



**Workforce Experience & Benchmarking Study,
Switzerland 2025/2026**

Start knowing what your employees value. Stop guessing.

**Drive business success by understanding
your workforce's preferences**





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Introduction



Switzerland's labour market remains resilient by international standards. Participation rates are high, and even with unemployment rising to 3.0% in January 2026, it's still among the lowest in Europe. Stability is an important foundation for the workforce, and findings from the [Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2025](#) show that job security has become a key motivator. However, stability alone doesn't define the work experience. People seek trust, recognition, and dependable flexibility, indications that their organisation supports them in both stable and changing times. As AI and other emerging topics stir uncertainty, clear, honest, and consistent communication becomes crucial. Employees want to know what changes are coming, why they matter, and how they impact them. These expectations reflect wider global trends.

In this context, enhancing the employee experience is less about adding more benefits and more about making focused, evidence-based decisions. When organisations truly grasp what their people value, they can channel resources into what counts: elements that bring clarity, predictability, and ease to the workplace. This intentional strategy in crafting the employee value proposition not only connects with employees but also helps organisations refine costs and stay nimble.

To clarify these priorities, we conducted the Workforce Experience & Benchmarking Study with employees in Switzerland, in the end of 2025. Over 1,000 employees assessed the relative importance and satisfaction of 12 employee experience categories and 72 elements. The study reflects Switzerland's diverse workforce across age, gender, and region, capturing linguistic and geographic nuances.

These insights reveal what employees find most valuable and where employer offerings align – or miss the mark.

This whitepaper presents key insights, examines the top value categories and other crucial employee experience elements, reviews satisfaction and employer performance, and concludes with practical implications for building a more focused and future ready employee experience.

Key insights



The Big Three fundamentals

Across all demographics, employees in Switzerland place the highest value on recognition and appreciation, compensation elements, and flexible working. These categories represent the cornerstone and the most stable drivers of the workforce experience.



Everyday practicality outweighs aspirational perks

Elements that simplify daily work life like easily accessible offices, reliable tools, and benefits that reduce everyday expenses, rank higher than lifestyle or niche offerings. Employees appreciate what makes work smoother, easier, and manageable.



Security related benefits take precedence over wellbeing extras

Insurance based protections, such as daily sickness allowance accident insurance, and health insurance are more important than wellbeing or sports budgets, health screen packages, or preventive add-ons.



Growth matters – but not at the expense of stability

Employees favour tangible, progression linked development options, yet many still slightly prioritise job security over promotion. Development works best when anchored in clarity and stability.



Not all benefits are universally relevant

A small group of elements, like concierge services, massage options at the office, and sustainability ambassador roles, remain consistently low in importance across all demographics. These offerings have limited impact and are best considered only in specific strategic contexts.



The Big Three: recognition and appreciation, compensation elements, and flexible working model

Across Switzerland, our data highlights three key employee experience categories that consistently top the list: “recognition and appreciation”, “compensation elements”, and “flexible working model”. These categories not only rank highly, but also resonate across various demographics, providing organisations with a solid foundation to build upon. Within these categories, four elements emerge as top priorities, with no distinct

separation among them: “flexible work hours”, “base pay” and “13th month salary”, and “long service loyalty gift or bonus”.

Practically, employees have three key priorities: recognition, predictable pay, and control over their time. These elements are crucial in shaping their daily interactions with their employer and influencing their level of commitment.

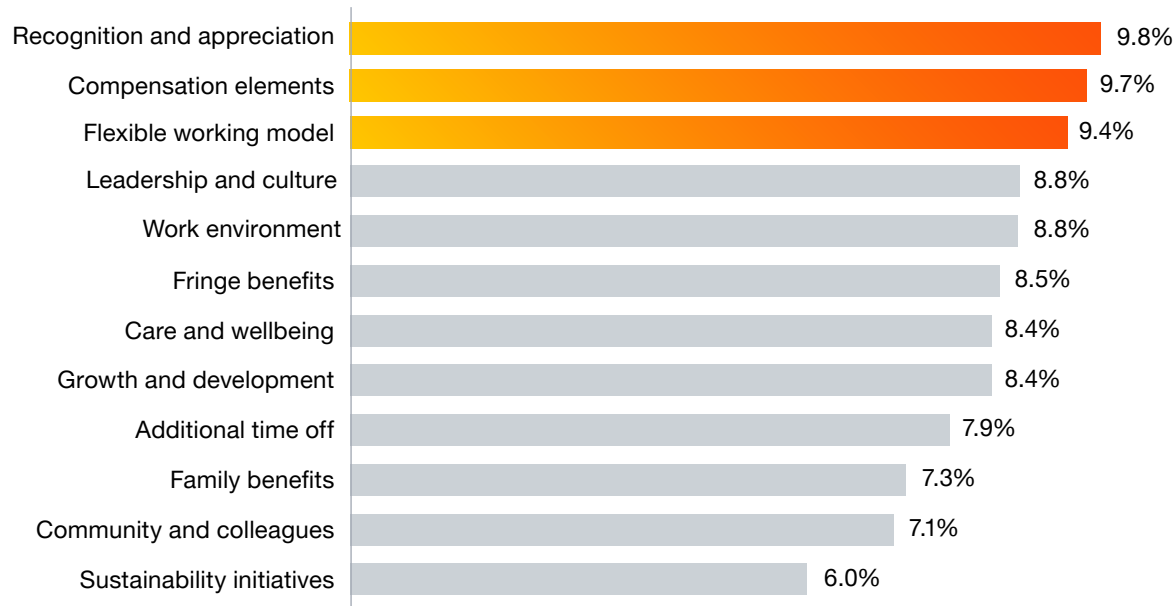


How to read the data?

Relative importance (RI) of a category shows how much a category matters compared to the others. The RI values sum to 100%, allowing for direct comparison: if one category’s RI is twice as high as another, employees consider it twice as important.

Relative importance of an element shows how strongly employees prefer one option over others. The values are normalised on a 1–10 scale, making elements directly comparable. An element rated 10 is the most important, while one rated 5 carries half the importance.

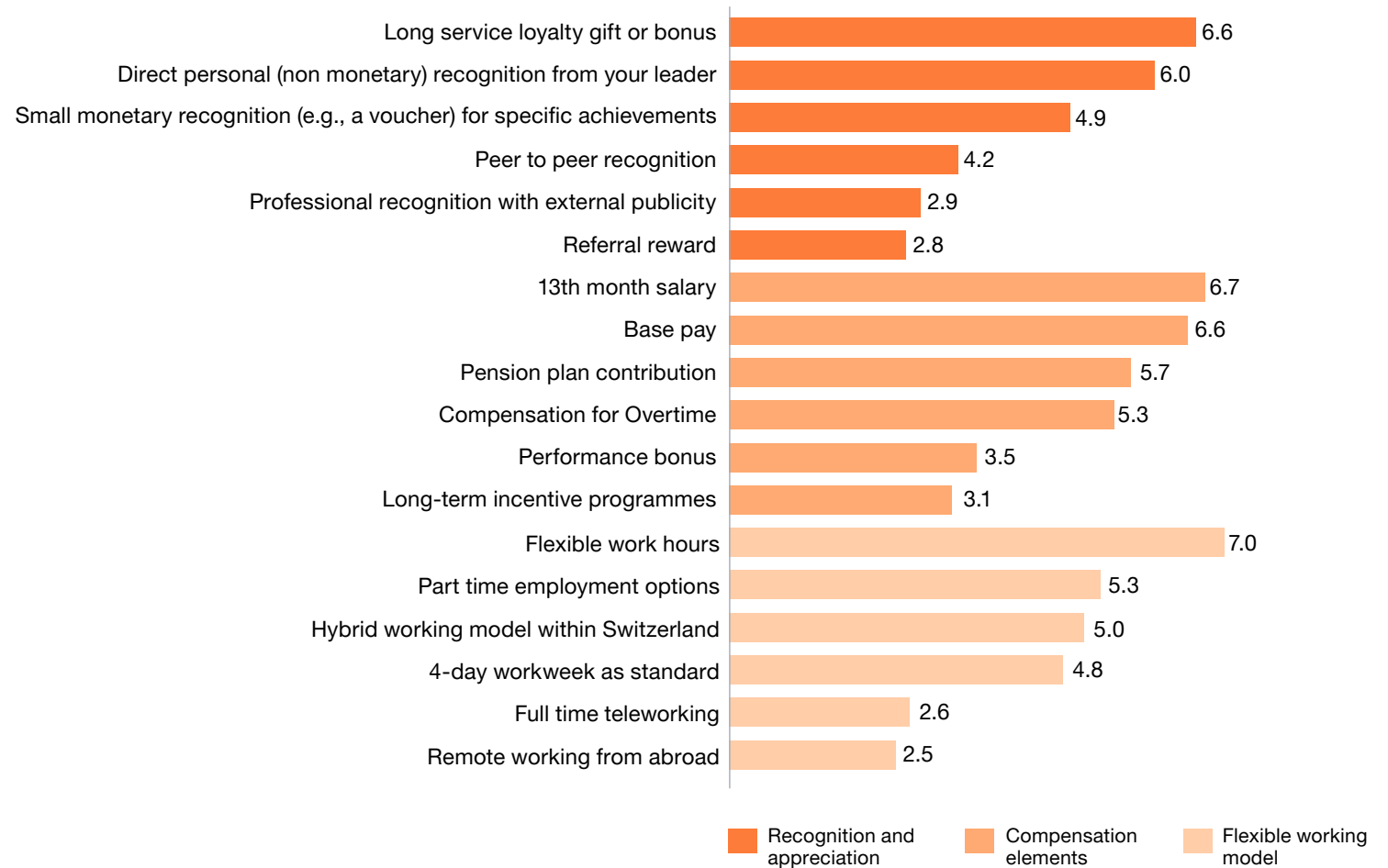
Employee experience categories by relative importance



Preferences hold different levels of relative importance for everyone. While some elements, like “flexible work hours”, are widely appreciated, others, such as “part time employment options” or “hybrid working model within Switzerland”, receive

mixed reactions. In Switzerland, certain preferences, like “full-time teleworking” or “remote working from abroad”, are more niche and should be strategically offered where they align with the talent strategy.

Elements of the Big Three workforce experience categories by relative importance



Ultimately, being seen and valued by one’s leader outweighs transactional acknowledgement.

The power of being recognised and appreciated

Within “recognition and appreciation”, two essentials stand out: “long service loyalty gift or bonus” and “direct personal (non-monetary) recognition from your leader”. Notably, 53% of respondents rank the first as their top choice, signalling that employees want to be acknowledged for their loyalty to the employee. It also carries significant weight for those aged 45 to 60, showing over 10% higher importance versus other age groups.

Other elements like “small monetary recognition” for specific achievements and “peer to peer recognition” show mixed opinions. In contrast, “professional recognition with external publicity” is a niche preference for 17 to 28-year-olds, indicating it’s more strategic for early career employees than a broad organisational focus.

Elements of the “recognition and appreciation” category by relative importance



“Compensation for overtime” is roughly

10%

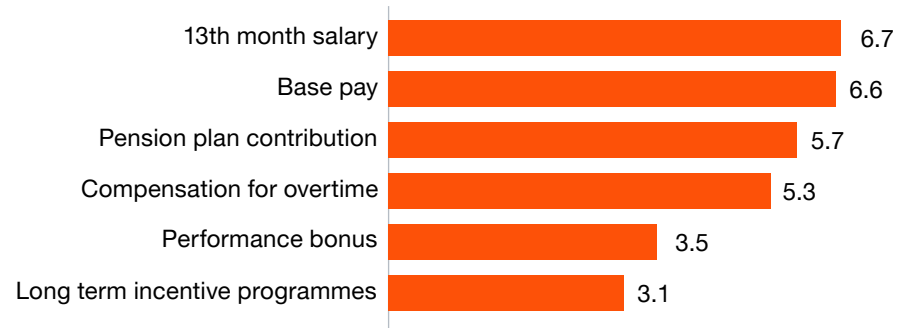
more important than a “4-day workweek as standard”

Predictable compensation wins

Within “compensation elements”, employees favour predictable pay structures. This is shown by the “13th month salary” and “base pay” preference. “Pension plan contribution” gain importance the older people get, peaking among those aged 45 to 60. “Compensation for overtime” resonates most with

the 17 to 28 age group, rating it – about 20% more than other age groups. “Performance bonus” and “long-term incentive programmes” are less favoured, underscoring a preference for stable, structured rewards over variable or long horizon incentives.

Elements of the “compensation elements” category by relative importance



“Flexible work hours” is

30%

more important than “part-time employment options.”

“Flexible work hours” emerge as the top priority, underlining the importance of control over working time.

The desire for control over time

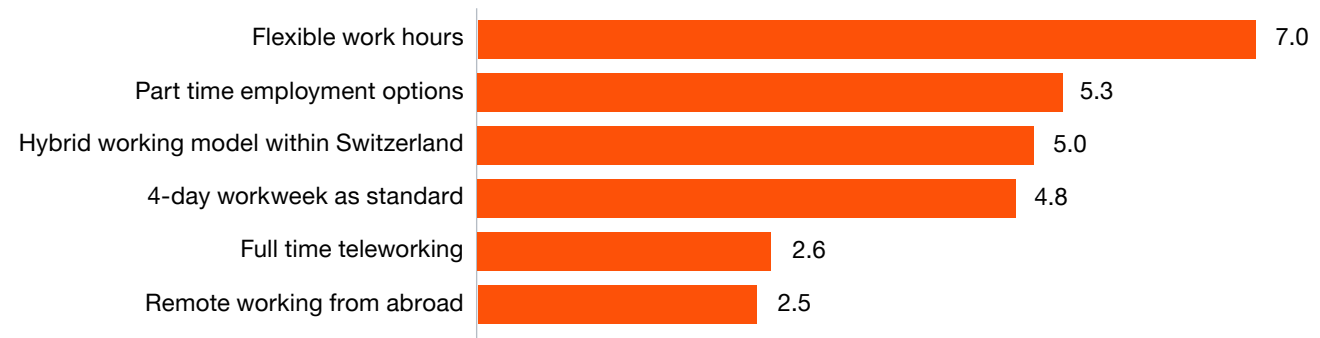
Within “flexible working model”, “flexible work hours” is a top priority. It’s the leading choice for 62% of employees in this category, showing its wide appeal across Switzerland. Interestingly, those aged 17-28 place less relative importance on it compared to other age groups. This highlights the need to tailor communication and leadership strategies to early career professionals.

The next cluster of priorities includes “part time employment options”, a “hybrid working model within Switzerland” and “4-day workweek as standard”. These are practical choices that can be adapted to different contexts. In contrast, “full time

teleworking” and “remote working from abroad” are seen as niche options. While they are important for a smaller group, many others don’t prioritise them as highly.

Beyond the top three categories, one element stands out: “easily accessible office location” within the “work environment” category. Ranking as the fourth most valued element out of 72, it emphasised that time flexibility is most effective when on-site days are easy to reach. In short, flexibility on when to work pairs with convenience on working from home or in an easily accessible office location.

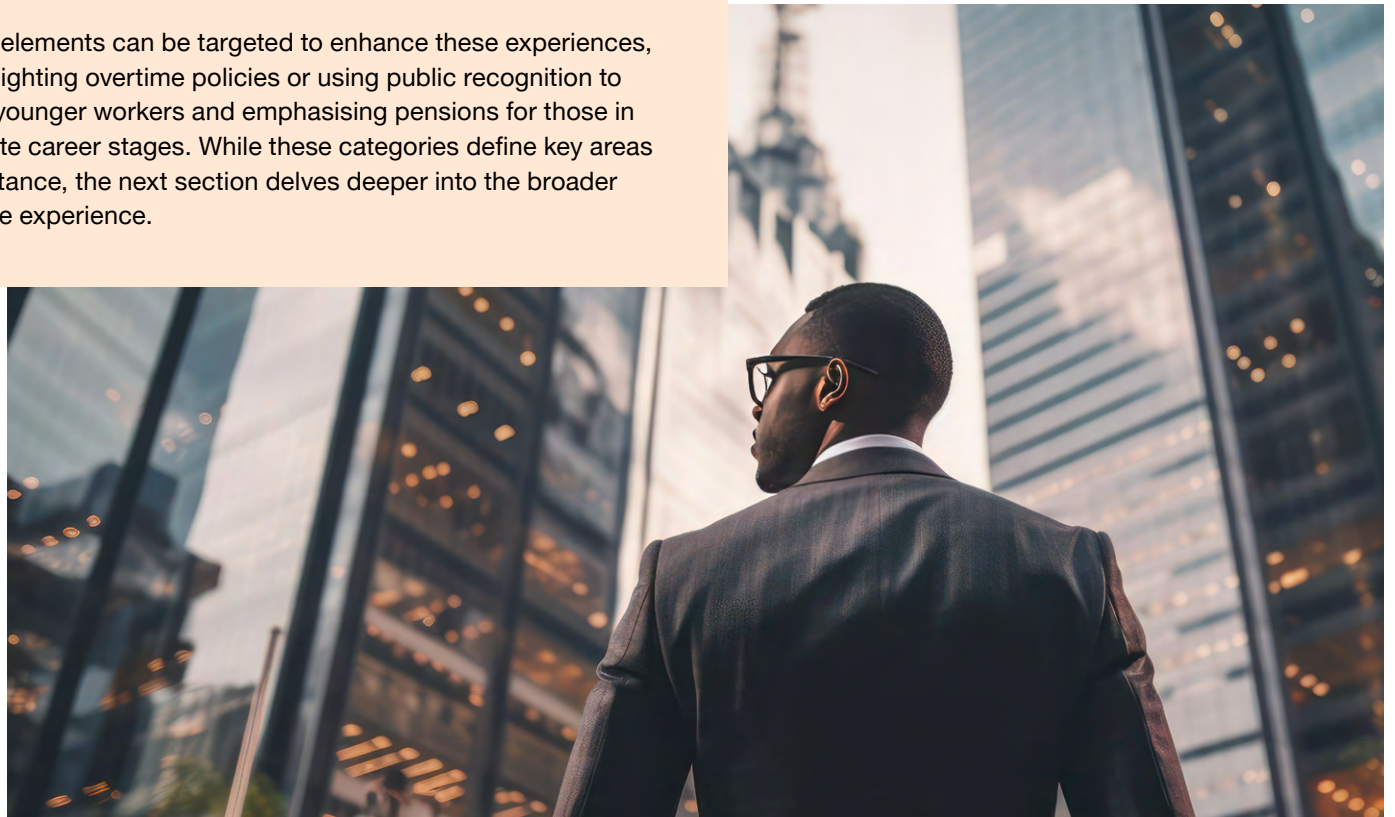
Elements of the “flexible working model” category by relative importance



Summary

Across the Big Three, employees have clear priorities: they value control over their work hours, acknowledgement from leaders and for long tenure, and enjoying a stable pay structure.

Specific elements can be targeted to enhance these experiences, like highlighting overtime policies or using public recognition to engage younger workers and emphasising pensions for those in mid to late career stages. While these categories define key areas of importance, the next section delves deeper into the broader employee experience.





Beneath the surface: understanding the broader employee experience

Across the wider employee experience, the core needs that define the Big Three continue to shape what matters most to employees. Being recognised, having steady and predictable pay, and maintaining control over their time are the key drivers behind many other preferences. These essentials reappear in various aspects of the workforce experience.

The core employee needs influence what employees expect from leadership and shape their desire for elements that simplify daily tasks, reduce uncertainty, or enhance financial stability.

Together, these patterns reveal that even beyond the main categories, employees consistently seek what offers clarity, ease, and security.

How leaders shape the broader employee experience

Leadership plays a defining role in shaping the broader employee experience.

“Transparent and open leaders” rank among the top ten elements overall and rise to the second most important element when the Big Three categories are set aside. Employees highly value “direct personal recognition from their leader”, which is about 40% more important than “peer to peer recognition” and around 20% more important than “small monetary recognition for specific achievements”, underscoring that recognition has the greatest impact when it comes directly from leadership. “Clear vision and direction” further reinforce this expectation, while a “speak-up culture” is seen as slightly less important. The picture is clear: clarity, openness, and personal connection from leaders have a strong influence on the employee experience.

An “easily accessible office location” ranks among the top five elements, highlighting the value employees place on reliable access to the workplace.

Preference to simplify daily work

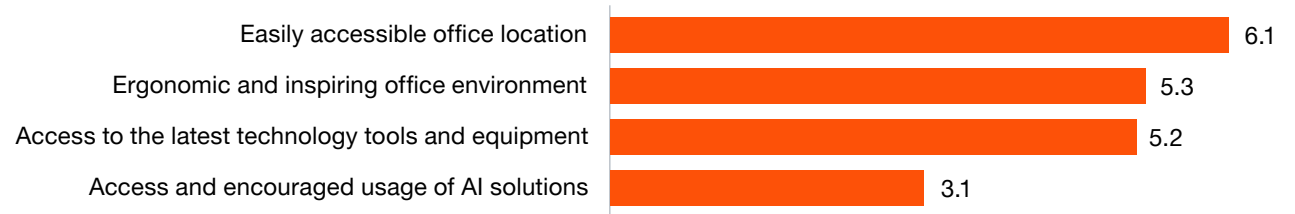
The importance employees place on simply getting to work with ease is a clear illustration of their preference to simplify daily work. An “easily accessible office location” ranks among the top five elements, highlighting the value employees place on reliable access to the workplace. Its relative importance is nearly twice that of “performance bonuses”, indicating that commuting convenience outweighs uncertain compensation. This preference strengthens with age, as employees aged 61–64 rate accessibility about 17% higher than those aged 17–28.

This preference also extends to the on-site experience. An “ergonomic and inspiring office environment” holds upper mid-range importance, but its relevance grows significantly

for employees aged 61–64, reaching nearly 17% above the population average. For this group, the quality of the physical workplace becomes a priority, highlighting that comfort, design, and usability play a crucial role in shaping their experience.

Beyond the physical environment, the technological workspace plays a vital role. “Access to the latest technology tools and equipment” nearly matches the value of an “ergonomic and inspiring office environment”, highlighting how employees see both physical and digital foundations as essential. In contrast, “access and encouraged usage of AI solutions” are rated almost 70% lower, showing a preference for dependable, familiar tools over emerging technologies.

Selected elements of the “work environment” category by relative importance



Employees prioritise protection-oriented benefits over wellbeing extras.

Preference to reduce friction and uncertainty

Reflecting their preference to minimise friction and uncertainty, employees prioritise protection-oriented benefits over wellbeing extras. Listed in order of relative importance, “daily sickness allowance insurance”, “supplementary accident insurance”, and “health insurance” all rank well above “yearly health screening

packages” and “wellbeing and sports budget”. These notable differences emphasise a consistent preference for dependable, insurance-based safeguards that mitigate financial and personal uncertainties.

Selected elements of the “care and wellbeing” category by relative importance



55%

of respondents would prioritise “job security” over “promotion and progression”

Reducing uncertainty influences development choices, with employees seeking growth options that offer clear, reliable paths forward. “Promotion and progression” as well as “digital upskilling”, both score higher relative importances, indicating that growth is valued when linked to tangible future

opportunities. The delivery method of “technical and personal skills training” is also important: face-to-face is valued nearly 17% more than virtual training. Yet, stability takes precedence, with 55% of respondents slightly favouring “job security” over “promotion and progression”.

Selected elements of the “growth and development” category by relative importance



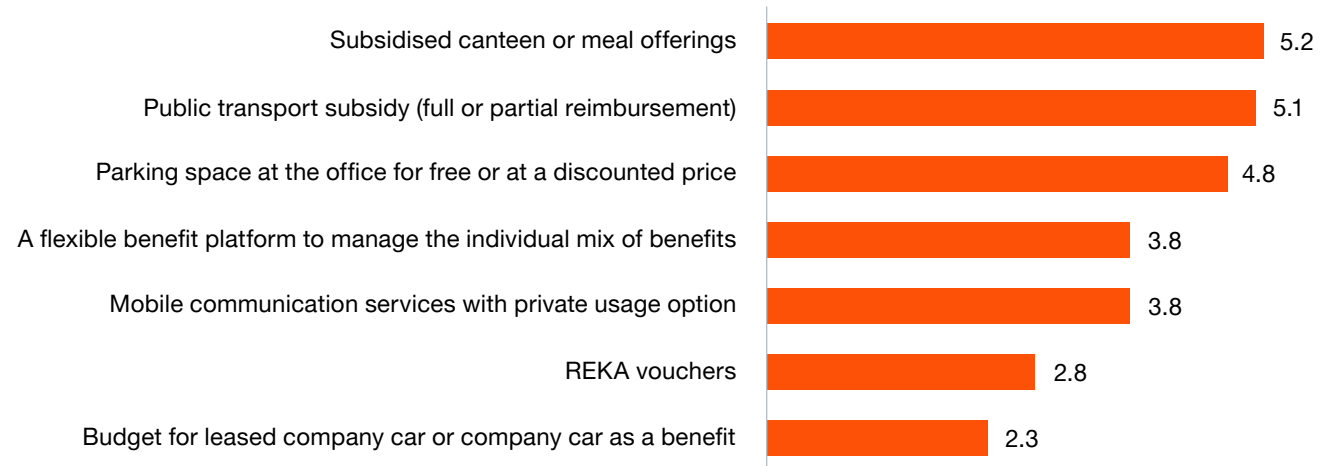
Employees value support that helps manage recurring out-of-pocket expenses, especially those related to commuting and on-site presence.

Preference to strengthen financial stability

Employees’ preference for financial stability is evident in their prioritisation of everyday cost-reducing benefits over optional fringe offerings. “Subsidised canteen or meal offerings”, “public transport subsidy”, and “discounted parking” consistently rank higher than a “mobile subscription with private use”, “flexible benefits platform”, “REKA vouchers”, or a “company car budget”.

Though these differences are moderate, the pattern is clear: employees value support that helps manage recurring out-of-pocket expenses, especially those related to commuting and on-site presence. This is particularly strong among those aged 17–28, who highly value subsidised meals and transport benefits, reflecting their sensitivity to daily costs early in their careers.

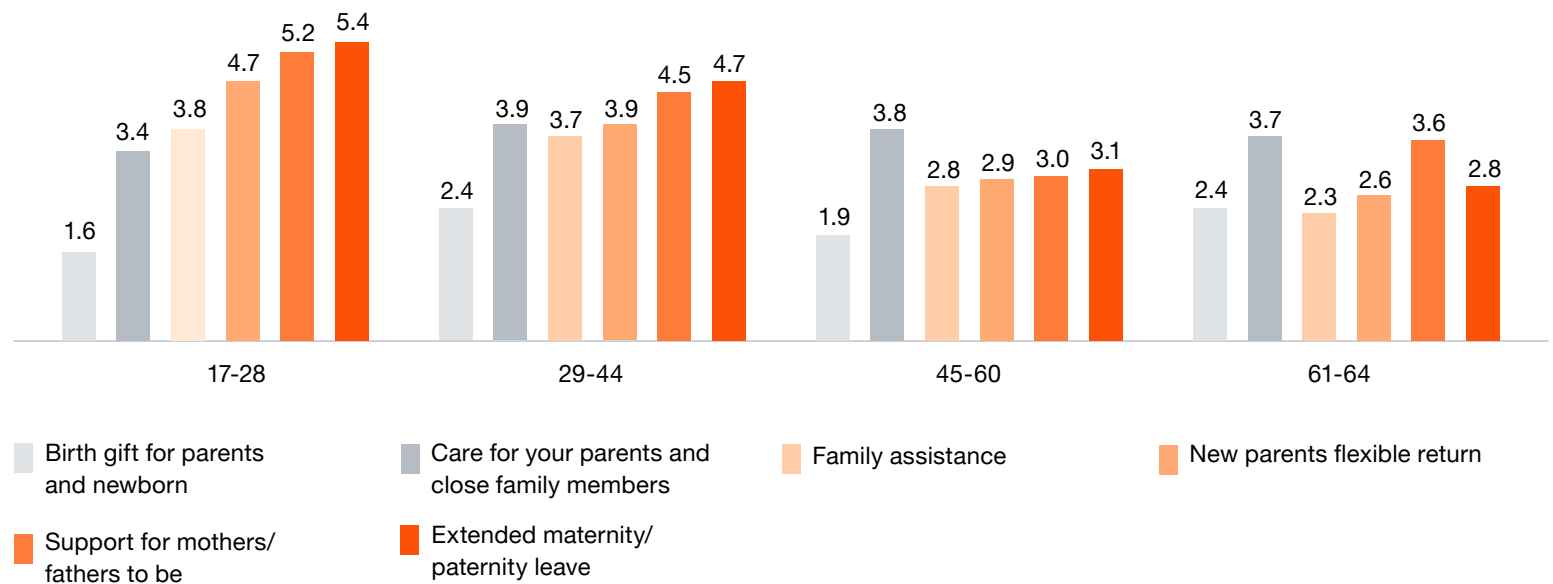
Elements of the “fringe benefits” category by relative importance



Financial stability influences the relevance of certain benefits at different life stages. While family-related benefits like “extended maternity or paternity leave” and “support for mothers and fathers-to-be” are moderately important overall, their importance rises over 30% among employees aged 17–28. For younger

employees, these benefits enhance financial predictability during major life transitions. Although not universal priorities, they become targeted stabilisers for those facing near-term family planning decisions, serving as meaningful differentiators when offered to the right demographic.

Elements of “family benefits” category by age groups



Summary

Taken together, the broader employee experience reinforces the same message from the Big Three: employees consistently gravitate toward elements that offer clarity, ease, security, and financial stability. Whether it's accessible workplaces, dependable insurance, predictable development paths, or support with everyday costs, these preferences remain steady across contexts. In contrast, more selective offerings deliver the greatest value when targeted to the demographic groups for whom they matter most.

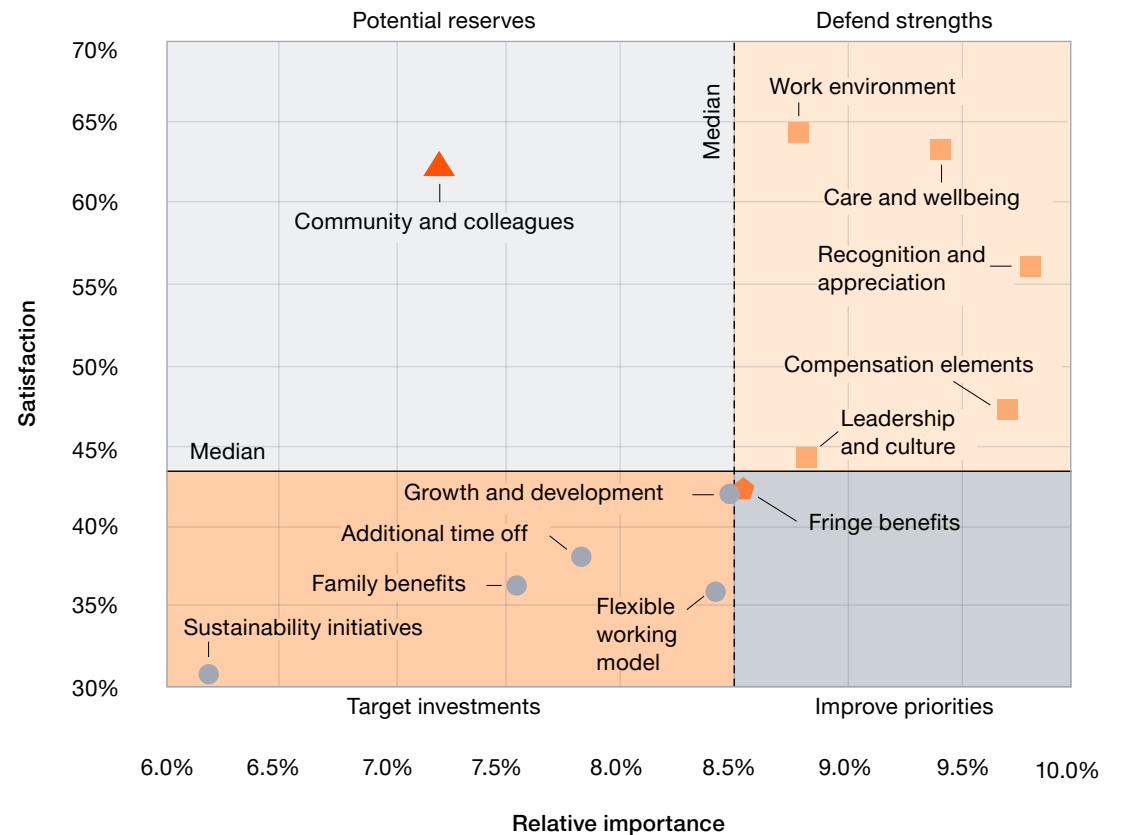




Performance check: how well employers align with what employees value

We've explored how employers in Switzerland are matching up with what employees truly value. Our quadrant analysis maps the relative importance against satisfaction across all twelve employee experience categories. Satisfaction was measured on a five-point scale from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied".

Satisfaction vs. relative importance heat-map



Five categories fall into the defend strengths quadrant: “work environment”, “flexible working model”, “recognition and appreciation”, “compensation elements”, as well as “leadership and culture”. They rank above the median in relative importance and satisfaction. However, “leadership and culture” hovers near the satisfaction median, making its position in the “strength” quadrant less stable than the others. Collectively, these categories highlight where employers are meeting expectations in the domains employees value most. They represent strategic strengths that should be defended, as any dip in satisfaction could pose a risk.

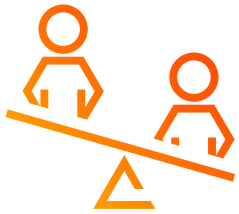
While most categories fall clearly into one of the quadrants, three cluster around the matrix mid-point: “leadership and culture”, “fringe benefits”, as well as “growth and development”. “Care and wellbeing” is lower on satisfaction yet also around the relative importance median. These categories are neither urgent weaknesses nor low priority perks; they remain central to a positive employee experience and could deliver engagement gains if invested in and improved. Differentiate

by prioritising investment in the high importance elements within these categories.

“Sustainability initiatives”, “family benefits”, and “additional time off” clearly fall into the target investments quadrant: These categories score lower on both relative importance and satisfaction, indicating that they are less central to the core employee experience. While not urgent priorities, they still play a role in rounding out the overall offering, particularly for employers that wish to maintain a balanced portfolio of wellbeing, sustainability, and family-oriented features. Yet, this quadrant highlights where we can uncover cost-saving opportunities by delving deeper into the specifics of preferences.

“Community and colleagues” lands in the potential reserves quadrant: it enjoys high satisfaction but low importance. This category reflects broader social and purpose-driven initiatives such as volunteering or pro bono work rather than everyday team collaboration. While these offerings are appreciated, they are not central to how employees evaluate their overall work experience.





The competitive experience: how employees compare their employer against other market players

To grasp how employees in Switzerland view their organisation's standing in the market, we explored their perceptions of their work experience compared to what they think competitors provide. These insights are based on employees' personal comparisons, rather than an objective measure of market practices.

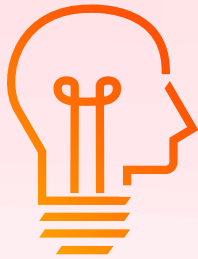
When it comes to comparing employers, most people see their own as similar to others. On average, 45% say their experience is "about the same," with results varying from 41% to 51% across different categories. However, 24% think competitors offer a better experience, while 18% feel their employer stands out positively.

Employees often value their employers for aspects that enhance their daily work life, especially in the categories "flexible working model", "work environment", as well as "community and colleagues". Meanwhile, competitors are frequently seen as leaders in more transactional categories like "fringe benefits", "compensation elements" and "additional time off".

"Growth and development" stands out as a crucial area needing attention. While it's seen as highly important, it often scores low in satisfaction, with employees viewing competitors' offerings as better. This situation leaves organisations exposed in their "growth and development" efforts. However, it also highlights a clear opportunity: enhancing this area can greatly boost retention across the organisation.

Our findings reveal that while employers are seen as competitive in shaping daily work life, they might lag in straightforward, transactional areas. Although unique experiences can set an employer apart, employees, especially the younger ones, still scrutinise transactional aspects against market standards.

To maintain a competitive edge, it's crucial for employers to offer a robust daily experience and ensure their transactional offerings stand strong in the market, particularly where competitors excel.



Conclusions

The study reveals a straightforward yet impactful insight: even amidst the complexities of today's workplace, employees in Switzerland favour on a few core essentials. They value predictable pay, genuine recognition, and the flexibility to balance work with life. Aligning with our [Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2025](#), this trend signifies a broader return to basics. In uncertain times, employees seek clarity, stability, and reliable benefits over optional perks.

For organisations, the message is clear: enhancing the employee experience isn't about adding more, but about making well-targeted, evidence-based decisions. Simplifying or retiring less impactful offerings allows focus on core elements that drive real impact. When the basics are strong, other initiatives thrive; without them, additional benefits or messaging fall short. By concentrating on what employees truly value, organisations can improve experiences and refine costs, ensuring resources are directed where they matter most.

Trust and transparency shape how employees perceive their work environment. They value not just the benefits provided but also the openness and consistency in sharing decisions. Transparent leadership is effective, especially when combined with financial- and job stability. This resonates with findings from the [Global Workforce Hopes and Fears Survey 2025](#): open communication and trusted leadership significantly enhance motivation and confidence, particularly when employees understand the changes and their reasons.

To effectively navigate change, it's crucial to sequence it thoughtfully. Keep the fundamentals steady, and ensure communication clearly explains the reasons behind decisions. Managers, who are closest to the daily experiences of employees, are key in turning strategy into everyday certainty. By prioritising and maintaining consistent, credible communication, organisations foster an environment where people remain engaged, adaptable, and confident, even when faced with uncertainty.

The study highlights that a cohesive workforce experience is more effective than a broad one.

We encourage organisations to be courageous and proactive in truly understanding what their employees value and prefer. This means moving beyond standard engagement surveys or assumptions about what should matter. It calls for a commitment to listen intently, question existing beliefs, and sometimes confront uncomfortable truths about the employee experience.

The study highlights that a cohesive workforce experience is more effective than a broad one.

Trust and transparency shape how employees perceive their work environment.

Understanding what truly matters empowers organisations to:



Offer clear, evidence-based guidance on where to focus resources and attention.



Avoid costly, low-impact programmes based on assumptions rather than data.



Prioritise initiatives that significantly boost motivation, productivity, and well-being.



Foster more transparent, credible communication with employees about organisational actions and their rationale.

Armed with this knowledge, organisations can make data-driven decisions that align business strategies with human needs; crafting policies, benefits, growth opportunities, and work environments that support both individual success and organisational performance.

By adopting this evidence-based, employee-focused approach, organisations can make informed decisions, enhance their culture, and create an environment where both people and the business can flourish.

Contact us



Adrian Jones
Partner, Leader Workforce
PwC Switzerland
+41 58 792 40 13
adrian.jones@pwc.ch



Róbert Bencze
Director, Leader Organisation and HR
PwC Switzerland
+41 79 939 21 45
robert.b.bencze@pwc.ch















About the study

The Workforce Experience & Benchmarking Study, Switzerland 2025/2026 was developed by PwC in collaboration with True Choice and enhanced with input from external experts to ensure Swiss market relevance. To maximise accessibility, the study was offered in German, French, Italian, and English. An independent

agency managed study distribution, and a third-party provider handled data collection. The study reached 1,004 participants, with quotas set to reflect the Swiss workforce by age, gender, and region. While the Italian-speaking sample was smaller, future studies may improve this representation.

The 12 categories and its items were:

 <p>Community and colleagues</p>	 <p>Sustainability initiatives</p>	 <p>Family benefits</p>	 <p>Work environment</p>	 <p>Care and well-being</p>	 <p>Compensation elements</p>
 <p>Additional time off</p>	 <p>Flexible working model</p>	 <p>Fringe benefits</p>	 <p>Recognition and appreciation</p>	 <p>Growth and development</p>	 <p>Leadership and culture</p>



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