



[home](#) » [diversity and inclusion](#) » do men really want money and power?

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[diversity and inclusion, featured](#)

SEEK's Laws of Attraction study surveyed almost 6000 people across 20 different industries and investigated what lures candidates throughout the varying stages of their career.

If you believe Hollywood – where Tom Cruise screams ‘Show me the money’ or where Leonardo DiCaprio and Charlie Sheen depict unscrupulous stockbrokers who’ll do whatever it takes to get to the top on Wall Street – you’ll believe men are hungry for money and power.

It’s a stereotype reinforced by Hollywood, but how true is it?

SEEK surveyed almost 6000 people across 20 different industries and investigated what lures candidates throughout the varying stages of their career. It found that while money and career growth may or may not be important depending on your level of seniority, what they do want is job security.

Laws of Attraction research manager Caroline North says job security is the only consistent priority to feature in the top three drivers for all males regardless of whether they are starting out in their career or at the top of the corporate ladder. It also found that the more senior you are, the more important you think salary and compensation is. However, that’s not exclusive to men - financial compensation is the number one driver for senior-level women too.

At the other end of the corporate scale, money wasn’t in the picture. Career development opportunities were more important than financial reward for those entering the industry.

“Those on the very first rung of the career ladder are often willing to trade off salary for experience,” says North.

“They see it as a way to get onto the ladder and recognise they have to take what the market is offering as they don’t yet have much financial bargaining power.”

Work-life balance is typically associated with what women want but, says North, it’s a significant driver for men too.

Of the four career stages studied – senior, mid, junior and entry-level – only the junior-level males did not come out with work-life balance in their top three priorities.

North says men may desire things such as additional leave to look after children or elderly parents, don't necessarily want a 9-5 five-day week and may be lured by the option of working remotely.

“When you are going into the marketplace you need to be aware of unconscious bias,” says North.

“If you are just talking to men about money and power you are missing a really significant point if you are not also talking to them about work-life balance.”

North says taking the time to examine the Laws of Attraction research and understanding how the drivers differ between men and women throughout the course of a person's career, can help you hit the right caliber of candidates.

Of the 13 key drivers included in the research, job security, work-life balance, salary and career opportunities were the four top priorities through a man's working life.

Chris Karagounis is the managing partner at Alex Kaar. He says it is not surprising senior and mid-level executives want to be appropriately rewarded when a significant proportion of those earning over \$150,000 a year have families and mortgages to support.

High property prices, family, two working parents and a highly competitive corporate environment moving at a frenetic pace puts a lot of pressure on executives and Karagounis fears it often comes at a high personal cost. He believes it has never been harder to be an executive than in the current climate.

But while men need job security and compensation, they also desire strong leadership and value life outside of work.

“A job is not enough for them,” says Karagounis.

“They don't define themselves solely on their employment terms. They study, play sport, have a family, have elderly parents - whatever it may be, there are other things important to them and they want to be able to switch off and in the current world that can be very hard to do.”

He says despite having a more flexible working environment than ever before, it hasn't freed up their time. Modern corporate Australia is switched on 24/7 and expects its executives to be that too. He wonders how long the pace and the pressure can be sustained.

Karagounis says the companies that do recognise their employees beyond the corporate walls stand to gain advantages from attracting a deeper talent pool.

Simon Bennett is a 40-year-old father of two and owner of Glide Outplacement and Career Coaching.

His definition of success is very different now to how he defined it in his 20s. When he started out his career in agency recruitment, money and power were everything.

He'd just finished four years at university and was fed up with being poor so he chose a career he thought he could earn good money quickly and chased KPIs and targets voraciously.

Bennett set himself a five-year earnings target. He hit it within the first year and doubled it by the second.

But by the time he hit management level his priorities shifted and he wanted more self-determination. He saw a gap in the market for outplacement and created a business that worked for him.

“The long hours, the culture, it didn't fit anymore,” says Bennett.

“I had twin boys and I wanted to spend time with my kids and be there for them. If you have young kids and both partners are working it can't always be the same person taking the day off when the kids are sick.”

Bennett had found the corporate world wasn't nearly as open to flexibility for men as it was for women.

He says the financial relationship with an employer changes as you move up the career ladder and other elements can become more valuable: “Some organisations struggle to understand that if the reward isn't as important as it once was, they need to change the reward.”

Now he chooses his own hours, often works from home, is able to coach his sons' soccer team and defines success not by being top of the earnings table, but by his own business goals and job satisfaction.

“I think a lot of organisations would benefit if, instead of a yearly performance review, they opened up an honest discussion about the elements of the job, what else you want or what areas you would like further development,” says Bennett.