Chapter 3: Trust:
The key to unlocking a quantified organization

How can organizations chart a course toward responsible use of workforce data and technology that creates trust, while navigating trade-offs between risk and opportunity?

Trustworthy companies outperform the S&P 500 by **30-50%**[36]

While regulation can help steer organizations in the right direction, regulations often lag behind the pace of technological innovation. And with significant variations across the globe, the regulatory landscape can be challenging for multi-nationals to navigate.

A lack of harmonious regulations means that many organizations may be using new technologies and sources of workplace data however they see fit, without taking any additional measures to ensure responsible data use. This haphazard approach can erode worker trust.

Three common scenarios could play out, often at the same time, in how organizations are gathering and using workforce data:

1. They're collecting data but are not sure how to use it, effectively gathering data for the sake of having it.

2. They're gathering and using it without a plan, governance, or responsibility practices in place (beyond meeting regulatory requirements), setting themselves up for significant risk and potential damage to workforce trust.

3. They're underinvesting in technologies that gather or use workforce data, either paralyzed by concerns of worker backlash or unknowledgeable about how to manage data responsibly, leaving a great deal of value on the table.

Organizations can avoid these pitfalls and create value for themselves and other stakeholders by focusing quantified organization efforts around using responsible practices that build trust.

Harnessing new data on work and the workforce and turning it into insights and action can be both a promise and a challenge, creating a tension between the potential for significant rewards but also the potential for significant risks. Done right—in a transparent, responsible way that benefits both workers and organizations—it can increase trust. But done wrong—where biased algorithms scale poor decisions and workers fear rights violations and wrongful terminations—it can damage fairness and trust, with significant impacts to an organization's brand, reputation, and financial performance.

Tensions—between transparency and privacy, between worker agency and organizational need, and between quantifying work and the workforce and recognizing that no one can ever be reduced to a sheer number—must be managed. Quantified organization leaders will likely be those who navigate these tensions to create a new relationship with workers based on trust, through responsible practices like workforce empowerment, transparency, and sharing the benefits in a way that can create new value opportunities for the organization and the worker alike.

Moving at the speed of trust

Trust can be just as important as growth, profitability, and other key performance indicators on the organization's balance sheet. It may not be enough to consider "what" a company does; it can also be equally important to consider "how" it does it.

79% of employees feel motivated to work for a trusted employer.[37]

The relationship between trust and quantification initiatives can be nuanced. Trust is often fragile and easily lost. Missteps can be costly, even for organizations where there is already a strong trust that exists between the worker and the employer. For organizations that are already facing a culture of mistrust, that hill can be an even steeper climb. In short, the potential of the quantified organization can be realized at the speed of trust.

Humanity
Demonstrating empathy and kindness and treating everyone fairly.

Transparency
Openly sharing information, motives, and decisions in straightforward and plain language.

Capability
Creating good work experiences.

Reliability
Consistently delivering on promises and commitments.[40]

To unlock trust and realize the opportunities of the quantified organization, organizations should develop their own frameworks of responsibility that encompass what Deloitte has defined as the essence of trust.[38]

The factors of trust—humanity, transparency, capability, and reliability—can help guide organizations in collecting, using, and managing data responsibly. Managing an asset as complex as trust requires understanding trust-driving activity enterprise-wide at a level of sufficient depth that enables targeted actions in areas related to the workforce and beyond like data integrity and protection as well as customer experience, technology and innovation among others.[39]

A framework for responsibility

From having a clear understanding of what should be measured to prioritizing shared value, transparency, and worker empowerment, the following principles can provide a starting point for developing a framework for responsibility for using work and workforce data to create shared value.

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The four principles of responsibility

A key to unlocking shared value? Building workforce trust by activating principles of responsibility in quantified organization initiatives

Measure the right things

Regularly evaluate links between metrics and outcomes: measuring what is intended and ensuring accurate cause and effect reasoning

Continually audit for bias: using new advances to ensure fairness and impartiality

Share responsibility, share value

Give to get: offering workers benefits in exchange for their data

Focus on development and growth: avoiding using data and technology as surveillance or a source of punishment

Share governance horizontally and vertically: distributing governance and responsibility across the c-suite and down to individual workers

Practice transparency and privacy

Guard worker privacy: ensuring data is secure and that it is aggregated and anonymized

Transparency first: being open and clear with workers about data collection and use

Give workers agency and control

Make it opt-In: granting workers agency and consent in participating in data collection

Empower workers with data management tools: enabling workers to see, manage, and challenge their data

Co-create practices with workers: involving workers from the start in creating the data initiatives themselves

Share ownership of data: enabling some data to be portable, going with the worker

Source: Deloitte analysis

Principle 1: Measure the right things

Regularly evaluate the links between metrics and intended outcomes

Trust factors: ✅ Capability   ♾️ Reliability

It is important for organizations to determine that the initiatives they undertake are measuring what they intend to, that cause-and-effect reasoning is accurate, and that analyses aren't oversimplifying complex problems. Consider our earlier example of monitoring truck driver fatigue. While the data collected led to actionable outcomes, they may have not been the right outcomes. Focusing on the individual worker likely oversimplified the problem and overlooked the organizational and structural problems at the root.

Using data to treat the symptoms of a problem only offers a temporary solution—organizations should be willing to go beyond the surface and allow the data to point to organizational changes that may be more challenging or difficult to implement but could ultimately help an organization solve problems and achieve their intended outcomes.

Organizations should ensure that the data they collect reflect the metrics they are seeking to capture accurately and reliably.

Case in point: a meta-study concluded that it is impossible to judge emotion by simply looking at a person's face, using technology like facial recognition.[41] Likewise, productivity likely cannot be accurately evaluated by measuring one's activity. Productivity, instead, should be measured with specific outcomes. Be careful of becoming more enticed by the data and numbers than the actual goals, always asking: just because it can be measured, does it really need to be, and if so, why?

> One of the changes I think that we're going to see is not just can I hold the data, can I use the data, but do I want the data? Because the risk to organizations now is so much higher than it was before. Data and big data was always seen as a competitive advantage, for whatever use case. There is now a discussion about whether actually big data is more of a risk than a competitive advantage. So what data do I actually want to hold? Why do I want to hold it? How do I want to use it? Is the risk of holding that data higher than the benefit that I'm going to get from it?"

Chief Operating Officer, Financial Services Firm

40%

of surveyed employees who give their employer high ratings on reliability, are more likely to share personal information with their employer.[42]

Continually audit for bias

Trust factors:	🤝 Humanity	✅ Capability	∞ Reliability

Organizations need to ensure that data collection and use is fair, equitable and ethical. Quantified organizations approach all parts of the organization with ethics and transparency and embrace technology responsibly such as including responsible AI to ensure AI systems are impartial, transparent and explainable, respectful of privacy, and more (see Deloitte's framework for responsible AI: Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (AI)™).[43]

New advances in technology can help. Vendors like TrueEra now offer testing tools designed to take a continuous, automated approach to test against bias,[44] and other vendors like Arthur offer a monitoring and governance solution meant to monitor, measure, and improve machine learning to ensure that models are delivering accurate, transparent, and fair results.[45]

Other advances, like supplementing human data with synthesized data created by software, help enable AI to fill in the gaps of "edge cases" that haven't happened in the real world and include more-inclusive, less-biased datasets.

Such tools can also enable organizations to measure workforce trust in the enterprise. These trust measurement activities should be executed repeatedly to monitor worker trust levels over time.

Principle 2: Share responsibility, share value

Give to get

Trust factors:	Humanity	Transparency

Workers are willing to share data—but there are some conditions. According to a study published in Harvard Business Review, 90% of employees surveyed are willing to let their employers collect and use data about them and their work, but only if it benefits them in some way.[46] A more recent Deloitte study on skills-based organizations confirmed that the vast majority of workers surveyed are willing to share their data on everything from their skills, interests and passions, preferences, and performance on informal work in projects or internal gigs not directly related to their job, but that many say it would depend on whether their employer offered them benefits in return.[47]

By designing with worker benefits in mind from the start, organizations can create new value propositions for workers—for example, a more customized work experience based on their own unique needs, preferences, and capabilities. Keep in mind that creating this shared value should be a principle applied to the entire workforce ecosystem, including contract workers, partners, and freelance or gig workers.

Figure 1: Workers surveyed are willing to share their data
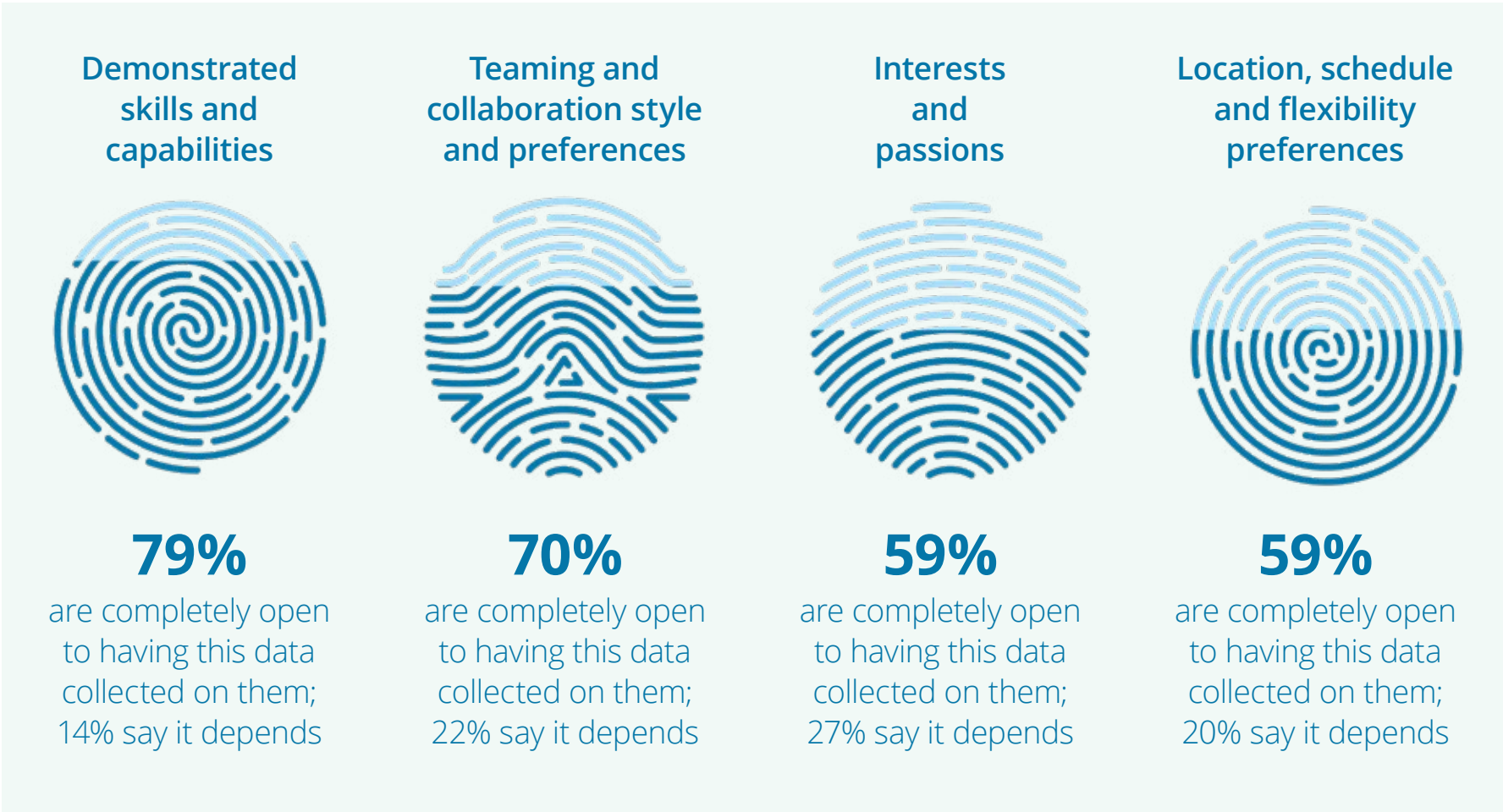
Demonstrated skills and capabilities	Teaming and collaboration style and preferences	Interests and passions	Location, schedule and flexibility preferences
79%	**70%**	**59%**	**59%**
are completely open to having this data collected on them; 14% say it depends	are completely open to having this data collected on them; 22% say it depends	are completely open to having this data collected on them; 27% say it depends	are completely open to having this data collected on them; 20% say it depends

Source: Deloitte Skills-Based Organization Survey, May-June 2022.

Give to get

Figure 2: But willingness to share is often based on whether they get benefits in exchange

What would make you more open to letting your employer collect your data?*

My employer would clearly tell me how my data is collected, used, and the benefits that will be achieved
50%

My data would open new opportunities for my growth and development, but it wouldn't influence hiring, deployment, performance assessment, pay, or promotions
44%

My employer would use only data that is objective and verified to inform hiring, pay, or promotion decisions, with the intent of making them fairer and more meritocratic
43%

New work opportunities such as roles, assignments, teams, or projects would be suggested to me based on my data
41%

I would have control about what data is shared and with whom
41%

I could validate and correct my data as needed
39%

I could have more customized work experiences based on my data
31%

*Asked of workers who said "it depends" when asked if they would be open to having their employer capture data on them.

Source: Deloitte Skills-Based Organization Survey, May-June 2022.

Focus on development and growth

Trust factors: Humanity   Capability

When workers feel like their data is being used to judge them, and it leads to a potential dismissal or other penalty, distrust and other overall negative consequences can result. Although there may be situations where data mining can reveal a need for consequences— for example, a pattern of bad behavior or failing to follow security protocols, in general, data should be used to help workers learn, grow, make their jobs easier, find meaning or happiness at work, and realize their potential.

53%

of board members and C-suite executives surveyed are confident that their organization is able to effectively manage risks related to responsible use of workforce data and AI.[48]

We have created confidential channels, public channels, and lots of different ways for employees and others to raise questions and concerns. We have an Ethical Use Advisory Council, which contains both external tech ethics specialists and internal employees. Overall, we've created an infrastructure meant to take in as many inputs as possible before we make these really hard decisions. This is a muscle that we have built—everyone in the company owns it."[49]

Paula Goldman, Salesforce's first chief ethical and humane use officer, in discussing what it takes to help ensure technology as a force for good with Deloitte's Beena Ammanath, Deloitte LLP Trustworthy and Ethical Technology leader

Share governance horizontally and vertically

Trust factors: 👁 Transparency   ∞ Reliability

A key to reliable, trust-worthy quantification initiatives is creating a governance system to determine the responsible use of data that includes a plan for collecting, storing, analyzing, and using it – either by AI or human decision making. Although one accountable C-suite level executive may own governance, they should be supported by a cross-functional executive coalition.

For example, a chief human resources officer may be responsible for ensuring that data is being used to improve worker and organizational performance.

A chief technology or information officer may carry responsibility for securing access to data and planning for how to respond to data breaches. A chief finance officer may need to integrate workforce data with operating and financial data, as well as oversee risk and reporting to external stakeholders. And a chief marketing officer may monitor the impact of data-based initiatives on the organization's employer or customer brand.

New roles are emerging as well that can help provide effective oversight, such as Chief Ethical and Humane Use Officer, or in some companies, Chief Trust Officer, Chief Ethics Officer, Chief AI Officer, and Chief Data Officer.[50]

But sharing responsibility shouldn't stop at the C-suite. Everyone from the board down to individual workers has a role to play. Managers, for example, can use new sources of data to help their teams learn, grow, and improve. And employees can play an active role in deciding what data they are willing to share with their employer.
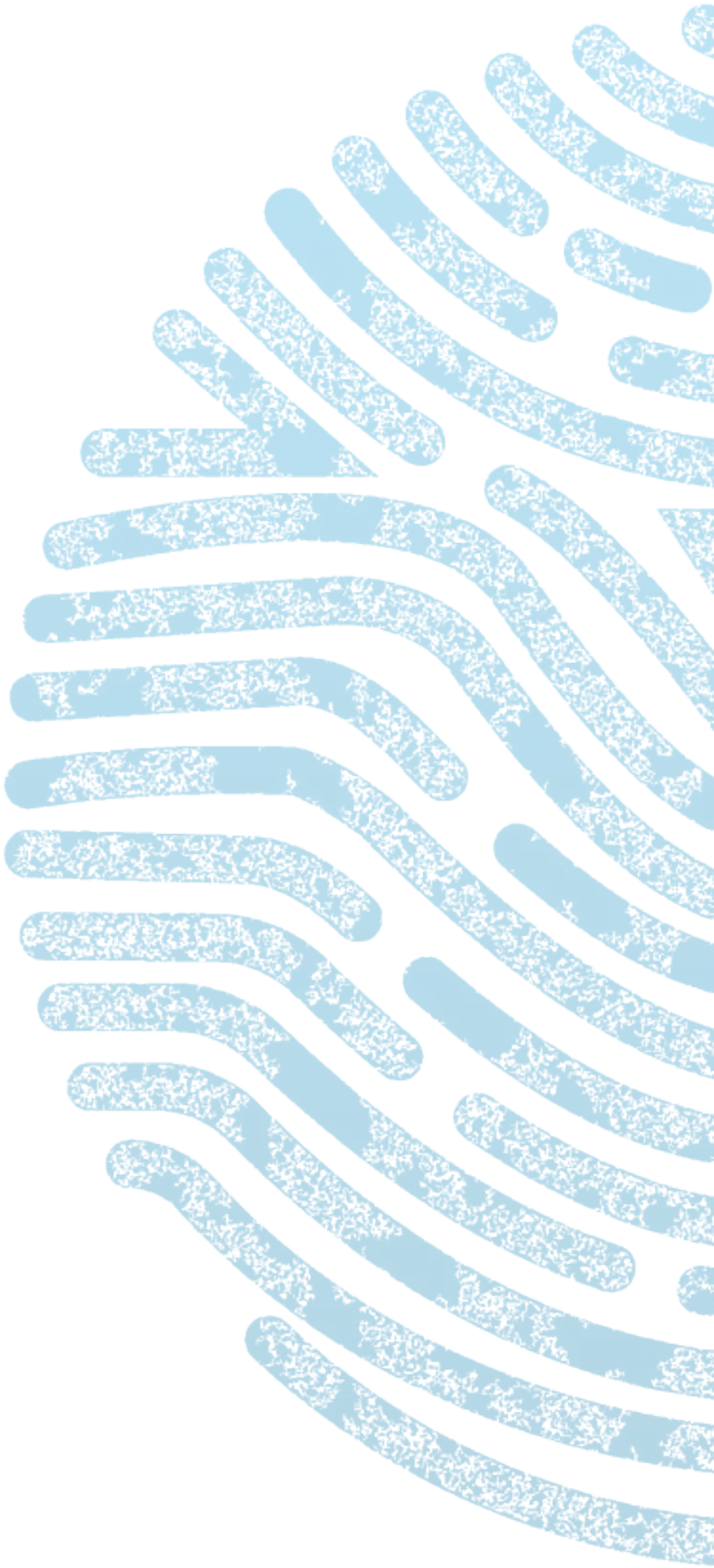
Principle 3: Prioritize transparency and privacy

Guard worker privacy

Trust factors:	⟲ Humanity	∞ Reliability

Preventing security breaches of worker data is an important factor that builds organizational trust. When asked what pressing issues are most important for their own generation (vs. future generations) to solve, workers surveyed named safeguarding privacy as a top priority—tied with tackling climate change but ranking above issues like encouraging sustainability, balancing purpose and profit, or achieving gender parity.[51]

Yet only 28% of workers surveyed strongly agreed that their leadership understands the implications and responsibility of protecting data confidentiality and ensuring security.[52] Keeping data secure can be helped by new approaches such as limiting data storage time, deleting any incidental data inadvertently collected, and using advanced technology to store and protect data. Some new technologies could even make it possible to acquire insight from data without acquiring or transferring the data itself.[53]

Workers surveyed named safeguarding privacy as a top priority—tied with tackling climate change but ranking above issues like encouraging sustainability, balancing purpose and profit, or achieving gender parity.

Regional, local, and global regulations around data privacy will likely continue to guide how organizations collect and use data and the internal policies they develop to manage it. For example, an organization with employees distributed globally may be able to gather employee data in some countries but not others due to regional or local privacy laws. The organization may need to choose a path: maintaining different policies for different locations or creating a blanket policy that adheres to the most restrictive regulations.

Guard worker privacy

Organizations will also need to consider the evolving nature of regulations across regions when making this determination. For example, employee privacy has historically been stronger in regions such as Europe, but is now gaining traction and evolving in places like the US. Even at the US state level, the regulatory landscape is evolving. The California Privacy Rights Act 2023, for example, affords employee data an array of privacy protections previously only afforded consumer data.

As a result, California employers are now required to notify employees (and prospective employees) as to the kinds of data they collect, what they will do with that data, and ways for affected parties to correct and, in most cases, request deletion of the data.[54]

When possible, it's also important to help workers control how their individual, personal data is shared across an organization. While workers may be open to sharing their individual skills data with the entire organization, for example, they may not be so open to sharing their individual data about their emotions or performance data. Aggregating and anonymizing data before sharing it can help, as well as involving workers in creating data privacy policies.

Lloyds's Banking Group's ethics charter for data and analytics

To help provide guidance and consistency for the responsible use of people data and analytics, Lloyd's Banking Group created an ethics charter, consisting of nine guiding principles. Included are principles like: "Protect colleagues by using anonymous or aggregated data and never name or allow the identification of individuals in published findings," "Strive to improve the working lives of colleagues by applying consistent, fair, and unbiased analytical methodologies," and "Provide data-led insights that empower decision-makers to drive impact for their colleagues, customers, and stakeholders."[55]

Corporate culture may be the biggest barrier to realizing value from worker data

When respondents to Deloitte's 2023 Human Capital Trends survey were asked to identify top barriers to realizing value from worker data, 27% of respondents cited culture, making it the most common barrier. However, "culture" may be a broad proxy for misaligned values or disagreements over if, how, or when worker data should be used.[56] To realize value from data, organizations should strive for a culture of trust and transparency.

Guard worker privacy

Trust factors: 👁 Transparency   ✅ Capability

Being transparent with workers about what an organization is tracking and why can help mitigate the risk of potential backlash and elevate trust. Gartner found that only 30% of employees surveyed were comfortable with their employer monitoring their email. But in the same study, when an employer shared what they would be monitoring and explained why, more than 50% of workers reported being comfortable with it.[57]

Organizations should also be transparent about their data governance rules—how long the data is being stored, whether the data will be shared in individual or aggregated form, and who (internally or externally) will have access to the data (see Deloitte's framework for Technology, Trust and Ethics).[58]

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Principle 4: Give workers agency and share control

Make it opt-in

Trust factors: Humanity   Transparency   Capability

While opt-in isn't possible in some situations—for example, when an organization monitors workers' digital applications to detect abnormal patterns of behavior that could represent potential security threats—there are also situations where organizations can provide opportunities for workers to choose to share their data. Asking permission shouldn't be buried in legalese at the bottom of worker's employment contract, however.

It should be presented in clear, straightforward language when any new data is collected, and clearly spell out what data is being collected, who will see it, how it will be protected, and the benefits that can be achieved, as well as a means for the employee to correct and potentially delete certain employer-held data. The time frame for data collection should also be clear, as well as what data might be collected when a worker isn't working (e.g., when location data from company-provided cell phones is being used).

A global health provider offers workers opt-out options

When one global health care provider mined employee data from communications and collaboration systems to conduct an organizational network analysis to optimize cross-functional collaboration, they offered employees the ability to opt out of data collection. To ensure that they respected employee permissions, the organization used technology from TrustSphere, a relationship analytics platform with embedded privacy and data protections to help ensure compliance with global privacy legislation (e.g., GDPR), ethical codes of conduct and other regulatory frameworks—including data de-identification, data aggregation, and data minimization. The approach is based on notification and opt-out to ensure trust, transparency, and choice.[59]

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Empower workers with data management tools

Trust factors: 👁 Transparency   ✔ Capability   ∞ Reliability

By providing workers a platform to see the data collected on them as individuals, as well as the aggregate data collected on them as part of teams or groups, organizations can provide greater transparency and build trust by giving employees an opportunity to ensure their data is correct and challenge it if they feel it isn't. Organizations should build in processes to allow workers to question or voice concerns when their data is used in algorithms–either through the platform itself, or by connecting with groups like an internal ethics review board.

New technologies and platforms can also help workers control who has access to their data and see who has accessed it, and grant permission (or not) for their data to be used for a purpose other than the one for which it was originally intended. They can also provide workers with any interpretations or analyses drawn from their data.

Co-create practices with workers

Trust factors: 🤝 Humanity   👁 Transparency   ✔ Capability

Instead of designing quantified organization initiatives that collect and use worker data as a top-down exercise, consider involving workers from the start in co-creating the practices themselves. This could include involving them in choosing what metrics will be useful and relevant in improving their experience at work and collaboratively deciding how the data can be used to inform action by AI or human judgement.

30%

of organizations surveyed by Deloitte's 2022 State of AI survey say they are involving workers in participative design of AI[60]

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SLB co-creates an updated work environment with workers

Wall-mounted cameras observe workers and assets at a maintenance and manufacturing facility for the oil and gas company SLB, with AI turning the aggregated and anonymized video data into insights that look at patterns of productivity. Workers are involved from the start, choosing to opt-in to data collection, viewing the results of the AI analysis, and collaboratively problem solving on how to use the data to improve their experience and results. For example, data insights led employees to modify rest areas and take more frequent breaks to minimize fatigue.[61]

Share ownership of data
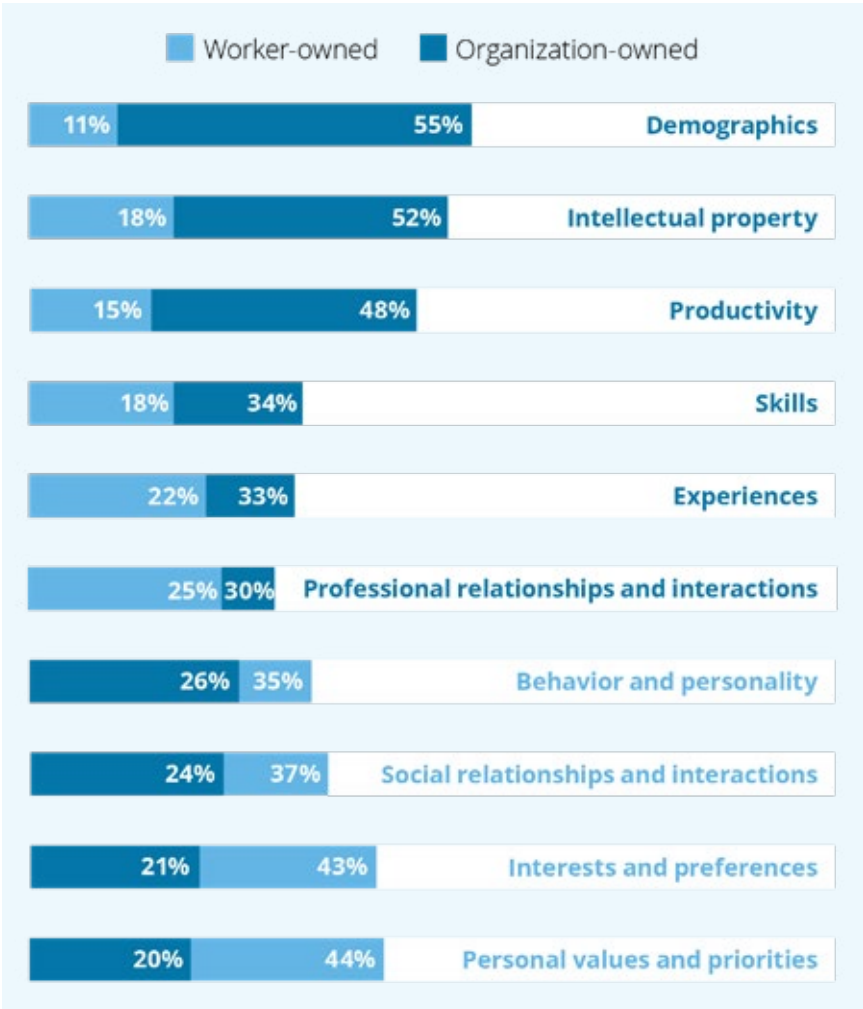
Trust factors: Humanity   Capability

Increasingly, organizations seem to be moving to a data ownership structure that is either shared or worker-owned, giving workers more power and control over their personal data and influence over how it's used. According to the Deloitte 2023 Global Human Capital Trends survey, a majority of organizations (61%) describe their existing data ownership structure as either shared or worker-owned.[62]

When data is owned by the worker, new technologies help allow employer-verified data to be portable, going with the worker when they leave an organization. According to our Deloitte Skills-Based Organization survey, 76% of workers surveyed say they want their data to be portable, and just over half of business and HR leaders are open to it.[63] Portable, trust-worthy data can benefit both employers and workers by creating a more transparent and efficient labor market.

Figure 3: Perspectives on worker data ownership by organization vs. workers

	Worker-owned	Organization-owned
Demographics	11%	55%
Intellectual property	18%	52%
Productivity	15%	48%
Skills	18%	34%
Experiences	22%	33%
Professional relationships and interactions	25%	30%
Behavior and personality	26%	35%
Social relationships and interactions	24%	37%
Interests and preferences	21%	43%
Personal values and priorities	20%	44%

Source: Deloitte 2023 Global Human Capital Trends survey.

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