

Attraction & Retention of People

A study by the European Rental Association



Exploring employee attractiveness and retention in the equipment rental industry: key challenges and impacts

2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a **global workforce characterised by shifting demographics and rapidly evolving skill requirements, the competition for talent has reached unprecedented levels.** As retiring populations outpace new job entrants and employees' expectations continue to soar, **companies are increasingly encountering challenges in attracting and retaining the right talent.** This struggle is notably pronounced in the equipment rental industry, where insufficient visibility and a lack of attraction further exacerbate the situation.

This study undertakes a thorough examination of **global workforce trends and the underlying factors contributing to attraction and retention challenges** within the equipment rental industry. **Building upon this analysis, concrete and actionable recommendations have been crafted** to help companies in enhancing their employer branding, attracting new recruits, and fortifying their retention strategies.

Central insights from the study **emphasize the critical importance for rental companies to prioritize strategic communication to broaden recruitment.** Simultaneously, companies should focus on refining **HR strategies** to enhance the value for workers by:

- 1) Innovating in employee care initiatives, particularly for frontline workers, who are among the hardest roles to recruit
- 2) Investing in management and support for workers throughout their career journey

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONABLE BEST PRACTICES

The study **has identified and prioritised 5 topics gathering 10 key recommendations for the industry.** These recommendations aim to address challenges within the sector by providing concrete and feasible actions:

10 ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

EMPOWER RECRUITMENT « TREAT CANDIDATES AS CUSTOMERS »:

- 1) Empower recruitment to increase its effectiveness and widen recruitment targets

INNOVATE IN EMPLOYEE CARE:

- 2) Set up employee reward solutions beyond compensation and provide them with additional benefits
- 3) Develop flexible solutions in staffing and programming to increase work-life balance
- 4) Invest in on-site work environment and working conditions

INVEST IN MANAGEMENT AND CAREER SUPPORT:

- 5) Support employee career journey (onboarding, career paths)
- 6) Encourage effective management and leadership
- 7) Address upskilling requirements

COMMUNICATE AS A COMMON INDUSTRY AND DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS:

- 8) Use new communication codes and media
- 9) Develop partnerships to reach more applicants

PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE:

- 10) Anticipate technological shifts and impact on skill demands

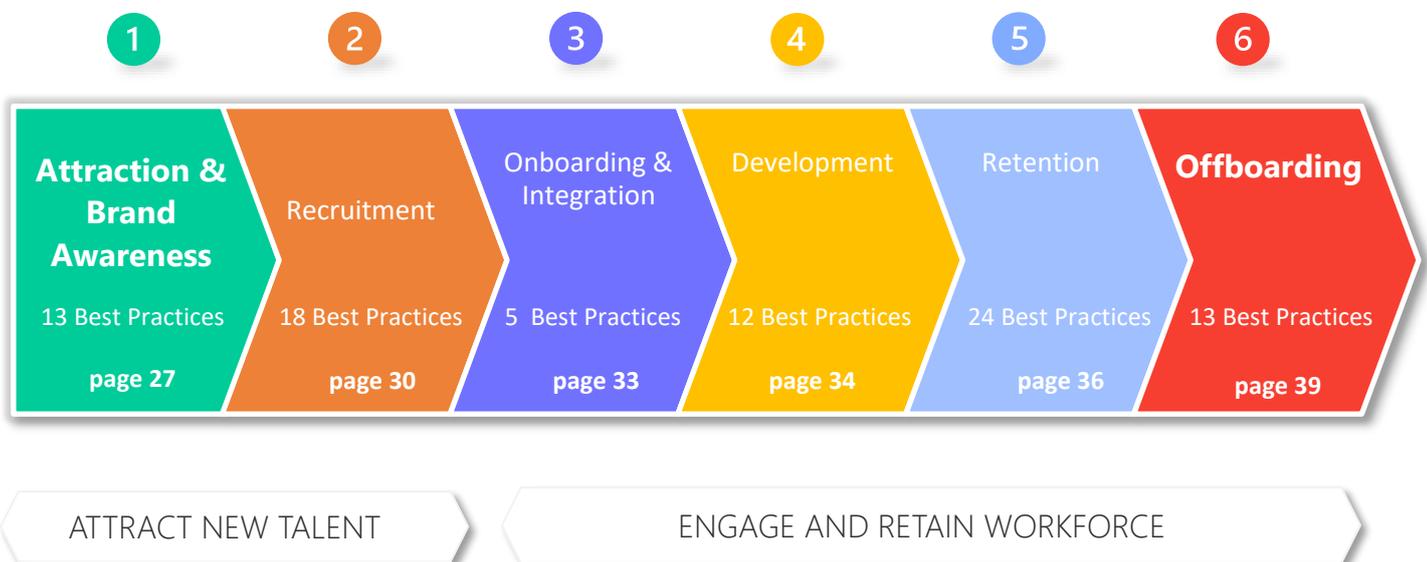
OVER 60 BEST PRACTICES

Aiming to guide and inspire companies in the implementation of the recommendations, **over 60 concrete best practices from within the sector and other industries have been identified and aligned with six distinct stages of an employee journey.**

This approach helps illustrate the **different areas where companies can intervene** to enhance their appeal and retain people, **highlighting that there is no one size fits all solution or method.**

These practices can be adapted to **various company sizes, cultures, and business requirements, considering their diverse needs and cultural disparities across countries.**

Below is the employee journey according to which the best practices have been organized. Each part of this infographic is clickable and will take you directly to the segment of the study where these best practices have been developed:



Additionally, we have pre-identified the populations that would best benefit from these practices, focusing on **technicians, drivers, engineers, and support functions**—populations companies mentioned as having the largest difficulties recruiting. The implementation of these best practices **is to be selected and executed based on the recruitment challenges identified within respective rental companies.**



Overall, this study serves as a **comprehensive guide for rental industry professionals seeking to optimise their employee management strategies and achieve long-term success in attracting and retaining skilled employees.**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and context of the research topic

The equipment rental industry in Europe has **experienced both growth and challenges over the last decade**, playing a central role in various sectors such as construction, industry, and events. Amongst these challenges, much like other industries, they are facing difficulties **due to staff shortages**, a situation that has been exacerbated by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Acknowledging the paramount importance of addressing these challenges and recognizing that **talent attraction and retention are essential for sustained growth and progress in the industry**, the European Rental Association (ERA) has been focusing on this topic for a while, setting it as one of its strategic pillars and placing it at the centre of its 2023 agenda. This commitment was showcased during the association's annual convention, themed 'Investing in People' and reiterated in various reports they have published throughout the years. Dedicated to its commitment to investing in people, the European Rental Association has joined forces with Eurogroup Consulting to undertake **a comprehensive research study designed to investigate and understand in detail the recruitment and retention challenges** faced by the equipment rental industry.

1.2 Research objectives and methodology

Our research aims **to understand the reasons behind the challenges in attracting and retaining employees** within the rental industry and to provide a **series of actionable recommendations** specifically designed for the industry, to enhance the appeal of rental companies as employers and to help them adapt to the evolving landscape of the industry.

To achieve this, we have adopted a mixed-methods approach:

- Firstly, we conducted a **comprehensive literature review** to examine current workforce trends related to employee attraction and retention, with a specific focus on the equipment rental sector and a particular emphasis on the existing skill shortages in different regions of Europe.
- Secondly, we conducted **in-depth interviews** with several rental company human resources (HR) experts (Sunbelt Rental, Zeppelin, Renta, Boels, Loxam, Gomez Oviedo, Niederstätter, Kiloutou) and representatives from national associations (Germany, France, UK, and Finland) as well as ERA's secretary general. These interviews provided valuable insights into the companies' perspectives on their primary business challenges and the corresponding HR implications. We also thoroughly explored specific HR issues and the best practices they have implemented or learnt about in terms of attractiveness and retention.
- Thirdly we have worked hand in hand and with **ERA's Future group**, a group of young(er) managers from rental companies that have provided their thoughts and vision throughout the progress of the report. Their input helped us to refine and prioritise our final recommendations, which are outlined in detail at the end of the study. Furthermore, these recommendations were reviewed in four focused interviews with HR directors and managers from Niederstätter, Renta, Zeppelin, and Riwal.

- Lastly, **Eurogroup's** deep understanding of industry-specific challenges and opportunities across all sectors, both in France and internationally, serves as the foundation of the study. Specifically, their **2024 Company Barometer¹**, based on a panel of major international companies, unmistakably indicates that **HR remains a top priority for company directors in 2024**, ranking just below profitability. This continues to evidence the utmost importance that companies are placing on their recruitment and retention strategies, while highlighting the importance of this study for the rental industry. Eurogroup's expertise in promoting employee attractiveness and retention across various sectors such as health, transport, and construction has also enabled them to provide tailored analysis for the rental sector.

Here below are two guiding frameworks that have been utilised throughout the study to structure their interview analysis and recommendations. Figure 1.1 identifies eight **key factors that significantly influence an employee's decision to join or stay with an organisation**, while Figure 1.2 maps out the **entire employee journey**, from initial attraction and recruitment through to long-term retention. These figures help in understanding the different stages of an employee's lifecycle within an organisation and the critical touchpoints that impact their engagement and loyalty.

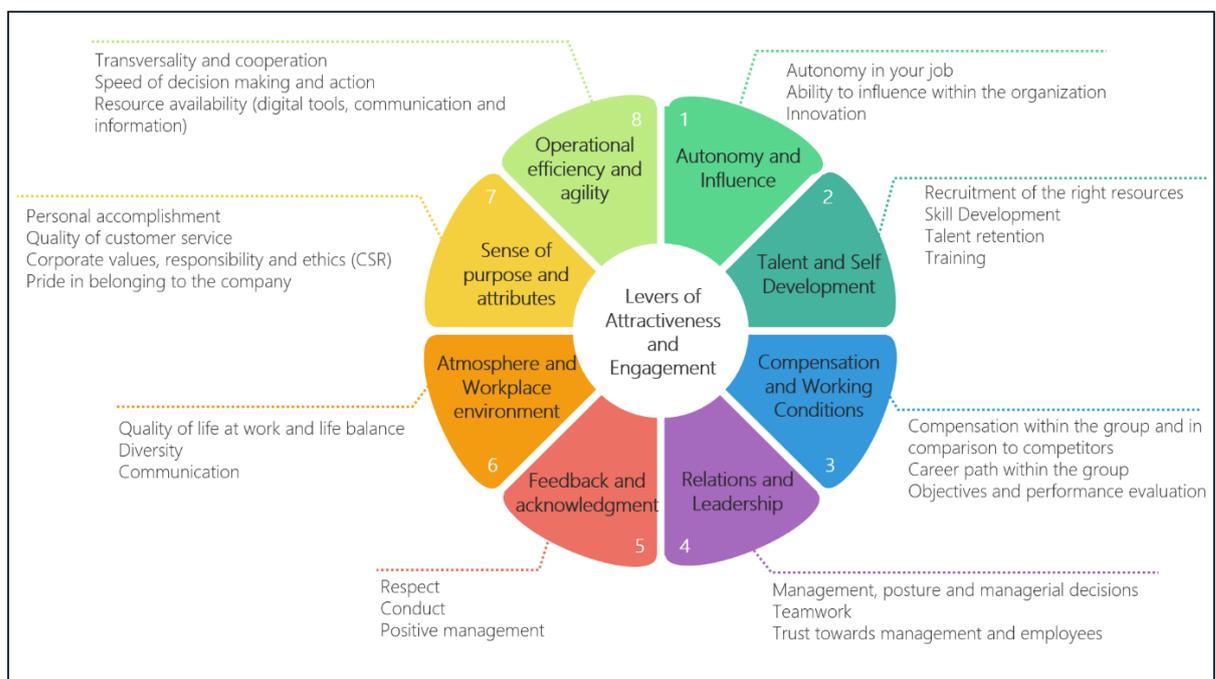


Fig 1.1 Levers of Attractiveness and Engagement, Eurogroup Consulting



Fig 1.2 Employee Journey, Eurogroup consulting

By conducting this thorough analysis, our research aims to provide valuable insights and to translate our findings into **meticulously crafted recommendations for rental companies**. These recommendations will be

¹ Eurogroup Consulting. *Baromètre des entreprises françaises 2024 - Eurogroup Consulting (2024, January 9th)*

tailored to enhance the rental industry's capacity to attract new talent, promote employee engagement, and improve retention rates, particularly in roles in which acquiring and retaining talent pose significant challenges.

Throughout this study, it is important to note that we will be covering both **internal and external factors that influence the ability of rental companies to attract and retain talent**. External factors, such as economic conditions, political climate, and social dynamics, are extensively covered in the introductory section of our study. While individual companies lack direct control over these factors, collaborating and engaging in strong lobbying efforts through national or European industry associations can offer collective leverage. Internal factors on the other hand present themselves as opportunities for direct action. Initiatives and strategies implemented within rental companies hold the key to enhancing their appeal as employers and fostering a robust, skilled workforce. By focusing on these internal aspects, companies can directly impact their talent acquisition and retention strategies.

2. An overview of the global workforce

2.1 Transformations in the global workforce

The past three years have been marked by a combination of **health, economic and geopolitical volatility combined with growing social and environmental pressures** that have led to accelerating transformations in the world's labour markets. This period has also seen a rapid acceleration of **digitalization and automation**, alongside concerted efforts to transition towards a more **sustainable and inclusive economy**. The current phase we find ourselves in is defined by **swift changes and a prevailing sense of uncertainty, influenced by a complex interplay of geopolitical, economic, and climatic factors**.

Post-COVID Workforce shifts

In the **post-COVID era**, the **global workforce has undergone profound transformations** spurred by the pandemic. This period has not only accelerated key trends but **also reshaped employee priorities and expectations**. Notably, there is a growing emphasis on finding work that feels **meaningful**, one that resonates with personal values and offers a sense of purpose². This is accompanied by a greater demand for a **better work-life balance** and increased **flexibility**, with remote work arrangements becoming increasingly sought-after.

'The Great Resignation'—referring to the many employees who left their jobs post-pandemic—shines a light on the increasing importance of personal fulfilment and value in the workplace. This era is marked by a **paradigm shift in the employee-employer relationship**, evolving into a more consumer-like dynamic³. Employees are now more inclined to switch industries and roles, indicating a fundamental change in their approach to employment, especially younger generations. This shift represents a balance of power that is increasingly tilting in favour of employees, especially in sectors with labour market tensions, **reflecting a profound transformation in the post-COVID work culture**.

Generational workforce dynamics and diversity

On a global scale, two distinct groups are crucial for understanding today's transformations in the global workforce: **the ageing population workforce and the younger generations**. The retirement of the older workforce is leading to a shortage of skilled workers, prompting significant changes. In contrast, younger workers have distinct expectations that are reshaping the employment landscape, prioritizing **career mobility, flexible work arrangements** like remote work or compressed workweeks, and **strong work-life balance** initiatives.

Additionally, younger workers are also more likely to value **diversity and inclusion in the workplace**. According to a 2023 Deloitte survey, 83% of Gen Z workers consider diversity and inclusion as important factors in their career choices, surpassing the 75% of Millennials and 67% of Gen X workers who share this view.⁴ Encouragingly, companies are increasingly adopting **DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion)** strategies which not only help fill vacancies but also positively impact business outcomes. **DEI has become a societal expectation for**

² [Gartner, "Employees Increasingly Seek Value and Purpose at Work," \(2023\)](#)

³ [McKinsey & Company, "The Future of Work after COVID-19," \(2021\)](#)

⁴ [Deloitte, "2023 Gen Z and Millennial Survey," \(2023\)](#)

companies, as highlighted in the Eurogroup's Future of Global Cooperation report⁵. Diversifying teams not only addresses workforce shortages by attracting non-traditional talent but also boosts financial returns, with diverse companies being 36% more likely to experience greater profitability⁶.

Automation, digitization, and an integrated focus on corporate social responsibility (CSR)

The nature of work is evolving across various fields as **automation and digitization continue to transform numerous tasks and jobs**. The World Economic Forum's 2023 Future of Jobs Report predicts that by 2027, 42 percent of all business tasks will be automated, with up to 65 percent of information and data processing roles being impacted⁷. Consequently, there is **a growing demand for new technological skills in areas such as data analysis, artificial intelligence, and cloud computing**. In addition to these technological skills, there is also a rising need for green skills (green skills being the expertise required to develop and implement sustainable practices). Between 2022 and 2023 alone, job postings in green sectors have grown nearly twice as fast as the available green talent pool⁸. This demand aligns with the evolving focus on **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** in companies, a shift that reflects the increasing preference of investors and consumers for businesses with robust environmental and social credentials, leading to a greater demand for CSR alignment across departments and the expansion of roles related to environmental sustainability.

Upskilling and reskilling initiatives

In response to ongoing disruptions, a significant number of companies are channelling **substantial resources into workforce upskilling**, allocating up to 1.5% of their revenue to learning and development initiatives⁹. Increasingly, the focus of these programs is expanding to encompass not only enhancing current skills (upskilling) but also equipping employees with new skill sets for different roles and responsibilities (reskilling) especially for those whose tasks will most probably be altered by AI and other new technologies. Another skillset companies are increasingly investing in is managerial training, recognizing the crucial role managers play in enhancing employee satisfaction and reflecting the modern workforce's heightened expectations from their leaders.

Evolving work models

The changing landscape of work has given rise to innovative work models offering **greater autonomy and flexibility** for employees¹⁰. This shift is reflected in hybrid work models taking centre stage, with offices adapting to prioritise collaboration and innovation while fostering connection among remote employees. This **desire for flexibility extends beyond traditional office roles, impacting frontline employees as well** (*Frontline employees in the rental industry mainly include of mechanics, drivers, and sales roles amongst other positions*). Industries are now actively experimenting **with adaptable work models suited to the realities of fieldwork**, exploring options like 4-day workweeks, time exchange systems, and rotating schedules. These efforts empower frontline units with self-organisation autonomy to optimise their workflows. The impact isn't limited to work structures. **B2C businesses are also evolving**, enhancing physical stores, and implementing digital strategies to both improve customer engagement and offer employees more flexible schedules.

⁵ [Nextcontinent \(Eurogroup\). \(2023, December\). Future of Global Cooperations - Key Trends and how to Turn Them into Strategy. \(2023, December\)](#)

⁶ [McKinsey & Company, "Diversity Wins How Inclusion Matters" \(2020\)](#)

⁷ [World Economic Forum, "Future of Jobs Report 2023," \(2023\)](#)

⁸ [LinkedIn, "Global Green Skills Report 2022," \(2022\)](#)

⁹ [Boston Consulting Group, "Reskilling the Workforce for the Future," \(2023\)](#)

¹⁰ [International Labour Organisation, "RDW 2019 Call for Abstracts," \(2019\)](#)

Aligning company culture to new employee expectations

Overall, **employees nowadays are expecting more and more from their employers**, and this is clearly being reflected in the growing efforts companies are placing in their people, not only in attracting talent but especially in retaining and engaging with them. Regarding the attraction of talent, companies are strongly investing in their brand image, enhancing their social media presence from LinkedIn to TikTok to attract the right skillset. While AI is facilitating the recruitment task through a search of profiles with “**the right company fit**”, the emphasis on selecting talent that aligns with the company culture has grown immensely. This shift towards a more personalised recruitment process aims to ensure **a mutually beneficial fit for both the employee and the company**. These efforts reflect the modern workplace's evolving dynamics, prioritizing cultural fit and a workforce driven by the organisation's purpose which has proven to give companies a competitive advantage.

Central to these efforts is the **Employee Value Proposition (EVP)** of companies, a pivotal element in distinguishing companies in a competitive job market. A compelling EVP that underscores the significance of work and includes a focus on "care" through tangible benefits such as work-life balance, becomes increasingly vital. This approach is particularly relevant for positions with **demanding schedules and extensive fieldwork**. As the job market grows more competitive and employee expectations evolve, articulating and communicating a well-defined EVP is crucial. It not only differentiates a company but also creates a narrative that connects with both potential and existing employees, fostering a deep sense of belonging and commitment.

Updating managerial models

Over the years, **managerial models have also evolved** from traditional top-down hierarchies to more **collaborative and inclusive frameworks** that prioritise employee engagement and empowerment. These frameworks underscore the significance of open communication, flexibility, and innovation within the workplace¹¹. Today, middle managers play a crucial role in translating a company's strategic vision into practical, on-the-ground actions. Their direct engagement offers a unique opportunity to cultivate a supportive and dynamic work environment, positioning them at the forefront of fostering organisational alignment, engagement, and loyalty. This enhanced role necessitates a shift from conventional management practices to include **coaching and promoting the professional development of employees**. This aspect is especially critical for **deskless workers**, who are at a higher risk of feeling disconnected from the company's core operations and culture. Management in this case is instrumental in closing this gap by efficiently communicating vital information and resources from headquarters, ensuring these employees feel engaged and in tune with the company's mission and values.

¹¹ [“A New Social Contract: Middle Management in a Post-Covid-19 World.” Bain, \(2020\)](#)

2.2 Global skill shortages and retention challenges

Amidst these rapid evolutions, **companies across different sectors are largely struggling in attracting and retaining the right talent.** Attractiveness, engagement, and retention of employees have become critical issues that are affecting all types of industries. More than three-quarters of companies in Europe have reported difficulties to find workers with the appropriate skill set¹².

The EURES 2022 report on labour shortages and surpluses, compiled by the European labour authority, offers compelling evidence of skill shortages in diverse sectors and countries across Europe, as depicted in Figure 2.2 (Fig 2.2) below. Although **the extent of skill shortages varies by country, sector, and occupation, there are a series of explanatory factors that collectively contribute to today's challenge** of ensuring a skilled and adequately sized workforce. Some of the explanatory factors are the following:



- **A demographic factor:** Currently more people are retiring than entering the job market and this has intensified during the Covid crisis, and this revolves primarily around an ageing population and declining birth rates, as shown in figure 2.1 below (Fig 2.1). As a result, a large segment of experienced and skilled workers is reaching retirement age, leaving a gap in the labour market¹³.

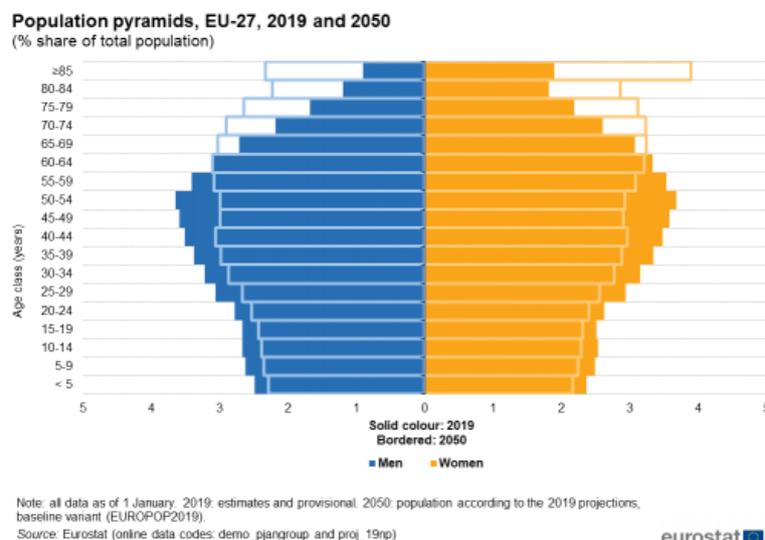


Fig. 2.1 Source: Eurostat (2019)

- **A demand for new skills:** The rapid advancement in technology, including automated machinery and green technologies, has created a demand for new skills resulting in difficulties for companies to find workers with the right skillset. The labour market is experiencing a gap in workers proficient in these emerging technologies. This gap is particularly significant in industries undergoing digital transformation and those pivoting towards sustainability and green practices.

¹² ["Towards 2023: The European Year of Skills, Data.europa.eu, \(2023\)](#)

¹³ ["The impact of demographic change in Europe." Europa - European Union website \(2023\)](#)

- Working conditions: In some cases, working conditions might explain the persistence of labour shortages in certain sectors and occupations. For example, the COVID-19 crisis heightened poor working conditions and job insecurity in some sectors and occupations, such as healthcare, hospitality, and tourism, and for seasonal workers. This led to a growing share of workers moving away from low-quality jobs, low-paying, less flexible, contact-intensive, physically demanding jobs¹⁴.

These factors combined with other global tendencies collectively contribute to the challenge Europe faces in addressing the skill shortages in its labour market.

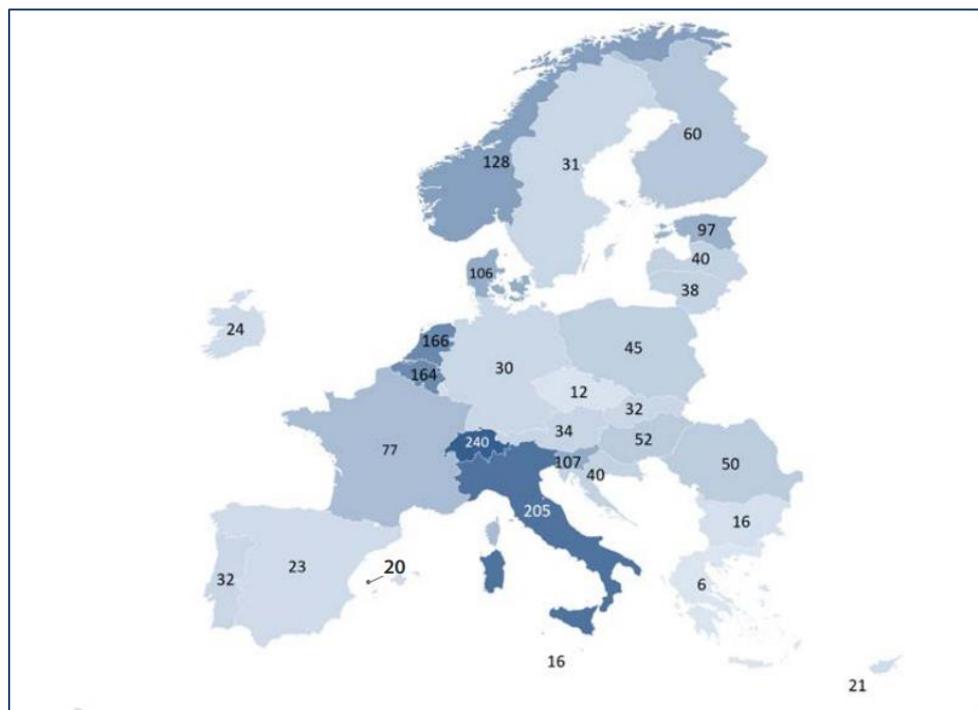
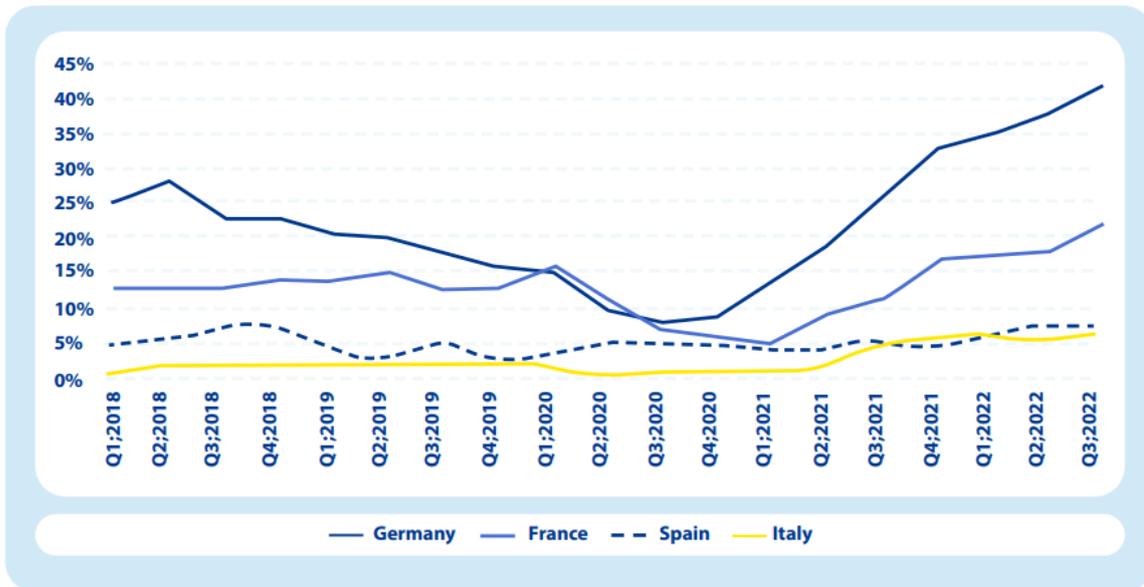


Fig 2.2: Total number of shortage occupations identified by each European country; 2022 Analysis of data submitted by EURES National Coordination Offices

¹⁴ [European Commission: DG Employment Social Affairs and Inclusion. "Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2023."](#)

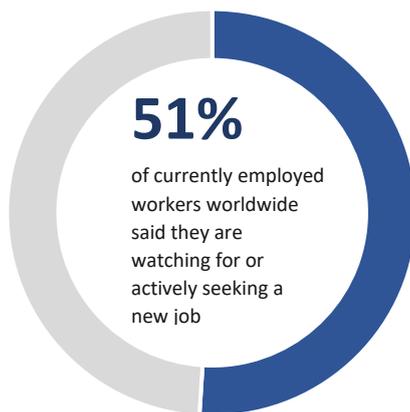
A close examination of the **European landscape reveals that shortages are concentrated in the northern and western regions**, with Italy also experiencing significant shortages. While a substantial portion of these challenges arises from a deficiency in digital skills, traditional skillsets, particularly in healthcare, software construction, and craft engineering occupations, are also in short supply. Furthermore, as illustrated in Figure 2.3 (Fig 2.3) below, the manufacturing sector can serve as an example of sector that has faced a notable surge in labour shortage particularly after 2020.



Source: Eurostat survey of manufactory employment

Fig 2.3: Share of manufacturing firms reporting labour shortages, 2018 – 2022. Source: Eurostat survey of manufactory employment

Additional information regarding the industries encountering the most pronounced issues in terms of employee attraction and retention will be presented in the upcoming section of our research.



European companies **primarily grapple with attracting the right talent**, but **retaining skilled workers remains a significant challenge** for half of them¹⁵. This problem is part of a larger global issue, as revealed by the 2023 Gallup State of the Global Workforce study, which found that **51% of the worldwide workforce actively seek new job opportunities**, and only 23%

of employees consider themselves engaged. At the European level, the intent to leave one's job is lower at 34% compared to the global average of 51%. However, it is concerning that Europe has the lowest regional percentage of engaged employees.

¹⁵ [European Year of Skills: Survey highlights skills shortages in SMEs | Digital Skills and Jobs Platform \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1)

Overall, employee retention is a significant concern for many companies, yet it highlights noteworthy diversity across different organisations. Figure 2.4 (Fig. 2.4) vividly illustrates the significant role that companies can assume in tackling this challenge. Some companies appear to excel in easily retaining their workforce, while others struggle with this task. This variation emphasizes **the importance of tailoring retention strategies to the unique characteristics and needs of each company and employee.**



Fig 2.4: How difficult is it for your company: (% EU27), Europa barometer, European Union 2023

2.3 An overview by industry

Attracting and keeping talented employees is a challenge for many industries, **but some sectors and countries are struggling more than others.** In Europe, **four key sectors are facing a shortage of skilled workers:** healthcare, technology, construction, and engineering.

- 1) **Healthcare:** This sector is in high demand, primarily due to factors such as an ageing population and the enduring impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to recent estimates, the World Health Organisation (WHO) anticipates a global shortage of 10 million health workers by the year 2030¹⁶.
- 2) **Technology industry:** Characterised by perpetual evolution and rapid innovation, the technology sector faces constant disparity between the skills required and those possessed by employees. This results in a heightened demand for professionals with specialised expertise in domains such as artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and software development, among others.
- 3) **Construction industry:** According to several reports, the construction industry is facing a lack of interest among young people, who find the sector's employment conditions unattractive. This is leading to a shortage of skilled labour. A review paper by the Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute highlights that the European Union Member States are facing a shortage of skilled labour, which is affecting the quality of work and the productivity of the sector¹⁷.

¹⁶ [Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030: Reporting at Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/global-strategies-on-human-resources-for-health-workforce-2030)

¹⁷ [Buildings | Free Full-Text | Review of the Construction Labour Demand and Shortages in the EU \(mdpi.com\)](https://www.mdpi.com/2075-5705/13/11/1911)

- 4) **Engineering:** The lack of engineers in Europe is due to several factors, such as the low attractiveness of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) studies, the ageing of the population and the difficult working conditions. The shortage of engineers poses challenges for various engineering sectors, from civil and mechanical engineering to electrical and software engineering.

As it has been shown, the diverse nature of labour shortages varies by industry, each influenced by a unique set of factors. However, it is evident that these shortages also share common threads, such as **the impact of ageing populations, evolving expectations of new generations and the ever-quicken transformation of skill requirements.**

Furthermore, **amidst a context of uncertain geopolitics, which is significantly impacting industries in various ways,** notably due to inflation creating global tensions, there is an additional layer of complexity. Geopolitical uncertainty can disrupt international supply chains and trade relations, while inflationary pressures erode purchasing power and increase costs for businesses. This combination of factors affects the **overall global economic growth projections, adding to the challenges faced by industries.** Although global inflation is expected to decline steadily from 6.9% in 2023 to 5.8% in 2024, overall global growth is projected to slow for the third year in a row—from 2.6% last year to 2.4% in 2024¹⁸.

¹⁸ [World Bank Report Outlines Policies to Reach Development Goals in EMDEs – World Bank Group \(2024\)](#)

3. An overview of the rental equipment industry

3.1 Industry dynamics

The equipment rental industry, despite experiencing a significant slowdown during the Covid pandemic, has been gradually expanding over the last decade, driven by a variety of factors. Notably, the increasing demand from sectors such as construction, infrastructure, and industrial development have played a pivotal role in shaping the market's trajectory. As we look forward to 2024, despite expected uncertainty, **the IMF updated economic outlook appears promising, characterised by sustained growth, economic recovery,** and heightened demand across various sectors. Supply chain issues and CSR preoccupations in a context of inflation foster an emerging trend for industry relocation, supporting rental business growth. Projections for 2024 however, suggest that growth rates will fall back for most countries except for Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden to around 2.0% to 3.5% as the economic conditions become more challenging¹⁹. See Figure 3.1 (Fig 3.1)

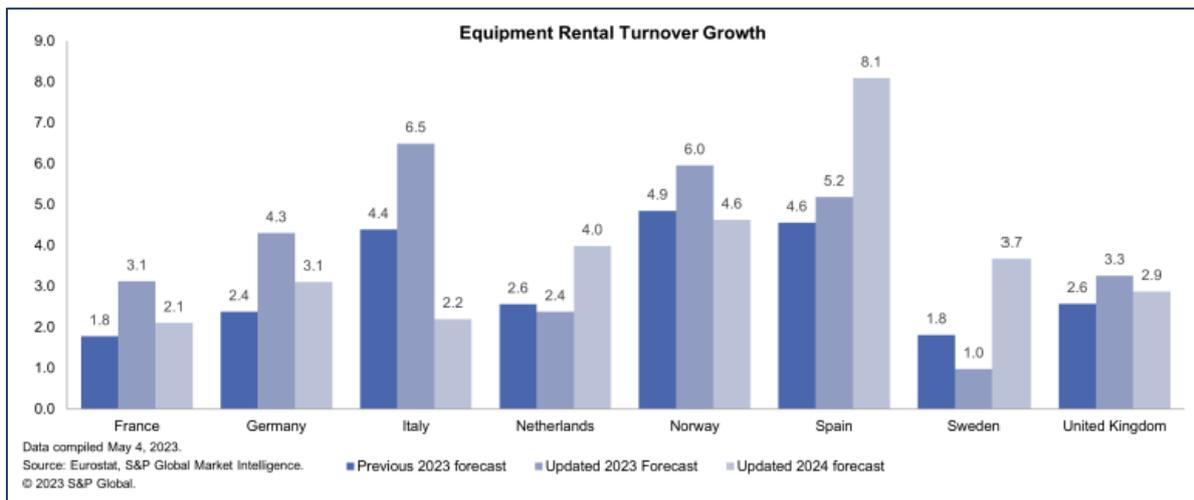


Fig 3.1 Equipment Rental Turnover Growth S&P Global 2023

¹⁹ [European rental market growth to slow down in 2023, but the industry remains resilient to economic difficulties - ERA](#)

Notably, the Netherlands, Norway, and Spain are expected to outpace this growth trend, with forecasted rates of 4.0%, 4.6%, and 8.1%, respectively. As can be seen by these varying growth rates, **the European equipment rental market exhibits distinctive characteristics, with certain countries significantly influencing its dynamics.** Among these, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France stand out as the three largest markets in Europe (Fig. 3.2)

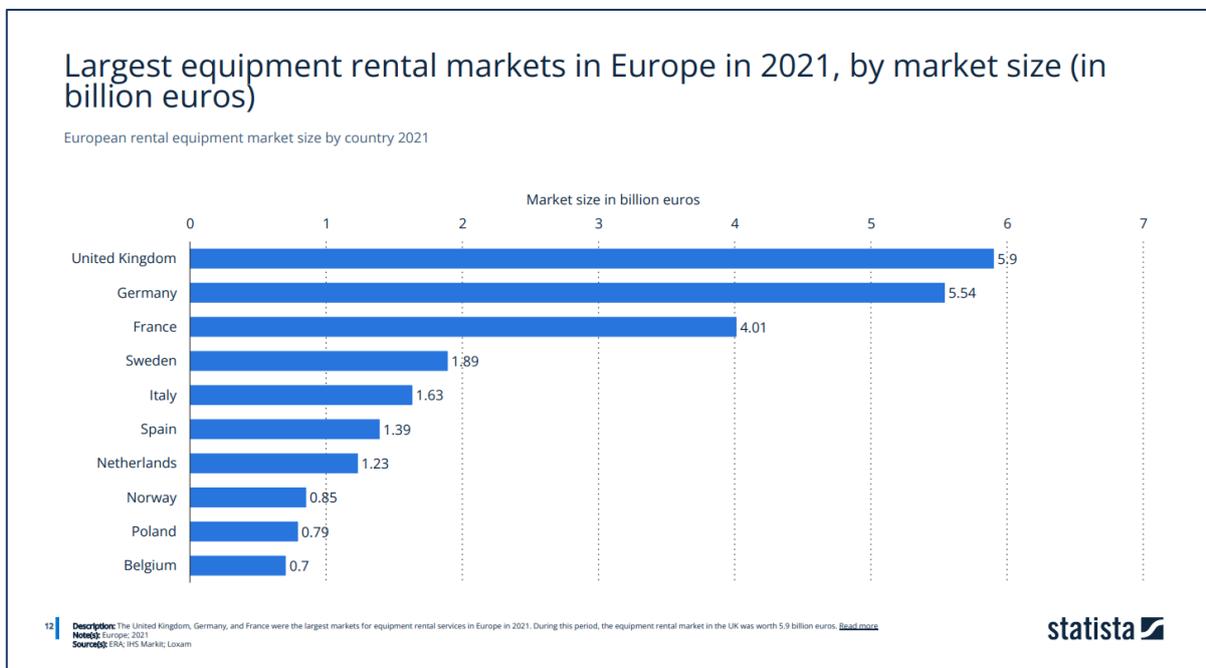


Fig 3.2 Statista graph, 2021 based on a recollection of information from ERA, HIS Markit and Loxam

From a broader perspective, **the rental industry continues to exhibit a high degree of fragmentation**, characterised by the presence of numerous small-scale rental businesses operating on a limited scale. Although larger corporations do exist, primarily composed of an extensive network of rental agencies spanning various regions, the market predominantly maintains its fragmented nature. This fragmentation becomes apparent when analysing the key participants in the equipment rental markets across Europe. For instance, in 2021, Sunbelt, HSS, and Speedy were the leading companies offering equipment rental services in the United Kingdom. However, they accounted for just 28% of the industry's market share, with the remaining 72% distributed among over 4,000 medium and small businesses, with medium businesses holding a significant share.

Market share of the leading equipment rental companies in the UK in 2021

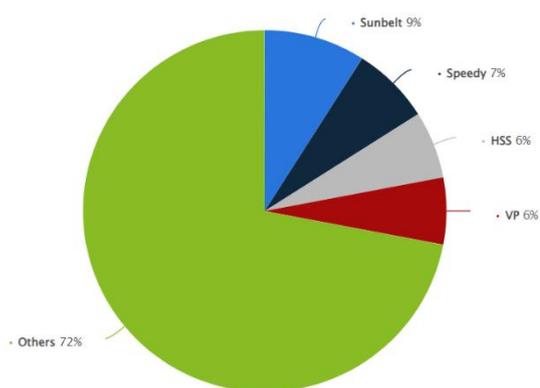


Fig 3.3 Statista, 2022

Tackling attractiveness and recruitment challenges, it's essential to **distinguish between small businesses, which constitute more than 75% of the market, and larger enterprises** to understand the different vacancies these companies need to fill up. Small businesses typically have fewer than 10 employees, often operate as family-owned entities, and usually source their equipment locally, operating from a single depot. In contrast,

larger organisations typically function through a hub-and-spoke structure, where a central hub serves as the main location for operations and is connected to multiple smaller locations, or spokes, for distribution and coordination of resources. The headquarters and hubs staff, make up about 10% to 20% of the workforce and consist in office role support functions such as finance, HR, and marketing. Spoke job positions on the contrary, typically involve non-office, technical roles focused on machinery maintenance and repair, transportation tasks, sales responsibilities which respond to a branch manager.

To ensure the industry’s continued growth in the upcoming years, it is imperative for rental companies to adopt a people-centric approach and to recognise that strategies and challenges may differ between larger and smaller companies and across different countries in Europe, something that can be seen specifically in the graph 3,4 (Fig. 3,4) below. This approach is vital not only for addressing the current labour shortages but also for attracting and retaining the existing workforce. It encompasses the creation of conducive work environments, the provision of essential skills and tools to enhance employee efficiency, and the assurance of job satisfaction. In these times of economic uncertainty, offering a strong Employee Value Proposition (EVP) is even more essential. Doing so allows employers to maintain a committed and motivated workforce, which is crucial for navigating these challenging times.

When we analyse the graph below, which outlines the five reasons why employees choose an employer, it becomes apparent that preferences vary significantly from country to country. This highlights the importance for employers to consider regional differences when planning their Employee Value Proposition (EVP). Across most countries in Europe, salary and benefits emerge as the primary motivator, except in countries in Northern Europe where a pleasant work atmosphere holds greater significance. Despite these variations, there is a rather common trend where employees increasingly value work-life balance and the overall atmosphere of their workplace. Additionally, job security is notably important, especially in Eastern Europe, where it ranks as the second most influential factor.

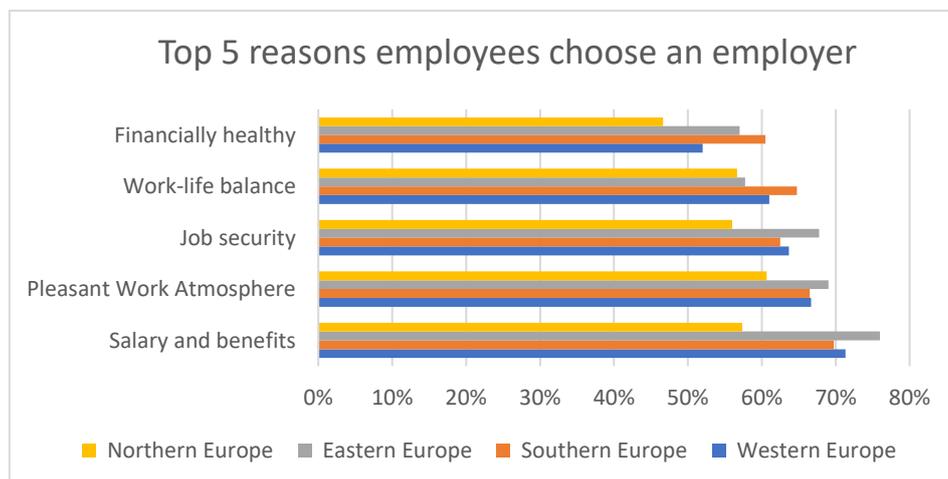


Fig 3.4, Recollected data from Randstad Employer Brand Research Global Report

3.2 The key assets of the rental industry

The equipment rental industry presents several compelling attributes that make it an appealing sector for potential professionals. Nonetheless, as we will elaborate in our subsequent research, **these attributes frequently go unnoticed by the public and should be emphasised more prominently.**

- **Sustainable business model:** The rental equipment business is part of the new circular economy and has been since its creation, embodying a sustainable development approach that replaces product ownership with product utilization. Today, it continues to advance sustainable development by making substantial investments in green and digital transitions²⁰.
- **Driving progress and growth:** This industry serves a crucial role in propelling projects forward, facilitating business expansion, and contributing to the development of essential infrastructure across a diverse range of sectors. While historically linked to construction, its positive influence has broadened to encompass other fields, including energy, filmmaking, and widely attended youth-centric events such as music festivals (Glastonbury being a prominent example).
- **Career opportunities and career paths:** Large rental companies offer a wide spectrum of careers and opportunities, often accompanied by robust training programs. Some even establish partnerships with universities. Notably, there are numerous success stories of individuals who began as apprentices and eventually ascended to top management positions.
- **Proximity and autonomy:** Emphasizing proximity and autonomy, rental depots are spread across every European count, ranging from large companies with numerous local-level depots to smaller, local businesses. This approach instils a sense of ownership and responsibility, enriching employees' professional experience. The local grounding and proximity of these rental businesses also bring significant benefits to their employees. By providing jobs within local communities, they help reduce commutes and enhance the quality of life for workers. Moreover, these businesses often offer a friendly and family-like work environment, fostering a strong sense of belonging.

3.3 Future Trends

While projected growth is on the horizon, **the sector's evolution evidently hinges on forthcoming economic trends within our ever-changing global landscape.** However, there are some clear expected trends that will significantly impact the industry and its employees.

Sustainability and purpose

Companies with a **strong commitment to sustainability and a positive social impact may be more appealing to employees who value these principles**²¹. As previously mentioned, the sector's future looks promising in a world where renting is becoming more popular, seen as a sustainable and eco-friendly way of doing business

²⁰ [Working in rental - ERA \(erarental.org\)](https://erarental.org/working-in-rental)

²¹ [IBM Survey: Employees More Likely to Accept Jobs from Sustainable Companies - ESG Today](#)

and in line with the values of millennials and younger generations. **The rental industry addresses key aspects of the circular economy including shared usage, reparability and recyclability of machinery which are central aspects of its business model.** The sector's contribution to sustainability is further supported by the sector's desire and actions to adopt greener technologies like electric machines, in line with the preferences of younger generations. Specific tools to enhance sustainability within the industry have also been designed, these include an Equipment CO2 calculator that can be found on the ERA website to help users make more sustainable choices when using construction equipment. Although the industry faces challenges in transitioning its fleet to electric machinery and meeting clients' efficiency expectations, it seems to be committed to this transformation if it succeeds to be profitable for the companies.

Digitalization

As with various sectors, **the equipment rental industry has experienced a noticeable shift toward digitalization**²². Numerous companies have begun transitioning their operations to the online sphere, providing customers with digital interfaces to browse available equipment, make reservations, and schedule delivery, pickup or maintenance operation. **This shift towards digitalization has become a central aspect due to evolving client expectations**, gradually replacing the traditional use of paper in rental industry tasks. Concrete examples, particularly in the US, demonstrate the positive impact of digitalization in the industry. A concrete example is United Rentals, which in 2018 realised more than 50% year-over-year growth in e-commerce revenue from UR One and whose digital commerce across all channels attracted over 3000 net new customers, resulting in a 45% increase in digitally generated revenue year-over-year.

Digitalization has also had a massive impact on the incorporation of new technologies²³ such as Computerised Maintenance Management Systems (CMMS), fleet management enhanced by the Internet of Things (IoT), as well as the integration of robotics and autonomous vehicles into operations. These technologies not only offer significant opportunities for efficiency gains, cost reduction, and improved service delivery but also necessitate the upskilling of employees internally.

Advanced machinery

The shift towards **more advanced and environmentally friendly machinery**, driven by technological progress, elevated safety standards, and the increasing prevalence of automated equipment, will have a significant impact on the rental equipment sector. To start with, the continued adoption of advanced safety-equipped rental equipment, providing improved visibility, manoeuvrability, and real-time hazard warnings, will further enhance employee safety by reducing accident risks. This transformation will then necessitate employees in the sector to acquire new skills to effectively operate and maintain the modernised machinery, tailored to the specific needs of their clients. **The skill set required in the rental equipment industry will vary depending on the level of modernization** within a company's fleet and equipment. This demand for new skills within the sector may result in skills inequities, affecting the workforce differently. As of 2016, the Future of Jobs Report predicted that 35% of workers' skills would be disrupted in the following five years, but by 2023, that share has increased to 44%²⁴. Consequently, there will be a strong emphasis on enhancing the skills of rental

²² ["Understanding the Future Trends in the Equipment Rental Industry." Axiom Equipment Group.](#)

²³ [Liddell, Peter. "Supply Chain Trends 2024: The Digital Shake-up - KPMG Global." KPMG, 2023,](#)

²⁴ [The Future of Jobs Report 2023, WEF Forum, 2023](#)

equipment professionals to use the new machinery efficiently and safely, **ensuring the industry remains competitive and responsive to evolving client needs.**

Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI has the potential to automate a significant portion of tasks in the rental business including office support, business, HR, and administrative tasks. Specifically, predictions estimate that business, HR, and admin tasks could see up to 25% automation thanks to generative AI. Examples include **the automation of the process of screening applications, implementing automated processes to keep track of maintenance schedules, product inventories and rental histories** or generating rental agreements amongst other examples. Chatbots which are already in use by some companies may also allow for client questions, helping to free time for workers. This will also have to be accompanied with a shift towards higher-order cognitive skills, creativity, and adaptability, enhancing operational efficiency and productivity.

Flexible work

As we transition into a more permanent era of hybrid work, **marked by an enduring desire for flexibility among desk-based employees, it's crucial to extend this equitable flexibility to non-office workers**²⁵. The trend of remote and in-office jobs coexisting is here to stay, and there's a growing need to ensure that non-office roles receive their fair share of flexibility. Based on insights from the 2022 Gartner Frontline Worker Experience Reinvented Survey, it's clear that organisations are acknowledging this demand²⁶. **A significant 58% of companies employing frontline workers have recently invested in enhancing their employees' work experiences**, with an additional third of organisations planning to do the same in the next 12 months. In the quest to provide more flexibility for frontline workforce, it's important to recognize the top factors that attract and retain employees in this segment. **These include more control over work schedules, paid leave, and work schedule stability.** Incorporating these elements not only benefits workers but also contributes to the success of organisations in various sectors.

²⁵ [ibid](#)

²⁶ [ibid](#)

4. Attractiveness, engagement, and retention factors in the rental industry

4.1 Challenges in attracting people

Based on our findings and in line with global trends, it appears that many companies in the rental industry are encountering **greater difficulties when it comes to attracting new employees compared to retaining their current workforce**. Although challenges may vary from company to company there are common trends that we share below.

While challenges in drawing talent apply to various job types, **most open positions within the sector are in field roles**, facing strong competition from other sectors such as the automobile sector and a lack of female applicants, notably in technical and transportation job positions. Below are some of the core issues that have emerged as fundamental factors contributing to the industry's challenges in filling its job vacancies.

Visibility Challenges

A recurring factor we've pinpointed is that the sector, being originally mostly a B2B industry, **lacks the visibility that many other industries enjoy**. Despite being an integral part of people's daily lives worldwide, the industry's lack of widespread recognition results in limited job applications and diminished interest from potential new hires. Unlike automobile companies, which naturally draw the interest of students in mechanical or engineering fields from the outset, **the rental equipment industry lacks this inherent appeal** and, on the contrary, seems to be known for hard and arduous work. As a result, it needs to actively seek potential employees rather than relying on external applications.

Skilled labour shortage

In line with global trends, rental companies are facing **challenges in high-demand job roles, particularly in the depots in on field positions such as engineers, technicians, and drivers**. An explanatory factor that has been mentioned to us is that in some countries, like in France, mechanic positions are experiencing a declining workforce, given that they are viewed as unattractive careers with limited prospects and career paths. The number of younger workers that apply to apprenticeships in the UK, for example, have also significantly declined. Additionally, **a post-Covid resignation wave and the physically demanding nature of these jobs**, which often deter female applicants, exacerbate the issue. While the primary hiring challenges in the equipment rental industry are concentrated in field roles, it's important to note that these difficulties are not isolated. Many rental companies also report issues in recruiting for office-based positions at headquarters, which typically offer more flexibility and have a higher representation of women, such as in HR roles. However, due to intense competition and the increasing expectations of potential employees, these companies are also struggling to fill in such vacancies, highlighting a broader talent acquisition challenge across the industrial sector.

Work-life balance concern

Another significant challenge in attracting talent to the equipment rental industry is work-life balance. **Concerns about the balance between work and personal life have been on the rise** in recent years and many roles in this sector, particularly the mentioned above field positions, often require irregular hours (work on Saturdays), extended workdays, and physical presence on site. This physical presence on site is a crucial aspect of depots of most companies that take care of sales relationship, equipment repair and maintenance and

delivery. These working conditions may then disrupt personal lives and make it challenging for individuals to strike a balance between their professional and personal responsibilities. The expectation of extended hours and potential unpredictability in scheduling can deter potential candidates, especially those seeking more stable or flexible work arrangements.

Working conditions

Working conditions are another challenge the industry faces in attracting employees due to their views on the demanding nature of the working conditions. Many of these jobs are conducted outdoors, subjecting front-line workers to unpredictable weather conditions such as extreme heat, cold, rain, or snow, which can impact their comfort, safety, and efficiency. In addition to weather-related challenges, these professionals must contend with physically demanding tasks, an increased risk of workplace injuries, and irregular working hours stemming from customer demands that may require 24/7 availability.

4.2 Challenges in engaging and retaining people

In today's fiercely competitive job market, actively engaging and retaining employees has become even more critical and is a heightened concern for businesses. The encouraging news is that, in contrast to talent attraction, **employee retention is a more cost-effective endeavour** where companies can exert greater influence. Interestingly, some of the smaller-sized companies we have spoken with have openly declared their success in maintaining low turnover rates, while others continue to grapple with significant retention challenges. Throughout our discussions and research, different key points were highlighted by companies as factors that employees complained about or that came out when they left the company.

Management challenges

A recurring concern among various rental companies, particularly larger ones, is the issue of management. **This often involves a lack of sufficient managerial skills**, especially when individuals are promoted to managerial roles without the necessary training or prior experience, particularly in cases where they excel as technicians. As a result, these newly promoted managers may struggle to effectively lead and manage their teams. **This can lead to several problems, including decreased employee engagement, poor communication, and low morale** and, in the worst cases, it can even lead to high turnover rates and decreased productivity. Within rental companies and specifically in depots, the role of local managers is central to achieving employee engagement and retention, given that depots tend to work autonomously from the headquarters, the leadership of their branch manager is critical to workers well-being and motivation.

Salary competitiveness

Yet another prominent factor contributing to the challenges of retaining talent in the equipment rental industry **is the significant salary gap when compared to other sectors**, particularly the automotive industry. As per a recent survey conducted by the European Rental Association (ERA), equipment rental technicians in Europe receive an average annual salary of €40,000. In contrast, their counterparts in the automotive sector in Europe command an average yearly salary of €50,000. This discrepancy is even more pronounced in certain countries, such as Germany, where equipment rental technicians earn an average annual salary of €35,000, while automotive technicians earn an average annual salary of €55,000. Employees often raise this as a

concern, and it continues to be a noteworthy factor influencing their decisions regarding whether to stay or seek opportunities elsewhere.

Flexibility

Flexibility is a growing concern for workers in various sectors and especially across younger generations. It's worth noting that **while the flexibility associated with working from home is typically only applicable to office jobs, non-office workers have their unique priorities**. A significant 30% of non-office workers highly value flexibility in terms of their working schedules, while an additional quarter (22%) place primary importance on flexibility in the number of hours worked. These trends reflect the shifting dynamics of the contemporary workforce, with distinct needs and preferences emerging among different sectors of the workforce²⁷ However, despite this growing demand combined with the concurrent business need for flexibility, only a quarter (24%) of non-office workers have seen increased flexibility since the pandemic. This is compared to over half (52%) of white-collar office workers, indicating that an equity gap exists between different types of work.²⁸

Career development

Career advancement is critical for job satisfaction and employee retention in the rental industry, especially as many hourly workers seek career progression. A study found that over 70% of non-office workers actively seek career advancement opportunities, both within their current companies and elsewhere²⁹. However, the availability of these opportunities varies across the rental industry. Larger companies often offer more significant career growth potential, but this isn't consistent throughout the sector. Our interviews revealed specific examples of employees who started as apprentices and rose to top management roles. One large rental company reported that about 80% of their branch managers were previously salespeople, and 85% of workshop managers started as technicians. Nonetheless, it is important to note that despite these examples, many companies in the industry reportedly face challenges in supporting the career progression of technical staff beyond branch manager roles and that some still must start working on it.

²⁷ [New data shows that flexible work is the next frontier for non-office workers, Randstad \(2023\)](#)

²⁸ [New data shows that flexible work is the next frontier for non-office workers, Randstad \(2023\)](#)

²⁹ [What frontline employees want—and what employers think they want, McKinsey \(2023\)](#)

5. Overview of best practices in the rental industry and other sectors

Amidst the challenges of hiring and retaining talent, **there has been a notable commitment from rental companies and national as well as the European association to overcome these issues** through various innovative initiatives. At the European level, significant efforts have been made by the European Rental Association to foster cohesion among countries and companies, with the objective of strengthening the collective image of the rental sector. This commitment was particularly obvious during last year's first edition of the [European Rental Week](#)—an annual event dedicated exclusively to promoting the rental industry across Europe. **National associations are also dedicating their energies to strengthening** the appeal of the sector all the way from organising events and awards to recognize the achievements of rental employees and making clear efforts to promote and communicate on the sector: A clear example is DLR's the French National Associations [website](#) which clearly explains the jobs in the rental sector in a dynamic and captivating way.

At the **company level**, where we are currently focusing our analysis, **rental companies are also making significant efforts to develop strategies to attract talent and enhance their retention capabilities**. Below, we have identified numerous best practices implemented by different rental companies and have aligned them with six distinct stages of the employee path:

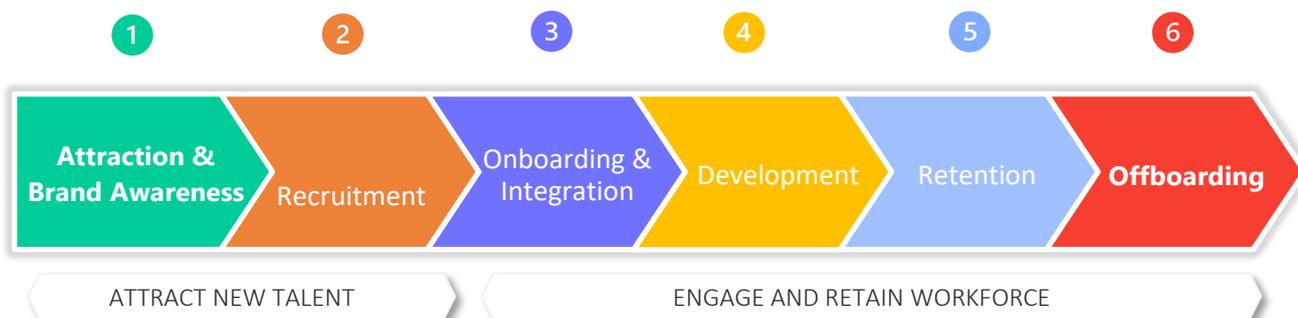
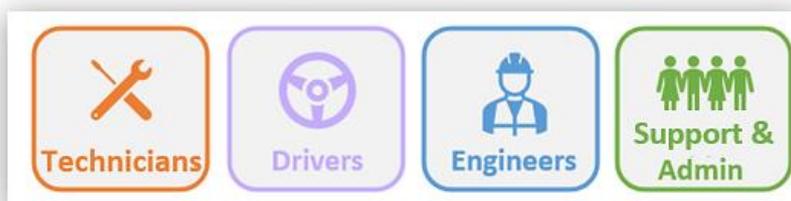


Fig 4.1, Employee Journey Path

This approach helps to illustrate the various aspects where companies can intervene to enhance their appeal and retain talent. Additionally, we have complemented these best practices with examples from other sectors. These **cross-industry best practices offer further insights and nourish recommendations** while providing the sector with innovative approaches to enhance their talent acquisition and retention capabilities.

In our analysis, **four key job categories are addressed, when discussing the best practices** from other industries. The four distinct employees' groups are **technicians, drivers, engineers, support, and administrative roles**. These were identified during our interviews as the areas facing the greatest challenges in talent acquisition. The best practices that are not specifically targeted at any of these groups are considered applicable to all employee types within rental companies:



1 Attraction & Brand Awareness



The attractiveness of an industry, and **more particularly the image projected by its brands is crucial in fostering a sense of allure and interest towards it.** In recognition of this, numerous rental companies have made substantial investments in their advertising and company branding to amplify their exposure across various formats and platforms. In any case, it is essential for companies to have a clear company mission, vision, values, and culture to put forward and to differentiate themselves from other companies, while putting forward their expertise. Below are some exemplary strategies implemented by some of the companies interviewed:

i. Company Mission:

Promoting and embracing a strong company mission that aligns with the brand's values and culture is a strategic imperative in today's competitive business landscape. Rental companies, recognizing the power of their mission and aesthetic, are actively implementing various advertising initiatives to showcase how they are making a positive impact on society today.

Here are some noteworthy examples:

Company Mission Best Practices	
<p>The Promotion of a diverse equipment range</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In recent years, many companies have diversified beyond their traditional focus, offering a wide range of equipment for industries like festivals, film, clean energy, and more, and have largely communicated on this. Demonstrating involvement across various industries can boost a company's brand image and position it as an appealing employer, recognised for nurturing a dynamic work environment engaged in impactful projects. 	
<p>The promotion of green technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The promotion of eco-friendly equipment, featuring low emissions of CO2, coupled with noise and vibration reduction, exemplifies a company's dedication to environmental sustainability. This shows its commitment beyond its circular business model, can enhance brand reputation and appeal to potential employees prioritizing environmental health, user safety, and sustainable practices. 	
<p>The promotion of diversity and inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental companies are increasingly demonstrating their commitment to diversity and inclusion through different initiatives such as participating in "Girls Day" for aspiring female mechanics or developing a Guide for LGBTQI employees. By doing so, they are demonstrating their dedication to fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment and strengthening their connection with a diverse and socially conscious audience. 	
<p>The promotion of skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A rental company has established a training academy to fulfil its local machine operator training requirements, offering a wide range of in-person and online programs. This initiative helps the company gain recognition within the industry and attracts employees dedicated to continuous upskilling and professional development. 	



ii. Social media and branding:

In today's dynamic business landscape, the rental industry has evolved its approach to branding, engagement, and image enhancement. Through **social media, logos, humour and human-centric storytelling**, companies are forging a new path in branding and engagement.

Social Media and Branding Best Practices

The use of social media:

- Several rental companies are effectively and creatively using social media platforms like Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, and LinkedIn for brand enhancement and recruitment. An example is Kiloutou's video "The Candidate" that won them the 2023 COM-ENT Grand Prix silver trophy in the "Employer Brand" category.



The use of logos:

- Incorporating a unique and recognizable logo across all publications, machinery, and company vehicles, such as lorries and vans, is essential in bolstering brand awareness and image while being a cost-effective strategy.

Done by several companies

Human-centric storytelling:

- Human-centric storytelling, as showcased in media collaborations can significantly enhance the image of the rental business as an employer as shown in [this video produced by BBC](#). By highlighting the dedication, skills, and teamwork of employees in a relatable narrative, it positions the industry as a community where work is impactful and fulfilling. This approach both draws potential employees by showcasing the human side of the business and elevates the industry's profile as a desirable place to work.
- Utilize compelling visual storytelling, such as videos showcasing individuals' journey from childhood hobbies to their current roles in the rental industry. This approach resonates with the audience and effectively communicates the message.



iii. Event Sponsorship:

Event Sponsorship Best Practice

Event sponsorship strategies:

- Engaging in high-profile sporting events and supporting specialised competitions like the WorldSkills Competition allows companies to expand their brand reach and industry presence. By showcasing commitment to excellence and skill development, companies enhance their reputation among potential employees as champions of growth and advancement.



Other Sector Best Practices: Attraction & Employment Branding



Social Media Employee Advocacy: Encouraging employees to share brand-related content on their personal social media profiles, offering incentives if needed.

- ✓ Ex. 1: Dell's program motivates employees to share insights on Dell products and services, providing training and resources for engaging content.
- ✓ Ex. 2: Feature employee spotlight stories on your website and social media. Employees often repost these stories, amplifying your brand message.

According to a study by Cisco, employee posts can generate 8X more engagement than branded content from the company

x	x	x	x	

Social media contests:

- The “tag-a-friend” to win a prize entry model of contests is a particularly good way to get new visitors to your social accounts and in turn raise awareness of your brand.

x	x	x	x	
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Partnerships and Influencer Outreach:

- Collaborate with influential organizations and individuals, such as the Girl Scouts, to extend the campaign's reach and credibility

x	x	x	x	
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Local contributions:

- Donations or lending’s of equipment to local non-profit organisations, schools, or community projects
- Local Media Features of stories or profiles in local newspapers, magazines, and news broadcasts, highlighting company history, values, and community contributions.
- Invest in educational initiatives to raise awareness about rental industry careers among students, parents, and educators.

x	x	x	x	
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Professional communities:

- Joining professional groups and business organisations in your area (local chamber of commerce or Facebook groups for example). Most of these groups host meetings, industry events, and seminars that provide a great opportunity to network with other business owners and fellow professionals.

x	x	x	x	
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2 Recruitment



The recruitment process is the central aspect for companies to acquire new talents. Several factors, however, are essential in converting a suitable talent's interest into an official hire. In the context of the rental industry, many companies have implemented strategies to proactively engage with potential talents, encouraging their recruitment rather than merely waiting for direct applications through their websites, for instance.

i. Educational partnerships

Companies in the rental sector are **actively approaching schools and universities to promote the industry, aiming to familiarize younger generations with it.** This strategy is particularly important considering the dwindling number of technical profiles and the scarcity of engineering graduates, especially considering the context of an ageing workforce.

Educational Best Practices

Local school fairs and open days:

- Rental companies are engaging in local school fairs to attract technical talent and partnering with universities to recruit engineering students. Open days at their facilities introduce students to the rental industry, fostering early brand recognition and connections with educational institutions for improved recruitment outcomes.

Done by several companies

Internships apprenticeships and traineeships:

- These are key recruitment strategies that provide recruits with essential industry experience and skill development. These opportunities not only prepare individuals for a career in the rental industry but also enable companies to cultivate a skilled workforce.

Done by several companies

ii. Referral recruitment

Referral Recruitment Best Practices

- Referral recruitment, demonstrated by a rental company's rise in employee referrals from 8.9% to 17.3% from 2021 to 2022, involves current employees suggesting acquaintances for job openings. This approach is advantageous as it brings in new hires likely to align with company culture and possess required skills.



iii. Modern digital and physical spaces

In the rental sector, **both digital and physical spaces play a crucial role in attracting top talent.** Key practices include:

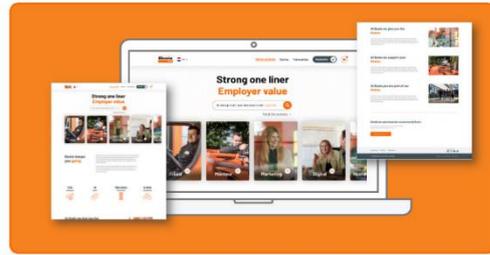
Modern Digital and Physical Spaces Best Practices

Renovated Depots:

- One company found that inviting candidates to visit their renovated depots and machinery resulted in more successful hires at these locations compared to older depots.



UX-Focused Websites with Engaging, Informative Job Listings: User-friendly design and clearly stating job benefits in online listings increases the likelihood that potential candidates will complete their applications. A [seamless UX and transparent job information](#) make the application process more engaging encouraging more applicants to follow through to submission.



iv. Diversity and inclusion policies

Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices

Non-conventional recruits: Different companies are targeting and opening their recruitment processes to non-conventional profiles. A clear example of this is Sunbelt who won the [Gold Covenant Prize](#) for the recruitment of mostly in their traffic teams where 7 percent of new hires were veterans during the 2021 calendar year and retaining no fewer than 75 percent of veterans hired in 2020 for 12 months. Other companies have also been targeting individuals with **criminal justice backgrounds, and those under 25 not in education** or employment within their recruitment processes especially for technical and driving roles.



Other Sector Best Practices: Recruitment



Mobile Application Process:

- Incorporating a mobile-based recruitment process with mobile-friendly websites and applications not only broadens the reach to potential employees but also increases the likelihood of candidates completing the entire application process.

	x	x		

Tangible referral recruitment incentives:

- Encouraging employee referrals, Google offers a cash bonus up to \$2,000 for successful hires, paid in instalments over the first year. Additional benefits may include days off, gift cards, or even a year of company-paid lunches.



	x	x	x	x

Optimised recruitment process and tools:

- Implementing an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) for a large business (+300 employees) helps to efficiently manage high application volumes and accelerate the hiring process. Small companies on the other hand can outsource their recruitment process leveraging external expertise to streamline hiring and focus on core business activities

	x	x	x	x

AI for recruiting:

- Enhancing candidate-job matches through AI analysis of uploaded CVs accelerates the identification of suitable positions, driving candidates to them faster. Moreover, employing AI-driven chatbots to address FAQs about the company, job, or application process boosts candidate engagement and knowledge throughout recruitment.

	x	x	x	x

<p>Hire hourly workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target's "On Demand" program provides flexibility by enabling employees to take on occasional shifts. A feature that is popular with team members who are full-time students, retirees, or other workers looking for part-time employment. Technology is crucial to achieving this as Target's mobile scheduling app allows team members to add or swap shifts to align with their schedules. 		x	x		
<p>Precise job offerings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating attractive job offers with detailed information on the job expectations, working conditions and salary ranges is essential as some candidates do not even apply if this does not appear. <p><i>Extra info: The European Directive 2023/970 published on May 10th2023, to be implemented in national laws within 3 years, requires transparency on the salary packages mentioned in the job offers and granted throughout the career path in the company.</i></p>	x	x	x	x	
<p>Widen recruitment spectrum and target new profiles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organising job dating with candidates in career transitions and seniors (job fairs and special events with the support of State work agencies), as carried out in the tech sector to recruit technicians and in the care economy to recruit youth educators, caregivers, and nurses... 	x	x		x	
<p>Apply gamification to recruitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing serious games in recruitment enhances applicant understanding of job specifications and can help overcome biases against challenging roles. SNCF Réseau, a French railway infrastructure company, developed a 15-minutes serious game for hiring switchmen. 		x	x		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign-On Bonuses: Attracting new employees with sign-on bonuses, which can be paid out in increments to then encourage retention. 	x	x	x	x	
<p>Certifying Academy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transdev, a transport company, has created a Centre for Apprenticeship Training (CFA) aimed at recruiting and training bus and coach drivers in France. They offer certifying courses at a local level, tailored to the needs of the regions, and collaborate with national and local stakeholders for the integration and employment, of their students. 		x			
<p>Assist with training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given that becoming a truck driver has become more time-consuming and expensive Volvo is increasingly assisting aspiring truck drivers by subsidizing their fees or offering paid time-off for training, which can help secure future recruits. 		x			
<p>Training for women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mauffrey a transport company has created a female driving academy that provides a one-month immersion course for females. 		x			

3 Onboarding and Integration



Once a recruit has accepted an offer, **the integration process is crucial for making them feel valued, well-integrated, and comfortable in their new work environment.** Onboarding is specifically the process of integrating a new employee. In other words, all the actions you take before, during and after the arrival of your new talent, to put them at ease and motivate them for their new positioning. This is specifically crucial in the rental sector where numerous companies mentioned that turnovers are high especially in the first year of work.

Onboarding and Integration Best Practices

Planned out onboarding process: Some rental companies have developed a comprehensive onboarding process based on an analysis of employee needs and expectations, resulting in higher levels of retention of employees in the long run. Key practices include:

1. **Co-constructing the Program:** Employees are involved in workshops to identify their needs and expectations, ensuring the program's relevance.
2. **Preparing the arrival of the new employee:** Providing the future candidate with online content and sometimes even team lunches to help them get familiar with the company and its culture.
3. **Ensuring a smooth first day:** Providing new employees with a welcome kit, a breakfast, a safety briefing, and all the necessary equipment and tools to start their journey. They are also appointed a tutor.
4. **An internal HR digital platform:** A digital platform that provides managers and employees with all the useful content they need, throughout the entire induction process. It takes the form of a toolbox that connects employees to managers and HR.
5. **Following up on the long term:** Making sure that the manager and the employee have regular feedback sessions and checkpoints throughout the first year.
6. **Measuring and improving the program:** Feedback from employees and managers is collected and analysed using a digital platform, allowing for program adjustments.



Initial trainings:

- Tailoring initial training to new employees' experience ensures they receive the right guidance, addressing gaps and building on existing skills. This personalised approach boosts confidence and competence, enabling effective contributions from the start.



Other Sector Best Practices: Onboarding and integration



Buddy program:

- Assigning buddies to new hires fosters connection and support in their early days. [Microsoft's](#) research on 'onboarding buddies' revealed a 23% increase in employee satisfaction and higher retention rates among new hires."



Facilitated digital onboarding process:

- Providing a digital onboarding process by allowing recruits to sign contracts electronically for example can help new hires complete administrative tasks more efficiently and reduce paperwork, ultimately improving their overall integration experience.

x x x x

Centralised information:

- Centralizing company information on platforms like an intranet or mobile app simplifies access to resources and benefits, including vital documents, policies, and benefits. When employees feel informed and supported, they're more likely to stay within a company.

4 Development



Professional development is an essential aspect of employee retention. By investing in trainings, companies demonstrate a commitment to continuous learning, which, when done right, can lead to increased employee engagement, job satisfaction, and productivity. Additionally, fostering a culture of growth and learning within an organisation can enhance the possibility of career evolution and personal satisfaction within employees. This investment in employee growth not only benefits the individual but also contributes to the overall success of the organisation. **Employees who feel valued and are given opportunities to develop new skills are more likely to be motivated and stay** with the company for a longer period.

i. Technical skills and career pathways

Providing technicians **with technical skills is vital for their engagement and proficiency with new machinery.** Clear **career pathways offer employees visibility in their growth,** fostering motivation.

Technical skills and career pathways Best Practices

Technical skills and safety programs:

- Numerous companies provide mechanics with technical skill programs including trainings on health and safety.

Done by several companies

Clear career paths and advancements:

- Some companies offer well-defined career paths and transparent advancement criteria, providing employees with clear direction and growth opportunities.
- To illustrate, apprentices have transitioned into managerial roles through dedication and skill development. For instance, at Boels, one apprentice received sponsorship for a university degree while continuing to work within the company.

Done by several companies

ii. Management and leadership skills

Many rental companies struggle with **line managers who possess technical expertise but lack essential managerial and supervisory skills.** This deficiency often leads to high turnover rates. Consequently, many rental companies have implemented various managerial training programs to address this issue.

Management and Leadership Skills Best Practices

Management programs:

- Leader's secret code:** Based on [The Leader's Secret Code book](#) one rental company is developing their 300 leaders with very positive results. Each year a different topic is deep-dived into, and this year they are focusing on change – how do you motivate a team through change, how do strategize change.
- Agile Management program:** Implemented by a rental company, this internal program operates on a two-year cycle with bi-monthly meetings. It aims to balance periods of independent work and collaboration among participants.

ZEPPELIN

Annual Talent Management program (partnerships with universities): A rental company has implemented this initiative for 60 international talents, segmented into future leaders, high potentials, and rising stars. Each segment undergoes a tailored program:

- Intensive strategic 9 months program together with Erasmus University Rotterdam including internal mobility and cooperation with Sweden Business School.
- De Baak international learning program for high potentials
- 4 annual sessions with all the talents with action learning, networking, and teambuilding

Boels

Other Development Best Practices				
<p>Reverse mentoring to break gender gap:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reverse mentoring to address the gender gap: Initially introduced in the 1990s at GE to promote digital skills. Schneider Electric views reverse mentoring to empower employees of all ages and seniority levels, fostering skills transfer. Specialised learning programs support these initiatives, which have also found success within women's networks. 	x	x	x	x
<p>Invest in learning management system to free skills development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide online training material and adaptative learning solution empowers managers and employees in their professional development. For example, AccesIndustrie developed AILearn platform where workers can access learning modules in full autonomy and test themselves. 	x	x	x	x
<p>Use immersive learning tools to accelerate training and better fulfill employee expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing in immersive learning solutions can address the need for upskilling in safety practices and technology. Michelin has converted fifty training modules into immersive formats for frontline workers, covering areas like risk prevention and technical training. Onsite VR training offers easier planning, better memorization, and meets deskless workers' expectations for training and skills development. 	x	x		
<p>Internal academy and lab to engage workers in continuous improvement and innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing an internal lab connected to learning and development contribute to employee commitment and retention. For example, SNCF created the mass transit academy that is a centre of excellence offering training solutions and a lab to share best practices, investigate new solutions, organise learning expeditions. 			x	x
<p>Mentoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing mentorship to new hires aids in skill, knowledge, and confidence development. Experienced mentors offer feedback, coaching, and networking opportunities. For instance, Goodyear Women's network recently launched its mentoring and development program for women in tech in partnership with KnowThyBrand Women et Girls in Tech Luxembourg. 	x	x		
<p>Diversity and inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SNCF has created the professional network SNCF Mixité for gender equality within the SNCF group. The network aims to promote diversity and gender equality by organizing conferences, development workshops, innovative training, and sports events. 	x	x	x	x
<p>Transforming skills and activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renault is transforming its skills and activities to adapt to the new mobility market while providing targeted and measurable support for its skill transformation. 	x		x	

5 Retention



Several of the best practices we've outlined **positively impact a company's retention capability**, such as management programs, which tend to increase the probability of retaining employees coached by these managers. Additionally, the companies **we interviewed have implemented numerous other initiatives to enhance their retention capability.**

i. Employee Benefits

When it comes to retaining employees, **implementing effective practices surrounding financial and other types of benefits is crucial.** Below, we highlight some of these practices that we've observed in various companies within the sector.

Employee Benefits Best Practices

Financial benefits

- **Competitive Salary Brackets:** To remain competitive in the job market, these companies regularly update their salary brackets. This practice ensures that employees receive fair and competitive compensation, reducing the likelihood of them seeking better-paying opportunities elsewhere.
- **Company Savings Plans:** Some companies help prioritize employee financial well-being by offering company savings plans. These plans provide employees with a secure and beneficial way to save and invest for their future, creating a strong sense of financial security and attachment to the company.
- **Part-Ownership and Profit-Sharing:** By implementing part-ownership and profit-sharing programs, companies empower employees to become stakeholders in the company's success. This alignment of interests fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among employees, ultimately contributing to higher retention rates.
- **Selective Bonuses for In-Demand Roles:** Recognizing the unique skills and contributions of certain roles, such as engineers, some companies offer selective bonuses. This targeted recognition not only boosts employee morale but also reinforces the value of specialised skills, encouraging employees to stay and contribute to the company's success.

Done by several companies

Other benefits:

- **Healthcare Benefits:** Offering comprehensive healthcare benefits, ensuring that employees have access to quality medical services and support, demonstrates the company's care for its employees' overall well-being, fostering loyalty and retention.
- **Team building:** Integrating team-building activities such as regular barbeques and team dinners into the organisational culture serves help to nurture a cohesive and supportive work environment. This emphasis on fostering a sense of unity contributes to creating a positive workplace atmosphere that motivates employees to remain with the organisation and grow in their roles.

Done by several companies

ii. Leadership & Autonomy

Leadership & Autonomy

Open Communication Channels:

- Some companies encourage robust connections and maintaining effective communication between the company's leadership and its employees through regular and open conversations. They encourage employees to share feedback, ideas, and concerns creating a culture of transparency and trust. This ensures that employees feel heard and valued. It also enables leadership to address issues promptly, leading to a more engaged workforce.



The role of management in empowering autonomy and responsibility:

- Given the often-decentralised nature of rental operations, entrusting significant **autonomy and responsibility to employees in various rental locations is paramount**. This practice involves granting on-site staff members the freedom to make decisions and take ownership of their roles and tasks. In aligning with good management practices, the role of management then shifts towards providing guidance, support, and the necessary resources rather than micromanaging daily activities. This approach is founded on the logic of a team project that encourages empowerment and autonomy, which in turn, fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership among employees.

Done by several companies

Other retention best practices



Flexible hours:

- Allowing employees to choose their working hours according to their personal preferences and constraints is a growing practice amongst frontline jobs. For example, flexible working hours can consist in allowing employees to start earlier or finish later, depending on their needs.
- Carrefour:** One of the world's largest retailers offer options such as part-time work, flex time and the possibility of working from home for certain administrative functions.
- Auchan:** another retail giant allows employees to choose their working hours according to their personal preferences and constraints.

X X X

4-day weeks:

- The four-day workweek is a growing trend in the European workplace, and many companies (including large distribution companies such as [Lidl](#) and Leclerc) are finding that it can be a successful and sustainable way to improve employee productivity, wellbeing, and satisfaction
- [A four-day week trial took place in the UK in 2022](#) between June and December 2022, and more than 90% of participating businesses opted to continue with the four-day week, with 18 adopting it permanently. [Positive effects](#) included a more motivated and satisfied workforce, which are more likely to perform better, improved retention rates and facilitated recruitment initiatives and improved gender equality.

UK Company Examples³⁰:

Company	Status	Details
	Permanent, 35 Hours	2017 - United Kingdom: "This manufacturing firm in Suffolk has been running on a four-day week for the past five years, allowing staff to strike a better work-life balance while boosting productivity."
	Permanent, 32 Hours	January 2018 - United Kingdom: "Staff at Elizabeth Carnahan's Gracefruit, a cosmetics and soap-making supplies firm, return to work today after their festive break to a four-day week – with no loss of earnings. She said it would give staff at the Longcroft, Stirlingshire firm more time for family life, as well as cutting on-site emissions by a least a fifth."
	Permanent, 40 Hours	July 17, 2020 - United Kingdom: "Morrisons is reportedly set to shake-up its head office working practices by introducing four day weeks – although staff will still be required to work one Saturday a month. The changes include a reduction of weekly hours from 40 to 37.5 – working nine instead of eight hours a day over four days, plus a six-hour day one Saturday per month."

X X X X

Another example:

- Lamborghini**, the Italian luxury sports car manufacturer, has recently introduced a four-day workweek for its production workers. Those on a rotating two-shift schedule will alternate a five-day week with a four-day week, overall cutting 22 days of work each year, the unions said.



³⁰ Eurogroup Company Information

<p>Open-shift management platforms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide hourly workers more control over their schedules and more flexibility by enabling them to easily swap shifts with colleagues and pick up extra hours at their own location or a sister location nearby. This is a practice that is integrated in numerous companies including Starbucks and Walmart amongst others. These platforms empower hourly workers by giving them greater control over their schedules, enhancing their work-life balance and satisfaction 		x	x		
<p>Employees advantages or subsidies to support parenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare subsidies or access to a network of nurseries/kindergarten eases the handling of parenting responsibilities, making the workplace more family friendly. 	x	x		x	
<p>Special bonuses or advantages to reward long-term engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional vacation or bonuses for xx years retention, recognizes and rewards loyalty, encouraging long-term commitment. For example, some companies allow additional days off according to seniority. 	x	x	x	x	
<p>Competitive Pay and performance-based incentives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering competitive wages compared to industry standards and consider performance-based incentives. Example Drivers: bonuses for safe driving, fuel efficiency, or timely deliveries. 	x	x			
<p>Instant Access to Earned Wages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing systems that allow workers to access their earned wages before the traditional payday. Apps and platforms offering this service can improve financial well-being by providing workers with the flexibility to manage unexpected expenses without resorting to high-interest loans. 	x	x			
<p>Invest in technology solutions and equipment to deskless workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to a study run in 2020, more than 75% of deskless workers consider the availability of technology at a company when deciding whether to work there. This starts with designing mobile-friendly solutions and providing with adequate devices, smartphones, or tablets (the same study reported that 56% of respondents had to use their own devices at work). Besides increasing attractiveness, this boosts productivity and top-line growth. 	x	x			
<p>Utilize Mobile Communication Platforms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing mobile-friendly communication tools that deskless workers can access from anywhere, at any time. This includes messaging apps, mobile intranet solutions, and workforce management apps that offer features like messaging, task management, and shift scheduling. 	x	x	x	x	
<p>Housing solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caterpillar prioritizes affordable housing for its mechanics workers in high-cost regions. Through the Housing Innovation Collaborative, the company partners with local governments and providers, offering rent subsidies and housing assistance directly. 		x	x		
<p>Monitor employer brand impact on social media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular checks on Glassdoor ranking and feedback and on social media ratings (Google...) helps understand employee concerns and public perception, allowing for timely improvements in policies and practices. 	x	x	x	x	

6 Offboarding



Having an **offboarding strategy is essential for companies to not only understand why employees leave but also to improve retention in the future** and maintain positive relationships for potential returns.

Departure Interview Best Practice

- These are a valuable tool for companies to understand why employees leave and to identify areas for improvement. Departure interviews can help companies identify patterns, gain insights into retention factors, and improve the employee experience.

Done by several companies

Offboarding best practices



Process the offboarding to set the path for a long-term relation: Secure the admin offboarding in an efficient manner. Organise closing interviews to collect feedback on the employer experience in the company and, whenever possible, farewell events within the team.

- ✓ Ex. Siemens France and Belgium systematically set up exit meeting to identify corrective action to foster employee retention. *“Some of our employees about to leave help us identify their replacement. This contributes to significant time saving on recruitment »*, David-Alexandre Gava Talent acquisition Director



X	X	X	X
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Invest in the company alumni and set up a community:

- Set up an alumni directory, organise events at least on a yearly basis that gather alumni and deliver business insights or set up open innovation events. This sometimes generates “boomerang rehire” when former employees are coming back with additional experience and skills.



X	X	X	X
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KPMG: This consulting firm systematically reaches out to its alumni to see how they feel 6 months after their departure which enables them to bring back a significant number of their employees.

A direct communication with the permanent team and colleagues:

- As part of the offboarding process, it's crucial to communicate directly with the remaining team and colleagues. Clearly outline who will be assuming the responsibilities previously held by the departing colleague. Additionally, consider the work atmosphere and potential risk of disengagement, and proactively address these concerns with the team

X	X	X	X
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Value seniority by prioritizing skills transmission through mentorship and training opportunities by young retirees:

- Encouraging the access to expertise by establishing a network of young retirees who can continue to contribute knowledge and guidance within the organisation

X	X	X	X
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6. Recommendations and conclusions

This comprehensive analysis of the talent acquisition and retention challenges encountered by the equipment rental sector, coupled with the identification of numerous impactful best practices, has enabled us to formulate ten actionable recommendations. **These recommendations aim to guide companies in the equipment rental sector to enhance their employee branding, attract fresh talent, and fortify retention strategies.**

The prioritization of these recommendations was conducted collaboratively with members of the ERA Future Group, all of whom acknowledged the significant impact and high feasibility of them all. The Future Group has also helped us identify the company sizes for which the recommendations are most relevant, as well as the types of jobs. We have highlighted this information when there was significant convergence in the recommendations below.

These recommendations have been categorised into five distinct topics and aligned with different stages of the employee journey. In addition, each recommendation points at the pages where can be found the corresponding best practices. These practices should be tailored to suit the unique characteristics of each country, company size, culture, and target audience in your attraction and retention strategy.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

EMPOWER RECRUITMENT « TREAT CANDIDATES AS CUSTOMERS »:

- 1) Empower recruitment to increase its effectiveness and widen recruitment targets

INNOVATE IN EMPLOYEE CARE:

- 2) Set up employee reward solutions beyond compensation and provide them with additional benefits
- 3) Develop flexible solutions in staffing and programming to increase work-life balance
- 4) Invest in on-site work environment and working conditions

INVEST IN MANAGEMENT AND CAREER SUPPORT:

- 5) Support employee career journey (onboarding, career paths)
- 6) Encourage effective management and leadership
- 7) Address upskilling requirements

COMMUNICATE AS A COMMON INDUSTRY AND DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS:

- 8) Use new communication codes and media
- 9) Develop partnerships to reach more applicants

PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE:

- 10) Anticipate technological shifts and impact on skill demands

EMPOWER RECRUITMENT AND “TREAT CANDIDATES AS CUSTOMERS”

Implementing a customer-centric approach by treating candidates as valued customers throughout the recruitment process, fosters increased engagement right from the beginning.



Recommendation 1 - Empower recruitment to increase its effectiveness and widen recruitment targets (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion).

To effectively attract employees, **rental equipment companies must establish a strong brand identity and purpose**. This can be digitally promoted on various social media platforms and locally through involvement in community events, sports teams, and educational institutions, as well as through employee referral programs. Other initiatives like job dating and special events (immersion and training) to help diversify and expand the recruitment pool towards candidates in career transitions and women.

Once candidates show interest, **the recruitment process must be agile, efficient, and user-friendly to maintain their engagement**. Prioritizing mobile applications and leveraging AI technology can enhance effectiveness. Thoughtfully designed onboarding processes, including gestures like a first-day team lunch, are essential to ensure newcomers feel welcomed. Providing access to essential company information from the start, whether through pamphlets, a buddy system, an intranet, or a company application, is also crucial. "A final step that must not be forgotten is to maintain a good relationship with employees who retire or move on to other jobs, as they can serve as a valuable source of wisdom or talent that may return.

FURTHER INNOVATE IN EMPLOYEE CARE

Companies in all sectors are innovating in employee care, to fulfil increasing expectations from employees. Rental companies must stay updated with their value proposition to attract and retain employees effectively.



Recommendation 2 - Set up employee reward solutions beyond compensation and provide them with additional benefits.

Compensation and benefits remain a key consideration for potential employees and rental equipment companies must make sure their packages are competitive within similar roles in other industries. Financial compensation should be personalised and may include selective sign-on bonuses for competitive positions, given incrementally to boost retention, company savings plans, and profit-sharing. Other alternatives such as implementing systems that enable immediate access to earned wages can also enhance employees' financial well-being.

Moreover, **non-financial benefits** like healthcare coverage, housing solutions, childcare support, and team-building activities can contribute to cultivate a robust organisational culture and positively impact workers daily lives.

Recommendation 3 - Develop flexible solutions in staffing and programming to increase work-life balance.

For front-line workers, who constitute an essential part of the equipment rental workforce, **flexibility extends beyond remote working**. These employees value greater control over their work schedules, including hours worked, access to paid leave, and stability in their work schedules.

Rental equipment companies should prioritize this need for **flexibility and actively explore options such as 4-day workweeks, time exchange systems, and rotating schedules** to empower mechanics and drivers in their schedule planning. By implementing these measures, rental equipment companies can better address the expectations of their front-line workforce, providing them with more work-life balance. This will also allow them to strengthen their position as a competitive employer in a period of skill shortages.

Recommendation 4 - Invest in on-site work environment and working conditions.

This fourth recommendation, like the previous one, **primarily focuses on front-line roles**. Often, innovations are not implemented in depots, yet it is crucial for these frontline workers to have access to applications, modern technology and machinery that will streamline their tasks. Additionally, ensuring they have access to an **incentivizing work environment and the best equipment**, including safety gear, is essential.

INVEST IN MANAGEMENT AND CAREER SUPPORT

Employee career journeys and skills development are central to keeping employees engaged. When accompanied by adequate management support, they strengthen a company's retention capacity and the well-being of its employees.



Recommendation 5 - Support employee career journey (onboarding, career paths).

Rental companies are **encouraged to support employee career journeys from day one with a comprehensive program** that integrates new hires smoothly into the company culture and provides clear guidance on their roles. Additionally, when feasible, although this may be harder to do in smaller companies, they **should define clear paths for growth within the organisation, offering regular training and development programs** aligned with career progression. The issue of career paths and prospects has been qualified as particularly critical for retention in support functions, whereas upskilling is to be prioritize as a retention factor for tech and frontline workers. By investing in these initiatives, rental equipment companies can attract and retain top talent, fostering long-term success and organisational stability.

Recommendation 6 - Encourage effective management and leadership.

Effective management is a crucial retention mechanism, as poor management often leads employees to leave their positions. To ensure that all employees who take on managerial roles possess the necessary skills, it is essential to provide **training and support throughout their journey**. This is particularly relevant for middle

management positions, where individuals may transition from technical roles to managerial ones without prior experience. Implementing training programs, bottom-up performance reviews, and mentorship initiatives for new managers can help bridge this gap and foster their development as effective leaders.

Recommendation 7 - Address upskilling requirements.

Invest in upskilling, particularly for technical roles and frontline workers, it is a key retention factor. To ensure ongoing skill development in technical roles, rental companies could regularly assess skills gaps and provide relevant training courses. **Collaborating with educational institutions and leveraging resources from national associations can offer employees access to diverse learning opportunities.** By prioritizing upskilling, rental companies empower their technical workforce to stay updated on industry advancements and to be able to work on new and advanced machinery.

COMMUNICATE AS A COMMON INDUSTRY AND DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS

To expand sector attractiveness, communicate as a common industry can leverage means to enhance public awareness and reach new applicants.



Recommendation 8 – Use new communication codes and media.

To effectively demonstrate the industry's impact and significance, **national associations and companies could collaborate to promote its image.** This effort could particularly highlight the pivotal roles played by the different jobs in the sector such as drivers and technicians. **Utilizing positive storytelling, showcasing real employees and their experiences in various job positions,** can effectively communicate the industry's value and attract new talent.

Given the constant evolution of communication mediums, the equipment **rental sector could capitalize on new media platforms** like short videos and social channels such as TikTok and Instagram. These channels can effectively promote these narratives and attract younger individuals to the industry.

Recommendation 9 – Develop partnerships to reach more applicants.

To address talent shortages, **the rental sector could focus on targeting a variety of profiles, including women through employee advocacy, as well as potential candidates seeking career transitions,** such as former army mechanics. This can be achieved by partnering with employment agencies and professional integration associations. To ensure the success of these campaigns, **it is essential to provide dedicated onboarding and career paths for these diverse profiles upon their arrival,** ensuring their seamless integration and development within the company.

PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

Recommendation 10 – Anticipate technological shifts and impact on skill demands.

A final and crucial recommendation for the rental industry **is to stay updated and anticipate key future trends that may impact its business and jobs**, enabling effective adaptation and avoiding being caught off guard. Today, for example, we can already see increasing demands in data skills, alongside the growing necessity for green skills, fuelled by the emergence of new eco-friendly machinery and customer demands for sustainable practices. The need for these skills will continue to grow, emphasizing the importance of proactive skill development. Additionally, given that rental companies are facing an aging workforce, **ensuring, and planning the transmission of expertise from the aging population to younger generations** within the sector is also essential for continuity and knowledge transfer.

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