

HR Leaders Monthly

June 2021

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HR Leaders Monthly

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Editor's Note

by Brian Kropp and
Lauren Romansky

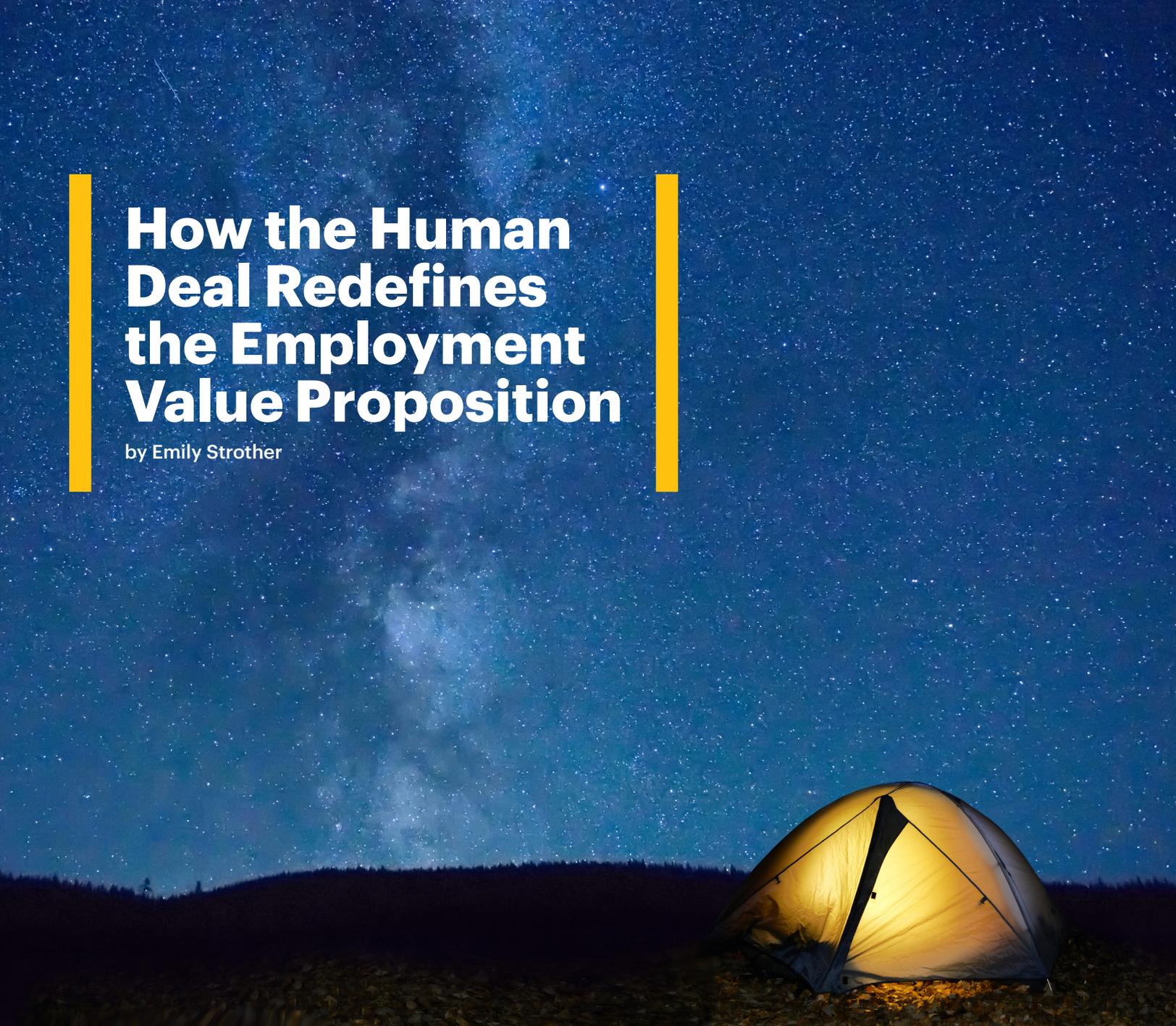
During the COVID-19 pandemic, the employer-employee relationship has undergone dramatic change at many organizations. As people and organizations around the world struggled together through a global catastrophe and as the lines between their work and home lives blurred, this shared experience has humanized employees in the eyes of their employers.

As disruption reshapes that relationship, organizations are rethinking traditional models of the employment value proposition (EVP) and creating a new, more human deal.

The human deal emphasizes the H in HR. Instead of a transactional model of the EVP that views employees exclusively as workers, offering them rewards and experiences in exchange for serving the organization, the human deal considers the fullness of employees' lives and is designed to help them grow as people, not just as workers. This framework entails deeper connections, radical flexibility, personal growth, holistic well-being and shared purpose. By redesigning the EVP around these components, HR leaders can create a better employee experience that drives greater effort, commitment and intent to stay.

This issue of *HR Leaders Monthly* showcases our new research into the human deal, in the first of a series of issues dedicated to our landmark studies of 2021. Within this journal, you will learn what the human deal is, how to start building it and how every part of the HR function is involved in the process. We look at strategies for identifying which EVP investments will resonate most with employees and deliver the highest returns. We also highlight how organizations are applying these principles to enhance employee well-being and career development, and we consider the implications of automation and artificial intelligence for the human deal.

The bigger picture shows how these elements of the human deal combine and interact to create a brand-new vision of what the EVP can mean. As HR leaders make decisions in response to a changing world of work, they need to be equally thoughtful about how employees' lives are changing and what impact these decisions will have on their employees, not just as workers, but as human beings. With this holistic perspective, HR leaders can set up their organizations for success in the next normal.



How the Human Deal Redefines the Employment Value Proposition

by Emily Strother

Disruption has transformed the modern work environment. HR leaders must reinvent their EVP to deliver a more human deal to employees, focusing on the whole person, their life experience and ultimately the feelings the human deal creates.

The uncertain talent implications of the crises of 2020 (e.g., pandemic, racial and social injustices, etc.) have forced CHROs and senior HR leaders to question whether their traditional employment value proposition (EVP) will set them up for long-term success.

Traditionally, organizations define the EVP as a set of attributes that the labor market and employees perceive as the value they gain through employment in the organization. These attributes may include people, work, opportunity, rewards and the organization itself.

This traditional EVP approach is underpinned by three key management principles (see Figure 1):

- Defined around employees
- Designed to provide an exceptional employee experience
- Delivered using features that match employees' needs

When the concept of the EVP first emerged in the early 2000s, this initial approach worked well. But, increasingly, organizations have questioned how well their EVP applies to critical talent segments, whether it is sufficiently differentiated in the labor market and whether it focuses on the right features.

Most organizations look to improve their EVP by adding features based on the latest trends. For example, the arrival of millennials in the workforce increased focus on student debt reimbursement and pet insurance, digitalization led to training in new technology and programming languages, and concerns

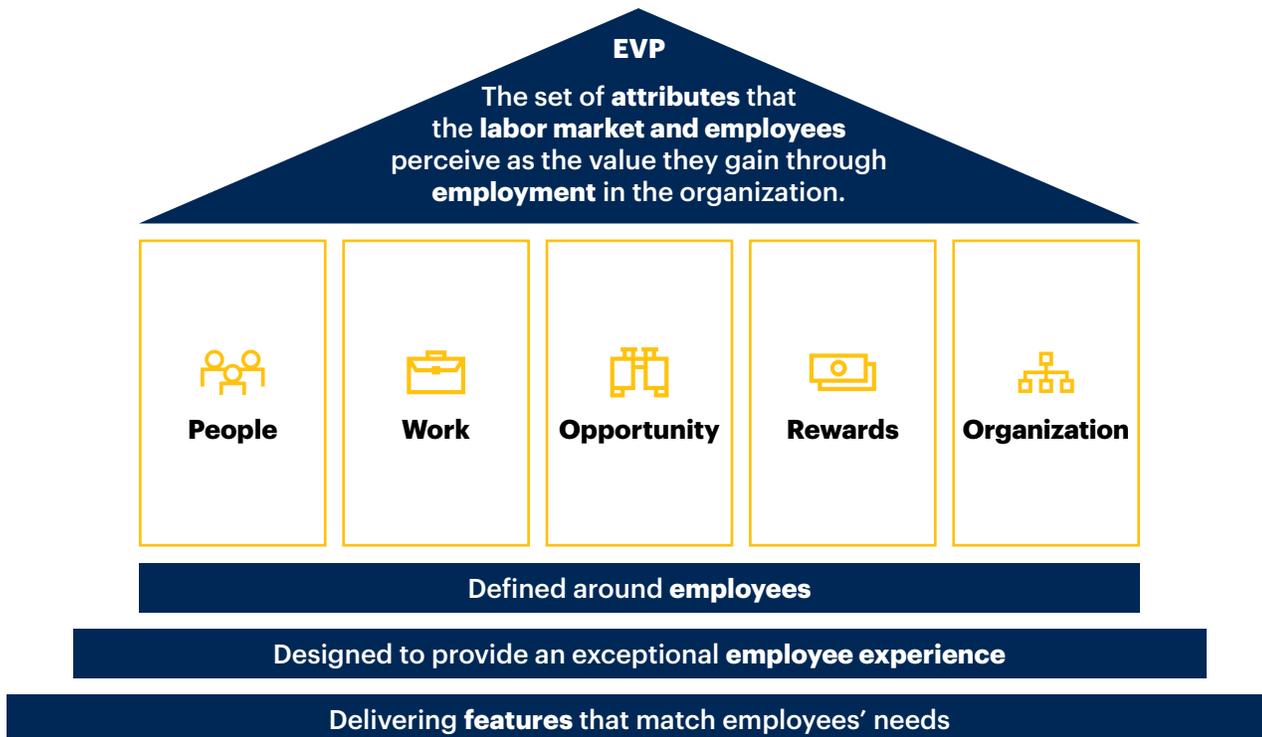
around wellness brought massages or yoga into the workplace.

However, this approach of adding more features to the experience is costly. The average company is estimated to spend \$2,484 per employee per year to improve the employee experience, and this expense is projected to continue growing.¹

Despite this growing expense, engagement remains relatively flat, and only 29% of leaders report they have the talent they need to meet current performance requirements. Additionally, only 31% of HR leaders believe their current employees are satisfied with their EVP, and 65% of candidates have discontinued a hiring process due to an unattractive EVP.^{2,3}

Rather than continue adding to the EVP, to align with employees' needs, HR leaders should consider how their traditional EVP management principles can change to address those needs. We have identified three shifts organizations must make to reinvent their EVP to align with today's work environment.

Figure 1. Traditional EVP Management Principles



Source: Gartner

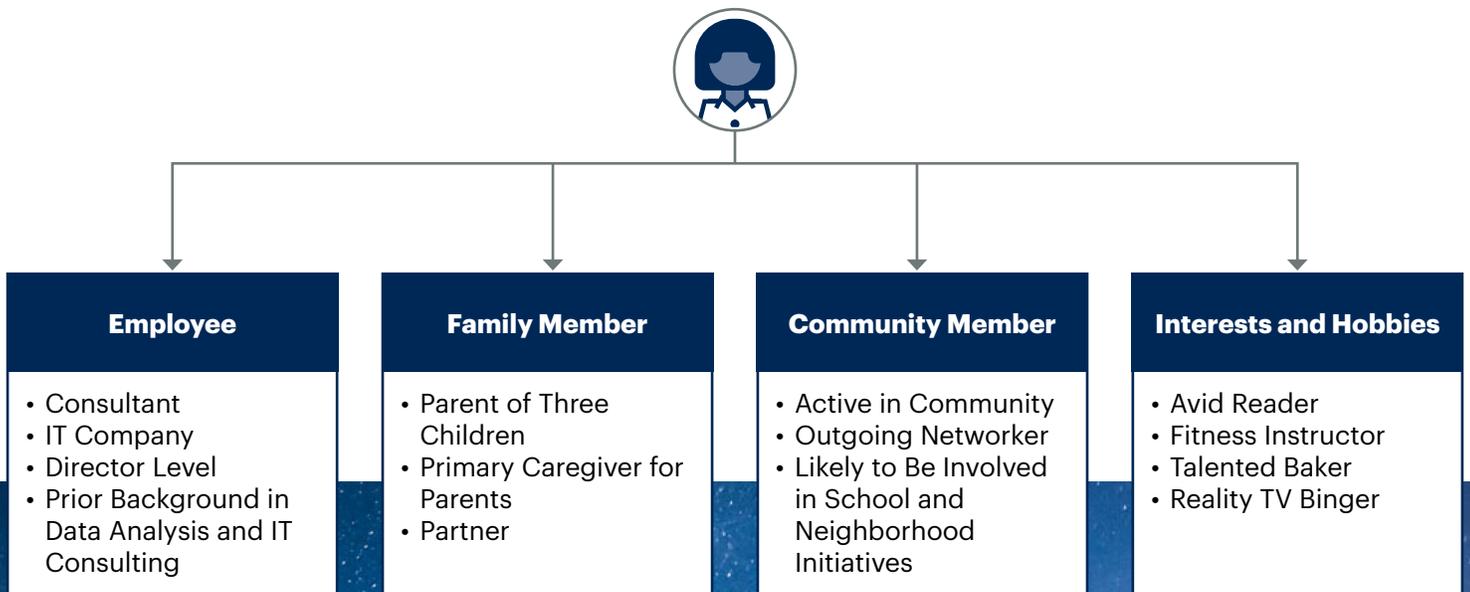
Define an EVP Recognizing Employees as People, Not Just Workers

Most organizations focus on employees as workers when they define their EVP. Many focus on when employees start at the organization, what their role and skills are and how long they have worked. However, employees are so much more than just workers; they have interests and hobbies, families and community investments (see Figure 2). Unfortunately, while 82% of employees say it's important for their organization to see them as a person, not just an employee, only 45% of employees believe their organization actually sees them this way.⁴

Design an EVP Around Life Experiences, Not Just Work Experiences

Typically, organizations see work and life as separate parts of a person's experience. This assumption has been challenged over the last few decades, as we have gone from work-life separation, to work-life balance, to work-life integration. Ultimately, separating work from life is not an effective approach because work is a part of life, along with family, friends, hobbies and interests. Once organizations start thinking about work as one of many aspects of employees' lives, they can design it to harmonize with these other aspects in the broader context of an employee's life.

Figure 2. Person-First Understanding
Employees' Perspective of Themselves



Source: Gartner



Deliver an EVP Based on Feelings, Not Just Features

Most organizations focus on the job attributes or features they offer employees. Despite efforts to provide unique features, such as “bring your pet to work” day or game rooms in the office, only 31% of employees say their organization offers a unique experience.⁴ Instead, organizations should focus on understanding how their EVP makes employees feel. Do employees feel understood, autonomous, valued, cared for and invested in?

Reinventing the EVP: The Human Deal

The definition of the EVP must evolve to align with these three key shifts to the traditional approach. The reinvented EVP — the human deal — is defined as:

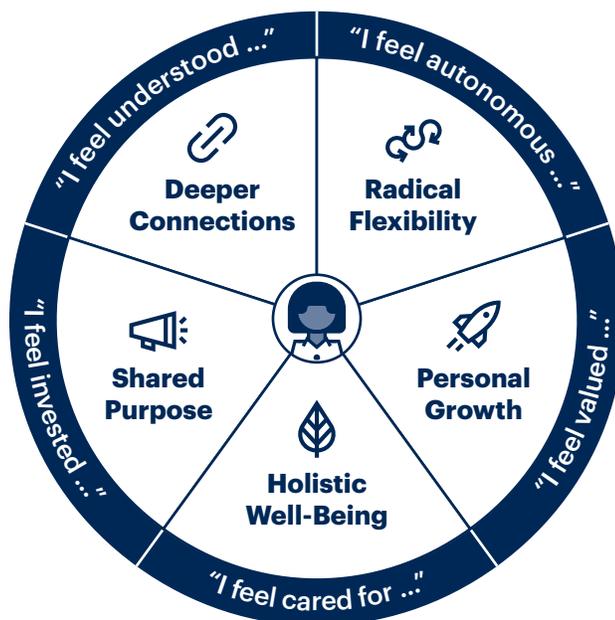
The emotional response to the set of attributes that people perceive as the value they gain in their life from employment in the organization.

The human deal framework centers around the whole person’s identity, connects the organization with employees’ life experiences and highlights the feelings a positive experience with the human deal can create between the employee and employer.

The five components of the human deal, and HR leaders’ role in delivering each, are as follows (see Figure 3):

-  **Deeper Connections** — How HR leaders help employees strengthen their family and community connections, not just work relationships.
-  **Radical Flexibility** — How HR leaders provide flexibility on all aspects of work, not just when and where employees work.
-  **Personal Growth** — How HR leaders help employees grow as people, not just as professionals.
-  **Holistic Well-Being** — How HR leaders ensure employees use holistic well-being offerings, not just ensure they are available.
-  **Shared Purpose** — How HR leaders can help the organization take collective action on purpose, not just make corporate statements.

Figure 3. The Human Deal Framework



Source: Gartner

When organizations make progress on any part of the human deal, they see clear benefits. Some of those benefits include:⁴

- 28% increase in employees who are highly likely to recommend the organization by delivering deeper connections
- 40% increase in high performers by delivering radical flexibility
- 6% increase in intent to stay by delivering personal growth
- 7% increase in employees' physical, financial and mental wellness by delivering holistic well-being
- 9% increase in employees who would be highly likely to accept the job again by delivering shared purpose

Because of shifts in today's work environment, the traditional approach to EVP is no longer effective. Instead of updating the EVP by adding new features as needs arise, organizations should shift to delivering a more human deal. Organizations that focus on the whole person, their life experience and ultimately the feelings created by the human deal will succeed not only in today's challenges, but beyond.

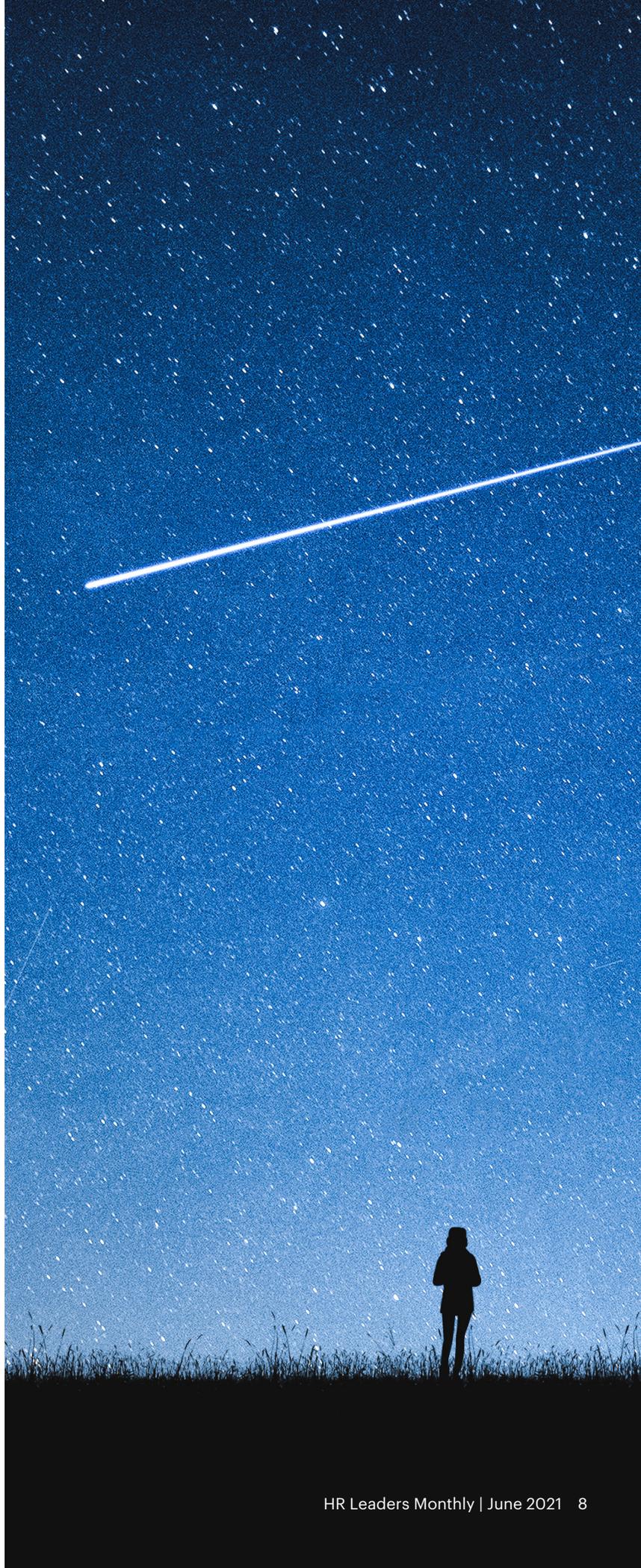
We surveyed 5,000 employees on their experiences and expectations of their organization's employment value proposition and employee experience. We also surveyed 77 HR leaders from across industries and geographies on the EVP and employee experience practices and challenges. In addition, we interviewed 85 HR leaders on EVP practices, challenges and solutions.

¹ 2019 Gartner Modern Employee Experience HR Leader Survey (n = 143 HR leaders)

² 2021 Gartner EVP Benchmarking Survey (n = 5,000 employees worldwide)

³ 2020 Gartner Candidate Panel Survey (n = 2,774 candidates worldwide)

⁴ 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey (n = 77 HR leaders)



Reinvent your EVP for a Postpandemic Workforce

The traditional employee value proposition isn't delivering, and the most progressive organizations are shifting toward a human-centered value proposition aimed to inspire in employees emotions that see them stay longer and work harder, driving the success of the business. Progress here delivers benefits:

- 28%** increase in employees who are likely to recommend the org by delivering deeper connections
- 40%** increase in high performers by delivering radical flexibility
- 6%** increase in intent to stay by delivering personal growth
- 7%** increase in employees' physical, financial, and mental wellness by delivering holistic well-being
- 9%** increase in employees who are highly likely to accept the job again by delivering shared purpose

Leverage this action plan to improve the lives of your employees while simultaneously improving critical business outcomes.

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Build a More Responsive EVP Management Strategy

by Shannon Wiest

The events of 2020 have spurred organizations to reconsider their traditional approach to the employment value proposition. HR leaders can better attract and retain talent during times of change by implementing a more responsive EVP strategy.

The past year brought us a flurry of external forces that fundamentally changed the way we work and live. Conventional wisdom regarding the typical 9-to-5, on-site work experience has been upended, expectations for employers to take stances on societal issues have skyrocketed and the COVID-19 pandemic destroyed work-life boundaries. Employees' experiences and expectations are evolving more rapidly today than ever before, which, in turn, affects their impressions of their employers.

HR leaders are growing concerned about the talent implications of these changes and whether they can attract, retain and inspire employees in today's environment. As a result, many organizations are revisiting their

employment value proposition (EVP) offerings — the set of attributes the labor market and employees perceive as the value gained through employment with an organization — and evaluating what adjustments should be made to address these concerns.

According to our research:

- HR leaders tell us retention is a growing issue; only 23% of them report that most employees will continue working in their organization when the pandemic ends.¹
- The ability to deliver a compelling message to candidates is a growing worry for HR, as 65% of candidates say that they've discontinued a hiring process due to an unattractive EVP.²

An EVP is a critical lever for HR leaders; it's about creating a compelling statement, a promise, of the kind of differential value candidates and employees can expect from employment. And when organizations deliver on these promises, they can better adapt to change, retain employees and maintain the engagement needed to thrive during times of disruption.

Without a better way of sensing and responding to what employees are going through and what they value most, organizations risk losing one of their most valuable assets: their talent.

HR leaders need to build a more responsive EVP management strategy to improve engagement in the face of these challenges.

Grow Awareness of EVP Reevaluation Cues

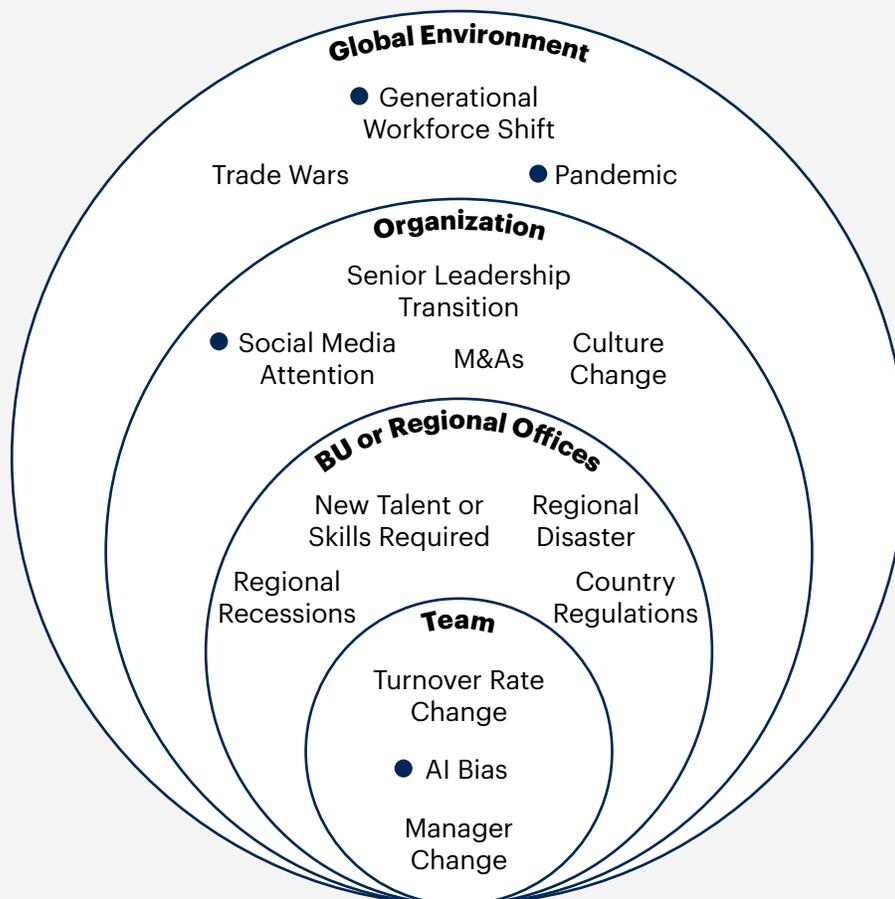
In light of recent events, using the traditional methods to surface, communicate, deliver and differentiate an EVP can leave HR chasing its tail, as the context for applying these methods is constantly shifting.

The first step is replacing the static EVP evaluation process with one that adapts to the internal and external forces affecting the organization. Although it is tempting to create an annual plan for an EVP evaluation, such an approach is slow to adapt to changes in the

employee experience today. To build a more relevant EVP, HR leaders need to recognize which external factors may indicate a shift in employee expectations or experiences. These cues, or triggers, include things that are organization-specific, such as the company's financial performance, as well as larger labor market conditions affecting the broader economy, such as the unemployment rate or compensation trends (see Figure 1).

The idea is to make it easy for HR leaders to recognize cues to revisit the EVP strategy, in the pursuit of identifying and implementing timely and relevant updates.

Figure 1. Potential Cues for the Organization



● Newer Cues to Consider

Leverage Continuous Listening to Understand and Adapt to Employee Preferences

To facilitate a more responsive EVP, organizations need to improve their listening and detection capabilities to better detect and resolve misaligned expectations before they multiply. Organizations should consider a continuous listening strategy that allows them to gather feedback from employees and candidates on areas where the company can do a better job of delivering on its EVP.

As with any listening strategy, organizations should start by determining what kind of information they are collecting and who they are collecting it from. This data can be qualitative, in the form of regular conversations with HR business professionals (HRBPs), or quantitative, such as data gathered from pulse surveys or feedback forms. Leadership must remember to include a diverse range of voices to make sure it does not overlook underrepresented talent segments.

In our research, we identified several feedback mechanisms commonly used to better understand employee preferences (see Table 1). Each organization should evaluate its listening strategy based on the overall complexity, resource usage, speed, insight gained and potential risks.

Table 1. Tools to Capture Employees' Voices

Tool to Deploy	Complexity	Resource Usage	Speed	EVP Insight	Potential Pitfalls
Pulse survey	Low	Low	Fast	Top-of-mind EVP factors	Short-term and narrow perspective
Organizational survey	Medium	Low	Fast	Complete view of EVP	Superficial information
Internal interviews	Low	High	Slow	Deeper insight of EVP	Bias and other influences
Internal focus groups	Medium	Medium	Slow	Deeper insight of EVP	Availability bias
Employee review sites	Medium	Medium	Fast	Raw insight of EVP	Extreme perspectives
Candidate surveys	Medium	Low	Slow	Attraction drivers	Aspirational data
Employee behavioral analysis	High	Medium	Fast	Unconscious EVP factors	Overfitting of patterns
Employee and candidate persona research	High	High	Slow	EVP groups	Ignoring diverse groups

Source: Gartner

One feedback mechanism that is often overlooked is employee review sites, which can be incredibly valuable in determining where organizations are delivering or falling short of employee expectations. With any direct listening strategy, it is important to adjust interview questions to uncover relevant challenges and evolving employee expectations. Consider the following questions in an employee interview or focus group:

- Aside from increasing pay, what could we do at this time to make you feel more valued as an employee?
- What benefits are most important to motivate you to continue working through disruption?
- What development opportunities do you need now, to learn and grow professionally?
- What experiences are important to keep as we shift to a hybrid work environment?
- How can we help you create your ideal socially distant work environment?

With a better idea of what's most relevant to employees, organizations can more effectively deliver on their promises.

Focus on High-Value Touchpoints for Greater Employee Impact

By sensing which EVP investments employees appreciate on a more regular basis, organizations can recognize and invest in those attributes. This is not about changing the core purpose of the EVP, but rather adjusting how organizations communicate and fulfill their promises to meet employee needs and candidate preferences. And to maximize the impact of these investments, it's best to focus on high-value touchpoints.

Traditionally, when evaluating an EVP, organizations ask employees what conversations, interactions or experiences remind them of why they work for the organization. Employees may, for example, answer by recalling a meaningful conversation with a mentor, which encouraged them to apply for their current role.

Rather than look at the entire employee life cycle, ask employees to recall ways the company has demonstrated a continued commitment to their development in the last month, last quarter or last year.

To better understand what employees are going through during moments of disruption and change, organizations should consider taking this conversation one step further. Rather than look at the entire employee life cycle, ask employees to recall ways the company has demonstrated a continued commitment to their development in the last month, last quarter or last year.

If employees struggle to recall how the organization demonstrated a continued investment in their personal growth, consider how managers or HRBPs can step in to personalize the delivery of the EVP during meaningful moments. An attentive HRBP can ensure a development opportunity is more memorable for the employee. For example, one might ask: Would this employee appreciate online courses for greater technical expertise or a one-on-one mentoring opportunity to develop their soft skills? These questions are effective because they are personalized and contextualized for the current employee experience.

HR can play an active role in surfacing these meaningful moments and recommending ways for employees to participate in new employee experience offerings. The goal is to help encourage participation and broader access to existing EVP attributes to drive a more positive, equitable experience for employees during times of change. If organizations take these steps, they can improve employee retention and candidate engagement at a time when they need it most. They can send employees a powerful message about how much they are valued during these difficult times.

¹ 2021 Gartner EVP Benchmarking Survey

² 2020 Gartner Candidate Panel Survey



Strategies to Close the Well-Being Participation Gap

by Ben Szuhaj

HR leaders can use this research to boost employee participation in well-being programs. Strategies include increasing employee understanding of well-being needs and offerings, reducing well-being stigma and apathy, and reducing the time and effort needed to participate in well-being programs.

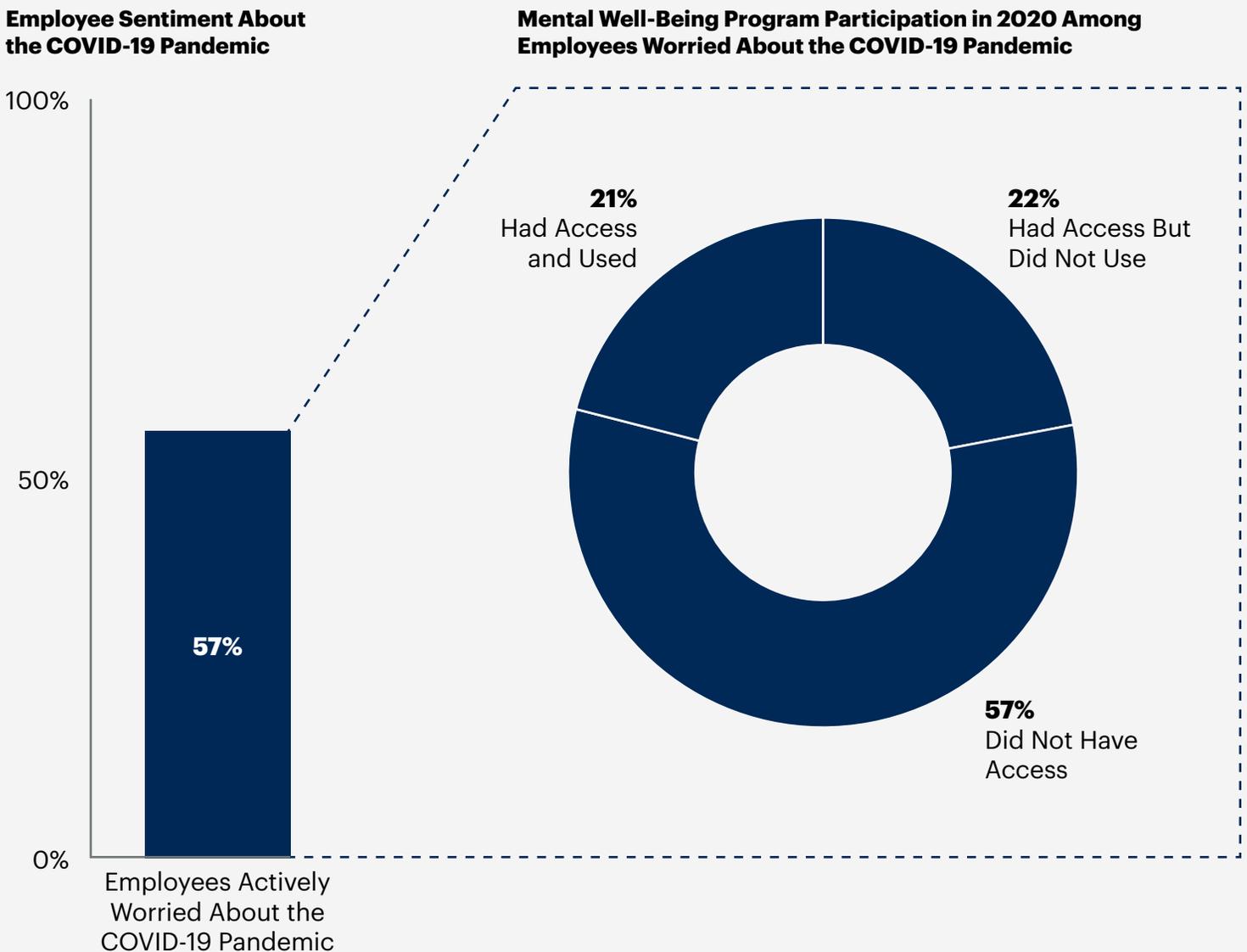
Over three-quarters of organizations (78%) reported that supporting employee well-being increased in importance in 2020.¹ Despite the numerous cost-saving measures necessitated by the pandemic, 46% of organizations increased their 2020 well-being budgets relative to 2019, while only 6% decreased them. Furthermore, 64% of organizations introduced a new well-being offering in 2020, and 34% expanded an existing offering.¹

Investment is concentrated most heavily in mental well-being, followed by family well-being, which includes offerings such as on-site daycare or support for survivors of domestic violence. These concentrations are driving well-being programs to become more holistic, which is good for business: Going from offering well-being programs in two distinct domains, such as physical and financial health, to four, boosts engagement by an average of 10%.²

However, despite increased investment in well-being programs, many employees who stand to benefit aren't participating in them. For instance, in a November 2020 survey, 57% of employees reported they were actively worried as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but only 21% of them reported they had access to a mental well-being program in the past year and used it (see Figure 1).²

Organizations recognize the importance of offering holistic well-being support. Now, to maximize investments made in employee well-being, HR leaders must focus on getting employees to use these programs. Doing so is good for employees and the business: 48% of employees who utilize well-being programs report being highly engaged, compared to 30% of employees who do not.³

Figure 1. Employee Participation in Well-Being Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic



n = 5,055 employees worldwide; 2,862 employees who reported they are worried about the COVID-19 pandemic
 Source: 2020 Gartner Employee Well-Being Survey



To close the well-being participation gap, we have identified three reasons why employees do not participate in well-being programs as well as strategies to address each reason (see Table 1).

Increase Employee Understanding of Well-Being Needs and Offerings

Almost all organizations (92%) communicated about well-being more in 2020 than in 2019.¹ However, many employees still don't know about these programs. For instance, a 2020 survey of organizations found that almost all offered mental well-being programs (96%), while a separate survey revealed less than half of employees (42%) thought their organizations offered them.^{1,2}

Table 1. Roadmap to Closing the Well-Being Program Participation Gap

Reason	Strategy
Employees have an incomplete understanding of their well-being needs and the offerings available to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take advantage of the unique strengths of underused communicators (e.g., senior leaders, managers and peers) to effectively reach more employees. • Design credible and appealing communications to help the benefits stand out in an information-saturated landscape. • Personalize well-being programs to make the relevance of support clear to employees.
Stigma or apathy prevent participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower trusted employees with varying levels of seniority to communicate the importance and normality of seeking well-being support to show struggling employees they are not alone. • Enable managers to discuss personal well-being topics with their direct reports to surface latent well-being needs. • Encourage employees to share well-being success stories to make the benefits of seeking support tangible.
Using well-being offerings takes too much time and/or effort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the burden employees face navigating well-being programs by adopting default enrollment in certain well-being offerings. • Equip employees with a step-by-step guide about how to participate to make it as easy as possible to get from A to B. • Use nudges to provide indirect suggestions and positive reinforcement that encourage participation without restricting personal decision making. • Build well-being into the employee experience by integrating well-being activities into processes and everyday work.

Source: Gartner

HR leaders should consider the following measures to increase employee understanding of well-being needs and offerings:

Take Advantage of the Unique Strengths of Underused Communicators to Effectively Reach More Employees

Typically, the total rewards function is responsible for well-being communications. And while total rewards and HR leaders certainly have a role to play, to increase employee understanding of well-being, HR leaders should leverage the unique strengths of underused communicators. Communicator diversification taps into the strengths of different stakeholders, such as managers, who have the ability to personalize messages to their direct reports, or senior leaders, who can influence company culture (see Table 2). Diverse support increases the likelihood an employee will receive a

message from someone capable of influencing them, increasing the range and effectiveness of communications.

Design Credible and Appealing Communications to Help Them Stand Out in an Information-Saturated Landscape

Employees are inundated with information every day. Because of this, HR leaders should focus on making communications credible and appealing so that they stick in employees' minds. Credible communications tend to be simple, clear and delivered by someone respected.⁴ Appealing communications tend to be emotional, story-based and contain something unexpected.⁴ An example that meets these criteria would be a short video of a senior leader talking candidly about his or her experience using the organization's mental health resources.

Table 2. Unique Strengths of Underused Communicators

	Total Rewards/HR	Senior Leaders	Managers	Peers
Unique Strength	Subject matter expertise, strategic vision	Cultural clout, exposure	Visibility, proximity, ability to personalize	Credibility, prevalence
Examples	Orchestrate communication strategy and provide critical details (such as how to use a program)	Share how they use well-being programs to provide broad exposure and influence public opinion	Check in with their direct reports about well-being to learn more about their individual needs	Join a peer emotional encouragement program, in which employees volunteer to explain available mental health support or discuss a colleague's emotional health

Source: Gartner

Personalize Well-Being Programs to Make the Relevance of Support Clear to Employees

People tend to discount personal health risks relative to the same risks for the general population.⁵ Because of this, it is easy for employees to fall into the cognitive trap of thinking well-being support is for “someone else.” To dispel this bias, Mashreq, a bank based in the United Arab Emirates, encourages employees to self-assess their well-being across six dimensions and make their well-being goals explicit (see Figure 2). The results inform an

action plan employees are asked to create to hold themselves accountable for using the organization’s well-being resources. This two-part exercise helps employees understand what support is relevant to their needs.

Reduce Well-Being Stigma and Apathy

Strong negative feelings, such as those resulting from stigma, prevent employees from seeking well-being support, particularly when it comes to mental health. Additionally, employee apathy stymies participation by reducing motivation to act. HR leaders should consider the following actions to combat stigma and apathy.

Figure 2. Mashreq’s Self-Assessment Report and Action Plan Template
Illustrative



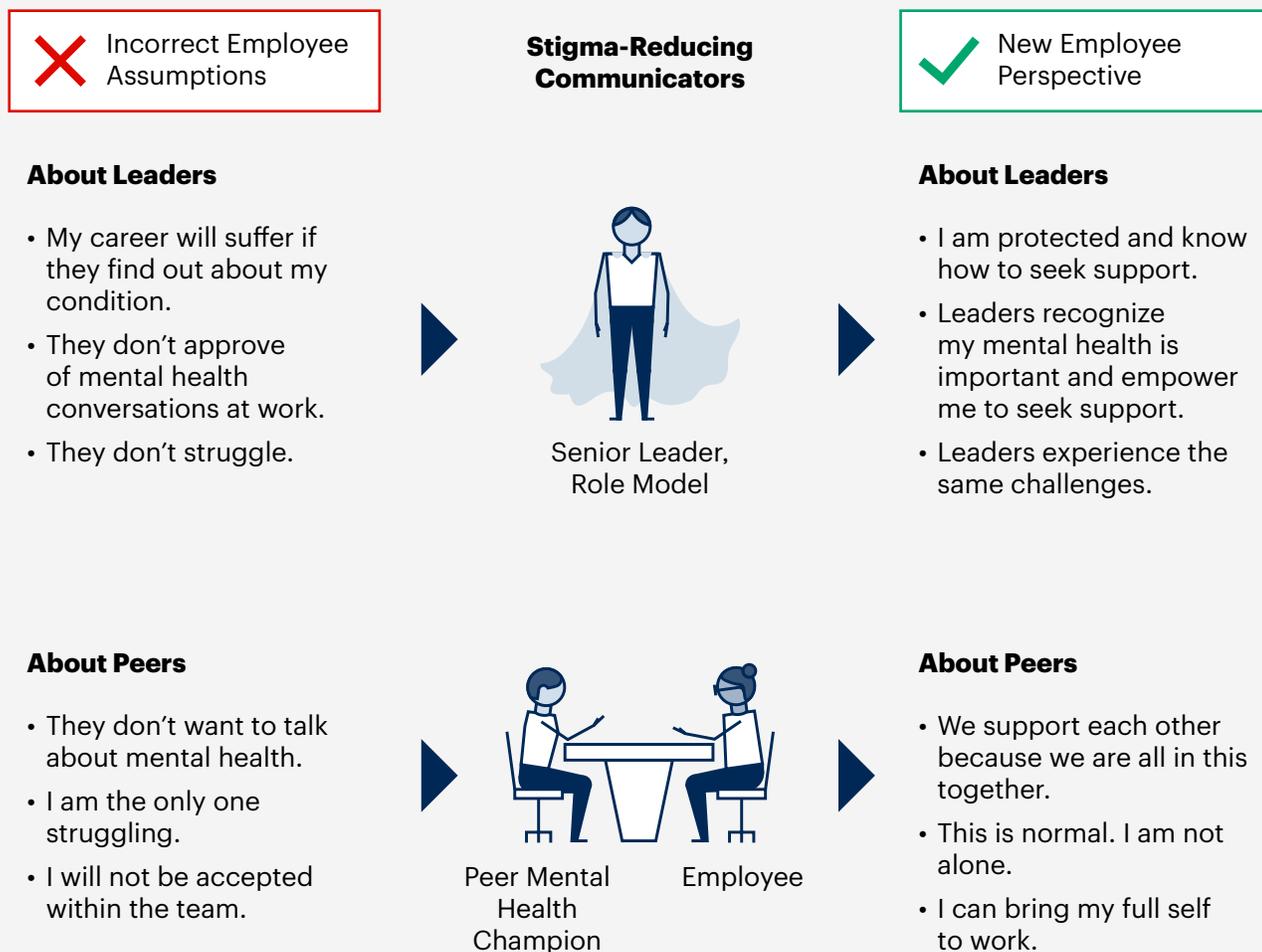
Source: Adapted From Mashreq Bank

Empower Trusted Employees to Communicate the Importance and Normality of Seeking Well-Being Support to Show Struggling Employees They Are Not Alone

At Genentech, a member of the Roche Group, leaders reduce stigma by sharing their own

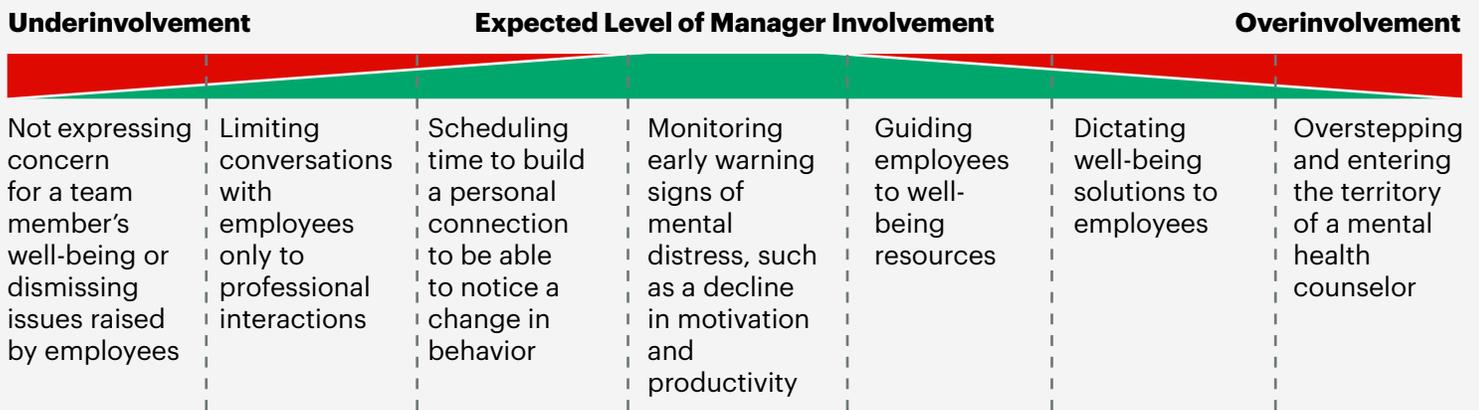
mental health challenges, while peer mental health champions guide the conversation and direct employees to the appropriate resources (see Figure 3). The U.S.-based pharmaceutical company’s HR gives the champions clear instructions on which conversation topics are appropriate and which should be held in a clinical setting to make them safe and productive. The combination of senior and peer communication with some HR oversight has helped to reduce stigma.

Figure 3. Employee Experience of Multilevel, Stigma-Reducing Communicators



Source: Adapted From Genentech/Roche

Figure 4. Spectrum and Guidelines for Manager Involvement in Employee Well-Being



Source: Adapted From EarlyValue*

* Pseudonym

Enable Managers to Discuss Personal Well-Being Topics With Their Direct Reports to Surface Latent Well-Being Needs

Some employees may not feel like they have well-being needs, even if they really do. An organization in the services industry combats this mindset by providing managers with easy-to-understand information (i.e., do's and don'ts, conversation guides) that defines the level of involvement managers are expected to have when supporting their employees with mental and emotional health issues (see Figure 4). This information enables managers to discuss sensitive topics with employees. It is important for managers to explore these latent well-being needs because, currently, only 49% of employees say their manager understands their problems and needs.²

Encourage Employees to Share Well-Being Success Stories to Make the Benefits of Seeking Support Tangible

Even if employees recognize their well-being needs, they may feel like well-being support is not for them, either because of stigma, apathy or both. To combat this mentality, HR leaders should demonstrate the multiple use cases of offerings by empowering employees to share well-being success stories, such as how they used the organization's employee assistance program (EAP). Presumably, employees will have used the resource for different reasons, but all will have benefited. Publicizing the EAP's utility can help employees imagine a future benefit for themselves, thereby motivating action.

Reduce the Time and Effort Needed to Participate in Well-Being Programs

Among all employees who indicated they could have participated in a physical well-being program in 2020 but didn't, 38% said it was because they were too busy.² This data is particularly concerning, as those most in need of well-being support presumably have the least time or energy. HR leaders should take the following measures to reach time- or energy-constrained employees.

Reduce the Burden Employees Face Navigating Well-Being Programs by Adopting Default Enrollment in Certain Offerings

HR leaders should consider enrolling employees by default in certain well-being programs, such as by signing them up for virtual exercise classes or sessions with a financial advisor, with the ability to opt out beforehand. One company that has

experimented with default enrollment is AMD, a U.S.-based semiconductors company. In 2020, the organization established a set of global recharge days so that employees could completely disconnect from work on a regular cadence. HR marked the recharge days as vacation days for employees (in locales where allowable) to make it easier for employees to take time off while still giving them the chance to opt out.

Equip Employees With a Step-by-Step Guide About How to Participate to Make It as Easy as Possible to Get From A to B

HR leaders should go beyond centralizing information about insurance copays or vendors. Such information is helpful, but to more effectively enable participation, HR leaders should adopt an employee-centric perspective. The organization should document the user journey of navigating well-being offerings, point out common sticking points and make it as easy as possible for an employee to follow the correct path.

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Use Nudges to Provide Indirect Suggestions and Positive Reinforcement That Encourage Participation Without Restricting Personal Decision Making

HR leaders should consider using nudges to create and sustain well-being participation. An organization may, for instance, create an ongoing well-being competition — such as a steps challenge — in which employees can see their progress compared to their peers in real time and are rewarded for reaching certain milestones. Such nudges (e.g., the use of indirect suggestions coupled with positive reinforcement) have shown to significantly influence human behavior without limiting individual choice.⁶ When implementing nudges, however, be careful to avoid using employee health data in ways that violate individuals’ privacy or create potential legal liabilities.

Build Well-Being Into the Employee Experience by Integrating Well-Being Activities Into Processes and Everyday Work

Rather than add new well-being activities onto the employee experience, HR leaders should build them into it, such as by incorporating the activities into job responsibilities or goals. For instance, HR leaders can allow employees to formally dedicate time to championing well-being so that it isn’t something extra that they do, but rather, something essential. Employees can also build well-being work into their goals to boost accountability and receive credit for their work. However, just as there are barriers to participation, there are barriers to being a champion. That is why, to attract and retain well-being champions, Genentech identifies key obstacles to volunteering and intervenes with solutions that enable employees to recognize their obstacles, and if necessary, take action (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Impact of Employee Enablement and Commitment Recognition on Attraction and Retention of Volunteers

	Obstacles to Volunteering	Organizational Interventions	Employee Enablement	Commitment Recognition
	“I don’t know how ...”	Training	X	
	“I’m worried about crossing the line.”	Clear scope of responsibilities, escalation paths	X	
	“This doesn’t apply to my ...”	Autonomy to tailor	X	X
	“I don’t get to express my ideas.”	Agency to propose ideas	X	
	“I don’t feel recognized.”	Apparel, unique email signature, etc.		X
	“I’m carrying a bigger burden supporting others.”	Additional well-being support ^a	X	X
	“I don’t have time.”	Incorporation into job responsibilities	X	X

Source: Adapted From Genentech

^a Champions and employees have access to 25 free Employee Assistance Program sessions per year and additional well-being support if needed.

Another way to build well-being into the employee experience is by adopting processes that incorporate well-being behaviors, such as discussing emotional health. Genentech's stigma-reducing communicators are one example of this approach. Another comes from CMI, a food and capital company based in Guatemala, which shared its leader-led, culture action planning efforts with Gartner in 2017. At CMI, HR helps leaders identify behaviors critical to the success of their team and assists them in building a plan to actualize those behaviors over time. This enables leaders to set the tone from the top and proactively craft a healthy culture.

HR leaders must proactively address the challenges preventing participation in well-being programs to realize investments made into well-being programs and drive talent and business outcomes. Offering holistic well-being programs is a great start, but it is not enough. HR leaders must also ensure employees have a complete understanding of well-being offerings, want to seek support and have the time and energy to do so.

¹ 2020 Gartner Well-Being Benchmarking Survey, n = 53 organizations worldwide.

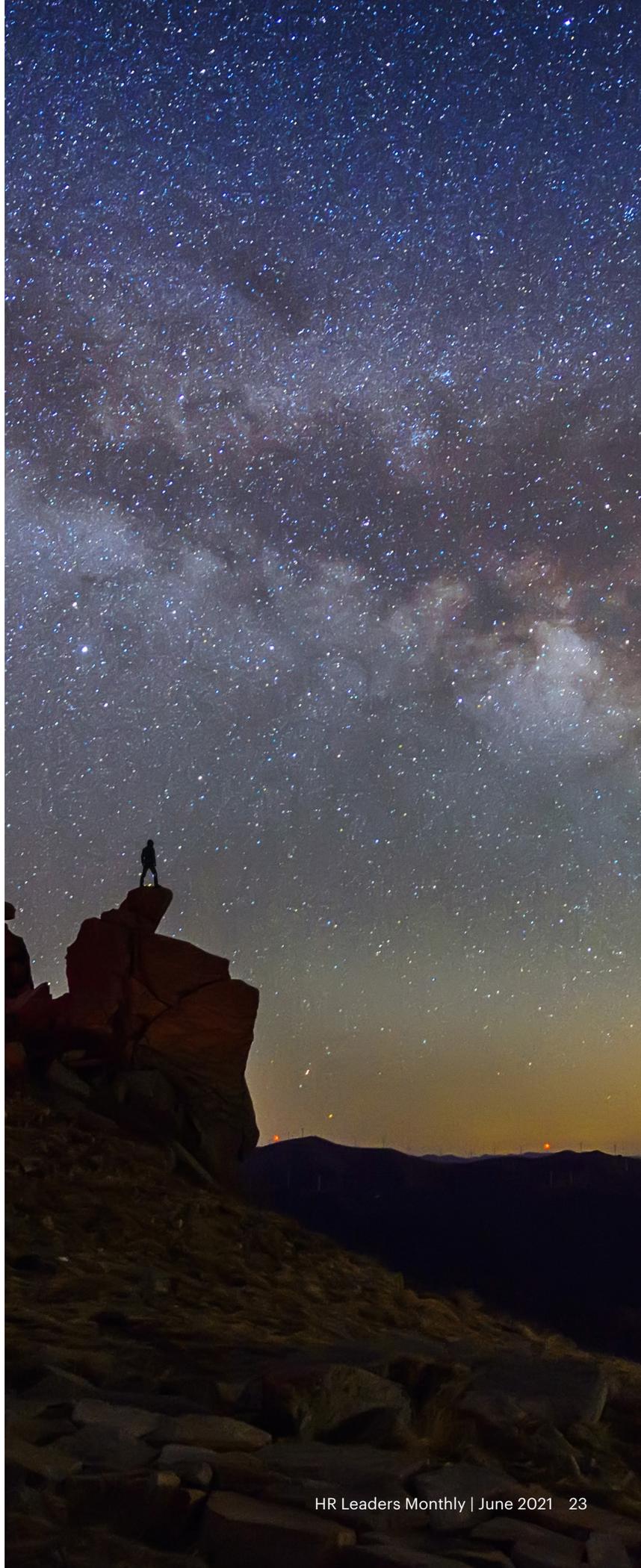
² 2020 Gartner Well-Being Employee Survey, n = 5,055 employees worldwide.

³ 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey, n = 5,000 employees worldwide.

⁴ [Made to Stick: SUCCESs Model](#), Heath Brothers.

⁵ M. Ortendahl, "Using Discounting Biases, Risk Characteristics and Perceived Control Improves Preventive Programs," *International Journal of Biomedical Science*, 2007, 3(2):81-85.

⁶ R. H. Thaler and C. R. Sunstein, "Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness." Yale University Press, 2008.



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Establishing Deeper Connections With Workplace Technology

by Carolina Valencia

HR leaders can help employees establish deeper connections with advanced technological tools by educating themselves (and the organization) on different types of technologies and their capabilities. They can lay the foundation for these efforts by clearly defining the roles of technology and people.

Our new research on the employment value proposition (EVP) reveals that, to attract and retain top talent, organizations must reinvent their EVP by delivering a more human value proposition. This reassessment means investing in a proposition that is focused on supporting people (not just workers), delivering an exceptional life experience (not just work experience) and how the organization makes employees feel (not just the attributes or features it provides). At the same time, automation is increasing the number of employees who work

with robots and artificial intelligence (AI) on a daily basis. As the EVP becomes more human and the workplace more technologically mediated, HR leaders find themselves managing not only connections among employees, their peers and their managers, but also between human employees and the increasingly sophisticated technologies with which they collaborate.

The Human Deal: Deeper Connections

According to our latest research, employees want their organization to care about their whole selves, both inside and outside of work. Eighty-two percent say it is important to them to be seen as a person, not just an employee, and another 68% and 62%, respectively, say it is important to them for their organization to care about their family and their community.¹

When employees have deeper connections (i.e., strong connections with co-workers, managers, their families and their communities), they are 14% more likely to say that their organization understands what they need at work and 17% more likely to feel like their organization understands what they need in life.¹ At organizations where employees experience deeper connections, 28% more employees are highly likely to recommend their organization to others.¹

Organizations recognize this need and are making investments to support employee connections in and outside of work, but employees don't share that view. Looking at comparative results from our HR leader and employee surveys, we see stark differences in the extent to which organizations are believed to be supporting general connections (e.g., with co-workers, managers) and especially deeper connections (e.g., with family, community) (see Figure 1).^{1,2}

An Accelerated Rise of Automation at Work

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many organizations to lay off and/or reduce the number of work hours for some of their employees. Some of these jobs and work hours will return, others will not. In a working paper published last June, a group of economists estimated that 32% to 42% of pandemic-related layoffs in the U.S. would be permanent.³ In response to the reduced staff capacity, many organizations identified jobs and tasks that could be replaced by technology.

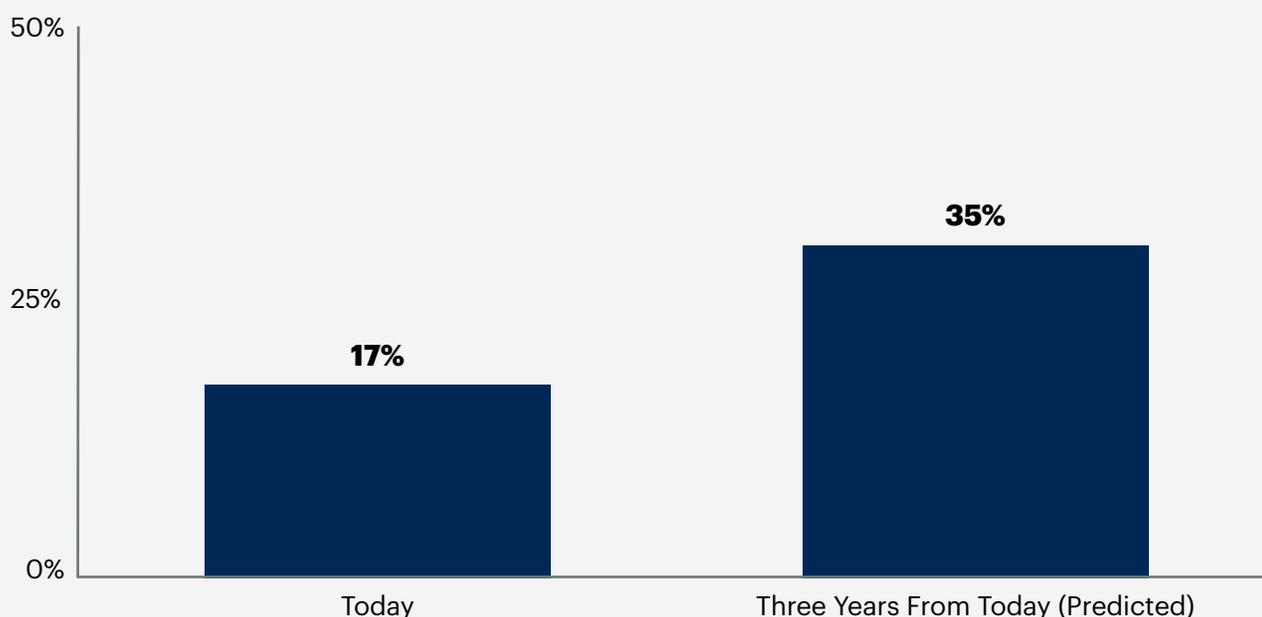
The trend of replacing humans with “bots” is certainly not new, but the pandemic accelerated it. One study estimates that approximately 400,000 jobs in U.S. factories have been lost to automation.⁴

In 2019, before the pandemic, CEOs predicted that in three years, about 30% of their organizations' tasks would be automated (see Figure 1).⁵ As organizations continue to identify cost-cutting measures due to the current environment, this number is likely to increase in the next few years.

How Employees Feel About Technology

As companies continue to automate tasks and jobs, employees' confidence in the tools assigned these tasks has yet to catch up. When employees were asked about which everyday personal activities they will trust machines to do, the most telling response revealed that human beings struggle to trust machines.

Figure 1. CEOs' Prediction of the Percentage of Tasks That Will Be Conducted by AI



n = 175 heads of HR, 106 CEOs

Source: 2019 Gartner CEO Pulse on the Next Generation Workforce

Only 57% of employees trust automated household appliances, such as the Roomba, to vacuum, which currently stands as the most trusted of all listed activities (see Figure 2).⁶

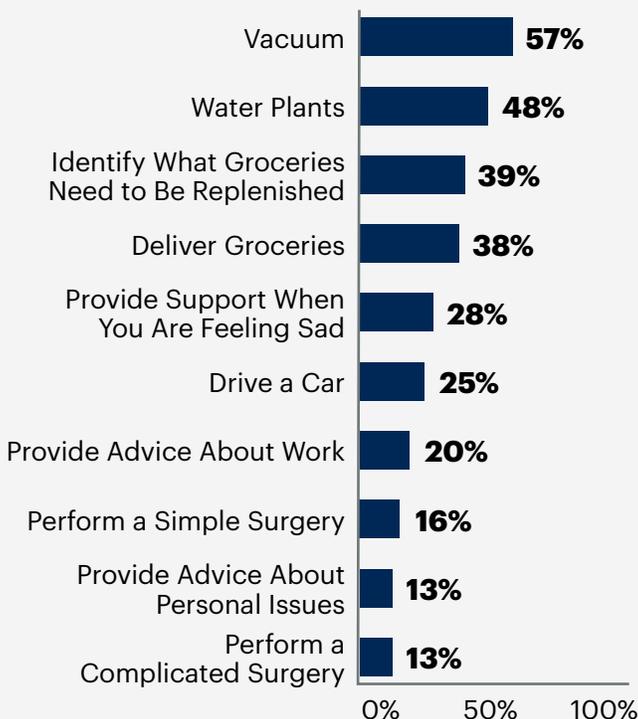
Trust is even lower when looking at work-related activities. Sending communications (trusted by 50%), scheduling work meetings or calls (48%) and making simple decisions (39%) are the work-related activities employees trust machines to do the most. Meanwhile, only 18% of employees trust machines to provide support to employees with complaints, and 11% trust them to make complex or sensitive decisions (see Figure 3).⁶

Perhaps even more concerning is the fact that even before organizations were on a focused path toward cost optimization, one out of every five employees believed their organization would fire them once it acquired technology that could do their jobs.⁷

Delivering a Human Deal That Builds Deeper Connections With Technology

Given the expanding adoption and advancement of AI-related technologies, the connections employees have with these technologies will become similar in importance to the connections employees have with their co-workers, managers, families and communities. As organizations work on reinventing the EVP by making employees feel valued through the connections they help foster, HR leaders must figure out how to help employees form strong connections with AI. It is important to strengthen these connections so that rather than competing with collaborative technology, employees partner with it to maximize their potential and performance.

Figure 2. Everyday Activities Employees Trust a Machine to Do
Percentage of Employees



n = 5,000 employees worldwide

Source: 2020 Gartner Job Leveling Employee Survey

Figure 3. Work-Related Activities Employees Trust a Machine To Do
Percentage of Employees



n = 5,000 employees worldwide

Source: 2020 Gartner Job Leveling Employee Survey

While this is still a new area for HR leaders, our research details some early steps leadership can take (beyond upskilling the workforce) to help employees build deeper connections with technology.

Self-Educate (and Educate Others) on the Different Types of Tools and Their Capabilities

There is a multiplicity of emerging technologies capable of various functions and tasks. The first step toward building a deeper connection with them is to understand what they are, what they can do and how can people leverage them to their advantage. One potential option is to start this education process with technologies that help employees in their personal lives. This approach can demonstrate the organization's support for the employee as a whole person while taking advantage of the fact that employees appear to trust these machines more than they trust machines with work-related activities.

Use the Technologies Themselves to Help Employees Build Deeper Connections

There are at least three ways this can happen. Organizations can:

- Help employees see how machines can reduce the time they spend on menial tasks. This clarification of work gives employees additional time to spend with their families, support their communities, build stronger relationships with their co-workers or take care of more interesting and higher-priority tasks.

- Identify which tools can actually help employees better connect with each other and how.
- Make the interaction between employees and technology more human-like. For example, when AI is used for call scheduling, organizations can consider incorporating an interactive dialogue between the employee and the AI. It can be as simple as having the AI say, "Thanks for submitting your request, Pat. I have now emailed and scheduled all of the people on your list."

Clearly Define the Role of Technology and the Role of People

For instance, while a robot or AI might be responsible for performing a particular automated task, people will be in charge of managing the tasks that will be automated. As part of this effort, to guarantee employees are comfortable collaborating with technology, organizations will need to establish the consequences that technology and people will have to deal with when these tools don't perform as expected.

¹2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey (n = 5,000 employees worldwide)

²2021 Gartner EVP Benchmarking Survey (n = 77 HR leaders)

³COVID-19 Is Also a Reallocation Shock, Becker Friedman Institute for Economy at The University of Chicago.

⁴D. Acemoglu and P. Restrepo, "Robots and Jobs: Evidence from U.S. Labor Markets," *Journal of Political Economy*, 2020, 128(6).

⁵2019 Gartner CEO 20 Pulse on the Next Generation Workforce (n = 106 CEOs)

⁶2020 Gartner Job Leveling Employee Survey (n = 5,000 employees worldwide)

⁷2019 Gartner Employee Experience Panel Survey (n = 5,219 employees)

The Human Deal Is Everyone's Deal

by Dion Love

Building a more human employer-employee relationship and employment deal requires a coordinated effort, and every HR subfunction has a role to play. HR leaders must get the entire function involved to successfully implement this transformation.

The human deal extends beyond the traditional employment value proposition (EVP) to create

a new, more human relationship between the organization and the people who work for it. It's founded on a not-so-radical set of ideas: that employees are people; that they care not just about their work, but their life as a whole; and that they're inspired not just by the features of their EVP, but how those features make them feel. This new deal rests on a basic belief that the boundaries placed around employees, work and the EVP no longer hold true in today's environment. The holistic and unbounded nature of the human deal defines not just what it is, but how we create and maintain it. To achieve the promise

of the human deal, HR leaders must collaborate throughout the HR function to reach employees at the moments that matter throughout their journeys (see Figure 1).

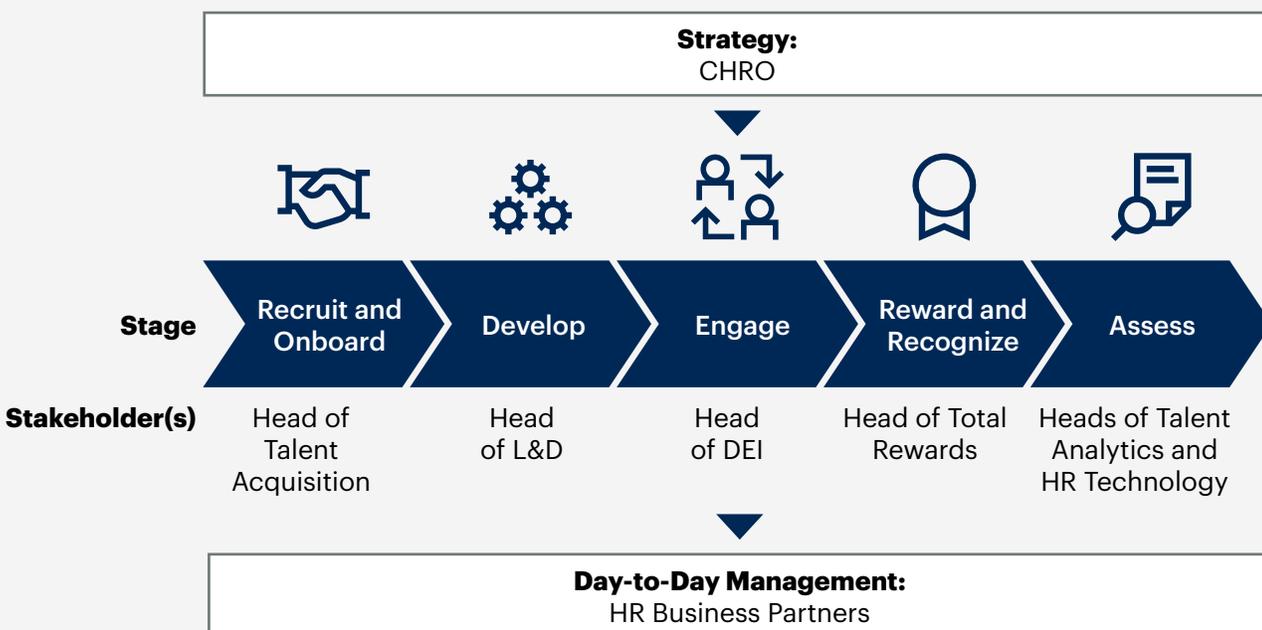
Strategy: CHRO

To make the transition from the traditional EVP to the human deal a reality, the CHRO must lead an integrated approach to provide clarity of vision and establish a firmwide commitment. The CHRO is the chief advocate of the human deal, helping business leaders and the broader organization understand that a more human deal is less about *what* you get for working at an organization and more about *how* it feels working there. The CHRO creates a vision and strategy for what that looks like across key moments that matter in the employee life cycle, garners commitment and required investment from the organization, and defines and enables the partnership among all HR leaders in advancing the human deal.

Recruiting and Onboarding: Head of Talent Acquisition

When a candidate first engages with an organization that delivers on the human deal, the experience is less about the organization and more about the candidate. The head of talent acquisition leads branding and candidate engagement efforts that focus less on what the candidates receive (and how those features compare favorably to what's offered at other organizations) and more specifically on what it's like to work there and what candidates' personal experience of the role and career will be like. The head of talent acquisition leads a team of recruiters that understands candidate preferences for specific aspects of the human deal and explains what that looks like in the candidates' personal experience. This changes the way organizations design everything, from their job descriptions to their largest employment branding campaigns. The head of talent acquisition leverages labor market expertise to better understand what emotions are informing candidates' decisions to join the organization.

Figure 1. Stakeholders Involved in the Human Deal Across the Employee Life Cycle



Source: Gartner

Development: Head of Learning and Development (L&D)

A deal is just a promise if it doesn't deliver, and it's here that the work of L&D is most critical. The head of L&D plays a critical role in bringing the human deal to life through investments that develop the employee for their professional life and align with their personal interests and motivations. This requires L&D leaders to rethink the way they develop their managers to ensure coaching and development is person-first, not business-first. In addition, L&D leaders should align development strategies to employees' interests and career goals and identify opportunities for development that employees can lead for each other.

HR leaders must center their actions and decisions around equity and inclusion.

Engagement: Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and Head of Employee Experience

In all efforts to define and advance a more human deal, HR leaders must center their actions and decisions around equity and inclusion. As such, the head of DEI plays a pivotal role in making sure the human deal that leadership creates is inclusive. The human deal must be inclusive for the current workforce as well as for the workforce the organization wants to see in the future, in terms of its composition as well as its engagement. The head of DEI works with all stakeholders and defines metrics to measure the extent to which investments are creating a more human and more equitable deal. DEI has a special role to play in building deeper connections, helping ensure employees are comfortable and confident in bringing their full selves to work, and helping define and enable shared purpose.

Rewards and Recognition: Head of Total Rewards (TR)

A true human deal — one that is fundamentally different from a traditional, transactional EVP — is more than a new talk track. It's more than substituting feelings for features. Herein lies the role of the head of TR. The TR leader's role lies at the intersection of the labor market and the workforce, understanding and defining preferences for attributes within the human deal that will inspire candidates and employees alike. This role is no longer about benchmarking compensation packages but truly understanding employees' comprehensive set of needs as people, not just as workers. TR also takes a lead in delivering on holistic well-being, ensuring employees have access to complete well-being support and how and where to use it.

Assessment: Head of Talent Analytics and Head of Technology

Measuring the success of the human deal will involve understanding a range of metrics, and it's here that the role of talent analytics is important. The head of talent analytics leads the effort to apply analytics toward understanding employee preferences for the human deal at the outset of its creation and also gathers and compiles feedback to optimize the offerings over time. From analyzing the attraction and performance dividend gained from radical flexibility to sizing the impact of new L&D investments on career pathing, the work of analytics will be pivotal in ensuring the ongoing success of the human deal.

As many elements of the human deal require technology to enable them to realize their full impact, HR technology has both delivery and management roles to play. The head of HR technology coordinates technology initiatives and the product rollout of the human deal. Additionally, the HR technology team designs programs to gauge the uptake and health of initiatives, from L&D programs to flexible working arrangements and new social responsibility initiatives.

Day to Day: Head of Talent Management and HR Business Professionals (HRBPs)

Successful coordination must be grounded in a complete view of the human deal and its execution. Talent management, in collaboration with HRBPs, plays a key role in oversight and management. The head of talent management aligns organizational values and human deal offerings and ensures that the organization, throughout all of HR's subfunctions, embeds human-deal principles in all employee experience touchpoints. The head of talent management is also a critical provider of feedback to the CHRO on the ongoing effectiveness of the human deal and the opportunities to create an ever more human experience at the organization.

The human deal is a holistic deal. Organizations that advance a human deal focus not just on the worker, but on the whole person; not just

on experience at work, but on experience in life; not just on features to provide, but on feelings to inspire. In doing so, organizations understand that the boundaries that have delineated worker from person, work from life, rational from emotional are no longer sustainable. Likewise, creating a human deal requires a holistic approach throughout the HR function, delivering on specific elements of the deal and helping evaluate and verify its efficacy. HR leaders should ask themselves these questions:

- What does it feel like to work here?
- How can I help my organization become a better place to work?
- How can my work inspire emotions in employees that lead to better decisions about where they work, how they perform and how long they stay?

The holistic nature of the human deal defines not just what it is, but how we must create it. The human deal is everyone's deal.





People-First Career Coaching: An Interview With S&P Global's Coaching Team

by Delphine Uriburu-Wilder

CHROs know traditional career coaching often struggles to bridge the gap between employees' ambitions and the organization's needs. S&P Global's coaching team discusses its people-first model, in which professional coaches help employees identify opportunities that suit their individual goals.

S&P Global Brett Badders, Abhijit Bhattacharya and Sandra Moorcraft lead the Global Career Coaching initiative at S&P Global. The initiative offers coaching to all colleagues and is designed to enhance their experience, accelerate their professional development, help them navigate their career progression, and increase their opportunities for internal mobility. In less than a year, over 1,200 employees have engaged with the three career coaches through over 2,000 coaching sessions and nearly 1,400 hours invested. Positioned as neutral, independent, division-agnostic and confidential and one-to-one, the career coaches are also finalizing credentials through Columbia University, Ashridge University and the International Coaching Federation.



What was the impetus for developing the career coaching program at S&P Global?

Dimitra Manis, our chief people officer, has championed a people-first focus and philosophy across S&P Global, making an exceptional people experience a top priority in everything we do. This resulted in important changes to our culture and people initiatives. As part of this ongoing transformation, our team met with people across the organization and assessed data to inform our approach. We kept hearing feedback along the lines of, “These changes to our culture and benefits are fantastic, and we want to stay with the organization. Can we do anything more as it relates to careers and personal growth?”

Until this point, we had a traditional approach to careers and coaching — coaching was often reserved for executives or high-potential talent. We also recognized the opportunity to provide additional mentorship support to our diverse leaders. The messaging to the rest of our people was that they owned their career, should get guidance from their manager and apply to open jobs that were of interest. We saw an opportunity to test something new that would have a high impact and be transformational in unlocking potential and career engagement — and that is how the people-first career coaching model came about.



Tell us a little bit more about the career coaching program itself. How is it different from traditional coaching experiences?

As we designed this program, there were a few central pieces we wanted to make sure to get right. Guided by our people-first philosophy, we believe that our people want to do well and should have equitable access to honest and purposeful coaching about their careers and customized support to help see the possibilities. So, we made career coaching available to everyone in the organization. We also thought it was important that these conversations be completely confidential and objective. That is a key difference from traditional coaching experiences.

Typically, people will have career conversations with their managers, but they are hesitant to share their true personal aspirations if the

aspirations don't align with their current position. They fear sharing that they are interested in another team or division will make their managers or people partners believe they aren't committed to the team. As coaches, on the other hand, we are neutral. We believe our job is to help people figure out their personal and professional aspirations across businesses and geographies and see how we can help connect them with those opportunities.



How does the organization's “people-first” philosophy impact the career coaching work?

This philosophy is key to the success of this approach. Our people come to and confide in us because our primary responsibility is to help them explore career paths across the company. We aren't driven by an organizational agenda for career coaching; it is about unlocking what is best for each person. We focus on uncovering individuals' personal and professional aspirations in life, outside of the constraints of their current role or even the business context.



What happens if employees' aspirations don't align with organizational opportunities?

Sometimes, people will come to us and say:

- “I've tried having career progression discussions with my manager.”
- “I applied internally for jobs and didn't get them.”
- “I feel like I've hit my ceiling here.”

In those conversations, we start by asking them if they have considered all the options internally. But it all comes back to being people-first. If leaving is best for the individual, then that's the outcome we want and we will help them get it. We will provide counsel as they update their résumé, practice interviewing and so on.

That said, fewer than 5% of individuals end up choosing to leave the organization. And simply by offering to have these conversations and support the exploration of external opportunities, we have seen people's resolve to stay at S&P Global strengthen. One coachee said, “I can't believe you are helping me consider outside options. No other company would do that. How could I leave this culture?”



How do you secure leadership and manager buy-in to career coaching?

In terms of gaining buy-in, our team and senior leadership worked incredibly hard to drive awareness and educate all people, managers and people partners on how career coaching worked and what it was intended to do. Support was truly top-down; our president and CEO, Doug Peterson, took time to share the vision and the impact we wanted to have with our people. This inclusive and positive partnership helped us gain and sustain momentum.

Additionally, as part of our broader cultural shift, we emphasized a one-company approach that encourages thinking about the needs of the larger organization, beyond an individual function or division. With this mindset shift, our managers were more onboard with coaches helping their direct reports explore opportunities within the broader organization. In fact, our managers really appreciated the additional resource to help them empower all people's success in the organization. That said, it's important to note that manager approval/permission is not required to meet with a career coach, and we never go back to managers on these discussions. We leave it to the discretion of the individual colleague.



How do you work with HR in your career coaching model?

When we were just beginning, we knew we wanted our colleagues across the people team to see the potential partnership we could have and the way our work would be complementary. To that end, we invited the entire people team to experience one-on-one career coaching sessions with us first. That experience really unlocked the partnership; they became advocates of career coaching from the start and helped our people connect with us. For example, members of the talent acquisition team will sometimes come to us and say, "I have this role to fill. Do you have any coachees in mind who may be a good fit?" We are also intentional about feeding back overall themes and trends from our discussions to inform our colleagues in their strategic people planning and employee engagement efforts.



Do you have any plans to update or expand the program in the future?

Absolutely! Given the success of the first 18 months of career coaching, it continues to be

an organizational people priority, especially given our pending merger with IHS Markit and continued focus on diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. In addition, while powering our people through these one-on-one conversations will always be our primary focus, we are planning for a next iteration, which will include events at scale (i.e., sharing lessons learned and critical themes with the broader organization), targeted workshops on emerging topics, implementation of new coaching technologies and alignment with our evolving performance management process.



What advice would you give to an organization trying to do something similar?

Don't underestimate the power of extending one-to-one professional coaching to all of your people. It's such a powerful and transformational offering that really connects an individual's personal and professional aspirations to the organization. We've found that you don't need to build out a huge infrastructure to support this, and the engagement outcomes are significant. It might feel daunting to do this at scale, but through a people-first approach, an effective communication plan, hiring the right coaches and ensuring confidentiality throughout, people will embrace and recommend the offering. We recognize that not all organizations can hire full-time career coaches. Another way to get started is by finding individuals in the organization with the characteristics of high-quality career coaches who are interested in mentorship or open to taking this on as part of their own personal growth journey.



How does your people-first career coaching relate to Gartner's human deal framework?

As we think about the human deal, one of the key components is personal growth and inspiring in employees a feeling of being valued. After 18 months, our people shared that one of the biggest benefits of the career coaching approach is that it makes them feel valued and seen at the company. They tell us how grateful they are that S&P Global is committed to helping them figure out what they want in their lives and getting them to an outcome that best serves that. The human deal is about caring for the whole person and driving an emotional response that people perceive as value they gain from employment in the organization. This people-first career coaching approach does just that.



Quant Corner Flexibility Is Not Just a White-Collar Benefit

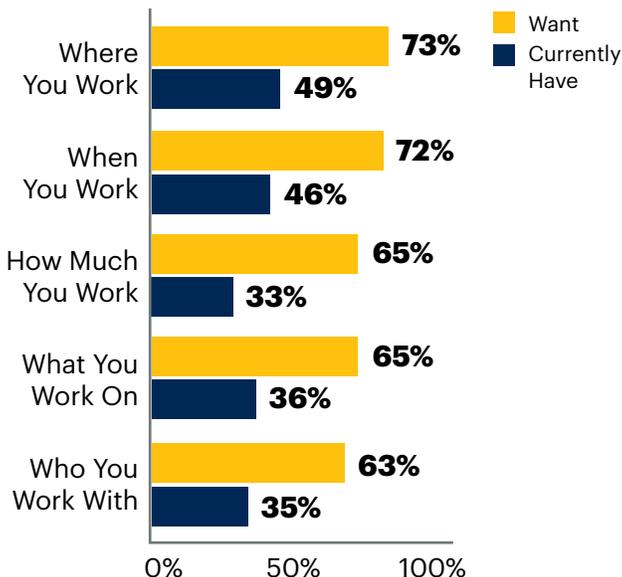
by Nikhil Chauhan

In light of the changes to the work environment resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, many HR leaders recognize that offering increased flexibility will be necessary to keep employees engaged even after they return to the workplace. However, flexibility is often considered a feature exclusive to white-collar office workers. In our 2021 EVP Employee Survey, we studied flexibility among both white-collar and non-white-collar employees (including those employed in manufacturing, operations, distribution and logistics, retail and customer service). Employees were asked what kinds of flexibility their

organization offered them as well as what kinds of flexibility were important to them.

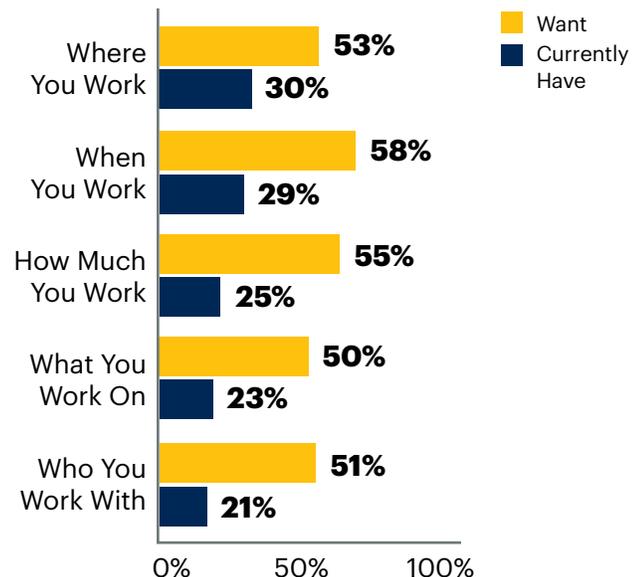
Our research finds that both white-collar and non-white-collar employees want more flexibility than they currently have, at similar proportions. While white-collar employees report both having and wanting more flexibility than non-white collar employees, at least half of non-white-collar employees said flexibility was important to them. Moreover, we find that it is not just one type of flexibility that matters. Employees want flexibility in all aspects of work, so HR leaders need to consider what flexibility might look like for their non-white-collar employees.

Flexibility Options White-Collar Employees Consider Important vs. Flexibility Options the Organization Offers
Percentage of Employees Who Want vs. Have Flexibility



n = 3,352 white-collar employees worldwide
Source: 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey

Flexibility Options Non-White-Collar Employees Consider Important vs. Flexibility Options the Organization Offers
Percentage of Employees Who Want vs. Have Flexibility



n = 1,155 non-white-collar employees worldwide
Source: 2021 Gartner EVP Employee Survey