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# **A toolkit for re-boarding and recovery**

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**Chapter 6 in Working out our new normal**  
Your COVID-19 resources pack



# Hello

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**COVID-19 has transformed our world. It's impacted our families, social lives and communities, not to mention our businesses and the way we work. When we start looking at the future of the workplace, we're all questioning what happens next? How do we get to the fabled new normal? How do we support and energise our employees? How do we look to the future?**

What happens next will be the defining moment for business culture and employee experience. The signs are good. Businesses are looking to be more innovative and agile as they react to the changing world, mental health is on everyone's agenda, we're investing more in technology, and we're seeing more empathy in the workplace. People and culture have never been more important.

None of us have faced a challenge like this before and, we need to be prepared to design and create the right environment for our employees to feel safe, supported and understood at work. We need to curate a new normal that fosters positivity and productivity for our employees. The changes we make today will shape our future workplaces to come.

# What do you want your employees to say about your business and culture **after COVID-19?**

That's the question we're asking our clients right now. It might feel like a big question, but what we choose to do now will inevitably shape our future workplace and culture.

We're working with our clients to develop bespoke re-boarding strategies to support their people take steps towards their new normal, whatever that looks like. But we know that so many of you are working through your re-boarding plans as we speak so, we've built a strategic blueprint to help structure and guide your thoughts. We'll take you through it, building your toolbox, step by step.

# Re-boarding: The employee experience blueprint

1

## Recover

Ensuring your employees feel safe and supported as they transition to the new normal.

### What's in your toolbox?

Re-boarding and recovery research

Line manager training: managing vulnerable teams

High level mental health training for line managers

2

## Rebuild

Understanding what needs to change to account for your current reality.

### What's in your toolbox?

The employee journey reassessment

Planning for our new normal: Let's get tactical planning calendar

Strategic clarity using the visual thinking map

3

## Re-energise

Boosting energy, productivity and motivation to build an even stronger culture.

### What's in your toolbox?

The new normal campaign

Quarterly strategy sessions

Amp up your recognition

4

## Reimagine

Turning your focus to the future.

### What's in your toolbox?

Visual thinking map

Design thinking

Reimagining your hire to retire

# 1

## Phase one: **Recover**

**How do you need to support your employees to feel safe and supported as they transition to the new normal?**

As employers, we can't ignore the inevitable impact that COVID-19 has on the wellbeing and mental health of our employees. We need to recover. Mental health in the workplace used to be a topic for HR or D&I or wellbeing teams, it's now a core conversation for everyone at every level. Even without the impact of remote working, furlough, career or financial anxiety, employees are facing personal and individual challenges that will all impact wellbeing and mental health. Collectively, our productivity, motivation and company culture, will need to recover.

No matter our industry, we need to meet our employees where they are on their own journey with empathy, support, and understanding. We need to know how to build an experience that will enable our people, and our businesses to recover. So, whatever your new normal will look like, to do that, we need to understand the full picture. As HR, internal communications, or engagement professionals, we can facilitate that conversation across the business.



# What's in your toolbox?

If you **only** do **one** thing, we think you should make it this one.

## The tool

## Purpose

## Recommendation

### 1 Re-boarding and recovery research

This isn't the time to worry about survey fatigue or communication saturation. To build the right strategic approach over the coming months, you'll need to have a good conversation with your people. You need to understand how they feel, the impact that COVID-19 has had on them, and your collective culture.

Conduct a mix of:

- Virtual focus groups
- 1 to 1s
- Survey

One size definitely doesn't fit all but get in touch if you'd like a copy of **our recommended research questions**. We explore four core themes; **our experience, our culture, our safety, and our future**.

### 2 Managing vulnerable teams: line manager training

To equip your line managers with the skills they need to effectively manage their vulnerable teams out of a period of stress, and into a recovery phase.

### 3 High-level mental health training for line managers

We'll be relying on our line managers to spot where people are struggling and point them in the direction of the right support. Consider equipping them with a baseline knowledge of what to look out for and how to talk about mental health in the workplace.

*Get in touch to talk to us about these tactics or sessions. We'd recommend building bespoke training.*



## Phase two: **Rebuild**

### **What and how do we need to change and adapt to account for our new reality?**

One of the most promising trends we're seeing is how agile and innovative are clients are in the face of massive challenge and change to their everyday operations. For the last few months we've all had our hands full with managing the crisis and the short term, as we now look to refocus and rebuild, we need to take stock of our strategies and plans.

We've been helping our clients do just that. The rebuild phase is focused on understanding what you had planned and rebuilding your strategies to account for the current reality, whatever that might look like for you.

There's two big topics here; your company strategy and your employee experience strategy. And, for both, it's so important to build trust, positivity and feeling of regrowth. The best businesses we work with have their people right at the heart of their recovery strategies. They understand that without their employees engagement, they won't be able to react, innovate and rebuild.

# What's in your toolbox?

The tool	Purpose	Recommendation
<b>1</b> <b>Employee journey reassessment</b>	<p>To uncover the impact that COVID-19 has had on your employee experience.</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <p><b>Onboarding</b></p> <p>What are the best aspects of our onboarding process?</p> <p>What impact has COVID-19 had on new starters?</p> <p>What is our ideal experience for new starters in the future?</p>	<p>Question what you can put in place for your people straight away to ensure consistency of employee experience.</p> <p>We've been running workshops with our clients, get in touch if you would like to chat about how we can tailor that for your business.</p>
<b>2</b> <b>Planning for our new normal: Let's get tactical planning calendar</b>	<p>To help you think through your short to medium term tactical challenges. If you won't be bringing your leadership team together for your annual conference, what will the virtual experience look like instead? We'll be running this exercise as a workshop virtually with our clients and expect to see some big gaps in our existing plans.</p>	<p>Map out your existing plans across 2020 and question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What was the plan?</li><li>2. Does it need to change?</li><li>3. How do we keep the magic of this experience?</li><li>4. What do we need to do now that we didn't before?</li></ol>
<b>3</b> <b>The visual thinking map</b>	<p>To clarify your company strategic goals, vision and priorities. Your people need to understand what you're building towards together.</p>	<p>Think visually. Create a visual strategy map to engage your people in your strategic direction as you rebuild through COVID-19.</p> <p>Support it with a consistent, powerful narrative.</p>



# 3

Phase three:

## Re-energise

**How can we boost energy, productivity and motivation to build an even stronger culture?**

We've got this! Phase one and two allow you to begin the healing and recovery process, let you take a breath, and focus on adapting your strategies and plans. Phase three seeks to build energy back into your organisation. We'll be connecting your people to your strategic goals and getting them involved in co-creating team plans around them.

Let's also consider purpose. Feeling connected to a greater purpose, understanding and aligning your own purpose to your role and contribution at work will build positive energy. Use your rally cry campaign to talk about your purpose and, embed meaning. Let us know if you want to see examples of powerful purpose-led work.

This is the exciting bit. With the right actions, you'll start to re-energise your culture so that it feels stronger than ever before. Your workplace might look and feel different, you might have new policies and procedures, and your people will be experiencing a new normal. As you communicate those changes, make sure you ground them in your long-term strategy and introduce your purpose or values to the conversation. Now is the time to refocus on your 'why'.

# What's in your toolbox?

The tool	Purpose	Recommendation
<b>1</b> The new normal campaign	As you're communicating any necessary changes to your ways of working, ground those messages in a wider, positive 'new normal' campaign.	We recommend creating a powerful and unifying rally cry for your campaign. Think about your call to action and ask your people to own it.
<b>2</b> Quarterly strategy sessions	Co-creation is a big tool for driving positive energy. You've communicated your company strategy to clarify your direction, now we need your people to engage in their part in delivering it.	Create team discussion guides using your visual thinking map that facilitate great conversations around how each team – and employee – will contribute.
<b>3</b> Amp up your recognition	To build energy around the good that you've seen over the last few months. Things have been moving so quickly, it's sometimes difficult to celebrate your achievements, now is the time.	<b>Use your existing recognition platform or, more simply, use storytelling and peer to peer recognition</b> to amplify and recognise great behaviours on a scale you haven't before.

If you **only** do **one** thing in this phase, this should be it. An incredible campaign will create memorable moments for your people.

Phase four:

# Reimagine

**How do we reimagine the future employee experience to strengthen our business?**

Let's sum this all up; in phase one we supported employees through their recovery journey. In phase two, we questioned and rebuilt what we need to do differently, in phase three we re-energised the organisation by connecting employees to both strategy and purpose. And, in phase four, we're going to continue that positive growth mindset to reimagine the future together.

As with any crises, COVID-19 has, and will continue to force us to reimagine what we know. For our health, our families and our world, that's an incredibly difficult thing to do. For our businesses, it's a complete necessity. More importantly, it's an opportunity. Our workplaces might look different, but the heart of our company cultures, should come out stronger.

Phase four focuses on using the collective power of your people to reimagine the future of your business. As we transition through and out of this experience, let's build on the positive learnings we've seen in your culture. Many organisations have seen increased levels of agility and innovation as they react to the impact of COVID-19. In phase four, you'll look to harness those elements of your culture and amplify them for a stronger future. Don't keep things the same.

# 4



# What's in your toolbox?

The tool	Purpose	Recommendation
<b>1 Collaborative innovation</b>	Collaborative innovation is a design thinking tool founded in positive psychology. Putting your big challenges out to the organisation to collaborate on the solutions helps your people feel part of the future of your business, and helps you solve from the bottom up.	We've worked with our clients to build innovative cultures. Get in touch if you'd like to see some great examples.
<b>2 Thank your people</b>	Show your people how much you value them. Go above and beyond and think bigger than recognition to create a culture that values people at its heart.	Use storytelling to capture the incredible moments of commitment that have truly brought your culture to life over the last few months.
<b>3 Future talk</b>	Job security may have been a concern for employees so it's important, where appropriate, that the conversation moves back to the future focused career journey.	Ensuring your people have the right role and feel fulfilled in their career is always a bespoke challenge. At a high level, talk about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal mobility</li><li>• Career success stories</li><li>• Virtual careers fairs</li><li>• Values based performance management</li></ul>



# If you only do these five things...

We get it, it's incredibly busy and stressful right now so if you don't have the headspace or capacity for a full re-boarding strategy, consider these 5 themes as the must have list.



## **Design your re-boarding programme with your employees.**

It's impossible to build the right re-boarding strategy without understanding where your people are and how you can support them. Keep it simple, but make sure you ask the right questions and use the insight to shape your plans.



## **Equip your line managers for the new normal.**

Whether that's training to lead or manage a vulnerable team, or line manager support for a partially remote team, don't leave this core audience to fend for themselves.



## **Give your people a warm welcome back to the office.**

It doesn't have to be a full rally cry campaign (though we think it should be), but it's important that your new normal communications are warm, understanding and welcoming. You want your employees to feel safe above all else.



## **Acknowledge the past.**

We'll get to the moment to celebrate and look forward but, no matter what industry you're in, it's important to take a moment to consider what you're going through as people, and as a business.



## **Reimagine the future.**

Look forward because your people will want reassurance about what's next. Do you need to recommunicate your company strategy? Or find new ways to innovate? Take time to consider what the future looks like or, even better, co-create it with your people.

# Need extra support?

These ideas aren't bespoke, they're just starters to help you think differently about the current challenges we're all facing. They are some of the high-level solutions we're seeing our clients work through. There's so much good general advice out there, but if you have a specific challenge you'd like to chat through, our lines always open.

Give Hattie, our lead strategist, a call on **07850 491 827**. We've also set up a dedicated mailbox **support@thisishome.co.uk** if you'd like to request sample agendas, tools or templates to help you.

**We're in it together,**

**Home**

