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EMPLOYER BRAND RESEARCH

Switzerland 2026

Decoding the Swiss workforce: a deep dive into
employee expectations, retention risks, and work-life balance.

THE FUTURE STARTS AT THE ENDGAME.™

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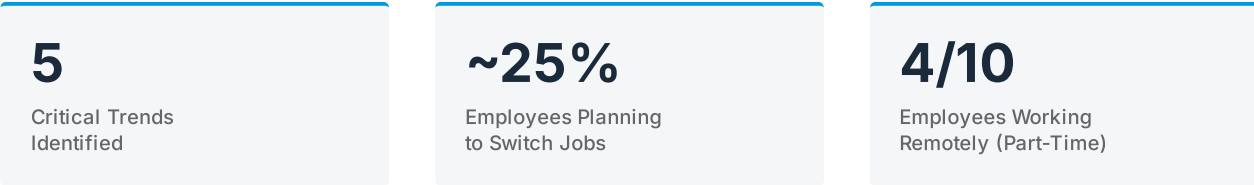
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EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

The NOVARIC® Employer Brand Research Switzerland 2026 highlights a workforce that is becoming more selective, segmented, and sensitive to gaps between expectations and reality. While work-life balance, pleasant work atmosphere, and salary remain key drivers, how they are prioritised shifts when employees make real decisions.

At the same time, rising job-switching intent and dissatisfaction with pay and daily work experience are increasing retention pressure, requiring more targeted employer strategies. This report decodes five critical trends shaping the Swiss labour market and provides strategic recommendations for employers seeking to attract, engage, and retain top talent in an evolving environment.



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TREND 1: EVOLVING EMPLOYEE PRIORITIES & EVP GAPS

Swiss talent continues to prioritise a consistent set of core drivers, yet the gap between what employees expect and what employers deliver is becoming more visible. This tension is shaping both engagement and long-term retention across the Swiss labour market.

1.1 Stability in Core Drivers, Shifting Priorities in Decisions

Work-life balance and pleasant work atmosphere are the most important drivers, followed by salary and benefits, job security, and equal opportunities. However, when trade-offs occur, priorities shift. Work-life balance becomes more decisive, while salary emerges as the strongest lever of choice.

1.2 Demographic Differences Shape EVP Expectations

Priorities differ by group. Older talent emphasises salary, job security, and stability, while younger talent prioritises career growth, learning, and development. Women place more importance than men on work-life balance, workplace culture, and equal opportunities.

1.3 Key Insights & Findings

1 Stability in Core Drivers

Work-life balance and pleasant work atmosphere are the most important drivers, followed by salary and benefits, job security, and equal opportunities.

2 Shifting Priorities in Decisions

When trade-offs occur, priorities shift. Work-life balance becomes more decisive, while salary emerges as the strongest lever of choice.

3 Demographic Differences

Older talent emphasises salary, job security, and stability, while younger talent prioritises career growth, learning, and development. Women place more importance than men on work-life balance and equal opportunities.

4 Widening Expectation Gaps

While employers perform well in job security and equal opportunities, salary, work-life balance, and workplace atmosphere rank lower in evaluations.

A balanced EVP is now a baseline expectation — employees expect a mix of flexibility, reward, and stability.

— NOVARIC® Research Findings

Important Notice: NOVARIC® Employer Brand Research Switzerland 2026. Modified V 1.0 May 2026. The policies and insights contained in this research apply to organisations operating within the Swiss labour market. NOVARIC® reserves the right to change, modify, alter, amend, discontinue, or otherwise revise these findings. Document ID: N-DOC-EBR-2026.

TREND 2: RISING RETENTION PRESSURE & JOB-SWITCHING BEHAVIOR

Switzerland's labour market is showing increasing mobility pressure. While actual job switching remains moderate, rising intent to change signals growing dissatisfaction in key areas. Understanding these signals is critical for employers seeking to maintain a stable workforce.

2.1 Job-Switching Intent and Behaviour

Around one in four employees plan to change jobs, while actual switching remains lower. This indicates a workforce that is increasingly open to new opportunities. Younger employees are more likely to leave to improve work-life balance or access career growth. Older employees are more sensitive to leadership quality and workplace relationships.

2.2 Turnover Drivers

Low Compensation

The strongest trigger for leaving. Employees who feel underpaid relative to market rates show the highest intent to switch.

Work-Life Balance

Desire to improve work-life balance is a major driver, especially among younger talent and working parents.

Poor Leadership

Negative work environments and poor management quality drive departures across all age groups.

Limited Growth

Lack of career development opportunities pushes high-potential employees to seek external progression.

Retention risk emerges when core expectations are not met. The alignment between EVP drivers and turnover reasons is unmistakable.

Employees are not leaving because expectations are new, but because they are not fulfilled. This shifts the focus from employer branding to execution.

— NOVARIC® Research Findings

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TREND 3: WORK-LIFE BALANCE AS A DECISIVE FACTOR

Work-life balance is firmly established as a core driver in Switzerland and becomes the most decisive factor when employees are forced to choose between employers. This trend has significant implications for retention strategy.

3.1 What Drives Work-Life Balance

- 1 Everyday Conditions**
Work-life balance is driven by a good work environment, time off and recovery, flexible working, and manageable workload. This shows balance is experienced through daily conditions.
- 2 Generational Expectations**
Younger talent values recovery time and personal growth, while older employees prioritise flexibility and stability. Each generation defines balance differently.
- 3 Secondary Benefits**
Retirement security, leave, and flexible work support long-term retention, with importance growing across career stages.
- 4 Key Decision Driver**
While widely expected, work-life balance remains a critical differentiator when employees make final employment decisions.

3.2 The Numbers

#1

Most Decisive Factor

4/10

Remote Workers (Part-Time)

~60%

Value Flexibility

Compensation is essential, but must be supported by strong work-life balance and experience. Employers who embed flexibility structurally will see the strongest retention outcomes.

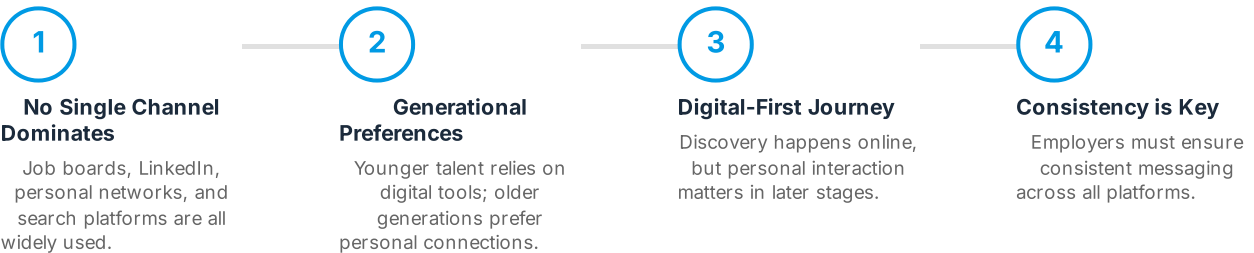
— NOVARIC® Research Analysis

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TREND 4: JOB SEARCH BEHAVIOR IN A MULTI-CHANNEL MARKET

Swiss talent navigates the job market through a wide range of channels, reflecting a fragmented but effective job search ecosystem. Understanding how candidates find and evaluate opportunities is essential for effective talent acquisition.

4.1 The Four Pillars of Job Search



4.2 Key Insight

The hiring journey is digital-first but human-confirmed. While discovery happens online, personal interaction becomes critical during later stages. Employers who fail to maintain consistency across channels risk losing candidates at every touchpoint.

4.3 Generational Channel Preferences

Generation	Primary Channels	Key Behaviour
Gen Z / Young Millennials	LinkedIn, AI platforms, social media	Mobile-first, expects instant response
Older Millennials / Gen X	Job boards, LinkedIn, referrals	Research-heavy, values personal touch
Boomers / Senior Talent	Personal networks, direct outreach	Relationship-driven, prefers phone

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TREND 5: WORKFORCE SEGMENTATION & ROLE-BASED EXPECTATIONS

Although core expectations are consistent, the experience of work differs significantly across job types, creating a more segmented workforce. Employers must recognise these differences to design effective engagement strategies.

5.1 Three Talent Segments

◆ OPERATIONAL TALENT TOP PRIORITY Job Security & Pleasant Atmosphere Places the strongest emphasis on job security and a pleasant work atmosphere. Satisfaction is closely tied to stability and workplace relationships. Fully on-site: Majority.	◆ DIGITAL TALENT TOP PRIORITY Competitive Salary & Work-Life Balance Evaluates employers more positively in flexibility and technology. Prioritises competitive compensation and remote work options. Remote-friendly: High adoption.	◆ PROFESSIONAL TALENT TOP PRIORITY Day-to-Day Experience & Flexibility Places greater importance on day-to-day experience factors, particularly work-life balance and workplace atmosphere. Values development opportunities. Hybrid: Most common.
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5.2 Key Implications

Tailored EVP Required. Employers must adapt their EVP to different talent groups, particularly in flexibility, development, and workplace experience.

Around four in ten employees work remotely at least part of the time, while many remain fully on-site due to role requirements. Hybrid work is shaped by role feasibility, not policy alone.

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STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

To remain competitive in Switzerland's evolving labour market, employers should focus on the following priorities. These recommendations are drawn from the five trends identified in this research and represent the most impactful actions organisations can take.

1

Close Critical EVP Gaps

Strengthen salary competitiveness and workplace experience to align with top talent expectations. The gap between promise and delivery is where retention is won or lost.

2

Build Targeted Retention Strategies

Address different drivers of turnover across generations and roles with personalised approaches. One-size-fits-all retention programmes no longer work.

3

Embed Work-Life Balance Structurally

Prioritise flexibility, time off, and manageable workloads as organisational standards. Work-life balance is the #1 decisive factor for Swiss talent.

4

Optimise Multi-Channel Hiring

Ensure consistent employer branding and candidate experience across all platforms. The hiring journey is digital-first but human-confirmed.

5

Segment the Workforce Effectively

Tailor EVP and engagement strategies to role-specific and demographic differences. Operational, digital, and professional talent have distinct needs.

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CONCLUSION

Switzerland's workforce is not undergoing a radical shift, but a structural realignment. Employees still value the same core drivers, but expectations are becoming more precise and demanding. The challenge for employers is not redefining needs, but consistently delivering across different workforce segments.

— NOVARIC® Research Conclusion

Partner for Talent

The NOVARIC® Employer Brand Research Switzerland 2026 provides a clear roadmap for employers who seek to attract, engage, and retain the best Swiss talent. In a market where work-life balance, compensation, and workplace experience are under increasing scrutiny, the winners will be those who translate insight into action.

NOVARIC® stands as a prominent force in Malta's recruitment and employment landscape, facilitating the seamless integration of talent into various industries amidst the dynamic European job market. Through our diligent efforts, we strive to not only match skillsets with opportunities but also cultivate long-lasting professional relationships that drive success for both candidates and employers alike.



NOVARIC®

The Future Starts At The Endgame.™

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