



Managing your workforce through COVID-19

Planning the workforce experience as we move to the new reality

As we get ready for the new reality for business and the next steps for employers who have furloughed employees, important decisions lie ahead. Your actions will be under intense scrutiny, and a number of factors need to be considered to do right by your employees and ensure your business is well-placed to succeed.

As a key pillar in your Enterprise wide Operational Resilience, how you manage your employees has never been more important, or more visible. Businesses are being asked to respond and adapt quicker than ever and the following weeks are critical to ensure your business returns to full momentum post COVID-19.

As a sign of just how impactful COVID-19 has been, many organisations are having to put in place rapid furlough response plans. Developing a plan to maintain engagement with your workforce and preparing for their return can make all the difference.

Employees may have been at home disconnected from the business, people will be stressed and need extra

support, the business may look very different, and so a robust engagement plan is crucial.

Not only should we consider the practical implications, but we must also consider how we enable engagement strategies. Maintaining empathy and connection is crucial to enabling a rapid ramp up in resource with an engaged workforce once business demand returns.

It's also important to recognise that now is the time to seize opportunity: act now to adapt your workforce and ways of working to the 'new normal'.

If responded to correctly, the return from furlough process is a critical first step in setting up your future organisation for success.



A three point plan to help you deliver your furlough response:

1 Set the principles:

Empathy, Pace, Connection

Interactive virtual workshop with key stakeholders

A short collaboration workshop to decide on the forward plan and pace of movement. Paying close attention to Employee Experience and the moments that matter during this challenging time is a true differentiator. The facilitator of this session will need to manage the conversation through furlough decisions, offboarding and onboarding user journeys, alongside experience design and supporting HR strategies.

2 Set the strategy:

Adjusting the service delivery to the new reality

Remote HR advisory and developing the new reality

Having a HR advisory service that can meet the needs of the business is critical. You must make sure your team and the employees line manager are able to provide the right service at this difficult time, ensuring Employee Experience is front of mind. Flexibility in your resourcing, including the ability to ramp up and down at speed, will be critical. As part of your approach, you will need to work to ensure your communication and change management strategies meet the needs of your stakeholder groups. Using the latest behavioural science methods will help you to support your employees through the change.

3 Enable through technology:

A consistent, streamlined experience

Remote technology enablement to facilitate recovery and the new reality

Enabling a portal and knowledge base for employees to self serve answers to questions while they are on furlough and then preparing to return to work can increase employee engagement during this challenging transition. For HR professionals and business partners, the implementation of virtual agents for common queries allows them to focus on more strategic, complex issues. Through workflow and manager self-service, tasks related to onboarding can be monitored through to completion, ensuring a better Employee Experience as they return to the workforce.



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