

READ THE ROOM:

WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION IN A CHANGING WORLD



Insights
with impact

2026 REPORT

POWERED BY



Certified



Corporation

LET'S ◀◀REWIND TO 2018

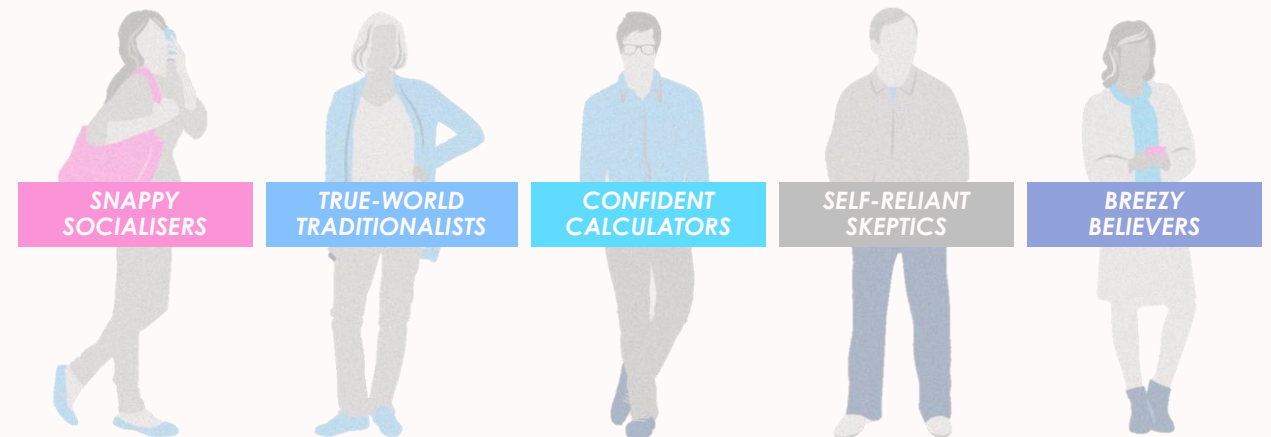
In 2018, we identified 5 communication tribes amongst UK B2B decision makers.

We hypothesised a growing sense of blurred lines between comms styles inside and outside of the workplace.

Think Apple TV's *Severance* – we don't have complete separation between our 'innie' (aka our work persona) and our 'outie'.

Instead, we each have our own human style and communication preferences, rather than one at work and a different one at home.

OUR 2018 B2B COMMUNICATIONS 'TRIBES'



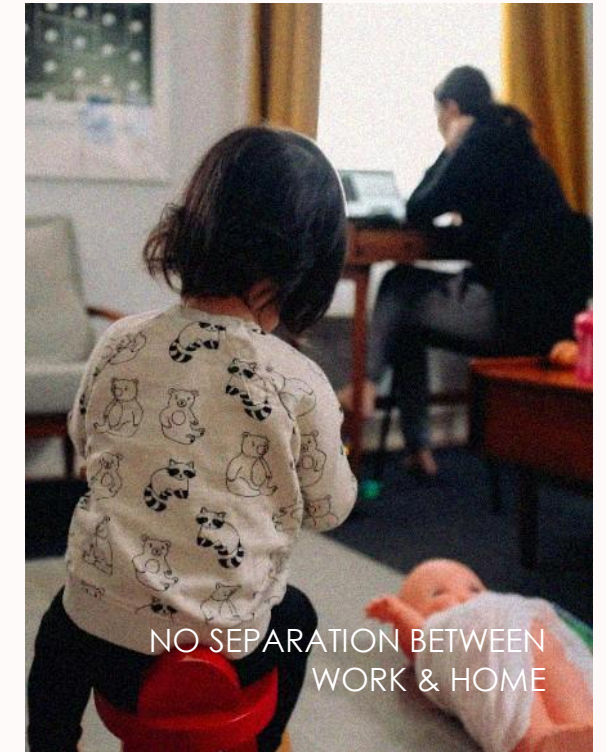
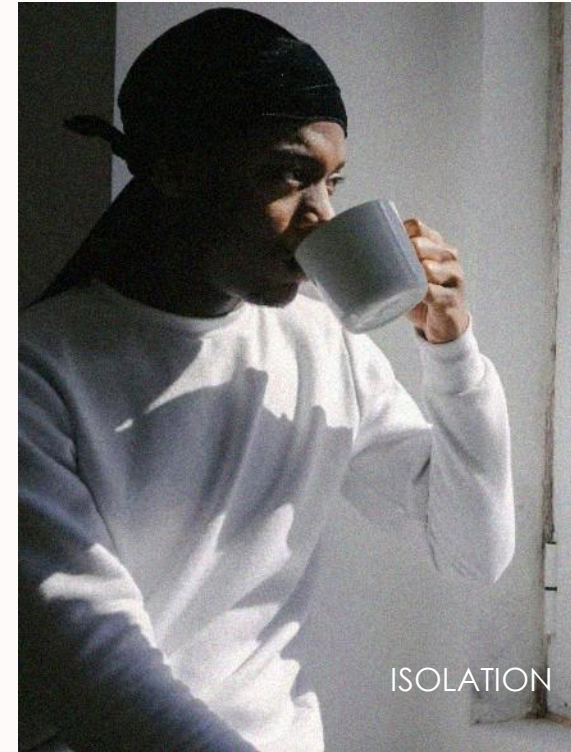
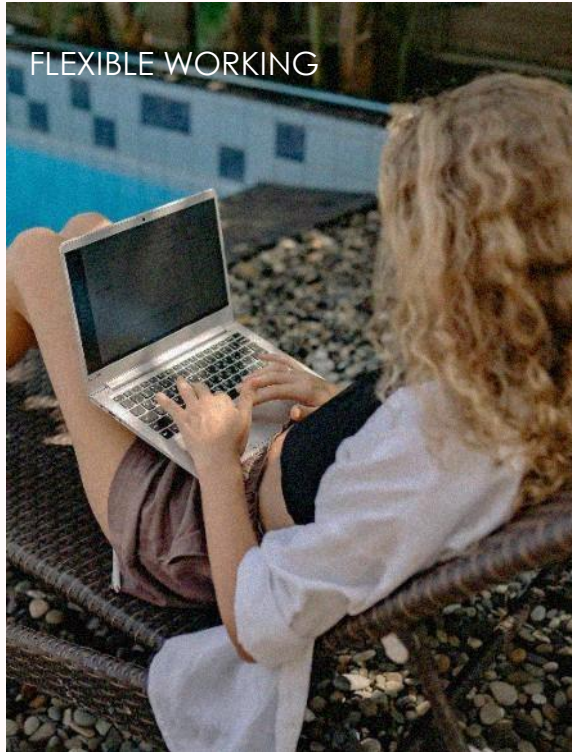
**WE'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT
SINCE 2018 AND DURING THAT
TIME, A WHOLE NEW GENERATION
HAVE ENTERED THE WORKFORCE:**

GEN Z*

*(aka. those born between 1997 to 2012)



GEN Z CAREERS HAVE STARTED IN **COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WAYS** TO PREVIOUS GENERATIONS



WHICH MAY BE A FACTOR IN WHY WE ARE NOW SEEING A GLOBAL DECLINE IN COMPANY LOYALTY & JOB TENURE

GEN Z IN THE US

33% plan to leave their job within a year¹

58% of Gen Zs describe their current role as a “situationship” and not something for the long-term

¹ Gateway Commercial Finance, 2025

GEN Z IN EUROPE

77% of UK Gen Z expect to leave their employer and not have a job for life²

Both UK and German Gen Zs **want** to stay for longer but are happy to leave if their expectations are not met

² L&G Shaping the Future of UK Workplaces, 2023

GEN Z IN ASIA

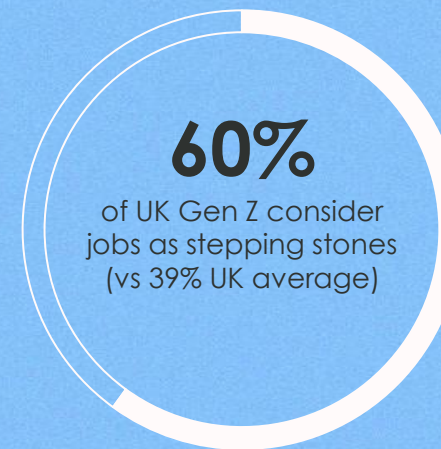
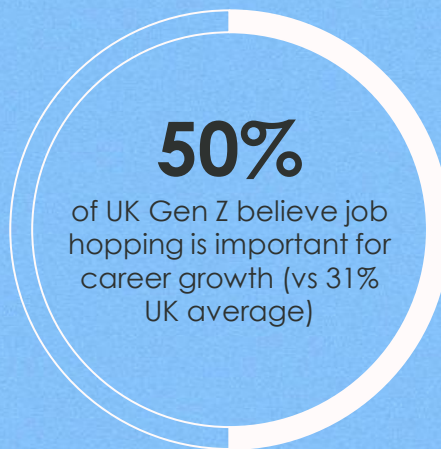
Chinese workers aged under 23 last just **7 months** in their first job on average³

37% of Indian Gen Zs plan to leave their job within 12 months, up to **47%** within 2 years⁴

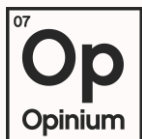
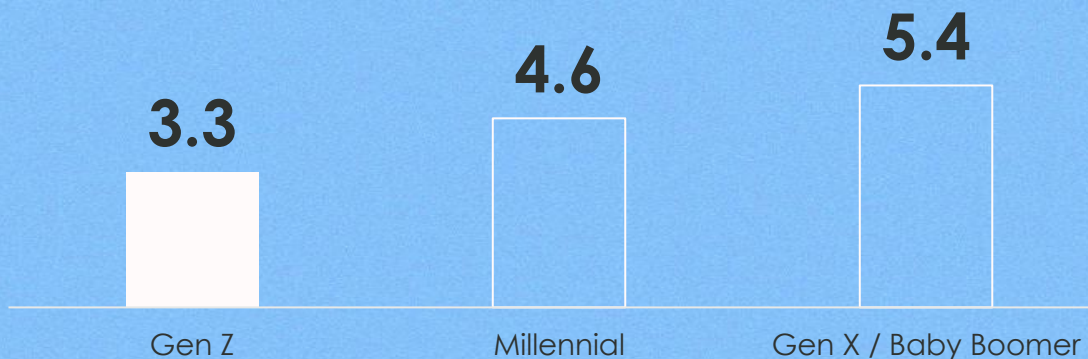
³ Randstad Gen Z Workplace Blueprint, 2025

⁴ LinkedIn China, 2018

EARLY-CAREER PROFESSIONALS SEE MORE BENEFIT IN SHORT-TERM ROLES OVER LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS




AVERAGE EXPECTED TENURE AT ONE JOB (YEARS)





WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM
COMMUNICATION STYLES TO TRY AND
HALT THE GREAT ESCAPE AND KEEP
HOLD OF OUR **BRIGHTEST** TALENT?

WE CREATED A **GLOBAL SEGMENTATION** AMONGST ALL AGE GROUPS TO UNDERSTAND HOW COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES INFLUENCE WORKPLACE SATISFACTION

Get in touch to find out more our segmentation capabilities [here](#) 

WHO?

Business decision makers across a range of industries and business sizes across all generation groups (Gen-Z, Millennial, Gen-X, Boomers)

WHERE?

US, UK, Germany, China, India

HOW MANY?

1,000 respondents per market


WHEN?

Fieldwork conducted summer 2025

WHAT?

A statistical segmentation on attitudes and behaviours towards communication in the workplace

OVATIONMR

We teamed up
with OvationMR to
fuel the fieldwork 


WHAT DRIVES **DIFFERENCES** BETWEEN COMMS STYLES?

This research set out to understand how global business decision-makers differ in their communication styles, and how these differences shape workplace satisfaction.

To define and isolate these styles, we developed a segmentation based on agree/ disagree responses to a series of attitudinal statements.

EXAMPLE STATEMENTS

 I prefer to take my time and carefully consider information I read

 I prefer to read the most important information and make quick conclusions

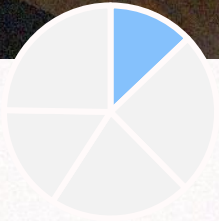
 I prefer to make quick conclusions based on my gut feeling with very little information

 I prefer to see all of the detail, not a summary

 I tend to trust official sources of information and statistics

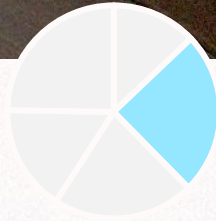
 Statistics are important for understanding the world accurately

MEET THE SEGMENTS



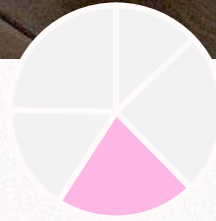
12% · GUT FEELERS

Prefer **informal, chatty communication** similar to how they interact on social media - using images, short videos, and quick, relatable messages. **Aged 20-30**, they rely on **gut instinct over data**, trust peers more than official sources, and often **find traditional or formal workplace communication** - especially with managers - **difficult and disconnected** from their style.



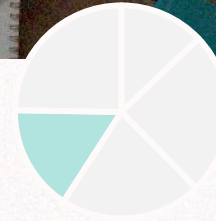
23% · INFO JUNKIES

Unlikely to have management or client-facing responsibilities. They **prefer structured, data-driven communication and value trusted, official information sources**. They are thoughtful and reserved in their communication, **maintaining clear boundaries between work and personal life**, and favouring formal, efficient interactions over casual conversation.



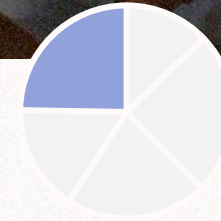
20% · TANGIBLE FEELERS

Relatability is everything - they **need to see themselves in the message**. Personal examples bring ideas to life, but only after they've had **time to carefully unpack the details**. They **trust facts over feelings**, stats over stories, and official sources over hearsay, **making every decision with thoughtful precision, not instinct**.



15% · SKEPTICS

Thoughtful, experienced segment of professionals who **value clarity over chatter and facts over flash**, approaching decisions with careful consideration rather than gut instinct. **Skeptical of official narratives and outside influence**, they **communicate with quiet confidence** and connect best with managers who share their **calm, no-nonsense style**.



23% · CHAMELEONS

This senior professional is **confident making solo decisions but takes time to weigh all the facts**, valuing detail, clarity, and trusted sources before reaching a conclusion. They blend warmth with formality, **adapting their communication style with ease** - whether messaging, video calling, or chatting with clients - while thriving in a role where their approach feels both understood and appreciated.

GEN Z'S ARE MOST LIKELY TO FALL INTO THE **GUT FEELER SEGMENT**

12% · GUT FEELERS

23% · INFO JUNKIES

20% · TANGIBLE FEELERS

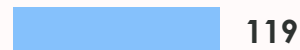
15% · SKEPTICS

23% · CHAMELEONS

GEN Z

MILLENNIAL

GEN X / BABY BOOMER



BASED ON INDEX SCORES FOR EACH GENERATION

TO UNDERSTAND HOW COMMUNICATION DIFFERENCES ARE IMPACTING GEN Z JOB SATISFACTION, WE'LL NEED TO DEEP DIVE INTO THE **GUT FEELER** SEGMENT IN MORE DETAIL

THE LACK OF HAPPINESS AND BELONGING WITHIN ROLES THAT WE SEE AMONGST GEN Z IS ALSO CLEAR TO SEE AMONGST GUT FEELERS

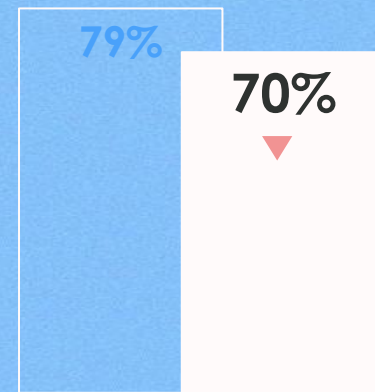


NET: AGREE: HAPPINESS AND BELONGING [GUT FEELERS VS TOTAL]

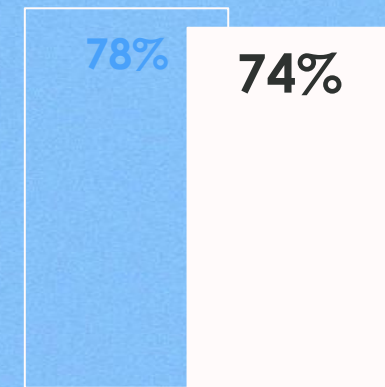
BASE: ALL MARKETS (UK, GER, CHI, INI & US)



I am **happy** in my current role



I feel I **belong** at my organisation



TOTAL



GUT FEELERS

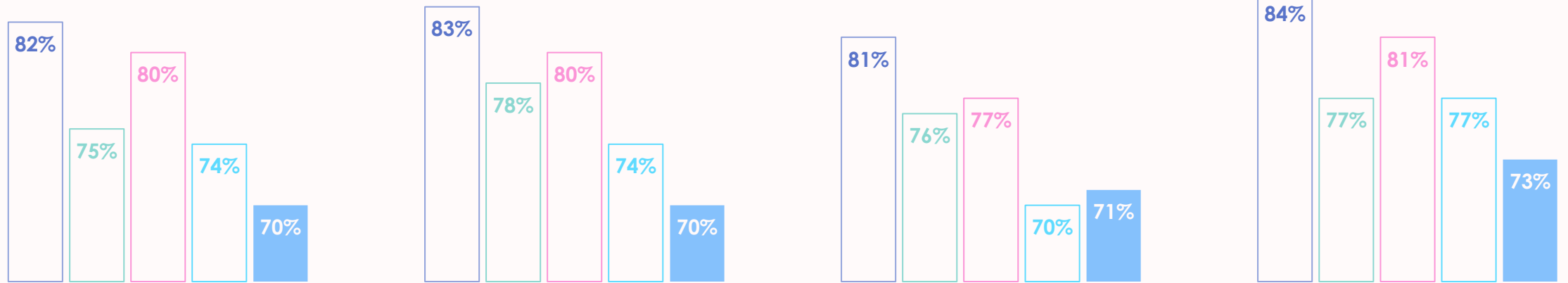


SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER THAN TOTAL

AT THE ROOT OF THIS, GUT FEELERS PERCEIVE GREATER LIMITS ON THEIR AUTHENTICITY AT WORK

NET: AGREE: COMMUNICATION + EXPRESSION STATEMENTS
[SEGMENT BREAKDOWN] BASE: ALL MARKETS (UK, GER, CHI, INI & US)

CHAMELEONS TANGIBLE FEELERS SKEPTICS INFO JUNKIES GUT FEELERS



“ I think my organisation respects individual differences

I feel comfortable communicating & expressing myself how I want at work

I'm able to be myself when I'm at work

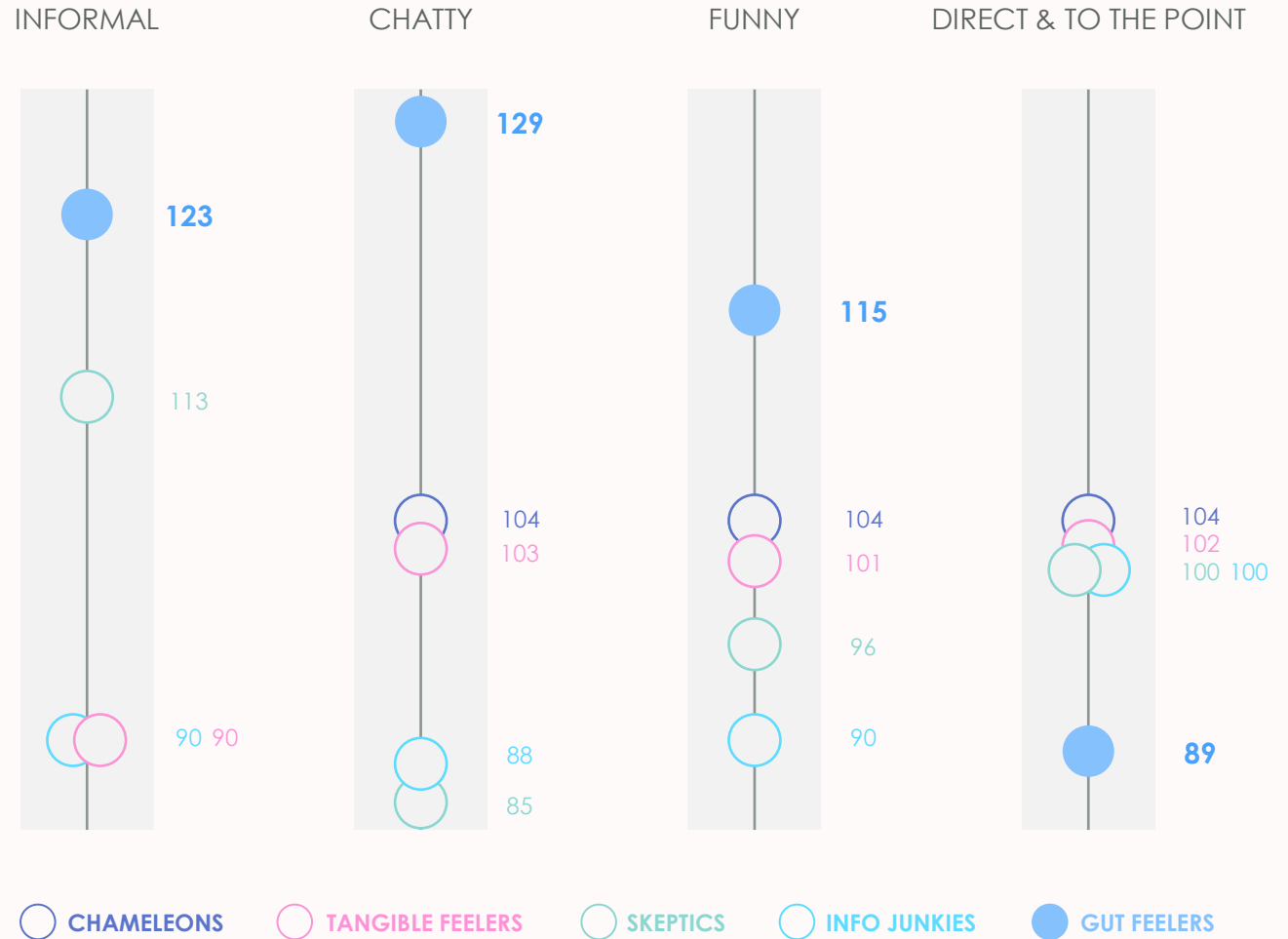
I feel that others understand my communication style



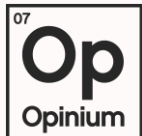
THIS SEGMENT VALUES
 A **CHATTY** WORKPLACE
 WHERE THEY CAN BE
 THEMSELVES AND
 COMMUNICATE IN AN
INFORMAL, RELAXED AND
LIGHT-HEARTED WAY

“ My communication style at work is...

SEGMENT INDEX SCORES



AND THEIR APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION ALSO FOCUSES ON CALMNESS, POSITIVITY, HONESTY AND COLLABORATION



HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL COMMUNICATION STYLE AND PREFERENCES AT WORK?

GUT FEELERS – ALL MARKETS



Speak slowly, focus on the key points, and listen more

I communicate calmly with others, am considerate of others' perspectives, and easy-going – it means I am able to create a warm communication environment

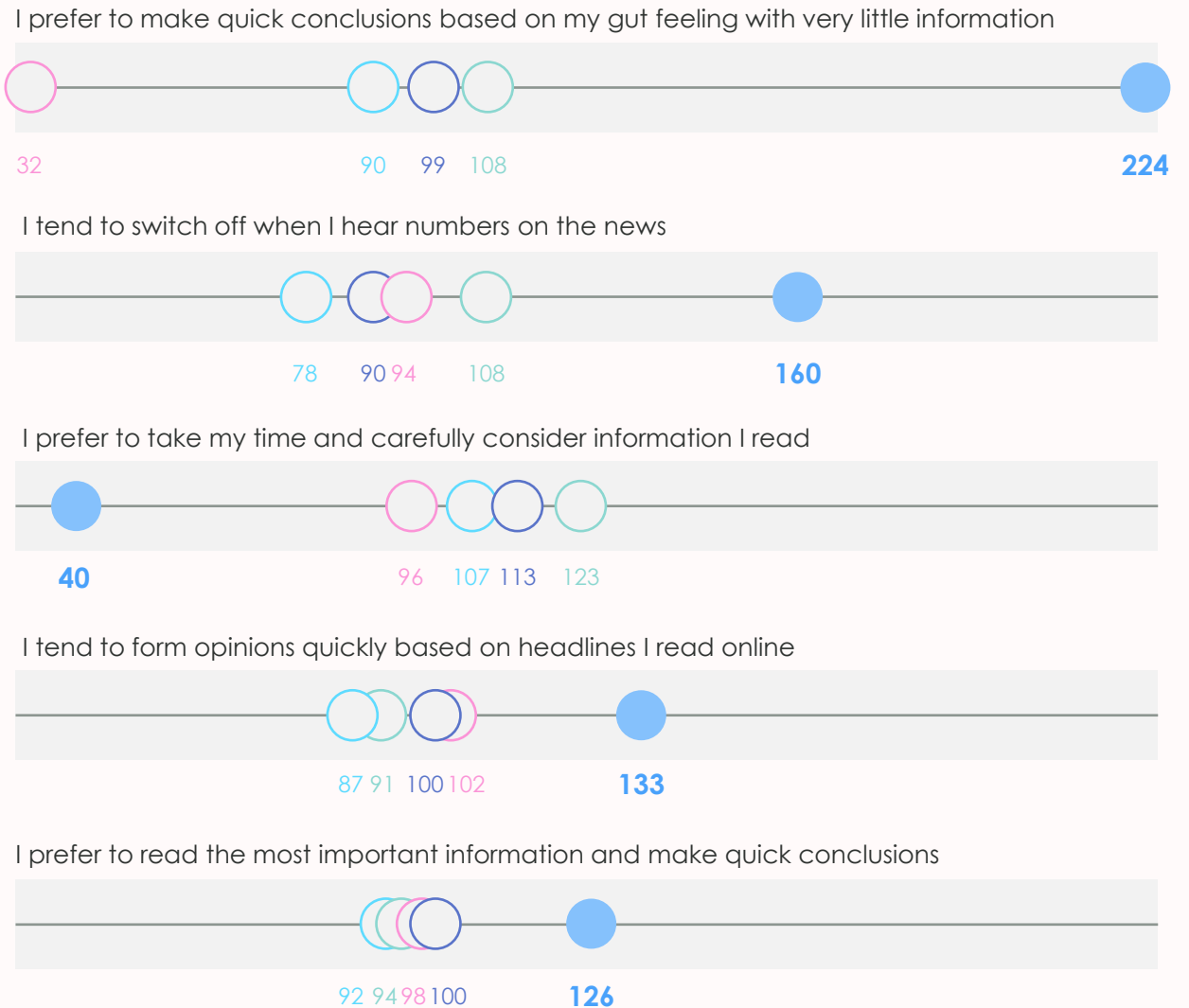
Humorous, approachable and helpful – I like to break down difficulties and have fun

Open communication where everyone gives feedback and we make conclusions

I'm open and honest and I prefer to talk to people in person

I often communicate in a friendly manner. I'm open-minded and say what I think.

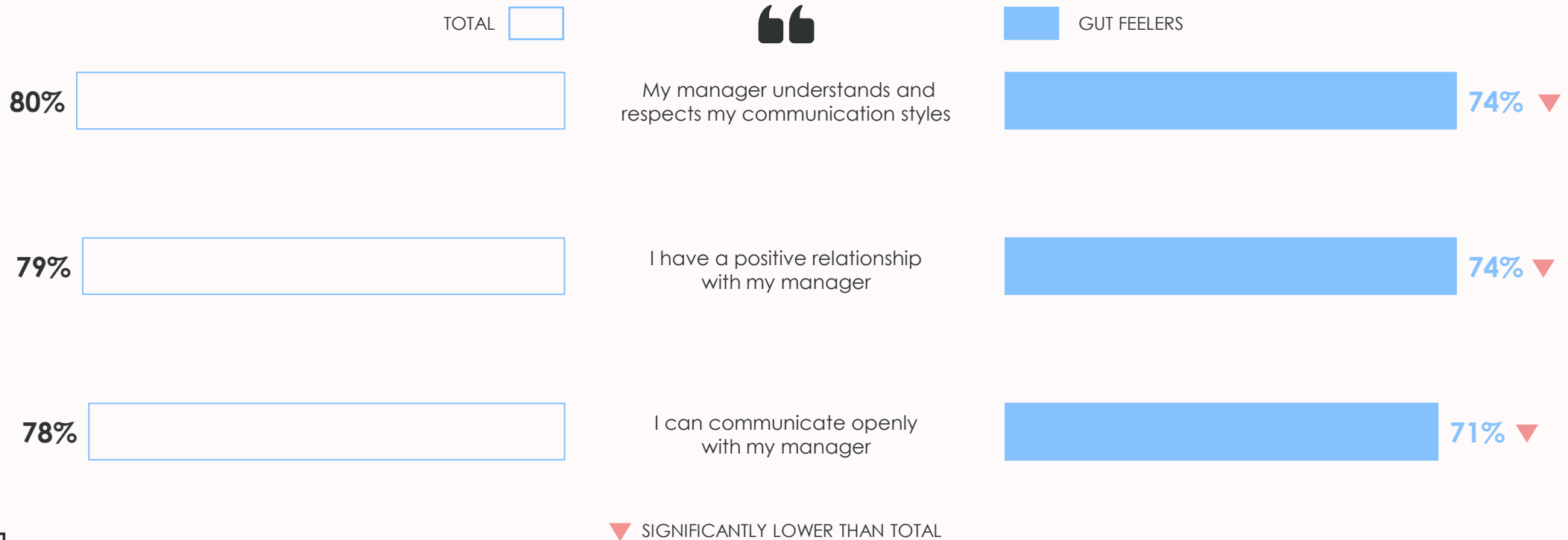
GUT FEELERS ALSO PREFER TO MAKE CONCLUSIONS FROM **HEADLINES** AND **INSTINCT**, RATHER THAN DELVING INTO THE DETAIL WHICH IS DISTINCT FROM THE OTHER SEGMENTS WE FIND IN THE OFFICE



THE MISMATCH IN COMMUNICATION STYLES IS BLEEDING INTO THEIR *RELATIONSHIP WITH SENIOR MANAGEMENT*

NET: AGREE: MANAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP STATEMENTS [GUT FEELERS VS TOTAL]

BASE: ALL MARKETS (UK, GER, CHI, INI & US)



WHICH CAN LEAD TO **POOR** LEVELS OF JOB SATISFACTION AND **BELONGING** WITHIN AN ORGANISATION

The impact of poor manager relationships on mental wellbeing has also long been documented in extensive research:



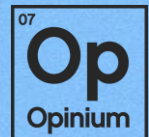
Poor management style is one of the top 3 reasons for work-related stress



49% have quit their jobs due to a negative manager relationship

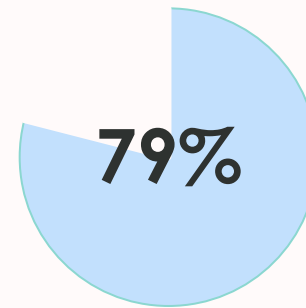


69% have said their manager impacts their mental health more than their doctor

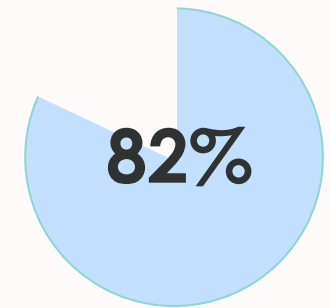


WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION · GUT FEELERS · 2026

Of those with a **positive** relationship with manager...

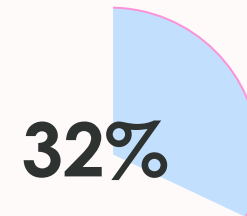


Agree that they are **happy** in their current role

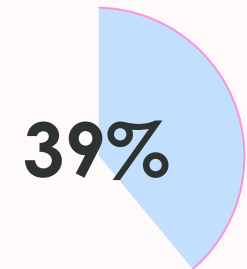


Agree that they feel they **belong** at their organisation

Of those with a **negative** relationship with manager...



Agree that they are **happy** in their current role

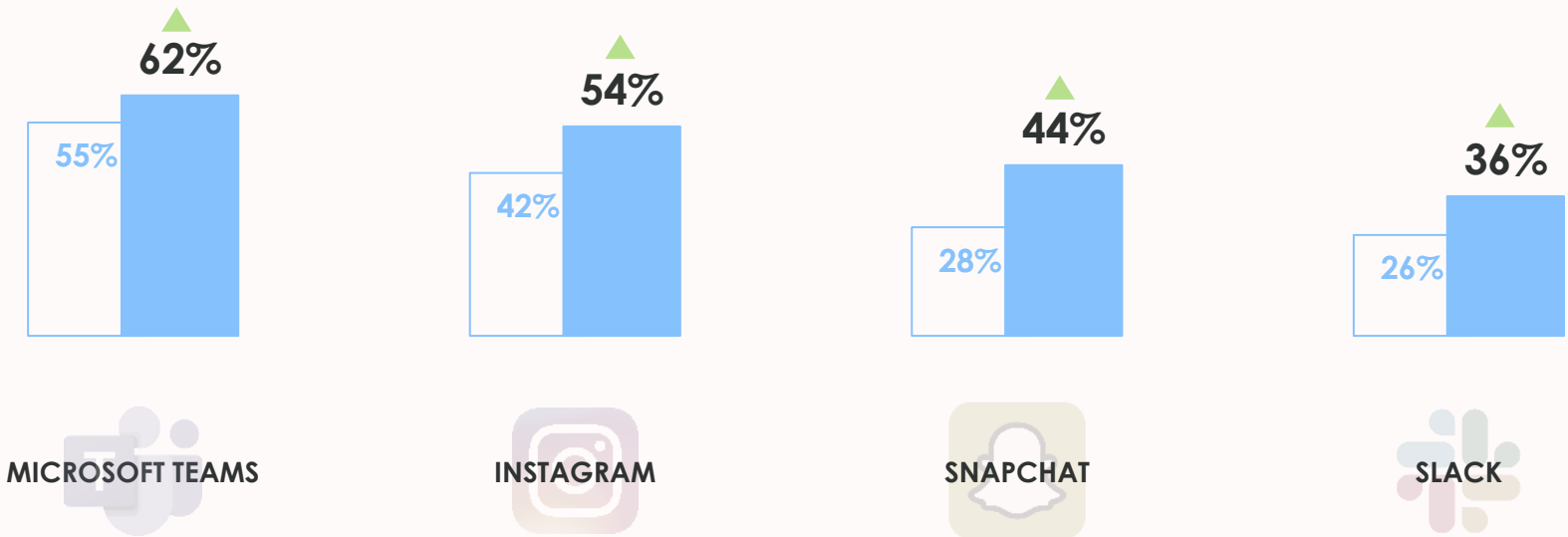


Agree that they feel they **belong** at their organisation



THIS CROSSOVER OF STYLES IS REFLECTED IN THE WAY **GUT FEELERS ARE COMMUNICATING AT WORK TOO**

TOTAL
 GUT FEELERS
 % OF GUT FEELERS WITH HIGH USAGE OF APPS TO COMMUNICATE AT WORK (VS TOTAL SAMPLE)



▲ SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN TOTAL

SAY HELLO TO **HANNAH**, OUR AI GENERATED **GUT FEELER**

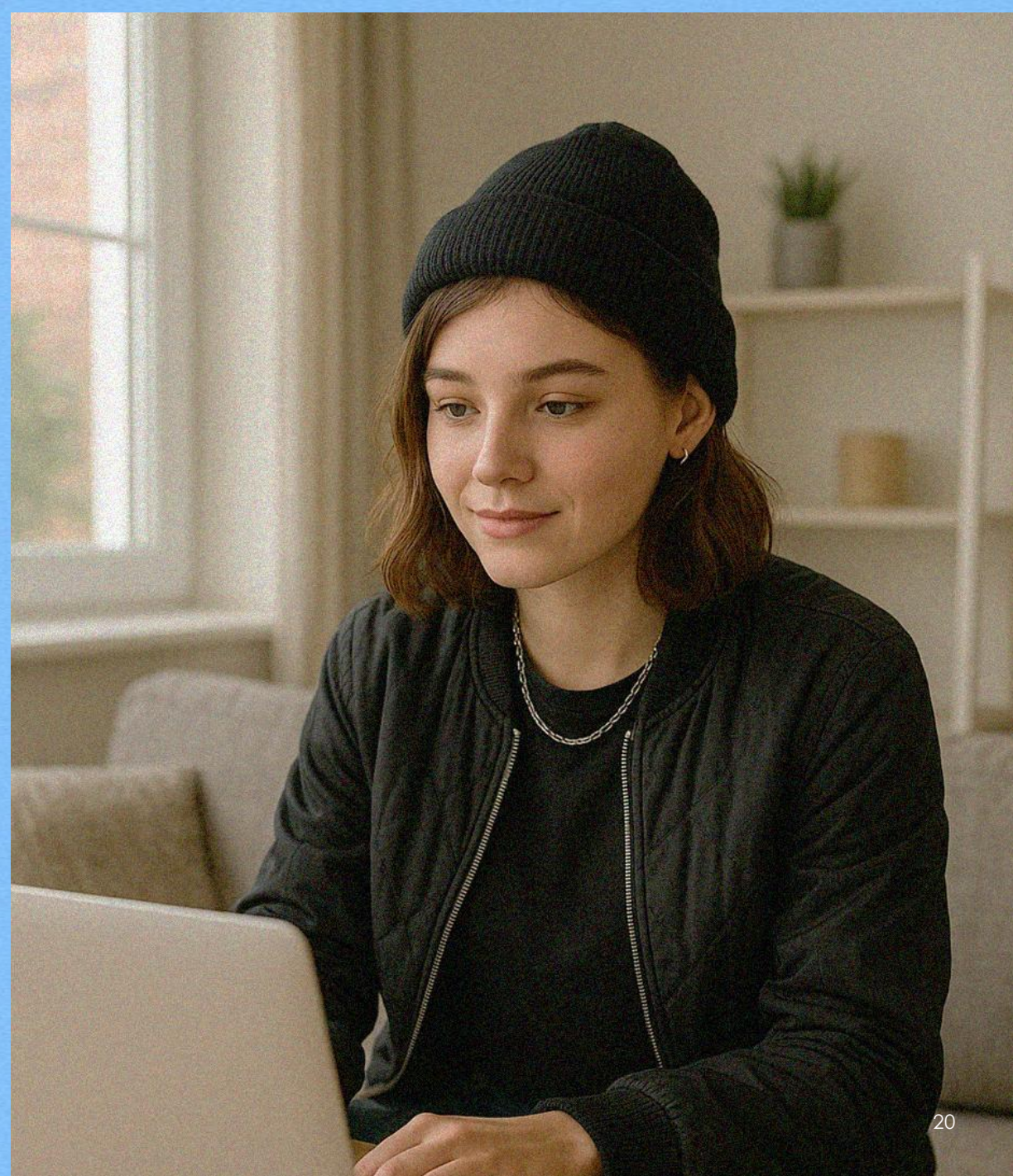
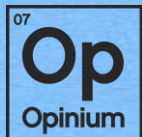
AI synthetic personas are realistic, data-driven replicates of statistical segments created using artificial intelligence.

AI-generated personas are built by analysing large volumes of behavioural, demographic, and psychographic data based on the characteristics and attributes that a user feeds the model with.

Once created, personas can be interacted with through conversational AI to test reactions to campaigns, products, or messaging in a more human-like way.

We created an AI persona for a Gut Feeler so we could have more of an in-depth discussion about their needs in the workplace when it comes to communication preferences.

Get in touch to find out more about how we can use synthetic personas [here](#) 



HANNAH NEEDS TO BE TREATED LIKE A PERSON WITH **HONESTY** AND **AUTHENTICITY.**

SHE WANTS SENIOR MANAGEMENT TO LISTEN, HAVE A JOKE AND LEAVE OLD-FASHIONED COMMUNICATION PRACTICES IN THE PAST



WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A MANAGER?



Being able to just... talk to them is important. My current manager is alright, but it's always so formal. Feels like I'm talking to a robot half the time. I want to be able to joke around a bit, like with my other work friends. If my manager can't take a joke, it's going to be a long day, every day.

Just be straight with me, even if it's not what I want to hear. I respect that way more than someone who's just trying to be my best friend to get something out of me.



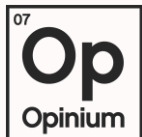
HOW WOULD YOU PREFER TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR MANAGER?

The best way for me to talk to my manager is through something like Slack or Teams. Email is way too formal and takes too long. I want to be able to just shoot off a quick question and get a quick answer. No need for the Dear Mr. So-and-so stuff.

Honestly, sometimes just a quick chat in person is good too, but only if it's chill. Like, walking over to their desk, not scheduling a whole meeting. Keeps it casual.

Basically, just talk to me like a normal person, not like I'm some corporate drone.

LOYALTY IS EARNED THROUGH **FEELING APPRECIATED** AND BEING GIVEN THE **OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW** IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT



“ WHAT DRIVES LOYALTY?

It's not just about the money. I also need to feel like my work actually matters. If I'm just pushing papers all day and not making any kind of impact, it's hard to care about the company's success.



And opportunities for growth are important too. If I feel like I'm stuck in a dead-end job with no chance to learn new skills or move up, I'm going to start looking elsewhere.

Basically, if the company treats me well, pays me fairly, and gives me a reason to care, then yeah, I'll be loyal. But if they're just seeing me as a cog in the machine, then they shouldn't expect me to go above and beyond for them.

“ WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE AT WORK?

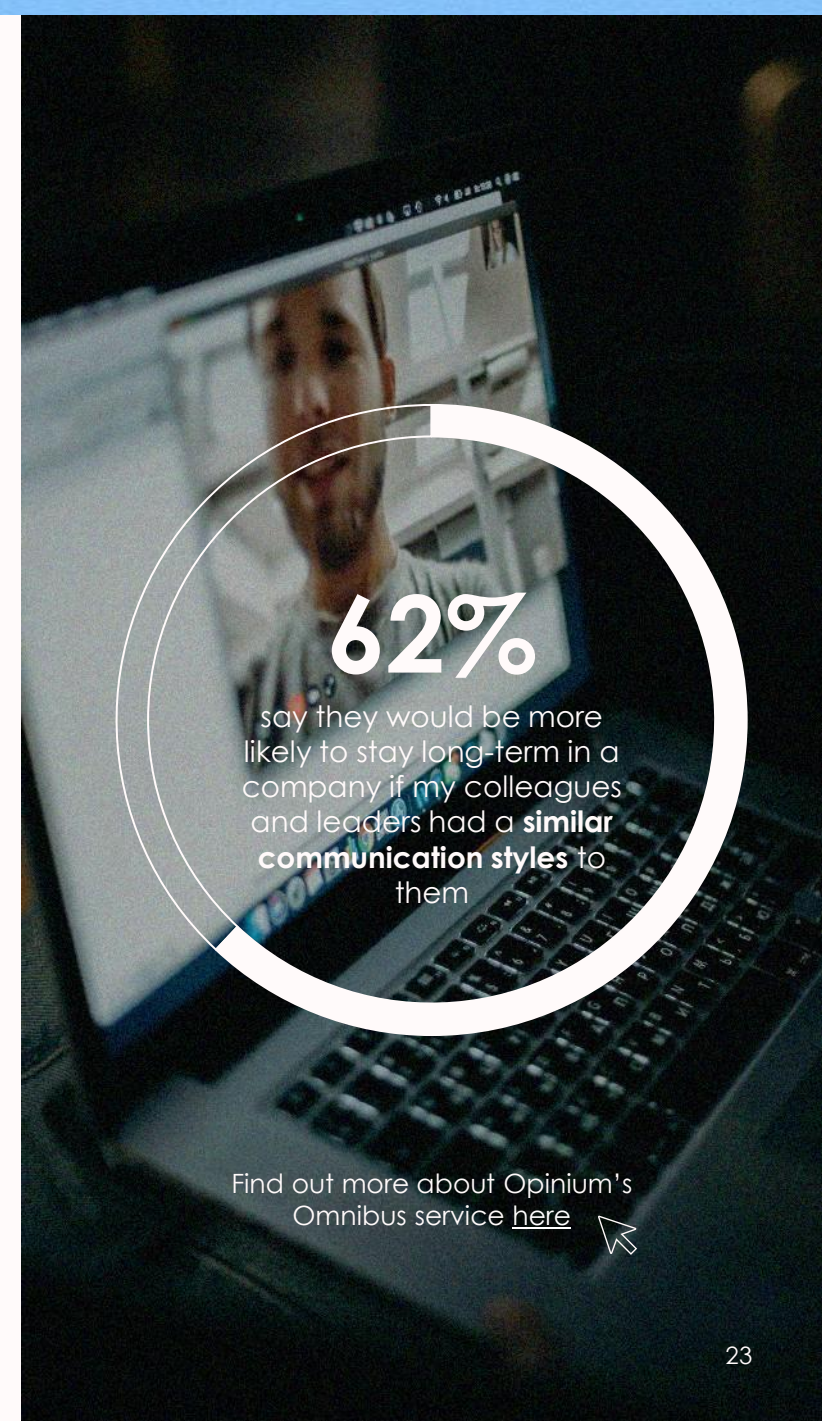
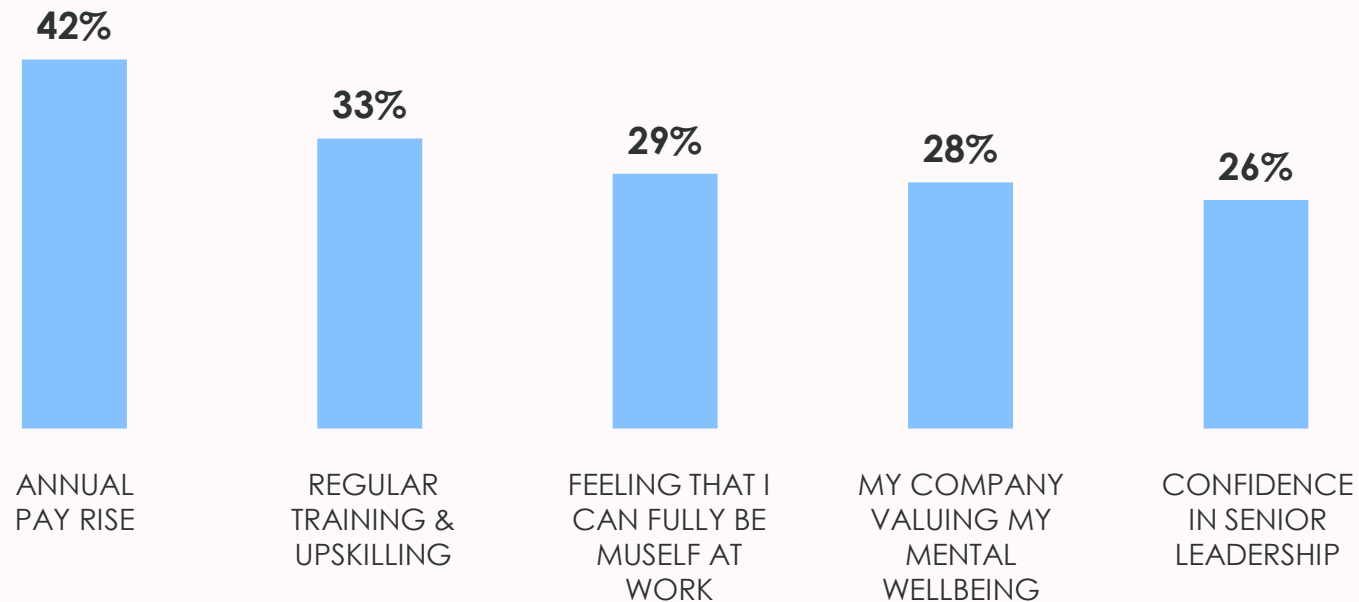
First off, more flexibility would be awesome. Like, if I have a doctor's appointment, I don't want to have to jump through hoops to take an hour off. Trust me to get my work done, and let me manage my own time a bit.

Also, the vibe in the office could be a bit more relaxed. It's not like we need beanbag chairs and a ping pong table or anything, but maybe some more plants or something to make it feel less like a sterile box. And ditch the dress code a bit. I'm not saying we should all wear pyjamas to work, but having to wear a suit every day is just ridiculous.

And finally, just be respectful and treat everyone like a human being. It's not rocket science.

HANNAH'S FEELINGS ARE REFLECTED BY THE UK GEN Z WORKFORCE WHO VALUE **AUTHENTICITY** AND **GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**

FACTORS THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE STAYING AT THE SAME JOB (TOP 5)



WHAT CAN WE LEARN AS *BUSINESS LEADERS?*

WHAT DID WE *FIND*?

Gut Feelers prefer short communication styles, utilising images, short videos and quick messaging to inform instinctive decision making

WHAT CAN WE *DO ABOUT IT*?

Consider replacing long, company-wide meetings with shorter, focused sessions or team huddles. Use visuals, short videos, and instant messaging tools for faster decision-making



WHAT DID WE FIND?

Traditionally, workplaces require workers to fit into their culture, including communication styles, in a top-down structure

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Foster a bottom-up culture by encouraging employees to express their authentic communication styles. Implement regular feedback loops and employee-driven initiatives.

Business
Analysis

WHAT DID WE *FIND*?

The relationship with senior management has a significant impact on job satisfaction and overall wellbeing

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Train leaders in empathy and active listening. Schedule regular one-on-one check-ins, mentorship programs, and create transparent pathways for career development.



WHAT DID WE *FIND*?

Gut Feelers blur the line between home and workplace, both in location and appearance

WHAT CAN WE *DO ABOUT IT*?

Allow flexible working environments and hybrid policies. Redesign office spaces to feel more like “home”: comfortable seating, relaxed dress codes, and less formal décor.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH GUT FEELERS AS *CLIENTS OR SUPPLIERS?*

THE SAME RULES APPLY: GUT FEELERS VALUE **AUTHENTICITY**, SO THEIR COMMUNICATION STYLE STAYS CONSISTENT **REGARDLESS OF WHO** **THEY ARE SPEAKING** **WITH**

GOLDEN RULES FOR ENGAGING WITH A GUT FEELER

AUTENTICITY OVER CORPORATE POLISH

- Encourage employees to drop the corporate jargon and share genuine stories. Train teams to bring personality into client and stakeholder conversations.

PEOPLE-FIRST APPROACH

- Showcase culture, values, and human impact in pitches, recruitment, and external communications. Highlight employee experiences and client success stories.

KEEP IT SHORT AND CLEAR

- Replace lengthy reports with 1-page summaries, infographics, or short videos after meetings. Use bullet points to emphasize decisions and next steps.

LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

- Actively use LinkedIn for thought leadership. Share articles, personal opinions, and culture updates. Encourage leaders and managers to build online visibility.

LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

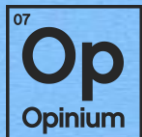
- Invest in onboarding, pitch training, and presentation skills. Ensure the first 5 minutes of every interaction (interview, sales meeting, networking) are engaging, personal, and memorable.



WHO ARE **OPINIUM?**



WE ARE A FULL-SERVICE RESEARCH CONSULTANCY, PROVIDING
INSIGHT WITH IMPACT
TO BRANDS AND ORGANISATIONS AROUND THE WORLD



Opinium

FULL-SERVICE

Full-service agency, providing integrated insights across qualitative and quantitative methodologies

AWARDED

Most awarded agency in the past 10 years – including twice crowned MRS Agency of the Year

METHOD NEUTRAL

We are mixed-method specialists who are happy to design and create new approaches to meet client challenges

INNOVATIVE

Leading the industry in new thinking, including leveraging AI and synthetic data analysis

THANK YOU!



Insights with impact

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