

Considerations for Your Employee Communications

COVID-19 has created a global crisis that is simply unprecedented in modern times. The last health-related issue of this magnitude was the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, and our way of life and how we communicate has certainly changed since then. This has left employers scrambling to implement their business continuity plans while keeping up with timely communications to their workforce.

While this client advisory may be specific to COVID-19, the underlying principles can be applied to most communication plans. When crafting your internal communication strategy, keep the following in mind:

- **Your tone should be clear and compassionate.** Although you may be communicating to your employees as a group, individuals have unique needs and concerns. While your message should be fact-based, in this unsure environment it is important to include the “human element.”
- **Be transparent with your action plan, even if it is fluid.** Employees need to know what actions you are currently taking for your business operations and what you may be preparing for.
- **Keep it concise.** Information fatigue happens and can happen fast. If you have a lot of information to relay, consider breaking it into separate topics, or, condense information to the most important touch-points then provide direction to where full details can be found.
- **Designate who communicates what.** Streamline what is sent and who on your team is responsible to avoid duplication of efforts, conflicting statements, and the aforementioned information fatigue. If your organization includes multiple departments, develop a process for over-arching communications, departmental, or job-specific messaging.
- **Avoid the vague or un-verified.** The information you relay in company-wide communications should be easy to understand at all levels of your organization. If referencing outside materials, ensure they are from verified and agnostic sources, such as governmental entities or authoritative, trusted resources.

Important Topics to Relay to Your Employees

- Current sanitation measures
- Social distancing efforts
- Benefits accessibility
 - Healthcare
 - EAP if offered
 - Disability plans
- Where to find current company policies and any notification of changes
 - PTO and attendance
 - Payroll
 - Travel/group meetings
 - Telecommuting