



Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.
The original outplacement company



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Challenger COVID Coverage

SURVEY: HALF OF COMPANIES WILL CONTACT TRACE; MORE THAN 92% WILL REQUIRE AND/OR PROVIDE MASKS

CHICAGO, July 27, 2020 – Businesses are clarifying their back-to-work protocols as their employees return to the office from working at home following the COVID-19 shutdowns, according to tracking by global outplacement and executive and business coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

An online survey conducted in June among 150 Human Resources executives at companies of various sizes and industries nationwide by Challenger inquired how businesses are addressing the virus.

In the latest survey, 51.72% of the companies said they will conduct contact tracing if an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19. This compares with 39.05% of respondents in an April survey of 300 Human Resources executives who said they would contract trace. Half of the most recent respondents said they would survey workers to contact trace; 17.29% said they will use an app to determine with whom workers have been in contact; 35.71% said they will use internal experts to conduct the tracing; and 14.29% said they would use all of these methods. No company said they will alert health officials to rely on them to conduct contact tracing.

“Contact tracing has been effective in slowing or stopping outbreaks in the past. So in the unfortunate scenario in which an employee falls ill with coronavirus, the tracing may help companies contain the impact for other employees and the community at large,” said Andrew Challenger, Senior Vice President of Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

More and more employees are being called back into the workplace. In the latest survey, 40% of companies reported most or part of their workers are working from home (WFH). That is down from the April survey, when 69.14% of companies said most or part of their workers were working from home. However, more companies reported that all of their workers were WFH: 33% said all workers were WFH in June compared to 28.4% in April. The June survey also revealed that 43.3% of companies stated they would keep most of their employees working at home even after the pandemic passes and 30% said they would transition some of their employees to work from home after the pandemic passes after implementing it successfully due to COVID.

Companies reported various protocols that will take place in the event an employee is diagnosed with the virus. A two-week quarantine for that employee and anyone the employee may have exposed will be required by nearly 90% of companies, up from 77% in April. Only 17.24% said they would shut down and quarantine the entire work site, while 44.83% said they will deep clean the entire worksite but remain open.

Additional precautions are being implemented to make the environment a safe one. Nearly all of the survey respondents – 96.43% – will limit the number of workers onsite.

“Workplaces will look very different going forward. As we have learned more about how the virus infects people and what safety measures have proven more effective, such as wearing masks and social distancing, companies are paying attention and putting those precautions into practice,” said Challenger.

Mask requirements will be nearly universal; 92.86% of companies will provide and/or require workers to wear masks. The mask requirement is up from 53.71% who said masks would be required when responding to the April survey. And masks will not be limited to just workers: 71.43% of companies will provide and/or require visitors to wear masks.

The same number of companies – 92.86% – also responded they will be limiting or prohibiting gatherings in shared spaces, such as conference rooms, break rooms, lunch rooms, and bathrooms. That same percentage said they will be maintaining social distancing protocols, with fewer people in workspaces and not allowing workers to come within 6 feet of each other. And again the same percentage of survey respondents will be providing sanitizing products, including hand sanitizers and bleach wipes, to workers.

Only 14.29% of companies will be providing and/or requiring workers to wear gloves, compared with 30.29% who said in April they would have this requirement. As medical experts have learned more about how the disease is transmitted, gloves have not been advised except when cleaning or disinfecting, or when treating a patient suspected of having the virus.

Among other precautions planned, 89.29% of companies will conduct regular deep-cleaning of all workstations/worksites and 82.14% will limit or exclude visitors, up from 85% and 59% respectively in April.

Getting to one's actual workspace may take more time: 57.14% of companies will limit elevator use and the same number will take the temperature of workers upon their arrival to work and will survey workers to see if they have had any risk of exposure.

"As companies and their employees navigate this new era of doing business, human resources leaders will be crucial in this process. Protocols may change as we learn what ones are most effective and as the medical experts and government officials respond to current statistics of the outbreak," said Challenger.

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What are your plans in the event an employee is diagnosed?	June	April
We will require a 2 week quarantine for that employee and anyone they may have exposed.	89.66%	76.92%
We will shut down and quarantine the entire work site.	17.24%	13.02%
We will deep clean the entire worksite, but remain open.	44.83%	84.57%
Other (please specify)	17.24%	14.61%

Will you conduct contact tracing?	June	April
Yes	51.72%	39.05%
No	48.28%	60.95%

How will you contact trace?	June
We will survey workers.	50.00%
We will use an app to determine with whom workers have been in contact.	17.29%
We will use internal experts to conduct contact tracing.	35.71%
We will alert public health officials and rely on them to conduct contact tracing.	0.00%
All of the above.	14.29%

What precautions are you implementing or considering due to COVID-19?	June	April
Limiting number of workers onsite.	96.43%	-
Providing and/or requiring workers to wear masks.	92.86%	53.71%
Limiting or prohibiting gatherings in shared spaces, such as conference rooms, break rooms, lunch rooms, bathrooms, etc.	92.86%	78.86%
Maintaining social distancing protocols (fewer people in work spaces, not allowing workers to come within 6 feet of each other).	92.86%	85.71%
Providing sanitizing products (hand sanitizer, bleach wipes).	92.86%	88.57%
Regular deep cleaning of all workstations/worksites.	89.29%	84.57%
Limiting or excluding visitors.	82.14%	59.43%
Providing and/or requiring visitors to wear masks.	71.43%	53.71%
Limiting elevator use.	57.14%	-
Taking the temperature of workers upon their arrival to work.	57.14%	40.57%
Surveying workers to see if they had or have any risk of exposure.	57.14%	45.14%
Providing and/or requiring workers to wear gloves.	14.29%	30.29%
All of the above.	14.29%	-
Other (please specify)	3.57%	8.57%

Have you instituted pay cuts?	June	April
Yes	30.0%	9.88%
No	70.0%	90.12%

How are you currently addressing COVID-19 for your business? (Please select the most relevant options)	June	April
All employees are working from home (WFH).	33.3%	28.40%
Most or part of our workers are WFH.	40.0%	69.14%
We instituted a hiring freeze, and we are still not hiring.	6.67%	37.04%
We instituted a hiring freeze, but are now hiring again.	26.67%	
We furloughed workers, but have recalled some or all.	23.33%	
Our workers were furloughed and will continue to be.	3.33%	14.81%
Our workers were furloughed and now some or all have been laid off.	3.33%	
We instituted temporary layoffs, but have recalled some or all of those workers.	3.33%	
We instituted temporary layoffs, and they have become permanent.	0.00%	
We instituted temporary layoffs, and they are still temporary.	0.00%	7.41%
We conducted permanent layoffs.	20.00%	11.11%
We are closing locations.	0.00%	8.64%
We are revoking internship offers for the summer.	23.33%	3.70%
We are offering/have offered additional leave for those impacted by COVID-19	33.33%	33.33%
Other (please specify)	16.67%	8.64%

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. © in an online survey conducted April 11 through April 16 among over 300 Human Resources Executives and June 11 through June 20 among 150 Human Resources Executives.