

**TINYpulse: State of Employee Engagement
One Year after COVID-19
April, 2021**



Overview

- For people around the world, work and life changed drastically as a result of COVID-19. The effects of the pandemic were widespread by March 2020.
- To slow the spread of COVID-19, many organizations were forced to switch to remote work overnight.
- This report reviews the impact of the pandemic through the responses of human resources and people leaders and also hints at what's to come as we emerge from the pandemic.
- Through the course of this research, we uncovered how resilient organizations were. HR professionals were pivotal in leading this resiliency and were heroes in their own right because they had so much thrown at them overnight from the C-Suite to their colleagues to their people. Thank you.

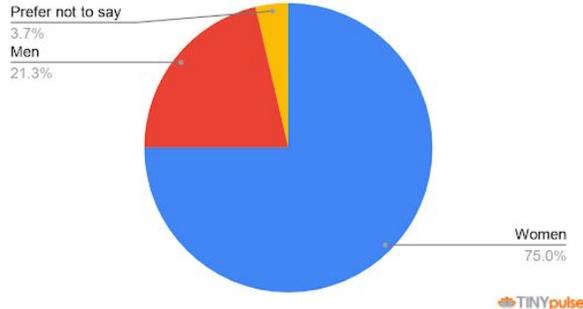


Since COVID-19 affected everyone, our survey was wide-ranging to capture a multitude of perspectives and feedback.

- **Respondents.** Managers and Human Resources were contacted through email, LinkedIn, and professional networking with the opportunity to complete a survey on their priorities and challenges in 2021. In exchange, respondents were offered a report for benchmarking.
- **Timing.** Collected responses from February 11-19, 2021.
- **Org size.** Organizations size ranged from 1 employee to 500,000 employees. The average organization size was 3,832 (SD 28,092) employees.
- **Geography.** 46 Countries Included with the majority of respondents coming from the United States

Gender

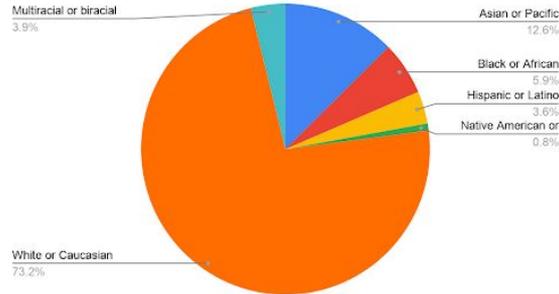
Reported Gender



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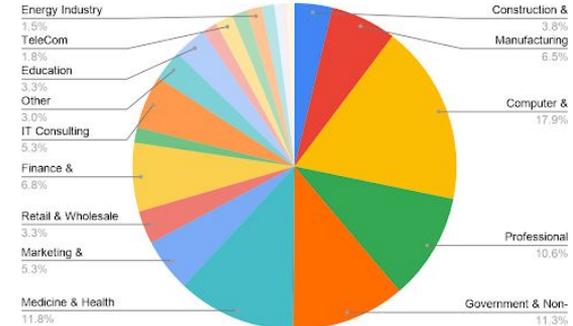
Race

Reported Race



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Industry



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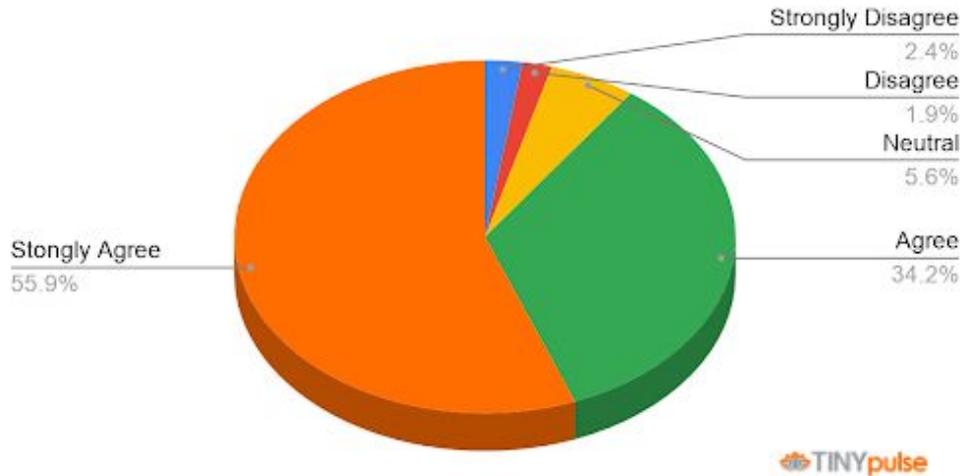
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 - Impact on stress and emotional well-being
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 - HR priorities in 2021

HR leaders overwhelmingly agreed their organization responded well to the pandemic

- 90% Strongly Agree and Agree with the statement, “My organization has effectively responded to the pandemic.”
- Highlights overwhelming resiliency in the face of massive disruption and change.
- The agility and resilience shown during the pandemic bodes well for recovery.

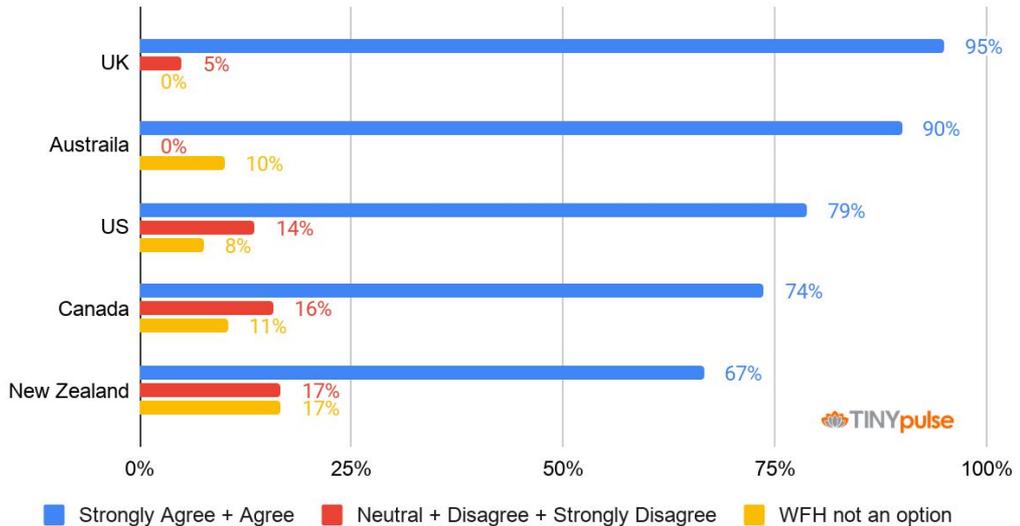
My organization has effectively responded to the pandemic.



Working from home (WFH) was extremely successful

- Successful overall, but a deeper analysis into primarily English speaking countries uncovered that the UK led the way with 95% of HR leaders citing success.
- New Zealand was the lowest with only 67% of HR managers claiming WFH success.
- There was no correlation between reported WFH success and stringent government response to COVID-19.

WFH Success for Primarily English Speaking Countries



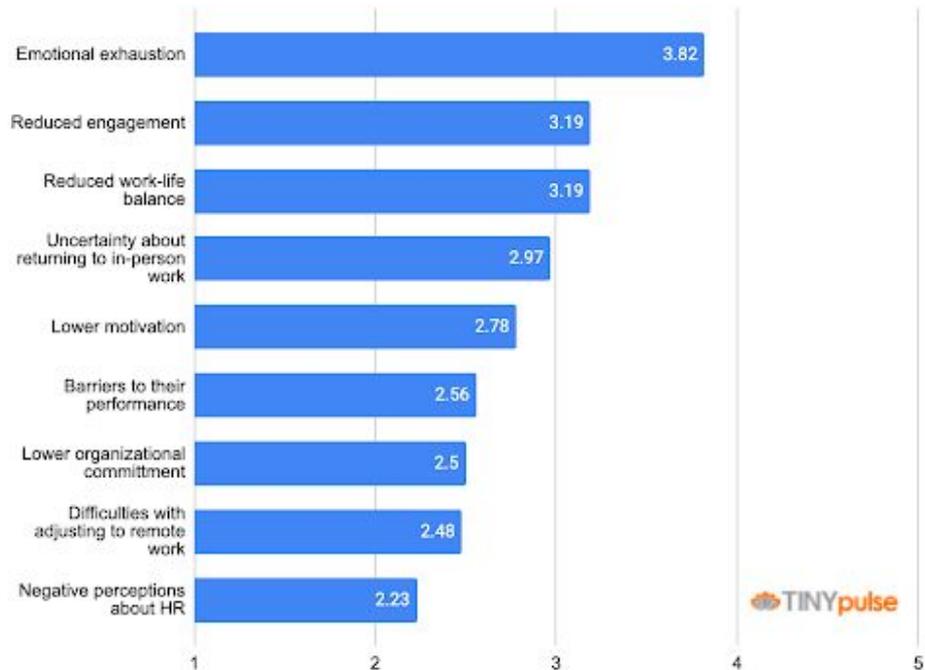
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The top 3 impact that employees experienced were emotional exhaustion, reduced engagement, and reduced work-life balance

- Emotional exhaustion was the clear #1 and was rated 20% higher than reduced engagement at #2.
- Tied for with reduced engagement for #2 was reduced work-life balance.
- The lowest three cited impacts were Lower organizational commitment, Difficulties adjusting to remote work, and negative perception of HR.

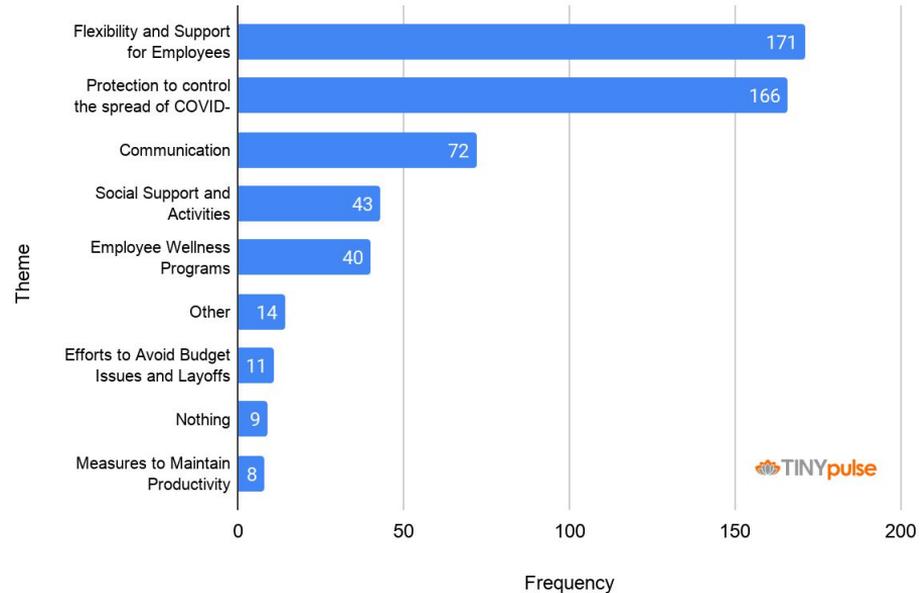
During the pandemic, to what extent would you say that employees in your organization are experiencing:



The overwhelming top 2 measures organizations implement to counteract the impact of the pandemic was Flexibility and support for employees and protection to control the spread of COVID-19

- Surprisingly, measures to maintain productivity was the lowest, and we surmise it's because employees were able to quickly and successfully adapt to their new WFH environment.
- As employees return to work, we predict that much more emphasis will be placed on Employee wellness programs because of the long-term impact of COVID-19 and the disruption to return to the office.

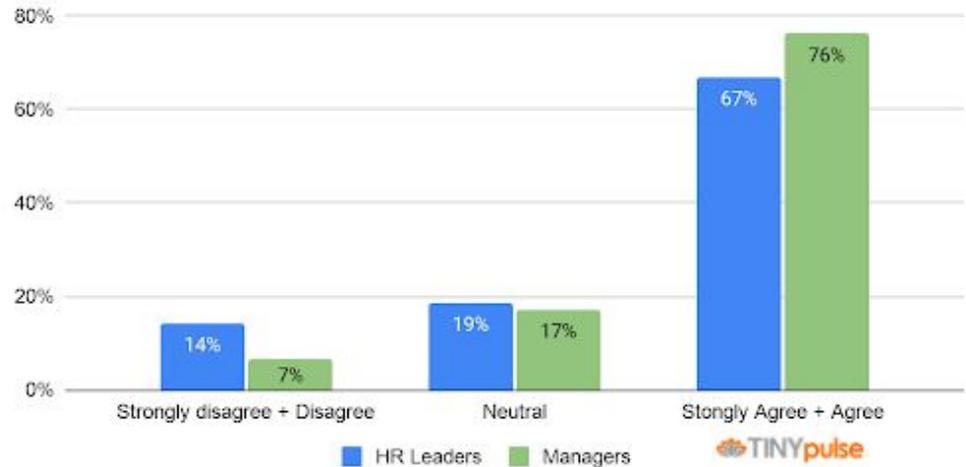
What measures have been taken by your organization to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic?



Overall, managers were rated as having slightly higher stress levels compared to HR leaders

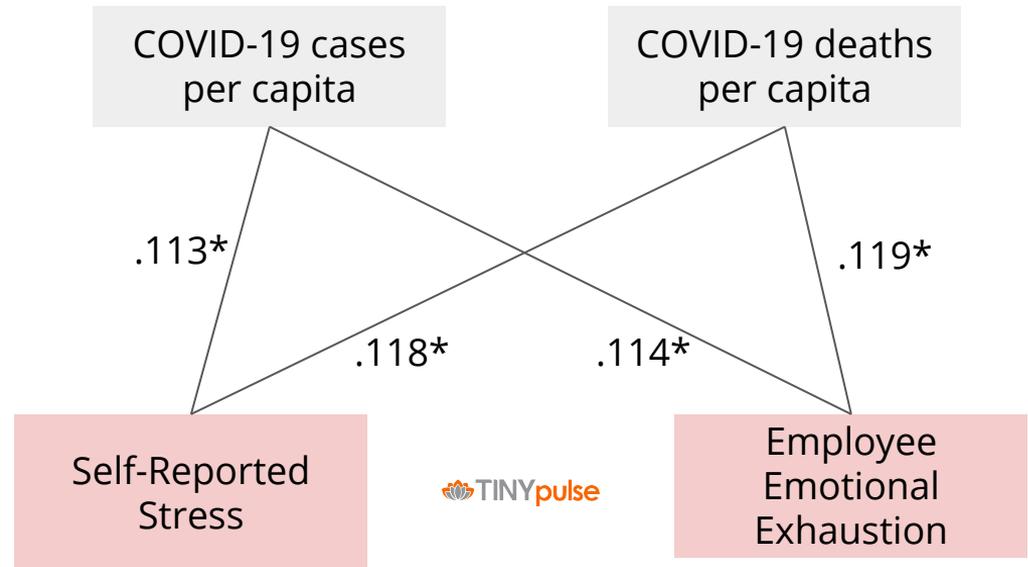
- HR managers self-rated their own stress levels and then rated the stress levels of managers in their organization. They cited managers as 14% more likely to have higher stress levels than themselves.
- This is an unexpected finding, but it could be due to the nature of HR professionals' work and training that equips them better to handle change and stress.

[HR Leaders / Company Managers] experiencing higher stress during the pandemic



There was a slight positive correlation with both COVID-19 cases and deaths and self-reported stress and employee emotional exhaustion

- Surprisingly, these correlations were not significant for healthcare and manufacturing industries which mainly require in-person working conditions.
- The correlations were especially strong for HR managers in the IT consulting industry with correlations between .426 to .523.
- Organizations in countries with more COVID-19 cases may have relied more heavily on IT consulting which could cause more stress and emotional exhaustion due to increased work demands.



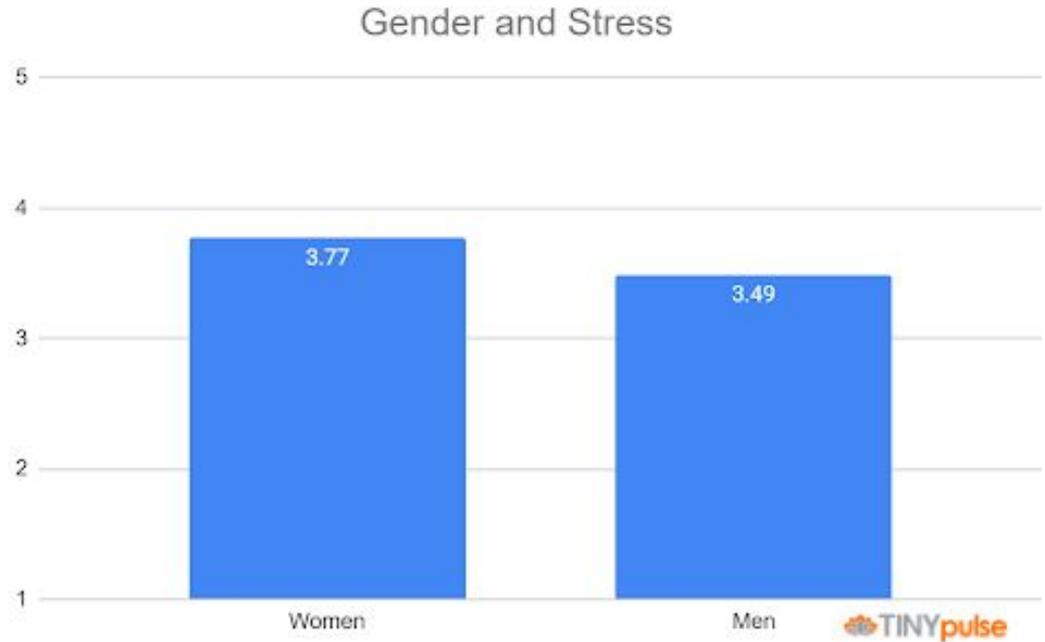
High correlations between stress levels and emotional exhaustion among employees, managers, and HR managers.

- These high correlations suggest that when one group of employees is struggling, others are too.
- This can be due to shared circumstances or the contagious nature of stress and emotional exhaustion.



Slight difference in stress level between men and women with women reporting higher stress

- No relationship was uncovered between self-reported stress and age.
- Personal stress is also not correlated with higher willingness to attain a vaccine to go on vacation.
- Women reported a slightly higher level of stress compared to men. This may be occurring because of women having more home responsibilities while also working from home. However, the difference in stress levels between men and women is not as severe as expected.

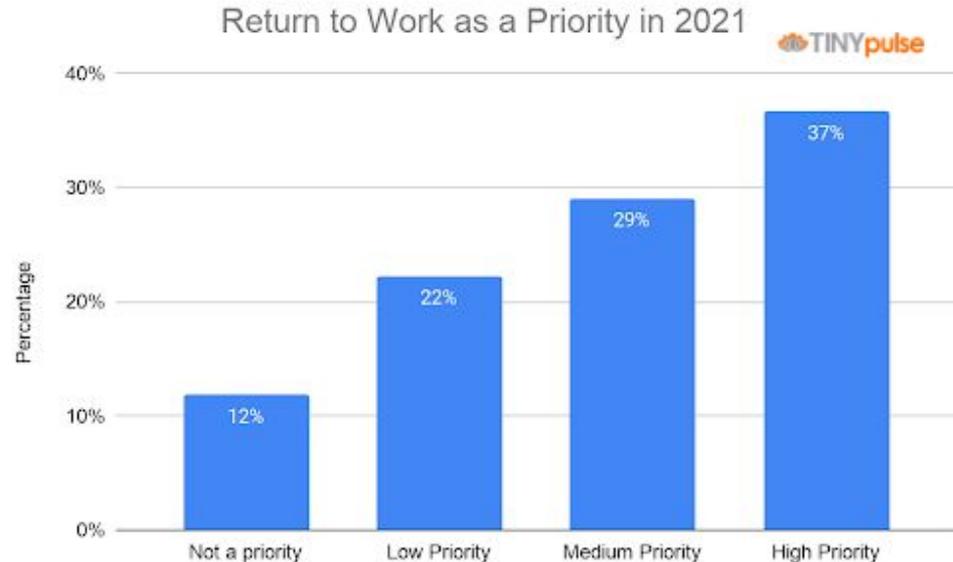


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A minority of HR managers rated return to work as a high priority at 37%

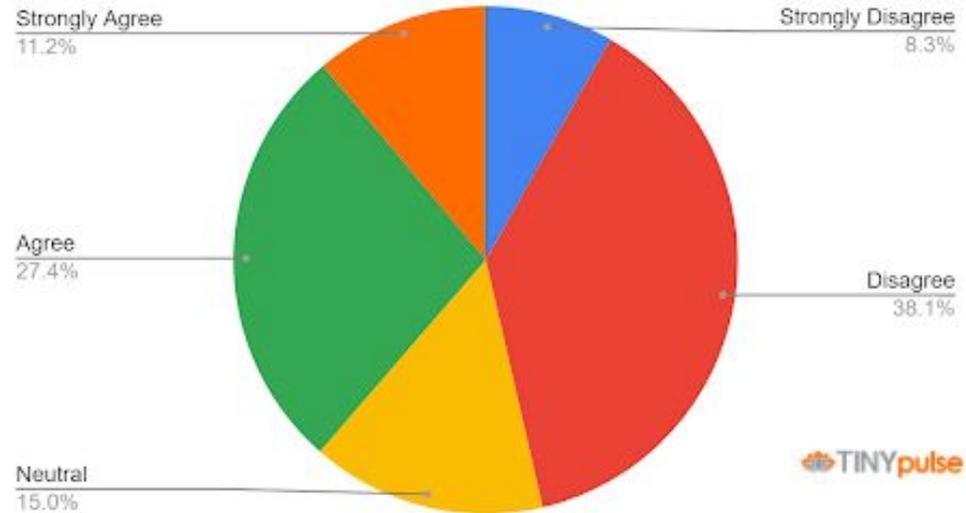
- Interestingly, 34% view RTW as Not a priority and Low priority.
- We believe this is related to an overwhelming percentage of HR leaders who believe:
 - That their organization responded (90%)
 - WFH has been extremely successful (67%+ in primarily English speaking countries)



46% Disagree or Strongly disagree that once the pandemic is over that it will be business as usual

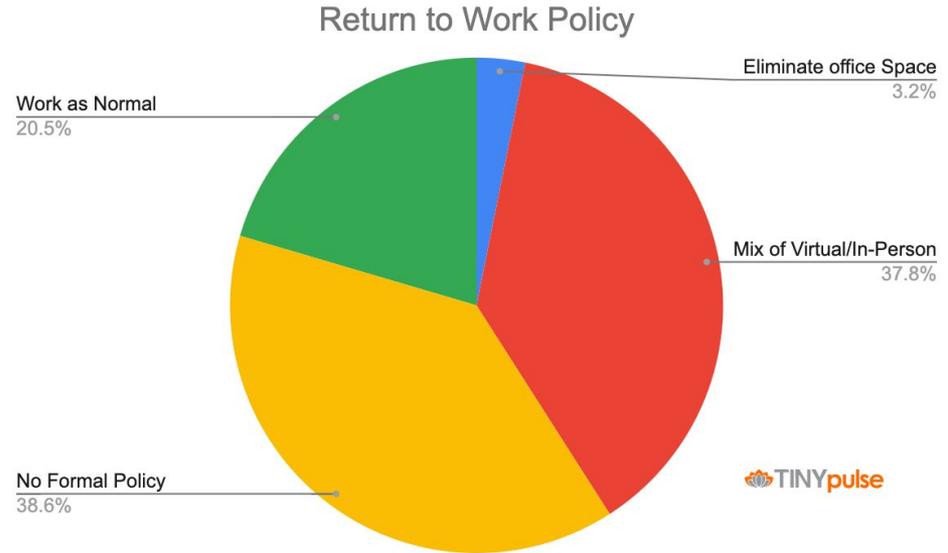
- 38% Strongly agreed or Agreed with that work will be business as usual after the pandemic.
- 15% are still undecided on what the future holds for their business.
- We believe the rapid success of working from home has forever changed the minds of what the future of work should be, which will be different than work before the pandemic.

After the pandemic is over, I expect that things in my organization will go back to normal



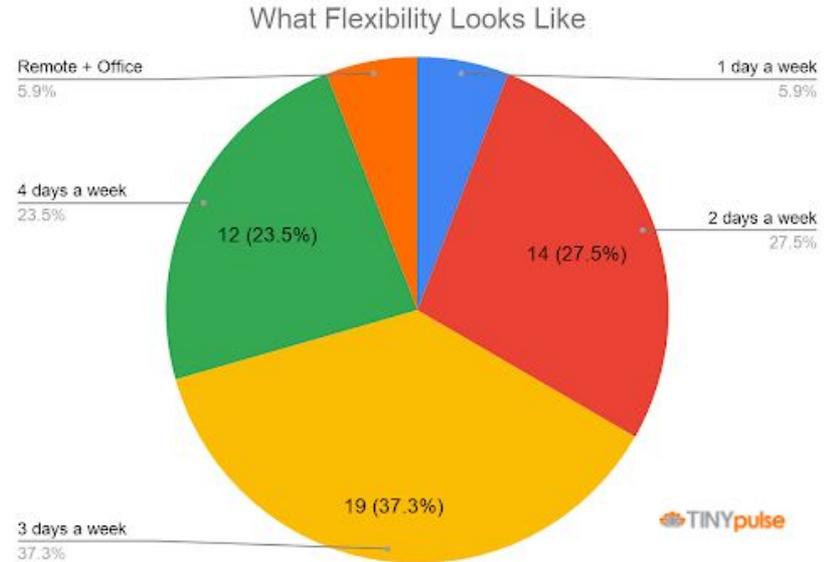
Currently 39% of organizations have not finalized their RTW policy

- 21% will Return to Work as normal or have been working on-site
- 38% will offer flexibility and a mix of days in office and remote options
- 3% have or plan to eliminate their space altogether
- Since COVID-19 made companies all remote overnight and affected almost all employees equally, we predict that transition will be far easier than returning to the office given different desires, work rhythms, and overwhelming success of WFH.



Of the companies that have decided what flexibility / non-5 days in the office looks like, 3 days per week in office is most common

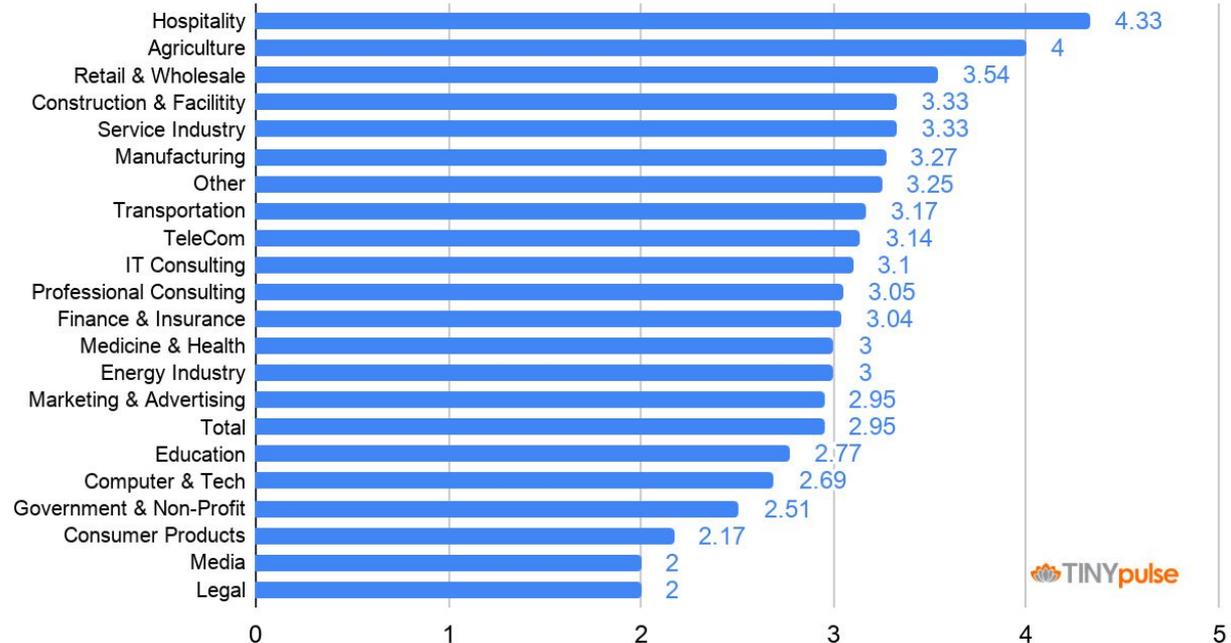
- Since 39% do not yet have a formalized policy, here's what others have decided with 3 days per week being the leading option.
- 1 day per week is only at 6%.
- 2 and 4 days are at 24% and 28%, respectively.
- If you are still undecided, it's much easier usually to remove days in office requirements versus adding days.



Not surprisingly, industries that cannot WFH, have the highest expectation to return to business as usual after the pandemic

- Hospitality led all industries with the highest agreement to the statement, “After the pandemic is over, I expect that things in my organization will go back to business as usual.”
- Legal was the lowest and seems most poised to learn from their WFH experience and adapt accordingly.

Industry Expectations for Business As Usual After Pandemic



Companies Returning to Office Policy

amazon

- Fully in-person by fall of 2021
- **Amazon [statement](#):**
“We believe it enables us to invent, collaborate, and learn together most effectively.”
- **Employee [response](#):**
“To go back into the office and still have to wear a mask and social distance, it defeats the point, when I can work comfortably from home...”

Google

- Fully in-person by September 2021
- **Google CEO [statement](#):**
“We firmly believe that in-person, being together, having a sense of community is super important...”
- **Anonymous employee response:**
“Given the budget cuts, increased pressure to stay productive, and cancelling of the promotion cycle, it's hard to believe that they want us to risk infection for the sake of community and not for the sake of profits.”

**WELLS
FARGO**

- Fully in office by Labor Day, Sept. 6
- **Wells Fargo CEO/COO [statement](#):**
“We believe most of us benefit by being physically together. Being physically together can be more inclusive...”
- **Employee response:**
“Thanks @WellsFargo for the return to work kit! Can’t wait for life after #COVID19”
via Twitter



Companies with Hybrid WFH Policies



- **Headquarters opened March 2021 — WFH part time standard**
- **Microsoft [statement](#):**
“Though we don’t know how far off a new normal is, we are adapting to a new way of working with an expanded understanding of flexibility.”
- “Microsoft’s decision to allow workers to come back to the office **[could produce a similar ripple effect](#)**... signaling to other employers that it’s safe to start bringing people back to the office.”



- **30,000 salaried office workers able to WFH with flexible hours**
- **Ford [statement](#):**
“If there’s one thing we’ve learned over the last 12 months, it is that a lot of our assumptions around work and what employees need has shifted.”
- "And especially someone like Ford, who is a large, respected employer — **[people are going to model that behavior](#)**."



- **80% of workers to spend at least 3 days in office**
- **IBM CEO [statement](#):**
"At least three days a week, maybe not all eight to 10 hours, but at least some fraction of those three days, in the office.”
- Employees created a **[work from home pledge](#)** at beginning of pandemic to uphold values and best practices while remote.

Companies with Making WFH Permanent Policies



- **Salesforce adopts a “Work from Anywhere” policy – flex, fully remote, and office-based options**
- **Salesforce [statement](#):**
"An immersive workspace is no longer limited to a desk in our Towers; the 9-to-5 workday is dead; and the employee experience is about more than ping-pong tables and snacks."
- Office-based employees will be the “[smallest population](#)” of their workforce going forward.



- **Spotify announced a “Work from Anywhere” model after the pandemic**
- **Spotify [statement](#):**
“The ultimate goal of our new design approach is to ensure that employees have a place where they can focus, collaborate, and create—whether that’s at a desk, in a conference room, or in cafe spaces.”
- Was in the works pre-COVID. HR leaders leaned in on a “[distributed-first](#)” idea.



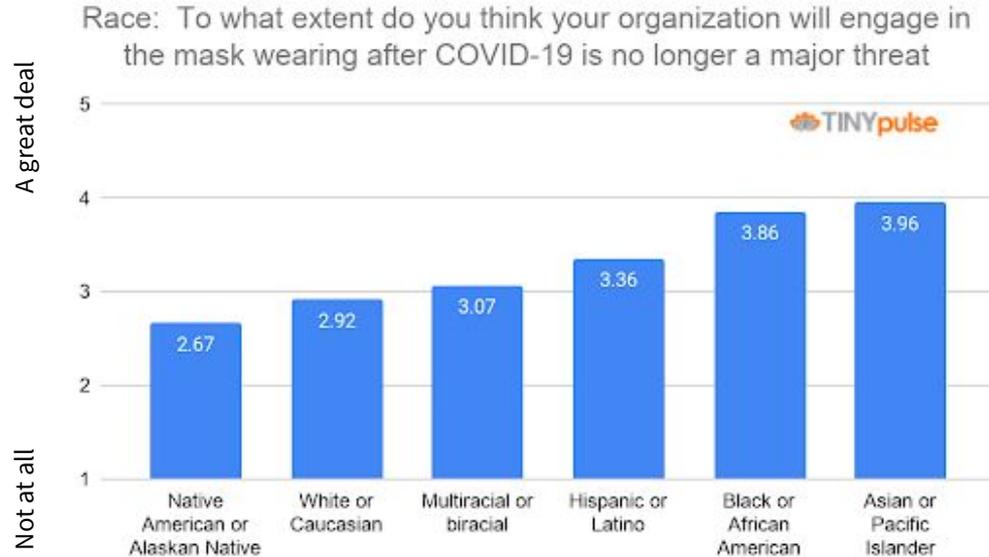
- **Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey told employees they could “work from home forever”**
- **Twitter CEO [statement](#):**
“Our concentration in San Francisco is not serving us any longer, and we will strive to be a far more distributed workforce, which we will use to improve our execution.”
- Twitter began “[decentralizing](#)” it’s workforce starting in 2018.

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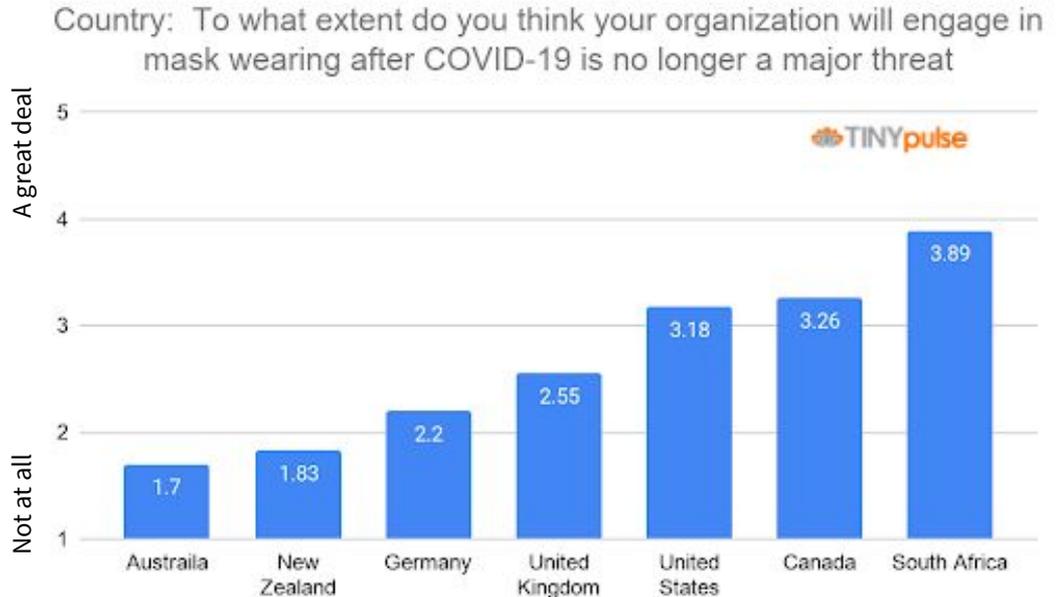
Asian or Pacific Islander HR leaders were the most likely to have their organization engage in continued mask wearing

- A close #2 was Black or African Americans at 3.86.
- The least likely were Native Americans or Alaskan Natives at 2.67.
- Age was surprisingly inversely correlated with continued encouragement of mask wearing.
- There was also no significant differences in opinion across industries.



Australia and New Zealand, which effectively locked down to avoid widespread COVID-19 cases are the least likely to continue mask wearing at work

- South Africa, which is currently struggling with a new COVID-19 variant, is the most likely to continue to encourage mask wearing at 3.89.
- There is an inverse correlation between countries' successful control of the pandemic with less likeliness to wear masks at work.

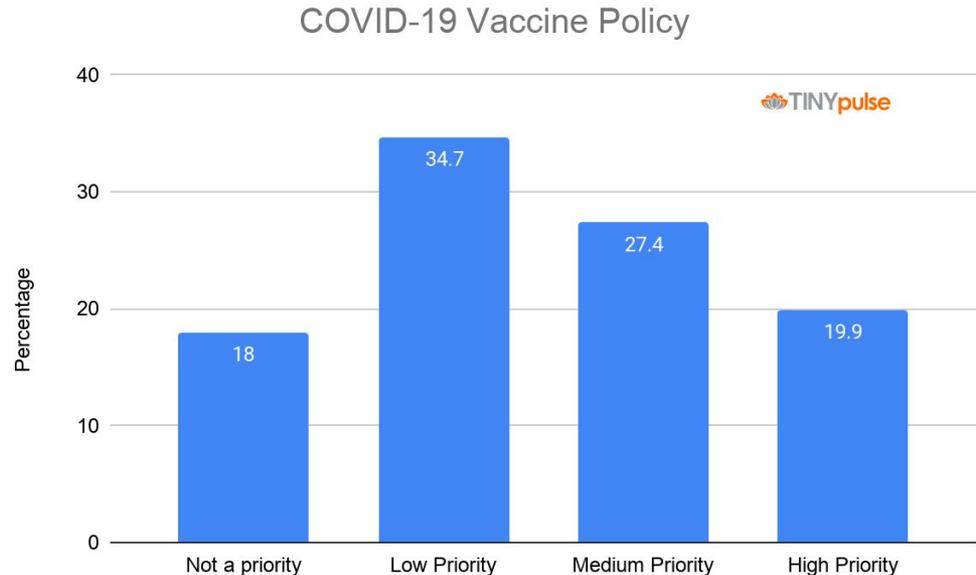


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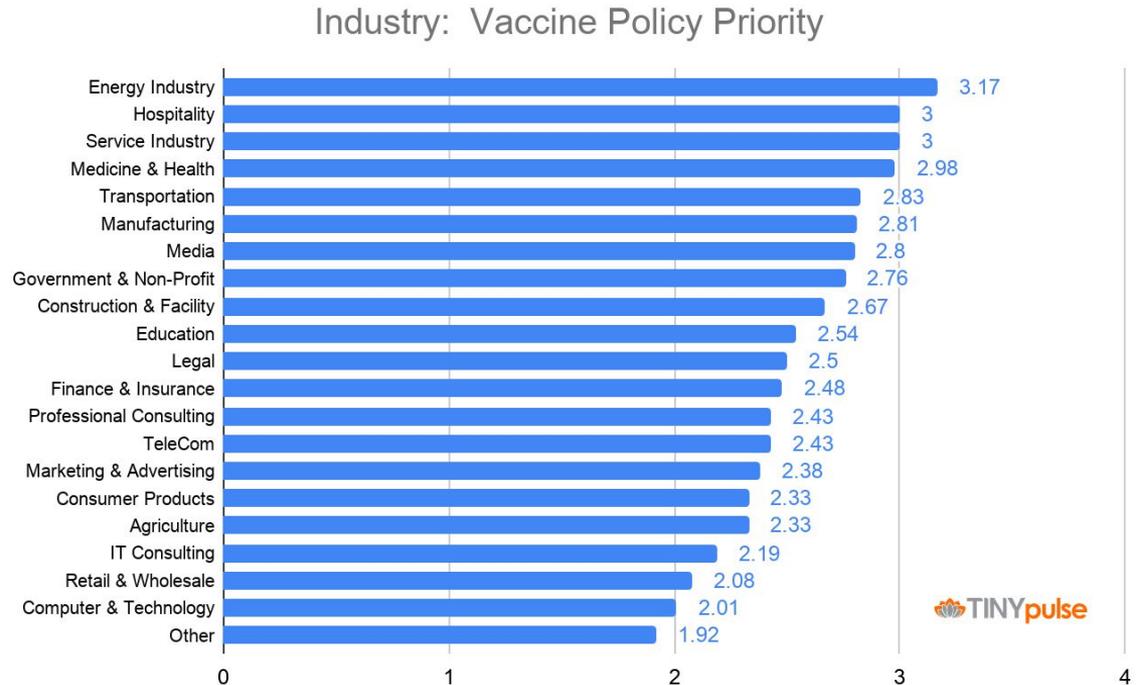
More than half (53%) of HR leaders reported that COVID-19 vaccine policy is not a priority or a low priority

- 1 in 5 reported COVID-19 vaccine policy as a High priority.
- 27% reported it as a Medium priority.
- In the United States, companies can mandate vaccinations to return to the office, but the vast majority have avoided that approach, which is reflected here.



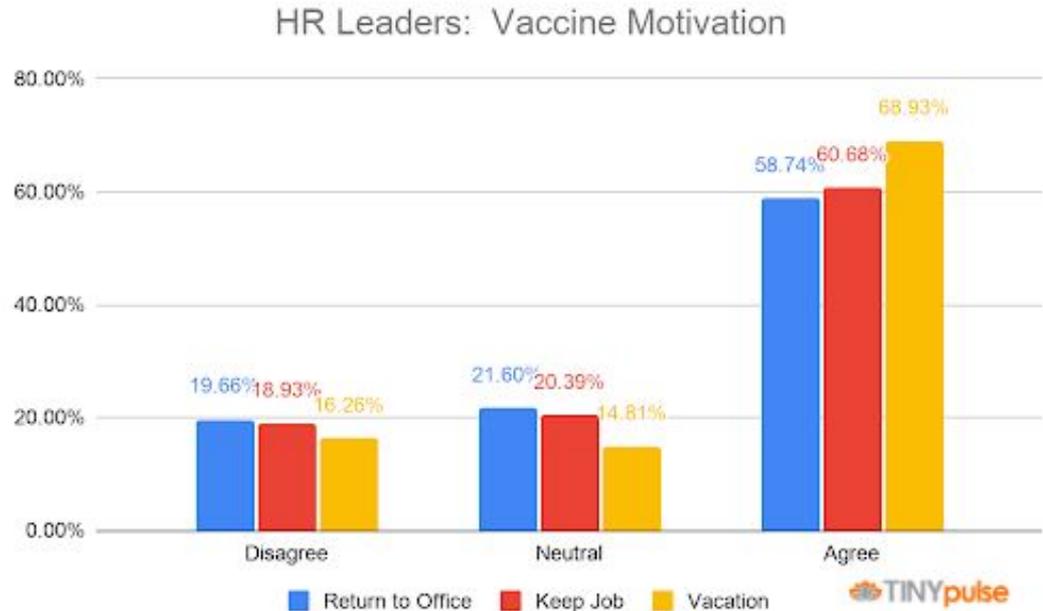
Energy, Hospitality, and the Service industry rated vaccine policy as a priority the highest likely due to the fact that most of their employees have less WFH options and higher risk of exposure.

- Surprising that Retail & Wholesale was near that bottom given people facing nature of their work.
- IT Consulting and Computer & Technology was at the bottom most likely because the nature of that work allows more WFH options.



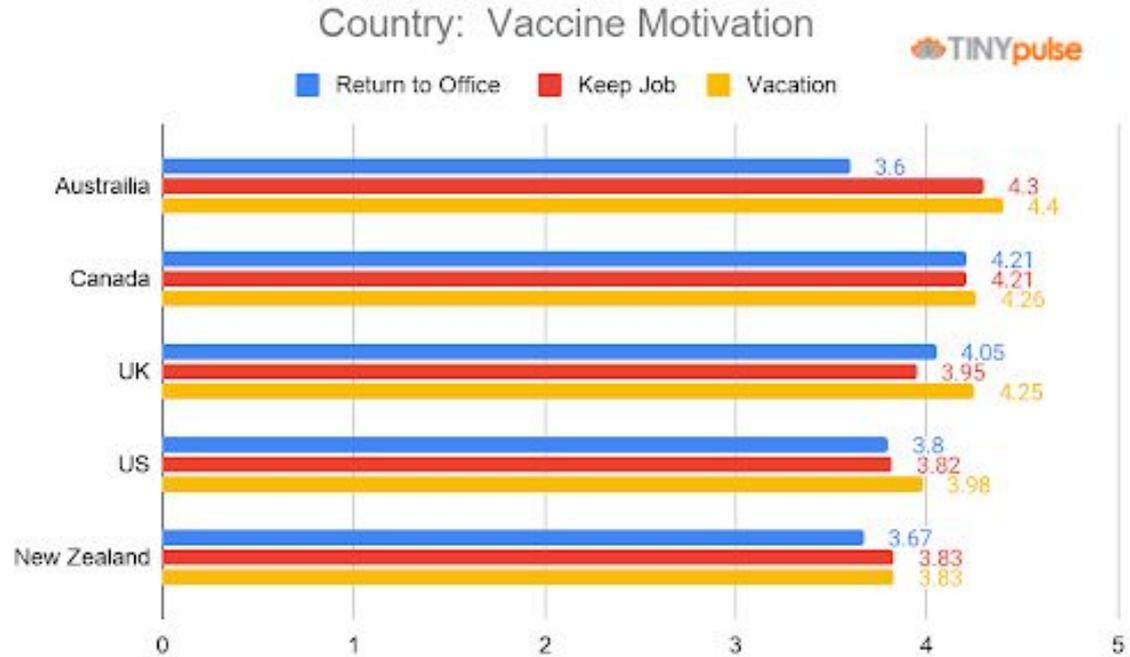
HR leaders are 14% more likely to get a vaccine to go on vacation than to keep their job

- Almost 70% would get a vaccine if it was required to go on vacation.
- 61% would get a vaccine to keep their job.
- 59% would get a vaccine to return to the office.
- We discovered no significant relationship between race and vaccine motivation.
- Personal stress is positively correlated with willingness get vaccinated to return to the office.



Aussies are the most willing to get a vaccine to go on Vacation and to Keep their job

- Kiwis exhibited the lowest willingness to get a vaccine to go on vacation at 3.83.
- Kiwis were also the most unlikely to get a vaccine to keep their job.
- Canadians were the most likely to get a vaccine to return to the office to see coworkers at 4.21.



Incentives, education, and convenience are three main approaches employers are using to drive employee vaccination

Incentives



- [Kroger](#) paying employees \$100 to get vaccinated.
- [Wells Fargo](#) providing 8 hours of PTO.
- [Amtrak](#) providing 2 hours of PTO per vaccine and additional sick leave.

Education



- [Walmart and CVS](#) partnering with Ad Council on vaccine PSA.
- [Harlem Hospital](#) inspiring Black workers to get vaccine, group that's statistically more hesitant.
- [Facebook](#) encouraging and highlighting benefits of vaccines.

Convenience



- [Amazon](#) delivering on-site vaccinations for US employees.
- [MGM Resorts](#) offering employees on-site vaccines..
- [LA County](#) proving mobile vaccine clinic to food packaging workers.

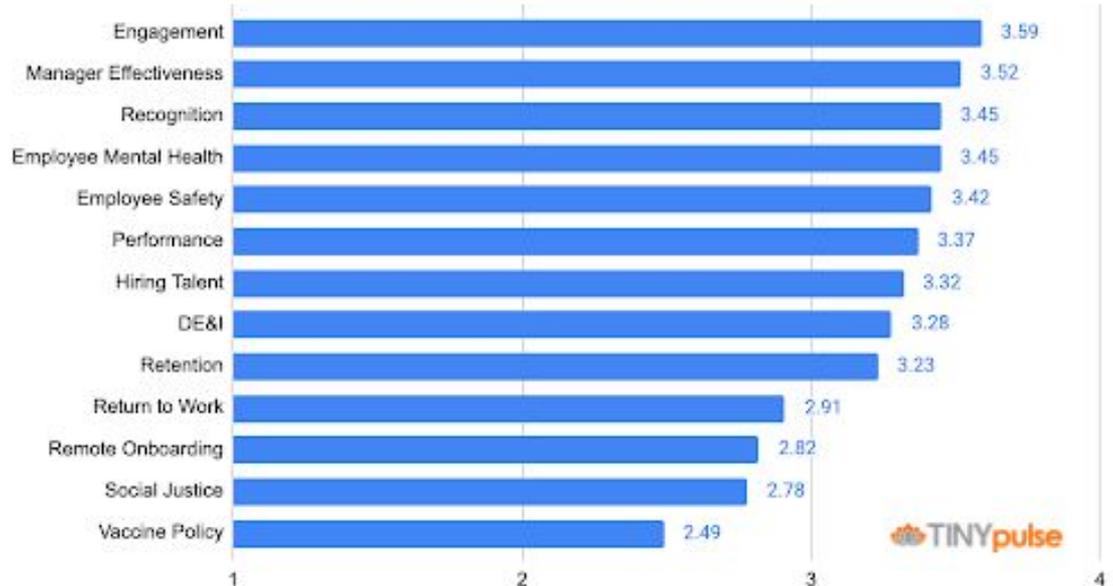
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Employee engagement was the #1 priority for HR leaders in 2021

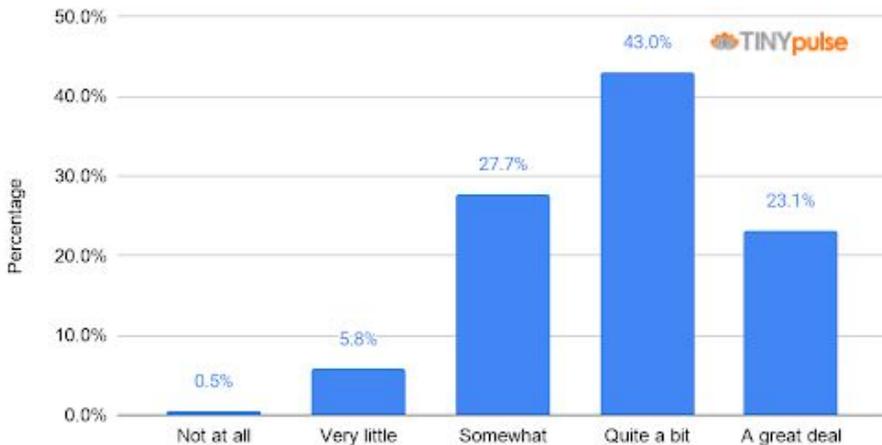
- #2 was Manager Effectiveness at 3.52. Rounding out the top 3 was Recognition at 3.45.
- We found no relationship between organization size and priorities.
- We believe that since so many companies plan to have retain some remote component, they realize that engagement, manager effectiveness, and recognition need to be prioritized because these areas of HRM are more challenging with limited in-person interactions.

What are the top priorities for Human Resources in your organization in 2021?

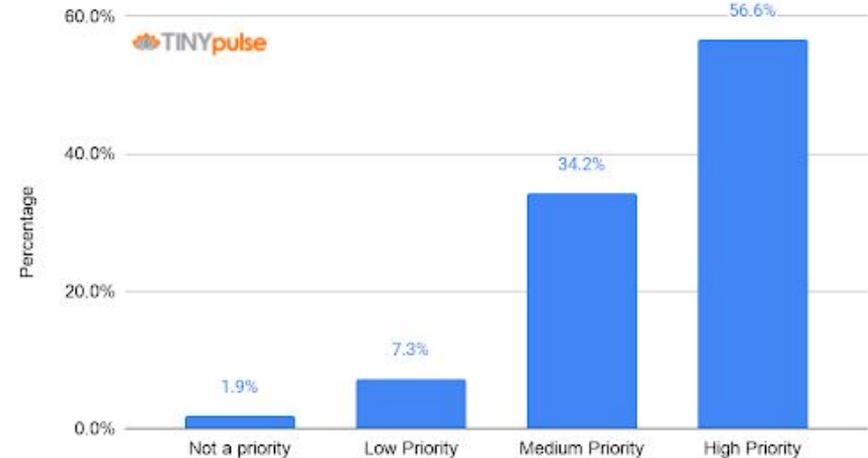


57% of HR managers responded that Employee Mental Health was a High Priority in 2021. There was no significant correlation between reported employee emotional exhaustion and prioritization of mental health.

During the pandemic, to what extent would you say that employees in your organization are experiencing emotional exhaustion?

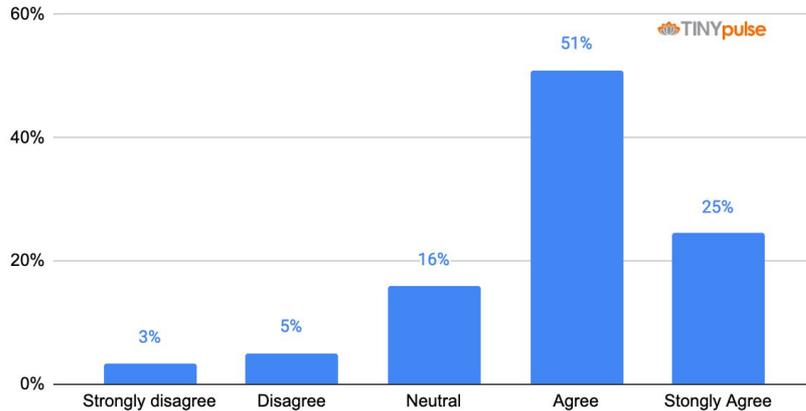


Employee Mental Health as a Priority in 2021

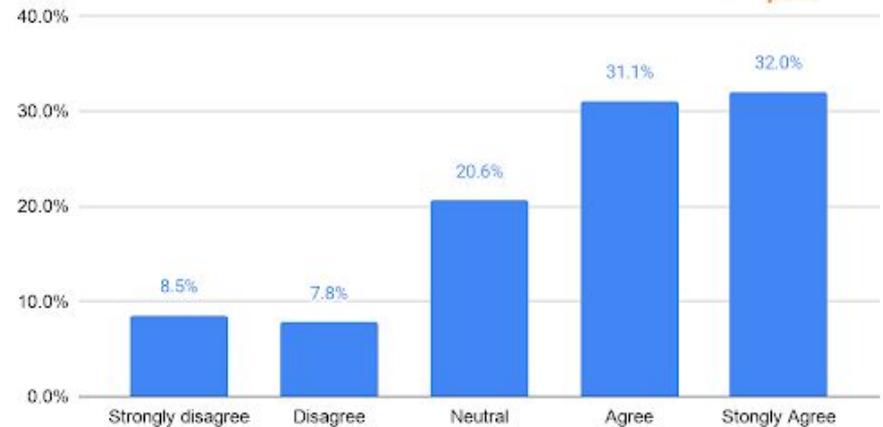


76% of HR managers agreed that their organization has room to improve on DE&I. However, only 63% agreed that the plan to focus on DE&I in 2021.

My organization has room for improvement in diversity, equity, and inclusion.



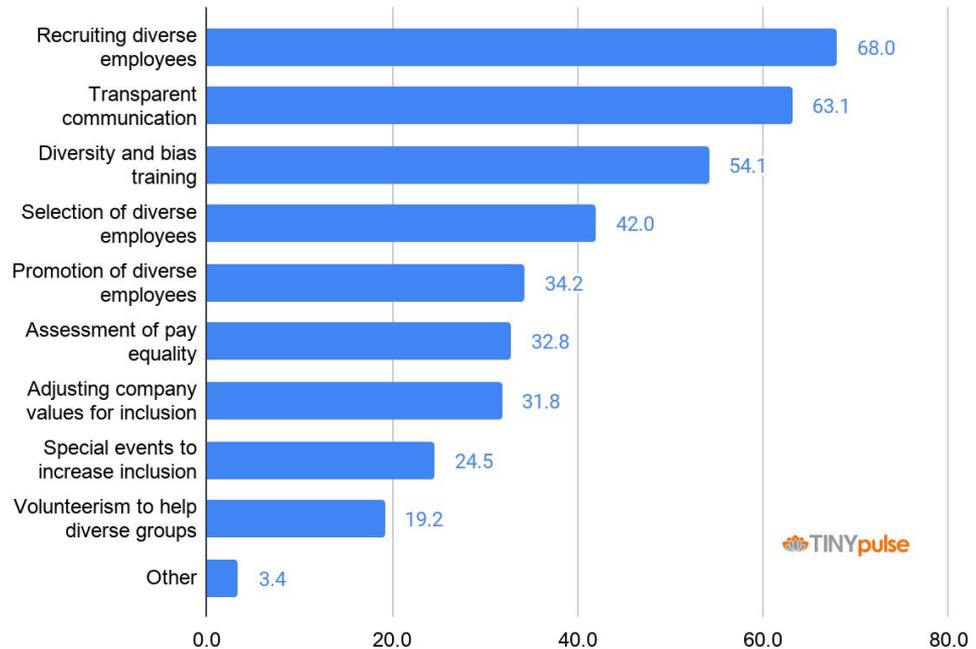
During 2021, my organization plans to focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.



There are a diverse set of initiatives that HR leaders will be focused on regarding DE&I

- HR managers most frequently planned to target DE&I through recruiting diverse employees.
- Transparent communication was the second-most frequently planned DE&I initiative.
- The third most frequent planned DE&I initiative was diversity and bias training.
- The least common were special events and volunteerism.

Most Popular and Least Popular DE&I Initiatives



Live TINYwebinar on April 22, 2021 — 09:00am PT / 12:00pm ET

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