



Meaningfulness at work in United States

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

Voluntās

Understanding meaningfulness in United States 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 US 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?

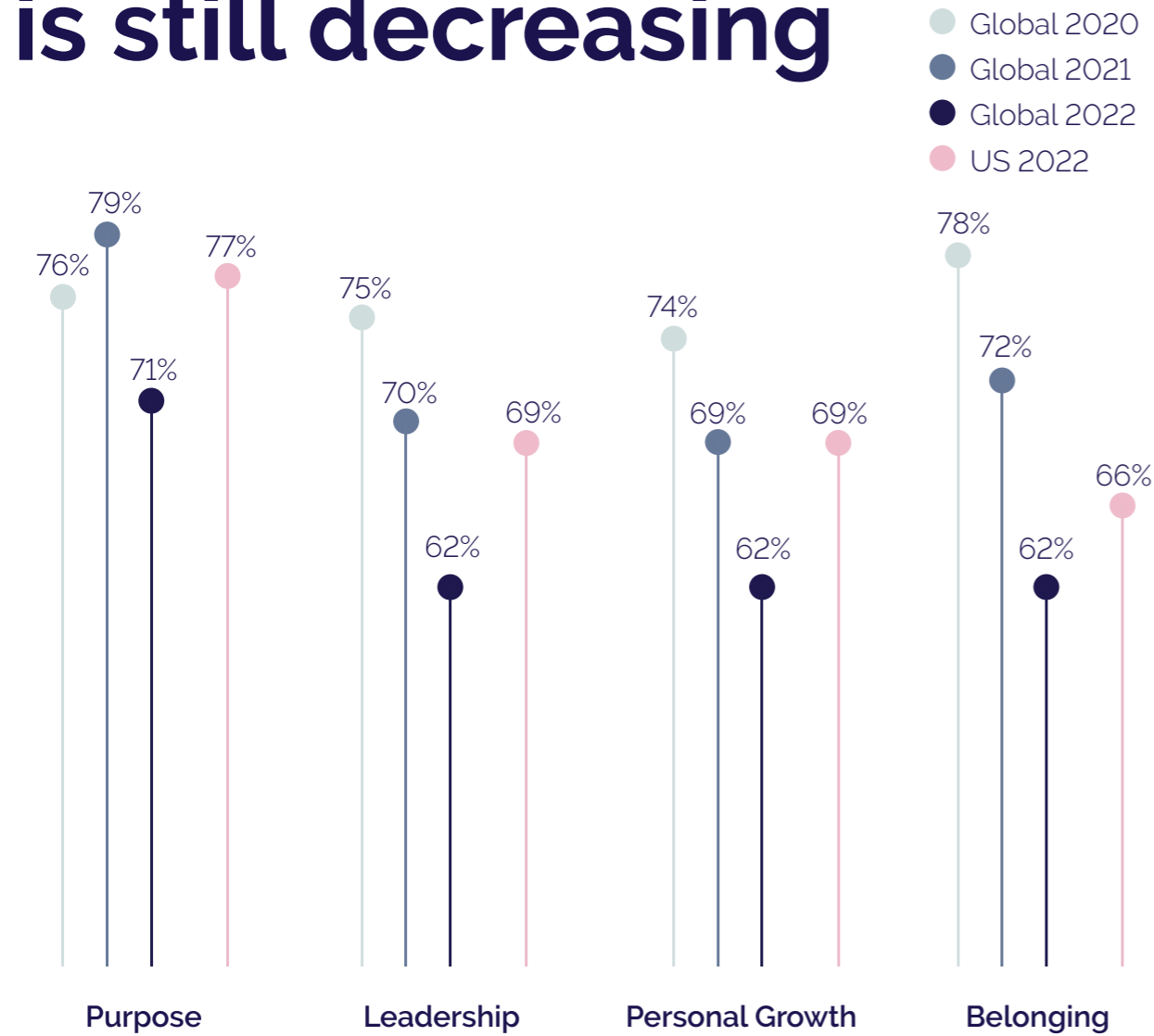
The Meaningful Work Quotient is based on four drivers of meaningfulness. At Voluntās' Center for Applied Meaningfulness, we have analyzed every piece of research, poetry, and empirical industry data about what makes work meaningful.

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 United States.

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.

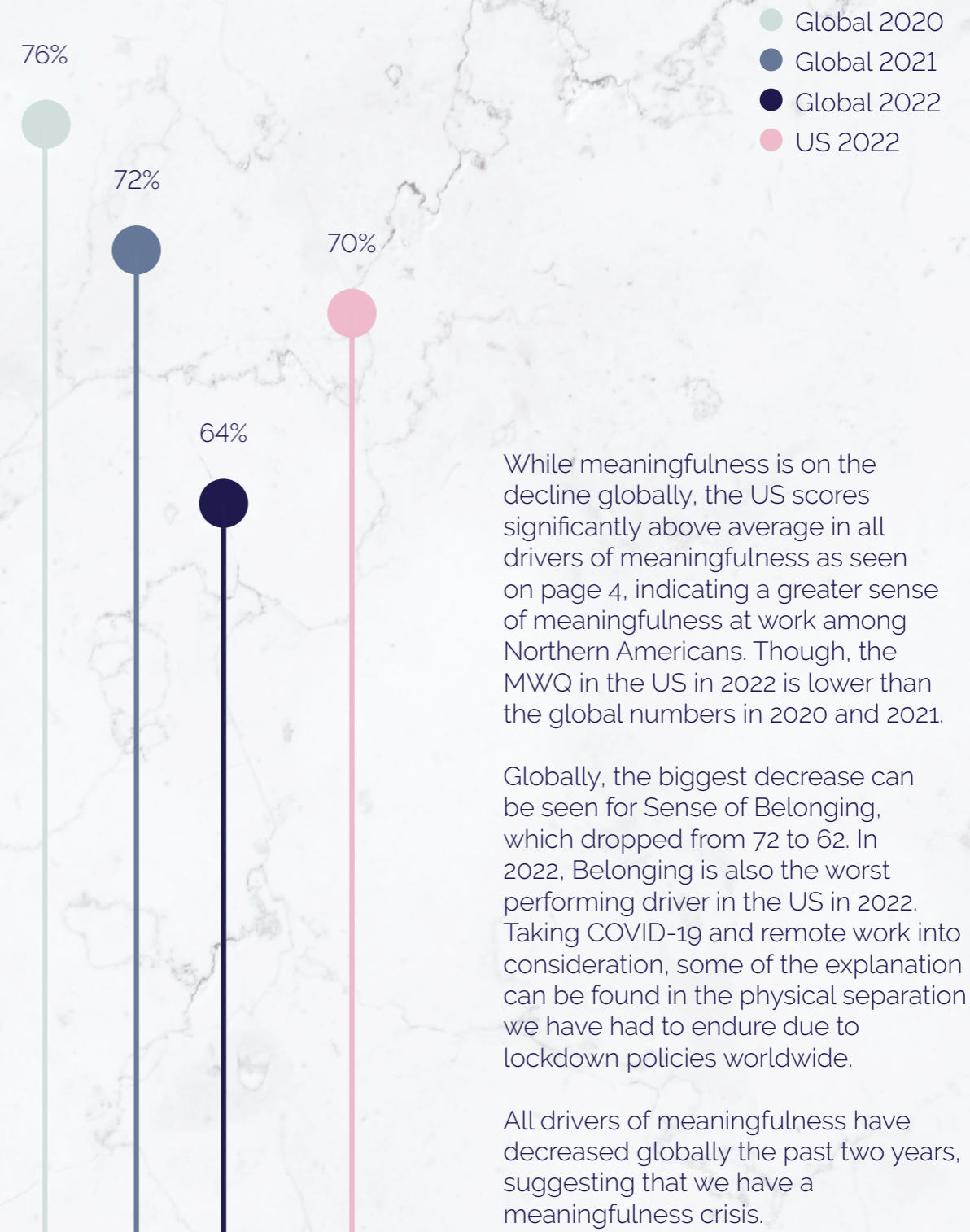
Leadership
You feel guided in the work that you do every day and that it is prioritized and clear what your daily objectives are, as well as what you need to achieve.

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.

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.

National level

Meaningfulness in United States



While meaningfulness is on the decline globally, the US scores significantly above average in all drivers of meaningfulness as seen on page 4, indicating a greater sense of meaningfulness at work among Northern Americans. Though, the MWQ in the US in 2022 is lower than the global numbers in 2020 and 2021.

Globally, the biggest decrease can be seen for Sense of Belonging, which dropped from 72 to 62. In 2022, Belonging is also the worst performing driver in the US in 2022. Taking COVID-19 and remote work into consideration, some of the explanation can be found in the physical separation we have had to endure due to lockdown policies worldwide.

All drivers of meaningfulness have decreased globally the past two years, suggesting that we have a meaningfulness crisis.



MWQ across age groups

In the US, meaningfulness clearly increases with age



Looking at meaningfulness at work across age groups in the US, the people, aged 18-29 years, experience the lowest level of meaning.

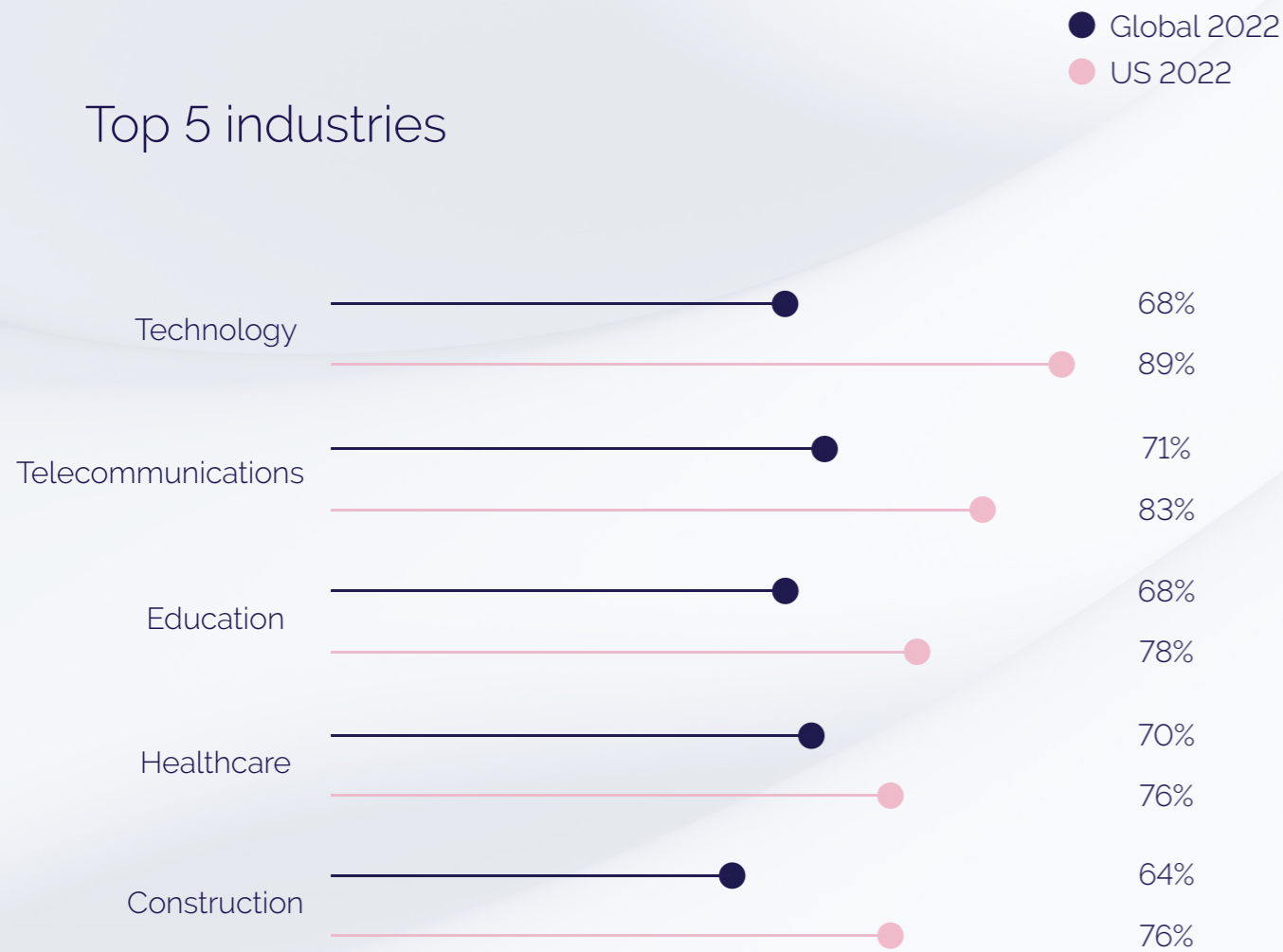
Even though, this is on par with the global trend, the US scores exponentially above average, moving from youngest to oldest age group. The 50+ group in the US scores 9 percentage points above the global average and 22 percentage points above the country's youngest.

The biggest jump in percentage points is seen from the youngest to the second youngest age group with 17 percentage points.

MWQ across industries

Technology is the most meaningful industry to work in

Top 5 industries



MWQ across industries

Working in Retail brings the least meaning

Bottom 5 industries



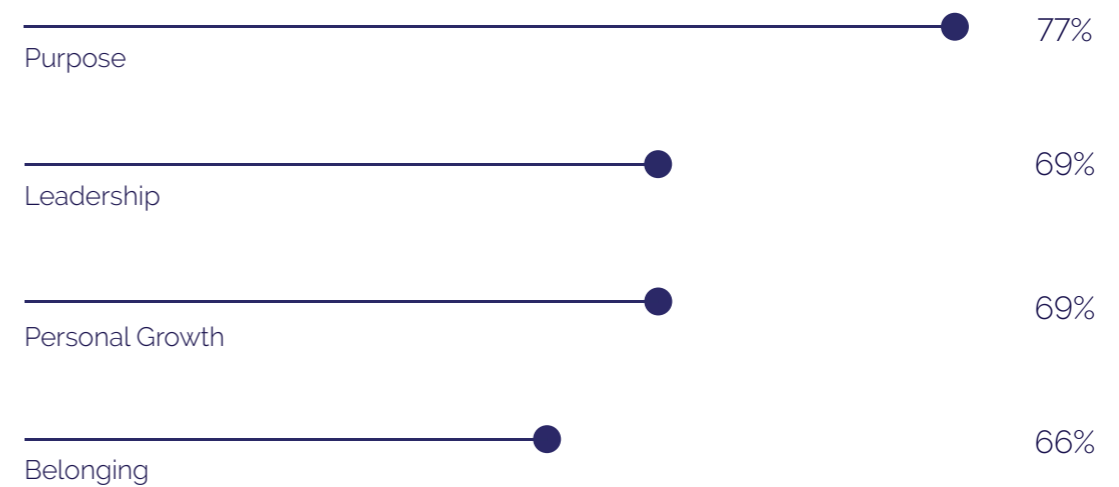
To ensure reliability of the data, some industries are excluded.

How are we doing at work?

Sense of Belonging is the most lagging driver in the US

The definition of Sense of Belonging is that you feel a sense of community and in general have strong social ties with your co-workers. Belonging, as a driver of meaningfulness, saw a global setback from 2021 to 2022 and in the US, it is also the most lagging driver with 66 % - 11 percentage points behind the strongest driver, Sense of Purpose.

Meaningfulness drivers in United States



Overview of statements in MWQ-driver 'Belonging'



Build belonging by moving from transactions to relations

As mentioned on page 10, Belonging is, both globally and regionally in the US, the most lagging meaningfulness driver.

The most lagging dimensions within Belonging – Virtue Alignment & Recognition – reflect a sub-optimal relationship between leaders and employees.

This unfortunately reveals that leadership has overlooked relational elements for too long - resulting in low levels of trust from employees.

34%

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

36%

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

43%

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