



# EMPATHY IN THE WORKPLACE INSIGHTS

## Q4 2021

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**Supported by:**



# CONTEXT

Managers of companies and organizations in Cambodia like in many places in the world are facing an upcoming workforce (and consumer base) with different attitudes and preferences in the form of millennials and Gen Zers.

To navigate these organizations successfully into the new decade, managers need to lead with empathy by exhibiting their understanding of this new generation of workers and consumers.

This is the start of a series of research to uncover insights and solutions for organizations looking to bridge the empathy gap in both our workforce and society.

Together, we can reach a day where organizations, our society and planet are better off through leading with empathy.



# SUMMARY

The Leading with Empathy programme together with The Idea and Volunteer Nation conducted a 50 person survey on empathy in the workplace to understand the empathy gap between employers and their employees.

This computer-assisted personal interview was supported by 3 student volunteers and conducted at two locations - the WIG Christmas Charity Event and at CADT (Cambodia Academy of Digital Technology) to capture the 19 to 29 year old age group (Millenials and early Gen Z) - namely the biggest volume of consumers in Cambodia given that 75% of the population is 35 and under.

Before studies are carried out, volunteers are vetted through written tests, virtual interviews and given a workshop on personal conduct and research. This training is a part of Volunteer Nation's Workforce Development commitment.





# RESPONDENT PROFILE

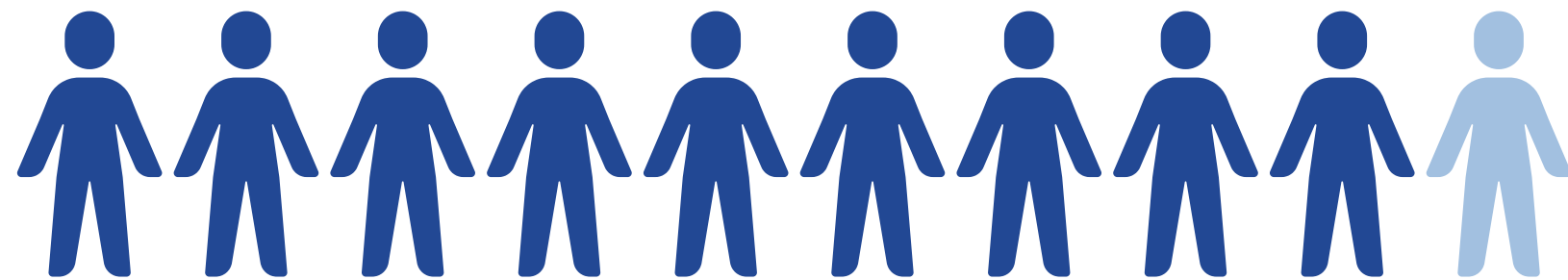
## Demographic

- Working in Professional Service and Retail
- Aged 18 - 24, 25 - 29
- Living and Working in Phnom Penh
- Creative Services, Banking, Retail
- Khmer
- 60% Male, 40% Female

# PRESENCE OF CAMPAIGNS

## Insights

# 90%



of respondents believed it was important to explicitly talk about empathy and values for better internal culture and communication within the workplace.

This is a good reminder for leaders, managers and HR officers to check-in on how often and where in their employee journeys and day-to-day interactions do company values and empathy get mentioned.

9/10 employees are looking for dialogue to guide and influence company culture and in their day-to-day work.

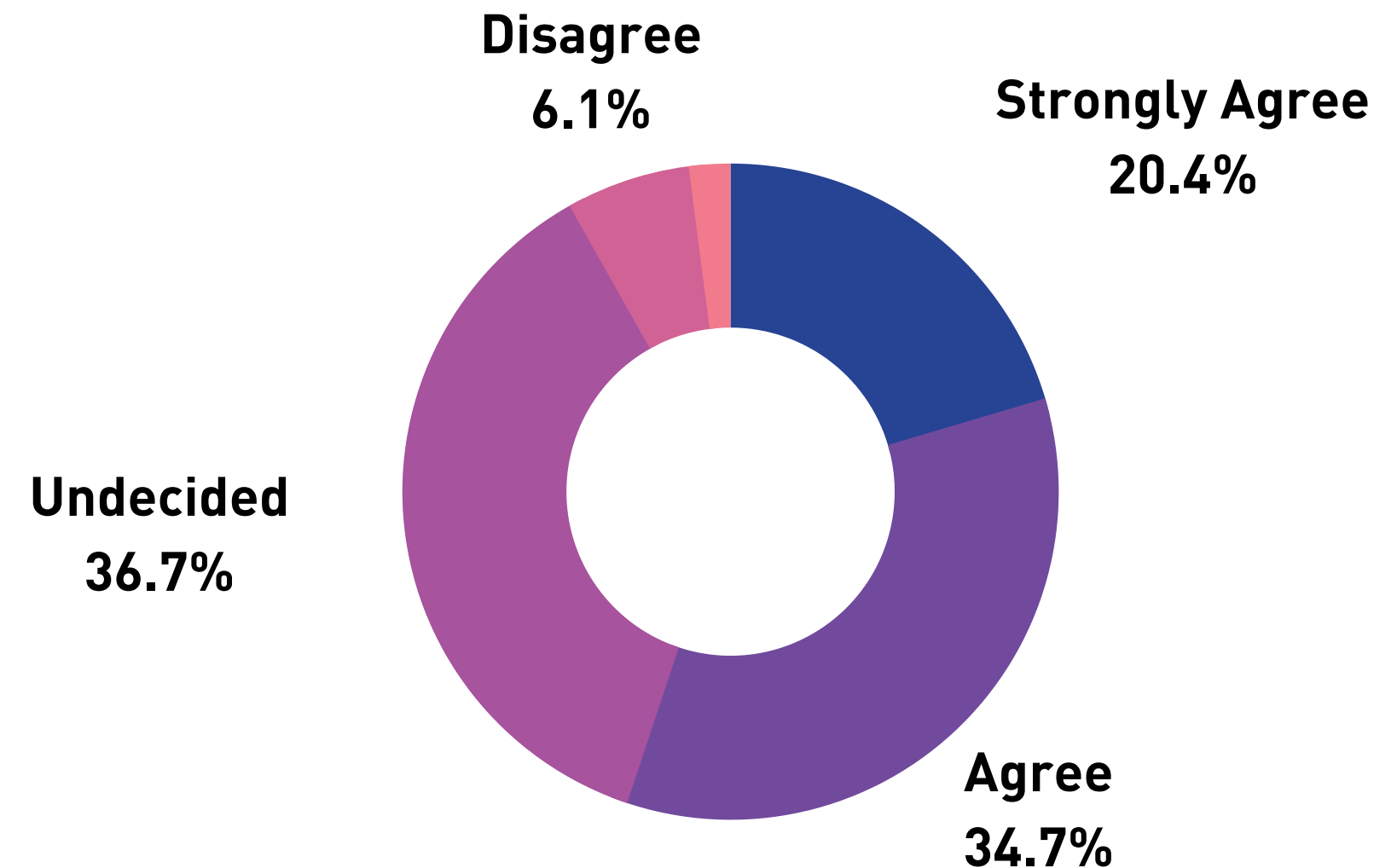


# DOES IT TAKE EFFORT TO EXHIBIT EMPATHY

## Insights

Just over half of respondents agreed that it takes effort to exhibit empathy and values in the workplace, while a third of respondents were uncertain as to how much effort it takes to show empathy and values in the workplace

This indicates a communication and potentially empathy gap in just under half of the respondent workplaces.



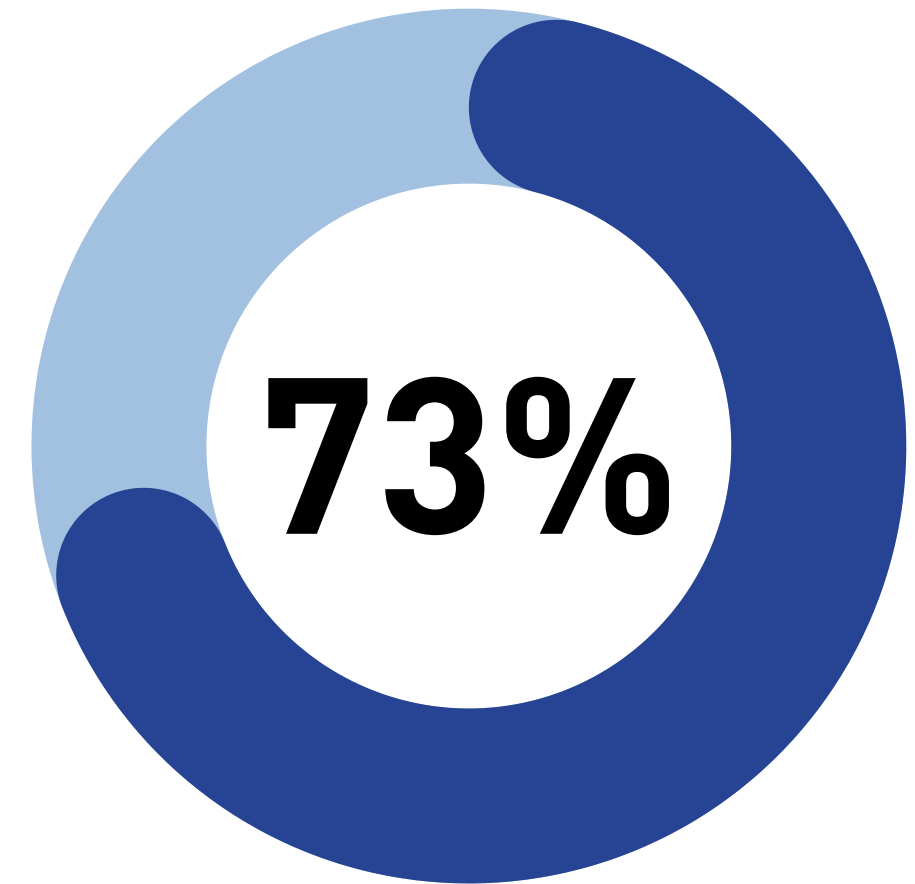


# DO YOU REMEMBER A CAMPAIGN ON EMPATHY

## Insights

Out of the approximately **30%** of people who have seen empathy-related campaigns, only half of them could recall where and what those campaigns were, indicating low recall. Almost all recalled campaigns were from NGO and charity related initiatives, only one referred to empathy within the context of the startup community.

Examples of NGO or community campaigns include:  
Run with Sai, Blood Donations, Kantha Bopha campaign,



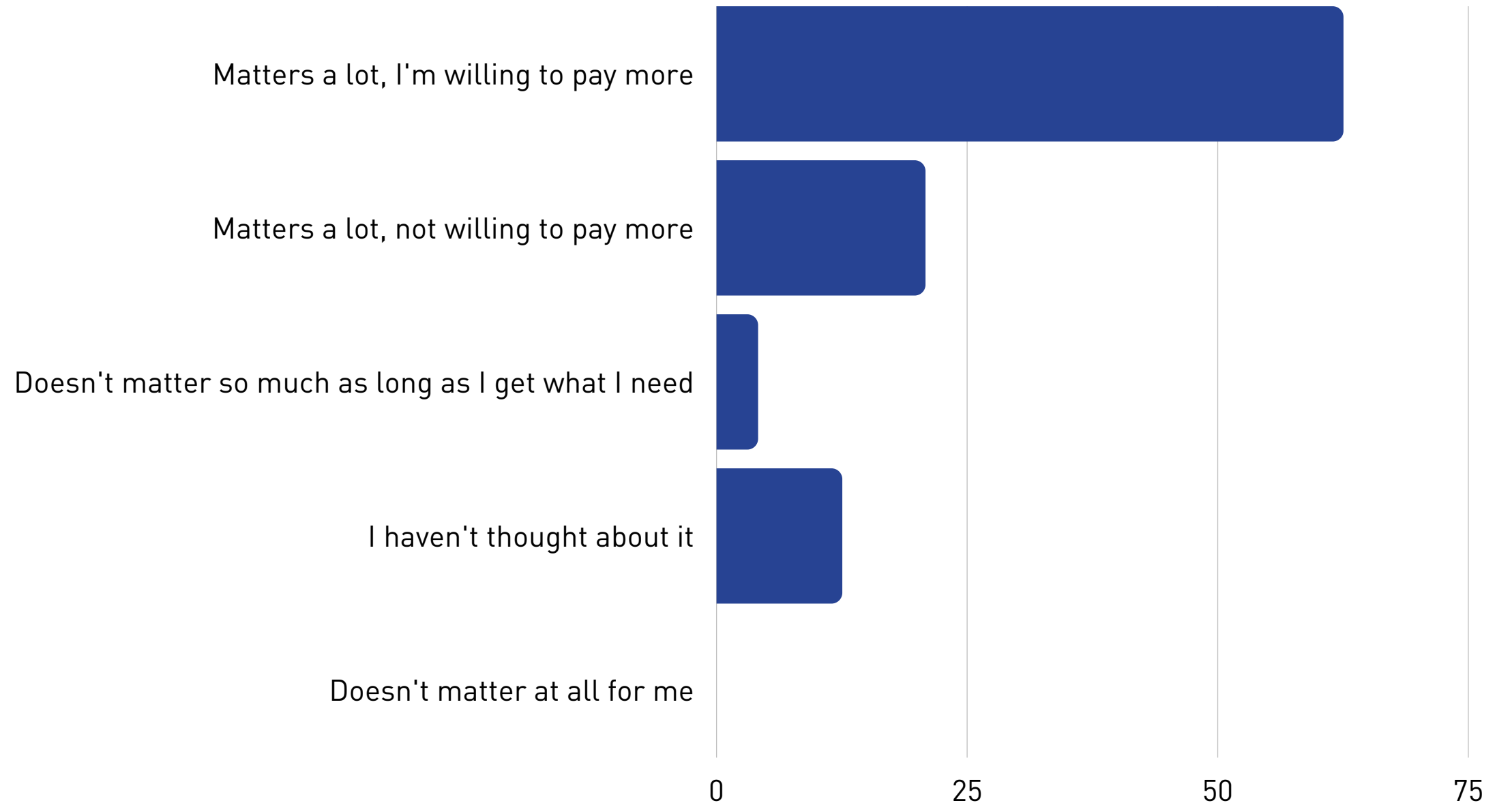
*73% of respondents have never seen or do not remember a campaign about compassion and empathy*

# ? ARE YOU WILLING TO PAY MORE?

## Insights

**62.5%** of consumers are willing and able to pay more for brands to operate in a manner deemed empathetic and compassionate.

This included both external and internal actions, such as CSR campaigns to employee support programmes. An analysis of individual perceptions on empathetic action was not conducted this time.





# RECOMMENDATIONS

- There's a clear opportunity for companies to act and communicate their activities which are empathetic and values-tested - 7 out of 10 people are willing to pay more - this means higher margins for companies.
- Another perspective is that companies which are seen as acting with empathy and with their core values will attract more loyal customers, although it is speculated that any company actions in conflict with values will result in customer punishment of the brand.
- Leaders and managers are expected by their employees to explicitly talk about empathy and values to improve and address communication and workplace culture issues. This corresponds with the finding that nearly 40% of people who don't understand the efforts of exhibiting empathy and company values in day to day work, they need their leaders to speak and show them how it's done.
- There's an opportunity for messaging both in recruitment and for market positioning as most consumers prefer to see these campaigns but don't see companies exhibiting nor communicating these themes in their messaging and activities.

# EXPERT INSIGHTS

"As a therapist and when sometimes as a career and life coach; the most commonly shared story I hear is that *"It takes so much of my energy, time and productivity and at the end I don't enjoy my work at all because my manager don't understand human beings but results and profit"*, or *"I left my job because I don't enjoy working with my manager and those colleagues."* While some others have said *"I have a lot of challenges with my work, but I survive and grow when I have my manager and team who care and understand me"*.

When I work with managers and leaders; we speak about vulnerability, trust, and empathy as the stepping stones to archive a shared-result and benefit the larger community.

From the report, I am pleased to see that 65.2% of respondents are willing and able to pay more for brands to operate in a manner deemed empathetic and compassionate. I envision that there will be an increasing number and we are having a society where people share values of respect, empathy and compassion.

## **What does it take to be empathetic to oneself and one another?**

I believe it is hard but easy to do and it must start. We can start from listening and hearing from others, and observe the happiness in others and in you when you do a small, good act.

Empathetic and compassionate leaders create high performance results, from home to giant companies."



Sotheary Yim,  
Psychologist, Women's Rights Activist and  
Founder of Sneha



# FUTURE INSIGHTS TO GAIN

- A study on segmented audience perception on empathy ie) Their current understanding of empathy and levels of others in particular situations, empathy in the workplace vs. empathy at home, vs. empathy for oneself.
- What do companies think empathetic action is?
- What do managers believe are empathetic practices in the workplace?
- How much purchasing power do customers who are willing to pay more for empathetic brands represent in the market?
- Empathetic Practice and inclusivity indicators in the workplace

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Would you like to contribute?  
Or have your own question?

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