

COVID-19 Group Update

Dear all,

This week I attended a remote conference on the psychological impact of COVID and lockdowns on our mental health and wellbeing. There were several studies presented that showed results very similar to our study last year that identified how three identified groups of people were experiencing the pandemic in different ways. What was particularly interesting was the finding that the experience of lockdowns has only slightly impacted the mental health of people who work. The biggest impact on the mental health of people who work has been found to be affected by the actions of leadership and feelings of social isolation from work colleagues. As we know these two factors can affect anyone in Colart whether you are working remotely or in the workplace.

Hearing the results of these studies reinforced in my mind the importance of our efforts to focus on collaboration, communication, and connectivity – with this being the foundation of our leadership development programme. But how are we doing? Well, you will get the chance to tell us in July when we launch the annual employee engagement survey. This survey will cover your perceptions of the business, your perceptions of your leaders and whether we are living up to our cultural narrative of *feel like a family, act like a high performing team*. We know that we need to learn from our experience in terms of what worked well and what still needs to be improved.

More details will follow shortly on the survey so watch this space.

Employee Assistance Programme...

Linked to the differences in needs that we all have, we would like to remind you all about the employee assistance programme (EAP) available to everyone across the group. Of course, we want you to talk to your line manager if you have any problems so that we can help directly but we understand that sometimes this is not always possible.

An **EAP** is a confidential support service that we pay for via a third party to help you solve a wide range of problems and challenges in your lives at no cost to you. As it is a third party, you can have confidence that no details of your discussions will be shared with Colart as the third party provided is governed by the highest international standards of confidentiality and privacy. You can find more details [here](#).

Returning to the office...

Whilst we recognise there may be some varying local requirements, our general aim is for people working remotely to start coming back to the office up to 2 days per week from the end of June, but we will not make it an official expectation until 6 September.

Of course, this expectation will be subject to government advice in each country, as we know already that restrictions in Northern Europe will not make any attempt to come into the office from June possible. We will keep you all updated locally.

Business travel...

Coming into the office is not the only question you are asking – we are also being asked about Business travel. Our guidance and direction on this remain unchanged that business travel should (in the main) be customer and consumer facing i.e. customer or supplier meetings, consumer / artist events or major collaborations such as trade events.

Domestic travel within the country or market should continue to be managed in a way to maximise efficiency and minimise our carbon footprint. We have learned a different way of working with our customers and other key stakeholders so we should continue this practice as far as practicable.

International travel is where we have much tighter guidelines both for the safety of people and minimising the significant environmental impact. It should therefore only be taking place where it adds incremental value to the business and must be agreed by the GLT in advance of any booking. Where possible aim to make full use of technology by continuing to hold interactive and dynamic virtual meetings.

Remote induction...

Our remote induction sessions have now been completed by they are all available for anyone to watch if you need a refresher on any one of the subjects. You can find them all [here](#).

Thank you to everyone who took part and thank you to all our recent new starters who joined these sessions. Based on the feedback, the sessions were really valued but felt to be too long so we need to improve how we get our messages across – less is more! We also asked the attendees what advice they would offer to any new starter to Colart and I love this one:

“Don't be afraid to ask questions! It will make your life easier to just ask!”

This advice is perfect as it aligns to Dennis's message that you can ask anyone anything. Building our communication between each other definitely makes life easier.

Keeping to the basics...

We cannot stress these basics enough and here's a reminder:

1. Work remotely for those who can, only attending the workplace for the purpose of maintaining connectivity and collaboration for up to one day per week (for at least the short term)
2. For those who cannot work remotely, you should continue to come into work as normal whilst aiming to avoid using public transport.
3. When in work (whether factory, warehouse, or office) follow the clear safety protocols that are in place to protect everyone's health and welfare.
4. Take responsibility for keeping to the safety disciplines in terms of handwashing, wearing face masks and maintaining physical distance.... Hands, Face, Space.
5. Business travel is still not acceptable unless authorisation has been obtained in advance. If you do need to travel please ensure you wash your hands before and after your journey, maintain social distancing and wear a face covering over

- your nose and mouth for the duration of your journey.
6. Take responsibility for yourself and others.

Our mantra...

As always, please STAY SAFE – please follow the basics outlined above and any advice from the government in your country.

Finally, remember we want every voice to be heard...so please keep talking to us and this includes telling us if you are struggling in any way. You can use all routes available to you:

1. Your line manager
2. Your local HR Business Partner
3. The Q&A platform on the intranet

Regards,



Jane Beeston