

Leave and remuneration trends in the time of Covid-19 - survey

In the spirit of sharing workable ideas and in order to help South African business adapt to the current circumstances, 21st Century is running a series of weekly surveys with businesses and employers to sound out how the market is reacting to coronavirus issues and other important topics as they arise from a people management perspective.



The surveys are providing an insightful glimpse into how employers are reacting to the pressures of the virus on the workplace. Both 'Leave Treatment During Covid-19 Virus Times' and 'Pay Treatment during Covid-19 Times' have proven enlightening.

Annual vs special leave

The survey on leave for example asked whether the lockdown period should be used as annual leave, among other things. Half of the respondents felt that this time should indeed be deducted as annual leave, while the other half felt that the situation is no fault of the employee, who should still be permitted to take annual leave at their own discretion.

The issue of annual leave during this time is clearly a divisive topic, with a surprisingly even split evident among those who are for annual leave being used and those against. It is extremely sensitive, both for staff and for employers.

For staff, forced leave means no choice and potential inconvenience – both practical and financial – along with the implications for an employee who has used up annual leave. For employers, double the leave means lower productivity levels that directly impact the bottom line. Overall, however, organisations largely appear to be taking the socially responsible approach as opposed to a purely capitalist one and putting the well-being of employees first – at least for now. The dominant opinion is that those who operate in support of the greater good will fare better post Covid-19 when their actions come to light.

Remuneration and pay practices

The survey also addressed remuneration approaches and tools of the trade that companies provide to employees who are working from home, pay practices for those who are unable to work from home, and the prevalence of employers who

monitor and measure time management and productivity during the lockdown period.

The survey on pay revealed that across all employee levels, the majority of participating organisations are providing full pay for the lockdown period - for employees who can work from home.

Added to this, while it is clear that there is, and will be, a negative impact due to Covid-19 and the lockdown, employers are still doing their utmost to avoid reducing salaries or not paying during this period.

Where freezes on salaries are being considered, it is at senior levels at this stage – with 40% of participants not having made a final decision on this as yet.

Managing the Change survey

The next survey focuses on Managing the Change and opens on Wednesday, 15 April, closing at 10am on Wednesday, 22 April. It is easy to complete and free to participants. [Take part in the survey here.](#)

New concepts that shape effective policies during this difficult time will keep organisations sustainable and staff safe, motivated and effective. The company data of participants in a 21st Century survey will be kept strictly confidential. Data will reflect how companies anticipate responding, given that these are solutions for new scenarios never imagined before. The response by organisations will also be impacted by any new legislation that transpires over this period.

21st Century believes that coming together to share information is South Africa's greatest hope for creating sustainable solutions to keep business thriving, even when times are tough. New ideas are the currency that will secure a strong future for South African business and the economy. Participation in these weekly surveys could be an invaluable tool in crafting those ideas.

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