


THE OPPORTUNITY GAP

HOW TO
BECOME A
MEANINGFUL
BRAND
FOR EARLY
TALENT



73% of Gen Z believe companies and brands should play a role in improving their quality of life and wellbeing, but only 47% of them believe they are really working hard at delivering these improvements.

We are living through an extraordinary time of change. Businesses are shifting all around us to meet the higher expectations of consumers. But what about meeting the expectations of employees, especially Early Talent? After all, by 2025, at least 70% of the workforce will be made up of Millennials and Gen Z. What are they expecting from employers? And to what extent are employers delivering on these expectations?

This is what we set out to investigate. Starting with a focus on recent UK graduates with no more than 4 years of working experience, we wanted to tap into the crucial period where they are discovering the reality of working life. In doing so, we hoped to build a picture of what it is the younger generation are looking for and what employers need to be thinking about, in order to bridge the gap between employee expectations and their actual experiences.

The results were eye-opening. We found that while there is much that employers are doing well, there is still much to be done. Early Talent is crying out for employers to help them develop and progress further, and to help them feel more confident about their futures. They are struggling with the need to feel more valued and appreciated at work. And they are calling out employers for not being honest and trustworthy enough, nor being serious enough about their commitments to wider social issues.

While some of the results may be unsettling, we believe that understanding the issues is the first critical step you can take in order to become a truly meaningful employer in the eyes of Early Talent. After all, the gaps of today are simply the opportunities for tomorrow.

We hope you enjoy reading.

Havas People





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**73% OF GEN Z
LIKELY TO LEAVE IF
THEIR EMPLOYER
DOESN'T MEET THEIR
EXPECTATIONS**



Meeting the expectations of the next generation of talent

By 2025, Millennials and Gen Z are likely to make up 70% of the workforce. Our question is are we doing enough to understand the world of work through the eyes of this critical talent segment?

Their expectations go well beyond the salary and benefit considerations of previous generations. Be it more purposeful work, a sense of belonging, or the flexibility to work when and where they choose, there are a wide range of factors that influence where people choose to work, and why they chose to stay or leave.

Many organisations are now pondering how they will adapt to the growing demands of their employees. So it's no wonder that the concept of Employee Experience (EX) is increasingly being talked about.

The discipline of Employee Experience (EX), directly adapted from Customer Experience (CX), compels you to stand in the shoes of your employees and view the workplace through their eyes. This shift in perspective is critical. As McKinsey recently proclaimed:

'Mark our words: Employee Experience is the new evolution from employee engagement for defining how companies should interact with their people.'

And with good business reason. A recent study* found that 73% of Gen Z were likely to leave if their employers did not meet their expectations, thereby posing a significant risk to organisational performance. Conversely, it has also been found** that organisations who are delivering a top quartile employee experience are also achieving:

- **Twice the innovation**
- **Twice the customer satisfaction**
- **11 times more likely to feature on Glassdoor's Best Companies to Work**
- **25% more profit.**



* <https://www.hrdive.com/news/study-48-of-workers-have-left-a-job-because-it-didnt-meet-expectations/551179>

**<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends/2019/workforce-engagement-employee-experience.html>



Yet when it comes to Early Talent – the people who will soon make up the lifeblood of your organisation – the investment of time, money, and attention feels heavily focused on attraction and recruitment.

But what happens after they join? Is their employee experience living up to their expectations? Is it living up to the promises made to them when they joined? And if it isn't, what impact will this have on them, and ultimately your organisation?

We believe that the time has come for employers to start addressing these questions. Only when we understand the gap between what Early Talent are expecting and what they are currently experiencing, can we start to address their needs. Rather than 'attracting' them once, we can strive to create work environments that 'continually attract' them. This is what we mean by a Meaningful Employee Experience. And this is the opportunity gap for employers.

Our approach: Meaningful Brands®

For the last 10 years, Havas Group has been exploring what makes brands meaningful to consumers. Our annual Meaningful Brands study has consistently shown that people want brands to deliver better on their promises, improve the quality of their lives and play a positive role in society.

For instance, our 2019 report revealed that:

- 73% of Gen Z believe companies and brands should play a role in improving their quality of life and wellbeing, but only 47% of them believe they are really working hard at delivering these improvements
- 79% of Gen Z believe companies and brands should communicate honestly about their commitments and promises but only 41% of them believe they are doing it right now
- 54% of Gen Z believe companies have a more important role than governments today in creating a better future.



GEN Z EXPECT
COMPANIES
TO DELIVER
BETTER ON
THEIR PROMISES
AND IMPROVE
THE QUALITY
OF THEIR LIVES

What makes a brand meaningful to Early Talent employees

Surely Early Talent audiences expect as much – if not more – from the companies they work for, as they do from the companies they buy from? With this as our hypothesis, we wondered what a more meaningful employer, and more meaningful employee experience might look like for them.

So, for the first time, we applied the principles of our Meaningful Brands study to an Early Talent audience to answer the question: What does Early Talent expect from employers today? And how well are employers delivering against those expectations?

Havas defines Meaningful Brands as those that deliver highest against expectations across three tiers of benefits: Functional, Personal and Collective. In a careers context, these can be understood as follows:

Functional benefits – Does my employer offer me what I need?

The tangible or physical benefits delivered by an employer. They include the most practical, rational elements of the employee offer, such as pay, location and other ‘hygiene’ factors.

Personal benefits – Does my employer offer me what I desire?

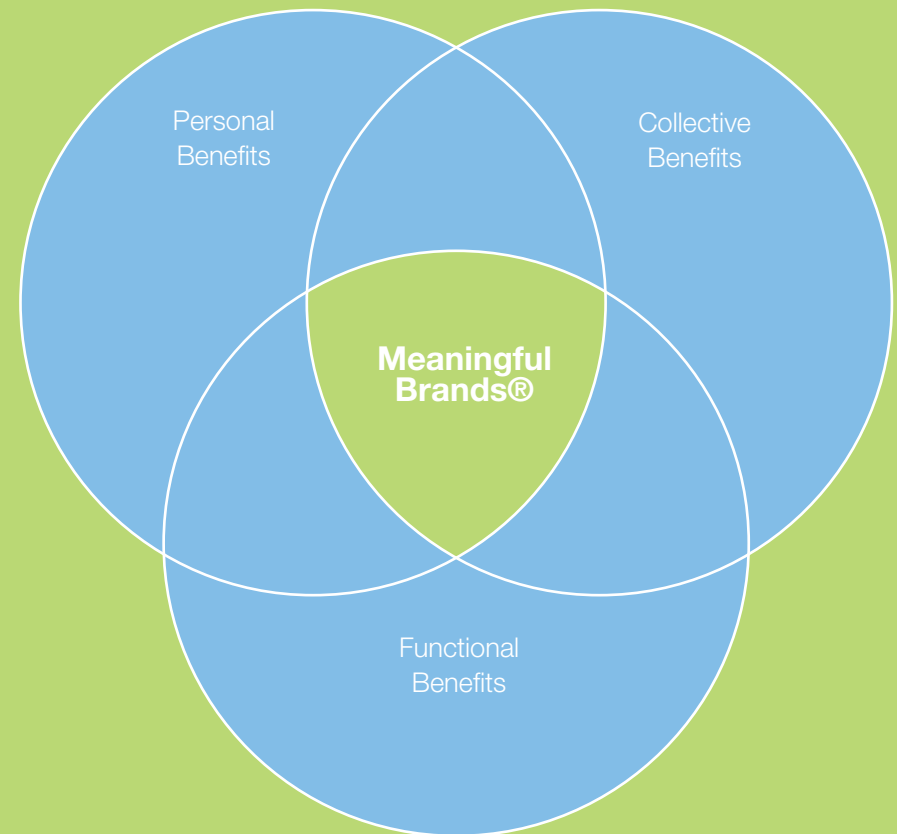
These are the intangible characteristics of a workplace that connect on a more personal and emotional level. Personal benefits relate to how someone feels at work. For instance, feeling valued and appreciated.

Collective benefits – Does my employer make a positive contribution to others?

Finally, these are the characteristics of a workplace that connect on a societal and cultural level. They express how an organisation operates as part of the wider world. For instance, their ethical practices around sustainability or transparency.

In the consumer space, the most meaningful brands (which are also the strongest financial performers) are those which perform well across all three tiers.

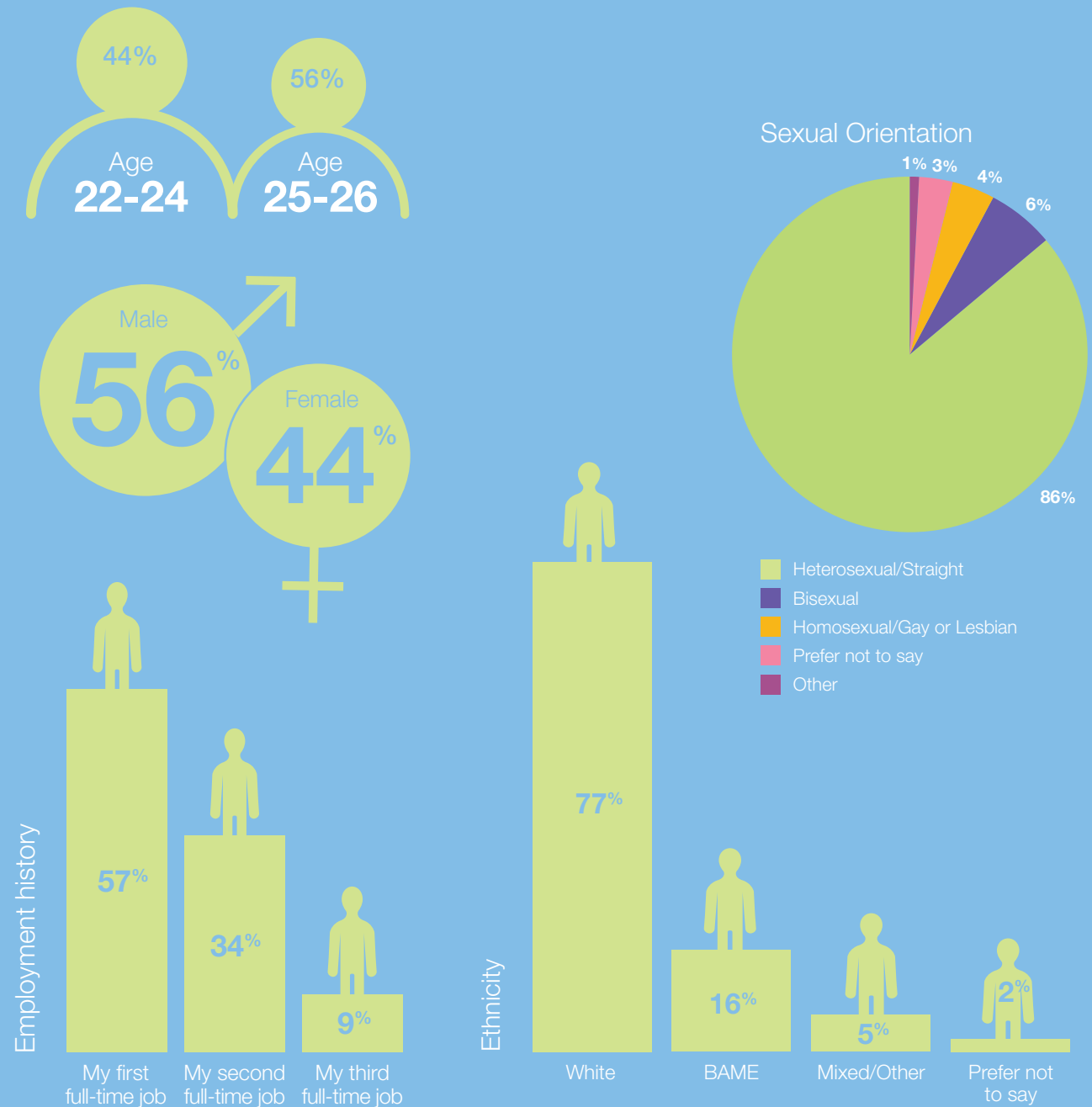
Might the same be true in the Early Talent space? With that in mind, we set out to find out how well employers are performing against our three tiers. Read on to find out the results.



Who we spoke to

We surveyed over 600 recent UK graduates* aged 22-26. They came from a diverse range of backgrounds, and are working across an equally diverse range of sectors. No-one surveyed had more than 4 years of working experience – our aim being to tap into this crucial period where graduates are discovering the reality of life in the working world.

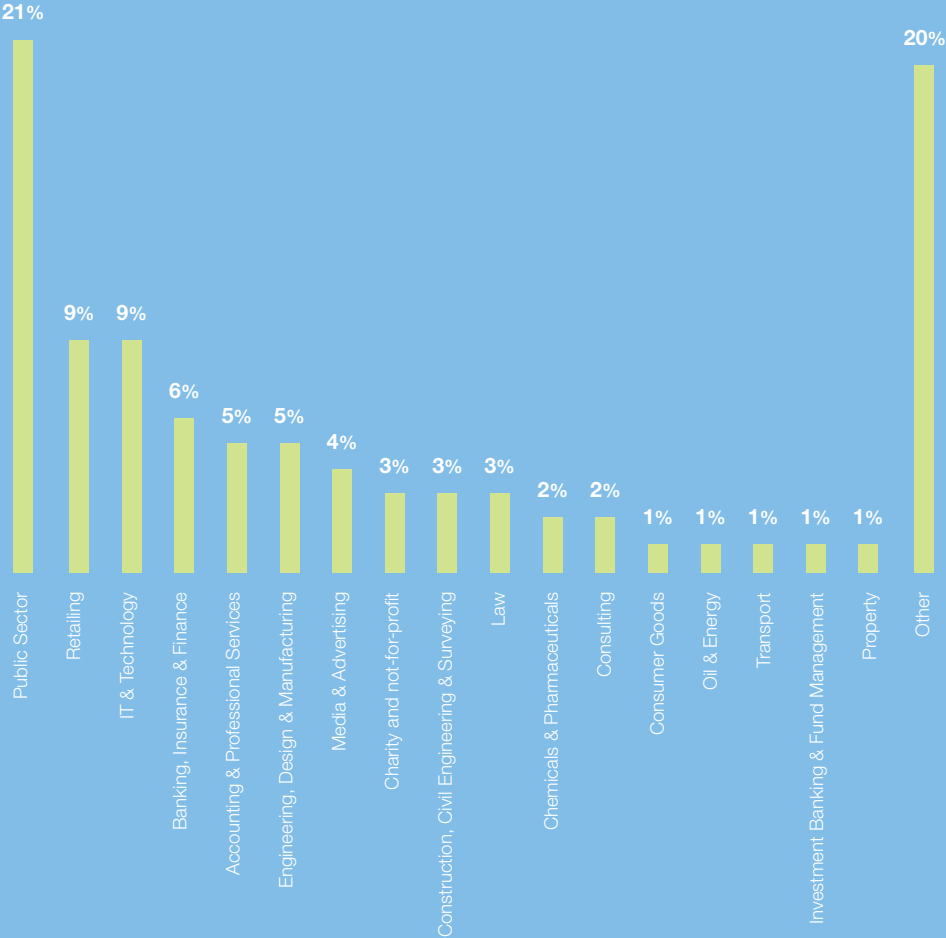
Notably, our respondents were born between 1993 and 1997, making them the last of the Millennial generation and the first of Generation Z to enter the workforce.



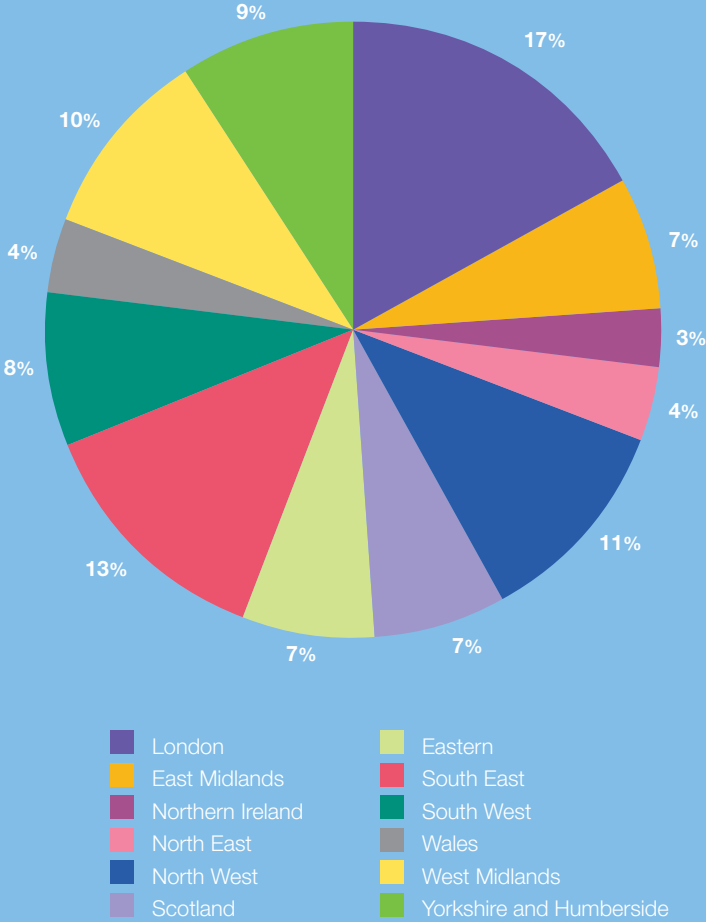
*As a pilot study, we limited our sample to traditional graduates. In future studies, we intend to widen this scope to include the wider spectrum of Early Career pathways, such as Degree Apprenticeships.

Who we spoke to

Industry Sector



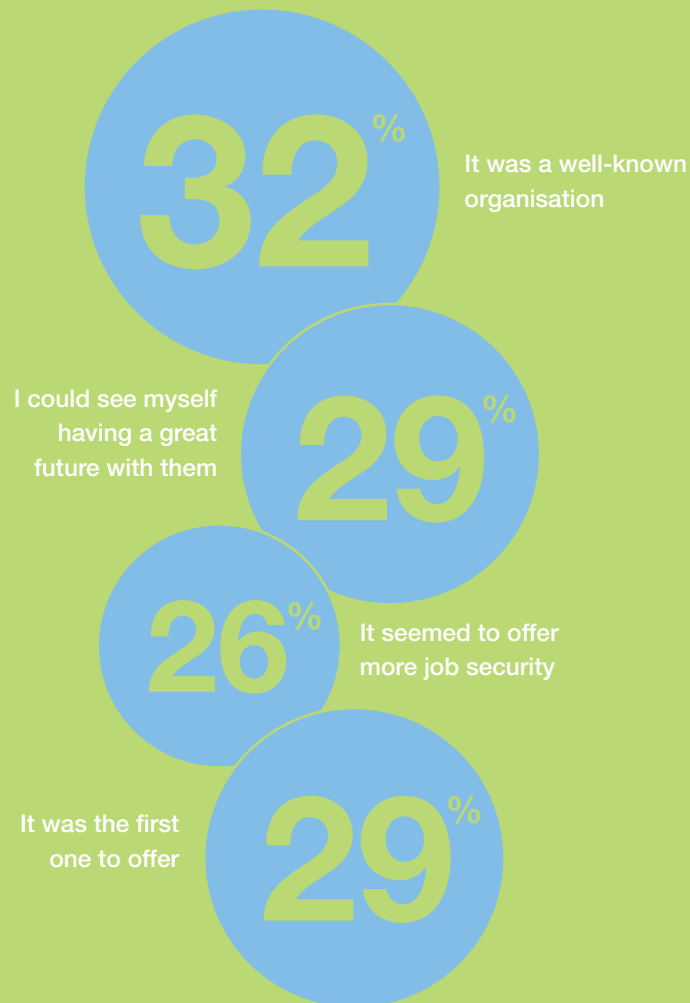
Regional distribution



FINDINGS



Why did you join?



Overall sentiment

To kick things off, we wanted to get a snapshot of our respondents' journey to-date: why they chose their current employer; things they love; things they would change; and how their feelings about their employer might have evolved over time.

Why did they join?

In terms of why they joined their employer, the top four reasons given were 'It was a well-known organisation' (32%), 'I could see myself having a great future with them' (29%), and 'It seemed to offer more job security' (26%).

No real surprises here. For most of our respondents (60%), their current job is their first one since graduating. And so they were primarily motivated by the need to be gainfully employed by a credible company as soon as possible.

What would they change?

We asked our respondents to tell us in their own words what they loved and what they would change about their current workplaces.

The things they would change included perennial themes such as pay and location. But issues around management, hours, levels of resourcing, culture and technology were prominent too – all of which shape the quality of their employee experience.

So what did they love?

It's perhaps no surprise that the hands down winner was their colleagues – a result that we consistently find across studies of this type. But it was interesting to see the other key words appearing including Flexibility, Doing Good, Inclusive, Social Impact – all of which are ideas that have reached mainstream culture in recent years.

These ideas are also what we classify as 'Personal' and 'Collective' benefits, within our Meaningful Brands framework.

Things they love





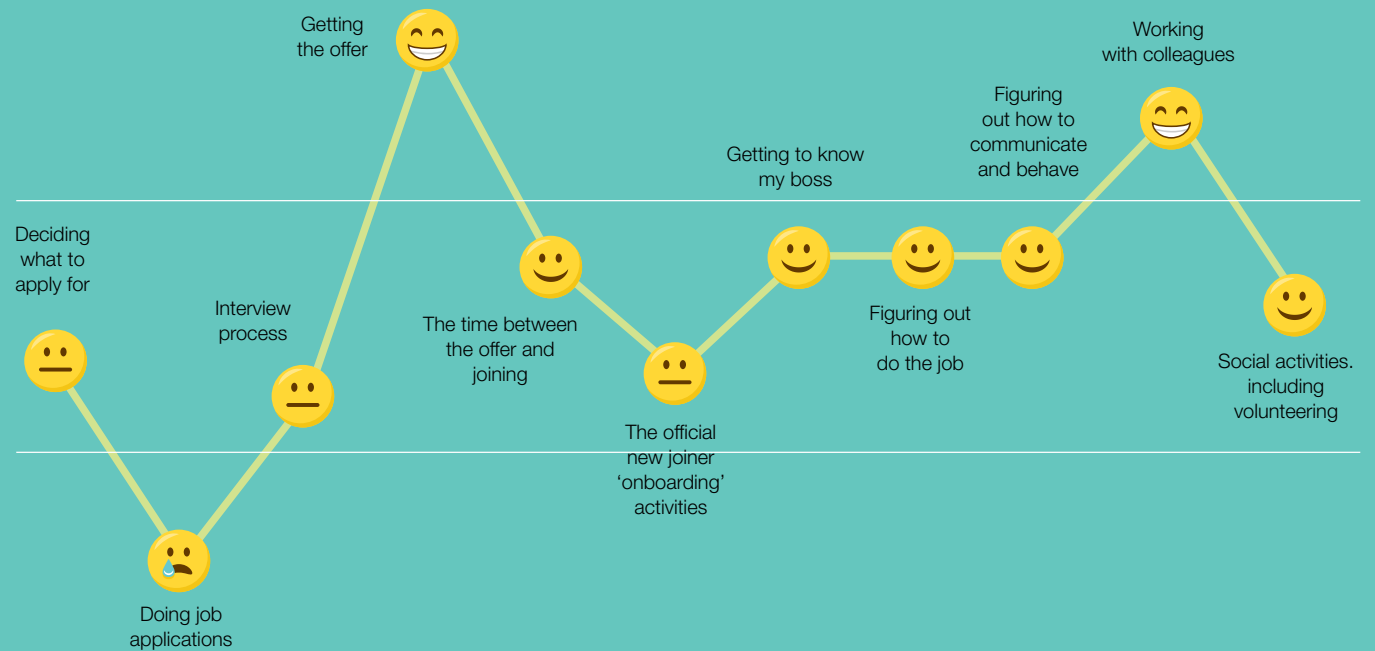
High and low points of the journey so far

The path to success is often bumpy! With this in mind, we asked our respondents to select emojis (with hidden scores behind them) that best conveyed how they felt at certain stages of their journey to date. Their mini-experience map is presented on the right.

After the low point of completing job applications, the rest of their subsequent journey doesn't look too bad, with most respondents being generally happy. But we would argue that after the high point of getting the offer, it's all a bit "meh" – not terrible, but not brilliant either.

After getting the offer, the only other true winning moment is working with colleagues. We consistently hear employees praising their colleagues. But it is important to recognize that your employees forming bonds with colleagues does not mean that they are forming bonds with your company too.

My journey so far



How do you feel about your employer today?

Most of our respondents have been with their employers long enough to have settled in, with 43% having been there for between one and three years. So we wondered how their feelings had changed over time. It turns out that only 33% of respondents liked their company more than they had expected. Whereas 65% of respondents told us that they liked their job more than they liked their company.

So what reason would they have to stay, when they can go and do the same job with any number of employers? And sure enough, whilst 49% of respondents do expect to stay where they are, 31% are already thinking about moving in the next couple of years.

These initial results reinforce how important it will be for employers to forge deeper connections with their people, especially their Early Talent. This is particularly crucial when you consider how much change and upheaval is taking place across every single industry. Being able to successfully navigate through these challenging times will be largely dependent on how well employers can inspire their talent not just to stick with them, but to be engaged and actively contribute.





IS THE EARLY TALENT EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE LIVING UP TO EXPECTATIONS?

Employee expectations vs employee experience

So now we get to the heart of our study: is the employee experience of Early Talent audiences living up to their expectations?

To recap, we have explored this through the three tiers of Meaningful Brands:

- Functional – Does my employer offer me what I need?
- Personal – Does my employer offer me what I desire?
- Collective – Does my employer make a positive contribution to others?

Within each tier, we presented respondents with a list of ten benefits. These were selected by reviewing the most common themes to come out of regular qualitative research we conduct with Early Talent, and cross-referencing these with third party studies of a similar nature.

For each attribute, we asked our respondents to answer two simple questions:

- How important is this to you? (Expectation score)
- How well is your company doing? (Experience score).

The difference between the two is the 'opportunity gap' that we were looking to identify.

Functional

Does my employer offer me what I need?

When we think about the jobs and careers we want, most of us start with the basics. Functional benefits are those that fulfil our most rational requirements. Typically, these serve as our front of mind considerations which are particularly relevant when weighing up the pros and cons of a potential employer.

We asked respondents what their expectations were across a range of functional benefits from pay and location to the efficiency of the recruitment process. Here's what they had to say.

Pays me fairly for the work I do



Is in a field I am interested in



Provides clear information so that I understand what the job involves



Offers me lots of paths to advance my career



Is based in a location that suits me



Offers me a work environment that is modern and comfortable



Offers me a formal training and development plan



Has a slick recruitment process that saves me time and makes me feel valued



Is a good name to put on my CV



Offers good perks and benefits like gym, discounts, healthcare, extra bonuses and incentives



■ Desired
■ Experienced



EMPLOYERS MUST MAKE THEIR BUSINESSES ACCESSIBLE AND RELATABLE TO EARLY TALENT



Fair pay

Unsurprisingly, pay came out top with 96% of our respondents ranking it as most important. However, this wasn't just about who paid the most – but also about there being the right balance between effort and reward. This correlates directly with our word cloud (p14) where the most frequently cited issues were pay, hours and the need for better resourcing.

Fortunately, 78% of respondents did feel that they were being paid fairly for their work. So while there is a gap between their expectations and experience, it is less dramatic than you might expect.

What's in a name?

Earlier, our respondents told us that one of the main reasons they chose their employers was because they were well-known. Yet here, only 57% of respondents said it was important to have a good name to put on their CVs. And in fact, only 49% felt that their current employer gave them this credential. But compared to other facets, it isn't what matters most to them.

This shows a curious contradiction in our respondents' attitude. It may be that the familiarity of a well-known company is simply a comfort to Early Talent who lack any other information or experience to help them feel confident in their choices.

Perhaps the lesson here for employers is that having a known name will help you get Early Talent in the door, but it's not necessarily going to help you keep them.

Doing work I'm interested in

We all hope to work in a sector that interests us. And our respondents are no different, with 93% telling us this was important to them. But when starting a career, it's not always easy to know what exactly we want or how to get those opportunities. Fortunately, 73% of our respondents did feel positive and interested in the fields they were currently working in. But of course, there is always more to be done, not just to attract talent, but to retain them. Employers must continue to do as much as possible to make their sectors as relatable, accessible, and relevant to Early Talent – not just at the attraction stage, but on an ongoing basis.

Understanding what the job involves

In any job, it is important that we have a clear picture of what the work really involves. This helps us to understand what is expected of us, but also whether it's something we actually want to do. This is particularly important to Early Talent, many of whom will have had very limited (or indeed no) prior work experience, and are unlikely to have specific sector knowledge.

This is clearly a strong concern for our respondents, with 92% telling us that they expect employers to provide clear information so that they can understand what the job involves. Only 69% felt that their employers were providing this.

Opportunities to advance

Whilst the majority of our respondents (77%) felt it was important to receive a formal training and development plan, it was far more important to them (89%) to be able to see many career paths for them to advance. But only 64% felt that these diverse paths were available to them. While this is not a terrible result, the gap between their expectations and reality show that employers need to invest more in developing multiple pathways. After all, if it seems like there is nowhere to go (or it's too hard to find out how to get there), then our respondents will naturally start looking elsewhere.

Location, location, location

Location has long been a challenge for both employers and employees. Our results mirror this with 87% of our respondents hoping to work in a location that suits them, but only 60% actually attaining this. For experienced talent, flexible working and working from home (enabled through technology) has done much to ease some location challenges. But these opportunities are not always available to Early Talent in entry level

roles. Which makes it even more vital for employers to offer an employee experience – including a modern and comfortable working environment – that makes it worth travelling for.

A slick recruitment process

Many employers are investing in improving their recruitment processes and delivering a better candidate experience. But there is still a long way to go, with only 56% of our respondents feeling their employers had provided this. Interestingly though, only 61% said it was important to them.

The quality of the recruitment process of course matters hugely, especially when it comes to speed and responsiveness. For employers, it is vital to provide this, not least because it helps them capture the brightest talent ahead of their competitors. But for employees, it is a short-lived moment and matters far less than their actual employment experience.

However, as more employers begin to make significant improvements to the overall candidate experience, expectations will climb accordingly.

Focusing on what matters most

What we noticed most about the results of this section is that when it comes to Functional benefits, employers are not doing too badly. The gaps between our audience's expectations and experience are relatively modest, and in some cases almost negligible.

For instance, when it comes to good perks and benefits, only 46% of our respondents say they are receiving these, but it's ok because only 51% think they are important.

We are not suggesting that employers ignore the Functional 'basics' – they are important foundations after all. But they don't inspire Early Talent or help them form deeper bonds with you.

This only happens when you focus on their more personal needs. This is where the real story is taking place – as you will see in the next section.

Key takeaways

DEVELOP CAREER PATHWAYS.

BE AS CLEAR AS YOU CAN ABOUT WHAT THE WORK IS, AND WHAT YOUR EXPECTATIONS ARE.

DO INVEST IN SYSTEMS, BENEFITS AND PERKS. BUT NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE.

Personal

Does my employer offer me what I desire?

This is the big one. Personal benefits are those which satisfy our emotional drivers – those connected to how people feel at work.

We asked our respondents what their expectations were across a range of personal benefits from having freedom to make decisions to feeling valued. The results revealed some large and worrying gaps between what Early Talent audiences are expecting and what they are actually experiencing and feeling at work.

Makes me feel valued and appreciated



Offers me a work-life balance which keeps me healthy and happy



Makes me feel like I can be myself and still fit in



Gives me tasks and projects that are interesting and worth doing



Helps me feel more confident about myself and my future



Enables me to be constantly learning – from new skills to soft skills



Connects me with teams and colleagues who I enjoy working with



Encourages me to express my ideas and opinions



Gives me the freedom to make decisions without being micromanaged



Gives me the technology and tools that help me work better and smarter



■ Desired
■ Experienced

Feeling valued and appreciated

The number one priority for Early Talent is to feel valued and appreciated at work, with 95% of our respondents telling us how important it was. However, only 58% felt that their employers were demonstrating this, making this the biggest experience deficit in this category. And the second biggest in the entire study.

Of course, what is required to feel valued at work can mean different things to different people depending on the circumstances, ranging from individual relationships with managers to formal recognition schemes. But the strength of this result tells us that the needs of Early Talent are simply not being met in this area.

Free to be myself

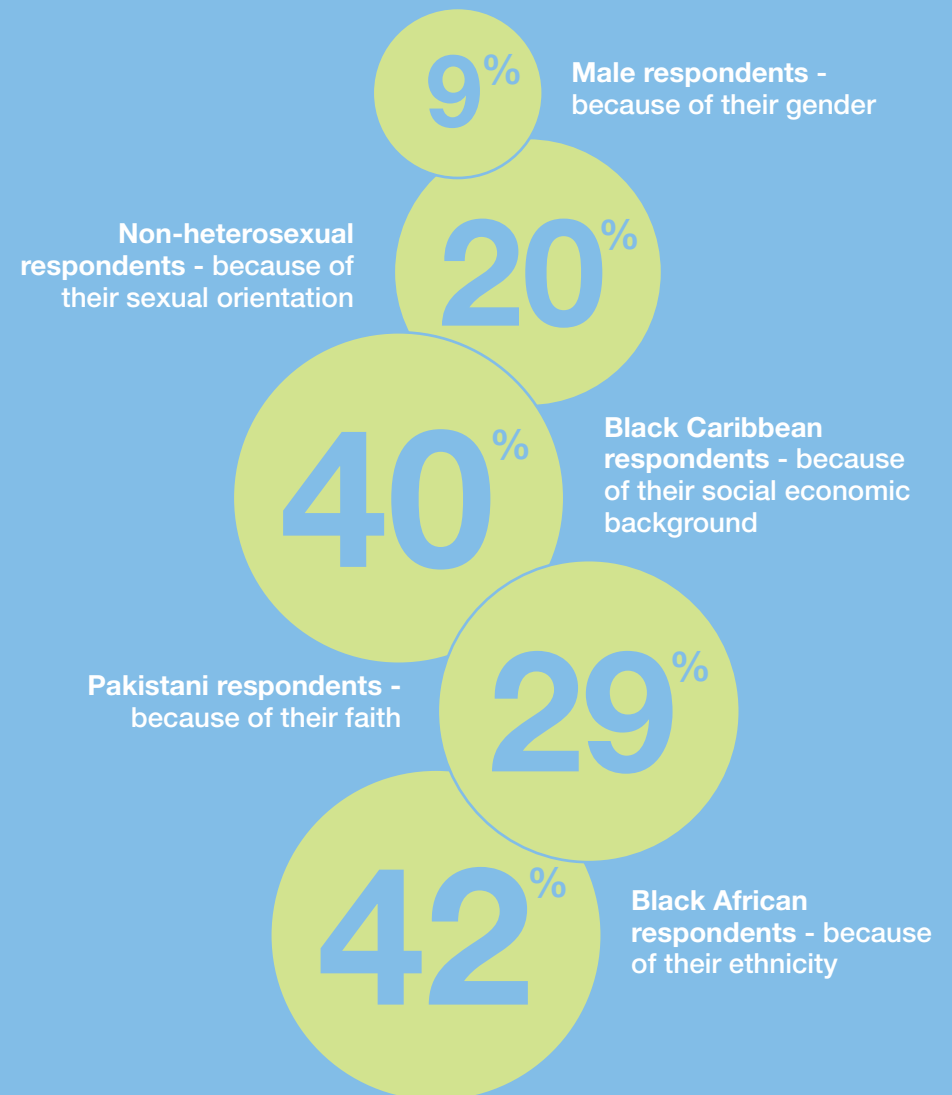
In the last few years, employers have seized on the mantra of 'Bring your whole self to work' as part of their Diversity & Inclusion initiatives. And our respondents are certainly expecting this, with 91% of our respondents telling us it is of high importance to them. We were pleasantly surprised to find that indeed 76% of them say that they enjoy this feeling at their current workplace. So while there is a significant gap, it was less than we expected.

However, later in the study we also asked our respondents a separate question about whether they had ever felt like an outsider at work. And if respondents were not white the answer was a resounding 'yes', as you can see by the results to your right.

Today, many organisations are evolving their diversity and inclusion initiatives to incorporate the concept of 'Belonging.' So, although our respondents told us that, for the most part, they feel they can be themselves at work, these 'outsider' results point to the need for greater understanding of nuances, particularly regarding minority audiences.

And in a surprising twist, 9% of male respondents felt they had experienced outsider status, compared to only 3% of female respondents. A sign of the changing times, and certainly one to watch for the future.

Have you ever felt like an outsider at work?





Work-life balance and wellbeing

Our respondents told us that having a work-life balance which kept them happy and healthy was their second highest priority (92%), yet only 60% felt that their companies were delivering this to them.

Certainly, we are seeing a much greater focus by employers on their responsibility for the health and wellbeing of their people – with work-life balance understood to be a critical ingredient in supporting mental health, wellbeing and emotional resilience at work. However, for our Early Talent audience, the gap between their expectations and experience is still too high.

Numerous studies have evidenced how and why the younger generation is more prone to suffer from stress and anxiety. Rather than dismissing them as ‘snowflakes’, we believe that employers must look seriously at how they can create more humane workplaces that don’t compound the pressures already facing this generation, and indeed their entire workforce.

Technology & tools that make work better

On a related note, 78% of our respondents felt it was important to have technology and tools which helped them to work better and smarter. However, only 48% had access to this in their current workplace – making it the second lowest experience score across the entire study.

We believe that investing in and streamlining workplace tools and technology that enable Early Talent to work in more flexible and digitally native ways is vital. It will not only help improve productivity, but will be beneficial to this group’s sense of wellbeing.

Editorial note: Within this study we did not ask directly about Flexible Working, as we considered this to be an aspect of achieving work-life balance. In future studies, we will examine this more explicitly, potentially aligning it with technology.

Feeling ‘confident about the future’ and ‘constant learning’

Our respondents had high expectations of their employers when it came to ‘helping me feel more confident about myself and my future’ (88%) and being enabled ‘to be constantly learning’ (87%). However, in both of these areas, only 59% said that their employers were providing this.

We also saw that while 91% of our respondents told us that they want to be doing work that is both interesting and worth doing, only 64% are experiencing this. It is possible that without understanding how their work contributes, they are also unable to see or value what it is that they are learning, which reinforces their lack of confidence about their future.

This is such a missed opportunity by employers. These employees in their early twenties are taking their first steps not only into their career, but into adulthood at a time when the rapidly changing environment (economic, political, technological) makes their path feel very uncertain. Having a sense of confidence, opportunities for continuous learning through their work and the chance to develop new skills will be crucial to their feeling of future readiness. And this will directly benefit employers.

Winning hearts as well as minds

In summary, it is here in the Personal space where employers have the most ground to gain. Our own experiences tell us that what matters most at work is not what we do, but how it makes us feel. Do we feel valued and appreciated? Feel like we belong? Feel good about the work we do and our contribution? Confident about the future? Happy and healthy?

What are the interactions taking place that could give Early Talent more of these feelings, more of the time? At what points are they occurring, and with whom? Finding the answers to these questions means reviewing formal structures and processes; but also unpacking your organisational culture and looking at how people behave and communicate with Early Talent. Often it is the smallest things that can make the most significant differences.

Of course, if we believe that Early Talent are preoccupied with their employers meeting their Personal needs, does this then mean they are less concerned with how their organisations are operating in the wider world? Read on to find out.



Key takeaways

**DO MORE TO HELP
TALENT FEEL VALUED
AND APPRECIATED.**

**OFFER THEM A WORK-LIFE
BALANCE THAT KEEPS THEM
HAPPY AND HEALTHY.**

**PROVIDE TECHNOLOGY
AND TOOLS THAT HELP
THEM WORK BETTER.**

**HELP THEM FEEL MORE
CONFIDENT ABOUT THE
FUTURE, AND HELP THEM
KEEP LEARNING.**

**HELP THEM SEE THE
VALUE OF THE WORK
THEY ARE DOING.**

Collective

Does my employer make a positive contribution to others?

Millennials and particularly Gen Z are considered to be the most socially and ethically conscious of all previous generations. In this final section, we look at how our Early Talent audience feels about an employer's responsibility to wider society, beyond their own individual needs.

We asked respondents what their expectations of employers were across a wide range of topics from providing value to customers to social responsibility. The results show that Early Talent is definitely paying attention to how employers are operating in the wider world.

Looks after all its employees equally well



Is an honest and trustworthy company



Genuinely cares about its customers (or users)



Believes in something beyond making money



Provides a valuable product or service that people need



Has a serious commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace at all levels



Is helping to shape the future of the industry for the better



Is committed to being a socially responsible company



Has a serious commitment to the environment and sustainability



Is using technology to create exciting new solutions



■ Desired
■ Experienced



CUSTOMERS WILL NEVER LOVE A COMPANY UNTIL THE EMPLOYEES LOVE IT FIRST.



Providing value and service to customers

As consumers themselves, it makes sense that 85% of our respondents told us it was important that their employer should care about its customers. And based on their experience, the majority (73%) believe that their employers genuinely do.

In more good news, we saw that 78% of our respondents believe in the value of the products or services that their employers are providing to customers. In fact, this was the one area where their experience actually exceeded their expectations (77%).

In the last few years we have seen many organisations transforming their customer experience, and strongly evangelising their 'customer first' values both internally and externally. Our results would suggest that this hard work has yielded the desired benefits, internally at least.

Customer first, employee last?

The difficult question, however, is whether this sharp customer focus is being delivered at the expense of employee welfare. Overwhelmingly, 95% of our respondents told us that their biggest expectation was for employers to look after all employees equally well. Unfortunately,

only 56% believed their companies were doing so. This result points to the largest deficit in the entire study. It also strongly aligns to the earlier deficit seen with 'feeling valued and appreciated'.

To quote Simon Sinek 'Customers will never love a company until the employees love it first.' It's a sentiment echoed by the likes of Richard Branson, John Lewis and AirBnB. If you believe this to be true, then looking after your employees must become a critical priority. It is simply good business sense.

Trust and Integrity

Our respondents told us that they expect their employers to be honest and trustworthy (92%) and to believe in something beyond making money (82%). However, in both cases, only 59% felt they could say that about their employers. These results point to the alarming lack of trust we are seeing across society between individuals and institutions, be they government or business.

In recent years, most companies have gone to great lengths to reposition themselves as purpose-led and socially-driven organisations. But if employees are hearing it, but not believing it, then it not only compounds the existing lack of trust internally, it also increases reputational risk externally.

Technology is not everything

The majority of our respondents (76%) felt that it was important that their employers should be shaping their industries for the better. And 64% agreed that their employers are doing this. But technology should not necessarily be the hero of every story. Only 60% of respondents felt it was important that their employers are using technology to create exciting solutions. And only 49% believed that their employers were in fact credible in this space.

By contrast, organisations across nearly every sector are working hard to publicly reinvent themselves as technology leaders – be it within financial services, healthcare, retail and so on. And much of this messaging is being pushed out into their employer marketing activity.

Our suggestion is to tread carefully here and not over-prioritise technology in all communications to Early Talent audiences – unless the benefits of that technology can be communicated and experienced by them in a way that is meaningful. When speaking to a tech audience, then certainly dial up your technology credentials; but when speaking to wider audiences, focus more on the impact of your technology achievements which are shaping your industry for the better.

Commitment to social responsibility

The majority of our respondents (76%) told us that it was important for employers to be socially responsible, but only 59% felt that this was actually the case with their current employers.

Curiously, the audience's concern for the environment and sustainability, was ranked a little lower, with 69% of our respondents telling us it was important to them. Perhaps, when framed in the context of an employment survey, it seemed less immediate and less pressing.

However, only 46% of our respondents felt that their employers were committed to the environment and sustainability, making it the lowest experience score of the entire study.

So while the social and environmental practices of their employers may not currently be front-of-mind to our Early Talent, it is their generation that has been the most vocal, particularly about the climate crisis. We believe it is inevitable that they will begin to turn their eyes directly on their employers regarding their environmental and wider social responsibility practices (including continuously raising their expectations regarding D&I).

Good employer. Good company.

Today, the real-life practices of corporations and institutions are under fierce scrutiny. The frequency of scandals and exposés and the regularity with which leaders are falling from grace is unprecedented. What's more, it's not just what an organisation is doing externally in the world that is being analysed more closely. How an organisation treats its employees is becoming a key reputational issue, too. And with employee activism on the rise, employees are increasingly becoming agents of change.

For our Early Talent audience, these Collective themes may not directly impact their day-to-day experience, and so may not directly influence why they join or leave an organisation. But they do form the backdrop for how they perceive their employer. Let's not forget that our respondents told us earlier that they liked their jobs more than they liked their employers.

We believe that those employers who are trusted and perceived to be 'doing the right thing' across the board will be able to generate stronger employee goodwill and advocacy that will not only positively influence the culture internally, but will build reputation externally. And that is priceless.



Key takeaways

**LOOK AFTER
YOUR TALENT
AS IF THEY WERE
CUSTOMERS.**

**BE HONEST WITH
PEOPLE; EARN
THEIR TRUST.**

**WALK THE TALK –
SHOW THAT YOU
ARE SERIOUS
ABOUT YOUR
COMMITMENTS.**

CONCLUSION



Creating a Meaningful Employee Experience for Early Talent

Based on what was ranked most important and on where the biggest shortfalls were, this is what Early Talent is telling us they need from their employers:

- Be good to all your people
- Show them you value and appreciate them
- Give them a work-life balance that keeps them happy and healthy
- Help them feel more confident about their future; help them to keep learning
- Give them the tools and technology that help them work better
- Show them how their work means something and is worth doing
- Offer them more paths to help them advance
- Be clear about what the work involves and what is expected
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Prove that you are serious about your commitments to wider social issues

So just as we have seen in our Meaningful Brands consumer studies, Early Talent want employers to deliver better on their promises, improve the quality of their lives and play a more positive role in society. These are the things that mean most to them.

Are they asking for too much? Is it more than any of us want from our employers? Of course not. Is it easy to deliver, especially within large organisations? No, of course it isn't. Is it even worth trying to tackle? Yes, we believe it is.

Here's something positive to hold on to. A whopping 77% of our respondents told us they believed that their company 'embraces the younger generation'. So as employers we should take comfort in the fact that we have not alienated our audience. Not by a long shot.

Instead, we should look at the gaps between what they are expecting and what we are delivering as opportunities to win them over. These gaps give us the roadmap to begin building the meaningful employee experience they crave.

How do we start?

Achieving real change always starts with understanding where you are right now. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- What conversations about (and with) Early Talent are you having in your organisation?
- Do you know what the expectations of your Early Talent employees were when they joined? And the extent to which you have delivered on them?
- What conversations about Employee Experience are you having?
- If you are already talking about Employee Experience, how are you measuring it? How are you mapping it?
- How does your Early Talent's employee experience measure up to your EVP and employer brand?


- Who else in your organisation is involved in these conversations? HR? IC? IT? L&D?
- Who 'owns' the employee experience in your organisation?

When you know the answers to these questions, you will have taken the first step to becoming a more employee-centric organisation. And this is what is needed if you are to shape a progressive culture. One that drives higher engagement and performance. And one that will appeal to the talent you need for the future of your organisation.


This is not just the responsibility of HR. Internal Communications, Learning & Development, line management and leadership all have an important part to play. Technology is part of the solution, but not the whole solution. The real results come from becoming a listening, empathetic organisation.

Consider the fact that your employer brand is likely to be based on your best day as an employer. The employee experience, however, comes from the everyday. Only when employers understand this can they truly begin the work of cultivating a meaningful employee experience that creates a better every day that truly meets the needs of future talent.

That's the Opportunity Gap.



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Keep in touch

Thanks for taking the time to read our first report into the Employee Experience from an Early Talent perspective. We hope you enjoyed it and that it's given you food for thought. Were the results what you expected? What were you most surprised by? We would love to hear your reaction.

Coming up in 2020

We will be extending this study much further this year to include more markets and more audiences. If you would like to take part, then please get in touch. We would love to have your support.

Conducting your own Meaningful Employee Experience audit

Would you like to know how well your organisation is meeting the expectations of your talent? And how you compare to your competitors? Havas People can help you conduct a bespoke audit with clear, actionable insight.

Contact us

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