

Exploring the shift in employee expectations

THE PERSPECTIVE SERIES

New insights into the UK workplace

Circleresearch
In partnership with Vodafone UK



LENGTH

18
Pages



READ TIME

1.5  
Cups of tea

PEOPLE SURVEYED



505
Senior
Managers

861
Employees

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The world of work is changing

Major advances in technology have transformed the workplace forever. They've dramatically impacted the way we go about work and the skills we need as employees to be effective. At the same time, they've also massively accelerated productivity and an business' potential for growth.

On a larger scale, legislation such as the minimum wage, paternity leave and the extension to maternity leave, have transformed living conditions.

In parallel, employees now demand much more of their employer. Not only do they want to be treated fairly and with respect; they expect to be fulfilled, to be empowered and to work flexibly. The social and legal contract between employer and employee has changed.

We're experiencing great changes in the economic climate, too. In 2007 the UK economy reached a historic peak. Now we're feeling the effects of a hard recession and economic turbulence. And since our manufacturing base has all but been replaced by a service industry, our economic lifeblood is now all about people.

This means that for most businesses, retaining the best employees is central to their success. Eight in ten senior business managers describe having the very best people as not just desirable, but critical.

The purpose of Vodafone's Perspective series is to help businesses find better ways of working. The guiding principle throughout the series is to strike a healthy balance between opinion and fact, theory and practice, observation and advice.

This first report sees things from the employee's perspective, and is a must for any business serious about talent management. Drawing upon the findings from a survey of 1,366 employees and employers across UK business of all sizes and sectors, we map the current state of the 'talent-scape' and identify different strategies for attracting, motivating and retaining the best employees in the current environment.

The **evolving** shape of the workplace

The **Perspective series** explores the changing shape of businesses in the UK. The reports aim to give guidance to businesses to find better ways of working – because businesses of every size are under increasing pressure to develop new ways to get things done. Perspective reports are essential reading for business owners and those with a strategic interest in the evolution of the workplace.

This first report focuses on the heart of the business: employees. It answers questions such as:

- how are employer attitudes towards managing employees changing?
- what really motivates and retains today's employee?
- how does flexible working impact employee satisfaction and productivity?

Vodafone commissioned two primary research surveys, which form the core of this report. Conducted by Circle Research in October 2011, the first of these canvassed the opinion of 505 senior managers within UK businesses and public sector bodies with 100 or more employees. The second gathered the view of 861 employees working for small (10 – 99 employees) medium (100 – 499) and large (500+) organisations. The findings are further complemented with secondary research and statistics, practical case studies and commentary from some of the UK's leading businesses, employment experts including the Chartered Management Institute and Ashridge Business School.

We hope you find the report valuable and that you take a moment to explore the wealth of other material available at www.vodafone.co.uk/perspective

Executive summary

Our research has broadly highlighted three core areas:

- despite unemployment being at a 15 year high, a talent blockage exists in today's employment market
- businesses need to embrace more flexible, collaborative and better ways of working
- there are hidden secrets to retaining talent; pay is secondary

A talent blockage

Attracting the best staff is critical but now harder than ever. Despite sky-high unemployment, the UK economy seems to be suffering a 'talent blockage', where people are reluctant to change jobs.

Our research shows that only one in five of the workforce is likely to seriously consider a job move in the next twelve months. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) figures further reveal that just 2.4% of the workforce put this intention into practice and left their job in 2011; in 1998 twice as many did so.

This is because: the effort invested in applying for a role is less likely to be rewarded; negotiating a deal is difficult, and job security, as a new entrant is more difficult.

Employers are responding by:

- better managing the employer brand
- escalating talent management up the business agenda
- becoming more proactive in their recruitment activities
- recognising the need for a more flexible approach to employment

The flexible workplace

Three-fifths of businesses now equip the majority of employees with the ability to work remotely. Flexible working is felt to: boost employee satisfaction, create a more productive place to work, develop a more flexible workforce and lower costs due to reduced demand for office space.

Like anything worthwhile though, flexible working is not without challenges. Those who have already deployed flexible working have faced three major challenges: overcoming fears that productivity would actually decline, addressing concerns that teamwork would suffer and blurring the home/work boundary.

So successfully deploying flexible working is about winning hearts and minds as much as it is about technology. Introduce flexible working with care and in reality these fears typically turn out to be unfounded. For example, three quarters of those equipped to work remotely say it has boosted their job satisfaction, and a similar proportion report that it has actually improved their work-life balance.

The secrets of employee motivation and loyalty

A motivated, productive and loyal workforce requires more than flexibility.

When senior managers in UK businesses rank the most important determinants of employee satisfaction, first by a significant margin is salary. Two further 'soft' elements – ensuring employees feel valued and their work-life balance – are also felt to have an important role. Ask employees and they broadly agree.

However, by isolating those who are exceptionally satisfied and looking for correlations between this and high ratings on specific attributes of their workplace, we have statistically derived what really creates a motivated, happy workforce.

In this analysis, two other elements have a far more pronounced impact on employee motivation and loyalty:

- **fulfilment**: the degree to which the job and environment is enjoyable and stimulating
- **tribalism**: the degree to which employees feel valued and in tune with the employer's vision

On the whole, employers show considerable room for improvement in these areas.

How do you think your business would fare?

A ‘talent blockage’

AT A GLANCE

1. Those on the hunt for talent spend longer seeking the best
2. 80% of employers believe poor economic conditions mean employees are less likely to jump ship. Most employees agree
3. Employers are taking four actions to unblock the pipeline:
 - employer brand reputation
 - talent management
 - social media recruitment
 - flexible approach

THE VERY BEST PEOPLE ARE CRITICAL TO SUCCESS

84%



Businesses

If you're involved in staff recruitment or retention, then the chances are you're having a tough time. Despite high levels of unemployment, our research highlights the difficulties employers are facing in finding high-calibre staff. Eight in ten say they need to work harder than ever to **attract the best**.

And with 84% of businesses telling us that having the very best people is critical to their success, it's a serious issue. As a service economy, the UK will only thrive if it continues to attract and retain the best talent. Given 8.3% of the economically active population are currently unemployed, it feels odd to highlight problems like these.

But in fact 68% of employers feel that high unemployment makes no difference to their ability to attract the best staff. The pool of potential recruits may be deeper, but this simply means that those on the hunt for talent need to spend considerably longer identifying the very best.

It's also becoming more of a challenge to entice candidates away from their existing employer. 80% of employers believe that today's turbulent economic environment means their employees are less likely to jump ship to a more uncertain option. Employees agree. When asked, only one in five of the workforce advises they are likely to seriously consider moving employer in the next twelve months. ONS figures further reveal that just 2.4% of the workforce put this intention into practice and left their job in 2011; in 1998 twice as many (4.5%) did so.

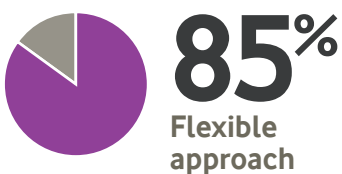
Within these statistics are some important demographic differences that can help business owners hang on to the most vulnerable sections of the workforce. Particular focus should be given to two groups:

- **younger employees:** 37% of those aged 18-34 report that they are seriously thinking about moving job in the next 12 months. This is in stark contrast to just 14% of those aged 45-54 who seem much more settled and loyal
- **mid-tenure employees:** an employee's loyalty also seems to be linked to their length of employment. During the first two years of employment, 30% are likely to be on the lookout for a new job, rising to 43% of employees who have been employed for four to five years. Beyond this point though, loyalty rockets. Only 11% of those with a decade or more service are likely to be on the job hunt

YOUNGER AND MID-TENURE EMPLOYEES ARE MORE LIKELY TO MOVE JOBS



EMPLOYER BRAND AND FLEXIBLE WORKING ARE CRITICAL IN TALENT MANAGEMENT



What's at the core of this talent blockage? Well, at its heart are three key concerns all of which relate to current economic uncertainty:

- 94% of employees feel competition for jobs is higher because of high unemployment. The considerable effort invested in applying for a role is less likely to be rewarded
- 78% feel the balance of power has moved in the employer's favour. As an employee, they feel their ability to negotiate a better deal is reduced
- 91% believe that businesses will remain leaner for the foreseeable future. Job security, especially as a new entrant, is hard to come by

So stagnation is a key feature of the current talent-scape. In such conditions our research shows that employers recognise the need to adapt. But how?

- by taking a step back and looking at the **reputation** of the business through its marketing strategy. Traditionally, managing business reputation has been concerned with customers, prospects, opinion-formers and investors. But there's increasing recognition that just as much attention needs to be given to managing how potential employees see the business. 90% of businesses however, now report that they're more conscious of this
- by ensuring **talent management** remains top of the agenda. If staff are the key to the success of a business, it needs to be the concern of all senior employees. And for half of employers it is; 55% describe employee retention and development as a significant focus for the management team
- by taking the initiative and being more innovative with recruitment. The advent of social networks such as LinkedIn have already had a marked impact on recruitment. Employers can now approach the best qualified prospects directly. 54% of surveyed businesses report that social media currently has some role in the way they recruit and a further 12% describe its role as significant. Looking ahead, 60% expect social media to play a more important role in the future. Make sure you don't get left behind
- by recognising the need for a more **flexible approach** to employment. 85% of managers believe that employees now expect greater flexibility from their employer

This last point is so key that it deserves a fuller exploration in its own right. Welcome to the flexible workplace...

The flexible workplace

AT A GLANCE

1. 59% have deployed flexible working
2. Top four benefits are:
 - employee satisfaction
 - productivity
 - flexibility
 - cost reduction
3. The top three barriers are:
 - reduction in productivity
 - impact on teamwork
 - blurring the home/work boundary
4. In reality these barriers are a myth

Parents and carers have a legal right to request flexible working and unless there are good business reasons not to, they should be given the means to work flexibly. But the expectation to work flexibly extends beyond those with dependents. Three quarters of employees say that they expect much more flexibility from their employer nowadays. Employers are not blind to this – the clear majority (85%) acknowledge this desire in their workforce.

Central to creating a flexible workplace is the adoption of remote working technologies, which provide employees with the same IT and communications tools they would have in the office, regardless of their location. With fewer employees in a smaller business, trust and reliance on them is even more keenly felt. Enabling them to work more flexibly is a win-win. Unsurprisingly then, almost nine in ten employers are experiencing demand from employees for technologies like these. One third describe this demand as 'significant'.

Alongside employee pull, employers themselves see two very good reasons to push the deployment of flexible working.

It's seen as a valuable weapon in the war for talent. When asked to rank the perceived benefits of flexible working, improved **employee satisfaction** and **retention** top the list. Almost three quarters name this as one of the five most compelling benefits; one fifth cite it as the single most attractive benefit. Allied to this, one half feel that offering flexible working options makes them a more attractive prospect as a potential employer.

Employers also recognise the impact of flexible working on business performance and the **bottom line**. Such practices are felt to create a more productive business (57% cite it as a top five benefit). A more flexible workforce is especially valued by larger SMEs (59% of those employing 100 – 499 name this as a top five benefit versus 49% in corporates employing 500+).

The conditions are ripe then for the widespread deployment of flexible working. And a very sizeable vanguard has already forged the way. Three fifths of businesses now equip the majority of employees with the ability to work away from the office. Again there are notable differences between larger SMEs and corporates in this respect, with just under one half of the former having deployed flexible working compared with almost two thirds of the latter.

However, many have still to embark on the journey – a significant minority (41%) enables only a small elite or none of their employees. Given the trend though, it's likely that many of these businesses will look at deploying flexible working soon. When they do they can learn lessons from their predecessors. It seems the barriers are primarily human rather than technical.

THE BUSINESS BENEFITS ARE VAST



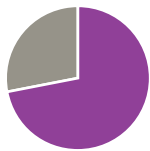
“Businesses worried about losing productivity and control if they create a flexible and remote workforce, are probably going to find that they are the losers in the future, because it is the way that the world of business is going. It’s critical that businesses respond and move proactively towards technological change.”

DR PATRICIA HIND, BUSINESS PSYCHOLOGIST AND MEMBER OF FACULTY AT ASHRIDGE BUSINESS SCHOOL

“In the future all sustainable businesses will need to embrace this concept of remote, flexible, virtual working, but I don’t ever believe it will be complete. Businesses will still need to manage face-to-face relationships, they will still need people sitting at desks. Employers will need to be able to manage that as well as the flexible workforce.”

DR PATRICIA HIND, BUSINESS PSYCHOLOGIST AND MEMBER OF FACULTY AT ASHRIDGE BUSINESS SCHOOL

FLEXIBLE WORKING IS HIGHLY BENEFICIAL



72%

Of employees felt it improved their work-life balance



54%

Of employees felt they are more productive



75%

Of employees felt it has boosted job satisfaction

“With the current economic conditions there is a focus on controlling costs and improving efficiency, but this report provides a timely reminder of the benefits of investing in a more flexible, mobile and motivated workforce.”

PETRA WILTON, DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND RESEARCH, CHARTERED MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Those who’ve already deployed flexible working have faced three major challenges: overcoming fears that productivity would actually decline (56% name as a barrier to implementation); concerns that teamwork would suffer (50%), and a reluctance to blur the home-work boundary (40%).

Speak directly with employees who are able to work remotely and they further dispel any pre-deployment angst. In their view it **boosts productivity**. Although one in ten (13%) report that they get less work done when working remotely, one half feel they are more productive. And more than that, it boosts morale. Three quarters say it boosted their **job satisfaction** and a similar proportion (72%) report that it has actually improved their work-life balance.

Of course it’s natural that having experienced the benefits, employees see the value. But business owners should be aware of two employee groups who seem less receptive to remote working.

One third of employees aged over 55 who are not currently enabled with remote working feel it would negatively impact their job satisfaction. Just 4% of the 18 – 34 age group report the same. It seems that flexible working is an inherently more attractive proposition to ‘digital natives’.

Part-time workers should also be a focus. One quarter of this group fear that working remotely would negatively impact their job satisfaction compared to only one in ten (14%) of their full-time colleagues. This is perhaps because part-time workers tend to value the personal relationships that work brings more highly, and see mobile working as detrimental to this.

So when formulating a flexible working plan, start by understanding the needs and **perceptions** of different employees. Develop an approach that recognises these differences; for example through tailored training. Couple these activities with an open dialogue which emphasises benefits, dispels any fears and outlines the support measures in place. Most important of all, ensure that the vision is supported by senior employees so they can lead by example.

Of course flexible working practices are important but are only part of the puzzle. To motivate employees in the modern world we need to know what makes them tick. What really drives them? What are their expectations for their development, their reward package and the way that they are managed? Ultimately, what makes them happy?

You might find the answers surprising...

CASE STUDY:

Flexible working in practice: FitMama

Founded in 2005 by Marie Behenna-Moran, FitMama is a pregnancy exercise specialist offering exercise and education services to pregnant women and new mothers around Basingstoke. FitMama provides both public classes and private sessions to help pregnant women prepare for the rigours of labour and new mothers to heal from the physical stresses of birth. When delivering its services, FitMama strives to work closely with local midwives, supporting their efforts to reduce complications during pregnancy and birth as a result of fitness and obesity issues. Marie also provides telephone support to clients outside of the sessions, if they have specific questions or simply need a sympathetic ear. In addition, FitMama works to foster a sense of community and peer support among the women who use its services. This involves arranging get-togethers, linking women together directly through telephone contact lists and a Facebook group and sharing news with them through SMS messages, among other things.

The challenge

Marie is now taking FitMama to the next level by bringing in other trainers to work under the FitMama brand. Expansion has added to the challenges Marie already faced running the business. “The nature of the business is that we’re very mobile,” she explains. “I need to be able to take my office with me, but historically I would have to rush back to my office at home several times a day to check email. I also get a lot of enquiries by text message, so I need to be able to easily send quick messages to clients.”

Marie highlights the limitations of her previous communications solution: “The costs were expensive and unpredictable, which didn’t fit well with our slightly unusual cash flow, where our clients typically book a series of courses lasting six or ten weeks up front. I needed a set monthly phone bill, so I could manage costs more easily, and so be comfortable still making the calls we need to make, even when our cash flow is tight.”

“The nature of the business is that we’re very mobile. I need to be able to take my office with me, but historically I would have to rush back to my office at home several times a day to check email. I also get a lot of enquiries by text message, so I need to be able to easily send quick messages to clients.”

MARIE BEHENNA-MORAN, FOUNDER



“My number is on all our marketing material, so it was absolutely essential to be able to take that with me to a new service.”

MARIE BEHENNA-MORAN, FOUNDER

The solution and benefits

When Marie was introduced to Vodafone One Net Express she quickly realised it offered the freedom to make calls while controlling costs, along with handsets that allow her to access everything she needs to run her business while on the move. Another key benefit was that Marie could transfer her existing mobile number to the solution. “My number is on all our marketing material, so it was absolutely essential to be able to take that with me to a new service,” she says.

FitMama is now in control while staff are out and about. Smartphones give us access to everything they need, including email, Facebook and the FitMama website. “It’s freed up all the time I used to spend travelling back to my office each day to check email, while allowing us to look more efficient to clients because we can respond more quickly to queries,” says Marie. “We can also give much better support to women when they need emotional support by phone, because we can ring them and stay on the call for as long as they need us to be, without worrying about the costs.”

Moreover, there are significant financial benefits. “We have the freedom to make as many calls to clients and to each other as we need to, without worrying about the cost,” says Marie. “The predictable monthly cost gives me the control I need to develop FitMama and take on new trainers. I now feel much more confident that I can supply a phone as part of the package for any new staff, because I’ll know what the costs are.”

“We have the freedom to make as many calls to clients and to each other as we need to, without worrying about the cost.”

MARIE BEHENNA-MORAN, FOUNDER



The two perspectives on flexible working

SOURCE: CIRCLE RESEARCH 2011

Employee perspective

They want it

86%  Employers experience demand from employees for flexible working

Many have it

59%  Organisations now equip the majority of employees with remote working solutions

They love it

75%  Employees say it boosts their job satisfaction

72%  Employees report that it improves their work-life balance

54% **++**
Say it makes them more productive

Flexible working: a win-win scenario for both employer and employee. For employees, boosting job satisfaction and providing a better work-life balance are key benefits. For employers, cost reduction and productivity are improved.

Common misconceptions

56%  Fear productivity would decline

50%  Concern teamwork would suffer

40%  Worry about blurring home/work boundary

Employer perspective

Reaping the benefits

54%  Expect lower costs due to reduced office space

57% **++**
Anticipate a more productive business

70%  Predict a boost in employee satisfaction

It's worth it

70%  Of employers with flexible working solutions deployed, find them beneficial



The secrets of motivation and loyalty

AT A GLANCE

1. Employers and employees believe work-life balance is most important
2. In reality, job fulfilment and tribalism (feeling of belonging) matter more
3. Employers underperform on both fulfilment and tribalism measures

“What the workmen want from their employers beyond anything else”, wrote the father of scientific management Frederick Winslow Taylor in 1903, “are high wages, and what employers want from their workmen most of all is a low labour cost of manufacture”.

An outdated view, surely? Perhaps not. A century later it seems that Taylor's view still holds true. To some extent.

We asked senior managers in UK businesses to rank what they felt were the most important factors determining employee satisfaction. 30% name salary as the single most important driver of employee satisfaction and 45% place it in the top three.

So it seems that, just as in Taylor's day, management perceive high wages as having a direct impact on levels of employee satisfaction. Unlike Taylor though, the modern manager has altered their view somewhat. They recognise that financial reward, whilst centre stage, isn't the entire picture. Our research shows that employers also believe two further 'soft' elements have an important bearing on employee satisfaction. These are whether employees feel valued and to what extent they enjoy a good work-life balance.

But maybe Taylor was right. Perhaps the secret to a productive, motivated workforce is simply paying them more than competitors? Employers clearly believe it's key and it seems much of their workforce agrees. Ask employees what they feel most strongly impacts their **job satisfaction** and one fifth will name remuneration or their **work-life balance** as the single most important determinant.

As it might be expected, the relative importance of these factors differs between individuals. As employees get older, for example, salary becomes less important. Ask employees aged 18-34 what motivates them and 23% will name salary first. But when employees aged 35-44 are asked the same question, most rate work-life balance as the most important. Similarly, work-life balance is by far the most important driver for part-time employees, with 20% placing it top of their list compared to just 10% doing so for salary.

So on this basis, motivating employees seems to be simple. Pay people well, don't work them too hard and tweak the balance according to their personal circumstances. In reality the truth is more complex. Strange as it may sound, people don't always know what really motivates them. Ask them and they'll usually offer an answer in good faith; an answer which isolates an important factor but usually oversimplifies the situation. Commonly, they'll state what they believe should motivate them or rationalise more **emotional** considerations. Probe deeper and something very interesting begins to emerge.

“It’s not just about the money. That is important, but people need to be valued, they need to be respected, they need to do work that they enjoy and they need to work for a company that they can respect.”

DR PATRICIA HIND, BUSINESS PSYCHOLOGIST AND MEMBER OF FACULTY AT ASHRIDGE BUSINESS SCHOOL

We asked employees to rate their current employment against a number of satisfaction measures. Next, we asked them to rate their overall satisfaction at work. By isolating those who are exceptionally satisfied overall and looking for correlations between this and high ratings on specific attributes of their workplace, we can find out what really creates a motivated, happy workforce.

The results of this exercise are revealing. Base salary and work-life balance actually have only a loose relationship to job satisfaction. They, along with a handful of other factors related to working conditions, do matter, but in some ways they’re just the basics. Two other features of employment have a far more pronounced impact on employee satisfaction, and determine whether an employer stands apart from the crowd.

The first concerns the level of fulfilment the role offers – the degree to which it’s enjoyable and **stimulating**. Outstanding employers provide an environment and roles which invigorate the workforce. The second concerns the degree to which the employee feels **valued** by and has a sense of pride in their employer. Allied to this are two further factors of slightly lower importance – the quality of leadership and the extent to which the employer’s vision is shared by employees. It seems that successful employers create stronger loyalty bonds in employees; a shared vision they passionately support, a belief that they’re part of something special, and a feeling that they personally matter.

So this is the modern employee. Rather than an automaton driven solely by financial reward, they’re seeking something much deeper. They’re motivated not just by their working conditions, but by a desire for fulfilment and a sense of **belonging**. How do UK employers match up?

The research reveals a polarised picture. 18% of businesses fall into the ‘excellent’ group with their employees describing them as “one of the best places to work”. At the other extreme, 8% of employers are labelled as ‘poor’ by their workforce. The majority sit in between two uninspiring categories. 53% are labelled as “good but could be better” and 20% as ‘acceptable’.

“It’s critical to create an environment for employees that is fulfilling and provides a real sense of belonging.”

PETRA WILTON, DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND RESEARCH, CHARTERED MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

“The psychological contract is critical. This is the implicit contract between an employer and employee about how they’re going to work together. It’s not written down, but is very, very important when it comes to retaining and recruiting staff.”

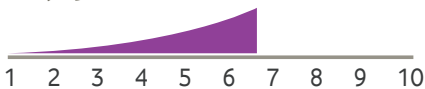
DR PATRICIA HIND, BUSINESS PSYCHOLOGIST AND MEMBER OF FACULTY AT ASHRIDGE BUSINESS SCHOOL

HOW WELL BUSINESSES ARE PERFORMING ON THE MOST IMPORTANT MOTIVATORS

Fulfilment

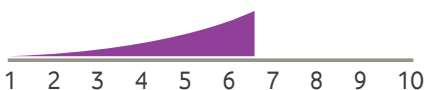
6.63

Enjoyment



6.57

Stimulation



Tribalism

5.93

Pride



5.59

Valued



Remarkably, when employers are asked to rate themselves based on what they expect their employees would say, the response is almost identical.

Look further and we see why. Employees were asked to rate their employer against various criteria. A rating of 10 meant they couldn’t be happier, whereas a rating of 1 meant they were seriously disappointed. Plot influence against satisfaction and some important patterns emerge.

Employers, when considered as a whole, can only be said to perform well in three areas:

- building good working relationships between employees
- the work-life balance offered
- commutability

These are all important parts of the satisfaction mix. However, as we’ve seen, they’re far from being the most important.

When we look at the dimensions that really matter to employees, there’s considerable room for improvement.

Employees typically give their employer a rating of 6.63 and 6.57 out of 10 for job role enjoyment and stimulation, respectively.

Satisfaction with the two core ‘tribalism’ factors – feeling proud and valued – is more disappointing. The average score given for ‘pride’ is 5.93 out of 10 whilst feeling ‘valued’ scores just 5.59. In both cases, small businesses with 10 – 99 employees perform slightly better than the norm, but still have considerable room for improvement. Here employee satisfaction ratings rise to 6.17 for feeling ‘pride’ and ‘valued’. This contrasts with large corporates (500+ employees) where employees give scores of just 5.84 and 5.36, respectively.

So, in most cases it seems that employees are still desperately seeking their ideal employer. Maybe that’s you? Pose three questions at your next management meeting and the answer should become clear.

- how would employees rate you on the critical ‘fulfilment’ and ‘tribalism’ dimensions?
- would you make it into the elite described as “one of the best” by employees?
- if not, are you happy with adequate or do you want excellence?

Conclusions

Let us leave you with one closing thought.

There's a central theme that runs throughout this exploration of the modern employee. **Change.**

We've seen some dramatic economic, social and technological shifts in recent years. Shifts which require businesses, regardless of their size or activity, to adapt to a new environment.

Key to this is the need to embrace a fresh approach to talent management and consider new, innovative working practices.

Successful businesses recognise that people are their most important resource. They also realise that this talent needs to be carefully nurtured. Gone is the mindset that all an employer needs to do is pay people well and not work them too hard. These things matter, of course, but in many respects they're mandatory. Perform poorly and staff turnover will rise, but performing well isn't necessarily a differentiator in an increasingly competitive talent market. For an employer to nurture a loyal, motivated and productive workforce, they need to offer fulfilment. Job roles need to be enjoyable and stimulating. They also need to create a sense of belonging. Employees want to feel valued and well led; they want to have a sense of pride in their employer and support the vision.

The winners in this new age are also adapting to changing working patterns and employees' demands for flexibility. Winning businesses give employees freedom in the way they work; the power to decide where they work and when they work. The motivations behind this aren't solely linked to fostering greater employee satisfaction. Smartly deployed flexible working practices create a more productive, responsive and efficient business.

So maybe pause for a moment and reflect. What are the implications of these changes for your business? Can you envisage a better way of working?

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Research was commissioned by Vodafone UK.
All statistics are true according to our research.

