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Human Resource Executive®

Investing in Talent

Higher pay and cheaper healthcare are among the tools employers are relying on to hire and keep workers in today's tight labor market.

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INSIDE HR TECH

By Steve Boese/Columnist

HR Tech's Not-So-New Normal

Like many of you, I occasionally spend some time cleaning up the office, tossing out and tidying up files and notes. During this process recently, I ran across a set of notes from a facilitated session that my business and podcast partner Trish McFarlane and I presented at the HR Technology Conference way, way back in 2011. The title of the session was something like "Your Kid Will Never Work in an Office"—a 2011 take on the never-ending "future of work" conversation. I'd like to share some of the notes from that session from 10-plus years ago because I think you'll find it interesting how similar they sound to many of the workplace and HR technology topics we are talking about in 2022.

Here are just a few ideas from the 2011 session:

- 56% of senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies believe virtual work will steadily or greatly increase at their company;
- When our kids grow up, they will refuse to work as many hours as we do;
- What do employers need to value in new employees? Adaptability, ability to learn on the fly and creative problem solving; and
- If your organization insists on maintaining a traditional office environment, you'll struggle to compete for talent versus companies like Google and others who are taking more creative and flexible approaches to how work is done and organized.

While we can let ourselves believe that more focus on work/life balance, remote working, constant learning and agility are new concepts brought forth by the pandemic, these notes from 2011 remind us that crucial workplace issues are applicable in every era and in every organization. Our challenges in 2022 are not new, but that doesn't make them easier to solve. However, it does serve as a good reminder that we can—for the most part, I think—stop searching for the "new normal" or crafting some nebulous "future of work" for our organizations. The "new normal" is just "normal." And the "future of work" is right now. In fact, it also was 11 years ago—and will be 11 years from now, too.

So, what I think this suggests is that HR and organizational leaders should probably focus on just a few basic objectives for 2022—and, shockingly (not really), the 2011 version of this advice would have been similar. For sustained success no matter the year, HR needs to address the overall wellbeing of the workforce, push to eliminate or reduce barriers to people's ability to do their best work and seek ways to improve flexibility and adaptability to processes and ways of working.

Let's consider what a concentration on these core areas suggests for how we think about HR technology in 2022 and forward. First—and perhaps you are already thinking about this if you were impacted by the outage of certain UKG time and attendance systems earlier this year—it's time to conduct a thorough review of your core, essential HR technologies for time tracking, payroll, leave management and benefits administration. These solutions are the foundation of not only the rest of the HR tech stack, but they form and support the most fundamental promise the organization makes to its people: that they will be paid timely and accurately for their work.

Beyond that—in the area of payroll and benefits technology, specifically—the last few years have seen considerable innovation and increased focus on empowering employees. Several payroll providers have pioneered efforts that allow employees to review and approve their own paychecks and direct deposit information in advance of the scheduled pay date, have access to early or even daily net pay, and that prioritize the integration of financial wellbeing and planning tools with other solutions. On the benefits side, we've seen capabilities like intelligent enrollment tools as well as more employee-friendly and highly personalized user experiences, which have enabled employers to better communicate the availability and value of their benefits offerings. While many other areas of HR technology often seem "sexier," it's important to not overlook the additional value that can be created in "boring" functions like payroll and benefits.

Just like it can be tempting to look for the latest shiny object when it comes to the future of work, so can it be in the HR technology space. But just as I encourage you to focus instead on just a few basic workplace ideas, I would also urge you to keep an eye toward the underlying, never-changing importance of your "core" HR technologies. This can help you ensure that they are providing all the essential functions you and your employees need, and further, to explore potential areas where you can enhance the services you provide your employees in these areas.

Steve Boese is chair of HRE's HR Technology Conference & Exposition®. Send questions or comments to hreletters@lrp.com.

Josh Bersin/Columnist

Human Resource Executive HR Technology Conference & Exposition

Let's Rethink How We Change

Business leaders have typically approached change initiatives with project management tools such as spreadsheets, assigned deliverables and rigid timelines. But now, the relentless pace of change, coupled with current workforce challenges, requires a new approach that is based on iterative and agile practices, employee impact and even human nature.

Recent research from the Josh Bersin Academy, coupled with the ongoing conversations conducted as part of our ongoing Big Reset working groups, show that a traditional approach to change management is no longer sufficient. Traditional change-management projects are designed as once-and-done; however, change requires changing business processes, job responsibilities and assignments, the associated employee behaviors and more—all simultaneously. Not only is a big-bang approach outside the realm of human nature, today's pace of change just doesn't allow for lengthy and complex planning.

While old change models can give some comfort of providing a structured approach, they also lead to a false sense of security. Even if you follow a change management methodology "to a T," something will happen that will disrupt planning. We need to change the paradigm and move away from a focus on management to one that facilitates change and supports employees along the way.

In companies that successfully manage change, leaders and high performers reinforce the company's mission and purpose; they explain how their reinvented business models will work; they create cross-functional teams to design and implement change; and they acknowledge that the initiative will never be done. That is, changes to any change process are inevitable. The research shows how companies that build change agility are more profitable, have higher rates of employee engagement and retention, and happier customers.

Our research sets out 10 lessons for change agility that hold true not just for the massive business changes brought on by the pandemic, but also for any transformational change. These include transparent communications, human-centered leadership, a clear mission that drives all actions, and rewarding and recognizing behavior changes. All of these practices are very important, but for this article, I'll highlight just two practices.

Microchanges Result in Macrotransformation

When you think of big transformations, the sheer magnitude of the change involved can seem overwhelming. Big-bang change projects are typically organized to facilitate the work being done by various teams. However, they usually fail to consider human nature when it comes to change and too often don't include affected employees in the process. The simple fact is that we humans find it difficult to accept a lot of change all at once. Additionally, people adapt to change at different rates. The answer is to look for ways to make incremental changes which, over time, result in significant changes.

For instance, Spectrum Health, a healthcare provider with more than 30,000 employees, adapted to hybrid work with a "virtual fishbowl" experiment. Rather than designing strict policies mandating specific attendance rules, the leadership team selected three groups to observe and experiment. Managers observed how employees were navigating the new style of work, shared best practices and identified the tools, strategies and mindset shifts that were needed. With this knowledge in hand, the organization then expanded to new groups and eventually the entire organization. Such incremental experimentation is key to testing a change and gives people the opportunity to learn along the way.

HR Capabilities to Foster Change Agility are Critical

For the last two years, HR teams have been charged with catalyzing change seamlessly and effectively for the workforce, while coping with changes in their own roles and personal lives. In fact, respondents to our Global HR Capability Assessment have put change and transformation as the top priority for HR professionals. However, 40% of HR professionals expressed they lack the skills needed for leading effective change. HR organizations need to provide development opportunities for staff to build the muscle for change management. Here are a few ways to get started:

Assess capability gaps. Evaluate the current state of HR capabilities in your organization to prioritize development opportunities. The capabilities that matter the most, as we discussed above, include continuous listening; the ability to analyze, interpret and translate data into action; design thinking; and fostering human-centered leadership.

HR values and needs coaching. Our capability assessment also asks HR professionals to indicate the development opportunities they consider most important for their careers. Coaching and mentoring surfaced as the developmental opportunity that HR professionals consider most important for advancing their skills and capabilities. HR leaders must focus on providing their teams with tailored coaching on short-term capability needs and mentoring to support capabilities important for long-term career growth and business success.

Leverage capability academies and communities. Capability academies emphasize developing business capabilities and typically includPRe developmental assignments and networks of people for sharing knowledge and information. Kaiser Permanente brought together a change management community of practice with close to 100 people from HR, IT and business operations to share success stories and learn and support each other while dealing with various change initiatives. The community of practice shares knowledge and tools in monthly meetings and in online discussions, with a focus on increasing overall change capacity.

In conclusion, the most important shift to successfully adapt to change is in mindset. We must recognize that every interaction is a change interaction, from the seemingly trivial to the "big" moments. And we need to craft the small moments even more carefully than the big ones; it is in these small moments where we can create readiness and acceptance for change and transformation.

Josh Bersin is an analyst, author, educator and thought leader focusing on the global talent market and the challenges and trends impacting business workforces around the world. Send questions or comments to hreletters@lrp.com.

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Talent Management

Slaying the Great Resignation Dragon with Upskilling and Learning

Chipotle, Siemens and other major employers are placing big bets on employee education to retain workers and keep them inspired and productive.

BY PHIL ALBINUS

Chipotle and Siemens may not appear to have much in common on first glance, but when it comes to their large and diverse workforces, they share a similar goal: to offer adult education and professional learning for their employees in an effort to build company loyalty, provide a career path for valuable talent, and to slow the rate of the Great Resignation as employees quit and switch jobs in record numbers.

Tawanda Starms

These learning and upskilling programs offer employees a wide array of options, ranging from high school diploma programs and college classes to courses teaching high-end computer networking skills and mentoring for future executives.

The two companies reflect a growing trend that centers learning in talent attraction and retention efforts: New research from consulting firm Willis Towers Watson, for instance, finds that the number of employers looking to equip their workers with new skills has grown nearly 70% just in the last three years. That's amid a context of more than 80% that anticipate hiring challenges this year and three-quarters that expect struggles with retention.

Like the request to work remotely, the demand for employee learning is coming from the employees. According to performance-management platform 15Five's 2022 Workplace Report, nearly half of American workers say clear career growth fueled by learning and development provided by an employer is one of the most important factors for them to remain at a company. More than three-quarters (76%) of employees say they work harder for an employer that shows it cares about their growth as a professional than one that doesn't.

Employers are opening up their wallets to address this challenge. Nearly half (49%) of organizations are increasing their learning and development spend in 2022, which is up from 41% in 2021, according to a survey of 300 HR leaders conducted by business tech provider Capterra. The survey also found that remote businesses boosted their L&D investment more than hybrid or on-site businesses and that high turnover from the Great Resignation is driving the decision to significantly increase L&D budgets this year.

Welcome to employee learning and upskilling's moment.

Chip Chats and iPads

For Tawanda Starms, vice president of talent and culture at Chipotle, employee education is just as vital an offering as any employee benefit. The restaurant chain extends many of its education benefits not only to its 90,000 full- and part-time employees but also their employees' family members.

Chipotle offers provides a variety of educational offerings, from GED programs to higher education degrees via debt-free online learning solution provider Guild, which offers courses from University of Denver, E-Harvard and E-Cornell, among other online universities. The Mexican restaurant also offers online courses from Udemy and Unity for Business, a pair of on-demand educational platforms, and Better Up, a program for on-demand executive coaching.

Chipotle is also expanding its learning tech with the launch of a new learning management system this spring from Docebo, which counts L'Oréal Paris, Netflix and Samsung as clients. With Docebo, all employees in the U.S. and Canada will have access to the LMS and its library of classes. The platform can assign courses for employees from restaurant training to leadership learning and allows employees them the chance to take on-demand classes in areas that interest them.

In addition, the restaurant regularly holds what it calls Chip Chats, which employees can virtually attend to discuss company initiatives and job opportunities with company leaders and supervisors. At one recent

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

How IBM, Cisco Added More Knowledge to a Smart Workforce

Nickle LaMoreaux

As CHRO for IBM, Nickle LaMoreaux, gets to the point: "Continuous learning has become a key attribute of our culture."

Seven years ago, IBM launched THINK40 employee education program for mandatory learning and skill upgrading. "This has created a workforce that is not only highly skilled but this also allows for internal career mobility," says LaMoreaux.

"Even before the pandemic, technology was changing jobs—no longer could somebody enter the workforce and expect to have a career in just that skill set for 20, 30, 40 years," she says. "As technology is evolving, new jobs are emerging, and we have to keep our skills fresh."

According to LaMoreaux, IBM's "most avid learners" are 44% more likely to get promoted. "With reskilling and upskilling, people can grow with the company even as their jobs change," she says.

Last May, Cisco took its employees offline for four days to give them the chance to examine the areas of knowledge they would like to pursue. In response, Cisco created "dozens of new educational offerings," according to Francine Katsoudas, CHRO for the networking giant.

Francine Katsoudas

"They were able to pick anything and everything that they wanted to get deeper in and we facilitated this. We probably put about 30 or 40 offerings out there" she says.

"We're going to continue to get creative about how we focus on this for the company. It will be less about the individual and more about the system providing that opportunity to learn and develop," she adds.

—Phil Albinus

Human Resource Executive HEALTH & BENEFITS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Cover Story

Investing in Talent

As the Great Resignation continues, compensation and benefits are increasingly being used to attract and retain workers.

BY KATHRYN MAYER

Fueled by the pandemic, KPMG has beefed up its employee listening strategies over the past two years, regularly asking its workers for feedback, as well as how they are feeling and what they need help with. Starting in 2020, the accounting firm began sending workers pulse surveys, conducting focus groups and hosting conversations to hear about their biggest struggles and what company leaders could do.

Most recently, when employees were asked about what they wanted and needed, the result was clear: They wanted more money in their pockets.

As a result, KPMG last fall announced several enviable benefits and programs that helped improve employees' financial situations: It handed out raises; it introduced an automatic 6%-8% firm contribution to retirement accounts—even if workers don't contribute themselves; it offered more frequent financial rewards for excellent work; and it said it would reduce employee healthcare premiums by 10% in 2022, with no change in benefit levels.

Not only that, but the firm in January announced a nearly $160 million additional investment in salary increases across the board for all KPMG professionals.

"We've always been in a very aggressive labor market, but the pace of change is more significant than we've ever experienced," says Darren Burton, the firm's chief people officer. "When you take an approach of your total rewards, it's all about balancing that portfolio and putting dollars where people value them most. If you take that approach and pay attention to what really matters, [employees'] satisfaction goes way up because you're giving them what they're asking for and what's most relevant in the marketplace."

Darren Burton

KPMG's strategy of focusing on employee needs while putting more money in their wallets is one being deployed by several employers as they navigate a trifecta of concerns—COVID-19, the Great Resignation and record inflation—and in the process try to keep and attract talent.

As COVID-19 challenges affect everything—public health, burnout, childcare and family responsibilities, and a renewed focus on work-life balance—a record number of employees are leaving their jobs. Meanwhile, cost of living is growing at the fastest rate in more than four decades: Consumer prices soared in January by 7.5% from the year before, according to the latest Consumer Price Index.

"Employers are trying to do whatever they can to retain and attract employees in this tough market. Compensation ceilings are looser than they've been in years, and benefits that were once considered superfluous five years ago are now being integrated into the mix," says Julie Stich, vice president of content for the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans, a nonpartisan group that counts more than 8,200 organizations and 32,000 individuals as members. "Line managers and executives are listening to employees—whether it's through town halls, stay interviews or more data-driven approaches—to understand what employees' key issues are."

These efforts are all causing employers to more aggressively reevaluate their compensation and benefits packages—especially offerings that put more money in workers' bank accounts and give employees a concrete and immediate way to feel valued and supported. An increasing number of company leaders realize that if they don't do so, they'll watch talent walk out the door.

"We're in a candidate-driven market. There are more job openings than there are people to fill them," says Stephanie Naznitsky, an executive director with human resource consulting firm Robert Half. "With the rise in cost of living, workers know they can go out into the market to find other opportunities that would help better their situation and offset some of the personal living expenses that have increased in recent months."

Compensation changes

According to a Willis Towers Watson survey of more than 1,000 companies conducted during October and November, about a third of companies boosted their salary increase projections from earlier in 2021. Companies are now budgeting an overall increase of 3.4% in 2022, compared with the average 3% increase they had budgeted in June 2021. Employers gave workers an average pay increase of 2.8% in 2021.

Though those increases are higher than in previous years, smart employers will likely go further to keep up with cost-of-living increases and to sway workers to stay. A 3% raise doesn't cover the cost-of-living increases, and it alone won't entice workers to stay when they can go elsewhere for a salary hike, experts contend.

There's a great reprioritization of work, rewards and careers underway, and it's putting significant pressure on compensation programs for many employers.

— Catherine Hartman, Willis Towers Watson

Bigger pay raises are on the table, often combined with bonuses, equity, stipends, recognition enhancements and more. Sign-on bonuses increased to 84% from 71% in 2021, spot bonuses increased to 73% from 64% and retention bonuses increased to 65% from 55%, according to a recent WorldatWork survey of more than 1,000 organizations.

"There's a great reprioritization of work, rewards and careers underway, and it's putting significant pressure on compensation programs for many employers," says Catherine Hartmann, North America rewards practice leader at Willis Towers Watson.

Roughly 74% of companies cited the tight labor market as a reason to increase their budgeting for raises, according to the Willis Towers Watson survey. "Employers are looking to recognize high performers or stand-out candidates with an immediate benefit—and that often equates to more money in pocket," Stich says.

Julie Stich

"Until the job market settles, this trend will stay."

While salary boosts and bonuses are a desired—and needed—approach, on their own, they are not enough to solve retention and attraction challenges. Doing that also takes a comprehensive total rewards strategy that looks at more generous benefits, experts say.

Better benefits

Providing more generous 401(k) contributions or covering or reducing the cost of healthcare premiums, as KPMG did, are certainly good ideas that make a big financial impact—and those trends are being embraced by a number of firms.

Meta, the parent company of Facebook, increased its 401(k) match to a dollar for every dollar its employees contribute, up to $10,250 this year and $13,500 for those 50 and older. That's up from a prior match of 50% of participant contributions up to 7% of pay. Boeing increased its matching contribution, now matching dollar-for-dollar the first 10% of base and incentive pay that non-union employees contribute to their 401(k) accounts. Previously, the aerospace giant matched 75 cents on the dollar for up to 8% of base pay an employee contributed.

Sweetening retirement savings is an increasingly popular strategy, especially in a tight labor market. Data last fall from Callan found about 16% of large and midsize employers plan to increase their 401(k) contributions or reinstate a previously suspended match in 2022, while another 8% said they are considering such a move. That 24% combined total is a big increase compared to 2021 when Callan found a combined total of only about 12% took similar action.

It's a smart approach: Employees are asking for more monetary support from their employer—especially since COVID-19 has left many workers in a more vulnerable financial position than they were pre-pandemic. Health concerns and job security continue to take their toll on many Americans, while others have lost jobs, had to miss work because of COVID infections or saw their investments and 401(k) balances take significant tumbles. A recent survey from Betterment, an investment advisory firm, found that financial benefits are now a top priority for employees, above in-office perks and vacation time. 401(k)s and matching programs remain the most highly sought-after financial benefits, the survey of 1,000 employees finds.

For KPMG, reevaluating its retirement plan spurred "tremendous" feedback from its employees, especially since employees specifically asked for upfront cash in their post-career savings. "Anyone will tell you that any good continuous listening strategy, the foundation of it is ensuring that you're following up with what you've heard," KPMG's Burton says. "And that's exactly what we did. All of these major total rewards changes were based on what our people were telling us related to their challenges based on [COVID-19]."

"It's market-leading," Burton says of the firm's updated retirement plan.

Retirement, of course, is only one piece of the financial wellness puzzle. Other employers are helping employees pad their emergency savings with savings programs, financial wellness programs and a focus on short-term financial support in addition to longer-term initiatives, like a more generous retirement plan.

Targeting employees' financial health is a good strategy for attracting talent and one that is increasing in importance, especially with the confluence of events

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happening in the marketplace, says Timothy Flacke, co-founder and executive director of Commonwealth, a Boston-based financial nonprofit.

"There are some employers who believe that turnover is inevitable, and they just sort of plan for it. And that's a real missed opportunity," says Flacke, who is speaking about financial health strategies at *HRE*'s Health & Benefits Leadership Conference. "There is truly an opportunity for a set of tools, interventions and benefits that are very focused on short-term financial insecurity."

Other creative benefit offerings that help offset costs are another consideration for employers, and a trend that will likely pick up steam into the year as the hot job market shows no sign of abating. Stipends for wellness or for work-from-home accommodations have become a standard; employers like Twitter and Google have handed out cash so employees can pick out a new chair, a desk or office supplies as remote work becomes the norm.

Tim Flacke

There also are benefit offerings that help offset costs for employees like student loan assistance, tuition reimbursement, daycare subsidies or fertility benefits—offerings that can directly help an employee's pocketbook. Those investments usually pay off for organizations, IFEBP's Stich says.

"The return on attracting and retaining key employees can quickly outweigh any utilization costs," she explains. "As always, the importance of communication can't be understated. Employers need to stress the value of the benefits they provide to their employees."

Flexibility and offering remote work can also combat the rising cost of living and put more money in the pocket of workers, Robert Half's Naznitsky says, as employees can be more in control of moving away from expensive cities, for instance, or can cut down on commuting to save on gas or other transportation expenses. "If you can help in those areas, maybe you are saving your employees from a stressful commute and commuting costs, or providing discounts that can help with other expenses," she says.

Embracing authenticity

Although providing immediate help is on the minds of employers in the battle for talent, experts say attention needs to transcend a short-term focus.

What's important is that employers authentically want to help employees and provide them with purpose, value and support. "It's more than dollars and cents," Flacke says. "If you send a message that's it all about the bottom line, that's what people will expect. But if you authentically send a message that you're here for a purpose and you're looking to help, that's a different message."

Stich agrees, saying purely financial and immediate benefits won't have a long-lasting impact unless they are coming from a genuine place.

"What is implemented now must be considered in the long-term," she says. "We know that over time, more money alone isn't a strong retention strategy. Employers need to consider longer-term actions and incentives that foster an enriching company culture."

Send questions or comments about this story to hreletters@lrp.com.

Health & Benefits

ABC's Ginger Zee to headline Health & Benefits Leadership Conference

Mental health is taking the spotlight for the opening keynote of *HRE*'s Health & Benefits Leadership Conference.

BY KATHRYN MAYER

TV personality, ABC News chief meteorologist and mental health advocate Ginger Zee is headlining *HRE*'s 2022 Health & Benefits Leadership Conference, being held in Las Vegas in April.

In her opening keynote, "The Mental Health Crisis: Time for Action," Zee will draw from her personal journey and history of mental health struggles to discuss why company leaders must step up to destigmatize mental health in the workplace. Zee, an Emmy and Murrow Award-winning meteorologist, is also the author of the *New York Times* best-selling memoir *Natural Disaster: I Cover Them, I Am One,* where she opens up about her own significant mental health issues that went undiagnosed until she entered inpatient therapy. She currently covers the nation's weather headlines on *Good Morning America* and across all ABC News broadcasts and digital platforms.

Zee's keynote comes at an important time: Mental health has been a big focus of employers over the past two years as rates of stress, anxiety, depression and burnout have soared among employees because of the ongoing pandemic. As a result, scores of employers have stepped up efforts on mental health by adding and expanding benefits, implementing mental health days and offering digital solutions. Still, experts say efforts must continue.

The 2022 Health & Benefits Leadership Conference marks the return of an in-person event. The 2021 event was held virtually due to COVID-19.

Zee joins a robust conference program that will go in-depth on the ongoing pandemic and the new world of work as well as spotlight some of the hottest trends and issues facing HR and benefits professionals.

Ginger Zee

Other mainstage events will include a panel of HR and benefits leaders on how COVID-19 has reshaped benefits; a session about improving workers' wellbeing when they work remotely from i4cp's Carrie Bevis; and a keynote address from James Klein, president of the American Benefits Council, who will discuss what benefits and HR professionals need to know about benefits policy in 2022.

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Chip Chat, a Chipotle restaurant employee interested in working in tech was encouraged to email a senior technology officer about joining the company's IT division, says Starms.

Like other large employers focused on skilling in today's tight labor market, Chipotle is keen to offer a variety of programs to serve employees' differing learning styles. "Things such as gamification are really exciting to our employees. The ability for us to be able to push this learning out to employees and have it accessible on different platforms, such as iPads in the back of the house," is critical for Chipotle, she says.

Chipotle's education technology also allows the company to monitor data from employee training to gain insight into when employees prefer to take their courses. HR leaders also can see which courses are popular and which are of little interest to employees.

"You've got extrinsic and intrinsic ways of driving retention. The intrinsic is really the ability to engage with employees from a space of development and the X factor of caring about someone," says Starms.

Siemens' 'Netflix of learning'

While many employers opt, like Chipotle, to purchase one or more third-party LMS platforms, technology giant Siemens built an in-house LMS for its 300,000-member global workforce. My Learning World, which went live in 2020, features an AI-powered tool that monitors employees' interests and suggests courses for their career and skills development.

"We jokingly refer to it as the 'Netflix of learning' because it learns about you and it makes recommendations for your learning based on things that you've previously done," says Jill Zahm, Siemens' director of talent management.

That means that Siemens employees can choose their career route and the courses that will help them achieve that goal and possibly get that job. "They've been identified as [needing skills that] would be really helpful for them, so people aren't training for the sake of training," she says. (Siemens trained more than 6,700 apprentices last year and invested roughly $184 million in lifelong learning opportunities—an average of $650 per employee.)

"If you would've asked me a year ago who I thought would be taking advantage of these programs, I would have said our more junior level and our younger workforce," says Zahm. "We're seeing this being used [by a wide range of employees] because everybody is hungry right now to grow and develop after a couple of years of feeling a little sedentary from COVID."

The tech fueling employee learning's moment

All of these employee education efforts and offerings come from the same inspiration: Retaining talent is top of mind for HR leaders as recruiting is more competitive than ever before, says Jill Popelka, president of SAP SuccessFactors.

"Companies are being forced to prioritize the opportunities they can provide employees to attract and engage them. Today, people are eager to learn different skills, to grow within an organization and to contribute in new and exciting ways," she says.

Jill Zahm

And employee learning doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg. There are some services that employers can take advantage of for their employees without breaking the bank. One of the leading cloud certification education providers, Amazon Web Services (AWS), offers more than 500 cloud computing lessons for free and uses the popular Twitch social media gaming platform—think Facebook Live for gamers—as an online classroom. AWS hopes it is "fun, informal, and interactive," says Maureen Lonergan, vice president of training and certification for AWS.

While employers and HR leaders are expectedly proud of their employee education programs, it isn't the final destination: They must ensure that an actual career path exists for employees.

"Rather than fixate on the next skill or programming language their team needs to learn, HR and tech leaders should think more holistically about the career paths they're establishing for employees within an organization," says Jonathan Naymark, general manager of Codecademy for Business, an e-learning platform provider.

Employees are looking for simple and intuitive learning systems that offer personalized learning opportunities with clear objectives, according to SAP's Popelka. Employees want to understand why and how they will benefit from a learning tool.

"The more a learning program can be tailored to the individual and become a natural part of an employee's experience—whether that's learning directly within a collaboration tool like Microsoft Teams or making it a part of their growth and development plan—the more likely that program will be successful," says Popelka.

Chipotle's Starms agrees. "We stay focused on creating an environment where employees can thrive, pursue their passions and become lifelong learners. They are engaging with us as an employer," she says. "They do care about staying with us as an employer, and they're proud to be Chipotle employees."

Send questions or comments about this story to hreletters@lrp.com.

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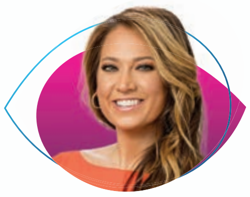
INSPIRING & ENLIGHTENING KEYNOTES

The Mental Health Crisis: Time for Action



GINGER ZEE
ABC News Chief Meteorologist; *New York Times* Best-Selling Author; Mental Health Advocate

COVID-19 changed everything and the pandemic continues to drive a dramatic decline in employee well-being. Hear **Ginger Zee** speak about her mental health struggles, the state of employee mental health, and how you can support your workforce through the current crisis and beyond.

Reimagining Financial Security in a Post-COVID World

DEVIN MILLER
CEO & Co-Founder, Secure

SUZE ORMAN
Finance Expert; Podcast Host; TV Personality; Co-Founder, Secure

What will financial security look like post COVID? How can you help employees save for financial independence and retirement? What's at stake for employers? Find out as **Suze Orman**, joining via livestream, and **Devin Miller** discuss it all and then elaborate on the new trend of employer-sponsored emergency savings accounts (ESAs). You'll learn the positive impact employers are already noticing from this high-impact offering and how ESAs fit into your company's financial well-being package.

The COVID-19 Benefits Revolution: What Have We Learned? What's Next?

DARREN BURTON
Chief People Officer, KPMG

CRYSTAL GASKIN
Chief People and Culture Officer, Mailchimp

During the pandemic, smart employers enhanced and rolled out new resources and programs to help their employees as the workforce relied on benefits more than ever. HBLC Program Chair Kathryn Mayer will moderate a discussion with HR executives on how benefits (and HR leadership) have evolved, what will change post-pandemic, and how lessons learned can prepare HR for the next crisis.

What to Know About Benefits Policy in 2022

JAMES KLEIN
President, American Benefits Council

ATTENDEE FAVORITE

Washington insider **James Klein** will examine the legislative issues most important and timely to benefits and HR leaders including healthcare, paid leave and retirement. You'll learn what's at stake for employer plan sponsors and benefits professionals, where healthcare costs are headed, and what public policy changes might be coming in the future.

Empowering Employees to Own Their Well-Being Working From Wherever

CARRIE BEVIS
Managing Director, Communities & Partnerships, Chair of Employee Well-Being Exchange, i4cp

Offering flexible work policies helps your company retain top talent and makes recruiting easier. But on its own it isn't enough. **Carrie Bevis** will acquaint you with invisible micro-stressors that can quickly deplete your workforce, especially in a hybrid environment, and share techniques and programs to support employee well-being no matter where your workers are located.

Ideas & Innovators

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See www.BenefitsConf.com for participants.

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Learn about financial wellness programs to help your employees build emergency savings, save for retirement and become financially secure.

Rethinking Healthcare
Hear transformational solutions to combat rising costs, encourage employees to not neglect care they need, address health equity issues and more.

Improving Mental Health
Discover how to create a supportive and mental-health friendly workplace to foster resilience and control burnout amid a mental-health crisis in the workforce.

Managing Remote Workers
Find out how to engage, communicate, manage and encourage high performance with your fully remote and/or hybrid employees.

Staying Compliant
Gain insight on the latest regulations and compliance issues that affect your organization's health and benefits decisions.

Tech Solutions That Work
Explore how to drive employees' benefits engagement and strengthen your company's values and culture with the help of technology.

See session details at www.BenefitsConf.com

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SVP, Communications Practice Leader, Segal Benz

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VP of Global Benefits & Mobility Operations, Korn Ferry

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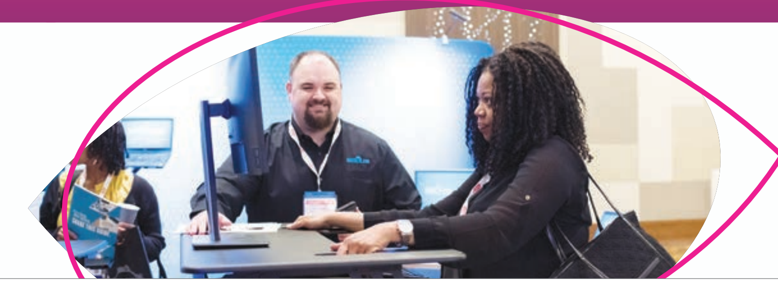

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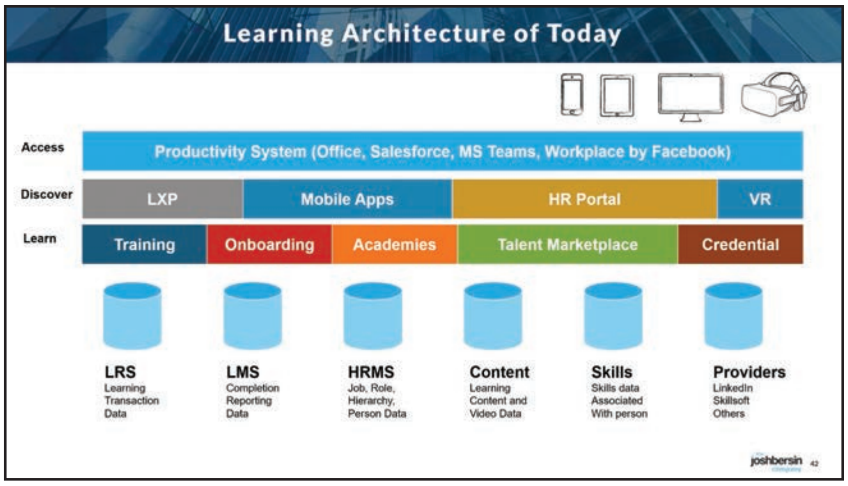
HR Technology

10 HR Tech Trends on the Horizon



Analyst Josh Bersin has been watching the HR technology industry for decades.

At HR Tech Virtual, Josh Bersin highlighted his latest insights for forward-thinking HR leaders.

BY PHIL ALBINUS

HR leaders are in the strangest and most challenging environment and must adapt quickly and decisively if they are to survive and thrive in the coming months. This was the warning from HR industry analyst Josh Bersin in his keynote address about the future of the HR tech market at HR Tech Virtual.

And the pressure is on. Last November and December saw 4.1 million American workers quitting the workforce, and HR leaders must brace for more. "If this trend continues, almost one-third of your workers could leave your company," Bersin warned.

Here are the new trends HR leaders must have on their 2022 radar to combat that exodus.

Employee experience takes over

Calling this an "urgent issue," Bersin said HR leaders' challenge in hiring new talent may come from within their companies. "If you are having trouble hiring, it might be because people inside are not happy and that information leaks out," he said.

It's not HR leaders' fault entirely: Employee experience vendors may have over- promised their wares. "We were told by EX vendors that their solutions would make things better but that's not true," he said.

"If you're not thinking of EX in your HR tech, you will run into problems," he added.

ERP still strong, redefined

The market for enterprise resource planning solutions—the cloud-based tools that manage operations, financials and HR activities—is "busy," with more than 1,000 unicorns waiting to go public. And while heavyweights like Microsoft, IBM and Oracle occupy this space, new entrants are hoping to also take advantage of this market.

Vendors are finding this sector to be more complex than they thought. "Despite what vendors say, you cannot get everything from one provider," Bersin said.

Skills taxonomies are the "next big thing"

Discovering the skills that are hidden among your employees is complex but critical. It needs to involve a companywide initiative that surveys employees about the specific talents and skills they possess.

"You need a talent intelligence office because this this cannot be done solely in learning and development and recruiting," he said.

The skills taxonomy HR leaders build or buy will affect other functions such as learning, growth and recruiting, and it must be open to third-party data. Technology challenges hamper these efforts, he said.

Recruiting and internal mobility have merged

There has been massive growth in internal mobility thanks to the Great Resignation, and HR needs to move people inside the company in "a more deterministic way," Bersin said. Offering employees learning opportunities to fuel those moves will be a significant focus.

"One of the big 'a-ha' moments of 2022 is bringing learning and talent acquisition together," he said.

Learning in the flow of work

The history of digital learning goes back to the early days of CD-ROMs, the internet and YouTube videos, when the creators of learning experience platforms soon realized that employees don't want spend two hours on an online course. They really want to spend 10 minutes or less on relevant content.

"I may get a little bit smarter at my job with some training but I want to know my long-term growth plan. What do I really need to learn over the next couple of years?" employees want to know, Bersin said.

Talent marketplace becomes a category

The talent marketplace, designed to fuel internal mobility, is one of the most innovative, creative, successful, fast-growing HR tech segments that Bersin has witnessed in the past three years.

"It's growing like crazy. The vendors at the bottom that are focused in this market are all finding tremendous growth," he said, citing tools from Gloat, Fuel50, Hitch and Workday.

"Most companies don't spend a lot of time and planning on how to make this work," he said. "They open up the job reqs and prepare the managers for letting people move around inside of the company, and then let it grow."

Employee listening explodes

HR is moving into a world of continuous listening for employees but organizations often make the mistake that listening to clients and employees are two sides of the same coin. They are wrong, said Bersin.

"Employee feedback systems are designed to tell HR what's broken and offer suggestions and feedback on why employees are thinking about leaving," he said. They should also be used to design a rewards program and help improve workers' lives.

For instance, Bersin said, Johnson & Johnson uses a real-time feedback system to measure employee productivity and solicit feedback. "Every time they fix a problem, they ask, 'How well did we do to get continuously better?'" said Bersin.

Performance, talent and learning converge

This is a crowded and complicated area that will remain somewhat fragmented.

"The real purpose of these systems is not just to capture [performance] appraisals but to help HR implement a closed system for performance management," Bersin said. "Every company does this differently."

Before buying this software, HR should focus on ease of use. "A lot of these performance management projects turn into a headache," he said.

Microsoft changes HR tech forever

The software stalwart is having what Bersin called "a big impact" in the HR tech market.

Along with the wide use of Microsoft Teams during the pandemic, Microsoft Viva's EX platform is a "hit in the market," said Bersin, and the software giant is also acquiring smaller HR tech companies to complement its solutions, with several key tools to be rolled out later this year.

"When you have roughly 70% of large companies have Microsoft deployments already, you can turn this stuff on with almost no implementation other than configuration," he said.

While Microsoft doesn't offer the same capabilities as Workday, SAP or many other HR systems, HR "cannot ignore it," he said. "They will continue to add value and get more third-party applications, and you have to take this seriously."

The metaverse is here

In the "metaverse"—the new virtual reality-focused space for collaboration and interaction—everybody's a developer and a creator. A recent survey found that 60% to 70% of people under the age of 40 said their life goal is to become an influencer and make money through developing content online.

This means opportunities for HR. "We have to unleash the creativity of our employees and managers and give them opportunities to not only interact and learn but to share content, ideas and experiences," said Bersin. For instance, companies are now offering virtual recruiting onboarding that allows recruiters and candidates to interact in a way that mimics an in-person onboarding to duplicate or mimic the entire experience.

"I guarantee you in the fall's HR Tech Conference, we'll be talking about some amazing case studies in this area," he said.

Q&A ON BENEFITS

Steve Brink
President
uFlexReward

Q: What are the biggest challenges facing HR leaders today, as far as benefits are concerned?

A: One of the biggest challenges for HR leaders is embedded in your question. For too long, HR leaders have siloed their ways of thinking around attracting, retaining and motivating employees. This has been slowly changing but the pandemic (and the so-called Great Resignation) has increased the notion that HR leaders need to have a more holistic view of the ways that compensate employees, i.e., the total reward. The reason for this need to change is employees want more flexibility and personalization on how they are compensated. HR can provide some limited flexibility in isolated silos but are unable to provide a complete picture of the total reward for each employee. HR leaders are recognizing this as a better way to engage employees but the biggest barrier to presenting flexibility across all the elements of total reward including benefits is the "helter skelter" nature of this data in HR systems. HR has more "point" solutions than any part of the organization, whether it is multiple benefit providers and administrators, potentially multiple HRIS across countries, performance management systems, equity systems, recognition systems, wellbeing providers, etc. How do HR leaders bring in all the disparate and disconnected information into one place so that HR has a complete-picture view on total reward for each and every employee, no matter where they are located? Our tool, uFlexReward, is a digital source that aggregates the various elements of total reward through APIs into one place. To provide flexibility and personalization, you must first present all the total reward elements to the employee so that they can make selections based upon their own preferences across all the total reward elements.

Q: Where do you expect to see HR and benefits leaders focusing their attention in the coming months as they attempt to address those challenges?

A: Employee engagement is on the top of everyone's priorities. We feel the best way to engage employees is to offer flexibility to match the employee's preferences, life stage, interests, etc. Remote and hybrid work are two of these flexible offerings. For flexibility of rewards, the first order of business is to gather all the elements of total reward into a single system, what we call an aggregator system (uFlexReward is an example of this that can be implemented in 60 days). HR can maintain their current "point" systems while having a technology that sits on top of all these various systems throughout all aspects of HR. Once this is done, HR leaders will be able to:

- gain visibility on the largest expense that leadership knows the least about: the details of their total reward spend. So often, decisions are based upon estimated data instead of the real spend of the different types of rewards. With the various elements of total reward aggregated, HR leadership can have better insights on how these different elements can impact the bottom line negatively or positively.
- present to their employees a real-time online total reward statement to better understand all of the elements of total reward that your organization offers to their employees. Various studies show only one-third of companies provide transparency to the full reward picture for their employees. With our tool, we see a significant increase in awareness of their rewards with an online total reward statement.
- create new, innovative ways to attract, retain and motivate their teams versus the one-size-fits-all traditional approaches of the past by providing more flexibility that align better with the perceived value of each and every employee—thereby, increasing engagement.

Q: What areas of employee benefits are especially ripe for innovation?

A: The real innovation is providing more options for employees that they perceive as valuable to their specific situation. Everywhere in society today—whether it is at the yogurt shelves in a grocery store, standing in line at a café shop where there are seemingly infinite ways to order a cappuccino or new cars allowing each driver to personalize the interior colors of the car by who is driving—people want it their way! We have struggled in the past to provide flexibility because we had the one-size-fits-all mentality—Will this be equitable? What if someone makes a poor decision? Times are changing. Each employee will value their benefits and other elements of total reward differently so why not optimize the employee's perceived value of each element or in totality? Obviously, we need to ensure we have guide rails and follow HR regulations and requirements. As HR leaders, we have touched on providing choices, but they have been limited and siloed in a specific area of reward. Now is the time to take a larger perspective of the ways we reward our talent and provide more flexibility that allows individuals to personalize how they want to be rewarded. Maybe an individual wants to focus on wealth accumulation or focus on cash flow because of buying a new house, or perhaps they need pet insurance because they have pets. This will continue to be an issue especially as different employment models (gig economy, contractors, freelancers) are increasing. Innovation will be focused on providing a personalized total reward portfolio for each employee and employment model.

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wtw

"The changing expectations of a multigenerational workforce that values transparency and **a personalized, consumer-centric talent experience."**

Mercer

"Above all, the total rewards package will need to be bespoke. In this respect, **HR will take a leaf out of marketing's book. HR can create unique segments — or personas — by clustering attributes like age, income, life stage, family status, career level and certain preferences, and tailor reward experiences and content accordingly.** Technology (from employee portals to digital career-pathing software) will enable individualized choice based on the needs each individual values, without adding undue administrative burden."

KORN FERRY

"For the last fifteen years, organizations have been working towards a deeper understanding of the preference profiles of employee groups. The aim? To deliver needs-based benefits and non-financial rewards while optimizing program costs that reflect culture. Amid current cost constraints, we see this trend rapidly accelerating. **By identifying the rewards that employees value most, forward-thinking organizations will be able to sustain levels of engagement** while limiting if not reducing overall labor costs."

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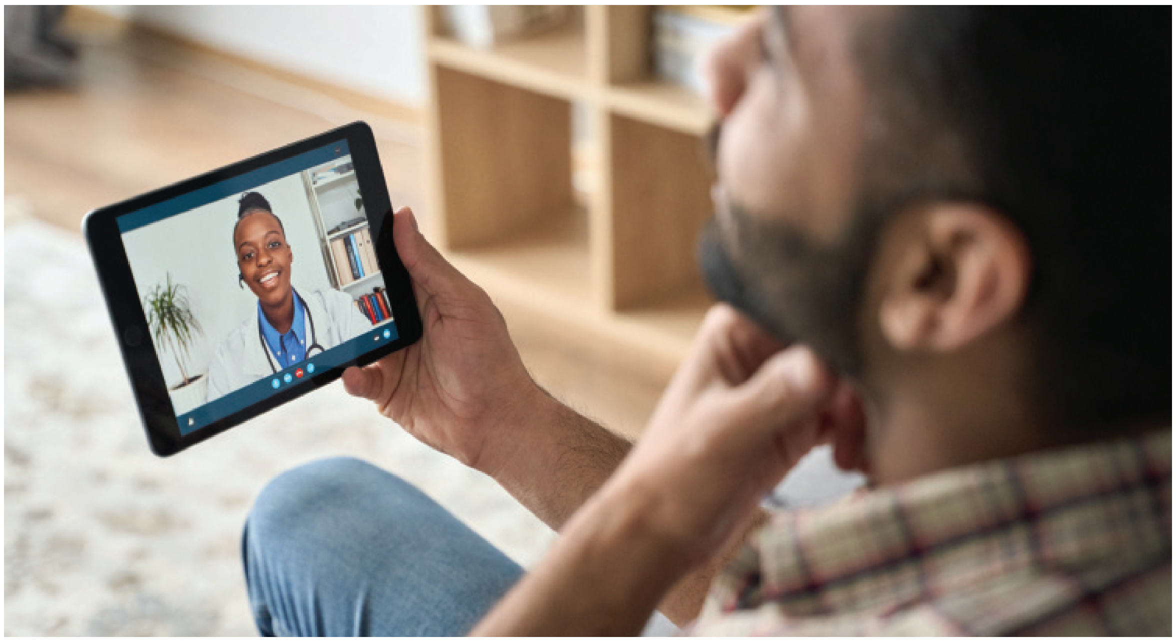
Q&A ON BENEFITS



Wendi Mader
Executive Director, Employer and Enterprise
Quest Diagnostics

Q: What are the biggest challenges facing HR leaders today, as far as benefits are concerned?

A: There's no question that the U.S. workforce has changed because of the pandemic, and a challenge that has come with this change has been maintaining employee engagement. Employees feel more engaged in their workplace when they have a chance to connect with one another and when they feel a sense of community where they work. However, with many companies moving toward more hybrid or remote work schedules, fostering a sense of community—and therefore increasing employee engagement—presents a particular challenge.

A Harris Poll conducted for Quest in late 2020 found doctor's visits had declined by nearly 70%, which has led to deferred diagnoses and care. Delayed care has many negative impacts, including worsening symptoms, postponed treatment and greater stress about health conditions. The challenge for HR leaders is to help employees understand why it's important to make their health a priority now and what the consequences are if they continue to postpone doctor visits and preventive screenings.

Q: Where do you expect to see HR and benefits leaders focusing their attention in the coming months as they attempt to address those challenges?

A: Because of the gap that has been created in general and routine care, HR and benefits leaders need to focus on meeting employees where they are regarding their health. Just as the workforce has shifted in the way it works, the way we access healthcare in general during the pandemic has changed dramatically. We expect employers will take advantage of the innovation that has occurred during the pandemic to leverage some of the new and improved access points that range from virtual-first care pathways to in-home diagnostic solutions.

There has been a higher demand for digital healthcare services, such as telehealth or text-based communications, and we expect to see this trend continue. Additionally, the need for remote collection services such as in-home collection capabilities and patient service centers has increased as the pandemic continues, because of the convenience of these options, and these solutions will likely be here to stay even when the pandemic comes to an end. Offering healthcare that is convenient and accessible also helps battle the issue of deferred care by making it easier for employees to get caught up on their health needs.

Q: What areas of employee benefits are especially ripe for innovation?

A: A laboratory benefit savings program for outpatient testing is one way for employers to reduce healthcare spending that is often underleveraged and therefore ripe for innovation. The majority of medical decisions are based on laboratory test results; they are an essential part of the healthcare system. Employers can help address gaps in clinical testing by offering a laboratory benefit to their employees, which streamlines the employee experience and ensures employees receive high-quality diagnostic testing at an affordable price.

A lab benefit can provide significant cost savings for employees, in addition to quality and convenience. It is not a heavy lift for employers to implement, and the use is employee-driven. Employees can use the benefit at the time of the service by providing information to the health professional about where to send their lab work. Also, because it is not tied to a physician network or health plan, employees can continue to visit their regular physician. While laboratory testing only represents a small portion of total healthcare spending, being able to lower those costs can go a long way in supporting overall cost-containment efforts.

Q&A ON BENEFITS

Bob Weinman
Vice President,
Benefits and HR Operations
TIAA

Q: What are the biggest challenges facing HR leaders today, as far as benefits are concerned?

A: In a recent *TIAA Retirement Insights Survey*, 78% of Americans said COVID-19 has changed their views about what is important in life as it relates to their finances, with 64% of them saying they place more value on being a resilient person who can deal with adversity. Coupled with the new ways of working and cautious return-to-office, making sure associates are financially, physically and emotionally secure is key.

Q: Where do you expect to see HR and benefits leaders focusing their attention in the coming months as they attempt to address those challenges?

A: There are several areas that will require continued focus, particularly wellness, inclusion, and safety and security.

There is broad recognition that mental health is impacted by a variety of factors, including financial wellness. Institutions are increasingly looking to expand wellness programs to incorporate financial support for diverse workforce needs. This includes managing daily finances, saving and planning for retirement and other long-term goals, and protecting against financial risks.

Wrapped up in that is also the need to continue to protect client data while working in a hybrid environment. HR and benefits leaders are working with IT teams to make sure associates have the tools they need to provide safe, secure service to clients, while also protecting their personal and professional data. It's a balancing act and one that continues to be an interdisciplinary focus.

All of this sits on a foundation of commitment to inclusion, diversity and equity. Organizations have been vocal about that commitment and now must honor it. Associates are looking for an environment to be authentically themselves and are seeking equitable pay and benefits. This means evaluation of benefit offerings that best serve employees across a diverse workforce.

Q: What areas of employee benefits are especially ripe for innovation?

A: There are many opportunities for innovation, particularly in financial education and cyber safety. Benefits leaders should be looking to expand their offerings around financial wellness, from basic budgeting to retirement planning. Additionally, they should be working with their IT teams to educate employees on how to keep not only client information safe, but also how to protect themselves digitally.

HR Leadership

Beyond the Great Resignation, 7 Trends Shaping Work

BY BRIAN KROPP AND EMILY ROSE MCRAE

At the start of 2021, many of us expected the world to return to normalcy, including a large-scale return to the workplace for many employees. But 2021 proved more volatile than anticipated, and that is only increasing in 2022 as the world confronts new waves of COVID-19 variants, the continuation of hybrid work and the reality of real wage cuts for employees as annual compensation increases fall behind inflation. These realities will be layered on top of longer-term evolutions around technological transformation, continued DE&I journeys and ongoing political disruption and uncertainty.

Here are seven underlying trends that will continue to shape the workplace the rest of this year:

1. Fairness and equity will be the defining issues for organizations.

According to our analysis of S&P 500 earnings calls, the frequency with which CEOs talk about issues of equity, fairness and inclusion on these calls has increased by 658% since 2018. Debates that have fairness at the core—around gender and race, climate change or other socio-economic, social and workplace issues—have become flashpoints in society.

Questions of fairness and equity are emerging in access to flexible work; geographical salary considerations; compensation for new versus established employees; and investments for different employee segments, such as additional financial resources to support employees with children.

This year, executives will need to address the reality of a varied employee experience.

2. Some companies will shorten the workweek rather than increase pay.

Employers are offering significant compensation increases to attract and retain talent; our research found that, in the U.S., year-to-date salary increases have been more than 4%, compared to a historical norm of 2%.

However, when inflation is considered, real wages have declined. If inflation continues to rise, employers will find the compensation they offer is worth less and less in terms of purchasing power for employees.

While some employers can compete for talent via compensation, others don't have the financial resources to do so. Rather than trying to win the war for talent by increasing compensation, some employers are reducing the number of hours worked by employees and keeping compensation flat. Reducing the hours employees need to work gives less liquid employers a better chance to compete with organizations that offer higher compensation but not reduced hours.

3. Turnover will continue to increase.

In the U.S., employees expect flexibility within their job as much as they expect a 401(k). Employers that don't offer flexibility will see increased turnover as employees move to organizations that offer a value proposition that better aligns with their desires.

Unfortunately for many organizations, increasing flexibility will not slow turnover in today's tight labor market. In fact, turnover may increase as there will be weaker forces keeping employees in seats. Employees who work hybrid or remotely have fewer friends at work and thus weaker social and emotional connections with their co-workers. These weaker connections make it easier for employees to quit their job by reducing the social pressure that can encourage employees to stay longer. In addition, with hybrid and remote work as the norm, the geographic radius of the organizations that someone can work for also expands. As the pool of potential employers increases, so does the attrition risk.

These factors will lead to sustained, higher turnover rates compared to any historical norms. The Great Resignation will shift to the Sustained Resignation.

4. The tools we use to work remotely will also help measure and improve performance.

Managers have less insight into what work their employees are doing when work becomes more geographically dispersed. This leads to inaccurate and potentially biased performance ratings based upon where employees work rather than their impact.

A Gartner survey in the fall of 2020 of nearly 3,000 managers revealed that 64% of managers and executives believe in-office employees are higher performers than remote employees, and 76% believe in-office workers are more likely to be promoted.

Moving forward, organizations will utilize the same tools they are currently leveraging to work in a virtual environment to assess the contributions that employees are making. For example, collaboration technology can nudge managers to call on people who have not been as active in meetings, which can cause participants to adjust the types of interactions they have to improve the quality of the meeting.

5. Wellness will become the newest metric that companies use to understand their employees.

In 2021, many companies expanded their wellness offerings, and we expect employers to continue to add in new measures that assess employees' mental, physical and financial health. The good news: These programs work for those who take advantage of them. Gartner analysis shows that employees who utilize these benefits report 23% higher levels of mental health, 17% higher levels of physical health and are 23% more likely to say they sleep well at night. These improvements in personal outcomes translate to higher levels of performance and retention.

The bad news is that there has been limited uptake of these programs by employees. Across the last 12 months, our data show that less than 40% of employees have taken advantage of any wellbeing offering provided by their employer.

6. Sitting is the new smoking.

The shift to working remotely has impacted employees in various ways. Some responded by increasing physical activity and losing weight (35%); however, more became increasingly sedentary (40%) and gained weight, likely due to the lost physical movement associated with commuting and walking around the workplace. As a result, some segments of the workforce will face increased health risks.

In response, organizations will adopt new communication plans, benefits and technologies to support the physical movement of their remote employees. Much like with traditional wellness programs, engagement with these physical wellness programs will often be lackluster. Some companies will go too far and elicit a backlash from employees who don't think their employer has a role in their physical health. These physical wellness programs also carry DE&I risks, as they could harm the engagement of employees with disabilities.

7. DE&I outcomes will worsen in a hybrid world without intervention.

Gartner analysis has identified that employees who work remotely or on a hybrid schedule perform at levels equal to employees who work in the office. However, managers believe that people who work from the office are higher-performing; thus, managers are more likely to promote and give bigger raises to their employees who come into the office compared to those who don't.

Data also show that, in a hybrid world, women and people of color prefer to work from home compared to white men. Given that, without intervention, gender wage gaps will widen and the degree of diversity within leadership benches will weaken. Without greater intentionality, underrepresented talent could be excluded from critical conversations, career opportunities and other networks that drive career growth.

Workplace disruption will not slow down; what will change is how variable that disruption becomes. Now it's time for leaders to determine how to thrive in a period of disruption that plays out unevenly across their organizations.

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