

HR.com's Future of Human Experience in the Workplace 2024



Elevate your
workplace vibe to
become an ace
employer



FEBRUARY 2024

Sponsored by

Circa
MITRATECH

CONTENTS



| | |
|----|---|
| 3 | Executive Summary |
| 7 | The State of Employee Experience Today |
| 13 | Key Elements of Employee Experience |
| 18 | Evaluating Employee Experience |
| 27 | Role of Technology |
| 30 | Employee Experience Drivers and Obstacles |
| 50 | The Near-term Future of Employee Experience |
| 54 | Key Takeaways |

Executive Summary

Most people spend a large portion of their waking hours at work. If their experiences are dismal, so are much of their lives. So, it's concerning that only a little over one-third of HR professionals responding to our latest survey give high ratings of the employee experiences in their organizations.

Dismal experiences lead to a wide range of bad outcomes for employers, from higher turnover to lower performance. However, a positive employee experience enhances engagement, job satisfaction, and performance, ultimately contributing to a [more productive](#) workforce.

The concept of employee experience has its roots in marketing's concept of customer experience. Marketers realize that customers are not coming into a business such as a store or café just for a product or service. What matters, it turns out, is the whole experience.

Today, more and more employers recognize that the same principles apply to human beings in the workplace. Unless their experiences are good, they'll be less likely to stick with their current employers.

To help organizations provide better employee experiences, this report digs deeply into the state of today's work experiences, the drivers of those experiences, and the practices used to shape those experiences. To gain a deeper understanding, we have classified responding organizations based on their perceived excellence in terms of providing employee experience and analyzed what they do differently compared to the others.

About the Survey

HR.com's "Future of Human Experience in the Workplace 2024" survey ran in the first quarter of 2024. We gathered usable responses from 255 HR professionals in virtually every industry vertical. Respondents are from all over the world, with the majority from North America, especially the United States.

The participants represent a broad cross-section of employers by number of employees, ranging from small businesses with fewer than 50 employees to enterprises with 20,000+ employees. Two-fifths of them are from organizations with 500 or more employees.

Our Major Research Findings

Major Finding **1**

Many organizations are still struggling in terms of employee experience.

- Only 36% of responding HR professionals say that employee experiences in their organizations are very good (at least eight out of 10).
- Nearly a third give the employee experiences in their organizations a low rating of six or below.
- Over 40% say they don't know how the experiences of employees in their organizations compare to experiences in competing organizations.
- Few organizations say their employees feel well-led (26%) and empowered (29%).

Major Finding **2**

Organizations are using multiple tools and measures to assess the employee experience.

- Turnover and retention are the key quantitative metrics for measuring the employee experience.
- Employee feedback and exit interviews are most commonly used by employers to gauge employee experience.

Major Finding **3**

Organizations are most likely to choose relatively traditional technologies and tools to improve employee experience. The two most commonly cited are:

- employee surveys, feedback, and communication tools (55%)
- employee recognition and rewards tools (46%)

Major Finding **4**

Good relationships are key to good experiences, while excessive workloads tend to drive bad ones.

- The two most cited drivers of employee experience are:
 - ▶ good relationship with the immediate supervisor (57%)
 - ▶ feeling of camaraderie and friendship with coworkers (56%)
- The two most cited barriers to employee experience are:
 - ▶ employee burnout (54%)
 - ▶ heavy workloads (51%)

Major Finding **5**

Although management-related factors are thought to have a strong influence on employee experiences, it is often employee benefits/initiatives that are viewed as being most important to improving experiences, with the most impactful being:

- compensation
- career development
- flexible work arrangements
- learning and development
- employee benefits
- recognition and reward programs

Major Finding **6**

Responding organizations are most likely to cite the following six factors as hindering their organizations from improving employee experiences.

- Budget constraints
- Insufficient buy-in from leaders
- Infrastructure and processes do not support it
- Higher priorities in their organizations
- Lack of interest from managers
- Insufficient tools

Major Finding **7**

Remote and hybrid work are associated with better employee experiences, according to most respondents.

- Today, 86% of responding organizations have remote and/or hybrid work arrangements.
- Among those that do, 83% say such arrangements improve employee experiences.

Major Finding **8**

Compared to experience laggards, experience leaders are:

- far *more* likely to say that a positive culture (with no or few toxic behaviors) drives positive employee experience in their workplace
- almost 4X *more* likely to have a good understanding of how they compare to other organizations
- almost 4X *more* likely to say their employees are well-led
- over 3X *more* likely to say employees are empowered
- almost 3X *more* likely to say that the employees themselves have a very high responsibility for their experience
- over 4X *less* likely to cite negative aspects of the culture as negatively impacting the employee experience
- 2X *less* likely to cite insufficient buy-in from leaders as a factor hindering the employee experience

Experience leaders: those who rated their employee experience as at least eight out of 10.

Experience laggards: those who rated their employee experience between one and six out of 10.

Please note that the findings and recommendations contained in this report are for informational purposes only. Nothing in this report should be construed as constituting legal opinions or advice. Please consult an attorney if you have questions about the legal requirements, rules, or regulations associated with any content discussed in this report.

The State of Employee Experience Today



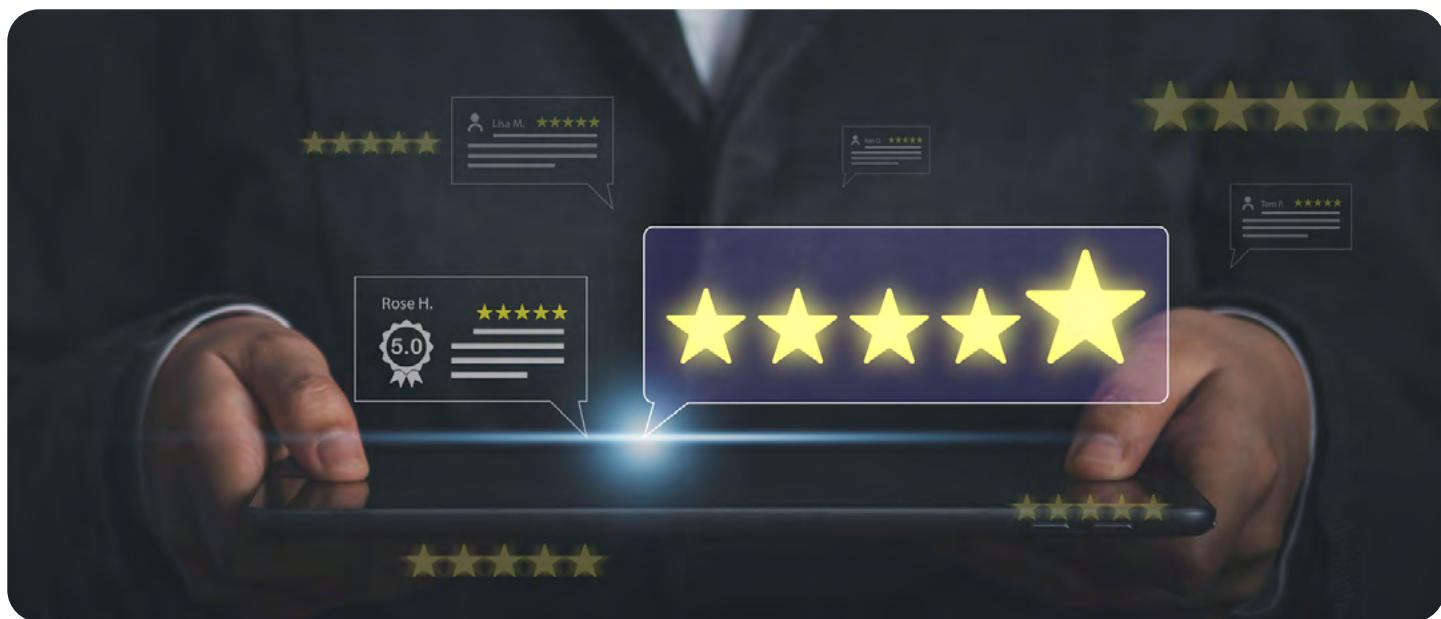
Finding: Just over one-third of respondents rate the employee experiences at their organizations as at least eight out of 10

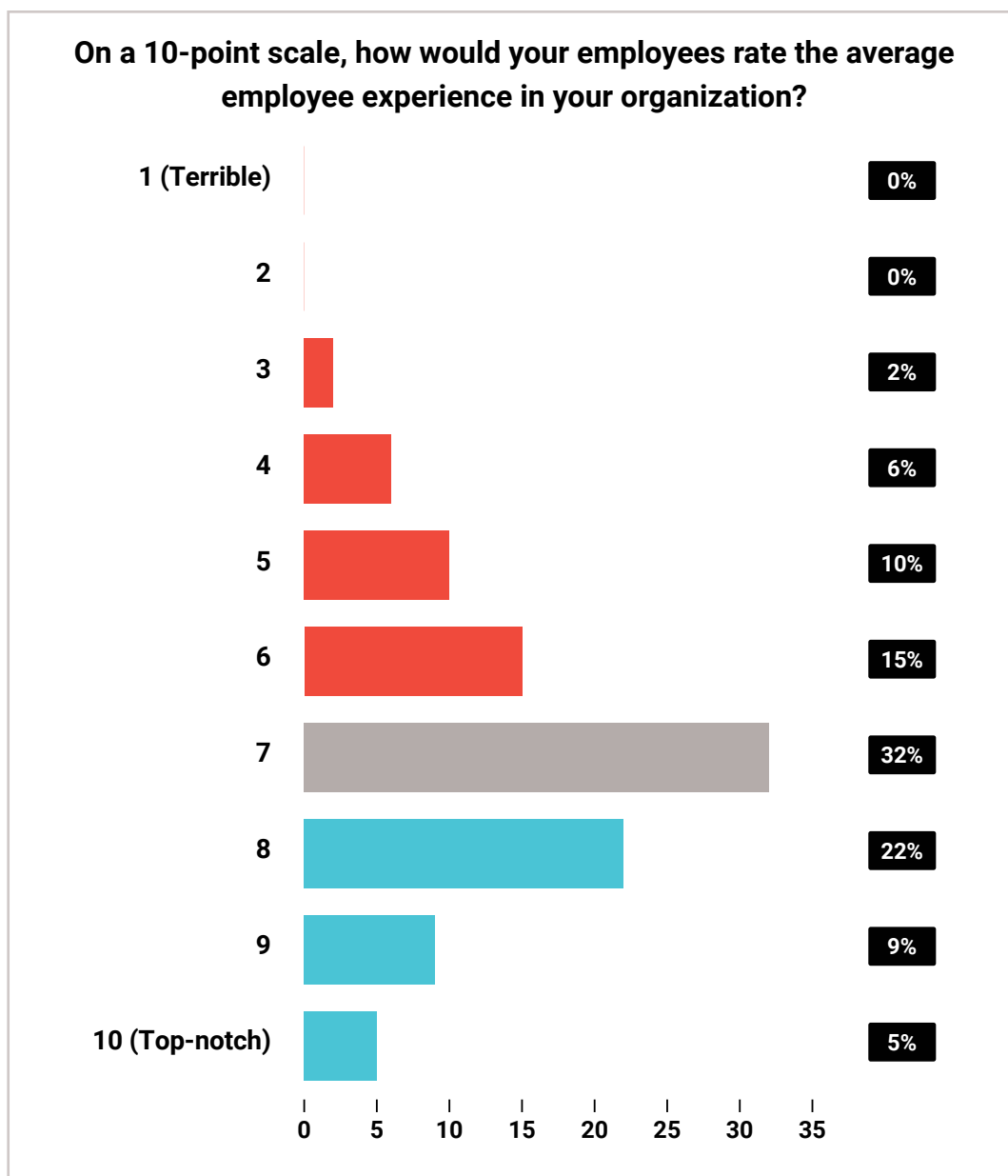
Throughout the report, we look at the findings based on organizational size. We deem organizations with 1 to 99 employees as small, those with 100-999 as mid-size, and those with 1,000 or more employees as large.

Only 14% of respondents say their employees have a great experience (scoring nine or 10 on a 10-point scale), but another 22% rate them as an eight, which we deem as good. About one-third of respondents have what we consider an unsatisfactory/poor score of six or less on a 10-point scale.

Differences based on organizational size

It appears to be somewhat more difficult to create a great employee experience when you are a mid-sized company. Among small companies, 43% are experience leaders, and among large companies 35% are. However, among midsized companies, only 30% are experience leaders.





Defining Experience Leaders and Laggards

In order to better understand how to create a great human experience in the workplace, we divided respondents into two cohorts.

- **Experience leaders:** those who rated their employee experience as at least eight out of 10.
- **Experience laggards:** those who rated their employee experience between one and six out of 10.

Among our respondents, 36% are experience leaders and 33% are experience laggards while the remaining ones are in neither category (i.e. scoring seven out of 10).



Finding: Over two-fifths of the respondents say they don't know how the employee experience in their organizations compares to the experiences in competitor organizations

Ultimately, the employee experience, like compensation, is a competitive factor. If the employee experience at your firm is good, and your competitors' experience offering is great, then you will be at risk of losing staff.

Over 40% of the respondents to this survey say they don't know how their employee experience compares to competitors. However, almost one-quarter (23%) of respondents say that they do have a good understanding of these comparisons, which proves that getting this information is possible.

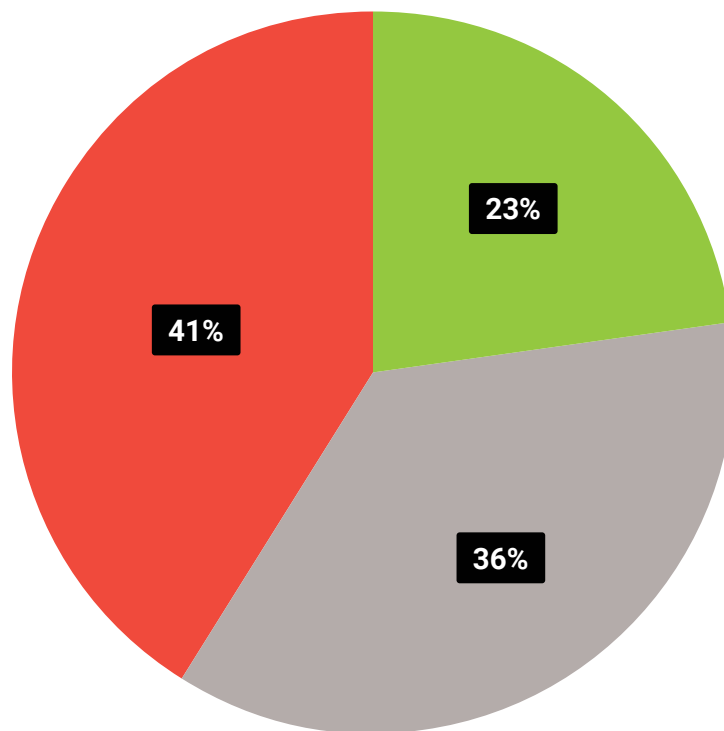
While it's routine to acquire salary data, it's not quite as straightforward to gather insights into the employee experience at other companies. Much of that experience is intangible. It reflects how employees feel they are treated as well as rewarded. This means that HR leaders need to do some digging by looking at social media data, getting information from third-party recruiters and new hires, and just generally keeping their ear to the ground for anything that will give insight into the employee experiences at other organizations.

Even when HR cannot gather "hard data" on how their employee experiences compare, they should develop a good sense of what competitors are doing.

Differences based on the size of the organization

Larger organizations are over three times more likely than small ones to have a good understanding of how the experiences of employees in their organizations compare to those in competing organizations (37% vs. 12%); mid-sized organizations are in between, at 24%.

Do you know how the experience levels of employees in your organization compare to the experience levels of employees in competitor organizations?



- Yes, we have a good understanding of how we compare
- Yes, we have a basic understanding of how we compare
- No, we don't have visibility into that





Finding: Experience leaders are almost four times more likely to have a good understanding of how they compare to other organizations

Organizations with good employee experiences (experience leaders) are almost four times more likely than experience laggards to have a good understanding of how they compare to their competitors. This is likely reflected in their prioritization of the employee experience, but there is more to it than that. When experience leaders know how they compare to competitors, then they are motivated not to fall behind the competition. But when they don't know, it's easy for them to believe their employee experience is good enough.





HRRI Strategic Recommendations

Based on our research, we have the following suggestions.

- ✓ Utilize employee surveys and industry reports to gather insights on competitors' best practices.
- ✓ Leverage social media platforms, industry forums, and professional associations to stay updated on emerging trends in employee experience. When you are more aware, you can be one-step ahead of the competition.
- ✓ Build strategic partnerships with recruitment agencies and attend conferences/networking events to stay abreast of evolving industry benchmarks.
- ✓ Ask new recruits about the employee experiences at former employers in the same industry.



Key Elements of Employee Experience



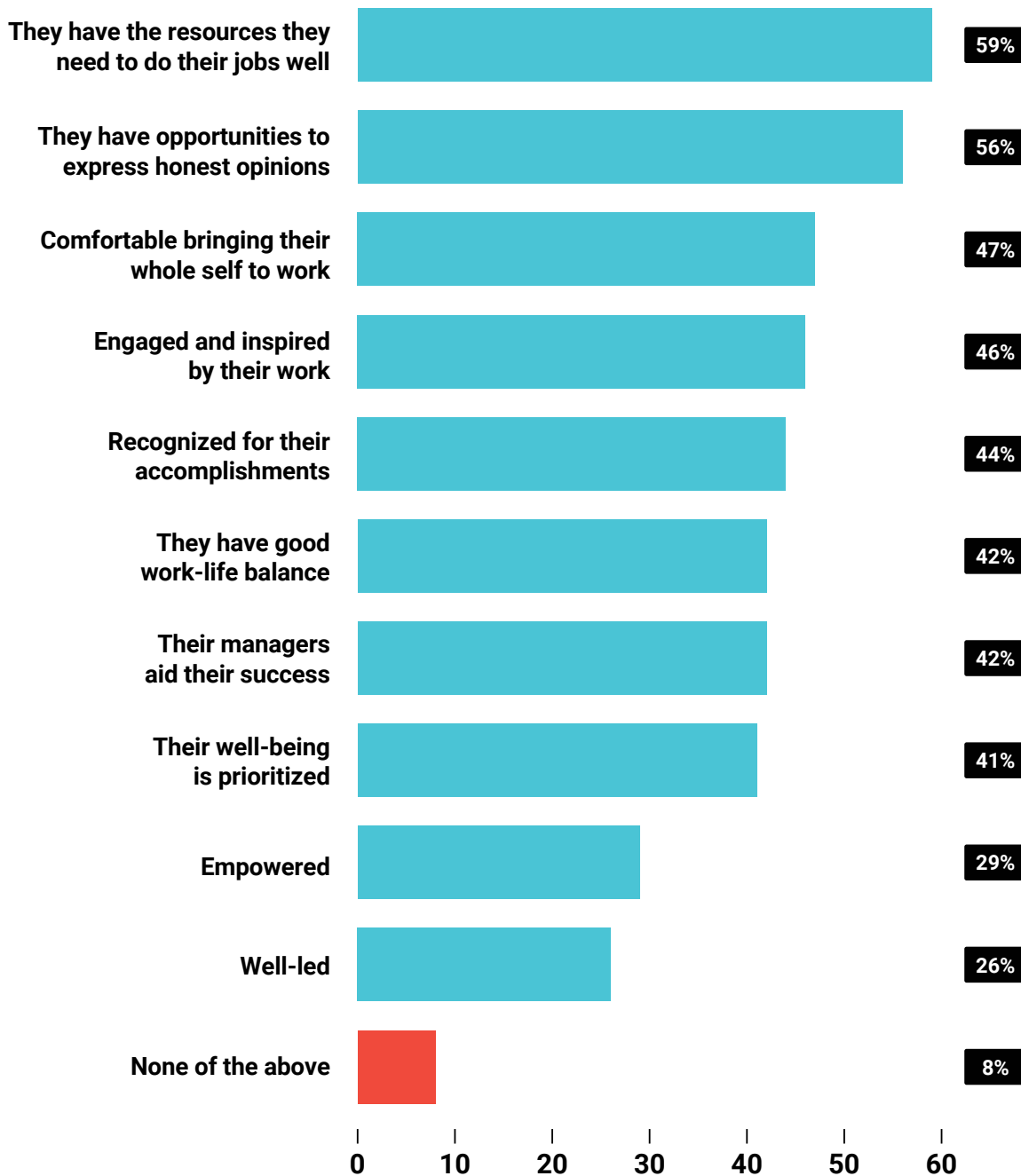
Finding: Only 42% say that employees in their organizations believe their managers aid their success

Many respondents have a relatively pessimistic perspective on how their employees typically feel about the organization. Only 59% of respondents even believe their employees feel they have the resources they need to do their job well, suggesting that over one-third have employees who do not feel that way. If their assumption is true, it could result in a serious productivity drain.

Even more worrisome is that only 26% believe employees feel they are well-led. Perhaps this feeling is related to the fact that only 44% say employees feel they are recognized for their accomplishments and just 42% say their managers aid their success.



In your opinion as an HR professional, employees in your organization typically feel: (select all that apply)



Only about one-quarter of respondents say their employees think they are well-led



Finding: Experience leaders outscore employee laggards by at least 2 to 1 on seven different employee experience factors

There are seven factors that organizations with good employee experience are at least two times more likely to cite compared to their laggard counterparts. One of the most dramatic differences is that respondents at experience leaders are almost four times as likely as those in experience laggard organizations to say employees feel well-led. Another striking difference was that almost three-quarters of experience leaders say their employees are comfortable bringing their whole self to work, whereas fewer than a third experience laggards say the same.



In your opinion as an HR professional, employees in your organization typically feel:





HRRI Strategic Recommendations

Based on our research, we have the following suggestions.

- ✓ Foster a supportive environment that empowers employees to voice their ideas and concerns by promoting open communication and providing regular feedback.
- ✓ Prioritize employee well-being by implementing wellness programs, flexible work arrangements, and creating a workplace where individuals feel valued.
- ✓ Establish a solid recognition and rewards system to celebrate employee achievements. Acknowledge and appreciate individual contributions.
- ✓ Develop managers in such a way that they aid employees in their successes and lead them well.



Evaluating Employee Experience



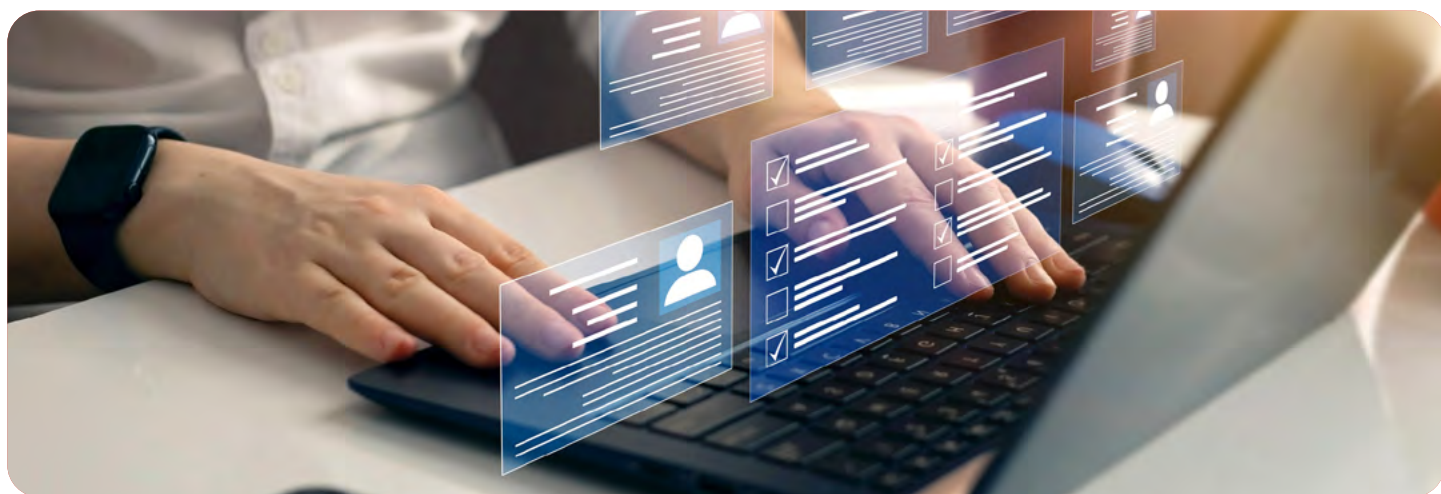
Finding: Turnover and retention rates are the key metrics for measuring the employee experience

Two-thirds of the respondents look at turnover and retention metrics to measure the employee experience. This makes sense because one of the main reasons organizations focus on the employee experience is its impact on retention. These are readily available and quantitative metrics that are easy for HR to understand and appreciate.

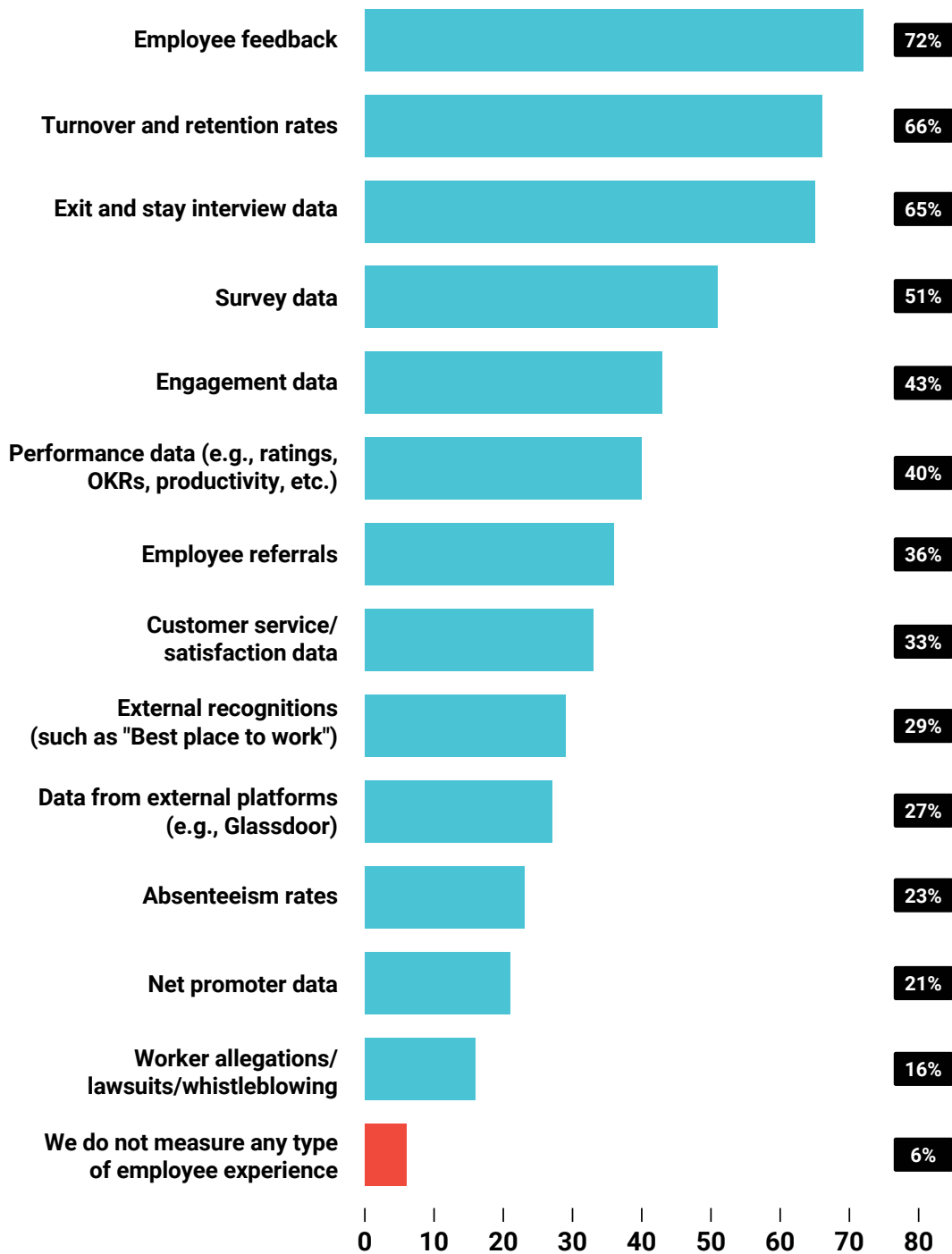
However, the most commonly cited source of data (72%) was simply employee feedback, which can include both quantitative data (e.g., from a survey) and qualitative feedback collected formally or informally.

Other commonly used sources of data are exit and stay interviews. Almost two-thirds of respondents use this data. These interviews, if done well, can provide insight into which aspects of employee experience are causing turnover.

Surprisingly, only 21% use net promoter scores (NPS). This score, which reflects whether employees would recommend the organization to others, is considered by some to be the single best number for assessing the overall employee experience.



Which types of data does your organization use to measure employee experience? (select all that apply)



Only about one-fifth of respondents use net promoter data



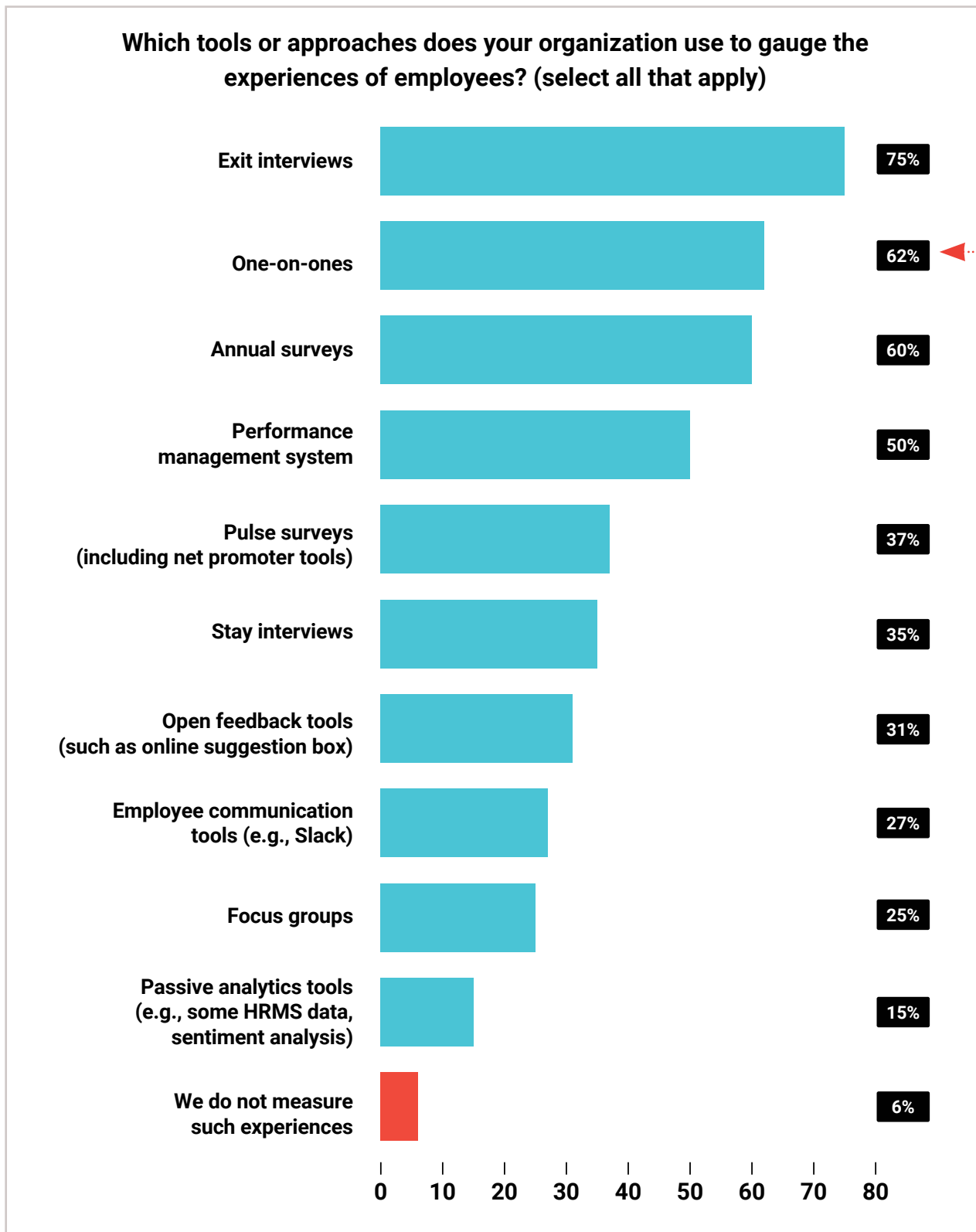
Finding: Three-quarters of respondents use exit interviews to gauge the employee experience

The most commonly used tool for gauging the employee experience is the exit interview, with three-quarters of respondents saying their organizations use this tool. The only other tools used by more than half the respondents are annual surveys and one-on-one interviews.

Exit interviews can be difficult because exiting employees may hesitate to be candid. However, if done with care they can yield insights as to what is driving turnover. For any organization concerned about turnover, it would be hard to justify not asking exiting employees why they left. Perhaps the key takeaway is that exit interviews are considered a useful window into the employee experience, but you'll see the most if you make an effort to get past the reticence employees may feel in sharing their true feelings.

Some experts propose that exit interviews be conducted only after former employees are in a new job and feel free to speak their minds.





Almost two-thirds of respondents use one-on-ones to gauge employee experience



Finding: Experience leaders typically use a variety of tools to assess employee

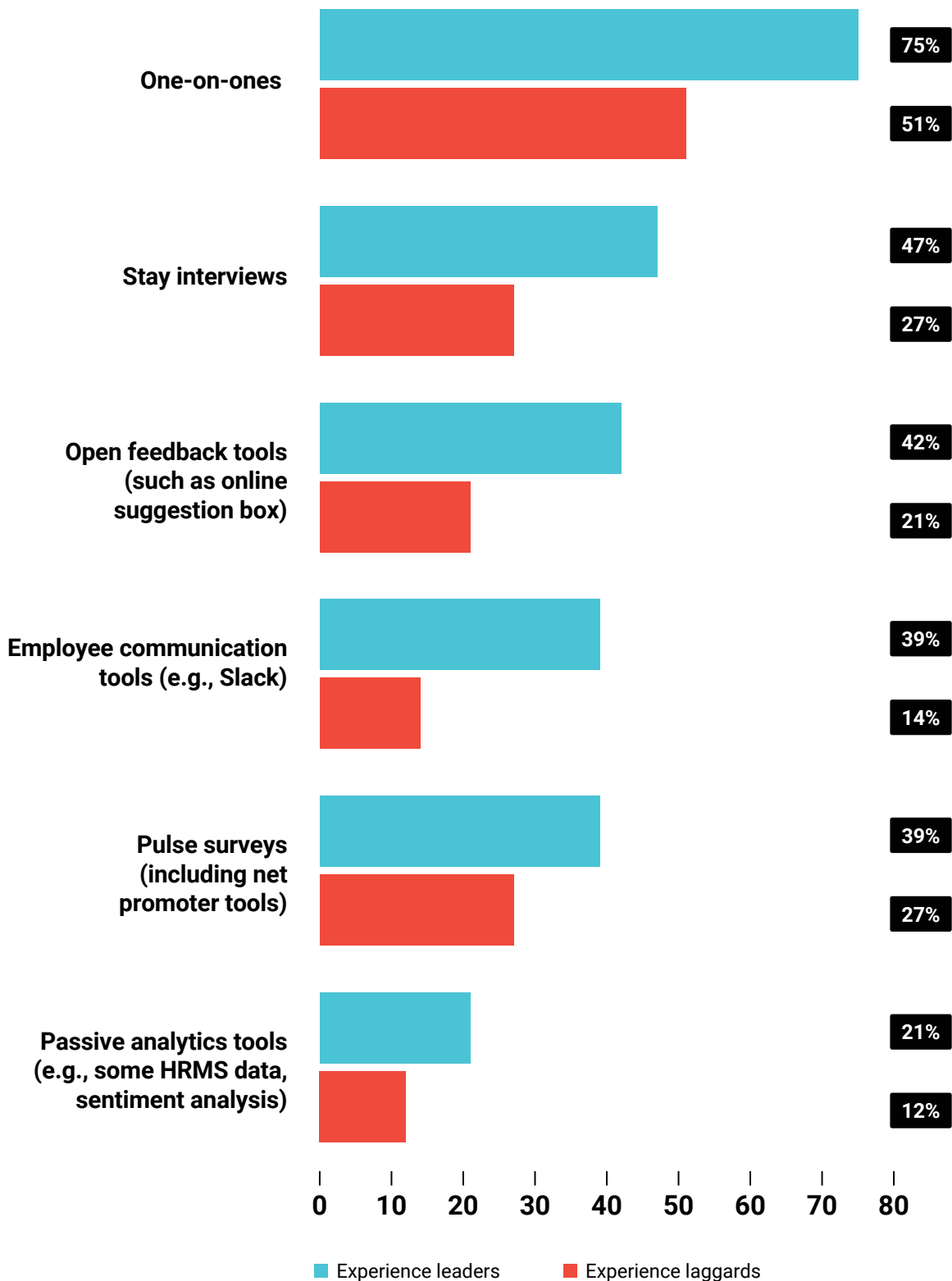
Since employee experience is a complex phenomenon, it is best understood by using a variety of tools to assess it. Compared to experience laggards, their leader counterparts are:

- 50% more likely to use one-on-ones
- nearly twice as likely to use stay interviews
- twice as likely to use open feedback tools
- nearly thrice as likely to use employee communication tools
- nearly twice as likely to use passive analytics tools

Overall, organizations that report good employee experiences typically use about five different tools whereas those with poor experiences only use three or four.



Which tools or approaches does your organization use to gauge the experiences of employees?

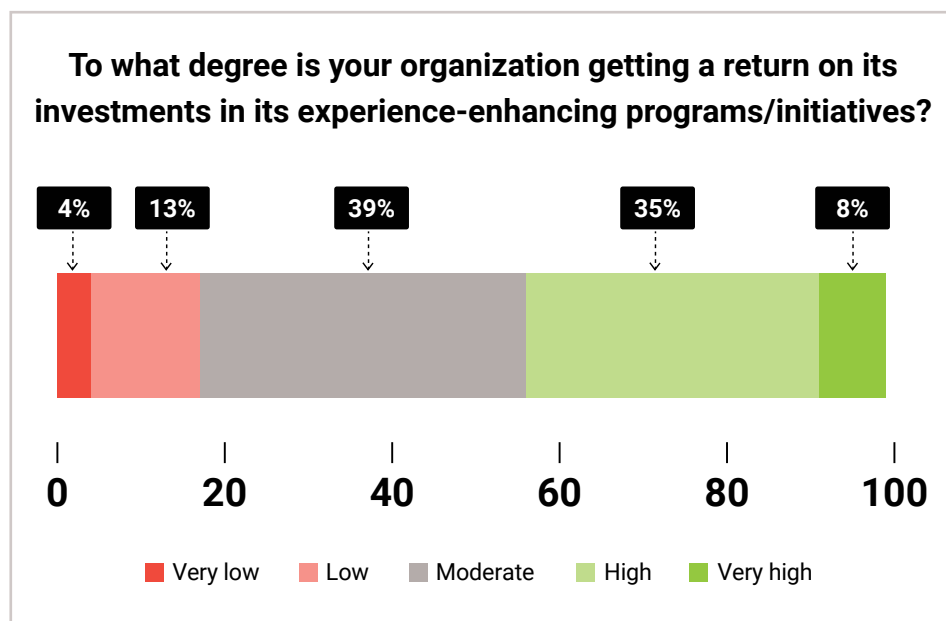


Differences based on the size of the organization

Small organizations are somewhat less likely than large organizations to get (or, at least, report getting) a high or very high return on investment (46% vs 58%). The notable finding based on size is that mid-sized organizations struggle the most with getting the ROI of their employee experience initiatives; only 34% got high or very high ROIs.

Finding: Over two-fifths of respondents get a high or very high return on investment from their experience-enhancing initiatives

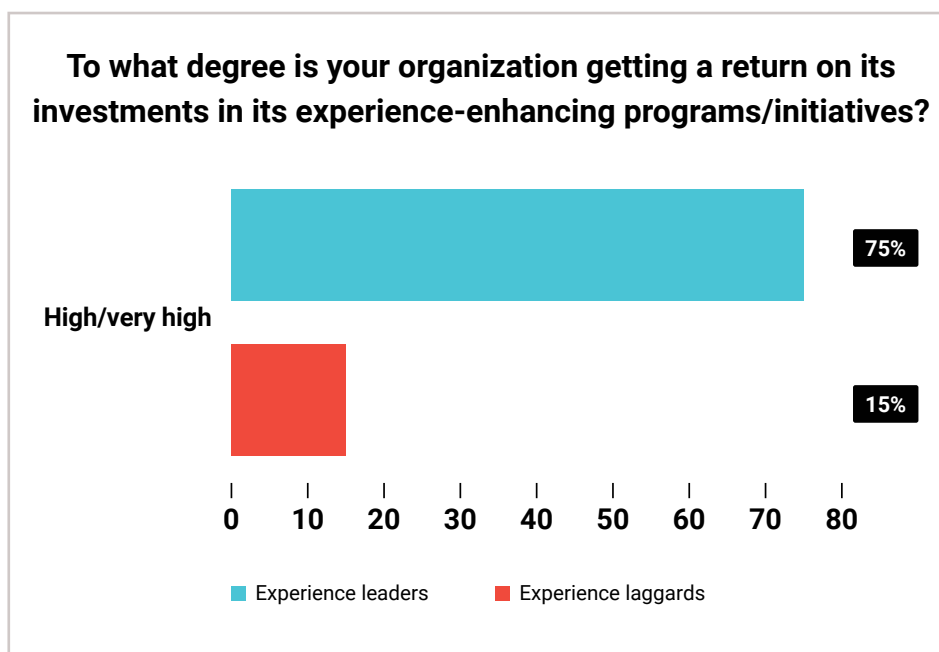
Under one-fifth of respondents (17%) say the ROI on their experience-enhancing initiatives is low or very low. Whereas, over two-fifths of respondents rank the ROI as high or very high (43%).





Finding: Experience leaders are five times more likely to cite getting high/very high return on investments in their experience-enhancing initiatives

Three-quarters (75%) of experience leaders cite a high/very high return on investment in their experience-enhancing initiatives compared to only 15% of the laggards who report the same. Evaluating ROI requires good metrics in place for any organization. This finding underscores the importance experience leaders place on having good metrics and making a point to measure ROI to check their initiatives' effectiveness, especially in terms of financial spending.





HRR Strategic Recommendations

Based on our research, we have the following suggestions.

- ✓ People analytics is a game changer in gaining insights into employee behaviors and preferences. Train your HR professionals in using analytics efficiently to tailor initiatives that resonate with your employees and better their experience.
- ✓ Include metrics when designing your employee experience strategies. They objectively assess the effectiveness of initiatives, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions that align with organizational objectives, ensuring a continuous cycle of improvement and adaptation.
- ✓ Measure ROI for employee experience initiatives to highlight the tangible impact on organizational goals. It can make an excellent case for senior management to invest more time and resources into employee experience initiatives.

Role of Technology



Finding: Employee survey, feedback, and communication tools are listed by over half as the most useful technologies for improving the employee experience

Experience leaders are significantly more likely (55% vs. 37%) to cite employee recognition and reward tools as an important technology for improving employee experience compared to *experience laggards*. The same can be said about employee surveys, feedback, and communication technologies (61% vs. 49%) as well.

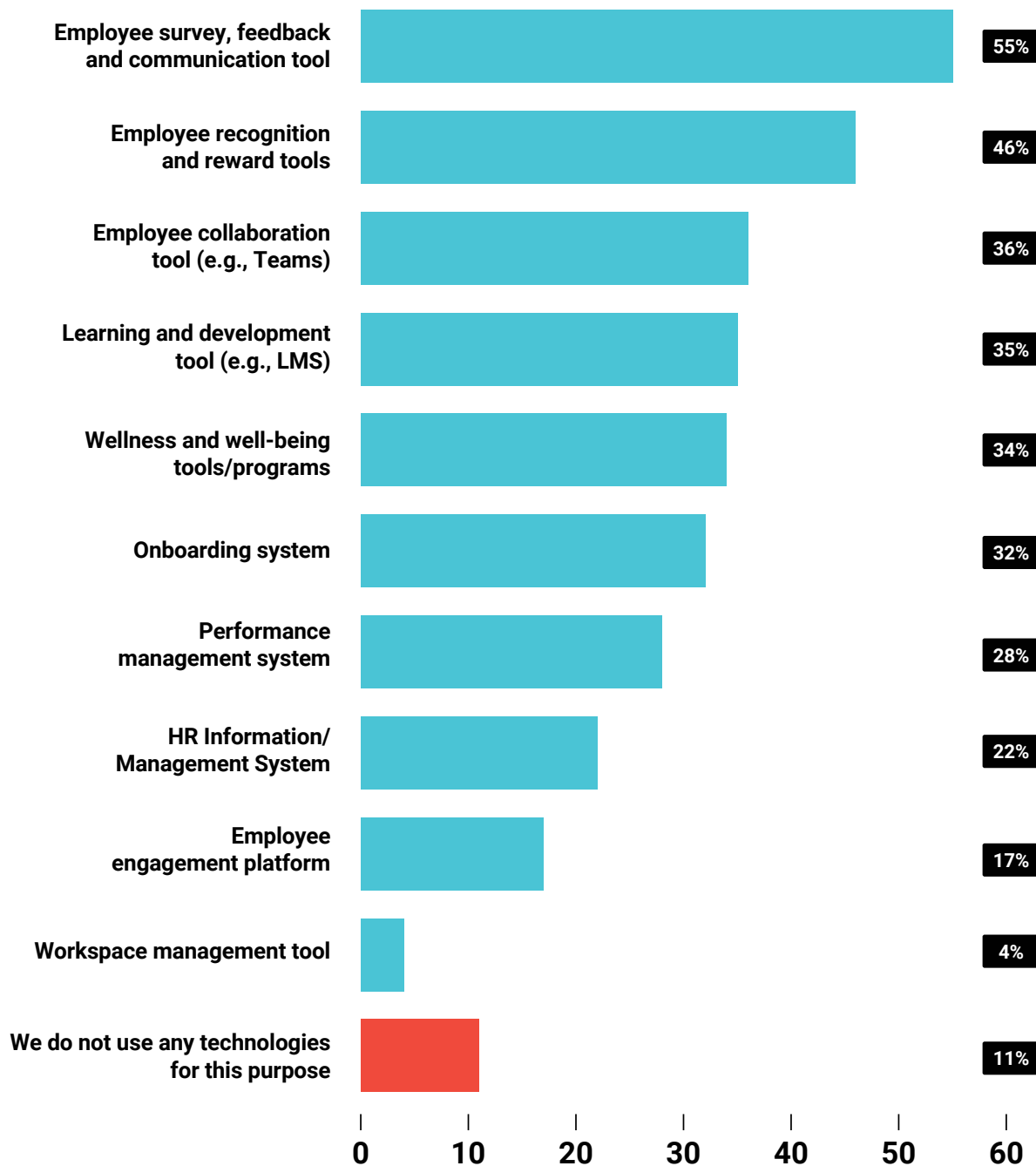
The most commonly cited set of technologies for improving the employee experience was employee survey, feedback, and communication tools. It is interesting to note that, with these tools, HR is trying to use technology to provide insights on what actions to take rather than using technology to deliver a better experience directly.

The second most commonly cited technology—reward and recognition tools—can directly improve the employee experience. But, as is the case with all technologies, they have to be deployed effectively to have the desired effect.

The third most commonly cited technology for improving the employee experience is employee collaboration tools. This is an interesting observation because it underlines the importance of smooth partnerships in the employee experience.

Two other tools to note, used by just over a third of respondents, are 1) learning and development tools, and 2) wellness and well-being tools/programs. All the other tools are only cited as useful by less than a third of the respondents.

Of the technologies listed, which five are most useful for improving the employee experience in your organization? (select up to five)



Employee engagement platform is found to be useful by under a fifth of the organizations

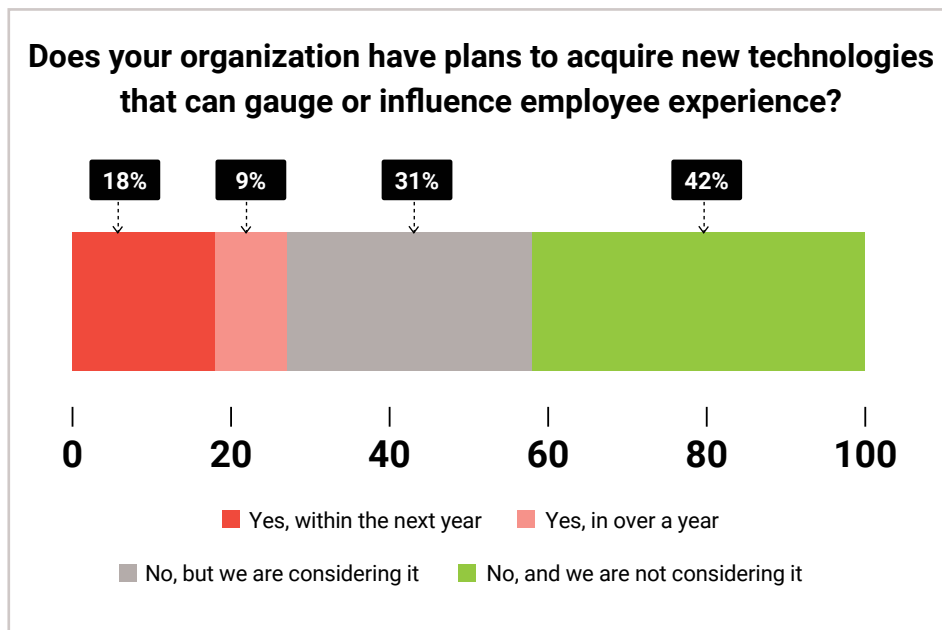


Finding: Over the next year, about a fifth of organizations plan to acquire technologies that can gauge or influence employee experiences

Many organizations (42%) do not intend to acquire new technology to improve the employee experience in the next few years. However, over one-quarter (27%) are planning to add new technology either next year (18%) or in over a year (9%). A further 31% don't have any firm plans but are considering such technology.

Given the importance of employee experience, why isn't there more of a rush to acquire technologies that can positively influence it? That's not entirely clear. Perhaps other non-technology-based applications, whether they be in terms of employee benefit programs or culture-based initiatives, are typically deemed as a higher priority.

Will new generative AI models make a difference in the area of human experience? We take this question up in our section on the future of employee experience.



Employee Experience Drivers and Obstacles



Finding: Interpersonal relationships top the chart among factors that positively impact employee experience

The most commonly cited factor (57%) driving the employee experience is a close relationship with the immediate supervisor. Respondents cite a feeling of camaraderie and friendship with coworkers as a close second (56%). Given the prevalence of remote work, we believe HR should be concerned that the feeling of work camaraderie will decline.

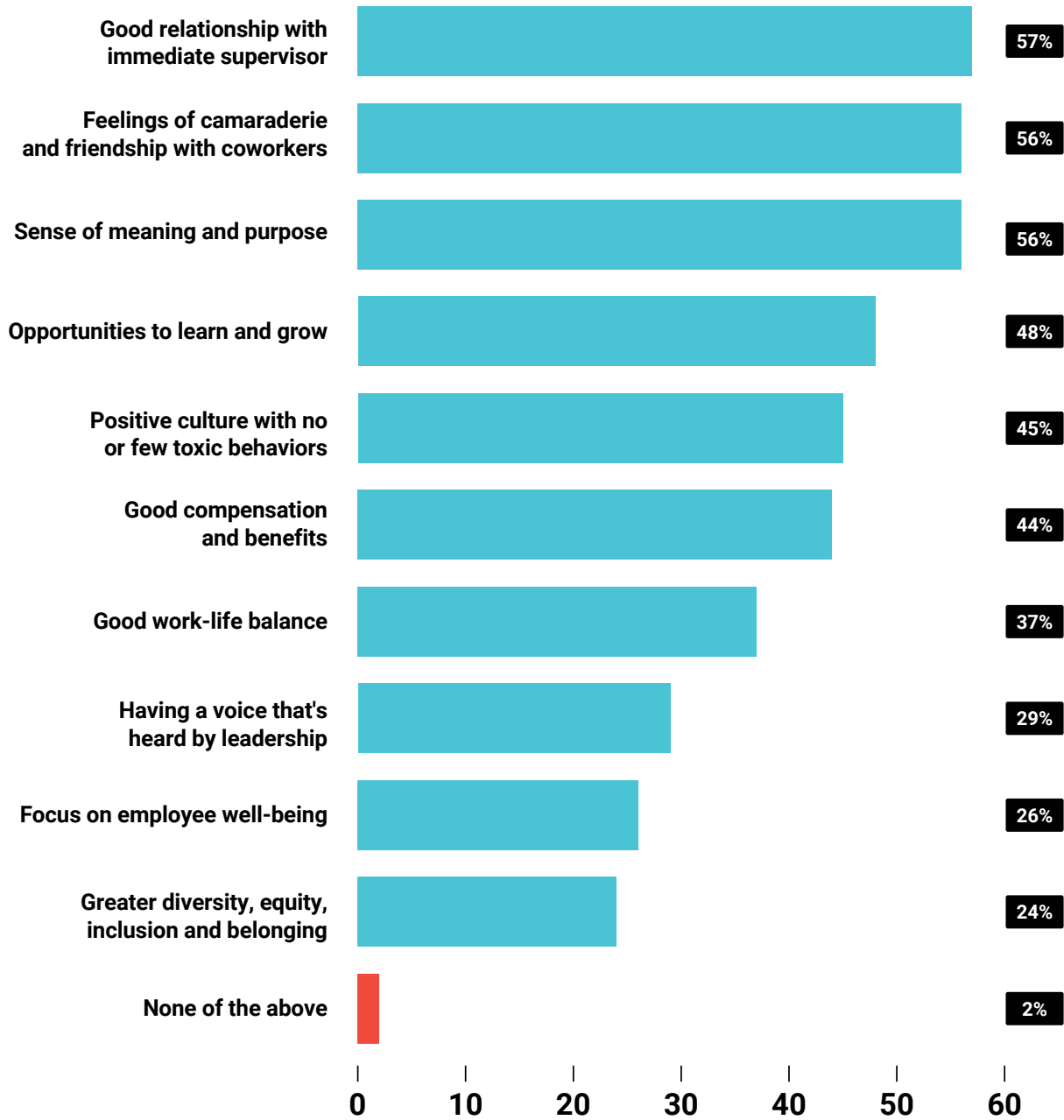
Well over half (56%) also cite a sense of meaning and purpose as a driver of a positive employee experience. Senior leaders play an important role in identifying and crystalizing an organizational purpose that employees can buy into. Leaders must also, often with the help of HR, communicate that purpose.

HR should also be aware of three other factors that were cited by between 40% and 50% of respondents:

- opportunities to learn and grow
- positive culture with no or few toxic behaviors
- good compensation and benefits

This additional list of factors reminds us that many things work together to create a great experience, so there are many angles that HR can look from to improve the experience in their organization.

What do you view as the top 5 factors positively impacting the experiences of employees in your organization? (select up to 5)

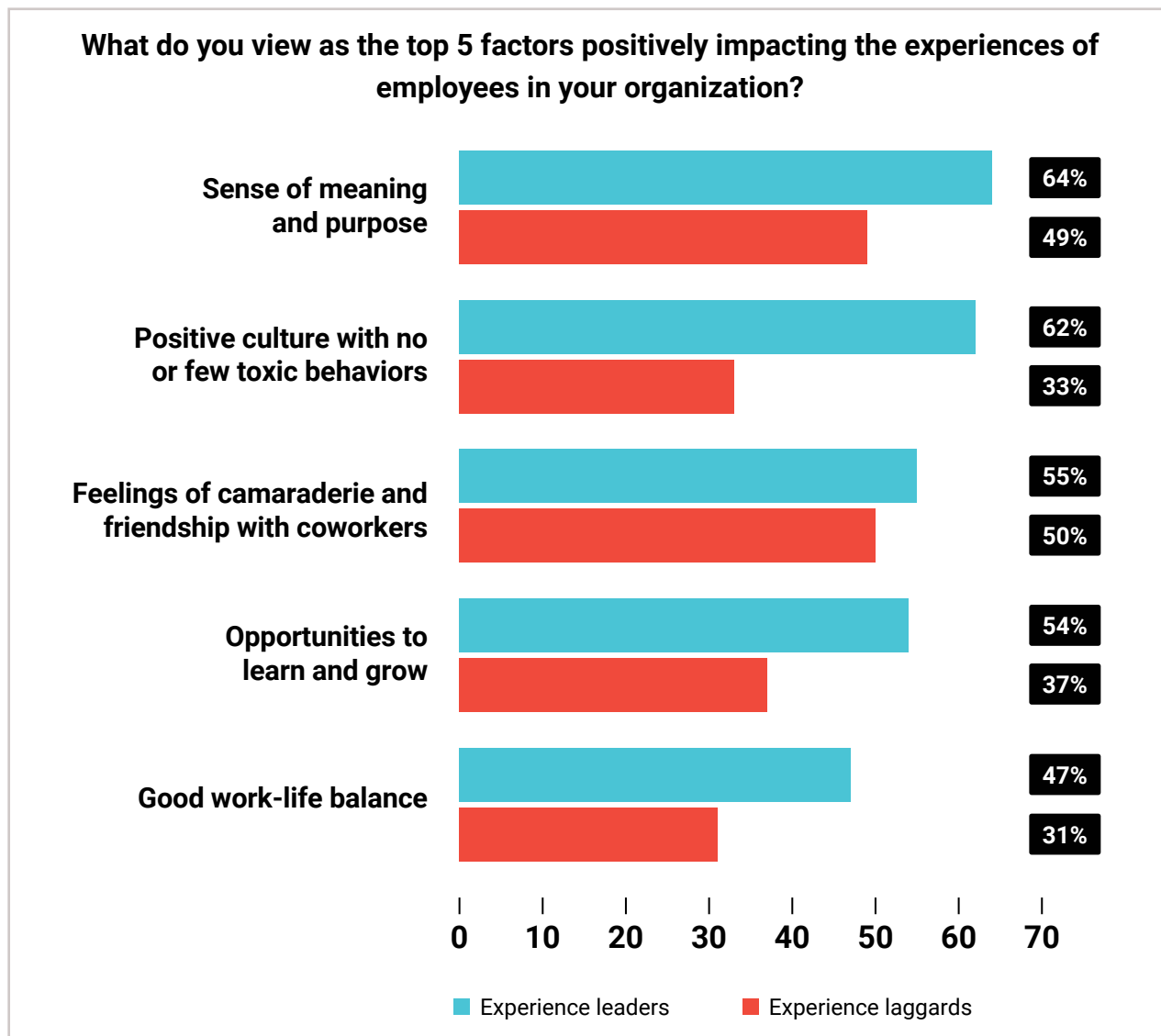


Close to two-fifths cite good work-life balance to positively impact their experience



Finding: Experience leaders are far more likely to cite a positive culture with no or few toxic behaviors as a driver of a positive employee experience

The top five factors that experience leaders cite are similar to the ones experience laggards cite. The most notable difference is in the factor “positive culture with no or few toxic behaviors.” Only a third of experience laggards cite this whereas almost two-thirds of experience leaders cite it. This suggests a positive culture is more often lacking among experience laggards. Addressing any toxic elements of a culture is, of course, a crucial step in improving the employee experience.





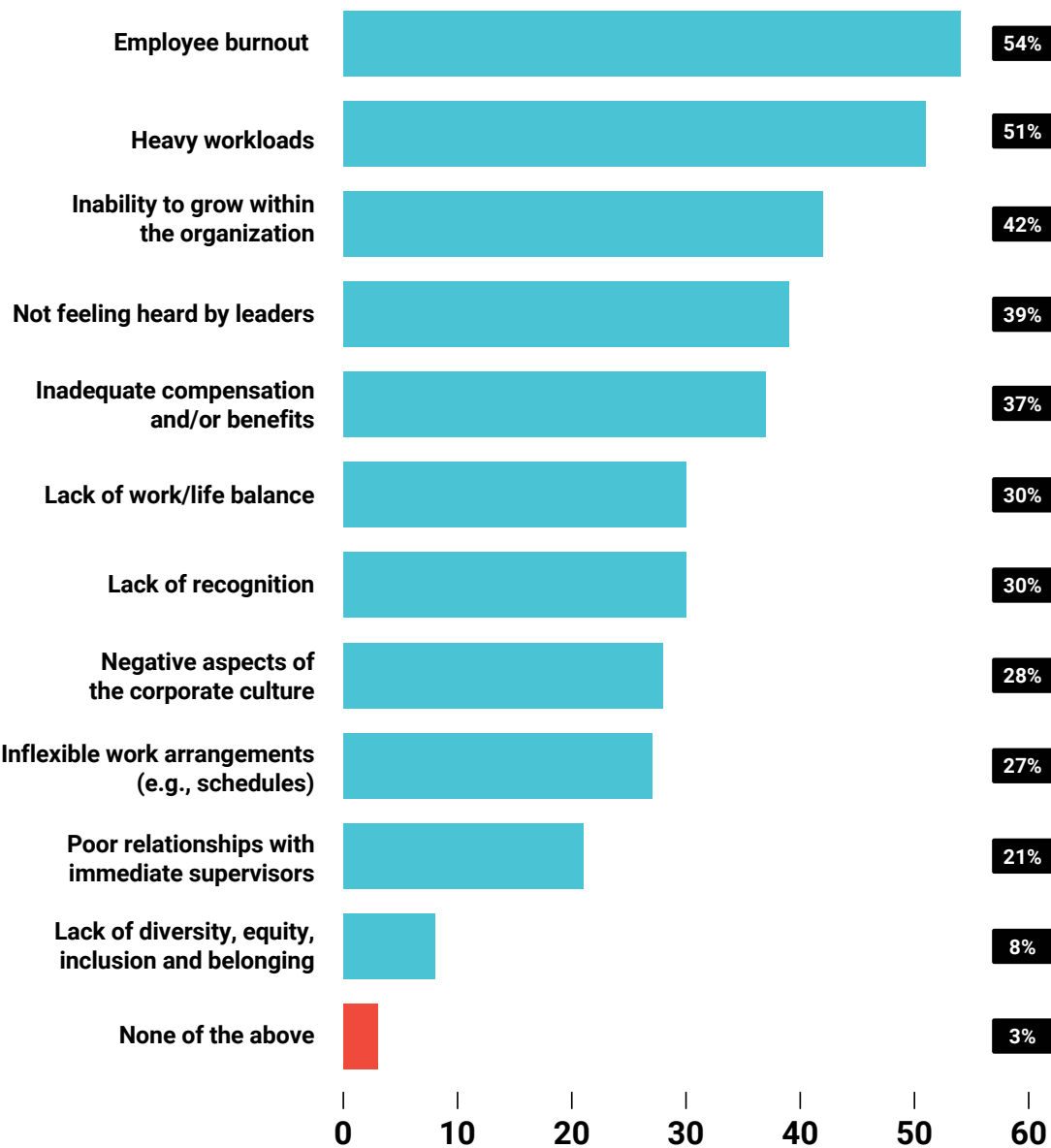
Finding: Employee burnout and heavy workloads are the top factors negatively impacting the employee experience

Irrespective of all the good things HR is doing to enhance the employee experience, there are a few things that can potentially undermine those good efforts. Respondents cite employee burnout and heavy workloads as the top factors negatively impacting the employee experience. These are difficult issues to control because, for example, when trying to hit hard deadlines/targets, what managers may anticipate as short-term workloads may end up bringing long-term consequences.

The lesson is that HR needs to work with leadership to get a consensus on whether managers are undermining the long-term success of the organization by creating the kind of pressure that degrades an otherwise positive employee experience.



What do you view as the top 5 aspects negatively impacting the experiences of employees in your organization? (select up to 5)



Lack of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging is cited as a negative impact by only under a tenth of the organizations

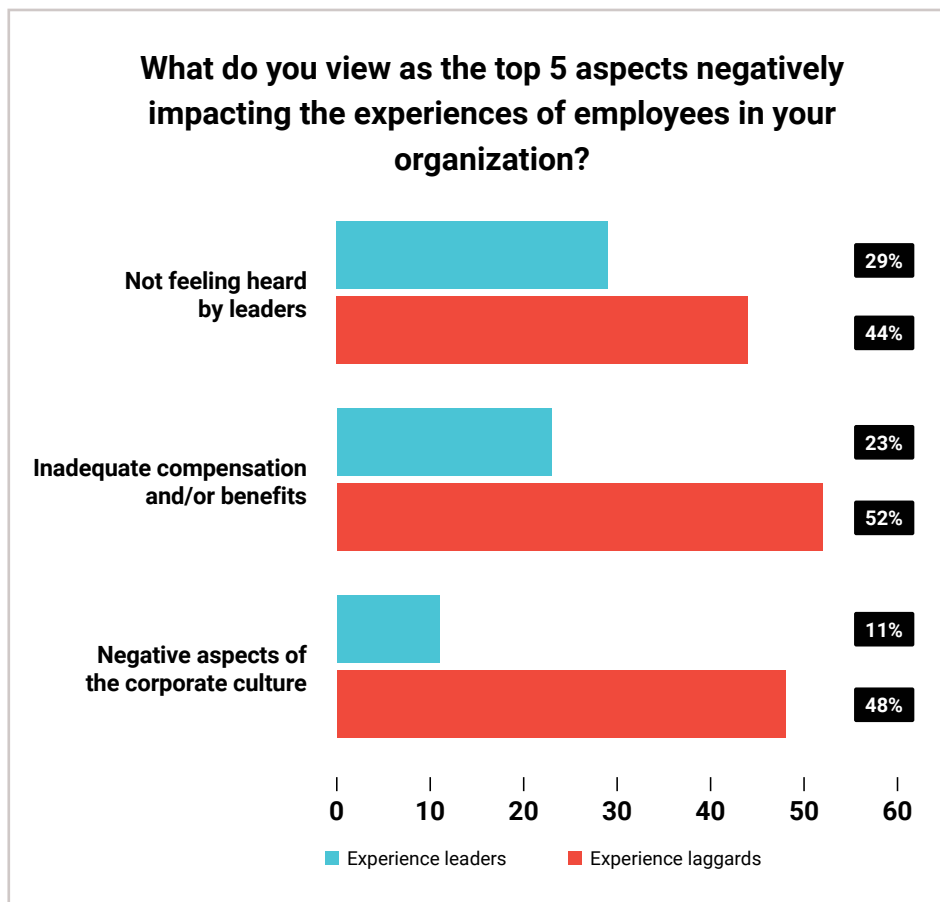
Differences based on the size of the organization

Employee burnout and heavy workloads become more of an issue as organizations get larger. Only 49% of small organizations cite burnout as negatively impacting employee experience, but that number increases to 53% in mid-sized organizations and jumps to 66% in large organizations.



Finding: Experience laggards are over four times more likely to cite negative aspects of the culture as negatively impacting the employee experience

Both experience leaders and laggards are likely to agree that employee burnout and inability to grow are among the top things negatively impacting the employee experience. But we see especially large differences between the cohorts in terms of 1) inadequate compensation and/or benefits (more than twice as likely to be cited by experience laggards), 2) negative aspects of the corporate culture (over four times more likely to be cited by experience laggards). This clearly highlights the fact that addressing culture is one of the most important ways to improve the employee experience.





HRRI Strategic Recommendations

Based on our research, we have the following suggestions.

- ✓ Encourage conscious work-breaks and establish clear boundaries between work and personal life to support employees in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. These culture-based initiatives could have a big impact on the workplace experience.
- ✓ Ensure there are processes by which employees can feel heard by leaders. Make regular check-ins with staff a part of your workday processes. It helps greatly in building a sense of belonging and enhances the overall employee experience.
- ✓ Strive to craft total rewards systems that, even if they can't provide the highest compensation in an industry, at least provide attractive and fair compensation levels.



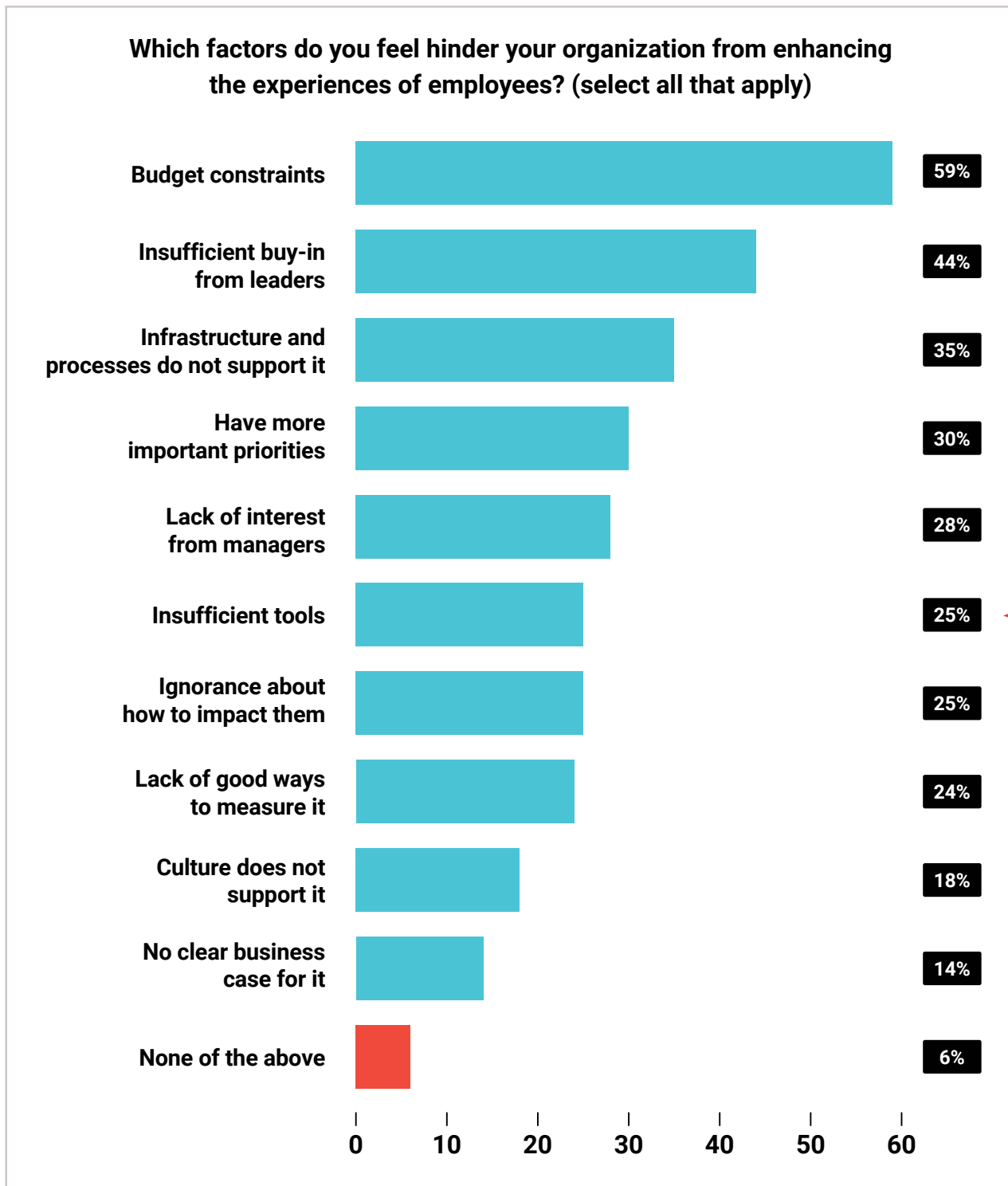


Finding: Budget constraints are the top factor hindering the organization from improving the employee experience

Budget constraints are never entirely going away. Every organization needs to make some hard choices about resources. So, HR will often need to be able to work around some constraints. Fortunately, some of the key factors driving a good experience—such as camaraderie with teammates and good relationships with supervisors—don't depend on budgets. There is a lot that HR can do to encourage and educate managers and employees about how they can contribute to a great experience without spending a lot of money.

Over a quarter (28%) of respondents say lack of interest from managers is one of the top barriers to improving employee experiences. This is something organizations should be able to address even without large budget increases or investments in infrastructure.





A quarter cites insufficient tools hindering employee experience



Finding: Experience laggards are over five times more likely to cite culture as a factor hindering the employee experience

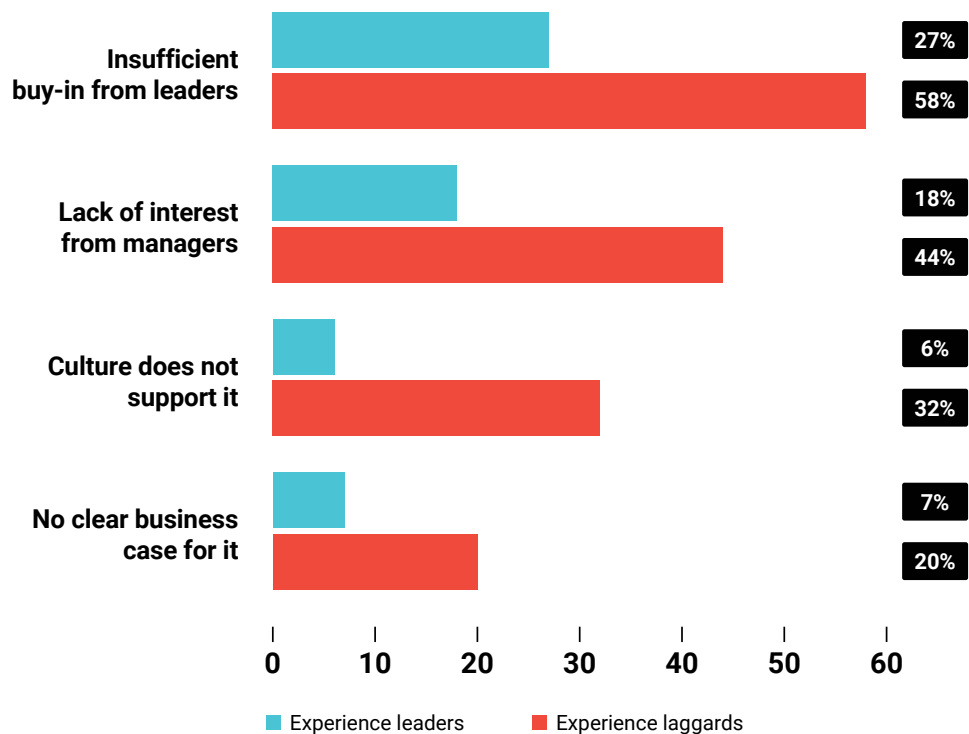
Four factors hindering a good employee experience are at least twice as likely to be cited by organizations with a worse employee experience. They are:

- insufficient buy-in from leaders
- lack of interest from managers
- culture does not support it
- no clear business case for it

Of these factors, culture stands out because experience laggards are over five times more likely to cite it than are experience leaders. Of course, to get support for culture change, you will need buy-in from senior management and interest from managers. While this finding may be discouraging for organizations struggling with a poor employee experience, it does suggest where the effort needs to be made: getting leaders to understand the need to shift the culture.



Which factors do you feel hinder your organization from enhancing the experiences of employees?





HRRI Strategic Recommendations

Based on our research, we have the following suggestions.

- ✓ Invest in leadership development programs that equip senior and line managers with the skills to create a positive workplace culture, support their teams, and enhance employee satisfaction.

- ✓ Ensure senior management is actively involved in employee recognition events. It helps in highlighting leadership commitment to reinforcing a culture of appreciation.



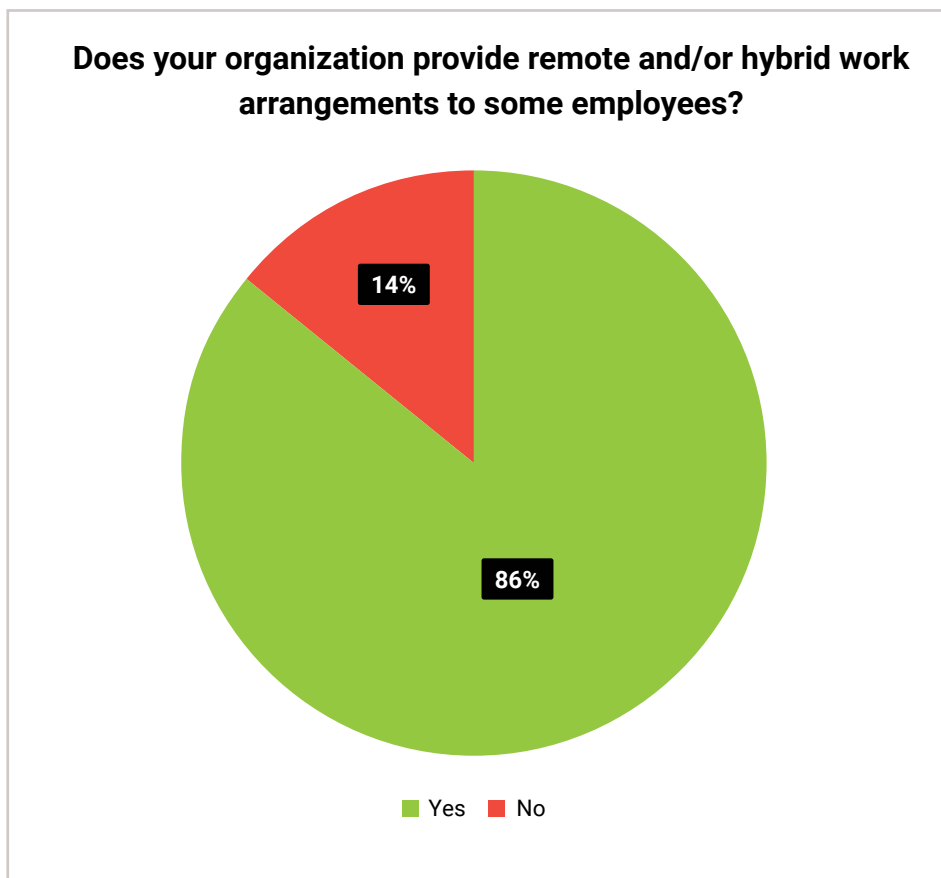
Differences based on the size of the organization

Over 90% of large organizations offer remote and/or hybrid arrangements to some employees, but that number drops to just over 80% for small and mid-sized organizations.

Finding: Well over four-fifths of organizations offer remote and/or hybrid work arrangements

Many jobs cannot be done remotely. However, for those where remote or hybrid work is an option, the jury appears to be in. It's been several years since lockdowns were lifted and 86% of organizations are still offering remote and/or hybrid work arrangements.

While there have been some highly publicized moves to force employees to return to the office, the economic and work-life benefits of hybrid work appear to be indispensable in many organizations. The challenge for employers, and HR in particular, is to understand how to manage in these new work arrangements in ways that maximize productivity, learning, and the employee experience.

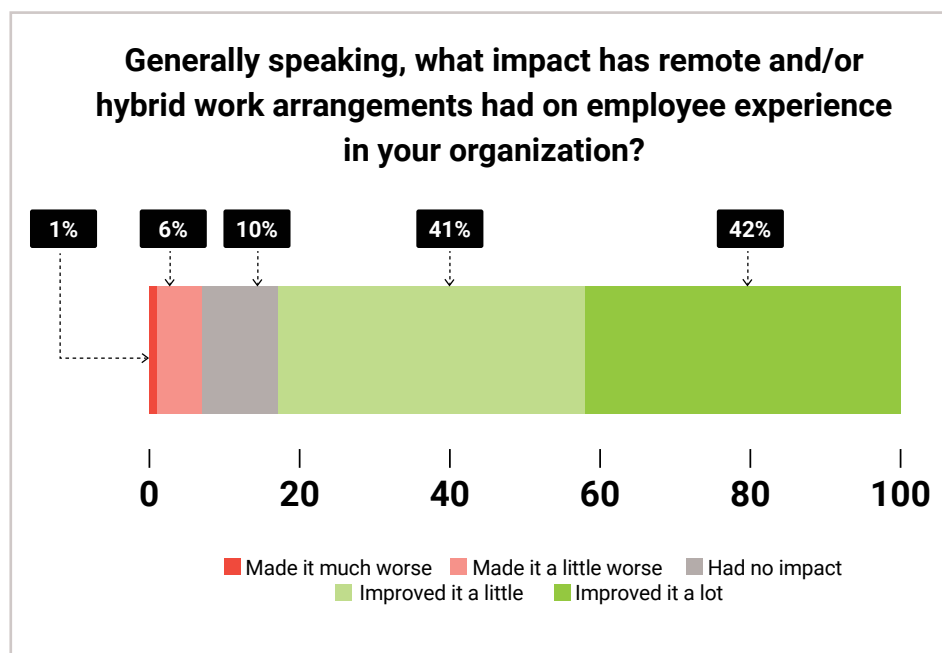




Finding: Over two-fifths of respondents say that remote and/or hybrid arrangements have improved the employee experience a lot

Respondents have an overwhelmingly positive view of the impact of remote and/or hybrid arrangements on the employee experience. Over 80% of those who offer remote/hybrid work options say these arrangements have made the experience a little or a lot better. In fact, over 40% say “a lot better.” Only 7% of respondents say that remote and/or hybrid arrangements have made the employee experience a little or a lot worse.

This is good news for organizations, and it raises the question about those organizations that don’t offer remote and/or hybrid arrangements. Given that the arrangement is almost always positive, there needs to be a very good reason for not offering it.



Differences based on the size of the organization

Compensation is the most commonly cited factor in both small and mid-sized organizations. But it falls to sixth place in large organizations, where, presumably, compensation may be higher. In large organizations, HR professionals believe employees are most likely to consider career development and flexible work arrangements as the initiatives most important for improving their experience

Finding: Career development and flexible work arrangements are cited just after compensation as the factors most important to employees

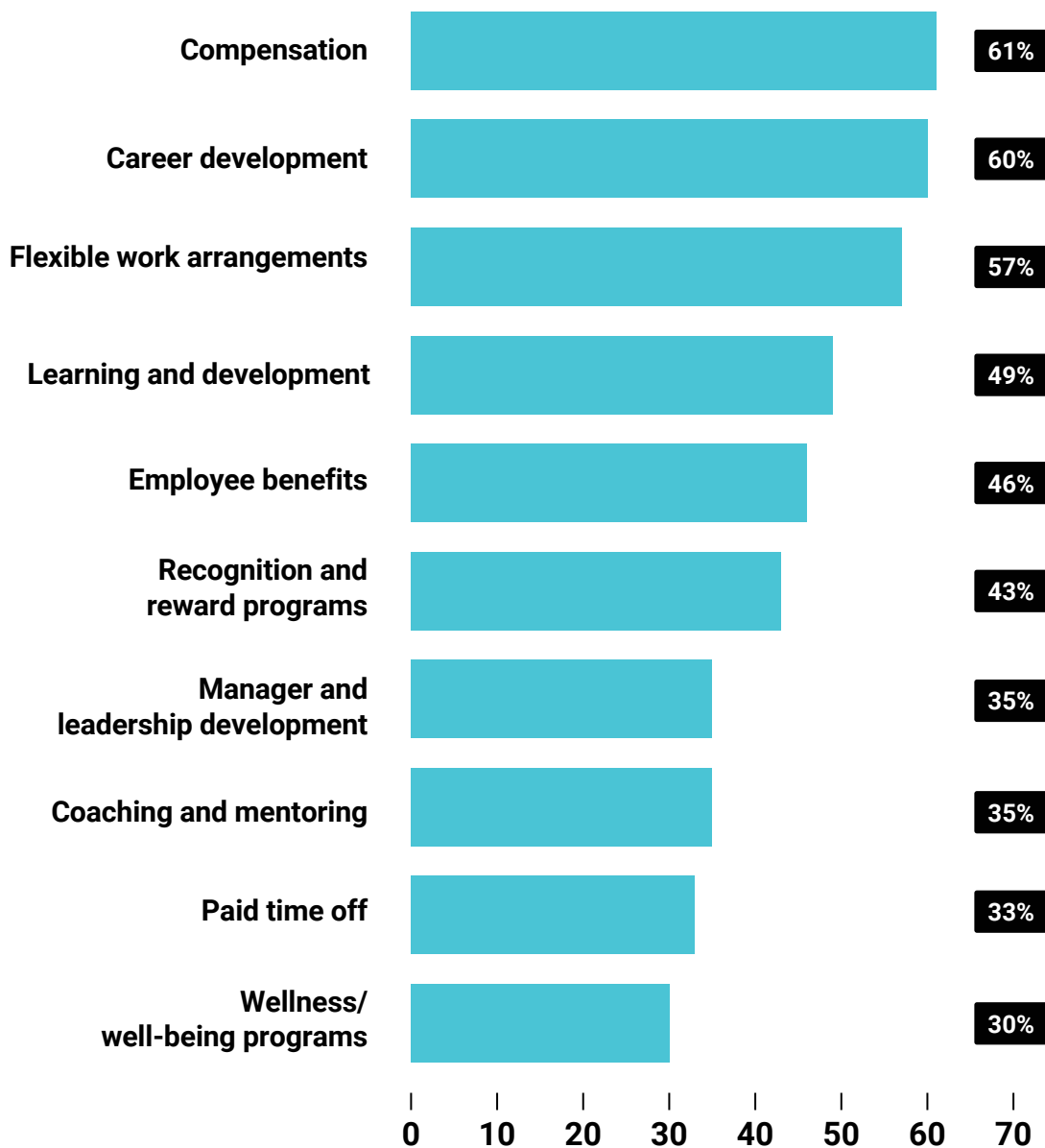
Nearly two-thirds of respondents report that they believe employees consider compensation as one of the most important factors in improving employee experience. Of course, HR often has a limited ability to alter compensation, which should draw attention to the other factors that affect the employee experience.

Both career development and flexible work arrangements are cited by more than half of the respondents as important factors for employees. Improving career development is often a challenge because the expectation is unique for every individual. However, HR needs to teach managers that in many cases employees will be happy if they are learning new skills and taking on interesting projects. That is also a kind of career development an organization can offer even if promotions are few and far between.

Flexible work arrangements can often be offered at little cost. Lack of flexibility often reflects a management preference rather than a business imperative.



What would employees in your organization consider to be the 5 programs/initiatives that are most important to improving their experience? (select up to 5)





Finding: The responsibility for the employee experience is shared between immediate supervisors, top leadership, HR, and the employees themselves

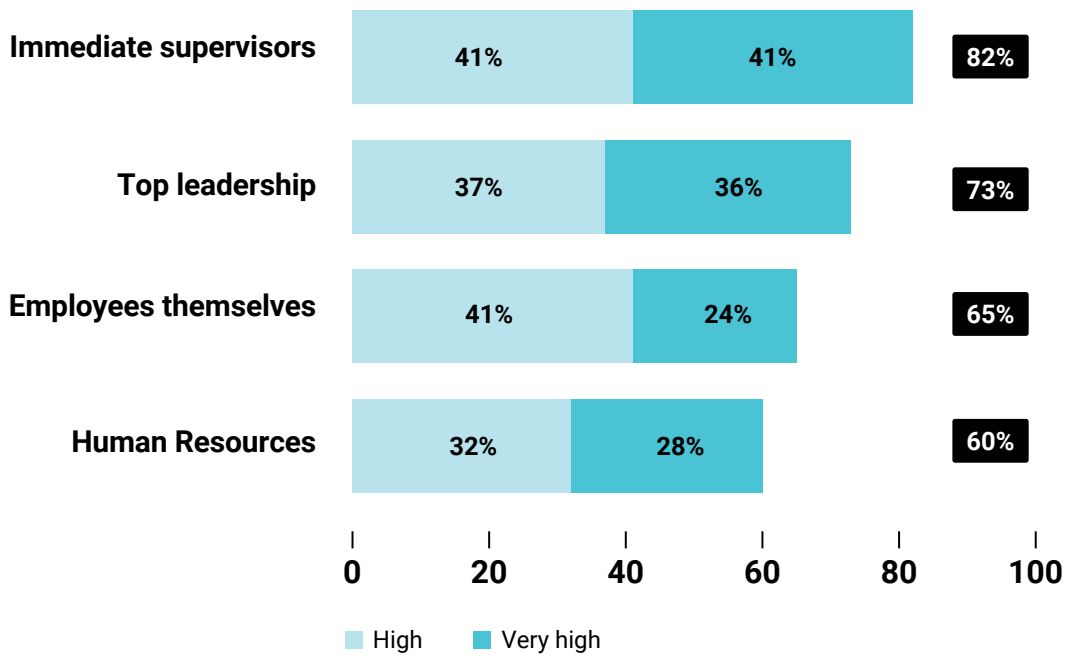
Over 80% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the immediate supervisor is responsible for the employee experience. While this is the most commonly cited point of accountability, we should also note that all of the possible people involved are cited by at least 60% of respondents. In other words, the consensus is that creating a great employee experience is a shared responsibility, with different people having different roles to play.

It's worth mentioning that employees themselves are seen as responsible for their own experience by 65% of respondents.

Of course, employees may not necessarily think this way, and it points us to a potentially helpful intervention. Employees may be unaware of the things they can do to improve their own experience. Providing the right training and communication could help them realize it. For example, this study identified a sense of camaraderie as an important driver of a good experience. HR could give employees tips on how to create an atmosphere that encourages friendship and minimizes conflict in their teams.



**To what degree are the following groups responsible for the experiences of employees in your organization?
(please provide your best guess)**



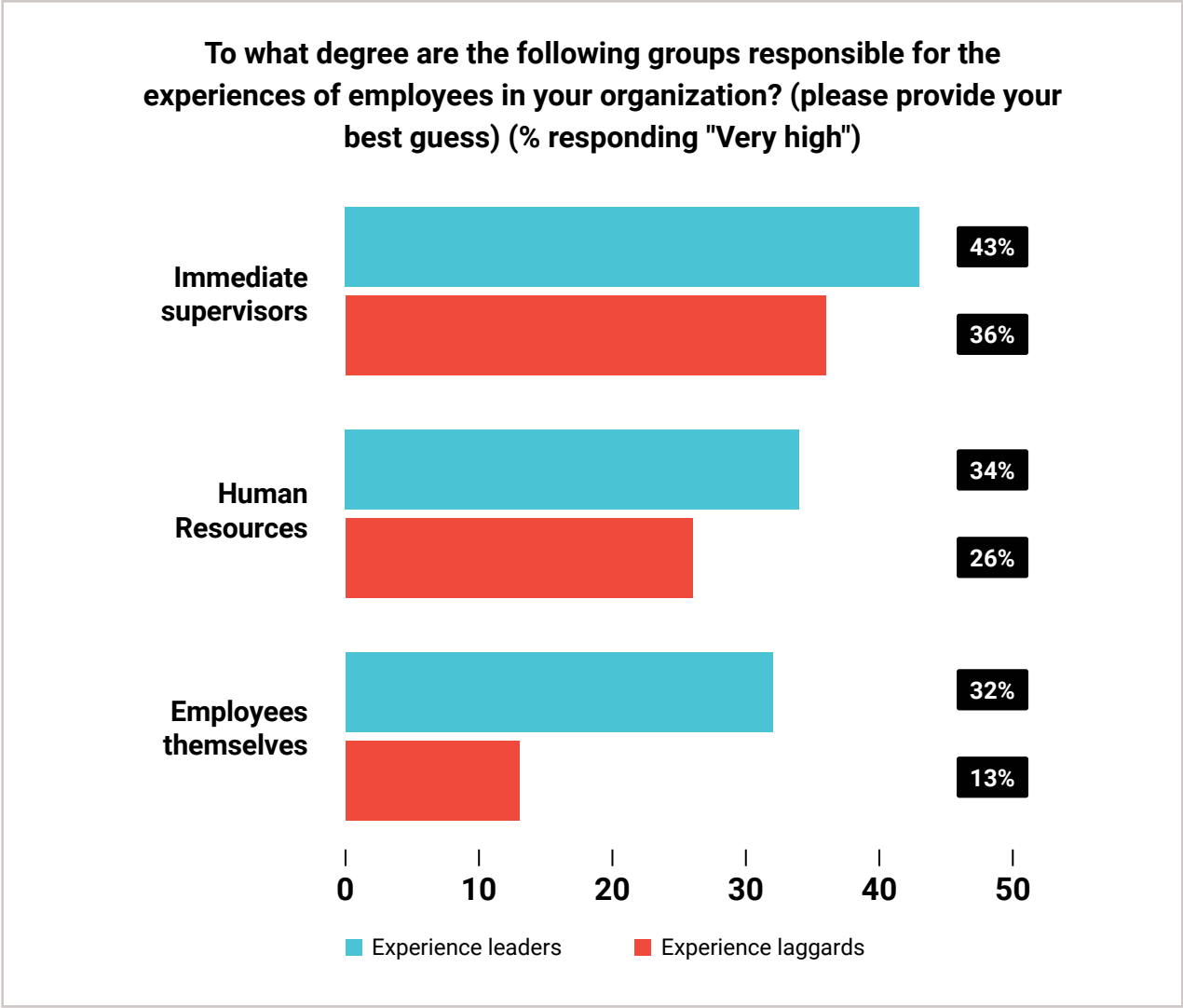


Finding: Experience leaders are over two times more likely than are experience laggards to say that the employees themselves have a very high responsibility for their experience

Both experience leader and laggard organizations tend to point to immediate supervisors and top leadership. However, we do see a difference in which experience leaders are almost 50% more likely to say that HR has a very high responsibility. Even more dramatic, experience leaders are almost three times more likely to say that the employees themselves have a very high responsibility.

We might assume that organizations placing the onus on the employees themselves are avoiding responsibility, but that doesn't seem to be the case. Organizations with good employee experience seem to differentiate themselves from those with poor experience in part by asking employees to play their part. Of course, employees can only play their part if they are empowered to learn, speak up, and have an impact on their work life.





The Near-term Future of Employee Experience



Finding: There is no consensus on how experience-related factors will change over the next year

We asked respondents which of several things related to the employee experience will change next year and there was no consensus. That is, no factor was chosen by more than half of the respondents, much less by most of them. What's more, a little over one-quarter say there will be no change.

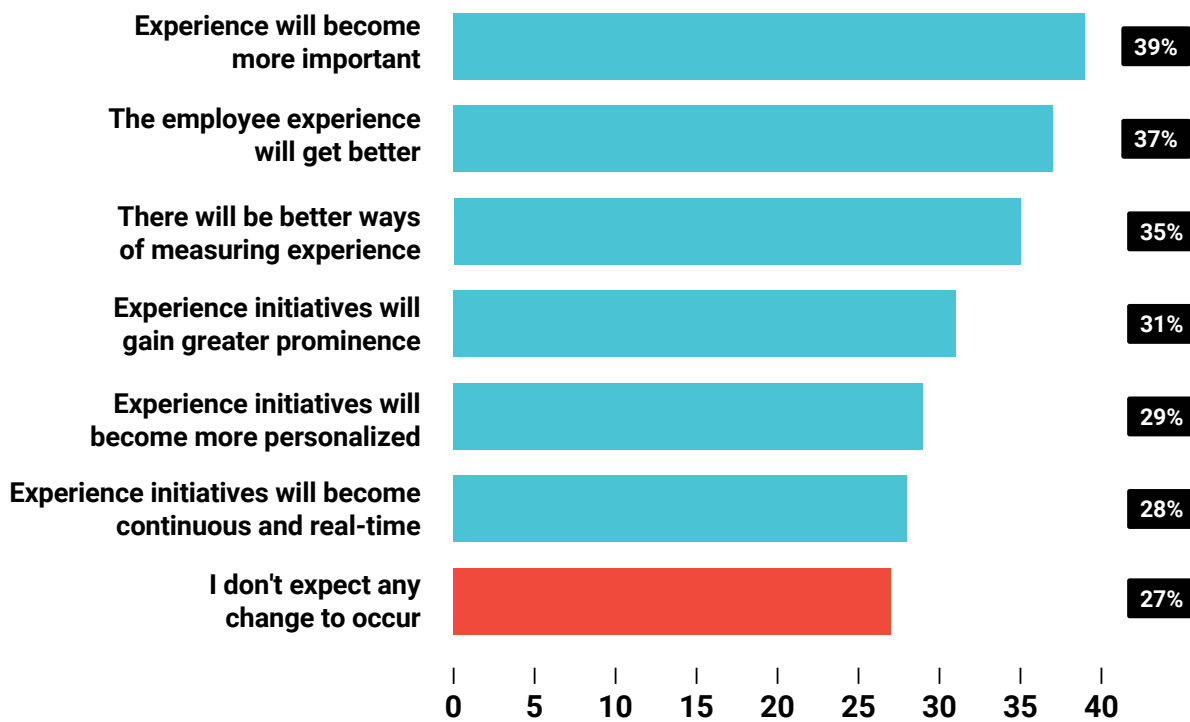
The three potential changes most commonly cited are:

- experience will become more important
- employee experience will get better
- there will be better ways of measuring experience

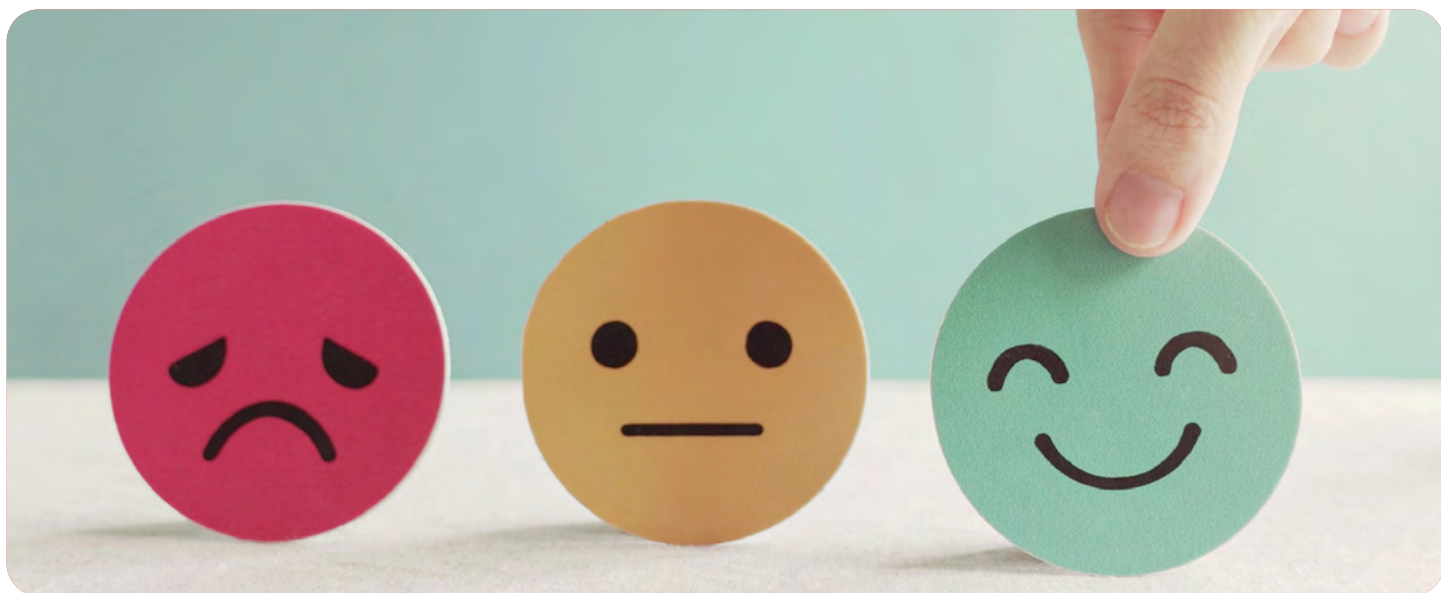
Although there's no consensus, we do believe that the fact that these responses reflect a degree of optimism about the near-term future of employee experience, both in terms of its prioritization and likely success.



How do you feel experience-related factors will change in your organization over the next year? (select all that apply)



Just over one-quarter of respondents say there will be no change in factors related to the employee experience





Finding: Over half of the respondents say AI will increase automation in the realm of employee experience

The perceived effect of AI on employee experience is ambiguous. However, respondents are more likely to cite positive than negative effects. The three most commonly cited effects are:

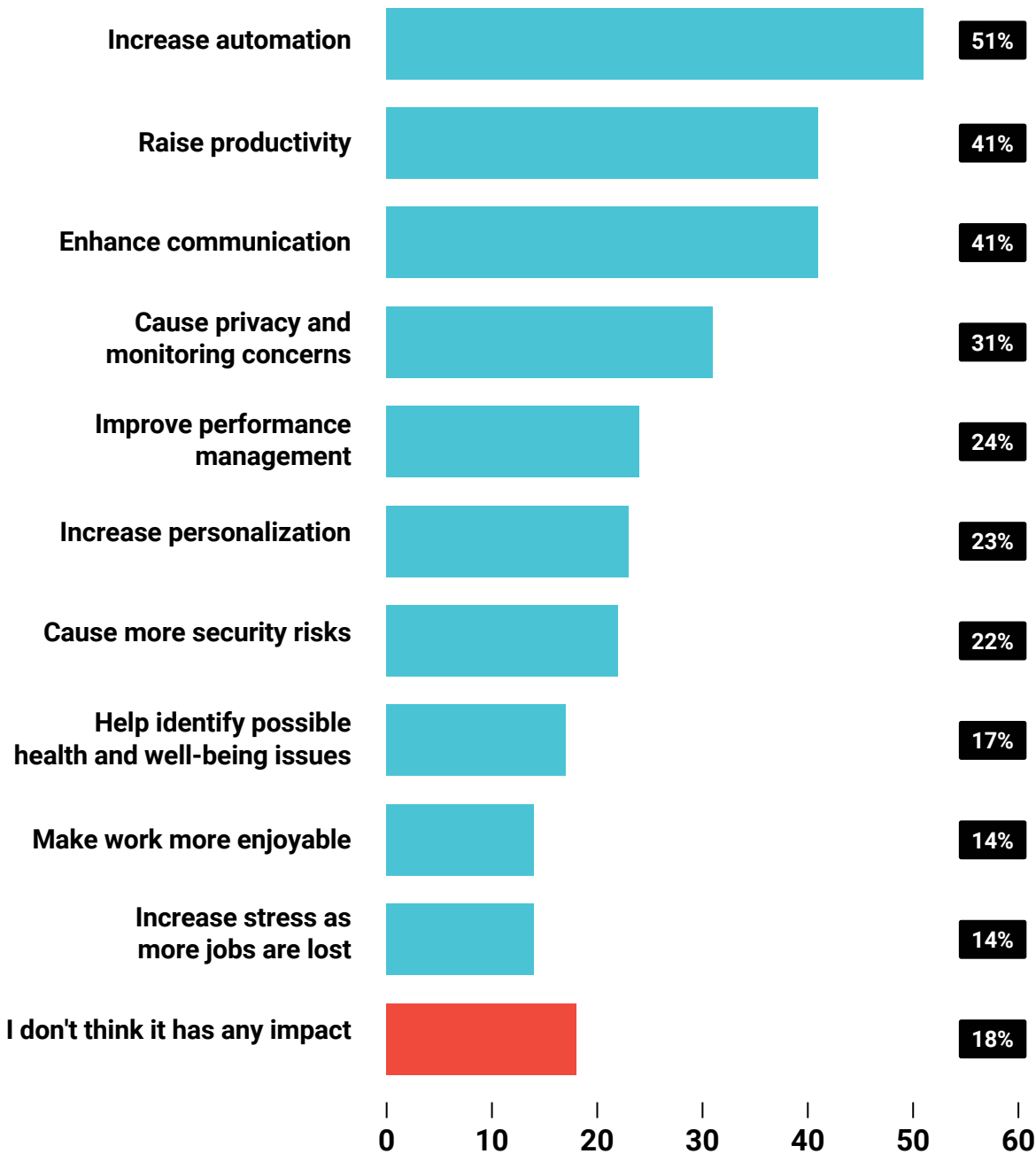
- increased automation
- raised productivity
- enhanced communication

The idea is that AI may be able to help automate more of employees' repetitive and administrative work, freeing them up to work on more interesting, experience-enhancing tasks. Along with greater automation and augmentation should come higher productivity.

Respondents are generally less likely to cite the possible negative consequences of AI, such as privacy and monitoring concerns, security risks, and greater employee stress as jobs are lost to AI.



What role do you think artificial intelligence will play in influencing the employee experience over the next two years? (select all that apply)



Two-fifths say AI could enhance communication



Key Takeaways

Key Takeaway 1

Assess programs and offerings such as employee benefits in terms of how they influence employee experience. For example, compensation rates, career development programs, and flexible work arrangements tend to have a strong influence on employee experience. Identify the factors that have the strongest positive impact on employee experiences and hone those programs and practices to make them more impactful.

Key Takeaway 2

Gather good data on how employee experiences in your organization compare to those in other competing organizations.

One of the best ways to get leaders committed to achieving and maintaining a good employee experience is to show them data on how they compare to others. There are various ways of gleaning such information.

- Utilize internal employee surveys, such as engagement surveys or Net Promoter Scores (NPS), to gauge internal experiences.
- Examine industry reports to gather insights on competitors' best practices. For example, you might be able to get data relevant to assessing the employee experience from Glassdoor, Indeed's Work Wellbeing Score, or your organization's employee engagement survey provider.
- Leverage social media platforms, industry forums, and professional associations to stay updated on emerging trends in employee experience.
- Build strategic partnerships with recruitment agencies and attend conferences/networking events to stay abreast of evolving industry benchmarks.
- Ask new recruits about their employee experiences at former employers in the same industry

Key
Takeaway **3**

Cultivate a culture that provides a great employee experience. Our data shows that a great employee experience shows up in many different ways, from being comfortable bringing your whole self to work to feeling empowered to having the opportunity to express honest opinions. The broad nature of the employee experience suggests that it needs to be prioritized as part of the culture.

Key
Takeaway **4**

Identify and correct toxic elements of the culture. Sometimes improving the employee experience is best served by addressing the things that damage that experience. While it can be politically challenging to raise issues around toxic elements of the culture, HR must be willing to do so if it wishes to create a great employee experience.

Key
Takeaway **5**

Use a variety of tools to gauge and influence the employee experience. It may be tempting to rely on one tool to gauge the employee experience. However, to get a good understanding of such a multi-faceted phenomenon, organizations need to use multiple tools. Organizations with a good employee experience typically use at least five different tools to assess employee experience. One of the more commonly cited tools for improving the employee experience is collaboration tools. Given that these can improve the employee experience while at the same time improving effectiveness should often push these to the top of a list of tools to leverage.

Key
Takeaway **6**

Encourage employees to play a part in creating a great experience and empower them to do so. Organizations with good employee experience are much more likely to say employees have a very high responsibility for their own experience. Follow this example by first empowering employees to have a meaningful impact on their own experience and then by encouraging them to take advantage of that empowerment.

Key
Takeaway **7**

Develop leaders and managers in such a way that they hone skills that improve employee experiences. Employee experiences are strongly influenced by direct managers as well as senior leaders. They need to understand the factors that shape employee experiences as well as the types of programs, practices, and behaviors that influence such behaviors positively.

Key
Takeaway **8**

Don't underestimate the importance of a feeling of camaraderie. HR focuses a lot on leadership behaviors and HR programs, but one of the most important factors in enhancing the employee experience is a feeling of camaraderie. HR should gather data on this, particularly as employees start spending more time working remotely. HR should also consider what it, or managers, can do that will help foster this feeling of camaraderie.

Key
Takeaway **9**

Be alert to affordable initiatives that enhance the employee experience. HR professional often cite compensation as among the top factors that drive employee experience, yet HR has limited control over compensation rates. HR can also look to more affordable initiatives such as learning and development. Peer learning, for example, can be inexpensive and deliver three relevant outcomes: improved skills, enhanced camaraderie, and a better overall employee experience.





About Circa

Circa is a SaaS-based diversity recruitment and OFCCP HR compliance technology solution company. Our story began in 1994 as LocalJobNetwork, a connected network of job recruiting sites serving organizations across all 50 states. Since then, our solutions have evolved in step with emerging business needs and a fast-changing workforce. Recently we've acquired America's Job Exchange and DiversityJobs to become the industry's leading diversity recruitment solution. Today we bring a spectrum of best-in-class products to solve diversity recruiting, affirmative action planning and compliance management for some of the country's most innovative companies.



About HR.com and the HR Research Institute



The HR Research Institute helps you keep your finger on the pulse of HR! Powered by HR.com, the world's largest community of Human Resources professionals, the HR Research Institute benchmarks best practices and tracks trends in human resources to help more than 2 million HR professionals (that many people can't be wrong!). Companies are backing up their strategic decisions with informed and insightful HR.com research references!

Over the past few years, the HR Research Institute has produced more than 180 exclusive primary research and state of the industry research reports, along with corresponding infographics, based on surveys of thousands of HR professionals. Each research report highlights current HR trends, benchmarks and industry best practices. HR Research Institute reports and infographics are available online, and always free. Visit [hr.com/hrresearchinstitute](https://www.hr.com/hrresearchinstitute) to maximize your HR potential. [#hrresearchinstitute](https://twitter.com/hrresearchinstitute)