COMMUNICATING THROUGH UNCERTAINTY

7 STEPS FOR SUCCESS

OVERVIEW

Communication is crucial in these challenging and unusual times. Businesses can't afford to get it wrong when they are already facing their toughest test yet. As we adapt to and learn new ways of working, a focus on maintaining effective communication with one another, our clients and stakeholders is paramount.

The webinar outlined **7 practical steps** that you can take in order to motivate, engage and lead your people through these times of change.

1. CLEAR COMMUNICATION PLAN

A communications plan will enable your business to retain stability through these uncertain times. Just pause long enough to think through these 5 steps:
1. Setting your objectives
2. Identifying your target audience
3. Managing your messages
4. Embrace the new communication channels
5. Measure success.

What can you do?
- Form a dedicated team to manage your communications
- Ensure regular communication
- Check your information sources
- Shut down the rumour mill

2. TUNE INTO YOUR PEOPLE'S EMOTIONS

The better you understand their fears, anxieties, wants, and needs, the more successful you'll be as a leader. Realising that our employees will react to change in a variety of ways is critical. Reflect on which stage your team is at on the Coronavirus Change Curve:
1. Shock and denial 2. Anger 3. Bargaining 4. Sadness 5. Acceptance

What can you do?
- Before you take on your colleagues, ask yourself how YOU are
- Create opportunities for people to say how they're feeling
- Reaffirm things that haven't changed
- Balance reality with hope

3. MANAGE YOUR MESSAGE

When managing your message know who you are talking to why and for what desired outcome. Put yourself in the shoes of your audience and build clear and simple messages that are easily understood. Create opportunities to repeat the message in different ways

What can you do?
- Provide timely updates
- Think about what a company announcement means for your team
- What do you need the team to start, stop or continue doing as a result?
- Be compassionate and recognise their concerns

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4. HELP YOUR PEOPLE PRIORITISE WORKLOAD

A few targeted priorities clearly communicated will ensure that your teams are as productive as they can be. More than ever, we need our teams to stay productive – the long-term viability of many businesses depends on it. And that means ensuring everyone is pulling in the same direction but also recognising that you need to let your people find their own way to get the job done.

What can you do?
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of your employees
- Be flexible with how and when work is done
- Make sure your team know what is expected of them
- Ensure your team know when and who to escalate to if they need support

5. BE VISIBLE

With the majority of our staff working remotely, those general, day-to-day, human interactions are harder. But they're also more important than ever before – because they help people feel connected. As a leader it's all about creating as many opportunities as you can for people to meet and share how they are feeling.
This is NOT about checking up – it's about checking in!

What can you do?
- Keep in touch formally and informally
- Be available
- Put open time in your diary when staff can contact you should they need
- Regularly ask how they are doing and feeling

6. KEEP YOUR TEAM TOGETHER

Workers that are used to being anchored by a shared office space may struggle with a sense of belonging when they are forced to work remotely. You can help bridge the distance by being intentional about relationship-building.   At a time when you can't gather your staffs in the same room you will have to try to gather them virtually to give them a sense that they've part of a team.

What can you do?
- Organise daily morning check ins
- Arrange regular virtual coffee breaks
- Listen to their concerns
- Encourage your team to do the same

7. RECOGNISE ACHIEVEMENTS

An easy way to keep remote employees engaged is to continuously support them through recognition. Recognition demonstrates to your staff that you care about their work and well being, even when they aren't in the office, working at their desks. If you fail to recognise your team, they may begin to feel isolated or unappreciated and productivity will drop as a result.

What can you do?
- Recognise your staff for specific actions
- Tailor recognition to acknowledge staff efforts
- Say thank you during 1-1 catch-ups
- Be timely