

GEN Y AND THE WORLD OF WORK

A report into the workplace needs,
attitudes and aspirations of Gen Y Sweden

ACCOUNTANCY & TAX/CONSULTANTS/CONTACT CENTRES/EDUCATION/ENGINEERING/GENERAL MANAGEMENT/HUMAN RESOURCES/INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/LEGAL/OIL & GAS/OPERATIONS/PHARMACEUTICALS/SALES & MARKETING/TELECOMMUNICATIONS/TRANSPORTATION/UTILITY/WORKS

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
SUMMARY OF OUR RESEARCH	4
1. GEN Y SWEDEN AND THE WORLD OF WORK	6
2. LEADERSHIP	10
3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP	14
4. ATTRACT	16
5. RETAIN	20
6. TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK	24
ABOUT HAYS	26
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	27

FOREWORD

For a nation with only 9.5 million people, Sweden punches above its weight on the international stage.¹ Its social democratic model of free education, high pay and high taxes is famous the world over. Sweden also ranks second (behind Canada) in the Reputation Institute's 2013 global rankings, which measure international perceptions of the country's economy, environment and government.² This is no doubt bolstered by people's image of the country with its beautiful landscapes, its high standards of living and the fact that it is home to globally recognised businesses and iconic brands such as ABB, IKEA, Volvo, Ericsson, H&M and Sandvik to name just a few.

The so-called 'Swedish model' emerged post Second World War as a kind of compromise between unrestricted capitalism and a centrally planned, state-funded economy.³ Sweden thus became one of the world's fastest growing economies in the 1950s and 1960s. From this emerged Sweden's far-reaching social welfare system, which still sees social charges and taxes among the highest in the world, equivalent to 50 per cent of GDP.⁴ These high taxes and government economic intervention have not inhibited Sweden's global competitiveness however. Sweden is now ranked as the sixth most competitive economy in the world, according to the World Economic Forum.⁵

Their economic model is closely connected to the Swedish national character and the 'law of Jante'. Taken from a book by the Danish author Aksel Sandemose, this highlights a central feature of Scandinavian culture—that people are discouraged from promoting their own achievements over those of others. The law of Jante remains a strong and very real influence to the next generation of business leaders. "In general, Swedes are a shy species," Carl Waldekranz, co-founder of Stockholm-based start-up Tictail, told the New York Times. "The law of Jante is part of our culture. It tells us that no one can be better than anyone else."⁶

Despite weathering the recession of 2008 comparatively well, Sweden was not immune to the recent Eurozone Crisis. To some extent, the country's reliance on exports has tied their economic health too closely to the fortunes of others. 50 per cent of the country's produce is consumed abroad and 70 per cent of that is within Europe.⁷ This has recently led to an increase in unemployment, notably amongst some of the big Swedish exporters such as Ericsson and Volvo. It is, in particular, startlingly high for the Swedish youth, standing at 25 per cent for men and 22.3 per cent for women.⁸

Against this context Gen Y Sweden are emerging into the workplace with a mix of traditional attitudes and a set of brand new challenges. With high unemployment, many of Gen Y Sweden are biding their time before entering a relatively challenging jobs market. A large proportion of them have chosen to remain in education and an increasing number are considering starting their own business.

Our findings, based on a survey conducted amongst 1,000 of its members, suggest that there is still wide support for the basic tenets of the Swedish economic model. Despite there being more limited job prospects right now, this group have quite clear expectations when it comes to choosing an employer. Personal development, making a difference to society and finding interesting work all rate highly and they put their personal values and lifestyle far ahead of wealth creation.

James Cullens
Group HR Director
Hays

SUMMARY OF OUR RESEARCH

ABOUT OUR SURVEY

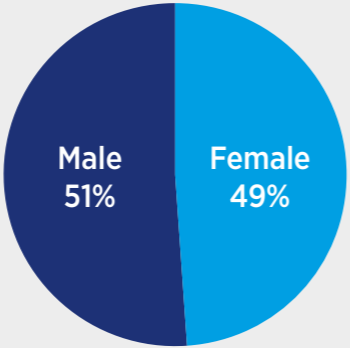
For our ninth Hays report on the needs and aspirations of Gen Y worldwide, we asked young people in Sweden to tell us how they see their future at work.

A total of 1,000 members of Gen Y Sweden answered our survey. 35 per cent identified themselves as a student or in full time education, much higher than our cross-country average of 27 per cent. A higher than average 16 per cent are also unemployed and looking for work, and less than a third are in full time work.

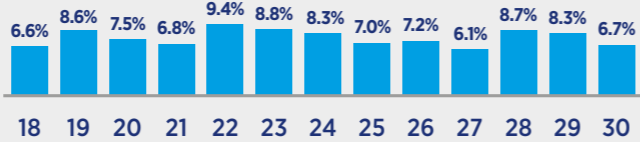
This research explores what young Swedish people look for in the world of work, what kind of career they aspire to, the rewards they expect and what gives them job satisfaction. It throws light on the kind of working environment they seek and the qualities they look for in their bosses.

Finally the research reveals some insights into the way Gen Y Sweden relate to social media and technology. The findings are invaluable for HR departments and organisations seeking to recruit, motivate and retain Gen Y Sweden as part of their workforce.

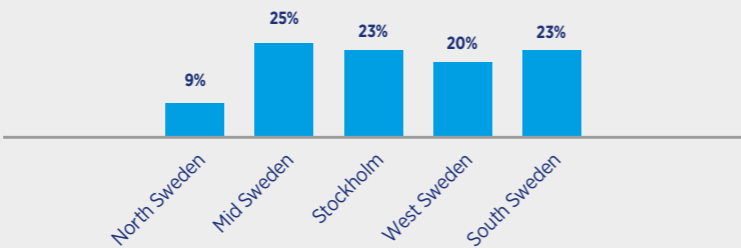
GENDER SPLIT



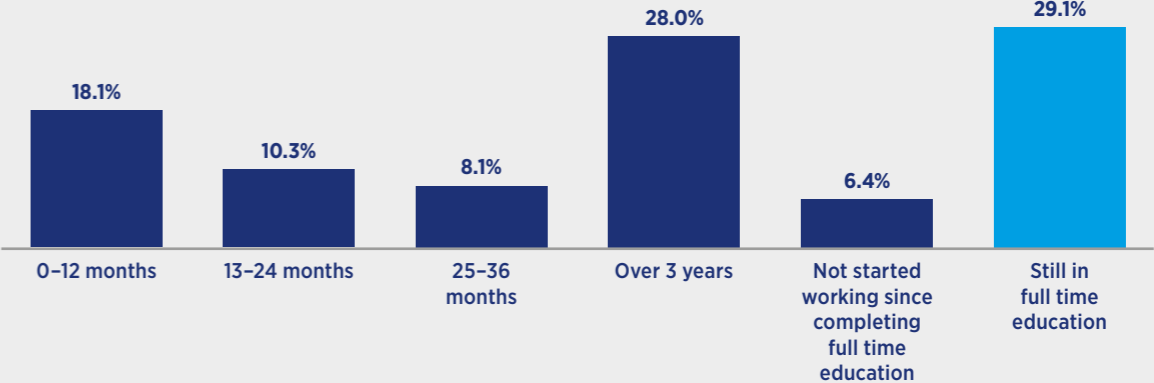
AGE SPLIT



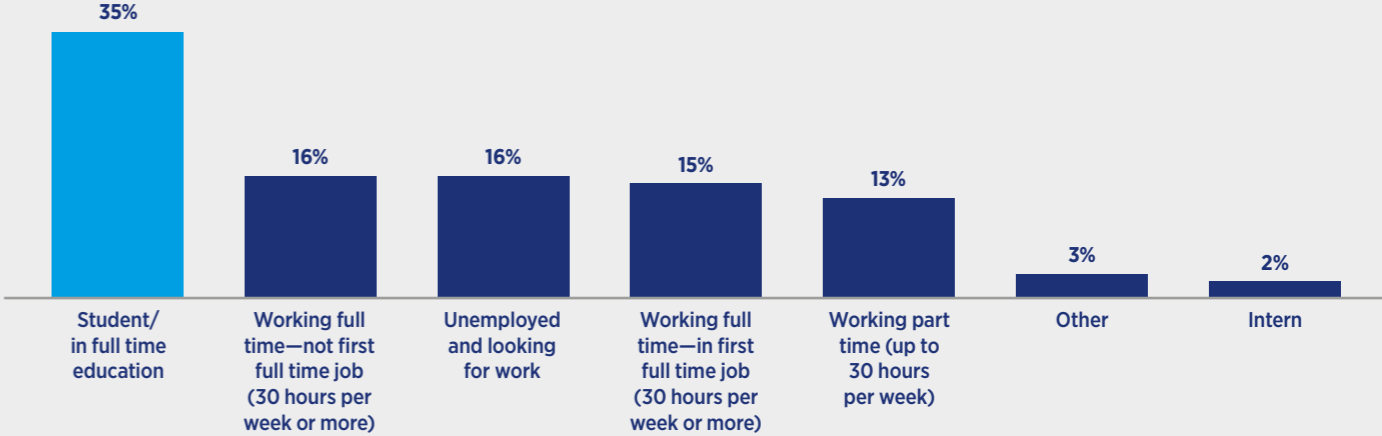
REGIONAL REPRESENTATION



YEARS IN WORK



CURRENT WORKING STATUS



PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 1,000 people born between 1983 and 1995 living in Sweden answered our survey. 16 per cent of respondents said they were unemployed and looking for work, and 13 per cent are only working part time. However, only six per cent have not worked at all since leaving education and currently 45 per cent are optimistic that job security is now a realistic prospect across all areas of the job market, far higher than the cross-country average. Regionally, the majority of our respondents come from Stockholm, Mid Sweden, South Sweden and West Sweden.

1. GEN Y SWEDEN AND THE WORLD OF WORK

Despite being the first generation of Swedes to experience an unemployment rate of over 20 per cent, Gen Y Sweden are starting from a relatively strong base. The World Economic Forum still rates Sweden as one of the most productive and competitive economies in the world, citing a strong focus on education and ranking it number one in the world for technological readiness and sixth for innovation.

ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS:

ARE SELF EMPLOYED/HAVE THEIR OWN BUSINESS

3.7%

AGREE THAT HAVING THEIR OWN BUSINESS IS THEIR MAIN CAREER OBJECTIVE

14.7%

WOULD CONSIDER HAVING THEIR OWN BUSINESS IN THE FUTURE

48.8%

ARE NOT INTERESTED IN HAVING THEIR OWN BUSINESS

32.8%

Recent economic challenges have also done little to stem the flow of internationally successful start-ups emerging from Sweden, including many in the technology industry with Gen Y at the helm. Our survey finds a generally optimistic response to the challenges of today's employment market, a high level of interest in personal development opportunities, doing work that makes a difference to society, and an interest in having several different employers throughout their career. Gen Y Sweden don't want just any work, they want interesting and varied work.

A COACH FOR A BOSS

The precepts set out by the Law of Jante are evidenced in the responses from Gen Y Sweden when it comes to what they want from a manager. They largely steer away from using the term 'leader' when it comes to describing their ideal boss—this was chosen by just 33 per cent, low when compared to the cross-country average of 40 per cent. Instead, like a lot of their peers in other Western countries, they want a coach or mentor most of all. In keeping with the traditional Swedish collectivist approach to business, they are also twice as likely to see their ideal boss as a peer compared to our global average (24 per cent vs. 12 per cent).

GEN Y SWEDEN'S IDEAL BOSS:



46%

COACH/MENTOR



33%

LEADER



27%

CONFIDANT/
DISCUSS PRIVATE &
WORK MATTERS



25%

ADVISOR



24%

PEER



23%

DIRECTOR/
ALLOCATOR
OF WORK



10%

FRIEND

A similar story emerges when Gen Y Sweden name the most important qualities in a workplace leader. They favour the ability to motivate others overwhelmingly (chosen by 55 per cent). After this comes fairness (47 per cent) and knowledge/expertise (38 per cent).

BECOMING MORE ENTREPRENEURIAL

Team ethos and collective contribution are valued more than individual accomplishments in Sweden, which may help explain why the number of entrepreneurs emerging is comparatively low.⁹ However, Gen Y Sweden seem to have a slightly different attitude. The majority

(67 per cent) of respondents said that they are considering starting a business or already have one, perhaps caused in part by the recent high youth unemployment rate.

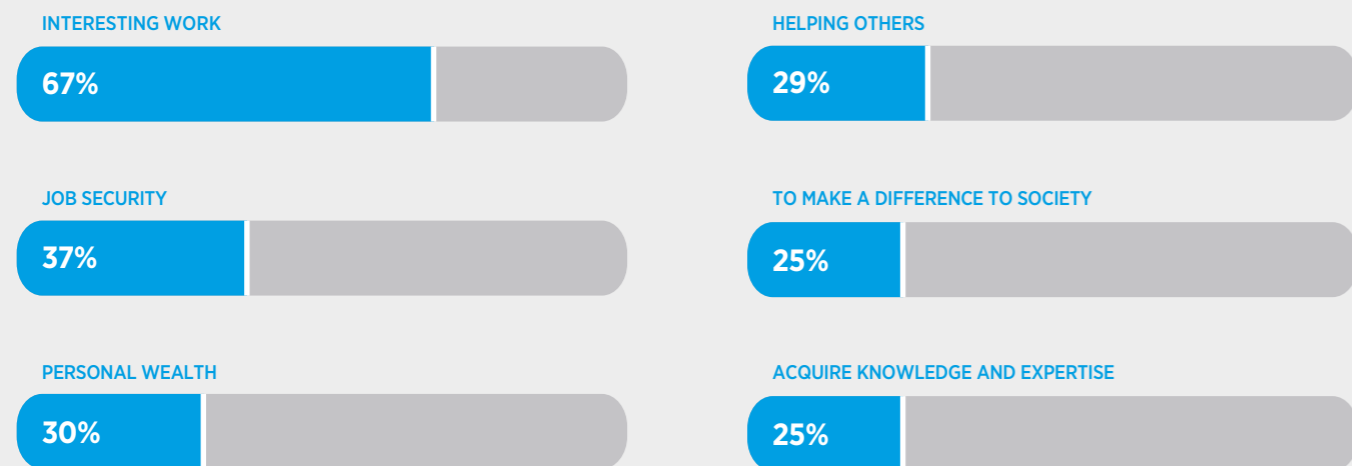
Some well-known and internationally successful start-ups have emerged in recent years, such as Spotify and SoundCloud in the technology and software sector. But while start-ups are becoming a more attractive proposition for this generation to consider, few have followed through on this desire. Sweden ranks among the lowest of all countries surveyed internationally in terms of those currently running their own business, at just four per cent.

A HUNGER FOR LEARNING AND TRAVEL

With free education from primary school through to university, coupled with high youth unemployment, it is understandable that Gen Y Sweden are studying for longer than elsewhere.¹⁰ 35 per cent are still in education according to our survey, well above our global average. Once they enter the world of work, however, the strong commitment to education and learning doesn't stop. The vast majority of respondents are willing to study through their careers, and want to do so in order to progress rather than to necessarily earn more money. Training and development is rated more highly than anything else in what they want from a potential employer (chosen by 51 per cent).

1. GEN Y SWEDEN AND THE WORLD OF WORK

WHAT GEN Y SWEDEN WANT MOST FROM THEIR WORK:



They also have an international aspect to their personal development interests. The vast majority (80 per cent) of Gen Y Sweden seem to want to make the most of their excellent language skills (among the best in the world)¹¹ to work internationally or on international-facing projects.

NOT MONEY ORIENTATED

Perhaps because the average wage is already relatively high in Sweden,¹² Gen Y are not primarily motivated by money when it comes to their career aspirations—far less so than many other countries surveyed so far.

Instead, interesting work is desired most from a career by over twice as many of Gen Y Sweden than those

looking for personal wealth when it comes to what they want most from their work (67 per cent vs. 30 per cent respectively). Furthermore, when we asked what gives them job satisfaction, we found that Gen Y Sweden are almost half as likely to choose financial reward compared to their international peers.

A FOCUS ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The Swedes are amongst Europe's most successful in balancing work and home life, with working hours often completed between 3pm and 5pm,¹³ and our cohort show no interest in changing this. Half of Gen Y Sweden define career success as achieving a work-life balance, and 43 per cent choose fun and social interaction as

the most important factors when deciding to work for a potential employer. We also found that social life around work is also significantly more important to Gen Y Sweden compared to the cross-country average (40 per cent vs 30 per cent). Long hours and a need for regular overtime will be a sure-fire way to drive employee turnover with this generation.

PROBLEMS FOR THE IT CROWD

Young Swedes are highly computer literate. The country has amongst the fastest broadband and 4G connections in the world, and the population certainly makes use of them. Research in 2012 found that 82 per cent of Swedes aged 15–16 use social networks daily,¹⁴ and the nation is third in the world for internet penetration.¹⁵

SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE WORKPLACE

29%

AGREE THAT EMPLOYERS ARE WITHIN THEIR RIGHTS TO CHECK THE FACEBOOK PAGES OF FUTURE EMPLOYEES



59%

THINK THAT EMPLOYERS SHOULD TRUST THEIR EMPLOYEES TO USE PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK



40%

CAN'T RESIST LOOKING AT WORK EMAILS WHEN ON HOLIDAY



38%

FIND IT HARD TO SWITCH-OFF FROM WORK AT WEEKENDS DUE TO CONSTANT CONNECTIVITY



However, they are also aware of the effect technology is having on work-life balance—our survey has found that many can't help but check work emails while on holiday and find it hard to switch off at weekends. While Gen Y Sweden are heavy users of social media, only 25 per cent agree that it is a helpful work tool and very few predict that it will be a dominant form of communication at work in five years' time.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HR

Companies familiar with Swedish culture will have a head start in dealing with this new generation as they join the workplace. Even so there are some important things to consider. Gen Y Sweden care deeply about maintaining their values and lifestyle, and are keen to develop their knowledge and skills and will be best

managed in a coaching and mentoring style rather than being directed. A good social life around work and opportunities to travel are also important to them.

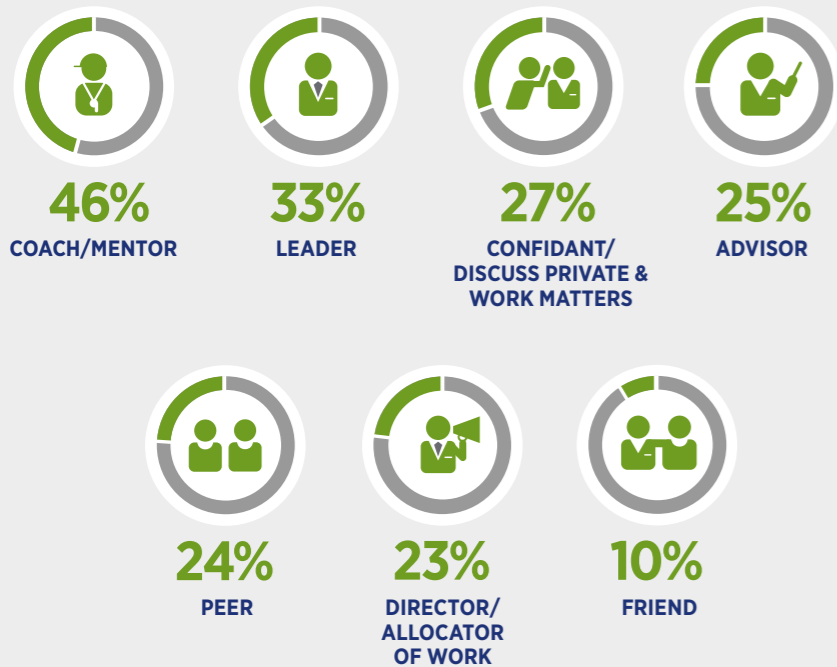
In the rest of this report we will explore further what this generation desire and expect, and how organisations can adapt to attract and retain the very best of them.

“ 43 per cent choose fun and social interaction as the most important factors when deciding to work for a potential employer ”

2. LEADERSHIP

Sweden has historically been seen as a collectivist society, rather than a culture that fetes the individual. Leadership in Sweden, as per its Scandinavian neighbours, is strongly influenced by 'Jantelagen' or the 'law of Jante' (see box out). The concept comes from Dano-Norwegian author Aksel Sandemose's suggestion that Scandinavian culture discourages people from celebrating their own achievements over those of others. In essence, it is not the done thing to promote individual attributes over and above the greater good.¹⁶

GEN Y SWEDEN'S IDEAL BOSS:

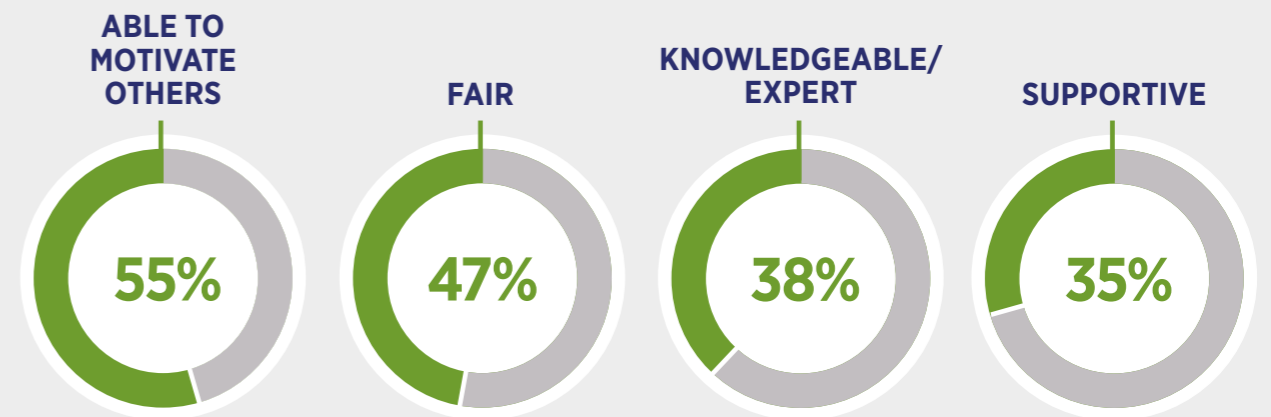


Interestingly, as reported in Fons Trompenaars' and Charles Hampden-Turner's book, 'Riding the Waves of Culture', a majority of Swedes were found to prefer collective responsibility when fault is being attributed, compared to more individualistic societies such as the UK, the US and Russia.¹⁷ However, it would be wrong to read 'collectivist' as a form of 'group-think' in the Swedish context. Out of the 40 countries surveyed by Trompenaars, Sweden came 27th in rating 'individual freedom' highly, and 73 per cent believed a good manager to be one that leaves them alone to get the job done.

On a more humorous note, Swedes were also found to be the least likely to help their boss paint their house in their spare time (91 per cent said no, compared to only 32 per cent of Chinese).

The Swedish image of an archetypal leader is personified by Ingvar Kamprad, the founder of the country's most successful company, IKEA. He leads a humble life, flies on budget airlines (if he isn't travelling by bus) and prefers to dine in his store canteens rather than Michelin starred restaurants.¹⁹ In his memoir 'Testament

4 MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES IN A WORKPLACE LEADER:



The Law of Jante broadly translates into the following ten rules:

- You're not to think you are anything special
- You're not to think you are as good as us
- You're not to think you are smarter than us
- You're not to convince yourself that you are better than us
- You're not to think you know more than us
- You're not to think you are more important than us
- You're not to think you are good at anything
- You're not to laugh at us
- You're not to think anyone cares about you
- You're not to think you can teach us anything

In this context, 'us' can be taken to refer to society as a collective whole, rather than any particular group.¹⁸

Of A Furniture Dealer' he wrote: "We don't need flashy cars, impressive titles, uniforms or other status symbols. We rely on our strength and our will!"

It seems that this vision of leadership resonates for our Gen Y Sweden sample. Their attitude is reflected predominantly in start-ups run or staffed by Gen Y. For example at Gothenburg-based communications agency Rabash, a Gen Y worker-owned co-operative, everyone is paid the same salary,²⁰ and CEO Petter Joelson describes the company strategy as "have a glass of wine and try to be a bit relaxed!"²¹

Informality is a key trait in Swedish business, especially for young people. Olle Wästberg, Director-General of the Swedish Institute sums this up by saying: "Young Swedes employed by foreign companies or international organisations often run into trouble by being too informal or disrespectful of structures. In a Swedish ministry, for example, it is quite natural for a newly employed young person to stop

the minister in the corridor and launch (an) idea. That simply wouldn't happen in France", he adds.²² He further defines business culture as "easy communication, low internal competition and anti-hierarchical organisation structures".²³

These descriptions resonate with our survey findings of the attitudes of Gen Y Sweden. They seem to maintain traditional expectations of leadership, valuing mentors who display humility over directive leaders.²⁴

GEN Y WANT A MOTIVATIONAL MENTOR

Rather than a leader, in Sweden it is a coach/mentor that comes out on top as the most popular description of an ideal boss at 46 per cent. Only one in three (33 per cent) of our sample actually want their ideal boss to be a leader, which compares to the average of 40 per cent of other countries surveyed. Gen Y Sweden are also twice as likely to describe their ideal boss as a peer (24 per cent) than the global average (13 per cent).

2. LEADERSHIP

Where Gen Y Sweden are more in line with other countries however is in the qualities they want from a leader in the workplace. The ability to motivate others is the most common response so far across all countries (48 per cent), and is top in Sweden too (at a higher than average 55 per cent); fairness (47 per cent) and expertise (38 per cent) come second and third respectively for Gen Y Sweden.

HUMILITY WINS RESPECT

For a leader to be humble is more important to Gen Y Sweden compared to their counterparts from other countries (27 per cent vs. 14 per cent). In the Swedish tradition, a strong individual proves their worth through their contribution to the team and eschews symbols of wealth and status. This leadership style has been taking shape as far back as Lars Magnus Ericsson, the founder of multinational telecommunications giant Ericsson in 1876, whose managerial approach is described by his biographer as an even temperament combined with mutual trust and cooperation.²⁵ This is echoed in the style of modern leaders such as Mikael Ohlsson of IKEA (see box out).

IKEA is well known for having a flat management structure. Mikael Ohlsson, IKEA's Chief Executive, believes this encourages senior executives to have deep trust in local managers. He says a flat, decentralised, non-bureaucratic organisation gives employees "freedom within frames".²⁶ Pernille Hagilhd, IKEA's HR manager for the UK, also describes this as relying less on individual leaders, creating "ownership through engagement" and breaking down "barriers between managers and co-workers". Stores have even been known to be run by employees for whole days while managers participate in training.²⁷

Continuing this tradition, humble leaders who display a mentoring relationship and view staff of all levels as peers are preferred by our respondents. 47 per cent indicate fairness as one of the most important qualities in a leader, and 35 per cent want their boss to be supportive. Far fewer see a confident or direct leader as ideal, at 13 per cent and nine per cent respectively.

However, this does not necessarily mean a completely informal relationship is what people look for at work. Only ten per cent described their ideal boss as a friend and roughly a quarter of our sample actually look for a boss to be an allocator of work or directional in their leadership style.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HR

With such a high number of Gen Y Sweden wanting a boss who behaves as a coach or mentor, organisations should consider integrating formal mentoring and coaching into their training and development curriculum if they don't already do so. Strong leadership is still required, but it manifests in a different way than is the case in some other countries. Gen Y Sweden value humble and fair management styles. This will be potentially far more motivational and effective where Gen Y make up a significant portion of the workforce. Considering the high value of humility, it will also be important for senior management to 'walk the talk' in this respect.



3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Despite a number of hugely successful start-ups coming from Sweden, from recent successes Spotify and SoundCloud to those more established brands such as Volvo and Ericsson, the proportion of entrepreneurs in the country is low compared to others we have surveyed.²⁸ As with leadership, our research suggests that a strong team ethic and collective contributions are most prized—a company’s success comes from galvanising the efforts of everyone, not just individual inspiration.

However, there are some signs that this attitude is slowly changing amongst Gen Y Sweden. The record high youth unemployment rate of 27.8 per cent in August 2009 may have improved slightly, but is still far from ideal with a rate of 22.6 per cent as of December 2013.²⁹ A challenging job market may well be causing more young people to stay in education, but it might also be the catalyst for others to consider starting their own entrepreneurial ventures.

According to the Founders Alliance, a group supporting entrepreneurs in Sweden, “We are happy to see a change in attitude to entrepreneurship in society (where) a majority of today’s young people seriously consider starting a business. In addition, politicians from

Swedes have an unusual relationship with tax. The country has the second-highest tax burden in the world—after Denmark—with an average of 48.2 per cent of GDP going to taxes and the majority of earners paying between 49 and 60 per cent through a combination of local government and state income tax.³⁰ And yet high tax rates remain popular, due to the good standard of living they afford all citizens through the funding of high levels of social welfare benefits. This includes universal nursery coverage, free schools, along with free health and dental care for under-18s. Unusually, perhaps, the Swedish Tax Authority was recently rated the second most popular government agency, scoring highly for its customer service and for ‘contributing positively to society’ in particular.³¹

Female entrepreneurs remain thin on the ground in Sweden. According to the OECD, only six per cent of working women (vs. 15 per cent of working men) are self-employed—less than the OECD average (ten per cent).

Our survey suggests these trends may persist amongst the younger generation—36 per cent of females said they had no interest in owning their own business, compared to 24 per cent of males. Interestingly, our research indicates that this gender difference is more commonly found amongst non-European countries—Gen Y in the US, Australia and Japan all had differences of at least ten per cent. In France, Germany and the UK, however, the gender differences were minimal.

both blocs have begun to see entrepreneurs as an asset for new jobs and for society at large.”

Some structural barriers to starting up new businesses remain. As a high tax rate on labour makes it difficult for entrepreneurs to create new jobs and growth, this has caused industry bodies to call for tax reforms and encourage investment.³² However, there are notable start-up examples emerging in the technology and software sector, and our research suggests Gen Y Sweden are part of this change in attitude to entrepreneurialism. Of all countries surveyed, Sweden has the second highest proportion (49 per cent) of respondents who identify themselves as not currently self-employed but something that would be considered in the future.

Our results uncover, though, that for Gen Y Sweden this entrepreneurial spirit is aspirational, and does not seem to be translating into the reality of owning their own businesses (only four per cent of respondents currently do so).

START-UPS ASPIRATIONAL BUT NOT A FOCUS

With 64 per cent of Gen Y Sweden actively considering having their own business or stating it as one of their main career objectives, there is a definite entrepreneurial desire amongst this generation.

However, it appears to remain a latent desire. Only four per cent already have their own business, the second lowest across all countries surveyed so far. Of the 64 per cent expressing an interest in this, relatively few see starting a business as a main career objective (15 per cent). It seems running their own business is a consideration for Gen Y Sweden, but the interest ultimately fades away when it comes to making it a reality.

This may be due to the structural barriers to starting up a business present in Sweden. It may also be because of a lack of requisite skills and experience forming a barrier to founding start-up companies. Only 28 per cent of Gen Y Sweden have over three years of work experience—fairly low compared to other countries in our survey—and only 31 per cent are working full time compared to our global average of 44 per cent.

A DEMAND FOR ONGOING EDUCATION AT WORK

A very high proportion of Gen Y Sweden (35 per cent) remain in full time education compared to their international counterparts. In part this could be as a result of the high youth unemployment rate of 22.6 per cent,



9 OUT OF 10

ARE STUDYING OR ARE WILLING TO STUDY FURTHER THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREER

While there is a way to go before entrepreneurial ambition is seen as the norm in Sweden, social entrepreneurship—combining business start-ups with a social or collective focus more in keeping with the country’s culture—shows signs of being on the rise. The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket) actively supports and funds social entrepreneurs,³³ and almost a quarter of Gen Y Sweden in our survey define career success as ‘making a difference in society’. Recent social entrepreneurial ventures to emerge include Mattecentrum, which offers free online learning for children who want to improve their maths skills, and Solvatten, a solar water-treatment unit that provides clean hot water in Kenya and Nepal.³⁴

as young people choose to stay in education for as long as possible in order to ride out the recession and improve their skills, qualifications and employability at the same time.³⁵ The autumn term of 2012 saw a record 126,000 first-time applicants to higher education in Sweden.³⁶ It’s worth noting that free education from primary school to university is an integral part of Sweden’s welfare system, and public spending on education is amongst the world’s highest at seven per cent of GDP, compared to Germany at 5.1 per cent and France at 5.9 per cent (some, such as Japan and Hong Kong fall below four per cent).³⁷

This strong commitment to education and learning in Sweden continues within the workplace. Of our respondents, 90 per cent are willing to study through their careers, and the reasons are not merely monetary: 44 per cent would study in order to progress, nearly double the 24 per cent who would do it just to earn more money.

CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Sweden is a country international in its ties and outlook. 20 per cent of Swedish society has family or roots in other countries,³⁸ and Gen Y Sweden’s attitude to international work seems to reflect this. “Swedish youths are often very skilled in languages making them attractive internationally,” writes Christina Kogh of the Swedish Employment Service.³⁹ Swedes have also been rated the best in the world at speaking English as a second language.⁴⁰ It seems Gen Y Sweden are keen to take advantage of this skill-set, with four out of five of our respondents indicating an interest in international opportunities in their work.

However they are split between what kind of international work opportunities they are most likely to take up. While one fifth (22 per cent) are interested in all types of international work, one quarter (25 per cent) would like to work in Sweden but with international travel, one sixth (15 per cent) are interested in staying in Sweden while working on international projects, and 17 per cent are interested in both living and working overseas.

Niklas Zennström is the current face of Swedish entrepreneurship. He co-founded Skype, the internet-phone company bought by eBay in 2005 for US\$2.6 billion (and later by Microsoft for US\$8.5 billion).⁴¹ But he didn’t stop there, creating peer-to-peer software Kazaa, online video-sharing service Joost, and he now runs an investment firm and a human rights philanthropic body. He admits to being the exception rather than the norm but hopes that, “my entrepreneurship will inspire the young Swedes of today to take a step into the entrepreneurial world and together create a better society”.⁴²

IMPLICATIONS FOR HR

Our research reveals that Gen Y Sweden are becoming more entrepreneurial in their outlook, with 64 per cent at least considering running their own business one day.

Businesses that value innovation should take steps to try to harness this entrepreneurial intent positively. Building the right operational culture that offers people the opportunity to work creatively on projects and to explore new opportunities could spur business innovation and Gen Y should be at the heart of this.

Gen Y Sweden are also more attracted by opportunities to continue their education at work with the hope of progressing their careers. Employee development programmes will be perceived to be of particular value if they are linked closely to professional development too.

They are also highly attracted by international opportunities and the ability to use their English language ability. Offering international work as part of a company’s employee value proposition will help secure ambitious Gen Y talent. Whilst start-ups may be an attractive aspiration for many, organisations able to offer development or study opportunities and international work will still be able to attract really talented people.

4. ATTRACT

Given the high level of Swedish youth unemployment rates of 22.6 per cent, it appears to be an employer's market at present. In contrast, unemployment across the whole working age population in Sweden is actually fairly low—just 8.6 per cent of a labour force totalling nearly 5.1 million. Given the country's total population is just over 9.5 million, including 1.6 million Gen Y'ers, there are a lot of young people looking for work.

CAREER SUCCESS INDICATORS:



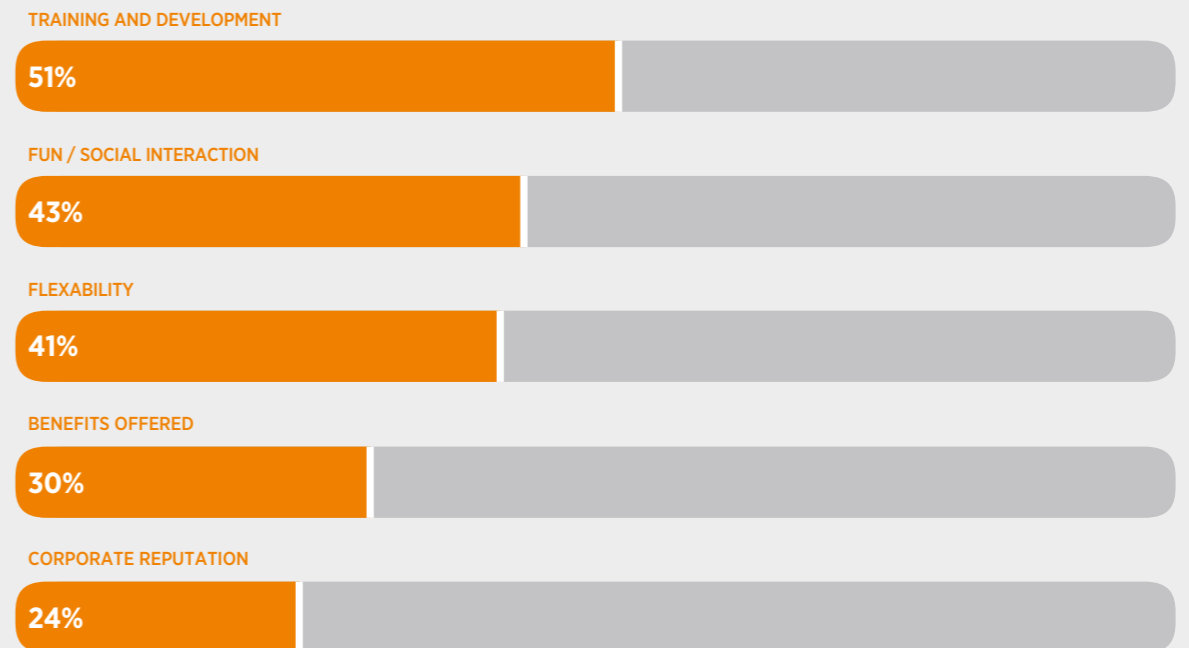
However, this does not mean that Gen Y Sweden are willing to work for just any employer—far from it. A high proportion have chosen to remain in education, with 664,000 still studying. On top of this, parental and welfare support mean that some young Swedes can afford to bide their time—a poll in late 2009 found that seven out of ten Swedes aged between 20–25 remain in their parental home.

Considering the importance Gen Y will play in the future leadership of Sweden's businesses, understanding what drives this unique group is crucial. Our research reveals that despite the tough job market, Gen Y Sweden have a clear vision of what attracts them to an employer, what they expect from their working environment and what they want for their careers as a whole.

PRIORITISING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

When deciding whether to take a job, just over half of Gen Y Sweden say training and development is one of the main things they look for from a potential employer, rated more highly than anything else. In contrast, benefits offered are important to less than 1 in 3 (30 per cent) of respondents, significantly less compared to the other countries surveyed so far (38 per cent). This could be due to the high level of benefits already offered by the state.

TOP FIVE FACTORS WHEN DECIDING ON A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER:



Generally employers also offer 25 days' holiday per year plus 13 public holidays,⁴³ and very stable and reliable pensions.

Our Gen Y Sweden sample actually say that obtaining a range of experiences is one of the key indicators of career success—it was almost twice as popular for them in comparison to the other countries surveyed so far (43 per cent vs. 25 per cent). They are also keen for a boss who is an expert and a coach/mentor who can develop them further. All of this suggests that Gen Y Sweden are less likely to look purely for financial benefits when choosing an employer.

MEETING SALARY EXPECTATIONS

While financial gains do not seem to be a core part of the way Gen Y Sweden

In Sweden, generous personal benefits such as a child allowance of £1,080 a year per child are offered. The country was also a pioneer of shared parental leave. Parents can take 480 days per child, split 50:50, receiving a full 80 per cent of their income for 390 days. It is expected that each parent takes 60 days at a minimum. The country also spends more than the OECD average on healthcare and the population are much more likely than average to describe themselves as being in good health.⁴⁴ Additionally, the poverty rate for people aged 66 years and above of 9.5 per cent is considerably lower than the OECD average of 12.8 per cent.⁴⁵

define career success, a good base salary is important for companies trying to attract the best of this generation. This is perhaps a result of an ingrained expectation of reasonable pay—the average salary is 294,398kr a year (around £27,000, or US\$45,000), high by international standards.⁴⁶

When asked to define career success only 31 per cent of Gen Y Sweden choose 'creating personal wealth'. This is compared to our global average of 48 per cent. However, when prompted to select the rewards or benefits they look for when choosing a job, Gen Y Sweden are more likely to pick base salary (73 per cent) than their counterparts in other countries (58 per cent average). In contrast, the potential to earn a bonus was chosen by only 36 per cent, compared to 48 per cent internationally.

4. ATTRACT

It seems that Gen Y Sweden are a group relatively less interested in financial success. What is clear is that they are still expectant of a reasonable salary in line with their country's typical earnings.

WORK AND LIFE MUST BE BALANCED

Gen Y Sweden want flexibility in their jobs and a working environment that allows them a balance between work and life. They are also the least likely of the countries surveyed so far to define their career success by how much money they make. So what do they value?

Of those surveyed, 41 per cent think flexibility is the most important factor when deciding to work for a potential employer. When asked what they find important in terms of the work environment, they said flexible hours (47 per cent). And for 50 per cent of them, career success is defined as balancing their work and personal lives successfully.

The Guldnappen—or 'golden pacifier'—award has been awarded since 2003 to companies or individuals who have gone the extra mile in establishing work-life balance.⁴⁷ Awarded by Unionen, Sweden's largest union among private companies, previous winners include US\$16 billion global IT solutions company CSC. Its award-winning approach included a generous policy for homeworkers, flexible hours, prolonged leave options, and even provision of household services.⁴⁸

Gen Y Sweden also look for perks such as levels of holiday allowance (44 per cent) and they want the possibility to work at home (31 per cent). However, this does not necessarily mean a preference for detachment from work and colleagues—43 per cent of Gen Y Sweden choose fun and social interaction as the most important factor when deciding to work for a potential employer. It seems that to Gen Y Sweden, work-life balance does not necessarily mean a separation of the two—social life around work is significantly more important to Gen Y Sweden (40 per cent) compared to our global average of 28 per cent.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HR

Given the high youth unemployment rates at present, there are a lot of members of Gen Y Sweden looking for work.

If an organisation is looking to attract the very best of them, then it must consider what it is prepared to do and what is appropriate in developing its employee value proposition. Working overtime for example is neither valued nor seen as necessary—it can even be regarded as an indication of poor planning and time management.⁴⁹ In contrast, working from home is becoming more common and more attractive to Swedish workers keen on flexible working opportunities.⁵⁰

We have found that, given the choice, Gen Y Sweden look for personal development from an employer. They prefer managers who are nurturing and mentoring in style, and a strong training and development programme will be a critical part of any attraction strategy. This doesn't mean that pay and reward generally should be discounted, however. While Gen Y Sweden are fairly ambivalent about bonuses and benefits, they still expect a good base salary offer.



5. RETAIN

While a competitive base salary is a key part of attracting Gen Y talent, employers can't just buy their loyalty—a decent wage is taken as a given, and raising it won't necessarily guarantee retention. There may not be a national minimum wage set by government, but in reality the vast majority of employers have to follow union-negotiated contracts which offer very high effective minimum wages.⁵¹

WHAT GEN Y SWEDEN WANT MOST FROM THEIR WORK:

INTERESTING WORK

67%

HELPING OTHERS

29%

JOB SECURITY

37%

TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO SOCIETY

25%

PERSONAL WEALTH

30%

ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

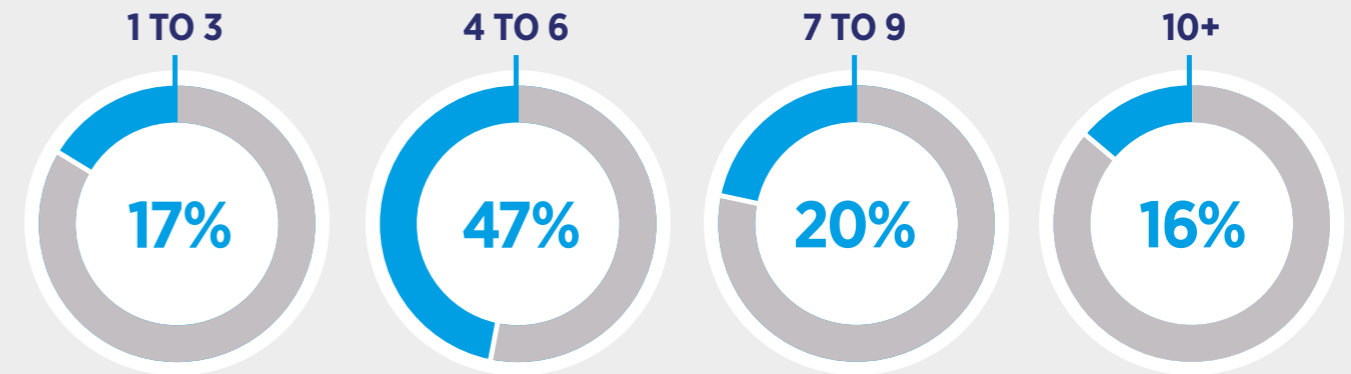
25%

According to OECD figures, the Swedish population is in general fairly content.⁵² They suggest that this is partly a result of their work culture, to which good wages, relatively low hours and clearly defined employee rights all contribute. Confidence in job security may also play a part, and our research has revealed that Gen Y Sweden are above average in their outlook when asked whether it is achievable across all areas of the market.

There is also a substantial social safety net for those out of work: even those who aren't part of a union receive socialbidrag (benefits) paying both rent and up to an additional 3000kr (£280) a month to cover food and bills.⁵³ Given the country's strong worker rights and generous social benefits, therefore, employers have to be proactive and thoughtful about their retention strategies.

Our research shows that Gen Y Sweden are undecided about how long they should spend with their first employer—64 per cent say 'it depends' when asked about this (compared to a global average of 47 per cent). However, 36 per cent expect to have more than seven employers in their career, significantly more than our global average of 19 per cent. So it's never been more important to take steps to retain the very best Gen Y

HOW MANY EMPLOYERS GEN Y SWEDEN EXPECT TO HAVE IN THEIR CAREER:



According to the EU, the Swedes are amongst Europe's most successful in balancing work and home life.⁵⁴ Many workplaces in Sweden now apply flexible working hours, and employees typically start work between 7am and 9am and go home after the legal amount of working hours have been completed between 3pm and 5pm (as prescribed by The Working Hours Act, 2010).⁵⁵ While logic might suggest that longer working hours would boost productivity, Sweden shows that quality can beat quantity—they were rated sixth in The Global Competitiveness Index 2012–2013 and again in 2013–2014.⁵⁶

talent. Whilst some may see this as a huge hurdle, at the same time it is a great opportunity for firms to build really strong

employee value propositions (EVPs) that keep their staff engaged. Using some of this research could help shape the content and direction of these EVPs appropriately.

INTERESTING WORK COMES BEFORE PERSONAL WEALTH

Interesting work is desired most from a career by 67 per cent of Gen Y Sweden, while significantly fewer respondents see personal wealth a key desire (30 per cent).

Furthermore, Gen Y Sweden are almost half as likely (26 per cent compared to 46 per cent in other countries) to indicate that financial reward gives them most satisfaction at work compared to their international counterparts.

A DESIRE FOR JOB SATISFACTION

The majority of Gen Y Sweden (60 per cent) define career success as achieving job satisfaction.

Ethical company values are an integral part of retention in Sweden. According to a 2012 report by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv, Sweden's largest business federation), "relationships between companies and their employees as well as between business and politics must reflect the highest standards of ethics", and reiterates the belief that companies play a key role in achieving long-term sustainable development based on economic growth, environmental considerations and social commitment.⁵⁸ Gen Y Sweden appear to agree, with 22 per cent actually defining career success as making a difference to society and 24 per cent saying that helping others gives them the most satisfaction at work.

5. RETAIN

When asked what brings the most job satisfaction, 60 per cent say feeling valued and appreciated, 38 per cent prefer feeling like they have made a positive contribution, while 45 per cent say that varied and interesting work gives most satisfaction at work.

As Trompenaars explains in 'Riding the Waves of Culture', if a business seeks to nurture a truly communitarian culture they should encourage managers to offer generous rewards, appreciation and gratitude to their teams.⁵⁷ This seems to be reflected in Gen Y Sweden's desire to feel valued and appreciated, and resonates with our findings about their preference for a fair and motivational leader in the workplace.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HR

36 per cent of Gen Y Sweden expect to have more than seven employers in their career. Considering their relatively high confidence in job security, it appears that Gen Y Sweden expect to change jobs and choose employers on their own terms. Businesses will need to try and retain the best talent through a strong EVP. If they don't, they will be reduced to trying to get the best out of people before they move on to another company.

According to the OECD Better Life Index, Swedes are more satisfied with their lives than the average OECD country. 85 per cent of people in Sweden say they have more positive experiences in an average day (defined as "feelings of rest, pride in accomplishment, enjoyment, etc.") than negative ones ("pain, worry, sadness, boredom, etc."), compared to 73 per cent of Russians and Spaniards, 71 per cent of Greeks and Portuguese, and only 69 per cent of Italians.⁵⁹

Feeling valued and appreciated at work is important, so non-financial recognition and reward schemes could prove a good retention strategy. Gen Y Sweden also need to be interested in their work in order to be satisfied, and a work environment that allows them autonomy as well as clearly set tasks and time will help keep them engaged.

Offering a good work-life balance, interesting work and personal development opportunities are all important in order to retain Gen Y Sweden. Swedish companies that do this well include Stockholm-based property insurance firm FM Global which now operates in 130 countries around the world and offers 30 days of paid holiday, flexible hours for personal appointments such as those with a doctor or dentist, incentives for vocational study and personal development, yearly gym membership and free fruit in the office.⁶⁰



6. TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK

By 2012, 92 per cent of Swedes already had internet access and 87 per cent had broadband connections.⁶¹ When it comes to using social media, Swedes are also at the forefront: close to 5 million have Facebook accounts, meaning Facebook penetration in Sweden is almost 55 per cent. LinkedIn also is widely used.⁶² Research by .SE (the Internet Infrastructure Foundation) in 2012 found that 82 per cent of Swedes aged 15–16 use social networks daily, along with 64 per cent of 18–24-year-olds; a full 100 per cent of 16-year-olds use the internet every day, believed to be the first demographic cohort to do so.⁶³

According to Eurostat, Sweden has the highest proportion of high-speed broadband connections in Europe.⁶⁴ It was also the first country in Europe to have 4G LTE connectivity in 2009,⁶⁵ and still has the fastest 4G networks in the world.⁶⁶ This could arguably have contributed to the rapid increase in smartphone use: in 2011, 52 per cent of 18–19-year-olds used smartphones, which rose in just one year to 85 per cent in 2012. Sweden is also a leader in eGovernment— you can even pay your taxes by SMS.⁶⁷

Despite internet penetration being high throughout Sweden and the population being highly computer literate, our survey finds that Gen Y Swedes do not see access to social media within work time as essential, and traditional forms of communication are still seen as important.

TRADITIONAL COMMUNICATION REMAINS IMPORTANT

Mobile phone calls (64 per cent) and email (59 per cent) are going to be the most common means of communication at work five years from now, according to Gen Y Sweden, although very few respondents (16 per cent) think that the office phone is going to remain the most prevalent.

Furthermore, the traditional one or two-page CV is still the most important tool when looking for a job for 62 per cent of Gen Y Sweden (compared to a global average of 49 per cent). There is very little importance attributed to having a social media profile

The Swedish government made headlines in 2012 by handing over its Twitter account to a different Swedish citizen every week.⁶⁸ Called the 'Curators of Sweden' project, the official @sweden account was given over to individuals encouraged to tweet about places and things to do in Sweden as well as answer questions about life in Sweden. The results were mixed, with one unfortunate incident of anti-Semitism and another user using it to try and secure a date. But the eclectic mix and democratic process was quintessentially Swedish. "Sweden stands for certain values— being progressive, democratic, creative," said Patrick Kampmann, director of the ad agency Volontaire hired to manage the process. "We believed the best way to prove it was to handle the account in a progressive way and give control of it to ordinary Swedes."⁶⁹

for this—LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter were all approximately half as popular compared to the cross-country average.

GEN Y HAVE A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH TECHNOLOGY AT WORK

Mobile and internet communication tools are a natural part of Gen Y Sweden's way of working. Yet despite the obvious importance

of technology to the daily lives of Gen Y Sweden, a demographic that clearly fits the moniker 'digital natives', being able to access social media at work is not seen as a deal-breaker. 67 per cent of Gen Y Sweden agree that technology is blurring the line between work and social life. For 38 per cent technology is making it hard to switch off from work at weekends and for 40 per cent during their vacation time.

While 59 per cent think employers should trust their employees to use personal social media at work (compared to a cross-country average of 42 per cent), only 25 per cent agree that social media is a helpful work tool. Were an organisation to block social media access at work, only 22 per cent agree that such a stance would put them off working for that company.

Sweden is currently one of the global leaders for technology start-ups. A trend started by the internet phone company Skype and continued by music streaming service Spotify has seen many follow in their wake: photo app Foap,⁷⁰ private messaging service Flattr,⁷¹ shopping service Klarna, gaming company Mojang (the maker of Minecraft) and Facebook's largest games developer King (makers of Candy Crush), are all Swedish. The current generation of internet start-ups is seeing Gen Y Sweden combining business with technology like never before.

Home-working is becoming highly popular in Sweden, with home-computing technology, broadband and 4G connectivity making home offices some of the best equipped in the world. However, for a country that rates work-life balance so highly and is protective of family time in the evenings and weekends, the intrusion of work via technology into personal lives is an issue.⁷² Research in 2012 by .SE found that while a record 26 per cent of people in full time employment are able to work from home regularly, 73 per cent of them said it didn't allow them to be in the office any less frequently than before. The research concluded, "Flexibility has indeed risen but the distinction between work and leisure time has become less distinct."⁷³

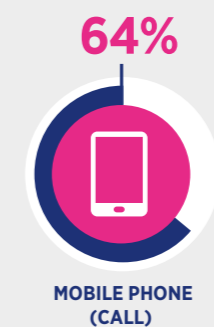
IMPLICATIONS FOR HR

Gen Y Sweden are 'digital natives', highly tech-savvy and more used to communicating via their mobile phones and the internet than any other form of technology. However, HR need not abandon more traditional forms of communication just yet—in particular providing a CV as part of the recruitment

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HOW GEN Y SWEDEN EXPECT TO COMMUNICATE AT WORK 5 YEARS FROM NOW:



process is still expected by the younger generation. Mobile phone and email are also seen as more useful forms of professional communication than social networks.

Reduced access to social media use at work therefore may not be the turn-off to Gen Y that some HR professionals might expect—a high percentage believe that technology actually blurs the boundaries between work and personal life, and only a minority see social media access as crucial to their

choice of employer (although this may be because the majority of Gen Y can access social media through their mobile devices without using the corporate network.)

Organisations need to be aware that while Gen Y Sweden are highly comfortable with and attuned to the latest technologies, they do not necessarily see them as a necessary part of looking for a job or useful for communicating at work.

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