



Getting the Best from your Employees

Understanding Career Motivations to Drive Better Performance

About this Insight Paper

StepStone recently carried out an online survey of 3,000 job-seekers drawn from the membership of StepStone's European job boards in Germany, Austria, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, France, Belgium and Italy. Data from UK job-seekers was drawn from a YouGov poll of 2,000 adults over the age of 18.

The research was conducted to ascertain how people are working, how they see their working lives progressing and just what it is that motivates them in the workplace. The results are striking, revealing a highly diverse set of employee groups, each with its own distinct concerns and motivations, and each requiring a different approach from employers wishing to attract, retain and develop the very best talent.

Executive Summary

Today's senior leaders are under intense pressure to re-examine their workforce and understand the impact of talent on the bottom line. Now more than ever following recessionary cut-backs, employers need to get the maximum benefit from their remaining employees. To achieve this, management needs to understand that while the requirements of their business have been changing, so have the needs of their employees.

Many businesses are facing the risk of their strategies being at odds with their employees' goals. One way to circumvent this situation is for Senior Managers to devise their strategies according to their employee profiles. The one-size-fits-all approach to resourcing and development has now become as outmoded as the 'job for life'. Instead, management's new approach needs to be as sophisticated and diverse as the people they seek to recruit and retain.

To help Senior Managers and their HR teams understand where this focus needs to be, StepStone conducted a series of surveys addressing how people across Europe are working, how they see their futures progressing, and what motivates them in the workplace. The results reveal a highly diverse set of employee groups, each with its own distinct concerns and motivations and each requiring an entirely different approach from employers wishing to attract, retain and develop the very best talent.

Based on these findings, this paper seeks to:

- Educate employers on what to ask of whom in order to make the most of their talent, fulfill the business' needs and improve retention and profits.
- Help management and their HR teams to identify and benefit from the cooperation and flexibility their employees are ready to give.

Win-Win Employment

With much of the corporate world having undergone major change in the past year, the focus is now starting to shift towards creating healthier businesses to support a long-term recovery. The problem is that many people are left feeling very tired and are now seriously revising their longer-term work and life plans.

As employers are assessing budgets, succession and retention issues, their employees are worried about what they perceive as the coin-toss between redundancy or a doubled workload. Some are simply treading water until they feel it is safe to make a job move when the economy stabilises, which makes employee engagement a matter of priority - now.

The potential loss of talent when the market picks up - combined with the past year's job losses - could leave organisations with a large number of open positions and knowledge gaps. Businesses are looking to strengthen their overall structure for both the short and the long-term battle, but these would-be losses would in fact have the opposite effect.

Now rewind...

Would it not be an astute move for Senior Managers and their HR teams to pre-empt this retention quandary by embracing employees' needs from the start? By determining what drives different employees, understanding their top priorities, and applying their specific contributions to the business, employers can create a win-win situation across the board.

This is at once an admirable, fundamental and utterly attainable concept. Everybody knows that forcing square pegs into round holes is fruitless. The far more productive approach is to match the peg to the relevant gap. You are likely to know the shape of your business needs at this stage, but how clear are you on the shape of your employees' needs?



Today's Demographics

StepStone recently conducted a survey of 3,000 job seekers via their European job boards in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, France, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Italy. In addition to this, data from UK job seekers was drawn from a YouGov poll of 2,000 adults over the age of 18.

The results show a distinct difference in priorities and attitudes in people as they grow and move through their careers. Each category, and indeed each individual within that group, also presents a unique contribution to the business, and employers stand to benefit from this if only they know where to look and what they are looking for.

Let's look at the five groups that emerged from the research:

- Cash Chasers
- Ladder Climbers
- Bread Winners
- Quality of Lifers
- Flexibility Seekers

The terms may be familiar, but what do these profiles mean today? We'll look at that in a moment, but first consider this:

Mike joined his company about 18 months ago in the Communications Department. In his international role as a B2B Web Marketing Manager, he is mainly responsible for website analytics, search engine optimisation, day-to-day maintenance of the company website and managing online campaigns.

Mike is in his early 30s and has specialist knowledge and previous experience from several other blue chip companies. He has a personal passion for Social Networking and strongly believes it plays a vital role in the future success and value contribution of Marketing. His personal goal when joining the company was to further develop his expertise and branch into new innovative areas of Web Marketing, whilst also building up his salary as quickly as possible. He was also open to the idea of working abroad, so had consciously targeted an employer with pan-European presence.

However, from a career standpoint, Mike's manager Eduard has asked him to take on other broader responsibilities to cover the recent drop in headcount, involving unpaid overtime and precious little time for "playing about on Twitter." While an acceptable situation for some, Mike knows his experience and specialist skills will be welcomed by a competitor, and could also command a higher salary. It may be the middle of a recession but he's drafted his resignation letter and has already received call-back interviews for two new jobs. So where did they both go wrong?

Mike is a typical "Cash Chaser" and is willing to make a supreme effort in his job, providing it promotes the lifestyle he desires. Even with an overstretched budget, Eduard could have considered some other options to achieve the coverage needed, whilst playing to the motivational areas Mike is driven by - e.g. an opportunity to take on more workload, but perhaps as part of a relocation; giving him in-house training to further hone his skills and help him build more competencies on the emerging technologies side; developing a pay for performance package based on the extra responsibilities; or paying some limited overtime to set up a corporate Linked In and blog presence, playing to Mike's passion for social networking, whilst also supporting the business.

Mike in turn could have helped the situation by being more proactive. He should have been more open to his manager about his motivations and medium-long term career expectations. He could also have looked at the workload challenges, and cherry picked areas that would have helped the business, whilst playing to his strengths and areas of interest.

This is where it becomes so important for managers to know who is prepared to do what. Many employees are prepared to put in unpaid hours and energy, but a "Cash Chaser" employee often isn't one of them, whereas a "Ladder Climber" may well be. And while the chance of promotion would almost certainly appeal to both Cash Chasers and the Ladder Climbers, the same offer might put an older "Flexibility Seeker" in an uncomfortable dilemma.

So we can see that giving the wrong tasks or offering the wrong rewards to the wrong employees can unwittingly increase a company's retention risk. Yet in contrast, by getting to know people as individuals and finding out what makes them "tick", you can discover the contributions that employees are most willing and able to make. Once you apply this knowledge and reward your employees appropriately, then you have the chance to create a powerful synergy and bond that is hard to break.

Employee Profiles

Cash Chasers:

- Often the youngest members of the workforce
- The group that is most motivated by money
- 50% are unwilling to do unpaid overtime, whereas if paid, 64% will work extra hours to boost their earnings
- 72% have been actively job-seeking in the past year
- Only 8.5% see themselves in the same position in 3-5 years

Cash Chasers are usually relatively new to the company and have yet to build up a sense of loyalty to the organisation's brand or vision. Employees in this group are keen to up their income and are prepared to work unsociable hours to achieve this. Yet, unlike their ladder-climbing colleagues, the majority of them are only prepared to do overtime if it's paid.

Surprisingly, the Cash Chasers' apparent "dash for cash" is not all for fast food and fast cars. From everyone surveyed, this group's intention to retire early was the highest, with 37% planning to retire before 60, which requires financial foresight. Their lowest motivator was corporate social and environmental responsibility, rating at only 8% in the UK, so we could surmise that their much-publicised interest in these matters has currently taken a back seat.

The desire to earn quickly will keep Cash Chasers on the lookout for new opportunities, but don't dismiss their value. Their skills and potential should be closely evaluated, as their ingenuity could lead the business in a lucrative new direction. So be aware of their interests, and keep them engaged.

During hard times, this group's freshness to your business can have its disadvantages. Being amongst the newest in the company, they may be more interested in their own survival than that of the company, and are quick to jump overboard if they feel the ship starting to tilt. Open communication and a clear understanding of their future within the company will help to keep them on board.

Cash Chasers	
High Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money
Low Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stability • Flexible working • Corporate social and environmental responsibility
Contribution:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superior knowledge of social media • Inventive ideas

Figure 1

Ladder Climbers:

- 65% work unpaid overtime to get noticed
- They have higher expectations of promotion than any other group
- If they don't get the recognition they want, they won't stick around
- 60% have been actively looking for work in the past year
- 36% see themselves in a more senior role in the company within 3-5 years

Ladder Climbers seek promotion and prominence. Setting their career sights from the outset, they often manage their careers like a poker player, playing towards their goal with a long-term strategy that maximises both their opportunities and profit.

Working to a solid, often self-planned career path, Ladder Climbers seek recognition and advancement. Whilst they do care about financial rewards, the chance of promotion is what keeps them loyal to their employer, and they are likely to put in the long hours when necessary in order to get ahead.

Be careful, though. Although Ladder Climbers put the work in, they shouldn't be taken for granted. If their career needs are not being met in their current organisation, they won't hang around and will seek other job opportunities. In general, Ladder Climbers prefer to be office bound but some are open to flexible working. They are also less attracted by the appeal of bigger organisations or working abroad than a Cash Chaser.

Ladder Climbers	
High Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion, recognition & reputation • Career plans • Roots and wings (a stable existence and a promising future)
Low Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working abroad
Contribution:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loyalty • Service above and beyond the call

Figure 2

Bread Winners:

- Family oriented
- Strongly interested in money, as the main household earners
- Seek flexible, convenient work that fits into their lives
- Increasingly interested in employers' ethics
- 34% see themselves in the same job and position in 3-5 years

Facing competing demands from work and family, Bread Winners are intent on bringing home the money while also striving to limit work to just one part of their busy lives. With dependents to support, the main motivation for this category is money, although they are now less prepared or able to work unsociable hours to earn more. The other priority equaling their income is convenience and flexibility - both in terms of location and hours - so as to get their work-life balance right.

Bread Winners are far from work-shy, they simply represent the watershed between employees who put in long hours and those seeking greater flexibility. Stability is also key for this group and they are generally committed to their current organisation, especially if they can relate to its ethics. Most expect to remain in the same job or possibly hold a more senior position within the next three to five years.

On the surface, breadwinners might seem reluctant to change, with family considerations steering them away from working abroad. However, this outlook is often based on preconceptions. So if an overseas position seems right for an individual, talk to them and discuss how it could potentially benefit the whole family.

Bread Winners	
High Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money • Stability • Flexible, convenient working
Low Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working abroad • Travel
Contribution:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loyalty • Commitment

Figure 3

Quality of Lifers:

- Flexibility and convenience matter almost as much as money
- Prepared to go freelance
- No longer as prepared to commute
- Only 21% expect to be in a more senior role and 23% see themselves in a different career or sector within 3-5 years

Money is not usually the overriding concern for Quality of Lifers, but takes its place alongside such priorities as making work fit around personal needs and having a convenient workplace. Being able to eradicate the time spent commuting presents a strong appeal at this stage in a Quality of Lifer's career. Their reluctance to sacrifice their lifestyle for the sake of their job also shows in the shrinking amount of unpaid overtime they do.

This group places less importance on promotion than younger groups. Yet even though 64% are still full-time employees, don't assume they have settled in the company for good. An increasing number are considering going freelance to pursue their desire of flexible working. They are also more actively looking for work elsewhere than their Bread Winner colleagues.

One strong retaining factor for a Quality of Lifer is a company's employer brand. If their organisation has a brand and code of ethics they can identify with, they will be less inclined to pursue a solo career.

Quality of Lifers	
High Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work life balance • Convenient workplace • Family commitments • Flexible working and quality of life
Low Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money • Promotion
Contribution:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability • Experience

Figure 4

Flexibility Seekers:

- Less interested in promotion and more interested in flexibility than any other group
- Put family commitments before career
- Prefer not to work full-time in the office
- Interested in sabbaticals, travel and social responsibility
- Most hope to have retired within 3-5 years

Flexibility Seekers, whose pensions have been eroded by current economic conditions, are postponing their retirement to earn extra money. Although finances motivate their need to continue working, their driving priorities will be to fit their job around their original retirement plans.

The desire to work from home, even for those in full-time employment, is stronger than for any other group. Flexibility Seekers are also interested in sabbaticals and travel opportunities as they seek to broaden their experience. In addition, their employer’s social and environmental activities, as well as its employer brand, bear a significant importance to this group.

Employers need to realise that this is still a relatively untapped source of talent. Older workers have superior experience and interpersonal skills, making them top candidates for knowledge sharing and company mentoring programmes. Most importantly, they want to work. However, as flexibility is their top priority, they are more likely to put their personal interests first than any other sector of the workforce.

Flexibility Seekers	
High Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible working • Personal interests • Work life balance
Low Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion • Career Path
Contribution:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring • Experience • Maturity • Good interpersonal skills

Figure 5

Thinking back on his own career, Martin Percival, Group HR Director of StepStone, talks about his professional development and changing priorities. “There was a long period where the idea of working outside the UK was a very real ambition but, for family reasons, I was not in a position to pursue this.

However, during my time with Amazon.com in their early European start up phase, at relatively short notice an opportunity arose to relocate to the Netherlands as Head of HR for a Pan European Customer Support Centre.

My boss had the presence of mind to realise this might be of interest to me, despite my having a relatively young family, and within 4 months we had moved to The Hague for what turned out to be an incredibly rewarding experience for the family for the next 4 years.”

Using the Results

Managers need to understand their employees’ specific needs and motivations in order to entice them into the company, develop them appropriately and to find the right incentives to retain them.

By the same token, when a reduced workforce is required to equal or increase its output, it is valuable to know who is most willing and able to do this, and who is not. As we have seen, not all employees welcome the same challenges, the same opportunities, or even the same rewards.

The following table gives a sample view of how Managers and their HR colleagues could target different employee groups in relation to particular business and workforce needs:

Employers' Needs	Cash Chasers	Ladder Climbers	Bread Winners	Quality of Lifers	Flexibility Seekers	Watch Points
A more flexible workforce	<i>Less applicable</i>	<i>Less applicable</i>	Willing to work from home	Will work freelance, change careers or sector	Desire flexible work, travel and sabbaticals	Each group offers a different kind of flexibility. It is important to know what to ask of who, to improve productivity and avoid resentment and retention issues
More output with less resources	<i>Less applicable</i>	Will work extra time unpaid	Less willing to work unpaid or unsociable hours	<i>Less applicable</i>	Might take a pay cut for an extended contract	Don't take this output for granted. These groups need to be rewarded with other benefits and incentives that address their circumstances and career goals
Innovative ideas without paying extra	Their fresh, often profit-oriented initiatives could prove lucrative	Should be offered the chance to prove themselves	Likely to have ideas about flexible working schemes	May have the ideas but might be less willing to champion the project	This group should be considered for mentoring programmes	When working under strained circumstances, employees' abilities can start to get overlooked. Self-service employee software can help keep track of who is able to offer more than their role indicates
Looking to save overheads	<i>Less applicable</i>	Will work unpaid overtime now, hoping for future promotion	May be happy to work from home	May work from home, work part-time or even freelance	May be happy to work from home, or even work freelance	Matching business and employee needs will save money and help improve retention, but take an office away from a Ladder Climber or limit a Cash Chaser's salary potential and you're heading for a voluntarily reduced headcount
Covering unavoidable overtime	Willing to work longer, unsociable hours to boost their earnings	Will do it willingly, but are looking for promotion	Not so willing to work unpaid or unsociable hours	<i>Less applicable</i>	<i>Less applicable</i>	Where possible, offer this to the groups you know are looking to improve their bank balance or their reputation, and consider the personal circumstances of the employee

Figure 6

A Successful Approach

Looking at how to leverage this research in the **short-term**, employee self service programmes are a great way to gain highly valuable information for the HR team by encouraging employees to fill in their career preferences, strengths, needs and development history, along with requests for further training. If you use this as a genuine part of your talent acquisition strategy you will be regarded as an employer who listens - which is a vital element in becoming an employer of choice.

Taking this into a **mid-term** strategy, career-planning programmes give employees a feeling of stability and a

clear overview of their future with the company. They can see what they need to contribute or learn in order to reach where they want to be. They will also better understand their contribution to the company's objectives, and can start to clarify the direction they want to take, both professionally and personally. These plans can be reviewed and updated regularly as the employee considers their career and lifestyle development.

In the **long-term**, employee development and engagement requires ongoing maintenance. Figure 6 can help Managers and their HR teams to understand these new priorities and

expectations around working life. Flexible hours, remote working, money or holiday trade-offs and regular communication plans could enhance your employment practices.

Martin Percival comments, “The key to helping ensure this approach is successful in the long-term is having regular reviews with each individual, talking openly and frankly about their career direction and aspirations. This may seem obvious, but in practice, I have found that many managers are rather reluctant to do this. When asked ‘Why?’ the response I often get is, ‘I am concerned I won’t be able to meet the aspirations and expectations that my team members might state in such a conversation.’”

Martin continues, “My view is that it is surely better to know what your team members’ future hopes are so that you can try to accommodate these and plan accordingly. Rather than a surprise resignation from somebody you’d considered a loyal team member who would stay with the company for the long run - especially when you discover their career move is one you could have accommodated if you’d only known about their aspirations.”

In Conclusion

In these financially unsettled times, it is generally agreed that everyone is required to give and accept more in order to keep their job or help keep their company afloat. Still, it pays for employers and their employees to know what both sides expect.

Understanding the different needs, priorities and motivations behind every individual and member of these demographic groups could therefore prove valuable to both employers and their employees. More than just an employer paying lip service to tick the employer-branding box, recognising these groups’ diverse attitudes and offerings present a whole scope of fresh benefits to both sides of the business.

Instead of representing an increasing demand in an employee’s life, your company can demonstrate its willingness to employ

and reward its people appropriately for their unique contribution. In turn your business benefits from the untapped passions and abilities of your employees.

Take these guidelines and discover how uncovering your employees’ individual needs - and engaging their aptitudes - can boost their job satisfaction and improve your company’s productivity.

About StepStone

StepStone helps businesses get increased performance from their people, helps them build and develop global talent pools, and helps people find new jobs that match their talents. Across the world thousands of organisations rely on StepStone every day to improve their business performance and talent development strategies while millions of people rely on StepStone to improve their careers. StepStone delivers world class technology and services for finding, recruiting, retaining, managing and developing talented people.

StepStone operates some of Europe’s largest talent networks, accurately matching employers with potential employees, and provides a complete suite of Human Capital Management software solutions. StepStone’s on-demand (SaaS) software and services enable organisations to implement efficient processes, including; attraction and hiring, post-hire talent management, performance management, compensation management, skills and competency management, career and succession planning, training and development management.

StepStone was founded in Norway in 1996 and listed on the Oslo Børs (Ticker@ STP.NO) in 2000 and the London Stock Exchange (LSE: STPS) in 2008.

At the end of June 2009 more than 1,600 organisations, including many of the world’s leading businesses, use StepStone software and services. It operates in 17 countries and employs more than 800 people. Its global customers include Aviva, Deloitte, Deutsche Telekom, Lufthansa, McDonald’s, Telefonica, ThyssenKrupp and Volkswagen.

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