

The Big Stay: 71% hesitant to move jobs

1 year ago



Over two-thirds of UK professionals (71%) have admitted that fears around job security are preventing them from moving jobs.

Global recruiter Robert Walters has warned professionals that ‘hanging onto a job’ which no longer serves your career could not only be detrimental to the economy but also to careers.

Three-quarters (76%) have stated that job security is a concern (on varying scale) when considering a new role, with 16% admitting that fears around new job security has stopped them from applying for a new role in its entirety.

The findings come from a recent poll conducted by [Robert Walters](#) – which unveils the unprecedented number of professionals who are choosing to remain with their current employer, a phenomenon which the recruitment firm calls ‘The Big Stay.’

Chris Eldridge, CEO of Robert Walters UK & Ireland comments:

“It was just three years ago where we saw evidence of The Great Resignation – where professionals were taking new job opportunities at a record high, which was also matched with high starting salaries.

“Whilst there was an initial fear around ‘The Big Stay’ – this is potentially a short-term trend with market confidence already returning post-election.

“Economic growth is underpinned by labour movement – organisations need fresh perspectives to remain competitive, maximise revenue opportunities and drive profitability. Equally employees reluctant to pursue progression opportunities risk stagnating their careers or pigeonholing themselves. Statistically, professionals who move jobs more often will earn more over their working life than someone who has

chosen to stay put.”

Shift in Priorities

An overwhelming 77% of UK professionals state that they would now prioritise job security over pay – with 16% admitting that this was only something that ‘crossed their mind’ recently.

In fact, 74% of UK employers have stated that prospective employees now bring up the topic of ‘job security’ during the hiring process – with 53% stating that this has been a more recent occurrence in 2024.

When probing further on this increased focus on job security, over two-fifths of professionals (43%) stated that the state of the economy plays a ‘significant role’ in their decision on whether to move roles – with inflation (22%), unemployment rates (18%), and GDP growth (4%) being primary considerations.

Chris adds: “There is clearly a lot playing on the minds of professionals at the moment – even if a company can promise job security, the unstable economic environment is causing professionals to postpone making any important life and/or career changes.”

Companies Struggle to Attract

79% of hiring managers stated that they have noticed an increase in prospective employees declining job offers in 2024 – with the large majority (55%) stating that this is down to salary or culture fit, followed by concerns around company security (14%) or job stability (12%).

As a result, 75% of companies have stated that they have made changes to their recruitment strategies in an attempt to address concerns prospective employees may have over job security. These include sharing growth plans (38%) and being more open about industry challenges (25%).

Just 13% have stated that they are being more upfront about company performance – with many companies worried this may deter professionals from joining them.

When it comes to financial health and long-term company plans, organisations are increasingly taking a more transparent approach – over a third claim that they are now very transparent (39%), followed by somewhat transparent (26%) and slightly transparent (10%).

A quarter (25%) state that they are not at all transparent about the financial health of the company during the recruitment process.

Chris adds: “Companies may be reticent to share financial information or company challenges for fear of deterring professionals from accepting a job offer. However from my experience, when a company is fully transparent about their financial position or industry barriers – this only helps to ensure that the ‘right fit’ accepts the job – professionals that can and are eager to offer fresh insights that support in addressing those challenges.”