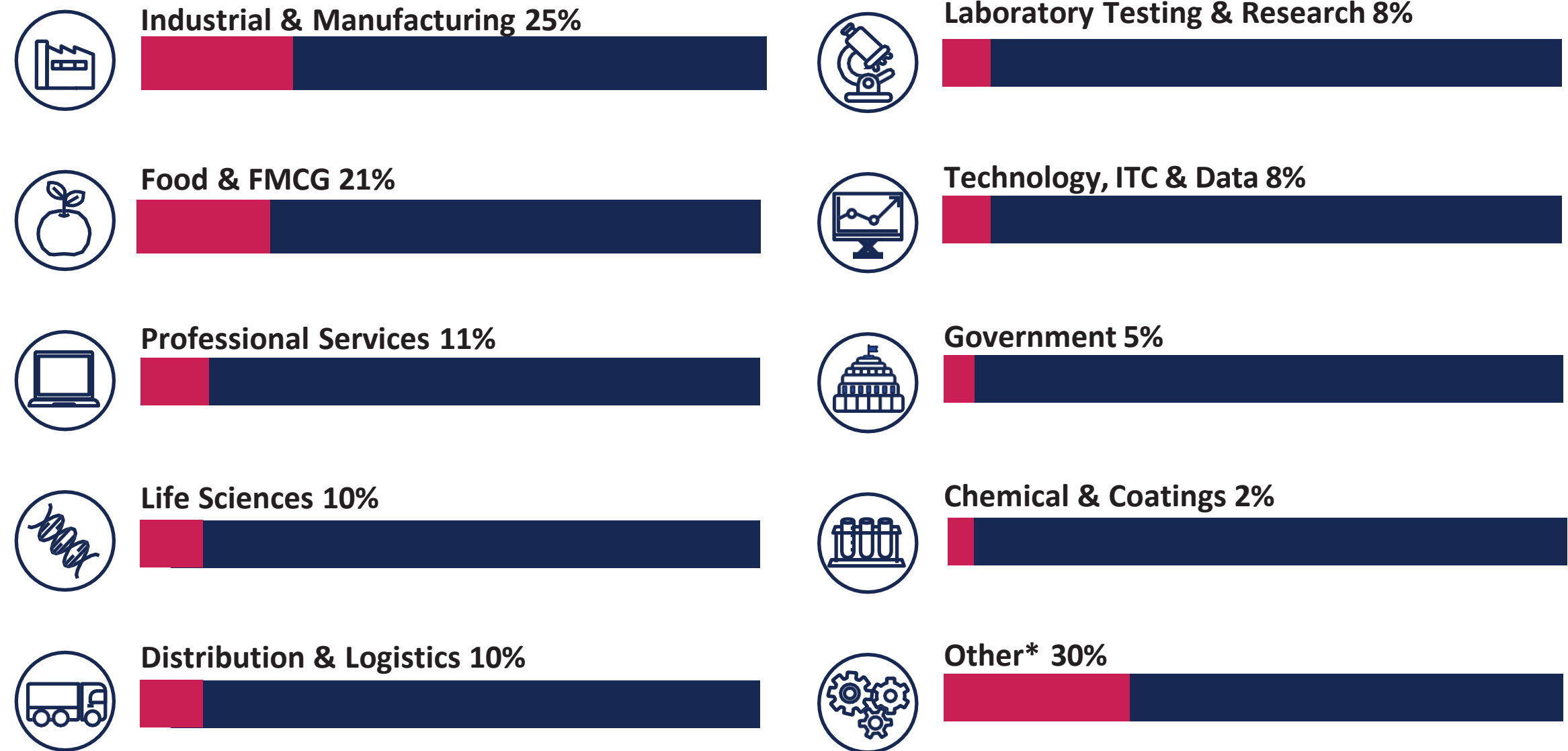
The full findings that follow were collected via Scitex's inaugural Aotearoa Workforce Survey, which ran in 2024.



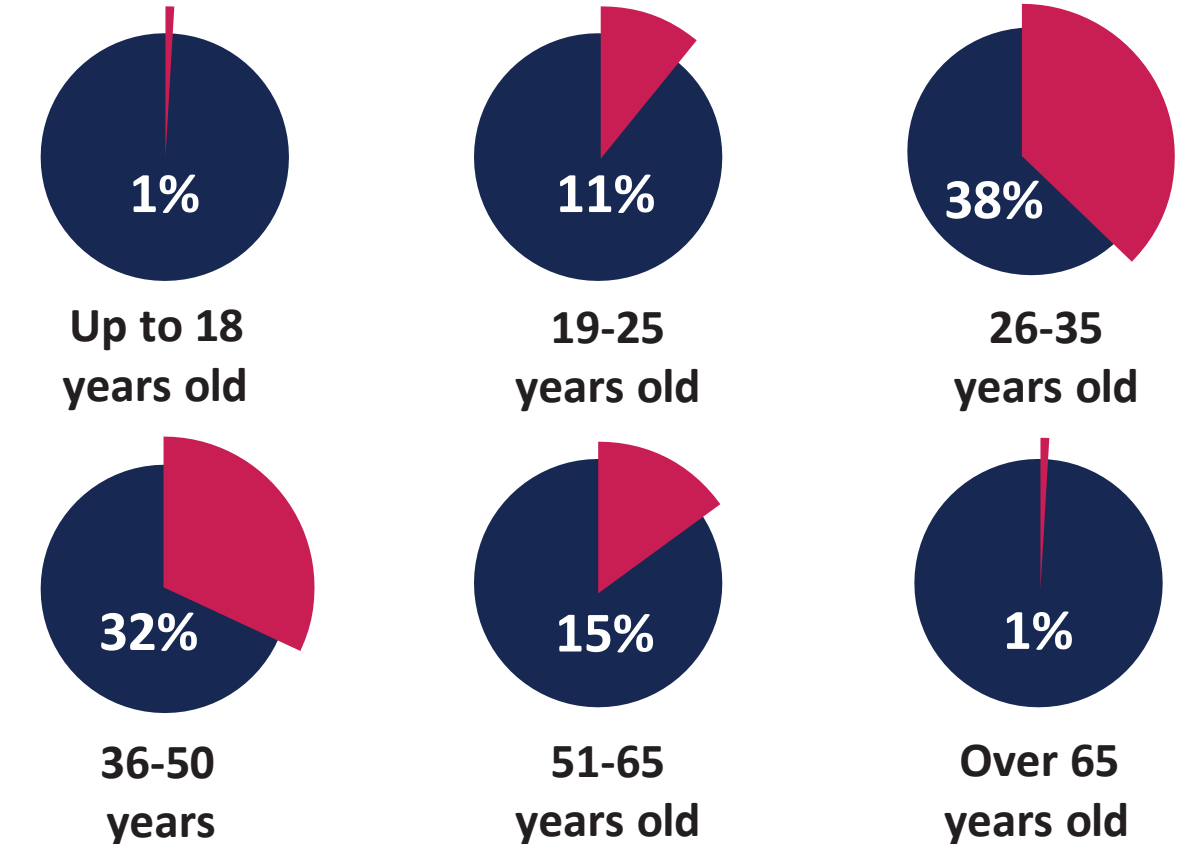
Employee Sample Data

The survey gathered 2,567 responses; the insights generated through this report are derived only from the domestic 1,630 employees currently in NZ. Given the value of such data to NZ employers, we focused only on the domestic data subset.

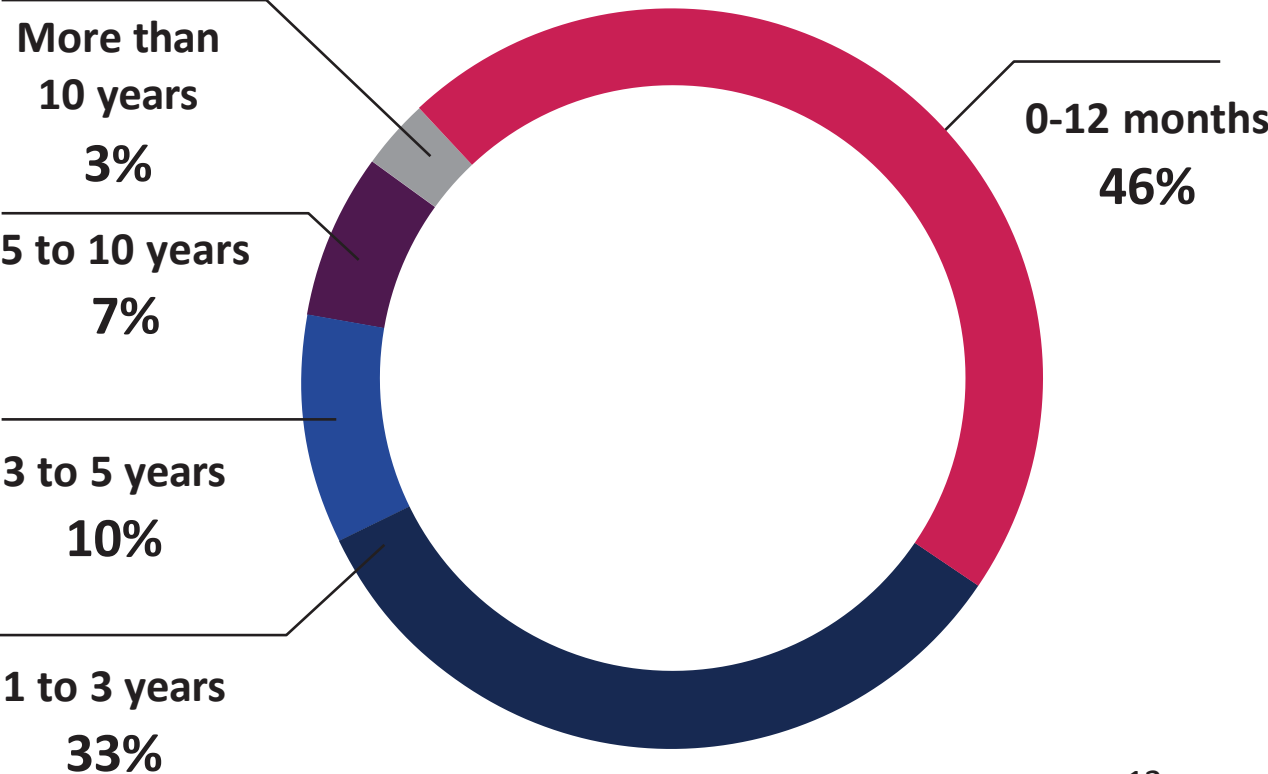
Industries that respondents work in



Respondent ages



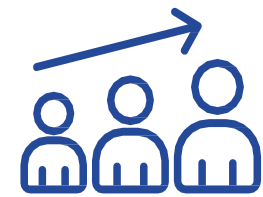
Respondent Tenure At Current Employer



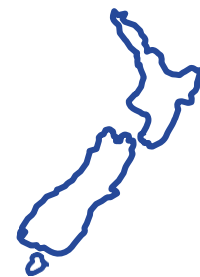
*The top 4 categories that make up 'other' are:
 None / Unemployed / seeking work / student / between jobs 12.9% Construction 10.5%
 Retail (inc supermarket, online, pharmacy) 8.0% Engineering 7.2%

1,630 Respondents

Scitex utilised its proprietary network and partnered with external experts, to gather 1,630 responses from employees, currently in New Zealand. In summary, this group consists of:



18-65 years olds



Currently within New Zealand



Varying job search statuses



Varying tenures



General Management



Human Resources



Operations



Area or function management

63 Business Leaders

In addition to 1,630 employees, we also connected with 63 business leaders to better understand their perspective and experiences. These leaders came from a range of fields:

Respondent job search status



Open to new opportunities
43%



Actively looking for work
35%

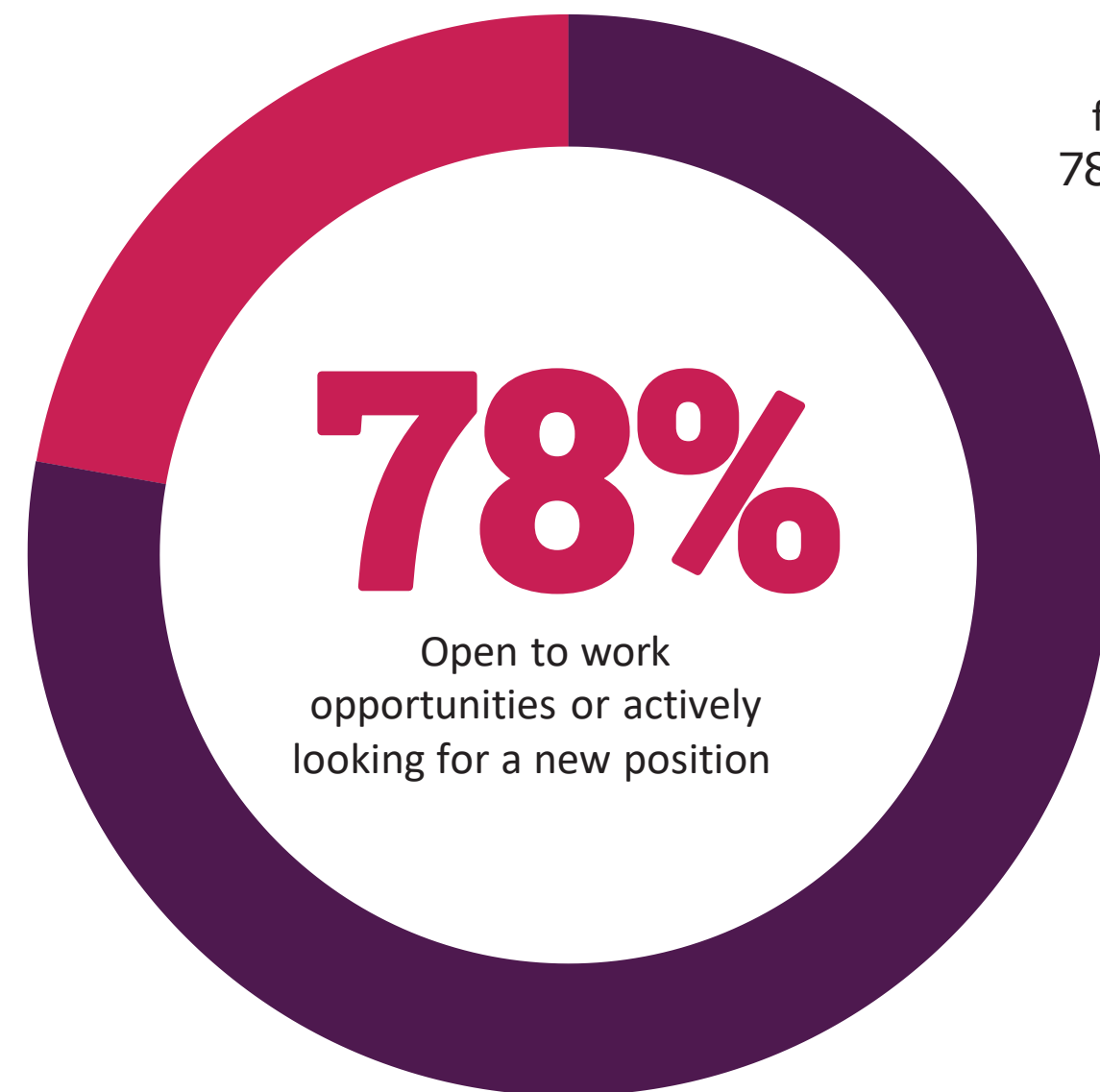


Not looking for work
22%

The insights that follow pull from one cohort or the other (candidate/employee respondents or business leaders), not the combined.

Changing Jobs

The data highlighted that employees consider changing work situations more often than you might like to think. Delving into why can help reduce staff turnover and help make Better Mondays for employees and employers alike.



Interestingly, the first finding of our research is that 78% of local workers surveyed are either looking for a new role, or open to a new role

Only 1 in 5

employees are focused solely on their current employer with no interest in other opportunities.



Those who have been with the same employer for 10+ years are more likely to consider new roles

If you are a hiring Manager, there is value in understanding what drives change and what encourages people to stay. This can help direct efforts to retain key talent.

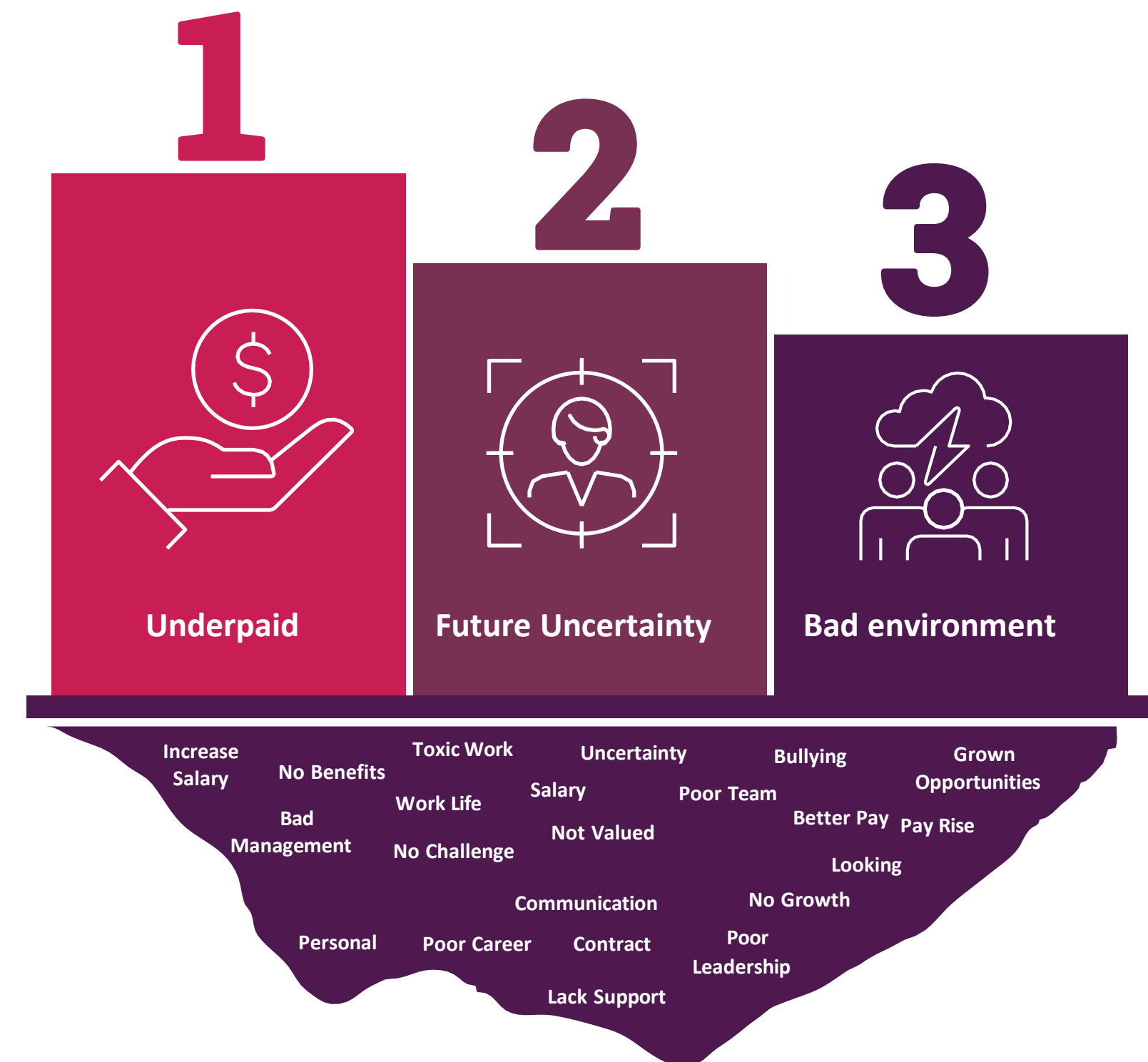
What drives change?

Our research highlighted reasons why employees stay in their current employment or will consider other opportunities.

Key factors driving desire to stay with an employer



Key factors driving change and decisions to leave



Decision Making Influences

1st

Spouse / partner

2nd

Friend

3rd

Family Member

3rd Equal

Online

When considering a new job, candidates confide in their most trusted personal supporters.

Something to consider is how strong your brand visibility is, on:



Google search



Google reviews



Google photos



Your website



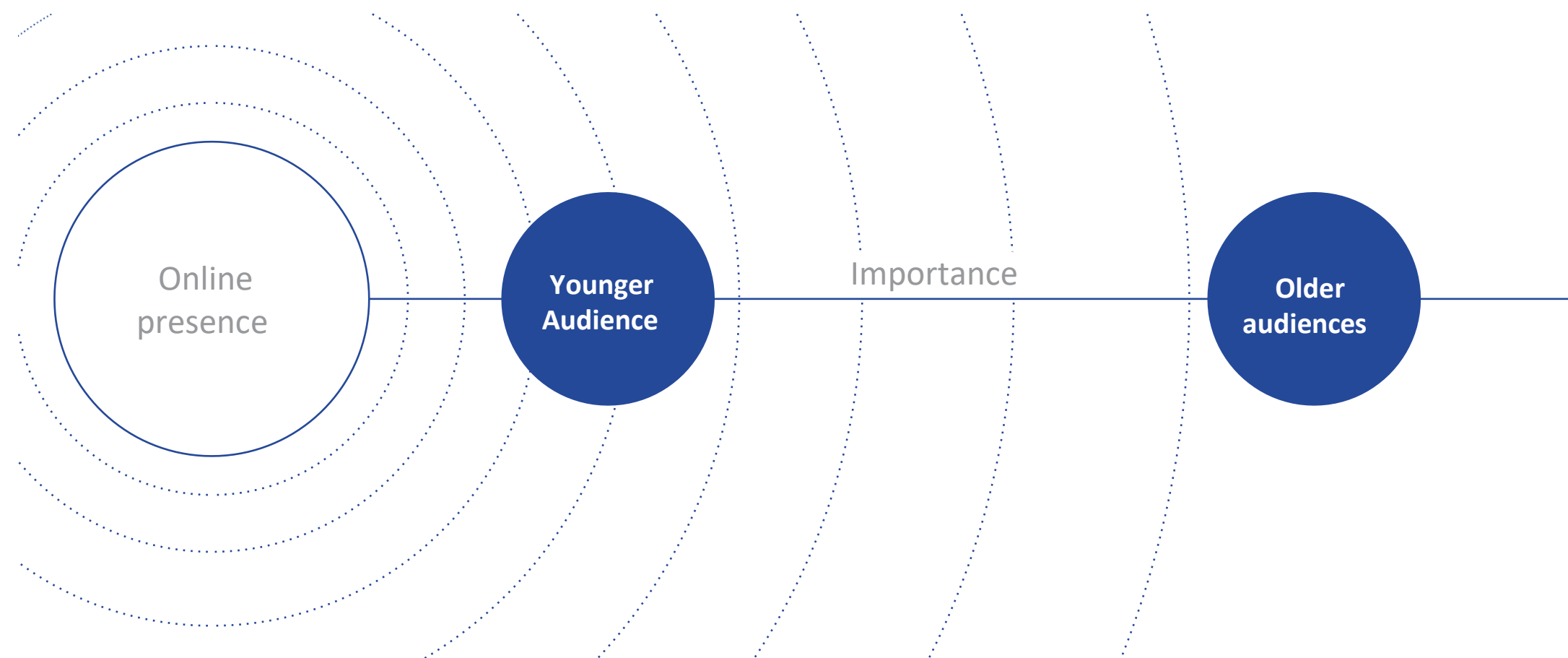
LinkedIn



Other Social Media

Further Insights: Influence

Younger audiences place more bearing on an organisation's online presence, whereas older generations don't; however, what they find out about you online is important to them.



Younger audiences (19-25 year olds) are more likely to talk to their current Manager for advice before accepting a new job offer. It's important to keep this in mind when at offer stage of that demographic.



Why employees stay

We know from employees, that in order to retain top talent, these are the key levers to consider pulling:

57%

Flexible work;
consistent WFH
opportunities

47%

Bonus

39%

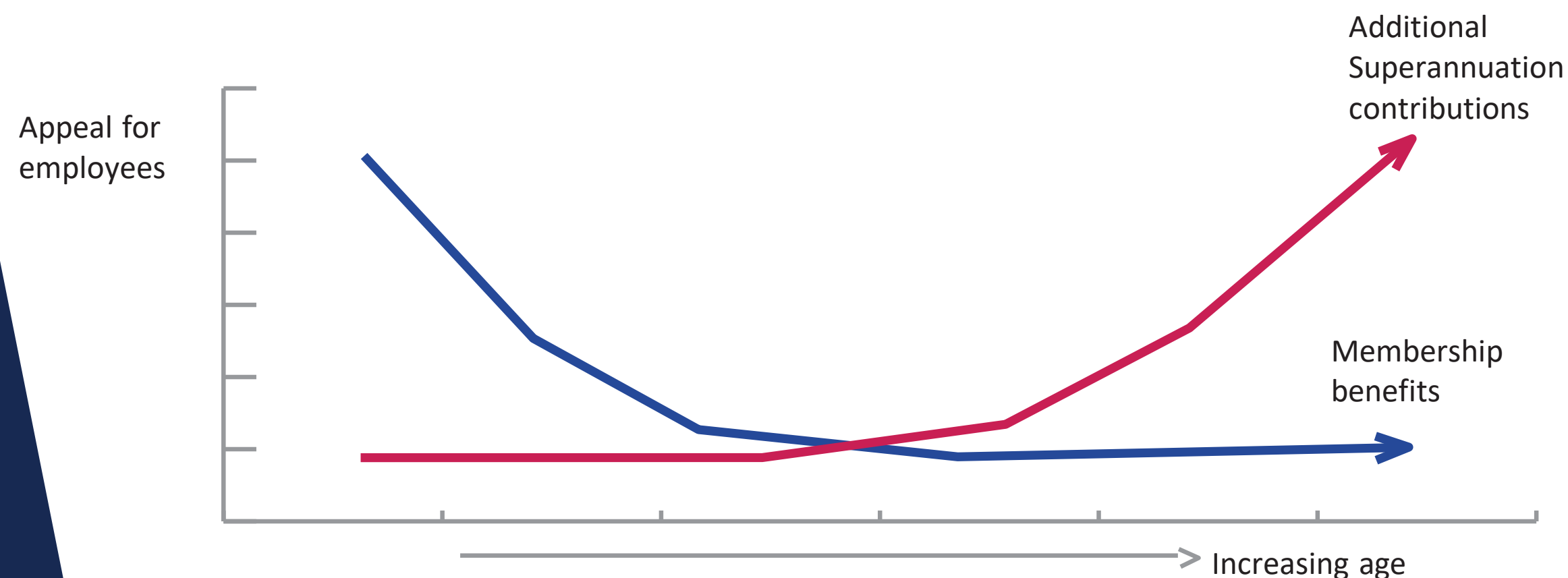
Medical or health
insurance

36%

Specific Coaching
and development
opportunities

Other related insights:

The appeal of a bonus and membership benefits (such as gym, online store or club memberships) lowers as employees get older; the appeal of additional Superannuation contributions is more appealing amongst older employees.



Additional leave (birthday, mental health etc.) over index's with 19- 25 year olds (followed by the 26-35 year olds)



Additional Super contributions appeal more as we age older

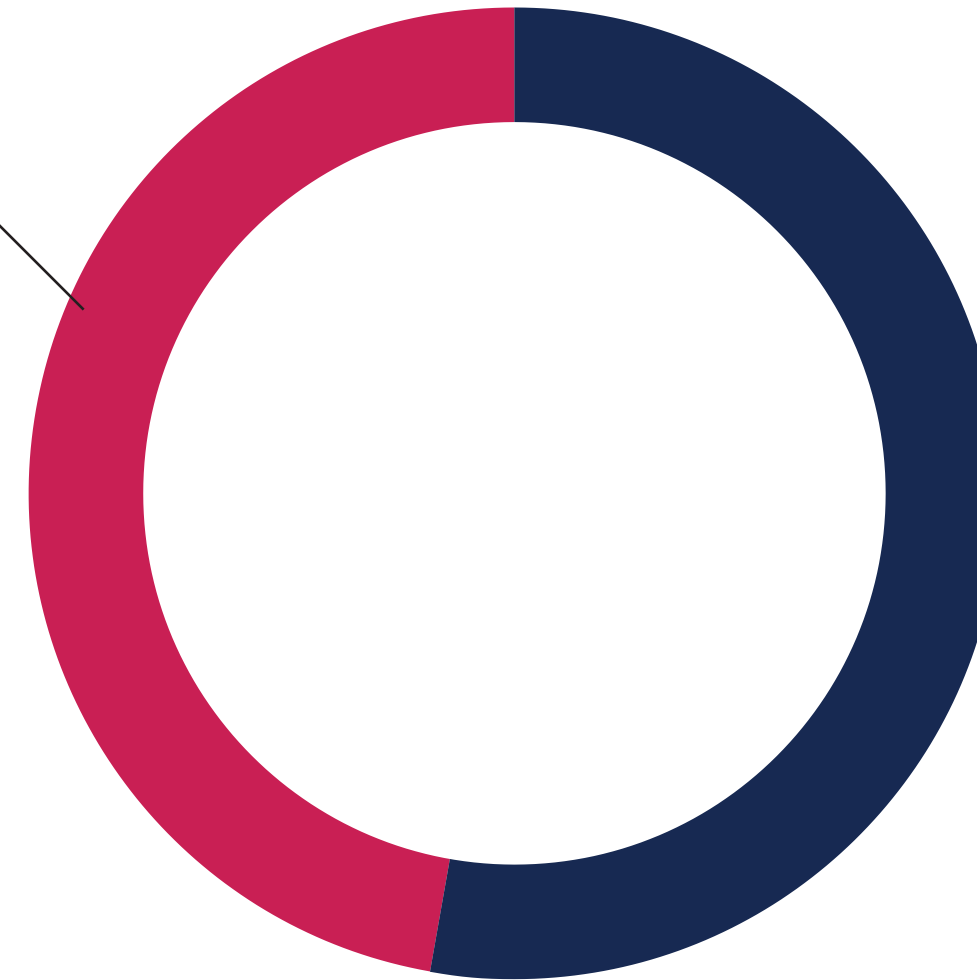
Top benefits for employee retention

47% of Managers don't have any staff retention initiatives in place.

Employees have told us that these are the benefits that are meaningful to them. The challenge is to ensure your organisation offers a strong mix of benefits, relevant to your team and operation.

47%

of Managers stated that they do not have any staff retention initiatives in place



53%

of Managers that do offer staff retention initiatives those who do, are offering (any combination of the below)



Additional benefits



Training



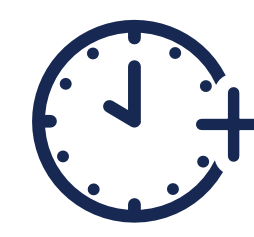
Bonus



Flexible work



No sick day bonus



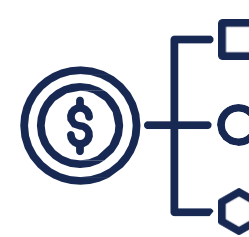
Overtime allowance



Wellness initiatives



Comprehensive development plans



Product at cost



Annual review



EAP plan



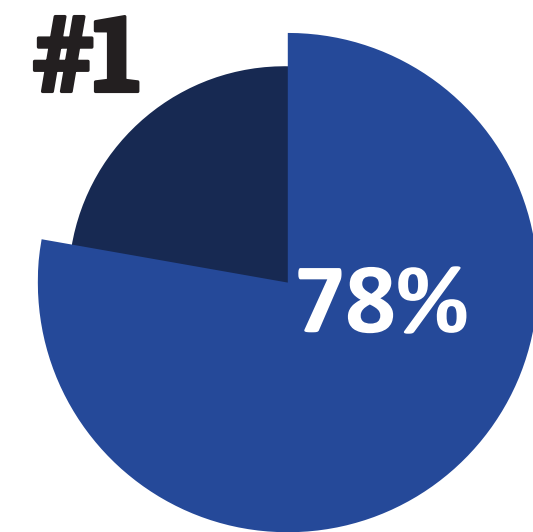
Team events / celebrations



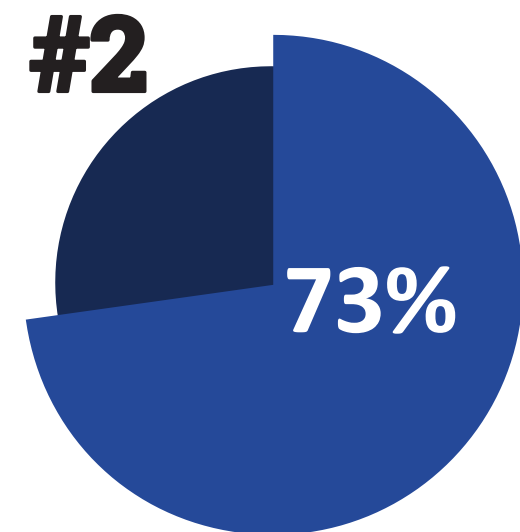
Health / Medical insurance

Professional Development

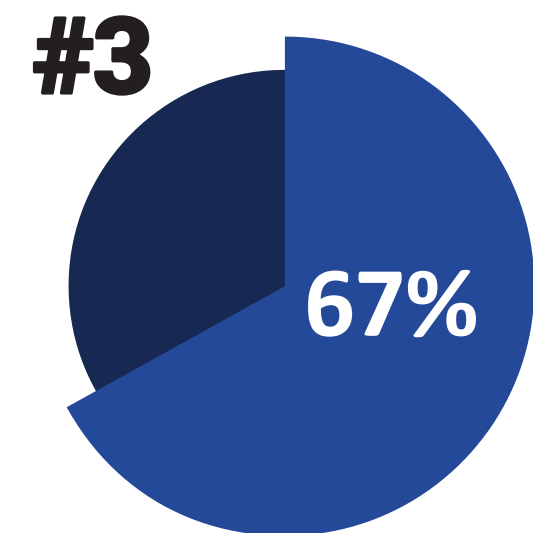
With development opportunities rated as a key reason employees stay, our survey asked the question of existing employers, which of the below are currently part of their approach to professional development to overcome their Team's skills shortages.



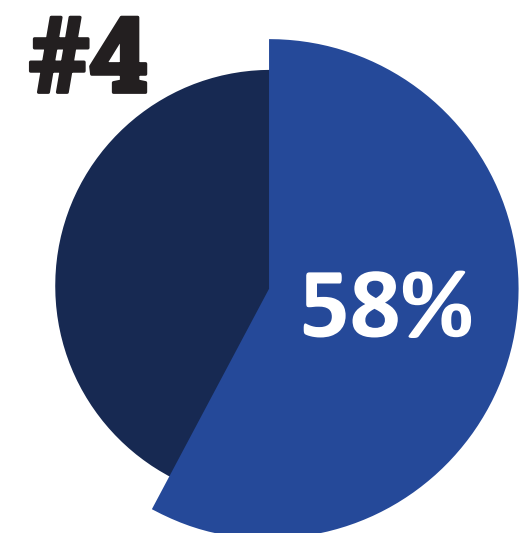
Inhouse training



Inhouse knowledge sharing



Regular feedback or reviews



Exposure to new elements of the business; special projects

1 in 2

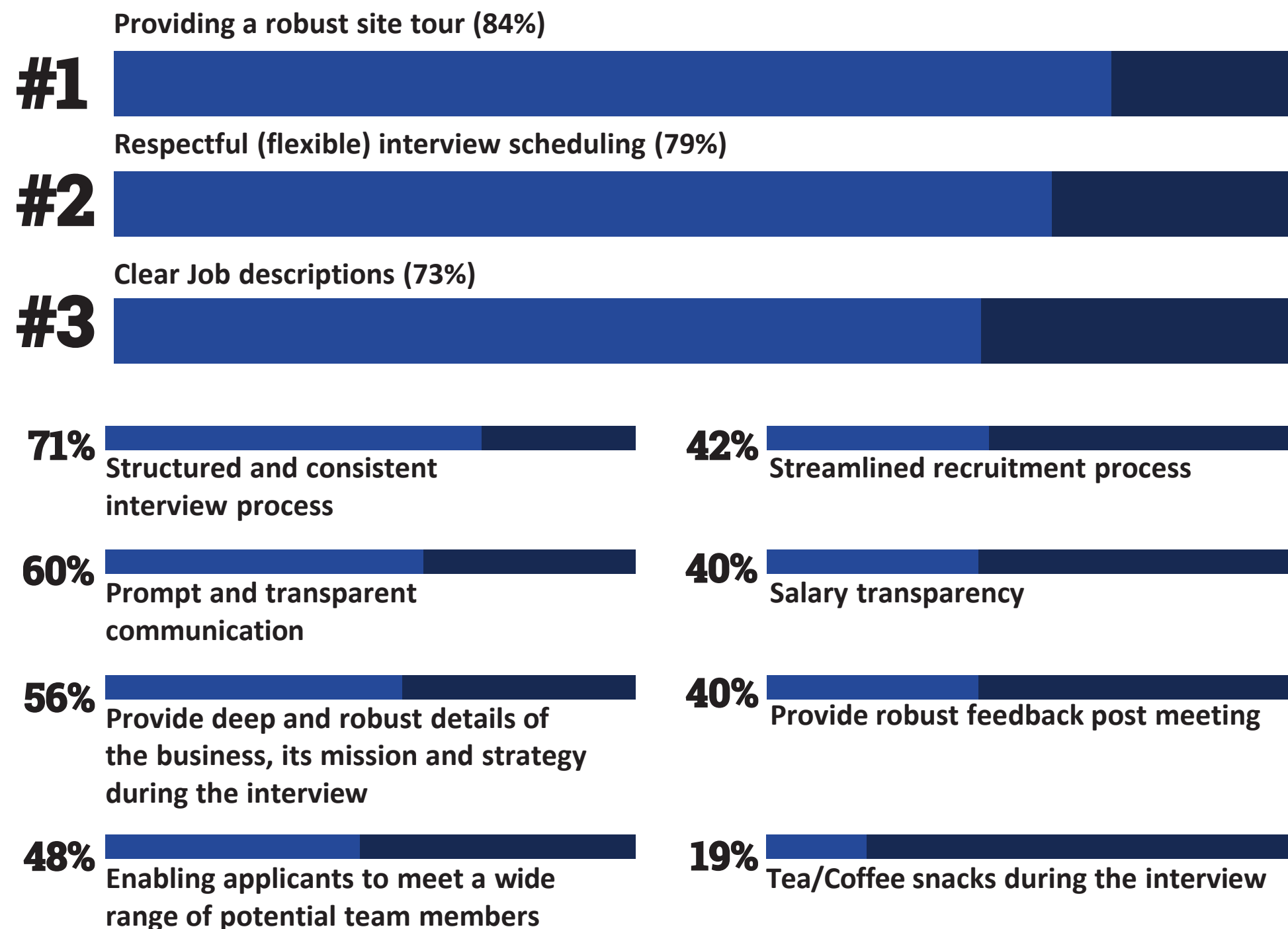
Employers invest in development

What this showed is that the focus is currently on in-house knowledge and low-cost options. Only 1 in 2 invest (with budget and actual spend) in development:



Application Experience

Our research provided some insights into the recruitment process from an employers' perspective, including what experience a candidate may expect, and what counts against candidates when they apply for a role. We asked the question 'What steps do you take to ensure a positive experience for job applicants, and to retain their interest throughout the recruitment process?'



Common mistakes applicants make that disqualify them from a job during the interview process (as answered by hiring managers):



Who will be in high demand?

We asked our employer respondents what roles they anticipate are the most difficult to recruit and who will be the most 'in demand', in the next 5 years?

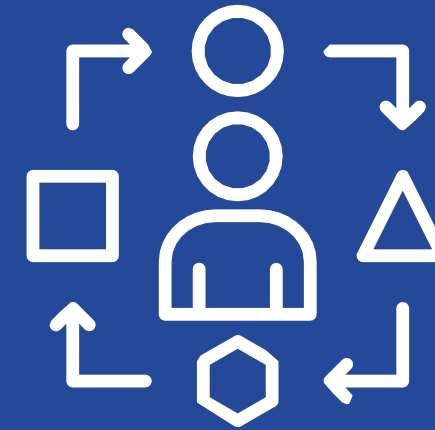
Role



Engineering

(Across a range of areas: electronics, controls, mechanical, design, software, quality, project, specialist operators & production workers).

Soft Skill



Adaptability

With the level of technologically driven change we are starting to see and the fact that this is expected to only increase, the ability for employees to pivot, effectively embrace change or update their skill sets, will become even more crucial.

Key Takeaways



Make flexibility a key priority

Flexibility & the opportunity to work from home (at some stage in the week), is the top benefit you can offer. Being mindful of your team's lives and supporting them to mesh work and home schedules is what employees are looking for. Any change you make will be appreciated (e.g. 9am company meetings can be tough for parents or caregivers).



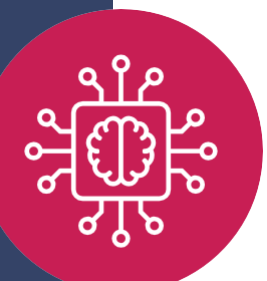
Ensure your employer brand is stable and your employees feel secure

Without a feeling of stability, employees are left questioning their future, and when they should start looking elsewhere. Transparency with employees around future business plans (and the role they play; their future) is helpful.



Ensure employees feel like they are progressing and brightening their future prospects

Leading employers are addressing career and personal development right from day one (sometimes as early as the job offer stage). Discuss and engage your team and new employees about their future prospects and opportunities, early, and deliver on it.



Workplace technology will be a selling point for employers

As AI becomes more ubiquitous in business operations, companies leveraging it for task automation gain a competitive edge. Job seekers are looking for employers who embrace these advancements both as a sign of a progressive company who embraces the future, and one who exposes employees to these new tools effectively.



More purposeful engagement with younger workers & migrant populations

Millennials and Gen Z prioritise fulfillment, purpose and work-life balance. Post-Covid, many experienced “quitting phenomenon”, prioritising personal well-being over careers. They value benefits like remote work, personal development and additional leave.

New migrants have unique needs to help them fit in and adjust to life and a career in a new country, invest in supporting them.

About Scitex

Your specialist recruitment agency, that gets results

Scitex is a recruitment company that specialises in Scientific and Technical positions. We've spent 37 years gathering insights and expertise in scientific and technical communities, career and jobs.

We are well connected; over 2 out of 3 of our placements come from our preexisting networks. These are often candidates we have spoken to over periods of time to understand their needs, direction and skillsets – to ensure we get them into the right career opportunity and workplace.

We exist to enable Better Mondays. We aim to help your team achieve their goals, by having thriving teams and individuals enabling optimal organisational performance. We offer solutions across Temporary and Contract Staffing, Permanent Placement, Executive Search, Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) and Outsourcing; across both Australia and New Zealand.

For any questions regarding this report, please contact **Gareth Robertson** (Managing Director) on gareth@scitexgroup.com



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