

National Pharmaceutical Congress Spring Webinar:
New Career Skills for Pharma's Post-Covid Era



Advance Briefing

APRIL 6, 2022
11:00 AM ET

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of registrants to the 2022 NPC Spring Webinar.

It provides advance and contextual reading.





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The way Pharma works now

It's been two years since we all decided to close the office for two weeks (maybe three). Heading into the third pandemic year, it's clear that the world of work has changed permanently. So what will that look like for Pharma?

At the 2022 NPC Spring Webinar on April 6th, panelists will tackle the question in three parts: new ways of working—balancing remote and in-person offices; the impact on career mobility—hiring and training; and the new skill sets we need to navigate today's workplace.

Speakers at this session will be **Jim Shea**, General Manager of the Council for Continuing Pharmaceutical Education (CCPE); **Peter Brenders**, General Manager, Canada at BeiGene; **Leandra Wells**, VP Respiratory at GSK; and **Danny Goldman**, Head of Strategy & Portfolio Operations at Sanofi Canada.



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New ways of working

As restrictions lift, we're seeing heated debates around the return to the office and the pros and cons of in-office and remote work. What approach has your company taken? How has your team's workflow adapted to a reality where many stakeholders are remote?

The workplace of February 2019 is gone for good, according to a recent article published by *Forbes*. Leaders now have to create a new culture that includes a lived pandemic experience and an emerging post-pandemic reality.

Citing a 2021 study which determined that employee well-being would play the greatest role in shaping the workplace of the future, the author defines well-being using five benchmarks: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment.

While working remotely, people have struggled to fulfill many of these criteria.

Read more: [*Forbes*, 5 Keys to Flourishing in a Post-Pandemic Workplace](#)



The latest annual survey on employee benefit trends conducted by MetLife found that, with the pandemic's lasting effects on the workforce, employers should rethink their responsibilities to their employees and create a holistic work culture that addresses changing priorities in safety, mental health, and more.

Importantly, the survey found that about 2 in 5 employees say knowledge-sharing has become more difficult, and roughly half say they're working outside of their normal work hours more often. Still, half of employees say they're happier with their current working situation than they were pre-pandemic.

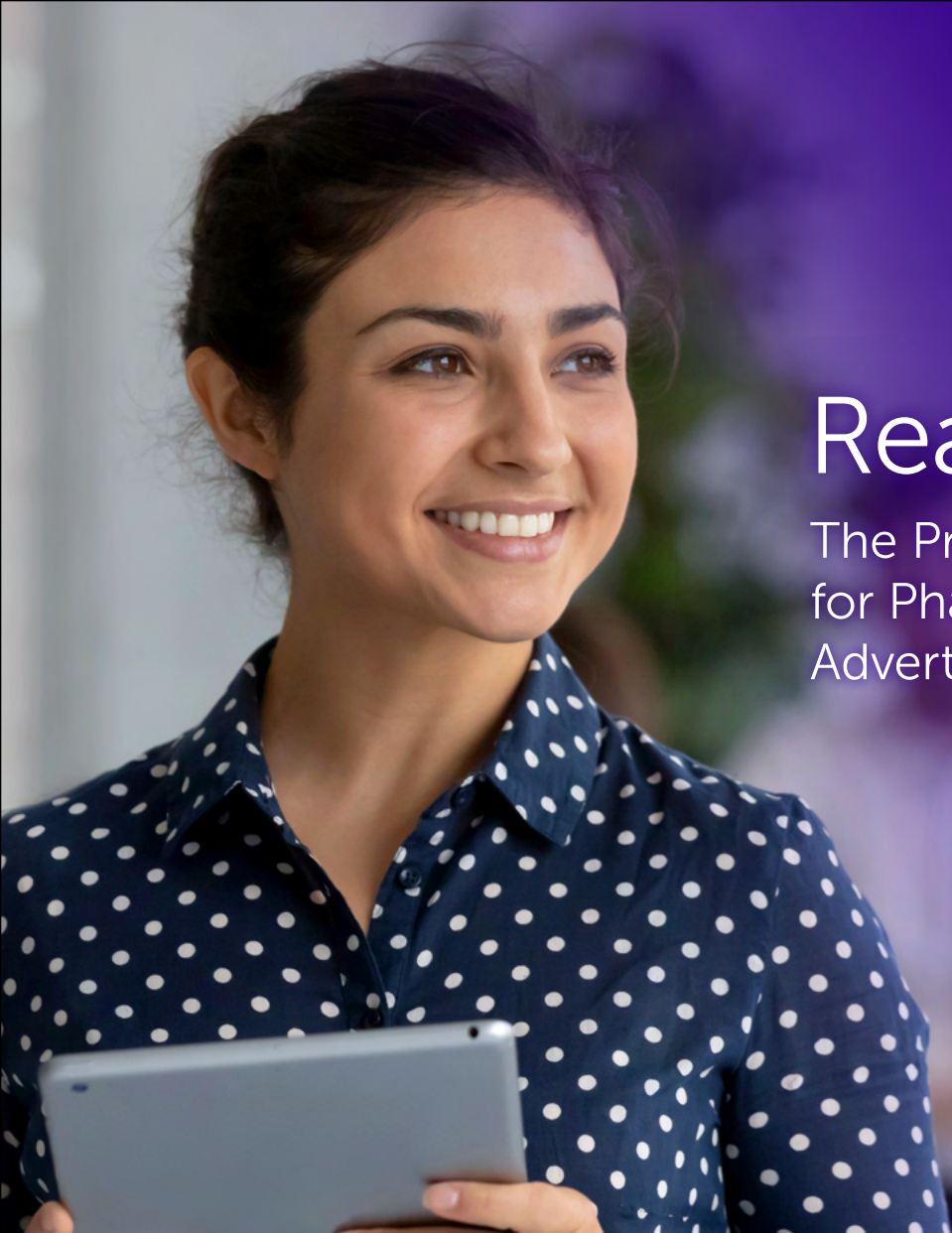
As work gets more flexible, employers will need creative solutions to foster collaboration and manage workloads. Opportunities include supporting balanced work schedules that work around employees' professional and personal needs and training managers to be more aware of potential burnout.

Read more: [Redesigning the Employee Experience: Preparing the Workforce for a Transformed World](#)



With Covid cases relatively low, companies are increasingly calling their employees back to in-person work, at least for part of the week. Executives usually cite collaboration and work culture as reasons to return. But once in the office, workers are finding that Zoom meetings are still a central aspect of the day.

While employees who return to the office are seeking socialization and relationship-building more than anything else, executives are most likely to cite collaboration—or worse yet, productivity, when people have spent the last two years proving they can be productive working from home. The fundamental disconnect between



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messaging and lived reality is only causing frustration and resentment among those required to go back to the office.

For a hybrid strategy to work well, companies need to be intentional about how and why people are going back to in-person work.

Read more: [Bloomberg, Employees Are Returning to the Office, Just to Sit on Zoom Calls](#)

Impact on career mobility

What does the prevalence of remote work mean for career mobility? Is talent still being nurtured remotely? Can we still network, or are we just waiting to go back to meetings? Is it more difficult to hire in this environment?

After two years of working from home, employees don't just prefer remote work, according to a recent article from *The Atlantic*. They also feel like they're getting better at it. Despite widespread reports of burnout, research has found that self-reported productivity has increased steadily in the past year.

Return-to-office preferences are all over the place, and any one-size-fits-all policy is going to make a lot of people upset. According to survey data, more than 20% of respondents would prefer to work from home "rarely or never," while more than 30% say they would prefer to stay home for the entire workweek.

Young workers are most worried about the lack of social connections with peers and mentors, which creates a sense of drift and leads them to be more open to changing jobs.

If employers fail to build any kind of tangible corporate culture, many workers, feeling no sense of real community among their colleagues, will switch jobs with greater frequency. And no matter what employers do, in an era of record-high job openings, many workers will switch jobs anyway.

Read more: [The Atlantic, The Five-Day Workweek Is Dying](#)

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CNBC reported that nearly 4.3 million Americans quit their jobs in January, a slight monthly decline but still near the record level set in November. The elevated level in early 2022 comes off a year in which almost 48 million Americans quit their jobs, an annual record.

The Great Resignation is in full swing, said a senior economist working at Glassdoor, with job resignations still up 23% above pre-pandemic levels.

The data suggests people aren't quitting their jobs to exit the labor market but are leaving en masse for better opportunities in a strong job market for workers. The high labor demand is pushing employers to pay higher wages as they compete to attract talent, and that higher pay is luring workers away from their current jobs.

Read more: [CNBC, The Great Resignation Shows No Sign of Slowing Down](#)



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The Great Resignation shows no sign of easing and the supply of workers may keep dwindling, according to a recent Bloomberg interview with a global employment services provider. Talented workers have more options and they're going where their needs are met.

The trend has been a boon to employees searching for better working conditions and higher pay. Economies bouncing back from the pandemic and work-from-home options have made it easier for employees to quit unappealing positions and look for alternatives, driving up wages.

Of those polled, 83% and 71% said flexible hours and workplace were important, respectively. Companies are increasingly calling their employees back to the office, at least for part of the week. But with flexible work arrangements, the office is becoming more of a collaboration and meeting place than a place just to get work done.

Read more: [Bloomberg, Great Resignation Isn't Slowing and May Persist](#)

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Covid-19 spurred on the Great Resignation of 2021, during which record numbers of employees voluntarily quit their jobs.

An article in *Harvard Business Review* argues that the 2021 number is inflated by workers who might otherwise have quit in 2020 had there been no pandemic. But the spike isn't just short-term turbulence provoked by the pandemic, it's the continuation of a trend of rising quit rates that began more than a decade ago.

The authors identify several contributing factors: workers are retiring in greater numbers; they're reconsidering their work-life balance and care roles; and, because of pandemic-related fears, they're demonstrating a reluctance to return to in-person jobs.

Companies that demonstrate a commitment to improving their employees' long-term career prospects by offering training and tuition reimbursements will garner greater loyalty and gain in stature with prospective employees.

Read more: [Harvard Business Review, The Great Resignation Didn't Start With the Pandemic](#)

New skill sets we need

What does the “new normal” mean for training? What skills are you encouraging your team to develop for today's workplace and what do you look for in new hires?

Even before the pandemic hit, there has been a dearth of training in the corporate world, and an article published in *The Atlantic* opines that this has partly driven the Great Resignation. In 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that companies with fewer than 100 employees gave their workers only 12 minutes of training from their manager every six months, and in organizations of 100 to 500 employees, that was halved to six minutes.

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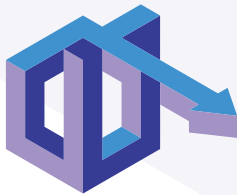
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Mentorship and training are not things that happen passively; they are actions to be done deliberately, thoughtfully, and consistently, with the intention of fostering and retaining talent. Remote work poses new challenges for mentorship and training, but it also offers an opportunity for leaders to step up by using newly-possible approaches.

Mastering asynchronous collaboration is one way to manage scattered teams. Instead of trying to outsmart time zones or get everyone's schedules to align, commit to investing in asynchronous mentorship as well as real-time communication. In other words, prioritize being on the same page rather than talking at the same time. Working in constantly-synced cloud-based documents—even something as simple as a Google Doc—can help build a regular, documented feedback loop.

Semi-regular synchronous meetings are still essential to a successful remote team. As a leader, it's important to hear everyone's voices fairly frequently and pay attention to their messaging in how they discuss their work. Good management requires a combination of helping someone with work and evaluating their emotional state as they navigate work-induced stress.

Those who hope to run successful organizations should deliberately empower a culture of active management and mentorship, compensating mentors and giving them the time they need to do the extra work of nurturing young talent.

Read more: [*The Atlantic*, How to Mentor Young Workers in a Remote World](#)





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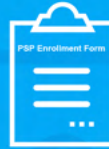
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* Adapted from Canadian Medical Association Workforce Survey 2019
[†] Potential advantage versus new competitors



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Meet the Faculty



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Respiratory Business Unit Head at GSK, responsible for the performance, strategic direction and growth of the business unit in Canada; sits on several boards at Mount Sinai Hospital



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General Manager of BeiGene Canada, leading the Canadian affiliate operations; 2016 inductee to the Canadian Healthcare Marketing Hall of Fame and founding host of the NPC Podcast leading 40 episodes across five seasons



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General Manager of the Council for Continuing Pharmaceutical Education (CCPE) and an experienced Pharma executive with broad background in sales, marketing, training & development, strategic planning, and business process improvement



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Head of Strategy and Portfolio Operations, Canada at Sanofi, a clinical data storyteller with deep expertise in marketing; a dedicated cancer mentor and advocate



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