

Only a fifth of UK professionals find their jobs fulfilling

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Only a fifth (21%) of UK professionals find their current job role fulfilling. This isn't something going unnoticed by UK employers, as 84% say they've noticed a decline in employee morale over the last 12 months.

Recent research from [Robert Walters](#) reveals how the 'purpose deficit' hitting UK workplaces – driven by a confluence of reduced job opportunities, low morale and unstable leadership – is trapping professionals in unsatisfying roles.

Chris Eldridge, CEO of Robert Walters UK&I: “The current ‘purpose deficit’ hitting UK workplaces poses a significant risk to employee satisfaction and productivity, which in turn has serious consequences for organisations’ overall output and, more broadly, levels of economic growth.”

Professionals trapped in ‘golden handcuffs’

The phenomenon of ‘golden handcuffs’ sees professionals trapped in jobs they don't enjoy due to substantial paydays and perks. However, owing to the current economic climate a similar trend has appeared, without the financial rewards.

Indeed, the Robert Walters poll finds that only a fraction of professionals feel fulfilled in their current role. Twice as many (44%) identify their current role as wholly unrewarding.

Further [research](#) from Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) highlights how less than a fifth of UK employees feel motivated to work daily, with 10% reporting they never feel inspired by their jobs.

Chris states: “High stress, a lack of engaging work, office politics, and reduced recognition can all lead to professionals feeling unfulfilled. However, despite economic instability deterring professionals from job changes, those who feel ‘stuck’ are at risk of disengagement.”

Purpose as a stress safeguard

[Studies](#) have linked individuals with a sense of purpose to being able to better regulate stress levels.

Providing more cause for concern is the fact that 43% of UK professionals surveyed by Robert Walters admitted to experiencing high-stress levels ‘at least twice a week’, with 15% saying it happens ‘almost every day’.

Chris comments: “Professionals with a clear sense of purpose in their roles are better equipped to handle stressful situations at work. While those lacking this are more likely to negatively internalise workplace stress.”

Morale taking a plunge

Adding to the deficit, almost three-quarters of professionals now believe their employer is not doing enough to maintain workplace morale.

Diminished workplace culture (32%), increased responsibilities leading to burnout (30%) and pressures from cost-cutting measures (15%) are cited as top concerns.

Chris adds: “Rising employer costs often shift focus away from workplace culture and manageable workloads yet neglecting these will only exacerbate stress and burnout levels – ultimately increasing employee disengagement.”

How can companies reverse the purpose shortfall?

A quarter of professionals’ state that stable leadership is a crucial driver for increased engagement. Yet this year has already seen a series of high-profile CEO exits from Primark, Halfords and Unilever to even NHS England – leading to more uncertainty being cast over the stability of the position.

Chris concludes: “Leaders play a crucial role in setting a tone in the workplace, to better help employees connect and find meaning in their work.

“While managers and senior leaders can nurture their team’s sense of purpose through acknowledging their contributions, assisting in setting actionable goals, providing clear direction for advancement, and cultivating team cohesion.

“However, professionals must also actively seek their own purpose by:

- **Identifying Strengths:** Evaluate your role, responsibilities, and projects to pinpoint tasks you excel at and areas for growth. Discuss these with your manager to align your tasks with your strengths.
- **Setting Ongoing Goals:** Establish daily, monthly, quarterly, or yearly goals to maintain focus and clarity. This approach provides a comprehensive view of your aims and a clear path to achieving them.

- Celebrating Wins: Goals not only guide you but also create opportunities to recognise achievements. Celebrate these wins personally or share them with managers to highlight your progress and enhance recognition.

“Creating purpose at work is a shared responsibility. It takes the combined efforts of leaders, managers and professionals to craft a fulfilling work environment.”