

2019 Workplace Happiness Report

For employers, the trick to helping people find meaning in their work may not be about aligning it with a grander purpose. According to Udemy's latest research, all-around satisfaction and fulfillment is more about an environment that supports work-life balance—with flexible schedules and remote-working options, for example.



ranked "good work-life balance" as most essential to giving work meaning

The key to finding meaning at work? Balance matters more than pay, praise, or purpose.

For the more than 1,000 full-time American employees we surveyed, quality of life drives their career choices and their sense of purpose at work—more than 37% ranked "good work-life balance" as most essential to giving their work meaning.

So, what about the metrics we typically think matter at work? Only 19% ranked "personal accomplishment" and "success in my role" as most important to meaning, and 16% picked "constantly learning, growing, developing." "Contributing to a greater good" or making a difference in people's lives actually only gives 14% of respondents meaning in their work.

Millennials, more than others, love to keep learning.

Millennials, surprisingly, were least likely to prioritize work-life balance as the factor that gives their work meaning, with only 25% selecting it over other options, compared to 42% of Gen Z, 40% of Gen X, and 48% of Baby Boomers. Instead, millennials ranked "constantly learning, growing, developing" higher than people in other age groups did.

Millennials also led the pack in saying they'd rather take a high-pressure job they've always wanted over a less-stressful but less-fulfilling option. Just don't expect them to battle traffic to get there—70% of millennials, particularly men, said they'd rather have a less fulfilling job with a shorter commute than a meaningful job that puts them in transit for long periods (64% of men, compared to 54% of women).

Who's living the dream?

Millennials might prioritize learning and growing over balance simply because they really love their jobs; 84% of them consider their current position to be their "dream job."

Overall, 69% of respondents are in their dream jobs, with Baby Boomers last in line (only 54% said they are working their dream jobs). Moreover, it's men who are more likely to say they're currently living the dream at work (77% of men, compared to 62% of women).

Broken down by education level, 76% of college grads agree they're in their dream jobs, compared with 58% of those without a degree. College grads are also more willing to take a pay cut for to work for a company with a compatible mission and are more willing to accept a long commute to get to a fulfilling job.

Why do millennials love their jobs so much? They're more satisfied than other generations with how well their workplaces meet their personal preferences. Given their aversion to long commutes, it makes sense that they insist on having the ability to work remotely when they want.

CURRENTLY IN THEIR "DREAM JOB"



84%

Millennials



69%

Total respondents

Among Millennials

64% strongly agree that their employers invest in their development

62% are able to set their own schedules

50% can work remotely when they want

But there appears to be a lack of gender equality in this flexibility:

👤 Among Millennial Men

57% feel invested in

59% set their own schedules

45% can work remotely

👤 Among Millennial Women

38% feel invested in

36% set their own schedules

36% can work remotely

Notably, those working in management and people with college degrees feel more strongly that their employers invest in their learning and development and allow them to work remotely and set their own schedules. This suggests that access to important training resources and flexible options are not being shared democratically throughout organizations.



Would take a pay cut to work for a company with a compatible mission

So, does mission matter?

As it turns out, mission does matter—especially for millennials. This age group feels most strongly that they should work for a company whose mission they believe in. While 62% of employees overall would take a pay cut in order to work for a company with a compatible mission, agreement was overwhelming among millennials (78%), compared to Gen X (43%) or Boomers (43%). Overall, 90% agree or strongly agree that they find meaning in their careers.

When it comes to the values that complement a company's mission, corporate diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives, when implemented, go a long way, too. Among workers whose employers run a formal D&I program, 91% believe those initiatives are having a real impact. Once more, millennials express the strongest support for such programs. Meanwhile, those without D&I programs expressed skepticism, with only 43% saying they believed such initiatives would have a positive impact.

The 2019 Workplace Happiness Report survey was conducted online by Toluna International on behalf of Udemy between March 14-20, 2019, among 1,011 full-time U.S. employees. Full methodology available upon request.

About Udemy

With a mission to improve lives through learning, Udemy is the online learning destination that helps students, businesses, and governments gain the skills they need to compete in today's economy. More than 30 million students are mastering new skills from expert instructors teaching over 100,000 **online courses** in topics from **programming** and **data science** to **leadership** and **team building**.