



Public Service as a Career of Choice

Building trust to leave your people
and your organization Net Better Off

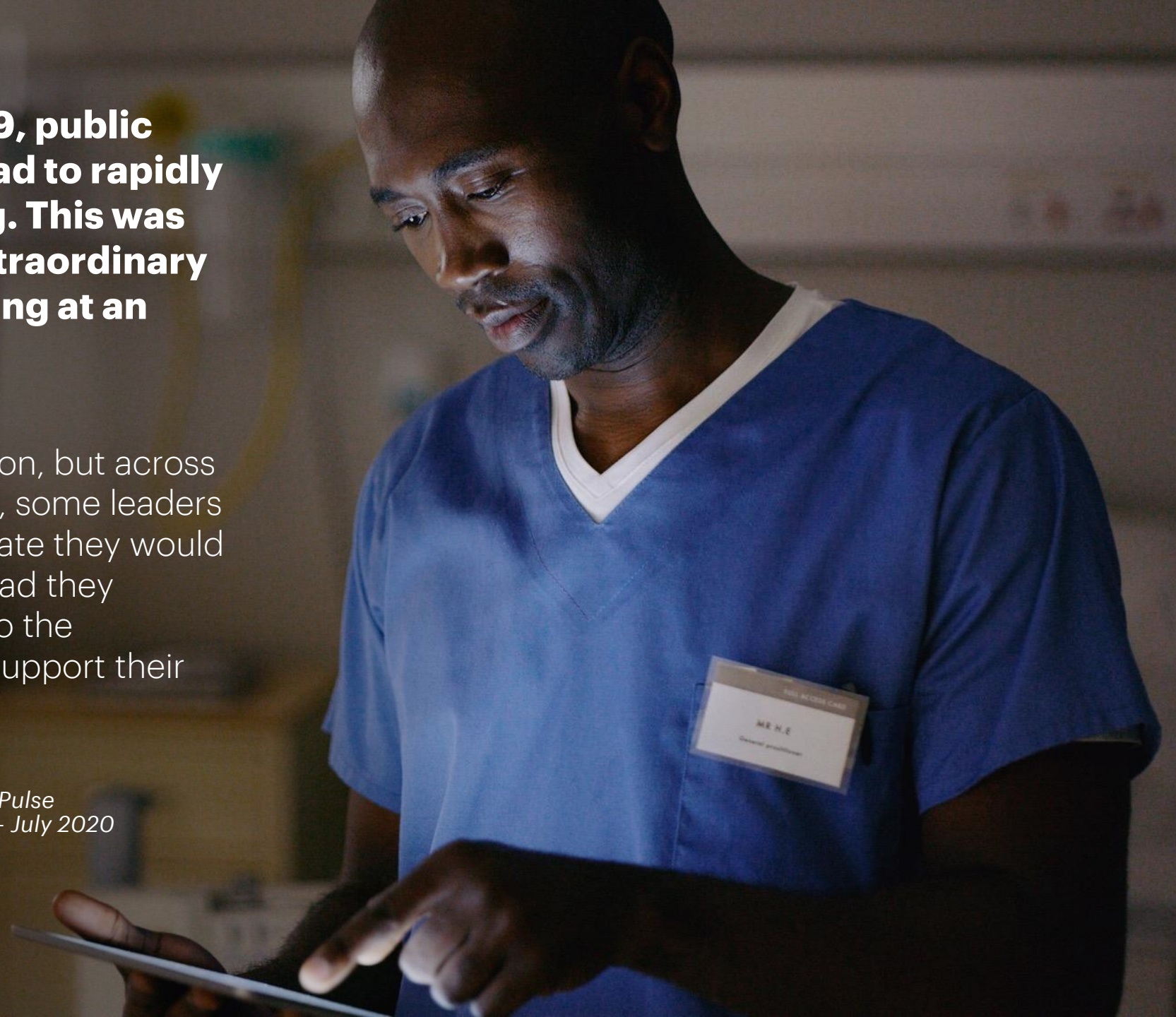
December 2020



In response to COVID-19, public service organizations had to rapidly change ways of working. This was essential to keep the extraordinary work of government going at an extraordinary time.

Many are rising to the occasion, but across the public and private sector, some leaders by their own admission indicate they would have been better prepared had they invested more heavily prior to the pandemic in programs that support their people's holistic needs.¹

1. Accenture Research C-suite Functional Pulse Survey, n=700; data collected from June – July 2020



A consensus for change

The entire C-suite is rethinking their responsibility towards their people.

Prior to the pandemic, 35% of CXOs fully embraced the responsibility to support people's holistic needs.

In 6 short months this has escalated dramatically to over half (50%) of CXOs.¹



Expectations around the employee-employer relationship are being rewritten in real-time for public service.

Workers are asking tough questions:

- How is the agency responding to meet people's needs during this pandemic?
- How is the agency going to keep me safe when re-entering into the workplace?
- How is the agency helping to dismantle inequality in the workplace?

So, what do public service employees want?

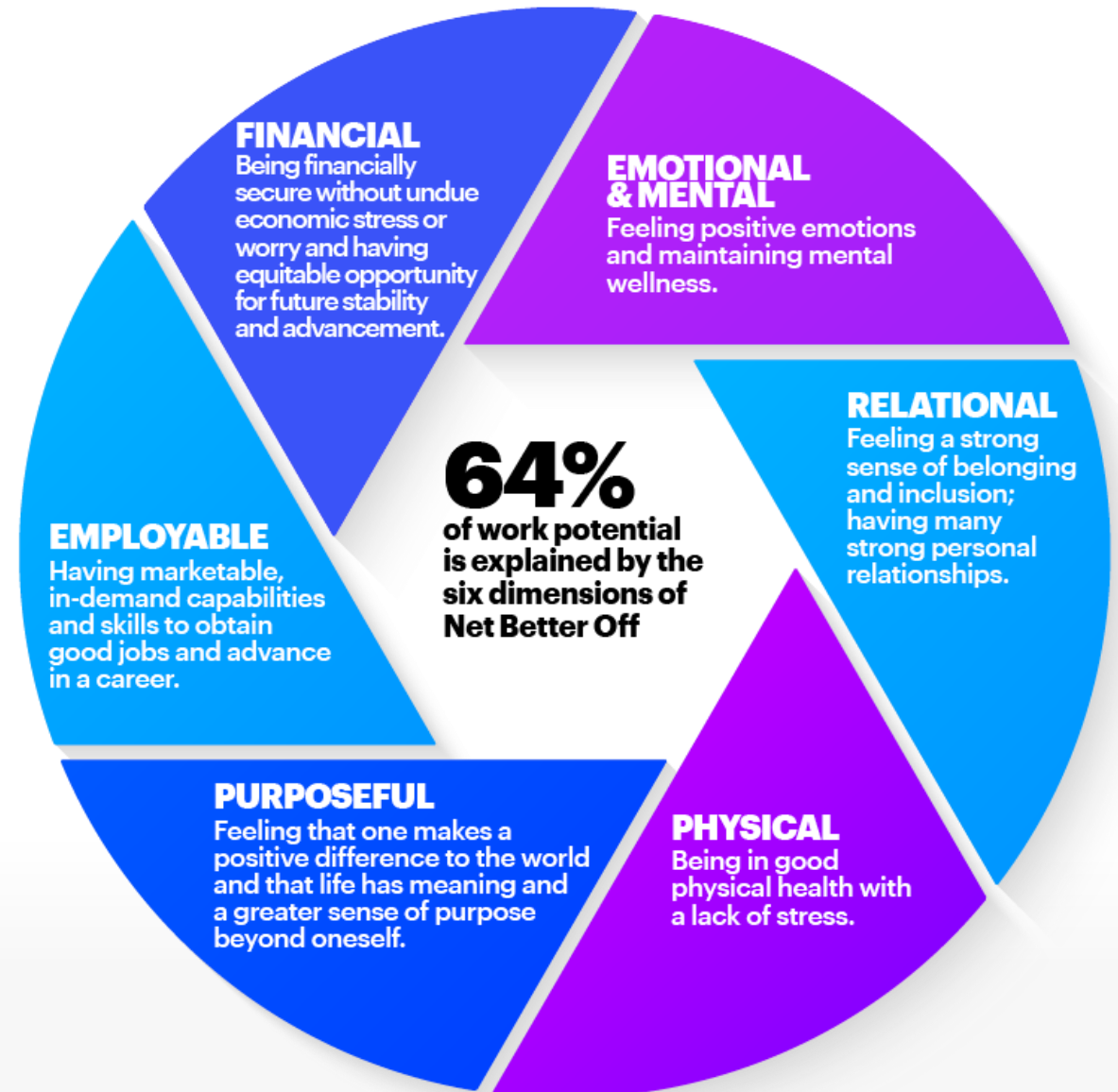
Our latest research, which surveyed HR decision makers and workers across 10 countries and 15 industries (including the public sector), found that by meeting six fundamental human needs through work, public service organizations can earn their people's trust and unlock their full potential. **We call this framework Net Better Off.**



Introducing a groundbreaking new model: **Net Better Off**

Net Better Off measures and brings into focus what inspires workers' potential.

We found that each of the six dimensions of Net Better Off were significantly correlated with people trusting their employer.



Bridging the expectation gap

57%

More than half of public sector workers strongly believe their employer is responsible for helping them become Net Better Off.¹

28%

In stark contrast, only 28% of public sector leadership feel the same way.²

By bridging this gap, CHROs and other leaders in public service organizations can build trust based on the fundamentals of what matters most to their people. And as our research demonstrates, leaving employees Net Better Off is not just good for them, but also good for citizens, businesses and communities.

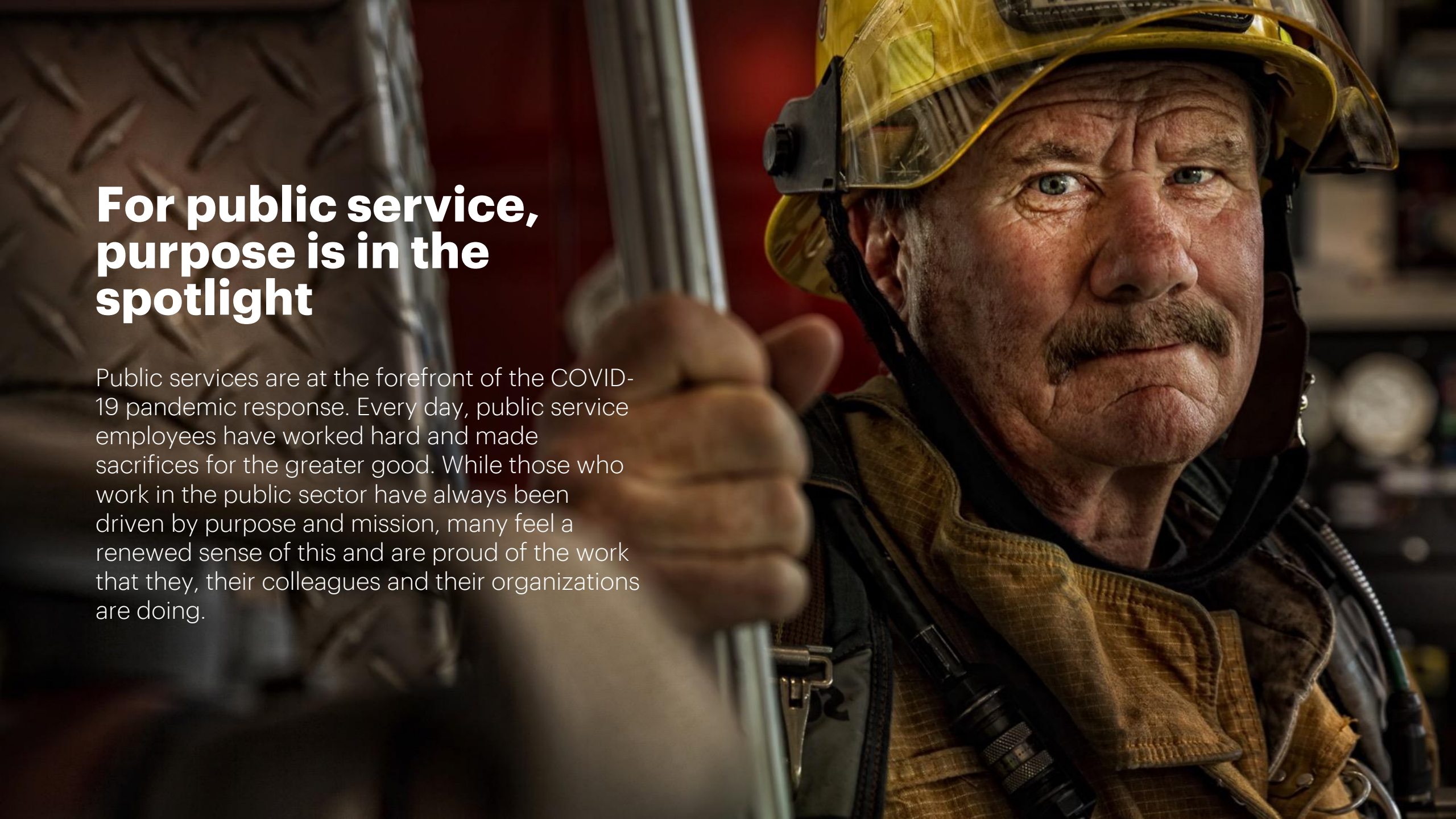


Across public service, the strongest drivers of worker behavior are attributed to the **Relational, Emotional and Purposeful** dimensions of Net Better Off

Emotional Relational	Emotional Relational Physical	Relational Emotional	Purposeful Emotional Relational	Emotional Relational	Physical Purposeful
Purposeful Physical Employable	Purposeful	Purposeful Financial	Physical Employable	Physical Purposeful	Relational Emotional Employable
Financial	Employable Financial	Physical Employable	Financial	Employable Financial	Financial
"I would recommend my employer"	"I trust my employer"	"I want to work for my current employer for a long time"	"I am fully inspired and motivated"	"I have a highly positive experience working for my employer"	"I utilize my full range of skills"

Relative impact of Net Better Off dimension on workers' behavior

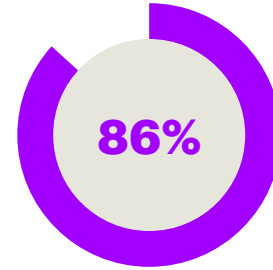




For public service, purpose is in the spotlight

Public services are at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic response. Every day, public service employees have worked hard and made sacrifices for the greater good. While those who work in the public sector have always been driven by purpose and mission, many feel a renewed sense of this and are proud of the work that they, their colleagues and their organizations are doing.

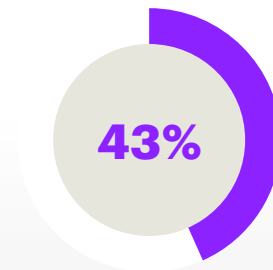
There has never been a more opportune moment to reimagine the employee experience within public service agencies. Now is the time to harness the rise in purpose by helping employees reach their full potential and by leaving them Net Better Off.



Of public sector workers feel their work aligns with the desire to do something meaningful and worthwhile.¹

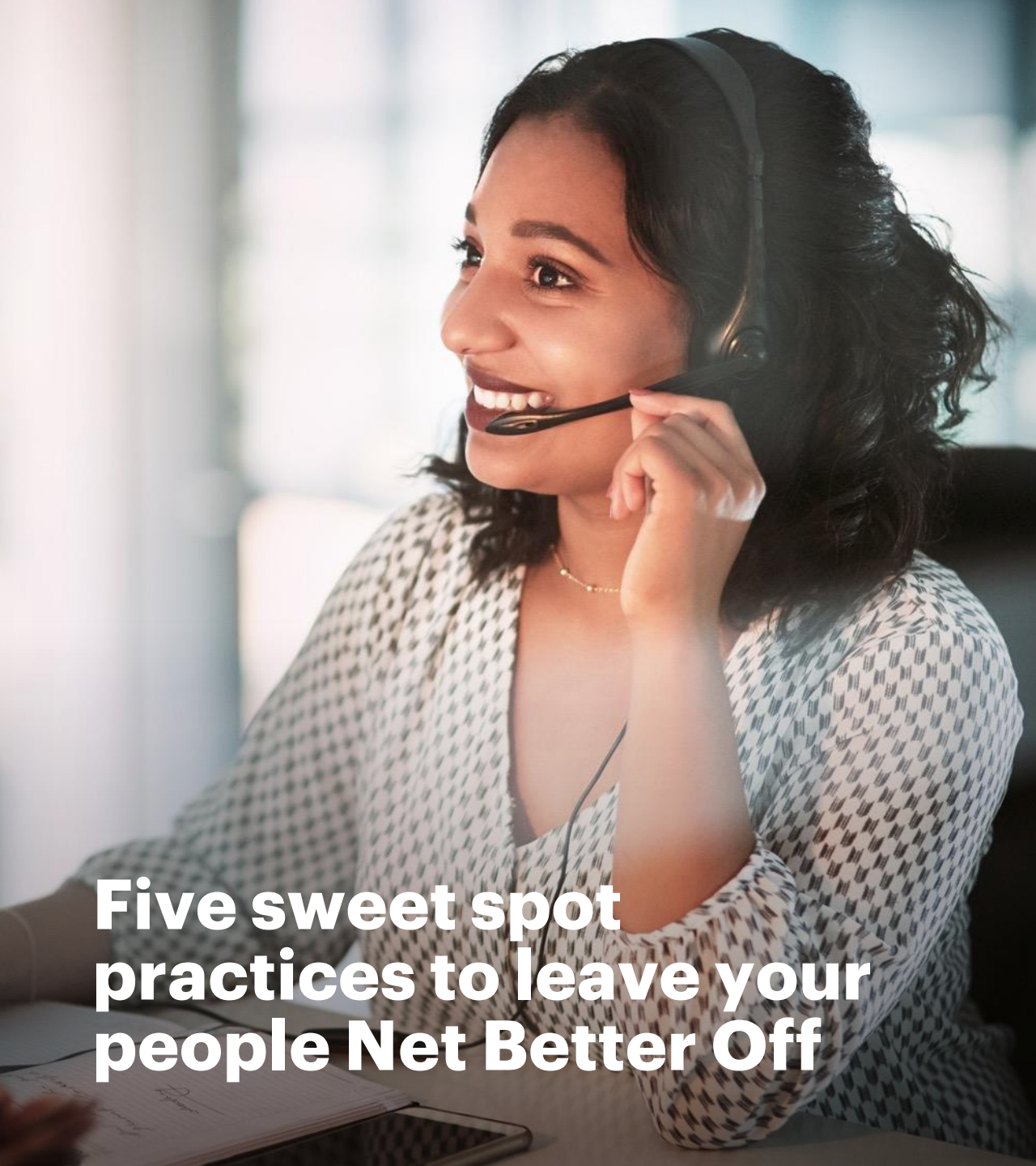


Of those who had been part of a public service agency but have left would consider re-joining out of a sense of civic duty and a desire to contribute to society.²



But many have more to give. Just 43% of public service workers in non-manager positions believe their potential is being fully realized at work.³





Five sweet spot practices to leave your people Net Better Off

To leave employees Net Better Off, we highlight five practices that, when taken together, form “sweet spots” for building trust and performance in the public service workforce.



Enable continuous learning



Listen to what your people need at the front lines



Use technology to enable flexible work arrangements



Champion workforce wellbeing and equality



Set and share people metrics

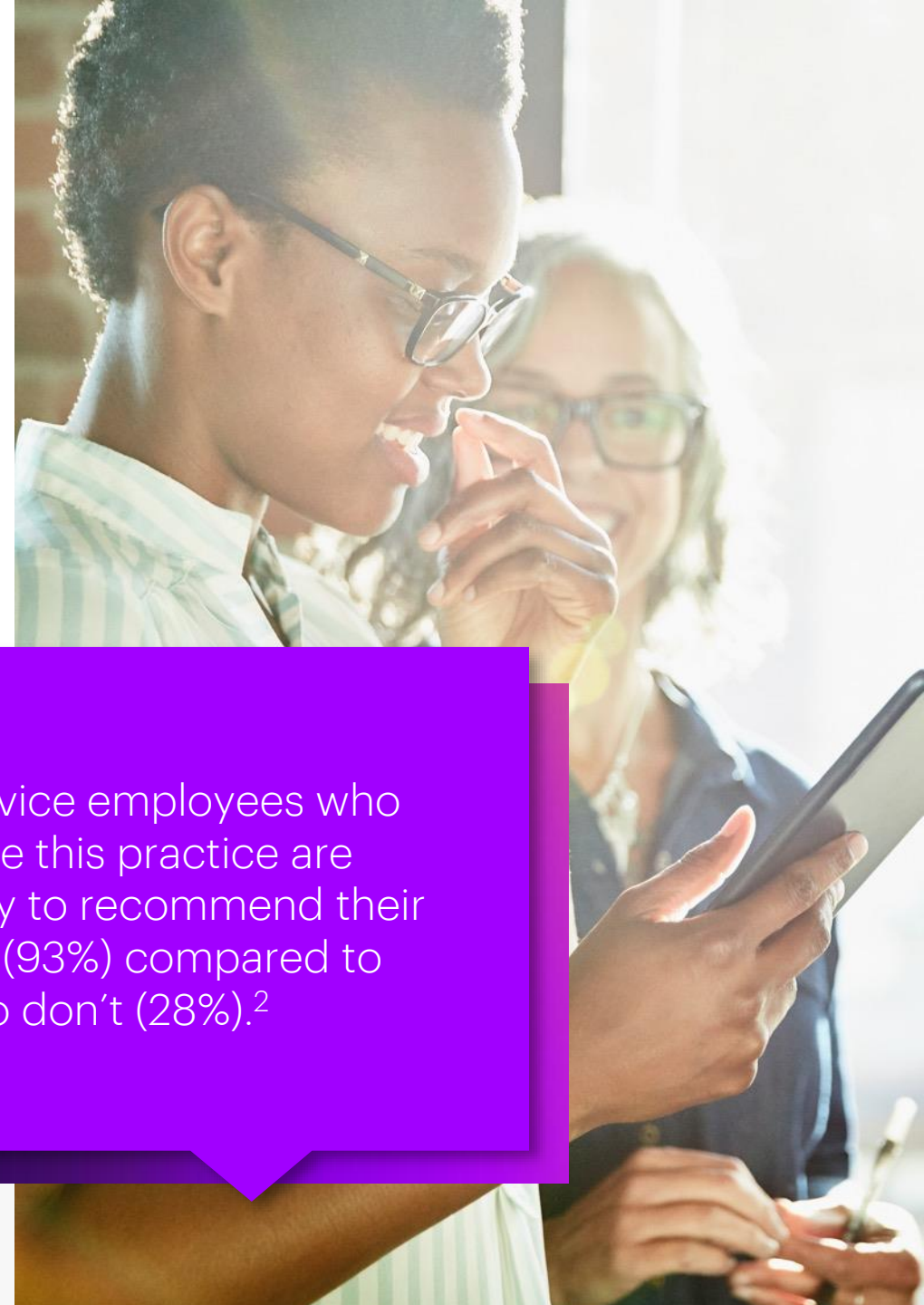


Enable continuous learning

Agencies that lead in this practice use data analysis to anticipate future skills needs. They deconstruct and reconstruct roles, determining which tasks are best suited for machines and which require uniquely human skills. They also use technology and innovative methods to make people's learning experiences more effective and accessible.

The pandemic has made employees more aware of the need to develop new skills. Sixty-four percent of public service workers say that remote work has made them consider the need to upskill or reskill. Yet only 35% feel strongly that their agency provides the training opportunities needed to build these skills.¹

Public service employees who experience this practice are more likely to recommend their employer (93%) compared to those who don't (28%).²





Enable continuous learning

How should public service agencies apply this practice?

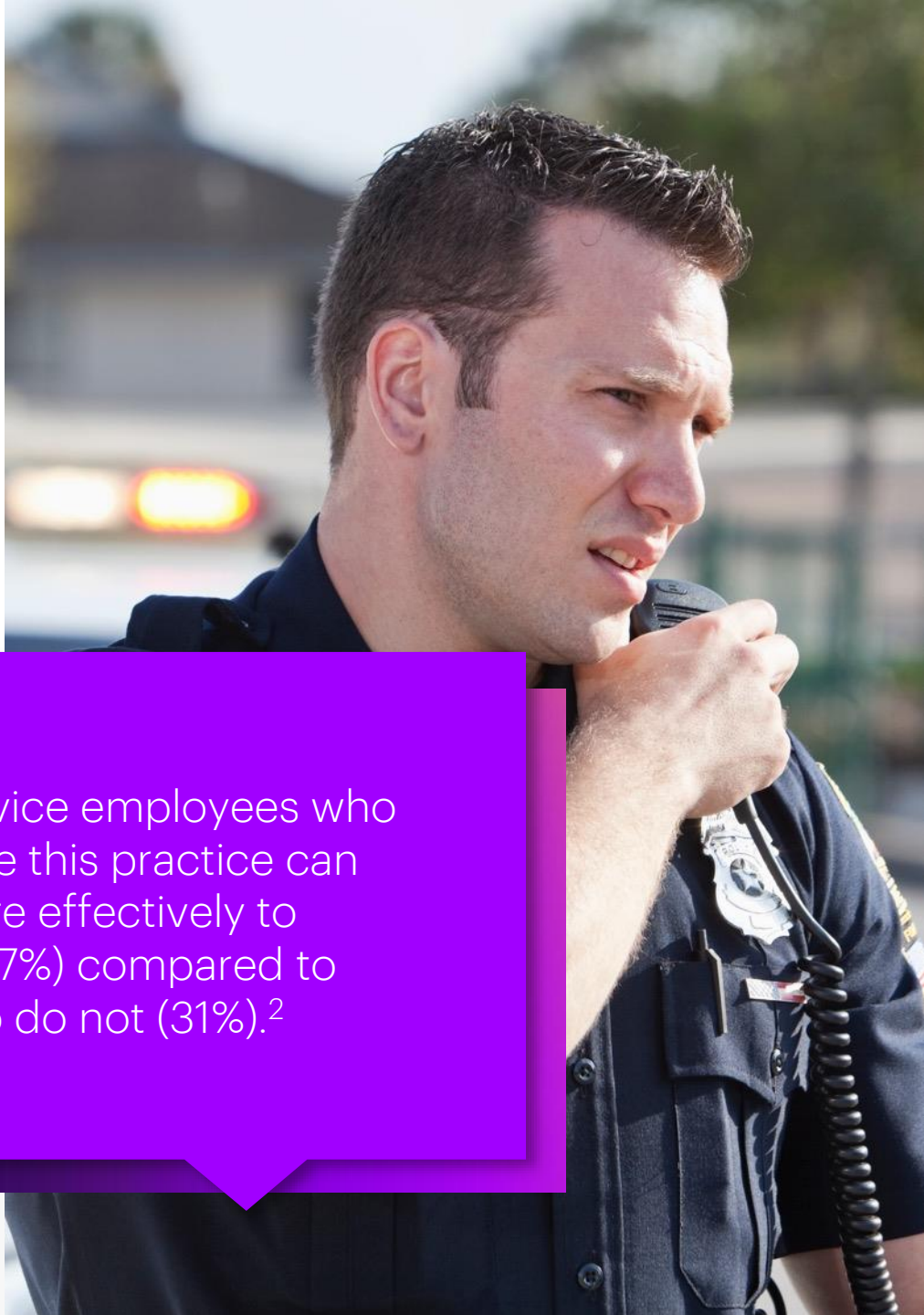
- Define a continuous learning mandate and strategy to help behaviors evolve, tackling low adoption.
- Provide multiple channels for ongoing learning, giving employees a choice to learn in a way that suits them.
- Reward continuous learning through incentives.
- Make greater use of intelligent technology for training, for example [AVE nueS](#). Only 19% of our respondents say that their agency uses Virtual Reality (VR) for immersive training.¹
- Use research and analytics to understand what skills will be needed in future and set a roadmap for attaining them.



Listen to what your people need at the front lines

Agencies that do well here use technology to anticipate, predict and quickly respond to their people's needs. They use two-way applications to flag workforce trends while giving individuals a voice. This allows them to build trust by applying insights in a way that provides clear benefits to individuals, not just to the organization.

Our findings also confirm that employees expect open and clear communication and that transparent interactions and access to data with context are essential to building trust. Seventy-six percent say that since the crisis began, their agency has done well in communicating important updates to employees. Communication will become even more important as workers are increasingly virtual and learning new collaboration tools (which 48% have already done during the pandemic).¹



Public service employees who experience this practice can adapt more effectively to change (97%) compared to those who do not (31%).²

1. Accenture Public service as a Career of Choice, September 2020

2. Accenture Care to do Better research, September 2020





Listen to what your people need at the front lines

How should public service agencies apply this practice?

- Use different channels of communication for different generations, for example social media for younger employees.
- Bring in new tools and techniques to capture and measure shifting needs, keeping people at the heart of all decisions.
- Align leadership performance, measures and incentives with employees' needs.
- Empower, educate and build trust with employees so they get the benefit of the data available to them.




Use technology to enable flexible work arrangements

A growing number of agencies are applying intelligent technologies to automate tasks, improve productivity, and enhance services for citizens. By using technology in this way, agencies can accelerate flexible work, freeing their people to engage in more fulfilling and innovative tasks.

Our research shows that while public service employees are seeking new digital tools, they still have some apprehension about working with them.

Fifty-four percent of public service workers believe their agency should provide new digital tools – 70% say their agency's use of automation has increased since the pandemic hit and 68% agree that this automation of routine tasks has freed up time to focus on more important work. However, their desire for digital technologies has its limits: 66% say they prefer working with humans rather than intelligent machines.¹



Public sector employees who experience this practice are more likely to feel fulfilled in their work (76%) compared to those who don't (19%).²

1. Accenture Public service as a Career of Choice, September 2020
2. Accenture Care to do Better research, September 2020





Use technology to enable flexible work arrangements

How should public service agencies apply this practice?

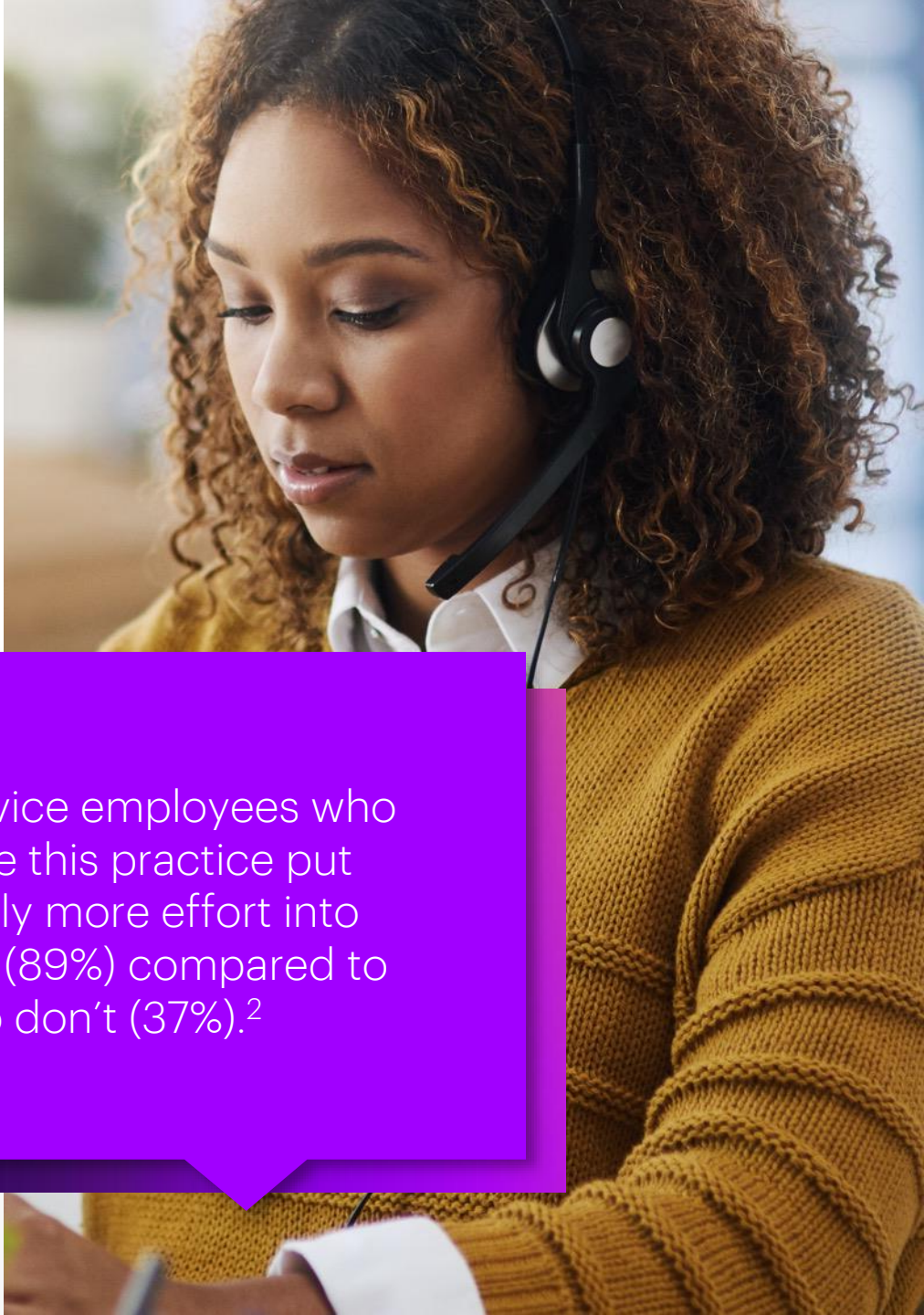
- Understand how technology can support desired behaviors, rather than starting with the technology and then attempting to retrofit.
- Look closely at how to get the best out of existing technology while focusing on continuous improvement for both the technology and the users.
- Use automation to free up employees' time to focus on work that requires human interaction.
- Where possible, co-invest in secure cloud with one of the leading global public cloud providers.



Championing workforce wellbeing and equality

Agencies that lead in this practice continually refine their wellbeing efforts to reflect their people's changing needs. For instance, in the midst of the current pandemic, public service organizations had to quickly create initiatives to safeguard the physical and mental wellbeing of their workers. Similarly, many are mobilising to become more inclusive places to work and seeking to nurture a culture that elevates a sense of belonging and accelerates equality for all.

Through and beyond the crisis, supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of workers is more important than ever. Sixty percent of public service workers currently feel they have a good work/life balance, down from 74% before the pandemic started. And over half – 52% – say they have recently experienced increased stress. Continuing to champion workforce wellbeing and equality will allow employees to bring their best selves to work in support of the mission.¹



Public service employees who experience this practice put significantly more effort into their work (89%) compared to those who don't (37%).²

1. Accenture Public service as a Career of Choice, September 2020

2. Accenture Care to do Better research, September 2020





Championing workforce wellbeing and equality

How should public service agencies apply this practice?

- Gain data-driven insights on a continuous basis, including use of analytics to understand development opportunities for different groups.
- Set the right tone from top, with the right leadership behaviors. Our research shows only 16% of public service workers are looking to their leaders to set positive examples around work/life balance; this should be much higher.¹
- Create a continuous feedback loop to learn what employees need to feel safe, supported and included in the workplace, and be ready to pivot if needs change.
- Go beyond pay and traditional compensation. Our research shows that 51% would prefer the option of a sabbatical or secondment as a reward.²

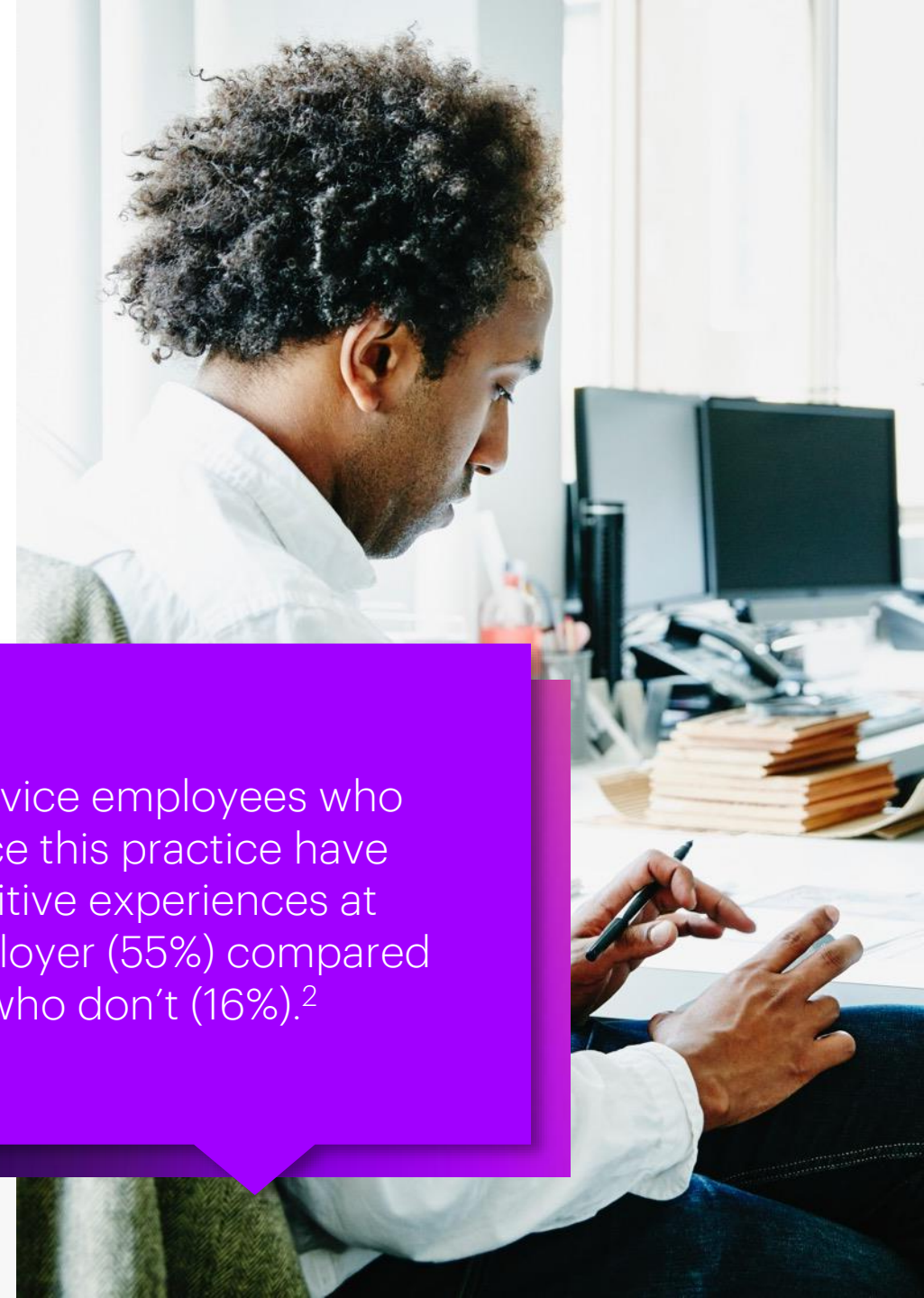


Set and share people metrics

The most equal and diverse workforce cultures experience 11 times the innovation mindset of the least equal and diverse, according to [Accenture research](#). Agencies that lead in this area showcase their commitment by ensuring people metrics are in place and communicated publicly, take meaningful action, and use this to help foster a culture of equality that encourages innovation. Individuals should feel they belong and can be the same person both inside and outside of work.

Our research suggests that many agencies have some way to go. Forty-eight percent of current employees want their agencies to offer safer and more collaborative workspaces.

Workers who were in public service and have since left echo this sentiment: 60% highlight the need for agencies to build a workplace where nobody feels excluded or disrespected.¹



Public service employees who experience this practice have more positive experiences at their employer (55%) compared to those who don't (16%).²

1. Accenture Public service as a Career of Choice, September 2020

2 Accenture Care to do Better research, September 2020





Set and share people metrics

How should public service agencies apply this practice?

- Make sure that diversity and equality conversations with employees are transparent, accountable and focus on issues that matter to them.
- Implement robust back-office HR systems, sourced as-a-service, to get a real-time, unsiloed view of workforce dynamics.
- Recommendations from the top should be democratized by having employees involved in decision making. Get all the right people at the table from day one and have someone or a team responsible for making sure it happens.

Elevate trust to leave people Net Better Off

For public service agencies, ensuring their people are Net Better Off is more critical now than ever – to support employees today when they need it most and to strengthen their trust in the employer-employee relationship to reap benefits tomorrow. The Net Better Off model enables individuals to work at their full potential. And it allows them to feel a stronger sense of purpose, a calling that – now more than ever – inspires many people to join and stay in public services.



This reorientation relies on public service leaders who can pinpoint and solve the problems that matter to their people in innovative, tech-forward ways and reshape how work is done in their organizations. However, committing to making people Net Better Off requires more than imaginative practices and policies. It means putting care and compassion at the heart of the work experience and building trust through transparency.

People's potential can and will change when they are sufficiently supported. And that means deeper trust, a more fulfilled and motivated workforce, and ultimately, better services for citizens.

To learn more about how Accenture can help your agency consider new ways to leave your people Net Better Off, please contact:



Ryan Gaetz

Managing Director – Consulting,
Accenture Workday Education &
Government Lead



Mary Kate Morley Ryan

Director – Talent & Organization/Human
Potential



Rainer Binder

Managing Director – Public Service,
Social Services Lead



Ryan Oakes

Senior Managing Director –
Strategy & Consulting, Global
Public Service



Research methodology

Care to do better research, September 2020

The Accenture Research program was built on four proprietary research initiatives:

- A survey of 15,665 workers across skill levels and generations from a range of large and small companies: 30 percent were management workers.
- A survey of 3,200+ C-level executives: 50 percent were HR decision makers and 50 percent, other CXOs.
- Both surveys covered 10 countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Spain, Singapore, United Kingdom, United States) and 15 industries (Aerospace & Defense, Banking, Communications, Consumer Goods & Services, Energy (Oil and Gas), Freight and Logistics, Health, Insurance, Media, Public Sector, Retail, Technology (High Tech), Travel, U.S. Federal Government, Utilities). These were carried out between October and November 2019.
- A follow-up survey was conducted in the months of April – July 2020 with 5,400 global workers and 700 C-suite executives.
- 35 in-depth interviews involving CHROs, CEOs and academic experts, conducted by Accenture Research and third parties.
- Econometric modeling to determine the relationship between Net Better Off and companies' revenues.
- The Sweet Spot practices were derived using regression modeling to evaluate practices that significantly drove Net Better Off and organizational growth.

Research methodology

Public service as a career of choice research, September 2020

- This Accenture study is based on a survey of 5,030 workers, of which 2,530 were those currently working in public services across central/federal, state and local government. The others include those who worked in public services previously, those who have considered public services but never joined and those who have never considered a career in public service.
- The aim was to understand perspectives on work and careers in public services, specifically around improving the employee experience as the world of work shifts to a new dynamic following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The respondents were primarily those at the Executive Vice President/Director level or below.
- The survey covered five countries – Australia, Germany, Singapore, United Kingdom and United States. It also covered five public service segments – Tax/Revenue, Public Employment Services/Social Services, Defense, Borders/Customs/Immigration and Public Safety.

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About Accenture Research

Accenture Research shapes trends and creates data driven insights about the most pressing issues global organizations face. Combining the power of innovative research techniques with a deep understanding of our clients’ industries, our team of 300 researchers and analysts spans 20 countries and publishes hundreds of reports, articles and points of view every year. Our thought-provoking research—supported by proprietary data and partnerships with leading organizations, such as MIT and Harvard— guides our innovations and allows us to transform theories and fresh ideas into real-world solutions for our clients.

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