

limeade®



2020 Employee Care Report:

The hidden causes of turnover

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We need to talk about employee care

No, not about the trendy perks or benefits you just introduced. While a strong 401(k) match, a fitness stipend or cold brew on tap look great on paper, those elements alone don't offer the care and support employees want and need to thrive at work.

Today's workplace is an always-on environment that extends beyond the physical office. New HR technology enables companies to virtually deliver the tools, resources and communications employees need to do their jobs more efficiently. But employees aren't robots. If you ask more of them or push them harder, they'll need additional support to maintain their personal well-being and levels of performance you are asking them to achieve.

According to our survey of 1,000 full-time U.S. workers, organizations rarely fulfill employees' socioemotional needs for affiliation, esteem and emotional support. And in a job market where employees have the upper hand, they're willing to move to an organization that will do a better job of fulfilling these needs.

We took a deeper look into the realities of care in the workplace and identified key problems linked to employee turnover, including low levels of inclusion, high levels of burnout and the inability to address mental health issues like stress and anxiety. We also identified where employers fall short, how a lack of care manifests in the workplace and how companies can change to retain top talent.



Key findings

Employees are suffering



44% of burned out employees constantly or often resent their employers.



47% of employees who have disclosed a mental health issue in the workplace have experienced a negative consequence by doing so.



52% of employees have noticed their company taking steps to improve their inclusion efforts since the #MeToo movement began.

2X

Millennials are more than **2x as likely** as baby boomers to disclose a mental health condition in the workplace.

And they're quitting because of it



38% of employees have encountered a colleague encouraging them to leave a job with them.



48% of employees don't believe their employers' D&I efforts are genuine.



1 in 3 employees have left a job because they didn't feel their employer cared about them as a person.

2X

Employees who are burned out are **twice as likely** to have tried to convince another colleague to leave the job with them.

01

The biggest causes of employee turnover



In 2018, **2.3% of the U.S. workforce** quit their jobs. That's an average of 3.5 million workers monthly — **the highest rate since 2001**. Although the current job market is robust, the promise of a strong job market itself isn't necessarily the main factor that's driving employees to quit. The causes of turnover are numerous.

Academic studies¹ show that top causes of unwanted turnover include a low-quality supervisor relationship, poor team morale, lack of tangible rewards, lack of growth opportunities and lack of autonomy.

Additionally, a **Limeade Institute report** found that employee care can be the antidote to unwanted employee turnover. When employees feel their employers authentically care about them as individuals, they're more engaged, more likely to stay and more likely to recommend their workplace.

¹ Kurtessis, J. N., Eisenberger, R., Ford, M. T., Buffardi, L. C., Stewart, K. A., & Adis, C. S. (2015). Perceived Organizational Support: A Meta-Analytic Evaluation of Organizational Support Theory. *Journal of Management*, 43(6), 1854–1884. doi: 10.1177/0149206315575554



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In this survey, Limeade explored how care takes shape in today's workplace and found that employers are coming up short: **Only 31% of employees strongly agree that their employers care about them as individuals.** And some employees who feel cast aside will even encourage coworkers to leave with them — posing a double threat to employers and proving that turnover can be contagious.



Only 31% of employees strongly agree that their employers care about them as individuals.

Employee turnover by the numbers

Lack of employer care contributes to employee turnover



1 in 3 employees have left a job because they didn't feel their employer cared about them as a person.



1 in 4 left a job because they weren't treated with dignity by company leaders.



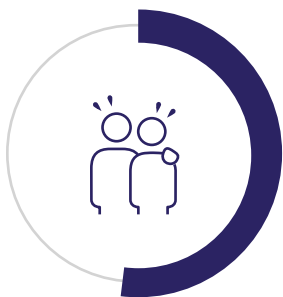
1 in 5 left a job because their employer didn't support their well-being.

Employees will leave in pairs if things get bad enough



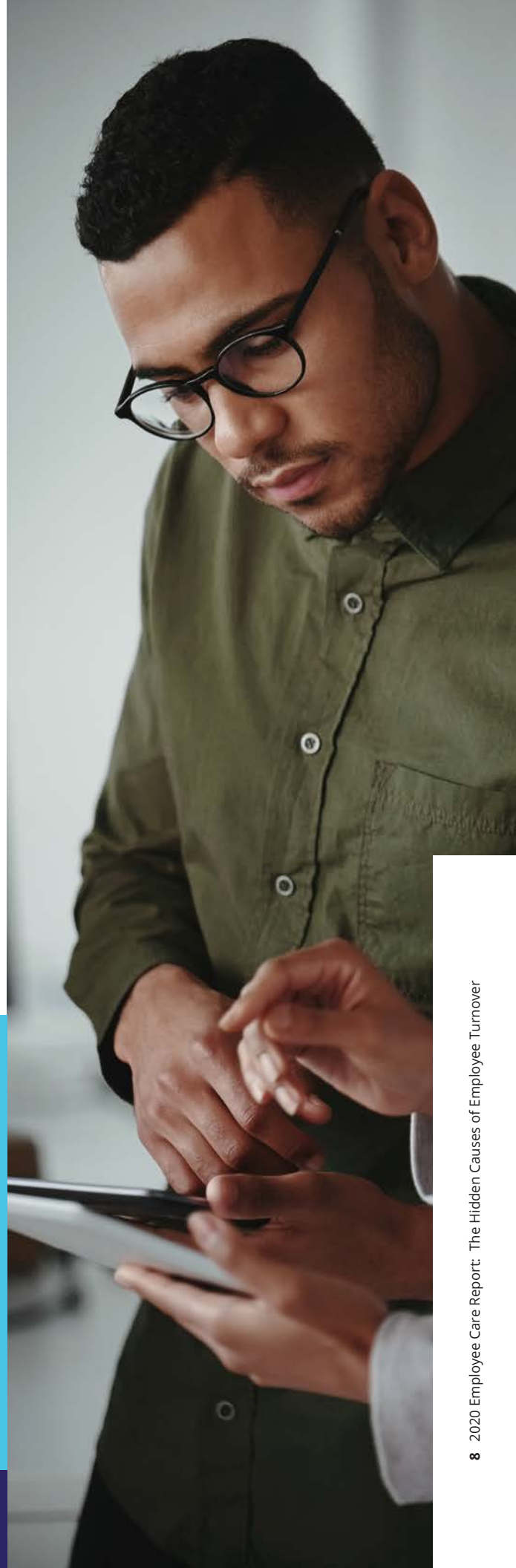
38%

of employees have encountered a colleague encouraging them to leave a job with them.



For burned out employees, that number jumps to

52%



How to act on it: Don't rely on exit interviews

More than four in five respondents (88%) were truthful about why they left a job in an exit interview, but many still wished they had said something more. This “something more” is valuable information for your organization to improve how it cares for its employees, so it's in your best interest to dig for it.

While exit interviews are important, they happen too late in the employee lifecycle to truly understand what's going on in an organization. Instead, leverage stay interviews and consider developing an in-depth discussion guide with questions geared toward understanding whether your business fulfills the basic, physiological and socioemotional needs of its employees.

Additionally, train HR representatives on how to create an open and safe environment where employees not only feel empowered to provide candid feedback, but also have ample opportunity to discuss their experience throughout their job tenure.



Exit interview feedback that employers never got to hear



I would have given more examples of unfair treatment, but I felt rushed through the interview.



I would have spoken my mind, but I needed a good reference and felt I couldn't afford to be transparent.



I did more than the job description and wasn't recognized for it.



The managers were so poorly trained.

02

All about burnout



Burnout happens when employees are highly engaged, but don't get the support they need to maintain their personal well-being. It's a real, documented occupational phenomenon — last year, the World Health Organization even added the syndrome to its **International Classification of Diseases**.

The effects of burnout have real consequences for employees' lives. A **multi-sample**² study published in the Journal of Organizational Behavior lists fatigue, irritability and health problems as symptoms of burnout. Our study found that of employees who consider themselves burned out, 52% had trouble sleeping at night, 34% had a disinterest in socializing and 26% consumed more alcohol than usual.

Burnout's effects on employers aren't pretty, either. It pushes workers to resent their employers, leave their jobs or even encourage coworkers to leave with them when their employers don't have proper care in place to deal with the syndrome.

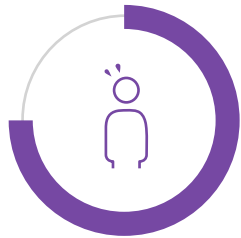
²Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: a multi-sample study. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 25(3), 293-315. doi: 10.1002/job.248



Our study found that of employees who consider themselves burned out, 52% had trouble sleeping at night, 34% had a disinterest in socializing and 26% consumed more alcohol than usual.



Burnout by the numbers



75%

of employees have experienced burnout at work.

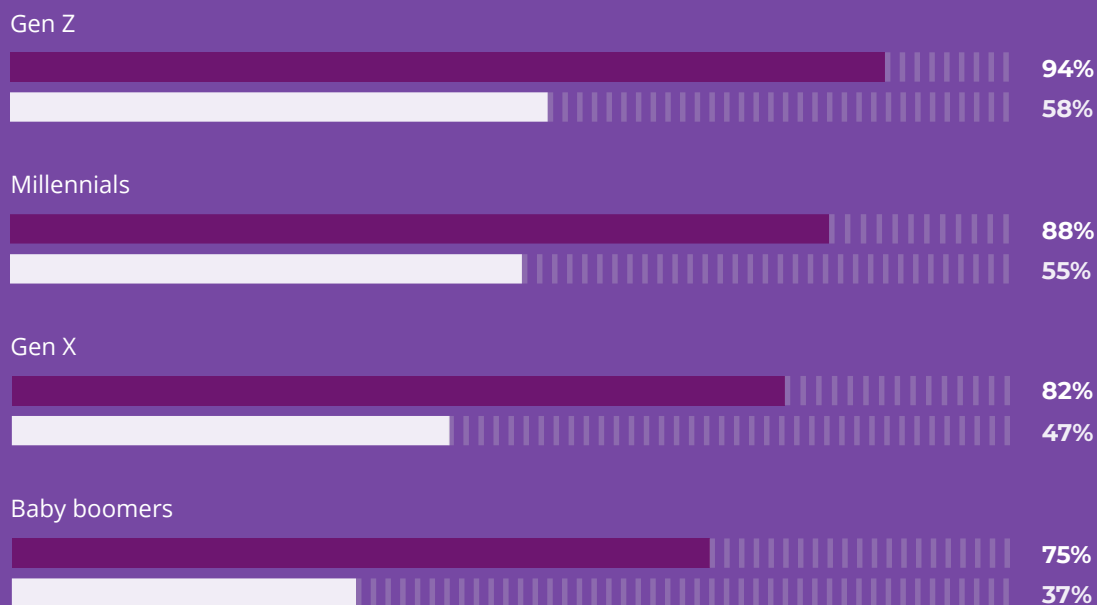


44%

of burned out employees constantly or often resent their employers.

Younger workers are less likely to wait out the burnout

- % who have job searched due to burnout
- % who have taken a new job due to burnout



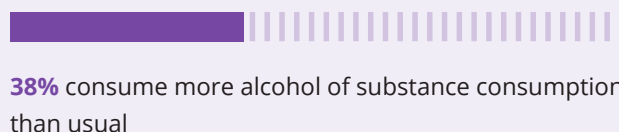
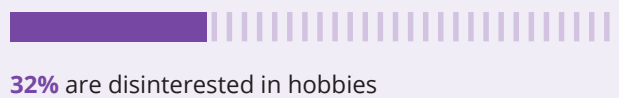
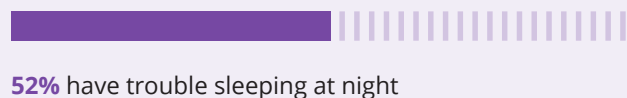
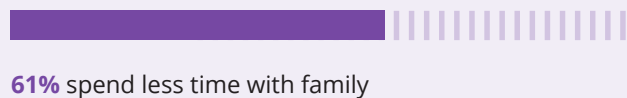
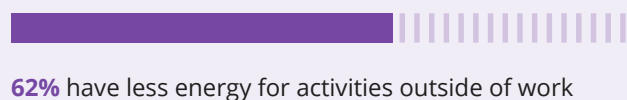
How to act on it: Don't brush burnout under the rug

Only 25% of employees said their employers have discussed or acknowledged the possibility of burnout at work with their employees. But burnout is common, and it's important to remember that employers need to acknowledge their own roles in burnout.

Employee care should be at the core of any action. Tackling burnout is about identifying problem areas, tracking them, intervening at the group level and constantly working to resolve the issues. But it's also about training HR and managers to spot the signs of burnout and create a safe environment to show employees you have the resources to help them recover.



Adverse effects of burnout



03

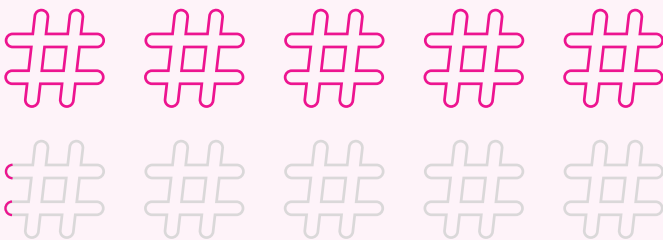
Inclusion is essential



It's an important time for inclusion in the workplace. With communication and reporting of workplace transgressions increasing alongside the rise of the #MeToo movement, it's critical for organizations to be thoughtful and authentic in their efforts. These initiatives haven't been overlooked; 52% of employees have noticed their company taking steps to improve their inclusion efforts since the #MeToo movement began.

And yet employees' views about their employers' authenticity on this topic are fairly split. Perhaps because too many employees don't feel they work for leaders who are on their side, and the adverse effects on individual workers are clear.

Findings of the survey revealed that many employees who fall victim to examples of workplace misconduct don't feel they can report issues. It's clear that many employers have yet to gain employee trust and convince their people that employee care is their main motivator.



52% of employees have noticed their company taking steps to improve their inclusion efforts since the #MeToo movement began.



It's clear that many employers have yet to gain employee trust and convince their people that employee care is their main motivator.

Inclusion by the numbers

Receiving and handling inappropriate comments



30% of employees have encountered someone making an inappropriate remark about some aspect of their identity.



32% didn't report the issue.



Of those who reported, 47% said their issue was not handled satisfactorily.

A gender take

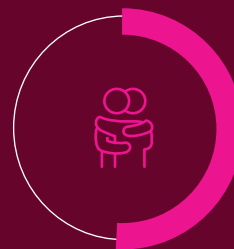
Men and women received inappropriate comments at the same rate (30% vs 30%), but men were much more likely to say they were satisfied with how the issue was handled (74% vs 43%).

Inclusion



81%

agree that their employer makes a conscious effort to promote inclusion in the workplace.



51%

say they've left a job due to a lack of inclusion

Employees are split on whether their employers' D&I efforts are genuine

52% genuine



48% not genuine

How to act on it: Sell your inclusion efforts internally, too

When employers work to improve inclusion initiatives, many prioritize external promotion of those efforts. It feels good to publicly promote policies on a website or share a social media post about anti-bias training, but effective D&I efforts go beyond external measures.

Inclusion is every employee's responsibility, not just a top-down initiative. By promoting your inclusion efforts internally, your people are more likely to come on board and join the effort.

Start by showing employees what your D&I goals are. To help your employees rally around inclusion as a cause, your internal marketing plan should include employee-run resource groups, outside expert speakers and tangible ways to further the conversation, such as a social media hashtag or an internal forum to share daily acts of inclusion.



Employees on why their companies D&I efforts are genuine or not



When the higher-ups all look the same, the feeling of a glass ceiling for people of color is very real.



For us, D&I training is a 15-minute video and five-question quiz that anyone could pass.



Our D&I came long before the #MeToo movement. I believe they are genuine.



My CEO is a woman so I think her efforts are genuine.

04

How mental health plays a role



Although we've seen improvements in recent years, our data shows that stigmas against mental health conditions are alive and well in the workplace. While mental health conditions can be managed, not all can be managed successfully on a regular basis and may occasionally impact an employee's ability to perform at their typical level. Employees cannot always just check their mental health burdens at the door when they come to work each morning.

But disclosing a mental health condition doesn't always feel like a safe option to employees, especially given the discrimination — both blatant and subtle — many face from colleagues.

If anything shows the employee-care disparity that exists in the workplace, it's this: Nearly half of employees who have disclosed a mental health condition say they've experienced a negative effect of doing so.



Employees cannot always just check their mental health burdens at the door when they come to work each morning.



Mental health and emotional well-being by the numbers



30% of employees have disclosed a mental or emotional health issue in the workplace.



47% who have disclosed an issue have experienced a negative consequence for doing so.

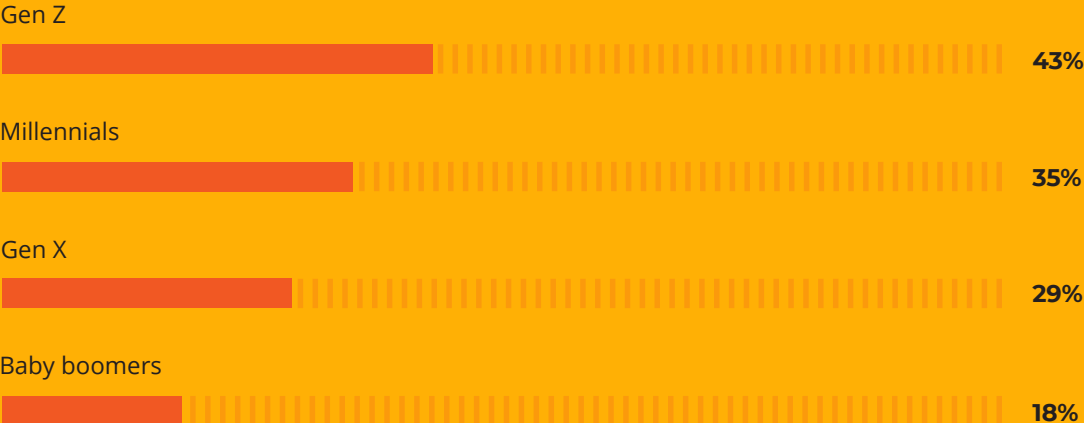


62% report being discouraged from sharing an opinion at work.

A generational look at mental health in the workplace:

Older employees are less likely to disclose mental health concerns in the workplace — perhaps due to an awareness gap in mental health among older workers or the fact they've been in the workplace long enough to know it won't be well-received.

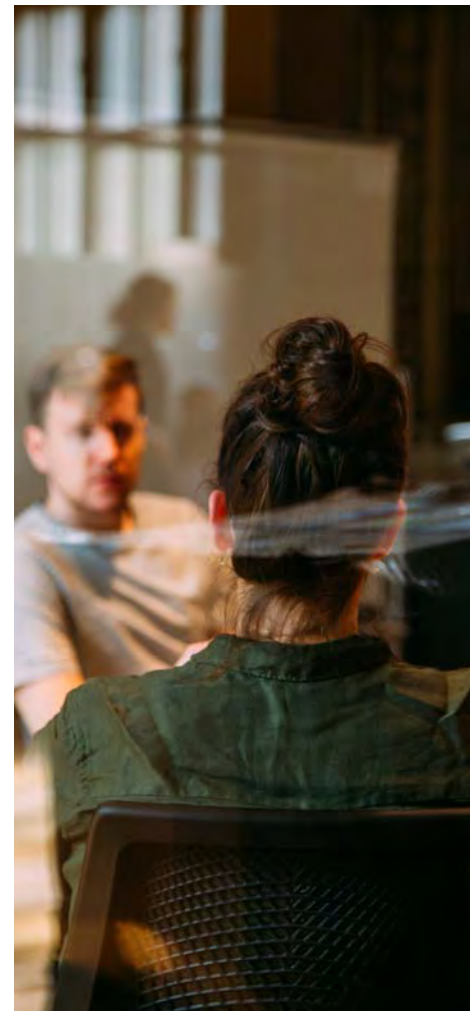
% who have disclosed a mental health issue at work



How to act on it: Define a policy for disclosing a mental health condition

When employees struggling with mental health issues see there is an established, transparent and fair policy for handling their situation, they are more likely to find the support needed to thrive in the workplace. Train and empower managers to not only know the policy, but to have these conversations with their people in a respectful, trusting and non-judgmental way. Too many employees suffer in silence with a mental health condition because they're unsure how managers will receive it.

To be effective, this policy must cover all the bases. Subtle discrimination toward mental health issues cannot be swept under the rug, so holding would-be discriminators accountable requires an authentic culture for mental health accommodations. This starts with proactively offering tools and resources that support emotional well-being, and ends with policy transparency and consistency at the leadership level.



Employees on mental health and emotional well-being



You get treated differently — like you're not able to take on projects or are about to break. It's a look, a feeling and even the way things are worded in talks with you. I've been pulled out of discussions and calls and decision-making opportunities.



My supervisor stated that he also experienced mental health issues, and if he could deal with it in a certain manner, then I could, too.



Basically I was told to suck it up and come to work.



I was not promoted as I was "too emotional."



I was watched more closely after taking sick time off and needed proof from my doctor.

Committing to employee care

As workplaces continue to ask more of their employees, employers need to reciprocate by providing care and fostering engagement.

In renewing your commitment to offering top-tier employee care, focus your efforts on burnout, inclusion, mental health and emotional well-being. When you do, employees are more engaged, more likely to stay at the company and more likely to recommend the company as a great place to work. In short, more care means better business results — and it starts with you.

Ready to take action to show your employees you care?

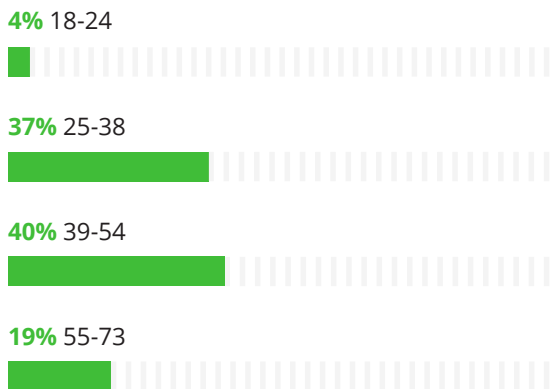
Head to limeade.com to learn more.



Methodology

Limeade surveyed 1,000 full-time employees in October 2019. This survey was conducted via an online survey platform. Each respondent was located in the U.S. and worked at a company with 500 or more employees. Their sample breakdown is as follows:

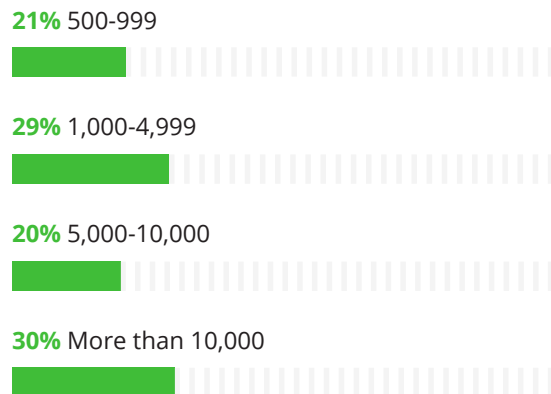
Age



Gender



Company employee count



About Limeade

Limeade is an employee experience software company that helps build great places to work. The Limeade platform unifies employee well-being, engagement and inclusion solutions with industry-leading communications capabilities. Recognized for its own award-winning culture, Limeade helps every employee know their company cares.

To learn more, visit www.limeade.com.

