

WINNER FOR AGILITY & RESPONSE

AN AGILE APPROACH TO COVID

How a Fast and Collaborative Response Can Keep COVID Under Control

Fortune Brands Home & Security, winner of the 2021 Duty of Care Award for Agility and Response, created a multi-layered approach to keeping associates safe during COVID.

Fortune Brands Home & Security, Inc. is a leading US manufacturer of home and security products for kitchens, bathrooms, entryways and outdoor living spaces. FBHS is primarily located in the United States, but it also has manufacturing and distribution facilities in Canada, Mexico, Europe, China, Japan and elsewhere.

Jennifer Rataj, FBHS Director, Corporate Communications, sets the scene:

'Safety is our Number One priority. During the pandemic, we quickly and aggressively took action to protect the health and wellbeing of our 25,000+ associates. These fast and collaborative initiatives enabled us to keep manufacturing our range of home products for millions of people during a time when being in a safe and comfortable home was more critical than ever before.'

Leadership and Management Commitment

Leaders and managers across the organisation played a key part throughout the pandemic with different initiatives:

Collaborative Project Management Office (PMO)

In early March 2020, a PMO was set up to discuss challenges, opportunities and trends, and to share information and best practices. It included dozens of cross-functional leaders.

Leading by Example

Leaders and managers modelled safe behaviour. They posted photos of themselves wearing masks on plant

walls, TV screens, the employee App and social media. They also shared when they got vaccinated, and why.

Leadership Town Halls

These addressed the business response to COVID and how each leader could contribute. Between April - February 2021, the company CEO hosted seven live, virtual Town Halls. Each Division President also held their own virtual meeting.

Stakeholder Engagement

Again, this was a multi-layered approach, all aimed at keeping associates safe:

On-Site Vaccinations & Vaccine Support

By April 2021, working in partnership with local health departments and providers, more than 22 on-site vaccine clinics had been set up, enabling approximately 1,500 associates to easily get vaccinated. Then, more clinics were set up, both on and off-site.



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Associates were helped to make vaccine appointments, given advice on vaccine safety and access to other information. FBHS strongly encouraged associates to get vaccinated and offered paid time off for those with appointments during work hours.

Enhanced Safety Protocols & Benefits

Attendance policies were relaxed to give associates more flexibility. Strict processes were established for contact tracing and quarantine to manage exposure risks in FBHS facilities. Mask wearing was made mandatory and all telemedicine visits covered by the company benefits plan were free for four months, corresponding with the height of the US outbreak.

Masks

A 'Masks Are Cool' campaign was launched via internal and social media channels. During the month-long campaign, associates submitted nearly 200 mask-wearing photos.

Supplying PPE

Early in the pandemic, FBHS supplied every associate with a health kit that included face masks, a thermometer, hand sanitiser and no-touch tool. Several facilities with 3D printers made face shields to donate to local hospitals and first responders. Other locations made or re-bottled hand sanitisers for associates' families.

At-Home Testing

At-home testing kits were available for associates.

Changing How People Work

During the first months of the pandemic, associates were required to work from home where possible. As restrictions lifted, offices adopted the same safety measures that applied in FBHS plants.

Constant Communication

The employee App grew significantly and offered safety reminders, and guidance from the CDC and other trusted sources. Team leaders reinforced safety at daily huddles and plant meetings, and posted COVID safety signage throughout all facilities.

Encouraging Safety Outside Work

A Fight COVID-19 Colouring Contest helped families educate their children. It was available in English, Spanish and French. Messages about 'Masks Are Cool' and the vaccine clinics were shared on social media too.

As of year-end 2020, 12,000+ FBHS associates who were in essential, hourly production roles, experienced a COVID-19 prevalence rate well below the U.S. average. The company maintained its strong Total Recordable Incident Rate of 1.20, and an LTR [Is this LTIR: Lost Time Incident Rate?] of 0.40.

Jennifer Rataj Concludes

'Our focus on safety was especially critical as the pandemic caused people to focus more on their homes, and demand for our products grew. Our initiatives resulted in clear benefits and long-term adaptations to working practices.'

'We will continue with several of the safety measures we introduced and offer increased work flexibility for our salaried associates. Additionally, we will continue to hold organisation-wide virtual leadership town halls and leverage our virtual and video meeting tools.'

Key Elements

- Leadership involved closely throughout as role models, to provide encouragement and share experience.
- Mask wearing, vaccinations, health kits and other safety protocols introduced early on.
- Ongoing advice and support provided to associates and their families, at work and at home.