



CARIBBEAN  
HOTEL & TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION

## "CHTA Live: The Resilience Series "HR Strategies and Solutions to Support Business Continuity"

Thursday, April 16, 2020

### Q&A

1. Severance and notice is far more serious than was discussed. It will put many small hotels and businesses out of business. How can the CHTA put pressure on governments to ease these laws keeping in mind that most businesses will only employ a percentage of their original team and will have to pay huge sums to let go staff they really don't want to lose.
  - a. CHTA: We are finalizing the analysis of a COVID-19 Impact Survey which will provide us with the data that will support our recovery platform and regional advocacy efforts. This webinar as well has provided us further insights into the challenges the industry is facing and will continue to face.
  - b. Nicola: This applies not only to the Tourism sector and must be an overall country strategy. Agree CHTA should start to lobby. JHTA (Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association) has already started the lobby with our government in Jamaica. We do need to work together to make the case.
  - c. Peter: We ran into this when businesses literally were "wiped-out" by Hurricane Dorian in The Bahamas. It was considered a case of Force Majeure and this certainly does. So the Chambers of Commerce should be lobbying the government for exemptions especially as this crisis continues.
  - d. Gail: Lobbying should involve the Chambers of Commerce and Employers federation as they represent a larger number of employers in each country. In Barbados there is a Tripartite Social Partnership where these types of requests are tabled. I believe that requests have been made for suspension of the triggers for Severance.
  - e. Nicole: As these are unprecedented times, national hotel associations and where they are not in place, small independent / boutique hotels should strongly consider forming an alliance to lobby their governments for alternative solutions. Whilst severance payouts could be the nail in the coffin for some small hotels, many at risk of redundancy employees will be expecting their redundancy payout to assist them in this time. It would take an act of parliament to change current labour laws - perhaps a middle road solution of severance pay out spread over a period of time or the period of lay off be extended to 6 months particularly if the property intends to rehire the employee they don't want to lose.
  
2. If an employer is unable to pay the severance - will the government pay the severance and then the employer be indebted to the NIS/NIC.
  - a. Peter G: Given the severity of this Pandemic I don't know where some governments will find the funds to survive let alone companies but my comments above about Force Majeure will apply here also.

- b. Gail: I agree with Peter, Governments will be required to shore up Severance Funds if National Insurance was asked to pay severance where employers are in default.
3. Good afternoon, as GH (Groundhandler Aviation) there is a cut of more than 90% income and flights. As we are suffering we reached to the local government to maintain existence for the near future.
  - a. Peter: Only the government can answer that question given the magnitude of this crisis.
4. If persons are assigned to different tasks is it best to have them sign temporary terms especially if the tasks expose them to different types of risks?
  - a. Peter: Whenever changing assignments it is always best to put it in writing and get their SIGNED agreement
  - b. Gail: If the roles assigned are significantly different from the job of the incumbent, then yes you should get their agreement.
  - c. Nicole: In addition to the above advice, be as specific as you can in the scope and nature of the different tasks, and the amount of flexibility expected and the period of time of the temp terms. As you mention the “exposure to different types of risk” be sure that they have received adequate training, the right equipment and protective gear.
5. Some employees are concerned regarding their privacy while working at home. any thoughts in this area. How is the info kept TECHNICALLY secure? This needs the Biz IT dept to set up protocols for 'snooping' and data privacy. I live in Canada and use to work for a large company. As part of your access protocol you are asked to sign a confidentiality form
  - a. Peter: Any company who is assigned work from home privileges should have the necessary security in place. You have to confirm with them if you have concerns.
  - b. Gail: Employers should have Remote Working Policies which should be discussed with employees prior to commencing home working, they should cover, access, security and handling of data remotely IT would be required to ensure secure access. Permissions, and protection from leaks, hackers, spam viruses etc. Employees should be reminded of their Non Disclosure or confidentiality clauses in their contracts of employment.
  - c. Nicole: If your company has Remote Working policies and confidentiality agreements in place - great you are covered. However owners / managers, HR, now is the time to check that they are up to date before issuing. OR is it time to update and reissue? As an employee being assigned / asked to work from home, it is in your best interest to ensure you understand the dos and don'ts with regard to protecting the company's data and equipment. If you are using your own phone, laptop etc - and are concerned about your own personal privacy get clear on the expectations and ensure that you try as much as possible to keep your private information separate from work.

6. Should an employer create a WFH policy for the employees to sign on to? If so, how would this impact on their previous employment policy/contract?
  - a. Gail: I assume you mean a working from Home Policy. If so yes it's preferable to have a policy that is communicated and discussed with employees and have them sign. Usually these types of Policies are administrative in nature , just regulating how work will be done away from the office. However, if the Policy is in contradiction of any of the terms of the Employment Contract, Then the Company should get the employees agreement to vary his contract terms.
  
7. If you asked your employees to take vacation during this time of curfew, but they refuse...can you do with this? If this situation remains for a longer period, can you let go of your employees?
  - a. Peter: Vacations are taken at the convenience of the company. You can lay-off employees in accordance with local labour law.
  - b. Gail S: In addition to Peters comments, check your Labour Laws. Most Vacation provisions allow for notice to be given to employees if you want to compel them to take vacation. However it's always best to use moral suasion and communicate to employees that use of vacation can be a win-win. Employees get the opportunity to be paid and the Company can plan staffing better when the Economy opens up.
  
8. What is 'good' practice in testing your Employer brand.. it's possible that what you think of yourself is different to how others perceive you.
  - a. Nicole: YES!  
How do you test this?
    - b. Nicole: There are a number of different ways you can do this and /or use traditional HR / management processes with a little customization to get the information you need. E.g. Induction for new hires, Probation reviews , Exit / Leaver interviews, employee satisfaction/engagement surveys. Even asking your employees directly! Then take action with that intel. Of course there is also independent research - which will attract a cost for quality research.
  
9. Nicole, do you provide workshops? Or do you have resources for improving on how to create an employer brand?
  - a. Nicole: Both. The approach depends on your unique situation, challenges or aspiration for your business. Email me if you would like to know more.  
From the moment you have one employee, you have an employer brand! Your employer brand is your organization's image or reputation as understood and experienced by existing, potential and past employees, and it is *critical* to the success of your business. The trick is ensuring that your employer brand marketing message matches the actual employee experience of your brand and culture.