

Market Burst

Top trends in talent

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April 2022

A shift towards freelance work

Freelancing has emerged as an attractive employment option after the pandemic. Professionals, especially those delivering high-demand services like computer programming, business consulting and IT, are drawn to flexible schedules and more control over what, when and how they do. Nearly [80%](#) of independent contractors recently surveyed by Upwork said that control over their schedule was a key motivator for pursuing freelance work and [7 in 10](#) pointed to location flexibility.

On the other end, firms are willing to hire remote gig workers now, more than ever, provided the current struggle to retain and attract full-time employees. According to Upwork, [38%](#) of firms plan to significantly increase their usage of remote independent consultants in the next two years. Due to the rise in the adoption of remote teams, freelancing provides a viable career path for skilled professionals in regions where domestic opportunities may be lower. The [top four countries](#) with the fastest-growing freelance markets are US, UK, Brazil and Pakistan.

Experts suggest tapping into the freelance community is critical for combating the current talent crunch. Businesses risk missing out on this valuable talent if they approach independent contractors only for small projects or routine work – deploying freelancers as a filler for full-time hires is not an option anymore.



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Deploying technology to fight the Great Resignation

The pandemic removed many barriers of adopting new tools, and enhanced digitalisation made it essential for companies to keep investing in technology. Now that crisis management is over, [market experts](#) are looking for tools to drive employee engagement and influence talent retention.

With many remote operations running smoothly, it's time to focus on the functionalities of collaboration tools that offer human connection. For example, [Slack's Donut app](#) is designed to schedule informal watercooler-type virtual meetups. It randomly pairs colleagues up and facilitates conversations, virtual coffees, peer learning, and work anniversary celebrations.

Employers need to ensure their workers feel connected and heard as individuals, whether based remotely or onsite. Unbalanced interactions in a hybrid workplace can erode connection and leave teammates feeling alienated. To this end, some firms offer stipends for better tech setup in the home office. [Buildkite](#) lets employees design their ideal work environment in a co-working space, with a new computer and phone budget every 24 months.

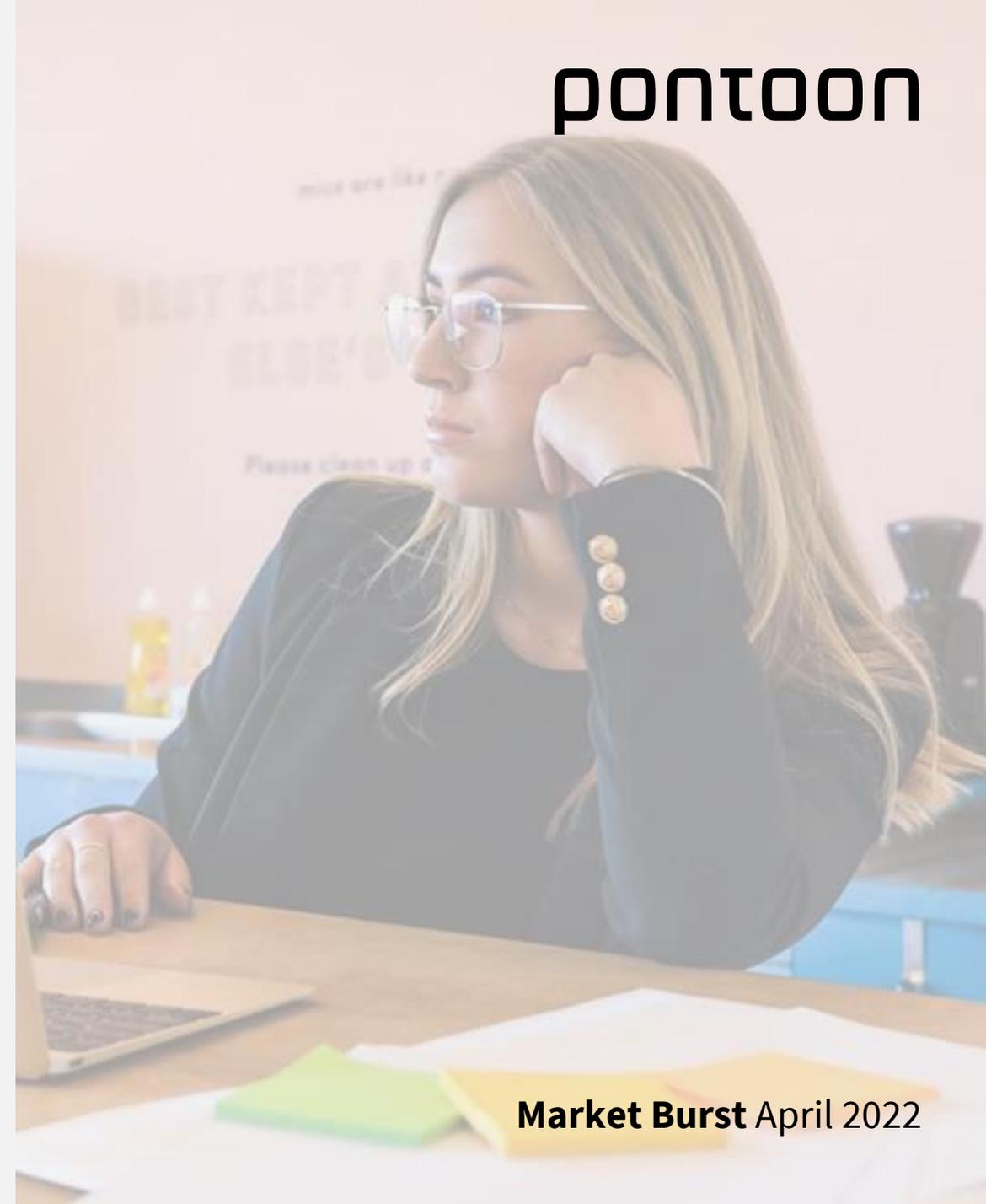
Another crucial area to consider is workforce analytics which can detect work patterns, measure behaviours and benchmark employees across peers and industries. With increased visibility into productivity, output and impact to business outcomes, firms should continuously invest in employee engagement.

Ghosting in the hiring process

Ghosting, a phenomenon originating in the dating world, is making strides in the hiring market. Indeed reported that only [27%](#) of US employers say they *haven't* ghosted a job seeker in the past. In the same report, [1 in 10](#) workers said they have been ghosted even after receiving a verbal offer. It is a worrying practice, provided a negative candidate experience can seriously damage the employer's brand.

Candidates are also cutting ties. [A quarter](#) of respondents in a recent survey of 1,000 UK workers said they ghosted a potential employer due to a negative first impression with the brand. A similar proportion pointed to inaccurate job descriptions and salaries lower than advertised as a reason to cut off communication. Interestingly, receiving a more attractive job offer didn't top that list.

Today's candidates are looking for a streamlined and consistent hiring process that makes them feel respected every step of the way – from job descriptions to onboarding. Meaningful interactions are key, however a recent study of 1,500 global workers found that while [70%](#) of job seekers want feedback on an interview, nearly [8 in 10](#) never hear back. Candidates decide who they want to work for at every touchpoint and will quickly move on if faced with a lengthy application process, inconsistencies, and slow or no recruiter response. Onboarding is also crucial, especially if conducted virtually. Employees who have a positive onboarding experience are almost [three times](#) more likely to feel prepared and supported, which boosts their confidence, enhances engagement and decreases the risk of jumping ship.



People's readiness for the future of work

[LHH](#), a fellow Adecco Group brand, recently published the [Readiness Index](#), which provides deep insight into how people feel about their future career prospects and their levels of preparedness. The study revealed three core trends driving workers' readiness for the future of work.

1. People aged 18-24 have the lowest Readiness Score of 7, with 55% anxious about their next career steps. A low level of control over what follows has decreased their self-confidence, and one-third of the group feel their voice isn't heard compared to older colleagues.
2. There are also clear differences between how men and women feel about themselves in the workplace. Male workers have a more negative perception of colleagues at their current companies and are very concerned with financial fairness. Men are 9% more likely to feel they can grow in their careers and are 80% more interested in pursuing leadership positions.
3. The study also revealed moderate concerns about the rise of tech, with 45-54 year-olds being most worried about the speeding digitalisation. On average, people are more concerned about the immediate environmental factors such as the economy and hybrid working.

Understanding how employees feel about work and their needs means companies can act with greater insight and empathy. Firms can tailor employee care approaches to what people need compared to what the management may feel is necessary. The latest research by [Adecco Group](#) has confirmed that increased productivity and performance is the top benefit of improving how employees feel at work.

Reinventing company cultures

Company cultures are being reshaped worldwide on the back of the pandemic, automation, and Great Re-evaluation. Workers are demanding more flexibility and more attention to their wellbeing. In today's competitive market, candidates have also plenty of options to choose the work environment that matches their aspirations and work styles.

According to LinkedIn, [4 in 10](#) candidates globally consider organisational culture the highest priority when picking a job, with the Netherlands, France, Australia and New Zealand topping the list of the countries that look for a stronger company identity. A caring culture has become a significant asset for many companies worldwide, and others will need to keep up if they want to attract and grow talent.

Culture can be a huge selling point for picky job seekers. LinkedIn reports a [67%](#) engagement boost for posts that mention company culture. Also, [15%](#) more members posted about this topic in 2021 compared to 2019.

Experts say it is not enough to have a strong organisational identity - the brand messaging is also important. Candidates want to know if the firm's culture matches their preferences, so firms need to alter what they communicate – shifting the focus to what's essential to job seekers. Another strategy is to involve the current employees in discussions around what makes their workplace unique. That will help position the company as the employer of choice.



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