IndusGuru

The Expertise Network

A Humane Response to the Humanitarian Crisis

**Insights from our survey on
Organization Response to the 2nd Covid Wave**

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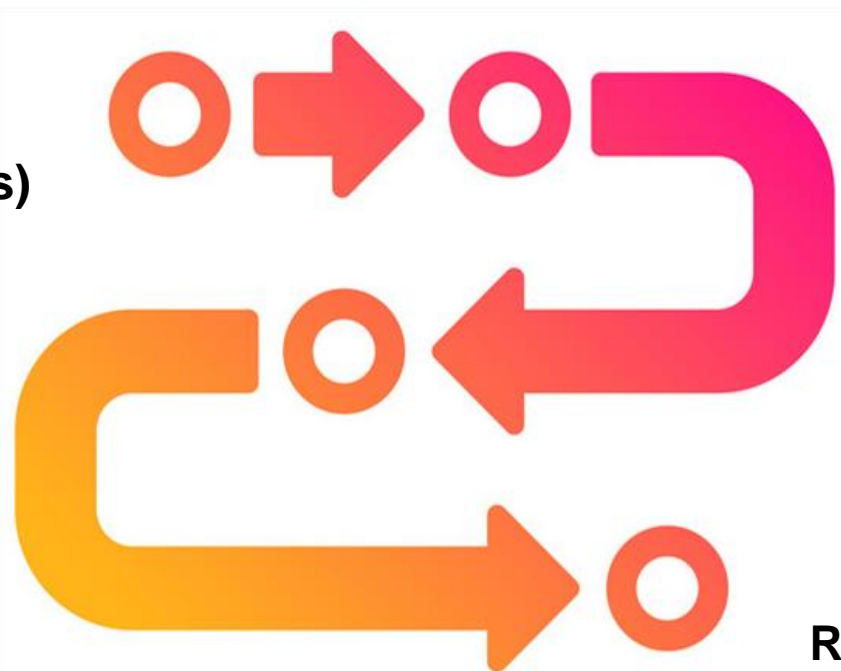
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Context

- The second wave of the pandemic needs a combined response from **Government, Civil society, Citizens and Corporate India**

- Organizations are grappling with a never-before crisis, to try and protect and support their employees and their families across the country

- IndusGuru undertook a Research Survey aimed at creating a **quick reference guide** to help leaders understand **"emergent" people and organisation practices** to protect and support their employees. It was **conducted between 6th and 13th May, 2021, at the height of the 2nd wave**

- This report provides a **rough guide for leaders – to benchmark their practices with other organisations**, and potentially adopt some relevant learnings for their own work-force. It also provides insights on the **key HR and Organisation Practices that may emerge over the next 3-12** months and more.

Methodology

Surveyed **50+ Senior business & HR leaders (CEOs, CXOs)**

10 broad industry groups, across **start-ups, SMEs, large corporates**

In-depth interviews with **industry leaders** for additional context

Results showcased in this Report

Response Demographics

% of Respondents by Industry

- Financial Services 17.6%
- Industrial Manuf… 13.7%
- Professional Ser… 13.7%
- Others 13.7%
- Technology, Med… 11.8%
- Consumer & Retail 9.8%
- Health Industries 9.8%
- Consumer Servi… 5.9%
- Infrastructure an… 3.9%

% of Respondents by Organisation Size

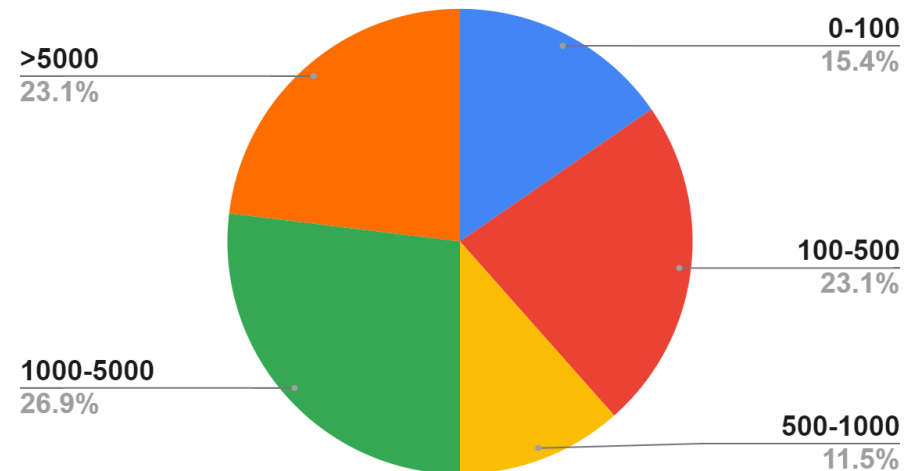

- 0-100 15.4%
- 100-500 23.1%
- 500-1000 11.5%
- 1000-5000 26.9%
- >5000 23.1%
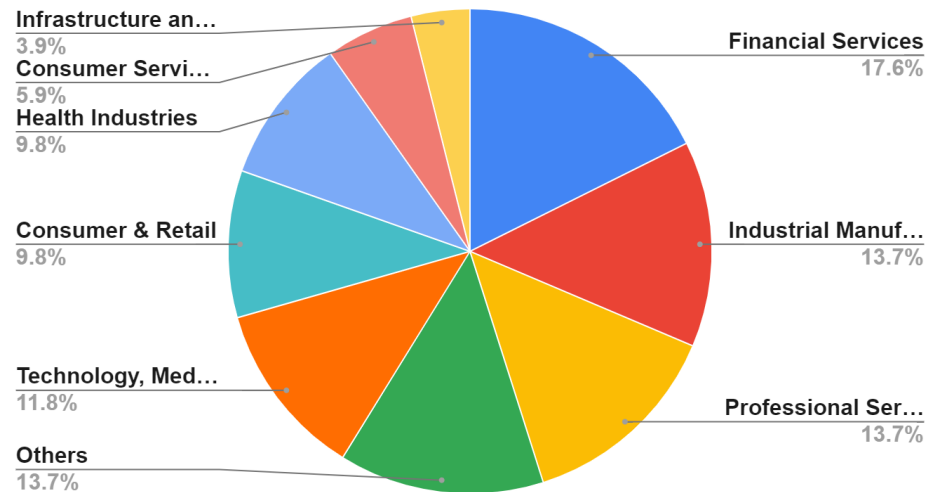
57% — Top 4 sectors – Financial Services, Industrial (including Manufacturing & Automotive), Professional Services and TMT

50% — Equal split of responses across Large Corporates (>1,000) and Start-ups, Niche companies (0-100), SMEs (100-500)

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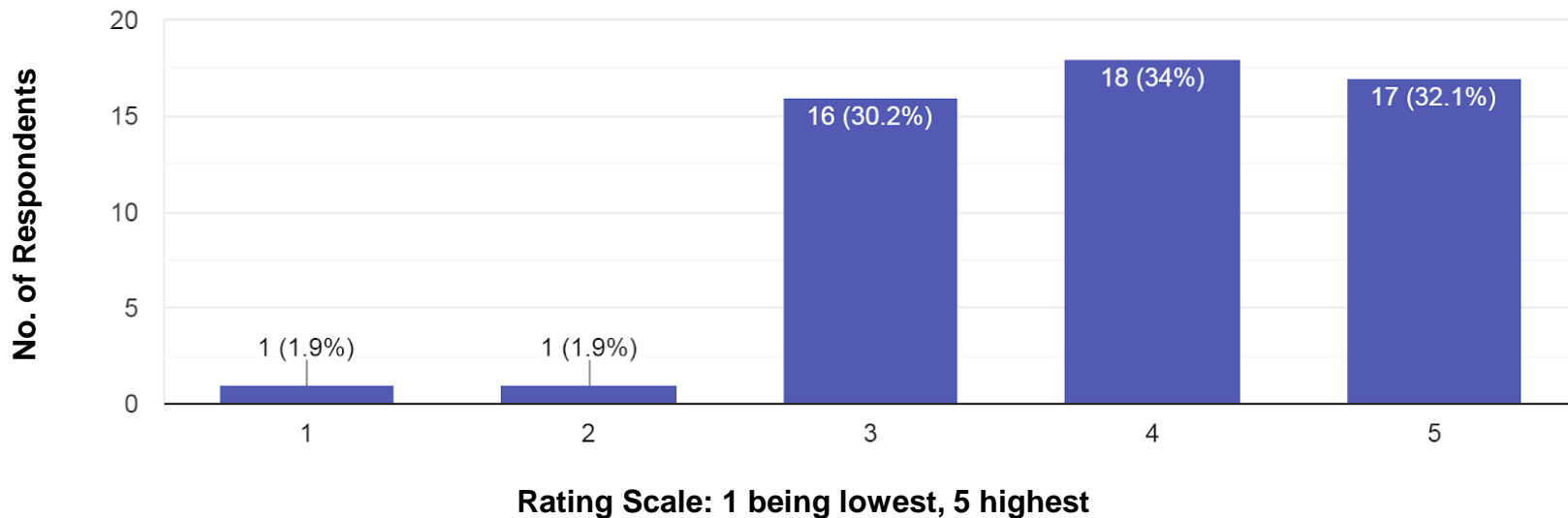
Executive Summary

- Large organisations have **adapted their people and HR practices significantly since the 1st Wave of the Pandemic – primarily around WFH and Flexible working arrangements**. SME's and smaller organisations have some distance to cover

- This adaptation has led to Business operations and results being relatively stable in the 2nd wave – but this wave has unleashed a human crisis on a national scale across sectors and organization types. The largest number of organisations report *5-10% of their work-force being affected by Covid – 3 times the national average case-load*

- As national health infrastructure groans under the strain - organisations have immediately responded by taking on several roles of a *Primary Healthcare provider/ First port of Care* for their employees and families

- More than **50% of Organisations report that the Employee health, morale and engagement is their #1 concern** over the next 3-12 months

- Critical organization priorities reported for the next 3-12 months include
    - **Top concerns**: Enabling Vaccination access for all employees and strengthening Health and Safety Protocols
    - **Emerging concerns**: Mental Health support, Flexi attendance & leave policies, supporting families of deceased employees

- **Digitisation as a means to build resilience**, is a top priority, beyond the core-people agenda

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Learnings from 2020 – Adapting to the New Normal

Q: How much did organisations adapt their HR strategies and policies to the new remote and online working environment?

No. of Respondents (y-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20)

- 1: 1 (1.9%)
- 2: 1 (1.9%)
- 3: 16 (30.2%)
- 4: 18 (34%)
- 5: 17 (32.1%)

Rating Scale: 1 being lowest, 5 highest

**~65% respondents made significant adaptations (rated 4 or 5) since the pandemic first hit in March-2020**

Learnings from 2020 – Adapting to the New Normal

# of Organisations and Average Adaptation Score by Industry
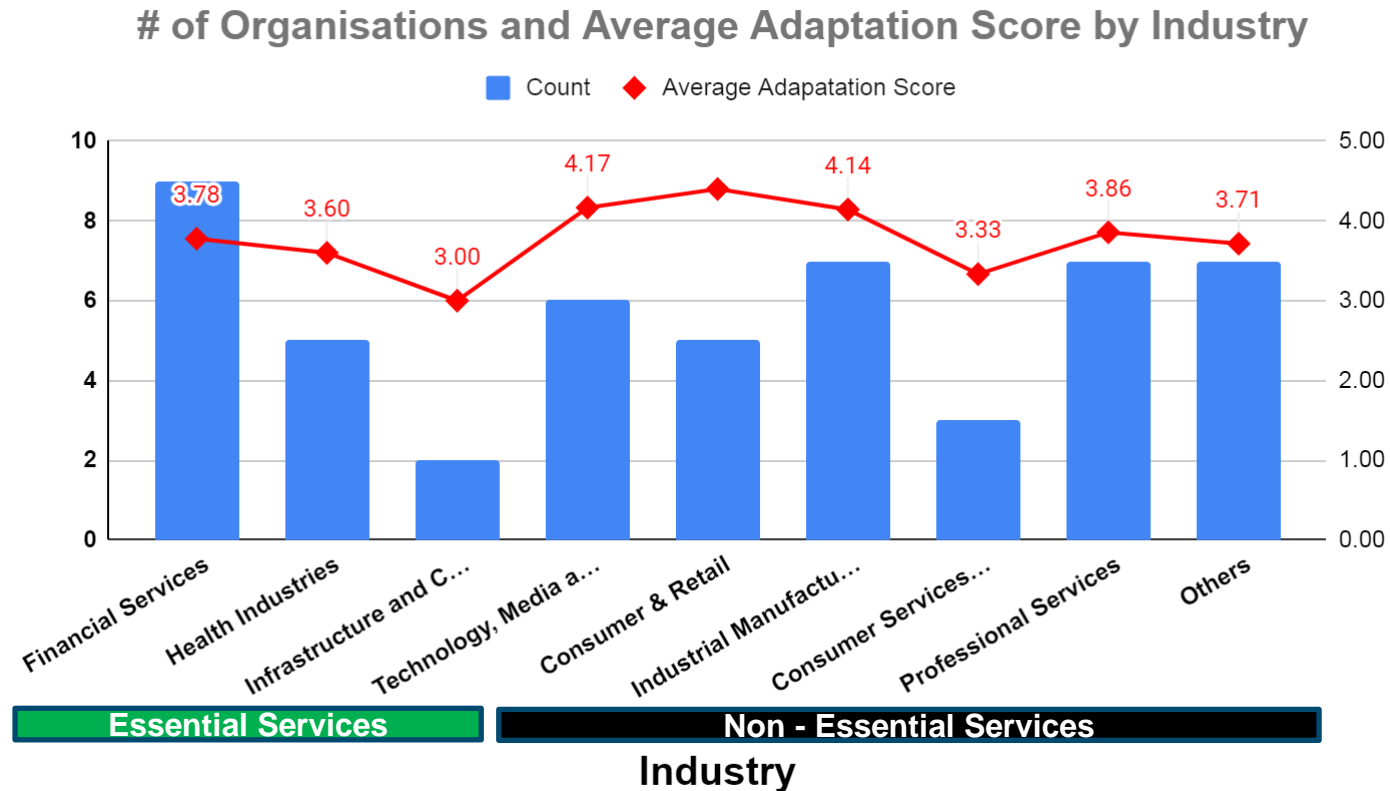
Industries such as TMT, Industrial Manufacturing, Consumer & Retail report a high adaptation score on their HR Strategies and Policies – to deal with the lockdown and disruption

Learnings from 2020 – Larger organisations show a distinctly higher adaptation in their HR practices, driven by the need of a larger work-force and a more mature "HR capability"

Average Adapatation Score
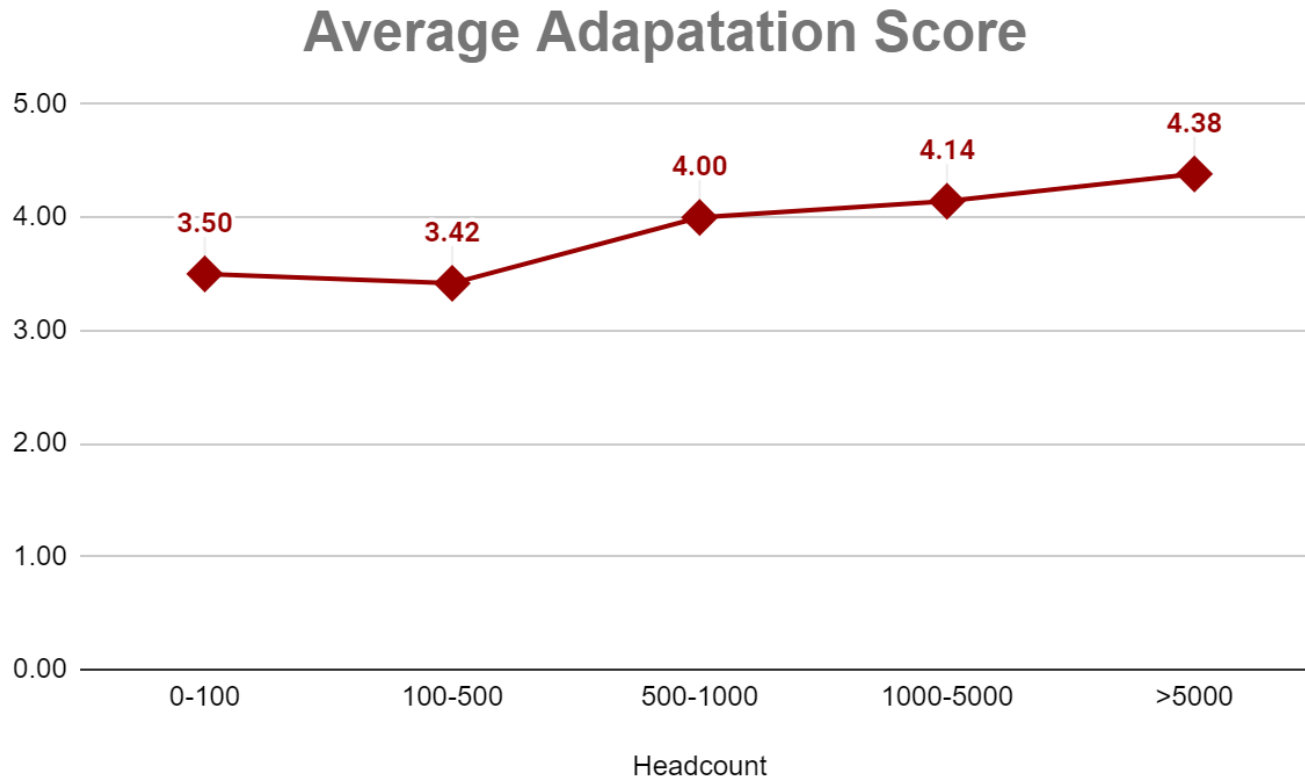
Large organisations (headcount > 1000) report a much higher Adaptation Score. Crafting employee-friendly and supportive policies has clearly been mission critical for these large organisations

Flexible Work Timings and Home Office Setup assistance rank among the top HR Strategies / policies that have been adapted to the new normal

1. **Work From Home**

2. **Flexible Work Timings**

3. **Home office setup assistance (electronics & furniture)**

4. **Workplace Redesign (social distancing at work)**

5. **Virtual Trainings and Upskilling**

6. **Increased Mobile and Internet support**

7. **Redefining KPI/KRA's**

8. **Online Recruitment & Onboarding**

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The 2nd wave Impact – Corporate India is bearing a much higher caseload (typically 3X), than the reported national average (currently reported at 1.7% of national population)

Impact - % of Employees Affected

20.8%

24.5%

26.4%

28.3%

- 0-2 %
- 2-5%
- 5-10%
- 10-20%
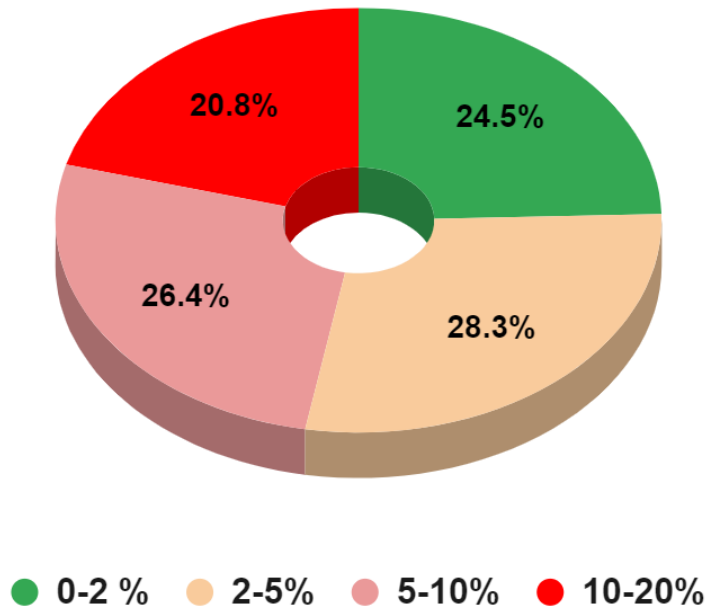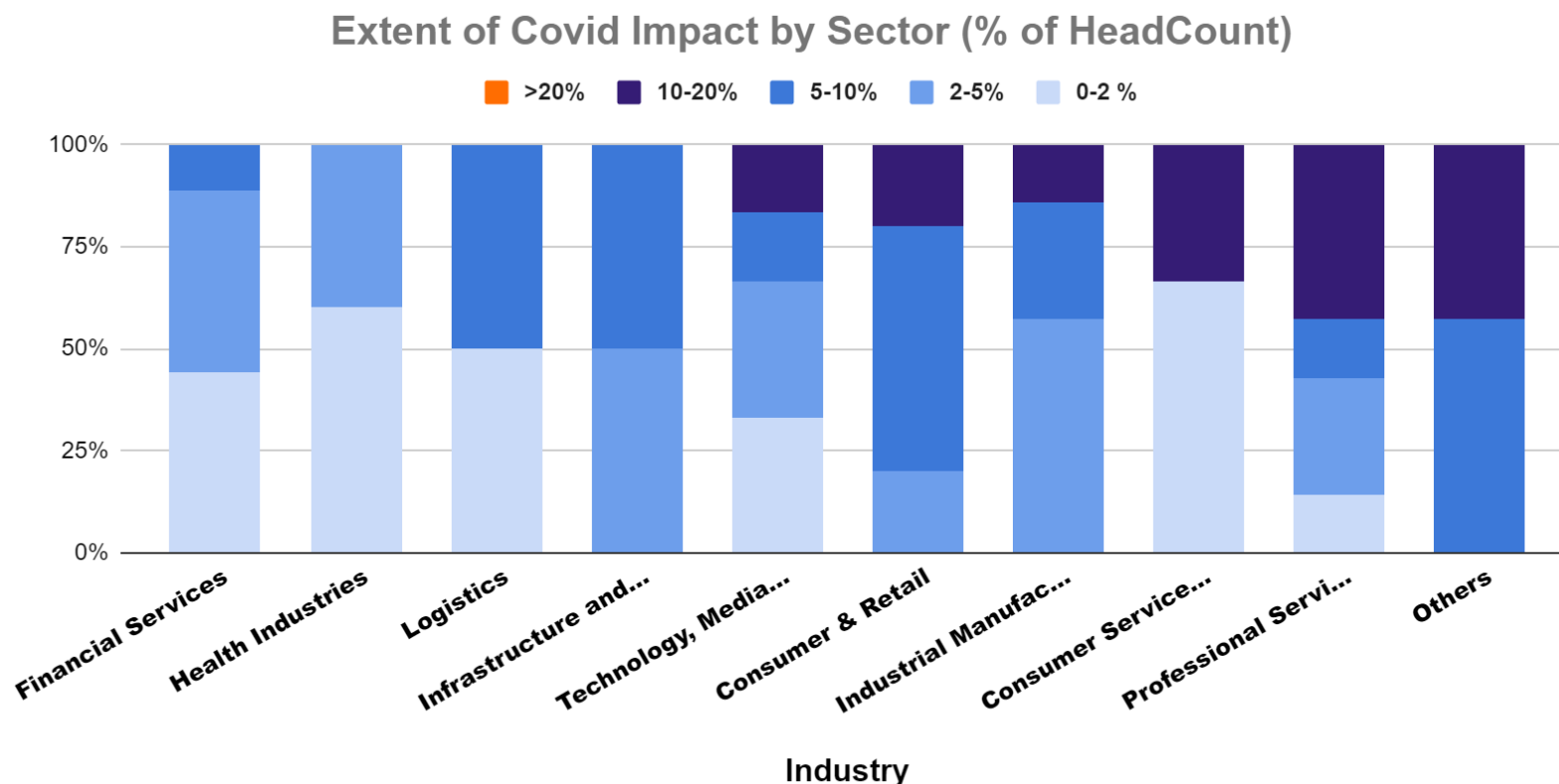
28% of organisations report an impact of 2-5% of their headcount being affected by Covid
46% of organisations report an impact of >5% of their workforce being affected

Combined with the multiplier effect of families impacted – we are looking a human crisis at a scale that most business leaders have never faced before

The 2nd Wave Impact is seen across all sectors – non-essential service sectors which had opened up in Jan-March, and then locked down, have been severely impacted too

Extent of Covid Impact by Sector (% of HeadCount)

Legend: >20% | 10-20% | 5-10% | 2-5% | 0-2 %

X-axis (Industry): Financial Services, Health Industries, Logistics, Infrastructure and..., Technology, Media..., Consumer & Retail, Industrial Manufac..., Consumer Service..., Professional Servi..., Others
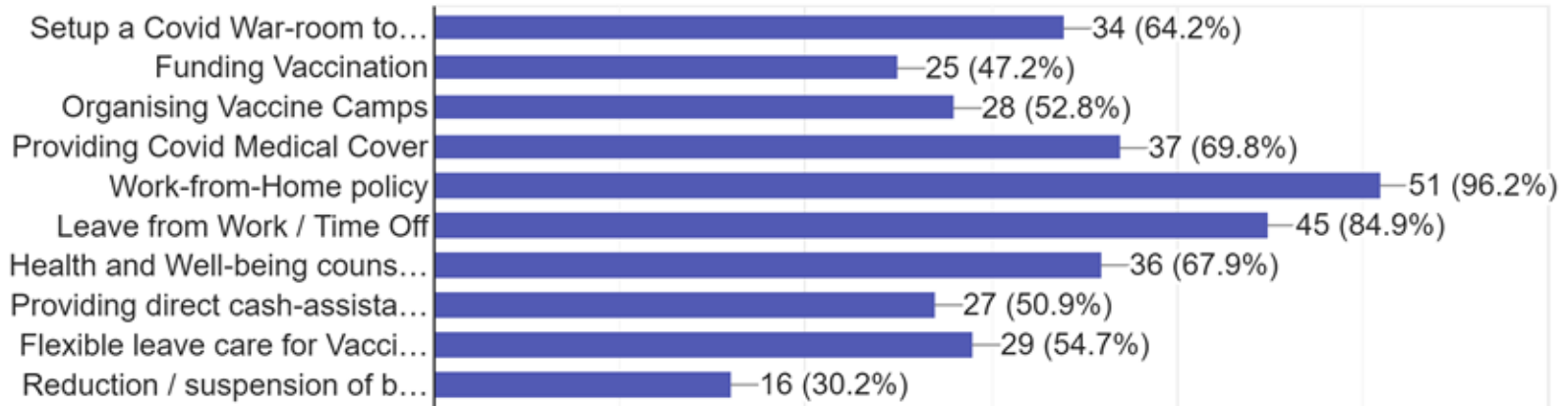
Essential Services

Non - Essential Services

Non-Essential Service Industries – while impacted more by the lockdown, appear to bear a higher case-load burden in terms of employees impacted

Immediate Response – A Parallel HealthCare Support System has emerged, driven by Corporates as the first port of call for their employees

Immediate Response - What are the measures you have put in place to support your employees?

53 responses

Measure	Responses
Setup a Covid War-room to…	34 (64.2%)
Funding Vaccination	25 (47.2%)
Organising Vaccine Camps	28 (52.8%)
Providing Covid Medical Cover	37 (69.8%)
Work-from-Home policy	51 (96.2%)
Leave from Work / Time Off	45 (84.9%)
Health and Well-being couns…	36 (67.9%)
Providing direct cash-assista…	27 (50.9%)
Flexible leave care for Vacci…	29 (54.7%)
Reduction / suspension of b…	16 (30.2%)

Most Prevalent Policies / Initiatives

- **Work from Home (96%)**
- **Leave from work / Formal time off from work (85%)**
- **Providing Covid Medical Cover (70%)**

A growing trend is of organisations – playing the role of "HealthCare Provider" –50-60% of our respondents reported
- **Health and well-being counselling (68%)**
- **Setting up a Covid War Room to Assist with Medical Resources (65%)**
- **Funding Vaccination and Organising Vaccine Camps (50%)**

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Immediate Response – Corporates have stepped up even as national healthcare resources and infrastructure are falling short

1. **Setting Up Transit Ward for employees**

2. **Ambulance arrangement**

3. **Organising Plasma donation camps**

4. **Tele Medicine Consultations for remote staff**

5. **Importing and Providing Oxygen concentrators**

6. **Variable Payouts irrespective of achievements**

7. **Webinars on Mental Health**

Leading Global Technology Company's response to the 2nd Wave of COVID-19

We need to ask the question– What is it to be a leader in the time of Crisis? - HR Leader, Leading Global Technology company

Overview:
o Fortune Global 500 company
o Global Employee Strength 500,000+
o Spread across 30+ locations in India
o 20 business verticals

Challenges(1st wave)
o Business continuity
o Online working
o Virtual Trainings
o IT infrastructure

Challenges(2nd wave)
o Anticipation to human needs
o Health crisis never seen before
o Tie-up with Medical service providers, Hospitals, converting Hotel beds for COVID care, emergency medical kits, provided oxygen, etc

Employee Benefits
• Giving Core benefits for all employees irrespective of business function
• Reimbursing- COVID home care, RTPCR tests, vaccination
• Expanding Insurance benefits beyond employees- to extended family
• Summer camps for children to support WFH parents

Long Term Strategy
• Planning the New Digital Work Environment and Re defining Organisation
• Designing Human elements- Team work, Collaboration etc
• Defining- Client engagement and Selling in the virtual world
• Hybrid work environment
• Re-skilling employees
• Redefining Leadership

Emerging need to focus on Employees Mental Health-Consult a doctor on demand

Manufacturing company for advanced tinting equipment

"If you are not reporting to work – then you have no moral right to ask the person sweeping the floor to report also"

Overview:
- Number of employees 100+
- Turnover 100 Cr+
- Locations: Across states for manufacturing

Challenges(2nd wave)
- More fear amongst employees
- Employees not willing to come to work
- Manufacturing seeing a huge set back as 2-3 people have to work together

Strategies to support employees
- Flexible work policies
- Following Social distancing
- Educating employees
- Employee Insurance

Look at every employee as a 'Human first'

Being a leader in the crisis
- Lead by example and Walk the Talk
- Be empathetic
- Be present for your people
- Make things happen

Long Term Strategy
- Employee Safety
- Ensuring basic necessities are up to maintain business continuity for next 6 months
- Risk analysis
- Maintain Cash flows

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Longer Term Implications – Employee health, morale and engagement is the top concern for the largest number of respondents

What do you believe will be the most critical impact on your organisation over the next 3-12 months. Pick 1 Option

50 responses
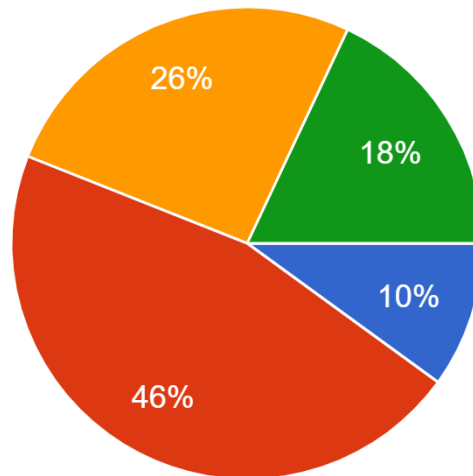
Legend:
- Reduction in Sales Revenue
- Impact on employee health, morale and engagement
- Disruption of operational and supply chain activities
- Challenges to cash-flow and financial health
- Others

Pie chart values: 26%, 18%, 10%, 46%

Close to 50% of respondents indicate that the biggest impact over the next 3-12 months will be to employee health, morale and engagement

Our Case Study Interviews also corroborate that the business impact (sales, supply chain) in this wave have been minimal

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Longer Term Implications – Employee health, morale and engagement is the top concern – for all Organisation of all types. As the organization size increases – it pre-dominance as the key concern increases

Most Critical Impact / Concern by Size of Organisation

Legend:
- 🟩 Reduction in Sales Revenue
- 🟨 Challenges to cash-flow and financial health
- 🟦 Disruption of operational and supply chain activities
- 🟥 Impact on employee health, morale and engagement

Headcount
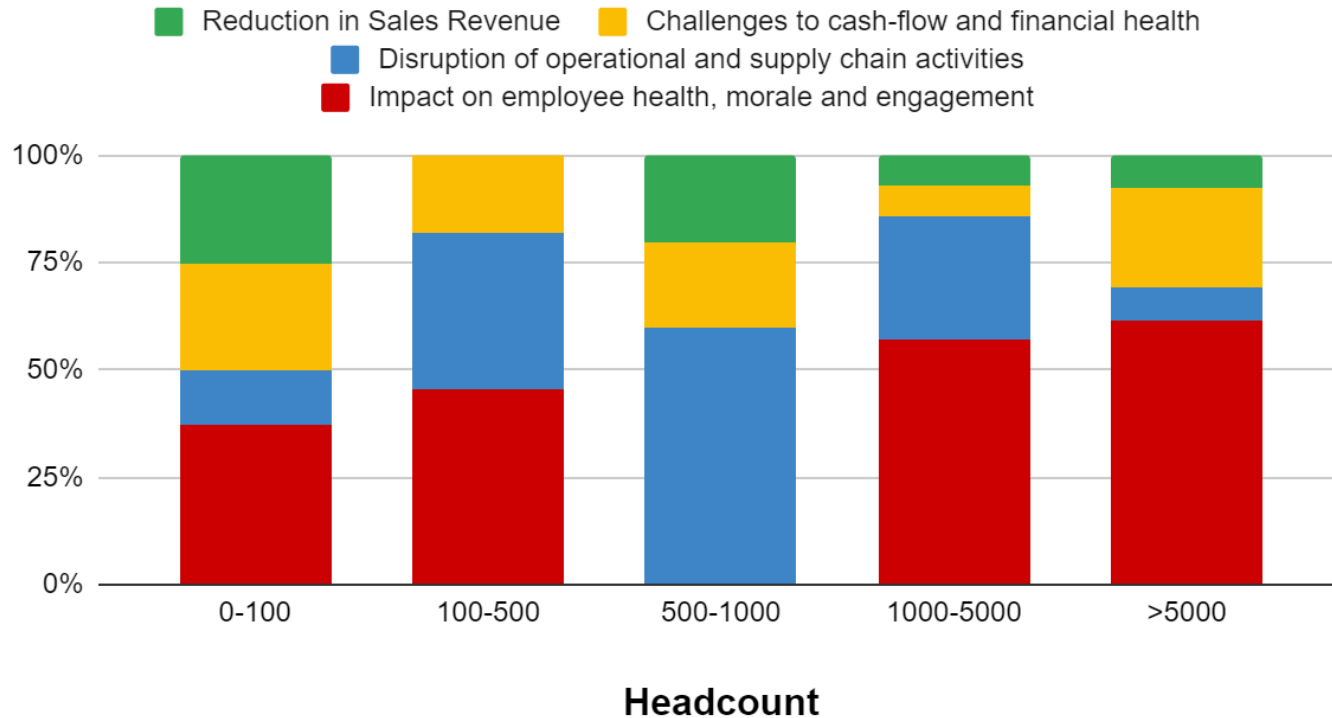
Smaller organisations cite a few different priorities as their key concern over the next 3-12 months. Employee well-being becomes the pre-dominant concern for larger organisations

Leading Personal Care Brand

Overview:

- Leading company in the field of skin care
- More than 130 years of experience
- 11 product range
- Office and Manufacturing faculties at various locations in India
- Pan India Sales and Distribution
- 1000 Employees + Third Party Sales people

Challenges(1st wave)

- Supply Chain impacted= Due to National Lockdown
- Stocks not reaching from Warehouse to Retail
- Organisation processes suffered

Challenges(2nd wave)

- People Impact
- More fear because of first hand experience of the Virus
- Impact of employees Mental Health

Basic Priorities for long term Strategy
- *Health and Well being of employees*
- *Business Continuity*
- *Protecting the Brand and financials*

Senior Management

Key Reps from Functions and Locations

COVID Crisis Team

New HR Policies
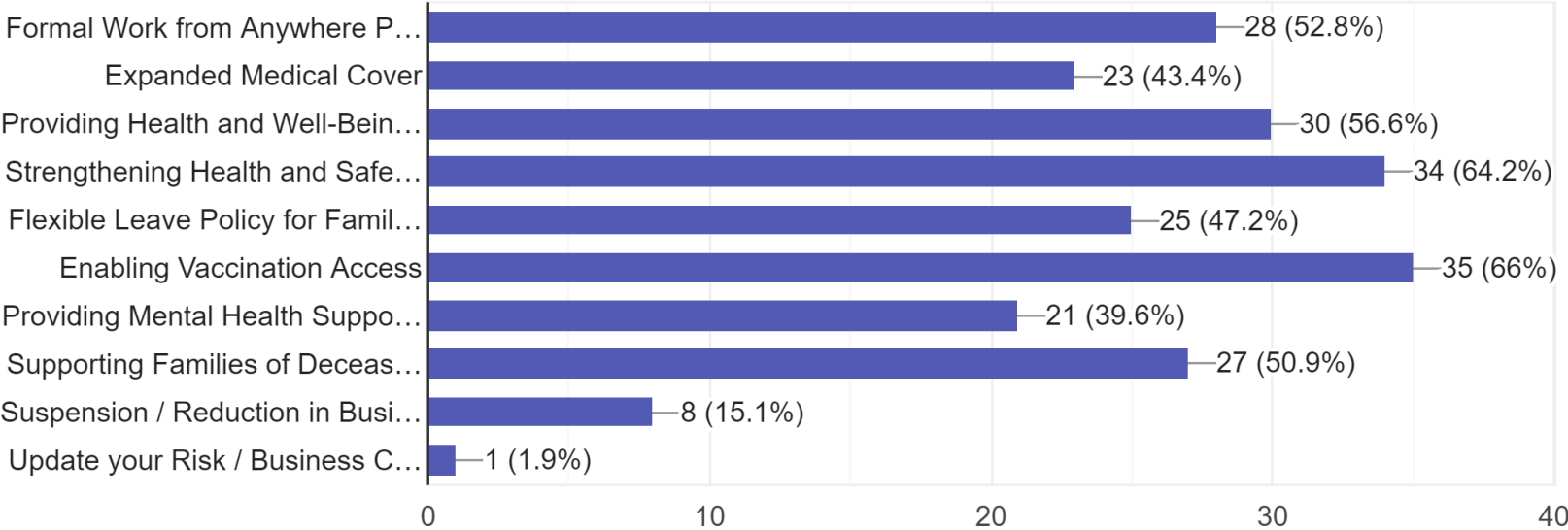- Corona Insurance
- Corona Home Isolation-
  - Home quarantine package
  - Doctor consultation access 14 days
  - Nurse monitoring vitals
  - Psychological counseling
- Helpline Numbers for employees and family
- Additional Leaves
- Importing Oxygen Concentrators
- Covid Aid Cash Loan with 0% Interest
- Webinars
  - Stress Management
  - Grief Management
  - Empathy to employees for Leaders

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Longer Term Priorities – 'Health and Safety First'

Longer Term - What are the priority measures you are planning in the next 3-12 months to deal with the Covid crisis or its aftermath

53 responses

Category	Value
Formal Work from Anywhere P…	28 (52.8%)
Expanded Medical Cover	23 (43.4%)
Providing Health and Well-Bein…	30 (56.6%)
Strengthening Health and Safe…	34 (64.2%)
Flexible Leave Policy for Famil…	25 (47.2%)
Enabling Vaccination Access	35 (66%)
Providing Mental Health Suppo…	21 (39.6%)
Supporting Families of Deceas…	27 (50.9%)
Suspension / Reduction in Busi…	8 (15.1%)
Update your Risk / Business C…	1 (1.9%)

Enabling vaccine access to their employees is the top-most priority for organisations over the next 3-12 months

Longer Term Priorities - Enabling vaccine access to their employees is the top-most priority for organisations over the next 3-12 months

The expectations and definition of the "Human Resources" function and "Employee welfare" is being broadened

- **Vaccination for employees is top-of-mind for most businesses**

- **2/3rd** of all respondents report that **providing Vaccine Access** will be their **top-most priority** over the next 3-12 month

- With fears of a 3rd wave gaining ground, and a sluggish national vaccination program, the other top-priorities for the next 3-12 months include
  - **Strengthening health and safety protocols**
  - **Providing health and well-being services to employees**

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Long Term Priorities - Emerging Practices gaining ground including providing Mental Health Support and supporting families of deceased employees

The expectations and definition of the "Human Resources" function and "Employee welfare" is being broadened

Supporting families of deceased employees

More than 1/3rd of our respondents indicate that they are planning

MENTAL HEALTH Helpline

Flexible Attendance & Leave Policies
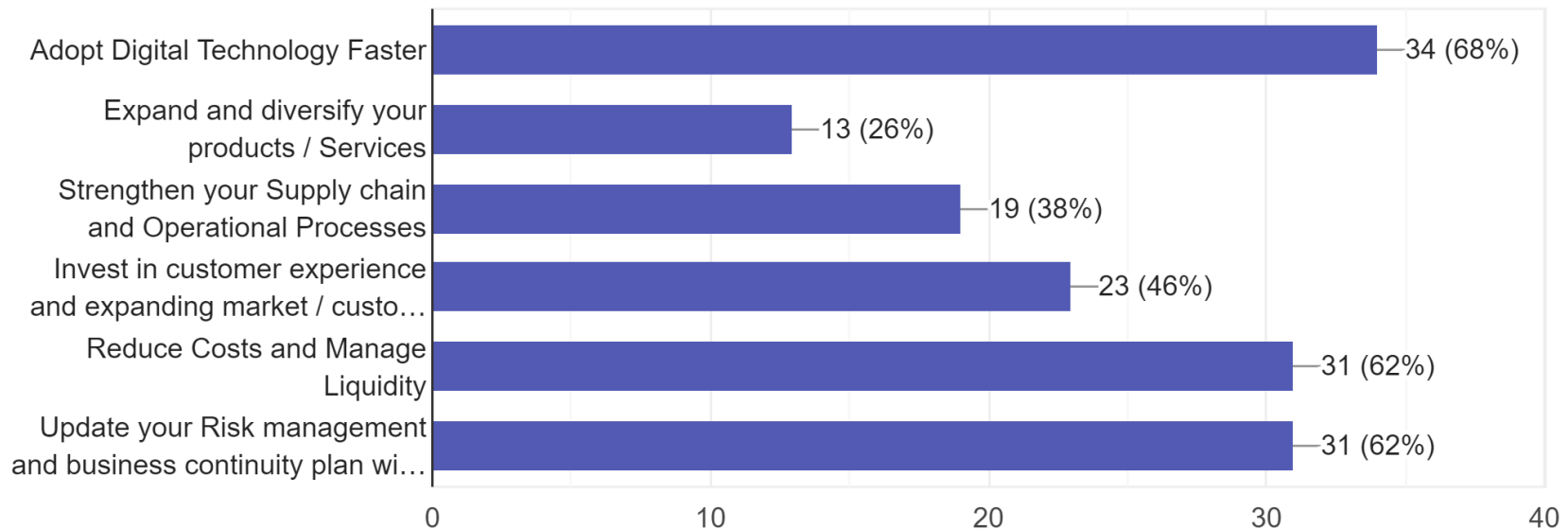*For Family Covid Care*

Formal Policy for Work from Anywhere

Expectedly, organisations are aiming for faster Digital Adoption to building resilience to future crises

What are other business priorities / measures you plan to take up to strengthen your organisation and make it resilient to future crises

50 responses

Category	Value
Adopt Digital Technology Faster	34 (68%)
Expand and diversify your products / Services	13 (26%)
Strengthen your Supply chain and Operational Processes	19 (38%)
Invest in customer experience and expanding market / custo...	23 (46%)
Reduce Costs and Manage Liquidity	31 (62%)
Update your Risk management and business continuity plan wi...	31 (62%)

More than 60% of organisations report that building future resilience will require
- **Instituting wider and stronger risk management**
- **Managing cash and liquidity stack up**

A few reflections for the longer term – The IndusGuru View

- The first-wave of the Pandemic – the Great Disruption, brought about a transformational change to the way a large part of the India Inc. works. It raised **several fundamental questions**, related to how an organisation manages it's most critical resource – it's people:
  - **What should we define and design the "work-place" ?**
  - **What work should get done, where ?**
  - **How can we motivate, engage and support employees working remotely ?**

- Even as organisations are reshaping their response strategies, the 2nd wave of the pandemic has hit us – resulting in a human-crisis at a scale, unmatched in our living memory. It has put into stark relief, even more fundamental questions for organisations:
  - **What is the role of an organisation in protecting and supporting its's people ?** Family health and welfare in India – is inextricably linked with employee welfare and motivating people goes well beyond financial care to their physical & mental well-being
  - **What is the role of the Human Resource Function ? What new capabilities** will it have to build ?
  - **What is the meaning of Leadership in the Covid-Era ?** What can Leaders learn from this once-in-lifetime experience ? How should leaders **balance or prioritise the Shareholder and Stakeholder (employees, communities, environment) perspectives**

| Workplace Design |
| Job & Role Design |
| Recruitment & Onboarding |

| Employee Benefits |
| Health & Wellbeing |
| HR Business Partner role |
| Performance Management |
| Leadership Development |

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We help organizations find the **best-fit business expert**, for their **critical short-term assignments and projects**, and facilitate the process of selection and engagement.

Our Expert Network

We have 600+ expert consultants empanelled with us today, with an average Industry Experience of 20+ years

DOMAINS

Strategy And Finance	Marketing And Operations	Human Resource And Organisation	Infotech And Digital Media
215	166	144	260

…and 30 Industry Sectors, including FMCG, Apparel, Pharma, Auto, Industrial Manufacturing, Chemicals and Logistics

IndusGuru works with organisations across sectors and functions to provide them Senior Business Expertise on Demand

Contact us

Our Team

IndusGuru is promoted by IndusGuru Network Partners LLP, a team who has between them have more than five decades of experience in the management and technology consulting industry, in leading global consulting firms.

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