

Bring it! Exploring the extent to which working adults feel they can be their true self at work: a survey on behalf of *Get Into Teaching*

Introduction

Kindred Agency commissioned research company Censuswide to carry out a survey on behalf of the *Get Into Teaching* campaign exploring the views of the working population in England. The purpose of the survey was to gain further insights on how much people feel they can be themselves and express their true personality in their current workplace, and how important this is generally in daily life.

Findings from the survey were used to inform campaign development and marketing, in particular public relations activity to position teaching as an opportunity for those looking for a fulfilling and rewarding career option. Press releases based on the main survey findings were proactively shared with target national and regional media for publication. These releases included information about how those considering a career in teaching can find out more.

Methodology

The research was conducted by Censuswide in accordance with the [MRS Code of Conduct \(2019\)](#) between 29th September and 6th October 2021. The aim was to gain a representative sample of 2,000 working people in England (18+), excluding teachers and trainee teachers. The final response was from 2,488. Respondents were asked a set of single answer and multi-answer questions. All responses were gathered using an online survey and individuals were recruited via a random and anonymous sample selection, from an online “double opt-in” panel (where all eligible respondents are required to answer the demographic screening questions again to take part in the survey) of the general public in England.

The Censuswide panel was originally recruited via sampling specialists and since has grown organically. Panellists can opt to answer all surveys but will be filtered out if a survey is not relevant to them. Panellists are also invited to participate in surveys via a newsletter. Censuswide employs members of the [Market Research Society](#) and its research activity abides by the [ESOMAR](#) principles.

The way these surveys were built meant that respondents were asked a number of preliminary screening questions to gather their demographic data, which could be used to analyse the data. This demographic data included age group, gender, work status, city and region.

Questions were based on a range of topics and themes exploring:

- What motivates people in their current job and whether they feel they can express their individuality
- How important people feel it is to be able to express their unique individuality in daily life
- The attributes and personal traits people are most proud of possessing
- How often people feel they can bring their life and cultural experiences into the workplace
- What people believe bringing their ‘true self’ to work means and how it makes them feel
- Whether the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has made people want to live and work in a more authentic way
- The extent to which people think school teachers are able to express their creativity and individuality

In the survey, we are working with a 3.09% margin of error (and a 95% confidence interval), which means that if the research were to be repeated, we would expect the percentages to differ no more than 3% either way from the current results data.

Summary findings

Respondents were asked what, if anything, motivates them in their current job role and from a range of statements, respondents answered as follows: 53% said the money I need to live; 40% said enjoyment of the role; 25% said the impact on others; 25% said the fear of not having a job; 24% said the topic/subject area I work in; 20% said all the training I undertook to get here; and 20% said the status I now have in the job I do. There were 5% of people who said nothing motivates me in my current career/job role, and under 1% stated “other”.

When asked how important they feel it is to be able to express their unique individuality in daily life: 42% said very important; 48% said somewhat important; 9% said not really important; and 1% said not important at all. Asked if they feel they can express their individuality in your workplace, respondents answered as follows: 31% yes always; 50% yes sometimes; 15% no not really; and 3% no not at all. Respondents were also asked if they feel more at ease expressing their individuality in other settings (outside of your workplace): 33% yes always; 50% yes sometimes (the yes responses were 38% and 48% respectively for those Gen Z working adults aged 18-23); 15% no not really; and 2% no not at all.

Respondents were asked what they think hinders them most when it comes to expressing their true character and full personality in your current career/job role. From a range of statements respondents answered as follows: 29% said there is an expectation to act in a particular way; 24% said fear of judgment from colleagues; 20% said being sat behind a desk all day; 19% said the environment being too formal; 17% said working remotely and away from others; 15% said my personality doesn't fit the culture of my workplace; and 12% said my personality doesn't really fit with the job I do. There was 22% who said nothing hinders me most when it comes to expressing my true character and full personality in my current career/job role; and under 1% stated “other”.

Asked if they show their individuality and personality when presenting (in a work context) in front of others, respondents answered as follows: 23% yes always; 51% yes sometimes; 20% no not really; and 5% no not at all. Respondents were asked to choose the attributes and personal traits they were most proud of possessing from five options: 41% supportive nature; 37% openness; 35% enthusiasm; 34% confidence; 34% motivation; 34% individuality; 32% creativity; 25% courage; and 16% ability to be vulnerable. Then 5% of people stated, “I am not proud of possessing any attributes and personality traits” and 1% stated “other”.

When asked how often, if at all, they bring their life/cultural experiences (e.g. interests/passions/hobbies) into their work, respondents answered as follows: 18% said every day; 12% said 4-6 days a week; 22% said 2-3 days a week; 17% said once a week; 6% said once every 2 to 3 weeks; and 7% said once a month. Fewer than 1% said less than once a month and 18% said never. On average, respondents bring their life/cultural experiences into their work almost three times a week.

As part of the survey, respondents were asked what bringing your 'true self' to work mean to them and from a range of statements, respondents answered: 39% said not having to change my personality in the workplace; 36% said being authentic in the way I go about my daily work; 36% said being honest when I'm struggling with something; 35% said not being afraid to express myself; 35% said the ability to be open with my boss and colleagues; 23% said being in an environment where my personal interests and hobbies are intertwined with the job I do; 21% said being able to channel my personal interests and hobbies into my day job; and 5% said it doesn't mean anything to me. 3% of respondents stated they “didn’t know” and under 1% stated “other”.

Respondents were asked if they feel they can be their true self in their current career/job and answered: 28% yes always; 50% yes sometimes; 17% no not really; 5% no not at all (for Gen Z working adults aged 18-23, 23% said no not really and 7% said No not at all) . Respondents were asked if they were able to bring their 'true self' to work, how this would that make them feel or if they already bring their 'true self' to work, how this makes them feel. Respondents answered in the following way: 40% said happier; 30% said more satisfied in my work; 30% said more motivated; 29% said a sense of freedom; 26% said more settled; 26% said more effective; 22% said more creative; 19% said liberated; 18% said excited; 15% said that I have autonomy; and 9% said “none of the above”.

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *“Expressing my individuality at work would allow me to be more satisfied with the job I am doing”*: 27% said strongly agree, 42% said somewhat agree, 26% said neither agree nor disagree, 3% said somewhat disagree, and 2% said strongly disagree. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *“When I can't show my true self in the workplace, I feel restricted and unable to make my mark”*: 19% said strongly agree, 40% said somewhat agree, 29% said neither agree nor disagree, 9% said somewhat disagree, and 3% said strongly disagree.

Respondents were asked if they feel their experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has made them want to live and work in a more authentic way: 24% yes, absolutely; 42% yes, probably; 28% no, not really; and 6% said no, not at all.

As part of the survey respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *“School teachers are able to express their creativity and individuality when working alongside young people”*: 22% said strongly agree, 45% said somewhat agree, 23% said neither agree nor disagree, 7% said somewhat disagree, and 3% said strongly disagree. Respondents were also asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: *“A good school teacher is someone who brings their personality and interests into the classroom”*: 33% said strongly agree, 42% said somewhat agree, 21% said neither agree nor disagree, 3% said somewhat disagree, and 1% said strongly disagree.

The city-based statistical variations report:

City-based data	Birmingham	Bradford	Brighton	Bristol	Hull	Leeds	Leicester	Liverpool	Manchester	Newcastle	Norwich	Nottingham	Oxford	Plymouth	Sheffield	Southampton
Number of respondents per city in the overall sample	189	103	102	106	100	102	100	103	194	103	100	111	101	100	101	100
Respondents who don’t feel* they can be their true self in their current career/job	19%	24%	22%	17%	22%	26%	25%	19%	18%	26%	22%	23%	37%	16%	34%	17%
Respondents who agree** that expressing their individuality at work would allow them to be more satisfied with the job they are doing	72%	62%	68%	65%	70%	67%	58%	75%	67%	73%	63%	73%	70%	67%	67%	66%
Respondents who feel it is important*** to be able to express their unique individuality in daily life	96%	88%	83%	81%	87%	92%	92%	91%	92%	84%	85%	90%	88%	88%	87%	89%
Respondents who feel more at ease**** expressing their individuality in other settings (outside of their workplace)	83%	82%	83%	75%	75%	79%	84%	85%	80%	85%	83%	85%	79%	82%	85%	85%
Respondents who would feel/ already feel happier bringing their ‘true self’ to work	37%	37%	40%	41%	39%	42%	41%	41%	44%	41%	34%	51%	47%	31%	49%	38%
Respondents who would feel/ already feel more satisfied bringing their ‘true self’ to work	29%	19%	28%	24%	31%	34%	32%	29%	31%	31%	35%	31%	40%	29%	37%	35%

Respondents who would feel/ already feel more motivated bringing their ‘true self’ to work	30%	32%	24%	34%	36%	39%	32%	24%	32%	31%	18%	36%	33%	35%	27%	28%
Respondents agree** that school teachers are able to express their creativity and individuality when working alongside young people	70%	67%	56%	65%	72%	64%	75%	71%	69%	67%	61%	67%	57%	67%	58%	63%
Respondents who agree** that a good school teacher is someone who brings their personality and interests into the classroom	75%	81%	69%	74%	76%	72%	79%	81%	75%	81%	71%	79%	74%	77%	75%	74%

The regional statistical variations report:

Regional-based data	East of England	Greater London	East Midlands	West Midlands	North East	North West	South East	South West	Yorkshire and the Humber
<i>Number of respondents per region in the overall sample</i>	210	444	246	194	97	304	377	250	366
Respondents who don’t feel* they can be their true self in their current career/job	23%	19%	21%	21%	24%	20%	25%	15%	27%
Respondents who agree** that expressing their individuality at work would allow them to be more satisfied with the job they are doing	62%	71%	65%	73%	73%	71%	70%	66%	66%
Respondents who feel it is important*** to be able to express their unique individuality in daily life	89%	94%	90%	96%	85%	92%	89%	84%	89%
Respondents who feel more at ease**** expressing their individuality in other settings (outside of their workplace)	83%	87%	83%	84%	87%	82%	84%	78%	80%
Respondents who would feel/ already feel happier bringing their ‘true self’ to work	39%	37%	42%	39%	41%	43%	40%	38%	42%
Respondents who would feel/already feel more satisfied bringing their ‘true self’ to work	30%	32%	31%	31%	31%	32%	32%	29%	30%
Respondents who would feel/ already feel more motivated bringing their ‘true self’ to work	22%	31%	32%	31%	33%	30%	27%	34%	34%
Respondents agree** that school teachers are able to express their creativity and individuality when working alongside young people	60%	74%	71%	70%	69%	69%	62%	66%	65%
Respondents who agree** that a good school teacher is someone who brings their personality and interests into the classroom	69%	72%	80%	74%	79%	78%	75%	74%	76%

*This finding combines respondents who said ‘no, not really’ or ‘no, not at all’

** This finding combines respondents who said ‘strongly agree’ or ‘somewhat agree’

*** This finding combines respondents who said ‘very important’ or ‘somewhat important’

**** This finding combines respondents who said “Yes, always” and “Yes, sometimes”