

From: Business Management Daily

Subject: Practical HR strategies to boost your career

In The News ...

Poll: 70% say financial stress harms work performance

Seven in 10 workers surveyed by insurance company YuLife believe their own financial worries negatively affect their on-the-job performance.

The results are timely, as persistent concerns about inflation, rising interest rates and a possible recession dominate conversations around both the water cooler and the kitchen table.

Employees seem acutely aware of a connection between their own financial well-being and their performance at work. Two-thirds of respondents said a company's ability to support their financial well-being would influence the likelihood they would apply for a job there. Forty-five percent said employers should play a role in enhancing employees' sense of financial well-being beyond just handing out paychecks.

88% of employers to change health and well-being vendors

Most U.S. employers are making changes to their vendors that provide health-care and well-being benefits, according to a recent survey by the Willis Towers Watson consulting firm.

Among employers that offer mental health benefits, 37% said they plan to change providers of employee assistance programs and clinical solutions over the next two years. (See "Spotlight on Benefits" on page 2 for more on how employers can support employees' mental health needs.)

In this issue

Caring for employees' mental health	2
HR's newest legal liability risk	3
Su tapped to become secretary of labor	4
What to ask before switching HR vendors	5
Memo to Managers: Onboard seasonal staff	6
Expert Advisor: Scheduling hybrid workers	7

Is it time to force employees to use PTO?

Now is the time to tell employees to submit their requests for time they want to take off for summer vacation. The sooner supervisors know who will be gone and when, the easier it will be to make seasonal staffing adjustments.

But what if workers are slow to schedule vacation time or insist on taking just a day or two off around the 4th of July instead of taking a full week off? That's far more disruptive for supervisors.

The problem may be in the way you've structured your paid-time-off plan. Fortunately, there's also a simple way to fix that.

New trend: Shorter breaks

It seems fewer employees are taking

week-long vacations. That's what an analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows.

The two agencies conduct regular surveys asking what people did in the preceding week. The main goal is trying to calculate the unemployment rate by identifying people currently seeking jobs. Thus, surveys ask whether respondents worked for pay. If the answer is no, surveyors ask why not. One possible response is that the individual was on vacation. This provides the so-called vacation rate.

It turns out, the vacation rate has plummeted since 1980, indicating far

Continued on page 2

Most employers still hiring, still cautious

As employers navigate mixed messages about the economy—persistent inflation and headline-grabbing layoffs on one hand, a 53-year-low unemployment rate and increased consumer spending on the other—a new report by the Littler Mendelson employment law firm reveals the impact of uncertain conditions on workforce management and planning.

Littler's Employer Pulse Survey Report: 2023 Economic Outlook was based on surveys of 450 in-house lawyers, senior executives and HR professionals. They are cautiously optimistic—and bracing for the worst.

The survey found employers trying to avoid layoffs, keep employees engaged and retain talent. However, nearly a quarter of respondents said they were laying off staff, particularly in the tech industry and other sectors

that substantially ramped up hiring to cater to the needs of consumers during the pandemic.

Optimistic about their own businesses, but ... Three-fourths of employers expressed confidence in the state of their own businesses now and for the next 12 months. However, respondents worry about how a potential economic downturn will affect their workforce management and planning. More than three-quarters (77%) of respondents expressed concern on that front. Respondents from technology and health-care companies expressed the most concern—87% and 82% respectively.

Cautious hiring, layoffs not yet widespread. One-fourth of respondents said they have implemented workforce reductions or are in the

Continued on page 2

Force PTO use?

(Cont. from page 1)

fewer people are taking a week-long break.

At the same time, time taken off because of illness has also fallen, so it's not that people are necessarily taking more sick time instead of vacation time.

One possible explanation: More employers now offer paid-time-off banks, in which employees have a pool of leave they can use for any purpose: trips to the doctor, sick leave, personal days off or vacation.

It could be that workers hesitate to take time off for any reason, thinking they should save their PTO just in case they need it for serious health problems down the line. That could explain the increase in taking a day or two off around a three-day weekend—and the scheduling problems that often result.

One possible solution: Employers with PTO plans might consider requiring employees to designate vacation leave they intend to take and incentivize them to take that time off in blocks of five days or more.

Hiring but cautious

(Cont. from page 1)

process of doing so. However, 60% said they are not planning or even considering them, and 50% said they are or are planning to *grow* their workforces.

Pandemic lessons learned. The high percentage of employers avoiding layoffs could reflect lessons learned from the pandemic and a competitive talent market. During the first few months of the COVID-19 outbreak, thousands of employers had to furlough employees due to shutdowns. But then they had to scramble to staff up once business reopened. Employers don't want to go through that again.

Online resource Read Littler's survey report at www.littler.com/files/2023_littler_employer_pulse_survey_report.pdf.

Spotlight on Benefits

4 keys to care for employees' mental health and wellness

Your workers are stressed. According to ComPsych, the world's largest provider of employee assistance programs, almost 100% of workers surveyed said mental health support is a top concern. More than 60% reported having high levels of stress, suffering from extreme fatigue and feeling out of control. Of stressors related to work, 41% cited an excessive workload.

All that stress is expensive for employers. According to the nonprofit American Institute of Stress, work-related stress and associated absenteeism, diminished productivity and turnover cost employers at least \$187 billion per year.

To relieve employees' stress and improve their mental health, try these tactics.

1. Employee assistance programs

You may have an employee assistance program to help employees deal with personal problems. Make sure they know about your EAP and the services it offers.

Remind employees that most EAP services are available at no charge. Summarize EAP benefits in employee newsletters, social media and all-staff emails.

Whenever the EAP program offers a new option, let everyone know. Popular new EAP offerings include downloadable apps for self-guided meditation or brief online and telehealth therapy sessions with qualified mental health counselors.

2. Insurance-covered treatment

Employees sometimes don't know that their employer-provided health insurance covers mental health treatment, including live and telehealth

therapy sessions. They don't usually realize insurers must cover mental health conditions and addiction services on the same terms as physical conditions, with deductibles and copays set at the same rates as other medical coverage.

Employer-provided health insurance often covers talk therapy, in-patient hospitalization, partial hospitalization, substance abuse treatment, emergency care and medications. Ensure your health plan materials explain what's covered.



3. Fitness programs

Stressed, depressed and anxious workers can benefit greatly from exercise. Try offering free or discounted fitness club memberships. You might be able to offer on-site classes during lunch by contracting with local fitness or yoga instructors.

Encourage employees to participate or create their own fitness groups. For example, a group of workers could team up and walk outside during breaks or lunch.

4. Mandatory time off

Disconnecting from work can be hard. Employees may be reluctant to take vacation or feel compelled to respond to emails after hours. But time off is important for your employees' mental and physical health.

Tell supervisors to limit after-hours contact to true emergencies. Have them encourage subordinates to take vacation and personal leave. HR can help normalize time off by sending reminders in the spring encouraging employees to schedule summer vacations and staycations.



Beware latest legal risk facing HR pros: Lawsuits alleging breach of fiduciary duty

There's a new HR danger out there: Shareholders can now sue corporate officers—including the professionals who head up HR departments—for breach of fiduciary duty. Fiduciary duties include overseeing corporate risks that could affect a company's value and acting in the company's interest rather than self-interest.

Until now, that kind of liability was largely limited to members of the corporation's board of directors.

The possibility that you could be personally sued should light a fire under HR pros. Now is the time to fix a toxic culture that may contribute to discrimination, inequity and harassment.

Recent case: In 2018, McDonald's board of directors learned the CEO had engaged in

workplace sexual harassment. The board made him promise to stop. Less than a year later, the CEO was fired for having a sexual relationship with a subordinate. Meanwhile, allegations surfaced of widespread sexual harassment at McDonald's restaurants nationwide, which HR allegedly ignored.

Then a group of McDonald's shareholders sued, claiming corporate officers—including the head of HR—breached their fiduciary duty by ignoring numerous sexual harassment complaints and not pushing for the CEO's ouster following harassment allegations against him. A state court just greenlighted the lawsuit to proceed. (*In Re McDonald's Corp. Stockholder Derivative Litigation*, Court of Chancery of Delaware, 2023)

Employers win California battle over law restricting mandatory arbitration

A federal court has overturned a California law prohibiting employers from requiring employees to sign arbitration agreements.

Recent case: The Federal Arbitration Act is designed to encourage arbitration in lieu of litigation. The FAA generally preempts conflicting state and local laws.

A 2020 California law, AB 51, made it a crime to require employees to arbitrate employment law claims instead of taking them to court. However, any agreement to arbitrate remained enforceable under AB 51. Thus, employers risked criminal charges if workers signed the agreement, but workers would still have to arbitrate claims. Presumably, with criminal penalties as a disincentive, no reasonable employer would make signing a condition of employment.

Business interests sued to stop AB 51, arguing the law essentially forced employers into an untenable choice—either comply with AB 51 and lose their rights under the FAA, or face criminal prosecution but retain their FAA arbitration rights.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals sided with the plaintiffs, reasoning that potential criminal penalties would naturally interfere with encouraging arbitration via the FAA. **Result:** California employers can again require arbitration agreements as a condition of employment. (*Chamber of Commerce v. Bonta, et al.*, 9th Cir., 2023)

Note: States such as Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Vermont and Washington that have passed arbitration restrictions may soon find their laws challenged, too.

Defeat bias suits by keeping accurate HR records

Joan, who was over age 60, worked for the IRS. Her job required her to use the agency's computer network to access taxpayer records. The IRS has strict rules against misusing those records, and Joan regularly signed acknowledgments that she understood the rules. Even so, she got caught looking up the records of taxpayers her church friends were curious about. The IRS fired her. She sued for age discrimination, citing a supervisor's one-time comment: "Anyone too old to do this job should quit." The court tossed out Joan's lawsuit after the IRS produced documentation proving she broke the rules by inappropriately accessing taxpayer files. (*Opara v. Yellen*, 9th Cir.)

The lesson: Follow HR's golden rule: Document, document, document! Keep complete, contemporaneous records of every HR decision you make.

Worker lied to get job? That can sink bias case

Eugene, who is Black, was hired as a welding instructor, a job requiring three years' experience. His résumé claimed he met that requirement.

When students complained that Eugene taught improper welding techniques, he was fired. He sued, alleging racial bias. But the employer discovered Eugene didn't actually have the three years' experience. That was enough for the court to accept the employer's argument that hiring him had been a mistake and that he wasn't qualified for the job. Eugene's lawsuit was dismissed. (*Dykes v. Marco Group*, ED PA)

The lesson: For an ex-employee to claim discrimination in firing, he must first prove he was qualified for the job. If you discover that the person lied about his qualifications, you may be able to get the case dismissed quickly if the evidence shows he was unqualified for the job.



Su nominated to become secretary of labor

President Biden has nominated Deputy Secretary of Labor Julie A. Su to head the Department of Labor, replacing Labor Secretary Marty Walsh, who resigned in March.

Before becoming deputy secretary of the DOL, Su was the labor secretary of California, where she played a central role in enacting legislation, currently mired in litigation, that would have granted gig workers and other independent contractors many of the same rights employees have. Before that, she spent 17 years as a civil rights attorney representing workers who alleged employer wrongdoing. Over the years, she has developed a reputation as a strong pro-union advocate.

Su was on the short list to become Biden's first secretary of labor in 2021. The Senate confirmed her as deputy secretary of labor instead, on a 50-47 vote that broke along party lines, Democrats in favor and Republicans opposed. That schism is likely to play out again in Senate confirmation hearings, which have yet to be scheduled.

FTC extends comment period on proposed noncompete ban until April 19

The Federal Trade Commission has decided to continue accepting public comments on its proposed rule prohibiting employers from requiring employees to sign non-

compete agreements pledging they won't go to work for competitors. The revised deadline for submitting comments is now April 19, a one-month extension.

Reason: The controversial proposed ban has drawn massive opposition from business groups—and fervent support from employee advocates. As of March 14, the FTC had already received more than 9,200 comments, which appear to be evenly split between opponents and supporters of the ban.

Online resource Read the text of the FTC's proposed noncompete ban and submit comments at www.regulations.gov/document/FTC-2023-0007-0001/comment.

White House wants chip makers to provide day care benefits

The Biden administration has announced that it wants some employers to provide day care as a condition of receiving funding under the new CHIPS Act. The new requirement is an effort to bring workers—especially mothers—off the sidelines and back into the workforce to help ease the skilled-labor shortage.

The new law takes a carrot-and-stick approach to semiconductor companies that want a chunk of the \$39 billion Congress appropriated. To qualify for federal funding, chip manufacturers must provide access to affordable child care both during facility construction and when the factories are operational. If successful, the requirement may expand to other industries.

HR Q&A

by Anniken Davenport, Esq.

Are we allowed to ask applicants about their criminal histories?

Q. Is it legal to ask on a job application, “Have you ever been convicted of a crime, pleaded guilty or no contest to a criminal charge or had adjudication withheld?” — *Mary, Florida*

A. Employers must be very cautious when performing hiring or other background checks. First, make sure you have a legitimate business reason for obtaining criminal record background information.

The EEOC takes the position that unless a conviction is job-related and consistent with business necessity, using it to exclude an applicant may violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. It also says that arrest records should not be used to exclude applicants since arrests aren't proof the applicant committed a crime. There's one exception: If the case leading to the arrest has not yet gone to trial or otherwise concluded, a potential employer can consider the alleged crime if it is clearly job-related.

A number of other laws regulate what you can and cannot ask about a candidate for employment. For example, the Fair Credit Reporting Act sets strict rules for conduct-

ing employment-related background checks. Applicants and employees must give written consent before an employer can order a background check from a background reporting company. That consent must explain that information found during the check may be used to determine whether someone will be hired, promoted or fired. If the employer uses information in the report, it must give the subject a copy of the report and the background check company's contact information.

The Fair Chance to Compete Act also limits when federal contractors and federal agencies can request criminal history information, limiting requests for criminal history record information to after the employer has made a conditional employment offer. Prohibited records include arrests and convictions.

In addition, many states and cities now have laws that prohibit employers from asking about criminal records on their applications, specify what criminal records can be used and bar some convictions from consideration entirely. These are commonly referred to as ban-the-box laws. Be sure to check what the rules are in all states where you operate.

How to safely let down interviewees who didn't get the job

Even in today's robust employment market, there is intense competition for the best jobs. Don't let clumsy messaging cause negative publicity or, worse, liability.

How you handle rejections can mean the difference between an applicant with a positive impression of your organization and one whose feelings are hurt—and who might decide to sue you.

Send a well-crafted rejection letter to candidates who were interviewed. It assures them that they were seriously considered and it keeps you from having to verbally explain, in detail, why you rejected them.

No law requires you to tell applicants why they weren't hired. Give a neutral, nonspecific reason for the rejection.

Sample language to consider:

"Thank you for your interest in our organization. After reviewing your background and experience, we have decided that another candidate

more closely fits the position's requirements at this time.

It was a pleasure meeting you during your interview. We wish you the best of luck in your job search."

If you believe that the applicant could qualify for other positions in your company, you may encourage him to apply again in the future. (But only if you truly want him to do so!)

Try to personalize the rejection letter. Use the candidate's name and refer to something you discussed during his interview. Never provide inaccurate, misleading or conflicting reasons for an applicant's rejection.



5 do's and don'ts for checking on sick workers

Every organization has its share of workers who abuse sick-leave policies. However, going too far to ferret out shirkers could invite discrimination claims and damage morale. Here are five do's and don'ts:

- ✓ **DO** require sick employees to check in with a manager every day, but only during work hours. Or have supervisors call sick employees at home each day during work hours. Be consistent with all employees.
- ✓ **DO** insist on speaking to employees. If someone else answers the phone and says the worker isn't available to talk, request that the employee call in as soon as possible. Take the same approach if you receive calls from another person on behalf of the sick worker.
- ✓ **DO** realize that it's legal to visit the employee's home if a worker doesn't call in or won't return calls within a reasonable period. If the employee isn't home, you can later ask where the person was when you arrived. If the worker claims to have visited the doctor or a drugstore, ask for a note, prescription or other proof.
- ✓ **DO** know which absences are protected. Don't check up on supposedly sick employees who you believe leave home to participate in protected activities, such as voting or attending church.
- ✗ **DON'T** require sick workers to call supervisors upon leaving home and returning. Court decisions have ruled in favor of such a requirement only in narrowly defined cases involving the FMLA. Applying the practice to all suspected sick-day abusers could tempt retaliation claims.

Ask these questions before deciding to switch HR vendors

It looks great on paper: You can shave 5% off your training budget by just picking up the phone and returning that aggressive vendor's phone call. Many an HR director has gone down that road only to regret it.

Before you make that bold move, ask yourself these questions:

Will the discounts I get only be offset by increases elsewhere?

It's common for a vendor to dangle a "loss leader" in the hopes of drawing you in while conveniently forgetting to mention that the prices of other services are higher than you're used to paying. Make sure you have the wherewithal to peek into all the corners of that category.



Is the administrative hassle worth the benefits?

When new systems must be learned and followed, the cost savings can be erased by unexpected inconveniences. You may have to deal with new account reps and processes that turn out to be less accommodating than the old ones.

Will employees resist or revolt?

Before you bring in a new vendor with new products, imagine someone influential in the office asking, "What the heck is this, and how does it benefit us? How is it better than the old way?"

How much time do I really want to spend chasing that last dollar?

You can replace one vendor with another, but guess what: There'll always be someone who claims they can do even better. The free samples, teases and promises to price match never stop. Constantly juggling vendors and suppliers starts to produce diminishing returns pretty quickly.

To: _____
From: _____

Date: April 2023
Re: Managing seasonal employees

Onboarding How to welcome and prepare part-time & seasonal staff

Whether you're adding some college interns to the IT department or extra servers to the patio dining area, getting part-time staff comfortable and up to speed is critical. Here's how to get the most from these temporary team members:

Provide a clear job description

A nursery worker who thinks he's being hired to help customers select flowers will become frustrated (and unproductive) when most of his time is spent unloading trucks. Give applicants a detailed, honest account of what tasks a job entails.

Put instructions in writing

Whether it's a checklist for closing-time procedures or step-by-step instructions on how to operate a piece of equipment, written instructions help new hires feel confident that they're doing what you want. Be sure they receive copies of the employee manual, too.

Young, summer hires new to work environments may especially benefit from guidance on dress code, unacceptable use of electronics and other matters related to professionalism.

Show employees the big picture

A tour of the workplace can help new employees learn about the

company as a whole and feel more at ease. Whenever possible, relate the activities viewed back to what the worker will be doing. Let them know how their small piece fits into the overall goal.

Emphasize communication

Not wanting to bother their bosses or appear clueless, many new workers fail to ask pertinent questions and only find out the answers when reprimanded for doing something wrong.

Convey the message early and often that you value workers who want to learn and aren't afraid to speak up. Set up a mentor system, which will help erase new hires' uncertainty about where to turn for help.

Offer feedback and recognition

Seasonal workers thrive on many of the same things as full-time staff. Everyone wants to come to work to do a good job. Giving good, prompt feedback, even for small things, will increase their motivation.

While praise can be public (who doesn't enjoy being complimented in front of peers?), deal with prob-



lems in private just as you would with regular employees. Present the situation in a factual, success-oriented manner that focuses on a solution rather than assigns blame or questions competency.

Similarly, make positive feedback specific. Instead of offering a generic "good job," tell a new employee how impressed you were with her handling of a customer. She'll likely keep repeating the stellar behavior.

Show genuine interest

Don't let someone's designation as "seasonal" or "part-time" keep you from forming a bond. Taking the time to learn about background, goals and personality can make a person feel valued, leading to greater engagement and productivity. Your discussions can have a long-term influence on their career paths, regardless of whether or not you'd consider hiring them for full-time gigs later.

Likewise, developing positive relationships with other types of seasonal staff can have future payoff. Your needs and theirs may coincide again at a later time, perhaps next summer. Rehiring someone you already know and like can save a great deal of time and stress.

3 tips for managing part-timers

While the presence of part-timers may create management challenges, the supervisory basics are the same. Follow these tips:

- 1. Treat part-timers as equals to their full-time peers.** Focus on the importance of the work they do, not the number of hours they work.
- 2. Respect part-timers' time.** Many part-timers work short hours precisely so they can spend the rest of their week on family, school or community obligations. Whenever possible, allow part-timers to work a reliable weekly schedule instead of rotating their shifts.
- 3. Keep part-timers in the loop.** Employees who aren't at work every day still need to know what's going on.



About time: Scheduling is key when managing hybrid teams

With the COVID crisis slowly waning, employers and their people leaders must figure out what their post-pandemic workplace will look like. That requires facing the elephant in the room: It's really hard to claw back something—remote work—that people now see as the norm.

Making the return-to-office decision requires recognizing that remote work didn't just change *where* people work. It also changed *when* people work. That's why it is so important for managers of hybrid teams—with employees working remotely sometimes and on-site at others—to address scheduling issues.

There are at least two ways to approach in-person work scheduling for hybrid teams:

- For some teams, a regular schedule may work best. If you've ever worked retail or food service before, you know how frustrating it can be when you can't make personal plans because your work schedule changes each week.
- However, for other teams, the kind of work employees do and the nature of their work responsibilities (such as team projects and cross-department collaboration) and non-work commitments

(such as our families) make regular schedules unnecessary.

The key is to discuss the situation with employees. Each manager in your organization should work with their team members to come up with a schedule together.

Regular collaboration day

My team has decided to make Wednesday our "collaboration day" when everyone works on-site in the office. We also agreed to be flexible if someone needs to work from home on Wednesdays.

Our goal is to hold in-person meetings on Wednesdays so everyone can take advantage of this time together to help boost communication and collaboration.

Flex, with an overlap day

One of my clients is considering having each team or department represented by at least one person in the office on any given weekday, with all (or at least most) employees in the office on the same day each week.

For example, if person A is in the office Monday through Thursday, person B is in the office Tuesday through Thursday, and person C is in the office Wednesday through Friday. That makes Wednesday the "overlap" day. In addition to being a good time for meetings, the "over-

lap" day can also be used for training among peers.

The road back to 'normal'

There are a lot of unknowns about the path ahead. One thing is certain, though: Your managers and your organization as a whole will be moving forward against the backdrop of how the pandemic has reshaped pretty much everything we know.

After working out of the office—often without strictly defined hours—it's likely that many employees will be unwilling to fully surrender that flexibility. Some might decide to leave if you insist on everyone returning to on-site work as they did before the pandemic.

With plenty of technology to aid productivity and communication when people aren't in the office, as well as a couple years' worth of experience working remotely, why not continue virtual work at least to some degree for those who've managed it successfully?

Val Grubb is a keynote speaker, executive coach and trainer who specializes in translating complex skills such as leadership, inspiring accountability and motivating others into actionable steps that resonate with managers and executives. Learn more about her work at valgrubbandassociates.com.

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Survey: Tech tops HR's hottest investment trends for 2023

Nearly half of HR leaders cited HR technology as their top investment priority for this year, according to a recent poll by the Gartner consulting firm. Close behind were investments in staffing and recruiting, total rewards and training.

HR technology: HR tech was ranked as a leading HR investment priority by 46% of survey participants. HR leaders said they expect technology-related initiatives to hold the greatest potential for leveraging their functions' efficiency.

HR admin costs have spiked since 2020, largely because of pandemic-related factors such as remote work. Gartner's research found the yearly spend on HR administration increased from \$155 per employee in 2021 to \$194 per employee in 2022.

Staffing and recruiting: Employers are preparing for extremes in hiring by investing in recruiting technology. Forty-five percent of HR leaders surveyed said they planned to increase spending on staffing and recruiting.

To date, digitalization has facilitated automation of parts of the hiring process. Now, HR leaders are investing in all areas of the candidate pipeline, including candidate attraction and talent analytics. Gartner predicts technologies with the most potential to aid recruiting are AI-enabled sourcing and screening capabilities and candidate-relationship management platforms.

Total rewards: Forty-one percent of HR leaders plan to spend more on total rewards this year. A tough economy fuels this priority. HR functions face the challenging task

of providing additional support to employees affected by today's higher cost of living, while avoiding a wage-price spiral. They're boosting investments in equitable rewards programs, pay transparency and employee well-being. This includes spending on compensation planning technologies, pay equity tools and wearable tech to monitor employee stress and fitness.

Training: Investments in employee development are a priority for 41% of employers. Skills needs continue to change rapidly, requiring the learning and development function to take on an expanded role. Employers are increasing spending on HR technologies that enhance skills-management processes, AI-enabled self-service learning options, coaching applications and virtual-reality technologies.

FYI

55% of us don't use all our PTO leave

We're leaving an awful lot of leave on the table! An analysis by career site Zippia found that 55% of American workers don't use all their accrued paid time off. That adds up to more than 750 million days of leave not taken. On a per-employee basis, Americans leave an average of 6.5 days of PTO unused each year.

ChatGPT: Do your research before jumping in

The news media has been in an artificial intelligence feeding frenzy ever since AI chatbot ChatGPT was released Nov. 30. The program is a generative AI platform purported to be capable of doing everything from writing news articles like this one to developing new handbook policies.

It's said that HR departments worldwide are rushing to experiment with AI, trying to figure out how ChatGPT (openai.com/blog/chatgpt) and similar programs can streamline personnel processes. But before you decide whether to incorporate AI into your HR function, look beyond the numbers to find the real story about widespread usage. *Spoiler alert:* It may not be as prevalent as it seems.

In February, ResumeBuilder.com surveyed 1,000 U.S. business leaders to find out how many employers currently use or plan to use ChatGPT. The survey report said 77% of employers were using ChatGPT to help write job descriptions, 66% said they use it to draft interview questions and 65% use it to respond to job applicants.

But those high numbers don't represent feedback from a broad universe of employers. ResumeBuilder.com only surveyed organizations *already* using ChatGPT.

Remember, ChatGPT has been available for less than five months, making widespread adoption on the scale the survey reported unlikely. Perhaps generative AI bots can augment your HR capabilities, but don't believe all the hype. Do your research first.

How does your company compare on total rewards?

Total rewards are about much more than compensation. According to the WorldatWork association's 2022 In Review: Total Rewards Inventory of Programs & Practices report, total rewards encompass best HR practices around work flexibility, performance management and employee benefits in addition to pay.

Here are some of the study's findings. See how your company stacks up against the 990 organizations surveyed.

- **Sign-on bonuses** (offered by 88% of respondents), spot bonuses (73%) and retention bonuses (67%) all reached the highest level WorldatWork has ever recorded.
- **Hybrid work** was offered to some or all employees in 91% of organizations; 82% had fully remote employees.
- **Flextime** is a hallmark at 72% of organizations surveyed, matching the pre-pandemic average.
- **Compressed workweeks**, offered by an average of 41% of organizations in pre-pandemic years, were only found in 32% of organizations in 2022.
- **Student-loan repayment** assistance continues to grow, offered by 13% of 2022 respondents, compared to 4% in 2016. Tuition reimbursement was offered by 80% of employers in 2022, down from 87% in 2016.

Is there anything more dangerous than crossing the IRS?

Payroll Compliance Handbook

Once upon a time, payroll used to be easy: the employee's gross pay minus federal, state and local taxes. Then along came health premium and 401(k) deductions. Still simple, but...

Today, payroll managers deal with direct deposit, health spending accounts, vehicle allowances, phone expenses, earned income credits, garnishments and more. Payroll is now a confusing and time-consuming task prone to error.

Don't let a simple mistake unleash the full and frightening power of the IRS and wipe out your business... and you personally.

With our newly updated *Payroll Compliance Handbook*, you'll quickly and easily find answers to all of your nagging payroll questions. This handy reference is written in plain English - no legal gobbledygook here - so you can quickly understand what you need to do to stay in compliance, improve efficiencies and avoid costly payroll errors.

Each chapter focuses on a specific aspect of payroll management and compliance... and every issue of payroll compliance you need to know is addressed.



Navigate easily to topics including:

- Complicated tax calculations
- Exempt classification
- Fringe benefit deductibility
- Independent contractor status
- Paying for on-call time
- Business expense reimbursement
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