

# 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.



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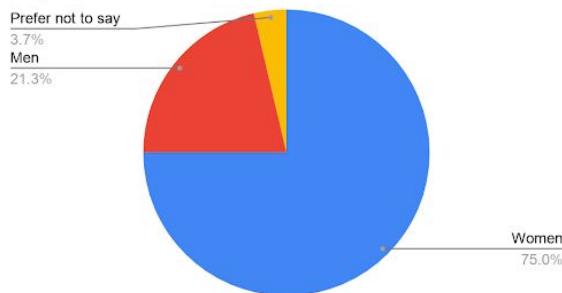


**Since COVID-19 affected everyone, our survey was wide-ranging to capture a multitude of perspectives and feedback.**

- **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

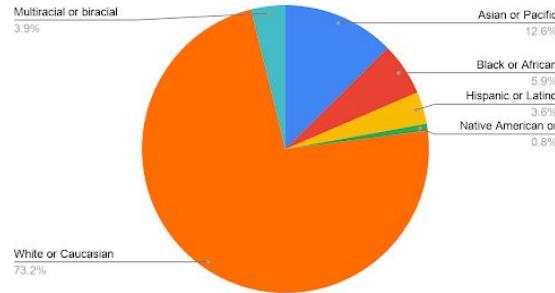
Gender

Reported Gender



Race

Reported Race



Industry

Energy Industry

1.5%

TeleCom

1.8%

Education

3.3%

Other

3.0%

IT Consulting

5.3%

Finance &

6.8%

Retail & Wholesale

3.3%

Marketing &

5.3%

Medicine & Health

11.8%

Construction &

Manufacturing

6.5%

Computer &

17.9%

Professional

10.6%

Government & Non-

11.3%

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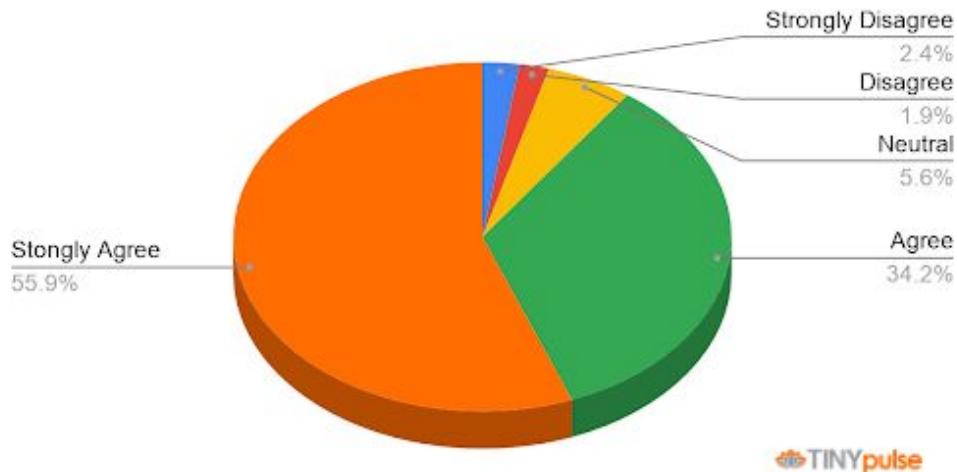
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  - Impact on stress and emotional well-being
  - Return to work approach
  - Changes with in-office policies due to COVID-19
  - Vaccine policy and willingness
  - HR priorities in 2021

## 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.

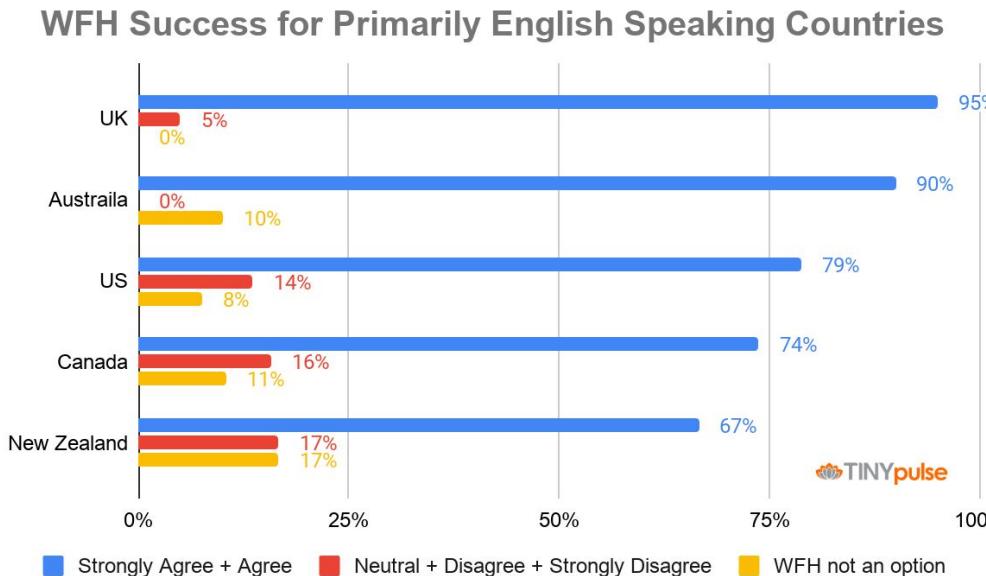
My organization has effectively responded to the pandemic.



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## 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.



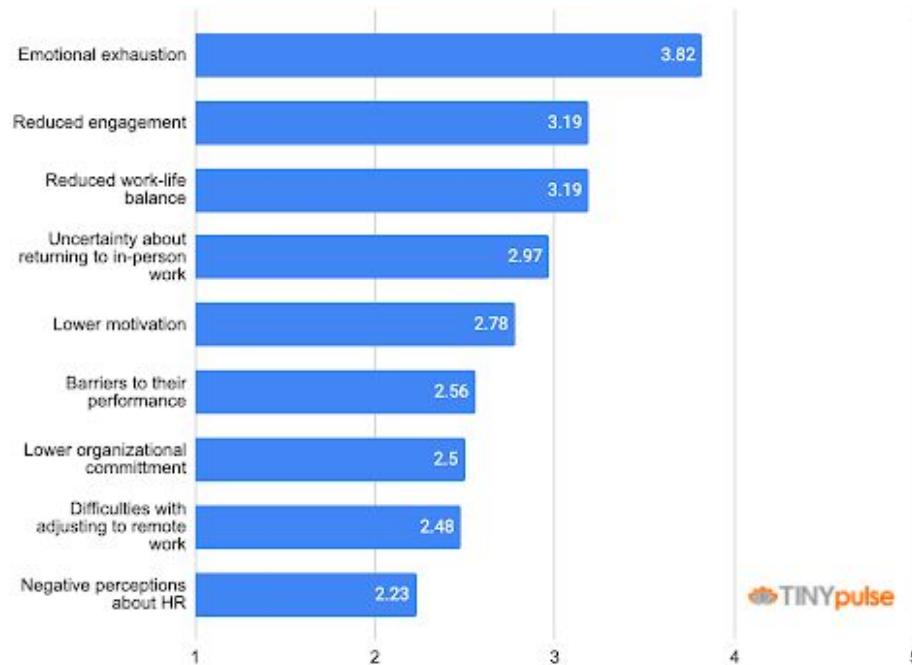
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## The top 3 impact that employees experienced were emotional exhaustion, reduced engagement, and reduced work-life balance

- 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.

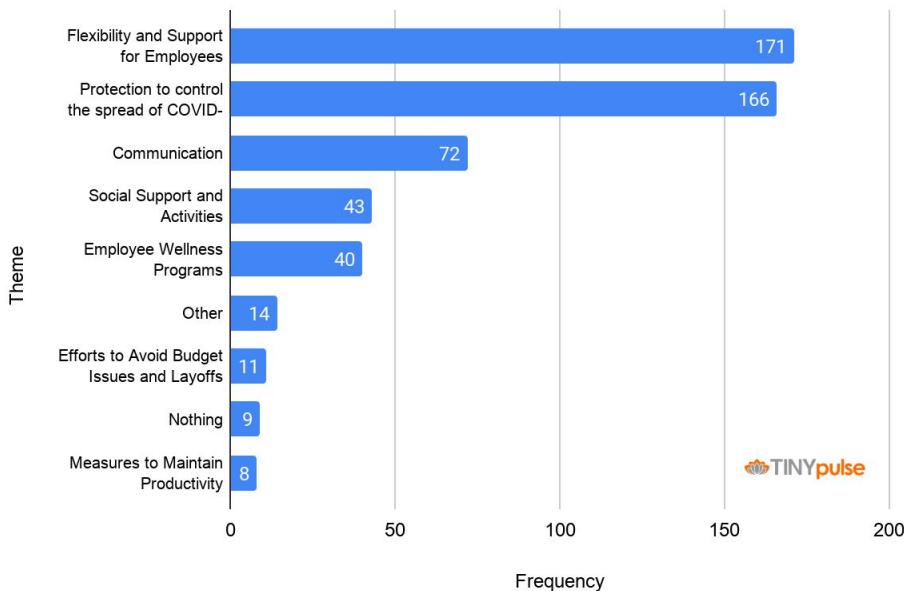
During the pandemic, to what extent would you say that employees in your organization are experiencing:



# 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.

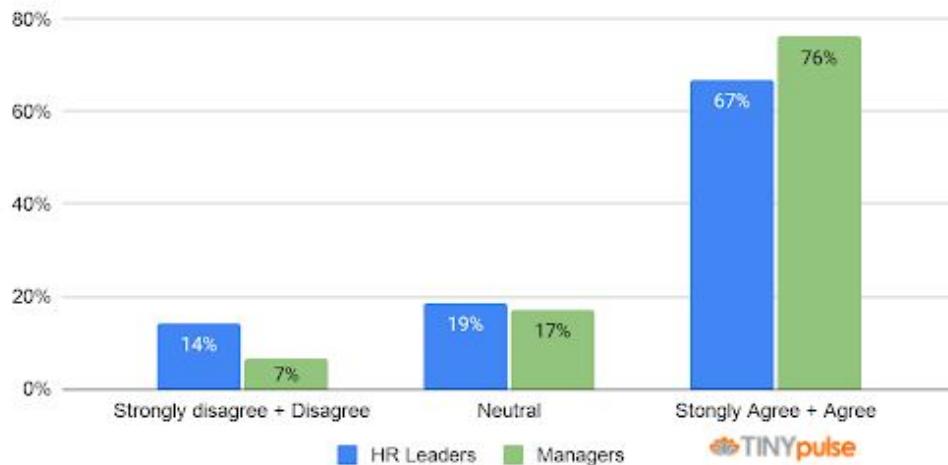
What measures have been taken by your organization to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic?



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

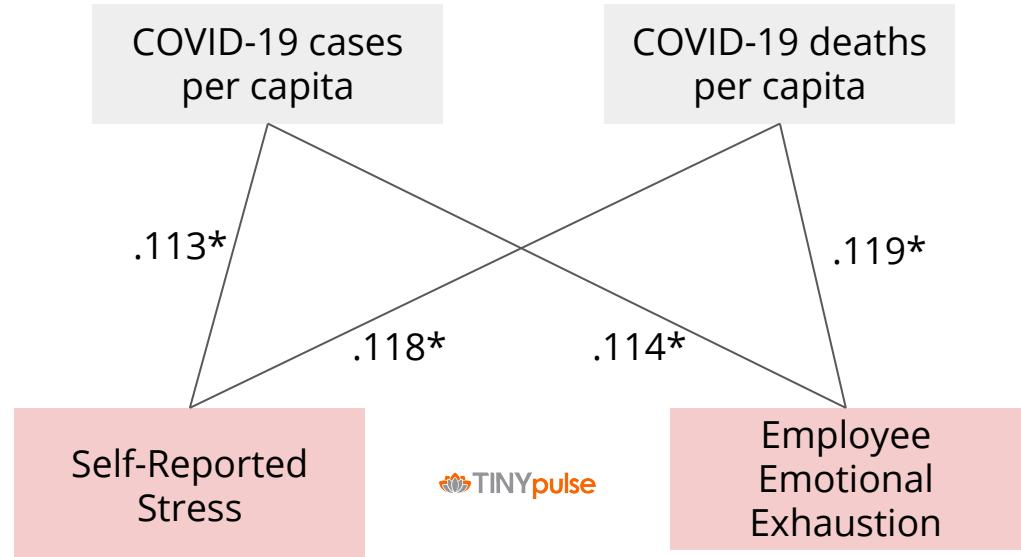
- HR managers self-rated their own stress levels and then rated the stress levels of managers in their organization. They cited managers as 14% more likely to have higher stress levels than themselves.
- This is an unexpected finding, but it could be due to the nature of HR professionals' work and training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

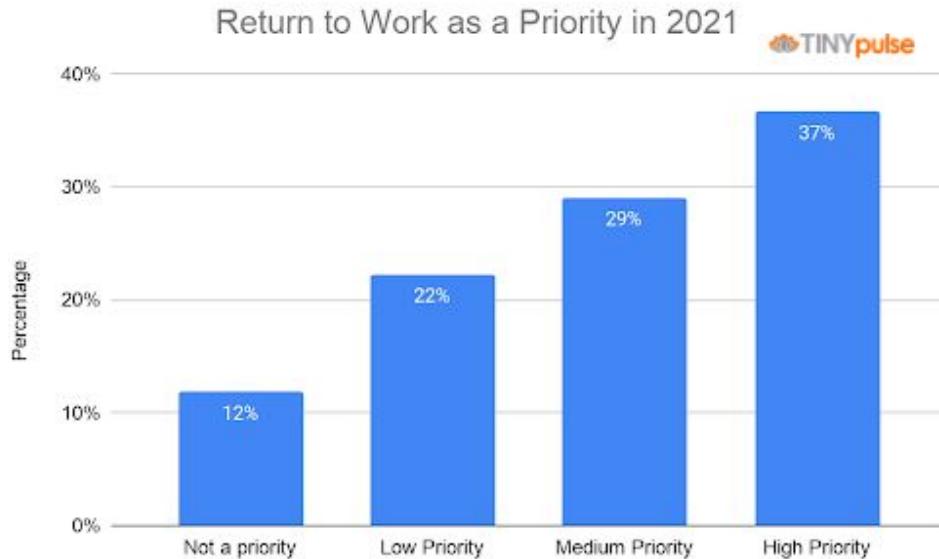


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## A minority of HR managers rated return to work as a high priority at 37%

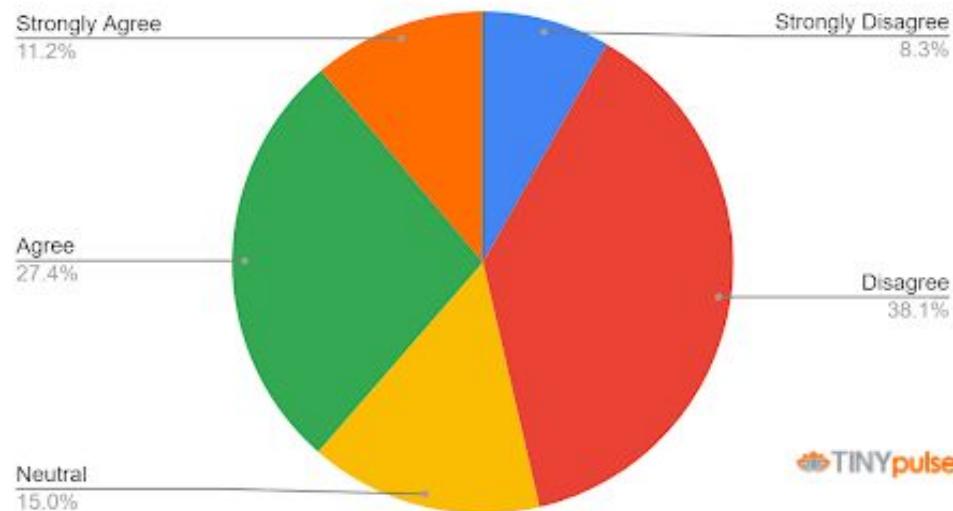
- Interestingly, 34% view RTW as Not a priority and Low priority.
- We believe this is related to an overwhelming percentage of HR leaders who believe:
  - That their organization responded (90%)
  - WFH has been extremely successful (67%+ in primarily English speaking countries)



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

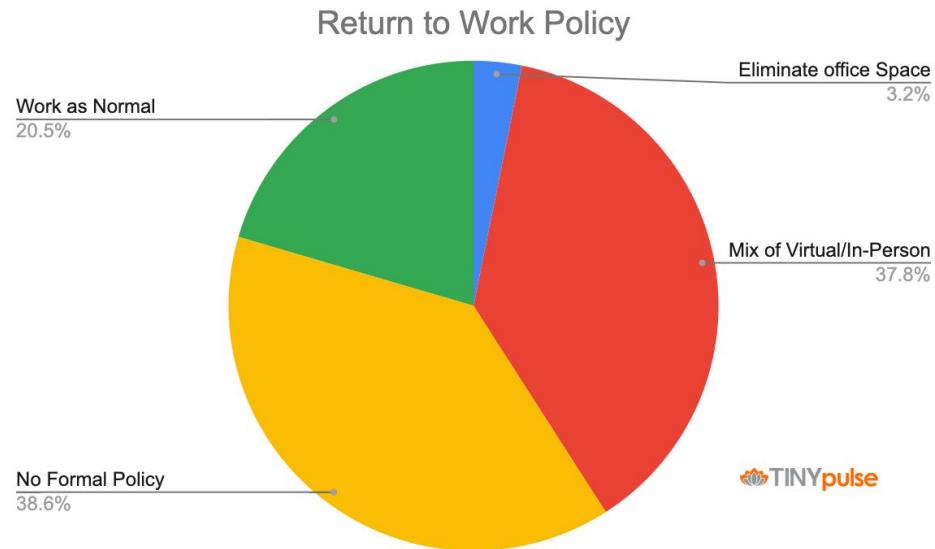
- 38% Strongly agreed or Agreed with that work will be business as usual after the pandemic.
- 15% are still undecided on what the future holds for their business.
- We believe the rapid success of working from home has forever changed the minds of what the future of work should be, which will be different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

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



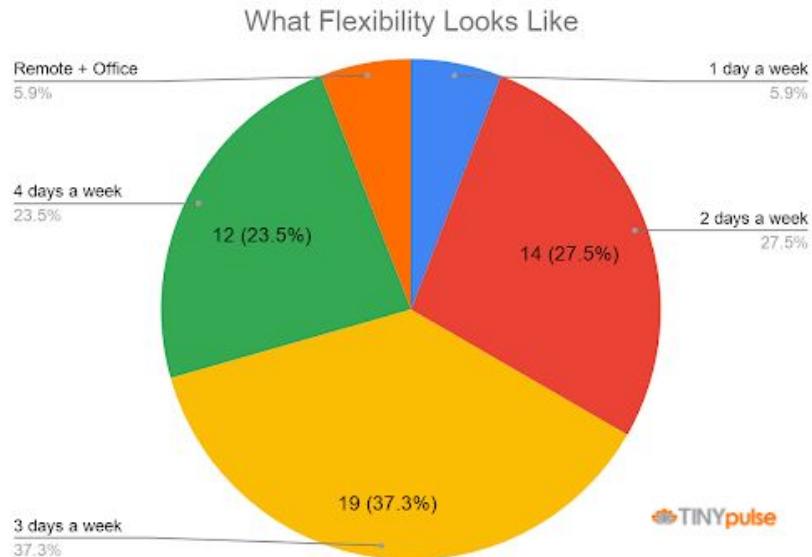
## Currently 39% of organizations have not finalized their RTW policy

- 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.



# Office Policy Plans

## Company Returning to Office Policy



- 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...”

## Company with Hybrid WFH Policies



- 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.”

## Companies with Making WFH Permanent Policies



- 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.

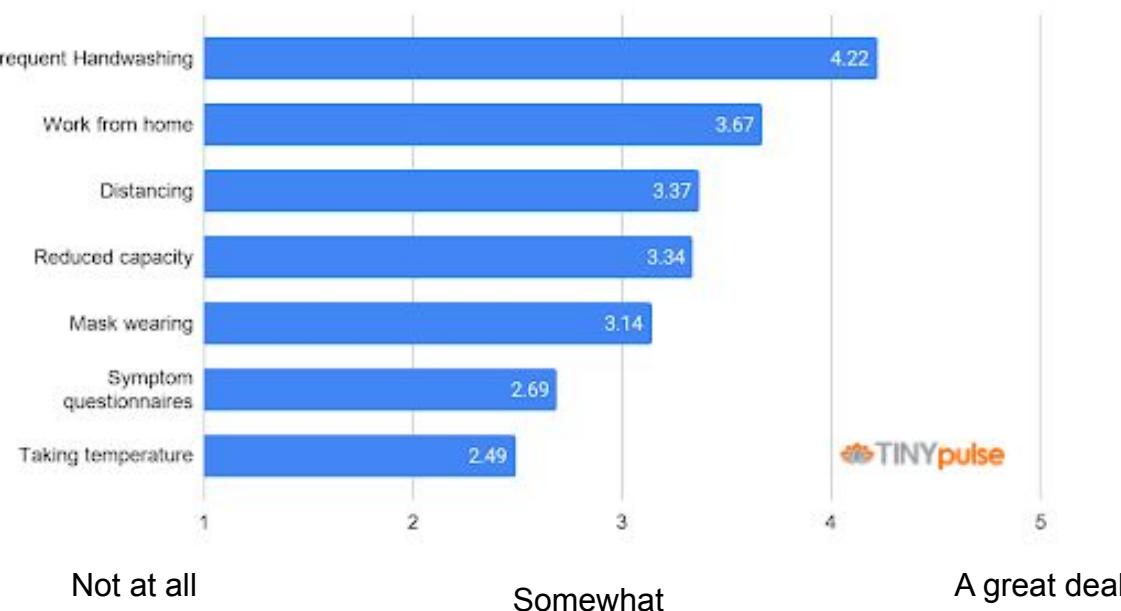
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## Of pandemic sparked at work practices, Frequent handwashing will be most encouraged post-pandemic

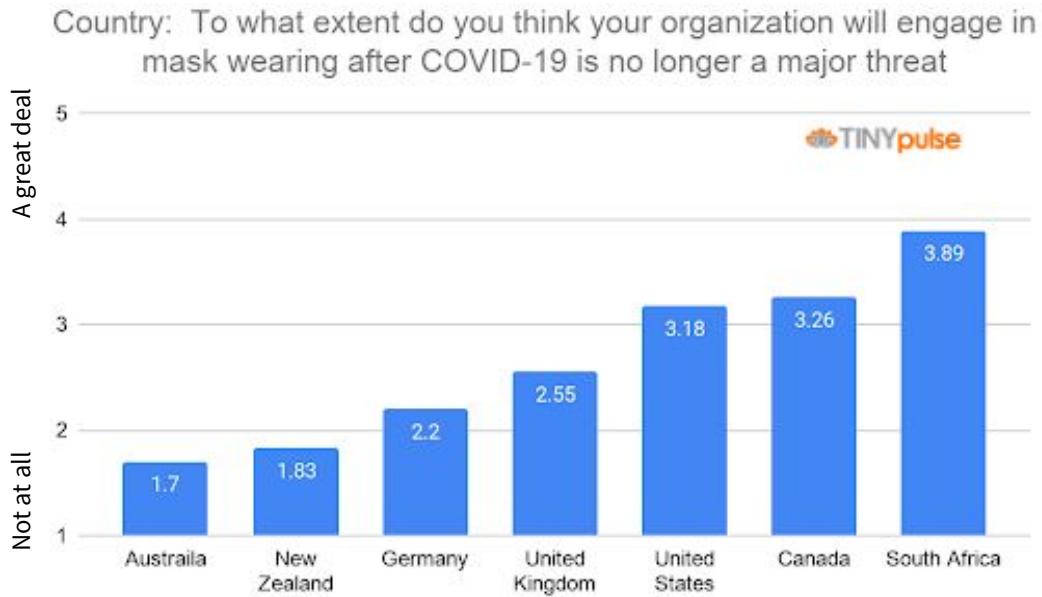
- The lowest rated practice is taking employee temperatures at 2.49.
- HR managers reported somewhat continuing a Mask wearing as a policy at 3.14. Indicating a lower commitment to this practice compared to several other practices.

To what extent do you think your organization will engage in the following practices after COVID-19 is no longer a major threat:



## 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.

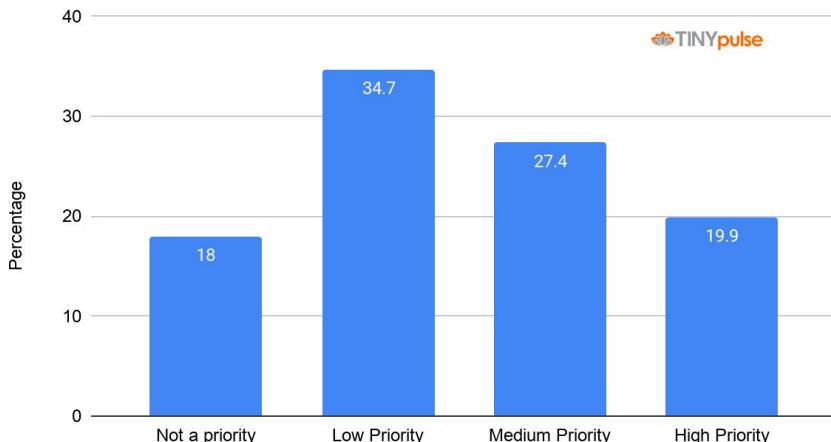


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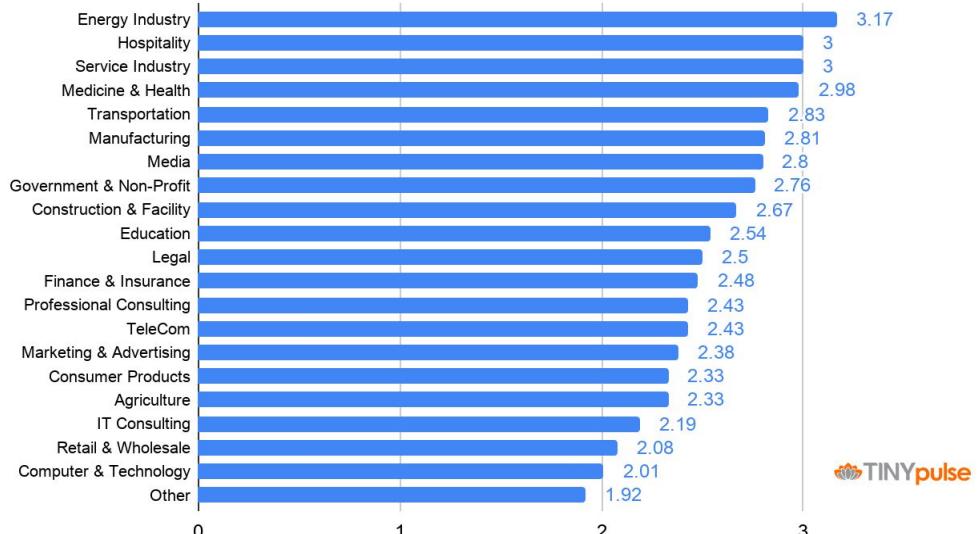
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**More than half (53%) of HR leaders reported that COVID-19 vaccine policy is not a priority or a low priority**

COVID-19 Vaccine Policy



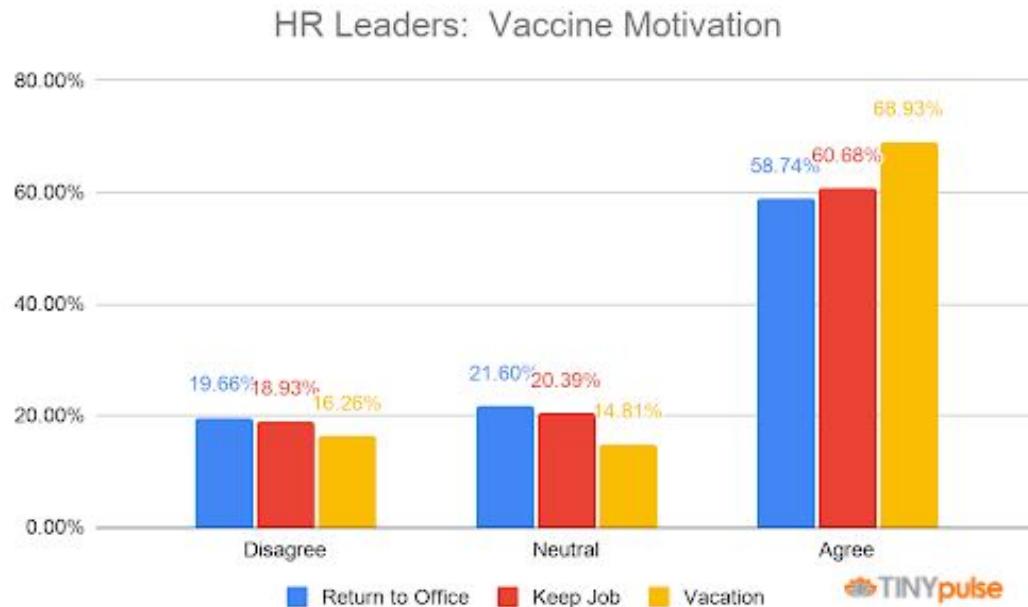
Industry: Vaccine Policy Priority



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 fewer WFH options and higher risk of exposure.

## 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.



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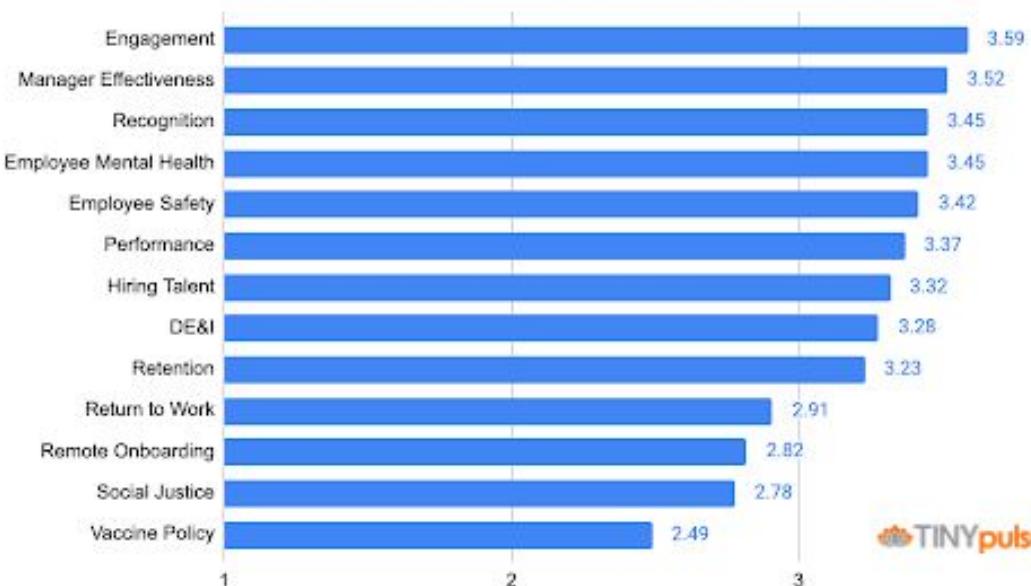
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## Employee engagement was the #1 priority for HR leaders in 2021

- #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.

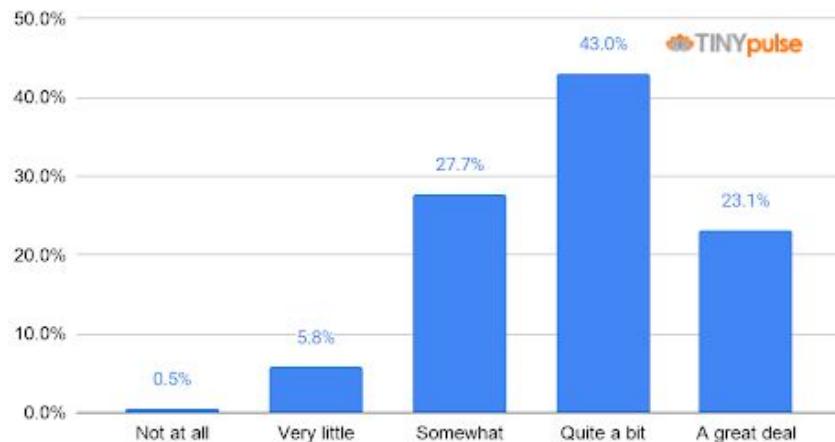
What are the top priorities for Human Resources in your organization in 2021?



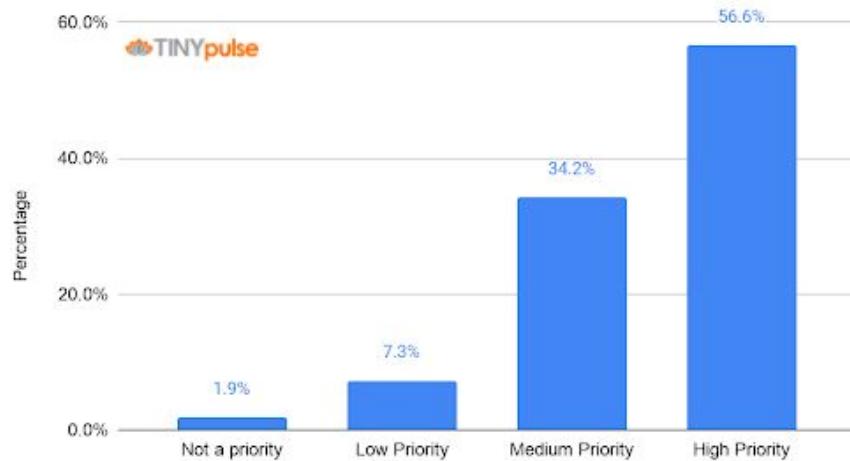
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**57% of HR managers responded that Employee Mental Health was a High Priority in 2021. There was no significant correlation between reported employee emotional exhaustion and prioritization of mental health.**

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

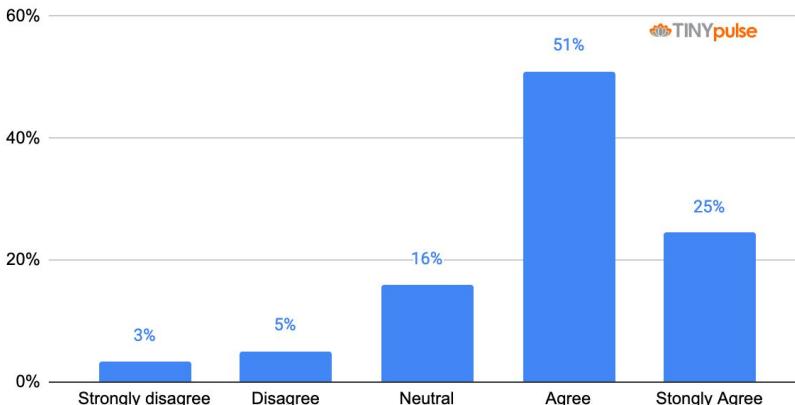


Employee Mental Health as a Priority in 2021

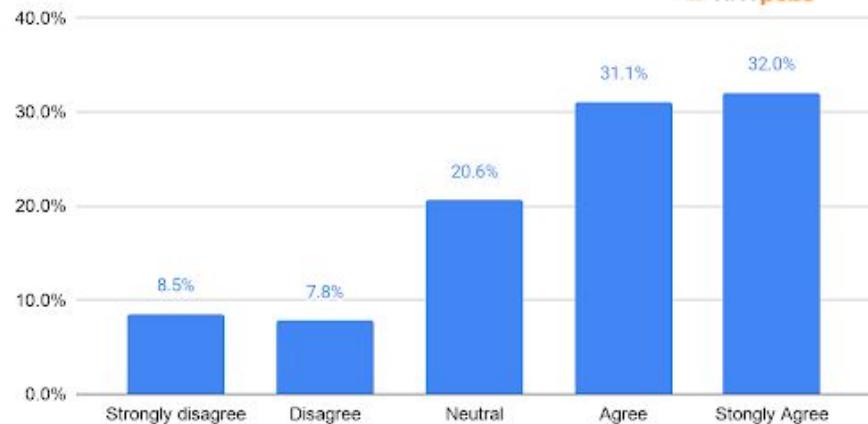


**76% of HR managers agree that their organization has room to improve on DE&I. However, only 63% agree that the plan to focus on DE&I in 2021.**

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



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



Room for Improvement in DE&I

.286\*\*

Focus on DE&I Initiatives

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**David Niu**  
Founder and CEO of  
*TINYpulse*

## 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

