

An aerial photograph of a coastal town in Ireland, likely Galway, showing a mix of colorful buildings, a prominent church spire, and a river or harbor. The sky is filled with wispy white clouds against a blue background. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

Meaningfulness at work in Ireland

How can we make more organizations more meaningful in 2022 and beyond?

Voluntās

Understanding meaningfulness in Ireland 2022

At Voluntās, everything we do is to make more lives more meaningful.

Meaningfulness is the feeling that your life has dignity and hope. Not evaluated in every moment, but as the sum of your past and present life and of the life that lies ahead of you. That, we know, is the best possible condition for human potential to be realized.

Our Center for Applied Meaningfulness measures and explores the impact of meaningfulness on human beings and societies. The center rests on the assumption that meaningfulness is a better way of measuring societal well-being or human progress than existing indexes for material and human development such as GDP. This Irish Meaningfulness Report 2022 is based on survey data collected between December 2021 and March 2022.

About Voluntās

With more than 65 human beings in six offices on four continents, Voluntās is one of the fastest growing consultancies born out of the Nordics.

Management consultants by profession and philosophers by heart, we specialize in advising companies, foundations, owners, boards, leaders and governments on how to create, adapt and drive meaningful organizations, brands, societies and planet.

The MWQ

What is the Meaningful Work Quotient?

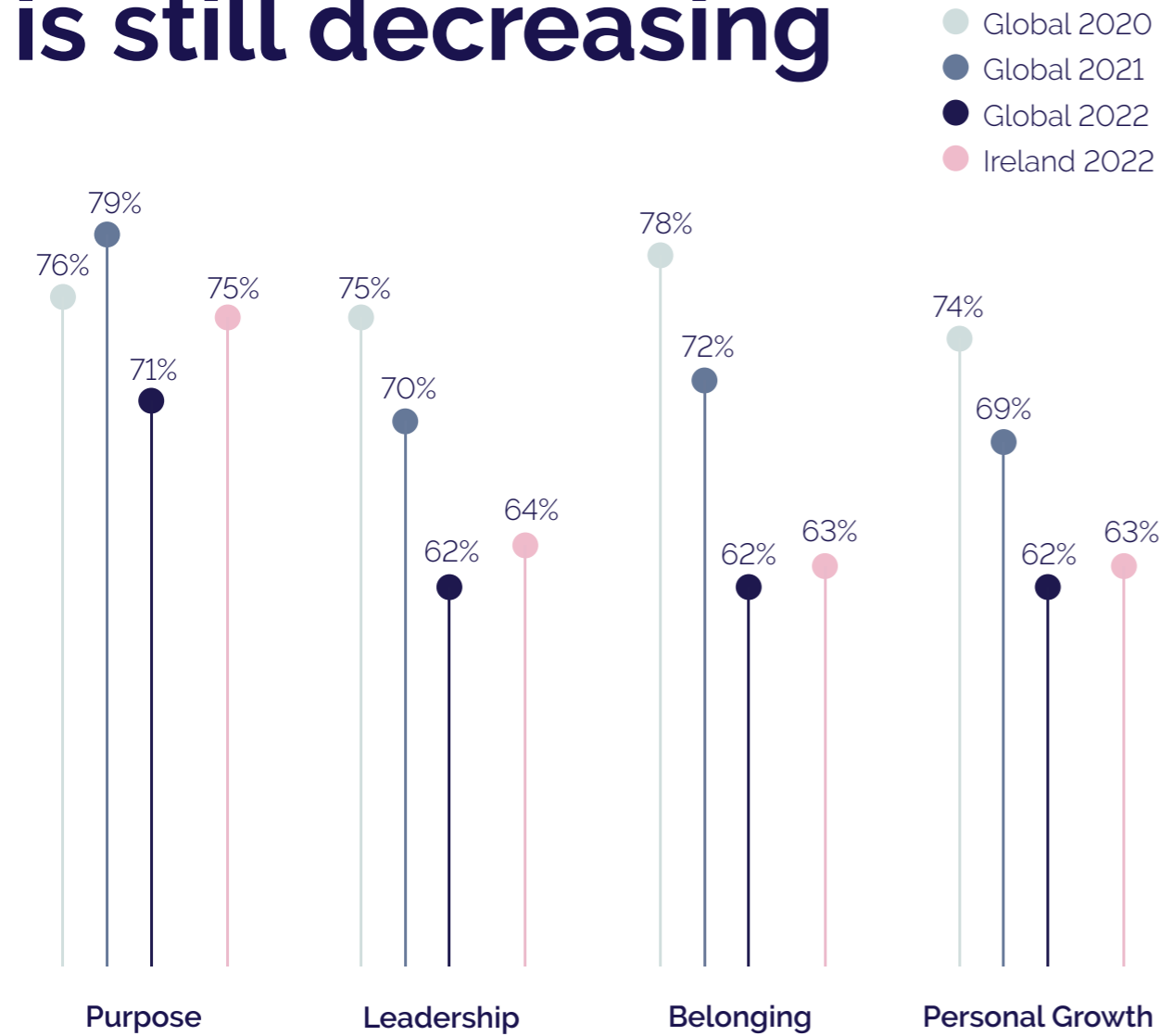
The Meaningful Work Quotient is based on four drivers of meaningfulness. At Voluntās' Center for Applied Meaningfulness, we have analyzed every piece of research, poetry, and empirical industry data about what makes work meaningful.

We have conducted the MWQ-survey across all significant industries, functions, hierarchy levels, age groups and geographies, amongst 30 different countries. This white paper will focus on meaningfulness within organizations in Ireland.

Condensing our learnings into drivers of meaningfulness, we then tested these drivers statistically and condensed our findings into four foundational building blocks driving meaningfulness for leaders and employees.

How are we doing at work?

Meaningfulness at work is still decreasing



Purpose
You feel a direction and impact in the work that you do, and you think that the purpose of the company aligns with your own moral compass and resonates with what you find important in life.

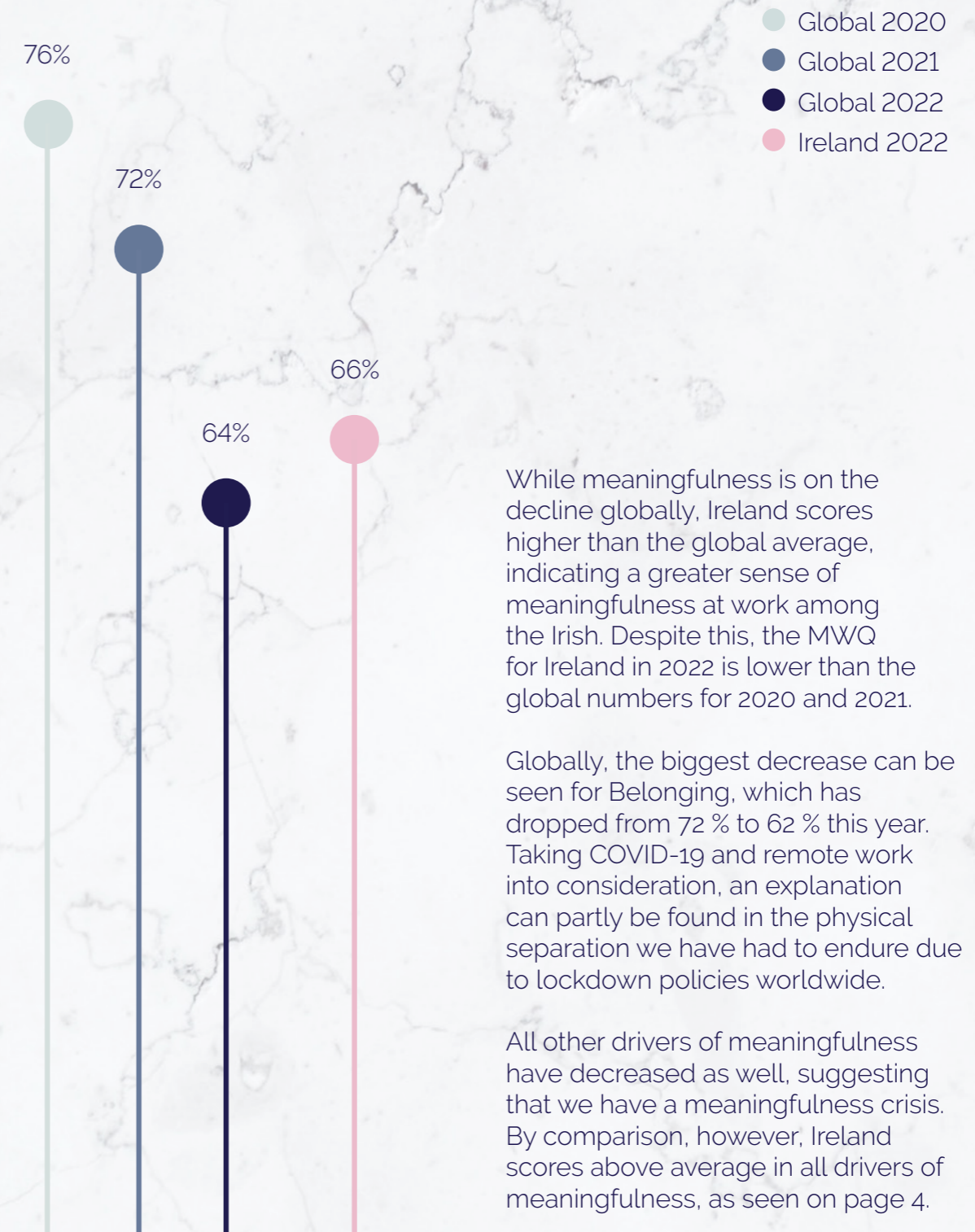
Leadership
You feel guided in the work that you do every day and that it is prioritized and clear what your daily objectives are, as well as what you need to achieve.

Belonging
You feel a sense of community and, in general, have strong social ties with your colleagues who you miss when you are not physically together at work.

Personal Growth
You feel that every day you become a little bit more aware of who you are, who you are not, as well as who you want and don't want to become, while given the feedback to develop accordingly.

National level

Meaningfulness in Ireland



While meaningfulness is on the decline globally, Ireland scores higher than the global average, indicating a greater sense of meaningfulness at work among the Irish. Despite this, the MWQ for Ireland in 2022 is lower than the global numbers for 2020 and 2021.

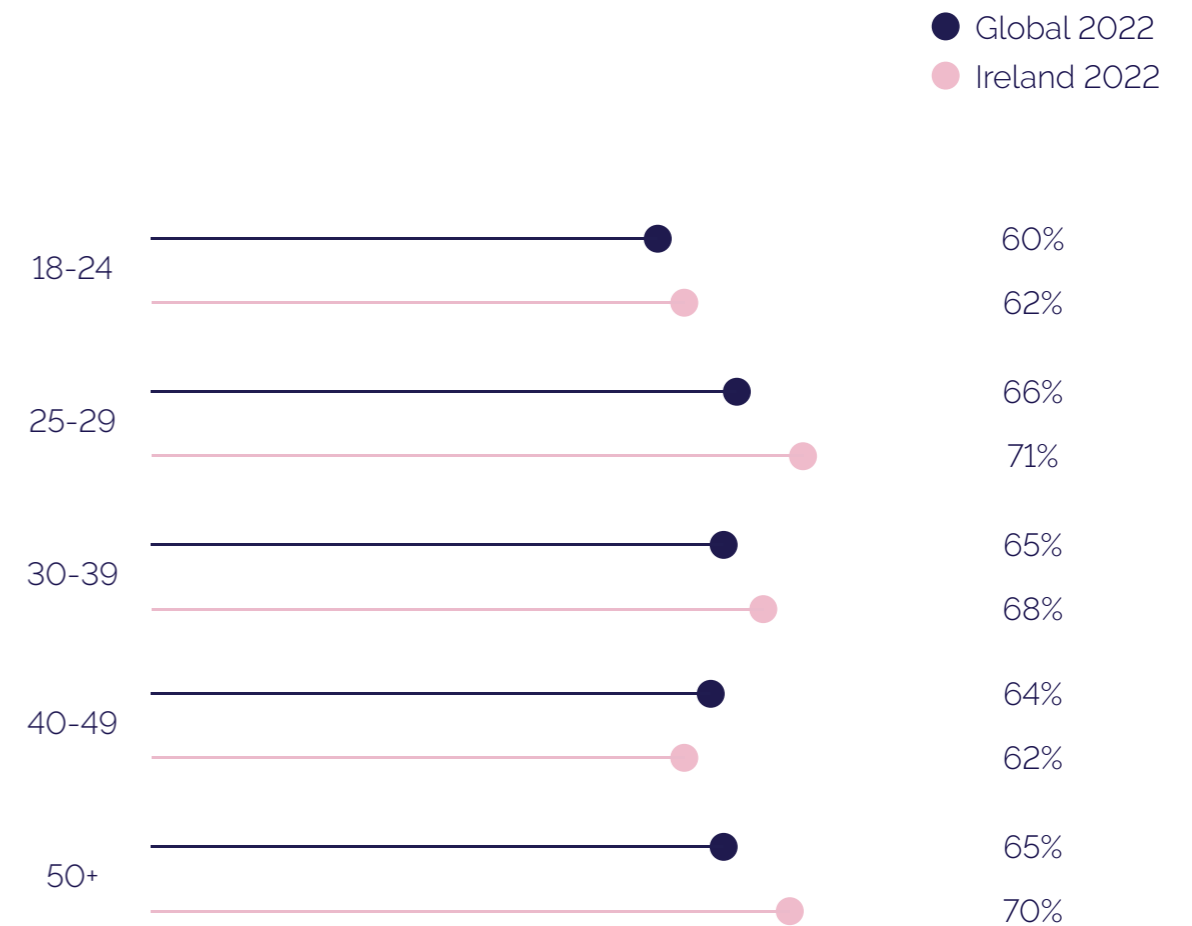
Globally, the biggest decrease can be seen for Belonging, which has dropped from 72 % to 62 % this year. Taking COVID-19 and remote work into consideration, an explanation can partly be found in the physical separation we have had to endure due to lockdown policies worldwide.

All other drivers of meaningfulness have decreased as well, suggesting that we have a meaningfulness crisis. By comparison, however, Ireland scores above average in all drivers of meaningfulness, as seen on page 4.



MWQ across age groups

The Irish aged 25-29 find more meaning at work



Looking across age groups in Ireland, the people aged 25-29 years, experience the highest level of meaning at work with 71 %, following the global trend, where the same age group peaks with 66 %. The biggest jump in percentage points is seen from the youngest to the second youngest age group with 9 percentage points.

MWQ across industries

Telecommunications is the most meaningful industry to work in

Top 5 industries



MWQ across industries

Working in the Food industry brings the least meaning

Bottom 5 industries

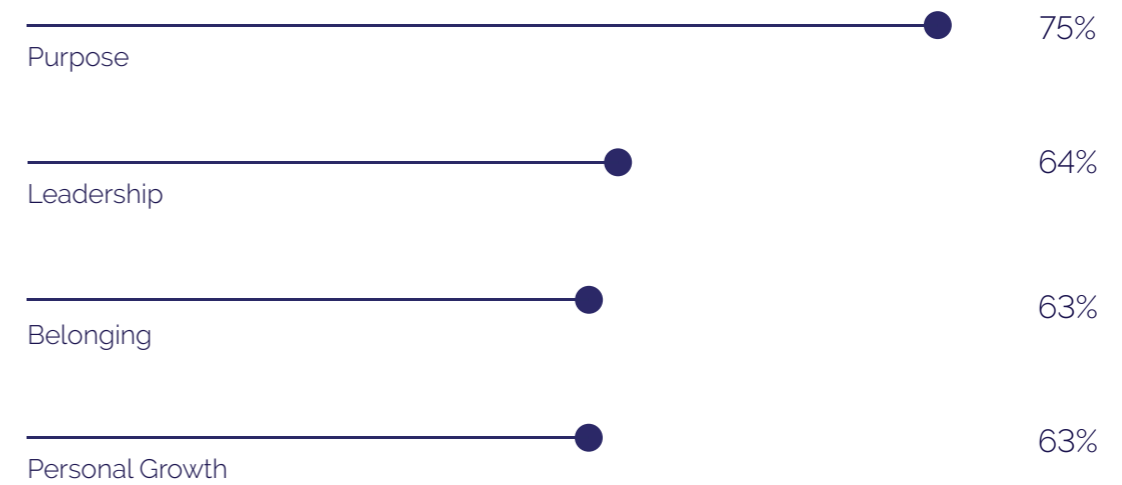


To ensure reliability of the data, some industries are excluded.

How are we doing at work?

Purpose is outperforming all other drivers in Ireland

Meaningfulness drivers in Ireland



Ireland has Purpose as the far strongest driver at 75 %, whereas Belonging (63 %), Leadership (64 %) and Personal Growth (63 %) score significantly lower.

Sense of Leadership relates to a feeling of guidance in the work that you do every day and that it is prioritized and clear what your daily objectives are, as well as what you need to achieve. Sense of Personal Growth relates to feeling that every day you become a little bit more aware of who you are and who you want to become, while given the feedback to develop accordingly. Sense of Belonging relates to the feeling of community and social ties with your colleagues.

In our Global Meaningfulness Report, we have, as mentioned previously, found a global decrease within belonging in clear correlation to Covid-19 and the derived lock-down. There are also clear connections between driver statements in Leadership and Personal Growth, meaning that Leadership can either stimulate or block Personal Growth.

Based on the state of meaning in Ireland, a lack of guidance and the presence of poor leadership suffocates the infrastructure for personal development. This reflects a sub-optimal relationship between leaders and employees, where a lack of guidance affects the possibility of realizing one's human potential.



Regain trust by moving from transactions to relations

Unfortunately, leadership has overlooked relational elements for too long - resulting in low levels of trust from employees.

As seen on page 13, half of the Irish workforce are unsure or disagree that their CEO cares about how the company earns money.

41%

Are either unsure or disagree that their CEO is a good human being ethically and morally

50%

Are unsure or disagree that their CEO cares about how the company earns money

49%

Are unsure or disagree that their leader puts human dignity above economic success

Three recommendations for leaders to create a Meaningful Organization

1

Diagnose the sense of meaningfulness and assess leadership

Measuring the level of meaningfulness that the employees experience in their work is the first step of creating more meaningful organizations. Such measures offer insights into how the employees' lives are impacted by work - which is inevitably an integral part of life. They also offer insights into how each leaders' behavior and ability to lead with purpose and along the company-DNA.

2

Conduct a "Cultural Due Diligence" on all People Processes

Review all steps of the employee journey – from attraction and recruitment to onboarding, development and retention. Does each step represent our culture and DNA? What original or surprising elements could you add to differentiate and amplify the culture you want to create? How can we optimize being a meaningful workplace – which structures or processes do we need to make more human?

3

Hire people who can shape your culture in a meaningful way

Poor cultural fit accounts for 89% of all hiring failures. Are you screening candidates for their self-awareness and cultural preference to assess whether they would thrive in your organization? If not, Voluntas has invented a tool for exactly that, which is tested and implemented across industries – from production and logistics to retail. The tool is applicable for M&A as well.





Scan to download our
Global Meaningfulness Report

Voluntās
Realizing Human Potential