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making improvement of the employee experience a top priority has surged, according to a new survey by Willis Towers Watson, a leading global advisory, broking and solutions ...

Isaac M. O'Bannon • Jul. 01, 2021



As companies transition to new ways of work, the number of U.S. organizations making improvement of the employee experience a top priority has surged, according to a new survey by Willis Towers Watson, a leading global advisory, broking and solutions company. However, while employers recognize adapting to the new reality will take time and require a hybrid work model, many are not ready to meet the challenges.

The 2021 Employee Experience Survey found more than nine in 10 employers (94%)

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pandemic-related policies and programs. The rest indicate they will be ready to do so during the second half of this year (59%) or in 2022 or beyond (28%). Additionally, while employers expect the proportion of their employees working primarily remotely will drop from 53% now to 20% in three years, they expect one in four workers (25%) will be working in a mix between onsite and remotely in three years, triple the current number (8%).

“Whether due to employer actions such as pay reductions and layoffs or because of virtual work and personal hardships for some workers, the pandemic exposed shortfalls in the employee experience at many organizations,” said Andy Walker, managing director, Willis Towers Watson. “Enhancing the employee experience has therefore become an imperative for employers, and it’s one that will take time and present challenges many are not currently prepared to meet.”

Indeed, nearly eight in 10 employers (78%) recognize that the new realities of the labor markets will require a hybrid model for many roles; however, many employers aren’t ready to realize that ambition. Only 52% of respondents are flexible about where or when work gets done; half (49%) are in the process of reimagining careers in response to changes in the way work is accomplished, and only 31% are segmenting Total Rewards to account for a different workforce profile. Overall, only 16% are doing all three of these.

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of organizations intend to focus on digitalization to transform the employee experience fundamentally over the next three years. When asked to identify the areas needed to improve the employee experience, respondents said they are looking to improve their offering or change aspects of their programs to address the needs in inclusion and diversity (82%), manager training (61%), learning and development (59%), and leadership competencies (54%). Further, over three-

fifths of employers (63%) identified flexible work arrangement as a priority to boost

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workforce,” said Suzanne McAndrew, global head of Talent Advisory, Data and Software, Willis Towers Watson.

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