

New Research Shows AI Helps Employees Feel More Valued at Work

Study finds AI-powered personalization increases trust, engagement, and employee loyalty when used with human intent

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, January 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New research suggests artificial intelligence is making work more human, not less. A study by best-selling author and researcher [Penny Zenker](#) finds that organizations using AI to personalize employee experiences report higher engagement, stronger trust, and increased employee loyalty.

The findings come from [The Next Era of Personalization: An AI-Human Collaboration](#), a new research report examining how AI-driven personalization affects engagement, trust, and burnout in the workplace.

The study is based on insights from more than 400 professionals across industries.

“For years, the fear has been that AI would replace empathy,” said Penny Zenker, author of the study. “What the data shows is that AI can actually help leaders connect more personally, more consistently, and more meaningfully with their people.”

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Penny Zenker

Key Findings From the Research

The study highlights a growing gap between employee expectations and workplace reality:



- 74 percent of employees say personalization at work is important, yet fewer than half feel they receive it
- Employees in highly personalized work environments are 16 times more likely to say they feel seen and valued
- Organizations that personalize even a few key employee touchpoints report up to a 40 percent increase in employee loyalty and reduced turnover
- Employees in companies using AI to personalize the employee experience feel 2.8 times more valued and supported, with measurable gains in engagement and belonging



The research also incorporates neuroscience findings showing that the brain's trust and motivation systems respond to personalized communication regardless of whether it is delivered by a human or supported by AI. The brain responds primarily to perceived intent, rather than the source of the message.

How AI Is Reshaping Human Connection at Work

Zenker's research reframes AI as a tool that strengthens human connection rather than replacing it. By using AI to personalize onboarding, feedback, recognition, and career development, leaders can better anticipate needs, tailor communication, and create experiences that reflect how people actually work.

"AI is not the threat. Disconnection is," said Zenker. "The real risk comes from ignoring the human data organizations already have about their people. When leaders use AI to personalize experiences, they will rebuild trust."

The report identifies 11 high-impact personalization touchpoints across the employee lifecycle, from onboarding through career growth, where personalization delivers the strongest returns in engagement, innovation, and retention.

Why AI-Powered Personalization Matters Now

The findings arrive as organizations across industries increase investment in AI tools while facing persistent challenges with burnout, retention, and employee trust.

"We have optimized systems, processes, and productivity," said Zenker. "What remains under-optimized is how people experience work. The future of work has to be more personal."

By combining behavioral data, neuroscience, and AI adoption trends, the research points to a clear pattern: organizations that use AI to humanize work are better positioned to improve engagement, strengthen trust, and retain talent in a changing workplace.

About Penny Zenker

Penny Zenker is a best-selling author, keynote speaker, and researcher who helps leaders rethink productivity, performance, and human connection in the age of change and AI. Her latest study, *The Next Era of Personalization: An AI-Human Collaboration*, explores how personalization and neuroscience can rebuild engagement and trust at work. She has spoken at TEDx, SHRM, and global leadership forums worldwide.

Download the full report:

<https://pennyzenker360.com/personalization-report/>

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