As organizations recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, their focus will shift to ensuring a smooth transition back to the workplace.

This checklist outlines key actions that communications leaders must take to drive an effective “return to the workplace” strategy.
# Implications for the Chief Communications Officer

## Short-term implications

- Employee anxiety about returning to workplace
- Manager and leader ability to facilitate return process
- Coordination challenges across geographies due to differing government regulations
- Coordination challenges with HR and other functions that also might be attempting to communicate changes in policy/protocol
- Lack of clarity into individual goals and broader strategic direction
- Increasing external scrutiny on organizations’ approach to return to work

## Long-term implications

- Shifting organizational priorities impact on employee strategic alignment
- Revamped customer expectations for brand promise
- Revised ways of working (including shift to long-term remote work arrangements) within comms team and across organization
- Cost pressures for both comms function and broader organization
- Remit of communications as part of a “new normal” project team needs to be established
Things to do now

- Implement feedback mechanisms to gather employee sentiment on return to workplace anxieties.
- Communicate a clear safety protocol for those returning to the workplace, before they return.
- Inform employees of the physical and psychological safety/well-being resources available to them.
- Support managers in cascading safety/well-being information and coach them to collect employee feedback.
- Provide regions/business units with clarity on which messages need to stay consistent and which can be contextualized.
- Enable senior leaders to deliver frequent, transparent updates on organizational objectives.
- Update external stakeholders on the organization’s return-to-work policy and community support initiatives.
- Continue to enable communication, collaboration and alignment for those who remain remote.
Things to plan/prioritize

- Enable managers to effectively communicate with remote employees.
- Audit internal channel capacity to build remote employees’ capability.
- Facilitate an organizationwide conversation on the pandemic’s permanent impact on organizational culture.
- Update the corporate narrative to reflect changes in the organization’s strategic priorities and product/service delivery.
- Conduct a communications team reflection on what systems/processes/skills worked well during the crisis and what needs to change to ensure future agility.
An Executive’s Guide to Returning to the Workplace

Visit gtnr.it/return-to-work for overarching insights to guide your organization as it brings employees back to the workplace safely and effectively, at the right time and in the right way.