Communicating Internally During COVID-19

Principles and Practice

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The challenge is to support your employees during extended working from home to be their best selves.

You can't solve a pandemic
for your employees.

But you can be the best employer possible.

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Guiding Principles

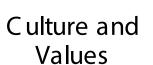# What do your employees need and want?

Less uncertainty   Honest answers

What will guide you?

Culture and Values

Past Practices

Inclusive Management

Who were you as a company before the pandemic?

What made your workplace unique?

What did you do, or say, internally that no other company did?

Culture and Values

How did you interact with each other?

What tools did you use to talk internally?

What were your informal ways of connecting?

Past Practices

How well do you know your direct reports?

What is their current situation?

What do they expect of you?

Inclusive Management

Putting Best Practices Into Action

Sharing information

Connections

Learning and Development

Operations

Empathy

Sharing information

Principles

Your employees will be concerned about their futures and the future of their company – big or small

Share what you can, to the maximum detail you can – even if it is more than usual

Be clear and honest – what do you know, what do you expect to happen next, what are the indicators you're looking for

Sketch scenarios and factors of influence, don't make hypotheticals

Practice

- Conduct a company-wide 'pulse-check' survey to measure staff engagement and well-being

- Share results and tailor actions to those responses that support working from home

- Have the CFO brief on the financial health of the company

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Connections

Principles

Increase frequency of communication. When you think you've said it enough, say it again

Make communication regularly scheduled and frequent

Update even if there is no update

Practice

- Regular open town hall meetings, lead by company leadership

- Use company connections to bring in external guest speaker

- Standing weekly meetings of leadership bodies, cascading down

- Provide staff at all levels and across the firm with presentation opportunities

Connections

Principles

Connect staff away from the work itself

Encourage and resource organic meet-ups and virtual gatherings

Use internal communications platforms to seed and maintain social connections

Practice

- Start a weekly company newsletter to share birthdays, employee spotlights

- Use Intranet tools for company contests and sharing non-work life

- Use slack channels for non-work-related conversations

- Give managers resources for (non-mandatory) team happy hours and non-work gatherings

Learning and Development

Principles

Provide resources targeted at helping staff transition to and manage remote working

Tailor resources most applicable to your workforce, customize offerings

Continue to offer professional development for staff at varying levels

Train and coach managers on ways to manage remote teams

Create peer groups between colleagues that don't typically work together to build relationships that would normally happen in an office

Practice

- Share external resources like LinkedIn learning paths, articles, webinars

- Build a virtual 'kitchen' or 'lunch room', a standing and regular space for employees to meet spontaneously

Operations

Principles

Be responsive and supportive of tech/IT needs and requests

Consider financial ways to support setting up home office/remote work

Review team design – with a wide variety of individual circumstances, the old ways of managing projects might not be practical, work or efficient

Practice

- Replace transport allowances with technology allowances

- Support flexible use of IT equipment

❤ Empathy

Principles

Acknowledge individual circumstances

Provide support for specific demographics

Give opportunities for non-work activities

Coach managers to emphasize the importance of employees taking time away/taking mental health days and keeping planned vacations

Model behavior that enforces the importance of separating work from personal life

Practice

- Provide virtual zoom yoga, mindfulness training, seminars on managing anxiety

- Provide opportunities to "close" or "pause" company-wide, offer Summer Fridays

The Glover Park Group

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