



Nonprofit**HR**

WEBINAR TRANSCRIPT

Getting Clear on Your Nonprofit's 2022 Talent Management Priorities

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Getting Clear on Your Nonprofit's 2022 Talent Management Priorities

Learning and development; diversity, equity and inclusion; and retention planning were the top three talent management strategy areas nonprofits focused on in 2021, but after another long and unpredictable year will they remain the primary focus for 2022? The Nonprofit Talent Management Priorities Survey is a signature report that assesses and reveals what the nonprofit sector is most concerned about in regard to managing its people resources. All-inclusive of the sector, this survey applies to mission-driven organizations that are large, mid-sized or micro, providing a rich set of data that every people leader can benefit from understanding. Listen now and hear what other organizations are focusing on in 2022, plus hear insights, implications and tactics you can use to prioritize your people.

From this discussion, you'll learn:

- What nonprofits were concerned about regarding talent management moving into 2022.
- The top three priorities for talent management practices, including talent acquisition, culture and employee engagement, performance management, learning and development.
- A snapshot of last year's data compared to 2022 and what the differences in priorities mean for the sector and your organization.

SPEAKER



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Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Hello, and welcome to today's webinar.

Thank you for joining us for a Nonprofit Talent Management Practices Survey results. My name is Atokatha Ashmond Brew, I am Managing Director of Marketing & Strategic Communication for Nonprofit HR, and I will be your conversation moderator for today.

We have a lot of great content to cover. You're going to walk away with a solid understanding of how nonprofits weighted their talent management priorities for 2022 in addition to insights and implications your organization may want to consider. Before we get started, though, I would like to go over a few items so you know how to participate in today's event.

You've joined the presentation listening using your computer's speaker system by default, if you would like to join over the phone, please just select telephone in the audio pane, and the dial-in information will be displayed. You will have the opportunity to submit text questions to today's presenter by typing your questions into the questions pane. You may send your questions in at any time during the conversation. Our presenter will get to them as soon as she is able to. We collect and address these questions as often as we can to help you understand even more of the content that is shared.

Today, just a brief note about Nonprofit HR before we get started.

Since 2000, Nonprofit HR remains the country's leading and oldest firm focused exclusively on the talent management needs of the social impact sector, including nonprofit, associations and other mission-driven organizations. We focus our consulting efforts on the following areas: Strategy & Advisory, HR Outsourcing, Total Rewards, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Search. We were founded with one goal in mind: to strengthen the social impact sector's talent management capacity by strengthening its people. Lisa Brown Alexander will share a little bit more about Nonprofit HR once she starts to present.

Today's presentation is being presented by Lisa Brown Alexander. She's the Founder and CEO of Nonprofit HR. Driven to serve the often-overlooked people management needs for the social sector, Lisa set out to build a market where one did not exist. She founded Nonprofit HR, the leading talent management firm in the country that works exclusively with the social sector. Lisa's goal is to ensure that every Nonprofit HR engagement inspires social sector leaders to strengthen their most important asset: their people.

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Over the course of her career, Lisa has presented to hundreds of organizations, staff and leadership teams covering all things talent management. Today, fueled by the passion of more than 100 employees and consultants nationwide, Nonprofit HR is a thriving company that is helping many of the nation's most impactful organizations get ahead through smart people management strategies. In the process, they are changing the way the entire sector thinks about talent and culture. Without further ado, Lisa, I'd like to hand it over to you.

Lisa Brown Alexander: Thank you so much, Atokatha, and welcome to each of you. Thank you for joining us this afternoon for what promises to be an insightful conversation about talent management practices across the social impact space. And so, we've got a lot to cover today, we're going to jump right in.

Just a little bit more about us as a firm, we have been conducting the Talent Management Priorities Survey now for several years. And this iteration of the survey is interesting. We've got some interesting new insights to share. The results of the survey represent participation by over 400 organizations from across the country, various mission sizes, geography, location, budget, the whole nine yards. And so, we think we've captured a very good and diverse snapshot of the sector and their plans for talent management in 2022.

Let's get started. We're going to get right into it. I'd like to ... share, first of all, some top-line results from the survey.

We've been asking the same series of questions year over year as a way of gathering data over a longer period of time. But this year, I'd like to focus on comparing movement between the results from our 2021 survey and those of our 2022 survey looking forward into next year. So what we've learned is that we are not necessarily making good progress as it relates to talent management strategy. Last year, 28% of organizations indicated that they had a formal talent management strategy that guided their work in 2021. We lost a little ground, a loss of 3% of organizations, with 25% reporting this year that they had some sort of talent management strategy in place. More organizations, as you'll see, 68%, reported not having a plan, and 7%, a little less than last year fortunately, indicated that they really weren't sure.

We also noted that the talent management priorities between last year and this year in the aggregate have not changed, So, we've got organizations still focusing on culture and engagement, learning and development, and performance management, those have remained among the top three talent management priorities going forward for this new year. You will note there's a difference, lesser focus on culture and engagement, and learning and development this year, as well as performance management. So while the priorities are the same, the numbers have changed, fairly notably. We'll talk about that in just a moment.

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All right, so, as true HR folks, we're going to break down this conversation by function with a start around talent acquisition.

There's a lot happening in the talent acquisition space, and what we are seeing is more than even the last year, we saw an increase from 2019 to 2020. For 2021 to 2022, we're also seeing an increase in the number of organizations focused on attracting and hiring diverse talent. With last year 54% of nonprofits saying that was their leading talent acquisition priority, 69% are saying that now and there are a number of reasons for that. Not the least of which is the focus on the Great Resignation and the mass exodus that we're seeing not only in the social impact space, but across every industry in the country. So, there's a much higher focus on recruiting and attracting talent. What does that mean for you? That means that you may have some challenges finding talent, if your recruiting house and talent acquisition house are not in order.

We're also seeing, and we're glad to see, a greater focus on employer brand, and strengthening employer brand, as a strategy for finding better talent. This did not rise to the level of a top three priority list in 2021, but it has definitely risen in 2022. The reason largely for that is the greater focus on hiring and attracting talent, and understanding the importance of having a strong brand, as one of many tools, to attract the right talent to your organization.

We also are seeing, compared with last year, a much stronger emphasis on strengthening internal capacity for interviewing. Last year, only 24% of organizations reported this as a priority. This year, 50%, that's a full doubling of survey participants saying, we really need to get our recruiting house in order and be sure that we've given our hiring managers and hiring panels the tools and experience and skills they need to bring people into the organization and in a way that mitigates bias, in a way that identifies really the best talent per hire. And so, we're glad to see that. If you are among that 50% that are focusing on that for 2022, we certainly applaud you. For those organizations that are not quite there yet, you'll need to get in the game. Because your colleagues in other organizations, peer organizations, competing organizations, and yes, nonprofits have competition for talent, are getting in this game, and they're working to strengthen their capacity and their skills around interviewing as a way of attracting more talent.

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So, what does this mean?

Well, what we know is that DEI, particularly in the last 20 plus months, has taken on more importance in talent acquisition. It's not just about bringing people into your organization, but it's also bringing more diverse talent into your organization. And this has become particularly important as job seekers and applicants make choices about who they are giving their time and talent to, based on your organization's public commitment to equity and inclusion, so this cannot be lost.

It's not just about your mission anymore. It's, how effectively has your organization communicated its commitment to DEI, particularly equity and inclusion? And the extent to which you've communicated that effectively will impact the job seekers' desire and interest, not in all cases but the majority of cases, on whether or not to join our organization.

We also know that the COVID pandemic and the Great Resignation have really changed the talent acquisition game. So, some 4.4 million Americans left the job force or the workforce in September of 2021. That number peaked in April of 2021 to 10.9 million people. That's really what the Great Resignation is all about. People leaving organizations and in largest numbers.

We know that among those leaving are mid-career professionals, as well as individuals working in the healthcare space. They have been taxed beyond belief. And many folks in healthcare, public health, private healthcare, are opting out of that space. They're burnt out, they're exhausted. Even beyond what we traditionally hear happening across the nonprofit sector. And so, being mindful of the fact that you're likely going to be having more competition to find diverse talent, you will have more competition finding mid-career professionals. If you're in the healthcare space, you're going to be triply challenged. There ... Folks are leaving. They've used this pandemic as an opportunity to make lifestyle changes. And we, as employers, are on the other end of that, needing to replace people who've made wholesale changes in their lives.

We also know that we're currently in a candidate-driven market. What does that mean? That means, for the first time on record, the number of job openings has surpassed the number of unemployed workers, which means the market is tighter, and it's going to take more and better effort on your part as an employer to find the talent that you need. I'm sure many of you are already experiencing that. We'll talk about the impact of compensation on this phenomenon, but it's just the reality that we find ourselves living in as organizations.

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Just a little bit more. We also know that more and more organizations, in addition to wanting to attract diverse talent, as part of that learning and training and strengthening internal capacity, organizations are focusing more and more on reducing and eliminating bias from the interview process and training for that. So, they're specifically and intentionally making sure that the people involved in the interview process are educated and made aware, and have some learning around how to minimize — not eliminate in many cases but minimize — bias in the interview process. And so, if you are leading your talent management function at your nonprofit, this is something you'll want to focus on, particularly if your vacancy rate is high and you will be engaging in higher levels of talent acquisition than you have in the past.

And then finally, the transparency of your brand. I cannot underscore this enough. And we saw this significantly during the social justice movement that really came to fore last summer. Organizations were being called out for inconsistencies in their messaging with reality. And so, it's critical as a talent management leader that you're transparent about your employer brand and that the environment that you sell to jobseekers is consistent with reality. Right? Because a failure to make sure that there's alignment between what you sell, and what you have is going to show up for you in your brand and how your brand is perceived by jobseekers. Again, it's a tough market. Many organizations are increasing their size, doubling their efforts, expanding the scope of their missions, hiring new talent and these are all critical things that you'll want to think about and be aware of as you move into 2022.

All right, so that's talent acquisition. Atokatha, I'm going to pause, just to see if there are any comments or questions. I'm not looking at the chat box, but I'm sure you'll let me know if there's something we need to chat about right now.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: I will, Lisa, there are no questions just yet.

Lisa Brown Alexander: All right, let's keep going.

All right, let's move into my favorite space, which is culture and engagement. I am a huge advocate for effective workplace culture, and I wanted to share some insights and some data that we learned as a result of this year's survey. Much like last year, organizations are continuing to assess their organizational culture, but you'll note that 53% of survey respondents for 2022 said that this was their top priority, compared with 33% last year. That's a full 20% increase in the focus on assessing organizational culture.

Why? Let's talk about that.

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So, what we know is that during this transition to remote work, to having a hybrid workplace, any gaps, any kind of holes in your organizational culture, may have become even bigger as a part of this transition to a hybrid or virtual workplace. Now, as a result of that, talent management leaders are recognizing they need to get a handle on what's going on organizationally and culturally in order to stem the flow of premature resignations, to ensure employee engagement and to also sustain organizational and individual performance. Right? So, assessing your organizational culture is a high priority for many, that's what you've told us, and that's at the top of your list. That, followed by improving organizational culture. That, last year, ranked 19%, so only 19% of organizations were focused on improving culture, whereas 37% this year are doing that. And then finally, a new priority for this year is implementing employee retention and engagement strategies, for all of the reasons you might expect: higher levels of departures, voluntary terminations or resignations from organizations, and needing to hold on to the people who remain. And so, we're encouraged to see that because we believe that the best social impact cultures have a focus, not only on acquisition and bringing people into the organization, but on keeping and engaging top talent in a way that fosters sustainability and mission continuity.

A couple of insights here. We know that workplace culture and ineffective leadership are the key drivers for the Great Resignation, not compensation. And so, if you're struggling with, "We're not able to keep people because we don't pay enough," while that may be true to some extent, that's not the primary reason that people are leaving organizations right now, and these are for-profits and nonprofits.

In many instances, and the data tell us this, they are departing because workplace culture, the culture that they were connected to, was dysfunctional. And as people ... stared their mortality in its face and made lifestyle decisions about how they want to spend their time, they're saying, "You know, do I want to go to work, virtually or otherwise, with the dysfunctional, toxic workplace culture and ineffective leadership, or do I want to just say sayonara and move on." And many people have opted to do that, as we all know. And so, we cannot minimize the power of effective workplace culture. When it works, it can be an absolute fuel and an igniter for attracting talent to your organization. Conversely, a toxic or ineffective workplace culture, and certainly ineffective leadership, has the reverse effect and will drive people out of your organization.

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We know that cultures thrive when staff feel engaged and valued and heard. And so, if you have not engaged in an exercise to listen and pay attention to your staff, you certainly want to get on that bandwagon in 2022, ensuring that your staff feel heard and engaged and valued is a critical part of any employee engagement and retention strategy. Organizations that fail to do so will see staff walk and vote with their feet. They will check out, they will leave, and they'll either do something completely different or they'll move to a nonprofit or another social impact organization that they believe values and engages and listens to their employees.

We know that you cannot strengthen a workplace culture that you don't understand or can't define, right? So, before you can improve, you have to first understand, and understanding comes from asking questions and listening to the answers. Improvement comes from taking action on what you heard. And so, we strongly encourage organizations if you're not having your ear to the ground or have some mechanism to keep your finger on the pulse of what's going on, that you focus on that intently in 2022.

We also know that organizations have a choice about their culture. They can allow it to be defined by unspoken actions, or they can proactively shape it into the cultures that they need to succeed and advance their mission.

What does that mean?

That means, manage your culture on purpose or just let it go by the wayside and hope that it's going to work for you. Chances are it won't. I will be really candid about that. I spent many years of my career, my 25-plus-year career, helping organizations shape and manage their cultures. This is one of the most valuable pathways we have for shaping our organizations and yet, it's underutilized. And so, if you have not paid attention to culture, 2022 is the year to do it, particularly if you are facing challenges with attracting and retaining staff.

Just a couple of other points, we know that as a result of the pandemic, flexibility – not just the pandemic but also renewed calls for social and racial justice – and inclusion will be key drivers for your workplace culture and your employer brand value, right? And so, if you are that organization that remains fixed and rigid with workplace flexibility, and you have not been intentional about creating an inclusive workplace culture, you will find yourself lagging behind because both flexibility and inclusion are key drivers for engagement, key drivers for retention, key drivers for effective workplace culture.

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Just an added point, not to pile on, but this is real stuff that we're hearing from organizations and seeing in our own work as a consulting firm working with nonprofit organizations. We know that employees have also become less tolerant, right? Those who have not left are becoming much more vocal about what they'll tolerate and what they won't. They're much less willing to be quiet about internal dysfunction and poor communication within their organization. And so, if you fall in this category, you need to be prepared to hear more from your staff, whether you have a young staff or an older staff. Immaterial. Whether you're focused in human services or health care, education or entertainment and arts, right? It doesn't matter where you are, we know that consistently employees are not willing to suck it up anymore and just take inappropriate or ineffective leadership and dysfunctional workplace culture, they simply won't do it anymore.

And then, finally, we know that our current climate demands leadership competencies and engagement, empathy and equity. Those continue to be critical skills for leaders to have, master and demonstrate through this period of uncertainty that we find ourselves navigating. And so, as you think about your learning and development strategies, as you think about executive training, executive learning, these are areas where we encourage you to just double down on the need for engaging those staff who choose to remain, the need for leaders to be empathetic for those who are committing time and talent every day, and certainly, ensuring that leaders know how to operate and demonstrate equity in their day to day practices ... are absolutely critical. Doing so will result in having an effective workplace culture.

So, these are just some of our insights around culture and engagement. I can talk about this topic for hours, so I'm going to pause and turn it back to Atokatha to see if we have any comments or questions related to culture.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Hi Lisa, we do have a couple questions, one may be in reference to the prior section, but this one is in reference to the section you're on. How soon should organizations expect ... to see positive impacts from culture initiatives they input?

Lisa Brown Alexander: Immediately, immediately. And you will see it. So, when your staff and your leaders tell you about the concerns that they have, and you take immediate action on those high-priority demands and requests made, you will hear from staff immediately. They'll see it, they'll feel it, they'll know it.

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Now, recognizing that when you do a cultural assessment of your organization, there are going to be priorities that you can immediately implement. And then, there are going to be those priorities that will take much longer. My advice would be focused on those high-impact, low-cost responses that will garner confidence and yield higher levels of trust among staff and will send a clear message that you, as a leadership team, are listening, right? So you can see immediate response with immediate change on those things that you can change immediately. And then, of course, communicating about those things that take a longer time to implement will also be a critical part of your culture and change management strategy.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Here's another question, Lisa: You said organizations are expanding their missions. Have they said why? Is this mission creep?

Lisa Brown Alexander: In some instances it is, right? And this is not a new dynamic among nonprofit organizations. We know that many times organizations that are struggling with their financial sustainability reach into new areas as a way of attracting new funding and ensuring their organizational sustainability. I don't know that the pandemic has changed that. But what we are seeing is organizations begin to expand their missions in response to demands made by the community, by government, by donors, in response to the pandemic in some cases, and I wouldn't consider that mission creep. I would consider that mission evolution. There's a structural balance between creep and evolution. And we could probably spend a whole day talking about that, but expanding your mission is not always a negative thing. It's how it's done, how it's communicated and the engagement of critical stakeholders. Those are all things that are important as you contemplate evolving your mission in response to changing external factors.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK, and here's another: How are organizations changing their comp and benefits to meet the new hiring market that you spoke about earlier?

Lisa Brown Alexander: Glad you asked. We're going to get to total rewards in just one moment. With that, let's move on, so we can get to that as part of our conversation.

Let's talk about performance management and what we're hearing from organizations as it relates to performance management. So, what we heard in 2021, the priority was still restructuring existing performance management systems and programs. But we saw a 17% increase in organizations that are prioritizing restructuring their performance management systems in 2022, compared with 2021. One of the biggest drivers for that is the move or the shift from a physical workplace to a virtual or remote one or a hybrid workplace, and the demands and the changes that come with performance management infrastructure as a result of that.

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We also heard last year that some 33% of organizations were prioritizing implementing training and development initiatives aimed at strengthening manager skills around giving and receiving feedback. This year, 42% of organizations are going to be focusing on training and development initiatives in this space. Why? Because your ability and the ability of managers to give and receive feedback was largely dependent on seeing the person that they were giving and receiving feedback to. And as many organizations have been forced to continue operations on a remote or virtual basis, that skillset has needed to change and we're beginning to see gaping holes in performance management systems and the need to strengthen training and development in this space as a result of moving to a virtual platform. So, that's one of the reasons that we're seeing that.

We're also seeing more organizations, thank goodness, shift from a traditional event-driven performance management model to a continuous feedback model. And being in a virtual environment, or a hybrid environment, and having a continuous feedback model works much more effectively than a traditional event-driven, in-person, paper-and-pen type of model. Let's talk about that just a little bit more.

As I've mentioned already, the shift to remote and hybrid work has really changed the way organizations are looking at performance management. And we see that through the data from this year's survey, many more organizations are needing to focus on this as they navigate through the year and as we recognize that this remote setup that we have is not temporary; it will continue probably for years to come – and certainly, as this pandemic continues to evolve from variant to variant.

We also know that pre-pandemic employers tended to associate a higher value to the effort that they could see, even if the output post-pandemic was the same. So, if I can see you, if I can put my eyes on you, then that means you're working harder, and I'm more confident about your performance. If I can't see you, if I'm in my living room and you're in yours, where you're in your basement and I'm in my bedroom, how do I really know that you're working? It requires a level of trust that many managers have not yet mastered and as a result, we're seeing the recognition among employers that they're there in-person dependent or performance management has really been impacted by that the pandemic world that we find ourselves living in.

We also know that there's a deep prioritization of the transactional aspect of work that's driving performance management redesign. We're moving away from a focus on how we produce things and programs to more of an impact-driven approach, because that's what we can control a little bit better. And that is also influencing how performance management work has been, and is being, designed.

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We have an entire team at Nonprofit HR that spends time working with organizations on rethinking their performance management approach. And we've done a lot of that work in 2021 as a result of this move to a remote and hybrid workforce. So, more to come on that. Think about your own organization's performance management systems and processes. Are they dependent? Do they rely on in-person interaction? If they do, you're going to find yourself needing to rethink that performance management approach to reflect more of our current reality.

Performance factors, such as communication, collaboration and accountability are increasingly important in the virtual work environment. And so, if you're not measuring performance around communication effectiveness and the extent to which people collaborate across your organization, the extent to which people are held accountable, you may find that you need to revisit your performance factors. I hope you're no longer tracking and choosing performance factors such as time and attendance because that means something very different today than it did five years ago. So we strongly encourage you to rethink your performance management approach to integrate, if you aren't doing performance management in a structured way, to integrate communication, collaboration and accountability as key performance factors going forward.

Just a quick quote from one of our survey participants, they recognized the need to focus on the integration of changes made during the pandemic. So they're looking at their organization, looking at their performance management systems, looking at external factors and saying, "We need to make a shift. We need to equip our leaders with better tools to give and receive feedback, and we also need to change our systems to be more responsive in a virtual world."

Any questions, comments around performance management?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Not around performance management just yet, Lisa.

Lisa Brown Alexander: All right, Let's keep moving. We still have a lot of content to share.

We're going to move now into the learning and development space, some organizations refer to it as training. But what we heard from organizations is that they have three priorities as it relates to learning and development this year.

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Developing a learning and development strategy – so in 57% of the cases, organizations don't have a formal learning and development strategy or program in their organizations and are prioritizing that in the year forward.

We heard from respondents that 32% of them are implementing DEI-related training. And we know that this is a direct result of what happened last year across America, an awakening, a jolt into reality, around the continued need to educate, raise, awareness and eliminate unconscious bias or reduce unconscious bias in the workplace. And so, we're seeing a much higher percentage of organizations – this actually didn't even fall on the priority list for 2021, but for 2022 – implementing DEI training is the number two priority among nonprofit organizations.

Now, you may not know how to do that. You may not have a dedicated DEI function at your nonprofit – completely understandable. The vast majority of organizations do not. But what we do encourage you to do, is partner with someone who does. Find a peer organization that's maybe leading in this space, and learn what your colleagues across your peer network have done. And if your whole network of organizations is at the infancy stage of DEI and becoming a more equitable and inclusive organization, then partner with a consultant. Partner with some entity that has done this work before. So, DEI training is not new. It's newer to the nonprofit sector. But the for-profit world has been doing this work for a couple of decades now. And so, there's some good practice out there, some best and better practice around training and development that your organization can engage in, and we certainly encourage you to do that.

And then, finally, as the third priority, we have seen an increase in organizations expanding their investments in strengthening and developing teams. That's up 10% from last year. Last year, 22% of organizations reported this as a priority. This year 45% – huge increase, right? – are reporting that they're going to be expanding their investment in developing and strengthening teams.

Why? Let's talk about that.

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Couple of reasons why. Again, going back to this virtual hybrid workplace. That's really ... exposing where there are gaps in learning among organizations, but we also know that organizations are investing in learning and development more than they have before, because the lack of career growth and mobility are also contributing to why staff are leaving. They're looking across their organizations, and they're saying, "You know, I'm not going anywhere. I'm not experiencing growth." And I'm not talking about micro-sized organizations that have 10 people and there's really nowhere to go. I'm talking about those nonprofit organizations and social impact organizations that do have some mobility opportunities. Staff are in many instances not seeing where they fit in and that's driving premature resignation and termination. And so, investments in the same are really an effort to drive at retention and to foster a claim of learning.

We know that organizations are also moving beyond statements and symbols of equity and inclusion to deepening awareness and eliminating inequity through learning and development. And so, that 32% of organizations that are prioritizing DEI training this year, they're doing that in many instances as a second step on their DEI journey. Many organizations started their journeys last year ... making clear, bold, ambitious statements about their commitments to DEI, and to equity and inclusion. And many organizations we're seeing are moving beyond that in 2022 to really strengthen understanding and awareness and eliminate inequity in their organizations.

We know that social connections are one of the most important building blocks to team resilience. And so, while we saw organizations saying, "We need to strengthen our teams," it's particularly hard to do that in a virtual and hybrid world, where people are coming and going, they're trying to connect via Zoom, the happy hour, the coffee chats, the book clubs. All great, but they're waning, right? And so, organizations are needing to do more to build that team resilience as a way of keeping their organizations healthy and strong. And so, investments in team-building relationships, investments in strengthening trust and collaboration and mutual support are all critical in a virtual and hybrid work environment. And so, developing learning and development programs and trainings around that is going to be critical for organizations going forward.

Of course, no one's really taking their foot off the pedal as it relates to leadership development. We're seeing organizations continue to invest in this space, but what we are seeing is, it's ... doubling down on change management, crisis management, emotional intelligence and leading diverse teams with ... the core four buckets that organizations are prioritizing as it relates to leadership development — so change management, crisis management, strengthening emotional intelligence, which connects to empathy and engagement, and also, leading diverse teams.

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Atokatha, thoughts, comments?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Yes, Lisa, so we have three questions. The first one is: I ... understand the need to create a comprehensive L&D strategy, but I believe my team needs training in the interim. What's the best practice way to proceed?

Lisa Brown Alexander: That's fair, and that's an important distinction, right?

Many organizations have learning and development or training programs without having a training or ... learning and development strategy. The difference between the two is activity versus a plan, right? So, no harm, no foul with going forward with training programs. What I would do is shape your training programs around your performance management data. What are your performance management evaluations, performance evaluations, telling you about skills gaps, cultural gaps, workplace concerns?

Developing training programs in response to your performance management programs, activity and data is a great place to start if you're not ready as an organization to move to strategy. A learning and development strategy is a plan. It's being intentional about how you're going to foster a culture of learning in your organization, which is different than just the activity. It's looking at across your landscape as an organization, looking at your mission and what you're trying to accomplish and achieve, and setting about a long-term plan beyond just a year, beyond just a few months, to say, "We're going to prioritize developing and strengthening competencies and skills on a longer-term basis, and then shape our learning and development programs, or training, around that plan." So, hats off to you if you're starting with activities and programs, no harm there, but that's the difference between a training program and a learning and development strategy.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK, and a similar question, Lisa: How can my organization prioritize learning and development trainings when we have many priorities to address?

Lisa Brown Alexander: Choose one. Choose one, choose two. Much like the survey, what are your highest priorities as it relates to either skills or competency gaps in your organization? You can organize an entire year of training around your very top priority.

So, yes, organizations have multiple and competing talent management priorities. But identify the one that's on fire, the one that's burning, the one that's having the most detrimental impact on your organization and focus on that as a way of stopping the blood flow ... putting out the fire, increasing and improving effectiveness of your staff, and ultimately your organization.

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So, yeah, priorities are many and competing. But choose one, double down on it, and really shape your learning and training activity around it as a starting point.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK, Lisa, and this is more of a statement question. The person is looking to understand how managers that are having challenges creating trust with their direct reports should proceed in defining trust if they themselves are having the challenge building trust.

Lisa Brown Alexander: Yeah, I wouldn't do it alone. That's a great question.

Trust is something that has to be shared, right? You can't — supervisors can't trust their staff, but if the staff don't trust the supervisor, then trust doesn't exist. And so, a lack of trust within an organization is an opportunity to be transparent, to be vulnerable and to be honest about what's not working, and to engage all of your internal stakeholders around the conversation about what trust is and what it needs to be in your organization, right? And that requires checking your ego at the door, both employees and management and having conversation. Many times that conversation needs to be facilitated because if you're in a low-trust environment, then asking someone to share their opinion might be challenging, but if you facilitate that conversation with a neutral third party, bring someone in to help you navigate through what trust means at your nonprofit, what trust means at your social impact organization. And once you do that, then come to some agreement about how it shows up and what you want it to look like as a starting point.

It's not perfect. It's not at a full-stop solution. But it's certainly a starting point for you as an organization. Engage the services of someone who can help you who might bring in a higher-trust quotient because they're not connected to your culture and your politics and all the machinations going on in your organization. So that would be my input.

All right. Let's keep going.

We've got a couple of other functional areas to cover. We had an earlier question about total rewards, and when we talk about total rewards, we're referring to compensation and benefits, for the most part.

And so, what we heard from organizations as their top comp and benefit priorities for 2022 was correcting and addressing pay and benefit inequities. And this priority comes as a direct result of that awareness and awakening that many organizations had last year as a result of the murder of George Floyd, and the ensuing conversations and actions that came about as a result of that horrific incident.

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And so, this correction, this recognition, that we need to go beyond statement making to really look at inequitable practices within our organizations is driving this. Forty-two percent say that correcting and addressing pay and benefit inequities is their leading priority. That number last year was 18%, so there is an exponential increase in organizations that have raised their awareness level and are taking corrective action to correct inequities of the past. I applaud that. We're thrilled to hear that. I know that our DEI leader, Emily Holthaus, is thrilled to hear that as she helps organizations navigate through their diversity, equity and inclusion challenges and helps them strengthen their systems and their practices in their programs internally to be more effective.

As a second priority, 48% of organizations are expanding their benefit programs and making deeper investments in benefits. Again, a direct result of the pandemic. One, people are facing healthcare crises like they haven't faced before. But two, as a strategy for not only retaining current talent, but attracting new talent. We all have to up our benefits game. So last year and next year will not be the years, or the year, to pull back on your benefit offerings. Bad move, wrong direction, right? As we face a tight labor market, more and more organizations are going to need to expand and deepen their investments and benefits. Despite the high cost, that's going to be critical. Last year, only 13% of organizations responded to us by sharing that that was their priority, 48% this year are seeing that that's a second priority for them.

Followed by 51% of organizations implementing and/or restricting merit-based pay. Now, whether you implement or restrict is going to be based on where you sit on the financial coin, right? If your organization is growing and receiving new funding, new donors, then you may find yourself implementing and growing your programs. Conversely, if your organization is facing financial crisis or is suffering from a lack of financial sustainability, you may find yourself restricting merit-based pay programs.

Many organizations attempt to keep up with the cost of living. We know that inflation is the highest it's ever been. And so, we do know that some organizations have seen some slippage as it relates to staying up with inflation and merit-based pay or cost of living adjustments, which is the case for many nonprofits. But this is the third highest priority as it relates to total rewards in 2022.

Just a couple of insights around total rewards, we know that equitable pay practices is up as a competitive advantage. If you want to attract top talent to your organization, you must have equitable pay practices. You must take a look at how you're paying people and address and correct inequities. Because your failure to do so will result in your staff – we talked about folks being more vocal than they've ever been – they will call you out. They will put you on front street as it were, and say, “Listen, my nonprofit doesn't pay equitably.”

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Now, whether or not that's true is less important — perception is fact. And, if your staff go out to the public sphere and communicate that, or even communicate it to other colleagues, it will be something you will have to manage. And so, if your organization could be proactive in 2022, by looking at your pay practices and addressing inequities, you will find that to be a competitive advantage. It will, however, be critical that you communicate that you're addressing pay, and you have corrected inequities where they exist.

We also know that organizations, as I mentioned before, are moving beyond those symbols of statements that they made in 2021 to really focusing on pay equity. It's really risen as a priority among social impact leaders that are seeking to take that next step to deepen their investments in creating equitable workplaces, and those organizations are looking at their systems and their policies and practices related to pay it back.

We know that pay equity remains key in the care for organizational commitment. So, it's one thing to say it, it's another thing to look at your pay and benefits practices and do something about the inequities that exist, right? And so, to the extent that you can say that you've done that, that is a key competitive advantage, but it also was a demonstrated commitment on the part of your organization to be an equitable employer.

We also know that compensation is essential to retention. Even though it's not at the very top of the list, culture and leadership top the list as it relates to retention, but compensation is a strong third and sometimes fourth. And so, helping staff understand that they're valued and that you are willing to pay them competitive livable wages are critical. Look outside of your organization and be sure that you are paying equitably. If you haven't done a market study in two, three, four or five years, chances are your organization's competitive pay position has flipped.

And so, take a look at where you are, engage the services of an experienced compensation leader, or compensation firm, to help you through this work. It's way too important to do internally. And the failure to do this work effectively and accurately can undermine the very retention practices that you're trying to fulfill within your organization. So, be sure to be careful about your compensation work. Be sure to engage with someone who can help you do it effectively and accurately, the first time.

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Just a couple of other points. As I mentioned earlier, we're seeing that organizations are expanding their benefit programs in direct response to the erosion of staff retention. Again, tying that back to the Great Resignation and people leaving organizations at exponentially higher rates than ever before. And so, your benefits programs can be a helpful tool in a larger toolkit to retain staff.

We also know that employee benefits can be life-changing for today's workforce, particularly those centered around self-care, flexibility and mental health. And so, be sure to look at your employee benefits through those lenses as we continue to navigate through the pandemic. It is not going away. Self-care, flexibility and optimal mental health are critical to the success and ... sustainability of our workforces. And so, to the extent that we can enhance our benefits in those spaces, that will really help us to not only keep those that we have, but also attract others to our organization.

On a similar note, well-being and flexibility continue to dominate as priorities among today's social impact workforce. And so, openly talking about well-being, having programs and services and activities that foster employee well-being in the workplace is right on the money as we look into 2022. Be sure to focus on employee well-being as you move into this next year and ... think about enhancements that you plan to make to your benefits programs.

And then, finally, continue to push your leadership toward empathy. Empathy is probably one of the most important leadership skills that we can have our leadership team sharpen as the pandemic continues to drone on. Leaders without empathy right now are—they're like a Molotov cocktail. They're not what will enhance and strengthen and support the kind of workplace culture that all of us need as we navigate through the coming year. And so, continue to push your leadership toward empathy and the need to embrace flexibility as a strategy for attracting and retaining talent. Just absolutely critical.

Recognizing, of course, as this organization said in the quote below, "Due to the pandemic, we have limited budgets and are working hard to replace lost staff at the current time." But they're also recognizing that in order to replace lost staff, their organization needs to be competitive. Competitive in pay practices, competitive benefit practices and competitive as it relates to culture. So these are just some of the insights we have with respect to total rewards.

Atokatha? Just checking in to see if we have any questions specific to the total rewards space.

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Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Yes, there is a question that has to do with asking candidates upfront for salary information to help them understand if these are the best candidates for the positions. And this person is also recognizing the challenge or limitation with asking about salary information in certain states.

Lisa Brown Alexander: Absolutely, and that has become a prohibition in many states across the country. And so, what we encourage at Nonprofit HR is that organizations take a different approach. That they establish a hiring range for the position and be transparent about what that is. And that gives the candidate the information they need to select in or out of your search, right?

So, if, for example, someone is looking for a salary of \$75,000 a year, but your position pays between 40 and 60. Giving them that information allows them to self-select on whether or not they want to throw their hat in the ring or not. So, rather than asking about salary history, which our participant has acknowledged may be illegal in some states, be transparent about what you're hiring for and what that salary range is. People appreciate it and it also helps to support equity. It also keeps you accountable as an employer when you share that information and make it publicly available. So that would be my advice about that.

Any other questions, Atokatha, related to total total rewards?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Yes, another question has to do with needing to make compensation adjustments and even benefits adjustments. But not really having the resources to do so and remain competitive financially.

Lisa Brown Alexander: Yeah, it's a real conundrum. The cost of health insurance has skyrocketed in many instances for organizations. And so, just ... holding onto the basics has been challenging. This is where you have the opportunity to engage your leadership team and engage your board to help them understand the need to prioritize benefits and compensation as part of a broader talent management strategy.

Your mission cannot be accomplished without people to do the work. And so, while your organization may be limited, the failure to allocate the appropriate resources to begin to close the gap or to address shortfalls ... in your benefits and compensation program will ultimately affect the effectiveness with which you could address your mission. And that's how I would contextualize it for my board and my leadership.

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More simply said, if you don't have the people in the seats to do the work, the mission cannot be accomplished. Your ability to attract and retain talent in this very tight labor market is going to be predicated on the extent to which your benefits and compensation are competitive. Recognizing you may have a huge gap, we understand that, and it may take time. But be transparent with your staff because they probably already know. Acknowledging that you may be of below market in your compensation and benefits practices is a really important first step, but you can't do that if you don't know where you stand. Right?

So, be sure you validate your pay position as an organization. Be sure that you're transparent about where you are and then push on your leadership and your board to reprioritize resources to allow your organization to pay and offer benefits in a way that doesn't undermine the work that you're trying to do for the communities that you serve.

All right, we took some questions on the TR space. Let's move to talent metrics and analytics, which is a popular area for many participants on the call. But let's just share some data from this year's survey as a way of helping you understand what other organizations are doing across the sector.

So, much like other components of human resources and talent management, we're seeing, as a result of the dynamics of the last 18 to 20 months, organizations really doubling down on getting better data. As a matter of fact, implementing HR and talent metrics reporting remained the top priority for nonprofit organizations in 2021 and 2022. The difference is the number of organizations reporting this as being their key priority.

Implementing a talent management metrics program or reporting an approach is a priority of 54% followed by 36% wanting to benchmark existing talent metrics. And no, that is not a typo. We've reported it twice because it was reported on our survey as both a second and third priority.

I wanted to also share with you that 42% of organizations reported on expanding their talent metrics reporting as a priority for them as well. So, it was a very close first, second, third, fourth. Then, we wanted to just report, in this particular instance, that additional priority. Big differences, though, in implementing, big differences in benchmarking, from 25% to 36% (2021 to 2022), and then expanding reporting of metrics from 15% last year to 42% this year. Just huge differences, but let's talk about the why.

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Well, we know that metrics help organizations and leaders better understand the effectiveness of their talent management function and HR practices, right? That's the why behind gathering metrics and collecting data around your talent management practices. We also know that HR leaders across the sector are increasingly relying on talent metrics and analytics to make and influence talent management decisions within their organizations.

People, leaders and boards want data. And so, if you are trying to shift the needle in your nonprofit's HR practices, having data to support either the efficacy or the ineffectiveness of your practices will help make that case. So, data is critical to making the business case for deeper investments or shifting priorities. And so, this is why we're seeing organizations rely more and more on talent metrics as the years progress.

We also know that the pandemic has accelerated the importance of talent on mission delivery and that actions that organizations are taking to attract talent within their organization are becoming more and more important. For example, how long is it taking you to hire? That's the time-to-hire metric. What's the cost per hire? Diversity hiring rate? Voluntary turnover rate? Employee satisfaction and engagement rate? New hire failure rate? Source of hire? These are all critical metrics and analytics that organizations, including nonprofits, are looking at more and more to make business decisions, and to shift their hiring and talent management investments. And so, gathering just some of these critical analytics and metrics for your organization will help you strengthen your function.

And then, of course, increasingly, members of nonprofits are implementing metrics to be competitive with peer organizations and to be able to say, "This is what we've done, this is how much we've invested. And as a result of having done that, we're a better organization, we're a stronger organization, we're the organization you want to attach your time and talent to." So, it can also help strengthen your competitive position as an employer.

Finally, we'll just move on and, finally, move to talent-focused technology. We've seen some progress there, as well. With some 63% of organizations increasing their use of talent acquisition technology in 2022, compared with 49% of organizations doing that, reporting it as their top priority, last year. Followed by 48% of organizations, for 2022, identifying the need to invest, or at least find, performance management technology, compared with 32% last year. Again, this is all related to our stronger hybrid and remote work, right? So, this virtual work environment that we find ourselves in is really pushing the envelope on the need for better technology for organizations, including implementing and identifying learning management technology, right?

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So, we know that more organizations are investing in learning and development, but many lack the system to support that learning and are prioritizing implementing an LMS as part of their 2022 talent management activity. And compared to last year, only 17%, so that's a 40% increase in organizations investing in LMS, learning management system.

Likely, you are on the spectrum in your organization, right? You may have an LMS and you need to improve it as a result of being virtual, or, in many instances, like the 57% of organizations that reported implementing, you may be at the beginning stages. But, as virtual and hybrid work becomes more of our long-term reality, having some sort of technology to support the learning of your organization is going to become more and more critical.

The increased demand for new talent is also driving an increased need for applicant tracking system technology. As you hire more, those Excel spreadsheets, those Word documents, those hand-written notes are not going to cut it, right? The volume of recruiting that many organizations are facing is going to continue to drive the need for better technology or ATS, applicant tracking systems technology. We also know that the increase in remote work is driving a greater demand for better performance management technology, hence the increase and the renewed prioritization among social impact organizations. So, that in-person, event-driven performance management approach is really becoming obsolete, and in many instances, has become obsolete.

We know that technology is already transforming the entire recruitment lifecycle, and that everything is really becoming digitized – from the resume collection process to the candidate engagement process to even the interview process. And it's all about the experience, both the candidate and the employee experience. And technology is an enabler to an optimal candidate experience.

We know that employee training is moving increasingly to the digital realm, and that shift is allowing for us to benefit from the latest innovations in technology. Recognizing that you may not have the resources to invest in the latest and greatest, but having some sort of technical and technological capacity for your talent management practices is going to be critical in the year and the years going forward.

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Then finally, we know that online learning is not a trend anymore. It's not a new phenomenon, it is our reality. And online employee learning is a must, particularly as there is a greater emphasis toward personalized, self-paced, self-directed learning. That form of learning really recognizes diversity. It facilitates equity because it makes it accessible to people across the landscape of your workforce. It supports career pathing and skills gap identification and competency development. And so, all of that supports deeper investments in LMS technology and bringing one on board for your organization.

Then, finally, we know that organizations are also focused on data security. So as we digitize and move into the digital realm, it's critically important for all organizations regardless of size, particularly if you're keeping your data in the cloud, to be mindful and intentional about security. Making sure that if you have a self-service platform, ... it's using the best in data protection practices and that you are using platforms that ensure the integrity of the data and privacy requirements that you're responsible for complying with.

So, we know, a good quote here from this workforce development organization in California, "We have the tools, but need to understand/leverage the functionality," of the technology that they have. So, engage with your technology vendors. Almost all of them will offer training and development on their systems and use that as a starting point for improving how your nonprofit uses technology.

We've covered a lot as we wrap up today's session, I just wanted to share a couple of other data points around the impact of COVID. Just a quick snapshot here on the ways that the COVID crisis has impacted budget/talent management objectives.

For respondents, 68% said that they were making adjustments to prioritize/reprioritize talent management. Thirty-eight percent reported that they will be increasing their operating budget in 2022. Sadly, 20% are deprioritizing talent management programs and objectives in response to the reprioritization of other aspects of their organization.

We're concerned about the 20% that have not adjusted their talent management approaches at all and have really not seen the pandemic as impacting their organization's approach to talent management. We're concerned about that 20% because things have changed, the workforce has changed and the demands of the workforce have changed and we need all the organizations to change with it to ensure their sustainability.

Then finally, some 18% of organizations said that as a result of COVID, they're going to need to reduce their operating budgets and conversely their talent management budget in 2022.

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Just a couple of other points of interest.

We had a good distribution of organizational budgets participate in this survey. You can see the distribution based on budget size, across the survey respondent pool. We also had strong participation from across the country. All of the states denoted in dark orange are where we had organizational participation, so good representation across the country. In terms of headcount, we see the headcount representation being reflective of the broader sector, with a large majority of participating organizations being small, much like the composition of nonprofits across the country. We also saw a good distribution of mission types and focuses among survey participants, ranging from education to social justice.

And finally, we want to thank you for joining us today. We hope that you found today's conversation and this presentation rich with data and information. We're going to remain on the line for the next 15 minutes to field any more specific questions that you have. But we certainly encourage you to look out for the email that will follow today's presentation with your copy of the report. You'll also be able to download our 2022 Talent Management Priorities Survey results from our website at nonprofithr.com. And if you want to go back in time to see progress over the last several years, you're certainly welcome to do that, as well.

And with that, I'm going to turn it back to Atokatha to field any remaining questions that we have. Atokatha?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Hi, Lisa. Lots of questions, and they're all regarding the content that you shared today, so we'll jump right in. The first question has to do with a LMS system in terms of, how long does it normally take to implement one, and then also, if you have any recommendations for where they should start?

Lisa Brown Alexander: Well, I would start with understanding what your learning and development needs are and understanding what your budget is. How much can your organization invest in a system?

Much like cars, LMS systems of range in an investment requirement from a small, cloud-based, affordable system all the way to of Cadillac or Mercedes Benz, depending on where you sit. LMS systems like LinkedIn Learning, which is incredibly robust, is also very expensive.

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So I'm not under the practice of recommending systems, but I certainly would say, evaluate the resources that your organization has available, understand what your baseline needs are for learning and development and then, you can go from there to make investments in learning management systems.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK, Lisa, here's the next question: We're a 17-year-old, small nonprofit with 20 employees. Starting 10 years ago, the organization has already put employee benefits as the top priority. Our organization has offered the best employee benefits, has been benchmarked as leading the industry over the years in terms of 401K match, ER paid, non-deductible plans for employees and families, et cetera. We did a paid equity adjustment three years ago. Everyone is either above or at the max of the salary band. And, in a nutshell, the person is asking, how do they ensure that they offer opportunities for upward growth, considering nine out of the 20 employees are already directors of the organization? Their employees are saying that they want more, but there really isn't much more growth opportunity, especially considering their size and budget.

Lisa Brown Alexander: Yeah. Now, that's a very specific situation. But what I would say is redefine what career mobility means at your nonprofit. You're small and if nine of your employees are already leaders and not going anywhere, that means for the rest of the staff, they have to understand what career mobility or engagement or enrichment looks like at your nonprofit. And so, that's where I would start, redefine that, not as movement upward, but the deepening of skills and experience in order to be more effective and create new learning opportunities, which may not necessarily translate into a higher title but would give folks deeper skills and experience to do the work that they're called to do. So I would say, start with redefining what career mobility means for your organization being that it's a small one.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK, here's another. As the HR contact, I've tried to encourage management to consider self-care via things like time off separate from vacation. But they don't seem to want to budge on this issue, especially since we have a newly formed union addressing all the concerns you spoke about so far. How can I get management to consider self-care for staff who are deserving of it?

Lisa Brown Alexander: That's a complicated situation. The unionization of your workforce should be a very clear sign to leadership that there is a problem. I'm assuming that your staff were not always unionized. We are seeing a greater unionization of the nonprofit workforce, and it's largely because staff requests and expectations have gone unheard and unanswered. If you are an organization in that situation where you don't have a union yet are beginning to hear the rumblings of one, an antidote to that is to listen with more intent and to take action in response to what your workforce is telling you they want and need.

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Your failure to do that will cost time and money. It's really that simple.

And so, in the case of this particular organization, the leadership will now have to work with the union. If the union is in place, that is who they negotiate with. And they'll negotiate with them in a very different way than they would have had they listened and engaged and responded prior to the formation of the union. So, there's not a whole lot of leeway there when you already have a union in place. My recommendation would be to help and educate your leadership on what it means to have a union in place in your workforce and how to work with it. That would be my best advice.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK, here's another: Our organization relies significantly on volunteers. Do your findings on culture, performance management and learning and development apply to volunteer talent as well?

Lisa Brown Alexander: They do not.

Our surveys, historically at Nonprofit HR, and we've been doing survey work for at least 10 years, only refer to and reflect practices related to paid staff. So we do not collect data on volunteer management practices. And so, no. This data that we've shared today and the data in the past do not reflect volunteer management practices, I'm sorry about that.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK, here's another: What is the best way to build community with a growing staff during remote work? And we have other questions, Lisa, regarding the impacts of the hybrid workforces that their organizations have put in place and ways that they can maintain a grip on their culture and what's needed for their talent.

Lisa Brown Alexander: Don't guess. Ask your workforce. Ask them what would be meaningful and important to them.

So many times with leaders and management, we are misdirected in our efforts because we don't take the time to listen and to hear what our staff are telling us. Engage them, open up a forum that allows staff of all sizes, all levels, all roles, all practices, all departments to share their feedback about what would be meaningful to them. You can do that in a focus group. You could do that through a survey. You can do it all kinds of ways, but listen to what your staff are telling you are important, rather than guessing. Then, respond and collaborate and partner with them to implement what you can, what you can afford, what fits for your culture and what your leadership can and will embrace. That's really critical.

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Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK. What are examples of cultural assessment questions? Is this the same as an employee engagement survey?

Lisa Brown Alexander: It's not. An employee engagement survey measures the extent to which people feel connected to their work, to their colleagues. A cultural needs assessment goes beyond that and asks questions to understand perceptions related to leadership, the elements of the workforce and the workplace that are working to support employees and those that are working against employees. So, it's broader than engagement.

And Nonprofit HR, we've got some good whitepapers and articles related to cultural needs assessments and employee engagement. And so, we encourage you to check out our website and also, surf the web for good information and insights, whitepapers and the like online. There's a ton of information and data on the differences between cultural needs assessments and engagement surveys. And, take a look at that. Certainly, start with Nonprofit HR. We've been doing this work for a long time and are happy to help in any way that we can.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK. Do you have any particular insights regarding why that 20% said they haven't made any ... moves ... or changes regarding COVID?

Lisa Brown Alexander: I do, I do. I have a theory about the sector and its talent management practices.

Every nonprofit falls into one of three buckets. They're either talent oblivious, talent aware or talent focused.

The talent oblivious represent that 20% of organizations that just are not doing anything, despite the entire world around us changing. It's those organizations that will continue to lag in their talent management practices, in their ability to attract and retain talent, in their ability to really fulfill their mission, because missions cannot be fulfilled without people to do it.

And so, that 20% of organizations that have done absolutely nothing in response to COVID represent, in many instances, those organizations that are talent oblivious. In other words, they just don't have a clue nor understand the impact of good talent management practice on ... organizational mission accomplishment. And, honestly, those organizations are the ones that we're desperate to help because those organizations can really see transformative things happen when they make meaningful investments in their talent. But they just don't realize it yet.

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Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK, Lisa. So, just a couple more questions. One has to do with: What if you have leadership that asks for staff input, but then does not do anything with it?

Lisa Brown Alexander: As the talent management leader in your organization, you need to call them on the carpet. Bring to their attention – put it in front of them – that you've asked this question, two, three, four maybe five times, and you have failed to respond. As a result of your failure to respond, our staff are no longer engaged.

Now, you need the data to support that, but put it in front of them and help them understand the damage that occurs when they ask for feedback and fail to take action. It's critical that you do that. Get quotes from your staff. Collect data, do a survey. Do something to help quantify that, so the management understands that is not effective leadership – to ask and do nothing. It works against organizations when they solicit feedback with no intention to act.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Here you go. How do you build buy-in for a learning culture, especially while working remotely?

Lisa Brown Alexander: That's why you need a learning culture. Right?

The remote work environment is forcing us all to learn in a new way and how better to support, what better way to support, creating a learning culture than by having the technology and prioritizing learning as a talent management priority?

So I would say that if you want to be successful in a virtual environment, you have to – we are all learning. But we have to be intentional about learning how to be successful in this new paradigm we find ourselves in. And that supports investments in learning and development in a new way to support organizational sustainability and long-term growth.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK and our final question, Lisa, is specific to diverse abilities and DEI. And it is asking if you can speak to any changes or information you may be learning or hearing about persons with disabilities gaining access to their needs being met inside organizations, especially during COVID and return to work.

Lisa Brown Alexander: That's a very specific question. I will admit and be transparent: That is a question I would like to defer and punt to our Managing Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Emily Holthaus.

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And so, let's do this: Let's commit to getting your contact information, the person who posed that question, and get someone from our team to respond to that question for you because that falls a little outside of my wheelhouse, and I don't want to provide the wrong response. So, let's get that person's information, if we don't have already, and we'll be sure to get you an answer.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Right, yes, we do have their contact information, Lisa, and we'll do so. And I've added Emily Holthaus's information regarding the DEI practice that she runs for Nonprofit HR to the chat feature ... so you may see information there as well. Lisa, that's all. Those are all the questions that we have for this afternoon.

Lisa Brown Alexander: All right ... You all put my skillset to the test, and I certainly thank you for joining us this afternoon ... Again, I hope that it was helpful and valuable. And we encourage you to continue to look to Nonprofit HR to share this important information about good talent management practices and priorities, not only in 2022 but in the years to come.

And with that, Atokatha, I'll turn it back to you. I certainly enjoyed today's time and hope you did as well.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Hey, thank you all so very much for being here. Thank you again, Lisa, for all the information that you shared today on a timely topic and conversation. We will respond to any other questions that didn't get answered via email. I think we did a good job at getting through most of them, Lisa. You can expect to receive the slides and the recording link to today's webinar via email in the coming days.

I also ask that you please complete the feedback survey once it pops up as we close out the session. We do use those responses in our survey to help shape our information and also, to shape the topics that we include in our events calendar for every year. So, we look forward to hearing your feedback on that. If you'd like any other information about Nonprofit HR, please visit nonprofithr.com.

If you need help with any services or any information regarding what Lisa Brown Alexander shared today, please email us at info@nonprofithr.com. Again, thank you so much, Lisa, for a wonderful presentation. Thank you all for attending. Have a great afternoon.