

Australia's post-COVID workforce reshuffle...

Do your employees have
one foot out the door?

Australia's post-COVID workforce reshuffle... Do your employees have one foot out the door? Are you sure?

The importance of employee engagement has long been understood for its overall impact on the success of a business. An engaged team delivers increased productivity, reduced turnover, and better customer engagement, to name a few - which all adds to increased success for the business.

Following two years of a pandemic that, for the most part, the general population didn't see coming, the sentiment in the workplace has had a significant shift.

The term 'the great resignation' which started in the USA defined the culmination of these shifts in the modern workforce. These changes have had slightly different implications for the Australian market, where the reality is closer to a reshuffle.

Globally, over 40% of the workforce are considering leaving their employer this year ⁽¹⁾. Voluntary quitting has increased along with employee's confidence in being able to get another job as good as their current one (52%, +14%), and a job that pays as much as their current one (58%, +7%) ⁽²⁾.

Are you keeping up with how your employees are feeling?

During the first year of the pandemic many employees were seeking support and connection through their employers. Whereas in year two, as we come out of the pandemic, the focus is now on opportunities and culture.

The balance of power appears to have shifted to the employees hands, following:

- **A tight labour market:** Australia's reduction in the young civilian population of almost 350,000 people (ages 15-34), combined with border closures during the pandemic, has tightened Australia's labour market, especially in industries with low skill levels or high-levels of young workers, such as construction, accommodation, retail, and food-services ⁽³⁾.
- **Unemployment at an all-time low:** the unemployment and underemployment rate has reached its lowest rate since 2008⁽²⁾. By early December (2021), after adjusting for seasonal trends, job postings on Indeed's Australia site were tracking 97% ahead of their level on February 1 last year (2020), our pre-pandemic baseline. Quite simply, there have never been so many jobs available in Australia at one time ⁽¹⁾.
- **The demand for hybrid and flexible working conditions has increased:** Flexible working is the leading preference for office workers post-COVID, with more than two in five stating they would leave an employer that doesn't offer some form of flexibility.

WHAT DOES HYBRID MEAN TO EMPLOYEES?

The average number of days in-office wanted by those who primarily want to:

1.5
work from home

2.8
work flexibly

3.7
work in the office

This shows that even those who want to work from home would like some in-office days, and those who want to work from the office would like some working from home days⁽⁵⁾.

It's not all about wages...

Using employee data collected during the pandemic, we at Insync found that the key drivers of envisaging a fulfilling future at an organisation are specifically around investment in people and teams.

From Insync's Alignment and Engagement Survey's (AES) conducted through 2020 and 21/22, the items from the 'Investment in people' subset have the highest correlation to employees envisaging a fulfilling future at their organisation, followed by Team Leadership.

The biggest changes and opportunities from 2020 to 21/22 can be found in employees opportunities to improve skills as well as whether an organisation's chosen values and behaviours are demonstrated consistently.

Perceived care along with utilising an individual's skills to their full potential remained consistently important throughout the entire period.

Where to spend your energy for maximum results with your employees

- **Invest in people:** 75% of Australian workers are ready to learn new skills or completely re-train to remain employable in the future ⁽⁶⁾. By offering your employees opportunities to upskill and adapt to emerging technologies you are enabling them to see a future in your business without having to look elsewhere.
- **Offer flexibility & support work-life balance:** Work-Life balance was the number one concern when asked about coming back into the office, as well as the number one concern when asked about working from home ⁽⁷⁾. By thinking about the structure of work flow in the same way your employees think about it, where work is integrated into their lives, you can work towards a personalised approach to both flexibility and supporting work-life balance.
- **Build retention through personal relationships:** Having a set of great managers will help to encourage company loyalty. Great managers reduce turnover more effectively than any other role in an organisation, finding that it takes a pay increase of around 20% to lure most employees away from managers who engage them ⁽⁸⁾. Regular check-ins to establish that your team is engaged, motivated, challenged and feels valued are essential.
- **Learning and growth opportunities:** Offering employees opportunities to grow and develop, such as upskilling programs, digital training, career development coaching and educational training across all levels, plays to the important finding from Insync's AES 21/22 where employees are seeking opportunities to improve skills when envisaging a fulfilling future at their organisation.

Who to turn to for support?

Understanding and knowing can be very different things, especially in the world of employee engagement. Having a robust listening strategy in place to ensure you tap into the lived experience of your people is essential in this fast-changing landscape. A robust listening strategy should provide you with independent and objective data on why your employees are leaving and what the early detection signs are before they leave.

Insync's AES data/benchmarking, along with our long-standing expertise in employee engagement, puts the power back in your hands. Working alongside your team, whilst taking the pressure off them to deliver the knowledge, insights and workload required to implement and embed, allows your business to continue with BAU and create engaged, aligned workforces.

With the real data of what is happening on the ground of your business, you will have a plan to move forward and re-engage your employees, identify potential high performers, understand their aspirations and provide opportunities for learning, growth and enrichment.

Our business improvement partners will become an extension of your team – they will get under the skin of your business and develop a framework specific to your business, that will embed employee engagement and future proof your business success.

Contact us today for a 15 minute chat about your employee engagement and how we can help.

1. PowerPoint Presentation (microsoft.com)
2. Employee Turnover and Retention Trends (quantumworkplace.com)
3. Australia's Bumpy Recovery Set to Shift Into Higher Gear in 2022 (hiringlab.org)
4. Australian Business Economists Speech by the National Skills Commissioner | National Skills Commission
5. Hybrid or the highway for Australian workers: Swinburne research | Swinburne
6. New world. New skills. Upskilling for the digital world: PwC
7. https://insyncranet.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/Insync/EXZvbiNQmKbNtY_I0Q9ieGUB2rWAlOF3VjFVquFOhYiSqA?e=MY1LBQ
8. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/426353>



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