

HEART INTELLIGENCE IS A CRUCIAL ASPECT OF WORKPLACE RESILIENCE

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In today's rapidly evolving working landscape, leaders and their employees find themselves navigating a whirlwind of challenges. An accelerating rate of change. The necessity for constant business transformation. The advent of artificial intelligence, to name but a few. All are reshaping traditional leadership and employee roles, as well as the way in which teams work. This relentless pace of change can evoke exhaustion and feelings of overwhelm, as the pressure to stay ahead intensifies.

We need to adapt to these changes. Balancing change with stability, as well as supporting ourselves and our teams in times of uncertainty. We firmly believe the best way for leaders, businesses, and employees to deal with these challenges is to cultivate resilience, as well as a growth mindset in themselves and others. And this is something we outline in more detail in our book [The Resilient Culture: How Collective Resilience Leads to Business Success](#), which is out now.

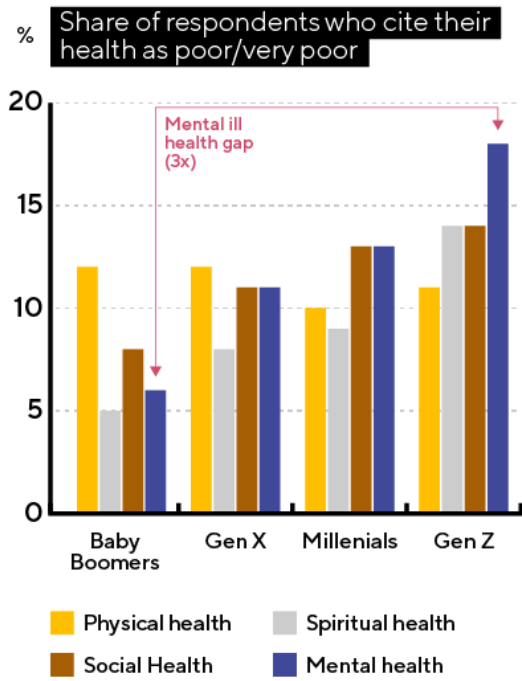
Employees are facing three core gaps in employee experience: **care**, **connection**, and **purpose**. All of which are hindering workplace resilience.

1. THE CARE GAP

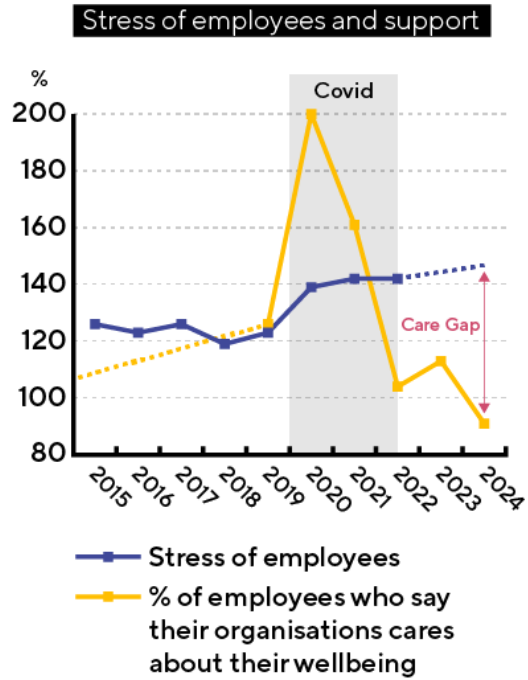
From our work with [over 200 organizations](#) since 2009, including HSBC, the EU and UK Parliaments, and a Formula 1 Team, among many others, we've consistently found that Gen Z workers (born in 1997-2012) are struggling with a burden of mental and spiritual ill-health. This is particularly acute for those working with AI and digital media. One study found that poor mental health is around three times as common in Gen Z workers compared to their Baby Boomer executives¹ (*see chart below*). This trend has accelerated in the post-pandemic world, where stress has continued rising as corporate wellbeing investments have declined.

The right-hand chart shows an ongoing increase in perceived stress at work. While at the same time, highlighting that fewer workers believe their organization cares about their wellbeing, particularly since the pandemic.² In other words, there's a rising need for care from employers, at the same time as actual care is declining. Without a drastic change here, we argue that workplace resilience will continue heading in the wrong direction.

Gen Z face significant wellbeing challenges – as well as increasing stress – and thus a care gap



Source: Gen Z mental health: The impact of tech and social media McKinsey 2023

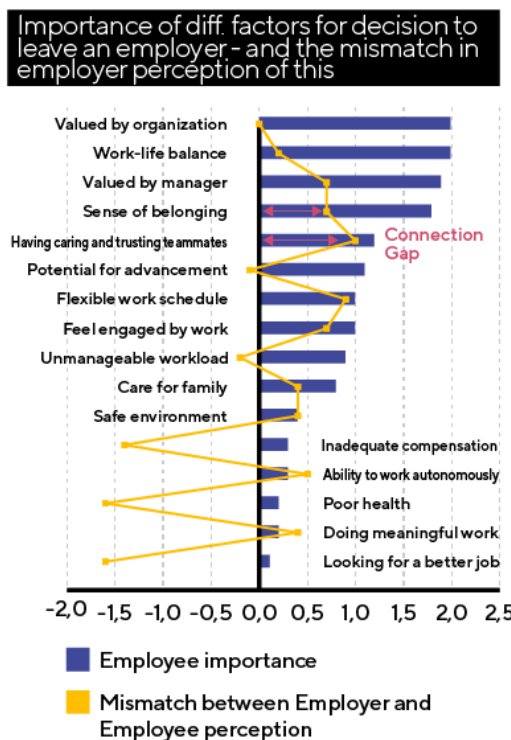
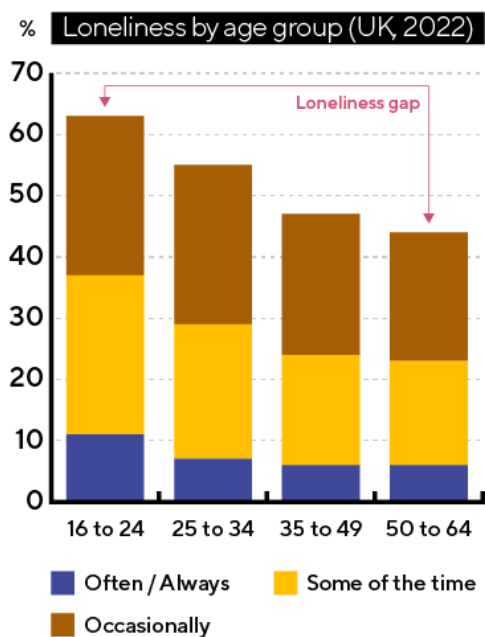


Source: Stress of Employees is from Gallup Global Workforce Study 2023 % of respondents who said they experienced stress a lot of the day yesterday indexed to 2010=100. % of Employees who say organisation cares about their wellbeing is from Gallup, indexed to 2010 = 100 (USA). Data until 2022, trend-line assumed to be continuing

2. The connection gap

Data on loneliness from the UK in 2022 shows a much higher incidence of loneliness among younger generations, compared to older ones.³ Younger generations struggle more here in part because they're less embedded in family structures. They value belonging and social connections at work more than older generations do. Thus, for them, the social aspects of work and the felt sense of belonging are far greater determinants of their decision to stay or to leave a company than many employers think (see chart below).⁴ Thus, they've been hit hardest by the shift to hybrid working.

Employers fail to understand how younger generations value connection



Source: Wellbeing and Loneliness – CommunityLifeSurvey 2020/21 www.gov.uk and “Great Attrition” or “Great Attraction”? The choice is yours; McKinsey

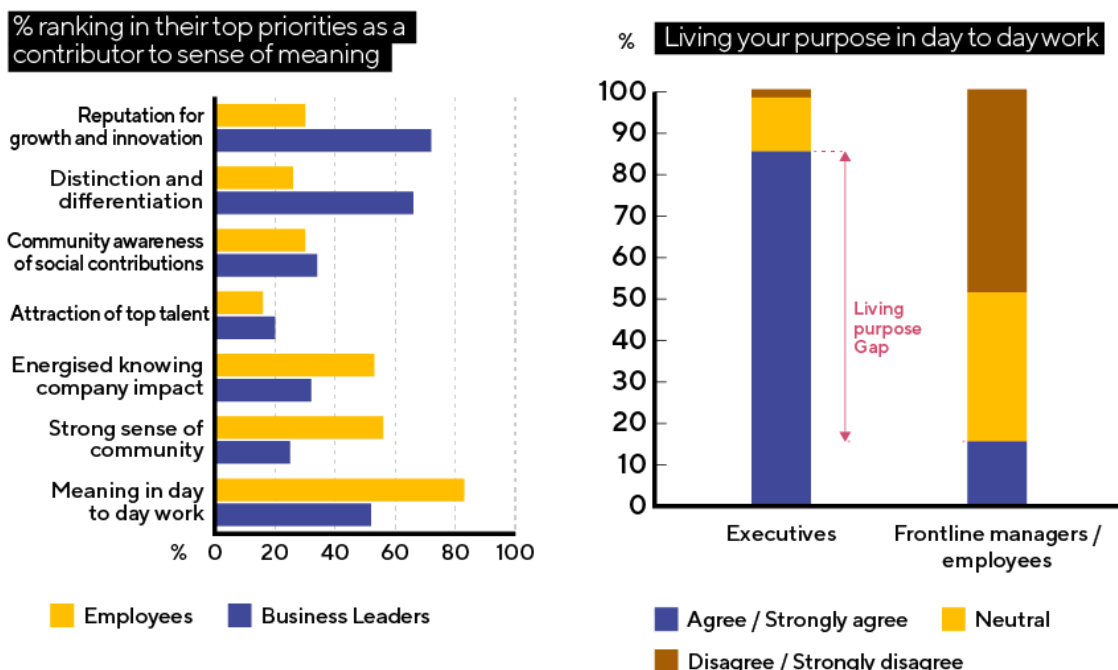
The perception of belonging, feeling valued by leaders, and connected to the social fabric of work are all important for employees. But employers consistently underestimate how employees’ decision to leave a firm is often driven by a lack of belonging, or of feeling connected and valued.

Employers also tend to overestimate the ability of offering higher wages to reduce employee churn. If you run a firm where employees don’t feel socially connected, and are constantly leaving, don’t be surprised if workplace resilience is notably absent.

3. The purpose gap

The younger generation are also looking for purpose much more in their decisions to join or leave a company (see chart below). While younger generations are looking for meaningful work, executives tend to look for recognition and reputation. Or status, in other words. As a result, there's a tremendous purpose gap between executives and more junior employees, as the right-hand chart shows. This again, is a conundrum that we feel has to be addressed if workers are to become more resilient.

Different priorities contribute to meaning – leading to a significant purpose gap



Source: PWC – Putting Purpose to Work: A study of purpose in the workplace and Help your employees find purpose – or watch them leave; McKinsey

Leading to the future with heart intelligence

These care, connection, and purpose gaps can be seen as a lack of warmth and inspiration and meaning. Viewed another way, we could say that employees are struggling with a lack of heart in their work. To face the ever-quickenning pace of change in the workplace, solutions can't just spring from our minds. They must come from our hearts, too.

To combat rising burnout and dissatisfaction at work, businesses and leaders will need to engage their heart muscles more. To do this, we argue they must anchor concrete resilience skills in their teams and employees. Just as we can exercise our cardiovascular system through exercise, we can boost our connection to purpose by regularly engaging in resilience skills that connect us to warmth, connection, and inspiration. To our hearts.

Our own proprietary data, taken from our work with 50 businesses and more than 3000 employees, shows that focusing on the resilience skills of connection and purpose leads to improvements in performance, psychological safety, and innovation. The issues of the heart are measurable and trainable. They need not be viewed as 'wooly' or anti-performance.

Teams practicing resilience skills are four times more likely to be psychologically safe and twice as likely to be high-performing teams, according to our data. Focusing on wellbeing, paradoxically, will boost the chances of business success. **In *The Resilient Culture*, we outline how businesses can build such resilience skills into their teams. And in doing so, transform the very fabric of their workplace culture.**

We strongly believe it's time to ditch the outdated view of resilience as simply enduring suffering. It's time to view resilience as a series of skills. Skills that can be employed to shift our state in response to the challenges we face at work. These skills are eminently trainable and scalable. And in our view, mean that developing a truly resilient workplace culture is something every business can and should aspire to.

Sources

1 Erica Cole, Andrew Doy, Kana Enomoto, and Cheryl Healy, "[Gen Z mental health: The impact of tech and social media](#)", McKinsey, April 28, 2023

2 Jim Harter, "[Employer Cares About Their Wellbeing Plummet](#)", Gallup, March 18, 2022,

3 "[Community Life Survey 2020/21 – Wellbeing and Loneliness](#)", UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media, & Sport, July 29, 2021

4 Aaron De Smet, Bonnie Dowling, Marino Mugayar-Baldocchi, and Bill Schainger, "['Great Attrition' or 'Great Attraction'? The choice is yours](#)", McKinsey, September 8, 2021