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CULTURE CHECK-IN SURVEY

AS TOLD BY RISING LEADERS

2021



WELCOME TO THE CULTURE CHECK-IN SURVEY

When March 2020 hit, most working people were thrust into a remote environment. It marked a unique moment in history where the world was forced to adapt to what became known as the “new normal”.

Fast forward to March 2021 and the pandemic has, for better or worse, put employees in a position to think differently about work. We wanted to know if the “new normal” was just a temporary fix or if new insights had emerged from what the modern workforce wants from their employer moving forward. To do that, we conducted the 2021 Culture Check-In Survey.

We asked our participants questions around some key themes we had been hearing from clients over the last year:

- Have people lost connection to their colleagues and/or their organization?
- How do they feel management performed through the pandemic?
- How important is creating a “sense of belonging” to employee retention now versus before?
- Does generation matter?
- And finally, are employees headed for the door?

So, what did we learn?

Of the 500 people we surveyed, Millennials showed up in a big way (44% to be exact). They made it clear that, as Rising Leaders, they’re now looking to position themselves for more meaningful and lucrative career paths; citing compensation/benefits over work-life balance for the first time, and leaning into a sense of belonging to attract and retain them. We’ve always known these things matter, but in a career climate where anyone can now work anywhere, the competition to retain talent is fierce and it’s time to listen.

Why should you care?

Now that you’re in tune with the needs of a Rising Leader, consider your options:

1. Provide more of what matters most to Rising Leaders to keep their skills and potential in-house
2. Or, risk losing them to a more culture-forward competitor that can offer them what they want

With Millennials making up over a third of today’s workforce, it’s safe to say that they hold the future of organizations everywhere in their hands. As they move from their entry-level jobs into leadership positions, the writing on the wall couldn’t be clearer: Developing a people-strategy that brings purpose and opportunity to the forefront of the employee experience is essential to the future of your business.

We’ll be unpacking more about who the Millennial workforce is, what they’re craving from their employers, and how your organization can plug into what matters most to the Rising Leaders out there.



the GOOD NEWS

Overall, employees felt they were cared for and treated fairly through the pandemic.

When we asked participants to rate their organizations based on fair treatment & having a voice, the survey population as a whole rated their organizations 7.8 and 7.4 (out of 10), respectively. Across generations, people also seemed to lean toward staying with their employers post-pandemic.

When asked whether they would seriously consider a job offer, the average response came in below that threshold at 4.3. Good news at face value.

There's Good News & Bad News...



the BAD NEWS

Rising Leaders are feeling out of balance and at risk.

When you peel back the onion and look at responses by generation, however, the story changes pretty dramatically.

They feel more disconnected than their older colleagues and may be looking to cash in on a frothy talent market. Exhausted from carrying the heavy load through the pandemic, they may be looking past their coveted work/life balance and voting for cold hard cash. Not all is lost. We still have a couple levers we can pull to keep them or attract them.

I feel I am treated fairly and impartially by my management and in my organization



I feel I have a voice in my organization



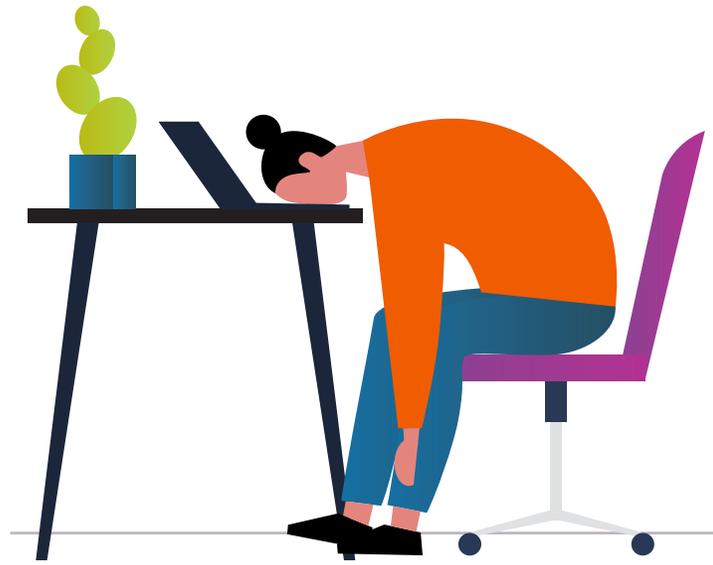
How likely would you be to leave your organization if you had a job offer today?



Some Rising Leaders don't feel in sync with management...

When asked how their managers performed through the pandemic, reviews were decidedly mixed. The older generations (often the ones doing the managing) rated performance higher than our Rising Leaders. **This is a potential blind spot for Established Leaders who may believe all is fine with their employees.**

Rising Leaders rated manager performance consistently lower across the board, with the biggest discrepancies appearing in attention to physical safety, emotional wellbeing, setting clear expectations, and communication & transparency.



35% of Rising Leaders were critical of the following factors on a scale of 1-7 when it came to how management handled the pandemic.



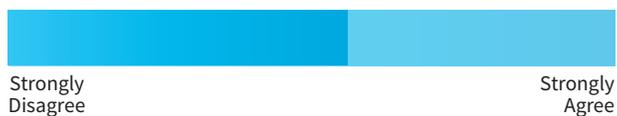
Rising Leaders might need more communication from their managers....

1 in 4
respondents said they haven't met with their manager to talk about their concerns or aspirations in the last 90 days.

In the last 90 days, my manager and I have discussed what I **value & aspire to**.



In the last 90 days, my manager and I have discussed my **concerns & frustrations**.

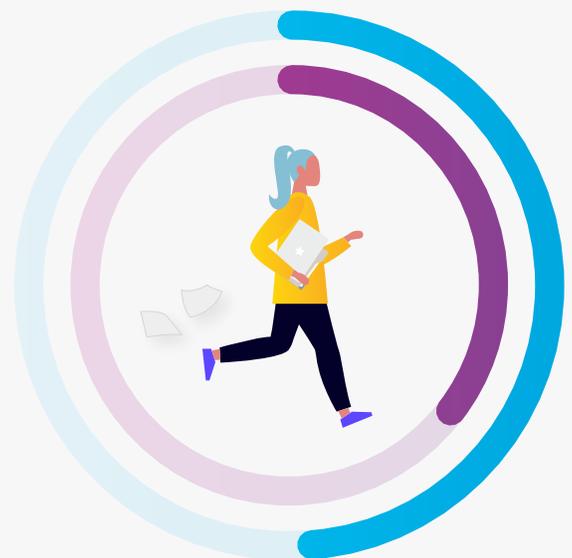


Are Rising Leaders heading for the door?

Rising Leaders are on the move...

When asked whether they would consider a new job if one was offered, **47% of Rising Leaders said they would at least “seriously consider it”**.

The most alarming news, however, is that **31% of those surveyed responded that they were basically “out the door”** if an offer came their way.



So, what's attracting and retaining Rising Leaders?

In previous surveys, Rising Leaders responded overwhelmingly that Work-Life Balance was most important to them. This year, we have a new winner, and it's not a close race. Rising Leaders ranked Compensation & Benefits as the #1 (by 70%) benefit that would attract or keep them.



Sense of belonging plays a prominent role among Rising Leaders...

When it comes to **top culture contributors**, good team relationships and sense of belonging were at the top for Rising Leaders, followed by a flexible work schedule and career development opportunities. **Not far behind was a sense of autonomy in their jobs and frequent transparent communication.**

#1 53% - Sense of Belonging & Good Team Relationships

#2 24% - Flexible Work Schedule

#3 23% - Career Development Opportunities

What exactly is a "sense of belonging"?

What does a Sense of Belonging even mean to Rising Leaders? Respondents were asked to rank what they believed were the top contributors to a sense of belonging in any organization. We learned that **Rising Leaders felt connection to purpose, their colleagues, and a feeling that their contributions mattered were most important.**

Feeling empowered in their job, supported both personally and professionally, and safe to use their voice to impact the organization came in just below the top 3 mark.



57%

Knowing how their role connects to the bigger picture of the organization

48%

Meaningful connection to one or more of their colleagues

47%

Feeling their personal contribution to the organization matters



Speaking of flexible work schedules...

With **42% of surveyed Rising Leaders saying they worked from home through the pandemic**, we wanted to know how they're feeling about going back to the office. We took an unfiltered sample from social media where younger generations were asked how they feel about going back to the office.

I changed jobs so I could work remotely.

@millennialbookworm_

I was able to move to a nicer but less expensive city that's closer to my family since I don't have to go to the office and I love it.

@maryel.em

They want us back full-time in July. I'm working with a consultant to redo my LinkedIn profile, resume, and cover letters to start my job search.

@karaindy

I would be happy with at least two days in the office because I want to get out of the house. But I agree that it's been proven that work can also be done at home.

@starpr01

If I could find a job that paid me close to what I make now and stay remote, I would leave in a heartbeat.

@earspelledbackward

Not actively looking for something new, but if a company is that offers remote work has a better offer, I will definitely switch.

@tessavwalstijn

We are set to go back in September. I am looking for another job that's remote.

@pinkblossom2828

I am doing a hybrid and the days at the office are shorter because we finish them up at home. It's way better.

@vchvz415

I spend hours at my desk in my office that could be used for myself, I would be much more productive knowing I didn't have to stay there for 8+ hours.

@jackiethelifecoach

I plan to quit if I'm not allowed to stay home.

@tpop86

I feel like the foundation for this to happen has been around for years, but the older generations think it's lazy.

@texashomegirl

I have to go into work (I'm a teacher), but I would love others to work remotely so my commute is shorter! It would help everyone!

@rooroo72

At this point it's beyond silly to ask us to drive to work to do the exact same thing in office that we do at home.

@codytjim

The day they make us go back is the day I quit.

@marissamcough

I think I'm the only one that is looking forward to going back into an office setting. It helps me feel more motivated and enjoy the social aspect of it.

@sazzycassie

The thought of returning to a cubicle kills me.

@claudialorenz4

I don't mind the office, but I'd like to be able to choose for myself how and where I'm most productive.

@louhauna



I already know of 3 people that turned in their notice before they're forced to return by July 5.

@ms.marajade

I can't be the only person that misses the office and human interaction. It will be a sad world if we do everything online.

@Hihihihio18

I was hired to work remote and if they ask me to start going to an office, I will simply look for another remote job.

@Laureehawes

Just having the option to go remote or into the office is freeing. I don't want to be told how to be flexible. That makes no sense.

@smithkel

I've made my mind up that I can only work from home moving forward.

@tamu_maisha



So, now what?

Established leaders are doing fine. They make most of the decisions and are comfortable doing whatever it takes to get the job done. That's how they were raised in business. While this is a strength, it may also be a weakness as it creates blind spots in their knowledge of what is important to those who come after them.

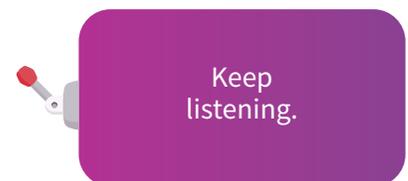
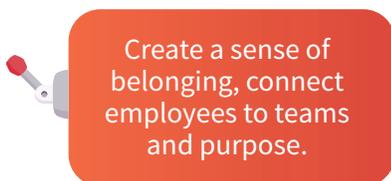
Rising Leaders feel disconnected and out of balance as they have juggled heavy workloads and young families through the pandemic. It's their second bite at the rotten apple of disruption, so they've replaced work-life balance with priorities related to money, sense of belonging, and flexible work schedules. Those who invest in the tools and programs to deliver on belonging and flexibility will be in the best position to retain and attract the top talent in their markets. Yes, you have to be financially competitive, but hasn't that always been the case? The new levers to pull seem evident, now all you have to do is pull them.

If you're saying "This isn't about us. We've always worked from the office and we're just as connected as we've ever been," you're not out of the woods. While this may be true (and you're fortunate), this does not exempt you from paying close attention to what your younger generations care about. Right now, all over the country, people are finding unprecedented opportunities to work remotely for companies without geographic barriers.

For some, they got a taste for it through the pandemic, don't want to go back, and are now hitting the market to get what they want. For others, they were required to work in-person before they were comfortable and see the job market opening at a rapid pace across the country. These scenarios will play out at an accelerated pace in the months and years to come. Which side do you want to be on?

Pull the right levers...

Rising Leaders know what they want from their employers, so how do you make the culture moves to insure the success of your organization? Pull the levers we now know to pull:



Want to learn more about how you can address these issues in your own organization? [Let's chat.](#)

uMap™ is the software that helps organizations maximize employee engagement and drive performance by growing leaders, connecting teams, and bringing meaning to the everyday workplace.

