

NEXT-GEN

PAYROLL

TRACKER®

P. 8

(Feature Story)

Westgate Resorts On Why Essential Workers Value Flexible Payment Options



**SMB confidence grows
about weathering
the pandemic**

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**How digital solutions
are helping firms break the
two-week paycheck cycle**

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WHAT'S INSIDE

A great digital shift is underway amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses are leveraging digital channels to maintain relationships with their customers at a time when in-person retail experiences have been rendered impractical or impossible. Many of these innovations have focused on how businesses are managing their customers' experiences, yet digital optimization is also vital when it comes to improving their employees' experiences — specifically how they are paid. Employees are instrumental in getting businesses through the current crisis and in ramping up operations as it abates.

Many workers are living under difficult financial circumstances, including those in front-line occupations, such as nurses, delivery drivers and sanitation workers. More than 41 percent of lower-income workers in the United States are earning less since the pandemic began, according to PYMNTS [research](#), and they have elevated concerns about job security. Nearly 70 percent of consumers who make less than \$50,000 have less than \$2,500 in savings while 28.9 percent have nothing saved.



The traditional two-week paycheck cycle is more insufficient than ever to meet workers' needs. New digital solutions offer a path forward, allowing workers to get paid the same day they work — or even in advance — through payment methods that are far faster and convenient than paper checks. Workers **believe** such payment options reduce financial stress and improve overall wellness, while employers **consider** them important incentives in retaining and attracting workers. Eighty-five percent of employees consider financial wellness important to their overall well-being, according to ADP's **Evolution of Pay Report**, while 84 percent of employers believe wellness-related offerings help them attract top talent. The inaugural issue of the Next-Gen Payroll Tracker®, a PYMNTS publication, sponsored by ADP®, explores these trends and technologies in depth.

AROUND THE WORLD OF PAYROLL INNOVATION

Governments around the world have taken dramatic steps to prop up their economies during the pandemic. A central strategy has been offering direct aid to businesses, illustrated by the United States' Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). A significant share of businesses are starting to benefit from these programs, despite a slow roll-out — and the lion's share are using the funds to retain their workers. The National Federation of Independent Business **found**

that 80 percent of small businesses sought PPP loans and 90 percent had their requests approved. Fifty-four percent of these firms intend to have the repayment requirements waived by spending at least 75 percent of the funding on payroll. One likely reason that firms are having more success in negotiating the program's complexities is that business associations and payroll providers have come **forward** with detailed guidance.

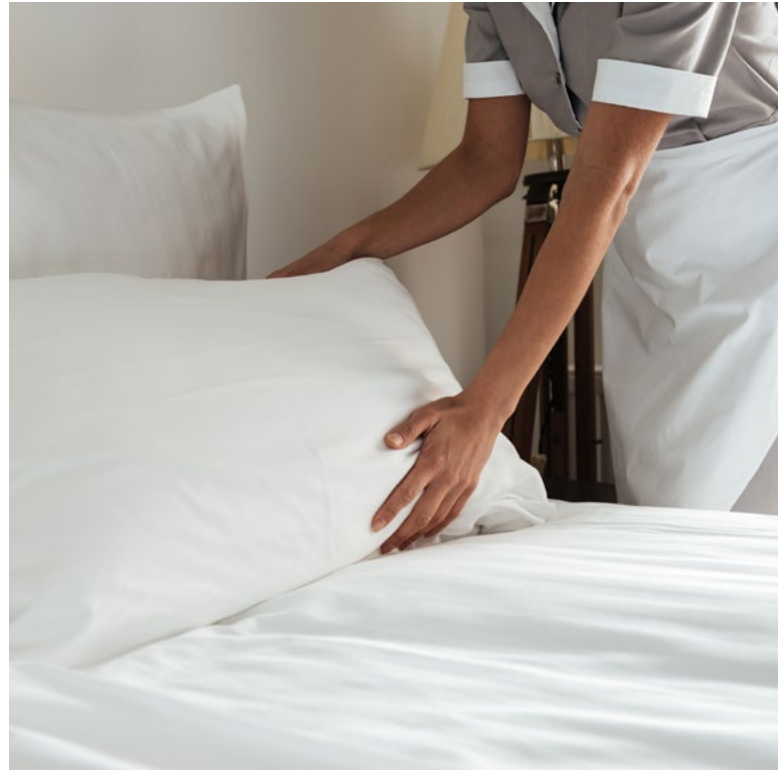
Businesses appear to be growing somewhat more confident about staying open in one form or another during the pandemic, even though concerns persist. PYMNTS **research** from late May found that 48.1 percent of small to mid-sized business (SMB) owners were confident they could keep their businesses open throughout the pandemic. This is up from the 41.8 percent who had this view in early April.

One of the ways in which a rising share of employers are helping their staffs better manage their finances in uncertain times is by offering faster digital payment options. Canadian pizza chain Topper's is now **making** it possible for delivery drivers and contractors at 80 of its locations to receive same-day card and mobile wallet payments, for example.

For more on these and other recent headlines about payroll innovation, read the Tracker's News and Trends section (p. 13).

WESTGATE RESORTS ON HOW FLEXIBLE PAYMENTS HELP WORKERS' FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

One notable indication that the economy is steadily reopening is that air travel and hotel bookings are **ticking up** from their historic lows at the height of the pandemic. Resorts and hotels are among the businesses returning to life, but it will not be business as usual. The hospitality industry has to be particularly mindful of guests' and workers' safety as the pandemic eases. For this month's Feature Story (p. 8), PYMNTS interviewed Karen Sims, senior director of financial services for **Westgate Resorts**, about why providing flexible compensation options helps workers feel more financially secure and motivated, especially in these uncertain times.



DEEP DIVE: THE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES DRIVING HR INNOVATION DURING THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND

It has become very difficult for workers to file paper time sheets when many physical offices are closed due to the pandemic. The same holds true for cashing checks at the bank or popping one's head into the human resources (HR) office for a quick question. New digital payroll technologies are making it possible for HR managers to accommodate remote workforces, expedite payment and ensure compliance in a time of shifting regulations. Cloud-based payroll platforms, for example, are allowing managers to handle the sensitive and vital work of running payroll without having to use on-premise software systems, while card and real-time payment rails hold the potential of ensuring faster and more secure payments. This month's Deep Dive (p. 18) explores the digital innovations that could help bring HR and payroll into the digital future.



EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

GEORGE MAVRANTZAS,
vice president of strategy and
thought leadership at **Wisely by ADP**

WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR EMPLOYERS TO OFFER FLEXIBLE PAYROLL OPTIONS?

The case for being proactive about offering alternative payment methods to your organization has never been stronger. To meet the expectations of younger workers, independent contractors and employees who simply want their money faster, smart organizations will want to stay ahead of the curve and offer various forms of payment to their workforce.

For the first time in history, there are five generations in the workforce at the same time, and each segment's needs vary, so businesses need to offer different payment methods to appeal to a range of employees. For example, Gen Z will likely be attracted to pay card methods, whereas baby boomers may want other pay options, such as direct deposit or paper checks.

To determine your organization's preparedness for alternative payment methods, you'll first want to figure out the composition of your workforce's pay preferences. You can do this by calculating your pay-by-check population or direct deposit percentage. You could also examine any employee requests for faster access to funds. The **online calculator** offered through the **Wisely by ADP** payments suite can assist firms in making such estimates.

Compliance is another critical component to consider before you offer different payment methods for employees. Compliance will have numerous complexities, especially if you offer multiple products, have a large enterprise or are processing payroll for a workforce that's dispersed across many states.

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5 FIVE FAST FACTS

44.6%

Portion of SMB applicants for PPP loans that intend to use the funds **to keep paying their employees**

50.8%

Share of paycheck-to-paycheck workers who believe the option of **early pay would reduce financial stress**

15%

Increase in share of SMB owners who are now **confident they can stay open** through the pandemic from early April

67%

Share of firms that have paid or plan to pay **bonuses** in 2020

\$76K

Average PPP loan amount in the program's **second round of funding**

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■ FEATURE STORY

WESTGATE ON HOW
**FLEXIBLE
WORKER
PAYMENTS**
ARE HELPING
REOPEN RESORTS



Few sectors of the economy have been harder hit during the COVID-19 pandemic than the hospitality industry. Consumers have been staying at home and resorts and hotels have been subject to closure orders.

Things are steadily changing, however. The volume of passengers going through United States airports **increased** fourfold in early June compared to mid-April, and hotels and resorts are reporting an uptick in summer bookings. It is possible that consumers are ready for a collective vacation after the strain of the past few months.

Karen Sims has a firsthand perspective on these improving fortunes as the senior director of financial services for U.S.-based **Westgate Resorts**, which operates 27 timeshare resorts across the country. Most of the company's facilities have reopened, which is good news for property owners and the thousands of Westgate workers who were furloughed during the shutdown.

The current circumstances are also dramatically demonstrating the value of offering workers flexible and digital payment options — something Westgate embraced a few years ago. The company has made it possible for workers to receive earned wages the same day they request them. The service has proven popular with Westgate's workforce, which includes housekeepers, maintenance workers and food servers.

"[The] daily pay [option] has been a huge hit. We've had over 45 percent of our eligible population use the service," Sims said.

“ We would occasionally hear these stories about people who couldn't afford to put gas in their car to drive to work or to buy their next meal. ”

“ Having the option helps us, too, to bring in people and get them to sign up for shifts and be more available, **because [employees] get that instant gratification of having the money there** for whatever their personal need or desire is. ”

THE CHALLENGES OF MAKING ENDS MEET

It has been **estimated** that close to half of U.S. consumers live paycheck to paycheck, lacking any financial cushion in case of emergencies or other unanticipated expenses. COVID-19 has exacerbated these trends: The share living under these circumstances has risen since the start of the pandemic to 59.2 percent, according to PYMNTS **research**.

These realities help explain why the conventional paycheck cycle does not work well for many workers. Sims explained that Westgate managers became aware of their workers' sometimes-high level of strain.

“We knew we had a lot of team members that were struggling to pay their bills. We would occasionally hear these stories about people who couldn't afford to put gas in their car to drive to work or to buy their next meal,” Sims said. “We did not want to see our team members wasting money on expensive payday loans or credit card debt. So, allowing them to have this access to their earned pay before their payday, for just a very low transfer fee, seemed like a great way to help them.”

There are several early payment services available in today's market — and some do not charge fees. These options may be especially helpful for new hires who may have been searching for work for extended periods of time, and flexible payment options'



benefits go both ways. Employers appreciate that staff members may be less stressed and more reliable and motivated.

“It gives [workers] the motivation to even increase their hours worked because they can see the benefit immediately after they end their shifts,” Sims said. “Having the option helps us, too, to bring in people and get them to sign up for shifts and be more available, because [employees] get that instant gratification of having the money there for whatever their personal need or desire is.”

Such incentives may also help in getting new employees in the door. ADP’s **Evolution of Pay Report** found that 29 percent of prospective employees would consider having early access to earned pay when deciding whether to accept job offers.

GOING DIGITAL WITH PAY CARDS

Allowing employees to control when they are paid is just one innovation transforming longstanding payroll processes. Another is the use of prepaid debit cards to disburse wages instead of paper or direct deposit checks. The solution, pay cards, may also enable cardholders to set up automatic bill payment, transfer funds and set aside money for special purposes. The method may thus function like a bank account for employees who lack them — a **situation** that applies to 22 percent of U.S. consumers.

Westgate has offered pay cards for several years now, and Sims said they can help workers keep a handle on their finances for not only themselves but their entire households.

“In a number of cases, [workers] will use [the method] to give their kids a card, [and

then] put money on the card to give their kids the responsibility of managing money,” Sims said. “We see some using it as [a] special savings-type [account], [so they can put] money aside for a vacation or ... make sure they have gas to get to work.”

Pay cards confer benefits to employers as well. Distributing paper checks is costly and prone to human error. A firm with 100 employees could save nearly \$30,000 per year by employing pay cards in place of paper checks, according to an [online calculator](#) offered by ADP’s payments suite, [Wisely by ADP](#). Pay cards can also ease some of the frictions associated with employee onboarding.

“If they are not entering all that [information] and we do not know how to pay them, [we used to] just issue a check. And that check then has to be picked up, it has to be cashed. Sometimes [workers] do not cash them, and then we’re chasing them down,” Sims said. “So it is a much more convenient process if they have a card issued to them right when they start.”

REOPENING TO A NEW REALITY

Most businesses are aware that reopening over the coming weeks and months means they will not be returning to business as usual. A host of new rules and regulations will govern everything from occupancy limits to sanitation — and conscientious companies will go beyond government

mandates. These considerations are especially important in the leisure and hospitality industry, which must ensure that patrons feel safe and at ease if they expect them to stay or return.

Westgate has [established](#) strict reopening protocols for its resorts and has made them public to offer guidance to the wider industry. These steps include increasing the cleaning and sanitizing frequency of all public spaces, emphasizing frequent-contact surfaces, and updating procedures for interactions between guests and staff. Guests will also be greeted with drive-thru check-in at all locations where it is possible, and ultra-low violet disinfectant fogging will be used in common areas. Staff will be required to wear masks and they will use gloves when transferring items to and receiving items from guests.

“We are cleaning everything all the time — using foggers and such — and we have moved to curbside check-in in many instances. We have really updated the whole protocol on how rooms are cleaned. ... Our team members wear face masks and are switching out their gloves every time they serve a new table,” Sims said.

All of this means that essential workers at hotels and resorts will be more important than ever. Offering fast and flexible payment options may ensure that they are better able to meet their own essential needs.

NEWS AND TRENDS

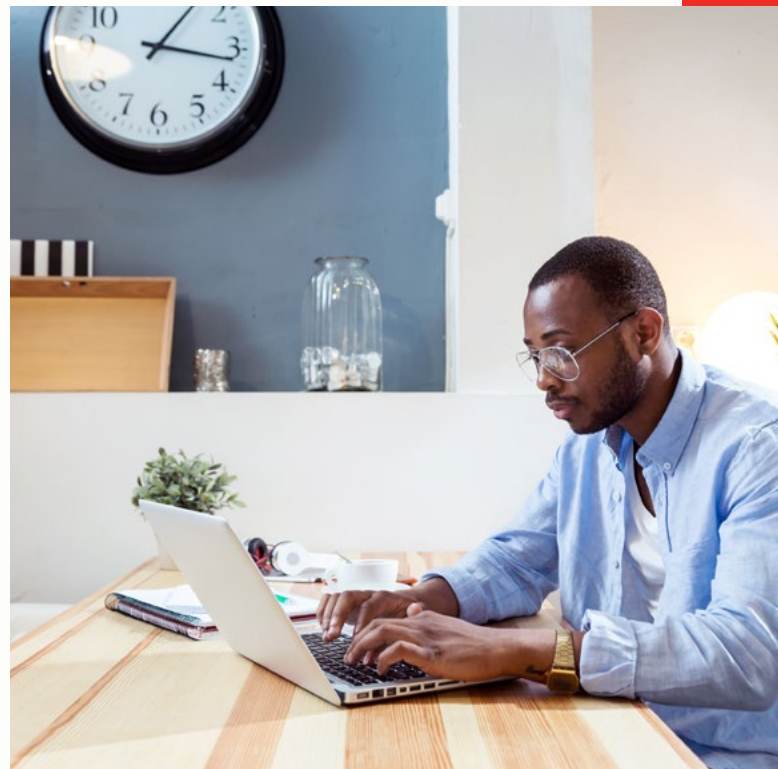
EMPLOYERS ADAPTING TO THE NEW REALITY

MAJORITY OF SMALL BUSINESSES TAPPING PPP FUNDING ARE USING IT TO KEEP WORKERS ON PAYROLL

Delays and eligibility concerns initially hobbled government support programs for U.S. businesses hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, but this has shifted in recent weeks. A majority of firms in several sectors report they have received funding through the PPP.

Businesses are primarily using these funds to keep their workers on the payroll in hopes of fully resuming operations when the pandemic eases its grip. The most common reason SMB owners cite for tapping PPP loans is paying workers, **according** to PYMNTS research. Close to 45 percent of SMB owners who applied for the funding say their goal is to pay their workers, while 25 percent say they need the funding to survive the pandemic. An even larger share will likely use much of their PPP funding for payroll purposes: 78.8 percent of SMBs

plan to keep their PPP loans, which require them to spend at least 75 percent of the funding on payroll.



COVERING PAYROLL WOULD COST U.S. GOVERNMENT LESS THAN LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Aid programs like the PPP are helpful to U.S. SMBs, but such assistance efforts could be beneficial to the government as well. Research led by UCLA economist Till von Wachter recently **estimated** that subsidizing employee payrolls for a year would cost the U.S. government substantially less than paying for unemployment benefits to aid workers laid off or furloughed amid the outbreak. Such funding would involve the long-term extension of programs like the PPP, which covers a large share of firms' payroll costs for two months. These policies can also mitigate the social and health

costs associated with long-term unemployment, which is especially important because the life expectancy of individuals who lose jobs during recessions declines by 1.5 years, according to the analysis. The research notes that Germany employs a program to keep workers paid during economic downturns that is **credited** with helping the country recover after the Great Recession.

THE ROAD TOWARD REOPENING

SMALL BUSINESSES GROWING MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT WEATHERING THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic endangered survival for millions of small businesses, but new research indicates that a growing share are starting to regain optimism. PYMNTS **research** shows a steady uptick in firms' confidence levels since early April. The analysis shows that 48.1 percent of SMB owners are confident they can keep their businesses open through the pandemic, up from 41.8 percent who had this view on April 6. The share of firms that are doubtful about their prospects has declined, with 44.7 percent only "slightly" or "somewhat sure" of their survival in late May, compared to 52.9 percent in early April. The data suggests that government funding, along with the steady reopening of the economy, may be improving such firms' outlooks.





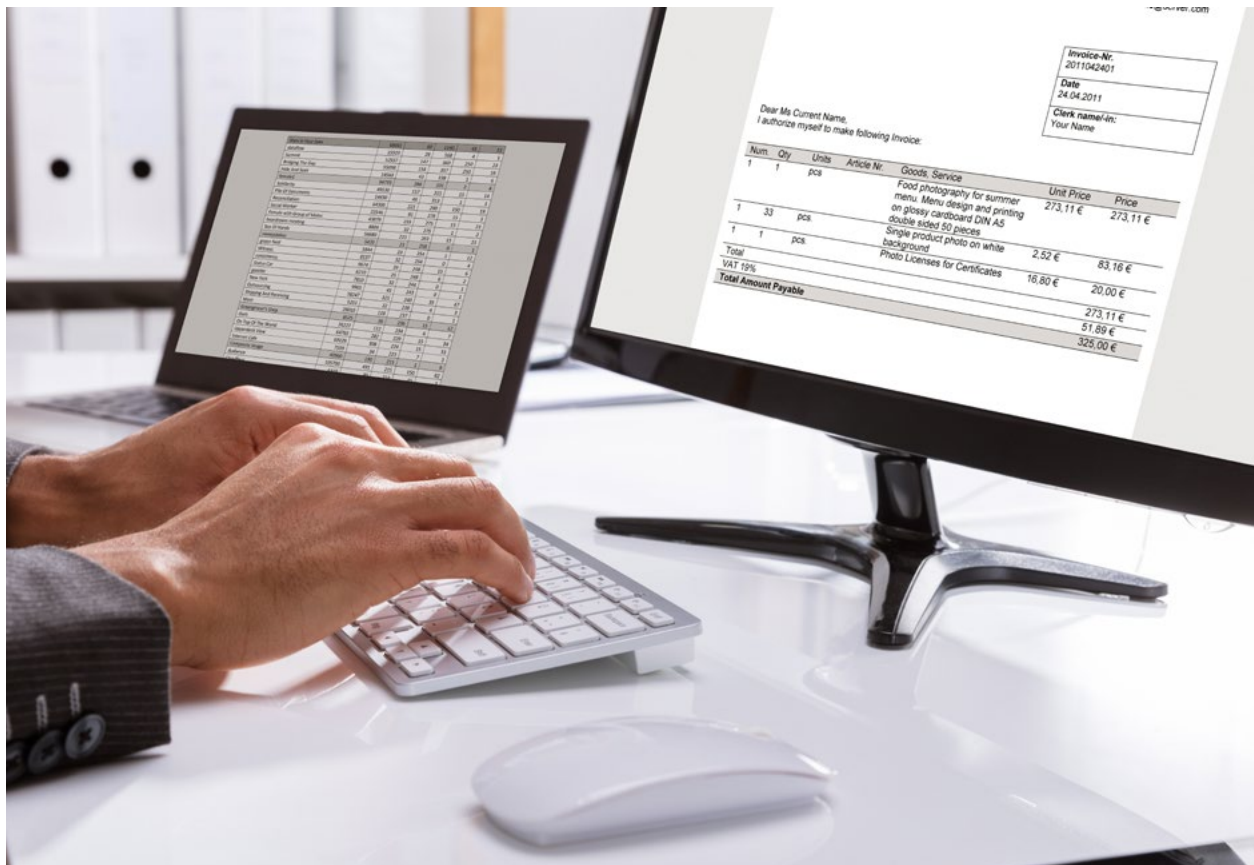
SURVEY FINDS THAT 85 PERCENT OF U.S. RESTAURANTS PLAN TO REOPEN IN SOME FORM WITHIN SIX WEEKS

There may be no business sector more severely affected by the pandemic than that of restaurants, which have contended with closure orders as well as consumers wary about dining out. Restaurants have shown remarkable adaptability, though, turning to takeout and delivery aggregators to stay in business. New data suggests these moves, along with government funding, are helping restaurants stay afloat.

A recent [survey](#) found that 85 percent of U.S. restaurants expect to be open to some extent by late July. It also found that most establishments will offer only limited services such as takeout and delivery at that point, with 65 percent estimating that it will take at least three months before they become fully operational. The survey further indicated that restaurant owners are having better luck receiving PPP funding than they did in the program's early days: 74 percent of eateries that have sought the funding received it. This could be good news for their staffs as 36.4 percent of restaurants reported that they were reducing payroll to make ends meet, according to PYMNTS [research](#).

NEARLY 80 PERCENT OF WORKERS WANT TO STAY AT THEIR CURRENT JOBS AMID PANDEMIC

Employees are understandably reluctant to search for new jobs during the pandemic, but the market has not come to a stop. Its evolving and dynamic nature has created challenges for employers eager to fill new roles, with a recent [survey](#) finding that 78 percent of employed U.S. workers would not consider changing jobs during the pandemic. Their attitudes are largely influenced by the pandemic-related economic downturn as 69 percent believe they would be unlikely to find new employment. This suggests that employers' recruitment efforts must be proactive in the current economic climate and ensure safety, even during a pandemic.



PANDEMIC SPOTLIGHTS VALUE OF EMERGENCY PAYROLL PROTOCOLS

The nature of spring 2020's cataclysmic events was nearly impossible to predict, even though many forward-thinking companies have made planning for the unexpected part of their long-term resiliency strategies. Disruptive events can come from many sources, after all, including the weather. There were 14 severe storms and natural disasters in the U.S. that caused in excess of \$1 billion in 2019 alone. Payroll is one of the most important aspects of ensuring continuity of operations through such disruptive events.

The pandemic has demonstrated, in real time, how solutions like prepaid **pay cards** can allow payroll operations to continue when employees may be unable to receive or redeem paychecks through conventional means. Even the federal government has **decided** to employ pay cards to disburse stimulus funding to approximately 4 million consumers who lack bank accounts and mailing addresses or who are otherwise unable to receive check or direct deposit payments.

PAYROLL TECHNOLOGY PROVIDERS OFFER GUIDANCE TO HR PROFESSIONALS

Payroll management can challenge HR professionals even in the best of times, and such hurdles have been compounded

during the pandemic as governments around the world hastily enact new regulations. HR departments are finding themselves managing payroll for remote workforces while governments institute new reporting requirements for stimulus programs such as the PPP. Companies like ADP are providing **resources** for HR professionals that help them navigate such challenges. Guidance for employers continues to evolve as legislative circumstances change, so it is more important than ever for HR professionals to have continued access to expert insight.

CANADIAN PIZZA CHAIN EXTENDS SAME-DAY PAY TO WORKERS

The shift from traditional paychecks to digital alternatives was underway long before the pandemic, but the crisis is making more firms appreciate the value of fast, cashless compensation methods. Canada-based chain Topper's Pizza has enabled 80 of its stores to **offer** card and mobile wallet payments to employees, delivery drivers and contractors. The service allows workers to receive card or mobile payments for work completed within the same day. A Topper's executive said the service would make the experience safer and more efficient for the company's customers and drivers.

DEEP DIVE

USING DIGITAL PAYROLL TOOLS TO MAINTAIN **FINANCIAL LIFELINES** IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

The United States federal government sought to disburse more than \$1 trillion in stimulus funding in the early days of the COVID-19 lockdown to help businesses stay afloat and pay citizens for urgent expenses. The money was sent out by check and direct deposit, but millions have not yet **received** the funds. Part of the problem was that the government did not have current address and account information for large shares of the U.S. population, which undermined central goals of the funding: to provide immediate financial relief to businesses and consumers and to stimulate a flatlining economy. The government has since turned to prepaid debit cards to reach some of the millions of citizens who fell through the cracks in the early phase of the program.

The situation illustrates a principle that is just as applicable to the private sector in the current socioeconomic moment: Analog, paper-based processes are often not up to the task when speed and efficiency are paramount. Large and small firms' operations have been thoroughly disrupted by the past months' events. Some businesses have been forced to close their doors indefinitely while others have had to quickly set up and manage remote workforces. All must still maintain financial relationships with what could be considered their most precious resource: their employees. This presents myriad challenges to payroll issuers that range from compensating employees who may no longer have access to timesheet filing systems to complying with the requirements of government aid programs such as the PPP.

Some firms already had digital tools and platforms in place to streamline their payroll operations, but many others have had to scramble to adapt to these new realities. These businesses must find new ways to leverage digital technology to safeguard their staffs' financial well-being in uncertain economic times, regardless of their existing capabilities. The economy will not simply reset itself as the pandemic eases — it will evolve in new ways that will require firms to demonstrate flexibility, technical agility and thinking beyond the traditional payroll cycle.

THE TRENDS TRANSFORMING THE LABOR MARKET

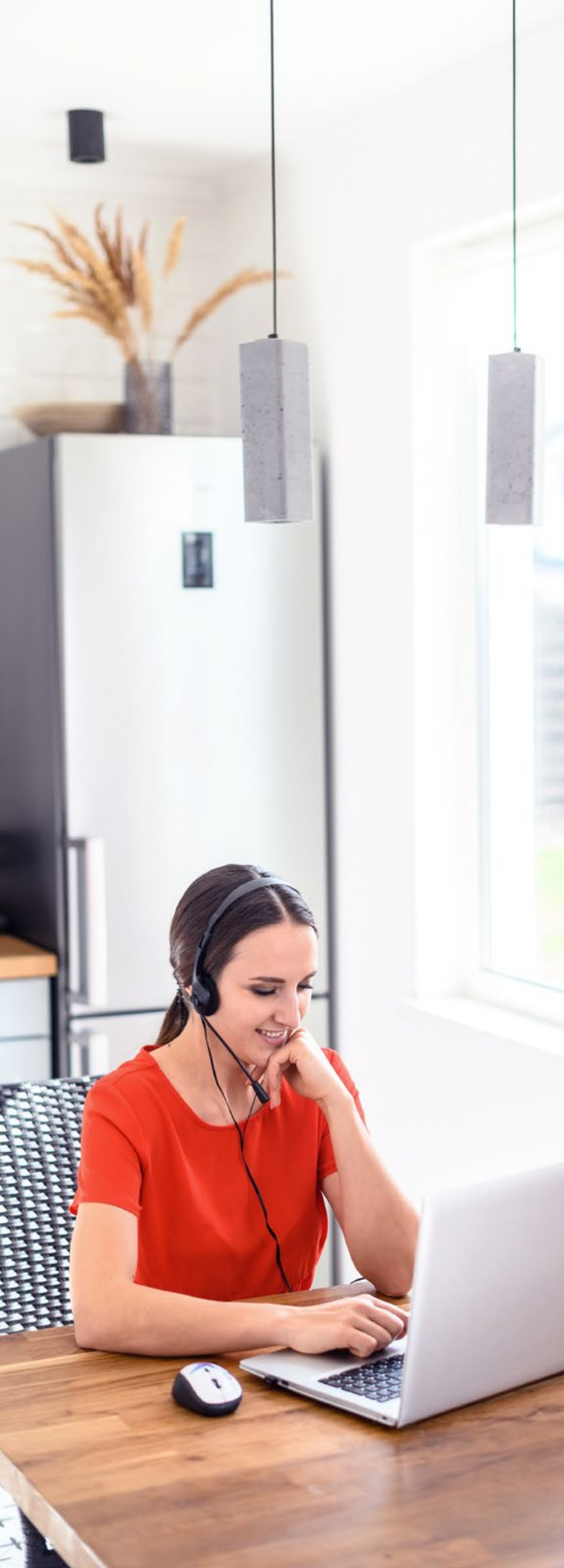
The pandemic has dramatically shown why firms and their employees need more flexible compensation capabilities, especially those on the front lines of the crisis, like nurses or delivery drivers. Many of these workers are now being required to work irregular shifts due to social distancing policies or unprecedented demand. Employers in certain industry segments may also have to **manage** hazard and overtime pay or offer other financial incentives in addition to paying workers off-cycle.

These changing circumstances go both ways: Workers may be required to work less predictable schedules, and they also have financial needs that do not necessarily fit neatly within the traditional two-week pay cycle. The ongoing situation may

compound cash flow gaps for such workers — their hours may have been cut, for example, yet they may continue to bear the cost of stocking up on groceries and safety supplies. On-demand payment options may take on special urgency for such workers.

It is not just front line workers whose work patterns are being disrupted, however. Many white-collar professionals and office workers are now working from home, including entire HR departments. Nonsalaried workers may no longer be able to submit paper time sheets, whereas salaried professionals may find themselves having to **work** unusual hours from home and may seek stipends or other flexible pay





options in light of these circumstances. These shifts are not going to be short-term and are **expected** to fundamentally alter professional life in the years ahead.

EMERGING DIGITAL PAYROLL SOLUTIONS

Businesses are looking to address these challenges using digital payroll solutions that are already available in the market. Some are embracing self-service online tools such as websites that allow employees to access information about their pay, vacation time, benefits and other matters. A new generation of cloud-based mobile tools and faster payment options may be uniquely suited to the current moment, however.

One key innovation does away with the paper and direct deposit checks all together. Workers and contractors can be **paid** via debit cards or through virtual cards that rely on secure, transaction-specific codes. Payment is disbursed on credit card rails, therefore funds can be made available to workers faster and in more flexible ways than conventional payroll processing allows. Card-based payment methods may be especially useful for workers who may otherwise have limited access to credit cards and banking services. The Real-Time Payments (RTP) network offered by The Clearing House (TCH) is being **used** to allow instant payouts for certain payroll use cases.

A number of payroll providers and firms are making it possible for workers to request same-day payments for work they have completed — or even before completion, in the case of pay advances. Such options have proven especially compelling for non-W2 workers and those making a living in the gig economy. More than two-thirds of gig workers who live paycheck to paycheck would be willing to **switch** to providers that offer pay advances. These workers believe having ready access to their paychecks would improve their overall well-being by allowing them to cover basic expenses and lessening financial stress, according to PYMNTS research.

Alongside these new flexible payment offerings are highly functional mobile tools, like the **MyADP app**, that put a host of vital tools at employees' fingertips, including paycheck status, time-off requests and HR inquiries. Such apps often work in tandem with cloud-based HR platforms, which administrators and employees can use anywhere they have access to the internet — a vital capability at a time when HR teams may not have access to on-premise software systems. These cloud-based systems can **stay** up to date on shifting regulations governing such matters as tax withholding and agency reporting. These are naturally important considerations when economic and regulatory environments are in flux.

A NUMBER
OF PAYROLL
PROVIDERS
AND FIRMS
ARE MAKING IT
POSSIBLE FOR
WORKERS
TO REQUEST
SAME-DAY
PAYMENTS FOR
WORK THEY HAVE
COMPLETED —
**OR EVEN BEFORE
COMPLETION,
IN THE CASE OF
PAY ADVANCES.**

Digital payroll innovations in the current era go well beyond offering basic conveniences to employees. They have the potential to secure and strengthen their financial lifelines and their senses of well-being.

ABOUT

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We are a comprehensive global provider of cloud-based human capital management (HCM) solutions that unite HR, payroll, talent, time, tax and benefits administration, and a leader in business outsourcing services, analytics and compliance expertise. Our unmatched experience, deep insights and cutting-edge technology have transformed human resources from a back-office administrative function to a strategic business advantage.

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