

Rebuilding work

What do employers and employees expect for HR policies, employee engagement and wellness and the future of work as the working environment evolves?



As the coronavirus health crisis turns the corner, moving from a pandemic to an endemic phase, employers are diligently rebuilding their workplaces to suit the new working environment that's emerged from this cataclysmic disruption.

As they rifle through their toolboxes to find the policies, strategies and support resources they'll need to reinvent their respective workplaces, there's a palpable sense of both quiet reflection on the past and dogged curiosity for what's to come. Employers of all makeups can agree on one thing: the task ahead won't be straightforward or easy.

Indeed, organizations are digging deep into data to find solutions that will help them transition slowly but successfully into the new working environment. They're focused on ensuring their businesses can sustain the change to come and that they create an environment in which employees can thrive.

This significant focus is why *Benefits Canada* is launching a brand-new survey that dives into the strategic policies employers are putting into place to carve

out their future workplaces. But it's important to hear from the people who'll be affected by these decisions. That's why, for this survey, we not only spoke to more than 100 employers, but more than 600 employees from across the country in order to hear what their respective organizations are doing and the areas in which they'd like to see some improvement.

As we've seen during the pandemic, with employers and employees both rolling up their sleeves — one holding the nail, while the other wields the hammer — to ensure every aspect of the business is fastened tightly in place throughout the turmoil, the saying “we're all in this together” rings particularly true.

— Lauren Bailey, associate editor, *Benefits Canada*



LEGEND

Section 1:	
How human resources policies are reshaping the workplace	pg 56
Section 2:	
Fostering employee wellness and engagement	pg 60
Section 3:	
Navigating the future workplace	pg 63

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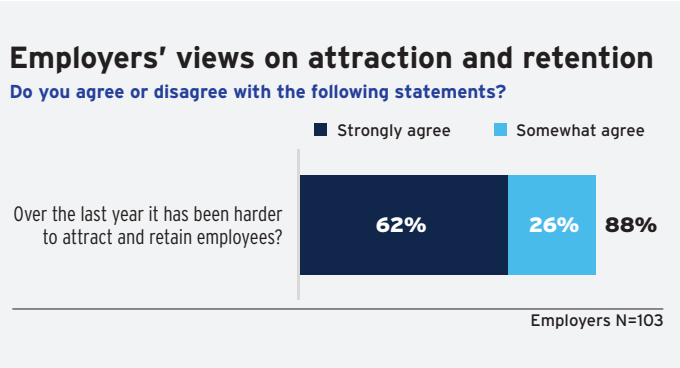
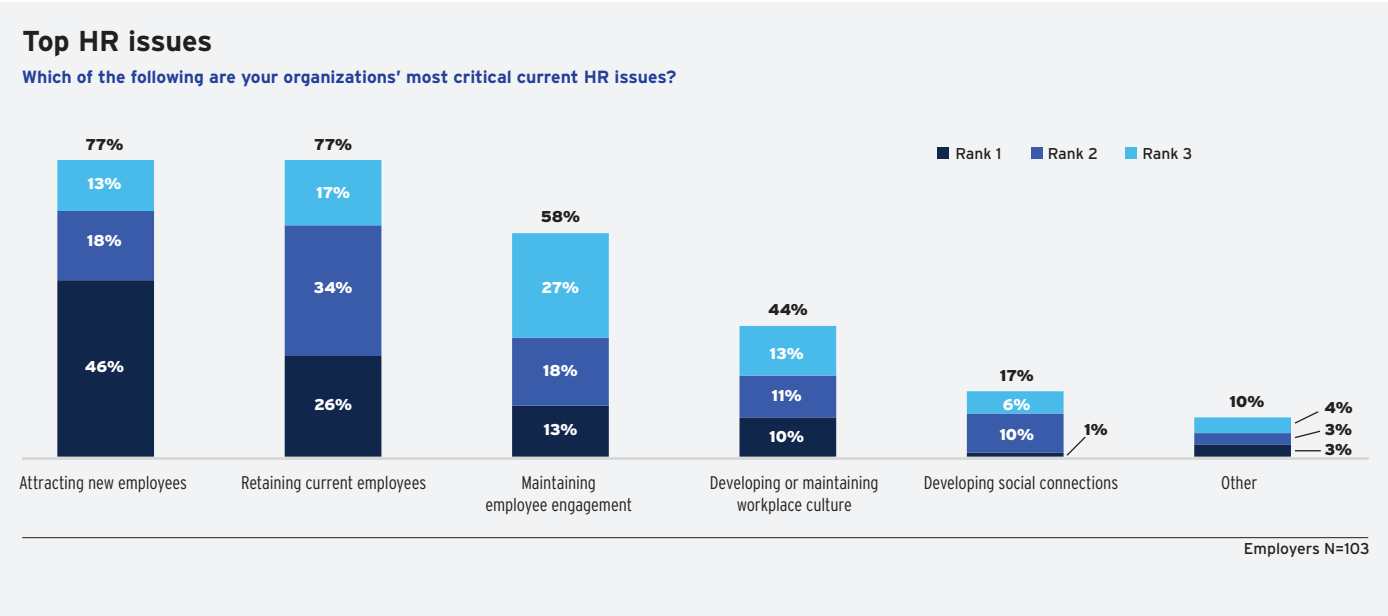


Section 1: How human resources policies are reshaping the workplace

More than half of employers’ most critical HR issues have changed over the last two years. Whether they’re contending with the pressures of a tight labour market, navigating an inflationary environment, embracing remote or hybrid work or planning a full return to office, attraction and retention is a top priority.

Critical issues, top priorities

- When it comes to employers’ most critical HR issues, more than three-quarters (77 per cent) chose attracting new employees and retaining current ones among their top three priorities, with 46 per cent and 26 per cent, respectively, ranking these issues as their No. 1 concern.
- Nearly six in 10 (58 per cent) cited maintaining employee engagement and 44 per cent chose developing or maintaining workplace culture as one of their top three priorities, with 10 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively, ranking both as their No. 1 focus.
- Despite the pandemic shifting many white-collar employees to remote working, developing social connections was at the bottom of employers’ lists at just 17 per cent, with only one per cent calling it their No. 1 issue of concern.
- Over the last year, 88 per cent of employers agreed it has been harder to attract and retain employees, including 62 per cent who strongly agreed with this statement.

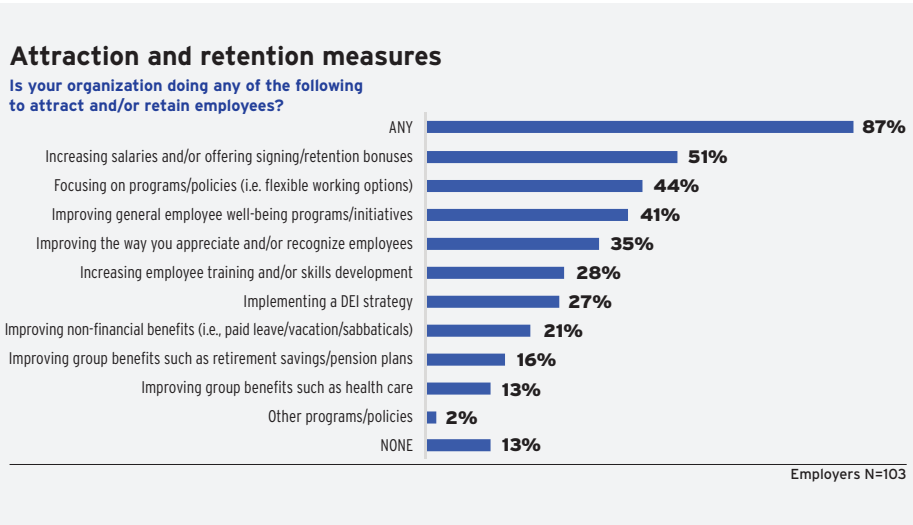
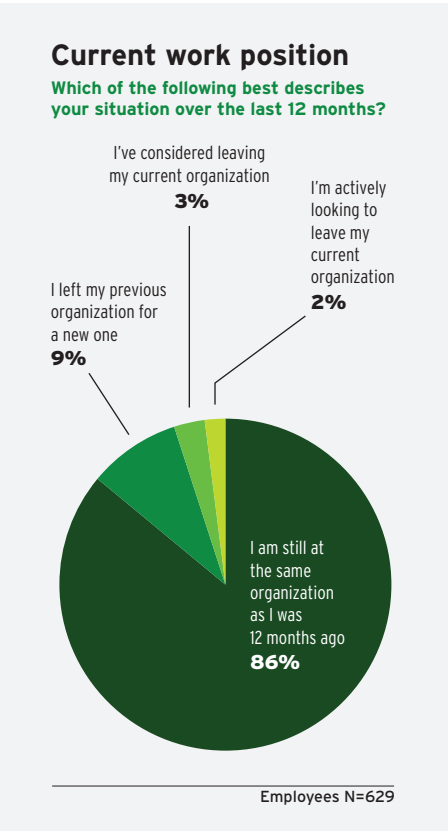


Employers should prioritize retaining the people they’ve invested in who know the business and have the task knowledge. Otherwise, this cycle of recruitment becomes one focused more on short-term needs and less on strategic alignment of people, which may be indicative of why companies are contending with a talent shortage.

– Nita Chhinzer, University of Guelph’s Gordon S. Lang School of Business

Beefing up the employee value proposition

- Although 86 per cent of employees have opted to stay at the same organization they were with 12 months ago, some have either started with a new employer (nine per cent), considered leaving their current company (three per cent) or are actively looking for a new opportunity (two per cent).
- The reasons cited by those who left to join a new organization were lack of flexibility in where and when they work (49 per cent), better retirement savings/pension plans (41 per cent), no change to compensation/salary (41 per cent), lack of appreciation and/or recognition (41 per cent) and better health benefits (35 per cent).
- Employers are using a range of incentives to help with their attraction and retention efforts. Around half (51 per cent) are focused on increasing salaries and/or offering signing/retention bonuses, while others are implementing programs/policies promoting flexible working options (44 per cent) and improving general employee well-being programs and initiatives (41 per cent).
- However, many employers are missing the opportunity to develop their existing talent pool, with just 28 per cent increasing employee training and/or skills development.
- Employers are also implementing diversity, equity and inclusion strategies and/or initiatives (27 per cent) and improving non-financial benefits, such as paid leave/vacation/sabbaticals (21 per cent).
- Just 16 per cent are improving retirement savings/pension plans and 13 per cent are improving health benefits.



For us, it’s really going back to the basics: ensuring the employee value proposition is clear and our candidates and current employees recognize the value of it. It’s one thing for our pension and benefits team to understand and be able to communicate the employee value proposition, but it’s making sure those folks who are recruiting are educated on, and can speak to, the benefits available.

– Tracy Fogale, Kraft Heinz Canada

CASE STUDY: MONDELEZ INTERNATIONAL

Investing in existing talent

In 2018, Mondelez International introduced a leadership development program that recruits employees directly from local universities, develops their skills internally and creates a career pathway to full-time employment.

The two-year rotational program, which provides graduates with experience in general management, includes field- or customer-based sales rotations in the first year and two different marketing roles in the second year. Afterwards, graduates join the company in a full-time, permanent position based on business needs and where they performed well during the program.

One of Mondelez’s philosophies is ‘grow every day,’ a phrase rooted in the organization’s goal of ensuring employees are equipped with the right skillset and knowledge to be successful in a changing market.



Growing disconnect between employers, employees on essential offerings

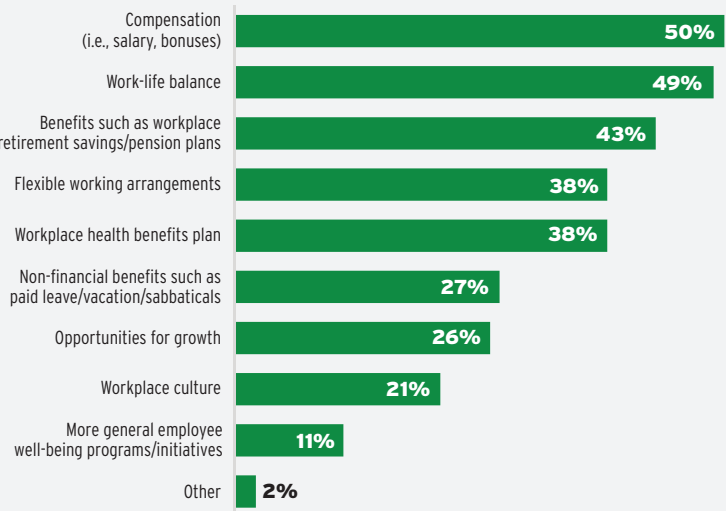
Although most employers are using salary increases/ and or offering bonuses to enhance their attraction and retention efforts, the corresponding response from employees differed slightly.

- Top tools with value-add**
- Compensation (i.e., salary, bonuses) is viewed as the top tool in employers’ attraction (80 per cent) and retention (66 per cent) toolboxes, followed by financial benefits such as health-care and retirement savings/pension plans (68 per cent for attraction and 66 per cent for retention) and work-life balance (55 per cent and 76 per cent, respectively).
 - When asked which supports their employers are using to attract and retain staff, more than a third of employees said their organizations are focusing on DEI initiatives (39 per cent), improving more general employee well-being programs/initiatives (36 per cent), increasing employee training and/or skills development (36 per cent) and providing non-financial benefits such as paid leave/vacation/sabbaticals (35 per cent).
 - Another 33 per cent said their employer was increasing salaries and/or offering bonuses, focusing on HR programs, such as flexible working or stock options, to engage employees (29 per cent) and improving benefits such as health-care or workplace retirement savings/pension plans (26 per cent).
 - The top response for what employees personally value the most from their workplace and job was compensation (50 per cent), followed by work-life balance (49 per cent) and financial benefits, such as health-care and retirement savings/pension plans (43 per cent).
 - Despite employers’ focus on workplace culture, it landed far down employees’ lists at 21 per cent.
 - Notably, general employee well-being programs/initiatives was also ranked much lower by employee respondents, at 11 per cent compared to employer respondents who viewed this as an important attraction (30 per cent) and retention (61 per cent) tool.



Importance of job elements

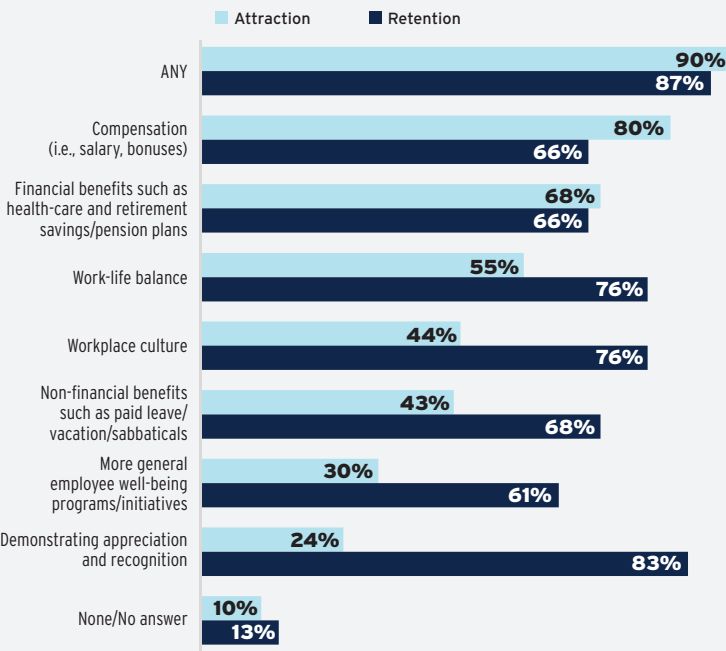
Of all of the elements of your workplace and job, what do you personally value the most?



Employees N=629

Most important tools for attraction and retention

In your view, which do you consider your most important tools for attracting and retaining employees?



Employers N=103

We’re having to ensure we have clear development plans in place for existing colleagues, so they have visibility to their potential careers and development opportunities in the organization. When sourcing new talent, the full benefits package that you offer in detail is very influential to someone joining an organization right now because candidates want all the information on what the organization has to offer across benefits, compensation, career development and culture.

– Jackie Wheeler, Mondelez International

Managing talent in an inflationary environment

With the price of goods and services — from groceries to the gas pump — steadily rising, employers and employees are feeling the effects of inflation. The pandemic, the ‘Great Resignation’ and the challenging economic reality have combined to create a financial climate in which employers can’t afford to sacrifice their attrition levels for the ability to implement salary freezes.

Staying calm, carrying on

- Despite the current inflationary environment and its possible recessionary impacts, 76 per cent of employers gave pay raises in 2022 with a similar number (73 per cent) planning to implement pay raises again next year. The average increase reported for 2022 was 3.4 per cent.
- Almost six in 10 (59 per cent) employees noted they’ve received or will receive an increase this year, averaging 3.1 per cent.
- For 2023, there’s a gap between employee respondents’ salary expectations and what employer respondents have planned. Despite the high inflation rates this summer, employees feel a 3.9 per cent pay increase on average for next year would be fair or appropriate. However, employers are planning raises of just 3.4 per cent.
- Six per cent of employers are unsure of their plans for salary increases next year.

We’re focusing on employee engagement through Gallup surveys [and] employee focus groups. Culture and engagement are definitely at the top of most of our employees’ concerns and what they want. Focusing on employee engagement, workplace culture and developing social connections will actually help employers’ recruitment and retention efforts.

– Ally MacGregor, First Onsite Restoration

Plan sponsors are challenged by the financial reality of inflation. The ‘Great Resignation’ and the number of people retiring provides the existing workforce leverage to negotiate their salary. Some plan sponsors are using mid-year increases or one-time payments in lieu of a perpetuity salary increase. Others are using signing bonuses to encourage new talent or retention bonuses to inspire retaining talent long term.

– Dave McCagherty, RBC Insurance

Pay increases in 2022 and 2023

EMPLOYERS

Did you give out pay increases in 2022?

76%

On average, how much did you increase salaries in 2022?

3.4%

Do you plan to increase salaries in 2023?

73%

On average, by how much do you anticipate you’ll increase salaries in 2023?

3.4%

Employers N=103

EMPLOYEES

Did you receive a salary increase in 2022 or expect to receive one?

59%

What was your 2022 salary increase?

3.1%

If you’re still in the same position next year, what level of salary increase do you feel would be fair/appropriate?

3.9%

Employees N=629

Key takeaways

- Over the last year, attraction and retention has become more challenging for employers as the labour market heats up and candidates look for companies that stand out among the crowd.
- While employers are focusing on compensation and leveraging well-being benefits, such as flexibility, to draw top talent, they’re missing an opportunity to upskill and grow the existing talent they already have.
- With planned 2023 salary increases below employee expectations, employers have to find creative ways to make up the difference and send a message that their organizations are investing in staff for the long term.

Section 2: Fostering employee wellness and engagement

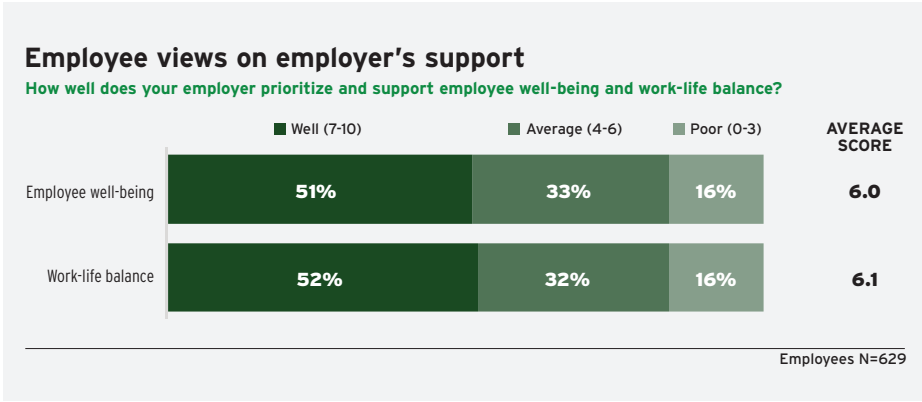
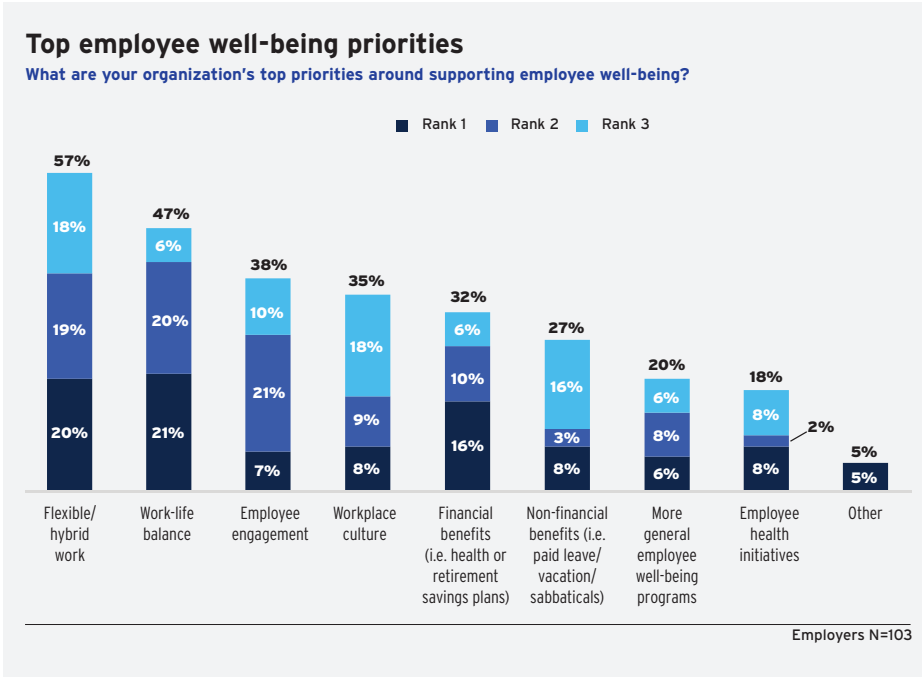
The effects of the pandemic and the resulting shift to remote working continues to shine a spotlight on the importance of employee mental health and well-being. Employers are leveraging a number of support tools and strategies to foster employee wellness and engagement in the current working environment, including increased mental-health benefits, flexible working and non-financial time-off policies.

Employee mental health, wellness taking centre stage

- Among the 18 per cent of employers that rated health initiatives as part of their top three priorities, almost all (94 per cent) are planning to focus on mental health in the next six to 12 months.
- To support employee well-being, employers’ top priorities are work-life balance (21 per cent) and flexible/hybrid work arrangements (20 per cent), which are intertwined.
- Similarly, about half of employees gave top marks to their employer for prioritizing and supporting well-being (51 per cent) and work-life balance (52 per cent).
- About a quarter (26 per cent) ranked flexible or hybrid working arrangements as the No. 1 priority their employers should focus on when supporting employee well-being and 39 per cent said the same about supporting work-life balance.
- More than a third (39 per cent) of employees cited flexible or hybrid working arrangements as the No. 1 tool their employers can leverage to support work-life balance; however, nearly the same percentage (31 per cent) ranked benefits such as health-care and/or retirement savings/pension plans as the top tools employers should use to support their well-being.
- Employees also chose non-financial benefits, such as paid leave/vacation/sabbaticals, as the second-most important tool to support employee well-being (13 per cent) and work-life balance (31 per cent).

If we set traditional benefits coverage aside and ask people what defines ‘better benefits’ or what people want from their employer, the response we hear loud and clear is support for mental health. Flexible work arrangements and work-life balance can have a significant impact on mental health and, while we often use those two terms interchangeably, they’re not the same. You can have flexible work arrangements that provide you the choice of where you work from, but if you’re working most of your waking hours, you’re likely not achieving work-life balance. We need to ensure our benefits programs combined with our workplace policies and practices demonstrate support for employee mental health.

– Julie Gaudry, RBC Insurance



CASE STUDY: KRAFT HEINZ CANADA

Carving out time for focused work

Kraft Heinz Canada is empowering employees to better manage their schedules and providing them with focused time to work through its North Star Days initiative. In 2021, the food and beverage company implemented these monthly meeting-free days to help reduce employee burnout,



while helping staff manage their productivity. “Like many companies, our employees’ days are inundated with meetings and there is less time to focus on strategic initiatives,” says Tracy Fogale, the organization’s senior benefits manager. “We recognize that meetings themselves do not deserve criticism, but the application of the meeting. We continue to focus on meeting etiquette so that we are all making the most effective use of everyone’s time in the most productive manner.”

When employees expressed the need for more time for focused work, Kraft Heinz set aside these pre-blocked meeting-free days so employees can focus on their priorities and dedicate time to “think big.” Many employees have schedule-driven days, spending many hours per week knee-deep in meetings, so the North Star Days gives employees more opportunities to better plan their schedules and deliverables, says Fogale.

The initiative is just one part of the organization’s multi-faceted well-being strategy, which aims to nurture employees’ growth by providing them with time to do what they love uninterrupted so they can think strategically and learn more about the business. Ultimately, Kraft Heinz believes this support will help empower employees to manage their schedules and help them be more engaged and productive.

While the company continues to focus on employee well-being, Fogale admits there’s no silver bullet to solving the employee burnout problem experienced by many employers. “We may not have the absolute solution, [but] . . . as the world around us evolves, we must also pivot and evolve. . . . Kraft Heinz recognizes that our employees are our greatest asset and must continue to explore creative opportunities to help support . . . [them] and their families.”

CASE STUDY: HOOTSUITE

The tie that binds DEI and employee well-being

Early in the pandemic, Hootsuite recognized the extensive mental strain its employees were under and the heightened need to provide support across all areas of employee well-being, so it took action, expanding its well-being benefits offerings to ensure they were inclusive.

The technology company started with listening sessions and conducted employee pulse surveys to understand its workforce’s changing needs. In 2021, Hootsuite leveraged the findings from these initiatives by launching a new suite of wellness benefits that offered employees more flexibility and choice. Employees now have the option to choose between three plans — simple, standard and enhanced — which provide varying levels of coverage. Under the new plan, all Canadian employees now have coverage for fertility treatments and gender affirmation surgeries.

Additionally, Hootsuite increased its mental-health benefits coverage to 100 per cent and expanded its list of approved mental-health practitioners covered under the plan. “After introducing new programs aimed at supporting employee mental health, we saw an increase in our internal ‘belonging score’ from a company-wide survey,” says Paul Dhillon, the organization’s

director of total rewards. “The number of employees who said they felt like they ‘belonged’ at the company jumped from 79 per cent in 2020 to 86 per cent at the end of 2021.”

Hootsuite also expanded its paid sick leave policy to include personal and/or mental-health days for employees to use for their own self-care or to care for their immediate family members. In 2021 and 2022, it held company-wide wellness weeks that allowed all employees to log off for the week with full pay. It also re-introduced its half-day Fridays program over the summer months. In addition, the company expanded its DEI program to include education on anti-racism, allyship and raising children to embrace diversity.

As part of Hootsuite’s commitment to creating a welcoming, safe and equitable working environment, it’s recognizing and addressing pay equality. In 2020, the company signed the Unbounce Pledge for Parity, which prioritizes pay parity, and collaborated with a third-party firm to conduct pay equity audits across the organization.

“In 2021, we delivered on this commitment, reaching 100 per cent pay equity for all employees and

across all underrepresented groups . . . and [we’re] proud to continue reporting pay equity for 100 per cent of employees today,” says Dhillon.

“Hootsuite has done a lot of work when it comes to DEI, particularly with inclusive benefits offerings,” he adds. “When you look at our non-traditional benefits, compensation or pay equity, our approach is to encourage and engage managers and leaders in equitable decision-making. We want to ensure our overall fair pay and inclusive benefits offering are aligned, so we put a stake in the sand that we provide regular updates to the organization that holds us accountable.”



DEI as a business imperative

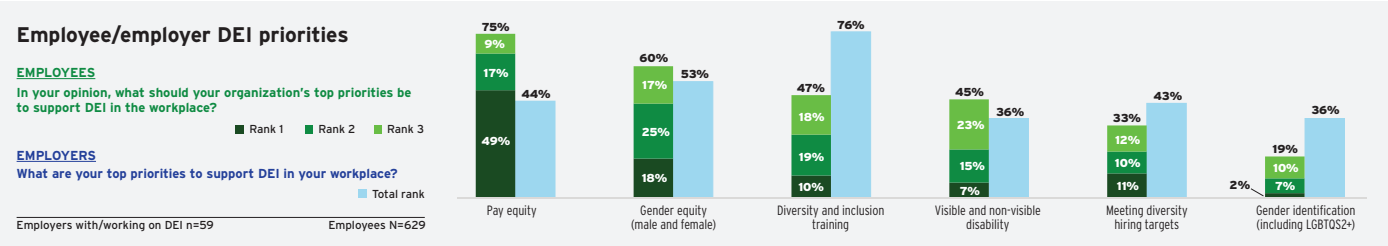
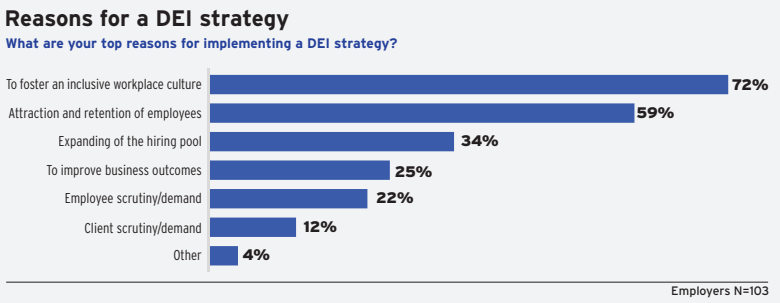
Employers are making the connection between DEI and mental health and wellness, with many taking steps to weave DEI practices throughout their core business channels to close blind spots and existing gaps.

Embracing diversity, cultivating inclusivity

- Since the beginning of the pandemic, close to a third (37 per cent) of employers have increased their focus on DEI.
- Half currently have (30 per cent) or are working on (20 per cent) a formal DEI strategy.
- Employers with a formal DEI strategy said they put it in place to foster an inclusive workplace culture (72 per cent), for attraction and retention purposes (59 per cent), to expand the hiring pool (34 per cent) and to improve business outcomes (25 per cent), among a host of other reasons.
- Currently, among those with a formal DEI policy or those working on one, 40 per cent have a chief diversity officer, compared to 45 per cent that don't and 16 per cent that are unsure.
- More than two-thirds (68 per cent) of employers provide managers or employees with DEI training in areas such as inclusive leadership (52 per cent), diverse and inclusive hiring practices (42 per cent) and dismantling unconscious bias (30 per cent).
- Nearly a third (32 per cent) of employers ranked diversity and inclusion training as their top priority around DEI, followed by gender equity (24 per cent), meeting diversity hiring targets (18 per cent) and pay equity (11 per cent).
- On the other hand, employees want their employers to focus on pay equity (49 per cent), gender equity (18 per cent), meeting diversity hiring targets (11 per cent) and diversity and inclusion training (10 per cent).
- Despite the disconnect between employers and employees when it comes to DEI priorities, employees still have a favourable view of their organizations' DEI efforts, with 89 per cent rating these efforts as good (61 per cent) or average (28 per cent).

The fact that so many employees said they value an employer's focus on DEI initiatives is a gift to employers that genuinely want to deliver on their DEI initiatives and are happy to edge ahead of their competitors in a tight labour market. The more difficult situation is the opposite one, where employees are not aligned with what they perceive is their employer's commitment, or lack of commitment, to DEI principles. Perhaps the non-alignment will encourage employers to take a long, hard look at whether they are being clear with their employees about what exactly they mean and what they intend to do to support advances in inclusivity, diversity and equity. An employer's commitment to DEI values is as credible as its comprehensive plan and measurable actions to implement it.

– Mary Picard, Dentons Canada



Key takeaways

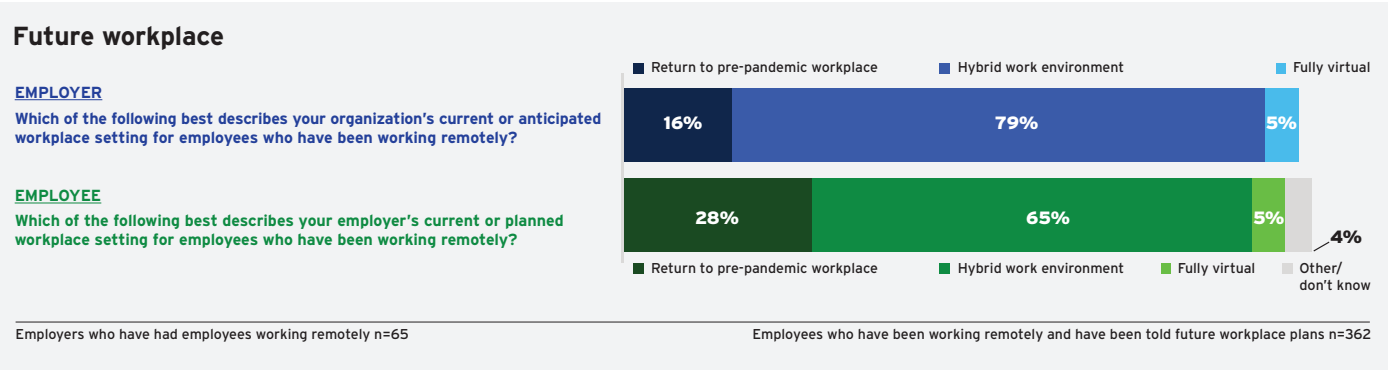
- Mental health is a top priority for some employers as they focus on supporting employees' work-life balance amid the pandemic shift to remote working.
- Employers are embedding DEI throughout their organizations to create an inclusive workplace culture for attraction and retention purposes, to expand the hiring pool and to improve business outcomes.
- Although employers and employees disagreed on their top priorities around DEI initiatives, both groups agreed it should be an important focus for their respective organizations.

Section 3: Navigating the future workplace

As the pandemic moves into an endemic phase, employers are confronted with mapping out the parameters of the future workplace. Moving forward, the return to work will look different for every employer, morphing from a traditional 9 to 5 workday to one that favours flexibility and work-life balance.

Onsite, offsite

- Since the beginning of the pandemic, 63 per cent of employers say a significant number of their employees are working from home or remotely, with the majority planning to keep their workforce partially (79 per cent) or fully (five per cent) remote. Sixteen per cent anticipate a return to the pre-pandemic workplace with almost all employees onsite.
- More than half (54 per cent) of employers that plan to adopt a flexible/hybrid working policy are considering basing the number of days employees work in office on their work requirements, while 32 per cent are planning to mandate that employees return onsite two days per week and six per cent indicated they'd mandate three days per week in office.
- Fifty-seven per cent of employees who were shifted to remote working during the pandemic have already returned to the office in some capacity.
- More than two-thirds (68 per cent) of employees said their organizations are planning to move to a hybrid (63 per cent) or fully remote working arrangement (five per cent).
- About a quarter (28 per cent) of employees said their employers have indicated they'll be returning to the pre-pandemic workplace with almost all employees onsite.



CASE STUDY: FIRST ONSITE RESTORATION

Flexibility a key offering in the new working environment

First Onsite Restoration Services is embracing the new working environment by allowing all office-based employees to work remotely in a hybrid model.

Prior to the pandemic, the disaster recovery and property restoration company didn't have a formal remote working policy in place, but about 10 per cent of its employees worked from home. As the health crisis began to recede, it became clear to the organization's leaders that it had to formalize a policy and that flexibility had to be at the heart of it.

Since First Onsite's offices reopened, about 30 per cent of employees have continued to work remotely in a hybrid capacity. Employees can request to work from home in a hybrid model based on their managers' needs. "Locally, we cater to ... managers and their teams and they're encouraged to do what works for them," says Ally MacGregor, the organization's

HR business partner, noting managers will allow all employees to work from home with the expectation they're in the office two days a week.

The decision to move to a hybrid working policy was driven mainly by employee expectations, particularly as the hiring market was heating up, she adds. But it's also a product of the pandemic workplace and the awareness that the organization can run effectively with employees working remotely. The company has determined that the ability to accommodate employees' demand for more flexibility helps foster employee engagement and allows them to achieve better work-life balance.

As well, the fact that most of First Onsite's office-based employees have opted to switch to the new hybrid working model shows company leaders it was the right policy

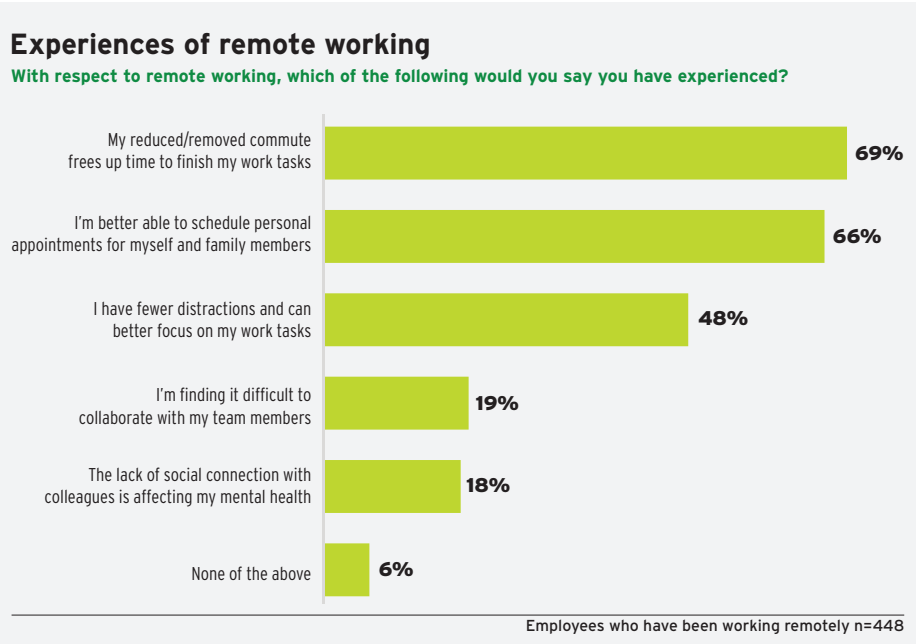
decision, says MacGregor.

"We focus on culture and employee engagement, which have been positively affected by our flexible policies and [it shows] we are listening to what the staff want. The remote working environment has actually been a lot better since the coronavirus pandemic because we're more focused on this working environment now. We've seen a lot of positive come out of the switch."



Social connection, collaboration

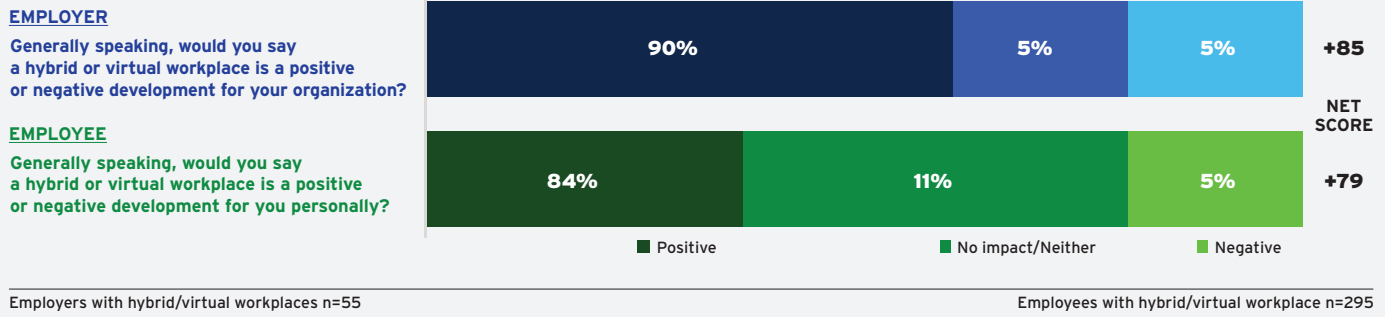
- Nearly half (49 per cent) of employees have been working remotely or at home more over the last two years. With that shift came the loss of camaraderie and social connection that was part of the traditional in-office working environment.
- Indeed, while 88 per cent of employees believe working from home has provided them with a better work-life balance, 63 per cent feel less connected to their colleagues, 18 per cent say the lack of social connection is affecting their mental health and 19 per cent are finding it difficult to collaborate with team members.
- However, employees working at home also said reduced/removed commutes free up time to finish work tasks (69 per cent), allows them to better schedule personal appointments (66 per cent) and provides fewer distractions so they can better focus on work tasks (48 per cent).
- A large majority (84 per cent) of employees whose employer has moved to a hybrid or virtual model believe this set up is an extremely (47 per cent) or somewhat (37 per cent) positive development for them personally.
- When asked how their employers are keeping them connected with colleagues in a hybrid or virtual set up, employees cited a range of policies, such as mandated weekly virtual team meetings (36 per cent), monthly or bi-monthly town hall virtual meetings (30 per cent), mandated monthly or bi-monthly in-person town hall meetings (19 per cent), voluntary weekly virtual coffee chats (17 per cent) and mandated weekly in-person team meetings (14 per cent).
- But as the workplace evolves to be more fluid and flexible, employers with a combination of in-person and remote work arrangements now recognize they'll also have to shift their focus towards ensuring equity is maintained between both cohorts.
- In particular, return-to-work issues of the most concern for employers with a flexible or hybrid workforce are ensuring equitable opportunities for growth for both in-person and remote workers (53 per cent), ensuring meetings are inclusive to both cohorts (45 per cent), making benefits and perks equitable (34 per cent) and establishing new goals and targets for employee performance assessments (28 per cent).



Hootsuite provides employees with autonomy to define what ‘workplace’ means to them by allowing them to choose the environment that best suits their unique needs – whether in-office, remote or a hybrid of both. As we operate in a rapidly changing and fast-moving industry, one of our priority areas of focus continues to be providing employees with the tools and resources they need to better collaborate cross-functionally, despite operational challenges such as different time zones. This has positively impacted our [employees] and our company; there has been overwhelming support on our employee engagement surveys on this and a desire to continue it.

– Paul Dhillon, Hootsuite

Views on hybrid/virtual working



CASE STUDY: ENDY

Jumping on the bed

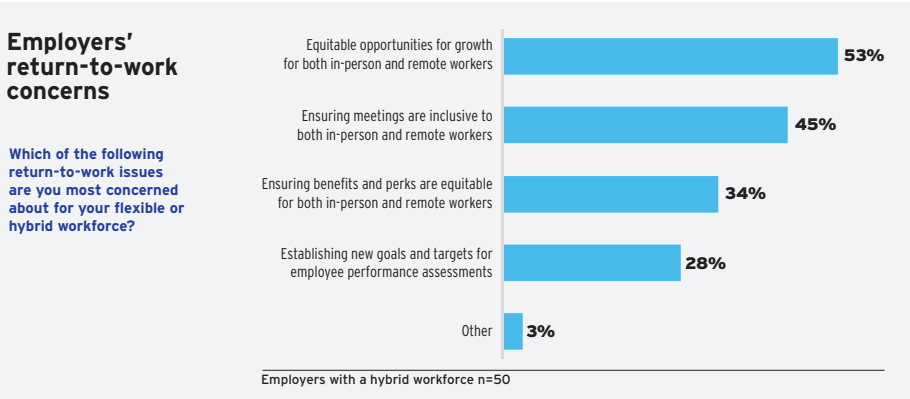
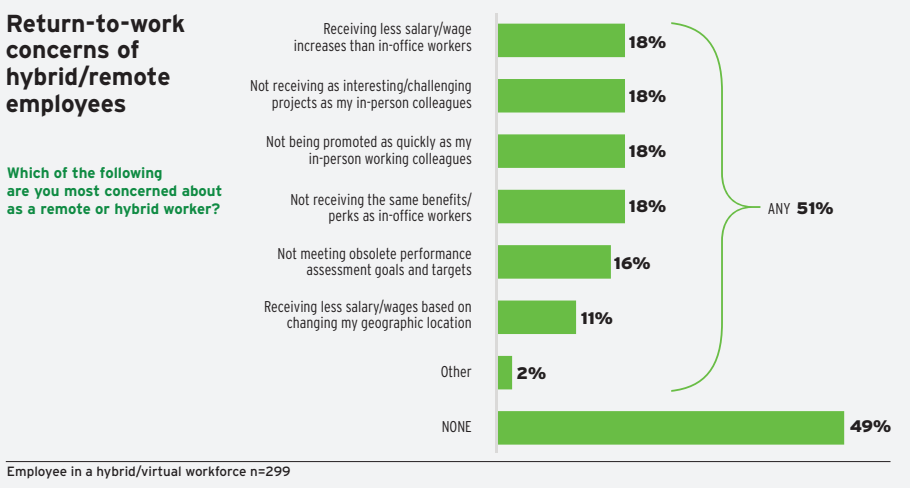
One of Endy’s company values is ‘Jump on the Bed,’ a play on words for the mattress company.

The idea is rooted in the belief that the organization’s employees should celebrate victories — big and small — and recognize team members for their efforts, says Hemalee Sisodraker, the company’s director of people and culture.

Every quarter, the organization hosts its Jump on the Bed Awards, where employees can nominate their peers who have demonstrated value within the company. “Shining a light on each other’s talents and strengths is a core part of who

Endy is as a brand,” says Sisodraker. “It gives us a moment to pause and reflect on the quarter, celebrate wins and jump on the bed together.”

Prior to the pandemic, the awards were held in person; however, it was moved to a virtual format during the height of the crisis. Endy recently held its first in-person ceremony since the start of the pandemic. “We had an amazing turnout and it was great to see our team come together in an authentic way,” says Sisodraker. “Bringing people together in a meaningful way has been a focus for us at Endy.”



Employers moving to a hybrid work policy should ensure there are opportunities for hybrid meetings, as well as the occasional ‘live’ meeting. They should also consider investing in collaborative software and online platforms to create spaces for interaction. There can be a drift in engagement levels if employees begin to feel disconnected, so making sure that roles and deliverables (expectations) are clearly defined will be critical in this new working environment.

– Tina Dacin,
Queen’s University’s
Smith School of Business



Key takeaways

- A large majority of employers are planning to keep their workforce partially or fully remote, while a small percentage anticipate a return to a pre-pandemic workplace with almost all employees onsite.
- While both employers and employees view hybrid or remote working as positive, both acknowledge the substantial loss of social connection and collaboration amid the shift to virtual working.
- Top issues of concern for employers with respect to the future workplace include keeping employees socially engaged and ensuring equitable policies are in place for both in-office and remote workers.

The Future of Work Survey Advisory Board



Nita Chhinzer

associate professor, leadership
and organizational management
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About the survey: The purpose of *Benefits Canada*'s inaugural Future of Work Survey is to provide information that doesn't currently exist to help our partners in human resources and benefits — whether they're plan sponsors, consultants or insurance companies — better meet the needs of the Canadians that depend on them. What makes this research valuable is that the results are discussed and analyzed by an advisory board of industry experts, including plan sponsors, insurers, employment lawyers and academics, providing key insights into what the data means for employers and employees. These insights are incorporated into the report.

Survey methodology: The results are based on two separate online surveys conducted in July/August 2022. One survey was of a nationally representative sample of 623 Canadian employees working at least three days a week on average in organizations of at least 50 employees. The questionnaire was developed by Contex Group/*Benefits Canada* and fielded by Contex Group and Maru/Blue using a random sample drawn from their Canadian online panel. The data has been statistically weighted to ensure the age, gender, regional and racial composition of the sample reflect those of the adult working population according to the 2016 Census data. In addition, Contex Group and Maru/Blue fielded a separate online survey with 103 decision-makers/influencers of workplaces/HR policies in organizations of at least 50 employees from across the country. The data was statistically weighted to accurately reflect the geographic distribution of business and business size according to Industry Canada.

About *Benefits Canada*: *Benefits Canada*, celebrating its 45th anniversary this year, is the country's original and most influential HR, benefits and pension publication for key decision-makers in Canadian workplaces. Senior HR professionals, finance executives, pension board trustees, benefits professionals, managers and industry specialists have turned to the magazine to help them make informed decisions about HR policies and benefits and pension plans.

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About Contex Group: Contex Group's mission is to "inform, connect and inspire through a variety of content specially designed to help business people, professionals and organizations develop and reach their full potential." Contex Group is a Canadian leader in the creation of conferences, exhibitions and training and a publisher of prestigious publications and websites, aimed at a variety of business audiences. The company operates through several major brands, including *Benefits Canada*, *Avantages*, *Les Affaires* and Con-tech Bâtiment.

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