

From: Business Management Daily

Subject: Practical HR strategies to boost your career

## In The News ...

**Employers are still accountable for COVID safety.** Don't think that the big Supreme Court ruling on vaccine mandates means you can ignore all COVID safety precautions in your workplace. Even after the court struck down OSHA's vax-or-test mandate (*see right*), OSHA is reminding that its General Duty Clause still requires employers to provide a work environment "free from recognized hazards."

Plus, many states and cities continue to set specific requirements (vaccines, masks, distancing) for COVID safety. And employees or their family members who contract COVID at work could bring lawsuits against employers for gross negligence of COVID safety standards at work.

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## Vaccine choice is left to employers; many undo

To mandate COVID vaccinations for your employees or not? That decision is again back in the hands of most private employers after the U.S. Supreme Court on Jan. 13 blocked OSHA's federal vaccination-or-testing requirement for companies with 100+ employees.

In a 6-3 ruling, the high court said OSHA's emergency temporary standard was an overreach of its powers. In a separate ruling, the court did allow a similar vaccine mandate that covers almost all health workers to take effect. A related vaccine mandate for federal contractors is still tied up in court.

The court's decision leaves states free to regulate employers with regard to COVID and vaccines. Some are stepping up and establishing their own vaccine-or-test mandates. Other states are blocking such mandates. For a state-by-state list of vaccine mandate rules, go to [www.tinyurl.com/StateVax](http://www.tinyurl.com/StateVax).

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Also, OSHA says it will continue to use its General Duty Clause to go after employers that ignore general safety standards to keep workers healthy.

**What this means for employers:**

Nothing in the court's ruling prevents employers from implementing their own vaccine mandates on employees if they wish. Courts have repeatedly said employers are free to establish vax mandates on their own. (You must, of course, offer religious and medical accommodations.)

"If you want to mandate vaccination regardless of the ETS, then have at it," says attorney Robin Shea of Constangy Brooks. "If you don't want to mandate vaccination at all, then don't. Just be sure you are taking all other recommended precautions to

*Continued on page 2*

## Hybrid work emerges as the true 'want': 3 tips

Flexibility about where and when to work is no longer a unique recruiting tool—it's become an expected element of a professional workplace, like a health plan and 401(k). And the leading flex program to emerge from the pandemic is hybrid work, in which employees split working locations between the office and their home.

A full 83% of employees say they prefer a hybrid work model, according to a new Accenture survey. And organizations are buying in. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of high-growth com-

panies have already adopted a "productivity anywhere" workforce model.



Don't expect such a dramatic change to come without advance planning ... and some growing pains. Your organization can help managers lead employees into this brave new world with a bit of planning and training.

According to new research by the Gartner business advisory firm, your organization can help a hybrid model succeed with these steps:

**Equip teams for resilience,** investing in tools and technologies that

*Continued on page 2*

## Vaccine choice

(Cont. from page 1)

prevent transmission of COVID in workplace.”

### How are employers responding?

Employers and HR have been of two minds about OSHA’s mandate. While many agreed with the public health purpose, they dreaded the administrative hassles that come with a vax mandate. And they feared it could drive away workers.

Now without a federal requirement, many employers are backing off vaccine mandates. The latest: On Jan. 18, Starbucks told its 200,000 workers that they would no longer be required to be fully vaccinated (or submit to weekly testing).

In a SHRM survey before the Supreme Court’s ruling, a full 75% of large employers said they would not require employees to get COVID vaccinations if the Supreme Court struck down OSHA’s mandate. The top reasons (in order): legal uncertainty, managing morale, recordkeeping hassles and retaining employees.

## Hybrid work

(Cont. from page 1)

facilitate collaboration, mentoring and asynchronous brainstorming between far-flung co-workers. Make sure everyone has (and is trained on) the right collaboration tools, like Slack and online whiteboards like Miro.

### Develop the skills managers need

to navigate difficult conversations that foster team cohesion, inclusion and what Gartner calls “psychological safety.” Looking after managers’ own well-being is important, too. Almost 70% of HR leaders surveyed said managers in their organizations feel overwhelmed these days.

**Measure performance by impact, not hours.** Monitoring remote work by the keystroke or time on task is counterproductive, Gartner argues. Instead, employers should focus on metrics that evaluate the quality and effectiveness of employees’ work.

Gartner’s research finds that managers who master this mix can boost sustainable high performance by as much as 45%.

# To ease record COVID call-offs, navigate the CDC’s new return-to-work guidance

Employers are facing major staffing disruptions as Omicron surges across the country. In the first two weeks of January, about nine million Americans couldn’t work due to a COVID illness (or caring for someone with COVID). That’s triple the levels from the first two weeks of December.

Employers often rely on CDC COVID guidance to decide how to handle isolation and return to work.

Until now, the CDC has advised an isolation period of 10 days. That changed recently when the CDC issued new guidance recommending that people who test positive—regardless of vaccination status—stay home for just five days, whether they have COVID symptoms or not.

The isolation period wasn’t the only thing changed. Until recently, the CDC said workers should produce a negative COVID test result before returning to work. That’s not the case anymore. Now, if people are either asymptomatic or have symptoms that are improving, they can resume



If you follow the CDC’s new guidance, make sure employees know that returning to work requires a 24-hour fever-free period after five days of isolation and improvement of other symptoms.

normal activities—including going to work—as long as they wear a mask for 10 days after the positive test.

In addition, people should not return until they have been free of fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) for 24 hours.

**Advice:** If you choose to follow the CDC’s latest guidance—it’s not required—inform employees of the new rules. Make sure employees monitor their temperatures and understand that returning to work requires a 24-hour fever-free period after five days of isolation in addition to improvement of any other symptoms. As an extra precaution, consider checking returning workers’ temperatures.

**Online resource** Read the CDC’s new guidance at [www.tinyurl.com/new-CDC-isolation-guidance](http://www.tinyurl.com/new-CDC-isolation-guidance).

## The disconnect between recruiters & managers is hurting your hiring process

Today’s labor shortage makes it critical that recruiters and hiring managers work seamlessly (and quickly) to identify top talent. But too often, a disconnect between these two groups is slowing the hiring process and swerving it off course, according to a new survey by the Talent Board.

“Strong alignment between recruiters and hiring managers is essential, and neither has to do it alone,” says Talent Board leader Kevin Grossman.

Where does the collaboration go awry? The survey cites these areas:

**1. Unclear candidate criteria.** Nearly half of recruiters (46%) say they struggle to decipher between the hiring manager’s “must-have” skills/experience versus the “nice-to-have” skills.

**2. Hiring managers’ unrealistic expectations.** More than half of recruiters (56%) say hiring managers have unrealistic expectations of the speed and results of the hiring process.

**3. Delays in résumé reviews and feedback.** Most recruiters complain it takes too long for hiring managers to provide feedback on résumés or debrief after candidate interviews.

**Advice:** More—and more frequent—communication between both sides will yield better hiring results. Simple tips like optimizing intake calls to address “must-have” candidate criteria are key. Another good way to cut the time and cost of hiring is by embracing AI tools like chatbots, virtual interviewing services and text apps.



## Must you provide a reason for terminations?

There's no legal requirement saying employers have to provide employees with a written—or even a verbal—statement setting forth the reasons for a termination (unless you have an employment contract that calls for it). But as decades of lawsuits have shown, failing to give a legitimate, business-based reason can leave room for the employee to assume the firing reason was inappropriate or unlawful.

Whether you give a reason or not, it's essential to document your discipline and termination reasoning at the time you make those decisions.

**Recent case:** Soon after returning from medical leave, Ida was fired for

poor work. She filed an FMLA lawsuit, arguing that because the termination notice didn't include a reason, she was likely fired for taking FMLA leave.

The court rejected her case because her manager produced contemporaneous notes showing he had met with Ida to discuss her performance problems *before* she took leave. Post-meeting notes show that the company decided then to fire her. (*Houston v. Texas Dept. of Agriculture*, 5th Cir.)

**Online resource** Read our article, *10 Steps to Stress-Free, Lawsuit-Free Termination Meetings*, at [www.theHRSpecialist.com/10steps](http://www.theHRSpecialist.com/10steps).

## Pre-hire tests must be directly related to job

Making a job offer is a de facto acknowledgement that you believe the person is qualified for the position. If the offer is contingent on some sort of pre-employment test, make sure the test is directly related to job tasks and is consistent with business necessity. Otherwise, you are risking lawsuits that likely favor applicants who fail the test.

**Recent case:** Alana was offered a truck driver job, contingent on passing a physical test of strength. The company used the same test—developed

by an outside vendor—to evaluate all other newly hired drivers.



Alana failed the test and the offer was rescinded. She complained to the EEOC, which filed a lawsuit on behalf of her and other women who had failed the test.

The court sided with Alana, saying the strength test discriminated against women. *Reason:* The company's drivers don't typically lift heavy weights, so the test was not really job-related or consistent with business necessity. (*EEOC v. Stan Koch & Sons*, DC MN)

## When can FMLA be taken for care of sibling?

The FMLA typically allows eligible workers to take up to 12 weeks of job-protected unpaid leave to care for the serious illness of a son or daughter. But it's not just biological or adoptive parents who can qualify.

Employees can also take FMLA leave if they're standing *in loco parentis* of a person with a serious ailment who is under 18 or is over 18 and "is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability." The relationship is based on day-to-day responsibility, not a biological or legal relationship.

**Recent case:** A cleaning company fired a worker, saying that he had abandoned his job. The worker claimed he'd requested FMLA leave to provide care for his paralyzed brother.

The company argued the employee's relationship with his brother didn't fit *in loco parentis* because the brother wasn't financially dependent on his caretaker. But the court disagreed, saying "financial support is not a necessary requirement for someone to stand in loco parentis." (*Crawford v. Creative Cost Control*, W.D. VA)

## Avoid repeated questions about workers' retirement

When a 60-year-old HP employee got a new manager, that boss began to call him "uncle," criticize his "old skills" and repeatedly ask when he was "going to retire." After losing his job in a RIF, the employee sued for age bias. The court sent his case to trial, saying one or two retirement inquiries may be isolated, "but 10 inquiries, a jury could easily find, is a campaign." (*Sloat v. Hewlett-Packard*, 6th Cir.)

**The lesson:** Pressing an older worker about his retirement plans could be just as unlawful as forced retirement. Remind supervisors to stay away from the topic.

## Be prepared to accommodate hearing impairments

A Dollar Tree warehouse refused to hire a deaf applicant for a general warehouse job and instead hired less qualified applicants. The EEOC sued and Dollar Tree agreed to settle by paying the applicant \$50,000 and training its staff on disability bias. (*EEOC v. Dollar Tree Distribution, Inc.*)

**The lesson:** Make sure your managers don't instantly rule out deaf applicants. The ADA requires employers to offer reasonable accommodations for disabled individuals at every step, including hiring.

## Paying with 91,000 pennies sparks new DOL charges

When a Georgia auto body shop owner angrily paid a worker his final \$915 in wages via 91,500 greasy pennies dumped on the person's driveway, it triggered lots of bad press for the company. Now it also has triggered a retaliation lawsuit from the U.S. Department of Labor, which says workers are entitled to "obtain the wages they earned without fear of harassment or intimidation."

Plus, the DOL found that the owner was paying straight time for all hours worked, not overtime. The DOL suit seeks nearly \$37,000 in back pay, which cannot be paid in pennies.







## When we fire employees for refusing the vaccine, can they earn unemployment?

Typically, employees who quit their jobs or are fired for cause—including defying company policies, such as vaccine mandates—are ineligible to earn unemployment benefits. However, a handful of mandate-resistant states (including Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Kansas and Tennessee) have created exceptions to their unemployment benefits for people who are fired for refusing to submit to company-required COVID vaccines. Similar proposals are being pushed in other states, including Missouri and Wisconsin.

## Safety training: Don't overlook OSHA options

Before spending big bucks on third-party safety videos and training guides, check out OSHA's hundreds of free publications, videos and other online training tools for employers. This includes a dozen videos on workplace COVID safety. Find links to these safety and health training materials at [www.osha.gov/training/library](http://www.osha.gov/training/library).

## Group health insurance plans must now cover at-home COVID tests

Effective Jan. 15, group health plans, including self-insured plans, must either provide insured employees with free over-the-counter at-home COVID test kits or reimburse employees who purchase their own tests. One caveat: Access to free tests is not available to unvaccinated employees who may be subject to mandatory weekly COVID testing. How to make that distinction is up to plan-sponsor employers.

## IRS increases mileage rate to 58.5¢ per mile

The IRS's standard mileage rate, which you can use to reimburse employees who drive their own cars on business or to value employees' personal use of company vehicles, increased to 58.5¢ a mile for 2022, up from 56¢ last year. For employees who drive their own cars on business, the 58.5¢-a-mile rate is a ceiling; you may use a lower per-mile reimbursement rate, if you choose. Reimbursements up to 58.5¢ a mile are tax-free, provided employees account for their business miles. Mileage tracking apps on smartphones make this easier.

## HR Q&A

### Can we ask staff to keep mum about bonuses?

**Q.** Our company will be handing out quarterly bonuses this year, but only to select people based on performance. Can we ask them to keep it quiet as we distribute the checks?

**A.** Yes, but you want to avoid the impression that this is something you are demanding. If you are the person handing out the checks, anything you say will appear to come from a position of power. If you are concerned about ill feelings, you might want to share a word or two on your reasons. For example, something like: *"Congratulations on earning a bonus! Only our top performers are receiving these bonuses, so you might want to be sensitive about sharing that information with co-workers."*



### W-2 forms: How to handle incorrect SSNs?

**Q.** In the past, our HR office has checked every new hire's Social Security number in person. We just switched to self-onboarding for new hires and now no one confirms employees' SSNs. Two employees entered their SSNs incorrectly. One has left the

company. Should we file these W-2s on paper with a note attached regarding the incorrect SSNs?

**A.** The Social Security Administration doesn't want you attaching anything to your W-2s, except a W-3, if you're filing on paper. If you're filing on paper and you don't have an employee's SSN, write "Applied for" in Box a. If you're e-filing, put all zeros in Box a. But be sure to follow up with the employee who's still working for you and try to follow up with the employee who left. Once you receive their correct SSNs, you'll have to file Form W-2c, so the SSA can update these employees' wage records.

### After lawsuit is settled, how do we report it?

**Q.** A former employee sued the company. How should the settlement payment be reported—on a W-2, since this is a former employee, or a Form 1099-MISC?

**A.** The reporting depends on the elements of the settlement. Back pay and front pay need to be reported on a W-2. If you're not going to withhold, you need to gross up those amounts, because they are taxable. Compensatory damages, liquidated damages and any damages paid under the FMLA should be reported in Box 3 of the 1099-MISC.

*Do you have a question? If so, you can email it to The HR Specialist at [HRSEditor@BusinessManagementDaily.com](mailto:HRSEditor@BusinessManagementDaily.com).*

## Health insurance costs: Benchmark your increase

The average per-employee cost of employer-sponsored health insurance jumped 6.3% in 2021 as employees resumed seeking care after avoiding it in 2020 due to the pandemic, according to Mercer's National Survey of Employer-Sponsored Health Plans.



That 6.3% jump is the highest annual increase since 2010, and it raises this question: Are higher costs a temporary market correction or the start of a new period of higher cost growth?

Employers are projecting on average a fairly typical cost increase of 4.4% for 2022. However, Mercer analysts caution that costs could rise faster if employees continue to catch up on care that they delayed for the past year, or if "long COVID" illnesses generate lots of expensive claims.

Rising prescription drug prices are another wild card that could accelerate cost growth.

Cost shifting—in which employers transfer a larger share of the cost of health services to employees in the form of higher deductibles and co-pays—seems to be off the table for many employers.

Adding or expanding access to behavioral health care continues to rise on employers' benefits priority lists. In fact, the largest employers (20K or more workers) in the Mercer survey cited it as their number one health care priority.

**Online resource** Find the full Mercer survey at [www.tinyurl.com/Mercer2022](http://www.tinyurl.com/Mercer2022).

## Setting priorities for HR: A 7-step process

The pandemic pushed HR to the forefront and elevated the CHRO role in many companies (*see page 8*). But establishing yourself as a key member of the strategic team is easier after you've systematically set priorities for your HR department. Use these seven guidelines to help separate real priorities from run-of-the-mill tasks.

**1 Track ongoing projects** every day over a few weeks. Ask yourself how they influence the organization's bottom line or productivity. Do they support the organization's goals? Do they help HR serve employees better? What resources do they require?

**2 Find ways to cut back, eliminate or delegate** ongoing projects and tasks that provide negative responses to the previous questions. Ask HR staffers to do the same thing. Review results and devote the time saved to true priorities.

**3 Rank every current project** and task into three urgency levels: Critical (must be met within a specific timeframe); Important (can significantly affect business success, but not as time sensitive); or Desirable (could improve operations). Resist the temptation to call everything a high priority.

**4 Set a goal for each priority.** Is it to increase sales, ramp up productivity, improve service or something else?

**5 Write down everything** that needs to be done to accomplish each priority. Label each task either "Urgent" or "Not urgent."

**6 In hiring, prioritize which jobs to fill.** Give precedence to jobs that impact revenue, are difficult to fill and require hard-to-find skills.

**7 Brace yourself for resistance** to some priorities. Prepare arguments to counter opposition you anticipate.

## Bringing in a trainer? Trust, but verify

If you're hiring someone to train your staff on compliance or skills—either in person or via Zoom—don't just assume everything will go smoothly. Here some tips from Phil Race, author of *2000 Tips for Trainers and Staff Developers*:

**Agree to things in writing.** A friendly conversation over the phone may be difficult to recall weeks later. Put pen to paper and send a summary of your conversation and expectations to the visiting trainer.

**Discuss in some detail the areas to be covered,** and what the session title means. Talk through exactly what you both understand about the topics to be covered and explain what outcomes you expect from the training. Provide details. Examples can be very useful.

**Review the handouts,** and check when your presenter wants to distribute material. If handouts are supplied in advance, check whether it is intended that they should be issued at the start, or at particular stages during the session.

**If on site, check which facilities the presenter will need.** Ask how



much room is needed and how the room should be set up. Is privacy needed? Are tables required for materials? What kind of technology is needed?

**Don't be afraid to interject when necessary.** If the discussion goes in a direction that's not necessary/helpful, or if you can see that the audience has tuned out, try to bring the session back on track. Throw in a question to steer things in another direction when necessary. Or call a quick break and have a quick chat with the trainer to refocus the discussion.

To: \_\_\_\_\_  
From: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: February 2022  
Re: Rehiring former employees

## Recruiting

# Many happy returns: The year of 'boomerang' hires

A record number of people quit their jobs in 2021. Some pursued new careers. Others sought remote positions. Others decided to retire early or focus on family.

But as time passes, many people will reevaluate their decisions and would consider returning to their previous employers—either in the same or different roles. Should you take back any of your so-called “boomerang employees”?

### Pros and cons

Rehiring someone you already know has possible advantages:

#### ✓ Save time, training and money.

Boomerangs can hit the ground running, which makes life much easier for managers.

#### ✓ Recoup institutional knowledge.

The employee knows how things work and has relationships with co-workers, customers and partners. And maybe they've picked up new skills or ideas in the interim.

#### ✓ It sends a message to co-workers.

When an employee returns, co-workers may realize that the workplace grass isn't always greener elsewhere, which may help with retention.

Rehires also carry possible pitfalls:

✗ **Carry along bad vibes.** You obviously want only ex-employees who

left on good terms to return. But do they harbor any grudges? According to a Robert Half survey, the top four reasons employees don't return to past

employers are, in order, dissatisfaction with management, the corporate culture, previous job duties and the company burned bridges when they left.

✗ **A sense of entitlement.** Does this person think his rehiring gives him a special status, or allows him to regain the same seniority, perks, etc.?

#### ✗ Are you taking the easy way out?

Is this rehire an easy path or the right fit? If you fail to consider other applicants, you may be missing out on great talent.

### Four questions to ask

Before catching that boomerang, consider these four questions:

**1. How well did the person perform before?** Bringing back a great employee who you were sad to lose makes sense. Rehiring someone who was average or unimpressive probably does not.

**2. How would this person's return affect others?** Some people burn bridges when they quit. They tell off co-workers or fail to give proper



*Not long ago, quitting a job was considered a breach of trust. Some managers may still hold that bias. But don't let this antiquated mindset keep you from making moves that help the company.*

notice. Even if the person who wants to come back is highly skilled, think twice before rehiring if bad blood exists.

**3. Is the person still the best fit?** Depending on how much time has passed, the role the former employee left may look quite different now. If responsibilities and tasks have expanded or changed, evaluate whether the person has the skills to perform successfully.

**4. Will this person leave again soon?** Managers faced with the prospect of bringing a former employee back on board might need to deal with their own feelings before proceeding.

Not too long ago, quitting a job was considered a breach of trust or a lack of loyalty. Some managers still hold this bias and a grudge. Don't let this antiquated mindset keep you from making moves that truly would help your company.

Good talent is not easy to find. Also, the reality is that few people nowadays stay with a single employer their whole career.

Still, it's natural for a manager to wonder if the person might leave again. Conversations before making hiring decisions should include asking, “*Why do you want to come back?*”

The desire to return may be due to a change of circumstances—kids back to on-site learning, no longer needing to care for a sick relative or vaccine ability easing safety concerns.

It's also possible that the person got caught up in the “build a different life” momentum created during the pandemic but did not truly think through the decision.

## How to stay in touch with your alumni

Maintaining a connection with ex-employees can help attract the good ones back into the fold. Here are a few ways to keep up that link:

- **Follow up on exit interviews.** Even if the employee has left, shoot them an email saying, “*Thanks for the feedback. We've responded by improving ...*”
- **Use social media.** Connect with the person on LinkedIn. Consider setting up a LinkedIn alumni network. Post exciting company updates on your social media. Consider sending a quarterly e-letter to ex-employees about company news.
- **Build a rehire database.** It can include ratings and insights from former managers, plus a “most wanted” list.
- **Reach out directly.** Contact certain ex-employees once or twice a year; let them know you'd be open to having them return in the future.





# Lessons from America's worst employers of 2021

For each of the past five years, I've gathered examples of greed, discrimination, mistreatment, abuse and general awfulness from the workplace. I've compiled them in a list and asked America to vote on the Worst Employer of the Year. Here are last year's top five (or bottom five, depending on your perspective) along with a key lesson you can learn:

## #5: The (Not) Better Boss.

*CEO downsizes and fires 909 employees 18 days before Christmas over a Zoom call, and within days of the company receiving a \$750 million cash infusion.*

**The lesson:** At all costs, avoid firing by a letter, phone call (or, worse, voice mail), email, text message, Facebook post, Tweet or any other not-in-person communication, including Zoom. In the world of COVID and remote work, it might be unavoidable. But these people deserve to learn their fate in a manner other than a mass virtual meeting with hundreds of soon-to-be-former co-workers.

## #4: The Transphobic Terminator.

*Manager fires a trans employee*

*after months of harassment because she offended his Christianity.*

**The lesson:** LGBTQ+ employees have the same legal rights as all other employees. Your religion does not trump their right to work free from discrimination and harassment.

Employees should never be given a free pass because they're



"the boss" or a "high performer." The law certainly won't give you a pass for excusing their behavior.

## #3: The Cosby Suite.

*Star employee names his hotel room at a conference the "Cosby Suite" and uses it to groom potential conquests.*

**The lesson:** If you want harassment to stop, you need a culture that doesn't tolerate it, and that culture starts at the top. These employees should not be given a free pass because they're "the boss" or a "high performer." The law certainly won't give you a pass for excusing their behavior.

## #2: The Stillbirthing Leave Spurner.

*School district denies maternity leave to a teacher after she suffered the tragedy of delivering a stillborn baby.*

**The lesson:** Denying bereavement leave is one level of bad. It's a whole other level of evil, however, to tell a mother that she can't take any time off following the death of her newborn baby. These employees should be given sufficient time to grieve.

## #1: The Enslaving Employer.

*Hindu temple lures Indian men from marginalized communities and forces them to work nearly 90 hours a week for \$1 an hour.*

**The lesson:** 2021 marks the third consecutive year that an allegation of slavery or human trafficking took home top honors. It's awful that these atrocities still exist, and that people make others suffer for greed, profit or other motives.

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## Omicron further delays the back-to-the-office push

This winter's COVID wave is forcing employers to once again push back their plans to return employees to the office. Nearly half (44%) of companies have altered their reopening plans because of the Omicron variant, says a new Gartner survey. Apple and Google told workers they are delaying returns indefinitely. And the longer this goes on, employees become more resistant to returning. A full 55% of U.S. workers say they'd consider leaving their job if they were asked back to the office before they felt safe.

## 2021 was the year employers took pay equity seriously

A full two-thirds of U.S. organizations say they took some actions in 2021 to make sure their pay levels were equitable based on gender, ethnicity and age, according to a new WorldatWork survey. The most popular aspect analyzed is gender (98% of companies), followed by ethnicity (91%) and age (55%). Just 3% analyze by other factors, such as disability, sexual orientation and veteran status.

## The pandemic changed (and elevated) the CHRO role

At the start of COVID, employers thought they faced a health care issue, then a office space issue. But as the pandemic evolved, it became clear this was a complex business and people issue that has put HR directors squarely at the forefront and as key members of the C-suite. Latest proof of how the CHRO role has been raised: the former CHRO of Unilever was recently appointed CEO of Chanel.

## Empty offices? Cut costs with motion detectors

If your office currently has a fraction of its previous employees, it's likely burning money by lighting unoccupied work areas. So look into motion detectors and set the controls to turn off automatically after specified minutes of inactivity. Also, check into daylight technology that adjusts artificial light levels based on the amount of natural light in the area.

## Resignation nation:

### Who's looking to jump ship in 2022?

If your company doesn't have a structured retention strategy for this year, it's time to get one. America's quitting culture doesn't show signs of slowing down in 2022.

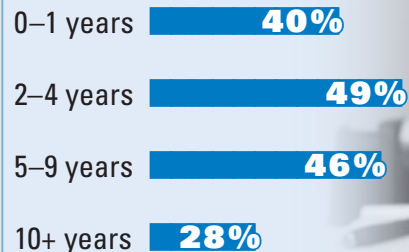
More than four in 10 U.S. workers (41%) say they plan to look for a new job in the first half of 2022, up from 32% six months ago, according to a new survey by staffing firm Robert Half International. People most likely to begin job searching this year: Gen Z professionals, tech workers and employees who've been with their employer from two to four years (*see chart below*).

Employees realize that wages are rising nationwide. "Seeking a salary boost" was the top reason (54%) that people cited for wanting to jump ship, followed by better benefits (38%) and the ability to work remotely (34%).

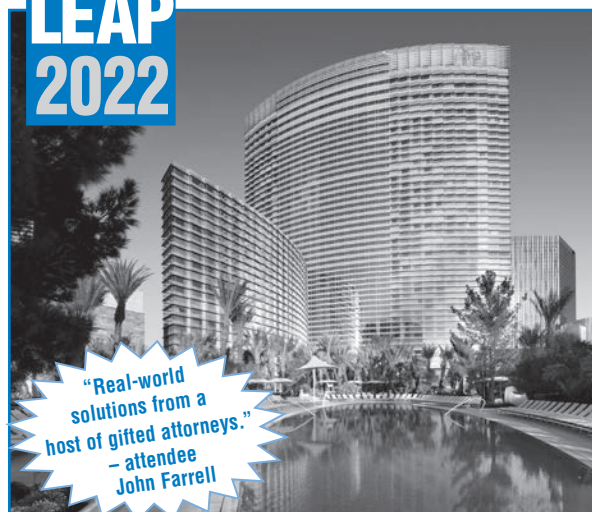
Surprisingly, the survey found that more than a quarter (28%) of professionals planning to look for a new job would quit without a job lined up.

*Tip:* Now's a good time to conduct Stay Interviews to assess whether workers are content with their jobs and to identify what your organization can provide to keep them happy (and off the job boards).

### Workers looking to leave, based on years on the job



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*Over, please*

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- **Fringe benefits: taxable or non-taxable?** How to reward fringe benefits to employees without crossing swords with the IRS
- **W-2s, W-3s, 1099s and more: What errors will land you in the IRS hot seat?** We'll tell you how to avoid them
- **What's the law in your state?** Check out the appendixes for the requirements in your state.

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