Pandemic Mindset in the US Labor Market, 2021
“The fact is, while 4 million quit in April 2021, more than 6 million were hired. According to Indeed.com’s Hiring Lab, job postings have been higher than pre-pandemic levels since March, leaving workers with a vast array of opportunity. It’s only natural that many will want to strike while the iron is hot, fearing the market may be different before the end of the year.”
More Americans are looking for work than not

For Americans without a job, why aren’t they looking?
How long before workers go back to work?

Insights:
- Many who left the workforce during Covid are taking their time before going back
- Subsidies are not driving the majority of Americans’ decisions about returning to work
Why aren’t people going back at work?

Insight one: Less than 20% of Americans say they don’t need the income; government subsides are driving a smaller part of the labor shortage than it might seem.
Why aren’t people going back at work?

Insight two: Many Americans unemployed during COVID don’t want to go back to what they did before; many are seeking a better job and will hold out until they find one.
Why aren’t people going back at work?

Insight three: Tied for first place, concerns about workplace safety are keeping many workers at home.
Why aren’t people going back at work?

- Looking for better job
- Stop work (dual income)
- Receiving income
- Need childcare
- Fear of Covid
- Starting your business
- Other

Insight four: Ten percent of out-of-work Americans can’t find childcare, which in turn keeps them out of the workplace.
Besides more money, what defines a “better” job?

American workers, presented with lots of available choices are looking for better quality of life, more opportunities, more flexibility.

Less than 20% looking for a job say the main reason is they want to work from home!
Summary

• This is not a new problem: service industries were struggling to hire workers before the pandemic.
• Blaming government subsides as the reason why people aren’t back at work explains less than 20% of unemployed Americans.
• Once out, most workers don’t want to go back to the same jobs they had before.
• More money is important but NOT the primary driver: Better opportunities, and workplace safety, for example, are much bigger drivers.
• For parents with young children, access to child care is a real problem in many communities (a third of US child care providers have not reopened since COVID).
Actions:

1. Change the way you market to workers (and marketing is the right word) to appeal to what out of work Americans are seeking

2. Don’t sell the job you have, sell the opportunities that job will create (opportunity for promotion, learn new skills, on the job training, etc.)

3. Address workplace safety concerns upfront (we believe in a safe and secure workplace, etc.)

4. Marketing to young parents, stress flexible work schedules so they can care for young kids
Creative recruiting example:

Insight: Workers want more flexibility in schedules.
Action: Consider shifting your communication and scheduling to digital so younger associates can see options.

Using a mobile app that allowed workers to change shifts without the consent of their supervisor, managers found workers worked more hours and negotiated with each other to keep the schedule filled.
Survey details

- Adults, 18-60
- 50/50 male female split
- Income range $25-75k annual
- Less than 5% semi retired
- Geographic survey respondents commensurate with US population

Survey respondents current or former employment:

- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Construction
- Foodservice
- Agriculture
- Services
- Other (please specify)