



Green Circle Life 2021 HR Survey Insights

Green Circle Life recently polled human resource (HR) professionals regarding the effects of the COVID-19 crisis as well as how they are looking to adjust and drive company change, if any, in 2021. The topics included, but were not limited to, healthcare costs, employee attraction and retention, company culture, benefits awareness and more.

Companies ranging in size from less than 250 employees to more than 5,000 employees were polled. More than 45% of participants reported they worked at a mid-size company, between 1,000 to 5,000 employees. Additionally, 65% of participants reported they were involved in HR initiatives at their company. Here are the key survey findings:

COVID-specific:

- 74% of HR professionals reported that in 2021 they plan to expand their benefits and services due to COVID-19 to include telehealth as well as mental and behavioral health benefits.
 - 18% plan to make no changes in their benefits plan while 8% reported making other changes, not specifically due to COVID.
- When asked about what new challenges COVID created for their company, here is how participants responded:
 - 25% reported they struggled with managing a remote workforce;
 - 20% reported HR policy changes created difficulties;
 - 19% reported they faced challenges with recruiting and retention efforts;
 - 17% reported general economic struggles;
 - 12% reported a loss in employee productivity; and
 - 7% reported other/general business struggles.
- HR professionals shared the following concerns for their employees due to COVID-19:
 - 23% reported emotional wellbeing and mental health;
 - 22% reported health and safety of employees and their families;
 - 19% reported ongoing communication and engagement;
 - 15% reported supporting onsite and remote workers in hybrid models; and
 - Other concerns included new workplace safety procedures, benefits enrollment and communication.

Benefits:

- 69% of HR professionals reported in 2021, they plan to make changes to their annual wellness program.
 - Those changes included expanding lifestyle programs such as stress, weight, sleeping habits, as well as adding behavioral and mental health programs, incentivizing employees through employee wellness rewards and replacing providers.
 - 29% reported they would not make any changes in the New Year.
- Here is how employers plan to encourage their employees to learn and use their benefits:
 - 18% revealed they would do so through an integrated HRIS and benefits technology platform;
 - 18% reported their solution was to promote wellness programs and online resources;
 - 17% reported publishing an annual benefit guide online;

- 13% reported organizing benefits education and wellness events/clinics; and
- Additional strategies included mailing the annual benefits guide to employees' homes, complementing annual enrollment through a manual benefits selection process, encouraging benefits vendors to manage their own communications and more.

Culture

- 39% of HR professionals reported in 2021 their company is focusing on driving engagement and cultural change.
 - Other priorities included controlling healthcare costs, enhancing the benefits enrollment progress and improving retention efforts.
- When asked about how they would like to drive cultural change:
 - 30% reported focusing on engaging employees in company values;
 - 30% reported building positive employee morale;
 - 20% reported improving employee productivity; and
 - Additional strategies included increasing employee wellbeing and looking at technology solutions.
- Strategies to enhance company culture include:
 - 29% reported increasing company-wide communication efforts;
 - 24% reported recognizing employee contributions and engagement;
 - 18% reported hiring for a cultural fit; and
 - Additional strategies included developing an internal campaign and implementing technology solutions.

General:

- When asked how their company will control healthcare costs in 2021, HR professionals reported:
 - 22% plan on offering telemedicine;
 - 17% reported promoting wellness rewards programs;
 - 17% will offer multiple health plans;
 - 14% reported promoting preventative care programs;
 - 13% plan on promoting a high deductible plan; and
 - Other initiatives included offering holistic wellbeing programs, looking for new brokers/consultants, offering on-side or near-site clinics and offering narrow-network options.
- Strategies to attract and retain employees:
 - 34% reported work-life balance;
 - 20% reported focusing on a positive workplace culture;
 - 20% reported highlighting a competitive benefits and compensation package; and
 - Other strategies included flexible work environments and non-work-related activities.