Who's Vouching for You?



Why Australian Jobseekers trust your employees more than your employer brand.

indeed

About Indeed

Indeed is the #1 job site in the world[1], with 685 million Job Seeker Profiles[2] and 4 million employers globally. For over 21 years, we've helped organisations find and hire the talent they need to grow.

We believe technology should make hiring more human, not less. In today's fast-moving labour market, hiring can feel like a trade-off between speed and quality. Employers are under pressure to move quickly, while still making high-stakes decisions about people, potential, and performance.

Indeed is designed to support both, combining powerful technology with human insight to help you find, attract, and connect with the right talent. Visit au.indeed.com/hire to discover how Indeed can help you hire with clarity and confidence.



[1] Comscore, Total Visits, June 2026
[2] Indeed data (worldwide), job seeker accounts that have a unique, verified email address

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Methodology

The Australian Employer Brand Survey was commissioned by Indeed and conducted online by YouGov between 15th and 20th July 2026.

This research examines how Australians assess and decide to trust an employer before they apply, surveying 1,001 workers nationwide, including both employed individuals actively seeking work and jobseekers, excluding self-employed workers from both categories. For the purposes of this report, job seekers are referred to collectively as 'workers'. Respondents were sourced from the YouGov panel, where panellists are incentivised by points that can be redeemed for cash or vouchers.

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 64, capturing perspectives across early, mid, and late career stages. The sample was designed to be nationally representative, enabling robust insights into how workers research employers, what builds trust and credibility in an employer brand, and the red flags that deter candidates from applying.

The questionnaire was designed by YouGov in collaboration with Indeed and That Comms Co. Following the completion of fieldwork, the data was weighted by age, gender, and region to reflect the latest ABS population estimates of Australian workers and jobseekers aged 18 to 64. Statistical significance has been reported at the 95% confidence level.

This study was conducted in accordance with ISO 20252:2019 standards, to which YouGov is accredited.



Does your employer brand actually build trust?

We asked 1,001 Australians what they really think of your careers page. They didn't hold back.

One open question. No prompts, no multiple choice, no framework.
Just this: what's the biggest red flag that stops you applying for a job?

Here's what one individual wrote back:

> "The biggest red flag is consistent reports of toxic culture, especially around bullying, discrimination, or unrealistic expectations, with no credible evidence that leadership is addressing it. If I see a pattern of negative reviews, media coverage, or employee stories that paint a picture of a place where people are undervalued or mistreated, I won't apply. Trust and respect are non-negotiable."
>
> **- Australian worker[3]**

Nobody put the word evidence in their mouth.

That's not someone casually browsing job ads.
That's someone building a case.
And they're not unusual.

76%

say culture and reputation shape where they want to work.

39%

reckon employer branding often feels too polished to be true.

24%

believe the photos on your careers page.

29%

are now checking you with AI.[4]

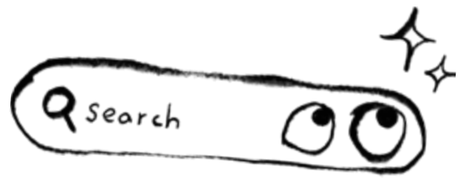
Read those four numbers in order and you have the whole report. Employer brand still matters enormously. But people have stopped taking your word for it. They're least convinced by the part you spend the most money on. And now there's a second reader in the room.

Which means the job has changed.

Your employer brand isn't the stuff you make anymore. It's the evidence that exists about you.

Look at what people actually trust and the pattern appears immediately. Every signal near the top is either something they can verify, or something one of your employees wrote. Reviews beat being an old company. Being an old company beats being a famous one. A salary range beats a photo shoot, nearly two to one.

Money buys you the weakest signal on that list. Nothing buys you the strongest.



[3] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

[4] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Part 1

They’re watching more closely than you think

72% of Australians agree a well-communicated employer brand makes it easier to decide whether a job is right for them.[5]

Just 3% strongly disagree. Most of the rest aren’t opposed, just undecided.[6] That’s about as close to consensus as Australians get.

Agreement is one thing, though. Strength of feeling is another, and this is where it sharpens: for **36%,** culture and reputation is very important.[7] More than a third of the workforce treats your reputation as a serious factor, not a tiebreaker.

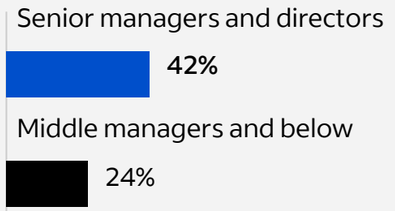
So the attention is there. The question is who’s paying it, and that’s where it gets uncomfortable.

The people you find hardest to hire are the ones looking hardest. Senior managers and directors are nearly twice as likely as middle managers and below to strongly agree that employer brand helps them decide: **42% vs 24%.**[8] The audience with the most options is the audience reading you most carefully.

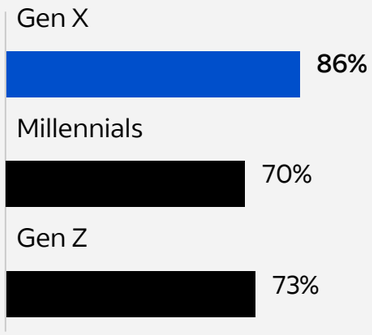
And Gen X care about it more than anyone. 86% say a positive employer brand matters, against **70%** of Millennials and **73%** of Gen Z.[9]

[5–9] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Strongly agree that employer brand helps them decide



Say a positive employer brand matters



Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

And they’ve already decided what counts

66% say it’s important that you’re consistent across job ads, your website, social media, and employee reviews.[10] A quarter say it’s very important.

Read that list again.
They’ve put reviews in it.

As far as Australians are concerned, what your employees say about you is part of your employer brand. Same bucket as the campaign you commissioned and the page you designed. They’re not making the distinction you’re making.

Most companies don’t manage it that way. That gap is what the rest of this report is about.

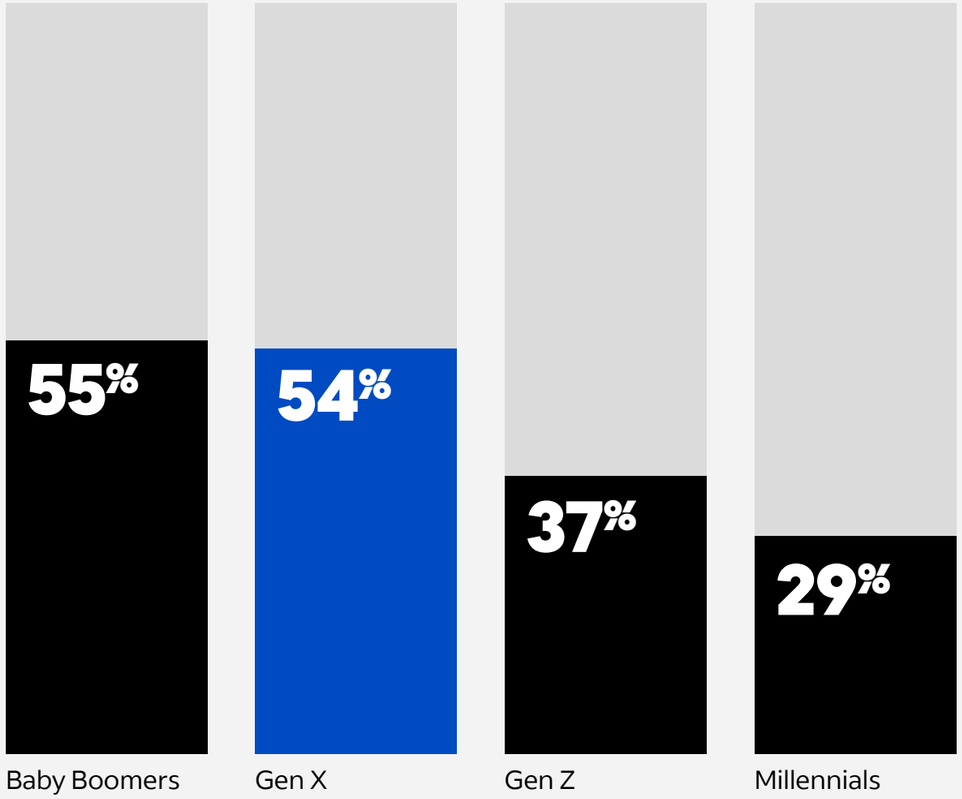


[10] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

The generation that cares most believes you least

So we asked the obvious follow-up: how many of you think employer branding is too polished to be true? Then we cut the answers by age, and the result was backwards.

Too polished to be true, by generation



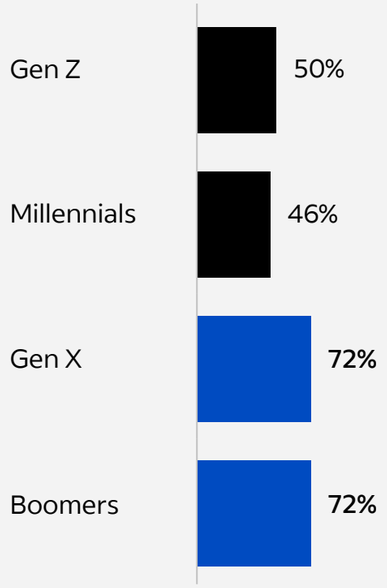
Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Here's the paradox. Boomers and Gen X value employer brand more than any other generation.

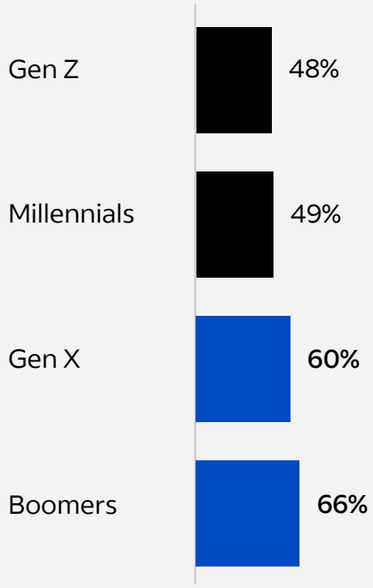
Younger generations are the reverse: they care less about employer brand, but they're far more likely to take it at face value.

Gen X and Boomers are far more allergic to slogans and buzzwords (both **72%**, against Gen Z **50%** and Millennials **46%**) and to stock imagery, **60%** and **66%** against **48%** and **49%**.[11]

Slogans and buzzwords



Stock imagery



Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

And it's not only about age. Public sector (**54%**) and third sector[12] (**58%**) workers frequently find employer branding too polished, against **35%** in the private sector.[13] The more time someone's spent near the comms machine, the less they buy from it.

Here's what one individual wrote back.

> "Their whole website and advertising looks like cliché management speak."
>
> **- Australian worker**[14]

So your toughest critic isn't a 24-year-old on TikTok.
It's a 52-year-old senior hire who's seen this exact campaign four times already.

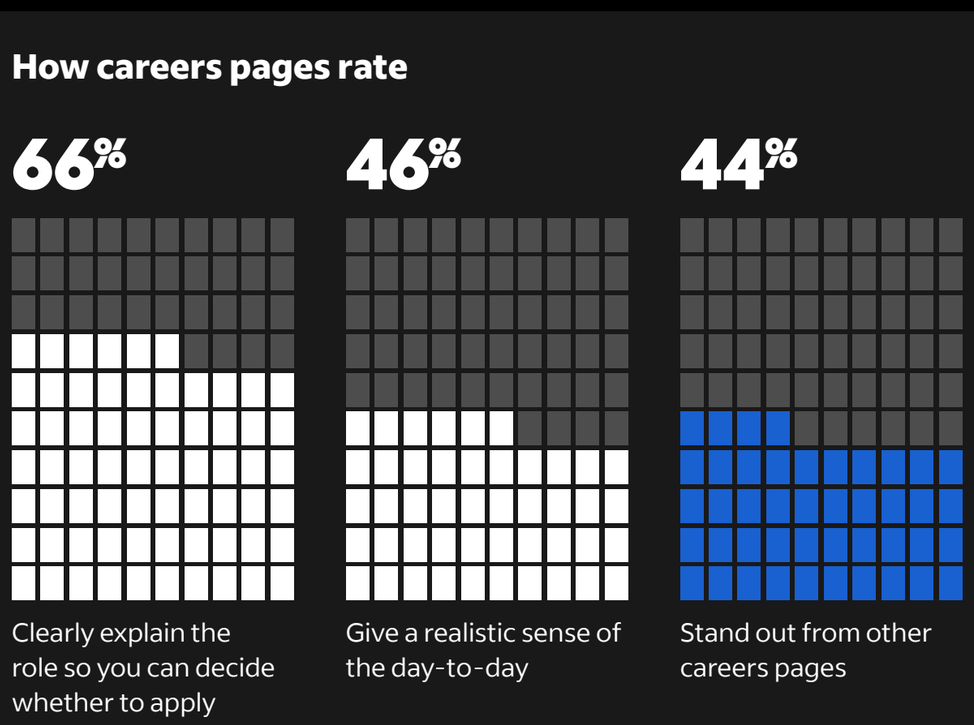
[11, 13–14] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers
[12] Third sector definition refers to charities and not-for-profits

Part 2

Where you're getting caught out

Careers pages are doing about half the job. They can explain the role, but they're far less effective at helping candidates picture the reality of the job or remember your company afterwards.

How careers pages rate



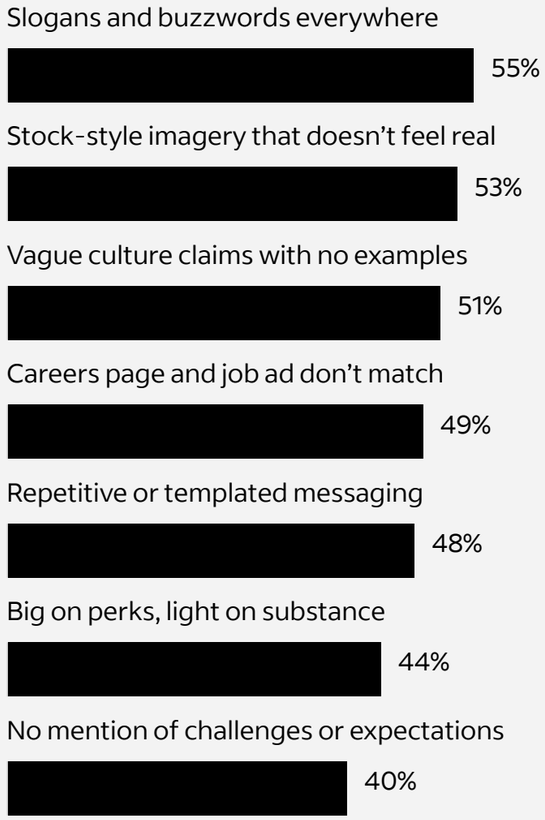
Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Good at the paperwork. Not great at the human bit. Worst of all is being memorable.

Most careers pages are a job description in a nicer font

And when a page misses, the reasons are remarkably consistent. What candidates call "too polished" tends to come down to a familiar set of signals that feel generic, overworked or disconnected from reality.

Here's what makes a page feel too polished or unrealistic



Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Every single one of those is a choice someone made.
Which means every single one is fixable.



Here's what one individual wrote back.

> Cookie-cutter imagery and cliche wording. Feels disingenuous too glossy and familiar."
>
> **- Australian worker**[15]

Sometimes saying it is worse than saying nothing

Two answers that should make everyone in the room go quiet.

We asked what would make a careers page more believable:

> Nothing. Anything created by the company is going to give itself a positive look."
>
> **- Australian worker**[16]

And what would give them confidence in a company's claims about career progression:

> I don't think there is anything that would make me confident about that. I'm more likely to lose confidence if the company claims it in their job ad."
>
> **- Australian worker**[17]

Read that second one again.
Making the claim actively did them damage.

You can't write your way out of this.
For a decent chunk of the audience, anything with your logo on it gets marked down before they've finished the sentence.

The only thing that gets through is evidence somebody else made.



[15–17] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

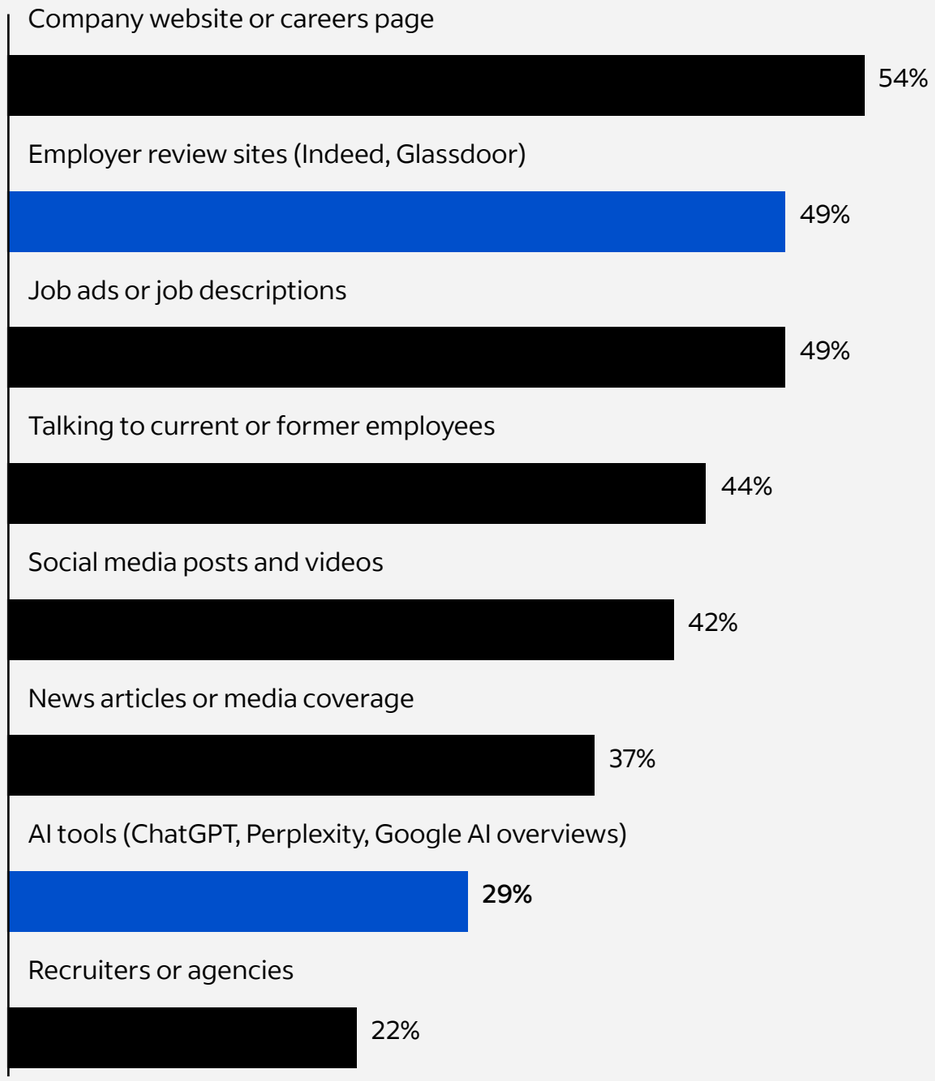
Part 3

Where they actually go looking

Candidates may start with your own channels, but they rarely stop there. By the time they decide whether to trust you, they've usually checked multiple sources and compared the story across them.



How Australians research an employer



Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Your careers page comes first, but only just. Roughly half their homework happens somewhere you don't write a word. Google search, Glassdoor reviews, Reddit.

But there's a new player now

29% are researching employers with AI.

33% Millennials

31% Gen Z

32% white collar workers[18]

Here's the thing about an AI answer. It gets built from what's publicly out there: reviews, ratings, pay data, how long people stay, news. **It can't quote something it can't find.** That line you spent three months workshopping about investing in your people? It's not in the answer your candidate gets. It was never findable.

If it's not in your evidence, it's not in the answer.

And when there's not much to work with, the summary gets stitched together from whatever's lying around: a couple of old reviews, one news story, some general vibe about your industry. Having a thin footprint isn't nothing. It's space for someone else's version of you.

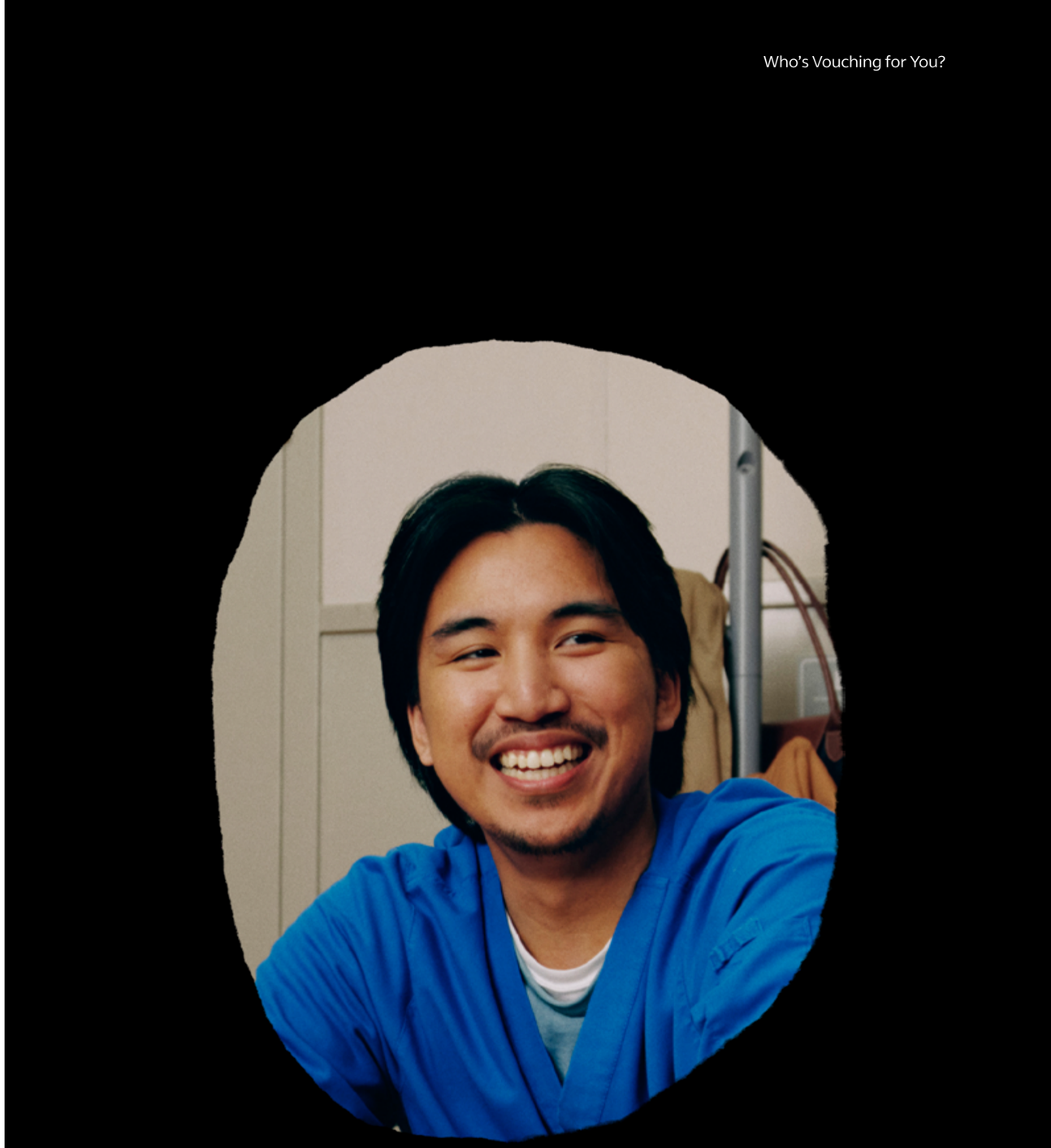
And they can smell AI on your side too

Nobody asked about this. People raised it themselves as a red flag:

Machine-written copy, machine-checked. The only thing that survives both is evidence.

> "Obvious use of AI in its creation, stock photos and no mention of remuneration range."
>
> **- Australian worker[19]**

[18–19] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers



Some people audit you. Others just quietly leave.

The split here is striking. Some candidates will dig through extra sources, cross-check what they find and look for signs that might confirm or contradict your story. Others won't investigate that far at all: they'll simply rule you out and move on.

	Younger	Older
Looked up gender pay gap data	**55%** Gen Z & Millennials	**18%** Gen X **6%** Boomers
Read a company's reply to a bad review	**55%** Millennials **48%** Gen Z	**29%** Boomers
Avoid applying after negative reviews or coverage	**59%** Millennials	**73%** Gen X **84%** Boomers
	Younger candidates dig. They check the pay data, they read your reply, and they'll let you change their mind.	**Older candidates don't dig. They just don't apply.** No investigation, no application, no clue on your end that they ever considered you.

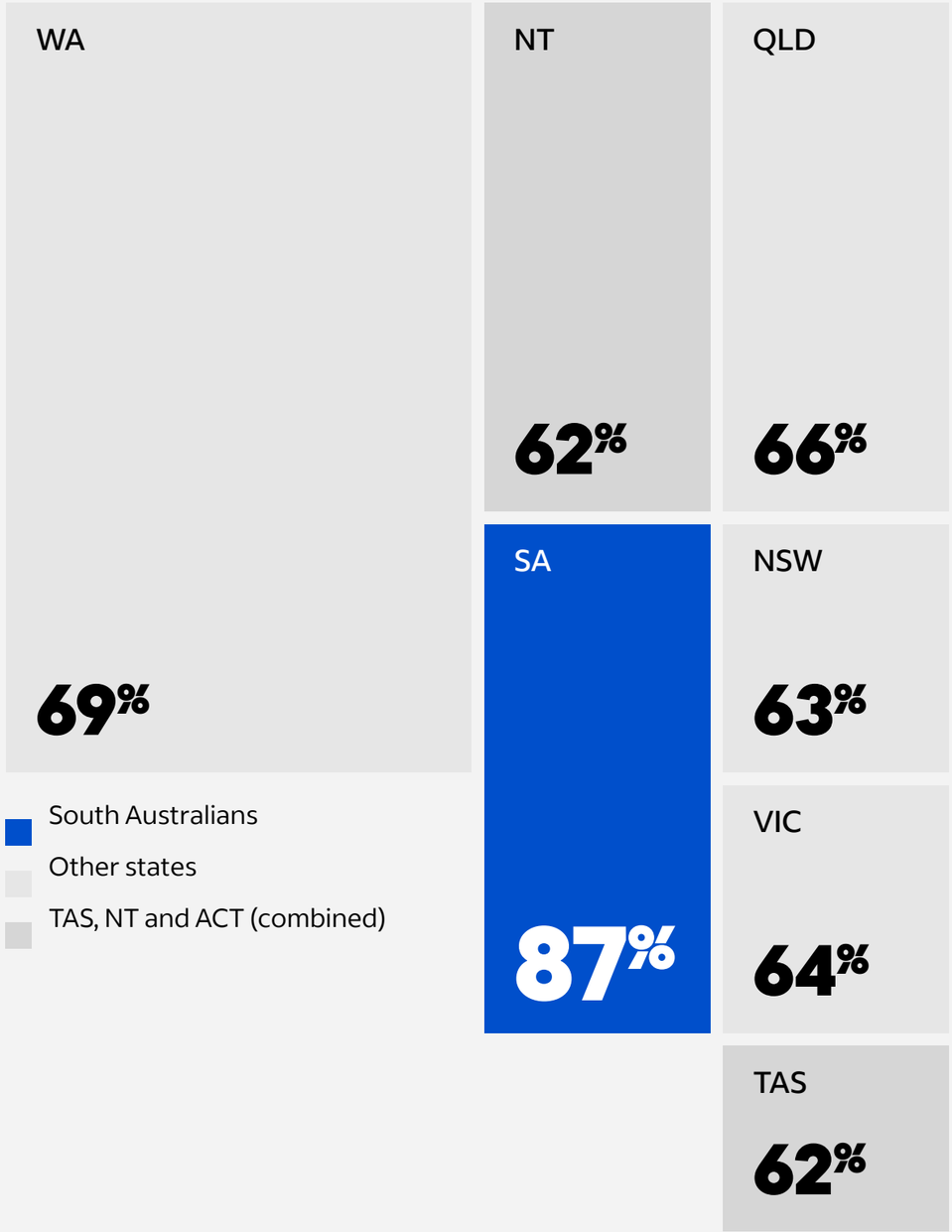
Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

The second one never shows up in a report. It's also the bigger number.

Worth knowing: South Australians are the least forgiving in the country: **87%** would avoid applying after negative reviews or coverage, against NSW **63%**, VIC **64%**, QLD **66%**, WA **69%** and **TAS /NT/ACT 62%**.[20]

[20] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Would avoid applying after negative reviews or coverage



Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers



Part 4

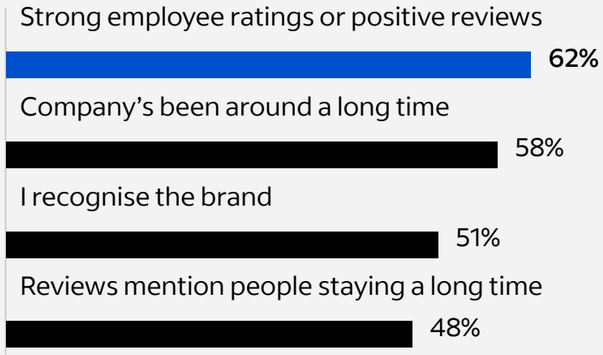
What actually earns trust

If candidates are checking beyond your own channels, the obvious question is what they are actually looking for. The data points to three distinct jobs your evidence needs to do, and most employers aren't doing all three well.

TRUST Do they believe you're solid and real?

When people are deciding whether to take you seriously at all, the strongest signals are the ones that feel externally validated. Trust starts with proof that other people have had a credible, stable experience of your company.

Trust signals



Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Your employees' reviews sit at the top. Your own photos sit at the bottom. That's the whole credibility problem in two numbers.

Being long-established reassures older candidates (Gen X **68%**, Boomers **69%**, against **52%** for both younger groups).[21] People *staying* reassures younger ones (Gen Z **52%**, Millennials **53%**, against Gen X **41%** and Boomers **32%**).[22]

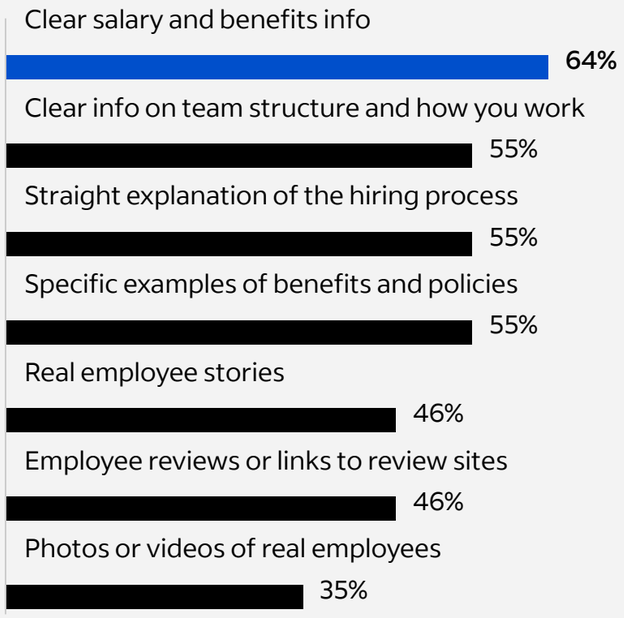


[21–22] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

CREDIBILITY Is there enough here to act on?

Once trust is established, candidates want enough substance to make a decision. This is where practical detail matters most: the more specific and usable the information, the more credible the employer feels.

Credibility signals



Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Facts beat faces, nearly two to one. A salary range does almost double the work of a photo shoot and costs you nothing to produce. That's about as close to free as employer branding gets.

Gen X are the fussiest here: **74%** want clear salary and benefits, against Gen Z **56%** and Millennials **59%.**[23]

[23] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

AUTHENTICITY Does this sound like a real job?

And then there's the final test: not whether the message is attractive, but whether it feels honest. Candidates are not asking for perfection. They are asking for signs that you are telling the truth about the job, the culture and the trade-offs.

74%
say being upfront about the challenges you're facing improves their trust.[24]

Only
8%
say it hurts.[25]

76% want you transparent about pay equity, bullying and mental health support, climbing to **86%** of Gen X and **87%** of Baby Boomers.[26]

Which means the people most suspicious of your polish are the same people most desperate for your honesty. Same finding, twice over.

> "Ditch some of the corporate talk and just tell you exactly what they want you to do."
>
> **- Australian worker**[27]



[24–27] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

What you said vs what they heard

We tested how people instinctively react to ten common employer lines.

Ten common employer lines

Positivity

68% People first	**68%** We invest in our people
61% Make an impact	**60%** Innovative culture
54% Dynamic environment	**52%** We're a family
49% Bring your whole self to work	**44%** We work hard and play hard
44% Fast-paced environment	**38%** We're not your typical company

Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

The bit that stings

Only 44% say careers pages stand out from the others they've seen.[28] And the line specifically designed to make you sound different is the **worst performer in the entire study.**

Announcing you're not like other companies is the least convincing thing you can possibly say.

They're not reacting. They're translating.

> No salary listed, instead things like 'fast-paced environment', means to me that they want someone to go above and beyond for low pay.

> When they are like "we're a family". I don't need more family, I need a job that won't take advantage of me. When they say that I often assume they will want me to be available to be called in and to work extra hours

Fast-paced → we're short-staffed.

We're a family → we'll call you on a Sunday.

Not what anyone in the brand team meant.
Very much what the market's hearing.



[28] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

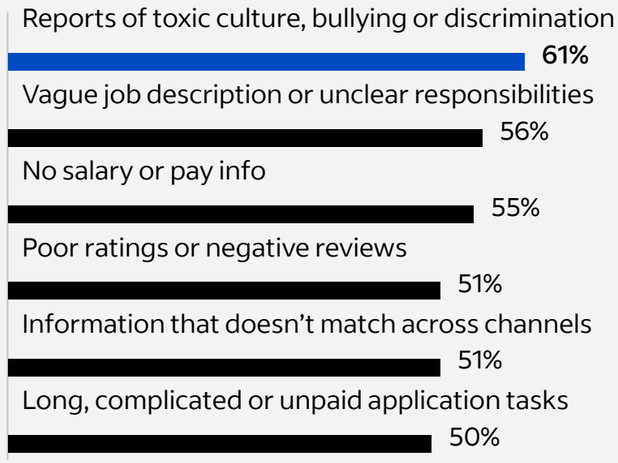
Part 5

What it's costing you

When employer brand signals fall short, the impact is not abstract. It shows up directly in whether people decide to apply or decide not to.



What makes Australians less likely to apply



Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

The single biggest deterrent in this country is something only your own employees can say about you. No campaign budget touches it.

66%
would steer clear of a company after seeing negative reviews or coverage.[29]

Only **9%** wouldn't.[30]

> "A company that talks a big game about values and culture, but has a stream of recent reviews or news stories about toxic behaviour, discrimination, or high turnover. That mismatch tells me they're not being honest, and I don't want to walk into that kind of environment."
>
> **- Australian worker**[31]

[29–31] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Replying to reviews is a coin flip

48% have read a company's response to a bad review.[32] Of those:



were more likely to apply

couldn't have cared less.[33]

less likely

Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

So seven in ten replies did nothing, and a third of them actively cost you the person. **Replying isn't the skill. Replying well is**, and it's worth six in ten of everyone reading.

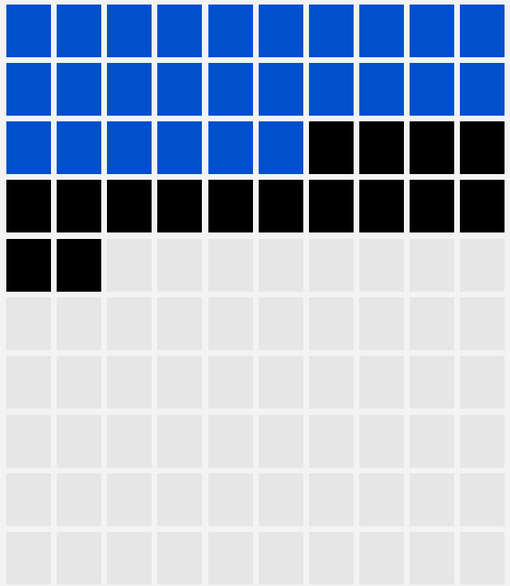
Where it pays off: Gen Z (**40%**) and Millennials (**30%**) are far more winnable than Gen X (**20%**).[34] Same with senior managers and directors: **41% vs 24%.**[35]

> "A company that blames its employees instead of taking accountability for high turnover and bad culture."
>
> **- Australian worker**[36]

[32–36] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

And filing the paperwork isn't the same as being found

42% have looked up a company's WGEA gender pay gap data.[37] But **26 of 42** said it made no difference to whether they applied.[38] That's three in five of everyone who bothered.



42%
have looked up a company's WGEA gender pay gap data.

26%
said it made no difference to whether they applied.

Source: Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Publishing something on a regulator's website isn't the same as putting it where the decision gets made.



[37–38] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Part 6

So, own your evidence

Your evidence exists whether you look after it or not. It's already being read by candidates, and by whatever's summarising you for them.

Only question is whether you're the one shaping it.

1. HAVE A LOOK

Ask what a candidate asks (*what's it like to work at your company*) and read what comes back. Pay as much attention to what's **missing** as what's unflattering. If it can be sourced, it can be found.

> "Trust and respect are non-negotiable."
> **- Australian worker**[39]

[39] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

2. ADD WHAT THEY ASKED FOR

Their priority order, not ours:

- **Put the pay in.** Top credibility driver at **64%**, and leaving it out is a red flag for **55%**.[40]
- **Explain how the job actually works.** Team structure, ways of working: **55%**.[41]
- **Walk them through the hiring process. 55%.**[42]
- **Specific policies, not a fruit bowl. 55%** want specifics; **44%** are put off by perks with nothing behind them.[43]
- **Real employee voices over employee photos**.[44]
- **Put the career path in the ad itself.** Strongest progression signal at **56%**.[45]
- **Say the hard part out loud. 74%** say it builds trust.[46]
- **Lead with people. 68%**, against **38%** for telling them you're different.[47]
- **Bin the stock library.** Only **24%** believe those photos.[48]

3. KEEP AT IT

Reviews keep landing, so your strongest trust signal is a living thing, not a project with an end date. Reply, and reply properly. And let someone other than you back up your culture claims.



[40–48] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers

Part 7

Where we come in

Review sites are the second most-used research channel (49%), and employee reviews are the strongest trust signal going (62%).[49] That is where this is won or lost.

Glassdoor is one of the places candidates go to understand what it's really like to work at a company, with millions of company reviews and salary insights available to job seekers. Together with Indeed's Employer Branding Suite, it plays a critical role in shaping employer brand perception long before someone applies.

Indeed's Employer Branding Suite helps employers strengthen visibility, showcase authentic company storytelling and measure brand health across the hiring funnel. It brings together tools including Display Ads, Employer Branding Hub, branded jobs, insights and analytics, and Brand Score to help employers build a more consistent brand experience across Indeed, Glassdoor and other relevant sites.

35%

increase in job clicks

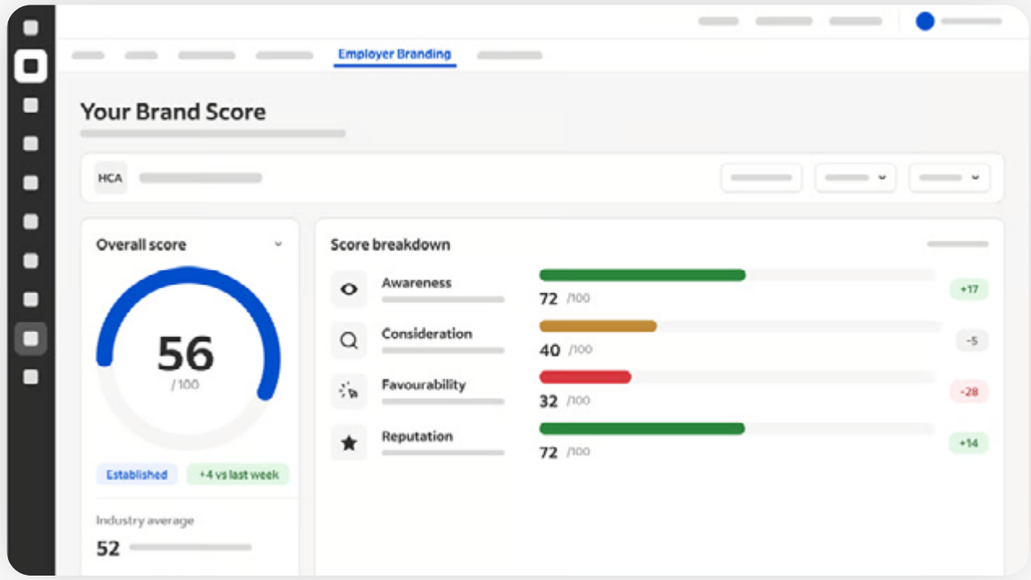
28%

increase in started applications

Employers using **Employer Branding Hub** saw an average 35% increase in job clicks[50] across their Indeed and Glassdoor Company Pages, and employers using both Employer Branding Ads and Employer Branding Hub saw an average 28% increase in started applications[51] across Indeed and Glassdoor.

[49] Indeed Survey with YouGov 2026. Total N=1001 workers
[50] Indeed and Glassdoor Data (worldwide), April 2023 - March 2025. Results may vary.
[51] Indeed and Glassdoor monthly employer-level data (worldwide) January - June 2024. Results may vary.

Brand Score helps employers measure brand health across key signals with one trackable metric that blends awareness, consideration, favourability and reputation.



The hero of this report was never the employer. It's the person doing the homework: reading the reviews, checking the pay data, seeing how you handled the criticism, working out whether you're worth an application.

They're doing more due diligence than most companies assume.

Come and have a chat with Indeed about owning your evidence.

JOBS
NEED
PEOPLE

indeed