

# Beneath the surface

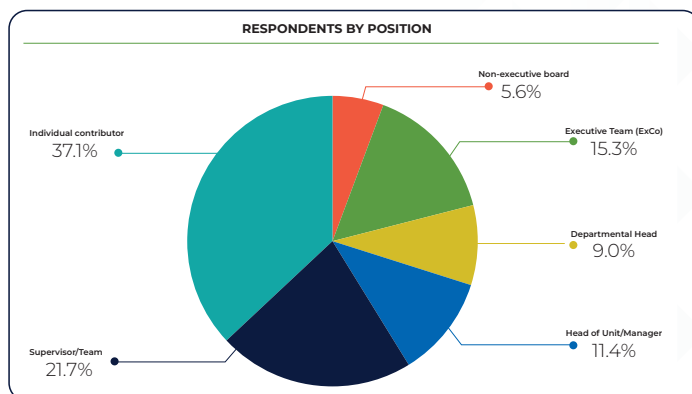
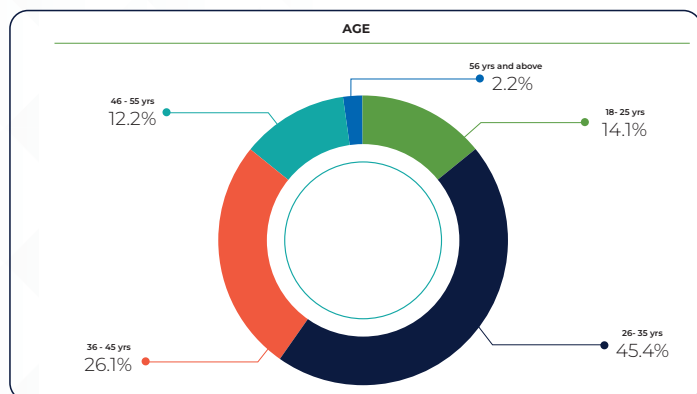
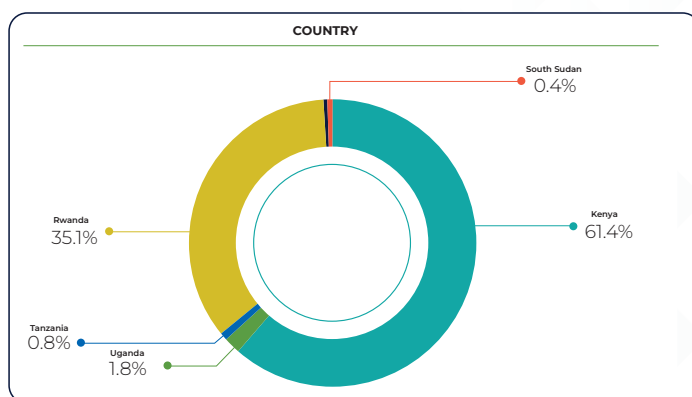
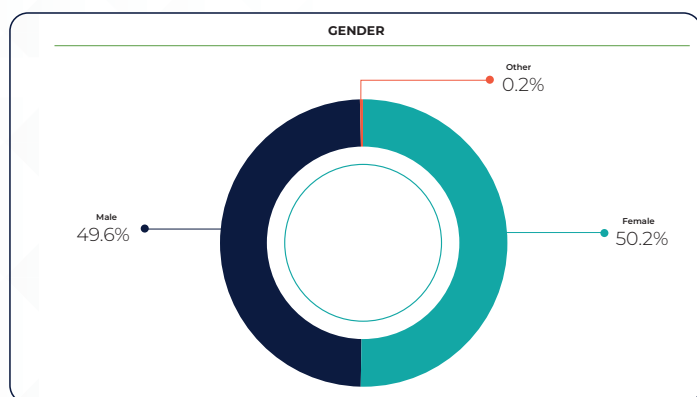
Decoding organisation culture in the new world of work

**Employee energy is the fuel of every enterprise, and leaders need a workplace culture that not only attracts and retains the best people but one that inspires and enables talent to give their best as they deliver great results.**

Over the past 12 years, Connect X, a boutique organisation culture and change management agency, has undertaken more than 30 organisational culture assessments across a broad range of sectors in East Africa. Through these assessments, we have established a deep understanding of the motivations and priorities of employees, as well as the factors that impact organisational culture and transformation. We have also gathered insights into how best to deliver meaningful and effective transformation for organisations on the people side of change. This work has become invaluable to leaders seeking to achieve employee motivation and engagement for effective execution.

We launched the **2023 East Africa Workplace Culture Assessment** on 19th September 2023, with a desire to deepen our understanding of the current employee experience as well as the aspirations of the East African workforce. The 2023 assessment was completed by 502 employees from across East Africa.

## Survey Demographics



## Report Highlights

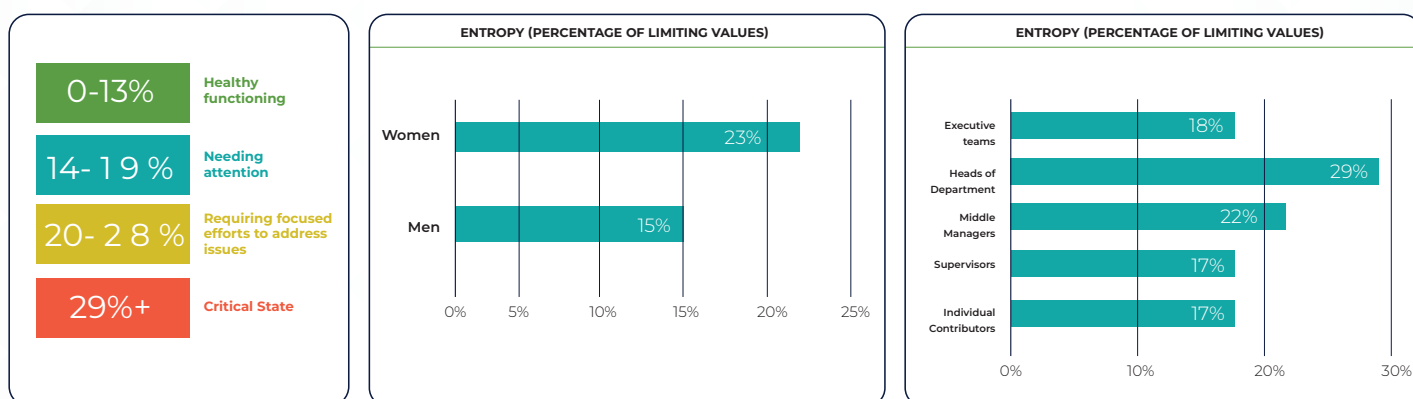
### What is working

- Across the different groups, employees generally feel that the organisation is on the right track- they want to see values such as accountability, teamwork, employee engagement, brand image and customer satisfaction continue to be prioritised in their workplace.
- Most employees have their own values represented in the current culture of their workplace, an indication that they are contributing to shaping the culture and are not simply victims of a culture created by others. This provides the opportunity to draw on employees to make any culture shifts required.

### Challenges for employees today

- Survey results show that organisations are focused on delivering on the success of the organisation but do not effectively address the human need for safety, inclusion and balance between their effort and their reward.
- Employees describe experiencing an absence of trust, friction between employees and leaders, a lack of transparency, incivility in communication, lack of employee well-being, poor processes for managing and retaining people and a lack of cohesiveness and collaboration.
- Cultural entropy, the amount of energy in a group that is wasted by navigating culture related challenges at work, is at an entropy rate of 21% in this assessment. Anything above 13% poses a significant risk to workplace culture and performance. This reinforces the fact that addressing culture challenges should be a key priority for leaders.
- Employees who identified as departmental heads record a 29% entropy rate, pointing to the need to immediately support this group. This frustration is driven by cost reduction, exploitation, resistance to change and a silo mentality.
- The absence of safety is significantly higher for female employees, who record an entropy score of 22% against a score of 15% for men. Our results indicate that women feel less aligned with the current organisational culture and are most impacted by conflict avoidance and cost reduction.
- The report shows that each generation is currently experiencing the workplace differently, based on their diverse aspirations and motivations, and seeking different attributes from both their teams and the business as a whole. Preconceived biases about each other, and our growing lack of understanding across the generations, is affecting how we effectively communicate with each other at all levels.

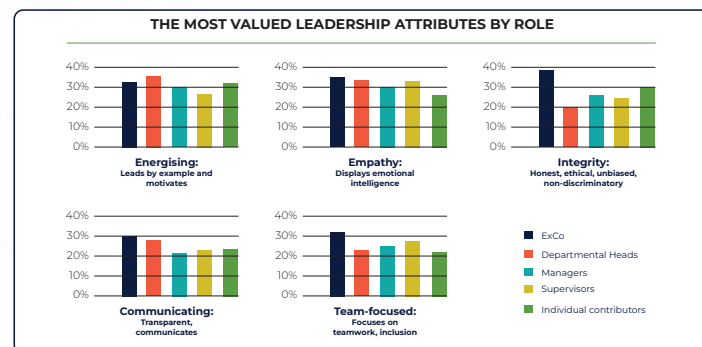
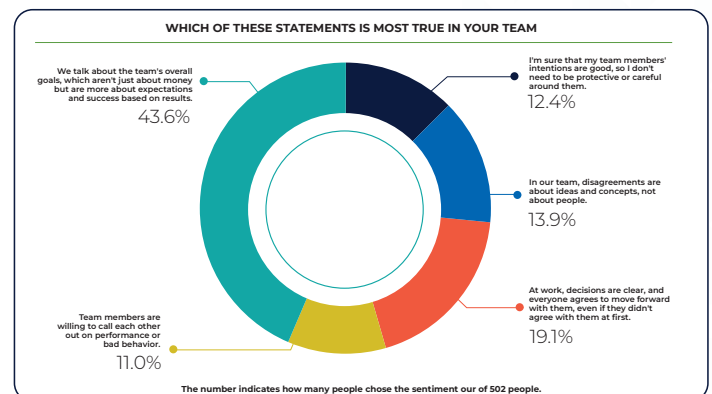
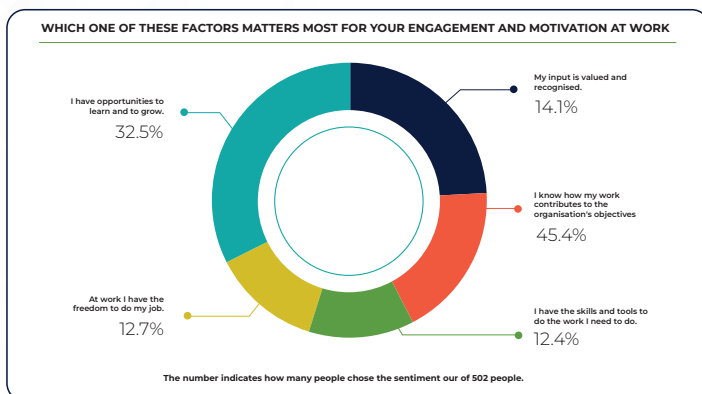
### Entropy



## Challenges for employees today

- Societal values such as social justice, future generations, environmental protection and human rights are absent across all demographics. It is interesting that the employee feedback represents minimal focus on this, both in the selection of personal values, current and desired culture as well as in the verbatim feedback. Employees do not share this as a motivation, a source of challenge or a need for change both at an organisational and individual level.
- The feedback indicates a workplace experience characterised by the absence of psychological safety. Employees use terms such as backstabbing, witch hunts, gossip, bullying, shouting and sabotage to describe elements at work that frustrate them. They also share that internal competition, blame and lack of clear direction impact their ability to trust their leaders and each other.
- The term 'performance punishment', the practice of burdening high-performing individuals with more work, is also emerging as a challenging factor. Managers do this rather than addressing poor performance in the team. At the manager level, instead of coaching their teams to deliver a better quality of work, managers often take the work on themselves to avoid conflict.

## Additional Employee's feedback



## A Way Forward

This report does not replace the need for organisations to undertake a full culture diagnosis within their organisation but provides insight into some of the areas in which leaders need to pay attention.

While employees desire organisations to have a willingness to adapt and be open to new perspectives, there is a call for organisations to put the employee at the centre of initiatives and foster more collaboration. We recommend five key steps to shift the employer-employee relationship:

1. Define and build an engaged, collaborative and inclusive community at work.
2. Emotionally contract teams and agree on behaviour norms.
3. Intentionally address the challenges getting in the way of sustainable work.
4. Build resilience on the team.
5. Embrace change and the need for inclusive collaboration.

For more details on the report results and the five recommended steps, please see the full Connect X Report.

[About Connect X](#) ›

**Connect X exists to catalyse positive change in organisations through the design and implementation of a fear-free workplace culture in order to support employees to grow and thrive while delivering on the organisational mission.**

Each engagement we deliver is uniquely designed and customised to meet the needs of our client organisation and its employees.

We utilise a highly structured program design approach, with clear indicators and methods for measuring success, which enables faster adoption and optimisation of the investment in culture change initiatives.

### Connect X

Ikigai, Lavington, Nairobi

**Email:** [teamconnect@connectxm.co.ke](mailto:teamconnect@connectxm.co.ke)

**Tel:** +254 700 299 558

