

COVID-19's Impact on Employees

A Summary of Workplace Experience Survey Results



We are facing a time with unprecedented challenges that most of us could not have imagined. The impact this pandemic has had in a matter of weeks has been overwhelming. Both employees and companies are feeling the effects. How companies respond right now will have a lasting impact on the productivity and engagement of employees.

Two weeks ago, [People Element](#) began surveying employees about COVID-19's effect on the workplace. We surveyed over 2,000 people anonymously across a variety of industries to gather feedback on how companies are managing this global crisis.

The [COVID-19 Response Study](#) will remain open throughout this crisis so we can monitor feedback and share our findings as things develop. Please share your feedback in this quick [60-second survey](#).

What Employees Are Saying During the Pandemic

Now that we are a couple weeks into the “new normal”, we’re seeing some central themes:

Lack of job security



- More than 4 in 10 people (43%) are concerned about job security
- More than [16 million Americans](#) (10% of workforce) have lost their job in just 3 weeks
- 80% of people who've received additional pay/hours feel more secure about their job

Need for better communication



- Only 67% of people say their company has communicated a clear plan
- Nearly half of people in a Chief Officer role say they haven't communicated a clear plan
- Companies over 50,000 people have the highest ratings in how they're managing communication

Challenge of remote work



- Nearly one-third of people say they can't effectively work remote
- Challenges with infrastructure, caring for children at home, and remote work being prohibited
- Up to [30% of the workforce](#) may be remote by 2021 compared to the current rate of 3.6%

Focus on health and well-being

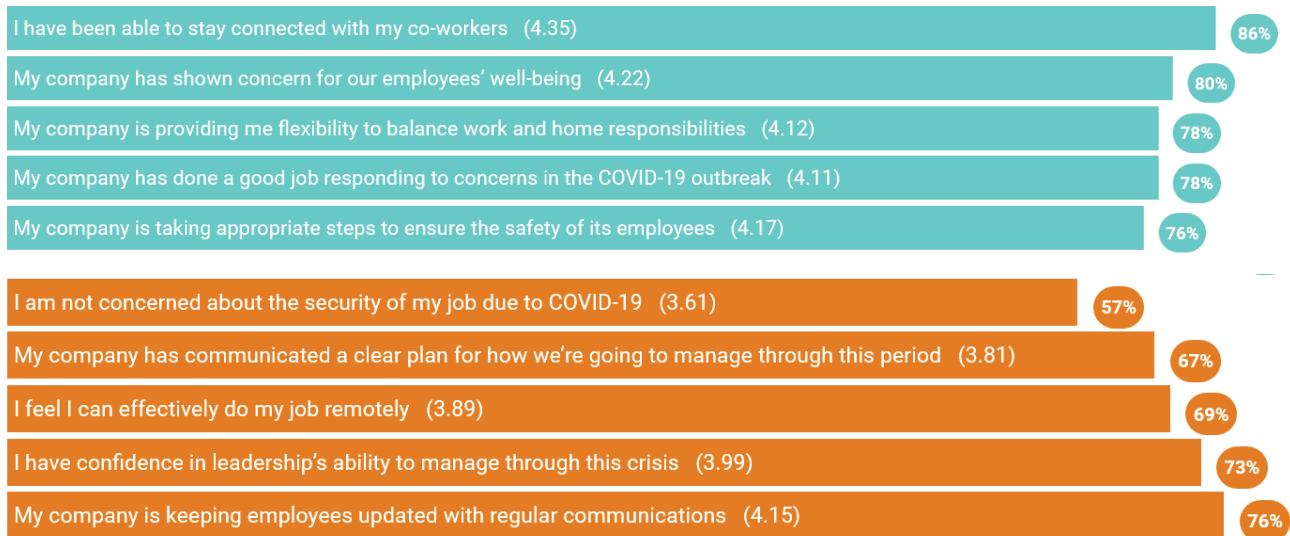


- Nearly 1 in 3 people reference “health” and “safety” as being top of mind right now
- 80% of people feel their company is concerned for their well-being
- Leaders can increase confidence in employees by showing more empathy in communications

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A Detailed Look into Employees' Experiences

The following sections provide detailed survey results and insight into what people are experiencing in the workplace during COVID-19.



Scores of (4) and (5) on a 1-5 agreement scale are combined to represent a percentage of favorable responses. Results for each question are displayed in order of favorability from highest (blue) to lowest scores (orange). Mean scores are displayed in parenthesis.

Regardless of change in work environments and increased remote work, 86% of people have been able to stay connected to co-workers. While staying connected has the most favorable response, 31% of people haven't been able to work effectively while remote. Working with kids and spouses at home, and lack of infrastructure to get work done, are new challenges to address.

Across feedback, we're seeing how critical the role managers and leaders play in a crisis. Leaders need to check-in regularly, listen to what's going on, and communicate with understanding and empathy for their people. Feedback suggests that companies can do more to put the health and safety of their employees first.

Before COVID-19, the concept of employee engagement was the focus of many companies to strengthen business and boost people. Times are quickly changing and our approach to engagement is changing. How do companies attempt to engage employees in their work when faced with issues of job security, chaotic working environments, or trying to stay safe while going to the grocery store?

The actions leaders take now will determine what happens when this crisis ends and the [impact on employees' engagement, productivity and commitment](#).

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Things are changing quickly and often, and people are asking for clear, consistent and frequent communication to build confidence in their company. We see a higher percentage of positive ratings from those who said their company was quick to respond and communicated concern for people's well-being.

“The leader's role is to define reality, then give hope.” (Napoleon)

The number one suggestion for leaders and companies is to provide frequent and authentic communication. People feel leaders need to connect with them in a real and honest way. At least 10% of people comment on needing honest communication about the future.

As seen in areas top of mind for employees, companies have an opportunity to build confidence by showing empathy and understanding. Leaders can help reduce stress among employees by showing they understand what people are feeling and experiencing.

Comments related to Compensation & Benefits fall into two main areas of concern: impact to revenue and individual financial stability. Comments include 1) lack of communication for a plan on revenue impact, and 2) not acknowledging personal situations - no accommodations for extra pay, PTO or childcare assistance, and prioritizing company finances over peoples' well-being.

Facing Challenges Head On

As COVID-19 tears across the globe leaving many in turmoil, companies are navigating through uncertain times. During this crisis, companies will move from a focus on [performance to survival](#) with increasing pressure to keep work going while caring for their people.

What we've learned in this initial feedback:

- Put your people first
- [Show empathy](#) and understanding
- Give people information, be authentic
- Communicate frequently, clearly, and consistently
- Leaders and managers need to check-in with their people regularly
- Provide guidance and resources to support remote and onsite work

We will continue to monitor survey results over the coming weeks, please share your [feedback](#).

For resources and information on what other companies are doing to manage through this crisis, go to the People Element [COVID-19 resource page](#).

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