

## WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER.

During these turbulent times, Synchrony® is here to help. We are here to support you and your small business. This content series presents helpful resources and information you can use right away, on important topics such as physical health, small-business tips and preparing for what's next.

### **PREPARE TO BRING EMPLOYEES BACK AND HAVE TOUGH CONVERSATIONS**

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During these challenging times, you've likely made very difficult business and staffing decisions. Whether you were able to keep your business open (perhaps at partial capacity) or had to temporarily close, reopening presents its own set of complications. You may need to navigate how to rehire employees who were laid off or bring back employees from furlough. In the process, you may engage in some tough conversations with current, future or terminated employees.

They may have questions about safety, finances, benefits and how decisions were made. From managing paperwork to creating a safety plan, this transition time has many aspects to consider.



## HERE ARE SOME TIPS FROM SYNCHRONY:

### Create a Plan

Just as you used your best information available to make decisions about staying open or closing, and which staff members (if any) you should keep on the payroll, you'll now do the same process in reverse. Create a forecast of revenue and expenses. Determine which of your roles/employees are most critical for reopening. Then decide how many employees you can afford.



### Communicate Clearly, Honestly and Effectively

This is a very anxious time for many people. You may get questions about how staffing decisions were made and why some, but maybe not all, employees are coming back. Be up front with employees. If your company has had little or no revenue, it's probably not possible to operate as "business as usual." If you feel comfortable, share your sales figures for context. If you don't have all the answers right now, be honest about that. These open conversations can go a long way toward building trust with employees.

### Make a Plan to Rehire or Recall Employees After a Layoff or Furlough

Once you've made the decision to reopen, it's time to create a staffing plan. Keep in mind that some employees may be eager to return, and you may have some who can't (or won't) return. There are many factors that could go into that decision, such as availability of childcare or the amount of unemployment the person is receiving. If you have questions about the rehiring or recalling process, consider consulting an employment lawyer or other advisor. There are also online resources that can help provide some guidance.

- As you make your staffing decisions, ensure fairness and equity. You cannot discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information (including family medical history). State and local law may include other categories or characteristics that are protected from discrimination, so make sure those are not a factor in your decision, either.
- Think about how to contact employees, offer re-employment and complete paperwork. Rehired employees may need to fill out new W-4 and I-9 forms.
- As employees come back to work, keep Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regulations in mind. Employees are still entitled to established minimum wage, overtime pay (if applicable), and paid and unpaid breaks (based on state/local laws).

### Ensure Safety for Your Employees

The reality is that some employees may be so concerned about workplace safety that they won't come back. One way you could help build confidence is to create and post a safety plan. This could include things like your store sanitizing process, your policy on protective equipment like masks, limits on the number of people in the store and any other measures you are taking. Also be aware of state/local laws that may regulate these safety issues, such as requiring masks or requiring companies to supply certain protective gear.

### Consider Employees' Well-being and Mental Health

Keep in mind that employees and their family members may be struggling with stress, anxiety or other mental health issues. It's important that you show employees that you care about them as people. Ensure you are taking the time to check in on their well-being and asking how they are doing. You may find that employees need support or ask about resources. You could start by directing them to your health insurance provider (if applicable) or the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

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*Although some of this content relates to legal issues, it should not be construed as legal advice.*

**We are all in this together, and Synchrony is with you every step of the way.** Ready to explore more human resources topics? Here are additional resources:

**Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)**  
[What You Should Know About the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act and the Coronavirus](#)

**U.S. Chamber of Commerce**  
[How to Manage Staff Concerns](#)

**Inc. Magazine**  
[How to Help Your Employees Feel Safe When You Reopen](#)

**Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**  
[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information](#)

**World Health Organization (WHO)**  
[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information](#)

**Forbes Magazine**  
[Three Experts Advice: What To Know About COVID-19 Layoffs And Separations](#)

**National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI)**  
[Information on COVID-19](#)



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This unique program offers knowledge and tools that can help you grow, lead and operate your business.



For more information or to connect with an expert, contact us at [synchronyconnect@synchrony.com](mailto:synchronyconnect@synchrony.com).

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