

Solutions Snapshot

Banking - The Power of Empathy

The Situation

In the spring of 2020, 90% of US states issued some version of a stay-at-home order to battle the spread of coronavirus. Non-essential businesses were forced to shut down, and many furloughed staff. For one southwest bank, this meant a temporary layoff of over 1,200 employees.

As they began recalling workers, some feared returning could put their health at risk even in an environment with more safety precautions in place. Most knew refusing to return could leave them out of work and ineligible for unemployment benefits. The bank understood the concerns and realized this new working environment could severely impact productivity, customer service and employee morale. So, they began looking for ways to make employees feel comfortable and appreciated.

The Solution

Empathy was key. Bank executives and managers were asked to imagine how employees felt as they were written off as “unessential” workers, filed for unemployment and faced the stress of contracting the virus as they returned to work.

The bank developed a plan to help people cope with the changing environment, feel more comfortable with the actions taken to protect employee health and demonstrate their value to the company. The plan included:

- Identifying the fears and anxieties everyone was feeling
- Communicating changes in policies and procedures
- Showing how these changes would protect employees and customers
- Offering a tangible and personal token of appreciation to each returning worker
 - Gift Select Now code redeemable on branded website from a choice of awards
 - Planned for special gift box with an executive message enclosed

The power of empathy strengthened the bonds with their returning employees that will last for years after this pandemic is history.