



# Kenexa Research Institute Uncovers the Two-Year Itch

Research conducted by the Kenexa Research Institute (KRI) revealed a downward pattern in employee engagement levels. Much like the popular romantic comedy that illuminated marriage's "Seven Year Itch," KRI has uncovered a "two-year itch" that's disruptive to the workforce. More than 840,000 responses collected from U.S. and UK multi-national companies show that new hires are most excited and engaged during their first few months on the job (72%), but that during the sixth through 18th month, their satisfaction levels decline. By the end of year two, instead of focusing on their jobs, odds are that they're focusing on finding a new one.

Jeffrey Saltzman, M.A., said, "These findings are of critical importance to employers. A workforce that continually churns creates enormous expense and substantial employee morale issues, and significantly reduces a company's competitive advantage." He continued, "Employees who are disengaging from the workplace represent a tremendous amount of lost value. Not only did the organization expend tremendous resources to get that employee in the first place, resources which may now be squandered, an unengaged employee negatively impacts organizational effectiveness in such areas as customer interactions and relationships, productivity, innovation and growth. This pattern of disengagement represents an opportunity for companies to increase their performance if the disengagement pattern is addressed proactively and managed."

Despite the dismal statistics (a full 57% of new hires are disengaging at the two-year mark), KRI's research shows that the longer an employee stays with an employer, the higher the levels of satisfaction and engagement (66% at year 16 and 62% for those on the job 20 years or more.)

Saltzman observed, "Whether in the U.S. or UK, the longer term employees, who are of course the survivors of the 'two-year itch,' once again become more engaged and committed. By taking the appropriate measures to get employees past the 'two-year itch,' employers can reap the benefits of their investments in recruiting, training and development and build a higher performing workforce."

The Kenexa Research Institute has studied the relationship between employee attitudes and business outcomes, including customer satisfaction, employee retention and management effectiveness. KRI's research helps organizations to better understand: 1) how employee attitudes impact key performance indicators and 2) what components of the work environment are most critical for engaging employees and achieving sustained business growth. This information helps Kenexa's clients improve customer loyalty, increase efficiencies and ultimately increase their bottom line.

## Database Overview

The report is based on the analysis and compilation of data drawn from 3.5 million employees from 2004-2006 Kenexa organizational effectiveness surveys conducted in U.S. and European multinational companies.

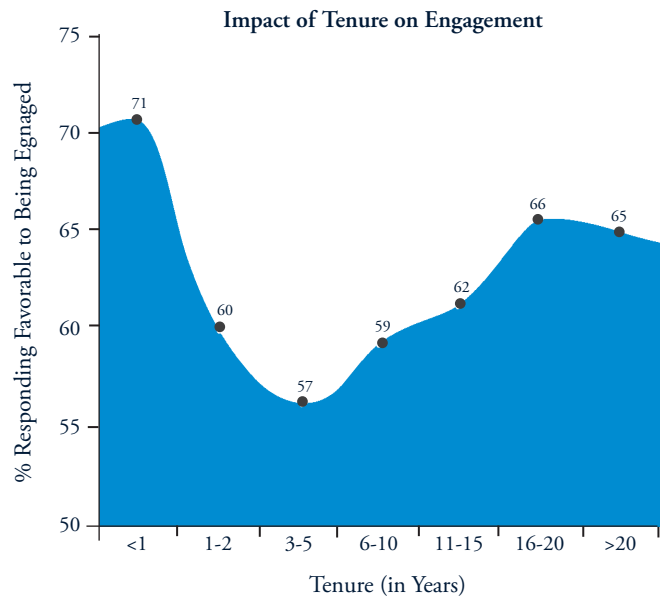
## Study Details

The notion of work life balance has become a popular topic. Many companies are making efforts to help employees better handle the pressures of their jobs as well as their families. The Kenexa Research Institute examined how both men and women felt about their workplaces' efforts to make this tension more bearable.

Survey items were rated using a 5-point Likert-like scale. The % favorable is the percentage of people who chose either of the two most positive answers (typically “strongly agree” or “agree”).

**Survey Results**

- Females were more positive than males in their perceptions of company efforts to help them balance work and life responsibilities.
- Regardless of gender, those who indicated more favorability toward their organization’s efforts to support work/life balance also indicated a much lower intent to leave the organization.



**About Kenexa**

Kenexa provides business solutions for human resources. We help global organizations multiply business success by identifying the best individuals for every job and fostering optimal work environments for every organization. For more than 20 years, Kenexa has studied human behavior and team dynamics in the workplace, and has developed the software solutions, business processes and expert consulting that help organizations impact positive business outcomes through HR. Kenexa is the only company that offers a comprehensive suite of unified products and services that support the entire employee lifecycle from pre-hire to exit.

**Media Contact**

Jennifer Meyer, Kenexa  
 1.800.391.9557  
 jennifer.meyer@kenexa.com

