

Fact Sheet

Return to Workplace Strategy Series – Part 2 – How Do We Evolve?

For the webinar associated with this fact sheet, visit <https://youtu.be/ls9UY8c937Y>

Our Return to Workplace Strategy Series is looking in detail at a topic that is only going to grow in the minds of business owners, managers and employees – how do we get back to the workplace after a pandemic, what does that look like, and how can the situation be managed for maximum benefit to everyone involved, as well as dealt with lawfully and compassionately.

In Part 1, we considered **what is happening and what is next** – what has changed over the last 9 months? How are our employees, managers, government and all other stakeholders feeling about getting back into the workplace? What are the consequences of the various options both for individual businesses and for the economy and society at large?

In Part 2, we're looking at what options are available to you for **your business to evolve**.

How do we evolve?

Work from Home vs Work in the Office

This is not a black and white issue – you can also consider having your staff work in a mixed way, i.e. some days in the office and some at home. For example, King & Wood Mallesons (national law firm) have rolled out a new rostering system where each team decided for themselves how to divide days in the office and at home, ensuring clients are serviced properly, workload is managed, and the key social and connectivity benefits of being together in the workplace are achieved.

Questions to ask:

- Who needs to be in the office and when?
- What are your client/customer expectations?
- How do you manage rostering and scheduling when staff are or aren't in the office?

Physical Office Space

Now is a really great time to consider whether your current physical workspace remains appropriate for your business. Rent and property can be a large cost to a business, so if there's an opportunity here to review this expense, take it!

Questions to ask:

- Do you have the right spaces for your staff to do their best work? Do you have enough desks, too many desks, a greater need for meeting rooms rather than solo desks, etc?
- Can you meet social distancing requirements in the workplace?
- What's your short, medium and long term expectation for the physical office space?

Your Expectations of Employees

As your employees begin to return to the office, now is the time to review what protocols and expectations you have put in place, either consciously or unconsciously, and whether they continue to be appropriate.

Questions to ask:

This information and advice is general in nature, based on our interpretation of current legislation and policy, and does not take into account your specific circumstances. You should consider whether the information is appropriate to your needs and seek professional advice if required.



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- What protocols and expectations have you put in place for work from home/hybrid working around hours and productivity?
- Are these reasonable and effective?
- Have they been communicated clearly to your employees?
- Is it time to deliberately review these expectations?

Work Health and Safety

Work Health and Safety obligations remain for employers regardless of where employees are actually working. You don't want to set yourself up for future workers compensation claims because someone is working at their dining table or in bed and hurts their back over time, or develops a neck injury because their screen is too low. Think about the future of your employees' health and what you can do about it now.

Questions to ask:

- How can you meet work health and safety requirements? Have you been doing this well so far, and how can you improve?
- In the office:
 - o Cleaning
 - o COVID-safe spacing requirements
 - o Protocols and management for people/clients visiting your workspace
- At home:
 - o Do your employees have a safe and ergonomic workspace and furniture? Have you checked?
 - o Do your employees have the equipment they need?
 - o Do your employees have adequate internet/electronic security at home to protect your business/client data?
 - o Do your employees have adequate insurance to cover your investment in their home office?
 - o Do you have the documentation in place that you need, such as Work from Home policy, checklists, ergonomic checklist, etc
 - o Do you hold "toolbox" safety meetings with staff working from home to keep WHS top of mind?

Planning

Do you have a disaster recovery plan in place? As we've seen in South Australia last week, lockdowns can come hard and fast if there's an outbreak of COVID19 in your area, and businesses should be prepared.

Questions to ask:

- Do you have a disaster recovery plan? Is it up to date?
- Do you have contingency options in place if someone in your workplace is diagnosed with COVID19, or if there is a sudden increase in cases in your area?
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Next big question is – how do employers and employees bring all of this information and potentially competing desires together to make a plan for the future?

Need help? Contact Pinnacle People Solutions for tailored advice and support for your business by email to admin@pinnaclepeoplesolutions.com.au or call 1300 856 231

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