LHH

Outplacement and Career Mobility 2024 Trends Report

New Global Data for Employers

Introduction

Since last year's edition of this research, business discourse has been dominated by one issue above all others – the proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI) and its potential to transform the world of work. Some say that we're already amid a wave of AI-driven redundancies[1], while others point to the technology's potential to be a net job creator[2]. In any case, the very nature of work is set to change significantly across swathes of roles.

Meanwhile, headlines about redundancies and unemployment remain unavoidable, with AI often cited as a factor. The United Nations[3] astutely predicted at the start of the year that global unemployment would rise during 2024, and it has, relative to pre-pandemic levels in the United States[4] and the United Kingdom.[5]

When we looked beyond the headlines with our own research last year, we found redundancies were widespread and deep. These redundancies were often driven by a range of factors but led by over-hiring in previous years, the need to cut costs, and restructuring.

At the same time, employers engaged in an intense 'war for talent' to address skill gaps, invest in new technologies, and attract the strongest talent of the next generation.

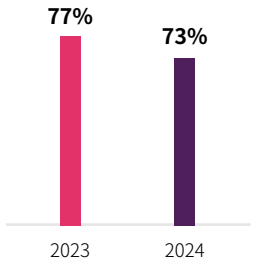
How much has the situation changed in the last 12 months? Have employers gotten better at handling redundancies? What's the impact on workers?

To find the answers, we surveyed 3,011 HR leaders (CHROs, HR Directors, and equivalents) and 8,101 white-collar workers across nine countries. These included the five surveyed last year (Australia, Canada, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States), plus Brazil and the DACH region (Austria, Germany, and Switzerland).

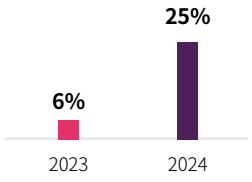
At a glance:

Year-over-year changes

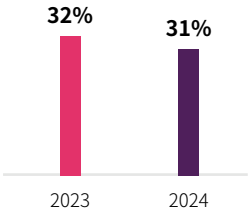
HR leaders considering or undertaking redundancies this year:



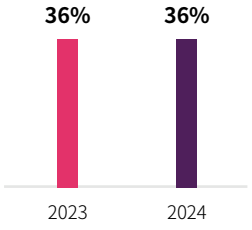
HR leaders worried about employee burnout resulting from redundancies:



Workers considering changing jobs in the next 12 months:



Workers worried about being laid off by their current employer:



[1] https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-02-08/ai-is-driving-more-redundancies-than-companies-want-to-admit

[2] https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/08/ai-artificial-intelligence-changing-the-future-of-work-jobs/

[3] https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/01/1145377

[4] https://www.barrons.com/livecoverage/may-jobs-report-data-today

[5] https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/latest

Redundancy Trends & Impacts Overview

73%

of HR leaders are making or considering redundancies in 2024, versus 77% in 2023.

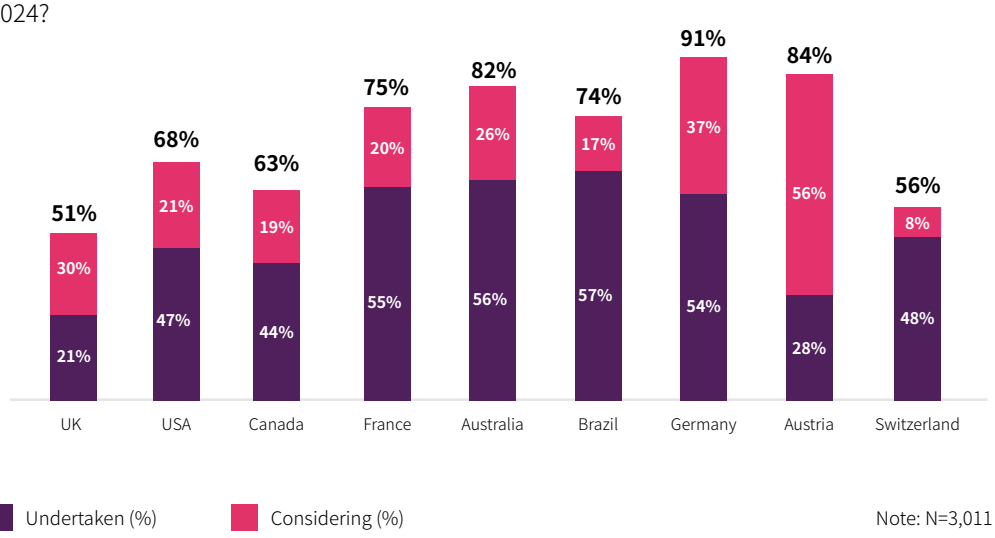
Redundancies continue to be widespread but appear to be slowing. Almost half (48%) of surveyed HR leaders said their organisation has conducted redundancies in 2024 or is planning to do so.

In addition, 25% reported that they may make redundancies this year but are yet to reach a final decision. This means 73% of HR leaders are making or considering redundancies in 2024, versus 77% in 2023.

Does this decline mean some organisations have found their footing? While still a high figure the decline suggests some have completed their redundancies for now. Of note, there are significant variations between geographies (as shown in Figure 1, below).

Figure 1: HR leaders undertaking/considering redundancies in 2024, by country

Q: Has your organisation undertaken or is your organisation considering any redundancies in 2024?



The United Kingdom stands out, with only 21% of surveyed HR leaders reporting redundancies in 2024. Perhaps UK-based organisations have made the most progress in their right-sizing efforts. Our data also revealed UK employers are the most likely to report a hiring freeze (discussed further below). Together, it suggests they've adopted a wait-and-see approach, using hiring freezes as a redundancy alternative.

Rightsize…or "Rightskill?"

Last year, data revealed employers were laying off workers while engaging in a 'war for talent' to secure the skills needed for the future.

New data showed a significant gap between the 73% of companies considering or undertaking redundancies on the one hand, and the 12% engaged in hiring freezes on the other.

It may seem counterintuitive when employers hire new employees while laying off others, but it's not really. It happens all the time. Products or services are discontinued. Funding dries up or gets reallocated to different projects requiring different specialisations. Branches or factories close and open elsewhere.

Here, the data revealed it was less about down or rightsizing. As we identify in the next section of this report, employers' primary motivation was and is to 'rightskill.'

Further, employers are implementing redeployment programs in large numbers (see the focus on redeployments subsection, later). This suggests employers are building, not simply buying, a workforce with skills the organisation needs in the roles where it needs them.

Hiring freezes – conservative measure or stifling growth?

Only 12% of surveyed HR leaders reported a hiring freeze, but this number disguises some significant variation between geographies. UK HR leaders reported the highest incidence of hiring freezes (20%) followed by Canada (19%), the United States (14%), and Australia (12%).

While hiring freezes will always be a useful tool, we caution against relying on them too heavily at this specific moment. Skill mixes for many roles are shifting rapidly[6] and competition for in-demand skills is intensifying[7].

In this context, any hiring freeze ignoring the skills cost risks depriving the organisation of fresh talent with hard-to-find skills. This could have far-reaching consequences.

To successfully execute necessary hiring freezes we recommend:

1. A thorough assessment of the organisation's current skills base and future skills needs
2. A plan charting a course between the two via internal mobility and skilling

It's critical to have the right people with the right skills in the right roles going forward. If you must enact a hiring freeze, ensure it doesn't become a 'skills freeze' too.

[6] https://www.lhh.com/us/en/insights/building-a-skills-first-culture-challenges-for-leadership/

[7] https://www.lhh.com/us/en/insights/embracing-ai-strategies-for-success/

What's driving redundancies now?

Globally, HR leaders expect redundancies to affect 16% of their workforces, with respondents in Austria reporting the greatest impact (20%) and Brazilians the least (13%). This is a slight decline from a global average of 20% in 2023's report and deceleration versus an end of the large-scale redundancies identified last year.

The top five drivers of redundancies globally are presented in Figure 2, below.

Figure 2: Top five drivers of redundancies in 2024

Q: What are the business reasons why your company has completed or is considering redundancies in 2024?

Note: n=1,436

The top five drivers of redundancies have changed significantly since last year, when 'over-hiring in previous years' was top with 41% of HR leaders citing it as a reason for redundancies.

This year, the responses were more evenly spread, with 'over-hiring in previous years' and (new to the top 5) 'releasing individuals for low performance' carrying equal weight. Another new entry to the top 5, 'releasing employees without the right skills' followed closely with other usual drivers, restructuring and cost-cutting.

Drivers indicating 'low performance' and ''wrong skill sets' are closely related and likely overlap. They could also be a consequence of previous 'over-hiring' when many employers scaled rapidly post-pandemic, were less selective in a candidate-driven market, or simply a casualty of economic forecasts.

Based on the rapidly changing needs for various hard and soft skills, we strongly encourage employers to reskill, upskill, and redeploy workers when appropriate and feasible.

Make empathy central to your employer brand

Employers should also consider the impact of redundancies on the remaining workers and the wider community. Laid-off workers and their retained colleagues often keep social ties when the former's employment ends. Your retained staff are likely to discover, in detail, how their former colleagues were treated.

Meanwhile, insensitively handled redundancies posted on social media[8] are increasing. Laid-off workers frequently share their experiences with their social and professional networks, eroding your employer brand's goodwill.

Simply put - poorly handled redundancies make it difficult to retain the employees you need and makes recruiting new talent harder.

Forward-thinking employers play the long game

Avoiding these reputation and business risks during redundancies begins with treating workers with dignity and respect. Then, the most forward-thinking employers go further. They recognise for many laid-off workers, the world of work changed significantly since their last job search.

While some may feel prepared for the new reality of skills-based hiring[9], many will need support in identifying the skills they have, the extent to which they are transferable, and the skills they need or want to learn.

Large, well-resourced employers with a skills-based culture in place may provide this support alone, but we recommend all employers educate themselves on the range of third-party tools supporting these endeavours.

For example, this area of the HR services market has moved quickly to find innovative, practical applications for generative AI. These enable employers of all sizes to offer a level of support during and after redundancies previously unachievable for smaller organisations.

While negative stories about poorly handled redundancies travel fast, so do positive stories. They're unlikely to garner the same kinds of headlines, of course, but your retained staff will hear from their former colleagues they were treated well and set up for success. So too will the talent you try to recruit in the future, and the local community.

[8] https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20240118-workers-are-filming-their-redundancies-then-posting-them-to-tiktok-what-could-go-wrong

[9] https://hbr.org/2022/02/skills-based-hiring-is-on-the-rise

Challenges and concerns for HR leaders and workers

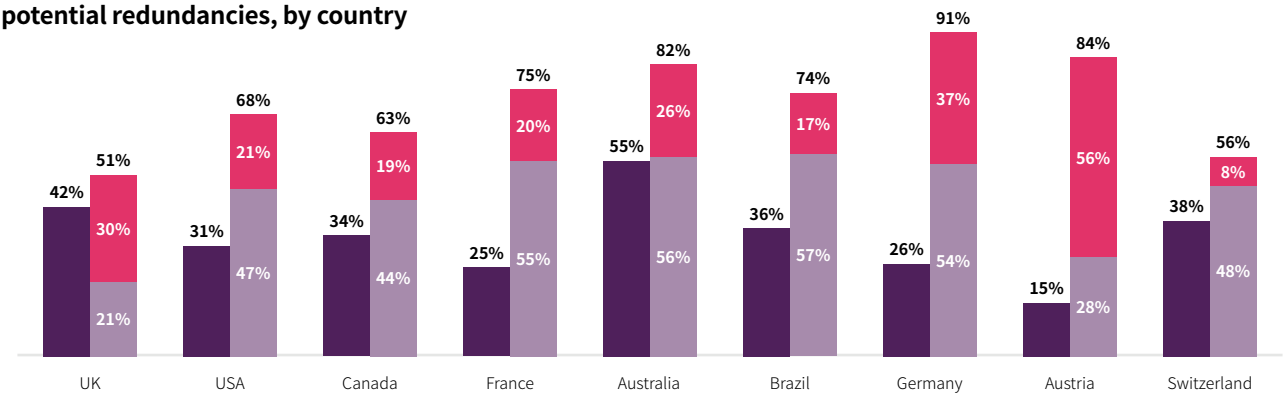
Last year, we found widespread concern around redundancies among workers, and the same is true in 2024.

Once again,

- More than half (56%) of surveyed workers reported redundancies within their teams in the last 12 months
- 36% reported being worried about a potential redundancy by their current employer.

This global average, however, disguises significant variance in how secure workers feel in each surveyed country, as shown in Figure 3, below.

Figure 3: Workers' concern about being laid off compared to HR leaders' actual and potential redundancies, by country



Note: N=8,101; N=3,011 ; percentages in dark purple represent those who agreed with the statement 'I am worried about being laid off by my current employer.'

Workers concerned about being laid off

HR leaders undertook redundancies

HR leaders considering redundancies

Workers in Australia, at 55%, are the most worried about being laid off, by a considerable margin. This is 13 percentage points ahead of the second most, those in the United Kingdom (42%).

Because Australia has the third-highest percentage of HR leaders considering or undertaking redundancies at 82%, the concerns of Australian workers appear to be well-founded.

It's noteworthy that in some countries, workers' concern about redundancies is far less than the proportion of HR leaders undertaking or considering redundancies.

Only two countries placed ahead of Australia here: Germany at 91% and Austria at 86%. In fourth place behind Australia came France, at 75% (see Figure 1). Yet workers in Germany, Austria, and France report the three lowest levels of concern about being laid off, at 26%, 15%, and 25%, respectively (see Figure 3).

Notably, these three countries are the only members of the European Union in our survey sample and enjoy a reputation of protections and support for unemployed workers. Because of their work culture and social constructs, such as universal healthcare, potential redundancies are arguably less of a stressor.

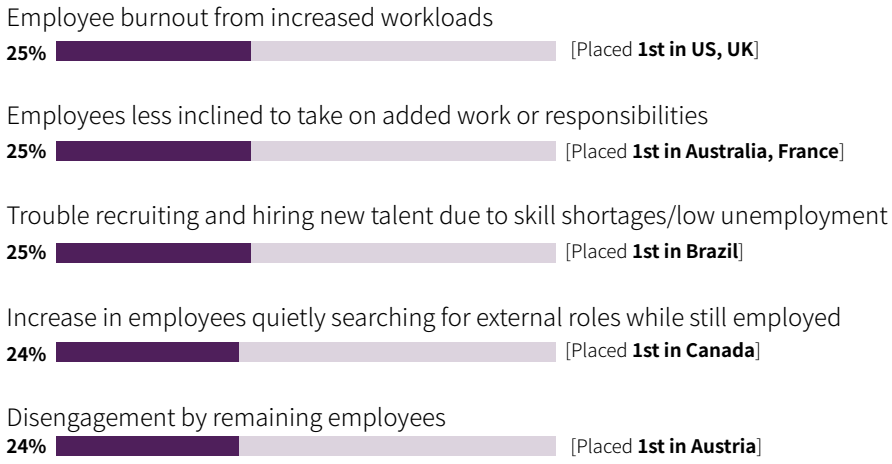
Redundancy concerns in HR leaders

Only 2% of HR leaders said they had no concerns about the impact of redundancies on the organisation. This is an increase on last year's 1% but unlikely to be significant given the low numbers this represents.

When we asked HR leaders to identify their specific concerns, we found that no single issue emerged as the biggest. Less than a single percentage point separated the entire top five (see Figure 4, below), and only four percentage points separated the full range of 10 potential impacts.

Figure 4: HR leaders' top five concerns around redundancies

Q: Which concerns, if any, do you have about redundancies at your organisation?



[1st place in Switzerland was **'Lawsuits by disgruntled employees'** and in Germany **'Inability to achieve business objectives'** – both didn't make the global top 5]

The extreme closeness of responses to this question shows **HR leaders recognise redundancies can have a broad range of negative impacts on the business.**

In effect, HR leaders are raising an alarm here: Even when redundancies are necessary, these negative impacts must be properly accounted for so the organisation can continue to operate effectively.

What this amounts to in practice is redundancies alone are not a solution to an organisation's problems. Instead, they are an important part of the solution with steps to reduce disengagement and burnout among remaining workers.

Focus on employee burnout

It's encouraging to see HR leaders recognising the risks of remaining employees burning out from increased workloads. Last year, only 6% of HR leaders identified burnout as a potential pitfall of redundancy programs while 72% of workers said their teams were burned out.

So far, HR leaders' renewed focus on the risks of burnout appears to be bearing minimal fruit. The proportion of workers reporting burnout in their teams declined only three points to 69%. This is a small decrease, but should encourage concentrated efforts to tackle this retention killer.

The data also suggested **worker burnout is a worldwide issue.** While there's some geographical variation in the rates of reported burnout, most countries clustered closely around the global average.

Which stood out? Switzerland at 81% was the highest, while neighbouring Austria reported the lowest at 56%.

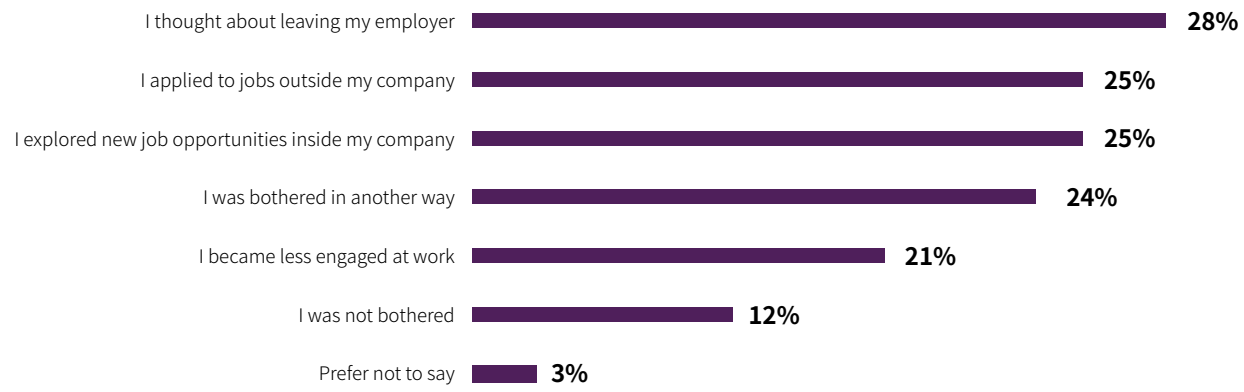
In this context, it's unsurprising worker burnout rocketed to the top of HR leaders' concerns around redundancies. Worker burnout drives and intensifies HR leaders' other concerns around redundancies.

For example, burned-out workers are less inclined to take on other responsibilities, more likely to actively seek jobs externally, and more prone to disengage. While tackling burnout won't eliminate remaining issues, it will reduce them significantly.

Consequences of worker burnout

To dig deeper, we asked how workers responded to burnout in their teams. Most felt motivated to take some kind of action, with only 12% remaining unbothered – see Figure 5, below.

Figure 5: Workers' responses to burnout in their teams



Note: n=5,586 (respondents who reported burnout in their teams in the last 12 months); multiple answers permitted

Unsurprisingly, workers typically respond to burnout in their team by reconsidering their future. While 28% thought about leaving their employer, a quarter (25%) took action by applying for jobs outside the organisation. A quarter explored opportunities within the company, while 21% reported that they became disengaged.

This supports HR leaders' fears that employees disengage and search for new jobs in response to redundancies. Both appeared in the top five HR leaders' concerns shown in Figure 4 and often intensified by worker burnout.

Arguably the most significant aspect of these worker responses to burnout, however, is that approximately equal percentages look for new opportunities internally as externally. This has significant ramifications for HR leaders' retention strategies, discussed further in the section below.

The bottom line? Once employees feel burned out, they 'leave' mentally or physically, and leaders have a new problem.

Retention strategies and redeployment programs

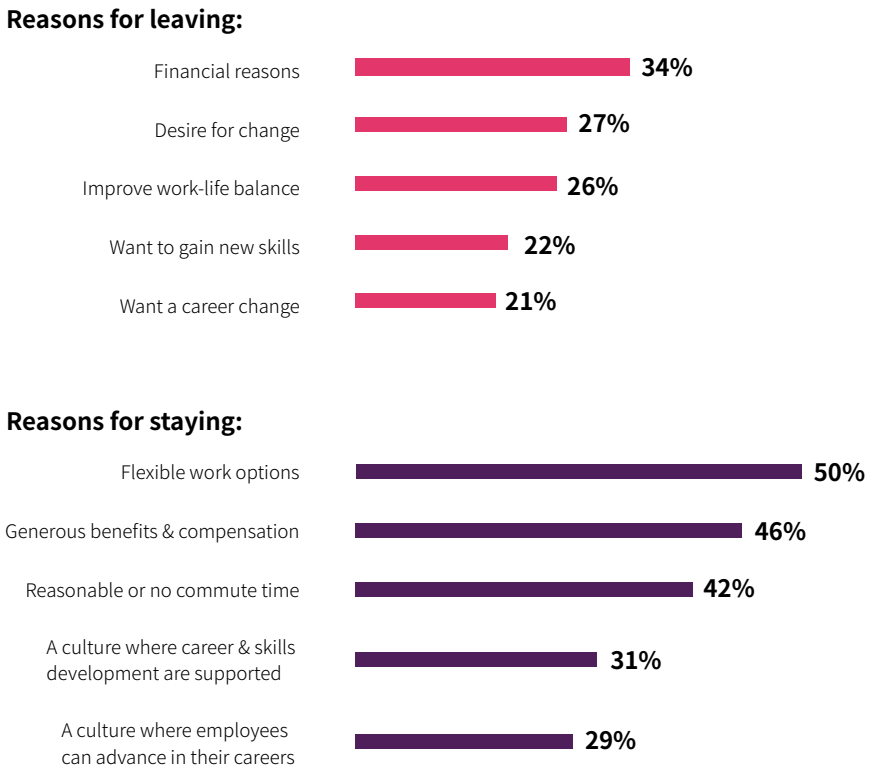
The proportion of workers considering changing jobs has remained broadly the same since last year's research.

This year, 31% reported that they are considering changing jobs within the next 12 months, while 26% reported they are considering doing so over a longer time frame.

This means overall, 57% of workers are considering changing jobs. Last year's equivalent figures were 33%, 24%, and 57%, respectively.

To assess the relationship to HR leaders' retention strategies, we asked our surveyed white-collar workers to elaborate on the reasons they want to leave – or stay – with their current employer. The top five responses to each of these questions are presented in Figure 6, below.

Figure 6: Top five drivers of employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction



Note: n=4,567 (workers considering leaving); n=3,339 (workers not considering leaving); multiple answers permitted

This year's answers closely mirror those given last year. The desire for a career change displaced 'company culture' as a top-five reason for leaving, but that aside, the top five reasons for staying in or leaving a job remain the same as last year and in the same order.

Like last year, financial reasons are a powerful driver of worker dissatisfaction and was the top reason to leave a job. Meanwhile, 'generous benefits and compensation' was the second most powerful reason to stay.

In another parallel with last year's research, the drivers unrelated to finances share two broad themes – 1) quality-of-life factors such as flexibility and commuting and 2) professional growth and career development.

Naturally, this leads us to the same conclusion as last year. People want to be in control of their own professional lives and destinies, with the ability to work flexibly and develop their skills and careers.

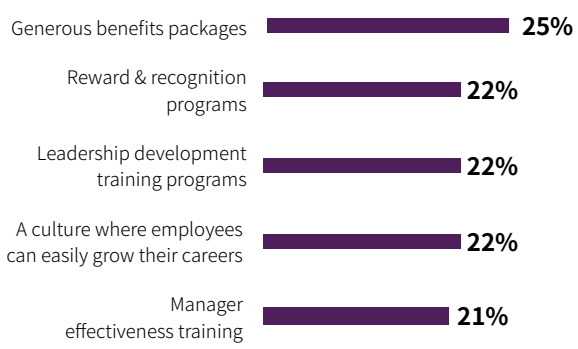
We expected HR leaders' retention efforts to focus on these aspects, but last year we were disappointed to find this wasn't the case. This year, we're pleased to report that, with one exception, **retention strategies have shifted to meet workers' needs more closely.** The top five retention strategies HR leaders have in place are shown in Figure 7, below.

HR leaders were most likely to cite 'generous benefits packages' (25%) as a retention strategy they employ, directly addressing workers' foremost reason for leaving.

However, retention is not just about convincing people to reconsider their decision to leave. It should also focus on building a working environment where your best talent does not make such a decision in the first place.

Figure 7: Top five talent retention strategies employed by HR leaders

Q: What talent retention strategies, if any, does your organisation have in place in 2024?



Note: N=3,011; multiple answers permitted

Flexible working continues to be a source of misalignment between employers and workers

The majority of surveyed workers (50%) rallied specifically around ‘Flexible work options’ as a reason to stay with an employer.

Given the absence from HR leaders’ list of top five retention strategies, **flexible working options is the single most underused retention tool available.** We advise employers who want to retain their top talent to build flexible working into their retention strategies.

As hard as pandemic lockdowns were, many people embraced the flexibility remote work provided. Workers are people, with diverse responsibilities and interests. Recognising this and providing space for them to attend to them shows empathy and trust.

Whether it’s veterinarians’ availability, school events, or a pharmacy’s business hours, workers are frequently asked to accommodate the schedules of others. Do we want ‘work’ to be the reason someone delays medical care, spends their whole Saturday on errands, or doesn’t show up for a child’s school concert?

In other words, are your policies for flexible or remote work inspiring loyalty or resentment? Give employees agency to flex their working hours as feasible, just as you ask that they flex with the needs of the business.

Good retention strategies integrate professional development

of surveyed HR leaders believe their retention strategies have been effective so far, yet

of workers are considering leaving

We were particularly pleased to see such a strong focus on development in HR leaders' retention efforts. Leadership development programs are powerful tools to address workers' desire to develop their skills and progress their careers. Last year it was the third least common retention strategy.

This year, it shares second place with 'reward and recognition programs' and 'a culture where employees can easily grow their careers.' Both relate to professional growth and career development.

Naturally, every redundancy is stressful news for the individual concerned. But it's also difficult for those retained. They grapple with prematurely severed professional relationships, increased workloads, and other negative impacts.

Against this backdrop, taking a visible interest in the development and progress of the remaining workers can act as a comforting 'arm around the shoulder' to those left feeling unsure about their future in the organisation and considering leaving.

We identified a marked disconnect between the content of HR leaders' retention strategies and workers' needs last year, so we are pleased to see so much progress this year in bringing these into closer convergence.

However, another disconnect that we identified last year remains – 86% of surveyed HR leaders believe their retention strategies have been effective so far, yet the fact that 57% of workers are considering leaving suggests this confidence is misplaced.

Given that **retention strategies are aligning more closely with what workers want,** we suspect this is somewhat of a 'lagging indicator.'

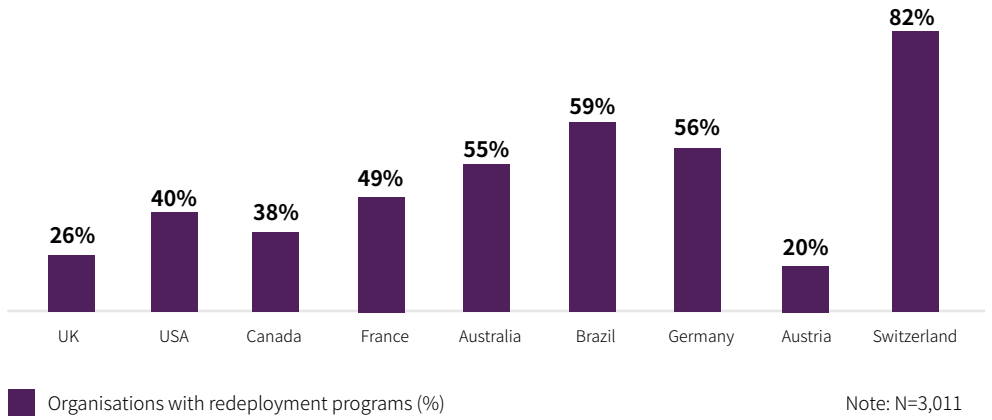
HR leaders' renewed focus on development, growth, and culture to improve retention is unlikely to be felt immediately. These are long-term programs that need time to take root. The percentage of workers wanting to leave their current role has remained at 57% for two years now. We'll watch closely to see if it falls as these retention efforts mature.

Redeploy instead of saying goodbye

This year, 82% of HR leaders said they considered redeploying workers as a redundancy alternative. Arguably the most significant change, though, was in the proportion of HR leaders who have a redeployment program in place.

This jumped 25 percentage points to 47%, indicating a large increase in the number of organisations using such programs. We did, however, record significant geographical variation: The percentage of HR leaders in each country indicating their organisation has a redeployment program is shown in Figure 8, below.

Figure 8: Use of redeployment programs by country



Organisations in the United Kingdom and Austria are evidently behind their peers in other countries using redeployment programs, and we advise them – and all organisations underusing redeployments – to embrace them. Redeployments are not a total solution, but they address many of the challenges HR leaders face.

Redeployment is a win-win

For example, our survey shows workers are eager for opportunities to develop new skills and progress their careers:

59%

said "I would like to develop new skills to propel my career, but I don't know what to pursue"

44%

said "I would like to change roles, but I don't know which career path to take"

43%

said "My career is not progressing as I'd like"

A well-managed redeployment program, especially one integrated with existing skills and leadership development programs, may help people hone the skills they'll need for the future. They may discover their strengths or new passions – without needing to find a new employer to do so.

Preserve institutional knowledge with internal mobility

It's worth remembering the proportion of burned-out workers who seek internal opportunities is the same as those who job search elsewhere, at 25% (Figure 5).

This suggests workers are open to remaining with their employer despite burnout. In such cases, a redeployment can be the difference between retention and attrition.

Therefore, employers should proactively identify burnout risks and step in with targeted support interventions, including redeployment options. This approach may even shift some of those who are applying for external roles into the 'seeking internal opportunities' camp.

Given HR leaders' concerns about burnout, attrition, and disengagement after redundancies, the value of redeployments should be clear, as they address factors negatively impacting employers. Further, the use of redeployments protects the employer brand by reducing the number of laid-off workers and demonstrates sensitivity (the absence of which often leads to harmful publicity around redundancies[10]).

Pathways to success for workers

Ideally, a well-operated redeployment program links closely with a career transition program. This ensures the people who need such services are appraised of all their options. In turn, these should both link to well-being and skilling programs.

Together, these measures ensure your organisation's people understand their own strengths, opportunities for growth, and where their skills can be best put to use.

Some will find internal roles to apply their skills more meaningfully to the organisation's success. Some will acquire the skills and achieve the well-being they need to succeed and grow.

Inevitably, some will transition to employment elsewhere. With these four programs in place and functioning as intended, they will leave with all the tools for future success.

By ensuring 'traffic' flows between such programs, employers have the right skills in the right places at the right time – and, perhaps more importantly, may swiftly adjust when events (e.g., technological developments) demand agility.

[10] https://www.lhh.com/us/en/insights/treating-people-with-dignity-and-respect-during-redundancies/

Communication problems between employers and laid-off employees

Redundancies are sometimes unavoidable and a time of heightened emotions and intense stress. This is truer than ever, with the current redundancy cycle on the heels of the Covid economy, rapid technological change, and a talent shortage that started in 2018.

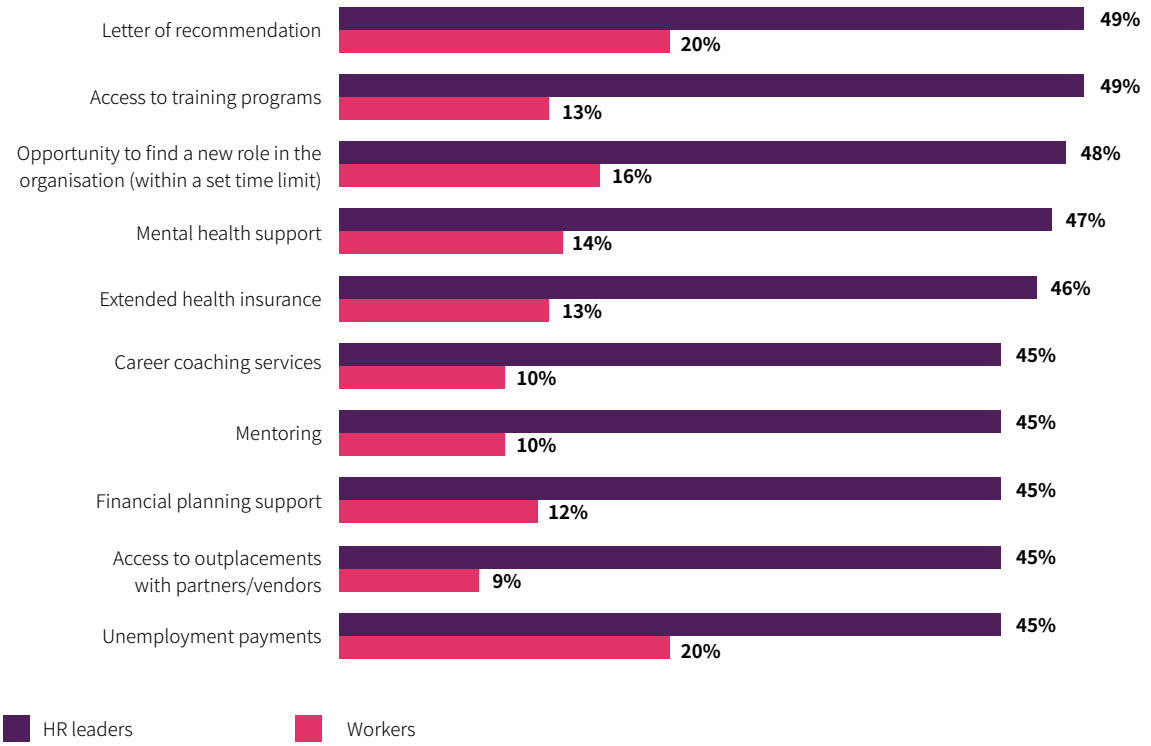
In addition, organisations cannot assume the discussions with laid-off workers will remain private. In the social-media age, it's a constant risk that a misspoken phrase or ill-considered gesture will become infamous.

In these circumstances, a comprehensive support program for laid-off workers helps protect the organisation from negative publicity and reduce the hit to the morale of remaining workers.

But there's a problem. Last year we identified a large disconnect between HR leaders' and workers' views of the range of support offered, and that disconnect remains in 2024.

HR leaders report the provision of redundancy support at much greater rates than workers (see Figure 9, below).

Figure 9: Redundancy support reported by HR leaders and workers



Note: N=3,011 (HR leaders); N=8,101; support types are the top 3 identified by HR leaders; multiple answers permitted

Figure 9 shows the gap between the types of redundancy support reported by HR leaders and those that workers report seeing in the organisation; notably, this gap exists right across the spectrum of possible support types.

For example:

- 45% of HR leaders report that they provide career coaching services but only 10% of workers say they do
- 45% of HR leaders say they provide access to outplacements with partners and vendors, but only 9% of workers agree

Each support type was cited by almost half of HR leaders, but no support type was mentioned by more than one-fifth of workers.

This tells us that **organisations are still failing to effectively communicate the range of support options available to laid-off workers.** We therefore urge employers to look again at how this information is relayed to workers and ensure it's prominent in all redundancy-related communications.

Turn 'rejection' into 'redirection'

It's common for laid-off workers to feel unsure of themselves. It's normal for a person to doubt their professional value and ability to resume their career with success.

Positive interventions such as career coaching, mentorships, and outplacements can play a vital role in preventing the shock and disappointment of a redundancy from spiralling into a personal crisis. This is precisely the kind of support their remaining colleagues (and future talent) will notice.

By helping departing colleagues identify and develop their skills, make new professional contacts, and get guidance on their next steps, an employer sends a strong message. It tells retained and incoming talent that they, too, can expect to be treated with fairness and dignity even in difficult times.

When you provide a comprehensive range of support options to laid-off workers, you treat them fairly and respectfully. You also protect your employer brand and lessen the negative impact of redundancies on the remaining workers, many of whom stay in touch with former colleagues and retain an interest in their personal well-being.

Recommendations and next steps

Redundancies are a tense, emotional time for everyone in an organisation, even those impacted indirectly. Leaders, managers, and workers all feel the strain in different ways, so we encourage organisations to ensure people at all levels feel supported during such a trying process.

Don't get stuck - use skilling and mobility to keep moving forward

While a wait-and-see approach to redundancies may have merits, consider how this interacts with other policies and approaches. For example, while a hiring freeze looks like a sensible alternative to redundancies, combining it with a wait-and-see approach to redundancies and no redeployment program may lead to stagnation.

Think of your organisation as a body of water. It benefits from movement and flow. Investing in talent skilling and mobility and in new talent, keeps it fresh and healthy. Stagnant water breeds nothing but negatives.

HR leaders evidently recognise this, as they identified 'trouble recruiting and hiring new talent' as a top-three concern around redundancies and relatively few employers have frozen hiring. This means the 'war for talent' we identified is ongoing, as employers try to use a combination of recruitment and redundancies to achieve the right skills bases.

Redeployments and reskilling should be part of that picture too. Organisations cannot thrive in the long term without the fresh thinking, drive, and commitment from bringing new talent into key roles. Sourcing such talent internally via redeployment/mobility is a strong approach.

Tackle burnout head-on

HR leaders' renewed focus on worker burnout is a welcome development, but further progress is needed. Worker burnout makes all the negative impacts redundancies on an organisation worse and may jeopardise the business's ability to function.

Proactively identify workers at risk of burnout and offer the support options they need, whether enhancing their skills to perform better in their current position, redeploying them into a more suitable role, or something else.

Further, proactively prevent burnout at the organisational level. For example, a worker close to burnout in an organisation with a standard of access to both career coaching and redeployments has the tools to find a new internal opportunity that suits them better.

Conversely, a worker in an organisation without this support (or where accessing support is outside the norm) is more likely to succumb to the mental and physical health implications of burnout and quit. Or worse, stay and poison the rest of the apples in the barrel.

Expand support for laid-off workers – and tell them about it

The disconnect we identified last year between the support options HR leaders say they offer, and the ones workers say they receive still exists. Moreover, it has not improved.

Strive to offer as broad a range of options as possible to laid-off workers but evaluate how the organisation communicates this information. Frankly, the message isn't effectively reaching the people it should.

Rectifying this may require some creative thinking, such as implementing closer integration of redundancy support programs with skilling and mobility programs.

Finally, consider how people process information in a crisis. People commonly feel overwhelmed as they begin to consider the consequences and won't retain everything they're told.

So, be sure to

- Simplify your information as much as possible
- Use a credible source to deliver the messages
- Be consistent in your delivery and content of information
- Release accurate information as soon as you can

Conclusion by JC Townend, LHH President UK&I and TAG President UK&I

Layoffs are a tense time for any organisation and in the last year, they presented some real challenges for many business leaders. After hitting a 25-year peak in the second half of 2020 during the Covid pandemic, redundancies reported to the UK government stabilised in 2021 before hitting a 25-year low in 2022, which gave confidence to employers and employees alike. However in 2023, redundancies returned to trend, including some large and highly-publicised global restructurings, particularly in the digital/tech sector. These were made more painful by a sluggish job market characterised by declining job postings, especially in London.

We expect average redundancy levels will maintain in the coming year, with a combination of big announcements and small restructurings. However, we expect job openings to begin to recover in 2025, providing more openings for redundant employees, both within their existing companies and externally.

Redundancy can also be a time when employees (sometimes for the first time) have the chance to really explore their career moves in the context of the changing job market – assessing their skills and interests, closing training gaps, and (with the right coaching) setting themselves up for long-term employability. Sometimes this can be done through redeployment into new roles within their existing company – it can be easier and cheaper to retrain them for jobs of the future than to pay severance and seek candidates in hard-to-fill roles externally. And sometimes this is landing a role externally. Regardless, companies can support their brands and their workforce by providing the coaching and reskilling to help these employees land on their feet.

Globally, our data paints a conflicting picture of the redundancy support provisions as reported by HR leaders and workers. We find often companies are offering more than their redundant employees know.

That said, we've seen some real progress over the last 12 months. Redeployment is a real focus for HR leaders in the UK as they grapple to keep their talent, with nearly two-thirds (65%) of UK based HR leaders reporting considering redeployments as an alternative to redundancies, especially as a fifth report hiring freezes in their companies.

When those affected by redundancy are aligned on their next steps and have access to the help they need, it reassures the remaining workers that if laid off someday, they can be confident they'll find the same support. Overall, the picture painted by this research is a positive one – the progress made in the last 12 months may be uneven, but it is significant.

JC Townend

LHH President UK&I and
TAG President UK&I

About LHH

At LHH, we exist to help people, teams and organisations find and prepare for what's next. Our end-to-end HR solutions future-proof organisations and careers all over the world. Through Advisory, Career Transition & Mobility, Leadership Development and Recruitment Solutions, we enable transformation, and our job is never done because there's always another tomorrow to prepare for.

We make a difference to everyone we work with, and we do it with local expertise, backed by global infrastructure and industry-leading technology. LHH's over 8,000 colleagues and coaches span 66 countries, working with more than 15,000 organisations, a majority of Fortune Global 500, and nearly 500,000 candidates each year. Together we address needs across the entire talent journey, helping organisations build their capabilities and individuals build brighter futures. There is a world of opportunity out there. Let's get to work.

LHH is a part of the Adecco Group, the world's leading talent advisory and solutions company, headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland.