



2024

# Broker Services Survey

# Introduction

The 2024 Broker Services Survey provides valuable insights into the constantly evolving broker-client relationship. It allows brokers to see what employers across the United States are asking and wanting from their brokers and the challenges employers are currently facing. Zywave has been producing the Broker Services Survey for over 10 years.

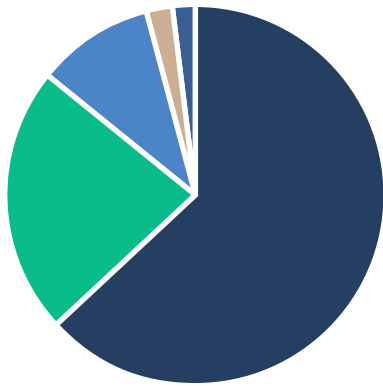
The key findings from the 2024 survey remain fairly consistent with previous years' results, with employee attraction and retention, compliance and technology playing important roles. Most clients continue to seek information on a consistent basis from their brokers and have high expectations for prompt and effective service or answers to their questions. A significant shift was that more employers (nonmanagement employees and C-suite alike) feel optimistic about their organizational performance this year.

The 2024 Broker Services Survey was completed by over 375 respondents across employee benefits and property and casualty lines of business from organizations of all sizes across the United States. This report breaks down the survey results by the broker-client relationship and line of business (employee benefits and property and casualty), each including an at-a-glance summary of the survey results, highlights and an analysis. The results also include a combined analysis regarding the C-suite. Demographic information can be found at the end of the document, detailing respondents' organizational size, location and industry.



# The Broker-client Relationship

Nearly **86%** of respondents indicated they are either satisfied or very satisfied with their insurance broker's services. Notably, roughly 12% of respondents were disappointed with their insurance broker last year, and only around 4% reported feeling that way this year.



How satisfied are you with the services your insurance broker provides?

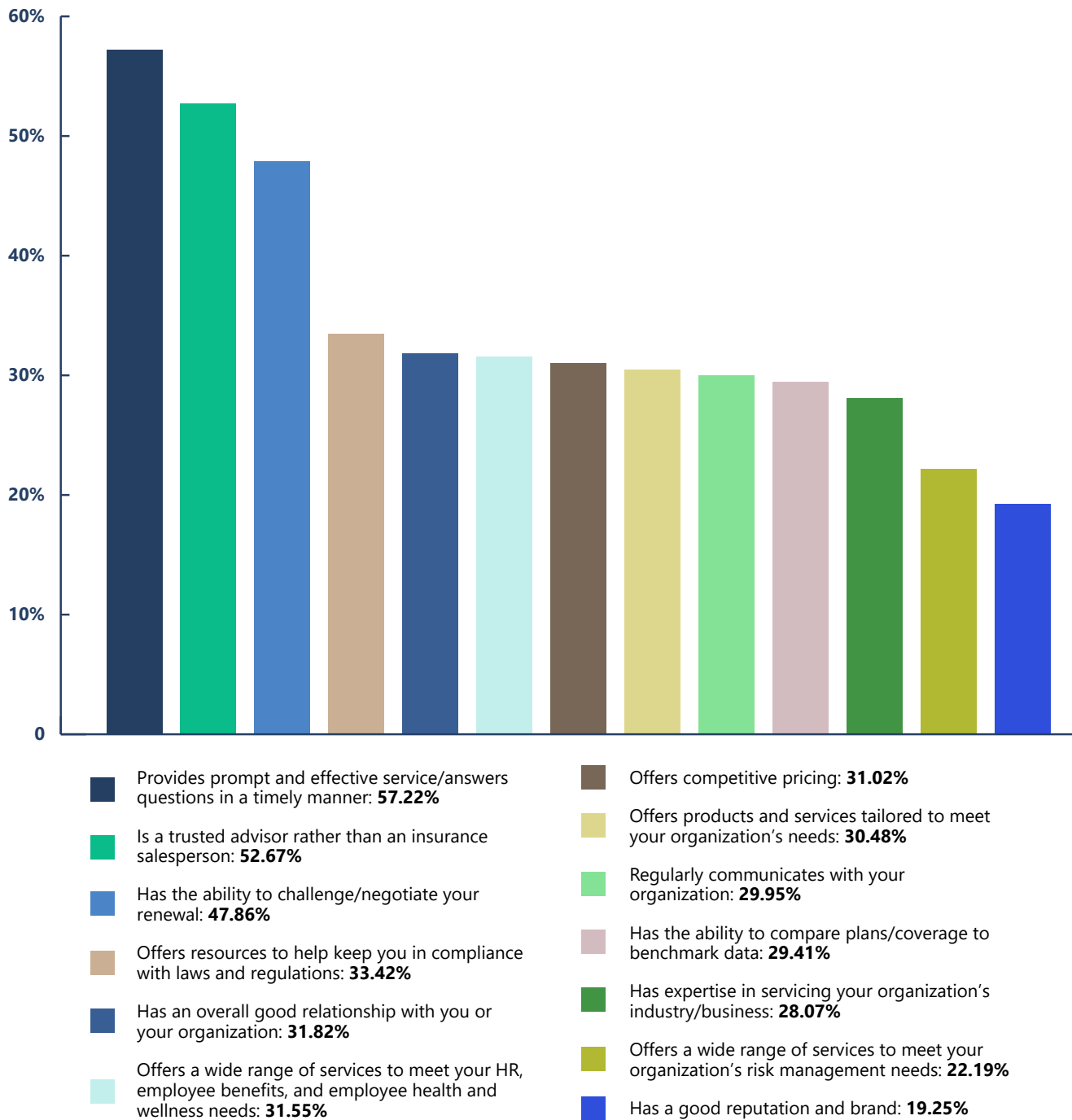
Very satisfied	63.30%	Slightly disappointed	2.13%
Satisfied	22.61%	Very disappointed	1.86%
Neutral	10.11%		

While these numbers are encouraging, it's crucial that brokers keep the momentum going by continuing to grow and adapt to meet employers' evolving needs and desires. Brokers should keep in mind that survey respondents' satisfaction is likely a strong indication that resources—such as Zywave's Content Cloud, HR Hotline, Client Portal and more—are helping them feel confident in their brokers' services.

When selecting a broker, looking for someone who provides prompt, effective service and timely answers to questions (**57%**) were the most important criteria for employers. Consumers, in general, expect prompt customer service from companies, and this industry is no different. When employers have questions or concerns, they turn to their brokers for answers and guidance. Effective onboarding and training can help ensure that all brokers are able to confidently answer client questions and solve issues in a timely manner.

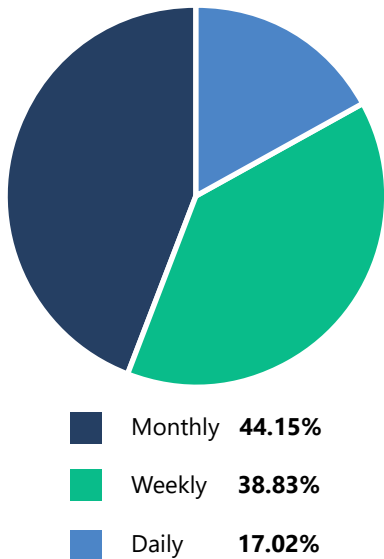


## What criteria do you use when selecting a broker?



Employers' second most important selection criterion was that brokers are "trusted advisors rather than insurance salespeople" (52.67%). Even though the criteria of "prompt service" and "trusted advisor" were equally important last year, there was a significant change from previous survey results, as "offering tailored products and services" dropped from the top three to the eighth spot in this year's results. Personalized offerings are still important in today's market, and employer responses indicated they want their broker to be a trusted advisor who keeps them up to date on compliance and can offer a wide range of services to meet their HR and employee benefits and wellness trends. Other broker criteria that were highly valued by employers included being able to challenge or negotiate the renewal (47.86%), offering compliance resources (33.42%) and having an overall good relationship with the organization (31.82%).

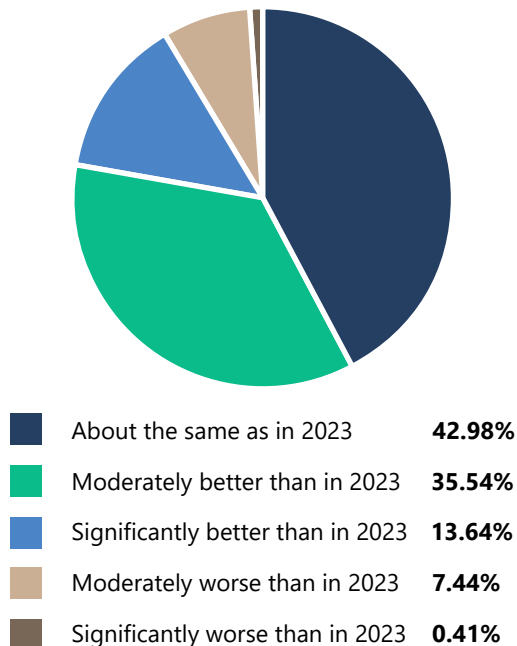
How often are you seeking information related to any or all of these topics: HR, compliance, risk management, commercial insurance, employee benefits, wellness and safety?



According to the survey, nearly **83%** of respondents wanted to hear from their brokers weekly (38.83%) or monthly (44.15%) for information on certain insurance topics. Only 17.02% of respondents indicated they seek information from brokers daily, which is a significant drop from 31.51% in last year's survey.

Over the last few years, the spike in employers seeking information from their brokers each day was likely driven by COVID-19 pandemic developments, economic pressures and workplace challenges (e.g., remote work and talent shortages). This number has leveled out and returned to normal figures again, if not slightly higher, with employers most interested in being contacted by their brokers at least weekly. For reference, 13.33% of employers sought daily information from their brokers in 2021, and 31.51% desired this in 2023. Employers continue to want frequent information, so brokers need to ensure that all communication touchpoints are valuable to their clients. Keep in mind that employers select their brokers based on their being trusted advisors and responding promptly; therefore, while fewer employers may communicate with their brokers on a daily basis, brokers should focus on being responsive, accurate and impactful, not waiting more than a week between contact points. The pressure is on brokers to make communications count and prove themselves as trusted advisors and partners.

What is your organization's outlook for its performance in 2024?



Moreover, nearly **92%** of employers believed their performance outlook in 2024 was either about the same or better as 2023's performance. Employers are feeling more optimistic, as this figure was a jump from 83% last year. There may be lingering economic hurdles for employers in 2024, but largely, employers' outlook remains overwhelmingly positive. Brokers can be optimistic given the survey results, especially since the insurance market tends to be more stable than most industries.

# Highlights and Analysis: Employee Benefits

The 2024 Broker Services Survey asked employers about their organizations' most pressing challenges regarding employee benefits and HR. This section compiles these responses and provides general insights regarding the employee benefits market in 2024.

## Employee Benefits Challenges for Employers in 2024

Survey respondents reported that their top challenges in 2024 were mitigating health care costs, offering a competitive benefits package, and attracting and retaining employees. Other top concerns included staying informed and current on compliance, employee communications and benefits administration. While the order is slightly different, these top challenges remained the same as last year's survey.

### Please rank your organization's top challenges as they relate to employee benefits and HR.

- |   |   |    |  |
|---|---|----|--|
| 1 | Mitigating health care costs                  | 6  | Managing benefits administration                   |
| 2 | Offering a competitive benefits package       | 7  | Supporting employee well-being                     |
| 3 | Attracting and retaining employees            | 8  | Navigating employee paid time off and leave issues |
| 4 | Staying informed and up to date on compliance | 9  | Helping employees prepare for retirement           |
| 5 | Employee communications                       | 10 | Implementing or managing remote/hybrid work        |

## Health Care Cost Mitigation

Health care cost mitigation regained its spot as the most pressing employee benefits challenge, overtaking last year's top challenge, competitive benefits packages. Managing health care costs continues to be a top employee benefits challenge for organizations, and employers may be frustrated with the limited options to address these rising costs. In 2024, employers' top organizational challenges in health care cost mitigation revolved around educating employees to become better health care consumers, finding appropriate plan designs and navigating costly prescription drugs.

### Please rank your organization's challenges as they relate to mitigating health care costs.

- 1 Educating employees to be better consumers of health care
- 2 Finding the appropriate plan design
- 3 Costs related to prescription drugs
- 4 Proper utilization of care
- 5 Options related to group size

Many employers will continue with traditional approaches to mitigating health care costs, such as explaining available benefits, guiding employees to cost-effective care and improving health care literacy. The goal is for workers to not only better understand the health care landscape but also be wiser benefits consumers. However, employers are also willing to take more drastic measures, such as modifying health plan designs or altering funding approaches. Helping employees navigate rising health care costs is an ongoing process, but it's essential that workers feel properly informed about medical expenses, benefits options and mitigation strategies. As health care costs will likely increase for the foreseeable future, employers who act now to address workers' concerns about rising health care costs and provide actionable solutions can improve employee retention, increase productivity, strengthen staff morale and gain a leg up on their competition. Fortunately, brokers are uniquely positioned to share cost mitigation resources to help employers make benefits decisions and educate employees.

### Competitive Benefits Packages

According to survey respondents, offering competitive benefits packages remained a leading employee benefits challenge for employers in 2024. Additionally, talent challenges were still prevalent for surveyed employers. Many company budgets have been tight in the past couple of years, so employers are more strategic about their benefits offerings. Benefits extend far beyond health insurance, with more employers expanding offerings and considering expanded voluntary benefits and flexible benefits (e.g., professional development, wellness benefits and paid time off) to better recruit, retain and support employees. To remain attractive to key talent and current employees, employers have focused on providing compelling offerings since they send a powerful message to employees that employers value their contributions and care about their quality of life, leading to more loyal and engaged workers.



## Employee Attraction and Retention

During record-high labor figures in 2021 and 2022, workers used their leverage to demand higher wages, better benefits and more career development opportunities—and were willing to change employers to do so. Now, economic indicators and labor metrics show that the worker-friendly employment landscape has recovered to give more leverage back to employers. Despite this shift, finding and keeping top talent is a lingering challenge for employers across industries. Specifically, they are finding it difficult to keep up with pay demands, stay competitive amid rising health care costs and offer the flexibility employees desire. Employers are also struggling to find workers with the skills, experience and education they need to succeed in their current and future roles.

Furthermore, while today's workers see both the possibilities and risks of job or career changes, many choose to explore new opportunities and leave their current employers. Overall, employees are taking more ownership of their happiness, finding the job that's the best fit for them while fulfilling personal responsibilities. As the job market evolves and employee expectations shift, companies must adopt innovative strategies to keep their talent engaged and satisfied.

## Key Takeaways

The 2024 Broker Services Survey responses suggest that employers continue to deal with many of the same challenges as they have for the last few years. Since many employee benefits challenges are the same year over year, it's becoming more difficult for brokers to separate themselves from the competition and demonstrate the value they add. Therefore, successful brokers will need to establish effective strategies to respond to these challenges and position themselves for long-term success.





# Highlights and Analysis:

## Property and Casualty Insurance

The 2024 Broker Services Survey also asked employers their views on the most pressing challenges related to commercial insurance and risk. This section compiles these responses and provides general insights regarding the property and casualty market in 2024.

### Commercial Insurance Challenges for Employers in 2024

Employers' top organizational challenges with commercial insurance in 2024 were concerns about understanding the level of coverage needed, being able to afford that insurance, and implementing risk management and employee safety strategies. Employers also reported struggling with understanding what is (and isn't) covered by their policies and receiving the level of customer support and guidance the organization needs. Secondary concerns for employers included structuring layers of insurance, finding available coverage and understanding insurance terminology.

#### Please rank your organization's most significant commercial insurance challenges.

- 1 Understanding the level of coverage that our organization needs
- 2 Affording insurance
- 3 Implementing risk management and employee safety strategies, policies and procedures
- 4 Understanding what is and is not covered by our policies
- 5 Receiving the level of customer support and guidance our organization needs
- 6 Structuring layers of insurance
- 7 Finding available coverage

### Understanding the Level of Needed Coverage

Survey respondents' top commercial insurance challenge was understanding the level of coverage that their organizations need. Notably, this concern was ranked fifth last year and jumped to take the first spot this year. In recent years, the commercial insurance space has become increasingly complex, and more employers need guidance on understanding their policies and how much coverage they need to properly protect their organizations. This presents another opportunity for brokers to step up as trusted advisors to companies and help them understand various forms of insurance and risk transfer strategies. Amid an evolving risk environment and challenging commercial insurance market, brokers can help businesses focus on addressing the factors they can control and secure appropriate levels of coverage.

### The Cost of Commercial Insurance

Unsurprisingly, the rising cost of commercial insurance was a primary concern for many of this year's survey respondents. Over the past few years, the commercial insurance sector has been grappling with a hard marketplace. Although recent months have provided some rate relief for certain lines of insurance, overall, commercial insurance premiums remain elevated. Increasingly, businesses are having to budget more dollars for insurance coverage that is similar or less favorable to the coverage in past years. Pricing for commercial auto, commercial property, and umbrella and excess liability is especially challenging in the current environment.

While this environment is challenging for organizations across the country, insurance brokers can help their clients navigate the hard market in several ways. Brokers can help soften the impact of the hard market on their clients by educating them on market conditions and supporting risk management and alternative risk transfer efforts.

### Risk Management Challenges

Implementing risk management and employee safety strategies, policies and procedures was among employers' top 2024 risk management-related organizational challenges. Specifically, they were most concerned about employee safety, cybersecurity and workers' compensation costs.

**Please rank your organization's risk management challenges.**

1	Employee safety	6	Financial risks (e.g., market, credit, price or liquidity risks)
2	Cybersecurity (e.g., data breaches and hacking)	7	Addressing management liabilities
3	Workers' compensation costs	8	Property risks and facilities management
4	Strategic risks (e.g., competition/economic environment)	9	Disaster planning
5	Regulatory changes on the federal, state and local levels	10	Supply chain management
		11	Drivers and fleets

Survey respondents identified employee safety as their top challenge related to risk. In 2023, employers ranked this as their number three risk management challenge. While advancements in workplace safety solutions have helped mitigate losses related to employee injuries and illnesses, developments such as inflation, shifting workforce demographics and employee mental health challenges have posed some concerns for employers. As a result, more of today's employers are implementing safety and health programs to address these common risks.

Notably, cybersecurity concerns remained top of mind for employers. In fact, cybersecurity rose three spots since the 2021 survey and now came in as the second most pressing risk management issue for employers for the second consecutive year. In recent years, there has been a marked increase in the frequency and severity of cyberattacks. Furthermore, cybercriminals are leveraging artificial intelligence technology to identify their targets more easily, launch attacks faster and in larger volumes, and wreak further havoc. Fortunately, brokers are uniquely positioned to share cybersecurity resources to help employers protect themselves against attacks and help educate employees about these threats.

### Key Takeaways

The responses to the 2024 Broker Services Survey suggest that employers continue to deal with many of the same challenges as they have for the last few years. However, challenges within the insurance market have brought these challenges into sharper focus. Therefore, successful brokers must establish effective strategies to respond to these challenges and position themselves for long-term success. Brokers who can help clients navigate commercial insurance options, deliver practical guidance, and assist clients through cybersecurity and risk management challenges will have an edge against competitors.

# C-suite Insights

The C-suite has much in common with the overall population when it comes to perceived challenges. While the C-suite represents a small sample size (**30.33%**) of survey respondents, this group has a unique perspective that can provide valuable insights into the employee benefits and property and casualty markets.

## Broker Relationship

Nearly **80%** of C-suite respondents wanted to hear from their brokers weekly (30.14%) or monthly (47.95%) for information on certain insurance topics. Keep in mind that the latter can mean infrequently since “monthly” is a catchall category for survey respondents. However, the C-suite was more likely to be open to daily communications than nonmanagement employees (21.92% versus 17.02%), so it comes down to having a strong broker-client relationship and understanding personal communication expectations.



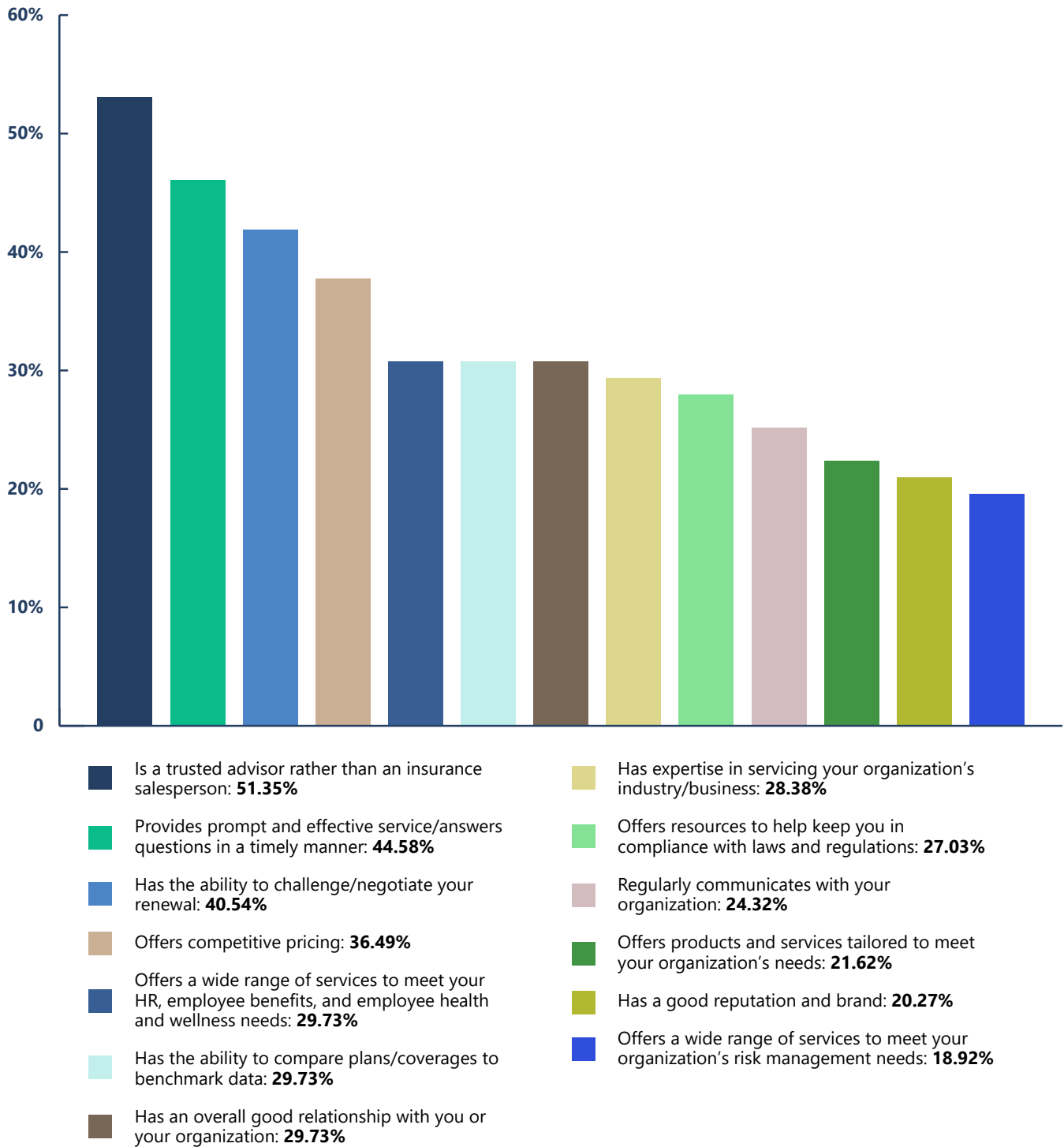
How often are you seeking information related to any or all of these topics: HR, compliance, risk management, commercial insurance, employee benefits, wellness and safety?

- Monthly **47.95%**
- Weekly **30.14%**
- Daily **21.92%**



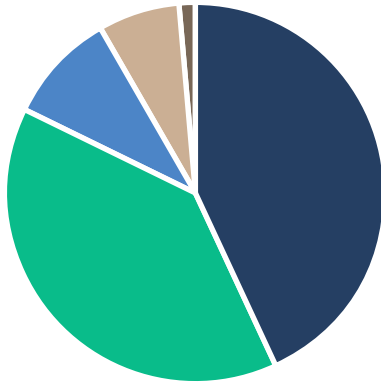
The C-suite prioritized the same three criteria as nonmanagement employees when choosing a broker: that they are a trusted advisor rather than an insurance salesperson (51.35%), provide prompt and effective service and answer questions in a timely manner (44.59%), and can negotiate the renewal (40.54%).

### What criteria do you use when selecting a broker?



## Organizational Outlook

When thinking about organizational performance in 2024, the C-suite was slightly more optimistic, with **43.24%** believing their organization's outlook is moderately better than in 2023, compared to **35.54%** for nonmanagement employees. Furthermore, the majority of both groups agreed that their company's outlook is about the same as last year (**39.19%** of C-suite and **42.98%** of nonmanagement employees).



What is your organization's outlook for its performance in 2024?

Moderately better than 2023	<b>43.24%</b>
About the same as in 2023	<b>39.19%</b>
Significantly better than 2023	<b>9.46%</b>
Moderately worse than 2023	<b>6.76%</b>
Significantly worse than 2023	<b>1.35%</b>

## Employee Benefits

C-suite views of the top 2024 employee benefits challenges generally mirrored other respondents' views. However, the C-suite was more concerned about talent attraction and retention and offering competitive benefits packages—unchanged from last year—whereas nonmanagement employees considered mitigating health care costs the most pressing benefits challenge. This can likely be attributed to the fact that the C-suite tends to be more cost-conscious and concerned about having enough of the right workers to get the job done and providing attractive benefits to find and keep talent.

### Please rank your organization's top challenges as they relate to employee benefits and HR.

- 1 Offering a competitive benefits package
- 2 Mitigating health care costs
- 3 Attracting and retaining employees
- 4 Staying informed and up to date on compliance
- 5 Managing benefits administration
- 6 Employee communications
- 7 Supporting employee well-being (e.g., mental health, physical health and social health)
- 8 Navigating employee paid time off and leave issues
- 9 Helping employees prepare for retirement
- 10 Implementing or managing remote/hybrid work
- 11 Returning employees to the workplace

Moreover, the C-suite viewed finding the appropriate plan design as the top-ranking challenge for mitigating health care costs; nonmanagement employees ranked it second. Like the above results, the C-suite is focused on its offerings and their associated costs.

**Please rank your organization's challenges as they relate to mitigating health care costs.**

- 1** Finding the appropriate plan design
- 2** Educating employees to be better consumers of health care (e.g., telehealth, choosing urgent care versus emergency room)
- 3** Costs related to prescription drugs
- 4** Proper utilization of care
- 5** Options related to group size

## Property and Casualty Insurance

Similar to employee benefits, C-suite views regarding the top property and casualty challenges in 2024 echoed those of other respondents for the most part. The top three challenges were affording insurance; understanding the level of coverage the organization needs; and implementing risk management and employee safety strategies, policies and procedures. While the C-suite is more concerned about being able to afford insurance, nonmanagement employees consider understanding necessary coverage levels as the most pressing commercial insurance challenge.

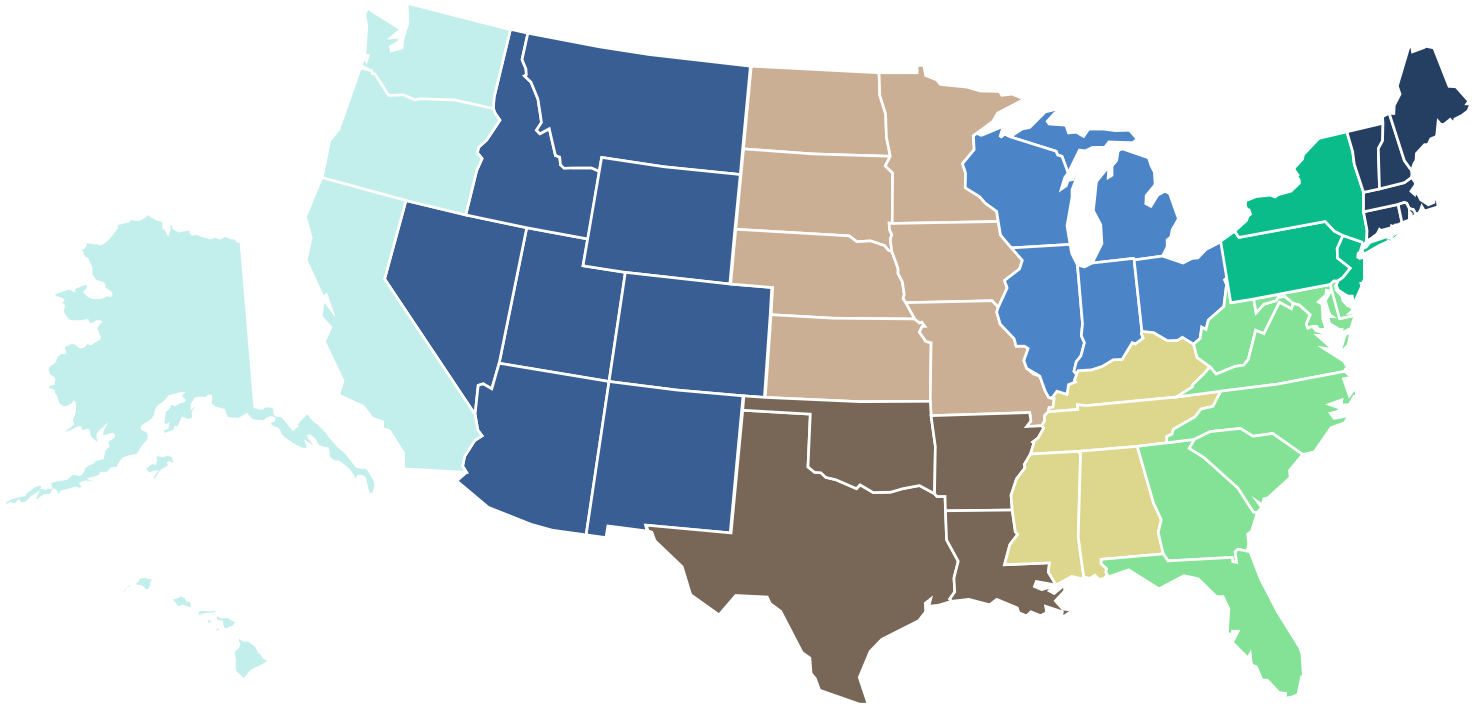
**Please rank your organization's most significant commercial insurance challenges.**

- 1** Affording insurance
- 2** Understanding the level of coverage that our organization needs
- 3** Implementing risk management and employee safety strategies, policies and procedures
- 4** Understanding what is and is not covered by our policies
- 5** Receiving the level of customer support and guidance our organization needs
- 6** Finding available coverage
- 7** Structuring layers of insurance
- 8** Understanding insurance terminology

# Demographics

This survey was completed by over 375 employers in all regions of the United States. The overwhelming majority of survey respondents were from organizations employing fewer than 500 employees.

In what state is your organization (with the most employees) based?



**New England: 3.27%**  
(Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont)

**Mid-Atlantic: 11.42%**  
(New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania)

**East North Central: 31.02%**  
(Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin)

**West North Central: 10.62%**  
(Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota)

**Mountain: 2.86%**  
(Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming)

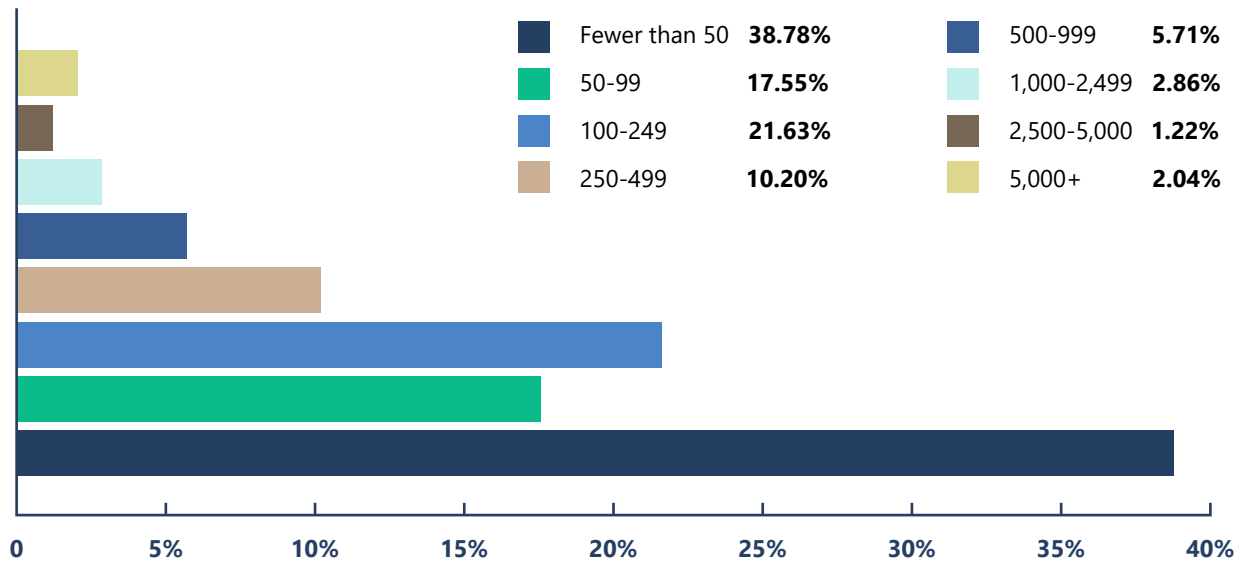
**Pacific: 14.29%**  
(Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington)

**West South Central: 8.56%**  
(Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas)

**East South Central: 5.31%**  
(Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee)

**South Atlantic: 12.65%**  
(Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia)

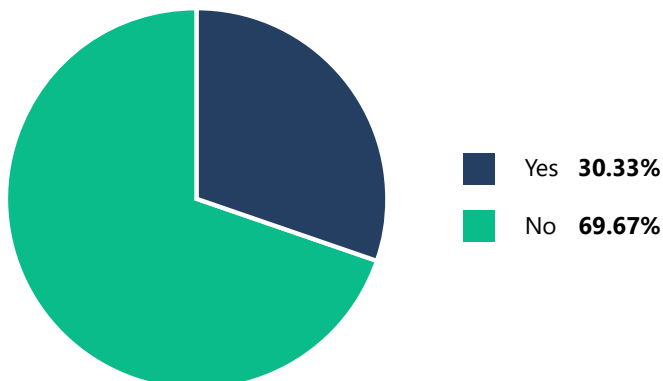
## How many employees does your organization employ?



## In which industry sector does your organization operate?

15.57%	Finance, insurance and real estate	4.92%	Transportation, communications, electric, gas and sanitary services
14.34%	Manufacturing	2.46%	Education
18.85%	Other	0.82%	Social services
10.66%	Construction	5.33%	Public administration
6.56%	Health care	1.23%	Agriculture, forestry and fishing
11.07%	Nonprofit	1.23%	Hotels/hospitality
5.74%	Retail and wholesale trade	1.23%	Legal

## Are you the owner of your business or a member of the C-suite or leadership team (e.g., president, CFO, COO or CIO)?







Rankings are generated through weighted averages (one-to-five scale). The first-place selection gets more points, then the second and so forth. Sometimes, the weighted value (with decimals) is shown; other times, a placed rank is used. Nevertheless, the scoring method is the same for ranking questions.

Please note that due to rounding conventions, some graph percentages might add up to less than 100%.

For more information about the Broker Services Survey, please reach out to Zywave Partner Support, who can connect you to the authors in Content Development.

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