



Kansas State Council of SHRM, Inc.
825 S. Kansas, Suite 502 • Topeka, KS 66612
(888) 332-6248 • office@ksshrm.com



KS SHRM COVID-19 WEBINAR DISCUSSION

May 15, 2020

Topic: HR Roundtables

ADA, FMLA and Accommodations

No notes available

Communication

1. Best way to communicate possible staffing changes--only when something is changing, or on a regular basis to keep them informed regardless of actions.

Communicate early and often to the extent possible. If you wait until you have all of the details, you've likely missed the chance to provide needed information when it can be most useful. Consider using something like "based on the information we have at this time..." when communicating about something not yet solidified.

Ensure messaging is consistent at all levels of the organization – tone, content, etc.

Make sure to cover/address topics such as:

- *What they (your audience) can expect moving forward – clarity can be reassuring and allow people to prepare as needed (practically and emotionally)*
- *Resources that may be helpful (make sure to verify the credibility of these resources)*

2. How often are other communicating to their employees regarding Covid-19 issues, return to work, etc?
Most in our discussion group were communicating weekly or more often with a senior leader group and disseminating information to employees every other week or as needed in the case of more frequent changes.

In general, senior leader groups are meeting less frequently than at the start of the pandemic (i.e. daily to weekly).

3. sign language interpreters, real time captioning, how much do you share (e.g., furlough considerations, back to work, etc)

No one on the call had experience using sign language interpreters or real time captioning.

"How much to share" is a bit subjective, however, there was discussion about the benefits of transparency in helping to allay concerns and fears. Sharing considerations that have been made and avenues explored in advance of furlough or layoff demonstrates the compassion and responsibility taken in these tough times.



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4. Virtual networking ideas between colleagues
Nothing will work for everyone so offering different options is helpful, i.e. end of the day happy hour, lunch groups, coffee connection points.

Daily or weekly engagement opportunities like pictures on a specific topic, recipe exchanges, scavenger hunt challenges, inspirational quotes, etc. were some ideas shared.
5. What should we be communicating at this point?
Return to work plans, boundaries and expectations. If returning to work – what are new policies and procedures employees need to be aware of? What can they expect going forward?

Cultural & Morale Impacts of COVID-19

- A lot of discussion about the process of reopening and the anxiety that comes with that process
 - discussed how to create ways to keep EEs connected and engaged
 - covered efforts to address EEs fears and concerns through communication and virtual presence
- Discussed how to bridge the gap between opposing views. (ie- helping managers who are very procedural recognize the need for empathy and understanding during this time)
 - Discussed bringing the conversation to their level and finding common ground to have to discuss from an in-between position - similar to where we always seem to be in HR!
- Covered employee requests and concerns surrounding unemployment vs working.
 - There was some concern over EEs choosing unemployment because it could potentially pay them more than their wages.
 - We also discussed request processes and approvals for accommodations
 - Good points about making sure employees understand that keeping your job also includes job security, PTO, retirement, benefits, etc
- Discussed the way that this pandemic has likely highlighted cultural issues that were already there.
 - It is very unlikely that your culture improved without any intervention but this may give us an opportunity to see issues that were going on behind the scenes that have really been forced to the surface.
 - It could be possible to adjust engagement surveys or add questions specific to this pandemic
 - Some discussed avoiding surveys right now but others were encouraging about continuing the process in spite of or even because of the pandemic
 - Even in the best culture - it is still necessary to be more flexible and understanding right now to improve the culture
- Stacey reviewed the high points of Self Care for our group and the importance of making sure leaders take care of themselves as well as their staff
 - TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF - EEs will notice if you don't (even if you don't think they will)
 - Stay hydrated
 - Make sure you take breaks
 - Make sure you eat good healthy food
 - Get exercise
 - Stay focused on gratitude and your blessings
 - HR people are like first responders when it comes to the emotional aspects of responding to EEs needs
 - Compassion fatigue is a very real thing



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- You have to step up your game during times like this to make sure you can get through it too!
- We ended with a brief discussion on the future impacts of the current pandemic
 - The proof has been made that more flexible work requirements are possible
 - We discussed several positives that came from this and hope to see them continue but we will see where the world takes us all.

Planning for the Future of Work

- Explaining the "new normal."
 - *It all boils down to communication – in writing, in video, in person – spell it out clearly*
 - *One bank is using animated videos (how to wash hands, social distancing, washing surfaces, etc.) – and requiring sign offs for each employee*
 - *A manufacturer took pictures of where areas are that are marked off to include in training. All documents & materials are posted on the intranet for re-reading anytime. They also set up a special email address covid@x.com for employees to send questions to for answers.*
 - *Must have a plan in place to ensure clarity & consistency*
 - *Consider using an Anonymous Survey to get feedback from staff – concerns, what like to see, face coverings, client/customer needs, physical modifications, cleaning*
 - *How to continue to utilize digital/virtual formats on an ongoing basis*
- How do you go about succession planning? – We didn't get to this question.
- How long are others waiting to bring all employees into their physical work space?
 - *It's not as much about time, as it is about ensuring safety for staff & customers*
 - *Depends on the Governor's orders / Federal guidelines*
 - *Phases – some are going 10-20 people at time*
- Managing staff remotely (work from home); Suggestions for Technology
 - *If you have extra computers, monitors, etc. use them. Maybe the computers in the training room can be repurposed. Consider needs for those working remotely and have plans. Implement telework agreements. Check in regularly with those working outside of the office. Be available for questions/concerns. Know what your expectations and timelines are. Follow your policies.*
- My organization didn't pause when this began, but we're worried about a second wave. What steps or plans should we be making now to be prepared?
 - *KDHE is a great reference point if people are traveling or taking vacations.*
 - *Have a Pandemic Plan – know what you're going to do "IF"*
- What changes do HR professionals see in how work is done in their workplace, is anyone doing some type of workforce planning based on those changes.
 - *Negligence Claims – will your work comp cover? There is a law in process in Kansas to 'presume' the virus was obtained thru work. Unless you have evidence to verify, don't record it.*



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- *Insurance – do you have employer liability insurance? EL not GL. Attorney recommendation to ensure you have it should you be sued in court over COVID-19.*
- *Performance Management – it's more important now than ever to follow your policies*

- **What should be considered to develop plan?**
 - *If you don't have a plan, contact your attorney for a template.*
 - *Pandemic Planning – cleaning, hygiene, social distancing, what happens when, isolation, leave, recordkeeping, guidance around staying home if sick, return to work criteria (if sick, timelines, symptomatic/asymptomatic, coming back from required work from home, etc.)*
 - *How-To's - can we use the same pencil? Do we need to purchase dirty/clean receptacles? Do we need to give special consideration to those with bonafide concerns?*
 - *Staffing - Staggered work schedules? A/B Teams for all/some?*
 - *Compensation – paying people when off work (is it PPP or not?)*
 - *Mask Safety – to wear masks or not to wear masks? How many should be ordered, where to get them? Cloth? N95? Medical-grade? Cloth face masks are not PPE, so don't require a hazard analysis, but you should make sure people know how to wear properly, launder regularly, when shouldn't be worn, and consider having disposable masks available if cloth masks are forgotten at home. Pro tip: a piece of paper towel inside your masks helps prevent moisture build-up.*
 - *Temperature Checks – thermal temperatures aren't considered conclusive. Writing down a person temperature is considered individually identifiable health information and would need to be protected and guarded like any HIPAA document. Attorney recommendation is to use a check mark instead. Consider your 'why' for doing them – is it to make your associates or customers feel better? How are you affirming someone's temp has been taken? Some are requiring wristbands or stamps to validate daily screening.*

- **When does the second wave hit and will there be a third, testing, vaccinations, etc.**
 - *No one really knows. Have a plan, just in case.*

Recruitment

It's more important now, more than ever, to spend more time working with our candidates. Help them prepare for the interview: know what to expect from the process, who will be participating, test the tech, etc. These are all things that will set them up for a good interview experience, and it will also ensure they have a good impression of the recruiting experience and you as a recruiter.

Most interviews are being conducted virtually. Initial ones, especially are done by phone/video. Any in-person final interviews are done adhering to social distancing guidelines.

There was general agreement on the need to be transparent with candidates regarding any PPE requirements for the job prior to extending any offer.



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There are several options for virtual onboarding through different platforms. Some are utilizing those options fully, and some have simply incorporated DocuSign for signatures with a mostly manual process. Also, there are electronic options for I-9 verification. Some are utilizing those programs, which were in place pre-pandemic; others are handling document review in person with social distancing guidelines.

Recruiting avenues during this time include LinkedIn, Indeed, industry-specific professional organization forums. Some have participated in virtual networking events.

Recruitment post-pandemic will likely be changed on some levels. Depending on the timeline of the virus, it's likely most university and in-person career fairs will be available as virtual-only. Many in-person networking events will likely be suspended. Recruiters may have to spend more time researching and leveraging their networks (LinkedIn, etc.) to uncover new candidates.

Direct impacts to recruiting staff varies industry to industry. Some industries have seen an uptick in job requisitions, while others are under hiring freezes. Some recruiting teams are adding to staff to handle the workload, and others have assigned project work to recruiters. Now is a good time to look at all parts of the recruiting process to identify areas where the system or candidate experience could be improved. Especially reviewing the mobile experience, as the number of mobile clicks and applies has grown significantly since mid-March. It's important to determine if our mobile process is too cumbersome for candidates.

Depending on the industry and the organization, some recruiters are able to take this time to upskill. Some employers see this as an investment in their future success and as a retention tool.

Again, some companies under hiring freezes are shifting recruiters to project work—especially those who fall directly under the HR umbrella. Many are working on training initiatives and process improvements.

Some companies have looked at and/or implemented texting solutions to help them better engage candidates. Some HRIS/ATS platforms have texting integrated, making this task much more manageable.

There was a good discussion around employee referrals as a recruiting tool. Here is a summary of some of the options and general notes different recruiters mentioned their employers had in place:

- \$1,000 paid to employee (referrer)
- \$100 paid to employee (referrer) and \$25 paid to applicant (referred)
- \$25 paid to employee (referrer) after 90 days and \$75 paid to employee(referrer) after one year
- \$50 paid to employee (referrer) after 30 days and \$200 paid to employee (referrer) after 90 days
- Referral amounts are based on position—higher amounts for more specialized or executive positions
- Increased referral amount when in greater need of specific staff: they ran a promotion for a specified timeframe, and referral dollars paid out for those specific positions hired within the promotional period were higher than regular payouts
- Some have referral payouts at 30 days, 90 days, and one year
- Some require the referrer to complete and submit a form
- Most require the candidate list the referring employee on the application



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Safety in the Workplace

- Guidelines, Checklists for this...
 - Several law firms have come out with some materials, LEAR's Safe Work Playbook, SHRM back to work resources
- Potential guidelines/timelines for phasing out all extra safety precautions currently being taken.
 - One participant said they were planning to keep extra precautions for 18 months.
 - Others did not know.
- Requiring masks - how monitor?
 - Lots of companies are providing masks.
 - Most are encouraging them, rather than requiring them.
 - Some are requiring them.
- Safely returning to work and continuing to work/What are others doing as best practices in this area? What are the recommended best practices to start bringing employees back to work and ensuring safety and proper distancing? What safety precautions are companies putting in place to keep employees safe when they return to work.
 - Body temperature checks at entry points
 - Posting COVID-19 questionnaire at entry points
 - Issuing daily stickers or badges to employees once cleared
 - Providing hand sanitizers and tissues
 - Painting or taping 6 feet to show standing points
 - Blocking open doors to reduce hand contact
 - Positioning tables and chairs in breakrooms to maintain social distancing
 - Prohibiting use of shared water fountains, coffee pots, microwaves, etc.
 - Increasing sanitizing of high touch points
 - Reducing physical meeting size or restricting large staff meetings
 - Staggering shifts
- What is required PPE? What is recommended PPE? And what is HR's role in getting leadership to address? Who really is essential to work onsite? PPE, who provided it, the employee, customer, or business, requiring PPE compliance
 - Many companies are providing cloth masks for employees; majority of participants are encouraging, but not requiring it.
 - Filtering facemasks (such as N95s) are regulated by OSHA. Most participants whose organizations are not required to provide these are not allowing them so as not to trigger additional OSHA requirements
 - Consider PPE for employees who are responsible for temperature checks, including cloth face masks and gloves.