

Workers seek a deeper relationship with their workplace as the importance of non-financial factors grows

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Workers increasingly view their work as more than just a source of income, as they seek a deeper relationship with their workplace, a new ISS public opinion survey has found. The survey highlights the opportunity for employers and HR professionals to improve the social contract with employees and foster a greater sense of workplace belonging, says Margot Slattery, Group Head of Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging at ISS.

This research about 'Belonging in the Workplace' was conducted by Opinium on behalf of ISS A/S, a workplace experience and facilities management company, between 03/15/23 and 04/26/23. It is based on a public opinion survey of 4,500 people representing a cross-section of society who work in various industries below management level in larger organisations with more than 250 employees. Respondents were based across the United Kingdom, USA, Germany, Denmark and Switzerland. No ISS employees participated in the survey.

The survey of 4,500 workers across the five countries found that while pay is still the main factor for the majority (96%) of respondents as a reason for why they value their job, more than a third (39%) of respondents think that their workplace is 'mostly' or 'only' important for *other reasons* than just the pay.

When delving deeper into these 'other reasons', 83% of the respondents pointed to 'a sense of purpose' as the most important reason for why they go to work. This is closely followed by 'the general culture of the workplace' (78%), while 'opportunities to develop and progress my career' was ranked somewhat lower (67%).

More than a quarter (26%) of the respondents also cited that, if they had the choice, they would prefer a 'somewhat' or 'much' deeper relationship with their workplace. This figure is even higher for young people, aged between 18 and 34 (36%).

The respondents were also asked what 'a sense of belonging' at the workplace means to them. Over half (59%) associated this with 'a place where I feel respected and am treated fairly', whereas 42% pointed to 'a place where I perform well', and 36% mentioned 'a place where I feel wanted'.

For Margot Slattery, Group Head of Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging at ISS, the survey results demonstrate the great need, but also the huge potential, for employers to increase their focus on culture, employee well-being, and belonging:

"Beyond the paycheck, we witness a powerful shift in worker's motivation, where non-financial factors have taken on immense significance. Rather than simply living for the weekend, workers want to feel the hours they are putting in at work are worthwhile, contributing to a positive goal, and making an impact, all while feeling safe", she says and adds:

"This reality demands that employers adopt a holistic approach to employee attraction and retention, always keeping people at the core. Many workers, not least the younger generations, are eager to forge deeper connections with their workplace. By establishing a compelling 'social contract' with employees and nurturing a workplace culture centred around well-being, safety, and a sense of belonging, both companies and employees will greatly benefit."