

# What Women Want (At Work)

From Shecession to Shesurgence



ManpowerGroup

Data tells us women have left the workforce at alarming rates, creating an urgent need for employers to better understand what women want at work to thrive. To find out, we asked 5,000 workers across five countries including Australia, France, Italy, United Kingdom and United States.

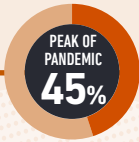
As we look to the post-pandemic world of work, employers who provide choice, flexibility and performance-over-presenteeism will attract and keep the best diverse talent, all while driving their skills and growth agendas.



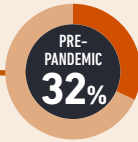
## 1. WOMEN ARE LESS BURNT OUT NOW THAN PEAK PANDEMIC



As flexibility and hybrid become part of the post-pandemic workplace normal, burnout has dropped down to **39%**. Among generations Gen Z and Millennials, **4 in 10** are feeling burnout the most.



In the peak of the pandemic, **45%** of women reported feeling stressed or burnt out daily.



Despite the drop, women are still experiencing a higher level of burnout from pre-pandemic levels (**32%**).

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Both women (at 39%) and men (slightly lower at 37%) are feeling the effects of the pandemic. People want employers to offer more – to prioritize wellbeing and purpose, while providing flexibility, competitive pay, good working conditions and skills development.



## 2. THE NEW HIERARCHY OF THRIVE

**What do women really want?** Compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, and a manager / team they trust are the baseline.

If you have have those, focus on these **4 well-being factors to attract and retain women**:



**Health Benefits**  
(including maternity leave, fertility benefits)



**A Culture of Openness around Mental Health & Well-Being**  
(including additional PTO & mental health resources)



**Physical / Nutrition Benefits**



**Subsidized Elder Care / Child Care**

Mental fitness will be increasingly prioritized, expanding traditional health and safety exponentially. A mass movement to break the stigma of silence will require employers to be explicit about their increased duty of care – protecting mental health as well as wealth (financial health), employability and well-being. Expect growing calls-to-action on ways to prevent burnout, build resilience and boost mental fitness.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

## 3. END OF THE 5-DAY 9-5? THE 4-DAY WEEK RULES

**Now is the time to reimagine a new future of work.** If the 5-day week were phased out, what would women (and men) choose?



**62%** of women (and 65% of men) would prefer to work a compressed four-day week (paid for 5).



**1 in 5** women would like to work four days, vs. just **16%** of men.



Regardless of gender, **19%** would prefer to choose which days / times of the week suits them to get their work done.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Now is the time to tear up the playbook and adopt a one-size-fits-one approach. Individual choice will be in the reach of the many – not just the few. People from all roles – from the production line to the home office – will demand more flexibility and autonomy as a norm.



## 4. MIND THE GAP: WHAT COMPANIES PLAN VS. WHAT WOMEN WANT

### WHAT COMPANIES PLAN

Flexible Working Policies	68%
Creating an Inclusive Culture	68%
Internal Sponsorship	68%
Including in Leadership KPIs	67%
Mentoring / Coaching	66%
Partnering with Universities / Education	66%

### WHAT WOMEN WANT

Supportive Managers and Teams	80%
Opportunities to Develop their Careers	70%
Autonomy & Flexibility	49%
PTO and Mental Health Support	33%

A heightened focus on a values-driven agenda, empathetic leaders, and a culture of trust will become a net positive for attracting and retaining talent and engaging remote teams. The employee value proposition will take precedence.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

## 5. WANT TO KEEP GREAT TALENT? KEEP ME ENGAGED.



### FLEXIBILITY FIRST:

Flexible start and finish times are the most attractive working arrangement for women (men want that too, yet they are equally focused on where they work – hybrid).



### SHAPING THE NEW HYBRID:

Just **8%** of women (and men) want to work fully remotely, **7%** of women (and 10% of men) want to work fully in the workplace, while **85%** want autonomy to choose what works best for them.



### PTO AND MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS:

One in four women (and men) want the ability to take more mental health days. It is a top workplace flexibility factor.



### THE POWER OF PEOPLE:

**82%** of women want to work with people they get along with and trust and **80%** of women want a supportive managers vs. **77%** and **71%** men respectively.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Autonomy, Career Progression and Feeling Motivated / Passionate about the Work You Do – Matters Most to Women

## WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE



**1. Support women (and men)** to balance work with caring responsibilities, start with flexible start and finish times.

**2. Value performance over presenteeism** – being in the physical room is no longer a determiner of commitment.

**3. Help women progress into leadership** by focusing on high-growth roles and offering career advancement support.

**4. Know that culture creates change, not just policy.** Over half of leaders believe the single most powerful thing an organization can do to promote more women leaders is to create an inclusive culture.

**5. Leadership must own it** – gender parity cannot be delegated to Human Resources. For commitment to be authentic and aligned with business strategy, change must flow from the top.