

MANAGING POST-ELECTION UNCERTAINTY

Days after a record number of Americans voted in a national election, states are moving ahead with the final counting of mail-in ballots and certifying the results. The nation is moving toward an outcome of both the presidential and congressional races. However, it will be some days and possibly a few weeks until the complete and final outcome is certified. Calls for vote recounts and legal challenges are happening in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Georgia and North Carolina. The rules that govern recount and legal challenges differ in each state; some states conduct automatic recounts if vote totals are close enough, while others allow them only with a court order or an opposing campaign challenge.

We are seeing our democratic institutions at work in states across the country. As this process moves ahead, it's an important time for senior executives to communicate with employees and set guidelines for everyone to follow so as to promote a culture and workplace of safety and inclusivity. Here are three sets of recommendations for executives and communications specialists to consider:

DELIVER A MESSAGE TO EMPLOYEES OF RESPECT FOR OUR GOVERNMENT AND LEGAL INSTITUTIONS AND CIVILITY IN THE WORKPLACE.

- + With election margins extremely close in several battleground states, urge employees to be patient as the legal challenges and vote recount processes play out. Continue to reinforce the resiliency of our democratic system even during a time of change and uncertainty.
- + Executives must set the tone for civility and calm. Emotions may remain elevated in the aftermath of the election, on top of an already difficult year resulting from the pandemic, economic downturn and social protests. The election illustrates sharp divides across the electorate that will remain embedded in our politics.
- + Employees expect their company to be a safe harbor for civility and discourse. Continue to watch for any signs that employees are changing their work behavior because of politics.
- + Executives should urge civility, remind everyone to be tolerant of differing opinions, and be a voice of reassurance that our democratic institutions are functioning as they have in the past.

BEGIN LOOKING AHEAD TO THE PUBLIC POLICY LANDSCAPE IN 2021 AND BEYOND.

- + The election outcome will have consequences for business operations. If the current trends hold, a Democratic president will need work closely with Republicans in Congress to govern. This is a window of opportunity to plan and prepare for different policy outcomes next year in areas such as corporate taxes, labor and environmental regulations, trade and investment policies and federal initiatives that might impact the technology, financial services, healthcare and education sectors.
- + Government relations and public affairs teams should begin to map out which scenarios will impact their business and prepare for different contingencies.
- + Investor teams should identify business risks and determine how they will communicate these to analysts, media and investors.
- + The outcome of the election may also impact how U.S. companies conduct business around the world. Global companies must navigate today's fractured world order as nations compete for global or regional political influence, economic preeminence, security interests and technological advantage. In today's interconnected world, shared challenges such as income inequity, climate threats, rising debt and the pandemic are all in need of collective government and private sector action. Senior executives should also be looking over the horizon to holistically identify and manage geopolitical risks in 2021 and beyond.

REMAIN FOCUSED ON YOUR DEI AND ESG COMMITMENTS.

- + Exit polling reaffirmed the importance of social and environmental issues in the minds of many voters. Everyone is being watched for their commitment to respect racial equity and diversity.
- + Many companies are auditing their business operations with a greater commitment to promoting equality and fairness and creating new opportunities for Black employees and other minorities to be promoted to corporate board positions and senior-level executive positions and hired across the overall workforce.
- + Public expectations are high, and companies should be prepared to regularly report their progress and new practices.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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