

UK ENGINEERS REMAIN CONFIDENT DESPITE YEAR OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

- UK confidence in engineering sector is down on 2014 results
- European based engineers are least confident in seeing sector growth
- Higher percentage of women over men saw pay rises in 2016
 - Engineers embrace machine automation

Matchtech, the UK's number one engineering recruitment company, surveyed over 2,500 engineers from around the world for the first *Engineering: Voice of the Workforce* study showing that despite the political and economic uncertainty of 2016 UK engineering confidence is still high at 58%.

Despite the good news, the survey showed that engineers' confidence has been knocked by the events of 2016. Engineers cite the reducing of budgets, a lack of economic investment and a clear strategy from government as key threats to engineering growth.

As a result, UK engineers' confidence in career progression is down 14% from 2014 when Matchtech asked the same question in their *Confidence Index* study to coincide with the Conservative party achieving a majority government in the UK's general election.

When asked about the impact of Brexit, 49% of the UK engineering community said they were concerned about the impact of Brexit on their sector vs 43% who were not. Only 39% were concerned about the job implications of Brexit on their job against 53% who were not.

The sectors where engineering confidence is highest is within rail (72%), utilities (68%) and renewables (65%).

Matchtech also found that 42% of respondents think the renewable sector is expected to grow the most in the next 12 months; while only 14% believe oil and gas will see any growth.

Keith Lewis, Managing Director of Matchtech, said: *"Our first Voice of the Workforce survey has shown how last year's unprecedented political change has led to a drop in confidence amongst engineers. In light of the political events of last year and the ongoing uncertainty it is unsurprising that confidence has fallen; however, we are buoyed by the recent upswing in manufacturing, which we believe will change this negative perception and bring confidence back to the sector."*

Regionally, European confidence is lowest of all (53%), while Africa is the most confident in growth (61%), followed by the Middle East (58%) and Asia Pacific (57%). Confidence in North America sits just above Europe at 55%.

The study also found that in the US, almost 60% of respondents were concerned about how the US election result would affect the sector.

Keith Lewis, also said: *"Despite a fall in confidence, we believe overall confidence remains high due to the fact that half of the engineers surveyed (57%) received a pay rise last year. One third (33%) of the engineers did not and 10% said their pay decreased. The majority of those that did receive a pay rise said it was between one and three percent of their salary. When we looked at how this was split between the sexes, we found that women (67%) were more likely to say they received a pay rise compared with men (56%)."*

Over half of the respondents stated that they believe gender diversity is improving; however only one third are aware of the steps their employer is taking to improve gender diversity, and even fewer are aware of how their employer is addressing the ageing workforce issue, which was raised as a major threat to the industry. Only 16% of engineers who responded believed their role would be at risk or would not exist in five years' time. Machine automation and technological developments aren't currently seen as a major threat to their livelihoods or the workforce more broadly, despite the Bank of England's warning to the contrary that 15m jobs could be lost to automation in the next two [decades](#).

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For more information please contact the Press Office via matchtech@edelman.com

Joshua Leigh – 0203 047 9205

James Shapland – 0203 047 2339

About Matchtech

Matchtech is the UK's number one engineering recruitment specialist, with over 30 years' experience in successfully matching job-seekers with hiring employers within the engineering industry.

Our consultants specialise in providing recruitment services across the aerospace, automotive, energy, infrastructure and maritime sectors. Through our sister companies, we are also able to provide solutions across the technology, professional and employability sectors.

About the survey:

Matchtech commissioned independent global market research firm Edelman Intelligence to conduct a survey with engineering professionals from around the world.

Across a three week period in October and November 2016, 2,522 respondents took part in the online survey, sharing their views about key industry issues and career opportunities within the engineering profession.

About Edelman Intelligence:

Edelman Intelligence is a global, full-service market insights and analytics firm that provides corporate, non-profit and government clients with strategic intelligence to make their communications and engagements with stakeholders the smartest they can be. The firm specializes in measurement, tracking and analysis in reputation, branding and communications. Edelman Intelligence is part of Edelman, the world's largest public relations company. Edelman Intelligence has more than 200 employees and 12 offices around the world.