Leading at the front(line):
Diversity, equity, and inclusion imperatives

Key findings from the 2022 Diversity, equity, and inclusion amongst frontline workers study
August 2022
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Companies in the consumer sector have weathered a plethora of pandemic-related challenges, including the “Great Resignation,” which has resulted in historic levels of employee turnover, especially with respect to frontline workers.¹ Often comprised of a group of individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences, frontline workers play a vital role in driving organizational productivity and customer engagement. However, there has been relatively limited primary research conducted to date that focuses on frontline staff and their experience of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) challenges.

As such, Deloitte has embarked on a research program designed to identify specific barriers and improvement opportunities for companies looking to create more equitable and inclusive experiences for frontline workers. Among other tangible benefits, making DEI “real” for the front line can unlock an individual’s full potential to create compelling experiences for customers, driving critical business outcomes, including satisfaction and loyalty.

Efforts to promote and sustain DEI initiatives at all levels of an organization also represent a key opportunity for businesses to differentiate themselves in a hypercompetitive market when it comes to attracting and retaining frontline talent.

The goal of this research effort is to help consumer companies engage in a holistic conversation about building more equitable and inclusive workplaces for all frontline employees.

ABOUT THE STUDY

Deloitte surveyed over 3,000 frontline workers in the United States between April 6 and April 21, 2022. The data gathered represents the opinions of workers across a variety of consumer industries, including automotive, consumer products, retail, travel, food service, and hospitality.

¹ Christine Trodella, “It’s time for the C-suite to prioritize frontline workers—or risk losing nearly half of their workforce,” Fortune, March 29, 2022.
Executive summary

**KEY FINDINGS**

Only one-third of frontline workers (34%) feel they can always be their authentic selves at work.

Only 64% of frontline workers feel a sense of belonging at their company.

32% of frontline workers have felt discriminated against by a coworker.

Nearly a quarter of women and a third of Black frontline workers report having been discriminated against by either a customer or coworker, on the basis of their gender and race/ethnicity, respectively. Only half of Black and Hispanic workers report having not been the victim of some form of discrimination.

Only 56% of frontline workers feel their company provides effective sponsorship whereby established leaders advocate for more junior employees.

Less than a third (31%) of frontline workers feel their company is very accepting of family and/or personal commitments.

Only 38% of frontline workers think their company’s DEI initiatives are truly focused on creating a better workplace for all.

The retail sector significantly lags other consumer sectors, including automotive, consumer products, and travel/hospitality, when it comes to the percentage of frontline workers who are satisfied with their job, supervisors, and their company’s senior management team.

The path to career advancement within a company is clearer for more men (92%) than women (85%).

Less than half of women (47%) feel their company provides effective sponsorship opportunities compared to nearly two-thirds of men (64%).

Despite having a similar level of access to necessary tools (74% of women vs. 78% of men), noticeably fewer women report having access to training (68% vs. 78%) or clear lines of communication to obtain timely feedback or share ideas (63% vs. 74%), signaling an important area for improvement to support the career progression of female workers on the front line.
Employee satisfaction and trust
Eight in 10 frontline workers are satisfied with their jobs. However, they are significantly less satisfied with their company’s senior leadership team. Scores also deteriorate as the size of the company increases, making it difficult for frontline workers to buy into cultural changes that flow from the top.

**Percentage of workers who are satisfied/very satisfied with their ...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By company size (# of employees)</th>
<th>250-999</th>
<th>1,000-4,999</th>
<th>5,000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor or manager</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company’s senior management team</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**By consumer industry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Automotive</th>
<th>Consumer products</th>
<th>Transportation, travel &amp; hospitality</th>
<th>Retail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor or manager</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company’s senior management team</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Prefer not to answer responses not considered | Q27. How satisfied are you with the following? | Sample size: N = 2,805.
Frontline workers find the most pride in doing interesting work, but an emphasis on having a strong relationship with coworkers and a sense of being valued point to the need for a robust company culture rooted in DEI.

**Percentage of workers who find the most pride at work from ...**

- Doing interesting work that gives me a sense of accomplishment: 24%
- Having a strong relationship with my coworkers: 19%
- Receiving a paycheck: 17%
- Being valued: 17%
- Feeling that I am making a difference: 11%
- Helping my company to excel and grow: 10%
- I don't receive any pride from work: 2%

Notes: Q29. I find the most pride at work from the following... | Sample size: N = 3,005.
Seven in 10 frontline employees find their work challenging and interesting. However, this is only one facet of creating employee engagement, and not all consumer industries are equal as the retail sector lags, perhaps contributing to relatively lower employee satisfaction scores in that sector.

Notes: Q18. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement, “I find my day-to-day work challenging and interesting”? | Sample size: N = 3,005.
Satisfaction scores also align with the level of trust that frontline workers feel for different groups within their organization—a key opportunity for companies to leverage in order to make positive change. Unsurprisingly, trust diminishes as the organizational distance from the employee increases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of trust frontline workers place in ...</th>
<th>By company size (# of employees)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>250 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My coworkers/team</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My manager</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership at my company (i.e., C-suite/executives)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Distrust includes “highly distrust” or “distrust”; trust includes “highly trust” or “trust”; prefer not to answer responses not considered. Small/medium companies = 250–999 employees, large companies = 1,000–4,999 employees, very large companies = 5,000 or more employees. | Q13. Each of us trusts various people to different extents. How much do you trust the following people? | Sample size: N = 2,988.
**Diversity and values**

Only 68% believe their leaders share their values, making it challenging for company management to connect with frontline workers to better understand their lived experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of workers who agree or disagree that ...</th>
<th>% agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My immediate team reflects diverse perspectives</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My company's leadership team reflects diverse backgrounds</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater diversity in my company has a positive impact on my work experience</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My company's leadership team shares my values</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater diversity in my company has a negative impact on my work experience</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Prefer not to answer responses not considered | Q26. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | Sample size: N = 2,986.
Satisfaction and trust drivers

Three-quarters of frontline workers agree or somewhat agree that their employer is empathetic, straightforward, meets commitments, and provides a good work experience, but only around one in 10 strongly agree with these statements, signaling room for improvement.

Notes: Prefer not to answer responses not considered  |  Q15. Do you agree or disagree with the following?  |  Sample size: N = 3,005.
However, only a third of frontline workers feel they can always be their authentic selves at work and only a quarter feel a sense of belonging, which may lead them to employ “covering” techniques to fit in, diminishing their ability to bring their full set of talents and enthusiasm to the workplace.

Notes: Q28. I can be my authentic self (i.e., all of who I want to be) at work; Q36. How often do you feel a sense of belonging at your company? | Sample size: N = 3,005.
One-third of frontline workers report having been discriminated against by coworkers or customers. Nearly a third did not feel supported by another colleague when they were discriminated against by a coworker (rising to four in 10 at companies with at least 5,000 employees).

### Percentage of workers who felt discriminated against (by customer/coworker) based on ...

- **Gender**: 14% (Co-worker), 19% (Customer)
- **Race**: 10% (Co-worker), 16% (Customer)
- **Age**: 14% (Co-worker), 15% (Customer)
- **Sexual orientation**: 6% (Co-worker), 7% (Customer)
- **Disability**: 6% (Co-worker), 4% (Customer)
- **Other**: 3% (Co-worker), 2% (Customer)
- **No discrimination**: 68% (Co-worker), 60% (Customer)

### Percentage of workers supported by another colleague when they felt discriminated against by a coworker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By company size (# of employees)</th>
<th>Study avg.</th>
<th>250-999</th>
<th>1,000-4,999</th>
<th>5,000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** Responses do not add to 100% as it is a multiselect question. Q37. Have you ever felt discriminated against by a coworker based on one or more of the following (select all that apply)? Q38. Have you ever felt discriminated against by a customer based on one or more of the following (select all that apply)? Q39. Did you feel supported by another colleague (i.e., an ally) in that moment? Sample size: N = 3,005 (Q37); 2,257 (Q38); 970 (Q39).
Ethnicity discrimination

Nearly a quarter of women and a third of Black frontline workers report having been discriminated against by either a customer or coworker, on the basis of their gender and race/ethnicity, respectively. Only half of Black and Hispanic workers report having *not* been the victim of some form of discrimination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Q37. Have you ever felt discriminated against by a coworker based on one or more of the following (select all that apply); Q38. Have you ever felt discriminated against by a customer based on one or more of the following (select all that apply) | Sample size: N = 3,005 (overall); 868 (18–34); 1,643 (35–54); 494 (55 and above); 1,272 (women); 1,704 (men); 81 (Asian/Pacific Islander); 300 (Black/African American); 324 (Hispanic/LatinX); 2,217 (White/Caucasian).
Retention and advocacy
Career plans

Nearly four in 10 frontline workers want to shift their role or move into management at their current company. However, seeing a clear path to achieve these career goals can be a challenge for some (particularly women).

Plan for role/career

- I would like to stay in my current job: 39%
- I would like to move into management/senior management at my company: 23%
- I would like to move into a different role at my company: 16%
- I would like to find a different role in a different industry: 8%
- I would like to work in a similar role for a different company: 5%
- I would like to work in a similar role in a different industry: 2%
- I would like to start my own business: 5%
- Other: 1%

Percentage of workers who see a path to reach their goals within their current company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study avg.</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Already achieved</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

90% of frontline employees of companies with 250–999 workers say they can see a path to achieve their career goals with their current employer (including those people that would like to stay in their current role). This percentage drops to 82% of frontline employees at companies with an overall workforce of 1,000–4,999 individuals, and 74% among workers at very large companies (5,000 employees or more).

Notes: Q19. What is your plan for your role/career? | Sample size: N = 3,005 | Q21. Do you see a path to get to your goal(s) within your current company? | Sample size: N = 2,332.
A significantly lower percentage of younger frontline workers want to stay in their current job and a higher proportion of them would like to find a different role in another industry altogether, highlighting the key challenge of retaining talent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan for role/career</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like to stay in my current job</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to move into management/senior management at my company</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to move into a different role at my company</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to find a different role in a different industry</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to work in a similar role for a different company</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to work in a similar role in a different industry</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to start my own business</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Q19. What is your plan for your role/career? | Sample size: N = 3,005 (overall); 868 (18–34); 1,643 (35-54); 494 (55 and above); 1,272 (women); 1,704 (men); 81 (Asian/Pacific Islander); 300 (Black/African American); 324 (Hispanic/LatinX); 2,217 (White/Caucasian).
**Critical career objectives**

Competitive pay and work/life balance are the most critical career objectives for frontline workers, but a focus on “working with great people” signals the importance of creating better work environments for all employees.

**Most important career objectives**

- Competitive income/pay: 57%
- Work life balance: 57%
- Attractive benefits: 50%
- Working with great people: 50%
- Flexible schedule: 47%
- Career progression opportunities: 37%
- Learning and development opportunities: 36%
- Opportunities for challenging and interesting responsibilities: 35%
- Flexible work location: 31%
- Company culture: 31%
- Opportunity to work at a “household name” company: 13%

Notes: Responses do not add to 100% as it is a multiselect question. | Q22. Thinking about your career in general, which of the following objectives are most important to you? (please select all that apply) | Sample size: N = 3,005.
Below the surface, both women and Asian workers are comparatively more focused on income and benefits, work/life balance, and the quality of their relationships with coworkers, which may inform a more nuanced strategy when creating talent acquisition and retention programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most important career objectives</th>
<th>Study avg.</th>
<th>18–34</th>
<th>35–54</th>
<th>55+</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Black/African American</th>
<th>Hispanic/LatinX</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitive income/pay</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/life balance</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive benefits</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with great people</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible schedule</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career progression opportunities</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and development opportunities</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for challenging and interesting responsibilities</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work location</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company culture</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to work at a “household name” company</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Q22. Thinking about your career in general, which of the following objectives are most important to you? (Please select all that apply) | Sample size: N = 3,005 (overall); 868 (18–34); 1,643 (35–54); 494 (55 and above); 1,272 (women); 1,704 (men); 81 (Asian/Pacific Islander); 300 (Black/African American); 324 (Hispanic/LatinX); 2,217 (White/Caucasian).
Aside from compensation, a lack of work/life balance and poor working relationships are among the top issues that would cause frontline workers to leave their industry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top issues that would cause you to leave your industry</th>
<th>18-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>55 and above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low income/pay</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of work/life balance</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor working relationships</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of promotion opportunities</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of competitive benefits</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of flexible schedule options</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition/acknowledgement</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment/discrimination</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual harassment</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to commute to work</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of challenging or interesting assignments</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of diversity and inclusion in the workforce</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of remote work location/telecommuting</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of mentors</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Younger workers are relatively more likely to leave for lack of career growth while poor working relationships make older workers leave.

Notes: Responses do not add to 100% as it is a multiselect question. | Q24. In your opinion, what are the top issues that would cause you to consider leaving your industry? (please select all that apply) | Sample size: N = 3,005 (overall); 868 (18–34); 1,643 (35–54); 494 (55 and above).
Industry withdrawal

Issues related to pay, quality of working relationships, discrimination, and sexual harassment are significantly more likely to drive women to leave their industry than men.

Top issues that would cause you to leave your industry

- **Low income/pay**
  - Women: 58%
  - Men: 37%

- **Lack of work-life balance**
  - Women: 39%
  - Men: 32%

- **Poor working relationships**
  - Women: 36%
  - Men: 23%

- **Harassment/discrimination**
  - Women: 34%
  - Men: 18%

- **Lack of recognition/acknowledgement**
  - Women: 32%
  - Men: 21%

- **Lack of promotion opportunities**
  - Women: 31%
  - Men: 27%

- **Lack of flexible schedule options**
  - Women: 31%
  - Men: 21%

- **Sexual harassment**
  - Women: 31%
  - Men: 12%

- **Lack of competitive benefits**
  - Women: 30%
  - Men: 27%

- **Hard to commute to work**
  - Women: 19%
  - Men: 16%

- **Lack of diversity and inclusion in the workforce**
  - Women: 17%
  - Men: 15%

- **Lack of remote work location/telecommuting**
  - Women: 17%
  - Men: 13%

- **Lack of challenging or interesting assignments**
  - Women: 16%
  - Men: 17%

- **Lack of mentors**
  - Women: 12%
  - Men: 12%

**Key gender difference**

Notes: Responses do not add to 100% as it is a multiselect question. Nonbinary/nongender conforming responses not shown (insufficient sample size). | Q24. In your opinion, what are the top issues that would cause you to consider leaving your industry? (please select all that apply) | Sample size: N = 1,272 (women); 1,704 (men).
Less than a third of frontline workers think their company is very accepting of family commitments, potentially contributing to a lack of work/life balance and subsequent employee churn.

Notes: Q50. How accepting is your company of family/personal commitments? | Sample size: N = 3,005.
Charting a path forward
Only 38% of frontline workers think their company's DEI initiatives are truly focused on creating a better workplace for all, while a quarter think these efforts are more about looking good, clearly signaling a need for improvement across consumer industries.

Notes: Q55. Which best represents your company's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion? | Sample size: N = 3,005.
Only half of frontline workers think their company provides effective sponsorship programs, pinpointing a critical miss to offer tangible career advancement support for historically marginalized people.

Percentage of workers who agree that their company effectively provides ...

- Tools to do my job (including any physical tools and/or software/technology that is necessary to complete job functions): 76%
- Training to ensure I know how to use those tools: 73%
- Mentorship (i.e., when an experienced employee provides guidance to an individual with less experience to raise the potential for his/her/their future career goals and success): 70%
- Clear lines of communication to share ideas and feedback: 69%
- Objective and actionable feedback in a timely manner: 69%
- Professional development opportunities (i.e., exposure to/information about job/career opportunities within my industry and sector): 66%
- Sponsorship (i.e., an established leader uses their influence to advocate for visibility and promotions for a more junior employee): 56%

Notes: Q47. To what extent do you agree your company effectively provides you with the following? | Sample size: N = 2,986.
Sponsorship vs. mentorship

Sponsorship opportunities are not geared to all frontline workers equally as less than half of women give their company a passing grade on this front, compared to nearly two-thirds of men.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of consumers who agree that their company effectively provides...</th>
<th>Study avg.</th>
<th>18–34</th>
<th>35–54</th>
<th>55+</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Black/African American</th>
<th>Hispanic/LatinX</th>
<th>White</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools to do my job</td>
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<td>77%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>69%</td>
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<td>82%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training to ensure I know how to use those tools</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<td>Clear lines of communication to share ideas and feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective and actionable feedback in a timely manner</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<td>Professional development opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
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<td>47%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Q47. To what extent do you agree your company effectively provides you with the following? | Sample size: N = 857 (18–34); 1,636 (35–54); 491 (55+); 1,270 (women); 1,689 (men); 79 (Asian/Pacific Islander); 296 (Black/African American); 319 (Hispanic/LatinX); 2,195 (White/Caucasian).
Where are consumer companies falling short when it comes to implementing effective DEI programs for frontline workers?

Employee satisfaction scores and trust in leadership deteriorate as the size of company increases, making it difficult for frontline workers to buy into changes in corporate culture that flow from the top of the organization.

Frontline workers who don’t feel they can be their authentic selves at work may feel compelled to employ “covering” techniques as a coping mechanism to fit in, which may impede their ability to bring their full talent to the workplace and negatively impact the customer experiences they create.

One-third of frontline workers have been discriminated against by a coworker and nearly a third of those individuals did not feel supported by another colleague in that moment (rising to four in 10 people who work at companies with at least 5,000 employees).

Only 28% of younger frontline workers want to stay in their current job and another 30% would like to leave their current company, highlighting the key challenge of retaining frontline talent.

Aside from compensation, a lack of work/life balance and poor working relationships are among the top issues that would cause frontline workers to leave their industry.

Only 38% of frontline workers think their company’s DEI initiatives are truly focused on creating a better workplace for all, while a quarter think these efforts are more about looking good, clearly signaling a need for improvement across consumer industries.

Only half of frontline workers think their company provides effective sponsorship programs, pinpointing a critical miss to offer tangible career advancement support for historically marginalized people.
As consumer companies struggle to meet a long list of challenges, more can be done to promote and sustain DEI at all levels of an organization to provide a compelling proposition when it comes to attracting and retaining frontline talent.

Here are a few things to consider:

1. Make DEI come alive for all workers
   DEI programs and initiatives designed at the corporate level may not be flowing down to workers on the frontline. Build a DEI program specifically with the needs of frontline staff in mind and engage them throughout the design.

2. Focus on sponsorship vs. mentorship
   Move beyond a focus on mentorship programs to have senior leaders engage in more impactful sponsorship behavior to actively support the career progression of diverse employees on the frontline.

3. Recognize and align to organizational differences
   Equip field managers to activate and drive DEI at the regional and individual business unit level of the company to account for organizational differences that can affect critical outcomes.

4. Live the DEI mission
   Align the lived experience among frontline employees with external messaging around DEI to build trust with the company’s workforce. This can lead to better employee engagement, support productivity gains, and help create more compelling customer experiences.

5. Elevate DEI accountability
   Company leadership should communicate DEI as a priority and shared responsibility for all departments in the organization (i.e., send a clear signal DEI is more than simply an HR issue by tying performance management to DEI goals).
As companies strive to better understand the lived experience of their frontline staff, more focus could be placed on the following eight key relationships that affect how a person feels throughout their journey with an organization.
One of the first steps consumer companies can take is to conduct a self-assessment of performance on DEI to set a baseline understanding of current positioning and establish a roadmap for improvement.

The **COMPLIANT** organization is largely focused on risk mitigation, with a basic understanding of diversity (representation), and does not have a DEI strategy.

“**What do we have to do to stay out of trouble?**”

The **EMERGENT** organization has incorporated diversity and inclusion inconsistently throughout the organization. DEI strategy exists but is not tied to strategic outcomes.

“**What are the most immediate areas to promote diversity and inclusion within the walls of my organization?**”

The **EMBRACING** organization has a diverse mix of employees with differences in visible and invisible identities. DEI strategy is linked to business strategy, with preliminary efforts to optimize its diversity and advance equitable outcomes.

“**How do we design for the unique needs of our intersectional workforce?**”

The **INTEGRATED** organization has begun to embed equitable practices throughout its business with intentional focus. Diversity is represented broadly throughout the organization and in key leadership positions.

“**How can we embed and drive equity in all of our behaviors, systems, policies, and processes?**”

The **EQUITABLE** organization leverages diverse backgrounds, capabilities, viewpoints, etc. to drive business results and value, and monitors key indicators to understand and correct for inequitable outcomes. Employees and leaders feel like diversity, leveraged through inclusion, is integral to business success.

“**How can we drive value from diversity, equity, and inclusion internally?**”
Deloitte’s DEI eminence

Deloitte’s DEI solutions are backed by research and published thought leadership. Our select publications help organizations understand what DEI means today, how it impacts business outcomes, and what leadership behaviors can help to unleash employee and business potential.

The Inclusion Imperative for Boards
Management teams—their efforts often led by chief diversity, inclusion, or human resources officers—have started to recognize that focusing on diversity without also focusing on inclusion is not a winning strategy. This paper explores the role of the board of directors in building an inclusive enterprise.

Published: Apr 2019 | Read more

The Equity Imperative
Challenge the status quo. Transform long-held beliefs and behaviors. Build a more equitable future, together. Businesses can help lead the way toward racial equity and our perspective can help you drive the change.

Published: Feb 2021 | Read more

Activating Health Equity: A moral imperative calling for business solutions
Disparities in health outcomes should not, and do not have to, be driven by racism and bias. Here’s what life sciences and health care organizations can do to advance equity in the pursuit of health and well-being for all.

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Government’s equity imperative
Inequity and bias impacting the use and delivery of federal services is a systemic problem requiring a systemic response. To build an equitable future, government leaders should address inequities across all parts of their organizations and beyond.

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Ethical technology and trust
Those companies that develop an ethical technology mindset—demonstrating a commitment to ethical decision-making and promoting a culture that supports it—have an opportunity to earn the trust of their stakeholders.

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Building trust in DEI
Sincere commitment and collaborative action can be instrumental to garnering trust from stakeholders and progressing toward more equitable outcomes.

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