



Ageless Talent

How The HR Services Industry Empowers Every Generation

2025

Social Impact Report



WORLD
EMPLOYMENT
CONFEDERATION
The Voice of Labour Market Enablers



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About The World Employment Confederation

The World Employment Confederation serves as the voice of the HR services industry at the global level, representing both national federations and workforce solutions companies worldwide.

Our diverse membership encompasses a broad spectrum of HR services, including agency work, direct recruitment, career management, Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO), and Managed Service Provider (MSP) solutions.

Our mission revolves around securing recognition for the pivotal role played by the HR services industry in fostering well-functioning labour markets and advocating on behalf of our members to enable appropriate regulation. By fostering an environment conducive to sustainable growth of the HR services sector, our ultimate goal is to deliver better labour market outcomes for all.

By bridging the supply and demand gaps in labour markets, creating pathways to employment, enabling agile organisations, balancing flexibility with protection and deploying digital solutions responsibly, the HR services industry plays a central role in addressing labour market challenges and delivering people-centric solutions.



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Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Lightcast and Staffing Industry Analysts (SIA) for their invaluable contributions to this report. Their extensive research, data, and knowledge have complemented and greatly enriched our analysis.

Both SIA and Lightcast have been long-standing and engaged partners of the World Employment Confederation, providing broader labour market analytics and insights about the staffing industry that further empower us and our members in our advocacy work. We acknowledge and appreciate their commitment to raising awareness about the positive role of HR services and their openness in sharing their work.



SIA

SIA is a global research and advisory firm focused on staffing and workforce solutions. Its research covers all categories of employed and non-employed work, including temporary staffing, independent contracting, and contingent labour.

SIA provides independent analysis of the workforce solutions ecosystem—spanning staffing firms, managed service providers, recruitment process outsourcers, compliance firms, and talent acquisition technologies such as vendor management systems, online staffing platforms, and crowdsourcing. It also offers training and accreditation through its Certified Contingent Workforce Professional (CCWP) program.

Known for its award-winning content, data, tools, publications, and executive events, SIA helps suppliers and buyers make informed decisions that improve results and reduce risk. Founded in 1989 by staffing pioneer Peter Yessne, SIA is a brand of Crain Communications and is headquartered in Mountain View, California, with offices in London.

Learn more: www.staffingindustry.com



Lightcast

Lightcast is the global leader in labour market intelligence, empowering smarter decisions for businesses, education institutions, and governments worldwide. With the world's most comprehensive database—spanning over 2.5 billion job postings, 400 million career profiles, and 100+ government sources—Lightcast delivers unparalleled insight into skills, jobs, companies, professional profiles, and workforce trends across 150+ countries. Their proprietary taxonomies, advanced AI, and expert guidance transform complex data into clear, actionable intelligence.

Lightcast market research, analytical software, and data expertise is used by companies across the globe to better understand their own workforce and identify skilled and diverse talent for future growth. The company also guides colleges and universities in connecting their programmes to the needs of the local labour market and advises government entities in creating more effective programs for economic prosperity.

Lightcast has offices in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, New Zealand, and India.

Learn more: www.lightcast.io



Executive Summary

WEC's Social Impact Report 2025, Ageless Talent: How the HR Services Industry Empowers Every Generation, explores how the world of work is reshaped by the emergence of a multigenerational workforce and how the HR services industry is responding with inclusive, flexible, and future-ready solutions.

In labour markets marked by demographic shifts, rapid technological change, and economic uncertainty, organisations face growing challenges in attracting, retaining, and supporting talent across all age groups. This report diagnoses the key pressures affecting workforce dynamics—from the Demographic Drift and Skills Shortfall to Digital Disruption and the Elusive Economy—and highlights the urgent need for new workforce management strategies.

The HR services industry is a strategic partner. Through flexible workforce solutions, personalised career support, and innovative partnerships, it is helping employers navigate complexity while empowering people – whether they are just entering the labour market, have reached mid-career, or are seeking new opportunities later in life. Drawing on global data, expert insights, and real-life stories, this report showcases how we unlock the potential of every generation.

From youth apprenticeship programmes to mid-career reskilling and mature worker reintegration, the industry proves that generational diversity is not a challenge to manage, but an opportunity to lead.

Flexibility, inclusion, and cooperation will be the cornerstones for a resilient and growth-oriented workforce strategy. By embracing these principles, policymakers, employers, and HR services providers can build together sustainable labour markets that deliver better outcomes for all.



One family. Four ways of working.

The modern workforce is anything but uniform - as the Martins family's story shows.

Work looks different for each of them, but the constant is this: they all want and like to work. Not just to earn a living, but because it gives them meaning, growth, and pride. It's how they build fulfilling lives.



The Martins live under one roof but work in four different worlds. Thomas (66) is a self-employed graphic designer who, unlike his fellow Baby Boomer friends, is not ready to retire. Working from his attic studio lets him stay creative and available for his family, especially when his wife works night shifts.



49-year-old Maria has built a meaningful career in a hospital, rising through the ranks with the hard work and dedication that characterise Gen X. She thrives on responsibility and mentoring, finding deep purpose in her role.



Their daughter, Elena, is a hardcore Millennial. At 27, she works at a tech firm, but that's not her true calling. For her, flexibility is essential—it's what allows her to pursue her dream of launching a sustainable clothing brand.



Meanwhile, her brother Leo is a 19-year-old Gen Z who is just beginning to explore working life. He has started a mechanic apprenticeship and enjoys the hands-on learning and variety of rotating mentors and shops, embracing the journey with curiosity.

The workforce today is multigenerational. Four, even five, generations coexist in the workplace – all with different expectations, needs, and qualifications. While HR managers have been used to managing a multigenerational workforce since time immemorial, demographic trends, coupled with technological developments and economic hardships, are leading to changes in society that push this situation to new levels of complexity.

In this report, we examine the drivers of change that require labour markets to offer a wider range of solutions to enable all types of workers to access employment. We demonstrate how HR services companies have already understood the potential across all generations and have put in place specific initiatives to tap into all those talent pools.



01.

The Multi- generational Makeup





Let's start by diving into each generation, their needs and expectations.

Older generations, such as the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers, are gradually exiting the labour force. Those still at work may have some health concerns and are interested in less-than-full-time job positions⁰². The gradually retiring senior experts are leaving with their expertise, and this creates a know-how vacuum in the workplace.

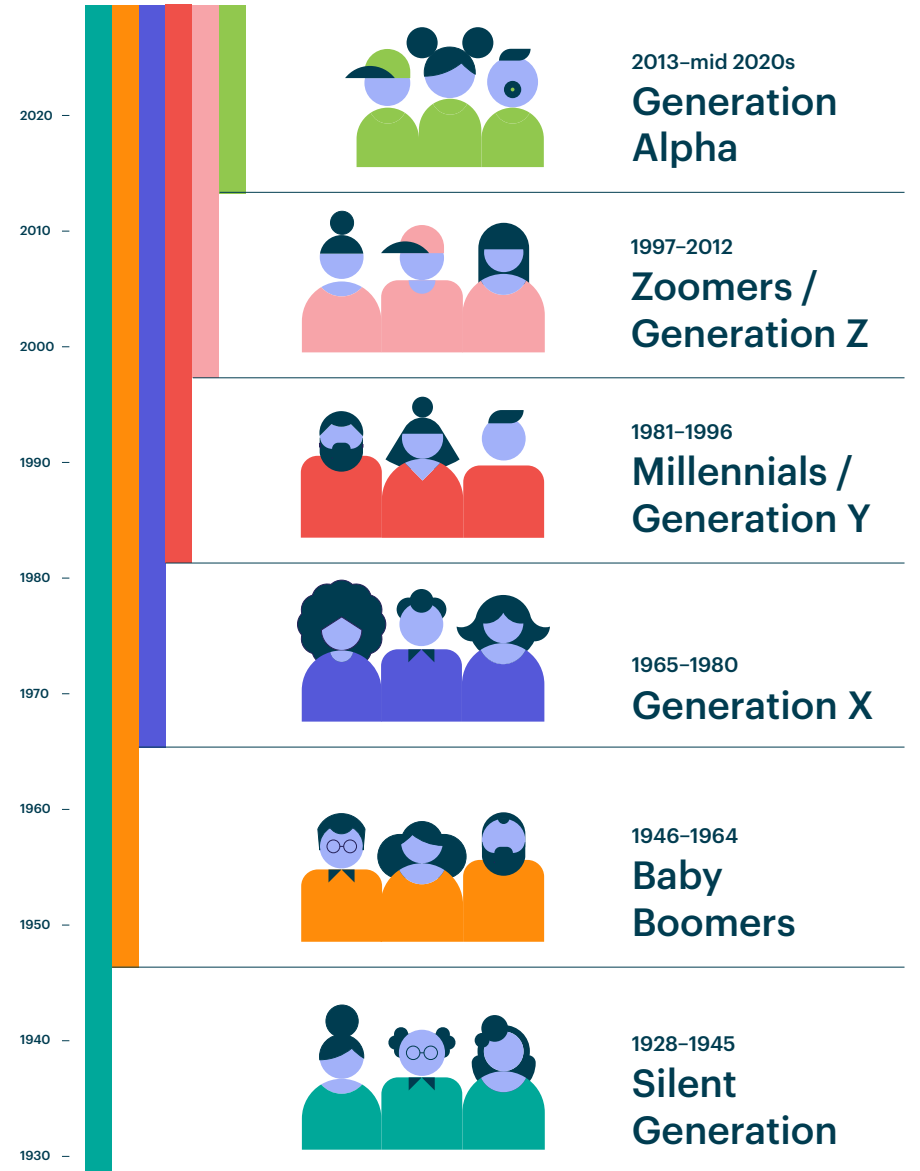
At the same time, efforts to retain and integrate older workers are often undermined by age-based bias. Randstad⁰³ reveals that ageism is a pervasive issue in the workplace, affecting both older and younger employees. Older workers are frequently perceived as outdated or less tech-savvy, while younger professionals are often seen as inexperienced or unreliable. These stereotypes influence hiring, promotion, compensation, and daily workplace interactions, leading to emotional, psychological, and financial consequences. The report also highlights the intersectional nature of ageism, showing how it compounds with other factors such as gender, disability, caregiving responsibilities, and education level. For instance, women over 40 often face multiple layers of bias that limit their career progression.

Late Generation X and early Millennials are most concerned with caring for family members, whether their offspring or their parents. These age groups aspire to facilitate their work-life balance, to make space for family life and caring responsibilities. A study conducted by Asembleo⁰⁴ in Spain showed that women between 40 and 44

years old represent the largest tranche of the part-time employees, consciously choosing ways to combine work with family caring responsibilities.

The younger generations entering the labour force (late Millennials and Generation Z) have different priorities and working styles. Research by Roberta Katz at Stanford's Centre for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences⁰⁵ found in 2024 that Gen Z values flexibility and meaningful work over traditional work structures. They are more likely to seek jobs that align with their personal values and offer a good work-life balance. In 2023, a Johns Hopkins University study suggested⁰⁶ that the younger generation assigns more value to flexibility and mental well-being. This translates into a so-called "consumerisation of work", with those younger generations seeking training and re-skilling more often and being more inclined to shift from one job position to another, both within the company and from one company to another.

In parallel, young people face challenges like rising costs of higher education⁰⁷ and the cost of living⁰⁸ in general. Therefore, many youngsters are forced to study and work at the same time to make ends meet. Some don't have access to higher education and thus seek other opportunities to make a living, e.g., by entering apprenticeship programmes or working informally. Recent studies, such as the 2025 White Paper by Swisstaffing⁰⁹, reveal that Generation Z prioritises wages and job security.



Classification of Generations⁰¹



Her Chosen Path– Even if Not Her Dream Job

Leonie (24, Switzerland) worked as a cook in an institution for elderly people. However, the organisation needed to close, so she lost her job. This was quite a setback for Leonie, who truly loved her job. As a cook in a care facility, she enjoys the freedom to play with ingredients in meals and bake cakes, which is not possible in a typical restaurant.

Leonie is not the type of woman who sits tight while waiting for her dream job to come around. She prefers mastering her own life and did not want to be unemployed. She was not interested in applying for any jobs, going to interviews, or following courses... She was determined to work again in an institution for elderly people.

So, Leonie took a temporary job at Hottellis to earn money while looking for her dream job. The money she earns right now is enough for her to avoid applying for unemployment benefits and enables her to follow her chosen career path.



Cooking for elderly people brings me joy, because I can be creative and make them feel cared for — that’s the work I want to return to.





02.

Labour Market Diagnosis

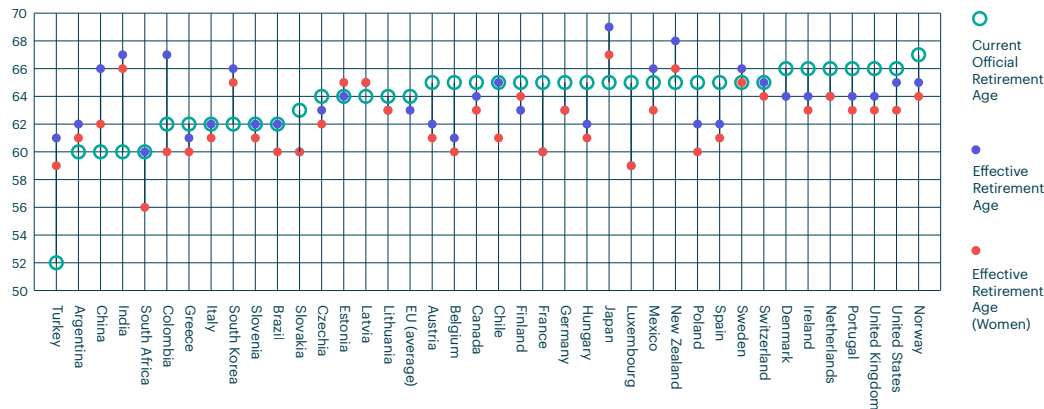
- 2.1 The Demographic Drift
- 2.2 The Skills Shortfall
- 2.3 The Digital Disruption
- 2.4 The Elusive Economy





While HR managers have been used to managing a multigenerational workforce since time immemorial, demographic trends, coupled with technological developments and economic turmoil, are leading to changes in society that push this situation to new levels of complexity. In this section, we examine the different drivers that are creating new hardships for HR functions in managing a multigenerational workforce.

FIGURE 1 Official versus Effective Retirement Age – 2023 (OECD¹⁰)



2.1 The Demographic Drift

The rapid population growth over the second half of the 20th century, since the end of World War II, continued into the beginning of the 21st century, but this population was older. Globally, the median age in 1950 was 23.9 years worldwide; in 2005, it was already 28.1 years. The spread of the median age across countries is also quite diverse: in Japan, the current median age is 49.9 years. On the other end of the spectrum is Niger, with a median age of only 15.2 years. The indicator in many European countries today hovers around 42; in the United States, it is at 39.

Population ageing in the 20th and 21st centuries has been associated with declining fertility rates and increasing longevity, causing intense pressure on public pension systems. Governments are under pressure to alter their labour market policies. One obvious adjustment is an increase in the retirement age, causing people to stay in the workplace till later. Since the 2000s, the retirement age has increased in a lot of countries from as low as 50 years to 55 in China, from 60 to 65 in Japan, from 62 to 65 in the USA, from 62 years to 67 years in many European countries.

Interestingly, the effective retirement age is often different from the legally set one (as shown in Fig. 1 on the left). For example, the legal retirement age in Asia is early, so people tend to continue working for a few more years. Similarly, this trend

is observed in some Latin American countries, such as Mexico, Costa Rica and Colombia. By contrast, in most European countries as well as in the United States and Canada, people tend to retire before the official retirement age.

The rapid population growth happened in parallel with a rise in the labour force participation rate of people between 15 and 64, from 66% in 1990 to 75% in 2023. The steady growth of labour force participation in Europe happened largely thanks to an increasing female participation. The ILO suggests that the rate of working women in Europe has increased faster than that of men (see Fig. 2 on next page):

- ▷ from 55% in 2003 to 70% in 2023 for women
- ▷ from 78% in 2003 to 80% in 2023 for men

This led to the peaking of the employment rates in a number of developed countries, meaning that the margin for manoeuvre for HR managers has been gradually shrinking. Examples of such countries are the Netherlands (83.5%), Switzerland (83%), Denmark (79.8%), Sweden (78.2%), and Germany (77.9%). Figures are far from 100% because there will always be a fraction of the population following education, being out of work, dealing with health issues or family responsibilities, because they are in care work, or else unable to find work. That's why such a high labour market participation rate can be considered close to full employment.



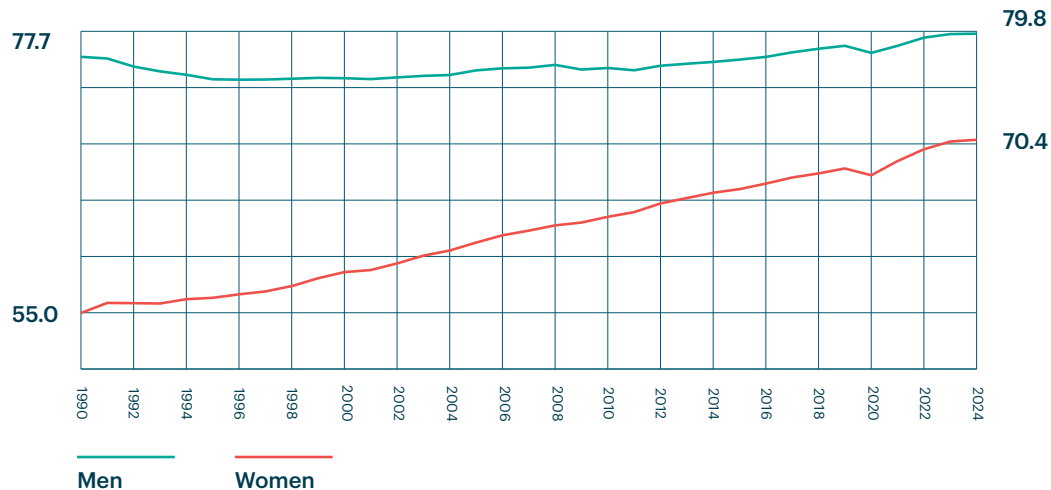
Labour markets are facing a “Rising Storm¹³”. Looking at the global situation, Lightcast identifies a threefold squeeze on labour supply globally¹⁴:

- ▷ By 2040, 4 out of 5 countries will see a slowing growth in their working-age population, and 3 out of 10 will see an outright decline.
- ▷ The proportion of people over 65 is already rising everywhere, especially in the developed countries.
- ▷ Low birth rates and reduced immigration create a further squeeze, especially in the developed economies.

In the USA alone, this would lead to a deficit of six million workers by 2032.

HR managers are increasingly challenged in securing the talent their organisations require. Even when candidates are available, they often encounter another barrier: a persistent mismatch between the skills offered and those in demand.

FIGURE 2
EU Labour Force Participation Rate
for Men¹¹ and Women¹²
 (% of population ages 15-64)



Demographic Drift

Global population ageing, declining fertility, and rising retirement ages are squeezing labour supply despite high participation—driving worker shortages, especially in developed economies.





2.2 The Skills Shortfall

Even when talent is available, a further challenge lies in alignment, because skills are changing at an unprecedented pace. According to Lightcast¹⁵, on average, each occupation has seen one-third of its skills changed between 2021 and 2024. In the top quartile of most changed occupations, this figure rose to a staggering 75%. Moreover, the pace of change is accelerating: the past three years have witnessed as much evolution in skill demand as the preceding five. This rapid shift places immense pressure on both workers and employers to continuously adapt, reskill, and realign.

At the same time, generational shifts are causing the erosion of knowledge transfer. Baby Boomers, many of whom have dedicated decades to their careers, are increasingly opting for early retirement or part-time work, often in contrast to rising official retirement ages, which in turn accelerates the effect of demographic change in the workplace. Their reduced presence in the workplace has unintended consequences: it limits opportunities for younger generations to learn through direct, on-the-job mentorship. In an era of population ageing, this loss of tacit knowledge and hands-on training represents a critical missed opportunity for workforce development.

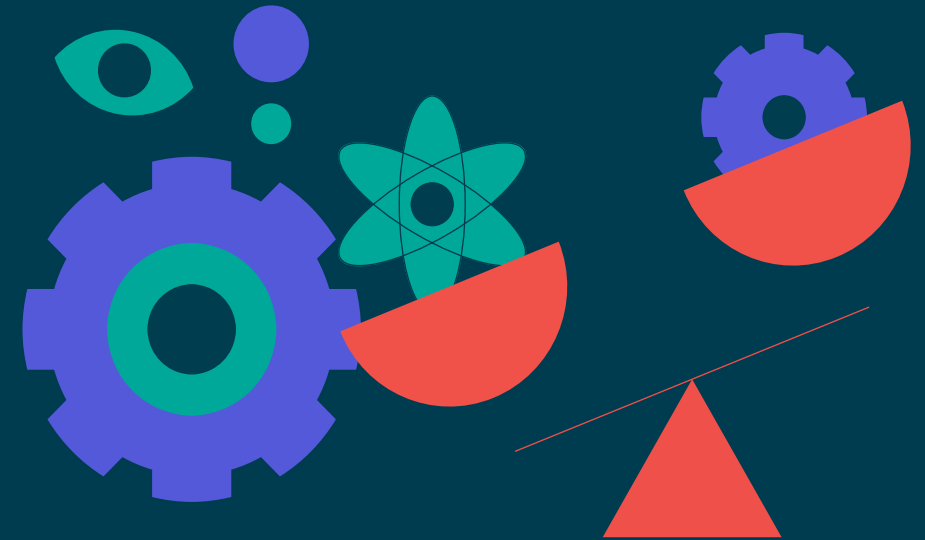
Generational divides are also evident in occupational distribution. In the United States, Gen Z workers are predominantly found in blue-collar roles such as food service, personal care, and agriculture. At

the same time, Baby Boomers continue to dominate white-collar professions, including legal, managerial, and business roles. The picture is more nuanced in the United Kingdom, with both generations represented in skilled trades. However, Gen Z is more prevalent in caring, leisure, and customer service roles, whereas Boomers are concentrated in administrative, operational, and leadership positions. These patterns further hinder intergenerational collaboration and the organic transfer of skills.

No industry is immune to talent shortages. A 2025 Lightcast analysis of Fortune 1000 companies highlights that sectors such as healthcare, hospitality, construction, and services are particularly at risk. The report warns that over 85 million jobs could go unfilled globally by 2030, potentially resulting in a staggering \$8.5 trillion in unrealised revenue. The primary disruptors driving this shift include the adoption of artificial intelligence, the transition to a green economy, and the growing importance of cybersecurity.

Skills Shortfall

Skills are evolving at a record pace while generational shifts erode knowledge transfer, creating talent shortages across industries that could leave 85 million jobs unfilled by 2030 and cost the global economy \$8.5 trillion.





2.3 The Digital Disruption

Historically, technological evolution has been happening in pulses, with the past decade leading the revolution in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Indeed, AI has revolutionised human life by deeply integrating into daily routines and industries, transforming communication, automating tasks, personalising services, enhancing healthcare and transportation, and fundamentally changing how we work, learn, and interact with technology.

While at the early stages of implementation, AI's vast potential in countless aspects of human life cannot be underestimated. The OECD Employment Outlook 2025 suggests that with generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT), falling costs, and the increasing availability of workers with AI skills, OECD countries may be on the brink of an AI revolution. Jobs will change, be created, or disappear. Skills needs are shifting. The OECD reports that 27% of jobs are in occupations at high-risk of automation¹⁶.

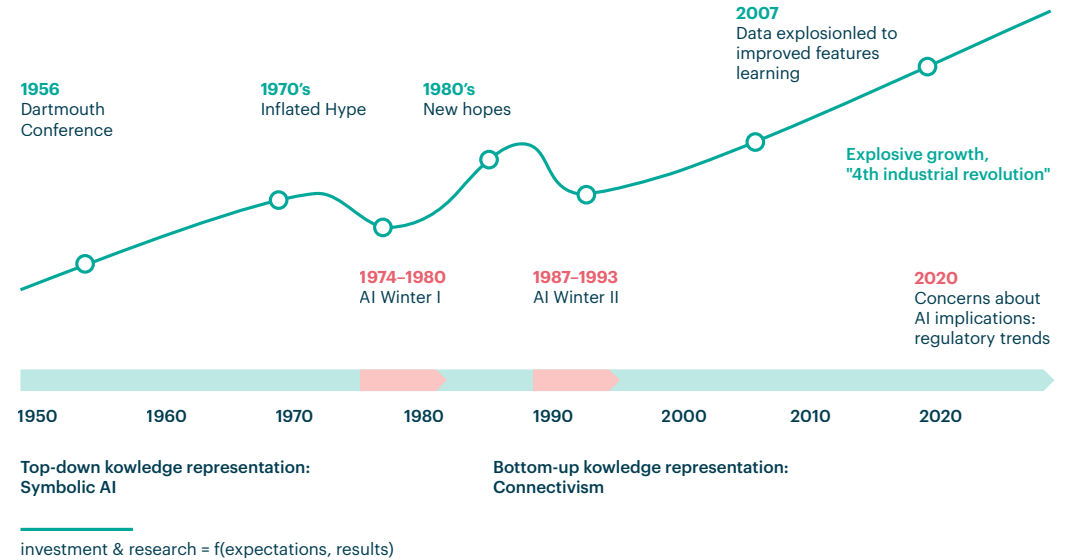
The Work We Want research project by the World Employment Confederation reveals that 81% of senior executives believe that AI and other tech disruptions will force organisations to radically rethink skills and resources across large areas of the workforce. 78% are concerned that their organisation can't train employees fast enough to keep up with technology developments in the next three years.

Organisations are already finding themselves with skills gaps that badly constrain their performance and limit their ability to adapt to the new digital era.

More and more occupational job advertisements require at least one AI-related skill, and the trend indicates exponential growth going forward. Recent research, such as Lightcast's research of proprietary job postings data that they analysed in cooperation with Stanford HAI¹⁸, and Jobs and Skills Australia¹⁹, concludes that AI adoption is significantly higher in high-tech and white-collar professions (computer and mathematical occupations, creative and digital fields, business, finance, and management roles), while blue-collar, care economy, and roles centred on direct human contact (construction, transportation, farming, food preparation, and production) are less prone to AI adaptation.

Yet, another recent Lightcast study²⁰ actually finds that over half of online job postings now requiring AI skills are outside tech, pointing to a broader adoption of AI skills in the workplace. Not least, AI skill mastery also comes with a salary premium compared to similar jobs that do not require the ability to work with AI. In healthcare and education, AI is primarily used to augment administrative and analytical tasks rather than replace core activities that require direct human interaction. While AI is beginning to influence blue-collar jobs through technologies like predictive maintenance and intelligent wearables, the primary impact is on automating routine tasks

FIGURE 3
AI Hopes and Winters¹⁷





and creating new tech-oriented roles that require reskilling. Human oversight, problem-solving, and supervisory skills remain essential in these sectors.

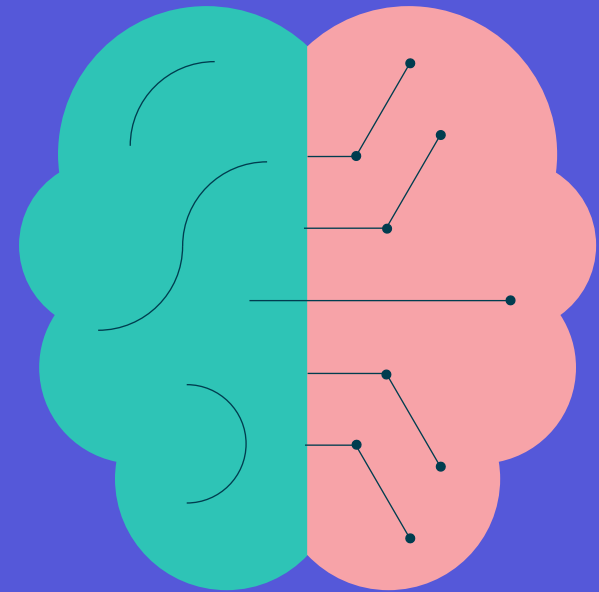
Paradoxically, rapid integration of AI into a global workplace contributes to skills shortages. While clever use of AI can dramatically increase productivity, it can also lead to employees' and workers' anxiety about their job security and, possibly, raise ethical concerns. Gen Z and Gen Alpha, as digital natives, tend to navigate AI and digital tools with ease, often driving innovation and new ways of working. Millennials are keeping pace, while Gen X and Baby Boomers are less naturally inclined to keep pace with the technological change²¹. These intergenerational tensions around AI adoption pose a unique challenge for HR leaders. Successfully navigating this terrain requires not only a deep understanding of emerging technologies but also the ability to foster collaboration across age groups, leveraging the distinct strengths each generation brings to the table.

Ensuring that all employees maintain relevant, up-to-date skills is essential for organisational resilience. Moreover, managing the human side of AI transformation demands psychological insight, strategic clarity, and a strong sense of purpose from HR professionals. Only by aligning technological advancement with inclusive workforce development can organisations truly thrive in the age of AI.

However, the challenge for HR managers extends beyond skills mismatch caused by the rise of AI. In many cases, economic volatility makes it difficult to hire at all.

Digital Disruption

AI is reshaping industries and jobs, creating skills gaps and intergenerational tensions that force organisations to balance tech progress with inclusive workforce development.





2.4 The Elusive Economy

In recent years, businesses across the globe have navigated an increasingly complex operating environment marked by significant economic and social shifts. The aftermath of the global pandemic, evolving work models, rising energy costs, and persistent inflation have collectively impacted both organisations and their employees. These challenges have been compounded by geopolitical instability, contributing to heightened uncertainty and growing concerns around workforce well-being.

Lower-income households have been particularly affected, as a larger share of their earnings is directed toward essential expenses that are most sensitive to inflation²². This financial pressure is also felt by younger workers and those approaching retirement, many of whom are key contributors to today's workforce²³. Meanwhile, middle-income earners are increasingly relying on personal savings to manage the gap between stagnant wages and rising living costs, an issue that can influence employee engagement and retention.

For employers, these dynamics present both strategic and operational challenges. Volatile energy markets and shifting regulatory landscapes have necessitated a more cautious approach to workforce planning. Many organisations have responded by pausing recruitment or delaying expansion plans, while

simultaneously contending with persistent talent shortages and evolving skills requirements.

Looking ahead, the global economic outlook remains uncertain. The IMF's April 2025 World Economic Outlook²⁴ forecasts a slowdown in global growth, citing trade tensions and financial market volatility as key risks. These factors, along with reduced investor confidence and a retreat from international cooperation, may further strain labour markets and complicate long-term workforce strategies.





03.

The Flex Factor

- 3.1 The Strategic Partner HR Managers Need
- 3.2 A Solution for Each Generation
 - 3.2.1 Diamonds in the Making: Young Workers
 - 3.2.2 Polished Stones: Mid-Career Workers
 - 3.2.3 Workforce Gems: Mature Workers





In a world of work where flexibility is now a must-have for workers and employers alike, 83% of senior executives say that employees place as much value on flexibility around where and when they work as they do on compensation²⁵ – yes, even Boomers.

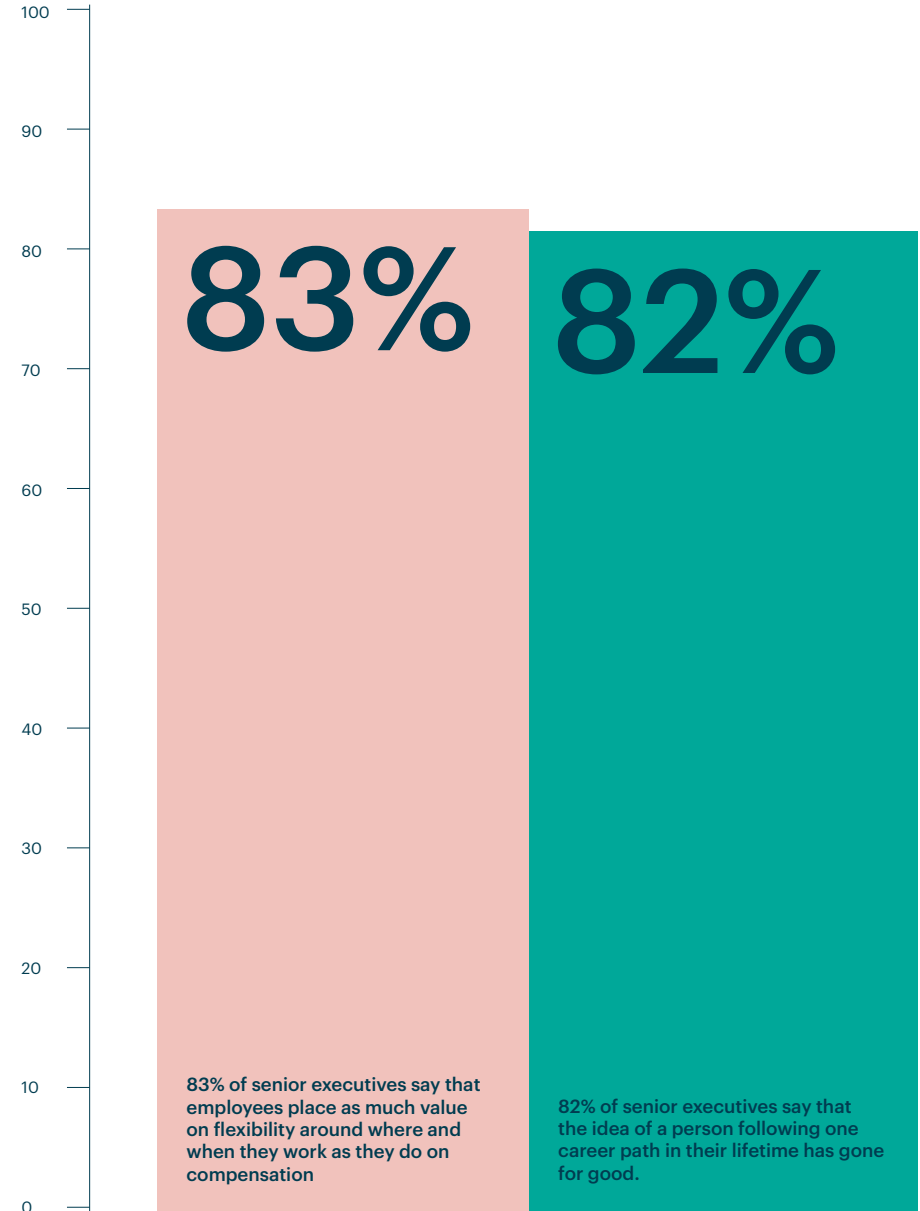
Research from SIA's Temporary Worker Survey 2024 (North America region) clarifies how workforce preferences vary by both occupation and age. Temporary workers most interested in the historically common forms of employment tend to be found in roles such as production, office and administrative support, computer and mathematical occupations, healthcare support, and business and financial operations. In contrast, those seeking new work formats (including temporary work, part-time ongoing employment, and independent contracting) are more likely to be in the healthcare practitioner and education/training sectors. Older workers—especially those aged 56 and over—are more likely to prefer different arrangements. Notably, 44% of healthcare practitioners indicated that temporary work was their ideal work format.

Flexibility is not just about whether people want to work flexible hours or remotely. It is also affecting how people think about work over the course of a career. The Work We Want survey²⁶ uncovered that 82% of senior executives say that the idea of a

person following one career path in their lifetime has gone for good.

According to SIA's Temporary Worker Survey 2024 (North America), nearly half of all temporary workers reported that their primary reason for engaging in temporary employment was to pursue a pathway to permanent work. However, 11% indicated they were using temporary roles to supplement income while actively seeking a permanent position, and 18% said they took on temporary work to supplement their income while not actively job hunting, suggesting a preference for flexibility or interim earnings. Another 13% engaged in temping to gain new skills or accumulate work experience—a trend especially relevant for career pivoters, young entrants, or those re-entering the workforce. The remaining 12% cited various other reasons, reflecting the diverse motivations.

HR managers should focus on localising talent strategies, focusing on skills development in some regions and retention/automation in others. Given





the difficulty of finding talent, retention strategies should be put into higher gear. That would include employee-centric policies (flexible work, skills-based hiring, accommodation of health/family needs), employee experience, and learning and reskilling (professional and digital) opportunities.

Career Management firm LHH advise putting people at the centre of talent strategies by²⁷:

- 01. **Investing in skills development to align human and AI capabilities through upskilling and reskilling.**
- 02. **Bridging generational gaps to foster collaboration across age groups.**
- 03. **Reimagining talent acquisition and retention by emphasising emotional intelligence (EQ).**
- 04. **Embracing inclusive, human-centred workplace cultures to support growth and innovation.**

Ernst & Young sums it up very well: “Providing meaningful economic opportunities for disengaged communities wherever they are is critical for the economic and social health of local economies and the world. When one in six of us will be over 60 in 2030, demographic pressures will require rethinking many of the certainties of the past 100 years²⁸.”

HR services companies do just that.

3.1 The Strategic Partner HR Managers Need

HR managers are not alone in this arduous task of workforce management. HR services agencies worldwide are the experts in matching the demand for with the supply of jobs.

Traditionally, companies turned to agency work as a short-term solution – either to cover for permanent staff on leave or to manage workforce demands during peak production periods. However, the nature of work has significantly evolved, and agency work now plays a more strategic role in the labour market. Today, one in every 50 workers is an agency worker, reflecting its growing importance and value in the modern workforce.

A wide array of flexible workforce solutions has emerged over time³⁰, reshaping how HR professionals can source and manage talent. Models such as remote work, hybrid arrangements, freelancing, gig work, and portfolio careers are increasingly becoming not only common but also central to workforce strategy. The SIA Workforce Solutions Buyer Survey 2025 (Europe) reveal that 70% of European workforce buyers now engage remote workers, and 46% use freelancers, confirming that demand for these formats has entered the mainstream. The survey also notes the growing adoption of talent platforms (29%) and direct sourcing strategies (52%), highlighting how



Given the difficulty of finding talent, retention strategies should be put into higher gear.





employers are diversifying access to talent beyond traditional agency models.

As outlined in the previous chapter, HR managers face a diverse array of challenges. These range from navigating intricate legal landscapes and managing international workforces to ensuring diversity, optimising operations, and supporting workforce transitions. Staffing agencies are well-positioned to meet these demands with targeted, specialist services.

1. Managing Diverse Hiring Needs

The need for flexibility in workforce composition is another common challenge. Staffing agencies provide both temporary agency hiring and direct hiring models, enabling HR managers to tailor their recruitment strategies to specific project requirements, seasonal fluctuations, or long-term organisational goals. This flexibility supports the creation of diverse and dynamic teams.

2. Navigating Legal Complexities Across Borders

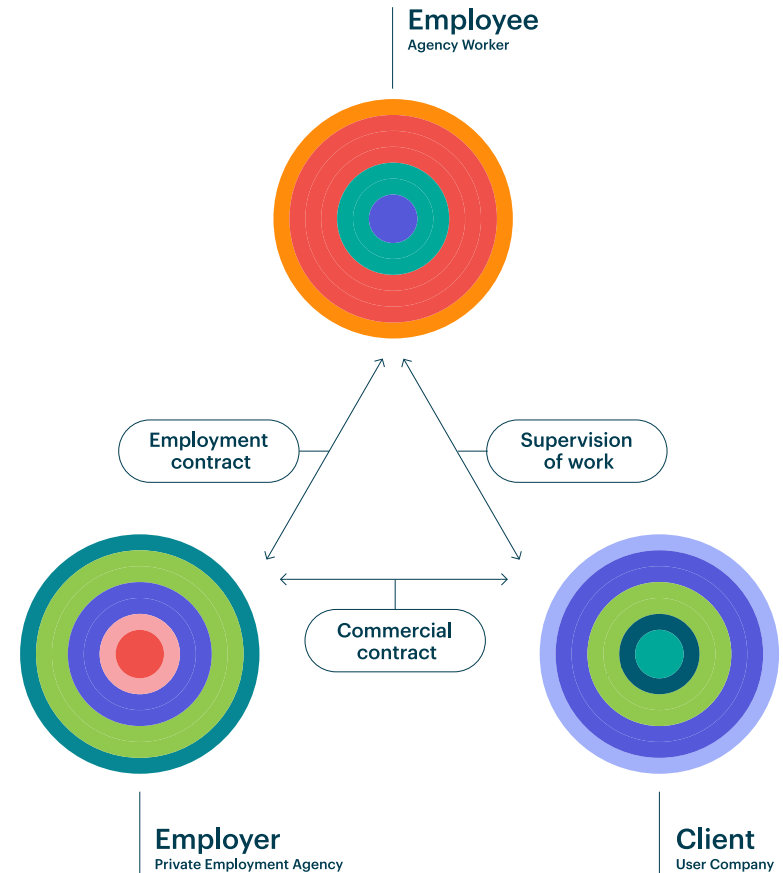
One of the most pressing issues for HR managers is ensuring compliance with varying employment laws when operating in multiple countries or hiring talent located abroad. According to SIA's Europe Staffing Company Survey 2024, half of staffing firms cite data privacy, a third cite wage compliance, and 28% worker misclassification as top compliance concerns.

To address this, staffing agencies offer Payrolling and Employer of Record (EoR) services. EoR solutions allow organisations to legally employ workers in different jurisdictions without setting up local entities, thereby minimising legal risks and administrative overhead. Additionally, 40% of firms now rely on dedicated compliance teams, underscoring the operational capacity agencies bring to HR functions.

3. Enabling HR Focus on Core Activities

With the increasing complexity of HR functions, there is a growing demand for solutions that allow HR managers to concentrate on strategic priorities. Managed Service Provider (MSP) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) models offered by staffing agencies take over the management of contingent workforces or entire HR processes. MSP often includes the Statement of Work (SoW) element, allowing for a diverse spectrum of business solutions to HR needs. This allows internal HR teams to focus on essential business functions and value-added activities. Staffing firms are also expanding their capabilities in digital workforce management and automation. SIA's Europe Staffing Company Survey 2024 reveals that over 60% of firms intend to enhance their use of analytics, sourcing automation tools, and recruitment chatbots, indicating a growing investment in improving HR support and agility. These insights reinforce the vital role staffing partners play in reducing administrative burdens and enhancing strategic responsiveness within client organisations.

The Agency Work Employment Relationship²⁹





4. Supporting Employee Transitions

Facilitating smooth transitions for employees moving between jobs is crucial for both organisational reputation and employee well-being. Staffing agencies provide Career Management and Outplacement services, guiding workers through career changes, offering reskilling opportunities, and supporting job searches to ensure positive outcomes for departing employees.

5. Increasing and accelerating labour market participation

The HR services industry plays an essential role in enhancing labour market participation and inclusion, and by doing so, helps to address the challenges of a multigenerational and ageing workforce. HR services support younger workers in gaining access to employment, support experienced workers in their next step of the professional career and help older workers to remain employed or to gain extra income after retirement.

6. Delivering Project-Specific Solutions

For organisations with limited budgets or highly specific, short-term projects, staffing agencies offer Statement of Work (SoW) services. These solutions enable companies to engage external specialists for defined deliverables, ensuring cost-effective and targeted project execution without long-term employment commitments.

The need for labour market intermediation comes from the worker's side too. Even within flexible work arrangements, structure and support remain essential. In SIA's Temporary Worker Survey 2024 (North America), nearly a third of temporary workers (29%) expressed a clear preference for working through a traditional staffing agency, underscoring the critical role agencies play in providing trusted guidance, personalised job matching, and consistent engagement via recruitment consultants. Their involvement not only facilitates access to flexible roles but also brings a sense of stability and professional support that many workers value.

3.2 A Solution for Each Generation

HR services providers are age-agnostic; they assess candidates' potential based on their experience, interests, and availability. Yet, they also acknowledge the barriers that each generation faces in accessing labour markets and how personalised job matching, career guidance and mentoring, access to training, and ongoing support after placement can help unleash an individual's full potential.

Let's look at some of the solutions that the HR services industry has implemented worldwide to make our multigenerational workforce work.





3.2.1 Diamonds in the Making: Young Workers

Agency work serves as a stepping stone to permanent employment, offering students and recent graduates a way to gain work experience and earn income while studying or transitioning to the labour market. On average, half of agency workers are Generation Z. (See Fig. 4 on p. 24)

Youth programs tend to focus on building foundational skills, confidence, and work readiness. According to Right Management³¹, early-career employees are not primarily driven by compensation or perks. Instead, their engagement and loyalty are most strongly influenced by opportunities for growth, alignment with organisational culture, and clear career pathways. Organisations that tailor support to these priorities are more likely to build loyalty and long-term commitment among their youngest talent.

Gi Group Holding – Youth-Focused Initiatives

MULTIPLE COUNTRIES

In 2024, Gi Group Holding implemented a wide range of initiatives across multiple countries to support young people in their transition from education to employment. These included soft skills training in Brazil, career coaching and mock interviews in Turkey and the UK, and apprenticeship

promotion events in Brazil, the UK, and India, where 300 candidates were placed through the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme. Career guidance and networking were also prioritised, with one-on-one consulting in China and sponsorship of the Leeds Young Professionals Network in the UK. In India, partnerships with NGOs supported underprivileged youth in accessing jobs and training, while a scholarship in Turkey recognised academic excellence.

In Italy, the company launched a nationwide [Training Hub](#) and 300 Academy programs, delivering over 360,000 hours of vocational training to 65,000 participants in high-demand sectors like logistics, mechatronics, ICT, elevator maintenance, electrical systems and leather goods. These programmes combine technical training with continuous support from business and education professionals, who guide them from initial orientation and selection to classroom integration and eventual placement in partner companies.

At the Global HQ level, Gi Group Holding focused on multigenerational workforce development. Key initiatives included leadership and team development programs, intercultural group coaching, and a strengthened Talent Care strategy with initiatives like Parents@Work and a global Mental Health Programme. A global mentoring program—featuring traditional, reverse, and peer mentoring—further promoted mutual learning and leadership growth across generations.





Travi - Welqome & Test Your Selfie

BELGIUM

The [Welqome project](#) is a Belgian initiative by Travi that supports job-seeking youth under 26 by helping them navigate the labour market. It offers soft skills training, job readiness workshops, and networking opportunities, while also providing digital tools and resources to ease the transition into employment. Travi — short for Training for the Temporary Work Sector—is the sectoral training fund for the Belgian temporary employment industry. It works to enhance the skills and employability of temporary workers by developing training programs, tools, and partnerships that support both job seekers and staffing agencies.

Another successful tool developed by Travi targeting young workers is Test Your Selfie, a free, interactive online tool to help them assess their soft skills. Those non-technical competencies are now essential in the workplace but often underdeveloped amongst young workers. Through relatable, real-life scenarios commonly encountered during job applications and on the job, users can evaluate themselves across nine core soft skills, including communication, flexibility, teamwork, initiative, and feedback handling. Accessible via smartphone, tablet, or PC, the platform provides immediate insights into personal strengths and areas for improvement, empowering youth to better prepare for the labour market.

Overall, Belgium is a country with targeted policies to facilitate the employment of young workers. There are targeted hiring subsidies for young agency workers, especially those with lower educational attainment and young agency workers can benefit from training funded by the VFU, the public employment services in the region of Flanders, which can help them develop both general and job-specific skills, improving their employability. Similar projects are also running in other countries, for example the Doorzaam³² training fund in the Netherlands.

The Adecco Group - Onboarding Talents

BRAZIL

Embarque de Talentos (Onboarding Talents) is a project by Adecco Brazil in partnership with Porto Digital, aimed at promoting employability for young people from public schools who are studying technology through the Embarque Digital Program in Recife. Their goal is to generate a positive social impact by fostering employability for low-income youth in Recife who study technology and need support to begin their careers—strengthening the Brazilian ecosystem with new talent. In 2024 and 2025, over 770 students were directly impacted, over 80 volunteers were involved in over 120 hours of mentoring sessions.





Randstad – Career Mode

THE NETHERLANDS

The Dutch labour market has grown tight over the past years, and employers are facing ever more difficulty finding talent to fill the job places. Randstad, the staffing agency, has found a novel solution to tapping into the non-traditional talent pools by accessing the gaming environment. With the Career Mode initiative³³, they are observing young people in action on online gaming platforms. Based on their game scores and their demonstrable skills within the gaming environment, young people are approached and asked whether they'd like to use those skills in the real world, to earn real money.

The project has been highly successful: the outreach to a difficult-to-reach group has increased by nearly 50% between November 2022 and June 2025, and the engagement content increased by 15%. Last but not least, the number of applications for practical training doubled over the same period of time.

ManpowerGroup – M-Shine

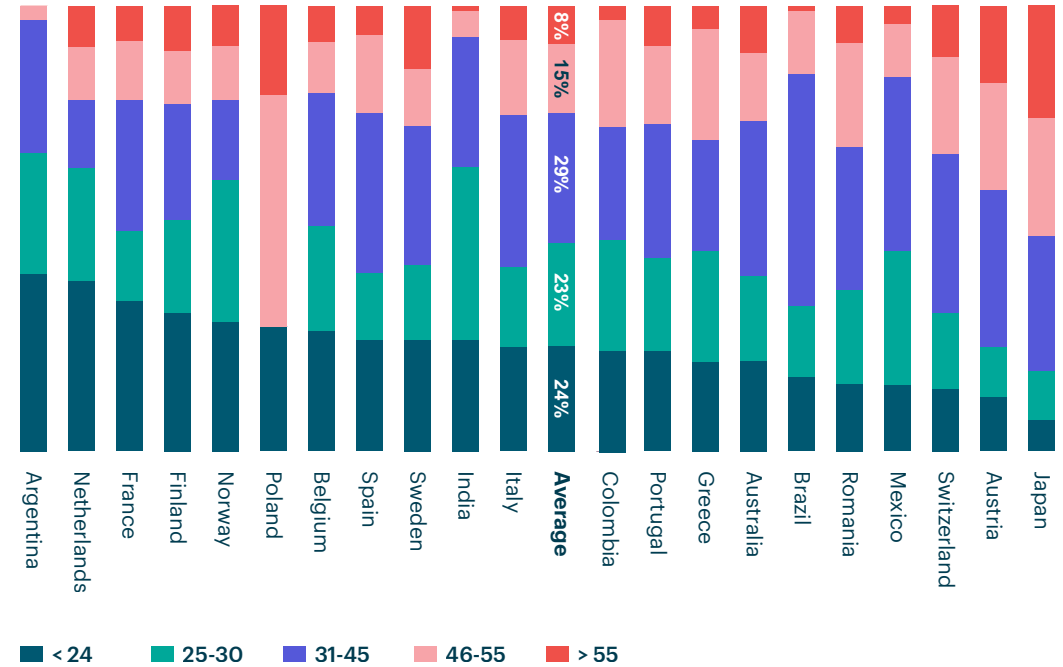
JAPAN

M-Shine set out to bridge the gap between young adults with no prior administrative experience and sustainable career opportunities in office-based roles. The goal was to provide a structured pathway into the workforce for people in their early 20s, equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to thrive. M-Shine implemented a bench model staffing service, offering stable employment while participants gained hands-on administrative experience.

The program emphasised career development and skill-building, offering to participants personalised career guidance, access to training, and real-world experience in administrative environments. This tailored approach addressed the unique needs of early-career people, many of whom were navigating their first professional roles.

The initiative proved highly effective: over 80% of M-Shine associates reported satisfaction with their experience, expressing pride in having taken on the challenge despite lacking prior experience. The program not only facilitated successful career transitions but also enhanced long-term employability and professional growth.

FIGURE 4
Agency Workers By Age – 2023 (% of all agency workers)





Dreaming Big — A Zoomer’s Journey Powered by Temp Work³⁴

In his 20s, Ikenna left a comfortable life in Nigeria to chase a bold dream: becoming a Hollywood screenwriter. Now studying for a Master’s in Screenwriting in the UK, he supports himself through temporary agency work as a cleaner at a London university. This flexible work arrangement gives him the income and time he needs to focus on his studies and creative ambitions.

“The importance of working and studying”, says Ikenna, “is taking care of the financial burden, pays your rent, buys food. As an international student, I’m only allowed to work for 20 hours a week and it would be nice for students, especially master’s students, to have more hours.”

Ikenna’s journey shows how temporary agency work can be a powerful enabler for young people—especially Gen Z—helping them build the future they envision on their own terms.



As an international student, I’m only allowed to work for 20 hours a week and it would be nice for students, especially master’s students, to have more hours.





3.2.2 Polished Stones: Mid-Career Workers

Mid-career employees are the least engaged³⁵. As we have described earlier, they often struggle with work-life balance and juggling multiple responsibilities. This group is also most likely to leave their jobs due to uncertainty about their career paths and feeling overlooked—similar to “middle siblings” in a family dynamic. Right Management’s research further finds that employees who are only “somewhat engaged” are just as likely to leave as those who are fully disengaged.

This highlights the critical need to elevate somewhat engaged employees to full engagement to improve retention. Mid-career employees are shown to be most engaged when they receive strong career support³⁶. They have a growing desire for personalised career paths and recognition of their contributions. Alignment with company culture and team dynamics continues to matter and Learning & Development still plays a role – though it becomes less critical than in early career stages.

As employees progress in their careers, their focus shifts from acquiring skills to advancing and being appreciated. Organisations that tailor their support to these evolving needs—especially by offering individualised career guidance—are more likely to retain and engage mid-career talent.

According to Staffing Industry Analysts (SIA) North America Temporary Worker

Survey 2024, temporary workers are showing a growing preference for flexible work formats, particularly remote arrangements. 61% rated remote work as highly important, and 55% would consider a pay cut for the ability to work entirely from home. This preference is most prominent among older workers and those in higher-paid professional roles, reflecting broader societal trends, including dual caregiving responsibilities among late Generation X and early Millennials.

Assolavoro - Ebitemp

ITALY

The sectoral bilateral fund Ebitemp³⁷ provides a wide range of welfare and fringe benefits to agency workers. Among the benefits proposed there are specific measures for working parents, such as day care contribution for children; financial support in addition to maternity leave; adoption and foster care aid and support; an addition to INPS contribution for the mandatory maternity leave; voucher to buy books and didactic materials for children; financial aid to college tuition. In 2024, Ebitemp supported 31 800 people, a 10% increase on the year before, and invested €15.7m on measures for agency workers.





Parent-friendly policies

IRELAND

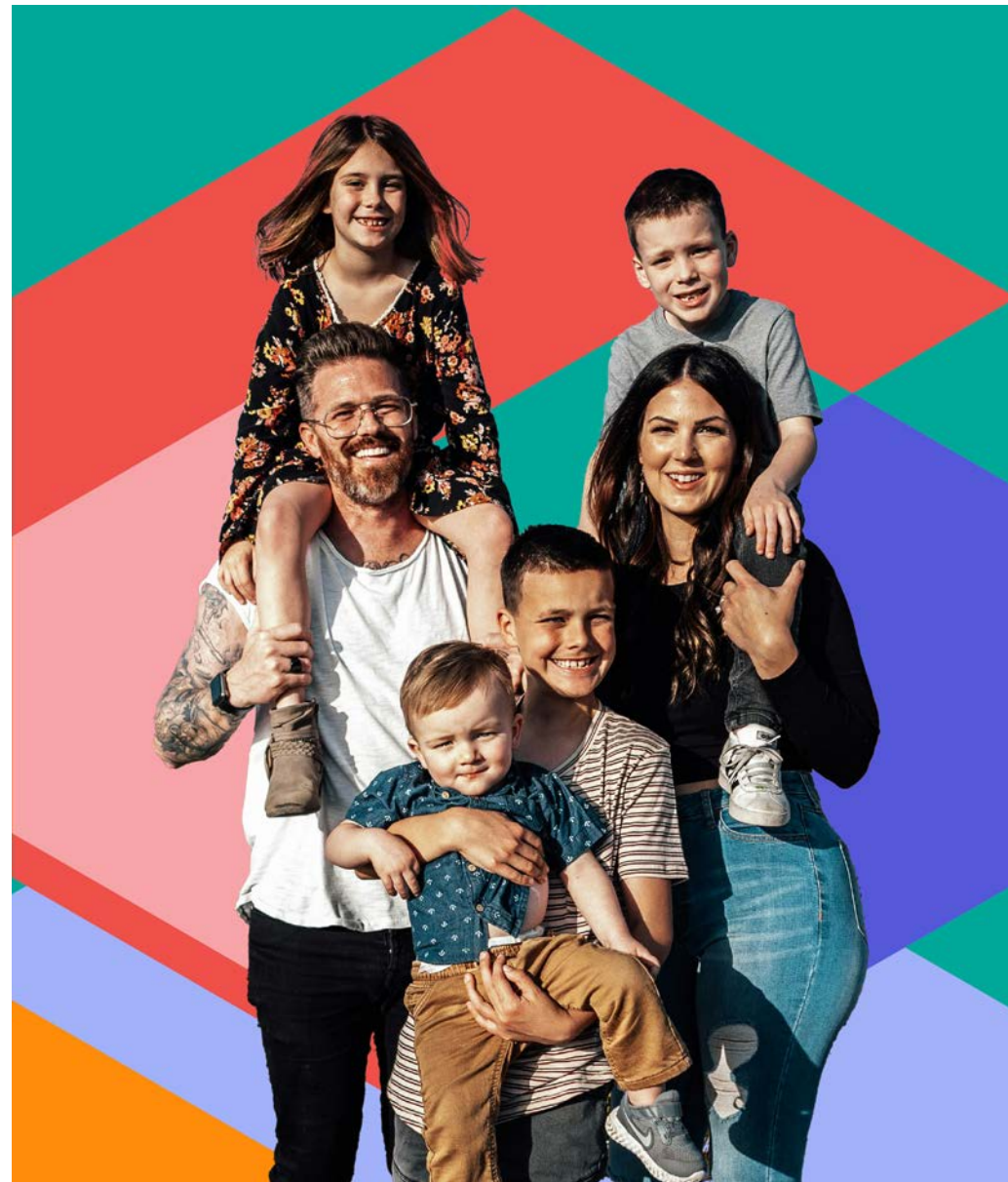
In Ireland, working parents can request flexible working arrangements, including remote work, and are entitled to various leave options like maternity/paternity leave, shared parental leave, adoption leave, and parent’s leave, as well as access to childcare assistance and other family-friendly policies.

These benefits are the result of the adoption of legislation by the European Union to ensure that all workers—including agency and temporary workers—are treated equally in terms of access to basic social security benefits.

This principle is enshrined in several directives, notably Council Directive 79/7/EEC, which mandates equal treatment in statutory social security schemes, and Directive (EU) 2024/1499, which reinforces equal treatment across employment and occupation, including social protection.

This ensures a level playing field across EU member states, safeguarding workers from discrimination based on contract type and guaranteeing fair access

to protections like sickness, unemployment, and old-age benefits. While EU legislation establishes a common framework for equal treatment and access to social protections, the extent and effectiveness of its implementation can vary significantly between member states. Ireland is definitely amongst the first-in-class here!





Born to Care – On her Own Terms

Clare³⁸ has always loved being a radiographer—being on the frontline, caring for patients, and using her clinical expertise. But after 18 years in the UK’s National Healthcare Service (NHS), she found herself pulled away from what she loved most: direct patient care. Seeking more balance and the chance to pursue other ambitions, Clare made the leap to become a locum radiographer.

Now, Clare brings her skills to hospitals that need her most. With years of experience, she can step in and make an immediate impact, supporting overstretched teams while continuing to do the work she’s passionate about. The flexibility of agency work has also allowed her to build a training business, helping others grow professionally and ultimately improving patient care.

Clare’s commitment goes beyond her assignments. She’s active in her professional body, contributes to medical committees, and shares her knowledge with students

and colleagues. Whether responding to emergencies like hospital fires or stepping up during the pandemic, Clare is always ready to help.

Temping isn’t without its challenges—there’s no guaranteed salary, and it demands experience, adaptability, and planning. But for Clare, the freedom to shape her career, support the NHS, and keep learning makes it all worthwhile. Her contract may be temporary, but her dedication is anything but. “Thanks to temp work I can run my own radiography teaching and training business.”



Thanks to temp work I can run my own radiography teaching and training business.



Photo Credit: KB Media



3.2.3. Workforce Gems: Mature Workers

For employees in the late stages of their careers, there is a shift in engagement drivers compared to earlier career phases³⁹. Organisational fit becomes the most important factor. This includes alignment with company values, positive relationships with colleagues and managers, and a sense of belonging. Career Support remains a strong driver, but mature workers focus less on upward mobility.

Yet, career guidance is a critical enabler in the comprehensive strategy required to ensure that mature workers thrive at work. The OECD Employment Outlook 2025 identifies the following elements as part of this strategy:

- ▷ Incentives to remain in or return to work
- ▷ Employability, including upskilling and reskilling
- ▷ Opportunities, such as access to quality jobs and flexible work arrangements

Career guidance helps mature workers navigate transitions, identify new career paths, and make informed decisions about training and employment. According to the OECD, these people may struggle to adapt to changing job demands without such support, leading to underemployment or premature labour market exit⁴⁰.

Mature worker programs, therefore, emphasise upskilling, career transition, and adapting to changing job markets.

The Adecco Group – Mature Workers project

UNITED KINGDOM

As people live and work longer, the global workforce is changing—but mature workers over 50 are still too often excluded from meaningful employment. The Adecco Group’s Innovation Foundation launched the Mature Workers project to explore why so many are pushed out of work involuntarily and why re-entry, especially into new industries, is so difficult. Through research and human-centred design, the project uncovered a key insight: mature workers bring valuable experience, yet face systemic and cultural barriers to returning.

Focusing on the UK, the Foundation convened a diverse Working Group of employers, policymakers, NGOs, and mature workers to explore solutions. What emerged was a call for a mindset shift: older workers are not a burden, but an asset. “Are they missing out on the experience, the patience, and the empathy of people who’ve had a varied career?” asked Andy, a 61-year-old former youth worker now retraining as a personal trainer.

The project centres on voices like Andy’s—people who miss not just the income, but the purpose and connection of work. Whether it’s Graham, 63, eager to keep contributing after a retail career, or Tony recalling the camaraderie of the fire service, their stories highlight the





resilience and value mature workers offer. The Foundation remains committed to designing a labour market that sees their worth and supports their return.

Prism' emploi – 50+: Experience Matters!

FRANCE

In partnership with France Travail, Prism'Emploi has taken actions to support the employment of workers aged 50 and over, as part of a broader strategy to help those furthest from the labour market. Those actions include:

- ▷ Tailored placement programmes, access to temporary and permanent contracts, use of immersion programmes to help seniors explore new roles and industries⁴¹.
- ▷ Training and re-conversion programmes to remain competitive in the job market, including skills assessment, short-term vocational training, and support for digital literacy and emerging job sectors⁴².
- ▷ Workplace adaptation and retention strategies, including encouraging employers to retain older employees, to adapt work conditions to suit their needs, and to prevent age-related discrimination in hiring and employment practices⁴³.

Manpower – Intergenerational Inclusion Initiative

POLAND

ManpowerGroup recognised a lack of representation of younger generations in decision-making and strategy formulation teams, whose work impacts both younger and older employees. This initiative aims to enrich board perspectives with insights from younger viewpoints. In Poland, selected young employees are invited to participate in regular senior leadership meetings, where they represent younger generations. Over a period of one to two years, participants share their perspectives, needs, and beliefs, openly discussing their perceptions on various topics, such as communication styles, ESG, benefits and other policies appealing to younger generations.

This intergenerational programme has yielded positive initial feedback from both older and younger employees. Senior leaders have gained valuable insights into younger generations, while younger employees have developed a deeper understanding of business accountability and decision-making processes. The programme helped to foster innovative policies that cater to both age groups. Future evaluations will measure the impact of these decisions on engagement and job satisfaction among younger employees in the company.





Young workers

NEED:

Purpose
Experience

HR SERVICES PROVIDE:

Work Readiness
Access to First Jobs



Mid-career workers

NEED:

Flexibility
Work/Life Balance

HR SERVICES PROVIDE:

Career Support
Personalised solutions



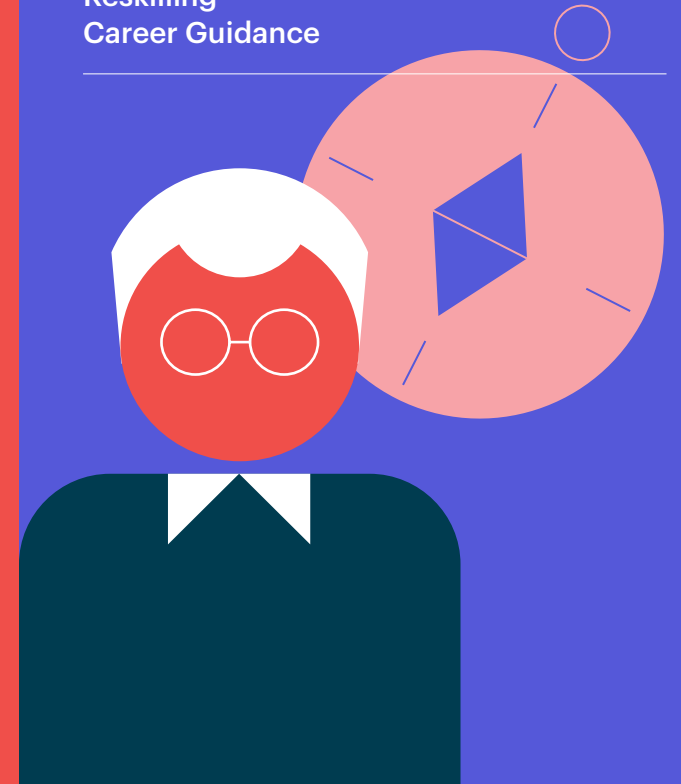
Mature workers

NEED:

Continue Working
Adapting

HR SERVICES PROVIDE:

Reskilling
Career Guidance





Still Making an Impact – A Story of Reinvention

Andy⁴⁴ (61) has spent over 40 years working primarily as a youth worker, guiding young people and eventually managing teams in middle management roles. His career has also included stints in DJing, retail security, and house clearing. The most rewarding part of his work has been seeing the long-term impact—when former youths, now adults, recall the positive influence he had on their lives.

After his project funding ended in March, Andy faced uncertainty about his next steps. Rather than retire or settle, he chose to retrain as a personal trainer, aiming to take control of his employment future. This shift reflects his desire to stay active, independent, and continue helping others in a new way.

Andy misses the camaraderie and shared goals of team environments. He encourages employers to reflect on their hiring practices—especially regarding older workers. He believes people over 55 bring valuable experience, empathy, and patience, and urges organizations to recognize the potential they might be overlooking.



I believe people over 55 bring valuable experience, empathy, and patience, and organisations need to recognise the potential they're overlooking.





Freedom to Choose – Finding What Matters Most

Martin (61, Switzerland), a highly educated professional in the hospitality industry, currently works as an agency worker in Switzerland. He began his career as a trained cook and later transitioned into restaurant service. After spending ten years with the same employer, a company restructuring led to his departure. The working relationship with his superiors had become strained, and Martin ultimately decided to leave. Confident in his skills and experience, he believed finding a new job would be straightforward. However, the reality proved more difficult than expected—especially without a driver’s licence or the flexibility to relocate within Switzerland.

Agency work offered Martin a valuable solution. It allows him to stay active in the labour market, gain new experiences, expand his professional network, and earn interim income (“Zwischenverdienst”) while seeking longer-term opportunities. It’s not unfamiliar territory—he had done agency work in his youth and appreciates the variety and flexibility it brings.

For Martin, one factor stands above all in any job: the working environment. A positive, respectful atmosphere is what truly matters to him—and flexible work gives him the freedom to choose environments where he feels valued and comfortable.



For me, the most important thing in any job is the working environment. I want to be in a positive, respectful atmosphere—and flexible work lets me choose places where I feel valued and comfortable.





04.

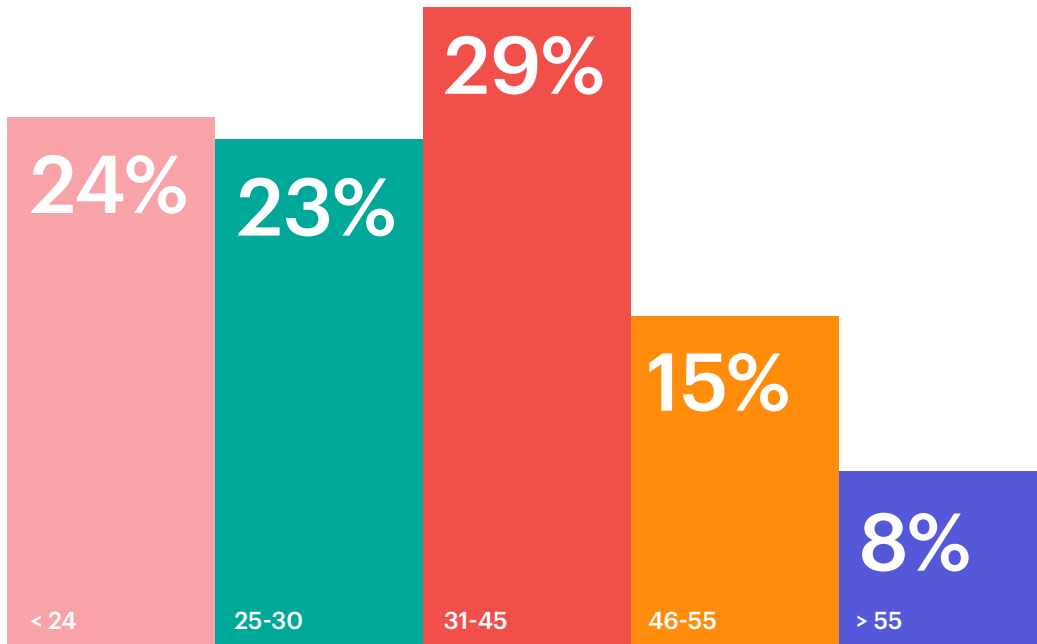
Generational Diversity: A Force for the Future





Many healthcare professionals are deciding that traditional jobs are not their ‘thing’ anymore. They’d much rather work on a temporary basis — work for three months and then take three months off and recover.

Barry Asin
Chief analyst, Staffing Industry Analysts (SIA)⁴⁵



If you’re a teacher, you generally need to be in front of a class from 9am to 3pm. I know of teachers who have switched jobs because they’ve been able to do that work at home, for not much less money — and have gained flexibility in how they work. How do we remain competitive when other sectors offer that flexibility and we don’t?

A CEO of a UK-based educational trust ⁴⁶

Labour markets worldwide are in the midst of a profound and complex transformation. Technological disruption, shifting worker expectations, and an increasingly uncertain economic environment are reshaping how, where, and why people work. Demographic challenges further intensify these megatrends. At the intersection lies a critical imperative: unlocking the full potential of a multigenerational workforce.

A Workforce in Transition

Developed economies are contending with ageing populations and shrinking workforces, while younger regions face high unemployment. This demographic divergence is creating intergenerational tensions and complex policy challenges:

- ▷ Older workers want to slow down their work life but face risks of financial insecurity.
- ▷ Mid-career professionals are navigating the tension between traditional job stability and the desire for more work-life balance.
- ▷ Younger generations value flexibility but face risks of burnout, isolation, and limited long-term security.

Encouraging labour market participation across all age groups is essential - but it must be done sustainably. Without policy innovation, the shift toward flexible work risks becoming uneven across regions, sectors, and social groups, exacerbating inequalities. To truly benefit from “the flex factor”, policymakers must develop frameworks that encourage flexibility and resilience, while employers should implement practices that foster an adaptable and diverse work environment.

Agency Workers By Age – 2023
(% of all agency workers, global average)



Embracing flexible workforce solutions is not just a response to change – it is a proactive strategy to transform generational diversity from a source of tension into opportunities.

Catalysts of Change

This is where the HR services industry steps forward—not just as a provider of talent solutions, but as a strategic partner to organisations navigating this complexity. Through flexibility, the industry is uniquely positioned to:

- ▷ Help organisations design and deliver inclusive and future-ready workforce strategies
- ▷ Drive social mobility through lifelong learning and career development programmes
- ▷ Inspire innovative societal solutions and advocate for modern safety nets

HR services providers help organisations turn generational diversity into a competitive advantage. Workforce diversity is a proven driver of business

performance, as many surveys from Staffing Industry Analysts demonstrate. Organisations that lead in diversity, equity, and inclusion are 2.7 times more likely to report high success rates when competing for new business opportunities through formal proposal processes, and they are 2.4 times more likely to cite candidate quality and internal satisfaction as competitive advantages⁴⁷.

74% of DE&I leaders report improved talent retention and note stronger attraction of high-quality candidates, while 63% experience greater ROI from contingent workforce programs⁴⁸.

The contingent workforce is no longer a peripheral consideration - it plays a central role in talent strategies across all industries⁴⁹. According to the SIA, contingent workers account for an

average of 22% of the workforce among large companies, with a median share of 20%. This figure is expected to rise to 25% within two years and reach 27% over the next decade. Some organisations anticipate even greater growth, with the 75th percentile projecting contingent shares as high as 40% in ten years. Industries such as manufacturing report higher contingent shares (23%) compared to sectors like technology and telecom (18%).

In terms of workforce composition (Europe, excluding UK), regular full-time employees make up 63% of staff on average, followed by consultants and outsourced workers (10% each), temporary agency workers (8%), internally sourced temps and freelancers (2% each), and part-time employees (5%).

Overall, the data affirms that contingent labour is not only a significant component of current workforce strategies but is also poised to increase in strategic importance across European organisations.

From Tension to Opportunity

Ultimately, embracing flexible workforce solutions is not just a response to change – it is a proactive strategy to transform generational diversity from a source of tension into a foundation for resilience, innovation, and growth. The HR services industry is helping shape this transformation. By acting as a strategic partner to organisations, it contributes to building a world of work that is inclusive, adaptive, and empowering for all generations.



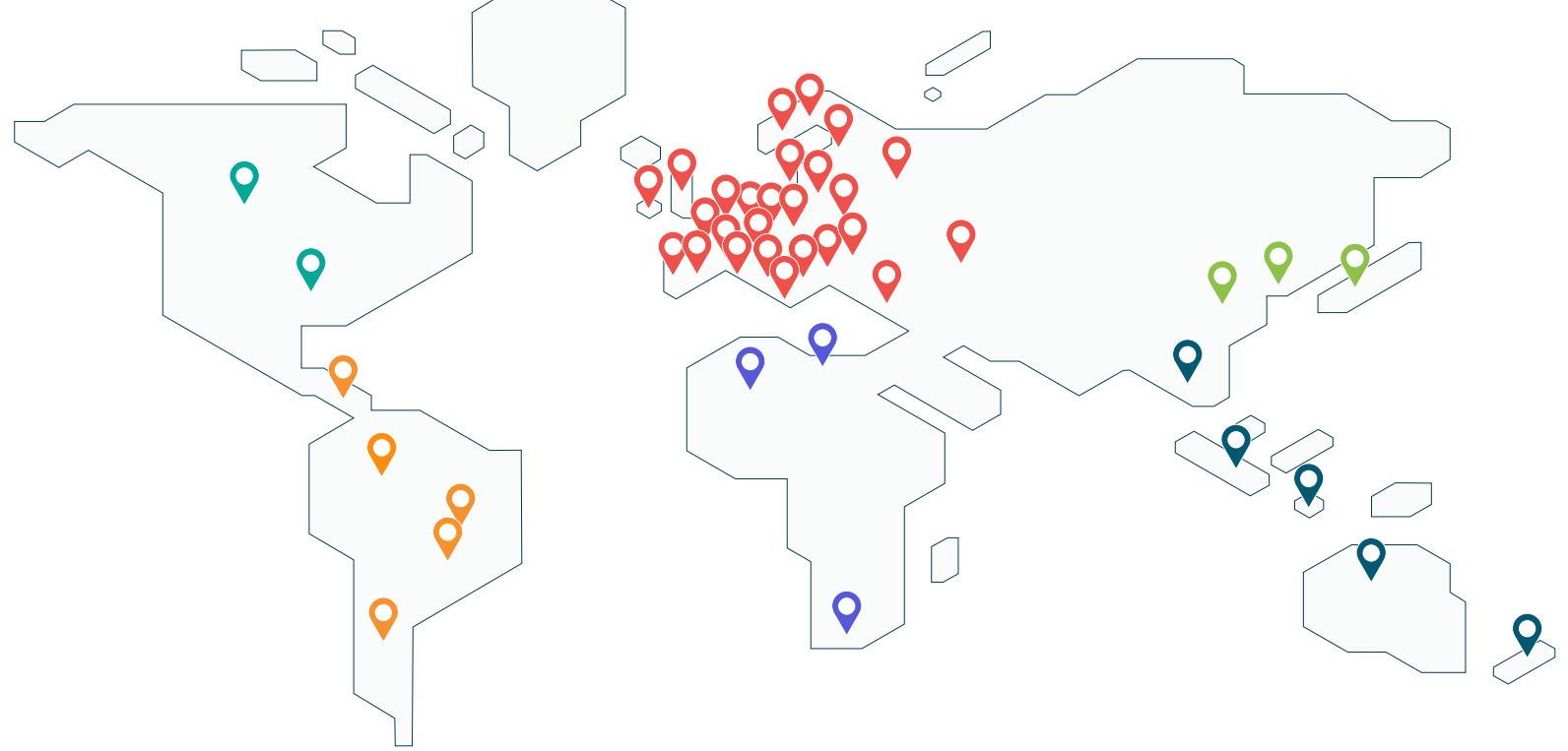
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Our National Federations

A membership representing ~90% of the global sales revenue of the industry



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* Membership of FAETT suspended for the year 2025 (Argentina is represented by two federations)
** Membership suspended for the year 2025



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