

McCANN  
WORLDGROUP

Executive Summary

**the truth about**  
**WORK**



# The Truth About Work

## OVERVIEW

The world of work has undergone a radical transformation in recent years; as AI gathers pace, another reimagining is on the horizon. With these new dynamics a play, it's imperative for CMOs and CEOs to turn their attention inward; to amplify, optimize and energize their employee experience and engagement strategies.

MW Truth Central's "Truth About Work" study, written in partnership with McCann Synergy and FutureBrand, interviewed 18,000 consumers across 18 markets; exploring everything from the business case for employee engagement, identifying employee fears, frustrations, hopes and dreams as well as their excitement and apprehension around AI, the highs and lows of bringing your 'whole self' to work and how brand purpose can be expanded to encompass employee engagement.







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## The Lost Art of Why We Work

In our hot pursuit of brand purpose, have businesses lost sight of the employee's individual purpose? New factors like AI and RTO are challenging our motivations in the workplace.

- 1 in 2 employees globally believe their job can feel pointless at times.
- 61% believe if their job were to disappear tomorrow, they don't think the world would notice.
- People who believe their job is pointless are 4x more likely to say their job is negatively affecting their wellbeing.
- Beyond providing for themselves, people are driven to work by two main factors: having a sense of purpose and feeling a sense of accomplishment.

Our sense of purpose at work is deeply personal. How can we start to recenter the employee's individual 'why'? Not only for their wellbeing but also for the health of the business.

- People who understand how their role fits into the company's mission are more likely to describe themselves as very creative (1.4x), very productive (1.6x), and very happy (1.7x).

### **TRUTH**

Brand purpose has become decoupled from the lives of the people who build the brands from the inside.

### **PROVOCATION**

How might we hijack brand purpose and put employee engagement at the heart of the conversation?



## The Secret Lives of Employees

To reimagine employee engagement, businesses require a deep understanding of their employees. But how well do they know their employees? “The Secret Life of Employees” reveals the complexities and emotions that shape experiences at work. From personal quirks to forming relationships and expressing vulnerability, the workplace can be a complicated environment to navigate.

- 1 in 4 employees admit to having cried at work.
- 1 in 5 employees say they have had a crush on someone at work.

Traditionally, emotions and over-sharing were discouraged and seen as unprofessional. But now there is a recognition that embracing our full humanity can drive successful organizations. Our research also uncovered that a full spectrum of emotions can exist within a single working day; people can be creative and frustrated, energized but anxious or even burntout and engaged.

- 49% of employees feel energized after a work day vs. 51% of employees who feel depleted.

However, there is a fine line between welcoming employees to bring their ‘whole self’ to work and encroaching too far into the personal life of the employee.

- 4 in 10 employees have felt tokenized at work.
- 58% of employees don’t want to bring their “whole self” to work.

### TRUTH

The “Bring Your Whole Self to Work” Era is over. People should choose how they show up.

### PROVOCATION

How can brands champion this new era of professionalism where the full breadth of our humanity is welcomed but not expected?





## Turning the Playbook Inside Out

How can we start to create holistic experiences that engage employees? Historically, the industry has been fixated on customers, utilizing tools and concepts like customer experiences, audience segmentations, and consumer-centricity.

- 71% of employees globally believe their company cares more about its customers than its employees.
- Nearly 2 in 3 18-34 year olds plan to change jobs within the next two years.

Employers must continuously strive to earn an impactful role in their employees' lives. This calls for aligning employee experience with the customer experience, shifting the focus to concepts such as employee journey, employee personas, employee segmentation, and employee-centricity.

In the spirit of being employee driven, what can we learn from the most creative, and most productive employees?

### **Introducing The Triple Threat Employee**

In popular vernacular, and according to Dictionary.com, a “triple threat individual is a person, especially a performer or sports player, who is proficient in three important skills within their particular field.” In our study, we define the Triple Threat Employees as those that bring the powerful trifecta of happiness, productivity and creativity. Every organization needs to attract as many Triple Threat Employees as possible:

- 14% of employees globally are Triple Threat Employees, and they are the happiest, most productive, and most creative employees globally.
- It's in part who they are: they consider themselves a great team player (70%) and they care about doing a good job (80%).

Some of these qualities we are born with, but they can also be nurtured and elevated by organizations. Companies that do this well offer modern, efficient, safe, and responsive workplaces where learning & development is encouraged, social responsibility is clear and fun is prioritized. If we take forward these learnings and focus on building a highly engaged workforce, we all stand to benefit. Brands with the most engaged employees have brand equity 1.5x higher than other companies, and a market cap that is 4x higher than other brands.

### **TRUTH**

Organizations thrive when they put customer AND employee at the heart of all they do.

### **PROVOCATION**

How might we as marketers use our skills and talents to build brands from the inside-out?



# The Truth About Work

## Our Methodology

Truth About Work was conducted in partnership with MW Truth Central, FutureBrand and McCann Synergy. The study, conducted in May-August 2023, sampled over 19,000 people globally in an online quantitative survey in 18 markets: United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, India, China, Singapore and Japan. Expert interviews were conducted with 17 business leaders across 10 industries, alongside a roundtable discussion with our Human Sciences Council; a coalition of 45 human & social scientists.

MW Truth Central is McCann Worldgroup's global intelligence unit dedicated to unearthing the macro-level truths that drive people's attitudes and behaviors about life, brands, and marketing. The unit has conducted over 50 global studies to date. These studies have covered 40+ markets, interviewed over 500,000 consumers, and contain more than 50 million individual data points. The research findings have been presented at conferences across the globe and covered by the Wall Street Journal, BBC, Time magazine, USA Today, Refinery 29, Forbes, PC Magazine, Campaign, Adweek, and many others.

To learn more about our work, please visit

[www.mccannworldgroup.com/about/truth](http://www.mccannworldgroup.com/about/truth)

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