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recruitment



# GREAT BRANDS

power great people

We're uncovering what it really  
takes for a great brand to be  
somewhere great to work.



# WHAT MAKES A GREAT BRAND somewhere great to work?

The answer is not a simple one, and one that's changed drastically in the space of a few years.

Two years ago, flexible working was a rarity only a few start-ups would offer and benefits were things you could typically hold and see. The pandemic's toll on the mental health and expectations of UK employees disrupted the status quo.

At a time when almost all sectors and disciplines are experiencing talent shortages we wanted to know what UK employees believe are truly the things that make a great brand a great place to work. Pushing away from buzz words and short-lived work trends, this insight shows what your current and future employees are really looking for.

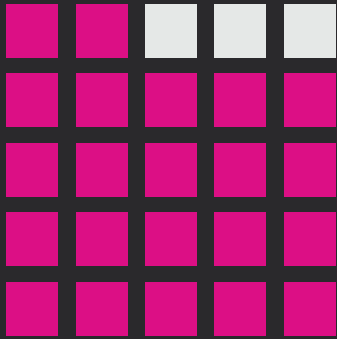
## METHODOLOGY:

Throughout Q4 2021 we surveyed 1,000 London-based professionals currently working within the creative industries. All survey responses were anonymous and we offered no incentive or reward for completed surveys.

# WHAT DOES A GREAT BRAND MEAN TO YOU?

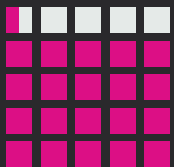
(0 not important - 5 very important)

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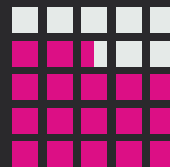
4.4

The company is focused on equality, diversity and inclusion.



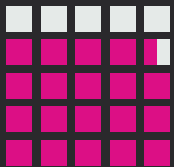
4.1

I share the same values as the leaders of the company



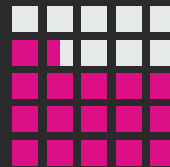
3.5

The company has sustainable products



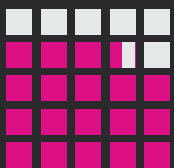
3.9

The company has a social purpose



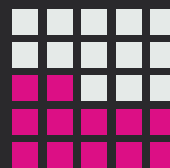
3.3

I could describe my colleagues as friends



3.7

I have a strong affiliation with the company's product



2.4

The company has a well known / strong social media presence



# SO WHAT DO people really want?

The biggest takeaway from our results is the importance of ethics to candidates. With a sharp focus on diversity, brands are being held accountable for their ethical practices and the sustainability of their products. The candidates of 2022 are looking for their workplace to lead by example, cultivating an inclusive, and supportive environment.

But don't think that great candidates will sacrifice their packages. Our respondents still rank pay/bonus as incredibly important. Having experienced a period of considerable uncertainty, candidates are being enticed by reliability, stability, and an increased salary.

rank the  
importance of...

**1st**

Pay / Bonus

Career Progression

**2nd**

**3rd**

Flexible Working

Benefits & Perks

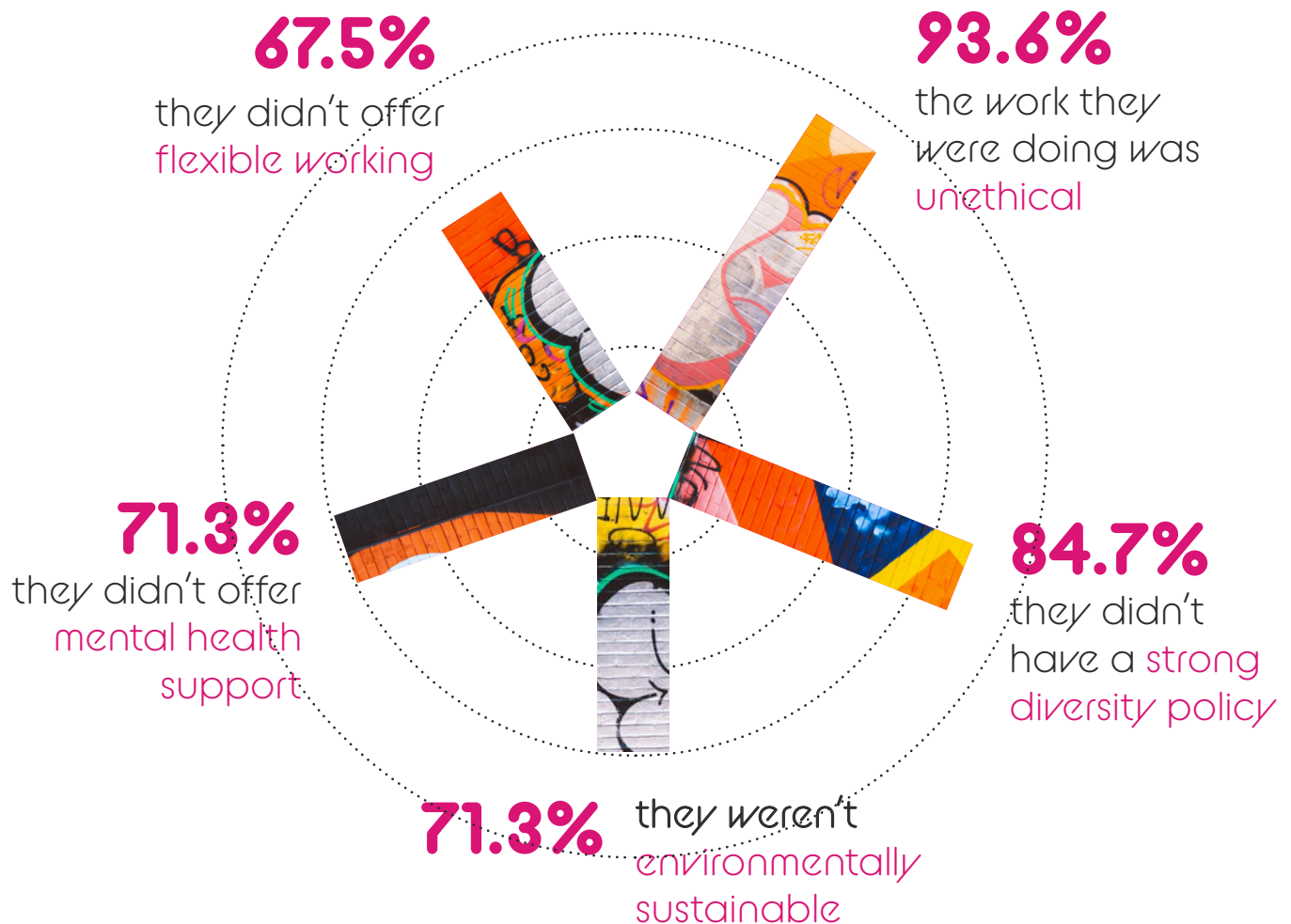
**4th**

**5th**

Equity / Share options

A GoodHire survey found that 61% of employees would take a pay cut to remain working remotely. In reality we are finding that good pay and flexible working are not mutually exclusive!

# our respondents **WOULDN'T WORK** FOR THEIR FAVOURITE BRAND if....



# if you could work for **ANY BRAND** who would it be and why?

At a time when candidates are in great demand and the competition for exceptional talent is intense - what do people think about your employer brand?

To be a great brand, it's not just about one initiative or message but don't underestimate the 'go-to-thing' that makes you truly memorable.



“ they are customer centric.



“ I really connect with the product.



“ a company that is pushing boundaries.



“ truly beautiful products.



“ iconic, timeless, incredibly relevant.



“ their advertising campaigns.



“ they just always seem to be relevant.



“ excellent far-reaching charity.



“ make a difference in the world.



“ ethical, sustainable, carbon neutral, animal friendly.



“ a diverse company and disruptor.



“ an impressive social conscience.



“ a clear purpose with a positive impact.



“ love the product's mission and vision.



“ they balance people, planet and profit.



“ for the working environment.



“ focused on sustainability.



“ because they expose truths.



“ two words... Richard Branson.



“ love their tone of voice and content on social media.



“ they're inventing a new world of fitness.



# & IS THERE a perfect environment?

Our research found that there was no preference on the size or age of a brand. Instead of being driven by stereotypical start-up or scale-up behaviours, candidates are focused on how a brand is structured and its culture.

In a clear shift from 24 months ago, the autonomy of working from home has resulted in our data showing a preference for a flat management structure. Remote working has meant that many of our respondents felt less micromanaged, and the increased focus on productivity has left them empowered.

Our respondents were also in favour of a collaborative and high-energy office - a trend that was amplified if the respondent favoured hybrid working. However often someone plans to be in a physical office in 2022 the need for in-person collaboration was listed as important to the success of their role.



When you think of  
your **IDEAL COMPANY**...

What kind of company is it?

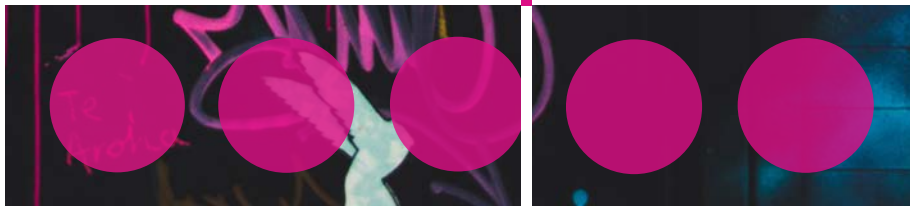
Start-up



Established  
Brand

What's the management structure like?

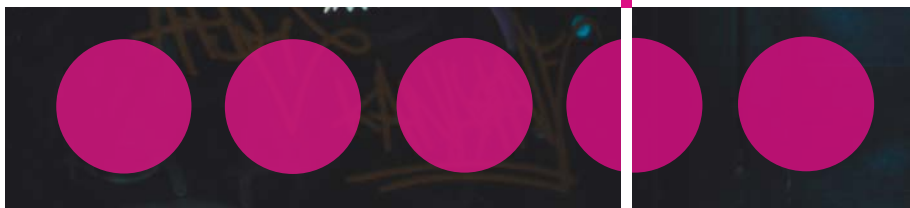
Hierarchical



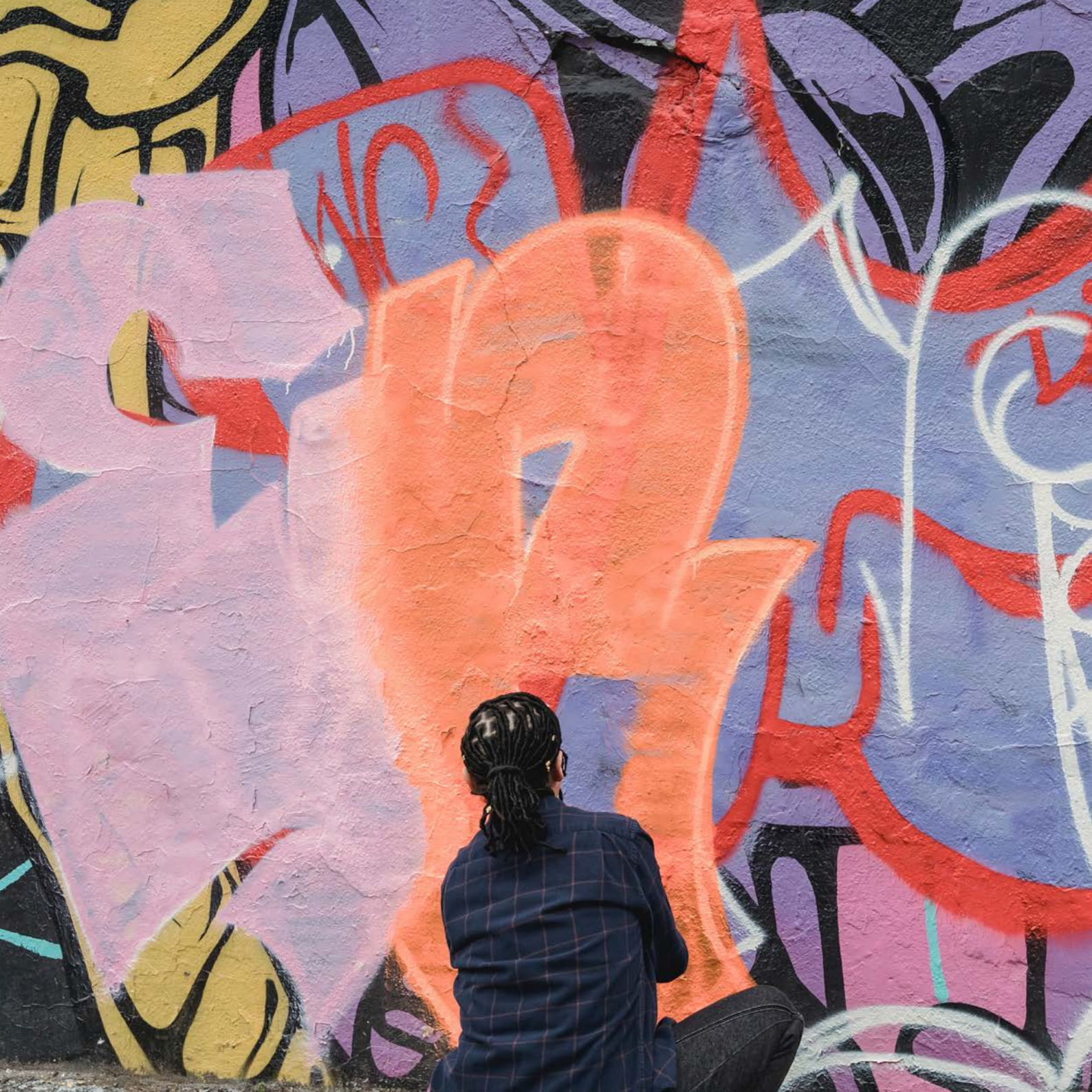
Flat

What's the office like?

Laid back  
/ quiet



High energy  
/ collaborative







# SO WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN for great brands?

Stating the obvious, great candidates have high expectations. We also know that there are many great brands that are able to demonstrate that they have the values, people strategy, policies, and support systems in place to provide an exceptional workplace. But it's not just about doing the right thing, it's also about making sure that you are shouting about it.

If you are currently faced with hiring challenges, are you representing your brand as somewhere desirable to work or maybe our data is making you question if you are doing enough?



who is responsible for  
talent attraction and  
your employer brand?



# YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND has never been so important

To hire great people you need to celebrate the exceptional and understand what makes the seat (or virtual seat) next to you a great place to be. From a job advert to day-to-day culture, is the perception of your future talent aligned to the reality?

One of the biggest challenges with supporting a great brand is that many candidates will already have pre-conceptions of your culture. As impressive as a careers site, content strategy or advertising package tells the story - it is usually in the shadows of your wider marketing strategy. Now is the time to take control of your employer brand!

If you have an exceptional people strategy, are you shouting from the rooftops and is everyone aligned? From your job adverts to how your people describe what makes your workplace exceptional, are you doing enough to encourage someone to leave the comfort of their current role?



think of your perfect candidate.  
Why would they leave their  
current role?



Pro

Con

We analysed **PUBLIC CANDIDATE FEEDBACK** for the most frequently used pros and cons when describing some of the UK's great brands.





## OUR RESEARCH SAYS... focus on individuality

Before you submit an offer, do you know what your perfect candidate really wants and can you provide it?

Our research found that 74% of candidates would be comfortable negotiating a job offer but are you able to personalise your benefits and remuneration? If you have asked a great candidate about their motivations and personal drivers during the interview process they will expect a package that reflects what you already know about them.

Unfortunately there really is no 'perfect' package. Based on personal circumstances and career priorities one candidate may be focused on a high basic salary, structured pay bands and a generous pension contribution. A second candidate, with a very similar profile, could prefer a lower salary alongside a competitive bonus scheme, supported by an interest free loan, healthcare and flexible personal benefits.

So what does your perfect candidates really want?

## IN CONCLUSION...

Great candidates are not only looking for brands they connect with, but brands that can provide what they need. The biggest learn from our research is that if your hiring managers are feeling restricted by rigid recruitment processes, one-size fits all employee benefits and don't truly believe your employer brand – your candidates will feel the same.

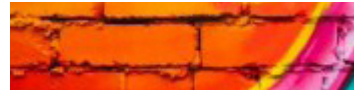
# How does an office culture influence EXPECTATIONS?

I prefer a  
**QUIET / LAID BACK OFFICE**

I prefer a  
**HIGH ENERGY OFFICE**

**3.6**

Company has a social purpose



**3.8**

**3.0**

Strong affiliation with company's product



**3.8**

**3.6**

Sharing same values as leaders of the company



**4.2**

**3.5**

Company has sustainable products



**3.5**

**2.1**

A big social media presence



**2.5**

**4.2**

Strong equality, diversity and inclusion policy



**4.5**

**0 - NOT IMPORTANT | 5 - VERY IMPORTANT**





# WHAT NEXT?

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We would love to discuss what our Great Brands research means to you and your organisation. If you would like to share your thoughts, need some additional context or salary benchmarking, or looking to enhance your employer brand you just need to ask!

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## About Handle

For the last 40 years we have been supporting the people that power the creative industries.

We can help you improve your talent processes, overcome people challenges, and predict what might happen next. We want to help creative, brand focused companies be the best they can be for their people.

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