• AgileOne WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS MARKET OVERVIEW

A New Era in Work

2022 Outlook, Edition 3

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

Understanding your workforce challenges in 2022 and beyond

In passing the two-year mark since the beginning of the COVID-19 health pandemic, organizations around the world continue to grapple with just how much the workforce landscape has changed. Company leadership and hiring managers tend to talk about a "return to normal," but is this even possible anymore when it comes to the world of work? For example, can companies compel workers to go back to the office? To work according to a 9-5 daily schedule or accept other traditional work boundaries that the pandemic has thrown into question?

If organizations are still wondering what the long-term future will look like, so are workers themselves. Some have spoken loud and clear by simply leaving their jobs, creating what we've come to call the "Great Resignation." Current quit rates support the moniker—and 41 percent of global workers are thinking of quitting by mid-2022 and beyond.¹ For many workers, pre-COVID workplace rules don't make sense anymore. In resigning, they've indicated that going back to "normal" is not an option. Addressing worker sentiment remains a key challenge for companies and their leadership as they move past the pandemic and start to confront the future of work. This is why AgileOne's workforce solutions market overview, Edition 3, focuses squarely on why workers are leaving their jobs today—and what companies can do to retain the talent they need to be successful. In the pages that follow, we share current perspectives and statistics about worker resignations across the U.S. and Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA); the sectors feeling the strongest constraints; and what companies can do to nurture employee loyalty and strengthen workforce strategies.

There are many reasons to be optimistic about work today. In helping companies remain vigilant about the issues affecting their workforces, AgileOne is confident we can continue to shape a better future for both employers and the employees who keep their businesses going.

EMEA AND U.S. MARKET OVERVIEW A RESIGNATION TIDAL WAVE

People are quitting in record-breaking numbers across the U.S. and EMEA

There is no shortage of attention being paid to the global workforce today. Organizations are not necessarily examining how they can keep people happy in a fundamentally changed workplace. Instead, they are trying to pinpoint a far more pressing global problem: why people are leaving jobs in record numbers.

The numbers speak for themselves. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated in a recent labor update that America is seeing an "all-time high" in resignations. This includes 4.5 million people voluntarily leaving their jobs in November 2021.² This is not just a trend affecting North America; Microsoft and LinkedIn found similar numbers across the world when they took an in-depth look at resignations on a global scale.

In surveying more than 30,000 people in 31 countries and analyzing trillions of productivity and labor signals across Microsoft 365 and LinkedIn, the study's authors found that more than 40 percent of global workers were planning on leaving their jobs over the course of the next year.³ While there are many complex reasons that people continue to resign, there is no doubt that the evolution in how we see work itself is a contributing factor. COVID-19, for example, accelerated the view that not all workers need to be at a physical location to get their jobs done. This is why 30 percent of global workers have also indicated that they intend to seek other options if their employers require them to eventually return to the office full time.⁴

4.5 million

people who voluntarily left their jobs in the U.S. in November 2021⁵



global percentage of workers who are considering leaving their jobs by mid-2022 and beyond⁶ **30** percent

global percentage of workers who said they will find a new job if compelled to go back to the office⁷

FUN FACT:

Organizational Psychologist and Professor Anthony Klotz of Texas A&M University first coined the term "Great Resignation" in early 2021, anticipating a huge resignation wave based on several complex factors related to COVID-19.⁸

TALENT MARKET OVERVIEW MAKING THE NUMBERS REAL

t can be tempting for employers to consider global resignation statistics as far removed from their everyday workforce challenges. However, we can already see how the 'Great Resignation' is affecting both specific organizations and the global economy at the most basic levels.

Take the statistic that 41 percent of global workers are considering leaving their jobs by mid-2022 and beyond. This includes people working in all categories of the labor market. So whether you employ bluecollar workers or people in more traditional "office" roles like high tech or finance, your organization is likely to feel the strain soon (if it's not already). Taking this a step further, if you employ 10,000 people, you could be looking at having to fill almost 4,000 jobs this year and beyond.

The inflation equation

There is evidence that the current major workforce resignation is contributing to record inflation as well. The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, for example, has found a "strong and positive relationship between the share of employed workers quitting their jobs (quit rate) and the rate of wage and price inflation."⁹ What this essentially means is that as the number of employed workers looking for other jobs continues to rise, wage competition among employers will rise, too, adding to an increase in general inflationary pressures. In 2021, this phenomenon helped to raise the inflation rate by at least 1 percent in the U.S.¹⁰



"We find that the tighter labor market during the pandemic gradually contributed to raising the rate of inflation."

-CHICAGO FED LETTER, NO. 465, FEBRUARY 2022¹¹

RESIGNATIONS BY KEY SECTOR/VERTICAL

WHAT'S HAPPENING ACROSS INDUSTRIES

Some areas more than others are feeling the out-size effects of workers leaving

While worker resignations are higher than usual for most industries around the world, certain sectors are feeling it more. The average quit rate across all industries in the U.S. by January 2022 was 3 percent. The quit rate for leisure and hospitality in November 2021, however, was more than double at 6.4 percent. Retail came in with the second-highest quit rate at 4.4 percent, making these two relatively low-wage industries responsible for one-third of all people who quit in November.¹²

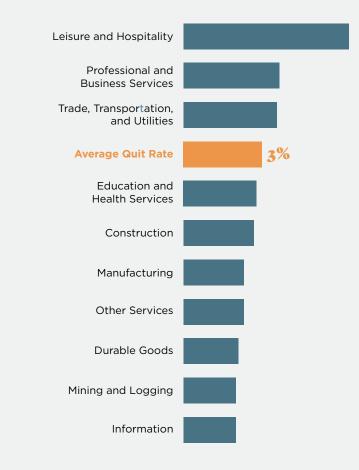
Some of this is to be expected since turnover in these industries has always been historically high, with more people choosing to leave voluntarily at predictable intervals over the last two decades. Still, this is the highest quit rate leisure and hospitality has seen since 2000, prompting experts to speculate that the pandemic has indeed directly affected worker resolve in these areas.¹³

Professional and business services industries currently have a 3.7 percent quit rate; slightly better than the 3.6 percent quit rate in trade, transportation, and utilities. Quit rates for construction, information, finance, insurance, and real estate are all relatively lower than the national average and have actually decreased slightly.¹⁴



Quit rates by industry

A few major sectors are responsible for a higher rate of quitting.¹⁵



RESIGNATIONS BY KEY SECTOR/VERTICAL SPOTLIGHT ON HEALTHCARE AND HIGH TECH

Quit rates are rising in two critical industries

The industries that have seen the most dynamic (and most complex) movement in workers since the beginning of the pandemic are the ones that have experienced an increase in demand. After analyzing nine million employee records across more than 4,000 global companies spanning job industries, the Harvard Business Review found that this is especially true with healthcare and high tech.

The pandemic ushered in novel demands of the global healthcare system, prompting many healthcare workers to experience everything from extreme burnout to the daily dangers of contracting COVID-19. This led to a 3.6 percent increase of healthcare workers electing to leave their jobs in 2021 over the previous year, compared with other industries where quit rates have actually started to decrease (manufacturing, construction, etc.).¹⁶

Quit rates increased even more in high tech when comparing 2020 with 2021. Part of this has been driven by the need for organizations to invest in better technology to become more digital and improve overall operations. So by November of 2021, resignations in high tech had increased by 4.5 percent as this highly skilled workforce continued to search for better opportunities.¹⁷

Overall, workers in both of these industries are the most likely to actively look for other jobs while still fully employed—or to leave the workforce altogether.



"These (resignation) trends highlight the importance of taking a data-driven approach to determining not just how many people are quitting, but who exactly has the highest turnover risk, why people are leaving, and what can be done to prevent it."

-HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW

NORTH AMERICA SPOTLIGHT IN TRANSITION: NORTH AMERICAN WORKERS AND THE "TRADITIONAL JOB"

With millions of open positions, Americans are still quitting in droves

A s we stated at the beginning of this report, the U.S. continues to experience record-high resignations among non-farm workers, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Current resignation statistics are at some of the highest levels the BLS has ever seen, as stated in one of their most recent labor reports. The annual number of quits increased by 12 million from 2020 to 2021, for a total of 47.8 million.¹⁸

However, by the end of July 2021, there were also a record 10.9 million open positions.¹⁹ With people still quitting, it's easy to see how filling these jobs could become a huge strain for American companies. Company leaders have been feeling this for a while, with a recent survey indicating that almost half of U.S. executives (49 percent) continue to see noticeably higher turnover among their ranks.²⁰

Who, exactly, is leaving? It's not who you might think. Older Gen X and Baby Boomers have been staying put, as well as younger workers just starting their careers. By contrast, it's the "mid-level" workers, aged 30-45, who seem to be making the boldest moves. From 2020 to 2021, resignations among their ranks increased by more than 20 percent.²¹ There are a few contributing factors, but one stands out the most: Employers might think that hiring people with limited experience is risky in the current labor market, making people in the middle of their careers more attractive and in-demand than other worker categories.



NORTH AMERICA SPOTLIGHT

In two decades, "quits" have spiked the most dramatically over the last two years in the U.S.²²



NORTH AMERICA SPOTLIGHT IT'S NOT (ALWAYS) ABOUT THE MONEY

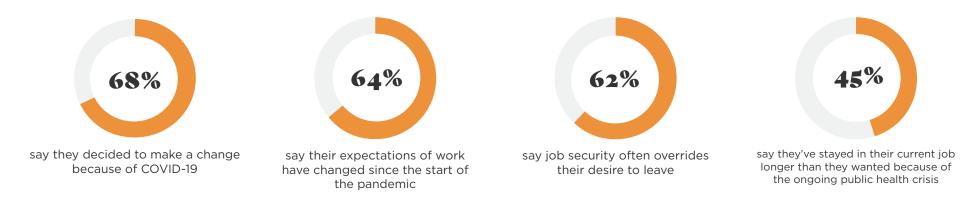
Salary is just one of many reasons U.S. workers are leaving their jobs

n March of 2020, we were just beginning to understand the seriousness of the pandemic and its potential for disrupting virtually every part of our society. On the job, tensions increased. Many managers, leaders say, did not have the tools to work with remote employees. So while some rose to the occasion in dealing with COVID-19 challenges, others faltered, prompting 56 percent of American workers to consider finding new jobs expressly because of their managers.²³

This and many other sentiments about today's workplace are gradually becoming the status quo for the collective American consciousness, signaling to companies that there are rarely easy answers when it comes to retaining employees. Yes, money is important—but many workers, burned out after more than 18 months of constant strain, have also come to realize there may be better ways to earn a living.

According to a 2021 survey of American H.R. professionals, these are the reasons most often cited by an employee when leaving a job:²⁴

- Better compensation (53%)
- Better work-life balance (42%)
- Better benefits (36%)
- Career advancement opportunities (33%)



In a 2021 survey of Americans looking for a new job, COVID has both prompted them to leave and to be cautious:²⁵

EUROPEAN REGIONAL OVERVIEW A NEW APPROACH TO WORK IN THE EU

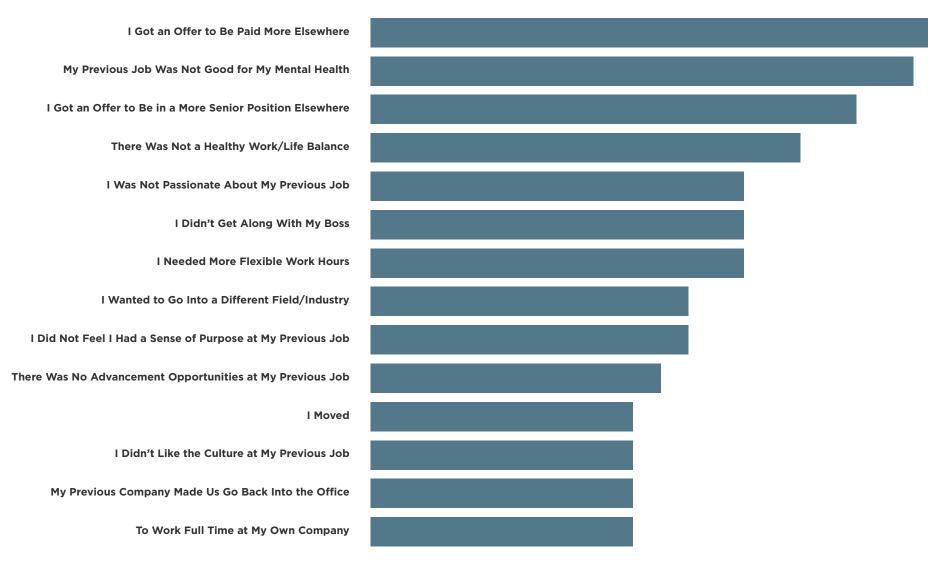
Western Europe is experiencing the Great Resignation too—with a few key differences

Similar to North America, Western Europe work culture has not been spared from the effects of COVID-19. When the pandemic first began, Europeans across the continent saw their lives and any semblance of career path significantly altered in the wake of the pandemic. Mass layoffs also contributed to a worsening unemployment rate, going from 6.3 percent across the EU to 7.7 percent at the height of the health crisis.²⁶

Although the unemployment rate has returned to pre-pandemic levels, EU work life is still in a state of flux. While the full impact of the war in Ukraine on EU work life, for example, remains to be seen, some speculate that employees will vote for stability and remain in their current jobs. At the same time, Ukrainians displaced due to the war are also looking for work in the EU. Companies are grappling with the future of work and the new way in which Europeans approach the typical 40-hour work schedule. Unlike North America, those on the move have mostly been Gen Z and Millennials. They're going after more money—but they are also keen to take care of their mental health and find different jobs that will put them on an upward career path.

Country by country, Germany has seen the most COVID-related resignations (6 percent), followed by the U.K. (4.7 percent), the Netherlands (2.9 percent), and France (2.3 percent).²⁷ In the pages that follow, we break down some of the country-specific factors in the EU that inspire job change.

EUROPEAN REGIONAL OVERVIEW GEN Z AND MILLENNIALS LEFT JOBS ACROSS THE EU FOR MANY REASONS SINCE COVID BEGAN.²⁸



NETHERLANDS SPOTLIGHT WORKERS IN THE NETHERLANDS: HAPPY FOR NOW

A unique social structure + culture of contracts means workers aren't always looking for what's next

A mong the European countries where the Great Resignation is not as strong, the Netherlands remains insulated for now, thanks to some distinct cultural traits. Chief among these is that the labor market in the Netherlands is "completely different" from others, such as the United States'.²⁹ This is partly due to strict labor regulations that typically translate into collective bargaining agreements, which prevent poor working conditions and promote a generally positive work culture. These agreements also ensure that even if companies have to pivot in times of crisis, they remain obligated to pay full wages to their employees.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the Dutch government also went to great lengths to offer support packages to companies so they could avoid negative economic impacts. This means Dutch organizations have also avoided mass layoffs, which has given the vast majority of workers good reason to stay in their jobs.³⁰ As a result, the 2.9 percent quit rate in the Netherlands has essentially remained unchanged since the start of the pandemic.³¹

NETHERLANDS SPOTLIGHT

owever, the financial picture for some program recipients, likely smaller businesses, is expected to take a downturn as COVID-related relief programs have ceased as of April 1, 2022. This will certainly result in an uptick of bankruptcies and more people available to work, but with the potential outcome of a talent-to-jobs mismatch.

The country is certainly not immune to other complications of the pandemic. Inflation is already impacting the Dutch population; in addition to higher home prices and a more flexible labor market, the country also saw inflation increase 11.9 percent year over year in March.³²

A recent survey of Dutch workers indicates they are watching American workers closely and may be inspired by the North American job exit. Nearly half of 5,000 employees surveyed said the Great Resignation is affecting their intentions to stay in their current jobs.³³

U.K. SPOTLIGHT WORKERS IN THE U.K.: FROM FEAR TO CONFIDENCE

Perhaps more than any other country within the European continent, the U.K. is feeling the pinch of workers leaving

U.K. companies laid off a large number of workers, similar to companies in the U.S. when the pandemic began. Yet, over the course of two years, that situation has dramatically shifted, with workers questioning their current employment status, which has fueled a uniquely British job exit. But it's not necessarily because workers dislike their current job situations—it's because the labor market is making workers more optimistic than ever that they could benefit from better opportunities elsewhere. In fact, the number of job vacancies from December 2021 to February 2022 rose to a new record of 1.3 million—with half of the industry sectors showing record highs.³⁴

The business environment is fueling that belief, with the U.K. achieving a 40 percent "business confidence score" by the end of 2021, according to Lloyd's Banking Group. This is slightly lower than in 2020, but it remains above the long-term average of 28 percent.³⁵ What this means is that U.K. companies expect to keep hiring, with nearly half of firms planning to increase staffing levels over the next 12 months. This could be a win for U.K. workers as they continue to see demand for their services and seek out opportunities to advance their careers post-pandemic.

U.K. SPOTLIGHT THE CONFIDENCE GAME³⁶

- Two-thirds of U.K. workers plan to change jobs in 2022
- Macroeconomic factors have created new job opportunities
- Compared to 2019, U.K. candidates are more selective now-viewing 1.5 times as many jobs before applying

"The number of job vacancies in December 2021 to February 2022 rose to a new record of 1,318,000. This is an increase of 105,000 from last quarter, with half of the industry sectors showing record highs."

-Office for National Statistics³⁷



GERMANY SPOTLIGHT WORKERS IN GERMANY: READY FOR BIG CHANGE

With Germany experiencing some of the biggest quit rates in Europe, companies have no choice but to pivot their workforce strategies

Germany has seen the most resignations in Europe since COVID began, and this has solidified the notion that the German labor market is poised for major change. In fact, even in 2019 before the pandemic started, low salaries and a lack of work-life balance were prompting German workers to take stock. In addition, the German Economic Institute estimates that the labor force will shrink by more than 300,000 people in 2022 as the number of retiring workers surpasses the number of workers entering the workforce.³⁸ One way for companies to mitigate such uncertainty is to integrate contingent options into their talent strategies, thereby providing the flexibility they need during challenging times.

German firms are now also hiring more. By June of 2021, companies were already expressing greater confidence in their ability to hire more people, which is expected to continue through 2022.³⁹ With such a positive business outlook in Germany, the presumed higher demand for labor could lead to more job openings, increasing the chances of people wanting to change jobs.

GERMANY SPOTLIGHT

"Due to the easing (of coronavirus restrictions) and the start of a spring rebound, unemployment is falling and employment is rising. The consequences of the war in Ukraine are at the moment showing up only sporadically in the labour market data. However, the dangers of a further escalation and possible stoppages in supplies of fossil fuels are weighing on further economic developments."

> -Daniel Terzenbach, head of the regions at the Labour Office⁴⁰

The willingness of companies in Germany to hire new staff is at the lowest level since May 2021, and some point to Russia's attack on Ukraine as one reason companies are more cautious with spending.⁴¹

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMPANIES WHAT'S REALLY DRIVING THE URGE TO QUIT?

Regardless of geography or job, there are some key common attributes driving the Great Resignation in North America and Europe

f there is one sentiment we can all agree on with regard to the so-called 'Great Resignation,' it's that there is no one-size-fits-all explanation. As a result, issues regarding what work means now and the human experience in general—are complex at best. As we've seen in the previous pages of this report, different countries are experiencing different challenges. Still, there are some overarching themes in how workers view their jobs today, regardless of where they live and what they do.

66%73%67%of leaders say their
company is considering
redesigning office
space for hybrid workof employees want flexible
remote work options to stayof employees want
more in-person work or
collaboration
post-pandemic.

Both remote and hybrid work models flourished out of necessity during the pandemic, prompting organizations and employees alike to reconsider how work gets done. Many industries and professions still require on-site workers, such as medicine. But for white-collar professionals in IT and other service industries, working solely from home or within hybrid scenarios seems to work just fine. As a result, companies everywhere are reevaluating their ability to offer a more flexible workday post-pandemic, knowing that employees aren't as willing to make the daily commute anymore.

The toll the global health pandemic has taken on emotional health and well-being cannot be overstated. Even in scenarios where employees could log on from home, extended screen time and the blurring of lines between professional and personal lives have turned out to be too much. Bonafide burnout is the result, which typically includes a loss of motivation, a sense of ineffectiveness on the job, and an overall sense of detachment from others. Complicating this issue is the fact that one in five global survey respondents say their employer does not care about their work-life balance.⁴³ To help workers begin to feel more positive about their emotional health—and, in turn, more loyal to their employers—companies would be wise to confront these issues and utilize proven methods to combat burnout.

The best of both worlds⁴²

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMPANIES

Tired around the globe⁴⁴



Power to the People

D espite the countless challenges workers all over the world continue to face as a result of the pandemic, many experts feel that, overall, they have never been in a better position to take their power back and demand workplace change. In short, whether people are looking for more flexible arrangements, more attractive opportunities, or career advancement, they don't want to compromise on the things that will make them happy in their work lives anymore. In reevaluating their priorities and becoming firmer in their demands, workers are expressing to employers that they are an essential component of a successful business. Employers can rise to the occasion by taking employees' concerns seriously and devising tangible solutions to prevent resignations and foster workforce loyalty.



"It is likely that employees regard changing jobs in economically uncertain times as risky or less profitable, and therefore tend to behave conservatively."

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMPANIES

Compensation Remains a Strong Motivator

C areer aspirations and concerns over work-life balance aside, people are not likely to discount compensation as a driving force in their work lives. The economic strain of COVID-19 strengthened workers' resolve in this area, prompting companies to reevaluate their strategies to make sure they could continue offering competitive, market-based pay. This is definitely happening in the hospitality sector of the U.S., where fierce competition for workers and the highest turnover rate of any industry have led employers to increase hourly wages significantly. Unfortunately, because of current inflation pressures, the real wage for the average American worker decreased in 2021.⁴⁶ Pay stagnation will continue to inspire workers in both the U.S. and Europe to change jobs, as this is one sure way to increase income if a current employer is unable to meet salary expectations.



True Value

Taking inflation into account, Americans' collective paychecks fell by 2.7% from March 2021 to March 22 2022.⁴⁷

SOLUTION 1 CONSIDER THE HOLISTIC EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Solutions to Combat the Great Resignation: Make Sure Your Employee Experience Measures Up

A positive company culture that puts the employee first is a steadfast predictor of loyalty

The subject of "toxic" work culture is a common workplace trope. After all, no one wants to work for an organization that does not truly value employees' contributions and emotional well-being. Unfortunately, while most companies would never deliberately create a negative work environment, these conditions still occur when leadership fails to pay close attention to the holistic employee experience. The Great Resignation has only amplified this failure; many people who've quit their jobs in the last year cite culture as a huge factor. A recent study backs this up, indicating that a "toxic corporate culture" is the leading predictor of attrition at Culture 500 Companies in America.⁴⁸



"Toxic culture is 10.4 times more likely to contribute to attrition than compensation."

-MIT SLOAN MANAGEMENT REVIEW⁴⁹

SOLUTION 1 (CONTINUED)

The fact that even Culture 500 Companies—an index of multi-national organizations known for their cultural values—can't always keep employees happy is a clear sign that almost any organization could benefit from re-examining their employee experience and taking the steps needed to improve it. At AgileOne, we've taken these concerns to heart—and we've been innovating strategies since before the pandemic started. We've doubled down on the things we can do to support a positive workplace culture consistently. What we've seen—and experts agree—is that a positive, holistic culture does more than just foster goodwill and loyalty among your workforce; good company culture is also proven to drive strong business performance.

Of course, there is no right or wrong answer when it comes to creating a better employee experience, but taking a human-centered approach is a good start. The best leaders will always approach their employees with empathy and a desire to address unique and diverse needs. Hybrid work environments present unique challenges, so companies willing to double down on network building and creating a sense of community will be more successful in creating an inviting work environment. Additionally, managers who prioritize building social capital and nurturing employee needs will also help workers avoid burnout and understand that management values them beyond the task at hand.

SOLUTION 2 CONSIDER REIMAGINING YOUR TOTAL WORKFORCE STRATEGY

Solutions to Combat the Great Resignation: Develop a Total Workforce Strategy

Retention will remain a challenge in the future of work without a thoughtful approach to managing your holistic workforce needs

iring managers know how expensive it can be to bring on someone new vs. retaining the knowledge and skills of a faithful employee. In this way, the Great Resignation has come at a tremendous cost to countless organizations in terms of both losing valuable employees and making unforeseen financial investments in new talent.

Embracing a total workforce strategy similar to what we do for AgileOne clients can help. Typically developed with the help of a workforce advisor, these tailored strategies are designed to reframe an organization's unique workforce challenges, helping them bring all of their workforce needs under one umbrella. The biggest advantage of this approach amid the Great Resignation is that organizations become empowered to be proactive instead of reactive when faced with retention problems.

Total talent management can help in the same way, inspiring companies to embrace people, processes, and technologies to support the effective management of all employees while also building in retention strategies. Driven by data and the same holistic workforce philosophy, total talent management can address an organization's workforce fulfillment needs by integrating a singular model inclusive of multiple worker types, classifications, and outsourced resources.

Three steps to improve employee retention through data:50



SOLUTION 3 CONSIDER CONTINGENT

Solutions to Combat the Great Resignation: Take a Closer Look at Contingent

Temporary, or 'contingent,' hiring is nothing new-except when it comes to the future of work

A s employers across the world were still trying to figure out the "future of work" in early 2020, the pandemic swept in and unexpectedly forced their hands. Suddenly, the future was staring them in the face, and they had to contemplate serious employment issues and define new ways of working overnight. Fortunately, the pandemic also reminded companies how valuable contingent workers could be in a crisis like the Great Resignation.

Contingent labor has historically been seen as a way to fill gaps when there is an unforeseen business need. But how about considering ways to integrate contingent workers into your workforce so they can add long-term value? Demand for temporary workers is already increasing in the U.S., with employers expected to increase their contingent workforce by 7.0 percent in 2022, compared to 2021.⁵¹ Thirty-five percent of the nation's workforce was contingent in 2020, totaling 51.5 million workers.⁵² By 2050, it is predicted that up to 50 percent of the U.S. workforce could become contingent.

Contingent work is certainly a global phenomenon, and those companies who take advantage of this alternative way of working will further decrease their attrition risks while strengthening their overall workforce strategies.

TOP-FIVE TAKEAWAYS



People are continuing to leave their employers post-pandemic, with 41% of workers around the globe considering changing jobs in 2022 and beyond. This has put organizations around the world on high alert for ways to retain critical talent and foster more loyalty among their workforces.



There are many complex factors pushing the urge to quit, but the pandemic has brought to light a few key similarities across regions, industries, and jobs: People want better opportunities, better work-life balance, and more recognition from employers regarding the value they bring to the table. Addressing company culture is a key first step in preventing voluntary resignations. Workers want a more human touch. They want to be valued not just through compensation, but through more thoughtful strategies regarding flexibility, hybrid work scenarios, and emotional well-being.



Reconsider your total workforce strategy to become an employer of choice. With Total Talent Management from AgileOne, which connects people, processes, and technologies, companies can create actionable plans that will create employee autonomy, better well-being, and better benefits.



Consider contingent work to further bolster your workforce strategy. Both employees and employers can benefit from contingent arrangements, which foster the flexibility many workers are looking for while helping companies more efficiently address workforce demands.

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