

Three in five frontline workers not satisfied with their employee experience – but over half of managers unaware

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Job satisfaction, staff morale, and other key workplace culture drivers are poor amongst UK frontline sectors. This is according to [UKG](#), the global provider of HR, payroll, and workforce management solutions, and its recent survey of over 870 frontline employees and managers in the UK.

The findings, published in [UKG's Perspectives from the Frontline Workers report](#), reveal that 60% of UK frontline workers are not satisfied with their current employee experience. So much so, that over half (54%) say they are tempted to quit on tough days, and two-thirds (66%) say their job is not their passion and simply a means to make money.

Surprisingly, UKG's findings highlight a significant disconnect between frontline workers' experiences and management's view. 57% of frontline managers disagree that their direct reports are dissatisfied with their employee experience; 63% disagree that workers view their jobs purely as a means to an end, and 62% don't feel that their employees are tempted to quit on tough days.

This disconnect between frontline employees and their managers has seemingly contributed towards a 'two-tier' workplace culture. Over half (54%) of the employees surveyed feel there is one company culture for them (i.e. frontline workers) and another for 'everyone else' in the organisation.

51% of employees also feel their employer treats them like a number, not a person, whereas almost three quarters (74%) of managers disagree that this is the case. Similarly, two in five frontline employees feel they are not treated with respect at work, a claim 71% of managers deny.

Poor culture drivers

The report, which surveyed UK workers across sectors such as manufacturing, retail, hospitality, and 3PL, also uncovered the main drivers of poor workplace culture and employee experience:

- 64% ranked flexibility within their top three most important factors when looking for a new employer. Almost a third (31%) of the same respondents said the lack of flexibility in their current role would be their top reason for quitting.
- One in five (20%) feel they are never recognised at work by their manager, and a third (33%) said this lack of recognition and rewards would be their top reason for quitting.
- Not feeling heard is a common challenge too, with 32% claiming the feedback they provide about their organisation has little to no influence.

Neil Pickering, Senior Manager Human Insights at UKG says: “The conversation surrounding workplace culture has picked up over the past 5-10 years, and today we hear a lot about flexible working, work-life balance and employee wellbeing. However, flexibility and wellbeing for frontline employees looks a lot different than it does to office-based, salaried workers, and this is where businesses seem to be falling flat. Two-fifths of frontline employees feel envious of their salaried counterparts, and many believe there is a ‘two-tier’ company culture taking place. This suggests that businesses may not be fully aware of the true wants and needs of their frontline employees. They may also be falling short in providing these employees with the resources they need to feel satisfied and motivated at work. As a result, frontline employees might not feel valued or on equal footing with the rest of their organisation.”

Avichal Kulshrestha, Principal Industry Insights Manager at UKG adds: “Productivity is the lifeline for frontline sectors like manufacturing and retail, and without a happy, engaged workforce, this tends to suffer massively. This report also highlights the pain point that is flexibility for frontline workers, and with [around 60% of the UK’s workforce required to be physically present for their job](#), employers need to think about how they’re going to deliver against this need. It’s promising to see some organisations starting to adopt innovative practices to improve flexibility, such as employee self-scheduling and shift swapping made possible via modern workforce management technology. Investments like these can go a long way in terms of enhancing the employee experience, as well driving improvements to productivity and the bottom line.”

To learn more about this study, including comprehensive results and best practices for creating a great workplace, download the full UKG report, [Perspectives from the Frontline Workforce](#).