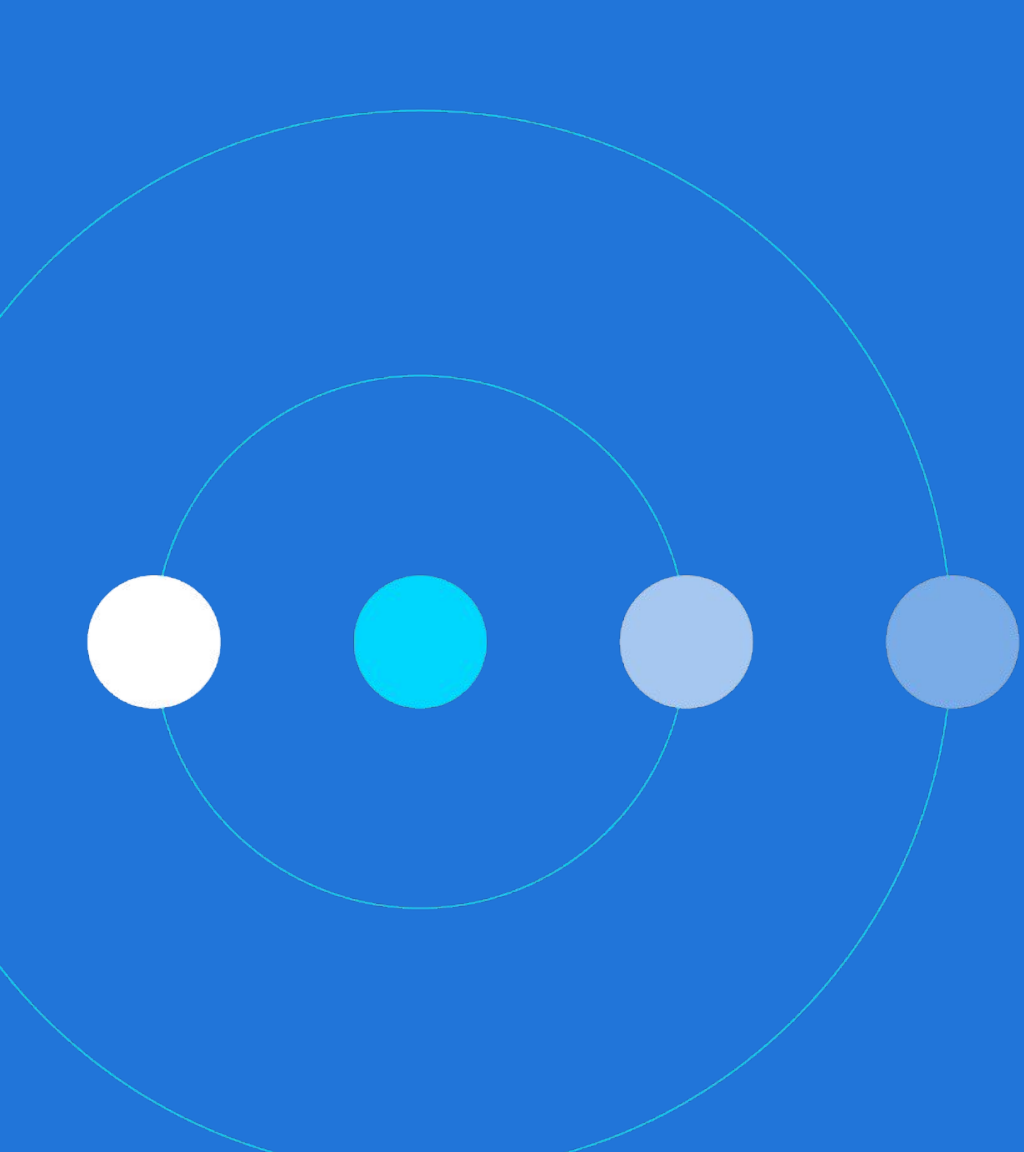


2026 randstad employer brand research.

hong kong SAR report.



partner for talent.



content.

- 03 about randstad employer brand research.
- 06 what matters to talent in hong kong SAR.
- 11 attributes of an ideal employer.
- 15 strategic deep dive into core talent drivers.
- 19 what work-life balance really means to talent.
- 22 what made employees switch jobs.
- 26 AI powers the search, human connection closes the deal.
- 34 appendix

about randstad employer brand research.



randstad employer brand research 2026 edition.

Commissioned by Randstad and conducted by Kantar, the Randstad Employer Brand Research is an independent and most representative and inclusive employer brand research in the world with more than 166,000 respondents and 4,300 companies surveyed worldwide.

It is the only study that captures the workforce sentiments towards key employee value proposition factors from employees and job seekers between the ages 18 and 64.

Since 2013, we have conducted the survey every year to track trends in employees' motivations and attractiveness of the employer brand.

The in-depth survey results and findings give an overview of the trending insights that can help shape and strengthen your company's employer brand strategy.

research conducted by:

KANTAR



argentina
australia
austria
belgium
brazil
canada
denmark

chile
chinese mainland
czech republic
france
germany
greece
hong kong SAR

hungary
india
italy
japan
luxembourg
malaysia
mexico

the netherlands
new zealand
norway
poland
portugal
romania
singapore

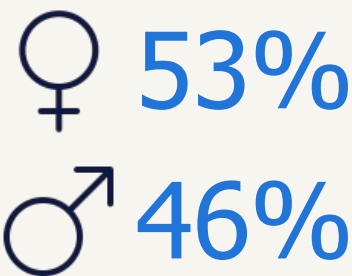
spain
sweden
switzerland
united kingdom
united states
uruguay



randstad employer brand research: hong kong SAR edition.

2,500

respondents in
hong kong SAR



* other is comprised of all other gender identities and people who prefer not to answer the question

14
minutes
online interviews



fieldwork

- online interviews
- january 2026

top 10 respondents' employment fields

administrative, secretarial & HR	15%
finance	10%
engineering & technology	9%
sales & marketing	8%
education & instruction	7%
customer services	7%
construction	7%
healthcare	5%
transportation & logistics	5%
ICT	4%



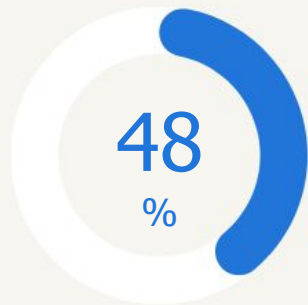
what matters to talent in
hong kong SAR.



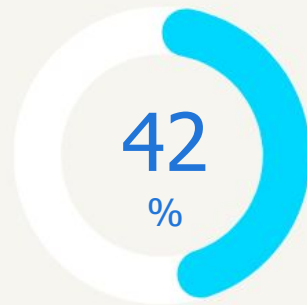
key findings:

work-life balance remains the top priority, but career drivers vary by life stage.

Career and secondary benefit priorities differ markedly across generations, underpinned by an increasing demand for stability. Gen Z view compensation and work-life balance as equally critical drivers in their early careers. As priorities evolve, the demand for stability grows significantly: Millennials heavily weigh job security when choosing employers, while Gen X place immense value on long-term financial and retirement security among secondary benefits.



of Gen Z see
compensation and
work-life balance as a top
driver in employer choice



of millennials cite job
security as a strong
driver in employer choice



of Gen X highly value
retirement and financial
security benefits among
secondary benefits



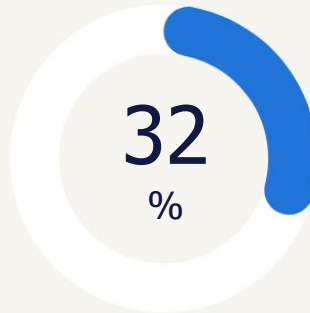
key findings:

young talent values tangible, concrete benefits more than just good culture.

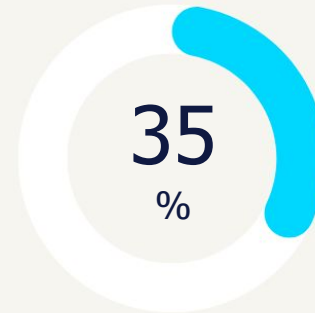
Work-life balance is based on tangible, structural conditions, rather than just culture.

The primary drivers are now rooted in the good work environment, reasonable workload, and flexible work arrangements, complemented by robust health support and generous leave policies.

However, Generational priorities differ. Gen Z place a uniquely strong emphasis on personal growth and supportive leadership, whereas Millennials and Gen X focus more on health and wellbeing support.



of Gen Z demand personal growth and fulfilment as a key driver of work-life balance, which is higher than among older generations.



of millennials and Gen X demand health and wellbeing support as a key driver of work-life balance

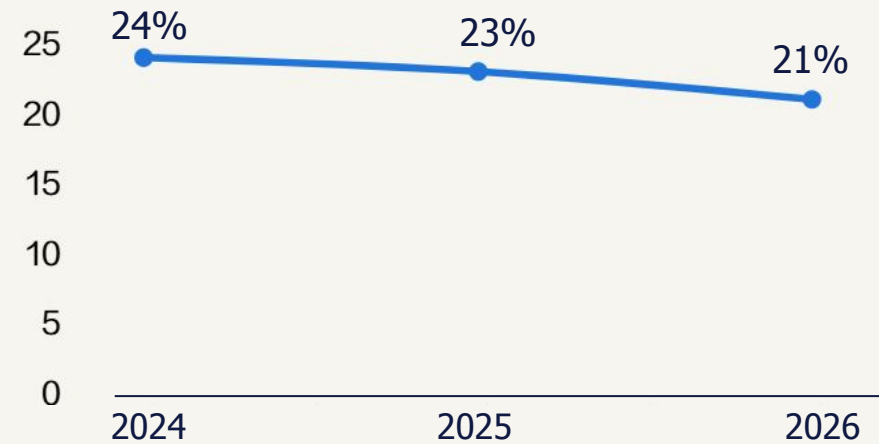


key findings:

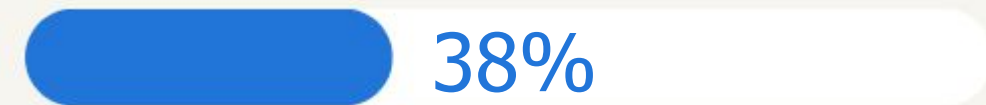
fewer people are actually changing jobs compared to last 2 years.

While fewer people are actually moving jobs compared to last 2 years, the desire to switch remains high. Failing to meet employees' core priorities directly drives staff turnover and hampers recruitment.

Key triggers include low pay, poor work-life balance, limited career growth, poor (relation with) management, and unfavourable workplace environments.



changed jobs within the first 6 months



of talent cite too low compensation as the primary reason for leaving an employer.

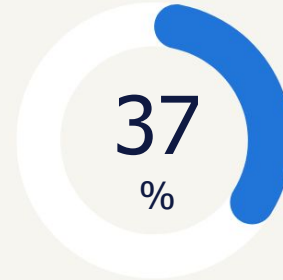
key findings:

navigating talent mobility and the future of hiring.

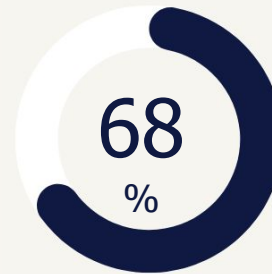
human engagement anchors the digital future of talent acquisition.

The hiring market relies on multi-channel sourcing, yet it remains fundamentally built on relationships.

Digital platforms and job boards provide broad reach, but human connections, such as recruitment agencies, are irreplaceable. We see this clearly with younger generations: Gen Z and Millennials use AI as a search tool, but even the most tech-savvy Gen Z talent still prefer a face-to-face conversation when it counts. To hire effectively in 2026, the strategy has to be hybrid, using AI for the outreach, but use real human engagement to secure the talent.



of talent utilise recruitment agencies as a vital bridge in their job search, ranking second only to job boards.



of Gen Z view in-person contact as critically important during the application phase, outpacing all other generations.





attributes of
an ideal employer.

work-life balance remains the leading EVP driver for talent in 2026.

Work-life balance is no longer just a lifestyle choice in Hong Kong, but its importance has actively surged. Faced with a challenging macroeconomic environment and fewer jobs available, people are staying put to protect their security. At the same time, companies are increasingly leaning on digital tools and automation to drive efficiency, which often leads to leaner internal teams. This leaves the remaining staff to handle heavier workload and do more with less. The resulting pressure is causing widespread burnout, turning work-life balance from a 'nice-to-have' perk into a necessity.

2026

1	work-life balance	56%
2	salary & benefits	52%
3	job security	43%
4	career progression	39%
5	pleasant work atmosphere	38%

2025

1	work-life balance	50%
2	salary & benefits	49%
3	financially healthy	42%
4	job security	40%
5	equity	35%

2024

1	salary & benefits	47%
2	work-life balance	46%
3	financially healthy	39%
4	job security	38%
5	equity	33%

generational differences in what employees seek in an ideal employer.

While fair pay and a good work-life balance are the baseline for everyone, their secondary priorities shift with age.

- Gen Z places a unique premium on a positive, engaging workplace culture to help them thrive as they start their careers.
- In contrast, for Millennials and Gen X, stability takes over as they prioritise job security when choosing employer.

gen z

(born 1997-2012)

- 1 48%
good work-life balance
- 2 48%
competitive salary and benefits
- 3 39%
pleasant work atmosphere
- 4 38%
career progression opportunities
- 5 38%
job security

millennials

(born 1981-1996)

- 1 57%
good work-life balance
- 2 50%
competitive salary and benefits
- 3 42%
job security
- 4 40%
career progression opportunities
- 5 37%
pleasant work atmosphere

gen x

(born 1965-1980)

- 1 59%
good work-life balance
- 2 58%
competitive salary and benefits
- 3 49%
job security
- 4 38%
pleasant work atmosphere
- 5 36%
career progression opportunities

work-life balance & attractive salary and benefits

2 unmet talent expectations.

evaluation of current employer

1. job security
2. easy access to work
3. work-life balance
4. equal opportunities
5. very good reputation
6. pleasant work atmosphere
7. salary & benefits
8. career progression
9. strong management/leadership
10. benefits the environment and society
11. interesting job content
12. state-of-the-art technology

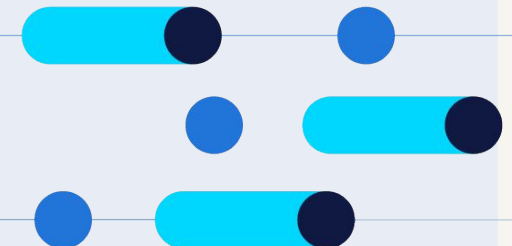
profile of ideal employer

1. work-life balance
2. salary & benefits
3. job security
4. career progression
5. pleasant work atmosphere
6. equal opportunities
7. strong management/leadership
8. very good reputation
9. easy access to work
10. interesting job content
11. benefits the environment and society
12. state-of-the-art technology

Employers are navigating a complex landscape this year, as only two of the top five things talent actually wants are being successfully delivered.

Currently, 'job security' is the market's greatest strength, and 'work-life balance' is performing reasonably well as one of the top 3 EVP.

However, "salary and benefits" ranks the second in what talent are looking for in an employer, but it continues to show the greatest gap between employee expectations and perceived reality, ranking as the #2 priority but only #7 in actual performance.



Q. How would you rate your own employer on each of the attributes below, on a scale from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (completely true)?
Q. Thinking about your ideal employer, please pick those elements that this organisation should most definitely have.

strategic deep dive
into core talent
drivers.



reliable pay & benefits contribute to a strong sense of job security.

When we look at what 'job security' actually means to talent in Hong Kong, reliable pay and benefits emerge as the dominant driver of perceived job security (66%), far outpacing other factors.

Beyond pay and benefits, the second pillar is built on the company's own financial health and stability. After that, employees look for fair treatment, recognition, and honest communication.

In a shifting economy, people are moving away from promises and looking for 'concrete markers'. They want to know their pay is dependable, their company is resilient, and the management is transparent. Essentially, trust is built on tangible results, not just words.

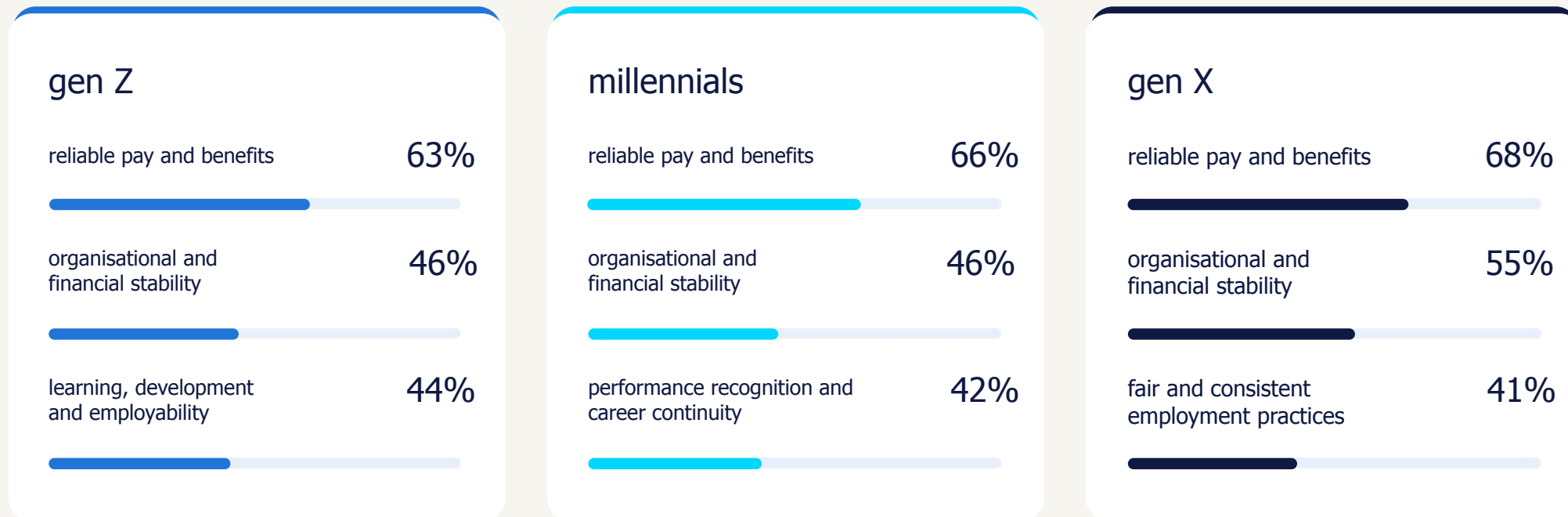
the elements that most significantly contribute to
a strong sense of job security



how different generations see job security.

While reliable pay and organisational stability form a universal baseline of security across all generations, their third priorities sharply diverge by life stage. Gen Z looks to the future and seeks security through learning and employability (44%). Millennials prioritise performance recognition and career continuity (42%), while gen X demands fair and consistent workplace practices (41%). For employers, this indicates that once the financial basics are met, “security” must be tailored to the generation.

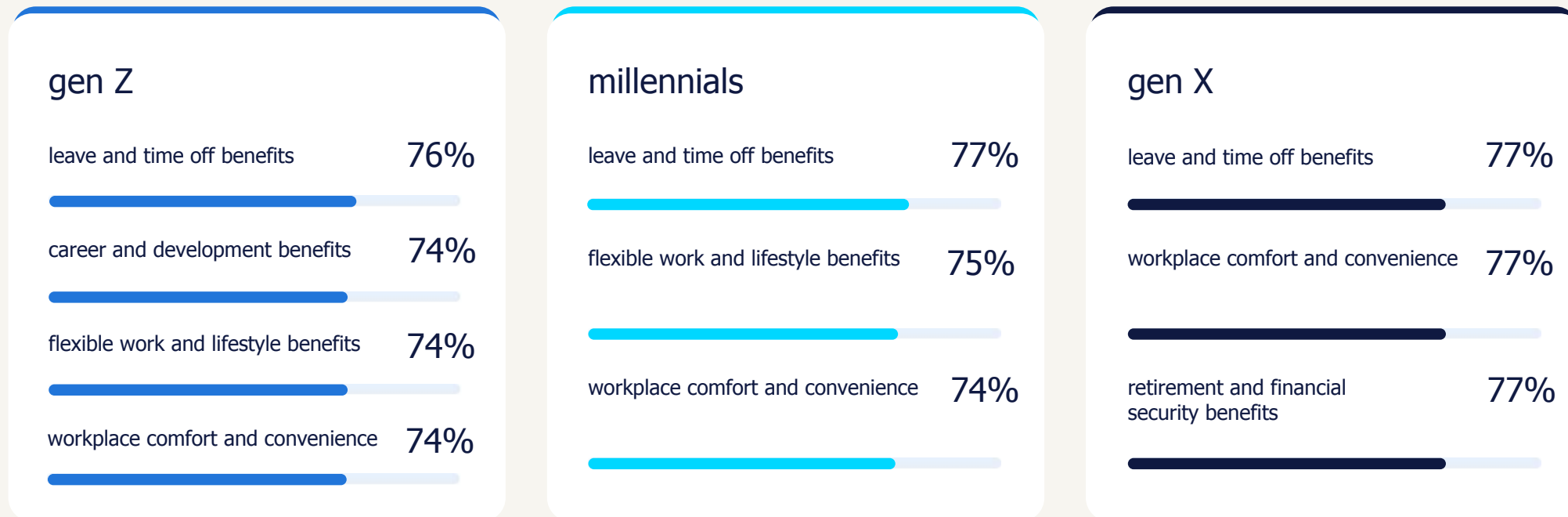
the elements that most significantly contribute to a strong sense of job security by generation



hongkongers set a uniformly high baseline for secondary benefits.

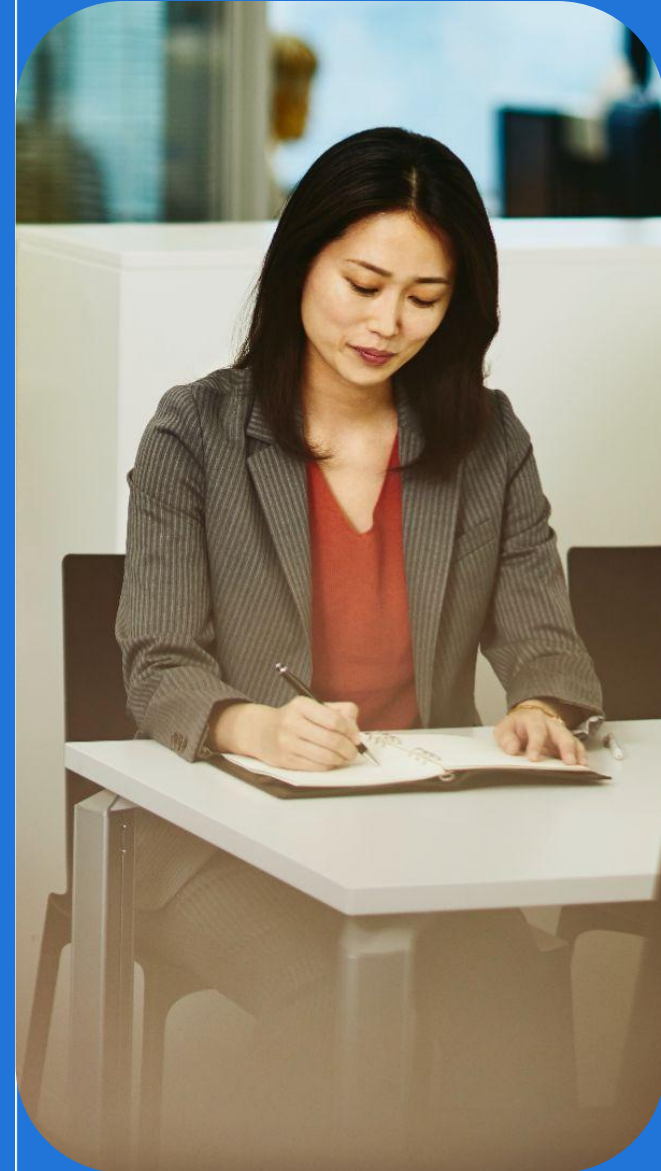
For secondary benefits, hong kong Gen Z and Millennials talent still values work-life balance related benefits, such as time off, flexible work arrangements and convenient workplace to be more important than financial security or culture. For Gen X, this is slightly different. It's work-life balance related benefits and financial security benefits as equally important at 77%.

the relative importance of secondary benefits by generation



Q. Please rate the importance of the following secondary benefits to you.

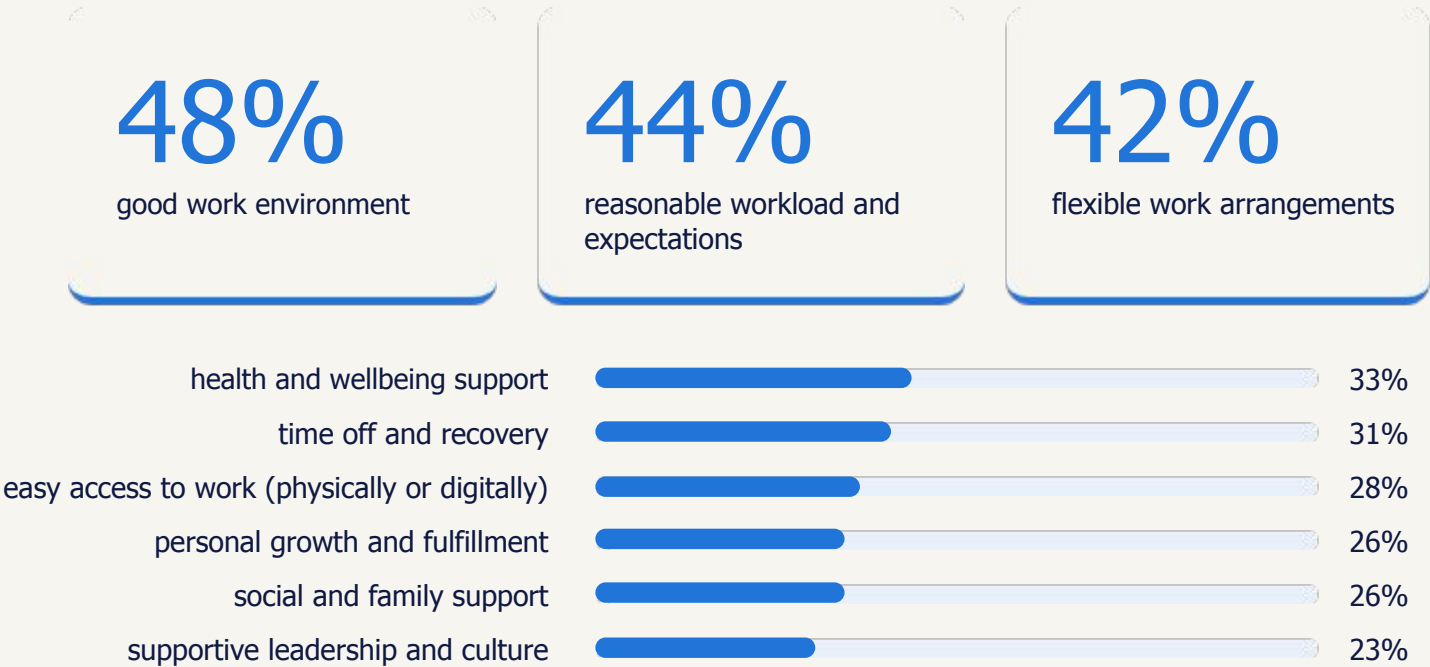
what work-life balance
really means to talent.



elements that strengthen work-life balance.

talent prioritises practical work environments and adequate recovery over softer cultural elements.

the elements that most significantly enhance a healthy work-life balance



In Hong Kong, work-life balance isn't a feeling. It's a set of tangible conditions. The data shows that balance is driven by a good work environment, reasonable workloads, and flexible arrangements.

Health support (33%), time off (31%), and easy access to work (28%) also rank high, while "soft" factors like supportive leadership and culture trails far behind.

This confirms that work-life balance is not a cultural afterthought for Hongkongers. It requires concrete workplace standards, standard workload management discipline, and flexible policies to deliver meaningful results.



“work-life balance” definition is different across generations.

As organisational changes and automation increase individual responsibilities, work-life balance is no longer about perks, it is about managing the daily workload. A positive work environment is a universal priority as talent seeks to avoid burnout.

However, generational approaches to managing this work-life balance differ.

- Gen Z prioritises flexible work arrangements to handle these demands on their own terms.
- Millennials and Gen X focus directly on workload and place a stronger emphasis on reasonable workloads to establish clear boundaries in a demanding market.

elements that most significantly enhance work-life balance by generation



Q. What are the top three elements that most significantly enhance a healthy work-life balance?

what made talent switch jobs.

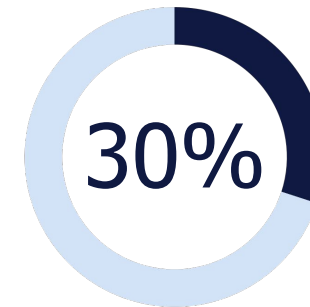
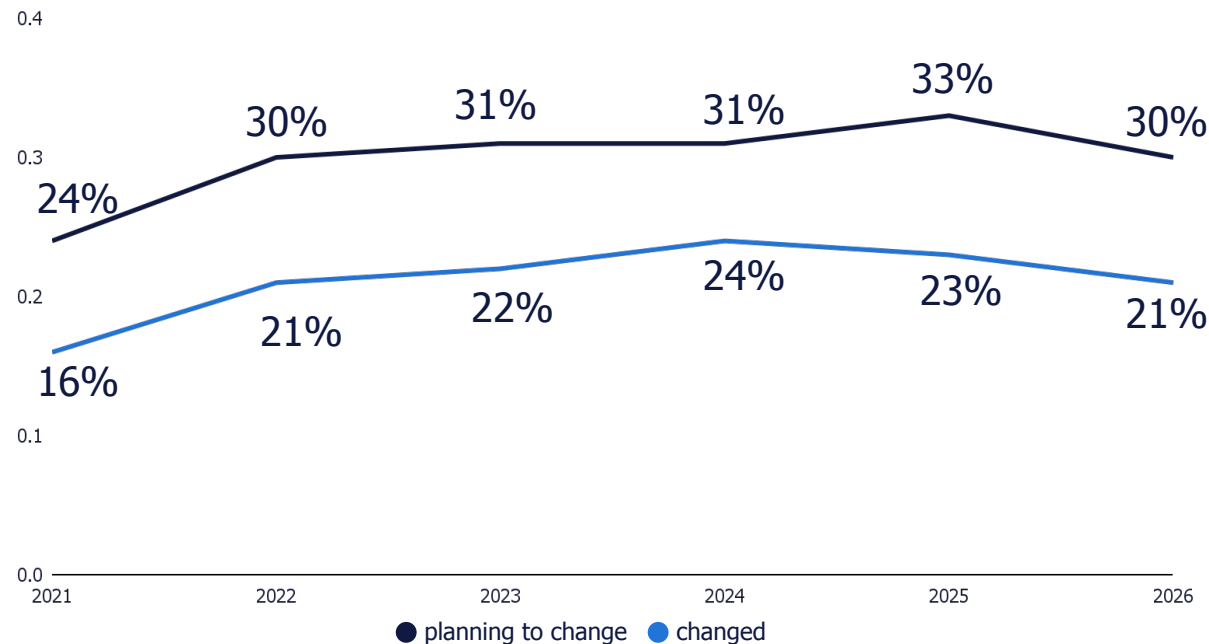


the rise of "job hugging": market caution stalls actual movement.

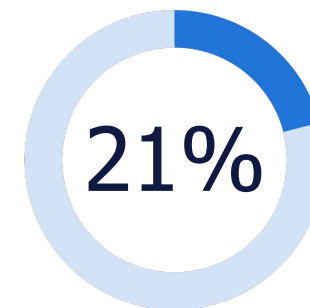
In Hong Kong, the desire to change jobs continues to outpace actual movement, though both metrics have declined since 2025. This gap reveals a trend of "job hugging" where employees stay put out of necessity rather than genuine engagement.

Facing a challenging macroeconomic environment and organisational changes, talent is increasingly choosing security over mobility, anchored to current roles by external market risks.

have changed employers in the last 6 months of 2025



is planning to change jobs within the first 6 months of 2026

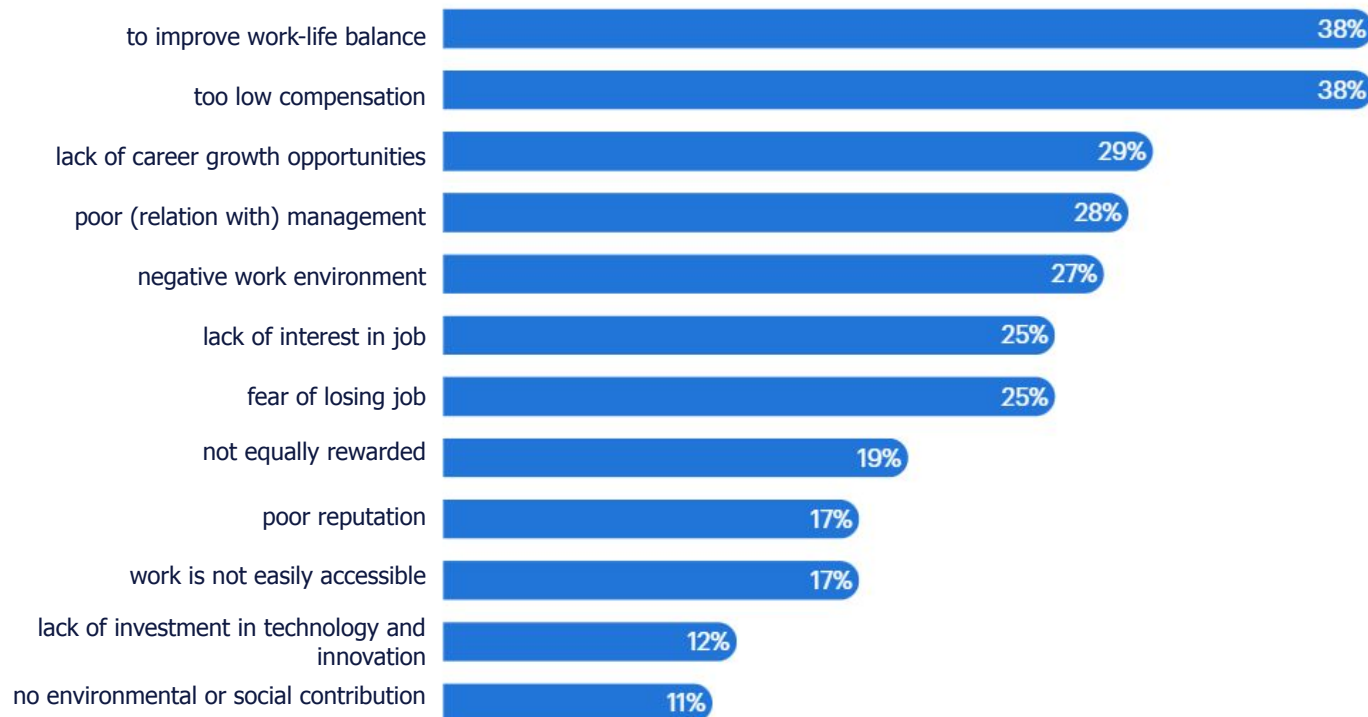


have changed employer in the last 6 months of 2025

the triggers of attrition: why talent leaves.

Hong Kong talent leave an employer because of low compensation, work-life balance concerns and limited career growth.

reasons for leaving



When "job hugging" ends, the decision to resign is driven by three clear catalysts:

- **Workload and Value:** The need to improve work-life balance is the leading trigger, followed closely by compensation that fails to match increased responsibilities.
- **Future-Proofing:** A lack of growth opportunities forces talent to look elsewhere. Similarly, when organisational changes loom, some choose to move proactively rather than risk instability.
- **Leadership and Environment:** Management remains the final breaking point. If leadership fails to support teams through demanding periods, passive loyalty quickly transforms into active attrition.



financial rewards and work-life balance are the primary turnover catalysts across generations.

Gen X is most sensitive to compensation gaps, whilst Millennials prioritise work-life balance.

reasons for leaving by generation

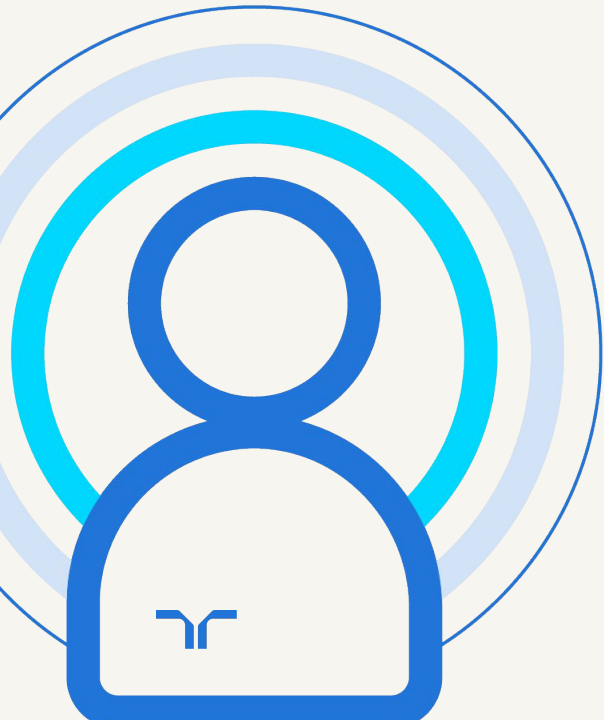


AI powers the
search, human
connection closes
the deal.

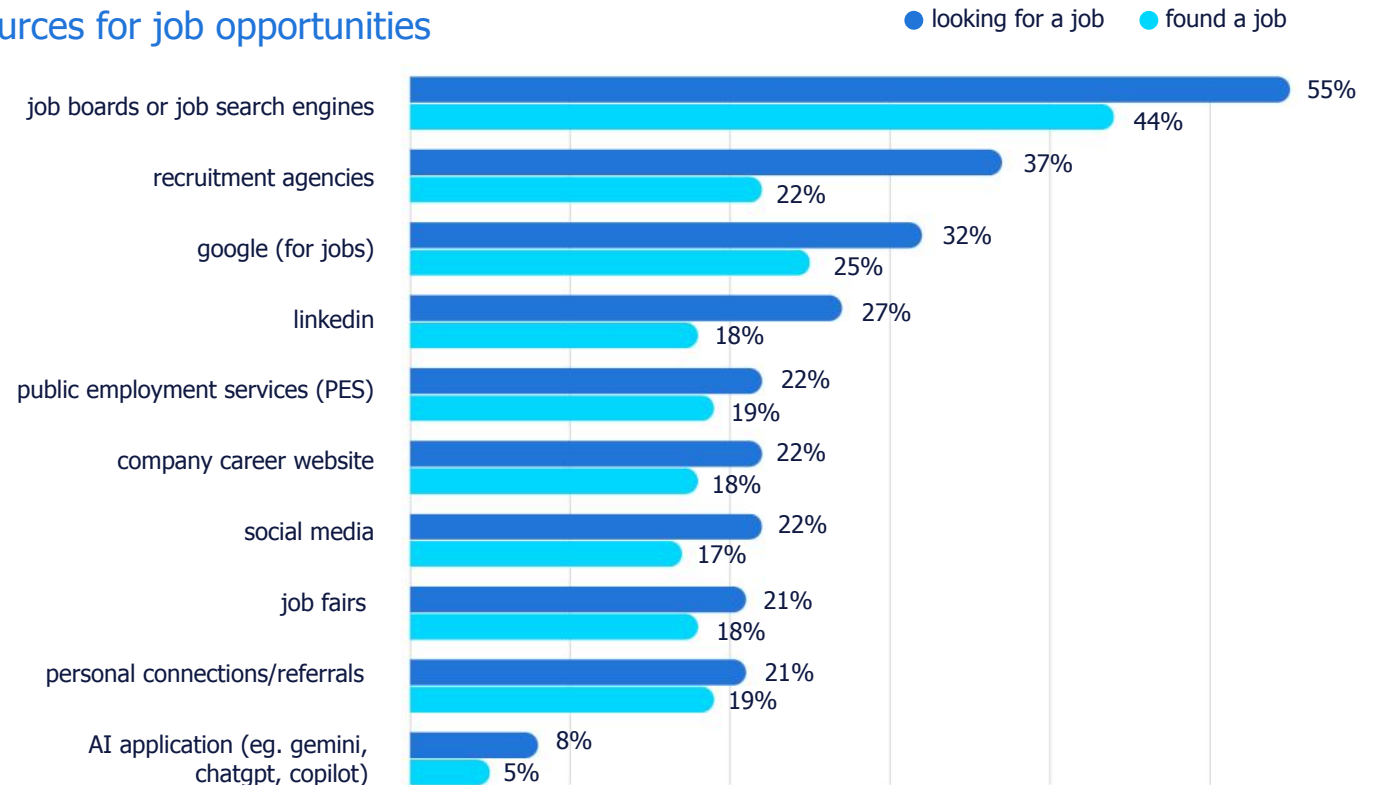


beyond digital volume, human-led channels remain the decisive factor alongside emerging AI.

Despite the rise of AI, the 'human touch' remains the gold standard for job seekers. Talent still heavily favours recruitment agencies and personal networks over automated platforms.



sources for job opportunities



younger talent drives the adoption of AI as a job search channel.

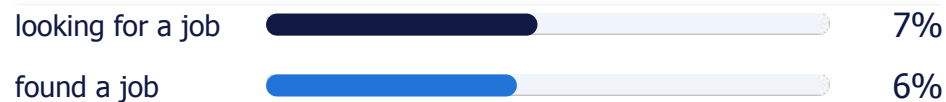
gen Z leads the exploration of AI tools, yet final job success across all generations continues to rely on human-led connections and trust.

AI application for job opportunities by generation

gen Z



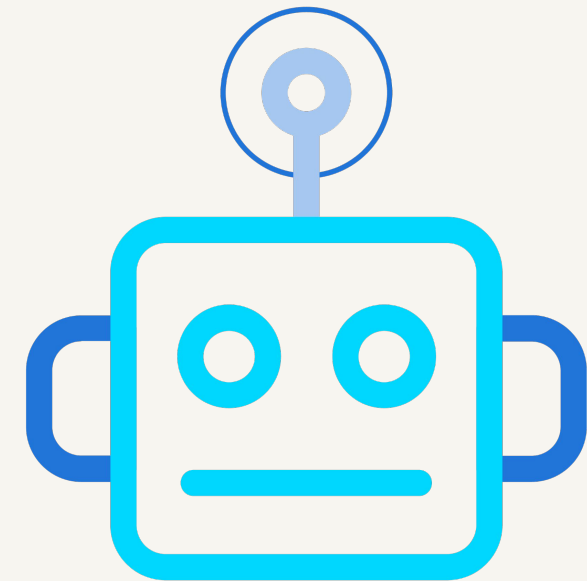
millennials



gen X



AI acts as a digital facilitator rather than a replacement for human judgement. even for digital-first generations, the depth of human relationships remains the indispensable closer in the talent acquisition journey.



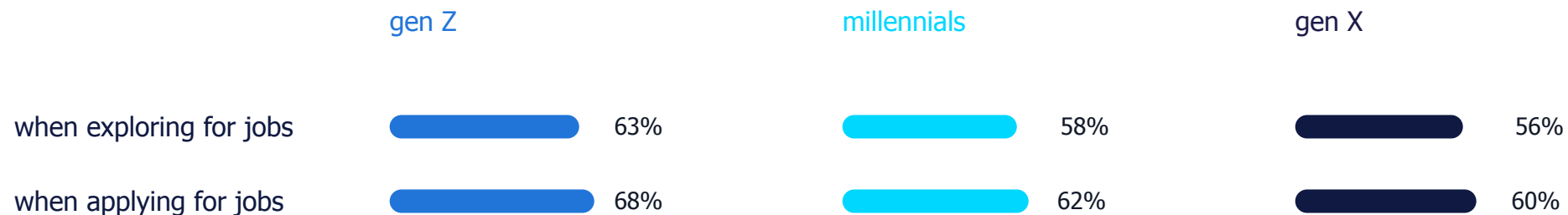
Q. Through which of the following job search channels have you used to look for a job?
Q. Through which of the following job search channels did you find a job?

human connection remains the non-negotiable anchor in the hiring process.

Though highly digitally savvy, Gen Z demands the highest level of in-person interaction in the job search. Automated, AI-driven recruitment simply cannot provide the deep personalisation they require.

For these younger talent, direct human connection is a non-negotiable requirement. They rely on face-to-face interaction for psychological reassurance, to verify genuine career growth, and to evaluate workplace culture firsthand before accepting an offer.

importance of in-person contact



about randstad.

Randstad is the world's leading talent company with the vision to be the world's most equitable and specialised talent company. We are a partner of choice for talent and clients. We have a deep understanding of the labour market and through our four specialisations – Operational, Professional, Digital and Enterprise – help our clients create the high-quality, diverse and agile workforces they need to succeed. We are committed to providing equitable opportunities to people from all backgrounds and help them remain relevant in the rapidly changing world of work. Through the value we create, we are committed to making the world of work better for all.



€ 23,077

revenue in millions (2025)



560,900

number of talent working globally
(on a weekly basis)



38,480

corporate employees



4,034

outlets in 39 markets



1,700,000

talent placed



52%

women in
management positions



included in AEX ESG Index

included in Dow Jones Sustainability Index

about employer brand research.

Randstad Employer Brand Research 2026 explores the views of working people in Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin and North America. Data was collected from over 166,000 respondents in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Chile, Chinese Mainland, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong SAR, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay in January 2026.

For this research, Randstad partnered with Kantar, a global research and analysis firm. Randstad Hong Kong has participated in the Employer Brand Research since 2013.

You can explore more employer branding insights and year-on-year trends on our Randstad Hong Kong website.



hongkong@randstad.com.hk
+852 2232 3408



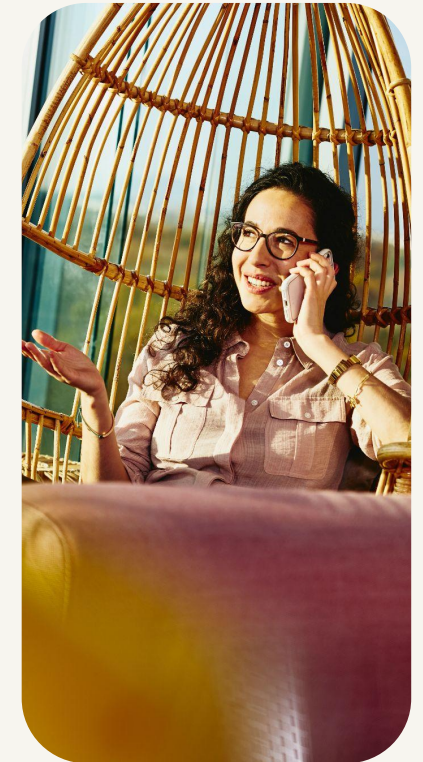
LinkedIn
linkedin.com/company/randstad-hong-kong/



Facebook
facebook.com/Randstad.HK



Instagram
instagram.com/randstadhksar



A man and a woman are seated in large, modern green armchairs in a bright office space. The woman, on the left, has curly hair and is wearing a light-colored blouse. The man, on the right, has a beard and is wearing a red blazer over a white shirt and yellow-rimmed glasses. They are engaged in a conversation. In the foreground, a red water cooler with two white mugs sits on the floor. The background features large windows overlooking a dense urban skyline with tall buildings. The text "industry employer brand performance." is overlaid in white on the lower left side of the image.

industry employer
brand performance.

2026: industry employer brand performance.

awareness & attractiveness



2026: industry employer brand performance.

employee value proposition scores.

	EVP #1	EVP #2	EVP #3
banking & financial services	strong management/leadership	good reputation	competitive salary and benefits
food & beverage	equal opportunities	access to work	strong management/leadership good reputation
FMCG & consumer	good reputation	strong management/leadership	equal opportunities
insurance	equal opportunities strong management/leadership	access to work	good reputation
IT & T	state-of-the-art technology	equal opportunities strong management/leadership access to work	job security
leisure & tourism	good reputation	career progression	strong management/leadership
luxury & retail	good reputation	strong management/leadership	pleasant work atmosphere
property, real estate	good reputation strong management/leadership	job security	career progression
utilities & infrastructure	job security	career progression strong management/leadership	good reputation

appendix.

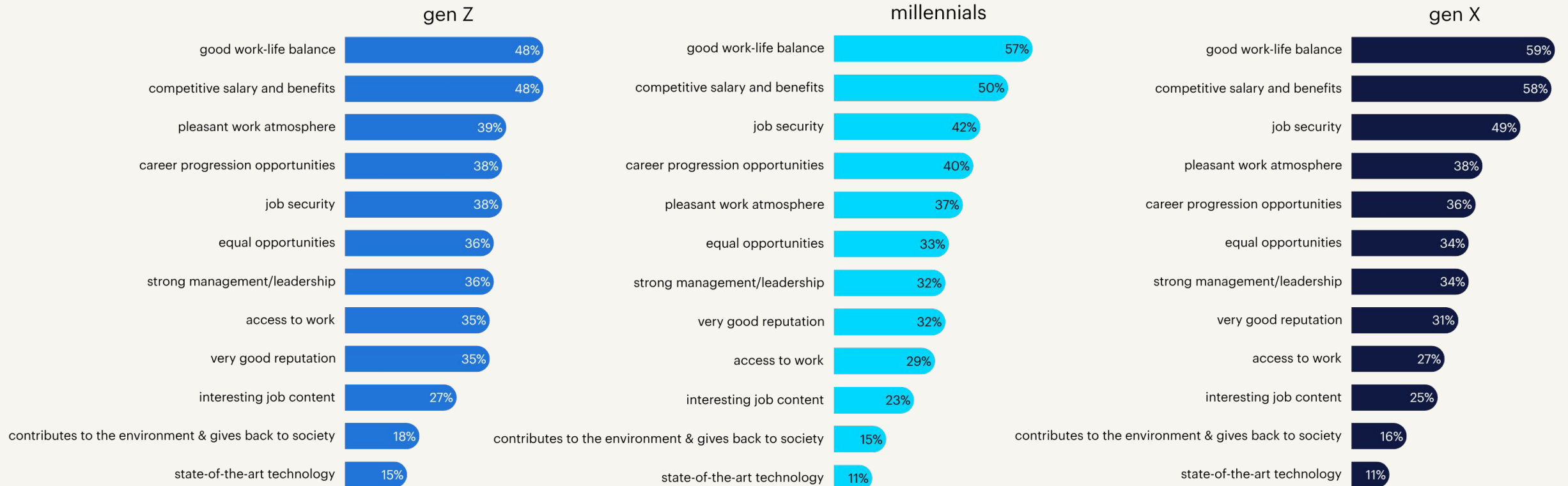
employee value proposition: all respondents.

value proposition

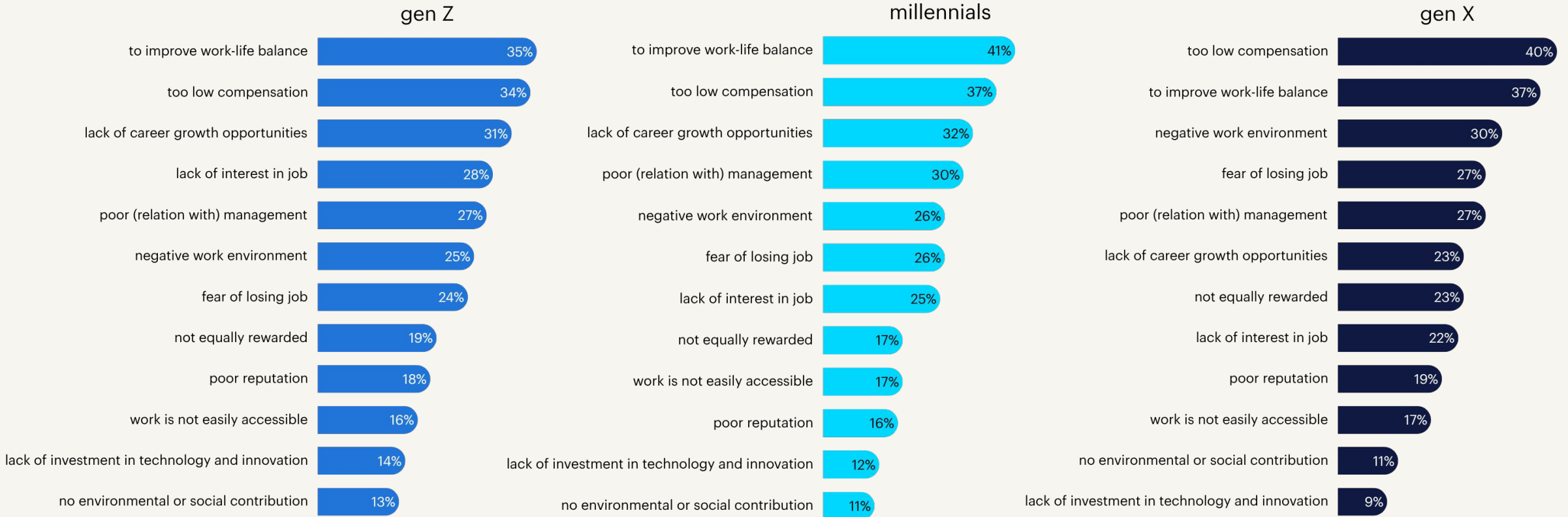
all respondents



employee value proposition: generations.

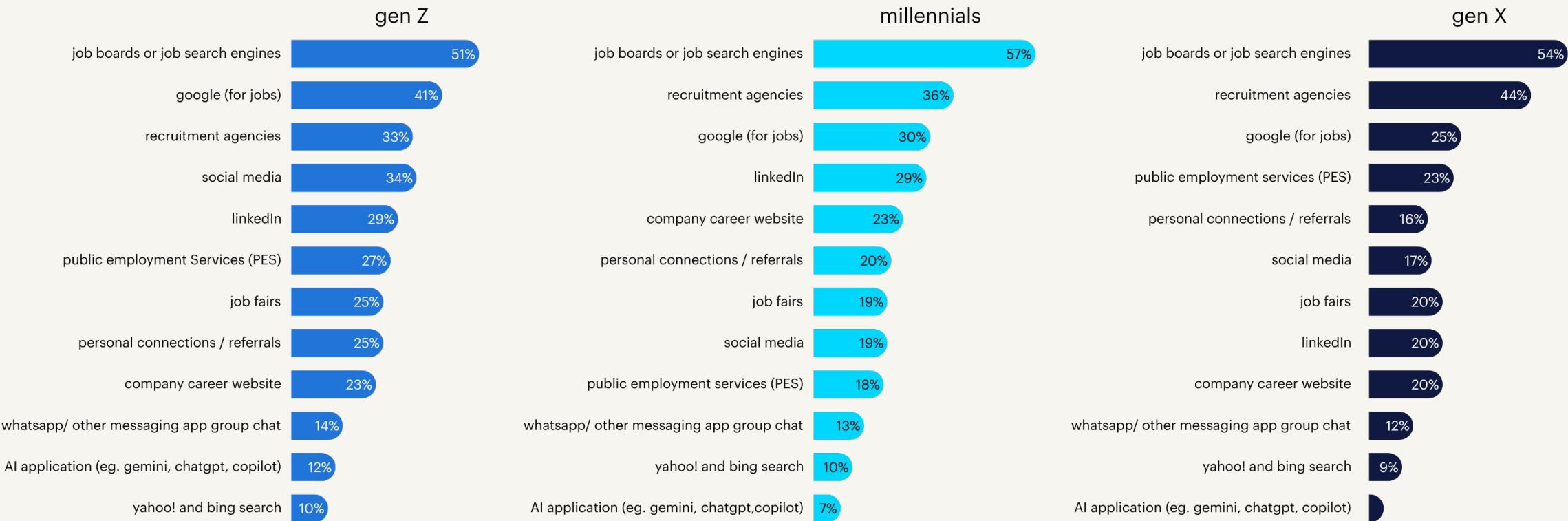


reasons to leave an employer: generations.

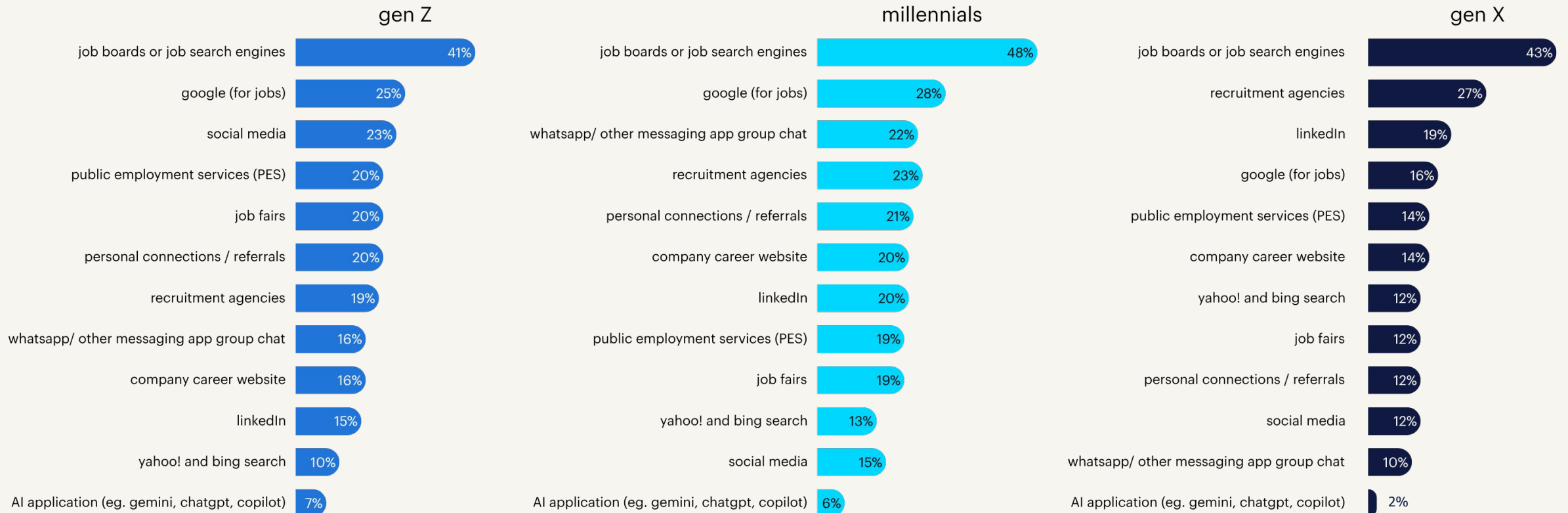


Q. For what reasons did you or would you decide to leave your employer?

channels used by job seekers: by generations.



channels used by talent who found new jobs: by generations.



Q. Through which of the following job search channels have you used to look for a job?
 Q. Through which of the following job search channels did you find a job?

partner
for talent.

