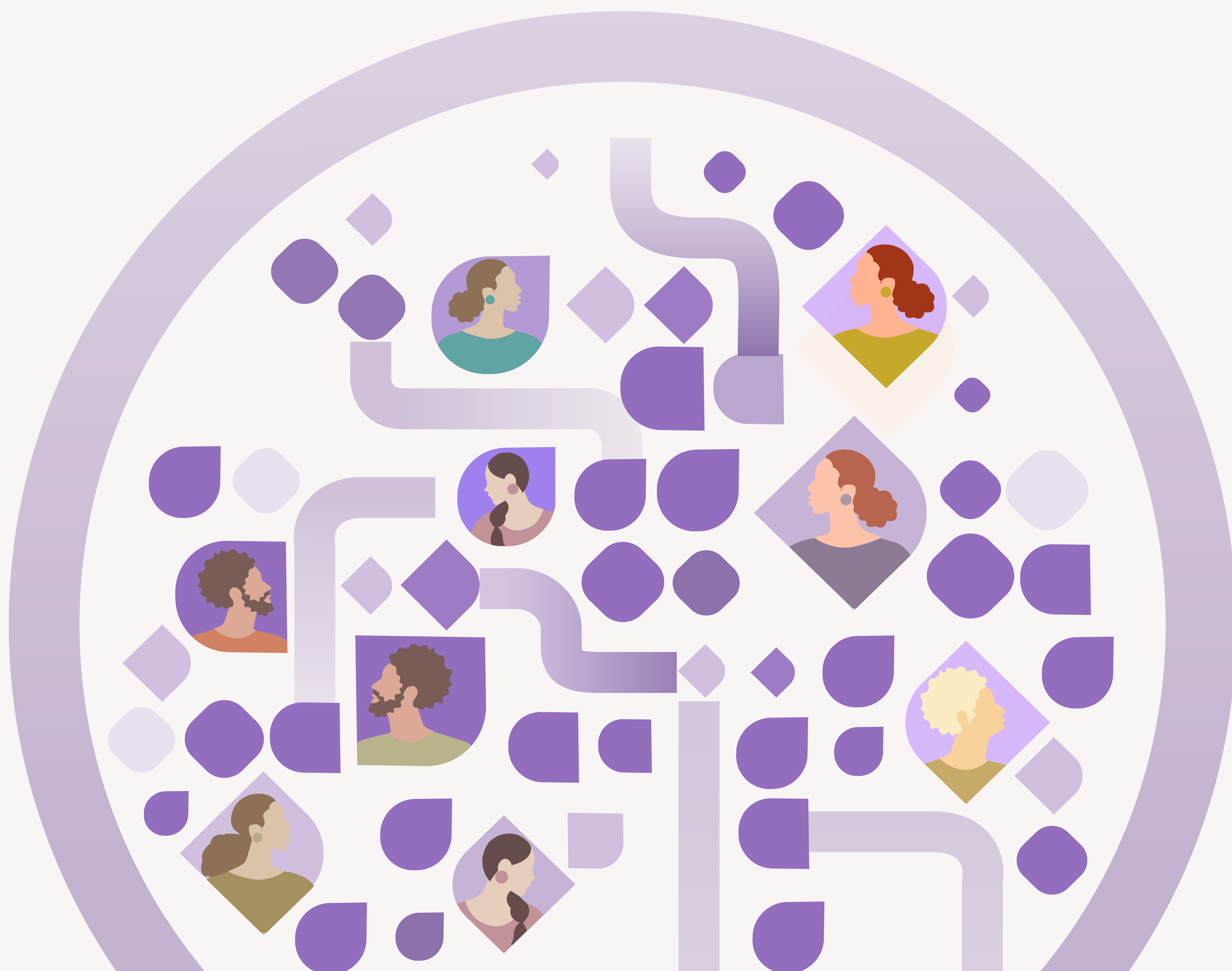


How to Build a Thriving Global Team Amid the Great Resignation



Table of Contents

Introduction	2
1. What is The Great Resignation?	4
1.1 The changing perceptions of work and “the office”	8
1.2 The reality of “Quiet Quitting”	11
2. Existing work challenges and “resigning” on a global scale	12
3. How to build a thriving global team	
Way forward with Skuad	15



Introduction

It's been nearly two years since the COVID-19 crisis upended labor markets, job opportunities seem to be available in many advanced economies, yet skilled talent are reluctant to take on those roles.

The world of human capital is under intense pressure currently as powerful forces — globalization, demographic and regional shifts, digitization, urbanization, and virtual and informal forms of employment — gain momentum. The new world of work is not conformist anymore. As a result, "quitting" has become a watchword among corporate as well as gig jobs.

Globalization, demographic and regional shifts, digitization, urbanization, and virtual and informal forms of employment — gain momentum.

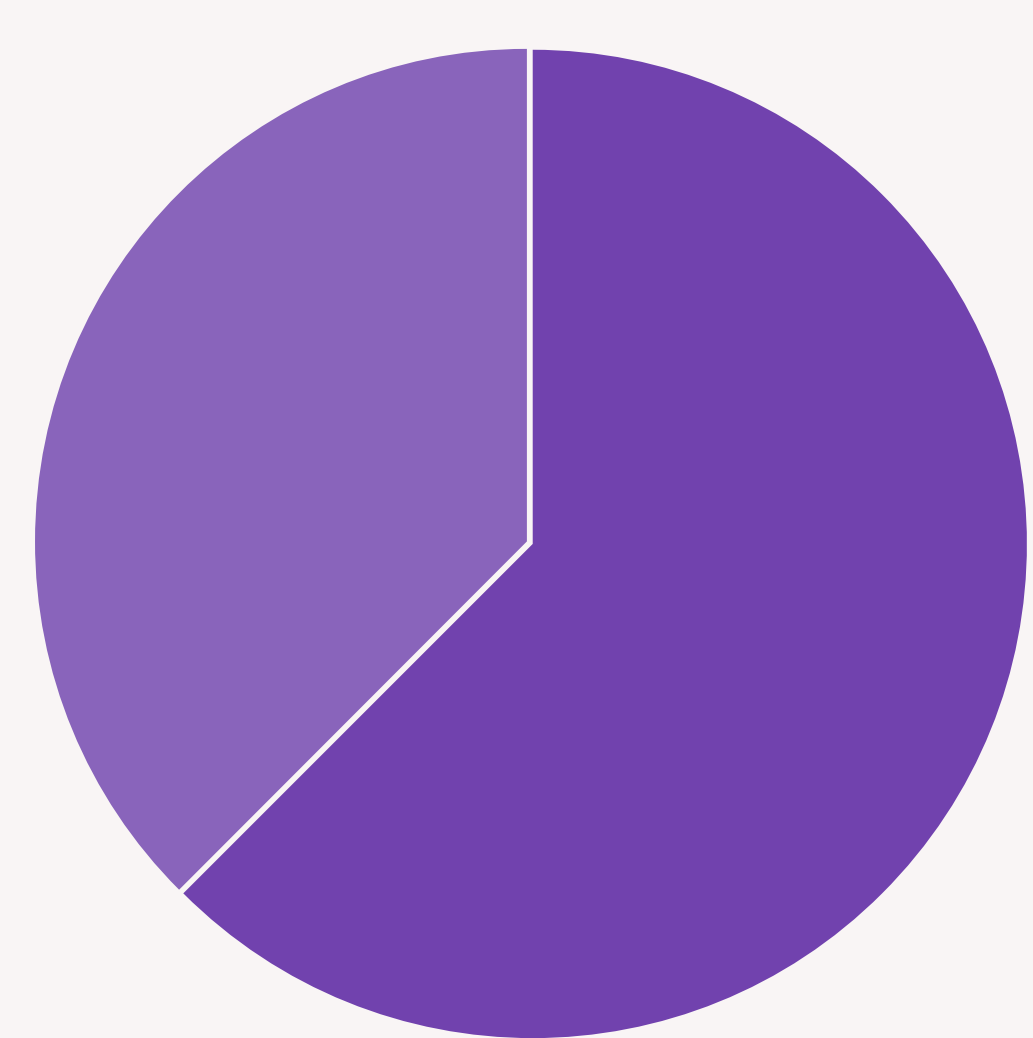


As borderlines between on-site and remote work blur, more so in a post-pandemic world, employers and employees are reconsidering work arrangements in many ways.

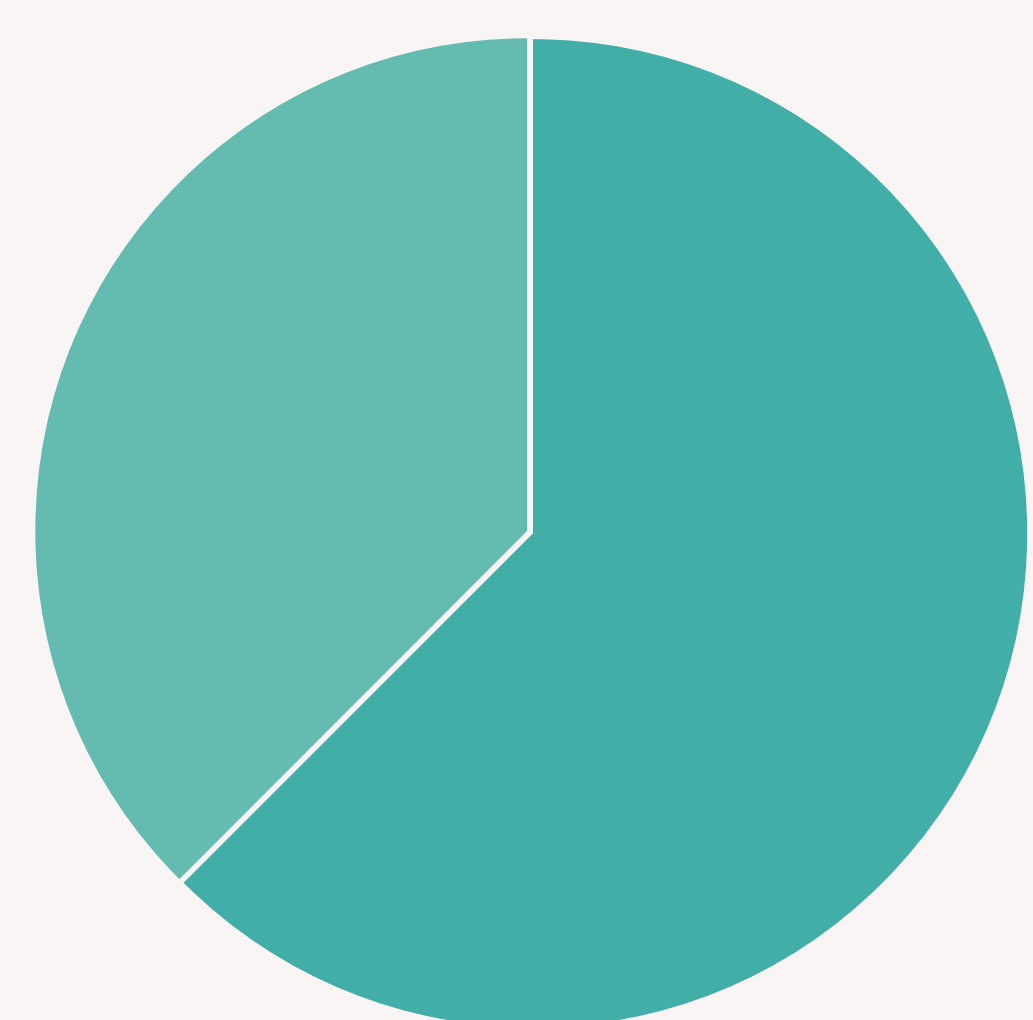
Specifically, while work is still understood as the means (**e.g., schedules, performance, deliverables, etc.**) to some ends (**e.g., compensation, bonus, benefits, etc.**), the perception of work has evolved significantly since 2020.

Companies will struggle to find and hire the right talent for the role. While those whose skills are not in demand will take up any job simply to earn a living.

Meanwhile, according to [peer-reviewed research, appreciation, not pay](#), is driving millions of workers in major labor markets, including the U.S., to reconsider current employment arrangements, if not to quit entirely. Still, the current global quitting pattern goes well beyond a passing inclination to just quit because of pandemic fatigue.



68% of employees prefer hybrid work over conventional work modes



63% report being happier because of more flexibility

[According to a study by Michael Page](#), 68% of employees in India prefer hybrid work over conventional (on-site) work modes and 63% report being happy because more flexibility is introduced into in-place work arrangements. Meanwhile, a staggering 85% of employees from the Technology and Telecom sectors in India plan to tender their resignation within the next six months.

Companies like Infosys, Wipro, HCL and TCS are already seeing an attrition rate of over 20%.



In the pursuit of higher productivity, employers may miss out on employee happiness while hiring contractors managed across distributed teams. In the current world of diverse hires, having global teams may be only a designation many companies fail to stand up to. **Companies need to dig deeper to fully comprehend ongoing work revolutions — from “The Great Resignation” to “Quiet Quitting” — and establish a truly global and inclusive employment strategy.**

This white paper aims to help employers manage The Great Resignation, understand the constantly evolving nature of remote working, and effectively build and lead global teams.



1. What is The Great Resignation?

Professor Anthony Klotz of Texas A&M University coined the term “[Great Resignation](#)” (also known as the “Big Quit” and the “Great Reshuffle”) in an interview with Bloomberg in 2021. It is an ongoing economic trend wherein large numbers of employees have voluntarily resigned from their jobs, beginning in early 2021 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The most cited reasons for resigning include wage stagnation amid inflation and living expenses, inflexible remote-work policies, limited opportunities for career advancement, hostile work environments, lack of benefits and long-lasting job dissatisfaction.

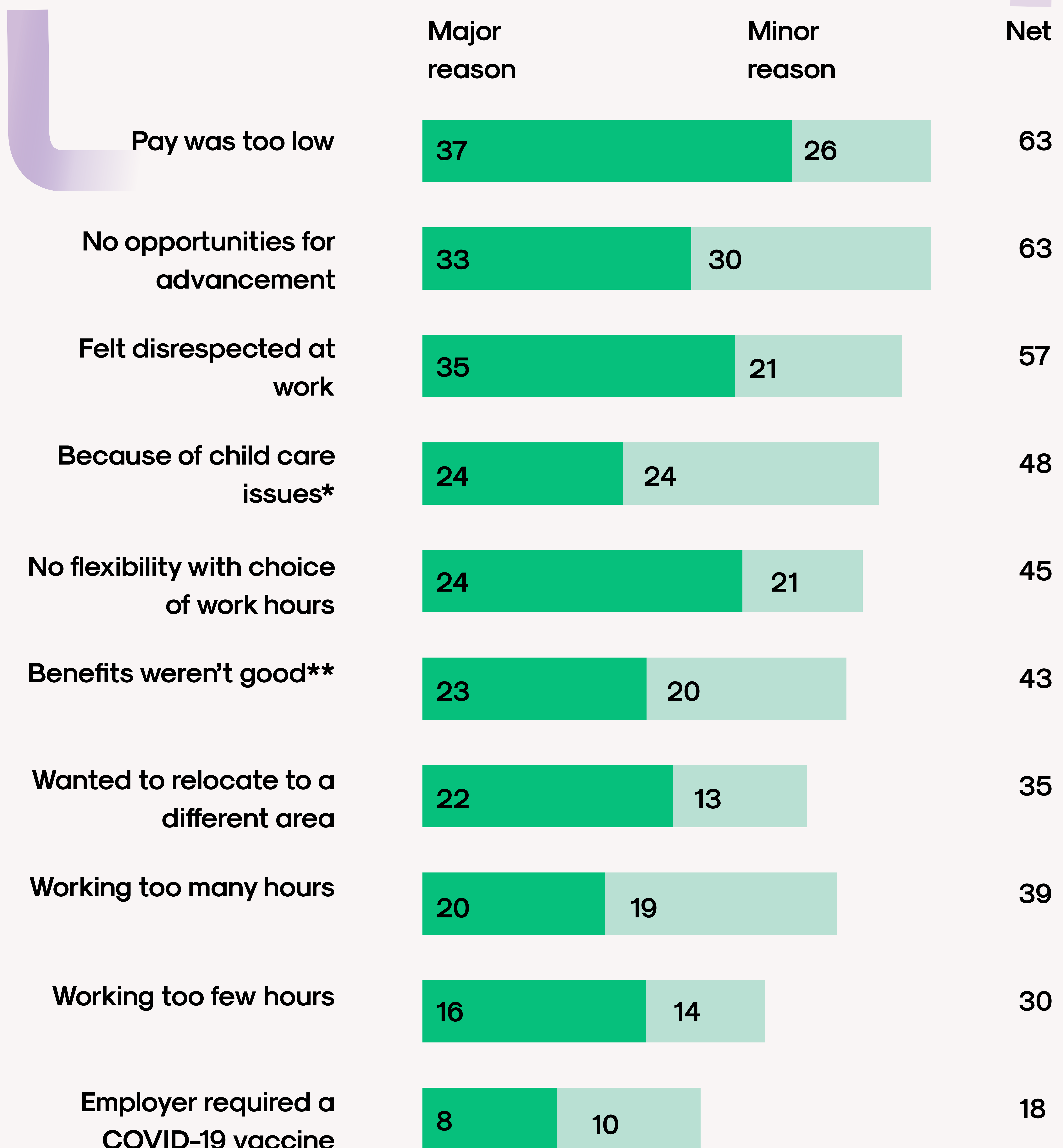
An [extensive survey revealed two trends](#):

- Resignation rates are highest among mid-career employees
- Resignation rates are highest in the technology and healthcare industries



Professor Klotz also suggested to the Financial Times that the the that the great resignation will unsettle the labor market for at least two or three years. As more people quit and gain new opportunities and improved flexibility, this will become contagious, and more people will

follow what they see their friends and family doing. In a [widely-cited survey by Pew](#), disrespect stands out as a leading cause for quitting. Interestingly, appreciation in the workplace and other major reasons for quitting are shown below.

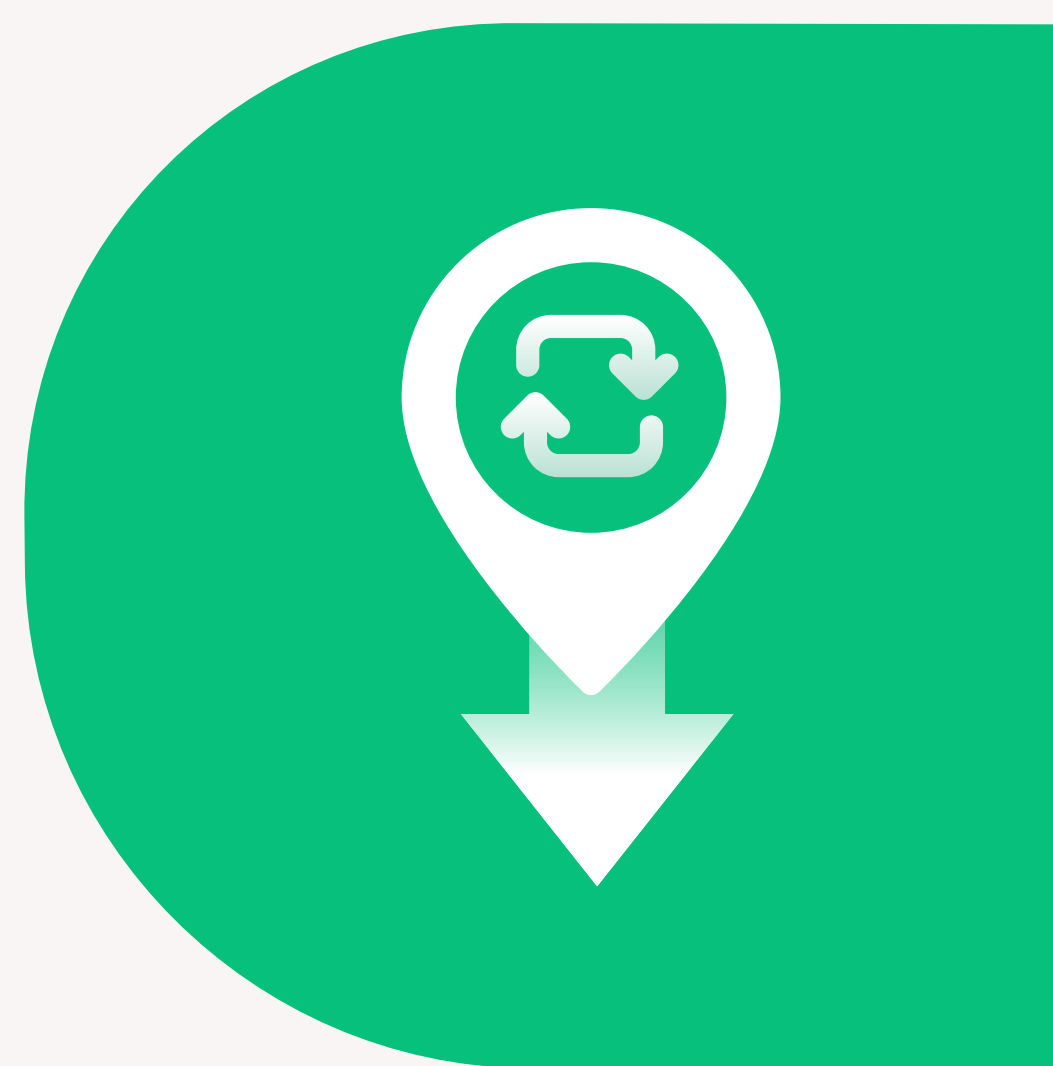


A [Harvard Business Review article](#) cites the following factors for this global phenomenon:



Retirement:

Unlike younger generations, especially Gen-Z, older workers (Baby Boomers) have had the financial wherewithal to retire earlier. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the pace wherein a number of senior workers were either laid off or chose to quit.



Relocation:

Rates of relocation have been declining steadily since the 1980s, and Covid has not reversed that trend. Relocation is not a major factor in the Great Resignation.



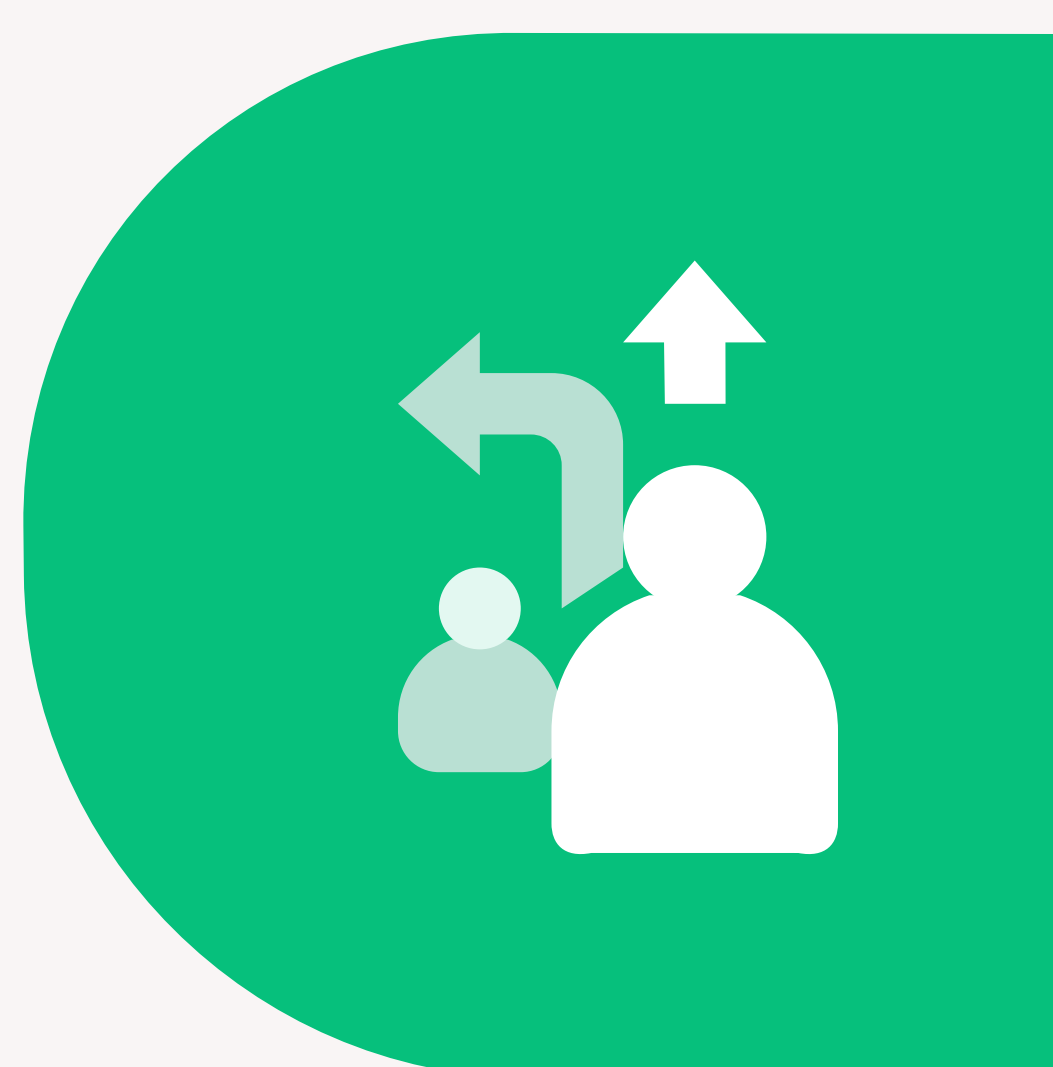
Reconsideration:

This refers to what is commonly called "burnout" among both old and young workers who have been experiencing heightened levels of stress during the pandemic, especially in some industries like hospitality.



Reluctance:

This refers to fears related to COVID-19 where workers are showing reluctance to get back to work as usual and prefer a more hybrid work arrangement.

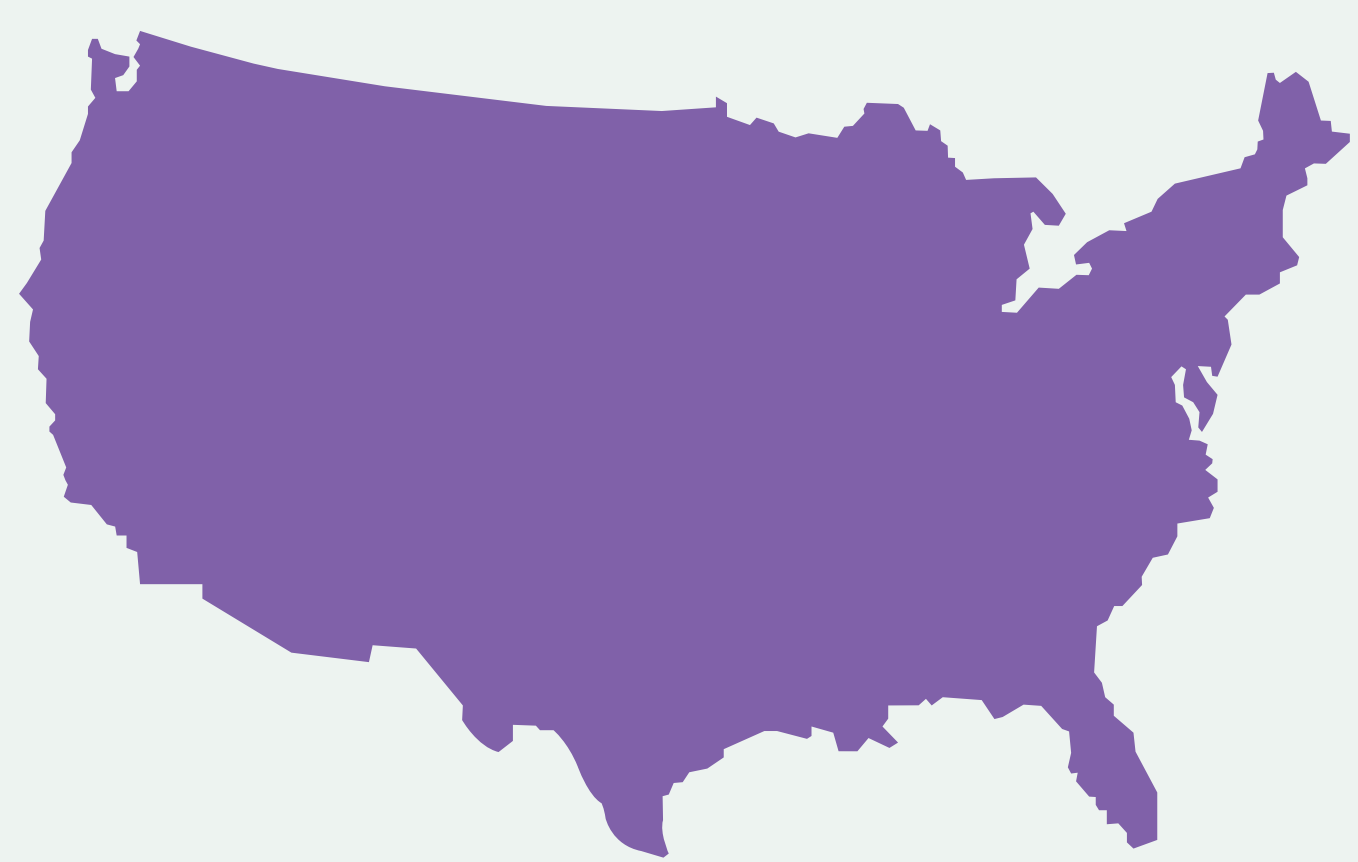


Reshuffling:

This refers to workers moving around, but not necessarily quitting, within or across sectors.

These factors are informed by conditions in the U.S. labor market and may not reflect more nuanced changes in other major labor markets in Europe and Southeast Asia.

The general Great Resignation pattern holds across different markets, though.



United States



Europe



Southeast Asia

A notable pattern of employees quitting jobs en masse is identifiable across different jurisdictions such as in India and Singapore.

Higher-pay-for-higher-performance arrangements

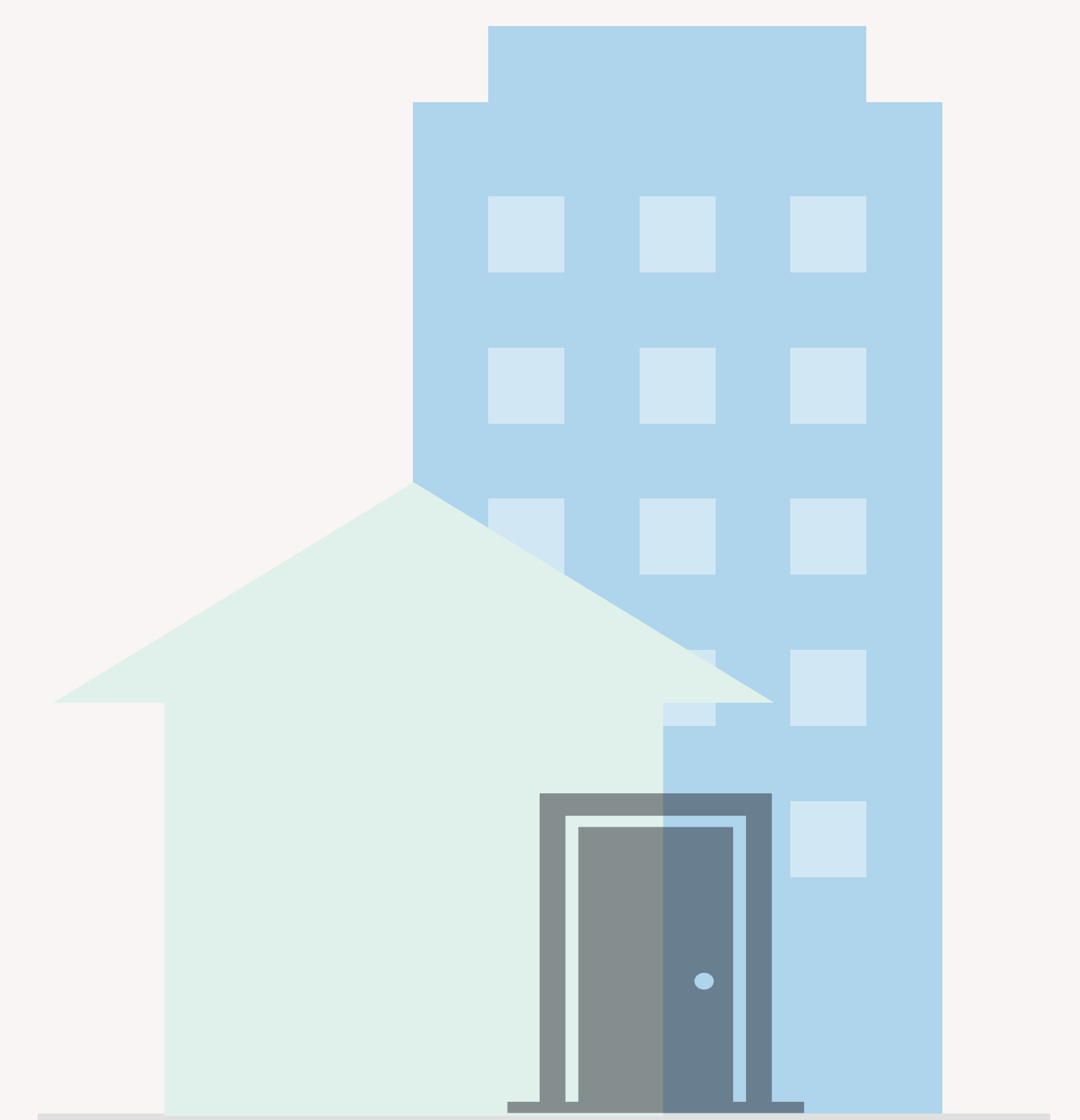
SHIFT

Flexible and remote work arrangements

Notably, the lack of adequate flexibility (and respect) at workplaces has made a growing pool of so-called "knowledge workers" reconsider when, where, and how to work. Specifically, **more skilled workers are moving away from conventional higher-pay-for-higher-performance arrangements to more flexible (and remote) work arrangements.**



Boomerang Employees



Confident of more employment opportunities, more skilled workers opt in and out of in-place work arrangements — referred to as **"boomerang employees."**

However, quitting, for many, is viewed as a luxury. Less skilled employees may not have the option to switch jobs or get back onboard.

1.1 The changing perceptions of work and “the office”

Typically, perception is critical in defining how corporate culture works. This is more visible at a C-suite level. To recap, leadership still plays a critical role in defining work habits and routines in a new world of remoteness.

However, **deep changes are needed in work environments and only cohesive leadership at the C-suite level can enable a culture of collaboration across and within distributed global teams.**

Under current global employment circumstances, **negative perceptions about work in general are contributing to how inter-generational discrepancies are identified in quitting frequency and volume, especially with Millennials and Gen-Z.**

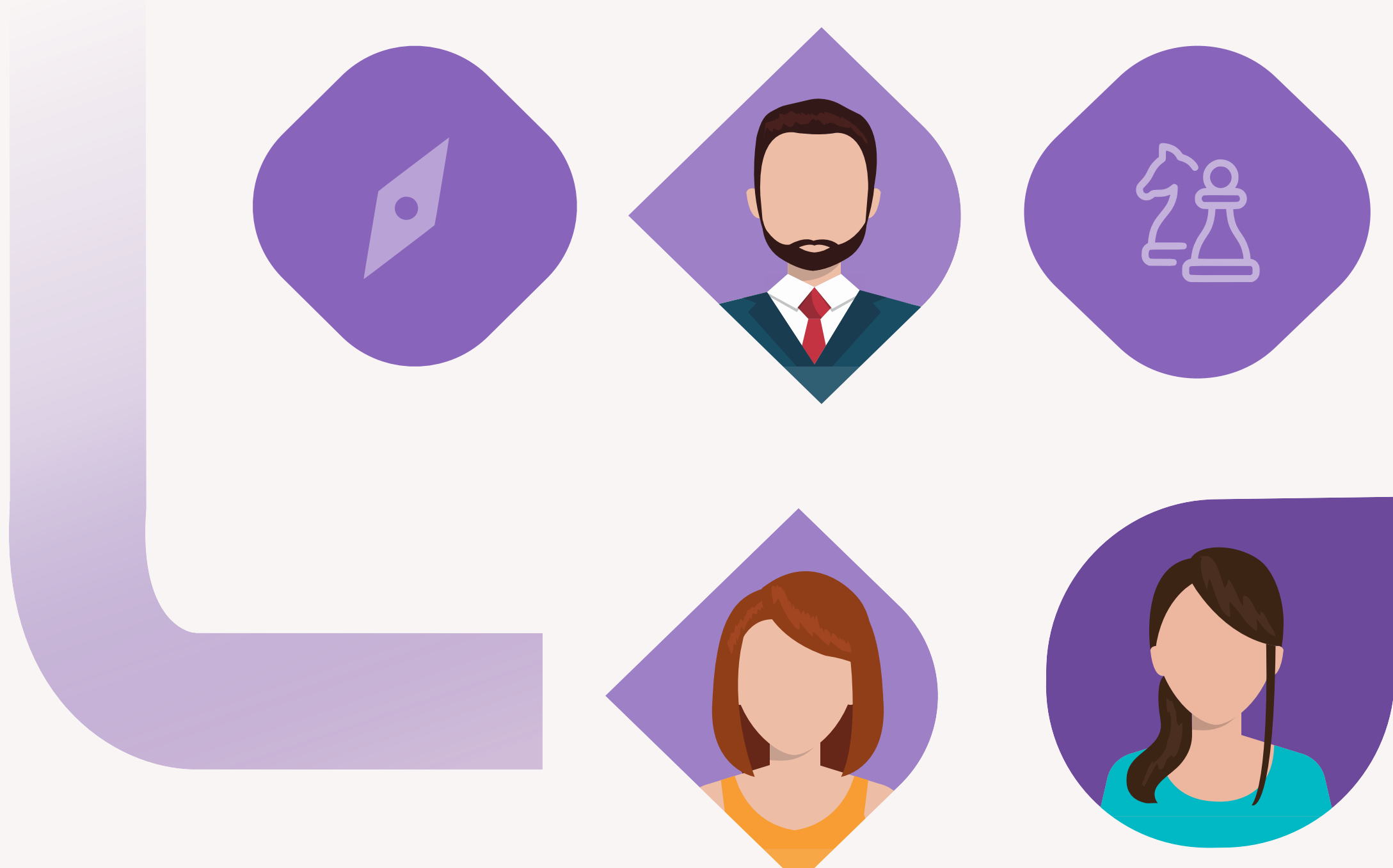
Several [factors contribute to changing perceptions](#), including:

Digital transformation:

The rise of digital platforms over conventional brick-and-mortar businesses has made it possible for companies to scale faster. From an employment perspective, skilled workers are increasingly defecting from established brands only to start extremely successful startups with corporate cultures that are at odds with former employers.



Instead of enduring stressful and mentally draining working hours at established brands, **employees are launching new platform-based startups catering to the employment needs more suited to younger generations of workers looking for more flexibility and appreciation at work.**



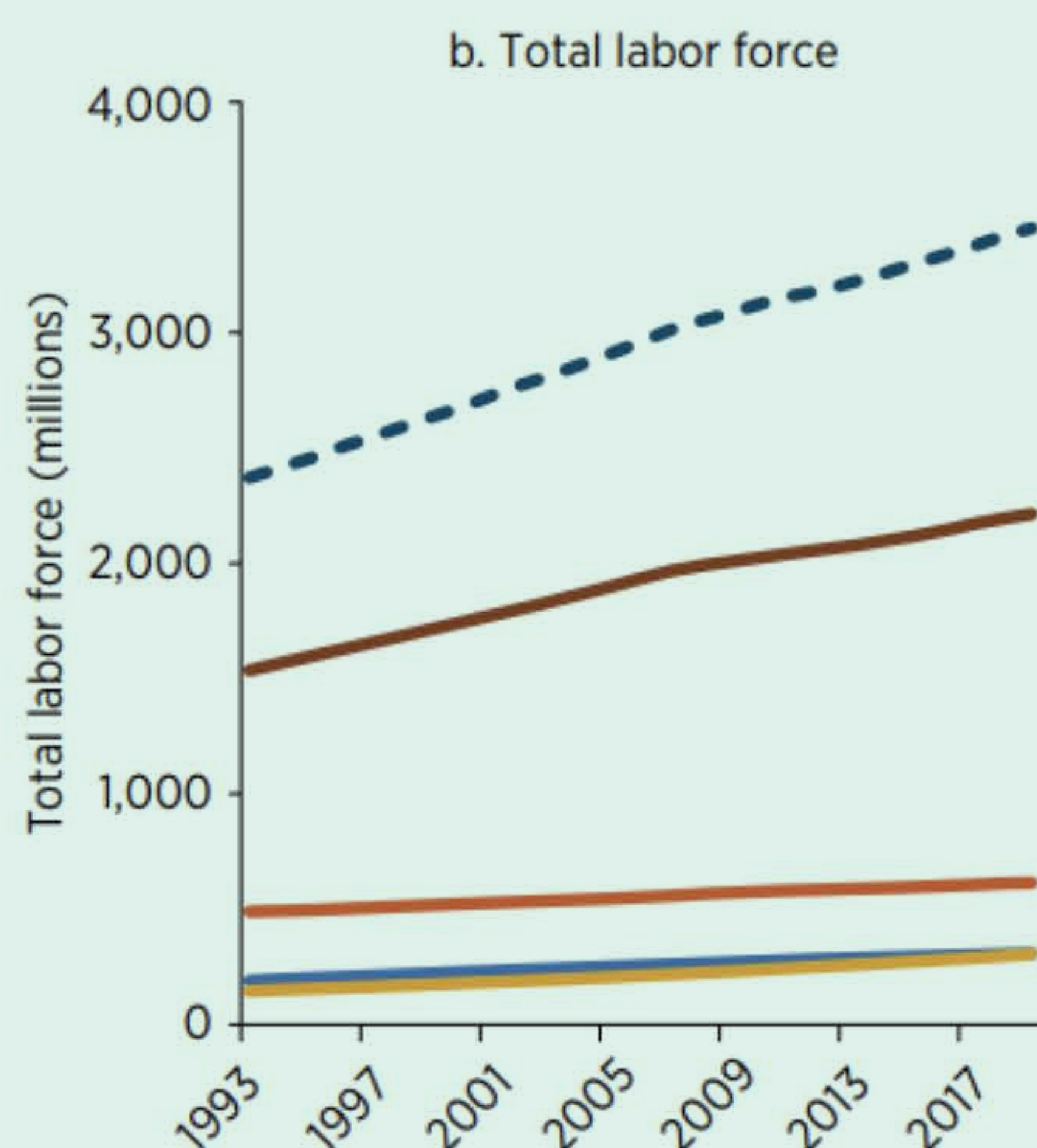
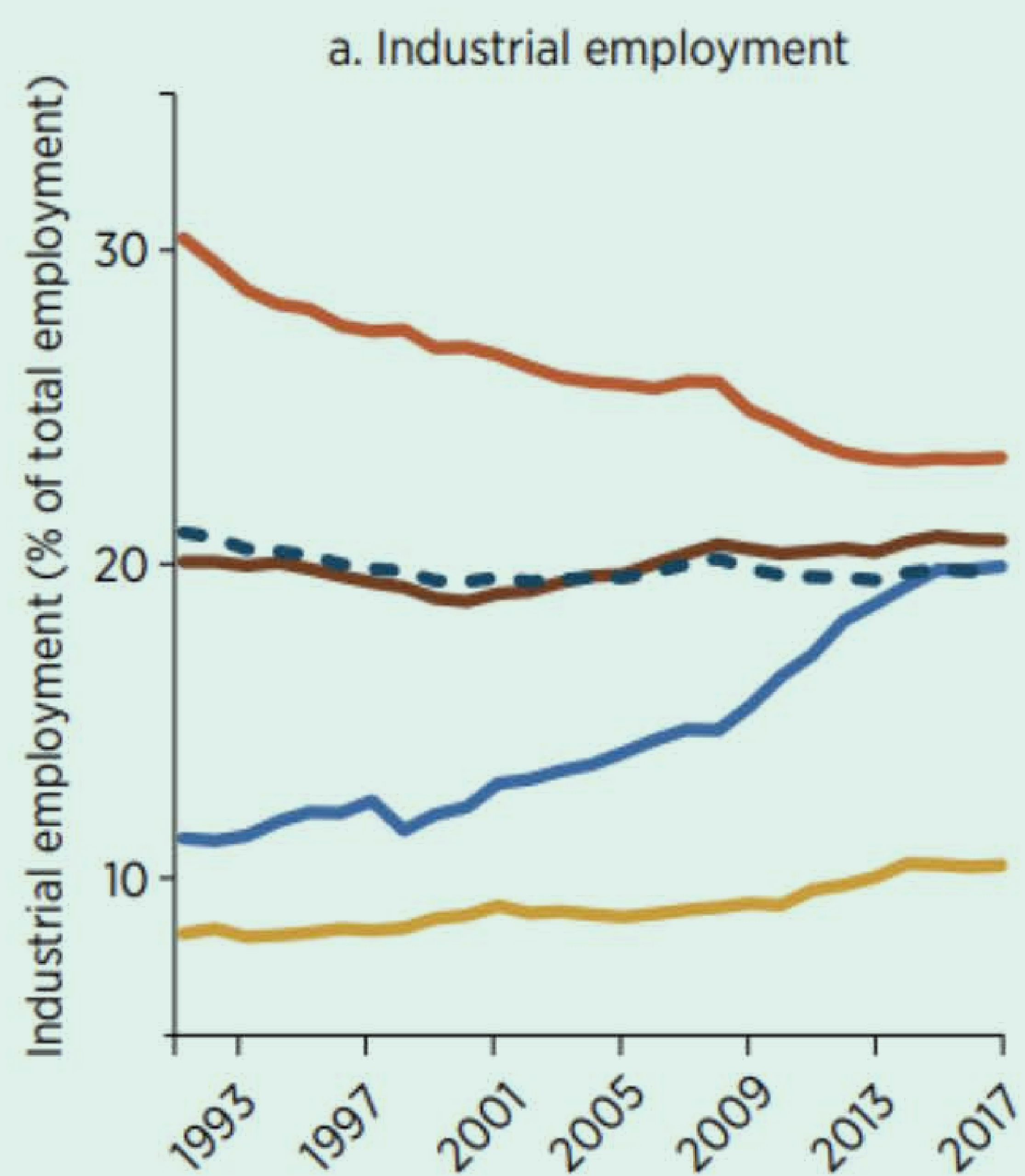
Technological advancements:

The impact technology is having on employment skills cannot be overstated. **In developed and developing economies, advanced computing, cognitive and adaptability skills are in high demand and replacing more conventional jobs.** Unsurprisingly, less skilled workers are the first to be furloughed or laid off during economic crunches — as witnessed during the COVID-19

Mistaken use of AI:

Unlike a widely but mistakenly held belief, artificial intelligence (AI) is **not projected to replace humans in performing routine and non-routine jobs.** Instead, more skilled workers (again) are expected to perform more sophisticated jobs at a more flexible pace and for highly satisfactory financial and non-financial rewards.

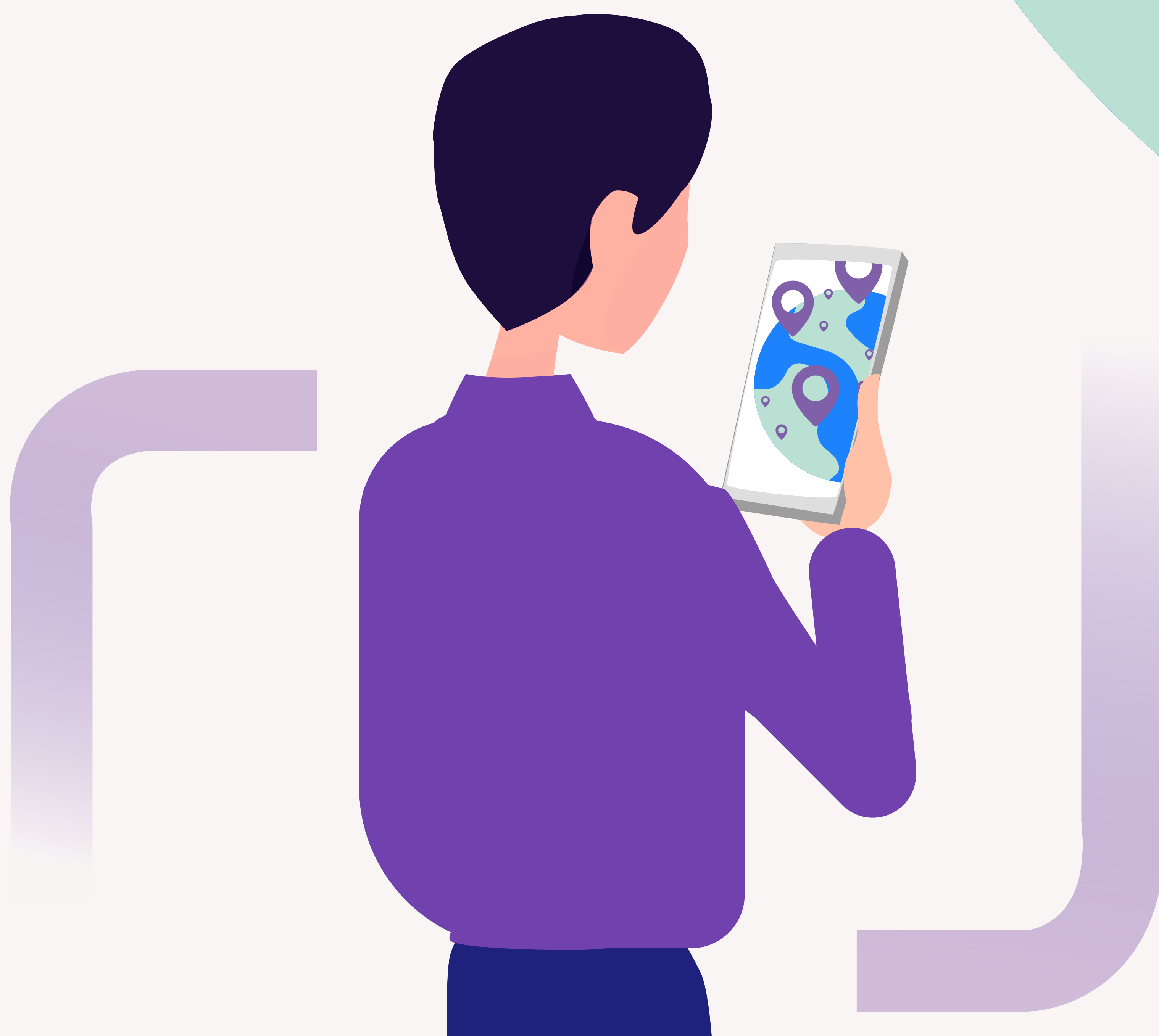
Consider industrial robots: while routine, mechanical work is being increasingly carried out by robots, more sophisticated and cognitive functions (such as automation management) are done (and controlled) by human agents. This opens up a new skill window for more workers, not less, by reshuffling workers into new, more creative roles.



Impact of social media:

The impact social media has on job equality perception is immense. This is perhaps most obvious in developing economies where **more exposure to the opportunities and lifestyles in developed economies leads to frustration, social fragmentation and mental health issues.**

The Great Resignation, accelerated by altered expectations in the post-COVID world, has proved who has won and lost the most when quitting. While skilled workers in more developed economies have alternatives to jobs left on a voluntary basis, less fortunate workers in developing economies only have to watch on social media how job opportunities unfold in labor markets worlds apart.



1.2 The reality of “Quiet Quitting”

Numerous studies have shown that COVID-19 has accelerated stress, burnout and falling engagement among workers. “Quiet quitting” is the latest act of resistance to counter these challenges and deal with burnout.

Burnout is a big risk in the workplace, especially among younger Gen Z professionals in their 20s. According to a Microsoft survey, [~54% of Gen Z workers were considering quitting their jobs.](#)

[Quiet quitting is a TikTok term that’s gone mainstream](#), mainly to describe Gen Z workers, who only do the job they’re being paid to do, without taking on any extra duties. [Quiet quitters continue to fulfill their primary responsibilities](#), but they are less willing to engage in **extracurricular activities**: no more staying late, showing up early, or attending non-mandatory meetings.

It also shows some are quitting to take a break or care for family, as remote working has removed boundaries for working or living overseas. Quiet quitting, in the very real sense, means ditching the “hustle” mentality.

Quiet means Employees are not going an extra mile.



2.

Existing work challenges and “resigning” on a global scale

The Great Resignation, first identified in the U.S. labor market, has similar instances in major global labor markets, including India and Singapore.

The case for mass resignation is already established in major global labor markets — **workers experiencing more burnout, are no longer able to fuel organizational growth.**

In India, flexibility is cited more frequently as a major reason for quitting, especially in the better paying tech roles. Employees are on the lookout for opportunities and experiences, not just higher pay or perks.

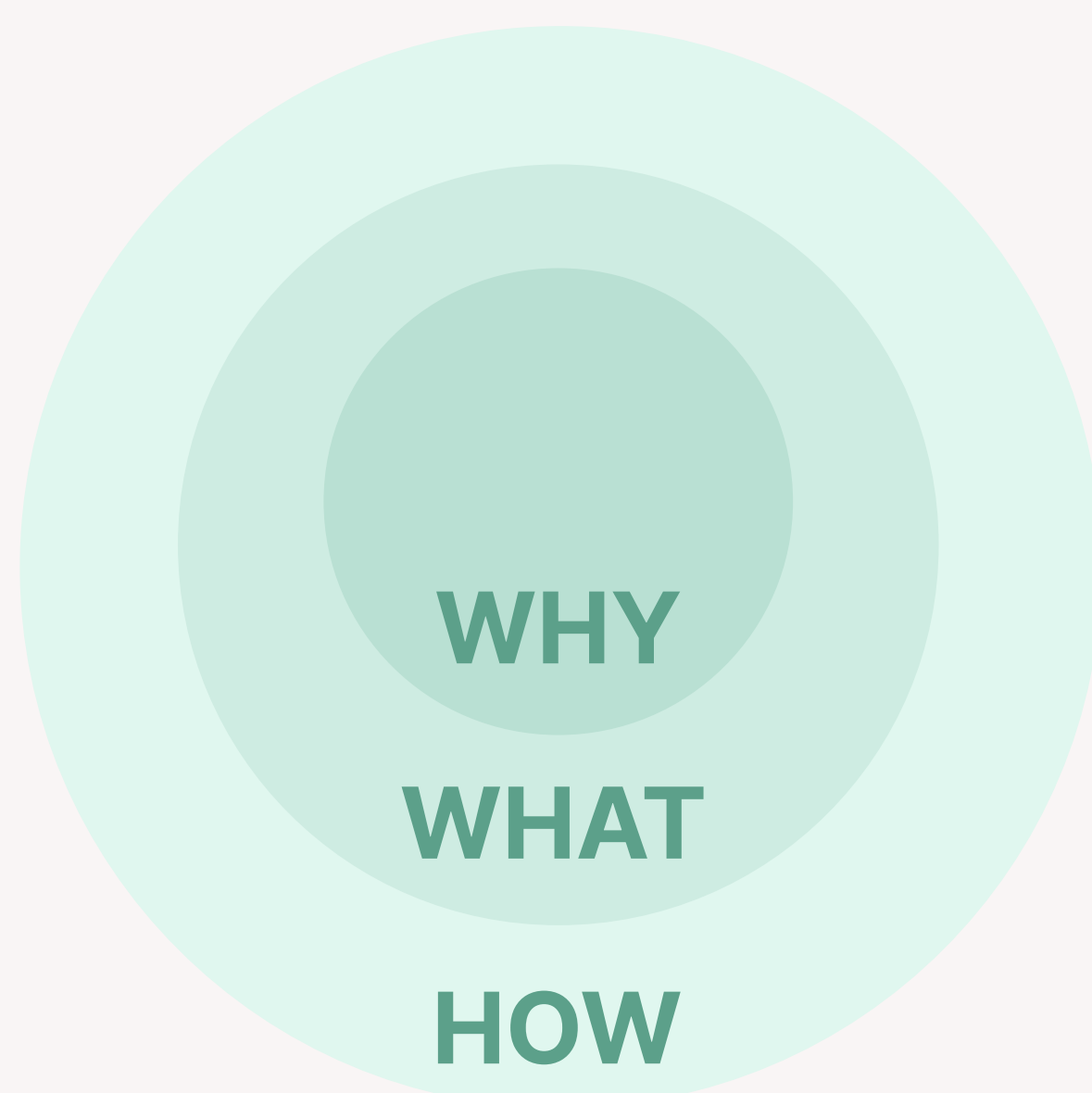
While resignation numbers in Singapore are not as high as in the U.S. or India, it still follows the pattern — more and more professionals have resigned or are quitting to find more rewarding life or professional experiences.

Employees are on the lookout for opportunities and experiences, not just higher pay or perks.



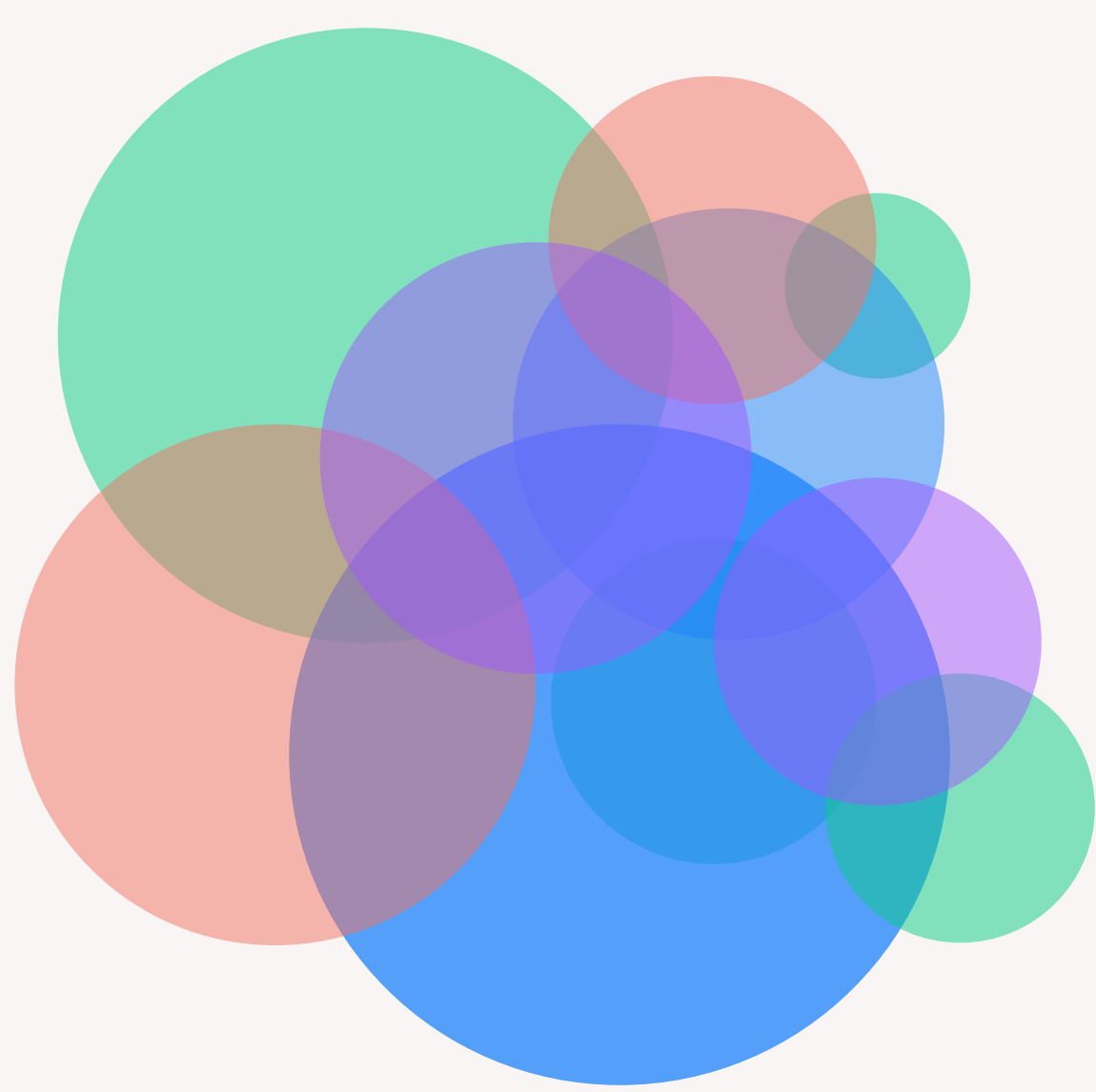
The Great Resignation has uncovered a series of challenges underlying existing work arrangements and contracts, including:

1



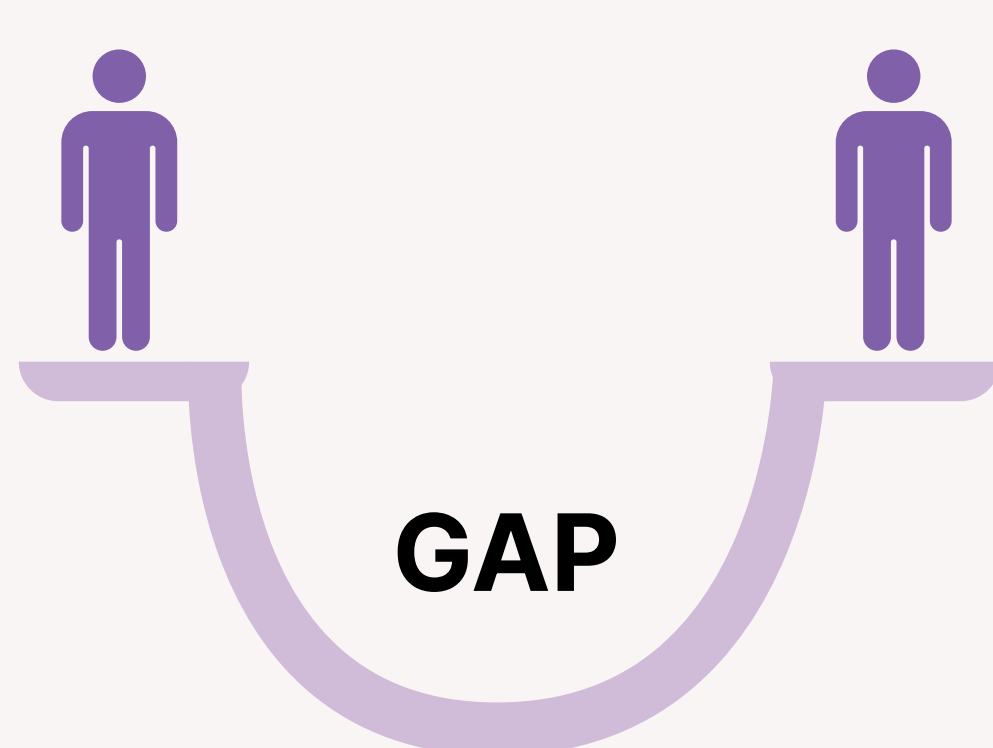
Purpose: Beyond higher pay and professional development, a growing number of employees have come to realize that a [sense of purpose is absent in their personal and professional lives](#). **Stressful working hours and growing job insecurities are not conducive to being a content professional.** For example, since the takeover, Twitter employees have been [clocking up much longer hours than usual](#), amid scares of layoffs and complete overhaul of the company.

2



Work quality: While performance and productivity metrics are important in an organization, they shouldn't come at the cost of [work quality](#). **Employees are increasingly looking for innovative ways to make work happier at a more personalized pace.**

3



Employer-employee expectation gap: In pursuing growth, employers and employees are at odds. **For employers, growth refers to organizational growth and bottomline gains. For employees, growth is increasingly personal.** According to a [survey on motivators for employers and employees in India](#), employers seem to overvalue "corporate brand" by 110% while undervaluing "a greater sense of purpose" by 51%.

4



Toxic corporate culture: It is no surprise that [most often workers quit because of a "toxic" work culture](#). For example, between April and September 2021, a record-breaking (over) 24 million American employees left their jobs. A few indicators of toxicity at the workplace include failure to promote diversity and inclusion, inequality and disrespect as well as unethical behavior and practices.

5



The hybrid/remote-first/distributed dilemma: In reorganizing work, companies have been struggling to accommodate often conflicting needs of employees across geographies or having radically different work requirements, including flexibility of location and schedules. Consider, for example, [the different perspectives of Twitter and Airbnb regarding office and remote work policies](#).

This is far from an exhaustive list of all challenges The Great Resignation has brought about. Organizations and all employees (skilled and otherwise) need to reconsider new ways of work arrangements to be able to deliver more optimally.

Employers should be enablers of change by providing conditions necessary for workers to perform efficiently according to the new rules of engagement: remotely, hybrid, or on-site. And, **employees need to be more accepting of changing work policies to be more productive from where and how they work.**

3.

How to build a thriving global team

A growing number of employees from diverse backgrounds and labor markets find current work conditions unacceptable. In pursuing flexibility, productivity and propose — in and out of the work environment — employees (and consequently employers) are rewriting the rules of engagement.

The global lockdowns around the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of remote and hybrid work policies, making employees feel more empowered about their talent, qualifications, skills and roles. For employers, too, being remote-first or distributed helps address gaps in talent, manage working capital and improve employee retention.

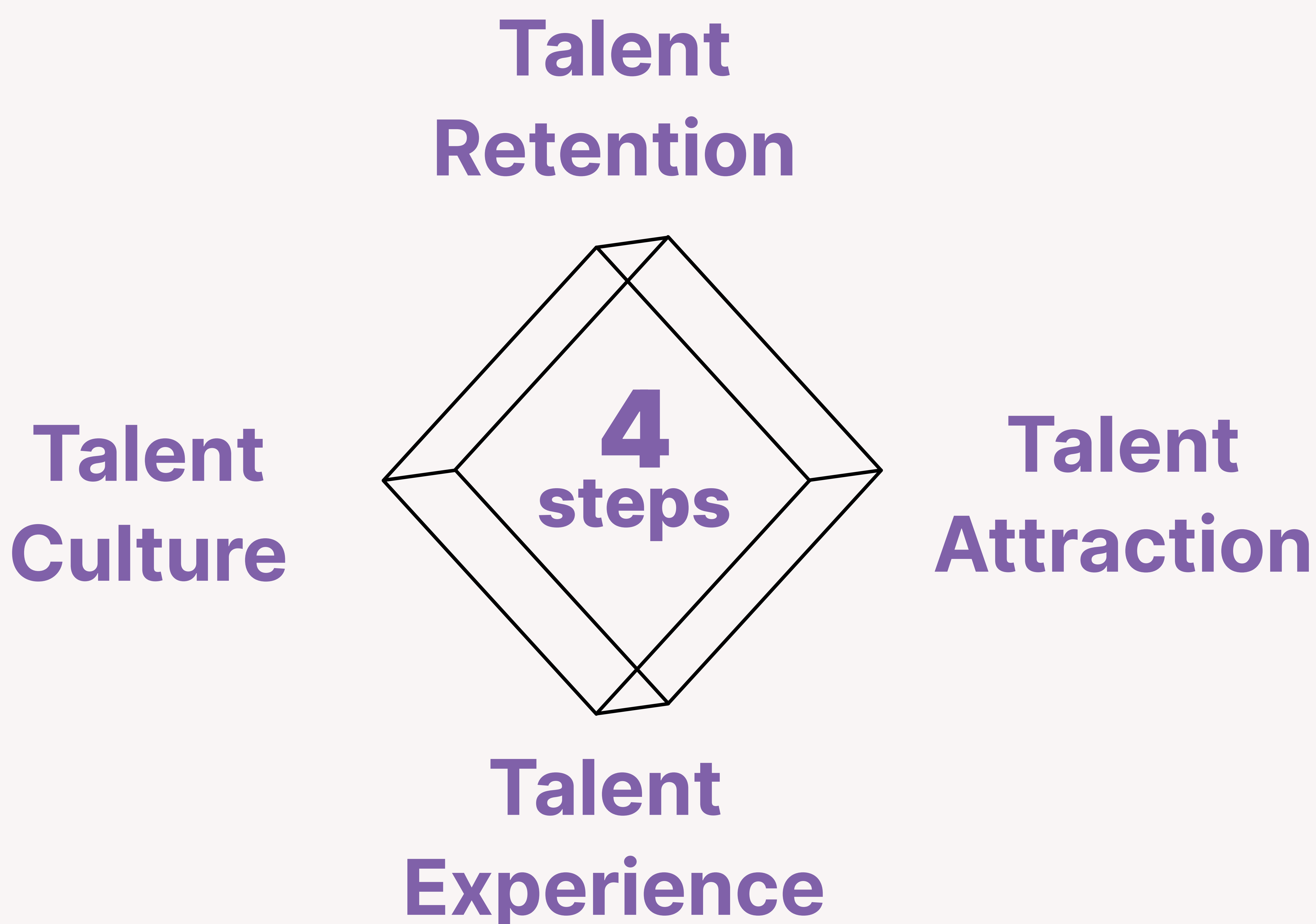
Some of the more forward-thinking companies have realized that hiring on a global scale and building distributed teams is the way to find the most talented people necessary for the role, irrespective of their location.



The jury is definitely out there on what constitutes the right balance between what employers require and what employees need. And, given the constant evolution of the current global employment-vs-resignation situation in the new world of work, uncertainty prevails.

Therefore, instead of a once-for-all strategy, a more practical approach could be to draft and establish a Counter-Resignation Blueprint (given below) to anticipate and manage global attrition among employees (derived from a study by Michael Page).

Four steps to building a successful global team

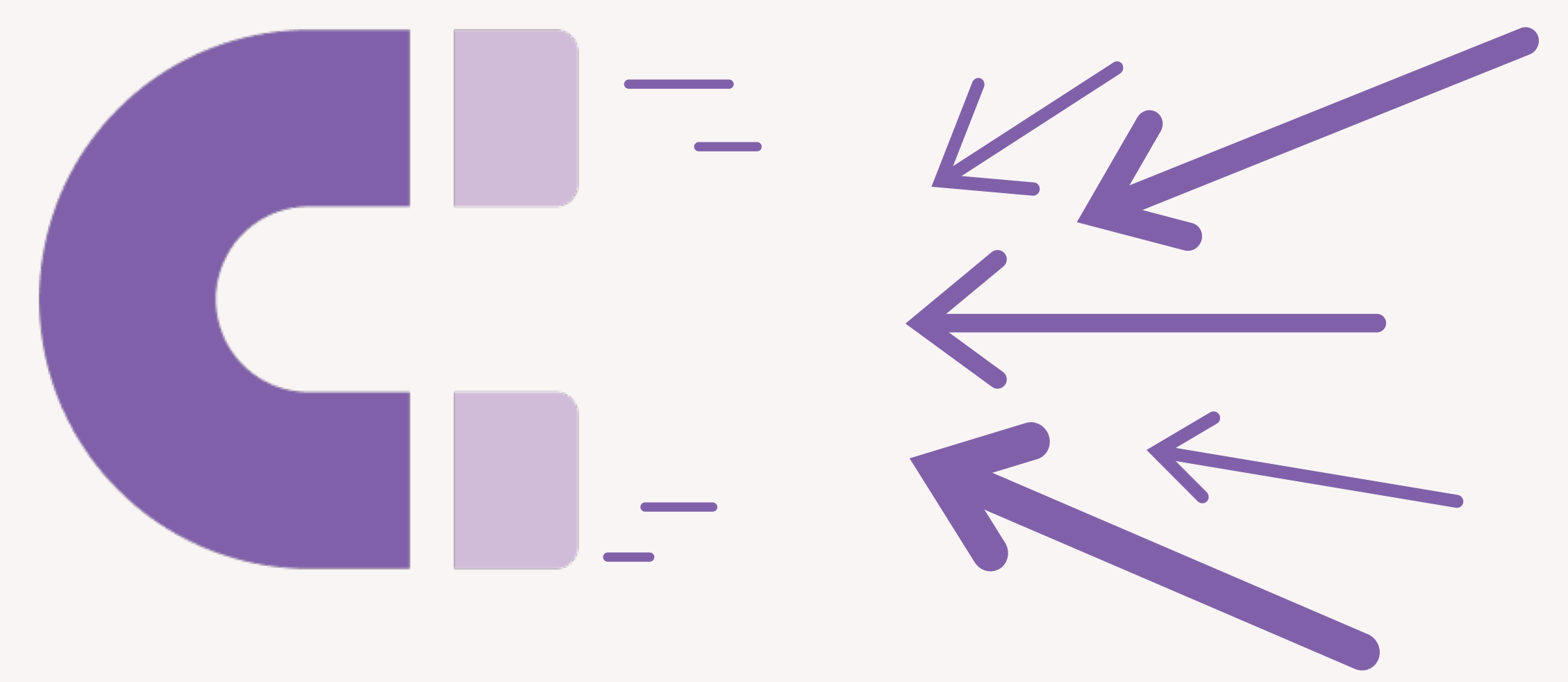


3.1 Engage in talent retention



Remember, be people-first:

The Great Resignation has been initiated by and for people. That is why employers should put employees first, not only to stop resignations, but also to make employees grow happily and substantially.



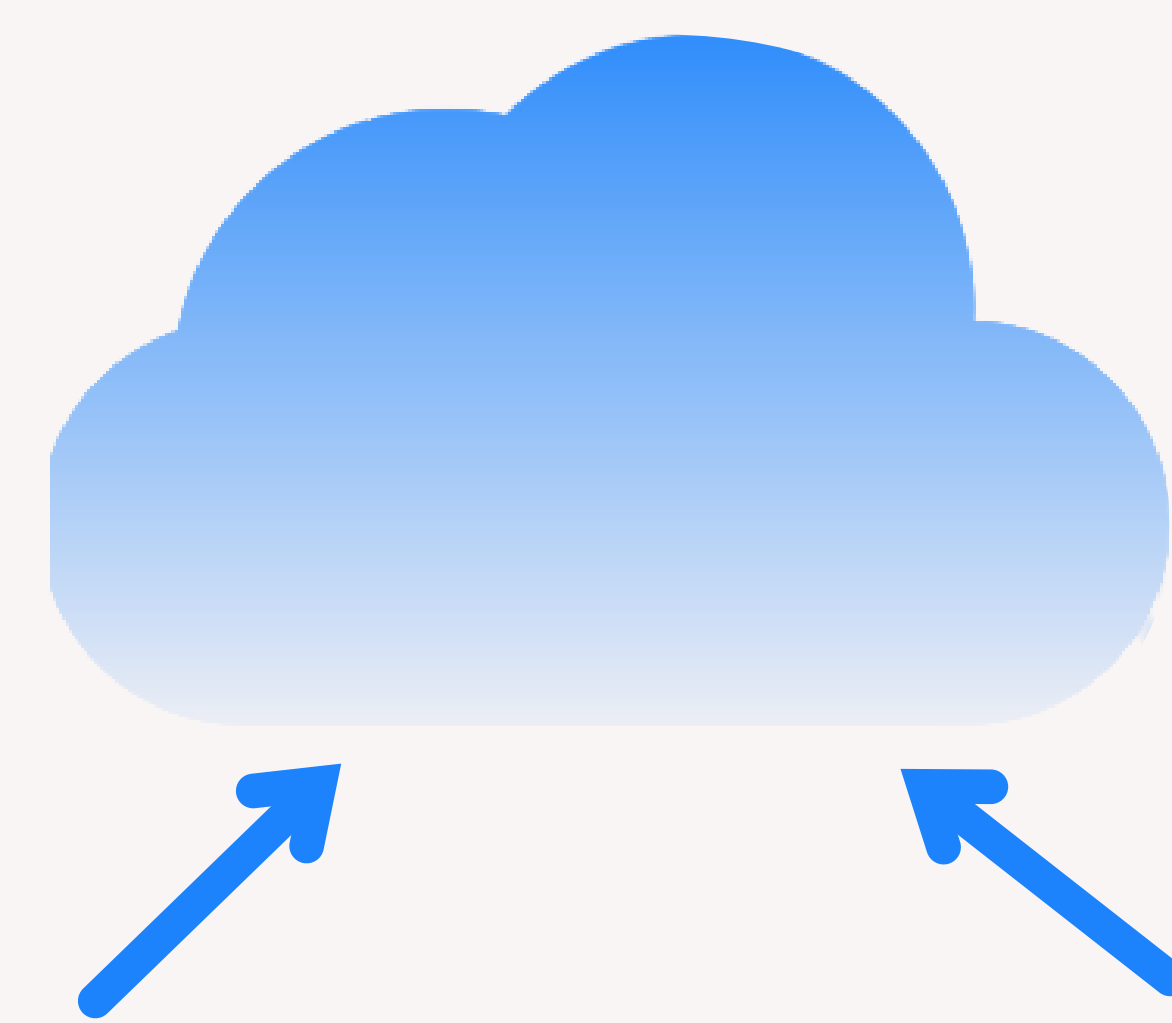
Create a great corporate culture:

Toxicity is what drives employees out. So ensure you cultivate a corporate culture where employees feel welcome, listened to, and appreciated by all.



Promote flexibility:

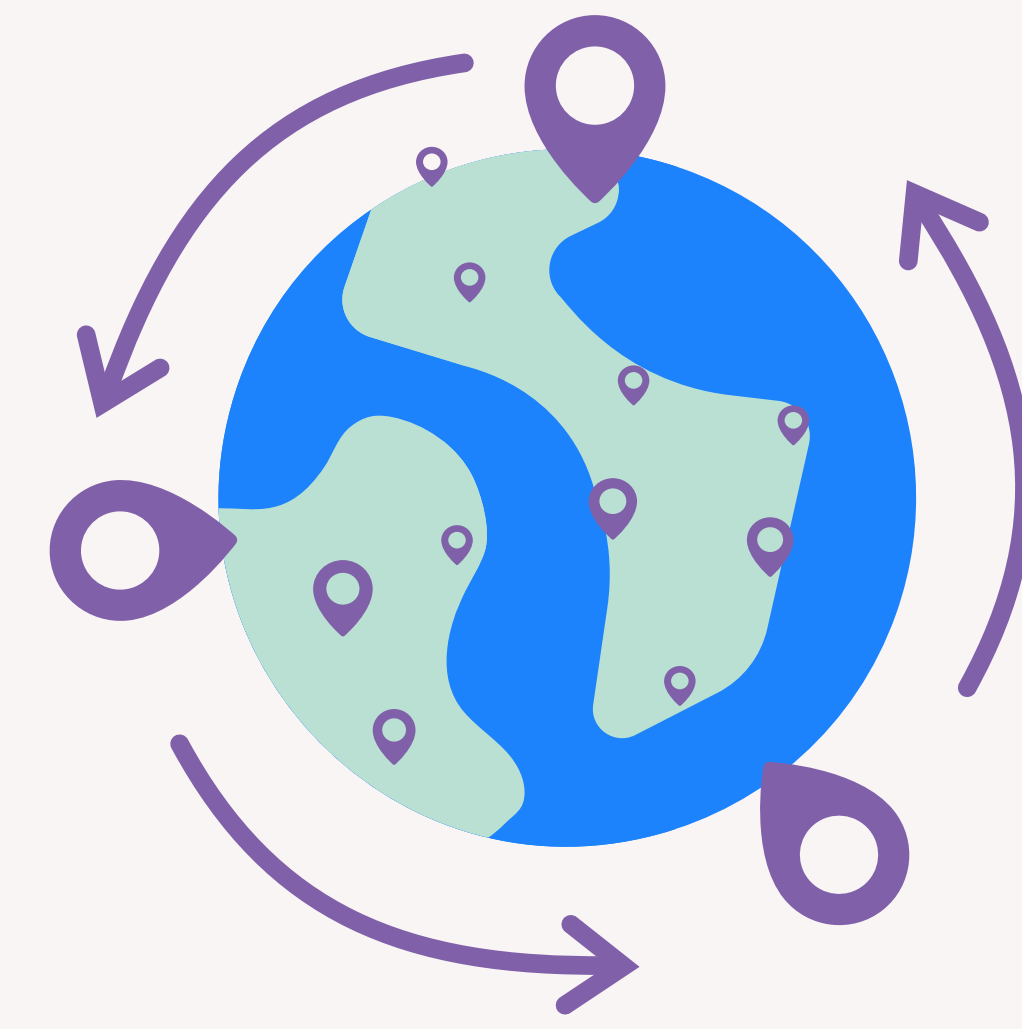
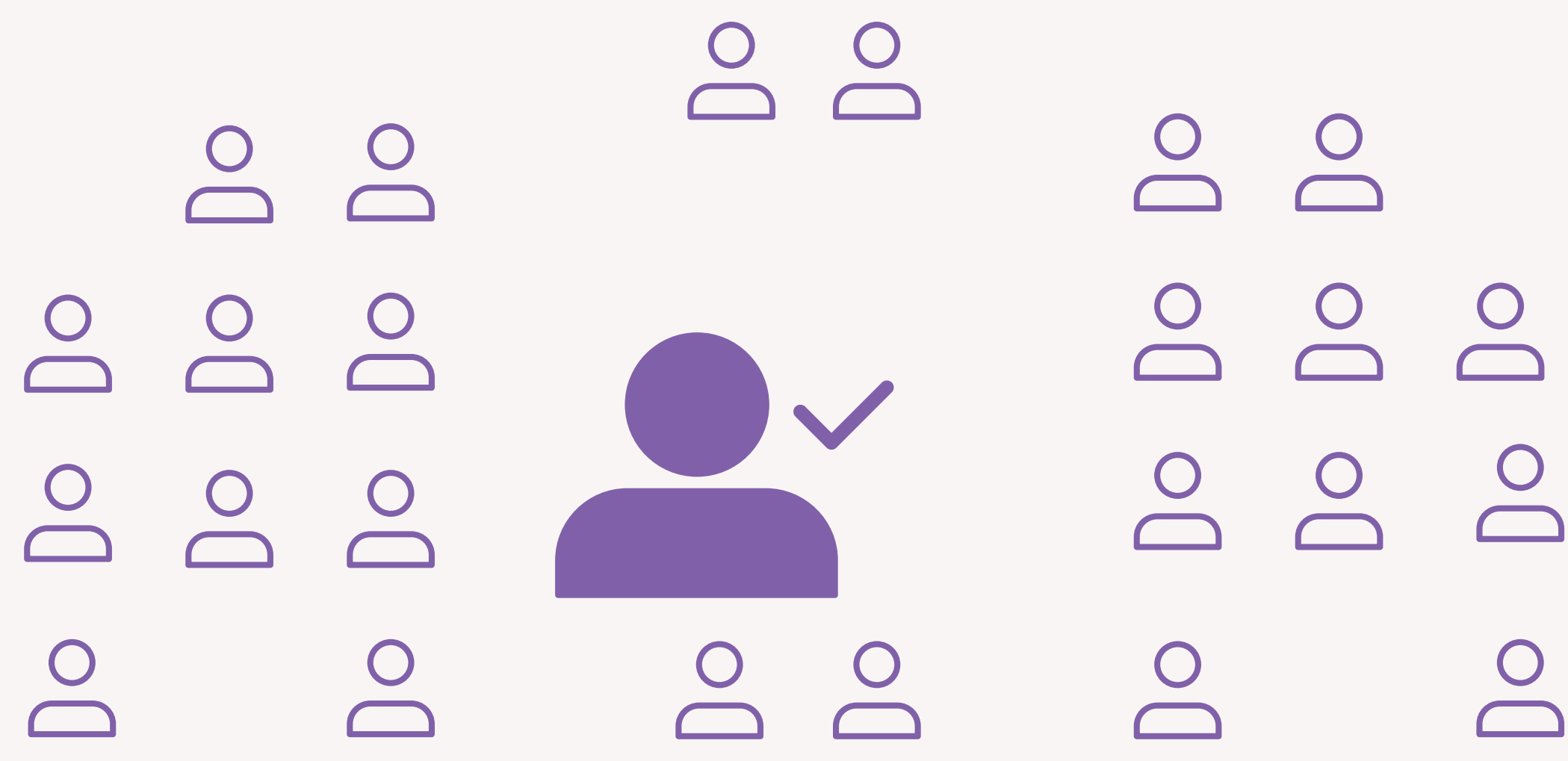
As a policy, flexibility has been a major deal breaker in the post-pandemic work scenario. Intuitively, companies should consider flexibility as a non-option in every hiring and retention decision.



Promote digital transformation:

Technology is now integral to any successful business. Make digitization a constant in every process and across functions and departments. Not only do operations become more scalable and efficient, but employees also gain more skills and are on board for future changes.

3.2 Focus on talent attraction



Grow new leaders:

Talent is always attracted to leadership roles. Companies need to ensure that they offer enough scope for leadership opportunities. Otherwise, they might end up losing critical employees to competition.

Promote distributed work:

Talent wants flexibility. In a post-pandemic world, the distribution, not centralization, of the workforce has become the new normal. It is important to ensure that all employees are included to avoid any disruption or conflict within global teams.



Make corporate communications speak to employee needs and priorities:

In an employee-first work world, corporate communications has to prioritize employee needs. In doing so, employers are better positioned to engage and retain employees more effectively and persuasively.

Revisit job descriptions:

As the workforce becomes more distributed and flexible, current job descriptions and roles are increasingly becoming outdated, if not irrelevant.

Taking a second look at pre-pandemic job descriptions is not only wise but indispensable to match ever-evolving roles and functions.

3.3 Establish a healthy corporate culture



Develop a people-first approach:

This has become critical for companies across the globe. For example, by designing comprehensive performance metrics and career advancement plans, employers enhance employee retention and experience.



Show support:

Employees appreciate recognition, sometimes more than materialistic kudos. Leaders need to show tangible support for their colleagues and employees in person or on acceptable channels like social media. This helps employees feel appreciated and rewarded among managers and peers.



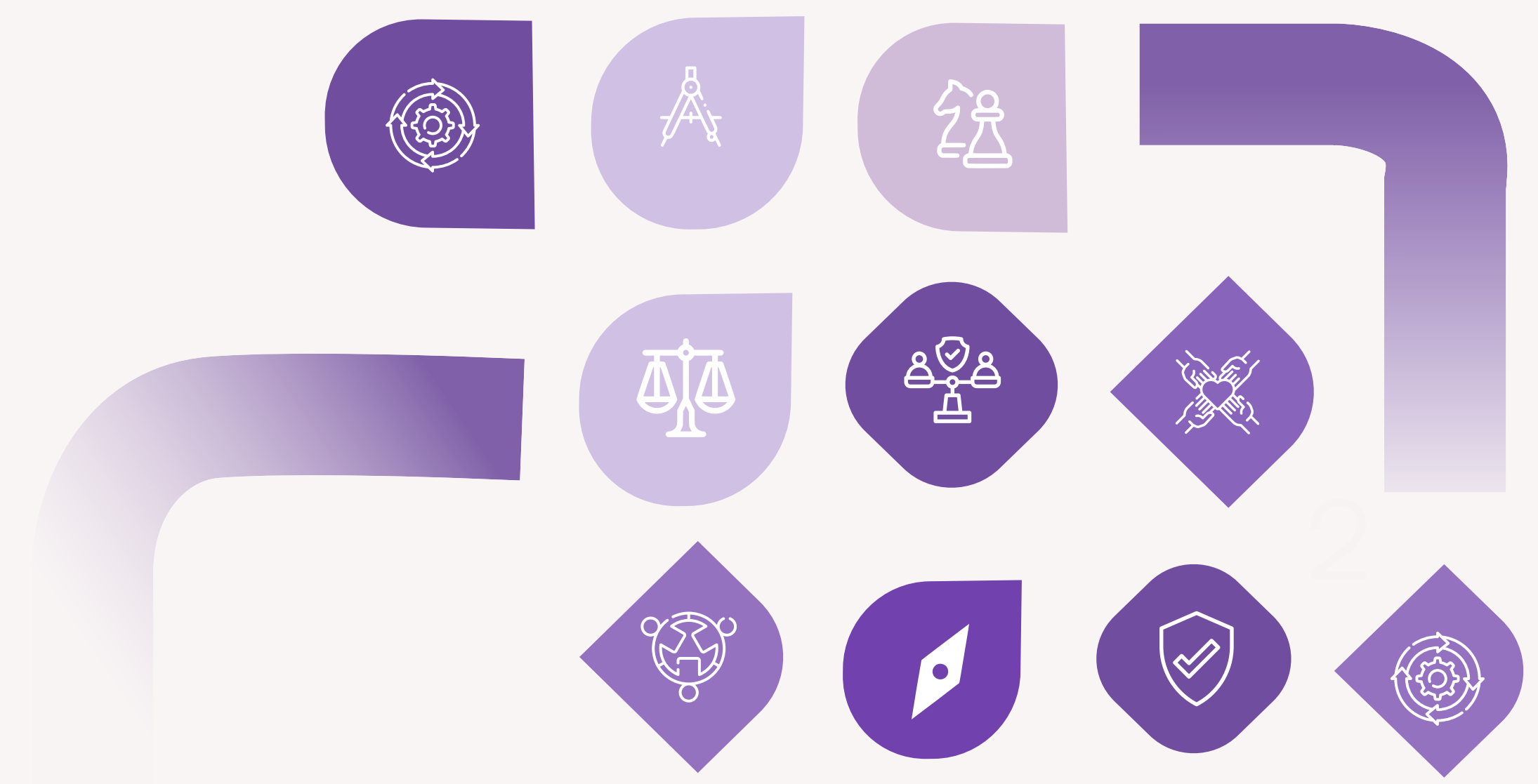
Promote upskilling efforts: As employees look for more opportunities for career advancement, employers should consider building a culture of constant learning using every possible resource at hand.



Develop a networked management style:

In lieu of centralized, micro-managed work environments, organizations need to align on and implement processes for different teams, wherein employees do not feel monitored. In remote and hybrid work modes, reporting can be less intrusive by enabling employees to provide 360 feedback in creative and actionable ways.

3.4 Prioritize employee experience



Lead with empathy:

Company strategies and policies need to be accommodating, and not overly stringent. This makes it easier for all employers and employees to adapt to any sort of change management.

Integrate Diversity, Equality & Inclusion into business strategy:

Engaging a workforce should go beyond PR and words into actual on-ground actions. By embracing diversity, adopting fair employment practices, and practicing inclusivity.

Way forward with Skuad

Still unfolding, **The Great Resignation** is a watershed in work history where pre- and post-pandemic work rules are being rewritten in ways, hitherto unthought of by both employers and employees.

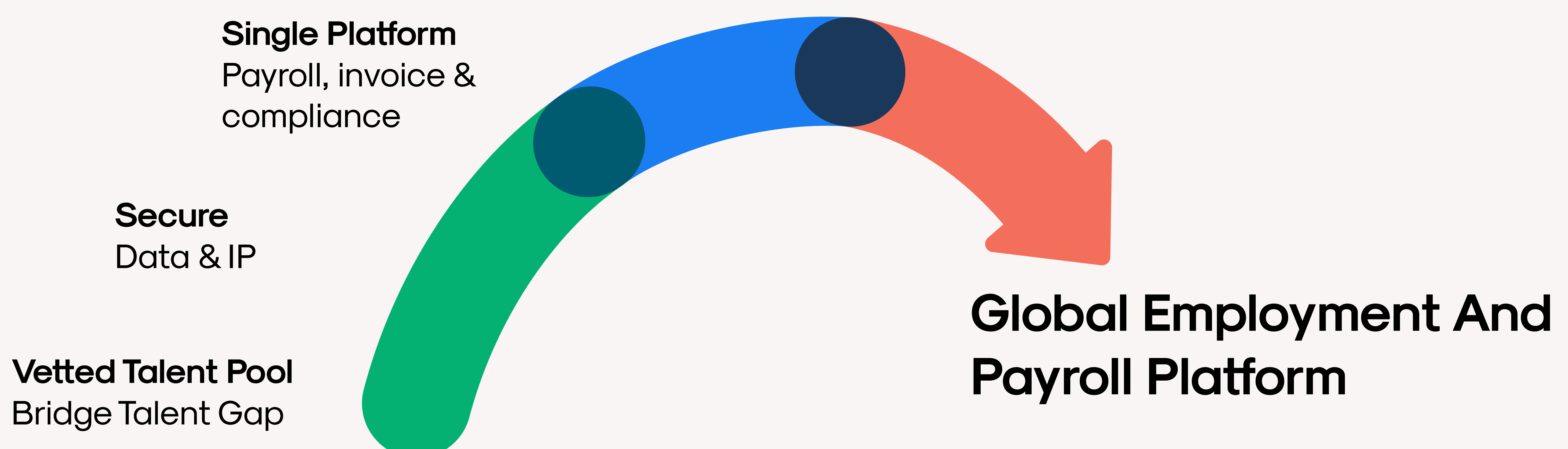
As more and more employees opt in for remote or hybrid work mode, distributed work has become a reality. Employers ideally should seize this opportunity and invest in processes to make the workplace more diverse, equitable and inclusive.

By accommodating employee needs into a distributed global work system, employers can address longstanding pre-pandemic grievances and engage the best-in-class talent and employees across geographies in innovative ways.

As a fast-growing global employment and payroll platform, Skuad enables start-ups, medium sized business and enterprises to navigate the complexities of building and managing globally distributed teams.

- As an EOR partner, Skuad eases the talent hiring and management process to build successful global remote teams.
- As the People Operations partner, Skuad enables both startups and enterprises to achieve their business goals by helping them reduce time and money spent on admin and legal complexities around the globe.

SKUAD as an EOR Partner



Ready to expand globally and into the new world of work?

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