OrgVitality.com

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND BUSINESS RESILIENCE

Survey Results from COVID-19 Pandemic

Survey Purpose

In early March 2020, COVID-19 shuttered US offices seemingly overnight. To help both individuals and organizations navigate new challenges, OrgVitality offered a free Employee Well-Being and Business Resilience survey to any organization that wanted to make sure employees have what they need, better understand their specific challenges, and ensure that critical messages from leadership were getting through. This analysis is based on responses from 59,753 employees in industries that include banking, hospitality, food and beverage production, insurance, financial services, pharmaceutical, business services, manufacturing, animal care and government.

Survey Results

92% of employees surveyed thought their organization responded well to the crisis.

Strikingly, overall results are extremely favorable. Yet this isn't entirely surprising, as it echoes our research from previous crises including after the September 11th terrorist attacks and 2008 financial crisis. Immediately after a crisis, employees give organizations some leeway and look for honest, effective, and open leadership.

81% of employees thought they could effectively manage their work/personal demands.

The majority of the respondents were working from home; many for the first time on an ongoing basis. Given that the pandemic presented a new work/life balance challenge, it's not surprising that 1 in 5 respondents reported struggling in this area. Fortunately, most employees were comfortable sharing their concerns about the current crisis with their manager, despite working remotely. Maintaining that open and candid communication is a great help in crisis management.

Communications During Times of Crisis

Organizations looking to communicate effectively with employees can benefit from OrgVitality's Message Performance Future® model:

Message: Provide clarity regarding what the organization is about, how it will operate, and how each person contributes to delivering on these goals. Ensure that this message is delivered consistently throughout all levels of the organization.

Performance: Ensure that people have what they need to deliver on the Message and get the job done. Performance should be thought of in the broadest sense, including such areas as teamwork, communications, decision making, training, equipment, resources, processes, and procedures.

Future: Provide employees with a sense of their own future and belonging at the organization to make sure that employees have a reason to stay.

Organizations will have varying degrees of success with each of these key elements. The organizations that are most successful at implementing needed change while also keeping their employees engaged during a crisis are those that are strong in all three areas. Now, at a time when the future is uncertain, and your workers are likely doing their jobs remotely, it is critical to ensure you have all three aspects met.

86% Said they had the tools and resources that they needed, and a similar percentage felt that their coworkers were still able to collaborate effectively.

93% Said that their team was effectively adapting how they worked in response to the crisis.

These findings indicate a degree of agility that should make the participating companies proud.

87% **Of employees said that despite the current uncertainty, they were confident in their organization's future.**
This is a critical measurement because OrgVitality's research done during the 2008 financial crisis clearly shows that employee levels of confidence are a very good indicator of whether organizations will survive a crisis. (Learn more about our research on employee confidence **here**.)

Senior Leadership plays key role in confidence

Much of employee confidence is of course driven by senior leadership: what they say how, they say it, how transparent and authentic they appear. Senior leaders have been getting very high marks so far. 93% of employees felt that senior leaders responded quickly to the crisis. And almost as many (91%) were certain that senior leaders are prioritizing the health and safety of employees and their families. Ratings were somewhat lower for senior leader transparency and openness when communicating about the crisis. Only 86% gave them high marks in that area and there was a considerable range of scores across companies.

Employees working from home were more positive than those who stayed onsite

93% of employees working from home felt that senior leaders were prioritizing their health and safety, while only 83% of other employees felt that way. Those who were still working on site were also less likely to feel that they had the tools and resources available that they needed, or that their teams were effectively adapting to the crisis.

Customer-facing employees are the least favorable of all employees

Employees in roles that involve customer interaction tended to be the least favorable compared to those in any other role, such as corporate support, operations/production, or others.

Since employees working onsite were less favorable on key issues, we explored whether this finding for customer-facing employees was in fact due to that subset who were still having direct, personal contact with customers. We found that all customer-facing employees, whether working from home with only electronic customer interactions or working onsite, were less favorable throughout the survey. Some of larger gaps are shown in the chart below.

Customer-facing employees have greater concerns compared with **Others**

Non-Profits Hit Harder By Crisis

We saw a clear difference between for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. For-profit organizations were much more successful in dealing with the crisis, while non-profits struggled with fewer resources.

This gap appeared to be true at all levels. For example, while 89% of employees in for-profit organizations felt senior leaders were transparent and open in their communications, only 83% of those in nonprofit organizations felt that way. When it came to actually getting the work done, similar gaps were observed in terms of non-profit employees being less likely to feel that they had the necessary tools and resources, that their coworkers were still able to collaborate effectively and that their team was adapting to the crisis.

This suggests that non-profit organizations may struggle more to be agile and flexible in times of crisis.

Moving Forward

Organizations have the approval of most employees right now, but it is critical they don't squander it. How organizations handle the return to onsite work, the continuation of remote work, or any lasting economic uncertainties will determine how well they maintain employee confidence as the global pandemic evolves. As part of our continued support for both organizations and employees, OrgVitality has released a free library of pulse surveys to solicit ongoing feedback from employees, including:

Readiness to Return: As more organizations move to bring employees back to the workplace, this survey will help you understand the specific concerns of your employees throughout every stage of the return-to-work process, while also ensuring that employees feel supported and heard by leadership.

Re-Opening: Once employees are back, assess their re-integration into the workplace.

Workplace Safety: Based on CDC guidelines, this survey measures how employees think both the organization and their co-workers are handling health and safety issues.

Work Processes: As the "new" normal continues to evolve, this pulse survey will be critical to measure employees' ongoing feelings about the working environment, the organization's long-term sustainability, and team performance.

Virtual Teams assessment: Whether your entire team is remote or if you have a hybrid at-work and at-home team, this survey will help managers understand how effectively the team is working, recognize areas of strengths, and identify any challenge spots.

For more information or to register and access these surveys, click **here**.

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