



Making Strategy Happen

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When Work Gets Back to “Normal”, Will Your Employees be There?

Among the many changes the pandemic brought to the workplace is to finally put an end to outdated ideas about where and how work should be done, creating new, likely permanent expectations about flexibility, working conditions and life balance among the workforce. In addition, the pandemic stimulated personal reflection with many employees deciding it is a good time to switch careers. It is perhaps not a surprise that two out of three people who lost their jobs during the pandemic have switched careers, seeking greater stability in different industries. What may be surprising is that, according to a recent [Ceridian study](#), 64% of all, currently employed people are looking for new jobs and for those under 30, the percentage is 76%.

Clearly this time of reflection has employees concluding that a change is needed. We should expect employee churn to continue, and possibly increase, when work is fully back to normal. What should employers take from this? Employees want what they have always wanted – flexibility, equity and balance. Now, however, employee expectations have shifted and companies that are not able to quickly pivot for the long term, may find themselves in a new talent crunch.

In order to execute on your 2021 strategy, you need people strategies that are aligned with your business and that meet the expectations of your employees. The cobbled together people operations, processes and tools that companies rushed to put in place mostly did the trick of keeping employees productive and companies profitable, although innovation and company culture suffered for some. But these short-term solutions may not be optimal long-term strategies.

Businesses should be asking themselves many questions including:

- Is your employee value proposition as compelling now as it was before the pandemic?
- What will your hybrid work model look like long-term and how will you realign your office processes to maintain required communications and alignment and retain the positive aspects of your office culture?
- How can you deploy a distributed workplace to ensure equity among your workforce and among roles that are not easily performed remotely?

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- Are your leaders and managers trained on how to manage, coach, collaborate, evaluate performance and motivate their team remotely?
- As you restructure to meet the changing needs of your business, are you able to optimize your existing talent resources to retain valuable organizational knowledge and offer compelling development and advancement opportunities?
- Will you be able to provide the type of employee experience people are coming to demand?

The opportunities for workforce and organizational transformation are extensive and vast. Companies that have committed to partially or fully remote workplaces are able to tap into the global talent pool, effectively reaching 99% of the world's population that doesn't live within commuting distance of their physical office locations. Flexible organizations that can envision new ways of working and can execute on comprehensive long-term strategies will drive engagement, achieve organizational agility, maintain alignment and foster teamwork across all functions, roles and locations. This will translate into competitive advantage in this new post pandemic landscape.

At ESG, we are supporting our clients through the complex projects we are all tackling during this time of change. We would [welcome the opportunity](#) to learn more about your current business challenges and determine where ESG can provide support.

—By Karen Kralios, Principal, Organization, Culture & Talent Strategy Practice Leader, ESG

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