Accelerating Adaptability

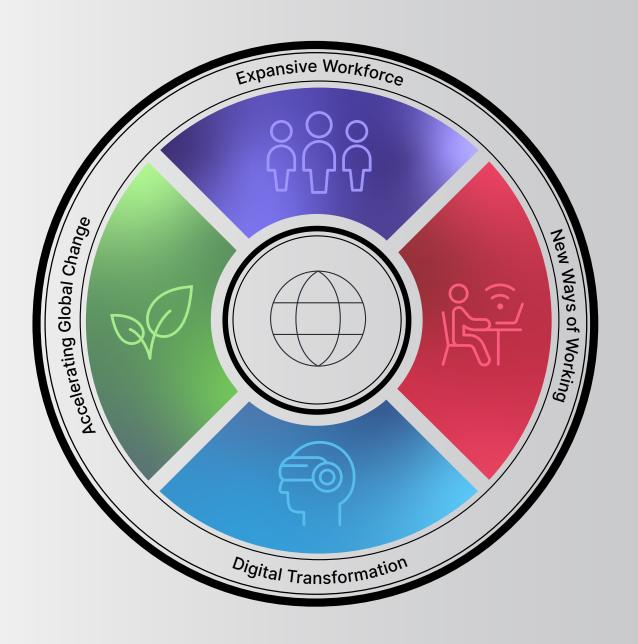2025 Global Workforce Trends

ManpowerGroup®

The Driving Forces Shaping the Workforce

For more than 10 years, we have partnered with our clients to explore four underlying forces shaping the future of work. As we look ahead to 2025 and beyond, we examine how the pace of change will accelerate and what it means for employers and the workforce.

2025 Global Workforce Trends

The Expansive Workforce

An increasingly diverse global workforce will impact the future of who is available to work, as well as when and how they'll work.

TREND 1:
Gen Z Gains Competency

TREND 2:
Millennial Managers Feel the Squeeze

TREND 3:
Closing Workforce Gender Gaps

TREND 4:
DEIB Stays the Course

New Ways of Working

The world of work changed forever in 2020, and employer and individual adaptation to distributed models is still in progress.

TREND 5:
Productivity-Fueled Pressure

TREND 6:
Workspace Creativity and Innovation

TREND 7:
Spotlight on the Frontline

TREND 8:
Rapid Talent Assembly

Digital Transformation

The democratization of AI is fast-tracking digital transformation and evolving the structure of organizations.

TREND 9:
Shifting AI Use from Wow to How

TREND 10:
Workforce Career Durability

TREND 11:
Cybersecuring the Future

TREND 12:
Institutionalized Innovation

Accelerating Global Change

In the Industry 4.0 era, organizations are coping with critical global talent shortages against a backdrop of geopolitical instability and environmental and sustainability challenges.

TREND 13:
Green Business Transformation

TREND 14:
Geopolitical Uncertainty

TREND 15:
Peak Employer Power

TREND 16:
The Constant in an Uncertain Future: Talent Scarcity

The Expansive Workforce

Gen Z Gains Competency

Millennial Managers Feel the Squeeze

Closing Workforce Gender Gaps

DEIB Stays the Course

TREND 1

Gen Z Gains Competency

Generation Z (born 1997-2012) have entered or will enter the workforce during a period of exponential change, while lacking the context of how organizations operated in the past. In addition to professional and economic stressors, Gen Z workers face greater mental health and communication skill challenges compared to prior generations. Nevertheless, they are holding their own.

Gen Z workers are the most likely to agree their current employer offers sufficient opportunities for promotion (63%), useful tech tools (80%), and opportunities to gain new skills (76%).[1] Employers are also confident (76%) their Gen Z employees have the skills and experience to successfully perform in their existing roles.[2]

Nevertheless, Gen Z workers are the most likely (47%) to say they will voluntarily or involuntarily (34%) leave their current role in the next six months. The respective Millennial figures for voluntary attrition (40%) and involuntary termination (28%) were similar.

47%

Gen Z workers are the most likely to say they will leave their current role in the next 6 months.[1]

Workforce Implications

As we experienced with the **Millennials, a "good job" won't be enough for young workers to stay put.** But Gen Z's expectations are reasonable and in line with those in other generations. **Gen Z workers seek employers who care about their well-being and can offer a clear career path and greater financial security.** Employers that clearly present and drive young workers toward these growth opportunities will reduce turnover and increase long-term employee loyalty.

[1] ManpowerGroup 2024 Global Talent Barometer   [2] ManpowerGroup Q4 2024 Employment Outlook Survey

TREND 3

Closing Workforce Gender Gaps

During the COVID-19 pandemic, global organizations experienced a mass exodus of women from the workforce, from which they are still recovering. Combined with a fraught geopolitical situation, the future of women's workforce participation appears newly uncertain.

The global pay gap for women is well known and remains a thorny problem. On average, women earn 20% less than men globally,[1] but nearly half (48%) of employers globally say they are behind on pay equity initiatives or have no plans to close the gap.[2]

Working men are struggling too. In the U.S. alone, 6.8 million men representing 10.5% of the prime workforce (ages 25-54) are neither employed nor seeking work. The trend is similar in other developed economies.[3]

48%

Nearly half of employers are struggling to close gender pay gaps.[2]

Workforce Implications

These stark figures reinforce the importance of making the future of work more appealing for both women and men. With gender parity still a long way off, **ManpowerGroup Chief Innovation Officer Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic recommends shifting the focus to data-driven measurement of performance, which creates more advancement opportunities for women.[4]**

We must proactively reach the growing population of men opting out of the workforce through free training programs in growth sectors such as green energy or battery manufacturing and offer strategies for employers to reach underutilized talent pools.[5]

Finally, **leaders who develop the traits of flexibility, emotional intelligence, global perspective, and technological curiosity will be well-positioned** to consider the unique qualities and needs of all genders.

[1] WEF   [2] ManpowerGroup 2024 World of Work Outlook for Women   [3] CNBC   [4] Harvard Business Review   [5] ManpowerGroup
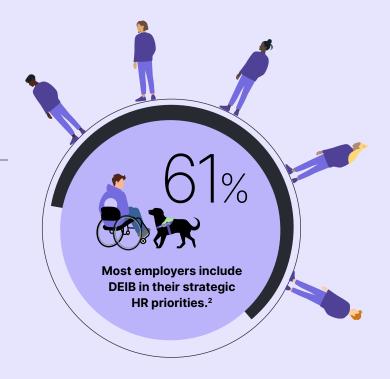
TREND 4
DEIB Stays the Course

Major global brands such as Ford, Google, John Deere, Molson Coors, Meta, and Zoom have recently scaled back their Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) goals and programs.[1]

However, this approach is not as widespread as the headlines suggest. According to our data, most global employers (61%) say DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) is an important part of their strategic workforce planning.[2] And when the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) announced a move away from an equity focus earlier this year, many employer members were outraged. If DEIB wasn't widely considered relevant, SHRM's decision wouldn't have been the talk of HR circles for months.

61%
Most employers include DEIB in their strategic HR priorities.[2]

Workforce Implications
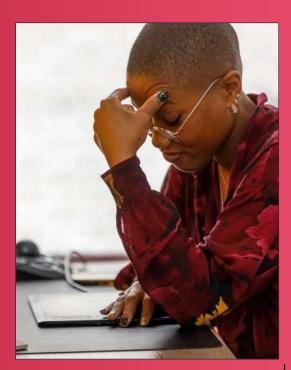
Recent years have shown us that the popularity of DEIB initiatives will ebb and flow over time. However, it would be a mistake to believe that the need to create a diverse and inclusive workplace will go away, or that a DEIB-focused mentality isn't a priority at the highest levels of global organizations.
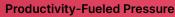
This is particularly true in developed markets where the diversity of the population is increasing as the size of the total workforce is decreasing. **Fortunately, a variety of AI-based technologies are now available to assist leaders in combatting unconscious biases and ensuring a work culture that's fair and rewarding for all.**

[1] Bloomberg   [2] ManpowerGroup 2024 Global Talent Shortage Survey

New Ways of Working

Productivity-Fueled Pressure

Workspace Creativity and Innovation

Spotlight on the Frontline

Rapid Talent Assembly

TREND 5

Productivity-Fueled Pressure

Nearly half (49%) of workers around the world say they experience moderate to high stress at work every day.[1] At the same time, only 21% of workers worldwide feel their employer fully supports their mental well-being.[2]

The new use of AI-based technologies may also be fueling burnout, as half (47%) of workers using AI say they have no idea how to achieve the productivity gains their employers expect. Over three in four (77%) say AI tools have decreased their productivity and added to their workload in at least one way.[3]

But these challenges offer a significant opportunity for employers. Research estimates investment in the treatment of anxiety and depression at work offers an average of up to 4x worker productivity gains.[4]

49%

Nearly half of the workforce experiences daily stress at work.

Workforce Implications

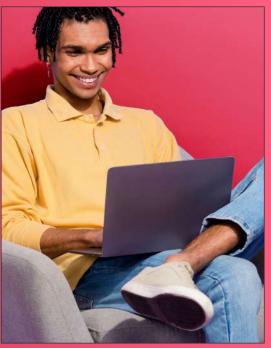Employers can improve the well-being of their employees beyond simple access to mental health resources. For example, the U.S. Occupational Health & Safety Agency (OSHA) recommends **identifying root causes that make it harder for employees to get their jobs done and determine if adjustments can be made.**[5]

The agency also recommends internal communications to ensure workers feel comfortable asking for help. And, when it comes to the **introduction of new technology specifically, leaders can be sensitive to the demands** on existing workload and leverage nontraditional talent such as contract workers to ease the burden of implementation.

[1] ManpowerGroup 2024 Global Talent Barometer   [2] ADP   [3] Upwork   [4] WHO & World Bank   [5] OSHA

TREND 6

Workspace Creativity and Evolution

Global office attendance rates declined by 90% in 2020 and have since stabilized 30% lower than 2019 levels. Forecasts for 2030 remain lower than 2019.[1] The increased flexibility for some could be causing resentment among their mandatory onsite peers. Most (57%) are 15% less likely than their hybrid peers (76%) to agree their organization supports their personal well-being and work-life balance.[2]

Employers must balance this with the needs of younger workers seeking connection. More than 7 in 10 Gen Z workers (72%) say it is important to have in-person socialization with their colleagues, and 59% feel the same for virtual socialization.[3]

Mandatory onsite workers are less likely than hybrid peers to agree their employer supports work-life balance.[2]

Workforce Implications

These findings point to a need to continuously evolve workspaces into destinations that promote connection and well-being. **Organizations that set up a corporate-sponsored physical office with a designated purpose** – such as hosting in-person meetings, offering individual employee hoteling space, or placing team members on the same schedule in a neighborhood-type environment – **are flourishing under this model.**

Recent research shows requests for **executive office spaces have decreased 80%, while requests for shared collaboration areas have increased 20%**.[4] We are also seeing the rise of third places. In sociology, the third place refers to social surroundings that are separate from the two usual social environments of home and the workplace. Popular third places for remote hybrid workers include coffee shops, libraries, clubhouses, and conference centers.

This evolution is not just limited to the physical, as workspace is likely to include a huge virtual and augmented reality component by 2030.

[1] McKinsey   [2] ManpowerGroup 2024 Global Talent Barometer   [3] Talent LMS   [4] WeWork

TREND 7

Spotlight on the Frontline

Frontline worker turnover was once considered an unavoidable reality, but as they face increasing talent scarcity, organizations are seeking new ways to connect with and retain these workers. Unfortunately, a perception gap between leaders and workers often hampers their efforts. While 83% of company leaders feel they understand the challenges faced by frontline workers, only 62% of those workers agree.[1]

ManpowerGroup's own research illustrates that only 1 in 3 (32%) of blue-collar workers trust their manager has their best interests at heart for their career development and nearly half (41%) say there are insufficient promotion opportunities at their current employer.[2] At the same time, more than one-third of blue-collar workers (35%) say they plan to leave their current job in the next six months.[2]

These developments have the potential to significantly derail the manufacturing industry. In the U.S. alone, by 2030 up to 2.1 million manufacturing jobs could remain unfilled due to growing skilled labor shortages.[2]

35% One in three blue-collar workers say they plan to leave their current job in the next six months.[2]

Workforce Implications

The future of frontline work involves an **understanding that the nature of the employer's relationship with these workers is changing, and they no longer wish to be seen as commodities or taken for granted.** Building such an environment requires a combination of innovation and scale.

Organizations are already getting creative with flexible scheduling, and development programs such as Manpower MyPath™ are providing workers with dedicated career coaches and other resources. **Personal attention delivered en masse is consistently reducing turnover, increasing employee satisfaction, and doubling training completion rates.**

[1] Dayforce 2024 Frontline Worker Study   [2] ManpowerGroup 2024 Global Talent Barometer   [3] U.S. Census
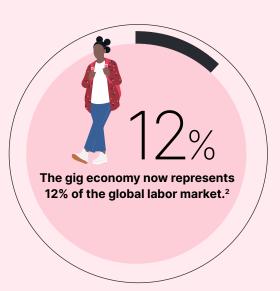
TREND 8

Rapid Talent Assembly

More than 60% of the world's workers (nearly two billion people) earn a portion of their livelihood through informal employment.[1] The gig economy — characterized by short-term contracts or freelance work — is growing and now represents 12% of the global labor market. This includes temporary workers assigned through an agency, direct sourcing, or self-employed contributors.[2]

The concept of Rapid Talent Assembly predicts an evolution where a greater share of work shifts from formal roles to rapidly assembled, task-based teams.[3] Instead of relying on traditional, full-time employees to perform most responsibilities, organizations are beginning to staff projects in response to immediate business priorities. These short-term teams include temporary and contract employees as well as consultants and subject matter experts.

12%

The gig economy now represents 12% of the global labor market.[2]

🌍 Workforce Implications

The world of work today operates in two extremes. The full-time workforce as we know it has not changed much since the introduction of the assembly line. However, **the way temporary and gig work is structured and utilized is shifting in real time,** especially in response to the **need for critical AI skills more often found in the contract work population.**

Rapid Talent Assembly envisions a future where elements of the gig economy are combined with traditional work to allow for more agility in business operations and the integration of AI-based technologies. Much of this will focus on digital platform matching, but it can also include optimizing traditional talent sourcing channels. For example, **Manpower recently partnered with Walmart to open job hubs within its highly-trafficked retail stores.[4]**

[1] United Nations   [2] World Bank   [3] ManpowerGroup   [4] ManpowerGroup

Digital Transformation

Shifting AI Use from Wow to How

Workforce Career Durability

Cybersecuring the Future

Institutionalized Innovation

TREND 9

Shifting AI Use from Wow to How

Nearly half of employers (48%) worldwide are currently using generative AI tools, and another 21% plan to leverage them within the next 12 months. As AI adoption accelerates, top employer concerns include the high cost of investment (33%), privacy and regulations (31%), and AI skills gaps (31%).[1]

Research estimates generative AI can improve a highly skilled worker's performance by as much as 40% compared to workers who don't use it.[2] But when it comes to combatting labor shortages and developing workers, generative AI still has limited utility.

AI-driven technology called talent intelligence is already in the marketplace. Talent intelligence harnesses deep learning to assess skills adjacency (that is, if you are good at skill A, you will also be good at skill B) and open non-traditional pathways for candidates who don't have the experience with the exact job needed but do have the capabilities required.[3]

As AI adoption accelerates, employers say the

high cost, privacy concerns, regulation and skills gaps are their top challenges.[1]

Workforce Implications

The Gartner Hype Cycle helps explain the current state based on previous patterns of tech adoption. After early excitement, the real challenges of implementation begin. **The gap between leadership expectations and worker perceptions shows the current state of skills gaps.** Employers who can accelerate adoption and curb pessimism through training through programs such as the Experis Academy, can realize more rapid productivity gains.

Leveraging talent intelligence technology, leaders can assess current organizational skills and future needs via a global dataset of standardized job descriptions and requirements. Not only does it facilitate more flexible hiring, but it provides a pathway to redeploy workers in times of disruption and to redesign jobs in keeping with digital transformation.

[1] ManpowerGroup Q3 2024 Employment Outlook Survey   [2] MIT   [3] ManpowerGroup

TREND 10
Workforce Career Durability

The coming years will be a period of disruption with 69 million new jobs created and 83 million eliminated.[1] Globally, required skills are projected to change by 50% by 2030 (from 2016)—and generative AI is expected to accelerate this change to 68%.[2]

Most workers are navigating this period of change without a plan. While 69% of leaders believe their employees have a career plan, only 27% of employees agree.[3] As the potential for skills gaps grows, career planning and professional development will become increasingly important.

Career durability involves acquiring the skills, mindset, and knowledge to be an engaged and productive member of the workforce – continuously. Career durability has five major pillars, including hard skills, soft skills, applied technology skills, institutional knowledge, and agility or a growth mindset. Applied technology skills enable workers to understand the technology currently available to do their jobs more efficiently.[4]

27%

In an era of accelerating change, only 27% of workers say they have a career plan.[3]

Workforce Implications

Increasing a workforce's career durability, especially in the applied technology skills that facilitate digital transformation, will rise in importance in the second half of the 2020s. Employers are mostly aligned on this point, with **a majority (61%) saying that digital transformation is an important part of their HR strategic planning and that training staff to leverage AI in their roles is a top priority.[5]** However, leaders must ensure that this awareness translates into tactical upskilling initiatives and reaches individual employees in the form of clear career roadmaps and skill acquisition programs.

[1] WEF   [2] Microsoft   [3] Right Management   [4] Eightfold AI   [5] ManpowerGroup Q1 2024 Employment Outlook Survey

TREND 11

Cybersecuring the Future

In 2024, the average economic impact of a single successful cyberattack grew 10% from the previous year, reaching a record-high of $4.88 million.[1]

Our society is also facing unprecedented challenges in coping with energy requirements and climate-related technology disruptions. AI-based applications especially require an inordinate amount of power, and increasing adverse climate events such as hurricanes and wildfires are likely to test the limits of current technology bandwidth and resilience and result in more shortages and outages.

As the frequency and costs of technology disruptions grow, it is increasingly difficult to find the right talent. For example, in 2024, the global cybersecurity talent shortage grew to 4 million.[2] Despite global economic uncertainty in 2024, 76% of IT employers around the world still said they were struggling find the skilled IT talent they need.[3]

Workforce Implications

In the wake of CrowdStrike-related outages in the summer of 2024, which had a $5.4 billion negative impact on Fortune 500 companies, business leaders understand the critical importance of skilled IT support and cybersecurity.[4] However, they also know finding the right IT talent is easier said than done. Working with **trusted global partners such as Experis to scale training, talent sourcing, and outsourcing can close skills gaps and help organizations survive in a world that's currently too dependent on fragile systems.**

76%

As global cyber threats grow, 76% of IT employers say they are struggling to find the skilled talent they need.[3]

[1] IBM   [2] WEF   [3] ManpowerGroup 2024 Global Talent Shortage   [4] Fortune

TREND 12

Institutionalized Innovation

Institutionalized Innovation (II) refers to the routine and integrated use of entrepreneurial strategies within the context of, and leveraging the resources of, an established organization.

Most CEOs (62%) believe they will need to rewrite their business playbook to innovate and win in the future.[1] In fact, nearly half (45%) of CEOs believe their company will not be viable in 10 years if it stays on its current path.[2]
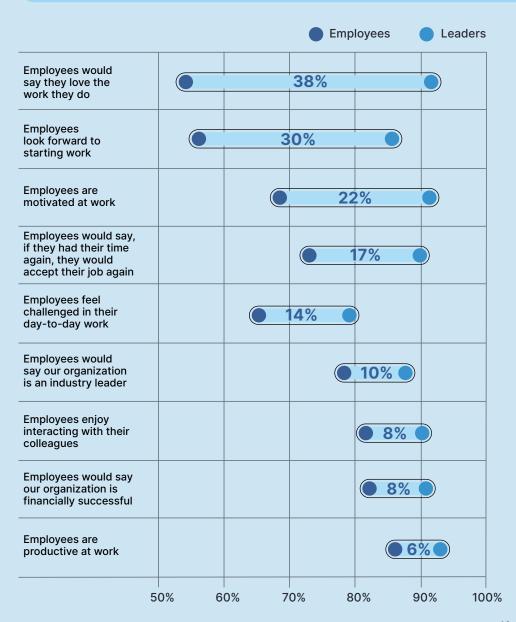
Successful organizations start with II by establishing a committee dedicated to devising one new revolutionary process or service a month and building "tinkering time" into the employee workday. And as organizations prepare to more effectively integrate II, it is important not to forget the basics. In a recent study, 83% of leaders believed their workforce was fully engaged, but only 48% of employees agreed.[3]

Workforce Implications

Institutionalized Innovation is possible for every type of organization, and we can learn a great deal from those out in front. For example, **Microsoft shifted from an internally-centered hierarchy to the empowerment of individual employees, which increased engagement.**[4] Instead of an internal-only approach, Microsoft actively sought multiple strategic partnerships (e.g., OpenAI) to accelerate its II plans.

[1] IBM   [2] PwC   [3] Right Management   [4] Harvard Business Review

Innovators Must Overcome Engagement Gaps

● Employees ● Leaders

Employees would say they love the work they do	38%
Employees look forward to starting work	30%
Employees are motivated at work	22%
Employees would say, if they had their time again, they would accept their job again	17%
Employees feel challenged in their day-to-day work	14%
Employees would say our organization is an industry leader	10%
Employees enjoy interacting with their colleagues	8%
Employees would say our organization is financially successful	8%
Employees are productive at work	6%

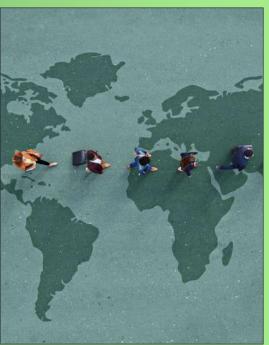50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

Accelerating Global Change

Green Business Transformation

Geopolitical Uncertainty

Peak Employer Power

The Constant in an Uncertain Future: Talent Scarcity
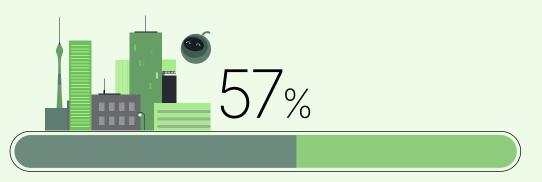
TREND 13

Green Business Transformation

Growing demand for action to address climate change from consumers, investors and government policymakers is accelerating the need for green business transformation, creating up to 30 million new jobs by 2030.[1]

For key functions such as Manufacturing, IT and Operations, employers estimate more than half (57%) of skills will change to accommodate more environmentally sustainable best practices.[2] Unfortunately, most (91%) employers say they do not have the skilled talent they need to achieve their sustainability goals.[3]

57%

Employers estimate more than half of the skills needed for Manufacturing, IT and Operations will change as they continue their green business transformation.[2]

Workforce Implications

Organization-wide sustainability requires a pervasive integration of green-first strategies and a change in the way work is executed. Understandably, workers may not understand how their skills translate into lucrative careers in emerging industries or to green roles with their current organizations.

Employers should leverage AI-based technologies to engage in green-specific workforce planning and conduct a skills audit to match current and prospective employees to green roles. Upskilling and reskilling initiatives should be undertaken at scale to fill identified gaps, and employers should continuously provide guidance to their workforces about how green components can and should be integrated into existing roles.

[1] WEF   [2] ManpowerGroup Q1 2024 Employment Outlook Survey   [3] ManpowerGroup Q4 2024 Employment Outlook Survey

TREND 14

Geopolitical Uncertainty

In 2024, geopolitical tensions eclipsed inflation to become the #1 concern for central banks and sovereign wealth funds. The propensity for ongoing conflicts to hamper trade and increase geopolitical fragmentation and protectionism are among the top concerns.[1] From a logistical standpoint, organizations cannot count on reliable supply chains or existing global operational models when global transportation, diplomacy, and health systems are disrupted. In fact, more than one-third of CEOs (38%) say they have canceled specific business plans due to political risk.[2]

ManpowerGroup's Total Workforce Index™ measures the impact of increasing geopolitical uncertainty on labor markets around the world. Key markets in the Middle East were especially impacted in 2024, with reduced scores in labor availability, labor cost efficiency, labor regulation, and labor productivity.[3]

"Based on conversations with policymakers and business leaders worldwide, it is evident it that we are in rapidly changing times — geopolitical uncertainty persists, technology continues to advance, and the economic rule book is still being rewritten post-pandemic."

– Jonas Prising, Chief Executive Officer, ManpowerGroup

Workforce Implications

While this period of instability is challenging, it also **offers organizations who are willing to take calculated risks an opportunity to grow their businesses and support the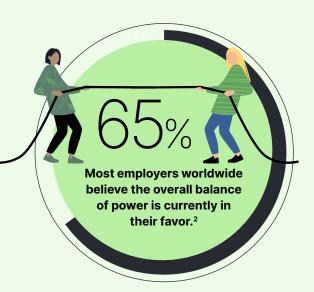ir workforces through turbulent times.** Furthermore, employers can address their own labor shortages while simultaneously helping those displaced by geopolitical conflicts. For example, through partnerships with TENT and Welcome.US, ManpowerGroup has helped find job opportunities for more than 30,000 refugees from war-torn areas.

[1] WEF   [2] EY   [3] 2024 Talent Solutions Total Workforce Index™

TREND 15

Peak Employer Power

As labor markets cooled around the world in 2024, the balance of power in most industries—particularly white-collar jobs—began to shift from employees to employers.[1]

Most employers (65%) worldwide believe the overall balance of power is currently in their favor. Most agree they have more power than workers over pay (65%), working location (66%), and flexible hours (59%).[2] Consequently, many employers are stepping up enforcement of new or existing HR policies. For example, many organizations such as Amazon are now mandating mandatory in-person attendance for all employees.[3]

65%

Most employers worldwide believe the overall balance of power is currently in their favor.[2]

Workforce Implications

While the current balance of power does favor employers, it is important for leaders to find the right balance. As the U.S. Federal Reserve and European Central Bank begin cutting interest rates, it is likely that recovering labor markets will offer more opportunities for employees dissatisfied with their current employer. Employers that "overplay their hand" risk increasing turnover costs when labor markets bounce back.

Employers who master employee listening will be best positioned to succeed in that climate. Specifically, they might organize regular leader town halls, set up and provide support to affinity groups, and use an employee experience platform to survey employees on a regular cadence and leverage data to determine general workforce sentiment.

Furthermore, governments across the globe are stepping up their employee protection initiatives, increasing minimum wages, implementing equity legislation such as pay transparency, and fostering support for unionization activities. Employers must be careful to keep up with and comply with new regulations.

[1] Forbes   [2] ManpowerGroup Q4 2024 Employment Outlook Survey   [3] CNBC

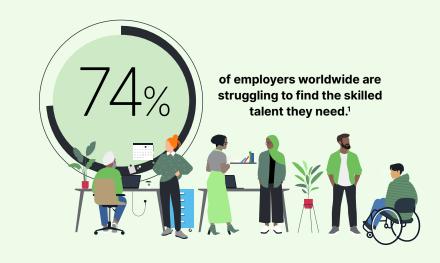# The Constant in an Uncertain Future: Talent Scarcity

All our forecasts this year live in the shadow of global talent scarcity. Despite lingering economic uncertainty, 74% of employers worldwide say they are struggling to find the skilled talent they need.[1] Automation and AI-based technologies will not offer the immediate reprieve many expect as these systems require substantial human oversight to operate effectively. To this point, more than half of employers (55%) believe AI is a job creator and anticipate it will increase their total headcount needs.[2]

74% of employers worldwide are struggling to find the skilled talent they need.[1]

🌍 Workforce Implications

As the workforce ages and population growth slows in advanced economies, a shrinking workforce and talent scarcity will be a constant. However, there is reason for optimism. **More than two-thirds (68%) of the fastest growing jobs on LinkedIn did not exist 20 years ago.[3]** The green transition has already created 4.5 million new jobs in Europe.[4] If these trends continue, the question for employers will shift from "What if we get it wrong?" to "What if we get it right, but we don't have the skilled talent we need?"

The future of work will be innovation as employers must compete to attract and retain increasingly scarce skilled talent. **Explore our annual ManpowerGroup Global Talent Shortage research to learn more about the scale of the challenge across countries and industries.**

[1] ManpowerGroup 2025 Talent Shortage Study   [2] Experis   [3] LinkedIn   [4] European Commission

Global Expertise to Navigate the Future of Work

ManpowerGroup® (NYSE: MAN), the leading global workforce solutions company, helps organizations transform in a fast-changing world of work by sourcing, assessing, developing, and managing the talent that enables them to win. We develop innovative solutions for hundreds of thousands of organizations every year, providing them with skilled talent while finding meaningful, sustainable employment for millions of people across a wide range of industries and skills.

Our expert family of brands — Manpower, Experis, and Talent Solutions – creates substantially more value for candidates and clients across more than 70 countries and territories and has done so for more than 75 years. We are recognized consistently for our diversity — as a best place to work for Women, Inclusion, Equality, and Disability, and in 2024 ManpowerGroup was named one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for the 15th time – all confirming our position as the brand of choice for in-demand talent. To learn more, visit manpowergroup.com.

Forward-Looking Statements

This report contains forward-looking statements, including statements regarding labor demand in certain regions, countries and industries, economic uncertainty and the use and impact of AI in the global labor market. Actual events or results may differ materially from those contained in the forward-looking statements, due to risks, uncertainties and assumptions. These factors include those found in the Company's reports filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), including the information under the heading "Risk Factors" in its Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2024, whose information is incorporated herein by reference. ManpowerGroup disclaims any obligation to update any forward-looking or other statements in this release, except as required by law.