

HOT SHEET

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Full-Circle HR

HR Trends:

- According to a 2022 Myers-Briggs Co. Survey, poor communication is the top reason for conflict at work.
- As the sports world begins to take marijuana (THC) testing off its lists, employers who drug test found that positive marijuana tests were at an all time high in 2021. Since THC stays in the system longer than most drugs, a positive test does not mean impairment at work.
- The Department of Labor update of the Overtime rule has once again been delayed likely until October. Continued debate in Congress about leadership confirmation and possible additional rulemaking are contributing factors.
- A recent Microsoft report ([New Future of Work Report 2022](#)) reveals that while remote work can improve job satisfaction, it can also lead to feeling socially isolated, guilty, and trying to overcompensate.
- A Revelio Labs study published by Bloomberg in May suggests that Artificial Intelligence is more likely to replace jobs that are predominantly occupied by women—the jobs were primarily support and administrative roles.
- July 1, WA Cares employee deductions must start.

Top Benefits Sought By Employees

According to the 2023 SHRM Employee Benefits Survey,* the top three benefits that employees seek are health insurance 89%, retirement plans 81%, and leave benefits 81%. Employers are beginning to respond to these numbers by increasing their family leave benefits. Paid parental leave has increased across the board with the employers in this survey. Employers are beginning to focus on not only the health and well-being of their employees, but also on their families. This includes leave for birth and adoption, regardless of gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Some leaves are as much as 16-26 weeks. The survey suggests

this is to some extent due to the pandemic and employee expectations for flexibility and supportive policies for their family lives. Employers are recognizing this and also realizing that since it is not something that happens all at once for a lot of employees or even very often for any one employee that it can be one of the most affordable benefits to offer. This might be particularly true for Washington state employers when considering the possible availability of 12 weeks off through Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML). This benefit can be paid to employees as a supplemental benefit to PFML so that their pay is kept whole dur-



ing this leave. Previously, PFML payments could not be combined with other forms of payment from the employer and now they can be paid as supplemental benefits and not impact the employee's PFML. One survey by Breeze, an online insurance broker, found that paid parental leave is valued by employees above employee fitness or mental health benefits, vision benefits, or student loan repayment assistance. Some employers are also including pet insurance a benefit since during the pandemic many employees acquired pets and pets are often considered part of the family.

Still, health insurance is believed to be the most important benefit that employers can offer. The survey found that Preferred Provider Plans are still the most popular with HSA qualified plans gaining in popularity. Sixty percent of employers who offer an HSA plan also contribute to the employee's HSA account. Tied with leave benefits, 94% of employers continue to offer traditional retirement benefits (403b, 401k, etc.) and 84% of those offer a matching contribution. Flexibility, family friendly, and professional career development benefits were also found to be important.

How to Motivate without Money or Promotions

While pay will always be an important factor in employment, there is more than that which matters greatly to employees. One example that comes to mind is an employee who discovered that a similarly challenging job was paid more than the one they had. While pay is superficially at issue, this employee's sense of value for what they do was injured. The fact is that, in addition to internal equity, the market can also dictate how a job is paid—even if it is equally as challenging as another job. In that case, transparency is important for employee morale and motivation. This example is a good segue into other ways employers can help create an environment where their employees feel motivated.

As is often said, people join companies, but they leave managers.** Investing in your managers' managerial skills can be a first great step toward improving employee engagement, morale, and retention. It also helps empower managers to do the job they most likely hope to do when it comes to managing employees. Help them learn active listening skills. Instill in them the importance of consistency in application of policies and procedures and also in being responsive to employees. Even when they can't give the employee what they want, encourage them to hear the employee out and follow up with honesty and transparency.

Once you begin working on supporting your managers, here are some other possible

areas of focus: 1. Focus on employee development. Support managers in learning to delegate and help them find opportunities to do so. It can offload some work from the manager and offer opportunities for on-the-job training. Be sure to look for ways to tie the delegation to the employee's career goals. Introduce rotational leadership of staff or other meetings. This can help develop staff management skills—giving you potential candidates for succession planning. Explore external training possibilities or invite your employee to do so and support them in accessing it when you can. Hold quarterly professional development meetings. 2. Show gratitude. Do it often and with specifics. Encourage

Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.
— Maya Angelou

managers to look for opportunities to show their gratitude and not just their eye for what needs to be corrected.^ 3. Offer flexible scheduling and focus on work/life balance. Be aware and sensitive to what may be going on in employees' lives. Encourage breathing breaks/meditation or a stretch break/walk outside during intense times, as appropriate to your culture. This can give them a fresh and/or creative perspective on their work. 4. Be a positive force in the workplace. Look for what is right and focus on it. If you are struggling with this, don't let it leak out onto your team, but talk with your own manager or an external coach or counselor.

*SHRM, *Parental, Family Leave Programs See Boost in 2023 SHRM Employee Benefits Survey*, Mayer, Kathryn, June 12, 2023.

** SHRM, *How to Motivate Employees without Money or Promotions*, Falcone, Paul, June 8, 2023.

^Indeed.com, *10 Ways to Motivate Employees*. <https://www.indeed.com/hire/c/info/how-to-motivate-your-employees?>