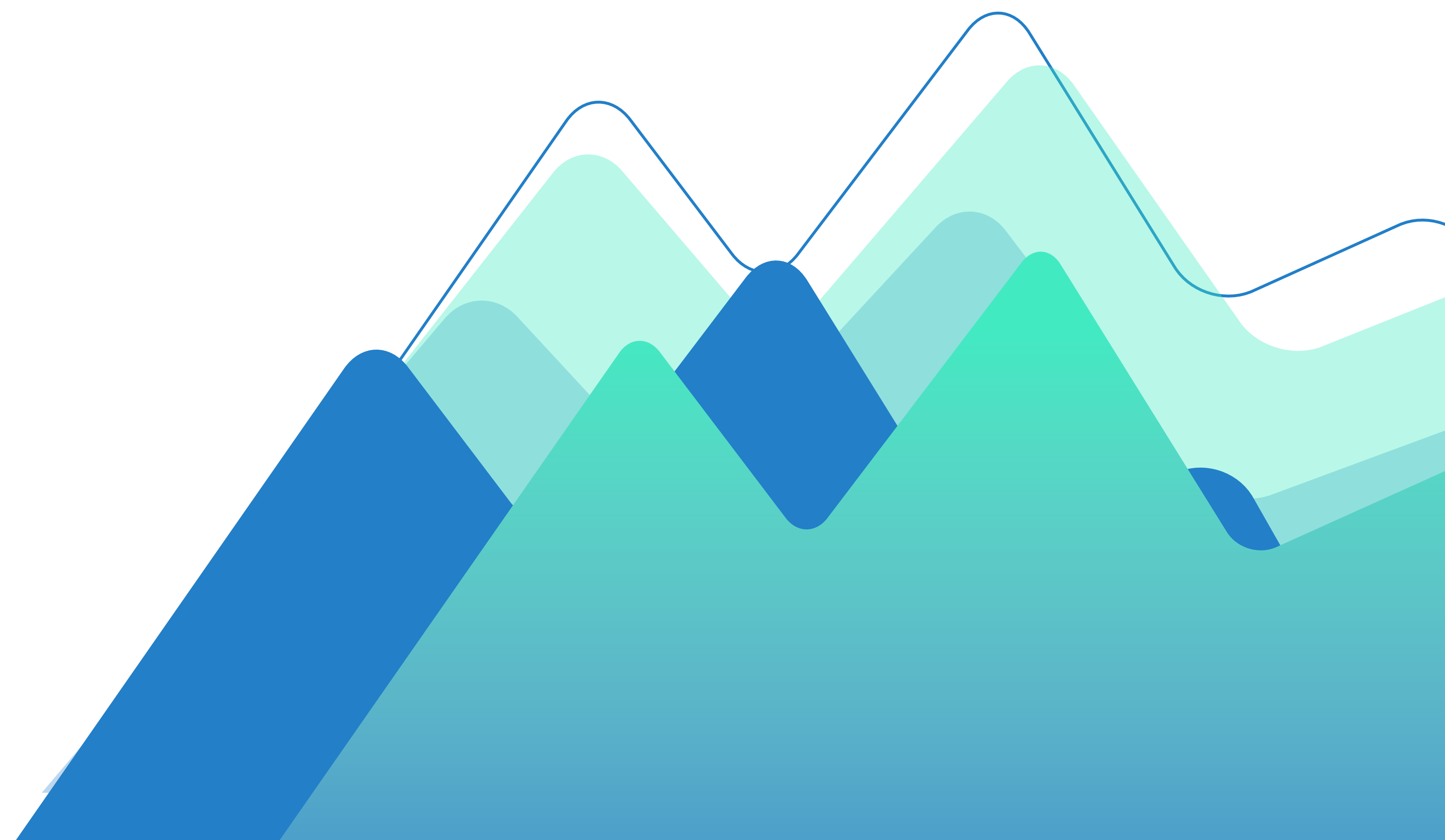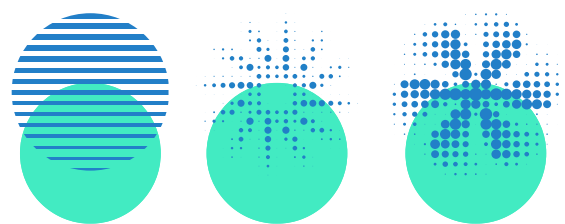# 2024 Employee Experience Trends

A Perceptyx Benchmark Analysis

Introduction

The employee experience today looks very different than it did 25, 10, or even three years ago. The workplace has been confronted with a variety of massive and rapid changes, both inside and outside the workplace, that continue to transform how, when, and where we work.

Our data — representing more than 20 million employees working across industries and across the globe — reveals that **change management** has now become the key differentiator of a great employee experience. To keep today's employees engaged, leaders must effectively support employees as they navigate the uncertainties, and the inevitable stress of change.

Employees naturally seek a sense of **belonging** in the workplace, manifested in personal connections with their co-workers and a community where differences are recognized and celebrated. After a surge in importance in 2020 and 2021, there has been a growing backlash against Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) programs. Organizations have been making headway in these areas, but there is still work to be done, and these dynamics highlight the risk to employers if they choose to abandon such efforts.

Our data also shows that employee **well-being** continues to be an area of need and risk for organizations. A variety of groups are struggling with stress, effectively managing their workloads, and finding a healthy balance in their work and personal lives. Understanding these concerns and creating clear plans of action to prevent and treat burnout should be top of mind for organizations in 2024.

3 Employee Experience Megatrends You Need To Know
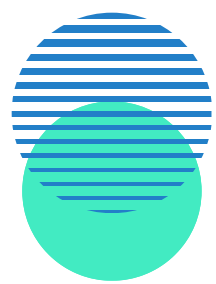
Trend 1
Change Management

- Effective change management is essential to engaging your workforce.

- Employee engagement has stabilized, but the advocacy gap is growing.
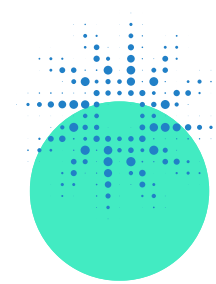
Trend 2
Belonging

- Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are an underutilized resource for belonging.

- Career equity initiatives are working, but a significant gender gap persists.

- Older employees feel like they fit in, but they have concerns about ageism.

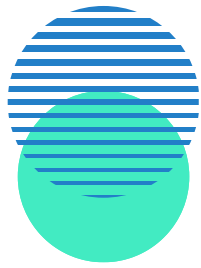- Strategies for retaining top talent are similar across all job levels.

Trend 3
Well-Being

- The "Manager Squeeze" is having a considerable impact on well-being.

- Third-shift employees struggle with well-being and could use additional manager support.

- Well-being for salaried employees is lower, despite feeling the organization cares.

Trend 1

Change Management

Effective change management is essential to engaging your workforce.

Like nearly every other report this year on trends or "the state of" something, this one starts with change. It feels worn out, because people are worn out with the speed of change and the continuous disruptions they face in their everyday lives. The workplace is no different.

The barriers to an engaged workforce have evolved. The quality of management has improved, and as a result, basic people management skills are now table stakes and no longer rank as key differentiators between the fully engaged and the rest.

Organizations used to focus on change management only during a disruptive "event" in their organization (e.g., a merger or a restructure) or in reaction to changes in the larger business environment (e.g., a recession). Yet given the near-constant change of today's business reality, effectively leading teams through change has become a core management skill.
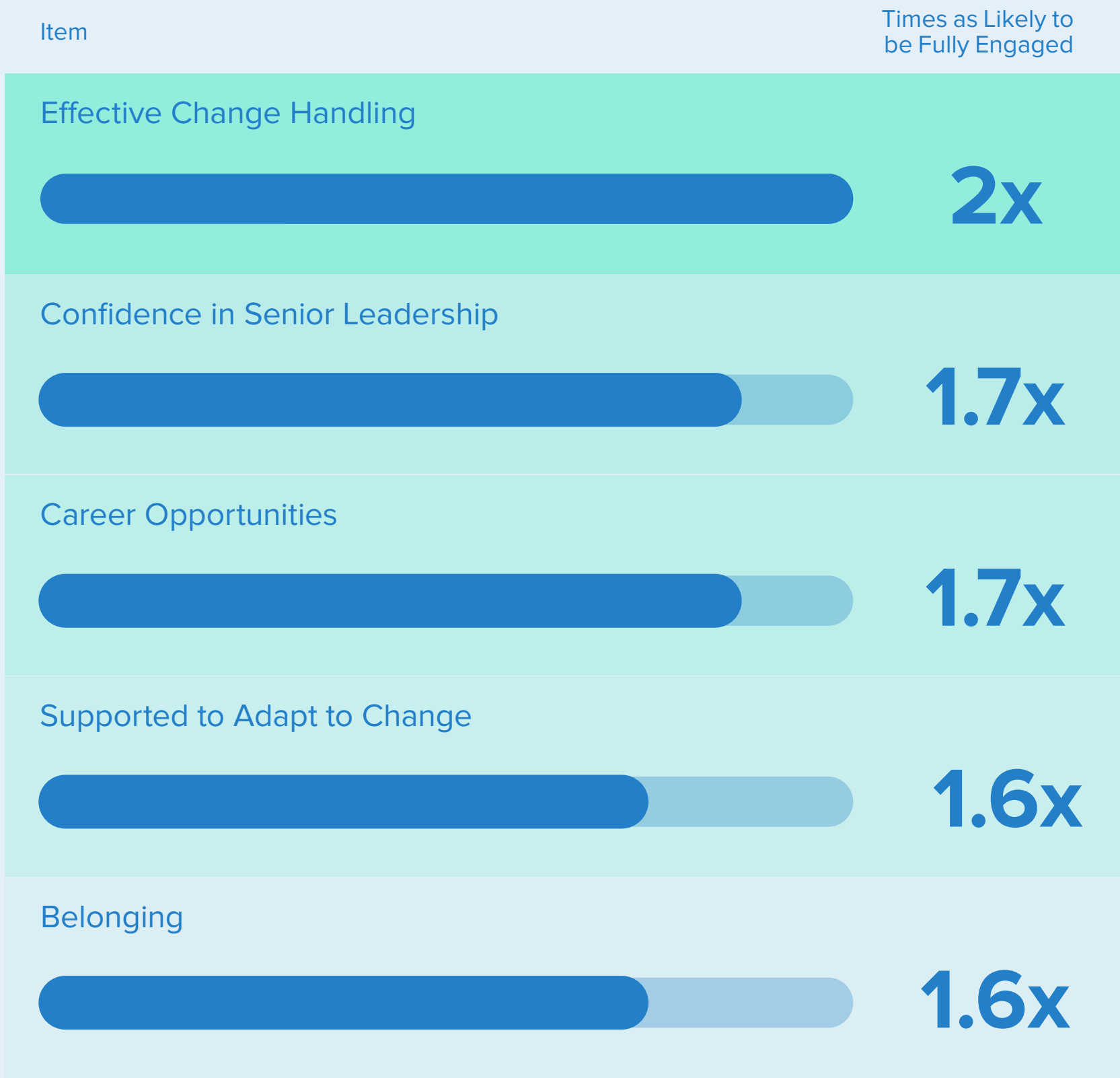
In fact, for the first time since Perceptyx began tracking this data, two of the top three drivers of employee engagement are directly related to change management.
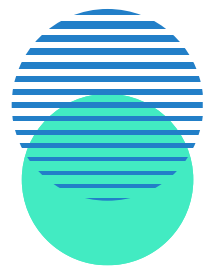
Importantly, the remainder of the top five also reflect elements of change management. An employee's confidence in leadership is impacted by their ability to navigate constant disruptions. Growth and development opportunities and understanding one's place in an organization continue to be core precursors to engagement, especially as employees navigate ever-changing demands from their day-to-day work, even within the same job.

In contrast, failing to effectively communicate, stay calm and positive, and protect employees from change fatigue will create a workforce that's ill-equipped to advocate for, produce at, and remain with your organization — now and into the future.

Top Drivers of Employee Engagement

Employees responding favorably to these items are more likely to be fully engaged than those who do not.

Item	Times as Likely to be Fully Engaged
Effective Change Handling	**2x**
Confidence in Senior Leadership	**1.7x**
Career Opportunities	**1.7x**
Supported to Adapt to Change	**1.6x**
Belonging	**1.6x**

Employee engagement has stabilized, but the advocacy gap is growing.

After a period of volatility during the pandemic, employee engagement (comprised of pride, advocacy, intent to stay, and intrinsic motivation) has stabilized. **Typically, these four measures show similar change patterns, but the last two years have shown a growing difference between advocacy — a willingness to recommend the organization as a place to work — and other engagement measures.**

This mirrors findings from Perceptyx's research into trends in the **general working population**. Workers are getting their general needs met today. They are proud, want to stay, and continue to bring their best efforts to their workplace day-to-day, but aren't sure they want to recommend that others join them at work.

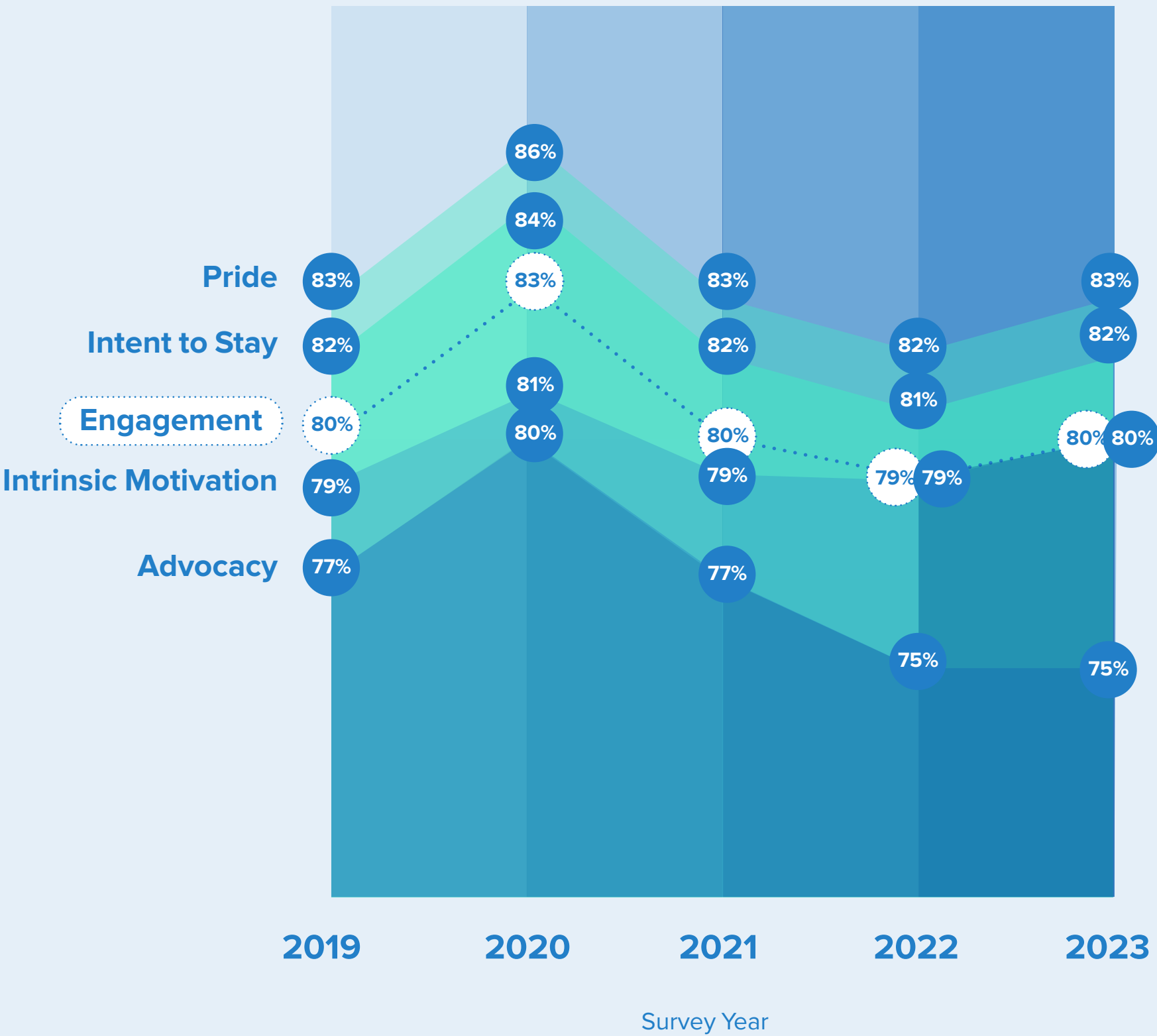What's influencing this lack of advocacy? The data show some clear patterns, and one reason continues to be ineffective change management.

Employees who are otherwise engaged may not advocate for their organizations when they lack confidence in their leaders' ability to navigate through disruptions, including communication, and setting a clear future vision that resonates with the organization.

Advocacy is an important metric for organizations struggling to fill open positions. The best new hires are often referred by those already employed, individuals who understand the work and the culture well, and can envision how their friends and colleagues might fill in the gaps. But, when change is occurring — and when isn't it? — employees need to be able to see their way to the other side of it before encouraging those they know to join them.

Components of Employee Engagement Across Time

The four components of engagement typically track together, but in 2022 we began to see company advocacy diverge from the others, failing to recover to pre-pandemic levels.
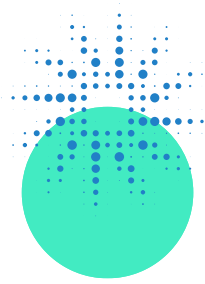
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Pride	83%	86% / 84% / 83%	83%	82%	83%
Intent to Stay	82%	83%	82%	82% / 81%	82%
Engagement	80%	81% / 80%	80%	79%	80% / 80%
Intrinsic Motivation	79%		79%	79%	
Advocacy	77%		77%	75%	75%

Survey Year

Trend 2

Belonging

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are an underutilized resource for belonging.

Participation in ERGs has a significant positive impact on employees' sense of belonging at their company. Over the past three years, employees involved in ERGs consistently reported higher levels of belonging compared to those not in ERGs.

While *overall* belonging scores increased from 2021 to 2023, those in ERGs show a notable advantage each year. Perhaps the most significant difference comes in eliminating those who fail to agree at all. Employees not in a group were 1.4x as likely to feel they don't belong in an organization.

Belonging continues to be a key driver in overall employee engagement, and also consistently relates to employee health and well-being, including loneliness. Earlier **research** by Perceptyx has shown that associates with a strong sense of belonging are nearly 2x as likely to experience no workplace loneliness.

By bringing together individuals with shared characteristics and interests, ERGs show the importance of fostering a strong sense of community. These groups not only support personal and career development, but also contribute significantly to a positive organizational culture where employees truly feel they are part of the team.

2x

Earlier research by Perceptyx has shown that associates with a strong sense of belonging are nearly 2x as likely to experience no workplace loneliness.

1.4x

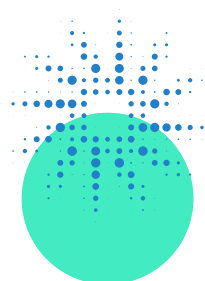*Employees not in an ERG were 1.4x as likely to feel they don't belong in an organization.*

Belonging Favorability by ERG Membership

Employees who are members of ERGs have higher levels of belonging in the organization than those who are not involved in an ERG.
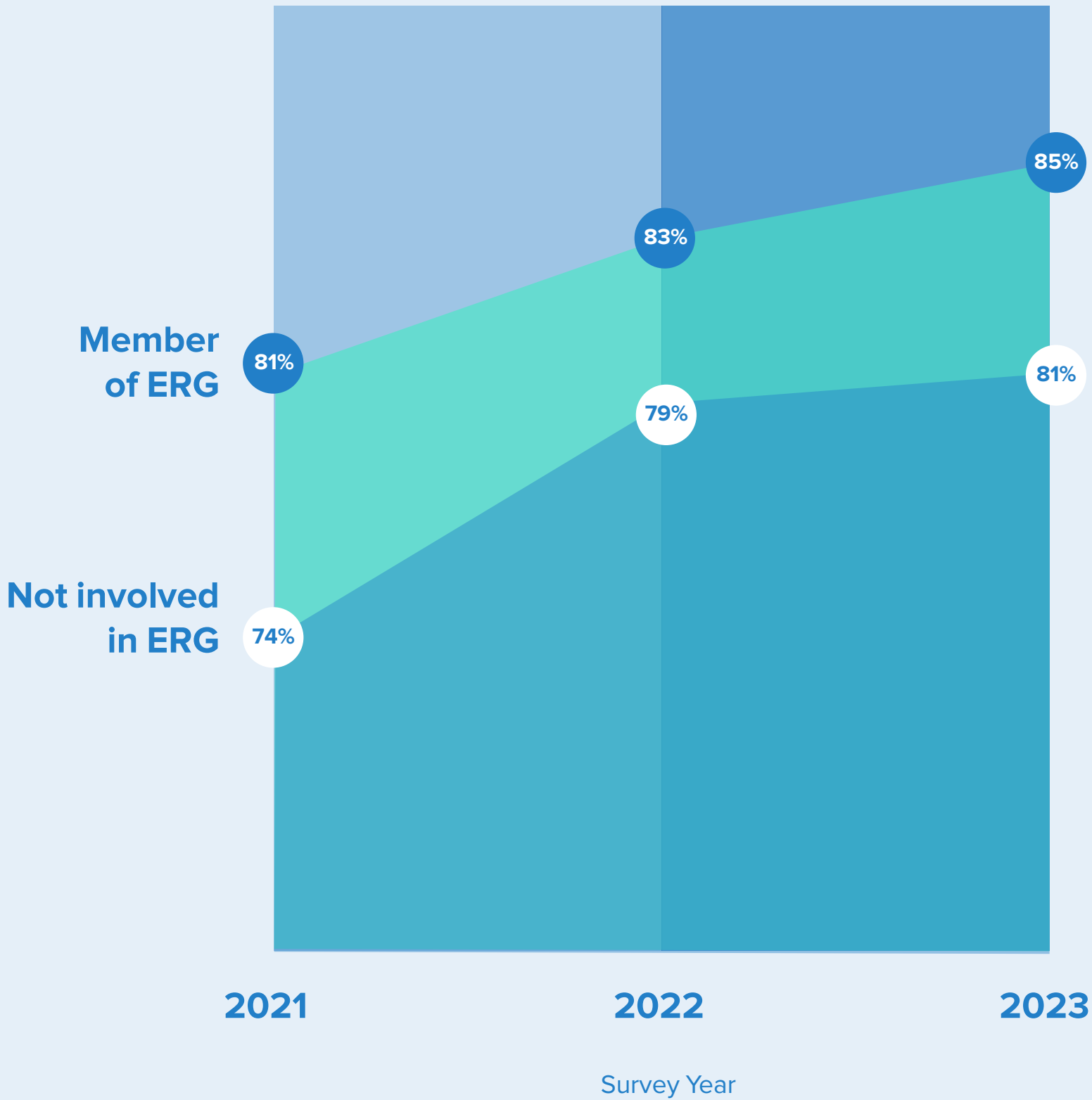
Member of ERG
Not involved in ERG

| 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |

81% — 83% — 85%
74% — 79% — 81%

Survey Year

Career equity initiatives are working, but a significant gender gap persists.

We have made some considerable progress in perceptions of career equity over the past five years. Measured by fairness in advancement opportunities and the ability to have a successful career, Perceptyx benchmarks show an overall increase over the past five years (2019 to 2023) in fairness perceptions across the board.

Programs such as wage transparency, open job descriptions, and an increased focus on skills-based hiring have made a difference. In addition, organizations are prioritizing DEIB and career growth efforts in their work to improve the employee experience.

Career equity has important implications for retention of top talent. While overall, about 55% think advancement opportunities are fair and 70% say there is an equal opportunity for all employees to succeed, that number plummets to 37% and 46%

respectively for those exiting.

The great news for organizations is that the focus and effort to create and increase fairness in career growth have helped all employees feel more confident. **However, a gender gap in perception that advancement opportunities are fairly accessed and awarded in their organization persists. Closing that gap is key to ensuring a workplace that attracts and retains all genders of employees.**

1.5x

*Employees currently employed are 1.5x as likely as those exiting to think advancement opportunities are fair and that there are equal opportunities to succeed.*

Favorability Across Career Fairness Items

Males and females alike have seen an increase in their perceptions of career fairness across time, however, the gender gap remains the same.

Male

Female

| 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |

Benchmark Year
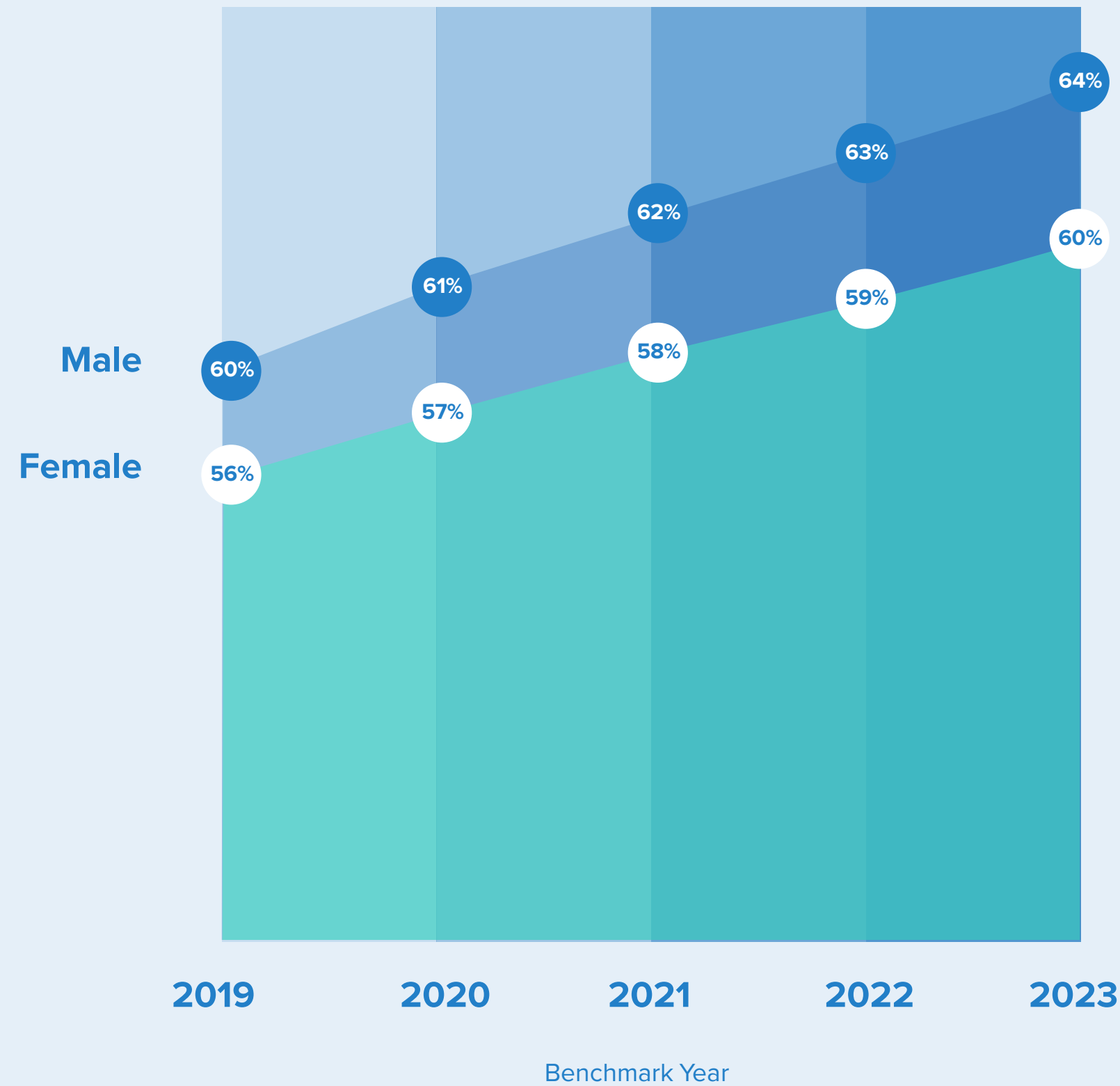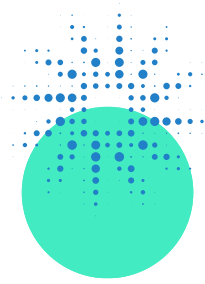
Trend 2 | Belonging

Older employees feel like they fit in, but they have concerns about ageism.

Belonging in the workplace, often used as a key outcome of an inclusive environment, is most favorable for older workers. As they age, worker sentiment with regard to "fitting in" in the workplace continues to get more positive.

However, results from our benchmarks show an interesting juxtaposition: perceptions of fair treatment in the workplace get worse with age. **While favorability scores start quite high for those aged 18-24, they decline steadily as workers age, with a slight increase for workers over 65, raising concerns about ageism.**
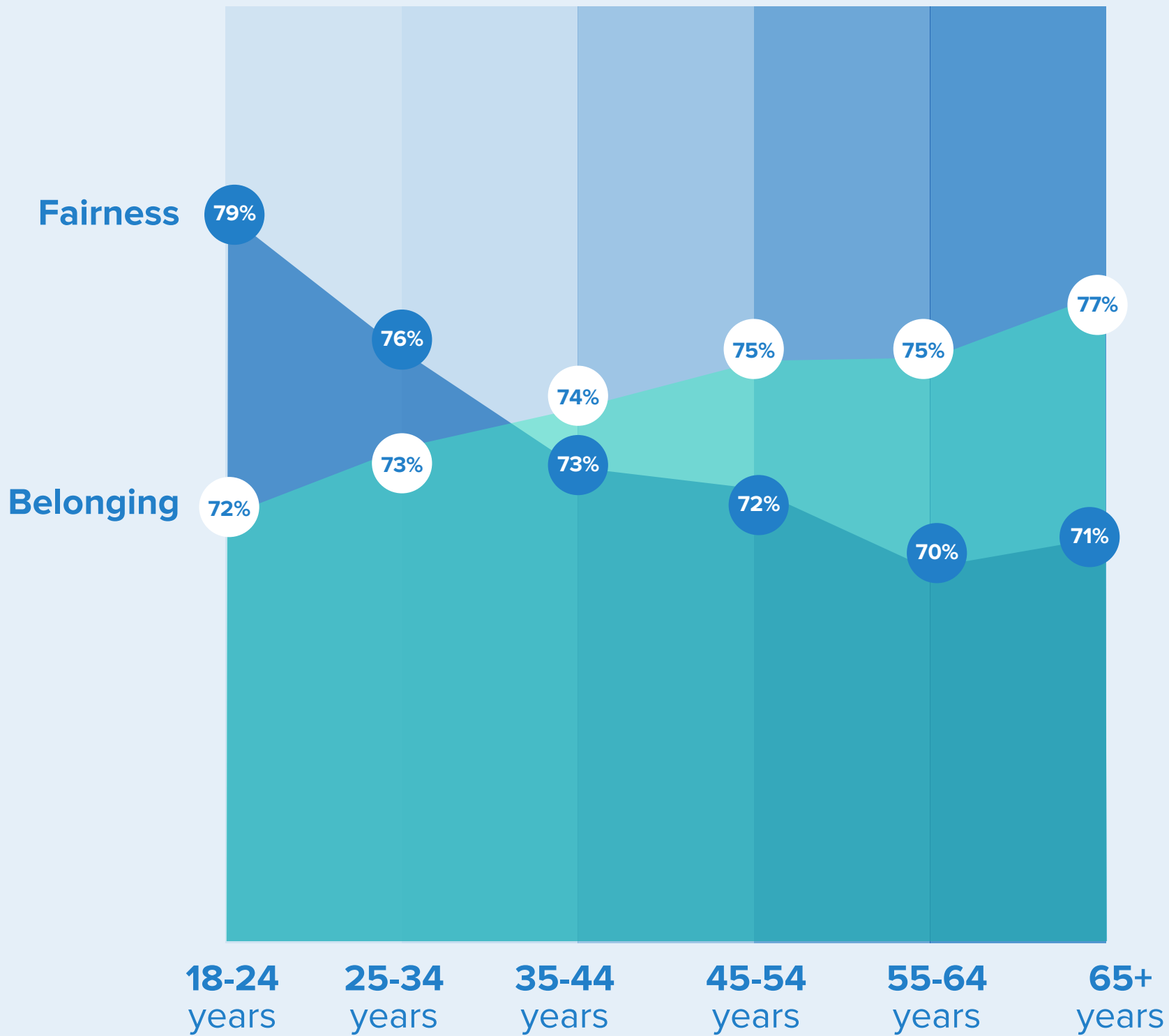
Both younger and older employees can struggle with different aspects of age in the workforce: young people with lack of inclusion, feeling confi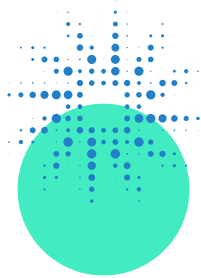dent in their contributions, and gaining enough experience to perform; older people with being given opportunities to advance as they near retirement and the avoidance of ageist stereotypes (being slower or out of touch, for example).

Fair treatment and workplace equity go a long way to the creation of a culture of inclusion and belonging. This divergence shows that older workers are finding other ways to gain belonging, even in the presence of unjust treatment. Clearly, an inclusive culture isn't enough on its own. Organizations must understand employee sentiment about all aspects of DEIB in their culture, and target actions directly at the groups who need it most to maximize their impact.

Favorability by Age Group

While belonging tends to increase as workers age, perceptions of fairness show a marked decline.

Fairness: 79% (18-24), 76% (25-34), 74% (35-44), 75% (45-54), 75% (55-64), 77% (65+)

Belonging: 72% (18-24), 73% (25-34), 73% (35-44), 72% (45-54), 70% (55-64), 71% (65+)

18-24 years | 25-34 years | 35-44 years | 45-54 years | 55-64 years | 65+ years

Strategies for retaining top talent are similar across all job levels.

Employee retention continues to be an important focus area for organizations, especially as the labor shortage in many industries continues. One of the best proxies for actual turnover is an employee's expression of their turnover intentions. Understanding the specific drivers of this intention can help organizations create the most effective retention strategies for their workforce.

These intentions can vary, and it's important to understand the unique things sending people out the door in key positions or in important demographic groups. Organizations tend to differentiate their strategies for various management levels, assuming that the factors retaining machine operators long-term differ from those retaining regional operations directors. In some instances, this may indeed be true.

However, there are some general trends that

cannot be ignored. For employees at all levels, two of the top three needs consistently related to turnover intentions were about belonging: career opportunities for people like me and a sense of belonging within the organization.

Ultimately, this suggests that regardless of job level, employees tend to think about leaving the organization for largely the same reasons: primarily a lack of specific development opportunities and a lack of belonging to the organization.

Organizations would do well to pay attention to the career development of associates, even at the highest levels of the organization, especially when traditional advancement may no longer be possible within the organization itself. Reaching the top rung of the proverbial ladder doesn't mean that employees want to stop learning and growing.
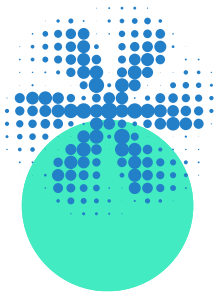
Top Predictors of Intention to Stay by Job Level

Leaders, managers, and individual contributors alike are more likely to stay with an organization when they have career opportunities and a sense of belonging.

Executives
- Belonging: 2.0x
- Career Opportunities: 2.3x

Managers
- Belonging: 2.1x
- Career Opportunities: 2.2x

Individual Contributors
- Belonging: 2.2x
- Career Opportunities: 2.5x

Trend 3

Well-Being

The "Manager Squeeze" is having a considerable impact on well-being.

A plethora of current research showcases how the modern manager is getting squeezed, both by individual contributors and their needs, but also by the need to manage upward and satisfy senior leaders. As a result, we find many indicators of employee and life experience lagging behind for managers. This is especially true when it comes to well-being in the workplace.
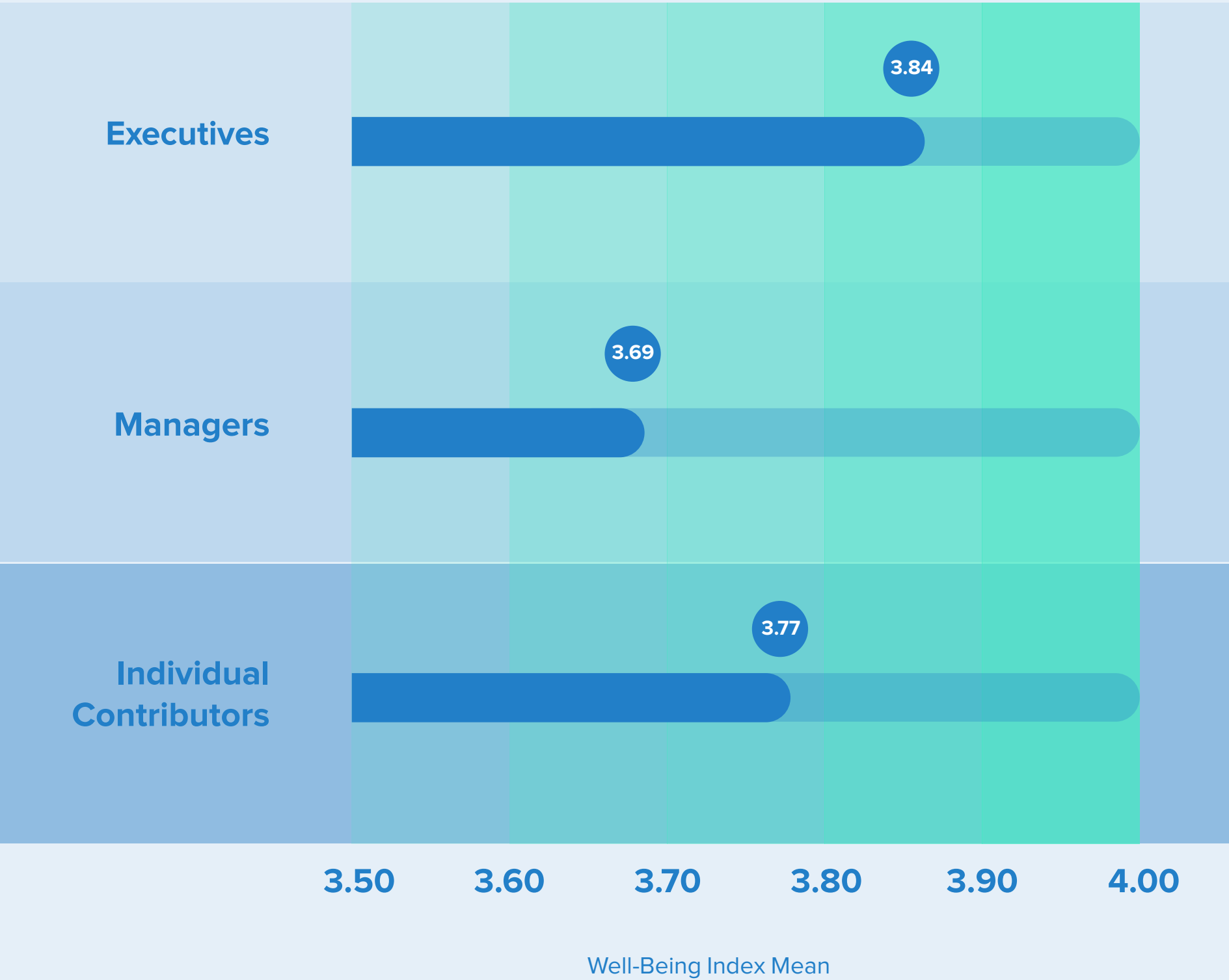
Well-being is an often-studied topic, particularly in a post-COVID world where expectations about what it means to be healthy — both physically and mentally — have changed. Lines between work and home have blurred as many office workers took on remote or hybrid schedules, front-line workers are increasingly faced with out-of-control and even violent customers, and labor shortages are forcing employees to do more with less, just to keep up.
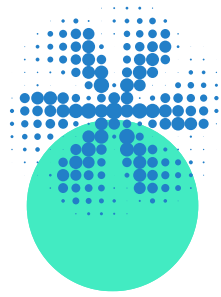
On measures including the priority the organization places on well-being, work-life balance, reasonable workload, and manageable stress levels, managers consistently score lower than their counterparts.

For senior executives, who we might suspect have the lowest well-being levels given their significant scope of responsibility, the opposite is true: executives retain the highest levels of well-being, perhaps because the heavy demands of their role are offset by better pay and benefits than individual contributors. Individual contributors, on the other hand are often protected from stress by their managers, who take on the extra responsibility, sometimes to their own detriment.

Well-Being by Job Level

Across a 4-item index measuring well-being, managers are consistently lower scoring than executives and individual contributors.

Executives — 3.84

Managers — 3.69

Individual Contributors — 3.77

3.50   3.60   3.70   3.80   3.90   4.00

Well-Being Index Mean

Third-shift employees struggle with well-being and could use additional manager support.

Workplace well-being is impacted by many things, but supportive management is one of the most important. Managers signal the emphasis the organization places on well-being, encourage (or discourage) work-life balance, and provide support to handle stress. **For organizations that operate on a 24/7 schedule, ensuring that all employees, regardless of shift, have the same access to a supportive manager is essential.**
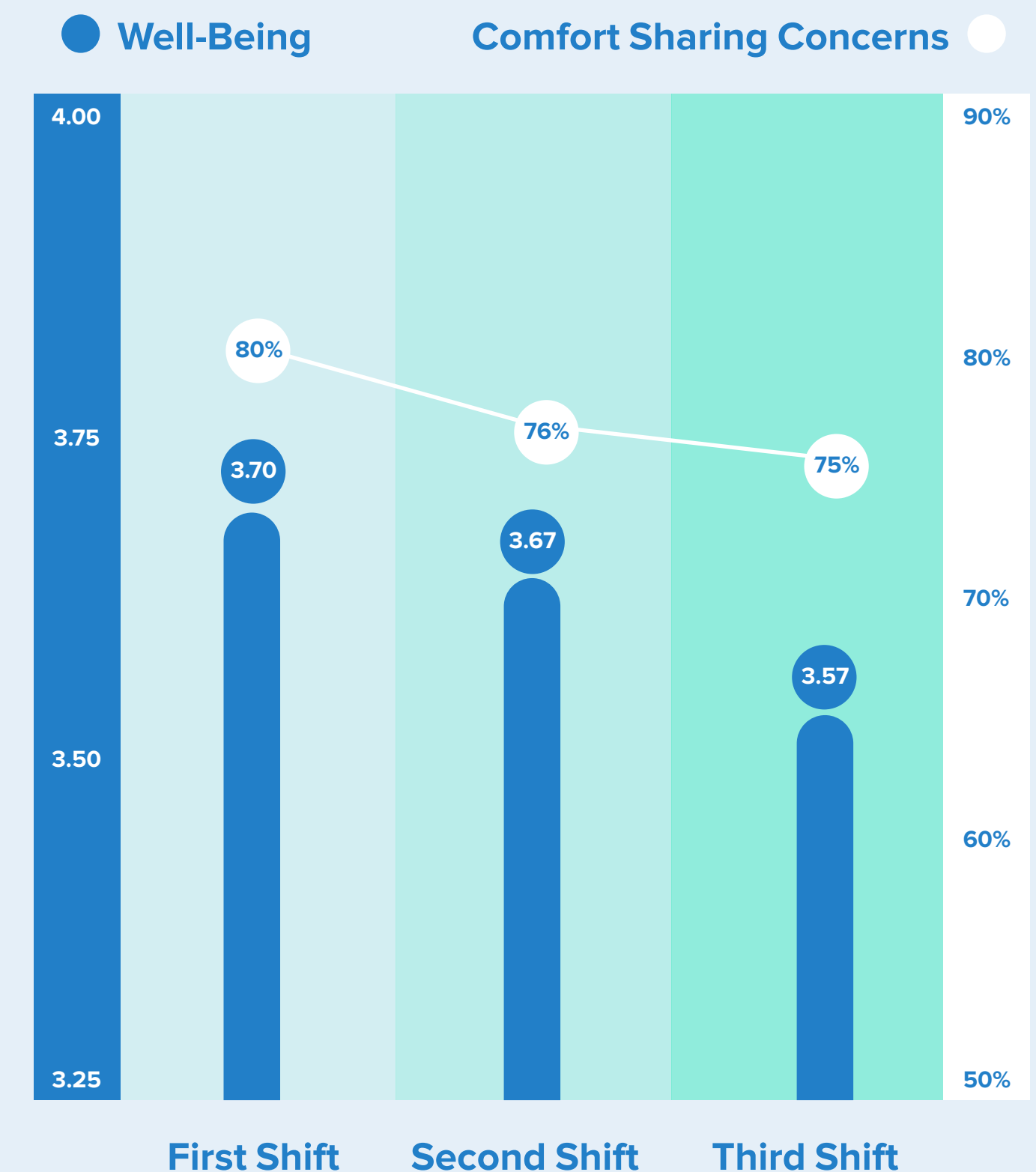
Employees working these later shifts often report a less positive work experience, and well-being is no exception. Third-shift workers report significantly lower levels of well-being than either their first or second shift counterparts, with second-shifters landing in the middle. Favorability with management support demonstrates a similar pattern.
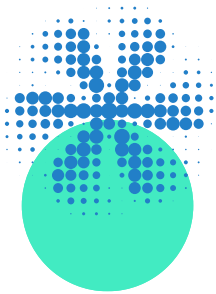
The formal managers at many of these organizations often work the first shift, limiting their day-to-day connections with later-reporting staff. Developing a deep relationship where employees feel comfortable sharing concerns about issues related to their health and well-being can be more difficult when managers aren't available or don't have visibility to situations on the floor.

Organizations would do well to pay particular attention to employees on these shifts, creating space for more manager and employee connections during an employee's regular work day.

Well-Being and Comfort Level Sharing Concerns by Work Shift

For shift workers, well-being and a comfort level with sharing their concerns with management — a hallmark of a supportive relationship — decline as employees work later shifts.

● **Well-Being**   **Comfort Sharing Concerns** ○

	First Shift	Second Shift	Third Shift
Well-Being	3.70	3.67	3.57
Comfort Sharing Concerns	80%	76%	75%

Well-being for salaried employees is lower, despite feeling the organization cares.

Over the past few years, organizations have made significant efforts to demonstrate their care and commitment to employees' health and well-being. This includes providing greater access to personal protective equipment (PPE), investing in subscriptions to meditation apps, and staging friendly health and wellness competitions.

Salaried employees, in particular, notice the investments their organizations make in their health and well-being, and thus, their perception that the organization cares is much higher than hourly employees. **However, believing the organization cares about their well-being does not actually translate into greater overall feelings of well-being.**
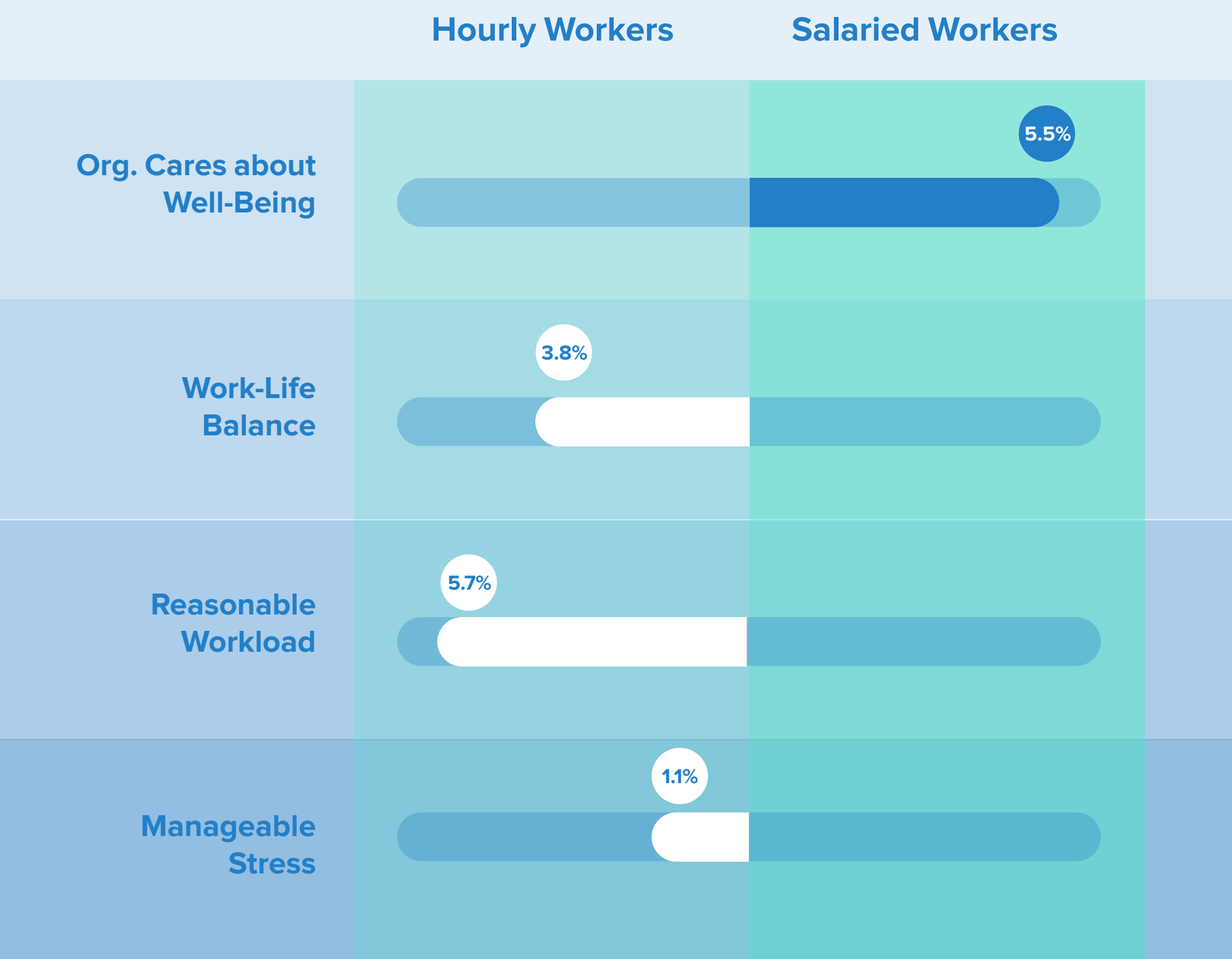
Employees paid by the hour report better work-life balance, a more reasonable workload, and are better able to manage workplace stress than those receiving a salary. This is of particular concern as it breaks with a nearly universal pattern across the employee experience, where salaried employees are more favorable than hourly employees. While hourly employees receive extra compensation for extra work, salaried employees are often working extra unpaid hours, covering for staff vacancies, or taking workplace stress home with them.

Low levels of well-being can lead to burnout, and burnout leads to a host of problems from lower levels of productivity to more sick days taken. Perks and other programs to minimize stress in the workplace are welcome, but they are not enough. Greater structural support is needed to ensure salaried employees continue to thrive.
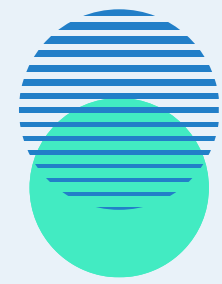
Well-Being Gap Between Hourly and Salaried Workers

While salaried workers are more likely to believe their organization cares about their health and well-being, perceptions about most aspects of well-being are higher for their hourly counterparts.
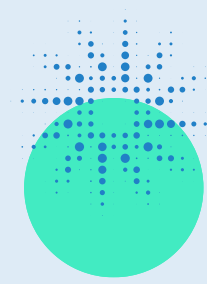
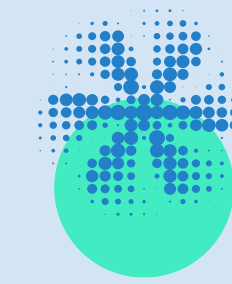|	Hourly Workers	Salaried Workers
Org. Cares about Well-Being		5.5%
Work-Life Balance	3.8%	
Reasonable Workload	5.7%	
Manageable Stress	1.1%	

What's Next?
Our Advice for People Leaders

	Change Management	**Belonging**	**Well-being**
Leaders	**Build confidence in the future vision for the company by transparently addressing any changes.** To paint a clear picture of where the organization is headed and rally others around it, dive deep into the changes impacting your workforce, listen to how employees are experiencing them, and share what you're doing about it.	**Support employee growth and development with a sensitivity to fairness.** Create a culture of fairness by defining and enforcing objective performance criteria, setting representation goals, and allowing opportunities for connections. Listen to employee feedback with an open mind and target actions where they matter most.	**Prioritize well-being in your vision for the future of employee experience.** Supporting well-being isn't just about offering the right benefits or time-off policy. In addition, communicating a compelling future can create a culture of teamwork and shared accountability, loosening the manager squeeze, and boosting productivity for all.
Managers	**Develop adaptability on your team by helping employees cope with change.** Share how changes will impact them in their daily work and trust employees to implement them. Treat navigating change like an essential skill, build resilience, and create a safe place for experimentation to make change happen.	**Support employee growth and development with a sensitivity to fairness.** Provide your team with emotional and tangible support for development by identifying and creating growth opportunities, offering constructive feedback at the right time, and learning what empowers individuals to do their best work.	**Define an ideal well-being strategy for your team and yourself.** In stressful times, resist temptations to remove team burdens by taking them all upon yourself. Consider healthy ways to cope with work stress, delegate workload, and hold work-life boundaries. Encourage your team to use well-being programs provided by the company.
HR leaders	**Focus on supporting employees through change.** Ensure that communications about changes are clear, consistent, and span all levels of the organization. Create forums for employees to share any wins, uncertainties, and concerns with the change process. Provide skills and development opportunities to ready employees for what is next.	**Support employee growth and development with a sensitivity to fairness.** Use data for decisions such as hiring, reviews, and promotions. Reduce impact of biases with more decision-makers, and make it possible to reverse bad decisions. Use programs like employee resource groups to increase belonging in your workforce.	**Focus on preventing burnout by offering the right supports.** Offering the right resources can help the workforce manage stress and workload. Fill vacancies and train backfills quickly so new employees can ease the burden of current employees. Ensure that regular time off is encouraged and enforced to help stave off burnout.

Conclusion

Change management. Belonging. Well-Being. While these are not new factors in creating an employee experience that will attract and retain top talent, they have reached megatrend status in the Perceptyx Benchmark Database today.

As we navigate the remainder of 2024 and beyond, there's no indication that the pace of change is slowing. If anything, we can expect that the disruptions will continue. Effective change management — setting clear vision from the top, communicating openly at all levels of the organization, and supporting employees as they embrace the new normal — is key to ensuring that your top talent stays with you and feels good about bringing their "A" game while doing it. Managing these changes can't be done in isolation. Leaders also need to help employees understand their place in the current and future organization, all while prioritizing employee well-being.

Whether you're a salaried female employee striving for your next professional role, a third-shift employee in search of a place to belong, a human resources leader creating employee resource groups, or an executive creating company-wide actions based on recent employee feedback, understanding the impact of these trends in your organization can ensure you design and execute the right strategy.

About

Perceptyx Benchmark Database
Perceptyx's 2024 Benchmark Database is the industry's most comprehensive collection of employee experience metrics. The current iteration, comprised of data collected during the years 2021-23, contains more than 20 million responses representing 707 unique items from 528 enterprises across 19 industries in 226 countries, including one-third of the Fortune 500. This database gives organizations reliable data to compare themselves with their peers, target areas for improvement, and cultivate a more engaged workforce. The report also includes data from prior Perceptyx Benchmark releases.

Contributors
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The authors would also like to thank Perceptyx Workforce Transformation Consulting Directors **Lauren Beechly, Jonathan Elbaz, Nick Hayter, and Megan Steckler** as well as the Perceptyx Benchmark team for their contributions to this research.

Perceptyx

CWT Center for
Workforce
Transformation
BY PERCEPTYX

About Perceptyx

Perceptyx is the Employee Experience (EX) transformation company, providing enterprise-grade employee listening, analytics, and behavioral science that activates people and delivers business impact. More than 600 global enterprises, including one-third of the Fortune 100, use Perceptyx's multi-channel employee listening, AI-powered recommendations, and personalized coaching to close the loop between insights and action. With an unrivaled technology platform and an in-house team of EX Experts, Perceptyx makes it easy for managers, HR executives, and business leaders to align their key business and talent priorities and drive positive organizational change.

About the Center for Workforce Transformation

The Center for Workforce Transformation, operated by Perceptyx, has a mission to educate and inspire executive leaders, managers, and employees through timely, relevant, and actionable insights about the modern work experience. Via original research, media, industry-focused Consortia, peer groups, and exclusive events, the Center is helping to amplify the practices of the world's leading organizations — driving leader and workforce transformation at speed, at scale, and in sustainable ways.

For more info, or to speak with a member of our team, visit www.perceptyx.com.