

RE-ENTRY AND RECOVERY FROM COVID-19: RETURN FROM WORKING FROM HOME OR LAYOFFS

WRITTEN BY: FRANK NEWMAN, C.H.R.L.



Just as astronauts and their flight teams have to prepare for reentry into earth's atmosphere, we have to prepare to welcome our staff back into our workplaces over the coming weeks.

As with any re-entry, we need to be aware of the mental and physical challenges facing our teams. Miscommunication, misunderstandings and unclear expectations can result in aborted landings, or missing our landing targets. We have to ensure that the people and the physical systems work together to deliver Mission Possible.

Successful reentries take careful planning and I've developed this flight checklist to ensure that your teams successfully get back to work.

PLANNING AND COMMUNICATING

Plan the re-entry carefully and consider adopting a phased approach with some people arriving on Day 1, others on Day 2, etc. The key element is to let people know ahead of time what to expect. Some employees will be incredibly nervous; for others, it will be business as normal. You have to manage everyone's expectations:

- Consider phased approach options
- Plan how will you manage that first Day, that first week
- Communicate plans ahead of time before everyone is back
- Consider sending a short video from your phone to set expectations
- Anticipate their questions and develop responses to Frequently Asked Questions

PHYSICAL WORKPLACE REVIEW

Conduct a Risk Assessment & Hazard Analysis; document how you will keep people safe as you move ahead:

- Identify any Safety Protocols
- How will you maintain social distancing?
- New Equipment requirements- masks, temperature checks
- Reception and guest Protocols

thank you!

THANK EVERYONE FOR THEIR PATIENCE - CONSIDER REWARDS AND APPRECIATION

This is a great opportunity to thank staff and appreciate them for any extra efforts they have contributed to supporting you during this time. Your staff will remember you for how you returned them as much as how you handled them during this time:

- Recognition or appreciation gifts
- Consider special bonuses for Going Above and Beyond
- Explore options for special customer appreciation

DEBRIEF - LESSONS LEARNED:

There are lessons to be learned from any mission, either successful or unsuccessful. Use this opportunity to capture the learnings from your management team and your employees. Take time to either get people together or send out a survey to create the dialogue. The feedback will be invaluable - just in case this happens again.



MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS:

- What have we learned from this?
- What could we have done differently?
- What will we change?
- Did we live up to our values? Our mission?
- What will we do differently to serve our customers, our employees?

EMPLOYEE QUESTIONS:

- Best and worst experiences?
- What have they learned?
- What do they think we should do differently in the future?
- On a scale of 1 – 10 how did you feel about the company before this? How do you feel now?

BONUS OPPORTUNITIES:

- 1 Share the learnings from each group with whole team to further engage them and provide a sense of closure.
- 2 Arrange a personal 1:1 check in with your team as they come back – how are they feeling? Did anything significant happen during their time away where you might help them now? Loss of family members, financial concerns, spousal layoffs?

POLICY REVIEW:

Events happened quickly over the past few weeks. Take time to document your policies and practices so people are clear about future expectations and behaviours:

- Safe work practices and social distancing
- Calling in sick and return to work, medical notes
- Medical records review
- Working from Home Policy and Practices

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:

Virtual team management and managing virtual meetings will be an ongoing role for business leaders and supervisors. You want to be able to maximize productivity. Provide training for your teams; set consistent standards for your leaders.

- Best practices for running virtual teams
- Best practices for running virtual meetings

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS REVIEW:

COVID-19 may have exposed weaknesses in your sick pay plans or your benefit plans coverage. Review your experiences. Where were there gaps in coverage? Should you consider additional benefits to support mental health?

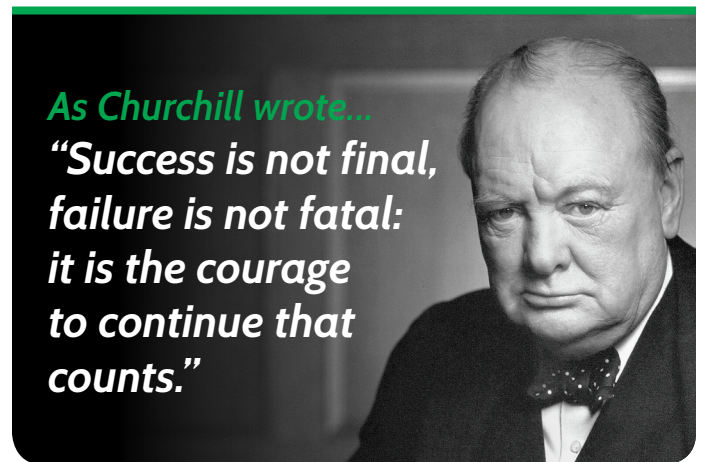
- Review Sick Pay practices
- Compensation for working at home – should you reimburse for home office expenses?
- Mental Health Support – Employee Assistance Plans

ONGOING COMMUNICATION PLANS:

It's easy to ease up on communication once the crisis is over, but the best companies continue to check in with their teams after the reentry. There are still lessons to be learned and asking for feedback is a great team engagement tool. Create check in points on a regular basis – how are people feeling, what's working, what's not working?

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

Once all your staff have successfully “landed”, your mission is over - That is, until the next time. Take a deep breath and celebrate.



No doubt, we may experience more challenges like this. Let all us learn and move on, ready for the next challenge. Did I just hear a cough?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frank Newman is the President of Newman Human Resources. He has been advising businesses on the best Human Resources practices for over 40 years. His website is www.newmanhumanresources.com.

