

Swiss HR-Barometer 2026

Focus
Competencies and Disruption

Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

Latest issue

This year's edition of the Swiss HR Barometer analyses the relationship between employees and their employers in Switzerland for the fourteenth time. The focus chapter, «Competencies and Disruption», examines digital transformation from the employees' perspective. It centres on three interrelated questions: How well prepared do employees in Switzerland feel for the demands of digital transformation? How do digital technologies shape their everyday working lives? And what risks and opportunities do they see for their professional future? The study thus sheds light on how employees experience digital transformation and reports on trends in employee expectations, Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, and work attitudes and behaviours across the survey years.

Sample

The sample was drawn on the basis of the sample register of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. The survey was conducted between March and June 2026. Respondents were free to choose between an online and a paper version of the questionnaire. In total, 1,597 responses from employees in the German-, French-, and Italian-speaking regions of Switzerland were analysed.

Focus: Competencies in the Digital Transformation

Employees in Switzerland generally feel well prepared for the digital transformation of the world of work: 70% have well-developed transferable skills, and 62% proactively develop their skills further. At the same time, confidence in their own digital abilities has declined compared with 2020. In addition to individual initiative, support from employers in acquiring and maintaining relevant skills also plays an important role. However, employer support falls short of employees' expectations, even though it is rated as high overall.

Focus: Work Experience in the Digital Workplace

Employees in Switzerland experience digital technologies both as demands and as resources, with the positive aspects predominating overall. 31% of employees perceive digital technologies rather or strongly as a resource, while 21% experience them rather or strongly as a demand. As a resource, digital technologies particularly support idea development and productivity. At the same time, digital technologies also bring new demands: 46% of employees depend on reliably functioning digital technologies for their work, indicating a high level of dependence on digital technologies in everyday working life.

Focus: Professional Future – Between Risks and Opportunities

Despite rapid technological change, the majority of employees in Switzerland are optimistic about their own professional future. Only 11% fear losing their jobs in the future due to new technologies or artificial intelligence. By contrast, 23% consider it likely that individual tasks could be automated. The consequences for the labour market as a whole are viewed considerably more

Focus:
Influencing Factors and Effects
of Digital Disruption and
Competencies

critically: 36% expect automation to lead to mass unemployment in the future. The potential consequences of new technologies are therefore perceived as substantially more disruptive at the overall economic level than for employees' own jobs.

At the same time, employees also recognise the opportunities associated with technological development: 34% expect rather or clearly positive effects of digital technologies and AI on their standard of living and everyday life, while a further 46% expect at least partially positive effects. Overall, this reveals an ambivalent, but by no means clearly negative or disruptive, picture of technological change.

How employees experience digital transformation is influenced both by individual characteristics and by organisational conditions and HRM practices. Higher digital self-efficacy is associated with greater autonomy, proactive skill development, and well-developed transferable skills. High digital demands, by contrast, are associated with lower self-efficacy, fewer perceived technological opportunities, and greater automation anxiety. Digital resources are associated with effects in the opposite direction. Lower automation anxiety is also found where there is greater participation, supportive leadership, and organisational support for skill development.

Automation anxiety, in turn, is associated with key work outcomes: it is linked to lower job satisfaction, employability, and commitment, as well as higher stress, greater job insecurity, and stronger turnover intentions. Organisational support for skill development, by contrast, is associated with more favourable work attitudes and behavioural intentions. This makes clear that digital transformation is also an organisational design and learning task.

Trend:
Career Orientations

Employees' career aspirations in Switzerland are changing. Although job security and long-term employment remain important concerns, traditional career goals are losing importance. Since 2018, the proportion of employees who aspire to hierarchical advancement or for whom «having a career» is important has decreased by 9% in each case. At the same time, alternative career aspirations are becoming more important: more employees prefer jobs at the same hierarchical level (+9%), consider having a career unimportant (+9%), and assign work a secondary role in their lives (+6%). The desire to shape one's own career, by contrast, remains consistently high.

Trend:
Human Resource Management

In 2026, employees in Switzerland continue to rate work design positively overall. Compared with 2024, there are only minor changes: task variety and autonomy have increased slightly, while task identity and feedback from the work itself have decreased slightly. In addition, mobile working is generally possible for just over half of employees.

There is still a need for action in performance management: fewer than half of employees (44%) receive regular performance appraisals. The picture is also mixed when it comes to employee development. The average number of training days has decreased compared with 2024 and now stands at five

Trend:
Psychological Contract

days per year. Professional skills remain the most important focus, while technological and social skills also play a significant role.

Leadership and the relationship between employees and supervisors continue to be rated positively and have improved slightly compared with 2024. Perceived opportunities for participation, by contrast, have decreased slightly, meaning that there is still potential for development in this area. Overall, there have been only minor changes in remuneration. Particularly noteworthy is the long-term increase in the prevalence of fringe benefits.

Trend analyses of the psychological contract show that, in 2026, employees' expectations continue to exceed the perceived offers of employers across all contract contents. The gaps remain particularly large for remuneration, job security, and development opportunities, while interesting and varied job content is also perceived as declining. Against the backdrop of digitalisation and AI, securing skills through further training, transparent development prospects, and the fair and participatory shaping of change is therefore becoming increasingly important. For sustainable HRM, it is essential to identify these expectations at an early stage and actively develop the psychological contract further.

Trend:
Job Insecurity and Employability

The results paint a picture characterised by increasing professional uncertainty: job insecurity increased between 2024 and 2026 in almost all sectors examined and is at the level of previous historical highs. At the same time, employees assess their employability somewhat more cautiously than in the previous survey in 2024. Against this backdrop, measures to strengthen professional future security are becoming increasingly important. Employers can achieve this by involving employees in change processes, highlighting development prospects, and creating opportunities to build skills that will be relevant in the future.

Trend:
**Job Satisfaction, Commitment,
Turnover Intention, Sickness
Absence**

While uncertainty regarding the professional future is increasing, the assessment of the current work situation remains positive and stable overall: job satisfaction and career satisfaction remain at a high level, while commitment is stable and turnover intention has decreased slightly. Sickness absence remains stable at an average of 6.0 days, but at a high level in the long term. For employers, this means strengthening existing factors that promote motivation and retention, such as appreciative leadership, interesting job content, and opportunities for participation and professional development. At the same time, it is important to identify strains at an early stage and take preventive action.

Conclusions

Employees in Switzerland experience digital transformation predominantly as a manageable change rather than an existential threat. Although concerns exist regarding automation, technological dependence, and job insecurity, the majority feel competent enough to meet the new demands and shape their professional future positively. The key is for companies and organisations to create appropriate framework conditions: continuous further training, a well-established culture of feedback and participation, and targeted support for particularly vulnerable groups. Digital transformation is therefore less a technological than an organisational and cultural transformation project, whose success depends on how people, companies, and society make use of the available opportunities and actively address the challenges.

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