

From: Business Management Daily

Subject: Practical HR strategies to boost your career

In The News ...

Relatively few employees continue to work remotely

The percentage of employees working remotely has fallen to near pre-pandemic levels, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data released in April. Only about 28% of private-sector employers have employees who frequently or always telework, down from 40% at the height of the COVID crisis in the summer of 2021. Before the pandemic, about 23% of employers had employees who often or always worked remotely.

The latest BLS numbers: About 11% of employers' workforces are 100% remote, compared to 10% in 2021. Sixteen percent reported that some of the employees are working from home, compared to about 30% in 2021.

Survey: We're not investing enough in fostering connections

Forty-five percent of U.S. workers say employers aren't investing in employee connection, according to a new survey by Eagle Hill Consulting.

Employees say feeling connected to their work improves their ability to do their job (60%), day-to-day work quality (58%), desire to go above and beyond (55%) and ability to serve customers (47%). Eagle Hill researchers say employee connection is multi-faceted, covering co-worker relationships at work, how connected employees feel to their work and the degree to which they feel aligned with organizational culture.

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What to do before DOL releases new OT rule

In January, the Department of Labor announced that it planned to issue a proposed rule in May to raise the salary white-collar employees must earn to remain exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act's overtime pay requirements.

The current weekly salary is \$684 a week or \$35,568 a year. Anyone who earns less than that qualifies for overtime pay when they work more than 40 hours in a workweek, even if they are classified as exempt.

No one knows exactly what the proposed overtime rule will require. However, it's prudent to start planning now for some kind of increase. The consensus among DOL-watchers suggests a new salary threshold just

under \$50,000 per year.

Here are the issues you should consider:

Who might be affected

First, look at the employees who would be on the bubble—your assistant and middle managers who currently earn just above the \$35,568 mark. You have three options:

1. Raise everyone's salary. If the bump in the salary threshold isn't too great, you should be able to handle the raise.
2. Reclassify everyone as nonexempt and pay them overtime when they work more than 40 hours in a week.
3. Raise the salary of some employees and reclassify others.

Continued on page 2

New OT rules could affect 3 FLSA exemptions

If the U.S. Department of Labor decides this May to raise the white-collar salary threshold employees must surpass to be exempt from overtime pay, the new rule will affect three kinds of employees: executives, administrative workers and professionals. Here's a look at the kind of work those employees must perform to qualify for exemption:

Executive exemption. The employee's primary duty must be managing the enterprise or one of its departments or subdivisions. He or she must direct the work of two or more other employees. The employee must have the authority to hire or fire, or have his or her recommendations as to the hiring, firing, promotion or any other change of status of other employees given particular weight.

Administrative exemption. The employee's primary duty must be

performing office or non-manual work directly related to the management or business operations of the employer or its customers. The employee's primary duty requires the exercise of discretion and independent judgment.

Professional exemption. The employee's primary duty must be performing work requiring advanced knowledge—work that is predominantly intellectual in character and requires the consistent exercise of discretion and judgment. The advanced knowledge must be in a field of science or learning. The advanced knowledge must be customarily acquired by a prolonged course of specialized intellectual instruction.

Online resource Read the DOL's official guidance on FLSA exemptions at www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/17a-overtime.

To do before new OT rule

(Cont. from page 1)

Employees' current overtime hours

Identify who is working overtime and how many hours a week they work. It may pay to reclassify exempt employees who put in lots of overtime hours. After all, they might be improperly classified.

Evaluate whether these employees meet the FLSA's duties test for their positions. (See below.)

Reviewing, updating all your job descriptions

Spend the next few weeks revisiting all your exempt employees' job descriptions. Seek honest feedback from employees on the tasks they perform. Ask them to be thoughtful and thorough about describing what they do. Reassure them of your objective—collecting meaningful information about the specific characteristics of everyone's position.

Areas of inquiry should concentrate on these points:

- **The essential tasks of employees' jobs.** Ask employees to explain what they do and why the job must be performed. Have them stick to currently assigned ongoing duties.
- **Employees' level of responsibility.** Describe employees' supervisory responsibilities: how many subordinates they have, the input they have into employees' performance reviews, whether they are authorized to hire and fire, etc. Ask employees to describe how their decisions affect others.
- **The problems they encounter** and how they solve them.
- **The special knowledge, skills or abilities** employees need to perform their jobs. Educational credentials are relevant; subjective statements about a position's occupant (e.g., Ashton works very hard) aren't.

Be prepared to reclassify employees—either nonexempt to exempt or vice versa—based on what you learn.

Spotlight on Benefits

Bereavement leave: How to manage time off when an employee's loved one dies

Is HR's focus on leave related to childbirth misplaced? According to the Census Bureau, there were more deaths than births in most U.S. counties during the 12 months that ended June 30, 2022. Yet much of the national discussion about expanding mandated employee leave centers on time off following birth. Meanwhile, your employees are more likely to experience the grief of losing a family member.

Except for unpaid FMLA leave to deal with depression following a family death, or limited time to cope with a service member's death, guaranteed time off to grieve is rare for most employees.

Any employer that offers reasonable bereavement leave—especially paid leave—sets itself apart as a workplace that values work-life balance.

Here's a look at state bereavement laws and proactive employer leave policies that provide time off to grieve and heal after a loved one dies.

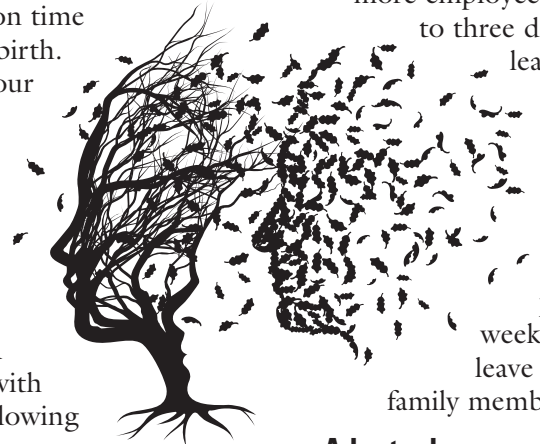
State bereavement mandates

A growing number of states now require some employers to provide at least limited bereavement leave for qualified employees. For example, effective Jan. 1, 2023, California began requiring bereavement leave and Illinois expanded its existing bereavement leave requirement to include time off following a miscarriage, stillbirth or failed adoption. Here's what these states require:

- **California:** Employers with five or more employees must provide up to five days of bereavement leave

for a family member's death.

- **Illinois:** Employers with 50 or more employees must provide up to two weeks of unpaid bereavement leave, including for stillbirth and miscarriage.
- **Maryland:** Employers with 15 or more employees must provide up to three days of bereavement leave for the death of an immediate family member.
- **Oregon:** Employers with 25 or more employees must provide up to two weeks of bereavement leave for the death of a family member.



Adopt a bereavement policy

Many employers provide at least a few days of bereavement leave, either by listing bereavement as a reason for using accumulated paid leave or as a separate benefit.

Employers should consider creating a separate bereavement policy. Include the following:

- **Reasonable time off.** Decide whether you will provide more time off for immediate family members and less time off for more distant relatives. For example, the death of an employee's parents, children or partners/spouses might warrant a week off, while three days may be adequate following the death of grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, aunts and uncles. A single day off to say goodbye to a close friend can also be offered.
- **Referral to EAP.** If you have an employee assistance program, remind grieving employees that they can contact the EAP for further assistance.



Check for possible retaliation before approving supervisor's disciplinary recommendation

Before approving discipline, always evaluate whether the action might be motivated by a supervisor's attempt to retaliate against the employee. Exercise the same due diligence when a supervisor recommends placing an employee on a performance improvement plan, which is often a precursor to termination.

Recent case: Cynthia, who worked from home for Under Armour, began hearing allegations of sexual harassment from female co-workers. She filed several internal complaints, claiming she and her colleagues were subjected to a sexually hostile work environment. For example, she complained to her supervisor that a district manager pretended to do a striptease during a videoconference and posted photos of himself on social media posing in a Speedo. She claimed a different district manager had commented on a female colleague's appearance. Cynthia's boss dismissed her concerns.

Meanwhile, news reports cited

a rampant hostile environment at Under Armour. The CEO held an all-staff meeting in which he promised to fix the company's culture. During the meeting, several men downplayed the seriousness of the problem. Cynthia passed along more harassment concerns to her boss.

Five months later, her supervisor gave her a glowing performance review. But nine days after that, he called Cynthia and asked her to resign in lieu of being placed on a performance improvement plan. She refused and was placed on a 60-day PIP. That's when she called HR, which told her the PIP was "highly unusual." When Cynthia failed to achieve her PIP goals, she was fired—and sued.

A court just ruled her suit can move forward. The judge noted that HR knew about her good performance review, her prior complaints and the PIP, yet it failed to intervene to stop Cynthia's subsequent firing. (*Pajak v. Under Armour*, DC WV, 2023)

Ensure job descriptions reflect actual work

Here's a tip that could prevent lawsuits or help you win if an employee does sue you: Designate someone to make sure every job description is up to date and truly describes the work being performed.

Key point: If a job changes, it's essential to revise the job description, too.

Recent case: Alison, who is Black, was an IT specialist at the EEOC's Chicago district office. Federal agencies such as the EEOC classify jobs by levels, based on the positions' responsibilities and the qualifications employees must possess. Each classification has its own job description.

Alison started at the GS-7 level and earned a promotion to GS-9 about a year later. At that classification, her job was to provide technical assistance

to staff and network support for the office. A white, male colleague—a GS-12 senior IT specialist—was transferred, leaving an opening. Alison applied for the job and was selected, but she wasn't promoted due to a hiring freeze. However, she began performing the job. Finally, realizing the EEOC wasn't going to fill the position, she sued.

The court said she has a case. It noted that she had been doing a higher-grade job for years without any revision to her job description, let alone her GS level. Simply put, her job description didn't reflect her actual work. (*Hardiman v. Burrows*, ND IL, 2023)

Advice: Review job descriptions at least once every year, updating them as needed.

OK to require training that may violate some religious beliefs

Raymond was a teacher in New York, which requires school systems to provide work environments free of discrimination and harassment. Training on anti-gay bias is mandatory for all employees. The school learned another employee was transgender and about to undergo transition treatment. Raymond objected to the training, stating his religious beliefs about homosexuality precluded him from participating. He said it would compromise his faith. The school district fired Raymond and he sued.

In court, the district argued it had no choice: It could not allow an employee to skip legally mandated training. A federal appeals court agreed and dismissed Raymond's lawsuit. (*Zdunski v. Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES*, 2nd Cir., 2023)

The lesson: Employers must try to accommodate workers' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices. However, they aren't required to break the law while doing so.

ADA accommodations depend on accurate job descriptions

Melchior directed eastern U.S. sales at Buffalo Wild Wings. Based in Washington, D.C., his job description said he had to travel up to 60% of the time, with up to nine flights monthly.

After Melchior had a heart transplant, he had stringent travel restrictions: no more plane flights, and remaining at all times within a three-hour radius of his hospital in D.C.

HR began discussing possible accommodations, including a transfer to another position. He rejected the accommodations, and the company fired him because he could no longer perform his job's essential functions.

Melchior sued, but his case was dismissed. The court noted that the job description made it clear extensive travel was an essential function. Thus, he was no longer qualified for the job. (*George v. Molson Coors*, DC Cir., 2023)

The lesson: An up-to-date job description is essential for making ADA accommodation decisions.

Can an employee waive the right to overtime pay?

Q. Can a board of county commissioners in South Dakota have a nonexempt employee sign a document to the effect that the employee would not ask for overtime pay or comp time off? HR feels federal law supersedes any such agreement. — *Tim, South Dakota*

A. Trust your HR team on this one! Workers cannot generally waive their right to compensation under the Fair Labor Standards Act and similar state laws. It is not clear to me, however, that the employee in question is covered by the FLSA, which is the federal law governing minimum wage and overtime compensation. Generally, the federal law does apply to state and local governments, with an exception for certain types of policy-making employees.

The provisions of the FLSA apply to all employees of state and local governments except to those who are specifically excluded in section 3(e)(2)(C) of the FLSA and to those who may qualify for exemption from the minimum wage and/or overtime pay provisions of the FLSA. As you've identified the employee only as

“nonexempt,” we will assume the ordinary exemptions would not apply here.

The right to overtime pay cannot be waived by private agreement between the employee and the employer. The U.S. Department of Labor further clarifies, “An agreement that only 8 hours a day or only 40 hours a week will be counted as working time also fails the test of FLSA compliance. An announcement by the employer that no overtime work will be permitted, or that overtime work will not be paid for unless authorized in advance, also will not impair the employee’s right to compensation for compensable overtime hours that are worked.”

In other words, if your nonexempt employee is entitled to overtime and agrees not to claim those wages, that agreement is null and void. Moreover, the employee might argue that the agreement demonstrates the county’s willful intent to violate the law. It would be best to revoke the agreement and set work hours and expectations for the employee in question. These concerns can be entirely avoided by ensuring the employee works no more than 40 hours in a workweek.

OK to dock pay for sick day if no PTO is available?

Q. We have a six-month introductory period for all new hires and paid time off accrues during this time. But employees aren’t eligible to use it until they complete the six-month period. Can exempt employees be docked pay if they want a vacation day or sick day during this time? Or, after the six-month introductory period, if an exempt employee has exhausted his PTO accrual, can he be docked pay? — *Mike, Kansas*

A. Yes, you can dock an exempt employee’s pay when the employee has exhausted any entitlement to paid time off, provided you remember that exempt employees generally cannot be docked pay for partial-day absences without running afoul of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

In other words, salaried exempt employees are entitled to full salary for those days on which they perform any work. If an exempt employee takes a full day away from work, however, he or she need not be compensated for that time.

Unauthorized, unpaid overtime: Can I be held personally liable?

Q. My subordinate repeatedly works unauthorized overtime. My supervisor refuses to address the issue. Can I be held individually liable for unpaid wages and related damages? — *Pam, Indiana*

A. Yes, the Fair Labor Standards Act imposes strict liability for violations of the wage-and-hour laws. It permits individuals who have decision-making authority to be sued as individuals to recover unpaid wages and related damages. You should address this problem directly with HR.

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Washington Report

Health benefits affected as COVID emergencies wind down

The COVID-19 national emergency declaration, which began in March 2020, officially ended on April 10, when President Biden signed H.J. Res. 7. The companion public health emergency, which also went into effect in 2020, is set to end May 11.

The expiration of the emergency declarations means employers can start winding down pandemic-era group health plan modifications that have been in effect for three years:

Testing and notification: Group health plans will no longer be required to provide first-dollar coverage of COVID testing. Employees diagnosed with COVID prior to expiration of the emergencies and who incur multiple expenses related to their diagnosis must still be reimbursed for the full cost of their tests and other services.

Vaccines: COVID vaccines and other preventive services are still considered essential health benefits, which must be provided cost-free to employees who get shots or services from in-network providers. However, employees who seek services out of network may be required to pay.

Advice: Consult your broker or carrier to learn more about what the expiration of the emergency declarations means for your health plans.

3 questions to kick off open-enrollment season right now!

Six months out, it's time to start planning for HR's biggest event of the year: open enrollment. Here are some best practices to ensure your open-enrollment period gets off to a productive start in late October or early November.

Focus first on plan design—creating a benefits portfolio that meets employee needs and is affordable for both employees and your organization. Take a fresh look at the full range of benefits you offer.



However, your major focus will probably be on your most important, expensive benefits: Health, dental and vision insurance.

What's your experience?

Your benefits providers are your most important allies for gathering data on how employees currently use your benefits and the adjustments you might want to consider. Ask your insurance brokers and carriers to crunch the numbers on the following:

- **Participation by benefit.** Which benefits have attracted the most employees in years past? Is participation in some plans increasing? Where is participation falling? Ask if the data suggests it's time to make plan design changes.
- **Current claims data.** What is the run rate for insurance claims so far this plan year? How is that claims experience affecting employer costs? Is it time to revise your benefits budget?

Based on that information, ask brokers and carriers for their suggestions about enhancing your benefits offerings.

Switch carriers?

Their answers might prompt you to consider going with other insurance providers. That's a high-stakes decision, and something of a double-edged sword. Many employers believe they must shop several carriers for the best pricing each year. And yes, you probably can find new plans that trade coverage for lower premiums.

However, it's important to consider the value of sticking with your existing carriers. Loyal customers tend to receive the best rates at renewal. If another carrier offers a better deal, ask your current carrier if they can match those terms.

Bottom line: Shopping the market is important, but it is not necessary each year.

Fully or self-insured?

As you review claims data, look for trends. If your spend rate has been declining for two or three years, you might consider switching from a fully funded insurance plan to a self-funded plan. In contrast, if you have a self-funded plan that has had to cover many large claims in recent years, you might consider transitioning to a fully funded plan to smooth out claims volatility.

This is not a do-it-yourself analysis. Consult a qualified broker or benefits consultant to guide you through the decision-making process.

Track employee turnover to improve retention

In today's tight labor market, smart HR pros are laser-focused on employee retention. Step one in crafting a plan to keep employees is understanding your organization's turnover—who is leaving and why. Here's how.

Collect data

The process starts with gathering information about employees who have recently exited the organization, perhaps over the last six months or year.

Slice and dice the data by demographic and other workforce characteristics: age, gender, position, pay grade, tenure, performance rating and so forth.

While you're at it, review notes from exit interviews.

Look for patterns

What turnover trends emerge from your analysis? For instance, perhaps five women quit the marketing department last year, compared to just one man. Maybe the highest turnover occurred among employees with less than two years with the company.

Have common themes emerged from exit interviews? If many former employees mention team discord, poor pay or burnout, you'll know where to focus to improve retention.

Act on what you find

Use what you learn to drive changes that might improve retention. Some possible corrective actions:

Improving onboarding. Losing new hires too quickly could signal that they were either bored or overwhelmed. Consider enhancing onboarding to address those issues. Train supervisors to schedule frequent check-ins with new employees.

Affording more flexibility. Many employees who telecommuted during the pandemic have begun to bolt now that work has moved back to the office. If you're experiencing an exodus of women or hearing exit interview comments about work-life balance, it might be time to consider instituting hybrid schedules or extending remote work options.

Caring for top talent. Losing too many high performers? Maybe your superstars need greater challenges, more appreciation or better professional development. Conduct "stay interviews" with your best employees to learn what keeps them around.

To: _____
 From: _____

Date: May 2023
 Re: Better decision-making

Strategy

Analysis paralysis? 4 tips for making better decisions

Your ability to make sound business decisions swiftly—even when they involve ambiguity and risk—is a major factor in your ability to guide and manage a successful team.

Here are some simple ways to make better decisions:

1 Take yourself out of the issue.

Scientific research indicates that the less emotionally invested in a problem you are, the better your decision-making capabilities.

That's because emotions tend to affect decision-making far more than we realize—even for the most level-headed leaders. These emotions can range from the deeply seeded (like fears about losing your job) to those as benign as feeling irritable because of a stressful morning commute.

Regardless of the emotion, science shows that your emotional condition at the time you make a decision skews your judgment and dictates the kind of information you'll tend to adopt or discard.

To eliminate these biases, use this simple tactic: Think about how you would advise your best friend

to make the decision, suggests Chip Heath, co-author of *Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work*. “When we step back and simulate someone else, it's a clarifying move,” says Heath.

2 Limit the data you consider. You want to be an informed manager—but there is such a thing as having too much data to consider when it comes to making decisions.

In one study conducted by researchers at Princeton and Stanford Universities, scientists found that information overload is at the root of many decision-making challenges.

In short, when we know too much, we lose our ability to see the big picture. Instead of focusing on the real problem, we hyper-focus on the detail we perceive as missing. As a result, our perception of the problem, the risk and the best outcome are clouded.

“There's always one more report, one more analysis and one more perspective that's a click or two away,” writes Ron Friedman, Ph.D., in *Psychology Today*. “The challenge lies in differentiating between questions worth exploring and questions best left unasked.”

3 Consider two options. Playing the proverbial devil's advocate can help you arrive at decisions

more efficiently. Not only does considering one option against the other give you a sense of focus, it can help you realize that the reasons behind your hesitancy to choose aren't as disastrous as they seem.

Science indicates that we tend to overemphasize how much regret we'll actually experience if we do make the “wrong” choice—which

leads us to take longer than necessary to make a decision of any kind.

4 Imagine the event taking place.

Should you switch vendors? Should you change the product? Neither of these situations has a clear “right” answer—but you can reduce your own uncertainty by letting the situation play out in your head.

Research conducted at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and cited by *Harvard Business Review* indicated that projects that involved so-called “prospective hindsight” (essentially, pretending the project unfolded based on the determined course of action before it really did) increased a team's ability to project future outcomes by as much as 30%.



Steer clear of these decision-making traps

CEOs often say one of their favorite ways to evaluate managers is to watch how they make decisions. The way a manager seeks out facts, processes information and communicates his conclusions reveals much about his poise and leadership. Avoid these pitfalls to ensure that you make wise, fair-minded decisions:

- **Inflating recent experience.** A memorable incident (good or bad) can produce lingering side effects. You may figure that the probability of such an event recurring is higher because it's something you vividly remember or it happened recently. For instance, when conducting a performance review, don't grade an employee based solely on what you've noticed in the weeks right before the appraisal. Take notes during the year and consider the performance for the entire period.
- **Engaging in “my side” bias.** To appear decisive, you may render decisions that ignore facts or common sense. This can occur because you overjustify your beliefs and convince yourself that you are right. Be open to all sides of a decision and make the choice based on objective facts.



Jill Pappenheimer



Stacy Litteral

Focus on employee experience to bolster retention

When employees leave an organization, it's typically because they lack a sense of engagement, don't feel aligned with the organization's overall vision or don't believe their work matters. They may also feel isolated and disconnected from colleagues, especially in remote or hybrid work environments.

In today's strong job market, employees have lots of career options. If they feel unhappy or unfulfilled at work, they will look elsewhere. That makes it more important than ever for leaders to create a work environment that fosters employee support, connection and empowerment.

Employees are looking for authentic engagement and meaningful work in organizations that support their overall well-being. They expect employers to take action on social issues, such as diversity, equity and inclusion.

Fostering that kind of employee experience is good for staff, of course, but it's also good for employers. They benefit from higher productivity, lower turnover, a better reputation (and, consequently, high-quality candidates), improved communication and greater collaboration.

Authentic communication is key

In most cases, organizations can

develop a better employee experience with frequent and authentic communication. In addition to regular conversations about tactical job performance, it's important to layer in ongoing conversations about how individuals feel overall about their work.

To create a dialogue that helps employees feel heard and helps managers understand their teams' experience, ask questions like these:

- Are you feeling connected to your work and your team?
- Do you understand what your responsibilities are? Are they the right responsibilities?
- Do you feel like you have solid stretch goals that keep you energized?
- Are you getting what you need to be successful in your role?
- Do you feel aligned with the overall goals of the organization?

By asking these questions regularly and truly listening to the responses, leaders can gain a better understanding of whether team members are thriving and take steps to address any issues before they reach a crisis point.

Metrics matter

It's vital to measure employee experience with ongoing data to understand

what is working and what isn't.

You should survey your team before and after creating new initiatives. Look at turnover rates, productivity, participation in benefit programs and more. Advanced people-analytics software can give you valuable data about trends in your organization.

An ongoing process

Once a dialogue is established, follow-through is crucial. A sure way to destroy worker trust is to promise or imply changes that never materialize.

Be ready to invest in the employee experience based on the feedback you receive.

Whatever you do, don't suddenly stop. Fostering a positive employee experience is an ongoing, iterative process that never ends. The point isn't to finish, but to continuously improve.

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Apply these perspectives to recruiting in today's 'seller's market'

The LinkedIn social media site recently released its 2023 Future of Recruiting Report, which contains helpful findings and predictions that HR professionals will find valuable. The report covers the impact of current economic uncertainty on recruiting, how the role of recruiting will change in coming months and the influence of artificial intelligence on HR.

The LinkedIn report offers 17 recruiting trend predictions based on interviews with global talent leaders, surveys of thousands of recruiting pros and analysis of data points generated on LinkedIn. Among the report's findings:

- While compensation ranked as one of the top priorities for candidates, only 45% of recruiters said their companies have increased salaries enough to keep up with inflation.
- Twenty-two percent of employers said they expect to spend more on in-house recruiting this year, while 23% expect to invest more in external staffing agencies.
- It's a seller's market. The recruit-

ing process is expected to favor candidates, not employers, for the next five years.

The report urges HR managers and recruiting professionals to implement these suggestions:

Look at skills first

The LinkedIn report emphasized the value of a skills-first hiring strategy. That's "the practice of valuing a candidate's skills over more superficial signals like an impressive alma mater or previous employer." Recruiters and hiring managers look more closely at skills instead of years of experience or prestigious colleges. It's one of the most effective ways to develop a more diverse and well-rounded employee population.

Assess what matters most

Fully 64% of recruiters agreed that the recruiting market will be more favorable to candidates than employers over the next five years. On the other hand, recruiting budgets are

predicted to flatline or decrease over the next year. That puts recruiters and HR professionals at a disadvantage when competing to attract top candidates.

In order to navigate this competitive, budget-constrained recruiting landscape, LinkedIn says it's important for HR staff to understand what matters most to candidates.

LinkedIn found that compensation and benefits was the top priority for candidates, followed by work-life balance and flexible working arrangements.

However, HR pros should be wary of tunnel vision. "Don't neglect other aspects of your company culture that foster that happiness," the report warns. It is important to build your employer brand and take a well-rounded approach to evaluating compensation and benefits offerings. That includes assessing work-life flex options and DEI programming, too.

Learn to work with AI

There's a lot of concern in some industries that AI technology could replace human workers. However, you can't take the "human" out of human resources.

HR professionals said they're mostly staying positive when it comes to AI. Of hiring professionals surveyed, 68% said they were either "very hopeful" or "cautiously optimistic" about the impact of AI tools like ChatGPT on recruiting.

According to the LinkedIn report, generative AI presents an opportunity for HR to save time on time-consuming tasks like drafting emails or job descriptions, freeing up more time to spend focused on candidates and employees. With an anticipated budgetary strain on recruiting this year, AI might be able to help short-staffed or under-funded HR departments better optimize their time.

Online resource Read LinkedIn's 2023 Future of Recruiting Report at business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/resources/future-of-recruiting.



Survey: Employers concerned about covering workers' mental-health needs

More than three years after the COVID-19 pandemic upended workplaces, mental-health coverage remains a priority for employers, according to an annual employer survey fielded by the nonprofit Kaiser Family Foundation.

Nearly half of surveyed large employers—those with at least 200 workers—reported that a growing share of their workers were using mental-health services. Yet almost a third of that group said their health plan's network didn't have enough behavioral-health-care providers for employees to have timely access to the care they need.

As millions of employees were sent away from shuttered office buildings to work from home or risked infection while working on the front lines, mental-health problems soared. Now, even as many workplaces have returned to a semblance of "normal," some workers are still grappling with the changes of the pandemic years and seeking mental-health services.

Although four out of five employers reported they had enough primary-care providers in their health plan's network, only 44% reported having enough behavioral-health providers, according to the KFF survey.

Among large employers, 14% said more employees sought services to treat substance use in 2022, although about half said they did not know whether there had been an increase, according to the survey.

Among employers with 50 or more workers, 17% said they had also seen an increase in the number of workers requesting FMLA leave for mental-health conditions.