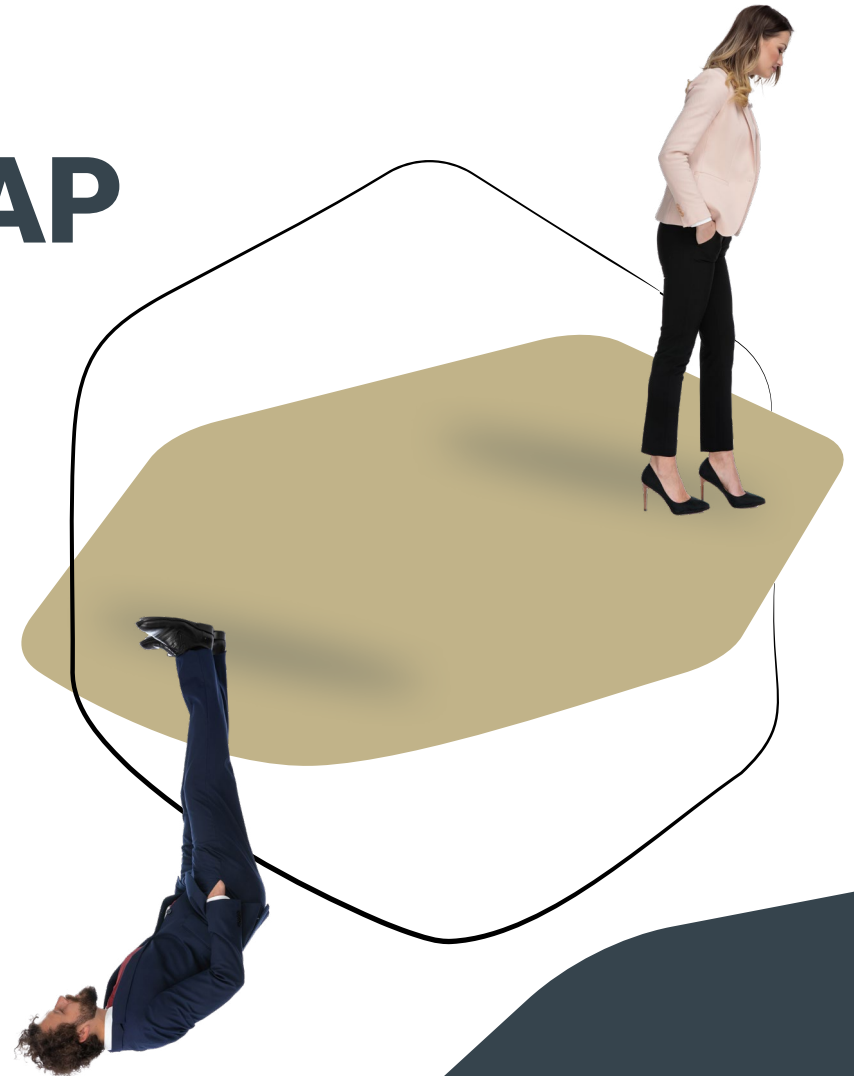


TALENT TRENDS 2024 · THE NETHERLANDS

THE EXPECTATION GAP

What our exclusive survey insights mean for
your hiring and retention strategies in 2024





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About PageGroup

An Expectation Gap has opened up in the workplace. How can we bridge the divide?

Last year, our flagship Talent Trends survey shed light on a significant shift within the world of work, which we termed 'The Invisible Revolution'. Coming out of the pandemic, a convergence of factors had resulted in a subtle but transformative change in workplace dynamics, with people thinking more holistically about the value their job contributes to their lives.

Now, just 12 months on, the situation has evolved again, with significant implications if you are hiring or retaining talent. Finding people strategies that work for all sides is becoming trickier - something we call 'The Expectation Gap'.

On the one hand, workers have a growing list of expectations, stretching far beyond competitive salaries and flexibility. On the other, their employers are facing significant pressures in a rapidly evolving business environment, making it harder for both sides to meet in the middle.

To delve deeper into this, we spoke to 50,000 workers worldwide for our 2024 Talent Trends survey, uncovering how people are really feeling and the critical insights employers need to know.

Here are some of the key findings:

- Whilst wage growth is slowing globally due to economic pressures employers are facing, **workers still expect higher salaries** to keep pace with the rising cost of living and feel valued for their contributions
- **Flexibility has become a flashpoint**, as employers grapple with implementing hybrid working models and policies that meet both business needs and employee preferences
- With five generations now in the workforce, **maintaining a dynamic and inclusive culture** where everyone can be their authentic selves is more complex than ever
- **Generative AI is no longer a concept rooted in the future.** It's already affecting people's daily working lives and career decisions, and adding another layer of complexity to the talent market

'The Expectation Gap' permeates all facets of the modern workplace, emphasising the importance of aligning expectations to foster a productive and truly cohesive work environment.

In the following pages, you'll discover insights and recommendations to bridge the gap, cultivate inclusive cultures, and confidently navigate the evolving work landscape.

Leveraging our strength as a global recruitment company and drawing on our proprietary data and technology, we provide valuable expertise, market knowledge, and insights to our customers, serving as a trusted partner.

With a presence in 37 markets worldwide, our team of specialist consultants stands ready to assist you navigate the complexities of the modern workforce. They can be reached via phone call, video call, or email, or you can [click here](#) to request a call back.

I hope you enjoy the report.



Nicholas Kirk
CEO at PageGroup

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Kirk'.

Mind the Gap

Key expectations uncovered
in our Talent Trends survey

1. Autonomy and flexibility

People-first, flexible workplaces that preserve
work-life balance

2. Cultivating genuine inclusion

Dutch people want workplaces where
everyone can thrive as their authentic selves

3. AI is here, and workers are ready

Job seekers are drawn to companies that use
artificial intelligence for growth, productivity
and learning

1,061

survey participants
in the Netherlands

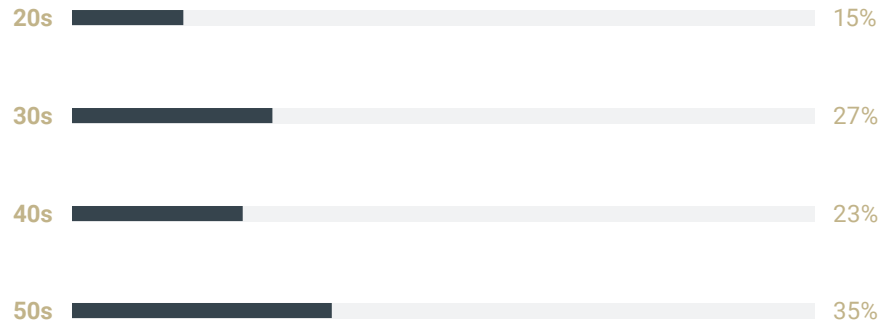


Talent Trends
is the most robust
and comprehensive
workplace survey
of its kind in the
world today

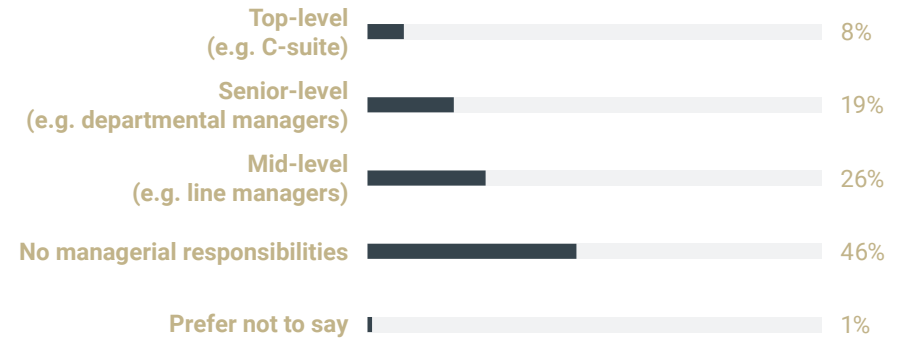


Who took our survey?

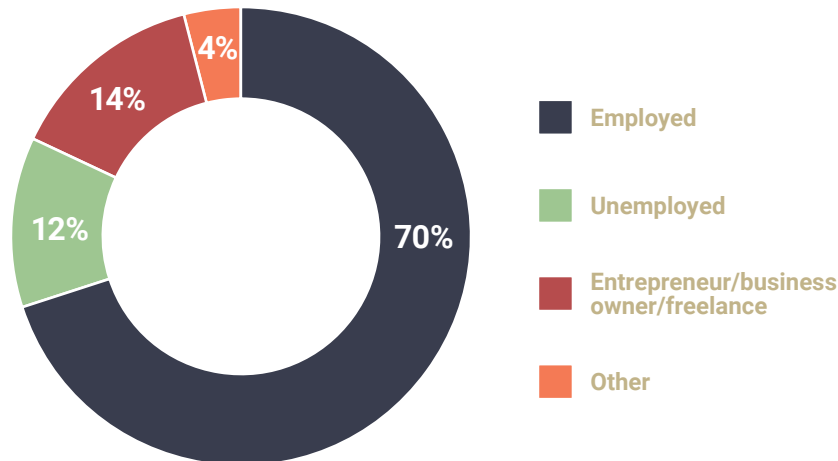
AGE



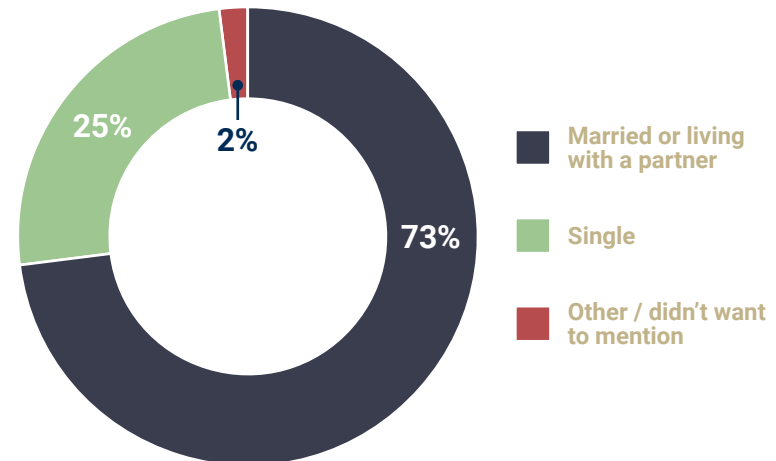
MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES



EMPLOYMENT STATUS



RELATIONSHIP AND FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS



Disclaimer

The percentages in this data might not add up to exactly 100%. This is because we round numbers to make them simpler to understand.

The Expectation Gap on... SALARY

Demands are rising
as wage growth slows



Salary is (still) king

But are demands for higher wages rooted in reality?

While the tension between salary expectations and economic realities remains a widespread concern across Europe, this pressure appears slightly less pronounced in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, it's still a significant factor in the Dutch labour market.

The Netherlands boasts the highest job satisfaction rate in Europe. However, more than three-quarters of those who are unsatisfied are actively seeking new roles. Although the Netherlands also has one of the lowest rates of salary dissatisfaction in Europe, the percentage of workers unhappy with their pay has increased slightly since the Talent Trends 2023 report.

For Dutch employers, the message remains clear: salary is a crucial factor in attracting and keeping talent. Just under half of surveyed companies recognise that offering a compensation package exceeding a job seeker's current earnings is key to getting noticed. And with a third of Dutch workers trying to negotiate a pay raise in the past year, it's clear the conversation around pay is more urgent than ever.

This ongoing expectation gap is a nudge for companies to rethink their salary strategies. It's about striking the right balance between what workers seek and what the budget allows.



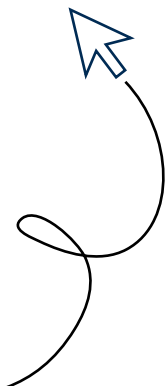


SALARY GUIDES

What should you *really* be paying?

Check out our Salary Guides for the latest information across key sectors and industries in your market.

[CLICK HERE](#)





The Expectation Gap on... FLEXIBILITY

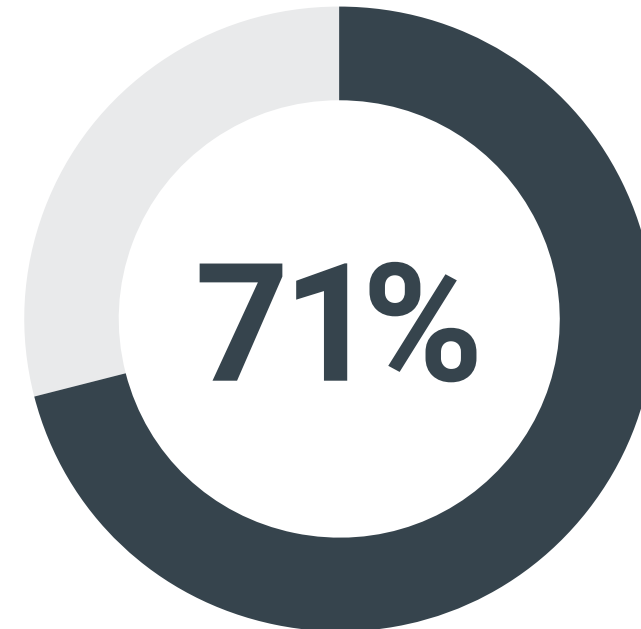
Why work-life balance is a must have



Work-life balance: The real prize

Higher salaries get people through the door, but what matters changes once they're settled

As we've seen, salary is often the top concern for Dutch job seekers. But priorities shift once they've landed the job and settled into their role. Work-life balance quickly becomes the most critical factor in job satisfaction, with flexibility and well-being taking centre stage. Indeed, 7 in 10 employees in the Netherlands prioritise well-being over a promotion – the highest in Europe and a significant increase over Talent Trends 2023.

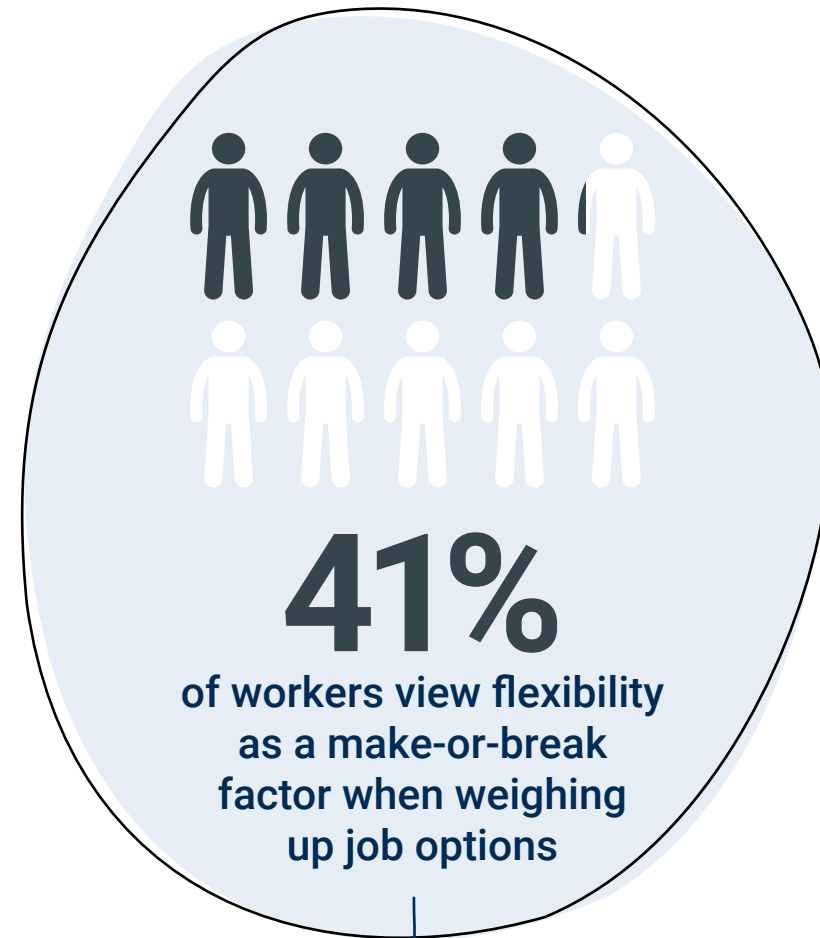


of Dutch employees would prioritise well-being over a promotion – it's a significant 7% increase over Talent Trends 2023

Flexibility: A Make-or-Break Factor for Dutch Workers

As flexibility becomes a top priority, employers must keep pace to attract and retain talent

In the Netherlands, the call for flexibility in the workplace isn't just getting louder – it's becoming a decisive factor in job decisions. Employees are sending a clear signal: the ability to fit work around life, not vice versa, is a non-negotiable priority. This push for flexibility isn't just about convenience – it reflects a desire for a work culture that balances professional achievements with personal fulfilment. Notably, this sentiment is even stronger in the Netherlands than in other parts of Europe and, indeed, the world



Who's more likely to value flexibility when considering a new position?



The Hybrid Work Puzzle

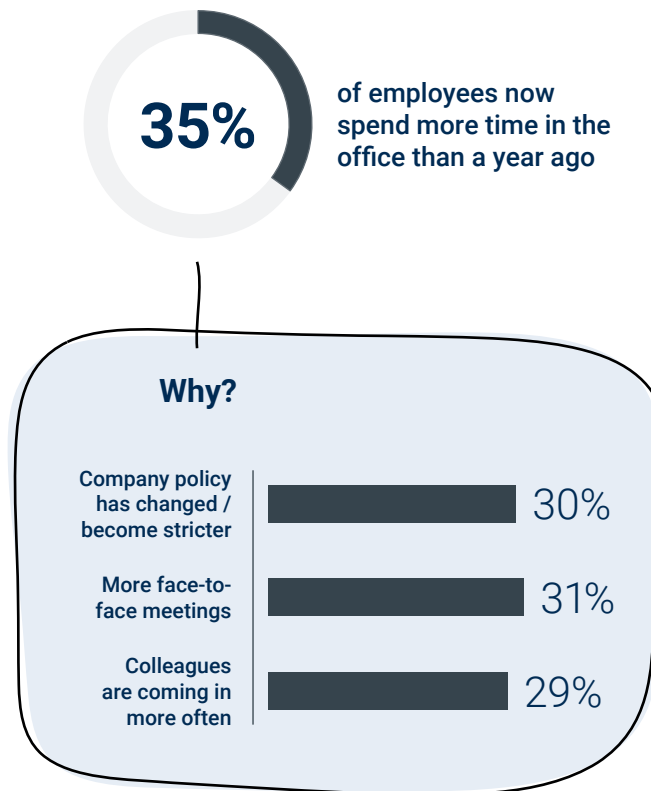
Bridging the gap in hybrid work expectations

Hybrid arrangements are reshaping the way people work in the Netherlands, setting a new standard for the modern workplace. With one of the highest rates of hybrid work in Europe, over 6 in 10 Dutch workers enjoy the flexibility of working from home combined with the opportunity for in-person collaboration at the office.

Interestingly, workers in their 30s are the most likely to embrace hybrid arrangements in the Netherlands, especially those in sectors like tech, consultancy and human resources.

However, the hybrid landscape is constantly evolving. Among those working in hybrid arrangements, over a third spend more time in the office than 12 months ago. This shift is driven by slightly different factors in the Netherlands compared to Europe as a whole. While company policies are a factor, Dutch workers are also motivated by the increased presence of colleagues in the office and a desire to enhance their learning opportunities. This suggests a more positive sentiment towards returning to the office in the Netherlands when compared to the wider European picture.

62% of workers in the Netherlands enjoy a hybrid work setup – above the global average



- Salary
- Flexibility
- DE&I
- AI

Prioritising Well-being

Dutch workers are putting health first, even if it means saying no to promotions

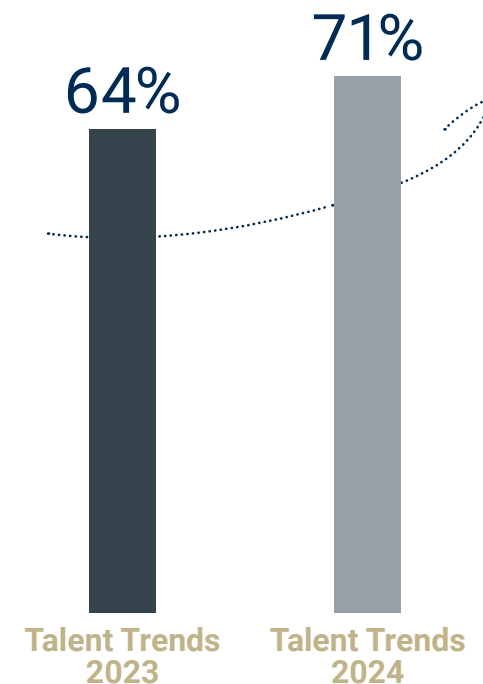
The Netherlands' workforce stands out for its willingness to put health and well-being ahead of traditional career milestones – a trend that has gained momentum since the Talent Trends 2023 report.

It's worth remembering that stressed workers aren't always stressed because of work. The [International SOS Risk Outlook Report 2024](#) notes that many external, ongoing stressors (like the climate crisis, social unrest and the rising cost of living) are leading to a level of employee burnout that many companies feel ill-equipped to handle.

As a result of these turbulent times, burnout is making people resistant to changing the way they work and unhappy when that choice is taken away from them. In fact, even if their salary isn't quite what they'd like, people will stick with a job that offers an excellent work-life balance.

This move towards valuing mental health and personal time over climbing the career ladder represents a major cultural shift. It's a clear message to employers that they must create roles and career paths that respect each person's need for balance, recovery and personal growth.

Dutch workers that say they would turn down a promotion if it meant sacrificing their work-life balance:





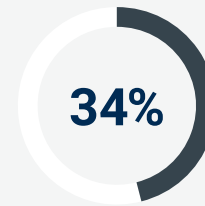
The Rise of the Multigenerational Workforce

From optimism to autonomy: decoding job satisfaction across generations

While Dutch workers in their 20s generally express optimism and excitement about emerging technologies like AI, those over 50 often report higher levels of job satisfaction than their younger colleagues.

This experienced group prioritises autonomy and personal fulfilment, seeking roles that align with their life goals rather than chasing higher positions that could bring additional stress. They value positive recognition from their managers and feel fairly compensated for their work.

Those in their 30s and 40s remain ambitious, keeping their options open for new opportunities that could advance their careers. Workers in their 30s, especially, strive to balance earning a good salary and maintaining a healthy work-life balance that allows for family time. It's worth noting that mental health is a higher priority for workers in their 20s compared to those in their 50s, perhaps reflecting a generational shift in how work-related well-being is viewed.

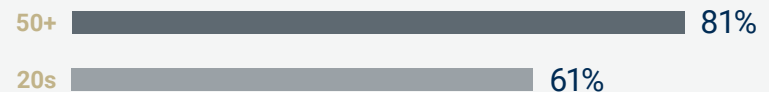


of the oldest (50+) employees report high levels of job satisfaction

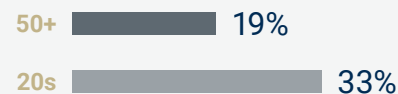
Employees that feel strongly recognised by their line managers for their contribution at work



Employees that are happy or very happy with their salary



Employees that prioritise their mental health at work





TAKEAWAYS AND TIPS

Flexibility

Flexibility is no longer just nice to have: For many Dutch workers and job seekers, it's the make-or-break factor when deciding where to work.

One size won't fit all: From tech-savvy 20-somethings to those valuing freedom in their later careers, different generations want different things.

Close the expectation gap: Make sure what you offer in hybrid and remote work matches your team's expectations.

Put well-being front and centre: Integrate well-being into your corporate culture. It's critical for keeping your team engaged and thriving, especially when times get tough.

Keep the lines of communication open: Honest and open conversations about work-life balance and other arrangements can clear up misunderstandings and make everyone feel valued.





The Expectation Gap on... DE&I

The difference between intention
and impact



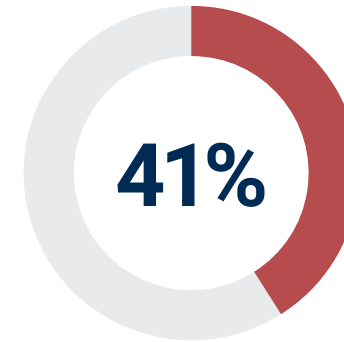
DE&I: A Journey Towards Authentic Inclusion

Never mind the buzzwords: bridging the gap between DE&I goals and reality

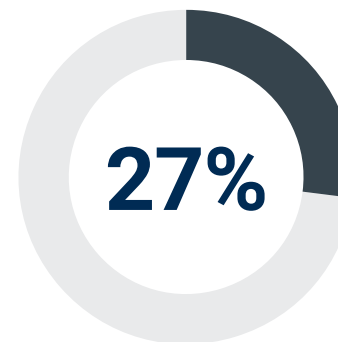
While the Netherlands stands ahead of much of Europe in crucial DE&I indicators – with a greater sense of inclusion and more professionals feeling they can be authentic at work – a clear majority still think there’s a way to go. This shows that creating workplaces where everyone feels truly valued is an ongoing effort.

The pandemic-era shift to hybrid work models, though beneficial for flexibility, has made it harder for businesses across the Netherlands to foster a truly inclusive culture. As employees spend less time physically together, creating a sense of unity and understanding among diverse team members has become more challenging.

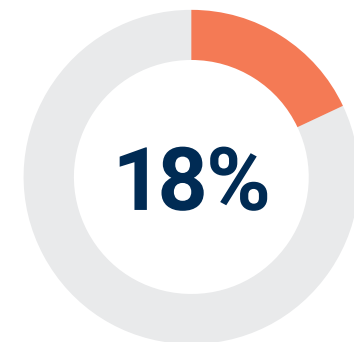
On top of that, with an unprecedented five generations now sharing the workplace, the complexity of meeting everyone’s needs and expectations has never been higher. This new reality demands a deeper understanding and appreciation for each employee’s unique perspectives – even in a progressive country like the Netherlands.



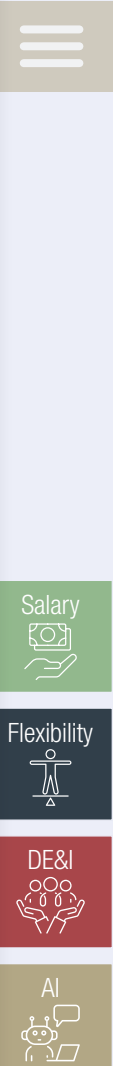
of respondents say they cannot be their authentic selves at work



believe their workplace is inclusive



think their senior leadership team is diverse



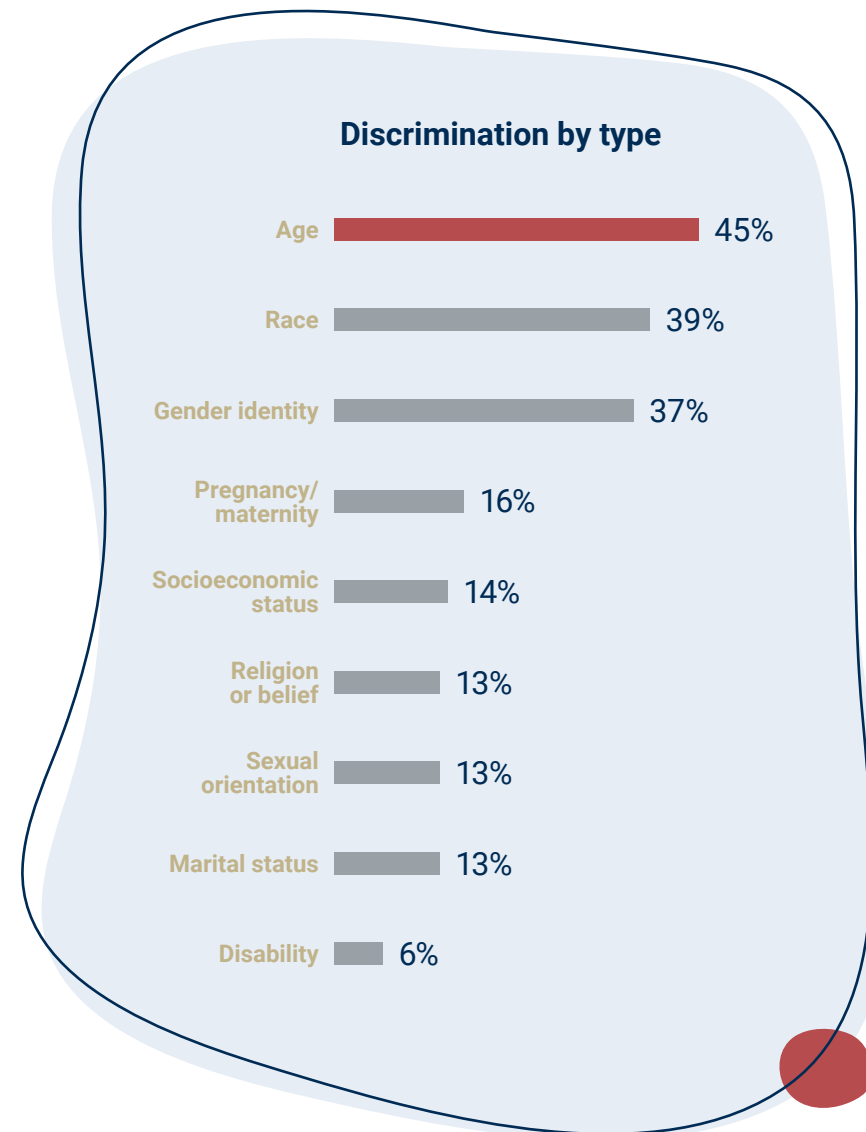
Discrimination: An Ongoing Battle

Beyond the numbers: the personal impact of workplace bias

Unfortunately, discrimination remains a problem in workplaces across the Netherlands, just like in the rest of Europe. The most common form of discrimination here is based on age, followed by race and gender. While the Netherlands fares slightly better than the European average in addressing workplace discrimination, there's clearly still work to be done. For example, almost two-thirds of people are happy with how their employer handles age discrimination, compared to just half of Europeans overall.

It's important to go beyond simply preventing obvious acts of discrimination. Those subtle, everyday comments or actions – the sort of 'microaggressions' that happen all too often – are just as damaging. Whether it's an offhand joke about someone's age or dismissive comments towards women, these behaviours chip away at the goal of creating a truly inclusive workplace.

Interestingly, while women are less satisfied than men with how workplaces are closing the gender pay gap, they're slightly happier about efforts to get more women into leadership positions. This suggests some positive progress in this crucial area.

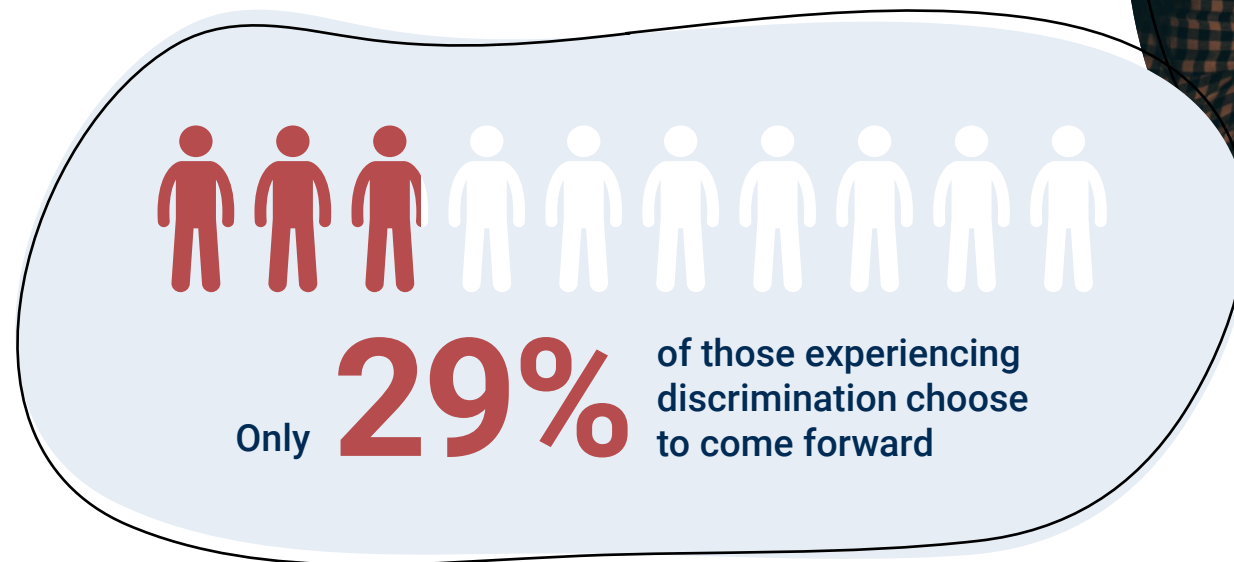


The Reporting Gap

When silence speaks volumes

The reluctance to report discrimination is telling, with only 29% of those affected choosing to come forward. This hesitancy to speak up is a clear sign that companies need better support networks that make sure every voice is heard and valued.

Young workers, particularly in their 20s, along with female employees, are ready to challenge the status quo, suggesting a pathway for progress. Involving these voices in shaping DE&I strategies – from surveys and focus groups to mentorship programmes – can drive meaningful change and foster a culture of allyship and inclusivity



Bridging the DE&I Gap

From policy to practice: making inclusion a reality

Our survey shows that while Dutch professionals clearly value DE&I efforts, there's still room for improvement when it comes to how these initiatives are implemented in the workplace. While tackling issues like age discrimination and closing the gender pay gap are recognised as necessary, many workers would like to see their companies take more decisive action.

It's encouraging that the Netherlands is ahead of many other European countries in this regard. This suggests there's a strong foundation to build upon. Now, the focus needs to be on translating positive intentions around DE&I into tangible, effective actions within workplaces.

To create truly inclusive environments, companies must do more than launch eye-catching initiatives. They must focus on developing a comprehensive, long-term strategy aimed at nurturing a culture where everyone genuinely feels like they belong. This means keeping the communication channels open, delivering support for those who may feel marginalised, and regularly assessing the impact of DE&I efforts by tracking key metrics and gathering employee feedback.





TAKEAWAYS AND TIPS

DE&I

Actions speak louder than buzzwords: Dutch workplaces have a real hunger for genuine inclusivity. Most people are calling for a shift from abstract DE&I goals to tangible, everyday practices where everyone can truly be themselves.

Flexibility can be a double-edged sword: While flexible working arrangements are a step forward for balancing personal and work life, they can make it harder to build an inclusive culture, especially when face-to-face interactions are limited.

Turn DE&I plans into reality: It's essential that the inclusive culture you talk about matches what employees experience every day. This means taking DE&I from your company's vision board and making it a fundamental part of daily work life.

Tackle microaggressions head-on: Educate your workforce on the impact of microaggressions and age discrimination. It's time to call out these behaviours for the harm they cause.

Promote a culture of openness: Encourage employees to speak up about discrimination by creating safe, supportive spaces for reporting.

Keep DE&I efforts fresh and relevant: DE&I isn't a one-time initiative but a continuous learning, listening and adapting process. Regular check-ins with employees can help you understand what's working, what's not and how you can continuously improve to ensure everyone feels valued and included.





The Expectation Gap on... AI

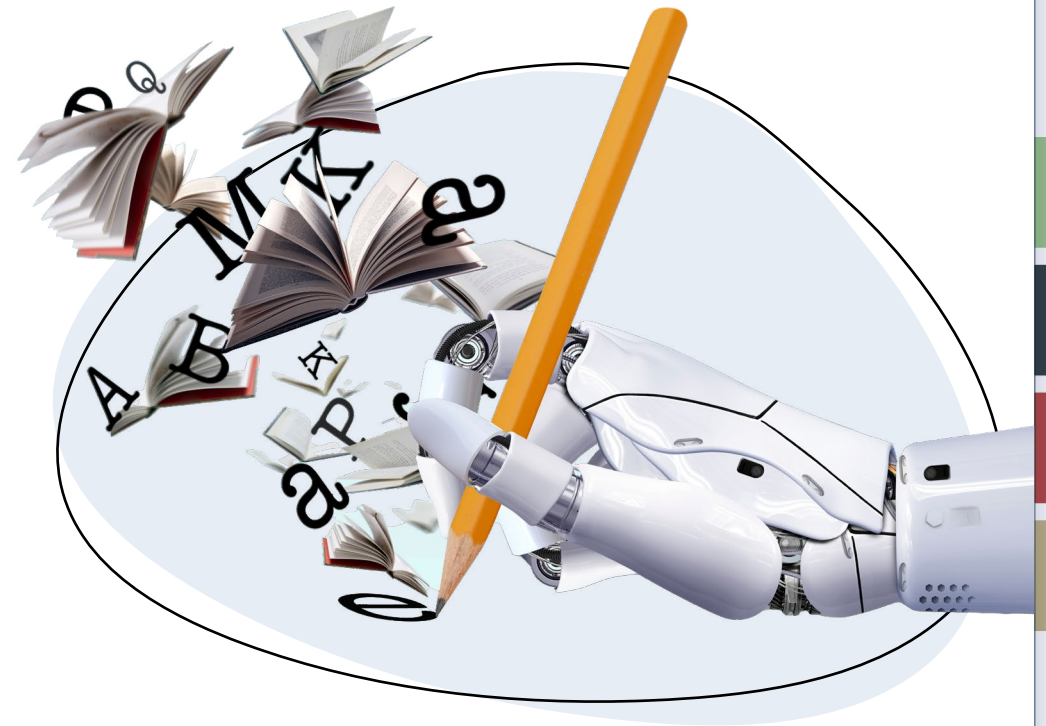
Keeping pace when careers are changing



Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace: The Future is Now

Employees in the Netherlands are in the vanguard of AI adoption

The world of work is undergoing a seismic shift with the arrival of AI tools like ChatGPT, which are revolutionising how we do our jobs and reshaping career paths. This transformation empowers employees with powerful new tools and encourages companies to embrace these changes to boost productivity. At the same time, they need to navigate ethical and legal boundaries, such as protecting personal data and respecting intellectual property rights.



The Netherlands: Pioneering AI Adoption in Europe

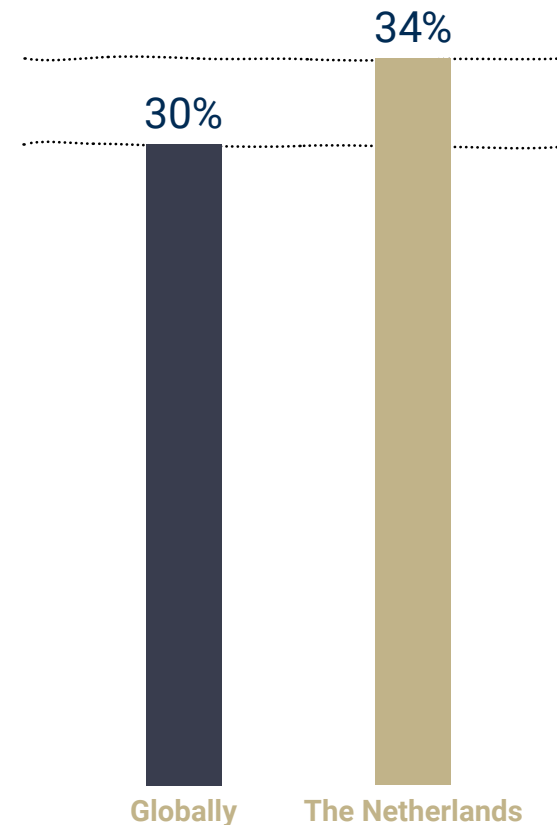
Setting the pace for the continent's AI revolution

The Netherlands stands at the forefront of AI adoption, significantly outpacing much of Europe. Professionals across the country, especially those in sectors like technology, business services and financial services, recognise AI's transformative potential for their careers. This puts them ahead of the global average in terms of AI use.

However, even within this progressive landscape, there's still a gap to bridge in terms of hands-on AI experience compared to other leading AI hubs around the world. Sectors like transport, the public sector and healthcare show slower uptake, highlighting the varying pace of AI integration across industries.

This signals an exciting period of change for the Dutch job market. The challenge is to further broaden AI adoption, ensuring that workers across all sectors are not just prepared for the AI-driven future but excited about how this technology can enhance their careers. This means investing in training, fostering a culture of innovation and continuous learning and equipping everyone with the skills and mindset to thrive alongside AI.

Percentage of employees
using AI in their current role





TAKEAWAYS AND TIPS

AI

Europe is on the brink of an AI revolution: The rapid advent of AI tools like ChatGPT is transforming the world of work, pushing businesses to quickly adopt these technologies for better productivity and fresh ways of working.

Keep ethics in the conversation: Diving into AI means doing it responsibly. That means keeping a keen eye on data privacy and copyright rules and ensuring AI use benefits everyone without crossing any lines.

Customise your AI approach: AI doesn't fit the same way in every job or industry. Look at how AI can specifically benefit different parts of your company, making sure it's a win-win for everyone involved.

Salary



Flexibility



DE&I



AI





CONCLUSION

How will you bridge the Expectation Gap?

The Expectation Gap we have explored in this report is visible across all elements of the modern workplace – from salaries to DE&I initiatives, AI strategies and hybrid policies. Bringing expectations back into alignment will be vital for employers as they create a new dynamic.

Our study suggests a solution: acknowledging the diversity in attitudes towards work and, therefore, approaching any issues with open communication and mutual respect.

Clearly stating expectations around issues such as workplace attendance, technology strategies and inclusion initiatives will reassure many employees, who may subsequently feel more engaged in ongoing conversations.

When hiring, you need to authentically build an image that fits with a potential employee's vision of their future. There's no one-size-fits-all solution – it's about nurturing trust between employees and employers so that open communication can take place and both sides can try to meet in the middle on their expectations.

Expectations might be out of alignment now. But we believe that more than ever, knowledge is power when finding solutions to these challenges and ultimately bridging the expectation gap to forge a future that works for all.





CONCLUSION

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND TIPS

The three-step process to realigning expectations and creating a modern workplace dynamic

1

Build trust - both ways**Create a culture of open communication and clear expectation setting**

Building trust isn't about delivering on every ask from workers and goes both ways - people have work to do to convince employers their version of flexibility and hybrid working is viable. It's important to communicate openly and honestly about decisions, even if they are not going to be universally popular.

2

Become change-resilient**Manage workplace anxieties and demonstrate a preparedness for future transitions**

It's fine to not have all the answers to conundrums around culture, flexibility and technology immediately – but acknowledging where approaches will need to evolve can build confidence and help people to prepare for what's coming next.

3

Always be people-first**Human capital is any organisation's greatest asset - and requires continuous investment**

As we've explored, there are more varied expectations for employers to navigate than ever. It's important to understand that there is no universal solution. It's about balancing individual needs – and recognising that it's impossible to deliver on all of them - with those of the collective workforce.

Salary



Flexibility



DE&I



AI



PageInsights

Explore our data your way

What we've detailed in this report is a mere fraction of the insights from our Talent Trends 2024 survey.

When it comes to finding the talent you need in this ever more competitive hiring landscape, we know that knowledge is power.

That's why we've also launched an **innovative interactive tool**, which puts all the information you need on what's driving the talent market right at your finger tips.

You can explore our data your way - by choosing any two filters across countries, industries or job functions - and the tool is an easy point of reference to come back to as many times as you need.

[Give the tool a try](#)



About PageGroup

Are you hiring?

Based on your recruitment needs, we have four internationally recognised and respected brands (Page Executive, Michael Page, Page Personnel, and Page Outsourcing) ready to help you find the right talent for your business.

PageExecutive

Executive search

Page Executive – the executive search division of PageGroup – offers a fresh approach to search, selection and advisory solutions for leadership talent. Recognised for the expertise and global reach of our consultants, as well as our powerful in-house research function, our tailored services, speed of delivery and high success rates are why organisations worldwide choose Page Executive to secure their leaders of tomorrow.



MichaelPage

Qualified professionals

Michael Page provides specialised recruitment services for professionals at middle management to leadership levels, along with highly specialised technical positions.



PagePersonnel

Clerical professionals

Page Personnel specialises in recruitment services for quality professionals within the professional support space through to middle management.



PageOutsourcing

Flexible recruitment outsourcing

Page Outsourcing specialises in delivering high volume talent acquisition solutions for permanent and temporary workforces. With the ability to meet ongoing or outcome based hiring needs, Page Outsourcing's support covers recruitment process outsourcing (RPO), managed service programs (MSP) and talent acquisition advisory services.



Scan or click on the relevant QR code to get in touch with one of our consultants.

