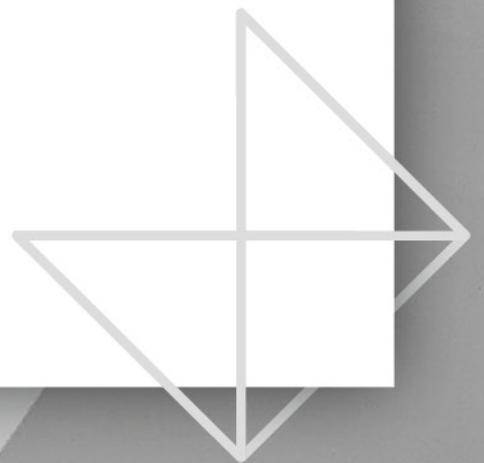




**HOW TO GUIDE:
EMPLOYEE & INTERNAL
COMMUNICATIONS
DURING THE
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**



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As with the management of any reputational issue, the way organisations engage with their own people during the coronavirus crisis will be critical to their ability to navigate it successfully. Below, we provide some practical guidance on how to communicate with your colleagues in the right way, in the right place, at the right time.

- 1. Balance facts with empathy.** While it is important to communicate clearly and concisely using facts, this should not come at the expense of empathy. Many people now find themselves working in isolation from colleagues under challenging circumstances – such as managing their work around the need to care for their children. Ensure your communications are mindful of employees' real concerns and always make it clear that their mental and physical wellbeing is your priority.
- 2. Show leadership.** Most employees will want to know that your organisation's leadership is in control of its response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Ensure senior executives are at the forefront of all internal company communications. Leaders must also be completely aligned with each other and with HR on developments, policies and procedures, and be confident in discussing these issues openly with employees.
- 3. Speak with clarity.** You should ensure any technical or scientific information is clearly explained, avoiding jargon and speculation at all times. You should also consider how messages may alter slightly when translated into different languages. If providing information on prevention and protection measures, do not assume blanket understanding and ensure that even basic advice is given in accordance with guidance from a credible source, such as the World Health Organization or a local healthcare provider.
- 4. Adapt for your audience.** Just like your customers, your employees have different priorities, different job roles and different ways in which they like to be reached. You should consider segmenting colleagues into groups and tailoring your communications accordingly. For example, do front-line staff need different guidance and support than those in working in central office functions? Are some people more likely to read information on the company intranet while others will respond better to email?
- 5. Consider local needs.** This is a global crisis, so if your organisation operates in multiple countries it is vital that you speak with a unified voice, especially when it comes to company policies and procedures. That said, the situation is different for each location, so local communicators and

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managers should be equipped and empowered to take the right actions for their specific region or market, especially in the event of a local Covid-19 outbreak.

6. **Remember communication works two ways.** While ensuring a regular flow of information from leadership to the rest of your organisation is critical, equally important is giving employees the opportunity to ask questions, offer feedback and voice concerns. This can be done through regular phone conversations between managers and employees, via online channels like your company intranet and internal social media platform or over email. It's a good idea to encourage employees to talk often with each other too, wherever possible by video conferencing to promote more face-to-face interactions.

7. **Be ready to evolve.** As well as tailoring your messages to different employee groups and locations, you must be ready to evolve with the crisis itself. The Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on individuals, communities, businesses and countries around the world is changing almost day-by-day. It is vital you stay on top of these developments and adapt your employee communications plan accordingly. Whatever happens, though, always back up any new health advice or safety protocols with clear signposting to certified information sources.