

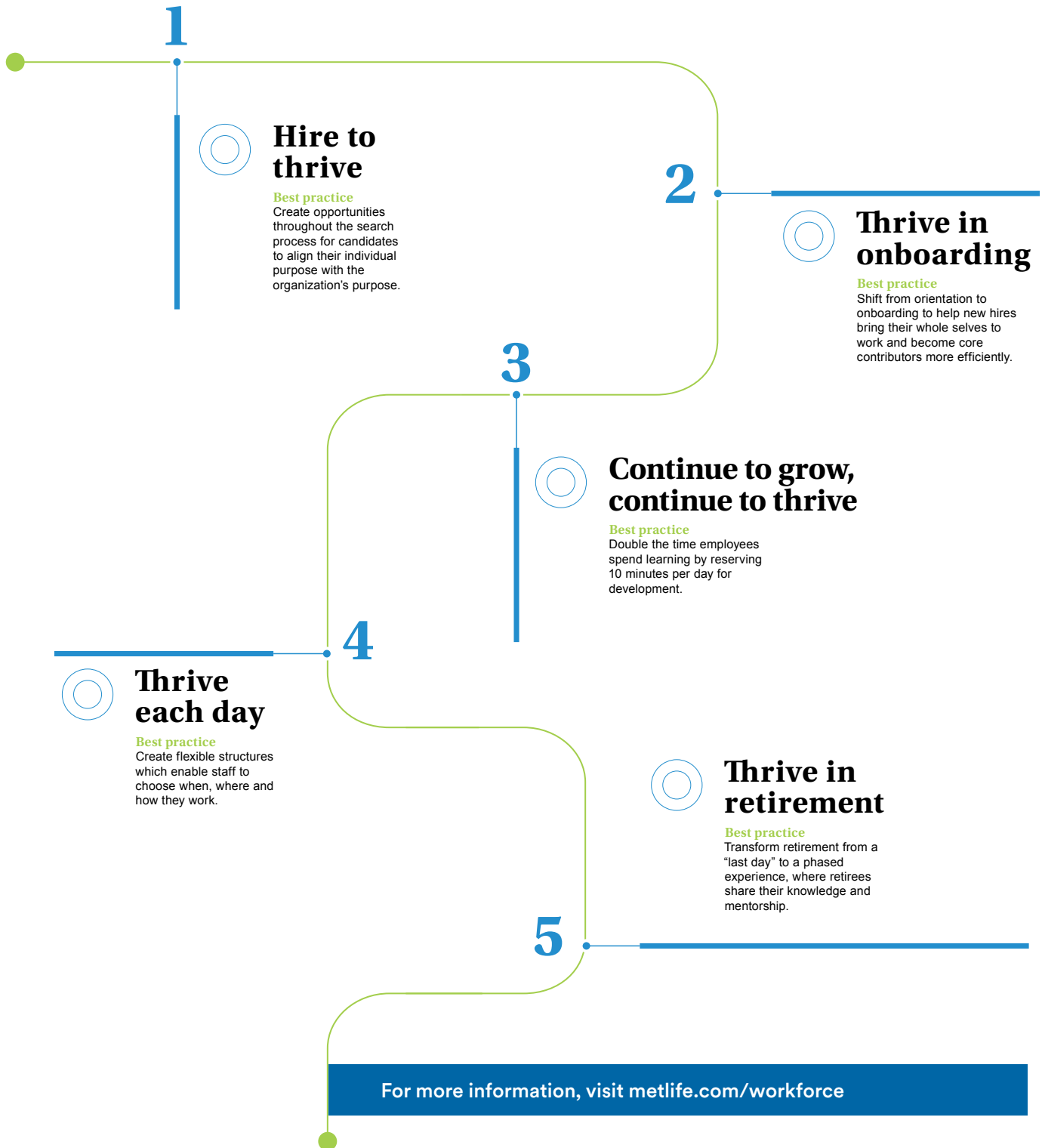
# The road to a more human workplace

Best practices in employee experience design from hiring to retirement



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Companies that treat employees as individuals help those employees thrive at work — and inspire greater productivity.



# Making the most of moments that matter

Employees have come to expect more from the relationship they have with their employer.

Attracting and retaining the best talent means adapting to the changing demands of the workforce. In practice, employers express these adaptations across a series of big and small moments that matter throughout the employee's journey. This paper provides a range of practices that span the entire employee lifecycle designed to attract, motivate, and retain workers. Through a careful approach to these pivotal moments, organizations can nurture a more human workplace. From the first handshake to the final goodbye, moments that matter invite employees to bring their whole selves to work, while creating a workplace that inspires greater productivity and worker satisfaction.



## Defining 'moments that matter':

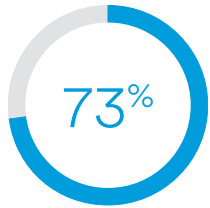
Those pivotal moments of professional and personal growth which impact the employee-employer relationship

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## Chapter 1:

# Hire to thrive

The search for a fit



of workers feel a strong sense of purpose about their work.<sup>1</sup> Successful organizations tap into this sense on a personal basis.

Moments that matter which arise during the hiring process set the tone for years - even decades - to come. Yet, many organizations treat hiring as a standardized corporate process with limited impact.

**From entry-level to executive, transforming hiring into a series of moments that matter which highlight the purpose of the organization, empower candidates to express their own sense of purpose, and begin a journey toward increased satisfaction and productivity for both parties.**



## The fit between employer and employee has never mattered more

Changing attitudes about the workplace come amidst record-low unemployment, with three-quarters of professionals not actively looking for a job.<sup>2</sup>

The shift in attitudes and competitive labor market have created pressure and heightened expectations around the hiring process. To navigate these forces, hiring managers and organizations must turn to a new interaction model for candidate screening and interviews that better meet the changing expectations candidates harbor while tapping into their desire for purpose at work.

### Opportunity: Express purpose through the hiring process

A framework for hiring interactions that allows employers to create thoughtful demonstrations of their workplace values while equipping candidates to embrace their own.

## Step 1 Before

Partner with marketing to create job postings and outreach that reflect the company's values through design and tone. Consider the impact of these initial moments and how they may be used by candidates to envision the ways in which working with your organization may help them fulfill a sense of purpose.



How would this job posting look if it were shared on Instagram by a candidate? It's not uncommon for job hunters to solicit input from friends and followers on a job prospect through their social feed.

What measures can you take when designing the job posting to encourage favorable feedback from the candidate and their social followers?

## Step 2 During

Create an interview experience that takes candidates outside of the traditional HR setting and exposes them to the faces and places they may be working among.



Where is the best place (or places) to conduct the interview for the candidate to see the entirety of the workplace on display?

Which potential colleagues or practices could you enlist to help the candidate express their passions and purpose?

## Step 3 After

Create a follow-up with a human touch. Whether the candidate is accepted or not, leaving them feeling highly valued is a fundamental practice in any workplace that puts humans first.



What specific aspects of the interview can be referred to in the follow-up to show your company was fully engaged in your time together?

What human elements (handwriting, phone calls, etc) can be utilized to demonstrate your appreciation?

## Case Study: pymetrics

A new toolset for finding a fit

Neuroscientist-founded pymetrics set out to completely redesign the hunt for candidates. Instead of relying on job postings and résumés, Dr. Frida Polli (Harvard, MIT) created a system to evaluate and match the deep neurological traits that make an individual the perfect candidate for a specific role.

The process begins with a workplace assessment, challenging existing team members to play a series of games on their mobile devices. The games have no winners and no right or wrong answers. They are designed to assess key traits, gathering millions of points of data about what makes an employee a good fit for a given role. These traits are assembled into a unique cognitive and emotional profile reflective of the best fit for the job.



Separately, pymetrics recruits and challenges candidates to play their games, building up a database of attributes. Candidates receive a report detailing their cognitive and emotional traits. They are then forwarded to a common application, which opens them to opportunities from organizations far and wide.

pymetrics compares the profile created from the workplace assessment with their database of candidates' neurological and emotional traits. The options are filtered through an algorithm designed to compensate for known biases in the hiring process. Ultimately, the system generates a list of deeply qualified candidates while leveling the playing field for all.



Through a unique blend of neuroscience and gaming, pymetrics has uncovered a new way to match people to workplace cultures. The results speak for themselves: as much as a 100 percent increase in hire yield alongside a 25 percent reduction in costs.<sup>3</sup>

## Chapter 2:

# Thrive in onboarding

## Creating a human onramp to the organization

Onboarding presents the first opportunity for new hires to integrate into your human workplace. Employers can make the most of this transition through a crucial set of moments that matter designed to foster comfort, self-expression, culture fit, and long-term success. **By better integrating new hires from the very start, employees achieve full momentum, perform better, and stay longer.**



### More than 1/3

of workers still feel the need to adopt a "work persona."<sup>4</sup>

## Onboarding should go beyond orientation

Nearly two-thirds of executives in new roles said they felt that a misfit with workplace culture was the single biggest stumbling block to their success.<sup>5</sup>

A more efficient journey from new hire to core contributor not only lowers the cost to the organization, it establishes the pathways by which employees fully realize their purpose and potential. Acknowledging the shortcomings of orientation and embracing the practice of onboarding will lead to a stronger bond between new hires and the workplace.

### Opportunity: Help new hires be their “whole selves”

An evolved approach to getting new hires established quickly and deeply into the organization for the long-term.

	Orientation	Onboarding
Focus	Role in company	Role in department
Duration	One-time event	Sequence of events
Setup	Classroom	On-the-job
Content	Big picture	Individualized
Outcome	Ready for training	Ready to contribute

Source: Insperity<sup>6</sup>

## Case Study: Onboarding at Percolate

From “outsider” to “part of the crew”

New York-based digital publisher Percolate takes a weeklong approach to integrating new hires into their workplace. By implementing a process that begins before new hires show up for their first day and ends with senior leadership, founder Noah Brier has fostered longevity among Percolate’s growing global workforce.

### Onboarding at Percolate<sup>7</sup>



**The Warm Welcome.** Within 48 hours of the acceptance letter, each new hire gets a care package with a mug, granola made by the founder’s family, a handwritten congratulations, and email access.



**The Ramp Up.** The Friday before their first day, new hires receive their first week’s schedule. They are designed to be full, to remove ambiguity and stress about where to start.



**The First Day.** The new hire’s work and personal space is cleaned and prepared. Upon arrival they are escorted to their workspace and given their first task: Write an introductory email to the entire workplace.



**The First Week.** Throughout each day of the first week, new hire’s calendars include meetings with workers and leaders from each department to help break the ice and show exactly where they fit into workplace culture.



**The End.** The final step of the process is an end-of-week meeting with a senior executive - such as a director, the founder, or CEO - to formally instill the confidence that the new hiree is now a trusted employee.



Chapter 3:

# Continue to grow, continue to thrive

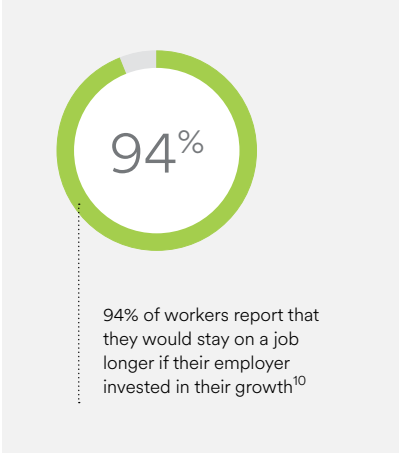
## Learning and growth

Learning and development has become an expectation, especially among younger employees. Employers today are seeking ways to provide lifelong education designed to help staff grow on and off job. In 2017, the companies which contributed to the \$90.6 billion invested<sup>8</sup> in workplace education benefits averaged 24 percent higher profit margins than those which did not.<sup>9</sup>

**In the quest for a more human workplace, providing benefits such as education which reach beyond the day-to-day can help bridge the work-life gap.**

# 10M

MetLife created a \$10 million Skills Development Fund to help its employees across the world remain competitive into the 21st century<sup>11</sup>



## Unlock the link between education, enrichment, and satisfaction

Organizations see the value in providing education for their staff, yet workers still spend only one percent of their week on learning and development.<sup>12</sup>

To better deliver on the desire for learning and growth, employers must find new ways to incorporate learning on the job. The benefits are clear: less turnover, lower long-term training costs, and built-in-adaptability for change and disruption.

### Opportunity: On the job learning that improves employees' whole lives

Approaches to increase employee satisfaction through continued learning

# 1

#### Microlearning

Double training time by reserving just 10 minutes per day for each employee to engage in self-guided learning.



# 58%

of employees prefer to  
**learn at their own pace**<sup>13</sup>

# 2

#### Horizontal Learning

Create training opportunities that extend beyond the workplace — such as emotional intelligence and public speaking.

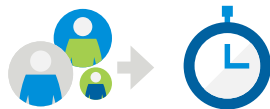


Executives rank **“leadership”** and **“soft skills”** as the most important priorities for employee growth<sup>14</sup>

# 3

#### Institutional Learning

Establish an employee-led weekly quickfire meeting where staff comes together to share and learn from one another.



Time is the number one reason employees feel held back from learning and growth<sup>15</sup>

## Case Study: Learning with “At Home”

Seamlessly integrating learning

Furniture retailer At Home partnered with app Axonify to create daily microlearning experiences for their staff. The “gamified” mobile app made it possible to keep staff on the floor while they learned using their own mobile phones. Through custom-designed, self-guided experiences, employees could learn about subjects from spotting counterfeit money to public speaking to the materials behind their latest products.

According to At Home’s Chief People Officer Valerie Davisson, **“the stores where people did the most training had the biggest increases in sales.”**<sup>16</sup>

36%

**drop in safety incidents** among associates on the platform<sup>16</sup>

98%

**voluntary participation** on the platform<sup>16</sup>



## Chapter 4:

# Thrive each day

## Flexibility on and beyond the job

Acknowledging an employee's need to fulfill their passions both at and after work is paramount to providing a human work experience. Whether it is taking a few hours off for an after-school function or doctor's appointment, providing flexibility has become an essential lever of empathy between employee and employer. **Creating flexible structures which enable staff to choose when, where and how they work is something employees increasingly desire.**

**83%** of workers feel that **balancing their work and personal lives** makes them better employees.<sup>17</sup>



## Flexibility that works for everyone

Nearly three-quarters of employees who work remote one day per week say their coworkers feel like family.<sup>18</sup>

Each team member has their own ambitions, obligations, and personal relationships that make them who they are. Part of encouraging the whole self to come to work is creating a workplace that fits into the larger support structures that each individual leans on for strength.

Still, nearly half of the workforce say their work and personal lives do not blend well.<sup>19</sup> Employers looking to improve worker satisfaction and productivity should consider three criteria when implementing more flexible practices.

### Opportunity: Implement flexibility in the workplace

A balanced approach to achieving continuity, productivity, and camaraderie

#### Recognition

Employees' needs for flexibility vary throughout their careers. Assessing near, middle, and long-term life goals enables employers to balance their expectations, case by case.

Understand a colleague's unique situation when returning from parental leave. While some parents may wish to return back to work quickly and with the same intensity as before, others may prefer a part-time transition period, easing gradually back into full-time work. An open discussion about the employee's specific personal and family needs will allow both parties to set expectations and provide support, accordingly.

#### Continuity

Different industries require different approaches to enable flexibility among their workforce. Simple changes can make it easier for workers across all industries to maintain continuity on their teams while offering greater flexibility.

Many workplaces rely on rigid shifts and scheduling to maintain productivity, and large numbers of them only offer schedules one week in advance. For pilots, restaurant workers, police, and doctors, a shift conflict can create stresses that ripple through work and life. Providing an extra week of scheduling - two weeks notice for most shift workers - can mean the difference between satisfaction and burnout.

#### Camaraderie

Flexibility is a balancing act. One employee's desire for flexibility must not negatively impact the other members of the team. While challenging, the pursuit of flexibility can also provide opportunities to extend the familial experience of teamwork and build community.

When shift coverage and temp workers fall through, other team members feel the pressure of a missing counterpart. However, transparency and communication between team members and management can make all the difference. A personal call from management rallying the team in support of an absent teammate is often all it takes to trigger empathy and inspire an extra push to cover the gap.

## Study: P&G's Flex@Work

An approach to flexibility around work

Global consumer goods leader Procter and Gamble's workforce surveying showed employees wanted flexibility more than any other benefit. With 95,000+ on staff, P&G set out to provide flexibility on a massive scale by focusing their efforts on three key employee touchpoints: flexible workdays, flexible benefits, and flexible careers.<sup>20</sup>



### Flexible Workdays

P&G introduced a range of measures to introduce more flexibility into the places, times, and amounts that personnel worked.

- Location-Free Roles
- Work From Home
- Short Work Weeks
- Short Work Days



### Flexible Benefits

In addition, P&G created new categories and classes of benefits to appeal to a broader range of employee needs.

- Expanded Parental Leave Options
- Additional Investment and Savings Plans
- Sabbatical
- Flexible Vacation



### Flexible Careers

Research revealed that not all employees are looking to progress through their careers at the same speed. This opened a new front of flexibility for P&G: Career pacing.

- Fast-Paced Growth
- Part-Time Scheduling
- Role Stability
- Leave of Absence

**6x More likely**

Internal research showed that employees who exercised flexibility were 6x more likely to stay on the job<sup>20</sup>

## Chapter 5:

# Thrive in Retirement

## Setting up the next act

Retirement is a moment of transition not only for those leaving, but also for colleagues losing an experienced coworker. The end of a career provides a wealth of moments that matter for the entire workplace. **Transform retirement from a “last day” to a series of moments that matter where employers can show their humanity across the entirety of a career.**

# 38

The average retiring employee leaves with 38 years **of experience**<sup>21</sup>



**More than 10,000** American workers become eligible for retirement each day<sup>22</sup>

## Retirement presents challenges to organizations across every sector of employment

As the brunt of Baby Boomers enter their late-60s, retirement will become an every-week experience at many American workplaces.

The average retiring employee leaves with 38 years of experience.<sup>21</sup> The shock of retirement can be detrimental not only to organizations, but also to the retirees who derived a great deal of purpose from their daily work. Managers and organizations must reframe the retirement experience to amend these stresses and provide a more human offramp for departing employees.

### Opportunity: Transition purpose at the end of a career

Creating moments of torch-passing that provide meaning for retirees and instill purpose in younger staff



#### From “The Last Day” to “Transitioning Out”

Studies show that half of workers believe that a phased approach to retirement is ideal<sup>23</sup>. In spite of this widespread desire, only one in twenty employers offer this benefit<sup>24</sup>. Employers should create options for phased retirement which allow outgoing employees to gradually decrease their hours and commitment, scaling down their pay and benefits over time. Phased retirement can create a softer financial landing for retirees at a lower net cost to organizations.



#### From “Brain Drain” to “Biography”

Retirees leave with unquantifiable knowledge and experience. Yet little is done to record and institutionalize their experiences before they leave. Employers should implement archival practices that not only capture retiring workers’ knowledge and expertise, but the human impact they had, as well. Creating multifaceted knowledge centers that capture the skills, personalities, and contributions of each outgoing employee shows the value an organization places on their staff from start to finish (and beyond).



#### From “So Long” to “Coffee Tuesday?”

One of the greatest shocks of retirement is the loss of kinship and humanity that comes from working on a team day after day. Beyond their institutional expertise and skills, retirees leave behind a workplace without their sense of humor, their rituals, and their emotional contribution to their community of colleagues. Managers and organizations should look to approaches like mentorship, externships, and seasonal social events to keep retirees engaged in the workplace beyond the end of their careers.

## Case Study: The US Government

Confronting mass retirement

The Federal Government is facing a worker crisis: One-third of their workforce is eligible for retirement over the coming decade.<sup>25</sup> To prevent a catastrophic loss of workplace experience, many agencies have introduced a multifaceted phased retirement plan designed to be a win for workers, retirees, and the budget.<sup>26</sup>



### Worker Win Part Time Help

Employees approaching retirement age are eligible to work fewer hours and days per week while receiving commensurate pay if they will extend their retirement date. This helps provide their team with a helping hand instead of a suddenly-empty seat.



### Retiree Win A Soft Landing

Many retirees are not as financially well-prepared as their counterparts. Phased retirement recipients continue to work part time for a reduced rate while continuing to receive full benefits coverage - offsetting a significant cost and untenable loss of income for many older workers.



# Thrive through moments that matter



Employers that take measures to bring about more humanity in their workplace enjoy greater satisfaction, productivity, and loyalty from their workforce. By identifying and engaging in these pivotal moments of professional and personal development, employers and employees can fulfill their senses of purpose, together.



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or visit [metlife.com/workforce](https://www.metlife.com/workforce)**

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