

## **Summary — MRA's COVID-19 Hot Topic Survey Series on Business Continuity**



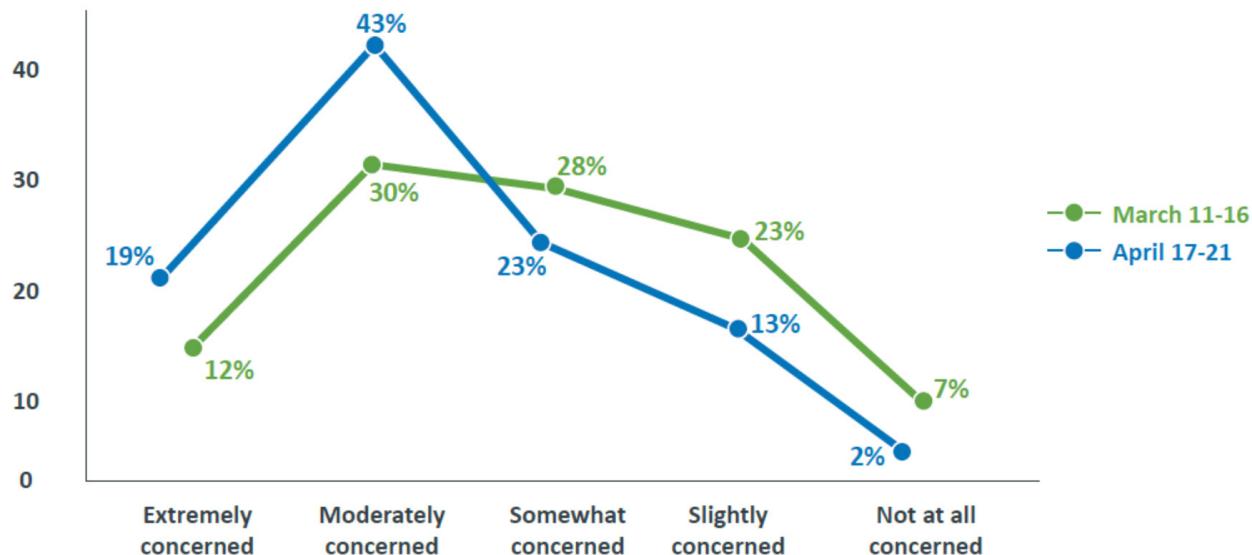
COVID-19 has changed the business landscape in many ways. To contain the spread of the virus, social and physical distancing measures were implemented swiftly, restricting movement in the way we conduct business, offer products and services, and cope with daily life. Industries across the board were affected. Business leaders were faced with a situation that they had not experienced, yet needed to respond quickly. Workforces at many organizations were furloughed, while at the same time, at other organizations were required to work in changed environments, work remotely, or remain on the front lines.

MRA conducted a series of hot topic surveys from March 11 through April 21 to get employers' insights on the Coronavirus pandemic and its impact on human resources and business continuity.

### **MRA Perspectives: Industry sectors and organization size are impacted differently by the pandemic:**

- As employers reported initially, industry sectors impacted most significantly include travel, retail, transportation, hospitality, service and others generally considered non-essential. Industry sectors impacted less include healthcare, manufacturing, telecommunications, and financial services/Insurance, those generally considered essential industries.
- As short-term effects of COVID-19 became better understood, employer's level of concern across businesses in terms of impact on human resources and business continuity leveled off. However, as the impact on the economy lingers, focus has shifted to **long-term implications**. Financial viability, operations, human resources, or business strategy remain at a high level of concern; particularly among small business owners who have been forced to take drastic measures to continue operating. In addition, for small companies, the Payment Protection Program has provided some much-needed relief. Now is the critical time for all employers to get into recovery mode.

### **Long-term Implications**



- As organizations emerge from the pandemic, a successful recovery plan must strongly be considered. Both small and large companies will have challenges and plans for returning to work are critical.
- Results over this six-week period show fast action and quick resilience of employers and employees to battle this crisis; the shift from concern to action is gaining steam.

## Workplace Realities & Organizational Support

### Face Protection and Temperature Screenings

Face protection, other personal protection equipment (PPE), and temperature screenings are tactics many employers have in place or to implement; however, the larger the company size, the more likely they are to provide, require, and/or encourage PPE and screen temperatures for employees and visitors.

**Providing, requiring, encouraging:**      **Face Protection/PPE**      **Temp Screening**



### Organizational Support to Employees, Customers and/or Community

Many organizations have begun to bolster employees, customers, and/or community as a sign of hope, optimism and support. These organizations are finding the need to develop new processes, adjust to changes, find alternate paths and design new strategies to reboot their organizations. Larger organizations are taking the lead with these top two categories.



## Talent Strategies and Total Rewards

### Talent Strategy and Total Rewards Changes in Response to COVID-19

Most employers surveyed indicate shifts, practice reviews and postponements in hiring strategies. While furloughs and layoffs have occurred in certain industries, delaying or canceling salary increases are among other tactics.



These figures vary by industry. For example, 60% of surveyed retailers report furloughing employees, followed by 28% of manufacturers. In contrast, only 8% of communication/technology firms have furloughed employees. Keep in mind, while many organizations have participated in recent government assistance programs (e.g. FFCRA, CARES), the thought to freeze or further reduce salaries, bonuses or other compensation plans still present and might be a necessary plan of action based on economic circumstances.

## Hazard & Appreciation Pay: Compensation for Employees in Higher-Risk Roles

Led by many in the healthcare field and other essential industries, to help retain employees, companies have implemented short-term hazard and/or appreciation pay. These temporary compensation programs support and recognize employees working on the front line or essential roles with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**As the advance of the pandemic rolled forward, 12% of organizations provided temporary action regarding hazard pay and another 26% of organizations implemented appreciation pay.**

Interestingly, one-time cash bonuses and paying an additional \$1-3 per hour are tactics that small organizations are implementing for hazard and appreciation pay. Large organizations are paying as much as \$4-6 or more per hour in addition to offering gift cards and cash bonuses.

## Moving Business Forward

### Transitioning to the Future State of Work

As organizations emerge from the pandemic, a successful recovery plan must strongly be considered. One that requires flexibility, agility, and a comprehensive return to work transition strategy. To move business forward, organizations surveyed are making necessary preparations centered around three areas of preparation:



- 65%** Creating work protocol following CDC recommendations (e.g. calling-in if sick, distancing, eliminating handshakes, cleaning workspaces, monitoring and following up on concerns)
- 64%** Modifying cleaning protocols
- 58%** Reviewing workspace considerations or facility planning to allow physical/social distancing to continue (e.g. work floor, office and cubicle layouts; conference, meeting or training rooms; break areas; common spaces)



- 57%** Reassessing continuation of remote work options
- 53%** Considering how attendance, remote work, travel and other policies may be relaxed in the coming months to allow employees flexibility
- 46%** Reviewing jobs that can (and should) be done from home to maintain physical/social distancing



- 51%** Determining cost-saving measures
- 33%** Suspending attendance at conferences, events and training as a cost-savings measure
- 31%** Reviewing organization's leadership strategy (e.g. needs, readiness, pool of emerging leaders)

## State of Hiring and Training

While looking to the future, organizations are reviewing workforce planning options. Currently, across all organizations, 50% are maintaining current workforces, 28% are hiring, 20% are temporarily laying off or furloughing employees, and 2% are permanently reducing workforce by terminating employees.

**Looking out 90 days, large organizations are twice as likely than smaller organizations to fill mission critical jobs lost in the pandemic. For many smaller organizations, however, hiring plans are on hold.**

**Results show, more-so in smaller organizations than larger organizations, the importance of training and/or professional development of employees (53% vs. 29% very important or important, respectively).**

## Conclusion

There is no denying COVID-19 created disruption to businesses globally, and many businesses have been adversely impacted as a result. Business operations have been severe and the lingering fear of the pandemic and its many unknowns adds to the layer of concern.

As return to work advances, organizations need to plan, re-evaluate, challenge conventional wisdom, and tackle future changes in an altered business landscape. Start recovery by examining ways the crisis brought surprise; how operations may have changed; what's worked and what remains as the biggest challenges; and most importantly, how the company will return in this state of "business as unusual."



**Returning to work will not be an easy flip of the switch. Recovery should be planned, steady and measured. MRA is here to help.**

## About this Hot Topic Survey Series



**1,366** organizations participated



Over **70** questions



Respondents totaled more than **3,000**  
Human Resources professionals



**March 11–April 21**



**30%** participated in more than one survey



All industries, all organization sizes

- **23%** Small (50 employees or less)
- **67%** Mid-sized (51-500 employees)
- **10%** Large (501 or more employees)

**Questions regarding this survey?** Contact the Survey Department at [surveys@mranet.org](mailto:surveys@mranet.org) or 800.488.4845 ext. 3508.

# MRA's Total Rewards Team Focuses on Solutions

## Our Currently Published Surveys

### Compensation Surveys

- Benchmark Compensation\*
- Industrial & Production Trades\*
- National Executive Compensation
- National IT & Engineering Compensation\*
- National Sales Compensation
- National Wage & Salary

### Policy & Benefit Surveys

- Health & Insurance Benefits
- Holiday Practices
- National Policies & Benefits

### Business Trend Surveys

- Compensation Trends
- National Business Trends
- Turnover

### Industry Surveys

- Healthcare Compensation Survey\*
- Logistics & Construction Compensation
- Nonprofit Compensation & Benefits\*

### Hot Topic Surveys

- Advancement of Women in the Workplace Survey
- Business Continuity Coronavirus Workplace Realities—Series
- Compensation Besides Base Pay Survey
- Compensation and Talent Insights for 2020 and Beyond
- Diversity and Inclusion—Best Steps Forward
- Don't Underrate the Power of Soft Skills
- Employee Turnover Survey
- Hiring Interns Survey
- Variable Pay: Your Advantage in a Competitive Labor Market
- Opioid Epidemic Survey
- Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Executive Summary
- Wellness and Wearable Technology Survey
- Your Competitive Edge in Attracting, Retaining, and Rewarding Top Talent

### Rely on MRA Surveys

From strategy to tactics, how do you apply these insights to your organization's total rewards story?

Known for local, regional and national, employer-matched, employer-reported data—with MRA surveys, you can be confident your organization is making vital business decisions based on solid, high quality market data.

### Participate in MRA Surveys

- Free survey results for member participants
- Data analytics at your fingertips via MRA's online survey tools—MRAPay and On-Demand Salary Tool
- HRCI credit for recertification or SHRM Professional Development Credit (PDC) for qualifying surveys

**Turn to MRA to build your powerful data analytics!**

### Questions?

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 **www.mranet.org/surveys**

\* MRAPay and On-Demand Salary Tool available for these surveys