

**Athabasca University (AU) 2023 Omnibus Poll:
The Great Evolution: Mapping New Workplace Dynamics and Desires**

This national Athabasca University survey was administered to a representative sample of Canadians across the country. It explored their attitudes and expectations for the future of work in tomorrow's post-pandemic era.

At-a-glance findings from the media release:

On re-skilling:

- Three in four Canadian employees (77 per cent) want to re-skill just to keep up with their job's changing needs
- Gaining digital skills is a top priority for 70 per cent of Canadian workers
- Three-quarters of employees (74 per cent) want to improve their interpersonal or soft skills—such as their communication style, conflict resolution capabilities, relatability, and team-building

On taking action to learn:

- Three –in five Canadian workers (63 per cent) say they want to increase their value at work through courses that don't demand too much of their time
- Almost three –in five workers (58 per cent) have already taken micro-credential courses before (short, flexible courses to develop knowledge, skills, and competencies in a focused area of learning)

Growing ambitions:

- Almost half (48 per cent) of Canadian employees say they have become more ambitious in their career aspirations since the pandemic
- Seven in 10 (72 per cent) say they have a desire to deepen their work expertise to advance their careers

Becoming guardians of work-life balance:

- 72 per cent also say since the pandemic, they have become much more protective of their work-life balance
- Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of workers acknowledge having experienced some prior workplace exhaustion, saying they are now guarding the pace of their work to make sure they don't burn out like they did before.

Feeling the effects of today's labour shortage:

- 70 per cent of employees report that being over-extended and under-staffed is one of the most critical workplace challenges today
- Some 59 per cent of workers also say they have become busier than they ever were before

On innovation in the Canadian workplace:

- 62 per cent of Canadian employees say that companies today are not advanced enough in their thinking from a futuristic lens. Interestingly, 47 per cent of employees also said they are dissatisfied with how their managers foster innovation at work

Additional noteworthy findings:

- **We are a country of passionate learners:** An incredible nine in 10 Canadian workers (89 per cent) say they want to continue learning to build new skills, specifically for their own personal benefit and growth
- **Canadians are on the hunt for new careers:** One-third of all Canadian workers (34 per cent) say they want to find a new and different career altogether. This figure jumps to 41 per cent among young Canadians aged 18-34
- **Canadians are craving social connections, camaraderie, and post-pandemic interpersonal re-skilling:**
 - Three-quarters of all Canadian workers (74 per cent) report wanting to increase their interpersonal skills for work (e.g., communication style, conflict resolution, relatability, team-building, etc.)
 - More than a third of Canadian managers (36 per cent) feel employees today don't actually have the depth of soft skills needed to excel in their jobs
 - Three in five Canadian workers (63 per cent) are seeking deeper connections with their colleagues. In fact, 44 per cent believe the hybrid work environment is making it hard to build camaraderie among staff
 - 87 per cent of Canadian managers say they want to increase their leadership skills. Meanwhile, 53 per cent of non-managerial staff say they are dissatisfied with how their organization's senior leadership motivates their employees
- **Canadian workers are searching for more purpose at work:**
 - Two-thirds (66 per cent) of Canadian workers say they want a more purpose-driven culture at work. This may suggest they want to go beyond chasing profits and make a difference through their work for the greater good of society
 - Close to four in five workers (78 per cent) say companies need to bring *purpose* to the forefront of their corporate culture
- **Canadian employees' struggles with mental health remain a critical challenge in the workplace today:** About half of Canadian workers (53 per cent) believe employees are struggling with their mental health
- **Notable regional and demographic differences:**
 - Workers in Quebec were significantly more likely than the rest of the country to say they want to learn new skills (re-skilling) to keep up with their job's changing needs (88 per cent versus 74 per cent, respectively)
 - Workers in British Columbia and Quebec (80 per cent and 79 per cent respectively) were more likely than the rest of the country (70 per cent) to say they want to increase their interpersonal or soft skills for work. Young Canadians aged 18-34 had the deepest desire to augment their skills in this area at 84 per cent

- Quebec workers are most likely to say they want a more purpose-driven work culture (72 per cent versus 64 per cent in the rest of Canada)
- Quebec workers' desire for deeper connections and camaraderie with colleagues also surpasses the rest of Canada at 72 per cent versus 60 per cent, respectively
- When it comes to feeling busier today than they've ever been before, workers in Ontario outnumber all other regions in Canada. Two-thirds (65 per cent) of Ontarians reported being busier than they've ever been, compared to 55 per cent in the rest of the country
- Young Canadians aged 18-34 are most likely to say they have become more ambitious in their career aspirations post-pandemic (67 per cent compared to 45 per cent of those aged 35-54, and just 20 per cent of those over 55 years of age)

About the Study: The Great Evolution: Mapping New Workplace Dynamics & Desires

These are the results of a survey conducted by Athabasca University, from January 6-10, 2023, among a nationally representative sample of n=1,507 Canadians who are members of the online Angus Reid Forum, balanced and weighted on age, gender, region and education. This included a sub-sample of n=831 full-time and part-time employed Canadians. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of the total sample size would yield a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points at a 95% confidence level, while a probability sample of the employed Canadians sample would yield a margin of error of +/- 3.4 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. The survey was offered in both English and French.