

No. 13 / 2026, Cologne
#orgatec

New ORGATEC survey: What motivates Germany's workforce?

Salary is the most important motivating factor and almost two-thirds of employees are strongly influenced by their working environment

More money in their bank accounts, a pleasant workplace and less bureaucracy: what do employees in Germany really need to be more motivated and productive? In a recent YouGov survey commissioned by Koelnmesse for ORGATEC 2026, most respondents indicated that a higher salary would be the strongest incentive to be more committed to their work. However, for 63.5 per cent of the employees surveyed, the working environment also has a significant influence on their level of motivation. From 27 to 30 October 2026, ORGATEC in Cologne will showcase ways of designing future-ready workspaces that meet the needs of employees and enable new forms of collaboration.

A higher salary remains the number one motivator

For 71.2 per cent of those surveyed, a higher salary is an incentive to work harder or achieve more. This puts money well ahead of other motivating factors. 38.5 per cent cited recognition from line managers, 36.6 per cent a pleasant working environment and 30.0 per cent more flexible working hours. Salary also ranked highest when workers were asked to name the most important motivator for them personally: 51.1 per cent of those who had previously mentioned at least one motivating factor chose a higher salary as the most important incentive.

Working environment influences almost two-thirds of employees

Alongside financial considerations, workplace design also plays an important role. For instance, 63.5 per cent of respondents stated that their particular working environment - including office design, furnishings and atmosphere - has a fairly strong or very strong influence on their motivation. Employees have a wide range of requirements when it comes to their working environments. Among those who said their motivation is influenced by their working environment, 35.3 per cent cited a pleasant indoor climate, while 34.4 per cent mentioned ergonomic workstations and good furnishings. 33.7 per cent would like modern technical equipment, and 32.8 per cent would like more peace and quiet and opportunities for privacy. Professor Sascha Stowasser (Dr.-Ing. habil.), Director of Germany's Institute of Applied Industrial Engineering and Ergonomics (ifaa e. V.), comments on the findings: "A good working environment must be functional, but above all it must be designed with people in mind. A pleasant indoor climate, ergonomic workstations, modern technology and adequate opportunities for quiet time create important conditions for motivation, well-being, productivity and collaboration."



ORGATEC
27.10. - 30.10.2026
www.orgatec.com

Your contact:
Elena Fischer
Tel.
+49 17612562802
e-mail
e.fischer@koelnmesse.de

Koelnmesse GmbH
Messeplatz 1
50679 Köln
P.O. Box 21 07 60
50532 Köln
Germany
Tel. +49 221 821-0
Fax +49 221 821-2574
www.koelnmesse.com

Executive Board:
Gerald Böse (President and Chief Executive Officer)
Oliver Frese

Chairman of the Supervisory Board:
Mayor of the City of Cologne
Torsten Burmester

Headquarters and place of jurisdiction:
Cologne
District Court Cologne, HRB 952

Offices are still needed: almost half prefer a fixed workplace

Home office, hybrid working model or a fixed workspace at the employer's premises? The YouGov survey reveals where employees believe they can work most productively and with the highest level of motivation. 47.7 per cent of respondents stated that they work best at a fixed workstation at their employer's premises. 21.1 per cent prefer to alternate between a fixed workspace and a home office. A further 17.0 per cent feel they are particularly focused when working predominantly from home, while 8.2 per cent mostly prefer to switch between different work locations. In short, these findings demonstrate that many employees still regard their employer's workplace as an important location for maintaining motivation and productivity. At the same time, the variation in preferences shows that there is no single working environment that satisfies the requirements of everyone equally. What is needed are concepts that facilitate not only collaboration and face-to-face interaction but also the ability to concentrate and work independently.

Less bureaucracy rather than more AI

While artificial intelligence is the subject of intense debate as a driver of productivity, employees have other priorities. "Respondents see better organisation, less bureaucracy and fewer interruptions as the most important ways of boosting productivity - far more so than the use of AI," says Stowasser. For the survey participants, the key to working more productively lies primarily in day-to-day workflows: 31.5 per cent identified organising work and processes more efficiently as one of the chief means of improving their productivity without increasing their working hours. 26.3 per cent of respondents would like to see less bureaucracy and the removal of unnecessary coordination and approval steps, while 25.9 per cent cited fewer disruptions and interruptions as a priority. Better leadership and faster decision-making are considered particularly important by 23.5 per cent; 20.4 per cent highlighted the need for better teamwork. By contrast, only 8.4 per cent cited the use of artificial intelligence to support their work as one of the key drivers of productivity.

ORGATEC 2026: The future of working and contract environments

The results of the YouGov survey make it clear that creating modern workplaces involves far more than just design and aesthetics. What matters most is how effectively workspaces cater to the diverse needs of employees and support them in their day-to-day work.

This is where ORGATEC 2026 comes in. United by the event's central theme - "From rooms to relationships: designing spaces in an ever-changing world" - around 500 exhibitors from some 40 countries will demonstrate how working and contract environments can be designed to be fit for the future. The focus will be on products, interior design concepts and adaptive solutions that promote collaboration and a sense of belonging, while also responding to changing requirements.

The exhibition programme will be complemented by a varied programme of events, featuring highlights such as the special exhibition on the Eames Pavilion System, the Innovation Award Architecture+ Office and the Wherever Whenever - Work Culture Festival. Initiated by Germany's Interior Business Association (IBA), the festival will

offer a diverse mix of talks, discussions, workshops, immersive exhibitions and other interactive formats, opening up new perspectives on the office and modern working environments.

Page

3/4

The leading international trade fair for workspace and contract solutions will be held in Cologne from 27 to 30 October 2026. Tickets are available online at: [Buy tickets | ORGATEC](#)

About the survey

This data is based on an online survey conducted by YouGov GmbH on behalf of ORGATEC (Koelnmesse GmbH). A total of 518 employees in Germany without specific managerial responsibilities were polled between 1 and 7 October 2026. The survey was quota-sampled and the results were weighted by the proportion of employees across company size, gender, age group, economic sector and regional distribution. Multiple responses were permitted where appropriate. Certain findings relate to subgroups with a correspondingly different sample base.

Koelnmesse - Global Inspiration for Living, Contract and Public Spaces

Koelnmesse is the world's top trade fair organiser for the areas of Living, Contract and Public Spaces. Leading international trade fairs such as ORGATEC, interzum, FSB, aquanale and spoga+gafa come together at the Cologne trade fair location to form renowned and established industry meeting points. This strong portfolio is further enhanced by imm cologne and idd cologne, both of which are also held in Cologne. These fairs comprehensively represent the interior and design segment, the furniture and interior construction industries' supplying sections, the kitchen world, all topics for the modern working world, garden lifestyle as well as modern work environments, public spaces, sports and leisure facilities, along with saunas, pools and wellness centres.

Beyond that, Koelnmesse is strategically expanding its portfolio in international growth markets. The imm brand family includes imm india and IFFINA+ powered by imm cologne in Indonesia. The ORGATEC brand has established a global footprint with ORGATEC Tokyo, ORGATEC India, and ORGATEC WORKSPACE Saudi Arabia. The international presence of the interzum brand extends to interzum guangzhou, interzum bogota, interzum jakarta, and the interzum forum italy. The FSB brand is also internationally active, with the FSB Sports Show Riyadh and the FSB Forum Italy in Bergamo. Furthermore, the portfolio features La Feria De Diseño Medellín powered by idd cologne in Colombia.

Further information: www.orgatec.com/trade-fair/portfolio-worldwide/

The next events:

ORGATEC - The leading international trade fair for workspace and contract solutions, Cologne 27.10. - 30.10.2026

idd cologne - The urban industry event for premium interior design, Cologne 27.10. - 31.10.2026

FSB Forum Italy - The Networking Event in Italy for Sports, Leisure Facilities and Public Spaces, Bergamo 11.11. - 12.11.2026

Note for editorial offices:

ORGATEC photos are available in our image database on the Internet at www.orgatec.com/imagetdatabase in the “Press” section.

Page

4/4

Press information is available at: www.orgatec.com/press/press-releases/press-releases-of-orgatec/

If you reprint this document, please send us a sample copy.

ORGATEC on Instagram:

www.instagram.com/orgatec

ORGATEC on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/orgateccologne

ORGATEC on LinkedIn:

www.linkedin.com/showcase/orgatec-cologne/

Your contact:

Elena Fischer

Public and Media Relations Manager

Koelnmesse GmbH

Messeplatz 1

50679 Cologne

Germany

Mobil +49 17612562802

e.fischer@koelnmesse.de

www.koelnmesse.com