

Expectations of a COVID-19 vaccine rollout

An in-depth conversation with U.S. opinion elites

The Glover Park Group surveyed its insight community, TrendSpotters, to understand expectations of the upcoming vaccine rollout.

What's new?

- There is already a lot of public survey data on Americans' views of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- This research digs deeper. We had a qualitative conversation with an engaged group of consumers across the United States.
- Our focus was on the role brands and employers should play, and how people feel about potential "requirements" associated with the vaccine.

TrendSpotters is GPG's proprietary research tool composed of 300 opinion elites nationwide.

- GPG created this community to gain insight into our clients' most critical and time sensitive questions.
- Operates like a social media platform where users are notified to complete online activities (surveys, discussions, ethnographies, etc.).
- Provides quick, on-demand insights on a range of topics including current events, message testing, creative and ad testing, among other purposes.
- 130 panelists participated in this specific engagement.

Businesses need to get involved and strengthen confidence in the rollout.

With tepid confidence in the government's rollout plan, businesses should:

- ✓ Make access to the vaccine easy and free for your employees, and where relevant, your customers
- ✓ Identify what distinctive capabilities you can offer to support the government, whether that's providing logistics, lending real estate or devoting marketing know-how
- ✓ Support efforts to reach at-risk groups
- ✓ Show CEOs getting vaccinated to build trust
- ✓ Ask employees to get vaccinated, but not coerce

Against the backdrop of divisions and low trust, businesses need to mitigate against:

- Suspicions of jumping the line or preferential treatment
- Unwittingly reinforcing existing inequities, whether by race, class or geography
- Potential backlash from accusations that employees must “comply” with vaccinations to keep jobs
- Efforts that feel tokenistic
- Concerns about profiteering

Context



A light at the end of the tunnel.

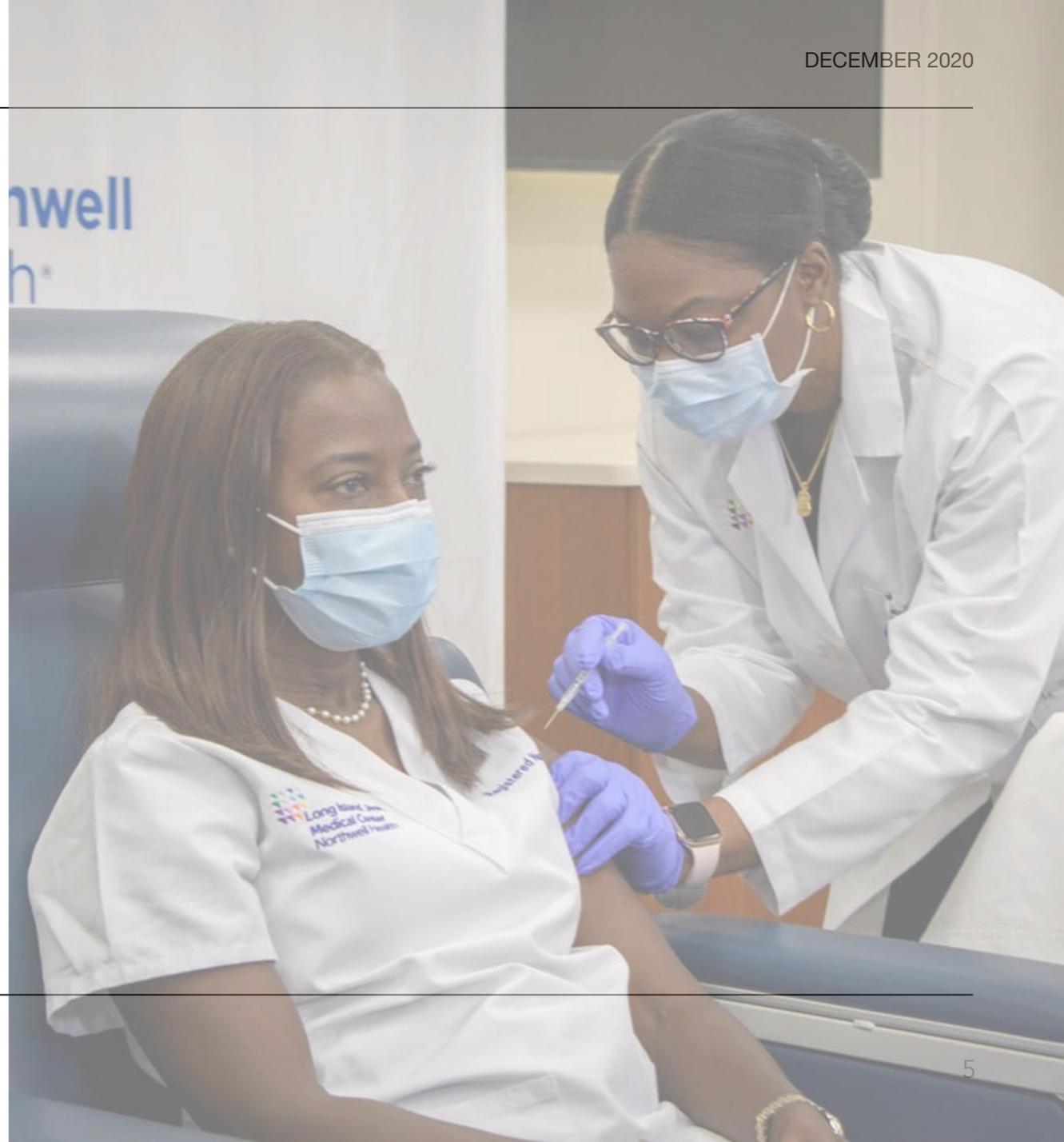
Elites are most likely to say they **feel encouraged** by the development of a vaccine. While it will still take a bit of time, a return to “normal” is in sight.

“I’m thrilled we have a shot at avoiding another batch of lockdowns, and a way to protect vulnerable people.”

“For those in a rush, such as medical personnel, this is a good thing.”

“I was thrilled because these vaccines are the best bet to get back to normal life at some point.”

“When I read that Pfizer and Moderna were developing their vaccines based on a method they were already using to develop drugs for cancer and Parkinson’s, I felt a lot more at ease about the time frame involved.”



But anxiety is still front and center, mostly driven by speed.



Although optimistic, many elites are concerned about how quickly the vaccine was developed, questioning if speed sacrificed safety.

“There is a lot of rushing to get things through. That isn't going to change the precautions we all need to do.”

“I can't help but still feel a bit skeptical and questioning of its effectiveness and whether the steps and protocols were taken.”

“Overall, quite conflicted. Generally encouraged by the thought and hope for a vaccine but torn due to the expedited process and novel mechanism by which the vaccines were generated.”

“My biggest concern is that behind closed political doors there has been pressure to rush things. All we need is for people to start dying from the shots. I'm a senior in my late 70s and won't get it until I can be assured it is safe.”

More Republicans report feeling skeptical **(26%)** than Democrats **(14%)**.

Q. Which of the following describe your reaction to this news? Select all that apply.

Most compelling reasons to get vaccinated center on helping the economy and resuming life. Supporting the most vulnerable is less effective.

50%

Individuals should take the vaccine to do their part to reduce the spread and **get our economy back** on track.

49%

Individuals should take the vaccine so everyone can **resume normal day-to-day life** as soon as possible.

48%

Individuals should take the vaccine to **protect their own health and the health of their loved** ones.

31%

Individuals should take the vaccine to **protect the health of our most vulnerable citizens**, like the elderly and those with compromised immune systems.

22%

Individuals should take the vaccine to **protect the health of our frontline workers** who keep society functioning, like healthcare workers, grocery store employees and delivery people.

“I’m glad and hopeful that a vaccine will be available to help things return to normal in the coming year. I look forward to getting it and helping develop herd immunity.”

Q. Which TWO of the following are the MOST compelling arguments to make when it comes to taking a COVID-19 vaccine?

There is tepid confidence in the government's rollout plan.

34%

very confident

48%

somewhat confident

17%

not as confident

Need to address serious doubts about equitable access:

- Fears about inequitable access for rural geographies, lower-income and minority communities emerge.

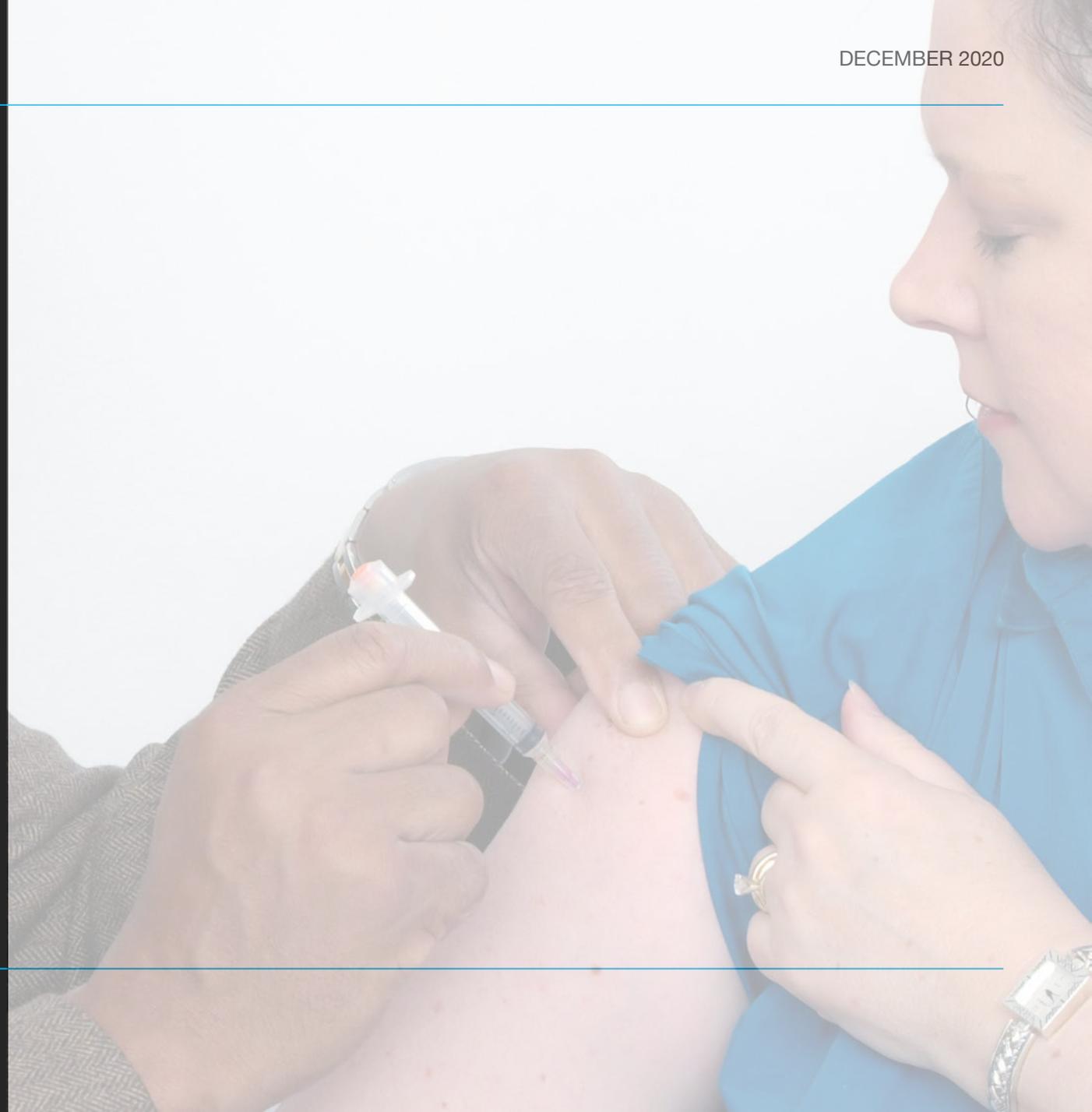
“I figured that rural areas across states will have a hard time accessing the vaccine, therefore hindering the task of getting COVID-19 under control.”

- As do suspicions about potential preferential access.

“I suspect that just as always, the rich and famous will get preferential treatment, and marginalized people will be the last to get them.”

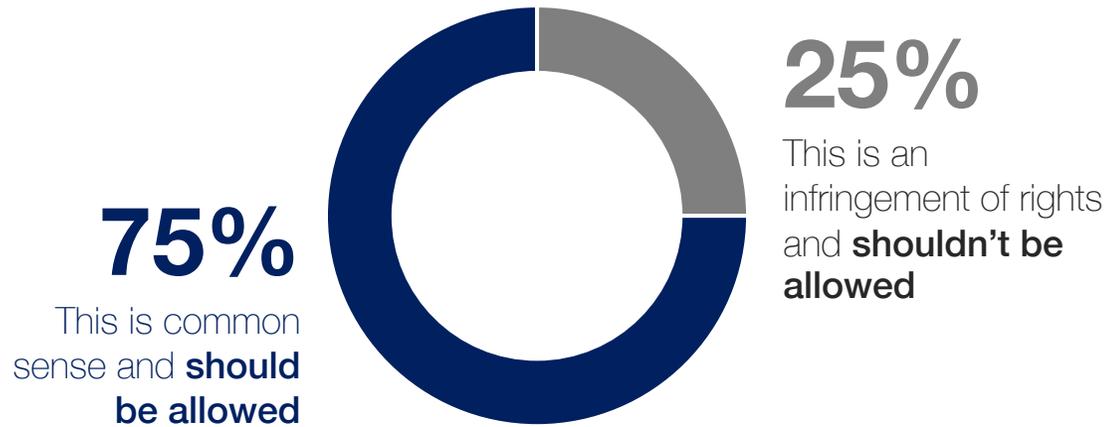
- Jumping the line will be met with serious reputational consequences.

Expectations of Businesses

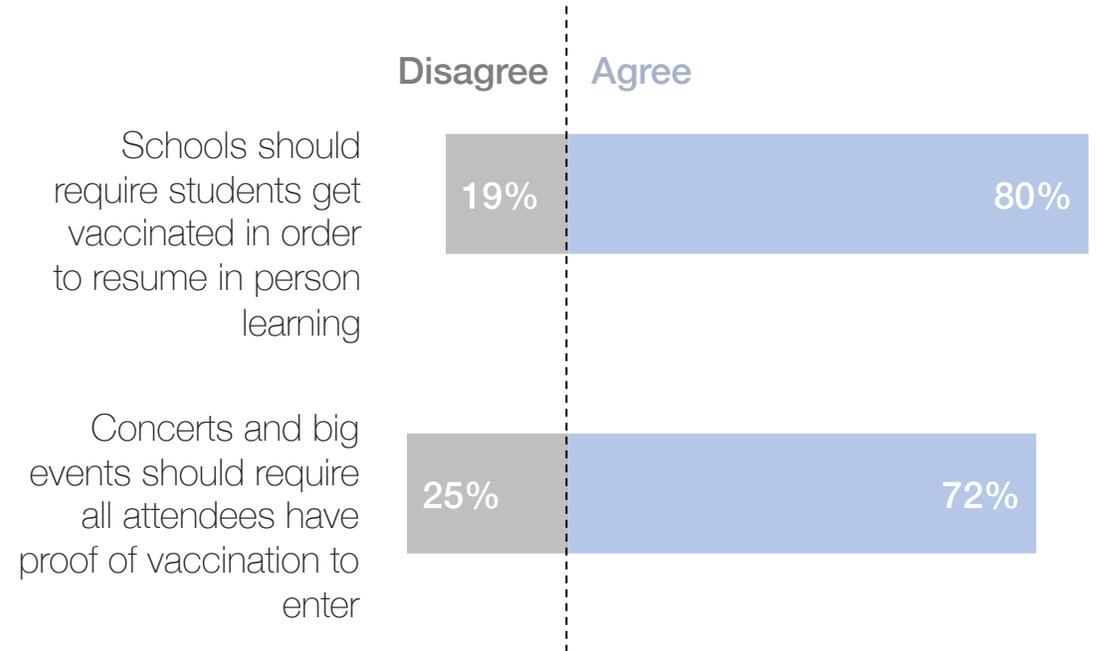


Businesses have permission to require vaccinations to use their services.

Companies should be able to ask for proof of vaccination before letting people use their services – (such as boarding a flight, going into the office, attending a fitness class or restaurant, etc.). How do you feel about this?



- An even larger share of elites think students should be vaccinated before going back to school.



Mandates on certain private events may go a step too far.

Elites draw the line on vaccine requirements in certain contexts, such as...

“When visiting private events that the public is not invited to (weddings, family parties).”

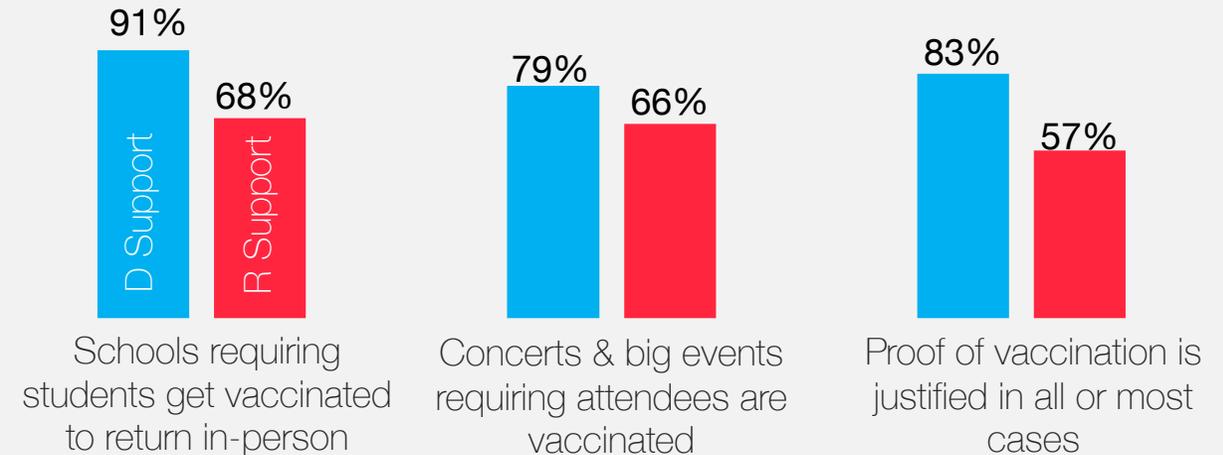
“Restricting private rights that have no effect on the public.”

“I would exclude religious facilities.”

Republicans are likelier to be triggered by individual infringement claims.

Compared to **Democrats**, **Republicans** are four times likelier to feel requiring a vaccine is an **infringement of rights**. **10%** vs. **45%**

But requirements in certain scenarios hold bipartisan support:



Employers by and large have a mandate to request employees to get vaccinated before returning to work – especially in high-contact jobs.

More than 4-in-5 elites say it's acceptable *to ask* certain frontline employees to get vaccinated before coming back to work, especially:



Health care
workers



Teachers



Food processing
workers

While requiring employees get vaccinated may be *legal*, its *acceptability is less clear*: some elites and news outlets say this is perfectly fine and legal, especially for frontline workers; but others say recommending it is enough and worry about companies retaliating or firing employees who refuse.

Additionally, most reject the idea of lower-wage, frontline workers as vaccine “test dummies.”

“If the companies producing the vaccine get FDA approval, the vaccine has been proven to be effective and safe. People should be thrilled to be among the first to get it.”

“First, when available the vaccine will have been fully vetted. Secondly, these are the folks who almost always get the short end of the stick. They should be among the first to have access to a vaccine.”

“On the one hand, front-line employees have a lot of contact with them and they need protection. On the other hand, they have lower incomes and vaccination is risky. I think if they experience adverse reactions after being vaccinated, the government should cover their treatment costs.”

Wide agreement that vaccines should come at no cost to the public.

Most think the **government** and/or **private health insurance companies** should make sure patients don't get saddled with the cost.

89%

Strong majority of elites agree...

Government should require all **private health insurances cover the entire cost** of vaccinations for insured recipients.

88%

Providers administering the vaccine should be prohibited from billing any vaccine recipients, especially those without insurance, and instead **receive reimbursement from the government** for such costs.

Q. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements when it comes to deployment of a COVID-19 vaccine?

In their own words: How can businesses play their part?

1 Make it easy for employees.

Visibly support the vaccine and encourage employees to partake by providing information and allowing time off.

“In-office vaccine drives/clinics, much like the flu vaccine, or offer [employees] time off.”

“Allow the vaccine to be administered on their campuses or at work.”

2 Make it affordable for employees.

Cover the cost of the vaccine for employees and combat false claims that it isn't free.

“Encourage employees to get vaccinated by ensuring all costs are covered.”

“Offer employees incentives or pay for costs.”

3 Make it accessible to the public.

Lend capabilities to support distribution and raise awareness among consumers.

“Help people understand how the vaccine is developed and why it is safe, help Black people and other communities that have been frequently discriminated against feel safe in taking the vaccine.”

4 CEOs should set an example.

Make public display of business leaders' vaccinations, like former presidents.

“Be an example and have leaders take the vaccine in front of their employees.”

“Mount a public service campaign. Show everybody, from the CEO on down, receiving the vaccine.”

Going above and beyond: lend resources, help at-risk groups.

Hosting **pop-up clinics**, **educating employees** and **marshalling talent** are initiatives most strongly supported, while **encouraging employees to get vaccinated** is a baseline expectation for many.

Please indicate if this is the role you'd expect to see big businesses and companies play:

	Goes beyond expectations	Meets expectations	Bare minimum	Should not do this
Lend resources (ex. delivery trucks, cargo flights, refrigeration) to make the vaccine available around the country	31%	52%	9%	8%
Host pop-up vaccine clinics at their stores, offices, plants or factories	25%	55%	12%	7%
Educate their employees on the benefits, risks, and other considerations for taking a vaccine	21%	52%	19%	8%
Support efforts to make sure the vaccine gets to hard-to-reach and at-risk groups, such as the homeless	30%	49%	8%	12%
Advocate for the vaccine to reach the developing world, for example countries in Africa	31%	45%	10%	14%
Marshal their celebrity talent and endorsers, for example, top tier athletes or entertainers, to champion getting the vaccine	24%	51%	12%	13%
Devote advertising dollars to encourage people to take the vaccine	27%	42%	15%	15%
Issue recommendations to their employees to take the vaccine	18%	49%	22%	11%
Encourage people to share on social media sites that they've received the vaccination to build momentum behind people getting vaccinated	24%	43%	14%	19%

Watch outs: triggering concerns about profiteering, or mishandling employee communications.

Few worry about business overreach (i.e., requiring vaccinations to enter a store). Instead, concerns stem from businesses...

Trying to profit from vaccines.

- “I’m concerned that big businesses will try and use this as simply an opportunity to increase profits, when in actuality this is something that should be done worldwide without regards to money.”
- “Big business’ main concern is profit above all - I’m concerned that they will try to profit off the vaccine (not making it available at a low cost to those in need) and that there might be incentives for them to cut corners or hide bad findings to make a profit.”

Dealing poorly with employee vaccination requirements, perpetuating societal divisions.

- “People may wind up losing their jobs or have to make a choice as to compliance.”
- “My biggest concern is that a business would create mandates for their employees to be vaccinated, thus taking away the individual’s freedom of choice.”
- “[Concerned] that some of their employees will not take the vaccine and then the companies will have to decide if their employees will get to continue working.”

Email research@gpg.com for more insights specific to your organization, company, or industry.

Thank you.



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