

THE FUTURE OF THE BEST PLACE TO WORK



Entromy



BRIMSTONE

ABOUT THE STUDY

Over the past eighteen months, people have been [re-evaluating their priorities and reassessing their relationship with their jobs](#). [Freedom and personal control now feel more vital](#), gaining mindshare that might previously have gone toward money, perks, or titles.

We wanted to learn about the expectations people have for organizations and for the work environment and understand what actions leaders can take to make their organization a “great place to work.”

The biggest takeaways from the survey are that flexibility is top of mind and that Managers and Senior Executives have differing perceptions with respect to the organization and to actions being taken to make the organization a great place to work.

Respondents identified flexibility as a challenge and an opportunity. To differentiate the organization, engage employees, and to attract and retain talent, leaders need to create and sustain new work structures that enable flexibility.

The data highlighted a gap between the perceptions of Senior Executives and those in other roles. For example, 82% of Senior Executives responded that their organization is taking the right actions to make their organization a great place to work compared to 42% of Managers. There is a need to create and adapt to new work structures and for focus to be placed on organizational alignment. Specifically, Senior Executives need to take steps to understand the perspectives of their teams and their organization, and align on goals, objectives, and on the culture of the organization. Together, these actions will help leaders create and sustain a great place to work and differentiate their organization so they can attract and retain talent.

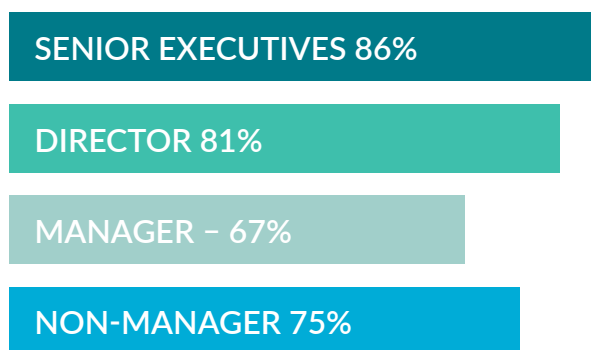
The survey included 127 respondents. The majority of respondents (73%) were from the United States. Of those who chose to identify their role, 51% identified as Senior Executive, 17% as Director, 12% as Manager, and 19% identified as non-Manager.

Of the respondents who identified where they are working, 24% reported they are in the office, 35% reported they are fully remote, and 41% reported their company had a hybrid work structure.

A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

While the majority (79%) of respondents reported that their company “is a great place to work,” Senior Executives were more likely to agree or strongly agree (85%) with this statement than Managers (67%).

My company is a great place to work



Notable differences in perceptions were also seen in response to whether the company is “taking the right actions to make it a great place to work.” 82% of Senior Executives agreed or strongly agreed with this statement as compared to 42% of Managers.

Respondents identified values, culture, and flexibility as the top qualities that make a company a great place to work.

When asked “what could your company do to make it a better place to work?,” the top response was increased flexibility” followed by continued opportunities for remote work, putting guidelines in place to reduce the feeling of being “always on,” and increased opportunities for professional development.

CULTURE

My company demonstrates a commitment to employee engagement and empowerment

SENIOR EXECUTIVES 67%

MANAGERS 42%

There are three elements to culture: behaviors, systems, and practices, all guided by an overarching set of values. In a great culture, the three elements are aligned, and they line up with the organization's values. When there are gaps, there is a lack of organizational alignment, and, often, this results in people leaving the organization.

The survey found that Senior Executives are more likely than managers to believe that their company's culture is aligned to their company's objectives.

Similarly, there was a 25% gap between the perspective of Senior Executives and Managers with respect to whether the company demonstrates a commitment to employee engagement and empowerment.

Respondents identified "lip service on work-life balance," "top-down attitudes/actions," and "maintaining the company culture," as the biggest challenges companies face with respect to culture.

Together, the gaps in perception show that organizations need to bring together Managers and Senior Executives with the goal of aligning the organization, and making a commitment to employee engagement and empowerment.

TALENT

There is work to be done with respect to attracting and retaining talent.

Less than half (45%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that their company is taking the right actions to attract talent.

My company is taking the right actions to attract talent



Role	Percentage
Senior Executives	59%
Director	28%
Manager	42%
Non-Manager	50%

SENIOR EXECUTIVES 59%

DIRECTOR 28%

MANAGER - 42%

NON-MANAGER 50%

Senior Executives were more likely to agree or strongly agree than those in other roles. There is a similar difference of perspective when looking at talent retention.

66% of Senior Executives their company is not only taking the right steps to retain talent, but they are also doing a good job of retaining talent. This is in contrast to 53% of Directors, 43% of Managers, and 44% of non-Managers.

When asked to identify the actions companies could take to retain talent, top responses were: culture, flexibility, equity, and professional development opportunities.

Flexibility

Flexibility is top of mind for people. It was identified as biggest challenge for organizations, as well as what companies need to put in place/offer to attract and retain talent.

70% of respondents shared that they stay with their organization because of flexibility. 64% of respondents indicated that introducing new work structures that allowed for more flexibility would enable the organization to attract talent.

32% of respondents expressed that they were "tired of lip service" from Senior Executives with respect to work-life balance.

To attract and retain top talent, companies need to place focus on flexibility.

TALENT

Professional Development and Opportunities for Growth

Our survey found that people are looking for opportunities for professional growth and to advance their careers. Respondents shared that they want their organization to provide access to professional, invest in professional development, and support career development and growth.

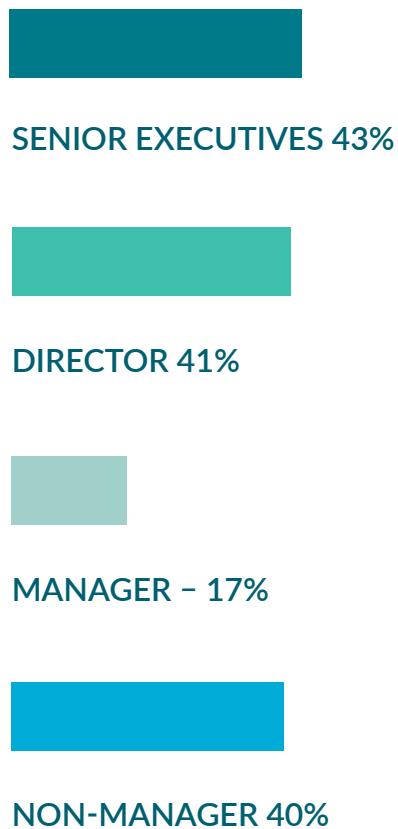
What's more, respondents identified that lack of opportunities for professional development is a reason why they are considering leaving their organization.

Together this data shows that organizations need to value professional development, invest in it, and give employees the opportunity take the time necessary for professional development opportunities. Organizations that recognize the value employees place on professional development and career growth will be able to differentiate themselves and thereby attract and retain talent – and drive the business.

WORK STRUCTURES

Only 39% of respondents feel their company is implementing new work structures that will benefit their organization, and 43% of respondents feel their company is implementing new work structures that will benefit employees.

My organization is implementing new work structures that will benefit my organization



The majority of respondents do not feel their company is implementing new work structures that will benefit their organization

WORK STRUCTURES

Here again, we see a difference in perception; there is a 26% gap between the response of Senior Executives and Managers on new work structures to benefit the organization and a 13% gap between Senior Executives and Managers for new work structures to benefit employees.

Looking at engagement strategy, our survey found that respondents were more likely to agree or strongly agree that their company has a good engagement strategy in place if the work structure in place was hybrid (67%) or remote (57%), than if the organization was employing an in-person structure (50%).

When asked, "What do "great companies" have with respect to work structures?," the top response was "flexible working arrangements."

Similarly, when asked "What new processes, support structures or actions would you like to see your company implement?," the top response was "flexibility."

Respondents shared the following recommendations for improving work structures:

- Invest in improved technology
- Ensure that there is a clear strategy that connects everyone's work to the goals of the organization
- Create explicit guidelines to mitigate the feeling of needing to be "always on" not always on
- Working remotely has enabled collaboration and we have proven to be successful, returning to the office will reinforce silos and isolation unless this is explicitly addressed through new work structures
- If there are Remote days - let us be efficient as we have proven we can be at home (both for the company and in our lives). Don't force us into an office to work in isolation

THE WAY FORWARD

At the start of the pandemic, Eric J. McNulty, associate director of the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative at Harvard, and Leonard Marcus, founding co-director of the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative at Harvard, [wrote](#), “The coronavirus crisis, like every crisis, is unfolding over an arc of time with a beginning, middle, and end. It is useful to think what distinguishes what was, is, and will be. There was a past of relative stability and predictability. There now is chaos and disruption. There will be ... a different state.” While we remain along the arc of the crisis, we are at a point where we can consider and even define what “will be.” The challenge for leaders is deciding what makes the most sense for their organization given our new environment, our different state – one shaped by our experiences and learnings of the past eighteen months.

While there may not be a “right” answer, the mindset of what can be instead of trying to replicate what was in place pre-pandemic provides strategic direction.

The findings of this survey reflect what has been seen in a growing body of research – a need to place focus on organizational alignment and the role of flexibility in talent retention and acquisition. Further, to move the organization forward, leaders need to listen to their organization, and place focus on organizational culture, professional development, and professional advancement.

ABOUT US

Brimstone is a management consulting firm that empowers our global clients to achieve breakthrough financial performance by driving large-scale organizational transformation. Our approach delivers bottom line results by enabling companies to attain strategic alignment, develop leaders at all levels, and build a culture of high performance.

brimstoneconsulting.com

Entromy is a next generation assessment platform that enables executives to rapidly understand organizational network dynamics through collaborative surveys delivering nuanced insights. Our technology significantly reduces the time and resource requirements to complete comprehensive organizational assessments, and provides more in-depth insights than traditional survey platforms.

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