

COVID-19 Communications Plan

Messaging to stress throughout:

- The “big why” — the main reason you’re doing this
- Transparency — you’re following CDC/EEOC guidelines, state and local recommendations, etc.
- Safety — it’s safe according to CDC, pharma, medical associations, etc.
- Resources — always refer people to one place (“the source of truth”) for more information

Phase 1 Announce Company Intentions — as soon as possible after decisions are made

| Who You’re Talking To | What You’re Saying | How You’re Getting the Word Out |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Senior Leaders HR Managers</p> <p><i>This is where your “cascade” of information begins.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prep them for making the announcement to their direct reports (script, messaging) • Preview employee communication with them • Talk about next steps/timing (realistically) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory webinar, include CEO video stating, “We need you to lead the way.” • Emails • Toolkit: Talking points, dynamic/living FAQ, facts from reliable sources • Intranet/internet page to house information, recordings, documents |
| <p>All Employees</p> <p><i>Critical: Tell them more information is coming and when...and keep your word. If too much time is passing without more information, reassure them. Gain trust!</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain decision — tell them the “big why” of the decision (to ensure a safer workplace and build trust with the community/customers) • Educate on vaccine safety (reference CDC, EEOC, pharma, etc.) • Anticipate questions, answer with “working on it” and “more to come” • Talk about next steps/timing (even if it’s a rough estimate) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video message from CEO shown getting vaccine • Photos of others (preferably known names) getting vaccine; start/promote a hashtag • Postcard/mailer to homes (w/photos) • Posters (w/photos) • Emails (for non-desk workers, personal emails if possible) • Messaging on intranets, internets, apps • Other channels you may have (screens/monitors, table tents, broadcast announcements, team huddles, etc.) |
| <p>Other Influential People (ERGs, Wellness Champions, Company Ambassadors, etc.)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate/train them on what is known to date • Ask them to actively gather feedback; tell them where to send comments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinars (run by HR managers) • Toolkit: Talking points, dynamic/living FAQ, facts from reliable sources • Follow-up feedback loop (what are the questions they’re hearing?) |

Key concerns to prepare for:

- Negative impacts of vaccine — have messaging ready for side effects (stats and facts from CDC, policy for sick leave, etc.)
- Conflicts and pushback — train HR managers on conflict resolution
- Exemptions for religious and medical reasons — have accommodations in place, and have your legal team ready

Phase 2 Communicate Expectations — at least 4 weeks before the program ends (or within 3 weeks of Phase 1 announcement, to keep communication open and squash rumors that pop up with a lack of information)

| Who You're Talking To | What You're Saying | How You're Getting the Word Out |
|---|---|---|
| Line/Department Managers HR Managers Other Influential People (ERGs, Wellness Champions, Company Ambassadors, etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain expectations of all employees (what <i>their</i> employees will need to do) • Give additional details (or a comprehensive FAQ if possible) • Preview employee communication with them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • FAQ (branded and designed, printable) • Messaging on intranets, internets, apps |
| All Employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what they will need to do • Offer logistical details, if known (where, how, costs, timing) • Provide any forms necessary, if possible • Who to call/where to go with questions • How to ask for accommodations/exceptions • Restate the “big why” of the vaccine program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More photos/postings of employees getting vaccinated • Posters (w/photos) • Emails (for non-desk workers, personal emails if possible) • Messaging on intranets, internets, apps • Other channels you may have (screens/monitors, table tents, broadcast announcements, team huddles, etc.) |

Phase 3 Communicate Vaccine Logistics — 2 weeks and 1 week before the program ends

| Who You're Talking To | What You're Saying | How You're Getting the Word Out |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| All Employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer logistical details (where, how, costs, timing) • Provide any forms necessary • Who to call/where to go with questions • How to ask for accommodations/exceptions • Last chance reminders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postcard/mailer to homes (2 weeks before) • Printable flyers — last chance reminders to HR managers, line/department managers, others with influence • Updated FAQ, as necessary • Emails (for non-desk workers, personal emails if possible) • Messaging on intranets, internets, apps • Other channels you may have (screens/monitors, table tents, broadcast announcements, team huddles, etc.) |

Whether It's Mandatory or Voluntary

Even if you're only *encouraging* employees to get the vaccine, it's more compelling to have an end date in sight. Maybe the company will pay for it or allow time off to get it, until a certain date.

In a voluntary program, Phases 2 and 3 merge to become a set of initial communications followed by a series of reminders.