

HR COMMUNICATIONS. SIMPLIFIED.
WRITE ON TARGET

Moving On. Being Ready.

THE GREAT MIGRATION...
BACK TO THE WORKPLACE



Business As Usual Is Gone

COVID-19 has unleashed uncertainty among employees. After dozens of surveys, webinars, and research papers (and endless conversations), one thing is certain as we begin the return to our workplace:

Communications are more important than ever.





Findings

WHAT TO EXPECT AS EMPLOYEES RETURN

- Greater value placed on trust
- Increased focus on well-being
- Higher expectations for digital communications
- Reduced employee engagement
- Overall change in the world's corporate narrative

Greater Value Placed On Trust



WHY?

PEOPLE SAY...

78% Businesses have a responsibility to ensure employees are protected from the virus in the workplace and do not spread it into the community.

63% I trust my employer more than the media.
I would like my employer to share information about the coronavirus daily.



BE READY

✓ **Keep Leaders Communicating**

- Exude reassurance, confidence, and gratitude for the employees.
- Be honest and authentic, address the tough issues, show empathy.

✓ **Rely On (and Prepare!) Your Front-Line Managers**

- They talk to their team directly every day/week, and they're trusted.
- 67% prefer to hear company news from their supervisor. (HR, you're at 3%.)
- Help them out with messaging: FAQs, tool kits, easy access to you.

No matter your role or status, every interaction with employees (hallway, elevator, break room) is a chance to communicate your message.

Increased Focus On Well-Being



WHY?

COMPANIES SAY...

73% Promoting health and well-being has been a priority since the crisis began.

78% They'll be focusing on this now and in the next 6-8 weeks (making it top priority in one survey).

1000% The increase in mental health hotline calls at Kaiser Permanente.

And Many have gained weight, stopped fitness routines, and been isolated.



BE READY

- Keep your wellness program/EAP front and center — this is not the place to make budget cuts.
- Openly promote your understanding of and support for mental health — post flyers, send postcards, use pre-printed sticky notes, have leaders talk about it, etc.
- Focus on family-friendly benefits that help balance demands of home and work.
- Consider offering virtual courses in [Mental Health First Aide](#) for managers.
- The National Alliance for Mental Illness has a comprehensive guide to mental health support during COVID-19. [Download it here.](#)

The second-largest family unit isn't a unit at all — it's a single person. Who has been living alone for weeks.

Higher Expectations For Digital Communications



WHY?

COMPANIES SAY...

42% Ineffective digital channels have been one of the biggest challenges.

48% They intend to improve those channels.

74% At least 5% of their office-based workforce will become permanent work-from-home employees.



BE READY

- If you haven't already, it's time to move your communications online with easy access. What information can you make available outside a firewall, with no cumbersome login information?
- Video collaboration tools are the norm now. Topping the list is MS Teams, with 68% using it and 94% finding it effective. Also: Facebook Workplace, and SharePoint.
- Empowering and engaging employees through mobile apps is a must. The giants like Workday and ADP are always improving their offerings, and you can research more on [Capterra's](#) website.

Temporary furloughed employees? Some companies are using WhatsApp to keep them in the loop.

Reduced Employee Engagement



WHY?



Adjusting to yet another new schedule.



Anxiety is still high, so expect distractions.



Trying to reconnect to the purpose of their jobs.

While a celebration isn't in order, appreciation certainly is. Encourage handwritten notes to welcome employees back and thank them for returning.



BE READY



Set Expectations Before They Return

- Survey employees ahead of time to gauge the mood. Ragan Consulting has a [COVID-specific survey](#) you can download free.
- Promote your mental health benefits and any benefits/policies that can help with work-life balance.
- Suggest daily/weekly team meetings to reconnect people.
- Be clear about social distancing, hand-washing/sanitizing, use of common areas, required masks, temperature checks, etc.



Print and Post New Rules or Protocols

- Put them where they'll clearly be seen — bathroom stalls, timeclock areas, front doors, etc.
- See page 9 for signage help.

Change In The World's Corporate Narrative



WHY?



The pandemic is all about human lives... people are anxious and hurting.



Employees are people. They respond/engage better with a human tone of voice.



Corporations/companies aren't generally seen as human, but as organizations.

How many kids, dogs, and doorbells did you see and hear on video calls? That's the human side.



BE READY



Think About Tone of Voice in Your Communications

- Are you human-sounding or too formal? (One telling sign... do you use contractions?)
- Use the words “we” and “you.”
- Remember to advise line managers on tone, too.



Let Stories Humanize Your Organization

- These last few months have brought out the best in a lot of employees. Find their stories and share them.
- Already doing this? Keep up the positive momentum.
- Think about three sources for stories: community, colleagues, and clients.

Research & Useful Resources



PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

This document from Sullivan and Cromwell, LLP, has great, simple “legal” advice.

Workplace prep

Who should return and when

Workplace screenings and privacy concerns



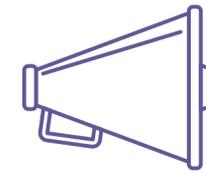
RESEARCH & STATS

Gatehouse State of the Sector — Special COVID-19 Issue

Academy of Business Communications — Scary Global Pandemic Series

Edelman Trust Barometer: Special Report on COVID-19

Gallup — COVID-19: Leading Through Disruption



SIGNAGE & SUCH

Our partnership with a local printer allows us to offer pre-printed signs and notices to help remind employees of new protocols.

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