

State of work in technology (with Bob, Kim and Eric)

Bob Lemke: Kim, I saw that we recently released the results of the State of Work in America, and I'm really excited to learn a little bit more about the survey. I have an upcoming meeting with a technology sector client, and I saw some information that would be great to be able to share with them, and I'm interested in your insight. Do you have some time to speak to those, possibly?

Kim Jacoby: One key theme was around well-being. So we saw that mental emotional stress as well as long hours were key reasons why employees are feeling stressed out or burned out at the organization.

Bob Lemke: Yeah, I mean, the technology sector is under a lot of pressure these days. If you think about headlines, you know, thousands of jobs lost, thousands of individual workers laid off and really in an environment that they probably are enjoying at some level for a lot of different reasons based on information that you see, such a really interesting perspective and context.

Eric Gonzaga: And I think that I mean, I have noticed that two of my tech clients, just with how stressful the environment is, that, you know, the issues she just was talking about, mental health, big benefit that folks are offering. And part of it is just folks know that, hey, we're paying competitively. Everybody spent a lot of money on pay recently. And so now it's all about how do you keep those folks? It's not that easy. And so, you know, when I'm talking to tech companies and leaders, what they're talking about doing is just making sure that they have their employee value proposition set. How do employees align with the mission and really, what's the role? How do we treat employees? That's kind of the mantra of the day, because money's not keeping folks at these organizations anymore because everybody's spending money.

Bob Lemke: Yeah, I think the, you know, the workload part of it, the long hours probably speaks a bit to their ability to manage capacity and demand on the client side. I think about technology workers not only in the tech sector, but technology workers in other sectors, and they share similar issues I would see. So it's really interesting around that, you know, the workload and the stress of the environment, the reductions that are going on, how that's showing up in the data.

Kim Jacoby: There's a big fear among technology employees about layoffs, about job security, and that were those were two reasons why employees said they would leave an organization. We've also seen among current employees that they're switching jobs a lot. So we saw many saying that in the past 12 months they have switched jobs and they've actually stayed within the technology industry when they have switched.

Bob Lemke: Yeah, I think I saw a lot of, you know, thousands of job openings last year and certainly fewer job openings this year. But the hunt for good, cool work, you know, the use of really high-end tools, probably the environment, the freedom, the flexibility they have to do good work is an ongoing issue. And I could see that that's showing up in the data as well.

Eric Gonzaga: I mean, they're still leaving and looking for other jobs. And I mean, ultimately it's, you know, nowadays creativity is essential, you know, when it comes to technology. And technology is trying to solve a lot of issues that we've been dealing with over the last few years. So how do you get those people? You know, I mean, it really comes down to culture.

Bob Lemke: Well, there's a lot of hot skills, and if I don't have development opportunities within my current environment, I'm going to seek either a leader at another group that will support me or expose me to whether it's A.I. or cybersecurity or cloud computing. You know, these are in-demand skills. So I want to get more exposure to those things. I can see that, yeah.

Kim Jacoby: Right. So people who have switched jobs in the last 12 months, there is a strong majority who are actually actively looking for what's next, where am I going to go next? And when we looked at the data as far as why somebody joined an organization, why do they stay with an organization? Advancement opportunities was one of the key reasons.

Bob Lemke: Yeah, it seems like it's almost table stakes at some level, right? If you think about the tech worker and the evolving landscape of technology and skills demands that if I'm not providing those to my employees, they're going to seek it on their own. That resonates with me.

Eric Gonzaga: And I think it's, I mean, you've seen a lot of that because, again, I mean, folks spent all this money on comp and benefits. And then when it comes to, again, how do leaders engage? That's what it really comes down to, again, is how do people fit into, you know, the mission and the strategies of the organization. And the other issue is just, well, how do we ensure that those communications, it maybe requires a little bit more formality nowadays, but it's very employee centric at this point.

Bob Lemke: I could see there's ongoing struggle within the technology organizations, whether the tech sector itself is the career track as an individual contributor versus a leader, and the pressure on leadership. You know, if I'm thinking I'm an individual contributor now, my growth opportunities and leadership, maybe it's not the environment for me to start to lead a team. So that's another context that would be great to share with a client for sure. This has been really terrific. I appreciate you spending a bit of time here and joining in, offering some solutions and insights. It's going to be a really good conversation with the client, really enthused to be able to share this with them. Thank you.

Kim Jacoby: You're welcome. And have a great meeting, if you need any other data, just you know where to reach me.