

“Are we going back? Will it be business as usual?” The million-dollar questions. Your organization’s return to work requires detailed planning and in-depth considerations. What are the needs of your employees and their families, what are the needs of the business and how do you meet both? Much like when designing your compensation package, writing your mission statement or creating your values, having a clear “why” behind your return to work plan creates a framework for consistency.

### **What we know:**

COVID-19 changed the face of the office workspace dramatically.

WSBC requires all employees to provide their staff with a **safe working environment**. This means both physically and mentally.

Companies **MUST** adhere to Provincial and Federal health orders at all times, no matter what their plan is.

We left suddenly, coming back has the possibility to be traumatic.

Our world has changed. As has work expectations.

Whatever you decided you need to back it up with a policy that complies with ESA.

Companies have options!

## **The “New Normal”**

While a little macabre, we need to recognize that anyone can bring COVID-19 in the door; employees, vendors, contractors, so it is important to broaden your scope when planning for the new normal and make reasonable accommodations for those who might be immunocompromised or living with and/or caring for those who are immunocompromised.

Ask yourself:

How do we create an environment that is safe and healthy?

What we serve clients/customers/users effectively?

Will this keep the company healthy and viable?

## **Which stakeholders should be involved?**

Who should be at the table when formulating strategies to return to work? Who are the biggest partners? What functions should be involved? Is it;

The HR and the executive team?

The health authorities?

Our building management team?

Consultants/contractors/vendors?

Insurance providers?

What do your employees want?

## **Change management**

Having a multifaceted philosophy is key to keeping the company nimble enough to meet business challenges of the future. Developing clear phases that your company can maneuver between as things progress or regress will help keep your company nimble. An example of Phases would be:

one (Current Life): company-wide work from home

two: opening up the office for voluntary return

three: inviting employees to come back but not requiring it.

four: full return to work initiated

## Critical KPIs

Identifying critical KPIs as triggers for when to maneuver will also aid in this as a measurable way to help decision making; Know the current government regulations? Are other companies sharing what they are doing in your industries doing? What are our competitors doing? Listening to those KPI's and pivoting accordingly in case measures aren't hit or there is a resurgence or employees aren't comfortable.

## Re-onboarding

When looking at re-onboarding your team it is important to weigh the pros and cons of returning to work, the obvious con being a threat to safety however, returning to the office is now being considered a retention tool or a reason for changing jobs.

Remember, as an employer you have an obligation to provide a safe working environment for your employees so safety is number one. Whatever the pros are, none of that matters unless you can deliver a safe work environment. Look at the pros and ask yourself, do we all have to be in the same space to achieve that? Are there other tools we can use to recreate collaboration, improve communication or maintain relationships etc?

Returning to work is a process of teaching change, managing disruptions and implementing new and sustainable practices. It's also important to be kind to yourself, work as a team and communicate, remembering that no one has been through this process before. It's ok to design a return to work plan only to poke holes in it as you come to understand your needs better.

**Connect with BLANKSLATE to kick off your COVID-19 Return to Work Package.**

The package includes:

A workplace inspection and recommendation on workspace usage that will allow employees to return to a safe working environment. Plus a review in-situ once employees have returned to work.

An HR Audit of your policies and contracts that are compliant to new requirements

A designed unique return to work strategy for your company.

An employee re-onboarding plan so returning employees know what to expect.

Flat rate of \$2200.00 + GST