

PROJECT HAPPINESS: FITOUT

Benchmarking happiness & engagement in the fitout sector.



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Introduction

Project Happiness: Fitout is a sector wide project researching & benchmarking happiness in fitout. The project was carried out by **The Condor Collective** in partnership with **FIS**.

On behalf of **FIS** & **The Condor Collective**, we want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in **Project Happiness: Fitout**. We had a fantastic response from over **600 people in the fitout sector**, and this project would not have been possible without people giving up their time to complete the survey.

We are **The Condor Collective**, experts in people performance and creating happier employment in construction. Our work with clients often starts with our employee engagement tool, **The Happiness Survey**; as clients need a measure on current engagement, to set objectives to work towards. The data gathered enables us to target topics that will have the biggest impact on a team's happiness & performance at work.

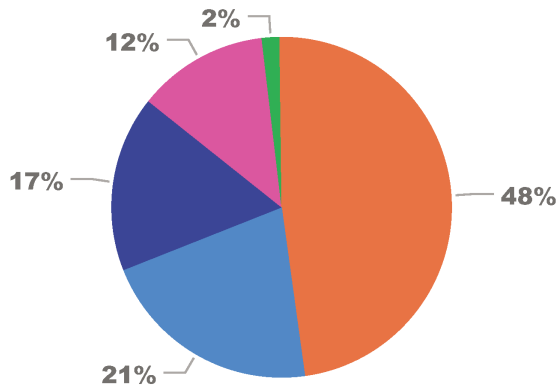
Project Happiness: Fitout serves the same purpose for the fitout sector. This benchmarking project can be used to better understand what topics will have the biggest impact in effecting positive change across the sector. The insights gained from **Project Happiness: Fitout** will enable **FIS** to drive initiatives for their members and the wider sector, to make fitout an even greater space to work in.

The data gathered from **Project Happiness** are in places predictable, highlighting key areas of work to be done, like **helping to close the gap on the skills shortage**. In others, the insights are better than expected, highlighting a **positive outlook** many workers in fitout have on the sector.

We would encourage anyone interested in **improving employee engagement in construction** to follow us on LinkedIn - @thecondorcollective. If you would like any further information on the project, please feel free to contact us: holly@thecondorcollective.com.



Demographics

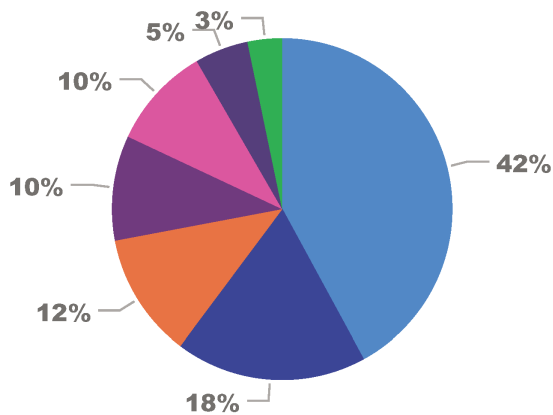


● Fitout Contractor ● Fitout Consultant ● Fitout SubContractor ● Other ● Fitout Manufacturer ● Fitout SubContractor - Labour Only

48% of respondents work for **Fitout Contractors**, making them the largest group within the survey. **Fitout Manufacturers** report the highest average happiness score of **4.2 out of 5**.

Fitout Contractors and **Fitout Subcontractors** have average happiness scores of **3.76** and **3.84 out of 5**, respectively, indicating a positive sentiment towards workplace happiness among these groups.

Fitout Subcontractors - Labour Only reports the lowest average happiness score of **3.0 out of 5**, suggesting specific challenges in these roles may impact workplace happiness.

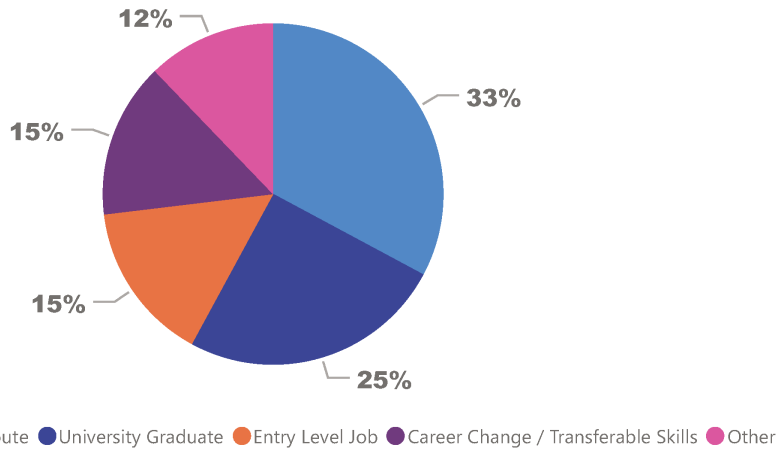


● 20+ years ● 6-10 years ● 16-20 years ● 11-15 years ● 3-5 years ● 1-2 years ● Under 1 year

42% of respondents have worked in the industry for **20+ years**, indicating a highly experienced survey population.

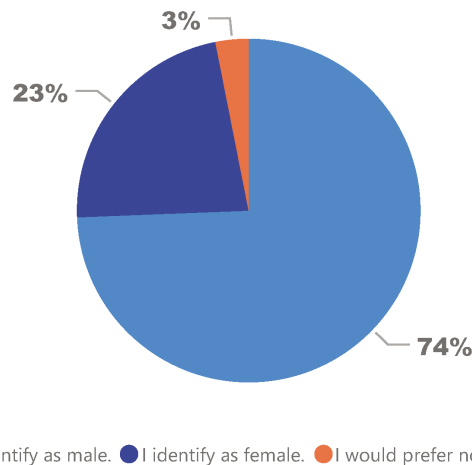
The happiest length of service are **11-15 years & 16-20 years**, with **74%** of both categories reporting they were generally happy at work.

Demographics



33% of respondents entered the construction industry through an Apprenticeship/Trade Route, and **25%** are University Graduates.

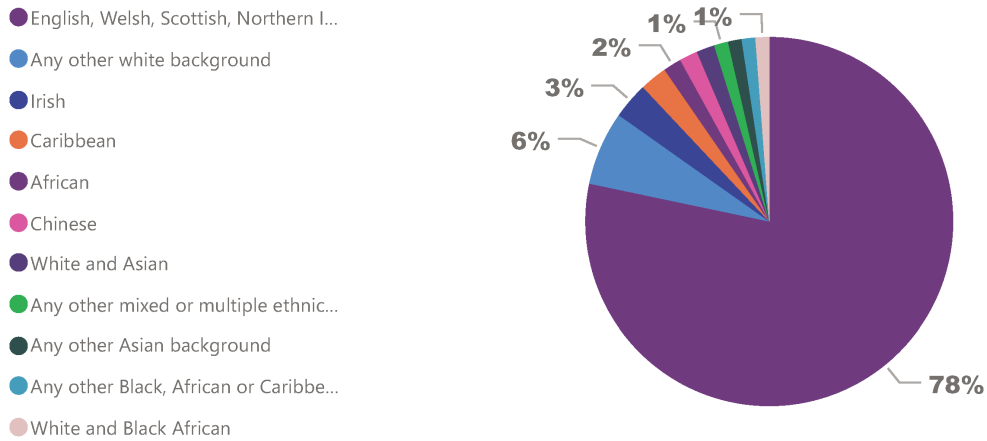
Rates of entry into the sector via apprenticeship drop dramatically when reviewed against length of service; **64% of respondents who have 20+ years experience** entered the construction industry via an apprenticeship, versus only **6% of respondents** who have been in the industry for **6-10 years**.



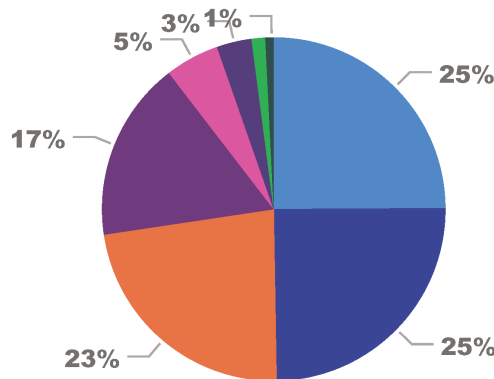
23% of respondents identify as women, this is **8%** higher than the national statistic of **15%** of women working in construction in the UK; indicating fitout could be more a more diverse sector of the industry.

Happiness scores are similar across male (**67%**) and female (**71%**) respondents . Those who prefer not to say their gender report lower happiness scores (**33%**).

Demographics



Majority of respondents identify as English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, or British (**78%**), with other ethnic backgrounds represented to a lesser degree. The survey data shows greater ethnic diversity than the UK average, where white individuals make up **82%** of the population as per the 2021 Census.



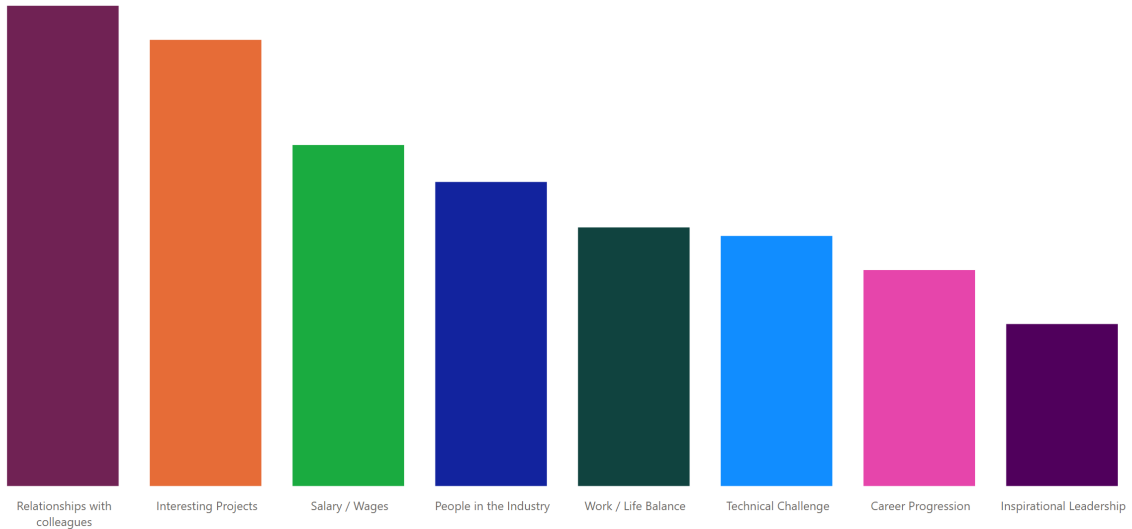
● 45 to 54 ● 35 to 44 ● 25 to 34 ● 55 to 64 ● 18 to 24 ● 65 to 74 ● I would prefer not to say ● 17 or younger

The age group **35 to 44 years & 45 to 54 years** makes up **50%** of respondents (25% in each age bracket), followed closely by **25 to 34 years (23%)**.

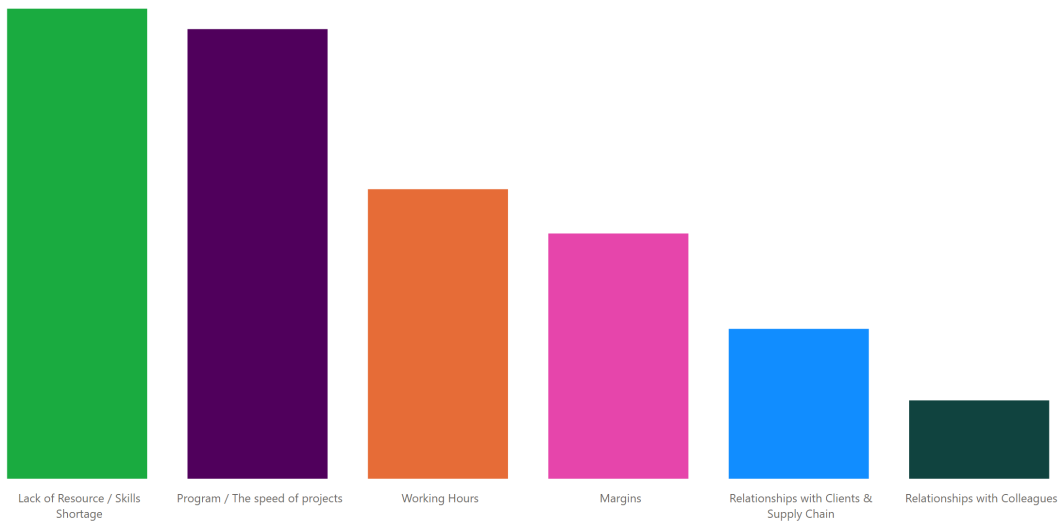
Older age groups, particularly those **65 to 74**, show higher happiness scores (**77%** agreement). The highest levels of unhappiness was reported in the **45-54 age** bracket with **13%** of respondents reporting they are unhappy at work.

Happiness in Fitout

With **67% of survey respondents indicating they are happy or very happy at work**, it suggests a generally positive sentiment towards working in the fitout sector. When asked to select the factors that positively impacted individuals' happiness in the fitout sector, the top 3 reasons cited were **relationships with colleagues (70%), interesting projects (65%) & salary/wages (50%)**.

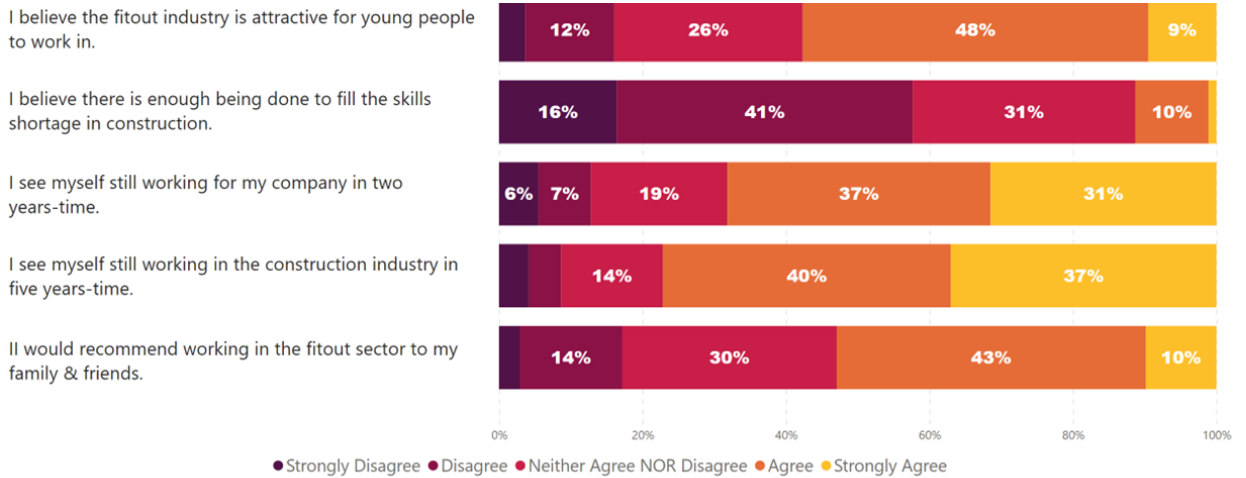


When asked to select the factors that negatively impacted individuals' happiness in the fitout sector, the top reasons cited were the **skills shortage/lack of resource (58%) & speed of project (55%)**. If the sector is looking to improve happiness, these are the two factors that would have the biggest impact. Interestingly, the statement **'I believe there is enough being done to fill the skills shortage in construction.'** garnered the lowest score across all survey questions, with only **11%** of respondents in agreement. This suggests an area of improvement that the industry needs to collectively address.



The Future of Fitout & Construction

On average, respondents rated their intention to stay in the construction industry in five years at **4.01 out of 5** suggesting a generally positive outlook towards a long-term career in fitout.



Key Insights

- **Less Than 5 Years Experience** - 71% see themselves working in the industry in five years.
- **More Than 15 Years Experience** - 72% see themselves in the industry in five years.

Apprenticeship Schemes

The presence of apprenticeship or graduate programs in 55% of respondents companies suggests some investment in addressing the skills shortage.

Career Longevity in Construction

77% of respondents see themselves working in the construction industry in 5 years time, highlighting a strong industry attachment.

Happiness as a Key Factor

There is a correlation in the data between happiness at work and future intentions to stay in the industry. This reinforces the need for companies to prioritise employee satisfaction as a means of enhancing retention inhouse and the wider industry.

The Skills Shortage in Construction

Over half of the respondents (53%) would recommend working in the fitout sector, suggesting a positive opinion of the industry among current workers.

A majority of respondents believe the fitout industry is attractive for young people (57%).

Despite a general willingness to recommend the fitout sector and a belief in its attractiveness to young people, there is still work to be done to address human resources with only 11% agreement that there is enough being done to fill the skills gap.

Suggestions for Businesses

Companies within the fitout sector should focus on strategies that enhance retention. The most common motivators we see when deploying **The Happiness Survey** within construction businesses are:

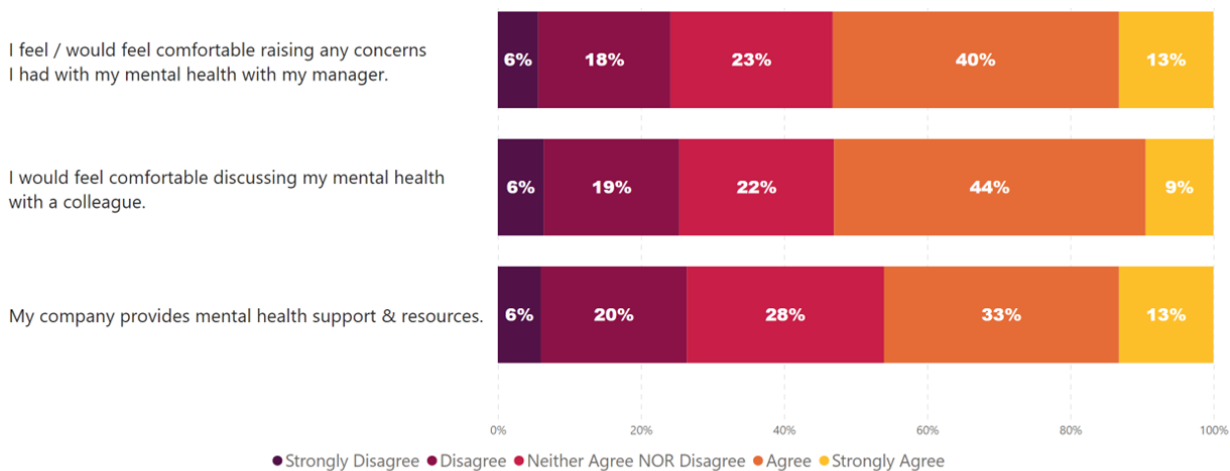
1. **Good relationships with colleagues**
2. **Good work-life balance/Flexibility**
3. **Attractive Salary**
4. **Career Progression**

Focusing initiatives on your team’s motivators can support both industry-wide retention efforts and individual companies’ goals to maintain a committed and engaged workforce.



Mental Health in Fitout

Older age groups (**45-64: 54% agreement**) perceive greater support from their companies compared to younger employees (**17-25: 17.5% agreement**). Levels of comfortability discussing mental health and perception of mental health support score significantly lower among those who prefer not to disclose their gender.



Mental Health - Key Insights

- **53%** would feel comfortable **raising any concerns** they had about their mental health with their **manager or a colleague**.
- **46%** agree that their company provides mental **health support & resources**.

The insights highlight variations in perceptions of mental health support across different age demographics within the fitout sector, suggesting potential generational differences in expectations or experiences.

Suggestions for Businesses

Communicate about Mental Health Resources

Lower agreement in younger employees could highlight a need for companies to build trust and improve communication channels regarding mental health support.

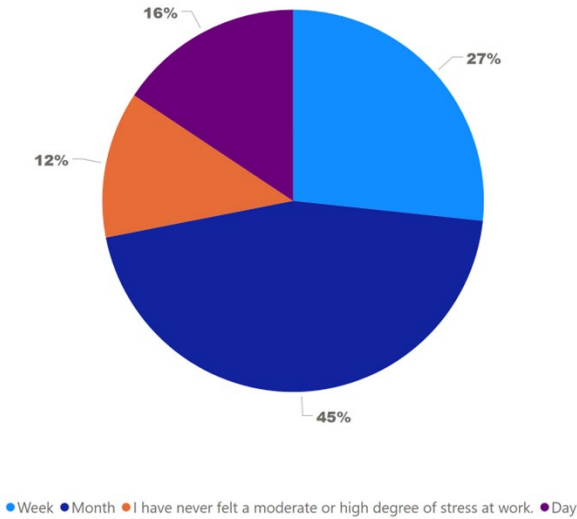
Create an Inclusive Culture to promote Psychological Safety

Fostering a supportive, open, and inclusive environment could enhance comfort levels across all demographics.



Stress in Fitout

45% of respondents have felt a high degree of stress in the **past month**. 27% have felt a high degree of stress in the **past week**. 16% have felt a high degree of stress in the **past day**. 12% of respondents report they have **never felt a moderate or high degree of stress at work**.



Age Impact

Younger professionals (25-34: 52% report a high level of stress on a monthly basis) and those in the mid-career stage (35-44: 39% report a high level of stress on a weekly basis) report higher stress levels, possibly due to career development pressures or work-life balance challenges.

Gender Differences

Stress experiences vary by gender, with people who preferred not to say their gender reporting higher frequencies of stress per week (50% report a moderate/high level of stress per week). Males report a higher daily stress percentage 29% in comparison to women at 19%.

Industry Tenure

Those with 6-10 years of experience report high stress levels in the past day (24%), suggesting potential mid-career challenges, while newcomers (1-2 years experience) seem better at avoiding or managing stress with 0% respondents citing having felt a moderate/high level of stress in the past day.

Suggestions for Businesses

Tailored Support Programs

Develop support and wellness programs keeping in mind that different demographics may be susceptible to different frequencies of stress.

Mentorship & Guidance

Offer mentorship for younger and mid-career professionals to help navigate career pressures.

Inclusive Wellness Initiatives

Ensure wellness initiatives are inclusive and sensitive to the diverse needs of the workforce, including gender-specific support where appropriate.

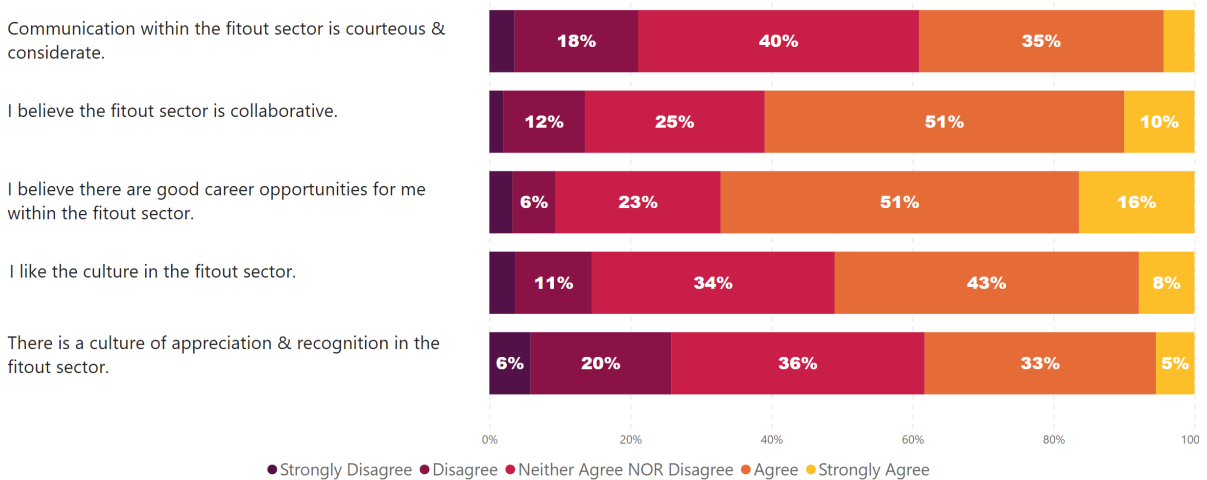
Stress Management Training

Provide training on stress management techniques, encouraging groups identified as experiencing higher stress levels to attend.



Culture & Engagement in the Fitout Sector

51% like the culture in the fitout sector, with 67% agreeing there are good career opportunities available to them. Lower scoring topics include communication (39%) and appreciation (38%).



Key Insights

- 51% agreement that participants like **the culture** in the fitout sector.
- 61% believe the fitout sector is **collaborative**.
- 39% agreement that communication within the sector is **courteous & considerate**.
- 38% feel there is a culture of **appreciation and recognition** in the fitout sector.
- 53% of respondent would **recommend the fitout sector** to family and friends.
- 57% agreement on the fitout sector being **attractive for young people**.

Age

- **18 to 24 years old** have higher belief in the fitout sector's attractiveness for young people (**73%**) and appreciation/recognition culture (**69%**).

Gender

Females tend to have higher agreement rates on positive culture compared to males, particularly in recommending the sector to family & friends (**F:61% vs M: 51%**) and finding it attractive for young people (**F:73% vs M:54%**).

Tenure in Fitout/Construction

- **16-20 years experience:** Highest agreement liking the culture (**64%**) vs **6-10 years experience** scoring **41%** agreement.
- **3-5 years experience:** Highest belief in the sector being collaborative (**76%**).

Suggestions for Individuals working in Fitout

There is a positive correlation between appreciation & recognition and happiness at work. Feeling valued could therefore be a key factor in an individual's decision to stay within the industry.

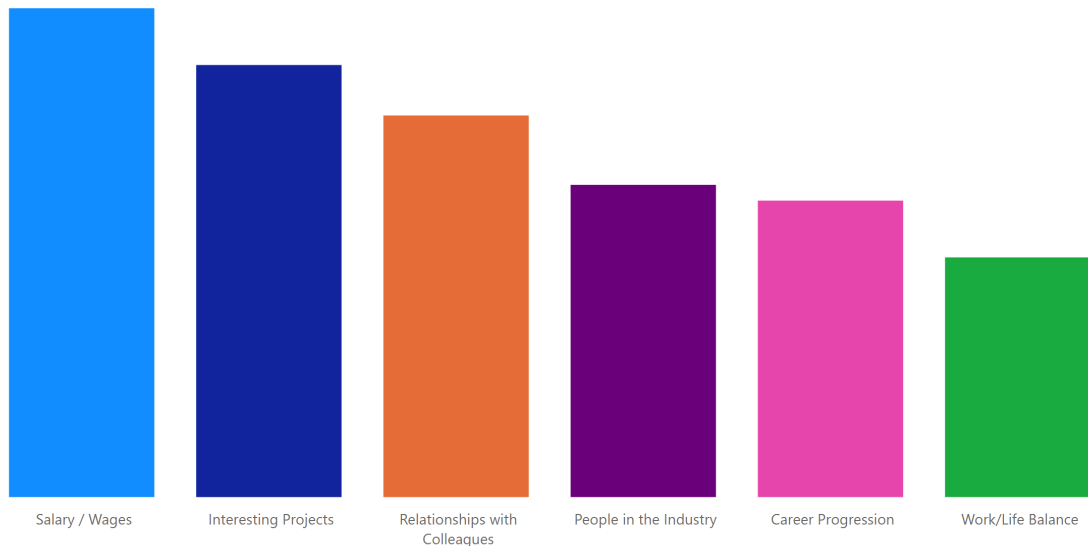
Showing appreciation to the people you work with can be as simple as a 'thank you' for a job well done, or recognising when someone has surpassed expectations on a task.



Culture & Engagement in the Fitout Sector

When asked to select the reasons they choose to work in the fitout sector respondents top 3 reasons cited were **salary/wages (54%)**, **interesting projects (47%)** & **relationships with colleagues (42%)**.

Interestingly, these are the same top factors cited for having a positive impact on individuals happiness in slightly different order & weighting.



When reviewing the reasons people choose to stay in fitout across different demographic there are significant differences in weighting:

- **Salary & Wages: Male: 61% | Female: 30%**
- **Relationships with colleagues: Age 55-64: 47% | Age 65-74: 30%**
- **Interesting Projects: Female: 59% | Male: 45%**

Suggestions for Businesses

Salary & Benefits is a topic that is often raised in The Happiness Survey. Across all of our company surveys conducted it averages **#3 on the list of highest motivators for employees** in businesses.

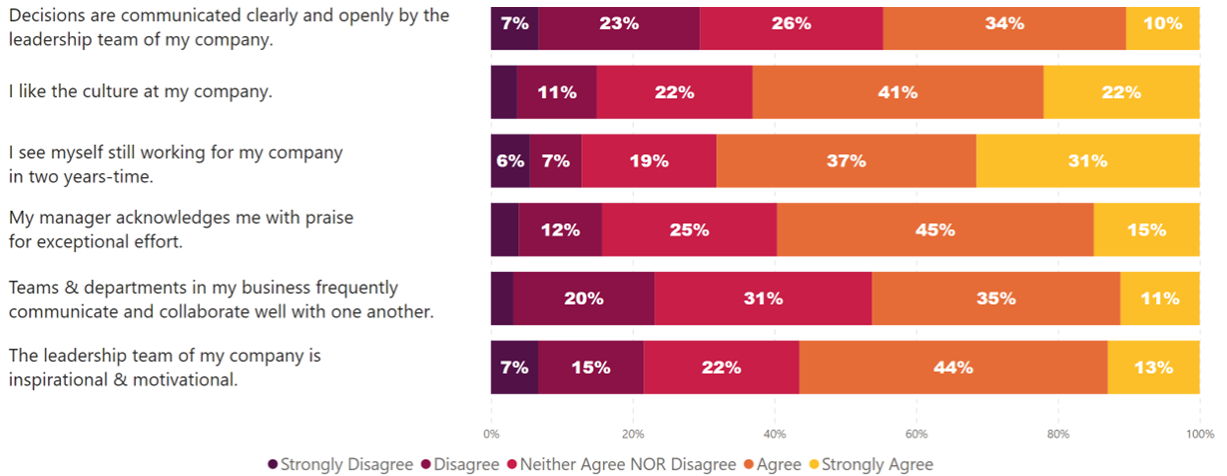
Fair and transparent pay is critical to engage and attract talent. Transparency around pay comes from having the right framework in place. Being able to reference a banding structure and making consistent decisions about all team members salaries helps mitigate unnecessary remuneration conversations.

Employees & contractors can benefit from knowing that this framework is benchmarked to the industry levels of pay, taking this off the table as an issue when it comes to what drives individual's happiness at work.



Company Culture & Engagement in Fitout

The data suggests a positive outlook on company culture within the fitout sector. **68%** of respondents still see themselves working at their company in two years time & **63%** agree with the statement ‘I like the culture at my company.’



Key Insights

- **57%** find their company's leadership team **inspirational and motivational**.
- **60%** receive praise from their manager for exceptional effort.
- **44%** agree that decisions are **communicated clearly and** openly by their company's leadership.
- **46%** believe that teams and departments within their company **communicate and collaborate well**.

Company vs Sector

The comparison reveals that while there are positive insights to both fitout sector culture and company culture, there are distinct areas where company culture is viewed more favorably, especially regarding praise from managers and enjoying company culture.

However, both show room for improvement in areas such as communication and appreciation, pointing to universal challenges within the fitout sector.

Tenure in Fitout/Construction

- **Under 1 year:** Highest agreement on inspirational leadership (**78%**)
- **1-2 years:** Highest agreement on acknowledgment by managers (**85%**)

Gender

- **Females:** Have higher agreement rates on positive company culture, particularly around company leadership being motivational (**64%**) and collaboration within teams (**64%**).

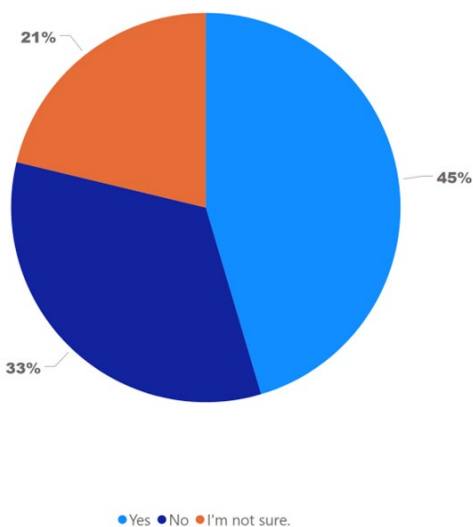
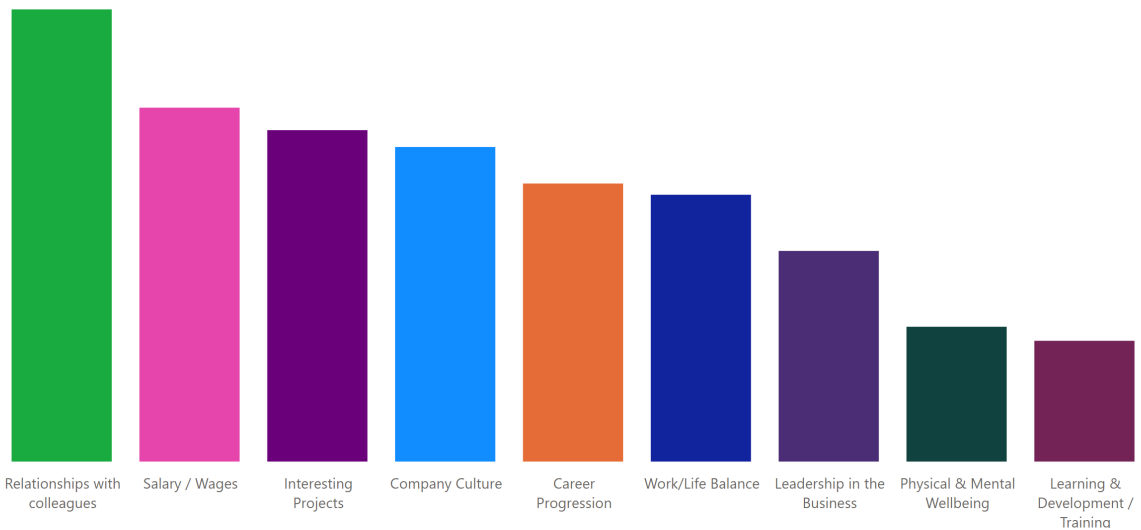
Discipline

- **Consultant:** Lower agreement on communication from leadership (**34%**).
- **Manufacturer:** Higher levels of agreement on collaboration in their company (**75%**).
- **Subcontractor:** Lower agreement on praise from their managers. (**42%**)



Company Culture & Engagement in Fitout

The top 3 reasons why people chose to work for their company were **relationships with colleagues (56%), salary/wages (44%) & interesting projects (41%)** . These are the same factors cited for creating happiness in fitout in a slightly different order & weighting.



Engagement Surveys

- **45%** of respondents agreed their company had carried out an engagement survey
- **33%** of respondents said their company had not gathered any feedback from employees
- **21%** said they were unsure if their company had carried out an engagement survey

Suggestions for Businesses

Engagement Surveys

Employee engagement surveys, like **The Happiness Survey** provide essential feedback and measure how motivated your employees are to do their best work.

Engagement surveys help businesses to identify their key strengths and celebrate them. They also help to identify areas of improvement that businesses need to work on, helping to increasing employee engagement across the team.

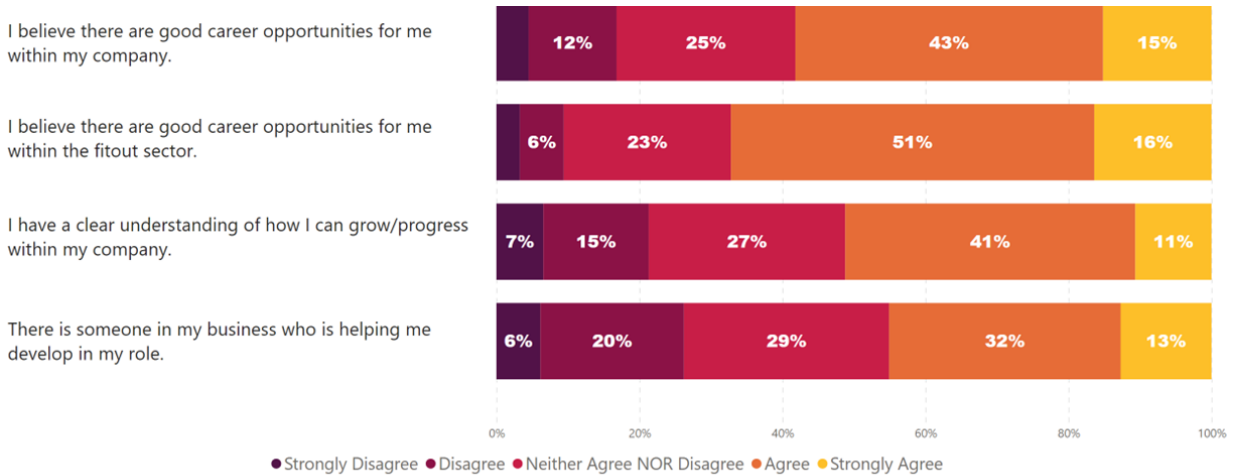
Communication & Collaboration

By addressing topics like communication & collaboration, businesses can strengthen employee engagement to help tackle challenges such as retention. **The Condor Collective** offers workshops on both communication & collaboration designed specifically for construction businesses.



Career Progression in Fitout

67% of respondents believe there are good career opportunities for them in the fitout sector, with lower agreement at 58% agreement on career development opportunities in their business.



Key Insights

- 51% have a clear understanding of how to progress in their company.
- 45% have someone in their business who is supporting their development.
- Career progression is the 5th highest motivator for people to stay with their current company (34%).

There is a correlation between perceiving good career opportunities at company level and respondents' development being supported by someone in the business.

This underscores the importance of mentorship, & guidance in enhancing employees' perceptions of their career prospects within businesses.

Gender

Both males and females perceive relatively similar levels of career opportunities and support for development.

Good Career Opportunities: Female 55% | Male 60%

Support for Development: Female 45% | Male 46%

Age

The data shows that younger individuals may see more opportunity for progression in their business (18-24 years: 84%). This underscores the importance of developing career development programs to improve engagement across all demographics in businesses.

Suggestions for Businesses

Growth of the business needs to translate down to an individual level. A career development path provides employees with an ongoing process to enhance their skills and knowledge that can lead to mastery of their current jobs, promotions or skills transfers to a different position.

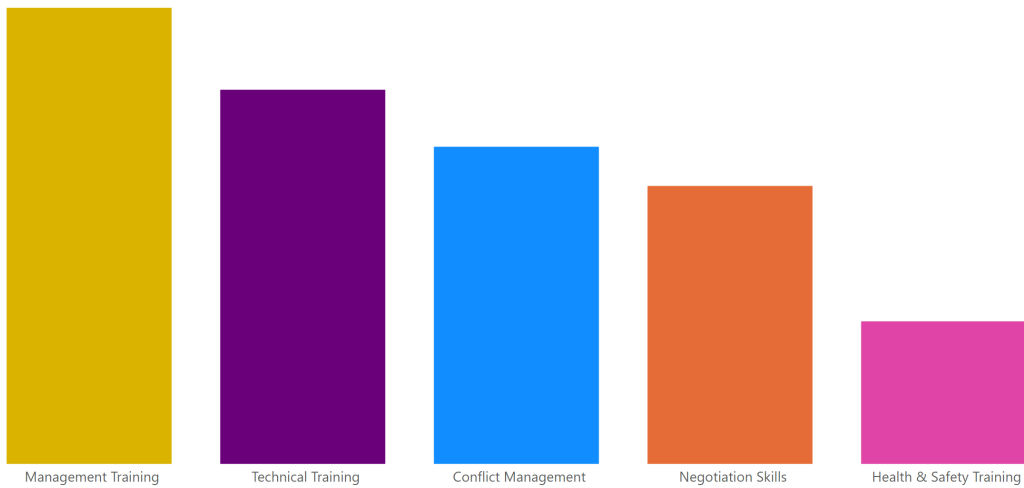
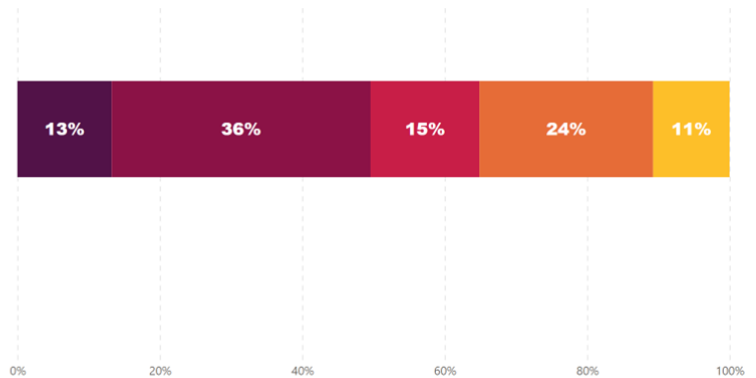
It is important to note, while many career paths lead to management positions, there is a need for other options for those who don't aspire to management. There is sometimes an assumption in businesses that there 'isn't enough room' for people to progress; this issue can be resolved with mastery career development paths as well as managerial.



Learning & Development in Fitout

The data indicates that a large percentage of respondents, **50%**, disagreed with having received training in the last year. In contrast, **35%** agreed that they had received training, and **15%** chose a neutral position on this question. This highlights an area for potential improvement in providing training, learning & development within the sector.

I have received technical, behavioural or management training in the last year.



Key Insights

When asked to list the most helpful training individuals would like to receive, **53%** of respondents requested management training, **43%** technical training, **37%** conflict management training.

Similar to career progression, there is a correlation in the dataset between having someone in the business supporting respondents' development and having received technical, behavioral, or management training in the last year.

Suggestions for Businesses

Learning programs can be an excellent asset for businesses and employees alike. Employees are more likely to stay with a business when they invest in their career development.

If a business identifies the skill gaps among teams, then delivers training to bridge those gaps, the business will increase productivity and in turn, profit.

Improving Engagement in the Fitout Sector

Engagement strategies are a great way for businesses in the fitout sector to improve employee engagement, leading to a more motivated, committed, satisfied team and higher people performance. These efforts not only enhance the internal culture & positively effect retention in your business, they also contribute to a happier workforce in the fitout sector.

Enhance Leadership & Managerial Support

Inspirational Leadership Development: Invest in leadership training programs to cultivate inspirational and motivational skills among leaders and managers.

Recognition Programs: Implement or enhance recognition programs that encourage managers to acknowledge exceptional efforts more frequently and visibly.

Foster a Collaborative Environment

Team-Building Initiatives: Organise regular team-building activities that promote collaboration and strengthen relationships across teams and departments.

Cross-Departmental Projects: Encourage projects that require cross-departmental collaboration to improve understanding and teamwork across different parts of the business.

Improve Communication

Clear Communication Channels: Establish clear and open channels of communication for decisions, updates, and feedback within the company.

Feedback Loops: Implement regular feedback loops where employees can share their insights and suggestions with the leadership team, ensuring their voices are heard and considered.

Invest in Employee Wellbeing

Well-being Programs: Implement well-being programs that address physical, mental, and emotional health, recognising the impact of well-being on overall engagement.

Cultivate a Culture of Appreciation & Recognition

Appreciation Programs: Develop programs that consistently recognise and appreciate employees', not just from a performance standpoint but also for their efforts in fostering a positive work environment.

Address Skills Shortage & Career Progression

Apprenticeship and Training Programs: Expand or introduce apprenticeship and graduate programs to address the skills shortage and attract young talent into the sector.

Career Development Plans: Create clear career development plans for employees, offering training, mentorship, and progression opportunities that align with individual career & business goals.

Tailor Strategies to Demographic Needs

Diverse Engagement Strategies: Recognise the diverse needs of employees based on demographics (age, gender, experience) and tailor engagement and development strategies to meet these varied needs effectively. Using tools, such as **The Happiness Survey**, is a great way to measure engagement across all demographics in your business.

Inclusive Culture: Work towards an inclusive culture that respects and values diversity, ensuring that all employees feel supported and valued regardless of their background.



Project Happiness: Prize Winner

As part of Project Happiness: Fitout, we ran a prize draw for participants to enter to win a £250 gift voucher as a thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. We asked the lucky winner, Keziah Campbell to share a few details of her experience working in the sector.



Name: Keziah Campbell

Role: Strategic Space Planner

Company: Workplace Creations

What do you love about working in fitout?

I love the fast-paced nature of the sector and the variety of projects.

What do you love about working at Workplace Creations?

I've met some great people and have made some good friends at Workplace Creations.

What is the best project you have ever worked on? And why?

16 Old Bailey. I was able to step more into the creative side and present some consortia ideas. It felt like a very collaborative project.

Why did you decide on a career in construction?

I always loved art. Design and interiors have always been a point of interest for me. So it naturally made sense to peruse the fitout sector as a career option.

What is one thing the fitout industry could do to make the sector more attractive to other young people?

I think we need more groundbreaking designs. Designs that use more intuitive technology, more relaxed work settings and branding.

What is your favourite building in the world & why?

My favourite building in the world is the Shard. I just love how elegant it looks amongst all the other skyscrapers.





Project Happiness

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