

AON

# Transforming Energy Starts With People

Why Sustainable Workforces Are the Future of the Energy and Power Industry

## About the Report

This report was developed in 2021 based on Aon's proprietary research and interviews with the organisational leaders and consultants who are shaping best practices around health and wellbeing at work. Thank you to all who took part, in particular:

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# Foreword: Building a Workforce for the Future

At any stage of a transition there are risks and opportunities. For those involved in the energy transition, the stakes for both are high. As many firms within the energy and power sectors develop their vision for the future and prioritise a move towards decarbonisation and renewables, they must navigate a multitude of new challenges.

From innovation and investment to climate change and social responsibility, operating models are evolving and businesses are pivoting their products and services to meet these complex challenges. The common thread connecting these factors across the industry is people — more specifically, workforces.

At this crucial juncture, we see a series of interconnected human capital challenges that require both immediate and long-term strategic solutions. The need for greater corporate social responsibility is driven by multiple factors: competition for talent, shifting sociocultural values of prospective employees and greater stakeholder concern for climate change.

Meanwhile, the energy industry has not transformed as quickly as some sectors in terms of inclusion and diversity (I&D) strategies. This has limited the ability of many organisations to expand their workforce at pace.

As a result, these recruitment challenges have led to many areas of the industry retaining an ageing

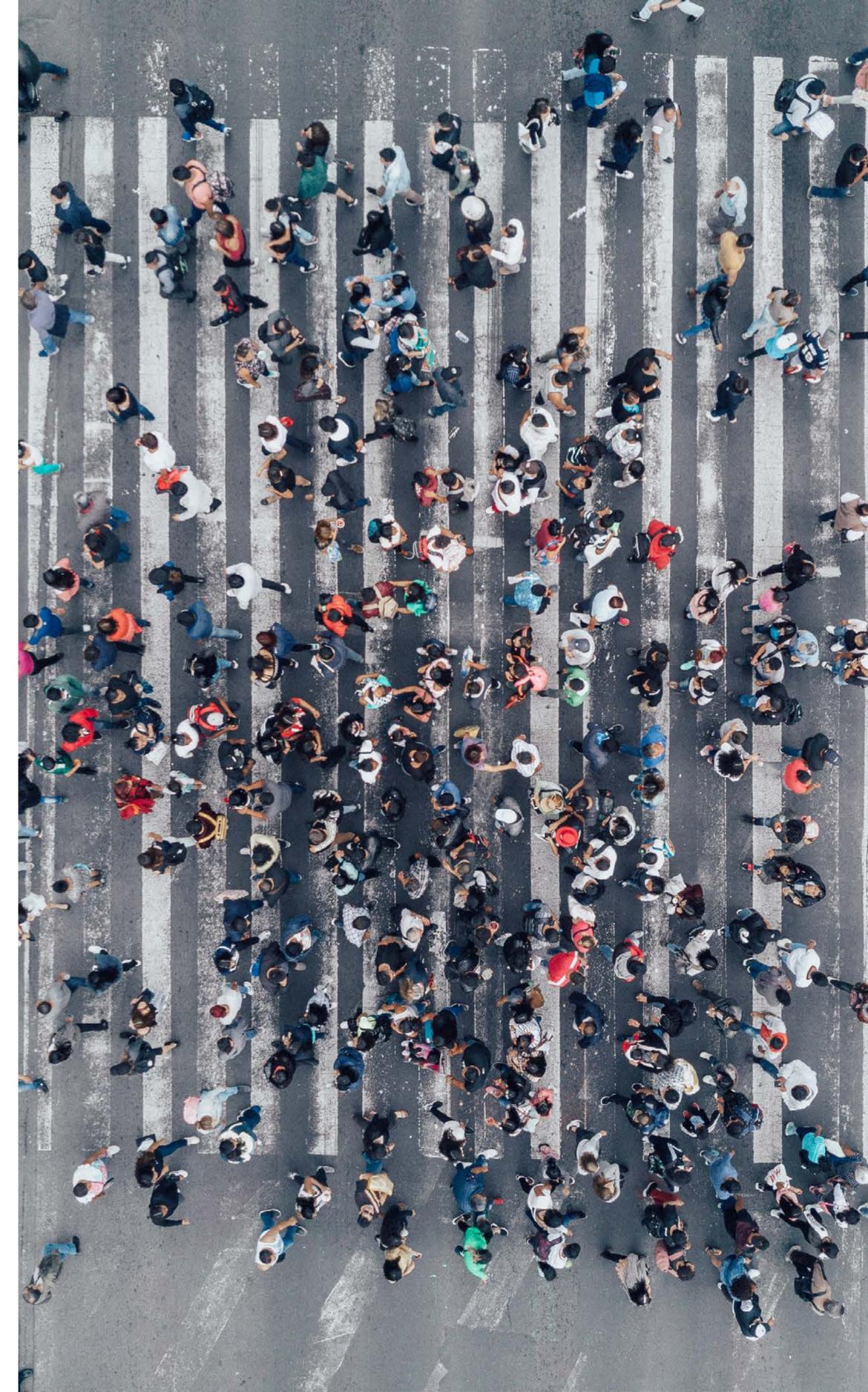
workforce who not only need new skills to meet the changing demands of business, but who also have different needs and expectations when it comes to their employee benefits.

The existence of these human capital challenges at this transformational moment for the industry adds a layer of complexity to the journey of energy and power organisations.

With the right strategy, these challenges are surmountable.

Understanding the divergent needs and motivations of employees at different stages of their careers and adapting benefit strategies to reflect these needs is critical for energy businesses looking to secure long-term productivity and profitability. In this paper, we explore the challenges and opportunities in the energy sector regarding talent attraction and employee attrition as businesses redefine their people strategies and develop resilient workforces ready for a new age of power and energy.

**Andrew Cunningham**  
Chief Commercial Officer  
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# Executive Summary



**Interconnected human capital challenges face businesses within the energy and power sector as they navigate the energy transition.**



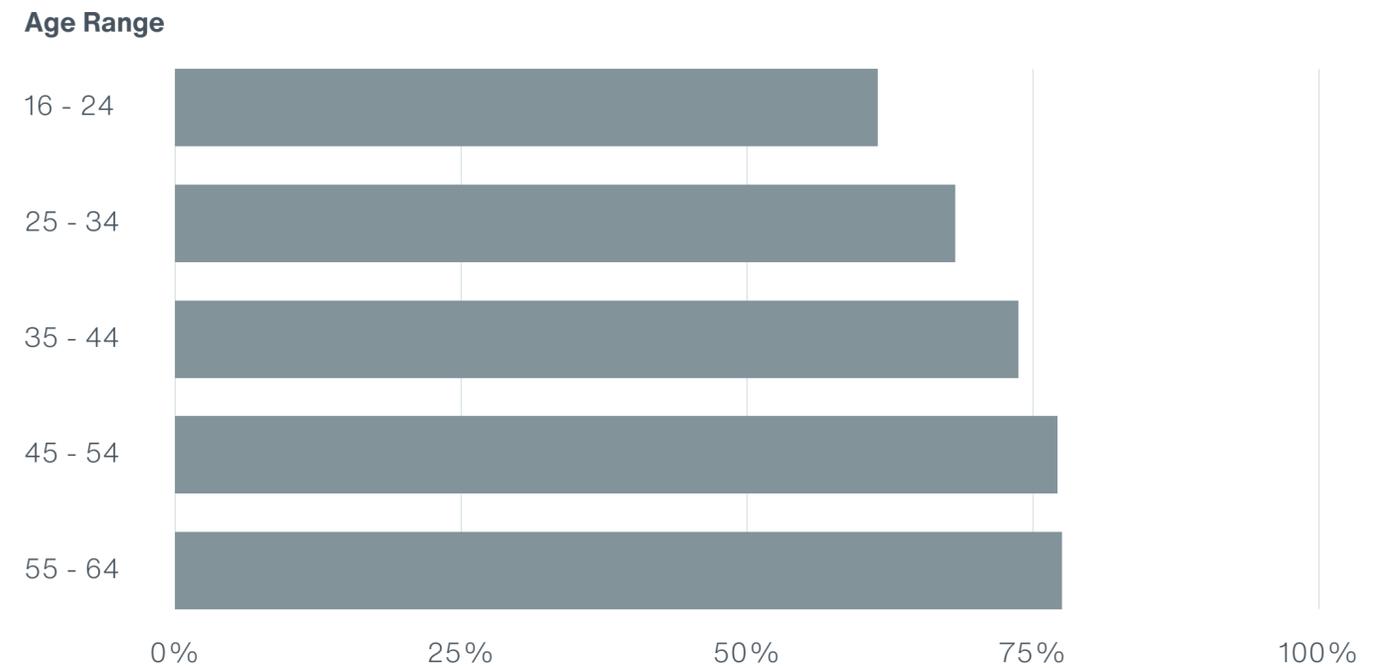
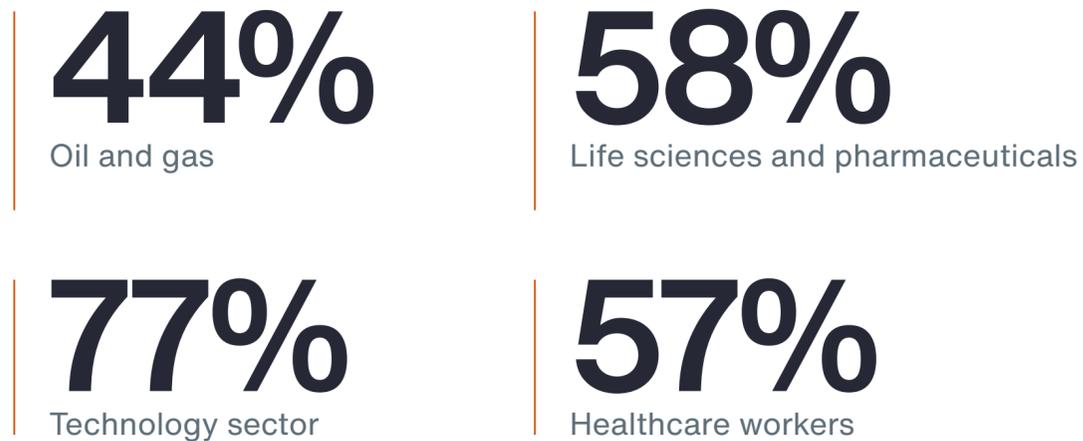
# Talent Acquisition

Shifting social values and employee expectations are disrupting the recruitment of a new generation of talent into the industry. Energy companies that were once favoured employers by graduates are facing competition from the appeal of an ever-evolving technology sector.

A survey of participants across North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East reported that 44 percent of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) millennials and Generation Z are interested in pursuing a career in oil and gas, compared to 77 percent in the technology sector, 58 percent in life sciences and pharmaceuticals and 57 percent in healthcare<sup>1</sup>.

As climate change rises up the global agenda, traditional oil and gas businesses are feeling the impact of a worldwide sociocultural movement. This movement is driving employees to pursue careers within organisations that mirror their sense of social responsibility.

Multi-generational workforces believe brands should be doing more to address environmental issues<sup>2</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> The Future of Risk: Energy, Aon, 2021  
<sup>2</sup> [GWI Zeitgeist Survey, 2020](#)

# Reskilling and Upskilling the Existing Workforce

In direct response to the recruitment challenge facing the industry, businesses are having to retain an ageing workforce.

Almost

# 47%

of the workforce in the sector are aged over 45<sup>3</sup>.

While these employees bring huge value to organisations through their knowledge and experience, regulatory pressures and changing operating models are also driving demand for new skills.

# 44%

of employees in the energy sector say their company does not regularly invest in their training and development<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> [Energy Outlook Report, Brunel, 2021](#)

<sup>4</sup> [The Future of Risk: Energy, Aon, 2021](#)



# Addressing Lack of Diversity

To meet talent shortages and drive more innovation within the sector, businesses must embrace greater diversity within their workforce.

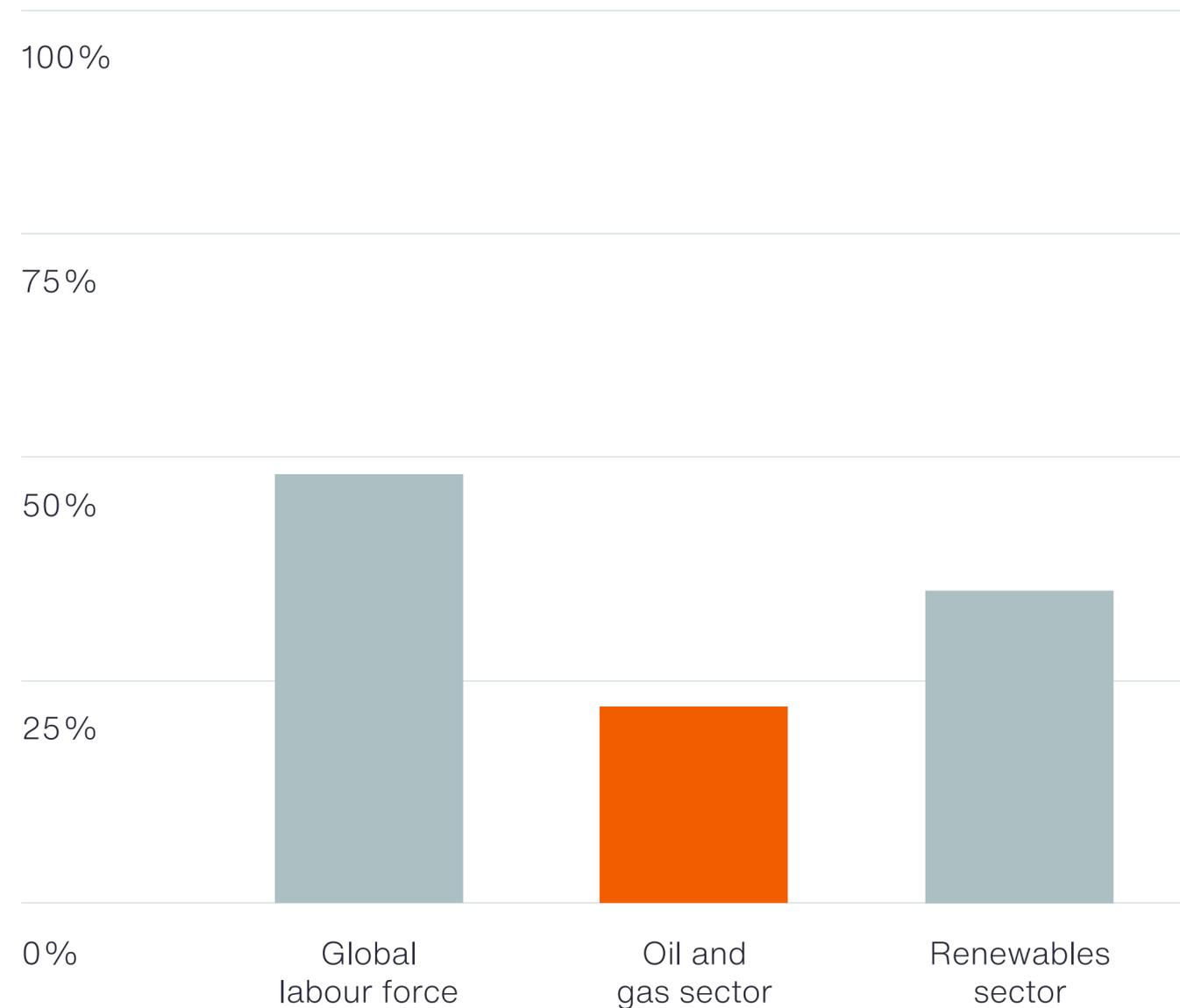
This doesn't just mean building a workforce that represents society by including a blend of ages, ethnicities, nationalities and other attributes. Companies must also foster diversity of thought by attracting individuals who bring transferable skills from different industries. This adds immense value and helps ignite fresh thinking.

Despite this, data shows the sector is not keeping pace with other industries when it comes to prioritising diversity.

**78%**

of energy firms say that inclusion and diversity (I&D) is extremely or very important to them<sup>5</sup>, compared with 83% of respondents across all sectors<sup>6</sup>.

Despite making up 48 percent of the global labour force, women account for only 22 percent of the labour force in the oil and gas sector and 32 percent in renewables<sup>7</sup>.



<sup>5</sup> [Aon's Global HR Pulse Survey: Energy, p44, May 2021](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Aon's Global HR Pulse Survey, Global, p44, May 2021](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Gender diversity in energy: what we know and what we don't know, IEA, March 2020](#)

# A Talent Shortfall and Skills Gap



The emergence of new technologies, as well as the pressure on some businesses to pivot their operations and services, means a remarkable transformation is already in motion within the energy and power industry. Coronavirus (COVID-19) has accelerated the pace of transition<sup>8</sup>.

The advantage of disruption and disorder is that it offers an opportunity to think and act differently, as evidenced by the dramatic fall in demand for energy caused by the pandemic<sup>9</sup>. As a global event, COVID-19 has become a catalyst for change, creating commercial and sociocultural pressures that are pushing the sector towards greener, more renewable energy sources.

Amid the re-shaping and disruptions, the industry is facing a skills shortage and experience gap that must be addressed. Here, we divide these challenges into two themes:

1. The retention and needs of the existing workforce
2. Attracting and meeting the expectations of new, diverse talent



The energy transition is significantly reshaping our sector – we’re seeing new players entering new geographies, with new technologies that create new possibilities.

**Antonio Castro**

Head of Sustainability  
EDP

### The Divergent Challenges of Traditional and Emerging Industries

While this paper focuses on skills challenges across the energy sector, it is also important to recognise distinct issues impacting multiple sub-sectors within the industry.

Oil and gas firms are likely to see profit margins squeezed as hydrocarbon fuel usage declines in favour of renewables. This will limit a firm's ability to offer highly competitive incentives and benefits. It will also curtail investment in training and development that would boost employees' professional wellbeing.

Conversely, the renewables sector is booming and offers more appeal to employees committed to creating a more sustainable world. However, this sector faces similar challenges to other sub-sectors within the industry,<sup>10</sup> including the challenge of attracting skilled workers to remote locations. In a male-dominated industry, this has typically limited an organisation's ability to diversify their workforce.

<sup>8</sup> [Goodbye big oil – welcome big energy. Aon Energy. April 2021](#)

<sup>9</sup> [The Future of Risk: Energy. Aon, 2021](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Sector insights: skills and performance challenges in the energy sector. UKCES, March 2015](#)

# Retaining Talent

This evolution of technologies, operations and priorities demands new and evolving skills from the workforce. However, the rapid pace of change in the industry can make it difficult to identify the skills needed for the future, narrowing the window of opportunity in which to reskill and upskill existing employees.

A historical lack of investment has led to insufficient education and training in the sector, resulting in a worsening skills shortage<sup>11</sup>. The global financial crisis of 2008 was a catalyst, and saw the industry as a whole dramatically reduce investment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) studies, focusing instead on retaining the knowledge, skills and experience of a mature workforce<sup>12</sup>. According to a recent report by energy recruitment specialist Brunel, almost 47 percent of the workforce in the sector are aged over 45<sup>13</sup>.

As well as the challenges of depreciating physical fitness, this group also has unique benefit requirements and a greater need to engage with their future financial wellbeing.

Not only do organisations need to plan how to reskill and upskill these existing workers to meet the changing demands of the industry, they must also address the differing needs of an ageing workforce.

During times of turbulence and transition, businesses must keep a laser focus on the wellbeing of their workforce to maintain motivation and loyalty and avoid the departure of much-needed talent.

Fortunately for employees, despite the threats to some legacy occupations from the digital revolution, a recent study of the UK oil and gas industry identified that more than 90 percent of workers are well-positioned to work in adjacent energy sectors as the industry starts to decarbonise<sup>14</sup>.

11 [Energy Outlook Report, Brunel, 2021](#)

12 [The Future of Risk: Energy, Aon, 2021](#)

13 [Energy Outlook Report, Brunel, 2021](#)

14 [UK Offshore Energy Workforce Transferability Review, RGU Energy Transition Institute, May 2021](#)





**It is the velocity of change that makes workers obsolete, making constant reskilling and upskilling a must in today's organisations. Studies say that employees will need to learn more than 15 times in their professional careers. 'Learn how to learn'. This means constant learning, and emphasises the importance of on-the-job learning. Organisations need a strong commitment to coordinate innovative development programmes to attract, retain and develop a sustainable workforce for the future.**

**Eduardo Dávila**

Chief Executive Officer, EMEA

Aon

# Attracting Talent

A survey across North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East reported that STEM Millennials and Gen Zs were interested in pursuing careers in the following sectors <sup>15</sup>:

## 44%

Oil and gas sector

## 57%

Healthcare workers

## 77%

Technology sector

## 58%

Life sciences and pharmaceuticals

The search for new talent has always been an intense and competitive battleground. Today, several critical factors are now impeding the ability of some industry sub-sectors to attract employees with the skills needed to meet future challenges.

Despite the opportunities emerging from this exciting and revolutionary juncture, the sector has struggled to shake off its static public image: old-fashioned, lacking innovation and slow to adapt<sup>16</sup>. Companies must compete for engineers and technologists with businesses and industries perceived to be much more appealing — whether that is from a cultural, personal development or reward perspective.



<sup>15</sup> [The Future of Risk: Energy, Aon, 2021](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Positioning utilities to win the battle for talent, Deloitte, 2017](#)

Globally, 42 percent of graduates believe new technologies will have a major impact on the oil and gas industry, compared to 73 percent in the technology sector<sup>17</sup>.

Cited by one in four employees<sup>18</sup>, above-market pay and benefits remain the top driver attracting employees to an organisation. However, an employer’s global commitment to climate change and social responsibility is also driving employee decision making.

Shifting social values inspire employees to actively pursue employment at purpose-driven businesses. From a strong commitment to I&D to environmentally friendly pension packages, employee expectations are changing. Workers are likely to be as interested in a company’s social growth as they are in its economic growth.

Growing public and political pressure on the sector’s perceived failings in its commitment to tackle climate change<sup>19</sup> have created an image problem that has a profound impact on some sub-sectors of the industry.

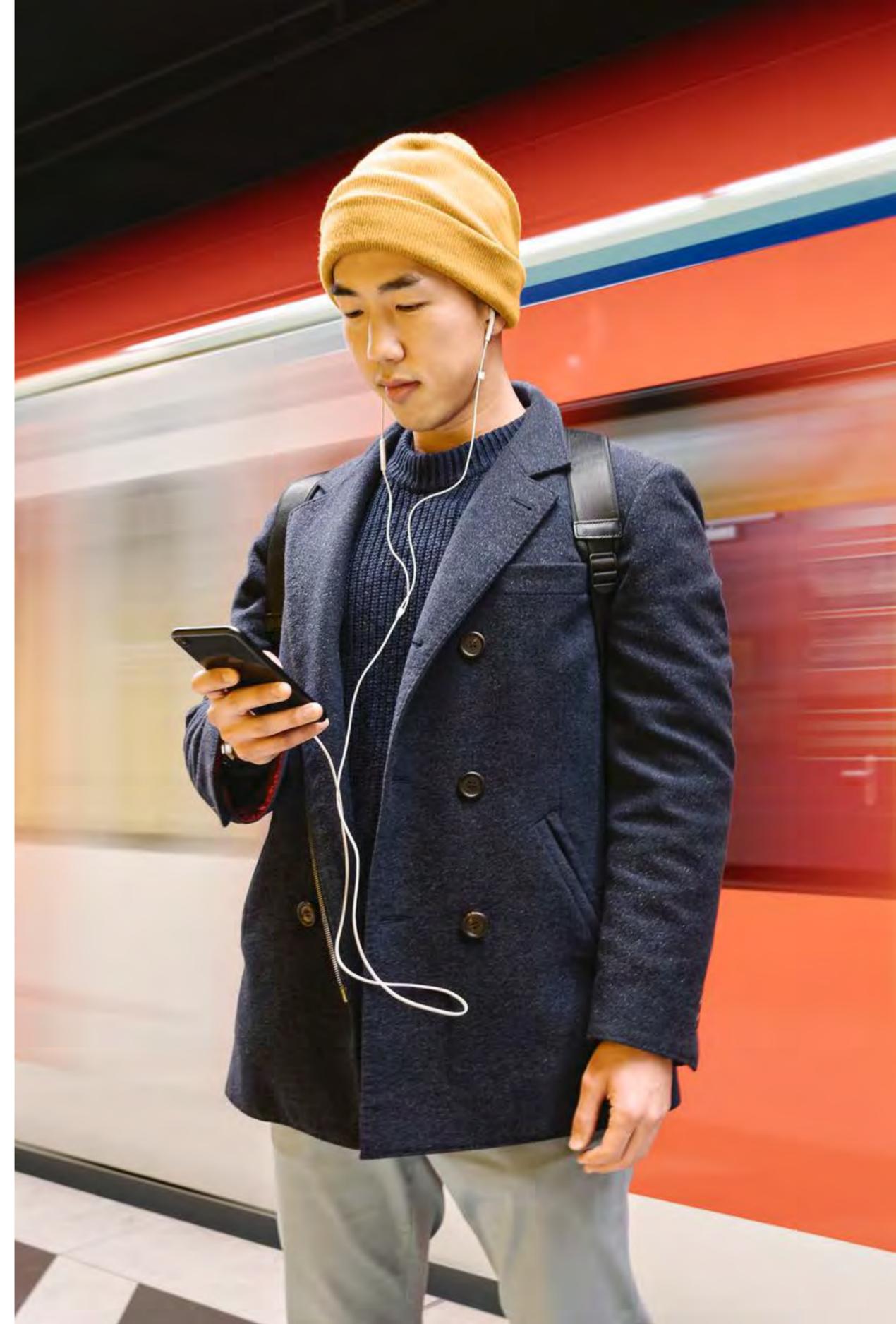
For organisations pivoting their offering towards renewables, authentic communication of environmental, social and governance (ESG) policies will be vital to the success of their future talent strategies.

**32%**

report no access to training with their current employer in the last year<sup>19</sup>.

**44%**

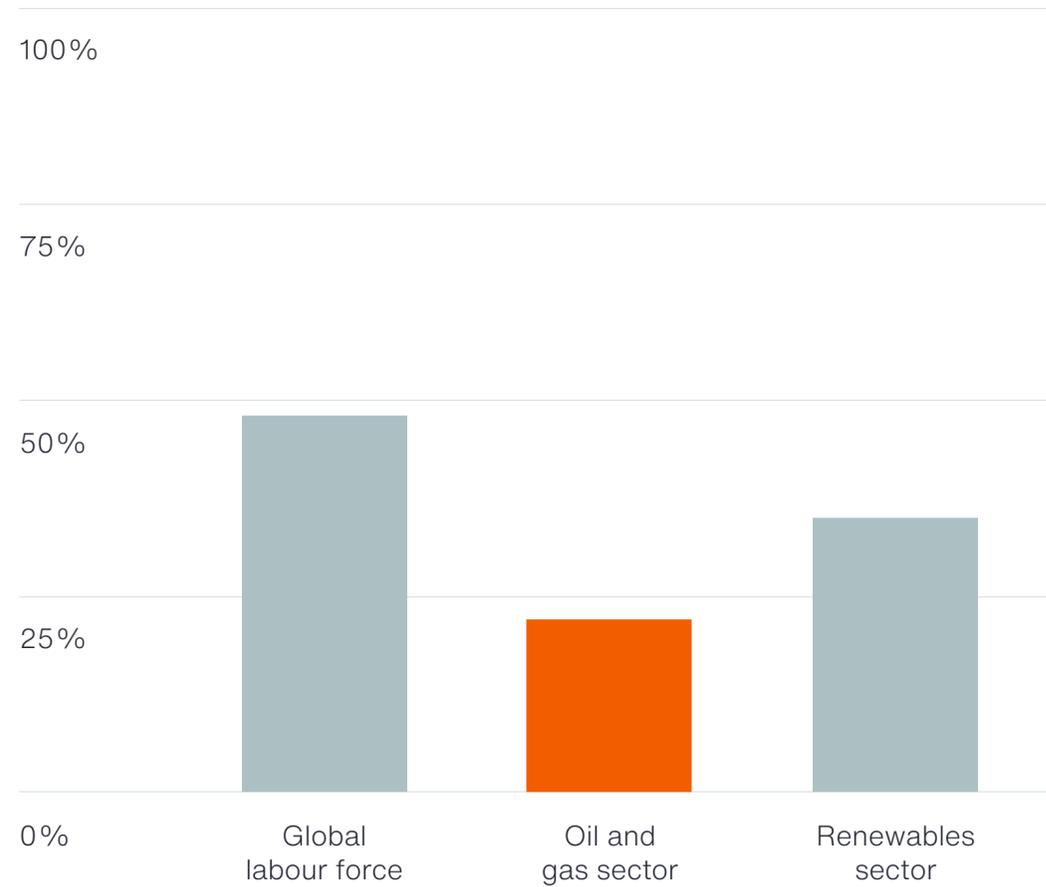
of employees in the energy sector say their company does not regularly invest in their training and development<sup>20</sup>.



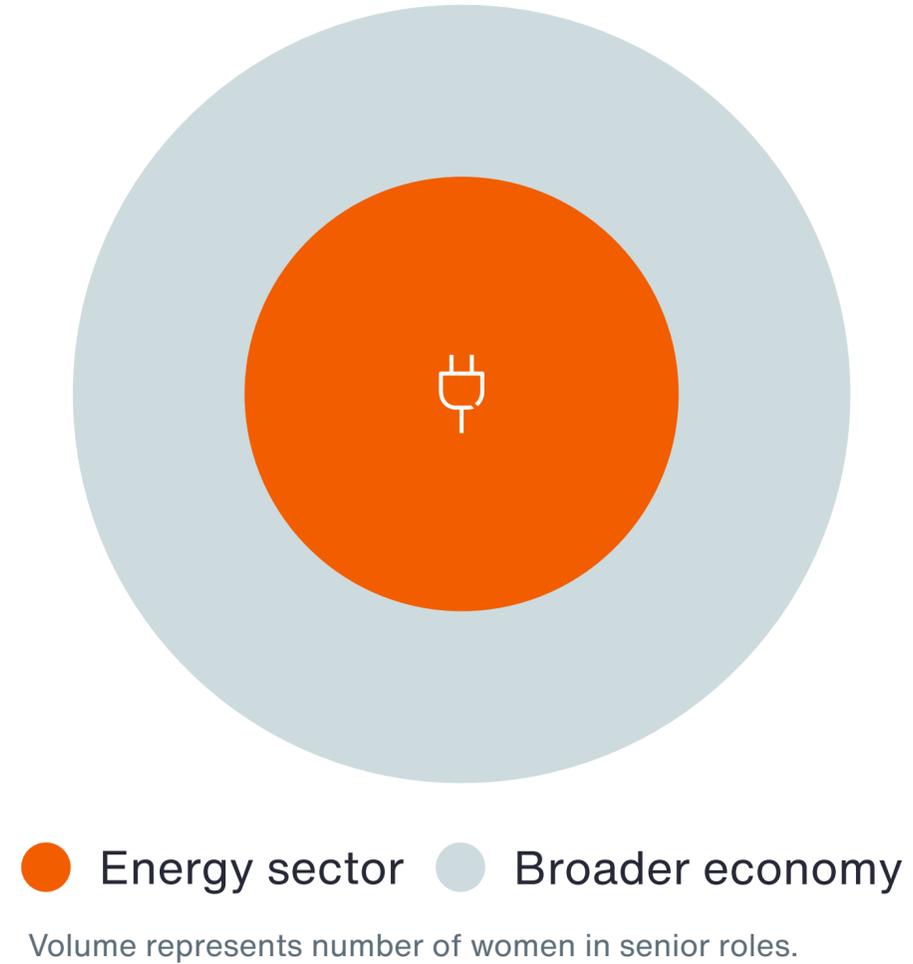
17 [The Future of Risk: Energy, Aon, 2021](#)  
 18 [Employee Mindset Study Ireland, Aon, 2020](#)  
 19 [Reuters, October 2020](#)  
 20 [The Future of Risk: Energy, Aon, 2021](#)

# Sector-Wide Inequalities

Despite making up 48 percent of the global labour force, women only account for 22 percent of the labour force in the oil and gas sector and 32 percent in renewables<sup>21</sup>.



Fewer women reach senior roles in the energy sector than in the broader economy<sup>22</sup>.



<sup>21</sup> [Gender diversity in energy: what we know and what we don't know, IEA, March 2020](#)

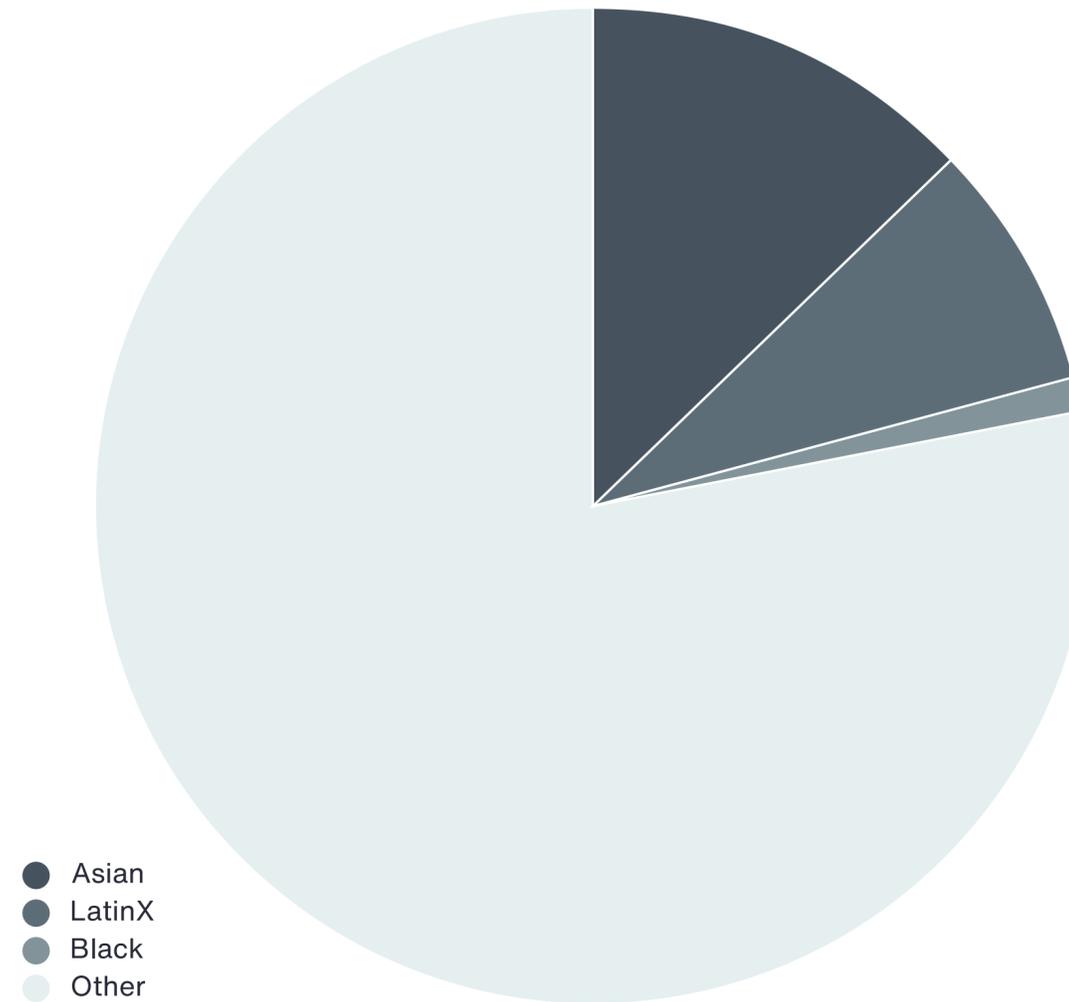
<sup>22</sup> [Gender diversity in energy: what we know and what we don't know, IEA, March 2020](#)

# Sector-Wide Inequalities

Asian (13 percent), LatinX (eight percent) and Black (one percent) employees collectively make up just 22 percent of the global energy sector workforce and only 20 percent of the C-suite<sup>23</sup>.

A lack of diversity at all levels of the industry is inhibiting businesses' ability to bridge the talent shortfall. It also limits their potential to tap into unique perspectives that could solve challenges and make discoveries. To uncover blind spots and foster innovation, organisations need the power of diverse thinking.

Businesses wanting to advance their approach to gender parity and diversity must explore the issues preventing people from joining the industry and the barriers limiting their progression. Without this, organisations risk struggling to attract employees who value a positive approach to inclusion and diversity.



# Sustainable Workforces, Sustainable Future



# The Future-Ready Workforce: Agile, Resilient and Robust

As the world contemplates our collective energy and climate needs, the term 'sustainable' has become synonymous with the future planning of energy sourcing. To meet the challenges ahead, businesses also need sustainable workforces. Building an agile, resilient and robust workforce capable of adapting to a volatile and changing world should be a priority for leaders across the sector.

“

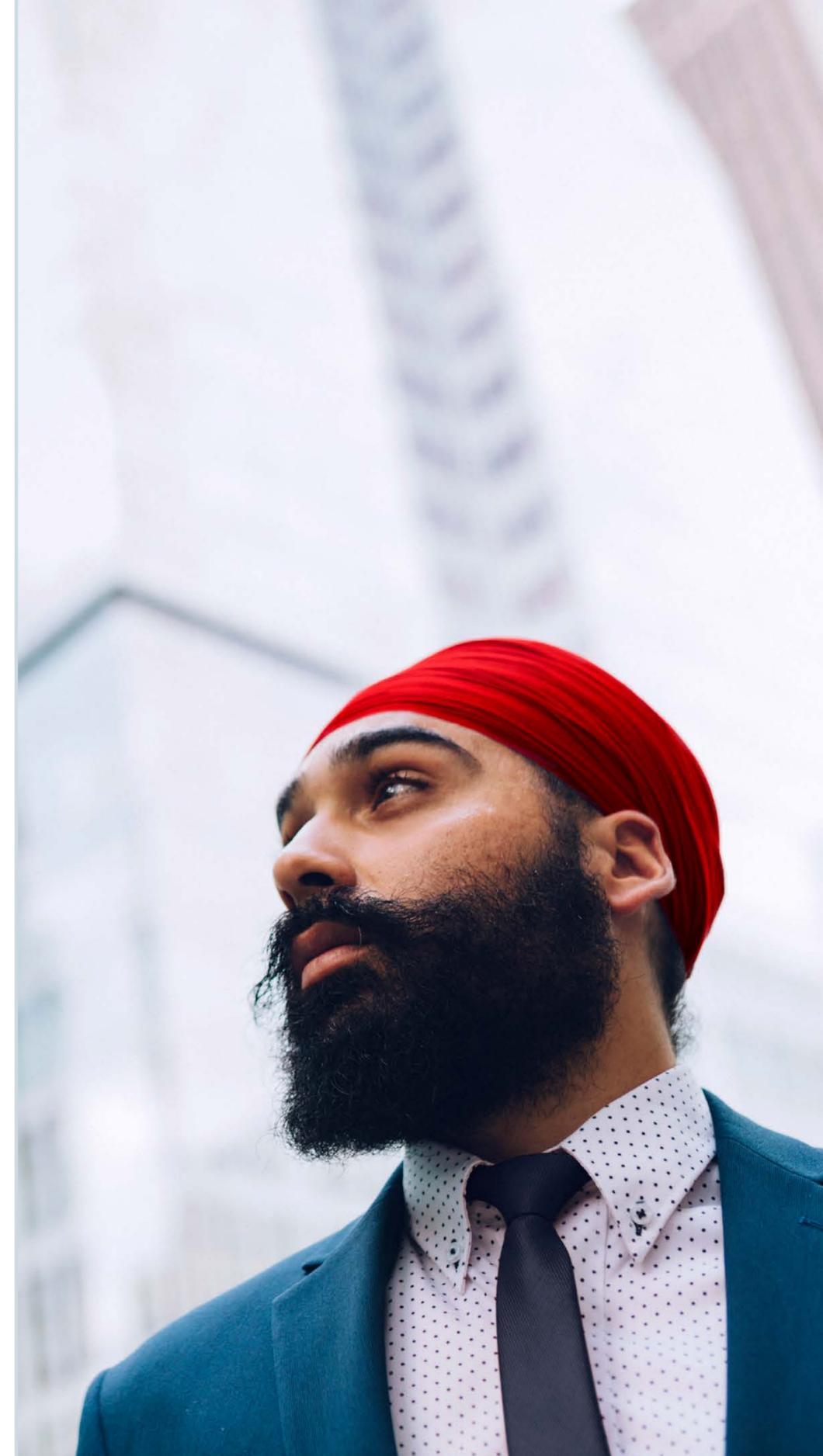
What does a sustainable workforce look like? We believe creating sustainability among your people means nurturing and stimulating the energy of the workforce to foster an enduring spirit that helps drive forward the organisation.

**Mark Potter**  
EMEA Power Leader  
Aon

Combining this enduring spirit with a structure that enables people to see their path and grow with the direction of the organisation is vital. Workforce agility is central here; defining what an agile workforce looks like and how to adopt practices to support and reward resilience is only part of the process. Building employee sustainability starts with organisational culture and structure — a journey that begins at the top.

Developing a culture that safeguards employee wellbeing and aligns company values with employee expectations makes it easier to recruit new talent and retain loyalty among existing employees.

By providing employees with the environment and tools they need to thrive, businesses can build workforces resilient enough to navigate a rapidly evolving landscape.





**Success in navigating the challenges of the energy transition demands both a culture change and a challenge to leadership. For the changes needed to transition to resonate, it can't just be about HR, it needs to be a leader-led identity change. With world-class leaders spearheading the way forward.**

**Tamsin Lambert**  
Talent Excellence Advisor  
Shell

# The 10 Factors

There are 10 factors<sup>24</sup> to consider when it comes to building workforce resilience. Here, we explore the five that are most critical to an energy industry trying to create sustainable workforces for the future.



# Operating With Compassion and Engaging Community

The drumbeat of the climate change agenda is growing louder and stronger. In light of the IPCC's seminal 2021 climate report<sup>25</sup> that declared 'a code red for humanity'<sup>26</sup>, the energy industry is facing significant pressure from regulators, investors and the wider public to innovate and find solutions, rather than continue our planet's dark trajectory.

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards have increasingly become as important to future hires and existing employees as they have to potential investors. While this cultural shift is impacting all industries, it is especially pertinent and time-critical to the energy and power sectors.

Leaders who demonstrate genuine compassion for their workforce can create stronger connections between their people and are likely to be rewarded with increased levels of collaboration, trust and loyalty<sup>27</sup>. However, at a time when social responsibility is driving career decision

making, a clear and authentic ESG message can help organisations increase their appeal to a wider employee base.

It matters to many workers that their employer extends compassion and engagement beyond the confines of the workforce and positively impacts the lives of employees' families, local communities, the global population and the planet. Businesses in the energy and power sectors can compete with enticing technology companies by demonstrating their work within renewables is meaningful and will help create a more sustainable world<sup>28</sup>.



**If the industry is to attract young talent, it is apparent that they will need to introduce robust and visible ESG commitments that show they are taking positive steps to decarbonise and be a positive agent of change in the energy transition. Unless they can find this future purpose — and help young people to understand their positive role in the transition — they will struggle to attract talent against industries with a stronger legacy of environmental and social commitments.**

**Suzanne Courtney**  
Strategic Growth Director  
Assessment Solutions  
Aon

<sup>25</sup> [Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, 2021](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Climate change: IPCC report is 'code red for humanity', BBC News, August 2021](#)

<sup>27</sup> [Compassionate leadership is necessary - but not sufficient, Harvard Business Review, December 2020](#)

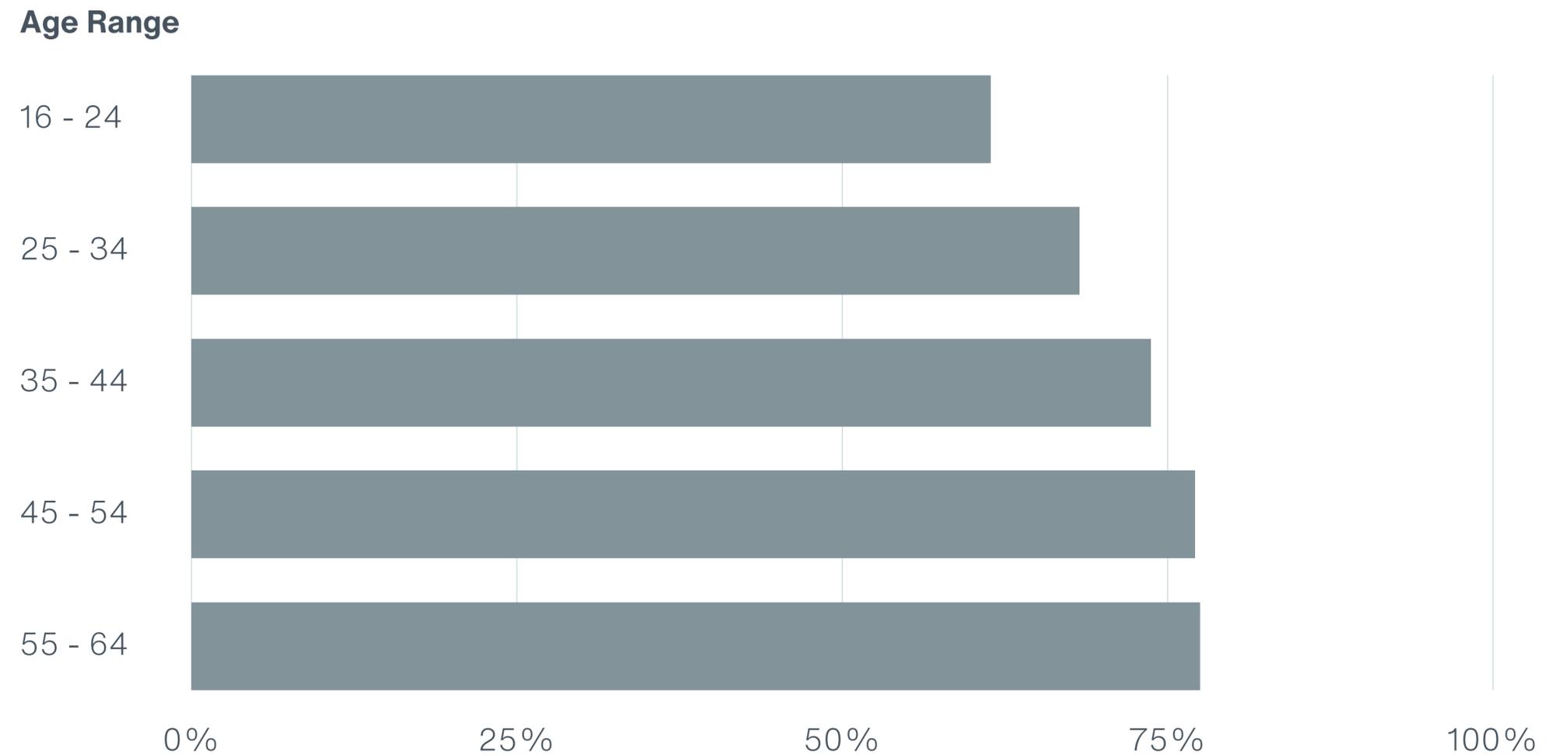
<sup>28</sup> [The Future of Risk: Energy, Aon, 2021](#)



**To be positive agents of change in the transition and avoid being accused of greenwashing, organisations need to be transparent and put their goals on the table — show what they want to achieve, how they're planning to do it and the timings of their targets.**

**Antonio Castro**  
Head of Sustainability  
EDP

People from age ranges 16 - 24 (61 percent), 25 - 34 (68 percent), 35 - 44 (74 percent), 45 - 54 (77 percent) and 55 - 64 (78 percent) believe brands and big corporate should do more to address environmental issues<sup>29</sup>.



# ESG Actions HR Teams Should Consider

<p><b>Recruitment</b></p> <p>Assess talent to ensure employees have the right profile and skills now and for the future.</p>	<p><b>Training and Development</b></p> <p>Evaluate current talent and develop trainings that help employees meet current and future challenges.</p>	<p><b>Education</b></p> <p>Provide regular and on-demand access to learning about key ESG topics like climate change and unconscious bias.</p>	<p><b>Employee Listening</b></p> <p>Understand what employees think about ESG and how their employer is living up to corporate commitments.</p>
<p><b>Inclusion and Diversity</b></p> <p>Ensure the workforce at all levels is inclusive and diverse, able to consider all voices in decision making.</p>	<p><b>Rewards and Benefits</b></p> <p>Provide benefits and rewards that integrate sustainability (e.g., renewable energy) via sustainable suppliers.</p>	<p><b>Compensation</b></p> <p>Ensure wages are fair, equitable and connected to ESG goals where possible.</p>	<p><b>Pensions</b></p> <p>Provide employees access to retirement funds committed to mitigating climate risk and reducing carbon emissions.</p>

# Managing Employee Expectations

Nearly a third of employers conduct no form of research or listening to understand employees' needs<sup>30</sup>.

While business strategy in the sector is increasingly defined by the energy transition, organisations risk alienating employees if they fail to keep their ears to the ground when it comes to employee needs. More than 90 percent of employers acknowledge that employees' expectations of their work experience are changing<sup>31</sup>.

Shifting social values have created a disparity between employee expectations and organisational realities regarding salary, benefits and culture. This comes at a time when the industry cannot afford to disenchant existing employees or new talent. Without a compelling employee value proposition (EVP) aligned to what employees actually want, businesses risk missing out on engagement with employees that can lead to greater profitability, higher productivity and increased job satisfaction<sup>32</sup>.

A recent Aon study discovered that 70 percent of millennials cited employee benefits among the most important aspects of choosing their current employer<sup>33</sup>. Unsurprisingly, boomers value retirement savings or

pensions more than any other benefit<sup>34</sup>. When you consider changing attitudes towards work-life balance, flexible working and improved parental leave policies, it becomes clear why organisations need to meet the divergent needs and motivations of multigenerational workforces at different stages of their careers.

40% of employers do not believe their benefits are meeting the needs of all generations in their workforce<sup>35</sup>.

Auditing your current employee benefits offering or listening to the changing demands of employees can help identify long-held and outdated models. Instead, determine those that will move your business towards the future of work and wellbeing. Additionally, benchmarking your salary and benefits offering against your competitors can help you remain competitive in the quest to both recruit and retain talent.

30 [UK Benefits and Trends Survey, Aon, 2021](#)

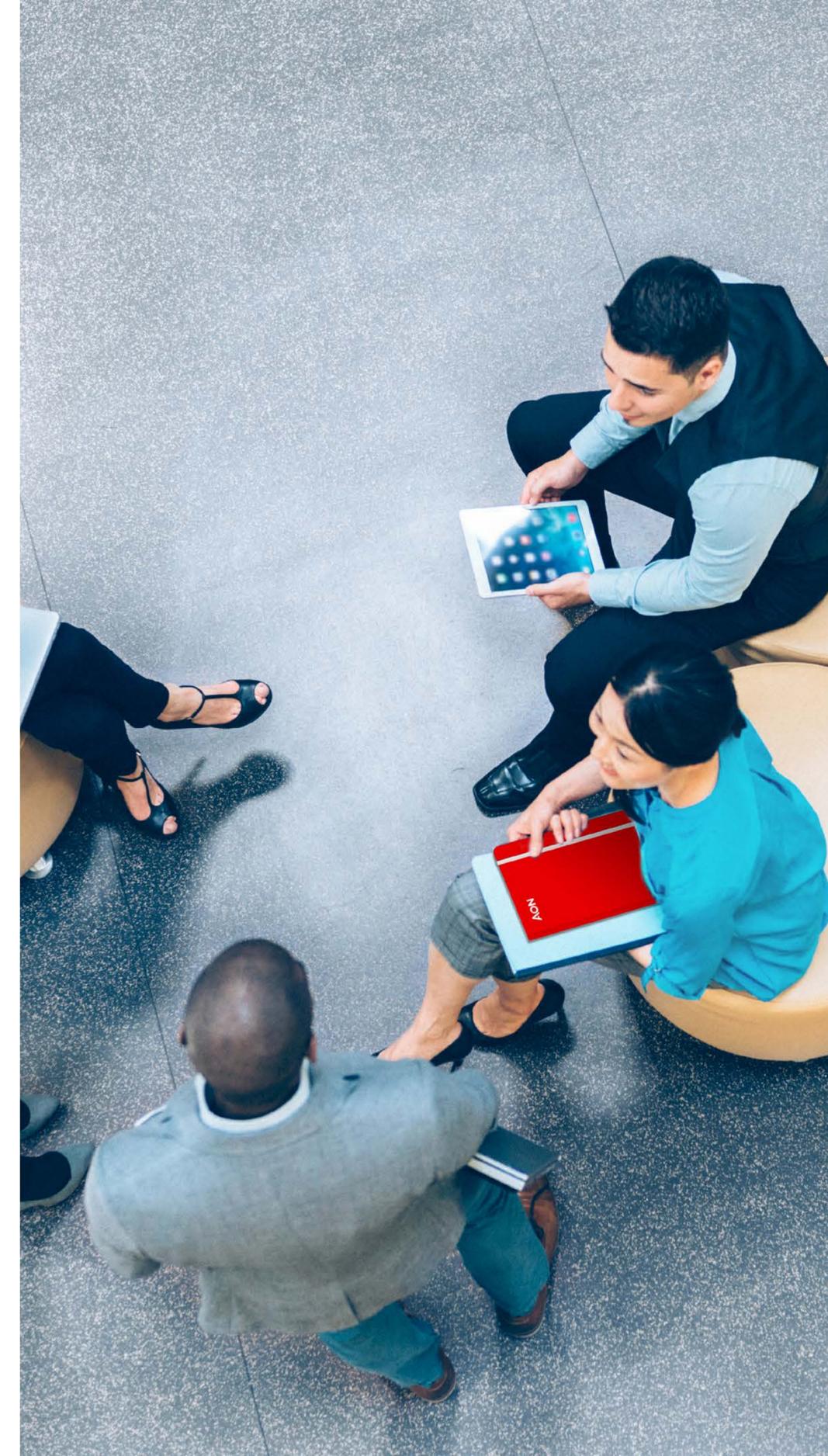
31 [UK Benefits and Trends Survey, Aon, 2021](#)

32 [Creating a Compelling Employee Value Proposition, Aon, 2018](#)

33 [Employee Mindset Study Ireland, Aon, 2020](#)

34 [Enabling Workplace Change Through Rewards, Aon, 2021](#)

35 [Employee Mindset Study Ireland, Aon, 2020](#)





**A successful rewards programme will help build a resilient workforce by encouraging the right behaviours, driving performance outcomes and uniting a workforce by focusing people on a common purpose to deliver on the business's mission.**

**Enabling Workplace Change Through Rewards**  
Aon, 2021

# Mental Health in the Modern Day

For those sectors of the industry with offshore workers, the combination of a highly pressurised environment with long shifts and rotational working can have a detrimental effect on mental health. The impact of working away from home and loved ones, in unfamiliar countries and surroundings, has serious consequences on the emotional wellbeing of many workers in the industry. A recent report<sup>37</sup> discovered that almost one-third of offshore workers meet the benchmark for clinical depression while on rotation. Of remote rotational workers:

**40%**

suffer from suicidal thoughts

**37%**

suffer from loneliness

**23%**

suffer from emotional exhaustion



## Mental health and burnout rank in the top five employee wellbeing issues facing organisations<sup>38</sup>.

While managing the mental health of offshore workers has always been a challenge, the report discovered that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic had compounded the mental toll on many. With a reduction of around 4,000 workers on oil and gas installations in the UK alone during 2020, survey respondents said the pandemic had increased the demands of their job (60 percent) and resulted in increased stress and anxiety levels (56 percent)<sup>39</sup>. With Aon's Manager Development Solution showing that managers consistently struggle with the challenge of holding difficult conversations, companies must take steps to enable open dialogue regarding mental wellbeing.

Change and uncertainty can undoubtedly create anxiety within the workforce. As businesses transition or consolidate their operations, they must assess and address the emotional impact on their workforce. Identifying and understanding the stressors negatively impacting employees' mental health is a proactive and necessary step for organisations seeking to build resilience in their people. It is why many firms are increasingly embracing technological innovations to reduce the risks of work-related stress and promote

a positive work-life balance. In addition to creating stronger connections to loved ones for those working away, technology solutions are improving the accessibility of mental health support. From telemedicine to video sessions with qualified therapists, Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) can help employers protect and enhance the mental health of their people.

Attitudes are changing towards mental health at work and the role that employers play in supporting employees' psychological safety. Fostering a culture that encourages open communication about mental health while offering support options will be increasingly important in building a sustainable workforce in the energy and power sectors. A holistic approach to wellbeing will not only help attract new employees, but also help organisations better support existing employees through the challenges and disruption of the energy transition.



38 [Aon's Global Wellbeing Survey, 2021](#)

39 [Mental Health and the Remote Rotational Worker, International SOS Foundation, April 2021](#)

# Fostering Adaptable Skills

Organisations need the right people in the right roles to propel their businesses forward. One of the challenges of the energy transition is that it has accelerated the pace at which skills requirements change.

As the sector evolves, there will be increasing demand for new skills from the workforce, requiring businesses to continually assess:

- Whether these skills are already available within their people
- What training will be needed to develop existing skills
- Whether new talent is needed to fill the gaps

In tandem with training and development, it is also essential that energy and power employers foster a growth mindset in their people. They must encourage employees to embrace change, flex to accommodate new demands and see challenges as growth opportunities.

The turbulence of the COVID-19 pandemic has taught businesses that a growth mindset is an essential tool that can be leveraged during periods of volatility. With so many sections of the industry in a state of flux, the

commercial landscape being forged by the energy transition requires agile, resilient and sustainable workforces capable of shifting with evolving business needs.

Workforce agility comes from people's ability to continually learn, adapt and problem solve. The advantage of the energy transition is that it brings opportunities for employees to develop new skills, use new technologies and boost career wellbeing. The priority for employers is to communicate the forward-looking opportunities that will come from this evolution while also providing the appropriate development opportunities that help employees reach their potential.

To retain top talent, energy and power firms need to take proactive steps to help employees identify and own the future skill requirements of the transition. Skill development will need to be targeted at the critical, technical requirements of this evolution, but it will be essential that employees embrace the opportunity to explore their preferences and capabilities to establish the next step in their careers.

When it comes to new talent, firms need to look ahead to understand how issues such as digitalisation, diversity and emerging technologies will change the face of their skills and training requirements. They will have to adapt their hiring and development strategies to meet these evolving needs.



For people to flourish and grow, we have a two-fold platform. First, we enable personalised learning. By acknowledging there is no linear path, we have a range of provisions such as work-life content and training courses on a range of topics. Secondly, we make it clear it is up to the employee to own their careers. They need to be proactive and clear with themselves about what is best for them. We also provide shadowing and mentorship programmes to help them find their path through the organisation and ensure they don't get stuck in a silo.

**Nikolaus von Hesler**

Head of Global HR Insights  
Siemens



**The half-life of skills is ever-decreasing and as such the learner mindset is an essential skill that everyone needs to have in their toolkit as they navigate the energy transition.**

**Tamsin Lambert**  
Talent Excellence Advisor  
Shell

# Embracing Inclusivity

An inclusive culture and diverse workforce should be more than a signifier of a dynamic and progressive organisation. By drawing from the widest talent pool and embracing a broader range of skills, experiences and perspectives, businesses can drive greater innovation and productivity and ultimately build workforce resilience<sup>40</sup>.

With STEM profiles and digital skills in increasingly high demand, the sector needs to work in closer collaboration with the education system. By aligning to more training and education initiatives, the sector can encourage a wider spectrum of people to step forward, explore STEM careers and develop a professional path.

The energy and power sectors have always been predominantly White and male, but as more women and people from different ethnic backgrounds enter into engineering and related disciplines, a more equitable employer brand and benefits package offers an opportunity to resonate with a wider employee base — driving more inclusive solutions as a result.

Identifying the needs of a more diverse workforce and auditing your existing benefits can help identify where there are gaps in support. Creating this needs-based approach helps to leverage data on current benefits take-up to maximise spend value, while offering the choice that existing and prospective employers need. However, for a commitment to the creation of a more inclusive and diverse workforce to be meaningful, this strategy has to be top-down. If a commitment to flexible employee benefits is not combined with a visible, well-communicated I&D strategy and consistent candidate and employee experiences, businesses will fail to nurture a culture that values and champions diversity.

A non-biased selection process, combined with equal career opportunities enabled through targeted education, will help the organisation leverage the diversity of the workforce to the fullest. Supporting employees through optimised benefit flexibility can improve employee engagement throughout their careers<sup>41</sup>.

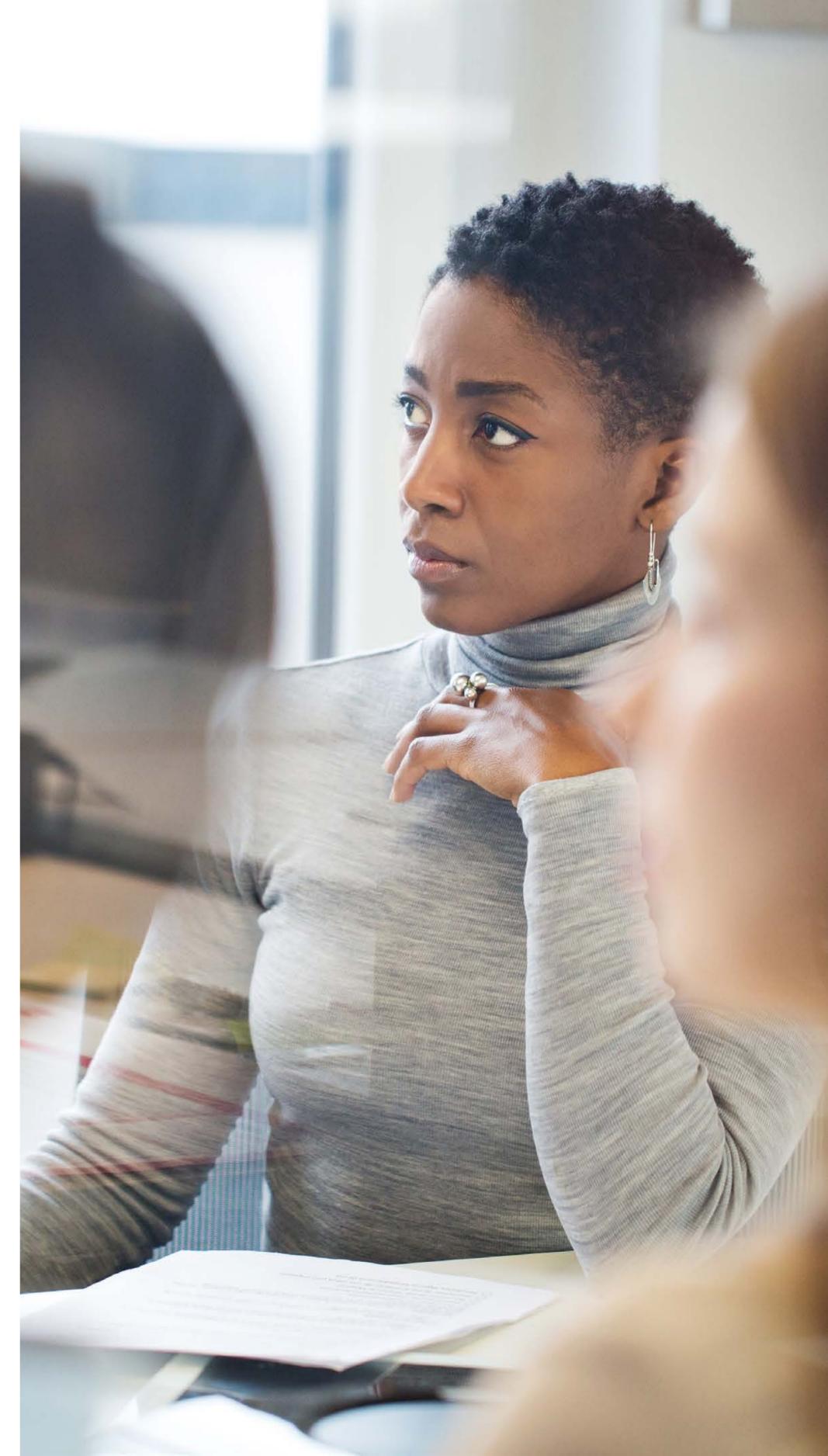
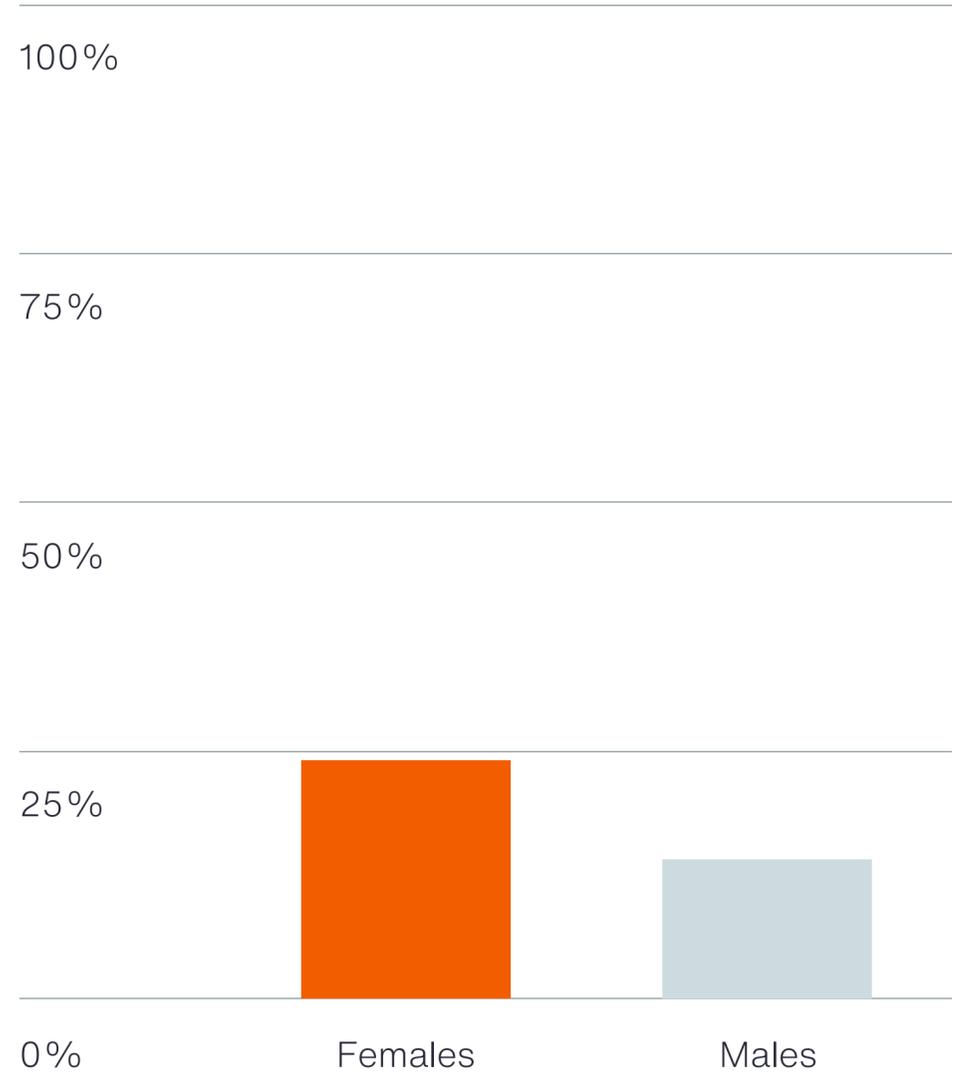


Females are more likely to be dissatisfied with their pay and benefits (24 percent vs 14 percent of males)<sup>42</sup>.

“

Increasingly, we are seeing more young women pursuing careers in engineering, digital and technology fields – all areas where energy and power firms will need to develop their capabilities. This is opening up considerable opportunities for women to build careers in energy and power, while an increasing focus on diversity and equity should see more women rising through the ranks to leadership positions within firms across the two sectors.

**Suzanne Courtney**  
Strategic Growth Director  
Assessment Solutions  
Aon



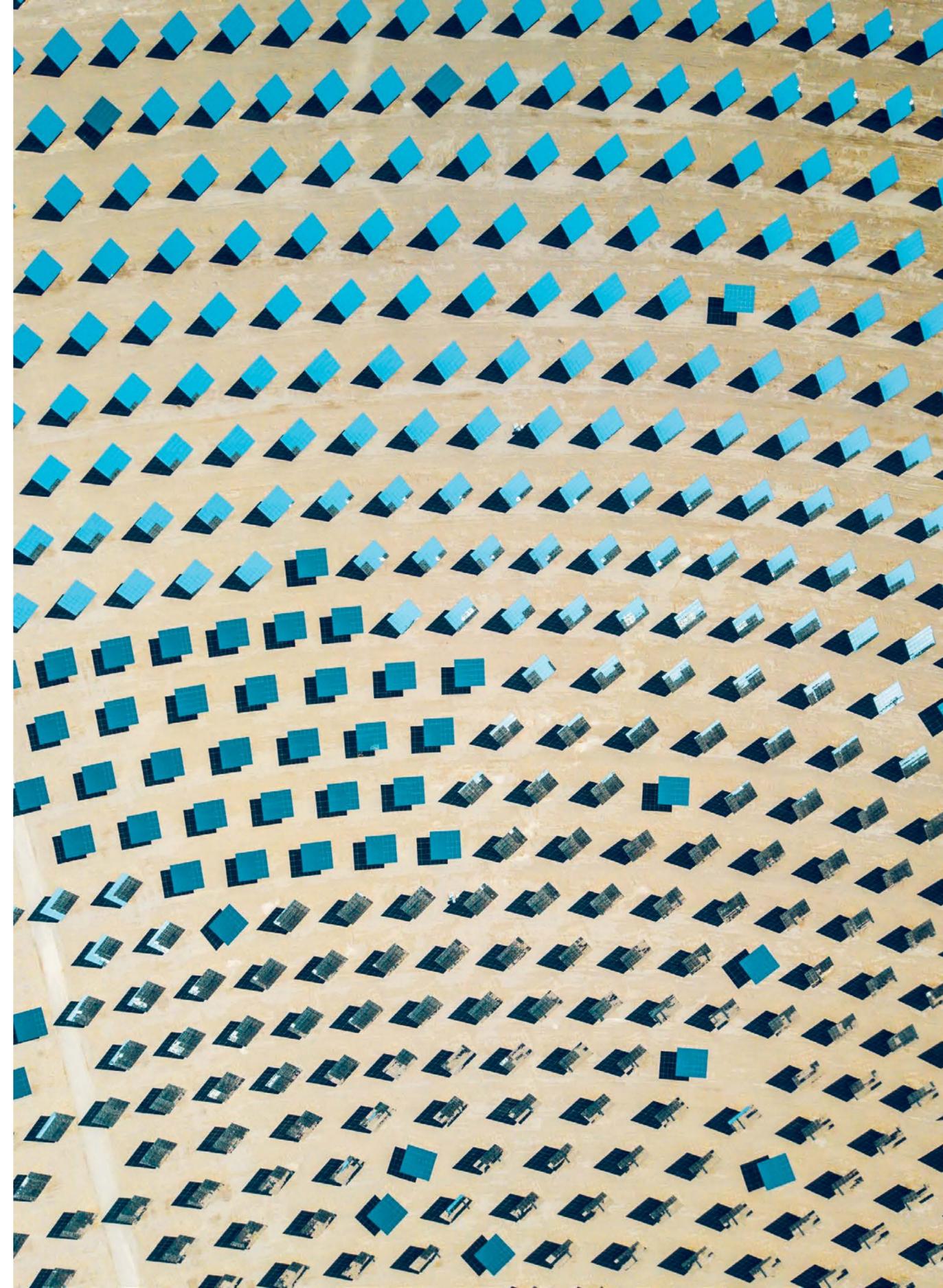
# Company Spotlight



# Cepsa

As a multinational energy company, Cepsa is acutely aware of its role and responsibility in the energy transition and is actively addressing the value it brings not only to its clients and stakeholders, but to society and the environment. The Spanish firm continues to diversify its business model by transitioning towards new forms of sustainable energy and is supported on this journey of innovation by more than 9,500 employees.

To understand how Cepsa is supporting existing staff through the transition of its operations, while also boosting its appeal to new talent, Aon asked its director of human resources and operations Carlos Morán Moya, to share some key insights into Cepsa's current and future people strategies.



### Adopting a New Culture

As part of its shift towards sustainability, Cepsa has developed a new set of organisational values that are better aligned to its future vision. Creating values that are authentic, unique and relevant to its people has been central to Cepsa's strategy, to ensure they are adopted by its employees and integrated into the company culture.



We will not succeed in this path of change and transformation if we do not adopt a new culture adapted to our purpose of being relevant actors in the transition towards new forms of energy that are sustainable and compatible with the environment. For this, we have proposed new values that promote consistent and coherent behaviours with that purpose, which must be extended and assimilated throughout the organisation.

### Communicating Change with Clarity

Large-scale change within any organisation can push employees to the limit and test both individual and organisational resilience. Cepsa is keenly aware that the magnitude of this transformation to processes, technologies and products has the potential to create uncertainty and stress for its employees.

To combat this, Cepsa is making transparency and communication with its people a priority, ensuring they understand why this change has to happen now, and the importance of their role within the process.



All of this represents a challenge for our leadership and communication skills, which must make each one of our people see that without their personal involvement and commitment, we will not be able to achieve the success of such an exciting destination.

### Providing Meaningful Learning Opportunities

The upskilling and reskilling of specific groups of employees is an imminent task for many in the sector, but a challenge for which Cepsa is well-prepared. In addition to providing innovative development programmes linked to company values (including diversity, ESG and digitalisation) and offering employee coaching and mentoring, the organisation's commitment to staff development is founded on a strong set of guiding principles.

With a learning model based on 'meaningful, attractive and effective employee learning experiences', Cepsa's ability to foster a workforce with adaptable and intersecting skills puts it in a strong position when it comes to facilitating the mobility of its people.



Learning at Cepsa is supported by a structure of topic-based academies, directed by a committee of experts in the specialisation, across departments and businesses. This structure makes it possible to develop and maintain critical and cross-cutting knowledge profiles in the organisation and flexibly respond to the expected change.

### Capitalising on a Strong Branding Strategy

In the face of increasing competition for the best talent, Cepsa has remained an attractive employer. Its ‘Talent Call’ programme for recent graduates promotes the company’s digital transformation and entices new talent to be part of innovative technology projects that are driving the organisation’s digital development. Clear communication of their EVP, combined with successful recruitment methods, help Cepsa reach wider audiences and strengthen its reputation and appeal as an employer of choice.

“

Our talent attraction policies incorporate innovative methodologies for seeking out and selecting candidates that are tailored to the current environment, including gaming techniques. These aim to improve the candidates' experience and ensure equal opportunities in decision making.

### Ensuring High-Quality Employment Conditions

Prioritising employee health, safety and wellbeing is helping Cepsa to manage change. It’s a strategy that has helped the business navigate the turbulence of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the ongoing energy transition. Cepsa created a healthier, more committed and productive workforce by offering flexible working policies, personalised benefits packages and permanent contracts to 90 percent of staff. These initiatives not only strengthened the existing workforce; they also made Cepsa more attractive to job-seekers.

“

For millennials, who value freedom more than anything, organisations need to leave behind the traditional ways of work and offer creative freedom. Cepsa has put measures in place to improve work-life balance, foster an ethical and diverse working environment and to develop ourselves professionally and personally.

### Promoting Inclusion and Diversity (I&D)

Recognising the value and importance of an inclusive, diverse workforce, Cepsa has adapted its benefits packages to provide products and services that are relevant and adaptable to the individual needs and desires of its employees and their personal circumstances. In addition, the business has committed to delivering a new I&D strategy that is intentional and impactful – not just one that looks good on the surface.

“

We believe metrics are an essential part of measuring the impact of our I&D strategy, so we have set diversity goals, which help to track our progress and to develop and implement initiatives to achieve them. This year we have launched more than 35 initiatives to support inclusion and diversity at Cepsa, focused on promoting diverse talent, reviewing talent processes, and improving inclusive culture.

# Conclusion



# Conclusion

The path to a sustainable future will be determined by a collective global evolution of regulations, practices and attitudes. The power and energy sector has a significant role to play. As the energy transition has already demonstrated, this evolution reaches practically every touchpoint of operations for businesses in the sector, from technologies and territories to processes and policies.

For these changes to be successful, it will be critical to revise people strategies to adapt to the shifting priorities of organisations and individuals. The industry needs strategies that build sustainable, agile and resilient workforces, capable of driving progress. Without them, businesses will struggle to navigate through their existing and emerging challenges.

By starting with a strong ESG focus, businesses can take greater control of the climate change narrative and leverage corporate commitment and action in the battle to attract and retain their workforces. Devising flexible

policies and holistic employee benefits programmes will also help businesses cater to the divergent needs of multigenerational workforces. When combined with an I&D strategy and culture that recognises the value of a diverse workforce, organisations in the sector will also be able to source vital skills from a far wider pool of talent.

Using people strategies to deliver business goals and creating greater integration between HR and wider organisational structures is what will help organisations manage people risk, optimise spend and empower workforce agility.

It is this prioritisation of people strategies that will help future-proof businesses to an ever-shifting landscape, while also helping the sector become the positive agents of change that people want and the planet demands.



**HR needs to ask questions to make businesses and business leaders think differently, as it will be our people strategy that will enable us to meet a business strategy increasingly defined by the energy transition.**

**Tamsin Lambert**  
Talent Excellence Advisor  
Shell

# Are You Rising Resilient?

Our short survey quickly assesses whether your workforce is likely to be resilient.

[Take our self-assessment survey >](#)



# Next Steps for People Leaders

**1**

## Assess the resilience needs of your workforce

This will help your organisation manage employee expectations, optimise mental health and embrace inclusivity. To plan for a sustainable future, organisations need to audit their existing benefits offering. Assess whether you are putting the right policies, attitudes and actions in place, not only to support your people's health and wellbeing, but also to foster their resilience.

**2**

## Identify the gaps in your people strategies

Fostering the adaptable skills the energy industry needs will demand that you focus on wellbeing and people development goals. Establishing a starting point will guide you towards the wellbeing and development solutions you need to achieve your organisational goals.

Talent assessments of existing and future employees can help ensure you attract and develop the people you need, supporting diversity and building a workforce that has adaptable skills.

**3**

## Re-examine the effectiveness of existing benefits strategies

Traditional benefits strategies were not designed to meet the needs of this new age of power and energy. To manage employee expectations, support mental health and attract skilled people, companies must re-examine their employee benefit strategies to address the divergent requirements of an evolving workforce.

Developing a benefits strategy that delivers for your employees alongside a culture of security, motivation and belonging will help you optimise your people spend and ensure your workforce has access to the benefits they need and value.

**4**

## Strengthen your employee benefit communications

To reap the rewards of your time and financial investment in employee benefits design and strategy, it's important to effectively communicate your benefits offering. In addition to improving engagement with existing employees, you can widen your appeal to prospective employees by demonstrating your commitment to creating a sustainable workforce.

People are leaving their employers due to a lack of opportunities to learn, develop and grow. Providing and communicating these opportunities should form part of your benefits offering and conversations.

**5**

## Set a schedule to review and refine your strategies

In a rapidly evolving sector, your people strategy must help employees adapt to change, maintain motivation and face adversity. Regularly reviewing your strategy and its effectiveness will help your people thrive now and in the face of future challenges.

Creating an inclusive culture and delivering appropriate benefits and a supportive working environment help you draw from the widest possible talent pool, embracing a range of skills, experiences and perspectives. This helps generate workforce resilience, drive innovation and create a more robust and successful organisation. The benefits of building a sustainable workforce are tangible and numerous.



## About

Aon plc (NYSE: AON) exists to shape decisions for the better—to protect and enrich the lives of people around the world. Our colleagues provide our clients in over 120 countries with advice and solutions that give them the clarity and confidence to make better decisions to protect and grow their business.

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