

## Why REPL Group CMD was in a dilemma on the first day back at work

By Maieeva Rebello, ET Bureau • Last Updated: Aug 17, 2020, 05:42 PM IST

### Synopsis

While Pradeep Misra was excited to be back at work, he was worried about the pandemic.



Pradeep Misra shares how his company managed to start work once again amidst the pandemic.

**Rudrabhishek Enterprises** has their office located in **Connaught Place**, the heart of Delhi. **Pradeep Misra**, Chairman and Managing Director of **REPL**, commutes by his own car.

"The area being one of the busiest business centres of town, reaching office was time consuming. **Post lockdown**, travelling to work has become a hassle-free affair due to less traffic," he told ET Panache.

On the first day back to office post-lockdown, Misra was in a dilemma. On one hand, he was excited to be back at work while on the other worried about the **pandemic**.

"Lots of enthusiasm and confusion prevailed in the office. Understanding the gravity of the situation, I have acted with great caution and responsibility. I had adapted our lifestyle to the new normal at home also. However I was just happy to get back to my office, and resume work at my desk," he said.

The company is trying to follow every **possible safety measures** at their office. They have doubled the hygiene practices to keep employees aware and safe. Employees are screened every morning and evening, and their data is maintained and recorded.

"We are ensuring social distancing by introducing alternate day working. Sanitising task is scheduled on regular basis and also distribution of disposable masks to the employees as per requirements. We are trying to minimise human touch in the office by applying digital modes. Proper guidelines are issues and maintained for usage of public spaces like elevators, cafeteria, meeting halls, etc. Touchless access control system, video conferencing instead of physical meetings, work from home on alternate days, etc are few steps taken," he said.

Getting back to work wasn't really easy. "At home, our prime focus was safety. At office, the primary focus has to be work with safety. Therefore, maintaining a delicate balance between work and safety was a challenge. However, after a couple of days, we all have got used to it," Misra said.

The main challenge is maintaining a balance between work and safety. "After having less business for several months, we wanted to quickly restore the operations and move forward. To lead the organisation from frontstage and backstage along with keeping the employees and stakeholders motivated was not an easy task," he shared.

Currently they are operating with around 50 per cent of their total staff.

"These are the bare essential employees required to run the business. Those employees who use public transport to commute are largely working from home. The office timings have been reduced. Work-from-home has improved the productivity by reducing two to three hours of travel time," he said.

"My sincere advice to other heads of companies is please don't take the virus lightly. Open your office with full safety measures. Encourage more and more employees to work from home. Ensure strict safety measures in your office to negate the risk of infection. Learn from the experiences of other organisations and keep your eyes and ears open to the developments happening on any front. Covid-19 is not about to go away soon. It is important to adapt yourself to the 'New Normal', and with revised SOPs try to reach pre-Covid-19 productivity levels as quickly as possible," he advised fellow bosses.

'Enthusiasm wrapped around fear and confusion', Misra thinks this would be the ideal phrase to describe their first day back at work.

"We all wanted to get back to the office and were excited to restart work, however the fear of virus was always at the back of the mind. In the past few months of lockdown, we had almost learnt to live with the new normal. Everybody wanted to share their lockdown stories however maintaining social distancing was also important. In the pandemic situation, leaders must stand and demonstrate sincerity and show the path to move forward. As a company, we have taken this as opportunity to learn more and shift to new horizon," he ended.