



E&J Gallo Winery

## Vitality<sup>®</sup> CASE STUDY

### ENGAGING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

E. & J. Gallo Winery is one of the largest wineries in the US, with over 7,000 blue- and white-collar employees.

As an essential workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic, hourly staff remained on site to maintain production while corporate staff transitioned to working remotely. Pivoting to a hybrid model presented a new challenge in keeping the entire workforce engaged, connected, and supported, whether at home or on site.

"20% of our population at any given time was not here for two years. It created a lot of challenges," said Carmella Smyth, Senior Benefits Manager at Gallo.

**“ We were challenged to go outside what we used to do to reach people. We had to open our minds to communicate to our employees.”**

Gallo utilized their on-site clinic to help reach employees and bring care to where they were, whether in person or remotely. Essential workers relied heavily on the on-site clinic for information regarding COVID-19 testing and vaccinations. Through a partnership with their clinic vendor, Gallo could encourage employees to seek primary care and behavioral health support through virtual interactions.

"Behavioral health was at the intersection of dealing with the pandemic, returning to work, and balancing family life," stated Smyth. "The on-site clinic tripled their volume in calls per week of people calling in for virtual care and COVID support. It also became critical to building support and connection and helping people feel comfortable returning to work."



**Today, Gallo has been working hard to engage its diverse workforce.**

“We still have challenges in engaging our Spanish-speaking population. Many workers come from different backgrounds, work long hours, and have a different culture,” notes Smyth. A one-size-fits-all communication strategy does not work for such a diverse workforce. Smyth elaborates, “We have workers who work rotating 12-hour shifts, seven rotating days, day and night. Physically it’s hard for them. Psychologically it’s hard for them. From a communications standpoint, we start with simple sound bites. We try to bring our employees information in the easiest way possible through emails, flyers, posters, and jumbotrons throughout all our plants.”



**In addition to honing their simple and clear communication strategy, Gallo is also working on personalization.**

“One thing we’ve learned is that we still do information overload, where instead we should stop and sit with the employees at the different levels and listen to them. Where can we meet you where you are? What can we do, knowing your calendars are crazy with work? This will be crucial for us in the next year or two.” Another element of personalization Gallo is pursuing is learning how best to communicate with employees of all ages. Gallo has engaged a team of experts to help craft the most engaging messaging for employees of different generations.

Another tactic Gallo is utilizing to enhance its strategy is having representative advocates in the organization deliver messages to build trust. Smyth spoke about how Gallo’s Vitality Champs have played a vital role in creating inclusive engagement. “Information can’t be top down from the same person all the time, or people will lose interest. Our Vitality Champs have come up on their own. People trust the folks that they work with. We find we get more engagement when information is shared from the Champs.”

