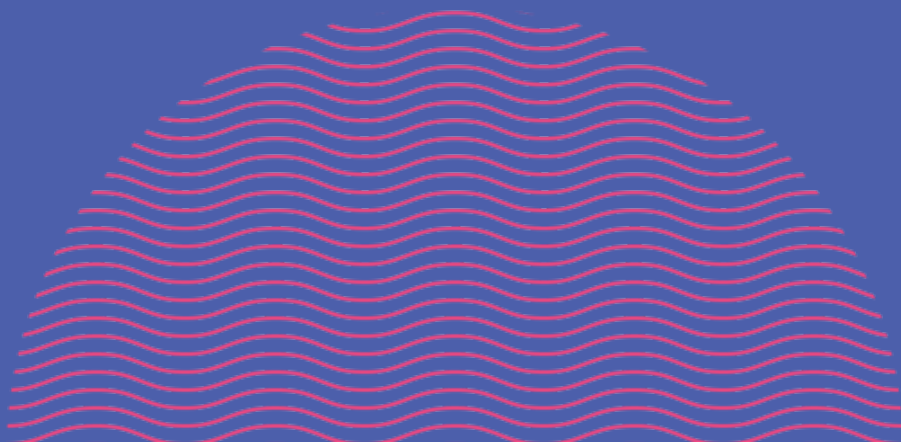


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Sustainability Engagement Trends 2024

Analysing worker attitudes towards
workplace sustainability initiatives





Josh Cleall
Chief Executive Officer at Jump

We're absolutely delighted to share this report, which brings together research from the industry, as well as our **survey of over 1,500 UK workers**. In this paper, we have analysed the trends in sustainability engagement that are most pertinent to organisations right now. Most importantly we provide conclusive evidence of the awareness-action gap; **that employees are aware of their organisation's sustainability goals**, and want to contribute more towards them, but lack the resources to do so. We hope that you find these insights as valuable and enlightening as we did.

01 Introduction

As the climate emergency grows, workers are looking to their organisations to show leadership in sustainability, so that they can ensure they spend their time doing work that aligns with their values. The urgency of this transition is underscored by the increasing amount of sustainability regulation and reporting requirements, such as the [EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive](#), driving the booming [green technology and sustainability market](#).

For organisations, embedding sustainability at every level is an opportunity to foster a culture that aligns employees with a purpose, mission and vision. This alignment is particularly relevant in today's competitive job market, where [employee engagement is a key driver of organisational performance](#), with those that effectively engage their workforce building better products, and delivering better customer experiences.

[Embedding sustainability in the workplace allows organisations to reduce costs](#) by reducing energy consumption, minimising waste, and optimising resource use. Moreover, [companies that successfully integrate ESG measures into their operations are more resilient](#), and better positioned to thrive in a marketplace where stakeholders demand accountability and transparency.

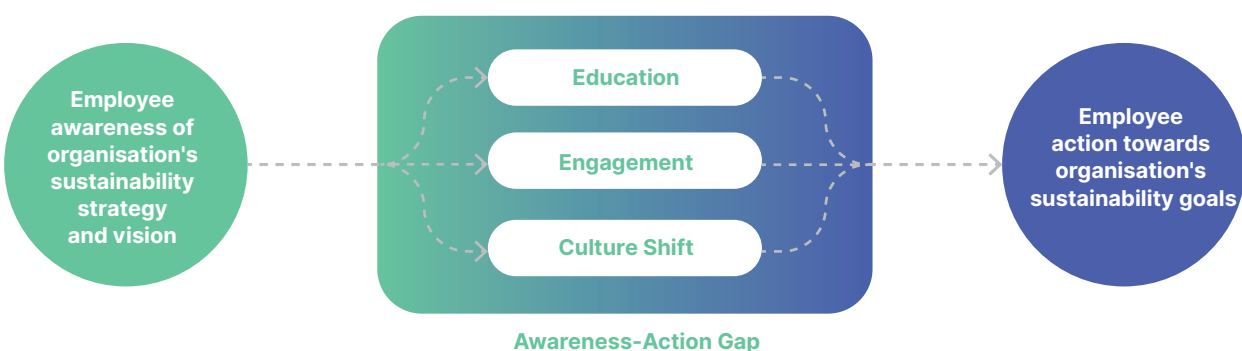
Whilst employers are beginning to understand the importance of sustainability engagement, there is still a long way to go. As stated by the 2023 [Environment and Climate Change Committee](#)

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[report](#), "behavioural change is "essential" for achieving climate and environment goals and delivering wider benefits." Bridging the gap between awareness and action, therefore, requires strategic intervention from organisations to drive behaviours. The success of these interventions hinges on providing the right guidance, incentives, and motivation to show employees how much their role contributes to the success of the company's sustainability initiatives.

As the world faces unprecedented environmental and economic challenges, the role of organisations in guiding and motivating employees to close the awareness-action gap is crucial.

At Jump, our mission is to motivate and empower people to take action for a sustainable future. That is why we are publishing this white paper, containing our own proprietary research; to help employers understand the attitudes workers have towards their sustainability vision, strategy and initiatives, and how they can turn that awareness into action.



02 Context

We aren't the first organisation to research how climate change is affecting the lifestyle choices of the current generation of workers. [Deloitte's 2024 Millennial and Gen Z Survey](#) showed that climate change remained a top three concern for both age groups. In fact, 59% of Gen Z workers and 55% of millennials say they research a brand's environmental impact and policies before accepting a job from them. Additionally, 26% of Gen Z workers and 23% of millennials said they plan to change jobs due to sustainability concerns in the future.

According to the [2024 Deloitte CxO survey](#), climate change is also a top three priority for business leaders, with 70% agreeing that they expect climate change to significantly impact strategies and operations over the next three years, and 85% of businesses increasing sustainability investments. Despite this, other research, shows there is a disparity between employer perception of sustainability initiatives and the way in which sustainable culture is embedded across all levels of the organisation. The initial impetus for our current study

was a survey conducted on sustainability professionals across a range of UK employers, ran by Jump in 2023. This survey highlighted a massive gap between employer perception and staff action, with **75% of employers stating that they believe their people want to play their part in their sustainability strategy but don't know how.**

In addition to this, the [CONE Communications Millennial Employee Engagement Study](#) found that "83% of millennials would be more loyal to a company that helps them contribute to social and environmental issues." This further reinforces that providing resources that facilitate employee action towards a strong and well-advertised sustainability policy is key to employee retention and attraction.

These studies all show a growing trend: younger workers feel as though their organisation could be doing more to combat climate change and are willing to change jobs to find an organisation that shares their vision. What our study aims to do is explore whether employees are being adequately involved in their organisation's sustainability strategy, and whether there are more organisations can do to decrease the awareness-action gap.



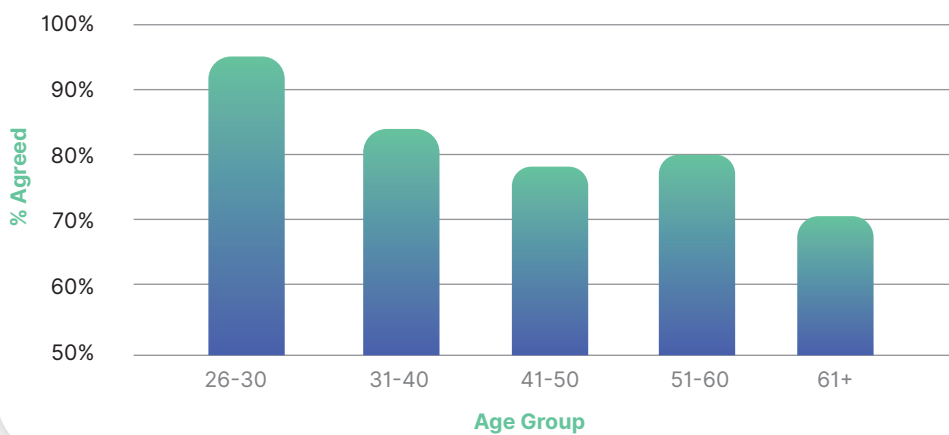
03 Analysis

We surveyed over 1,500 UK-based workers – mostly in middle management or more junior roles – at larger organisations (defined as having over 1,000 employees), to understand the audience that is likely to be targeted by sustainability communications.

The first goal of this study was to identify the extent of the ‘awareness-action gap’. To do this, we must first show that workers are both invested in and aware of sustainability initiatives. The survey shows these two aspects, as **82% of respondents agreed that “it is important to [them] to work for an organisation that prioritises sustainability.”** This shows the increasing importance of sustainability within worker’s values and ethics.



It is important to me to work for an organisation that prioritises sustainability



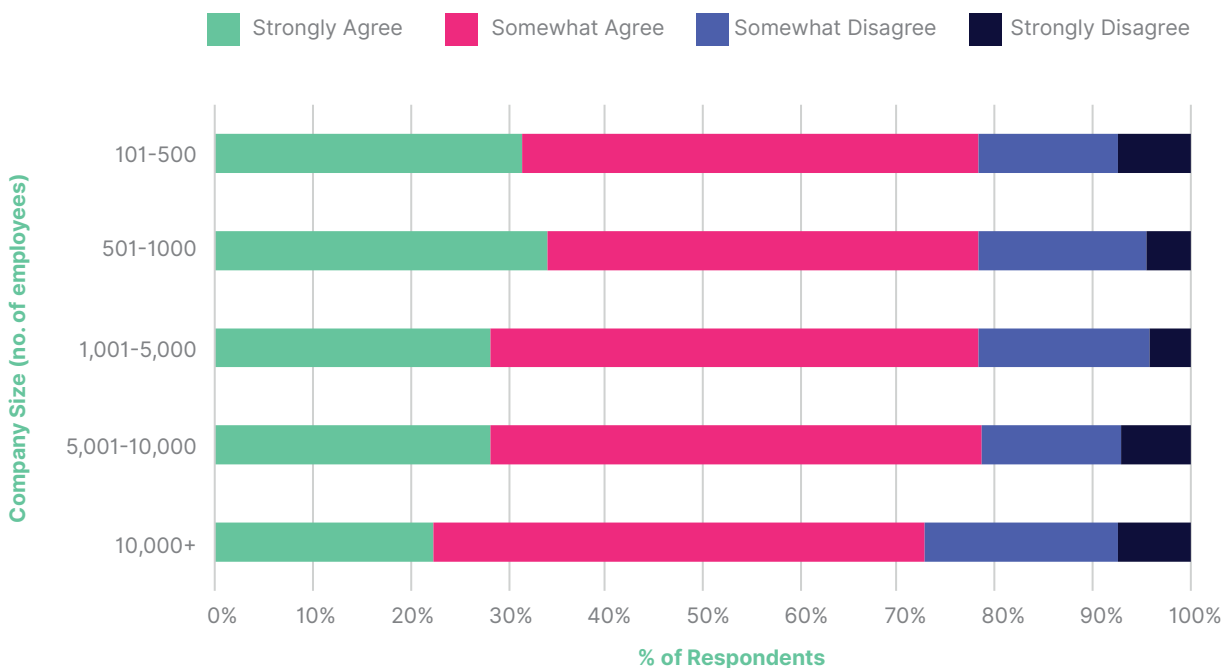
76%

of workers are “aware of their organisation’s sustainability strategy and vision.”

We also see that 76% of workers are “aware of [their] organisation’s sustainability strategy and vision.” Slightly fewer respondents (73%) agreed that they were “aware of how [their] role contributes to [their] organisation’s sustainability strategy and vision.” In the first instance, therefore, we can see that sustainability is important to workers, and that they have at least some awareness of their organisation’s sustainability strategy, however only 28% of respondents strongly agreed that they were aware of their company’s sustainability strategy and vision, showing there is still some progress to be made in this area, particularly in larger organisations.

In terms of converting that awareness into action, the study shows that **79% of respondents agree that they would “like to do more to contribute towards [their] organisation’s sustainability goals,”** with a sizeable 31% strongly agreeing with the statement. Even among those that agree that they are aware of their organisation’s sustainability strategy, 84% agree that they want to do more to contribute. This shows that despite the growing awareness amongst employees in their organisations’ sustainability vision and initiatives, there is a sizeable gap that needs to be closed in order to convert that into action.

I am aware of my organisation's sustainability strategy and vision



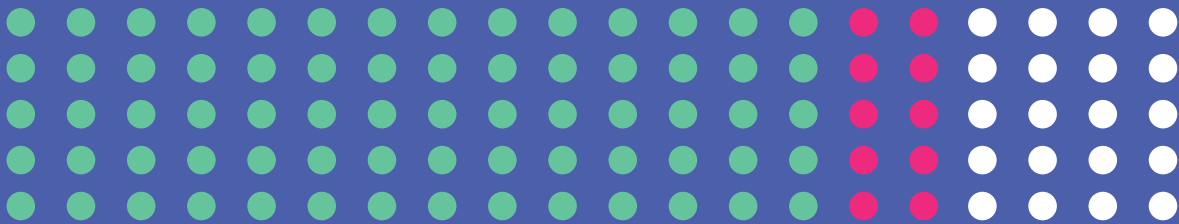
76%

24%

Agree

I'm aware of my organisation's sustainability strategy and vision

Disagree



64% Agree and want to do more

Agree and don't want to do more 12%

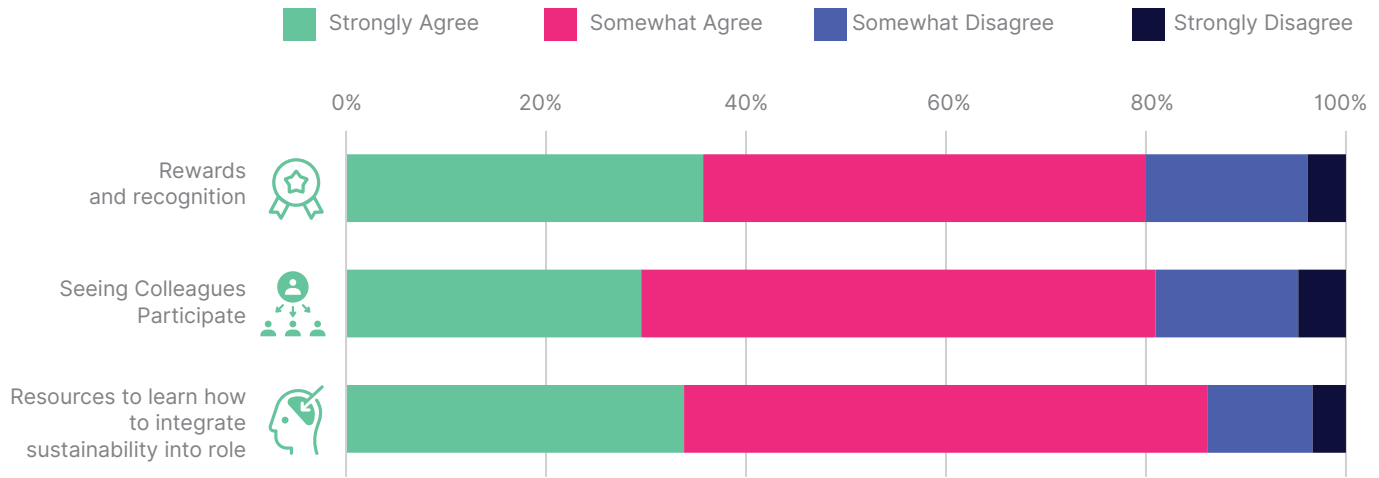
In line with previous research, 18–30-year-olds are most passionate about working somewhere that prioritises sustainability, with 43% strongly agreeing that sustainability was an important factor when choosing an employer. Additionally, 40% of respondents in this age group strongly agreed that they want to do more to contribute to their organization's sustainability goals.

The 18–30-year-old age group also has a significant awareness-action gap of 90%, i.e. of those that agree they are aware of their organisation's sustainability strategy, 9/10 also feel that they could be doing more to contribute. This suggests that while younger employees are highly aware of their organization's sustainability strategies and highly motivated to do more, there is a noticeable gap between their awareness and

the actions they are currently taking. This gap indicates that resources are best directed at this age group to activate them, as they are motivated and aware of sustainability, but need more support to take action.

Additionally, only 17% of all respondents strongly agree that their organisation "provides them with enough resources to contribute towards sustainability goals," and an astonishing **86% agreed that "Having more resources to learn how to integrate sustainability into [their] role would motivate [them] to contribute more towards [their] organisation's goals."** Therefore, a key barrier to workers contributing more to their organisation's sustainability goals is the lack of education about how they directly connect to their role.

What would motivate you to contribute more to your organisation's sustainability goals?



The survey also identified key motivators that could drive action within a workplace. **80% of respondents agreed that “rewards and recognition would motivate [them] to contribute more towards [their] organisation's sustainability goals,”** showing the need for businesses to provide an investment in employee benefits in return for their action.

Additionally, **81% of respondents agreed that “Seeing [their] colleagues take part in sustainability initiatives would motivate [them] to contribute towards [their] organisation's sustainability goals,”** showcasing the importance of making sustainability initiatives and green champions front-and-centre for the whole organisation to see.

80%

of respondents agreed that rewards and recognition would motivate them

Conclusions

Ultimately, our study has determined that while workers have some knowledge and are acting towards sustainability goals, there is still a lot of ambition to contribute more, if provided with the right guidance and resources. This is particularly significant as we know that people are prioritising employment with organisations that align with their values.

Additionally, we can conclude that some of the best groups to target with sustainability communications are younger workers as they are primed for activation, prioritising sustainability the most when seeking an employer, being the most likely to want to contribute more to sustainability objectives, but also having the largest gap between their awareness of sustainability objectives and the action they are willing to take to help achieve them.

Finally, the overarching sentiment is that given more resources, rewards, community engagement, and most of all education surrounding how employees' roles connect to the organisation's sustainability strategy and vision, workers would be motivated to contribute more to their organisation's sustainability goals.

Using these key motivators are an important part to closing the awareness-action gap and embedding a culture of sustainability at every level of the business. By doing this, organisations can attract and retain employees that are engaged and passionate about driving the organisation towards its mission to thrive in a sustainable future.

For more information visit our website at www.teamjump.co.uk

