

New surveys show how pandemic workplace policies are shifting.

Kessler, Sarah . New York Times (Online) , New York: New York Times Company. Sep 1, 2021.

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FULL TEXT

Most companies now have plans to require that employees get vaccinated by the end of the year, one survey shows.

Google said on Tuesday that it would delay reopening its offices until Jan. 10. The new date is a postponement from October, which was a postponement from September, which was a postponement from July, which was a postponement from January.

Companies including Amazon, Apple and Starbucks have rescheduled with similar frequency, and it's becoming difficult to take new announcements about back-to-office plans seriously. The New York Times, Twitter and others have decided not to set a new date for reopening their offices.

These shifts, of course, reflect constantly changing circumstances during the pandemic. A batch of surveys captured how workplace practices and policies are changing, the DealBook newsletter reports.

On vaccine mandates:

Before the latest surge of coronavirus cases, few companies had announced vaccine mandates. But according to a survey released Wednesday, most companies now have plans to require that employees get vaccinated by the end of the year. Conducted by Willis Towers Watson, the survey polled nearly 1,000 companies that together employ almost 10 million people:

- 52 percent plan to have vaccine mandates by the end of the year (including 21 percent that already do).
- 78 percent plan to track employees' vaccination status (55 percent already do).
- 17 percent are considering health insurance premium rewards or surcharges to encourage vaccination (2 percent already do).

On employee expectations:

Creating and putting these policies in place takes time. Companies may also be responding to their employees' shifting expectations (and fears) about returning to the workplace. Another report released Wednesday, conducted by the Conference Board, surveyed 2,400 U.S. workers:

- 42 percent said they were worried about returning to work for fear of contracting Covid-19 or exposing family members to the virus, up from 24 percent of respondents in a survey in June.
- 29 percent said they were unsure if they would remain at their current job for the next six months. Among those looking for jobs, 80 percent said that their employer's stance on flexible work arrangements was very or moderately important in their decision to look elsewhere.

On business travel:

After the pandemic, one of the things that workers can probably count on is less business travel, according to a

survey out Tuesday by Bloomberg of 45 large companies around the world:

•84 percent of companies plan to spend less on travel after the pandemic, with a majority of those planning cuts of 20 to 40 percent of their prepandemic budgets. Put another way, all of those Zoom meetings aren't going away.

DETAILS

Subject:	Vaccines; Business travel; Immunization; Employees; Pandemics
Business indexing term:	Subject: Employees
Identifier / keyword:	Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Coronavirus Reopenings Business Travel Vaccination and Immunization Workplace Environment
Publication title:	New York Times (Online); New York
Publication year:	2021
Publication date:	Sep 1, 2021
Section:	business
Publisher:	New York Times Company
Place of publication:	New York
Country of publication:	United States, New York
Publication subject:	General Interest Periodicals--United States
Source type:	Blog, Podcast, or Website
Language of publication:	English
Document type:	News
ProQuest document ID:	2567953607
Document URL:	https://www.proquest.com/blogs-podcasts-websites/new-surveys-show-how-pandemic-workplace-policies/docview/2567953607/se-2?accountid=44910
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Last updated:	2021-09-02
Database:	U.S. Major Dailies

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