

workhuman®

5 Workplace Wellbeing Trends to Watch

EVOLVING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE IN 2024





Believe it or not, some workers are plain tired of hearing about company culture.

In fact, one unfortunate [2023 survey](#) found that workers ranked “culture” as the second most annoying buzzwordy phrase in the office, only after “new normal.”

Yikes.

While culture – ahem, employee experience – is certainly not going anywhere, we are starting to see a shift in workplaces across every industry. If 2023 was about creating and building up company culture, 2024 is about evolving it – and allowing employee wellbeing to take center stage.

In late 2022, [Gallup research](#) brought to light that 40% of U.S. employees said their job negatively impacts their mental health. With such a sizable amount of the workforce not wanting to get out of bed in the morning, it makes good sense for company leaders to focus on improving employee wellbeing.

As companies begin to shift their attention and resources toward strengthening workplace wellbeing, the employee experience will inevitably evolve, too. To keep you ahead of the curve, we’ve rounded up five workplace wellbeing trends to watch for in 2024.

ONE

Less stress at work, thanks to AI

According to [Gallup's State of the Global Workplace: 2023 Report](#), employee stress remains at a “record high,” with 44% of surveyed employees reporting that “they experienced a lot of stress yesterday.”

Proactive companies are working hard to combat this stress and the very [real consequences](#) that come with it – burnout, disengagement, lower job satisfaction, and a whole host of mental and physical health problems for their workers.

In 2024, signs point toward companies exploring how artificial intelligence (AI) can be used as a solution for stressed-out workers to find relief. Strategic use of AI for training, career development, and employee feedback are just a few use cases.

“AI has the potential to transform the employee experience. It can automate repetitive tasks, letting people focus on what they are passionate about, freeing up their time for skills development or work-life balance, and potentially create exciting new job roles and career paths. It’s important to engage employees in this process,” reports [IBM](#).

TWO

A new chapter for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

Let's be clear: Workforce resilience, flexibility, and inclusion are themes we continue to see stand strong.

But ... have you heard the term "Peak 65" yet?

U.S. Census [data](#) shows that more than 12,000 U.S. adults will turn 65 every day in 2024. As more and more baby boomers begin to hit retirement age, a shift in generational diversity is to be expected in the U.S. workplace.

At the same time, Generation Z is already making a splash as young workers. Among other effects, [new research](#) out of the U.K. suggests Gen Z is influencing how we speak to one another, instilling more casual language in the workplace and using emojis with more frequency. 

As workplace demographics shift, what employees expect from DEI may change too. DEI leaders are already facing conflicting internal and external pressures, according to [Gartner research](#) presented at the 2023 Gartner ReimagineHR Conference. While the industry landscape continues to evolve alongside the fluctuation of workplace demographics, we anticipate a new chapter for DEI to be defined this year.

THREE

Flexible work: the gold standard

As KeyAnna Schmiedl, chief human experience officer at Workhuman®, told Inc. in 2023, “Having open, honest conversations about how employees feel about returning to in-person work will create better relationships between employees and their employers and can help avoid any larger-scale controversies or conflicts down the line.”

It seems that companies used 2023 to have those real conversations with employees and iron out their new ways of working in a post-pandemic world. While it may seem that every day a new LinkedIn influencer is waffling about the benefits of remote vs. in-person work, we’re seeing a clear north star emerge: When possible, a work policy that supports flexibility is key. And, to back that claim up with data: 2023 reporting by the International Labour Organization found that a flexible work policy contributes to more opportunities for work-life balance, a key component of worker wellbeing.

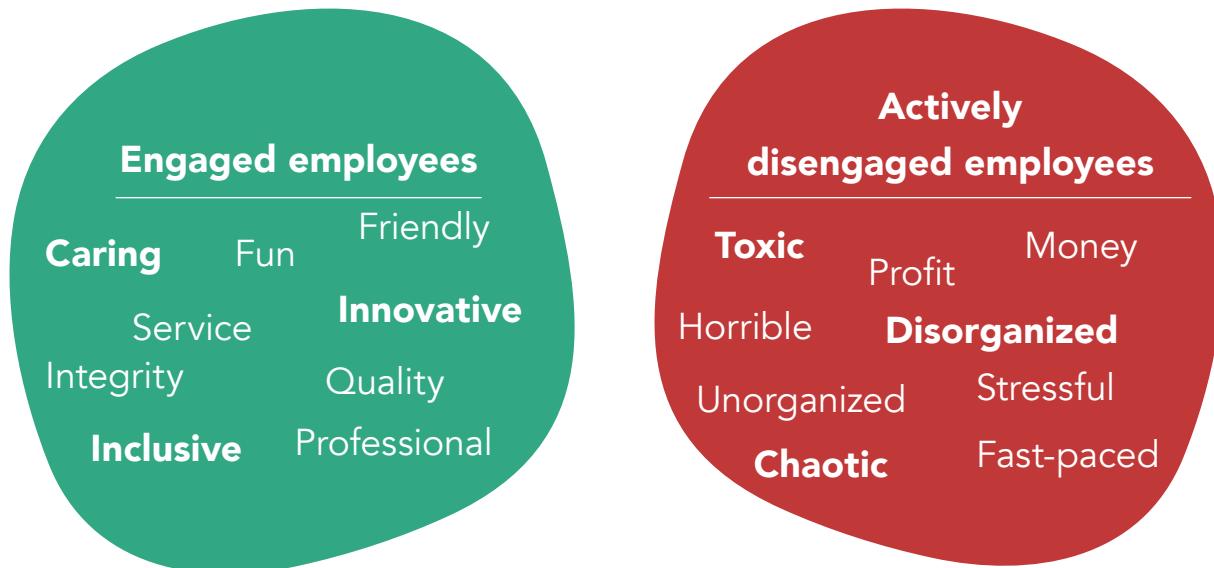




FOUR

Refocusing with feedback

In the [2023 Workhuman-Gallup Culture Report](#), we found a stark contrast between the top words engaged and actively disengaged U.S. employees used to describe the culture of their workplace:

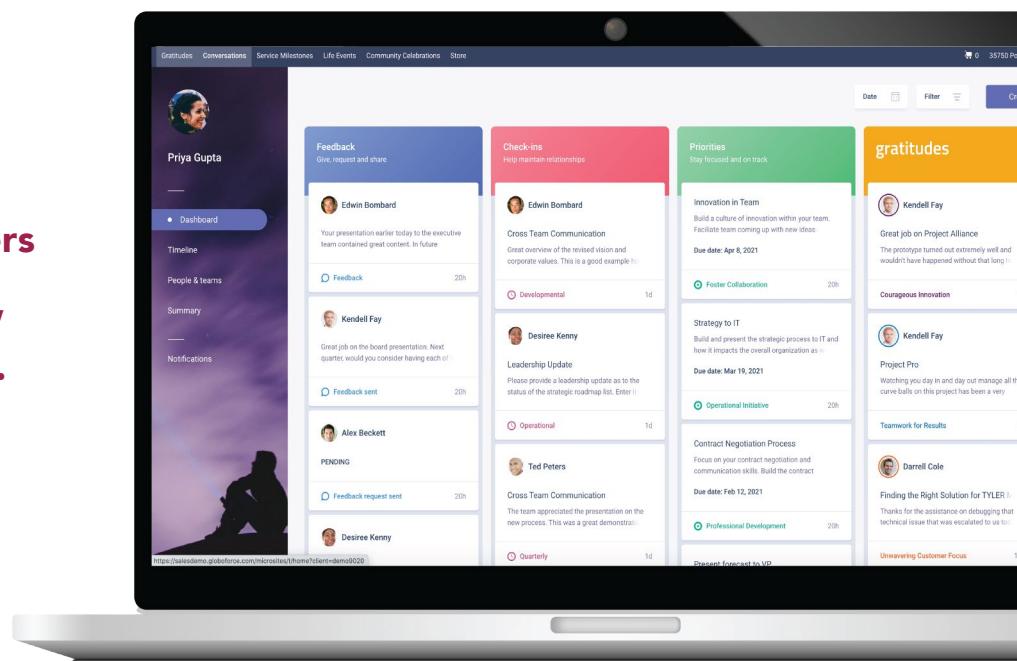


Source: "Empowering Workplace Culture Through Recognition," Gallup and Workhuman, 2023

It's clear that leaders need to focus on reaching actively disengaged employees. How?

Through refocusing and creating an employee experience that includes ongoing feedback, professional growth opportunities, and performance reviews. All this with good reason, too – Workhuman research shows that frequent check-ins with managers lead to more engaged, productive employees.

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As part of the Workhuman® Platform, Conversations (shown above) is integrated with Social Recognition®, making it easy to turn employee feedback, progress, and performance reviews into formal recognition moments or vice versa.



FIVE

More, more, more morale

After all workers went through in 2023 (cue: quiet quitting, RTO, the great layoffs, global inflation), it's no surprise that there will be a spotlight on building back up employee morale in 2024.

Through decades of research, Gallup has identified five key elements of wellbeing that contribute to people's thriving, struggling, or suffering in life: career, financial, social, physical, and community.

Historically, companies may have focused efforts solely on building up employees' wellbeing as it pertains to their career, but we forecast that companies will continue to expand their employee

resources to include benefits that also foster the financial, social, physical, and community elements of wellbeing.

A strong morale – or, to borrow 2023’s ‘it’ word, culture – is linked to business outcomes, like employee productivity and engagement, according to [Harvard Business Review](#). And we’re beginning to see companies focus on whole-person wellbeing as a catalyst for positivity at work.



The throughline of the year: employee recognition.

Trends may change, but one thing is certain: Recognition is one the most effective and affordable ways to improve employee wellbeing. From our report with Gallup, Amplifying Wellbeing at Work and Beyond Through the Power of Recognition, we chronicled four ways recognition improves worker wellness.

A large-scale study of more than 12,000 employees across 12 countries demonstrates that fulfilling employee recognition is associated with better employee wellbeing across four key dimensions:

- 1. Increased overall life evaluations:** Employees are as much as 2x as likely to evaluate their lives and futures positively.
- 2. Reduced levels of burnout:** Employees are up to 90% less likely to report being burned out at work “always” or “very often.”
- 3. Improved daily emotions:** Employees are up to 2x as likely to report having experienced a lot of gratitude the previous day, and about 40% less likely to report having experienced a lot of stress, worry, and sadness.
- 4. Better social wellbeing:** Employees are 7x as likely to strongly agree that they have meaningful connections or a best friend at work, and as much as 10x as likely to strongly agree that

To sum up, here are the top five workplace wellness trends to watch in 2024:

1. Less stress at work, thanks to AI
2. A new chapter for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)
3. Flexible work: the gold standard
4. Refocusing with feedback
5. More, more, more morale

**Interested in using recognition as a strategic tool to improve workplace wellbeing?
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