



NEWS RELEASE

The Hartford's Future of Benefits Study: Generational Perspectives On The Workplace From Boomers to Zoomers

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- Despite higher levels of burnout and disproportionate mental health challenges, Generation Z workers are most likely to value connections with coworkers and feel optimistic about their financial futures
- Amid a surge of new responsibilities, employers are doing their best to meet the needs of their employees, but challenges remain

HARTFORD, Conn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- **The Hartford's** fifth annual Future of Benefits Study, released today, reveals different generational perspectives about workplace productivity, employee benefits, personal finances, mental health, and paid leave as more Gen Z workers (zoomers) enter the workforce and many baby boomers retire. Gen Z experiences higher levels of burnout and disproportionate mental health challenges compared with other generations, yet is most likely to value connections with coworkers and feel optimistic about their financial futures.

"The expectations and needs of Gen Z workers across many facets of the workplace are notably different from other generations," said Jonathan Bennett, head of Group Benefits at The Hartford. "As the number of next-generation employees surpasses baby boomers in the workplace, understanding these differences and taking a multigenerational approach to workplace benefits is crucial to shaping the future of work."

Key findings include:

- 3-in-5 U.S. workers are experiencing some level of burnout at work, with Gen Z more likely to say they always/often experience it (32%) compared with other generations.
- 29% of U.S. workers report feeling depressed or anxious at least a few times a week, yet stigma prevents them from seeking mental health care (39%), which is more significant among Gen Z workers (45% and 52%).
- Gen Z workers are more likely to report that their financial health (47%), mental health (41%) and physical health (38%) negatively impacts their productivity.
- Gen Z workers (75%) say strong personal connections at work are important compared with millennials (70%), Gen X (67%) and baby boomers (62%).
- 53% of Gen Z workers believe their financial situation will get better in the next year compared with millennials (45%), Gen X (32%) and baby boomers (26%).

“It is encouraging to see Gen Z’s optimistic financial outlook, although there’s more we can do to help employers support financial and mental health in the workplace,” Bennett added. “As an employee benefits provider, The Hartford is focused on helping our employer clients reach all generations with simple benefits education to increase understanding about how the benefits they are offered in the workplace can help support employee wellbeing, protect their paychecks and provide a financial safety net.”

Keeping pace with employee needs and technology

The generational shift is increasing the complexity for employers who are holistically seeking to address the evolving needs of their employees. Employers are also faced with a surge in new responsibilities and a need to keep up with rapidly changing technology.

The Hartford’s 2024 Future of Benefits Study, which polled U.S. workers and HR professionals (employers), found 62% of employers said their day-to-day responsibilities have increased in the past few years. In addition, 84% say advances in HR technology have expanded their responsibilities and required them to develop new skills. While balancing the shifts in their responsibilities, employers still face challenges with managing benefits, employee expectations and benefits education.

Over the past five years, the study has shown that U.S. workers consistently value the benefits offered to them. However, employers believe employees underutilize employee benefits. Some U.S. workers, particularly Gen Z and millennials, admit they don’t fully understand the voluntary or supplemental benefits offered in the workplace and are seeking better resources to enhance their understanding.

Key findings include:

- 50% of U.S workers believe their company needs better resources to help them understand their benefits.

- 73% of employers believe employees underutilize the benefits and services available; this has increased significantly since March 2020 (64%).
- 67% of employers say educating employees about benefits is a challenge, which has been an ongoing concern over the past five years.
- 80% of U.S. workers value the insurance benefits their company offers to them, which is flat compared with March 2020.
- 38% of U.S. workers do not understand supplemental benefits and what they cover.

A spotlight on paid leave

Paid family and medical leave are benefits sought after by all generations in the workplace and can help people of all ages take care of themselves or their loved ones. It is one area of benefits that employers continue to expand, and workers believe can help attract and retain employees. However, many U.S. workers, especially Gen Z, consistently express concerns about taking a leave of absence from work. The complexity of managing leave for employers continues to increase as more states implement paid family and medical leave programs.

Key findings include:

- Employers have added or expanded leave benefits beyond state or federal requirements, including:
 - Medical leave: 46%
 - Sick time: 46%
 - Paid time off (PTO)/vacation time: 39%
 - Family leave: 38%
 - Parental leave: 38%
- Half of employers say there is no easy way to track and manage all of the leave types.
- 33% of U.S. workers think there is a negative perception associated with taking leave.
- 34% of U.S. workers are fearful of workplace repercussions if they take a leave, an increase from 29% in 2023 and highest among Gen Z (49%).

The Hartford is a leading provider of employee benefits and absence management. For more information about the company's Group Benefits offerings, visit www.thehartford.com/groupbenefits. For more information about The Hartford's 2024 Future of Benefits study, visit www.thehartford.com/futureofbenefits.

Study Methodology

The Hartford's 2024 Future of Benefits Study was fielded Feb. 21 – March 4, 2024 and included 502 employers and 1,246 U.S. workers. The employers surveyed were HR professionals who manage/decide employee benefits and

U.S. workers surveyed were actively employed. The margin of error is employer +/- 4% and U.S. worker +/-3% at a 95% confidence level.

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