



## Use the experience of the shutdown to improve the work environment

**Businesses can improve their work environment by making good use of the experiences gained during the shutdown period, where many companies have been forced to reorganize and to allow employees to perform their jobs significantly different from what they are used to.**

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There was no time to prepare and no past experiences to draw on when companies almost two months ago were shut down and virtually all employees were sent home. Since then, the crisis has forced most people to work and collaborate in new ways. The new working conditions have, however, provided a unique opportunity to rethink workflows and the work environment – and to assess whether the new-found experiences can be used to create value for the company going forward.

Willis Towers Watson's health experts in Corporate Wellbeing help companies with implementing targeted, preventive measures that improve employee health, well-being and the work environment. They have compiled a list of points of attention that can be used in relation to employees returning to work, but which are also relevant to those who continue to work from home.

### Listen to the employees and managers

Create an overview of what has been challenging and what has worked well during the shutdown. Listen to the experiences of the employees and managers and find out if the shutdown has led to new workflows and procedures that are worth sticking to.

Use the following questions as inspiration to gathering experience from the organization:

- What new opportunities has the shutdown provided for working life?
- How can the experiences from the shutdown be incorporated in the company's overall policies and procedures going forward?
- How has the shutdown affected the work-life balance?
- What experiences have managers and employees gathered while working from home – and how can the teams use these experiences in the future?
- Have the new working methods increased or decreased the flexibility in how tasks are completed? How has the assignment and problem solving of tasks been handled?
- What are the learnings from virtual meetings – can these experiences be transferred to physical meetings when the workplace reopens?

## Focus on employee well-being

Employees respond differently during a shutdown as well as when the company reopens. Not all people express their concerns and worries, which is why it is important to monitor and prioritize employee well-being – even for those employees who continue to work from home.

Use the following advice as inspiration to focus on employee well-being:

- Create a space (maybe virtual) where it is okay to share concerns – professional as well as personal.
- Prioritize frequent – formal and informal – One-on-One talks between employees and managers.
- Use digital tools (preferably with video feed) to ensure personal and professional support between managers and employees.
- Measure employee well-being continuously. Ask questions about the employees' mood and use i.e. a 'well-being barometer' from 1 to 10 or make use of digital tools – such as Woba – that can provide a basis for talking about employee well-being in the future. [Find out more about Woba](#)
- Involve employees in difficult decisions whenever possible to increase employee influence on own work and to create a sense of closeness during these times of distance.
- Show the employees that you trust they are doing their best and are performing satisfactorily. Get input from employees on how management can show that they have put their trust in the employees.
- Visible management is a must. Management needs to be especially clear in its communication and actions (in both the physical and virtual forums). This can be ensured by establishing more frequent contact points with the employees.

## Strengthen the workplace relationships

Working from home has completely changed the way employees work and cooperate. The experience can help the company improve the way people work and relate to each other.

Use the advice below as inspiration to strengthen collaboration and the workplace relationships:

- Retain the informal structures – talk to each other and exchange knowledge and experiences at regular virtual meetings. It will benefit people who are still working from home by increasing the influence on own work and by strengthening the sense of community.
- Keep the new digital habits where it makes sense.
- Talk about the new demands on the physical work environment – for those who are returning to the workplace but also for those who continue to work from home.
- Consider what new types of social events can support the employee sense of community – in the current situation as well as in the long run.

## Remember the physical health

Until sports and health clubs reopen, employees may find it difficult to maintain their physical health.

Use the advice below as inspiration to improving the employees' physical health:

- Engage in exercise at work through online training programs to strengthen the employees' health and sense of community. Find training programs at [www.pulsenop.dk](http://www.pulsenop.dk)
- Make the home office a more permanent solution and inspire employees to design their home workstations in an ergonomically correct manner – i.e. by sharing [the recommendations from Nielsen Care and Willis Towers Watson](#).

## The latest findings

Find out more about how the shutdown has affected the work environment:

- 46 percent would like to continue to work from home after the corona crisis. According to a survey by YouGov on behalf of IF Skadeforsikring. [Read the press release](#)
- 83 percent of managers feel that working from home is working well and that employees are showing a can-do attitude. According to a survey by Lederne. [Read the article](#)
- 50 percent of managers expect that their place of work will make more use of working from home going forward. According to a survey by Lederne. [Read the article](#)