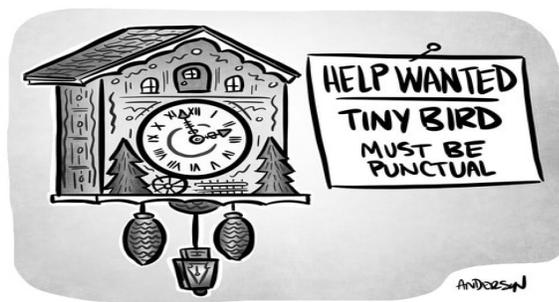


# HOT SHEET

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Full-Circle HR



## HR Trends:

- Biden's American Rescue Plan includes paid leave, increased minimum wage, extending unemployment compensation, more support for small businesses, and relief to those in need; additionally, proposed COVID-19 relief includes temporary COBRA healthcare coverage subsidies through 9/30/2021.
- A New York City ordinance challenges At-Will Employment in the fast-food industry by requiring employers to follow progressive discipline and requiring 'just cause' before reducing hours or firing someone.
- Legal experts believe that if an employer-mandated COVID vaccine results in the employee having an adverse reaction, liability will likely be covered under Worker's Compensation as it is for other work required vaccinations.
- The right to free speech is often not a protection for private sector employees who express their political opinion, on or off-duty, if it violates policy (at work), harms an employer's reputation, involves violence, or is otherwise illegal.
- Employers find successful hiring/retention of GenZ means offering flexibility, work/life balance, coaching, diversity and growth.

## Managing Workers Remotely

Managing remote workers is likely not a skill that many managers have and the need for this has continued much longer than many expected. Now that companies have invested in the technology to support remote workers, it is also likely that, even after the pandemic ends, remote working will continue to be a normal part of doing business where it is appropriate and desirable. In light of that, some tips for managing these worker effectively may ease the path: 1. Set Clear Expectations—Establish clear and realistic

goals and deadlines for your team and be accessible to provide clarity on priorities, milestones, performance goals and other support. 2. Be Flexible—Recognize that employees working at home may have different demand on their time due to family needs. Give support to workers in setting a schedule that fulfills your contact needs, but adapts to when they can be most productive. 3. Shorten Virtual Meetings—Save them screen time when you can and try to have short 'huddle' meetings. 4. Track Your Workers' Progress—

Trust the process, but stay informed about their schedules and task plans. Remember, just because you can't see them, does not mean they are not working. 5. Emphasize Communication—Determine the best communication tool (text, phone, video, email etc.) for each employee and stay in touch, but find a balance between keeping everyone informed and nagging. 6. Remember to Listen—The most successful managers are good listeners and also communicate trust and respect. 7. Build

Connections—Open a fun chat channel and support your employees in staying connected. 8. Provide a Way to Collaborate—Create a shared document that tracks activities, so everyone can check in on status and offer collaboration. 9. Resist the Urge to Micromanage—If your staff are meeting their goals and look productive, trust that. Use regular one-on-one check-ins to stay up to date. 10. Celebrate Success—Look for ways to celebrate work milestones together.

## Tough Employee Conversations During COVID

Giving constructive/corrective feedback to an employee is difficult under 'normal' circumstances. As we adjust to safety requirements such as wearing masks and remote work, this makes this process that much more challenging. First of all, whether doing this with a mask on or via virtual connection, many of the non-verbal cues get lost or obscured. In some cases that may be good, but for the most part, it makes it a less human-to-human connection and can impede the most effective flow for the dialogue. This can be more true for some than others. For example, one study shows that nearly 80% of Baby Boomers and Traditionalists say that social interaction is more difficult while working remotely compared to 64% for other generations. Additionally, these conversations may

seem to be needed more often because changes in the work environment, whether on-site or working remotely, have added extra stress and challenges to performing the job. So, before it gets to the point of corrective action, speak openly and compassionately with your staff to ensure you have a full understanding of the difficulties they face and engage in dialogue/problem solving with them to explore ways to adjust goals, mitigate difficulties, or adjust job descriptions. Remember, parents of young children and often those moms in particular are facing unprecedented stressors during COVID.

Whatever conversation you are having, here are some suggestions on how you might have them more effectively. Suggestions regarding masks include: Avoid clear masks because they often fog up; Remember the acronym

PAVE which stands for pause, accentuate, volume, and emotion; Practice your 'mask' voice; Periodically nod and make sounds of listening/understanding (Mm hmm is one); Increase your usual body language by about 10%, making full use of appropriate gestures to convey emotion and meaning; Some appropriate mirroring of the other person's body language can help foster connectivity during the conversation; and Practice smiling with your eyes so that when a smile is appropriate it comes through in spite of the mask.

While masks are not ideal, meeting in person is usually preferable for these types of conversations rather than virtually. If a virtual meeting is the best option, here are some tips for doing so. Ensure that both you and your employee

*Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for.*  
— Barack Obama

have set the meeting for a time when you can both be uninterrupted and stressors can be avoided as well as possible. Avoid distractions and show your employee that you are giving your undivided attention. Sit so that your employee can see you from mid-chest up and that the lighting is such that your face is clear and visible. Likewise, encourage your employee to do the same. Use some of the same techniques discussed about non-verbal communication and watch for and be sensitive to cues from your employee. Also, be aware that your employee may be more emotionally expressive in their own home than they might be in the office. Be sensitive and alert to your employee's comfort level with having this conversation in their home.