

So much for the ‘end of the road’: Women aged 50+ perform best

A new study shows: Women aged 50 and over are highly motivated and loyal to their employers – and represent Switzerland’s largest potential labor reserve.

The Swiss workforce is a highly motivated crew: More than half go above and beyond what’s expected of them. This is shown by a representative study involving 1,242 respondents recently conducted by swissstaffing and gfs-zurich. Women aged 50 and over demonstrate the highest motivation levels of any demographic in the Swiss labor market.

70 percent of women aged 50 and over go above and beyond in their jobs. Overall, 63 percent of workers in the 50-plus bracket display an above-average commitment – more so than in any other age group. The proportion is lowest among men aged 18 to 29, at 36 percent. Overall, ‘quiet quitting’ is still a marginal phenomenon in Switzerland: 57 percent of the workforce deliver more than expected, whilst just three percent do only the bare minimum.

One key finding of the study: Staff aged 50 and over are valuable employees for companies in several respects. Not only are they particularly hard-working, but they are also exceptionally loyal. And this trait is most pronounced among women in the 50-plus bracket: 71 percent have no intention of switching jobs. For companies, this means: sustained motivation, low staff turnover and the transfer of knowledge relevant to the business. These findings stand in stark contrast to the reservations that job seekers aged 50 and over continue to face when applying for a position.

At 200,000 persons, the 50-plus age bracket constitutes Switzerland’s largest potential labor reserve

Numbering over 200,000 persons, non-workers aged 50 and over constitute Switzerland’s largest pool of potential labor, a figure that stands to rise between now and 2050. Of these, 62 percent – around 126,000 persons – are women. “In other words, the very group that demonstrates the greatest work motivation in the labor market also represents Switzerland’s largest untapped labor potential,” says Ariane M. Baer, author of the study and project manager at swissstaffing. With the wave of baby boomers going into retirement, the structural shortage of skilled workers is set to become significantly more acute in the coming years. In the long term, the Swiss labor market will only be able to meet this challenge if the labor potential of the over-50s is consistently harnessed. The 50–64 age group will account for more than a third of the working-age population (see FSO, 2024) in the coming decades.

Flexibility is vital to successfully harnessing the workforce's potential

Flexible working arrangements are a key lever for tapping the potential of the over-50s and keeping them in work for longer. For women, flexible working hours (82%) and part-time work (81%) are crucial aspects. Working from home and job-sharing also play an important role. Men in the same age bracket tend to prefer project-based or freelance work. It is worth noting that around half of women aged 50 and over who are not in employment would look for paid employment if their working hours or employment level could be arranged flexibly. "This shows that it is not a lack of willingness behind their not taking a job, but rather the absence of suitable working arrangements," the study's author explains.

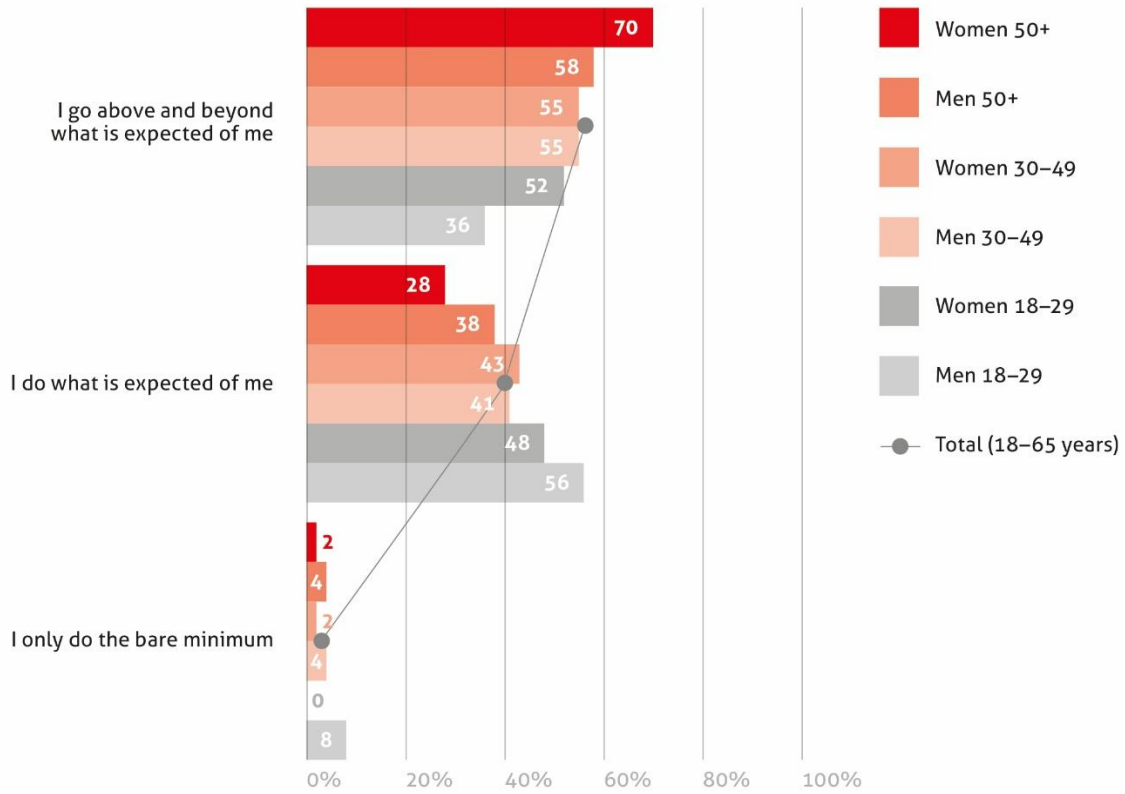
Staff leasing providers help to unlock potential

As a flexible form of employment, temporary work can play a significant role in harnessing the labor market potential of those aged 50 and over. It offers a low threshold for personalized work assignments and makes it easier for non-workers to return to the labor market. It also supports voluntary continued employment beyond normal retirement age. Through the CBA on Staff Leasing, it combines flexibility with social security. Professional staff leasing companies use their networks to help connect experienced workers with companies. This makes them important partners in effectively tapping into the labor pool and ensuring the stability of the labor market of the future.

Study design: Survey of the working-age population

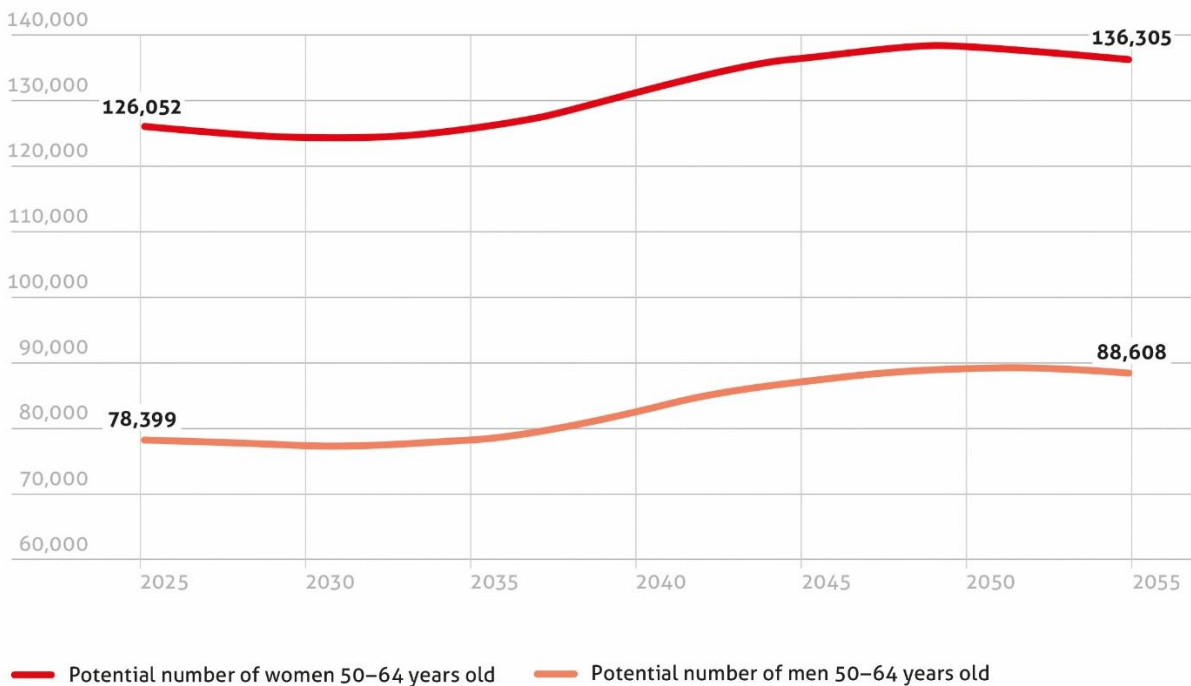
The research institute gfs-zurich surveyed 1,242 people in Switzerland aged between 18 and 65 (or, in the case of those not yet retired, up to 70), commissioned by swissstaffing. An additional random sample of 201 non-working individuals was surveyed. This meant that a total of 344 persons not in employment were surveyed. The survey was conducted online and by phone. It is representative in terms of age, gender, education and language region. The survey took place from 15 September to 8 October 2025.

Worker motivation and commitment



Based on: Workers surveyed (n=1,072).
Source: swissstaffing / gfs-zürich 2025

Potential non-workers who would like to work, projection 2025–2055



Calculation: Number of non-working 50- to 64-year-olds as per SLFS 2024 multiplied by the number of non-workers that would like to work.
Source: swissstaffing / gfs-zürich 2025

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The full **white paper ‘The potential of 50 and over: Why women aged 50 and over are crucial to the future of the labor market’** is available to download at: <https://www.swissstaffing.ch/en/Sector-Politics/White-Paper.php>.

swissstaffing is the competence and service center for Swiss staff leasing companies. As an employers' association, swissstaffing represents the interests of its more than 500 members in dealings with politics, business and society. swissstaffing is a social partner of the CBA on Staff Leasing, the agreement covering the largest number of employees in Switzerland. www.swissstaffing.ch.

Studies on temporary workers and staff leasing companies in Switzerland

swissstaffing regularly publishes white papers on economic, political and social issues relating to temporary work in Switzerland. For this purpose, the association also commissions surveys. You can access the latest studies via [this link](#).