

People Centric Finance is the Differentiator

September 15, 2026

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People-Centric Finance is the Differentiator

Why People Should be Prioritized Over the Next Decade for the Next Generation and Talent Succession

Written by

Bob Mims

CPA





About the Author



Bob Mims, CPA, is an entrepreneur and accounting/management executive based in Memphis, TN. He has served as a CFO and CPO across various industries in the role of planning, modeling and accounting capacities. Bob has had the privilege of serving as chair on an AICPA committee and on two FASB advisory committees. During his ten years with the accounting firm KPMG, he was selected as national instructor of the year on three occasions.

Bob graduated from the University of Mississippi and enjoys outdoor sports with his wife, 5 children, 2 service dogs, and 2 cats who think they are dogs.

bob@TheKnowledgeInstitute.com



What Are We Doing Today?

- Perception of CFOs and people
- Risks on people and retention
- Current trends to know
- Integrating people into strategy and daily work



Big Picture of Things

Number of Miss Universe Titles Won



Earth: 71



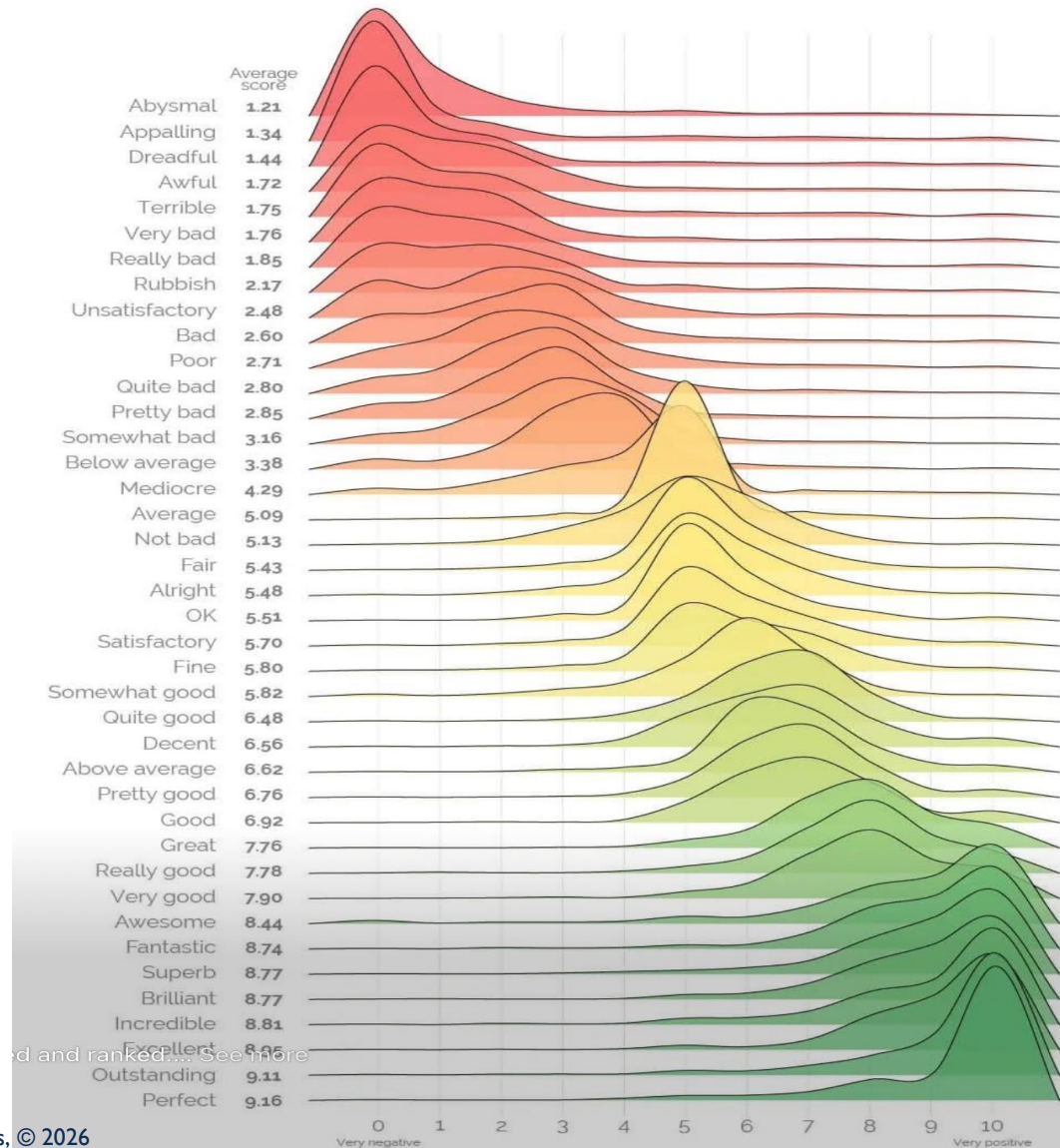
**Rest of the
Universe: 0
(known)**



Words Matter

How good is "good"? Now with even more words!

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'very negative' and 10 is 'very positive', in general, how positive or negative would the following word/phrase be to someone when you used it to describe something?



and ranked... See more



Numbers and Accounting

- Which is correct accounting for people?

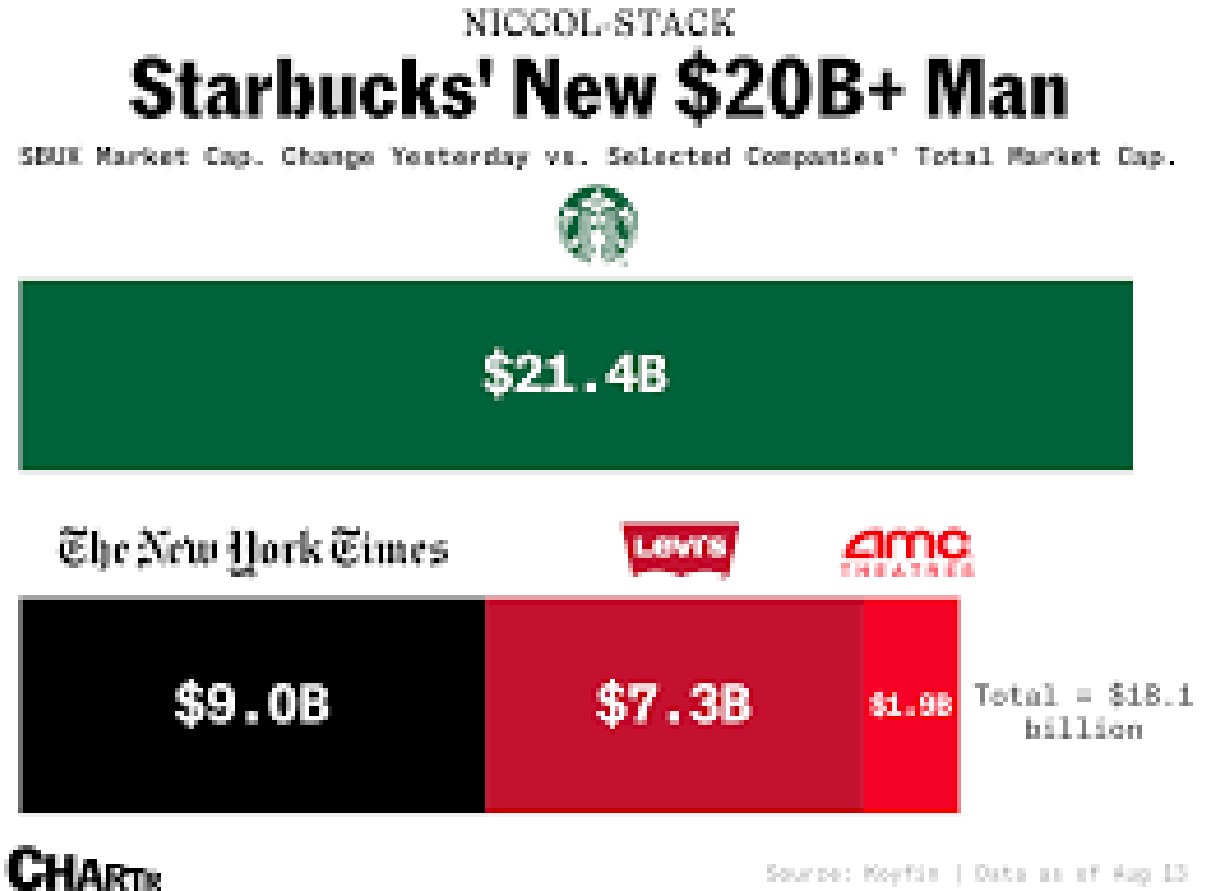
Asset	Liability	Revenue	Expense
-------	-----------	---------	---------

1.	Credit		Debit
----	--------	--	-------

2.	Debit	Credit	
----	-------	--------	--



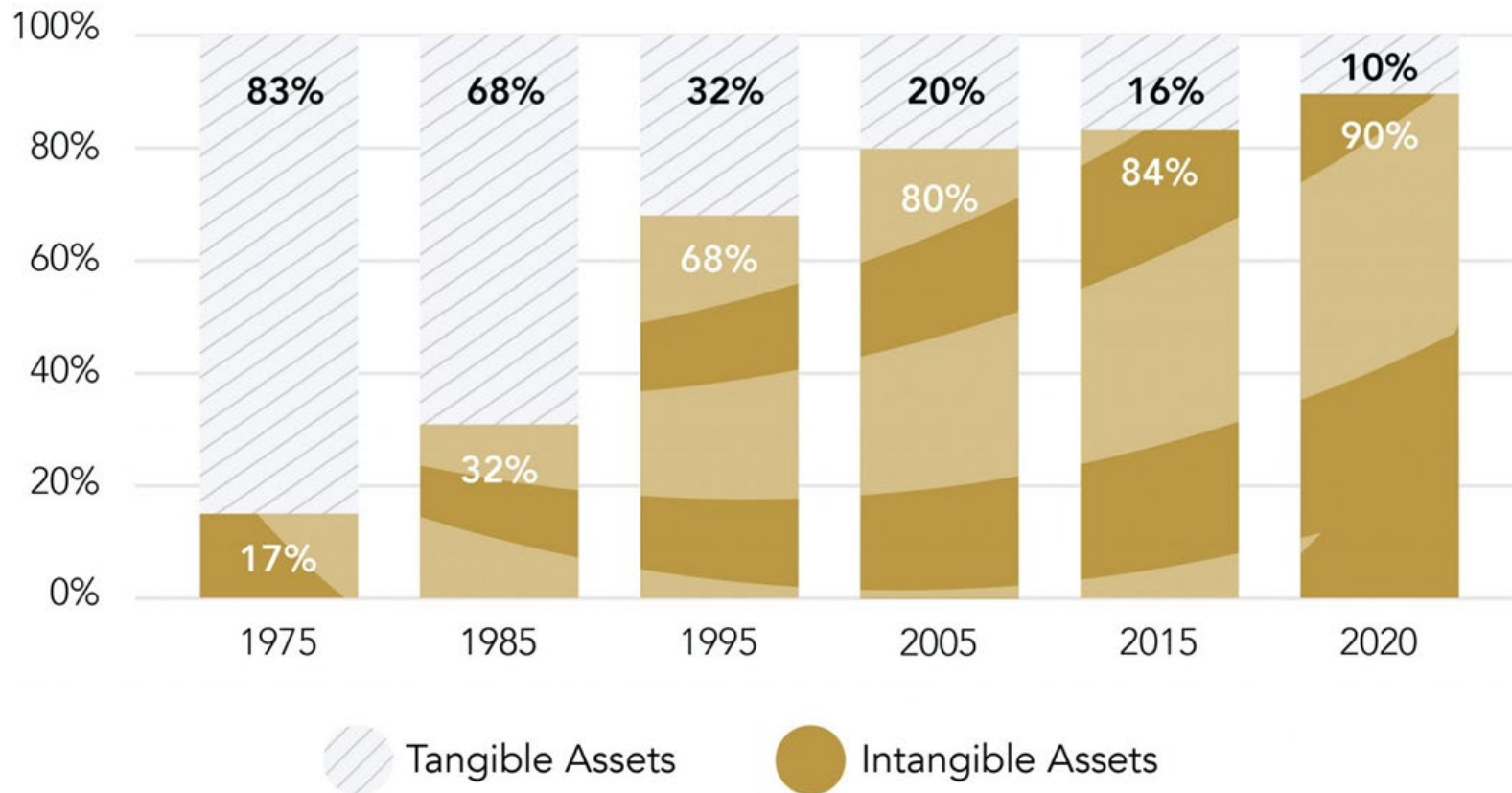
Can We Measure Leadership?





This Is Crazy!

COMPONENTS *of* S&P 500 MARKET VALUE





Work Well Being Index

Work Wellbeing 100 vs. S&P 500

(January 2021 – July 2024)²





Human Capital and Goodwill

- Workforce value imbedded in purchase price
- Not separately identifiable
- Included in goodwill
- Impairment risk if workforce leaves





The World Has Changed

**My mom and dad had 6 photos of
me from 1993 and I have 235
photos of my dog from 7am this
morning**



CFOs Are Offensive?

"chief financial officer":
Offensive Security - Chief
Financial Officer



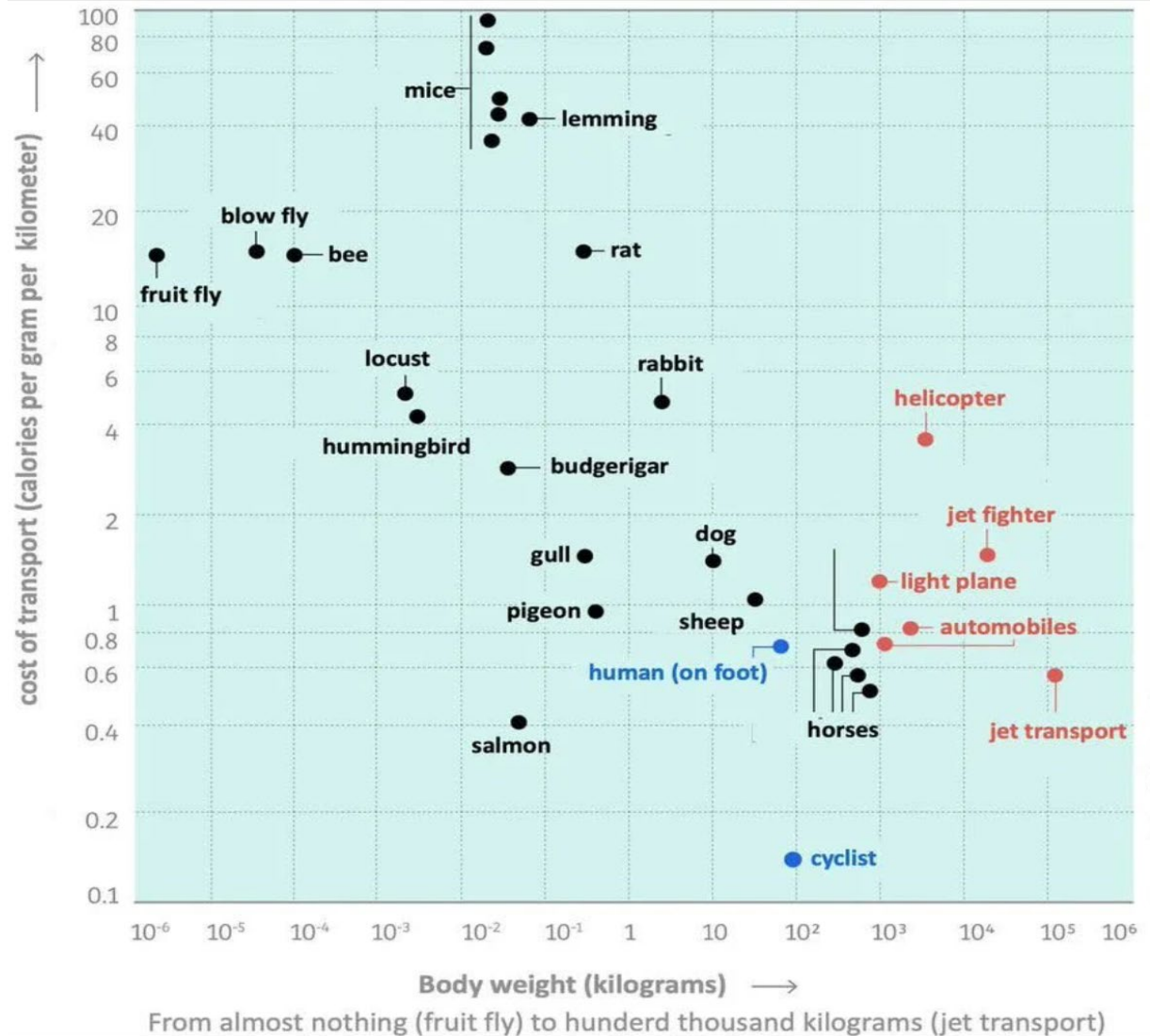
LinkedIn
Job Alerts
To You

12:08 PM



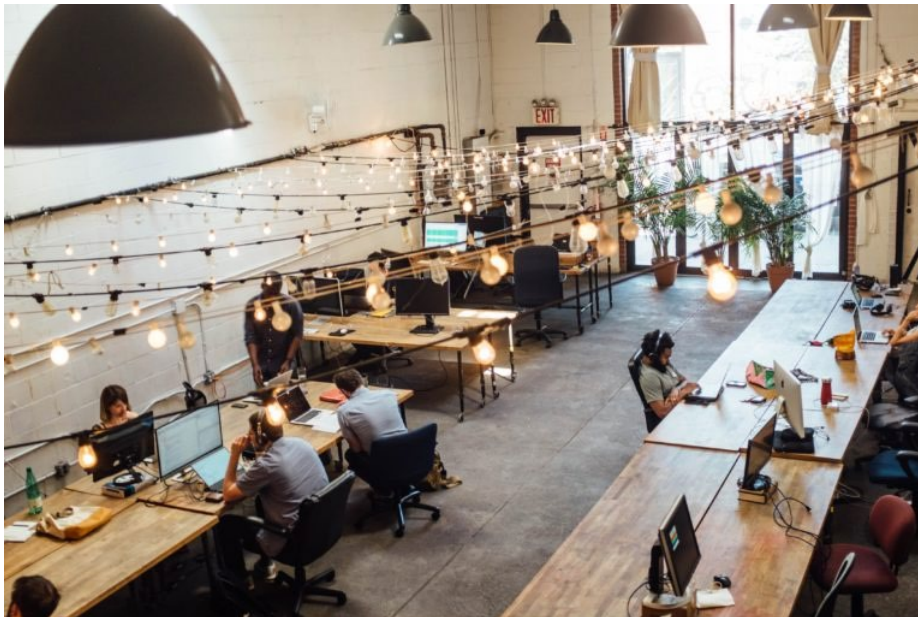


We Measure Everything





How'd We Get Here?





Culture and Workplace Change



There's a need to reimagine the workplace of tomorrow



72% of workers want a mix of remote and in-person working.



9% of those who can work remotely want to go back to a traditional commute and work environment full time.

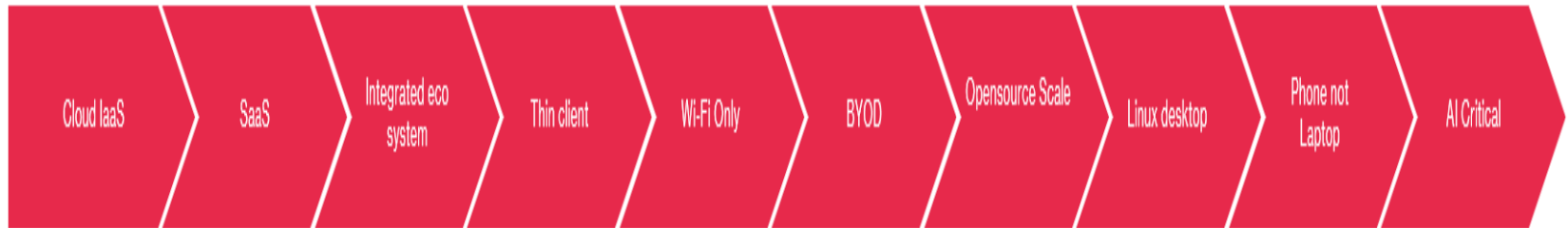
PwC's Hopes and Fears Survey March 2021

The Knowledge Institute, LLC, Bob Mims, © 2026

Barnaby Ling



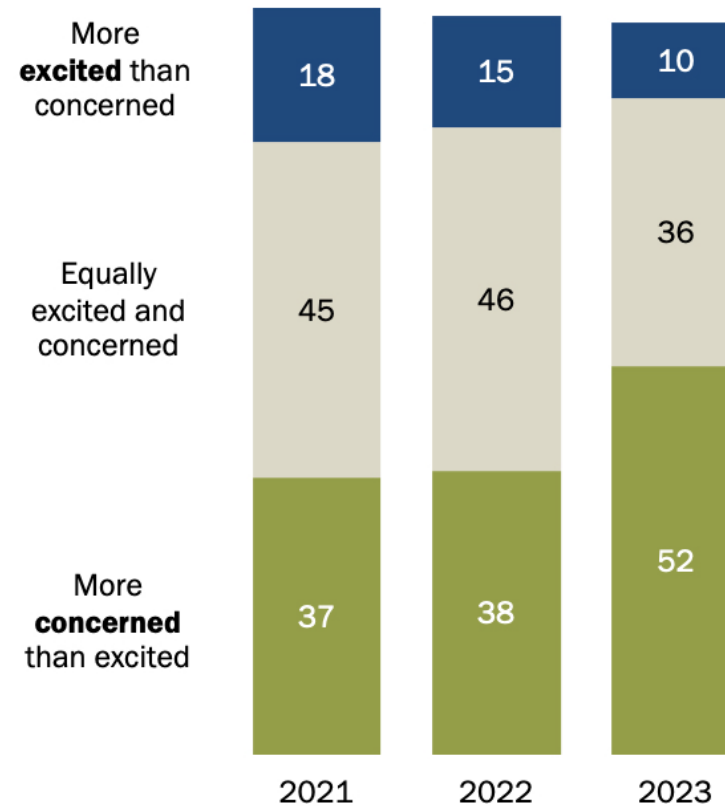
Tech Evolution





AI Concerns

% of U.S. adults who say the increased use of artificial intelligence in daily life makes them feel ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.

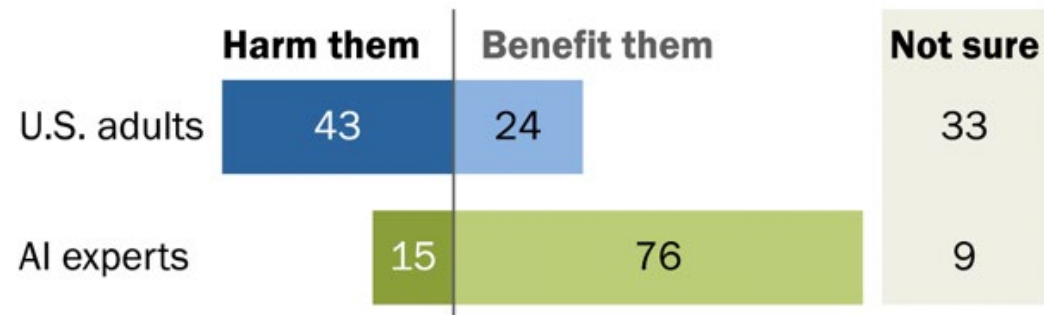
Source: Survey conducted July 31-Aug. 6, 2023.

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AI Benefits?

% who say they think the increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) is more likely to ...



Note: “AI experts” refer to individuals whose work or research relates to AI. The AI experts surveyed are those who were authors or presenters at an AI-related conference in 2023 or 2024 and live in the U.S. Expert views are only representative of those who responded. For more details, refer to the methodology. For full question wording, refer to the topline. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Aug. 12-18, 2024. Survey of AI experts conducted Aug. 14-Oct. 31, 2024.

“How the U.S. Public and AI Experts View Artificial Intelligence”

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AI Benefits?

**My husband asked me why I
speak so softly in the house.**

**I said I was afraid Mark
Zuckerberg was listening.**

He laughed.

I laughed.

Alexa laughed.

Siri laughed.

The Tesla laughed. 😄📱🚗👁️👁️

Facebook



AI Will Take Your Job?





Impacts of Workplace Evolution

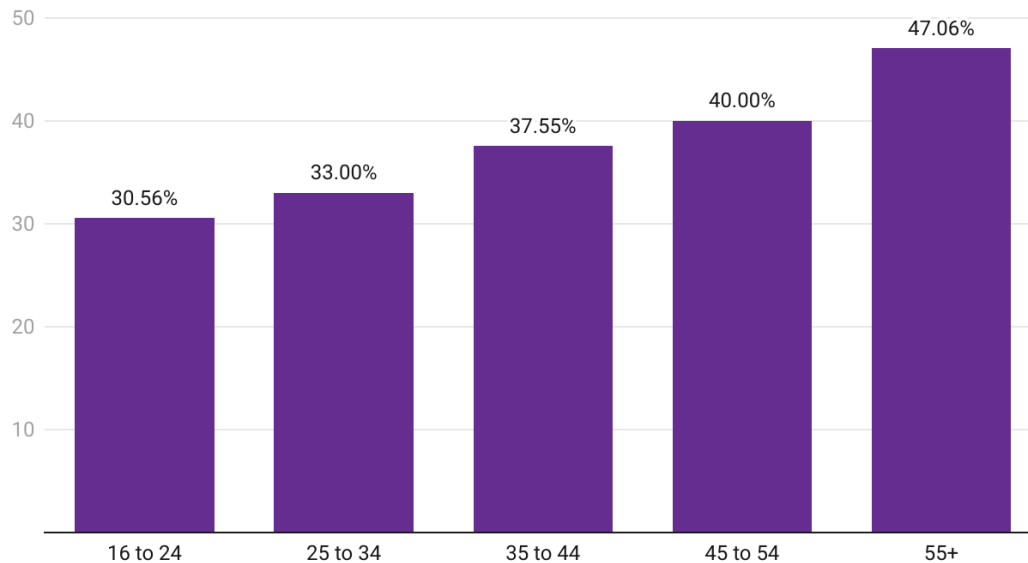
- Lost culture and social skills
- Resentment from “in office” and “at home” cultures
- Generational issues of previous work ethic biases
- Lost accounting education of nonaccountants via greater silos



Lost Culture and Social Skills

- Lost culture and social skills

% Of People Who Use Face-To-Face Conversation To Communicate Within The Workplace - By Age Group

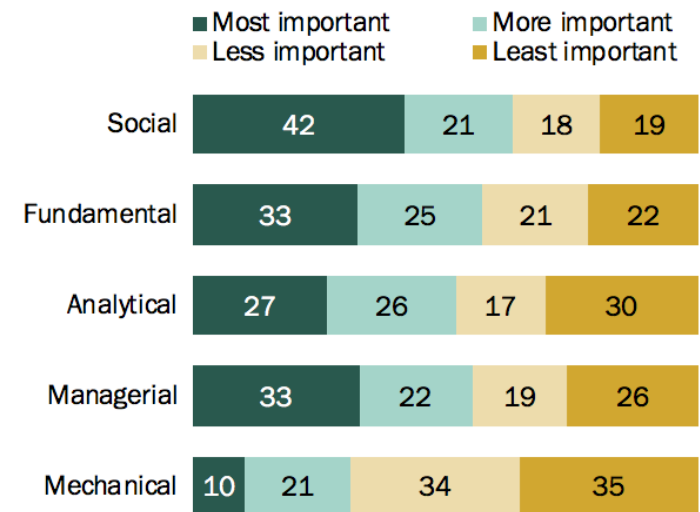


Source: ElectrolQ

Electro IQ

Four-in-ten workers are in occupations in which social skills are most important

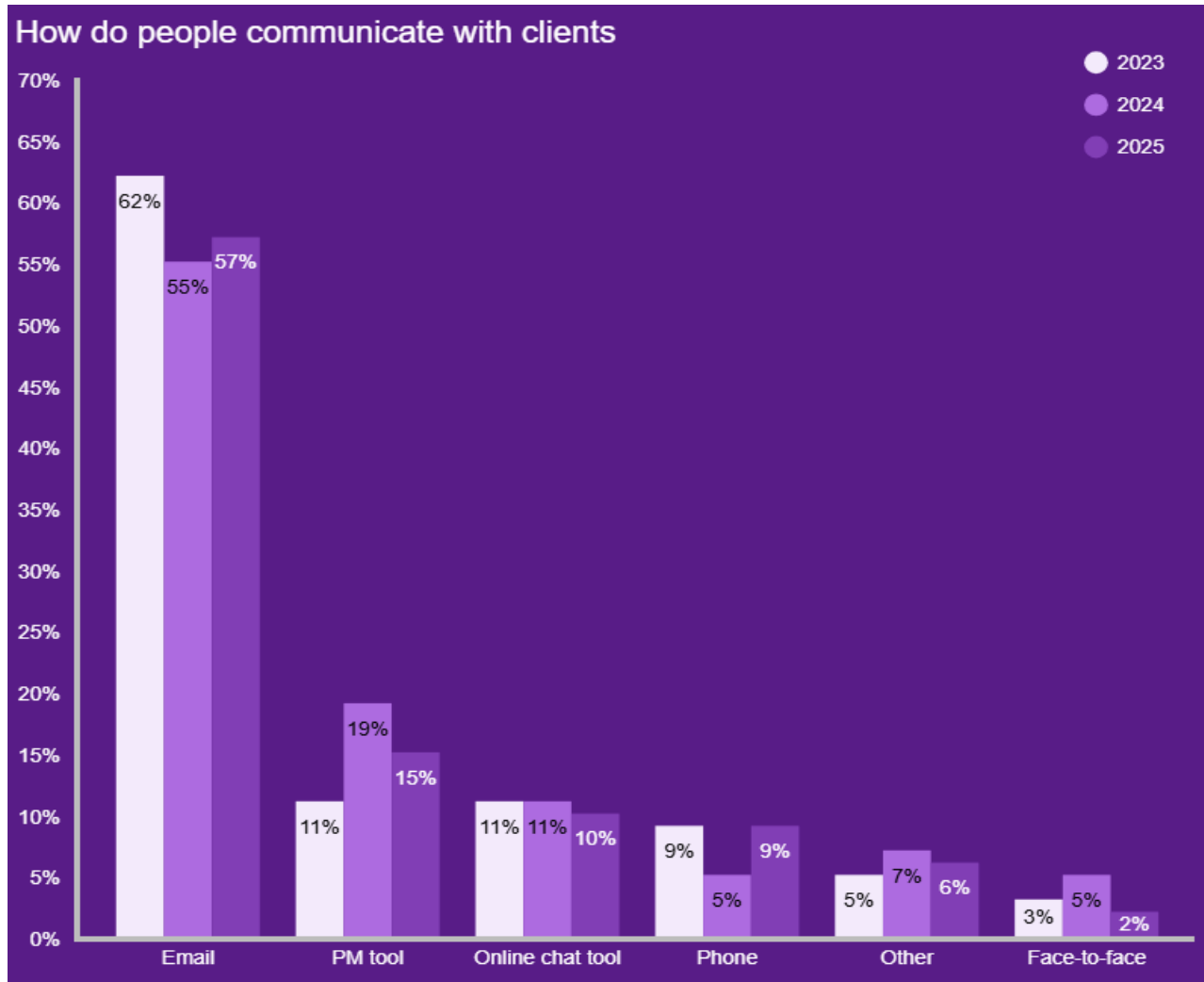
% of employed workers, by importance of a skill, 2018



Pew Research



How We Communicate



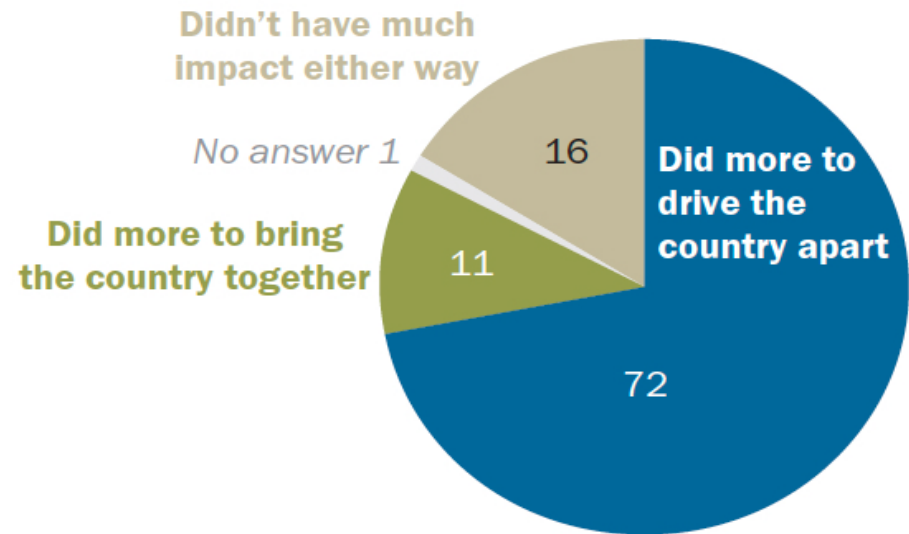


In Office Versus at Home

- Resentment from “in office” and “at home” cultures, both.

Most say COVID-19 drove the U.S. apart

% of U.S. adults who say that all in all, they feel the COVID-19 pandemic ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 21-27, 2024.
“5 Years Later: America Looks Back at the Impact of COVID-19”

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Generational Work Bias

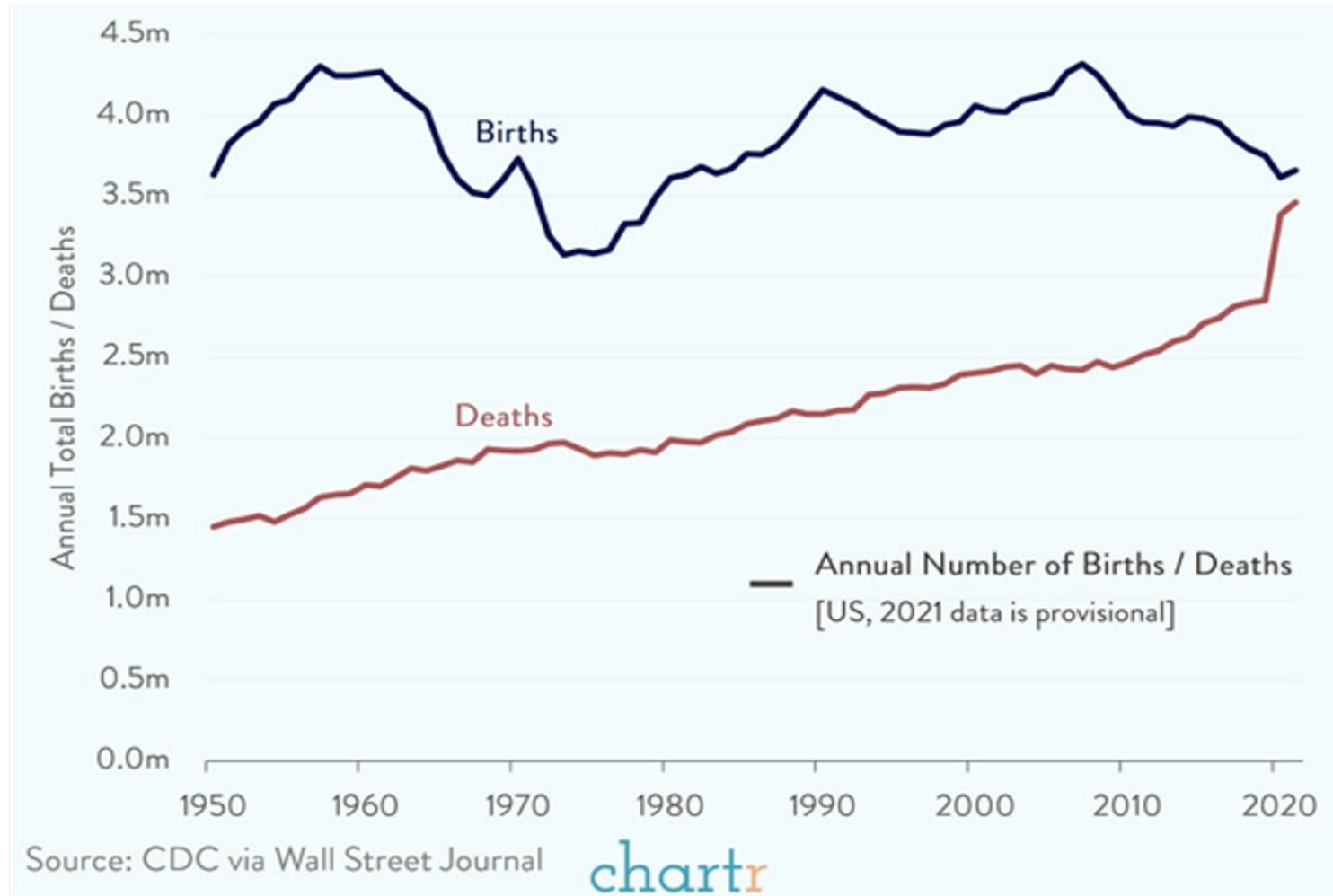
- Generational issues of previous work ethic biases



LinkedIn

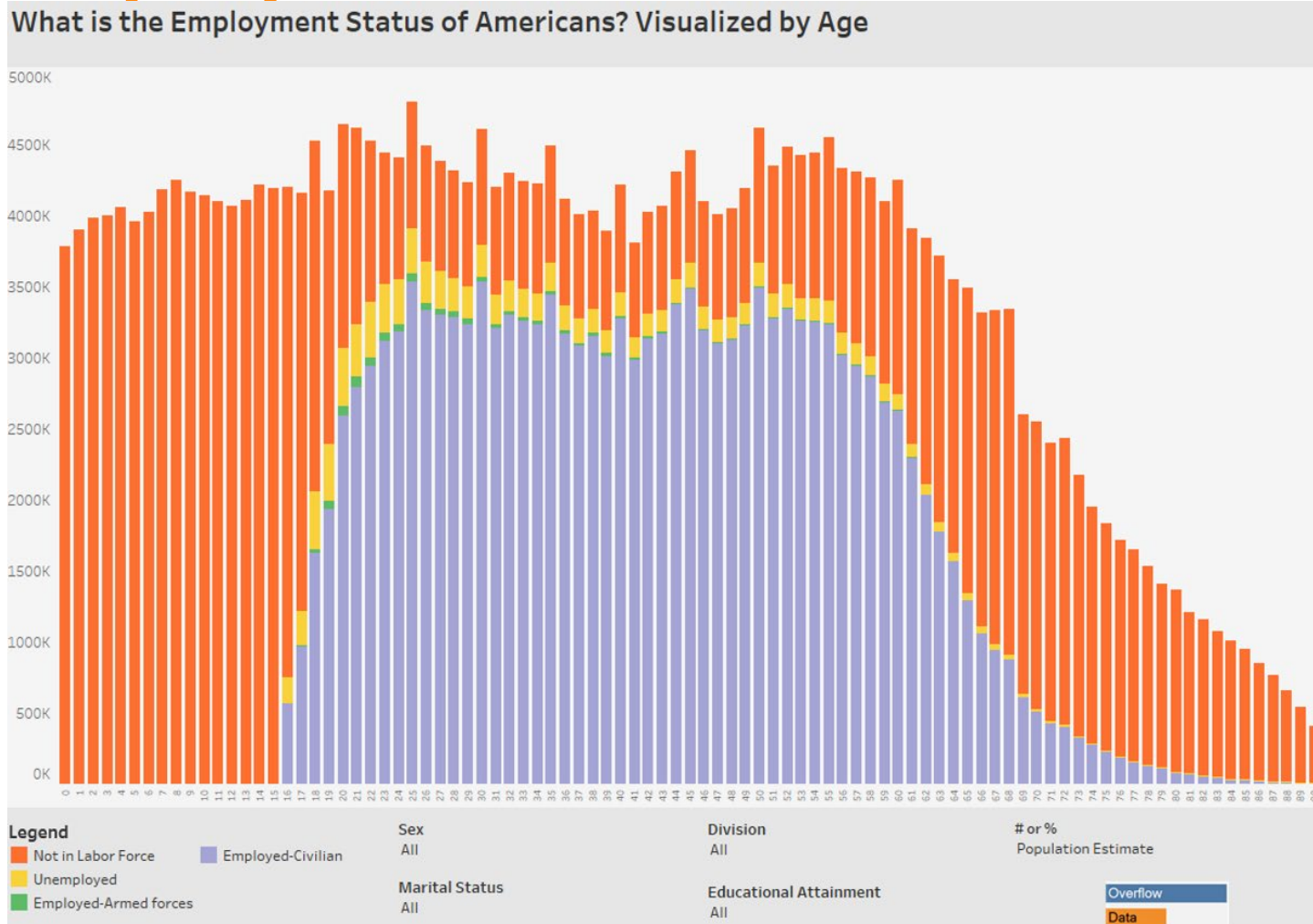


Births and Deaths in U.S.





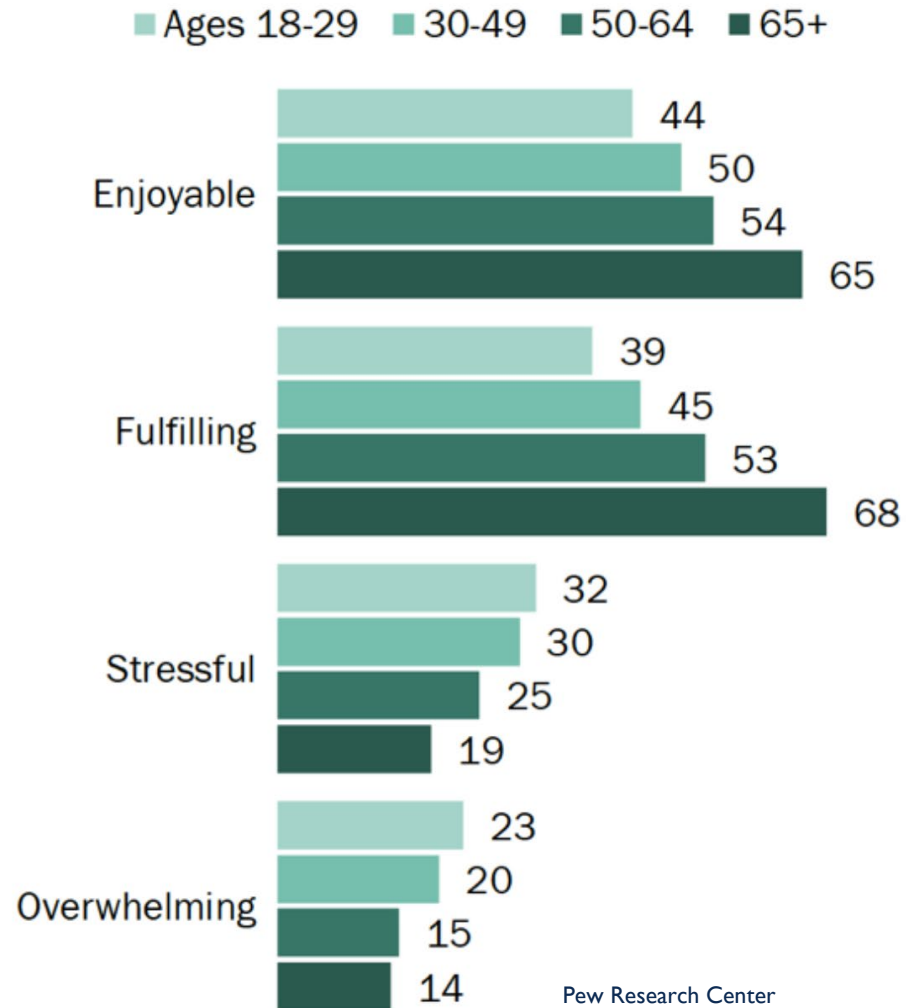
Employment in U.S.





Boomers

*% of employed adults saying they find their job to be ____
all or most of the time*



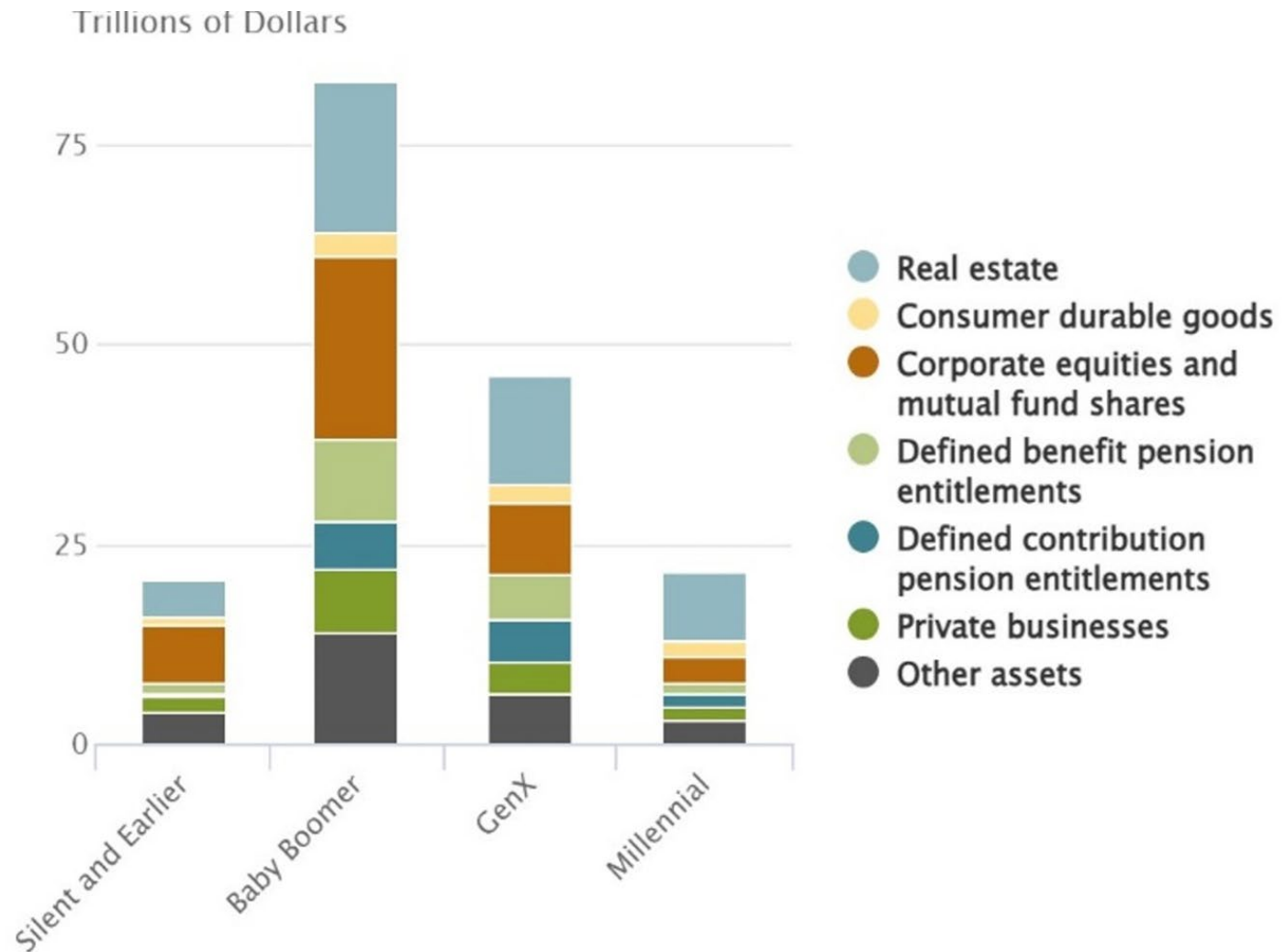


The Secret Conference Call





The Secret Conference Call



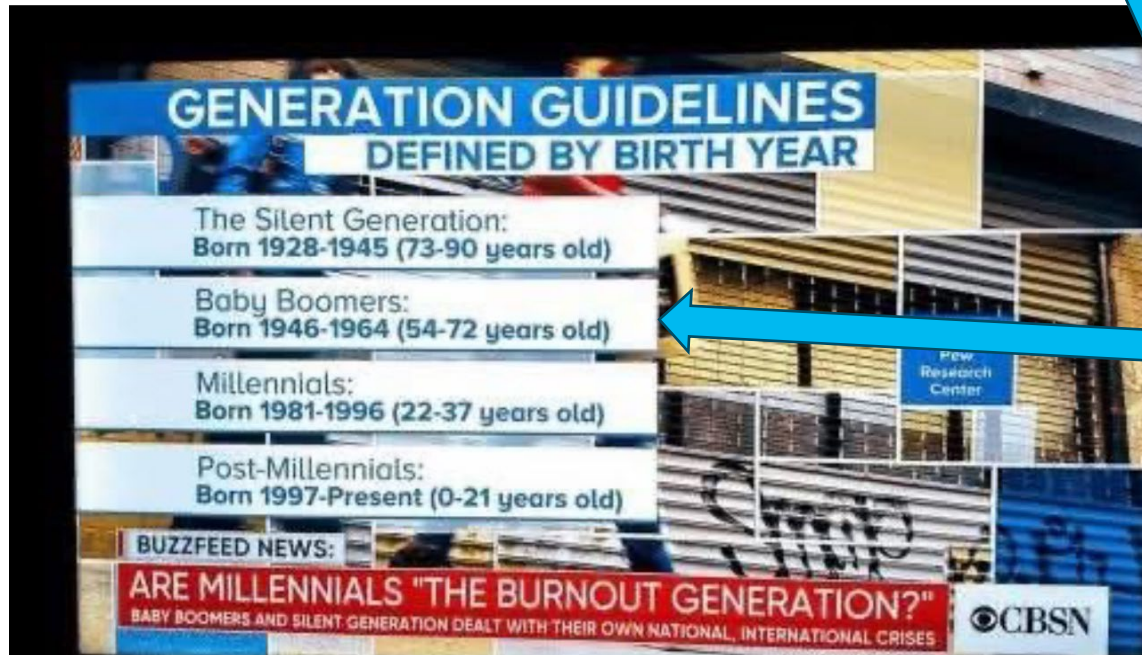


CBS Forgot About a Generation



GenX Only

Alexa Ernsberger Dull · 3d · 🌐



X?

The most Gen X thing ever

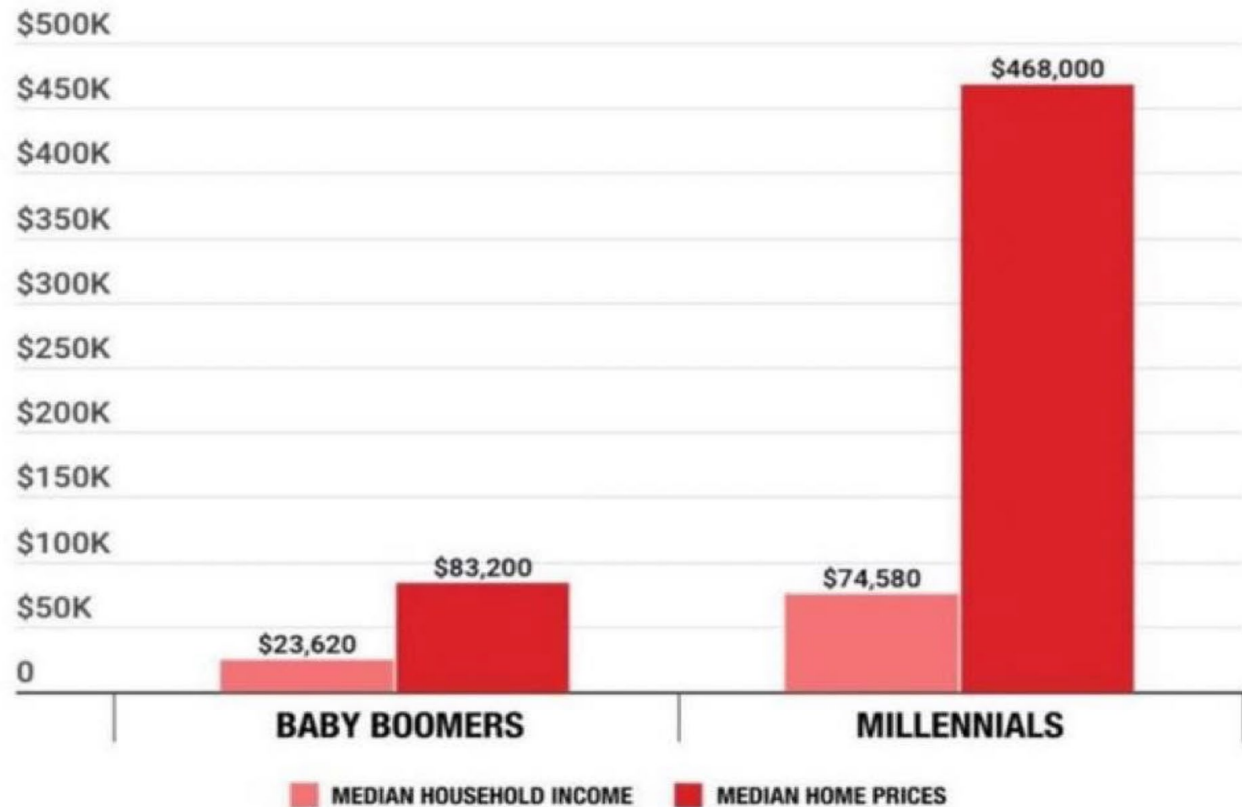
🤔👍 14.5K

1.8K comments 1.3K shares



Different Concerns by Generation

BUYING A HOME IN 1985 VS. 2022



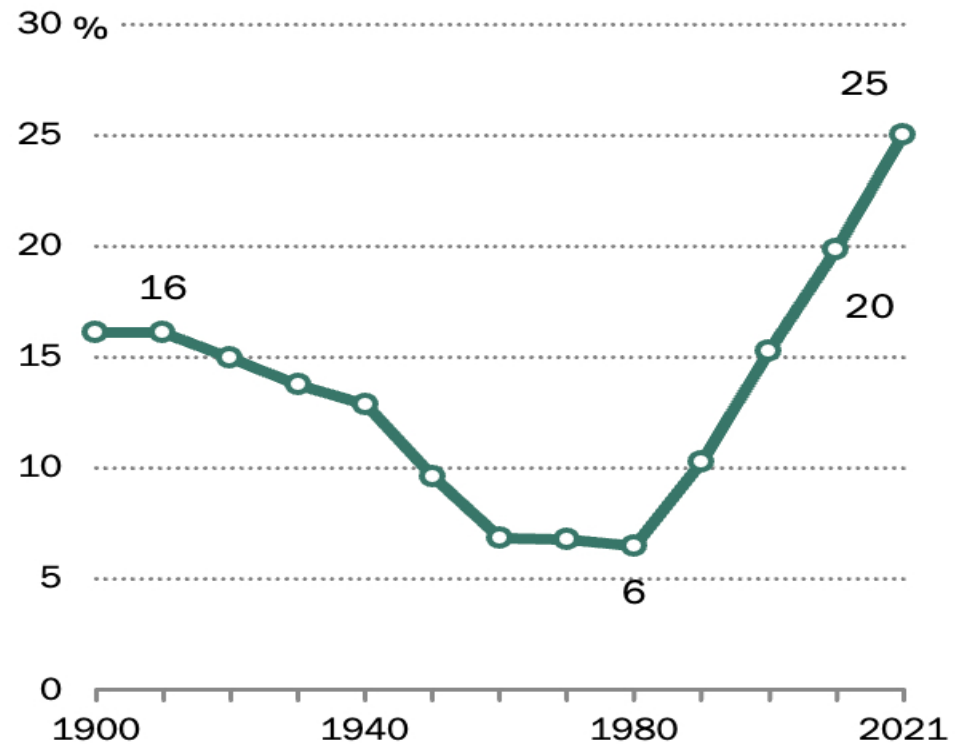
Data From The Federal Reserve And The Bureau Of Labor Statistics.
Source: Clever Real Estate — Home Prices Vs. Inflation, 2024



Marriage Trend

One-quarter of U.S. 40-year-olds have never married, a record high

% of 40-year-olds who had never married



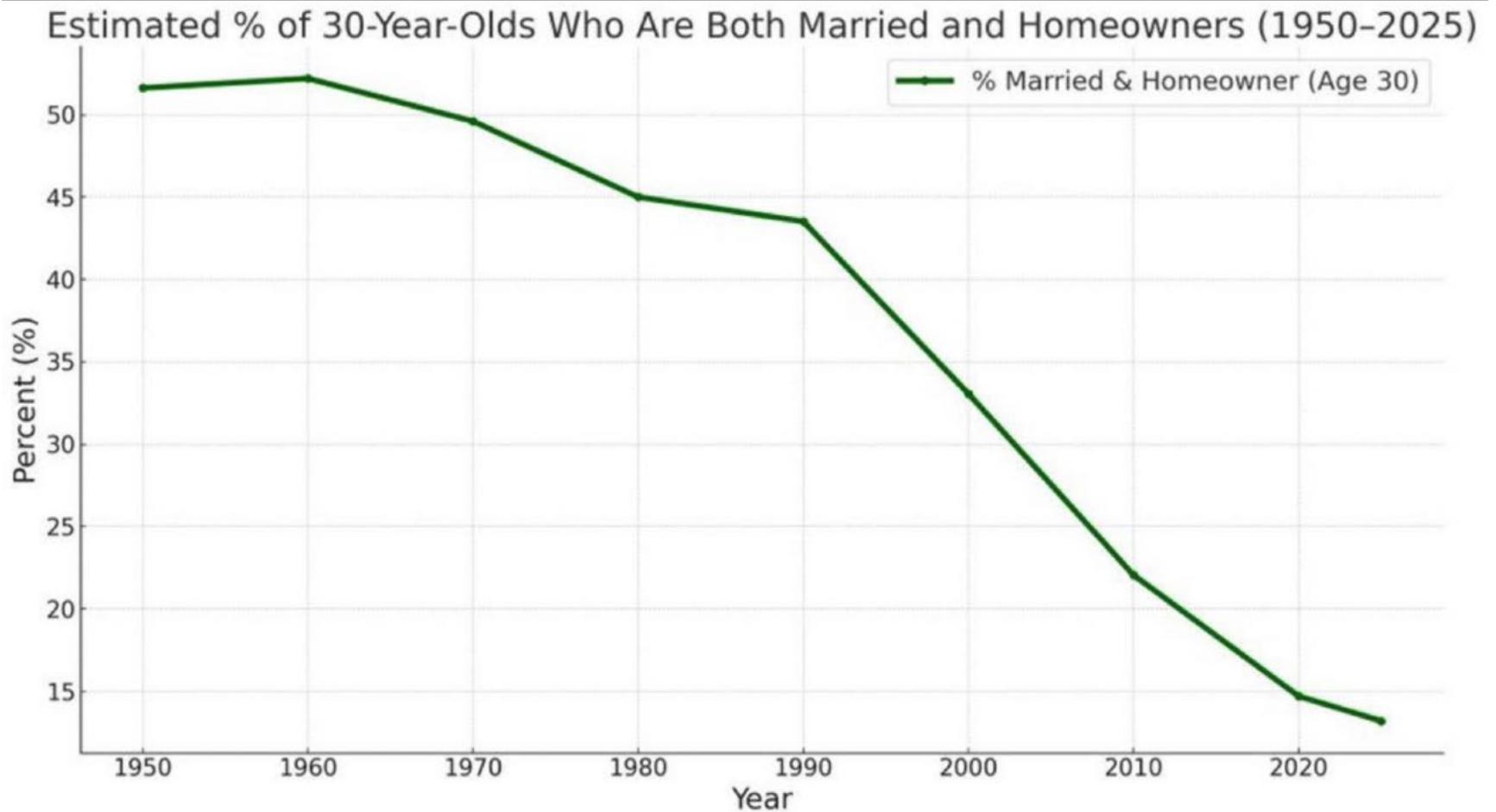
Note: Data labels shown for 1910, 1980, 2010 and 2021.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1900-2000 decennial census and 2010 and 2021 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

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New Paradigm





Generations





How Many of You Have Friends?

- If we don't educate nonaccountants, there will be less trust among the entire team.





Latest Trends on People

- Happiness in the workplace?
- Bosses
- Feedback to employees
- Demographics

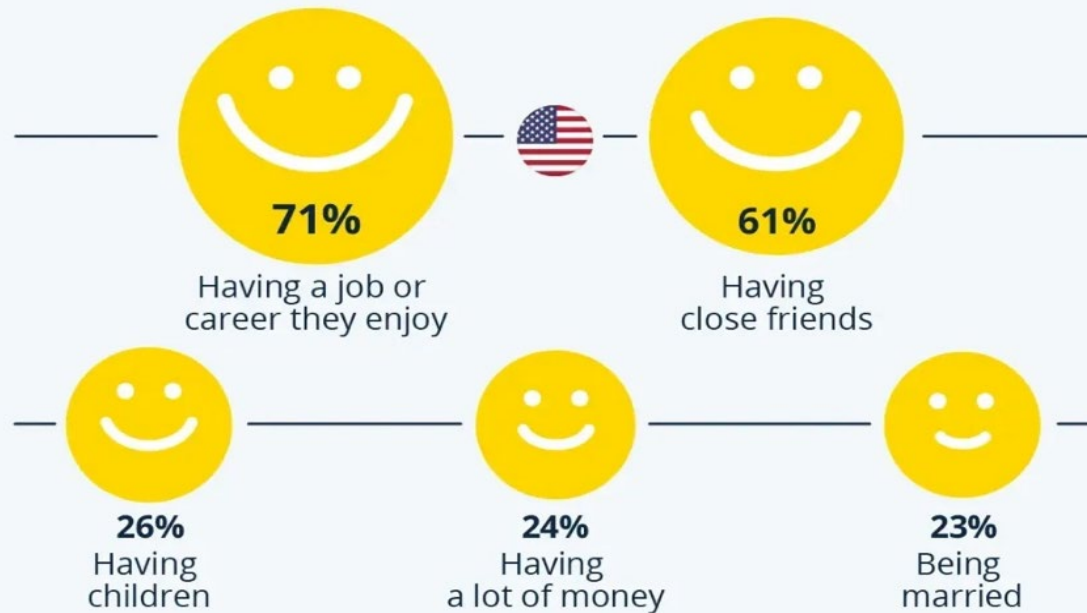




Relationships are Key

The Key to Happiness?

Share of U.S. respondents who say each of the following is extremely/very important for a fulfilling life



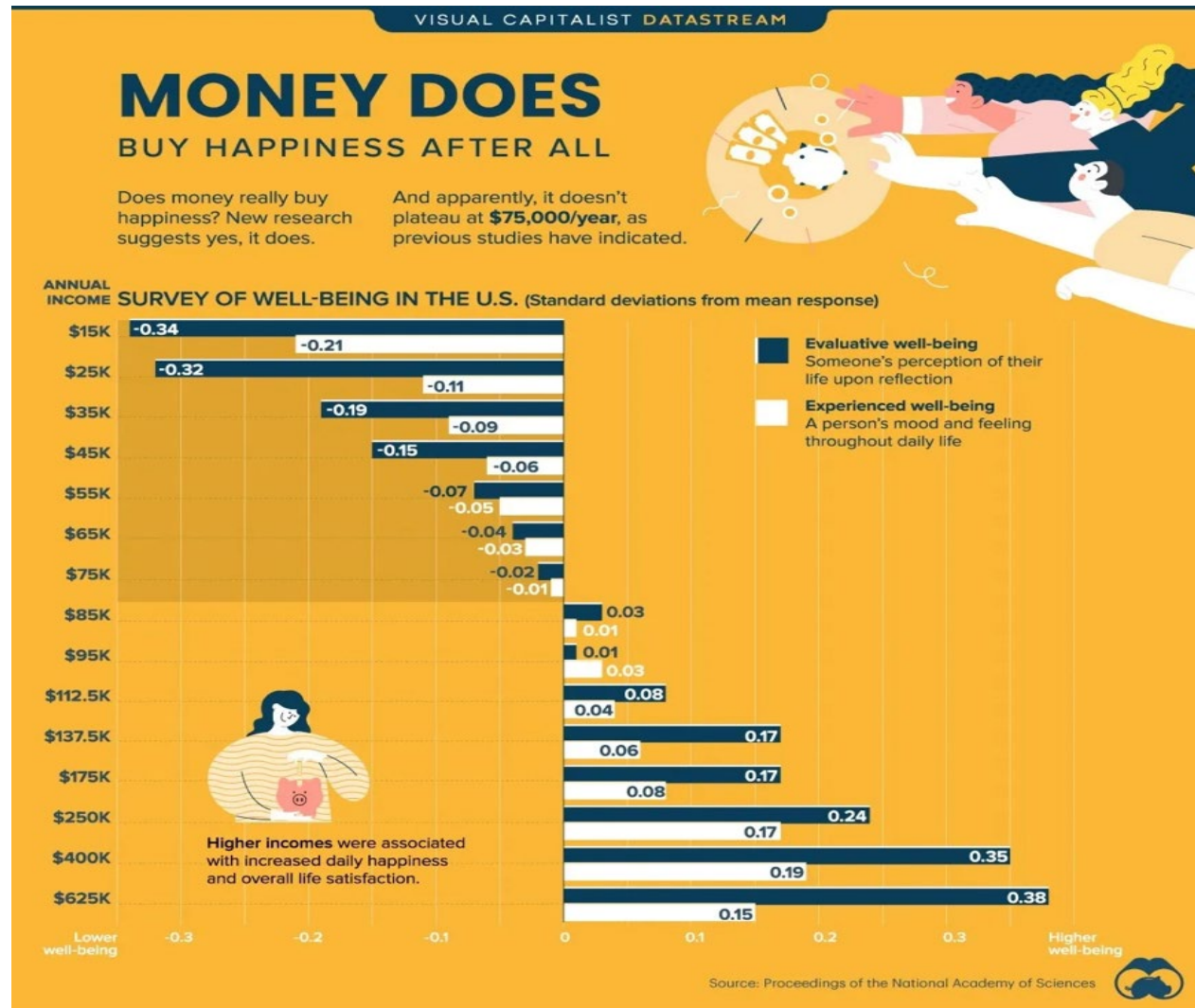
5,073 U.S. respondents (18+ y/o) surveyed Apr. 10-16, 2023
Source: Pew Research Center



statista



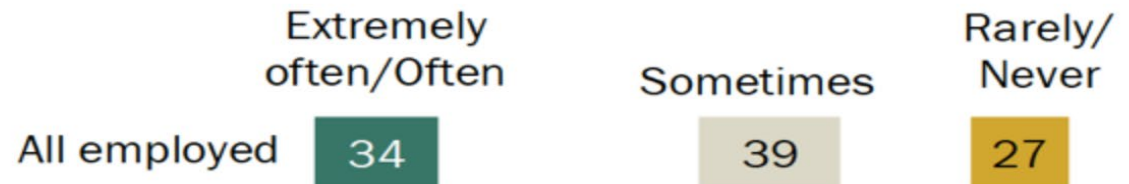
Money and Happiness



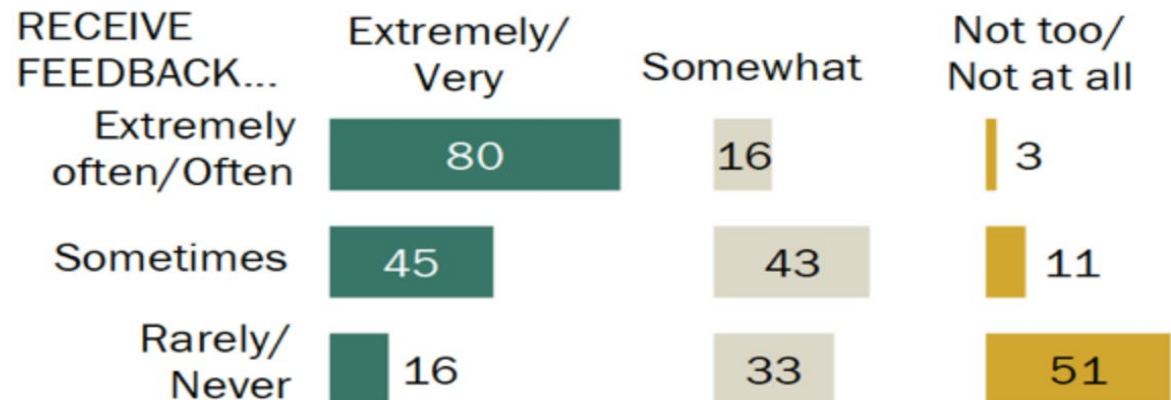


No Feedback

% of employed adults saying they receive feedback on how they're doing their job from their manager or supervisor ...



% of employed adults saying they are ____ satisfied with the amount of feedback they receive based on how often they receive feedback





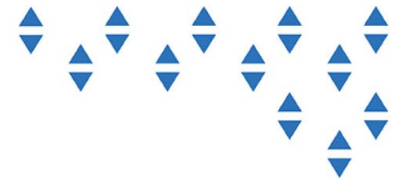
Trust

Trust in team leaders is the foundation of Engagement

SHARE THIS



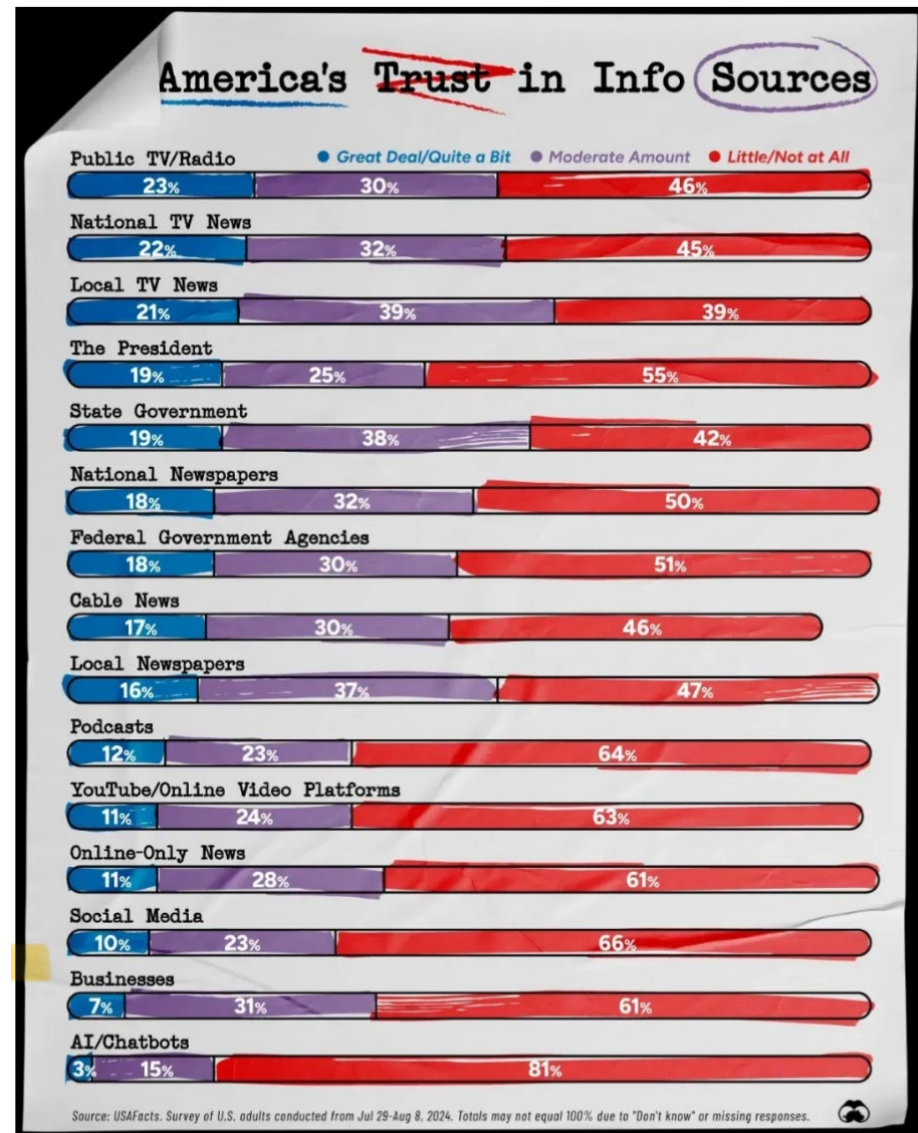
A worker is **14x**
more likely to be Fully
Engaged if he or she
trusts the team leader.



Global Workplace Study 2020 | ADP Research Institute



Trust in America



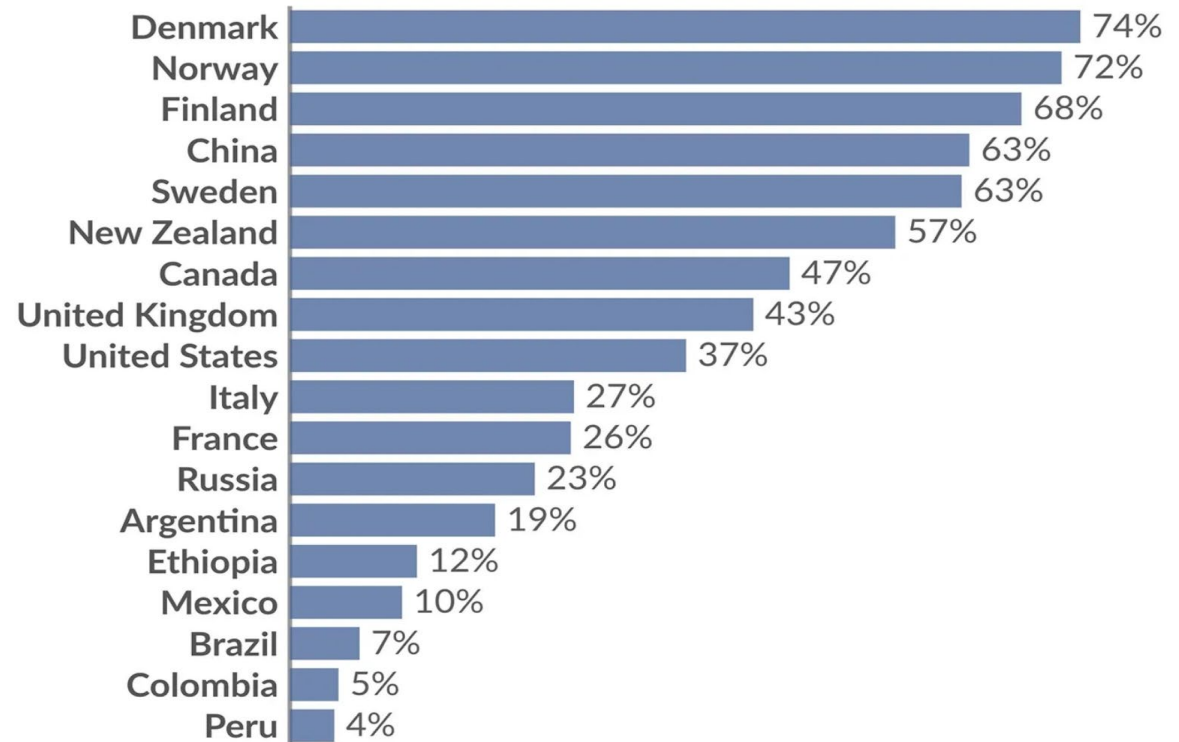


How Important is Trust?

Interpersonal trust varies widely across countries

Our World
in Data

Share of people answering that "most people can be trusted".



Data source: World Values Survey & European Values Survey (2022)
OurWorldinData.org/trust | CC BY



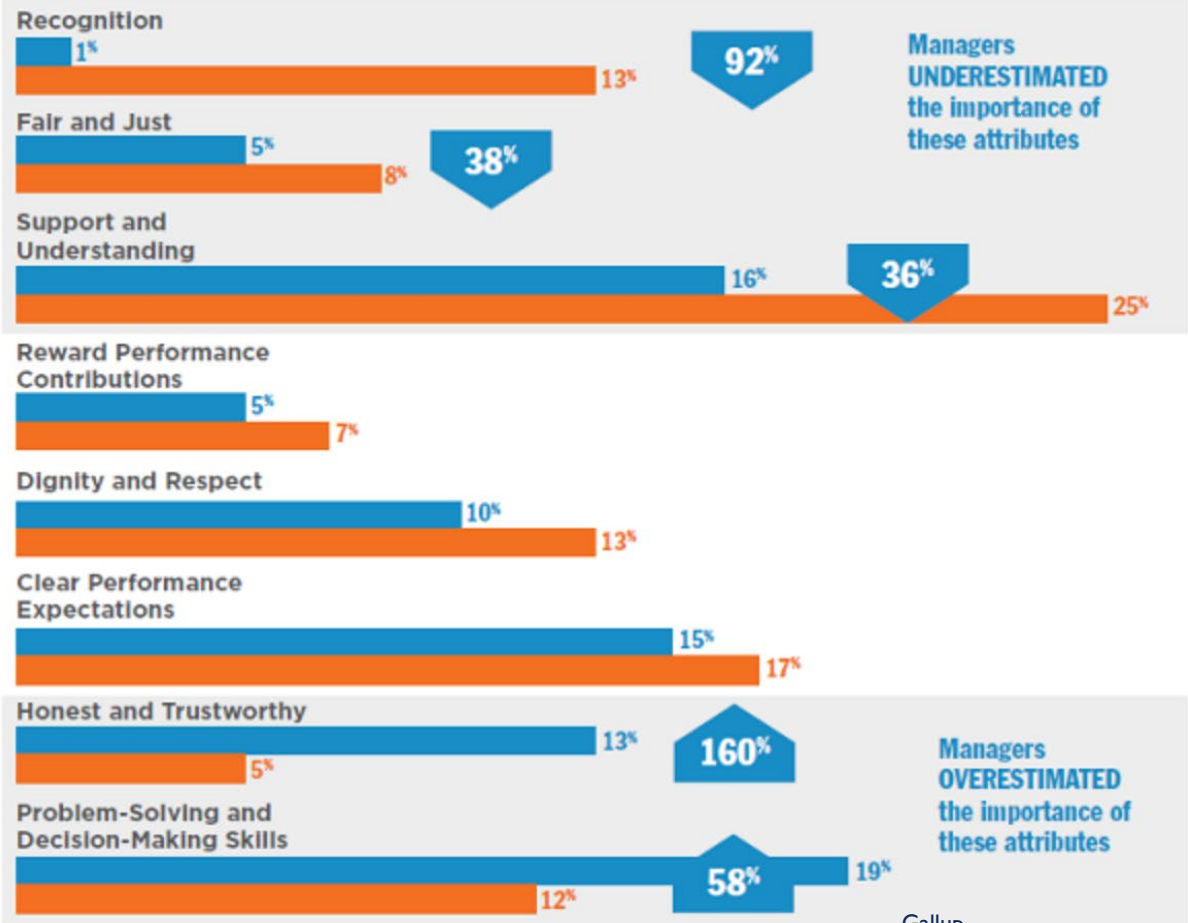
We Got It Wrong

Managers misjudge what **EMPLOYEES WANT MOST** from them in 5 of 8 key attributes

% of MANAGERS who
said this is MOST important
to employees

% of EMPLOYEES who
said this is MOST important
to them

Managers who don't
understand what
employees want from
them miss important
opportunities for
improving performance
and retention





Key Employee Statistics

Key Employee Recognition Statistics

Employees
receiving positive
recognition are



more engaged



of employees agree
that recognition is a
major motivator

Companies that
prioritize employee
recognition are



more likely to have
a more engaged
workforce

Happy, engaged
employees are



more productive
than unsatisfied,
unrecognized
workers

Sources: Harvard Business Review, Flex Jobs, Zippia

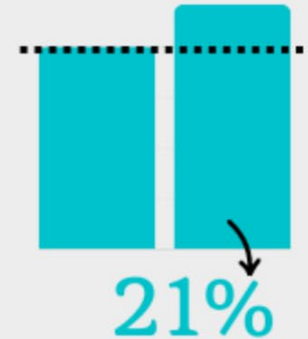
 **Fit Small Business**



Recognition Statistics



Of employees say they would leave their job if they didn't feel appreciated

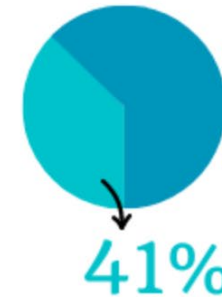


Higher profits were recorded in organizations with high employee engagement levels

Recognition does not have to be a significant outlay.



Of employees prefer non-monetary incentives



Of employees want to be recognized by a peer

Gallup



Impact of Employee Recognition

Employees who feel recognized at work are **2.5 times** more likely to be happy with their jobs and **1.5 times** more likely to feel motivated to do their best.

92% of workers are more likely to repeat a specific action after receiving recognition for it.

67% of employees rated praise and commendation as the top motivators for performance, choosing them over performance bonuses and other financial incentives.

40% of American workers believe that increased recognition at work would boost their energy and effort.

SelectSoftware
REVIEWS



Employee Motivation

EMPLOYEES ARE
MOTIVATED BY



78%

of people would work harder in their jobs if they were **recognized**.

— Spring 2012 Globoforce Mood Tracker



65%

of working Americans say they receive **no praise** or recognition on the job.

— Gallup



Awards and Praise Impact

WHO IS JOB SEARCHING?

of those who do not feel appreciated



60% of those who don't feel appreciated are looking for a job.

AND WHO IS NOT?



80% of those who feel appreciated are staying put.



Question

Are You Busier Than Ever?

- a) Yes,
- b) Definitely,
- c) Too busy to answer,
- d) About to retire,



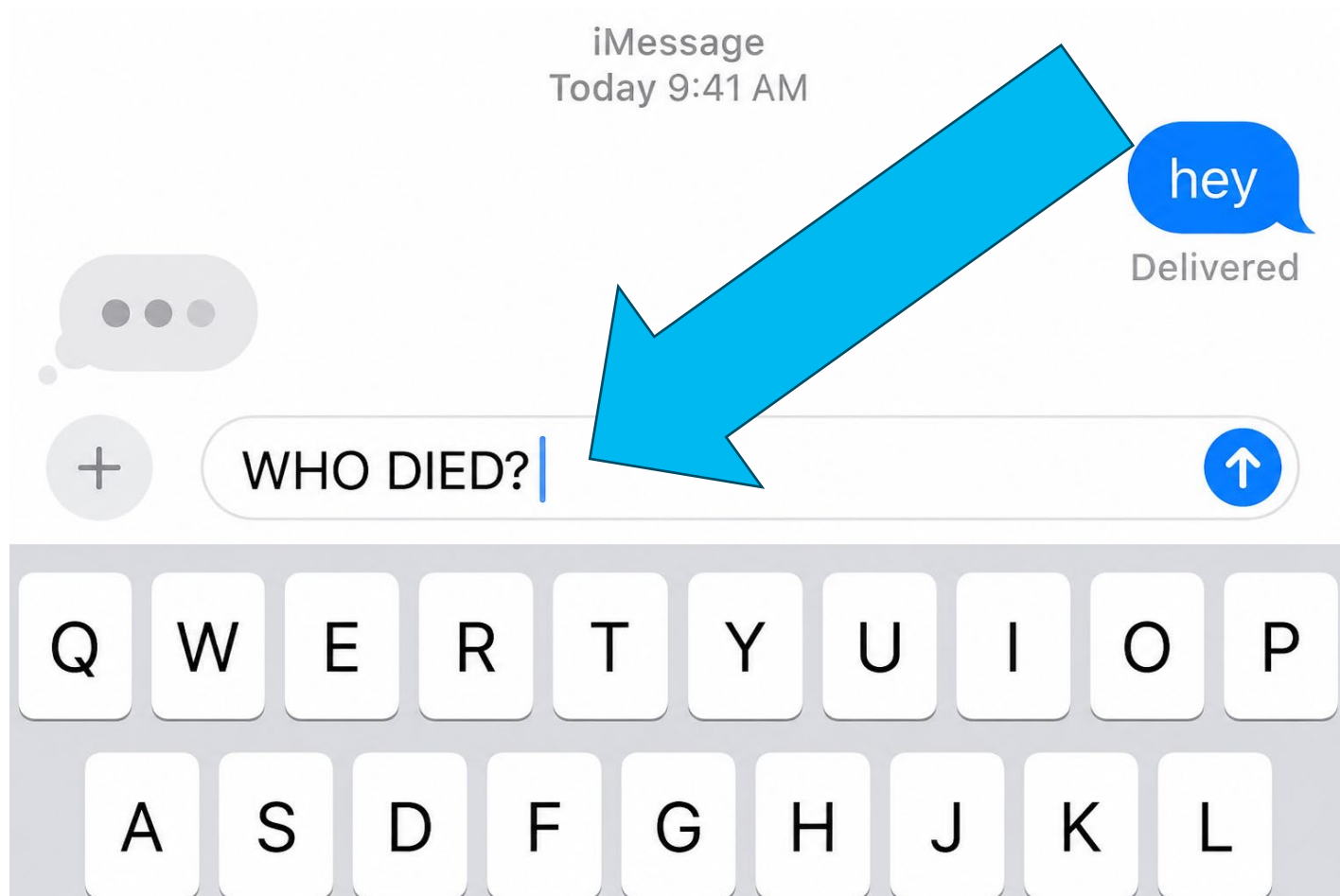
Case Study

Phone Test



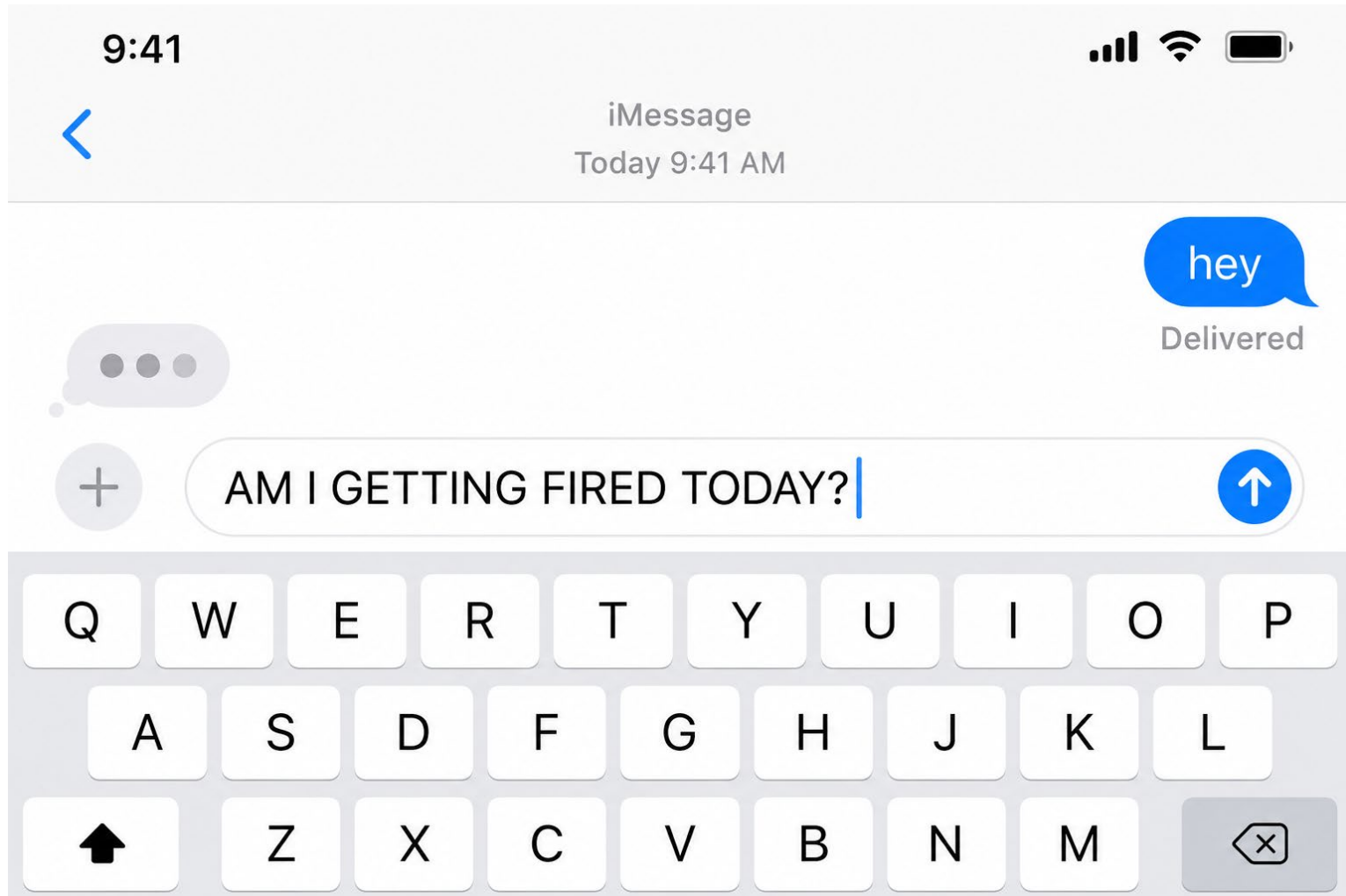


Reply/Conclusion





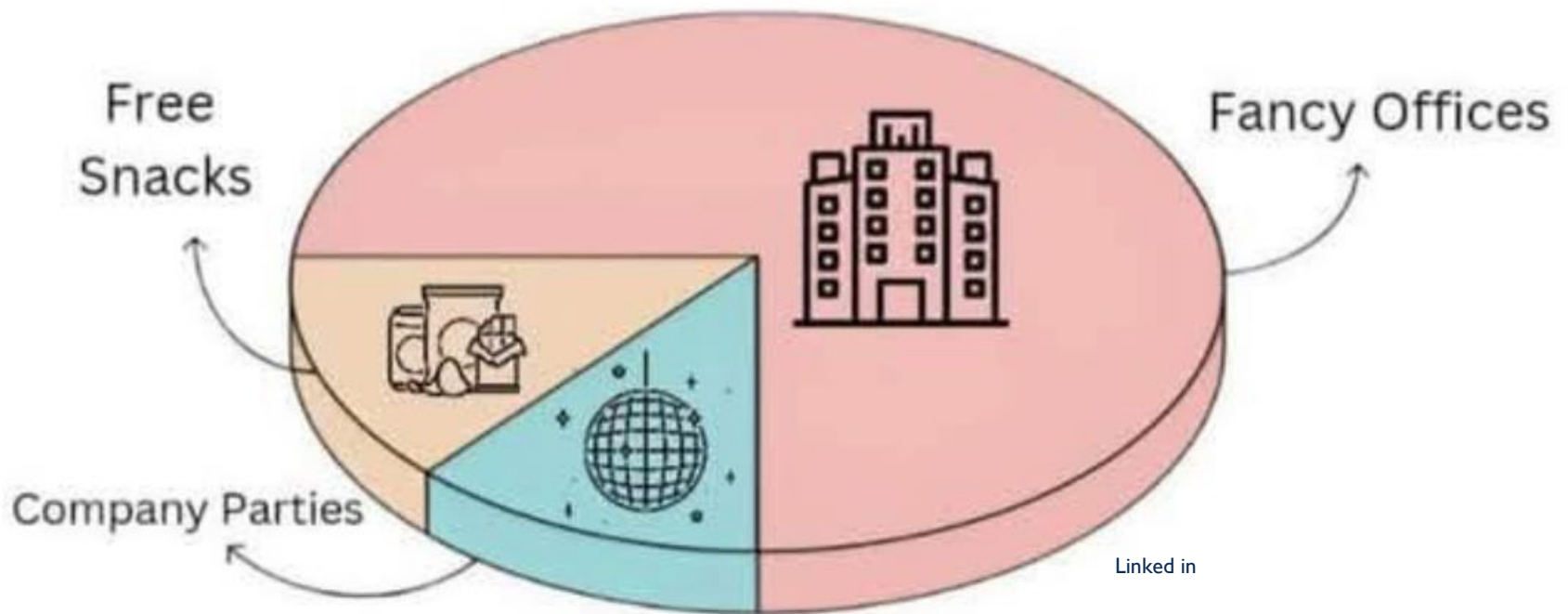
Reply/Conclusion





Employees Don't Need

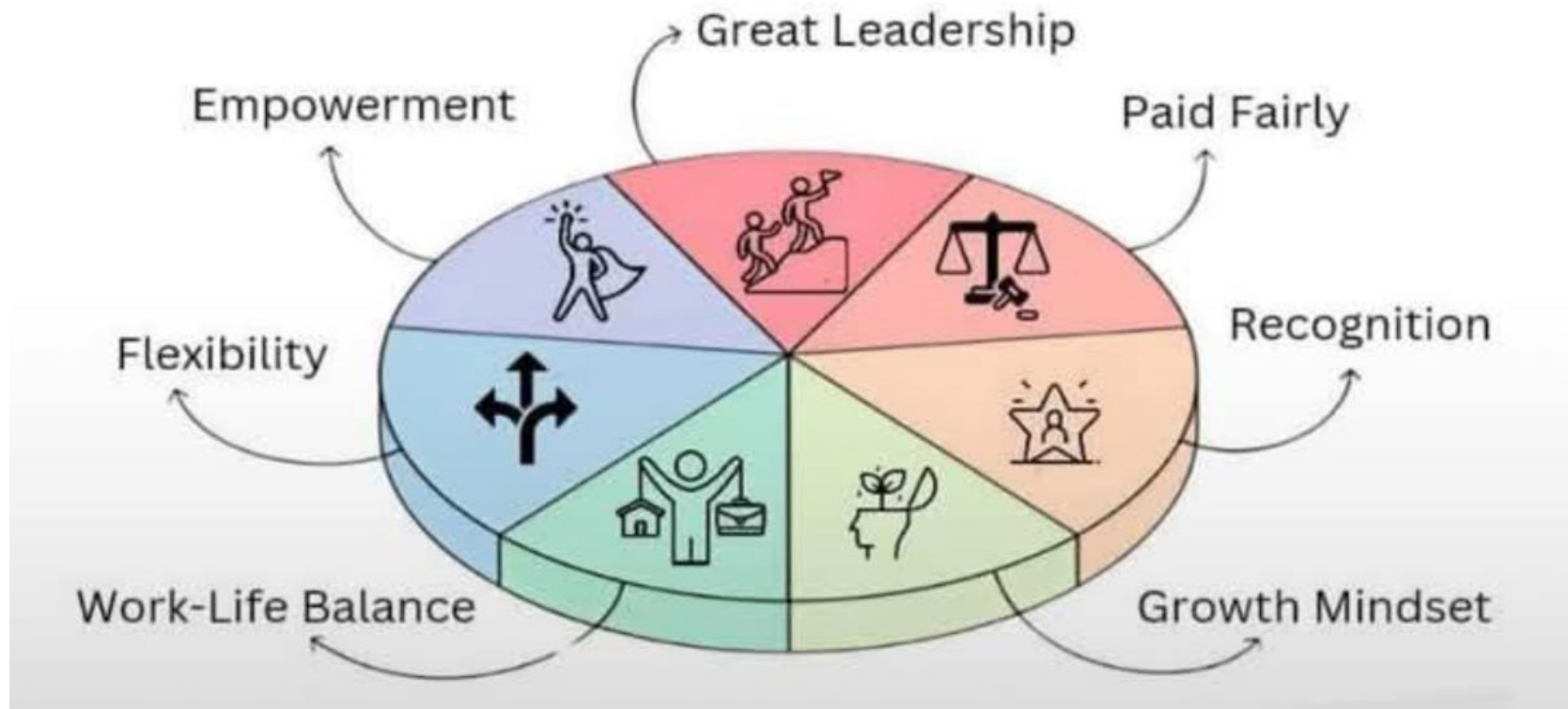
EMPLOYEES DON'T CARE ABOUT





Employees Do Need for Today

WHAT EMPLOYEES REALLY NEED

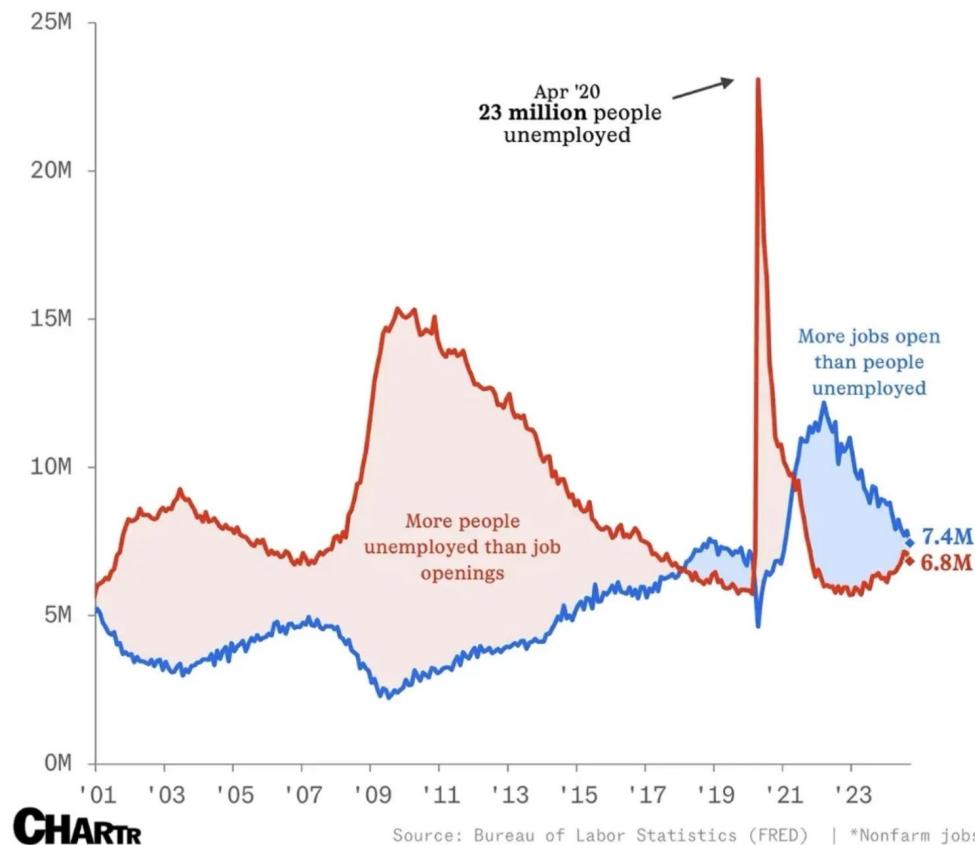




Employees Currently More Valued

Job Openings Keep Falling In The US

Total Number Of People Unemployed & Total Job Openings* [US, Jan '01 - Sept '24]





Our Roadmap To Do List



Y'all May Think We Talk Funny,
But The World Takes Our Music Seriously.



Slow. Southern. Drawl. A touch of country twang. Some people think we sound funny. Except when we're singing.

From the father of country music ... to the king of rock 'n' roll ... to the birthplace of the blues. For decades, Mississippians have been scoring the soundtracks of peoples' lives.

From the Deep South to the top of the charts, Mississippians are music to the world's ears.

MISSISSIPPI...
Believe It!™

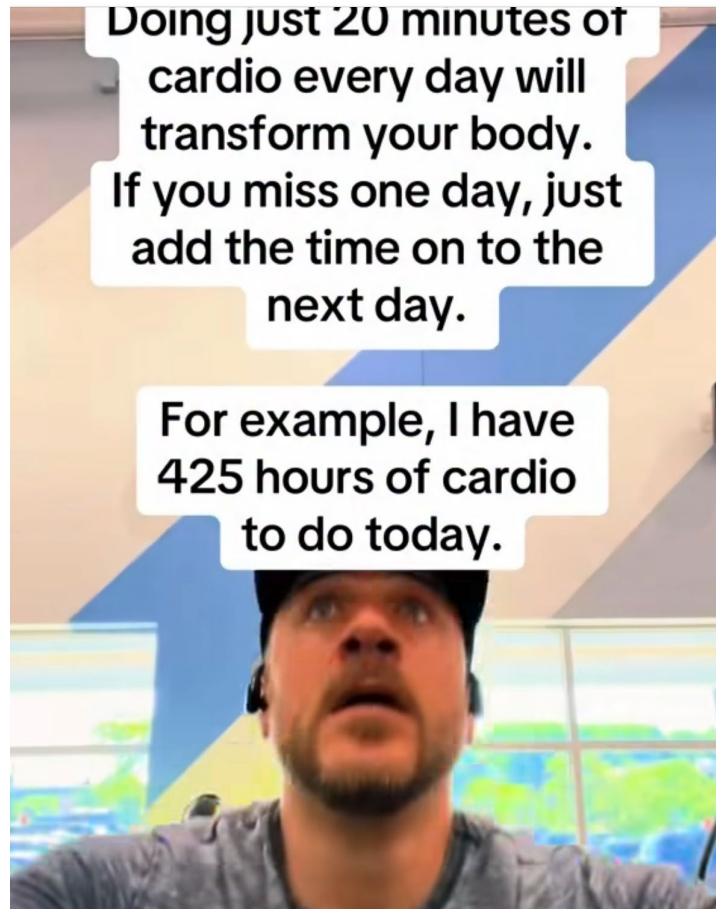


Resolutions-Plan Better





Resolutions-Do Your Plan





Resolutions-Be Smatterer

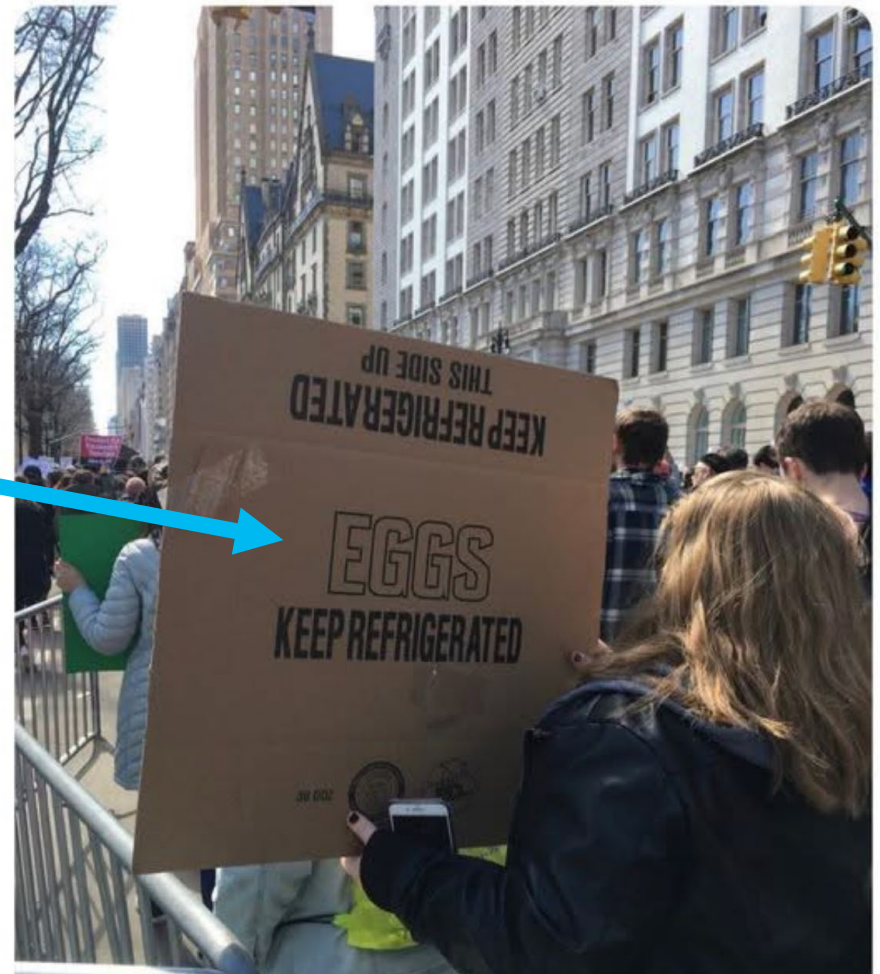
SMU really didn't think this one through 😂





Resolutions-Set Boundaries

refrigerate eggs activists are finally
taking a stand





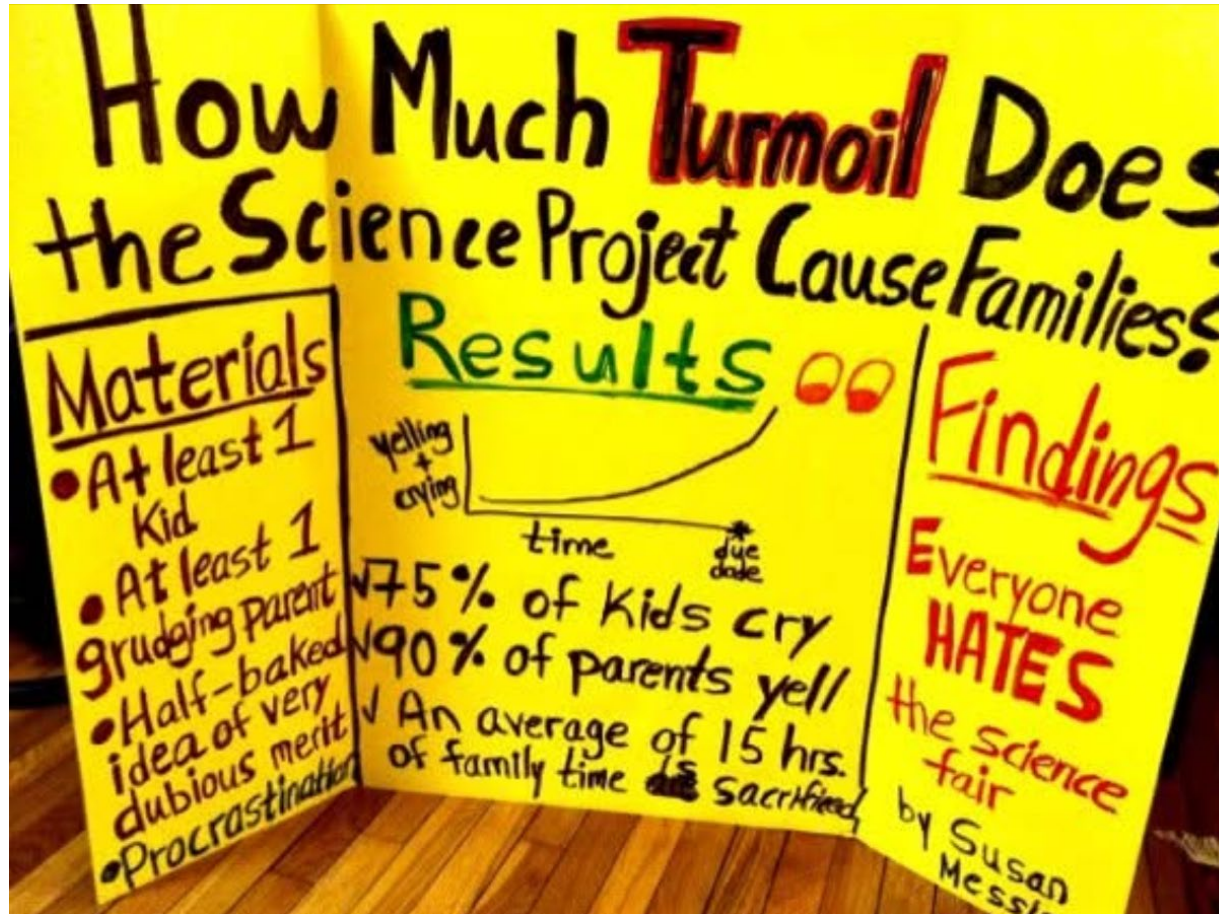
Resolutions-Have Fun

**Next time you get
a call from an
unknown number,
answer it by
whispering...
"It's done, but
there's blood
everywhere!"**





Resolutions-Stop Dumb Things





Resolutions-Be Yourself

**Apparently the serving size for
chips is 10 chips.
Listen, I eat 10 chips while
deciding if I even want chips.**



Resolutions-Work Hard

**My boss arrived at work
in a brand-new Lamborghini.
I said, "Wow, that's an
amazing car!" He replied,
"If you work hard, put all your
hours in, and strive for excellence,
I'll get another one next year."**



Paying Bonus Idea





Resolutions-Being Clear



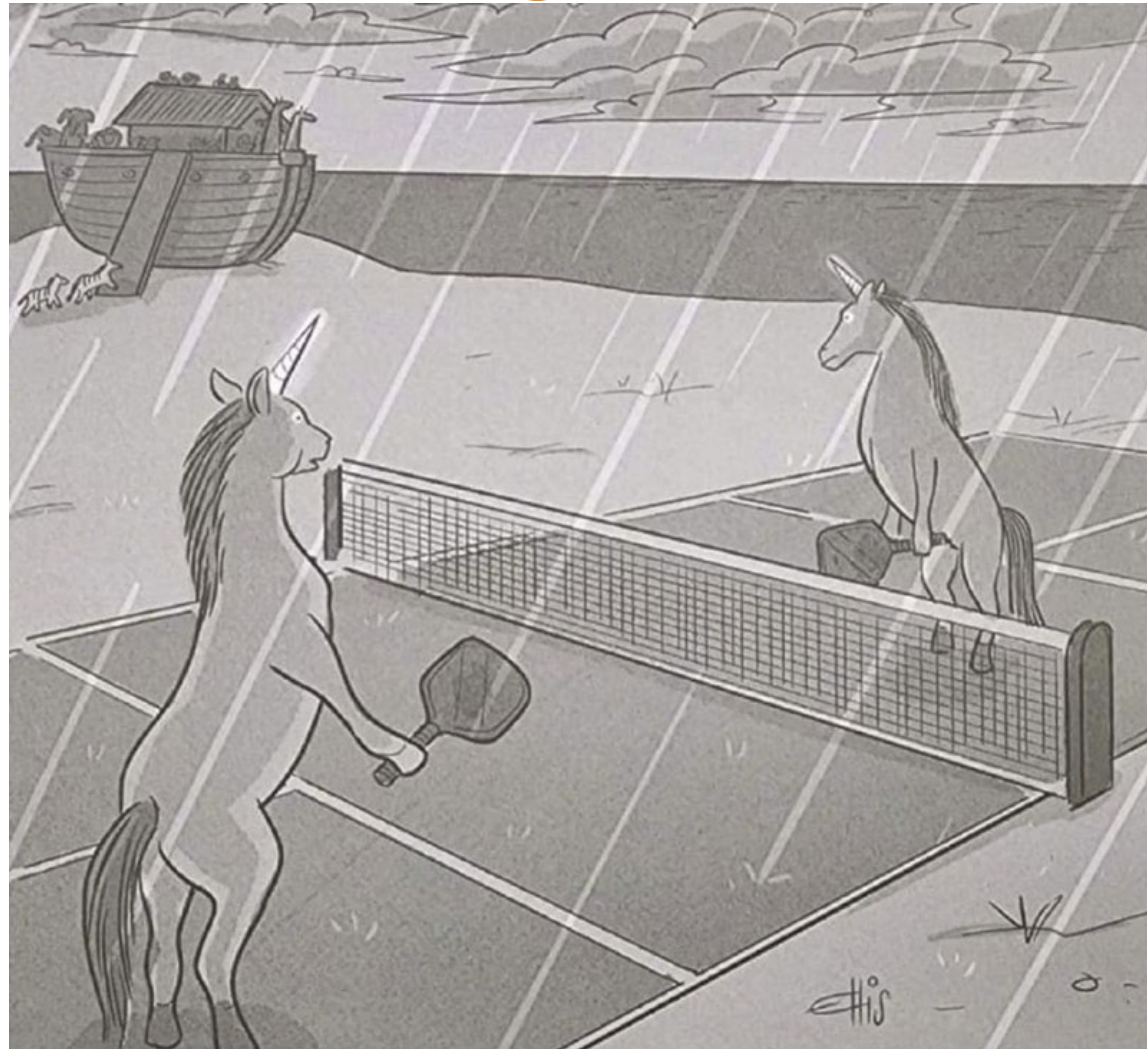


Resolutions-Professional Skepticism

**It's 6 months
since I joined the gym
and no progress.
I'm going there in
person tomorrow, to
find out whats really
going on...**



Resolutions-Avoid Big Risks





Resolutions-Build Relationships





People-Centric Leadership





CPA Are Awesome!



Norris Weese





Takeaway for Everyone

- bmimscpa@gmail.com





What Just Happened?-Roadmap

- Diffuse the negative perception of CFOs
- Know changes and trends to understand change and retention
- Stay siloed at your retention peril
- Resolutions roadmap
- We earned CPE
- We learned how to be more valuable ourselves

Thank You!

Please share your thoughts and comments.

Bob Mims Bob@

TheKnowledgeInstitute.com

You can also connect with us on LinkedIn, or call us at 704-942-0413

