



How a Strategic Benefits Plan Can Help Attract and Retain Employees

Presented by:
Cindy Letourneau, KMA HR Consulting



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



1

About KMA



KMA Human Resources Consulting offers HR, recruiting, and compensation expertise and solutions to businesses across New England.

Cindy Letourneau, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

We are glad to be with you today!

HR Consulting

Recruiting

Compensation



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC

We are HR.™



2

Agenda

- 1) What do Candidates and Employees want?
- 2) Employer Value Proposition (EVP)
- 3) Engagement and Retention
- 4) Salary Planning
- 5) ME Legislative Changes



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



3

Section 1:

**When it comes to benefits,
what do candidates and
employees want?**



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



4

What do Candidates/Employees Want?



- Good Pay/Benefits
- Flexibility
- Career Growth
- Positive Culture
- Good Onboarding Experience



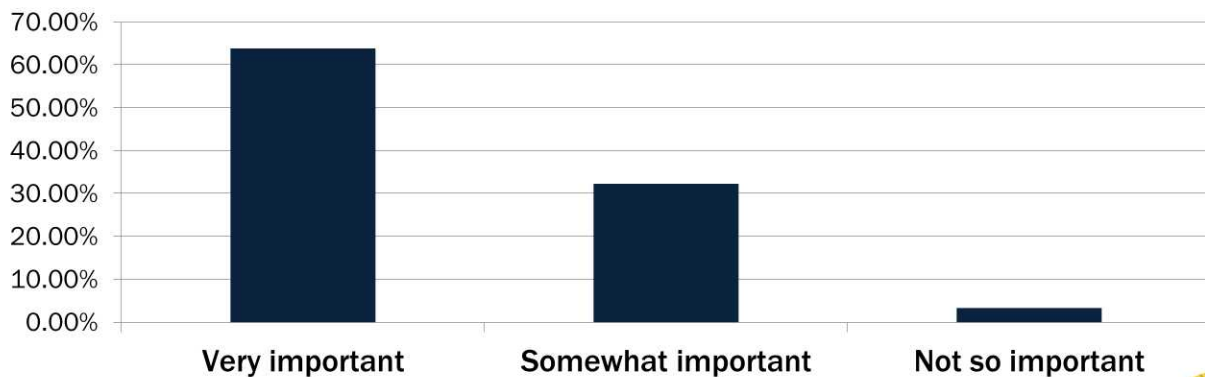
© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC

5

5

Survey Findings

How important to you is workplace flexibility?



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC

6

6

Employee Offerings

Companies use a variety of channels
to reward and recognize employees:

Base pay

Incentives

Benefits and
Perks

Recognition

Work/Life
Opportunities

Learning &
Development



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



7

Section 2:

**What is the importance of an
Employee Value Proposition
(EVP)?**



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



8

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

An EVP is an experience an employer provides to employees showing what they will give in exchange for an employee's skills, experience, productivity and commitment.

Financial

Benefits

Learning and Development

Wellness

Retirement

Unique perks and offerings



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



9

Employer Value Proposition (EVP)

- An EVP is a valuable marketing tool
- An EVP is part of your employer brand
- Communicate your EVP internally and externally

Professional Development

Wellness

Volunteer Benefits

Company Events

Company Discounts

Ensure Summary of Benefits includes all benefits you offer



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



10

How to Develop an EVP

Examine Existing Offerings

Ask Your Employees

Identify Future Hiring Needs

Establish Your EVP

Communicate Your EVP

"Why should I work for this company and not another company?"



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



11

Section 3: Engagement & Retention



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



12

Engagement and Retention Trends

Engagement and Retention Work Best Together

- People-first culture – people want to feel cared about and respected. Focus on developing internal talent.
- Work/life harmony is a priority – flexibility where possible.
- Technology – leverage technology to achieve engagement and retention
- Lead with empathy and compassion – people need compassion, appreciation, recognition and transparency.



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



13

Engagement and Retention Trends

- Inclusion and Belonging – with an inclusive, fair, and just culture, there is a more innovative, creative and engaged workforce.
- Leadership Development – train leaders on important skills such as adaptability, empathy, change management in order to build trust and enhance employee experience.
- Interesting and challenging work –
 - Today's employees are critical thinkers, challenge seekers.
 - Problem solving is inherent to their nature.



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



14

Section 4: Salary Planning



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



15

Salary Planning & Budgeting

Compensation is usually an organization's biggest expense.

If done well, it will result in:

- Fair, equitable and legally compliant practices
- Market competitiveness
- An engaged workforce
- Reduced turnover
- Better recruitment



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



16

COMPENSATION UPDATE

Results of Comp Increase Survey Helping Business Get Pay Right



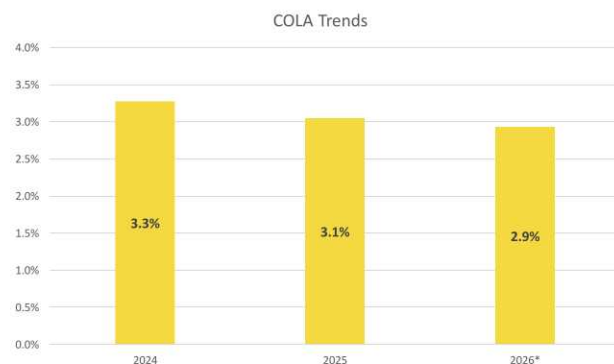
© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



17

Helping Businesses Get Pay Right - COLA

- Projected COLA increase trending downwards for second year in a row
- COLA ranges from 2% to 3.9%, for 80% of participants, with an average of 2.9% for 2026
- 41% of those offering a COLA are planning to offer the same increase as 2025



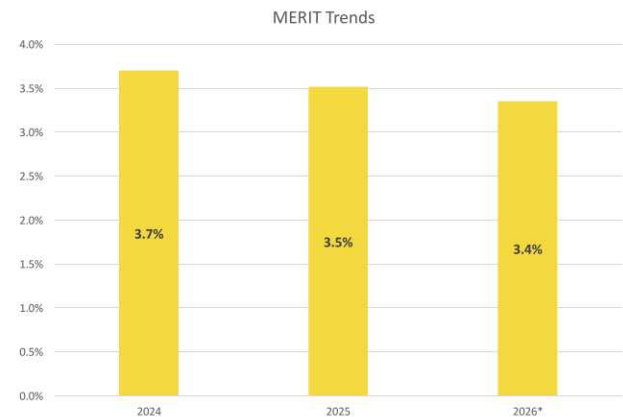
© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



18

Helping Businesses Get Pay Right - MERIT

- Projected merit increase trending downwards for second year in a row
- Merit ranges from 2% to 5%, for 80% of participants, with an average of 3.4% for 2026
- 32% of those offering a Merit are planning to offer the same increase as 2025



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC

19

19

Observations

Reasons for Reductions

- Market adjustments provided in previous year
- Reorganizations
- Uncertainty in the market
- Budget

Reasons for Increases

- Focus on retaining employees
- Ongoing inflation concerns

Other observations:

- Health insurance costs for 2026 increasing
- Retention and discretionary bonuses were used to retain employees



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC

20

20

Section 5:

Keeping Up-to-Date on Maine Legislative Changes in Benefits



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



21

Maine Paid Family & Medical Leave

- **Beginning May 1, 2026, employees can start taking leave**
- **Eligible workers will have 12 weeks of paid time off for family and medical reasons:**
 - **Medical Leave:** Employee's own serious medical needs
 - **Family Leave:** Care for a new child or for family with a serious health condition
 - **Safe Leave:** To stay safe or to help a family member stay safe after abuse or violence
 - **Military Leave:** For emergencies related to a family member's impending military deployment



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC



22

Maine Earned Paid Leave

Update Effective 9/24/2025

- Employers with 11 or more employees must allow employees to accrue up to 40 hours of earned paid leave per benefit year, *regardless of any carryover hours* from the previous year.
- Employees may now maintain balances that exceed 40 hours, for example, 40 hours accrued this year plus 40 hours carried over from last year.
- In November 2025, MDOL further clarified that a cap on use of earned paid leave in a given year is prohibited.



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC

23

23

Maine Reporting Time Pay

Effective 9/24/2025

- Employers with 10 or more employees must compensate nonexempt workers if scheduled hours are canceled or reduced without proper notice. In such cases, employees must be paid the lesser of:
 - Two hours at their regular hourly rate, or
 - The total pay for the scheduled shift
 - Exceptions apply when:
 - Employer made a documented good faith effort to notify the employee not to report to work, or
 - Due to severe weather or natural disaster, civil emergencies, employee's own illness, medical condition, or workplace injury



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC

24

24

Thank you!

Reflections and Q + A

25



**Human.
Resources.
Consulting.**



cletourneau@kmahr.com



www.kmahr.com



© 2025 KMA Human Resources Consulting, LLC

26

26