



Return to Work

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Introduction

At GattiHR we have been speaking with HR Leaders across industries to learn what organizations are doing to prepare to for returning to offices and non-essential workspaces. While the process remains unclear as States and Cities begin to make different decisions, we have found that HR leaders are taking a people first approach. In speaking with leaders, we have found that the thinking is largely focused on the tactical and the cultural.

Tactical

As companies prepare to return to work the major focus is making sure that the employees who do come into the office are not in contact with Covid-19. Leaders are re-examining everything from floor plans, to cleaning practices to food preparation and storage. Some companies are creating A Teams and B Teams to shift employees back into their office space and test the cleaning practices. While other companies are finding that working from home is working for them and that return to work will happen when the entire team can be there safely. As a result, return to work dates have been pushed back indefinitely.

In the process of examining and creating these new expectations many HR teams have been helped by creating new break out committees. Bringing together team members across different functions to collaborate by utilizing different expertise.

Cultural

In addition to the procedural aspects of engaging an in-office work force, HR leaders are also examining company culture. Companies that previously had a strong office presence culture are coming to see the merit in a work-from-home-accepting culture. Time spent in quarantine shows that employees will work and can work almost anywhere. The unexpected nature of the quarantine has allowed managers and teams to find new ways to communicate and approach tasks. One result is an increase in transparency around companywide decisions including the transition back to work.

HR Leaders are finding that employees want to be in the know and do well when they can make their own decisions about work and health and safety. However, employees are also asking for clarity of expectations. In speaking with HR leaders, we have found that companies are doing what they can to share information with transparency while also leaving some decisions to employees. Taking a mixed approach has allowed for a level of autonomy that keeps individuals safe and healthy while also keeping the best interest of the organization as heart. For example, many entrepreneurial businesses who previously had very lax policies on PTO or work from home are finding themselves fielding requests for more rigor and policy creation and struggling with what that sort of communication may do to the culture they'd worked so hard to create.

Overall Sentiment – Let's Treat People Really Well

The American work force is resilient, and the American worker is one of the toughest in the world. HR Leaders have seen the strength and adaptability of their employee population and all agree on one point; let's treat people really well. No matter what decision is made, making the health, safety and emotional security of employees a priority has been the focus of the HR community.