

THE CULTURE QUESTION

SURVEY ANALYSIS

As part of our research for *The Culture Question: How to Create a Workplace Where People Like to Work*, ACHIEVE Centre for Leadership and Workplace Performance conducted a survey to gain insight into what factors contribute to or are connected to having a great workplace. The survey asked respondents – both managers and employees – to rate 20 statements on a five-point scale with these five options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, to Strongly Agree.

We collected responses by displaying the survey on our website, linking to it on social media platforms, and emailing it to our current clients and contacts.

We did not use a randomized sampling method, so our results cannot be generalized to the broader population within a certain margin of error. We believe that our results are practically significant even though they are not statistically significant.

This means that we believe the results of our survey are applicable for decision making, and we have found that it has produced valuable information and insights into the factors that relate to having a great workplace. The results have clearly shown which variables are most impactful for creating a workplace where people like to work.

While we cannot be certain that our results accurately reflect the opinions of the general population, we can say that they reflect the diverse opinions of 2,401 managers and employees of various ages, working in both small and large organizations across many different sectors.

FULL LIST OF STATEMENTS FROM THE SURVEY:

- 1 My organization is a great place to work.
- 2 Leaders in my organization communicate the organization's purpose in meaningful ways.
- 3 I like the people I work with.
- 4 Leaders in my organization care about healthy interactions between employees.
- 5 The work I do challenges me in a positive way.
- 6 My organization produces high quality work.
- 7 I can rely on my coworkers.
- 8 My direct supervisor cares about me as a person.
- 9 My organization has a meaningful purpose.
- 10 I have a friend at work.
- 11 Leaders in my organization work to resolve conflict quickly.
- 12 The work I do brings me personal satisfaction.
- 13 I am motivated and engaged at work.
- 14 Teamwork is a source of positive energy at my place of work.
- 15 I trust my direct supervisor.
- 16 I have fun at work.
- 17 People in my workplace deal with conflict constructively.
- 18 I am challenged and inspired by others at work.
- 19 Leaders in my organization communicate effectively.
- 20 I have autonomy in how I do my work.

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One of the guiding beliefs of **ACHIEVE Centre for Leadership & Workplace Performance** is that people should be able to like where they work, and we provide training and resources to this end. Therefore, in sending this survey to existing clients and those who follow us on social media – that is, people who may already be interested in workplace improvement – we assume that a greater proportion of respondents identified as having a great workplace than if we had selected participants at random. The practical significance of our survey lies in the relationships between having a great place to work and the other factors we asked about related to workplace culture. The important questions to ask are: *“What factors are connected to having a great workplace?”* and *“How do those factors contribute to having a great workplace or not?”*

For the purposes of this analysis, people who “have a great workplace” are those who responded with Agree or Strongly Agree to, “My organization is a great place to work.” Likewise, those who “do not have a great workplace” are those who responded Disagree or Strongly Disagree to this statement.

We used correlation as a tool to analyze our data. Correlation measures the strength of relationships between variables – in this case, our survey statements. For example, we wanted to analyze the relationship between having a great place to work and reporting that you are cared for as a person by a direct supervisor. Correlation is measured by the correlation coefficient, which is abbreviated in this analysis as “r.” It can range from -1 to 1, and the closer it is to -1 or 1, the stronger the two variables are negatively or positively related. A coefficient of 0 means that there is no relation between the variables. When looking at positive relationships, a coefficient of 0.2 to 0.3 is weak, 0.31 to 0.5 moderate, and 0.51 to 1.0 is strong. A strong positive relationship means that as one variable increases, the other increases. Correlation should be used as a general guideline for establishing relationship strengths between variables, but does not show causation, or which variable causes the other.

This analysis focuses on 10 of the statements in which we found strong or interesting connections to having a great workplace, including weak correlations where we thought we would find strong correlations. When numbers do not add up to 100%, this is due to rounding to the nearest whole number. We explore these in the order that they appeared in the survey.

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MY ORGANIZATION IS A GREAT PLACE TO WORK.

A strong majority of our respondents reported that their organization is a great place to work. While 77% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, only 15% were neutral, and 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. As stated above, it is likely that this result was skewed due to our sampling method, so we have not directly referenced this result in the rest of the analysis. However, we believe that it is significant to look at the relationships between having a great place to work and the other survey statements.

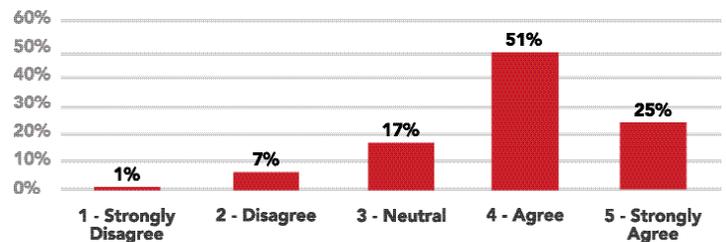
LEADERS IN MY ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATE THE PURPOSE IN MEANINGFUL WAYS.

Our survey data showed that having leaders who communicate their organization's purpose in meaningful ways has a strong positive relationship with having a great workplace ($r=0.69$). This means that workplaces in which leaders communicate meaningfully about the organization's purpose are more likely to be great workplaces.

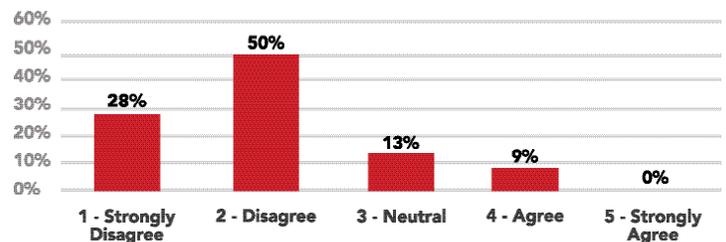
In addition to the strong correlation, this relationship seems quite intuitive. Both statements in our survey that are about communication have a strong relationship with having a great workplace (see "Leaders in my organization communicate effectively"). The statement, "Leaders in my organization communicate the organization's purpose in meaningful ways" specifically connects effective communication with a sense of purpose, both of which have an impact on workplace health. When leaders both communicate effectively and convey a sense of meaning and purpose, workers are more likely to appreciate and enjoy their work experience.

Of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they have a great workplace, 75% agreed or strongly agreed that leaders in their organization communicate the organization's purpose in meaningful ways. Only 7% disagreed or strongly

disagreed. The reverse trend holds true for those who do not have a great workplace. Of those respondents, 78% disagreed or strongly disagreed that leaders in their organization communicate the organization's purpose in meaningful ways, and only 9% agreed.



"Leaders in my organization communicate the organization's purpose in meaningful ways," of those who agree or strongly agree that they have a great workplace.



"Leaders in my organization communicate the organization's purpose in meaningful ways," of those who disagree or strongly disagree that they have a great workplace.

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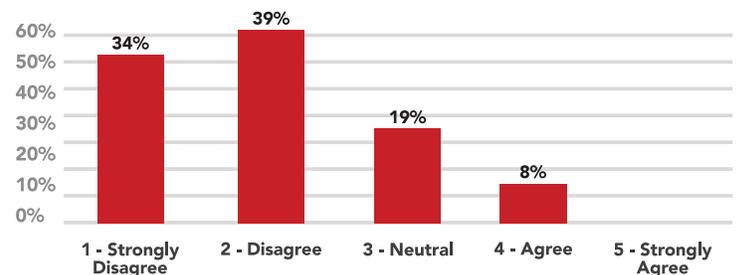
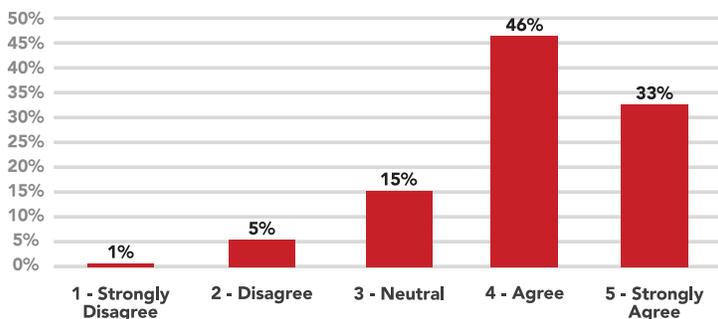
LEADERS IN MY ORGANIZATION CARE ABOUT HEALTHY INTERACTIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES.

Our survey data showed that having leaders who care about healthy employee interactions and having a great workplace have a strong positive relationship ($r=0.68$). The fact that workplace satisfaction increases when healthy interactions are encouraged gives a strong indication that the promotion of healthy relationships is one of the contributing factors to having a great workplace.

This strong correlation makes logical sense. When leadership is involved in creating and participating in a culture of healthy interactions, employees build positive relationships with each other and with leaders, resulting in a sense of well-being in the workplace.

Of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they have a great workplace, 79% agreed or strongly agreed that leaders in their organization care about healthy interactions between employees. Only 6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The reverse trend persists for those who do not have a great workplace. Of those respondents, 73% disagreed or strongly disagreed that leaders in their organization care about healthy interactions between employees, and only 8% agreed or strongly agreed.

For most of the other statements, the differences between the responses of managers and employees were minimal. However, for, "Leaders in my organization care about healthy interactions between employees," the differences were much more apparent. This could be indicative of the differences in how people perceive the intentions of leadership. Of the respondents who do not have a great workplace, 77% of managers and 68% of employees disagreed or strongly disagreed that leaders in their organization care about healthy interactions between employees. More significantly, of those who do not have a great workplace, 41% of managers and 26% of employees strongly disagreed. This could indicate that those with management responsibilities have a more critical view of leadership or that they are more directly affected by senior leadership.



"Leaders in my organization care about healthy interactions between employees," of those who agree or strongly agree that they have a great workplace.

"Leaders in my organization care about healthy interactions between employees," of those who disagree or strongly disagree that they have a great workplace.

THE CULTURE QUESTION

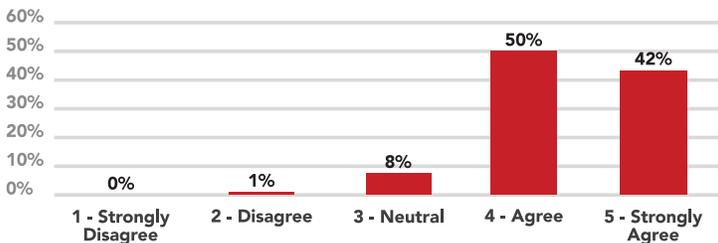
SURVEY ANALYSIS

MY ORGANIZATION PRODUCES HIGH QUALITY WORK.

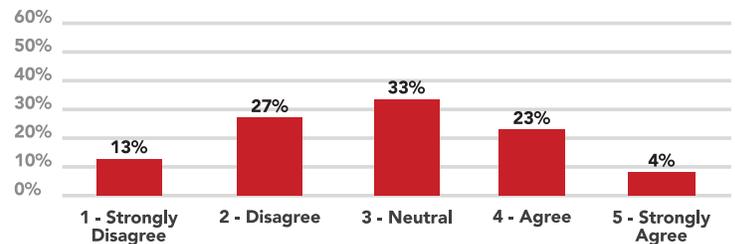
Our data showed a strong positive relationship between working for an organization that produces high-quality work and having a great workplace ($r=0.65$). This means that the people who strongly agreed that their organization produces high-quality work were more likely to strongly agree that they have a great workplace.

Of respondents who have a great workplace, a very strong majority (91%) agreed or strongly agreed that their workplace produces high-quality work. Almost no one (1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. On the other end, of respondents who do not have a great workplace, the distribution was more even. While 40% disagreed or strongly disagreed that their workplace produces high-quality work, 27% agreed or strongly agreed, and 33% were neutral.

There are at least two possible reasons for this. It's possible that people who are happy at work tend to think highly of their work, with the inverse also being true. Or it could mean that when work is high quality, people take pride in it, leading them to think more highly of their workplace.

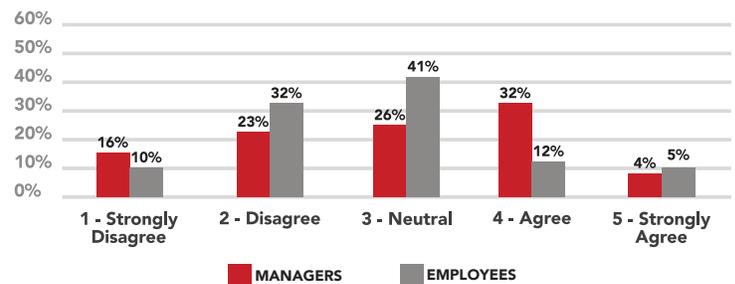


"My organization produces high quality work," of those who agree or strongly agree that they have a great workplace.



"My organization produces high quality work," of those who disagree or strongly disagree that they have a great workplace.

There is a noticeable difference between managers and employees in workplaces that are not great. In those workplaces, 17% of employees agree or strongly agree that their workplace produces high-quality work, but 35% of managers agree or strongly agree. This suggests that managers who do not think they have a great workplace may have a different impression of the quality of their organization's work because of their position. It also suggests that, for these managers, producing high-quality work has less of a connection to whether they think their workplace is a great place to work. We surmise that because managers have more control over the work, they are more likely to judge it positively.



"My organization produces high quality work," of those who disagree or strongly disagree that they have a great workplace.

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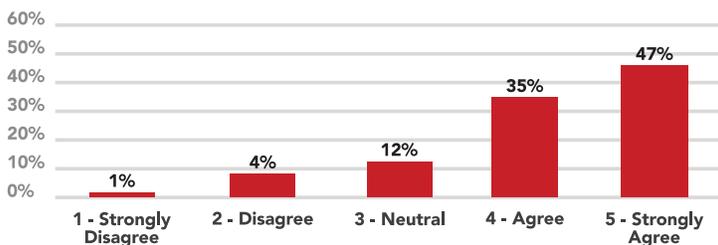
SURVEY ANALYSIS

MY DIRECT SUPERVISOR CARES ABOUT ME AS A PERSON.

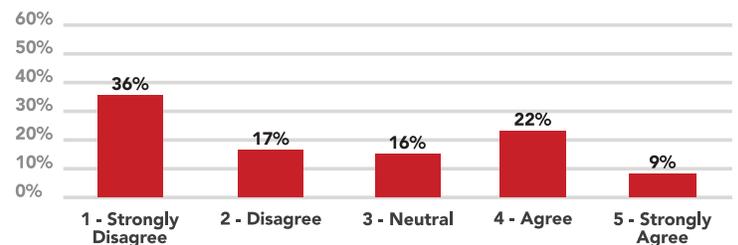
Our survey data showed that there is a positive relationship between having a great workplace and having a caring supervisor ($r=0.54$). This means that workplaces where leaders care about employees are more likely to be great workplaces. The fact that satisfaction with one's workplace increases when leaders are caring indicates that caring leadership is one of the contributing factors to having a great workplace. It is noteworthy that, of any two statements in our survey, "My direct supervisor cares about me as a person" and "I trust my direct supervisor" have the strongest relationship ($r=0.84$). We infer that people are more willing to trust someone if they feel like that person cares about them. Interestingly, neither of these statements has an exceptionally strong relationship with any other statement.

This statement is not as strongly related to having a great workplace as some of the other statements. This indicates that while caring leadership is a factor in creating positive workplaces, it must be coupled with other leadership and workplace culture factors. It is not enough for a leader to care about people without being effective in other areas.

It is common for great workplaces to have leaders who care about employees. Of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they have a great workplace, 82% agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisor cares about them as a person, and only 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Caring leadership is less common, but it is not wholly absent in workplaces that are not great. Of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have a great workplace, 53% disagreed or strongly disagreed that their supervisor cares about them as a person, and 31% agreed or strongly agreed that their leader cares about them.



"My direct supervisor cares about me as a person," of those who agree or strongly agree that they have a great workplace



"My direct supervisor cares about me as a person," of those who disagree or strongly disagree that they have a great workplace.

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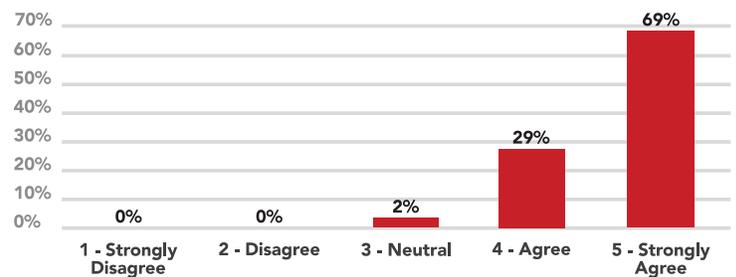
MY ORGANIZATION HAS A MEANINGFUL PURPOSE.

Our data showed a positive relationship between working for an organization with a meaningful purpose and having a great workplace ($r=0.55$). This means people are more likely to believe that they have a great workplace when they also believe that their workplace has a meaningful purpose.

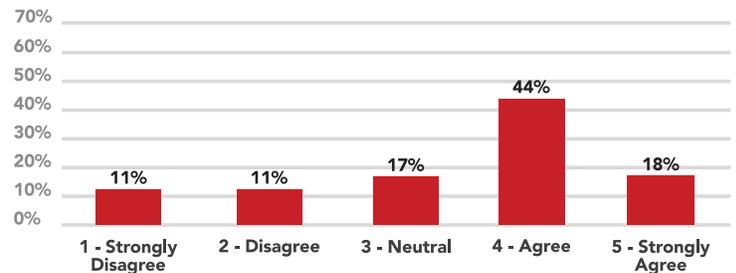
By comparison, the statement, "Leaders in my organization communicate the organization's purpose in meaningful ways" has a much stronger relationship with having a great workplace ($r=0.69$). This suggests that communicating about an organization's purpose in meaningful ways is more impactful than actually having a meaningful purpose. In fact, according to our data, having leaders who communicate organizational purpose in meaningful ways and working at an organization with a meaningful purpose only have a moderate relationship ($r=0.48$).

This means that neither of these is a great indicator of the other. We believe this means that leaders are able to inspire workers by speaking meaningfully about their organization even if that organization does not necessarily have a meaningful purpose. The important distinction is that one of the statements is about meaningful communication and the other is about meaningful organizational purpose.

Of respondents who have a great workplace, virtually everyone (98%) agreed or strongly agreed that their workplace has a meaningful purpose. Almost no one disagreed or strongly disagreed. On the other end, of respondents who do not have a great workplace, 22% disagreed or strongly disagreed that their workplace has a meaningful purpose, while 62% agreed or strongly agreed.



"My organization has a meaningful purpose," of those who agree or strongly agree that they have a great workplace.



"My organization has a meaningful purpose," of those who disagree or strongly disagree that they have a great workplace.

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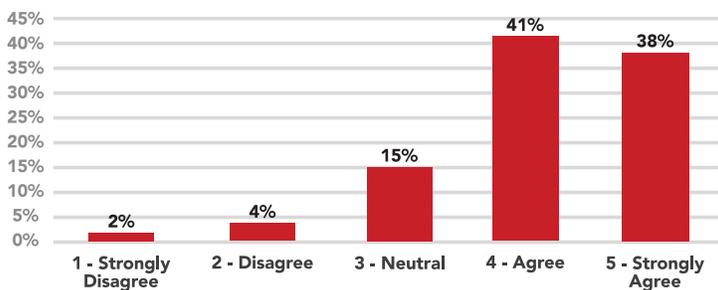
I HAVE A FRIEND AT WORK.

The correlation between having a great workplace and having a friend at work is fairly weak ($r=0.24$), which suggests that there is not a significant link between them. Of all the statements in the survey, having a friend has the lowest correlation with having a great workplace by a significant margin. This does not mean that meaningful relationships are not significant in creating great workplaces. We believe meaningful relationships extend beyond friendships.

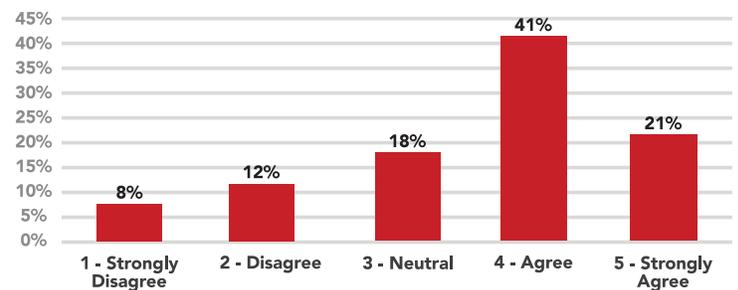
The responses to this statement indicate that having a friend at work is not a great indicator of whether or not an individual thinks they have a great workplace. In both great and not great workplaces, people will often find a friend with whom they can relate. Negative workplaces inherently act as a source of bonding – employees can confide in each other about how they really feel about their workplace.

For those who agreed that they have a great workplace, 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have a friend at work, and only 6% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Among those who disagreed that they have a great workplace, the results are more mixed. However, a majority (62%) of those who do not have a great workplace have a friend at work, and 20% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have a friend at work.



"I have a friend at work," of those who agree or strongly agree that they have a great workplace.



"I have a friend at work," of those who disagree or strongly disagree that they have a great workplace.

THE CULTURE QUESTION

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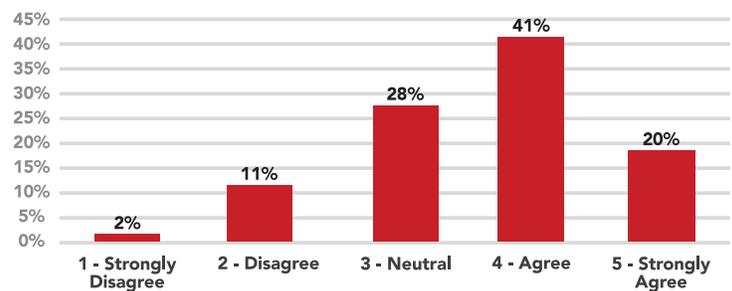
LEADERS IN MY ORGANIZATION WORK TO RESOLVE CONFLICT QUICKLY.

Our data showed that having leaders who resolve conflict quickly has a strong relationship with having a great workplace ($r=0.61$). By comparison, the statement, "People in my workplace deal with conflict constructively" had a noticeably weaker correlation with having a great workplace ($r=0.54$). This indicates that leaders have a more substantial role than employees when it comes to conflict resolution and its relationship to creating a great workplace. Interestingly, "People in my workplace deal with conflict constructively" and "Leaders in my organization work to resolve conflict quickly" had one of the strongest correlations in our survey results ($r=0.70$). This emphasizes that when it comes to conflict, leaders should lead by example. In workplaces where leaders resolve conflict quickly, others are far more likely to resolve conflict constructively as well.

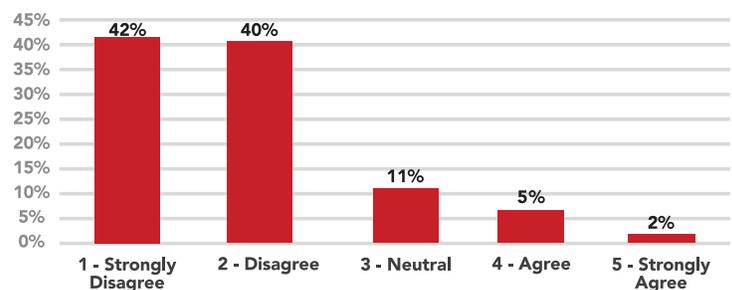
Respondents were more neutral to this statement than some of the other statements. Of those who reported having a great workplace, 61% agreed or strongly agreed that leaders in their organization resolve conflict quickly, 26% were neutral, and 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The response was stronger for those who did not agree that they have a great workplace. A large majority (82%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that leaders in their organization resolve conflict quickly, 11% were neutral, and 7% agreed or strongly agreed. This shows that workplaces that are not great are more likely to lack leadership that works to resolve conflict quickly than great workplaces are to have leaders who are noticed for working to resolve conflict quickly.

It may seem surprising that more people in great workplaces chose "Neutral" as a response to whether their leaders deal with conflict quickly. One explanation could be that great workplaces have a lower incidence of negative conflict in general, and when there is conflict, it is dealt with privately and quickly. If conflict is not regularly apparent, it is difficult for constructive conflict resolution to be apparent as well. However, in a workplace where conflict is more commonly perceived, it is easy to see when conflict is dealt with and when it is not. People notice conflict most when it is not handled well. In environments where it is handled very well, it may not be noticed at all.



"Leaders in my organization work to resolve conflict quickly," of those who agree or strongly agree that they have a great workplace



"Leaders in my organization work to resolve conflict quickly," of those who disagree or strongly disagree that they have a great workplace.

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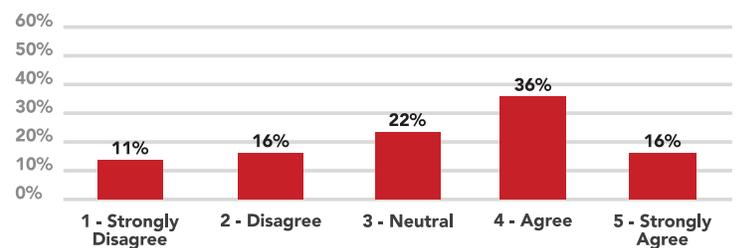
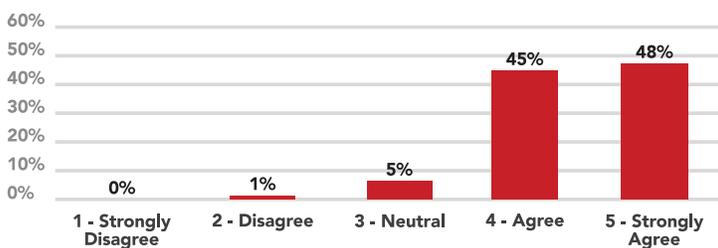
THE WORK I DO BRINGS ME PERSONAL SATISFACTION.

Our data showed that doing work that brings personal satisfaction has a moderate positive relationship with having a great workplace ($r=0.48$). This suggests that having work that brings personal satisfaction is a less significant factor in connection with having a great workplace.

The correlation is only moderate likely because many people find personal satisfaction in their work even if they do not have a great workplace. Of those who reported having a great workplace, 93% agreed or strongly agreed that their work brings them personal satisfaction. Only 1% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Just over half (52%) of those who do not have a great workplace reported that their work brings them personal satisfaction. For a quarter (26%), their work does not. A similar portion (22%) is neutral about their work bringing them personal satisfaction.

It is interesting that finding personal satisfaction does not have a strong connection to having a great workplace. Of all our survey statements, this has the second weakest correlation with having a great workplace, stronger only than, "I have a friend at work." It seems that people can find personal satisfaction regardless of whether they have a great workplace. Personal satisfaction is clearly more common in great workplaces, but the majority of our survey respondents who do not have a great workplace still find personal satisfaction in their work.

Just as people can find friends at work even if they do not have a great workplace, they can also find satisfaction in their work. This statement has to do with a personal connection to specific work, so workers may be able to direct their work in a way that brings them satisfaction even in a workplace that they do not think is great.



"The work I do brings me personal satisfaction," of those who agree or strongly agree that they have a great workplace.

"The work I do brings me personal satisfaction," of those who disagree or strongly disagree that they have a great workplace

THE CULTURE QUESTION

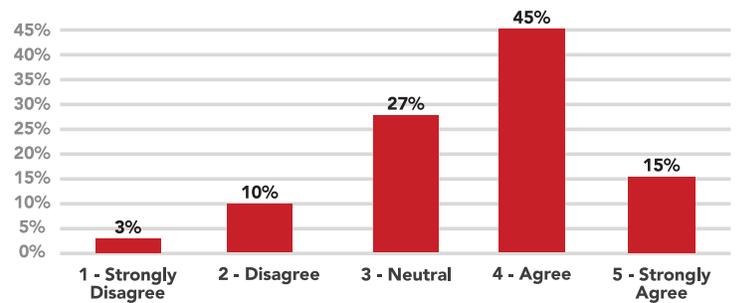
SURVEY ANALYSIS

LEADERS IN MY ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

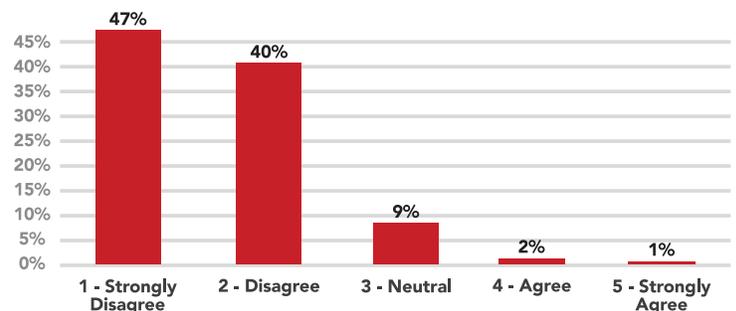
This statement has a strong relationship with having a great workplace ($r=0.65$). Effective communication from leadership contributes more to a great work environment than two of the five other statements related to leaders: "My direct supervisor cares about me as a person" ($r=0.54$) and "I trust my direct supervisor" ($r=0.55$). One explanation for this may be that the two latter statements relate to direct supervisors, but the first one relates to leaders in general. If leaders at all levels communicate effectively, this may have more of an impact on having a great workplace than one's direct supervisor being caring or trustworthy. All the statements that deal with leaders in general have higher correlations with having a great workplace than the two questions that relate only to direct supervisors.

Over half (60%) of respondents who have a great workplace also agreed or strongly agreed that their leaders communicate effectively, and 27% were neutral. However, the much larger majority (87%) of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have a great workplace disagreed or strongly disagreed that their leaders communicate effectively.

One possible explanation for this is that people who believe that they have a great workplace do not notice the effect that communication has on their workplace. The benefit may be normalized in a workplace's culture, causing employees to not realize the difference it makes. In a negative workplace, it is much easier to see that effective communication is missing. Similar to effective conflict resolution, effective communication is noticed more in its absence than its presence.



"Leaders in my organization communicate effectively," of those who agree or strongly agree that they have a great workplace.



"Leaders in my organization communicate effectively," of those who disagree or strongly disagree that they have a great workplace.

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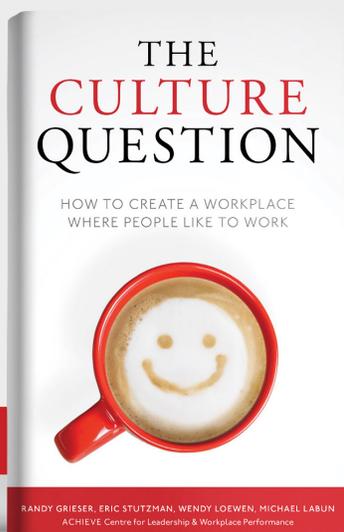
CONCLUSION

These findings show us where we should be focusing our efforts as we strive to create workplaces where people like to work. The data from our survey make two trends apparent to us.

First, of the five statements that have the strongest correlation with having a great workplace, four of them have to do with the conduct of leaders. Specifically, leaders have significant influence on the quality of a workplace by communicating the organization's purpose in meaningful ways, caring about healthy interactions between employees, communicating effectively, and working to resolve conflict quickly.

Second, some factors are more significant in their absence than in their presence. For example, when effective conflict resolution and communication are present in a workplace, it is not always easy to notice their impacts. However, the absence of these factors has a strong negative influence on a workplace, as shown in the correlation data of our survey. This means that leaders and employees must be mindful to practice effective communication and conflict resolution, even though their efforts may not be recognized.

Although our survey did not measure the personal efforts of non-leadership employees in creating great workplaces, we believe that the actions of all staff matter. As our research indicates, leaders bear a larger share of the responsibility for building the conditions for an organization to thrive, given their position of power. However, great workplaces are co-created by everyone. All organizations are the sum of their parts – the individual actions, attitudes, and efforts of each person.



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By Authors:

Randy Grieser, Eric Stutzman,
Wendy Loewen, Michael Labun