

# Young Poles on the labor market

survey third edition - May 2022



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**PwC, Well.hr and Absolvent Consulting** has joined their forces for the third time to carry out a **Young Poles on the labor market** study. The last three years have confronted students and graduates with challenges that previous generations did not have to face – the Covid pandemic, the "new normality", the war in Ukraine. All those challenges changed the style of work and influenced the market and professional opportunities for young people.

Students and graduates try to find their place in an ever-changing and unpredictable world and start their career on their own terms.

**The purpose of the third edition of the study, was to yet again examine the students and graduates entering the market in order to check:**

- **how - taking the experiences from the past years into perspective**  
**- they assess their chances,**
- **what factors are important for them when choosing employment,**
- **how they check the credibility of the employer,**
- **what have changed in their attitudes and expectations during the recent years**

**and what does this mean for employers?**



Anthony Fomin, Unsplash





## Katarzyna Komorowska

PwC | Partner



Dynamically changing macroeconomic conditions and further difficulties such as rising inflation and wage pressures force entrepreneurs to respond to it in a decisive manner and change their employment model. At the same time, according to our research, young people entering the labor market are very optimistic. Although salary and benefits have already been very important factors directly influencing young employees' decisions, now they have become even more important. Their expectations fit into the current economic situation - in addition to increasing inflation and wage pressure, the cost of living also keeps growing.

Graduates also point out the need for a flexible work approach and meaningful duties among the important factors. This is a valuable tip for employers. It can inspire them to consider whether their employment model is too strict and doesn't fit the contemporary trends sought by employees. Of course, this is not the only tool that helps employers to keep up with the needs of the young talent. There are many more solutions - B2B, task-oriented work model, hybrid work, flexible benefit models, a shorter work week, or tax credit for creative employees.

ESG (Environment, Social, Governance) is a new and increasingly important trend. Employees, especially young ones, pay more and more attention to the ecological and social commitment of the employer. Therefore, it is worth to consider new elements of the EB strategy, such as the Equal Pay Certification supported by PwC which confirms equal pay for the employees.

# Main conclusions

- Young Poles evaluate their chances on the labor market with optimism. For the first time in three years, the majority of young people (64,2%) believe that their chances on the labor market have improved compared to the previous year.
- A positive assessment of the labor market translates into expectations towards employers. The median expected net remuneration increased to 4863 PLN (an increase of over 350 PLN compared to 2021).
- More than a half of young Poles (57%) declare that they consider high salary to be one of the key factors for choosing a job. It is an indicator of the professional success to almost 22% respondents.
- Benefits are also increasingly important for young people – 82% of respondents check the list of benefits before applying for the job advertisement.
- In addition to remuneration, the opportunity to gain experience, sense of meaning and flexibility are also very important to students and graduates.
- 24,9% of respondents believe that achieving professional success means combining work with their passion. For 15,8% of respondents success means having a sense of meaning at work.
- 65,5% of young people check company values before submitting their application. Young people are also looking for information about specific actions taken by organizations. Almost a half of respondents (49,9%) check the company's social engagement and its response to current events. Young people identify with such values as: the natural environment, entrepreneurship and diversity.
- Young people value their wellbeing very highly, especially their mental and social wellbeing. More than a half of them prefer work-life balance to high earnings. Good atmosphere at work, lack of conflicts and working with a supportive boss are also important to them.
- Flexible working hours and remote work is a "mandatory" benefit for 37,2% and 41,5% of respondents, respectively. Employers who want to stand out on the labor market should offer a shorter work week and additional days of paid leave to attract the young talent.
- The importance of online communication channels is growing – more and more students believe that a good employers have a career page and manage their profiles in social media efficiently.





# About the study

The study was carried out with the use of an online survey in March and April 2022, on a sample of 3207 respondents. The following analysis included the responses of people who were no older than 27 years (N=2023).



**63%**  
women



**37%**  
men

## Status:

- Students: 54%
- Graduates: 46%

## Respondents came from the following locations in Poland:

- Warszawa: 32%
- Kraków: 20%
- Poznań: 12%
- Katowice: 11%
- Wrocław: 10%
- Gdańsk: 8%
- Łódź: 7%

## Age:

- up to 20 years: 11,6%
- 21 - 24 years: 34,9%
- 25 - 26 years: 16,7%
- 27 years and older: 36,9%

## The pool of respondents include:

- 28,9% of students
- 42,5% of working students
- 24,0% of employees
- 4,6% of neither students or nor employees

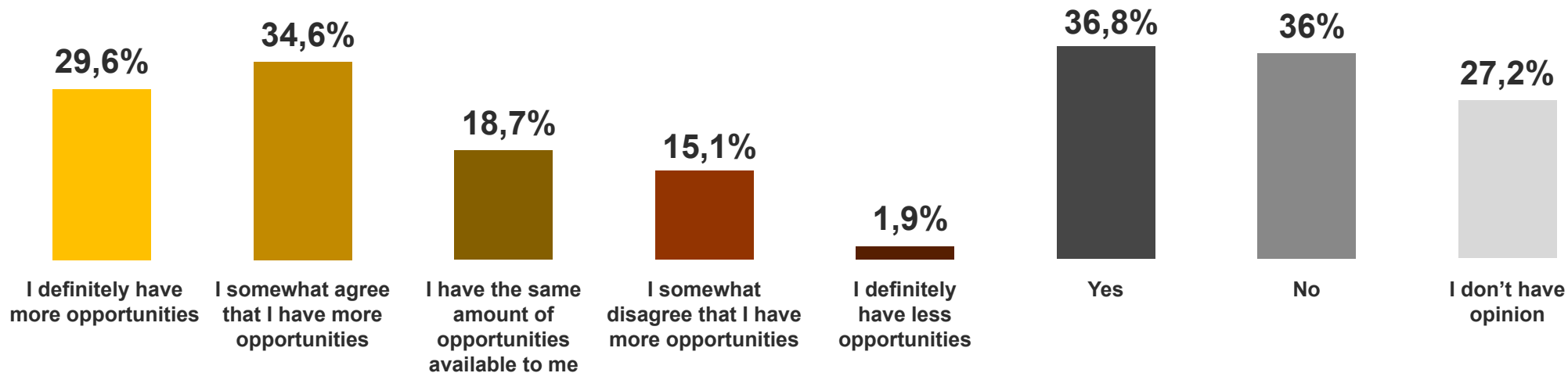
A young man with curly brown hair, wearing a black hoodie, stands in front of a modern glass building. He is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The background shows a city street with other buildings reflected in the glass. A red banner is overlaid on the lower left, and a yellow square pattern is on the right.

# Outlook on their chances on the labor market

Stefan Stefancik, Unsplash



# Opportunities on the labor market



## Impact of the geopolitical situation

- When asked whether the war in Ukraine affected their chances on the labor market, the respondents are divided. 37% of them agrees with that statement and almost the same number disagrees. 27% of students have no opinion on this matter.
- Graduates and students who have already taken up employment are more likely to claim that the war has no impact on their situation on the labor market.
- For the first time in 3 years, young people are optimistic about the future - 64,2% of them believe that their chances on the labor market have improved compared to the previous year. This outlook on the market situation is probably influenced by the economic recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic and a large number of offers addressed to students and graduates.
- 17% of young people think that their chances on the labor market have deteriorated, while 18,7% - that they are the same as a year ago.
- In comparison, in 2021 almost half of respondents (48,7%) estimated that due to the pandemic, their opportunities on the labor market changed for the worse.
- In particular, respondents who have already taken up some jobs are the ones who assess their chances on the labor market in a positive way.

# Which competences will be the most important on the labor market in the future according to young people?

Respondents claim that most important competences of the future include: openness and quick adaptation to change, combining various skills with each other, quick learning and IT skills. Those competences have not changed almost at all since 2021.

## What is more, the competences that young Poles considered to be their strengths in previous editions remained the same:

- 23,9% think that being a quick learner is one of their strengths (23,3% in 2021)
- 17,5% think they can combine different skills (17,5% in 2021)
- 10,2% say that openness to change and quick adaptation to new conditions are some of their advantages (12,4% in 2021)
- The percentage of respondents who consider IT and programming languages to be their strengths increased slightly compared to 2021 (5,6% compared to 4,9%).





A high-angle photograph of four young women sitting around a round glass coffee table in a modern living room. One woman is typing on a laptop, another is holding a smartphone, and the others are looking on and smiling. A small potted plant sits on the table. A red banner with white text is overlaid on the bottom left.

What is the most important  
for young Poles at work?

Meghan Lamle, Unsplash



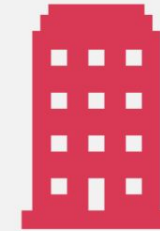
# Hybrid work model: learning and relationship building



**54,5%**  
Remote work



What do you  
choose?



**45,5%**  
On-site work



**28,9%**  
Interesting tasks



What do you  
choose?



**71,1%**  
Good atmosphere



**37,8%**  
Working in a young  
team



What do you  
choose?

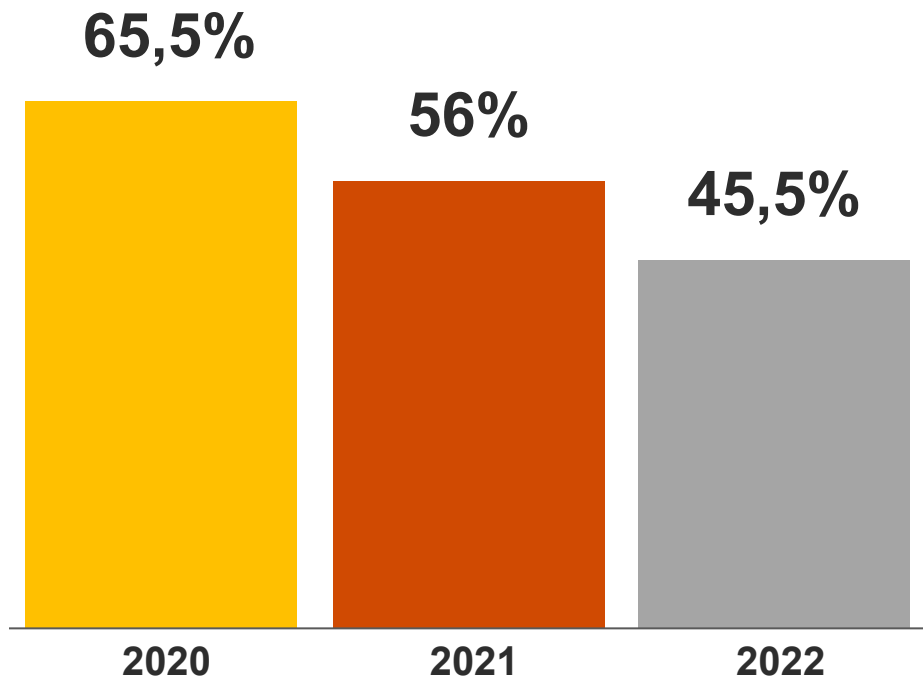


**62,2%**  
Opportunity to learn from  
experienced colleagues



# Working from the office full time is becoming a thing of the past.

- Since 2020, the percentage of young people who choose working from the office, despite having the option of remote work, has been systematically decreasing.
- Remote work and hybrid work fit better into the preferences of young Poles regarding the work flexibility.



Fewer and fewer  
young people  
choose to work  
from the office



# Trends: work flexibility

- 54,5% of young Poles prefer working remotely to working on-site.
- Lack of remote work and flexible working hours are unacceptable according to - respectively - 10,3% and 8,4% of respondents.
- The situation is similar when it comes to the long commute - 21% of young people would find it difficult to accept it.
- Flexible working hours and the possibility of remote work is a "mandatory" benefit for 37,2% and 41,5% of respondents, respectively.
- Flexible solutions support the maintenance of "work-life balance", and the balance between different spheres of life is one of the most important aspects of work for 36,5% of respondents.



# Choices of young Poles



**74,1%**  
Stable employment



What do you  
choose?



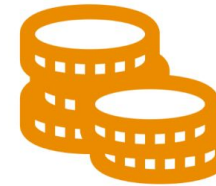
**25,9%**  
Self-employment



**52,8%**  
Work-life balance



What do you  
choose?



**47,2%**  
High income



**60,3%**  
Boss-authority figure



What do you  
choose?



**39,7%**  
Boss-friend

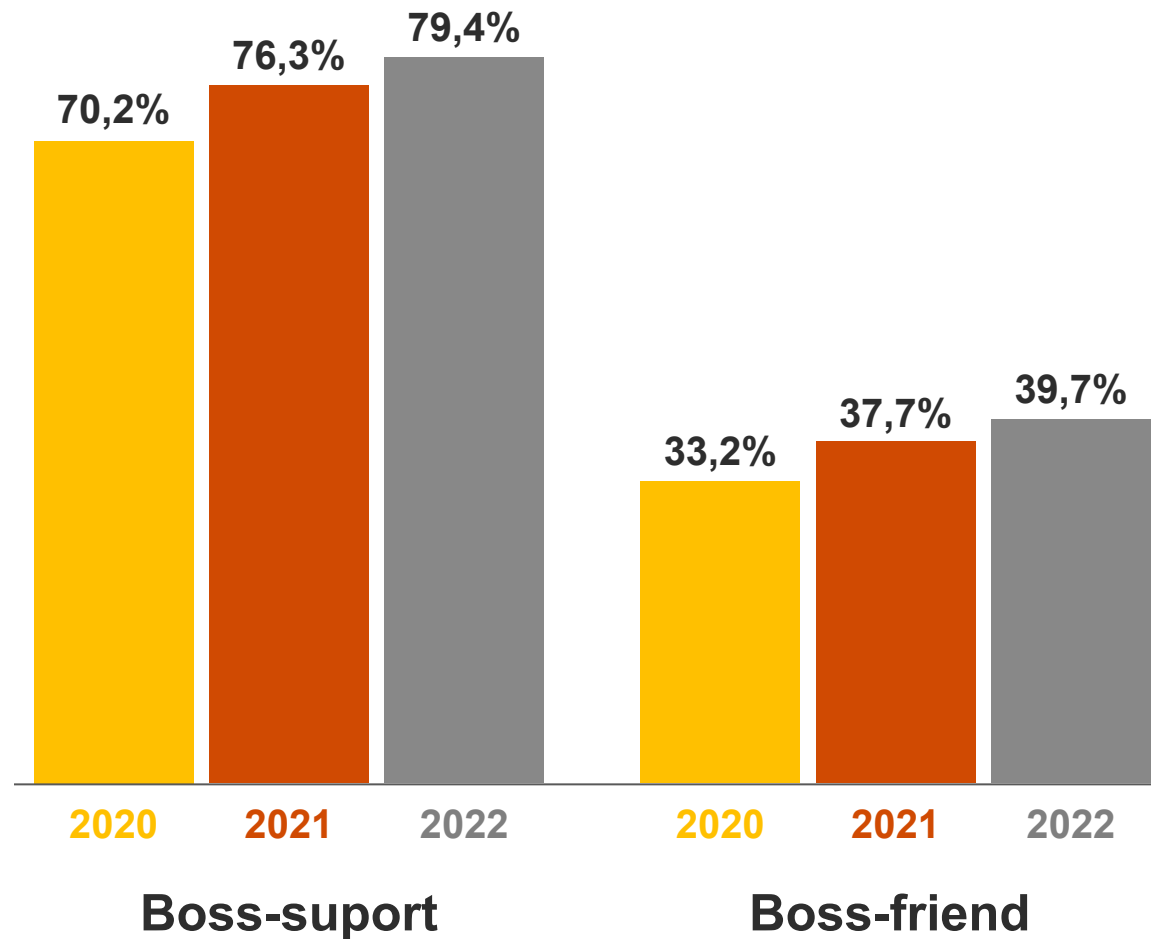


**31%** of respondents pointed out that introducing a shorter work week could really differentiate employers from the rest of the market.

**23%** of young Poles also consider additional days of paid leave as an outstanding benefit.



# Trends: relations with the boss



Since 2020, we have been observing an emerging trend in the area of work relations - with the boss and with the team.

- Although the respondents still prefer to have a boss who is their authority figure, the percentage of young people who prefer to work with the boss who is predominantly their colleague is systematically growing.
- There has also been an increase in the number of students who prefer a supportive boss rather than a challenging boss since 2020. This year, almost 80% of respondents would rather work for a supportive supervisor.
- The importance of team relationships is also growing – good atmosphere is more important than interesting tasks for over 70% of respondents.

# Work atmosphere

- Good atmosphere in the team is more important than interesting tasks for more than 70% of respondents
- Conflicts in the team are unacceptable for 35% of young people.
- It is also unacceptable for 45% of respondents to have a high level of stress at work.
- Young Poles increasingly value their mental and social wellbeing.
- They also care about their development
  - the lack of development opportunities would be unacceptable for 41% of students and graduates.







## Magdalena Pancewicz

**Well.hr co-founder, wellbeing and communication strategist.**

**Well.hr**

John M. Keynes, in his essay written in 1928 titled *Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren*, predicted that in 2028 we would work for only three hours a day. Although it still seems unlikely from the 2022 perspective, the idea of employee wellbeing (achieved, among others, by increasing the access to flexitime and flexplace work options) is very important to us today.

Young people realized during the pandemic that they can learn and work from anywhere. Moreover, they are convinced that the possibility of choosing the place and time of work has a positive impact on their productivity. They follow information about pilot solutions implemented in Poland and abroad, such as shorter work week or additional days off. They see the employers offering such benefits in a positive light.

At the same time, they value social wellbeing - the subsequent editions of the study have demonstrated that good relations with colleagues and a supportive boss, who can preferably be both a colleague and an authority figure, are becoming more and more important for them.

Employers who will provide a sense of freedom at work and work environments that favour good work relations will be most successful at attracting young talent from the labor market.

# What is the most important and the most difficult to accept at work?

What is most important at work according to you?(select the top 5 areas)	2020	2021	2022
High income	42.5%	46.9%	56.8%
Gaining professional experience	49.4%	49.8%	43.4%
Friendly atmosphere	50.0%	46.0%	42.5%
Feeling that your efforts at work are meaningful	43.2%	43.4%	40.3%
Flexible working hours	31.7%	30.9%	37.9%
Maintaining work-life balance	31.0%	33.6%	36.5%
Working remotely	22.9%	22.3%	32.8%
Work that is connected to your interests	36.4%	36.4%	31.0%
Stable and secure employment	35.9%	31.1%	26.8%
Interesting tasks	32.9%	30.0%	24.9%
Low stress levels	21.7%	19.1%	23.5%
Attractive training package	27.2%	22.9%	21.2%
Working with new technologies	15.9%	15.9%	15.4%
International environment	10.3%	15.0%	12.4%
Work that is matched to skills	16.7%	13.9%	13.7%
Ability to make your own independent decisions	9.4%	9.9%	9.5%
Quick promotion	5.7%	9.0%	9.5%
Teamwork	9.5%	10.6%	9.0%
Working in a socially responsible company	x	7.2%	5.9%
Working in a young team	5.8%	5.1%	5.8%
Polish capital	1.9%	1.1%	1.1%

What would you find difficult to accept at work?	2020	2021	2022
Earnings not matching expectations	51.7%	45.7%	45.0%
High level of stress	47.8%	42.5%	44.9%
No opportunities for development	53.1%	47.5%	41.0%
Conflicts within the team	49.4%	37.7%	34.7%
No opportunities for promotion	34.0%	29.2%	28.7%
Repeatable, boring tasks	29.3%	27.0%	25.5%
Long commute	24.6%	16.8%	21%
A manager that can't teach you anything	29.2%	15.7%	14.4%
Overtime work	13.8%	10.6%	11.3%
Lack of remote work	6.4%	5.3%	10.3%
Strict working hours	9.6%	6.7%	8.4%
Lack of independence	9.6%	4.8%	5.8%
Frequent business trips	6.4%	4.6%	4.5%
Fully remote work	x	6.0%	4.4%





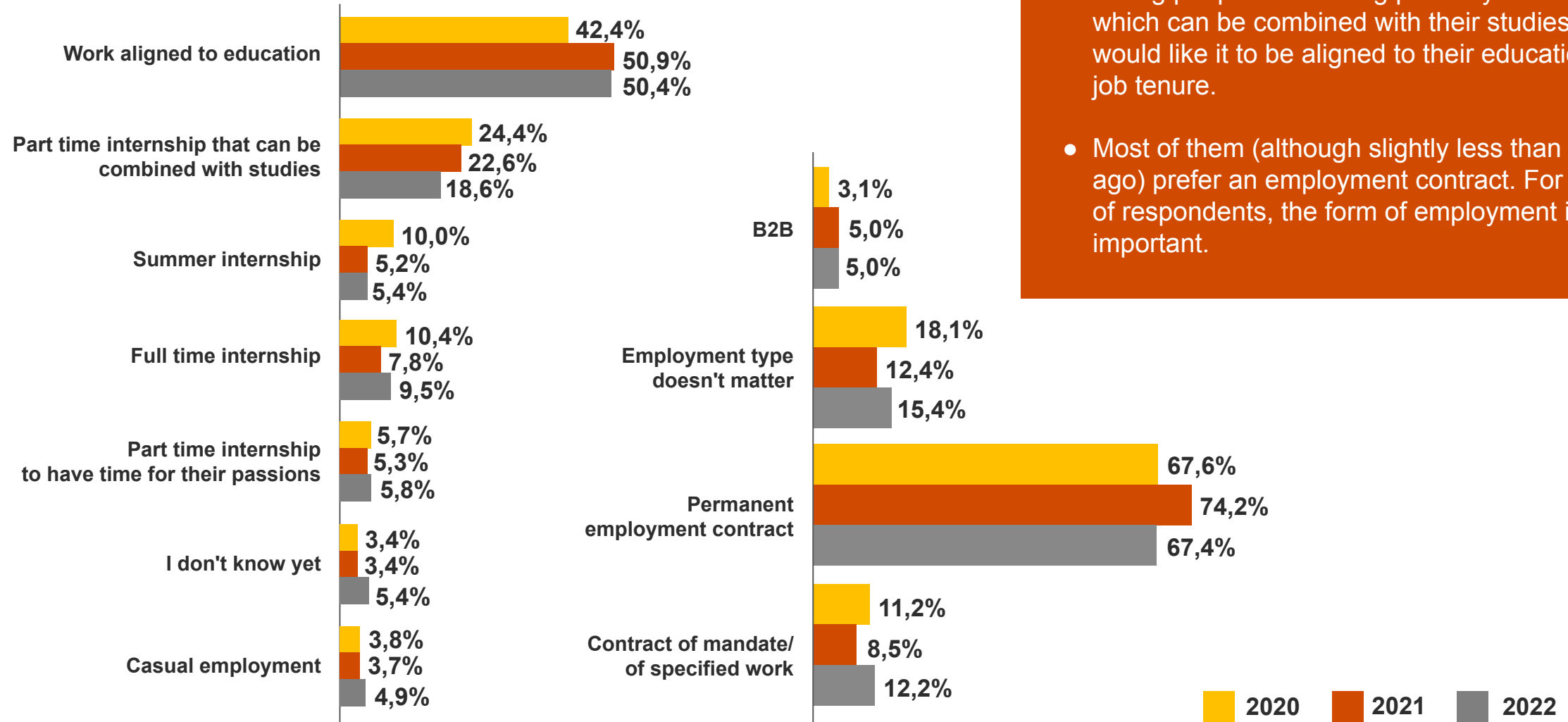
# Career aspiration



Jared Sutel, Unsplash



# What are the young people looking for on the labor market?



- Young people are looking primarily for work which can be combined with their studies. They would like it to be aligned to their education and job tenure.
- Most of them (although slightly less than a year ago) prefer an employment contract. For 15.4% of respondents, the form of employment is not important.

**24,9%** of respondents believe that achieving professional success means working in a job that they are passionate about.

For **15,8%** of respondents success means having a sense of meaning at work.

High earnings (**21,7%**) are also considered to be a proof of to the professional success.

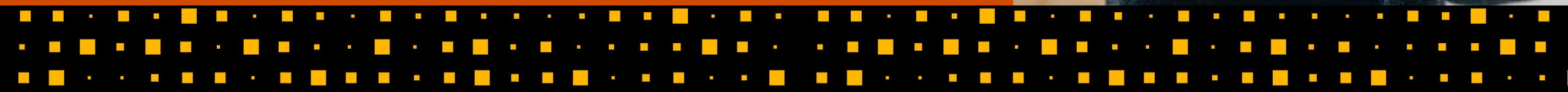
Success may also mean combining work with travelling (**9,6%**), becoming an expert (**8,2%**), or running your own company (**7,6%**).



# Professional aspirations of the young Poles - remuneration

The pandemic, the difficult economic situation and the migration crisis related to the war in Ukraine did not lower the wage aspirations of young Poles. On the contrary, their net salary expectations have somewhat increased.

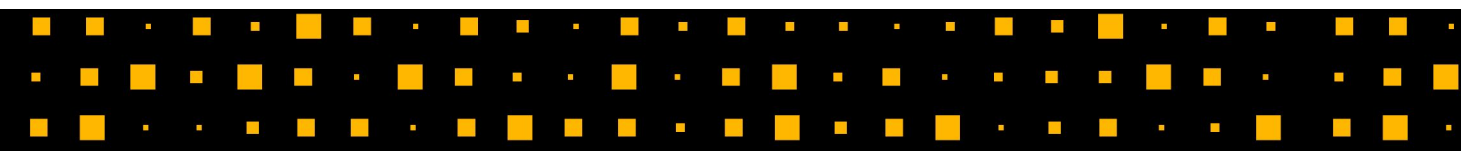
- The median expectations were around 4863 PLN net. Compared to 2021, expectations increased by over 350 PLN.
- Similarly to the previous years, men declared higher financial expectations.
- **When asked how long one should work in one company, young Poles say 6 years (5,96%).** Since the first edition of the survey in 2020, the declared time in one company has been reduced by one year.





# Trends: remuneration

- Since 2020, the percentage of respondents for whom high earnings are more important than the work-life balance has been systematically growing (although the work-life balance is still more important for more than a half of the young people).
- More than a half of young Poles (57%) declare that high salary is one of the key factors for them when it comes to work. It is almost 10% more than in 2021.
- 45% of students and graduates declared that an income which does not meet their expectations would not be acceptable.
- The expectations of young people are in line with the economic situation – inflation and the wage pressure, as well as the rising costs of living.





## Krzysztof Ciok

Head of Absolvent Consulting



Let's strike the phrase "competitive salary" from the vocabulary of HR and EB, HR and administration teams. A salary higher than the market average, just like a salary equal to the market average, with no indication of a specific amount or salary range is a misleading concept for the young generation. For Generation Z money is not and will never be a taboo subject. However, this often drags employers out of their comfort zone, affecting the employer-candidate relationship, wrongly so.

Now, looking at the main attributes identified by survey participants based on their key employment choices, from the perspective of a point-based rating system. If we assume that the financial aspect is number one with 10 points, and other issues such as working remotely, a close-knit team, and the opportunity to work with experienced experts have 8, 7, and 6 points respectively, then the collective sum of points for the lower places is obviously greater than the value of our "one".

"At the moment I am able to pay you this much...", "On Fridays we have introduced 'workation', where we work until 3 p.m.", "Your future boss invites you to a training day online this Thursday" - these are no longer myths, but examples of story doing, i.e. encouraging employees to participate in projects and be involved with the team.

The needs of young Poles at the beginning of their careers are so varied and individual. Therefore, we would like to encourage everyone to use this report and its findings to implement effective and understanding communication. In which talented individuals are treated as real partners. Let's refresh our storytelling style, making it flavourful. Let's understand how we create the best possible workplace every day, let's understand the process. Let's invite you to be part of its creation! To celebrate every "check" on the "to do" list. This is the current framework for an effective dialogue with young workforce participants in a world of changing realities.



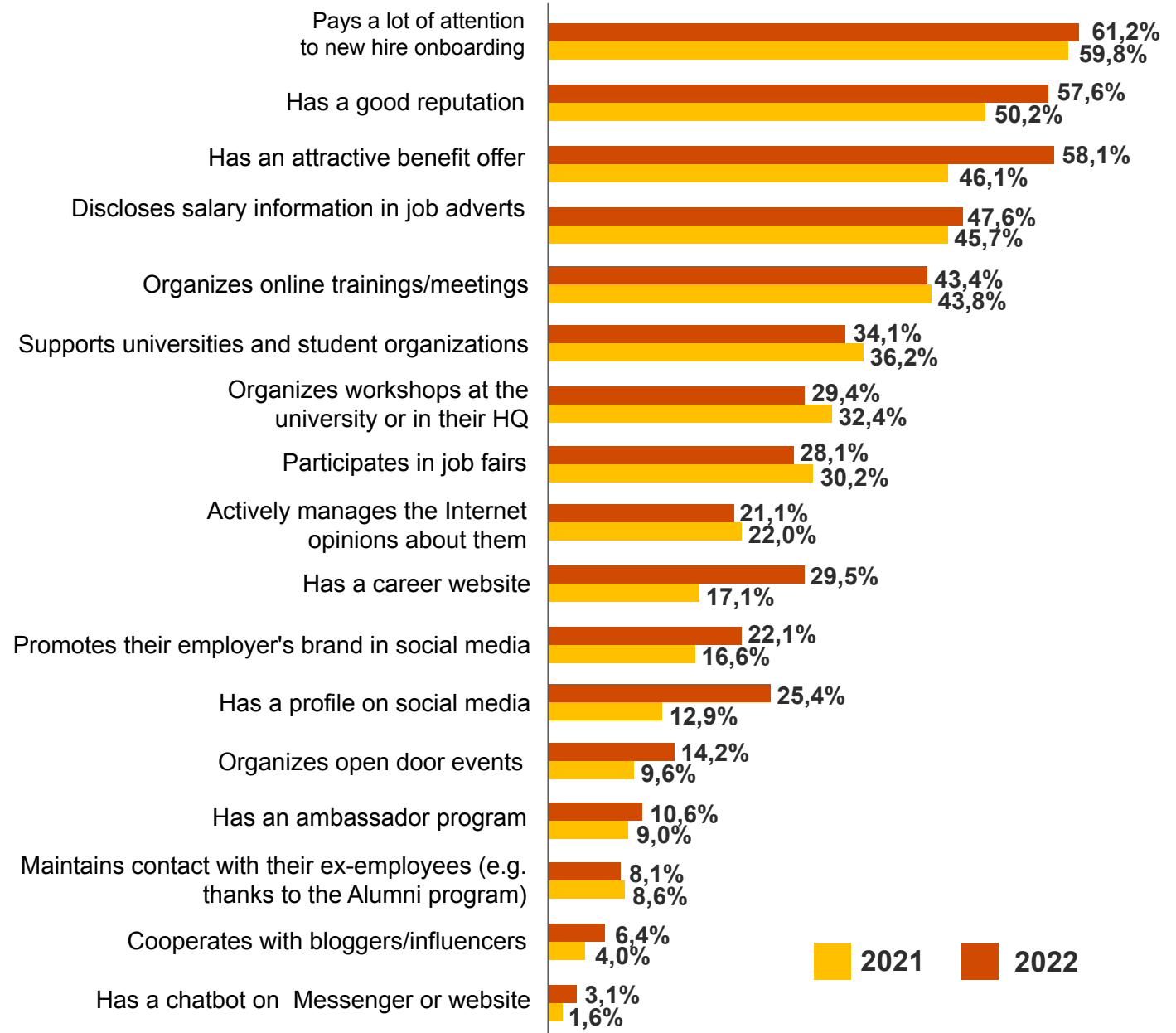
A woman with long, wavy red hair and bangs is smiling while looking down at a laptop. She is wearing a maroon V-neck t-shirt and has a colorful tattoo on her left arm. She is sitting at a table in a cafe or office setting. In the background, there are white chairs, a sewing machine, and a neon sign. A red banner is overlaid on the left side of the image.

In search of a  
good employer



# What does it mean to be a good employer?

- Before starting employment, young Poles thoroughly check the future employer – their friends' opinion about the company is still the most important factor for them. At the same time, the importance of online communication channels is growing - career page and well-managed profiles in social media. On the other hand, the importance of employers' activity at universities is decreasing.
- The fact that the company is a good employer is primarily confirmed by the good onboarding experience of the new employee.
- As in the previous years, transparent communication of remuneration and a wide range of benefits are also very important.
- A good employer actively tries to attract young talent - conducts trainings, workshops and online meetings, supports student organizations and is present during the job fairs.

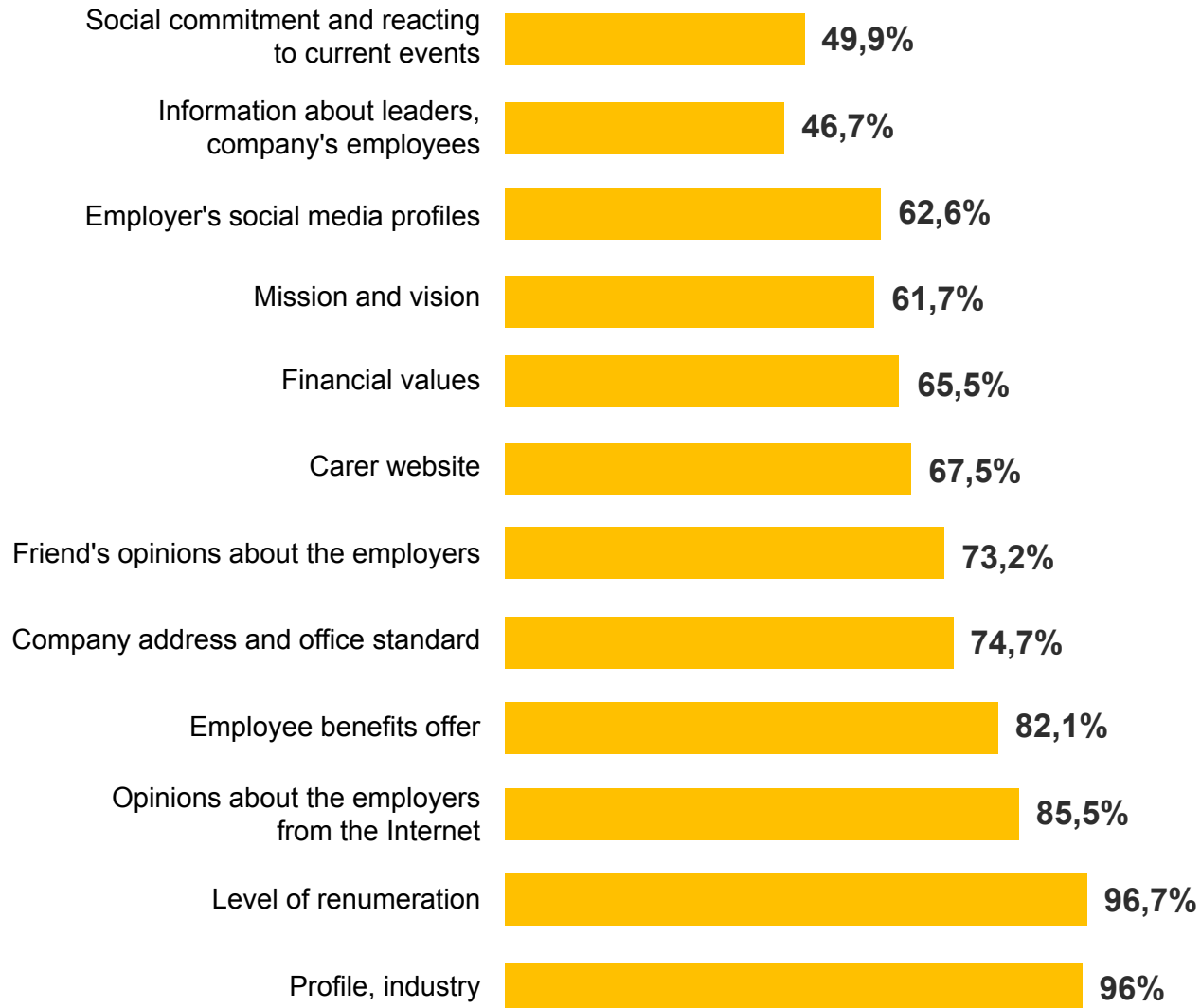


Non-wage benefits are increasingly important for young people.

For **58%** of young Poles, the rich offer of benefits proves that the company is a good employer. **82%** of respondents check benefits before they decide to submit an application.



# What grabs young talents' attention while looking for a job



- Before deciding to apply for a job, young people carefully check the future employer - career page, social media profiles, opinions on the Internet and those given by their friends, as well as the company addresses and office standard.
- More and more young people also check the level of remuneration (96,7%) and the benefits offer (82,1%).
- 65,5% of young people check the values declared by the organizations before applying. However, young people do not stop after checking company's declarations - they also look for information about actions taken by companies. In 2021, 68,9% of respondents were interested in the solutions introduced by the company during the pandemic\*. This year, 49.9% of them declared that they were checking the company's social engagement and looked at the way the company reacted to the current events\*.

\*questions asked only – in 2021 and 2022, respectively



# The most important benefits for the young people

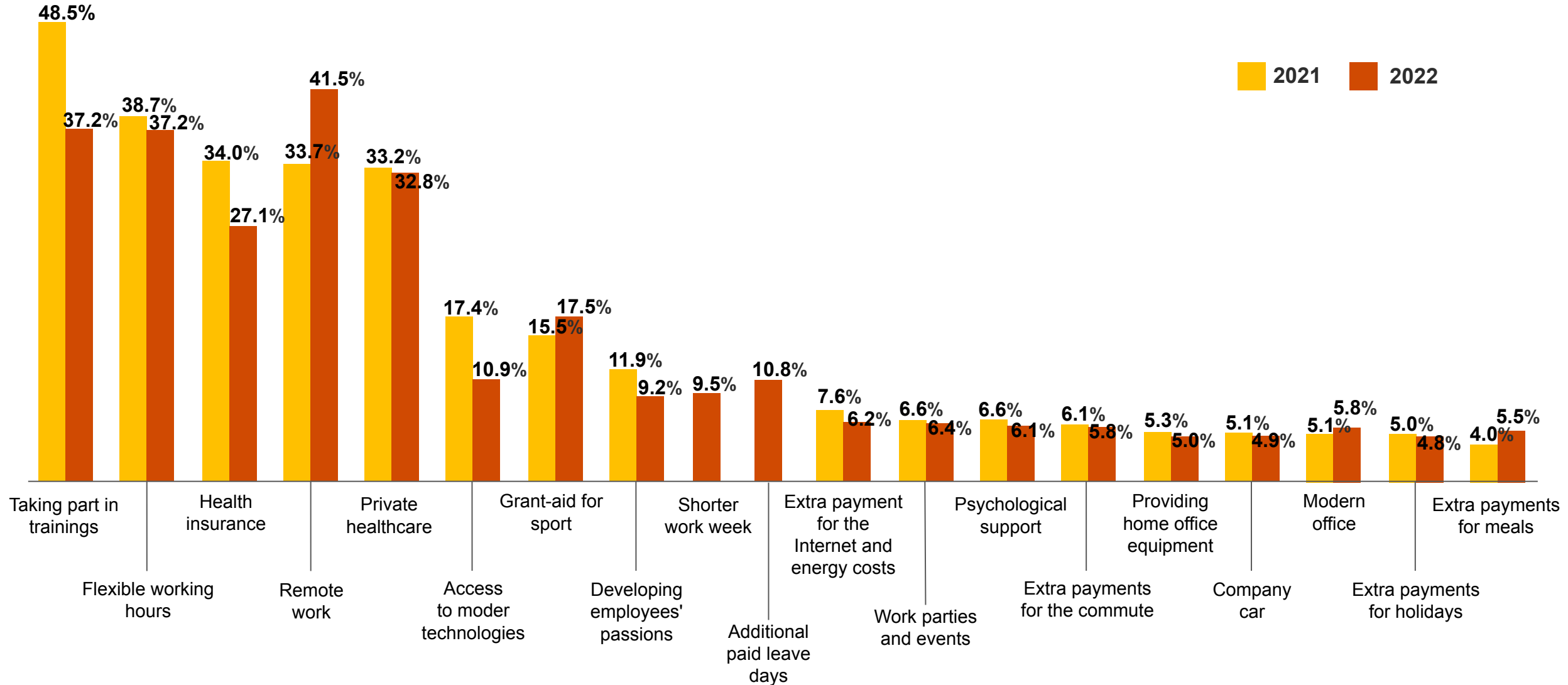
Similarly to the previous editions, non-wage benefits valued by the experienced employees were also important for the young people entering the labor market:

- Flexible working hours and remote work are considered to be the "mandatory" benefit for 37,2% and 41,5% of respondents, respectively.
- Access to training - is important for 37,2% of respondents.
- The most important benefits also include health insurance (27,1%) and private medical care (32,8%).
- Additional days of paid leave and a shorter work week are important for 10,8% and 9,5% of respondents, respectively.

## What makes the employer stand out?

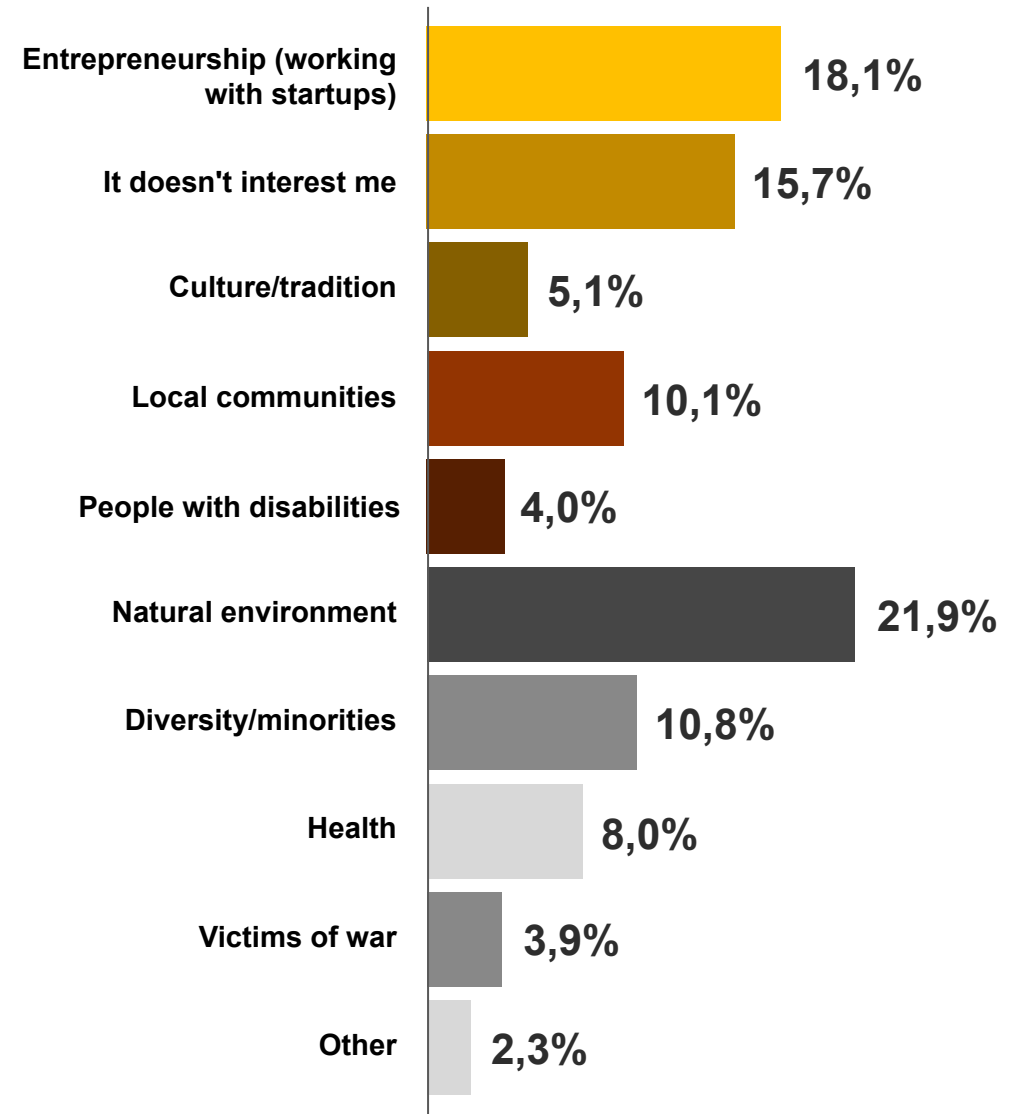
- According to 31,1% of respondents, introducing a **shorter work week really makes employers stand out on the market.**
- For 22,7%, it's rather **additional days of paid leave.**
- **18,7% of respondents say that they would draw their attention to the employers who would help them develop their passions.**

# The most important benefits for the young people



# What values should the employer support?

- 65,5% of young people check the company's values before submitting the application. Young people are also looking for information about specific actions taken by organizations.
- Nearly half of respondents (49,9%) check the social involvement of companies and their reactions to current events.
- Students and graduates identify themselves the most with such values as: **natural environment** , **entrepreneurship** and **diversity** (supporting minorities). 16% of respondents do not care about the initiatives supported by their potential employer.

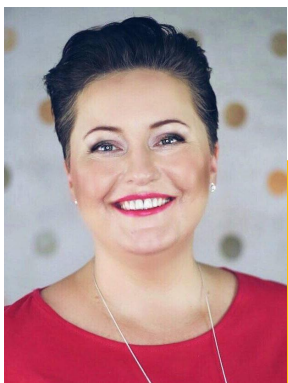




# Supporting Organizations



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