

COVID-19 IMPACT & HR TRENDS

Measures taken by organizations to combat the second wave of COVID -19 and maintain business continuity.

— August 2021

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About the Survey



Last year, we at OMAM had conducted a study on the role of HR during COVID -19 , and we found that the HR role has significantly increased with additional responsibility to sync the business continuity, managing remote working, driving employee engagement, managing the culture, taking care of employee's mental health & wellbeing and dealing with the uncertainties caused by this pandemic.

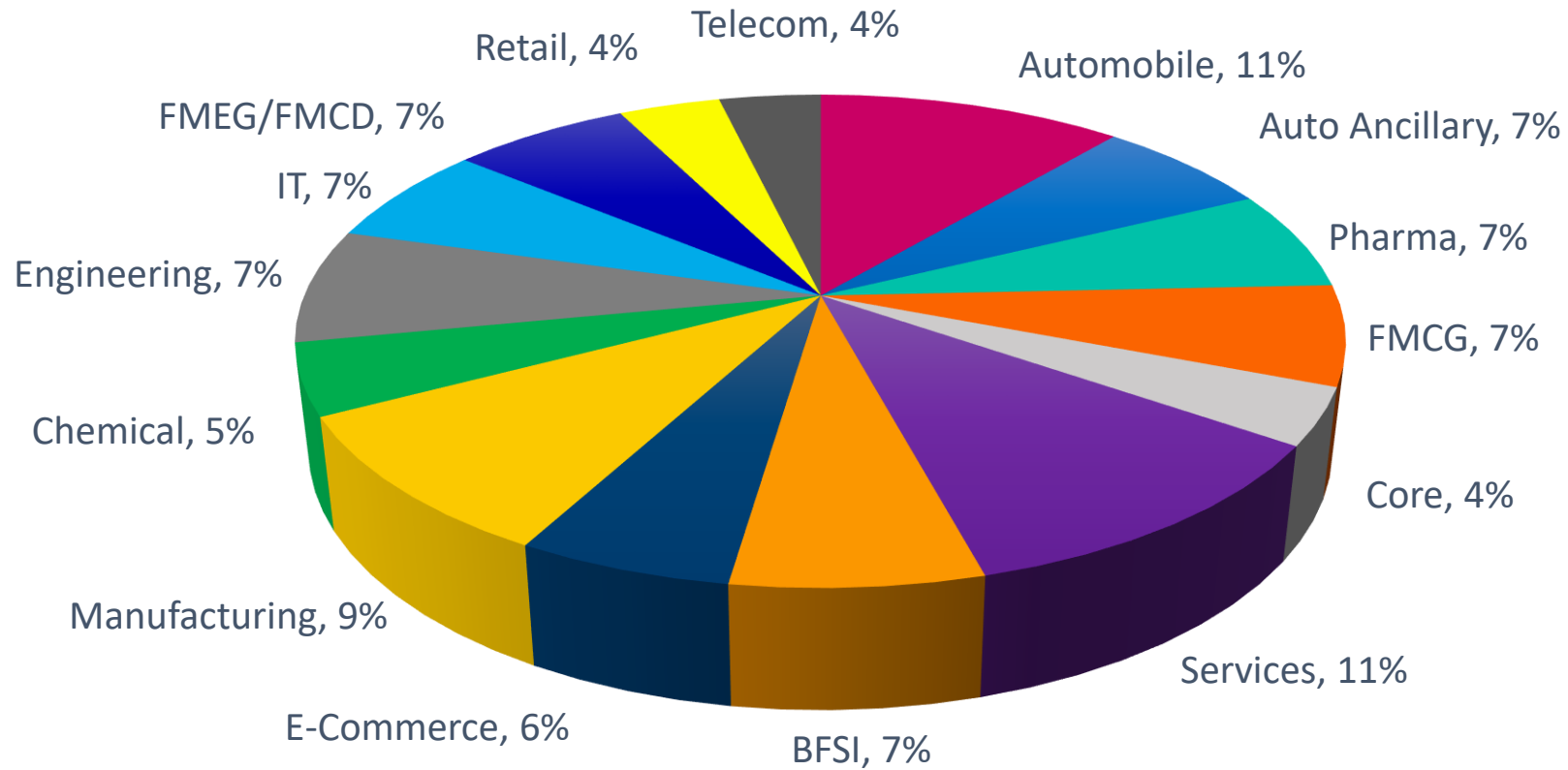
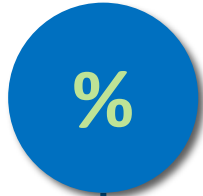
Over the last 16 months, companies have moved back and forth between working online and offline as and when lockdowns were announced and ended, respectively. These lockdowns have also played havoc with people's mental health, sense of well being and belonging. People have lost friends, family, colleagues. There has been a lot of fear, and people are struggling with how to return to normalcy, or what will normalcy even mean going forward.

Now that people are getting vaccinated at a rapid pace and scale, with cities being gradually unlocked, organizations across India are figuring out how to reopen their doors, set up different hybrid models , and bring people back to work. We spoke to industry leaders and businesses to understand the various initiatives taken by their organizations to address these concerns, provide stability, security, mental health and other support as they prepare to open up and return to work.

This survey covers – initiatives facilitated by organizations to ensure well-being initiatives, impact on – leave policy, business and increments, priorities of employee benefits, creating special task force, vaccinate employees, support provided to COVID-19 infected employees, support provided to family members of deceased employee (due to COVID-19), etc. and measures taken to reopen once the restrictions are waved off.

This survey was conducted during the month of June ~ July 2021 covering over a 100 medium & large Indian Business Houses & MNCs across various sectors. Inputs were taken from HR leaders across the country and the findings are compiled and presented in the following pages.

Participation Percentage (Industry-wise) ...



- Automobile
- Services
- Engineering
- Auto Ancillary
- BFSI
- IT
- Pharma
- E-Commerce
- FMEG/FMCD
- FMCG
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Core
- Chemical
- Telecom

Coverage ...



Impact of COVID-19 on employee safety, employee engagement and employee wellness



Initiatives facilitated to vaccinate employees



Benefits provided to employees infected with COVID-19



Impact of COVID-19 on leave policy



Benefits provided to family members in case of death of an employee infected with COVID-19



Well-being initiatives for the employees 

Focus areas/ top priorities in terms of employee benefits 

Impact of COVID-19 on annual increment 2021 

Realignment in Compensation & Benefits 

Plans/ strategies / protocols made for reopening 

Special Taskforce ...

97% of companies surveyed have created a special taskforce to look into **Employee Safety, Engagement and Wellbeing**



COVID-19 Emergency Response Team – Monitor cases in the company & direct vendors, fixing doctor’s appointments, providing information about precautionary measures



CFT (Senior Leadership + HR) – Monitor COVID-19 situation and manage employee safety & engagement



Employee Assistance Program (EAP) – for free counselling and referral service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for employees & their family members free of charge for any assistance.



Central Taskforce Team (Doctor + Health & Safety Head + Head HR) – address queries related to insurance, home care treatments, hospital beds, oxygen supplies, a repository of plasma donors, ambulance amongst others, workplace sanitation, food assistance and create programs to help other people



COVID-19 warrior team – a voluntary initiative that connects employees and associates to donors among employees who have fully recovered from COVID-19 and are willing to donate their blood plasma

Other Initiatives

- Wellness Survey – to check the health status
- Weekly webinar with doctors & psychologists
- Wellness sessions - Zumba, Yoga and Meditation
- HR Head + Team – in constant touch with employees to engage and motivate them
- Launched HealthApp; Doctor’s contact shared
- Employees engaged through various write-ups

Facilitating & Tracking of Vaccination

100% of companies covered in the study are tracking the vaccination status of employees

Major initiative taken by the companies for tracking vaccination status



Regular updates on Vaccine shared with employees through WhatsApp, Telegram App and Weekly meetings



Webinar organized wherein a medical expert explained the need for Vaccine and answered FAQs on the same



24/7 Helpline – to answer COVID-19 and Vaccine related queries



Links and forms shared across the company so that employees can register and update their vaccination status



Support on registration, sensitizing & arranging vaccination camps for employees & their families



Employees have to register in CoWIN app and in EIS portal

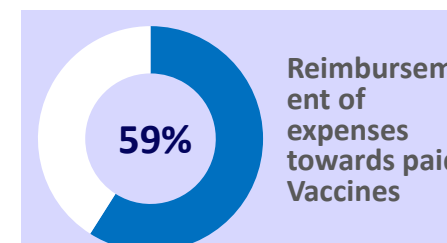
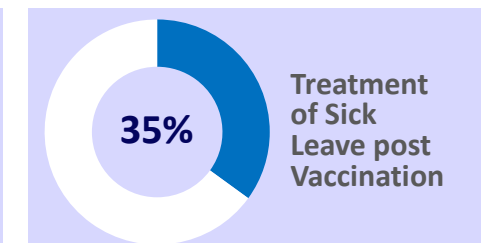
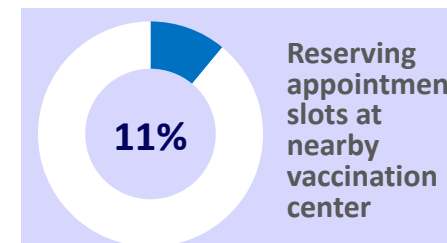
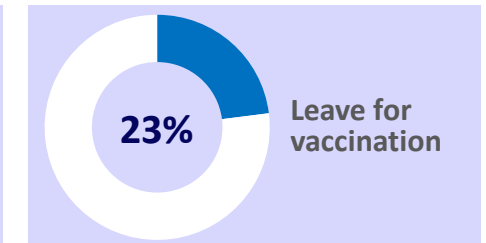
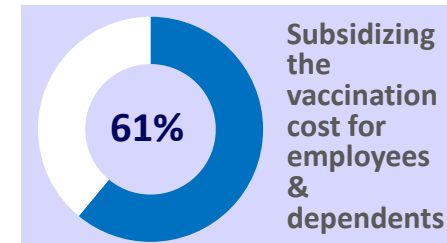
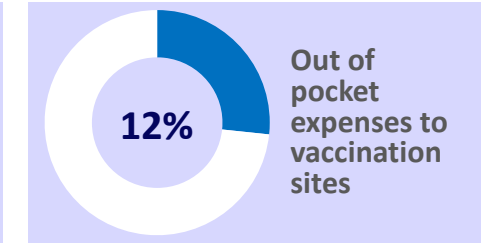
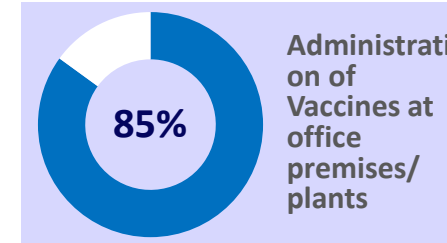


Integrated systems, Dashboard and Spreadsheet – to track status

Initiatives Facilitated by Companies to Vaccinate Employees ...



- Most of the companies conducted vaccination drives in company premises for their - permanent & contractual workforce
- Companies partnered with hospitals to conduct drives and doctors were available on campus to explain the post vaccine consequences & medication
- 65% of the companies provided free vaccines to employees + 3 dependents
- Companies also provided reimbursements to employees who got themselves inoculated before the commencement of the vaccination drive.
- Reimbursements provided ranged from Rs 500/- to Rs 2000/-
- 65% of the companies conducted the drive on a Friday so that employees get to rest over the weekend
- Companies across industries provided Unlimited Sick Leave/ 1 day leave without deduction for vaccination
- Other benefits – Surgical mask (6 sets) + Sanitizer bottle every month, 1 day off, providing transportation in remote areas to reach vaccination center



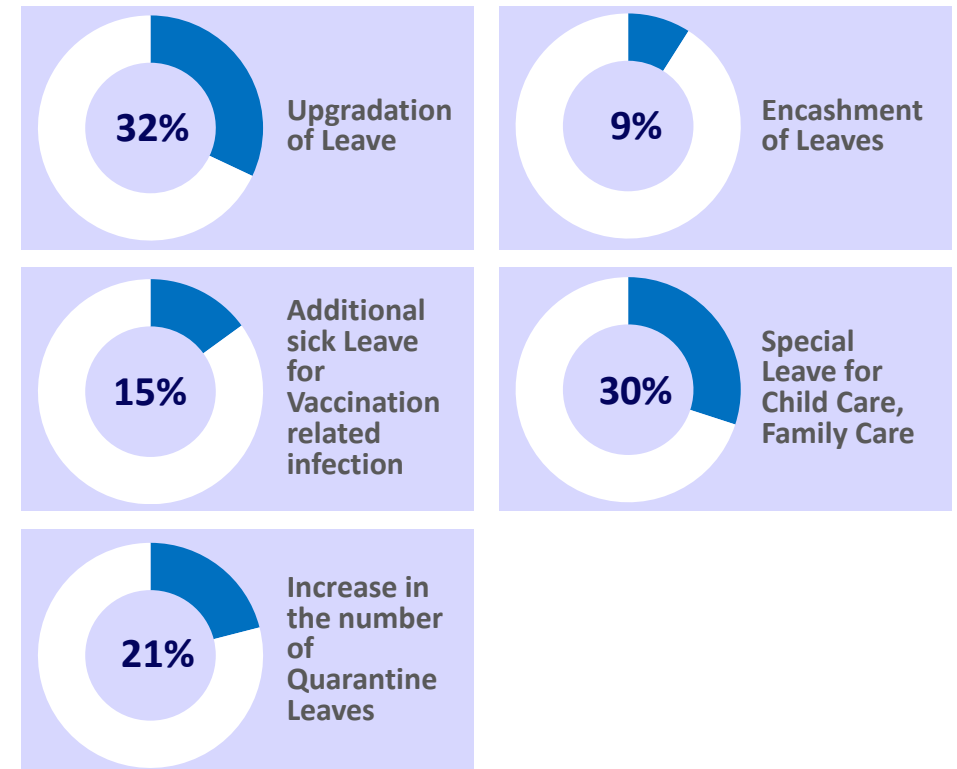
Impact of COVID-19 on Leave Policy...



- Almost all the companies surveyed have given Special COVID-19 Leave ranging from 14 ~ 21 days
- All the companies followed the government norms of quarantine days
- 10% of the companies also provided Hospitalization Leave of 27~28 days

Some of the key initiatives across industries are:

- Some companies gave Care Giver Leave or Family Care Leave range from 5 ~ 14 days (in case family/ neighbour gets infected)
- 'Gift-a-Leave,' policy which helped employees who had exhausted their leave credits seek a leave from their colleagues
- Extension of COVID leave – 3 ~4 weeks
- Additional leave for hospitalization
- Bereavement Leave in case of death of family member



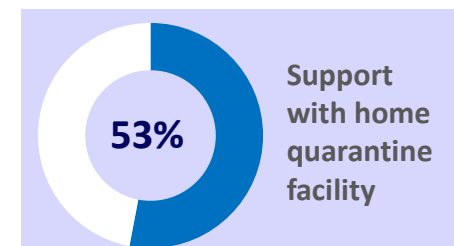
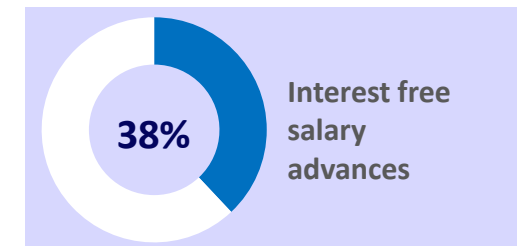
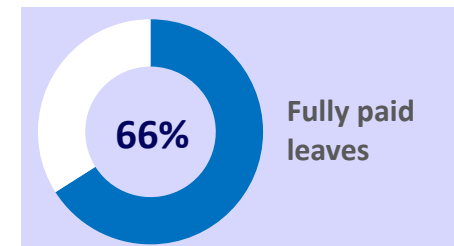
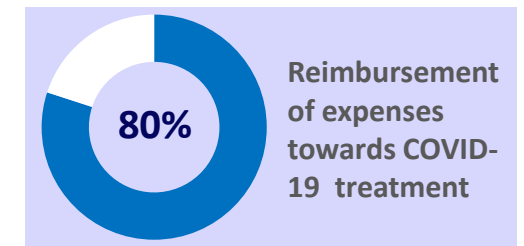
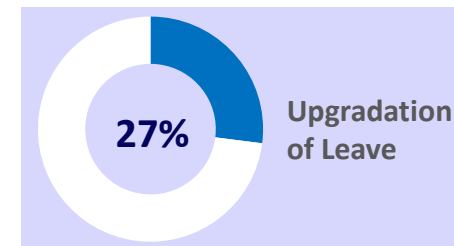
Benefits – To Employees Infected with COVID-19...



- For ~85% of the companies surveyed, the medical expenses incurred towards COVID-19 treatment is covered under Health insurance with an additional COVID-19 coverage.
- Most Companies negotiated with insurance companies for top-up policy

Some of the key initiatives across industries are:

- Reimbursement of medical expenses for COVID-19 range from Rs 15,000/- to Rs 30,000/-
- Home cure packages including sanitizer, masks, oximeter, meal etc. delivered to employees in case of home quarantine
- Companies partnered with hotels for COVID-19 positive mild symptoms/ symptomatic employees who wanted to maintain distance from family
- Some companies set-up a contact point for ambulance, cylinder & counseling, and teleconsultation post hospitalization
- Tied-up with medical agencies - to provide support in case of home quarantine and support in moving to the hospital.
- Some companies paid salary advance/ loan ranging from 1 month to 12 month's salary
- Companies also partnered with NGO's to help identify fully recovered donors across India



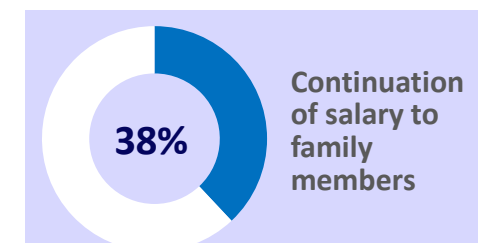
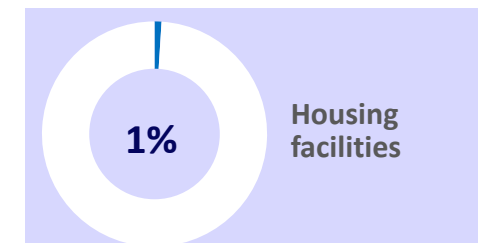
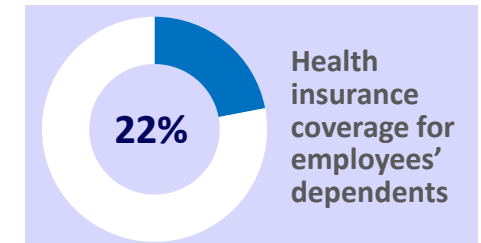
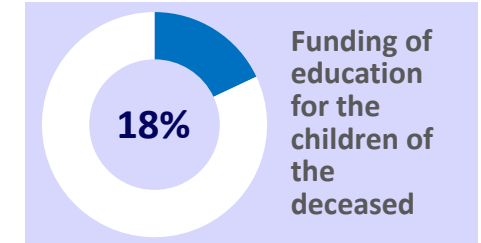
Benefits – To Family Members in Case of Death of an Employee Infected with COVID-19 ...



Around 38% of the companies surveyed have moved an extra mile to support family members of employees in case of death of an employee by providing Health insurance coverage, continuation of salary and funding of education for the children of the deceased

Some of the key initiatives across industries are:

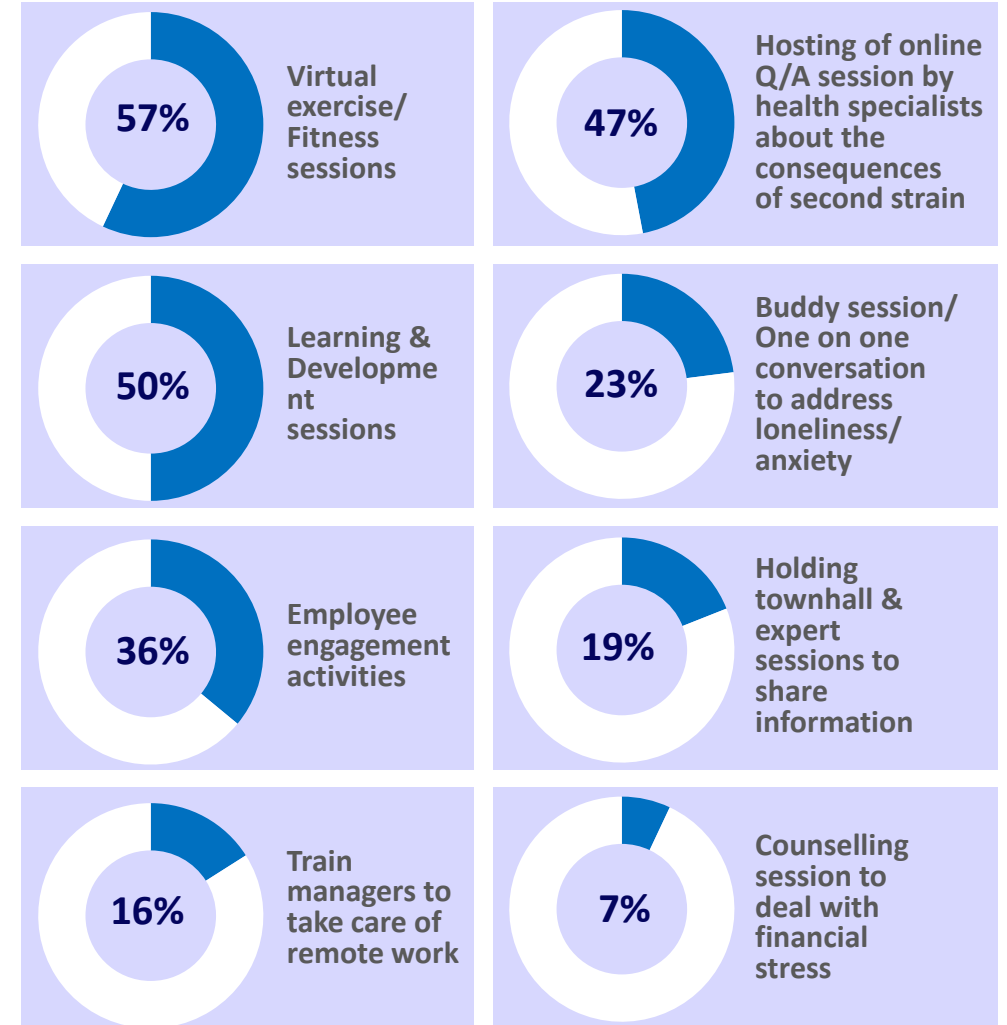
- Extended Medical insurance – for next 3 ~ 5 years
- Few companies surveyed – indicated that they will continue to pay salary from 1~ 3 years or up to superannuation
- Some companies – will pay one-time lump sum amount equivalent to five times the CTC (Minimum Rs 20~25 Lakhs) of the deceased employee.
- Bereavement Policy of 8 months - full monthly salary + Term insurance applicable for 3 years of yearly salary
- Some companies have also offered jobs to eligible family members, or they will train them and make them eligible
- Some companies will be funding education of two children up to Std 12 or graduation
- Other Benefits – Term life insurance coverage, Funeral expenses, Financial assistance to workmen/ contract workforce, Bereavement one time amount to pay immediate bills, EDLI, Group Insurance, Death Relief Fund & Compensation on compassionate ground



Well-Being Initiatives ...



- Sessions on Yoga/ Homeopathy/ Zumba/ Mental well-being/ COVID-19 related resilience/ Nutrition/ Diet/ Ergonomic class and Sanitization
- Online sessions by doctors on vaccination, mental aspect of working from home, diabetes and cardiology etc.
- Toll free numbers shared to connect with psychologists (employee + family) to get counseling, discuss work pressure and post marriage issues etc.
- Links shared with employees wherein they can register and discuss about stress and work life balance
- Leadership training for young leaders who are there for 4 to 5 years to deal with sub-ordinates to change the mindset from that of a despair to growth mindset
- Tie-up with fitness apps for all activities on – wellness, counselling, diet and learning & development
- Videos shared for COVID-19 talks by specialist doctors
- Talks by Covid-19 infected employees to share their experiences
- Buddy, HRBPs and COVID-19 Marshals placed in plants & project sites
- Employee engagement activities such as poster making, virtual tea/ coffee/ lunch session, thanksgiving & gratitude etc.
- Synchronous Virtual Learning (SVL) sessions



Employee Benefits – Focus Areas/ Top Priorities ...

The second wave of COVID-19 was quite traumatic as compared to the year 2020 for employees. Industries were just recovering from the first wave, economy was improving, but then due to the sudden stormy second wave of COVID-19 2.0 , lockdown was declared again bringing lives to a standstill. More than business, impact was devastating on lives. With the right intel, companies started investing more in the initiatives their employees really wanted and tried to boost employee engagement and loyalty for the long term. The key focus areas in terms of Employee Benefits is as follows:



Health & Safety Measures

- Health, Safety and Vaccination remains primary goal - for 100% of the companies surveyed
- Keeping in mind the health of workers in factories, health & safety kits including PPE's, washable masks were provided as per govt. norms
- Announcement & posters were used as a reminder to maintain social distance
- Videos were shown regularly of all hand & respiratory hygiene measures



Support in WFH

- Companies not having work from home policy are trying to make work from home prevalent and convenient.
- Work from home allowance, wi-fi to facilitate work from home and workstation set-up expenses are given as operational expenses
- Focus on educating people, awareness, mobile application developed for internal communication and prevention measures



Other Areas of Focus Are:

- Employee Retention - Retaining talent in the wake of COVID-19, understanding evolving motivational and aspirational needs. Introducing Recognition schemes and Group Term Life insurance
- Equipping & supporting employees with all the facilities to do their job well
- Focusing on outreach programs
- Ensure employees are geared to come to office without compromising safety and customer engagement
- Support to family in case of any exigency or sudden loss

Business Impact ...

Auto



- Domestic business is unsteady but export is going good
- SCM is not geared up due to unavailability of raw material impacting manufacturing
- Low deck of vehicles, expected to improve August onwards
- Business impact is 30% to 40%

FMCD



- Consumer behavior around the season and festivals will determine the impact though markets are open

Service



- Huge impact on business of 25% to 30%
- In hospitality sector loss of revenue due to closure of hotels
- Aviation sector rattled again as leisure routes were worst hit

Manufacturing



- 10% to 15% impact on sales
- Growth has reduced, aggressive growth plans but no loss
- Since project sites are operating, business is reinstating

FMCG



- Business looks optimistic, growth is likely to resurge after the lockdown and restrictions are lifted up

IT



- Impact on RFPs & deals
- Cyber security risks as all IT companies are working remotely
- Continued demand for cloud infrastructure services, and potential increase in spending on specialized software

BFSI



- Loans effected liability
- Credit card business impacted as no expenditure
- Foreign Financial Services – business impact is high as major chunk of business comes from US

Retail



- A significant shift in the buying behavior
- Spend on Hygiene and cleaning products, food, and home-entertainment increased
- Reduction in travel and entertainment spend.

Telecom



- Broadband, Prepaid & Postpaid services grown
- Sales declined as customers have transitioned digitally
- However, migrant labourers movement effected large chunk of revenue

Strategies/ Protocols for Reopening...



After months of shutdown and remote working, businesses started resuming operations gradually in a phased manner. Essential Businesses kept their doors open along with manufacturing & production set-ups even at the height of the second wave

Risk levels are always there, however businesses especially non-production employees are working on different SOPs, strategies and protocols to resume back to office keeping in mind the state-wise government guidelines and all safety protocols.

Various strategies and protocols are as follows:

- Around 55% of companies follow agile working mix of work from home and office
- Around 29% companies with non-production/ support staff are still continuing with the WFH system keeping the prediction of 3rd wave of the pandemic. However, production employees are coming to factories with all safety protocols
- Few companies are preparing SOPs/ Blueprints to resume back to office and few will follow staggered working where employees will be allowed for 2 /3 days a week in office
- Vaccination certificates/ status are checked at the entry instead of Aarogya Setu App
- Around 15% companies have started working with some restrictions but better monitoring. Putting COVID-19 Marshals on floor to report deviation & using CCTV to monitor COVID-19 appropriate behavior in office premises
- Around 5% of the companies have staggered office working pattern – 30~35% work from office and remaining work from home
- In Manufacturing sector, factories are operational, however, employees in the corporate are tracking closely the vaccination to resume office
- Companies are also taking feedback from employees - on either work from home, come to office for one single day / two days/ entire week

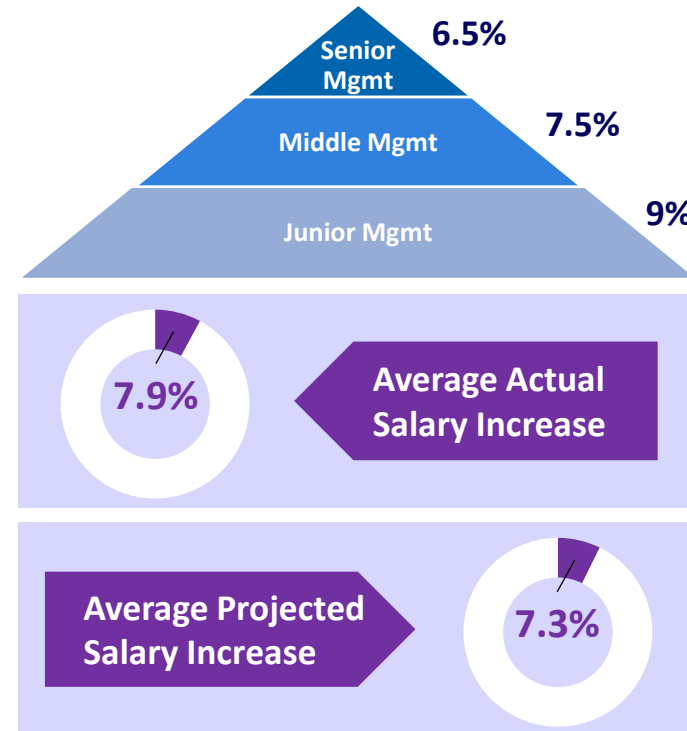
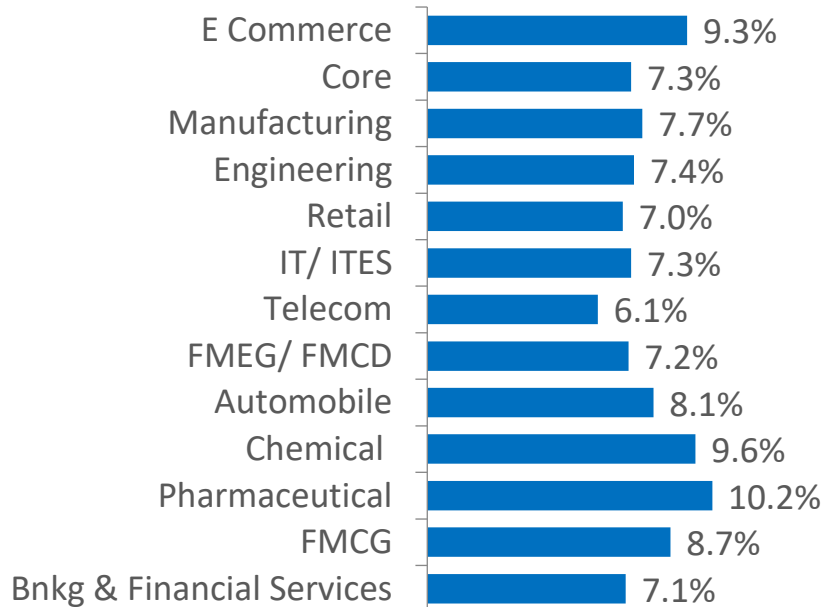
Impact of COVID-19 on Annual Increment 2021...



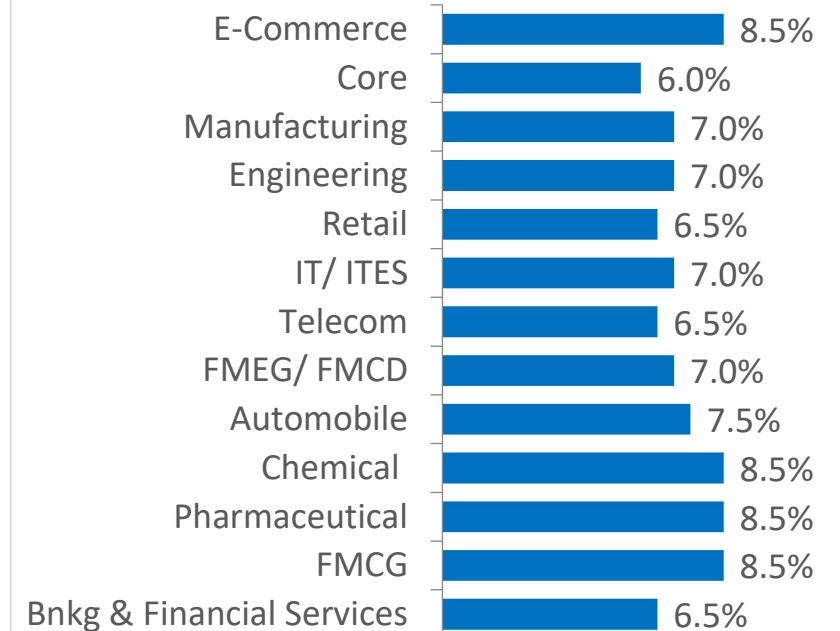
The deadly second wave derailed the economy and devastated major cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai. Even though the companies are more keen towards cost cutting, most of the organizations have gone ahead & given increments. Now, companies are hoping for stable market conditions and relook at their business continuity strategy along with strengthening the workforce.

The actual increment - 2021 vis-a-vis projected increment 2021 (vide our earlier article of March 2021) is given below:

ACTUAL SALARY INCREASE 2021



PROJECTED SALARY INCREASE 2021




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Other Services

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- Staffing
- Diversity & Inclusion Training
- Leadership Development

Hope this report will help you in understanding the initiatives taken by companies to tackle the second wave of COVID-19.

Thank You for your participation.

In case of any query/ suggestion, please write to us at –
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OUR BELIEF...

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