



FIVE (ISH) GOOD IDEAS FOR A SUCCESSFUL REMOTE WORKPLACE

SEPT 28, 2021

Presented by: P.A. Neena Gupta, Partner

AGENDA

1. Survey Your People
2. Review Your Physical Workspace
3. Review Your Employee's Remote Workspace
4. Decide on Your Vaccination Policy
5. Draft Your Remote Workplace Policy

1 – SURVEY YOUR PEOPLE

Ask your Workplace about Return to Work

- Gauge interest in returning to the workplace
 - Full-time
 - Hybrid
 - Permanent
- What do employees like best about working from home?
- What do they miss most about working from the office?
- What is their preferred optimal choice?

1. SURVEY YOUR PEOPLE

- No need to re-invent wheel
- Communicate a summary of what people are thinking

- **Resources:**

<https://worktango.com/covid-19-remote-work-free-survey-templates-offer/>

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/coronavirus-return-to-work-survey-template/>

<https://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/15-questions-returning-work-survey-covid-19/>

RESOURCES

Sue Bingham, “To Make Hybrid Work, Solicit Employees’ Input”,
Harvard Business Review (July 29, 2021),
<https://hbr.org/2021/07/to-make-hybrid-work-solicit-employees-input>

2 – REVIEW YOUR PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Spacing of Work Stations
- Reduction of Workforce in the Office
- Staggered start times
- Reduction of Capacity in Boardrooms
- Hand Sanitizing Stations

2 – REVIEW YOUR PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Consult with landlord regarding ventilation in workplace/add ventilation

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/2020/09/covid-19-hvac-systems-in-buildings.pdf?la=en>

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/2020/09/covid-19-hvac-systems-in-buildings.pdf?la=en>

3. REVIEW YOUR EMPLOYEE'S REMOTE WORKSPACE

- **Ergonomics/IT**
 - Reliable internet
 - Laptop
 - Docking Stations
 - Chair
 - Desk
 - Mouse
 - Keyboard
 - Headset/Camera/Microphone

3. REVIEW YOUR EMPLOYEE'S REMOTE WORKSPACE

- **Confidentiality**
 - Spouse has work station in same area?
 - Children doing home work in ear shot?
 - Printing of paper – how disposed of?/Shredding?
- **Bonus Tip**
 - Check-in routinely to make sure employee has tools they need and they are working
- **Resource:**

<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/telework.html>

4. DECIDE ON YOUR VACCINATION POLICY

- Almost 80% (as of September 18, 2021) of population 12 or over fully vaccinated
- Almost 70% (as of September 18, 2021) of entire population vaccinated
- Vast majority of vaccinated population more comfortable if others vaccinated too!

Source:

- Dr. De Villa, Medical Officer of Health, “strongly” recommending each workplace have a vaccination policy.

<https://www.toronto.ca/news/toronto-medical-officer-of-health-strongly-recommending-toronto-employers-institute-covid-19-vaccination-policy-and-support-workplace-vaccination/>

4. DECIDE ON YOUR VACCINATION POLICY

- Check if legislated requirements (mostly healthcare/long-term care/day care and similar settings)
- Most common policy:
 - Vaccination or Rapid Antigen Test (RAT), using free tests distributed through Chambers of Commerce
 - Cadence is usually 2x a week
 - Refusal to vaccine or test, grounds for suspension without pay or termination
 - Vaccine Education Resources

4. DECIDE ON YOUR VACCINATION POLICY

- Popular policy, because gives individuals who are not vaccinated a pathway to work
- Exemptions limited to strict medical/sincerely-held “religious” belief or creed
- Medical exemptions should be written by healthcare practitioner within scope of practice, e.g. in Ontario, chiropractors are not licensed to deal with immunology issues and therefore, notes from chiropractors can be treated as insufficient
- Experts, however, do not consider RAT as good a solution as full vaccination
- Incorporate vaccination terms in your new hire template

5. DRAFT YOUR REMOTE WORK POLICY

- Which employees? All? Some?
- Will there be core dates/times/events where people are expected to be in the office
- Do you create cohorts? Group A, Group B, Group C
- Do you have bonuses for those who come to work physically
- Does remote work = flex-time?
- Rita Trichur, “Hybrid work risks becoming the next ‘career killer’ for women”, September 1, 2021, *The Globe and Mail* <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-hybrid-work-risks-becoming-the-next-career-killer-for-women/>

5. DRAFT YOUR REMOTE WORK POLICY

KPMG:

https://home.kpmg/ca/en/home/insights/2021/07/work-from-home-work-from-office-or-both.html?cid=ggl-cpc_ggl_ca_2021_hybrid-workforce&utm_medium=cpc&utm_source=ggl&utm_campaign=2021-hybrid-workforce&utm_term={keywords}&gclid=Cj0KCQjw18WKBhCUARIsAFiW7Jyg1JuH4rN0eAXSfFWhZNOjjg6Vx1cNX3rqrgA5LXOvaGY86GAcSBlaArEWEALw_wcB

Communitech:

<https://www.communitech.ca/start-and-grow/your-company/hybridwork/>

5. DRAFT YOUR REMOTE WORK POLICY

Ontario government resources:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/vjaw6ajmdj8y8ku/Vaccine%20Education%20Video.mp4?dl=0>

Canada government resource:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/awareness-resources.html?vaccination# covid-awareness-table>

6. RE-SURVEY THE WORKPLACE

- It's not once and done
- We will have to adjust
- Not sure how the pandemic will progress
- People's needs change rapidly (child's class shut down, elder care, mental health)
- What's working, what's not

7. INVEST IN MENTAL HEALTH

Findings released today from the Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health indicate that **about one in five** (21%) Canadian adults aged 18 and older screened positive for at least one of three mental disorders that were assessed: major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Source: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210318/dq210318a-eng.htm>

8. RECONSIDER PAY

- **1 in 5 Canadians planning on quitting unless there's a pay raise**

Source: Emily Douglas, 1 in 5 Canadians planning on quitting unless there's a pay raise, September 27, 2021, Human Resources Director (Canada)

https://www.hcamag.com/ca/news/general/one-in-five-canadians-vow-to-quit-if-hr-doesnt-offer-them-a-pay-rise/311355?utm_source=GA&utm_medium=20210927&utm_campaign=HRDCW-Breaking-20210927&utm_content=369379E8-8B79-4F0E-827B-FA679F810CE7&tu=369379E8-8B79-4F0E-827B-FA679F810CE7

USEFUL RESOURCES

Gowling WLG – COVID-19 Insights

<https://gowlingwlg.com/en/topics/covid-19-how-will-coronavirus-impact-your-business/canadian-resources/>

Insights: Mandatory Vaccinations

<https://gowlingwlg.com/en/insights-resources/articles/2020/workplaces-vaccination-policies-to-mandate-or-not/>



USEFUL RESOURCES

- Work from home – 30% of workforce worked from home from Q2/2021 (up from 4% in 2016)

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210804/dq210804b-eng.htm>

- COVID-19 safety plan:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-workplace-health-safety>

<http://www.workplacesafetyplanbuilder.labour.gov.on.ca/>

QUESTIONS?



P. A. NEENA GUPTA

Partner



Neena.Gupta@gowlingwlg.com



+1 519 575 7501