

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Future of Work: C2HR's Employment Survey Shines Light on What's Ahead

Compensation increased a good amount for content developers and slightly for connectivity providers in 2022, but the coming months could prove strenuous for companies amid turbulent financial times. **The Content & Connectivity Human Resources (C2HR) Association** revealed in its annual compensation survey for 2022 that while companies are gearing up for slower hiring, increased turnover and potential dips in revenue in 2023, the state of the workplace 2.5 years removed from the beginning of the pandemic is beginning to take shape.

The forecast calls for a potential recession in 2023, which has already seen companies reduce headcounts in an effort to cut costs. **Amazon, Netflix, DirecTV** and recently **Disney** are among the few making personnel changes in anticipation of a recession, but more arduous decisions about the dollars and cents loom. *Mark Konkel*, a partner at the law firm **Kelley Drye & Warren**, told **CFX** that two trends could arise if a recession officially arrives: First come the layoffs. Second, though, is the need for employers to maintain or increase pay for the remaining workforce to retain that talent.

"One way to retain employees is obviously just offer more money, but there are lots of other things that employees care about in terms of work-life balance," Konkel said. "I think you're going to find an increasing number of employers having to take a serious look at enhancing benefits that aren't directly to do with pay in order to retain a workforce."

The topic of pay is shifting to lean toward the power of the prospect, with job seekers and active employees wanting more clarity about salaries from companies. Approximately 78% of connectivity providers listed transparency in pay ranges as a pressing current issue (content developers came in at 55%), coinciding with an increase of pay transparency laws going into effect in some areas of the U.S. such as New York City or California. However, there are complications that come with those laws, such as what should happen with a remote worker who doesn't live within that jurisdiction or what consequences exist, if any, should an employer decide to offer more or less than what they had originally anticipated.

But companies being clearer about the salary range they're offering gives job seekers the benefit of knowing what they can expect when it comes time to talk money. "[In] the last year with the extremely competitive job market, great reshuffle, the great resignation—however we're referring to it, I think it certainly emboldened candidates to be more upfront about what they were going to need to make a move," *Fang Xu*, Head of Talent Acquisition and Head of Diversity at **A+E Networks**, said.

How are companies providing benefits that aren't relative to money? A+E for example is taking that work-life balance to heart, giving employees the ability to choose to be in-person, hybrid or fully remote. Xu said on top of those options, the company has made other changes such as changing sick days to "wellness days" to be more conscientious of mental health needs or offering third-party platforms that encourage employee wellness.

Every year, we ask the Cablefax 100 a variety of questions, from what's their go-to Starbucks order to their predictions for the metaverse to how many companies they've worked for over the course of their careers.

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Another tidal wave of change sparked from the pandemic came in regard to those workplace environment policies. While the wave isn't as massive as it was during the heat of the pandemic, it's a shift that is difficult to reverse course on. Connectivity providers saw the biggest shift to a permanent remote format in the Mountain Region at 24%, but only one other region eclipsed the 10% mark (East at 13%). The smallest percentage came in the Southwest at 6%.

It's a similar story for content developers, whose biggest transitions to fully remote came in the Southwest and Midwest at 12% and 14%, respectively. Other regions, however, are still in the low-single digits, such as the West and South at 3% and the East at 1%.

With the vast majority of companies maintaining a fully in-office or hybrid format, it paints a potential struggle for what companies want and what employees desire for their own flexibility. C2HR found that 84% of content developers and 78% of connectivity providers have flexible work policies as one of their most pressing issues. While companies could force employees to return to the office full-time, labor shortages will give the hand to prospects who insist on having a flexible work environment.

"The work marketplace has shifted back to an environment in which it will become increasingly common for employers to expect employees to actually show up at work," Konkel said. "That having been said, and even if COVID is really not the issue any longer, there has been a permanent change in the expectations of the labor marketplace, meaning that lots of people will expect the flexibility to work from home."

After facing a heavy impact from the restrictions brought by COVID-19, content developers are seeing a rebound in compensation growth. Base pay for executives was up 4.8%, while middle management, individual contributors (IC) and operating IC/support saw increases of 5.1%, 5.3% and 5.5%, respectively. Merit budgets for content developers increased a full percentage point from 2021 to 2022, going from 2.6% to 3.6%, respectively. For total direct compensation—which includes base salary, bonus and stock incentives—execs saw the biggest jump at 11.6%, with middle management following at 7.3% and operating IC/support at 6%.

Connectivity providers saw growth in base compensation for management (2.1%) and salaried positions (3.4%). The biggest areas of growth came among hourly (5.2%) and sales roles (3.5%), and of those hourly workers it was the entry-level positions that had the most growth at 7.5%.

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## SOHN CALLS OUT INDUSTRY OPPONENTS IN TESTIMONY

*Gigi Sohn* is prepared to make her case for why she's still President *Biden's* nominee for the fifth **FCC** seat some 15 months after she was first nominated. "I believe deeply that regulated

entities should not choose their regulator. Unfortunately, that is the exact intent of the past 15 months of false and misleading attacks on my record and my character," Sohn said in prepared testimony for tomorrow's hearing before **Senate Commerce**. "My industry opponents have hidden behind dark money groups and surrogates because they fear a pragmatic, pro-competition, pro-consumer policymaker who will support policies that will bring more, faster, and lower-priced broadband and new voices to your constituents." The hearing, which starts at 10:30am ET, will be Sohn's third confirmation hearing. It comes after what some have described as a [smear campaign](#) to stall her nomination. In her prepared testimony, Sohn outlines other reasons she thinks she's the person for the job, including her qualifications and how she cares deeply about the agency's mission of ensuring everyone has affordable and robust communications networks. Sohn, who co-founded **Public Knowledge**, said she believes it's "critical for at least one member of the FCC to be a consumer advocate who has spent a career not beholden to any interest but that of the public." Sohn's list of supporters tops 400 and includes **DISH, Fiber Broadband Association, NTCA: The Rural Broadband Association** and the **Parents Television & Media Council**. One group not in her corner is the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce**, which sent a letter to Senate Commerce leadership outlining concerns that Sohn will create a regulatory environment hostile to the free enterprise system because of her support of Title II broadband classification and advocacy for government-owned networks. "Ms. Sohn's track record and her views on communications policy could be seen as promoting a government take-over of the broadband industry," wrote Chief Policy Officer *Neil Bradley*.

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## MTV LEADERSHIP TAKES OVER SHOWTIME

**Paramount's** plans to further integrate **Showtime** took greater shape Monday as the company announced it would combine Showtime and **MTV Entertainment Studios** under one unified leadership team. *Nina Diaz* is expanding her role to Chief Creative Officer & President of Content for Showtime/MTV Entertainment Studios. President of Scripted *Keith Cox*; EVP/Head of Talent and Casting *Trevor Rose*; and EVP Showtime Original Scripted *Amy Israel* will all report to Diaz. As a result of the shifts, *Gary Levine* is transitioning to a new role as Senior Creative Advisor for Showtime and *Jana Winograde* is leaving the company. Among her many wins at the programmer were her contributions to the launches of his like "Yellowjackets" and "Your Honor." "Perhaps most of all, it's clear how much *Jana* dedicated herself to the Showtime family, mentoring junior staff members and maintaining an open-door policy for colleagues at all levels," *Chris McCarthy*, Showtime/MTC En-

ertainment Studios & Paramount Media Networks President/CEO, said in a staff memo. “Without a doubt, she has been a supportive and motivating force for everyone at Showtime.” Also leaving the company are Paramount Premium Group COO/CFO *Michael Crotty*; EVP, Nonfiction Programming *Vinnie Malhotra*; EVP/General Counsel *Rob Rosenberg* and EVP, Content Acquisition *Kent Sevenser*. Showtime CMO *Michael Engleman*; EVP, Distribution *Ken Kay*; and President of Sports *Stephen Espinoza* are among those continuing in their roles.

## SUPER BOWL: TUBI SCORES, COMCAST HIT WITH FOUL

The Kansas City Chiefs may have taken home the Lombardi Trophy in a victory over the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday, but **Tubi** was the winner of social media with a [Super Bowl ad](#) that tricked users into thinking their TVs had minds of their own. Spouses and friends all started asking who sat on the remote when the ad made it seem like someone was navigating to the Tubi app and starting up a movie. Also notable was **Comcast's** [ad](#) showcasing the capabilities of its next-generation 10G network, calling it “one giant leap for mankind.” The provider announced last week that its 10G upgrade will come to 10 million homes and businesses by the end of the month. Comcast’s introduction of its 10G network came at a tough time for some customers in Philadelphia, the home of its headquarters, that were impacted by an outage Sunday. The cause of the service disruption was a severed fiber cable in Kensington. The network outage impacted a few thousand customers in the Kensington and Fishtown neighborhoods of the city. The vast majority of households had service restored by kickoff, and Comcast has said the cause of the fiber cut was vandalism in the area.

## LESS THAN HALF OF U.S. HOUSEHOLDS HAVE CABLE

The majority of U.S. households no longer subscribe to a monthly cable subscription. That’s according to **Samba TV's** latest State of the Viewership report, a study analyzing approximately 47 billion hours of linear and streaming during the second half of 2022. Some 48% of adults report they have a monthly cable or satellite TV subscription and less than half of U.S. households watched linear TV daily during the analysis period. Not all of those dollars are being transferred over to the streaming business with households indicating they would not be willing to replace a \$100 cable bill with \$100 in total streaming subscription costs. The majority of adults subscribe to two or less streaming services, with 29% of people having canceled a subscription when a must-watch show was over in order to sign up for a different service. Football is king when it comes to linear with the **NFL** dominating all 25 of the most-watched linear programs in the second-half of the year. Women’s sports are on the rise, however, with multiple live women’s sporting events demonstrating triple-digit YOY growth.

## FOX SPORTS APP SHOWED OFF SUPER BOWL LVII

Those watching Super Bowl LVII on the **Fox Sports** app Sunday had some of the best views in the house. **SSIM-WAVE's** technology, built to analyze content streams based on how humans view them, scored the Fox Sports App’s video quality as 83 on SSIMWAVE’s 100-point scale. The app also had the lowest latency of any streaming service evaluated by SSIMWAVE. The services measured as part of SSIMWAVE’s tests were broadcasts in the U.S. on **Fox** and in Canada on **CTV**, the Fox Sports app, **YouTube TV**, **Hulu + Live TV**,  **DirecTV** and **DAZN**. Two streaming providers scored higher than 80, but no broadcast or streaming quality matched the 4K scores seen during last year’s FIFA World Cup semifinals or finals. Those scores reached as high as 88. Seeing game-changing moments in real-time matters now more than ever thanks to social media and constant news alerts that hit smartphones, but out of the five streaming services measured during the game, four suffered from latency that was 20-40 seconds behind the fastest streaming service. A U.S. cable operator’s feed of the Fox broadcast recorded the lowest score of all those measured, a 73 on the 100-point scale.

## CATCHY COMEDY COMING SOON

**Weigel Broadcasting** is launching OTA network **Catchy Comedy** on March 27. The comedy-focused channel is a rebrand of the **DECADES Network** and will be available in 69.5% of U.S. television markets. It will also be available through **Philo** and **Fndly TV**.

## FIBER FRENZY

**Ritter Communications** completed a \$900,000 expansion project in December bringing the company’s services and business solutions to Ripley, Tennessee. Ritter now serves more than 123 communities across four states in the Mid-South.

## BREEZELINE'S BUSINESS STREAM TV

**Breezeline** introduced its new cloud-based video service for small- and medium-sized businesses. Called Business Stream TV, the service uses IPTV technology to integrate live TV, streaming and music services, popular sports apps and more. Business Stream TV will be available in the service areas where Breezeline’s residential Stream TV service is available. Additional markets will launch later this year.

## PROGRAMMING

**Roku** and **pocket.watch**, a kids and family studio, struck a deal that will bring four content specials and one new series to The **Roku Channel Kids & Family**. All of the titles will have debuted by the end of 2023.