

2022 RESEARCH REPORT

The State of Work-Life Harmony in Singapore 2022



A deep dive into the perception and satisfaction of Work-Life Harmony schemes across different industries, cohorts, and organisations in Singapore





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Preamble: | Finding harmony amidst uncertainties



by **Ms Yeo Wan Ling**

Director of U SME and U Women and Family, National Trades Union Congress (NTUC)

In our efforts to support women joining the workforce while balancing caregiving responsibilities, NTUC has been promoting work-life initiatives from the 1990s. NTUC has since been actively involved in tripartite level initiatives to push for Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) and family-friendly workplace practices.

My team U Women and Family at NTUC has continued the journey of working together with our unions to encourage employers to implement work-life harmony practices at workplaces. Many organisations have adapted remote work arrangements and have encouraged their employees to telecommute where possible during the pandemic.

The impact of working from home has brought about both positive and negative effects on workers. Some workers have shared with us the challenges they have experienced in managing both work and personal life as the lines between the two domains were progressively blurred, which impacted their mental well-being.

NTUC will continue to work with our network of employers in unionised sectors, including small and medium-sized enterprises, to look beyond operationalising FWAs so that the welfare and future prospects of employees on FWAs are not compromised.

This survey conducted by EngageRocket was part of our tripartite-level efforts for employers to assess and review their work-life harmony practices to meet the needs of employees. The goal is to achieve work-life harmony, where employers and employees both achieve a sustainable balance between work and personal life. We believe such practices will benefit both women and men, and ultimately the organisations they belong to.

I give my sincere thanks to the companies who have participated in this survey. Together with our Tripartite Partners, NTUC will continue our efforts to enhance work-life harmony for all, because #everyworkermatters.

Thank you.



1

The Importance of Work-Life Harmony and How It Affects Us

The definition of work-life balance has changed in the last two years, as the lines between the home and the office, work hours and personal hours, and leisure and productive work continually blurred. In 2022, there is greater work-life permeability than ever before, especially with the rise of hybrid working. This necessitates a reimagined approach that advocates for better integration, better balance, and healthier boundaries – i.e., work-life harmony (WLH).

“Work-life harmony sustains the wholeness of mental health and well-being. Every individual wants to enjoy life without thinking of work outside working hours. Same applies to committing to work whilst working in the office. Lack of work-life harmony can cause burnout, lower job performance, and poor health.”

Margaret Teo, HR Manager at Amity Global Institute.
Participant of WLH Survey program.

WLH is a state in which an individual is able to achieve both professional and personal goals, aided by an environment where “work” and “life” are interdependent elements. As these two facets of our lives become increasingly intertwined, work-life harmony helps to achieve a genuine and sustainable balance. It also tailors the experience keeping in mind changing employee demographics and the unique work and family obligations they face every day.

Initiated by the Alliance for Action on Work-Life Harmony (AfA-WLH) and supported by National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), EngageRocket conducted a survey of 3,332 employees in Singapore to understand the state of work-life harmony today, employee perceptions and employee needs surrounding WLH. This report showcases the key findings from this study.



2

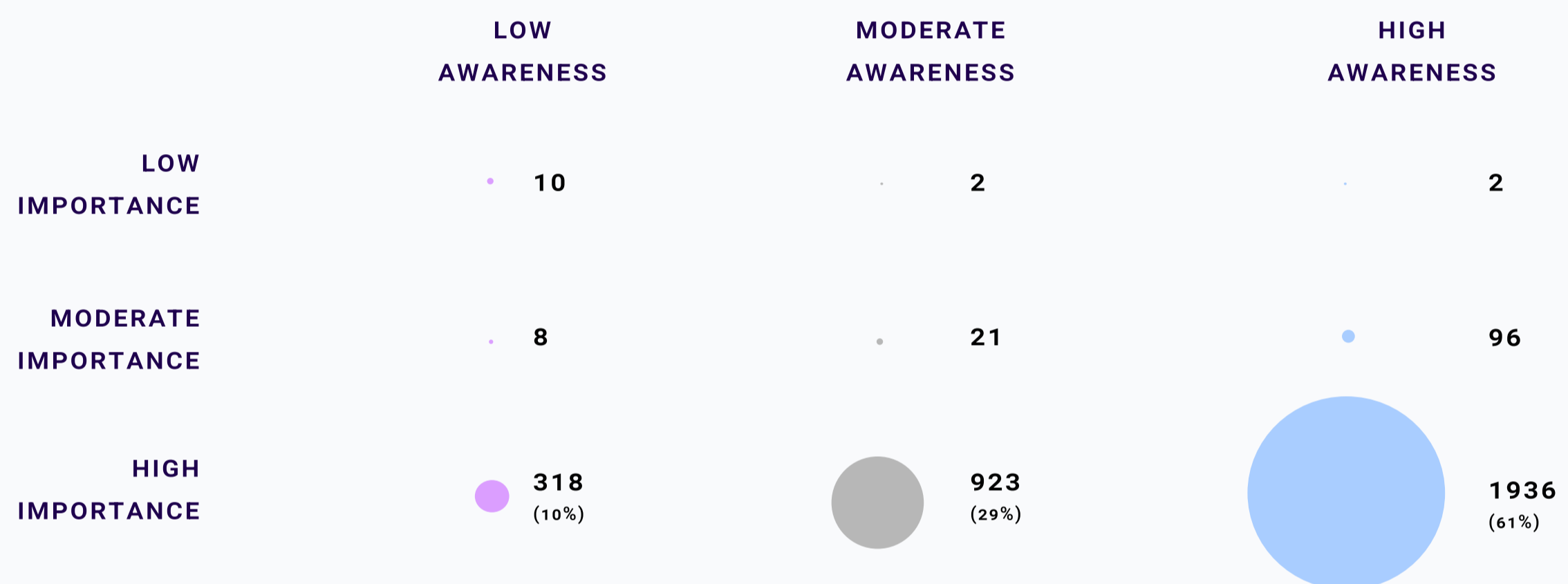
Work-Life Harmony is Directly Correlated to Employee Engagement

Employee engagement increases when WLH satisfaction rises

Work-life harmony is a relatively new concept, and our research indicates that its awareness and prioritisation among the workforce remains low. Overall, **61% of survey respondents have a high awareness of work-life harmony** but are unsure of what it entails.

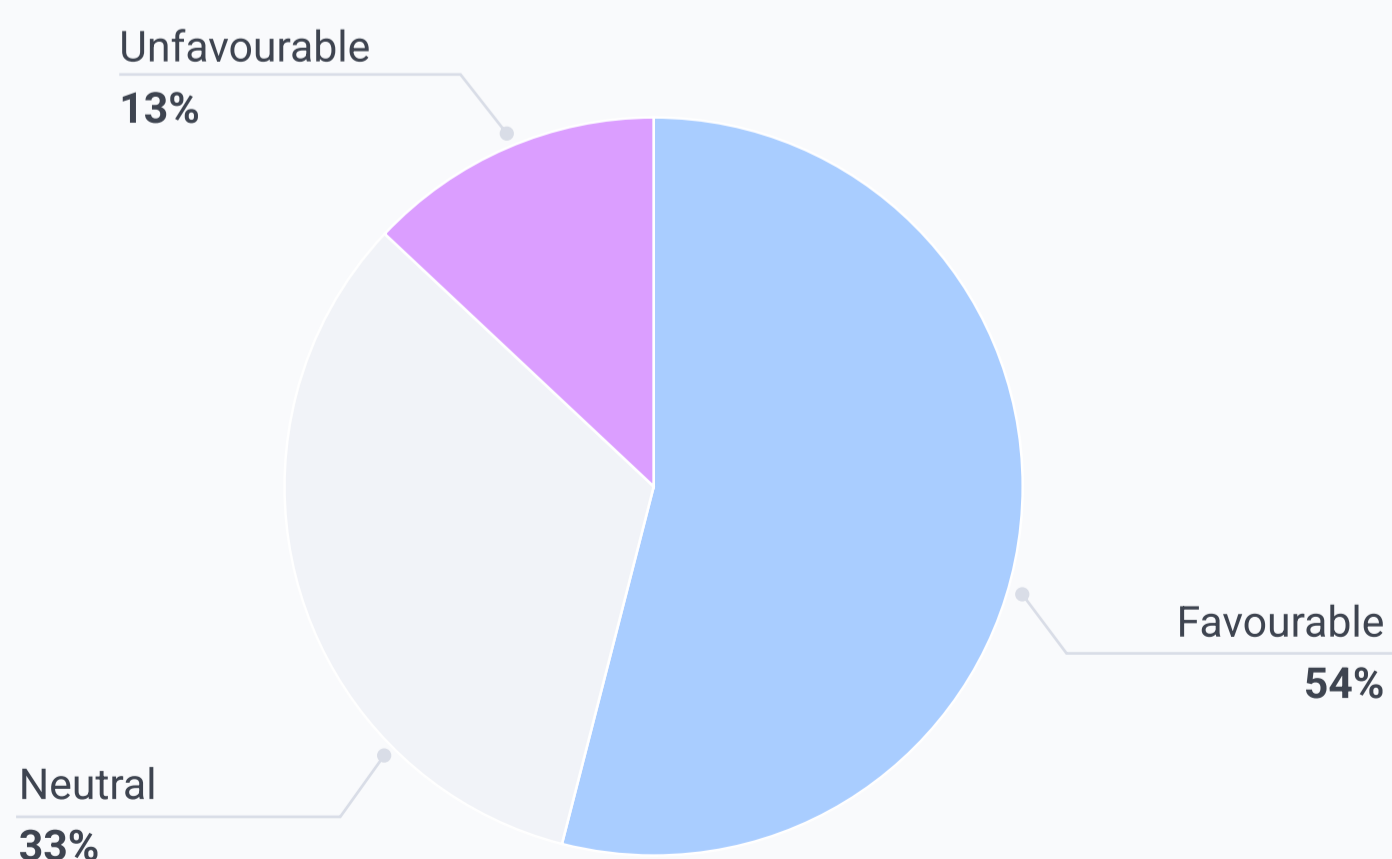
SURVEY QN

1. I am familiar with Work-Life Harmony. (Low, Moderate, High)
2. Harmony between work and life is important to me. (Low, Moderate, High)



SURVEY QN

I am satisfied with my Work-Life Harmony.



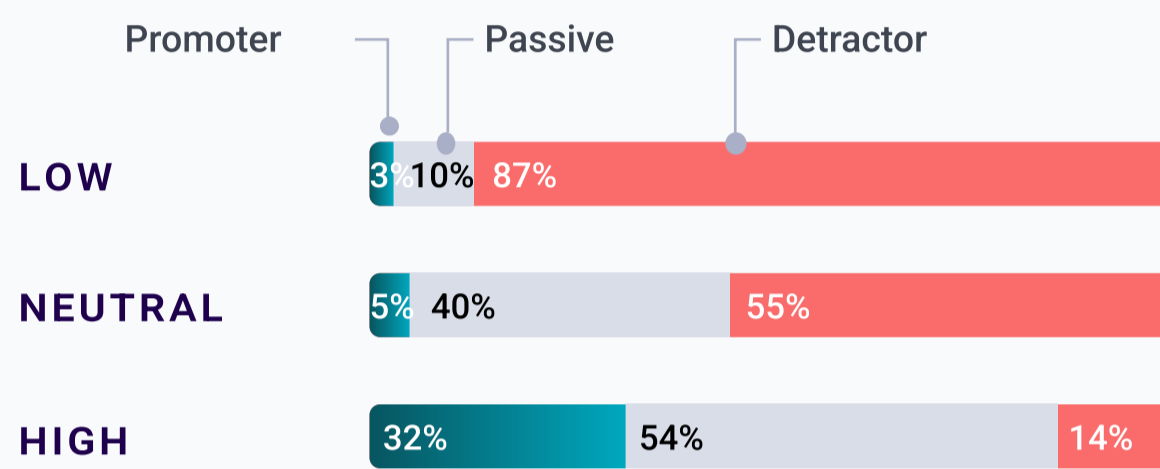
Overall, only 54% of respondents declare being satisfied with their WLH.

13% of respondents declare being unsatisfied with it.

Our study reveals that those **who have managed to achieve greater degrees of harmony are more engaged**. 32% of employees with high work-life harmony satisfaction are engaged and willing to recommend their workplace to others. This is true for only 3% of those with lower levels of WLH satisfaction. 87% of this latter group are “detractors” who do not advocate for their organisation.

SURVEY QN

1. How likely would you recommend this organisation as a place to work to friends and family?
2. I am satisfied with my Work-Life Harmony. (Low, Neutral, High)



Organisations can leverage this correlation to improve the workplace. In scenarios where the employer adopted schemes to support work-life harmony, engagement levels also increased.

Interestingly, **small organisations with 1-49 and 50-199 workers are among the early adopters**. The data shows that many employees of small organisations claim that their workplaces offer WLH schemes.

“Work-life harmony has a clear effect on employee engagement. When one experiences anxiety or stress at work to the point of feeling overwhelmed, it affects our ability to think about, focus, and do the right things.”

Kris Ong, Senior HR Manager of SLS Bearings.
Participant of WLH Survey program.



3

One Work-Life Harmony Strategy Does Not Fit All


Just like how employee requirements vary across cohorts, so do their work-life harmony needs. Our research shows that one strategy cannot fit all due to different levels of engagement, working patterns, risks of burnout, and other drivers.

Women, Gen X and millennials have greater need for WLH

From our research, **male employees are more likely to be satisfied with their work-life harmony than women (62% vs. 50%)** and to advocate for their employers (23% vs. 16%).

“NTUC U Women and Family remains committed to the continuing efforts of tripartite partners in improving work-life harmony and building progressive workplaces. initiatives.

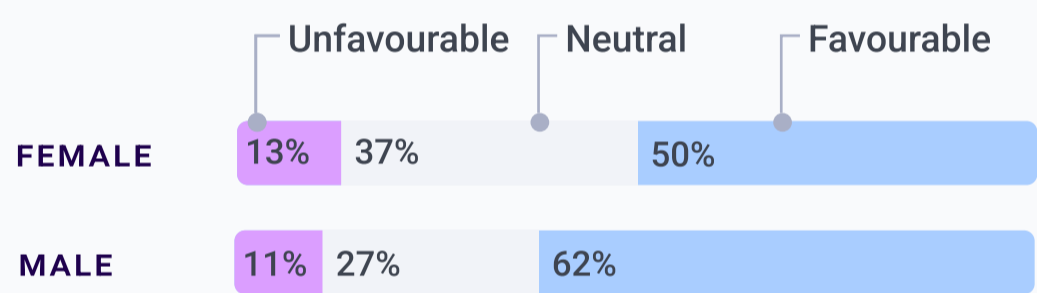
I would like to encourage progressive employers to consider how the concept of work-life harmony applies to men. It is crucial that men contribute to caregiving needs in the family so that at the end of the day, both women and men alike experience work-life harmony.”



Ms Yeo Wan Ling
NTUC Director of U SME and U Women and Family

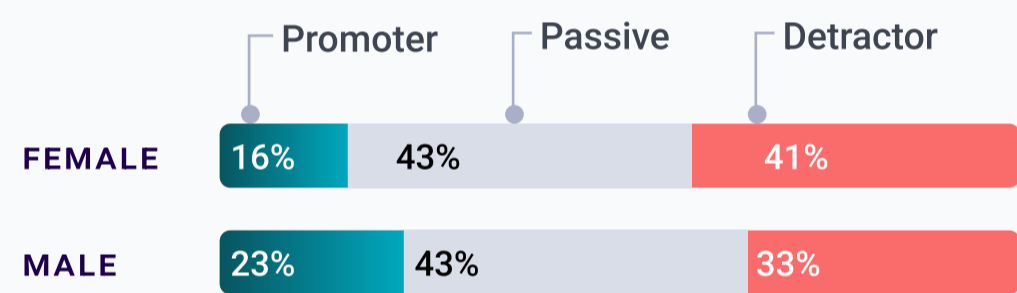
SURVEY QN

I am satisfied with my Work-Life Harmony.
(Unfavourable, Neutral, Favourable)



SURVEY QN

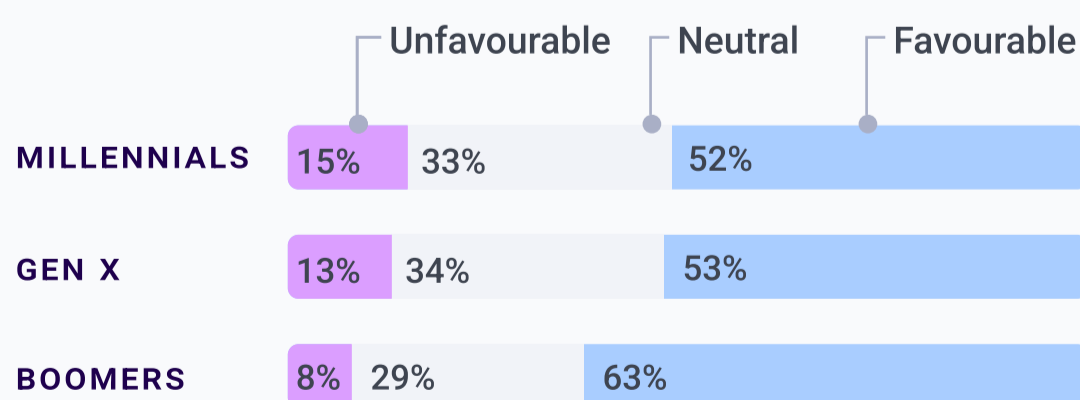
How likely would you recommend this organisation as a place to work to friends and family?
(Promoter, Passive, Detractor)



Needs also vary across age demographics -- **Millennials and Gen X are more likely to be dissatisfied with their work-life harmony compared to Boomers (15% and 13% vs 8%).**

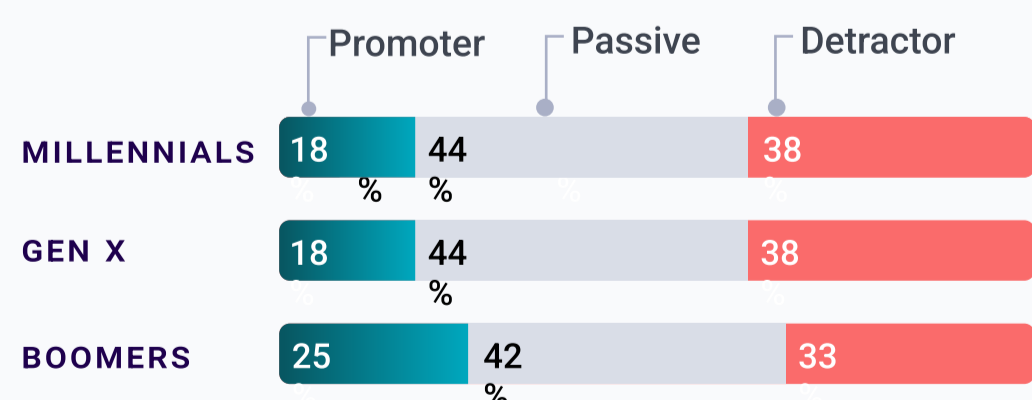
SURVEY QN

I am satisfied with my Work - Life Harmony.
(Unfavourable, Neutral, Favourable)



SURVEY QN

How likely would you recommend this organisation as a place to work to friends and family?
(Promoter, Passive, Detractor)



Boomers are those aged 50 and above
Gen X are aged between 40-49
Millennials are those aged 20-39

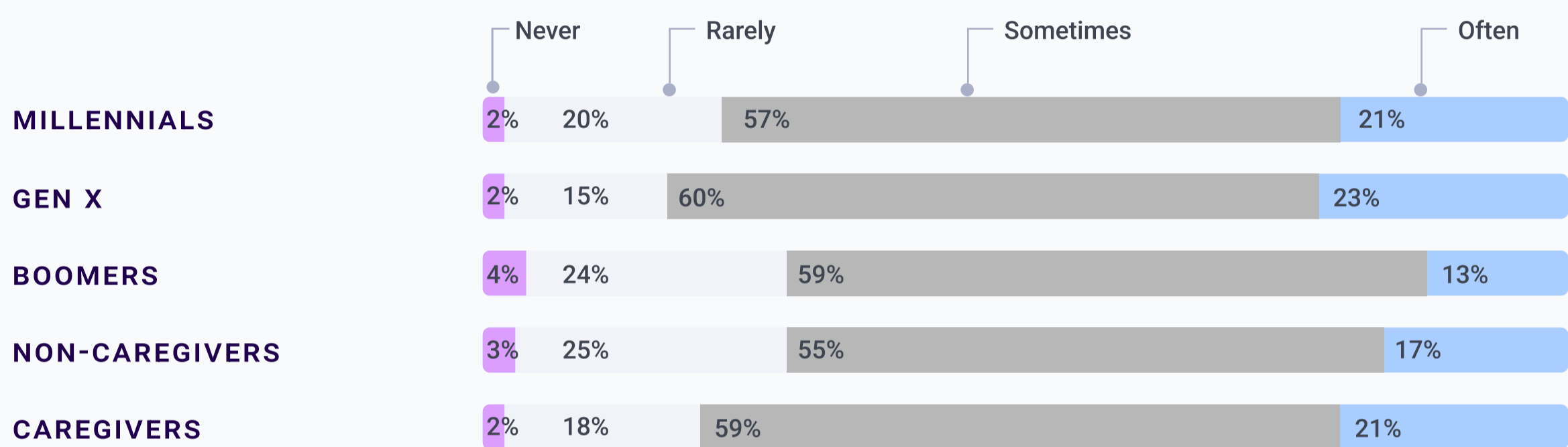
Note: Gen Z are excluded due to lower numbers of respondents (<1%)

Organisation should consider different schemes that can benefit different segments but take care not to neglect any specific segment

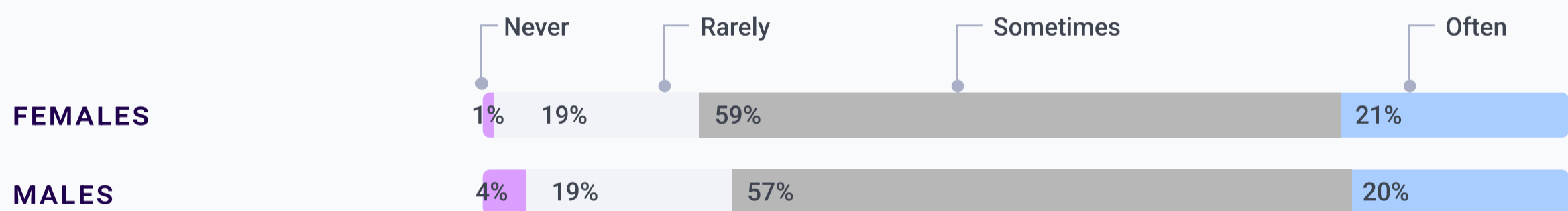
Home responsibilities are also a top motivating factor. **Gen X, women and caregivers** are at the highest risk of burnout (at **83%, 80%, and 80%**). Our research also revealed that non-caregivers and boomers are at lower risk of burnout, and therefore require a different approach to work-life harmony schemes.

SURVEY QN MCQ Single Select

How often do you experience feeling of burnout at work?

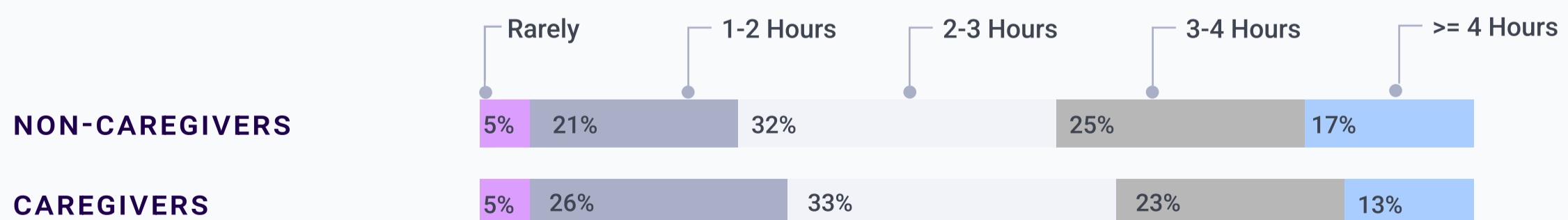


Caregivers and Gen X are more burnt-out



SURVEY QN MCQ Single Select

After an average work day, how many hours do you have for yourself, family and friends?



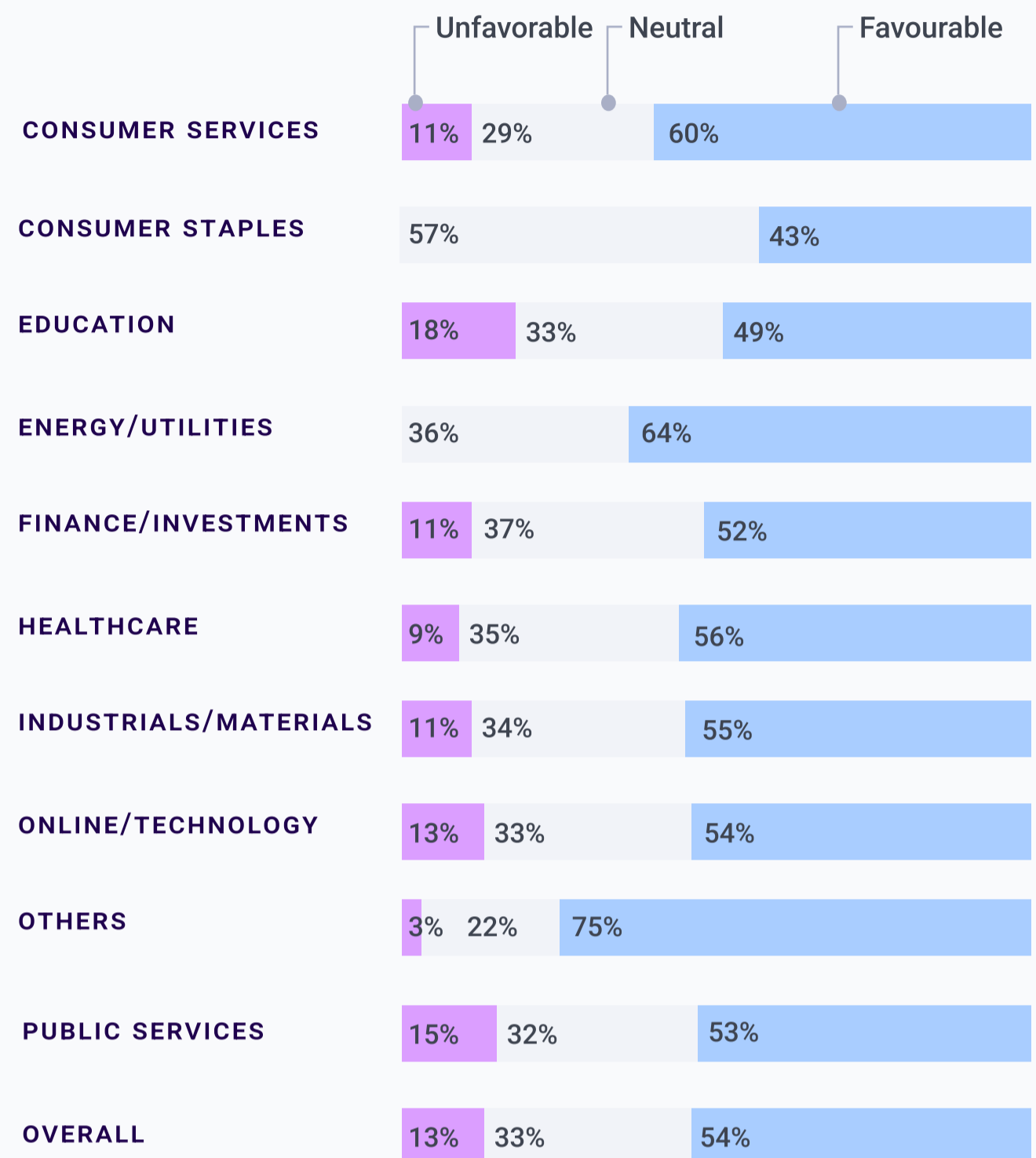
Different industries show different levels of WLH satisfaction

As we see differing practices in WLH schemes across industries, it is no surprise that **satisfaction levels also vary across industries**. This highlights the need for a tailored WLH approach that is best suited to different business sectors and models.



SURVEY QN

I am satisfied with my Work-Life Harmony.





4

Adoption for Work-Life Harmony Strategies is Lagging

High need for tailored WLH schemes based on importance

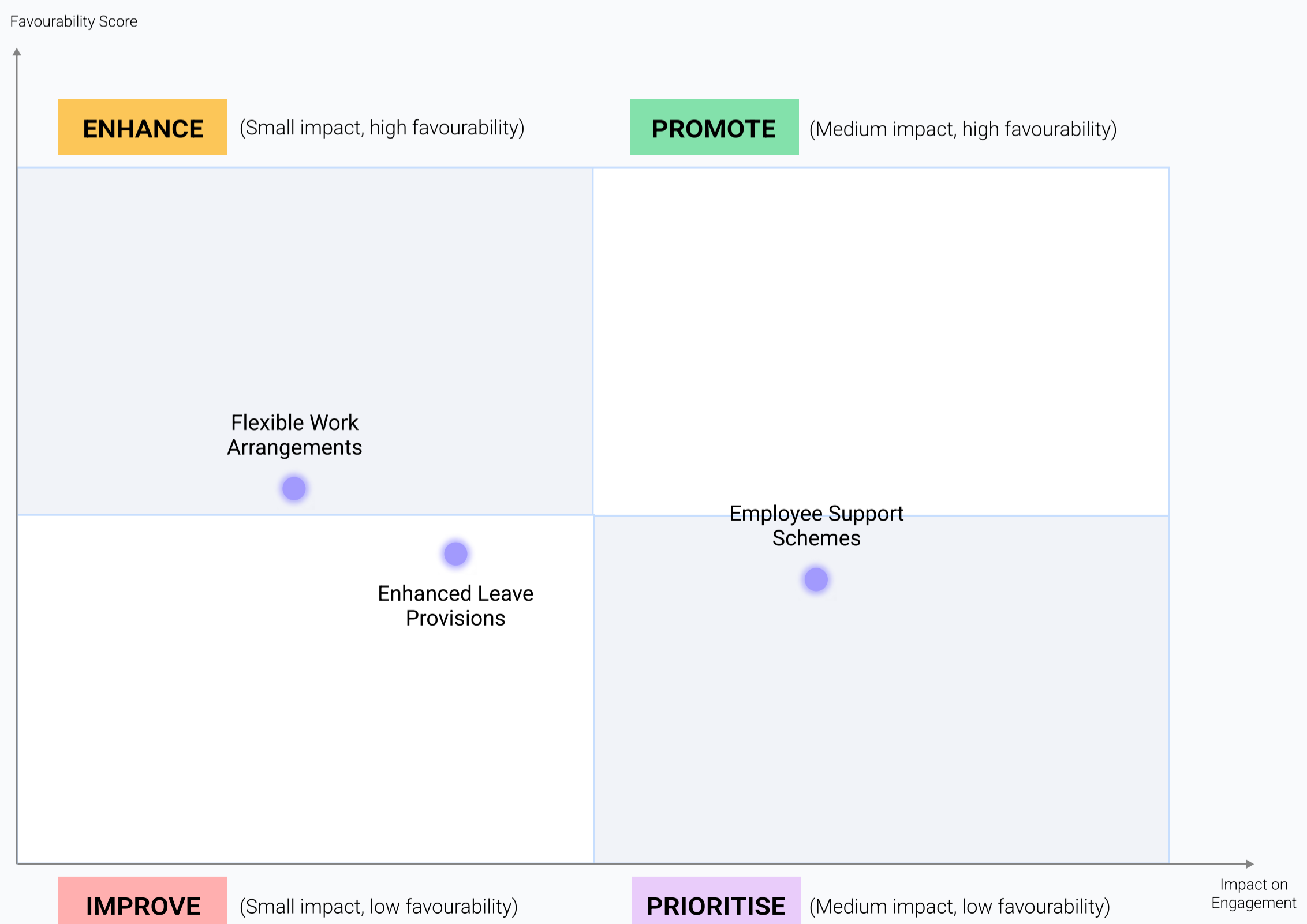
Not all schemes are perceived equally by employees. According to our study, **employee support schemes have the highest impact on work-life harmony** - but are adopted the least. Additionally, enhanced leave provisions and flexible work arrangements can also have a positive impact.

“The likely antidote for promoting the implementation of WLH strategies is buy-in from top management. Involving them as sponsors of the schemes is crucial as WLH strategies may involve a change in ways of doing business. Since champions of the strategies understand the needs of employees and how the change can positively impact the organisation, they are more likely to secure buy-in by integrating the needs and benefits from both sides.

Kris Ong, Senior HR Manager of SLS Bearings.
Participant of WLH Survey program.

INSIGHT

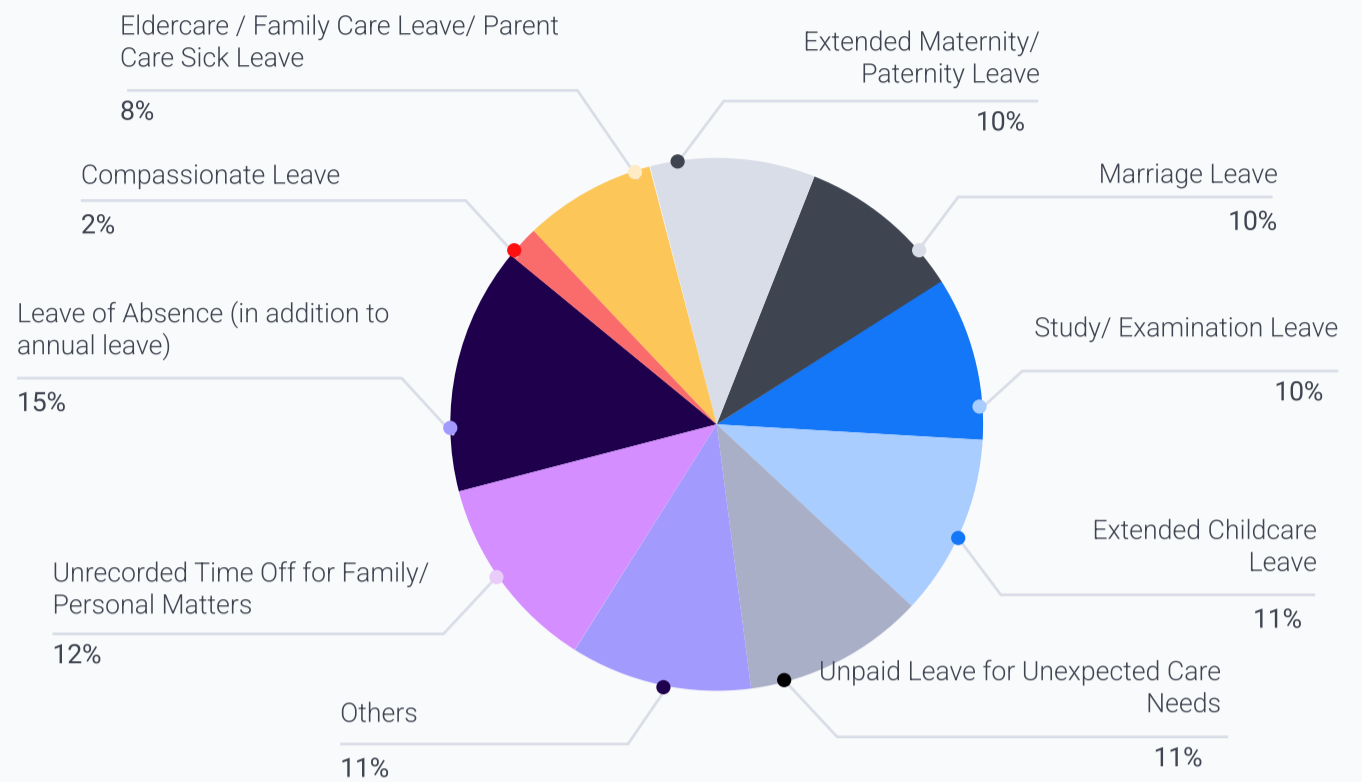
Employee Support Schemes that have the greatest impact but the lowest adoption



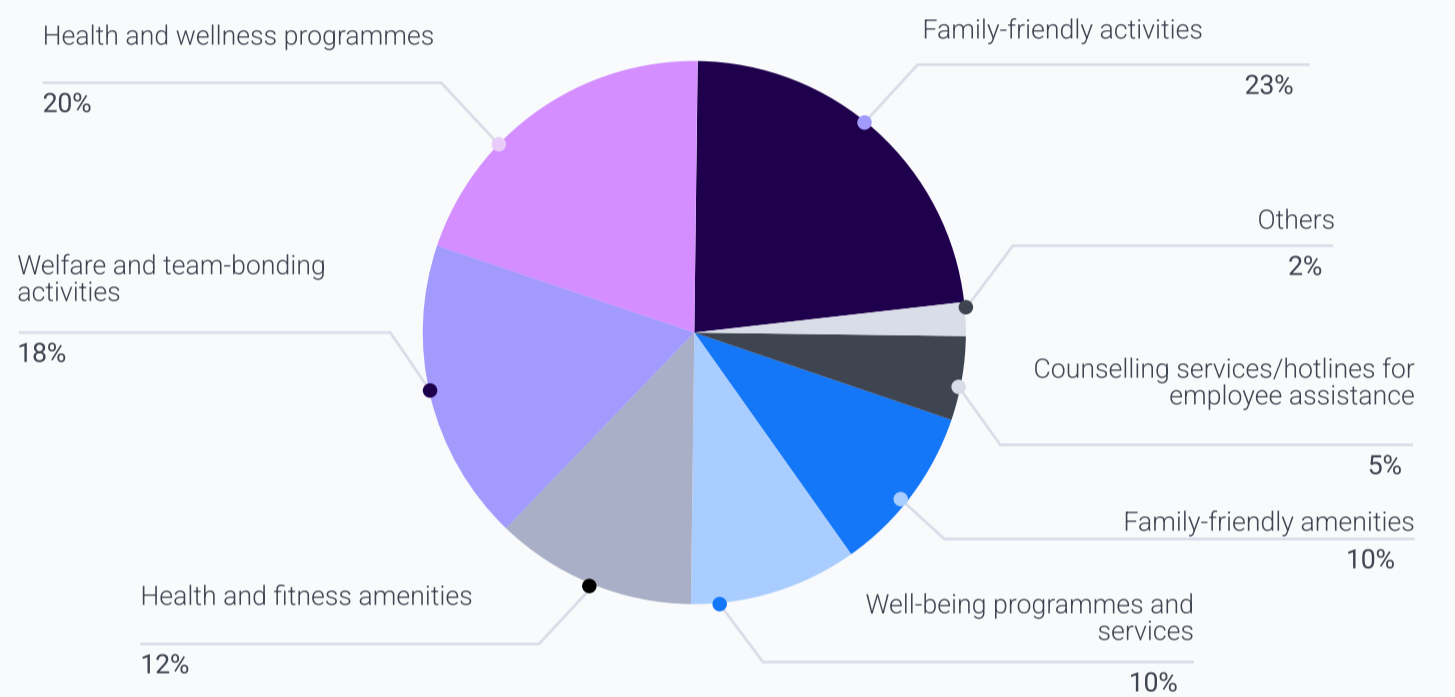
INSIGHT

Specific initiatives that will help employees the most

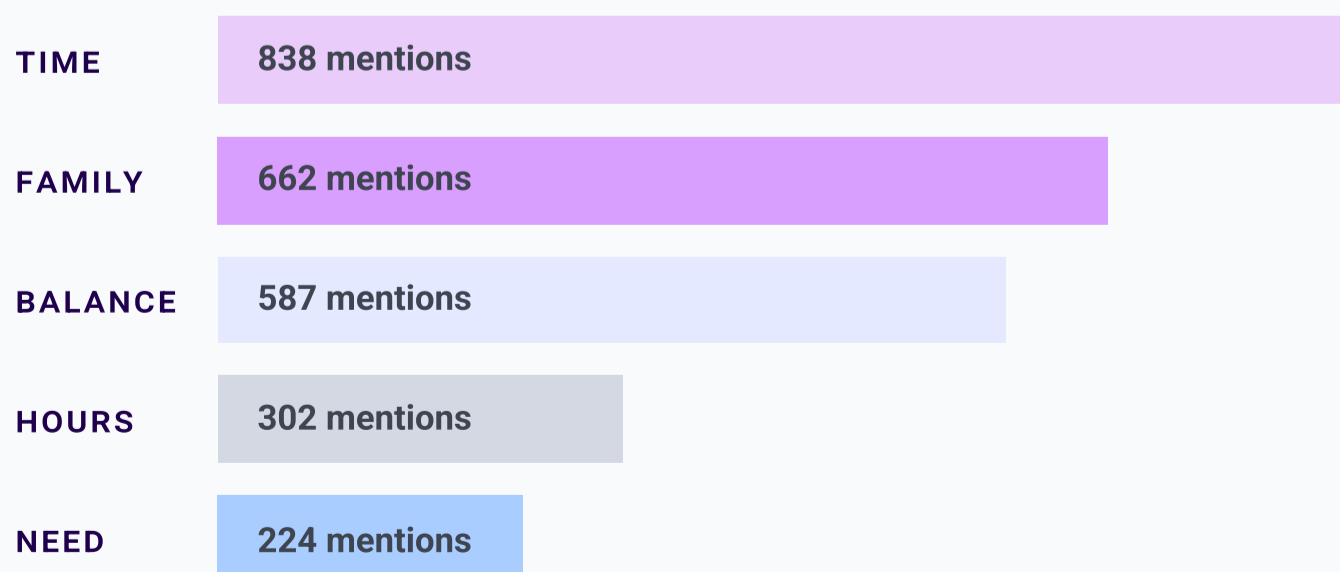
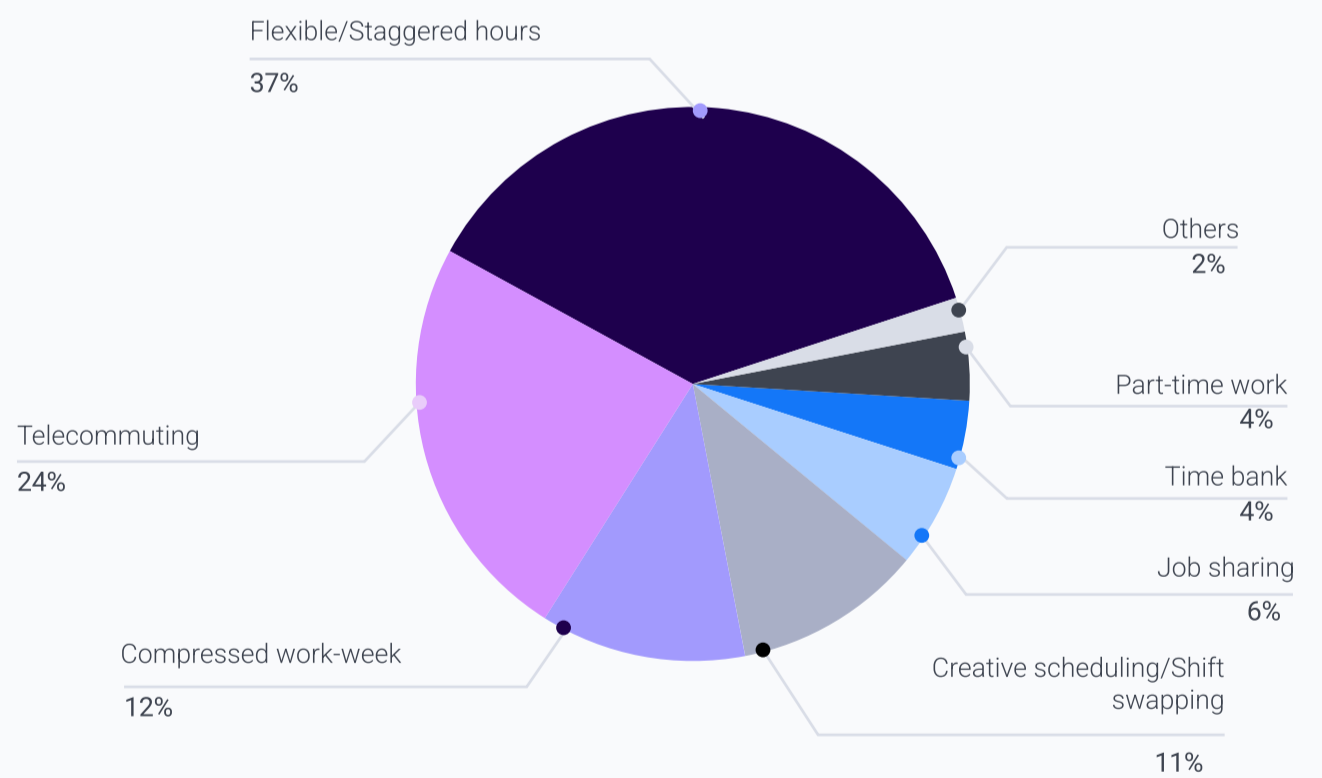
ENHANCED LEAVE PROVISIONS



EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SCHEMES



FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS



When we asked employees what work-life harmony meant to them, the answers were diverse and highly interesting. There were 838 mentions of “time”, 662 mentions of “family” and 587 mentions of “balance.” Some of the other notable terms that came up include “weekend”, “home”, “supervisor”, and “friend.” This shows how widely needs may vary from one person to another.

SURVEY QN

What does Work-Life Harmony means to you?
(Open-ended)



SURVEY QN

What does Work - Life Harmony mean to you?

<p>TIME</p> <p>Able to have time to settle personal stuff or to take a break</p>	<p>FAMILY</p> <p>When the organisation also cares for my family well-being</p>	<p>BALANCE</p> <p>Being able to balance work and life, ensuring a healthy boundary between the two</p>	<p>NEED</p> <p>A balanced work life where I can look after my personal needs and demands without feeling guilty that I'm abandoning work which is as important.</p>
<p>HOME</p> <p>Not to bring work back home</p>	<p>FLEXIBILTY</p> <p>Having the flexiblty to work within a given range of timings as well as locations eith the appropriate infrastructure in place</p>	<p>LEAVE</p> <p>Being able to enjoy a non-working day / leave / after working hours in peace</p>	<p>To stop work/ leave the office without worrying about being contacted after work hours / on weekends for work matters.</p>
<p>FRIENDS</p> <p>Clear cut working hours and personal time</p>	<p>PERSONAL TIME</p> <p>When the organisation also cares for my family well-being</p>	<p>MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Where an individual is able to achieve both jobs and personal goals with the help and support of colleagues and management</p>	<p>Time management of work and toddlers as well as family care</p>

Organisations need to establish and exhibit healthy boundaries at work

61% of respondents said that leave benefits are crucial for work-life harmony, followed by family-related support, flexi-work (56%), management support (55%), and scheme communication (43%). However, over 80% of employees report to work even when they are unwell which shows a lack of healthy boundaries. It is important that organisations pay extra attention to different segments - for instance, male employees are more likely to consider management support as important, while female workers tend to look for more family-related support schemes.

“Through the pandemic, we have been forced to rethink the working experience and what it means to be at work. More importantly, we have had to put theory into practice, and learn from the experience. What we have found about working and leading remote and hybrid teams, the impact on our ways of work, and even our personal well-being and mental health will impact the employee experience in profound ways over the next few years.



CheeTung Leong
Co-founder of EngageRocket

SURVEY QN

What is important to me in achieving Work-Life Harmony? Select up to 3.

Most employees feel that enhanced leave benefits are important for their WLH

ENHANCED LEAVE BENEFITS

61%

FAMILY-RELATED EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SCHEMES

56%

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

56%

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT FOR SCHEMES

55%

COMMUNICAITON OF SCHEMES

43%

HEALTH-RELATED EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SCHEMES

36%

MENTAL WELLNESS-RELATED EMPLOYEES SUPPORT SCHEMES

29%

INSIGHT

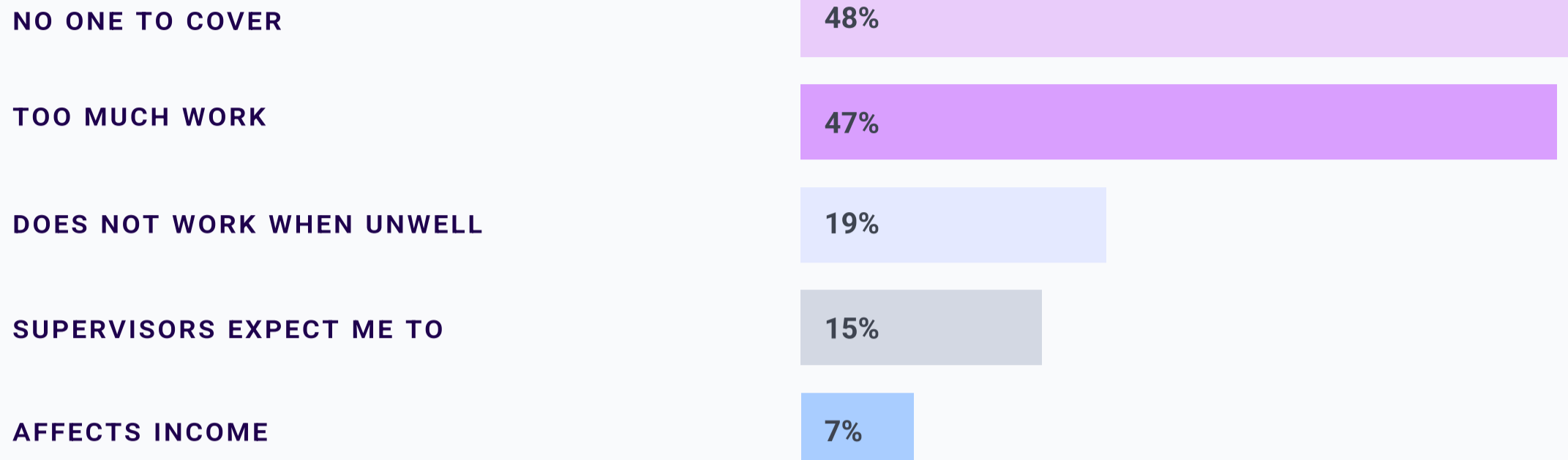
Top 3 Initiatives by cohorts



More than 80% of the people work even when unwell because...

SURVEY QN

I choose to work even when I am sick or feeling unwell because: (Tick all that apply)



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Towards Meaningful Change and Greater Harmony in 2022

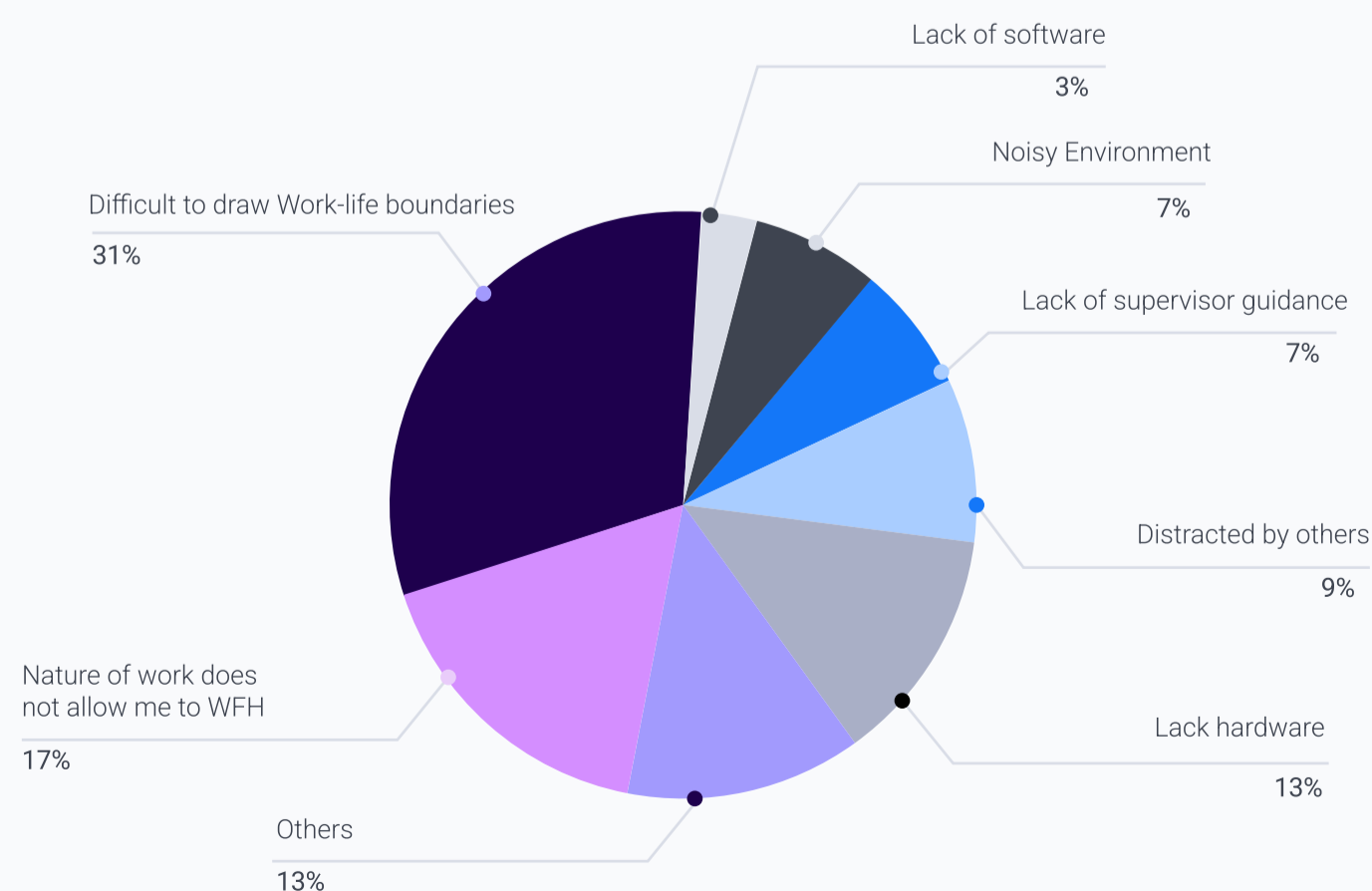
The pandemic uprooted work-life models established over several decades, and realigning oneself will be difficult. Work-life harmony builds the foundation for meaningful integration between professional and personal responsibilities so that employees can excel at both and find fulfilment. This will make them less prone to burnout or attrition.

However, we found that a number of key challenges stand in the way of achieving this:

- It is difficult to draw work-life boundaries for 31% of employees
- The very nature of their work does not allow 17% to work from home
- 13% are held back by the lack of the right hardware and 3% by software
- 9% are distracted by people around them and 7% by a noisy environment
- 7% also report an absence of supervisor support

INSIGHT

Challenges faced when working from home



It's important to keep in mind that varying organisations would need to cater to their workforce's work-life harmony in a tailored manner. The appropriate scheme may vary depending on the employee group, which brings about the need for accurate and scientifically proven ways to collect employee feedback

However, the path should not stop at listening. Actions must be taken if employers wish to improve work-life harmony at their workplaces. For this to happen, managers need to be involved in driving changes that would benefit their teams. After all, **effective managerial action is responsible for up to 70% of employee engagement.**

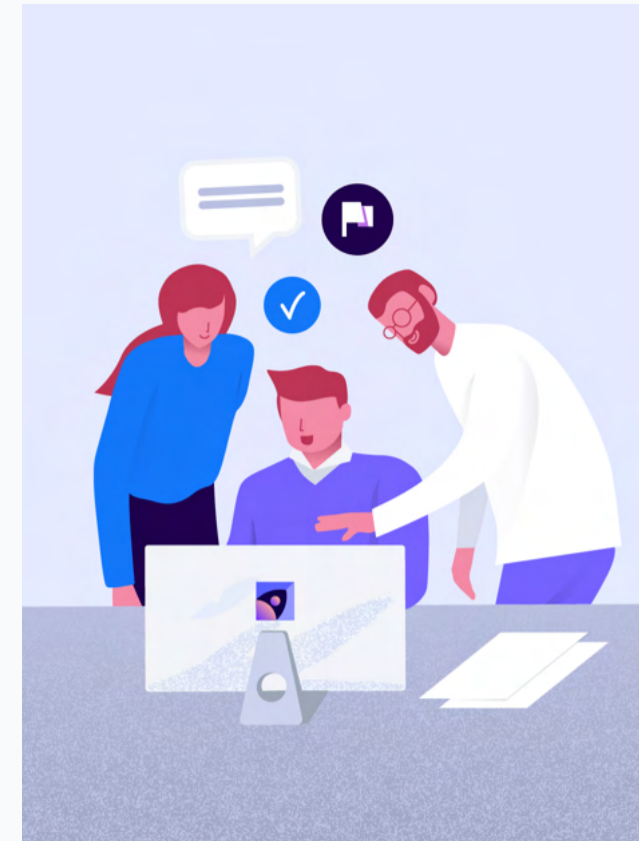
This is why organisations must take proactive measures to empower their managers, yet it is not a simple task. 42% of HR administrators find it difficult to involve managers in taking action that can drive meaningful change in the organisation. To address this, managers need to be equipped with **the right tool** that can provide them with data about their teams' challenges and needs, along with suggestions on the right actions to take. Insights along with actionable recommendations will help managers in making decisions for their teams' navigate work-life harmony and make the right policy decisions.



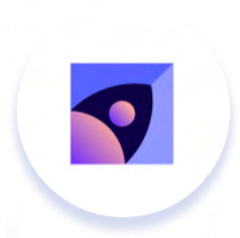
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Methodology

The report is based on a survey of 3,300+ respondents across 10 industries. The respondent pool covers every age demographic from 20 years of age to 60+ years. There is also representation across the entire tenure spectrum, from new employees who have been with the company for less than 3 months, to those who have stayed with the same company for 20+ years. Finally, and most importantly, we assessed the various aspects of work experience for remote, office, and hybrid models.



In partnership with...



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EngageRocket is APAC's fastest-growing employee experience technology provider that empowers companies to enable human connections at scale. Companies across 14 countries and 20 industries such as Sephora, StarHub, Love Bonito and Epson use EngageRocket to drive sustainable people and business outcomes with relevant and timely people-insights.

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National Trades Union Congress (NTUC)

The National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) is a national confederation of trade unions as well as a network of professional associations and partners across all sectors in Singapore. NTUC's objectives are to help Singapore stay competitive and working people remain employable for life; to enhance the social status and well-being of our members and working people; and to build a strong, responsible and caring labour movement. NTUC's vision is to be an inclusive labour movement for all collars, ages and nationalities. NTUC is at the heart of the Labour Movement, which comprises 58 affiliated unions, six affiliated associations, 12 social enterprises, six related organisations as well as a growing ecosystem of U Associates and enterprise partners.

For more details, visit www.ntuc.org.sg.



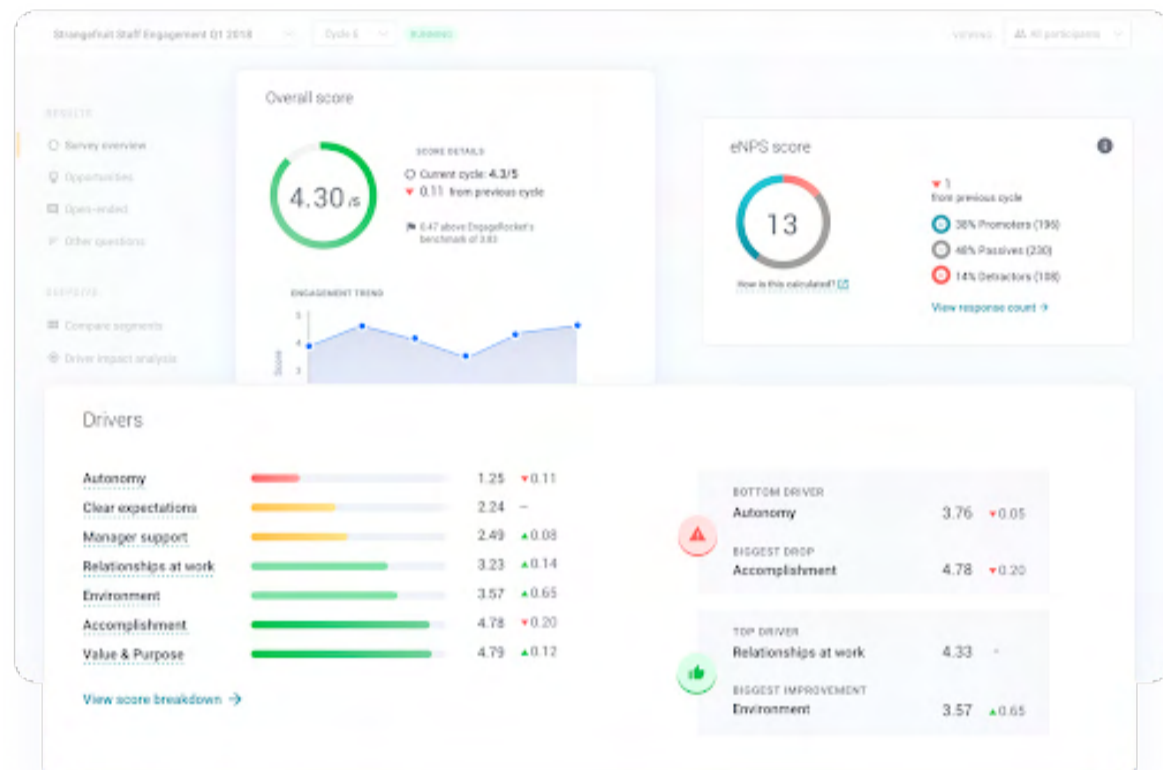
NTUC U Women and Family

NTUC U Women and Family is the voice for working women and families. It supports the aspirations of working women through the promotion and enhancement of employment opportunities and work-life initiatives.

Find out more at www.uwomenandfamily.org.sg



Improve employee experience with EngageRocket's BELONG

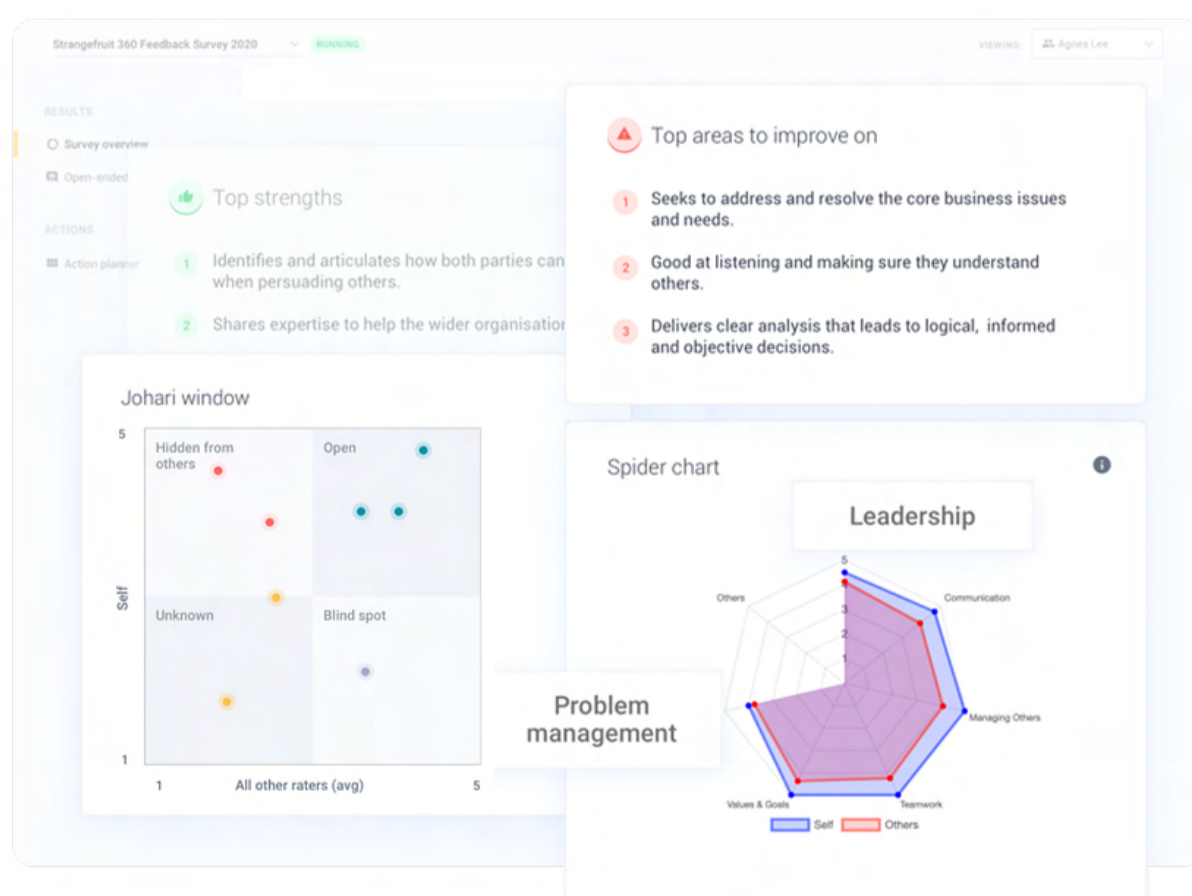


BELONG: Employee Experience Survey

Engage your talent from day one

- **Question Library:** Ask research-backed questions & get feedback for on-boarding, engagement, etc
- **Confidentiality:** Encourage communication without compromising employee's confidentiality.
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GROW: 360 feedback review

Develop your leaders into their best selves

- **Flexible setup:** customise questions, rater groups, selection methods, communication and reminders.
- Large validated competency and **question banks**
- Powerful **analytics**
- Data-driven **learning needs analysis**
- **Action planner:** Set goals, targets, tasks and reminders to encourage personal mastery
- Follow through closely and **monitor progress**



NEW Empower managers to take action with EngageRocket's ACT

25%

of HR professionals are unsure of the right actions to take after an employee engagement survey. *

42%

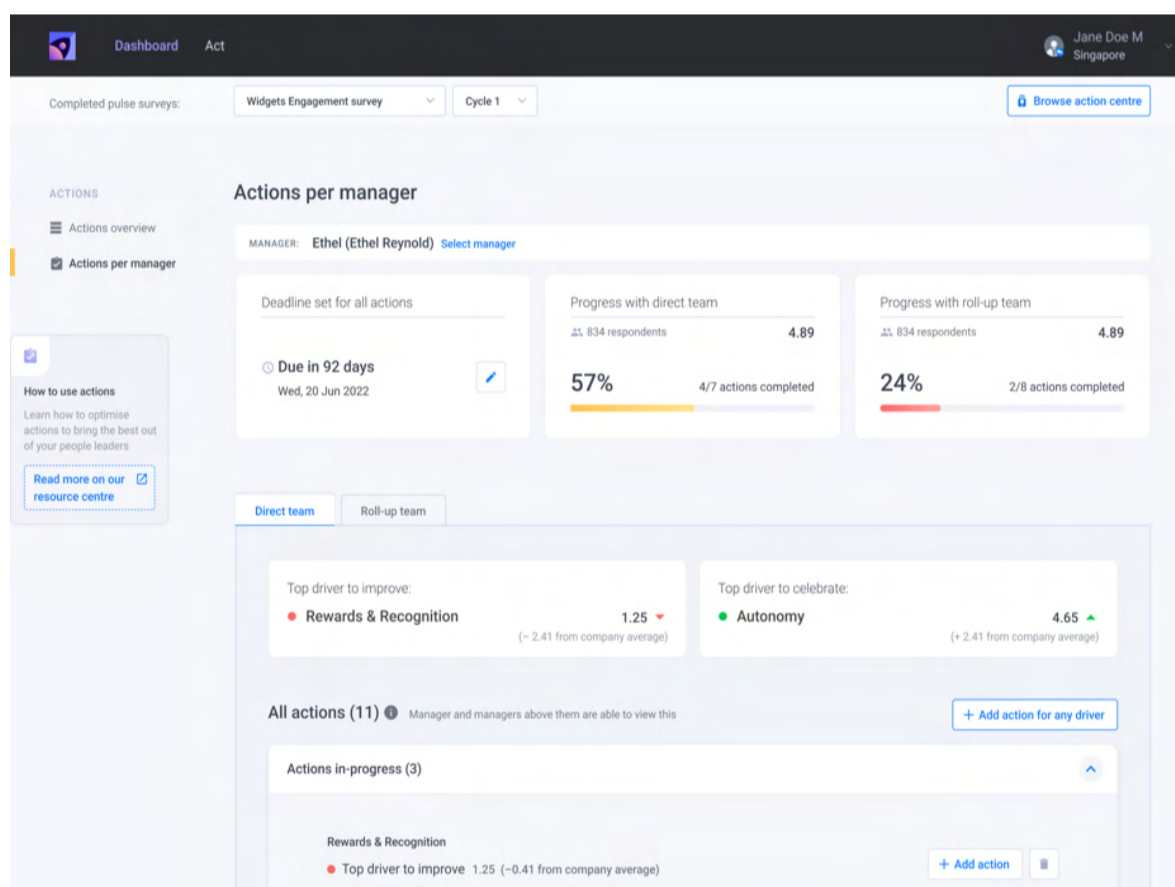
of HR administrators find it difficult to include managers in the process to act on survey results.

95%

of HR leaders want to empower team leads with the right tool to take meaningful actions. **

*based on a poll of 102 HR professionals in APAC

**based on EngageRocket's user interviews with CHRO and HR Directors in APAC



ACT: Action Suggestions for Managers Empower leaders, so your people can thrive

- **Equip managers with the right tools** to identify of key areas to focus on based on employee feedback
- **Enable better team connections** with targeted activities and conversation points
- **Motivate upskilling** with Adaptive learning repository in our curated Action Center
- **Monitor progress to foster accountability** with HR Dashboard to track actions and send reminders to team leads



About Us



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