


*Proven Practices for*

# Tackling Workplace Challenges in a Post-Coronavirus World

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## **The workplace is a whole new world following the COVID-19 outbreak.**

As employers scramble to find their footing, it's not immediately clear what next steps to take in order to maintain a safe and healthy workplace.

These real-world examples are snippets of larger challenges expected to remain for the foreseeable future. Take a look at how some businesses are succeeding or struggling, and learn proven practices that can help your organization overcome any obstacles that lay ahead.



# 1

## Preventing virus exposure in the workplace

Not all businesses can operate with all employees working remotely. Some, such as manufacturing facilities, need a way to ensure all shifts are covered and no employee comes to work sick. This can include making building or schedule modifications to allow for social distancing. It's also critical to provide employees with plenty of information about new rules and procedures.

Businesses are taking many different approaches to stop the spread of the virus. [Walmart](#), for instance, installed plexiglass barriers in check-out lines and conducts temperature checks for all employees before they are allowed to begin their shift. Tech company [Mobify](#) said their post-coronavirus office has additions like sanitation stations as well as new restrictions, like using arrows on the ground to control the flow of employees entering and exiting restrooms. Many other companies are exploring or establishing best practices such as contact tracing, testing employees on-site, or changing building hours and shifts to prevent having too many people in the building at once.

# Conduct automated health and wellness checks

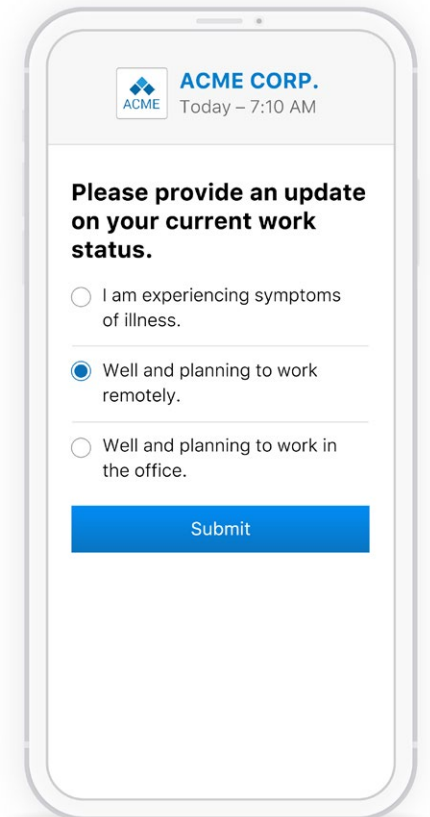
While preventing COVID-19 exposure in the workplace looks very different for each business, there is one element that is crucial no matter what: two-way communication. Communication matters whether you're modifying the workplace, notifying employees about new rules or procedures and keeping employees engaged.

Regardless of how you choose to minimize illness exposure in the workspace, employee communication needs to be a central part of your plan. Sharing plans with workers provides reassurance that their health concerns and needs are respected, and provides the opportunity for better employee engagement. It also can give them an idea of what they'll encounter even before they arrive at the office, allowing employees to prepare and remember what's required to avoid exposure.

Some solutions like the Rave Platform gives businesses the opportunity to ensure that employees are symptom-free even before arriving at work. Send automated daily health checks to employees prior to their shift, allowing them to indicate if they are well enough to enter the workspace. With [Rave's health and wellness checks](#), a company can also rapidly isolate individuals who have tested positive or are at risk of contracting the virus.

Limiting the amount of people in the workspace and precluding employees who display symptoms are both effective strategies for minimizing exposure. However, doing so may mean that managers need to frequently modify schedules or fill available shifts.

With a solution like those offered by Rave, managers can address scheduling issues at a moment's notice. With a polling feature, employees can indicate if they're available to fill an empty shift. This eases the burden on managers, helps keep employees safe and can minimize operational disruptions that can negatively impact productivity.







## 2

# Supporting employee mental health

The COVID-19 pandemic isn't just a threat to physical health; it can also have a long-term impact on mental health. Experts predict a long road full of wellbeing issues that are bound to have an impact on employees both inside and outside of the workplace.

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**Research from Peking University projects that mental health issues created by the coronavirus outbreak could exceed the consequences of the virus itself.**

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The epidemic is expected to trigger mental disorders such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress. Prior to the pandemic, mental health issues cost the global economy [\\$1 trillion a year](#) in lost productivity. It's still not clear what the impact will be from widespread, long-term mental health issues related to the coronavirus.

Aside from loss of productivity, individual companies could potentially lose valuable employees due to mental illness. According to Mind Share Partners, [20%](#) of workers say they would willingly leave a job for mental health reasons. Luckily, the World Health Organization points out that employers have the power to eliminate a number of contributing work stressors, such as:

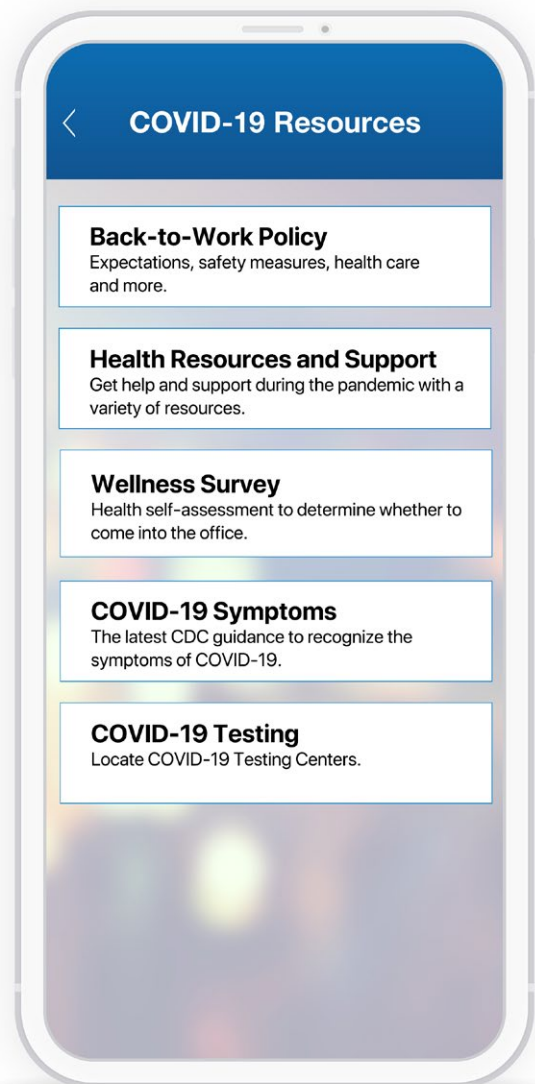
- **Inadequate health and safety policies**
- **Poor communication and management practices**
- **Low levels of support for employees**
- **Inflexible working hours**
- **Unclear tasks or organizational objectives**

## PROVEN PRACTICE:

# Share and provide easy access to mental health resources and support

Some businesses, such as [Starbucks](#), offer training to employees so they can recognize and respond to signs of mental health and substance abuse and provide resources to their team. Even if your company isn't a massive world-wide coffee chain, there are still many ways to support your employees during a tough time. A crucial part of this is providing easily-accessible resources that are always available to employees. Like Starbucks, managers should also understand signs of mental health distress and procedures to follow to help prevent serious incidents.

Communication plays a large role in mental health. In fact, a [Gallup survey](#) exploring employee burnout found that one of the five factors that lead to burnout was unclear communication from managers. This is especially true in a post-COVID environment. Workers are likely already dealing with a bundle of personal stressors, including potential financial, health and childcare problems. Uncertainty surrounding workplace safety procedures or facility's reopening only adds to the list.



A key part of maintaining employee resilience is ensuring that workers can take a day off when they need to - whether it's because of childcare challenges, feeling unwell or just needing a mental health day for themselves. Managers will be better prepared to adjust for these call-outs if they can easily send staffing polls to find workers that can fill available shifts. With solutions like Rave, employees can designate how they receive these messages. For example, if employees can control how they receive staffing polls, then they can ensure they receive this communication on their personal cell phones. If it's unlikely that they'll check their work email outside of work hours, then this capability makes a huge difference.

Employers can also use the Rave Platform to assist employees by providing critical information for those in need, such as available community resources. Rave provides a channel to quickly and easily update stakeholders on accessibility to medical care, food, childcare and other needs through a personal safety app. This way, employees will always know that you're on their side.



*A study by [SleepStandards](#) observed that the pandemic has led to disrupted sleep schedules and widespread fatigue. According to the [American Safety Council](#), sleep deprivation increases the likelihood of a workplace accident by 70%. Furthermore, the [National Safety Council](#) warns that the stress of the COVID-19 outbreak has also led to an increase in substance abuse, which can also be a huge threat to worker safety.*



# 3

## Avoiding Potential Liabilities

This is a particularly challenging time for those who work in employee safety. With minimal guidance and an incredibly short timeline, they must ensure that all efforts and precautions are taken to reduce risks to employee health. They can't afford to overlook or rush through any elements in this preparation. As emerging stories show, failure to account for the safety needs of employees can make companies vulnerable to lawsuits and negative publicity.

A group of unions representing workers from multiple Las Vegas-area casinos [sued employers](#) in late June 2020. In the lawsuit, casino workers said their employers put their health at risk by refusing to require guests to wear masks. According to [a representative](#) from one of the unions behind the lawsuit, “[employees] want to work, but they want to work safely. We’re going to do whatever we need to do to protect these workers, these families and this community.”

Lawsuits are just one possible worst-case scenario from failing to provide proper protection. As always, it's critical to stay up to date on requirements from the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC). In a post-coronavirus world, OSHA is closely watching to ensure employers are adequately protecting employees. In fact, as a result of the pandemic, [OSHA is expected](#) to start investigating workplace safety violations by the number of complaints filed against a company.



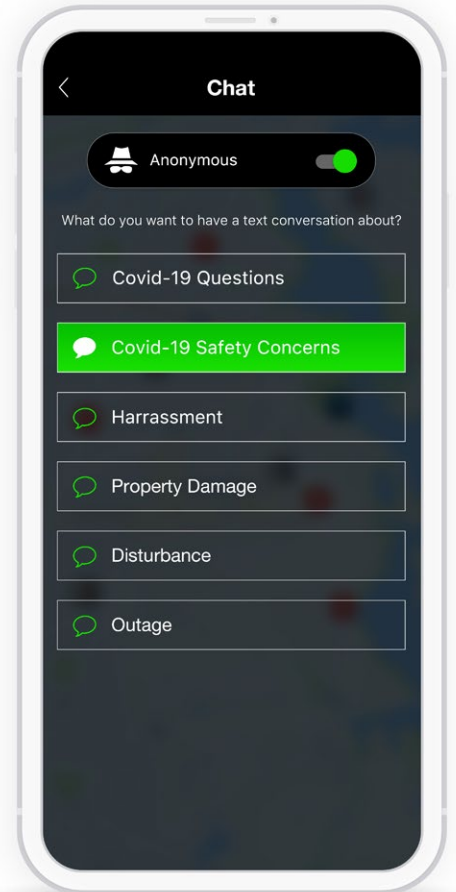
# Provide a confidential tip line for employees

After the coronavirus outbreak, [80%](#) of surveyed workers said their employer is responsible for their health and wellbeing. For employers to live up to this expectation, they need a way to instantly know about any shortcomings or worker concerns. By providing a secure tip line, employees can be empowered and engaged about their own health and wellbeing. With this, employees will always have an outlet to report any safety concerns, and employers can easily track issues and rapidly address them.

Employee tip lines can also act as an early warning system for businesses. According to the former general counsel of General Electric [Alex Dimitrief](#), “Open communication about potential integrity lapses enables managers to address issues before they become litigation or enforcement nightmares. A few employees speaking up can turn what could have been a disaster into a manageable situation. And fundamentally, encouraging employees to raise concerns is the most credible and effective way for leaders to communicate the importance of conducting a company’s affairs with integrity.”

A key part of this is whether it can be done anonymously. When employees have a way to report issues or concerns confidentially, then they can reliably speak their mind about issues as they arise. Whether they require specific equipment to prevent exposure, or are sharing worries about a sick coworker in the workplace, employees will feel more comfortable speaking up if they have the option to do so confidentially. Some solutions can also provide your organization with a digital paper trail of employee tips. With this, you’ll always have a record of the safety needs and oversights that workers want addressed.

With the Rave platform, employers can get ahead of concerns before they grow into larger issues. With Rave, businesses can offer employees the ability to send anonymous tips via text message. By providing a private and secure way to speak freely, employers can receive honest feedback and address problems that they may not know about otherwise.





# 4

## Communicating with employees wherever they are

The coronavirus outbreak has completely redefined the workspace. At any given moment, employees can be going about their usual tasks while social distancing in an office or on a factory floor, working remotely from another location, or out traveling for their job. No matter where they may be, it's vital that employers are able to reach everyone they are in charge of keeping safe.

Communication is also important when it comes to informing employees about new rules and regulations before they come into the workplace. However, sharing this information is not a one-time job. Even with enough time and plentiful signage as a reminder, mistakes can happen. This is especially true during an event like the coronavirus outbreak, when workers will be balancing many other important concerns ranging from their personal finances to the health and wellbeing of friends and family.

Following procedures and enforcing compliance isn't just critical for employee safety. It's also necessary after [OSHA's announcement](#) that it will be increasing the number of in-person inspections of all types of workplaces. Companies that are caught violating procedures won't just receive a fine or punishment from OSHA. Companies that failed to follow procedures have seen this mistake spawn plenty of [negative publicity](#), which can cause extensive damage to your business, reputation and bottom line.

# Consistent and targeted messaging

The construction company [Bernhardt](#) shared how it based its response to the coronavirus outbreak on its own workplace safety strategy. Communication is central to all stages of this process, from the collaboration among key stakeholders in the beginning planning stages, to assessing areas for improvement with team members after plans have been executed. None of these steps are possible without enhanced collaboration and communication among teams. Or as Bernhardt's director of operational services says, "By using the improvement process, promoting transparent communication with trusted resources, and relying on a safety-first culture we are slated to better impact the communities we help build."

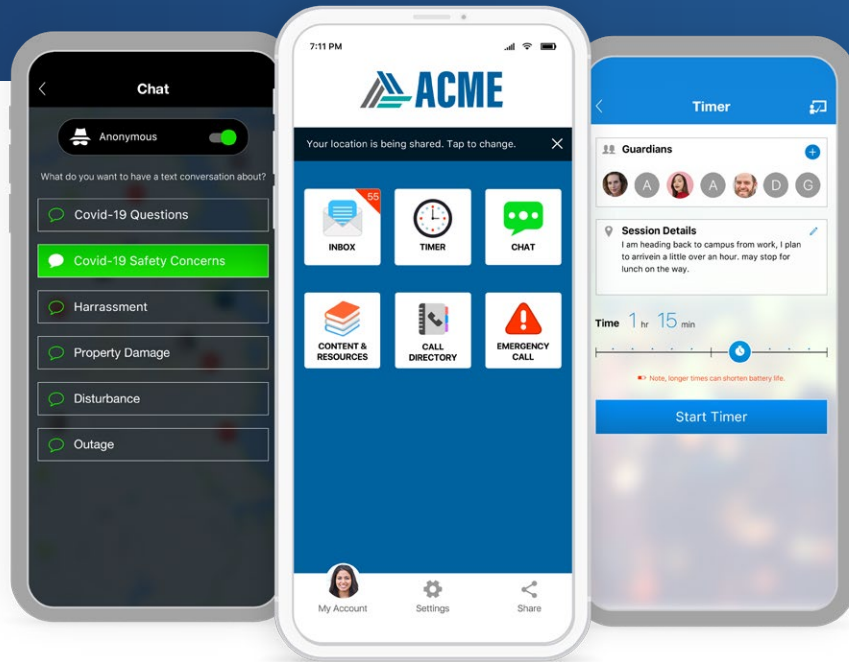
This level of coordination can't happen if communication is restricted. During unforeseen events such as the coronavirus outbreak, important decision makers need to meet immediately, regardless of where they are. Solutions like the Rave critical communication and collaboration platform can make this level of rapid response possible with features like:

- **Easy-to-use interface**
- **One-click conference bridge**
- **Configurable and pre-set message templates**
- **Unlimited users with role-based access control**

To make messages more pertinent to employees, look for a solution like Rave that provides dynamic targeting capabilities. With this, employers can do things like only message workers who are physically in the workplace and are at risk of approaching severe weather. Targeting can also help with initiatives like sending notifications to employees who have tested positive, are in quarantine, or are more at-risk. For example, Rave provides the flexibility to do things like only message employees who worked a particular shift or are working in a specific department, location, or from home. These capabilities can make all the difference when it comes to announcing and enforcing coronavirus safety initiatives or advising workers from a particular shift to get tested.

Rave also offers users the ability to geo-target their messages. With geo-targeting capabilities, you can draw a shape on a map to designate the region where people will receive your message. For example, geo targeting can be used to reach only employees who are currently in a particular building on a campus of multiple manufacturing facilities.

# When it comes to your employees, focus on what really matters.



Without standard communication obstacles in the way, your business can tackle the many challenges of a post-coronavirus world while remaining flexible and ready to respond to any critical event in the future.

What challenges are you trying to tackle? Learn how solutions from Rave Mobile Safety can help you evolve and excel in keeping your employees safe and your business running.

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