

Strategizing and communicating Workplace vaccine policies



The newly released COVID-19 vaccines promise an eventual return to a more “normal” workplace. Employers are exploring whether to encourage or mandate vaccination, how to provide or facilitate access—and the communications to support their strategies.

Guiding Principles

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to COVID-19 vaccine communication. The most effective approach for your organization will depend on role, geography, collective bargaining and/or other factors. A thoughtful and empathetic communication plan can be the difference between confusion or resistance and understanding and adoption.



Lead with facts, but anticipate emotion

Given the range of views Americans have on COVID-19, and vaccines in general, encouraging—or even requiring—employees to be vaccinated is a sensitive issue. Provide employees with reliable information from trusted public health resources. At the same time, reinforce public health guidance to continue behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.



Leverage leaders and other “influencers”

Who do your employees respect and listen to? Ask them to share their vaccination experiences and why they’ve chosen to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. For example, take a page from Dr. Anthony Fauci and others who have received their vaccines publicly. Or, tap into employee resources groups to reach certain segments and help address concerns.



Connect back to existing pandemic-focused channels

By this point in the pandemic, many employers have established consistent sources of information—such as a designated website, regular leadership updates or town hall style meetings. Use these familiar channels to explain the company’s position and role in vaccine distribution, and how that aligns to other messages employees have received all along.

Learn more

Visit www.mercer.com or contact your Mercer consultant

Removing Barriers

Make sure to explain all of the ways your organization is removing barriers to getting a COVID-19 vaccine. This might include paid time off/sick time for the vaccination and any recovery, incentives to drive participation or how to access the vaccine where employees live and work.

Sample Communication Approaches

Here are some examples of how an organization might use communications to support different COVID-19 vaccine strategies.

If you're an employer...



...Requiring vaccines for employees in customer or patient-facing roles



...Requiring vaccines for employees to resume business travel



...Encouraging vaccines, especially among employees who rely on public transportation

Communication might include:

- Promotion of on- or near-site vaccination clinics.
- Text message reminders of vaccination dates and locations.
- Video message with leaders or peers receiving their vaccine.
- Work site posters or table tents.

- Policy details posted on company intranet or COVID-19 resource center.
- Targeted message to roles resuming business travel.
- Flyer or postcard promoting ways to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine.

- Leader announcement connecting COVID-19 vaccines to return-to-work plans.
- Special web page addressing facts and myths about the COVID-19 vaccine, with links to trusted sources.
- Manager talking points and FAQs to use in small group meetings.

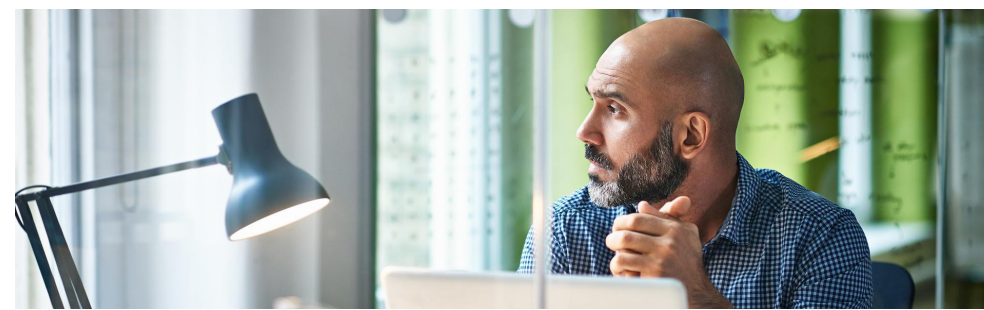
How Mercer Can Help

Mercer's communication experts can help guide your organization on both strategy and implementation in ways that reflect your vaccine approach and unique workforce characteristics.



Define Strategy

- **Define a communication plan** that reflects your organization's vaccine policy or approach, and matches both business and workplace needs.
- **Identify unique workplace segments** and uncover any sources of concern or confusion.
- **Establish success measures** and how those will be monitored.



Engage Leaders

- **Brief business leaders, HR and people managers** with vaccine policies and expectations.
- **Enlist leaders and managers** to visibly support employer vaccination efforts using video, blogs and social channels or virtual team meetings.
- **Equip managers to address employee questions** and direct to resources through tools like talking points and FAQs.



Connect with Employees

- **Develop and deliver messages** through new or existing communication channels.
- **Target workplace segments** as needed (for example, higher risk individuals, employees who travel for business or adult family members).
- **Monitor employee sentiment** via pulse surveys or digital focus groups before, during and after vaccinations.