

ONLINE SENTIMENT SNAPSHOT

# GLOBAL WORKERS EXPECT MORE FROM THEIR EMPLOYERS AMID INFLATION

A Synthesio Report

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[Recent research](#) from Ipsos showed that a global average of one in three (34%) say inflation is one of the top issues affecting their country. As food and energy costs continue to rise, many are feeling the pressure: [25%](#) say they are finding it quite difficult or very difficult to manage financially these days. To make matters worse, wages in many countries, including the [US](#) and [UK](#), are not keeping pace with inflation.

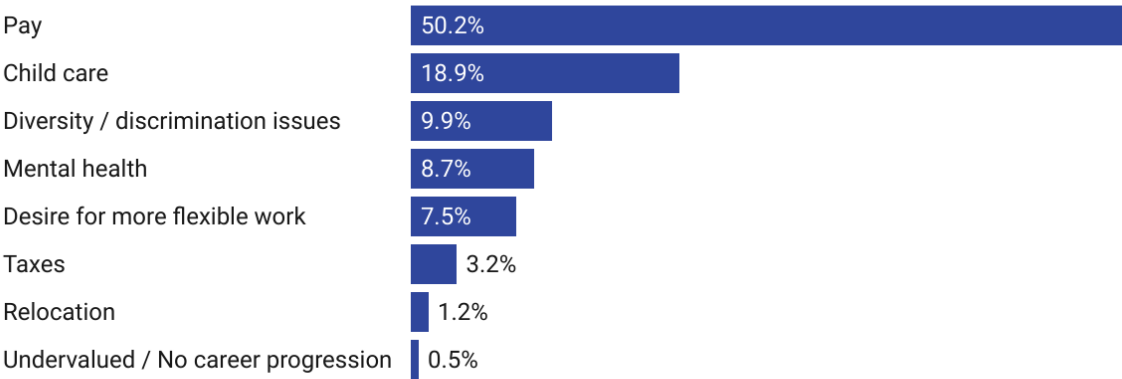
To dive deeper into how inflation is impacting global employees, we used Synthesio’s AI-enabled consumer intelligence platform to collect and analyze 20 million online, English mentions in 219 countries (for US-only analysis, [see here](#)). Here’s what we found:

## PAY REMAINS THE MOST-DISCUSSED REASON FOR LEAVING A JOB

Conversations about pay make up more than 50% of the global conversation volume – and mentions of the impact of inflation on wages has risen by 71% over the past 90 days. Meanwhile, talk about raises has increased by 46%, mostly driven by internet users encouraging each other to ask for more money in light of the rising cost of living, and seeking advice for how to have salary negotiation conversations with their managers. Worldwide Google Searches for “how to ask for a raise example” are also up 750% over the past 12 months – with the highest search volumes in the US, Canada, and Ireland.

Figure 1 Most-discussed motivations for resignation over the last 12 months

### What drives employees to resign?



Created with Datawrapper

Source: 05/09/21 – 05/09/22, public mentions in 219 countries related to resignation, English only



## WHILE POLITICAL FIGURES ARE THE BIGGEST TARGETS OF SOCIAL MEDIA CRITICISM, WORKERS ARE FRUSTRATED BY THEIR EMPLOYERS' LACK OF RESPONSE TO INFLATION

Most internet users place the blame of inflation on politicians, but many are voicing anger over raises (or lack thereof). One viral tweet that said, "if you're not giving your employees a pay raise beyond inflation/cost of living growth, you're giving them a pay cut," generated more than 100k likes and 17k retweets – and spurred conversations about employees' own experiences:

*"It's so irritating that my annual performance reviews have always been "exceeds expectations/high performer" but my salary increases have barely been enough to cover inflation. This year I got a whopping 2.4975%, which my boss said was higher than anyone else on my team."*

*"Today I resigned. My German boss asked why and I stated the phrase: 2 weeks back I asked for a raise, 15% to match the last 3 years inflation rate (no raise in 3 years due to covid albeit I have generated more income during covid than his business has achieved in 17 years)."*

*"My employer is not increasing the salary because cost has increased and profits have diminished, Now with no pay hike and also have to face increased market prices might as well pack my bags and move to Europe or Canada. India is soon turning out to be a Capitalist hell."*

Particularly on forums, conversations revolve around workers encouraging each other to ask their employers for a raise – or find a new job that will pay more.

*"if you aren't making \$20/hr you should ask for a raise or threaten to quit, or actually quit & find a better job, while the labor market is wicked competitive, & prices keep rising."*

*"My employer offered 5%. I'm interviewing with another place offering 18%. Guess where I'm going....."*

*"I got 20% more. You guys who haven't gotten a raise put your resume out there and see what's out there. Employers are giving out tons of money."*

*"It's actually a great time to ask for a raise because your company very likely wants to keep you in this job market."*

*"You would be insane not to ask for a raise. If they offer you anything that isn't fair then you need to dust off your CV and leave because they aren't taking actually taking care of you."*

Negative sentiment about inflation's impact on wages has increased by 70% in the past 3 months, and Synthesio's emotion analysis detected "fear" and "anger" as the top emotions associated with posts. A peak in conversation volumes in March (pictured in the next figure) came after social posts circulated in the US claiming Congress passed a bill to grant themselves a 21% pay raise. Though the details of the bill were misconstrued on social media – and the bill actually increased House office budgets by 21%, not Congress members' salaries – many Americans were still outraged that "everyone seems to be benefiting from inflation, except workers."

**"If you're not giving employees a pay raise beyond inflation/cost of living growth, you're giving them a pay cut."**

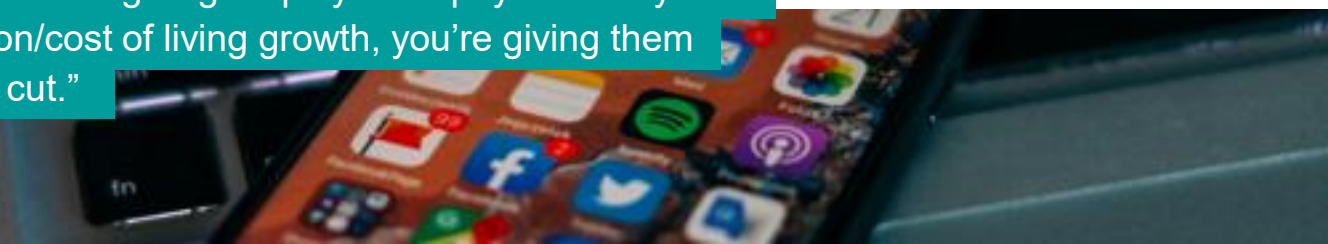
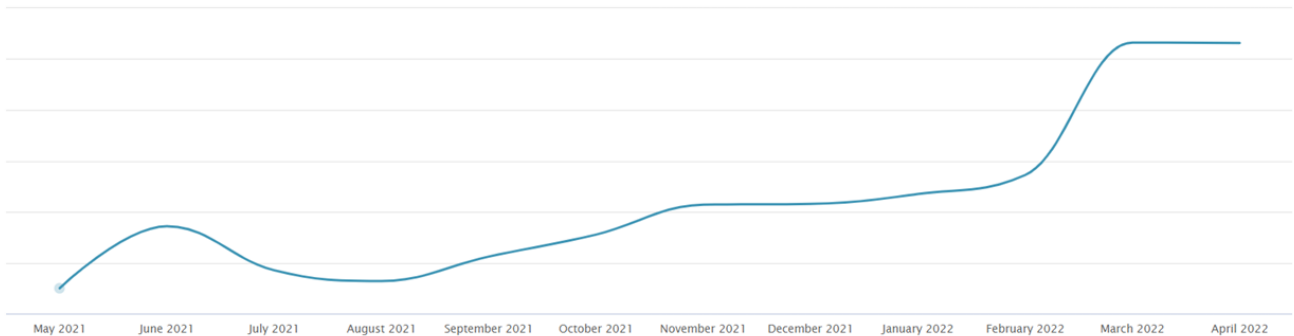


Figure 2 How sentiment related to inflation's impact on wages is evolving globally

## Volume of negative sentiment related to inflation's impact on wages



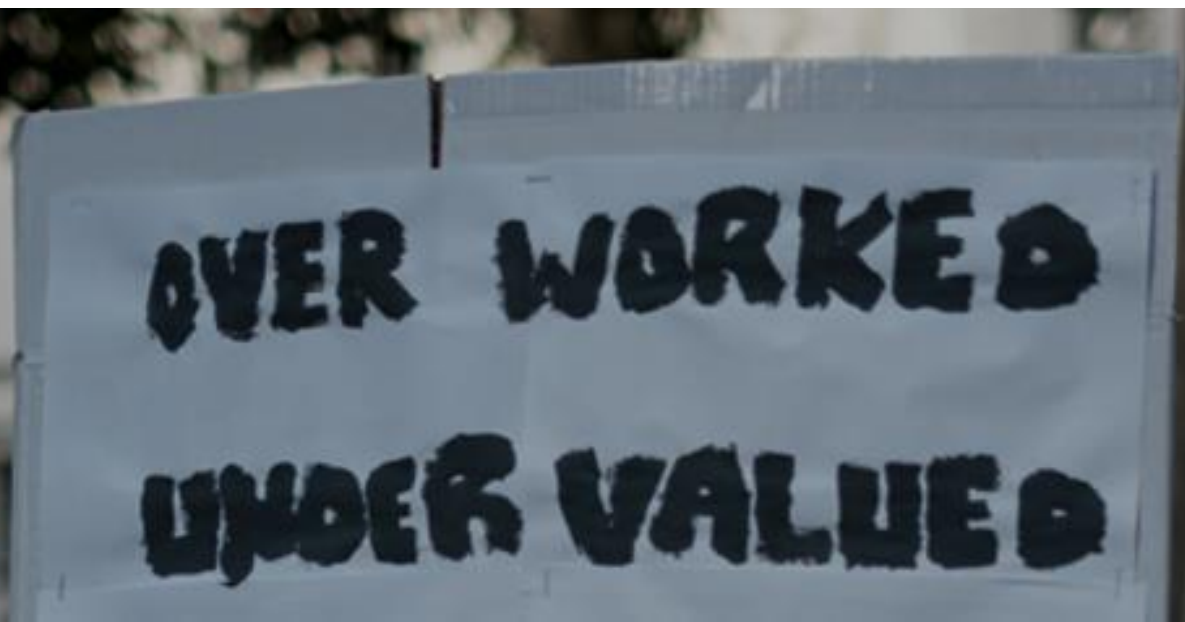
Source: 05/09/21 – 04/30/22, public mentions in 219 countries related to inflation and work, English only

Politicians aren't the only ones receiving pushback; CEOs at companies like Apple, Coca-Cola, and Goldman Sachs have come under fire online for receiving massive pay raises while worker pay remains stagnant. Amazon and Netflix – the usual suspects of social media criticism – are also generating online conversations with inflation surcharges and increased fees.

*"Apple CEO pay jumped 569% to \$98,700,000. Goldman Sachs CEO pay jumped 65% to \$39,500,000. Coca-Cola CEO pay jumped 40% to \$24,500,000. Starbucks CEO pay jumped 39% to \$20,400,000. Worker pay only increased by 5%. How come you never hear CEO pay contributes to inflation? 🤔"*

*"I'd like to pass a maximum wage bill for CEOs called the year to a day bill. CEOs should not be able to make more in one day than their average worker makes all year. 365 times the average workers pay should be the max. Any more and their workers pay is automatically increased."*

*"What's crazy to me is how politicians will say that a \$15 an hour minimum wage will cause inflation, but don't say that increasing CEO compensation will cause inflation or that having a \$15 an hour wage driver for our port truckers would actually decrease inflation."*



# INFLATION IS IGNITING ONLINE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT LOW INCOME FAMILIES AND MINIMUM WAGE WORKERS

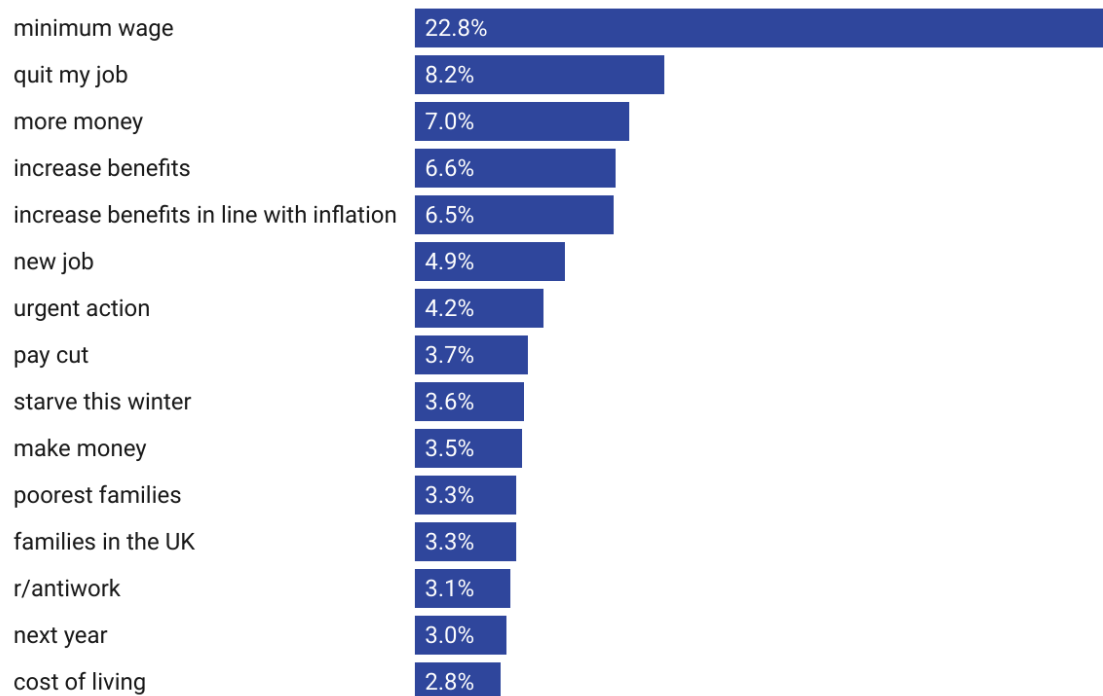
We used Synthesio Topic Modeling to scan and categorize millions of conversations about work, inflation, and pay. The largest cluster (constituting more than 16% of the study's conversation volume) related to minimum wage and the shrinking purchasing power of already struggling families.

In the US, thousands of posts have circulated about what the minimum wage should be if it kept pace with inflation. Though companies don't make the minimum wage "rules," workers don't feel like they're being taken care of by their employers. What's worse, many feel like they're being taken advantage of: one viral tweet showed an alleged leaked email from an Applebee's franchise exec saying rising gas prices are great for business because the chain can offer workers even lower wages. The tweet quickly amassed over 44k likes and nearly 18k retweets. The online response showed criticism of the food chain's "poverty wages" and called for boycotting.

The social media response across other countries is similar: in the UK, internet users have called for the government to increase benefits in line with inflation. Conversation volumes spiked in March and April with workers taking to social platforms to share various petitions and the hashtag #fairbenefitsnow. Meanwhile in India, "salary cuts" is the top phrase associated with negative sentiment. One user said, "record high inflation & cost of living, unemployment, salary cuts, job losses (...) the killing of the Indian dream!"

Figure 3 Synthesio text analytics reveal the top consumer expressions associated with negative sentiment

## Top phrases associated with negative sentiment

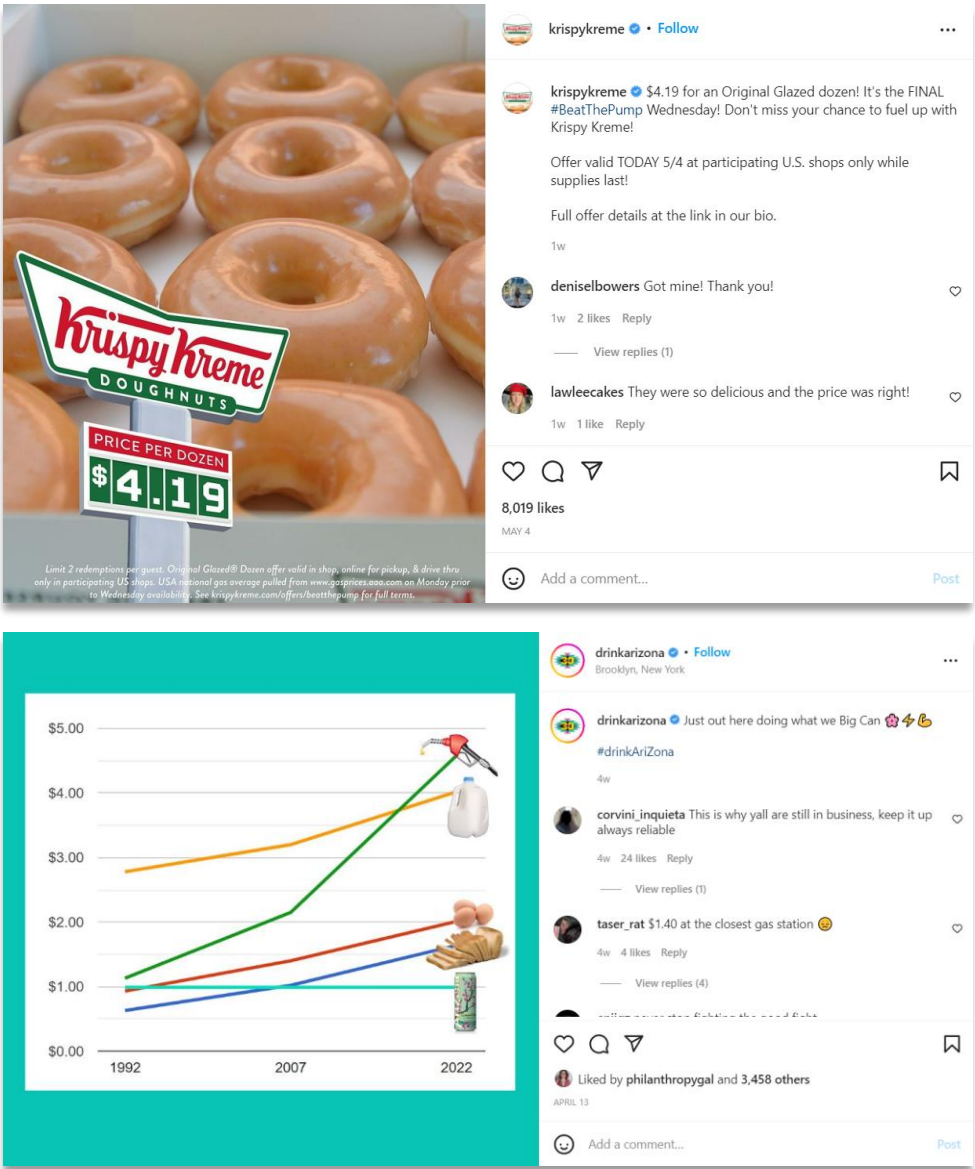


Created with Datawrapper

Source: 05/09/21 – 05/09/22, public mentions in 219 countries related to inflation and work, English only

But it's not all negative; some brands have found ways to stand out and lift spirits amid [falling real wages and compensation](#). Krispy Kreme spiked positive sentiment with social posts for #BeatThePump Wednesdays, offering a dozen donuts for the average price of a gallon of gas. Meanwhile, AriZona Beverages saw a surge in online mentions with consumers praising the brand for *still* offering their Iced Tea for \$0.99. “Can we just take a small moment to spend 5 minutes out of our day to go buy a .99 cent Arizona Iced Tea. How are they the only ones who combat inflation for us and are still alive to tell the tale?” said one internet user.

Figure 4 Creative campaigns from brands like Krispy Kreme and AriZona Beverages spark engagement and joy online



Source: 05/09/21 – 05/09/22, public mentions in 219 countries related to inflation and work, English only

Inflation and its effect on wages will continue to put pressure on brands – especially as competition for talent remains high. While social media is a key tool for brands to attract potential employees and stand out from competitors, it's also a critical source of insight. With more workers turning to online platforms to share experiences, voice frustrations, and [discuss their evolving workplace expectations](#), it's more important than ever that brands tune in.



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## About Synthesio

Synthesio, an Ipsos company, is a global leader in AI-enabled Consumer Intelligence. Our hybrid offering provides companies, brands, and agencies with the most complete, accurate, and predictive picture of their markets and buyers. Our AICI platform, powered by the most advanced natural language understanding and AI algorithms, supports the broadest set of online and offline data sources and fully leverages Ipsos' award-winning analytical frameworks. Synthesio was founded in 2006 and has offices in New York, Paris, London, Singapore, and Brussels.

Want a deeper look at the social insights we uncovered while researching for this report? Ready to see a social listening pioneer and global leader in AI-enabled consumer intelligence in action? Request a demo with our sales team today to learn how you can turn online conversations into critical business insights.

[Request a demo](#)