



## Inquiry & Insight: Back To Work With The Coronavirus

business customers employees pandemic

**Summary:** As bankers get back to work in the branch, there are questions to answer. Today, we discuss how to make both customers and employees comfortable in the branch and how to hire virtually.

There are interesting jobs that many of us have never heard of, such as "chicken nugget taste-tester" (self-explanatory), Netflix "tagger" (they binge-watch then tag shows), and "Snoozetern" (they get paid to sleep on mattresses). As bankers get back to their job at the branch, there are questions to answer. We answer a few of them for you today.

**Q: How do I make sure our customers feel comfortable about coming back to the branch, especially our seniors?**

**A:** Like many grocery stores have done, financial institutions should consider offering hours when only seniors are allowed to bank. Stock up on pens so no one has to share (or implement sanitization of pens after they are used) and make hand-sanitizer dispensers easily accessible as customers enter and exit. It would also be helpful to reach out personally to older customers. A short phone call to explain preventative measures your bank is taking can help ease concerns. Likewise, consider maintaining extended hours for drive-up services, for customers who prefer to avoid in-person contact.

**Q: We also want to make our employees comfortable when returning to the branch. Any tips on this other than physical distancing and hand sanitizers?**

**A:** First and maybe most important, remember that some employees may be reticent about returning. Communicate new protocols the bank has implemented in terms of deep cleaning and sanitizing and be sure to reorganize workspaces so they are adequately spaced, perhaps utilizing plexiglass dividers, as appropriate. You may need to shift employee schedules to lessen the number of people in branches at one time too. Also, try to be flexible if employees initially request fewer in-branch hours while continuing to work remotely as well. Continue using virtual technology, as appropriate, to avoid large groups congregating. Lastly, you may want to have a mechanism for contact tracing and communicating with employees should a staff member be exposed to the virus.

**Q: Our institution is hoping to hire. What are some strategies we can use for this period when things really haven't opened up completely?**

**A:** Start by going digital in your recruiting efforts. Use digital job boards and social media, and don't forget to refresh your posts, so they get renewed attention. When it comes time to interview, start with a phone screen. If things go well, move on to a video interview. If possible, try to keep it one-on-one, even if the candidate has to go through two or three video interviews to meet with senior members of the team, to allow for more robust and in-depth discussions. For more tips, read [Virtual College Recruiting During the Pandemic](#).

As you get back to business in the branch, things will eventually stabilize. In the meantime, we hope this discussion has helped in some way. Good luck on your journey!

## HAVE A QUESTION FOR INQUIRY AND INSIGHT?

Send any questions to me at [steve.brown@pcbb.com](mailto:steve.brown@pcbb.com) and I will try to address them in a future Inquiry & Insight issue. I look forward to hearing from you!

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