

# Understanding employee engagement across different work environments

How does employee engagement differ based on work environment? Are manual labor or customer-facing employees more engaged than traditional office workers?



Generally, manual or physical workers tend to exhibit higher levels of energy, engagement, trust and job satisfaction compared to office workers, suggesting that there may be inherent benefits to jobs that involve more physical activity and hands-on tasks. If your organization employs predominately office workers, consider how you could adopt relevant elements of the manual or physical work environment to improve engagement.

## Employees in customer-facing retail roles are less likely to be thriving at work.

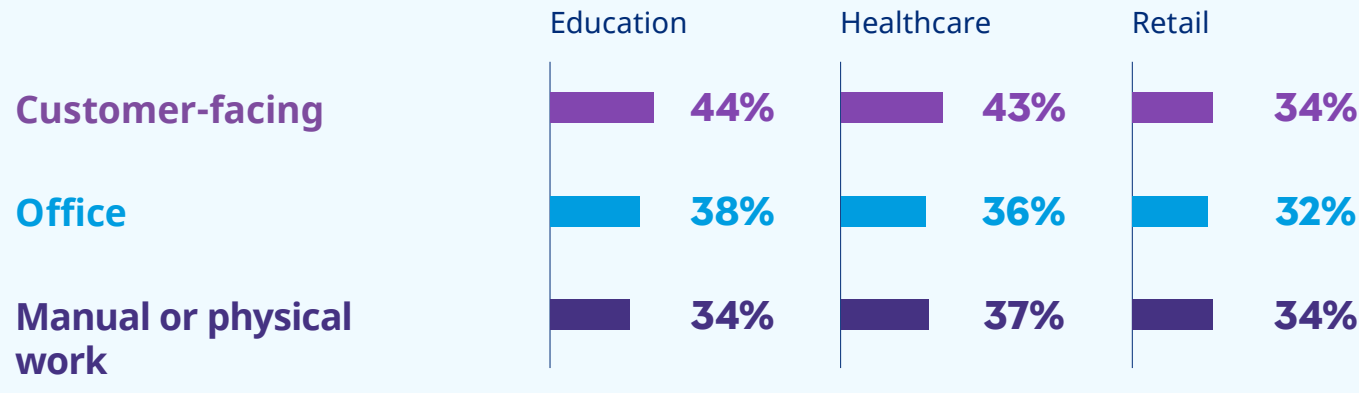
Customer-facing employees in the retail industry are less likely to feel they are thriving compared to traditional office workers in the same industry. However, in the healthcare industry, the trend is reversed — more customer-facing employees feel they are thriving compared to office workers. In the education industry, 88% of office and customer-facing employees are thriving at work.



## Regardless of work environment, many employees working in retail don't feel their current role aligns with their motivations or makes the best use of their skills.

The degree of alignment with motivation and skills varies across industries, with the retail industry exhibiting the lowest level of alignment. Only one-third of retail workers feel that their role aligns with their motivation and skills, compared to about 40% of workers in all other industries. In customer-facing healthcare and education industries, 44% of employees feel their role aligns with their motivations and skills, compared to only 34% in retail.

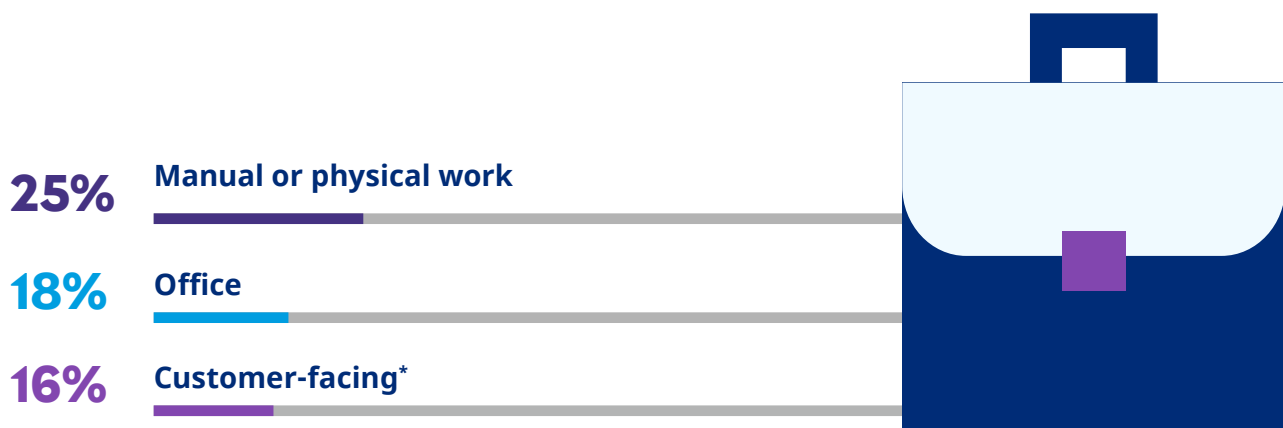
### Employees feel their role aligns with their motivations and skills



## Across all industries, manual or physical workers are more likely to be energized at work.

Manual or physical workers in all industries are more likely to have higher levels of workday energy, despite the expectation that they would use more physical energy for work-related tasks. Office workers are less likely to feel energized, and customer-facing workers are the least energized, indicating that working with customers may deplete their energy.

### Employees are extremely energized at work



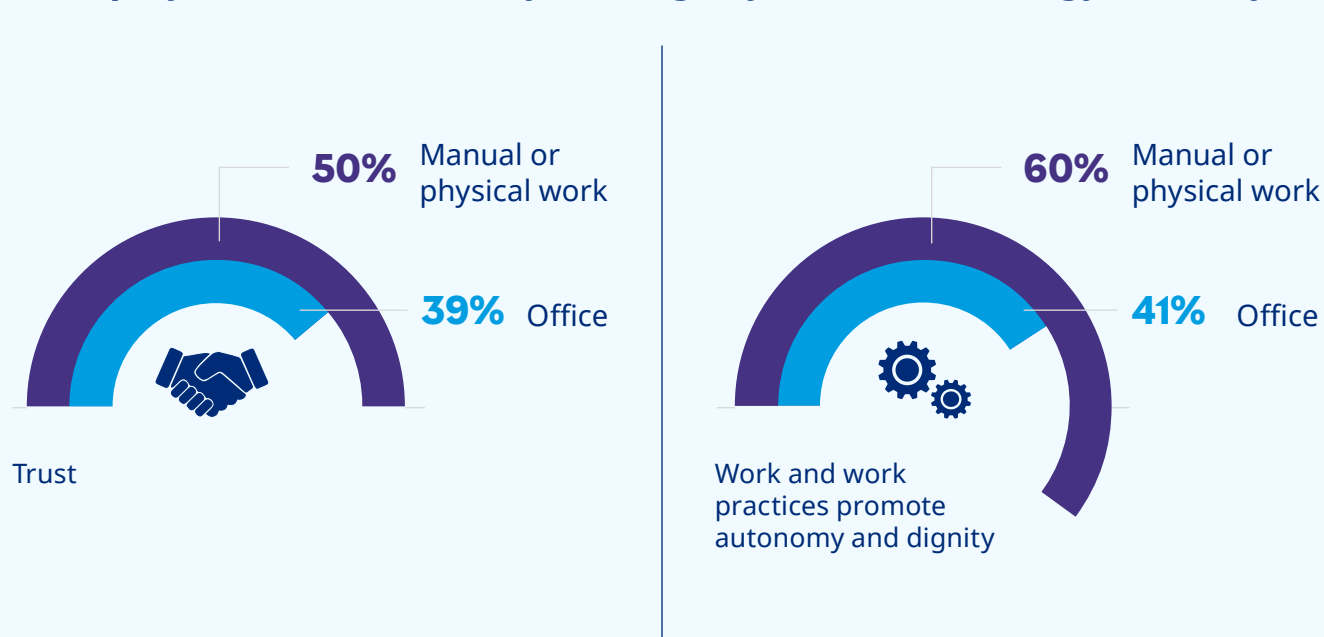
\*In a retail, education or healthcare setting.

The industry in which customer-facing roles are situated appears to have an impact on their level of engagement and energy. Retail employees, in particular, seem to be struggling the most with feeling that their role doesn't align with their motivations and skills. This highlights the importance of providing meaningful and fulfilling work experiences for employees, especially in industries where customer interactions play a crucial role.

## Half of manual or physical workers in the technology industry indicate that people trust one another at work.

In the technology industry, half of manual or physical workers strongly agree that people trust one another at work, but only 39% of office workers in this industry feel the same. Manual or physical workers are much more likely to feel work and work practices promote autonomy and dignity, compared to office workers.

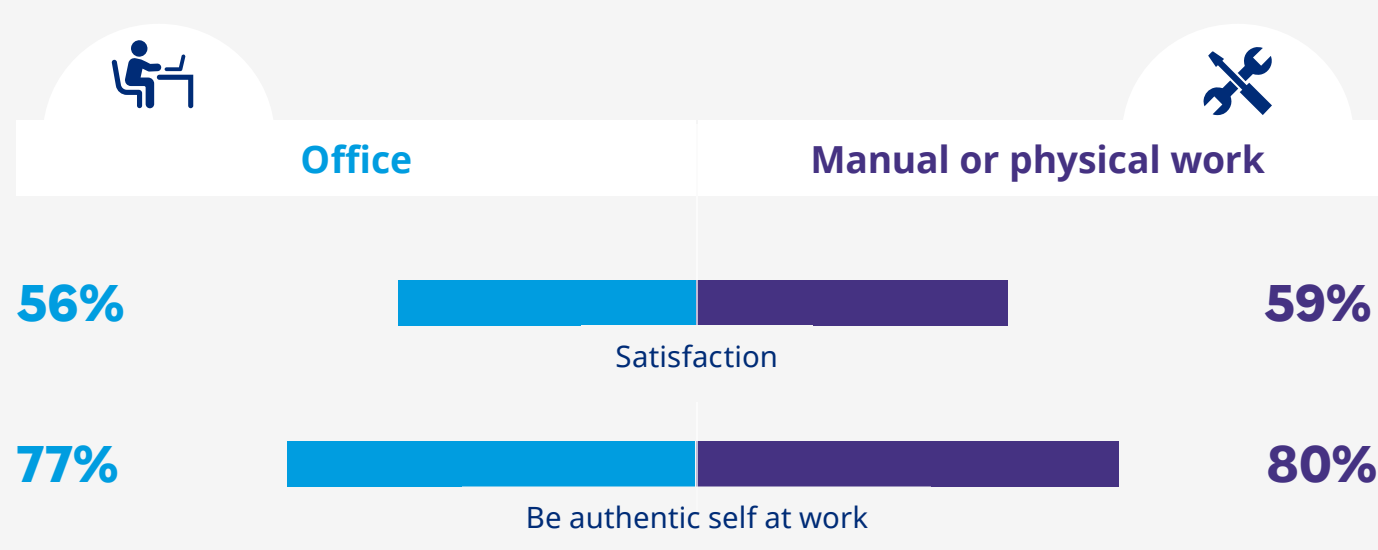
### Employee trust, autonomy and dignity in the technology industry



## Employees with jobs that require manual or physical work tend to be more satisfied than office workers.

Employees in manual or physical work roles have slightly higher job satisfaction and feel more comfortable being themselves at work compared to office workers. This suggests that the work environment plays a role in overall employee satisfaction.

### Employee satisfaction and authenticity at work



Regardless of the work environment, there are various measures that your organization can take to assess and enhance employee engagement. By conducting regular surveys, implementing recognition programs, fostering a positive work culture and providing opportunities for growth and development, your organization can create an environment that promotes higher levels of engagement, satisfaction and overall wellbeing among employees. Investing in employee engagement not only benefits individual employees, but also contributes to improved productivity and organizational success.

Source: Mercer's 2024 Global Talent Trends

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