

# 2024 HUMAN CAPITAL TRENDS REPORT



# THE NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM EXTENSION

*Thriving beyond boundaries: Human performance in a boundaryless world*

**2** 024 Global Human Capital Trends Report is based on the data gathered by an eponymous survey, comprising answers of over 14,000 respondents across 95 countries (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.3). The report brings a clear message that the more boundaryless work becomes, the more uniquely human capabilities – like empathy and curiosity – become more important too (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.3).

This extension, with its insights based on the responses gathered across the Netherlands and Belgium, further emphasizes and contextualizes themes identified in the Global Human Capital Trends report.

First, a brief overview of the 2024 Global Human Capital Trends is captured and the respondent demographics are explained in detail. Finally, eight consecutive chapters will provide a brief overview of the Global findings and analyze how they are reflected in the Netherlands and Belgium. Trend chapters are placed according to the ranking of importance to the survey respondents in the identified geographical scope.

03.....*GLOBAL HUMAN CAPITAL TRENDS OVERVIEW*

04.....*RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS*

05.....*CHAPTER 1: THE TRANSPARENCY PARADOX: COULD LESS BE MORE WHEN IT COMES TO TRUST?*

06.....*CHAPTER 2: WHEN PEOPLE THRIVE, BUSINESS THRIVES: THE CASE FOR HUMAN SUSTAINABILITY*

07.....*CHAPTER 3: AS HUMAN PERFORMANCE TAKES CENTER STAGE, ARE TRADITIONAL PRODUCTIVITY METRICS ENOUGH?*

08.....*CHAPTER 4: ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL: HOW MICROCULTURES HELP WORKERS AND ORGANIZATIONS THRIVE*

09.....*CHAPTER 5: WHAT DO ORGANIZATIONS NEED MOST IN A DISRUPTED, BOUNDARYLESS AGE? MORE IMAGINATION*

10.....*CHAPTER 6: FROM FUNCTION TO DISCIPLINE: THE RISE OF BOUNDARYLESS HR*

11.....*CHAPTER 7: HOW PLAY AND EXPERIMENTATION IN DIGITAL PLAYGROUNDS CAN DRIVE HUMAN PERFORMANCE*

12.....*CHAPTER 8: EVOLVING LEADERSHIP TO DRIVE HUMAN PERFORMANCE*

13.....*REFERENCES*

14.....*CONTACTS*

# 2024 GLOBAL HUMAN CAPITAL TRENDS OVERVIEW

## 1. TRUST DOES NOT EQUAL TRANSPARENCY

Greater transparency can help organizations build trust or erode it. How can leaders build a framework to ensure transparency is helping and not hindering?

## 2. HUMAN SUSTAINABILITY

For true sustainability, organizations must create value for all people connected with them to create better outcomes for both businesses and humanity.

## 3. MOVING BEYOND PRODUCTIVITY

Traditional productivity metrics are becoming obsolete in an era of human-centered work. Workplace data can help organizations make the shift to measuring human performance.

## 4. WORKPLACE MICROCULTURES

Embracing different ways of working for different work groups, rather than enforcing a top-down centralized culture, fosters human sustainability and stronger business outcomes.

## 5. IMAGINATION DEFICIT

Accelerating technology innovation and several other disruptions, offer tremendous opportunity. Organizations that are able to scale curiosity and empathy will be best prepared to explore a better future for themselves and their workers.

## 6. BOUNDARYLESS HR

The future of work demands that the HR Department continues to evolve from a siloed function to a boundaryless discipline integrated with the people, business, and the communities it serves.

## 7. DIGITAL PLAYGROUND

Technology is accelerating the evolution of the relationship between workers and organizations. Digital tools can provide safe, accessible spaces for workers and organizations to experiment and play.

## 8. LEADERSHIP

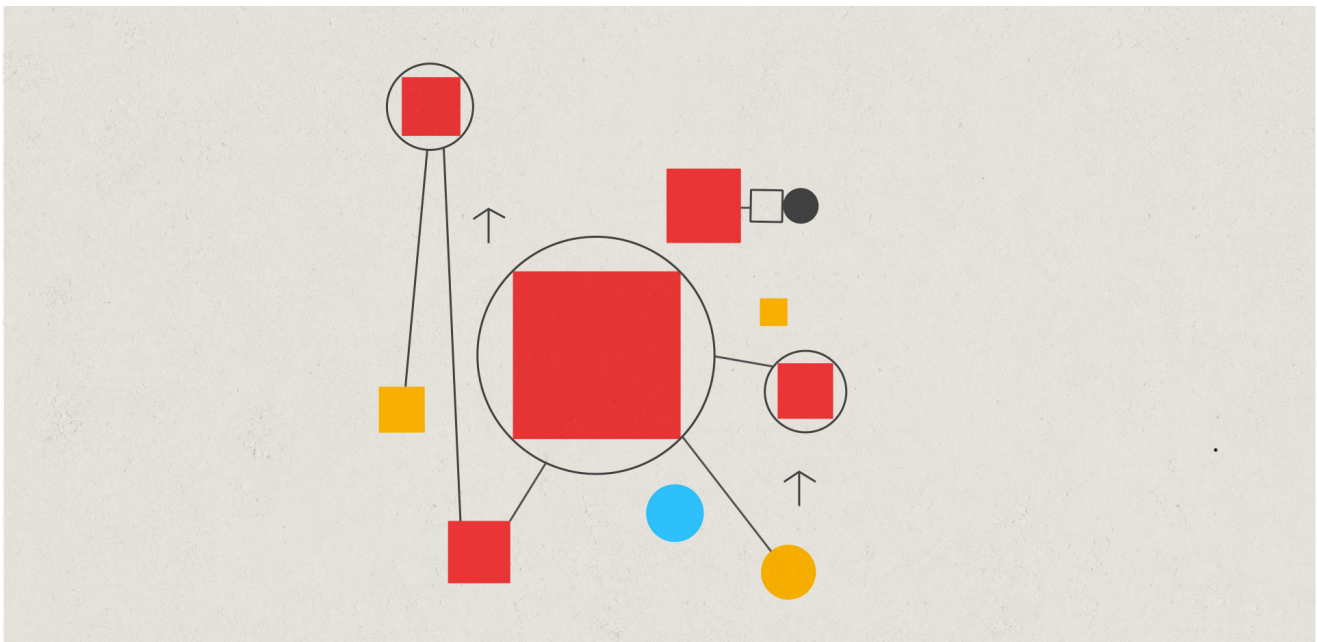
Leaders can help their organizations successfully embrace a more human way of working by examining and evolving their own mindsets in new ways of leadership.

# RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

This report extension will focus on the survey respondents located in the Netherlands and Belgium. Across the selected region, the survey captured 460 individual responses, with a wide variety of industries the respondents' organizations and/or occupations belong to (Deloitte, 2024). Across the industries the majority of respondents indicate to work in *Government & Public Services* and *Professional Services* each at 17%, followed by the *Consumer Industry* at 14.8% (Deloitte, 2024).

Reflecting on the organization size, ranging from *'Less than 500 employees'* to *'Over 50,000 employees'*, over a third of respondents (34.8%) indicated a size of *'Less than 500 employees'* (Deloitte, 2024). The next large cluster of just above 30% indicated their organization size as *'1,001-10,000 employees'*, followed by 12.8% with a size of *'501-1,000 employees'* (Deloitte, 2024).

Finally, the majority of respondents (almost 60%) showed that their job function lies outside of Human Resources and the organizational level of respondents that prevailed was *'Individual Contributor or equivalent'* at 52% (Deloitte, 2024). Next dominating organization levels were *'Manager or equivalent'* at 17% and *'Director/Senior manager or equivalent'* at 15.7% (Deloitte, 2024).





# CHAPTER 1

## THE TRANSPARENCY PARADOX: COULD LESS BE MORE WHEN IT COMES TO TRUST?

*Greater transparency can help organizations build trust or erode it. How can leaders build a framework to ensure transparency is helping and not hindering?*

Transparency is commonly thought to be a key driver of trust, the idea that more transparency equals more trust has become a truism (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.39). While transparency – defined as an employer using straightforward and plain language to share information, motives, and decisions that matter to workers – is a key dimension of trust, its effect is not that univocal (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.39). Nowadays, transparency is further shaped by the use of digital tooling such as social media, which can be both a gold mine and a land mine (Deloitte Insights, 2024, pp.39-41). If responsibly managed, it can create new opportunities to measure and unlock human performance (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.41). On the other hand, there is a significant potential for misuse – for example, privacy breaches, AI-driven surveillance and efforts to control workers' every move (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.41). Leaders – in collaboration with workers – should consider important questions around what information to make transparent, why, to whom and how (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.41).

Survey respondents across the Netherlands and Belgium found the *transparency paradox* the most important trend of this year's report. A total of 80.4% valued the importance of an increasing focus on trust and transparency in the relationship between workers and organizations for organizational success as either 'very important' or 'of critical importance' (Deloitte, 2024). This statistic aligns closely with the Global findings that highlight the *'The knowing vs. doing gap: Respondents know that navigating the transparency paradox to build trust is important, but few are doing enough to make meaningful progress'*: 88% of respondents recognize the importance, with 52% doing something, and 13% doing great things (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.42). Across the Netherlands and Belgium, 48% of organizations are addressing the issue, while 10% indicate to lead the action, which again aligns with the global findings (Deloitte, 2024). The Global findings further suggest that those bridging the gap are two times more likely to achieve desired business outcomes and 2.4 times more likely to achieve positive human outcomes (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.42).

# CHAPTER 2

## WHEN PEOPLE THRIVE, BUSINESS THRIVES: THE CASE FOR HUMAN SUSTAINABILITY

*For true sustainability, organizations must create value for all people connected with them to create better outcomes for both businesses and humanity.*

We are operating in a human-powered economy (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.11). Organizations have transitioned from an industrial economy to a knowledge economy and more recently to an economy that is powered by the hearts, minds, and essential human traits of people – in short, our humanity (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.11). Human connections drive everything of value to an organization, including revenue, innovation, efficiency, relevance, productivity, and many more (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.11). Yet organizations' current efforts to prioritize these important connections are generally falling short – in part because many organizations are stuck in a legacy mindset that centers on extracting value from people rather than working with them to create better future for organizations and individuals alike (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.11).

To advance on the social dimension of ESG (Environment, Social, and Governance), leaders should reorient their organizations' perspective around the idea of *human sustainability*: the degree to which the organization creates value for people as human beings, leaving them with greater health and well-being, stronger skills and greater employability, good jobs, opportunities for advancement, and heightened connection to purpose (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.11).

When looking at this trend in the geographical context of the Netherlands and Belgium regions, we see that survey respondents are aligned on the importance of human sustainability, ranking this trend as the second most relevant on the list. A total of 57.53% recognize the importance of driving the organizations towards human sustainability, which is less than the global index of 76% (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.12). Moreover, while globally 46% of organizations already make their way forward and 10% making an impact, 32.5% of organizations across the Netherlands and Belgium are expanding their means of addressing the issue and a bit over 10.2% are doing great things (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.12). More indicative global statistics claim that this results in 1.8 times more likeliness of achieving desired business outcomes, and 2.1 times more likeliness of achieving positive human outcomes (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.12).



# CHAPTER 3

## AS HUMAN PERFORMANCE TAKES CENTER STAGE, ARE TRADITIONAL PRODUCTIVITY METRICS ENOUGH?

*In een tijdperk van mensgericht werken raken traditionele productiviteitsmetingen achterhaald. Werkplekgegevens kunnen organisaties helpen de overstap te maken naar het meten van menselijke prestaties.*

Leaders across industries are beginning to recognize the limitations of legacy productivity metrics in the current work environment (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.29). The once clear line that linked individual worker activity (for example, hours worked or calls completed) to tangible outcomes (customer satisfaction or commercial potential of projects) is now blurred and replaced by a complex network of collaborations and a demand for sophisticated skills that aren't easily observed by traditional productivity metrics (Deloitte Insights, 2024, pp.27-29). With new digital technologies providing access to more work and workforce data than ever before, it may seem that shifting to a new system of measurement would be easy to do (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.29). However, there are several potential challenges keeping organizations from expanding their view of performance beyond traditional productivity, including: pressure from external stakeholders, uncertainty about what to measure, productivity paranoia, and lack of visibility into outcomes (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.30).

Across the globe, 74% of respondents recognize the importance of the shift towards non-conventional productivity metrics, with 40% on board taking respective actions and 8% leading their way to reaping the outputs (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.28). In the Netherlands and Belgium region, 55.85% consider the shift important, 37.8% are on the go towards an improved approach and 8.8% are making great progress in doing so (Deloitte, 2024). Research further indicates that 'those who bridge the gap are more likely to unlock human performance': 1.7 times more likeliness of achieving desired business outcomes, and 1.7 times more likeliness of achieving positive human outcomes (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.30).



# CHAPTER 4

## ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL: HOW MICROCULTURES HELP WORKERS AND ORGANIZATIONS THRIVE

*Embracing different ways of working for different work groups, rather than enforcing a top-down centralized culture, fosters human sustainability and stronger business outcomes.*

Many large organizations invest heavily in a single culture that workers fit into – fixed and uniform, articulated and enforced from the C-suite down (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.79). However, rarely culture does play out this way (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.79). This monolithic view of culture is no longer fit for purpose in a world where an increasingly diverse workforce seeks greater autonomy and customized work experiences (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.79). Empowering teams to define and implement their own ways of working, rituals, and norms becomes increasingly important in the new era of human sustainability (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.82). The growing importance of workplace microcultures is being driven by several shifts related to worker preferences, technology, and ways of working, including: hybrid and remote work arrangements, an increasingly diverse workforce, advances in technology, and rising worker agency (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.84). When looking into the future of, leaders may worry that acknowledging and enabling microcultures may cause the organization to lose its identity or focus, however, the opposite is possible with thoughtful use of data, technology, and managers ‘owning’ their respective cultures (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.87). Microcultures can help strike the right balance between control and empowerment (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.87).

Across the globe, 71% of respondents agree on the importance of fostering microcultures, with 45% embracing steps to achieve that and 12% doing great things (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.81). Across the Netherlands and Belgium, close to 56% acknowledge the significance of this trend, with about a third of organizations being on the roadmap towards change and about 17% leading the way (Deloitte, 2024).

# CHAPTER 5

## WHAT DO ORGANIZATIONS NEED MOST IN A DISRUPTED, BOUNDARYLESS AGE? MORE IMAGINATION

*With accelerating technology innovation and other disruptions, comes tremendous opportunity. The organizations that are able to scale curiosity and empathy will be best prepared to explore a better future for themselves and their workers.*

We are living in an age of disruption and possibility : well-known boundaries fall away and new technologies – especially artificial intelligence (AI) - advance at ever faster speeds (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.53). In the current set-up, scaling the efficient execution of processes is becoming less important than the ability to adapt to changing market conditions, which drives new value (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.53). This ability, in turn, depends less on training workers in specific technical skills than on cultivating curiosity and imagination (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.53). While hard skills are important, enduring human capabilities are becoming more relevant than ever, including curiosity, informed agility, resilience, connected teaming, divergent thinking, social and emotional intelligence (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.55).

Globally, 73% of respondents agree on the importance of addressing the imagination deficit, while 37% of those take action and 9% are leading the way (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.54). The Global findings further suggest that those bridging the gap are 1.8 times more likely to achieve desired business outcomes and 1.9 times more likely to achieve positive human outcomes (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.54).

Across the Netherlands and Belgium, about 54% of respondents consider the topic urgent to address, while 48% of organizations take action and 10% advance in their roadmap towards battling the imagination deficit (Deloitte, 2024).

# CHAPTER 6

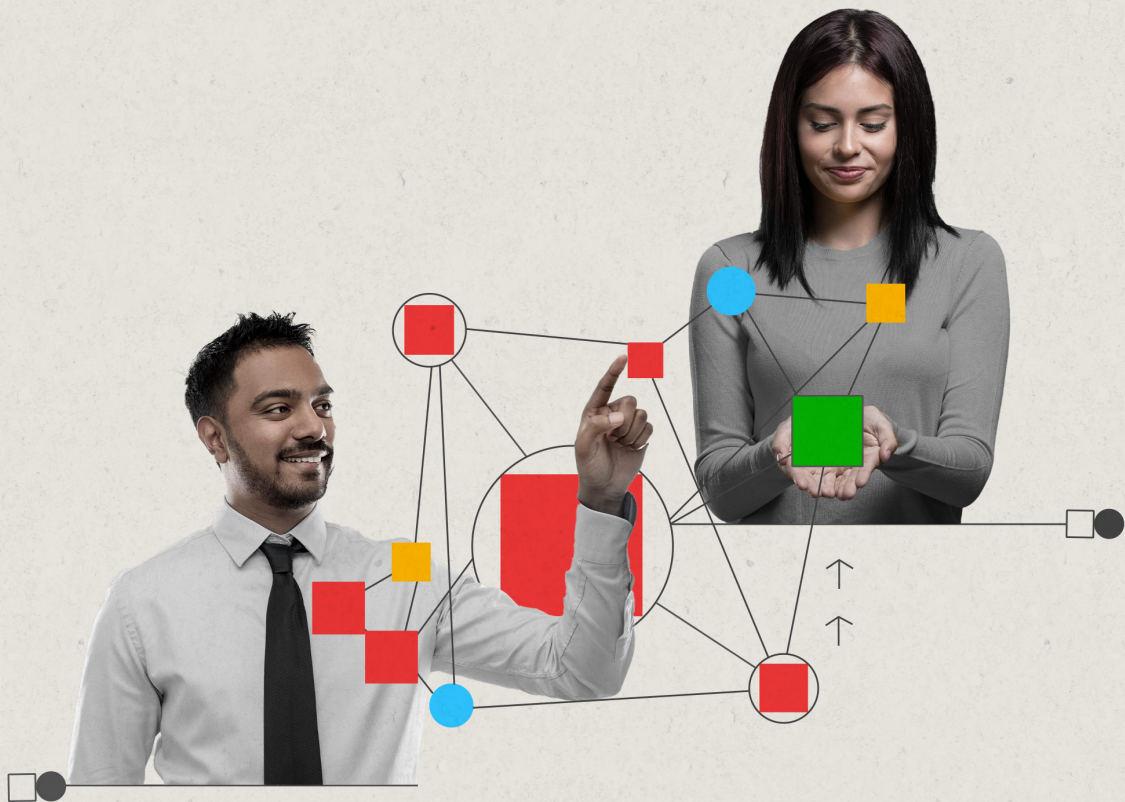
## FROM FUNCTION TO DISCIPLINE: THE RISE OF BOUNDARYLESS HR

*The future of work demands that human resources continue its evolution from a siloed function to a boundaryless discipline integrated with the people, business, and community it serves.*

To meet the new demands of a boundaryless world, HR itself should become boundaryless, shifting from a specialized function that owns most workforce responsibility to a boundaryless discipline (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.91). But what exactly is boundaryless HR? First and foremost it is a mindset shift – supported by the adoption of a different set of practices, skill sets, metrics, technologies, and even in some cases structural changes (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.93). The importance of harnessing the potential of people, as well as that of collaboration across organizational disciplines (functions) can be seen in a number of examples (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.91). Consider how the explosion of human and machine interaction demands close collaboration of HR and IT departments. The focus of HR shifts from improving productivity to unlocking human performance, from improving employee engagement to elevating human sustainability, from managing employment to orchestrating work, driving business transformation and shared outcomes (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.96).

Globally, 72% of survey respondents know that shifting HR to a cross-functional discipline is important, with 41% of organizations already taking some steps towards bridging the gap, and 11% doing great things at the moment (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.92). This in turn leads to 1.6 times increase of likelihood to achieve the desired business outcomes and that of 1.7 to achieve positive human outcomes (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.92).

Across the Netherlands and Belgium, 51% recognize the importance, about 25% of organizations are taking actions necessary for the shift, and almost 12% are leading the way (Deloitte, 2024).



# CHAPTER 7

## HOW PLAY AND EXPERIMENTATION IN DIGITAL PLAYGROUNDS CAN DRIVE HUMAN PERFORMANCE

*Technology is accelerating the evolution of the relationship between worker and organization. Digital tools can provide safe, accessible spaces for workers and organizations to experiment and play.*

Technological advancement, most notably the profusion of technologies powered by generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI) is creating the potential for new ways of working that can help elevate human performance outcomes for both organizations and workers (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.67). To deliver on these outcomes, organizations will need *digital playgrounds* – safe spaces that encourage intentional play and curiosity – to experiment and explore new ways of working (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.67). A digital playground is not a singular place or a virtual platform, rather a mindset and an approach in which technologies are curated with intention and opportunities to use them are democratized (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.69). Safety in this context refers to psychological safety – where individuals do not risk punishment or humiliation for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.69). Considering the effect of digital playgrounds on human performance, the global report highlights that to help organizations succeed, workers should feel like active participants in the evolution of their roles (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.73).

It is crucial to give them a place to explore and play, moreover, humans tend to learn best by practicing, continuous learning, and developing new skills (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.73). Organizations will likely need many digital playgrounds, each having a unique purpose and lifespan (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.75).

Globally, 65% of respondents acknowledge the importance of digital playgrounds, but few are doing enough to make meaningful progress: with 41% taking some action and 10% doing great things (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.68). Important to note that those bridging the knowing versus doing gap increase the likelihood of achieving desired business outcomes by 1.6 times and that of positive human outcomes also by 1.6 times (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.68). Across the Netherlands and Belgium, close to 47% face the need, a third is implementing the change, and 12% achieve new heights (Deloitte, 2024).

# CHAPTER 8

## EVOLVING LEADERSHIP TO DRIVE HUMAN PERFORMANCE

*Leaders can help their organizations successfully embrace a more human way of working by examining and evolving their own mindsets in new ways.*

Work has never been more digital. Organizations have access to more work and workforce data than ever before, paired with a growing suite of technology, tools and intelligence – a combination that promises to elevate business and human outcomes (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.105). In the midst of this transformation, an unexpected shift is taking place: many leaders and workers focus to not only make work better for humans, but also creating value for workers and every other human being that the organization impacts (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.105). It is clear from the other trends of this report that while technology plays a role, human outcomes and capabilities are the key drivers behind innovation and organizational growth (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.105). It is also clear that this new focus on human performance is not a trade-off (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.105).

To achieve desired human and business outcomes, leaders should consider leaning into more integrated, cross-functional leadership, examining and evolving their own mindsets in ways that may not be comfortable or familiar (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.106). It will likely require new and different measures of leadership accountability across the organization (Deloitte Insights, 2024, p.106).

The Global Human Capital Trends Report of 2024 provides guidance on how to act on each of the eight trends it identifies and what organizations should avoid across the following topics: defining what is important, governance, and trust and psychological safety (Deloitte Insights, 2024, pp.108-111).



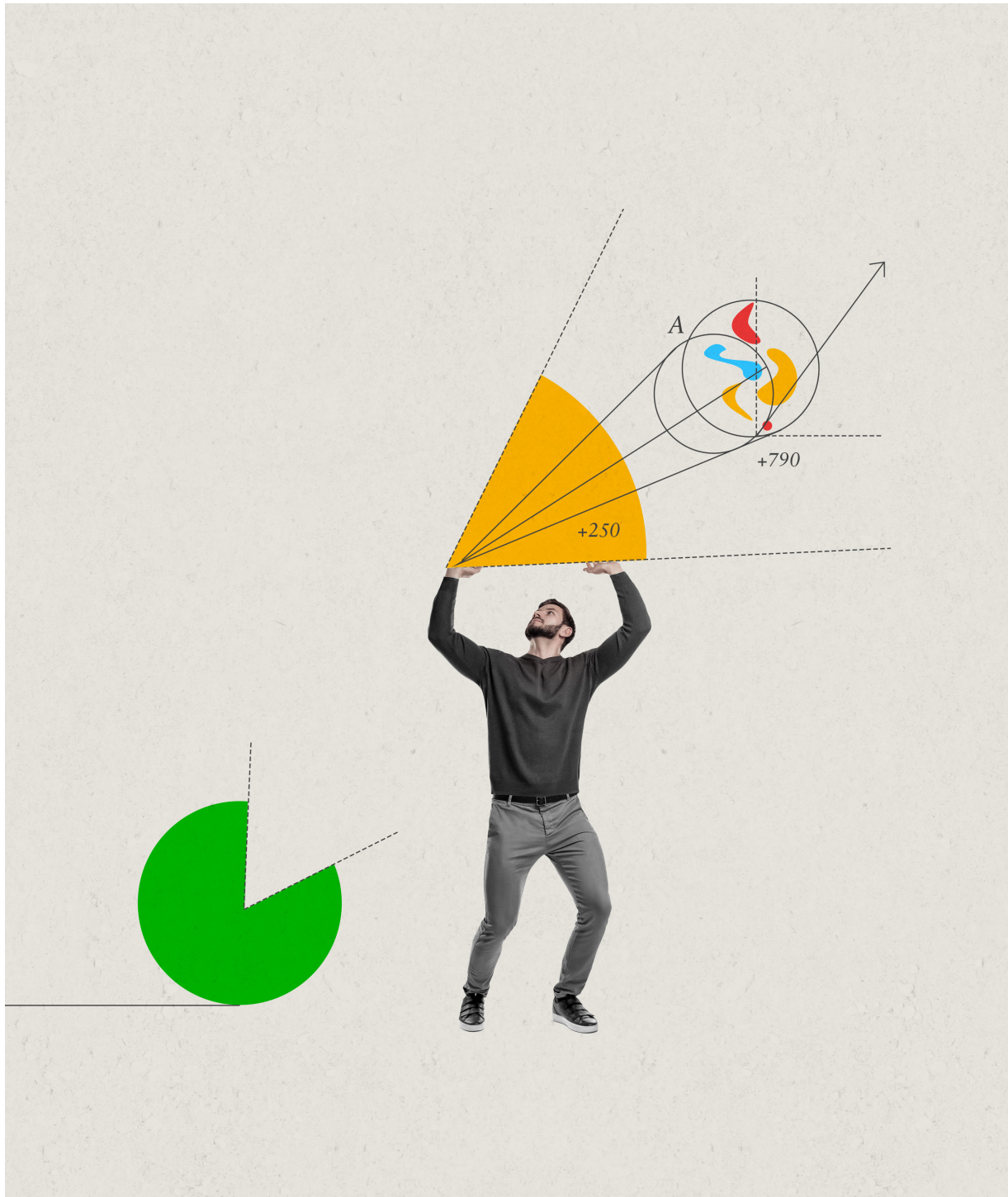
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