

## Offer a 'Human Deal' to Attract and Retain IT Talent Amid the Great Resignation

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Initiatives: [CIO Leadership of Technology Talent, Culture and DEI](#)

IT employees care strongly about working for employers that offer a "human deal." They are looking for an EVP that focuses on them as a whole person, including their beliefs, feelings, personal growth and relationships. Learn how CIOs can use this knowledge to compete in the war for talent.

### Overview

#### Key Findings

- IT employees, particularly millennials and Gen Xers, are a greater flight risk than non-IT employees. Top reasons listed for leaving organizations include manager quality and a desire for recognition.
- IT employees care about where they work (78%) and when they work (76%), but only 58% feel their organization offers the location flexibility they are looking for, and 54% state that their workplaces provide flexibility around the hours they work.
- Nearly all (85%) of IT employees feel it is important for their organizations to see them as a person, not just an employee, but only 58% experience this with their organizations.
- The ability to select what they work on matters most to millennial IT employees (77%) and Gen X IT employees (66%). For baby boomer IT employees, the freedom to choose who they work with stands out as the choice they would most like to have control over (51%).

#### Recommendations

To support CIO leadership, culture and people:

- Take steps to ensure that IT employees feel that the organization views them as a person, not just an employee, by focusing on manager quality and their interactions with direct reports. This includes promoting recognition for the employee within the organization, and caring about their families and communities.
- Offer IT employees the ability to choose who they work with, along with how much they work each week and what they work on.
- Discuss with IT employees the opportunities they seek when it comes to pursuing nontraditional career paths, as that is rated as highly important to IT employees but, on average, provided by only 15% of organizations.

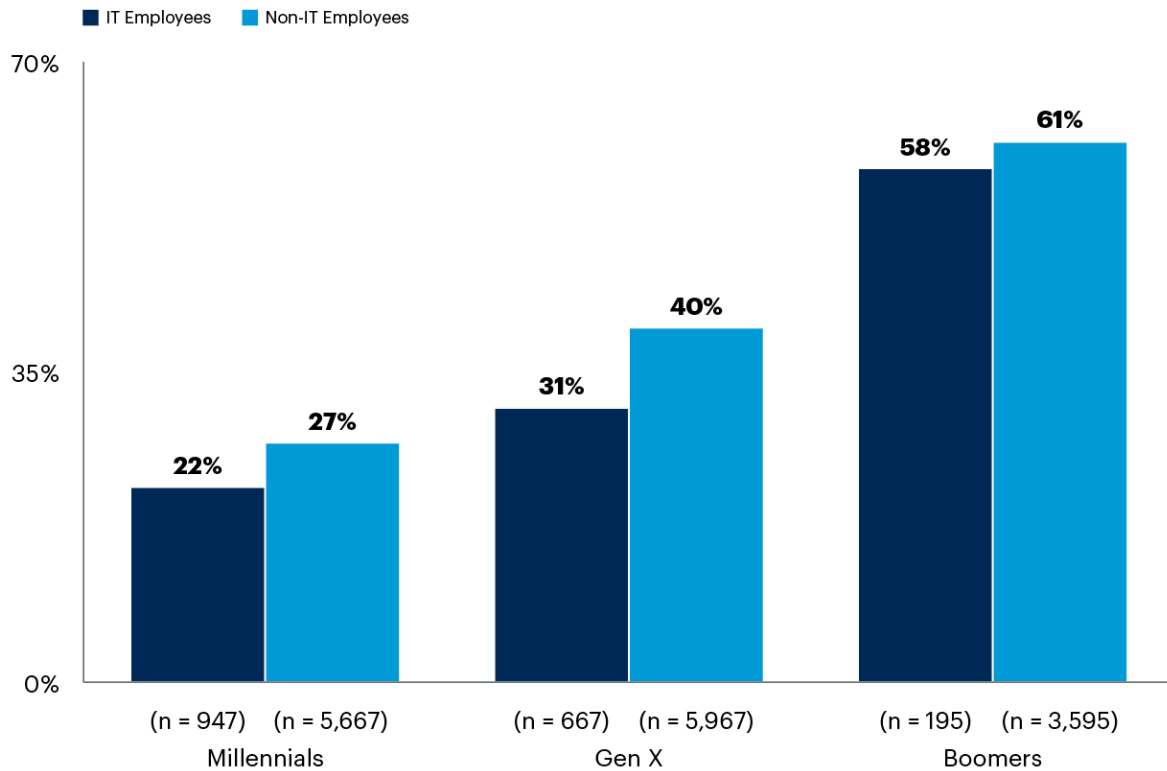
## Data Insights

The “Great Resignation” has made international headlines, and Gartner research <sup>1</sup> has found that IT employees are considerably less intent on staying in their current roles than non-IT employees. According to Gartner’s Global Labor Market Survey for 3Q21, only 28.6% of IT employees expressed a high intent to stay in their current roles. This is 10 percentage points less than non-IT employees in the same period and a drop of nearly 4 percentage points from the previous quarter.

Further examination of the data found that high intent to stay was even lower among the younger IT employees. Only 22% of millennial IT-employee respondents versus 27% of non-IT millennials expressed a high intent to stay (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: High Intent to Stay, IT Versus Non-IT Employees by Generation

High Intent to Stay, IT Versus Non-IT Employees by Generation



Source: 3Q21 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey

Note: Intent to stay measures the employee's desire to stay with the organization, based on whether he or she intends to look for a new job within a year, frequently thinks of quitting, is actively looking for a job or has begun to take tangible steps, such as placing phone calls or sending out resumes.

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The loyalty gap between non-IT and IT employees is more acute among Gen Xers. While 40% of non-IT employees expressed a high intent to stay with their current organization, only 31% of Gen X IT employees felt likewise.

When the same survey asked IT employees why they decided to leave their previous organizations, the reasons that had risen the most in importance from the previous year were manager quality (+5 increase in rank), recognition (+4 increase in rank) and location (+3 increase in rank). This change in priorities speaks to an increasing demand for employers to offer a more humanized working experience (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Top 10 Attrition Drivers for IT Employees, 3Q21**

(Enlarged table in Appendix)

<i>IT Employees</i> ↓	<i>Change in Rank From 3Q20</i> ↓
Compensation (31.3%)	0
<b>Manager Quality (24.2%)</b>	5
Work-Life Balance (23.3%)	-1
Respect (22.4%)	0
Future Career Opportunity (20.5%)	-2
Location (20.4%)	3
Recognition (20.3%)	4
People Management (19.2%)	0
Growth Rate (18.9%)	1
<b>Stability (18.2%)</b>	-5
n = 863 IT employees	

Source: 3Q21 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey

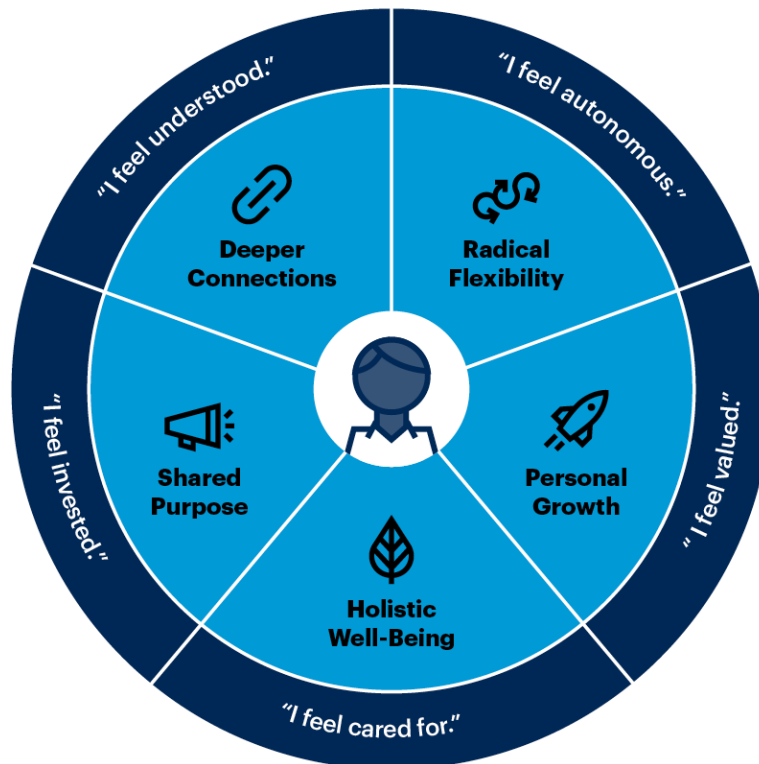
Breaking down the attrition drivers by generations, we see that **manager quality** and **recognition** as reasons for IT employees to leave an organization are **mainly driven by millennials**. **Location**, on the other hand, is a **main attrition driver for Gen X**. It is clear, therefore, that organizations need to do more to answer IT employee needs in terms of location flexibility and managers who are able to address employee needs more holistically.

Traditionally, the employee value proposition (EVP) is defined around employees as workers and what the organization can offer them to perform their jobs well. But persistent engagement and attraction challenges, and the human crises of the past two years, have proven these underlying principles outdated. Employees are people, not just workers; work is a subset of life, not separate from it; and value comes through feelings, not just features.

Gartner calls this new approach to the EVP the “human deal” – an emotional response to what people perceive as the value they gain from employment. It centers around connecting the organization with employees’ life experiences and the whole person’s identity, and highlights the feelings a positive experience can create between employee and employer (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: The Human Deal Framework**

## The Human Deal Framework



Source: Gartner  
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**Gartner.**

There are five components to the human deal:

- **Deeper connections** – How leaders help employees strengthen their family and community connections, not just work relationships
- **Radical flexibility** – How leaders provide flexibility on all aspects of work, not just when and where employees work
- **Personal growth** – How leaders help employees grow as people, not just as professionals

- **Holistic well-being** – How leaders ensure employees use holistic well-being offerings, not just ensure they are available
- **Shared purpose** – How leaders help employees feel invested in by taking a stand on the societal issues that matter to them

When organizations make progress on any part of the human deal, they see clear benefits. Some of those benefits include: <sup>2</sup>

- A 28% increase in employees who are highly likely to recommend the organization by delivering deeper connections
- A 40% increase in high performers by delivering radical flexibility
- A 6% Increase in intent to stay by delivering personal growth
- A 7% Increase in employees' physical, financial and mental wellness by delivering holistic well-being
- A 9% Increase in employees who would be highly likely to accept the job again by delivering shared purpose

We focused on the subset of 1,020 IT employees who responded to the 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey. We learned that not only do IT employees care passionately about working for a human-centric organization, but their needs also vary significantly between workforce generations.

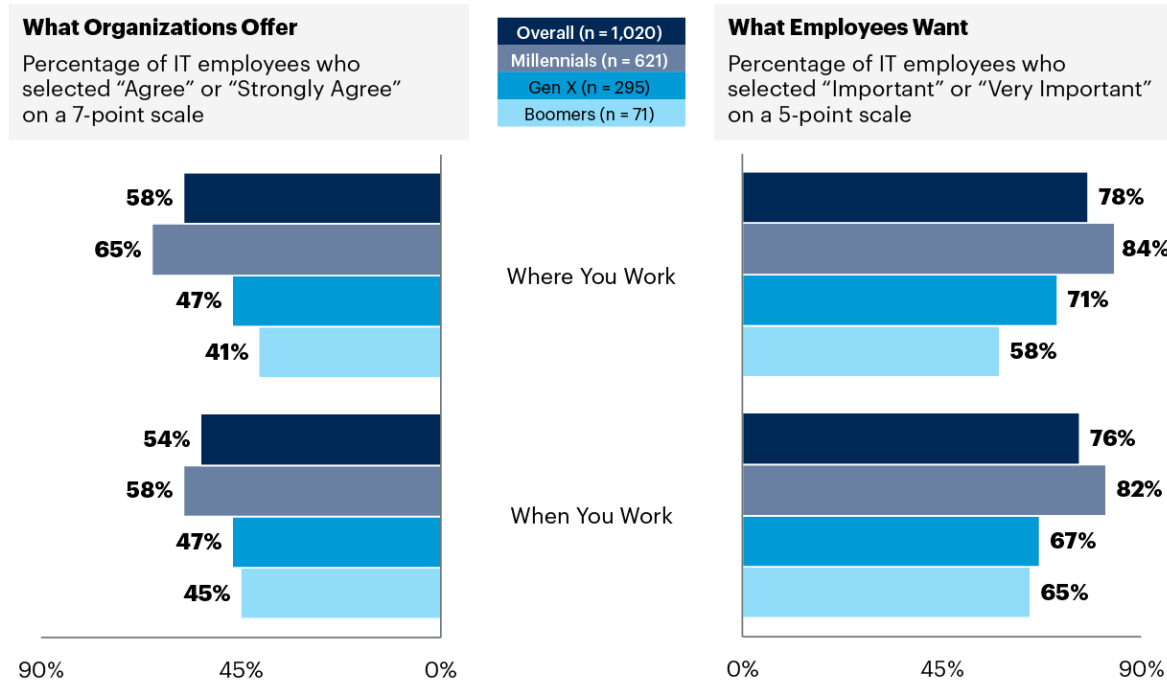
## Radical Flexibility

While, over the past two years, most organizations have learned to offer more flexibility around where and when their employees work, it's growing apparent that this isn't enough.

Nearly eight in 10 IT employees state that they care about where they work (78%) and when they work (76%). However, their organizations are failing to meet these needs. Only 58% feel their organizations offer the location flexibility they are looking for, and 54% state that their workplace provides flexibility around the hours they work (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Flexible Time and Location Options IT Employees Consider Important Versus What Their Organizations Offer

**Flexible Time and Location Options IT Employees Consider Important Versus What Their Organizations Offer**



What Organizations Offer: Q. Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

My organization offers me the flexibility to ...

What Employees Want: Q. How important is it to you to be able to decide for yourself ...

Source: 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey

Note: "Gen Z" employees were not considered due to low sample size.

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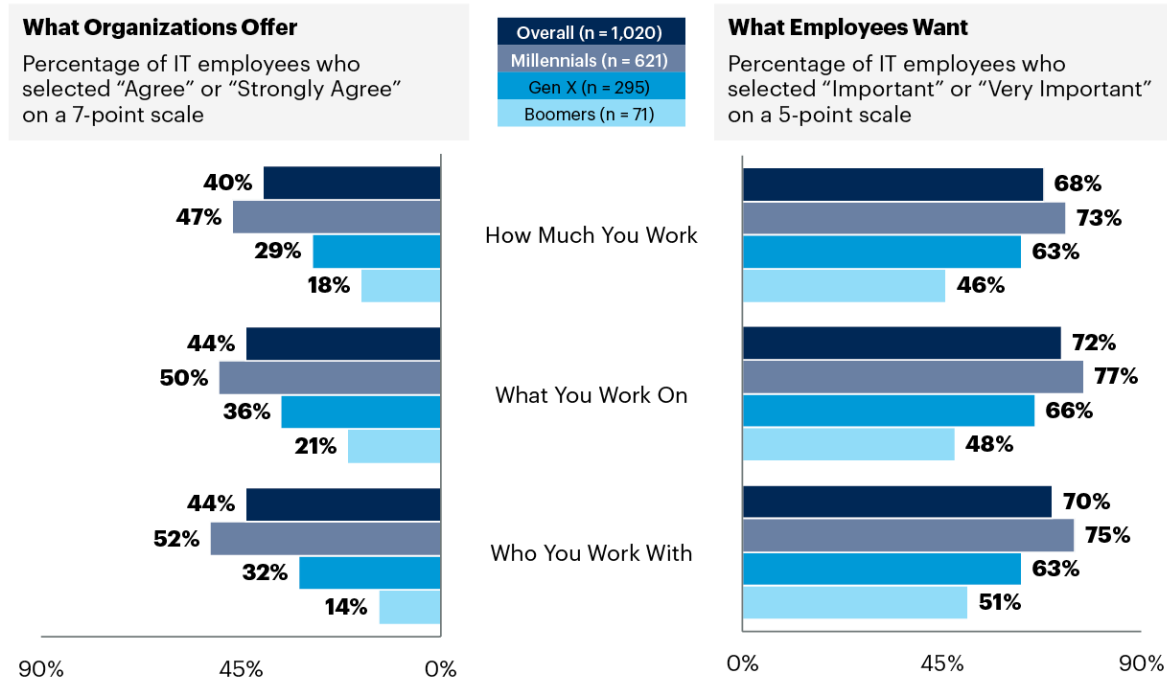
When looking across the generations, this need becomes more pronounced. Fully 84% of millennials demand location flexibility and 82% want more autonomy around their work hours. Location flexibility is also high on the priority list of Gen Xers, with 71% saying it's important to be able to decide where they work.

Boomers are more concerned with the number of hours they work, with 65% indicating they would appreciate flexibility around the hours they work and more than half (58%) would like to have control over where they work as well.

But flexibility around where and when employees work isn't sufficient to meet IT employee expectations in an increasingly competitive talent market. IT employees find it important to be able to choose how much they work each week (68%), what they work on (72%) and who they work with (70%; see Figure 4).

Figure 4: More-Flexible Options IT Employees Consider Important Versus What Their Organizations Offer

**More-Flexible Options IT Employees Consider Important Versus What Their Organizations Offer**



What Organizations Offer: Q. Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

My organization offers me the flexibility to ...

What Employees Want: Q. How important is it to you to be able to decide for yourself ...

Source: 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey

Note: "Gen Z" employees were not considered due to low sample size.

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Of these three dimensions of radical flexibility, the ability to select what they work on matters most to millennials (77%) and Gen Xers (66%). For baby boomers, the freedom to choose who they work with stands out as the choice they would most like to have control over (51%).

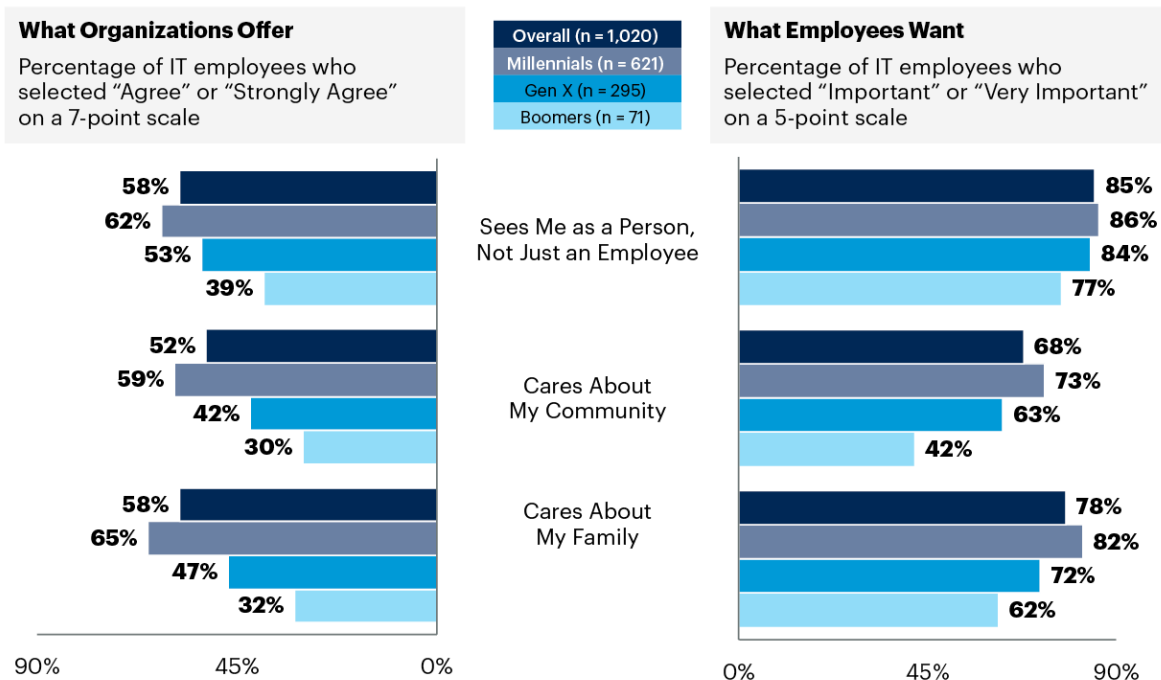
**Deeper Connections**

When IT employees cite manager quality and recognition as reasons for leaving an organization, what they are truly saying is that organizations are failing to meet their emotional needs. Our research indicates that organizations are not offering employees what they need in terms of deep personal connections.

Nearly all (85%) of IT employees state that it is important for their organizations to see them as a person, not just an employee. This is especially true for millennials in IT – 86% of whom feel this way – but it also holds true for most Gen Xers (84%) and baby boomers (77%; see Figure 5). However, organizations are not meeting their needs in this area. Only 62% of millennials, 53% of Gen Xers and 39% of baby boomers agree that their organizations see them as a person rather than just an employee.

**Figure 5: Deeper Connections IT Employees Consider Important Versus How Their Organizations Make Them Feel**

## Deeper Connections IT Employees Consider Important Versus How Their Organizations Make Them Feel



What Organizations Offer: Q. Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

My organization offers me the flexibility to ...

What Employees Want: Q. How important is it to you to be able to decide for yourself ...

Source: 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey

Note: "Gen Z" employees were not considered due to low sample size.

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And while most organizations only help employees build work connections, IT employees want their organizations to build deeper connections at and beyond work to include employees' relationships with their families and communities. For 82% of millennials, 72% of Gen Xers and 62% of baby boomers, it is important that they work for an organization that cares about their families. However, many feel that this need is not met fully, with only 65% of millennials, 47% of Gen Xers and 32% of baby boomers reporting that they work at organizations who care about their families.

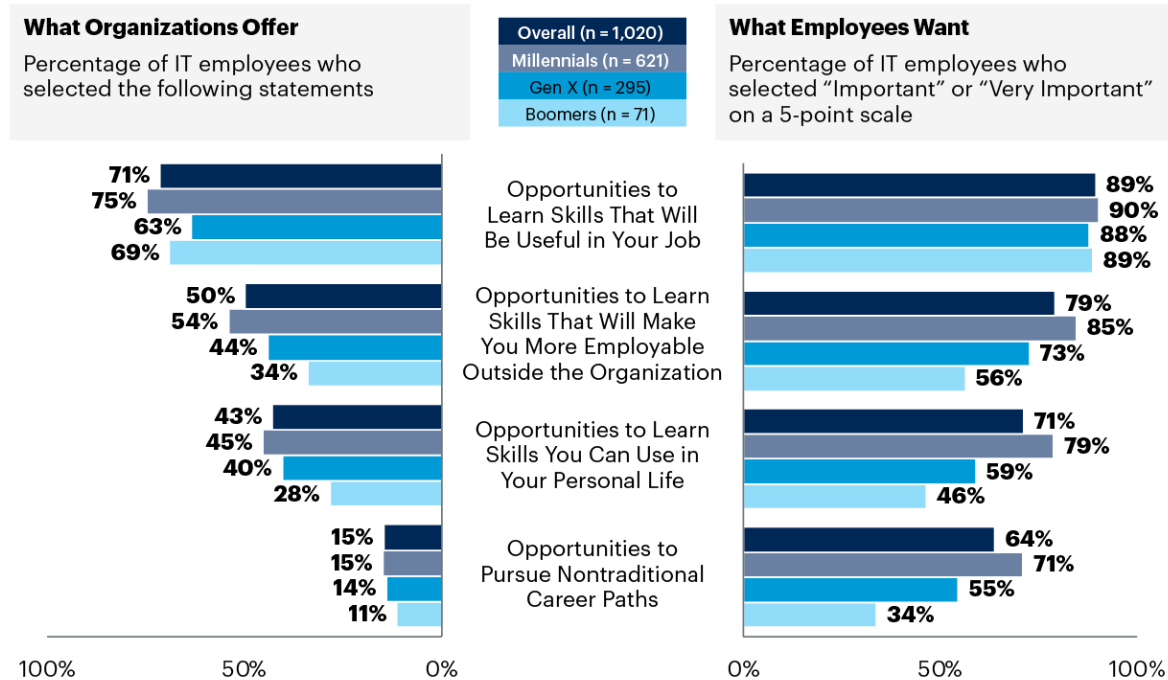
A similar gap can be seen when asked about whether their organizations care about their employees' communities. Only 59% of millennials believe that their organizations care about their communities, versus the 73% who want to work for an organization that does. These gaps represent opportunities for organizations to retain and attract IT employees.

## Personal Growth

IT employees want their organizations to enable them to **grow as a person, not just a worker**. Nearly eight in 10 (79%) find it important that their organizations provide them with opportunities to learn skills that will make them more employable outside the organization. Seven in 10 (71%) would like the chance to learn skills they can use in their personal lives, and 69% also want opportunities to pursue personal interests and nontraditional career paths (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Personal Growth Options IT Employees Consider Important Versus What Their Organizations Offer

**Personal Growth Options IT Employees Consider Important Versus What Their Organizations Offer**



What Organizations Offer: Q. Which of the following opportunities does your organization provide? Select all that apply.

What Employees Want: Q. How important is it to you for your organization to provide you with the following opportunities?

Source: 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey

Note: "Gen Z" employees were not considered due to low sample size.

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Millennials, in particular, have especially high expectations for personal growth in their jobs. Fully 85% find it important to have the opportunity to learn skills that will serve them in a career beyond their current organizations. Seventy-three percent of Gen Xers and 56% of baby boomers agree.

There is a significant gap between these desires and what organizations provide. Where organizations acutely fail to deliver is in the ability to provide opportunities for IT employees to pursue nontraditional career paths. In fact, only 11% of baby boomers feel their organizations offer these opportunities, the lowest of all the generations.

But not far behind are millennial IT employees, **only 15% of whom** say their organizations provide them with opportunities to pursue **nontraditional career paths** versus the **71% who feel it is important**. Furthermore only one-third (34%) said that their organizations provide opportunities for them to gain skills they can use in their personal lives, compared with the 79% who say it is important to them.

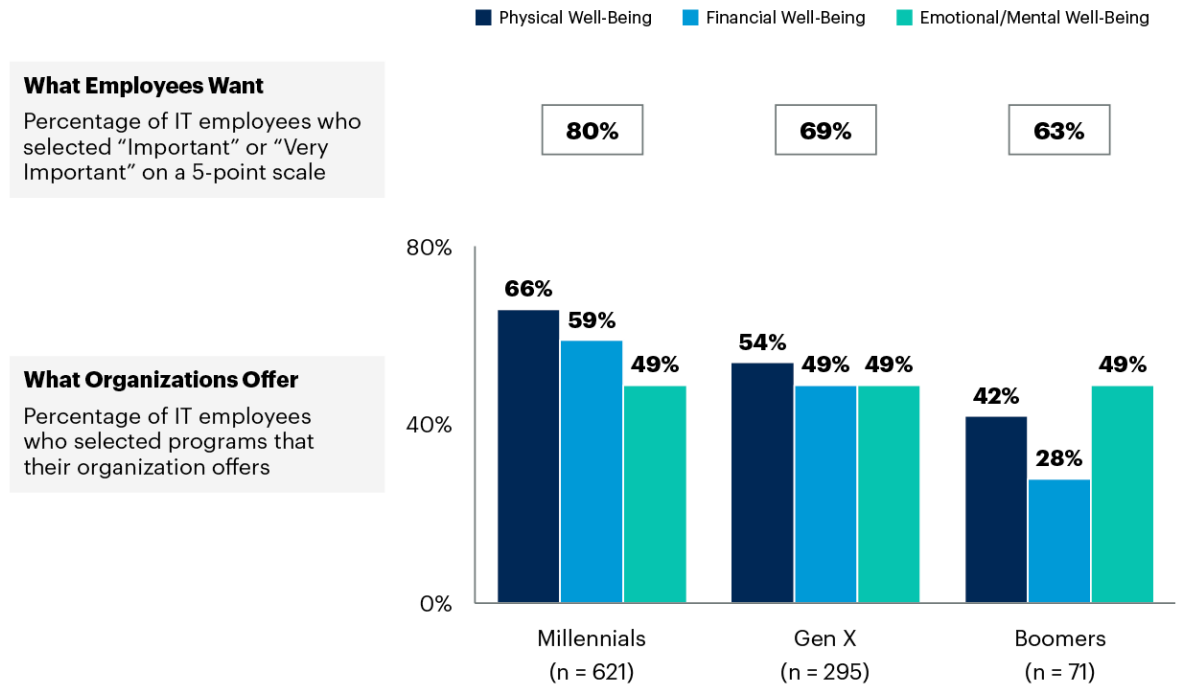
Gen Xers and baby boomers are less demanding of organizations to provide growth outside of their current career paths. Only 59% of Gen Xers and 46% of baby boomers would like to learn skills that they can use in their personal lives. When it comes to pursuing nontraditional career paths, only 55% of Gen Xers and 34% of baby boomers want their current employers to provide them with the opportunity.

## Holistic Well-Being

The crises brought on by the pandemic have shown the importance of caring for the mental health as well as the physical well-being of employees. This is especially true for **millennial IT employees, 80% of whom want to work for an organization that cares about their physical, mental and financial well-being** (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Well-Being Aspects IT Employees Consider Important Versus What Their Organizations Offer

**Well-Being Aspects IT Employees Consider Important Versus What Their Organizations Offer**



What Organizations Offer: Q. Which of the following well-being programs does your organization offer?  
Select all that apply.  
What Employees Want: Q. How important is it to you to work for an organization that cares for your physical, mental, and financial well-being?  
Source: 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey  
Note: "Gen Z" employees were not considered due to low sample size.  
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In this, millennials feel underserved by the organizations they work for. Only 49% report that their organizations have programs for emotional or mental well-being, 59% for their financial well-being, and 66% for their physical well-being.

Approximately two-thirds of Gen Xers (69%) and baby boomers (63%) would likewise prefer to work for an organization that cares about their mental, physical and financial well-being. Baby boomers, in particular, feel that the organization they work for does not care about their financial well-being, with only 28% feeling financially cared for.

## Shared Purpose

IT employees want to feel invested in their organization and the work they do, and organizations can help by creating a shared purpose – that is, taking a stand on the societal issues that matter to their employees.

However, while 64% of IT employees want their organizations to make statements on issues they care about, only 35% report that their organizations have made a statement about a societal issue externally. Further, while 64% want their organizations to take action on issues they care about, only 41% report that their organizations have done so (see Figure 8).

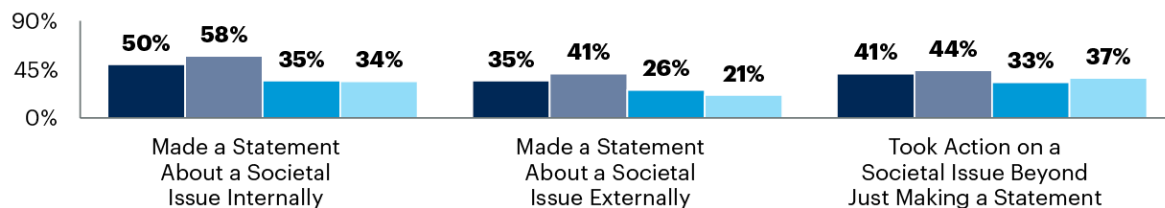
**Figure 8: Shared Purpose Actions Organizations Have Taken That IT Employees Are Aware of and Those They Want Them to Take**

### Shared Purpose Actions Organizations Have Taken That IT Employees Are Aware of and Those They Want Them to Take

■ Overall (n = 1,020) ■ Millennials (n = 621) ■ Gen X (n = 295) ■ Boomers (n = 71)

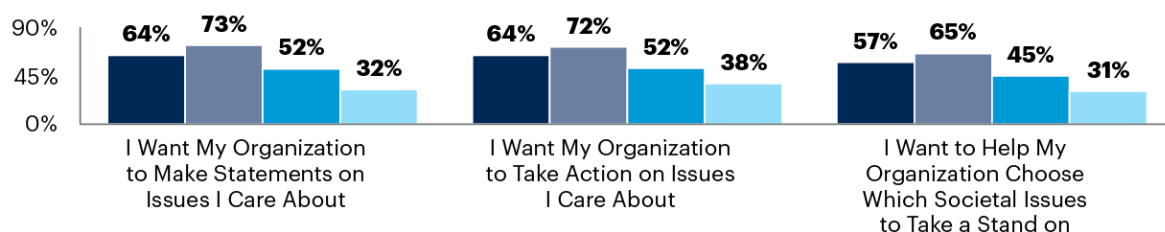
#### What Employees Want

Percentage of IT employees who selected the following statements



#### What Employees Want

Percentage of IT employees who selected "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" on a 7-point scale



What Organizations Offer: Q. Which of the following has your organization done in the last 12 months?

Select all that apply.

What Employees Want: Q. Please tell us the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Source: 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey

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Once again, when looking closer at the data across the generations, **having a shared purpose with their organization matters more to millennials than to any other working age group.** Nearly three-quarters (73%) of millennial IT employee respondents want their organizations to make statements on issues they care about, and 72% want their organizations to take action.

Baby boomers and Gen Xers also care about having a shared purpose with their organizations. More than half (52%) of Gen Xers and 38% of baby boomers want their organizations to take action on issues they care about.

## Presentation Deck

[Download the Presentation Deck](#)

## Evidence

### Research Methodology

The 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey polled 5,000 employees globally in December 2020 on their experiences and expectations of their organizations' employment value proposition and employee experience across six regions and 23 industries. Of those surveyed, 1,020 were employed in IT at the time. This research is based on the responses of those IT employees.

### Source References

<sup>1</sup> The 3Q21 Global Labor Market Survey<sup>1</sup> was based on responses from 18,001 employees globally, including 1,905 employees in IT functions. Responses were collected monthly across 40 different countries in 15 languages and were then aggregated to generate quarterly findings.

<sup>2</sup> The 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey

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## Recommended by the Author

Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

[CIOs Must Reinvent Their IT Employment Value Proposition to Compete for Top Talent](#)

[CIOs Need to Embrace Radical Flexibility to Drive the Post-COVID-19 Work Experience](#)

[Case Study: Employee Development Framework for Digital Transformation \(VDOT\)](#)

## Ignition Guide to Creating and Communicating an Employment Value Proposition for Talent in IT

### CIOs Must Build Skills in Emotional Dexterity to Succeed in the C-Suite

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