

Assessing Workforce Readiness – Questions to Ask

Businesses are constantly focused on balancing supply and demand needs with workforce capabilities. When economic and financial uncertainty hits, or the unexpected impact of a global pandemic, tough decisions need to be made. As businesses re-emerge from hard times, there is a newfound sense of resilience and optimism. During this recovery period, it is essential for organizations to make strategic plans for the future by assessing their workforce needs.

Use these questions as a starting guide to facilitate conversations with leaders at your organization to evaluate workforce readiness after COVID-19.

Leadership

- What caught you by surprise?
- What are you most proud of?
- How well were you able to execute our business continuity plan?
- What did you feel you/your team were not prepared for?
- What did you learn about our organization in regard to our speed and agility to move quickly?
- What is one thing our organization could have done differently/better?
- How has this pandemic shifted the way your department operates?
- What changes in work processes will you keep in place?
- Do you feel your team possesses the skills needed to manage through this crisis? Why or why not?
- What did you learn about your team's abilities to deal with change?
- What will your talent plan look like in order to meet future business goals?
- Do you feel better prepared if another unforeseen event were to happen in the future? Why or why not?

Engagement

- What has been most helpful when communicating with your team?
- Did your department feel there was good communication by senior leaders? What did they say was missing?
- What concerns are you hearing from your team as we prepare to bring staff back onsite?
- How were you able to reinforce our values/culture with employees during this time?
- How will you nurture the new skills that emerged from your team?

Technology

- What technology issues occurred during this time?
- Were you able to resolve technology issues quickly? Why or why not?
- What new equipment was needed to keep your team productive?
- What was the biggest challenge for your team related to virtual work?
- How did the use of technology save time or money?

Workspace

- For those working remote, how were expectations communicated?
- What were the biggest challenges in managing remote work?
- How are you evaluating the continued ability for remote work versus onsite work?
- For those working onsite, how did you reassure your team about safety? How did you emphasize hygiene practices? How did you handle objections?

HR Policies/Practices

- How did the shift in HR policies (i.e. attendance, paid sick, personal time, etc.) affect your team?
- How did you ensure diversity and inclusion were not negatively impacted?
- How did you conduct performance feedback during this time?

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- What benefits do you feel were most beneficial for employees (i.e. EAP, recognition/gratitude, increased pay, flexible schedules, paid lunches, etc.)

When assessing workforce readiness, it is also best practice to conduct listening sessions or take pulse “temperature check” surveys to understand and address employee concerns. Questions directly toward employees could include:

- Did you feel connected to your department/team?
- Did your manager/leader do a good job of regularly communicating with you?
- Which communication methods seemed to be the most effective for you?
- Did you feel equipped/prepared to work from home?
- What new skills did you learn during this time (i.e. upskilling, training, learning)?
- What work process was challenging? What worked well for you?