Reimagining the workplace
Employee wellbeing in the new normal

May 21, 2020
Requests

- Submit questions to the **panelists** using the Q&A panel
  - Q&A will automatically open, but use the toolbar to reopen this panel if necessary
- Message the **host** using the chat panel
Today’s speakers

Ofelia Isabel
Willis Towers Watson
Managing Director and Toronto Market Leader
Host

Dr. Jeff Levin-Scherz
Willis Towers Watson
North American Health Management Practice Leader

Wendy Poirier
Willis Towers Watson
Global Wellbeing Leader

Kristy McClellan
Willis Towers Watson
Talent Management Leader
Agenda

Setting the stage: The world as we knew it has changed

Key questions around returning to the workplace

State of employee wellbeing and what organizations are doing to manage it

Expectations of leaders as we restore stability
Setting the stage: The world as we knew it has changed
### Setting the stage: The world as we knew it has changed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A world faced with...</th>
<th>Global health crisis</th>
<th>Global economic crisis</th>
<th>Humanitarian crisis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technological enablement</strong> – An imperative for workforce productivity</td>
<td><strong>40 – 70% of the world’s population could become infected</strong></td>
<td><strong>Volatile global financial markets, supply chain disruptions, increased unemployment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lockdowns, self-isolation, school closures, social distancing, travel bans</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speed is key</strong> – Rapid and purposeful decision making over precision</td>
<td><strong>Flatter, leaner organizations with distributed workforce</strong></td>
<td><strong>Heightened anxiety – Demand for information and transparency</strong></td>
<td><strong>Safety and wellbeing is paramount</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost pressures, revenue challenges</strong></td>
<td><strong>Safety and wellbeing is paramount</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clarifying the ‘business’ agenda for the crisis &amp; beyond</strong></td>
<td><strong>Creating a purpose-driven impact on the ‘community’</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership dilemma – striking the right balance.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Caring for ‘self’ and preparing to lead through the crisis</strong></td>
<td><strong>Supporting and guiding ‘employees’ through uncertainty</strong></td>
<td><strong>Creating a purpose-driven impact on the ‘community’</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Global health crisis
- 40 – 70% of the world’s population could become infected

Global economic crisis
- Volatile global financial markets, supply chain disruptions, increased unemployment

Humanitarian crisis
- Lockdowns, self-isolation, school closures, social distancing, travel bans

The new reality of work...

- Technological enablement
- Speed is key
- Flatter, leaner organizations
- Cost pressures
- Heightened anxiety
- Safety and wellbeing

Leadership dilemma
- Caring for ‘self’
- Supporting and guiding ‘employees’
- Clarifying the ‘business’ agenda
- Creating a purpose-driven impact

Caring for ‘self’ and preparing to lead through the crisis
- Supporting and guiding ‘employees’ through uncertainty
- Clarifying the ‘business’ agenda for the crisis & beyond
- Creating a purpose-driven impact on the ‘community’
Most organizations are now preparing to restore stability

Reimagining our new workplaces using everything we’ve learned in the past few weeks

1. Managing through the crisis
   - Initial reaction and adaptation in key areas, followed by a period of sustaining operations, leading to a continuous cycle of additional reaction, adaptation, and sustaining as more is learned and conditions change.

2. Restoring stability
   - Resetting and reimagining operations under new assumptions, protocols, focus areas, and pace.
     - Reopening workplaces
     - Irregular operations “business as unusual”

3. Operating post-crisis
   - Achieving sustainable operations and business model, and redefining what normal means in the new environment.
Key questions around returning to the workplace
Today is a time like no other in our collective experience as people, communities and organizations

Initially associated with exposure to seafood and meat market in China
- >5 million confirmed cases
- Over 320,000 deaths
- Current mortality rate 0.6% – 3.4% (as of May 21)

Declared a worldwide pandemic on March 11

Most common incubation period: 2-14 days (mean 4 days)

Method of spread:
Respiratory droplets in air or on contaminated surfaces

Symptoms
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- New loss of taste and smell

About 1/5 of those with COVID-19 have serious illness – many require hospitalization and some require mechanical ventilation
- The aged, those with chronic diseases, and smokers are at highest risk

The global COVID-19 outbreak now sports exponential growth rates for cases and deaths...we are also in the midst of an unprecedented blow to global output, income, and employment. In financial markets, the pace of decline for equity and corporate bond prices exceeds any on record.

Barbera, Norris, and Wright; Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center

Source: Vox.com, World Health Organization, Johns Hopkins
Six key questions

1. When should we return to the workplace?
2. Who should return to the workplace?
3. How can we best protect workers?
4. How can we meet new emotional wellbeing needs?
5. What are new skills our managers and supervisors need?
6. How should we communicate around return to the workplace?
1. When should we return to the workplace?

Public health decisions will be local and based on:
- Decreased number of new cases
- Decreased portion of positive tests
- Widespread availability of tests
- Capacity in health care system

Business decisions will also depend upon:
- Customer demand
- Decrement to effectiveness from remote work
- Transportation
- Workplace layout and density

What about business travel?
- International business travel likely to be limited until there is a vaccine, as many countries will impose 14 day quarantine upon travelers
- Domestic business travel likely to rebound slowly given potential for local lockdowns to address new outbreaks

Be prepared for local reimposition of restrictions to quell new outbreaks
2. Who should return to the workplace?

Not everyone

- Some employees can remain remote with little or no productivity loss
- Some employees are at higher risk for complications or death from COVID-19
- Some employees will have dependents that are at higher risk for complications or death from COVID-19
- There will be employees who are not mentally prepared to return to the workplace, even if they or their family or dependents are not physically high risk
- Employers will need to consider transportation to the workplace along with workplace setup

Not all at once

- Staging return allows time to develop new processes to promote physical (social) distancing and to provide emotional wellbeing supports to returning employees

Employees at highest risk for complications of COVID-19

- Older workers (>60)
- Obese
- Chronic lung or heart disease
- Diabetes
- Kidney failure

The COVID-ready workplace will have less density, making it easier for employers to provide the flexibility for some workers to remain remote
3. How can we best protect our workers?

Exclude those with or at high risk of having COVID-19
- Thermal scanning with questions on symptoms and exposure
- Pre-work or ongoing testing
- Limiting visitors

Physical distancing
- New workplace layouts
- Capacity limits for conference rooms
- Staggered hours
- Face masks
- Signs and cues

Rethinking food and fitness
- Individual portions and no more finger food
- Reopening on-site fitness with new standards of hygiene

Cleaning
- Enhanced disinfection and more sanitizer/wipes

Testing can play an important role, but is not enough!
- Acute infection
  - PCR (nasal swab)
  - IgM Antibody (blood)
  - Antigen (nasal swab)
- Past infection
  - IgG Antibody testing (blood)

Tests are in short supply in many countries; however, this shortage will likely ease in coming months.

Tests for acute infection have many false negatives
Tests for past infection have some false positives, might not reflect immunity
4. How can we meet new and ongoing emotional wellbeing needs?

### Emotional Wellbeing

- Resilience, mindfulness, meditation training
- Coaching support
- EAP strategy (communication, redesign)
- Virtual care options
- Caregiving (flexible work, leave, backup, policies, navigation)

### Social Wellbeing

- Virtual social networks
- Manager communications
- Charity and volunteerism
- Remote work policies and tips
- Addressing loneliness
- Connecting with personal and organizational purpose
- Recharging focus on I&D, purpose, belongingness

"Changes in how we think, behave and relate to one another — some deliberate but many made unconsciously, some temporary but others potentially permanent — are already coming to define our new normal."

*New York Times*, Max Fisher, April 21, 2020
5. What are the new skills our managers and supervisors need?

**Critical new skills and knowledge for managers**

- Managing remote workers
- Understanding leave policies and practices
- Physical/social distancing
- New workflows and policies and procedures
- Employee safety: physical and psychological
- Addressing stigma and bias
- Supporting employees with mental health issues
- Approach to known or suspected workplace exposure
6. How should we communicate around return to the workplace?

An employee listening strategy will be the most effective way to understand what employees need and value as they return to the workplace.

Communication in the COVID-19 world should be:
- Empathetic
- Timely
- Clear
- Focused on employee safety (physical and psychological)
- Address issues of stigma and bias
State of employee wellbeing and what organizations are doing to manage it
Employee wellbeing from their perspective
Employees are deeply concerned and their experiences are significantly impacted

Majorities of employees reporting. . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety or worry</th>
<th>Distractions from work</th>
<th>Increased financial concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92% report at least some anxiety from the coronavirus, with 55% indicating a moderate or high degree of anxiety</td>
<td>70% report at least some distraction from work from coronavirus concerns, with 26% indicating a moderate or high degree of distraction</td>
<td>61% report at least some new financial concerns due to the coronavirus, with 25% indicating a moderate or high degree of worry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impacts on the Employee Experience. . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>39%</th>
<th>Agree fully that colleagues are able to cope well with the stress they are feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57%</td>
<td>Agree fully that they are able to find ways to manage challenges outside of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32%</td>
<td>Agree fully they can balance working from home with other personal life commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76%</td>
<td>Have shifted to a work-from-home arrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47%</td>
<td>Agree fully that they know how to apply company benefits to coronavirus care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46%</td>
<td>Agree fully their company is making it easier to access and use benefits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Willis Towers Watson Employee Opinion Norm Database
How are organizations managing?

Employers are changing wellbeing programs to effectively support employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the next 6 months:</th>
<th>80% have identified promoting wellbeing apps that support physical and emotional wellbeing as a priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/3 expect an impact to employee wellbeing, but most have offset this effect with wellbeing program changes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3 identified enhancing mental wellbeing and increasing benefits communication as key priorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3 are enhancing wellbeing programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 80% are increasing communications about wellbeing programs in the last month |
| 90% are promoting virtual solutions for employees to connect for non-work purposes |
| 70% are promoting healthy weight, nutrition and physical activity for remote workers |
| 80% are promoting healthy weight, nutrition and physical activity for remote workers |
| 2/3 are raising awareness of emergency financial assistance sources |
| 80% are increasing communications about wellbeing programs in the last month |
| 90% believe senior leaders are demonstrating a sincere interest in employee wellbeing and safety |
| 70% are promoting healthy weight, nutrition and physical activity for remote workers |
| 80% are developing a return to work strategy, but only 50% are using employee listening strategies |

How are organizations managing?
Financial wellbeing considerations with COVID-19

Prior to COVID-19
More than a third of households are living paycheck to paycheck

38%
Strongly agree or agree
No significant savings

Negatively impacted by financial problems

32%
Strongly agree or agree

Potential immediate actions:
- Support employees who may be balancing short-term financial priorities with long-term savings needs
- Consider options available within plan design and new related legislation
- Be mindful of varying populations (hourly, part-time, essential employees, collectively bargained, etc.)
- Understand the key provisions both legislative and employer upon leave, time-off and reduced hours

While managing:
- Implement changes to support employees (loan availability, in-service distributions, match true-up)
- Partner with vendors to monitor employee behaviour and adjust response/communications accordingly
- Reallocate benefit spending based on organizational objectives and rewards philosophy
- Ensure ongoing governance and plan operations are maintained

How are organizations managing?
Emotional wellbeing considerations are more important than ever

**Employees’ current state:** feeling overwhelmed by changing information, stress and anxiety of COVID-19, stress and anxiety of the panic surrounding COVID-19, safety, fear, caregiving from afar, managing work while caregiving, childcare, loneliness, guilt, helplessness, grief and uncertainty

**Prior to COVID-19**

52% of employees have taken actions to tackle their mental health issues by seeking support from their employer (social network at work, manager support or employer-provided services)

**Employer Interventions**

- Communications training
- Manager support
- EAP
- Caregiving (children, elderly, sick)
- Sleep programs
- Resilience exercises
- Incorporating strong community and localized resources where available
- Enhancements to mental health provider access
- Navigation support and resources
- Flexible work
- Worksite safety

*Source: 2019/2020 Global Benefits Attitudes Survey*
Expectations of leaders as we restore stability
This is a business experience

- Strategic objectives overtaken by business continuity planning
- Shifting expectations for revenue and financial outlook
- Deferred hiring and learning
- Layoffs
- Reimagined business capabilities
- Accelerated digital platforms to enable new ways of working
- Rewards changes and pay cuts
- Increased benefits spend due to changes and usage
- Adapting to change

And, it’s a human experience

- Grasping the significance of the crisis
- Managing a health problem during the crisis
- Feeling anxious about what can’t be controlled
- Balancing parent duties with work duties
- Re-assimilating with the work day
- Supporting colleagues, friends and family
- Re-connecting with purpose
- Covering anxiety to protect financial security
- Re-connecting with purpose
- . . . and more
69% of organizations have increased their listening efforts
Here’s what a high-performance employee experience sounds like through the pandemic. . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXCELLENCE</th>
<th>INSPIRATION</th>
<th>“I am inspired by what our company stands for and my role in shaping our future”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMPHASIS</td>
<td>DRIVE</td>
<td>“I’m ready and able to work in new ways to transform our business”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESSENTIALS</td>
<td>GROWTH</td>
<td>“I know how to grow my career and stay focused on achieving my ambition and potential”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>TRUST</td>
<td>“I trust our leaders to use good judgment while living our values and protecting our wellbeing”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNDERSTANDING</th>
<th>“I feel a deep sense of connection to achieving our mission”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INCLUSION</td>
<td>VOICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>CAPABILITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAIR PAY</td>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No matter where in the world or in which sector, the crisis is having a dramatic impact on the world’s workforce.

This is a **defining moment for leadership** – as they steer their organizations through uncertain times, **focus on workforce principles that align to the Employee Experience** and forge the ‘new normal’

**Source:** Joint Whitepaper with WEF: Workforce Principles for the COVID-19 Pandemic: Stakeholder Capitalism in a Time of Crisis
**Leadership expectations as we shift to restoring stability**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protect and preserve</th>
<th>In the immediate term, leaders focus on managing through the crisis, clarifying current priorities, and sustaining and adapting the organization for survival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel safe and secure</td>
<td>Leaders ensure employees have access to resources to manage their wellbeing, tools they need to work, and are enabled and supported on what’s important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel included and valued</td>
<td>Leaders seek out diverse employee input to co-create new ways of working, build purpose and resilience, and strengthen collaboration and shared experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evolve and thrive</td>
<td>Leaders focus on learning lessons from the crisis and articulating a purpose that goes beyond profit, anticipating customer needs and leading to deliver in new ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel inspired and invigorated</td>
<td>Leaders build confidence and trust with employees setting them up to work smarter, achieve their ambitions and potential, and protect their wellbeing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [Download Global crisis: Human capital road map from willistowerswatson.com](https://willistowerswatson.com)
Key takeaways

The world as we knew it has changed – in many ways for the better. How do we sustain the agility?

Ask critical questions about who and how employees can safely return to the workplace using new paradigms

Don’t only address employee’s acute wellbeing needs. Use this opportunity to build a culture of wellbeing

Leaders are being tested like never before – what you do (or don’t do) in a crisis will be remembered