

Reconnecting with your workforce: How to avoid the 'great breakup'

By [Kele Boakgomo](#)

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While we adapt to a world that's in a state of perma-crisis, women are demanding more from work and companies are struggling to hold on to the relatively few female leaders - how do you ensure that your female talent is supported where it matters?



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From the 'great resignation' and 'breakup' to 'quiet quitting', employers across the world are still navigating and negotiating the emerging future of work, and its impact on female workforces, along with perpetual global crises.

The trend of women leaving their work is not imagined, it's real, even at the highest office, exemplified by the recent resignation of New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern.

Organisations need to ensure that they get ahead of this trend and invest in creating environments where women feel that they can bring their whole selves to work, thrive and keep their tanks full.

The great breakup

A looming recession, chronic uncertainty and the pandemic aftermath, realities which would normally illicit conservatism are ironically driving change. People, especially women, are using this moment to reflect upon what is important for them and are looking for career opportunities that best align with their priorities.

As so aptly summarised in the 2022 [McKinsey Women in the Workplace report](#): "People have come through the pandemic feeling a bit more empowered. We've realised that being in a toxic environment where you're not happy is just not worth it," a black female vice-president said anonymously.

The report suggests that women in the workplace are now changing jobs at unprecedented rates to achieve their desired levels of balance and growth leading to what they call the “great breakup”.



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The research shows that for every woman at director level who gets promoted, two female directors are choosing to leave their company, decimating company leadership pipelines.

Only 26% of the C-suite pipeline is made up of women, with senior vice-president and vice-president pipelines sitting at 28% and 32% respectively. Shockingly, women make up less than a third of the total leadership pipeline.

Women leave because they face stronger headwinds when trying to advance. They're overworked and often under-recognised, and are looking for different work cultures and support. Across the board, companies still struggle to change the face of leadership.

Trying to recover gender parity

The World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos last week tackled the topics of gender parity, the care economy and diversity, equity and inclusion, across its many sessions. Discussions showed that gender parity is not recovering post-pandemic.

While the gap is a gulf to cross, organisations that take action to close it by investing in the empowerment and retention of women in their workforce stand to benefit tremendously.

For example, US tech company, Hubspot, was voted as the top tech workplace for women in 2022 in a [survey by Comparably](#). Their female workforce happiness shows in the billion-dollar company's bottom line and corporate performance.

In South Africa too, a 2020 Statista survey spotlighted companies like Aveng-Moolman Mining, Nestle and Unilever for the actions they take to retain female talent.

Simply put, companies that support their female workforce to grow, live and prosper, achieve exceptional results. And those who don't, scratch the surface of their own potential.

The reality is that women still struggle with cultural, structural and other biases, affecting how they show up at work. This compromises organisational performance in the medium and long term.

Support structures

Delivering support directly to women to curb the 'great breakup' requires innovation, insight and a data-driven approach to

ensure that real change takes place.

Companies need to understand and connect with the needs of their female workforce. We do so using a tech platform and app to deliver highly personalised growth journeys, supporting the organisation with deep insights that can pre-empt burnout, performance dips, mental and emotional challenges faced by women.



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Women experience extreme pressure to perform not only in the workplace but also in other aspects of their lives, so providing them with tools to build growth-enabling and supportive behaviours is a vital key to the war on talent, we've learned.

Supportive environments for women are more likely to foster commitment and engagement, which in turn creates rewarding outcomes for all. The opposite is also true.

Our platform keeps women engaged in their careers allowing them to show up as their whole selves, at work and in their personal lives, by delivering an innovative year-long personal development programme, growth challenges, and intelligent coaching.

When women are provided a platform to operate with agency and authenticity, they are more likely to lead and contribute – significantly.

As companies begin the new year and set their goals and strategies for the future, they should consider reigniting their female workforce by investing in and gaining insight into the individual needs of the women who make up their teams - and leverage technology to get there.

We cannot do the same thing and expect different results. As the McKinsey report shows, something fundamental has to shift in how we enable women to grow and prosper or the break-ups will continue.

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