Work is a Refuge, But Loyalty Must be Earned: Pluxee Brings its 14-country Study on Employee Engagement and AI to India

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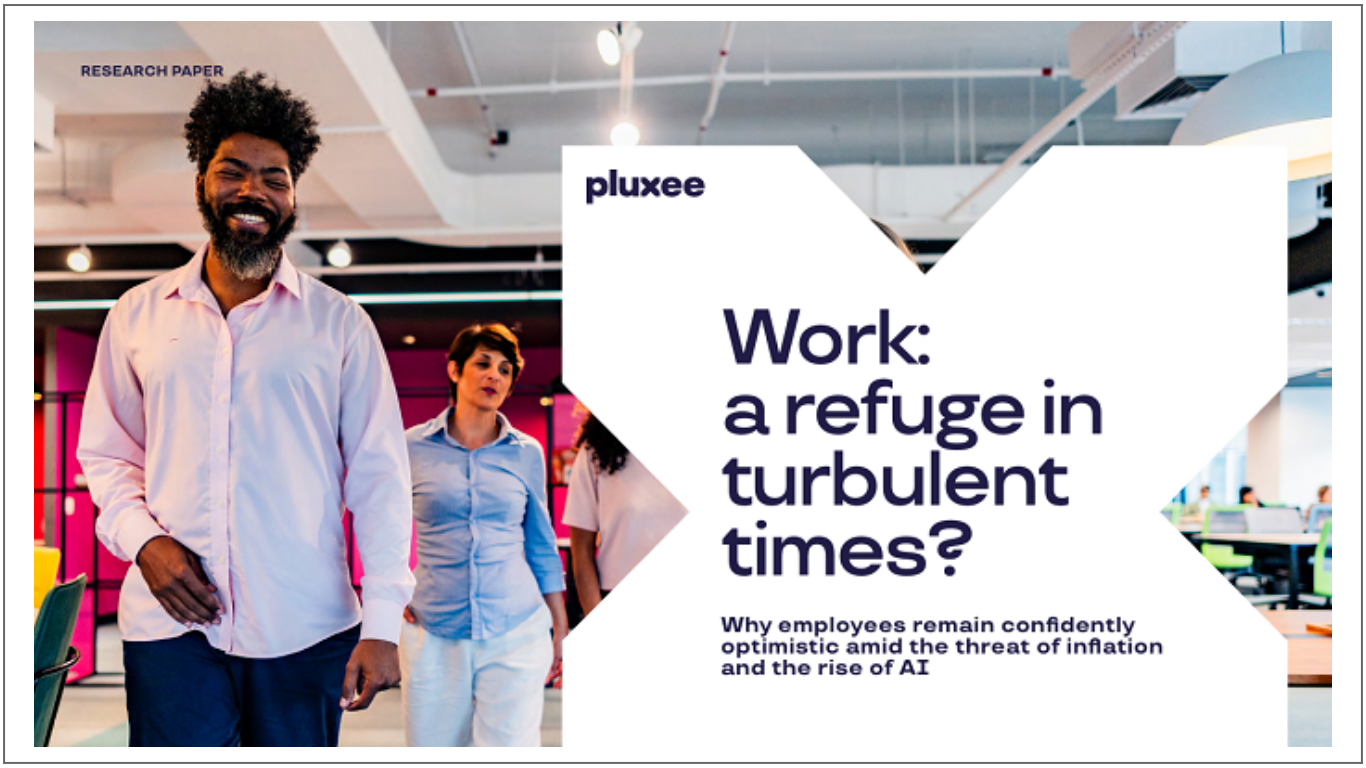
Pluxee, a global player in employee benefits and engagement, has launched in India its second international employee engagement study, **Work: a refuge in turbulent times?**. Released globally in September 2026, the study surveyed 11,000 respondents across 14 countries, including more than 1,000 employees in India, and highlights **three paradoxes that offer a vivid snapshot of employee engagement today**:

- While work plays a less central role in employees' lives, **their connection to their company grows stronger;**

- Despite persistent financial pressure, **employees are prepared to leave a job that no longer interests them;**
- Although artificial intelligence is poised to profoundly transform employees' jobs, **it inspires more enthusiasm than fear.**



Pluxee New Global Study

Abhijit Dey, Country Managing Director, Pluxee India, commented, "*Indian employees are among the most optimistic about AI and the most connected to their skills training, especially in AI. For Indian organisations, the message is clear. Engagement is a two-way street, and employees expect their employers to invest in them in return.*"

Key figures from the study

- **Inflation and purchasing power are employees' number one concern**, cited by 70% of employees globally (68% in India), including 25% who say they 'can't stop thinking

about it’ (29% in India).

- **Job satisfaction is higher than overall life satisfaction**, with an average score of 7.6/10 vs. 7.3/10 globally. In India, both job and life satisfaction score 8.1/10.

- **Employees remain strongly connected to their organizations**, with 87% saying they ‘love’ or ‘like’ their company, +4 points vs. 2025 (95% in India).

- **More employees are adopting “Measured Engagement”**, with 38% of employees globally engaging with work more intentionally to protect their boundaries, values and work-life balance, up 5 points since 2025. In India, this figure is 21%, up 6 points since 2025.

- **Loyalty is becoming more conditional**, with 33% of employees globally intending to stay with their company as long as their job remains interesting, +6 points since 2025. In India, this figure reaches 42%, +12 points vs. 2025.

- **Well-being, recognition and benefits top employees’ HR priorities**. Globally, well-being and working conditions rank first (35%), followed by recognition (33%) and employee benefits that complement compensation (29%). In India, the ranking differs: developing skills through training, particularly in AI, comes first (35%), followed by career development, flexibility and better management (29% each). Well-being and working conditions (28%), recognition (28%) and employee benefits (26%) follow.

- **Employees are surprisingly optimistic about AI**, with 65% expressing a positive attitude towards its use at work (83% in India), including 40% who say they “love” it (67% in India).

- **Employees see AI as more of an opportunity than a threat**: 40% are confident their job will not disappear as a result of AI (30% in India), while 42% believe AI will positively transform the content of their job (51% in India).

Find the full research paper on the Pluxee website: www.pluxee.in/work-a-refuge-in-turbulent-times/

An international study in 14 countries

Pluxee's global employee engagement study explores how employees worldwide are experiencing work amid economic pressure and the rise of artificial intelligence. Conducted by Ipsos in May 2026 with 11,000 employees across 14 countries, the study tracks changes observed since the first edition in 2025. The countries surveyed include Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, India[(i)], Italy, Mexico, Romania, Spain, Turkey, the UK and the USA.

The findings are analysed by Jean-Baptiste Barféty, a public policy expert specializing in work, digital transition and the common good, and former advisor to the French Ministry of Labor, together with Antoine Solom, Senior Consultant at FOCUS, specializing in research, advisory and strategy for engaging transformations.

Three paradoxes shaping employee engagement

Despite mounting pressure on household budgets and the rapid transformation of work driven by AI, employees continue to demonstrate a surprising capacity to adapt and move forward with confidence. Contrary to many assumptions, the findings

reveal a workforce that remains engaged, strongly connected to employers and broadly positive about work.

Yet beneath this resilience lie three striking paradoxes that capture the changing reality of employee engagement today.

While work is becoming less central to people's lives, employees feel increasingly connected to their company

As reduced purchasing power and lower life satisfaction prompt employees to make bigger trade-offs at work to better focus on their personal lives, work is becoming less central to their lives. The share of employees who say work is the center of their lives has fallen from 19% to 13%, while "Measured Engagement"[(ii)] has increased from 34% to 38%, reflecting a growing tendency to engage with work more deliberately to protect boundaries, values and work-life balance.

This shift should not be mistaken for disengagement. On the contrary, employees' connection to their organizations continues to grow: professional satisfaction remains high (above 7 in all countries), and 87% report they either 'love' or 'like' their company, up four percentage points.

According to Jean-Baptiste Barféty, the workplace has become a reliable 'refuge' for employees, serving as a place of connection and "a shock absorber protecting them from some of the discomforts they might be experiencing because of inflation and global uncertainty".

Despite financial pressures, employees are prepared to leave jobs they no longer find interesting

Financial difficulties are having a tangible impact on

workers’ lives, with 70% citing inflation and cost-of-living as their top worry and 25% saying they ‘cannot stop thinking about it’. In most of the countries studied, **more than half of employees struggle to make ends meet**, sometimes running out of money by the tenth day of the month.

However, despite a challenging context, employee loyalty is increasingly conditional: the percentage of employees who want to stay with their company ‘for as long as I can’ has fallen by 5 points compared to 2025. Meanwhile, the percentage of employees who ‘intend to stay as long as my job remains interesting’ is on the rise, increasing by 6 points globally.

Interesting work, the variety of tasks and recognition are driving employee engagement. This development reinforces a trend highlighted in the first edition of the study: employees expect reciprocity from their company in exchange for their engagement. Globally, when asked what their company’s HR priorities should be in the coming months, beyond higher salaries, employees’ top priorities are well-being and working conditions (35%), recognition of their commitment and achievements (33%), and employee benefits that complement compensation (29%).

Employees also expressed a need for growth, with 25% wishing to be ‘provided with better individual support and career development opportunities’ and 21% calling for their company’s HR to put developing ‘people’s skills through more training, particularly in AI’ at the top of their agenda.

AI is transforming jobs, yet employees see more opportunity than threat

While workers across the globe recognize that AI will be a

major force in transforming the world of work, they are unexpectedly optimistic about its potential: 65% welcome the AI revolution, and 40% described AI as ‘great’ and say they ‘love’ using it.

This confidence is reflected in perceptions of AI’s impact on employment: 40% of employees are confident that their jobs will not disappear as a result of AI, and 42% concede that the content of their jobs will most likely change, ‘but in a positive way’, making work ‘less routine and more interesting’.

Employees are increasingly embracing AI and adapting to its growing role in the workplace. Among regular AI users, 39% say they learn to use the technology on their own, compared with just 9% who rely on managers and 9% on colleagues. With 31% of employees identifying improving efficiency as a key challenge for their organization in the years ahead, many employees view AI as a tool to save time, simplify work and reduce complexity.

The study also highlights a clear link between employee engagement and openness to AI. Using the Engagement Spectrum introduced in Pluxee’s 2025 global study The New Rules of Engagement, researchers found that the more engaged and outwardly curious employees are, the more likely they are to embrace AI. While 64% of “All Parts Engaged” employees say they love AI and use it frequently, this falls to 39% among “Work Centrists” and 27% among “Outsiders”.

Companies now face the challenge of ensuring that AI becomes the game-changer employees expect for efficiency and well-being, so that their current enthusiasm for the technology endures.

About Pluxee

Pluxee is a global player in Employee Benefits and Engagement that operates in 28 countries. Pluxee helps companies attract, engage, and retain talent thanks to a broad range of solutions across Meal & Food, Well-being, Lifestyle, Reward & Recognition, and Public Benefits. Powered by leading technology and more than 5,600 engaged team members, Pluxee acts as a trusted partner within a highly interconnected B2B2C ecosystem made up of more than 500,000 clients, 37 million+ consumers and 1.7 million+ merchants. Conducting business for 50 years, Pluxee is committed to creating a positive impact on local communities, supporting well-being at work for employees and protecting the planet.

For more information, please visit www.pluxeegroup.com.

About Pluxee India

Pluxee is a leader in employee benefits and motivation, supporting businesses in attracting, engaging, and retaining talent through a broad range of solutions across Meal, Childcare, Wellbeing, Learning, Rewards & Recognition & whole range of other offerings. With 29+ years of expertise in India, Pluxee partners with 11,000+ companies across the public and private sectors also fostering a trusted network of 180,000+ merchant partners on meal and 5 million+ merchants on other benefits. Every day Pluxee India works to supports 3.5 million+ consumers in 2,200+ towns nationwide.

Powered by innovative technology and a dedicated team, Pluxee India delivers meaningful and personalized experiences through a single card and app to enhance the well-being of its consumers at work and beyond. Carrying forward a global legacy

of over five decades, Pluxee is committed to creating a positive impact on local communities, promoting sustainability, and enabling its stakeholders to do what matters the most.

For more information visit www.pluxee.in.

(i) To ensure comparability of results across markets, responses from India were excluded from the consolidated global analysis due to distinct response patterns observed within the dataset. India results are reported separately.

(ii) Measured Engagement, first identified in Pluxee's 2025 study The New Rules of Engagement, describes employees who engage with work deliberately to protect their boundaries, values and work-life balance.

