

BUILDING A DESTINATION WORKPLACE

- **Aryaman Dhawan**

HRM Committee Member and HR Leader at an ARC



Bombay Chamber
of Commerce & Industry



In today's exceptional business environment, we endeavour to create a destination workplace, that is, it is any organization that attracts, retains, and engages talent and it requires more than just offering competitive salaries or impressive perks. It sets the organization apart as being unique and special, and with a degree of excellence.

The destination workplace approach prioritizes the needs of employees with the needs of the organization and addresses the key aspects of what employees need to thrive:

			
Basic Needs	Success In Role	Growth Opportunities	Purpose and Fulfilment
Fair pay and safe, comfortable working conditions.	Feeling valued, empowered to make decisions, and receiving acknowledgment and recognition for their work.	Access to learning and development opportunities, whether through training, mentoring, or new challenges.	A sense of contributing to something bigger, knowing their work has real impact.

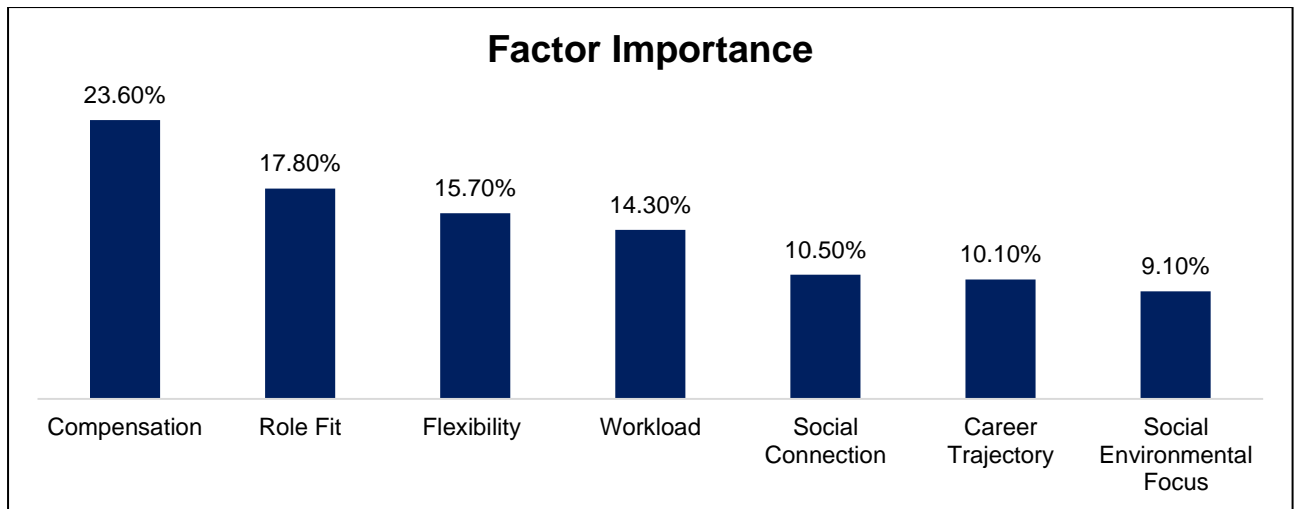
When organizations address these aspects, they differentiate themselves by creating a destination workplace where employees feel valued, fulfilled, and motivated. By meeting basic needs, fostering growth, and providing purpose, companies promote success. The Gartner Human Deal Framework (2023) emphasizes shifting from transactional to human-centric relationships, treating employees as individuals with unique aspirations. Both the framework and the destination workplace prioritize holistic well-being, recognizing that

thriving organizations go beyond traditional incentives to attract and engage talent.



*Source: Gartner Human Deal Framework

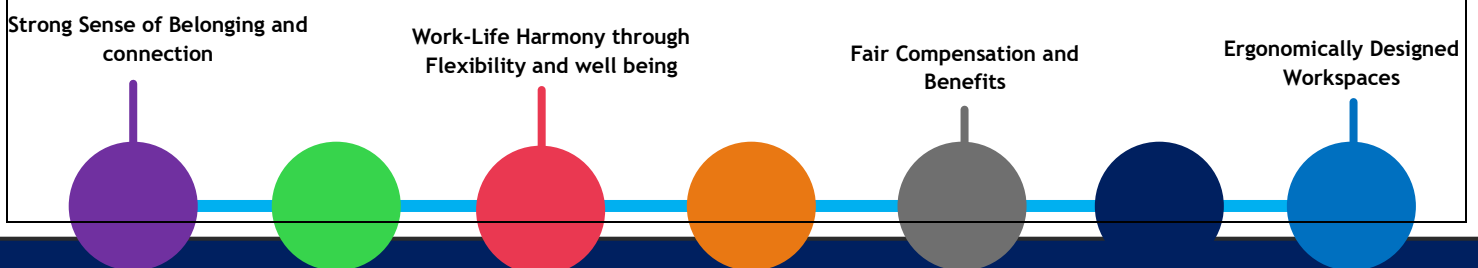
Qualtrics conducted a detailed survey on destination workplace (2022) and below are the main results of



*Source: Qualtrics Survey on destination workplace (2022)

This graph highlights seven key factors influencing employees' decisions to join or stay with an organization. Compensation (23.6%) leads, followed by role fit (17.8%) and flexibility (15.7%), emphasizing work alignment with skills and work-life balance. Workload (14.3%) impacts job satisfaction, while social connection (10.5%) and career trajectory (10.1%) stress the importance of relationships and growth. Social and environmental focus (9.1%) reflects employees' values. These factors align with Gartner's Human Deal Framework, which advocates a human-centric approach to the employee-employer relationship.

The Core elements of a Destination Workplace are:



Motivation through
engagement

Inclusive Work Environment

Open Communication and
Transparency

* Engagement Framework

1. Strong Sense of Belonging and Connection

A. Listening Culture: Employees want to feel that their voices create an environment where employees feel valued. When leadership actively listens and responds to concerns, it fosters a culture of trust and loyalty.



What can we do?

Regular Town halls, open forums, and one-on-one sessions for open communication. Leaders to act promptly on feedback to show impact within agreed timelines and build trust.



How can we do it?

- **Calendarize Sessions:** Schedule town halls and open forums in advance.
- **Publish Insights:** Share actionable feedback transparently.
- **Track Progress:** Monitor action insights against timelines.
- **Communicate Closures:** Update relevant audiences on resolved actions.

B. Teamwork and Peer Collaboration: Cross-functional collaboration helps break down departmental silos and fosters a sense of unity. Employees value teamwork and want to feel that their efforts contribute to a shared mission, which is further

strengthened by collaboration across various projects and initiatives.



What can we do?

Form Cross-Department Teams Create committees for projects like product feedback or process improvement come together to brainstorm on company-wide initiatives or problem-solve current challenges. Encourage Collaboration involve employees from diverse functions (e.g., marketing, sales, IT, finance). To break silos and foster understanding, relationships, and innovation through shared expertise.



How can we do it?

- Pilot Project: Launch a small-scale initiative to test cross-departmental collaboration.
- Identify Sponsor: Assign a department head to oversee milestones and accountability.
- Regular Check-Ins: Schedule progress meetings for alignment and transparency.
- Implement & Monitor: Execute recommendations and track results.
- Acknowledge Efforts: Celebrate team achievements and showcase outcomes to inspire future participation.



What can we do?

Implement peer mentorship/buddy programs to foster collaboration, bridge knowledge gaps, and strengthen internal networks. New hires can gain insights into the company's culture and operations.



How can we do it?

- **Buddy System:** Pair new employees with informal guides for support and orientation.
- **Time-Bound Program:** Set a clear duration, ideally 3 to 6 months.
- **Focused Support:** Help new hires adapt to the organization's culture and operations.

C. Social Connections Beyond Work: A destination workplace offers opportunities for employees to connect on a personal level outside of their work roles. Social events, wellness activities, off sites and gatherings help build a sense of community, which in turn strengthens workplace relationships.



What can we do?

Organize regular team-building activities, like workshops, offsites, and quarterly get-togethers, where employees from different departments collaborate on fun challenges. These events build trust, strengthen relationships, and improve collaboration.



How can we do it?

- Quarterly Get-Togethers: Block time in advance for informal social events with team-building challenges.
- Problem-Solving Workshops: Organize as needed for specific challenges or brainstorming sessions.
- Annual Offsites: Schedule before the financial year begins for big-picture thinking, relationship-building, and strategic planning.

2. Motivation through engagement

A. Purpose-Driven Work: Employees look for more than just salary, they want to feel that their work has meaning. Clarity between how individual roles tie into broader organizational goals helps employees find purpose in their tasks.



What can we do?

Regularly communicate the company's mission, vision, and values to align employees' personal values with organizational goals, fostering a deeper sense of belonging and purpose in their work.



How can we do it?

- **Calendarize Town Halls:** Schedule quarterly or annual town halls to reiterate the mission, vision, achievements, and future goals, fostering continuity and purpose.
- **Pre-FY Town Hall:** Hold a town hall before the new fiscal year to communicate organizational goals and engage employees through open Q&A sessions.
- **Customer Testimonials & Impact Metrics:** Share data on customer feedback and measurable impacts to highlight the organization's positive contributions.
- **Office Displays:** Use posters, banners, and digital screens to showcase the mission and values as a daily visual reminder.
- **Digital Integration:** Incorporate the mission and values into screensavers, internal platforms, and email signatures for constant reinforcement.



What can we do?

Ensure that each employee has a clear understanding of their role and how it fits into the larger organizational structure. When employees have clarity on how their work contributes to the bigger picture, they are more likely to feel that their efforts matter, fostering a stronger sense of purpose.



How can we do it?

- **Goal Alignment in Reviews:** Incorporate discussions during performance reviews about how individual goals align with organizational strategic objectives.
- **Explain the 'Why':** Train managers to articulate the significance of tasks and goals, linking them to broader company success.
- **Motivation Through Impact:** Highlight examples of how employees' contributions drive organizational achievements to reinforce their value.

B. Empowerment: Employees feel more motivated when they are empowered to take ownership of their work. Giving them the freedom to make decisions and solve problems fosters a sense of responsibility and pride.



What we can do?

Foster a culture of trust and accountability, where managers empower employees to make decisions and establish clear accountability systems. This ensures employees feel valued and confident in their contributions.



How can we do it?

- **Lead by Example:** Encourage senior leaders to model trust and accountability in their actions and decisions.
- **Policy Clarity:** Define approval and commercial accountability policies with role- and level-specific ceilings tailored to your industry.
- **Ownership Culture:** Empower employees to own their

responsibilities, providing them autonomy in their areas of expertise.

- Room for Learning: Accept mistakes as part of the growth process and create a safe environment for learning from them.
- Recognition: Celebrate and reward employees who exemplify trust, accountability, and ownership in their work.

C. Ongoing Learning and Development: A company that invests in professional development, mentorship, and training fosters employee engagement, loyalty, and long-term commitment, helping individuals grow their skills and align with the organization's future vision.



What can we do?

Develop tailored career development programs that map out potential career paths for employees, helping them understand how their roles can evolve within the organization.



How can we do it?

- Structured Career Paths: Define progression options, including vertical growth and lateral transitions.
- Skills Gap Analysis: Assess current competencies against higher role requirements to identify development areas.
- Targeted Development Programs: Offer tailored learning opportunities to bridge skill gaps.
- Career Check-Ins: Schedule regular discussions to align employee aspirations with organizational goals.
- Individual Development Plans (IDPs): Create personalized plans based on aspirations and performance.
- Encourage Lateral Movement: Support cross-departmental growth to enhance skills and organizational understanding.



What can we do?

Offer regular skill-building workshops, both technical and soft skills, in-person or online. These opportunities help employees stay current, feel more competent, and stay engaged in their career growth.



How can we do it?

- **Promote Lifelong Learning:** Encourage continuous improvement as a core cultural value.
- **Access to Learning Platforms:** Provide subscriptions to online learning resources.
- **Company-Sponsored Certifications:** Fund certifications aligned with roles and goals.
- **Expert-Led Sessions:** Organize workshops with internal or external experts.
- **Learning Budgets:** Allocate annual budgets for field-specific courses.
- **Dedicated Learning Time:** Allow work hours for webinars or self-paced learning.
- **Recognition of Learning Achievements:** Celebrate completed courses or certifications to inspire others.

D. Rewards & Recognition: Employees appreciate being recognized for their hard work. Reward and recognition programs for recognizing outstanding contributions creates a sense of accomplishment and motivates employees to continue to strive for best.



What can we do?

Create recognition programs that highlight contributions aligned with the company's mission, such as awards for advancing sustainability goals or improving customer satisfaction and TAT. This reinforces the value of meaningful work and motivates others to stay focused.

How can we do it?



- Align with Mission: Ensure awards reflect the company's mission and values.
- Award Categories: Design categories based on key impact areas (e.g., innovation, leadership).
- Clear Criteria: Set measurable criteria for fairness and transparency.
- Structured Process: Implement a regular award cycle with clear timelines.
- Selection Committee: Form a committee for unbiased evaluations.
- Public Recognition: Celebrate winners through events and communication channels.
- Meaningful Rewards: Offer tangible rewards like bonuses, certificates, or experiences.

3. Work-Life Harmony through Flexibility and well being

A. Flexibility as a Priority: Today's workforce places enormous value on flexibility. Whether it's the option to work remotely, flexi working hours, or take breaks when needed, employees want the freedom to manage their personal and professional lives resulting in better work life balance.



What we can do

Offering flexible hours, remote work, or compressed workweeks helps employees balance work with personal life. "Core hours" for meetings allow employees to adjust the rest of their schedules for personal commitments. This reduces stress, prevents burnout, and fosters a healthier work culture.



How can we do?

- A clear leave policy promotes work-life balance and employee well-being.
- Includes PTO for vacations, sick days, mental health days, and flexible leave options.
- Ensures fairness and equal access to benefits, reducing confusion and conflicts.
- Fosters trust and makes employees feel valued and supported.
- Contributes to a positive and engaged workplace culture.

- **Support for well-being** : More than ever, employees expect workplaces to support their mental and emotional well-being.



Recommended Action:

Offering days off for rest and recharge, access to counseling services, and promoting a culture of openness around mental health challenges helps employees feel supported. When employees feel that their company genuinely cares about their well-being, they are more likely to stay engaged and loyal.

4. Inclusive Work Environment

A. Diversity and Inclusion: Employees want to work in an environment that celebrates diversity and ensures inclusion. A company that promotes diversity and inclusion creates a culture where every employee feels valued and fosters belonging and collaboration across all levels.



What we can do?

Create Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) around shared interests like diversity, well-being, or hobbies. These groups provide a space for collaboration, idea-sharing, and support, with leadership attending to gain insights. ERGs promote peer collaboration, empower employees, and increase engagement in organizational matters.



How can we do it?

- Identify Relevant Topics: Create ERGs around meaningful topics like D&I, well-being, gender equity, parenting, or hobbies.
- Leadership Champions: Assign a leadership champion to provide strategic support and ensure ideas reach leadership.
- Internal Promotion: Promote ERGs through emails, newsletters, and intranet to encourage participation.
- Regular Updates to Leadership: ERGs should present updates on activities and recommendations to leadership.
- Monitor Impact: Track participation and assess the impact on employee engagement.
- Celebrate Success: Recognize ERG achievements in newsletters,

town halls, or company events.

B. Empowering and Collaborative Culture: The best workplaces promote continuous improvement by encouraging employees to share ideas, collaborate, and take risks without fear of judgment. They foster open communication, view failure as part of innovation, and support creativity and problem-solving. This builds trust, psychological safety, and strengthens organizational culture, driving ongoing innovation and growth.



What we can do?

To foster empowerment and collaboration, organizations should embrace the idea, "It's OK to fail, but we tried." Create a safe space for employees to take risks and experiment without fear of judgment. For example, hosting "Innovation Week" or "Innovation Labs" encourages teams to work on creative projects and share their outcomes. Post-project debriefs can celebrate successes, lessons learned, and areas for improvement, reinforcing a culture of growth and learning.



How can we do it?

- **Innovation Week/Innovation Labs:** Organize an "Innovation Week" where teams work on creative, out-of-the-box projects and share their results (successes and failures) with the organization.
- **Leadership Involvement:** Have the senior-most team members lead these initiatives, encouraging ownership and accountability.
- **Post-Project Debriefs:** Host debrief sessions to celebrate what worked, discuss what didn't, and highlight valuable lessons learned to foster a culture of continuous improvement.

5. Fair Compensation and Benefits

A. Fair Compensation Packages & Tailored Benefits: While fair pay is essential, employees are also looking for comprehensive benefits package that includes health insurance, retirement plans, mental health support, and wellness initiatives. Personalizing benefits to the needs of the workforce can set a company apart.



What we can do?

A robust benefits package might include health insurance, retirement plans, mental health support, paid time off, wellness programs, sabbaticals can significantly enhance the employee experience and meet the diverse needs of the workforce. Offering a well-rounded compensation package that covers health, financial, and emotional well-being.



How can we do it?

- **Comprehensive Health Insurance:** Offer a competitive plan covering medical, dental, and vision care for employees and their families, including parents.
- **Hospital Partnerships:** Partner with reputed hospitals for priority services like check-ups and appointments.
- **Mental Health Resources:** Provide access to counselling services and Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) for mental well-being.
- **Wellness Programs:** Implement initiatives like gym memberships, fitness class discounts, on-site activities (yoga, meditation), and health screenings.

6. Open Communication and Transparency

A. Regular and Honest Communication: Employees want to feel informed and connected to the larger organizational vision. Clear and frequent communication from leadership about the company's goals, challenges, and future direction builds trust and aligns employees with the company's objectives. Transparency at all levels of the organization fosters a sense of security and partnership.



What we can do?

Schedule virtual or in-person town hall meetings where the leadership team, including the CEO and senior executives, discuss the company's performance, vision, challenges, and strategic direction. This gives employees a chance to hear directly from leadership and ask questions in real time.



How can we do it?

- **Town Halls & Updates:** Communicate significant organizational changes (new leadership, restructuring, strategy shifts) through town halls and emails to clarify their impact on employees.
- **Transparency:** Be open about the reasons behind changes and their potential benefits for the company, reducing uncertainty and helping employees stay focused.



What we can do?

Create short, leadership updates (e.g., via email or internal portal posts or podcasts) that provide a high-level overview of key decisions, company achievements, and any upcoming changes. Transparency around challenges can help employees feel they are trusted partners in the company's journey.



How can we do it?

- Schedule regular meetings (monthly or weekly) on a consistent day (e.g., first Friday of the month) to help employees plan ahead.
- Encourage leaders to spend time in different departments for informal conversations.
- **Floor Presence:** Encourage leaders to spend time in different departments to foster open, informal conversations.
- **Virtual Open-Door Sessions:** For remote/hybrid teams, host virtual sessions via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Meet

for easy participation.

B. Feedforward Culture: Feedforward plays a crucial role in fostering a positive development environment. Unlike traditional feedback, which focuses on past performance, feedforward is future-oriented and provides suggestions for improvement moving forward. This approach encourages employees to focus on what can be done better in the future, rather than dwelling on past mistakes.



What can we do?

Feedforward Culture Sessions: Instead of traditional performance reviews, introduce feedforward sessions where managers focus on future-oriented advice for employee development. These sessions could be part of a quarterly or bi-annual review process, with employees setting goals based on feedforward input.



How can we do it?

- **Train Managers:** Encourage open, supportive conversations with constructive feedforward.
- **Active Listening & Empathy:** Foster attentive listening and empathetic responses.
- **Strengths-Based Feedback:** Focus on leveraging employees' strengths for future success.
- **Constructive Feedforward:** Provide future-oriented guidance rather than focusing on past mistakes.
- **Non-Judgmental Communication:** Create a safe, open environment with supportive language.
- **Growth Mindset:** Promote challenges as opportunities for learning and

development.

- 7. Ergonomically Designed Workspaces:** Employees want to work in environments that prioritize their physical health and comfort. Ergonomics play a crucial role in ensuring that the workspace supports the well-being of employees, reducing fatigue, and preventing long-term injuries.



What we can do?

Offering standing desks, lumbar support chairs, adjustable monitors, and ergonomic accessories improves comfort, productivity, and physical health. An ergonomic workspace reduces fatigue, boosts job satisfaction, and decreases stress and burnout. This fosters higher engagement, lower absenteeism, and improved morale, showing the company's commitment to employee well-being.



How can we do it?

- **Ergonomic Assessment:** Conduct an assessment of the current office setup to identify areas causing discomfort or strain, and gather employee feedback on specific needs through surveys.
- **Lumbar Support Chairs:** Invest in high-quality, ergonomically designed chairs with lumbar support to reduce lower back pain and promote proper posture.
- **Ergonomic Accessories:** Offer accessories such as ergonomic monitor, keyboards, footrests, and wrist supports to improve comfort and prevent repetitive strain injuries like carpal tunnel syndrome.
- **Ongoing Feedback:** Regularly solicit feedback on the effectiveness of ergonomic adjustments and make further improvements as needed.

Creating a destination workplace is not just a strategy for attracting talent it's a sustainable approach to building a high-performing, loyal, and motivated workforce. Employees who feel valued, supported, and connected to their work are more engaged, productive, and committed to the organization's success. By addressing the full spectrum of employee needs-survival, success, growth, and fulfilment we can create a workplace.

About Bombay Chamber

The Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry is India's premier chamber of commerce and Industry located in Mumbai, which is the country's industrial, financial and commercial capital. Established in 1836, it is the oldest Chamber in the nation and has served trade and industry through 189 years of continuous service. It is registered under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013 (Section 25 of The Companies Act, 1956), a non-profit organisation.

Not only is the Chamber known for its longevity, but also for its impeccable lineage. The Chamber plays an important role in promoting the city and the region as a trade, commerce, and industry hub.

The Human Resource Management (HRM) Committee of the Bombay Chamber comprises HR experts from its member companies. As an initiative to serve its MSME members the HRM Committee has launched this booklet. We hope that you will benefit from this booklet.

Disclaimer: "The views and opinions expressed in this communication are solely those of the author/speaker and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of their organisation"

© [2025] Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

All rights reserved. No part of this booklet may be copied, reproduced, or circulated without prior written consent of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry.