



**Candidates  
and careers:**

**a step change**



Flexibility

Diversity and inclusion

Motivation

**PageGroup**

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# Foreword

There's simply no denying that today's candidates are almost unrecognisable from those we saw 10, even five years ago. The economic crash of 2009 and the subsequent impact on businesses across the globe has created a significant shift in how candidates approach their careers.

Gone are the days when candidates will commit to a business for life and be chained to a desk for upwards of 10 hours per day. Recruitment cycles with seven rounds of interviews and aptitude tests are consigned to the scrap heap. Today's candidates are focused on building a career that's right for them on both a professional and personal level. They look for roles that are most suited to them as individuals and are no longer willing to work themselves into the ground to work their way to the top - and for good reason.

With an improved economic outlook and an increasingly buoyant job market we're starting to witness a step change for candidates.



Business is starting to boom and candidates can now look at opportunities to shape their careers, rather than let their careers shape them.

But can businesses keep up? Our report, based on independent research, highlights a disconnect between the needs of candidates and how businesses approach both the recruitment and cultivation of talent. We see three key areas that businesses should address to meet the needs of today's candidates:

**1**

## Motivation

What drives them to succeed in their careers and commit to their roles. A legacy brand and a standard benefits package is no longer enough

**2**

## Diversity and inclusion

Equality and diversity in the workplace will continue to play a crucial role. Businesses need to address the needs of the individual and ensure their offering is tailored to the requirements of each candidate

**3**

## Flexibility

Businesses need to move away from antiquated views of presenteeism and focus on working practices that encourage the best results at an individual level

# Foreword

It is vital that businesses take the time to understand the impact that social and cultural changes - such as motivators, flexible working and increased equality in the workplace - have on potential candidates and their requirements from a role. If they don't, businesses could face losing out on talent due to their antiquated opinions and attitudes towards their employee offerings.

PageGroup prides itself on having the knowledge to help today's candidates find the role that's right for them. By building long-term partnerships, we help our candidates shape a career that is as rewarding and satisfying as it can be.

**Candidates and careers: a step change** is designed with today's candidates and clients in mind - what they want from their roles, what is important to them, what motivates them, what it takes to build the right team and how best to

tackle the recruitment process. We hope that the insights to follow are useful and helpful.

If you'd like to know more, want to speak to us about how we can help find the role that's right for you, or how to attract and retain the best candidates, contact details can be found on our websites:

[www.pageexecutive.com](http://www.pageexecutive.com)

[www.michaelpage.co.uk](http://www.michaelpage.co.uk)

[www.pagepersonnel.co.uk](http://www.pagepersonnel.co.uk)



**Oliver Watson, Managing Director**  
PageGroup

## Research methodology

Third party research was conducted on behalf of PageGroup by research specialists Research Now to uncover the needs of today's candidates. For this study an Online Panel Methodology was used to survey UK residents aged between 28 and 40 who were in full or part time employment. These age parameters were set as a means for gathering industry trends and forming analysis around the core PageGroup demographic.

The profile of responses to all survey questions was then examined by Experian Mosaic Group analysis to draw out key demographics aligned with the changing face of today's candidate. As a result three key groups were identified: 'City Prosperity', those working in high status positions predominantly in city locations 'Domestic Success', namely high-earning families in middle or senior management roles who live in sought after residential neighbourhoods and 'Country Living' which consists of affluent homeowners often beyond easy commuting reach of major towns and cities.

# Global economic recovery – how is it impacting recruitment?

Despite strong signs of improvement, recent economic data reports show that both the UK and global economic recovery is still fragile and it seems likely that the outlook for businesses will remain in a state of flux. Recession and slow growth look set to continue in many key European and global economies, which will inevitably impact UK recovery.

While we will never know what lies around the corner, significant improvement has been made since 2009 and a thriving and buoyant job market is now a reality. There are an estimated 30.94 million people in active employment in the UK today, and increased confidence in the economy has seen a rise in candidates returning to the recruitment pool - our own figures show a significant increase in candidates searching for new roles, with applications up 71% on 2009 levels.

With improved recruitment prospects across almost all sectors - including automotive, aerospace, business services, media and technology - the race is now on for businesses to attract the right candidates to their roles.

## Candidate attraction - the challenge

With increased confidence comes increased demand, and skills shortages are a significant issue across many industries. Even with a decline in the manufacturing base in the UK we continue to see a shortage of graduate engineers to fulfil these highly-skilled roles. The burgeoning technology industry is another sector hit hard by the skills shortage, and often struggles to recruit candidates with the right skill sets to match levels of innovation and growth. A war for talent ensues on many fronts, with UK businesses struggling to compete in a limited recruitment pool.

As a result, we tend to see a pattern of ‘recruiting for the right now’, with businesses adopting a short-term approach to recruiting candidates in order to meet increased demand from an improved market. But businesses need to think of the future and must begin to think of the long-term needs of the company when it comes to recruiting to ensure they are attracting the right candidate for the role.



Ultimately, the key to success lies in businesses understanding the needs of today’s candidate. As our economic and social environment has evolved, so too have the types of employment opportunities that are available to today’s candidates - innovative companies, new working patterns and added benefits are all factors that influence our job moves. So what motivates them in their work and attracts them to new roles? How do career priorities map to lifestyle? Do candidates still want the traditional “career” model?

# Global economic recovery – how is it impacting recruitment?

## A job for life?

When it comes to sentiment towards the traditional career path, today's candidates indicate that they are far from committed. Long-term service is low, with only 12% of respondents employed in their current role for over 10 years. The highest proportion of respondents - 28% - indicated 2-5 years in their current role.

A move away from long-term service becomes particularly apparent when we look at how longevity of role corresponds to the age of candidates. Respondents aged 37-40 indicated the highest commitment to a particular business, with 25% in their role for 10+ years. However, 28% of respondents of the same age have only been in their role for 5-10 years, with 46% indicating they have been in their role for less than five years. With similar patterns emerging in the 31-33 and 34-36 age categories, we see a rising trend in candidates looking to change roles much later in life and bucking the traditional view of a settled role with a company.

We also see that long-term commitment to a particular employer is now a thing of the past. Taking a job based on a company's reputation or brand still has a draw for those in the early stage of their careers (44%), but as we progress to the upper end of our age bracket brand as a motivator significantly trails off to 31%.

To attract and retain the best people, businesses need to put as much effort into understanding what motivates good employees as they do into finding them. Gone are the days of the 'standard benefits package' and the 'career ladder' - the focus should now be on career enrichment and a personalised approach to employee motivation.

Traditional considerations such as salary, location and company brand have long influenced career paths. Yet while these 'bread and butter' requirements still rank highly among today's candidates, additional considerations are also influencing decisions in the workplace and impacting the career choices made.

## How long have you been employed in your current role?

	Age categories						
	Total	Male	Female	28-30	31-33	34-36	37-40
Less than a year	14%	13%	15%	16%	14%	15%	12%
1-2 years	17%	18%	16%	22%	19%	16%	11%
2-5 years	28%	27%	29%	33%	29%	27%	23%
5-10 years	28%	29%	27%	25%	32%	27%	28%
10+ years	12%	13%	12%	4%	7%	14%	25%
N/A - contracted	*%	*%	*%	0%	0%	1%	*%

# Rewards and recognition – beyond the basic benefits package

Today’s candidates have different aspirations. They want to receive wellbeing benefits such as gym memberships and health insurance as well as recognition for the work they undertake.

Forward-thinking organisations, such as the wide range of innovative start-ups we see in London’s Silicon Roundabout, are now high on the wish list for candidates when they consider the type of role they want next. However, not everyone can compete with the start-up culture, and the demand for rewards and recognition means that attracting candidates can be more difficult than ever. Our research shows that these additional considerations are an influential factor in today’s career decisions and dovetail with an increasing desire for work/life balance. Employment values are changing - but are we keeping up?

*“When I took this job, one of the questions I asked in the final interview was ‘what is the pension scheme’? I can guarantee that fewer people have asked that question this year.”*  
Oliver Watson

## What’s the draw of added benefits?

When accepting their current role, our survey respondents prioritised job titles, opportunities for professional development and flexibility over the more traditional draws such as brand and culture.

## What were your primary considerations when you accepted your current role?

	Age categories						
	Total	Male	Female	28-30	31-33	34-36	37-40
Location	55%	50%	60%	57%	55%	53%	55%
Job title	23%	22%	23%	30%	21%	25%	16%
Opportunity for professional development within role	31%	31%	31%	34%	31%	33%	27%
Opportunity to retrain/expand scope of role	8%	9%	7%	8%	9%	6%	9%
Company reputation and brand	13%	14%	12%	13%	12%	15%	13%
Company culture	12%	12%	11%	12%	11%	12%	11%
Visibility within the organisation	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%	2%
Opportunity to manage other people	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%	3%
Flexibility (working from home or flexible working hours)	18%	14%	22%	18%	14%	19%	23%
Job security	31%	30%	33%	28%	33%	30%	34%
Salary and financial benefits package (pension, health insurance)	43%	45%	41%	39%	45%	44%	43%
Other benefits - additional holiday, maternity package etc	6%	5%	7%	6%	8%	5%	5%
Other	4%	4%	4%	5%	3%	2%	6%

# Rewards and recognition – beyond the basic benefits package

When it comes to understanding what motivates candidates in their next career move we see that the draws are similar, with the traditional requirements such as salary and financial benefits, location and job security all scoring highly. But today’s candidates are increasingly looking for flexibility in their next role, with 26% citing this as a primary consideration, compared to 18% who cited this as a primary consideration in their current role.

As expected, priorities shift as we progress through our working life. Across all age categories we see financial stability becomes more important, with 62% of respondents aged 37-40 citing salary and financial benefits as a top priority in their next role. Within the 28-30 category, the importance of salary and benefits jumps from 39% as a

consideration for their current role, to 57% in their next role. All respondents indicated an increased interest in additional benefits, with all age categories highlighting this as a primary consideration for their next role, particularly in the top end of our age bracket.

We also see candidates looking to their next career move as an opportunity to expand their horizons. Percentages lifted across the board when respondents were asked whether the opportunity to retrain/expand the scope of their role would factor in their next career move, with respondents aged 34-36 most likely to consider this factor.

## What would be the three most important considerations for you in choosing a new position/making a career move?

	Age categories						
	Total	Male	Female	28-30	31-33	34-36	37-40
Location	52%	45%	58%	56%	53%	48%	50%
Job title	18%	17%	19%	22%	21%	18%	12%
Opportunity for professional development within role	32%	34%	30%	33%	36%	29%	30%
Opportunity to retrain/expand scope of role	12%	13%	11%	10%	14%	13%	13%
Company reputation and brand	13%	16%	9%	10%	12%	15%	13%
Company culture	11%	12%	10%	9%	11%	13%	11%
Visibility within the organisation	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Opportunity to manage other people	6%	7%	5%	7%	6%	6%	6%
Flexibility (working from home or flexible working hours)	26%	20%	32%	28%	21%	27%	28%
Job security	37%	38%	37%	36%	37%	38%	39%
Salary and financial benefits package (pension, health insurance)	61%	62%	59%	57%	63%	60%	62%
Other benefits - additional holiday, maternity package etc	10%	9%	11%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Other	1%	1%	1%	*%	*%	1%	2%



# Rewards and recognition – beyond the basic benefits package

## Career stages – how do priorities change?

Our research shows that motivating factors vary for different age groups – so when it comes to recruiting talent at certain points in their career, what are the key considerations?

Company culture is much more important to respondents aged 28-30, with 45% indicating that they were more motivated by this than at the start of their careers. Another key motivator for this age group is the opportunity to manage others, with 37% of respondents citing this as a driver. We see the popularity of management roles start to drop as we move through career stages, with only 25% of respondents aged 37-40 citing this as a motivator.

The draw of professional development also declines for older respondents; exposure to the opportunity for professional development drops from 42% of respondents aged 28-30, to 24% of respondents aged 37-40. As a result, we see professional development as a motivator drop within our older respondents, down from 56% (28-30) to 49% (37-40).

Unsurprisingly, promotion to senior roles as a motivator begins to wane with 23% of respondents aged 37-40 indicating that they are less motivated by potential promotion to a senior role. Understanding what motivates a candidate as they progress through their career is essential and businesses must consider these factors at all stages. In a strong job market, businesses need to carefully assess the rewards and recognition they offer to potential candidates if they want to attract and retain the best talent.

## The changing face of today's candidate



Typically our 28-30 year old candidates who fall into the City Prosperity group, work in high status positions. Commanding substantial salaries they are able to afford expensive urban homes. They live and work predominantly in London and the other major urban hubs, with many found in and around the City or in locations a short commute away.

- City Prosperity are found in senior and well-paid positions in the key financial and professional organisations, as well as in high status roles in politics, media and the arts
- Highly educated, very ambitious and focused on their careers, many of this group are single and are less likely than others to have children
- Constantly connected via their smartphones, working life takes precedence for many

# Rewards and recognition – beyond the basic benefits package



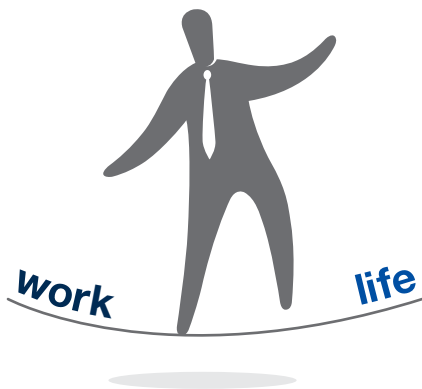
Those who fall into the Domestic Success group are high-earning families who live affluent lifestyles in upmarket homes situated in sought after residential neighbourhoods. Their busy lives revolve around their children and successful careers in higher managerial and professional roles.

- Domestic Success work in a cross-section of middle/senior management roles for well-known organisations or professional firms in sectors such as finance, property, information technology and professional services
- University-educated, likely to postgraduate level
- Live in good-sized three or four bedroom detached properties, owned with a considerable mortgage outstanding. Their lives are now settled and they have very comfortable standards of living
- Will commute to nearby towns and cities for work

# The work/life balance debate

In the past, businesses have often measured the success and commitment of the workforce through a sense of presenteeism. Employees were measured by how early they arrived for work or by how many hours they stayed in the office.

But with the rise of technology and a shift in priorities for candidates, the days of presenteeism are long gone. Candidates have different expectations and in turn the businesses that employ them operate in different ways and no longer require their employees to be plugged into a desk. Today's businesses are learning how best to operate in an output-measured environment - what employees achieve, whether they complete a task and if they hit targets.



Businesses are increasingly acknowledging the fact that top performers may not be those tied to the traditional 9-5 working day. Some of the highest achievers may alter their work schedule based on childcare or travel routines. Success is now about the capabilities of the individual and their ability to operate efficiently through a range of remote, and what might have been previously considered curious, ways.

## Expanding traditional business hubs

Our research suggests that living in proximity to the cities and hubs they work in is still a big draw for candidates with 38% of respondents living

0-5 miles from their place of work and 25% living 5-10 miles. Currently, only 11% of respondents live a significant distance from their place of work (25+ miles). Yet while the 'city' way of working is still an established norm, flexible working practices are slowly creeping into business and allowing candidates to seek career options further outside of these hubs.

## How far away do you currently live from your place of work?

	Total	Male	Female
0-5 miles	38%	34%	43%
5-10 miles	25%	26%	25%
10-25 miles	23%	25%	21%
25-50 miles	9%	11%	7%
50+ miles	2%	3%	1%
Work from home	2%	2%	2%

## The move towards flexibility

With the right to request flexible working extended to all UK employees in June 2014, this topic is very much on the business agenda. However, our research indicated that there are varying levels of businesses and candidates that are really making the most of it. Only 17% of respondents have been exposed to the option of a flexible working pattern in the last 12 months, and only 7% have applied for this change.

Despite this, candidates now aspire to achieve a better work/life balance. Across all age categories, respondents are more motivated by the opportunity to work flexibly than they were at the start of their career, with 57% of respondents highlighting this as a key motivator.

# The work/life balance debate

## Opportunity to work more flexibly

Do you believe that you are more or less motivated by this factor than you were at the start of your career?

	Total
1 Less motivated	3%
2	6%
3	26%
4	31%
5 More motivated	26%
Not applicable	8%

The working environment is more fast-paced than ever before, and to offset this, today's candidates are investing more in the 'life' side of the balance. This is likely as a response to the heightened pressure that people are now under from a much younger age.

Businesses need to acknowledge this cultural shift and recognise the changing candidate attitudes towards the structure and habits of the office environment. As organisations become more comfortable with this they should embrace different ways of working, assessing benefits for both themselves and candidates alike.

*"There is now more to life than the working week. People have a wide range of interests that extend beyond working hours, and through the proliferation of ways they can receive information on life beyond work, they are now more aware of this than ever before."*

Oliver Watson



Those that fall into the Country Living group are well-off homeowners who live in the countryside often beyond easy commuting reach of major towns and cities. Whilst undertaking a wide range of careers, a number of Country Living commute distances to professional jobs.

- Country Living consists of affluent people who can afford to live in pleasant rural locations surrounded by agricultural landscapes
- Incomes are good, often derived from commuting to well-paid professional jobs. Asset holdings in the form of stocks and shares are high
- Although broadband speeds may be low, the internet is used for practical purposes as it gives this group access to a broader range of work-related products and services than are available locally

# Breaking the career stereotypes

Gender in the workplace is a topic that's often avoided by businesses. But with the World Economic Forum predicting that the workplace gender gap will not close until as late as 2095, businesses can no longer avoid addressing this issue.

The glass ceiling is by no means broken, but we are witnessing a sea change in the drive for equality in the workplace and where attitudes have widely altered, practice must now catch up.



As recruiters, our main priority is to find the best candidate for the role. We encourage businesses and candidates alike to pursue opportunities based on the requirements of the individual situation. Yet we still see confusion and fear when it comes to issues of workplace diversity, with candidates often feeling the knock-on effect this has on their career development.

So why does gender continue to be a hot topic in the workplace and, more importantly, should this be the case?

## Benefits for all?

When looking at career development and access to opportunities such as flexible working, our research revealed little difference across gender. Respondents indicated the opportunities presented when it comes to flexible working are similar across the board - 24% of men and 25% of women.

## Move to more flexible working pattern

Over the last 12 months have you applied for or experienced a move to a more flexible working pattern? E.g. Home working/change to working hours etc.

	Total	Male	Female
Experienced	17%	15%	19%
Applied for	7%	9%	6%
Both	6%	6%	6%
Not applicable	70%	71%	69%

The gap between the desire for flexible working and the accessibility for this is equally wide across both men and women; 57% of men and 60% of women are more motivated by the opportunity to work flexibly than they were at the start of their careers.

This is a great example of a long-standing debate often tagged with the gender label - but what is apparent from our research is that when it comes to today's candidates, gender isn't a deciding factor for opportunities for career development or change. The requirements are similar for both. Businesses need to address the needs of the individual and focus on developing a package that suits today's candidate, regardless of gender.

# Breaking the career stereotypes

*“As a female managing director in PageGroup, you may think I’ve faced a number of challenges to get to where I am. But in my role, age, gender and background really don’t come into play: it’s all about the results you deliver.*

*PageGroup is progressive in its attitudes towards business diversity and embracing the opportunity to work in a manner that suits the individual. Initiatives such as ‘Women@Page’ now mean gender in the workplace is a more open discussion, and as a result we are more flexible as an organisation to help people that want to follow alternative career plans. People want different things at different times of their lives and it’s important that an organisation has the structures in place to support this.*

*Over the last thirteen years I’ve always known that if I focus on the job in hand and perform to the best of my ability, developing a succession plan, the next step will come. My advice for others looking to take the next step would be to control the controllable. I’m not a managing director because I’m female, I’m a managing director because I’ve worked hard to be the best that I can be and have delivered the results that have made my team what it is today.”*

**Isabel Cutts, Managing Director at Page Personnel Finance**

The same argument applies when it comes to motivators for both men and women. When we look specifically at additional benefits - such as additional holiday and packages to support families - we see little difference in motivation for men vs women (48% vs. 57%).

## Other benefits – additional holiday, maternity package etc.

Do you believe that you are more or less motivated by the following factors than you were at the start of your career?

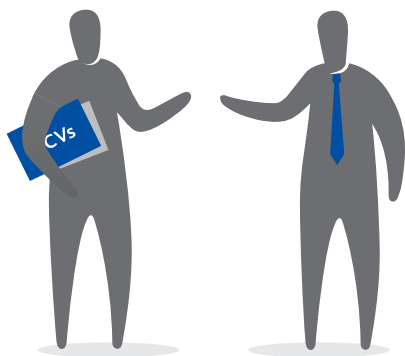
	Total	Male	Female
1 Less motivated	4%	4%	4%
2	7%	8%	6%
3	29%	33%	25%
4	32%	31%	33%
5 More motivated	21%	17%	24%
Not applicable	7%	6%	8%

Stereotypes have long been created within the workplace but businesses should be careful - with today’s candidates the gender divide is not as apparent as it first appears.

# Understanding today's candidates

Candidates are now looking for opportunities to shape their careers in ways that suit them. With the job market becoming increasingly competitive when it comes to attracting talent, businesses that fail to update their candidate attraction strategies and recruitment processes can expect to face a tougher future.

This report highlights the increasing need for businesses to address what drives candidates to succeed, seek to understand the needs of the individual and acknowledge the changes in candidate priorities both in and out of work. Businesses that move away from antiquated views and adapt their processes accordingly will take the lead in recruiting the best talent.



Should you want any more information, please contact us at:

[www.pageexecutive.com](http://www.pageexecutive.com)

[www.michaelpage.co.uk](http://www.michaelpage.co.uk)

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## About PageGroup ([www.page.com](http://www.page.com))

PageGroup (formerly known as Michael Page International) is one of the world's best-known and well-respected professional recruitment consultancies. Established more than 39 years ago in the United Kingdom, we now span 155 offices in 35 countries. We are a leading provider of permanent, contract and temporary recruitment for clerical professionals, qualified professionals and executives.

Through organic growth we have become a FTSE 250 company with more than 5,680 employees globally. We operate a consultative approach to professional recruitment combining local know-how with global expertise, to find the best fit between client and candidate.