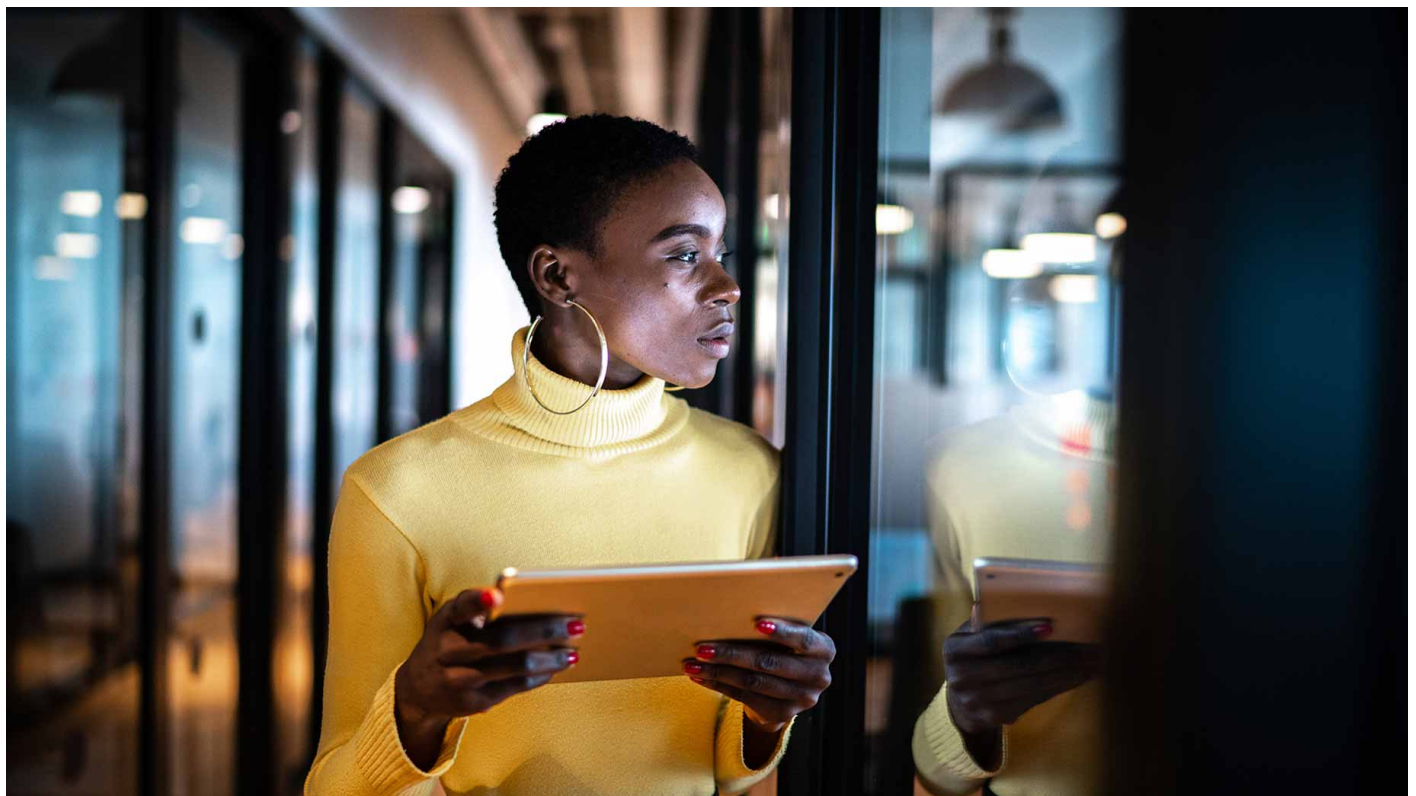


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DECEMBER 18, 2023

6 Workplace Trends Leaders Should Watch in 2024

BY **BEN WIGERT**



STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Many organizations are revising how they do business
- Relationships between workers and organizations are changing

- To win in 2024, leaders must rethink their approach to people management
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In 2024, employers and employees are heading for a relationship reset.

This shift partly stems from changes in where and how people work. In 2019, 60% of remote-capable employees spent their week working fully on-site, whereas that figure has fallen to just 20% in 2023.

But that's not the complete story. Nearly five in 10 U.S. employees work fully on-site in jobs that can't be hybrid or remote. And Gallup's research indicates that how employees are managed has about four times as much influence on employee engagement and wellbeing as their work location.

Essentially, it's the relationships workers have -- with their coworkers, managers, leaders and organization -- that are significantly evolving. Many organizations are radically retooling the ways they do business, leaving many employees, including managers, stressed and disconnected.

For example, when Gallup asked managers what changes their organization made in 2023:

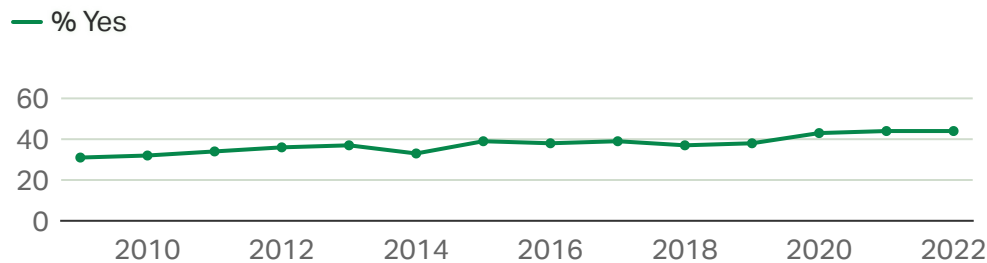
- 64% said employees were given additional job responsibilities
- 51% cited the restructuring of teams
- 42% reported budget cuts

To win in 2024, leaders should consider re-tooling their management strategies to better support the changing needs of their workforce and organizational culture. We recommend starting with a plan for assessing and addressing the following six trends that leaders should be paying attention to within their own organizations:

1. Global Worker Stress Remains at a Record High

Daily Stress Among Employees

Did you experience the following feelings during A LOT OF THE DAY yesterday? How about stress?



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Gallup's recent [State of the Global Workplace report](#) revealed that employee engagement is rising worldwide. That's good news. However, worker stress has remained at record high levels since the pandemic.

In the U.S. and Canada, employee stress is even higher, with 52% of employees reporting they experienced a lot of stress the previous day. This trend holds implications for peoples' wellbeing at work and home, as well as their productivity and longevity.

As we move into 2024, which trend will win out: the ongoing rise in stress or the improvement in employee engagement?

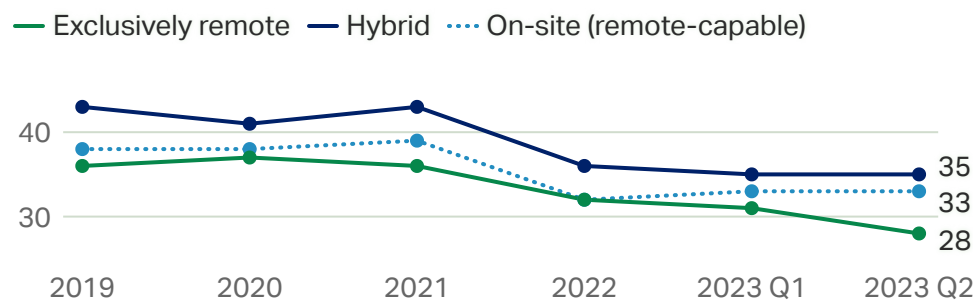
Read: [Globally, Employees Are More Engaged -- and More Stressed \(gallup.com\)](#)

2. Engagement Is Slowly Recovering, With Some Areas for Improvement

The Erosion of Mission and Purpose Among Remote-Capable Workers

Q08. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

% Strongly agree



WF Q2 2023, U.S. FT Employees; Exclusively Remote MOE: ± 3 points, Hybrid MOE: ± 2 points, On-Site (Remote-Capable) MOE: ± 4 points

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Employee engagement levels in the U.S. started a slow crawl back in 2023 after a post-pandemic slump. But one particularly concerning trend is the decrease in employees who feel connected to their organization's mission and purpose. This sense of connection inspires employees to go above and beyond basic job demands and push toward excellence. It also substantially boosts loyalty and retention.

Read: *Are Remote Workers and Their Organizations Drifting Apart?* ([gallup.com](https://www.gallup.com))

3. Leaders Are Restoring Trust Yet Have Much Room for Improvement

Trust in organizational leadership significantly declined since the onset of the pandemic until it started to recover in 2023. Yet, today, only 23% of U.S. employees strongly agree that they trust the leadership of their organization. Undoubtedly, the hardships and disruptions of today's new world of work have created headwinds for leaders. However, when leaders communicate clearly, lead and support change, and inspire confidence in the future, 95% of employees say they fully trust their leaders.

Read: *Why Trust in Leaders Is Faltering and How to Gain It Back (gallup.com)*

4. Managers Are Getting Squeezed

Changes to the workplace have hit managers especially hard. In 2023, managers were more likely than non-managers to be disengaged, burnt out and job hunting. They were also more likely to feel like their organization doesn't care about their wellbeing and to

say that they're struggling with work-life balance.

These manager struggles are bad news for organizations because they trickle down to their teams. Managers serve as crucial connectors for team collaboration and effectiveness, accounting for 70% of the variance in employee engagement.

Overall, the "manager squeeze" largely comes from increased responsibilities and navigating numerous organizational changes. Gallup research shows that many managers now have more work to do on a tighter budget with new teams. And from a relationship standpoint, they often find themselves caught between aligning with new directives from leaders and meeting the changing expectations of their employees.

What's certain is that managers will need more training and support to lead effectively in today's new work environment riddled with new expectations for managers.

Read: *The Manager Squeeze: How the New Workplace Is Testing Team Leaders* ([gallup.com](https://www.gallup.com)).

5. Organizations Need a Long-Term Hybrid Work Strategy

Since mid-2022, work location trends for the U.S. workforce have largely stabilized, which implies that most employees are currently working where they expect to be working for the foreseeable future, based on employer communications. A separate survey of CHROs from Fortune 500 companies found that eight in 10 had no plans to decrease remote work flexibility in the next 12 months.

Given that hybrid work has become the norm for remote-capable workers and people have largely settled into their new routines, it's time for leaders to optimize their hybrid workplace. That means doing things like creating a compelling workplace value proposition, empowering teams to collaborate more effectively, revising performance management systems, and training managers to be great hybrid coaches.

Read: *The Future of the Office Has Arrived: It's Hybrid*

6. Hybrid Culture Can Be Great -- If Done Right

Hybrid work offers the advantages of a more flexible work environment while also posing some unique challenges. In terms of advantages, hybrid workers have higher engagement, better overall wellbeing and lower turnover risk than fully on-site workers who are remote-capable -- which is good for business, too. Leaders and managers tend to recognize these benefits and report that hybrid work has reduced burnout, improved retention and expanded talent pools in their organization

At the same time, working apart more often and on different schedules creates some new obstacles. Organizations that plan to move forward with hybrid for the long term must thoughtfully create and fully commit to a strategy for how they best communicate, collaborate, build relationships and solidify their work culture.

Read: *The Future of the Office Has Arrived: It's Hybrid*

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