What is the Future of Work?

How do we create resilient, productive organisations and workplaces in a fast-evolving landscape?

Initial findings from Trickle's snapshot surveys on the Future of Work

What would a perfect workplace look like for you? Are you worried or excited about the impact of AI on your job? Do you think remote working enables employees to thrive or work less productively?

Here at Trickle, to learn more about what today's leaders and employees think about the fast-moving landscape of work, we're asking one simple question at events we attend throughout 2024: What is the Future of Work?

We're really excited to share our initial findings with you. They provide a fascinating insight into the opportunities and challenges for organisations today - and pose some very real questions that we need to address, if we want to create resilient, productive organisations ready for the future.

We've included a set of checklists at the back of this paper, to help open up the conversations in your organisations. Make sure you're also signed up to receive your invites to our free webinars. They're the perfect opportunity to explore the topics in more detail and put your questions direct to industry experts.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our findings so far. We hope you find this snapshot report and checklists useful.

Paul

Paul Reid
Founder & CEO
Trickle

Introduction

The landscape of work is changing rapidly.

From seismic leaps in artificial intelligence to the growing expectation for organisations to balance work demands with employees' wider life commitments, our whole concept of work is transforming.

But what are the real expectations for work both today and in the future? And how can we create resilient workplaces and workforces equipped for long-term success?

To learn more about what today's leaders and employees think, Trickle is asking a seemingly simple question throughout 2024: What is the Future of Work?

This paper provides a summary of our early findings, gathered from responses to snapshot surveys at two events: Hr Network Future Leaders Conference & Exhibition 2024 and CIPD Scotland Annual Conference 2024.

We discovered three dominant topics...

1

The impact and potential of AI and technological advances.

2

The need to create inclusive, psychologically safe work environments where employees have a clear voice and can thrive.

3

The effects of changing work patterns, including flexible, hybrid and remote working.

We've also included a set of checklists at the back of the report, laying out questions for each topic, to help open up these conversations in your organisation.

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01
Technological Developments & AI

The number one topic highlighted by respondents was the rapid developments in technology, including AI, with 40% of respondents raising points on this theme.

Technological advances offer organisations huge potential. We can now hear from a much wider spectrum of voices through virtual meetings, for example, or delegate mundane tasks to AI, freeing up time and resource to focus on communication, innovation and creativity.

However, the rapid speed of technological change also throws up challenges, from evolving job roles to cybersecurity concerns to skills shortages/the need to upskill staff.

Our respondents touched on all these issues. One really strong message shone through: the desire to keep people at the heart of an organisation, which was raised in 59% of the points on this topic. As one respondent said, "Work should be supported by AI but driven by a human-centric, skills-based workforce."

Underpinning this message was a desire for leadership to be explicit about how technology will enable the organisation to support the workforce and achieve meaningful goals. In the words of another respondent, organisations need to: "Employ strong ethical leadership to embrace technological advancements and promote employee voice."

"Balance human and technological potential, supporting people to thrive and achieve their results."
Attendee at CIPD Scotland event, March 2024

The key themes that emerged were:

Balancing human and technological potential, using AI and other technologies as tools that support employees to thrive and achieve results.

Opportunities for improving operational efficiency, using technology to help workplaces to be agile, flexible and to promote employee voice.

Need for training & skills development, enabling staff to make the most of emerging technologies and organisations to promote dynamic change, leading to enhanced creativity and collaboration.

Desire for strong ethical leadership, to both embrace technological advancements and promote employee voice and development.

Did you know...

60% of leaders say their company does not have a vision or plan to implement AI in the workplace – despite agreeing it's critical to remain competitive.*

Try this

Spell out your values & goals - on walls, in documents, at meetings. Link each technological change to these values & goals, so every employee know why it matters.

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02
Inclusive & Psychologically Safe Work Environments

The second most talked-about theme that emerged was the desire to create inclusive, psychologically safe work environments where employees can flourish – a topic touched on in more than a third (37%) of responses.

This type of environment is seen as vital not simply for individual wellbeing but also to drive collaboration and creativity – creating a space where diverse opinions are welcomed and real connections made.

In fact, our respondents made the direct link between an inclusive, positive work environment and their ability to thrive and be productive. As one respondent put it, we need to: "Create a workplace where employees can bring their best selves and feel safe."

Although there was a few variations in nuance across the responses, the overall sentiment was consistent and clear: the desire to recognise employees as people, with a clear voice in the workplace and a life that encompasses more than simply work. As one respondent put it, we need to work towards: "Full inclusivity where everyone is celebrated for who they are."

**"Value people for their brilliance and organisations for their synergy, promoting autonomy, trust, and freedom to develop."
Attendee at HR Network event, May 2024**

The key themes that emerged were:

Respect and kindness at all levels, enabling staff to develop real connections and have direct conversations where needed.

Meaningful and ethical values, reflected in both the direction of the organisation and the approach to staff, from leadership down.

Training & skills development, enabling organisations to embrace change and giving employees confidence in their capabilities.
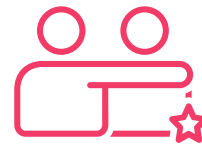
Staff to feel valued, with employees given a voice in the workplace and a focus on their wellbeing as individuals, not simply resources.

Did you know...

Trickle's employee voice platform offers an anonymous feedback function? Providing this always-on, safe feedback channel encourages employees to put forward ideas or raise issues at any time.

Try this

Highlight the positive: when a staff member demonstrates values such as kindness or respect, shout it out – at team meetings, in organisation communications or via Trickle's Shout About feature.

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03
Changing Work Patterns & Places

The third key topic raised, reflected in 28% of responses, was the evolution of working patterns and locations.

Accelerated by Covid, hybrid and fully remote positions are now accepted as the norm, virtual meetings are routinely scheduled and the traditional 9-5 has been replaced by a plethora of different work patterns.

These developments can bring huge benefits for organisations and individuals, with employees able to more effectively balance work demands with their wider life commitments and organisations having access to a flexible and productive workforce. It can also open up new opportunities for career development, bringing in talented employees to roles previously closed to those unable to fit into a traditional work pattern or workplace. As one respondent commented: "Work should integrate both personal and professional life."

At the same time, this new model of work can bring significant challenges. With fewer opportunities to meet in real life, staff can feel isolated and be at greater risk of experiencing mental health issues, managers may struggle to engage with teams they rarely meet and there can be a reduction in valuable organic collaborations and communications within and between teams.

In order for organisations to reap real benefits from these changing work patterns, it's therefore important to view them as part of a wider picture of needs and opportunities. As one respondent commented, organisations should: "Focus on flexibility, wellbeing, learning and development as profit priorities."

"Allow people to work how and where best fits their lifestyle, helping them flourish in meaningful organisations."
Attendee at CIPD Scotland event, March 2024

The key themes that emerged were:

Flexible working patterns, such as a four-day working week, hours that fit around caring responsibilities and/or the ability to work from home.

Balancing work and professional life, promoting a flexible work environment where individuals can thrive and be productive.

Promoting trust and recognition, with training and support to enable all employees to deliver effectively, regardless of their work location or hours.

Focus on wellbeing and development, with positive communication and skills development regardless of work location or hours.

Did you know...

Trickle's How Was Your Day? feature lets employees tap an emoji to show how they're feeling. It's a simple and effective way to take the pulse of your organisation – wherever they're based.

Try this

Set up small 'buddy' groups to help remote workers build connections. This could be a simple 10 minutes each week to ask: what went well last week / what didn't / what's happening this week?

Are you ready for the future of work?

Key questions to open up conversations in your organisation

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Is your organisation responding effectively to new and emerging technologies?

Points to consider:

Do you...	Yes	No	Comments & Actions
Routinely identify new technologies that could have an impact on your business and / or your work model?			
Have clear organisational goals and values that equip you to productively integrate relevant technologies into your workplace?			
Systematically identify opportunities to use AI and other technologies to improve operational efficiency and promote employee voice?			
Use technologies to promote positive communications, collaborations and feedback from employees?			
Have a workforce skills strategy that sets out how you will upskill your staff and evolve roles to respond to AI and changing technologies?			
Other Ideas & Actions:			

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Are you creating an inclusive work environment, where your employees feel psychologically safe and are able to thrive?

Points to consider:

Do you…	Yes	No	Comments & Actions
Have clear organisational values that help your staff understand how their work contributes to your organisational direction and goals?			
Embed values such as kindness and respect at every level of your workforce?			
Ensure leaders set the tone, from saying 'Thank you' to taking regular breaks?			
Have safe channels where employees can share concerns and ideas anonymously?			
Systematically gather and act on feedback from staff at all levels of your organisation?			
Other Ideas & Actions:			

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Do you have effective work patterns that ensure your teams work productively while recognising employees as individuals and balancing work with their other life commitments?

Points to consider:

Do you…	Yes	No	Comments & Actions
Routinely ask your team(s) what work pattern / set-up would help them thrive and be productive?			
Have clear policies and procedures around flexible working arrangements?			
Empower staff to work remotely, either on an ad hoc or formal basis?			
Systematically provide training & support to managers who have team members that work remotely?			
Implement clear procedures, to ensure all team members are linked in to communications and feel connected, regardless of their working arrangements?			
Offer any other forms of support to enable your workforce to combine work productivity with other life commitments?			
Other Ideas & Actions:			

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TAKE THE NEXT STEP TO TRANSFORM YOUR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Here at Trickle, we want to help create workplaces where all staff can speak up about their ideas and issues – allowing innovation and productivity to flourish.

If you'd like free, tailored advice on how to take your employee engagement to the next level, book your 30-minute employee engagement healthcheck.

Contact details

hello@trickle.works

www.trickle.works

Who are Trickle?

We are an employee voice platform that transforms your employees' ideas into action, enabling meaningful change.

Trickle empowers your team to raise ideas, offer feedback, praise peers, and more in just one click. With optional anonymity, it promotes a safe, open environment for impactful communication and collaboration.

Our customers use Trickle for all sorts of reasons, from transforming employee engagement to improving productivity. Check out the diagram below to see how. Curious to learn more? Give us a shout — we'd love to show you what Trickle can do for your team!

Strategic Goals of Top-Performing Organisations

Tackle risk more transparently

Enable early intervention on emerging issues

Boost performance with continuous improvement

Conduct operations more ethically

Employees participate using Trickle to...

Suggest an Improvement

Vote in a MoodSense

Praise a Teamate

Share Wins & Best Practice

Optimise their Wellbeing

Request 1-2-1 Support

Boost employee engagement, morale and retention

Be more inclusive in developing the organisation

Provide a safe space to speak up when things go wrong

Promote wellbeing & psychological safety