

The State of Humanity at Work

FINDINGS FROM THE WORKHUMAN®
SPRING 2020 SURVEY REPORT

workhuman*

Table of contents

Executive summary	4
Safety	6
Fair pay	8
Work-life harmony	9
Inclusion and belonging	10
Growth	11
Gratitude and recognition	12
Conclusion	14
About the survey	15
About Workhuman	15



Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to give a brief snapshot of the human experience at work, specifically in the United States. Findings are based on a survey of 2,613 full-time workers, with every state represented. Of course, survey data is just one part of the story. Every worker has a unique set of expectations and perceptions of what it means to be human at work.

The hope is this data can help HR and senior leaders gain a deeper understanding of how to better cater to core human needs, such as safety, fair pay, work-life harmony, growth, inclusion and belonging, and recognition.

Why should you care? For one, the skills shortage is real, and if your company hasn't yet been affected, it soon will be. This year's survey found 21% of workers are actively looking for a new job. That doesn't include those who would passively entertain a call from a recruiter. Most of these workers are in healthcare (16%) and technology (13%). Interestingly, most are also working parents (60%) and many have only been at their job 1-4 years (40%). In general, they haven't had a great experience at work either. Of those with one foot out the door, 33% say they've been sexually harassed at work (more than 2x higher than the survey average), 73% have experienced burnout, and 42% don't trust HR.

The good news is there are concrete steps you can take to prevent this type of experience and put your people and your business in a better position to thrive.

2/3



66% of workers think they're paid fairly.



Almost half of workers have been discriminated against because of their mental health.

1 in 5

21% of survey respondents said they are currently looking for a new job.

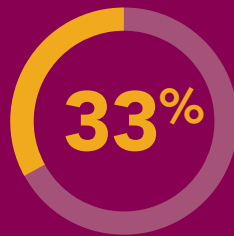
16% in healthcare

54%

More than half of workers have experienced burnout in their career.

More than one-quarter of workers have felt discriminated against over the course of their career.

26%



One-third of workers with one foot out the door have been sexually harassed at work.

1 in 3

36% of women who've been pregnant have been passed over for a job opportunity.

Safety

Each of us has the right to feel a sense of safety and security at work. While minimizing risk of physical harm in specific industries or roles is important, this survey focuses on interpersonal safety – specifically, to uncover what's really happening in regard to sexual harassment in the workplace.

15% of workers surveyed said they've been sexually harassed at work.

Unfortunately, the true number is likely higher, given the sensitivity of the topic.

Of those 379 workers, 233 were female, 137 were male, and 9 identified as non-binary or other. Sexual harassment is an issue that cuts across not only gender, but also race, age, and a person's position in the organization. It does not discriminate. And while #MeToo has been instrumental in raising awareness for inappropriate behavior, including violence, against women, this survey shows there's more work to be done for all demographics (see Figure 1).

For example, of males who said they've been sexually harassed, a majority (71%) said the harassment came from other men. And the incidents of sexual harassment for LGBTQ workers is staggering: 43%. Of those who have been harassed, 69% said the perpetrator was the same sex.

Harassment has no place in the workplace.

HR is where most of these complaints get filed, and yet, of those who have been harassed, 39% don't trust their HR department.

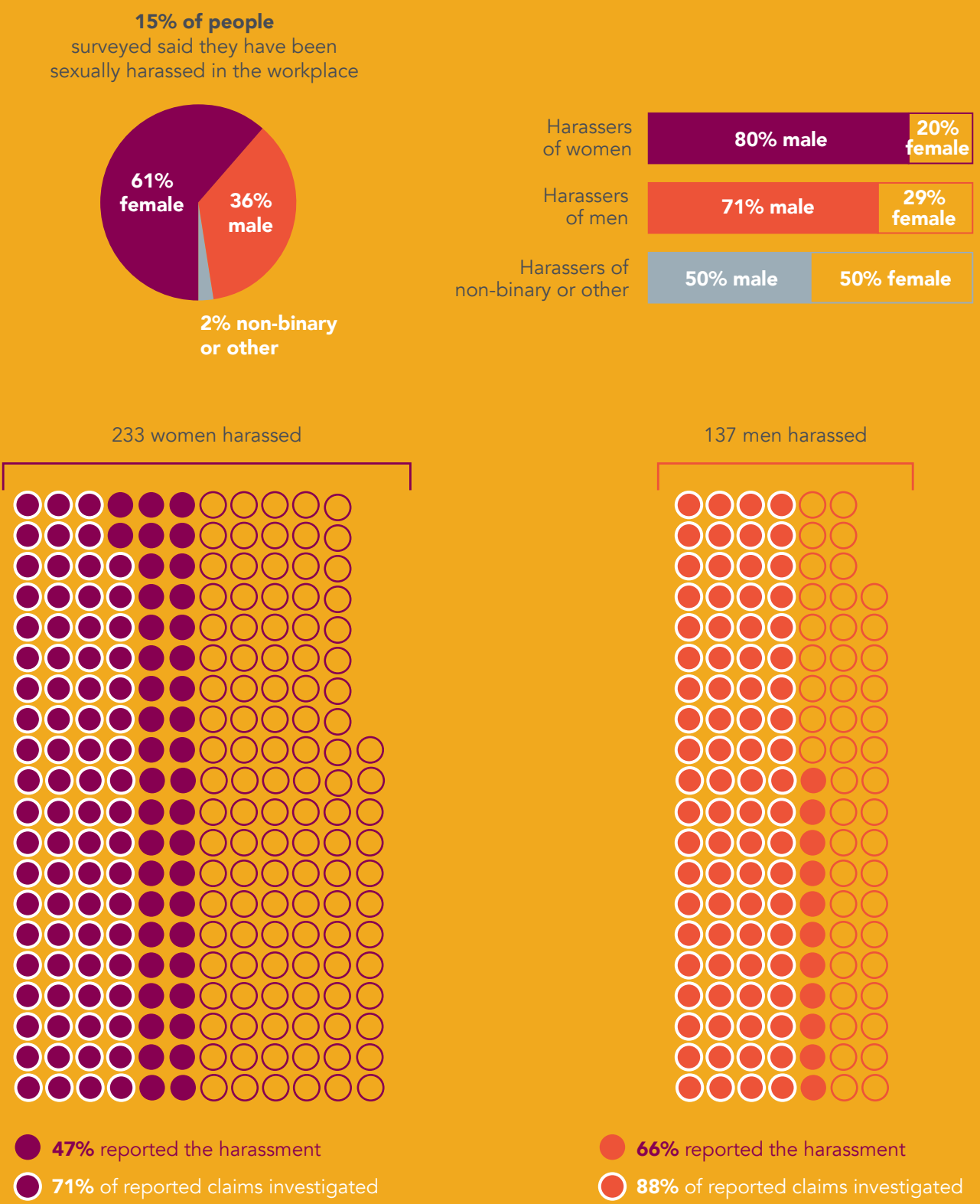
This mistrust is further manifested in low numbers of people reporting harassment (47% for women and 66% for men).

Changing these numbers is going to take work in building up trust and showing a commitment to listening and respect.



Who speaks up and who is listened to?

Figure 1: Sexual harassment occurrence and outcomes



Fair pay

It doesn't matter how much fun and excitement you infuse into the work environment if people don't think they are being fairly compensated for the value they bring to the organization.

When workers were asked if they feel they are paid fairly, only 66% said "yes."

Perception of fairness varies by gender, with 72% of men agreeing they are paid fairly and only 61% of women.

Transparency is one possible solution toward greater pay equity (see Figure 2). This survey showed only 31% of workers are at companies that make salaries public – so there's a long way to go in making this the norm. In those instances where salaries are public, workers are less likely to perceive unfairness in compensation (28% less likely for women and 41% less likely for men).

As companies work toward increased fairness, adding more meaning and personalization to recognition and rewards outside of compensation will become increasingly important to motivating and retaining workers.

Bringing more visibility to pay

Figure 2: Public salaries associated with perception of fairness



Work-life harmony

When we come to work each day, each of us is balancing varying levels of responsibility at work and at home. The most progressive companies recognize this and do everything in their power to help workers achieve work-life harmony and bring their best selves to work. Unfortunately, there's still a long way to go.

More than half of workers (54%) say they've experienced burnout in their career.

Burnout comes with a whole host of issues, including disengagement, poor health, decreased productivity, and eventually turnover.

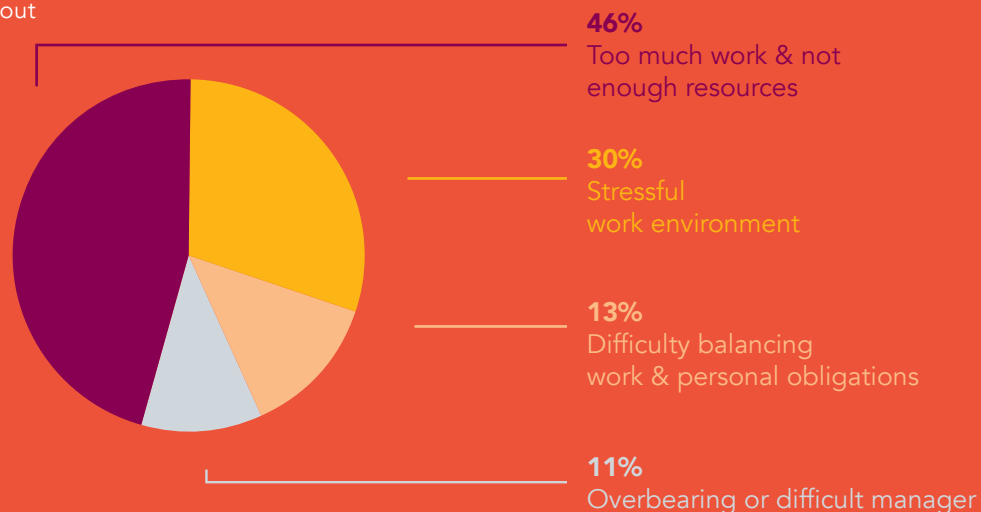
Incidentally, women are more likely to have experienced burnout than men (61% vs. 53%). One reason could be that many women shoulder more of a burden when it comes to family responsibilities. More than one-third (35%) of working moms (and 25% of working dads) do not think their company's parental leave policy gives employees enough time off.

Allowing employees to work when and where they choose is one way to achieve better work-life harmony. Only one in three people works remotely, according to the survey. But those who do are more likely to report being highly engaged (55% vs. 44%) and happy at work (86% vs. 78%).

We're all human and bring life into work. When companies embrace this, instead of focusing on restrictive policies, everyone can flourish and be productive.

Too much work is the leading cause of burnout

Figure 3: Reasons for burnout



Inclusion and belonging

An innate part of being human is the desire to fit in and be respected by your peers and the broader organization. Even as companies ramp up D&I practices (or just flaunt them for public relations), 26% of workers said they've been discriminated against at work and 31% have witnessed discrimination at work.

Figure 4 shows age is the most prevalent type of discrimination felt by workers. In looking at how different generations experience discrimination, the youngest workers (aged 18-24) are most likely to feel discriminated against (32%), report that discrimination (60%), as well as witness someone else being discriminated against (42%).

It's also worth noting some other key statistics when it comes to discrimination:

Women are more likely than men to feel discriminated against (29% vs. 23%).

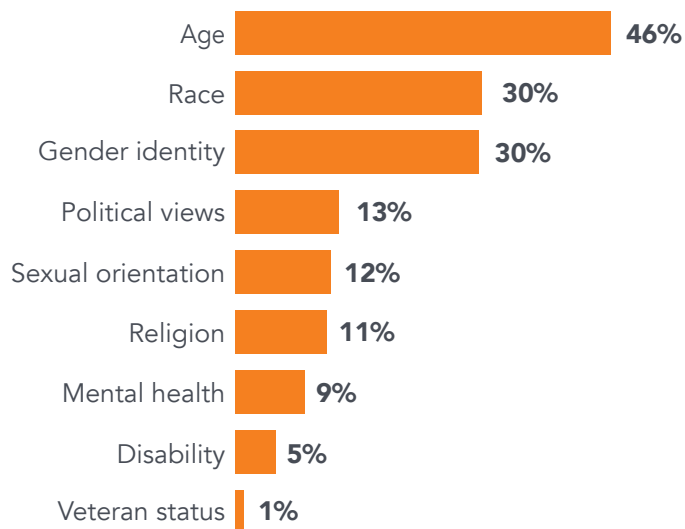
Though a smaller sample size, nearly half (49%) of LGBTQ workers said they've felt discriminated against in their career.

Of the nearly one in five workers (18%) who have a mental health condition, 45% say they've felt discriminated against because of that condition.

Let these numbers paint a picture for how people of varying backgrounds and perspective experience the workplace. Every company is at a different stage in the D&I journey, but at a very basic level, companies would benefit from giving every employee an opportunity to be heard and be themselves at work.

I have been discriminated against because of...

Figure 4: Categories of discrimination



Percentages do not total 100% because participants could select more than one option.

Growth

Now that many companies have accepted that traditional performance management is broken, they're looking for a path forward. Should they still conduct reviews? Should they ditch ratings?

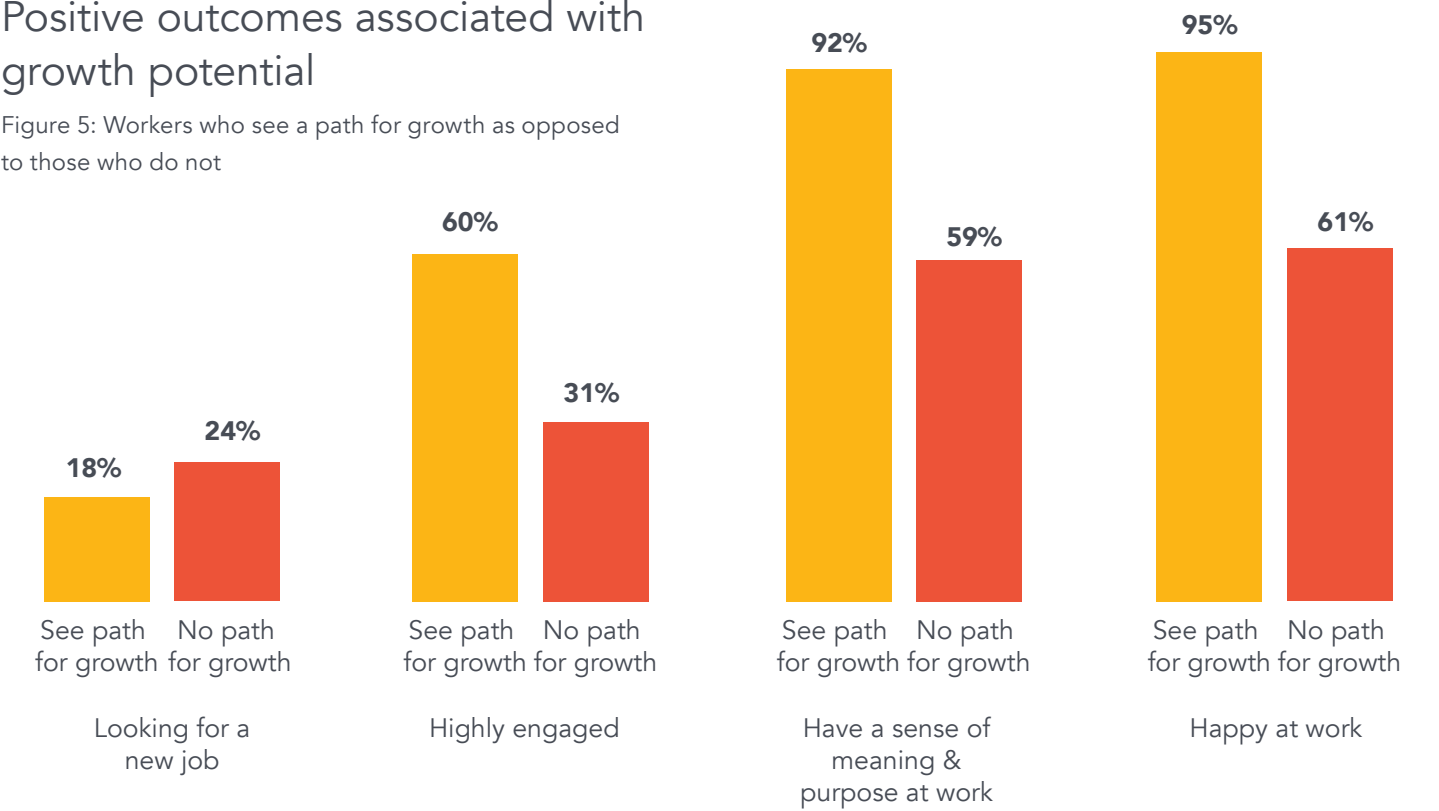
While the methods for conducting performance management are debated, one thing remains true: All of this is an exercise in futility if employees cannot see a path for personal growth in the organization. So workers were asked exactly that (See Figure 5).

It's also important to note what's going on outside of work can impact a person's perception of their growth potential. For example, of women who have been pregnant at work, about one in three (36%) say they've been passed over for a job or opportunity because they were pregnant.

Finally, workers were asked how frequently they receive feedback and recognition about their performance from their managers. Most responded "occasionally." And yet, when asked the ideal frequency of receiving feedback and recognition, a majority said "frequently." There's a disconnect here. Frequent conversations and communication about growth are more important than anything else when it comes to employee performance.

Positive outcomes associated with growth potential

Figure 5: Workers who see a path for growth as opposed to those who do not



Gratitude and recognition

Here's where all the opportunities for improving the human experience at work come together. Survey findings clearly show people expect a certain level of respect, autonomy, and appreciation at work. They want to be seen and valued for who they are and what they bring to the organization. And yet, 22% of workers have either never been recognized at work or haven't been recognized in more than two years.

As shown in Figure 6, workers recognized in the last month as opposed to never exhibit the following positive outcomes:

3x less likely to report feeling unsafe at work

More than 2x as likely to see a path to grow in the organization

Much more likely to trust executive leadership (81% vs. 55%)

Nearly 2x as likely to trust their HR team

Much more likely to find meaning and purpose in their work (82% vs. 61%)

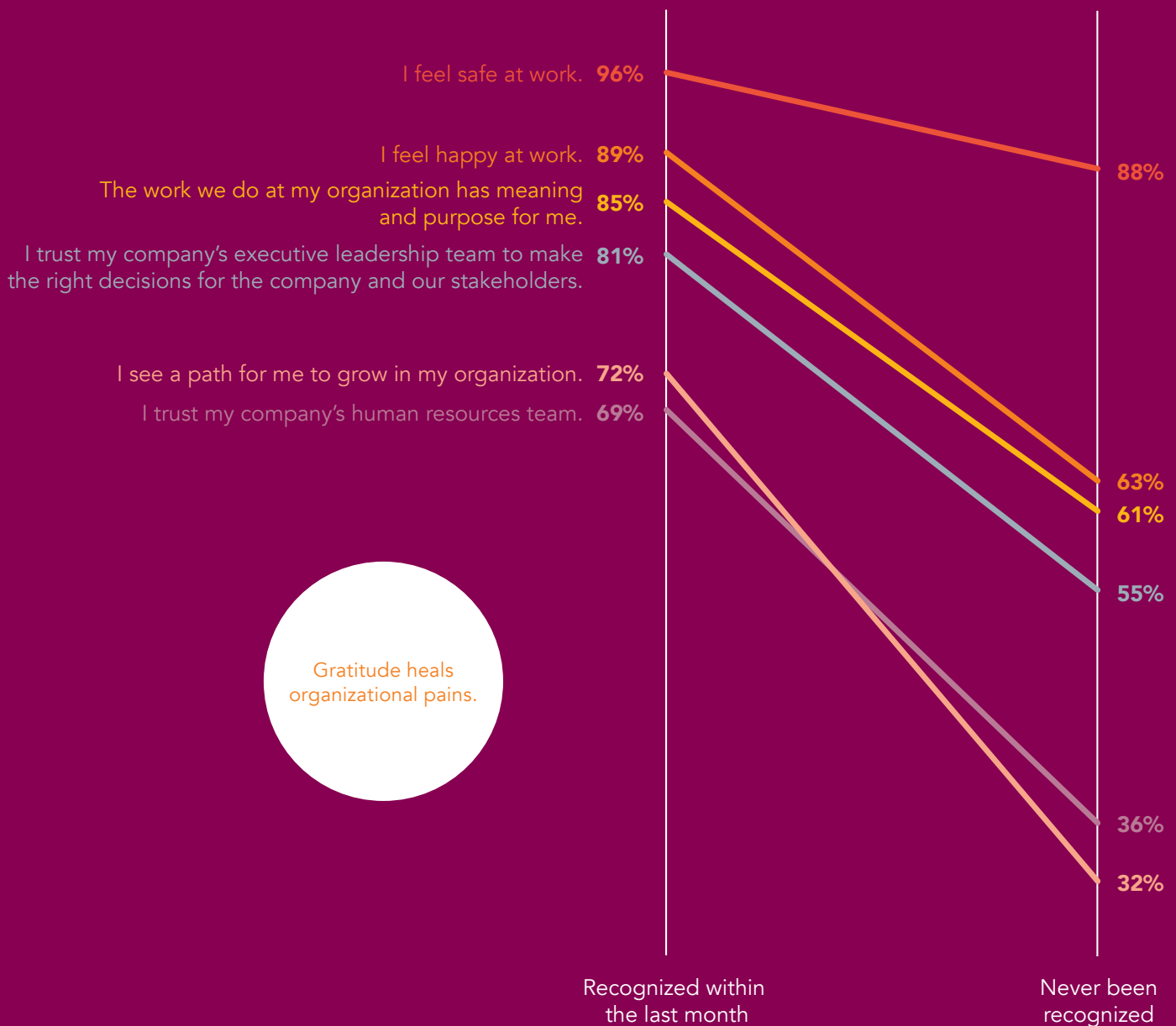
What's more, much of the same benefits result from giving recognition as well. In particular, those who've had the opportunity to give recognition in the last month are more than 2x as likely to be highly engaged compared to those who've never recognized a colleague (60% vs. 27%). They're also nearly 2x as likely to see a path to grow in the organization (64% vs. 34%).

Tapping into employees' desire to be seen and appreciated – and to express that gratitude toward colleagues – is perhaps the most underutilized management strategy and biggest area of opportunity for companies in the future of work.



Recognition lifts workers

Figure 6: Positive outcomes of receiving frequent recognition at work



Conclusion

The topics covered in this report – safety, fair pay, work-life harmony, inclusion and belonging, growth, gratitude, and recognition – are all core aspects of a human workplace. The more improvements companies make in these targeted areas, the more humans and businesses will flourish. It's that simple.

**No matter where you sit in an organization,
you have a right to a human workplace.**

These findings should be a call to action for HR and senior leaders to leverage the data and insist on a better experience for all. Sparking change takes courage, but there's never been a more opportune time to reject archaic, bureaucratic ways of working and make your workplace inherently more responsive to human needs.



About the survey

This survey was directed by Workhuman Nov. 27-Dec. 9, 2019. This is the 12th deployment of the employee survey since its launch in spring 2011. The respondent sampling of the survey was conducted by independent market research firm Dynata. The final sample of the survey was composed of 2,613 randomly selected fully employed persons in the U.S. (age 18 or older). The survey has a margin of error of +/- 1.9 percentage points at a 95% level of confidence.

About Workhuman

Workhuman® helps forward-thinking companies energize their cultures, unlock their employees' passion and potential, and unite their workforce around a shared purpose. With the world's fastest-growing social recognition and continuous performance management platform, our mission is to lead the movement to create human moments, celebrating the power of humanity in the workplace through gratitude and peer-to-peer recognition. Workhuman® Cloud uncovers provocative workplace data and human insights, delivering tangible results powered by our core belief – the more motivated and valued employees are, the more they can perform the best work of their lives. Workhuman (formerly known as Globoforce) was founded in 1999 and is co-headquartered in Framingham, Mass., and Dublin, Ireland.



Learn more about how Workhuman® Cloud can unlock potential, purpose, and passion in your organization.

+1 888 743 6723 | workhuman.com

Or read more on our blog: workhuman.com/whblog