

Next Gen GM

THE WORLD OF EMPLOYEE WELLBEING



A friend of mine said it best: “I wish people would stop calling it “social’ distancing, as it’s physical distancing we need to do.”

The social part cannot be eliminated and, in fact, is fundamentally essential for us all to carry on. Over the last several weeks my company, Pivt, has gotten an outpouring of emails from companies that are rightfully concerned about their employees’ and clients’ social wellbeing. Deep in coronavirus quarantines, transferees are longing for the familiar and a sense of belonging amid the magnified crisis, anxiety, loneliness, fear and confusion that is an inevitable part of all our lives currently. Moreover, we have spoken to transferees who have said that they have inundated HR Departments, RMCs and DSPs with calls regarding mental health concerns and questions about what is next.

The reality is, transferees face many of these issues not just during this time of crisis, but in their everyday lives. They want to be in control of their own happiness in their new location, but do not know where to start. I can empathize because I was one of them and thus envisioned Pivt to facilitate the social wellbeing of employees to address the needs that are not on the A to B punch list of relocation.



In 2014, I moved to London for work without knowing anyone and I cannot help but think about what I would have done under coronavirus circumstances.

I was a 21 year old in a new country, living in a 400 square-foot apartment, unfamiliar with the healthcare system and acclimation needs and lacked a fully established network of friends. I often felt lonely and confused and that was while I was able to leave my apartment, see people and have a routine. What was always missing and needed were three things: A trusted resource I could turn to for advice and answer the questions I didn’t know to ask, quality friends right away and a network of people who understood what I was going through, as a relocated and foreign employee. In a worldwide pandemic, this need is exasperated and these resources are especially critical now.

Curious about the implications and how we could better assist our clients, Pivt reached out to Expats around the world to better understand what has been most challenging for them during this pandemic.

Some of the survey results were staggering:

- 1) The biggest challenge in being in a new city during COVID-19 is overwhelmingly social well-being through the lack of support network that often resulted in loneliness.
- 2) An alarming 73.7% of Expats were not familiar with the healthcare system in their new country prior to COVID-19.
- 3) Since the quarantine occurred, only 5.3% of Expats heard from their RMC and 57% from their employers.
- 4) 57.9% of transferees said they did not have a chance to develop a support system before the “shelter in place” orders.



The survey makes it clear that business continuity, return on investment and transferee churn will ultimately depend on how companies react to this. Unless we give transferees and their families the tools they need in the palm of their hands, especially while in quarantine and alone, employee wellbeing and success will always be compromised.

As I write this quarantined in my New York City apartment at the epicentre of the pandemic, it has never felt more real.

Even as a native New Yorker, I feel isolated, fearful, and confused. It is inevitable that our world will be different on the other side of this. We can only hope that there will be silver-linings and perhaps a nuanced focus towards employee experience and wellbeing, will inevitably be one of them.

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