**The Pandemic from the Employees’ Viewpoint**

We have all heard about the effect that the pandemic is having on the U.S economy. With the number of sicknesses and the number of deaths rising, there is a side that is not often mentioned. That is the employees’ who are affected financially, emotionally and personally.

There are three aspects that should be taken into consideration.

**Think Long Term**

The way you treat employees during this pandemic will determine how your employees will treat you when the pandemic has passed. It is critical that the decisions you make now build loyalty by those who you will depend on to return to work and continue to make your company successful. A company is just like a person; both have reputations that will either build your employee loyalty or destroy a reputation that you have tried to build over the years. It is important that you think long term on every decision you make today and consider how you will have to live with that decision after the pandemic is over. Your employees will either respect you or resent the decisions you are making today.

**Treat All Employees Equally**

When you make decisions during this pandemic, there is another consideration often forgotten while you are dealing with all your stress and concerns. It is imperative that you treat all employees equally. If you employ 14 full time and part time employees combined, you are subject to the regulations of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). If you show preferential treatment to some employees compared to others, discrimination charges can be filed against your company. This can result in possibly thousands of dollars in fines. It is important to ensure that what you are doing to and how you are treating one group of employees that you not show preferential treatment. This will also irreparably damage you and your company’s reputation.

**Over Communicate**

It is imperative that you communicate on a regular basis to both your employees who continue to work onsite or virtually, but also to the employees who have been temporarily laid off. All of these employees are very concerned not only about their pay and benefits, but also about the future viability of the company. There are several ways that you can effectively and easily communicate to all of your employees:

* Hold weekly Town Hall meetings, either by phone or webinar. The top leader in the company can record this message to ensure the correct information is conveyed. Brief updates about the company should be given in a positive tone as much as possible, but you should address the future viability of the company without over exaggerating.
* It is effective to have a Hotline that employees may call with any of their real pressing concerns or questions. This will show to the employees that the company is listening and wants to hear from them. Someone must check this line two times a day to respond to the employee who has left the message. Not responding is worse than not having the Hotline.

We often say that our employees are our most important assets. The decisions made by the company speak louder than words. Be careful what you decide today because inconsiderate decisions on behalf of the employees can destroy your company’s reputation as well as its future success.