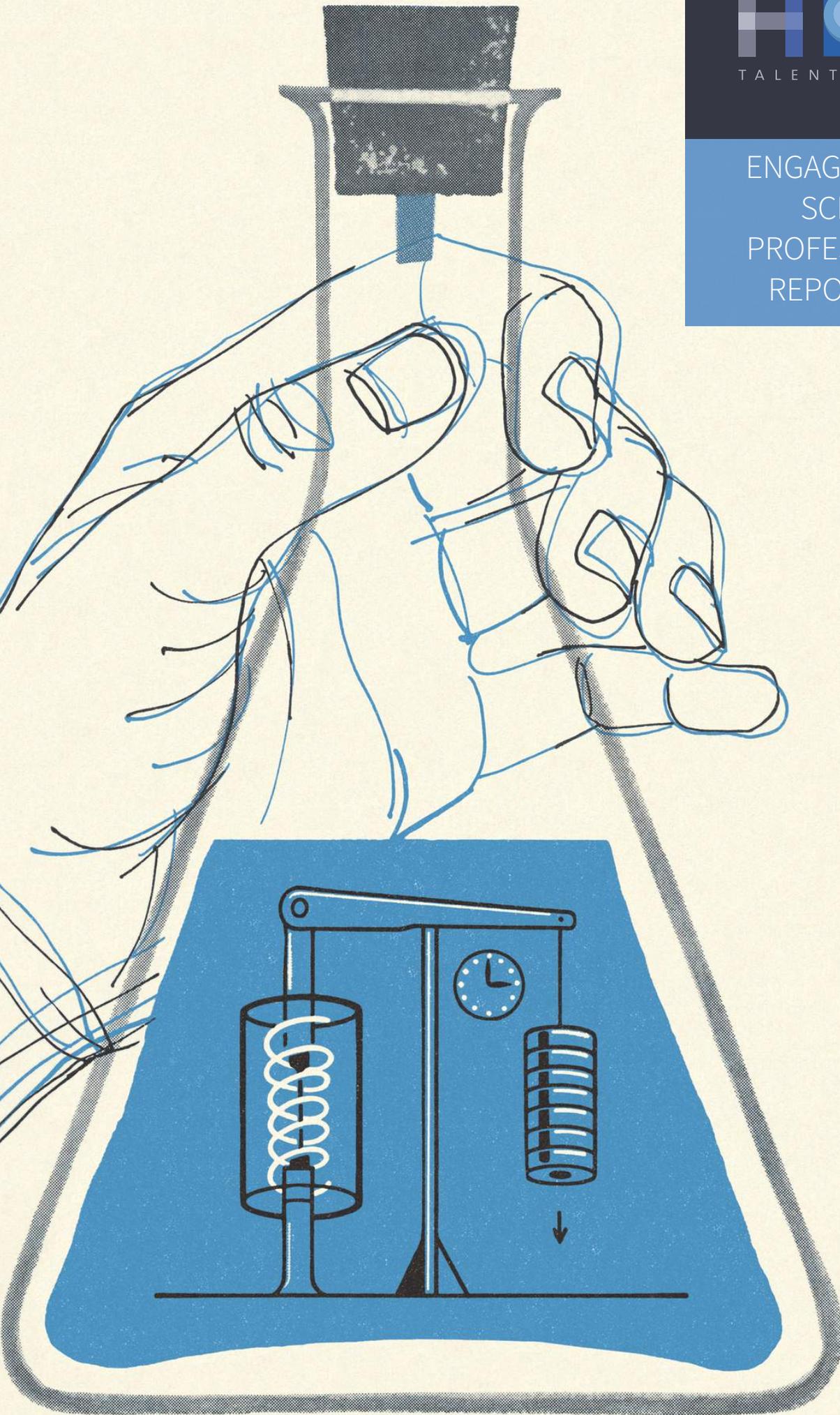


ENGAGING YOUR  
SCIENCE  
PROFESSIONALS  
REPORT 2017



# MAGNETIC ATTRACTION

Employee engagement appears to have become a separate management science, an industry even. Whilst it remains one of the most significant leadership challenges globally, it has particular significance in Ireland as unemployment continues to decrease and the employment landscape shifts. Despite its imperative, many organisations achieve little from their efforts, often relying on surveys and changes in benefits to try and grow engagement. In truth, employee engagement must permeate every aspect of an employee's experience, from work content to leadership behaviours and everything in between.

This report looks specifically at professionals who work within **Science** and shares engagement drivers and actual engagement experience. The responses look at culture, learning, benefits, leadership and the organisation of work. It further asks which external forces science professionals feel present the biggest threat to their firms.

The research for this report was undertaken by survey, with 1,340 professionals working in science related careers participating. 55.8% of respondents were female, 44.2% male and ranged across 6 layers of role level including Director (8.6%), Function Head (4.9%), Senior Manager (11.3%), Manager (17.8%), Supervisor (7.7%) and Standalone Specialist (49.7%).

We are very grateful for the time participants gave to the data collection process. They work in one of five industry segments being: Pharmaceutical (42.2%), Medical Devices & Diagnostics (19.6%), Biopharmaceutical (17.1%), Food & Beverage (14.7%) and Laboratory Services (6.4%). Participants were asked to identify the function they work in, which was reported as follows: Research/NPD (18.2%), Quality Assurance (27.7%), Quality Control/Analytical (6.7%), Quality Control/Bioanalytical (3.6%), Process Development (2.1%), Technical (5.5%), EHS (2.7%), Technical Operations/Manufacturing Science & Technology (9.7%),

Factors of “Respect”, “Listening” and “Recognition” are the three most powerful engagement drivers for science professionals. However, they are also the three areas that show greatest variance between what respondents believe to be important and what they report they actually experience in their firms today. “Trust” is also a considerable gap according to 41% of participants.

Validation (3.3%), Regulatory Affairs (8.5%), Pharmacovigilance (1.8%), Clinical Operations/Trials (4.9%), Medical Affairs (2.4%), Medical Information (1.2%), Upstream/Cell Culture (1.2%) and Downstream/Purification (0.5%).

We started by asking the respondents to rate 12 organisational characteristics, as to their impact on their personal engagement. As always, we hope this report provides some support in your organisation's engagement strategy and we are always grateful to receive any feedback that you may wish to share.

**84%** See how a company shows respect for their employees as key to their engagement.

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
Level of innovation encouraged	37%	48%	14%	1%
Leadership's capability to cope well with pressure	58%	37%	5%	0%
Leadership listening to valuing employee's opinions/ contributions to decision making	72%	25%	3%	0%
Trust in the organisation's leadership	62%	32%	5%	1%
Clarity of the organisation's vision	43%	44%	12%	1%
Employee recognition	67%	27%	5%	1%
Team oriented work environment	42%	44%	13%	1%
High level of employee empowerment	45%	48%	6%	1%
Respect for employees	<b>84%</b>	13%	3%	0%
Commitment to CSR	17%	55%	23%	5%
Workforce diversity	20%	46%	27%	7%
Your working relationship with your immediate manager	64%	30%	6%	0%

# WINNING FORMULA

Much has been written about the value of drawing on contracting or agile talent. Organisations are staying lean by bringing in specific scientific, technical or operational skill sets as needed, rather than hiring permanent resources. Science professionals are now choosing to work as contractors more often than ever before, building portfolios of experiences rather than developing their CV.s. They are choosing shorter term assignments that pay a premium rather than working out to pension.

Almost half of all professionals working in science related roles would choose to contract.

When asked under what circumstances respondents would choose to work as an independent contractor 13% indicated they were already currently working as such. A further 32% of respondents said they would pick this path for the pay premium that agile working provides. 40% of science professionals would willingly work as a contractor if there was no immediate permanent option available to them. Just 15% of those engaging in the research suggested they would not work as a contractor and did not foresee any need to.

We asked respondents to rate the importance of 10 compensation and benefit factors in their decision to join or remain at an organisation:

Annual Leave matters more than Performance Bonus

Pension is now more important than Healthcare.

Car allowance seen as having little impact.

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
Basic salary	72%	25%	2%	1%
Performance Bonus	40%	45%	13%	2%
Annual leave entitlement	51%	39%	8%	2%
Sick pay	30%	37%	24%	9%
Share options	16%	27%	34%	23%
Car allowance	6%	16%	24%	54%
Subsidised education	14%	29%	30%	27%
Healthcare cover	50%	31%	13%	6%
Pension	57%	30%	10%	3%
Flexitime	43%	31%	21%	5%

# TEAM CHEMISTRY

While the concept of effective teamwork has long been a holy grail for many organisations, collaborative effort is often leaked through gaps in team roles and poor organisation. A system developed by Deloitte named Business Chemistry, seeks to enhance the value derived from team structures by identifying four primary work styles that enable higher value output to be achieved. The concept centres around the values of big picture, pragmatism, momentum and connectivity all being present within the team.

At best amongst our survey respondents, participation in cross functional teams as a work method can be described as sporadic and in most cases without any real structure or autonomy.

Only 19% of firms put clear thought into combining the right skills and personality mix to work teams.

Only 60% of respondents say that they participate in cross functional teams with any regularity and only half of these are empowered as a team to set their own goals or to make their own decisions. Less than a fifth of science professionals responding to the survey say that no real thought is put into how a team is put together to ensure the right combinations of skills and personalities.

Just under a quarter of respondents identify their organisations as having strong emphasis on good systems being in place to support knowledge share in their work teams. Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, just 23% of survey participants say their cross function teams have a shared sense of accountability and clear understanding of responsibilities.

We asked respondents to share with us how clear they were about their organisation's strategy, culture and values:

Clarity on organisation strategy is generally strong.

Link between personal role and strategy is well understood.

Values are not as observed in actions or practices.

	STRONGLY AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
I am clear on what my organisation strategy is	33%	42%	12%	11%	2%
I understand the connection between my role and the strategy	42%	40%	11%	5%	2%
I am clear on the organisation's values	37%	38%	15%	7%	1%
These values are enshrined in all of the organisation's practices	19%	39%	22%	13%	7%
I believe our organisation culture is aligned with its strategy	19%	33%	25%	14%	9%
The organisation takes great care to hire to values when recruiting	14%	26%	23%	19%	16%
My firm does not communicate strategy with the wider business	10%	20%	24%	27%	19%

# SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

Scientists should be curious and their organisations innovative. A commitment to continuous learning is core to these contentions and whether its about new products, more

efficient processes or addressing unresolved challenges, organisational support for learning and development (L&D) is essential. So it is perhaps surprising that the experience of the 1,340 respondents to this survey is such, that widespread commitment to any of the learning processes below relates only to the standard management activities of induction and performance management.

Research respondents from the Pharmaceutical sector report the highest level of L&D support in general,

	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
Induction Programmes	50%	37%	9%	4%
Technical learning programmes	22%	48%	25%	4%
Behavioural skills programmes	15%	33%	36%	16%
Management and leadership development	18%	44%	23%	15%
E-learning resources	30%	35%	23%	11%
Professional qualification study support	15%	47%	25%	13%
International mobility programmes	8%	32%	33%	26%
Formal career planning	13%	27%	36%	24%
Senior mentorship allocation	13%	27%	36%	24%
Coaching	12%	37%	33%	18%
Frequent performance feedback	24%	47%	20%	9%
Formal performance management programmes	33%	35%	22%	10%

followed by Biopharmaceutical, Medical Devices, Food & Beverage and finally Laboratory Services. Almost half of the respondents from Food & Beverage state they rarely, if ever, have a formal appraisal. Almost two thirds in this segment say the same about formal career planning. The latter category of L&D initiatives, is that which is least experienced by professionals working in Science, according to the research results. Three quarters of participants from the Laboratory Services segment indicate that they rarely or never engage in formal career planning in their organisations, while 67% of that segment suggest the same about receiving frequent performance feedback from their managers. Coaching is a feature for about half of the respondents and broadly experienced equally across all five market segments.

While we note that technical learning programmes are experienced by most respondents, formal management and leadership development features well in the healthcare segments, it is rare in Food & Beverage and Laboratories Services. Whilst we did not seek age data in this particular research, we know from several studies of millennials that commitment to learning and a continuous flow of feedback, is key to which company they join and remain with. Lack of investment in L&D will therefore present an obstacle to attracting and retaining some employees in the future.

As a final area to review, we asked participants which of these external forces in their opinion represented the biggest threat to growth in the pharmaceutical, medical device and food production sectors in Ireland:

**29%** See the threat of increased competition from lower cost manufacturing regions as the biggest threat to growth.

Brexit and the potential resulting trade barriers	23%
Possible trade tariffs on exports to the US	14%
Reduction in levels of FDI from the US	12%
Changing political leanings in Europe	5%
Downward pressure on produce prices	15%
Threat of cyber attacks	2%
Lower cost manufacturing regions	<b>29%</b>

# CONCLUSION

While females outnumber males in the response base to this survey, that really proves little in observing the gender balance within science in general. However, using this response pool to assess career paths between genders is in itself illustrative and the results perhaps are concerning.

Despite outnumbering males in this group of 1,340 science professionals by 5:4, males outnumber females in all but one of the levels above specialist or standalone. The ratios at each level are as follows: Supervisor 5:3 (Male:Female), Manager 19:17 (Female:Male), Senior Manager 13:10 (Male:Female), Function Head 8:3 (Male:Female) and Director 11:7 (Male:Female).

Given the higher number of female respondents in the response pool, it is easy to believe that had the gender balance in the group been at par, males would have outnumbered females at all levels of leadership and to a greater extent.

Perhaps therefore, the challenge is not just about attracting females to careers in Science but more about keeping them engaged in their career paths. The competition for talent in science is raging, driven by continuous pressure on all related segments to produce new products, with better performance at lower cost. While the subject of women in science is regularly discussed and interested parties work hard to address the challenges, little seems to change. Yet opportunity exists to draw greater value from this particular potential talent pool.

Though the pattern of responses to questions around many engagement factors are similar, female participants in this survey responded much more strongly than males to questions such as “Leadership’s capability to cope well under pressure”, “Leadership listening...” and “Trust”. These are higher order values and behaviours in any successful leadership culture and organisation. Companies that adjust their workplace cultures to reflect more attention to these essential values and behaviours, may well discover a wider, richer, sustained talent pool, that delivers real competitive advantage.

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