

Talent

talentpath
RECRUITMENT

Guide

Real People.
Real Stories.
Real Insights.

2026

8th Edition

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Welcome to the 2026 Talent Guide

In this year's Talent Guide, the numbers tell a story we can't ignore. Some of it will feel familiar, but there are also clear shifts starting to take shape.

On paper, 2025 looked relatively stable. The unemployment rate was steady, and wages did rise. But for many workers, that progress felt minimal. As inflation picked up again towards the end of the year, those wage gains were quickly wiped out, leaving people feeling no further ahead. With cost-of-living pressures expected to continue into 2026, it's no surprise our survey data shows a growing number of people reassessing not just their next role, but their entire relationship with work. What they're no longer prepared to compromise on and what they truly need from their employer to stay.

Mobility is happening at every level. Senior leaders are just as active in the market as those early in their careers. Flexibility continues to dominate the conversation, and for good reason. Despite some large companies calling their people back to the office five days a week, moves that smaller organisations are watching closely, employees remain firm in their expectations.

This year, we've shone a spotlight on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB), and the data reveals a more complex picture. While many employees feel their workplaces are inclusive, experiences differ significantly for neurodivergent employees, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and people with disabilities. Too often, the barriers come down to leadership priorities, awareness and training, and whether DEIB is treated as a genuine commitment or simply another box to tick. We're genuinely thrilled to feature Neurodiversity in the Workplace with Aron Mercer. Aron has become a real part of the Talentpath extended family, an extraordinary partner who's added huge value for our clients over the past few years. This article is full of practical, take-home tips for managers on hiring and retention strategies.

As we sit down to write this intro, it's hard to believe this is our eighth edition of the Talent Guide. We keep bringing it back year after year because of you. The feedback we receive from the talent community and employers alike makes every survey, every calculation, and every conversation worth it.

It's been a big year for the Talentpath team, marked by some bold moves and exciting growth. One of the highlights was our majority acquisition of Dixon Appointments. By joining forces, we've been able to offer even more to our candidates and clients, while opening

the door to new opportunities for growth and optimisation. We've also spent our first full year in our Fortitude Valley office, and we're absolutely loving it. The space has been perfect for meeting with candidates face-to-face and connecting with hiring managers and business leaders.

As we look back on how far we've come (how has it been 19 years this year!), the lives we've changed, the businesses we've impacted, the connections we've made, it never ceases to amaze us the privilege we have to do this work. Every placement, every conversation, and every person who trusts us with their career journey reminds us why we started this in the first place. Here's to many more years to come! Enough from us, the data is here and the insights are clear.

As Tony Robbins said: *"Knowledge is NOT power. Knowledge is only POTENTIAL power. ACTION is power."*

Now it's over to you.

Jody Fazldeen and Dionne Sharp
Co-Founders at Talentpath



56%

of respondents expect to change jobs in the next year.

**This has increased from 49% in 2025.*

44% of respondents have left their workplace because they didn't feel included, valued, or safe. A further **18%** considered leaving but stayed.

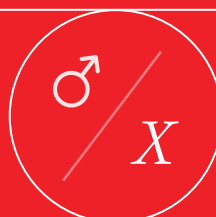


● Considered leaving ● Left

62% of respondents earning below \$100,000 expect to change jobs in the next year.

However, job mobility persists at senior levels, with **51%** of respondents earning \$200,000+ expecting to change jobs in the next year.

Men are the most likely gender to change jobs.

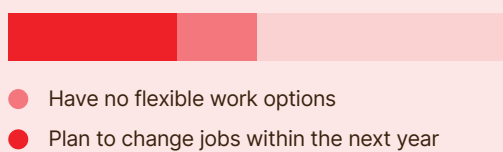


Generation X are the most likely generation to change jobs.

“In the last 12 months, has your ability to perform at your best been impacted by any of the below?”

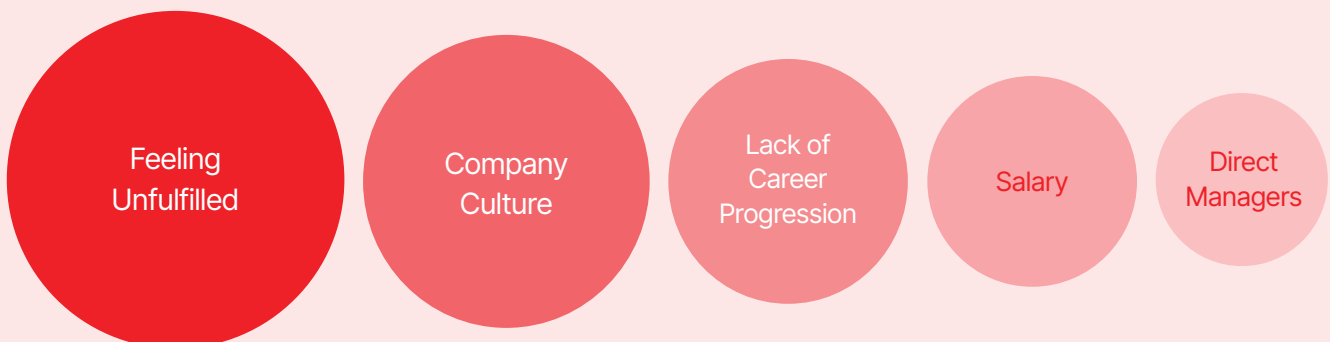
Anxiety	30%
Burnout	36%
Fatigue	37%
Lack of Motivation	37%
None of the above	29%

58% of respondents who experienced **burnout** in the last 12 months expect to change jobs within the next year.



19% of respondents have no flexible work options, and **two-thirds** of them **plan to change jobs** within the next year.

The top five reasons respondents left their previous roles:



Company culture and direct managers have emerged as additional drivers of departure in 2026, alongside consistent themes of fulfilment, progression and salary.

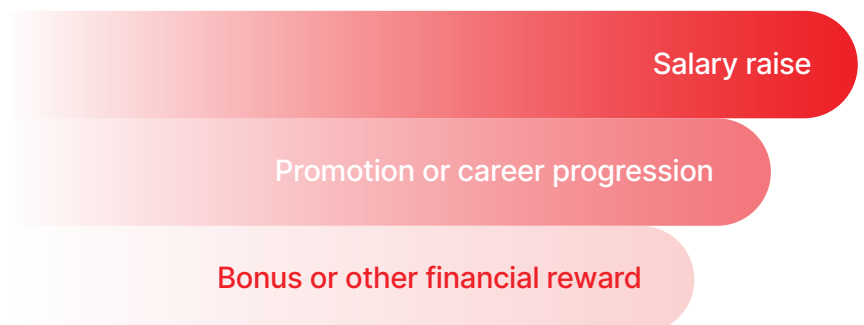
"What made you choose to stay, rather than leave?"



Top three things respondents believe have the most impact on a positive company culture:



Top three ways respondents prefer to be rewarded for their work:



When excluding direct salary and financial bonuses, respondents prioritise career trajectory and flexibility above all else.

Top three overall non-monetary benefits respondents prefer:

Learning and training programs and health and wellness initiatives are emerging priorities.



How preferences vary across generations:

Regardless of age, employees prioritise flexible work and clear career progression above other benefits.

Baby Boomer

1. Flexible hours
2. Career development and progression
3. Learning & training programs

Gen X

1. Flexible hours
2. Career development and progression
3. Flexible location

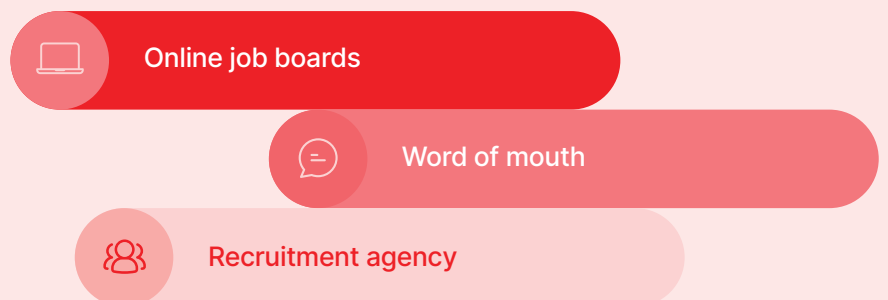
Gen Y

1. Career development and progression
2. Flexible hours
3. Flexible location

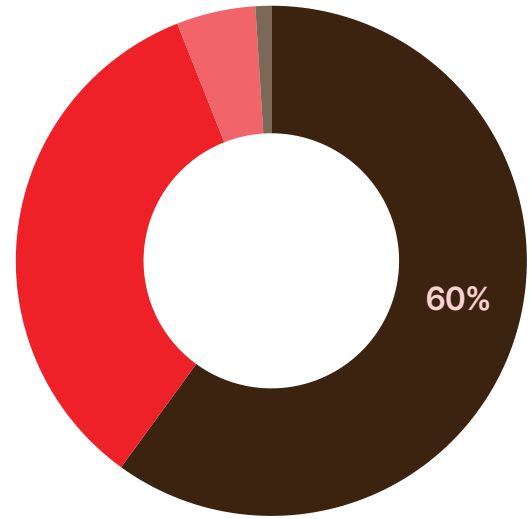
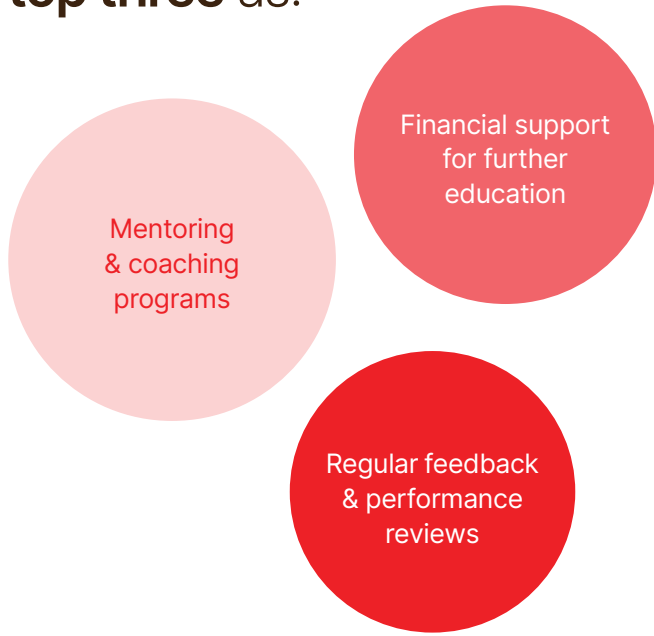
Gen Z

1. Career development and progression
2. Flexible hours
3. Learning & training programs

Top three ways respondents heard about their most recent role:



When considering options that would enhance their career with their current employer, our respondents ranked their **top three** as:



60%

Somewhat important **34%**, indifferent **5%**, not very important **1%**

of all respondents say **professional learning and development** opportunities are very important to their job satisfaction.

82%

of respondents agree that their workplace is inclusive and respectful of people from different cultures, backgrounds and abilities, **9% disagree**, and **8% remain indifferent**.

66% of respondents living with a disability or long-term health condition agree.

82% of First Nations respondents agree.

86% of respondents whose first language is not English agree.

“In your experience, what is the biggest barrier to building an *inclusive* workplace?”



Additional answers:

"Seeing DEIB practices as a tick-a-box exercise and meeting minimum requirements"

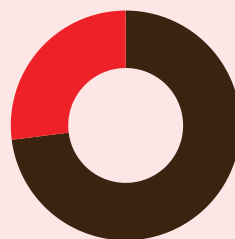
"Finding diverse staff that fit the needs of the business"

"Systemic and unconscious bias, which manifests as ingrained practices, policies, or attitudes that unfairly advantage or disadvantage certain groups"

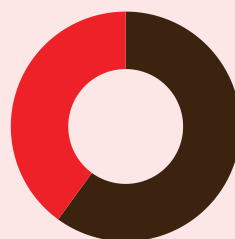
"A lot of initiatives have a one-size-fits-all approach"



82% of women and **78% of men** feel safe being their authentic self at work.



27% of LGBTQIA+ respondents are either indifferent or disagree.



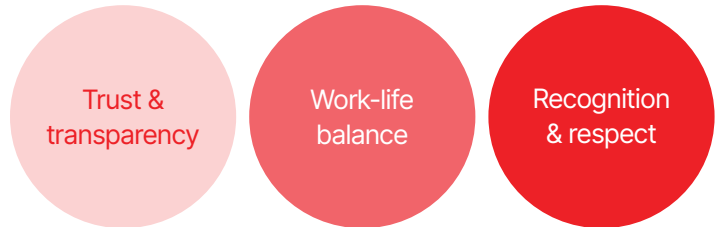
40% of neurodivergent respondents are either indifferent or disagree.

Human Resources & Talent Acquisition

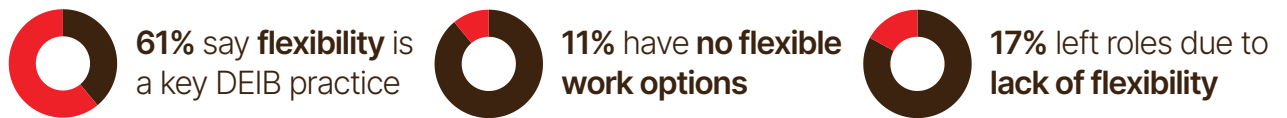
HR & Talent Acquisition talent are experiencing many of the workplace challenges they are tasked with solving: burnout, gaps in inclusion, and limited flexibility. Their responses point to a clear shift away from surface-level perks and towards structural foundations. Trust, transparency, work-life balance, and recognition carry far greater weight than surface-level benefits.

Flexibility, in particular, is no longer viewed as an optional benefit. It plays a vital role in equity, inclusion, and retention across the discipline. Learning and development is widely valued, but clearer pathways are often missing. The cultural foundations they advocate for externally need to exist internally. Organisations that can't achieve this risk losing the very people responsible for building healthier workplaces, while those who do will gain competitive advantage in attracting strategic talent.

Top three things HR & Talent Acquisition say **have the most impact** on a positive company culture?



By comparison, free food, cultural days and team drinks were each cited by fewer than 4% of respondents.



of HR & Talent Acquisition talent say learning & development is *very important* to their job satisfaction, while **38%** say it is *somewhat important*.

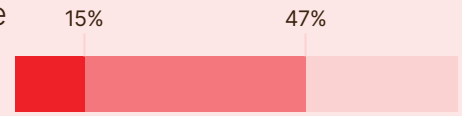
35% say **mentorship/coaching** could better assist their career progression

29% say **development plans** could better assist their career progression

29% say **financial support for education** could better assist their career progression

Learning and development is expected, but clearer structure and visibility are often missing.

47% of HR & Talent Acquisition talent have left a workplace because they didn't feel included, valued, or safe. A further **15%** considered leaving but stayed.



“What made you **choose to stay**, rather than leave?”

Belief in improvement:

“Belief that the company's priorities may change...”

Stability:

“Stability of employment”, “Comfortability” & “Convenience”

Team loyalty:

“Loyalty to my team.”

Manager:

“Discussing it with my manager.”

Growth:

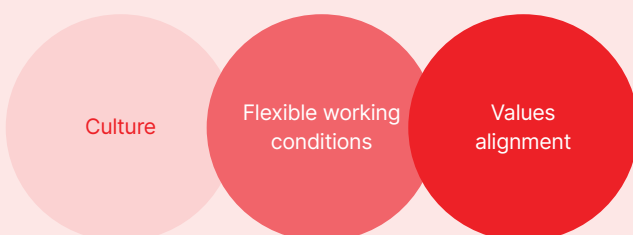
“Career progression.”

Talent cite their **direct manager** as a top factor, both in leaving their last role and in choosing their next one.

Top three things HR & Talent Acquisition talent say employers could do better to ensure their recruitment processes are fair, inclusive and positive for all applicants.



Top three factors that would attract HR & Talent Acquisition talent to a new organisation:



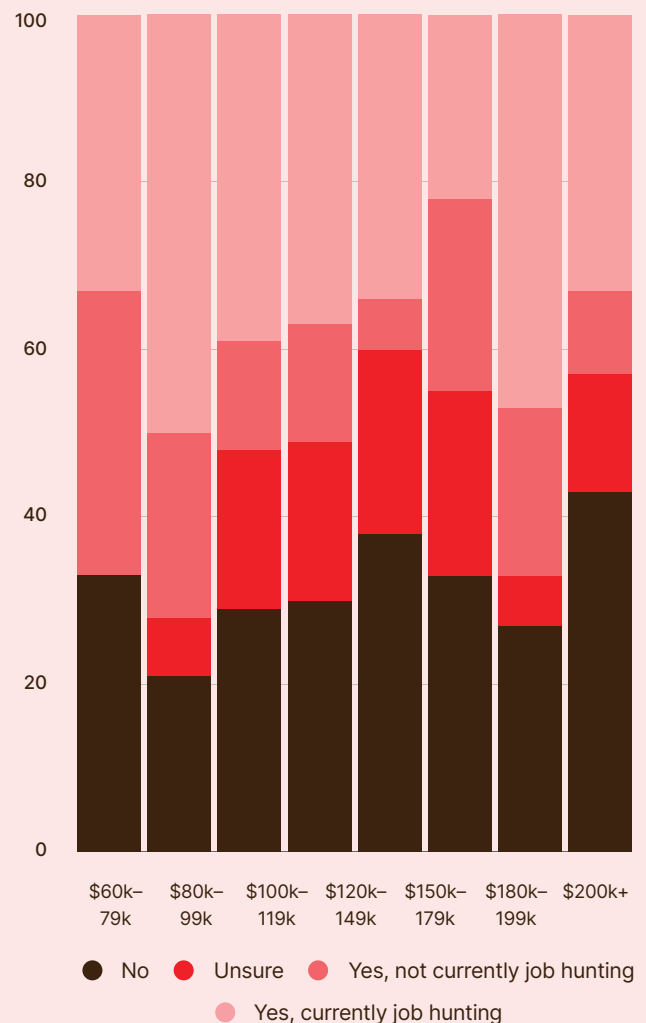
“In the last 12 months, has your ability to perform at your best been impacted by any of the below?”

Anxiety	31%
Burnout	41%
Fatigue	44%
Lack of Motivation	40%
None of the above	23%

This signals systemic strain, not individual resilience gaps.

“Do you expect to **change jobs** within the next year?”

Job change intent by salary band (HR & Talent Acquisition roles)



Job mobility remains high among HR & Talent Acquisition professionals, regardless of salary level.



HUMAN RESOURCES & TALENT ACQUISITION

Darcy Richardson

Urban Utilities
Talent Partner

“Emerging talent is not just something you invest in, it is something you learn from. If you view emerging talent through a long-term, generational lens, you unlock stronger attraction, enablement and retention outcomes.”

What's one thing you wish every employer understood about emerging talent?

Emerging talent is not just something you invest in, it is something you learn from. Grads bring contemporary education, real-world experience and fresh mindsets that inject energy into organisations. Employers often think in one or two-year cycles, but the real value comes from a five to ten-year horizon. The decisions made today can shape future leaders. If you view emerging talent through a long-term, generational lens, you unlock stronger attraction, enablement and retention outcomes.

What skills are you seeing most in demand for the future workforce?

Three areas stand out. First, digital and technology capability, as organisations modernise and customer expectations increase. Second, environmental and sustainability thinking, not just as roles but as a mindset, understanding that today's decisions have long-term impact on communities and infrastructure. Third, engineering and infrastructure expertise, particularly as population growth drives demand for both new builds and optimisation of existing assets. Across all areas, future-focused thinking and problem solving are critical.

What keeps grads engaged beyond the first year?

Ongoing, deliberate learning is essential. Grad programs are increasingly becoming structured learning experiences where individuals develop technical skills, industry knowledge and self-awareness. Cohort connection is equally important. Grads who move through rotations together build strong personal bonds and provide mutual support during change. Building a broader early careers community, including current grads, alumni and leaders, strengthens networks and knowledge sharing. When grads feel they are learning and supported, engagement naturally follows.

What makes an emerging talent program genuinely effective?

Trust and leadership involvement are key. Effective programs build trust with grads by supporting their development and career clarity, but also with leaders by demonstrating value and return on investment. Leader onboarding is critical, as day-to-day experience sits with them. When leaders are engaged in attraction, enablement and retention, programs become sustainable. Demonstrating both social and economic value ensures ongoing buy-in and helps future-proof the workforce.

HUMAN RESOURCES & TALENT ACQUISITION



Kathryn Winter

ISS Facilities
General Manager, People & Culture

“The biggest shift has been from transactional and compliance-driven HR to HR as a true business partner. When it’s done well, HR has a seat at the table and can shape strategy and influence outcomes.”

What’s something most people don’t realise about your role?

People often think HR is just policies, wellbeing initiatives and managing issues when things go wrong. Rather, the role has evolved into a commercial function that helps the business perform better through its people. A lot of the real work sits in the grey, balancing commercial pressures, human impact and culture, and helping leaders make better decisions. It also means having difficult conversations early, when stakes are high, so you can influence outcomes and manage risk rather than reacting after decisions are made.

How do you champion diversity and inclusion in hiring practices?

I look at hiring holistically, not just how a role is advertised. It starts with role design, defining success, and having the right people involved in decisions. I focus on capability and potential, not just traditional career paths. I have seen exceptional hires from non-linear backgrounds, including someone who pivoted careers during COVID and brought strong drive and perspective. I also hire for different viewpoints rather than familiarity. However, inclusive hiring only works if the environment is inclusive too, otherwise you bring diverse people into a system not built for them.

What do you think employers need to do better in 2026 to retain talent?

Retention is less about perks and more about genuine flexibility, trust based leadership and clear expectations. Different parts of the workforce want different things, so work needs to be designed around how people live now. People want to feel seen, developed and treated fairly, and they will not tolerate poor leadership, inconsistent decisions or values that do not match actions. Employers need to invest in leadership and address issues early rather than letting them fester. Broken promises and lack of follow through are what erode culture and drive turnover.

What’s the biggest change you’ve seen in HR over your career?

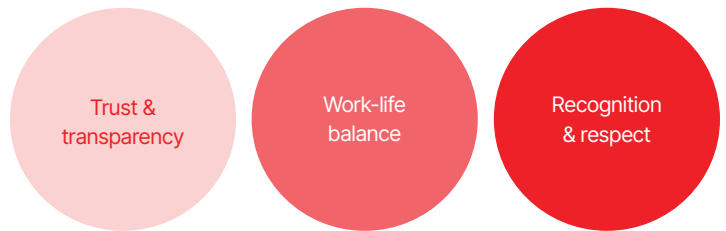
The biggest shift has been from transactional and compliance-driven HR to HR as a true business partner. When it is done well, HR has a seat at the table and can shape strategy, manage risk and influence outcomes, rather than being brought in after decisions are made. Another major change is the rise of employee voice. Employees are more willing to speak up about transparency, fairness and cultural issues. Organisations that listen, respond and adapt build trust and performance. Those that don’t inevitably see culture erode, engagement decline and turnover rise.

Business Services

Business Services talent are the operational backbone of organisations, balancing diverse responsibilities and wearing many hats across the business. This workforce shows notable instability. Job mobility is high, driven by a search for better pay, fulfilment, and visible career progression. Flexibility has become a baseline expectation rather than a perk, and its absence is pushing talent out the door.

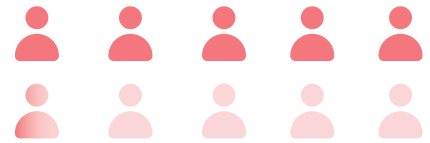
Learning and development matters deeply, but without structured feedback, mentorship, or clear progression frameworks, it remains abstract rather than actionable. This signals a workforce ready to commit and deliver, but only when the fundamentals are in place. Organisations that rely solely on transactional employment relationships will struggle with retention. Those that invest in a positive work culture, professional growth, and flexibility will retain the people who make everything else possible.

Top three factors impacting workplace culture for Business Services talent:



52% of Business Services talent are **actively job hunting**.

**This has increased from 28% in 2025.*

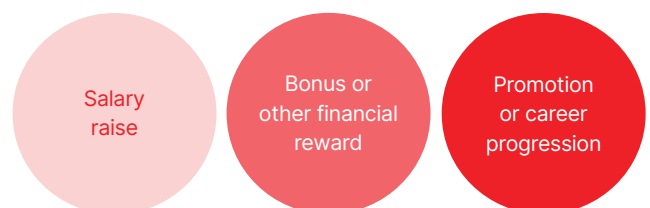


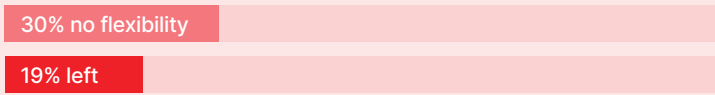
41% of Business Services talent left their last role due to feeling unfulfilled, compared to just **27%** who left for **higher pay**.

Top three factors that contributed to leaving their last role:



Top three ways they prefer to be rewarded for their work:





30% of Business Services talent have no flexible work options. **19%** left their last role due to limited flexibility.

Flexibility remains a clear retention risk, with limited access linked to attrition.

“What could your current organisation do better to assist with your career progression?”

Regular feedback and performance reviews	36%
Mentorship and coaching programs	31%
Financial support for further education	26%
Provide a development plan template	25%
Opportunities for challenging projects	23%

Progression support needs to be multi-faceted.

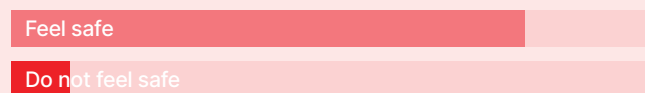
Top three benefits Business Services talent value the most:



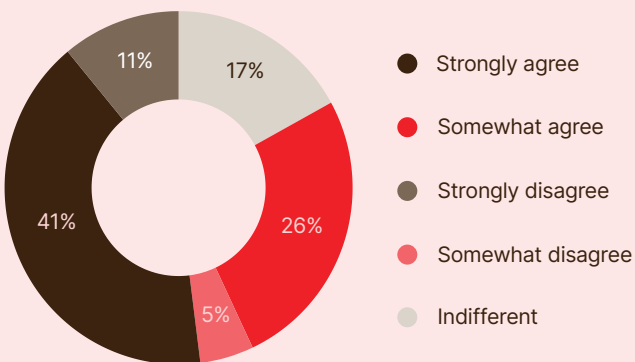
Business Services talent are twice as likely to value flexible hours over flexible location.



say learning & development is important to their job satisfaction.



83% agree they **feel safe** being their authentic self at work, while **8%** actively disagree.



67% of Business Services talent agree that their organisation supports their wellbeing and mental health needs.

This is the lowest result across all divisions.



agree that their workplace is inclusive and respectful of people from different cultures, backgrounds, and abilities.

Top three factors that would attract Business Services talent to a new role:





BUSINESS SERVICES

Julia Chittick

Cement Australia
Office Administrator

“Having supportive people who push you forward makes all the difference. The right encouragement keeps you motivated and moving toward your next step.”

If you could give your younger self one career tip, what would it be?

Do not take criticism to heart or be so hard on yourself. Early on, you are surrounded by people with 20 to 30 years of experience and it is easy to feel self-conscious and think you will never get to that level. But you learn faster than you think, and it does not take decades to become confident and capable. Take a step back, breathe, and do not stress the small stuff. Sometimes all you need is one person at work to have your back.

What matters most to you in a workplace now?

Flexibility and being close to home matter most, especially with a young daughter. It is not just about needing time off, it is about being able to make up the time and having understanding when life happens. Being around people who have kids or have been in similar situations makes a big difference because it is relatable and you can have open conversations. That kind of environment reduces stress and makes it easier to balance work with family responsibilities.

What's helped you stay motivated through different roles?

Having supportive people who push you has made the biggest difference. In one role, the workplace was so supportive they encouraged me to go for a better opportunity and told me I could do more. That kind of encouragement, whether from a friend, colleague or supervisor, helps you stay motivated and keeps you moving forward. I have stayed in touch with a mentor who still checks in, asks how I am going, and challenges me to think about my next step and where I want to be in a few years.

What skills from your legal background do you still use every day?

People skills and customer service skills. Law firms are large environments and you deal with many different personalities, so you learn quickly how to read people and not take things at face value. You also learn not to take bad moods personally and to just move on. Those skills still help now, even outside a law firm. I also use expectation management and staying organised, like keeping lists and remembering that most things are not life or death if a document is a few minutes late.

BUSINESS SERVICES



Claudia Campbell

Rio Tinto
Executive Assistant

“Great support professionals anticipate what’s coming, recognise early signals, and take action before something becomes urgent. The best support is a balance of being responsive and thinking ahead.”

What’s something people might not expect about being an EA?

Most people underestimate how strategic the role is. It is not just calendar management and booking meetings. A great EA is often doing forward planning, spotting what is coming next, and helping an executive prioritise the right people and moments. You sit behind the scenes, but you are also right in the middle of everything. You see patterns across stakeholders, you anticipate issues before they become problems, and you help decisions land smoothly. On the surface it can look calm, but there is a lot of fast thinking and coordination happening underneath.

What kind of work environment helps you do your best work?

A flexible, supportive environment built on trust and communication. I do my best work when there is an open line where I can be honest about how I operate and what I need to perform well. When an executive trusts my judgement and focuses on outcomes, it creates space for me to work proactively and stay responsive. Some days I can move extremely fast and get a huge amount done, and other days my pace is slower. The right environment understands that productivity is not always linear, and supports you to work in a way that still delivers great results.

When you walk into a new workplace, what are the first signs you notice in a good culture?

I watch how people treat each other. Are interactions respectful and inclusive? Do people seem comfortable being themselves? You can usually tell quickly if there is open communication and real teamwork. I also notice whether people make an effort to connect with you as a person, not just as “the EA.” Genuine curiosity and warmth matters. Another big sign is how leaders behave. If there is a big divide between executives and everyone else, it shows. In the strongest cultures, leaders are visible, approachable, and treat people as equals.

What do you think makes a great business support professional?

Proactivity, adaptability, calm judgement, and strong relationships. Great support professionals can anticipate what is coming, recognise early signals, and take action before something becomes urgent. They are also comfortable when plans change, because they always do, and they can adjust quickly without losing focus. Building a solid internal network is key, so you know who to call on when priorities shift or problems need solving fast. Attention to detail matters too, especially when there is a lot of noise and competing demands. The best support is a balance of being responsive and thinking ahead.

Customer Experience

Customer Experience talent are the voice, face, and heart of an organisation. Yet this workforce is under pressure. Burnout, anxiety, and fatigue are widespread, and there appears to be a link between wellbeing and retention.

The reasons are consistent: people leave when work-life balance erodes, when recognition is absent, or when flexibility

isn't available. Those who stay often point to strong leadership, team loyalty, or the flexibility they've managed to secure as anchors. What this reveals is a workforce that wants to stay and contribute but needs organisations to meet them halfway. Stability, flexibility, and tangible recognition through pay or progression aren't luxuries for Customer Experience talent; they're retention essentials. Without them, organisations risk losing the very people who turn simple transactions into relationships and complaints into loyalty.

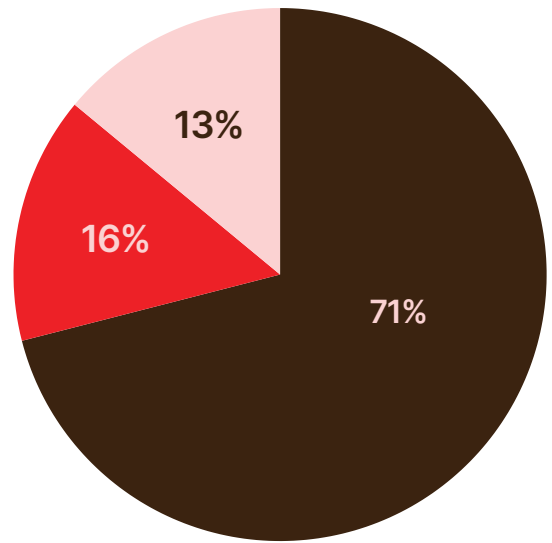
“In the last 12 months, has your ability to perform at your best been impacted by any of the below?”

Anxiety	41%
Burnout	42%
Fatigue	41%
Lack of Motivation	35%
None of the above	26%

48% of Customer Experience talent are actively job hunting.
**This has increased from 35% last year.*

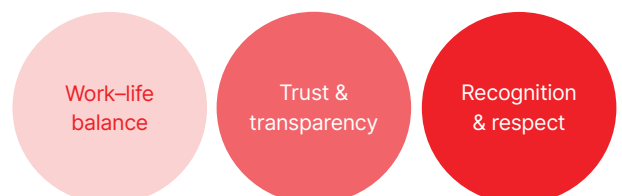
"Is burnout a precursor to turnover risk?"

55% of Customer Experience talent **experiencing burnout** are actively job hunting.



71% of Customer Experience talent **agree** their organisation supports their wellbeing and mental health, **16% disagree**, and **13% are indifferent**.

Top three things they believe have the most impact on a positive company culture:

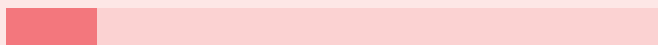


Top three ways

Customer Experience talent want to be rewarded:



receive additional benefits on top of their base salary with a KPI/performance based bonuses being the top reported.



14% of Customer Experience talent have no flexible work options.

Flexible work options

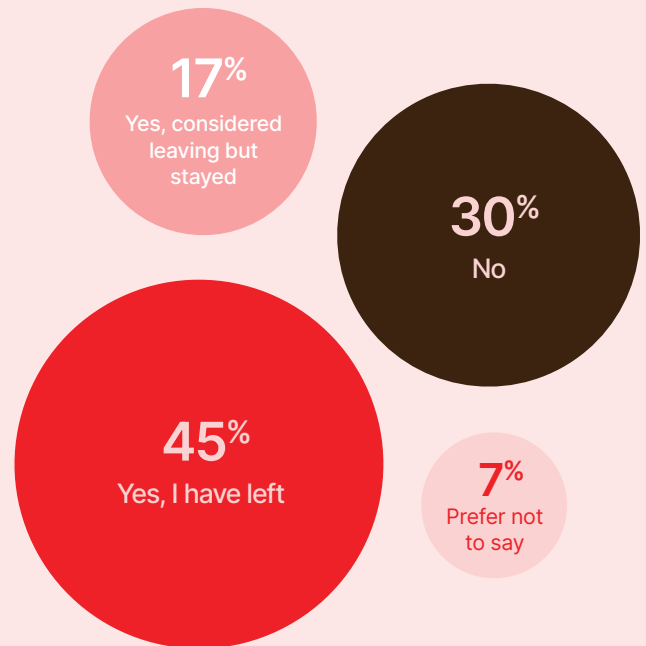
are the number one DEIB practice Customer Experience talent say makes the biggest difference to feeling safe and supported at work.

Top three factors that would attract Customer Experience talent to a new organisation:



**In 2025, culture ranked number one.*

“Have you ever left (or considered leaving) a workplace because you didn’t feel included, valued or safe?”



“What made you choose to stay, rather than leave?”

Flexibility:

“Honestly I have a lot of flexibility now...”

Pay/security:

“The security of a good wage.”

Leadership:

“Work for a great leader.”

Team loyalty:

“Colleagues”, “Team spirit”

Market uncertainty:

“Unstable job market.”

Career progression:

“Career growth”



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Claire Cunningham

The Customer Connexion
Founder & Managing Director

“Leaders must acknowledge how challenging frontline customer work can be. When they validate the difficulty and foster a supportive environment, teams stay engaged and motivated.”

What does a great day at work look like for you?

A great day at work is one where I am solving problems and making people's lives easier. That might look different each day, but at its core, it is about uncovering friction in the customer journey and helping clients see what they could not see before. I love identifying pain points, bringing new insights to light, and working through practical solutions that improve both customer and team experiences. If I can walk away knowing I have reduced complexity, created clarity, and made someone's day better, that is a win.

What kind of leadership helps you thrive?

The best leaders I have worked with lead from the heart. They remember that organisations are built by people and for people. They are not perfect and they do not pretend to know everything. Instead, they create an environment of learning and purpose, hire people smarter than them, and focus on clearing roadblocks so their teams can do their best work. Great leaders cultivate purpose and trust, strip ego out of decision making, and empower others to drive outcomes.

What do leaders need to get right to protect the wellbeing of their CX teams?

Leaders must acknowledge how challenging frontline customer work can be. Handling complaints, complex problems, and high volumes every day takes resilience. Protecting wellbeing starts with valuing that work and reinforcing its importance. Teams need to understand there is purpose behind what they do and that the skills they build will benefit them long term. It is also critical to create safe spaces where people can vent, reset, and feel heard. When leaders validate the difficulty and foster a supportive, even fun environment, teams stay engaged and motivated.

How do you see AI shaping contact centre teams in 2026?

AI has the potential to dramatically improve contact centres if used correctly. It should remove administrative burden, automate notes, flag issues, and connect systems so humans can focus on complex problem solving. Done well, it frees teams from time pressure and allows better customer outcomes. Done poorly, it becomes a barrier that frustrates both customers and staff. Leaders must define the experience they want to deliver long term and implement AI intentionally. The goal should be enhancing human capability, not replacing it.



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Pat Moran

RACQ
Team Manager

“Technology has its place, but the real differentiator is authenticity. In 2026 and beyond, customers will choose brands that feel human, responsive and genuinely invested in helping them.”

What's a customer moment you'll never forget (good or bad)?

A turning point for me was feedback from a large client where the relationship felt strained and guarded. Instead of defending our position, I set up time to genuinely understand their operation and what was breaking down in communication. Once they realised I was not there to assign blame, but to respect what they were trying to deliver and work through the issue together, barriers dropped quickly. That shift built real trust, improved collaboration across teams, and strengthened the commercial relationship long term.

What do you enjoy most about leading customer-facing teams?

Seeing people grow is the most rewarding part. Early on, many team members have one approach to handling complaints or conflict, and if it does not work, they escalate. Coaching in those moments is about giving them more tools. Over time, you see them handle similar situations with more confidence and sophistication, often without realising how much they have improved. My goal is for people to outgrow needing me. If they step into bigger roles, that is a win, even if it means I have to rebuild the team again.

What do you think is the most effective way to prevent burnout?

It starts with small, real-time interventions. If someone is frustrated, give them space to vent and reset so they are not carrying stress home. In insurance, people naturally step up during crises and take on extra work, but that often leads to exhaustion later. As a manager, you have to slow that down early and remind them to look after themselves. Personally, I notice burnout when I have been working too long on unclear priorities without meaningful outcomes. Clarity and reducing unnecessary decision-making are key.

What does great customer experience come down to in 2026?

Genuine human connection. When someone is lodging a claim or going through a difficult moment, they want empathy, not a scripted response. Even small, relatable comments can build trust quickly. In Queensland especially, that sense of mateship and shared experience matters. People remember when you make them feel understood. Technology has its place, but the real differentiator is authenticity. In 2026 and beyond, customers will choose brands that feel human, responsive, and genuinely invested in helping them.

Neurodiversity in the Workplace

with Aron Mercer

Aron Mercer, author of *Untapped Talent* (2024), PhD candidate at Griffith University, and part of the founding team of Xceptional Academy, brings over 25 years of experience. Diagnosed with ADHD at 12, Aron understands the systemic and intersecting barriers people with disabilities face in employment and is determined to dismantle them. His current research focuses on how organisational factors influence disclosure decisions of neurodivergent employees.

What are the most significant barriers neurodivergent employees face?

The biggest barrier is attitudinal. It sits in the minds of managers and co-workers, where untrue but pervasive stereotypes continue to shape how neurodivergent people are perceived. Here's the challenge: neurodivergence encompasses conditions like ADHD, dyslexia, and autism, accounting for up to 20% of the global population. Yet systems of work such as recruitment, onboarding and advancement are built for the majority. Most employers lack visibility on who their neurodivergent staff are and how to set them up for success because people aren't sharing that information, often due to anticipated stigma or past discrimination.

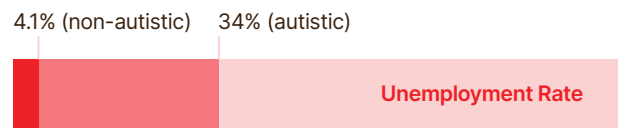
Why don't neurodivergent employees disclose their status?

Research shows people don't disclose when they fear stigma and negative stereotyping. They've often experienced discrimination through school, tertiary education, and previous workplaces.

“For 20 years, I didn't tell anyone I had ADHD. I didn't want to give anyone a reason to doubt me.”

The question for employers is: are you earning the right for people to disclose? If staff perceive disclosure as "career suicide" — and some do — it's clearly not safe. If you want truly inclusive environments, you need to lower the temperature and create conditions where people feel comfortable disclosing, should they choose to.

The unemployment rate for autistic Australians is 34%, compared to 4.1% for non-autistic people. Clearly, something isn't working.



What recruitment practices seem neutral but are actually exclusionary?

Standardised timed tests can disadvantage dyslexic candidates with different language processing, ADHD candidates who struggle with in-the-moment focus, and autistic people can have difficulty with social skills like interrupting non verbal cues and maintaining eye contact. Unstructured interviews are another issue. Managers think taking candidates to cafes or restaurants is disarming, but it actually adds social and sensory stress for people who struggle in those environments.

What should organisations do instead?

Start with predictability, clear and direct language, transparency through a recruitment process. Normalise inclusive design by offering optionality. Give candidates a choice: in-person, video call, or voice interviews for first rounds.

Provide questions in advance. If you're worried about unfair advantage, give them to everyone. Use work samples that demonstrate capabilities as close to actual work as possible. We've had great success at Xceptional Academy using work samples as a proxy for traditional interviews.

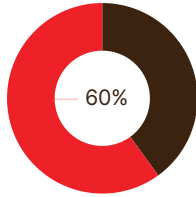
According to our survey, 76% of neurodivergent talent have left or considered leaving a role because they didn't feel included, valued, or safe. What's driving this turnover?

People don't leave organisations, they leave managers. When managers don't use clear and direct language or support focused work, staff burnout.

The neurodivergent staff you have, and you have more than you realise, are quite probably masking if they're not sharing what they need. Research shows this has serious mental health impacts.

When managers hold fixed ideas of professionalism, people burn out and force quit before things get worse. Add environments like open-plan offices, often kryptonite for neurodivergent staff, and the risk of turnover increases.

60% of neurodivergent talent have experienced burnout in the last 12 months.



What steps can people leaders take today to build a more inclusive workplace?

- **Start with education:** You don't need to be an expert, but knowledge goes a long way. Your best teachers are often the neurodivergent people you've already employed.
- **Be curious.** Watch how your teams interact. If someone routinely leaves meetings 15 minutes early or struggles with certain tasks while excelling at others, don't assume they're lazy or disorganised. Perhaps the meetings are too long, or they need movement breaks.

Practical workplace hacks

For Autistic Employees

- 1 Use direct, explicit language, avoid clichés and idioms
- 2 Provide at least 24 hours' notice for meetings and schedule changes
- 3 Accept different communication styles
- 4 Offer flexible schedules, remote work, and sensory regulation breaks
- 5 Maintain routine and consistency

For ADHD Employees

- 1 Keep meetings concise with clear agendas provided in advance
- 2 Introduce movement breaks every 45–60 minutes in longer meetings

- 3 Minimise workplace distractions and noise levels
- 4 Allow adaptable workspaces for better concentration
- 5 Use visual schedules, task lists, and checklists
- 6 Provide clear structures to manage workloads

For Dyslexic Employees

- 1 Provide materials in multiple formats (audio, video, text-to-speech)
- 2 Use dyslexia-friendly fonts (Arial, OpenDyslexic) with increased text size
- 3 Break down instructions into smaller, manageable steps
- 4 Allow extra time for reading and writing tasks
- 5 Provide written summaries of verbal instructions
- 6 Use plain language and avoid jargon

What gives you optimism about the future?

Public awareness has shifted significantly. Neurodiversity is being discussed far more openly in the media, and we're seeing greater representation and role models sharing their experiences. At the same time, more organisations are advertising neurodiversity-specific roles and programs, signaling a growing willingness to rethink how work is designed.

Younger people entering the workforce, particularly those in their early 20s, increasingly identify as neurodivergent or are aware of neurodivergence. There is also a rise of women diagnosed, often after the diagnosis of a child. They're demanding inclusion, optionality, and flexibility. While there's still work to do, these shifts suggest we're moving in the right direction.



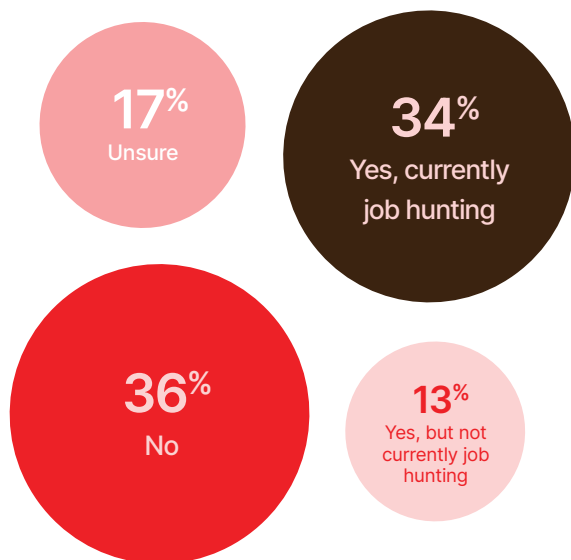
Sales

Sales professionals are the revenue drivers, relationship builders, and growth engines of organisations. They thrive on targets, autonomy, and the satisfaction of closing deals. Even in a division known for resilience and ambition, cracks are showing.

Burnout and lack of motivation affect a significant portion of the workforce, though job mobility is comparatively lower than

other divisions. When Sales talent do leave, it's primarily due to stalled career progression, inadequate salary, or a sense of unfulfillment. The pattern is clearest among lower earners, who are far more likely to be actively job hunting than their higher-paid counterparts. What keeps people engaged is straightforward: competitive pay, visible progression, and recognition that feels personal. Sales talent want to win, but they also want to grow within organisations that recognise their contribution and invest in their future.

“Do you expect to **change jobs** within the next year?”

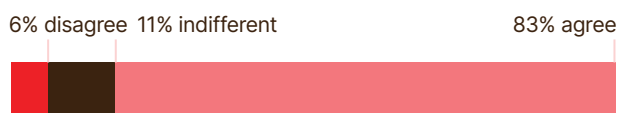


Sales has the highest share of talent not expecting to change jobs in the next year.

“In the last 12 months, has your ability to perform at your best been impacted by any of the below?”

Anxiety	17%
Burnout	38%
Fatigue	33%
Lack of Motivation	38%
None of the above	28%

Burnout, lack of motivation, and fatigue have increased from 2025; anxiety has notably decreased.



83% of Sales talent agree their organisation supports their wellbeing and mental health, **6% disagree**, and **11% are indifferent**.

Top three factors that contributed to Sales talent leaving their previous role:



Top three ways Sales talent prefer to be rewarded for their work:



Verbal one-on-one recognition has replaced bonus or financial reward in the top three this year.

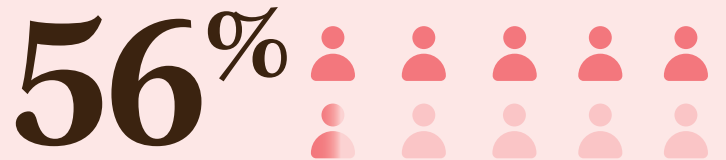
Top three factors that would attract Sales talent to a **new role**:



Top three DEIB practices that make the biggest difference to Sales talent feeling safe and supported at work?

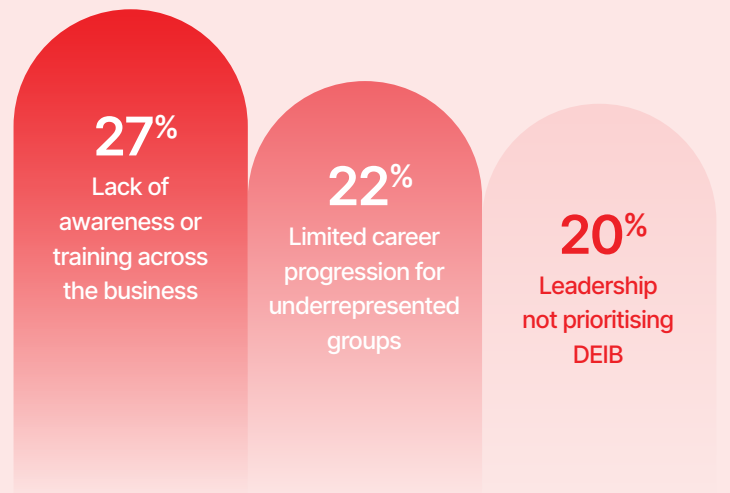


66% say professional learning and development opportunities are *very important* to their job satisfaction, with a further **28%** rating them as *somewhat important*.



want their organisation to provide **mentorship and coaching programs** to better assist with their career progression.

“In your experience, what is the **biggest barrier** to building an inclusive workplace?”



76% of women and **90% of men** in Sales say they feel safe being their authentic self at work.



SALES

Nick Warner

Entag

Account Executive

“Sales is not just about the money. The highs can be very high, but the lows can get low and dark just as quickly. The people who do well understand the ups and downs and keep turning up consistently.”

For someone considering a sales career, what's one thing you'd want them to know?

Sales is not just about the money. You need grit and thick skin because the highs can be very high, but the lows can get low and dark just as quickly. Don't walk into it blind. The people who do well understand the ups and downs, lean on a support network, and keep turning up consistently. If you show up every day, do the work, and stay steady through the tough patches, you will win over time.

What motivates you to keep growing professionally?

New challenges and the chance to switch gears. After nearly 11 years doing similar work, you can burn out and need something fresh. For me, moving into a new business and a new offering let me apply what I learned over the last decade in a different environment, bring a fresh perspective, and keep growing. When you can take your experience, use it somewhere new, and see both yourself and the business move forward, that momentum is motivating.

What makes a sales professional stay and build a career with one business rather than take the next offer?

Beyond money, it is culture, connection, and fit. Having a local presence matters, being able to walk into an office, meet the team, and build relationships face to face. Culture is not a buzzword, it shows up in how people support each other and how the business operates day to day. Tenure also speaks volumes. When you meet people who have been there for years and they still back the business, that is a strong reason to stay and build.

What habits or traits set top performers apart?

Consistency, focus, and discipline. Set smaller goals, hit them, then move to the next, and over time you build real results. Front-load your day, plan ahead, and protect focus by removing distractions. Stay healthy, show up early, and do the fundamentals: pipeline, calls, emails, and follow-ups. Get out from behind the screen too. Talk to people, network, learn the market, and understand what you are selling, who you are selling to, and why they would buy.



SALES

Gopi Sara

OneMRI
CEO & Co-Founder

“In 2026, every role has a people lens, an innovation lens, and a sales element – even if it’s selling ideas internally.”

What’s been a standout moment in your journey as a founder?

At the end of last year, I got influenza A and was bedridden for a couple of weeks. Leading up to that, I’d probably been running on adrenaline for 18 months at the highest level of motivation. While I was in bed, the team messaged with a small request, something as simple as, “Can you share the authenticator code that was sent to your phone?” Normally, it would have taken 10 seconds. But in that moment, it broke me. It made me question everything, “maybe I wasn’t cut out to be a founder”. It took a couple of weeks to reset and rebuild my energy. But I came back more motivated than ever. That moment stands out because it reminded me how fragile your state of mind can be when you’re depleted. It doesn’t take much to go off track and start reconsidering big life decisions. It also reinforced how important it is to have strong coping mechanisms and a trusted support network around you.

As a CEO, what does building an inclusive culture look like in practice?

For me, inclusive culture comes from being objective about what great looks like, rather than trying to “engineer” diversity during hiring. We define what we want before going to market, including clear criteria and a hiring rubric built independently of the moment. We assess candidates against that, focusing on things like the 4Hs (Hunger, Humility, Hard work and Honesty). We also run a rigorous hiring process so

we can confidently align on ways of working once someone joins, rather than doubting whether they are the right fit.

What helps people stay connected to a business long-term?

Alignment and connection. In week one, we use a “day one expectation” process to clarify what success looks like, what support someone expects, preferred management style, and long-term growth. That early alignment helps fix mismatches fast. We also ask people to share their personal story and why they are here, then present it to the company. It builds understanding and belonging. Finally, we create deliberate opportunities for friendships, like paying for lunch or coffee when teammates spend time together.

How do you see the relationship between people, sales and innovation evolving in 2026?

People will need to be more flexible and less siloed. Gone are the days where someone can say they only do one component. In 2026 I believe every role has a people lens, an innovation lens, and a sales element, even if it is selling ideas internally. We hire specialists, but we look for an innovation tilt. People need to solve problems directly, pull others in, and drive outcomes. At a fast-growing company, you cannot throw issues over the fence. You need people who can fix and/or build quickly.

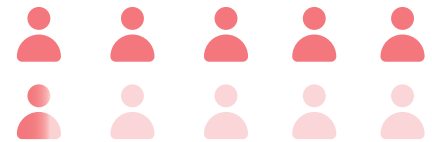
Marketing & Digital

Marketing and Digital talent carry responsibility for brand, growth, and performance all at once, and the pressure is starting to show. This division shows some of the highest job mobility across the workforce, nearly double what it was the previous year. The movement is consistent across all salary levels, indicating that retention challenges run deeper than compensation alone. Burnout plays a key role, with those experiencing it far more likely to be actively seeking new opportunities.

Work-life balance, recognition, and career development sit at the core of what defines a positive culture for this group, yet a substantial portion have either left or considered leaving workplaces where they didn't feel included, valued, or safe. Flexibility is critical here. It's the top DEIB practice that makes people feel supported, and its absence is a dealbreaker for many. This is a workforce ready to commit to organisations that offer clarity, growth, and balance, but if the message doesn't match the reality, they'll move on before the campaign even launches.

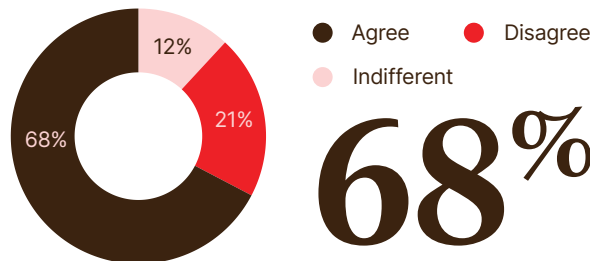
58% of Marketing & Digital talent are **actively job hunting**.

**This has increased from 29% in 2025.*



Job mobility persists beyond entry and mid-level salaries, suggesting retention challenges go beyond compensation.

Top three things Marketing & Digital talent believe have the most impact on a positive company culture?



68%

of Marketing & Digital talent agree their organisation supports their wellbeing and mental health, **21% disagree**, and **12% are indifferent**.

This is the highest level of disagreement across all divisions.

Nearly half of Marketing & Digital talent who have experienced burnout in the last 12 months are actively job hunting.



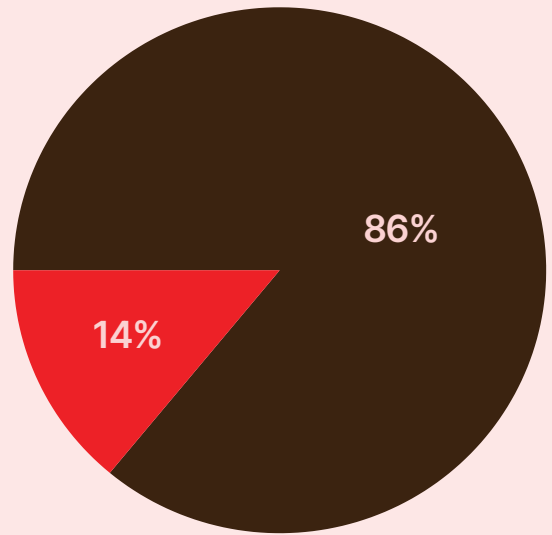
Over one-third of talent who have experienced anxiety or fatigue are actively job hunting.



Almost one third report access to wellness subsidies or incentives.

If most feel supported but few have actual wellness benefits, what's filling the gap?

Two-thirds of Marketing & Digital talent have either left a workplace or considered leaving because they did not feel included, valued or safe.



Top three factors that would attract Marketing & Digital talent to a **new organisation**:




86% of Marketing & Digital talent have *at least one flexible work option available*, while **14%** report having *no flexibility at all*.

Top three factors that would attract Marketing & Digital talent to a **new role**:



Top three DEIB practices Marketing & Digital talent say make the biggest difference to feeling safe and supported at work:

 **65%** of Marketing & Digital talent say clearer, more complete job descriptions would improve the fairness and inclusivity of recruitment processes.





MARKETING & DIGITAL

Kiandra Cavanagh

The Agency
Brand Integration Lead

“I value roles where I can improve systems so the same issues don’t keep repeating. Sustainability means building something with long-term benefit.”

Best career advice you’ve ever received, and have you followed it?

Progress over perfection. Early in my design career, I held back from applying for roles because I wanted my portfolio to be perfect, but a portfolio is never really finished. I missed opportunities by over-scrutinising. Now I focus on making it as useful and true to me as possible, then putting it out there. I also carry that mindset into work. A plan will never be perfect and it will change, so it is better to start with something, stay agile, and leave room for adjustments.

What has driven your momentum and growth so early in a new job?

The need to be useful and solve the real problem, not just deliver a short-term fix. The role I was hired for would not have addressed the bigger issue, so I evolved into a new, more strategic role that connects marketing, operations and onboarding. That shift protects my workload and sanity long-term, and it sets the business up better, including for whoever comes into the original role later with a clearer job scope. I was also ready to move off the tools after 10 years in design and step into something more people and process focused.

What matters most to you in your career right now?

Impact and sustainability. I want to build something that has long-term benefit, not just fix a problem for today. Sustainability also means sustainable for my mental health. In industries like real estate, it is not only workload, it is also managing personalities and expectations, so being set up with the right support and resources matters. I value roles where I can improve systems so the same issues do not keep repeating. Since becoming pregnant, flexibility and leave matter more too, but impact and sustainability are the most consistent drivers for me.

With AI ever-evolving, what skills do you think will matter most for marketers heading into 2026?

Human judgement and knowing how to use AI as a tool, not a replacement for creativity. AI can save time on admin like meeting recaps, emails and drafting, but it is not reliable for everything and it can be wrong. Marketers still need strong briefing, critical thinking, and the ability to check accuracy. You also need awareness of risks, including what should not be put into open tools. The people who do best will use AI to prompt and speed up work, while making smart calls about when not to use it and what the business context requires.



MARKETING & DIGITAL

Tricia Quintos

Elston
Marketing Coordinator

“A culture built on transparency, collaboration and trust; when leaders are open, communication is shared, and progress is visible, it becomes much easier to contribute quickly and confidently.”

If you could describe your career so far in three words, what would they be?

Adaptive, creative, and growth-focused. I moved to Australia right before lockdowns and had to adjust quickly, all while freelancing and studying. Since then, I have worked across very different industries and audiences, from FMCG and events to recruitment marketing and now financial services. Each role meant working with new people and stakeholders, and having new priorities. I'm also a natural planner, but I have learned that things rarely go exactly as planned, so flexibility matters. Creative problem-solving has stayed constant, especially in fast-paced environments. And the best part is the ongoing growth, marketing keeps evolving, so there is always more to learn.

What kind of workplace culture allows you to thrive and make an impact quickly?

A culture built on transparency, collaboration, and trust. I thrive when goals and expectations are clear early on, and when different parts of the business explain how marketing supports them. Being part of a well-rounded and supportive team makes a huge difference, too. Knowing that I have people to bounce ideas off, ask for a quick sense check, and share the load to keep things moving, no matter what. I also value a workplace where there is trust, and you're encouraged to ask questions without judgment. When leaders are open, communication is shared, and progress is visible, it becomes much easier to contribute quickly and confidently.

What kind of recognition actually motivates you to do your best work?

Private, specific feedback motivates me the most. I really value one-on-one conversations where I can understand what worked, why it mattered, and how my work contributed to results. Practical recognition also goes a long way, like genuine flexibility, work-from-home trust, or extra leave when you have put in the effort. The most motivating recognition, though, when a leader remembers your strengths and interests and gives you the chance to step into bigger or more aligned projects. It shows real confidence and that's the kind of trust that makes me want to keep raising the bar.

What excites you most about where the industry is heading?

Marketing is evolving quickly, especially with AI, automation, and better use of data. I like that more businesses are becoming open to testing new channels and formats, and responding to what the numbers show, even in more traditional industries. At the same time, I'm excited about the shift back toward human-centric, authentic storytelling. The content that performs best is often community-driven, values-led, and genuinely personal. As tools keep getting smarter, I think the brands that stand out will be the ones that use technology to work more efficiently while still creating real connection and trust with people.


Accounting & Finance

For Accounting & Finance talent, the numbers tell a clear story. A majority expect to change jobs in the next year, particularly in lower salary bands. When they move on, it's most often because progression has stalled, pay doesn't add up against responsibility, or the culture doesn't balance out the pressure they're under.

What keeps them engaged looks more like structure than perks. Salary, career development, and flexible working

outrank other benefits, and financial recognition through raises, promotions, and bonuses is strongly preferred; even though only around a quarter currently receive a performance-related bonus. Mentorship and coaching are a key missing piece in the progression equation. Most Accounting & Finance talent describe their workplaces as inclusive and feel safe being themselves, but they still want salary bands in job ads and visible DEIB commitments. This is a group that looks closely at how fairly opportunities, flexibility, and rewards are distributed, and adjusts course when the balance is off.

57%



of Accounting & Finance talent expect to **change jobs in the next year.**

**This has increased from 42% in 2025.*

Top three factors that contributed to Accounting & Finance talent leaving their previous role:



Half of Accounting & Finance talent say **mentorship and coaching programs** are what their organisation could most improve to better support career progression.

“In the last 12 months, has your ability to perform at your best been impacted by any of the below?”

Anxiety	30%
Burnout	38%
Fatigue	33%
Lack of Motivation	32%
None of the above	30%

Expect to change roles



62% of Accounting & Finance talent who expect to change roles in the next year earn under \$100,000.

Openness to job change in Accounting & Finance is concentrated within lower salary bands.

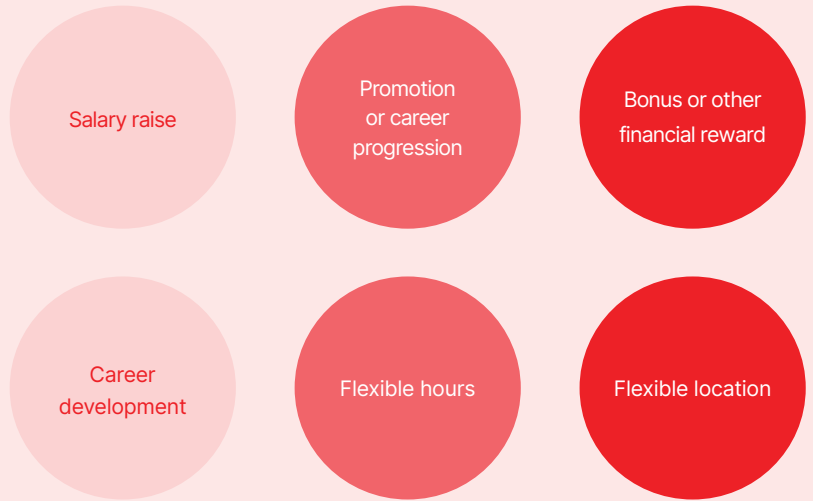
Critical Very important



Nearly half say a company's DEIB commitment is very important or critical to their decision to *join or stay*.

Top three ways Accounting & Finance talent prefer to be rewarded for their work:

Financial rewards are highly valued, yet only a quarter receive a performance-related bonus.



Top three non-monetary benefits Accounting & Finance talent value most:

61%

say **posting salary bands in job ads** could better ensure recruitment processes are fair, inclusive, and positive for all applicants.



More than twice as many respondents value flexible hours over flexible locations.

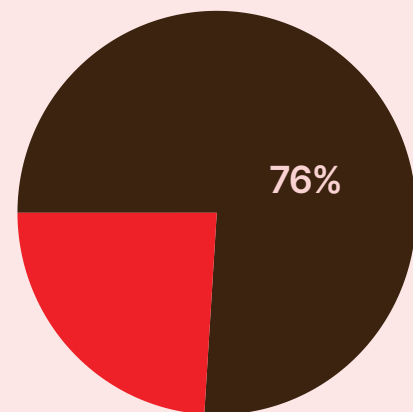


1 in 5 of Accounting & Finance talent have no flexible work options.

Flexibility is highly valued, yet a significant minority still has no access to it.

Left because of manager

One in four Accounting & Finance talent said their direct manager was a contributing factor in their decision to leave their previous role.



76% agree that their workplace is **inclusive and respectful** of people from different cultures, backgrounds, and abilities.

78% of women and **72% of men** in Accounting & Finance say they feel safe being their authentic self at work.



ACCOUNTING & FINANCE

Ankit Hemani

Lactalis
Senior FP&A Manager

“Usually, people leave organisations for growth. But if you are getting both professional and personal development in the same place, there is no reason to move.”

If you had to explain what you do in FP&A to someone at a BBQ, what would you say?

I work in finance, but it is less about traditional accounting and more about business partnering. My team supports supply chain operations, helping deliver products across the country in the most efficient and cost-effective way. I often describe myself as a “friendly neighbourhood cop”. I am there to help operational leaders, but also to keep them in check. Ultimately, I communicate business problems and opportunities through numbers. Finance is the language I use to guide decisions and improve performance.

What has kept you motivated through such a long period of growth within one organisation?

There have always been development opportunities available. If I was not growing vertically through promotions, I was growing horizontally by expanding my skills and responsibilities. I have stepped into more senior roles, built new capabilities, and taken on fresh challenges over time. Usually, people leave organisations for growth. But if you are getting both professional and personal development in the same place, there is no reason to move. That continuous progression has kept me engaged.

What's been the biggest opportunity that's come from being part of the same organisation over time?

It is not one single opportunity, but a series of small ones that add up. Being involved in major supply chain projects from inception, including network changes and what if analysis, has allowed me to influence real business decisions. Working through COVID was also a defining period. Managing shifting demand, workforce shortages and constant disruption was intense, but it accelerated both personal and professional growth. Observing how leaders navigated crisis was invaluable.

What do you think will matter most for finance leaders over the next few years?

Strong fundamentals will matter more than ever. I am seeing fewer people coming through with deep accounting foundations. Many are pursuing dual degrees and looking for hybrid roles. But if you want to work on strategic projects, you need to understand the basics first. Without solid technical grounding, you cannot have meaningful conversations or add value. Finance leaders will need to prioritise capability, fundamentals and depth of expertise in their teams.



ACCOUNTING & FINANCE

Gabriela Henao

Ingenia
AR Officer

“I focus on understanding the process, not just following steps. Knowing why you’re doing something helps you learn faster and work more efficiently.”

What surprised you most about starting your accounting career?

I assumed accounting was just about numbers, but once I started studying I realised it is much broader. It connects economics, finance and administration, and shows how everything in a business links together. Accounting helps you understand both the big picture and the small details of how a company works. That was the biggest surprise for me, because I chose it originally thinking I was just “good with numbers”, but it turned out to be about understanding the whole business.

What do you think has helped shape you into a top performer so quickly?

I focus on understanding the business and the process, not just following steps. When someone trains you, they might say “click here, download here”, but I want to understand why I am doing it. That helps me learn faster and work more efficiently. I am also very organised, pay close attention to detail, take clear notes, ask questions, and stay proactive. I regularly seek feedback so I can keep improving, especially when I am new in a role.

What learning and development opportunities have made the biggest impact?

The biggest impact was finding and recovering over \$1 million in rejected invoices at a previous company. I was new, but while organising files I found a folder of rejected invoices that had been filed away and not actioned. It was challenging to track down approvals in the mining industry, but through long hours, emails and calls we recovered around 95%. After that, the process changed. We acted on rejections immediately and made sure they did not build up again. That experience taught me a lot.

What skill do you think has helped you most in finance?

Excel has helped me the most. If you are an accountant, you need to be strong in Excel. At university I had several semesters with around six hours a week focused on Excel, which helped a lot. I also think being able to learn different systems is important, because every company uses different tools. Once you learn one or two systems, it becomes easier to learn others. Being organised and taking good notes also helps you learn properly and avoid repeating mistakes.

Projects & Technology

Projects & Tech talent turn ideas into working solutions, managing delivery, navigating stakeholders, and keeping systems, products, and projects on track. But the data points to a workforce in motion themselves. More than half are actively job hunting, and that jumps to 83% at both ends of the pay spectrum. Lack of motivation, fatigue, and burnout are common, even as many say their organisation supports wellbeing, suggesting support on paper doesn't always match the reality of delivery pressure.

What keeps this group engaged is a mix of fair reward, meaningful work, and room to grow. Salary, career development, and flexible hours sit at the top of the benefits list, and most want mentoring, coaching, and genuinely challenging projects to move their careers forward. Financial recognition matters, yet less than a third currently receive a KPI or performance-related bonus. Flexibility is generally strong, but decisions about staying or going are just as tied to culture, stability, and job security. This is a workforce that thrives on complexity and challenge, and won't hesitate to look elsewhere when progression, recognition, and balance fall out of scope.



of Projects & Technology talent are actively job hunting.

Job-seeking is highest at both ends of the salary spectrum, suggesting retention pressures extend beyond pay.

“In the last 12 months, has your ability to perform at your best been impacted by any of the below?”

Anxiety	28%
Burnout	34%
Fatigue	39%
Lack of Motivation	43%
None of the above	32%

Culture was the main contributing factor to people leaving their last role.



68% agree that their organisation supports their wellbeing and mental health needs, **19% disagree**, and **13% remain indifferent**.

Top three ways Project & Tech talent prefer to be rewarded for their work:



However, **recognition in front of peers** is the top preferred reward for **28%** of respondents.

Top three benefits Projects & Tech talent value most:



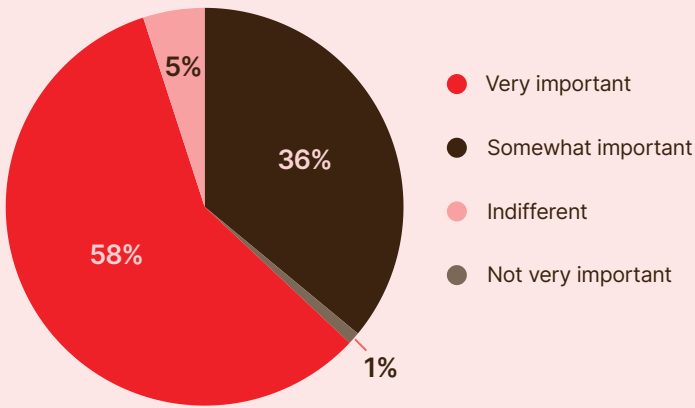
29% of Projects & Tech talent receive KPI/performance-related bonuses.

Want mentorship, coaching

53% want their organisation to provide **mentorship and coaching programs** to better assist with their career progression.

This has increased from 39% in 2025.

“How important are **professional learning & development opportunities** to your job satisfaction?”



Nearly all respondents cite professional development opportunities as important to their job satisfaction.

Only 8% have no flexible work options

**This is the lowest of all divisions.*

Want challenging projects

40% want their organisation to provide opportunities for challenging projects to better assist with their career progression.



30% Critical, Somewhat important, Not very important, Not important at all

79% say their workplace is inclusive and respectful of people from different cultures, backgrounds and abilities.

say a company's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion & belonging (DEIB) is very important when deciding whether to join or stay with an employer

Top three factors that would attract Projects & Tech talent to a **new organisation**:



Top three factors that would attract Projects & Tech talent to a **new role**:





PROJECTS & TECHNOLOGY

Namalka Arambewala

WorkCover Queensland
Program Manager

“True project success is about the journey you take stakeholders on and the legacy you leave behind.”

If you could try a totally different career for a year, what would it be?

If I could try something completely different, it would be travel writing or being a travel content creator. I am deeply passionate about travel; exploring new places, immersing myself in different cultures, learning about the history behind what I see, conversing with the local people. Being able to capture those stories and share them creatively with others would be incredibly fulfilling.

What do you enjoy most about contract work?

What I enjoy most about contract work is the variety and the opportunity to add real value. I have worked across multiple industries and organisations, each bringing new challenges and opportunities to create efficiencies for the people I'm supporting. Much of my recent work has been in the not-for-profit space, so it's been especially rewarding to contribute to organisations that are making a positive impact. I also value the people side of contracting. Building strong teams and learning continuously through each engagement.

Outside of just metrics, what indicates to you that a project has been successful?

For me, true project success is about the journey you take stakeholders on and the legacy you leave behind. It goes beyond time and budget. It's about ensuring stakeholders have been heard. Ultimately, they are the ones who will own and use the solution. If adoption is strong and people feel confident moving forward, that is a real measure of success. Real success is about the experience you create for your stakeholders and the value you leave behind once the project is complete.

What skills will define high-performing project professionals in 2026?

High-performing project professionals will be defined by a blend of human-centred skills such as emotional intelligence; strong stakeholder engagement, and the ability to guide people through change and adaptive thinking; being able to think outside of the box, and being comfortable with rapid technological shifts. Technical capability remains important, but I think the real differentiators for high-performing project professionals will be those who can combine strong delivery discipline with empathy, curiosity, and the agility to learn and evolve.



PROJECTS & TECHNOLOGY

Hugo Prieto

Goodstart Early Learning
SAP PMO Analyst

“What I enjoy most is the autonomy and trust I receive from leadership. When you’re trusted, you naturally take greater accountability, and that mutual respect creates a strong and positive environment.”

What’s your go to productivity tool or app right now?

My go to tools right now are Outlook Calendar, monday.com, and Microsoft Teams. Calendar management is essential in project environments, and I rely on it to coordinate stakeholders and maintain momentum. monday.com helps track tasks and responsibilities clearly. I also use AI powered tools within Teams to record meetings, generate transcripts, and produce summaries quickly. That allows me to follow up on commitments and keep everyone aligned. Outside of technology, swimming is part of my productivity routine. It helps me reset mentally and maintain focus throughout the week.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do day to day?

What I enjoy most is the autonomy and trust I receive from leadership. When you are trusted, you naturally take greater accountability for your work. That mutual respect creates a strong and positive environment. I value clear communication, well defined expectations, and the flexibility to manage my routine effectively. Supporting a complex enterprise software modernisation project requires coordination, structure, and cross functional communication, which I enjoy. Keeping stakeholders aligned and ensuring the project maintains its rhythm is both challenging and rewarding.

What makes a role stand out in a competitive talent market?

A role stands out when it challenges you to grow. The scope of responsibility and the level of complexity are what make a position truly competitive. The best roles push you beyond your comfort zone and require you to solve situations strategically, not simply react to problems. When a position encourages continuous improvement and builds a stronger version of yourself, it becomes attractive. Growth, learning, and the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to strategic outcomes are what differentiate a role in today’s market.

What keeps technology professionals loyal to an organisation?

Loyalty comes from shared values, respect, and purpose. Professionals stay when they feel their work contributes to something meaningful. A clear mission, consistently communicated and lived by leadership, builds that connection. It is not about branding or symbols, but about understanding who the organisation is, what it stands for, and how your work supports that vision. When people feel respected, aligned with the mission, and proud of the service they provide, loyalty develops naturally.

Human Resources & Talent Acquisition

HR Practices	2026
HR Director	\$220 - \$300k+
HR Manager/People & Culture Manager	\$140 - \$250k
HR Business Partner	\$100 - \$160k+
HR Advisor	\$85 - \$140k
HR Coordinator	\$70 - \$95k

Specialist Practices	2026
HR Change Manager	\$150- \$250k
Learning & Development Manager	\$120 - \$180k
Learning & Development Coordinator	\$75 - \$90k
Workforce Planning Manager	\$100 - \$150k
IR/ER Manager	\$150 - \$240k+
IR/ER Advisor - Business Partner	\$100 - \$150k
Remuneration & Benefits Specialist	\$120 - \$230k
Training Manager	\$110 - \$165k

Recruitment & Talent Practices	2026
Talent Acquisition/Recruitment Manager	\$130 - \$220k
Talent Acquisition Partner/Recruitment Specialist	\$85 - \$130k
Recruitment Coordinator	\$65 - \$85k

Business Services

Business Services	2026
Office Manager	\$80 - \$120k
Admin Manager	\$80 - \$105k
Executive Assistant	\$85 - \$130k
Personal Assistant	\$80 - \$130k
Legal Admin/Secretary	\$70 - \$95k
Team Assistant	\$70 - \$90k
Administrator	\$65 - \$90k
Facilities Office Coordinator	\$68 - \$85k
Receptionist	\$68 - \$80k
Procurement Officer	\$80 - \$110k

Customer Experience

Customer Experience	2026
Contact Centre Manager	\$120 - \$180k
Customer Experience Manager	\$90 - \$140k
Customer Experience Team Lead	\$85 - \$120k
Head of Customer Experience	\$150 - \$220k
Contact Centre Consultant	\$65 - \$75k

Claims	2026
Case Manager	\$70 - \$95k
Claims Management Officer	\$65 - \$95k

Sales

Sales	2026
General Manager of Sales	\$220 - \$350k
Head of Sales	\$180 - \$250k
National Sales Manager	\$150 - \$210k
Sales Manager	\$120 - \$190k
BDM	\$100 - \$160k
Sales Executive	\$80 - \$120k
Relationship Manager	\$85 - \$120k
Account Manager	\$75 - \$115k
Internal Account Manager	\$65 - \$80k
Internal Sales Rep	\$70 - \$100k

Our salary banding is based on national data and considers the following factors:

state where the role is based

city or regional location

remote work options

workforce size

industry

Marketing & Digital

Marketing & Digital	2026
CMO/CDO	\$180 - \$250k
Head of Marketing	\$140 - \$185k
Marketing Manager	\$100 - \$150k
Marketing Coordinator	\$65 - \$85k
Marketing Executive	\$75 - \$105k
Digital Marketing Manager	\$100 - \$120k
Brand Marketing Manager	\$100 - \$145k
Campaign Manager	\$90 - \$140k
Campaign Coordinator	\$65 - \$85k
Search Engine Marketing Specialist	\$80 - \$100k
Search Engine Optimisation Specialist	\$80 - \$90k
Event Manager	\$75 - \$100k

Communications & Content	2026
Communications Manager	\$115 - \$160k
Communications Specialist	\$80 - \$100k
Content Manager	\$90 - \$130k
Content Coordinator	\$70 - \$85k
Social Media Manager	\$85 - \$120k
Social Media Coordinator	\$65 - \$85k
Graphic Designer	\$75 - \$110k

Accounting & Finance

Accounting Support	2026
Payroll Manager	\$120 - \$160k
Payroll Officer	\$85 - \$100k
Accounts Payable Manager	\$100 - \$135k
Accounts Payable Officer	\$75 - \$95k
Accounts Receivable Manager	\$90 - \$135k
Accounts Receivable Officer	\$75 - \$90k
Credit Manager	\$90 - \$135k
Credit Officer	\$75 - \$90k
Bookkeeper	\$72 - \$100k
Finance Officer	\$75 - \$105k
Senior Payroll Officer	\$100 - \$115k

Financial Management	2026
CFO/Finance Director	\$180 - \$400k
Commercial Manager	\$160 - \$250k
Financial Controller	\$160 - \$300k
Finance Manager	\$130 - \$200k

Accounting	2026
Finance Business Partner	\$130 - \$180k
Financial Analyst	\$120 - \$160k
Project Accountant	\$100 - \$150k
Financial Accountant	\$110 - \$150k
Management Accountant	\$115 - \$155k
Accountant	\$90 - \$130k
Assistant Accountant	\$80 - \$95k
Cost Accountant	\$110 - \$145k
Group Accountant	\$110 - \$145k

Projects & Technology

Projects & Technology	2026
Change Manager	\$160 - \$180k
Project Manager	\$140 - \$250k
Program Director	\$210k+
Change Analyst	\$120 - \$160k
Business Analyst	\$110 - \$150k
Data Analyst	\$120 - \$150k
Reporting Analyst	\$100 - \$140k
IT Manager	\$140 - \$160k
Enterprise Architect	\$140 - \$200k+
Solutions Architect	\$130 - \$200k+
Systems Administrator	\$120 - \$170k
Technical Business Analyst	\$130 - \$165k
Functional Business Analyst	\$130 - \$165k
Data Engineer	\$170 - \$220k
Level 2 Support	\$80 - \$120k
Systems Engineer	\$130 - \$140k
Systems Developer	\$120 - \$140k

Our salary banding is based on national data and considers the following factors:

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Your *Talent Strategy* blueprint for 2026.

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