

## Making employee wellness a key priority

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Three years ago, a global survey amidst nurses suggested that their work was stressful and fatigue-inducing with 63 percent of them reporting burnout. While 47 percent of the surveyed nurses said that a nurse manager (or Head Nurse) handled their schedule, 43 percent believed that nurses should be able to self-schedule. Only 9 percent believed that a nurse manager should own the scheduling task. It was believed that when nurses have control over their schedules, they are empowered to take the time they need to balance work, life, and rest.

Today, life science workers who fall under the essential workforce category are at the frontlines of the war against COVID. While in most other sectors, employees have the flexibility to manage their life and work with adequate tech tools to schedule better and control fatigue, life science professionals do not have a real choice. Sadly, the ones who are toiling round the clock for our health too need to take care of their physical and mental health and need to be empowered to do so.

Managing health risks while functioning in a global epidemic is not just required for business continuity, but also for maintaining employee morale and motivation. This is even more challenging in the services sector. Globally, employers have increasingly accepted the relevance of mental wellness and are implementing initiatives that promote overall physical and mental wellbeing.

However, with the pressure to return to pre-Covid profitability, organizations are still trying to find the right balance between optimum outputs with minimal employee health risk while being compliant with the prescribed workplace protocols.

The recent Workforce Management Reset Survey, 2020 commissioned by Kronos and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) highlighted that surveyed employers cited Employee Health & Safety (63%), Workplace sanitization & hygiene (54%), and implementing social distancing measures (62%) as three key challenges to be addressed as they resumed work at the office. With the pace and manner of the virus spread, as employees return to the workplace, they need to be reassured of their safety. They need to know that their employers are taking all necessary precautions to safeguard their interests so they can continue to put in their best with very minimal anxiety.

As most companies resumed work through the various stages of unlocking, some were quick to implement physical measures like sanitization, alternate hot seating and restricted floor or workspace area access. However, all these measures by themselves do not suffice in executing a risk-free re-entry strategy. Collecting data on employee movements within premises and analyzing this information is critical to improving safety processes and bettering efficiencies. And this is where employers need to evolve from just investing in HR technologies to a more holistic workforce management solution that helps manage people and businesses by incorporating increasingly important processes like contactless attendance, staggered shift scheduling, contact tracing and flexible work hours.

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A mobile-first and contactless workplace needs to leverage the benefits of the cloud to not only empower their employees and make them feel more in control of their schedule and safety but also help employers better manage their onsite workforce. Investing in a comprehensive cloud-based mobile first solution can not only empower employees who will feel more in control of their schedule and shift in a vigil environment but also give employers visibility into the various aspects of an employee's movement within a premise so as to leave very little room for human error. And this is the need of the hour in building confidence amidst on-premise workers and encourage them to focus more on work than be worried for their health and safety.

The only way to achieve such divergent requirements for employee wellness would be through data and technology. Companies need to invest in the right technologies that will allow complete visibility into their workforce, so as to make informed decisions about their workforce. Technology that churns and helps manage data for the larger common good is a non-negotiable in a contactless world and every company, irrespective of the sector, must pivot to a digital-first approach in workforce management. In making technology their ally, not only do organisations stand to sustain in these challenging times but also move forward, albeit with caution.

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