2021
Work Tech Report

For Behavioral Health &
Human Services Organizations

ContinuumCloud

Table of Contents

Introduction

Welcome to the 1st Annual Work Tech Report for Behavioral Health & Human Services Organizations

Discover industry-specific technology trends, challenges, and priorities that are shaping the future of work.

This report specifically examines three key dimensions of behavioral health and human services technology: the employee experience, the client experience, and operational outcomes. Throughout each organizational dimension, the report explores the evolving role that technology plays in enabling organizations to achieve their mission.

Methodology: The 2021 Work Tech Survey was administered online in June 2021. Participants were recruited by email invitation, and a nominal reward in the form of a gift card was made available. More than 350 human services professionals at all organizational levels and across a diverse range of job functions completed the survey. Please note that percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

01

Executive Summary

There is a lot of optimism right now.

Human services organizations are producing positive outcomes. Respondents gave high ratings about their own <u>employee experience</u> as well as the <u>experience they're creating for their clients</u>. However, they also noted that these are areas that could benefit from further improvement, signaling the need for leaders to have a mindset of continuous improvement.

70% of employees rated the employee experience as good or excellent, and **78%** rated the client experience as good or excellent.

ContinuumCloud

Automation is the path forward.

Automating workflows and eliminating redundancies is an area where human services organizations need to improve. By [moving away from manual processes](#) and repetitive tasks, employees can focus on more meaningful work – and the organization can scale more effectively to meet the growing demand for services.

Only 50% of organizations feel confident in their ability to scale effectively to meet growing demand.

ContinuumCloud

Technology is a problem. But it's also the solution.

Sentiment toward the technology employees currently use at work was rather negative, especially among higher level executives and those in a clinical job function. Respondents also recognized that they need better reporting for operations, productivity, and outcomes. The right technology can enable employees and provide the insights needed to make improvements.

87% of those who gave their HCM technology a high rating also rated the employee and client experiences more positively.
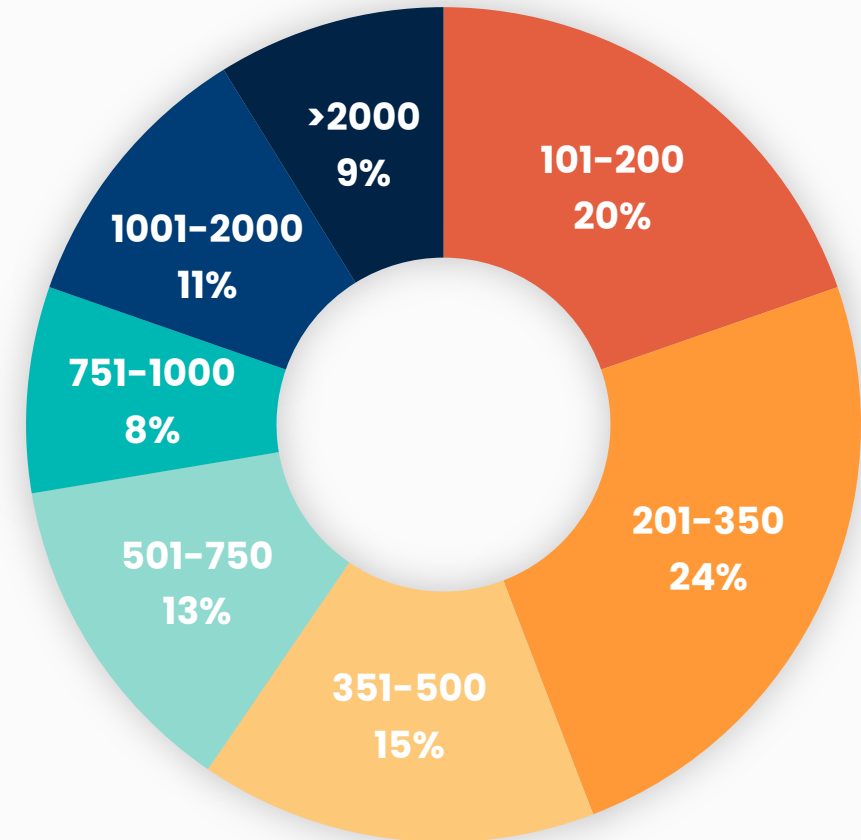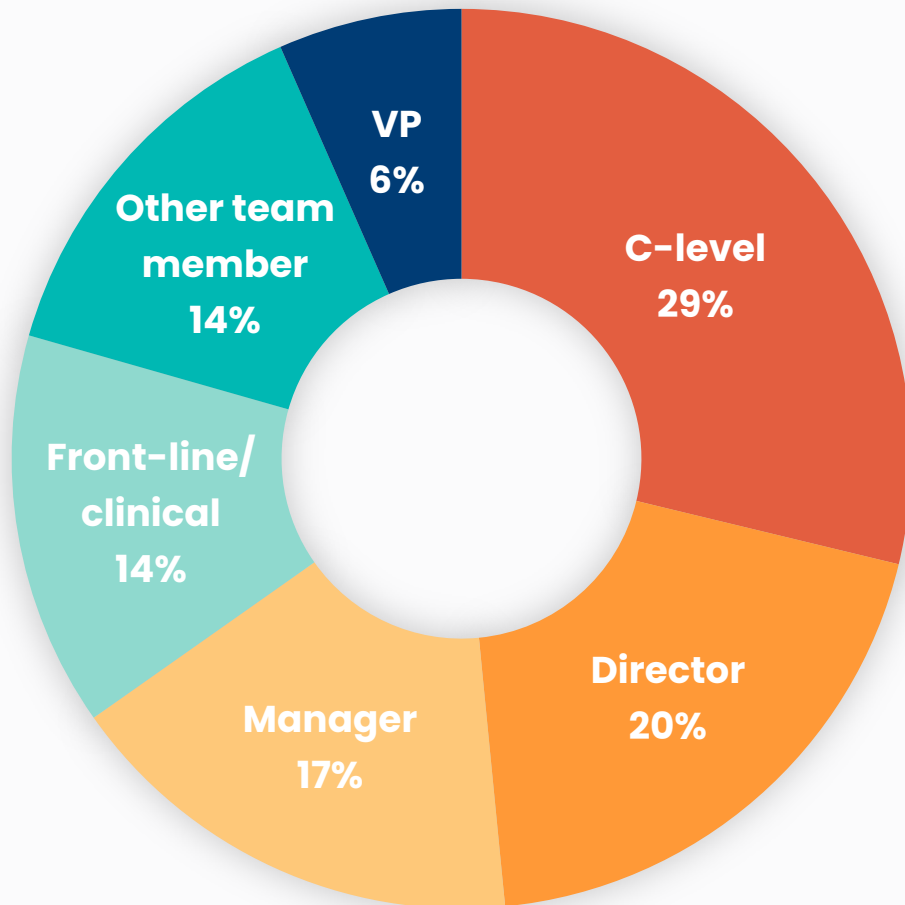
ContinuumCloud

Demographics

Who Took the Survey?

Survey respondents included human services professionals from a diverse range of job functions and job levels. Collectively, they represent mid-sized human services organizations from across the nation that provide a wide range of social good services, including mental and behavioral health, substance use disorder treatment, child and family services, and more.

Organization Size

- >2000 — 9%
- 101-200 — 20%
- 201-350 — 24%
- 351-500 — 15%
- 501-750 — 13%
- 751-1000 — 8%
- 1001-2000 — 11%

ContinuumCloud

Job Level

- C-level 29%
- Director 20%
- Manager 17%
- Front-line/clinical 14%
- Other team member 14%
- VP 6%

Job Function

- Operations & Administration 22%
- CEO/Executive 18%
- Clinical 16%
- Human Resources 15%
- Finance & Payroll 12%
- Other 10%
- IT 7%

ContinuumCloud

Services Provided

- Mental Health — 78%
- Child & Family — 51%
- Residential — 46%
- Addiction — 45%
- I/DD & Autism — 41%
- Education — 24%
- Public Health — 17%
- Foster Care — 17%
- Other Services — 13%
- Skilled Nursing — 11%
- Senior Care — 9%
- LTPAC — 1%

11

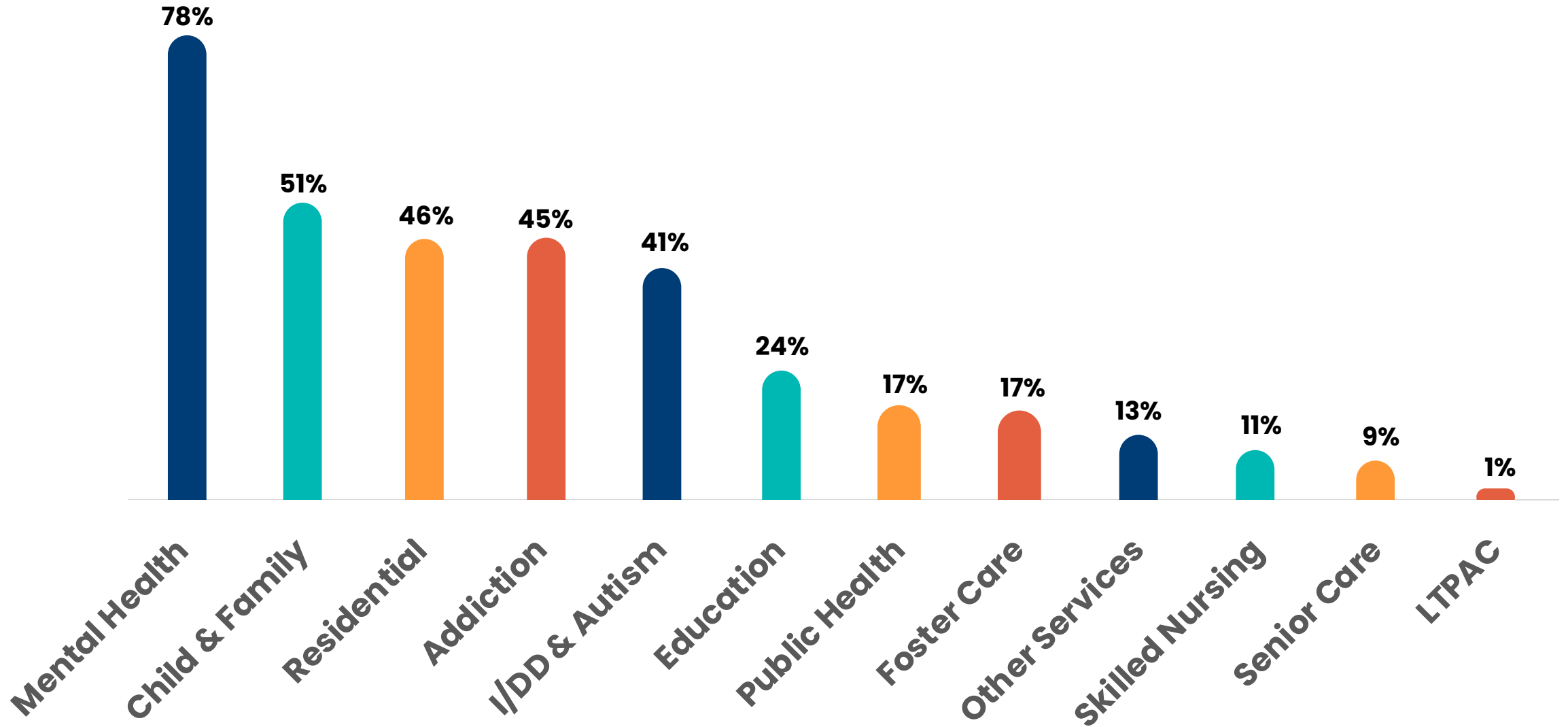ContinuumCloud

03

Employee Experience
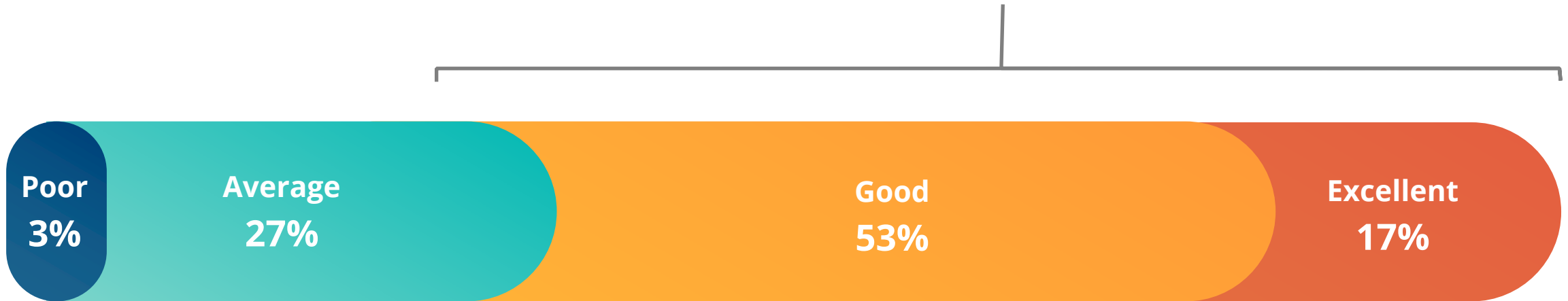
Employee Experience

The employee experience encompasses everything from the initial job posting to the eventual exit from the organization. It's a combination of all the interactions an employee has with the organization's people, processes, culture, and more, throughout the entire employee lifecycle.

Improving the employee experience ensures high levels of engagement, productivity, and morale throughout the workforce, enabling the organization to deliver on its mission.

ContinuumCloud

Employee Engagement

70% At all levels of the organization, employee sentiment about their experience at work is positive. More than 70% of human services professionals rated the employee experience at their workplace as "good" or "excellent."

Poor
3%

Average
27%

Good
53%

Excellent
17%

Not so fast!

Before human services leaders can breathe a sigh of relief though, it's also important to consider that employee engagement was rated as the top workforce management area that could use improvement. Close to 72% of respondents identified this as an area where their organization could improve.

ContinuumCloud

Only 36% of respondents gave their company's engagement strategy an above average rating.

The Details

Respondents rated these 5 elements of the employee experience on a scale of one to five stars. Percentages represent the proportion of respondents that ranked each category as "above average" with four or five stars.

Tracking and allocating time — 66%

Visibility into staffing — 63%

Training and onboarding — 56%

Engagement strategy — 36%

ContinuumCloud

The Big Picture

While the positive sentiment about the employee experience may seem contradictory to these ratings, they paint a more holistic picture of the complex nature of employee engagement at human services organizations. There's a lot of optimism about work right now, but there's also still some work to be done.

Human services leaders can reflect on their current successes and continue to build from there, as the employee experience is an area where continuous improvement is the key to success. And, as the results show, there's always room for improvement.

Employee engagement is an area that requires **continuous improvement.**

Where is there the most room for improvement?

Category	Percentage
Employee engagement and satisfaction	72%
Recruiting and onboarding	63%
Operations and communication	50%
Mobile tools and capabilities	35%
Resource planning and visibility	31%
Labor cost tracking and reporting	21%
Payroll and time & attendance	17%
Maintaining regulatory compliance	12%

ContinuumCloud

Top 3 Areas for Improvement

72%

Employee Engagement

may be the top area where respondents saw room for improvement, but this was closely followed by recruiting and onboarding as well as operations and communication, which relate to employee engagement as well.

63%

Recruiting and Onboarding

the early stages of the employee lifecycle – are when engagement levels are typically at their highest. Making the most of this critical period can help ensure long-term engagement for the employee.

50%

Operations & Communication

greatly influence the employee's day-to-day experience. Repetitive administrative tasks can waste employee time, while streamlined processes allow employees to focus on meaningful work so that they can feel that they're making an impact.

ContinuumCloud

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your organization:

Regularly measures the progress and outcomes of its workforce management initiatives

3%	10%	23%	46%	19%

Provides professional development and growth opportunities to employees

2%	4%	14%	55%	26%

Makes an active effort to promote a positive company culture through communication and transparency

3%	5%	10%	49%	34%

● Strongly Disagree   ● Disagree   ● Neutral   ● Agree   ● Strongly Agree

ContinuumCloud

Organizations have taken action to improve company culture and DE&I initiatives.

Company culture and professional development were both strong points according to respondents at all levels of the organization. When initiatives related to diversity, equity, and inclusion took on renewed importance in 2020, human services organizations recognized the need to take action. The positive results in this area show that progress is being made.

04

Client
Experience

Client Experience

The client experience is defined by all the interactions a client has with the organization. This includes finding the provider, setting up appointments, receiving care, and following through with treatment plans.

A positive experience in this area can increase engagement and improve outcomes for the people that the organization serves. Human services organizations need to deliver high-quality care in an efficient and effective manner to successfully achieve transformative outcomes.

ContinuumCloud

Client Engagement

78%

Similar to the employee experience, human services professionals had an optimistic view of the client experience their organization provides. Close to 78% of respondents rated the client experience as "good" or "excellent."

| Poor 2% | Average 20% | Good 56% | Excellent 22% |

Focus on Clinical Roles

Among those in clinical roles, the percentage is even higher at 82%. When it came to rating their ability to provide effective care in person and remotely, close to 70% gave an above average rating. Additionally, 77% agreed or strongly agreed that their organization is able to provide coordinated and integrated care to meet client needs.

ContinuumCloud

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your organization is able to:

Make it easy for employees to focus on providing high-quality care

1%	6%	21%	57%	15%

● Strongly Disagree   ● Disagree   ● Neutral   ● Agree   ● Strongly Agree

Best practices for providing high-quality care are constantly evolving, especially as models of care change. The diverse populations that human services organizations serve, along with the evolving role of technology in delivering quality care, pose both challenges and opportunities. It appears organizations are taking the necessary steps to enable their employees though, as 72% agreed or strongly agreed that their organization makes it easy for employees to focus on providing that high-quality care.

ContinuumCloud

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your organization is able to:

Effectively measure client outcomes to report on quality of care

2%	6%	27%	50%	15%

- ● Strongly Disagree
- ● Disagree
- ● Neutral
- ● Agree
- ● Strongly Agree

As with any process, initiative, or goal, the key to making improvements in client engagement is first having strong metrics in place to enable data-driven decisions. Only about 65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their organization effectively measures client outcomes to report on quality of care. With the current emphasis on outcomes-based care, this percentage seems surprisingly low and may provide a starting point for organizations committed to improving client engagement.

ContinuumCloud

Increasing client engagement is a top priority for **improving outcomes.**

Where is there the most room for improvement?

Category	Percentage
Keeping clients/patients engaged	52%
Creating mobile-friendly workflows	50%
Managing caseloads	44%
Managing documentation in one place	42%
Integrating telehealth into treatment offerings	36%
Reporting and auditing processes	36%
Scheduling and managing appointments	29%
Maintaining data security & HIPAA compliance	12%

ContinuumCloud

What needs the most improvement?

Well, it depends on who you ask. Overall, increasing client engagement took the top spot, closely followed by enabling mobile-friendly workflows.

But there were also differing priorities among the various job functions. While Operations staff identified client engagement as the top priority here, those in IT, Clinical, and CEO positions all identified mobile-friendly workflows as the area most in need of improvement. HR professionals were the outliers, identifying clinical documentation as the most important area to focus on.

ContinuumCloud

While providing effective care is a strong point, revenue cycle management could use some improvement.

Only 57% gave their revenue cycle management (RCM) an above average rating. As an essential system for ensuring organizations get paid for services provided, RCM is an area that many organizations could stand to improve.

By contrast, 70% gave an above average rating to their ability to provide effective care, both in person and remotely.

57%

Gave their revenue cycle management an above average rating

70%

Gave an above average rating to their ability to provide effective care in person and remotely

ContinuumCloud

Operational Outcomes

05

Operational Outcomes

Tying together the employee and client experiences are the processes, workflows, and systems an organization has in place to keep things running smoothly. Your operations can either help streamline processes and enable employees or it can impede progress and lead to constant frustration.

ContinuumCloud

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your organization is able to:

Use digital tools to automate workflows and processes

2%	11%	33%	48%	7%

Use workflows and processes to help improve efficiencies

1%	11%	35%	47%	6%

- ● Strongly Disagree
- ● Disagree
- ● Neutral
- ● Agree
- ● Strongly Agree

Can that be right?

Only 55% of human services professionals reported that their organization uses digital tools to automate workflows and processes, and only 53% said they use workflows and processes to help improve efficiencies. These numbers are surprisingly low considering how reliance on technology in the workplace has only increased over the years.
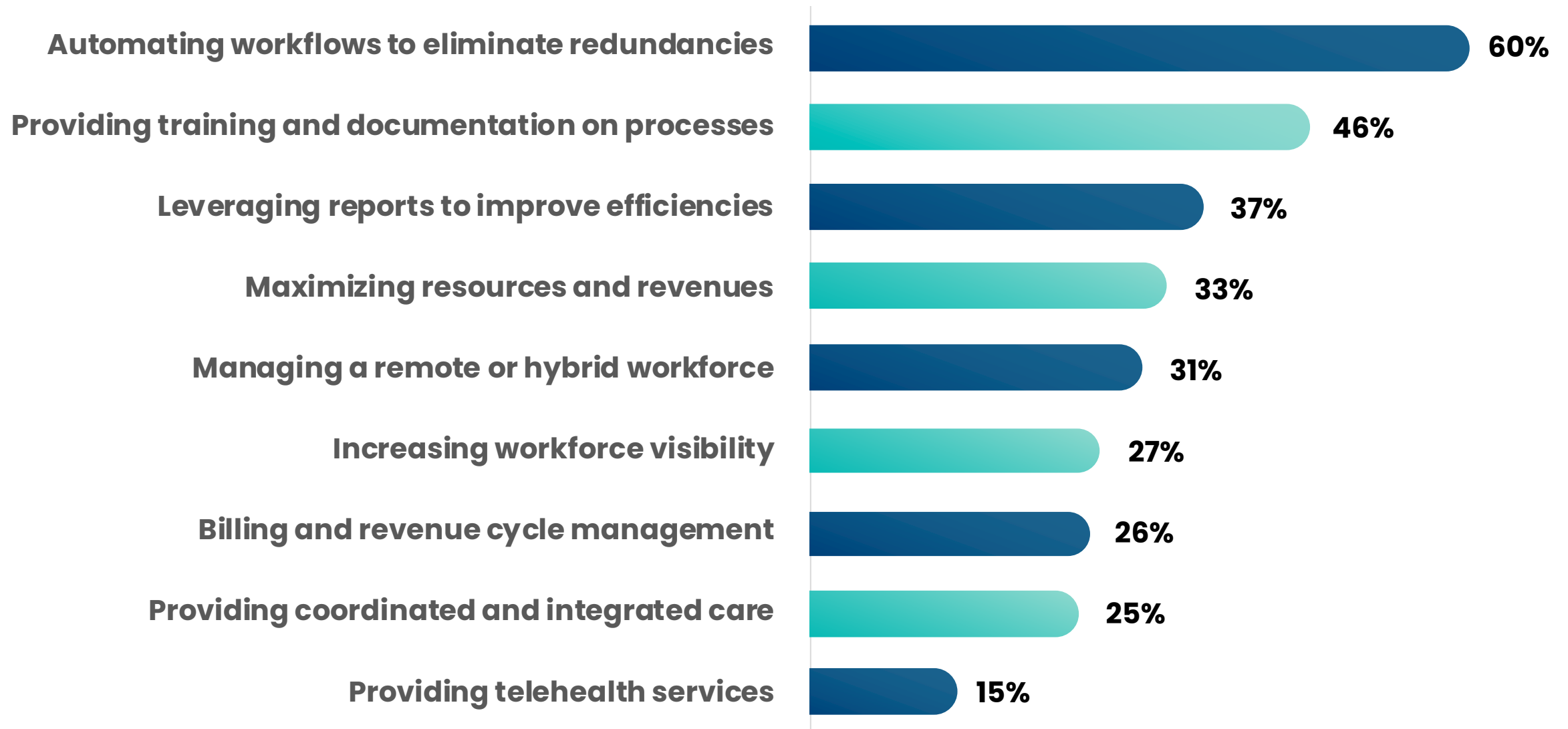
ContinuumCloud

Digital Tools & Workflows

Given these data points, it comes as no surprise that human services professionals identified workflow automation as the operational area that most needs improvement at their organization.

There was strong agreement across job functions and job levels in singling out workflow automation, with the exception of Finance professionals. This subset of respondents identified leveraging reports to improve efficiencies, along with billing and RCM, as slightly higher priorities over workflow automation.

ContinuumCloud

Where is there the most room for improvement?

Automating workflows to eliminate redundancies — 60%

Providing training and documentation on processes — 46%

Leveraging reports to improve efficiencies — 37%

Maximizing resources and revenues — 33%

Managing a remote or hybrid workforce — 31%

Increasing workforce visibility — 27%

Billing and revenue cycle management — 26%

Providing coordinated and integrated care — 25%

Providing telehealth services — 15%

ContinuumCloud

Human services organizations see the most room for improvement in **workflow automation**.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your organization is able to:

Maximize resources to operate in a financially efficient manner

| 1% | 11% | 30% | 51% | 7% |

Measure and report on the financial efficiency of specific programs, departments, etc.

| 2% | 9% | 32% | 46% | 11% |

Scale effectively to meet growing demand

| 3% | 14% | 33% | 44% | 6% |

● Strongly Disagree   ● Disagree   ● Neutral   ● Agree   ● Strongly Agree

ContinuumCloud

Key Stats On Scaling to Meet Demand

50%

Automation and tech enablement are also essential for scaling operations for sustainable growth. Just under **50%** agreed that their organization could **scale effectively to meet growing demand**.

58%

However, respondents were more confident regarding their current operational workflows. Nearly **58%** indicated that their organization is able to **maximize resources to operate in a financially efficient manner**.

57%

57% agreed that they're able to **measure and report on financial sustainability across different organizational dimensions**. These systems may be sufficient for the time being but may not be effective for future growth.

ContinuumCloud

Technology in the Workplace

06

Technology in the Workplace

Technology is central to every organization's operations, and how effectively it's used also impacts the employee and client experiences. From sending an email to writing up case notes to logging time at the end of the day, there are numerous forms of technology ingrained into our everyday work lives.

With employees relying on so many systems and solutions each day, it's important to understand how well technology is working for your workforce.

Exploring Two Key Workforce Systems

We looked individually at two of the most integral areas of human services organizations operations: their Human Capital Management (HCM) system and their Electronic Health Record (EHR) platform. These two areas cover the following processes:

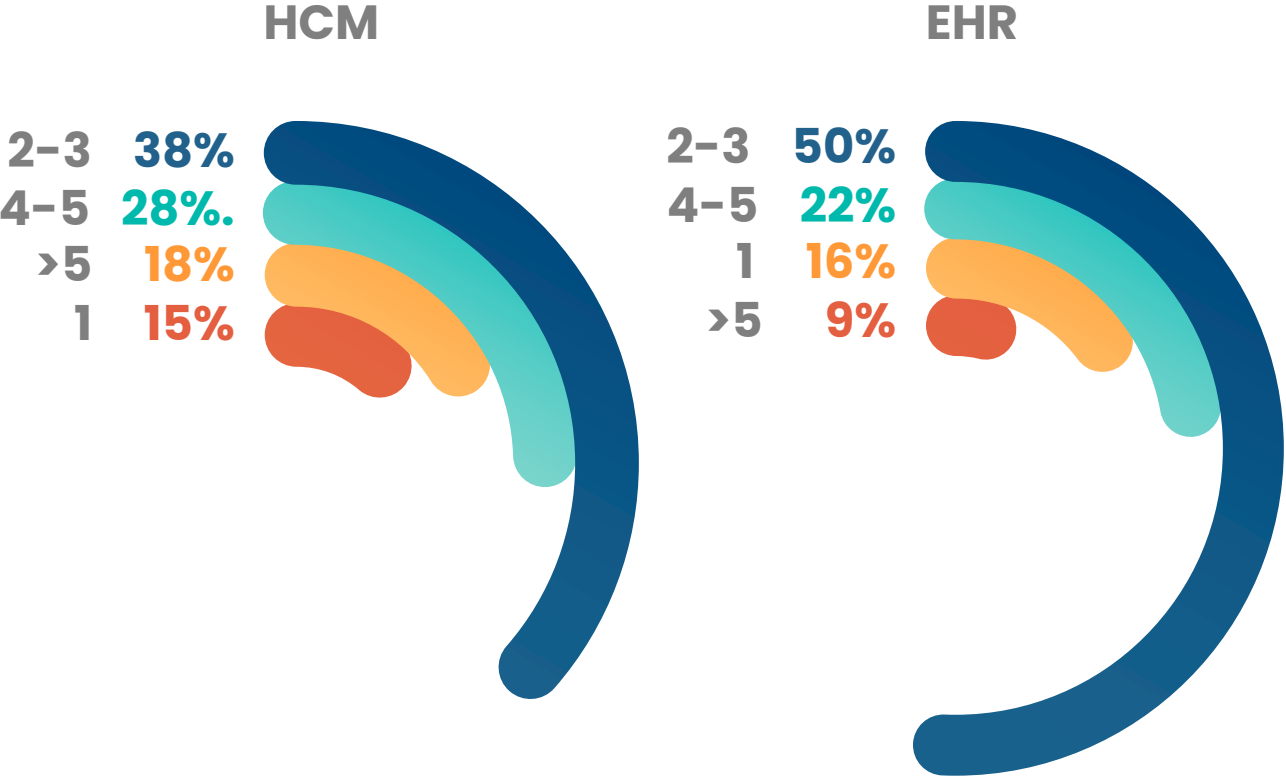| HCM	EHR
Recruiting and Onboarding	Clinical Documentation
HR Management	Supervisory and Auditing Tools
Time and Attendance	Revenue Cycle Management
Payroll Processing	Telehealth Capabilities
Talent Management	Scheduling and Appointment Reminders
Benefits Administration	Secure Client Messaging & Patient Portal
Workforce Analytics	Secure Internal Messaging
Credential Management	Advanced Reporting

ContinuumCloud

How many tech solutions do you currently use?

By far, most organizations are using 2-5 different systems to handle each of these domains, which adds up to a lot of different logins, reporting systems, and information sources that may or may not communicate with each other.

This pieced-together approach to technology solutions is likely contributing to the negative ratings employees reported in their experience with technology.
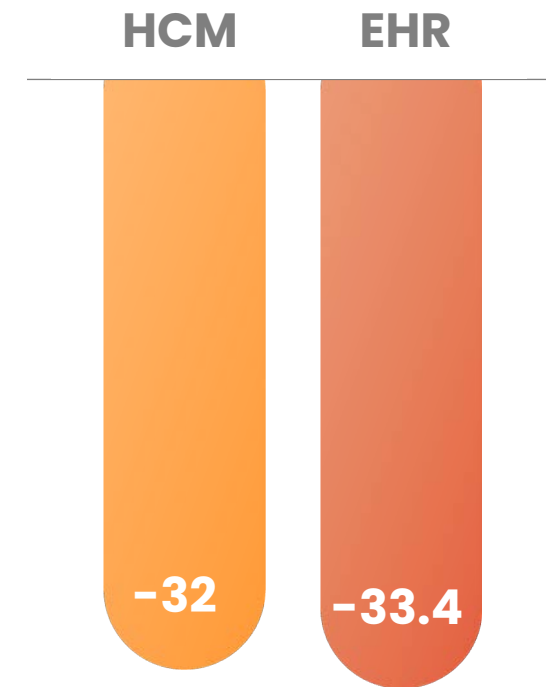
HCM

2-3 **38%**
4-5 **28%.**
›5   **18%**
1   **15%**

EHR

2-3 **50%**
4-5 **22%**
1   **16%**
›5   **9%**

ContinuumCloud

How likely are you to recommend your tech?

Employees report a negative experience across the board with their current technology. The NPS was −32 for HCM systems and −33.4 for EHR systems.

What's an NPS?

This survey utilized the **Net Promoter Score (NPS)**, which asks respondents to rate how likely they are to recommend the technology they're using to a friend or colleague on a scale from 0 to 10.

Those who provide a rating of 9 or 10 are considered promoters, 7 or 8 are considered passives, and 6 and below are considered detractors. To calculate the score, the percent of detractors is subtracted from the percent of promoters to produce a score that falls between −100 and +100.
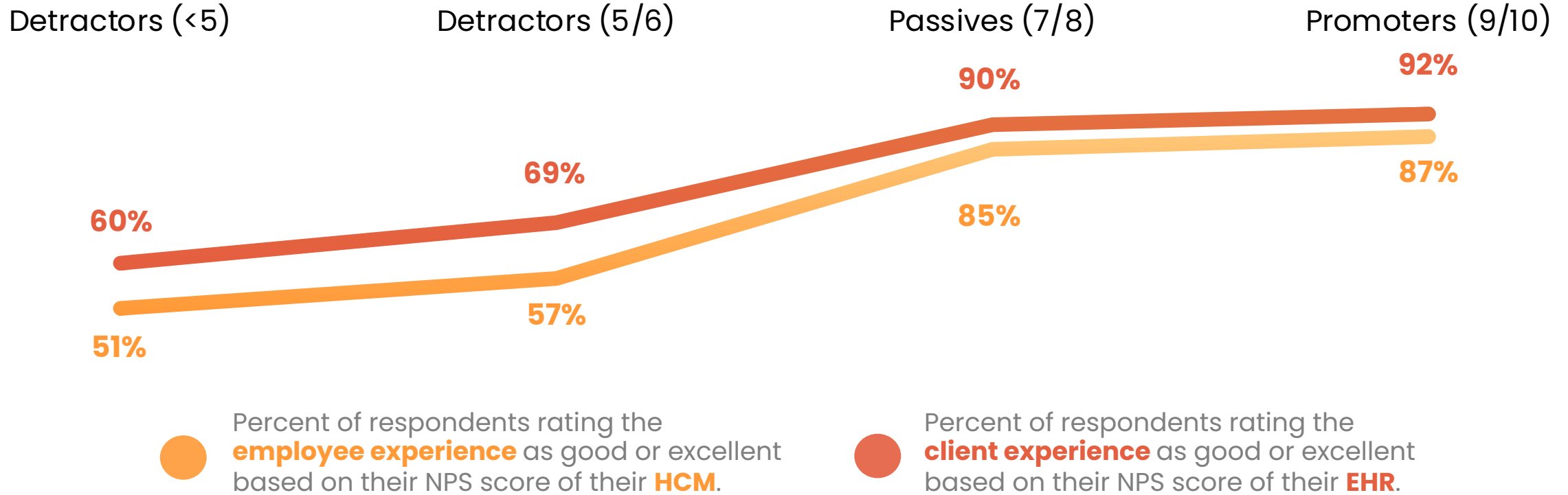
HCM   EHR

−32   −33.4

ContinuumCloud

Improving technology in the workplace can enhance both the **client and employee experiences.**
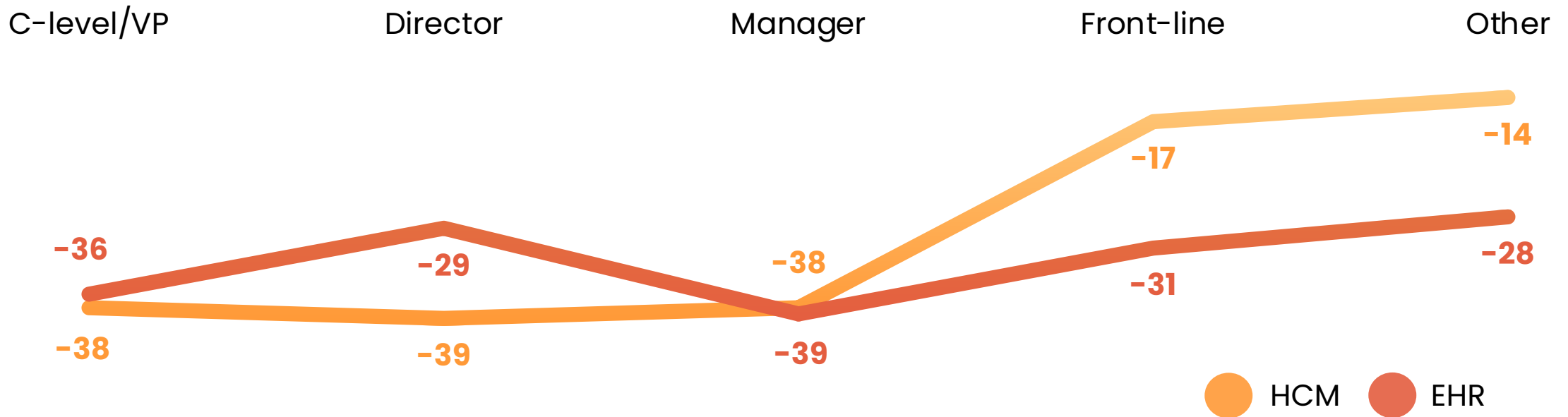
NPS and Engagement Ratings

As the employee experience with technology improves, so does their overall experience at work as well as the experience they provide to clients. Understanding this relationship and the impact technology can have across the organization can help guide human services leaders in making strategic decisions as they invest in technology at their workplace.

Detractors (<5)   Detractors (5/6)   Passives (7/8)   Promoters (9/10)

92%
90%
69%
87%
85%
60%
57%
51%

Percent of respondents rating the **employee experience** as good or excellent based on their NPS score of their **HCM**.

Percent of respondents rating the **client experience** as good or excellent based on their NPS score of their **EHR**.

ContinuumCloud

NPS Rating by Job Level

Higher level executives were less satisfied with their HCM solutions than front-line workers and non-supervisory team members. At the higher levels of the organization, executives and leaders are likely using more advanced features than those needed by front-line employees. For instance, budget reports, workforce analytics, and payroll dashboards might be some of the most important features for executives to leverage, while front-line employees use fewer areas of the system. Meanwhile, sentiment about EHR solutions was fairly even across job levels.

C-level/VP	Director	Manager	Front-line	Other

HCM: -38, -39, -39, -17, -14
EHR: -36, -29, -38, -31, -28

Legend: HCM, EHR

ContinuumCloud

NPS Rating by Job Function

Those in clinical roles are the least satisfied with all of the technology they're using, followed by those in IT. Clinical positions may rely on these systems more than most other job functions on a day-to-day basis while providing care. Similarly, IT may be responsible for troubleshooting these systems and have a more in-depth understanding of where there are challenges.

	Clinical	IT	CEO	Ops	HR	Finance/Payroll	Other
HCM	−45	−40	−39	−30	−26	−21	−17
EHR	−43	−40	−31	−29	−31	−34	−27

HCM   EHR

ContinuumCloud

Future of Human Services

07

Future of Human Services

Considering employee sentiment, client outcomes, and how operations are helping or hindering progress can all help us narrow down which initiatives to prioritize in the future.

With an understanding of the current state of workplace tech across the organization, the strategic human services leader can begin to plan a clear path forward.

ContinuumCloud

Priorities for the Future

At the end of the survey, after being asked to think about the employee experience, client experience, and operational outcomes, respondents took a moment to answer a final question about their organization's future priorities. These top three priorities are:

01 Measuring and reporting on the effectiveness of programs and operations — **68%**

02 Expanding services and programming to better meet the needs of clients — **58%**

03 Improving reporting and analytics capabilities to make data-driven decisions — **57%**

ContinuumCloud

Conclusion

Together, these priorities indicate a change in focus from the past year. While 2020 was a year defined by resilience and a focus on people and culture, 2021 builds on successes seen in those areas to focus more on improving efficiencies and enabling organizational growth.

These priorities can be accomplished with the right tech enablement to streamline processes and illuminate the insights needed to drive the organization forward.

As shown throughout the report, the future of human services is mobile, integrated, and automated.

About ContinuumCloud

A spectrum of solutions for social good

ContinuumCloud offers a spectrum of cloud-based software solutions intentionally designed to meet the unique needs of the behavioral health and human services industry. These solutions include an EHR platform, powered by Welligent, and an HR & Payroll system, powered by DATIS HR Cloud. Through these offerings, ContinuumCloud empowers organizations to provide high-quality care and deliver on their mission.

ContinuumCloud

A spectrum of solutions designed specifically for organizations that do social good in our communities.

www.continuumcloud.com