

2023 Employee Experience Trends



This is the year employees restructure their relationship with work and the organisations they work for.

Propelled by uncertainty and disruption, and motivated by meaning and opportunity, employees across the globe are taking a stand for themselves – they're scrutinising the fundamentals of their jobs, focusing on values, and setting boundaries that empower them to exceed their potential in a healthier and more sustainable way.

They're also looking to organisations to truly invest in and reward them. Training budgets, development courses, and basic benefits are no longer enough; employees want organisations to recognise their needs, work closely with them to chart a path forward, and compensate them for the incredible work they've been doing.

This great restructure is shifting the perspective of what work is. It presents challenges and opportunities for organisations. Now is the most pertinent time to not only develop more human-centric practices, but also build the foundations that attract future talent.



REGIONAL REPORT

Europe, the Middle East and Africa

Meet the experts

On a global level, the stage is set, but on a regional level, how do these trends manifest? From the challenges and opportunities to successes and failures, here we delve into the granularities to provide insight into the Employee Experience in EMEA.

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER



Antonio Pangallo, PhD

Principal EX Product Scientist

LEAD AUTHORS



Laura Harding, MSc

Employee Experience Product Scientist



Jake Outram

Senior EX XM Scientist

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS



Vanessa Kowollik

Senior EX XM Scientist



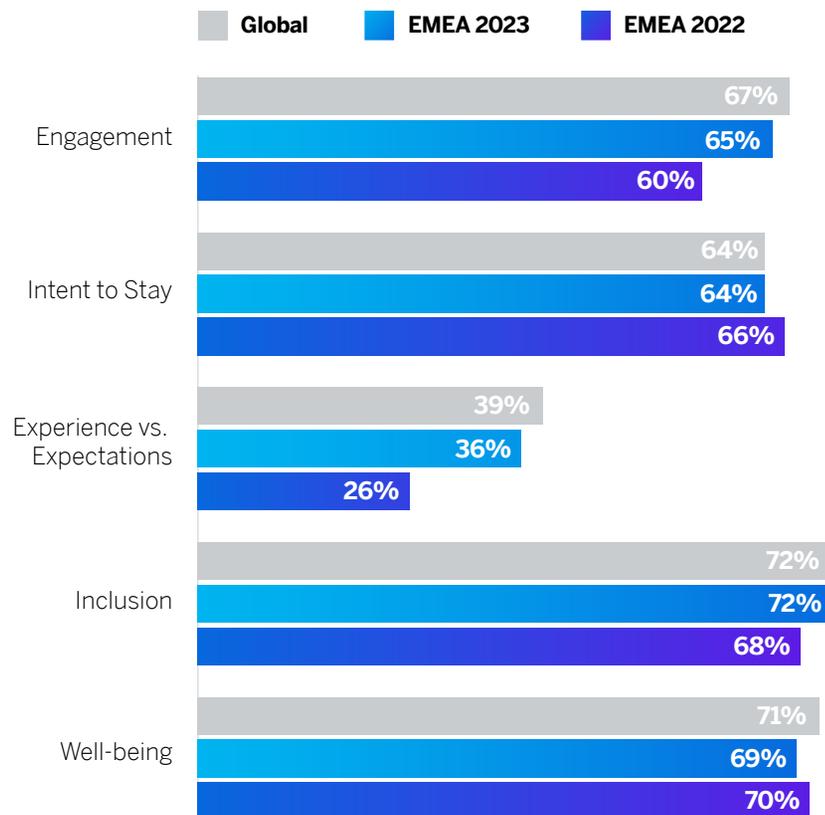
Lisa Le Derff

EX XM Scientist

This report is based on data from employees in the following countries: United Kingdom (excluding Ireland), Germany, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, and Switzerland.

EMEA

Snapshot



In this report, we'll be diving deeper into the key trends across the EMEA region — as well as what organisations can do next to deliver meaningful, practical, and employee-centric change.

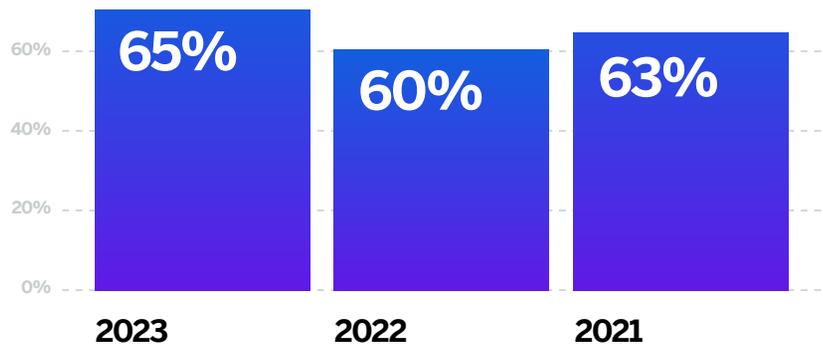


EMEA | TREND 01

How organisations respond to external challenges will determine ongoing, sustainable employee engagement

Organisations across EMEA have dug deep to create and deliver employee experiences that resonate with their people — and have bounced back from the dip to exceed previous scores.

Engagement levels by year



But there's still work to do, and despite an increase in engagement, the oncoming economic uncertainty has forced employees to reevaluate their situations.

Many employees now want proof that their organisation can weather the storm, as well as opportunities to grow and develop so that they can gain marketable skills to secure their own future.

Top drivers across EX KPIs in EMEA

- 01 Confidence in the future of the company**
- 02 Opportunities to grow and develop**
- 03 Believing in the company values**

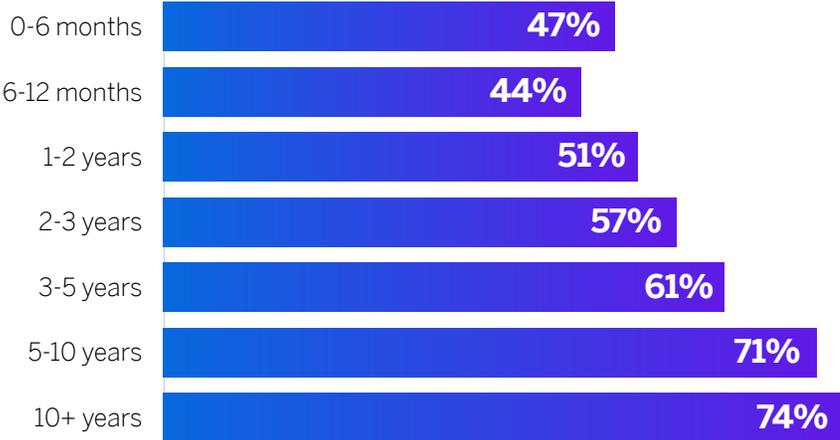
These are classic drivers during periods of uncertainty — and we saw a similar pattern during the 2008 financial crisis.

When employees are advocates of their organisation's products and services (and believe that the organisation can be competitive in an increasingly challenging market), they have a much higher *Intent to Stay*:

If employees have confidence in the future success of their organisation, they are more than 2x as likely (73%) to intend to stay.

However, our data shows that newer employees have the weakest ties to, or experience of, the organisation, and so it's much easier for them to break them and leave.

Intent to Stay broken down by tenure



They also have the most recent experience of the current job market, so they know what opportunities are available to them compared to longer tenured employees who may be more cautious (or less familiar) of external opportunities.

Now that you know where the challenges are — and what your people expect from you — what changes can you make to close the experience gaps?

The road forward

+ Now more than ever, it is critical to help employees understand their organisation's strategy and their role in supporting that strategy. Senior leaders play a vital part in communicating this and offering (authentic) reassurance, so open lines of communication and connection between employees is important. This is not the time for leaders to lock themselves away in a room to figure out how to navigate the external challenges.

- + Transparency is important — if there are challenges or barriers, do not gloss over them or offer false reassurance.
- + The onus doesn't just sit with leaders, managers are key in connecting the gap between 'corporate' and the 'front-line'.



Career opportunities are a critical factor in helping employees answer "what's in it for me?"

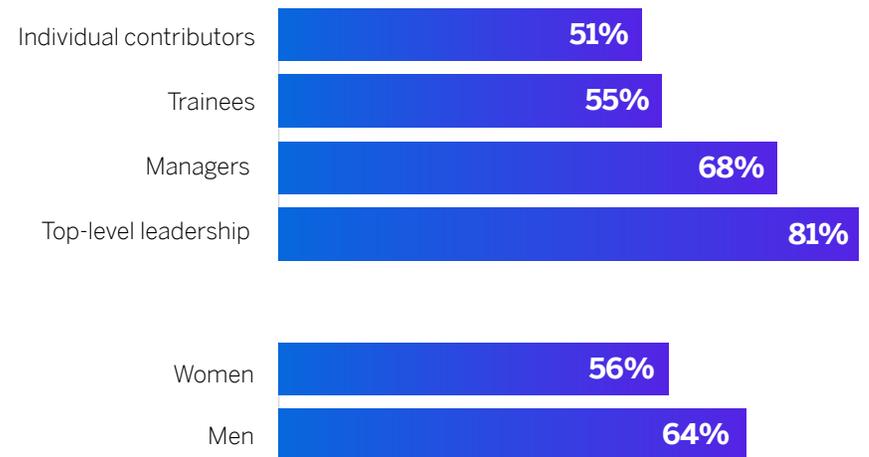
In periods of economic uncertainty, opportunities to develop and progress are incredibly important to both employees and their employers, especially as development opportunities can act as a counterbalance when there are limits to financial incentives.

We've seen that believing in one's ability to achieve career goals is a top three driver of *Engagement*, *Intent to Stay*, *Inclusion*, *Experience vs. Expectations* and *Well-being*.



But when we look at the differences amongst demographics concerning whether or not they can meet their career goals, we find:

Percent of employees who agree/strongly agree that their career goals can be met at their current employer



For employees, investment in growth and development not only ensures they gain valuable skills (particularly transferable skills to increase their employability), but also improves their fulfillment, motivation, and enjoyment in their current roles.



When asked if they feel their career goals can be met at their current company, those who agreed or strongly agreed are:

- 15%** more likely to have their expectations exceeded at work
- 15%** more likely to stay longer than 3+ years
- 19%** more likely to have higher engagement scores

For organisations, offering development opportunities helps to retain staff when there are limitations in offering higher pay. Simply, employees will be more tolerant of change and uncertainty if they feel that there's something in it for them.

The road forward

- + Use the opportunities presented through existing listening programs — e.g. engagement and pulse surveys, exit surveys — to understand gaps in experience of growth and development opportunities and identify where to deploy resources for targeted action.
- + Provide meaningful development opportunities. For employees, it's not necessarily about upward progression (though important), but also about learning and utilising new, relevant, and transferable skills.
- + As we see the need to engage employees in work that is purposeful and connects with their values, learn from employees what matters most to them, and seek to connect them with stretch assignments.



EMEA | TREND 03

Pay and benefits are coming under greater scrutiny

Across every sector, employees have pulled out all the stops and worked tirelessly to weather the disruptions caused by the pandemic and the shift to new ways of working.

But as the cost of living continues to rise and the economy remains in flux, pay and benefits have risen to the top of the employee agenda.

55%

**Of EMEA
respondents feel
they are paid fairly
for what they do**

53%

**Of EMEA
respondents feel
that their benefits
meet their needs**



Still, more than a third currently feel that their pay isn't linked to their performance, nor that they're paid fairly for what they do.



For organisations, this is a critical juncture. Pay and benefits are rarely top drivers of the employee experience — and instead a hygiene factor — but if economies continue to shrink and inflation remains high, compensation and benefits may come under even further scrutiny.



In EMEA, we're also seeing significant differences in perception of pay and benefits by both job level and gender:

75% of executives see how their pay links to their performance. Only 31% of individual contributors feel the same.

Also, when we look at how levels of pay and benefits are perceived for women versus men, there are still gaps in the experience — highlighting the need for organisations to keep doubling down on pay equality:

When it comes to:

Pay being linked to performance:



Believing benefits meet their needs:



Receiving fair pay:



As the economy becomes more volatile and the cost of living continues to increase, people expect and need more from their jobs. Yes, they want to work for organisations where they can grow and connect, but in times of disruption and uncertainty, they also want to get what they need out of their jobs financially.

The road forward

- + While the impact of inflation is largely outside the control of individual organisations, they can focus on non-pay factors that might help reduce relative reductions in pay. Employees are more likely to tolerate uncertainty and change if they are compensated in other ways.
- + With employees seeking greater career growth and development, organisations should emphasise the opportunities that are provided for employees to develop new, relevant, transferable skills and opportunities to work on developmental projects.
- + Ensure access to employee assistance programs, e.g. for financial support and budgeting advice, and compare current remuneration and benefits offerings to assess competitiveness and suitability for retaining staff.

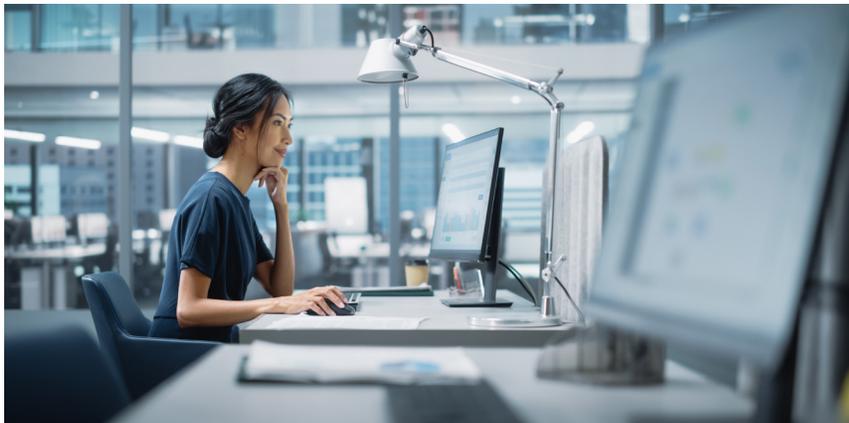
- + Routinely communicate business progress and KPIs to give employees a more realistic expectation of upcoming pay increases and potential bonuses.
- + Don't forget about pay being a motivator. It's OK to talk about money. Our external landscape has changed. Having conversations about pay and meeting employee needs is critical to providing a stellar EX and retaining talent.



Values are equally as important as the products and services organisations deliver

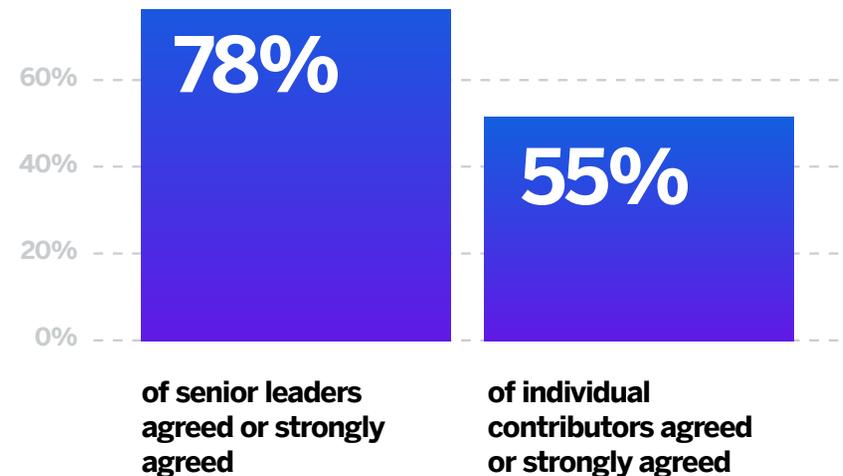
Employees want to work for organisations that are "doing the right thing," whether through environmental, social, or governance initiatives.

Plus, believing in and feeling connected to organisational values is a key driver of positive employee experiences and nearly every EX KPI – from *Engagement* and *Inclusion*, to *Well-being* and *Intent to Stay*.

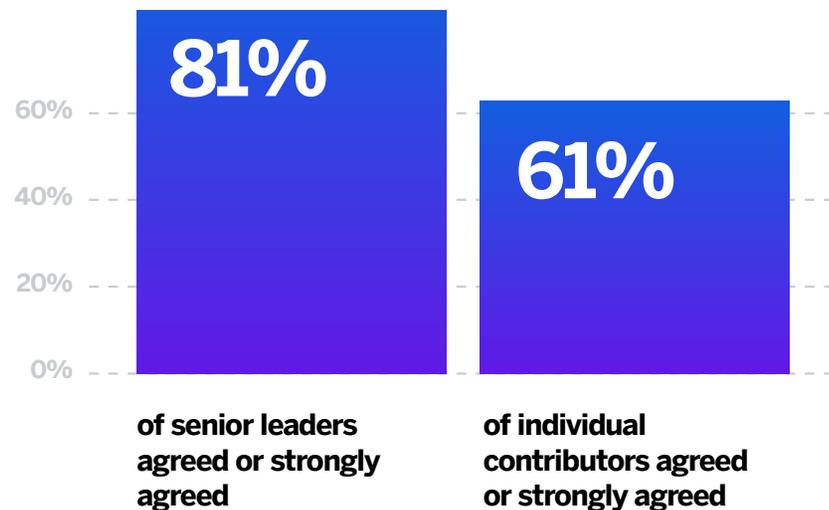


Of course, while employees and organisations both want to contribute to our societies, communities and environments, how those efforts are perceived differ by job level:

When asked: “This company is taking action to be socially responsible” (e.g., supporting community events, charitable causes, etc.), we found:



When asked: “*This company fosters environmentally friendly practices*” (e.g., recycling, paperless culture, saving energy, etc.), we found:



It is possible that this gap is a reflection of differences in visibility; perhaps employees are not aware of all the different initiatives currently underway.

As these values and practices begin to take center stage for many employees, it’s a make-or-break opportunity for organisations to demonstrate their commitment to the things their employees care about.



The road forward

- + As a top driver of *Intent to Stay*, authentically highlighting ESG initiatives to prospective and current employees will become an important differentiator in organisations looking to attract and keep talent.
- + Provide opportunities for employees to be actively involved in ESG initiatives. This will help better connect employees with their organisation and build a greater sense of purpose and accomplishment in their work. This will also provide employees with new (and potentially stretch) assignments which, as we have seen above, is another factor in helping to retain employees.

- + Employees need to see the connection between their work and company values. There is a need for managers to support employees to understand how their role contributes to the company's efforts to become more environmentally and socially responsible.



EMEA | TREND 05

Employee listening is still an evolving discipline

Almost overnight, organisations were forced to pivot quickly to implement solutions to support remote and hybrid working and keep workforces engaged.

To understand employee sentiment towards these changes and topics, organisations built out listening programs (which included frequent pulse surveys and always-on listening) to complement existing engagement and lifecycle surveys.

However, as some semblance of normalcy returned, and despite advances in employee listening technology, organisations just aren't harnessing the opportunities presented by employee feedback.

ONLY
44%

of employees have seen positive changes as a result of previous employee surveys

ONLY
42%

of employees have been given an opportunity to discuss last year's survey results





Of employees who report they've seen a positive change as a result of previous surveys:



However, of those who haven't seen a positive change, only:



Listening and acting on employee feedback is an integral component of any successful organisation, and is necessary to identify and close experience gaps.

The road forward

- + Don't try to boil the ocean. Instead, help managers and employees identify 2-3 core areas of opportunity based on key organisational priorities.
- + Equip managers with listening tools that provide actionable insights into the varying experiences of their team members. This will then enable managers to make evidence-based decisions about their team, rather than relying on anecdotes.
- + Communicate, communicate, communicate. Organisations must ensure that they connect actions and initiatives back to employee feedback. One way to improve employees' willingness to respond to surveys is to demonstrate the impact their voice has on the wider organisation.

- + Maintaining contact with employees is vital, but it's also important to connect employee and customer feedback to truly understand how employee experiences (and behaviors) affect customer experience outcomes.



Appendix

About the research

At Qualtrics, we believe that every voice has value, every interaction is an opportunity, and every experience matters.

That's why we ask tens of thousands of professionals each year about their experiences at work to understand how those experiences affect them.

At the same time, we also carry out this research to equip employers with the insights they need to make purposeful changes based on what their people need most.

As we enter a new decade, the world of work is changing at an unprecedented rate – and it's never been more important to understand precisely what your employees want.

The study was carried out in Q3 2022 using our [EX25 model](#) and included:

28,808
respondents

27
countries

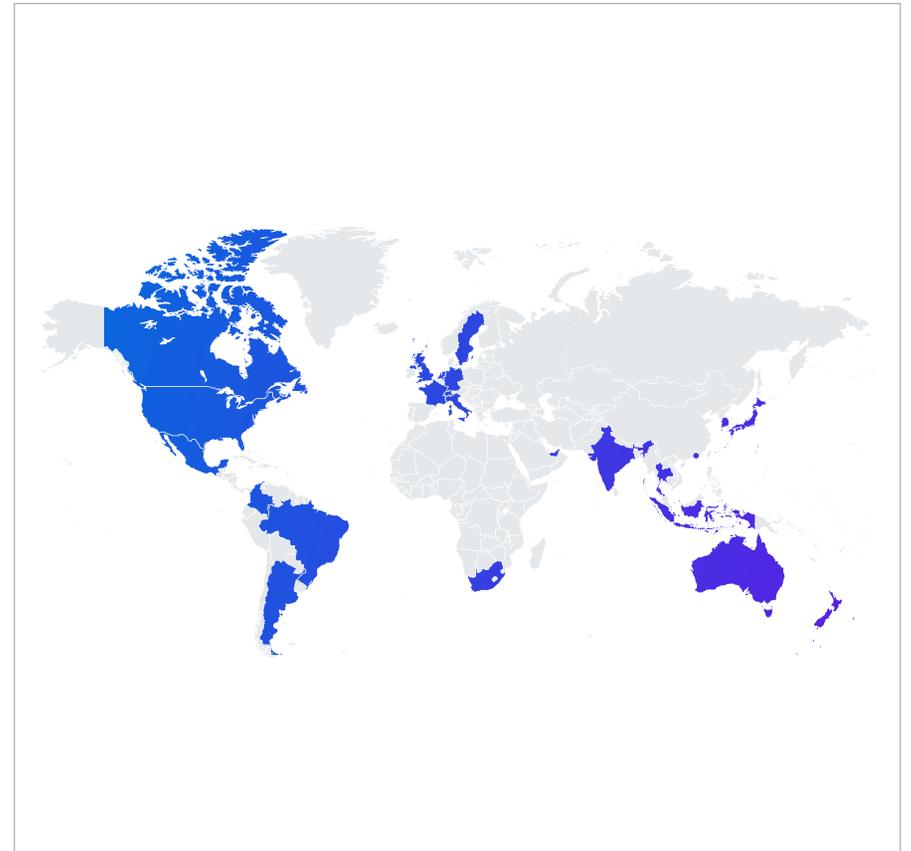
28
industries



Methodology

Country (% of sample)

Argentina	2%	Netherlands	3%
Australia	7%	New Zealand	1%
Brazil	2%	Philippines	2%
Canada	3%	Singapore	3%
Colombia	2%	South Africa	1%
France	7%	South Korea	3%
Germany	7%	Spain	4%
Hong Kong	3%	Sweden	1%
India	3%	Switzerland	1%
Indonesia	2%	Thailand	4%
Italy	4%	United Arab Emirates	1%
Japan	7%	United Kingdom	8%
Malaysia	2%	United States	15%
Mexico	2%		



Gender (% of sample)

Male	50%	non binary/transgender/ third gender	1%
Female	49%		

Work level (% of sample)

Trainee/Intern	4%	Senior Director, Director, Middle management	20%
Individual contributor	48%		
Manager/Leader of Individual contributors	22%	Executive leadership	6%

Age % (% of sample)

20-24	14%	45-54	21%
25-34	22%	55+	21%
35-44	22%		



Industry (*% of sample*)

Airlines	1%	Healthcare	10%	Real Estate	1%
Automobiles & Components	3%	Hotels & Leisure	1%	Restaurants	1%
Capital Goods	3%	Information Technology: Software & Services	6%	Retail	7%
Construction & Engineering	7%	Information Technology: Hardware & Equipment	1%	Services: Commercial Services & Supplies	1%
Consumer Durables and Apparel	2%	Information Technology: All Other	2%	Services: Consumer Services	1%
Consumer Staples/ FMCG	5%	Media & Entertainment	1%	Services: Professional Services	2%
Education	9%	Metals, Minerals, Mining	1%	Telecommunications	2%
Energy	1%	Non-profit	1%	Transportation	4%
Financial Services		Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology & Life Sciences	1%	Utilities	1%
Government/ Public Sector	8%			Other	10%
	7%				

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