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Swiss HR-Barometer 2022

Focus
Innovation and Failure

Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

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Latest edition

This year's edition of the Swiss HR Barometer marks the twelfth time that the working atmosphere experienced by employees in Switzerland has been analysed. This year's focus was the topic of «Innovation and Failure». When experiences regarding missed objectives are shared within a company, and employees use what they have learnt to develop new products and procedures, a company's power to innovate is strengthened. This is of vital importance to companies when you consider today's general fast-paced environment, increasing digitalisation and rising shortage of skilled workers. The Swiss HR Barometer focuses on how innovation and error cultures work within companies and analyses how these are linked to employees' individual work attitudes and behaviours.

Random sampling

The survey is based on a random sampling of the sample register kept by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. It took place between March and June 2022. Respondents could choose between online and paper versions of the questionnaire. In all, 2088 responses were received from employees in the German-, French- and Italian-speaking regions of Switzerland.

Focus: Innovative work behaviour

Employees in Switzerland are innovative. Only a fifth of employees in Switzerland say that they rarely demonstrate innovative work behaviour. This is reflected across almost every sector and regardless of the company size. There are, however, differences when it comes to age, gender and career level. In comparison to older employees, younger employees are more likely to say they demonstrate innovative work behaviour, and men are more likely to do so than women. Employees in managerial positions are more likely to say that they are innovative at work.

Focus: Innovation support and psychological safety

The majority of employees feel supported in the innovation process by their colleagues and managers. They cooperate in the development of new ideas and look for new ways of tackling problems. There is still room for improvement in terms of actually taking the time necessary to develop ideas: only 47% of the respondents agree that they do this. 70% of employees in Switzerland experience a culture of psychological safety in their company. This means that they feel free to express themselves without fear of having a negative impact on their relationships with their colleagues or career.

Focus: Learning from errors

86% of the employees believe that errors can be helpful in their own work and give them the opportunity to learn. This opinion is shared by employees across all sectors and sizes of company in equal measure. There was also no difference between managers and employees without managerial responsibility, or between genders. Older employees and employees who have been

employed by the same company for longer tend to be more sceptical with regard to how useful errors are in their own work. However, even for this group, the majority of respondents have a positive attitude towards errors.

Focus:
Error management and error aversion

A company's error culture influences whether errors lead to positive or negative consequences. Effective error management plays the most crucial role here. Two thirds of the employees report that people communicate well regarding errors in their company, that mistakes are analysed, and that people know how to deal with errors when they occur. Somewhat less pronounced is the employees' willingness to risk making an error: only 48% say they are willing to take risks to achieve goals. Error aversion, i.e. a negative attitude towards errors, is less prevalent within companies according to the employees. Around a fifth of the employees feel encumbered by errors. Less than one tenth of the employees feel that in their company, it could be better to hide errors from others.

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Focus:
Influencing factors when dealing with errors and innovation within companies

Both the error culture (error management and error aversion) and innovation support from colleagues foster a positive attitude towards learning from errors. If work is set up in such a way that they have plenty of autonomy, a high level of participation and diversity in their tasks, employees are more likely to report that they learn from errors.

A range of influencing factors have an impact on innovative work behaviour. While an independent career orientation tends to encourage innovative work behaviour, a loyalty-focused orientation tends to see the employee be more cautious. As expected, learning from errors has a positive relationship with innovation. On an organisational level, it seems that error aversion does not have a negative impact on innovative work behaviour. Innovation support from colleagues and managers encourages innovative behaviour, as does a workplace culture of autonomy, diversity of tasks and participation.

Focus:
Impacts of error and innovation culture on work attitudes and behavioural intentions

The organisational factors of error management, psychological safety and innovation support from colleagues and managers lead to reduced stress, higher job satisfaction, a higher level of commitment, lower turnover intention and higher satisfaction with respect to the employee's future career path. Error aversion in companies leads to an increased sense of insecurity in the workplace, more stress, lower job satisfaction, lower commitment, a higher turnover intention and lower career satisfaction. The only factor to have a positive effect on job insecurity is psychological safety within the company.

Focus:
Impacts of learning from errors and innovative work behaviour on work attitudes and behavioural intentions

The individual factors of learning from errors and innovative work behaviour have an impact on work attitudes and intended behaviours. Employees who see errors as an opportunity to learn something, and employees who can frequently demonstrate innovative behaviour at work, are more satisfied with their career path. Employees who often exhibit innovative behavi-

our are also more satisfied with their work and show a higher level of commitment towards their company.

Trend:
Career orientation

As before, the majority of employees can be assigned to traditional career orientations, however there are a few changes compared to the last two surveys carried out in 2018 and 2020. The proportion of traditional security-oriented employees remains constant. For them, stability and job security remain important factors in their career planning. However, the proportion of traditional promotion-oriented and independent-oriented employees is dropping. Accordingly, more employees are being assigned to the disengaged career orientation group. The trend is therefore moving away from career and future-orientation being the most important factors, and towards family and leisure time, and focusing on what is happening in the present. Employees across all career orientation types see learning from mistakes as an opportunity in equal measure. Employees with traditional promotion-oriented and independent career orientations are the most likely to demonstrate innovative behaviours.

Trend:
Human resource management

As in previous years, employees in Switzerland tend to rate the way their work is designed (task variety, task completeness, task significance, feedback, autonomy) positively. After a more negative assessment in 2020, a slight upward trend can be seen this year. There is still a clear requirement for action with regard to performance management and employee development. More than half of the employees still do not get regular feedback on their performance. The number of continuing professional development days taken per year has reduced again. Where management and participation are concerned, there is a more positive result. Compared to the last survey, attitudes towards superiors and the relationship between employees and supervisors has remained at a relatively high level. It is pleasing to see that participation has risen slightly for the first time in more than a decade. However, there is, as ever, a requirement for action. With respect to compensation, there has been, as in previous years, little change. The number of employees who only receive a single fixed salary component has risen again compared to 2020, but remains below the level of previous years.

Trend:
Psychological contract

The psychological contract analyses the expectations and offers of employees and employers. Expectations on the part of the employees demonstrate a clear upwards trend in comparison to previous years. In particular, employees' expectations of their employers have increased with regard to fair compensation and development opportunities, but also with respect to loyalty and interesting work. The employers seem to be responding to these raised expectations. The results show that the companies are also increasingly aligning their offerings with employees' expectations in 2022.

Trend:
job insecurity and employability

The labour market situation in Switzerland has generally improved in 2022 according to the employees. Perceived job insecurity has decreased in al-

most every sector. 66% of the employees see no reason to be concerned that they could lose their job in the near future. This finding reflects the current labour market situation, which is marked by an acute shortage of skilled workers. The current labour market situation also seems to be having an impact on their assessment of their own employability. For the first time since 2010, employees have rated their employability more highly. This trend is pleasing and could indicate that both employees and employers are recognising the enormous importance of employability and are investing in it.

Trend:
Job satisfaction, commitment and intention to give notice

Job satisfaction in Switzerland is, as before, at a relatively high level. A more detailed breakdown into different types of (dis)satisfaction, however, shows a downwards trend with regard to stabilised satisfaction. Despite this drop, those reporting stabilised satisfaction still make up the largest proportion of employees in Switzerland. Compared to 2020, there has also been a decrease in employees with a resigned attitude. Accordingly, there are fewer employees contending with an unsatisfactory working situation. Employees in this group who are trying to make a positive change, however, make up a larger percentage than in 2020. Employees' commitment to their employer remains at a high level and intention to give notice has dropped slightly once again. In the current labour market, in which employees are finding it easier to find a new position due to the shortage of skilled workers, these findings are positive for employers.

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Conclusions

We can conclude that if the labour market continues to be beneficial for employees, working behaviour will become more dynamic. Currently, intention to quit is low, but perceived employability has risen for the first time in ten years and employees are reporting more dynamic forms of job (dis)satisfaction, which indicate rising expectations with respect to a company's willingness to change. Companies should arm themselves with improved HR practices to combat this, with particular notice to be paid to compensation and employee development.

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