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The Pandemic Impact on the Workplace

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The Pandemic Impact on the Workplace

- New technologies enabling virtual interaction and collaboration
- Increases in remote and hybrid work
- Impact on the physical workplace

The Pandemic Impact on the Labor Market

- The Great “Resignation”
 - In March 2022, available job openings hit 11.5 million...
 - AND “quits” edged up to 4.5 million (a record)
 - Job openings outnumbered unemployed workers by ~5.5M
 - In 2021, 48 million workers quit their jobs (a record)
- Minnesota’s Labor Force

The Pandemic Impact on the Labor Market

- According to Pew Research, workers who quit a job in 2021 did so because:
 - Low pay (63%)
 - Perceived lack of opportunities for advancement (63%)
 - Feeling disrespected at work (57%)
 - Child-care issues (48%)
 - Lack of work flexibility (43%)
- We are in a new era of *boundary-less recruiting*
- Unexpected turnover is costly in many ways

Employee Expectations Shift

- Key Value Drivers for Employees - Post-Pandemic Workplace
 - Work-Life Harmony: More flexibility and autonomy
 - Well-being gains importance
 - Opportunities for growth
 - Sense of inclusion and belonging
 - Competitive wages and benefits

How to respond

- It starts with our **workplace culture**:
 - How we carry out our mission and values
 - How we create cultures of inclusion and belonging
 - How we communicate, support, manage, engage, fail, endure, succeed, and celebrate as institutions
- Understand and promote what makes our institutions attractive and desirable places to work and develop / renew our **employee value proposition**

How to respond

- Reframe and renew our **employee value proposition**
 - Build on a foundation of competitive and attractive pay and benefits in a hyper-competitive talent market
 - Offer greater autonomy and flexibility where it works
 - Re-recruit your current high performers
 - Evaluate causes of stress, anxiety and burnout and offer remediation ideas to reduce the sources

How to respond

- Reframe and renew our **employee value proposition**
- Create and showcase more opportunities for social connection and community; connect individual work with organizational mission
- Build a culture of appreciation and recognition
- Prioritize, promote and support employee learning and advancement opportunities

Post-Pandemic Workplace Pilot

- No single approach is appropriate for every institution
- FY22 Leadership Action Team (LAT) on the Post-Pandemic Workplace
 - Developed a Telework Decision Framework and
 - Defining the Student Experience discussion guide
- Lake Superior College and Metro State agreed to pilot and assess the effectiveness of the framework last Fall

Reflections on the Telework Framework



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Our Approach to Telework/Hybrid Work

- Nature of Metro's student body allows more hybrid work
- Emphasize service to students
 - Positive response to remote services
 - Benefits of synchronous learning for sense of belonging





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Our Experience with the Draft Telework Framework

82%

Supervisors found the telework framework helpful

“Makes telework choices understandable”

“Aligns with the university’s philosophy”

“Appreciate the focus on employee readiness”

Other Things to Include in the Future:

- Should mention that flexibility is understood and should be encouraged
- Add a component stressing the need to maintain a sense of belonging
- Work to create consistency across the institution
- Communication of potential flexibilities to job applicants





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Other impacts of Telework/Hybrid Work

- Space usage
- New methods of supervision



Goal: Balance employee value proposition AND the business needs of the College (that is, needs of our employees and the success of our students!)

- Prospective employees asking about telework options
- Current employees asking about opportunities for telework
- Concerns for equity among the areas (facilities employees really cannot telework).
- Re-examine position descriptions for ways to be more inclusive and provide opportunities to grow (remove unnecessary barriers)

Top Employee Expectations

Autonomy and Flexibility

Rebuild Social Connections

Support for Advancement Opportunities

Atmosphere of Appreciation and Inclusion



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Table Discussions

1. What post-pandemic workplace challenges (and opportunities) resonate most with you?
2. What is your institution currently doing to address the challenges and/or realize the opportunities?
3. What might we do collectively as a system to better address these challenges and/or seize the opportunities?



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