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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Year-end report card gives Georgia employers a B grade for 2020,**

**clarity on earning an A in 2021**

ATLANTA, December 10, 2020 – In a November survey of employed Georgians, goBeyondProfit found they gave their employers a solid B grade on addressing the challenges of 2020. The research shows employees would give an A grade – and likely greater employee productivity and retention – for companies and leaders demonstrating empathy and care.

“Our research helps CEOs see the path to quick wins. Be visible and accessible, demonstrate empathy, inspect your approach to racial and social conversations, and realize half your staff could use more connection at work,” said goBeyondProfit Founding Director Megan McCamey. “This reinforces our premise that embedding strategic generosity within business operations translates into real business value, including employee connectivity, productivity and loyalty. ”

Overall, emotional intelligence rises as a top skill required for leaders while employees increasingly rely on the workplace for emotional and social wellbeing.

A full report with graphs is available at <https://gobeyondprofit.org/research/georgia-employee-insights-poll-the-empathy-imperative/>.

Company and Leadership Behaviors to prioritize in 2021

In 2021, employees will value employer care and a sense of purpose in their work. In order of importance, employees want companies to demonstrate care, help the community, instill purpose, address racial issues, and of course, adapt the business to market shifts.

When asked what they want to see their leaders personally demonstrate in 2021, it’s important to them to see their leaders be accessible, transparent, empathetic toward company and community, and to address social issues of importance to them.

Gap analysis highlights empathy and racial/social conversation

For the most part, employers are doing well on delivering on what matters to employees. A gap analysis shows two significant gaps where behaviors are highly important but corresponding ratings are low: empathy and racial/social conversations.

The largest gap appears where employees highly value leaders’ demonstrations of empathy toward employees (79%) and the community (76%), while only 61% and 62% respectively rated employers as Excellent or Good on those behaviors. This reflects performance gaps of 18 and 14 points respectively.

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goBeyondProfit research, continued

Similarly, high majorities of respondents value addressing racial issues/conversations (75%) and addressing social issues I care about (73%). Those register performance gaps of 15 and 13 points respectively, because only 60% felt their employer performance was Excellent or Good on those two behaviors.

Unsurprisingly, Black and Caucasian respondents graded employees differently on the topic of race. On the question of addressing racial issues and conversation, Black employees are more likely than white employees to rate their employer as Poor/ Terrible (20% vs. 10%) while white employees are more inclined to give an Excellent or Good rating (68% vs. 52%). Black employees are also more likely than white respondents to rate their senior leader as “terrible” at demonstrating empathy towards members of the community (13% vs. 5%).

Connectivity at work

Connectivity at work has been impacted by the turmoil of 2020. A full 55% of employees are feeling much/somewhat more connected at work. A middle 34% express connection as about the same.

The cautionary tale lies with the 12% who feel somewhat or much less connection. This is reflected in reduced connection with their manager (13%), fellow employees (12%) and their company (10%). Relatively lower connection with managers across these questions should elicit leaders’ attention, since data has long shown that employees’ relationship with their manager is a key performance and retention trigger.

Recognizing individualized needs

No two employees have the same needs or priorities. Open-ended answers about the one thing employees most want from their employer right now covered the full gamut of needs any leader would expect, from financial support and empathy to health protections and professional growth.

It is not realistic that a leader would attempt to appease every employees’ individualized desires, but the research shows it is important to find ways to help employees feel heard and recognized. As leaders consider the make-up and needs of their teams, they might benefit from watching for trends among them. There are statistically significant differences shown among employees by age, location and race.

*The online survey of 520 employed Georgians occurred between November 5-11, 2020. At the 95% confidence level, the survey has an error range of +/- 4.3%*

*goBeyondProfit is a statewide alliance launched by business leaders for business leaders to spur corporate generosity and improve people’s lives.* *Through peer insights and stories, members learn from one another and strengthen their ability to ensure stronger businesses and healthier communities. goBeyondProfit is a fully funded philanthropic venture inviting every Georgia business to join at no cost.*

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