



# HRO TODAY

## Research Roundup

Our recent research studies uncover how the pandemic and other current events are shaping workforce trends.

By Larry Basnait

### **REPORT: Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Sourcing: Companies Struggle with Contingent Workforce D&I Focus**

As racial unrest swept the United States in 2020, more and more organizations announced initiatives aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion (D&I) within their corporate walls. Microsoft aims to double the number of Black employees in senior and leadership positions by 2025. Wells Fargo also plans to factor diversity goals into year-end pay packages and looks to double the number of Black leaders at the bank within five years. Likewise, Adidas claims it will fill a minimum of 30% of positions with Black or Latino candidates.

Our recent research report highlights new market-driven insight around diversity in the workplace, including answers to questions like: How are organizations progressing? Where are they focused? How can they get help to become an industry leader in D&I?

D&I is an organizational priority. The vast majority (90%) of organizations have made D&I a priority within their workforce. Almost two-thirds (65%) have begun implementing or are in the advanced

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stages of implementing D&I plans. An additional 7% are much further along and already seeing positive results from D&I initiatives.

The component of D&I where most organizations (83%) are investing is workplace and culture, defined as celebrations and learning of different cultures in the workplace. Workforce investment, which includes talent acquisition, mobility, and equity in promotions, is the second largest investment by over three-quarters (77%) of respondents. Following that, social responsibility (e.g., community and charity work) was selected by over one-half (54%) of respondents.

While workforce diversity is often factored into the selection of permanent employees (64%), it is only considered in the selection of temporary workers 44% of the time. Other sources, such as independent contractors and service providers

performing services under a Statement of Work, include workforce diversity as a selection factor much less often.

Specific diversity goals are common for full-time employees (71%), but very few have goals (16%) for their contingent workforce. All organizations surveyed have transitioned contingent labor to permanent status. More specifically, nearly one-quarter (22%) have transitioned between 25% and 49% of their contingent labor to permanent status, while another 11% transitioned between 10% and 24%. These findings show that contingent labor is a key feeder of talent. Diversity should be considered to help drive employee representation and business performance.

Yet organizations struggle with establishing benchmarks. Only 38% of respondents felt their organization understands how it compares in workforce diversity against peers and competitors, while just 18% said they feel like their organization is leading the industry in workforce diversity.

**This report was sponsored by Workforce Logic.**

[Read more: https://www.hrotoday.com/market-intelligence/research/diversity-inclusion-workforce-sourcing-8-key-takeaways-for-improving-di/](https://www.hrotoday.com/market-intelligence/research/diversity-inclusion-workforce-sourcing-8-key-takeaways-for-improving-di/)

## **REPORT: HR's Pandemic Response Defines Employer Brand**

More and more organizations are considering the impact of candidate experience and employer brand practices as it relates to the success of their talent acquisition strategies. Some common elements of candidate experience include consistent communication from preapplication to onboarding, setting expectations, and asking for feedback and providing feedback often.

According to a recent *HRO Today* research study, a company's own assessment of their candidate experience often acknowledges challenges, but overall satisfaction rates have improved since 2020. Nearly three-quarters (71%) felt they had a good or excellent

candidate experience, up from 65% in 2020. This perception may be a result of the pandemic pushing companies to refocus their employer branding efforts. In 2021, 41% of respondents planned to use employee recognition programs to improve their employer brand.

The preponderance of remote work changed the work landscape, and the need to address some of the challenges posed by remote work, such as isolation, less connection with the employer, and a lack of acknowledgment, became paramount. To improve employer brand, 37% of respondents increased social media usage, the second highest percentage of those surveyed. But in the last two years, the uptake in social media usage has limited its overall effectiveness in getting a company's employer brand message to its target audience.

The top three candidate experience challenges employers faced were providing a timely interview process, not having a formal way of capturing candidate feedback, and improving onboarding practices.

The timeliness of the interview process is crucial in providing a good candidate experience and is an ongoing challenge for recruiters. In 2020, a red-hot job market halted nearly overnight, and the lull was followed by many companies being unable to



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hire enough workers while struggling with candidate remote work demands. Candidate perception of an inefficient interview process not only conveys a poor company image but increases the likelihood of them accepting another offer.

Employee value proposition (EVP) priorities cover a range of goals. The most widely-held priority of an EVP is reinforcing company values, as indicated by over two-thirds (68%) of respondents. The next most common priority is distinguishing the company as a great place to work, according to 57% of respondents. Seven other areas are indicated as part of EVP goals by at least 30% of HR executives, suggesting a broad spectrum of objectives.

Companies will continue to invest more in their employer brands, though the percentage of respondents increasing the investment may be leveling off. Nearly one-half (47%) anticipate more of an investment in their employer brands, down from 74% in 2020.

An organization's COVID-19 response is a litmus test for employer brand, and will have a long-term effect on their culture, reputation as a great place to work, and ability to attract, recruit, and retain talent. Recruiters remain adamant about the importance of their employer brand as they move into post-pandemic mode. Over three-quarters (77%) of recruiters felt their employer brand would become more important in the long run. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of respondents adjusted their employer brand in response to the pandemic, and the bulk of those showcased what the company did to protect their workforce.

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) remains a key initiative after the racial unrest that hit a tipping point in 2020 and plays a more prominent role in employer branding. For the vast majority (74%), their employer branding strategy will change to include D&I as a critical component of the message. Failure to address it will reflect negatively on the current workforce and recruiting. D&I commitment will become a must-have in employer branding.

**This report was sponsored by PeopleScout.**

[Read more: https://www.hrotoday.com/market-intelligence/research/hrs-2021-response-defines-employer-brand/](https://www.hrotoday.com/market-intelligence/research/hrs-2021-response-defines-employer-brand/)

## **REPORT: Recruiting in the Dark: The Outcomes and Effectiveness of Resume Redaction in Recruiting**

How prevalent is the use of resume redaction among corporations? A recent HRO Today study was performed to estimate the amount companies use the practice, to identify their goals for employing the practice, and to examine the outcomes from its usage. The report also examined the reaction to the concept of resume redaction and preferences for how it is used among those candidates who have experienced it. Recruiter views and the views of job seekers surrounding resume redaction was also analyzed.

Resume redaction is a method companies are experimenting with to reduce bias and build a diverse workforce. Also known as blind recruitment, resume redaction is the process of removing identification details from a candidate's resume and

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application.

Types of hidden information can include name, home address, veteran status, or affinity group memberships, among other fields. The objective is to help recruiters evaluate people based on their skills and experience rather than factors that can lead to decisions that are unconsciously or consciously biased.

While the intention of this practice is laudable, does it meet the goals of improving workforce diversity and reducing bias? How is it being done and how often?

Currently, there is limited implementation of resume redaction. Despite increased energy around diversity initiatives, few companies are utilizing it. In the study, 10.7% of companies employed the practice, though 81.6% were familiar with it. Among the group currently using it, many only use it in certain instances, like when recruiting for more junior-level jobs where job history and experience are less impactful on selection. Findings from job seekers support the contention of recruiters that the implementation of resume redaction is limited. Only 13.9% indicated they have had information hidden.

Despite limited application, support for the concept is high among both job seekers and recruiters. Among candidates, 80.7% indicated a favorable response to the concept of resume redaction.

Recruiters have a set of tightly defined goals for resume redaction. They unanimously agreed that one goal is to eliminate the possibility of bias in the recruitment process. Interestingly, less than one-half (45.5%) cited diversity as a goal. While a more diverse workforce may be the intention, eliminating bias does not necessarily lead to a more diverse workforce.

About three-quarters (72.7%) of respondents indicated no change in their diversity goals after implementing blind hiring, with nearly offsetting amounts feeling achieving the goals has been easier versus harder.

Job seekers' concern over limiting accomplishments is high. Some believe blind recruitment may inhibit their ability to distinguish themselves. Despite a

very positive reaction to the concept, respondents were divided about the potential for valuable information being masked, with 40.7% feeling the practice could inhibit their job search, and 38.2% feeling it would not.

Recruiters were asked how they implement resume redaction, and 80% said they hide fields manually. This is often done by simply crossing out certain information with a dark marker or going through a resume and blocking out select fields of text within a document application. This technique could unconsciously support recruiter bias in the process, partially negating the point of the endeavor.

**This report was sponsored by Sevenstep.**

[Read more: https://www.hrotoday.com/market-intelligence/research/recruiting-in-the-dark/](https://www.hrotoday.com/market-intelligence/research/recruiting-in-the-dark/)

## **REPORT: You Can't Go Home Again: The Workforce Trends HR Needs to Address**

Workforce planning has seen many shifts in the last two years, and a new *HRO Today* report examines the anticipated changes in hiring, the differences in remote versus onsite work for new hires, and how the mix of contingent labor and permanent employees will evolve. Additionally, the report's findings explore the challenges faced with blue-collar recruitment since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Economic recovery has been unlike anything in recent history. The COVID-19 outbreak brought a red-hot economy to its knees almost overnight. How organizations manage the post-pandemic business environment will define not only their employer brands with their customers, but with their potential employees as well. Rehabilitation has not been steady, and workforce planning will continue to be more challenging in the future.

As offices struggle to reopen, companies will have to evaluate what workforce mix makes the most



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sense. Will they utilize permanent employees, contract workers, and independent contractors? Will their workplace be based in the office, remotely, or involve a hybrid mix of the two?

Continued government stimulus programs have decreased the immediate need to work for some. For nearly one-half of survey respondents (49.3%), recruiting for blue-collar positions is anticipated to be more difficult, while more than one in five (21.7%) expect it to be much more difficult. Among those indicating it would be more difficult, over three-quarters (75.7%) felt that government stimulus programs have decreased the immediate need to work. Two-thirds (67.6%) indicated more job openings from which candidates can choose, while nearly one-half (45.9%) cited childcare issues as a challenge. But recruiters should be aware that excess savings, particularly among many working and middle-class households, could soon be exhausted. Multiple

pandemic-spurred federal aid programs expired in September 2021, including the federal supplement to unemployment benefits.

Now, organizations are planning to increase the size of their workforce. Nearly three-quarters (71.4%) said they anticipate an increase in hiring in the next 12 months compared to the prior 12 months, which was 13 times less (5.5%). There will be more new hires working remotely, with over two-thirds (71.0%) anticipating more employees to be working from home.

There will be a moderate shift toward more permanent employees versus contingent labor. While most respondents (55.6%) indicate there will be no change in the permanent to contingent labor mix within their organizations in the next 12 months, over one-third (34.5%) felt there would be more hires compared to only about 10% leaning toward a greater utilization of contingent labor.

Employers also expect a moderate increase in total compensation for employees, but very little increase for contingent labor. The majority of respondents (82.7%) expect an increase in total compensation for permanent employees in the next 12 months, an average increase of 4%. For contingent labor, there is also an overall net increase in compensation, though it will likely be about one-half of what is anticipated for permanent employees.

The need for more resources will be pervasive. The four additional resources recruiters will need in order to manage the uptick in hiring are employee engagement, talent development, compensation review and changes, and permanent employee recruiting.

**This report was sponsored by Broadleaf Results.**

**Read more:** <https://www.hrotoday.com/market-intelligence/research/you-cant-go-home-again-the-workforce-trends-hr-needs-to-address-in-the-coming-year/>