

Taking care of your people during coronavirus



TIP SHEET



Business leaders are in uncharted territory with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In addition to the inevitable economic impact, the fear, stress and anxiety created are negatively impacting employee productivity, engagement and wellbeing. This crisis is unlike anything in our recent history. There is an unprecedented amount of panic and uncertainty that requires effective and principled leadership to navigate.



Be agile and responsive

While there is pressure to go on with business as usual, a crisis requires rapid problem solving and adaptability. Your existing resources and mitigation plans might not apply, so being agile and responsive will be critical to successfully guide your people through this.



Adapt your policies & programmes

Assess your company policies and benefits to ensure your employees are supported and can be effective regardless of their job type or location. For parents and caregivers, there is an additional layer of disruption that will require more flexibility.



Set realistic goals

Coronavirus will have widespread impact on everything. Instead of putting additional pressure on your people and expecting them to make magic happen, be honest and realistic about what is achievable given the circumstances. Adjust your plans, set new goals and focus on small wins.



Prioritise mental wellbeing

The combination of fear, uncertainty, big changes and social distancing are sure to have a negative impact on the mental wellbeing of your employees. You can support them by offering mental wellbeing coaching, EAP and stress and resilience programmes.



Encourage health & wellbeing

Healthy habits like staying active, eating well, getting enough sleep and reducing stress levels can help to keep the immune system strong. Despite the many disruptions in their lives, encourage your employees to maintain or even prioritise their healthy daily routines – not only for their physical health but also mental health.



Consider financial wellbeing support

The volatility and declines in the financial markets will no doubt contribute to employee anxiety. Help them focus on the longer-term and offer financial wellbeing resources to eliminate financial stress.



Communicate globally

Your people are living with uncertainty and are consuming information in excessive amounts. To reduce panic and avoid the spread of misinformation, communicate often and be transparent with your employees. If you have employees across the world, be mindful of cultural and regional differences. In addition to the HR teams, leverage your wellbeing champions network to ensure that each employee gets the most regionally relevant information.



Demonstrate empathy

At the end of the day, we are all in this together. Continue to show your people you are hearing their concerns and that you prioritise their health and wellbeing above all.

“

Take care of your employees, they will take care of your business.”

Sir Richard Branson



Ready to take your employee wellbeing programme to the next level? [Talk to an expert at Virgin Pulse](#) to get started.

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