

**WISCONSIN  
EMPLOYER SURVEY**

SUMMER 2021

**COVID-19 &  
THE CHANGING WORKPLACE**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: COVID-19, Government Restrictions Negatively Impacted Majority of Wisconsin Businesses

***New survey finds that 52% of Wisconsin employers had to reduce staff in response to the pandemic***

A new survey of Wisconsin businesses revealed that most employers were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and related government restrictions. Of those surveyed, 64 percent reported the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative financial impact on their business, with 52 percent reporting they reduced staff.

“Government-mandated lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic devastated Wisconsin businesses, forcing many to cut costs and reduce staff,” said WMC President & CEO Kurt Bauer. “With roughly half of Wisconsinites fully vaccinated, employers are now looking to increase staff levels and get our economy moving again.”

A previous release from the Summer 2021 *Wisconsin Employer Survey* explained that nearly 80 percent of employers are looking to add staff before the end of the year. That has resulted in a significant increase in wages, sign-on bonuses and flexible schedules in an effort to attract workers.

As businesses return to normal, they are faced with the fact that many employees can, in fact, work from home. For companies that moved staff out of traditional offices, they raised concerns about loss of company culture, decreased collaboration and lack of communication. Moving forward, only five percent of respondents said they would allow employees to work from home permanently.

Additionally, the *Employer Survey* revealed that most Wisconsin businesses would require employees to return to the office in the next year, with 74 percent indicating employees had already returned to in-person work.

When it comes to the COVID-19 vaccine, about one in five Wisconsin businesses are offering their employees incentives to get the shots. One-third of those companies are offering additional paid-time off for getting the vaccine, while others are offering cash bonuses and gift cards.

“Wisconsin employers are ready to get back to work,” added Bauer. “While offices will likely look different moving forward, this survey shows most of us are just ready to get back to normal.”

## About the Wisconsin Employer Survey

The *Wisconsin Employer Survey* is conducted twice a year by Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) – the combined state chamber and manufacturers association. The assessment provides a snapshot of where Wisconsin's employers stand on a number of important issues and outlines their economic outlook for both Wisconsin and the United States. For the Summer 2021 edition, WMC surveyed 266 employers that make up a representative sample of its membership. Businesses of all sizes, industries and geographic locations in Wisconsin participated.

The survey will be released in four separate reports on topics including: Workforce & Employment, State & Federal Policy, COVID-19 and the Economy.

## What financial impact did the COVID-19 pandemic have on your business?

**64%**  
NEGATIVE

**30%**  
POSITIVE

VERY NEGATIVE 26%  
SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE 38%

VERY POSITIVE 7%  
SOMEWHAT POSITIVE 23%

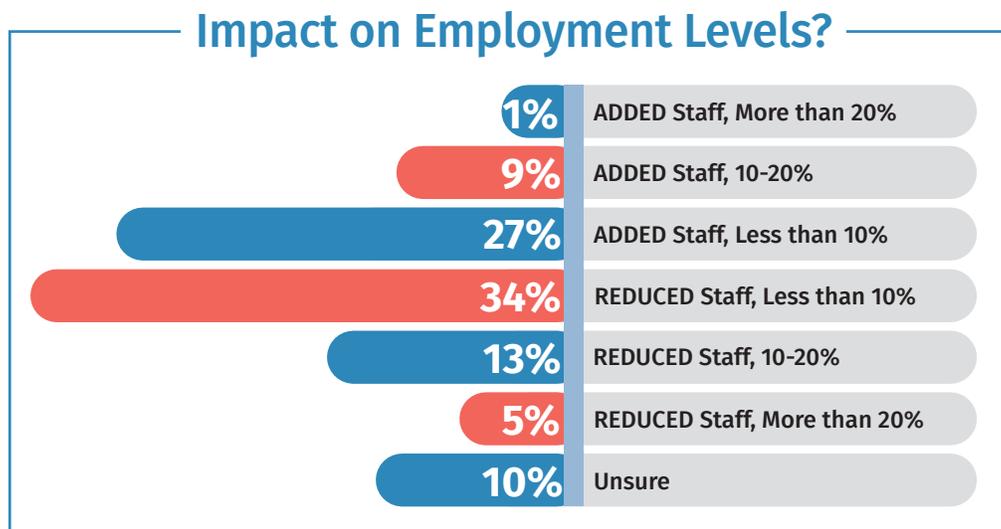
NO IMPACT 7%

*\* Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

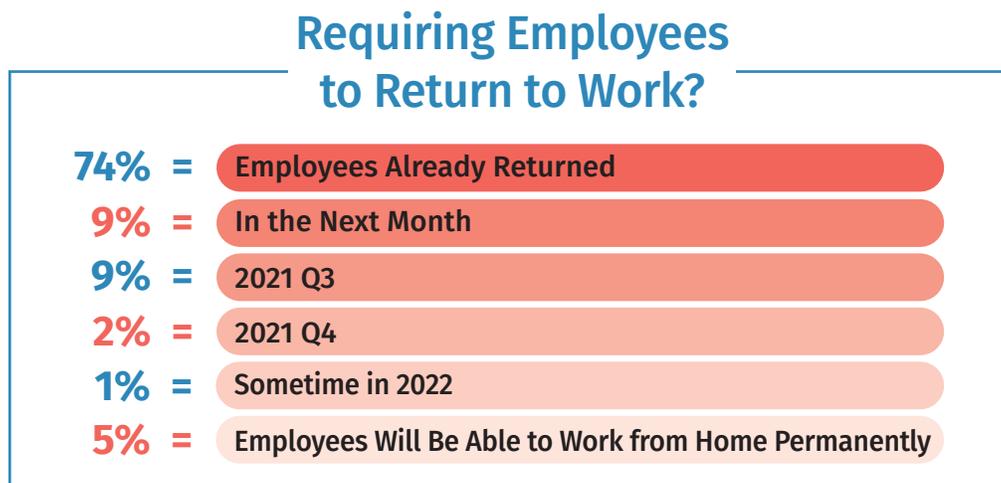
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## What impact did the COVID-19 pandemic have on your **employment levels?**



## If your facility/office closed amid the COVID-19 pandemic, when do you plan on **requiring employees to return for work?**



If you allowed some or all employees to work remotely in the last year, **what happened to your company's productivity?**

**44%**  
**STAYED  
THE SAME**

**8%**  
**INCREASED**

**32%**  
**DECREASED**

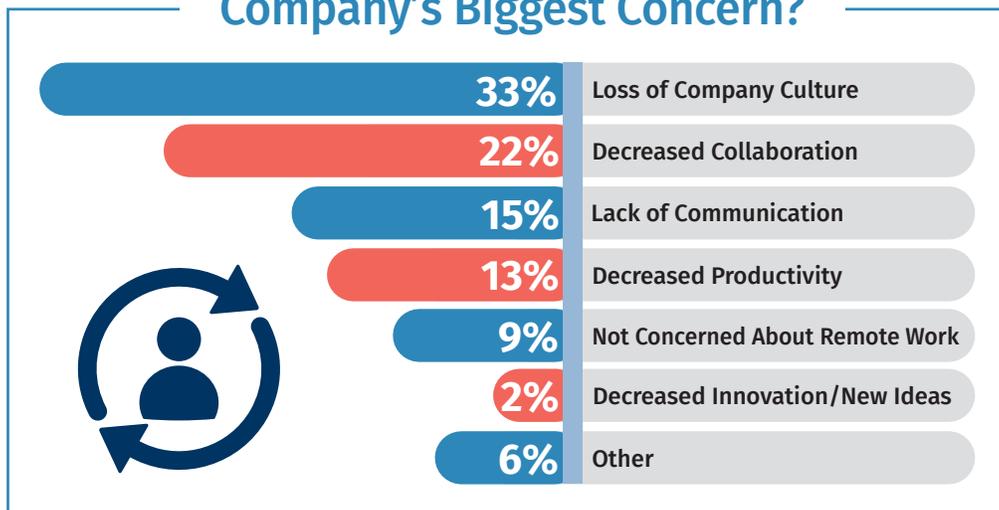
**UNSURE 17%**

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What is your **company's biggest concern**  
about allowing staff to **work remotely**?

## Company's Biggest Concern?



Is your company **offering staff incentives**  
if they get the **COVID-19 vaccine?**



If so, what **incentives** are you offering?



*In addition, some employers are not requiring vaccinated staff to wear masks or do regular COVID-19 testing. Employers also reported offering insurance discounts or additional incentives for wellness programs for vaccinated staff.*

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