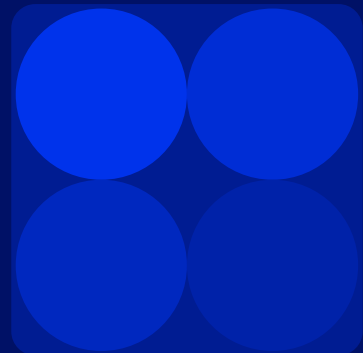
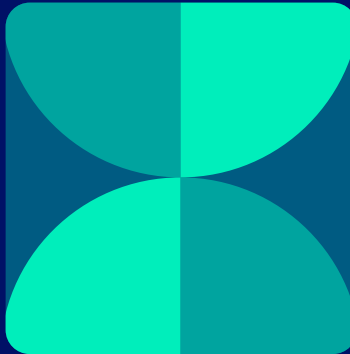


THE VOICE OF THE AMERICAN WORKFORCE

THE NATION'S LARGEST ANNUAL SURVEY OF THE HOURLY WORKFORCE



Letter from the Executive

A Legacy of Listening

Since 2007, Employbridge has given voice to the American workforce, surveying tens of thousands of workers each year in the clerical, logistics, manufacturing, and transportation sectors. Our goal is always to learn what matters most to those who make up this engine of the U.S. economy — and to provide employers data and insights on which to build agile workforce strategies.

Each year, the survey, now titled The Voice of the American Workforce, has yielded unique and actionable insights. We continued listening as the Great Recession came and went, followed by periods of growth, a global pandemic, and today as digital transformation gathers speed across industries and the consumer experience.

Echoes of Uncertainty

In this 17th annual edition, ongoing economic uncertainty echoes through many responses. For example, amid rising inflation, pay rates remain far and away the most important motivator for those looking for work. A strong desire for job security also rose in importance.

A path forward seems to be on many workers' minds, with many expressing positive feelings about their own prospects, yet many also looking for new opportunities, whether those be with new employers or through upskilling into advanced roles with current employers.



In this 17th annual edition, ongoing economic uncertainty echoes through many responses.

Desire for Flexibility

In 2023, trends first seen in 2021 and 2022 continue to challenge employers. These include the scarcity of workers to fill available jobs and wage earners' increased desire for work shift and schedule flexibility, an inclination that emerged from the pandemic.

This year's report provides highlights of the survey findings grouped around the key themes. It explores several new distinctions between responses of manufacturing and logistics workers, and much more. It closes with timely recommendations for putting the findings into practice.

Signature Placeholder

Cathi Canfield
Vice President
Enterprise Transformation
Employbridge

To further explore the findings as they relate to your region or business, please [reach out to us](#) for personalized insights.

The Voice of the American Workforce
The nation's largest survey of the hourly workforce



THE AMERICAN WORKFORCE HAS SPKEN

More than 29,000 wage earners shared what matters most to them in the workplace today.

1

Pay continues to be the top factor — by far — when looking for work.

2

Job security is now more important to most job seekers, surpassing last year's priority of shift/schedule..

3

"Treat me with **respect**" is the top priority for building loyalty and retaining workers.

4

While manufacturing workers prefer traditional 5-day/8-hour shifts, logistics workers show a marked interest in 4-day/10-hour **shifts**.

Methodology

A record-breaking 29,000 hourly workers participated, anonymously sharing their priorities and preferences and reflecting on their past, present and future work experiences.

The Process

From January to March 2023, we set up secure digital survey locations at multiple sites, including on-location at employers served by Employbridge. Respondents shared their insights by answering approximately 24 questions, both multiple choice and open response, exploring their attitudes, expectations, and preferences related to their work.

This year, as every year, we returned to essential questions, as well as developing a few new ones to reflect rising challenges and opportunities.

The Participants

Because of Employbridge's 2022 acquisition of Bluecrew, this year's study for the first time captures responses of workers who find and manage their gig work exclusively via digital app.

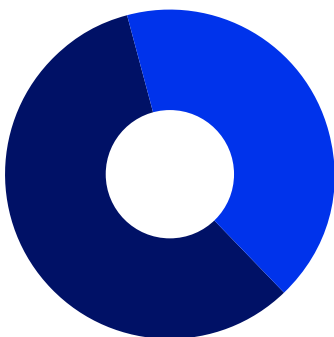
Overall, respondents included workers employed or recently employed on a flexible, part-time or full-time basis by Employbridge customers across 48 U.S. states.

Nearly half (47%) of all recorded responses were from workers with 1-5 years of experience. A total of 77% of respondents work in logistics and manufacturing. And 19% of participants in a manufacturing environment work in the automotive or transportation industry.

Respondent Demographics

29,000 hourly workers

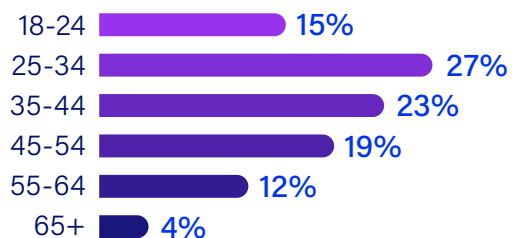
Participation by Gender



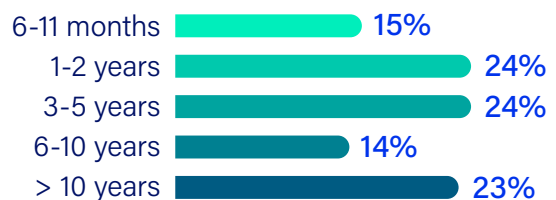
42%
Female Workers

58%
Male Workers

Age (years old)



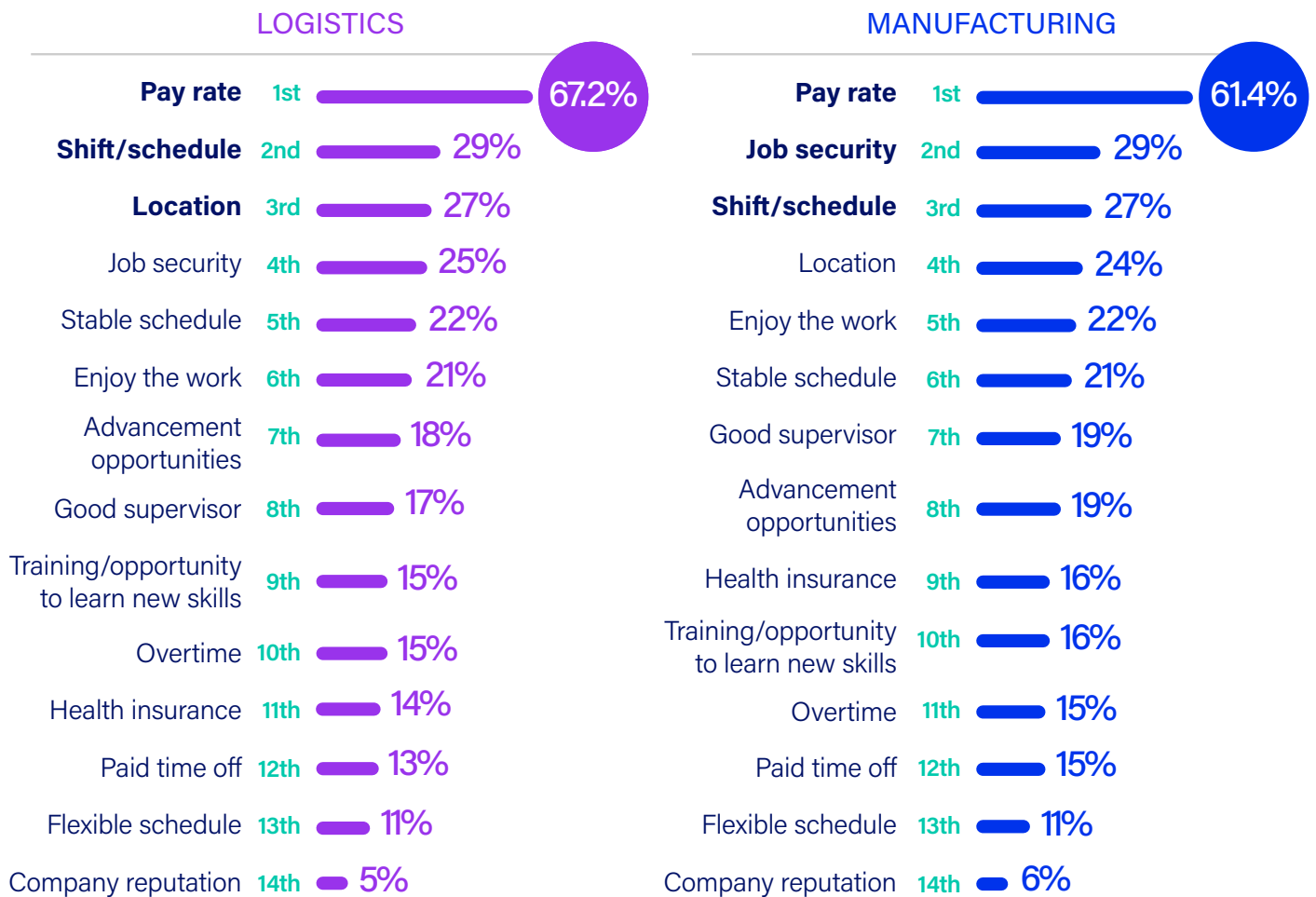
Years of Experience



Payrate still rules.

While wages rose over the past year – the survey revealed a net increase of \$0.43 per hour in manufacturing and \$0.56 per hour in logistics — **pay rate remains, by far, the top priority for job seekers.** Job security, shift/schedule, and location all vie for a distant second or third place.

“What is most important to you when looking for a job?”



Workers Feel the Economic Squeeze

Ongoing inflation continues to put pressure on workers to earn more to keep up with the cost of living. Current wages may not be sufficient for some; nearly half of workers in manufacturing (46.6%) and logistics (45.5%) reported working more than 40 hours a week, presumably to help make ends meet.

In fact, those whose status is “employed full-time, one job” dropped 2.5%, while those employed “full-time, more than one job” rose 1.2%. In addition to these indicators that budgetary realities are driving wage earners to work multiple jobs, fear of the potential for a recession may also be shaping the desire for better pay.

Impact on Turnover

When respondents were asked why they left their last jobs, the top response across all industries was “I found a job that paid more money.” Similarly, when asked to reflect on why they took past roles, pay was again the top motivator. “Consistent pay increase” was the top response across all industries.

Workers in certain verticals were more focused on pay than others. Nearly 70% of clerical workers prioritized it, while at 61.4%, manufacturing workers were less likely than clerical or transportation and logistics workers to name pay as their top factor.

Strong pay rates are the top reason for retention

“Consistent pay increase” was the top response across all industries

TOP REASON FOR STAYING AT PAST JOB: **GOOD PAY**

Transportation	73.9%
Logistics	66.8%
Manufacturing	62.1%
Clerical	60.2%



MOST IMPORTANT WHEN LOOKING FOR NEW JOB: **PAY RATE**

69.4%	Clerical
67.2%	Logistics
67.0%	Transportation
61.4%	Manufacturing

Lower-Wage Earning Segments Contract

As they did in 2022, lower-paying categories once again contracted, likely because wages rose (not because workers exited jobs). In manufacturing, the percentage of workers in the lowest-paying category (wage of less than \$14 per hour) dropped by 4.6%. Similarly, manufacturing workers making between \$14 and \$15.99 per hour dropped by 5.8%. The pattern carried over to the logistics sector, too, where the two lowest-paying categories – \$14 to \$15.99 per hour and \$16 to \$17.99 per hour – shrank by 7.3% and 5.1%, respectively.



In a job market in which the **number of open roles continues to outstrip the number of available workers to fill them**, pay rates will likely continue to climb.





Job security weighs heavily on many.

Across all sectors surveyed, job security now ranks as one of the top three priorities for job seekers, surpassing the importance of shift/schedule for workers in manufacturing and logistics. This is likely another reflection of an uncertain economy.

It is important to consider that while wage earners may be paid on an hourly basis, they are thinking far beyond the next pay cycle. Their sense of job security is shaped by what they believe about their prospects with an employer. An MIT Sloan research study¹ found, for example, that instability in the workplace — including layoffs and reorganizations — can contribute to employee attrition. When workers feel a job or their company is unstable, they will leave in search of a more secure position.

Looking for a clear path forward

Beyond fear of losing work, job security also involves seeing a positive path to personal advancement. Not seeing the prospect for upward mobility — whether it be perception or reality — can erode loyalty and lead to worker disengagement. When the Voice of The American Workforce asked workers why they left their last jobs, nearly a quarter of workers in some sectors selected “I had limited growth opportunities” (transportation: 15.9%; manufacturing: 17.1%; clerical: 23.5%; logistics: 22.7%).

Conversely, when workers do see a way forward with their employers, they can embrace a future where they stay and can become increasingly valuable employees. In 2023, as job openings continue to outnumber job seekers, workers have many options or jobs that offer security and growth.



When workers see a way forward with their employers, they can embrace a future where they stay and can become increasingly valuable employees.

Training to Advance

Many survey respondents cited advancement opportunities and training as top motivators for staying at a job. When they were asked, "Besides pay, what can employers do to earn your loyalty?," those who responded either "advancement opportunities" or "training opportunities for growth" together represent a significant number of workers.

This sentiment was recently echoed in a March 2023 Retail Brew article² that observed, "It may seem counterintuitive, but offering career development and upskilling programs in other fields can reinvigorate workers and increase employee satisfaction and retention."

As we dug deeper into workers' motivations for learning new skills, we found that 42.5% sought training to prepare for promotion or new jobs in their industries and that 67.3% wanted to equip themselves to earn more pay.

"How many hours a week would you invest to learn a new skill?"

LOGISTICS

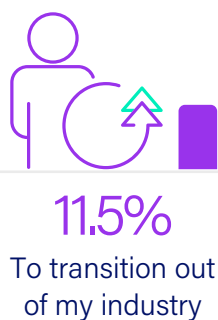
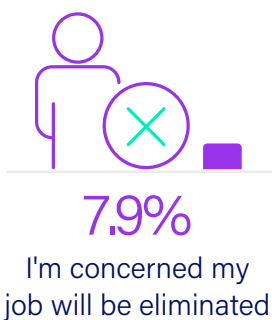


MANUFACTURING

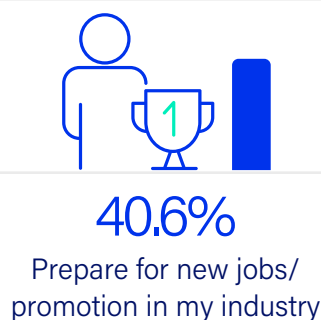
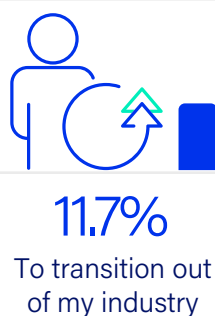


"Reasons to learn a new skill?"

LOGISTICS



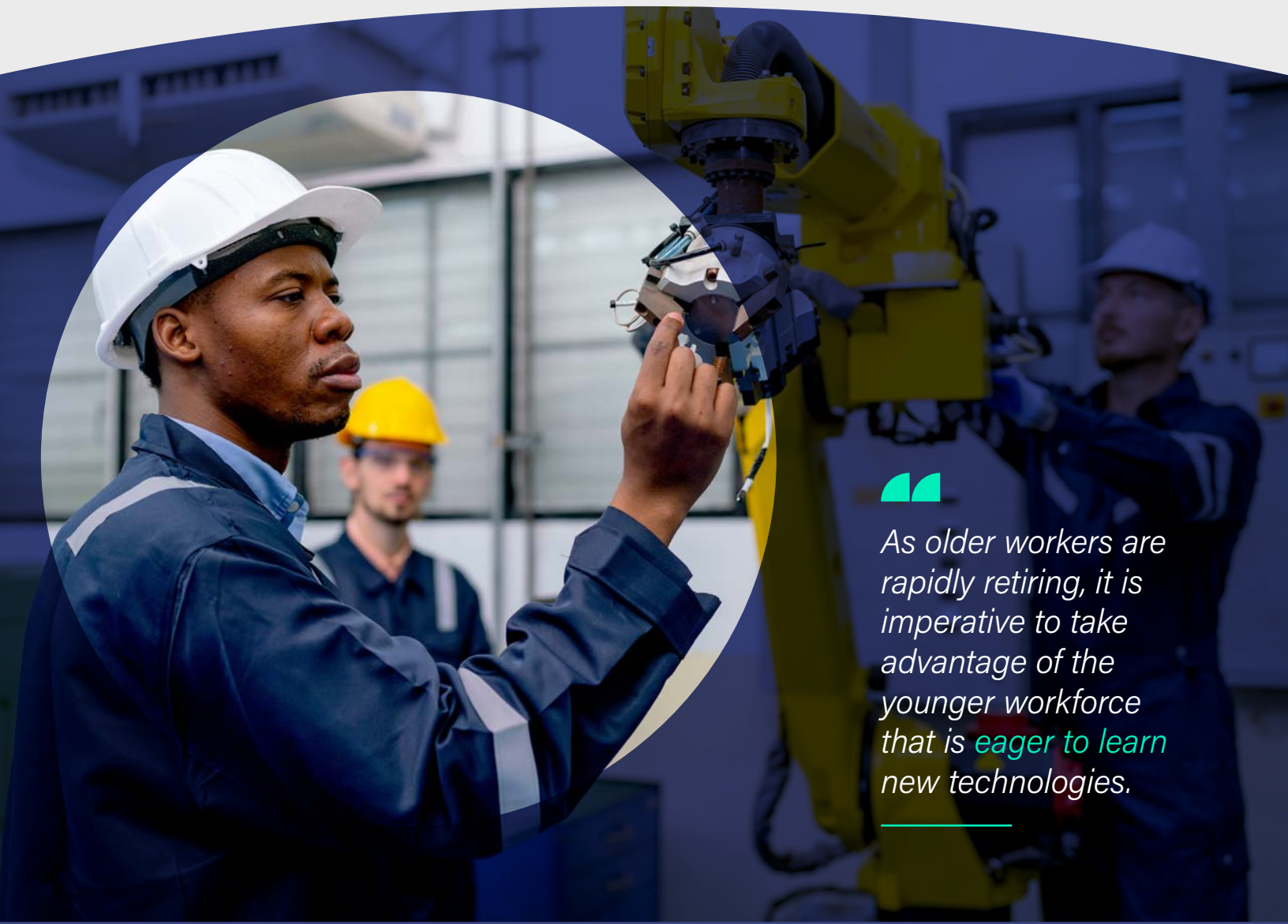
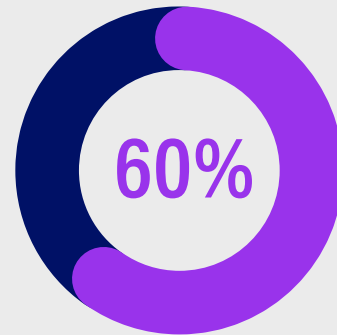
MANUFACTURING



Rising generations ready for automation

Millennials and Gen Z — which make up the largest age group in today's workforce — bring a strong interest in continuous learning, along with a tech-savvy mindset, to the workplace. More than 60% of respondents in these age groups report being either “somewhat interested” or “very interested” in becoming an automation/robotics technician, demonstrating that they are ready to take on the changing work needs of the future. Beginning with respondents aged 45 and older, this interest decreases, with only 59% of workers aged 45-54 interested and 56% of those aged 55-64. As older workers are rapidly retiring, it is imperative to take advantage of the younger workforce that is eager to learn new technologies.

Sixty percent of Millennials and Gen Z workers reporting being either “somewhat interested” or “very interested” in becoming an automation/robotics technician.

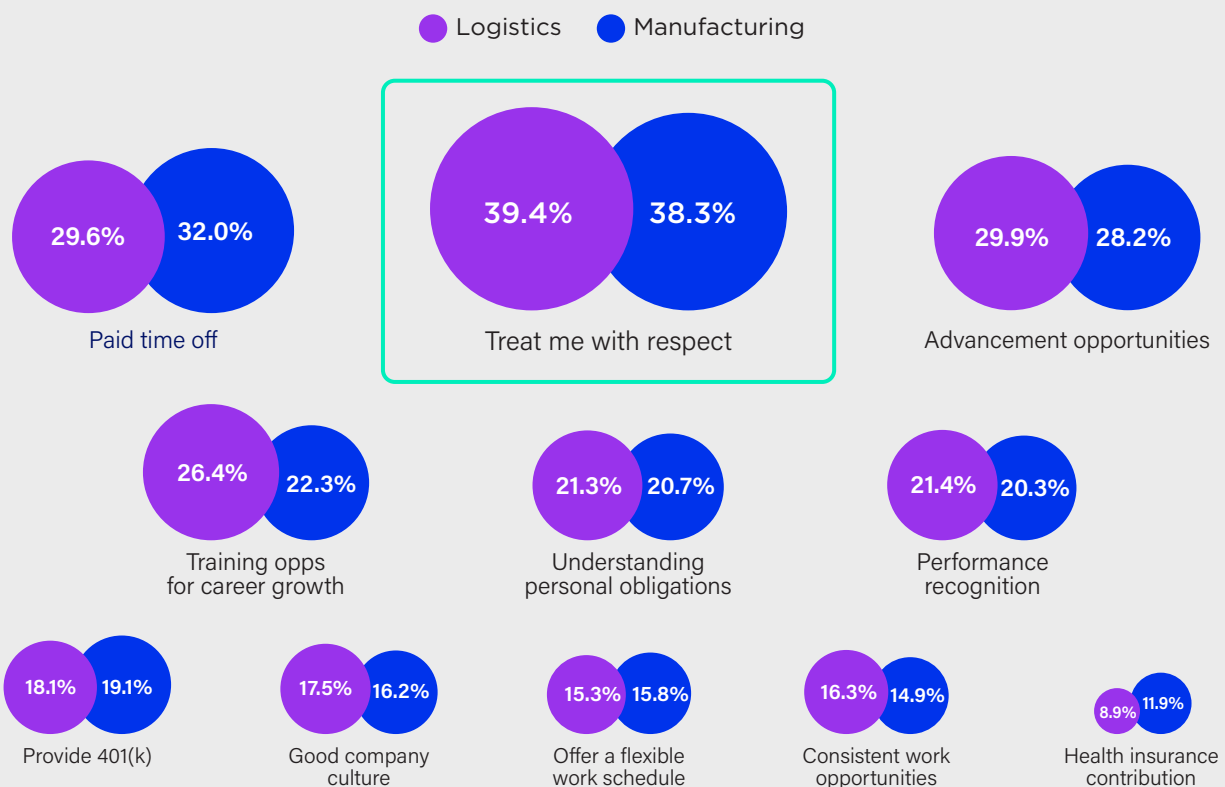


As older workers are rapidly retiring, it is imperative to take advantage of the younger workforce that is eager to learn new technologies.

Respect wanted.

“Treat me with respect” is the top priority for building loyalty and retaining workers. Other forms of respect, such as performance recognition and understanding of obligations that arise, also ranked highly. These are important ways to demonstrate respect, but everyday interactions can also go a long way. This includes being addressed by name, explaining workplace policies and rules, and giving workers a second chance when they make a mistake.

“Other than pay, what can employers do to gain your loyalty?”



When respondents were asked why they left past jobs, “I felt like I wasn’t appreciated/was treated unfairly” was cited by 25% of respondents, the highest reason selected after “I found a job that paid more” (28.7%). More subtle forms of disrespect may be hidden within other responses, such as the more than 18% who cited “I felt overworked/burnt out” as their reason for leaving.

According to Pew Research Center findings,³ the “majority of workers who quit a job in 2021 cite low pay, no opportunities for advancement, and feeling disrespected.” Two years later, The Voice of the American Workforce survey shows that respect is still an area in which employers have a big opportunity to attract and retain workers by shifting how those workers are treated.

In addition to being motivated by higher wages and opportunities for promotion within their industry, workers are also more likely to be engaged at work when their employer takes an active interest in their future, a point explored above in regard to job security and retention.

The way we work continues to shift.

Creative Solutions Wanted.

Most workers today are working traditional workweeks, but change may be coming. Many 2023 respondents are open to (or eager for) new approaches.

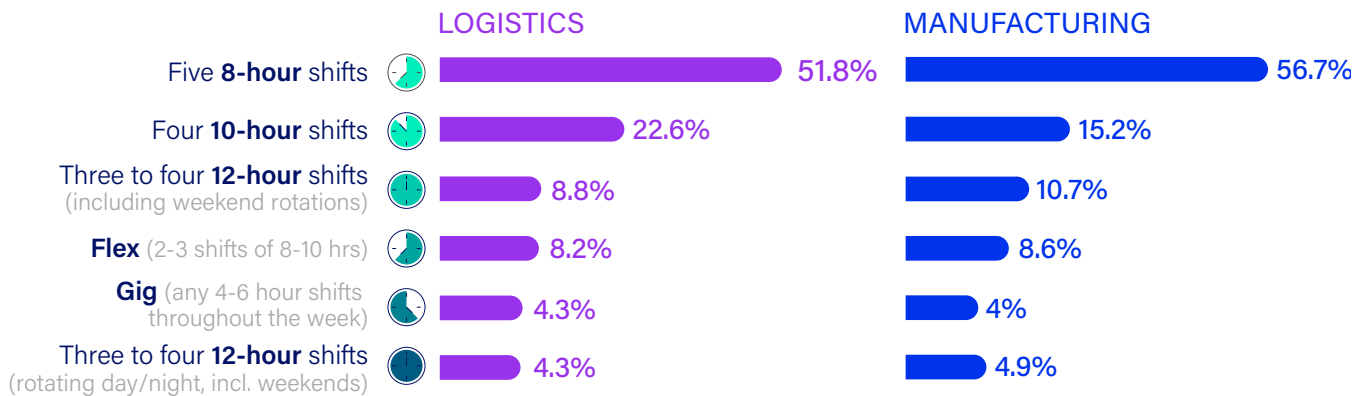
Among manufacturing workers, 56.7% today work a traditional workweek of five 8-hour shifts. Yet just 47.9% say this is their preferred schedule. Perhaps surprisingly, well over a quarter of manufacturing workers (26.5%) told us they would prefer a four-day workweek consisting of 10-hour shifts.

Seeing this change of preference in manufacturing, which tends to skew older and more traditional in their approach to work, is a significant indicator of something happening across the American workforce. Looking at logistics workers, even more — 34.9% — say they would prefer their 40 hours in a four-day week.

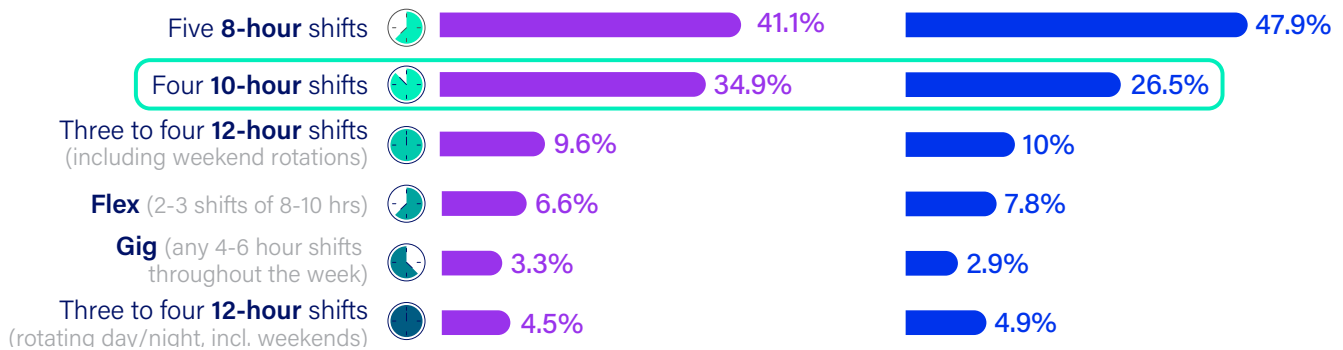


It's clear workers want the freedom to choose a schedule that fits their lives.

“What is your current shift structure?”



“What shift do you prefer?”



While preferences vary, it's clear workers want the freedom to choose a schedule that fits their lives. For some, that means a predictable and traditional five-day week. For others, a four-day or even three-day workweek may be more suitable. And with many workers needing to bring in additional income to keep pace with inflation and address economic uncertainty, having a shorter workweek allows them to pick up incremental or gig work to earn extra income.

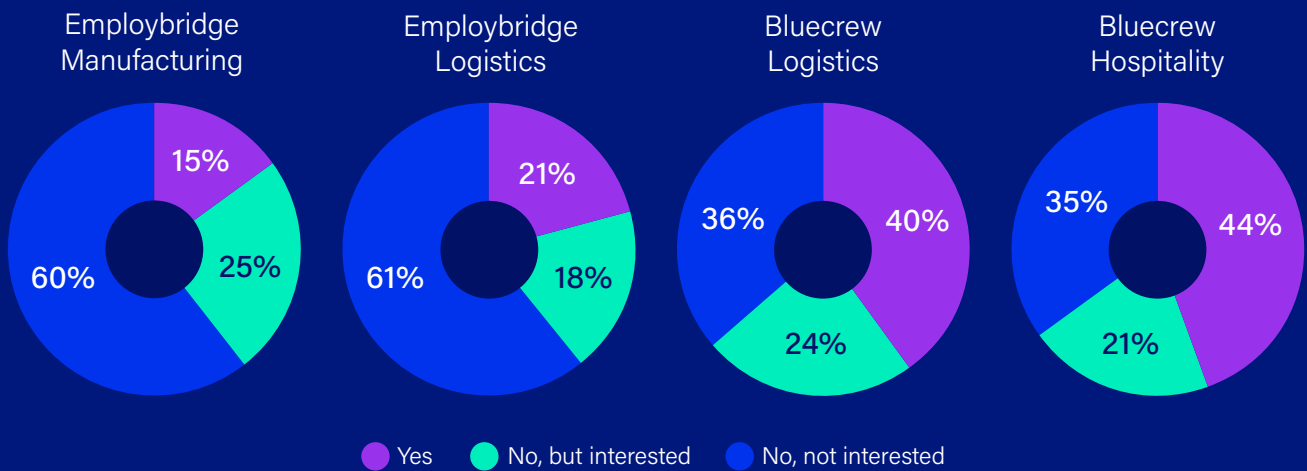
Gig Interest Rising

Among logistics workers, 42.5% say they would be interested in gig work. Of those, a majority — 66.5% — would take gig work to earn extra money. Other reasons for working gigs include earning money while between jobs and for the flexible schedule.

That need for extra income should not be overlooked. Of respondents who are employed through our digital app, Bluecrew, an overwhelming 90% say that they are looking for extra work to brace for a looming recession.

Workers' interest in new approaches to work — including gig, temp, flex, and four- or five-day weeks — could align well with employers' need for increasingly agile or scalable workforces.

“Have you ever worked a Gig?”



Five ways

to put the findings into practice

1

Enhance your Retention Efforts

As of January 2023, there were 5.3 million more open jobs than people available to fill them. Focus on pay rate as well as other factors that drive loyalty.

2

Showcase Opportunity

Communicate advancement and upskilling opportunities throughout the employee journey. Starting with the interview and new-hire onboarding, show employees there is room for them to learn and grow.

3

Be Proactively Transparent

Share how your company is performing in current economic conditions and what you are doing to address challenges so that workers can understand and prepare.

4

Cultivate Respect and Compassion

Seek to understand your employees' experiences, explain hidden rules, and give second chances.

5

Listen and Engage

Building from these findings, go deeper into learning your workers' shift/schedule preferences through focus groups, surveys, or suggestion boards.

To gain deeper insights into the data affecting your markets and regions, [reach out to Employbridge](#) to explore workforce solutions that give you a competitive advantage.

¹ MIT Sloane, "[Toxic Culture Is Driving the Great Resignation](#)" by Donald Sull, Charles Sull, and Ben Zweig, January 11, 2022.

² Retail Brew, "[Lowe's Philanthropic Arm Introduces New Training Program for Those Aspiring to Skilled Trades](#)" March 20, 2023.

³ Pewresearch.org, "[Majority of Workers Who Quit a Job in 2021 Cite Low Pay, No Opportunities for Advancement, Feeling Disrespected](#)" by Kim Parker and Juliana Menasce Horowitz, March 9, 2022.

employbridge™



About Employbridge

Employbridge is recognized by Staffing Industry Analysts as America's largest industrial staffing firm, combining the advantages of national scale and local market knowledge with the speed and efficiency of its proven Bluecrew digital platform. The company puts more than 440,000 temporary associates to work annually across a network of approximately 400 offices in 48 states. In 2022, Employbridge served 17,000 customers, generating more than \$3.9 billion in revenue. Providing value-added workforce solutions and job opportunities through focused specialties, Employbridge brands include ResourceMFG, ProLogistix, ProDrivers, Select, RemX, Remedy, Westaff, Decca, Hire Dynamics, and Bluecrew.

For the past 17 years, Employbridge has authored the largest survey of the U.S. hourly workforce — The Voice of the American Workforce, learning from tens of thousands of wage earners each year. The company is also helping close the skills gap in America's supply chain by providing free, career-focused skills development courses to its temporary associates as well as personal development courses through the firm's Better WorkLife Academy and Life Skills Studio; approximately 20,000 temporary associates are enrolled annually.

For more information, please visit employbridge.com.