



# The Great Resignation Spurs Disruption Across Industries

Automation Augments  
Shrinking Labor Pools



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## Automation Augments Shrinking Labor Pools

Pundits are labeling it, The Great Resignation. Employees are quitting their jobs in droves, and employers of all sizes and across industries are facing a talent shortage rarely seen on such a scale. According to the U.S. Labor Department, a record 3.8 million people quit their jobs in April 2021, followed by another 3.6 million in May. The trend has continued through the latter half of 2021, representing a 20-year peak in job vacancies.<sup>1</sup>

A recent Gallup poll examined the issue and learned that workers in all job categories, from customer-facing service roles to highly professional positions, are actively or passively job hunting at roughly the same rate. The study finds that nearly half (48%) of America's working population is actively job searching or watching for opportunities.<sup>2</sup> Much of that population comprises the most experienced within the organization.

### Resignations by Career Stage<sup>1</sup>

**Early Career** (ages 20-25)

**20.3%** ↓

decrease in resignations  
(the exception)

**Advancing Career** (ages 30-35)

**21.5%** ↑

increase in resignations

**Mid-Career** (ages 35-40)

**19.6%** ↑

increase in resignations

**Experienced** (ages 40-45)

**25.1%** ↑

increase in resignations

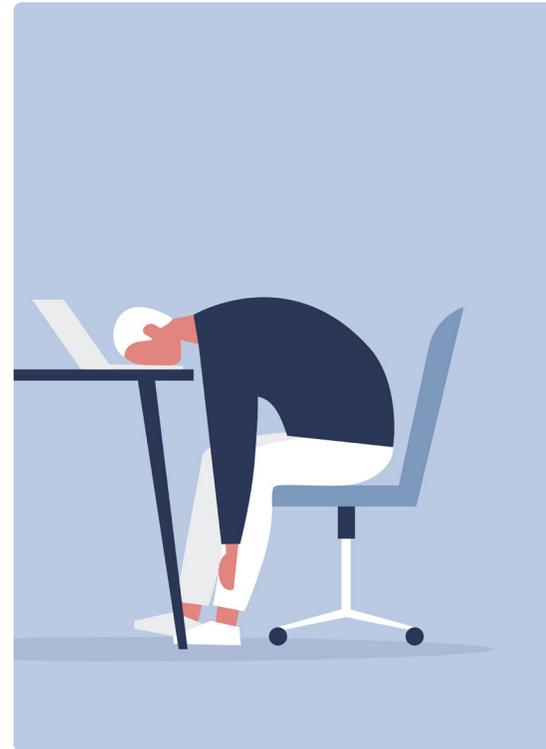


Employers, in response to the dearth of talent in their organizations, are exploring new ways to do more with less. In many cases, automation and machine learning solutions are surfacing as the most cost-efficient and dependable means to offload repetitive, time-consuming tasks, freeing staff for more high-value efforts. Let's explore why there are so many job vacancies in the first place...

## It's not you. It's **me**.

This departure surge spans both industry and job function, hinting at deeper social motivations at work among employees of all collar colors. Human resources professionals, their schedules filled with exit interviews, have some insights. HR tells us that in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many workers are reevaluating their personal career satisfaction levels, as well as the balance between their work and personal lives. Incentives like salary bumps and promotions are no longer preventing staff from jumping ship. Those working on-site are realizing how much time they spend commuting and are searching for fully remote or hybrid work options. Remote employees report digital overload and working environments that lack meaningful connection with colleagues. For employers, there is no easy answer.

Those still on the job are simply at the point of burnout. High productivity and a galloping economy are masking an exhausted workforce. Employees report significantly higher levels of “disengagement” – a marked lack of interest in outcomes or, put plainly, they just don't care about the job as much as they used to. In fact, studies demonstrate that only 20% of employees in the U.S. and 34% in Canada consider themselves “engaged” at work.<sup>4</sup> The problem is not just localized to the western hemisphere. In the United Kingdom, about 4.7% of the workforce has resigned since the lockdowns. Employees in Germany had the most resignations in Europe with 6% of workers leaving their jobs.<sup>5</sup> A study among Dutch workers found that 46% of those surveyed planned to quit in the next six months to a year (5% higher than the global average).<sup>6</sup> In Asia-Pacific countries, many workers are gravitating toward more flexible freelance opportunities – particularly in the Philippines, India, Japan, Australia and Hong Kong.<sup>7</sup> Half of the workers in Singapore consider themselves unhappy on the job.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, 83% of Australian employers report higher turnover while 40% of Australians workers are seeking different jobs.



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## What's it costing employers?

Disengagement (and all its unpleasant consequences) can be exceptionally expensive for organizations. The lost productivity of an unengaged employee is equal to 18% of that employee's annual salary. For a company of 5,000 employees with an average salary of \$50,000 each, disengagement costs about \$45 million a year. Replacing workers requires one-half to twice an employee's annual salary. So, it costs \$9,000 a year to keep each disengaged worker and between \$25,000 and \$100,000 to replace them.<sup>4</sup>

### Cost Impact of a Disengaged Employee<sup>4</sup>

**18%** ANNUAL SALARY  
Lost Productivity

**\$50k**  
Average Salary

**5k** 👤  
Company Size



**\$45M** 💰  
Annual Disengagement Cost

**\$25k-\$100k**  
Cost to Replace Employee

## Industry detail

While the Great Resignation is affecting a wide range of industries, certain sectors are feeling it in different ways:



### Warehouse and manufacturing

Labor experts report a sharp increase in resignations in the manufacturing sector. As the economy opens back up, people are looking for better opportunities, resulting in a shortage of hourly workers for industrial manufacturers.

As many as 2.1 million manufacturing jobs will be unfilled through 2030 and could ultimately cost the U.S. economy up to \$1 trillion. More than three-quarters of manufacturing executives (77%) surveyed said they expect to have trouble attracting and retaining workers this year and beyond. Being such a salary-sensitive industry, it was already prone to movements in labor. Small wage increases can easily move workers to a new employer. Companies are raising pay to attract labor, which has created an incremental arms race for talent.<sup>9</sup>



### Transportation and airports

Industries supported by personal and business travel floundered during the pandemic. The number of people flying in the U.S. bottomed out at less than 100,000 a day in April 2020. The prevalence of air travel has increased, but still down 20% compared to pre-pandemic levels. Government figures show that about 35,000 airline jobs were lost in late 2020, only recovered after Congress extended relief to airlines. Airline, road, and rail operations – responsible for administering high-traffic facilities serving the public – saw an elevated level of staff burnout.<sup>10</sup>



### Retail and hospitality

The retail and hospitality sectors are struggling to find talent. Despite receiving low salaries and a lack of benefits, these employees were placed on the front lines for long hours during the pandemic. Many brick and mortar retail outlets did not survive the lockdown, letting go of staff who, in many cases, have since moved on to greener pastures outside of the industry. The retail field presently has 965,000 open positions and experts predict a labor shortage of approximately 350,000 workers heading into the November and December peak retail period.<sup>11</sup>



### Health care

Perhaps no other industry bore the brunt of the global pandemic more than the health care industry. Across job roles – from the physicians and nurses caring for the ill, to custodial and facilities personnel maintaining medical-grade levels of sanitation – health care workers face the highest chance for job stress and burnout. In the last year, the health care industry experienced a 3.6% increase in resignations.<sup>12</sup> Between 20% and 30% of frontline U.S. health care workers say they are considering leaving the profession.<sup>12</sup>



Faced with the hard and soft costs associated with retaining or filling positions, more businesses are looking to automation of all kinds to augment unfilled job roles.

## Innovative solutions for the labor crunch

Only time will tell whether this phenomenon constitutes a reactive blip for the job market or whether the Great Resignation represents a long-term employment crisis. Regardless, employers are feeling the strain on operations now and – even if the rate of worker resignations levels off – the experience, institutional knowledge, and talent their workforces take with them will not be replaced easily or very soon.

Improvements in artificial intelligence, machine learning and cloud platforms have spurred a revolution in automation solutions available to businesses. Faced with the hard and soft costs associated with retaining or filling positions, more businesses are looking to automation of all kinds to augment unfilled job roles. From business process software and chatbots, to predictive logistics and advanced network security, to manufacturing robotics – nearly all areas of medium-sized to enterprise business have embraced automation in one form or another.

Although hybrid work will undoubtedly be much more common in the wake of the pandemic, some organizations (see above), by the nature of the business, will be unable to escape the need to manage facilities with large and complex floor plans. Custodial and facilities management job functions have changed. Requirements for sanitation and safety have refocused cleaning priorities to detail work. With fewer employees available to maintain the facility, robotics offer a way to supplement the most important (but mundane) tasks, such as floor scrubbing.

## The value of a multi-application autonomous floor scrubber

Autonomous floor scrubbers, a swiftly emerging technology, have gained acceptance across a wide range of commercial and public settings. Neo, powered by the Avidbots AI Platform, is the world's leading autonomous floor scrubber for large, high-traffic spaces. As a multi-application platform, in addition to autonomous floor care, customers can disinfect high-touch 3-D surfaces with the Disinfection Add-on. The Neo solution features dynamic mapping capabilities with real-time obstacle avoidance, making it efficient and effective.

### Avidbots Neo features

Neo is the world's leading automated floor scrubber for large, commercial spaces. Using AI-driven automation, advanced hardware, cloud software and live services, Neo automatically navigates and scrubs floors in dynamic environments.

#### Heavy duty, professional-level cleaning

Neo is ruggedly built with high-capacity water tanks, interchangeable long-life batteries, and adjustable speed and water flow for heavy-duty cleaning.

#### Safe, secure operation

Designed with human and physical environment safety in mind, Neo's onboard suite of sensors and cameras deliver flawless navigation avoiding obstacles—large or small. Additionally, Neo is designed with several on-board safety features to protect both the robot and the environment it is interacting with.

#### Simple, versatile cleaning configurations

The user-friendly touch screen interface and manual steering option make Neo easy to use. Disc and cylindrical brush configurations are available in multiple sizes to suit a wide range of facility floors and tasks.

#### Remote fleet management and performance metrics

Managers can check in on Neo at any time, from anywhere in the world, and get a host of useful information using the Avidbots Command Center web-based app. The Avidbots Command Center is an intuitive, always-on, multi-language interface – accessible from any web-enabled device – to monitor, manage and track Neo(s) in real time, 24/7/365. The full reporting suite provides key metrics to ensure the robot is used to its full potential.

#### 3-D surface disinfection

With Neo's Disinfection Add-On, organizations can achieve a consistent, fully autonomous and measurable electrostatic disinfection every time, giving their staff more time to focus on their core business.

#### Maximizing worker efficiency

With Neo cleaning the facility's floor area, management can assign staff to the core-business activities. Not only does that maximize the amount of high-value tasks that workers are able to complete, it can reduce employee injuries and absences due to repetitive strain and fatigue.

## Automation expands

The Great Resignation and the state of automation represent an interesting convergence of market conditions. Advanced robotics and artificial intelligence have been viable technologies for years, but some industries have been slow to adapt. It took a once-in-a-generation shift in people's thinking about their careers (and personal goals) to push the technology into new parts of the economy.



For those industries most affected by staffing, the Avidbots Neo autonomous floor scrubbing robot can fill a crucial niche in your cleaning operations, keeping facilities safe and disinfected.

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## Why Avidbots?

Buying an Avidbots Neo isn't just buying a floor scrubber. It's investing in a technological future that can redefine your cleaning function, making it more productive, more cost effective and easier to run. More importantly, our robotics and AI technology open up new opportunities to make your business even more successful. We realize this isn't just about buying a product, or a technology, or even a business proposition. You want to buy into a trusted partner who can take you into the future of automated operations using cutting edge robotics. At Avidbots, we work side-by-side with our customers to earn that trust and realize all the benefits that robotics can bring them.



## About us

Avidbots is a robotics company with a vision to make robots ubiquitous to unlock humanity's potential with a hyperfocus on autonomous cleaning. Our groundbreaking product, the Neo fully autonomous floor scrubbing robot, is deployed around the world and trusted by leading facilities and building service companies. Headquartered in Kitchener, ON, Canada, Avidbots is offering comprehensive service and support to customers on 5 continents.

## Contact us

Learn more about Neo.



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