

HR Leaders Monthly

October 2020

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Editor's Note

Brian Kropp
Lauren Romansky

Keeping employees focused on their work is often a challenge, but this year it has been especially difficult. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted employees' personal and work lives, while quarantines and social distancing erased the line between home and office for millions around the world. In the U.S., employees are trying to stay productive through an economic crisis, a historic moment for the racial justice movement and a divisive, emotionally charged election in which many believe the stakes are higher than ever. HR leaders trying to prevent the outside world from bleeding into the workplace are fighting a losing battle this year — and not necessarily taking the best action for their organization or employees.

The theme of this issue of HR Leaders Monthly is what we call the “distraction tax”: the toll nonwork factors take on employee productivity, engagement, morale and well-being. These external factors include world events such as elections, social movements or pandemics, as well as personal matters such as taking care of children or sick relatives. In using the word “distraction,” we do not mean to cheapen or minimize the importance of these events and issues in society and employees' lives. They are distracting precisely because they feel much more important to employees than their day-to-day tasks.

Telling employees otherwise is not helpful, nor is it necessarily correct. Employees who are struggling with “COVID-19 brain,” juggling their children's remote learning schedules and losing sleep over the future those children will inherit are not underperformers with misplaced priorities who need to be disciplined. Nonetheless, the organization and their colleagues are counting on them to get their work done, and it is HR's responsibility to make sure they are able to.

As the employer-employee relationship evolves and the line between life inside and outside the workplace blurs, organizations need new strategies for handling the impact of life and world events on employees' work and the friction these events can cause. The research and insights presented in this journal offer HR leaders valuable tools for helping employees work through external distractions and disruptions, without discouraging them from bringing their whole selves to work.



Why More U.S. Employers Are Offering Time Off to Vote

By Jonah Shepp

U.S. employees today expect their employers to support their civic engagement, including by ensuring they have time to vote on Election Day. In this contentious election year, HR leaders should consider ways to promote employee voter participation without taking partisan political stances.

The upcoming presidential election in the U.S. is expected to draw historically high voter turnout, even amid the unusual circumstances and potential complications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Presidential election years always increase the volume of public discussion about

voting rights and access in the U.S. This year's debate has been even more prominent due to the impact of the pandemic, as well as the racial justice movement calling attention to racial disparities in voting.

A perennial issue in this debate is the fact that Election Day is not a work holiday for most Americans, so voters must find time to go to the polls before, after or in between their usual workday shifts. In a 2017 Pew survey, 14% of U.S. registered voters who did not vote in the 2016 election said the main reason was they were too busy or had a conflicting schedule.¹

Elections are conducted by the individual states, so voting laws, times and procedures vary across the country. Most states require private enterprises to give employees some amount of paid or unpaid time to vote, but not all.² Two states, Illinois and Virginia, enacted legislation this year to make Election Day a state holiday.^{3,4} Legislation that would make it a federal holiday has been introduced in the U.S. Congress several times over the past 15 years but has never been enacted.

The patchwork of state laws means U.S. employers are not necessarily obligated to make it easy for their employees to vote. Many organizations do so anyway, however, by closing or limiting business hours on Election Day or giving their employees more time off to vote than state laws require. Enabling employees to vote is increasingly seen as a form of corporate social responsibility. In the “Time to Vote” initiative, a nonpartisan movement launched in 2018, CEOs commit to enabling employees to vote by giving paid time off on Election Day, making Election Day a day without meetings or providing resources for mail-in ballots and early voting.⁵ As of September, over 1,000 companies had joined Time to Vote, including some of the country’s largest employers such as Walmart, Target, PepsiCo and JPMorgan Chase.

In recent months, some high-profile U.S. employers have also publicized their own initiatives to enable and encourage their employees to vote. Twitter announced it would give its U.S. employees Election Day off every year starting this November and give employees in other countries paid time off to vote in their national elections.⁶ Apple announced in late July that all its U.S. employees would be allowed to

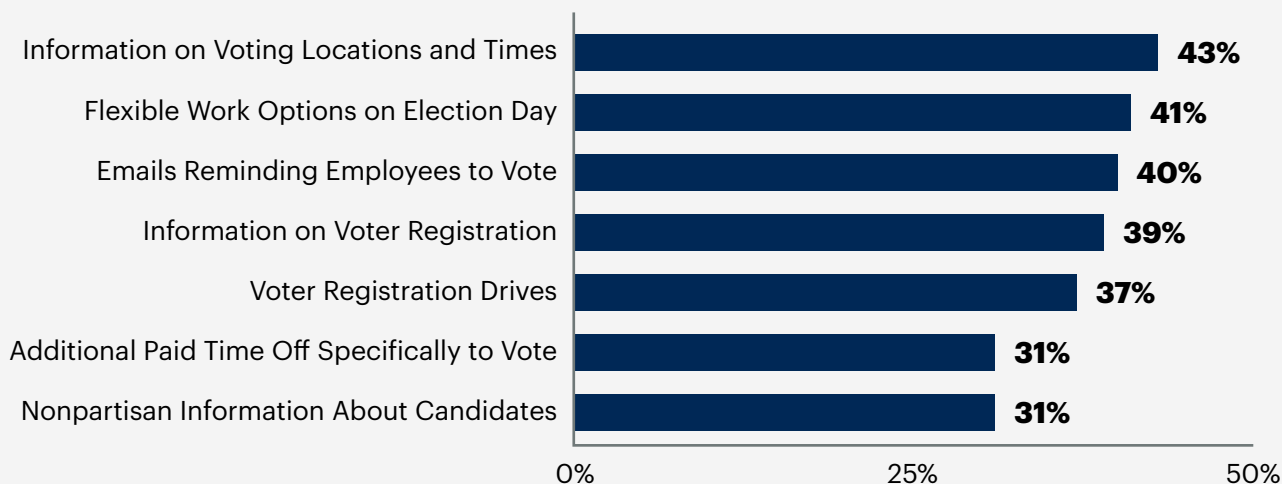
take up to four hours of paid leave on Election Day, to either vote or volunteer at a polling place.⁷

Some organizations have framed these decisions as part of their commitments to anti-racism. Best Buy, for example, revealed in a June statement that it would reduce store hours on Election Day to make sure employees had time to vote, as part of its efforts “to address the racial injustice in our society and communities.” The statement made this connection explicit: “When it comes to being heard, there is no better opportunity given to us than on Election Day.”⁸

Our research finds employees today expect their employers to play a more active role in facilitating their civic engagement, and many employers are meeting this demand.⁹ In our survey in September, 41% of U.S. employees said their employer offered flexible work options on Election Day to enable employees to vote, and 31% said their employer offered additional paid time off specifically to vote. Meanwhile, 43% said their organization provided them with information on poll locations, voting times or voter registration, 40% said their employer used emails to remind employees to vote and 31% said they received nonpartisan information about candidates from their organization (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Voter Participation Initiatives

Q: Which of the following does your organization provide for employees?



n = 520 U.S. employees

Source: Gartner U.S. Election Employee Sentiment Survey (February 2020)

External pressures from activists, media and peer organizations can influence these decisions, but one clear driver is growing demand from employees themselves. Sixty-two percent of U.S. employees say it is important their organization provide at least one voter participation opportunity, such as additional paid time off specifically to vote, information on voter registration and/or flexible work options on Election Day. Facilitating employees' civic engagement in a nonpartisan manner has a positive impact on employee engagement, particularly in the following areas:

- **Providing voter registration information** — Employees of organizations that provide information on voter registration are 43% more engaged than those whose employers do not.
- **Providing nonpartisan information about candidates** — Employees whose organizations provide them with nonpartisan candidate information are 43% more engaged.
- **Holding voter registration drives** — Employees whose organizations hold voter registration drives are 36% more engaged.

Voter participation initiatives can have a positive impact on the employee experience, but HR leaders may be wary of taking actions that could be interpreted as attempts to influence employees' political choices. Therefore, in enabling or encouraging employees to vote, it is important not to push political agendas on them. The safest and most effective approach to civic engagement programs is to give employees unbiased information and resources they can use to educate themselves and make their own decisions. HR leaders should be aware of any state voting rights laws that apply to their organization and make sure managers understand them as well.

This year's election may see fewer employees requesting time off to vote on Election Day, as many states are expanding options for early voting or voting by mail due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are expecting unprecedented numbers of absentee ballots to be cast. Most states are allowing all voters to cast ballots by mail this year, including some that usually require an excuse for absentee voting but have relaxed their regulations in light of the pandemic.¹⁰

In these circumstances, organizations can consider providing employees information about applying for and casting mail-in ballots, as well as health and safety precautions for those who choose to vote in person. Again, HR leaders should avoid pressuring employees to prefer one method of voting over another, but giving them information about their options could be particularly helpful to those who may be confused by all the recent changes in state policies.

This issue is largely specific, but not entirely exclusive, to the U.S. In most other democracies, elections are held on weekends, on days designated as national holidays or over multiple days. Canada holds federal elections on Mondays, but the Canada Elections Act guarantees eligible voters three consecutive hours of paid time off to vote.¹¹ The U.K. traditionally holds elections on Thursdays and does not guarantee time off to vote, but polling stations are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., giving most citizens sufficient time to vote before or after work.¹² Still, activists in these countries have also argued for making Election Day a holiday. In the meantime, employers there may face similar choices about whether and how to ensure their employees can vote.

¹ [Dislike of Candidates or Campaign Issues Was Most Common Reason for Not Voting in 2016](#), Pew Research Center.

² [State Laws on Voting Rights/Time Off to Vote](#), Workplace Fairness.

³ [Gov. Pritzker Signs Legislation to Expand Vote by Mail, Promote Safe Participation in the 2020 Election](#), Illinois.gov.

⁴ [Governor Northam Signs Sweeping New Laws to Expand Access to Voting](#), Virginia Governor.

⁵ [Time to Vote Movement Gains Unprecedented Momentum Ahead of 2020 U.S. Election](#), Time to Vote.

⁶ [Twitter Gives Workers Day Off to Vote in National Elections](#), Associated Press.

⁷ [Apple to Give Employees Paid Time Off to Vote in U.S. Election](#), Bloomberg.

⁸ [Best Buy Announces Plans for Juneteenth, Election Day](#), Best Buy.

⁹ Gartner U.S. Election Employee Sentiment Survey (February 2020)

¹⁰ [At Least 83% of American Voters Can Cast Ballots by Mail in the Fall](#), Washington Post.

¹¹ [Canada Elections Act \(S.C. 2000, c. 9\)](#), Justice Laws Website.

¹² [How to Vote](#), GOV.UK.

Employees Need Mental Health and Well-Being Support Now More Than Ever

By Jonah Shepp and Gabriella Cerio

The events of this year have increased levels of stress, depression, anxiety and other mental health concerns in the workplace. HR leaders should seize the opportunity of this moment to advance their organization's commitment to employees' psychological and emotional well-being.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a global public health crisis in more ways than one. On top of the risk to physical health, the pandemic's social and economic impacts have taken a serious toll on mental health. In August, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that as of late June, 40% of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use. The CDC also found the prevalence of anxiety disorder symptoms was three times as high, and depressive disorder symptoms were four times as high, as in the second quarter of 2019.¹ In a July tracking poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 53% of U.S. adults said worry and stress related to COVID-19 had negatively affected their mental health, up from 32% in March.² In a Qualtrics study, 53% of employees

reported increased sadness, 50% increased irritability and 54% increased emotional exhaustion as a result of the pandemic.³

These mental health burdens are not shared equally: In the U.S., anxiety and depression are increasing faster in the Black and Hispanic communities than among white Americans. Recent events, particularly the incidents of police violence that have energized racial justice activism, have had a disproportionate effect on people of color.⁴ Young people are also more vulnerable: A study last year from Mind Share Partners, SAP and Qualtrics found that half of millennials and 75% of Gen Z employees had left roles in the past for mental health reasons, compared with 34% of respondents overall.⁵

Despite mental health concerns being so common in the workforce, they are still not talked about and remain taboo topics in many workplaces. In the same Mind Share Partners survey, 60% of employees said they had not talked to anyone at work about their mental health in the past year.⁵

The need to address mental health and well-being in the workplace has never been greater than it is today. As a silver lining, however, the increased visibility of this issue creates an opportunity for organizations to address mental health more authentically and effectively. HR must lead this effort not only because employee well-being is essential to its mission but also because it relates closely to other key HR priorities such as organizational culture and diversity, equity and inclusion. Here are several steps HR leaders can take to establish a stronger foundation of mental well-being in their organizations.

Storytelling has the unique power to humanize and normalize life experiences and remind people they are not alone.

Destigmatize Mental Health

Emotional and mental well-being is not just the absence of disorder. The World Health Organization defines mental health as a state of well-being in which a person can realize their abilities, cope with everyday stresses, work productively and contribute to their community.⁶ Removing the stigma from mental health starts with reframing it as something everyone has and needs to care for. In times of crisis, change and uncertainty, everyone's mental health comes under strain. Employees who are finding it harder than others to cope — which today might include working parents, people of color, employees with disabilities or those with physical or mental health conditions — should not be perceived or treated as weaker or less resilient than their peers.

An effective way to destigmatize mental health is to share personal mental health stories. A 2018 Accenture study in the U.K. found that only 14% of employees had heard a senior leader talking

about the importance of mental health, while only 10% had heard a senior leader talk about being personally affected.⁷ Storytelling has the unique power to humanize and normalize life experiences and remind people they are not alone. In recent years, we have seen this play out as celebrities and business leaders have opened up publicly about their own mental health struggles, breaking down the taboo and driving important conversations in the public sphere. Senior leaders speaking honestly about their own experiences can have the same effect within your organization, signaling to employees that it is safe to talk about mental health and that such experiences need not be an impediment to success.

Enlist Leaders in Promoting Mental Health

Leaders exemplify an organization's values and model cultural and behavioral norms for the employees who report to them. Employees take their cues from leadership in determining what kind of behavior is acceptable, encouraged or discouraged. One of the most important ways leaders can promote mental well-being is therefore to practice the same psychological and emotional self-care they want to promote among employees.

Leaders should not only encourage employees to take vacations and parental leave, take advantage of flexible work options and use the organization's well-being offerings; they should also be doing these things themselves. When leaders are seen practicing work-life balance and taking care of their own emotional well-being, this behavior becomes embedded in the culture and employees start to emulate it.

One example of an organization that effectively encourages leaders to model behavior is Telstra. Since 2014, Telstra has had an "All Roles Flex" policy companywide, meaning employees have flexibility in where and when they work by default — rather than by dispensation.⁸ To promote its commitment to flexibility, Telstra rewards and recognizes senior leaders who leverage the policy effectively. Leaders who model and encourage new ways of flexible work are recognized on Telstra's internal and external websites, which creates accountability and positive peer pressure for other leaders to do the same.

Establish Additional Layers of Support

Of course, managers can't single-handedly support all employees' mental health at all times, so additional layers of support are necessary. One of the most effective ways of combating stigma and enabling conversations about mental health is to connect employees with peers who have experienced challenges similar to their own. At most organizations, a significant number of employees are struggling or have struggled with some form of mental, emotional or behavioral health issue. Knowing their challenges are not unique or even uncommon can make employees feel safer talking about them and seeking help.

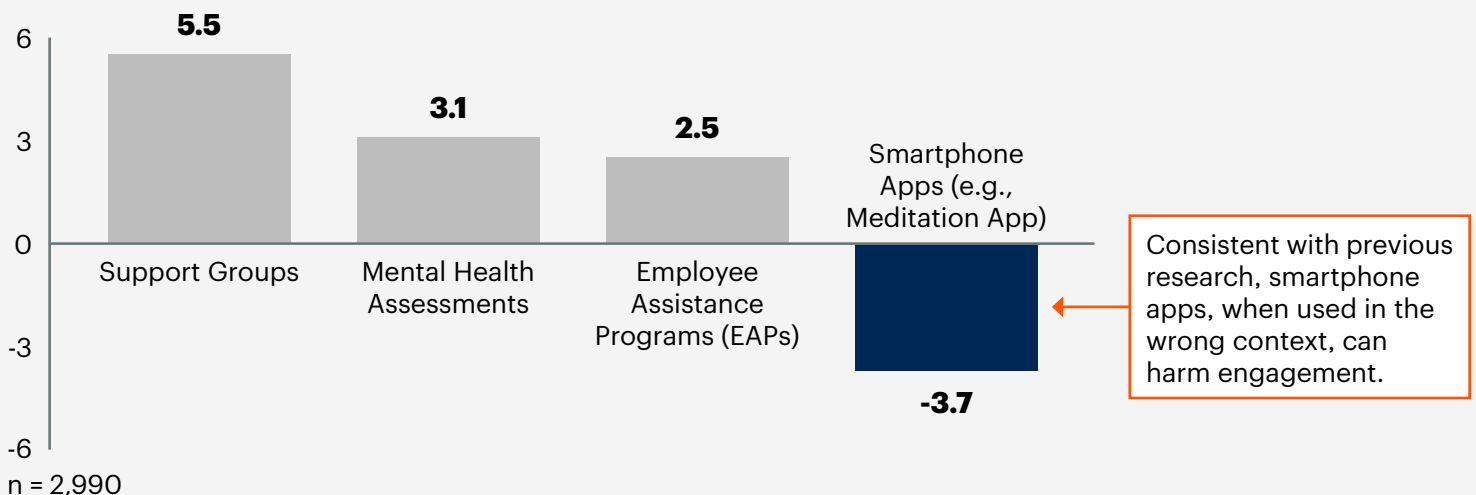
One effective approach to peer support is to establish an employee resource group (ERG) for mental health. Mental health ERGs give employees a place to go for peer support and also help raise awareness of mental health issues. Other organizations have created buddy programs to create one-on-one connections between employees with mental health concerns. This approach can be helpful to employees who feel less comfortable discussing these matters with a larger group.

A third pillar of peer support is allyship training: equipping employees to be empathetic and supportive toward their colleagues who are experiencing mental health challenges. Remember, every employee might struggle with some minor or major mental health issue at some point in their career. Encourage employees to participate in these support initiatives not only when they themselves are suffering.

Finally, organizations should maximize the utility of their mental health and well-being benefits. Amid the many stresses employees are facing this year, takeup of mental health benefits is increasing and expected to increase further in the months and years to come. Currently, many organizations lack the resources to increase well-being investments substantially, so HR leaders should focus on offerings that are proven to have the greatest impact on employee well-being and engagement (see Figure 1).

According to our research, these include support groups (which correspond to a 5.5% increase in engagement), mental health assessments (3.1%) and employee assistance programs (2.5%). But not all offerings are worth pursuing. For example, mobile apps for mental well-being have a 3.7% negative correlation with engagement, which suggests these apps are not worth the investment.⁹

Figure 1. Impact of Mental and Emotional Well-Being Programs on Employee Engagement
Percent Change in Engagement



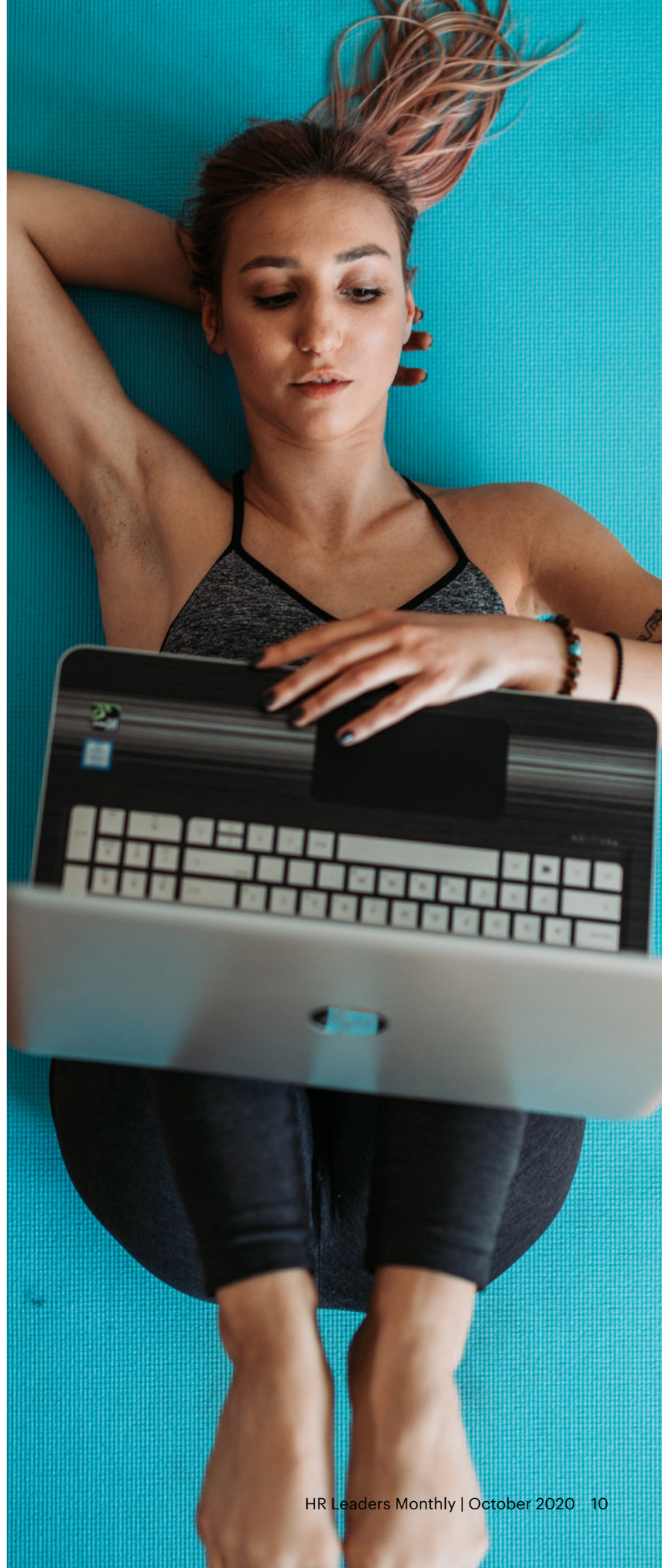
Source: 2019 Gartner Total Rewards Employee Survey

Now Is the Time to Act

2020 has dramatically changed the way we live: everything from where we work, to how we grocery shop, to how we socialize, to the conversations we are having in the workplace. With these large-scale changes, employees' mental health has inevitably been impacted. This has led to an acute need for support in the workplace today, but it also underscores the need for a continued focus on well-being in the future. Some of this year's changes will become permanent, and employees will have to adjust to the "new normal" of the postpandemic environment.

Through these trying times, organizations and HR leaders have a tremendous opportunity to use this moment to build cultures and work environments that promote well-being. Whether your organization is just starting out or is more seasoned in the well-being space, the action items listed here can help you move toward a new frontier of mental health.

- ¹ [Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24-30, 2020, CDC.](#)
- ² [KFF Health Tracking Poll — July 2020, KFF.](#)
- ³ [The Other COVID-19 Crisis: Mental Health, Qualtrics.](#)
- ⁴ [Depression and Anxiety Spiked Among Black Americans After George Floyd's Death, Washington Post.](#)
- ⁵ [Research: People Want Their Employers to Talk About Mental Health, Harvard Business Review.](#)
- ⁶ [Mental Health: Strengthening Our Response, World Health Organization.](#)
- ⁷ [Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace: The Role of Technology, Accenture.](#)
- ⁸ [Telstra Case Study, 2020.](#)





How to Address Social and Political Distractions With Today's Employees

By Rebecca Shirer Palacios, Sophia Fedeli and Josh Bittinger

Through all the disruptive events of 2020, politics has been a persistently distracting and divisive force in the workplace. HR leaders should recognize how political distractions affect employees and take action to mitigate the impacts of workplace political conversations and conflicts.

The events of 2020 have significantly impacted the workforce and its ability to get work done. Over one-third of employees (37%) have worried about losing their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic; in May, employees spent, on average, one hour thinking or talking about the pandemic each day while working.^{1,2} In June, 84% of U.S. employees reported following the demonstrations protesting the death of George Floyd very or somewhat closely; nearly two-thirds of employees (64%) reported that the recent protests and demonstrations against racial injustice impacted their ability to concentrate on their work.³

Through all these disruptive events, politics has been a persistently distracting and divisive force in the workplace. In March, shortly before the World Health Organization declared COVID-19

a pandemic, 48% of employees reported that politics was affecting their ability to get work done (see Figure 1).⁴ Four months later, in July, this figure had grown to 60%.⁵

Politics' Impact on the Workforce

Once considered a taboo topic, politics has now become increasingly difficult to keep out of the workplace. Left unaddressed, it can have significant impacts on key talent outcomes, particularly productivity and collaboration.

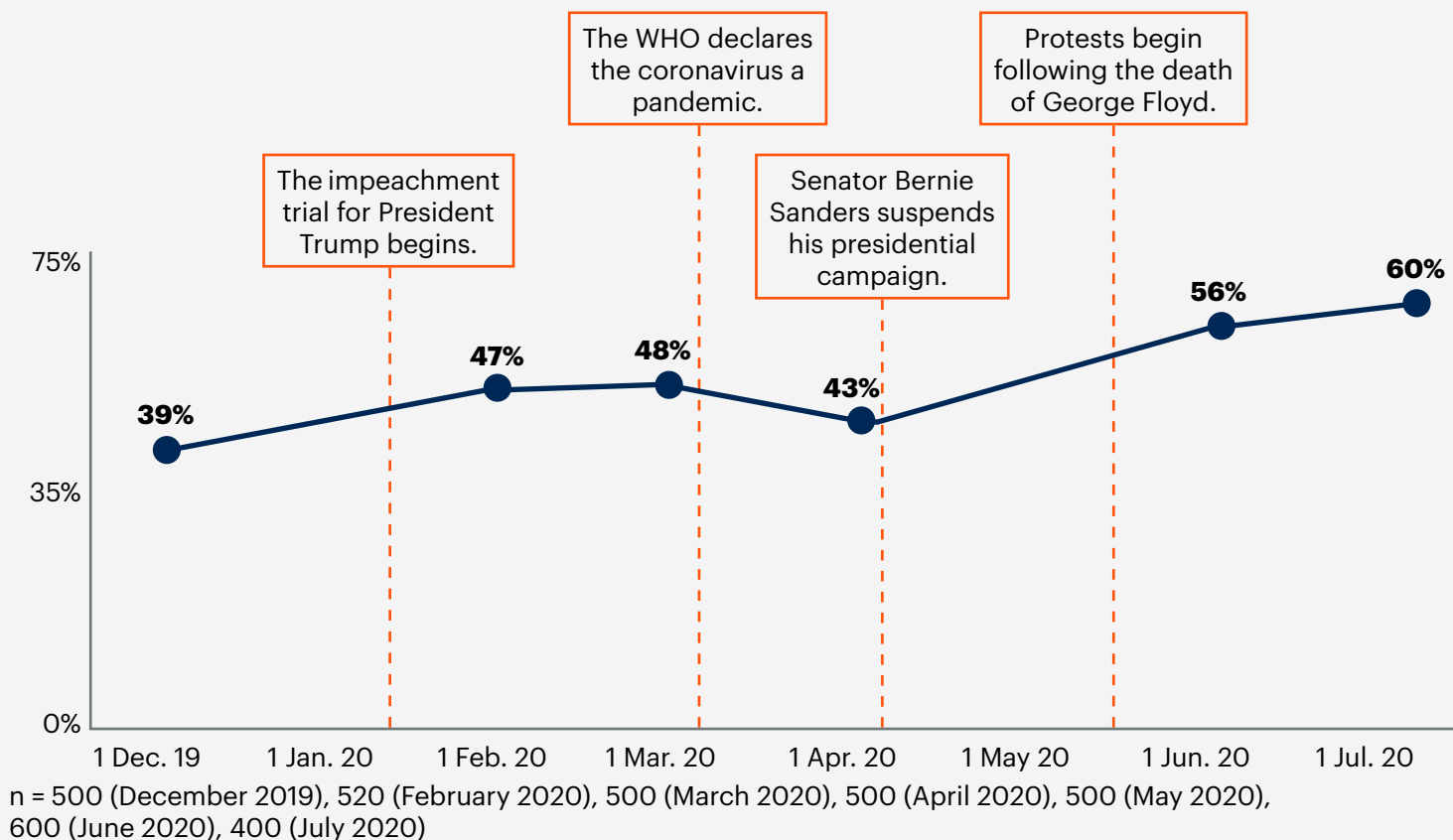
Productivity

As the line between work and personal life continues to blur and politics seeps into the workplace, employees face many distractions

that inhibit productivity. For instance, most employees in the U.S. (68%) report consuming political news on a daily basis while at work; on average, they spend 63.8 minutes doing so each day.⁴ This amounts to 13% of the average full-time employee's workday.

Employees are not only spending significant time consuming news individually but also participating in more discussions about politics with their colleagues. Nearly eight in 10 U.S. employees (79%) report discussing politics at work, and 92% report overhearing others talking about politics while at work.⁵ These conversations have become more prevalent in the last six months, even with a large-scale shift to remote work. In July, 32% of employees said they were discussing politics more often since the coronavirus outbreak.⁵

Figure 1. U.S. Employees Who Say Politics Impacts Their Ability to Get Work Done



Source: Gartner U.S. Election Employee Sentiment Surveys

How to Take Action: Use organizational culture as a guide when determining what types of regulations to put in place around political expression in the workplace. Discussions about politics persist in the workplace, despite 68% of employees stating their employer has policies that prohibit these discussions.⁶ Leveraging organizational culture will help ensure policies are effective and well-received by employees.

Collaboration

Conversations and other forms of political expression in the workplace not only are distracting but can also be divisive. Partisan affiliation has become, for many Americans, less a matter of civil engagement and more a deeply held aspect of their identity. As employees engage in political expression at work, tensions are likely to arise. In July 2020, 40% of employees reported that the topic of the 2020 election had led them to avoid a co-worker, and 28% reported that it had led them to argue with a co-worker.⁵ These political tensions can make it harder to collaborate and impact employees' ability to get work done.

Moving Forward

While we focus on the U.S. presidential election here as a case study of the impact an external force can have on the workforce, many of the year's unexpected events had similar effects: a global pandemic, historic rates of unemployment and slowed GDP growth, massive protests against racial injustice and multiple contentious elections around the world.

Embracing potential conflict has broad applications as new issues arise and take their toll on workforce productivity. This summer, many companies took a similar approach to calls for racial justice across the world. Nearly all employees (97%) whose employers took action in response to calls for racial justice were satisfied with their organization's response.³ Speaking with HR leaders about their approaches, we heard from organizational leaders who did not shy away from speaking and acting in response to these events. When they acted directly, employees emerged with greater empathy for each other, more united and appreciative that their organizations took on the issue instead of asking employees to leave that part of their identity at the door.

Living in the information age, employees are highly connected and want to remain informed about events as they unfold, often during the workday. Policies against political expression in the workplace are ineffective at steering employees away from these conversations about political activity taking place within and outside the bounds of the workday. As a result of these conversations persisting outside HR leaders' and managers' purview, productivity and collaboration have suffered. Instead of continuing down this path, HR leaders need to take a new approach to handling politics in the workplace.

HR leaders need to revisit their policies around political expression to ensure they align with the organization's culture, while creating space for these conversations to unfold productively. On its face, this approach seems counterintuitive as a solution to the distraction tax the U.S. presidential election has levied on the workplace. Yet by taking these steps, HR leaders can enable employees to engage in these conversations they are clearly interested in having at work, while learning to do so respectfully.

¹ Gartner ReimagineHR Employee Survey (July 2020)

² Gartner U.S. Election Employee Sentiment Survey (May 2020)

³ Gartner U.S. Election Employee Sentiment Survey (June 2020)

⁴ Gartner U.S. Election Employee Sentiment Survey (March 2020)

⁵ Gartner U.S. Election Employee Sentiment Survey (July 2020)

⁶ Gartner U.S. Election Employee Sentiment Survey (December 2019)



How to Build a Resilient and Responsive Organization

As organizations move from their initial COVID-19 response to a more sustainable game plan, they increasingly need to anticipate, strategize, plan and execute at speed.

Questions your HR peers and leaders are asking:



How do we get the right skills in the right place at the right time?



How can we redesign processes and structures to adapt better to disruption?



How can we respond to demands from our customers, as well as our leaders, managers and employees?

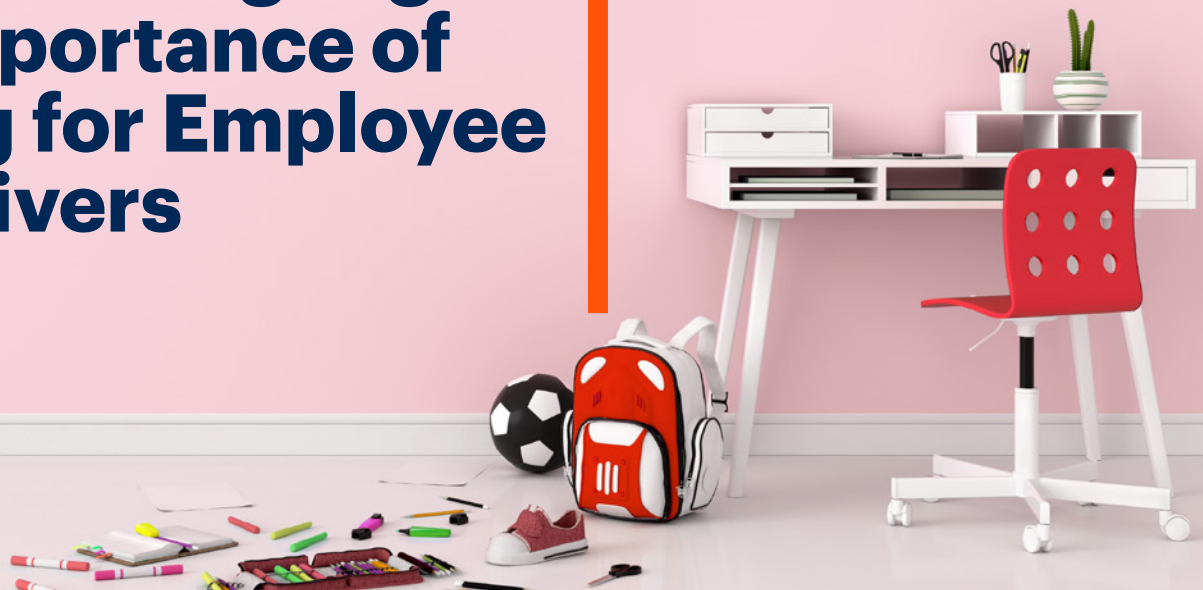


Discover 5 strategies and steps to build a more resilient organization.

Download Guide

Pandemic Highlights the Importance of Caring for Employee Caregivers

By Ashley O'Brien



COVID-19 has changed the needs of employees who are juggling work and caregiving responsibilities at the same time. To attract and retain talent in the future, HR leaders will need to design flexible work options and benefits that support caregivers both at work and at home.

With one child screaming and the other late for virtual learning, an employee grabs their “Zoom shirt” from next to the desk to respond to their manager’s inbound video call. Another employee is scheduled to work a shift on-site but needs to take their elderly parent to an important doctor’s appointment. Experiences like these may be very familiar to many employees who are navigating new demands for their roles both as employees and caregivers. COVID-19 has changed what caregiving requires and will require for some time to come, which consequently has changed how organizations need to support caregivers if they want to compete for talent in the future.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have humanized employees in the eyes of many employers, challenging organizations to understand the various responsibilities employees have outside work and their role in

supporting employees’ ability to manage these responsibilities. The challenge for HR today is not only to maximize the productivity of employees who are caring for children, elderly parents or sick family members at home. Instead, HR should lead organizations to think about employees as human beings first and care for caregivers with flexible support systems that respond to employees’ changing needs.

There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to this: Caregivers’ needs vary depending on what kind of care they are providing, as well as other factors such as whether they are required to work on-site or able to work remotely. These and other variables require organizations to be adaptive in how they support this talent. Employees who don’t receive the support they need are at risk for burnout, disengagement and increased likelihood of quitting.

Why It Matters

What organizations do to support caregiver employees today will impact their current employees' engagement and well-being, but these decisions will also have consequences for the future. Candidates are already asking prospective employers what they are doing for different segments amid COVID-19. These responses will shape their employer brand for years to come, impacting their ability to be competitive in the current and future talent markets.

Amid COVID-19-related changes, organizations must listen to employees to understand their needs and preferences. In our recent survey, 53% of employees in North America and 69% of employees in APAC identified child/family care support as a top-priority benefit during this disruption, making it the fourth-most-valued benefit behind PTO benefits and financial benefits, such as 401(k)s or one-time bonuses.¹ These benefits are particularly valuable to millennials, many of whom are caring for children, parents or both, as well as women, who face disproportionate pressure to balance their careers and family. Attracting, engaging and retaining these demographics are critical priorities for most HR leaders; caregiver benefits can help achieve those goals.

When employees believe their organization understands which rewards and benefits are most relevant to their needs, we see a 12% increase in employee performance and a 4% increase in intent to stay. This is not insignificant, as a 12% increase in employee performance is associated with a 3.2% increase in profits.² Rather than focusing solely on making caregivers more productive, HR leaders should take a broader view of how supporting these employees can drive business value.

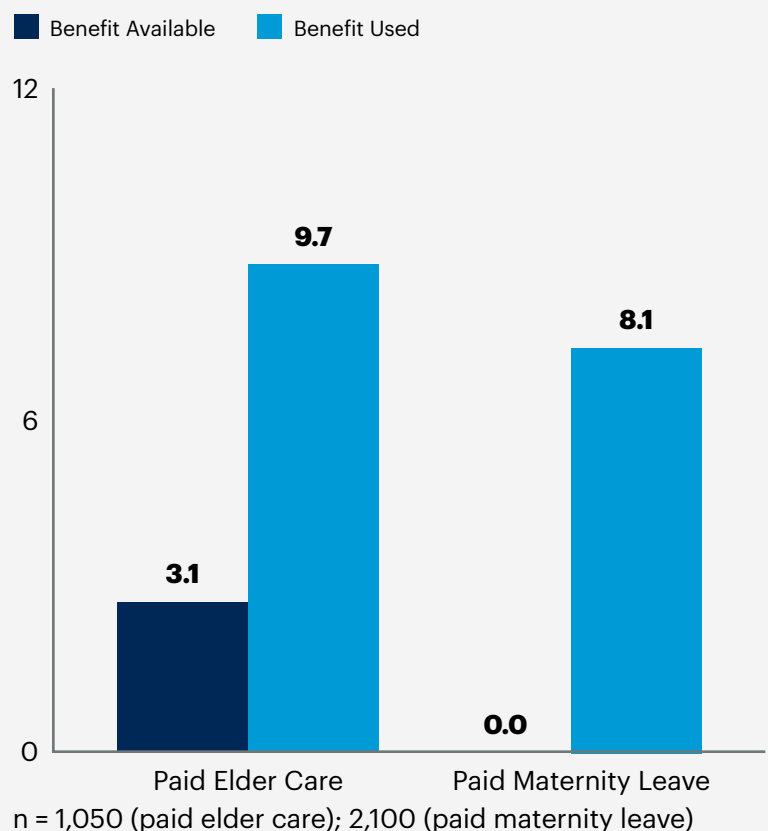
How This Impacts Millennials

Millennials, the largest generation in the workforce, are at a life stage where many are taking care of young children and elderly parents. Our research shows millennials express high demand for family and caregiving benefits, including a new type of benefit: elder care subsidies. Similar to the boom in parental

leave benefits in 2015 and 2016, when many organizations increased the amount of time off they offered to new mothers and fathers, millennial expectations may soon cause a rising trend of elder care and child care benefits. However, this does not need to become a huge cost for organizations. They can see the largest increase in employees finding the benefit useful and impactful from offering employees just \$1,000 per year for these family benefits.

In fact, simply offering elder care benefits can improve millennial employees' perceptions of their total rewards, even when they have not used those benefits themselves (see Figure 1). While this data focuses on elder care, we know from many client conversations that employees' caregiving responsibilities have intensified in general this year, so other caregiving benefit offerings may have similar effects.

Figure 1. Impact of Paid Elder Care on Millennials' Perceptions of Rewards



Source: 2018 Gartner Benefits Communications Employee Survey

How This Impacts Women

The economic and social impacts of COVID-19 have been disproportionately hard on working women, especially mothers. A recent study showed that full-time working mothers in two-parent households are, on average, doing around 22 hours of child care a week during COVID-19, in addition to maintaining their jobs.³ In comparison to their full-time working father counterparts, full-time working mothers provide 70% of the child care during normal working hours.⁴

Because of this experience during the pandemic, women are 46% more likely than men to leave their employer in the next year.⁵ If many working mothers leave the workforce entirely due to caregiving obligations, this could widen gender

pay gaps and make it harder for organizations to prepare other female employees for leadership roles.

Among women, work-life balance ties with compensation as the top attribute attracting them to join an organization.⁶ To promote work-life balance, HR leaders can help managers design flexibility into employees' schedules, whether in terms of hours, days or shifts. Flexibility could even look like scheduling meetings for 25 or 50 minutes instead of 30 or 60 minutes, to give parents time to ensure their school-aged children are set up between virtual learning classes. Additionally, racially and ethnically diverse women are 70% more likely than other employees to express interest in family-related benefits.⁷

On-Demand Virtual Events



Gartner regularly hosts virtual events across a variety of human resources topics. These webinars present an opportunity for you to gain insights from our research experts on leading through disruption, navigating the coming reset and more.

The Top Priorities for HR Leaders in 2021

Implications of the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election for HR

Leading the Hybrid Workforce: Address the Mindset-Skillset Challenge

Adapt HR Processes to Unlock an Agile and Responsive Culture

Preserve the Employee Experience by Addressing External Factors

How to Support Caregivers

Many organizations tried to create quick solutions to support caregivers during COVID-19. Seventy percent of organizations increased flexibility, and 50% offered guidance on how to create an effective home work environment.⁸ But organizations have a lot of room for improvement, as only 51% of employees believe their employer offers a great deal of support to parents and adult caregivers.⁹ Since we know there is no one-size-fits-all approach to supporting different caregivers' unique challenges, Table 1 shows how broad categories of support can be customized to meet different employees' needs.

Organizations need to act now to create benefits and ways of working that meet caregivers' needs. There is no one action that creates the best solution for each caregiver's unique

characteristics, so look for flexible offerings that allow for customization in different circumstances. Rather than offering a stipend that can only be used for emergency day care, for example, make the same stipend available for part- and full-time employees to use for a broad range of circumstances to care for their children, spouses and/or parents. Finally, ensure employees are aware of these offerings to maximize their impact on employee perceptions and performance as well as attract and retain talent now and in the future.

¹ 2020 Gartner Culture of Quality During Disruption Employee Survey

² 2018 Gartner Benefits Communication Employee Survey

³ [It's Time for Companies to Stand Up for Working Parents](#), Fast Company.

⁴ [Women Report Being Twice as Likely Than Male Counterparts to Leave Employer Within a Year Following Pandemic Experience](#), PR Newswire.

⁵ [The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality](#), Northwestern University.

⁶ 2Q20 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey

⁷ 2016 Gartner Recruiting Candidate Survey

⁸ 2020 Gartner Coronavirus Polling on Remote Work

⁹ 2020 Gartner Reimagine HR Employee Surveys

Table 1. Customizable Benefits and Support for Caregivers

Offering	Details
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement flexible hours to allow remote caregivers to work when they are most productive and give attention to family as needed. Allow on-site workers to change or trade shifts when they need to prioritize family needs.
PTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage PTO donation banks to support caregivers with unforeseen time off needs. Extend additional PTO when employees suddenly need time to care for a sick child, spouse or parent. Encourage employees to use PTO creatively, such as for half days.
Stipends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a lifestyle savings account that allows caregivers to customize the use of an annual stipend for caregiver support, such as day care, home care for a sick parent or a tutor for a school-aged child. Extend a caregiver stipend to part-time employees who may not normally receive benefits.
Psychological Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create live or virtual peer-to-peer support groups for similarly situated employees, such as those with aging parents, children with disabilities or children under the age of five. Host virtual activities for children, such as company-hosted reading hours or costume contests, in which parents and children participate together. Encourage managers to check in with employees about their children, such as by asking about their kids' weekend activities or how they are managing homework help during virtual learning.
Community Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up virtual activities for school-aged children to participate in from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. while parents complete the workday. For example, create a kids' club where the organization supports virtual activities to supplement after-school activities. These can even be focused on STEM activities or local community impact. Add on-site day care or partner with providers of care support services (e.g., child care services, tutoring centers, senior living facilities) to provide group discounts or special offerings for both on-site and remote employees.

Source: Gartner

How External Factors Impact the Employee Experience, and What HR Can Do

By Emily Strother



Many factors that impact the employee experience are outside HR's control. To improve the employee experience, however, HR leaders need to understand how these factors affect their employees and how to manage these experiences in an ever-changing environment.

External Factors Impacting the Employee Experience

HR leaders recognize many factors that impact the employee experience — including family, friends, technology and global pandemics — are outside their control. Some of the factors that are top of mind for HR leaders currently include personal finances, racial unrest, and child care and schooling during the pandemic (see Figure 1).

However, many HR leaders still aren't sure how these factors impact the employee experience. To ensure HR leaders leverage external factors to improve the employee experience, they need to understand which factors affect their employees the most.

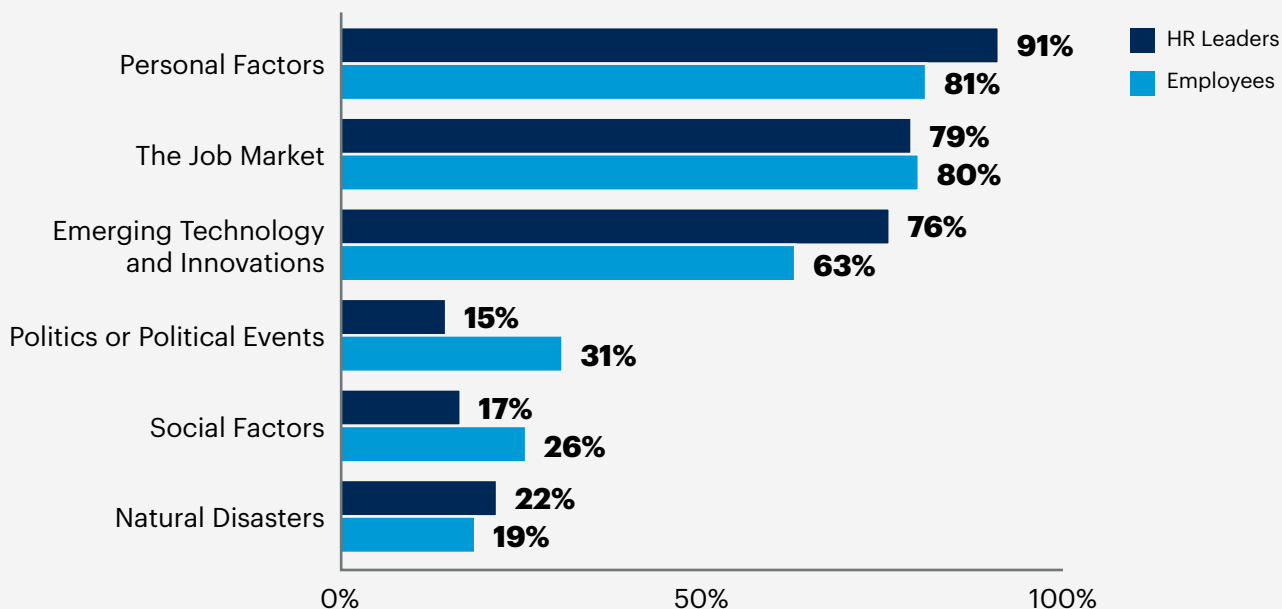
When we surveyed HR leaders and employees in the first quarter of 2020, both employees and HR leaders said they believed personal factors (such as family events, housing or travel), the job market, and emerging technologies and innovations impacted the employee experience the most (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. What Comes to Mind First When HR Leaders Think of External Factors



Source: Gartner External Factors Webinar (July 2020)

Figure 2. Top External Factors for HR Leaders and Employees



n = 189 HR leaders; 4,931 employees

Q: Which of the following have had the greatest impact on your or employees' experience at work? Please select three responses.

Source: 2020 Gartner HR Leader Quick Poll; 1Q20 Gartner Global Labor Market Survey

When we surveyed them again in July, however, a lot had changed. HR leaders believed natural disasters or pandemics, personal factors and social factors were the three biggest factors impacting the experience. Employees also indicated COVID-19 and racial injustice were impacting their experience. During the first week of June, U.S. employees reported spending 47.9 minutes per day thinking or talking about COVID-19 at work.¹ This is a trend HR leaders are seeing across regions and countries. Similarly, 64% of U.S. employees say the protests and recent discussions of racial injustices have had an impact on their ability to concentrate at work, highlighting the impact of social factors.¹

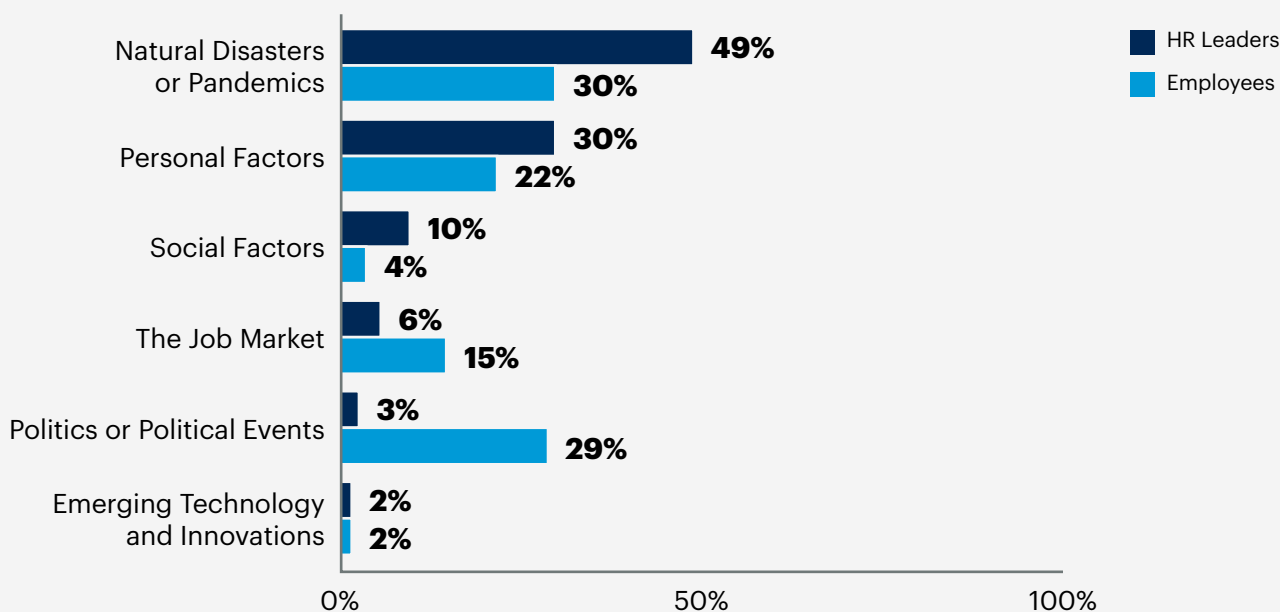
We also asked HR leaders in July to predict what factors would be most important in three months. Natural disasters or pandemics and personal factors remained in the top three, but they also expected politics and political events to increase in importance (see Figure 3). This

likely reflects the impact of the U.S. presidential election in November, as well as other political events around the world. Employees also admit to being distracted by politics: 68% of employees in the U.S. report consuming political news on a daily basis while at work.² Emerging technologies and innovations are not expected to be a top external factor in the third or fourth quarter of 2020.

How External Factors Distract Employees

These external factors can distract employees and diminish productivity. They can also reduce the amount of time employees spend on their work and make them less likely to pay full attention while they are working. This impacts their discretionary effort, an important HR and business measure. Some of the common factors that reduce employees' focus and productivity

Figure 3. HR Leaders Reporting Top External Factors Impacting the Employee Experience



n = 143 HR leaders (July); 146 HR leaders (October)

Q: Which external factor do you currently feel impacts your employees' experience the most? And which external factor do you think will impact your employees' experience the most in the next three months?

Source: 2020 Gartner External Factors Webinar Quick Poll

Note: Percentage may not equal 100% due to rounding.

include personal life experiences (e.g., sick family members, impending life change), political events such as elections and natural disasters such as hurricanes — and, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic. While HR leaders can't control these events, they can consider how to alleviate the distraction they cause and even leverage external factors to benefit the employee experience.

HR leaders can help managers uncover and assess obstacles to addressing external factors by equipping them with the right questions to ask their teams, leaders and other managers.

What HR Leaders Can Do

Although these factors are outside HR leaders' direct control, they can help improve employees' experience with external factors by inviting them to provide input on these factors, creating consistent messaging about these factors and ensuring managers are equipped to respond to them as they arise.

Invite employee input on external factors inhibiting their experience — By creating a safe space for employees to process external factors as necessary and appropriate, HR leaders can hear directly from employees about what they need. Consequently, HR leaders are more aware of the external factors that impact employees the most. Traditional feedback tools, such as pulse and regular surveys, conversations with HRBPs and managers, and internal feedback forums allow employees to freely share their opinions.

Create clear messaging about external factors — HR leaders can communicate with employees how external factors impact the organization and how the organization plans to respond to them. This reduces the risk of employee confusion and misinterpretation. Specifically, HR leaders should use town halls or companywide emails to share their response to external factors with employees, including the impact on business plans, and to empathize with how these factors affect the employee experience.

Equip managers to respond to external factors — HR leaders can help managers uncover and assess obstacles to addressing external factors by equipping them with the right questions to ask their teams, leaders and other managers. Train managers to navigate tough conversations with employees, and use nudges (small and nonintrusive mental pushes embedded in key moments of the talent life cycle that help the brain make more objective decisions and alter predictable behaviors) to invite productive conversations about external factors.

HR leaders can use these techniques to turn external distractions into opportunities for improving the employee experience. By recognizing external factors, how they change over time and what role HR can play in addressing them, HR leaders can create a more effective employee experience strategy.

¹ Gartner U.S. Election Employee Sentiment Survey (June 2020)

² Gartner U.S. Election Employee Sentiment Survey (March 2020)





A Business Case for the Hybrid Workforce

By George Penn

The COVID-19 pandemic disruption revealed how many jobs can successfully be done in a partially or fully remote environment. To take advantage of this paradigm shift, HR leaders can use a hybrid workforce model to build flexibility into when and where employees do their work.

Is there a business rationale for forcing employees back into their original work environments after the COVID-19 pandemic? Organizations continue to debate their workforce plans as they manage through the pandemic and prepare for a post-COVID-19 world. With portions of their workforces settling into remote and flexible arrangements, long-held beliefs about where and how work gets done most effectively have begun to shift. Many, though by no means all, workers have transitioned from the initial adrenaline rush of the pandemic and economic crisis into some level of normalcy. As they become more comfortable in their new settings and routines, both employees and organizations are recognizing that many roles can be performed just as successfully, if not more so, in flexible environments.

Before COVID-19, only 30% of employees in potentially remote jobs were taking advantage of this opportunity. Organizations expect that number to increase to 50% in a postpandemic world (see Figure 1), but even that estimate may not be in line with what employees expect.¹ In our recent survey, 78% of employees said they would like to continue working in some remote capacity after pandemic-related precautions no longer require it. Only 17% of employees working remotely at least some of the time due to the pandemic have no desire to continue working in a remote environment.² To address these expectations, organizations will need to put into place new strategies and models for managing their workforces, going well beyond the idea of where work gets done.

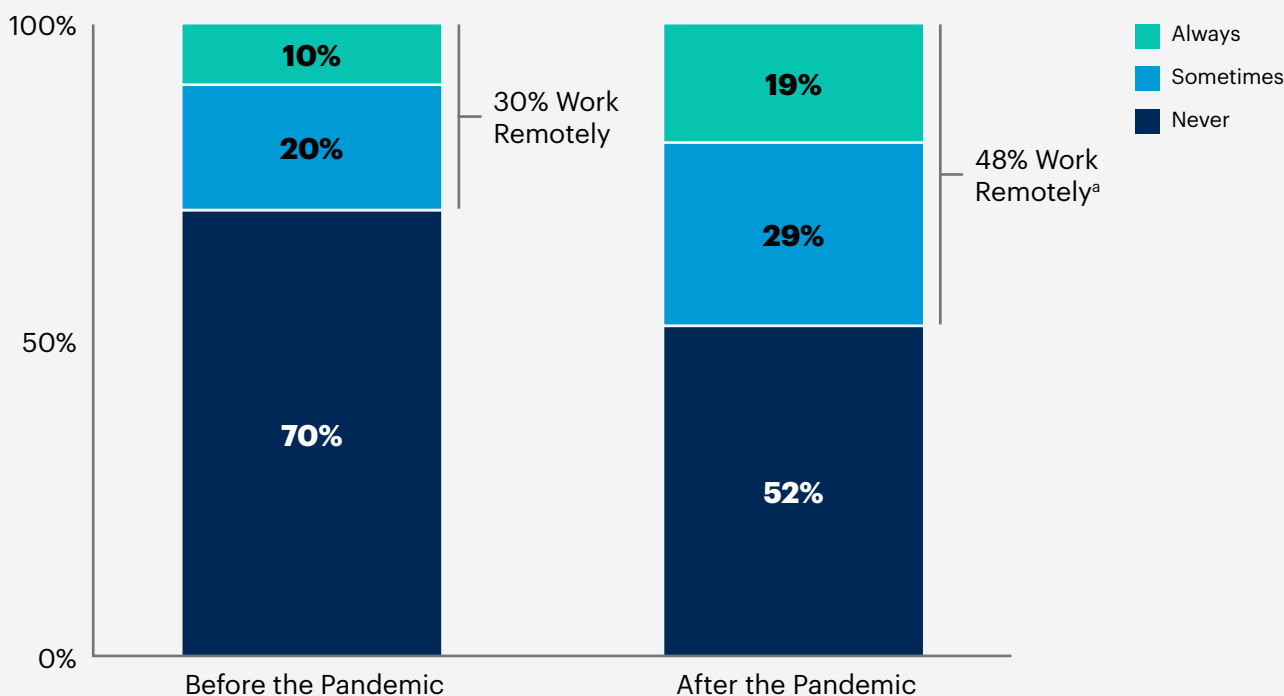
The Hybrid Workforce Model

A hybrid workforce model ensures the workforce can flow through various schedules and work sites, from traditional concentrated facilities (e.g., offices, factories, retail stores) to remote solo locations and remote microsites of small populations. This model is rooted in flexibility, adaptability and shared ownership on the part of employers and employees.

Employees' ability to "flow through" various sites and schedules depends on a collaborative and trusting relationship between employees and managers. A flexible environment can provide real benefits to both employees and the organization, which can only be achieved in an environment of shared ownership. Organizations and leaders need to break down long-held beliefs and potential

Figure 1. Projected Percentage of Employees Working Remotely, Before and After the Pandemic

Percentage of Respondents



n = 421 HR leaders; 4,535 employees; 317 finance leaders

Source: Gartner COVID-19 Crisis Benchmarking Against Your Peers Webinar Poll (2 April 2020); 2020 Gartner Cost Cutting and Employee Experience Survey; COVID-19: How Finance Leaders Are Responding to the Emerging Situation Webinar Poll (26 March 2020)

^a Modeled based on responses to three Gartner surveys

myths about where and how work gets done most effectively. Managers must trust employees to be effective and productive, while employees need to be flexible and comfortable being mobile.

The Three E's of a Hybrid Workforce Model

The roadmap for a successful hybrid workforce model centers on three critical themes:

- **Economics** — What is the business case and strategy for creating, extending or expanding a high-performing hybrid workforce?
- Employee **Experience** — Where and how do we invest in the employee life cycle for the greatest returns on a hybrid workforce?
- Organizational **Enablement** — How do we ensure continuous improvement of our workforce in a hybrid model?

The Business Case for a Hybrid Workforce Model

Our data on the global workforce before and during the pandemic gives us a good indication of how effective a hybrid workforce can be in a post-COVID-19 world. When segmenting the workforce based on their remote status, some very clear stories emerge, which break down long-held beliefs about the viability of remote work.

Hybrid Workforces Exhibit Higher Performance and Effort

Many leaders who resist the idea of a hybrid workforce express concerns about employee performance, particularly employees' ability to collaborate and connect in a hybrid environment. One of the most compelling data points to emerge on the hybrid workforce is that remote and semiremote employees have meaningfully higher levels of both discretionary effort (22% higher or more) and enterprise contribution (54% higher or more).³ Enterprise contribution is a measure of performance that includes both individual performance and network performance. This means hybrid employees are not only performing their own tasks at a higher level but also working more effectively within their employee networks.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that many employees who shifted to remote work during the pandemic are still learning how to effectively disconnect fully from work.

Employees' Sense of Inclusion Can Improve

Another surprising finding was that hybrid workforces reported higher levels of inclusion: 55% of semiremote and 49% of fully remote employees agreed they had the ability to express their true feelings at work, compared to only 27% of employees who never work remotely.⁴ Like the enterprise contribution data above, these numbers suggest a remote or semiremote workforce can be much more connective and collaborative than conventional wisdom would have it.

Work-Life Balance Can Improve

Work-life balance, a major factor in employee well-being, is higher among hybrid workers. Roughly 60% of semiremote and fully remote employees say they maintain a balance between work and life, compared to only 44% of employees who never work remotely.⁴ This comes as no surprise: Not having to commute and having more control over their time are two of the benefits of remote work employees value most.

Separating work and personal time can be a challenge when working from home. Anecdotal evidence indicates that many employees who shifted to remote work during the pandemic are still learning how to effectively disconnect fully from work. Instead of replacing commute time with personal time, they have merely added additional work hours to their day. However, if organizations are sensitive to this risk and design their hybrid work programs effectively, the potential impact on work-life balance may in fact be even greater than the numbers above suggest.

Business Case Lessons and Recommendations

As organizations have built and delivered business cases for hybrid work with their key stakeholders and executive teams, several critical lessons have emerged.

Use a data-driven, evidence-based approach to influence key stakeholders —

Analyze internal and external data to determine the potential benefits of a hybrid workforce model and align them with business needs and priorities. Calculate the potential cost savings from real estate, compensation premiums, costs associated with recruiting and learning, improved retention rates and performance, and other benefits.

Identify and prioritize critical components for your hybrid workforce strategy —

The employee experience and organizational enablement aspects of the hybrid workforce roadmap involve many individual components. Decide which of these components are most important for your organizations, and focus your energy and investments on these select few in the early stages. For example, would your labor market positioning benefit from a hybrid environment? Would virtual or mobile learning programs reduce costs and improve the application of just-in-time learning?

Clearly segment roles within the workforce to adapt hybrid strategies and policies —

Identify which jobs can be done in a flexible environment, whether based on location or schedule. Be sure to clearly define the parameters and rules of engagement for those positions. Even more importantly, explicitly state roles for which flexible work is not permitted.

Develop a set of critical questions and metrics to monitor the success of your hybrid workforce —

What questions does your executive team have about the hybrid workforce? Performance? Productivity? Retention? Engagement? Based on those questions, establish a set of critical analytics that are tracked consistently over time so that as trends, patterns and variance emerge, they can be addressed (or celebrated) in a timely manner.

The Hybrid Future of Work

Although hybrid workforce models have existed for decades in some form, in the past they've largely been driven or constrained by the limits of technology. The economic push of COVID-19, which forced organizations to work in a more remote world, has created clear momentum to take advantage of hybrid work arrangements in much more expansive and creative ways. Even if it is possible for employees to eventually go back to working the same way they used to, they may not want to, and it may not be the best option. In the new normal that emerges from this disruption, the hybrid workforce model will be an essential tool for many organizations as they recover and build anew.

The challenge for HR is how to seize this moment and adapt to the changing nature of work in a way that creates the most value for the organization and employees. Our most significant challenges will be handling the leadership mindsets and perception of how, where and when work gets accomplished. HR leaders should not be asking whether a hybrid model is right for the organization, but rather how they can take full advantage of a hybrid model to drive improved workforce and operational outcomes.

¹ Modeled based on responses to three surveys: Gartner COVID-19 Crisis Benchmarking Against Your Peers Webinar Poll, 2020 Gartner Cost Cutting and Employee Experience Survey, Gartner COVID-19: How Finance Leaders Are Responding to the Emerging Situation Webinar Poll.

² Gartner ReimagineHR Employee Survey (May 2020)

³ 2020 Gartner Workforce Responsiveness Survey

⁴ 2019 Gartner ReimagineHR Employee Survey

Interview

Fostering a Culture of Workplace Civility With Christine Porath

By Tommy Sullivan

In this Talent Angle podcast interview, Christine Porath discusses her book “Mastering Civility: A Manifesto for the Workplace.” She offers insight into how HR leaders can navigate incivility in the workplace by leveraging small positive actions to create virtuous cycles in employee engagement.



Christine Porath Associate Professor

Christine Porath is a tenured professor at Georgetown University’s McDonough School of Business. She’s the author of “Mastering Civility: A Manifesto for the Workplace” and co-author of “The Cost of Bad Behavior.” Christine is a frequent contributor to the Harvard Business Review and has written articles for the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, McKinsey Quarterly and Washington Post. She frequently delivers talks and has taught in various executive programs at Harvard University, Georgetown University and the University of Southern California. Prior to her position at Georgetown, she was a faculty member at the University of Southern California’s Marshall School of Business.

If left unmanaged, political volatility can create major challenges in the workplace, potentially affecting employee engagement, productivity and collaboration. As the 2020 U.S. campaign season enters its final phase, HR functions must prepare for and proactively manage politically driven tensions in their organizations. Minimizing workplace conflict in a postelection environment will require HR teams to partner with company leaders and managers to create an organizational culture that fosters mutual respect and consideration.

To do so, HR leaders can turn to guidance from Christine Porath, professor at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business. Porath joined Scott Engler on Gartner's Talent Angle podcast to discuss strategies for navigating incivility in the workplace and guidance to promote civility. Here is an excerpt from their conversation.

People say incivility sounds like a term that doesn't belong in business. How did you arrive at civility as the way to frame your arguments?

I do find that respect often is something some organizations feel more comfortable with, especially if they're going to translate it into multiple languages. And so, that's probably the best synonym.

People don't have a hard time at all knowing what incivility is. There are very few of us that can't relate to that in some way. The important thing I like to highlight if I'm giving talks around civility is: It doesn't mean you're just being nice. I hope the message [isn't], "Okay, well, we can't give negative feedback, we can't disagree, we have to disagree super kindly [or] we have to tiptoe around people."

People don't have a hard time at all knowing what incivility is. There are very few of us that can't relate to that in some way. The important thing I like to highlight if I'm giving talks around civility is: It doesn't mean you're just being nice.

I love Kim Scott's idea of radical candor, and what I really try to highlight is, you want to have direct conversations. You want to disagree when needed; you want to have strong opinions; you need negative feedback. It's the "how." So, especially to Kim's work, her point [of] "if you care personally, you want to challenge directly."

I emphasize, connect and then lead. If you're connecting with people, you show some warmth; for example, you have a lot more liberty and discretion to give harsh feedback, because people get it that you care.

Adam Grant has done research on this, too ... the idea of, "I have high expectations of you, and this is why I want you to know X," when you give negative feedback. If people have felt like you've been respectful in the past, that you seem like a person that cares, [they're] going to be far less defensive and ... far more motivated to try to meet that challenge.

If people are defensive and self-focused, it creates an environment where people are circling the wagons around themselves, which makes collaboration difficult. So what could be helpful is your incivility checklist. Where do people not recognize something that could be uncivil when it's having an effect on someone they work with?

Well, the No. 1 thing people admit to — what the civility quiz is — is they use email when they should use face-to-face, Skype, Zoom or something where there [are] going to be nonverbal [cues], there's going to be tone. So often we rely on email, when maybe we shouldn't. Maybe we need to have [more] face-to-face [interactions].

Like the CEO I was meeting with last week said, "I tell people and I try to live it, that if we need several emails, if we're going round to round, that's just not working, especially if it's negative." So, trying to break that chain, which is challenging, because we rely so much on technology.

Email is tough because the tone isn't there and you don't have the nonverbals, and especially with more cross-cultural folks working together, we come with very different norms. So, the idea being that what you [view as] direct, I may interpret as, "Wow, he must be really upset with me. Gosh, how did I set him off?" And that's just not the case.

I feel like technology makes some of this tougher.

So, what do negative routines look like?

Oftentimes what tends to happen, whether you're working in an uncivil environment or not, is you get really negative and you become very victim-like. So, it's easy to fall into the trap of, "I'm working in such a toxic environment. Woe is me. I can't control this. It's my boss. I have no power. The organization doesn't seem to care. What does this mean for my career? It's obvious if he and others treat me this way, what does that mean about me? I don't know that it would be any better anywhere else."

And then you even start using words that are victim-like, like, "I tried, but...", "I know I should change jobs; I know I should stick up for myself" or "I know I should stop worrying about [it], but I just can't."

And it really starts to feel like the world is against you. The challenge is to become more owner-like. What can you control? Focus on that. And what we find — and this is some other, but somewhat related research — is even if you focus on thriving outside of the workplace, that actually builds you up, and you bring a much more positive, resilient self into the workplace. So, thriving in nonwork and in work are positively correlated.

That's a starting place for some people that are feeling victimized at work, or they're feeling very negative about their work life. Really trying to focus on, "What can I control?" And even if it means baby steps outside of the office, that's what I'm going to do — "I'm going to run a marathon; I'm going to train for a triathlon; I'm going to pick up a new hobby; I'm going to join a different community [with] more positive people that are focused on giving back." All of those things create some positivity in our life that we're probably going to bring back into the organization. And guess what? It spreads. ... What we're learning in our new civility research — social network research — is, civility spreads.

People not only reciprocate but also pass it forward in their networks at work.

As you said, happiness in context doesn't depend on deep personal connections; in fact, frequent superficial face-to-face interactions can influence happiness. From a manager perspective, spreading happiness and civility in the workplace can seem odd. Does it make it easier if we say it's okay to be superficial, and start there with managers?

I think so. One of the examples I love for how this played out, and it started with something simple, is the "10/5 Way" that Ochsner Healthcare System in Louisiana started, which was: If their employees are within 10 feet of one another, they were to make eye contact and smile. And, if they were within five feet, they were to say hello. Patrick Quinlan, former CEO, told me he saw, and the data revealed, that civility spread, patient satisfaction scores rose as did patient referrals.

I think it just shows, those things may sound silly or trivial, but if we can get into that cycle, it's amazing the difference it makes. And not just among your own internal group — your customers, or your patients in this case. And so, it starts with the small things.

And again, if we think about how our day starts, whether we walk in and see someone smiling ... I can't tell you how often I hear people don't even say hello or make eye contact in an elevator and they get all upset.

Yes, you can feel the tension.

Yes, it throws people off. And we all have instances where we can recall a really quick interaction; it might've been someone that was driving a shuttle, or greeting people in an organization you walked into. It gives you a lift, and you, no doubt, smile and carry that into your next interaction with someone else.

It doesn't have to be tough, but I do think we want to be mindful and create some [expectations so that] the [behaviors] become more routine. That's part of what [Golden State Warriors head coach] Steve Kerr even mentioned with joy. Their practice facilities and their locker rooms ... [are] filled with images of them celebrating together, high-fiving, smiling, ... celebrating birthdays of staff and players and so forth. So, how can you surround yourself with some of the positivity ... on a daily basis?



Quant Corner

Employees More Engaged at Organizations Encouraging Political Expression

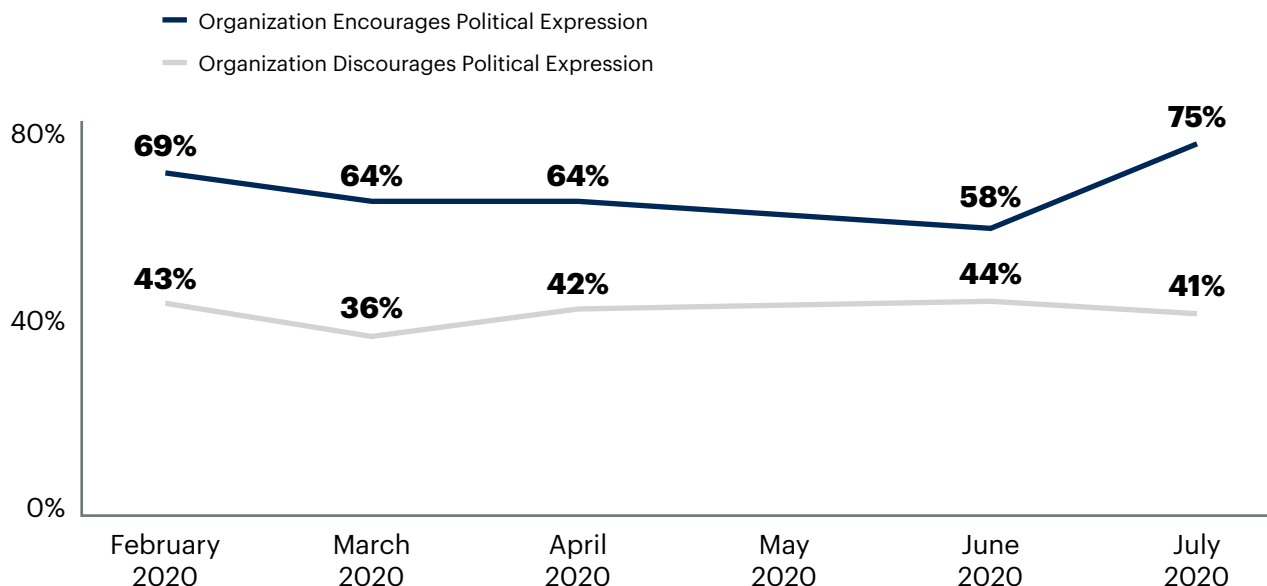
By Sophia Fedeli

Few employees say their organization encourages political activities or expression, but those who do are more likely to be highly engaged. In July 2020, just 24% of employees said their organization encouraged political expression, while 36% said their organization discouraged it. Among those whose organizations encourage political activity,

75% were highly engaged. By comparison, just 41% of employees who said their organizations discouraged this behavior were highly engaged. This 34-percentage-point difference in engagement is the largest gap observed to date, and is more than twice the 14-point difference observed in June 2020.

Impact of Encouraging Political Expression on Employee Engagement

Percentage of Highly Engaged U.S. Employees, by Organizational Encouragement of Political Expression



n = 520 (February 2020), 500 (March 2020), 500 (April 2020), 600 (June 2020), 400 (July 2020)

Source: Gartner U.S. Election Employee Sentiment Surveys

5 New Talent Strategy Rules

COVID-19 has created a new playing field



Top-of-mind thoughts from your HR peers and leaders:



Dynamic planning assumptions

“COVID-19 has pushed us to further accelerate the impact of strategic workforce planning. Where do we start?”



Talent anywhere

“I guess we don’t have to recruit only in Nebraska anymore.”



Compensation flexibility

“Why am I paying New York prices when I can now hire the same talent in Poland?”



Skill clusters determine capability

“We need to deconstruct roles into something we can plan around.”



Digital imperatives

“Our CEO has charged us to immediately determine how we are going to move to a fully distributed workforce model — permanently.”

Learn more about The Unbounded Workforce

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