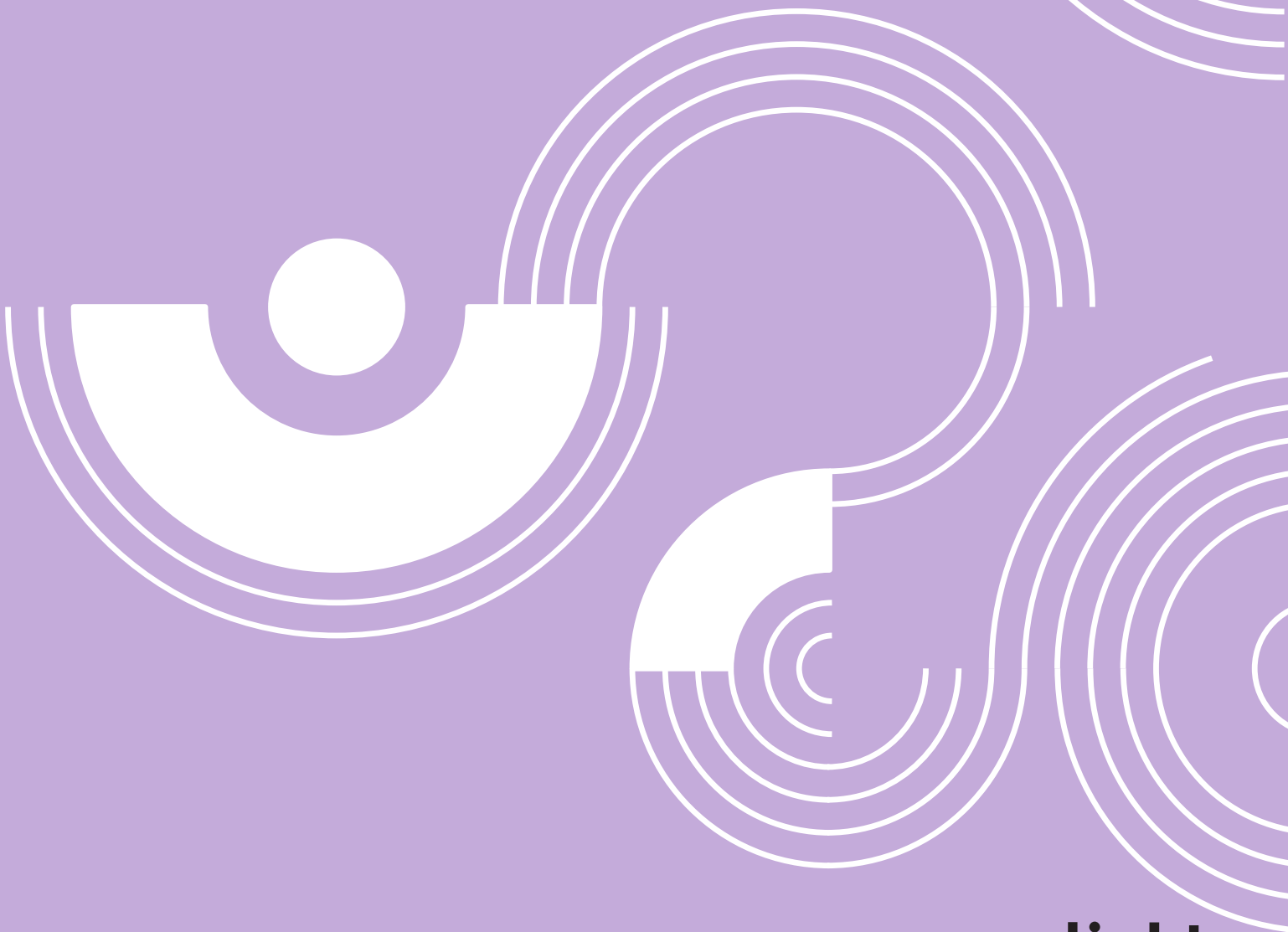


● 2022 Alight International Workforce and Wellbeing Mindset Study

Forging a Path Forward for Employee Wellbeing



alight

Offering wellbeing support to employees is something employers have been prioritizing as part of their overall rewards and benefits strategy in the past decade. And, in today's tough talent market, offering meaningful wellbeing support — programs that lead employees to feel positive about and in control of their wellbeing — can be an attraction and retention tool.

What's in it for the employers? The *2022 Alight International Workforce and Wellbeing Mindset Study* shows that employees who rate their wellbeing most positively are more likely to be productive and more likely to stay with a company. That means the investment you've made in them over the years stays with you, rather than walking to your competitors. Staying the course with wellbeing support and programs for employers isn't a straight line, but the data shows that we all need to do a better job of showing them that you're on the journey with them... or they may take the nearest off-ramp.

Surveying employee wellbeing

Alight's annual Mindset Study examines employee perceptions of their wellbeing across five key areas (mental/emotional, social, physical, professional/career and financial) and the relationship between wellbeing and the employee experience.

For our 12th annual study, we expanded our scope and reach. The 2022 survey respondents include employees in the United Kingdom, France, Germany and The Netherlands, as well as the U.S. This year's study includes 2,000 employees from each country.

We asked about wellbeing, but also about employee experience, technology and total rewards to name just a few topic areas. Any trend data reflects U.S. employee results because this was the first year to include employees in Europe.

As always, we polled employees from a wide range of industries, demographics as well as ethnic backgrounds to ensure we have a representative sample. This allows us to draw conclusions with a 95% accuracy.

Timing gives us important context for what was going on with employees when surveyed. Results are from March 2022, as the latest COVID-19 wave was waning in the U.S. and had weakened greatly in the U.K., France and Germany; The Netherlands was nearing the end of a national lockdown. Inflation was on the rise and the war in Ukraine had just begun.



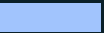

Good news or bad news?

The good news? Employees in the U.S. are much more likely to have positive feelings about their wellbeing in 2022 than in 2021 and those positive feelings have grown much stronger. In fact, we saw positive overall wellbeing ratings climb to 53% from 39% in July 2020, a time of tremendous uncertainty in the U.S. given the pandemic and societal unrest.

Even better news? Three out of four employees say that the culture their company creates has a major impact on their wellbeing. So, being deliberate about your wellbeing offerings and the way you're promoting them to your people and connecting them to the larger company culture can have a major impact on engagement and retention.

That promotion angle is key, because people aren't giving employers much credit for helping them care for or enhance their personal wellbeing. Fewer than half don't believe their employer cares about their wellbeing, and that the burden of getting or staying well is on the individual. The 2022 survey shows a further decline in employees' perceptions of their company's support for their wellbeing.

Positive Overall Wellbeing Rating*

| | | |
|------|-----|---|
| 2022 | 53% |  |
| 2020 | 39% |  |

*Wellbeing rating percentages represent top-3 box agreement on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is "couldn't be worse" and 10 is "couldn't be better"

Only 47% of U.S. employees feel that their employer genuinely cares about their wellbeing — and this falls to 34% for European employees.

It's time for you to get credit for the good work you've been doing for your people and their wellbeing. A smart strategy for the types of support you offer and the ways in which you help employees understand and make the most of them, can set you apart. If this is still an area of opportunity for you, now's the moment to act.

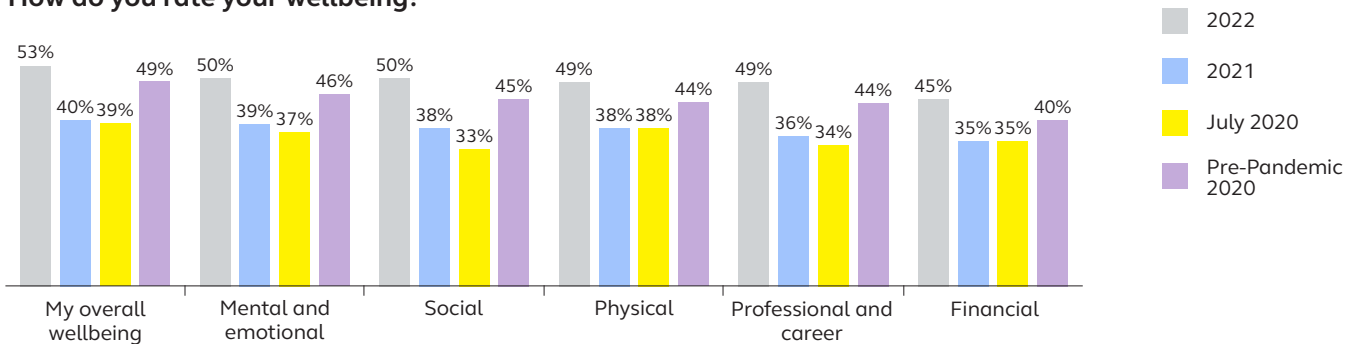
Let your people know that their wellbeing matters and show them how you're putting your money where their health is.

Understanding wellbeing in all its dimensions

Wellbeing is so much more than physical or mental health. Employees bring their whole person to work — and that includes physical, mental, financial, career and social concerns and priorities.

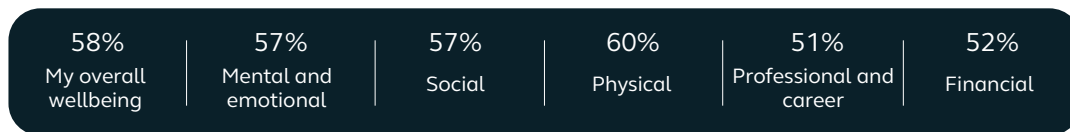
The areas where they are least likely to say they’re doing well are also the areas where they feel they have the least control.

How do you rate your wellbeing?*



* Wellbeing rating percentages represent top-3 box agreement on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is “couldn’t be worse” and 10 is “couldn’t be better”

Percentage of people feeling in control of each of the dimensions



Mental and emotional wellbeing

Mental/emotional wellbeing is the top predictor of overall wellbeing. But as we navigate a third year of the COVID-19 pandemic, three quarters report moderate to high levels of stress, which has not abated since the pandemic has slowed.

Employees say work/life balance has a major effect on their mental health. Yet about 10% fewer U.S. respondents said they could manage work and personal commitments effectively in 2022 than in 2021. We are diving deeper on stress and time pressures in our *Healthy Balance: Empowering Employees to Manage Stress and Improve Wellbeing* report.

Social wellbeing

Mirroring the percent rating their social wellbeing positively, only 50% of respondents feel connected to their coworkers. And another 35% report feeling lonely or isolated, up 9 points in the last year and up 13 points from pre-pandemic levels. That connection could be connected to the number of people working remotely, as 38% of primarily remote workers feeling more isolated than they might otherwise. Forging culture and connection in a hybrid environment is more challenging but is likely worth the effort.

Physical wellbeing

When it comes to physical wellbeing, nearly half (47%) say they regretted a health decision in the last year with more people saying they took advice from non-professionals, bad advice from healthcare workers and didn't check costs or if a provider was in-network. Promoting the tools you offer around cost comparisons and other guidance tools is a sound investment since 9 in 10 of employees who used these types of resources find them valuable. Yet, only 2/3 of people knew where to go to find the information to make those informed decisions, so it's incumbent to make them more accessible.

Financial wellbeing

Financial trouble can be a major stressor, so helping employees with financial wellbeing can also improve their mental wellbeing. But "financial wellbeing" can mean many things to your people – and vary, based on where they are in life. Research shows they won't necessarily trust information coming directly from their employer, as only 38% feel they can trust their employer to help them make the best financial decisions for myself today and in the future.

However, 68% say they are comfortable with sharing personal financial information to get more personalized financial guidance or planning. You can help them meet their financial wellbeing needs by serving up relevant resources and connecting them with recognized experts and tools to help them meet their needs at their stage of life. We explore more the types of benefits that employees are expecting to meet their unique needs and reflect who they are as individuals in our [Winning with Wellbeing](#) whitepaper.

Professional and career wellbeing

Financial wellbeing can overlap, to a degree, with professional/career wellbeing. If your people believe their future is bright at your company they're less likely to be tempted to look elsewhere. 4 in 10 people don't feel they are paid enough for the work they do and if better pay is the #1 reason that people leave a job, you may need to be more transparent about current pay and what they can achieve, as 66% agree pay transparency is important.

That desire to stay is a function of pay but also a function of feeling that they belong in your culture. 6 in 10 say they feel like they belong — up 7 points year over year and 11 points pre-pandemic. Even better: They're 38% more likely to be productive when they feel that they belong and that your values align with theirs. Providing a welcoming culture can be as important as providing the right tools, technology and resources.



wished their employer offered more resources and/or time off for mental health



report their employer actively encourages social interaction among employees



of employees spend at least 5 hours every month while at work on physical health-related tasks



say long-term financial planning is stressing them out



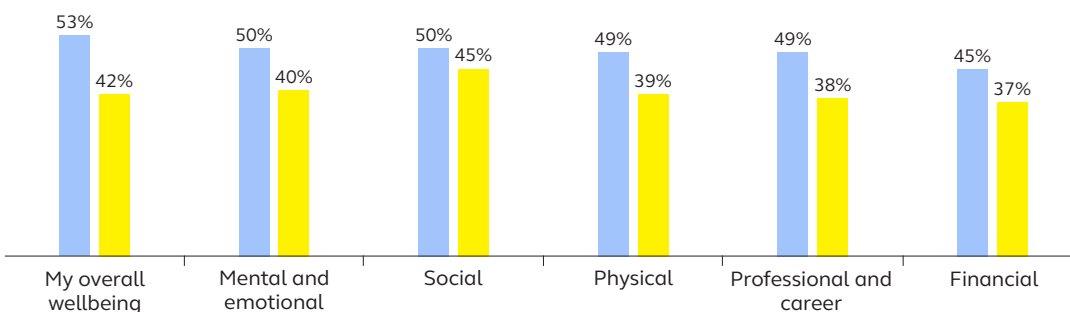
4 in 10 say that meaningful work is more important to them than pay

Unique wellbeing challenges across the globe

Fewer than half of U.S. employees agree that their employer cares about their wellbeing or offers resources that support their wellbeing. That's disheartening — especially if you've been investing in new programs for the past few years.

Outside the U.S., perceptions are actually worse. There's not a single dimension of wellbeing where the European cohort feels more supported or more positive about their experience than U.S. employees do.

How would you rate your wellbeing in the following areas?*



* Wellbeing rating percentages represent top-3 box agreement on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is "couldn't be worse" and 10 is "couldn't be better"

■ U.S. ■ European

As for feeling supported, international employees aren't feeling it either.

- Trust that my employer has my back if I were to experience a wellbeing challenge: 50% vs. 39%
- Wellbeing programs are easy to access: 78% vs. 65%

Here's what employees in all five countries have in common

- They struggle most with financial wellbeing.
- Only 42% of our European respondents felt they were balancing it all.
- They believe more time for themselves will improve their overall wellbeing. When asked what employers could do to have the biggest impact on their wellbeing, overwhelmingly they said help with work/life balance (55%) and provide sufficient time off from work (45%).

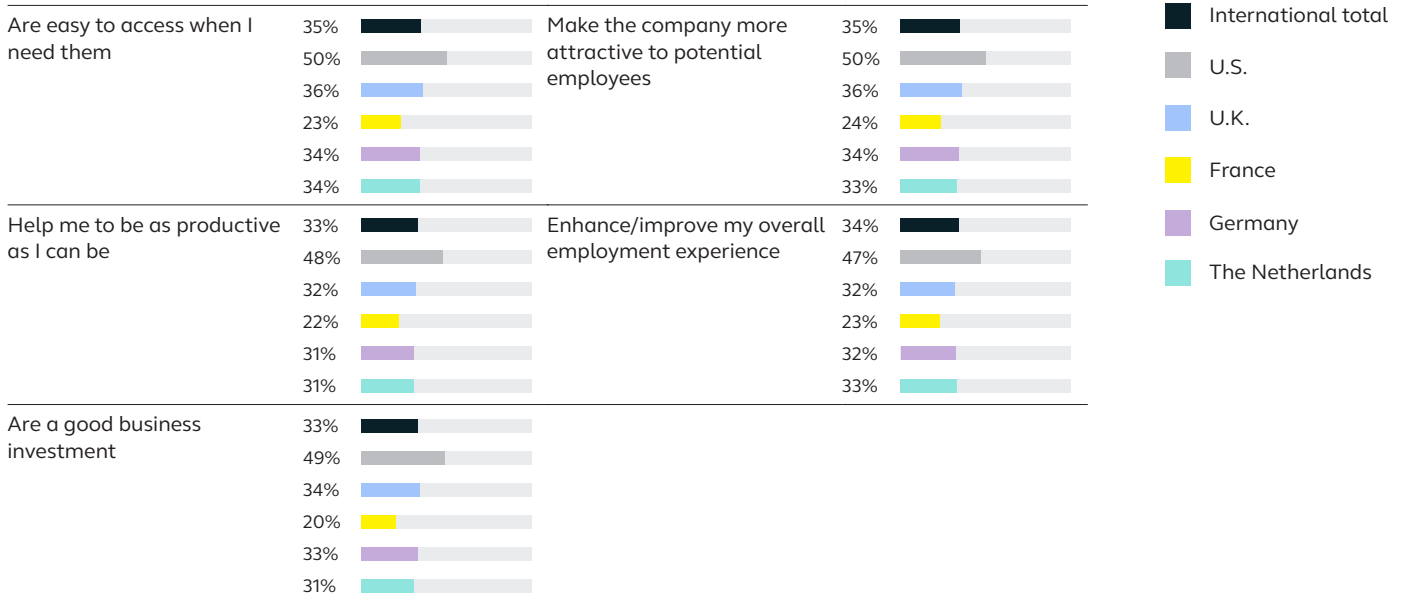
In the U.S., that theme is even stronger than it was last year: 83% of U.S. employees say spending more time on themselves is a top priority, up from 71%.



What can you do to create time for your people to focus on their wellbeing and work toward greater work/life balance?

Helping employees actually find time for wellbeing pursuits could be a powerful way to rebuild engagement and reinvigorate your workforce — without adding expensive incentives or new vendor programs. Whether that’s shortening calls, providing breaks, giving time off designated for wellbeing, or just showing how different programs will save you time could be possibilities, but be creative with finding time levers that fit with your environment and culture.

Wellbeing benefits and programs offered by my employer...



Moving from ‘aware of’ to ‘actively using’

Telling your people that they have great tools can help build awareness. But the real value comes when employees move from awareness of an offering to active use. Employee perception of a program’s value increases dramatically – 13 points! – when they’ve used it themselves

Employee perception of a program’s value increases dramatically - 13 points! - when they’ve used it themselves.

How can you move your people from learning about an offer to trying it out?

- **Showcase real users and real results.** Offer real user stories that focus on results and the feeling the user got from participating. The top reason people gave for not trying a program was they didn’t think it was relevant to their lives. Show them how it’s paid off for colleagues like them.
- **Make the time commitment clear.** The second most common reason people don’t try new programs is they think they don’t have enough time. Consider promoting offerings in terms of typical time investments, so employees have a clear sense of what’s a quick break and what’s a larger commitment and the benefits offered by each.
- **Make it personal.** Even globally, around half of respondents said they’d be comfortable sharing some personal information if it meant getting more personalized health or financial guidance.



Holding on to your people

There's a clear business case for offering wellbeing programs and using a smart communication strategy to maximize the value of your investment. The most common reason people change employers is for better pay. But pay is only one part of the picture, as 70% cite another reason from benefits to flexibility to value alignment or even COVID-19 policies. You can pull other levers to improve your employees' experience without increasing your payroll.

Think about what could be most meaningful for your people. We asked employees in five countries which of 25 wellbeing programs they valued most. In all five countries, their top answer was **reimbursement for working remotely**.

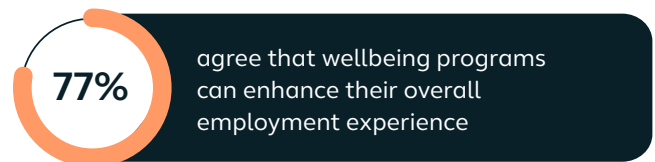
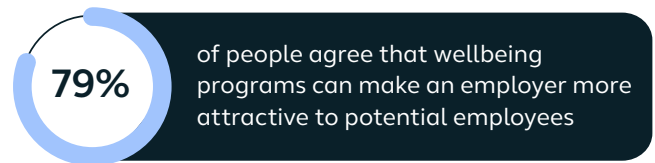
If you marketed this as part of your wellbeing strategy, framing the funds as an investment in employees' work/life balance, could you get even more bang for those bucks? Or, knowing the value employees place on time, could you make your shift to remote or hybrid work permanent and communicate that to provide more time around the workday for personal pursuits? Could you offer more flexibility in scheduling, to help your people balance home and work demands? Could you provide wellness hours, as you provide hours of vacation or sick time?

Looking at specific populations, there are other ways to think through the findings.

- **Parents or caregivers:** If your workforce has a lot of responsibility for others at home, how can your current vendors help your people better use their time or find some stress relief?
- **Younger employees:** Generation Z reports much higher levels of high or moderate stress than older employees (91% compared to 73% of Baby Boomers). What kind of stress management support can you offer these employees, in a way that's meaningful for their generation?

Coming up with the right blend of programs or creative solutions or low-cost options could have a high impact on your employees' perception that you support their wellbeing and desire to balance demands at work and home. And connecting those dots back to your overall wellbeing philosophy and investment in your people could see dividends.

The more employees feel that you're actively engaged in helping them strike balance, the more likely they themselves will be actively engaged. And that means better productivity, better retention and better recruitment opportunities to help you build your business.



What you can do now

Wellbeing will continue to be a focus for you and for your people in the coming years. So, how do you take steps to continue improving wellbeing across all dimensions?

- **Look at the full picture of wellbeing:** it is much more than an annual step challenge. Offer programs that support physical, mental financial, career and social wellbeing, too.
- **Make sure your people know** about all that you're offering to support their wellbeing. Be strategic in how you communicate programs and make it as simple as possible for people to access the tools you make available.
- Communicate that you offer programs for **all ages and stages**. You'll be most efficient when you offer targeted communication that shows an employee what's most helpful for where they are in life, whether that's just starting their career, building a family or nearing retirement.
- Go the extra step to **make it relevant and personal**. Whether it's serving up useful programs based on personal data or being easy to access in a moment of need, your people need to feel like your wellbeing support is there for them and not just a random collection of vendors.
- Emphasize results, so **employees know the programs can help them**. Are retirement fund balances up after you highlighted how you can help people save? Look to testimonials so that employees feel they're getting an unfiltered take on how a program has helped their colleagues.
- Find ways to **move people from "learn about" to "try it out."** Awareness is good, but employees have a stronger sense of a program's value when they're actively using it—and can become advocates for it with their colleagues.



About Alight

Alight is a leading cloud-based human capital technology and services provider that powers confident health, wealth and wellbeing decisions for 36 million people and dependents. Our Alight Worklife® platform combines data and analytics with a simple, seamless user experience. Supported by our global delivery capabilities, Alight Worklife is transforming the employee experience for people around the world. With personalized, data-driven health, wealth, pay and wellbeing insights, Alight brings people the security of better outcomes and peace of mind throughout life's big moments and most important decisions. Learn how Alight unlocks growth for organizations of all sizes at alight.com.

Contact Information

Laine Thomas Conway
Vice President, Communication Strategy, Thought Leader
Consumer Experience
laine.thomas@alight.com

alight