

The WorkProud Study 2024

Study Conducted: 2023

by Rick Garlick, Ph.D.

Introduction

In today's fiercely competitive landscape, companies face an increasingly daunting task: attracting and retaining top talent. Amidst rapid technological advancements, shifting demographics, and evolving employee expectations, businesses are confronted with multifaceted challenges in securing and maintaining a skilled workforce. From the demand for specialized skills to the pursuit of work-life balance and meaningful career advancement opportunities, organizations grapple with navigating a complex terrain where talent acquisition and retention have become critical components of sustainable growth and success. As the war for talent intensifies, companies must adopt innovative strategies and cultivate dynamic workplace cultures to not only attract top-tier professionals but also to inspire long-term commitment and engagement. This is particularly challenging given the transient nature of today's young workers, who often seek the quickest paths to promotion and salary increases.

WorkProud® has identified two key predictors of the commitment and quality of the workforce and its output. The first is *individual pride*, which can best be described as the inherent sense of satisfaction people receive from doing quality work and seeing the impact of that work on their customers, company, and community. The second is *company pride*, which is defined as the satisfaction people receive from working for a company with a strong culture that includes ethical leadership, fair treatment of workers, a strong sense of purpose, a positive contributor to the larger community, an inclusive work environment, and corporate values that align with the values of its employees. While there is a relationship between the two types of pride, in that they are both fueled by mission and purpose, as well as reinforced by meaningful employee recognition, they are, at the same time, separate concepts. For example, the research shows that healthcare workers show a powerful sense of individual pride in their work but are not always proud of the companies for whom they work. This can lead to situations where companies must frequently replace quality workers.

A recent study of 1,000 full-time workers, drawn across a diverse number of industries, shows the relationship between the two types of pride and important engagement outcomes. The first part of this paper focuses on the results of company pride, particularly as it impacts the attraction and retention of workers.

The study has been broken out into two elements:

- Part I: Building Company Pride
- Part II: Building Individual Pride

PART I**Building Company Pride***The Key to Attracting and Retaining Talent***Defining Company Pride**

The study asked the respondents to talk about the qualities that would make them proud to work for a particular company, regardless of whether their current employer represented these qualities. From the 1,000 responses to the question, the following themes emerged.

Fair compensation and benefits	Good pay, fair wages, and compensation for employees' efforts.
Community Impact	Desire for the organization to contribute positively to the community through charitable activities, support for schools, or helping the less fortunate.
Recognition for Employee Contributions	Recognition for hard work, acknowledgment of achievements, and appreciation for employees' contributions.
Employee Development	Opportunities for growth, advancement, and continuous learning within the organization.
Respect and Concern for Employees by Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of a safe and secure work environment, including concern for mental health and well-being. Emphasis on a healthy work-life balance. • Creating a positive and supportive work culture, including friendly staff, fun workplace events, and a sense of camaraderie among employees.
Transparency and Communication	Transparency in decision-making, open communication, and involvement of employees in significant decisions.
Values and Ethics	Alignment with personal values, integrity, ethical business practices, and a commitment to doing what is right.

Employee Care	Companies that genuinely care for their employees, consider their families, and provide support during emergencies. Includes; Support for mental health, Professional and respectful treatment of employees and valuing work contributions.
Diversity and Inclusion	Appreciation for a diverse and inclusive workplace where individual differences are respected. Recognition of and respect for individual differences, including gender-based equality.
Strong Products and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pride in delivering quality products or services that leave customers satisfied and happy. • Innovation and adaptability, staying ahead in the industry and looking toward the future.
Social Responsibility	Companies that contribute to social causes, give to charities, and have a positive impact on society.
Ownership and Responsibility	Ownership and responsibility for the company's actions, as well as accountability for mistakes.

Measuring the Impact of Pride

How much does having this type of *company pride* impact an organization? The survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement with statements using a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale. One of the statements was the following:

‘I am extremely proud to work for my current company.’

The data showed that 32% of the workers in this study ‘strongly agreed’ with this statement and were classified as the ‘high company pride segment’. Forty-one percent (41%) ‘agreed’ and were placed in the ‘moderate pride’ segment, with the other 27% placed in the ‘low pride’ segment.

The data showed that having ‘moderate’ company pride had a minimal effect on engagement, but there was a very stark contrast between those in the ‘high’ and ‘low’ pride groups relative to the strength of agreement they indicated on other key indicators of employee attitudes and intention.

**TABLE I: High and Low Company Pride Responses to Engagement Indicators
% ‘Strongly Agreeing’**

Engagement item	High Company Pride (32%)	Low Company Pride (27%)	Ratio
I would strongly recommend my company as a place to work to friends and family members.	72%	2%	36 to 1
I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with my present company.	62%	3%	21 to 1
Even if I were offered significantly more money, I would still want to stay at my current company.	32%	2%	15 to 1
I am paid fairly for the value I create for my company.	45%	4%	11 to 1

The above chart shows that workers are 36 times more likely to recommend their companies to others as a place to work, which is a key source of recruitment. Two-thirds of employees with high company pride say they would stay with their current company long term compared to only 3% with low pride. One-third (32%) of employees that have high pride would stay with their current companies even if offered significantly more money to do the same job elsewhere, compared to only 2% of the low pride respondents. Finally, higher pay satisfaction was associated with high pride companies, although it is difficult to determine the direction of the relationship. Paying people better likely results in higher pride in working for the company, while at the same time, people are more satisfied with their wages when they appreciate other aspects of the company.

Pride and Loyalty in Younger Workers

While the study shows there are no meaningful differences across generations on the pride employees have in their company, the impact of creating high pride is particularly high in younger workers. Based on a recent study by Glassdoor.com¹, the youngest group of workers, Gen Z (1997-2012) will overtake Baby Boomers (1946-1964) in the workforce in 2024. Currently, Boomers have a slight edge over Gen Z, 14% to 13%. Millennials (1981-1996), at 39% make up the largest proportion of the workforce with Gen X (1965-1980) representing 34%. With so much focus placed on retaining talent, companies have a right to be concerned about worker defections. Only 23% of workers, 42 years or younger, expressed a strong interest in remaining with their companies long-term.

That percentage declines further to only 18% for workers 30 years or younger. Only 16% of workers 42 or younger would remain loyal to their companies, even if offered more money to do the same work elsewhere. That number drops to 11% for workers 30 years old or younger. Workers 30 years or younger are slightly less likely to experience high pride in the companies for whom they work (28%) than those over 30 (33%) but facilitating high company pride is just as important for retaining younger workers.

TABLE II: High and Low Company Pride Responses to Retention Indicators for Employees 30 Years or Younger
% ‘Strongly Agreeing’

Engagement item	High Company Pride (28%)	Low Company Pride (25%)	Ratio
I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with my present company.	43%	7%	6 to 1
Even if I were offered significantly more money, I would still want to stay at my current company.	31%	4%	8 to 1

While the impact of high company pride on younger workers on retention might not be quite as strong as it is for older workers, it is still clearly a principal factor in retaining a young workforce that is growing in size and importance each year.

The Relationship Between Corporate/Individual Recognition and Company Pride

Earlier, the study described the importance of creating a culture of recognition as a source of driving both *company* and *individual* pride. Twenty-six percent (26%) recalled their company winning a workplace recognition award (e.g., ‘Best Place to Work’) sometime within the past three years.

The data below show the positive relationship between winning a ‘Best Place to Work’ award and employees having high company pride. Of course, the same concern exists regarding the directionality of the relationship, but it is certainly not a stretch to assume that corporate recognition reinforces the pride that workers may already feel toward their workplace due to its positive culture.

TABLE III: Company Pride and Corporate Recognition for Workplace Excellence

Workplace Award	High Company Pride %	Moderate Company Pride %	Low Company Pride %
Company won a Best Place to Work Award in the past three years	48%	40%	12%
No award	18%	35%	47%
Not sure	33%	46%	22%

The respondents frequently cited *having a culture of employee recognition* as a defining characteristic of a company for which they would be proud to work. The data strongly supports this. When asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statement, *'I am consistently recognized in ways that are meaningful for doing good work'* on a 5-point agree-disagree scale, 22% 'strongly agreed' and were classified as being in the 'high' recognition group; 42% 'agreed' and were put in the 'moderate' recognition group; while the remaining 36% were put in the 'low' recognition group. The following table shows the relationship between levels of recognition and company pride.

TABLE IV: The Relationship Between Consistent Recognition and Company Pride

Received Consistent Recognition at Work	High Company Pride %	Moderate Company Pride %	Low Company Pride %
High	59%	33%	8%
Moderate	33%	50%	17%
Low	13%	35%	52%

The table shows that six-in-ten (59%) of those who are consistently recognized at their jobs have high company pride compared to only 13% who receive little or no workplace recognition. Even those who receive 'moderate' recognition at work are 2½ times more likely to have 'high' pride in the companies for whom they work compared to those whose companies do not recognize them for excellent work.

On-site, Remote, and Hybrid Work

One of the arguments for having employees return to the office is that being together in a central location cements the bonds between an employee, their company, and their colleagues. The data show there is no difference between on-site and remote workers on company pride, although hybrid workers (e.g., part-time on-site with the rest of the time remote work) tend to have fewer people that fall into the ‘low’ pride group. On most of the engagement items, hybrid workers rated their companies directionally better than those that worked either entirely on-site or entirely remote.

TABLE V: Company Pride Among On-Site, Remote, and Hybrid Workers

Received Consistent Recognition at Work	High Company Pride %	Moderate Company Pride %	Low Company Pride %
On-Site	31%	39%	30%
Remote	32%	38%	30%
Hybrid	34%	48%	18%

Conclusions and Action Steps

The data reinforce the importance of positive work cultures to create strong company pride. Pride is an emotional driver that facilitates a ‘stickiness is between workers and their companies.’

When workers respect their companies, admire their leaders, feel treated fairly, and share their companies’ values, they will be less inclined to leave simply due to the lure of a bigger paycheck. When you consider the cost of turnover, particularly in today’s job market, ‘doing the right thing’ by your employees, customers, and communities is simply good business. Consistent employee recognition is a key component of this approach as it facilitates both pride in one’s company and in one’s individual work.

Here are some strategies for creating strong company pride in your employees:

Have a policy of transparent communication: Encourage open and transparent communication channels where employees feel heard and valued. Keep employees informed about company goals, strategies, and performance. Share successes and challenges openly, fostering a sense of collective responsibility and unity. Transparent communication leads to trust and a perception of honesty and high ethics, which are critical to pride in one’s company.

Consistently recognize employees in meaningful ways: Implement employee recognition programs to celebrate achievements, milestones, and contributions. Provide meaningful rewards and incentives for exceptional performance, such as bonuses, promotions, or additional time off. Recognize both individual and team accomplishments to reinforce a culture of collaboration. The data suggest that meaningful recognition is becoming something of an expectation, particularly among young workers, and the lack of meaningful recognition is one of the key reasons for leaving companies.

Provide professional development opportunities: Offer opportunities for skill development, training, and career advancement. Provide mentorship programs and coaching to support employees in their professional growth. Invest in continuous learning initiatives to empower employees to enhance their skills and expertise. The data debunked the idea that no one wants to stay at their present company their entire career. Employees with high company pride frequently envision staying at their present companies for their entire careers, although not necessarily stuck in the same jobs, doing the same work. It is important to keep employees feeling they are growing professionals and enhancing their personal brands, even if they plan to stay at their present companies long-term.

Focus on employee well-being initiatives: Prioritize employee well-being by offering competitive benefits packages, including health insurance, wellness programs, and work-life balance initiatives. Create a positive work environment that promotes physical and mental health, such as flexible work schedules, remote work options, and ergonomic workspaces. Show genuine concern for employees' personal and professional development, demonstrating a commitment to their overall well-being. The data show that employees take pride in companies that are aligned with their personal values, and who share employees' concerns for their health and well-being, as well as the well-being of their families.

Align the company mission with a larger sense of purpose to the community and society as a whole: Clearly articulate the company's mission, vision, and values, ensuring alignment with employees' personal beliefs and goals. Foster a sense of purpose by emphasizing the meaningful impact of employees' work on customers, communities, and society. Encourage volunteerism, corporate social responsibility initiatives, and community involvement to demonstrate the company's commitment to making a difference.

Empower employees to take risks: Empower employees by providing them with autonomy, decision-making authority, and opportunities to take ownership of their work. Encourage innovation, creativity, and risk-taking by creating a culture that values experimentation and continuous improvement. Support employees in pursuing their ideas and initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in their contributions. These things create a sense of two-way trust between employees and their companies. Companies take pride in a company they trust and who trusts them.

Provide strong leadership and role modeling: There is no greater path to building company pride than when employees respect the ethics of company leadership. Lead by example and demonstrate the company's values through actions and behaviors. Foster trust, respect, and integrity in all interactions with employees. Provide inspirational leadership that motivates and inspires employees to perform at their best.

The data from this study quantifies principles that the best-performing companies practice daily. These principles represent good business, particularly in an era where employees see themselves more as 'free agents' than in past generations. Fostering a keen sense of pride within a company is not just about instilling loyalty among employees; it is a strategic imperative for attracting and retaining top talent. A workforce deeply connected to the company's mission, values, and culture becomes a powerful magnet for like-minded professionals seeking more than just a job.

Moreover, a prideful workforce is inherently more engaged, productive, and innovative, driving profitability and sustainable growth. Ultimately, investing in building company pride is not just an expense—it is a proven pathway to long-term success in today's competitive business landscape.

PART II

Building Individual Pride

Elevating Workplace Engagement: Unveiling the Power of Pride

It is estimated that companies spend \$100B annually trying to boost employee engagement². Yet, a large portion of this investment focuses on short-term gains, akin to a temporary adrenaline shot, with little sustainable long-term improvement. According to Gallup trend data³, only 32% of U.S. employees were actively engaged in their workplace in 2022, mirroring the average over the past two decades. While organizations invest considerable resources in deciphering the keys to a motivated workforce, the significance of instilling a sense of pride remains an under-explored area. Beyond the metrics and strategies lies a fundamental truth: when individuals take ownership and derive satisfaction from their contributions, the ripple effects extend far beyond productivity metrics.

Recognizing pride in both one's individual work and their employer as pivotal drivers of sustainable engagement, WorkProud® embarked on a comprehensive study involving 1,000 full-time employees spanning various sectors. Initiated in late 2023, this study served as a follow-up to a similar investigation conducted just over two years prior, in 2021. While the 2023 study encompassed assessments of both individual and company pride, this paper narrows its focus to individual pride and its profound impact on critical HR metrics including job satisfaction, workplace attendance, productivity, and discretionary effort. Through an in-depth exploration, the second part of this white paper endeavors to unravel the connections between pride and these outcomes, shedding light on the factors that shape and stimulate pride from the perspective of the employees themselves.

Defining Workplace Pride

Having pride in one's work is a deeply personal and intrinsic feeling of satisfaction, fulfillment, and ownership derived from the quality, effort, and impact of one's contributions. It encompasses a sense of accomplishment, self-respect, and confidence in the work one performs. Individuals who take pride in their work demonstrate a commitment to excellence, attention to detail, and a desire to exceed expectations. This pride manifests itself in a strong work ethic, which includes a willingness to go above and beyond one's formal responsibilities. People who have strong individual pride show a genuine enthusiasm for their tasks or projects. Moreover, having pride in one's work involves a sense of responsibility for the outcomes and a recognition of how one's efforts contribute to the broader goals and success of both their customers and their company. Overall, it reflects a deep personal connection between an individual's identity, values, and the work they produce.

Put simply, pride is something people feel, and is a strong emotional driver of workplace engagement that is different from the rational components measured by many employee surveys.

Defining Individual Pride?

The survey asked the participants to describe a time when they felt pride in their work. The intention was to uncover the conditions that facilitate individual pride. The responses can be summarized by the following:

Project Success and Recognition	Successfully completing challenging projects or securing grants, achieving the best metrics, reducing turnover, and receiving accolades from superiors, peers, or clients for outstanding work.
Contributions to Organizational Success	Making valuable contributions like creating reports, implementing processes, or troubleshooting issues, hiring employees, contributing to career growth, increasing revenue, and playing a role in the growth and success of the company.
Efficiency, Problem-Solving, and Adaptability	Resolving issues, demonstrating efficiency, and handling emergency situations, streamlining processes, eliminating manual work, and adapting to challenges, including successfully managing testing for system upgrades.
Customer Satisfaction and Community Impact	Making customers happy, resolving their issues, and providing excellent service, contributing to the community through charity work or supporting local businesses, and creating positive experiences for customers or clients.
Personal Growth and Learning	Overcoming challenges, surpassing personal milestones, and continuous improvement, adapting to new tasks, learning independently, and enhancing skills, feeling proud of work every day, contributing to the company's success, and enjoying personal satisfaction.
Teamwork and Collaboration	Collaborating with colleagues to achieve common goals and being recognized for team achievements, leading teams, managing difficult tasks, and mentoring or assisting colleagues, and achieving success as part of a high-performing team.

Community Impact and Positive Contributions	Contributing to the community through charity work, helping the homeless, or supporting local businesses, making a positive impact on individuals, such as assisting with mental health issues or helping patients reintegrate into the community, and reconnecting families, helping elderly individuals, and assisting those in need.
Educational and Mentorship Achievements	Coaching, mentoring, or teaching, and experiencing pride in the success of students or team members, helping others develop new skills or overcome challenges.
Unexpected or Unique Achievements	Unusual accomplishments, handling unique or challenging situations, and preventing crises.
Recognition, Promotions, and Personal Satisfaction	Receiving praise, promotions, and bonuses for outstanding work, feeling proud of work every day, finding satisfaction in helping others, contributing to the company's success, or doing a job well.
Innovations and Initiatives	Inventing products, creating helpful dashboards, and implementing new ways for efficiency, crafting promotional material using design tools, painting, and mastering new skills or cuisines.

Intrinsic Qualities Are Also Important to Pride

While various strategies exist to stimulate pride in one's work, it's essential to recognize that taking pride in one's work is also deeply rooted in personal values and upbringing. Many individuals hold steadfast beliefs that dictate a job should be done meticulously or never left incomplete. Self-proclaimed "perfectionists" find immense satisfaction in delivering quality work as a result of their personal efforts.

These values and traits should be acknowledged as integral components during the recruiting and hiring process, forming part of a job candidate's profile. Identifying individuals who align with these values not only ensures a better fit within the organizational culture but also promotes a workforce driven by a shared commitment to excellence and quality.

The Current State of Individual Work Pride

The study categorized participants into three distinct groups based on their level of agreement with the statement, "Overall, I feel a tremendous sense of pride in my work."

These groups comprised individuals with high individual pride, exemplified by ‘strongly agree’ responses; those with moderate pride, indicated by ‘agree’ responses and those with low pride, encompassing individuals who responded neutrally or with disagreement. The table presented below illustrates comparisons between the findings from the 2021 study with the 2023 update.

Table VI: Individual Pride 2021 v. 2023

Study Year	High Pride	Moderate Pride	Low Pride
2021	43%	37%	20%
2023	34%	47%	20%

As indicated in the table above, there has been a notable decline in the proportion of workers reporting 'high' levels of pride from 2021 to 2023, accompanied by a significant shift towards the 'moderate' pride category. One potential explanation for this decline in work pride could be attributed to the departure of many Baby Boomers from the workforce. In the 2021 study, Boomers demonstrated the highest level of work pride, although pride levels experienced a decrease across all age groups. (A detailed examination of pride across different generational cohorts will be provided later in this paper.)

Moreover, another contributing factor to the diminished levels of pride may stem from increased stress among workers who are tasked with compensating for reduced staffing levels. It appears that companies are currently placing less emphasis on customer service compared to pre-pandemic times, potentially leading to heightened frustration among employees.

Additionally, the soaring price of inflation could serve as another source of frustration, further dampening pride levels as wages have failed to keep pace with inflationary pressures. These multifaceted challenges underscore the importance of addressing various factors impacting work pride to foster a more positive and fulfilling work environment.

The Impact of Pride

The survey included items that predict several favorable outcomes. Besides job satisfaction, other items predicted attendance, advocacy for the employer's products and services, and the level of effort employees exert on the job. The table below illustrates the significant relationship between high individual pride and these critical outcomes.

TABLE VII: The Relationship Between Pride and Engagement Outcomes*

Item	High Pride	Moderate Pride	Low Pride
I am completely satisfied with my job. (Job Satisfaction)	53%	12%	5%
I would strongly recommend my company's products and services if given the opportunity. (Product/Service Advocacy)	62%	22%	15%
I look forward to coming to work every day. (Attendance)	46%	8%	6%
I put in significantly more effort than the other people with whom I work. (Effort/Productivity)	41%	17%	17%
I consistently go the extra mile to help my company and co-workers. (Discretionary Effort)	59%	29%	14%

* Numbers in the table columns represent the percentages that 'strongly agree' with the statements.

The table above illustrates a distinct relationship between possessing high personal pride and overall engagement. Notably, maintaining 'moderate' pride in one's work does not significantly influence engagement. These findings underscore the importance of making concerted efforts to cultivate high pride within the workforce.

Generational Differences in Pride

A discernible portion of the decline in workforce pride can be ascribed to generational shifts. Although the disparity in pride levels between Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) and younger cohorts has diminished since the study was conducted in 2021, Boomers still exhibit markedly higher levels of intrinsic pride. This is evident in their consistently elevated ratings on statements such as 'There is no feeling in the world like the feeling of a job well done' and 'I cannot stand to look at work not done right.' In 2021, Boomers comprised 27% of the sample, whereas by 2023, this figure had decreased to 12%, aligning closely with their representation in the overall U.S. workforce.¹

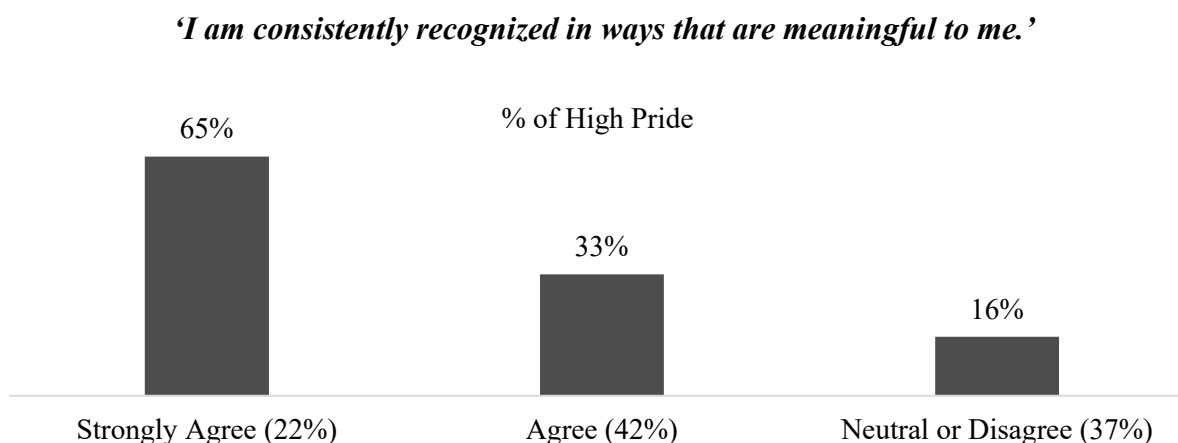
TABLE VIII: Generational Differences in Pride 2021 v. 2023

Generational Cohort Group	High Pride		Moderate Pride		Low Pride	
	2021	2023	2021	2023	2021	2023
Gen Z (b. 1997-2012)	40%	32%	26%	50%	34%	17%
Millennials (b. 1981-1996)	41%	34%	37%	45%	23%	21%
Gen X (b. 1965-1980)	43%	34%	38%	45%	19%	22%
Boomers (b. 1946-1964)	45%	36%	39%	51%	17%	13%

The preceding table illustrates a decrease in high work pride across all generational cohorts. Despite Boomers consistently scoring high on personality traits and values linked with elevated pride, they receive noticeably less acknowledgment compared to their younger counterparts. The significance of recognition as a catalyst for work pride will be further examined in the following section.

Recognition and Pride

Receiving recognition and appreciation for exemplary performance plays a pivotal role in nurturing work pride. The chart below delineates the relationship between individuals' responses to the statement 'I am consistently recognized in ways that are meaningful to me' and the corresponding percentages indicative of high levels of work pride.



The data depicted in the chart highlights a noteworthy finding: while only 22% strongly agree that they receive consistent recognition, a substantial majority of those consistently recognized—65%—demonstrate high levels of pride in their work.

Recognition by Generation

The study shows a clear distinction between the recognition given to younger and older workers. The following chart shows that, in most instances, Boomers receive a fraction of the recognition given to younger workers.

TABLE IX: Which of the following have you received within the past month?

Type of Recognition	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers
Private verbal praise	62%	70%	61%	60%
Written praise (e.g. thank you notes)	39%	40%	32%	26%
Public praise or recognition	42%	38%	28%	18%
Electronic/digital praise or recognition	29%	32%	23%	19%
None of these	11%	13%	23%	26%

A comparative analysis between the 2021 and 2023 studies indicates an increase in the recognition accorded to younger workers. Surprisingly, despite this uptick in acknowledgment, there has been a decline in their level of pride in their work. This suggests that for younger workers, recognition may be perceived more as an entitlement rather than a motivator. In other words, they expect to be recognized, and when they aren't, it serves as a demotivating factor rather than an incentive for enhanced performance.

Conversely, for older Boomers, their inherent inclination to take immense pride in their work may be dampened by the perception that all recognition and praise are directed towards their younger counterparts.

Conclusions

The findings underscore the critical importance of pride in one's work as a fundamental driver of both personal productivity and customer satisfaction. However, the study reveals a significant decline in individual pride since the 2021 study, indicating a concerning trend that warrants immediate attention.

A key contributing factor to this shift is the generational transformation within the workforce. While younger workers are receiving notable amounts of formal recognition, this acknowledgment seems to have diminishing effects on their work pride, possibly due to a growing sense of entitlement toward recognition. Conversely, the Boomer generation, characterized by their ingrained work ethic and values, are experiencing a deficiency in recognition, which is dampening the level of pride they derive from their work.

It is evident that formal recognition programs are no longer optional but imperative in fostering a culture of pride and fulfillment in the workplace. Addressing these disparities and ensuring equitable recognition across generations is paramount to sustaining and enhancing individual and organizational performance in the evolving landscape of the modern workforce.

The study points to the following as practical approaches to enhancing work pride.

- Formally recognize and appreciate valuable contributions by employees towards organizational goals, such as implementing processes, resolving issues, or contributing to revenue growth.
- Emphasize the importance of customer satisfaction and community impact and recognize employees who excel in providing excellent service or contributing positively to the community through charity work or support for local businesses.
- Acknowledge and celebrate employees' unexpected or unique achievements, such as handling challenging situations creatively or preventing crises effectively.
- Ensure that challenging projects are successfully completed and acknowledge employees' achievements with accolades, awards, or positive feedback from superiors, peers, or clients.
- Encourage employees to demonstrate efficiency, problem-solving skills, and adaptability by streamlining processes, handling emergency situations effectively, and successfully managing challenges like system upgrades.

- Support employees' personal growth and continuous learning by providing opportunities for skill development, overcoming challenges, and achieving personal milestones, while acknowledging their contributions to the company's success.
- Foster a culture of teamwork and collaboration by recognizing team achievements, promoting effective communication and cooperation among team members, and providing opportunities for leadership and mentorship.
- Encourage employees to make positive contributions to the community through volunteer work or supporting social causes and recognize their efforts in making a difference in the lives of others.
- Provide opportunities for coaching, mentoring, and teaching within the organization, and celebrate employees' successes in helping others develop new skills or overcome challenges.
- Encourage employees to innovate and take initiative by recognizing and supporting their efforts to develop new products, processes, or initiatives that contribute to the organization's success and enhance their sense of pride in their work.

In conclusion, fostering pride at work through consistent recognition and appreciation of good work is not merely a gesture of goodwill but a strategic necessity. Recognition should transcend mere participation in the workforce; it should be tied directly to tangible achievements that contribute to organizational success, enhance customer experiences, drive operational efficiencies, foster innovation, and advance the broader mission for the greater communal good. These elements serve as the linchpins in cultivating a fully committed workforce, including among younger employees who may require support in nurturing pride in their work. By prioritizing meaningful recognition, organizations can empower their teams to excel, innovate, and collectively contribute to a brighter future.

¹ Gen Z will overtake boomers in workforce in 2024 (www.axios.com/2023/11/22/gen-z-boomers-work-census-data)

² Companies spend \$100B annually trying to boost engagement (www.apollotechnical.com/employee-engagement-statistics)

³ Global Indicator: Employee Engagement (www.gallup.com/394373/indicator-employee-engagement.aspx)

About the Author

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Dr. Garlick received a Ph.D. in communication studies from Michigan State University.

Earlier in his career, Dr. Garlick worked in media and entertainment, financial services, utilities, manufacturing, retail, association, and not-for-profit research. Prior to entering the private sector, he taught courses in research methods, marketing, and persuasive communication at Michigan State University and DePaul University in Chicago. Dr. Garlick is currently teaching a course in Applied Research and Consulting in the graduate program in Hospitality Management at Penn State University in State College, PA.

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THE WORKPROUD STUDY 2024 was commissioned by WHAPPS, LLC. WorkProud® is committed to helping its clients create a unified approach to the employee experience that inspires employees to be proud of their work and proud of their company.

If you have any questions or would like to read the full version of this report, please reach out to us below:

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