



**4** talent trends  
life sciences companies  
need to address right now.

## With rapid digitalization and growing talent scarcity, the life sciences sector should consider a total talent approach to enhance access to in-demand skills and workforce agility.

In a year like no other, the life sciences sector was often seen in headline news around the world. From developing testing methods and producing test kits, to ramping up the production of personal protective equipment and ventilators, and developing vaccines at record-breaking speed, life sciences companies quickly rose — and are still rising — to the challenge in battling COVID-19.

Amid all the disruption, human capital leaders played a vital role in ensuring business continuity by enabling their people to work remotely, implementing safety measures for those who still need to work onsite and keeping all talent engaged. It's no surprise that, according to Randstad Sourceright's 2021 [Talent Trends](#) research, which surveyed 850 employers across industries in 17 markets around the globe, 75% of life sciences companies say the role of HR has transformed significantly since the onset of the pandemic — the highest among all sectors surveyed.

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While the battle is still ongoing, the pandemic will surely have a long-lasting impact on all aspects of the life sciences industry. The use of new technologies, such as RNA therapeutics, and cell and gene therapies, will create new opportunities in research and development (R&D) and bring more [scientific advances](#).

Organizations are taking a closer look at their [manufacturing and supply chain capabilities](#) after experiencing disruptions in raw materials and drug production caused by the various lockdowns. And with sales and marketing activities being heavily disrupted, companies will need to find new ways to reach and engage customers.

How can you forecast the talent needs of your business in the months and years ahead? How are you addressing talent demand, virtual workforces, reskilling and other burning issues within your organization, while still mitigating the impact that the pandemic has imposed on your industry and company? What will you need to do to fulfill your talent strategies in a world of competing priorities?

These are just some of the questions you face as you plan for the next normal.

Here are the top 4 talent trends that emerged from our 2021 Talent Trends research that will help you build the workforce of tomorrow:





# 01 build workforce agility with a total talent management strategy.

2020 has clearly shown that workforce agility is critical to business continuity, recovery and growth. The ability to quickly allocate resources when and where they are needed the most allows companies to meet changing business demands. Only 68% of life sciences companies, however, say their talent strategy is more focused on workforce agility than before. More life sciences organizations should look toward total talent management to solve challenges — such as meeting volume talent demand, needing to ramp up hiring quickly or closing workforce gaps — that result from new business demands, like those associated with COVID-19 relief.

percentage who say they're  
more focused on workforce  
agility than ever before:



68% life sciences

80% automotive &  
manufacturing

76% banking &  
finance

91% consumer  
goods

78% IT &  
technology

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is more focused on workforce agility than before.

To build workforce agility, organizations are implementing total talent management strategies that use talent analytics, market intelligence and a holistic view to hire for the job, not just the role. This integrated approach considers talent availability, how quickly and where an employer needs the work done, and other factors to find the right people — regardless of their preferred work arrangement and how the role was traditionally filled.

Taking this approach that considers all work arrangements holistically, employers enhance access to talent, reduce time to deploy and drive greater agility. As you gain visibility into all of your workforce arrangements, you can also make better use of your talent data to make insights-driven decisions.

For example, as one of the pioneers in building a total workforce demand model, [Philips](#) aims to break down the silos between permanent and contingent workforces to give hiring managers the best resources for their business ambitions. When the pandemic broke out, the company was able to reduce non-critical contingent spend and transfer workers to different departments to save on costs, all while continuing to deliver critical products.





## 02 accelerate digital transformation to drive broader business value.

Virtual clinical trials, telehealth, remote auditing — the pandemic has given a much-needed push to adopt and normalize emerging digital advancements that were slower moving before.

While the life sciences sector managed to pivot and accelerated many digital initiatives in the past year, companies now face the challenge of driving true enterprise digital transformation to create broader business value.

percentage that have increased  
the use of automation and  
robotics in the business:



Just 13% surveyed in our Talent Trends research say they have increased usage of automation and robotics in their business in the last year.

In particular, artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to create differentiation and help reimagine the way work is done. Manual processes in clinical development can be automated or augmented through the use of AI. Manufacturing operations and supply chain can be improved by using AI to predict bottlenecks and changes in market demands.

The life sciences sector, however, seems to be more hesitant in the adoption of automation. Just 13% surveyed in our Talent Trends research say they have increased usage of automation and robotics in their business in the last year.

To thrive in an increasingly digital, insights-driven world, you will need to hire and nurture more STEM talent to build out digital competencies and realize the full potential of new technologies in your business.



## 03 flexible work arrangements help attract top talent in a competitive industry.

Talent scarcity has always been a challenge for the life sciences sector, and the pandemic only exacerbated the problem. Over half (52%) of life sciences human capital and C-suite leaders we surveyed say talent scarcity has the biggest impact on their business.

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With the need to continue investing in R&D to tackle new coronavirus variants, fulfill vaccine production and to resume trials of other clinical projects that were put on hold, talent demand for the sector is expected to remain high. How can your company stand out when attracting the right people to your organization?

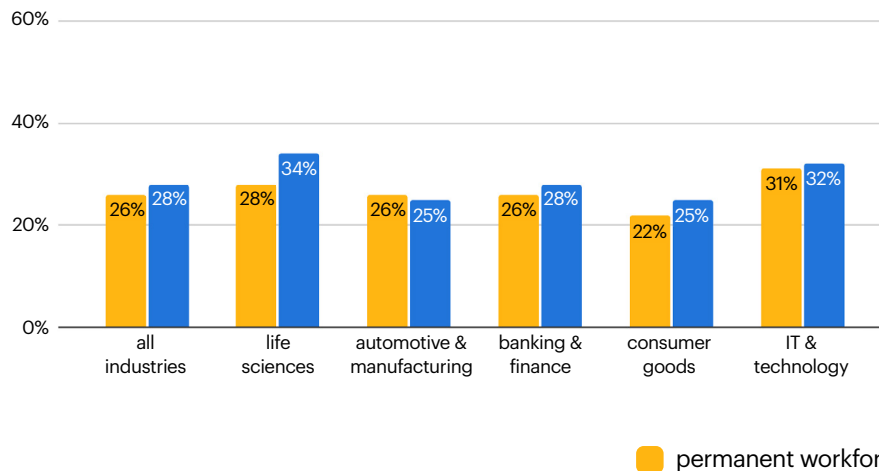
Seventy two percent (72%) of life sciences employers believe that flexible working arrangements can enhance talent attraction. With remote working becoming the norm, and with professionals proving that they're able to do the job effectively in virtual environments, many workers expect more flexibility in their work schedule. The expansion of the virtual workforce also creates an expanded talent pool, as organizations are able to hire talent from anywhere in the world.

### 03. flexible work arrangements help attract top talent in a competitive industry.

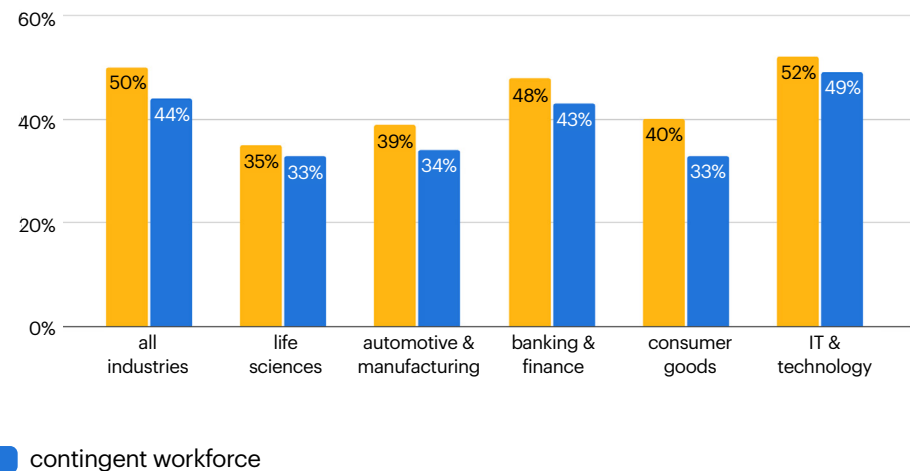
Life sciences companies, however, seem to be quite fixed in their views on flexible working. Employers in this sector report that while 28% of its permanent workforce and 34% of contingent workers were already working remotely prior to the pandemic, they expect a similar percentage of the workforce (35% for permanent and 33% for contingent) to be working remotely at the end of 2021.

On the other hand, most other sectors expect to see larger virtual workforces at the end of the year. It will be important to expand your remote working arrangements to avoid losing out in the competition for highly skilled candidates in the new world of work.

what percentage of your workforce worked remotely before the pandemic?



what percentage of your workforce do you expect will be working remotely at the end of 2021?





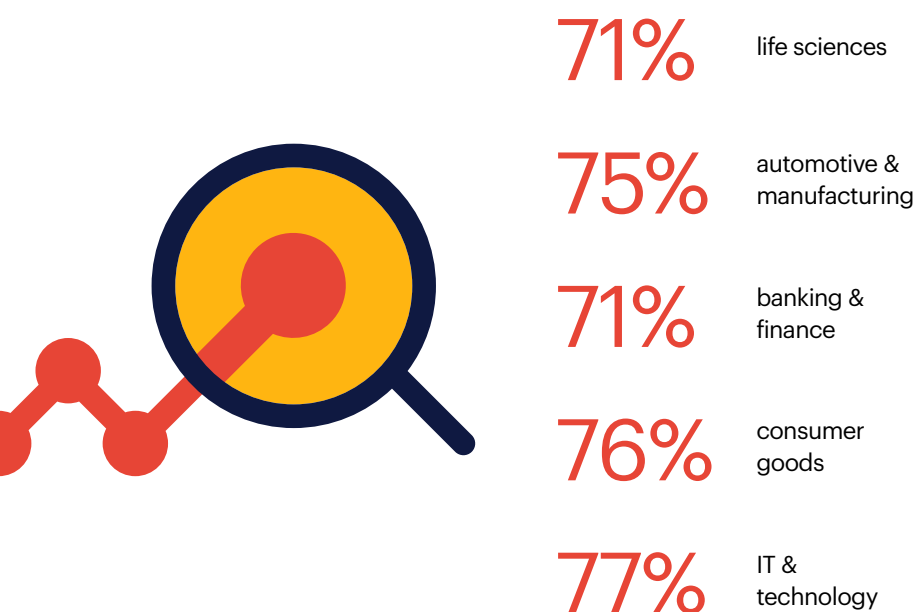


## 04 focus on the talent experience to enhance workforce satisfaction.

According to our 2021 Talent Trends research, the life sciences sector also lags behind other industries with regard to focus on the talent experience. Just 71% of life sciences human capital leaders rate their company's talent experience as excellent or good. With the sector gaining so much spotlight due to its critical role in the pandemic, life sciences companies should take the opportunity to improve their talent experience and enhance talent attraction and engagement.

While talent experience might mean offering free lunches and having contemporary offices a few years ago, talent today focuses on company values and other intangible factors. For example, company efforts around diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I), as well as learning and development opportunities, can help ensure employers stay relevant to their target talent while also helping to build a sustainable global workforce.

percentage who rate the talent  
experience at their organization  
as excellent or very good:



Fortunately, the life sciences sector shows a strong desire to invest in both. According to our 2021 Talent Trends research, 63% of life sciences companies say they plan to increase budget for DE&I programs. In a recent example, leading life sciences companies, such as Johnson & Johnson, Merck and Gilead Sciences, are among the 37 companies that formed [OneTen](#), an organization that aims to train, hire and promote jobs to one million African Americans over the next decade.

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Upskilling and reskilling are also critical, with 50% of life sciences leaders driving efforts to provide reskilling opportunities for employees. This helps to close the skills gap within the workforce, retain top talent in the organization and attract candidates who want to work for a company that can provide growth opportunities.

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If your company does not do the work of understanding and providing what is important to your target talent, it will likely lose the people it needs to your competitors that do.

# build on recent innovations to create a better future.

The last year has transformed the way we live and work, and the life sciences sector has not only risen to the occasion to adopt new ways of working, but has also demonstrated a strong level of resilience and collaboration.

With the rollout of vaccinations globally, companies need to look ahead and start planning for future challenges. How will you achieve growth with more drugs coming off-patent? How will you build on recent innovations to continue advancing drug development? How can your company harness the power of digital technologies in all aspects of the business?

No matter what strategies you take and goals your organization wants to achieve, talent is at the heart of your ongoing success.

Want to learn more about transforming  
your talent strategy to get ahead?

get your 2021 Talent  
Trends Report

or visit

[www.randstadsourceright.com/talent-trends](http://www.randstadsourceright.com/talent-trends).



## Talent Trends methodology

Randstad Sourceright's [Talent Trends](#) research is a survey of 850 C-suite and human capital leaders across 17 markets. Conducted by a third party on behalf of Randstad Sourceright, the research is designed to help our clients and the broader business community understand the top HR trends for 2021.

Online surveys were conducted via external panels during Q4 of 2020. Interviews were self-administered and could be taken across devices (including mobile phones, tablets, desktops and laptops).

Survey samples include C-suite and human capital business leaders at international and regional organizations in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, India, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Nordics, Poland, Singapore, the U.K. and the U.S.

## about Randstad Sourceright

Randstad Sourceright is a global talent solutions leader, driving the talent acquisition and human capital management strategies for the world's most successful employers. We empower these companies by leveraging a [Human Forward](#) strategy that balances the use of innovative technology with expert insights, supporting both organizations and people in realizing their true potential.

As an operating company of Randstad N.V. — the world's leading global provider of HR services — Randstad Sourceright continuously builds and evolves talent solutions through recruitment process outsourcing (RPO), managed services programs (MSP) and total talent management strategies.

Read more at [randstadsourceright.com](https://randstadsourceright.com).