

MindEdge & HRCI Present: HR, AI, and the New American Workplace

AI Is Here, In-Person Work Is Back, and Online Learning Certificates Are Very Popular





OVERVIEW

As the COVID-19 pandemic recedes into memory, the “new American workplace” is starting to take shape. In some ways, it looks like the old American workplace: more organizations have their employees working in-person again, and a majority of HR professionals say their workplaces are “back to normal.” But significant differences remain, and a new wild card – the introduction of artificial intelligence – has the potential to change everything.

HR, AI, and the New American Workplace – the fourth annual study of HR issues conducted by MindEdge Learning and the HR Certification Institute (HRCI) – surveyed 1,030 HR professionals who hold certifications from HRCI. The survey’s top findings: HR professionals tend to view AI as more of an opportunity than a threat to workers, though many remain undecided on this point. And they overwhelmingly support stricter government regulation of AI research.

At the same time, the lingering effects of the pandemic continue to be felt in many different ways: high levels of employee burnout, increased turnover, and significant difficulty in recruiting replacement workers. In this often-challenging landscape, HR professionals are working – often remotely – to recruit and retain top talent for their organizations.

“HR professionals overwhelmingly support stricter government regulation of AI research.”

HR professionals are uncertain about the impact artificial intelligence will have on American workers.

They haven't yet figured out if AI will be good or bad for most workers:



44% say that AI is “**more of an opportunity**” for workers because it will free them up to do more satisfying work



33% think **AI is a threat to workers** because it may **eliminate many jobs**



23% are still unsure about this issue – a high proportion that suggests the **jury is still out on AI**



Among those who follow news about AI closely, a majority (**51%**) see **AI as an opportunity**

But HR professionals do not see AI as a threat to their own jobs:



62% see AI as an opportunity for them to **take on more satisfying work**



Only **17%** think AI is a **threat to their job security**



Among respondents whose organizations are already using AI, **81%** see AI as a **personal opportunity**.

Regardless of whether they think AI is a threat or an opportunity, HR professionals want stricter regulation of AI research:



73% of survey respondents favor **stricter government regulation** of AI research



29% **strongly favor** stricter regulation



Among those who work in the Technology sector, **80%** favor **stricter regulation of AI**

Workplaces are gradually moving past the COVID-19 pandemic.

In-person work is making a comeback:



55% of respondents say that most employees at their organization are now **working in-person**



Only **17%** say that most employees **work remotely** and **28%** say that most workers are on a **hybrid schedule**



In-person work is most common in the **Manufacturing (82%)** and **Healthcare (63%)** sectors, and least common in the **Technology (24%)** sector

Workplaces are returning to some form of “normal”:



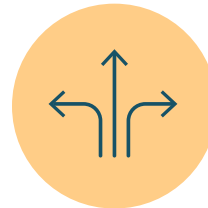
60% of respondents indicate their workplaces are at least “**mostly back to normal**”



Respondents who work in **Retail (69%)** and **Manufacturing (68%)** are most likely to say their workplace is back to normal



But only **25%** of respondents say that “**almost everything is like it was before the pandemic**”



Another **25%** reports that their organization is **fairly different** or **extremely different** from what it was like **before the pandemic**.

A small plurality of respondents says their new workplace is better than before the pandemic:

33%

33% of respondents say that conditions at their organization are **better than before the pandemic**

16%

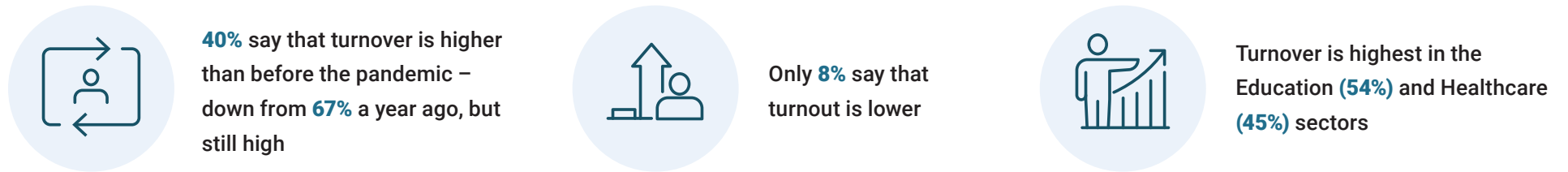
16% say that **conditions are worse**

31%

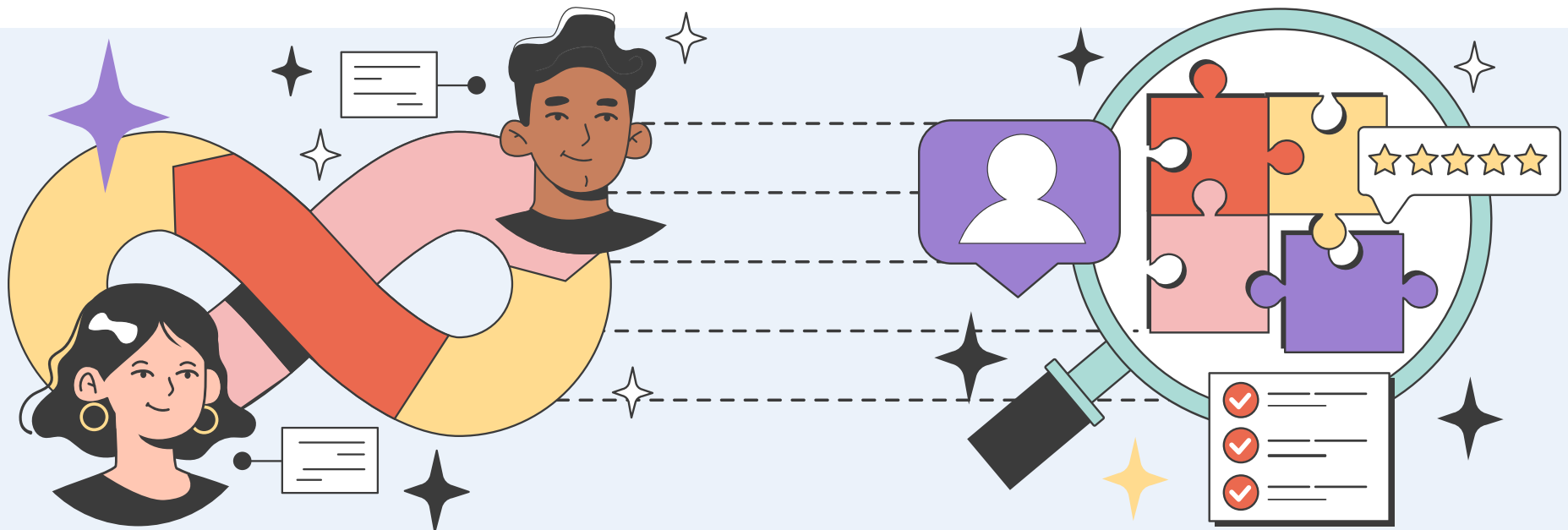
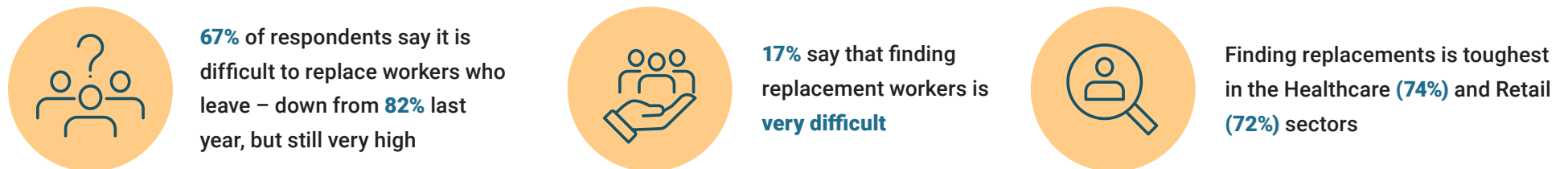
31% say that conditions are about the same, and **20%** were not at their current organization before the pandemic

Turnover and burnout continue to be significant issues.

In a tight labor market, employee turnover remains high:



Finding replacements for departing workers is difficult:



Employee burnout remains a significant concern

Two-of-three (**68%**) respondents report an increase in burnout at their organization:



This figure is down a bit from last year, but still quite high



23% say they have seen a major increase in burnout this year



Burnout is a particularly pressing issue in the Healthcare (**84%**) and Education (**79%**) sectors



HR professionals express strong interest in online learning and issue-specific HR certificates.

Continuous learning is a strongly held value among HR professionals:



85% of respondents say their organization offers continuing learning to employees



79% say that they, themselves, take courses on specific HR topics, outside their general certification



More senior HR professionals are more likely to take issue-specific courses: **81%** of professionals more than eight years on the job have done so, compared to **68%** of those with three or fewer years on the job

HR professionals report some difficulties with remote recruiting and hiring:



80% would be interested in taking online courses to earn a certificate in a specific HR topic, outside their general certification



43% would be very interested in doing so



Respondents are most interested in People Analytics (**83% interested**) and Employment Law (**82%**) certificates



There is also a high level of interest in Compensation (**72%**) and Benefits (**68%**) certificates

Remote HR continues to present an array of challenges.

Remote HR is not as prevalent as it was a year ago, but many organizations are still performing many HR functions remotely:



40% say their organization conducts HR functions remotely “all” or “most” of the time – down a bit from last year (**52%**)



Another **35%** say they practice remote HR some of the time



Only **23%** do not perform any HR functions remotely

Consistent with past results, HR professionals report difficulties with remote recruiting and hiring:



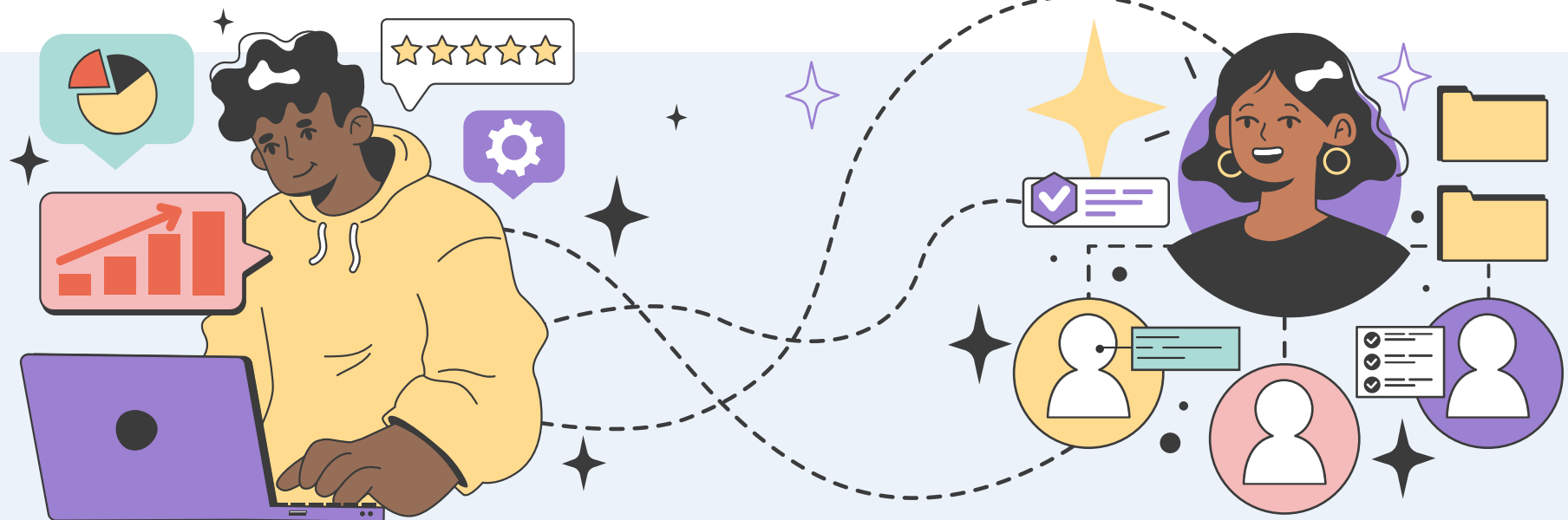
52% indicate that recruiting is harder than before the pandemic, and only **8%** say that recruiting is easier



35% say that remote onboarding is harder than in-person onboarding, and just **17%** said that remote onboarding is easier



30% indicate that remote interviews are less productive than in-person interviews, compared to **24%** who say they are more productive



Conclusion

As the U.S. economy gradually returns to a post-pandemic normal, a picture of the new American workplace is beginning to take shape. But many issues remain unclear. In-person work is on the rise again – but how many Americans will continue to work remotely? Employee turnover remains high – but how long will it take for employers to regain the upper hand in the job market? Burnout continues to be a major problem in the workplace – but when, if ever, will employees experience a decline in anxiety and stress? And perhaps most important: should we welcome or fear the advent of artificial intelligence, which may have the power to change our workplaces forever?

About the Methodology

MindEdge/HRCI's 2023 HR, AI, and the New American Workplace survey was conducted online from September 22 through 29, 2023. The survey probed the attitudes of 1,030 HR professionals in the United States who are 18 years or older and hold one or more certifications from HRCI.

About MindEdge Learning

[MindEdge's](#) mission is to improve the way the world learns. Since its founding in 1998 by Harvard and MIT educators, the company has served some 4 million learners. With a focus on digital-first learning resources—from academic courseware to professional development courses—MindEdge's approach to best practices in online education focuses on learners' needs across the spectrum of higher education, professional development, skills training, and continuing education.

About HRCI

HRCI, headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, is the premier credentialing and learning organization for the human resources profession. For over 45 years, we have set the global standard for HR expertise and excellence through our commitment to the development and advancement of businesspeople in the people business. HRCI develops and offers world-class learning, as well as the administration of eight global certifications and is dedicated to helping professionals achieve new competencies that drive business results. Learn more at <https://www.hrci.org/>.