From CFO Daily News:

CFO CONTROLLER Alert

The most current information on how financial professionals can increase cash flow & control costs

May 28, 2020

KEY FINANCE FIGURES

	<u>Curr</u> *	Lst Mo	Lst Yr
Leading Rates %			
Prime Rate	3.25	3.25	5.50
Fed Funds R	ate 0.25	0.25	2.50
Money Mar			
<u>London Inter</u>	bank (LIB	<u>OR)</u>	
1 month	0.25	0.86	2.46
3 months	0.47	1.32	2.56
6 months	0.70	1.22	2.59
Stock & Bond Indexes			
DJIA	24,222	23,391	25,325
S&P 500	2,930	2,762	2,812
NASDAQ	9,192	8,192	7,647
5-Yr T-Bill	0.36	0.44	2.26
10-Yr T-Bill	0.73	0.76	2.47
Employment Stats			
Unemploym rate (%)		4.4	3.6
Payroll employment (thousands)		-881	210
Average ho earnings (\$)	urly 1.34	0.15	0.05
	-		

*As of 5/11/20

The Cumulative Effect of CFO & Controller Alert

With the pace of change accelerating and the competition tougher, what's the best chance to keep up performance and get two steps ahead of the competition? A reliable source of continuous information.

It's the **cumulative effect** that helps, not any one reading. Our unique function is to deliver solid, focused information in your area of responsibility in a fast-read format twice a month to help performance.

Scenario planning now: Is your company keeping pace?

FP&A very different in a post-pandemic world

If ever there was a time a CFO could use a crystal ball, this is it.

Your next best thing? Scenario planning.

Of course not even that critical task is "business as usual" in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent economic crisis.

Three reasons it's an even tougher go for you and your finance team:

- 1. Cadences have accelerated. Quarters are now months, months are weeks, and weeks are days – things change so rapidly.
- 2. Management wants more scenarios. Because there are so many

unknowns, there are so many ways things can go – and you need plans for all of them.

3. Faster turnaround is expected. No time to lose – CEOs and other execs want plans yesterday.

These observations come from Grant Halloran, CEO of Planful, in a recent interview with *CFO* & *Controller Alert*. Here's his advice on scenario planning now.

Give 'em more

Gone are the days when you could have three different scenarios

(Please see Pace ... on Page 2)

The pandemic upside: Higher quality work

Two-thirds of employees say their work has improved despite COVID-19

A mong all the understandably dismal headlines throughout the coronavirus pandemic, we have a bit of good news to share:

Your employees are likely working better than ever. Specifically:

- 64% of U.S. workers say their quality of work has improved
- 70% reported better collaboration, and
- 82% believe their team has effectively adapted to working together amidst COVID-19.

That's the finding of a new pulse survey by KPMG LLP.

Though not every company is reaping these same benefits.

Why some see it and others don't

So what's the secret? Show employees how important they are to you during this unprecedented time.

Of the 75% of employees who say their companies make them feel valued, 60% had higher productivity levels (vs. 37% for those who didn't) and 75% enjoyed better team collaboration (vs. 55%).

Info: For full pulse results, go to tinyurl.com/kpmgCOVIDpulse

SCENARIO PLANNING IN A COVID-19 WORLD

Pace ...

(continued from Page 1)

running. Now in order to stay responsive to these ever-changing conditions, your company will want to have at least five different scenarios going simultaneously that reflect:

- worst-case
- medium-case, and
- best-case.

As for what goes in them, you'll need more on that front, too.

You want your information to be as granular as possible. That way your scenarios calculate easily from changes to variable drivers.

Often, those drivers are operational in nature. A few examples Halloran offers: pipeline metrics, number of reps, margins, trips, etc.

So you're generating more of everything from the scenarios themselves to the info that goes into them. Even more important than that?



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Your ability to course-correct and course-correct quickly.

No company can afford to revisit forecasts and budgets quarterly at this point in time. You need to be able to

Some of your peers are running scenarios daily – or even hourly.

readjust and take another direction as soon as new information comes out.

And do it faster

Of course, you can no longer take weeks to do that.

Your CEO might call you and want this information later that day, reminds Halloran. Or you'll need to deliver daily updates to the board that include multiple forward-looking scenarios on the spot.

Some of your peers are running scenarios daily – or even hourly – to keep pace.

That's tough to do when you're bogged down in spreadsheet-heavy FP&A processes.

Moving away from static planning and error-prone spreadsheets to, say, a cloud-based, continuous planning framework would set you up for greater success now and going forward.

With the right technology and processes in place, your company will become more agile, make better decisions and re-allocate resources more intelligently.

And that will put your company at a competitive advantage as we move into the next steps of this uncertain economic time.

Info: For more info, go to planful.com Have specific questions? You can email info@planful.com

Sharpen your JUDGMENT

This feature provides a framework for decision making that helps keep you and your company out of trouble. It describes a recent legal conflict and lets you judge the outcome.

Her per diems weren't counted as wages: Violation?

"I need to talk to you about the per diems we give employees for travel," said CFO Bill Keeper to A/P Manager Jennifer Smith, who was sitting in his office.

"Since most of our employees travel long distances to our job sites, we're paying them all per diems," said Jennifer.

Blanket per diem policy

"Yes, that's fine for the longdistance employees; however, for the few local employees who aren't traveling over 50 miles to get to the job site, those per diems need to be treated as regular wages.

"Linda Thomas, who's local, is saying her per diems weren't included as part of her wages, which matters when she works overtime," said Bill.

"Yes, it's been difficult keeping up with employees' residences, since some stay in temporary housing or hotels. Others forget to tell us when they've moved, since they're offsite. That's why we made a blanket per diem policy," said Jennifer.

The company was in the process of revamping their per diem policies, when Linda and other local co-workers took their employer to court over the per diem payments, saying they should've been treated as wages and counted towards overtime.

Did Bill's company win the lawsuit?

I Make your decision, then please turn to Page 6 for the court's ruling.

The fate of long-term investments now: New benchmarks to guide you

Two-thirds of firms are suspending at least some investments

A s CFO you've had to rethink just about every aspect of your business in recent months.

Your investment strategy is no exception.

So what are your peers doing on this critical cash flow front?

New benchmarks from Gartner give you an idea.

How do you compare?

Gartner took CFOs' pulses on their long-term investment

strategy in the current economic climate. See how your plan compares to your peers':

- 15% plan to completely suspend all or most long-term investments
- 50% will suspend selectively

- 30% have no plans to suspend most investments, and
- 5% are already replacing previous long-term investments with new ones.

That last bucket is the one you most want to be in, says Gartner.

FOR MORE ...

For a host of other benchmarks, go to cfoandcontrolleralert. com/?s=benchmarks Companies agile enough to pivot and stay ahead of the curve will emerge as leaders.

To do it, you need to know how your customers are changing through all of this.

In "normal"

times Gartner estimates CFOs spend 5%-10% of their time with customers. Now's the time to increase that to be as responsive as possible.

Info: For more on the Gartner survey, go to tinyurl.com/ longterminvestmentsandcovid

Workshares help firms save jobs, offset pay

A powerful tool that can turn workers into part-timers until business picks up

Here's a way to soften the blow of layoffs: Implement a workshare program that allows you to reduce employees' hours, while the state pays them partial unemployment.

Many states have experienced a rise in workshare applications from employers since mid-March, when the coronavirus caused shutdowns.

27 states give you this option

Currently, 27 states have these programs. However, the coronavirus relief CARES Act created an incentive for states that don't currently have worksharing to create such programs because the feds will reimburse costs. The programs are allowing employees who otherwise wouldn't be eligible for unemployment to receive benefits because their wages rise above the maximum eligibility threshold.

For example, Gibson's Bookstore in Concord, NH, started using workshare after shutting down in March. His 19 employees have stayed on board, working part-time to process online orders.

With the program, firms can save a huge amount on payroll costs, while employees continue to get a paycheck.

Adapted from "Will COVID-19 finally take the idea of work-sharing mainstream?" by Michelle Chang, at Quartz.com

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

This recession's shape: U, V, W or none of the above?

Few will argue that the COVID-19 pandemic will thrust the U.S. economy into a recession. The latest employment stats put us in the worst shape since the Great Depression.

But not all recessions are created equal. The speed at which we recover can make a massive difference in the overall impact of this unprecedented global event.

Unfortunately, economists aren't too optimistic.

Where economists weigh in

Reuters polled a group of economists to see what they thought the shape of this recession would be. And here's what they thought:

- 22 said it will be U-shaped, with a prolonged down period before recovery
- 10 believe it will be V-shaped, with the recession lasting just a short time and recovery as early as June, while
- five predict a W-shape, with several periods of ups and downs before rebounding.

But if you ask Fed Chair Jerome Powell, you're not going to get a picture that rosy.

Powell feels even a W is overly optimistic and that we will see more of a zigzag of peaks and troughs for at least a year.

That's important both for your budgeting and forecasting and to manage expectations with your exec team and even employees.

Adapted in part from "'W-shaped' recovery may be too optimistic, Fed's Powell suggests," by Lindsay Dunsmuir, at reuters.com

Is remote work triggering nexus for your business? The answers you need

For now, you should be OK. For how long is another story

L aptops, Zoom meetings ... and new tax responsibilities?

That's the latest compliance question to concern businesses all over the U.S.

The vast majority of employers currently have at least a portion of their workforce now working from home due to the coronavirus.

But if those employees' homes are located in another state, it could trigger nexus for your company.

So is this something you need to be concerned about?

Probably not ... yet.

Disaster relief rules apply

The "good" news is that many states are treating the pandemic similarly to how they would during disaster recovery when a natural disaster strikes – a temporary scenario. So employees working from home in another state won't land you on the hook for taxes there.

Besides that, eight states and Washington DC have come right out and said that at this time remote work won't trigger nexus.

Now for the big but ...

Of course many states may shift their stances the longer this drags on.

States are hurting for revenue like everybody else. And if remote work continues for months – or some businesses decide to shift part of their workforce to remote permanently (as many are considering) – then all bets are off.

This is something we'll be watching closely in the coming weeks and months. Stay tuned.

Adapted in part from "What Impact Working From Home May Have on Income Tax Nexus," at accountingweb.com

Finance and HR: a match made in the cloud

Working together can forward strategic initiatives and save money

Close collaboration between Finance and Human Resources is always important, but working together to drive digital transformation is truly critical.

Finance provides the guidance needed to identify and attack new opportunities.

HR uses that roadmap to ensure the organization secures the talent it needs to execute the strategic plan.

Shared plans and shared savings

Moving ERP and HRM into the cloud together integrates missioncritical functions while lowering costs.

You'll gain insight into how

emerging opportunities will impact budgets, talent requirements and resource allocation decisions.

And you'll identify which functions can improve with advanced cloud-based tools.

Moody's, for example, is applying data science tools to historical billing data to improve cash flow forecasts.

On the talent side, understanding how employees access and use business data can help HR to design effective training.

One idea: Set up webcasts where staff show their peers how they're using self-service forecasting tools.

Info: tinyurl.com/CFOHR581

MANAGING FOR RESULTS

Are you meeting your team's current needs? How to tell

What your team needs now is, well, actually four things – trust, compassion, stability and hope.

That's according to Gallup's new "COVID-19: What Employees Need From Leadership Right Now" poll.

Leadership approach

You can do an audit of your leadership approach to rally your team and lead them through the current crisis. Ask yourself:

- Do I have a clear action plan? Only 38% of employees say their manager has a clear plan in response to the coronavirus. Ask your team members if they're wellprepared to do their jobs, so you can readjust roles or leverage their strengths in new ways.
- Do I keep my team informed? Your firm's response to COVID-19 weighs heavily on employees' minds. And only you, as their direct supervisor, can keep them up to date on "opening up" plans and coach them to achieve during times of great uncertainty.
- Do I care about their well-being? There are five elements of well-being that people need to thrive – career, social, financial, community and physical. Now more than ever, managers need to set a tone that your company provides them the best opportunity to thrive in these areas. Employees take cues from managers that exhibit a life well-lived – talk about the importance of taking a break, keeping up friendships, etc.

(Adapted from "COVID-19: What Employees Need From Leadership Right Now," by Jim Harter, at gallup.com)

WHAT'S WORKING FOR CFOS & CONTROLLERS

Our subscribers come from a broad range of companies, both large and small. In this regular feature, three of them share success stories you can adapt to your unique situation.

COVID-19 changed our safety concerns, efforts

One of our biggest challenges right now is making sure that our employees feel safe in our offices during this health crisis.

We've expanded who we buy supplies from, and we've devoted more resources to research and secure the cleaning supplies and PPE we needed for employees.

Sometimes we even send our maintenance person out to the store to get supplies because we go through them so quickly.

2 We expanded benefits when most needed

The pandemic has shown how critical it is to embrace our humanity, be understanding and be caring, and that holds true for companies too.

Our pre-existing financial, medical and mental health benefits were well-designed to help employees through this crisis.

We further expanded benefits to include additional services, like free telemedicine consults that are tailored to this specific crisis. Then we considered how we could do even more with our physical space.

Taking it one step further

Before the COVID-19 crisis, we were planning to move to a bigger office, but that's on hold right now. However, we'd rented a large space clear of cubicles and furniture that wasn't being used.

We wanted to give people a space where they could work if they were unable to work at home for various reasons. We also wanted that space

Some other employee benefits include:

- all employees making \$100,000 or less received a \$1,200 tax-free financial assistance payment
- 100% coverage for testing and associate visits related to COVID19, plus immediate paid medical leave for any employee diagnosed with the virus
- expanded childcare support: 30 uses of emergency care for daycare/elder care disruptions
- access to free mental health

to be safe. Employees can maintain safe distancing guidelines in this new, larger office space.

We've also created staggered shifts. We expanded our business hours to accommodate this so more of our employees can get the hours they need and still maintain social distance.

This new flexibility makes our employees feel safe and they're more productive because of it – it's been worth the extra effort.

> (Jane Seals, Controller, Weldon's Electric, Inc., Killeen, TX)

professionals by phone or text

- free financial planning support
- 100% coverage for virtual doctor visits, and
- paid caregiver leave.

PROBLEMS

SOLUTIONS

REAL

We'll do whatever we can to support employees' well-being. Everything we do is through the lens of care and support. And there's no better time to let that shine than now.

(Kathie Patterson, Chief Human Resources Officer, Ally Financial, Detroit)

3 We're spending smarter now, thanks to A/P

A/P's the one that sees firsthand all the business purchases that come through our company.

They were in a good position to ask questions like:

- "What is our money really being spent on?" and
- "Is all that spend really justified or necessary?"

But these weren't questions we could answer alone. We needed help from the people making the buys. The easiest and most time-efficient way to do that was with a survey.

Survey says!

We sent a survey to all our business partners – the people making the various purchases we pay for.

Essentially, the survey asked: Is there anything we pay for that you don't think we should be paying for?

And employees provided some great perspective.

For example, in one survey, an employee pointed out a policy our company had that said if the vendor doesn't send a complete order, the vendor has to pay the freight costs.

Lo and behold, we found our A/P department had still been paying for a lot of those freight costs. So, we were able to send vendors chargebacks and save some money there.

By taking the time to survey and talk with our business partners, we found new, innovative ways to cut back and increase savings.

(Nicole Caley, Director of A/P, AAR Corp., as presented at the A/P P2P Conference & Expo, Orlando, FL)

A third of your peers still considering layoffs, furloughs – here's when the rest plan to bring folks back

It's going to take some time to return to normal on the staffing front

A lmost two months into stay-at-home orders and with 30 million U.S. jobs lost in just six weeks, many of your peers still aren't done reducing their workforce.

How many? Nearly a third (32%) of employers are either currently lowering headcount or are considering it.

That's according to a recent Society for Human Resource Management/ Oxford Economics survey.

The time to plan is now

At this unprecedented time in history, some companies are still determining whether to lay off or furlough people, while others have started to plan how and when they'll bring them back on.

Remember if you laid someone off (rather than furloughed them), you're technically starting a new employeeemployer relationship – including the paperwork that goes with that.



Source: The COVID-19 Business Index: A Bi-Weekly Report on the State of Business in the U.S. by the SHRM and Oxford Economics

Some of your peers are facing another reality: not bringing back employees at all. When it comes to laid off employees, companies expect 41% of salaried workers and 29% of hourly workers won't return (1% and 7% respectively for furloughed folks).

Sharpen your judgment... THE DECISION

(please see case on Page 2)

No, the firm lost. The court decided the company must pay its workers back overtime pay since the per diems weren't included as wages when calculating their overtime rates.

The company argued that it wasn't aware which employees were local and which weren't, so it gave everyone the same per diem payment each pay period. However, employees showed proof they provided their addresses to the company at their time of hire, so the employer should've been able to track which employees were within 50 miles of the job site.

The court recognized the difficulty the company had in determining whether an employee's address was a "permanent address or just a [hotel or temporary] address for the duration of the project" and that "willfulness was lacking," so it set a two-year statute of limitations on claims.

Analysis: Pay per diem separately

In most cases, per diems aren't counted as wages for employees who travel often. However, per diems should be treated as wages if employees aren't being reimbursed for travel or business expenses they've incurred, which means the payments should be included when calculating the regular rate for overtime pay.

To keep confusion at bay, it may be easier to pay per diems separately from workers' normal paychecks or provide the funds on prepaid cards.

Cite: Stone v. Troy Construction, LLC, No. 18-1825, U.S. Crt. of App., 3rd Circ., 8/20/19. Note: Dramatized for effect.

Experts give their solutions to difficult workplace problems

Finance professionals like you face new questions every day on how to deal with everything from accounting and tax regulations to management and employment law issues. In this section, experts answer those real-life questions.

Furloughed on work anniversary: PTO impact

Q: Are furloughed employees entitled to renewed paid time off (PTO) on their anniversary date?

It depends, according to Florida employment lawyer Bruce Alexander Minnick. If your company has employment contracts in place with all employees, then your company will be held to whatever is in the contract. However, if there isn't a written contract then the company has no legal obligation to deliver renewed PTO.

> Just be sure you're complying with your own state's laws as requirements change from state to state.

Affordability and the ACA

Q: If we don't know our employees' household income, how can we figure out if the health coverage we offer is "affordable" under the Affordable Care Act (ACA)?

: IRS offers three affordability safe harbors large employers can use to determine whether their health coverage meets ACA requirements, as long as they offer at least 95% of their employees the chance to enroll in a qualified plan.

The first is the Form W-2 wages safe harbor, where companies can use the wages reported in Box 1 of the W-2 as an estimate of household income.

With the second safe

harbor, employers can use the employee's rate of pay at the beginning of the coverage period, with adjustments allowed if an hourly employee's pay decreases.

The third safe harbor lets companies treat coverage as affordable as long as the employee required contribution for each month doesn't exceed 9.5% of the federal poverty line for an individual in the applicable calendar year, divided by 12.

Does at-will ever need a reason?

Because of current events, our company is going to have to let some people go. What are our obligations to explain the reason for termination if we're located in an "at-will" state? Do we have to give a reason at all?

: Generally, being an "at-will" state means that employers can terminate employees for any reason not prohibited by law, policy or contract says the office of Jordan Ramis, PC.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't double-check the employee handbook or look into any verbal agreements that may have been made. It's also important to know if you're dealing with employees in a union or collective bargaining situation.

If you have a question you'd like our experts to answer, email it to Jennifer Azara at jazara@pbp.com

COMMUNICATION KEYS

Staffer not speaking up on Zoom? Issue this challenge

Granted it can be tough to jump in during a virtual meeting, especially when there are a lot of participants.

To get everyone to contribute, challenge quieter participants to speak up in the first five minutes.

That won't give them a chance to get psyched out – and it's less likely someone else will offer up their idea.

From "How To Speak Up And Get Your Voice Heard On Conference Calls, Even As A Reserved Person," by Melody Wilding, at forbes.com

Appreciation Nation: Make time to show gratitude

Now more than ever employees need to hear they're appreciated. And some of the most meaningful recognition comes from their peers.

So while so many folks are working remotely, try establishing a weekly peer shoutout session, where staffers can show how they appreciate each other during this stressful time.

Info: blog.zestful.com/ remote-recognition

Clever new email signoffs in the age of coronavirus

"Stay safe!" has become a common email signoff these days, but some folks find it a tad condescending (think parents to their teenager).

A few clever alternatives:

- With clean hands and appreciation, or even
- Handwashingly (in place of Warmly).

Info: time.com/5827280/stay-safeemailing-during-coronavirus-pandemic

Recent developments that can help your business stay ahead

IRS issues new COVID cross-border tax guidance

The coronavirus pandemic may have disrupted more than that upcoming business trip – it could influence your tax compliance if you have business relationships impacted by ongoing travel restrictions.

Which is why IRS just released new guidance. Two new Revenue Procedures and an FAQ explain the relief you're entitled to. Find them at: *irs.gov/newsroom/treasury-irsannounce-cross-border-tax-guidancerelated-to-travel-disruptions-arisingfrom-the-covid-19-emergency*

Malware hits 400M last month: who's most at risk

April really is the cruelest month ... when it comes to malware attacks.

More than 400 million malware infections were detected last month, says Atlas VPN. That's between 10 and 16 million a day.

The top target? The education sector, followed by business and professional services, then retail and consumer goods.

No matter what your industry, it's worth touching base with IT to make sure your defenses are up-to-date.

Info: atlasvpn.com/blog/nearly-404million-malware-infections-detectedin-last-30-days-more-than-10-milliondaily

Study: Most folks still won't tap telemedicine

The doctor's office or hospital is the last place people want to be right now – yet many aren't tapping a viable alternative, says a new survey by *healthinsurance.com*

More than half (53%) of people said they don't intend to use telemedicine during the current coronavirus pandemic.

And it may be on you to make them aware of this option seeing as:

- 67% received no info about it from their regular doctor, while
- 72% got nothing on telehealth from their insurance company.
 Info: For full results, go to

healthinsurance.com/learning-center/ article/coronavirus-economic-impact

Take more time for this tax credit, says IRS

If your company was planning to take the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) as part of the Affordable Care Act, you have some extra time to do it.

IRS announced relief for time-sensitive tasks, which according to IRS *Revenue Procedure 2018-58*, includes this credit.

So for Forms 8850 that would've been due anytime between April 1, 2020 and July 15, 2020, your company now has until July 15, 2020.

Info: acatimes.com/wotc-deadlinesare-extended

Lighter side: Energy boost turns into cash flow boost

Many folks are adjusting to some new work hours in recent months ... but it's likely not paying off quite as well as it did for one Oregon family.

Levi Robinette recently pulled an all-nighter to help his wife adjust to her new overnight work schedule.

But when he needed some energy drinks for a little boost, he also bought some scratch-off lottery tickets.

And you guessed it – he won. \$100,000 to be exact.

Kindness may cost nothing, but it could also earn you six figures!

MEASURE UP

Considering what you already know about personal finance, could you still benefit from advice and answers to everyday financial questions from a professional?



Source: The 2020 Financial Literacy Survey from the National Foundation for Credit Counseling

During this time of widespread financial uncertainty, an independent source for financial advice may be one of the most important – and appreciated – benefits you can offer employees.

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> Mark Wilson CFO Cherryland Electric Co-op

The Purpose of CFO & Controller Alert

CFO & Controller Alert is a fast-read resource to help busy financial executives boost cash flow, control expenses, manage their resources effectively and stay in compliance with ever-changing regulations.

Each issue presents real-world examples of what worked and what didn't for CFOs and Controllers in a wide variety of industries – all in a concise format that saves you time.

Depend on this publication for the winning ideas you can put to work today to help your company manage growth.