



Period of Adjustment After Shutdown

A Question and Answer Session
with Kathy Carl





OnSolve® Chief of Human Resources Officer is Kathleen Carl. Kathy is responsible for increasing employee engagement, recruitment, retention and productivity while overseeing employee relations, benefits and training. Kathy has over 25 years of human resources experience with leadership positions in the pharmaceutical and utility industries. Kathy has worked for organizations of all sizes from start-up biotechnology companies to global organizations, including DuPont Merck, Wyeth and Sanofi.

We spoke with Kathy about some of the considerations regarding helping people adjust, and feel safe and comfortable, when they return to work. Here is a transcript of that session, edited for clarity and conciseness.



Q:

Do you think people will have a tough time adjusting to being around others again and returning to work as it was?

A:

We're going to experience all kinds of reactions, I think. Some people will really fall right back into the swing of things, especially those who always had a sometimes-remote work profile. Others will struggle with anxiety about catching the virus, which will not be eradicated by then, and they will likely still be reading the news each day and be worried. Some will be taking care of elder adults, some may have compromised immune systems, some are pregnant or have children at home from school. These employees will have concerns about being back in the broader population.

Q:

When do you think people will return to work?

A:

The big question. We don't know when it's safe. There's much to do before we bring people back, and we're going to take the time to do it right. One thing is, we're experienced at hybrid work or work from home arrangements. So we can stay that way for the immediate future, where those workers with special needs or concerns, and those workers who aren't yet comfortable working closely around others, can be productive and contribute from home.

Q:

Beyond the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) requirements, what else are we doing to make people feel comfortable about returning?

A:

For a couple of years now we've had unlimited sick days. They're not all paid of course, but they are unlimited. We've managed that well, and it's not ever really been an issue for us. The new guidelines allow us to take people's temperatures when they come to the office, and I think that's going to provide some comfort to everyone.

We're also letting everyone know the steps we're taking to sanitize the whole office environment. Just for instance, we're cleaning the air systems. We're redoing the filters. And we're working with our landlords at all our sites to make sure that the cleaning crews meet our stringent specifications.

And we're not rushing, because we don't have to. Because we're successful at remote working we can take time getting fully back in the office. That grace period will help us all feel comfortable that we're offering a safe environment for our employees to return to.

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Did You Know?

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) is an Act of Congress from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 meant to require certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for COVID-19 related reasons.

Visit dol.gov for more info.

Q:

What are the two most important things about returning to work?

A:

In order of importance. Keep safety first and foremost in the forefront. Your employees will thank you for that. We have to make sure that we're not doing anything — if at all possible — to compromise safety and a safe environment for our employees. That's number one.

And then secondly, communicate. Even if you don't have anything new to say, just check in with people.

Let everyone know what you're doing, where you are, what the management team is thinking as you go through this process.

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