Reboot: Getting back to the workplace

What does returning to the workplace look like going forward — whether that's in an office, a retail shop or a factory floor? Over the last two months, we've learned that more people than we imagined can work remotely, but, to make this the norm in the future, those new technologies and ways of working will need to be adopted. Businesses will also need to make significant changes around health and safety in the workplace. How your business will look and function in this new environment depends on multiple factors. You won't be able to control all of those factors, but you can embrace some of them now to accelerate your workforce strategy for both the short and long term. By using data and insights to drive decisions, you can manage new operations, technologies and ways of working, while meeting the needs of your people and your business as you move forward.

You need expertise, services, solutions and technology to help you get back to business. We can help with that.

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Work may never be the same again. Here's what to do now to help move your company and your employees forward successfully.

Manage health and safety
Use data as your guide.

- **Develop a plan to address and help mitigate workplace illness.** As many employees head back to the workplace, they are likely to encounter others who have continued to work on-site as essential workers or those who have different distancing practices than they do. This may concern returning workers. As you address workplace health and safety, include enterprise tools like **Automatic Contact Tracing**, which is geo-gated to the confines of your work facilities to help provide privacy and identify potential risks of exposure quickly.

- **Model a phased return-to-workplace plan, by site and type of job, using data, not dates.** To understand risks and safety issues that could come up at each worksite, use zip-code-specific health information, state-specific return-to-workplace guidelines and predictive behavior analytics. Anticipate and plan for recurrences of stay-home measures.

- **Execute risk measures and controls that are specific to COVID-19.** Build a framework to **manage and monitor legal and operational risks** and procedures related to a return to the workplace, to help support your people's health and safety, business continuity and near-term new ways of working. This includes setting expectations for suppliers, vendors and others who come in contact with your workers and facilities.

Develop a plan and strategy
Focus on people, productivity and how you work.

Lean into the new bias for action and problem-solving through empowerment and trust. Develop an **overall workforce strategy and action plan** that puts people first, includes a consistent data-driven decision-making approach, and puts appropriate risk and controls in place to enable your people's health and safety, business continuity and, near term, new ways of working.

Determine who needs to return to the workplace. As of April 22, nearly half **(49%) of companies** say they're planning to make remote work a permanent option for roles that allow it. Confirm that your strategy addresses the needs of individuals who will work on-site, or remotely on either a temporary or indefinite basis. (Here's a **list of questions** to ask yourself as you plan.)

Develop a return to workplace playbook. Mobilize a transition office focused on return to the workplace to deliver on all aspects of the plan: workforce, customers, workplace needs, health and safety, and revenue and cost modelling, among other areas.

Lead and communicate changes
Be guided by purpose, optimism and clarity.

- **Go long on your purpose.** Make decisions with a "no regrets" policy whenever possible. You won't regret making decisions that focus on the safety of your employees or your company's role in the community.

- **Inspire and teach managers new ways to lead.** The past two months have challenged leaders to think about how to engage and inspire their teams in a time of uncertainty and constant change. Elevate success stories, and provide clear guidance and plans for how to maintain those practices.

Operate under changed demands
Adapt to what's next as conditions change.

- **Build scenarios** of your workforce needs in real time. Segment employees, sequence facility openings and, for office employees, make plans to operate at 35% to 50% of in-person capacity for an extended period. From new specialty positions to shifting resources or headcount changes, build in data-driven analyses to help reduce costs and preserve jobs when possible.

- **Accelerate digital and remote ways of working.** Currently, **40% of companies** say they're planning to **accelerate new ways of working** and automation as part of their return-to-workplace strategy. Solidify how you will enhance processes that have been successful using new technologies.

- **Find cost-effective ways to improve your core operations.** Consider a **managed services approach**, so you can get the expertise you might not have in-house and scale up or down quickly.

- **As you return to the workplace, you won't be going back to the same ways of working.** Embrace and evolve behaviors and **new ways of working** that make sense for your workplace. Let go of how you have always done things. Instead, act quickly and decisively to **adopt new strategies, tools, technologies** and ways of collaborating and communicating for the future.

Rethink facilities and technology
Consider how and where people work.

- **Double down on automation and accelerate moves to digital.** You've now seen first-hand which manual processes have stood in the way of operating efficiently, so improve or replace those processes. **Speed up digital adoption**, starting with technologies and processes that enable your employees to be more productive. Companies that already had been operating more digitally have been able to manage better during this crisis.

- **Evaluate your real estate footprint.** Consider what might be permanent — or will last for at least the next year or so: reduced worksite capacities and an increased number of permanently remote positions. **Use data-driven insights** to pinpoint where you can reduce costs.

- **Training is essential to adopting new policies and guidelines.** Plan training on new safety measures for in-facility returning workers. Solidify new practices and incorporate virtual training for those who are working remotely for the long haul. Expect issues to arise and be prepared to address them.

- **Plan for and execute investments for must-haves.** You have to meet different demands for tools and infrastructure, and stay compliant with regulatory requirements that change daily. Stay up to date on what's required and what your people need to stay productive.

Build empathic policies and culture
Be sensitive to the situations your people face.

- **Plan work schedules with a people-first approach.** Take into account not just physical distancing needs, but also the concerns of employees who suddenly have new responsibilities at home or have health worries. Recommend or provide options for alternate, safe transportation, if needed, particularly for those who rely on public transit.

- **Understand workers' needs by enhancing employee listening.** Then, **define and implement policies** to account for employees' individual constraints and comfort levels, including underlying health issues, child care, etc.

- **Reevaluate performance measures, employees' concerns and productivity blockers. Check-In** or employee preference analytics to better develop a workforce strategy that is agile and can act and react quickly. Reevaluate and realign business performance, individual performance and compensation structures that are appropriate for the conditions in your business.

- **Focus on the well-being of your people.** Consider new or refreshed employee well-being programs to demonstrate caring and help reduce the emotional, physical and mental stress of the current environment. Understand the top constraints of your workforce and help your people work productively at times when they can be most effective.

Now what?

As we move toward work that looks very different than it did just two months ago, it's more important than ever to be guided by data-driven insights around your people, processes, financials and risks. That will give you the knowledge you need to act with confidence.

We have expertise, services, solutions and technology to help you get back to business.

Here are some resources to guide you:

- **Checking in on employee health and wellbeing**
- **Intelligent analytics can help master risk**
- **Using behavioral predictors to analyze health risks**
- **In today's environment, a dynamic workforce plan is a must**
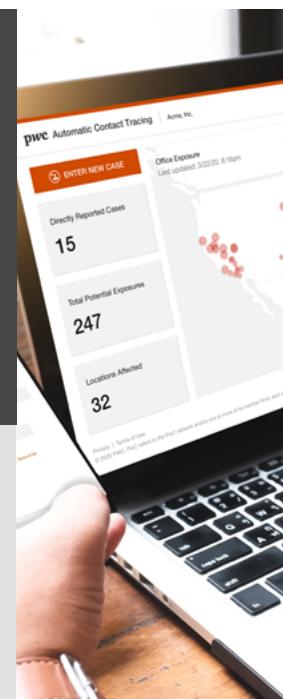
Check-In

Automatic Contact Tracing — built with individual privacy in mind — turns employee devices into virtual beacons, so you can more precisely identify employees who may be at potential risk of exposure to illness. Use Status Connect to check in daily with your employees to see if they are able to work productively and, if not, learn what's standing in their way so you can act.

Contacts

Carrie Duarte
Workforce of the
Future Leader, PwC
+1 617 331 0611
carrie.duarte@pwc.com

Deniz Caglar
Partner, Fit for Growth,
PwC
+1 312 420 8569
deniz.caglar@pwc.com

Bhushan Sethi
Joint Global Leader,
People and Organization, PwC
+1 917 863 9369
bhushan.sethi@pwc.com