

# Bringing Back the Workforce as you Restart in a 'New Normal'



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It has been seven weeks since we began implementing social distancing measures to help fight the spread of the coronavirus. Those measures included forcing many businesses to reduce operations or to suspend them altogether. We all had to react quickly and unfortunately in many cases did not have a lot of time to prepare to reduce operations and as a result, many had to make quick decisions on reducing staffing levels.

Many Governors throughout the United States are working toward or recently announced a measured and phased approach to re-opening businesses. This will allow anyone whose operations have been impacted by COVID-19 to have a planned, effective restart and the opportunity to bring back employees in a more structured manner.

When considering how to bring back employees there are three central questions emerge from that one topic – how many employees do I bring back, when do I bring them back, and who do I bring back first? However, before you begin to consider those questions, there are two preparatory steps to address first.

We recommend that you start the process of employee re-entry by developing a short-term budget. We all must recognize that over the next six to nine months, while we are phasing out social distancing measures, our revenue will not be at historical levels. Understanding what revenue generation you can expect will guide you in determining not only the employee levels you can afford, but the employee levels you will need to support operations.

The next step to consider is involving other leaders in your decision making regarding employee re-entry. It will make the process more effective if you bring in individuals with a broader view of operations, the employees, and their capabilities.

After the preparatory steps, we believe there are three basic considerations to address. In a perfect world, your first guide to bringing employees back would be your performance management system. You will want to bring back those employees who have been your top performers. A solid performance management system will help you recognize who those top performers are and address them first. Absent of a performance management system, you can rely upon the recommendation of the team of leaders you have assembled and their views of employee performance. Regardless of how you reach the conclusion, you should start with bringing back your best people.

One benefit to starting with top performers, is that the top performers are typically employees who have shown the ability to be successful in numerous roles within the organization. We believe that is a vital quality to have during this interim period of a restart. An employee who can help you in several areas will be very important since roles will be somewhat blurred for a period. You will also need employees who can follow new directions, since their roles may be different than the one they left weeks ago.

The last consideration you must make is to determine that you have all of the skill sets needed for operational success. There are some roles within organizations that only certain employees can complete. Therefore, you must consider them early in your restart.

We recognize that each business has its own unique challenges to face along with its own set of variables. However, we believe that the few tips addressed above can be applied to most restarts.

Our team of expert business advisors have answered the most FAQs from an employers perspective on how to bring your workforce back in the new normal. Follow the link below for more information.

[Returning to Work FAQs](#)

For more information on how the Coronavirus is impacting businesses across multiple industries, visit our COVID-19 resource page:

[COVID-19 Resources](#)