

Your organization's return to work philosophy and execution, 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.

## **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 in your return to work philosophy and execution. Ask yourself:

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

Can we serve clients/customers/users effectively?

How do we keep the company healthy and viable?

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

Another question to answer is 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?

## **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 this would be:

One: 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. Are the current government regulations? What are the current public offerings (restaurants open, schools back)? Listening to those KPI's and pivoting accordingly in case measures aren't hit or there is a resurgence or employees aren't comfortable.

## **Triage Team**

Who is responsible for which KPIs? Who are the decision makers? Identifying a small triage team is a great way to ensure that all trigger points are being monitored and real time information is provided.

Finance: what's happening in the economy? What are our investors saying?

CEO/Founder: what is the board's expectations and how can we manage that?

HR: what are the new regulations coming out? Are we compliant?

Legal: what's happening in that environment? Are we at risk anywhere?

## 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 threat to safety. 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.

Reach out immediately to [Izzie@blankslate.partners](mailto:Izzie@blankslate.partners) for more details and to be connected to your expert.

