

CASE STUDY

HUMAN CAPITAL

PEPCLO HEROES:
FRONT-LINE
STAFF



The worst thing for me was: "Am I going to get sick?" But then, after the first week at home, and then being called to come to work, the best thing I remember was being part of an essential service.' Ismael Salari, machinist

'PepClo opened its factory during level 5 lockdown on 20 April, with 20 front-line employees – our own team of Pepkor heroes.

Starting production at the PepClo factory as soon as possible was an imperative to ensure the long-term sustainability of the business and to protect the 1 700 jobs the factory provides. With the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, we applied a staggered approach to getting people back to work.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses and people's lives was new to everyone. Even though the country went into a national lockdown, there were no clear guidelines, policies or procedures to follow. Everyone – government, businesses and the public – had to implement new procedures while negotiating a new business environment.

We looked to the World Health Organisation for guidance and best practice, and made sure that we implemented all the health and safety regulations that were issued by the National Department of Health.

The roll-out was made easy by the positive participation of our employees, who all made sure to abide by the rules – keeping themselves and their colleagues safe.

As the factory started with the production of new COVID-19-related products, we had to change internal workflow, processes and quality standards while, at the same time, getting used to a COVID-19-related 'new normal'.

INPUTS

- ▶ R100 000
- ▶ Focus on culture and company values, actively showing CARE
- ▶ Disciplined environment

OUTPUTS

- ▶ 3 000 food parcels
- ▶ Inspired employees jumped at the opportunity to become front-line workers
- ▶ Limited infections among 1 700 employees in one factory

17 weeks

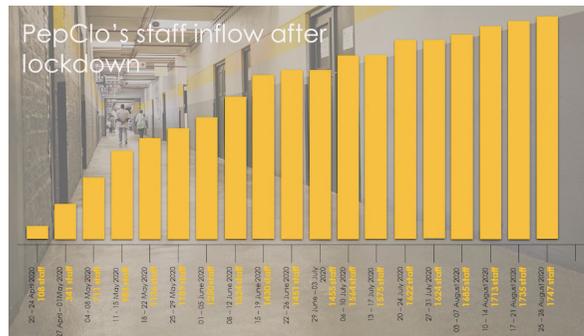
to build up to full capacity

Front-line heroes

were provided with transport, issued with permits, and received food parcels for their families

Actions implemented:

- ▶ Shortly before lockdown, employees were trained in COVID-19 protocols to ensure safety at home and on returning to work.
- ▶ Webinars and workshops ensured the right information was communicated to the right team at the right time.
- ▶ The right people and team were chosen to start a new process and do the groundwork for the rest of the factory.
- ▶ Industry-leading health and safety procedures were designed and implemented to accommodate 1 700 employees returning to work safely in a phased approach, to be used as an industry benchmark.
- ▶ Additional machinery was moved and installed for social distancing.
- ▶ Screens were installed between workstations.
- ▶ Masks and sanitiser were issued and sanitiser stands installed for continuous, easy access throughout the factory.
- ▶ Transport was arranged for front-line staff before public transport was permitted.
- ▶ Work permits were issued for all front-line staff.
- ▶ An on-site clinic was available for screening and patient support.



During the level 5 lockdown, 108 employees were our first front-line heroes to start production of the much needed fabric masks and disposable protective gowns that were produced for group companies and the Western Cape Government.



Social distancing and new arrival procedures had to be implemented when employees returned to work.