



a Landrum HR company

THE FUTURE OF WORK CHRO Roundtable Discussion Summary

The past 15+ months have been a time of great disruption, and also a time of creativity, innovation, and breakthrough. As we move into a post-pandemic world, employees’ needs, expectations, and desires have shifted from where they were before. Companies, too, are facing new challenges and talent needs in order to drive success. With Human Resources playing a pivotal role in navigating the new normal, hrQ brought together approximately 30 HR leaders to discuss this navigation and the current challenges facing HR.

Themes from the discussion include:



1 Remote/Hybrid Work



The majority of companies are planning some form of hybrid work going forward, although the timing and specifics vary by company. Some of the key challenges, considerations, and plans include the following:

- Bringing people back into the office and/or implementing a hybrid work structure requires a change management approach. Often this includes getting more “traditionally minded” people to think differently.
- Companies found it most successful when they used their return-to-work strategies to reinforce their culture and implement policies that are aligned with their stated culture.
- Many companies are experiencing misalignment between leadership and staff: In general, leaders tend to want employees back in the office more than employees desire to be back. In order to remain competitive in the talent marketplace, however, some degree of remote work seems necessary.



- Remote work presents challenges such as equipment standards, reimbursement of equipment, liability, etc. Some companies are using third parties to manage equipment funds and create equipment standards.
- Other challenges include empty and unused office space and employee moves during the pandemic (including to different countries), prompting new policies around location and relocation.
- Maintaining a level playing field for employees to thrive in their careers is an important consideration going forward when there is more variance in on-site and remote work.
- Development and mentoring of young professionals who are starting to “grow up” in their careers in a remote work environment is another critical focus. New programs need to be in place to support them. Many companies are also facing critical needs to build management skills for leading remote teams, cultivate trust and accountability in a virtual environment, and maintain employee engagement.

2 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Most companies had some form of DE&I strategy/programs in place before 2020, but plans accelerated in the past year. Many believe they are in good shape with DE&I, while others would like to do more. For example, some would like to add a full-time DE&I role but are finding that the universe of experienced and credible senior DE&I professionals is small. Larger companies with deeper pockets appear to be winning the war for talent in this arena, making it tough for small and medium-sized companies to build DE&I capability.

3 Workforce Planning, Recruiting, and Retention



Short and long-term priorities are focused on retention and recruiting, including how to respond to changing workforce demands and fierce competition for talent. With many companies facing talent scarcity, the ball is in employees’ court and companies need to adjust. Some companies are increasing wages and hiring bonuses.

An important approach to dealing with workforce challenges is to examine workforce composition and determine strategies for location, where to build talent, and where to outsource. All of these areas are likely to look different going forward.

Finally, helping employees to manage work-life balance and designing benefits around mental health are important areas of focus for at least some companies. Increased benefits cost is probably worthwhile, as the cost of not supporting the whole person is likely much greater.

From remote work to DE&I to heavy competition for talent and the need for revised talent strategies, we are clearly in the midst of transformative changes. Companies need strong partnership with Human Resources leaders now more than ever.

When you need an HR expert to help with your unique circumstance, let’s chat. contact@hrqinc.com