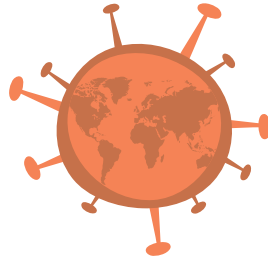


HANG IN THERE.

How to get your business
through COVID-19...





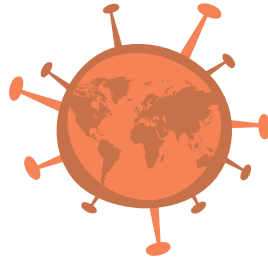
A message for all business owners worried by the current economic climate...

We've been receiving lots of calls this week from CEOs concerned about how **#coronavirus** is impacting their business and what measures they can take to carefully manage their workforce.

So, here's a summary of the most frequent employment tips and advice we have been giving out.

Hang in there - and I hope they help.

#strongertogether #HRhelp #COVID19



Hang in there. How to get your business through COVID-19...

The coronavirus pandemic is affecting everyone and not least the economy. As the situation has worsened, we've been taking call after call from worried businesses about what it will mean for them and their employees.

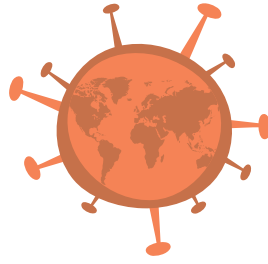
How can I afford to keep going?

Should I let people go?

Where do I stand legally?

These are just some of the questions we have been asked.

It's true that drastic times can lead to drastic measures but, before you resort to any extreme action, please remember that there are ways to reduce your overheads, retain your staff and ensure there's both a business and jobs to return to when you make it out the other side



Here are some employment tips on how to get your business through COVID-19...

BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING ELSE

Consult your staff contracts and handbooks.

Before taking any of these steps, check your contracts of employment and staff handbooks as they'll outline what contractual measures you can take.

Check for any trade union involvement.

Also check whether any trade unions represent your employees and, if they do, make sure to consult with them first.

NEXT STEPS

Encourage paid leave (holiday entitlement)

If your team have holiday owing, ask them to take it. In the absence of being able to work, at least it's paid leave. If you're worried about the cost of that, just bear in mind that you will still need to pay it if they move on.

Offer sabbaticals and unpaid leave.

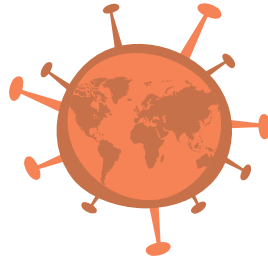
You're within your rights to ask employees to stay at home or take unpaid leave if there's not enough work for them. So, after the paid leave option, you can offer staff sabbaticals or ask for volunteers for unpaid leave. It won't be a popular suggestion and you'll need employee agreement in writing. More importantly, though, it may help to ensure that they have a job to come back to.

Freeze any scheduled wage increases.

At a time when you're looking to reduce expenditure, this should be a no-brainer. Then, once the business stabilises and as soon as you have the opportunity, review everyone's wage structure and redress things retrospectively – if you can. It'll go a long way with them.

Temporarily suspend bonus schemes and fringe benefits.

Deferring any bonus schemes for a fixed period could help to balance the books. Similarly, removing any non-contractual benefits (such as staff discounts or membership schemes) can also help to keep expenditure down.



Here are some employment tips on how to get your business through COVID-19...

Reduce people's hours.

You can cut the number of hours your staff works either by:

- cancelling overtime
- laying people off (a 'lay-off' is when staff are off work for at least 1 working day a week).
- limiting them to their contractual hours (as many in the hospitality sector are on zero- or minimum-hour contracts).
- introducing 'short-time working' (i.e. when hours are cut from the normal standard or contractual hours).

Remember:

- There's no time limit for how long you can lay someone off.
- Employees on lay-off or short-time working are still required to make themselves reasonably available for work.
- They can also take on another job during this time with your agreement (unless their contract says otherwise) but must be available to return to work once the lay-off or short-time ends.
- 'Guaranteed pay' should be given for the lay-off period, if the contract allows it.
- It's currently £29 a day for 5 days in any 3-month period – so a maximum of £145 per quarter.
- If employees usually earn less than £29 a day, then the normal day-rate can be given instead.
- Employees are not eligible for guaranteed pay if they've only been employed for 1 month. However, not offering it at a time like this is unlikely to do you any favours.

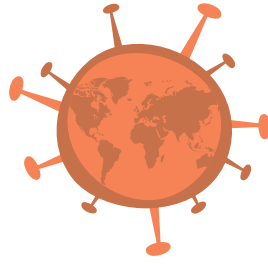
AVOID AT ALL COSTS

Terminating people.

Give this a lot of consideration before going through with it as once it's done, there's no going back. Knee-jerk reactions rarely prove beneficial and, even if the business recovers, it's unlikely that terminated staff would want to return. However, if you've no option but to terminate someone's employment, please make sure that your reasons are justified. Because, otherwise, you'll be looking at a tribunal once the dust has settled.

Closing the business with immediate effect.

Hopefully, it won't come to this. But, if you find yourself forced to immediately shut down, do remember that you're still obliged to pay your employees in lieu of notice and any accrued, unused leave/holiday pay. And, if making employee leaving payments isn't viable, you would need to consider putting the business into administration.



Here are some employment tips on how to get your business through COVID-19...

YOU'RE NOT ALONE – WE'RE JUST AN EMAIL AWAY.

Remember, we're all in this together and it's by working together that businesses and their people will pull through this.

Here at The People Factor, we're working hard to support business owners and employees at such a challenging time.

It really is unprecedented. So, if you need any help or advice on planning your next steps, what to say to staff or how to approach the legal side of things, please get in touch.

Even if you just want to talk something through and weigh up your options, we're here.

Email us at hello@thepeoplefactor.org.uk and we'll be right back to you to arrange a follow-up.

Hang in there and take care.
Karen