

Another area of significance importance we did not cover, in terms of moving from pandemic to performance, while continuing to work remotely – Health & Safety.

It would be interesting, and helpful to the group, if **everyone shares aspects of how they are addressing the topic of <post-COVID Health & Safety> in their organization.** This would be a great resource for the group to review and learn from if you submit real examples of what if anything has changed in this regard.

For example, assessment methods used to evaluate current program and gaps, new programs activities/resources offered, VOC, metrics/how to measure/report on performance of Health and Safety programs/resources, vendors utilized and/or communication templates/marketing materials utilized for employees/candidates.

On this topic, Dr Cappelli did mention one aspect when he mentioned that some <work from home> employees take less sick days and potentially work through/during times of “minor sickness”. Is this a benefit back to the employer offering work from home opportunities, or is it a potential detriment to employee wellness?

Let’s say we debate the opposite position for a moment.... Are employees who may be feeling “under the weather”, capable of doing their best work, minimizing risk/errors, working efficiently, being productive? May they also be prolonging recovery and/or risking a worsening of symptoms? Are they working while being sick because a policy allows unused sick days to be cashed in or converted to vacation time at the end of the year?

Overall, this leads to inconsistency in when/how an employee takes a sick day to rest/recover vs planning to “do their best” while being sick at work and not taking PTO. As well, by allowing and/or even simply not addressing this behavior, it could impact the overall wellness of the organization and demonstrates a lack of support and inconsistency in upholding a companywide culture of ethical practices and standards in maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all employees.

Sometimes having both onsite and remote workers will require you to look at both sides of the coin in regard to certain policies/practices, simply to ensure consistent interpretation and use by all. Member reactions to this?

#### **Health & Safety -important factors to consider post COVID:**

- It is critical to ensure a healthy workplace both in and out of the office.
- Real estate (corporate offices/buildings) must evolve to meet the changing needs of employees working in an office (i.e. flexible work spaces, reconfigurable furniture and walls, open areas for training and social events, air quality investments/filtration, even nature walks for employees to take on lunch/breaks, etc.).
- Employers must redefine the purpose of the office to facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing, in a safe and healthy environment.
- There has been an increase in anxiety and stress as a result of the pandemic. This, as well as the immense shift to working remote, has led to an increase in sedentary behaviors, sleep disruption and weight gain. Employees who work remote have increased working hours (in evening and on weekends) and due to often “unergonomic” or make shift work spaces in home

offices, the American Chiropractic Council has seen an increase of 92% in musculoskeletal conditions and pain - from working at home.

These all directly support the employers need to create, review and/or expand their Health and Safety programs and benefits (Mental and Physical Wellness Programs\*). Programs should account for the impact of employees working remotely/from home and provide solutions to maintain a physically and mentally healthy employee population, regardless of work location.

\*Financial Wellness programs are also growing in popularity/importance and should be evaluated to determine how to include within your organization, however these are often introduced as a separate/independent employee benefit, within the Health & Safety initiatives of the company.

Cushman & Wakefield conducted a study and asked more than 20,000 people from companies across the globe. Top responses were categorized into the 8 reasons listed below, reminding us that it may be prudent to review and understand why employees want to, RETURN TO THE OFFICE, as much as it is important to review and understand the perceived value of WORKING FROM HOME and why it may be preferred.

*“Why do you want to return to work IN YOUR corporate OFFICE?”*

1. To network with and be seen by leadership.
2. To feel more connected to the company culture.
3. To get better access to tools and similar resources.
4. To collaborate and attend meetings in person.
5. To be exposed to informal learning opportunities.
6. To separate work from personal life.
7. To have a better workspace set-up.
8. To socialize with colleagues.

Hint: Use this as a checklist for your organization, in terms of ways to support each in your physical workspace environment AND also as a checklist to brainstorm how these can be accomplished and provided to employees working remotely/from home.