

## HR boost For Better Employment:

improving personnel  
practices to inclusively  
employ skilled workforce

NEWSLETTER #1  
2025



## Strengthening the labor market of equal opportunities!

Dear friends, we are excited to present the first issue the HR boost project newsletter, a publication within the framework of HR Boost For Better Employment, aimed at improving HR practices for inclusive employment.



Our goal is to support companies in adapting their HR practices to new challenges, promote equal access to work for all – especially for those from vulnerable groups – and strengthen the professional HR community.

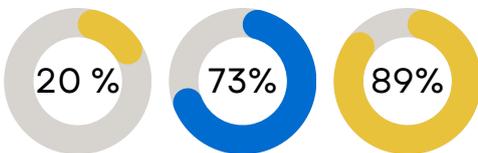
The initiative engages medium and large companies from the construction, agricultural, transportation, and service sectors. We offer training, consulting, strategic sessions, and opportunities for partnership.

This is a space for developing HR potential and shaping fair employment practices.

Equal opportunities – are not solely about social values, but also a resource for growth. And now is the time to strengthen the Ukrainian labor market based on openness and inclusion.

Enjoy the read!

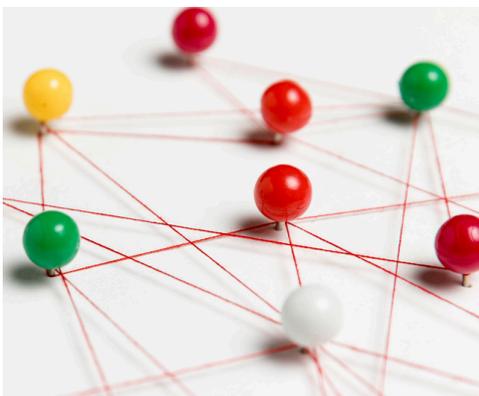
*Nataliya Starodub,  
Project Manager,  
NGO Center "MENTOR"*



### What do you love about your craft?

Employee expectations in Ukraine: how businesses can respond to labor market challenges...

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**TRAINING – MEETINGS – OPPORTUNITIES!**

## HR practices that restore dignity

**Rebuilding Ukraine is not only about infrastructure – it's about people. That's why the HR boost project has been launched in Ukraine, focused on developing modern HR practices that promote inclusive employment.**

**This initiative will help employers create more accessible work environments – open to people with diverse backgrounds and needs. Through training, consulting, and support for HR professionals, the project will contribute to shaping a labor market that works for people and for the country's recovery.**

Since March 2025, the participant recruitment phase has been underway for the project HR Boost

For Better Employment. HR boost focuses on improving HR practices for the inclusive employment of a skilled workforce. The project will cover the entire territory of Ukraine that is currently under the control of the Ukrainian government.

The initiative is aimed at improving HR approaches and creating conditions for the inclusive employment of a skilled workforce within companies and will continue until March 15, 2026.

Key aspects of the Project:

- Strengthening HR development and implementing modern technologies and approaches in recruitment and personnel management.

- Better employment – supporting high-quality jobs with a special focus on vulnerable groups.
- Inclusive employment – creating equal opportunities for all, including people with disabilities, ex-combatants, youth, and others.
- Skilled workforce – preparing and adapting specialists to modern labor market challenges through vocational education and skills development.

The goal of HR boost is to improve HR practices and raise the overall employment level in Ukraine.

It aims to give a new impetus to the development of the labor market and contribute to building a society of equal opportunities.

## VIDEO PRESENTATION:



The project covers the following sectors:

- Construction
- Agriculture
- Transport and logistics
- Service

The participant selection process among HR professionals included submitting an online application and interviewing candidates with a selection committee formed by members of the project team.

The selection committee consists of representatives from the Ministry of Economy, Employment Centers, and the NGO "Mentor Center" (the project implementer), as well as, if needed, other relevant experts. Additionally, at least one regional representative (for example, from a regional Chamber of Commerce, business association, or cluster) will be involved, who

will be elected as the chairperson. A selection committee is organized according to the regions of company operations. The regions of Ukraine are combined into five groups, with a separate Regional selection committee established for each of the five groups.

Participant selection for the Project started in March 2025 and was carried out based on the following criteria:

- Company size: medium (50 to 250 employees) and large (over 250 employees);
- Companies from the construction, agricultural, transport/logistics, and service sectors;
- Business registered in Ukraine for more than 2 years;
- Presence of an internal HR department or HR specialist;
- Staffing needs.

**Over 100 participants will have the opportunity to improve their skills through free training (offline and online workshops, strategic sessions, consultations, educational materials, etc.) and collaborate with top professionals working on the Project. They will become part of the HR community and have the chance to find valuable partners.**

## **MEDIA ABOUT US:**



# What do you love about your craft?

## Employee expectations in Ukraine: how businesses can meet labor market challenges



In February–March 2025, the NGO “Mentor Center,” as part of the HR boost For Better Employment project, conducted an anonymous online survey aimed at studying candidates’ expectations of their current or future employers. The study involved 454 respondents from across Ukraine, aged 18 to 60+. The main goal was to better understand employees’ needs and values in order to develop appropriate approaches to recruitment, motivation, and retention – especially in the context of post-war recovery.

### Barriers and frustrations

Among the characteristics that Ukrainians most often associate with an ideal employer, respondents named:

- honesty
- humanity
- responsibility
- fair salary
- friendly team
- decent working conditions

These traits were key regardless of age or gender, indicating a broad societal demand for respect for human dignity in labor relations.

### Important factors when choosing a workplace

Based on aggregated data, the top 5 most significant factors can be identified:

1. Official employment is especially important for women across all age groups.
2. Flexible working hours are a priority for women in the young and middle-age groups.
3. A motivating work atmosphere is highly valued by the 30–49 age group.
4. Remote work is important for young people under 30.
5. Health insurance is important for most respondents, especially women.

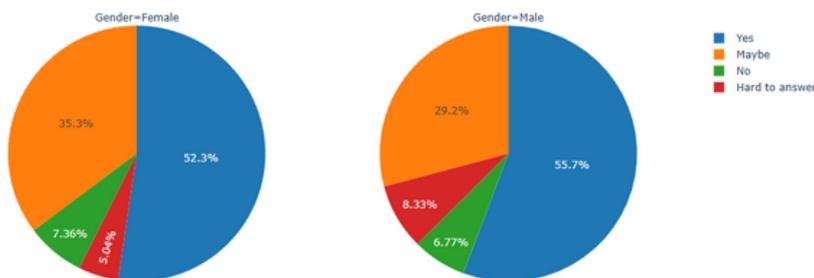
### Youth: Potential and Challenges

Young respondents (ages 16–23) demonstrate high flexibility:

- They are willing to relocate, although often only within their own region;
- They show greater interest in remote work and innovative practices;
- They have the highest openness to retraining.

Among young people, there is also a significant number of “don’t know” responses, indicating low awareness about rights, conditions, and prospects.

Distribution of Respondents' Readiness for Requalification and Acquiring a New Profession or Speciality



## Barriers and frustrations

Respondents clearly identified the biggest annoyances with employers as:

- unfairness
- low wages
- indifference
- lack of responsibility

These are the very factors that lead to high staff turnover in sectors where work is physically demanding or where basic employee support is lacking.

## Adaptation in a new workplace: the role of the team and mentorship

When changing jobs, respondents value most:

- a friendly team (the highest-rated factor among all responses)
- mentorship and guidance
- having time for adaptation

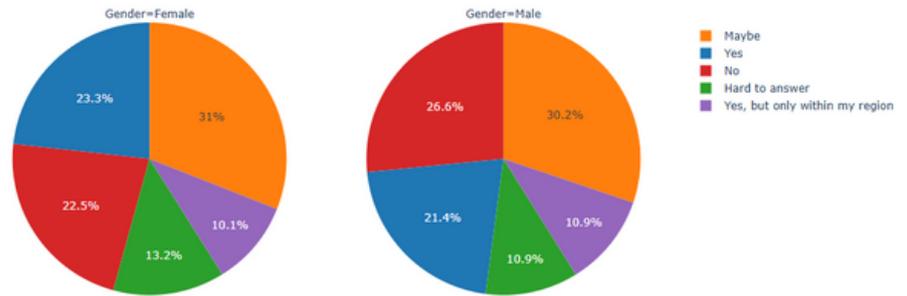
These factors are important to consider when building corporate culture in sectors with high stress levels or staff turnover.

## Recommendations for businesses in strategic sectors

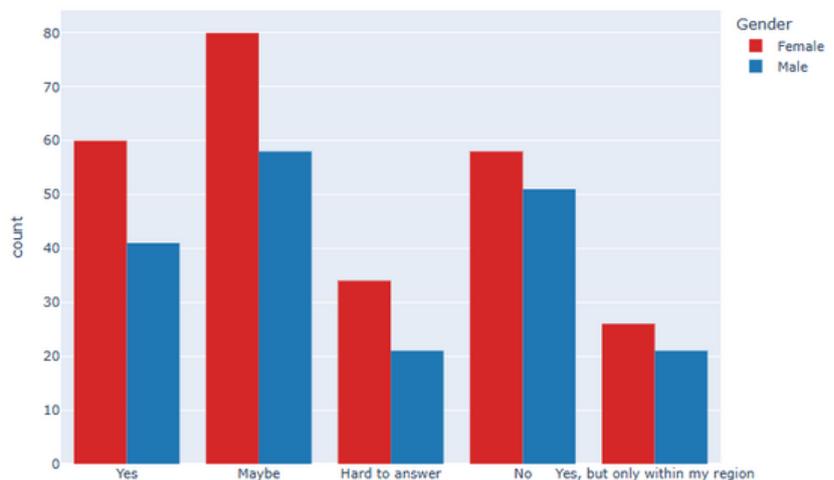
**Construction and agriculture:** implement basic social packages – health insurance, travel compensation, and flexible schedules for women. Providing a minimum set of “so-called humane conditions” will help reduce staff turnover.

**Transport and logistics:** focus on honesty, official employment, and support during adaptation. The high willingness of employees to retrain signals the need to launch internal training programs.

Distribution of Respondents' Attitude Towards Relocation for Work



Distribution of Respondents' Attitude Towards Relocation for Work

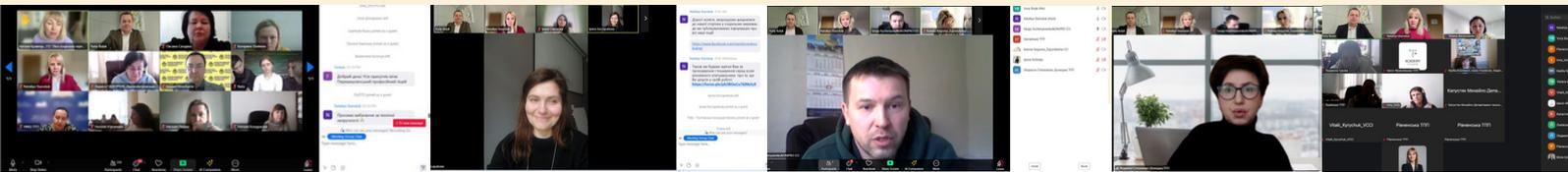


**Service sector:** develop a branded corporate culture (mentorship, training, loyalty to young staff). Investing in the work atmosphere and employee development is the key to business resilience.

The survey clearly shows that Ukraine's labor market is gradually maturing, and candidates – regardless of age – expect honest, responsible, and transparent employers.

Businesses ready to speak to employees in the language of their needs will not only attract talent but also lay the foundations for sustainable economic recovery.

**Regional advisors  
HR boost: building a  
partnership network for  
an inclusive labour  
market!**



**Successful recovery of the labour market is impossible without involving those who deeply understand the context, challenges, and opportunities at the regional level. That's why the team of the project HR boost For Better Employment has initiated the formation of a network of regional advisors.**

This strategic partnership is aimed at providing effective support to employers on the ground, promoting the implementation of modern HR approaches, and helping to develop inclusive HR practices. Regional advisors have become key ambassadors of the Project's values at the local level, ensuring the sustainability of change and adaptation to regional needs.

To attract motivated candidates, the HR boost team conducted a series of five informational webinars, during which potential advisors learned about the Project's goals, the role, responsibilities, and expectations related to this position.

The outcome exceeded our expectations: we received 32 applications from representatives of business associations, Chambers of Commerce, bilateral chambers, vocational education providers, employment services, and local authorities from across Ukraine.

Regional advisors also have the opportunity to strengthen their competencies within the Project and, most importantly, work alongside us to build an accessible, fair, and flexible labour market. They have been actively involved in a comprehensive process of regional outreach and in reviewing applications submitted by companies seeking to participate in the Project.

We sincerely thank everyone who showed initiative and expressed their desire to join the Project. Your interest, expertise, and commitment to developing an inclusive labour market are a powerful contribution to the future we are building together!

**32 applications submitted by potential regional advisors of the Project!**



*We sincerely thank all the colleagues who responded to our initiative and recognize the importance and potential of this direction in the recovery of the human capital market. Each regional advisor will also have the opportunity to enhance their own skills by participating in the trainings offered within the Project*

*Yuriy Bulyk,  
Project Administrator*

NATALIA STARODUB

## Inclusivity – the new foundation of the post-war economy

*“Businesses are having to rethink their strategies and seek new approaches to human capital management. That’s why we’ve launched the active phase of the HR boost, aimed at strengthening the resilience and adaptability of medium and large companies in Ukraine...”*



**About HR boost, its features and prospects – a conversation with Natalia Starodub, the Project Manager. Ms. Natalia, what was the key motivation for launching this initiative now – and what are the main challenges you aim to overcome?**

Today, Ukraine is facing extremely challenging conditions – it is not only about post-war infrastructure recovery, but also about systemic transformation of the national economy with further integration into EU standards. Therefore, it is no surprise that businesses have to change their strategies and seek new approaches to human capital management.

That is why we have launched the active phase of the HR boost For Better Employment Project – aimed at increasing the resilience and adaptability of medium and large companies in Ukraine. Currently, we see a huge need to align HR practices with the new realities – primarily regarding the inclusion of vulnerable groups

such as ex-combatans, persons over 50, women, youth, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who strive to realize their potential but often face obstacles.

**What opportunities does participation in the Project open up for Ukrainian companies and their HR specialists?**

We offer not just training but a comprehensive HR transformation process aimed at creating modern, flexible, and, most importantly, inclusive HR policies. 100 participants will have the opportunity to take part in offline trainings, strategic sessions, receive individual consultations, and gain access to practical materials. Moreover, the Project foresees active business collaboration – we are creating an HR community that will serve as a hub for support, experience exchange, and partnership development. This is especially important for companies in construction, agriculture, transport and logistics, as well as service

sectors, which are strategically essential for reconstruction. We are glad that by focusing specifically on these four key industries, we are already laying the foundation for the country’s development.

**What does the selection process for participating companies look like, and what advice would you give to those who join the initiative?**

The selection process has already been completed; it started in March and lasted until April 15, 2025. We received 141 applications, which we consider an excellent result. The main criteria were the presence of an HR function in the company, economic activity, belonging to target industries, and a clear need for personnel. Today, we are looking for those ready for change, and I can confidently say that great companies have joined us. The process included submitting an online application and an additional interview. The final analysis and recommendations were provided by selection committees consisting of representatives from government and expert institutions, including career centers and business associations – our regional advisors.

**141**

**APPLICATIONS RECEIVED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT!!!**

The formation of the pool of regional advisors was an initial stage of the Project, which ensured broad public attention.

Currently, preparations are underway for the first events. In June, offline trainings will take place, including a 3-day Training and Innovation Course for managers and specialists in personnel management.

A series of online events, a final national HR conference, and the creation of training materials are also planned.

Together, we provide support to businesses in building a modern and resilient labor market.

**Thank you, Olga Chernikova**



## FIRST TRAINING MEETING FOR THE PROJECT'S REGIONAL ADVISORS

**On March 25, 2025, the first meeting of the HR boost For Better Employment regional advisors – the Project's partners – took place.**

The meeting was opened with welcoming remarks by **Tetiana Berezovenko**, Implementation Advisor of the Skills4Recovery Programme at GIZ Ukraine, as well as **Natalia Starodub** and **Yuriy Bulyk**, NGO "Mentor Center," the implementing partner of the Project. At the beginning of the meeting, a brief presentation on the opportunities offered by the State Employment Service was delivered by **Ms. Inna Bondini**, Head of the Employment Promotion Department of the State Employment Policy Implementation Directorate.

In an online format, the regional advisors – our agents of positive change – had the opportunity to get acquainted, share their expectations, and discuss details and opportunities.

The key part of the meeting was the first training session for regional advisors on the topic "Consulting as an Organizational Service," conducted by **Larysa Tsyhan** – business trainer and Vice President of the Chernihiv Chamber of Commerce and Industry. She shared her insights on how valuable consulting can be in engaging and collaborating with businesses, and presented key opportunities and forms of cooperation.

Importantly, webinar participants also had the opportunity to hear about the expectations of HR professionals. Our invited guest –

**Ms. Halyna Tsvirkun**, Chief People Officer Meest, from a logistics company operating in 70 countries and a member of the Lviv HRD Association – gave a detailed overview of the opportunities the Project can offer, aligned them with the needs of companies, and answered colleagues' questions.





# HR marketing, recruitment, and internal communications: tools, opportunities, and synergy for inclusion

**Intensive three-day trainings for 100 managers and specialists in the field of human resource management, selected to participate in the HR boost For Better Employment Project, will take place across Ukraine from June to September 2025.**

Each school's program combines today's most relevant topics: HR marketing, recruitment in times of instability, inclusive approaches to internal communications, and the use of artificial intelligence tools in HR. Special attention is given to supporting the employment of people from vulnerable groups and to implementing DEI principles (diversity, equity, inclusion).

In today's business environment, the HR function has long moved beyond administrative tasks. It has become a key strategic partner for companies – especially in the context of wartime instability, increased employee mobility, and inclusion-related challenges.

In this context, HR marketing, recruitment, and internal communications are not just interconnected – they must function as a unified system that creates decent conditions for all employees, regardless of their age, experience, background, or current life situation.

## **HR marketing: a value-driven attraction strategy**

HR marketing is not just about job vacancies. It's about values, identity, transparency, and trust. At its core lies employer branding, which is built on three key components: research, strategy, and branding.

To create a strong HR brand, it is essential to understand your target audience – their expectations, barriers, and potential.

Effective tools include: content marketing on social media, internal surveys, analysis of former employees' feedback, SMM, newsletters, and partnerships with NGOs and organizations working with vulnerable groups. A crucial element is the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) – a clearly defined set of benefits the company offers in exchange for employee contributions.

In 2025, it is impossible to speak about a strong HR brand without inclusivity. The DEI approach (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) is not a trend but a growth tool.

Companies that declare

inclusivity must demonstrate it in daily communications, content, job vacancy language, and real cases of supporting IDPs, veterans, women in technical fields, people aged 50+, and young individuals without experience.

## **Recruitment: from “filling vacancies” to attracting talent**

Traditional recruitment focused on quickly filling positions is no longer effective in the long term. Today, a talent attraction approach is more valuable – attracting talent through building trust, communication, and relationships.

Digital tools play a key role: LinkedIn, Djinni, Telegram, Facebook, as well as professional forums, messengers, and partner platforms. At the same time, offline channels should not be underestimated: career fairs, universities, cooperation with veteran organizations, employment centers, and social services.

At the heart of modern recruitment is the candidate and their experience. This means individualized value propositions, structured interviews focused on motivation, soft skills, and psycho-emotional state. Instead of “screening” –

partnership. Instead of standard questions – adaptability and respect.

Neural networks and AI tools play a special role: ChatGPT for writing job postings, Claude for resume analysis, Fireflies.ai for interview transcription. This not only increases efficiency but also enables adapting the process for vulnerable candidates – providing clear, accessible information, creating a safe environment, and offering alternative communication formats.

### **Internal communications: the cement for trust and belonging**

Inclusive corporate culture starts with language. Internal communications are not just newsletters or announcements. It is a style of interaction where employees feel engaged, understood, and valued. HR here is not just a messenger,

This is especially important for those returning to their profession after a break, changing industries, or going through difficult life events.

### **Synergy: when the three areas work together**

The greatest effect is achieved when HR marketing, recruitment, and internal communications work in harmony. This is reflected in everything:

- job vacancies written with consideration of the company's values and the language of the target audience;
- interviews – not a test, but an introduction to potential value;
- onboarding – structured, clear, and empathetic;
- internal culture – vibrant and open to diverse people.

This is not about “tolerance” just for the sake of ticking a box. It is

Successful HR today is not just about finding employees but creating a space where people want to stay. A space where communications are honest, the brand is authentic, recruitment is collaborative, and the culture is humane.

These very approaches and tools are planned to be developed during the training implementation.

## **Key principles of inclusive communication:**

- **Clarity and simplicity:** no unnecessary jargon.
- **Flexibility:** the option to choose the channel and format (oral, written, with or without video).
- **Context and sensitivity:** to the person's psycho-emotional state, experience, and needs.
- **Respect for boundaries and differences:** “I don't judge, I'm curious.”

but a translator between realities: managers, teams, and individuals.

Support through feedback (1:1 meetings, regular evaluations, feedback sessions) becomes a tool not only for management but also for psychological safety.

about broadening horizons, embracing diverse perspectives, increasing loyalty, reducing turnover, and building a community.

Inclusivity is not a separate strategy. It is an integrated part of modern HR that permeates everything – from marketing to invitation letters, from job postings





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