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Innovative working environment

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ANTAL AND SODEXO POLAND SURVEY

Innovative working environment

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“Companies in the most innovative economies invest in research, technology, training and employee development, build modern environments and infrastructure within the company to generate innovation.”

Introduction

Innovation can be defined as the ability and interest of society, especially entrepreneurs and scientists, to conduct research and search for solutions to improve efficiency, improve technology or create new products.

These activities, as a result, are expected to lead to improvements in the competitiveness of specific companies, which can affect the economic development of regions or even countries.

Innovations are utilised in every sector of the economy. Their search and application is, on the one hand, very risky and unpredictable, but on the other hand, it is also an opportunity for a company to maintain and even strengthen its market position¹.

On a macroeconomic scale, innovation is considered one of the main factors in economic growth. From a microeconomic perspective, the implementation of innovations makes it possible to, among other things, reduce production costs, improve quality, expand the range of products offered, better meet the needs of consumers, respond more quickly to changes in buyers'

expectations, reduce the consumption of raw materials and energy, reduce the environmental impact of production and increase labour safety.

In summary, innovation increases the competitiveness of individual enterprises and, through this, the entire economy².

It is used to be thought that innovative activity in services is more about the assimilation of new technologies, while industry is the creator of new technological solutions, that in the activities of manufacturing companies, technologies have their source in independently conducted development research, while service innovations are mostly based on externally acquired knowledge.

It is worth noting that as important as in manufacturing activities, in the case of service innovations the source of new knowledge is the employees, their creativity, entrepreneurship and level of knowledge and qualifications.

¹ Innowacje w organizacjach, Kędzierska-Szczepaniak

² Innowacyjność w polskiej i światowej gospodarce, Koło Naukowe Ekonomistów Wydziału Ekonomicznego Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej w Lublinie

Perhaps it is even in service activities that a greater emphasis is placed on employee training and the acquisition of new knowledge than in the manufacturing sector³.

In the context of the importance of innovation for the country's economic development, it is important to take into account the rather low level of innovation in Poland.

In the latest edition of the European Commission's cyclical ranking, the *European Innovation Ranking*, Poland scored 0.33, which is the fourth from the bottom among EU countries and the tenth among all countries surveyed.

The biggest innovator for years has been **Switzerland**, whose innovation level in this year's ranking was 0.77. Among the EU countries, the best result was once again achieved by the Scandinavian countries: **Sweden** (0.74), **Finland** (0.73) and **Denmark** (0.73).

Compared to the 2015 ranking, Poland's score improved by 0.06 points, indicating an innovation growth rate very close to the EU average (0.05).

In comparison, the biggest quantitative leap was recorded in Cyprus (0.19 increase) and Greece and Estonia (0.12 each). Poland has remained in a similar position in the ranking since 2015.

The European Ranking Innovation Index consists of 32 factors grouped into **four categories**:

- 1. GENERAL CONDITIONS**
(i.e., level of digitisation, education and attractiveness of research activities),
- 2. INVESTMENT**
(financing and support, business investment, use of new technologies),
- 3. INNOVATION ACTIVITIES:**
 - innovators (including product innovation companies),
 - linkages, intellectual assets (including product innovation companies, professional mobility of employees in science and technology, patent applications) and
- 4. IMPACTS:**
 - employment,
 - sales of product innovation,
 - environmental sustainability.

According to the latest installment of WIPO's *Global Innovation Index 2022* ranking, **Switzerland has been hailed as the world's most innovative economy**, closely followed on the podium by the **United States** and **Sweden**.

Data is evaluated in the following areas:

- institutions,
- human capital and research,
- infrastructure,
- market sophistication,
- business sophistication,
- knowledge and technology products,
- creative products.

This means no less than that:

Companies in the most innovative economies invest in research, technology, training and employee development, build modern environments and infrastructure within the company to generate innovation.

These activities are a step prior to the introduction of an innovative product or operating model, rather than a consequence of implementing an innovation and making a company rich.

This is an extremely important difference, and understanding it may be the simplest recipe for the rapid advancement of our economy in future editions of the mentioned rankings.

Poland ranked 38th with a score of 37.5 points. Compared to the 2021 edition, we dropped two positions.

When an entrepreneur launches an innovative product or starts using innovative production methods, the existing rules of the game change for everyone. A new quality is injected into the sales or production process, which makes the company more profitable.

With the success of an innovative company, the situation of its employees should also improve. Such companies generate significant added value, have higher margins and a more stable competitive advantage, so they can pay their employees more. They can likewise invest in their development and training. As they fight for the best candidates in the market, they can also invest in providing higher work comfort and tools that affect ergonomics and productivity. In this way, they create high-paying and creative workplaces that provide professional and financial satisfaction.

However, are we sure that the above-described sequence and cause-and-effect relationship is correct?

It is not without reason that in the aforementioned rankings the components of the innovation index include:

- investment,
- use of technology, or
- education and support for scientific and research development.

³ Innowacyjność przedsiębiorstw sektora usług – nowe ścieżki rozwoju, P. Niedzielski, K. Rychlik, J. Markiewicz

“Innovations are created by people. Therefore, in order for innovations to be created, first of all, people and their needs must be taken care of.”

MARTA STAŃCZAK

SODEXO POLAND

Foreword

Marta Stańczak

CEO CORPORATE SERVICES, SODEXO POLAND

Our country has always been characterized by significant entrepreneurial and innovative potential. This is probably why our GDP has grown faster over the years than in countries with higher levels of innovation. Polish business has a lot of untapped reserves when it comes to innovation, which are just waiting, to be properly supported and unleashed.

On the one hand, this undeveloped potential requires support in the form of systemic solutions, such as investments in education and higher education, the expansion of scientific research centers, the development of an appropriate legal framework for innovation, and increasing financial outlays to support the research and development activities of enterprises. On the other hand, companies in Poland can significantly influence the development of innovation potential on their own, primarily by investing in employees and creating the right conditions for them to develop and generate innovation.

People are the greatest and most valuable resource of any organization. Good business is done by happy people. Employers have a great influence on the level of happiness and motivation of their teams.

If we provide employees with comfort, working conditions adjusted to different needs and tasks, fuel curiosity and the desire for further education and competence development, provide opportunities for co-determination of company rules, reduce the stress caused by the need to combine private and professional life, giving support in daily duties, and finally take care of food, health education and support their passions, we can be sure that our employees will be more engaged and achieve success for themselves and for the organization.

Innovations are created by people. Therefore, in order for innovations to be created, first of all, people and their needs must be taken care of. They should be given access to the necessary resources and conditions in which they can focus on what is really important.

“The priority for Poland should be to remove barriers to increasing innovativeness and create conditions that stimulate the innovativeness of companies. And for companies, priority should be given to activities that potentially stimulate innovation.”

ARTUR SKIBA

ANTAL

Foreword

Artur Skiba

PRESIDENT OF ANTAL

An innovative enterprise is defined as an intelligent enterprise, an enterprise of the future characterised by: high flexibility, commitment to the individual, full use of the potential of teamwork, strong core competencies and a passion for diversity⁴. The innovativeness of economic entities is understood as their ability and motivation to constantly seek and apply in practice the results of scientific research, research and development, new ideas, concepts and inventions⁵.

Thus, the priority for Poland should be to remove barriers to increasing innovativeness and create conditions that stimulate the innovativeness of companies. And for companies, priority should be given to activities that potentially stimulate innovation.

An important factor driving innovation is the workplace.

At Antal, as leaders in the recruitment of specialists and managers and in HR consulting, we look to the further future, we want to be pioneers of innovation in the recruitment market.

We are thirst for knowledge, we follow trends and innovations, we improve our work. We share knowledge and ideas. We do not maintain the status quo, we develop.

In the following analysis, we attempted to answer questions about **what triggers innovation in people and how companies' innovation efforts affect their attractiveness in the eyes of employees and candidates.**

We also put under the microscope factors that can indirectly trigger innovation in employees and influence the perception of companies as an innovative employer.

⁴ Zarządzanie firmą innowacyjną, A. Sosnowska

⁵ Proces innowacji w modelu działalności przedsiębiorstw, W. Janasz

These factors include:

- activities that support work-life balance,
- modern organization of workspace,
- access to technology,
- social responsibility and environmental activities or
- organisational culture.

We are aware that it is people who drive the company's innovation, which is why we see every client, candidate, employee as a human with their stories, talents and dreams. People are our passion, source of knowledge and inspiration..

We connect people, nurture relationships, talk, advise and change lives for the better.

In our opinion, one of the most important solutions for attracting talent to your organisation is precisely an innovative work environment. Innovation is therefore desirable in every aspect of the organisation, including recruitment.

The topic is important for us to address because it is closely related to today's challenges and areas of transformation that increase the need for innovation, and at the same time need to be addressed in order to effectively trigger and increase innovation, and these include:

- **the transformation of the way we work**, i.e. the challenges of remote and hybrid work (*working from anywhere*),
- **the competition for talent** as a result of the increasing mobility of candidates and the *gig economy* trend
- **the accelerating automation and digitisation** of every conceivable field of work, production, services, and the resulting demand for increasingly skilled workers who also have higher demands
- **the growing importance and awareness of *wellbeing* and health** in every aspect (including mental health)
- **the growing importance and awareness of ESG** and the impact of business on the environment and society.
- **increasing costs of doing business**, requiring continuous optimisation and implementation of solutions to reduce costs (e.g., reducing energy consumption, better management of space, fleet, licenses, etc.).

We hope that this report will provide you with richer insight and make it easier for you to make changes for the better, be it within your organisation or your own career path.

I wish you an interesting read,

Artur Skiba

PRESIDENT OF ANTAL

Methodology

The survey was conducted using the CAWI method with a sample of **1 016 professionals and managers** between **September 8 - 18, 2022**.

PART 1

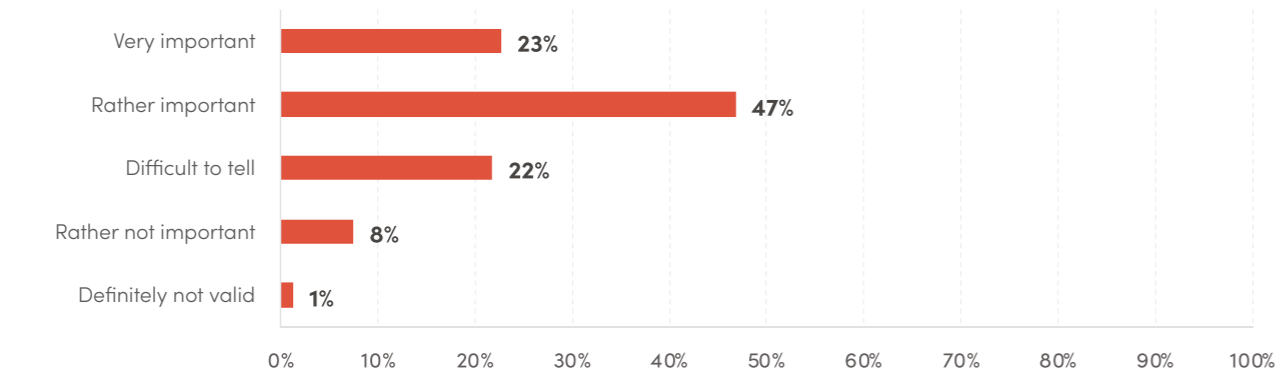
Innovative Company

1.01. Innovative Company

Innovation has a positive impact on a company's brand and is an important factor considered by potential candidates when choosing a future employer.

This is the opinion of the vast majority, 7 out of 10 respondents. Only one in 10 respondents say that this criterion is unimportant when choosing an employer.

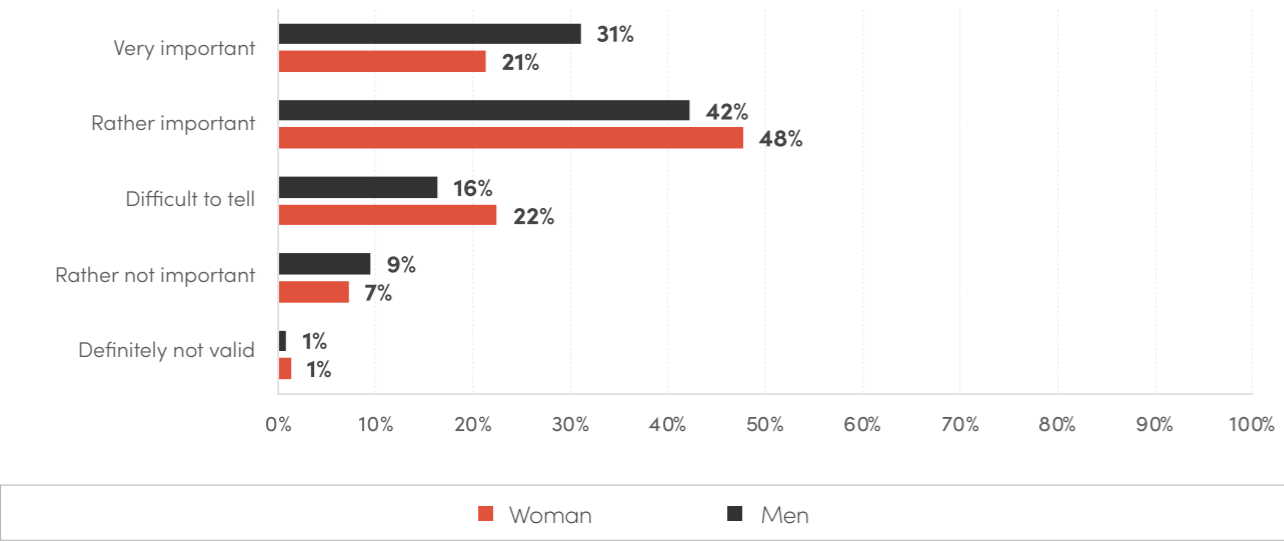
CHART 1.1.
How important is a company's innovation to you when choosing an employer?



Innovation of the organisation when choosing an employer is an important part of the offer regardless of gender.

As indicated by 69% of women and 73% of men, both sexes care about their organisation engaging in innovative activities.

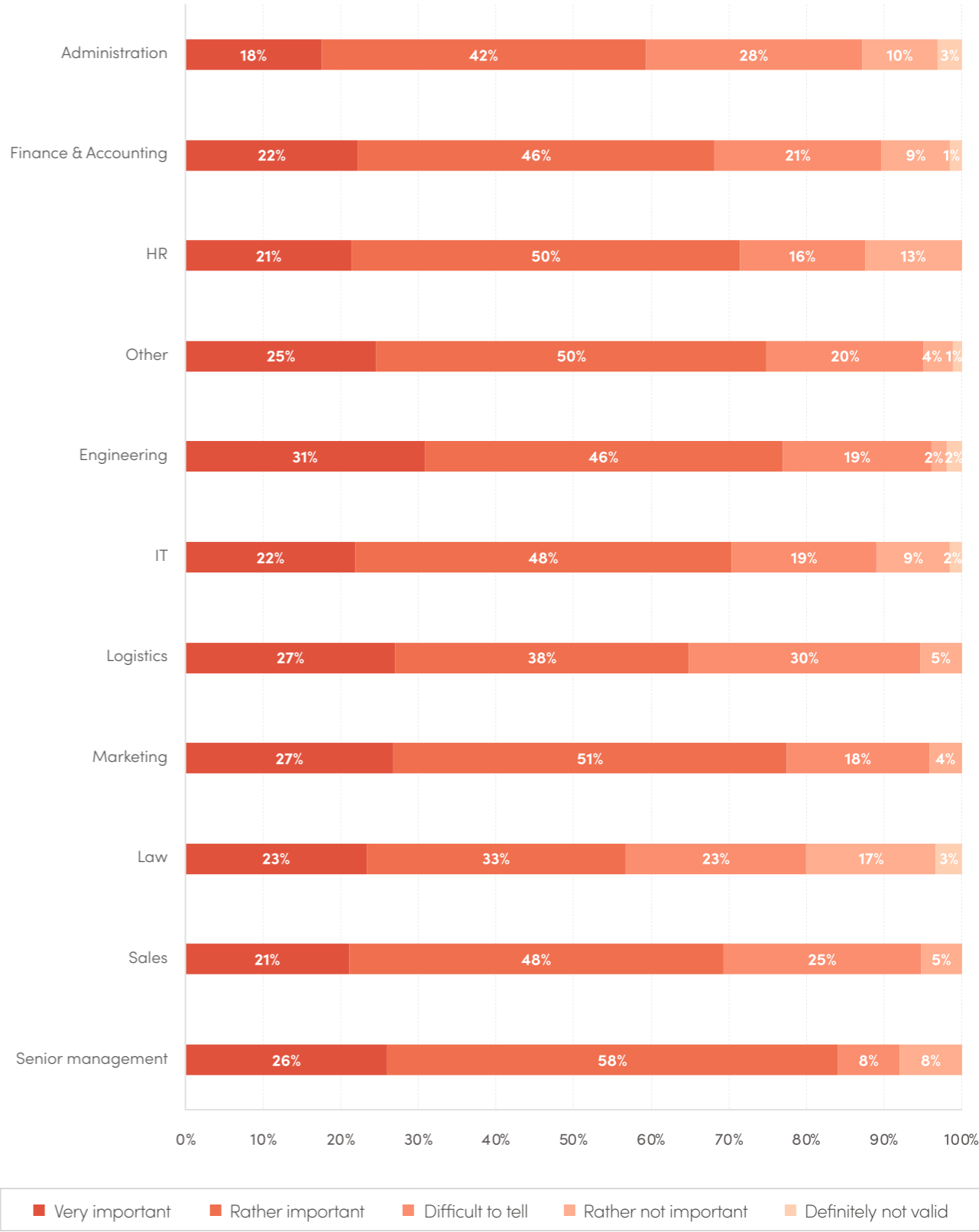
CHART 1.2.
How important is a company's innovation to you when choosing an employer?
(BY GENDER)



Among senior executives (84%), innovation is an important aspect when choosing a workplace. Innovation is also key factor for 77% of engineers and those working in marketing.

Innovation as not an important aspect when choosing an employer is most often indicated by lawyers (20%), HR (13%) and administration (13%).

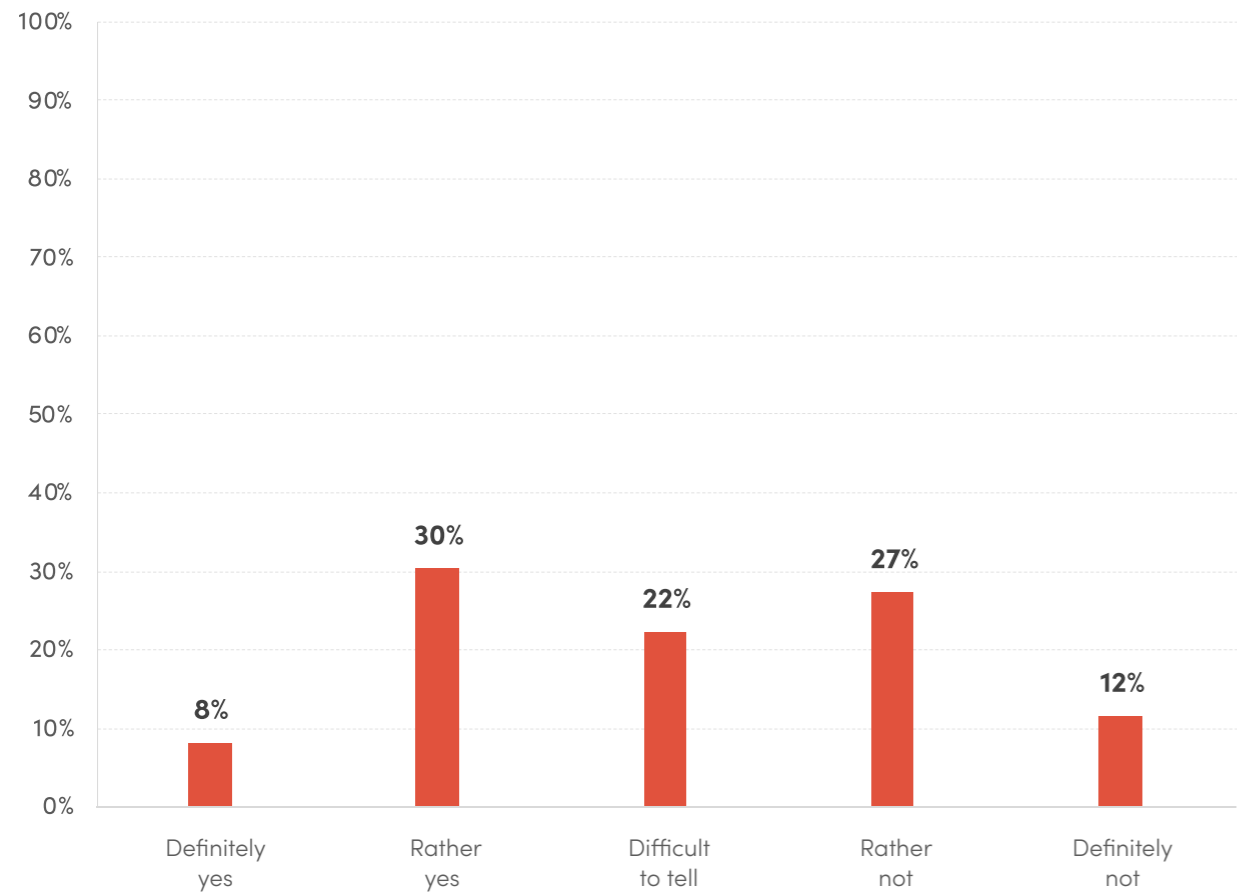
CHART 1.3.
How important is a company's innovation to you when choosing an employer?



And how do respondents rate the level of innovation of their current employer? 4 in 10 consider their current workplace to be innovative, with only 1 in 10 being completely convinced of this (answer: "definitely yes"). A similar percentage of respondents describe their current company as non-innovative.

These data indicate that Polish companies have a lot to work to do in terms of innovation. All the more so because, according to a Deloitte report, 81% of employees at digitally mature companies consider innovation to be a strength and competitive advantage for their organisations⁶.

CHART 1.4.
Would you describe your current workplace as innovative?

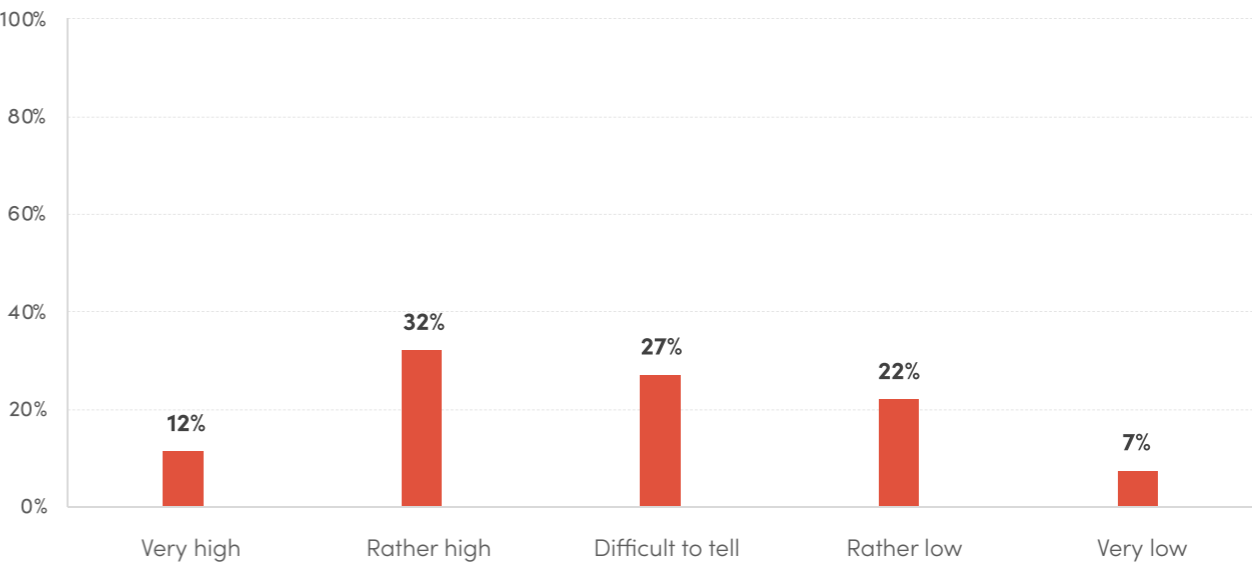


Interestingly, the distribution of responses to the question "What is the priority of innovation in your organisation" and some discrepancies when compared with the question about the evaluation of innovation of the current employer may suggest that some companies are in the early stages of innovative transformation; they are looking for ways to increase

innovation and make it a priority, but in the perception of employees, the road is still long and winding. At the same time, innovation is a low priority for the employer according to 3 in 10 respondents.

⁶ Accelerating Digital Innovation Inside and Out Agile Teams, Ecosystems, and Ethics, by Gerald C. Kane, Doug Palmer, Anh Nguyen Phillips, David Kiron, and Natasha Buckley; June 2019 Research report

CHART 1.5.
What is the priority for innovation in your organisation?

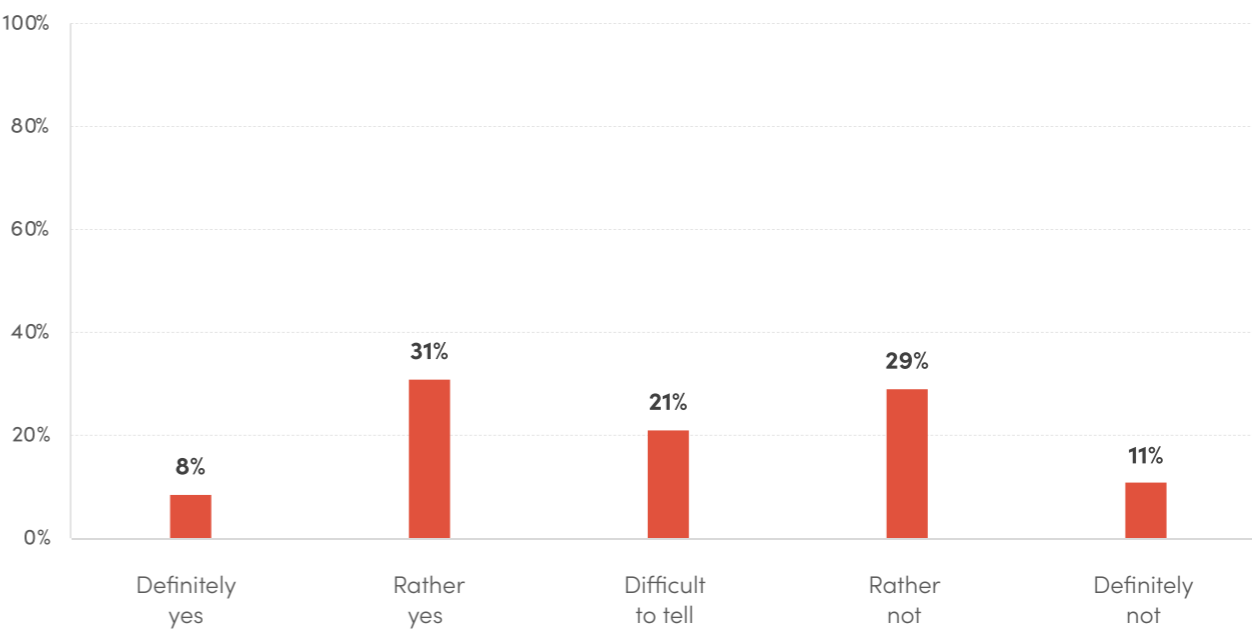


It is also no surprise that an employer's innovativeness correlates strongly with their assessment of the level of innovation of their own way of working.

More than half of economically active people use innovation in the workplace every day. Nearly nine out of ten of them (88 percent) believe that innovative solutions make work easier and more efficient.

The survey, conducted by TNS Poland on behalf of 3M, shows that Poles recognise the great value of innovative solutions at work.

CHART 1.6.
Do you think that you are working in an innovative way in your current workplace?



“Companies face an additional challenge: creating conditions that encourage employees to work for their company based on the design of innovative solutions.”

KATARZYNA SIEMIENKIEWICZ

INNOVATIVE COMPANY

Expert Comment

Katarzyna Siemienkiewicz

LABOR LAW EXPERT, EMPLOYERS OF POLAND

The development of new technologies creates many opportunities for innovation at the sectoral and internal levels. It is an added value not only for business itself, but also creates new perspectives for building the capacity of employees and their role in the operation of companies.

Innovation is associated with the process of improvement, as well as with reorganisation, which does not always generate optimism.

The psychological basis of human functioning accustoms us to operating in a familiar and current reality. Our brain readily accepts the familiar, and changes are not automatically assimilated by us. This mechanism can also be transferred to the problem of innovation in companies. It applies mainly to employees who are just facing the challenges of innovation, not to those who are already in the process or are guided by this factor when choosing an employer.

The results of the survey show that job candidates' interest in the level of innovation in the company is very high. As many as **47% of respondents said that the innovation criterion is rather important to them, and 23% said that it is very important.** Only 1 in 10 respondents said that this condition is rather or definitely not important. These results, in the reality of a labour market that is struggling with a shortage of workers, show that the struggle for a job candidate cannot take place without the involvement of the company's management bodies in building its innovation.

Thus, companies face an additional challenge: creating conditions that encourage employees to work for their company based on the design of innovative solutions. This is another very important factor that creates additional potential for attracting the right personnel.

It is also worth noting that innovation is highly valued by employees who rate their company as innovative. Job candidates' expectations of innovation are reflected in the number of employees who work at innovative companies and choose those that can boast of it. 38% of respondents believe that their company is rather or definitely innovative. Moreover, in most of the organisations where the respondents work, innovation is a high priority; for 12% very high, for 32% rather high.

Thus, labour market participants and observers should strive for the innovation index to have a permanently upward trend. Entrepreneurs cannot shoulder the entire burden of this progress, so cooperation between the business community, academia and policymakers is imperative.

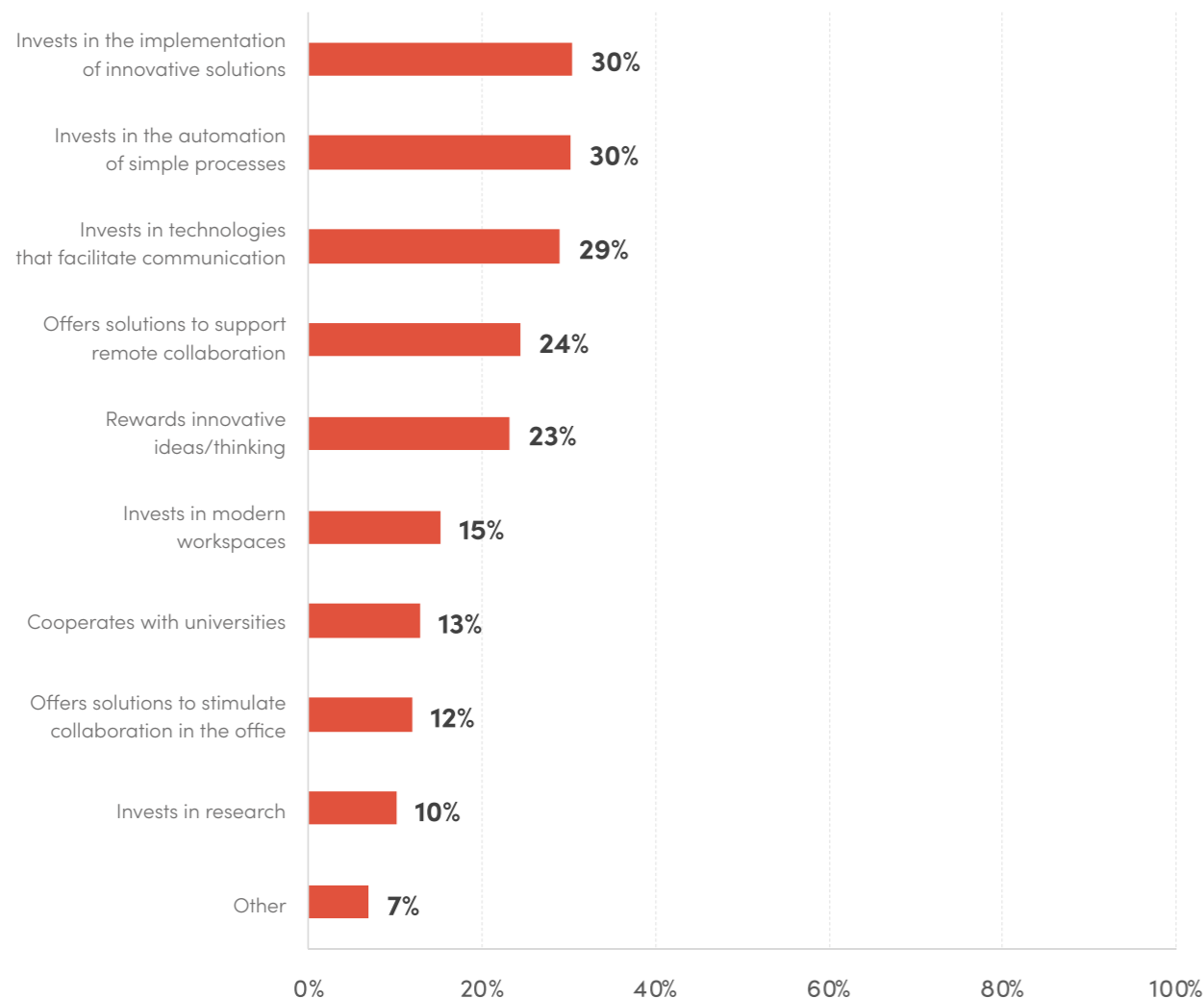
PART 2

How do companies invest in innovation?

How do companies invest in innovation?

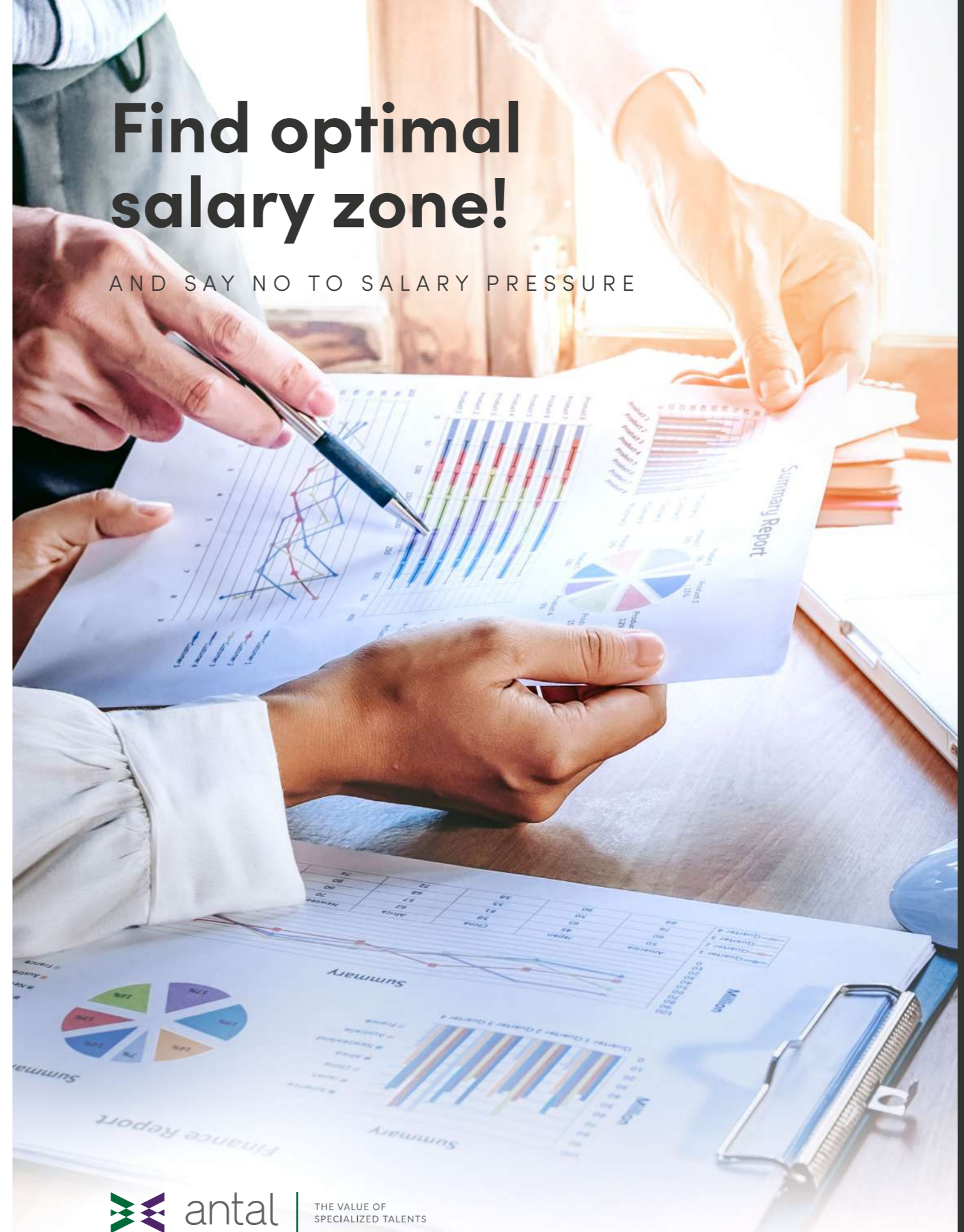
Again, an important driver of innovation according to respondents is the workplace. Respondents see companies' investments in modern workspace (15%) and offering solutions to stimulate collaboration in the workplace (12%) as important manifestations of fostering innovation.

How does your company support innovation?



Respondents were allowed to indicate all the correct answers.

AND SAY NO TO SALARY PRESSURE



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According to research, on average an employee who is changing jobs expects a 22% pay rise. Check the salaries which your company offers against those of the competition and find a safe zone which will prevent staff turnover. **We will be more than happy to provide you with details on the full range of Market Research services.**

“A company culture that, in addition to condoning mistakes, develops the required skills, implements the right processes and supports the entire process of generating innovations, is essential.”

SEBASTIAN SALA

HOW DO COMPANIES INVEST IN INNOVATION?

Expert Comment

Sebastian Sala

BUSINESS UNIT DIRECTOR, SSC/BPO ANTAL

The main finding of the report and the data cited is confirmation that, in the vast majority, companies are investing in innovation. As many as 56% of employees confirm that they feel they have permission in their workplace to make mistakes. And a sense of security, in this regard, is very important for one to try to change reality.

Does the stated investment provide an opportunity to develop ventures that affect processes in terms of the world and not just the organisation? Thanks to our innovations, do we have a chance in Poland to have more startups referred to as unicorns?

It turns out that companies are first of all investing in broadly innovative solutions (30% of declarations), then automation of simple business processes (30% of declarations), and new technologies to facilitate communication (29% of declarations).

Other areas with smaller percentages are also primarily concerned with our day-to-day work, facilities and efficiency.

Only 13% of companies declare cooperation with universities and only 10% invest in research.

45% of companies say they are investing in innovative solutions out of concern for the environment and sustainability.

These figures show that:

Entrepreneurs care about their business, developing it using facilities and implementing innovative solutions, but I would venture to say that as an economy we do not yet have an innovative business culture.

I'm generalising by saying that in Poland, as a business, we don't have an impact through our solutions on global trends.

We provide great business solutions to companies around the world as what are termed 'sub-suppliers'. We implement projects that have a huge impact on the success of projects in a greater 'puzzle', but for the time being we rarely have an impact on the entirety of globally known projects.

In my opinion, we have matured to allow mistakes to be made and to invest fewer resources in projects with a low probability of success.

I perceive at the same time talking to "business" that the situation is changing in favor of those who want to create unicorns.

In my opinion, we are dealing with the classic pyramid of needs according to Maslow, in business terms.

We were not wealthy as an economy, and could not afford the high risk of failure, but as our economy matures, I assume this will continue to change.

This does not mean that funds from organizations with significant financial surpluses do not find their way into the Polish market. They are distributed by funds that glance with a very favourable eye at the gems, realised by Poles.

When thinking about creating an innovative business culture, we can't think only about *decision makers*, because every employee contributes to the process of implementing new ideas that contribute to changing the rules of the game in business.

The most innovative organisations consciously invest in human as well as financial resources in bold, even radical, solutions.

But for this to happen, a company culture that, in addition to condoning mistakes, develops the required skills, implements the right processes and supports the entire process of generating innovations, paying attention to speed and commitment at all levels of the organisation, is essential.

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PART 3

How do companies support employee innovation?

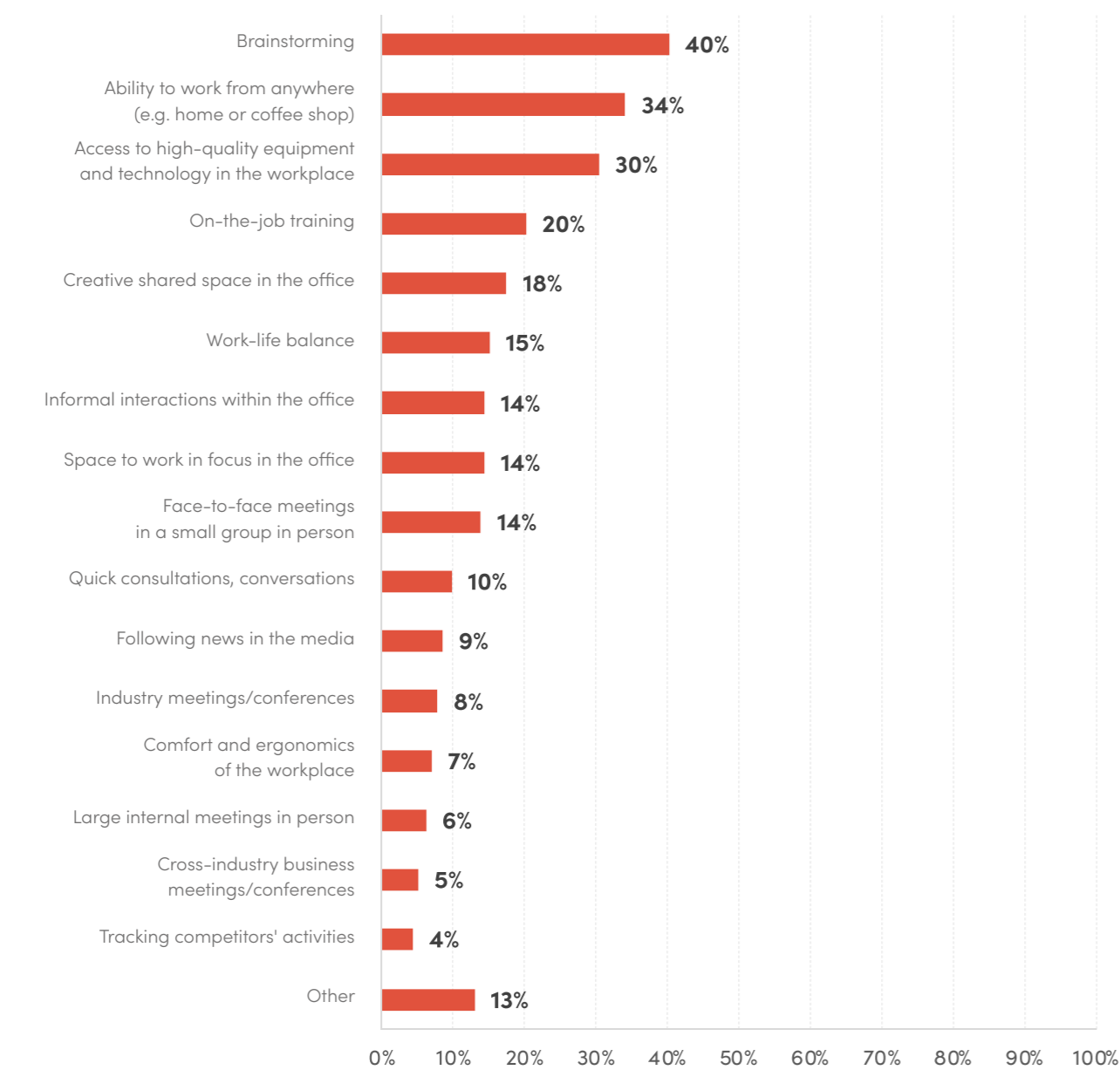
3.01.

Innovative work environment

Companies support employee creativity and innovation in a variety of ways. Brainstorming is most appreciated by respondents, as it was indicated by 40% of them as conducive.

The ability to work from anywhere and access to quality equipment and technology in the workplace are good for creativity according to one third of respondents. Meanwhile, one fifth of respondents indicate on-the-job training as conducive to idea creation and innovation, but webinars or video conferences do not fall into this group.

CHART 3.1.
What encourages you to create ideas and innovation?



Respondents were allowed to indicate all the correct answers.

Before we go into all of the above ways of strengthening innovation, it is worthwhile first as an entrepreneur to consider what keeps employees motivated and to help them find a sense of purpose in a way that allows them to find the energy, passion and commitment in themselves not only to accomplish their own tasks, but also to strengthen innovation and creativity in the workplace.

It is worth taking an individual approach here, because for each employee certain methods may work better or more effectively than others, including what was particularly highlighted during the pandemic period, i.e. **the differences in working from home and working from the office**, which often depend on a number of factors in the employee's life – such as gender, place of residence or the preparedness of the organisation and the employer itself for such a unique situation as COVID-19.

Freedom of choice in what way tasks are performed ranks very high in the expectations of today's employees. In a survey of *Professionals and Managers in the labor market* conducted by Antal, an encouraging element of a job offer for more than half of the respondents is the possibility of remote work and convenient location/good communication. Many post-pandemic employers have decided to return to offices or hybrid work, so the location factor is becoming more important.

“Satisfaction and a friendly atmosphere translate into reduced absence, reduced staff turnover, retention and attraction of top talent.”

PAULINA PANDYA - KRAJ

HOW DO COMPANIES SUPPORT EMPLOYEE INNOVATION?

Expert Comment

Paulina Pandya-Kraj

OFFICE MANAGER, STONEX

According to the International Labor Organization, employees' wellbeing is a key factor in determining an organisation's long-term effectiveness. More innovative companies care about this aspect because they are aware that their most important resources are human resources.

Satisfaction and a friendly atmosphere translate into reduced absence, reduced staff turnover, retention and attraction of top talent.

Wellbeing leads to productivity, greater motivation to perform and satisfaction with achieved results, which fuels creativity.

In companies that pay attention to employee wellbeing, benefits in the form of sports cards, hybrid work opportunities or participation in webinars on self-care are popular. While these forms of employee support are desirable and effective, they do little to build bonds and a sense of team belonging.

In our company, we have introduced community-building activities that involve the entire team.

For almost a year, we have organised monthly themed breakfasts. The meal takes the form of a buffet, where every month we can find traditional dishes from different regions and countries. Such an event has significantly reduced the monotony of work. It is a time when employees from different teams can exchange their insights and current projects.

The interactions during the meal contributed to the formation of new relationships and, in the long run, improved communication and improved work. Besides, conversations in a friendly atmosphere without haste were the beginning of many creative ideas, and such grassroots initiatives build commitment and a sense of team bonding.

Nearly half of the respondents feel that they are definitely allowed to make mistakes at work, but what is noteworthy, twice as many men as women think so.

According to the DELab UW report "Titans of Work. Women on the Labor Market in the Age of Digital Transformation":

Women perceive the Polish labour market as discriminatory. As many as two-thirds believe that they do not have equal opportunities for men in the labour market (67%), including opportunities for promotion (64%).

A huge problem is fear, which often stems precisely from the awareness of the inferior treatment of women in professional life and a lack of self-confidence.

However, in innovative companies, employees are more likely to make mistakes, and this may be due to greater attention to the topics of building diversity and equality, and to employers' awareness of the role of fear in blocking creativity.

CHART 3.2.

Do you feel you are allowed to make mistakes in your current workplace?

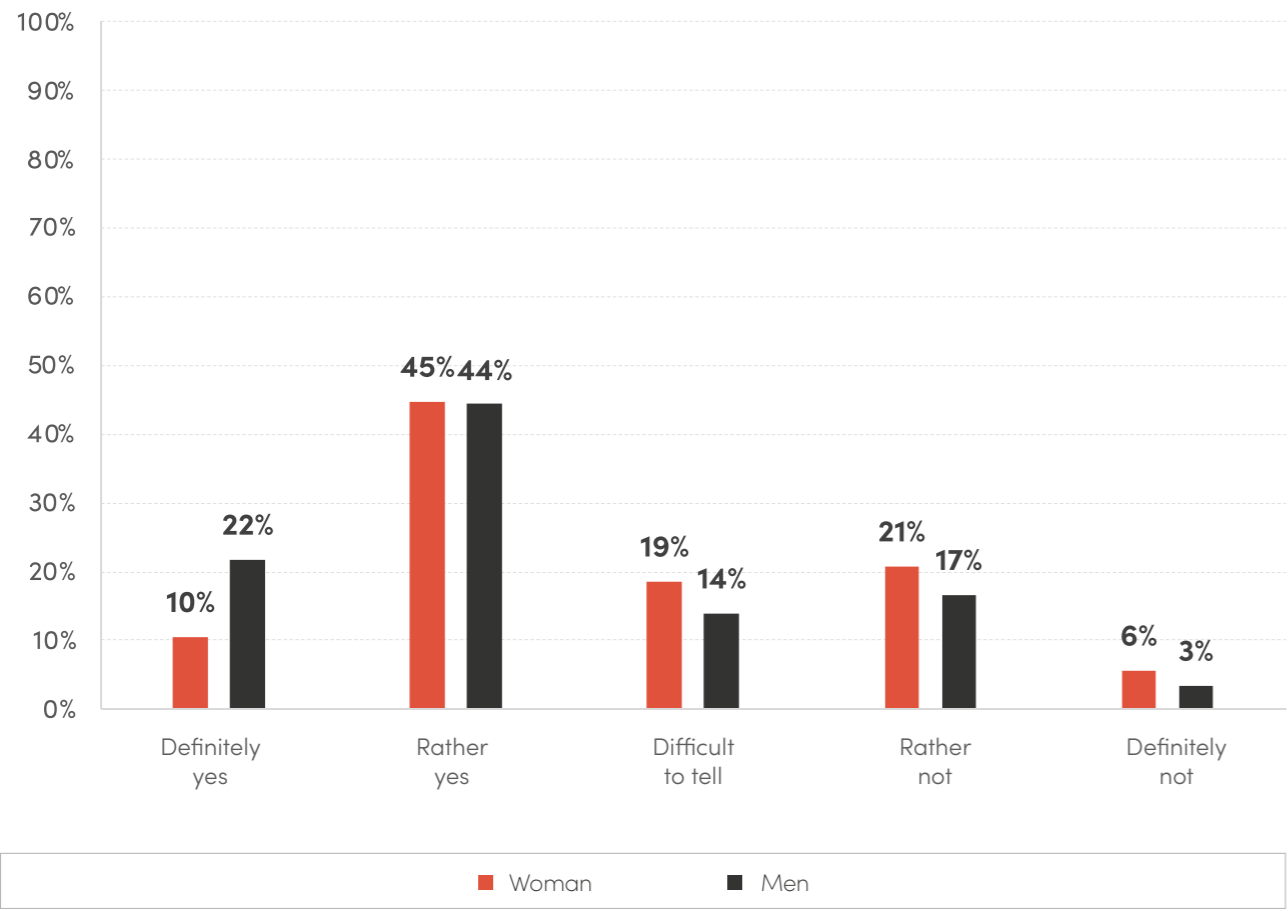
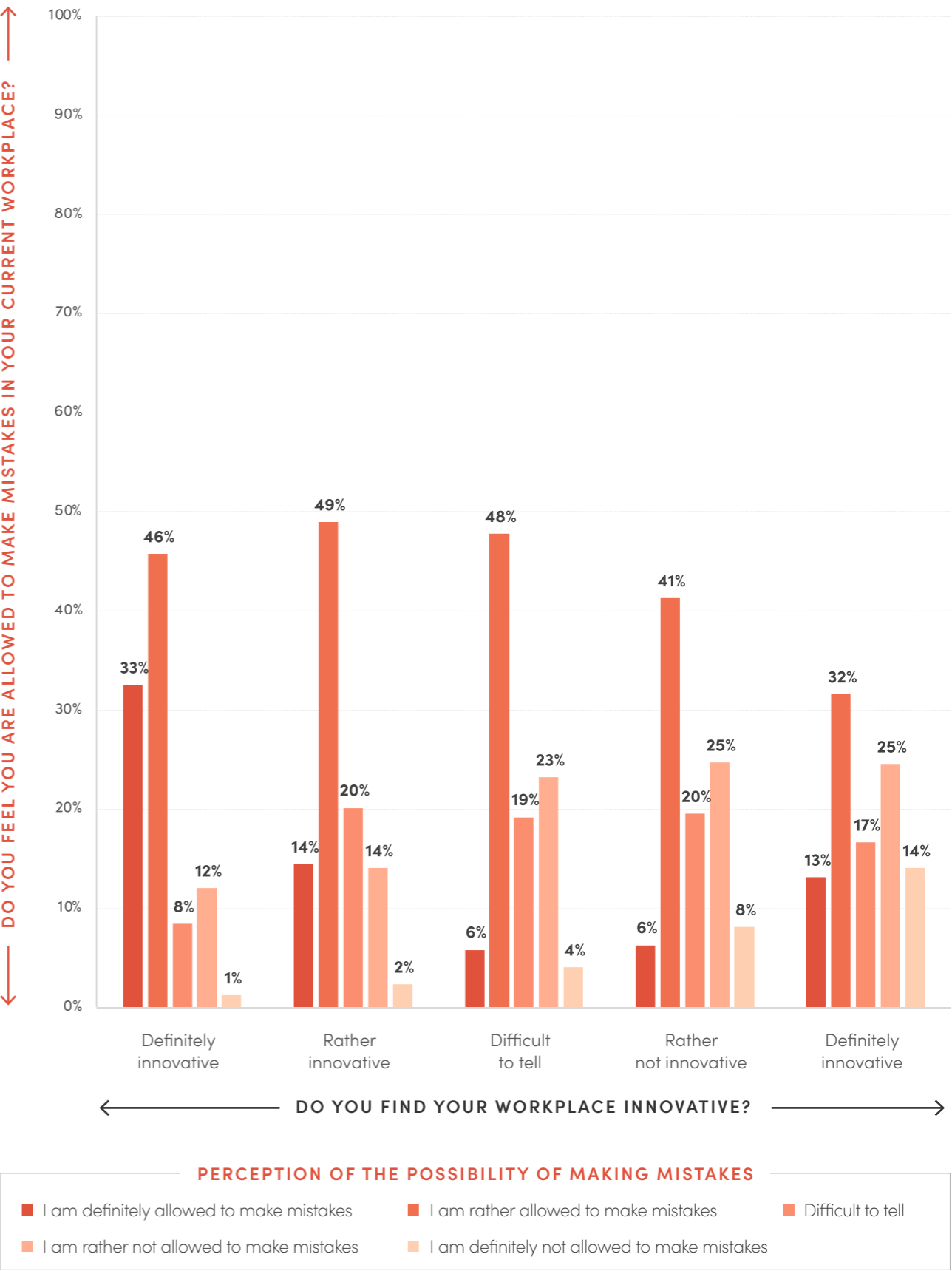


CHART 3.3.

Permission to make mistakes vs. evaluating the workplace as innovative



“Scandinavian countries have been at the top of innovation rankings for years. One of the reason of their success is an organisational culture conducive to unleashing creativity.”

AGNIESZKA ZIELIŃSKA

HOW DO COMPANIES SUPPORT EMPLOYEE INNOVATION?

Expert Comment

Agnieszka Zielińska

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE SCANDINAVIAN-POLISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Today, innovation is an essential part of building a competitive advantage. Although there is no simple recipe for it, sources of inspiration can be sought from our northern neighbours.

Scandinavian countries have been at the top of innovation rankings for years. In the *European Innovation Scoreboard*, published in 2022 by the European Commission, Finland, Denmark and Sweden are once again among the five most innovative countries in the European Union.

This success certainly has many reasons, but I am convinced that one of them is an organisational culture conducive to unleashing creativity. Open communication and mutual trust are the ground that allows an employee to make independent, responsible decisions. Another pillar of Scandinavian success is a focus on teamwork. Diverse teams have greater potential to generate out-of-the-box solutions to rapidly changing market and customer needs. A risk of error? Of course, there is, but without it, there is no chance for innovation.

The second important element of a work environment conducive to creativity is modern technology.

The fact that the Nordic countries occupy three of the first four places in the Digital Economy and Digital Society Index (DESI) 2022 confirms this.

Employees know that advanced technologies create new opportunities, which is perfectly reflected in the results of the US Future-Ready Workforce Study:

For as many as 82% of Generation Y respondents, the technologies offered in the workplace significantly influence their decision to work.

And while the pandemic has changed a lot in the way we work, a third factor that should not be forgotten is a modern, healthy workplace. Remote or hybrid work has become a valued standard in many sectors.

At the same time, 40% of respondents point to brainstorming as the most effective tool for unleashing creativity. So we still need offices: modern, friendly spaces designed with the type of activities performed by employees and their needs in mind.

3.02.

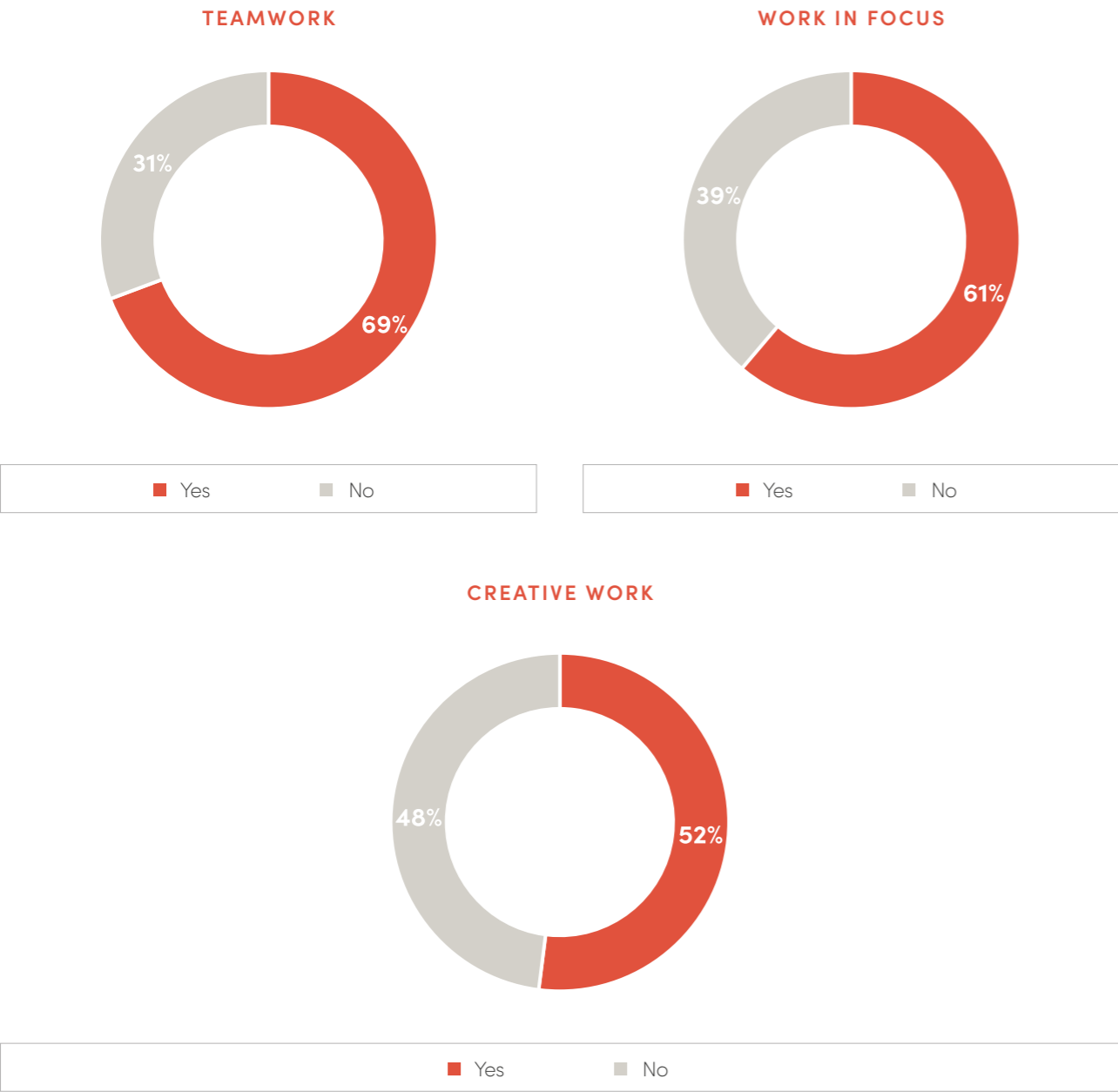
Innovative workspace

A well-thought-out office space allows people to work more efficiently, complete certain tasks, and can improve the provision of silence or privacy.

Organizations provide a convenient place for teamwork for one in seven respondents. Companies are less likely to provide space for creative work, as only just over 50% of respondents are provided with such space.

CHART 3.4.

Does your employer currently provide you with a convenient workspace for:



HOW DO COMPANIES SUPPORT EMPLOYEE INNOVATION?

Worklife balance and innovations

Małgorzata Bachner

REGIONAL OPERATIONS MANAGER, SODEXO POLAND

Innovation is created by people, so the loss of the most valuable employees or the inability to attract the best candidates has a negative impact on a company's innovative potential.

Employees are looking more and more closely at their future employer brand and innovation is an important factor for them to consider. This is why it is so important for companies to invest in innovation in different areas of their operations.

To attract talent and make the best employees want to stay with us, it is no longer enough to offer the well-known 'fruit Thursdays' or 'working in a young, dynamic team'.

The pandemic and events of recent years have changed the list of employee expectations and the list of the most desirable benefits.

A good example of the most desirable benefit is the ability to remote flexible work.

Currently, many candidates are refusing to participate in recruitments where the employer expects full-time stationary work.

On the other hand, it is already known that remote working does not provide the same opportunities to build bonds between co-workers, and provides much more limited opportunities to learn from each other than working in a traditional model. It also provides limited opportunities to assess the quality of employees' work and productivity.

“Many employers are trying to create an environment that will attract employees back to their offices by offering an environment that stimulates collaboration, relationship building, giving them technology that supports learning, collaboration and innovation.”

MALGORZATA BACHNER

This is why many employers are trying to create an environment that will attract employees back to their offices by offering an environment that stimulates collaboration, relationship building, as well as giving them technology that supports learning, collaboration and innovation.

Equally important is the offering related to the area of broadly defined *wellbeing* and services that support *worklife balance*.

The best companies, in order to attract employees and give the best conditions for innovative action, divide their offices into zones providing both conditions for quiet work, individual work, working in virtual teams, and spaces for creative work, and for informal meetings or integration.

The most innovative employers go a step further and strive to make their offices a better alternative to working from home in every possible way.

The most innovative workspaces now have a completely informal atmosphere, with the appearance of comfortable sofas, armchairs, pouffes or massage chairs. Special rooms for yoga, naps, meditation, games rooms, cinema rooms, mini-gyms and mini-libraries are also increasingly common. There are lots of plants in the interiors, and curtains appear in the windows. Employees are encouraged to come to the office with their pets.

Similarly, the list of services and benefits offered is evolving.

To relieve employees of the stress of combining both family and work, companies are putting a concierge service at employees' disposal to take care of the house, look after the pet or take care of last-minute flower or gift purchases.

Employers are also increasingly offering employees free or subsidised meals in the office.

All of these measures are designed to encourage employees to visit the office more often, attracting potential candidates and unlocking employees' potential.

According to the Antal research *Flexibility of Professionals and Managers in the Labor Market*, 78% of respondents prefer to work individually in focus online, while 56% would like to work creatively from home.

Survey respondents note the need to build engagement through face-to-face interactions, especially team brainstorming (59%), external meetings with a potential client (57%) and internal meetings within the company (56%).

Employers considered innovative by respondents are far more likely to provide their employees with a space that meets their needs.

Workplaces that are not very innovative most often do not provide space for creative work.

78% of respondents prefer to work individually in focus online (56% of them would like to work creatively from home).

FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS

59% of respondents prefer face-to-face interactions in case of team brainstorming.

57% of respondents prefer face-to-face interactions in case of external meetings with a client.

56% of respondents prefer face-to-face interactions in case of internal meetings.

CHART 3.5.

Assessing workplace innovation vs. the company's provision of creative workspaces

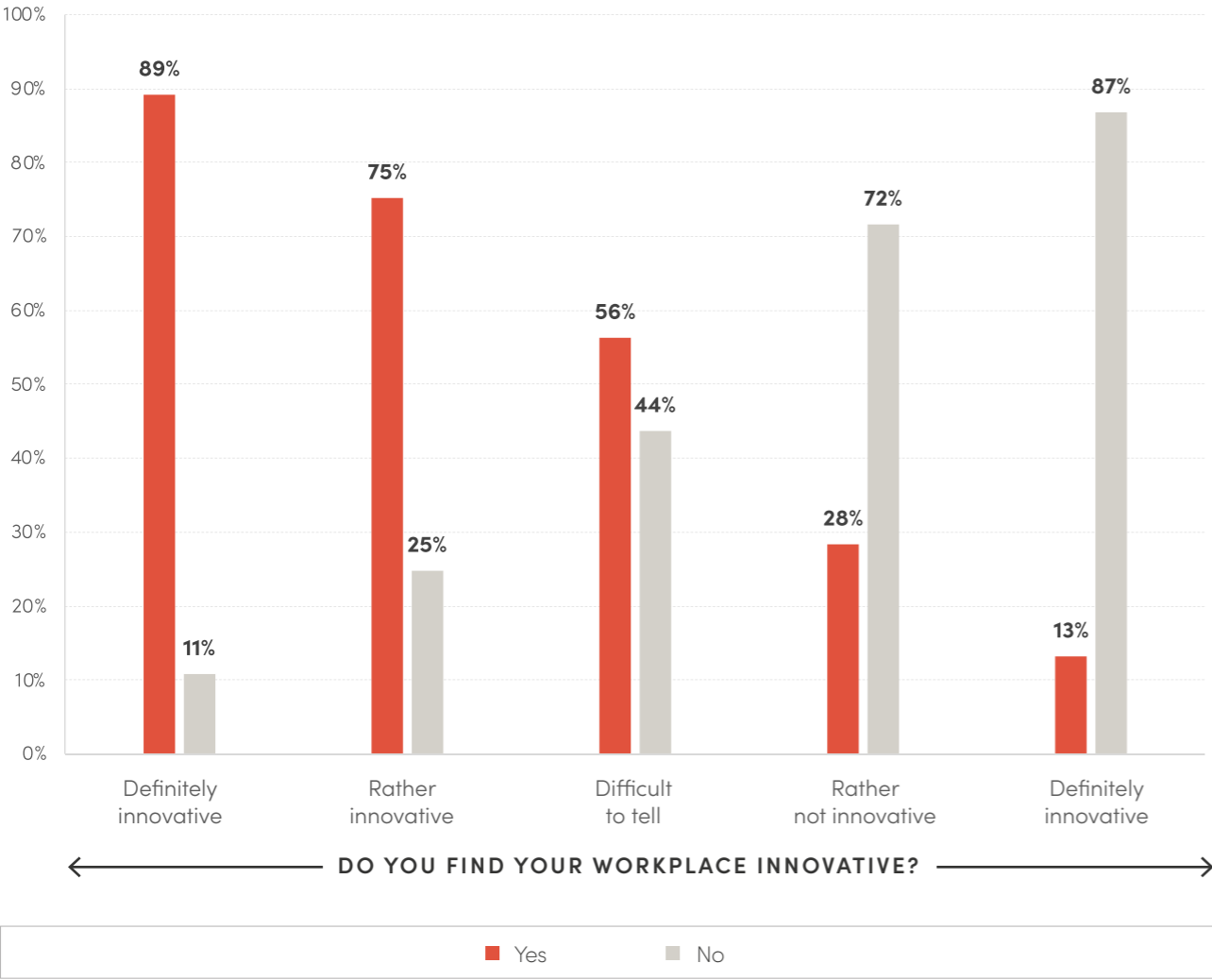


CHART 3.6.

Assessing workplace innovation vs. the company's provision of a space to work in focus

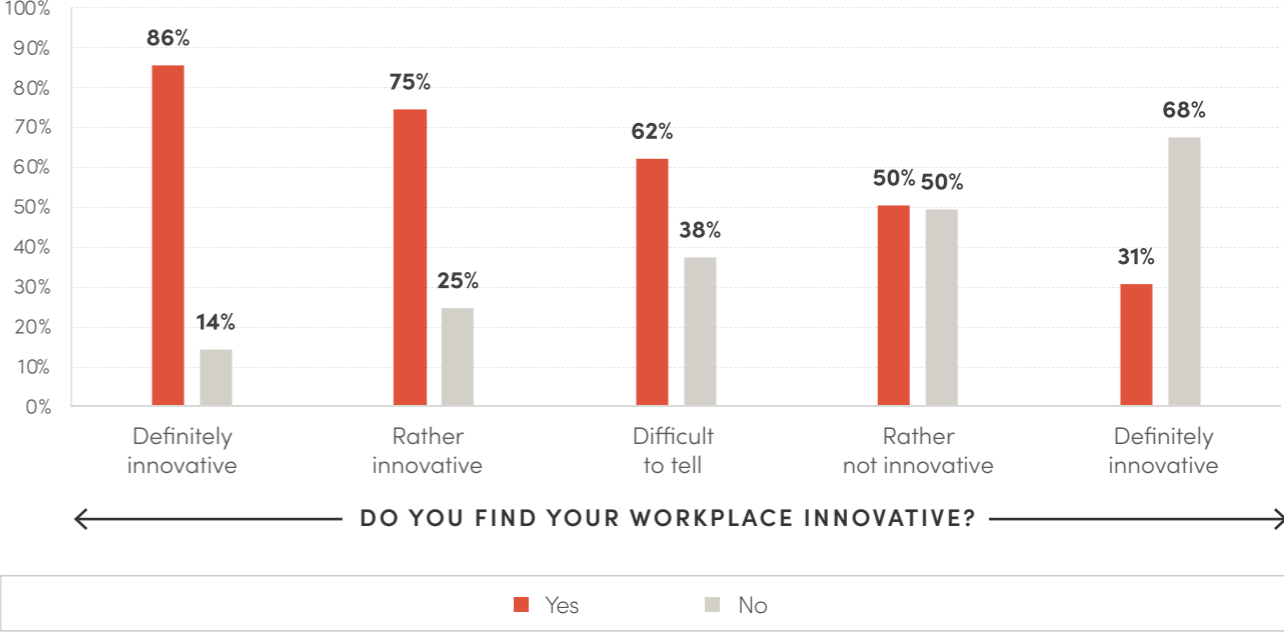
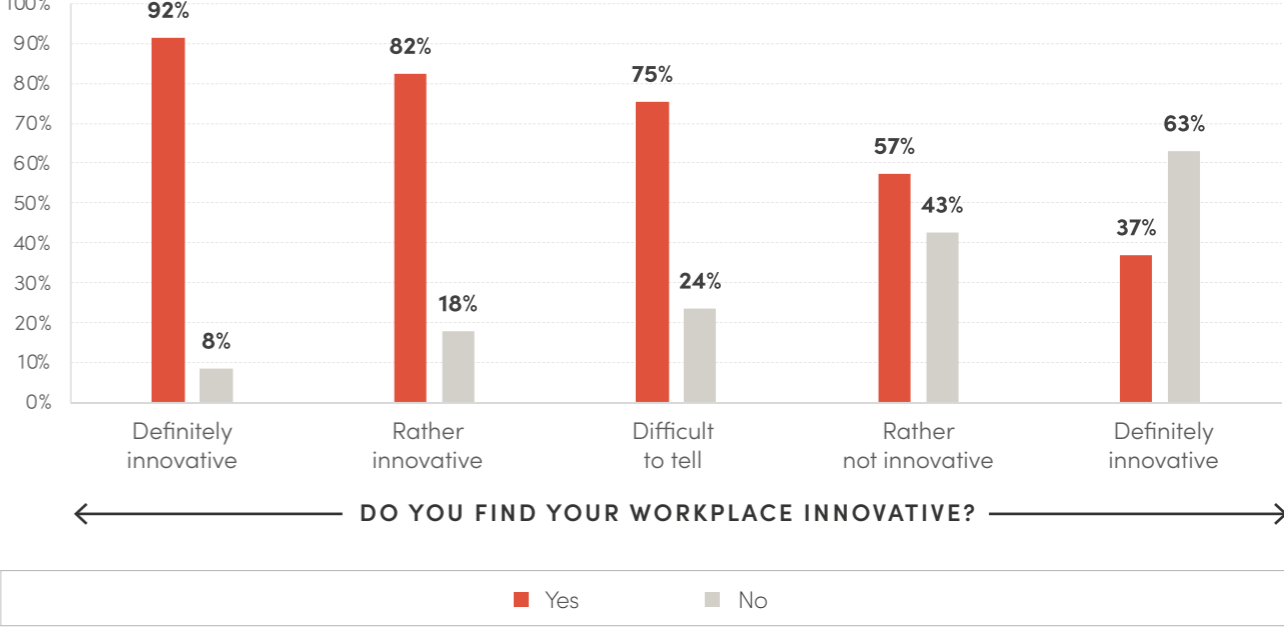


CHART 3.7.

Assessing workplace innovation vs. the company's provision of teamwork space



An innovative space is one that responds to the needs of employees.

This is also confirmed by the Sodexo report *Breathing space: A new workplace comes to life*, which shows that after the pandemic isolation, during which

employees spent a lot of time at home, expectations of office space have changed.

Most important is adequate virtual space (77%), used especially for remote work. It is important to provide space for individual work (68%), as well as space for collaboration (67%).

“The ideal that many organisations strive for is to achieve "turquoise" status, i.e. one in which competence and knowledge are more important than hierarchy.”

MARCIN BERGER

HOW DO COMPANIES SUPPORT EMPLOYEE INNOVATION?

Expert Comment

Marcin Berger

BPH VICE-PRESIDENT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OPERATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

Successes are important (and learning from them), but nothing grows us more than learning from our failures.

The ideal that many organisations strive for is to achieve "turquoise" status, i.e. one in which competence and knowledge are more important than hierarchy. One in which relationships between co-workers are built on trust, empathy and mutual respect. Finally, one in which it is understood that in order for the best possible solution to emerge, it is necessary to experiment along the way, and this means making mistakes and entering dead ends from time to time.

Antal research confirms that in Poland we are participating in this global trend. And this is gratifying. More than half of respondents say they have permission to make mistakes at work. The gender breakdown also shows no significant differences, which may indicate that positive changes are already taking place in terms of the use of double standards in companies.

On the other hand, about a quarter of people do not feel that they have been given the right level of trust. When we add an additional 18% of people who have no opinion, we get a picture of how much more there is to do in this area.

Another interesting aspect from the survey results is that there is a correlation between the possibility of employees making mistakes and their perception of the company they work for as innovative.

This only confirms that companies focused on development, on process or product optimization in the broadest sense, accept that this is a process whose inevitable element is mistakes and learning from them.

At Bank BPH, we understood many years ago that our most important asset is our people. And they are all the more valuable the more skills they have. Therefore, more important than how they are formally positioned in the Bank's structure is what they can do. We believe that empowerment, i.e. giving them the ability to make decisions in the areas they work in, is the way to success in two aspects: achieving the company's goals and building a team of committed and motivated professionals who like what they do and the organisation in which they work.

We also stretch the concept of innovation broadly. We not only recognise as such the implementation of modern technologies and edge cutting solutions, but also the continuous improvement of the way we work using Lean methodology. And we see that it works. In annual satisfaction surveys, more than 83% of employees confirm that BPH is a good place to work that facilitates professional growth.

PART4

Wellbeing of employees as a way to create innovation

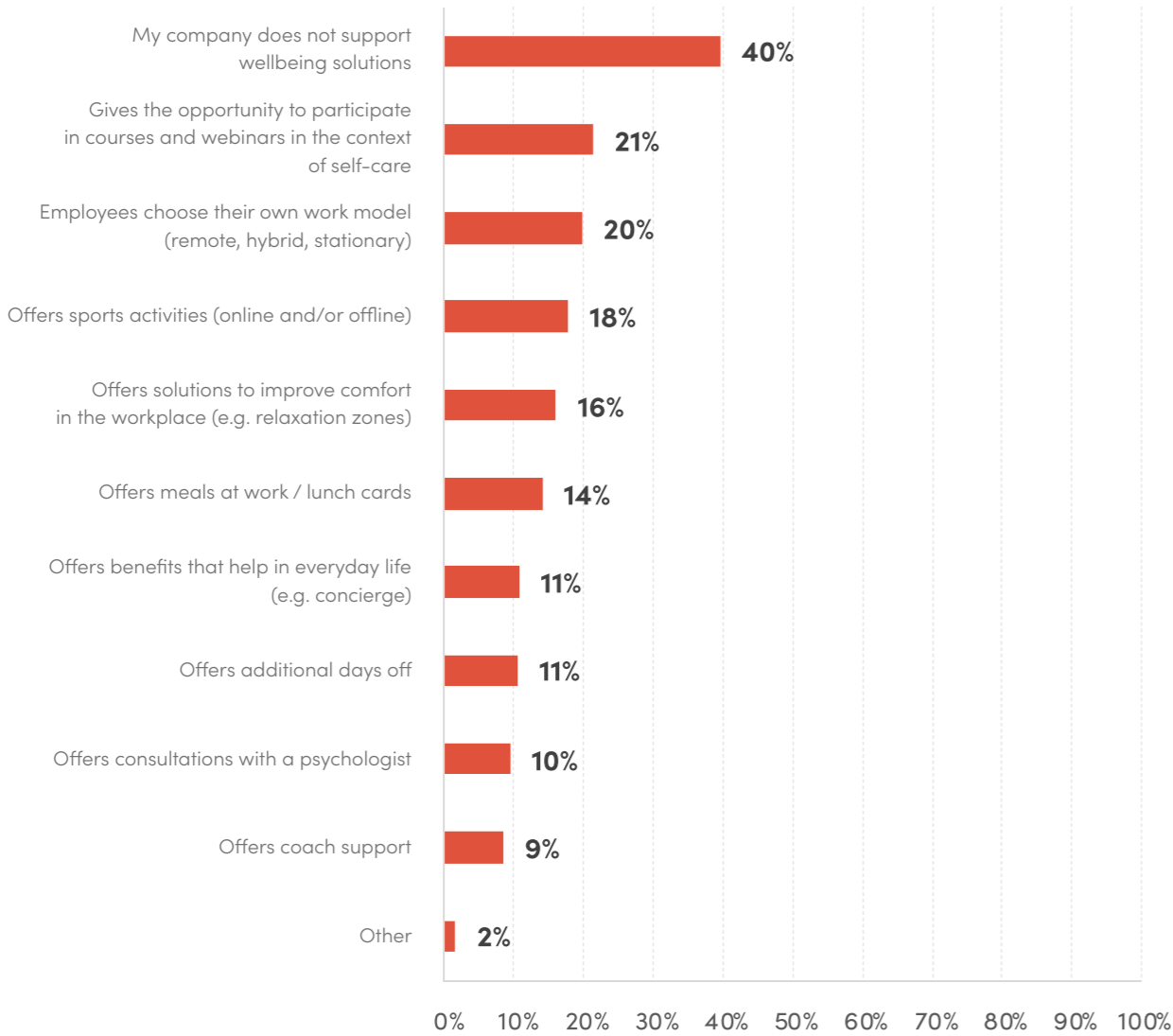


4.01. Wellbeing of employees as a way to create innovation

Wellbeing should be understood as a state of employee satisfaction and fulfillment. Employees who are happy and satisfied are more effective, creative, innovative and open to the new, and this translates into a competitive, innovative and technological advantage for the organisation.

Nurturing *wellbeing* employees make them more willing to help others, more easily adapt to change, less likely to leave work for health reasons, less likely to look for another job, and have a greater sense of belonging to the company.

CHART 4.1.
How does your company support employee wellbeing?



Respondents were allowed to indicate all the correct answers.

40% of companies do not support solutions that support employee wellbeing. 1 in 5 companies provides opportunities to participate in courses and webinars in the context of taking care of oneself, sports activities or employees' choice of work model (remote, hybrid or stationary).

15% of companies offer solutions to improve comfort in the workplace, meals or lunch cards.
1 in 10 respondents mentioned that the company offers consultations with a psychologist, coaching support or additional days off.

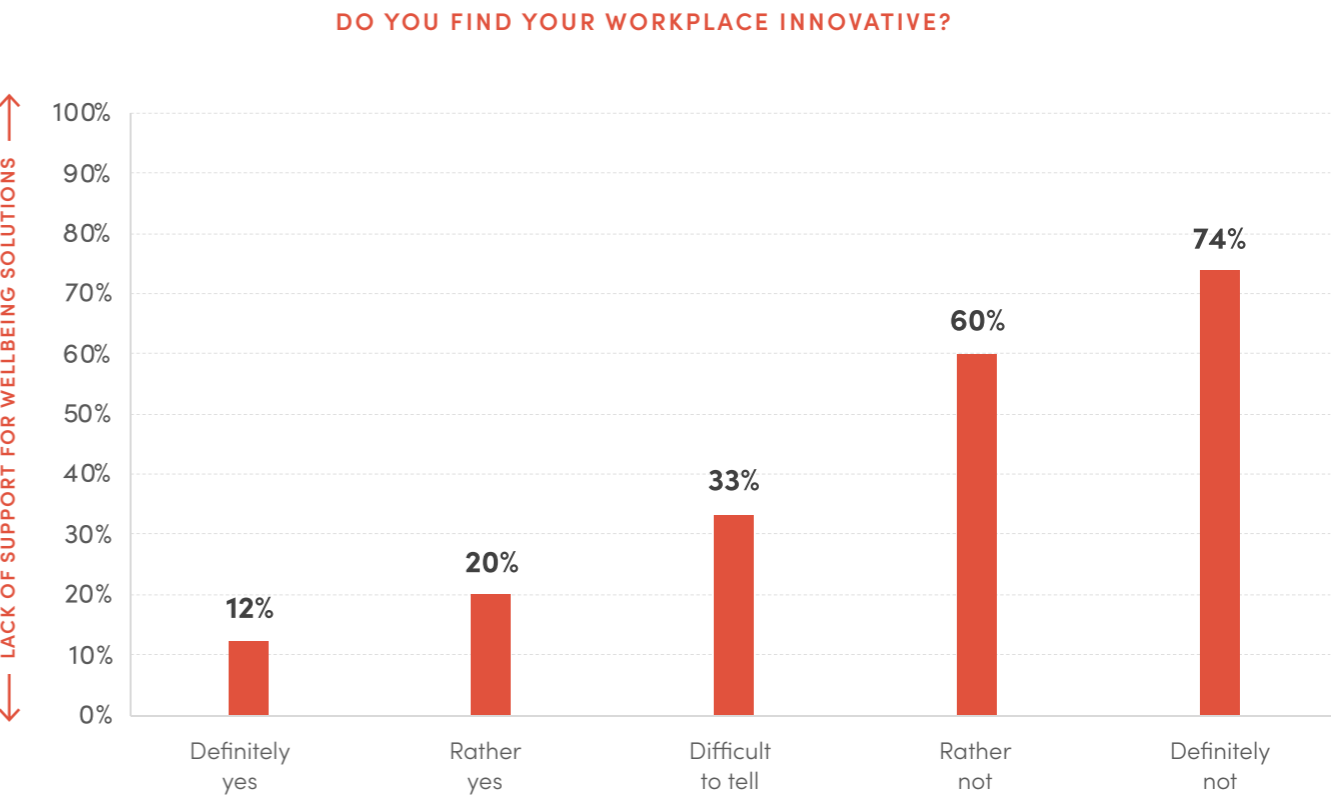
Evaluation of company innovation vs. lack of support for wellbeing solutions

Importantly, the lack of offerings and solutions to improve employee wellbeing correlates strongly with the employer's assessment of innovation

In contrast, 90% of employers considered innovative care about the wellbeing of their employees by offering, for example, solutions to improve comfort in the workplace.

Three quarters of respondents describing their company as not very innovative simultaneously note that the employer does not support employee wellbeing.

CHART 4.2.
Evaluation of company innovation vs. lack of support for wellbeing solutions



“The once key benefits with which to retain an employee or attract a new one fall quite short of the comfort solutions offered by innovative employers.”

KAROLINA GIZA

Expert Comment

Karolina Giza

TEAM LEADER, IT SERVICES ANTAL

The recently popular word *wellbeing* describes a specific state of human contentment. This state directly translates into many other spheres of life. In the professional context, a satisfied employee is an effective employee, an employee who is open to new challenges, and openness in turn entails innovation and a willingness to approach tasks creatively.

Thus, companies that want to be modern and innovative should focus on taking care of their employees' *well-being*, because in this way they will make their employees work more efficiently, more creatively and stay with them for longer.

What is the reality?

According to the report, almost one in two respondents believes that the company where they work does not support wellbeing solutions. Only one in five companies supports such initiatives as participation in courses and training related to taking care of oneself. At a similar level is the attitude towards the freedom to choose a work-from-home, office or hybrid model.

The once key benefits with which to retain an employee or attract a new one, such as:

- private medical care,
- a sports package or
- life insurance,

fall quite short of the comfort solutions offered by innovative employers.

According to the report, only a few or a dozen percent of respondents indicate that their company supports *wellbeing* through such solutions as:

- extra days off,
- lunch cards,
- relaxation zones in offices,
- sports activities, as well as
- support from a psychologist, coach or
- an external concierge service.

A deeper analysis of employees' needs, bending to their development, wellbeing and fulfillment are highly correlated with how much energy and commitment an employee will invest and thus contribute to the company's growth and building a competitive advantage over others.

That's why almost 90% of companies defining themselves as modern place great emphasis on satisfying their employees and improving the comfort of where they do their work.

Wellbeing of employees is also wellbeing of employers, a cause-and-effect sequence that will give an advantage to those companies that take proper care of their employees.

With employers constantly in need of new employees and the disparity between the salaries offered not so significant, non-wage factors are playing an increasingly important role.

It is wellbeing and the amenities behind it that are increasingly attracting top talent.

Interesting benefits that enable extra-professional development tempt employees who value wellbeing on other levels in addition to an attractive salary.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing should be understood as a state of employee satisfaction and fulfillment.

40%

of companies do not support solutions that support employee wellbeing.

74%

of respondents describing their company as *not very innovative* simultaneously note that the employer does not support employee wellbeing.

90%

of employers considered *innovative* care about the wellbeing of their employees by offering, for example, solutions to improve comfort in the workplace.



Empowering Workplace Transformation

Revitalising Your Spaces and Your People



PART 5

ESG and innovation

5.01.

ESG and innovation

It is impossible to develop, especially sustainable development, without innovation. And while innovative solutions sometimes manifest themselves as environmental hazards because they are linked, for example, to increased consumption or increased energy consumption, the reality is that most environmental problems are difficult to solve without innovation.

Today, organisations face not only climactic or demographic challenges, but also problems posed by military conflicts. Therefore, if modern companies want to be ESG (*Environmental, Social, Governance*) leaders, they must find a way to function in the modern world

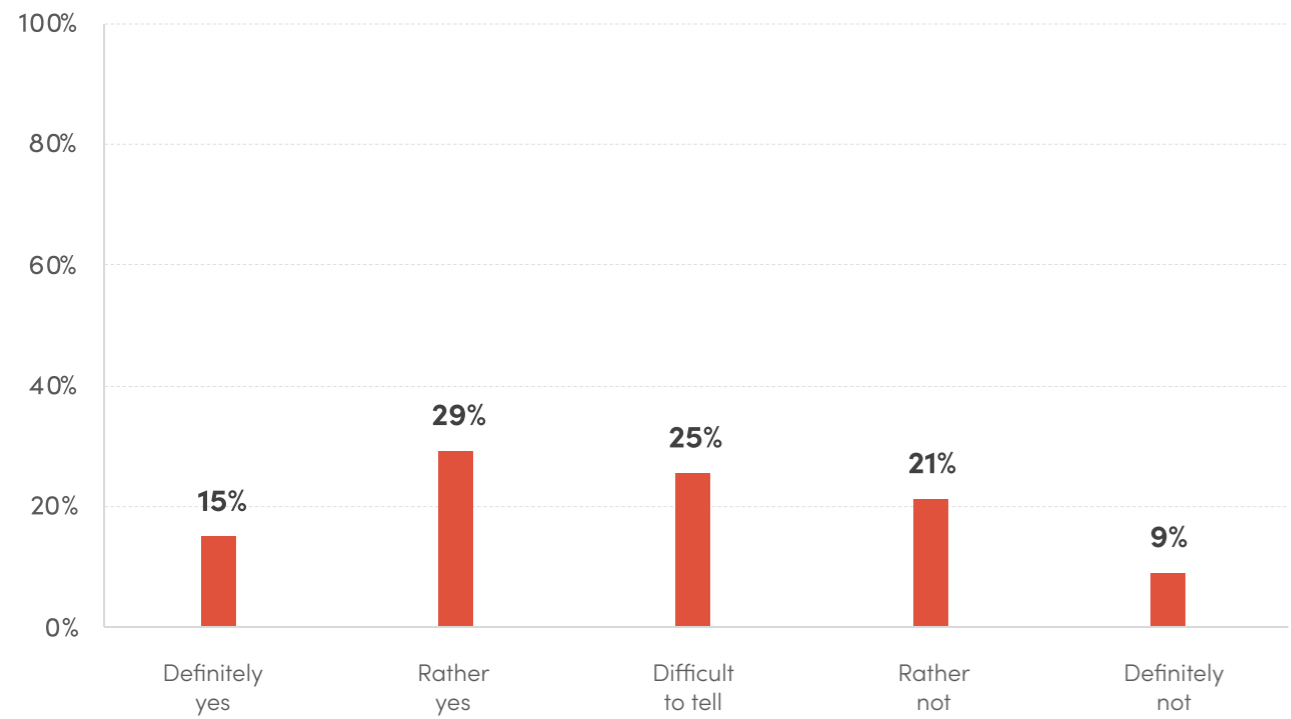
with respect for environmental, social and corporate governance. This is possible primarily through innovation.

The results of the research conducted show that using ESG strategies as a source of innovation is still a potential to be developed, through which organisations can build competitiveness in the local and global market.

30% of employers surveyed are rather implementing innovative solutions for the sake of the environment and sustainability, and 15% are definitely taking such measures. Only 30% of companies rather or definitely do not implement such solutions.

CHART 5.1.

Is your company implementing innovative solutions focused on the environment and sustainability?



Make your workplace
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“There is now an increasing emphasis on applying innovative and socially responsible solutions to the design and creation of workspaces.”

BŁAŻEJ KOWALCZYK

ESG AND INNOVATION

Expert Comment

Błażej Kowalczyk

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, SODEXO POLAND

Corporate social responsibility seems to be a topic closely linked to innovation. This is mainly because companies usually want to implement solutions, processes and internal rules to reduce the harmful impact of their activities on the environment or local communities, but at the same time are not ready to bear the high direct costs of such activities.

With this in mind, looking for innovations, i.e., solutions that will reduce the harmful impact on the environment while not increasing or even optimising the costs of operations, seems to be the most sensible route.

Now companies need to significantly intensify their efforts in this area. This is happening for several reasons. First and foremost, regulatory pressure on companies is increasing. Directives and regulations being passed, including in our country, oblige businesses to take more and more responsibility for their activities and their impact on the environment.

On the other hand, people's awareness of ESG topics is growing and it is becoming increasingly important to them. A few decades ago, no one would probably have linked the choice of a future employer to whether a company had a proper corporate responsibility strategy in place and whether it is innovative in this area. Today, things are very different and ESG is a very important factor for candidates and employees in terms of employer branding and attractiveness.

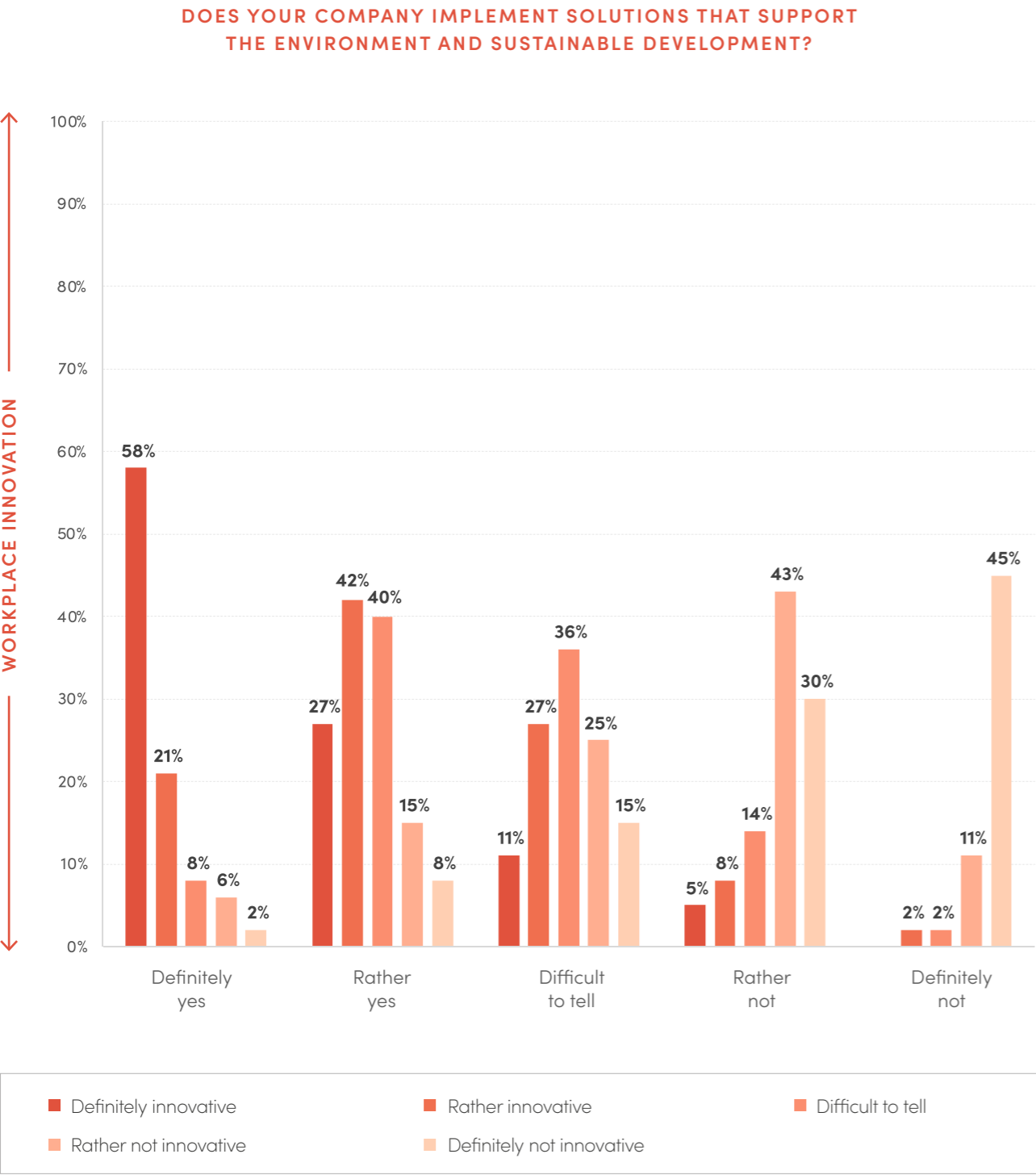
For this reason, there is now an increasing emphasis on applying innovative and socially responsible solutions to the design and creation of workspaces. This space should not only be visually attractive, but also comfortable, ergonomic and optimised to the needs of the user. It is also important to consider how and to what extent its construction and use affects the environment, whether it incorporates technologies and solutions that reduce or eliminate CO₂ emissions, waste resources or generate waste.

All of this means that designing a workplace is now no longer a task for the architect alone, but a task with many steps, requiring very careful analysis and a plan that takes into account many factors, among which social responsibility and environmental impact is one of the most important issues. Addressing these needs requires expertise and reaching for innovative solutions that, until recently, no one thought about when designing work spaces. I believe this is a trend that will continue to grow.

It is worth noting that companies rated as innovative are far more likely to show interest in implementing solutions aimed at addressing the environment and sustainable development.

Nearly 85% of companies with the highest level of innovation take such measures.

CHART 5.2.
Workplace innovation vs. implementation of solutions focused on environment and sustainability



Demographic, political and social changes, as well as EU regulations on ESG (i.e. environmental, social responsibility and corporate governance measures) have made the issue of diversity one of the biggest management challenges in companies today.

According to the Antal *Trends in Recruitment of Professionals and Managers* report, about **60% of companies are running campaigns to facilitate the hiring of groups at risk of exclusion in the labour market.**

Most campaigns target **women returning to the labour market after maternity leaves.**

Almost one in four organisations address their activities to **employees 50+** and to **foreigners.**

One-fifth of respondents mention that activities at their companies are dedicated to **people with disabilities or those wishing to reorganise.**

Despite the fact that diversity has been talked about in the Polish market for more than a decade, as many as **42% of the companies surveyed do not implement campaigns and/or processes to facilitate employment among groups at risk of exclusion.** Building diversity in an organisation directly translates into productivity. Employees of companies that support diversity feel greater job satisfaction and motivation at work, and declare greater commitment to their duties.

“Innovations do not originate in the vision of one person (the leader), but are developed collectively, through a process that requires acting on well-recognised insights.”

MICHAŁ BIELECKI

ESG AND INNOVATION

Expert Comment

Michał Bielecki

MARKETING INNOVATION MANAGER, GROUPM

In recent years, the topic of innovation has become extremely popular among Polish organisations.

This trend can be clearly seen in the results of PARP's cyclical survey *"Monitoring the innovativeness of Polish enterprises"*, according to which, between 2017 and 2021, the percentage of companies that are innovatively active (i.e. those that – whether successfully or not – have made efforts to introduce product innovation or innovative business processes) rose from 32.3% to 79.6%.

Among the external factors that stimulate innovation in Polish companies recently, the report mentions:

- responding as quickly as possible to changing customer needs,
- keeping up with competition and new market trends.

With the latter, we are referring to the global market – according to the *Global Innovation Index 2022*, Poland ranks 38th, which means we still have a lot of work to do.

External pressures, as well as factors supporting innovation, are causing many companies to start taking a closer look at internal conditions as well, which are helping our organisations become more innovative and take proper advantage of opportunities.

So what can you do to become an innovative company that attracts talent?

We won't exhaust the full catalogue of possible actions here, but let's try to organise them into a few key categories.

Communication technologies, equipment, offices suitable for individual and group work, partnerships with academic institutions, local governments, NGOs, VCs, in-house R&D departments, company incubators or gas pedals are a few examples of what I would call "infrastructure" in general. These are the kind of requirements and institutions (internal and external) that create opportunities for leaders and teams to create and implement innovations.

The second category I would call innovation culture, with employee engagement at its center. In this area, we should answer the question of how to effectively motivate employees and leaders to create ideas, submit them and implement them.

Among other things, properly structured HR policies on promotions, conducting meetings (including the popular brainstorming sessions), awarding prizes, building and sharing knowledge within the organisation, and implementing hackathons can help.

Finally, as Harvard Professor Lida Hill points out, based on the results of years of international research, a key factor in creating innovation is leaders.

This touches on the important issue of leaders' behaviour, which should be strongly directed toward stimulating innovation by fostering a culture of experimentation, flexibility, a sense of security and being heard.

In Hill's vision, a leader is an "interconnector" who does not impose his ideas, but supports his colleagues in their creation and execution. Innovations, especially breakthrough innovations, do not originate in the vision of one person (the leader), but are developed collectively, in close proximity to their target audience, through a process that requires acting on well-recognised insights.

I also see the role of leaders as having and sharing well-established knowledge of the innovation design process (knowledge of frameworks), as well as taking responsibility for the execution of innovation projects.

At the end of the day, an innovation that is not implemented remains (gloriously, of course) in the space of experimentation.

An employee comes to a company, but leaves a boss

WHAT IS IT LIKE AT YOUR COMPANY?



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Helping society achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals



At Antal, we pursue our strategy in a socially responsible way because we understand that in today's world, it is important not only to manage a company's capital effectively, but also to participate in sustainable development projects.

We develop human capital

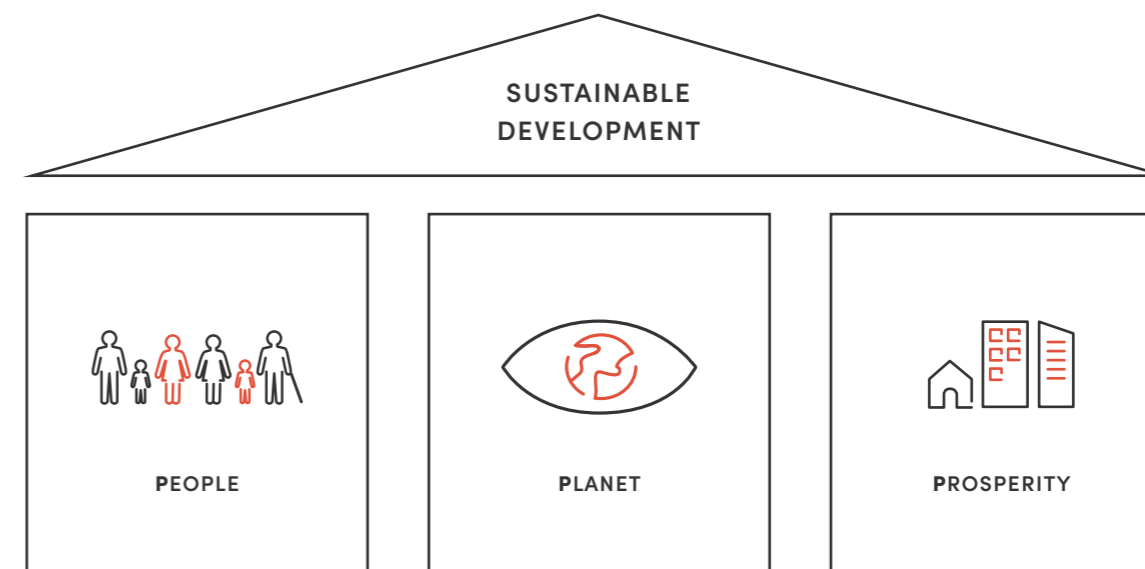
Our mission is the success of people. We are committed to enabling sustainable employment throughout their lives and providing organisations with opportunities to optimise their human resource management.

Our shared responsibility is to support our customers in the development of their businesses

For years, we have been supporting our customers in sustainable growth and undertaking a range of corporate social responsibility activities. We inspire our business partners thereby enhancing their contributions to sustainable development.

We confidently implement activities that support the 17 UN Goals according to the **3Ps principle: People, Planet, Prosperity**.

THREE PILLARS OF ESG ANTAL 3Ps: People, Planet, Prosperity



We shape the labour market

We want to have a positive impact on professional realities and be a role model in how we conduct our business and approach the most sensitive social challenges. This helps us add economic value to ourselves and our stakeholders and generates a positive impact on the Polish economy and labour market.

We share our vision

Conducting educational activities for the development of entrepreneurship in Poland is embedded in Antal's values and organisational culture. We educate future and current entrepreneurs, promote knowledge and best practice in *diversity and inclusion*, support the development of young people and actively participate in conferences aimed at business. We share our knowledge and experience by preparing numerous publications, creating industry research reports and opinion pieces on the labour market.

We believe that the activities we undertake as an organisation play a fundamental role in shaping and creating progress in society.



ANTAL AND SODEXO POLAND SURVEY

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CHECK ALL AVAILABLE ANTAL REPORTS →

Antal

Antal is a leader in the recruitment of specialists and managers as well as HR consulting. The brand is present in 35 countries and has been operating in Poland since 1996.

The offices in Warsaw, Wrocław, Kraków, Poznań and Gdańsk run projects in Poland and abroad, for the largest global and local enterprises from all sectors of the economy.

As one of the first recruitment companies on the Polish market, we have introduced a matrix division of teams, thanks to which our consultants specialize in both recruitment in the sector and position.

Currently, Antal has 9 recruitment divisions and teams advising companies as part of employee evaluation and development, employer branding and market analyses.

Our services

We approach the needs of employers flexibly and comprehensively. We specialize not only in recruitment, but also in HR consulting.

We offer services of permanent recruitment, contract recruitment and RPO (Recruitment Process Outsourcing), as well as advanced solutions supporting recruitment or strengthening the image of the employer and tools for the development of employees. We also conduct labour market surveys tailored to the needs of our clients.



Recruitment



Market Research



Recruitment Process Outsourcing



HR Consulting



Contracting



Interim Management



Employer Branding

Antal Market Research

Antal Market Research is a specialized department responsible for preparing reports analyzing the labour market. As part of the division, reports presenting trends on the labour market as well as materials prepared in response to individual customer needs are implemented. Antal Market Research prepares, among others, payroll reports, reports of the employer image or investment potential in the area of human capital, in specific industries or regions.

Remuneration research

We prepare comprehensive payroll reports in selected market areas. Thanks to the specializations of teams in Antal, we are able to present remuneration even for narrow and niche job groups. We design and prepare each study according to individual customer needs.

Research on the image of the employer

In the time of the candidate's market, the opinion of potential employees about the company has a key dimension directly translating into the costs and time of recruitment and the level of voluntary rotation in the organization. Antal Market Research offers to conduct a survey of the employer's image among a precisely defined target group indicated by the client (e.g. IT specialists). The report will present the employer's strengths and potential development areas. It will indicate relevant channels of information communication about the company or new vacancies.

Research on the availability of candidates and investment potential in the area of human capital

In a situation where a company is planning to invest in a new region, available human capital may affect the success and cost of the entire project. Antal offers comprehensive tests to determine: educational potential in specific areas of specialization, availability of competencies on a given market, difficulty in recruiting employees, approximate recruitment time, remuneration in specific locations, specific features of a given region affecting the acquisition of human capital, relocation potential, and competition analysis.

We also offer our clients a benchmark service of selected locations both in Poland and abroad.

Do you want to learn more about labour market research conducted by Antal?

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