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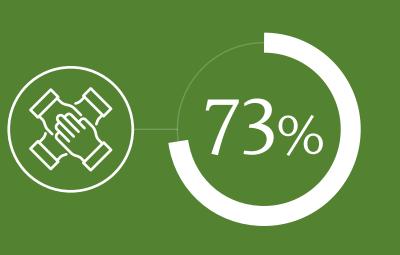
ECONOMIST IMPACT

Strength in numbers: The union's evolving role in workplaces

The rapid onset of the pandemic exposed how vulnerable many US workers are to unsafe working conditions. A sector-wide survey involving more than 1,100 union members and executives of organisations with unionised workers revealed the role played by unions to support their workers during and beyond the pandemic.¹

Unions have effectively influenced many organisations to invest in the safety and wellbeing of workers since the pandemic.

The vast majority (73%) of union representatives and advocates agreed that covid-19 has put a spotlight on the importance of union membership for essential workers.



Unions were also able to deliver tangible, urgently needed

Looking forward, organisations with union workers are more likely to continue investing in worker safety protections, compared with organisations with no union.

Anticipating an increase in investments in worker safety protection over the coming 2-3 years

benefits to their members during the pandemic.

Top five areas where workers reported their union membership had supported their needs as a working professional since covid-19:





Job guarantees/protections

Sick, vacation or medical leave



Declaring covid-19 as an occupational disease

Bonus or compensation increase due to covid-19



Organisations with union members are more likely to increase pay and benefits for workers, compared with organisations with no union members.



Organisation had increased investment in financial wellness education and resources



Organisation had moderately or significantly increased investments on pay and benefits







Executives in organisations without union members

Executives in organisations

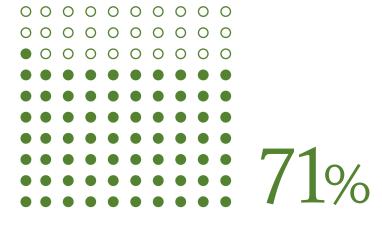
with unionised workers



Looking forward, unions can increase their influence among workers by supporting skills development.

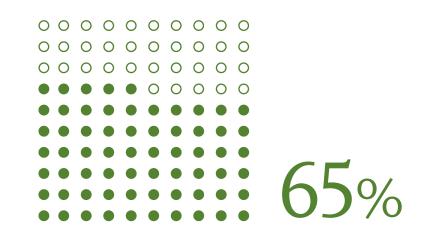


71% of executives in organisations with union workers selected talent as the most critical area for driving business value.





Two-thirds of union workers expressed interest in **improving their skills.**





During the pandemic, unions effectively leveraged collective bargaining to advocate for the interests of workers. They now face an opportunity to build on this momentum and expand awareness of how they can support workers in securing a better future.

Source:

1. Unless otherwise indicated, data based on a survey of 1,001 workers and 153 executives in the US manufacturing sector conducted by Economist Impact (formerly The Economist Intelligence Unit) in November and December 2020 and sponsored by Prudential.

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