



2019
GUIDE TO SEVERANCE &
WORKFORCE TRANSITION



RiseSmart, a Randstad company, is the leading provider of outplacement and talent mobility services for organizations in more than 40 industries and 80 countries. As a strategic partner to businesses across the globe, RiseSmart delivers industry-leading results and lifetime support to HR teams and employees. Through innovative methodologies and a blend of high-touch and high-tech delivery, RiseSmart's contemporary approach empowers companies to move talent into, within, and out of their businesses with ease. With a 98 percent satisfaction rating and landing rates exceeding 80 percent, RiseSmart has been able to help its customers improve employee engagement, increase productivity, and generate greater growth and profitability. Founded in 2007 and now a top global career transition firm, RiseSmart has earned awards and recognition for innovation and company culture from more than a dozen organizations, including Bersin by Deloitte, Gartner Inc., the Brandon Hall Group, and Fortune magazine. For more information, visit www.risesmart.com

THE 2019 GUIDE TO SEVERANCE & WORKFORCE TRANSITION

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“Employees, customers, and communities are all looking for exceptional experiences from the businesses they depend upon. Organizations hoping to create five-star experiences for employees understand the importance of maintaining a competitive edge at every stage of the employee journey—including upon separation. Keeping severance offerings competitive is an often overlooked—yet critical—component to establishing a reputation as an employer of choice.”

- Dan Davenport, President and GM, RiseSmart

WELCOME TO THE 2019 GUIDE TO SEVERANCE

If you are asked to describe “severance” in less than ten words, it can be done: a financial allowance paid to a terminated employee. This explanation is close to how the dictionary defines the word. However, in terms of how severance is determined and what is offered to employees through these programs, it’s much more complex than that simple definition may imply.

As most human resources professionals are well aware, severance encompasses a virtual encyclopedia of variables—much more than just dollar amounts and the length of time during which separated employees may be eligible to receive those payments. The world of severance also involves paid time off, medical benefits, stock options, outplacement services, non-compete agreements, and so much more.

While an economy of words may have its uses in many business situations, it is incumbent upon all HR professionals to provide as much information as possible to employees whose positions are being eliminated.

The realities of separation

For a whole host of reasons, job elimination is an inevitable reality in the business world. Many companies are compelled to reduce their workforce or reorganize their structures from time to time. In some cases, employees have to be let go during mergers and acquisitions as their roles become redundant. Whatever the reason for a separation, the more transparency and support an organization can provide, the better the outcomes for the impacted employees and the businesses themselves.

Our 2019 Guide to Severance & Workforce Transition contains the valuable data you need to formulate a comprehensive perspective on severance to help push your organization into the realm of providing an exceptional employee experience. Before we issued our first report in 2014, most companies had no easily accessible method by which to benchmark severance policies against both the competition and the business world in general.

Globalization trends

So that’s why—for this year’s survey—we thought it would be useful to find out how companies on other continents handle

severance. The data reaffirmed for us the fact that in other parts of the world, a higher percentage of companies offer severance to all employees as compared with U.S. organizations.

From time to time we have to think outside our borders to be better able to employ divergent thinking. For this report, we contacted more than 1,500 HR professionals from the U.S. and abroad, 40 percent of which are Fortune-ranked and 58 percent of which manage geographically distributed workforces. It is our goal to provide you with insights and ideas to ensure that your severance policies are competitive, fair, inclusive, and reflect an overall dedication to corporate best practices to help HR leaders benchmark severance plans and policies against a wide range of organizations around the globe.

After you’ve had a chance to absorb the data, engage your colleagues in discussions. Then, build the best severance structure you can. It’s never too early. Starting the process after layoffs or restructurings are announced will only make it harder on you, your colleagues, and all your future impacted employees. What’s more, doing it now can protect and promote your company’s relationship, not just with impacted employees, but also with all the employees who will remain on board. The right severance policy can even improve your ability to recruit future talent, because they know they will be taken care of should they lose their jobs through no fault of their own during a workforce reduction or restructure.

We want to hear from you

Feedback is always welcome. As HR professionals, we have a unique opportunity to make a real impact on the lives of our employees, their families, and the communities in which they live and work. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of equitable and productive severance policies and practices. As a contemporary provider of talent mobility and outplacement solutions, we are committed to helping you improve your company’s business outcomes, regardless of how often you have to move employees into, within, and out of your organization, and no matter how many people are involved. Please send your comments, questions, or recommendations to severance@risemart.com





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY FINDINGS

There is increased evidence that senior managers around the globe are now taking an “employee-first” attitude with greater frequency. That, of course, will play an important role in a wide range of policies that are suggested, planned, and ultimately executed by HR departments—policies that range from job recognition to the kind of severance that follows a layoff.

This “employee-first” trend is the result of a growing realization that a company’s most valuable resource is not its products or services, but its employees. A mindset shift among employers is taking place as people are seen not as a cost center, but as an organization’s most valuable assets. As such, companies are now investing in their employees at every stage of the employment journey, even upon exit from the company.

The modern worker is no longer as passionately tied to any one particular company, as was the case in previous generations. In the recent past, it was not uncommon to stay with a company, for decades. For a variety of reasons, today’s employees are more likely to keep their eyes and options open for new positions elsewhere. That does not lessen the worth of employee skills, ideas, and dedication. However, it is interesting to note that more than half of our respondents indicate that it is still an employee’s tenure and salary level combined that comprise the top criteria their companies use to calculate severance eligibility. That’s a trend that may change as employee experience becomes a top priority for HR departments in all industries and geographies. This study will serve as a baseline to determine whether or not the drive toward providing exceptional experiences causes the kinds of changes we are expecting in the next two years.

Many companies are currently willing to go an extra mile or two in an effort to hold onto their most valuable employees. Our survey results confirmed our experiences with customers and organizations in around the globe, and we regard it as some of the best news of all.

The advent of the new *Employee Relationship Economy* has been the impetus for **more organizations to seek to build greater trust with employees** through policies and practices that demonstrate transparency and fairness. **The six percent increase in the number of organizations offering severance benefits to all employees since 2017** is evidence that HR leaders understand that the employee experience includes what happens when people leave the organization.

While we have seen an increase in the number of employers offering severance to all employees, there's still room for improvement. Looking at companies with between 7,500 and 20,000 employees, half offer severance to all staff, but the other half do not. Those with over 20,000 employees offer severance to everyone only a third of the time.

Statistics that reflect which benefits are offered as part of severance packages tend not to vary much from survey to survey. What we found is that among employers that have a formal, written severance policy, **50 percent now offer outplacement to their employees as part of those pre-determined packages—up from 2017.**

When we asked about specific benefits offered to employees upon separation, our data supported what we already knew. Employees and employers in the U.S. view healthcare as the benefit that receives and requires the most attention. **Retirement benefits, the payout of bonuses and commissions, outplacement, life insurance, and retirement planning services** are other benefits to which employers give the most serious consideration worldwide.

Redeployment also looms large in our current study. In fact, 60 percent of all companies we contacted have programs designed to match employees with as many open internal positions as possible as an alternative to separation.

The number of organizations looking to redeployment as a talent mobility and retention strategy is up 14 percentage points from two years ago.

That's more good news and not all that surprising given the historically low levels of unemployment in the past few years and the scarcity of qualified candidates in the open job market.

As we learned several times from past studies, employees who separate from their companies don't always leave that company's orbit: In many cases, they interact with former coworkers, visit social media sites where they offer opinions about their recent experiences, or sometimes even network with people who may be seeking a job with their former employer. What's more, they may actually return to the company as contractors, temporary employees, or one day in the future, as rehires.

Our study supports these trends and the realization by HR leaders that their organization's ability to hire and retain the best talent hinges on company reputation. **Since 2017, the number of companies that actively monitor employer brand sites—such as Glassdoor and Indeed—has increased by 10 percent.**

That's why more companies are taking the employee/employer relationship seriously even after the relationship officially ends—and certainly while it's winding down. It's also why outplacement has become such an important element and a more commonplace offering. When outplacement was first provided by companies to their separating employees, it was offered primarily to those at the top of the organizational chart. Two-thirds of all the companies we surveyed now offer it to nonexempt employees.



SEVERANCE POLICY & PLANS



SEVERANCE POLICY & PLANS

ELIGIBILITY

Every company, large or small, must take an approach to severance that is as serious as the approach it takes to all other business practices and policies.

That's not just because of governmental regulations or the desire to limit liability, but also due to the need to build and maintain a reputation as an employer of choice, to be a good corporate citizen, and to protect brand reputation.

Driven by the ideas advanced by HR departments globally, companies increasingly feel that taking care of all their employees—including those who have to leave for one reason or another—is simply the right thing to do.

They are correct.

In North America, more than any other region in our study, an employee's tenure (years of service) and salary level combined comprise the top criteria for severance eligibility. That's what 54 percent of our survey respondents have reported. Tenure alone is used by only a quarter of those in the study, and salary alone is half of that percentage.

Our predictions for the short-term future are based on the consistent data we've gathered over the past five years. With that in mind, we can safely report that the top methods for calculating severance for distributed workforces are unlikely to change anytime soon. As in years past, tenure, local labor laws, base salary, job level, and title lead the list of criteria for determining severance.

Just how severance is calculated is obviously one of the key topics in any discussion an employee will have with his or her HR rep. When it's offered is another. As this chart shows, the need to restructure the workforce dictates the "when" more than anything else (30 percent). Large workforce reduction is the second most common determination (18 percent).

The main criteria for calculating severance in regions where U.S. companies have distributed workforces are consistent around the globe: A combination of tenure and salary tops the list.

What are the main criteria for calculating severance in each region where your organization has employees?

	Combination tenure/ salary	Other
North America	54%	46%
Europe	47%	53%
South America	30%	70%
Asia	28%	72%
Australia	25%	75%
Africa	18%	82%

When does your organization offer severance packages to employees?



Elimination of select positions	30%
Larger workforce reductions	18%
Legal dispute settlement	14%
Business relocation	12%
Individual termination due to poor performance	11%
Labor laws	15%

Compared with 2017, more organizations now offer outplacement to employees for reasons beyond just layoffs. Many now extend it even to employees whose termination is based on poor performance, because HR departments recognize that doing so can help safeguard the employer brand. Certainly, more companies would do well to consider providing outplacement to all employees during workforce reductions.

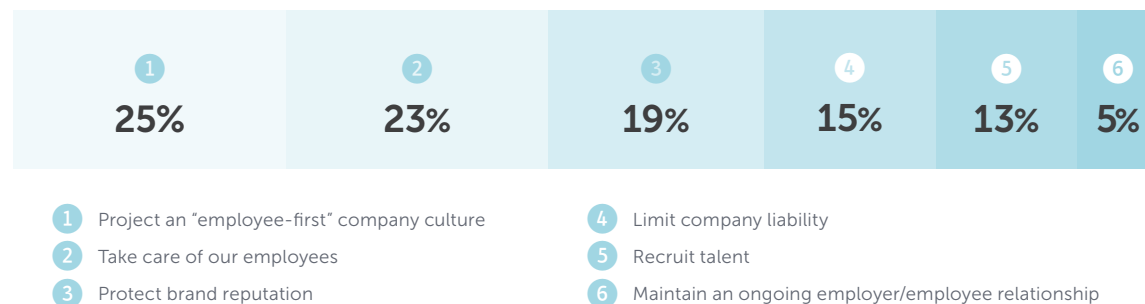
No one argues the importance of protecting the company brand. In fact, that's what probably lies behind all the other reasons that severance packages are offered—but rest assured it does not mean that a company values its employees any less than its brand. It's just that a strong brand can often translate to a stronger employee culture. Here's how: By having a strong brand, a company has more of the strength, power, and resources it needs to develop, reward, and hold onto its people. According to our survey, promoting an "employee-first" culture and taking care of employees are number one and number two, respectively, when it comes to the reasons that severance is offered to displaced employees.

Also on that list—a bit lower down—is the need to limit company liability, to recruit talent, and to maintain positive employer/employee relationships.

For organizations with distributed workforces, knowing the in-country labor laws is critical. Some HR leaders may be surprised to learn that although there is no right to employment in the U.S., other countries have laws that protect the employee over the interests or convenience of the employer. Your local employees will likely know these laws and termination rules better than their U.S.-based employer. If HR leaders don't have access to expert advice, they risk legal liability and damage to the corporate brand image. That's why all HR professionals must be aware of local laws, national requirements, industry customs, and all other similar information. According to our study, there are many sources, internal and external, to which HR pros can turn to maintain the highest level of familiarity with everything they need to know.

Internally, the top three sources are in-house courses and workshops, the company's legal team, and established corporate policies and compliance guidelines. External resources include local government agencies, independent consultants, online research, and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

In order of importance, what are the reasons your company offers severance to displaced employees?



The value of doing severance homework and legwork cannot be overestimated. We wanted to share the entire list of the most common ways in which U.S. HR professionals in organizations with distributed workforces learn about local labor laws and customs for severance calculation. Please also note that guides, such as this one, provide invaluable information that can assist in making decisions.

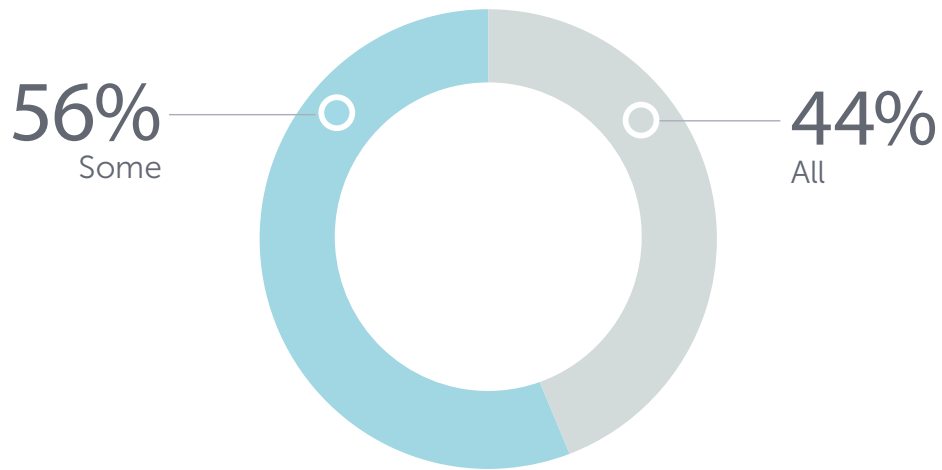
How do you learn of local labor laws and customs for severance calculations?

- 1 Internal trainings and workshops
- 2 Legal team
- 3 Corporate policies and compliance guidelines
- 4 Local experts and HR professionals
- 5 Local government agencies
- 6 Outside consultants
- 7 Dedicated in-house experts
- 8 Online resources and research
- 9 SHRM

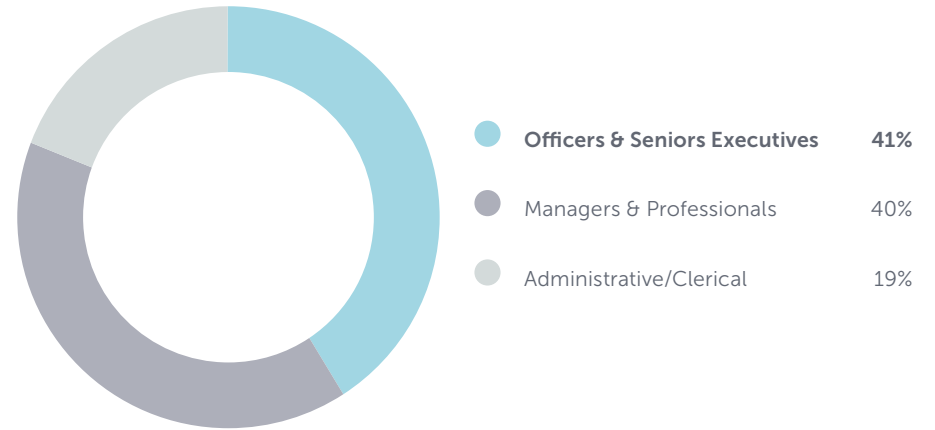
CALCULATION

A greater number of organizations today provide severance to more levels of employees. Where once it was offered to officers and executives, now it is more readily available to managers and other mid-level professionals. The first chart shows which employees are eligible for severance following an involuntary separation, and the second shows which employees are eligible at those companies where severance is limited to just a few specific groups:

Which employees are eligible for severance following an involuntary separation?



If only some, which employees are eligible for severance?



Given the recent employee engagement trends and the evolution of employee expectations, improvements in overall workplace culture may begin to show real advancement once all administrative and clerical workers are also assured a full and equitable severance package. That's something to work toward. After all, administrative and clerical employees are often the hub of the work environment. Typically, they are also among the most active people on social media, and their online influence can affect a company's reputation, particularly if they visit and comment on sites such as Glassdoor. The same holds true for employees early in their careers, who tend to be part of the most active demographic on social media.



Nearly 40 percent of the organizations we surveyed require a five-year tenure for employees to qualify for any type of severance benefit. Policies that exclude the majority of employees from severance are tied to similar policies that favor taking care of executives and officers who typically have been with the company for longer periods of time. Only 22 percent offer severance regardless of tenure, and 18 percent require at least two years with the company.

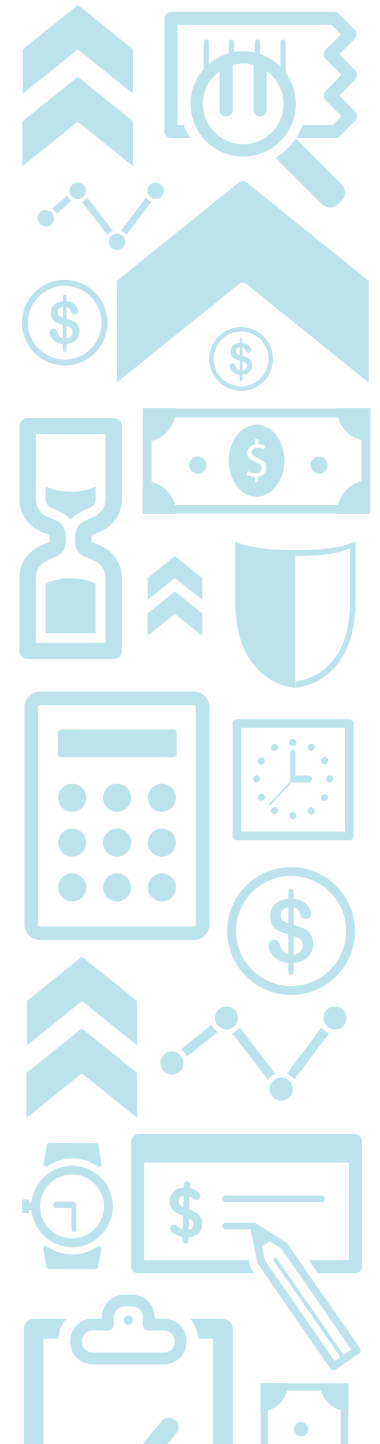
If only some employees are eligible for severance, how many years of service must an individual have to qualify for severance?



Shifting employment trends dictate that eligibility should not depend on how long someone has been with the company because, a) they did not choose to leave, b) they may be exemplary workers, and c) they can still function as excellent brand ambassadors. However, that's not the corporate reality today. With the proactive support of HR departments, maybe one day it will be.

When it comes to how much severance to expect, employees should be able to assume the highest levels of fairness, transparency, and transition support. Not only is it appropriate, but it encourages the "employee-first" culture we've been talking about, which can positively affect the company's reputation and recruitment efforts.

For all the reasons mentioned above, it is a good idea to have not just a formal severance policy, but also to partner with a reputable outplacement firm to determine the separation practices for your organization. Outside firms often provide the expertise necessary to ensure your organization is following best practices for severance and separation policies and plans during times of economic boom, as well as economic downturn.



Our research shows that only 62 percent of survey respondents in North America report that they have formal policies, which include the way they calculate severance. This is down 25 percent from the previous study. In the 2017 study conducted by RiseSmart, a decisive majority of respondents reported having a formal, written policy (87 percent). Interestingly, organizations may be less inclined to offer severance because business leaders believe that their impacted employees will not be unemployed for very long—due to the currently strong economy. In economic boom years, HR leaders may be focusing on the challenges associated with talent shortages and overlook other factors, particularly unexpected ones, such as the possibility of a recession, the impacts of market saturation for certain products, and forthcoming government regulatory decisions that can affect business. Without a formal policy, companies can be left with negative circumstances when they least expect them.

That’s why such policies should be put in place immediately (for companies that don’t already have them), and reviewed annually or biennially to ensure they remain relevant to the needs of the employee population and the company. Studies, such as this one, provide the benchmarking HR leaders need to compare their policies and plans to the norms in other organizations around the world. Having a competitive, written severance policy will help both in prosperous times and challenging times. Getting everything in place to support employees upon exit from the company includes forging a partnership with a skilled outplacement provider. Even if you’re focused on current challenges, getting support from the right business partner frees up your HR department to concentrate on more pressing internal matters.

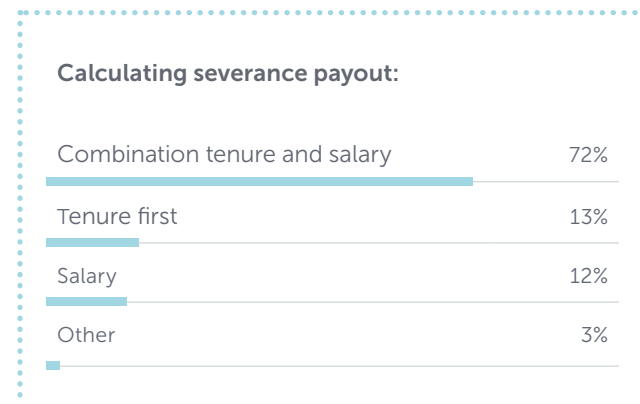
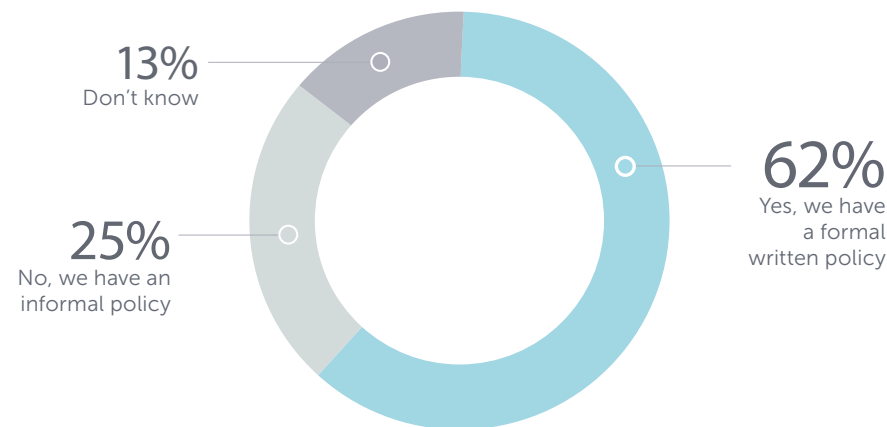


It is interesting to note that the percentage of companies offering severance to all employees has risen about six percentage points since 2017. That’s not a huge leap, but it’s a good development nonetheless. The results do not seem to be dependent on company size (other than at the smallest companies that offer severance to all employees). Companies with between 7,500 and 20,000 employees tend to split 50/50 in terms of offering severance to all employees.

Perhaps it’s no great surprise that the largest companies (more than 20,000 employees) offer severance to all employees only a third of the time.

The monetary portion of severance, and how it is calculated, can be a sensitive topic. As noted, typically the amount of severance is calculated based on years of service and salary. When calculating severance payout, 13 percent of our respondents report that they look at tenure first. The next most common indicator, as reported by 72 percent, is job level and title. Salary, reported by 12 percent, comes in third.

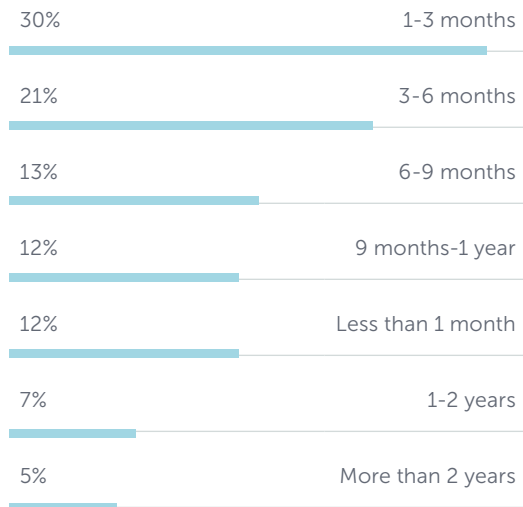
Does your organization have a formal, written severance policy?





About a third of all companies offer between one and three months of severance, and a fifth of all companies offer between three and six months. Only a little more than a tenth of all those we surveyed offer between six and nine months. In general, the larger company, the more likely it is to offer impacted employees more than one month's salary.

How many months of salary is typically offered to employees as part of severance?

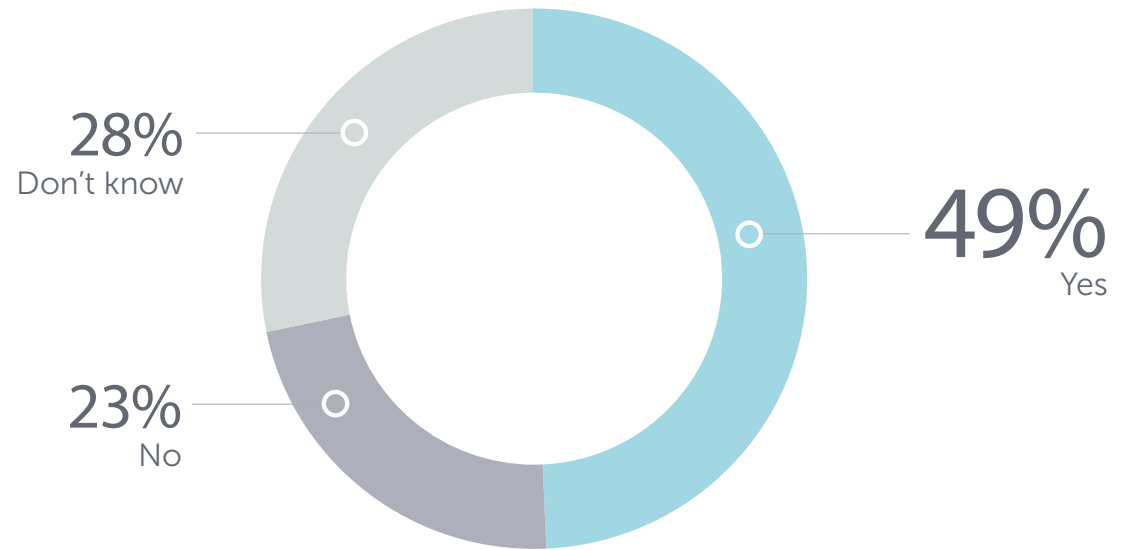


NOTIFICATION

Although people may be comfortable signing documents when accepting an offer of employment or during early onboarding, putting a signature on a piece of paper during the layoff process can be intimidating and anxiety-producing for impacted employees who may be unsure about the ramifications of the terms to which they are agreeing.

When it comes to separation, HR departments should feel compelled to alert all affected employees that signing a release of claims or a waiver form in exchange for a severance package is perfectly normal—par for the course and not cause for concern. About half of all organizations in our survey require a release of claims in exchange for severance. (Nearly one-third, however, don't know if they do or don't.)

Does your organization require a release of claims in exchange for the severance package?



In our previous report, we found that more organizations allowed employees under the age of 40 up to a month to sign required paperwork. Today it varies: For employees under 40, the time period ranges from a week to 90 days. Surprisingly, 24 percent of our respondents report not being sure how much time is allowed. This may be due to inexperience with layoffs. Among respondents that do know, two weeks takes the top spot (18 percent), and one week (16 percent) and one month (15 percent) are close enough to tie for second. About a third of our respondents allow from seven to 14 days.

For employees under the age of 40, how much time is typically given to sign a release of claims or waiver form?

14 days	18%
7 days	16%
30 days	15%
Less than 7 days	11%
21 days	9%
45 days	3%
60 days	2%
90 days	2%
Unsure	24%

As always, it is important to know what the law says about notification. Most states in the U.S. provide between 21 and 45 days for employees over the age of 40 to sign a release of claims form. Our survey reflects overall compliance with those requirements. About a quarter of our respondents indicate that their organizations allow more than the legal minimum for their mature-age employees.

The majority of survey respondents give employees over the age of 40 more than 30 days to sign a release of claims or waiver form.

For employees over the age of 40, how much time is typically given to sign a release of claims or waiver form?



Less than 30 days	42%
30-60 days	34%
60-90 days	9%
More than 90 days	4%
Other	11%

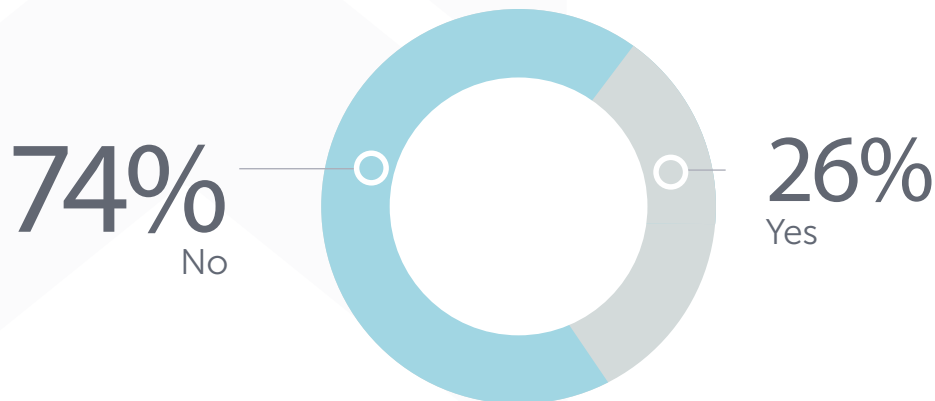
BENEFITS

Companies have to find new and unique ways to remain competitive given the challenges and realities of today's workplace. Any discussion about severance has to take that into consideration. Many organizations are already shifting their policies to reflect the changes in how we work, which is why a growing number of organizations are already changing the types and duration of benefits they offer to their separated employees.

As mature-age workers continue to remain in the workforce, companies must rethink their retirement benefits and the need to offer creative retirement planning. Additionally, highly valued workers in their twenties and thirties who join a company may stay for only a few years. As a result, eligibility policies should be re-envisioned to reflect these shorter—though no less valuable—employee tenures.

In response to the changing workforce and large number of mature-age workers continuing on in their careers, a fifth of the companies that we engaged in our study regard some kind of retirement benefits or retirement planning assistance as the top severance element to consider revising. Eligibility criteria come in a close second (19 percent), with payment of bonuses and COBRA health benefits in third and fourth place respectively. Rethinking outplacement services is in the top five at eight percent.

A quarter of all organizations in the survey are considering changes to their severance policy in the next year. The other three-quarters have no such plans.



What elements of your severance policy are you considering changing?

Retirement benefits and planning	20%
Eligibility	19%
Payment of bonuses for which employee previously eligible (e.g. commission)	11%
Health benefits continuance (COBRA specific to the U.S.)	10%
Outplacement services	8%
Education or retraining	7%
Life insurance	7%
Financial planning	6%
Continuation of stock options	5%
Long-term disability	5%
Short-term disability	2%

When it comes to the most sought-after benefits, healthcare is still the focus both for employees and employers. In the U.S., other important benefits mentioned—in descending order of where they came in on our survey—are retirement benefits, payment of bonuses or commissions, cash payouts, life insurance, and retirement planning services.



Since our last study, an increasing number of companies have decided to include benefits outside of healthcare, such as financial planning, as part of their efforts to remain competitive—and to attract new talent.

The following benefits are currently offered to employees upon involuntary separation:

- ① Health benefits or COBRA
- ② Retirement benefits
- ③ Payment of bonuses or commission
- ④ Cash payout
- ⑤ Life Insurance
- ⑥ Retirement planning services
- ⑦ Outplacement services
- ⑧ Short-term disability
- ⑨ Long-term disability
- ⑩ Education or retraining
- ⑪ Continuation of stock options
- ⑫ Financial planning



GLOBAL VIEW

SEVERANCE POLICIES AND PLANS

While companies in the U.S. and Canada by and large use severance to ease the transition for employees who are being separated from their organizations, European firms are more likely to offer severance as part of larger workforce reductions or to settle legal disputes. France, in particular, uses it as a legal remedy. Asia-Pacific nations use it almost equally to eliminate positions and significantly reduce the workforce. Business relocation is another reason that appears on the European and Asia-Pacific lists of severance motives, though slightly lower than the other reasons.

Top five global reasons for offering severance:

Europe	Asia-Pacific	North America
1 Larger workforce reductions	1 Elimination of select positions	1 Elimination of select positions
2 Legal dispute settlement	2 Larger workforce reductions	2 Larger workforce reductions
3 Individual termination due to poor performance	3 Business relocation	3 Labor laws
4 Business relocation	4 Individual termination due to poor performance	4 Legal dispute settlement
5 Elimination of select positions	5 Legal dispute settlement	5 Individual termination due to poor performance

Compared to Europe and Asia-Pacific, the U.S. and the U.K. have the lowest percentage of companies with formal, written severance policies. American companies have a good reason to look more closely at what their overseas neighbors are doing. Nearly two-thirds of European and Asia-Pacific businesses we contacted have formal policies. Having written guidelines saves time, answers questions swiftly, and makes the process a little easier.

Here are some highlights from the research:

- » **Who is eligible?** In Europe and Asia, the majority of companies offer severance to all employees following an involuntary separation. Spain comes in first, with 75 percent. Our survey was inconclusive when it comes to the number of years of service that employees must have behind them in order to qualify. The results vary too widely from country to country to draw any conclusions.
- » **How is it calculated?** Overwhelmingly, a combination of years of service and salary is used to calculate severance. In India, the majority of organizations use salary as the only calculation factor.
- » **Payment in lieu of notice?** This practice is more common outside of the U.S., and occurs with the greatest regularity in Spain and India.
- » **Are policy changes coming?** A high percentage of organizations across the globe, other than in the U.S. and Australia, plan to make changes to their severance plans in 2019. Almost three-quarters of all companies surveyed in India have changes in mind. In Europe, the health benefits will change, followed by eligibility. In Asia-Pacific, financial planning is the biggest change on the way, followed by health benefits.

Of the industries represented in our survey, the top three making changes to severance policies vary by region. Some similarities between regions include healthcare and information technology.

Europe	Asia-Pacific	North America
+ Healthcare	Information technology	+ Healthcare
Automotive	Construction/Manufacturing	Professional services
Information technology	Consumer goods/ Packaging	Wholesale/Retail



This table shows the severance elements that companies in three global regions are considering for change. These may provide some clues or spark some ideas for your own consideration.

Europe	Asia-Pacific	North America
1 Health benefits continuance	1 Financial planning	1 Eligibility
2 Eligibility	2 Health benefits continuance	2 Retirement benefits
3 Payment of bonuses	3 Payment of bonuses	3 Payment of bonuses
4 Retirement benefits	4 Retirement planning services	4 Health benefits continuance
5 Retirement planning services	5 Retirement benefits	5 Outplacement services

“In Belgium, the rules around who is eligible are determined by laws that prescribe the length of outplacement for employees based on seniority and length of service. We feel these laws are in the best interest of the employees and the companies, as they eliminate misunderstandings and negative employee sentiment.”

Marc Van Harneveldt, Managing Director, RiseSmart Belgium





GLOBAL VIEW

ELIGIBILITY

How do the statistics for severance eligibility abroad compare to those in the United States?

Here's where there may be a surprise: Every country surveyed surpasses the U.S. in the percentage of organizations that offer severance to all employees. What may not be surprising is that some countries mandate the use of outplacement services, which can explain the differences in those instances.

In every case, the majority of companies offer outplacement to all employees. In some cases, such as Spain, nearly two-thirds include all employees in separation benefits. But if it's a surprise, it's a good one, because maybe that will compel U.S. companies to take a closer and harder look at their programs and policies. Then, they can start to seriously consider making a few changes of their own that will help their companies improve to the point where every single one is an employer of choice.



“Since severance packages are mandatory by law, companies employing more than 1000 staff in France are legally required to offer outplacement to employees. The most common practice is to use an outside outplacement consultant instead of attempting to deliver these critical services through internal programs led by people who do not have the specific expertise to deliver successful outcomes.”

Arnaud Cartier, France Directeur Général, RiseSmart





HR SOLUTIONS



HR SOLUTIONS

RETENTION

For many employees, it's easy to jump to a certain conclusion the moment the word "layoff" is mentioned in e-blasts, at closed-door meetings, or even by someone standing in the break room. At that point, visions of bills that need to be paid and responsibilities that must be met begin to swirl around in the minds of many employees. When they begin to think of next steps, résumés that need to be updated, interviews that need to be scheduled, and severance that must be discussed instantly become priorities. Some workers actually start to look for employment elsewhere simply to build a safety net for themselves.

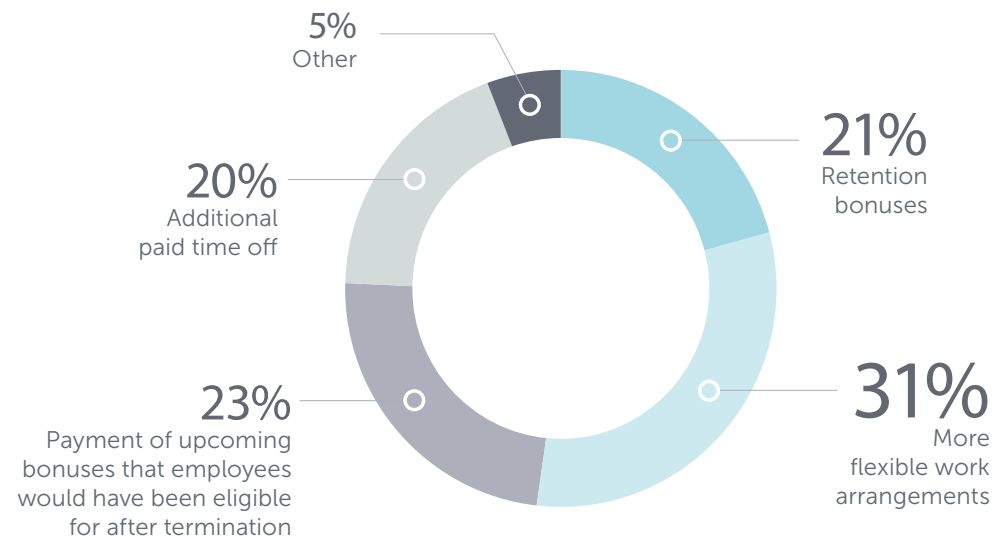
The fact is, companies really don't want to lose their most valuable talent during times of workforce restructuring, and many organizations make a concerted effort to hold onto key employees by offering additional benefits during the layoff notification period.

Common sense dictates that, to the extent possible, only redundant or superfluous positions should be eliminated, while positions that can ensure future growth should be retained. The majority of companies in our study (64 percent) continue to acknowledge that their most important assets are not their products or technologies, but their employees. And many

companies are willing to make investments to retain their most valuable people. HR departments continue to make it a priority to identify opportunities to match employees with other opportunities within the company, and to develop the policies that make the most sense for all current, future, and departing employees.

Several perks are currently offered to try to retain employees who may be compelled to look elsewhere when word of a layoff or workforce restructure begins to circulate around the workplace. These include more flexible work arrangements, payment of bonuses that would have been offered after termination, and additional time off. Flexible work arrangements are the most popular, having been mentioned by almost a third of all those in the study, followed by early payment of bonuses and retention bonuses.

When considering a layoff, what retention incentives do you employ?

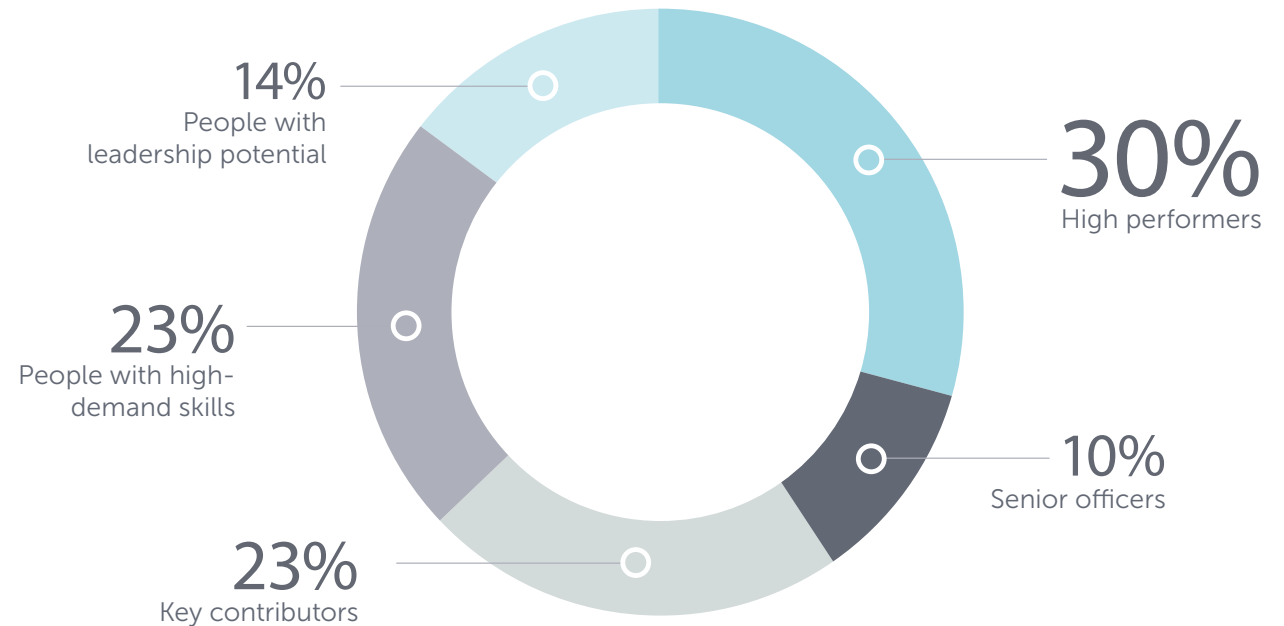


Today, in comparison with results from the past five years that we have been conducting this study, retention perks are offered to more employees—not just senior officers. This internal safety net is an effective strategy for holding onto a wider range of key contributors and workers who have vital skills from which the company can benefit.

Even in those cases where highly valued employees choose to leave, many companies find that offering them incentives lessens the separation anxiety. That's good for the post-employment attitudes of those who leave, and good for the company's reputation.

Also, implementing policies that give separated employees an incentive to stay longer than the customary two weeks allows organizations to leverage key talent at critical times, such as during a restructuring or a relocation of headquarters. High performers, key contributors, and workers with high-demand skills are among the employee populations that most companies hope to retain through incentives.

Who do you hope to retain by offering retention incentives during a layoff?



REDEPLOYMENT

Organizations searching for ways to create exceptional employee experiences and retain valuable talent are looking at redeployment as a talent retention and engagement tool.

Redeployment strategies can be used in a variety of circumstances and should be part of a company's internal strategies for encouraging talent mobility within the organization. In times of workforce transformations, redeployment is used to identify internal opportunities for those employees initially on the separation list.

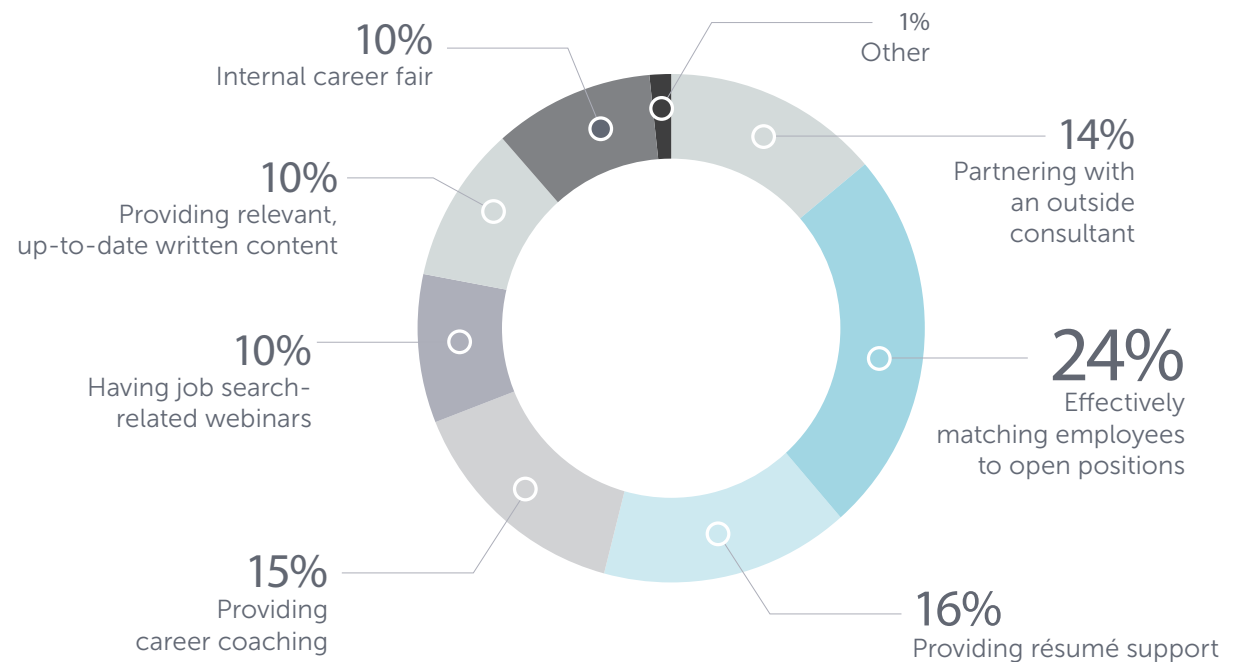
For employees, it's certainly preferable over job uncertainty, decisively better than unemployment, and in the best cases, can lead to greater job satisfaction than they may have originally envisioned.

In our study, 60 percent of all companies surveyed say they have programs in place to try to match employees with open internal positions as an alternative to separation. This is up significantly from the previous study, which indicates that companies today are more willing to invest in employees to try to keep them as part of the corporate family. Such investments include providing new skills training, finding ways to combine an employee's current skills (primarily soft skills) with his or her willingness to learn something new, career coaching, and résumé and personal branding support.

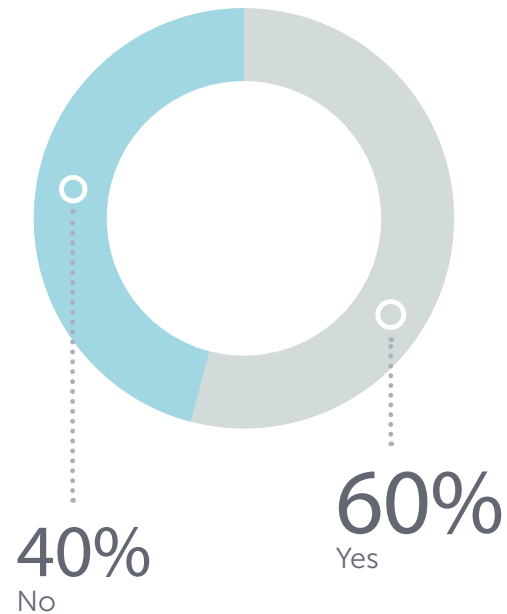
For employers, redeployment preserves institutional knowledge, relieves the time and cost of recruitment and onboarding, and lessens the incidence of valuable employees in redundant positions leaving the company for a competitor.

The biggest redeployment challenge for a company? Matching interested employees to relevant open positions and preparing those employees for a successful transition. In many ways, an internal transition is no less challenging than an external one, and may require an updated résumé and career coaching for interviewing and networking.

What would help you improve your redeployment program?



Does your organization currently have programs in place to help employees find and land open internal positions [redeployment]?



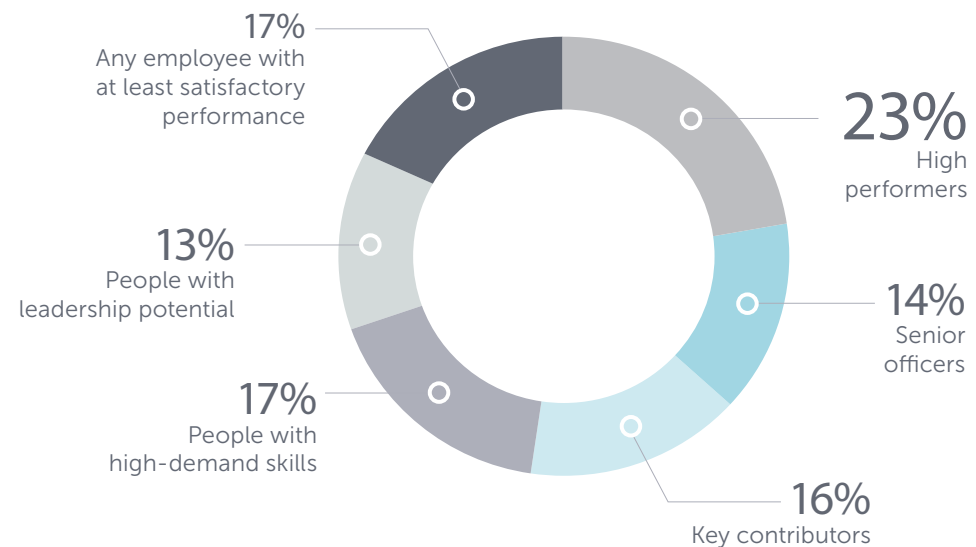
From the company's perspective, redeployment in times of workforce restructuring or downsizing makes sense mostly for high performers, key contributors, and those with skills that are in high demand. Senior leaders and employees with clear-cut leadership potential are often placed on the redeployment list.

Organizations hoping to implement successful redeployment programs first create a culture where managers value and seek to hire from within. In addition, all employees should be encouraged to become high-level performers or key contributors. Providing internal career development opportunities can help employees gain the skills they need to make them even more valuable to the organization.

An effective redeployment program also helps address skill gaps, prevents some employees from moving over to the competition, tightens internal employee networks, supports a positive corporate culture (which can be reflected on social media), and contains costs.

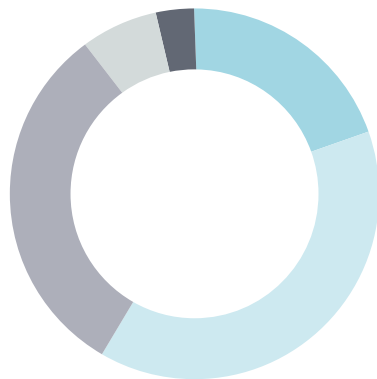
Effective redeployment programs reduce recruitment and hiring fees, decrease the time and resources needed for onboarding new employees, and lower severance expenditures. Redeployment also retains institutional knowledge, increases employee engagement, and increases retention rates.

Which employees are eligible for redeployment? (Select all that apply)



How do most companies today rate their own efforts? Almost half say their programs are “somewhat effective” or “not effective at all.” That doesn’t necessarily mean they’re doing a poor job; it simply means that the redeployment task is enormously complex. That’s precisely why using an outside provider for redeployment is a smart approach.

How would you rate your organization's redeployment programs?

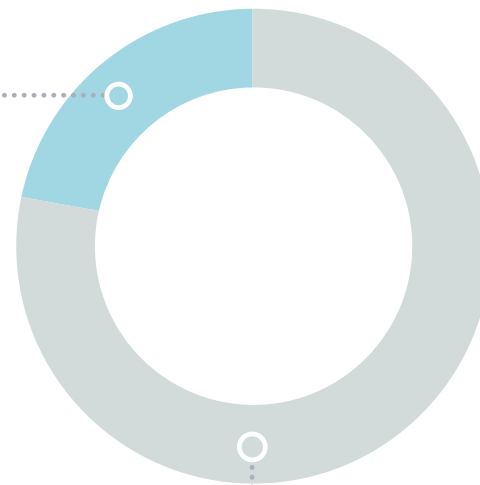


Effective	38%
Somewhat effective	32%
Very effective	20%
Not very effective	7%
Not effective at all	3%

The need to offer more robust redeployment programs is reflected in roughly one quarter of the responses from HR leaders we surveyed who stated that they are relying on outside consultants for help. Turning to outside redeployment specialists with the resources to manage an effective program, such as those found in outplacement services providers, frees up HR departments to do all the other important work—of which there is never a shortage. Contemporary outplacement providers have specialized software that can expertly match employees with internal open positions, and career professionals who can help employees with résumés, cover letters, digital profiles, interview coaching, webinars, job fairs, and much more.

Is your redeployment program run internally or through an outside consultant?

22%
Outside
Consultant



78%
Internal program

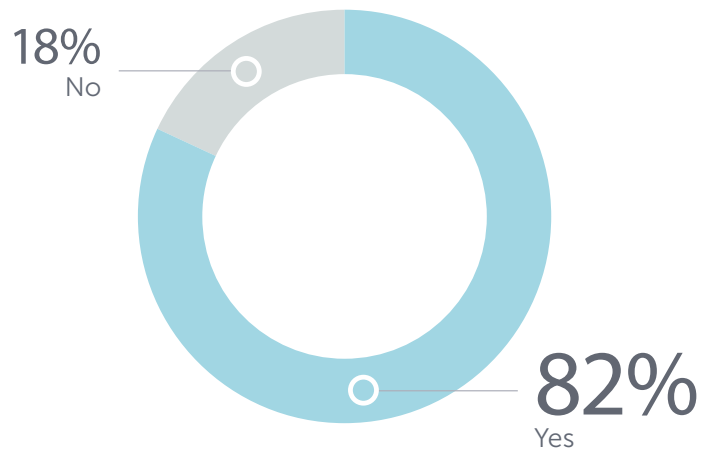
As part of the redeployment program, the most popular elements include:

- 1 Notification of open internal job leads
- 2 Career coaching
- 3 Résumé and personal branding support
- 4 Peer-to-peer mentoring
- 5 Job search-related webinars
- 6 Internal career fairs
- 7 Written content

Outside specialists also help companies improve their data gathering and analysis of internal employees to help drive key strategic decisions. Understanding which departments and business units successfully redeploy internal talent can allow companies to examine what worked well and where they can replicate those practices in other areas to further improve workplace culture.

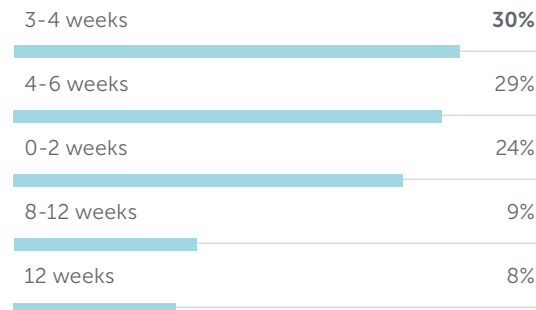
Over 80 percent of companies surveyed encourage employees to apply for open positions within their organizations. An open notification program is essential to the success of any redeployment policy. Additionally, a commitment from managers and supervisors to hire internally is critical to making redeployment successful.

Do you encourage employees to apply for open positions within the company?

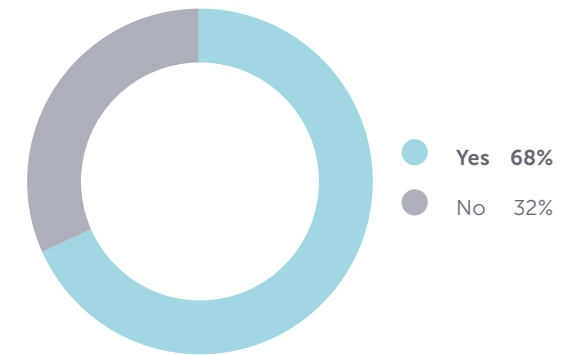


Just over two-thirds of our survey participants (68 percent) build in a specific eligibility period for employees to explore redeployment between the time of the separation announcements and the actual layoffs. It must be noted, though, that the timeframes have gotten tighter. Over the past two years, more than half (59 percent) have offered between three weeks and two months, a quarter offer less than two weeks, and about a fifth offer more than two months.

If yes, how long is the redeployment period of eligibility?



Do you offer a period of eligibility for redeployment after notification but before the layoff begins?



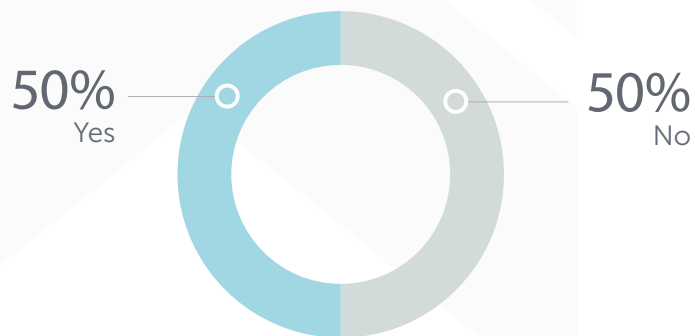
OUTPLACEMENT

Outplacement is a service provided at no cost to workers by their employer through a third-party supplier during layoffs or workforce restructuring. Today, half the companies that have formal, written severance policies offer outplacement to impacted employees. As long as employee experience, workplace culture, and employer brand remain top of mind for organizations, the trends toward offering more support to more people will continue to increase.

While organizations are evenly split on whether or not they offer outplacement, it looks as if this may change soon because, as previously noted, more companies seek to keep good relationships with current employees and separated employees. Despite the complexity of the task, outplacement is provided by an internal company team at 66 percent of the companies in our survey and by external consultants at 34 percent of organizations surveyed.

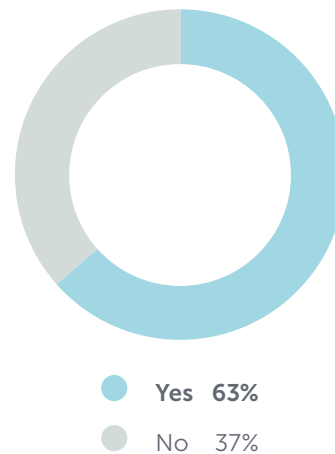
When layoffs are necessary, partnering with a contemporary outplacement firm is preferable. The best scenario is when a company forms a partnership with a contemporary outplacement service provider long before their services may be required. That way, the work can begin well before a layoff or restructuring takes place, no time is wasted, and best practices can be put into play without missing a beat.

If you have a formal severance policy, does your organization offer outplacement services to impacted employees?

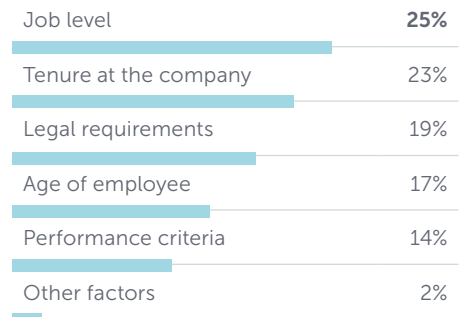


Today, 63 percent of organizations that provide outplacement offer those services to non-exempt employees. The top three factors that determine the length of time a separated employee can take advantage of outplacement services are job level, tenure, and legal requirements. The question of how much time is allowed is often one of the most important to separated employees—and it's the question they may ask before any other. After all, if two months' worth of outplacement service is offered, it usually will not be long enough for anyone to find a job: The national average for finding a new job is closer to five months.

If your organization offers outplacement, do you include non-exempt employees?



Which factors determine the length of time that outplacement services are offered to impacted employees?



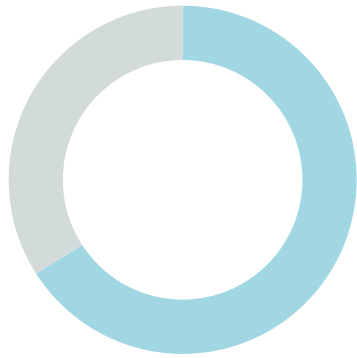


The length of time outplacement is offered changes with job level. These charts illustrate the range for officers/senior executives, management/professionals, and administrative/clerical.

Please indicate the length of time outplacement is offered by job level

#	Question	1-2 months	3-5 months	6-8 months	9-11 months	1 year	> than 1 year
1	Officers/ Senior executives	18%	27%	25%	10%	12%	8%
2	Management/ Professionals	17%	26%	24%	13%	13%	7%
3	Administrative/ Clerical	25%	25%	20%	13%	10%	7%

Is outplacement provided by internal teams or via an external consultant?

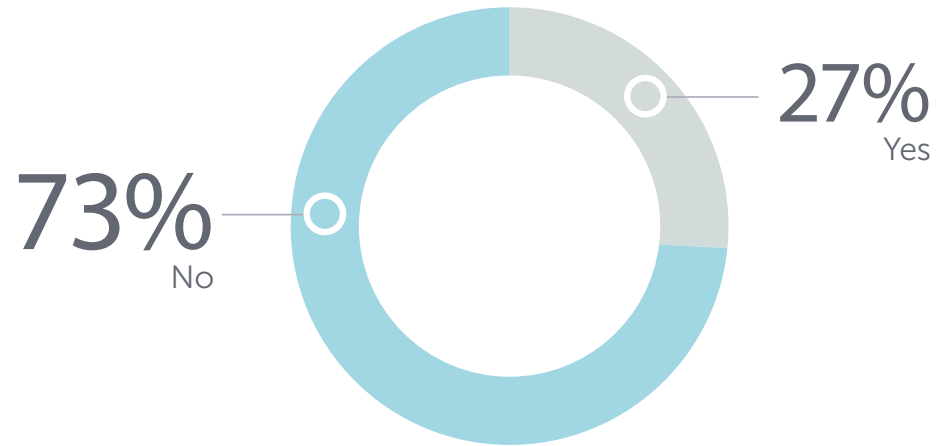


- Internal teams 66%
- External consultant 34%

In our survey, 27 percent of respondents offer cash in lieu of outplacement. In the long-term, this is not a solution that benefits either the employee or improves their marketability—and thereby won't help reduce unemployment claims for the employer. While money may come in handy, it won't help anyone find a new job.

In cases where cash is offered in lieu of outplacement, the top reasons given are cost savings, providing a simple solution, helping employees in the near term, and for individual retirement funds (as retirement is sometimes an avenue for mature employees when separation is imminent). While cash may seem like a simpler solution and, in the near term, a cheaper option, it is rarely a good solution and fails to impact the long-term costs and consequences of a layoff. As far as retirement is concerned, contemporary outplacement firms now also help companies develop creative retirement programs that offer more value than a one-time monetary payout.

Do you offer cash in lieu of outplacement?



Finally, it is important to understand that employees who are laid off, or leave voluntarily, will almost definitely interact with former coworkers. They may also speak with other people in the future who are considering an open position at the company. They may even return on their own one day as employees or contractors. In other words, the end of an employment relationship is not necessarily the end of an employer/employee relationship. That's why outplacement is so important: It allows former employees to hold onto good impressions.

What are the top reasons that cash is offered in lieu of outplacement?

- 1 Cost savings
- 2 Simple solution
- 3 Help our employees
- 4 Provide for retirement





GLOBAL VIEW

REDEPLOYMENT

Companies in India rank the highest (90 percent) in our international survey for having programs in place to help employees find and land internal positions.

Organizations in Germany placed a strong second (84 percent). By contrast, just 60 percent of companies in the U.S. report having redeployment programs. In Europe, senior officers and high performers receive this benefit most often. In Asia-Pacific, it's high performers and key contributors.

Any discussion of redeployment on an international basis has to include two essential questions to get the most complete picture. First, which industries offer redeployment?

Europe	Asia-Pacific	North America
+ Healthcare	Information technology	+ Healthcare
Information technology	Construction/Manufacturing	Professional services
Professional services	Government agency	\$ Wholesale/Retail

Secondly, which employees are eligible for redeployment?

Europe	Asia-Pacific	North America
1 Senior officers	1 High performers	1 High performers
2 High performers	2 Key contributors	2 People with high-demand skills
3 Key contributors	3 People with high-demand skills	3 Any employee with at least satisfactory performance
4 People with high-demand skills	4 Senior officers	4 Key contributors
5 Any employee with at least satisfactory performance	5 People with leadership potential	5 Senior officers

"We have seen a significant uptick in interest in RiseSmart's redeployment solutions. Low unemployment rates and talent scarcity are the drivers behind organizations seeking more ways to retain valuable and skilled talent."

Laurie Compartino, General Manager, RiseSmart Canada

The focus for many organizations overseas seems to be shifting toward recruiting, developing, and retaining workers who possess high-demand skills. As part of that shift, valuing employees only because of their level of seniority is becoming slightly less prevalent.

This leaves us with one final redeployment question from an international perspective: Precisely what do these companies feel they need to do to improve their programs?

The number one choice was internationally unanimous: matching employees to open positions. That took the top spot in Europe, Asia-Pacific, and the U.S. After that, the results were mixed and, therefore, inconclusive.

What would help you improve your redeployment program?

	Europe	Asia-Pacific	North America
Effectively matching employees to open positions	1	1	1
Partnering with an outside consultant	4		4
Providing résumé support	2	4	2
Having job search-related webinars	3	3	
Providing career coaching		2	3





GLOBAL VIEW



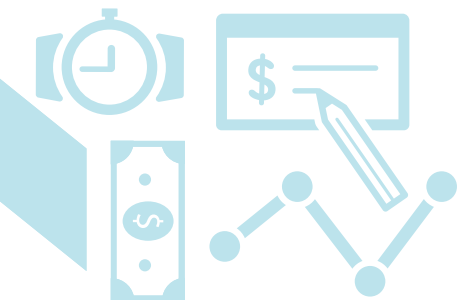
OUTPLACEMENT

Which factors determine the length of time that outplacement services are offered to impacted employees? In Europe, especially Spain, there is more consideration for the age of employees. A certain amount of ageism may continue to affect the ease and speed with which mature workers can make job or career changes. That's why allowing them more time to take advantage of outplacement services makes sense. In addition, many of these employees may very well pursue alternative career paths, such as entrepreneurship, consultancies, or other non-traditional routes.

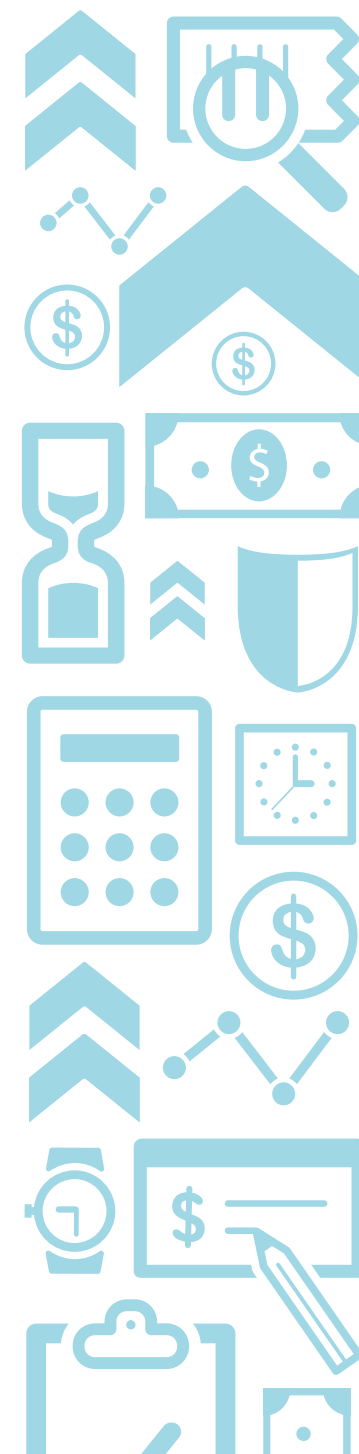
Many surveyed companies in Europe and the U.S. provide their separated employees with résumé preparation support. Providing some career coaching is common in Europe (the second most popular response) and in the U.S. (the third most popular). Webinars that discuss the job-search process was a third selection in Europe and Asia-Pacific.

"Diversity is key. HR professionals need to choose a business partner that can demonstrate diversity of thought, inclusiveness, and expertise in supporting people through change at all ages, life stages, levels, and backgrounds."

Alison Hernandez, Director, RiseSmart Australia & SEA



Higher rates of negative employee reviews could probably be predicted because outplacement is in its early adoption phase in some countries, such as India. Furthermore, companies that offer outplacement and rely on internal teams to provide job leads, résumé services, and career coaching, typically don't offer optimum career transition support as alternative options (such as using the expertise of an outside firm). So, in a corporate version of a Catch-22, it's no surprise that separated employees walk away with a negative view. In other words, not only were they let go, but they didn't receive effective support on their way out.







EMPLOYER BRAND PROTECTION



EMPLOYER BRAND PROTECTION

Corporate leaders accept the fact that the decisions they make will have either a positive or negative effect on their business. However, it's often difficult to discern which outcome will result. For example, let's say senior management determines that one entire department has to be eliminated. They must then consider not just the immediate consequences, but also the effect on the employer brand and potential increased tax and productivity costs for the next few years. The damage to the employer brand can be one of the first dominoes to fall.

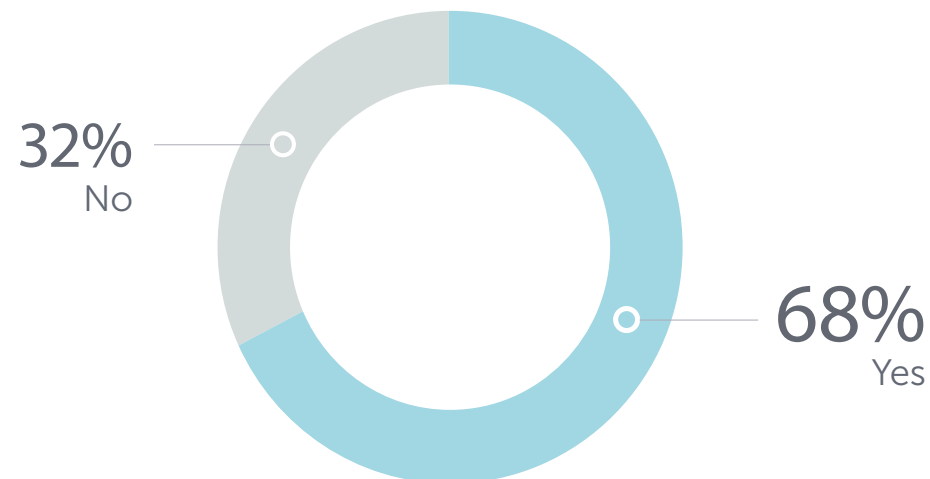
Many high-impact events and decisions can make recruiting harder, tarnish the company brand, and persuade valuable employees to search elsewhere. During restructurings, relocations, downsizing, and other corporate events that affect employee populations, the value of supporting the current workforce, maintaining brand reputation, and keeping the candidate funnel active are all extremely important. Even during an organizational restructuring, companies must continue to grow other areas of the business and continue to meet talent demands. After all, candidates today are, by and large, a little savvier than they were in the past, by virtue of the fact that there are now more ways to research companies. Online reviews and social media sites are just two of them.

The best advice for company leadership—which must be supported and often even put into practice by HR—is to be transparent as possible and sincere with the employee population about upcoming plans. In addition, it's a good idea to put processes in place that allow managers and employees to communicate openly about changes that have been announced.

Finally, companies will want systems in place to get the temperature of alumni employee sentiment and respond to concerns before they appear on social media. It's important to get the pulse of impacted employees early—one reason RiseSmart provides an alumni sentiment score, as well as real-time comments from former employees. If negative comments do appear, having a plan in place to respond with positive messaging and inviting off-line conversations with individuals shows that a company cares about its former employees and is willing to work with people who are not satisfied.

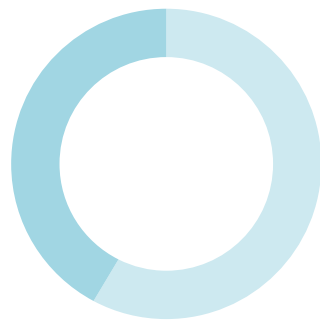
Currently, 68 percent of our surveyed HR professionals state that their organizations have some programs in place to protect the employer brand. Almost the same percentage (just slightly less) monitor employer sites like Glassdoor and Indeed to assess the comments of separated employees. That's a little bit more than before. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are also monitored, but not with as much frequency. Those organizations without programs in place to understand the sentiments of impacted employees and those that don't provide enough support, often find that once comments appear on Glassdoor and other social media sites, it's too late. The damage to the employer brand is done and the only thing left to do is try to mitigate the harm through proactive outreach.

Do you have programs in place to protect and improve your employer brand?

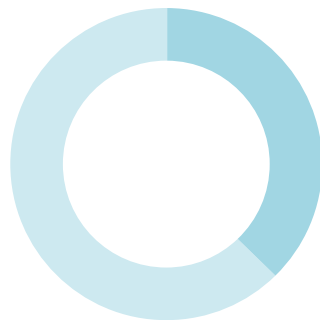


In our survey, we asked companies if they have noticed an increase in negative reviews on employer review sites and on other social media—such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and others—following a layoff. In fact, more than a third of the companies surveyed have seen an increase in negative sentiment across all social media platforms after a workforce restructuring event.

The imperative for organizations is clear. If you want to provide an exceptional employee experience and be known as an employer of choice, taking care of employees from the very beginning, through their tenure with your company, and upon exit—either voluntary or involuntary—is no longer a “nice to have”. Without the security and support of an outplacement and talent mobility expert, HR departments and the organizations they represent are bound to repeat the same mistakes and experience the same negative outcomes in the future.



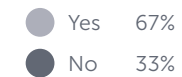
Do you monitor other social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) for positive or negative comments after a layoff?



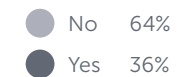
Have you noticed an increase in negative reviews following a layoff in those media outlets?



Do you monitor employer review/rating sites (Glassdoor, Indeed, etc.) for positive or negative comments after a layoff?



Have you noticed an increase in negative reviews there following a layoff on those media outlets?





GLOBAL VIEW

EMPLOYER BRAND PROTECTION

The majority of organizations report that they have programs in place to protect and improve the corporate brand. At the same time, fewer companies report that they actively monitor employer review and rating sites for comments that follow a layoff. In our estimation, it might be wise to do so, for often responses can highlight areas where a little improvement is needed—which, in turn, can help improve employee culture. What's more, responding to the criticisms and suggestions of former employees shows that a company is willing to listen, which also improves the company brand. After all, a company that's known to listen is more likely to be viewed as an employer of choice.

“We are seeing a more planned approach to transformation, with career transition activity happening ‘upstream’. Providing career coaching, branding, and career development through an outplacement provider, even in times of economic boom, breeds loyalty, protects the employer brand, and results in a much more powerful new beginning.”

Alison Hernandez, Director, RiseSmart Australia & SEA

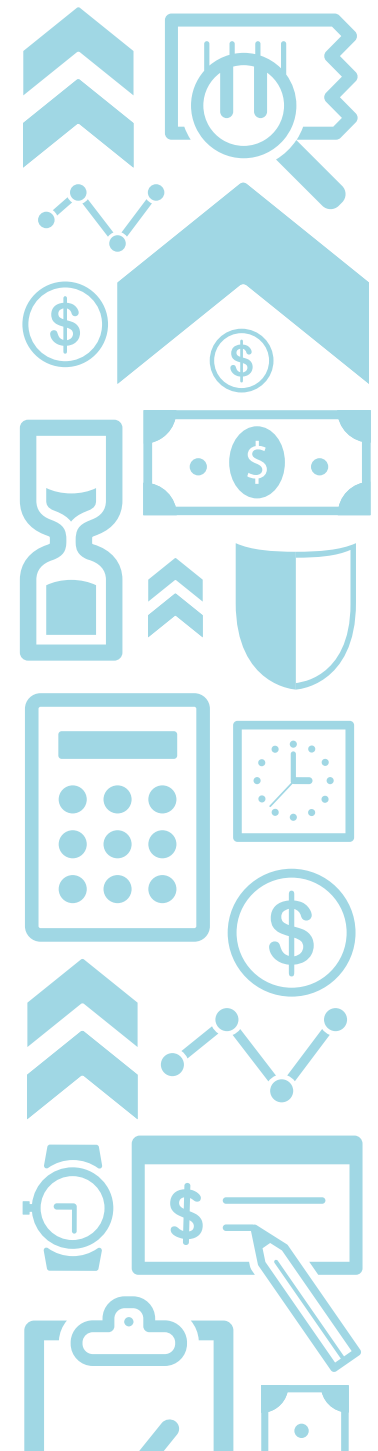


Across regions, we identified a few industries that are more likely to have programs in place to protect and improve employer brands. Top three industries by region:

Europe	Asia-Pacific	North America
+ Healthcare	Information technology	Professional services
Information technology	Construction/Manufacturing	+ Healthcare
Professional services	Professional services	\$ Wholesale/Retail

It is inevitable that some negative reviews will follow a reduction of force, particularly if the number of reductions is beyond single digits. Perhaps it can be called the “gut reaction” effect: Even the best employees who must depart from an employee-friendly company can feel slighted. That’s why it’s imperative to have policies and programs in place designed to deal with, and hopefully, minimize the negative effects.

In North America, nearly 40 percent of all companies surveyed notice an increase in negative reviews following a layoff. While that is higher than it could be if employees felt more supported following a layoff, our overseas neighbors and colleagues have a somewhat bumpier road. Our research shows that more than half of the surveyed companies receive negative reviews (Asia-Pacific at 53 percent, Europe at 63 percent).







CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION

Most clichés become so because in just a few words they describe undeniable truths. From “We are in the midst of a paradigm shift” to “Let’s think outside the box,” the business world—like virtually every other world—is full of them. Using clichés is generally something to avoid—just ask anyone in your corporate communications department. But there’s one cliché that our survey suggests holds true today, and no one’s making fun of it because it represents some very good news:

“We have an ‘employee-first’ culture.”

More companies are saying it now, and the truth behind it represents one of the best developments uncovered by this study. We applaud this mindset shift and suggest that all business leaders and executives fully support their HR departments in developing a truly “employee-first” culture. Beyond improving engagement and productivity, these organizations may find that an investment in creating better employee experiences provides the highest ROI in greater engagement, increased innovation, better productivity, and improved customer service.

With an “employee-first” culture, contented employees work harder and smarter, and satisfied ex-employees who were recently separated remain good ambassadors for the company no matter whom they talk to. Skilled workers that a company may wish to recruit one day will also be more likely to accept an offer of employment.

Respecting, supporting, and encouraging all employees takes many forms, from extended severance benefits offered for more employees, to excellent outplacement services that can be an advantage to all impacted employees, to vastly improved redeployment programs that give everyone increased hope for a better future.

Based on our findings, we suggest several best practices to help HR leaders plan a severance strategy that will help build a workplace culture that delivers exceptional employee experiences and promotes a stellar employer brand.

Establish uniform eligibility policies that include more people: The trends toward fairness and preserving the employer brand are already leading organizations to offer severance to more people. Globalization and distributed workforces create challenges for organizations designing disparate policies depending on geography. Instead of relying on local laws to dictate how your organization takes care of its employees, establish a standard severance plan that provides services and support to all employees impacted by layoffs and corporate restructuring events. It’s not just the right thing to do; it’s good for business.

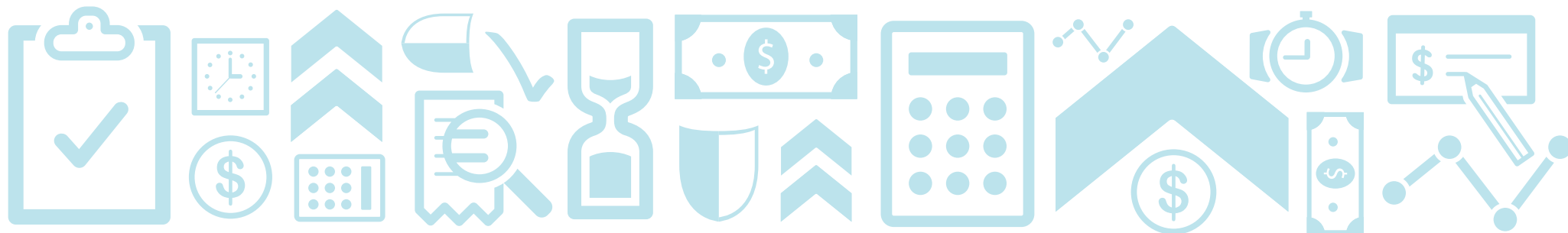
Offer outplacement as a standard element of severance: When the labor market is tight and unemployment is low, it’s easy to put things like outplacement on the back burner. But, if we are to learn anything from our international neighbors, markets can change suddenly. Make sure your organization has partnered with a contemporary outplacement firm that can provide the most personalized service, along with technology proven to accelerate employee transitions. The final step is the most critical. Include outplacement in your formal, written severance policies and communicate to impacted employees the services your business partner will be providing to ease their transitions to a new beginning.

Provide effective redeployment programs: Moving talent within organizations has become much more commonplace in the past two years. As talent shortages continue, a company’s ability to retain institutional knowledge and keep talented employees engaged will depend upon how effectively people can be matched to open positions and how well prepared those individuals are to interview internally. With everything else HR departments are tasked with, these programs are better served by business partners with the technology and expertise to deliver highly-effective redeployment programs. Relying on internal resources is no longer enough. Instead of waiting for critical mass, get those programs set up with a qualified outplacement provider today.

Proactively protect your employer brand: This may seem like an obvious piece of advice. However, two years ago we recommended monitoring your employer review sites after a restructuring event. Today, as more companies are making that a priority, it's no longer enough. HR leaders hoping to protect their company's employer brand need to know alumni employee sentiments before they show up on Glassdoor. That's why getting an alumni sentiment rating, like the one offered by RiseSmart, is critical to meeting future recruiting and retainment goals—and an essential component to employer brand protection.

Every year, we expand upon our severance study to include statistics and insights reflecting the most challenging aspects of severance policies. We look forward to continuing to provide the data and best practices HR leaders in every industry and everywhere in the world need to benchmark, refine, and improve the severance packages that support their most valuable assets—their people.

*This Severance Guide is intended for general information purposes only and is not intended to constitute legal advice. We recommend that you consult with your own legal counsel to determine how laws or recommendations discussed herein apply to your specific circumstances.







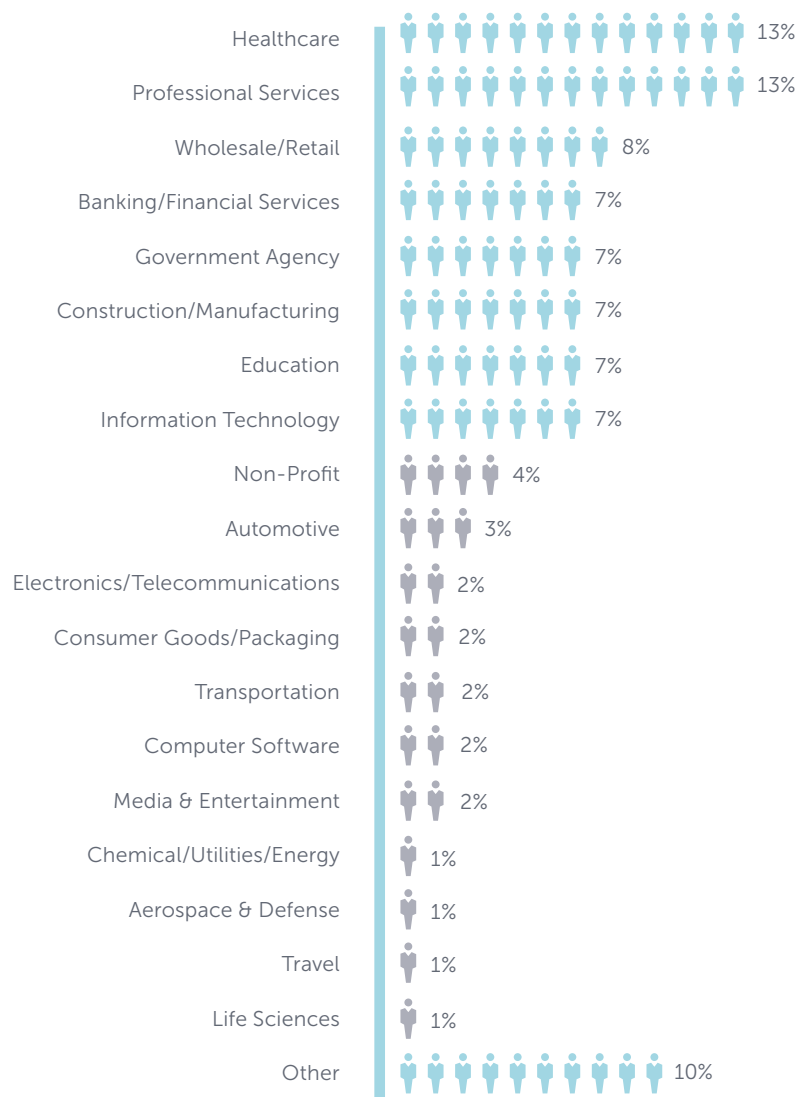
PARTICIPANT PROFILES

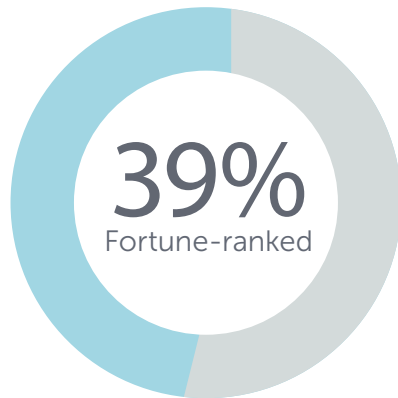
PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Over 1,500 HR professionals across more than 18 industries in the U.S and abroad participated in this severance study. Nearly 40 percent of the U.S. respondents identified their organizations as Fortune-ranked and nearly two-thirds were HR managers and executives.



Please select the industry that best fits your organization.



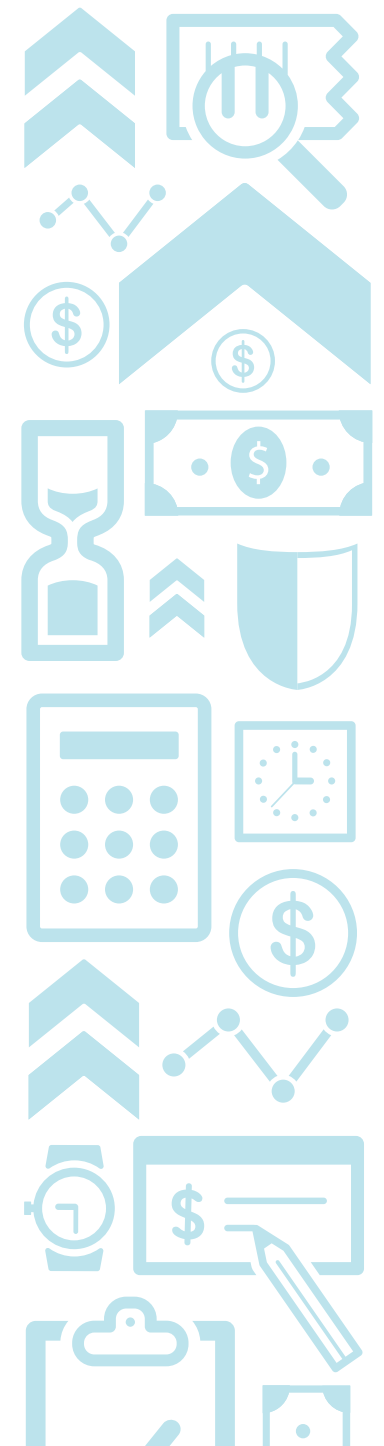
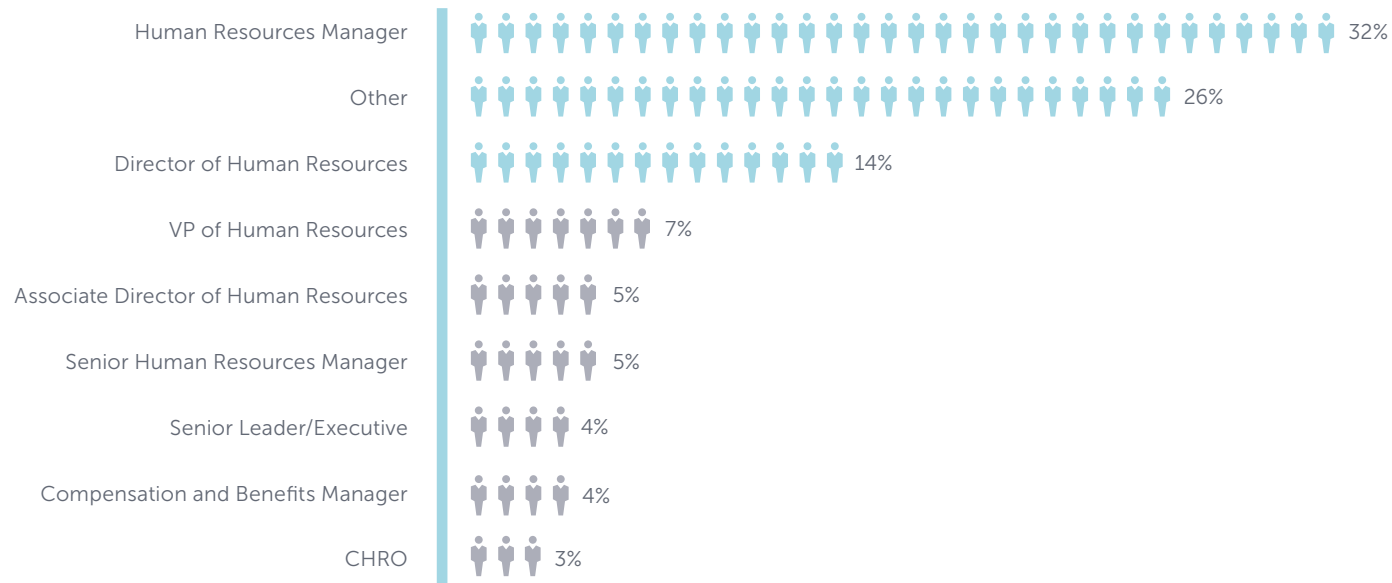


Is your company Fortune-ranked* ?

● Yes	39%
● No	61%

* Data from U.S. and Canada only

What is your title?



Number of Employees

1 – 4 employees	3%
5 – 9 employees	4%
10 – 19 employees	6%
20 – 49 employees	8%
50 – 99 employees	11%
100 – 249 employees	15%
250 – 499 employees	11%
500 – 999 employees	11%
1,000 - 3,000 employees	10%
3,001 - 5,000 employees	5%
5,001 - 7,499 employees	4%
7,500 - 10,000 employees	2%
10,001 - 19,999 employees	3%
20,000 or more employees	7%

Approximate Annual Revenue (USD)

Under 500,000	11%
500,000 – 1 million	15%
1 – 2.5 million	14%
2.5 – 5 million	11%
5 – 10 million	11%
10 – 100 million	14%
100 – 500 million	9%
500 million – 1 billion	6%
1 billion +	9%



INDUSTRIES WITH THE MOST RESPONDENTS

1

HEALTHCARE / LIFE SCIENCE

2

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

3

WHOLESALE / RETAIL

4

BANKING / FINANCIAL SERVICES

24% OF ORGANIZATIONS HAVE REVENUES OF \$100 MILLION

OR MORE

27%

OF RESPONDENTS ARE VP OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ABOVE

31%

OF ORGANIZATIONS HAVE

1,000

EMPLOYEES OR MORE

40%

OF RESPONDENTS CAME FROM FORTUNE-RANKED COMPANIES

* DATA FROM US AND CANADA ONLY

41%

OF RESPONDENTS ARE DIRECTOR-LEVEL AND ABOVE





BENCHMARKING DATA



BENCHMARKS BY INDUSTRY

KEY QUESTIONS BY INDUSTRY

If you offer severance to employees upon separation from the company, which employees are eligible for severance following an involuntary separation?

	All	Some
Aerospace & Defense	60%	40%
Automotive	35%	65%
Banking/Financial Services	62%	38%
Chemical/Utilities/Energy	31%	69%
Computer Software	44%	56%
Construction/Manufacturing	36%	64%
Consumer Goods/Packaging	43%	57%
Education	45%	55%
Electronics/Telecommunications	54%	46%
Government Agency	29%	71%
Healthcare	45%	55%
Information Technology	39%	61%
Life Sciences	29%	71%
Media & Entertainment	62%	38%
Travel	44%	56%
Non-Profit	49%	51%
Professional Services	49%	51%
Transportation	35%	65%
Wholesale/Retail	48%	52%

If only some, which employees are eligible for severance?

	Officers & Senior Executives	Managers & Professional	Administrative/ Clerical
Aerospace & Defense	40%	40%	20%
Automotive	38%	54%	8%
Banking/Financial Services	25%	61%	14%
Chemical/Utilities/Energy	62%	0%	38%
Computer Software	38%	31%	31%
Construction/Manufacturing	45%	26%	29%
Consumer Goods/Packaging	43%	35%	22%
Education	41%	40%	19%
Electronics/Telecommunications	34%	58%	8%
Government Agency	53%	8%	39%
Healthcare	37%	49%	14%
Information Technology	41%	42%	17%
Life Sciences	57%	0%	43%
Media & Entertainment	25%	63%	12%
Travel	44%	56%	0%
Non-Profit	40%	53%	7%
Professional Services	40%	39%	21%
Transportation	50%	35%	15%
Wholesale/Retail	42%	44%	14%

Is there a standard severance plan for all employees who are eligible?

	Yes, we have a formal written policy	No, we have an informal policy	Don't know
Aerospace & Defense	55%	27%	18%
Automotive	52%	31%	17%
Banking/Financial Services	72%	20%	8%
Chemical/Utilities/Energy	56%	38%	6%
Computer Software	77%	14%	9%
Construction/Manufacturing	60%	27%	13%
Consumer Goods/Packaging	89%	11%	0%
Education	65%	24%	11%
Electronics/Telecommunications	82%	11%	7%
Government Agency	53%	21%	26%
Healthcare	71%	17%	12%
Information Technology	72%	19%	9%
Life Sciences	63%	25%	12%
Media & Entertainment	68%	16%	16%
Travel	80%	20%	0%
Non-Profit	58%	27%	15%
Professional Services	56%	36%	8%
Transportation	74%	13%	13%
Wholesale/Retail	68%	20%	12%



Which of the following benefits are offered to employees upon involuntary separation?

	Retirement benefits	Health benefits continuation or COBRA	Outplacement services	Payment of bonuses for which employee was previously eligible (e.g. commission)	Retirement planning services	Education or retraining	Life insurance	Financial planning	Continuation of stock options	Long-term disability	Short-term disability	Cash payout
Aerospace & Defense	15%	25%	5%	3%	10%	3%	8%	5%	3%	9%	7%	7%
Automotive	10%	25%	12%	14%	5%	6%	6%	5%	2%	1%	5%	8%
Banking/ Financial Services	12%	20%	8%	12%	8%	6%	8%	4%	4%	5%	6%	7%
Chemical/ Utilities/Energy	7%	19%	7%	19%	5%	4%	2%	5%	5%	7%	4%	16%
Computer Software	13%	13%	9%	13%	7%	10%	9%	6%	1%	7%	7%	5%
Construction/ Manufacturing	11%	15%	5%	13%	8%	6%	9%	5%	6%	5%	6%	8%
Consumer Goods/Packaging	16%	11%	6%	11%	9%	10%	8%	7%	2%	6%	8%	6%
Education	15%	15%	6%	7%	8%	8%	13%	3%	2%	6%	7%	10%
Electronics/Tele-communications	12%	15%	10%	10%	9%	8%	10%	5%	4%	5%	5%	7%
Government Agency	14%	14%	7%	9%	8%	8%	6%	5%	3%	7%	6%	13%
Healthcare	15%	15%	4%	11%	9%	7%	9%	5%	3%	6%	6%	10%
Information Technology	14%	14%	8%	14%	7%	5%	9%	2%	4%	8%	5%	10%
Life Sciences	14%	18%	9%	14%	9%	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%	0%	13%
Media & Entertainment	9%	18%	11%	16%	5%	2%	9%	2%	0%	5%	7%	16%
Travel	14%	17%	8%	8%	8%	6%	8%	6%	0%	8%	6%	11%
Non-Profit	15%	21%	3%	9%	9%	7%	8%	6%	1%	5%	7%	9%
Professional Services	10%	16%	8%	13%	6%	5%	5%	6%	5%	4%	5%	17%
Transportation	15%	15%	4%	14%	8%	1%	11%	1%	4%	4%	7%	16%
Wholesale/Retail	14%	15%	5%	13%	7%	5%	7%	4%	5%	6%	7%	12%
Other	13%	19%	7%	12%	4%	4%	10%	3%	3%	5%	7%	13%

Which services do you offer as a part of your redeployment program?

	Notification of open internal job leads	Résumé and personal branding support	Career coaching	Job search-related webinars	Written content	Internal career fairs	Peer-to-peer mentoring	Other
Aerospace & Defense	32%	17%	17%	3%	10%	14%	7%	0%
Automotive	37%	14%	19%	10%	5%	5%	8%	2%
Banking/Financial Services	22%	18%	19%	11%	7%	11%	12%	0%
Chemical/Utilities/Energy	33%	12%	14%	10%	10%	7%	14%	0%
Computer Software	19%	15%	22%	17%	14%	3%	10%	0%
Construction/Manufacturing	25%	15%	16%	9%	10%	13%	11%	1%
Consumer Goods/Packaging	22%	16%	17%	11%	11%	8%	14%	1%
Education	24%	15%	15%	12%	13%	10%	10%	1%
Electronics/Telecommunications	22%	20%	16%	10%	8%	12%	12%	0%
Government Agency	27%	15%	13%	12%	8%	11%	13%	1%
Healthcare	25%	17%	15%	13%	7%	10%	12%	1%
Information Technology	24%	12%	17%	13%	8%	12%	14%	0%
Life Sciences	18%	36%	36%	1%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Media & Entertainment	24%	13%	21%	13%	16%	8%	5%	0%
Travel	27%	9%	27%	13%	5%	14%	5%	0%
Non-Profit	30%	15%	19%	7%	8%	6%	14%	1%
Professional Services	28%	13%	18%	9%	8%	8%	15%	1%
Transportation	36%	5%	18%	14%	9%	7%	11%	0%
Wholesale/Retail	25%	16%	17%	8%	11%	10%	10%	3%
Other	29%	10%	19%	10%	8%	10%	13%	1%

How would you rate your organization's redeployment programs?

	Very effective	Effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not effective at all
Aerospace & Defense	36%	36%	28%	0%	0%
Automotive	10%	34%	39%	14%	3%
Banking/Financial Services	25%	34%	34%	6%	1%
Chemical/Utilities/Energy	31%	13%	56%	0%	0%
Computer Software	45%	23%	23%	5%	4%
Construction/Manufacturing	28%	35%	28%	3%	6%
Consumer Goods/Packaging	19%	42%	31%	8%	0%
Education	22%	34%	30%	10%	4%
Electronics/Telecommunications	17%	38%	33%	8%	4%
Government Agency	21%	41%	26%	7%	5%
Healthcare	18%	47%	28%	5%	2%
Information Technology	24%	51%	20%	5%	0%
Life Sciences	13%	25%	62%	0%	0%
Media & Entertainment	24%	24%	47%	5%	0%
Travel	22%	33%	44%	1%	0%
Non-Profit	10%	44%	31%	13%	2%
Professional Services	18%	39%	35%	5%	3%
Transportation	23%	36%	32%	9%	0%
Wholesale/Retail	20%	43%	27%	7%	3%
Other	16%	37%	32%	9%	6%



What would help you improve your redeployment program?

	Partnering with an outside consultant	Effectively matching employees to open positions	Providing résumé support	Providing career coaching	Having job search-related webinars	Providing relevant, up-to-date written content	Internal career fairs	Other
Aerospace & Defense	13%	22%	9%	13%	13%	13%	17%	0%
Automotive	17%	23%	19%	12%	4%	8%	12%	5%
Banking/Financial Services	13%	26%	16%	13%	10%	14%	8%	0%
Chemical/Utilities/Energy	21%	31%	10%	3%	7%	21%	7%	0%
Computer Software	12%	12%	14%	25%	12%	10%	15%	0%
Construction/Manufacturing	14%	23%	15%	13%	13%	11%	10%	1%
Consumer Goods/Packaging	12%	17%	17%	16%	18%	9%	11%	0%
Education	13%	22%	15%	16%	13%	10%	11%	0%
Electronics/Telecommunications	21%	18%	18%	11%	14%	7%	11%	0%
Government Agency	10%	27%	16%	14%	12%	10%	10%	1%
Healthcare	14%	20%	19%	16%	10%	10%	10%	1%
Information Technology	11%	29%	14%	15%	14%	9%	7%	1%
Life Sciences	19%	27%	18%	18%	0%	0%	18%	0%
Media & Entertainment	22%	25%	16%	16%	9%	9%	3%	0%
Travel	6%	35%	12%	12%	6%	12%	12%	5%
Non-Profit	15%	31%	20%	11%	7%	9%	7%	0%
Professional Services	13%	27%	15%	14%	11%	10%	10%	0%
Transportation	14%	30%	11%	14%	11%	9%	11%	0%
Wholesale/Retail	16%	24%	17%	15%	8%	9%	9%	2%
Other, please specify	14%	26%	16%	18%	7%	7%	9%	3%

Which factors determine the length of time that outplacement services are offered to impacted employees?

	Job level	Tenure at the company	Legal requirements	Age of employee	Performance criteria	Other factors
Aerospace & Defense	28%	18%	27%	18%	9%	0%
Automotive	29%	35%	6%	6%	18%	6%
Banking/Financial Services	26%	24%	15%	17%	18%	0%
Chemical/Utilities/Energy	37%	21%	21%	7%	14%	0%
Computer Software	44%	8%	16%	12%	16%	4%
Construction/Manufacturing	24%	22%	18%	14%	19%	3%
Consumer Goods/Packaging	22%	27%	18%	21%	9%	3%
Education	26%	20%	18%	17%	18%	1%
Electronics/Telecommunications	29%	14%	29%	17%	11%	0%
Government Agency	21%	23%	25%	11%	20%	0%
Healthcare	29%	17%	22%	15%	16%	1%
Information Technology	18%	29%	20%	18%	14%	1%
Life Sciences	23%	11%	22%	11%	33%	0%
Media & Entertainment	19%	38%	19%	19%	5%	0%
Travel	33%	17%	17%	17%	16%	0%
Non-Profit	18%	31%	24%	10%	17%	0%
Professional Services	25%	23%	21%	9%	22%	0%
Transportation	28%	28%	17%	17%	10%	0%
Wholesale/Retail	22%	24%	21%	13%	18%	2%
Other	28%	22%	15%	16%	14%	5%



Which services are available through your outplacement programs?

	Relevant job leads	Résumé writing	Résumé critique	Digital profile support (LinkedIn)	Individual career coaching sessions	Group coaching sessions	Job search-related webinars	Written content	Job fairs	Peer-to-peer mentoring groups	Other
Aerospace & Defense	14%	19%	10%	5%	10%	5%	0%	19%	9%	9%	0%
Automotive	13%	15%	15%	9%	11%	4%	9%	9%	4%	7%	4%
Banking/ Financial Services	14%	15%	10%	10%	16%	6%	7%	6%	11%	4%	1%
Chemical/Utilities/ Energy	15%	15%	15%	12%	12%	4%	4%	8%	8%	7%	0%
Computer Software	12%	15%	10%	7%	15%	7%	12%	5%	10%	7%	0%
Construction/ Manufacturing	10%	15%	12%	11%	11%	9%	5%	8%	12%	6%	1%
Consumer Goods/ Packaging	10%	16%	13%	5%	11%	8%	10%	12%	13%	2%	0%
Education	22%	14%	9%	10%	5%	10%	7%	8%	10%	5%	0%
Electronics/ Telecommunications	11%	18%	10%	11%	11%	7%	10%	7%	8%	7%	0%
Government Agency	20%	14%	13%	6%	10%	6%	9%	5%	13%	4%	0%
Healthcare	16%	13%	12%	10%	8%	10%	10%	6%	10%	5%	0%
Information Technology	20%	14%	9%	10%	13%	9%	5%	8%	7%	5%	0%
Life Sciences	20%	20%	13%	13%	7%	7%	0%	13%	7%	0%	0%
Media & Entertainment	16%	16%	13%	6%	19%	6%	13%	9%	2%	0%	0%
Travel	10%	30%	0%	0%	10%	10%	20%	0%	10%	10%	0%
Non-Profit	18%	22%	11%	7%	4%	7%	11%	7%	9%	4%	0%
Professional Services	18%	15%	11%	8%	10%	9%	7%	8%	8%	5%	1%
Transportation	27%	12%	4%	4%	8%	8%	12%	7%	11%	7%	0%
Wholesale/Retail	15%	15%	13%	8%	7%	11%	9%	7%	9%	6%	0%
Other	18%	15%	12%	7%	11%	9%	5%	7%	8%	7%	1%



BENCHMARKS BY COMPANY SIZE

KEY QUESTIONS BY COMPANY SIZE

Are all employees eligible for severance resulting from involuntary separation?

Company Size	Response	Percentage
500 - 1,000	Yes, all	33%
	Yes, some	51%
	No, none	16%
1,001 - 5,000	Yes, all	35%
	Yes, some	56%
	No, none	9%
5,001 - 10,000	Yes, all	52%
	Yes, some	41%
	No, none	7%
10,001 or more	Yes, all	38%
	Yes, some	56%
	No, none	6%

If not all, which of your employees are eligible for severance resulting from involuntary separation?

Company Size	Officers & Senior Execs	Managers & Professional	Administrative/ Clerical
500 - 1,000	80%	73%	49%
1,001 - 5,000	87%	82%	59%
5,001 - 10,000	89%	80%	72%
10,001 or more	91%	83%	97%

Is there a standard severance plan for all employees who are eligible?

Company Size	No, severance plans differ according to level/title/position	Yes
500 - 1,000	54%	46%
1,001 - 5,000	52%	48%
5,001 - 10,000	40%	60%
10,001 or more	56%	44%

Of those with standard severance payouts, the average amount of equivalent salary offered to employees of these organizations is:

500 - 1,000	No minimum	2%	5,001 - 10,000	1 weeks salary	5%
	1 weeks salary	5%		2 weeks salary	5%
	2 weeks salary	10%		3 weeks salary	9%
	1 months salary	12%		1 months salary	19%
	2 months salary	10%		2 months salary	12%
	3 months salary	17%		3 months salary	12%
	6 months salary	26%		6 months salary	24%
	1 years salary	17%		1 years salary	10%
	More than 1 years salary	1%		More than 1 years salary	4%
1,001 - 5,000	No minimum	3%	10,001 or more	No minimum	6%
	1 weeks salary	5%		1 weeks salary	6%
	2 weeks salary	8%		2 weeks salary	8%
	3 weeks salary	6%		3 weeks salary	2%
	1 months salary	16%		1 months salary	8%
	2 months salary	16%		2 months salary	13%
	3 months salary	17%		3 months salary	21%
	6 months salary	22%		6 months salary	15%
	1 years salary	6%		1 years salary	12%
	More than 1 years salary	1%		More than 1 years salary	2%
			Other	7%	

KEY QUESTIONS BY COMPANY SIZE

For layoff events not impacted by the federal or state WARN Act, on average, how much notification is given to employees?

500 - 1,000	Day-of or one day's notice	7%
	1-2 weeks notice	22%
	3-4 weeks notice	11%
	30-day notice	23%
	45-60 day notice	16%
	90-day notice	5%
	More than 90-day notice	2%
	Depends on situation	14%

5,001 - 10,000	Day-of or one days notice	9%
	1-2 weeks notice	22%
	3-4 weeks notice	11%
	30-day notice	18%
	45-60 day notice	25%
	90-day notice	9%
	Depends on situation	6%

1,001 - 5,000	Day-of or one days notice	11%
	1-2 weeks notice	25%
	3-4 weeks notice	16%
	30-day notice	19%
	45-60 day notice	11%
	90-day notice	7%
	More than 90-day notice	2%
	Depends on situation	9%

10,001 or more	Day-of or one days notice	5%
	1-2 weeks notice	15%
	3-4 weeks notice	15%
	30-day notice	24%
	45-60 day notice	23%
	90-day notice	7%
	More than 90-day notice	2%
	Depends on situation	8%
Other	1%	



If you have a standard policy for COBRA or health plan continuation for all employees upon a layoff event, which of the following benefits are included in the standard severance package for employees?

	500 - 1,000	1,001 - 5,000	5,001 - 10,000	10,001 or more
We give employees a lump sum to fully or partially cover COBRA/insurance premiums (with intent that employees pay the insurance company directly)	43%	45%	54%	38%
We provide benefits continuance	17%	17%	16%	22%
We pay COBRA/insurance premium payments directly to the insurance company	13%	14%	7%	10%
We fully reimburse employees' for COBRA/insurance premium payments that the employee has made directly to insurance company	11%	10%	5%	6%
We partially reimburse employees COBRA/insurance premium payments the employee has made directly to insurance company	9%	7%	7%	10%
We provide a set of predetermined funds for premiums	6%	5%	7%	10%
Other	1%	2%	4%	4%

What's your title?

	1 – 1,000 employees	1,001 - 5,000 employees	5,000 - 10,000 employees	10,001 or more employees
CHRO	1%	4%	0%	0%
VP of Human Resources	7%	7%	11%	3%
Director of Human Resources	13%	16%	7%	9%
Associate Director of Human Resources	6%	4%	0%	0%
Senior Human Resources Manager	5%	2%	7%	7%
Human Resources Manager	36%	29%	33%	28%
Compensation and Benefits Manager	4%	5%	4%	2%
Senior Leader/ Executive	4%	3%	4%	4%
Other	23%	30%	35%	47%

What industry best fits your organization?

	1 – 1,000 employees	1,001 - 5,000 employees	5,000 - 10,000 employees	10,000 or more employees
Aerospace & Defense	1%	0%	2%	3%
Automotive	2%	2%	0%	5%
Banking/Financial Markets	7%	6%	9%	15%
Chemical/Utilities/Energy	1%	1%	0%	1%
Computer Software	2%	2%	0%	1%
Construction/Manufacturing	8%	4%	9%	6%
Consumer Goods/Packaging	2%	2%	4%	2%
Education	7%	11%	11%	3%
Electronics/Telecommunications	2%	1%	2%	3%
Government Agency	5%	11%	12%	13%
Healthcare	12%	20%	14%	10%
Information Technology	6%	5%	7%	4%
Life Sciences	0%	2%	0%	1%
Media & Entertainment	1%	3%	0%	2%
Travel	1%	2%	0%	0%
Non-Profit	5%	4%	2%	4%
Professional Services	16%	8%	11%	4%
Transportation	2%	2%	0%	2%
Wholesale/Retail	9%	7%	12%	9%
Other	11%	8%	5%	12%

Number of Employees

1 – 1,000 employees	69%
1,001 - 5,000 employees	15%
5,001 - 10,000 employees	5%
10,001 or more employees	10%



Is your company Fortune-ranked?

	1 – 1,000 employees	1,001 - 5,000 employees	5,001 - 10,000 employees	10,001 or more employees
Yes, a Fortune 100	10%	4%	10%	20%
Yes, a Fortune 500	19%	21%	26%	41%
Yes, a Fortune 1000	4%	9%	12%	12%
No	66%	66%	52%	27%



Which employees are eligible for severance following an involuntary separation?

	1 – 1,000 employees	1,001 - 5,000 employees	5,001-10,000 employees	10,001 or more employees
All	45%	43%	49%	37%
Some	55%	57%	51%	63%

Which services do you offer as a part of your redeployment program?

	1 – 1,000 employees	1,001 - 5,000 employees	5,001 - 10,000 employees	10,001 or more employees
Notification of open internal job leads	27%	28%	26%	29%
Résumé and personal branding support	15%	14%	12%	15%
Career coaching	15%	16%	22%	18%
Job search-related webinars	10%	12%	8%	9%
Written content	9%	8%	11%	6%
Internal career fairs	10%	9%	9%	10%
Peer-to-peer mentoring	13%	12%	10%	11%
Other	1%	1%	2%	2%



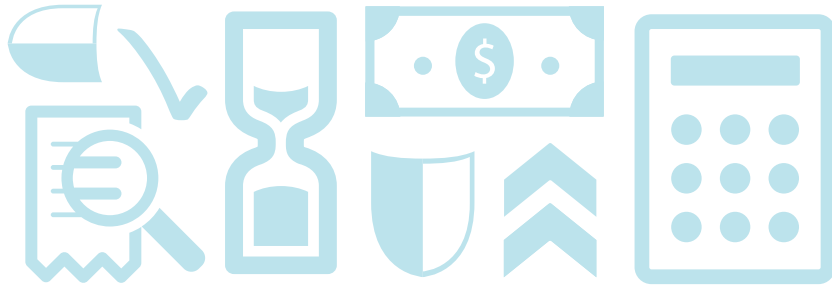
If only some, which employees are eligible for severance?

	1 – 1,000 employees	1,001 - 5,000 employees	5,001-10,000 employees	10,001 or more employees
Officers & Senior Executives	41%	40%	34%	44%
Managers & Professionals	41%	41%	36%	37%
Administrative/ Clerical	18%	19%	30%	19%



Which of the following benefits are offered to employees upon involuntary separation?

	1 – 1,000 employees	1,001 - 5,000 employees	5,001 - 10,000 employees	10,001 or more employees
Retirement benefits	13%	11%	12%	12%
Health benefits continuance or COBRA	16%	19%	16%	18%
Outplacement services	5%	7%	6%	10%
Payment of bonuses for which employee was previously eligible (e.g. commission)	12%	13%	9%	11%
Retirement planning services	7%	6%	8%	7%
Education or retraining	6%	6%	5%	5%
Life insurance	9%	7%	7%	7%
Financial planning	4%	4%	4%	4%
Continuation of stock options	3%	5%	6%	3%
Long-term disability	6%	5%	7%	5%
Short-term disability	7%	5%	8%	6%
Cash payout	12%	12%	12%	12%



How would you rate your organization's redeployment programs?

	1 – 1,000 employees	1,001 - 5,000 employees	5,001 - 10,000 employees	10,001 or more employees
Very effective	20%	16%	23%	21%
Effective	40%	32%	32%	39%
Somewhat effective	31%	38%	34%	29%
Not very effective	6%	12%	6%	8%
Not effective at all	3%	2%	5%	3%

What would help you improve your redeployment program?

	1 – 1,000 employees	1,001 - 5,000 employees	5,001 - 10,000 employees	10,001 or more employees
Partnering with an outside consultant	15%	11%	16%	11%
Effectively matching employees to open positions	24%	25%	23%	30%
Providing résumé support	17%	16%	12%	11%
Providing career coaching	15%	17%	17%	11%
Having job search-related webinars	10%	10%	11%	8%
Providing relevant, up-to-date written content	9%	9%	9%	11%
Internal career fairs	9%	12%	9%	16%
Other	1%	0%	3%	2%

Which factors determine the length of time that outplacement services are offered to impacted employees?

	1 – 1,000 employees	1,001 - 5,000 employees	5,001 - 10,000 employees	10,001 or more employees
Job level	26%	22%	25%	29%
Tenure at the company	21%	27%	20%	28%
Legal requirements	20%	17%	17%	19%
Age of employee	15%	12%	14%	8%
Performance criteria	17%	18%	24%	12%
Other factors	1%	4%	0%	4%

Which services are available through your outplacement programs?

	1 – 1,000 employees	1,001 - 5,000 employees	5,001 - 10,000 employees	10,001 or more employees
Relevant job leads	17%	17%	14%	15%
Résumé writing	15%	17%	13%	15%
Résumé critique	11%	9%	11%	15%
Digital profile support (LinkedIn)	9%	10%	6%	8%
Individual career coaching sessions	10%	9%	12%	13%
Group coaching sessions	9%	9%	11%	7%
Job search-related webinars	7%	9%	7%	7%
Written content	7%	7%	7%	7%
Job fairs	9%	8%	11%	8%
Peer-to-peer mentoring groups	6%	5%	8%	4%
Other	0%	0%	0%	1%

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
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