

Employers Focus on Well-Being and Work/Life Balance as Employees Return

60 percent of companies say their employees will be returning under a hybrid model

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Employers are giving increased attention to employee well-being as they plan return-to-worksite strategies, with 83 percent indicating that employee well-being will have a significant role in the coming weeks, according to the 13th Annual Employer-Sponsored Health & Well-Being Survey (<https://www.businessgrouphealth.org/who-we-are/newsroom/press-releases/2022-fidelity-survey>) from Fidelity Investments and the nonprofit Business Group on Health, released at the end of March.

Initiatives including mental health (91 percent of employers), physical health (60 percent) and work/life balance (57 percent) will be integral components of return-to-worksite strategies in 2022, according to the survey, which was conducted in December 2021 and January 2022 among 166 large and midsize companies.

The survey provides a glimpse into how employers are evolving their well-being programs as they bring employees back to a traditional worksite, some for the first time in nearly two years. Among the key findings, most respondents said that:

- **Have a majority of employees who will be working under a hybrid work model** in 2022 (60 percent), with about half of those companies expecting the majority of employees to work onsite three days per week.
- **Are focusing on job satisfaction in their well-being program** (52 percent, up from 35 percent last year).

"Employers are facing a unique set of challenges as employees return and readjust to a more traditional work environment," said Robert Kennedy, health and welfare practice leader at Fidelity Workplace Consulting. He's encouraged to see employers "evolving their employee well-being programs to address the needs of their workers."

Ellen Kelsay, president and CEO of Business Group on Health, a coalition of employers, said that executives increasingly realize "the correlation of their workforce's health and well-being to the overall success of their business."

DE&I and Well-Being

Among other survey results, large numbers of large and midsize employers:

- **Report that their diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) strategy** influences the design of their well-being program (81 percent).
- **Indicate that they communicate with their employees** about the relationship between DE&I and well-being (82 percent).
- **Design well-being initiatives** to support traditionally underrepresented communities (50 percent).
- **Plan to assess benefits and well-being initiatives** for inclusivity (45 percent).

The survey also found that 40 percent of employers plan to create DE&I standards and guidance for vendors and suppliers in 2022.

PepsiCo Addresses Caregiving Gap

PepsiCo Beverages North America (PBNA), south division, provides an example of how companies are incorporating well-being and DE&I goals into their return-to-work programs. On April 5, the division announced a new program to help female professionals return to the workforce after taking time off for caregiving during the pandemic.

In partnership with nonprofit Path Forward, the division will offer 16-week internships, or "returnships," to professionals with a minimum of five years of work experience who have taken at least two years off for caregiving. The program provides professional development workshops, feedback sessions, networking opportunities and mentorship support to interns along their journey as an on-ramp back into the workforce.

Applications are open on PepsiCo Careers (<https://www.pepsicjobs.com/main/jobs?keywords=Path%20Forward%20returnship&sortBy=relevance&page=1>) through April 29 for a 16-week returnship program for roles across PBNA's south division.

On completion of the program, successful interns have the potential to be offered full-time jobs in planning/logistics, sales operations, manufacturing, retail sales and food service sales with PepsiCo in Atlanta; Louisville, Ky.; Orlando, Fla.; and Tampa, Fla., with a chance to expand to other offices in the future.

The returnship program is part of PepsiCo's objective to reach gender parity in managerial roles globally by 2025, said Heather Hoytink, president of PBNA's south division.

She called the program "a natural next step to explore an untapped, yet highly experienced talent pool given the impact of the pandemic on women who were forced to make a choice between career and caregiving. Our goal is to provide rewarding job opportunities for caregivers looking to return to work, setting them on the path to success with the right tools, competitive pay and more."

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