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Keeping Pace with the Perceptions of Modern Workers

∴ 2024 Employ Job Seeker Nation Report



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Executive

Summary

The robust hiring environment continues to astonish experts and employers alike. With 829,000 jobs added in Q1 2024, according to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the U.S. labor market continues to defy expectations. The unemployment rate remains low and the economy is growing despite higher than normal inflation rates. Certain sectors continue to see strong growth, including healthcare, government, construction, and leisure and hospitality.

But where do job seekers fit into this? How satisfied are they in their current roles? What are their motivations when it comes to work and how do they go about searching for new opportunities? Perhaps more important, how can companies provide positive experiences to candidates, build a strong pipeline of talent, and have a reputation as an employer of choice to attract candidates in the market?

To find out the answers to these questions and more, Employ conducted its annual study of job seekers with Zogby Analytics, surveying more than 1,500 U.S. workers in April 2024.

The findings from this survey may surprise — or possibly alarm — employers. Overwhelmingly, 79% of American workers are satisfied with their current jobs and only 10% report they are dissatisfied. Despite this, 86% are at least somewhat open to other job opportunities, including 46% who are very open.

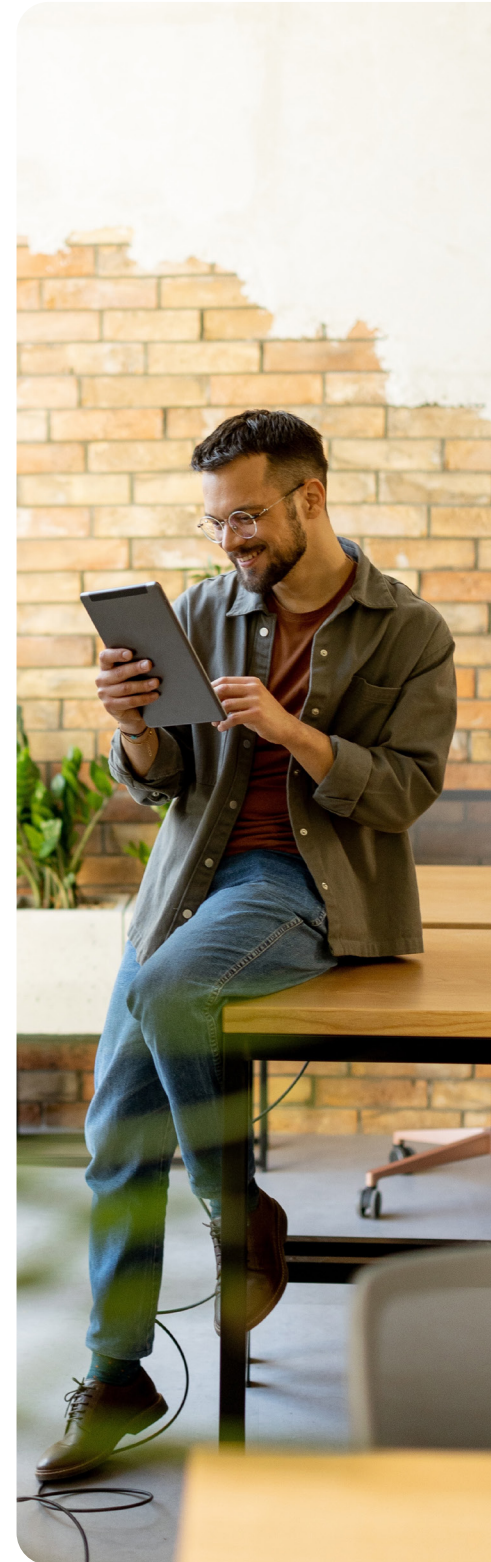
Similar to last year, large numbers of American workers (40%) are actively looking for a new job. And a third of respondents (33%) would feel comfortable quitting a job without having another one lined up. While that number dropped eight percentage points from last year (41% in 2023), still more than half of U.S. workers would consider applying for a job if approached by a recruiter.

Beyond compensation, active job seekers are primarily motivated by career advancement (52%) and greater work flexibility or remote work opportunities (49%). Half of job seekers believe that finding a job in the current labor market is easy, 56% believe that the current job market favors candidates, and 61% believe it will take them, at most, three months to find a new job.

Given these findings, the 2024 Employ Job Seeker Nation Report provides an in-depth, data-driven look at:

- ✔ **The complexity of job seeker realities in the current market**
- ✔ **Motivations for leaving jobs or declining new offers**
- ✔ **Preferences for workplace flexibility**
- ✔ **Experiences during the job search process**
- ✔ **Recruiter-candidate interactions**

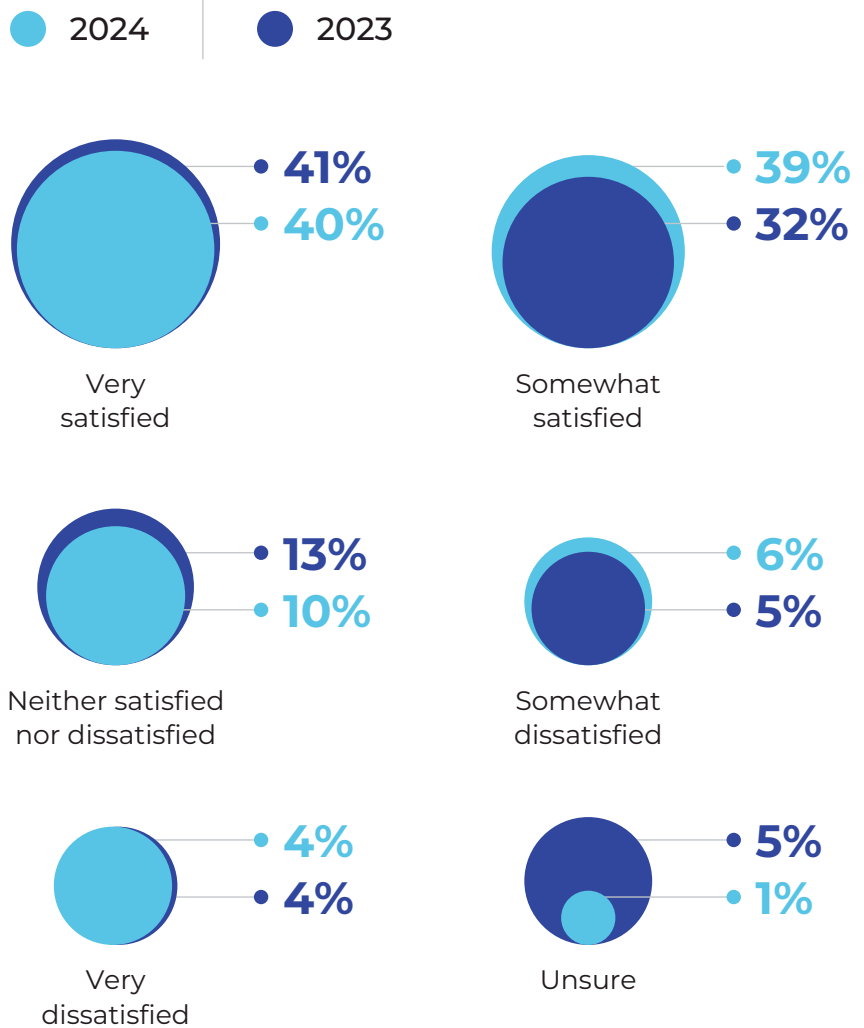
Employers should leverage this new data in light of the current hiring environment to optimize and improve their own recruiting functions, informed by the realities job seekers face right now.



Complexity of Job Seeker Realities

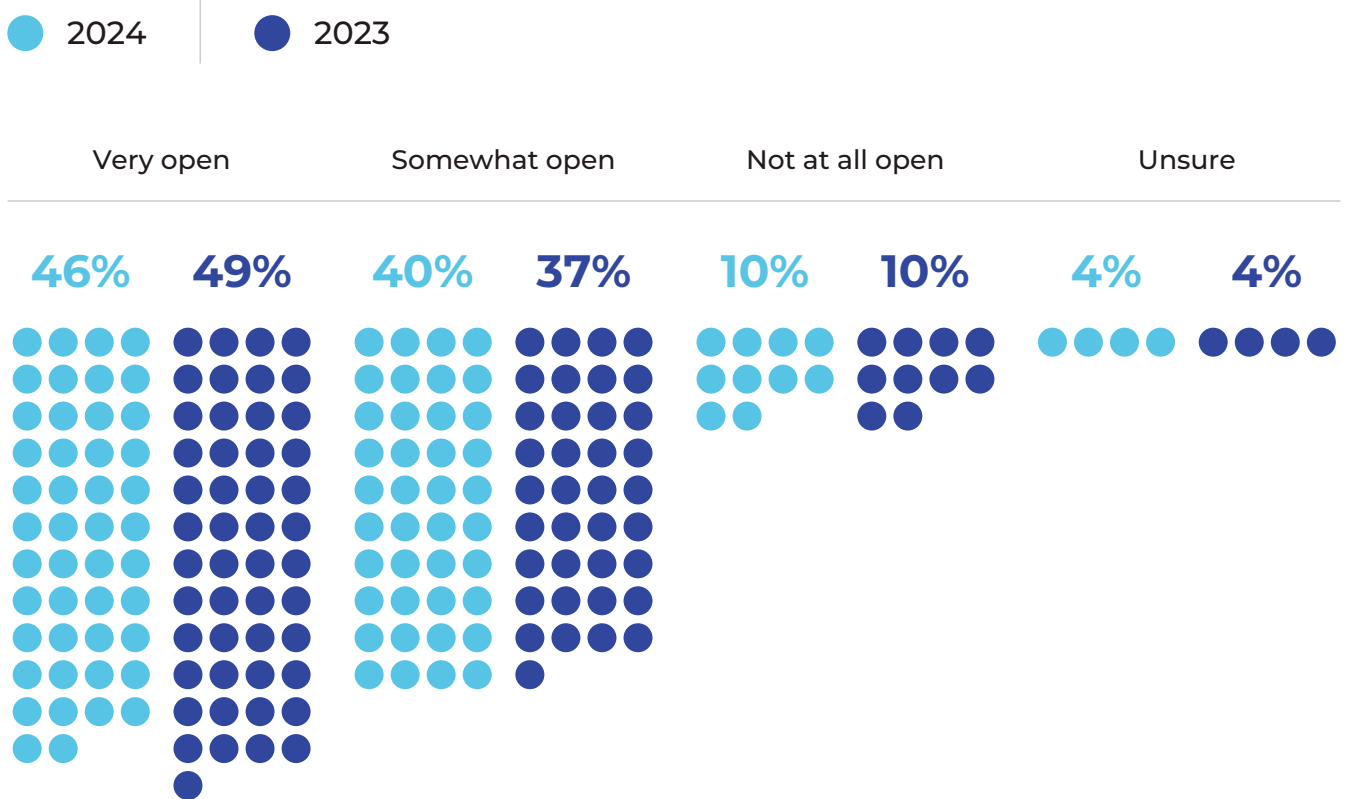
When it comes to levels of job satisfaction, U.S. workers are overwhelmingly satisfied in their roles. According to the Employ survey data, 79% are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied, compared to just 10% of job seekers who are dissatisfied.

How Satisfied Are You With Your Current Job?



Despite these high levels of satisfaction, 86% of workers are at least somewhat open to other job opportunities, including 46% who indicate they are very open. Similar to 2023, a significant percentage of U.S. workers are actively looking for a new job right now, with 4 in 10 workers indicating they are seeking new employment. The good news for employers is that a majority of job seekers (58%) have looked for a new position within their current company.

How Open Are You to Other Job Opportunities?



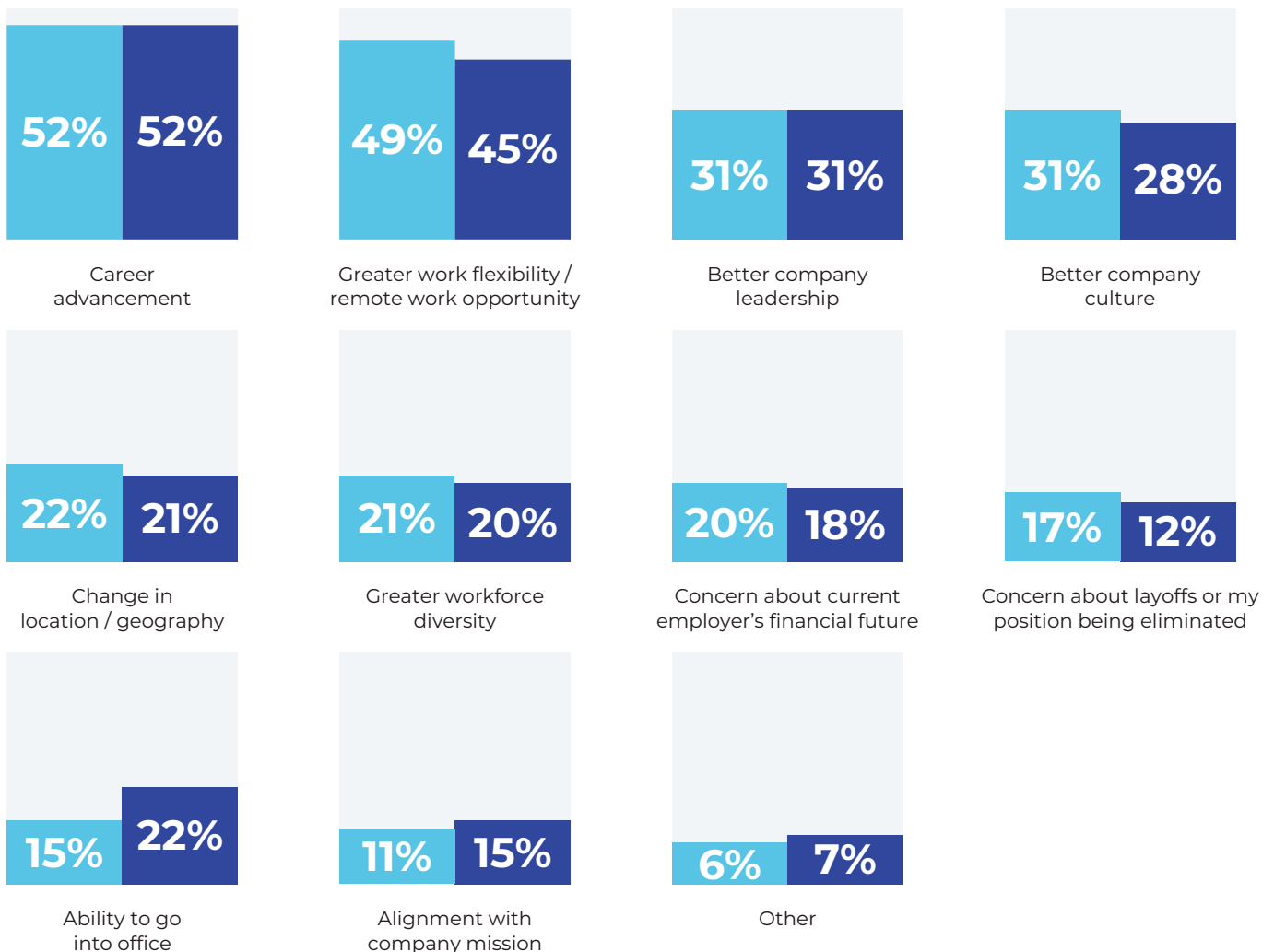
Active Job Seekers

So what motivates job seekers to look for new employment? Beyond compensation, active job seekers are primarily motivated by career advancement and greater work flexibility or remote work opportunities.

Other Than Higher Compensation, Why Are You Actively Looking for a Job?

● 2024

● 2023





Employers should recognize that candidates are looking for opportunities to progress and to stay flexible in their approach to work. By emphasizing advancement and flexibility in recruitment messaging, companies can differentiate themselves to job seekers in the market.

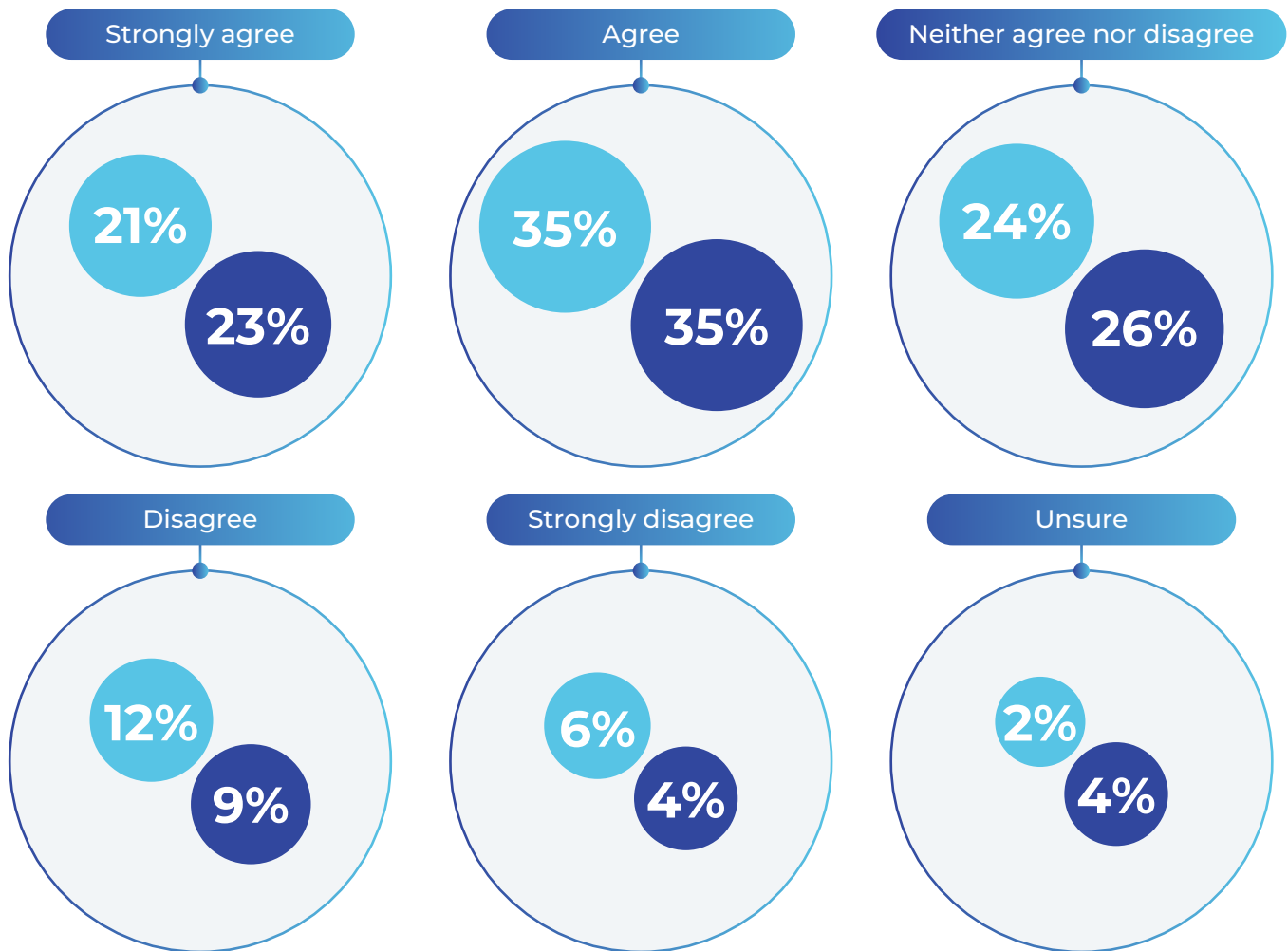
Company culture and better company leadership also rank high in importance to candidates. Organizations must take an active role in managing their employer brand and ensuring they have strong leaders who can effectively lead the workforce.

When it comes to looking for new roles, 50% of active job seekers believe that finding a job in the current labor market is easy, and 56% believe that the current job market favors candidates. Nearly two-thirds believe it will take them less than three months to find a new job.

To What Extent Do You Agree or Disagree That the Current Job Market Favors Candidates?

● 2024

● 2023



One in three workers

would feel comfortable quitting their current job without having another role lined up.

This data reveals that candidates are feeling confident in the current labor market. Companies would be wise to respond to these perceptions by focusing on areas within talent acquisition that can speed the hiring process, better nurture candidates, and reinforce worker priorities.

Passive Candidates

For the 52% of workers who are not actively looking for a job, 54% would consider applying for a new role if approached by a recruiter. Their top motivations for considering a new job include greater work flexibility or remote work opportunity (43%) and career advancement (42%).

Of these more passive candidates, 55% believe it would be easy to find a job in the current labor market, 49% indicate the current hiring environment favors candidates, and 73% believe it would take them less than three months to find a new job. However, despite these beliefs, only 18% of passive candidates would feel comfortable quitting their job without having another job lined up.

While there are distinct differences between those workers actively seeking a new job versus those who are not, there are also similarities. These commonalities point to shared motivations for seeking new positions and beliefs that the labor market still offers plenty of opportunity to find new roles quickly.

Motivations for Leaving or Declining Jobs

Between 2022 and 2023, more than one in five workers (22%) had left a job. During the past 12 months, this number dropped to just 17%. Workers indicate that beyond seeking increased compensation, they left their current position for career advancement (33%), better company culture (27%), change in location/geography (26%), better company leadership (25%), and greater work flexibility/remote work opportunity (24%).

Other Than Compensation, Why Did You Leave Your Role in the Last 12 Months?

● 2024

● 2023

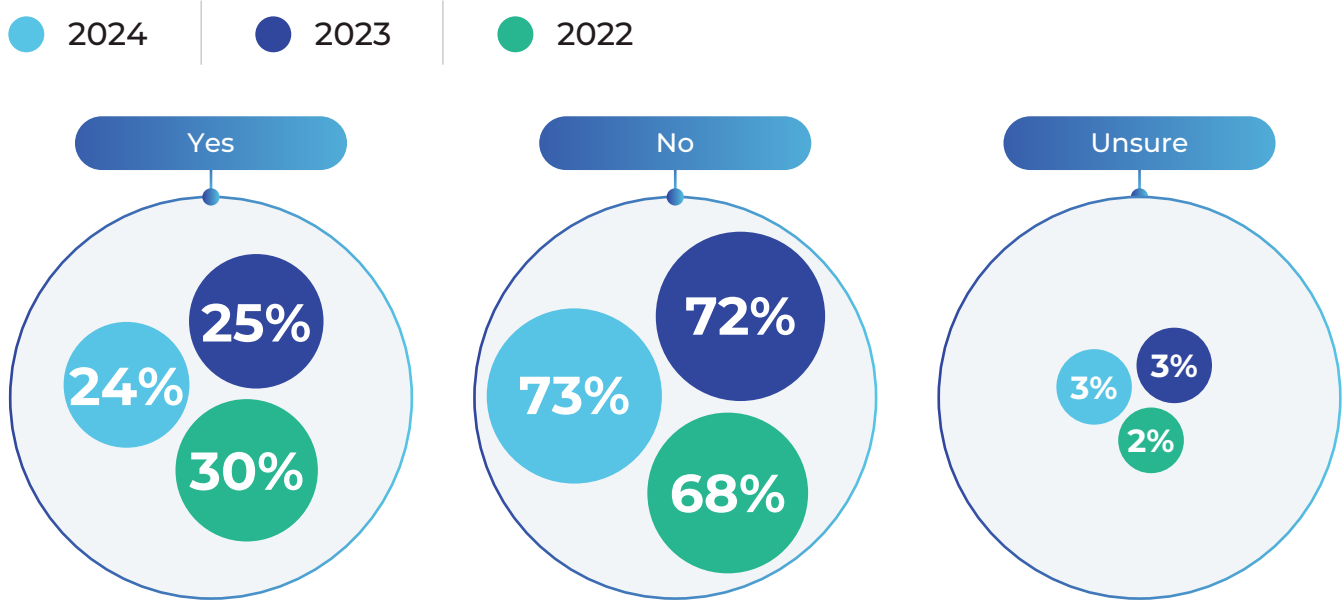
Motivation	2024 (%)	2023 (%)
Career advancement	33%	31%
Better company culture	27%	29%
Change in location / geography	26%	27%
Better company leadership	25%	26%
Greater work flexibility / remote work opportunity	24%	32%
Greater workforce diversity	16%	16%
Other	15%	14%
Ability to go into office	14%	18%
Concern about layoffs or my position being eliminated	14%	9%
Concern about current employer's financial future	13%	13%
Alignment with company mission	10%	12%

Most alarming for employers,
**24% of
workers**
have left a job within the first
90 days
of starting a new role.

While this number has decreased by several percentage points over the last three years, it is still concerning that nearly one in four workers acknowledges leaving within three months of beginning a role.

The primary reasons for leaving within this three-month period include poor company culture (47%), disapproval/distrust of company leadership (31%), and limited career advancement (28%). It is essential for companies to ensure that the transition between new hire to new employee is seamless, and that the experience promised as a candidate matches the experiences delivered as an employee.

Have You Ever Left a Job Within the First 90 Days After Starting a New Job?



When it comes to declining job offers during the last year, less than one-quarter (21%) of workers have turned down a new role. Contributing to their decision to refuse a new job is poor location or geography (38%), limited career advancement (33%), and limited flexibility to work from home or remotely (30%). While declining offers is limited to one in five candidates, it's essential that talent teams continue to nurture candidates through the recruiting lifecycle from first look to first day.

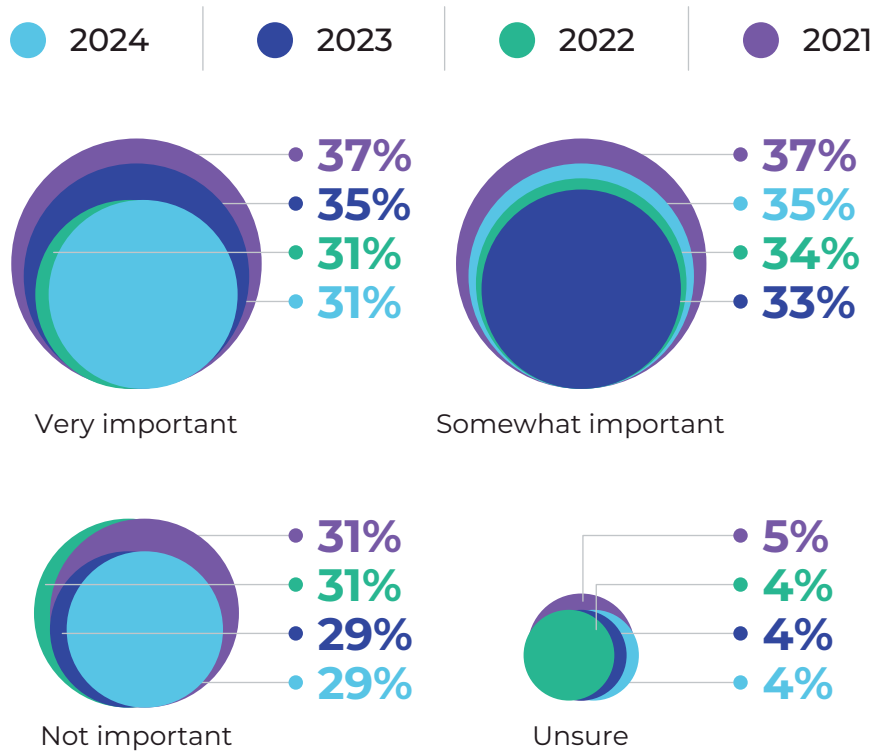


Preferences for Workplace Flexibility

One of the most widely publicized debates between employers and employees recently has centered on return to office. In the last year, worker preferences for remote work have remained steady, with nearly one-quarter (23%) of job seekers indicating they would decline a job if they were required to work fully in office.

The importance of remote work in whether to accept or reject a job offer remains foundational in the current labor market. In fact, 66% of workers indicate this is at least somewhat important in their decision-making process. However, this number has slightly declined over the past three years, decreasing two percentage points from last year.

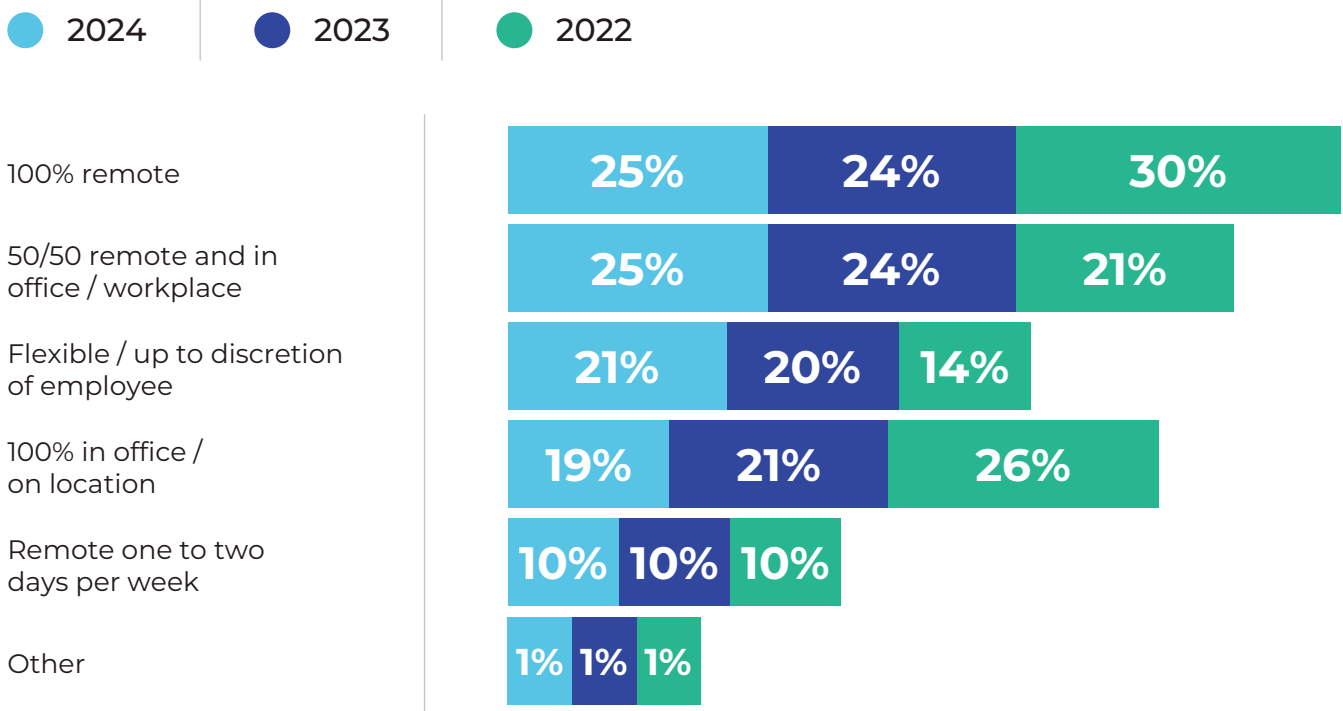
How Important Is Remote Work In Your Decision to Accept or Reject a Job Offer?



When asked about ideal work set-up, there is a fairly even split between preference for fully remote versus preference for a 50/50 split between in-office and remote work.

One interesting finding within workplace flexibility is that there is a generational divide. Remote work is especially important to Generation Z workers, with 75% considering it at least somewhat important in their decision to accept or reject a job offer. Generation X workers are the only age group where the top two work setups are either 100% in office (26%) or 100% remote (22%). Other age groups lean more toward mixed work arrangements.

What Is Your Ideal Work Setup?



For employers today, it is important to remember that preferences do vary between workers and a one-size-fits-all approach is not ideal. In fact, based on survey findings this year, one-fifth of workers (21%) indicate that leaving the work arrangement up to the discretion of the employee is preferred.

Experiences During the Job Search Process

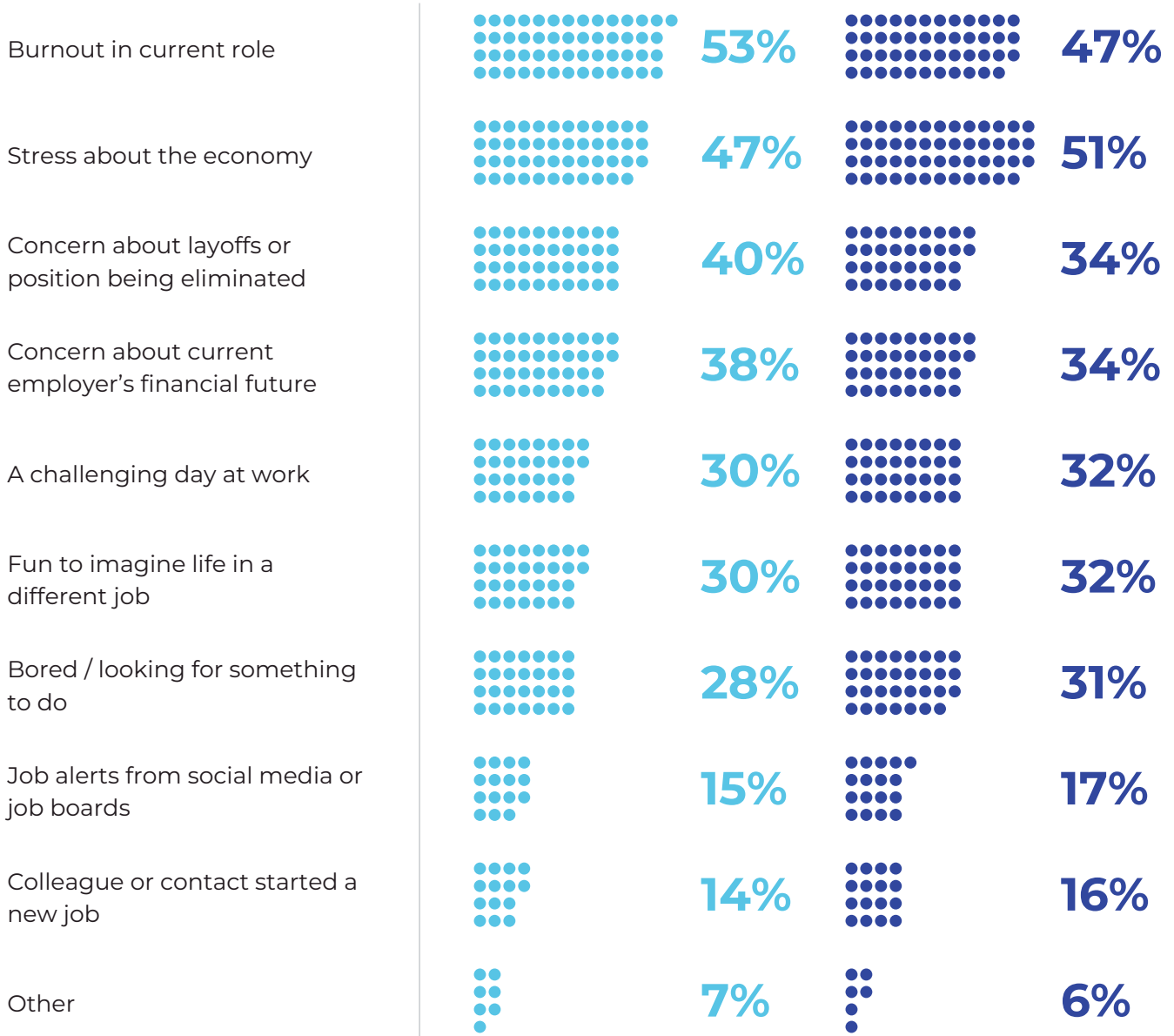
Understanding what candidates go through in the job search process is important if employers want to enhance and build a candidate-centric hiring process. For modern workers, burnout in their current role (53%) and stress about the economy (47%) are the biggest factors motivating them to start looking for a new job.

However, concerns about layoffs increased by six percentage points to 40% in 2024, while concern about the employer’s financial future also increased four points to 38%. Workers clearly understand the complexities of the labor market, but their strongest motivation for looking for a new job is primarily driven by their own stress levels.



What Motivates You to Start Looking for a New Job?

● 2024 | ● 2023



What Workers Like Least During the Recruiting Process

Searching for jobs can present many roadblocks to candidates. And there are many areas within the process that they dislike. For employers, these items should provide a list of opportunities to improve, optimize, or transform. View the list below across the recruiting lifecycle and determine if there are areas within your own organization that you can improve to better support and nurture candidates through their journey.



What job seekers like least about the job search process:

- Poor search results with too many irrelevant jobs: **49%**
- Difficulty finding jobs that match their skills/expertise: **48%**
- Getting SPAM emails: **43%**
- Difficulty finding jobs in their field: **41%**
- Length of time required to search: **34%**



What job seekers like least about the job application process:

- Having to input the same information from the resume into the application: **65%**
- Length of time required for each application: **56%**
- Not hearing back from the employer at all: **52%**
- Having to register to apply: **46%**
- Receiving generic automated confirmation email: **42%**
- Having to join the talent network to apply: **39%**



What job seekers like least about the interview process:

- Having to go through multiple rounds of interviews: **64%**
- Not hearing back from the employer after interviews are complete: **50%**
- Not receiving feedback from an employer: **47%**



What job seekers like least about the offer process:

- Length of time to receive an offer: **63%**
- Lack of transparency into offer process: **62%**
- Offer process takes too long from employer: **50%**

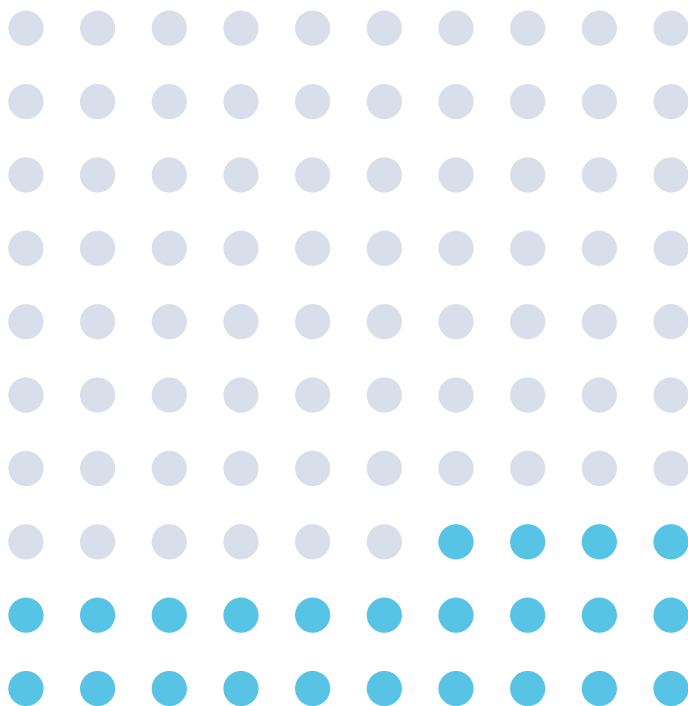
Whether it's lack of transparency, a slow process, or outdated technologies, employers should identify areas to bolster the candidate experience and connect with quality talent to drive their business forward.



Using AI in the Job Search Process

One new question within the 2024 Employ Job Seeker Nation survey centered on leveraging AI as part of the job search process. With the rise of Generative AI, and widely available AI tools to help job seekers, it's important to understand how candidates are using these capabilities to augment their experiences. When asked if they use AI to help in their job search, 24% of candidates indicated they do.

Do You Use AI to Help You In Your Job Search?



76%

Replied No

24%

Replied Yes

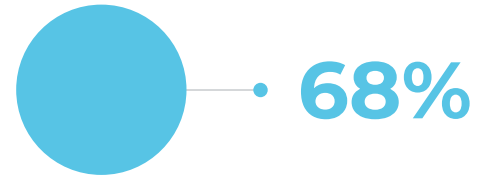


Job seekers also revealed the most common AI capabilities they use to support their job search. Specifically, more than two-thirds (68%) reported using AI to find or match with relevant job listings, followed by writing or reviewing resumes (58%), writing or reviewing cover letters (48%), generating interview questions (42%), and evaluating video interview styles (25%).

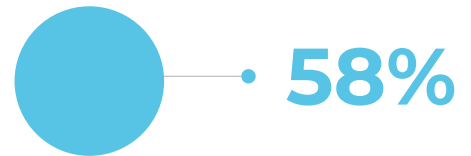
With the introduction of AI tools into the recruiting process, it is important to understand how adoption among job seekers will change over the coming years. Having the baseline for the types of AI tools used, and the frequency of usage, is essential for employers to better understand how job seekers leverage AI to enhance their interactions for the future.

How Do You Use AI to Help You In Your Job Search?

Finding or matching with relevant job listings



Writing or reviewing resumes



Writing or reviewing cover letters



Generating interview questions



Evaluating video interview style



Other



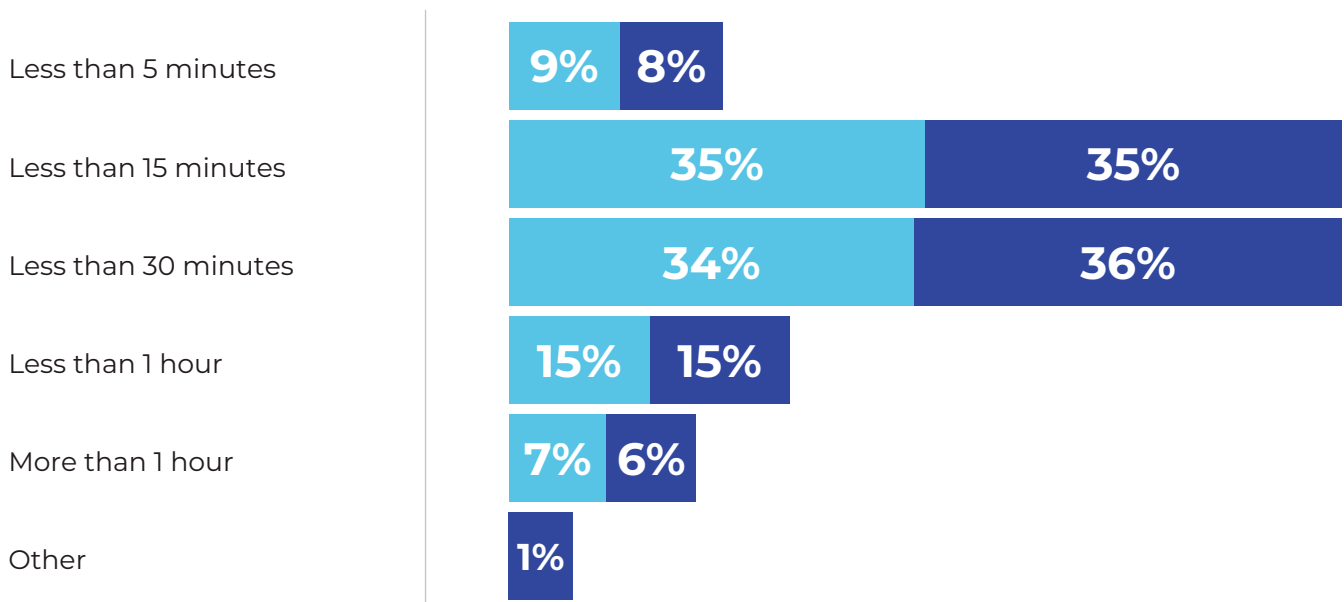
Application Process Length

Speed is a cornerstone of hiring. Those companies that have a streamlined and efficient application process can better convert candidates into applicants. And workers expect this in today’s modern hiring environment. In fact, more than three quarters (78%) of workers expect the job application process to take less than 30 minutes. Nearly one in 10 job seekers believe the application process should take less than five minutes.

How Long Do You Expect the Application Process to Take?

● 2024

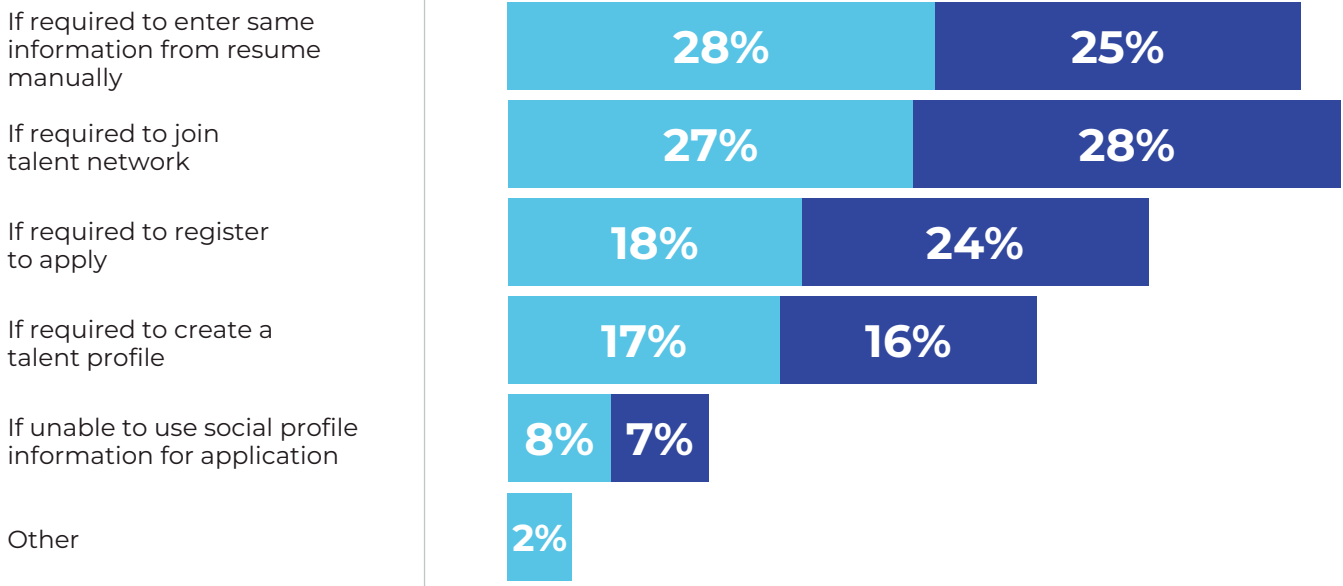
● 2023



More than one-third of job seekers (39%) would abandon an application if it takes too long. But at what point would this occur? It happens most often if candidates are required to enter the same information from their resume manually (28%), to join a talent network (27%), or if required to register to apply (18%). These findings have implications for employers to optimize their application process and improve the experience for candidates.

At What Point Would You Abandon An Application?

● 2024 | ● 2023



Speed is a cornerstone of hiring. In fact,

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Companies with a streamlined and efficient application process can better convert candidates into applicants.

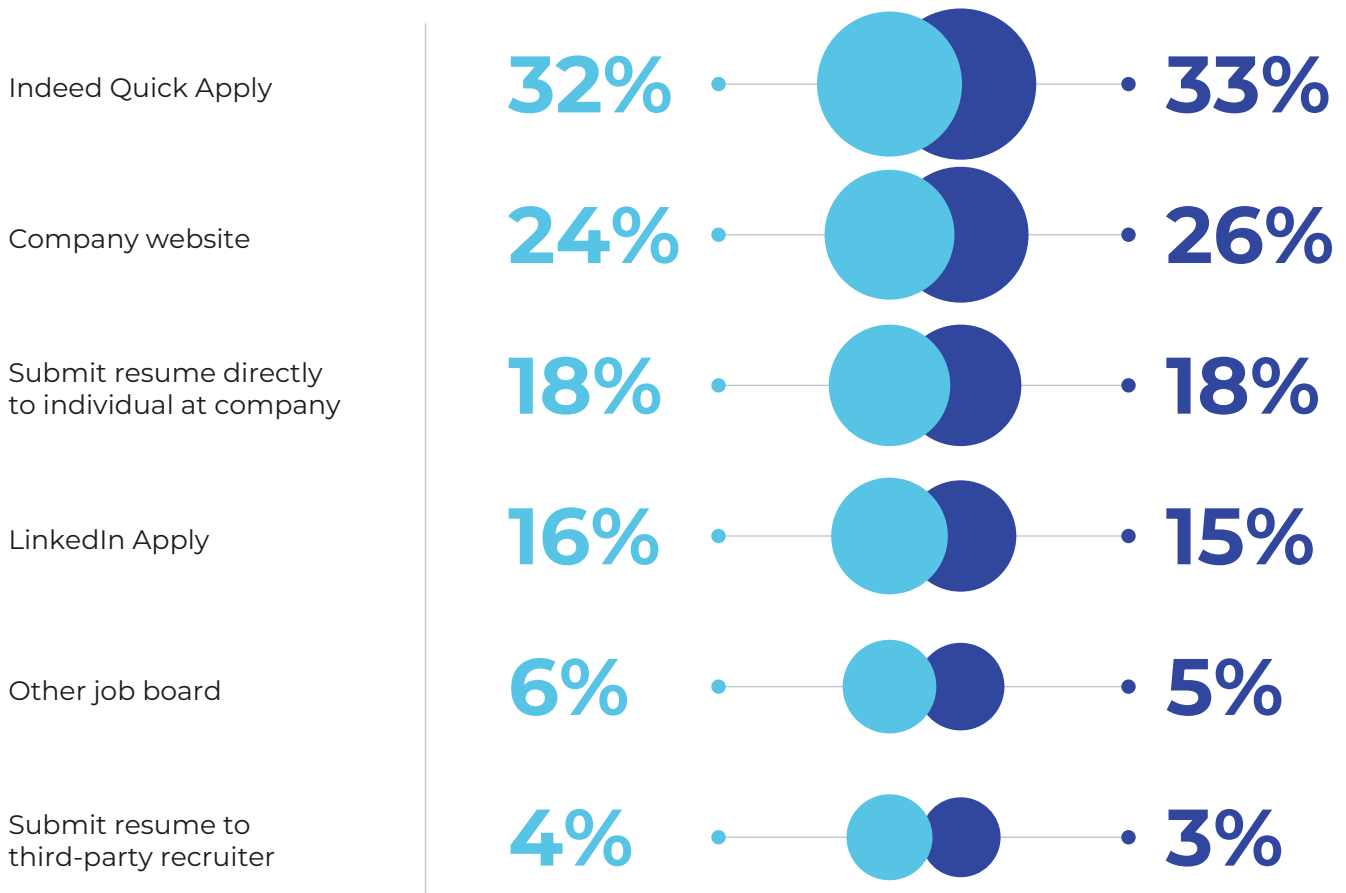
Common Channels for Applying

The most common ways job seekers apply include Indeed Quick Apply (32%), the company website (24%), and direct resume submission to an individual at the company (18%). Employers should make sure that they are leveraging these technologies, have a fast application process that does not require separate registration, and offer an optimized career site that easily converts candidates into applicants.

How Do You Typically Apply for a Job?

● 2024

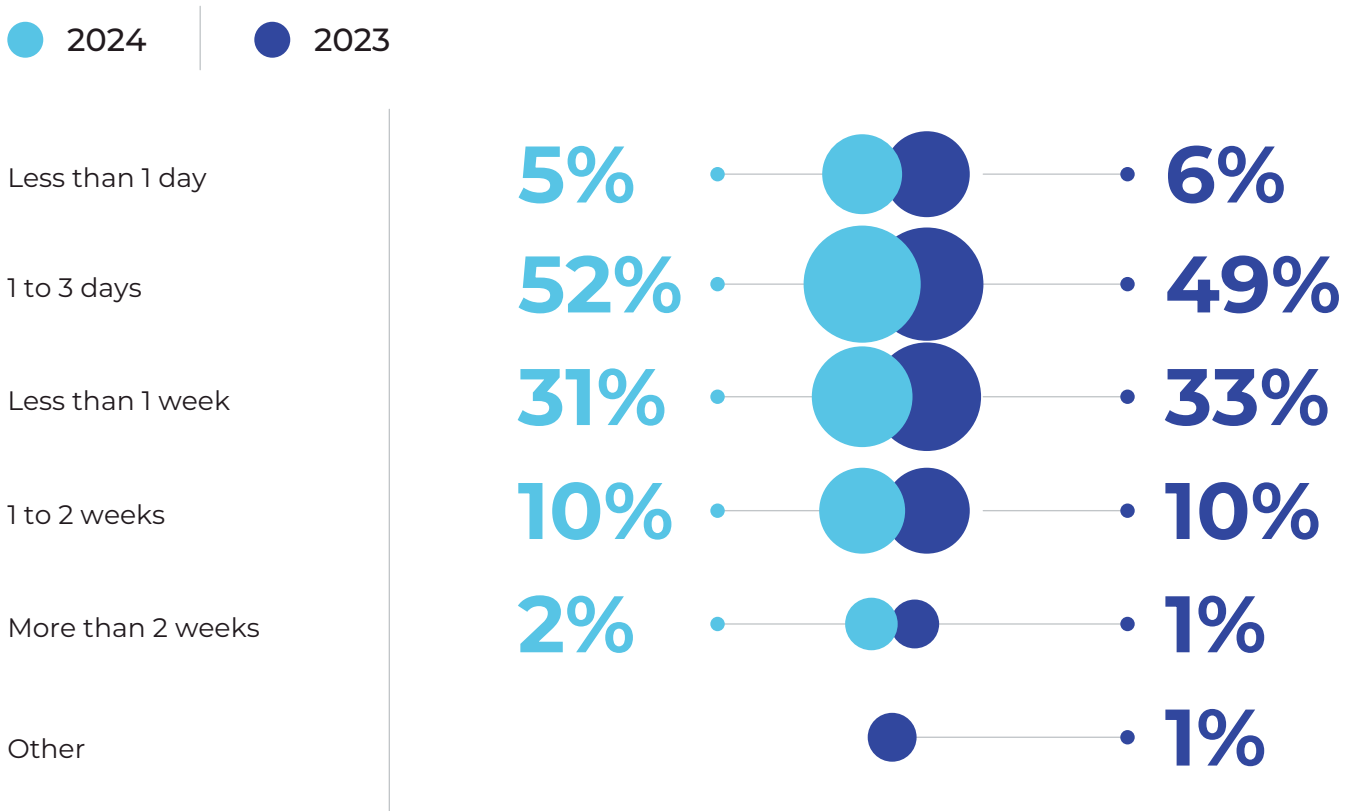
● 2023



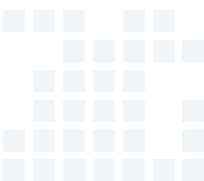
Outreach After Applying

Once job seekers have applied for a job, they have expectations about what kinds of outreach and how quickly they should receive communication from an employer. The day after applying for a job, most candidates expect an automated email from the company (26%) or a personal email from the recruiter (23%). Less than one in five job seekers have no expectations for communication. The majority of job seekers (52%) expect that outreach should occur within one to three days, while 31% of candidates expect it to occur within one week.

How Long Should It Take for a Recruiter to Get Back to You After You Apply?



More than one-third of job seekers assume they were rejected a week after submitting their application and two-thirds (65%) assume rejection after two weeks if they do not hear back from an employer.



Companies that regularly and consistently
communicate
throughout the hiring process have an
advantage
over companies that do not keep candidates
informed. Recruiting teams should
deliver higher quality
experiences
that set their company apart.

Recruiter-Candidate Interactions and Experiences

Interactions between recruiters and candidates are the cornerstone of a positive candidate experience. The candidate experience includes all the feelings, impressions, interactions, and activities a job seeker encounters and considers along their recruiting journey. It's how a candidate feels they've been treated throughout the recruitment process, and how that treatment makes them feel about the organization.

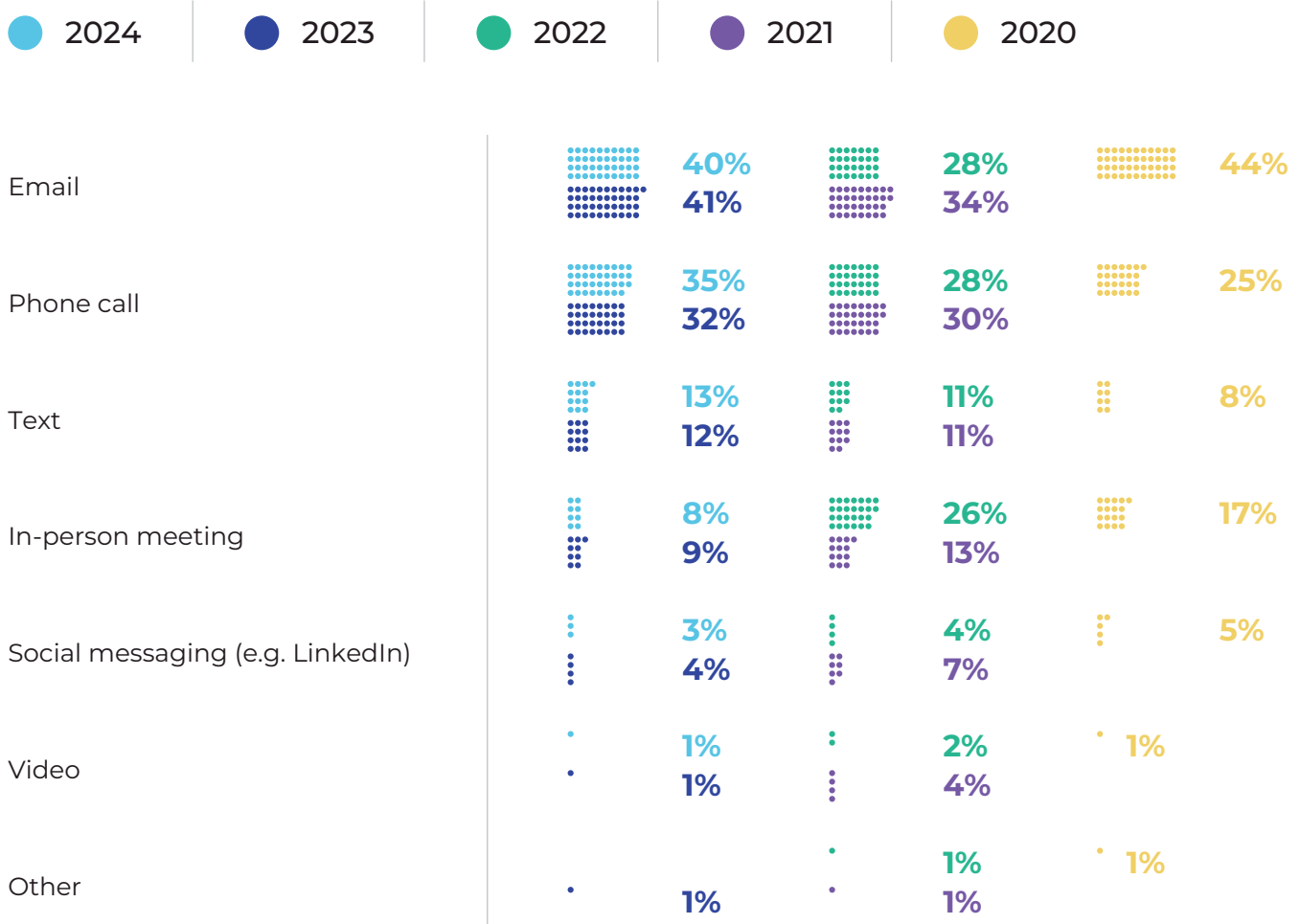
Communication Methods

The Employ Job Seeker Nation survey explored the most preferred methods of communication from the candidate perspective. And over the past year, some of these preferences have shifted. Specifically, during the last two years, email has regained popularity as a method of communication with a recruiter, with 40% of workers preferring this.

Phone calls have also made gains, with 35% of workers indicating it is a preferred communication style. Oppositely, social messaging on platforms like LinkedIn, texting, and video remain low as a preferred channel, even though they are considered a modern form of candidate communication and outreach.



What Is Your Preferred Method of Communication With a Recruiter?





More than a quarter (26%) of American workers have, at some point, interacted with a chatbot during the recruiting process. Of those, a majority (64%) believe that the chatbot improved the process and experience, most often through quickly answering their questions (69%), quickly connecting them to helpful resources (64%), and through availability when needed, especially during non-working hours (60%).

An overwhelming majority of job seekers expect to work with either a recruiter working on behalf of the company (48%) or corporate recruiter (34%) during the recruiting process. In some industries, such as construction, healthcare, and professional/business services, recruiters working on behalf of the company are more common than corporate recruiters (approximately 20 percentage points more likely than corporate recruiters). This is affirming news for organizations that outsource part or all of their recruiting process to strategic RPO partners.

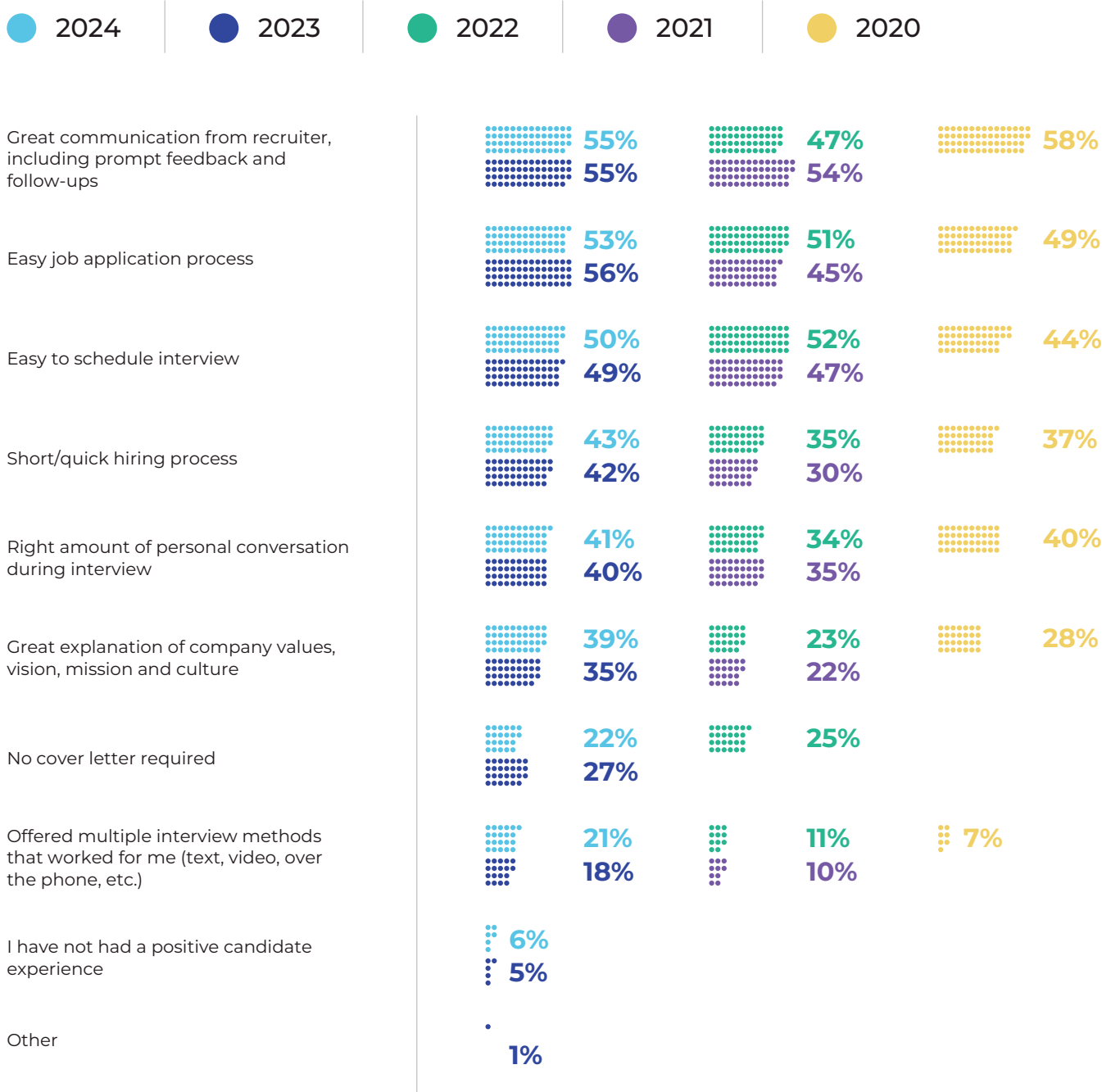
Positive Experiences

Job seekers have high expectations when it comes to the candidate experience. Providing a quality candidate experience allows companies to find and recruit top talent to impact the success of their business. A solid candidate experience also ensures organizations can build a robust talent pipeline and employer brand that strengthens their reputation relative to competitors.

According to job seekers, top factors leading to a positive candidate experience include great communication from a recruiter, including prompt feedback and follow-ups (55%), an easy job application process (53%), easy to schedule interviews (50%), and a short hiring process (43%).



If Your Most Recent Candidate Experience Was Mostly Positive, Which of the Following Were the Reasons?



Candidate Preparation

Candidates are smart and they recognize they must put time into the job search process. Most workers, in fact, indicate they put a significant or moderate amount of time into applying for new roles (93%). When applying for a job, a majority (52%) frequently update their resumes and job materials.

Perhaps because of this effort, when they submit an application, workers are optimistic. More than half (59%) expect to get an interview after submitting their resume, and more than a third of job seekers (36%) believe it will take no more than five applications before they are hired for a new role. Two thirds (66%) expect they will need to submit no more than 10 applications for a new job.

How Many Applications Do You Expect You Will Have to Submit Before You Are Hired for a New Role?

● 2024

● 2023

1 - 5

6 - 10

11 - 20

21 - 30

More than 30

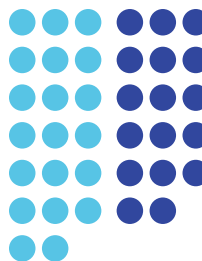
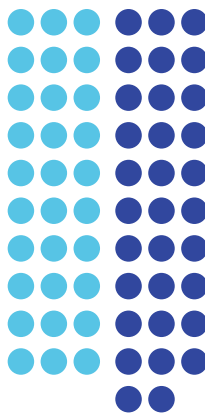
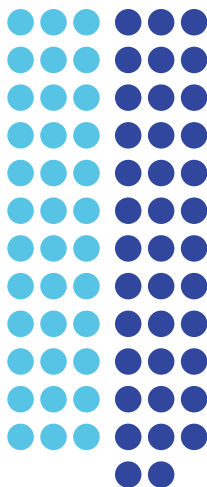
36% 38%

30% 32%

20% 17%

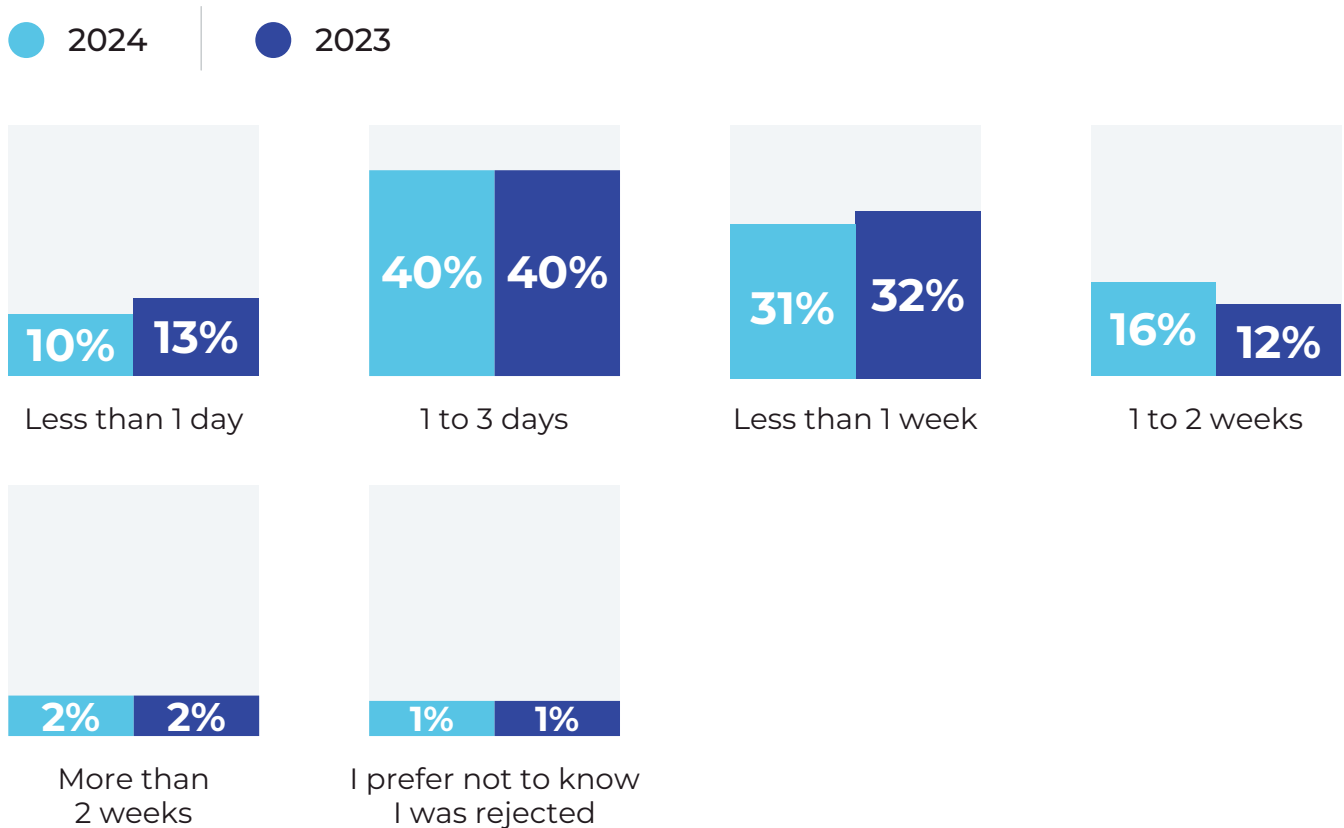
6% 6%

8% 7%



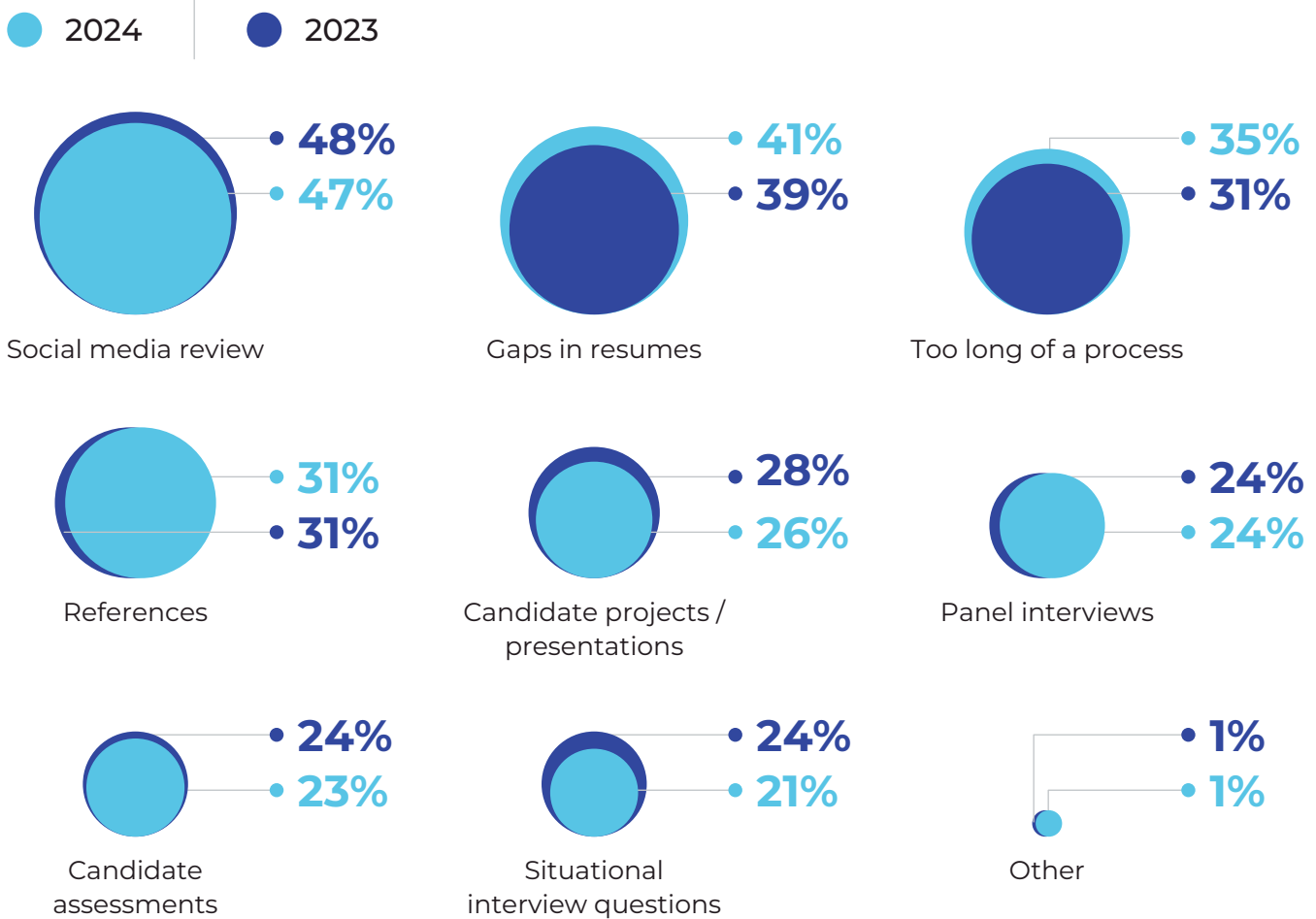
If they are not selected for a role, job seekers prefer to get a personal email from the recruiter (42%) or an automated email from the employer (26%). Half of workers believe it should take no more than three days to learn they were not selected.

If You Are Not Selected for a Job, How Long Should the Employer Take to Inform You?



Workers also have preferences on what should be deprioritized or discarded in the recruiting process. Job seekers may believe these items do not accurately portray them as a candidate or add unnecessary length and requirements to the hiring process. The top practices workers want employers to end are social media reviews of their profiles (47%), focusing on gaps in resumes (41%), and a lengthy hiring process (35%).

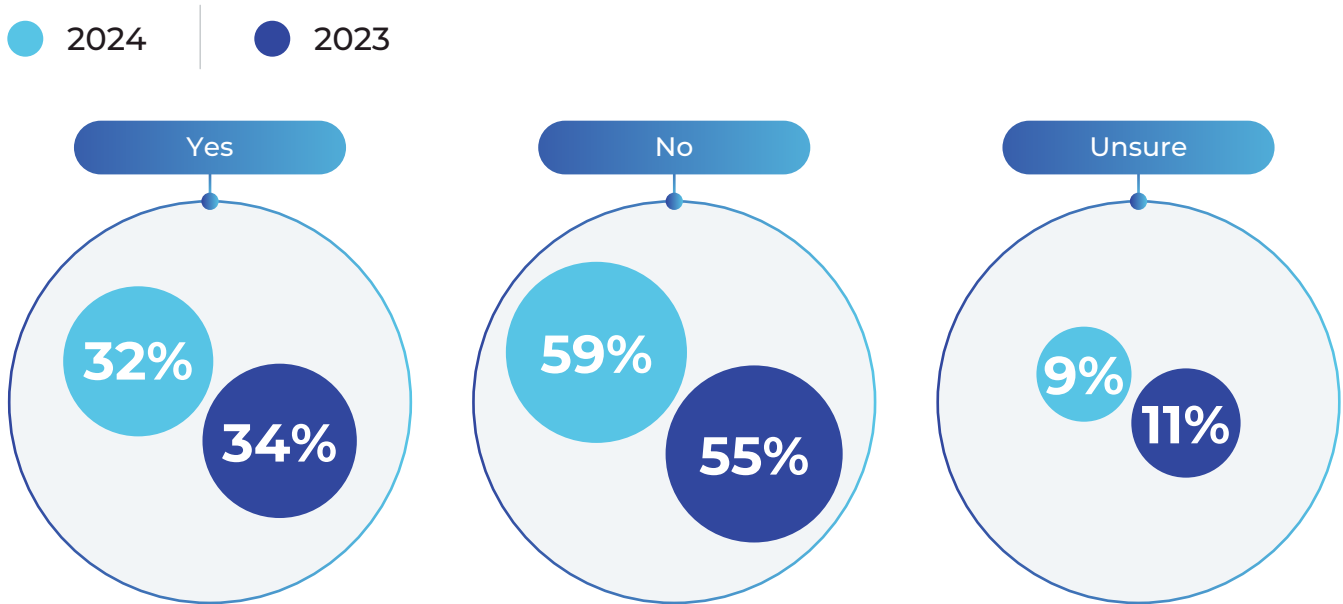
Is There a Portion of the Hiring Process You Feel Employers and Hiring Managers Should Abandon/Focus on Less?



Ghosting During the Recruiting Process

When communication breaks down between the hiring team and candidates, the result often ends in ghosting. This happens when one member of the interaction suddenly withdraws from all communication without warning or explanation.

In the Past Year, Has a Recruiter, Hiring Manager, or Company Ghosted You?



Less than one out of five (17%) job seekers have ghosted a recruiter, a hiring manager, or a company over the past year. But the same is not true in reverse. One-third of workers (32%) have been ghosted frequently, with 48% of job seekers indicating more than three times.

This not only damages the employer brand, but also can impact the potential of future candidates applying to an organization. As an employer, it is paramount that candidate ghosting does not occur and that adequate communication and feedback are given to job seekers no matter what stage of the hiring process they are in.



Key Takeaways and Conclusion

Work to Improve the Experience for Job Seekers

For employers today, understanding job seeker mindset, motivations, and behavior is critical to connecting with candidates more effectively and staying competitive in a tight labor market. As companies move further into 2024, make sure you apply the following trends and insights to your recruiting function:

- ✔ **Career advancement and flexibility are top priorities to active and passive candidates**
- ✔ **Applicants are putting a significant amount of work into and investing in AI tools to support their job search process**
- ✔ **Job seekers want a streamlined hiring experience with consistent communication and follow-up**
- ✔ **A majority of workers believe the job market favors candidates and it will take them just a few months to land a new job**

The job seeker realities of the current labor market should empower you to reflect on and examine hiring roadblocks that your company faces. Keeping candidates and job seekers central to your talent acquisition and recruiting strategies can help you overcome short-term challenges and embrace long-term success in your business.

By nurturing each individual and prioritizing candidate engagement at every step of their journey, your company will be on its way to building stronger relationships with top talent and aligning your people strategy to business outcomes.

Remember, if you're looking to improve job seeker experiences, and enhance your competitive position in the market, the key is keeping candidates at the heart of everything you do.



About Employ

Employ Inc. empowers organizations of all sizes to overcome their greatest recruiting and talent acquisition challenges. Offering a combination of purpose-built, intelligent technologies, services, and industry expertise, Employ provides SMB to global enterprises with a single solution for recruiting and growing a diverse workforce.

Through its **JazzHR**, **Lever**, **Jobvite**, and **NXTThing RPO** brands, Employ serves more than 21,000 customers across industries. For more information, visit www.employinc.com.



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