

Insights Into Today's Hiring Landscape

What Workers Want

2023

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Elevating Workers' Voices

No conversation or debate about jobs, employment, workforce development, or economic policy should be complete without addressing the issue of what workers want and need.

Yet the prevailing narrative today comes from the employer's viewpoint – how “no one wants to work anymore,” how workers lack key skills, and how in-person work is the best option for everyone.

To refocus the discussion and give voice to workers, this report draws insights from more than 15 surveys of workers and employers conducted throughout 2022 and 2023.

It highlights what workers want on the job and on the job search, and it showcases systemic problems with our modern system of hiring.

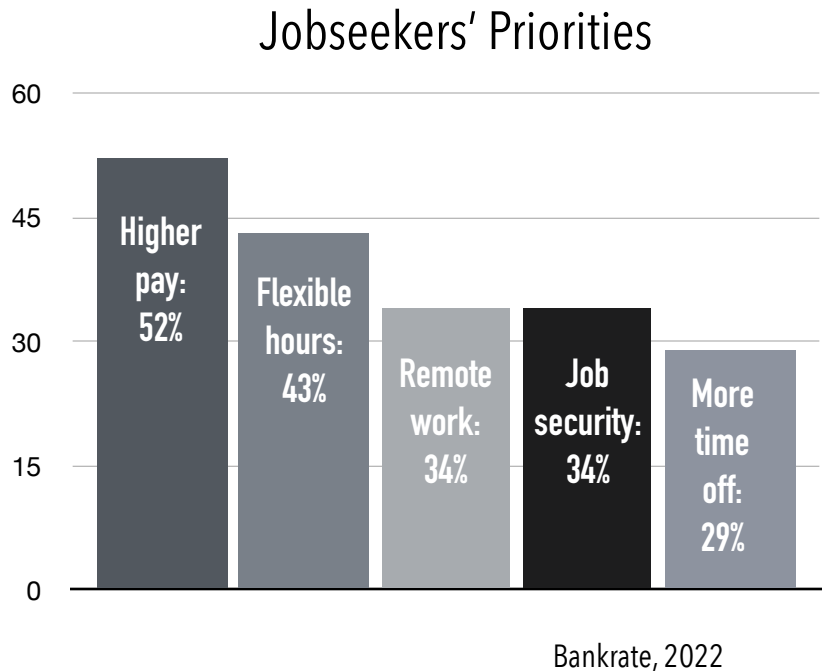
I hope it will be a useful resource for hiring managers, recruiters, and jobseekers alike.

Dan Shortridge
Results Resumes

Top Priorities

PAY ME: As might be expected, better pay and benefits top the lists of wants and needs for workers and jobseekers. They're trading time and labor – both finite resources – for compensation. Notably, a majority of workers (55%) report having felt underpaid compared to similarly experienced coworkers, with Black workers higher at 60%. (Bankrate, 2022)

REMOTE CONTROL: Balance between their work and personal lives typically rank second on worker survey lists (Gallup, 2022; Monster, 2023). This often comes in the form of flexible scheduling or remote work (Randstad, 2023). Despite recent high-profile reversals in employers' return-to-office policies that require workers to be back in person, remote work remains an important part of employment for many workers whose roles allow this option.



Under Pressure

BURNOUT IS REAL: Eight out of 10 Americans can't agree on the right pizza topping, let alone the best sports team or top political candidate. But that's the number of people who say they're at risk of burnout (Josh Bersin, 2022). Addressing this in a substantive way should be a top priority for all employers.

TRANSPARENCY: With anywhere from a fourth to a fifth of American workers covered by some sort of pay transparency law at the start of 2023, this trend is not going anywhere. Workers are on board, with around a full third saying employers who don't include a salary in the job posting are hiding something or will underpay them. And a majority (55%) say they have turned down a job offer immediately after learning the salary. The sunk cost fallacy holds little power any more.

Transparency decisions also have huge ramifications for candidate confidence. Nearly one in three say employers that don't disclose pay cannot be trusted (28%) or are biased (31%). (Adzuna, 2022)

Stress and Choices

81% of workers are at risk of burnout

24% want to work fewer hours

23% work mainly for the paycheck

16% say their company isn't the right fit

15% say their field isn't the right fit

Josh Bersin, 2022

Taking Action

BREAKING WITH BAD: There’s an old saying that workers don’t leave jobs, they leave managers. Actually, a subset of workers say they’re doing both. About 9% of jobseekers report wanting to depart their current situation due to a bad manager or negative work culture (Jobvite, 2022).

THEY’RE ASKING: Workers are trying to work for change from within as a first resort before quitting. One in five say they have asked their managers about going remote or adopting flexible work options in the last year, while one in seven have asked for a raise. One in eight workers reported quitting a job in the previous 12 months. (Bankrate, 2022)

EQUITY INVESTMENTS: But employees overwhelmingly say that their employer’s work on diversity, equity and inclusion is important. Younger workers say by huge margins (72%) that they might turn down a job offer or quit if their manager didn’t support DEI programs. There are broader implications for white male leaders: Elevated numbers (65-67%) would do the same if the company leadership was lacking in gender, racial, or ethnic diversity. (Indeed/Glassdoor, 2022)

DEI Importance

Diversity, equity and inclusion programs are rated as “very” or “somewhat” important by:

- 82%** of Asian American/Pacific Islander workers
- 80%** of parents in the workforce
- 79%** of Black workers
- 77%** of Hispanic workers
- 76%** of women workers

Indeed/Glassdoor, 2022

The Hiring Mess

PERSISTENT PROBLEMS: In spite of major employer investments in technology and recruiting in recent years, around a third of workers consistently report major problems with the hiring process. That’s not just a few disgruntled jobseekers – that’s a trendline that HR leaders need to take notice of. Complaints abound among jobseekers about poorly designed application systems, rude ghosting, and too-lengthy interview processes. Workers also are frustrated about being rejected after interviews for reasons that were plainly evident from their resumes. A majority (56%) say they quit at least one hiring process in the last year. (Cappfinity, 2022)

Why Candidates Quit The Hiring Process

- 26% lack of information about pay / benefits
- 24% ghosted after screening interview
- 22% long interview process
- 22% bad interview questions asked
- 21% lack of respect for candidate’s schedule

Cappfinity, 2022

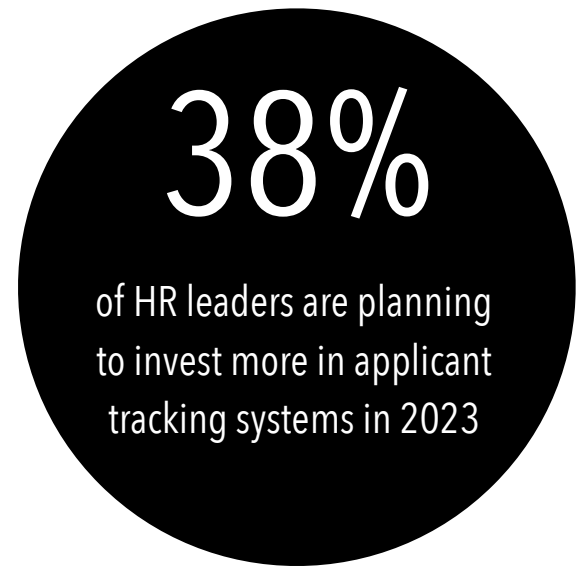
Top Problems With Hiring, According To Workers

- 28% lack of salary information, or large ranges
- 28% overly long interview processes (weeks or months)
- 27% being ghosted
- 26% too many parts to the interview process
- 25% offensive or inappropriate interview questions

Adzuna, 2022

System Slowdown

A KICK IN THE ATS: Applicant tracking systems apply technology to manage large volumes of candidates, saving recruiters time. But poor design has made them intensely frustrating to use and objects of derision for workers. An estimated 92% of jobseekers have abandoned online applications because they're too complicated – comparing poorly with an average e-commerce shopping cart abandonment rate of 70% (SHRM, 2022; Baymard, 2022). The average ATS takes 10 clicks just to start an application, and 51 clicks to complete one (SHRM, 2022).



KarmaCheck, 2022

Solutions: What Candidates Say Keeps Them Interested

37% regular updates on status

18% virtual tours

28% feedback after the interview

16% company videos

24% opportunity to show how they would approach a task

16% completing an assessment or case study project

20% virtual introductions to team members

Cappfinity, 2022

Frontline Workers On The Edge

There is a major disconnect between what frontline workers want and what they actually get. Workers in these roles – often direct-contact, lower-paid, and seen as disposable – overwhelmingly say that they want career advancement opportunities and the ability to grow in their jobs.

Yes, more pay ranks highly, but so does training and supportive management. Job security is desired almost equally alongside job fulfillment – the “dignity of labor,” in the words of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

What workers value is exactly what they say they don’t have. Only 16% of frontline workers report having written guidelines about what is expected of them, an astounding figure. External training options are few and far between; only 12% say they have education or training available outside of the workplace, and just 15% of frontline workers report being able to access tuition reimbursement to work toward a college degree (McKinsey, 2022).

What Frontline Workers Say They Need

79% job growth

78% better pay

77% job

descriptions that mention career growth

75% learning opportunities

75% skills aligned with job

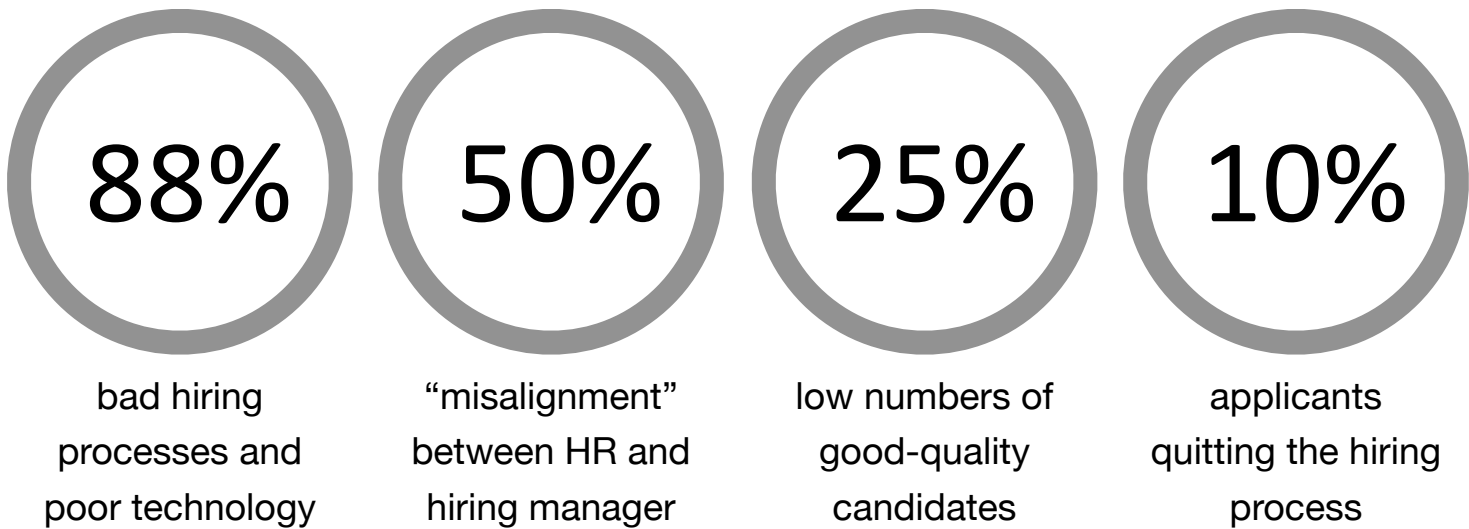
McKinsey, 2022

Hiring Problems and HR Burnout

The HR community acknowledges that these are legitimate issues. A huge majority of human resources leaders (71%) say they missed hiring a key prospect because their process wasn't efficient.

Many HR leaders say they're also experiencing burnout from hiring problems, with nearly a quarter reporting feeling symptoms almost daily. More than half have thought about quitting in the last year (KarmaCheck, 2022).

Roots of HR Burnout



KarmaCheck, 2022

References

For this report, we examined more than 15 surveys of workers and employers from 2022 and early 2023. The reports and studies linked here contributed to the analysis and may be of interest.

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