



## **Mental Health, Remote Work, and Return to Office**

Workplaces can always be more inclusive. In the case of Remote Work and returning to the office, the total well-being (inclusive of Mental Health) must be considered in decision-making. You may be wondering what that means. Here a few areas of your business you'll want to consider and the potential impacts to the Mental Health of your employees:

### **Office Space:**

Great movie, right? Well, in this case we're talking about office space as in office design. You'll want to consider your particular office's design, the nature of the work, and standards the organization has set while considering the health, safety, and engagement of employees. It cannot be ignored that some employees and customers may not yet feel comfortable returning to the former-normal. This can impact engagement, overall perceptions of whether the employer has employee health and safety at the forefront, as well as Mental Health. A survey can help in this regard to know what's on employees' minds.

You'll also want to consider that not everyone is always as jazzed about those Happy Hours or team-building events as you may be as an employer. For some, it creates anxiety and other concerns from a Mental Health perspective. If you are hosting these types of events, please ensure they're inclusive to all!

### **Technology:**

Lights camera, action?!? Do you require cameras on or allow for a break for employees to have them off? Flexibility here also promotes inclusion and supports engagement because no one likes to feel forced to do things. Does your current set-up allow for both hybrid and remote options or just one or the other? We've seen large-scale impacts to the technological component on Mental Health in the workplace. Be sure employees are trained on technology needed to do the job and that they have the support they need, particularly if they need accommodations to perform their roles. Yes, even in the remote aspect, accommodations still need to be made to support employees doing their best work.

As we've seen in our clients and network, there is a variance in whether or not teams want to remain remote, return to the office, or would prefer a hybrid approach to return-to-work. Many organizations are surveying their teams and sending communications- a best practice we celebrate, by the way. Open and frequent communication is best for engaged teams and cultures, and will do wonders for your Employer Brand!



## **Flexibility:**

More than ever, employees are starting to shape the world of work and being very vocal about increased balance, flexibility, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Corporate Responsibility, Work Perks, and more to support the type of Employee Experience they want to have. You'll also want to consider that the Future of Work could mean even more productivity and opportunities to develop teams if you play it right.

All that time spent on the morning commute could be poured into a morning workout to give your employees more energy for the day, which boosts positivity and brain power. Employees would have more time to devote to projects, may be able to start or end their day earlier and still meet expectations and deadlines, and be happier in the end. Mental Health matters! Employees are better-equipped to handle stress when they feel whole, appreciated, and supported.