

HOT SHEET

Volume 8, Issue 12
December 20, 2021

HR Trends:

- Salary increase budget projections increased from 3% to 3.9% in 2022 due to wage rate increases and inflation; the highest increase since 2008.
- In an attempt to prevent a COVID spike during the holidays and the cold season, New York City has mandated that all employers require COVID vaccinations.
- The unemployment rate fell to 4.2% in November and unemployment claims have fallen to the same level they were before the spike at the beginning of the pandemic.
- 47% of HR professionals say that the top challenge they face is employee retention; the second highest at 35% is recruitment.
- More companies are focusing their staffing efforts on re-skilling and up-skilling their current staff; this may also be a path to promoting employee satisfaction and possibly retention.
- According to data gathering by Select Hub, 60% of employees want to work remotely full-time after the pandemic.
- To adapt to the 'new normal' in the work world, employers must create digital strategies that address people-centric issues as well as technology needs.



Full-Circle HR

Moving Toward a 4-Day Workweek

In the 1930s when automation began to take off, John Maynard Keynes predicted that the workweek would grow much shorter. It has since been a topic for many world leaders. While work-life balance has always been a struggle, an increased concern for workers' rights, paired with automation have finally begun a global trend, particularly in Europe, toward a shorter workweek. Additionally, in this country the advent of remote work for many due to the pandemic and elimination of 'non-essential' aspects of some jobs may have shortened the need for long work hours. In light of what is being called 'the great resignation,' employers may be turning to creative ways to enhance morale and employee retention. One reason em-

ployees are giving for reassessing their work lives is a resetting of priorities and some of that is about work-life balance. Here are some pros and cons that can help employers consider the 4-day workweek (or other reduced schedule) for their staff. Pros include: 1. Studies have shown that productivity increases during the work hours to compensate for the lost day. Another study has shown that productivity peaks at 25-30 hours a week for people over 40.* 2. It makes it easier for caregivers, including working parents, to balance their responsibilities and finances associated with this.** 3. It means less time spent in commuting and there is less impact on the environment. 4. With less stress and better work-life balance, employees become happier,



more engaged, and hopefully more motivated and creative. 5. With the focus on efficiency, the team is more focused on goals and less likely to spend time on disputes or other non-essentials; it has been shown to improve the cooperative spirit overall. 6. It can lower unemployment rates. 7. If it is possible in your workplace, your employees being out of the office one day of the week can reduce overhead expenses by as much as 20%. The Cons include: 1. The greatest/most costly risk is if employees fail to meet their productivity requirements. This is more likely in workplaces that move to the 4-day workweek but continue to maintain a 5-day structure. 2. Some industries must maintain a 24/7 operation

which makes a 4-day workweek impractical for them. 3. Some workers may continue to put in 40 hours anyway (some companies leave room for occasional work on the off day). Other employees may feel a need to work more hours, particularly if they are hourly workers and this creates a reduction in income. Many companies who make this change do so while maintaining their employees' current income level.

While our culture of wanting more rather than doing the same in less time is at odds with the reduced workweek—it may be an inevitable trend. If you see the possibility in your organization, now may be the time to begin to assess it.

When things go wrong, don't go with them.

—Roger Babson

Supporting a Multi-Generational Workplace

In today's workforce, we have the opportunity to learn from and pull from the strengths of five generations! This was very striking for me when I saw an article on this. It is another aspect of diversity and, as is true for those of us on the Olympic Peninsula, it is something we can readily turn our attention to as we seek to value the strengths in diversity. The five generations include: Traditionalists (1925-1945) who comprise about 5% of the workforce; Baby Boomers (1946-1964) comprising about 24%; Gen X (1965-1980) about 32%; Gen Y or Millennials (1981-2000) 34%; and Gen Z (2001-2020) 5%. Each of whom have distinctive communication styles, motivations

and approaches to work. And yet, it is important to remember that everyone is an individual and no one likes to be put in a box that is supposed to be a one-size-fits all. So, always leave room for exceptions to the generalizations. Generational diversity offers many opportunities for education, mentoring (which goes up and down the age range), and camaraderie, but this is often overshadowed by miscommunication and frustration. It's an opportunity to think about how you focus on your employees' expectations, values, and attitudes about work and life. Paycor recommends 7 tips in the process of embracing generational diversity:*** 1. Build a generational advocacy program that fo-

cuses on what unites us rather than what divides. 2. As always, get leadership buy-in and participation in your advocacy teams. 3. Be inclusive and use training to help the generations understand each other and avoid potential barriers of unconscious bias, ageism and preconceived notions. Ageism goes both way and can, of course, be complicated by intersectionality (e.g. a white older woman may not command the same respect as man in her age group and a black younger male may meet different barriers than his white counterpart—and all the combinations in between add to the complexity). 4. Encourage people to watch their language and respect-

fully let each other know when common phrases such as 'old guard,' 'boy' or 'girl' are used. Often this is done without awareness—this is a time to raise awareness. 5. Create a reverse mentoring program. At least 40-50% of your workforce is very tech savvy and the rest has a wealth of experience that dates before technology became so dominant. Both groups can share their wealth. 6. Create a feedback loop so you can find out what is working and what is not. Be honest with yourselves. 7. Offer leadership development to everyone—don't miss the opportunity to develop younger staff as well.

* Zapier.com The Pros and Cons of a 4-day Workweek, December 2021

** SHRM, Why more companies are embracing a 4-day workweek, December 2021.

*** Paycor, 7 Tips for Creating Generational Advocates, November 2021.