



Shifting worker expectations guide the coming talent migration

The race to retain, recruit and retrain workers set to accelerate post-pandemic.

As pandemic restrictions ease, employers must prepare for an increasingly competitive talent market as workers rethink their careers and their expectations of work, says a new survey from Prudential Financial.

According to findings from the latest [*Pulse of the American Worker Survey: Post-Pandemic Work & Life – Expectations from the American Workforce*](#) fielded in late May, a quarter of workers still plan to look for a new job once the pandemic is over. Half of those surveyed say the pandemic has given them more control in deciding the direction of their career, and 48% are rethinking the type of job they want altogether. These insights were among a range uncovered in the survey of 2,000 full-time employed adults, conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of Prudential.

Half of workers planning to leave their jobs say they are seeking better compensation and benefits and would prefer a job that allows for professional growth as well as better work/life balance.

“The road ahead will see the market for talent heat up, and it will become increasingly competitive for employers to attract and retain top talent. Employers looking to be a magnet for top talent in the post-pandemic economy must understand workers’ expectations of work and what they need from their jobs,” says Prudential Vice Chair Rob Falzon.

Focus on skilling

The skills gaps that existed prior to 2020 have grown exponentially over the past year; in fact, American workers say getting their skills up to speed quickly is critical to seizing job opportunities as the pandemic eases—and many are worried they are not prepared.

Nearly half of workers (46%) said they will have to learn new skills within the next year to do their current

job, and 43% expect their financial security to be in jeopardy if they do not retrain or reskill.

“Job stability going forward will be based on the skills workers have to offer. Employers will be willing to pay a premium for talent with the right skills,” says Falzon. “At the same time, corporate America will need to step up and invest in their talent by offering skills training and enhancing on-the-job learning opportunities, such as through apprenticeship and rotation programs.”

While computer technology and tools that enable remote work topped the list of skills managers say are most needed, nearly half of workers surveyed and 30% of managers believe soft skills like problem-solving and adaptability will be more valuable in the coming years.

Despite feeling pressure to develop their skills, 4 in 10 workers reported spending little to no time learning new skills at work. One contributing factor could be that even though managers report increased productivity during remote work, they also say it is taking longer for teams to complete their work, perhaps leaving less time for skilling.

Pandemic gives new meaning to “work-life balance”

Work and home have never been never more blurred than during the pandemic, as many workers transitioned to remote work. The collision of personal and professional demands have forced workers to prioritize, with 46% saying they’ve made “trade-offs” between personal priorities and work.

In particular, the pandemic highlighted the struggles of working caregivers, who made up 38% of those surveyed. The strained balancing act caused by the pandemic led to an exodus of caregivers from the workforce, with women disproportionately affected, according to data reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Among the working caregivers polled in Prudential’s survey, 45% said they have considered leaving the workforce, compared to 19% of non-caregivers. While those surveyed have managed to remain in the workforce, 4 in 10 working caregivers say the pandemic left them with less time to devote to career and professional development.

When asked what they would value most from their employers going forward, working caregivers cited increased work flexibility (42%), more paid time off (38%) and a greater commitment to employee health and well-being (37%).

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