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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Future of Work After COVID

THOSE WHO CAN WORK FROM HOME, WILL; THE END OF THE IN-PERSON OFFICE PARTY?

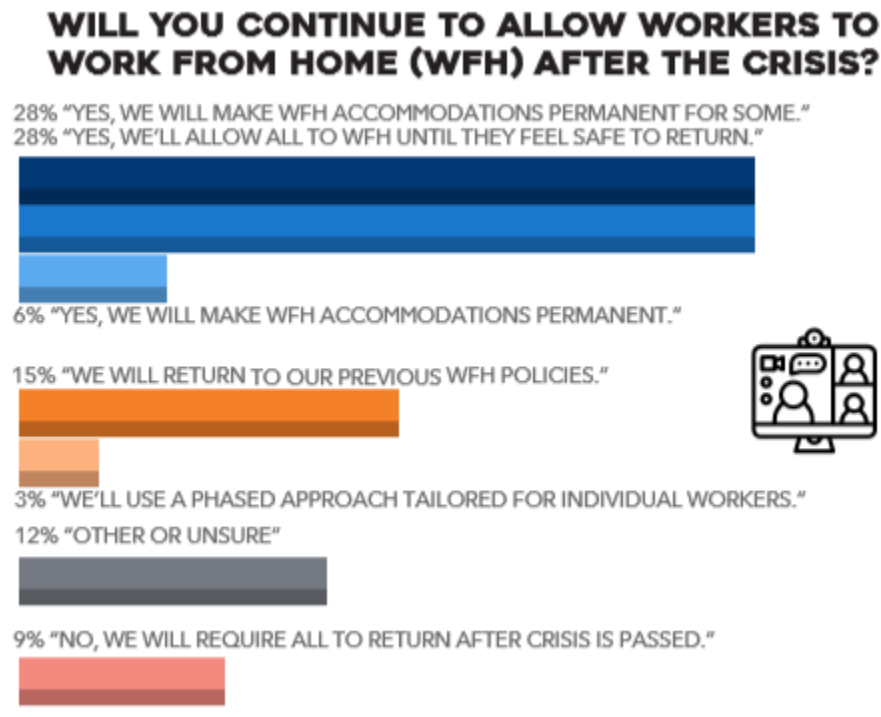
CHICAGO, April 27, 2020 – As companies create and enact plans to reopen worksites safely and consider the serious public health implications this will have on their workers, vendors, and customers, many Human Resources professionals are also pondering what the new normal will look like in the coming months and years. Likely, the precautions put in place now and during the gradual return to work will last far into 2021, having serious implications on company culture, according to one workplace authority.

“It is crucial that companies bring back their workers who have been laid off or furloughed, but it also must happen in a way that will protect them and the public. Employers are prepared to keep their teams working from home well into reopening, but for those who cannot, reasonable measures must be taken to protect these workers,” said Andrew Challenger, Senior Vice President of global outplacement and business and executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

The White House has offered guidelines to reopen non-essential businesses in a phased approach, which would require two weeks of declines in illnesses before reopening, as well as keeping social distancing practices in place, such as limiting the number of people in public places and using masks.

“While eager to get back to work, employers are preparing for an anxious workforce. It is imperative not only to worker safety, but to productivity, that employees feel their companies are taking every measure possible to limit the spread of the virus,” said Challenger.

One way companies are ensuring safety and well-being is to keep workers who can do their jobs from home, at home. In a recent Challenger survey conducted April 12-16, 28% of companies responded they would allow some of their workers to work from home permanently and the same number reported they would allow workers to work from home until they felt safe to return.



This crisis will have long-term implications for work from home accommodations, as well as for things like e-learning at the elementary, high school, and college levels. This time will also have a serious impact on how businesses deliver services, as many companies pivot to online offerings.

"We will likely see many workers continue to work from home going forward, at least a few days a week, as companies invest in and implement technology that allows it. Likewise, as schools implement virtual class technology during this time, students may find themselves doing distance learning every week in future school years," said Challenger.

Not all workers can work from home, and many companies and organizations cannot implement any work from home accommodations. For these companies, employers plan to provide a number of precautions, such as offering sanitizing products, performing regular deep cleaning, and limiting or excluding visitors.

“Continuing social distancing protocols, which call for maintaining a six-foot distance between each worker, banning gatherings in shared spaces, and limiting the number of workers during shifts, will have real implications on workplace culture in the months and years ahead. Companies will not be able to celebrate shared experiences like birthdays, work anniversaries, retirements, or even large sporting events in person,” said Challenger.

What precautions will you implement or are considering?

Providing sanitizing products (hand sanitizer, bleach wipes, etc.).	88.57%
Maintaining social distancing protocols (fewer people in workspaces, not allowing workers to come within six feet of each other).	85.71%
Regular deep cleaning of all workstations/worksites.	84.57%
Limiting or prohibiting gatherings in shared spaces, such as conference rooms, break rooms, lunch rooms, bathrooms, etc.	78.86%
Limiting or excluding visitors.	59.43%
Providing masks and/or requiring workers to wear masks.	53.71%
Surveying workers to see if they had or have any risk of exposure.	45.14%
Taking the temperature of workers upon their arrival to work.	40.57%
Providing gloves and/or requiring workers to wear gloves.	30.29%
Unsure.	6.86%
We will follow CDC guidelines.	1.71%

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. ©

The survey was conducted online among 301 companies nationwide April 12-16.

“Employers will need to be creative in recognizing their workers, perhaps hosting video happy hours and events, in order to maintain an engaged and productive workforce and boost morale,” said Challenger.

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