

Evolving organisational structures

How do you create a work environment where new generations feel happy, motivated and productive? This is one of the key themes explored in our Trend Report. In this report, BDO looks ahead to 2030 together with trendwatcher Tom Palmaerts. We show how Belgian companies can shape the future with agility and confidence. Autonomy may well be the catalyst that enables employees to truly excel.

Evolving organisational structures

The way organisations operate is fundamentally changing. While Generation X still appreciates clear structures and formal job descriptions, Millennials and Generation Z have a very different outlook on hierarchy. They expect mentoring, coaching and partnership. For the youngest employees it is entirely natural to approach the CEO or their manager directly. The formal distance is fading fast.

FROM BALANCE TO FLEXIBILITY

Whereas the conversation about work and private life used to centre around balance, it is now mostly about autonomy. Employees not only want to know how many hours they have to work, but also when and how. The balance has shifted towards flexibility and trust. Most employees are still loyal and reliable, as long as they are given the freedom to organise their own workload.



CULTURE AS A COMPASS

Younger generations in particular attach great importance to company culture, societal relevance and inclusion. Leadership is less about micromanaging and more about setting direction and safeguarding values. In addition to autonomy, teams also want a clear compass.

HYBRID WORKPLACES IN TRANSITION

The debate on working from home and office work is still very much alive. Large American companies such as Amazon, J.P. Morgan and Goldman Sachs called their employees back to the office full-time. In the short term, this decision may strengthen team culture but it often leads to resistance and departures. In a tight labour market, flexibility remains a crucial advantage.

The workplace itself is changing along with the people in it. The open spaces of the noughties were meant to foster collaboration but in practice they often resulted in less verbal communication. Younger generations are also more sensitive to noise and stimuli. The workplace of the future therefore resembles a lounge bar, with a strong focus on acoustics, clean air, ergonomics and hybrid collaboration.



MENTAL AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

The search for a balance between work and private life is increasingly shifting towards a need for flexibility and trust. Employees want to decide for themselves when they start, pause or finish work. That autonomy not only makes them happier, it also enhances their engagement and productivity. While pay remains a key factor, research by Accent (Nieuwe werkelijkheid, 2024) shows that employees now consider respect the most important feature of a good job. Not the salary, not the title, but how people are treated makes the difference.

This need for psychological safety didn't arise overnight. A global study by Edelman commissioned by Lululemon (Global Well-being Report, 2024) revealed that the global well-being score is back at the level of the lockdowns. One in three people feels worse than ever. Generation Z in particular hopes for more openness about mental well-being: three in four want to talk about it more openly but 45 percent have no idea how to communicate their feelings to older generations.



1/3

feels worse than ever



3/4

hopes for more openness



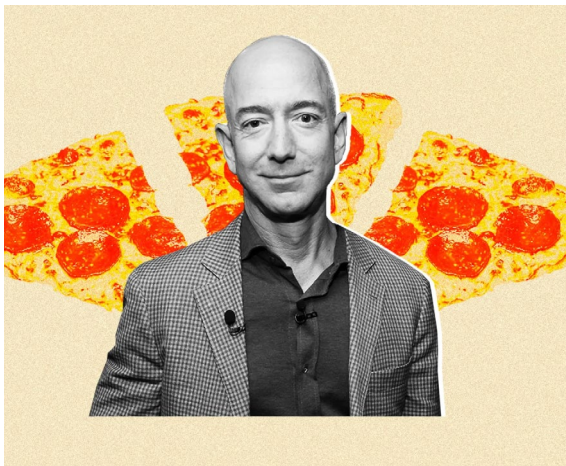
45%

have no idea how to communicate their feelings

New technologies can help close that gap. They offer young people an accessible, sometimes anonymous way of seeking advice, sharing concerns and asking for help. However, technology is not a substitute for genuine attention. Companies that build a culture of respect, closeness and humanity create an environment where employees stay and flourish.

SMALL AND AGILE TEAMS

Alongside new workplaces, new organisational models are emerging. More and more companies choose to work with small, hyper-productive teams of five to ten people who achieve significant impact through technology. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos calls it the two-pizza rule: if two pizzas are not enough to feed a team, it's too large. A small team stays agile and efficient.



In February 2025, the term '**vibe coding**' was coined. It is a new way for a small team to build a prototype super-fast and test it online. Vibe coding not only defines the technical framework but also captures the mood, interaction and emotional experience of a product in code. Thanks to vibe coding, the Brazilian EdTech company Qconcurso needed just two weeks to build a premium learning app with the Lovable software. Just 48 hours after launch, the app had already generated three million dollars. These kinds of examples show how small teams, supported by technology, can experiment quickly, scale fast and surprise markets.

In June 2025, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei even predicted that in the near future we will see the first company with a valuation of one billion dollars run by a single employee (the founder). Major players are showing the same trend: at Google, AI already generates a quarter of all new code, and at Coinbase it accounts for as much as forty per cent of daily code.

DOS & DON'TS FOR BUSINESS LEADERS



DOS

- Give employees the autonomy to choose how and when they work, within clear boundaries.
- Put culture and values at the heart of your compass for self-managing teams.
- Design offices as meeting places and oases of calm and experience, not as endless rows of desks.
- Encourage small, multidisciplinary teams to experiment and learn quickly.



DON'TS

- Don't rely on outdated hierarchical models as they clash with younger generations.
- Don't force employees to return to the office en masse because it harms retention.
- Don't view technology solely as an efficiency tool but as a catalyst for new structures.

"A future-proof organisation starts with simplification, standardisation and data quality. Too many companies build new technology on top of old complexity, resulting in digital chaos. Only when processes are clear and streamlined can automation or AI deliver real value. Lean and agile working is not a buzzword but a necessary condition for sustainable growth.

We are seeing a clear trend right now: companies that have the courage to simplify and make choices gain speed, agility and decisiveness. Smaller teams take ownership more quickly, organisational structures become less hierarchical and decisions are taken closer to the customer. The organisations that will stand out tomorrow are not the largest or the fastest, but the ones that actively reduce complexity today."

Peter Van Laer, CEO BDO Belgium