Crisis Communication

Effective Employee Communication in the Time of COVID-19

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Crisis Communication

Welcome

- Introduction
- Webinar Timing
- Audience Questions

Resilience. Education. Credentialing. ICOR
The International Consortium For Organizational Resilience

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Crisis Communication

Agenda

I	**Fundamentals**
II	Pandemic Impact Assessment
III	Message Development
IV	Employee Communication
V	What You Need
VI	Q&A

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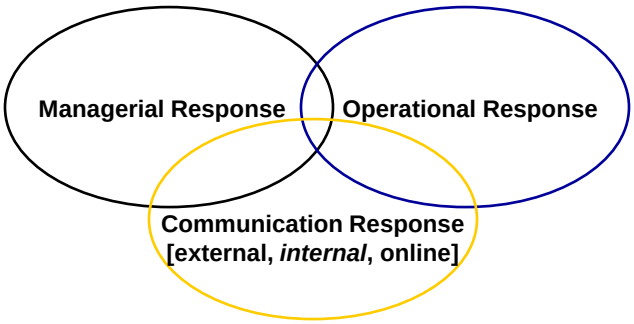
Crisis Communication

Covid-19 Response: Communication Is Critical



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Communication Response

1. Pandemic Impact Assessment
2. Business & Communication Objectives
3. Stakeholder / *Employee* Information Needs
4. Message Development (external & *internal*)
5. Comms Channel / Tool / Venue Selection
6. Message Testing & Delivery
7. Evaluate, Adapt, Change

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Crisis Communication Keys

- Timely
- Truthful
- Consistent
- Coordinated

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COVID-19 Response

- Pandemic Communication Plan (not too late)
- Focus: *Employees* & Customers / Clients
- Lead decisively with empathy & compassion
- Clear and easy to understand messages (health & safety, productivity, assistance)
- Talk to employees first & eradicate uncertainty
- Customized 2-way employee communication (content, channel, frequency, volume, eval)

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Pandemic Impact Assessment: Management View

- Management's view is TECHNICAL / ANALYTIC
  - Magnitude (research > How bad is it?)
  - Probability (statistics > How likely is it?)
  - Known facts and understood consequences
  - Liability must be minimized

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Impact Assessment: How About Emotions?

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Pandemic Impact Assessment: Public / *Employee* View

- Public's view is AFFECTIVE / EMOTIONAL
  - Shaped by stakeholder perception
  - Influenced by stakeholder outrage
  - Based upon personal experience and impact
  - "Not fair" & "They don't have any feelings"

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Information Needs

1. *What* happened?
2. *When* did it happen?
3. *Where* did it happen?
4. *Who* is affected?
5. *Why* did it happen?
6. *What* danger does it pose?
7. *How* do you feel about it?
8. ***What* are you doing about it?**

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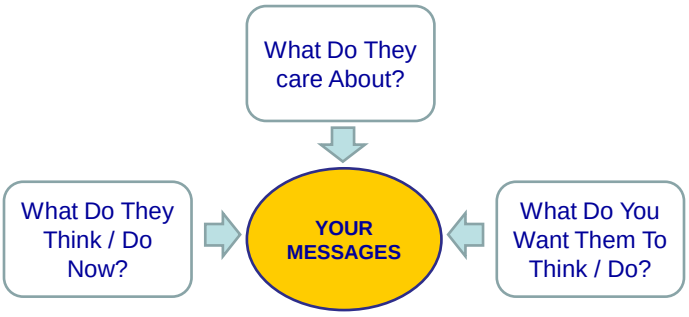
Customized Employee Communication



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Message Requirements

- Messages Must Be True (honesty)
- Messages Must Sound True to Speaker (credible spokesperson)
- Messages Must Sound True to Audience (believability)

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Key Messages

- Prepare to say what you know (Facts)
- Prepare to say how you feel about it (Feelings)
- Prepare to say what you will do about it (Actions)

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What Not To Do

"Okay, people, the question is should we deny first and then delay, or delay first and then deny?"

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Key Asset: Employees

- Without informed, dedicated and trusting employees the pandemic response will fail
- How can the organization help employees and their loved ones in this time of crisis?
- Leaders must listen, explain hard decisions with context, be visible (in person, video)
- Understand that all employees - across industries – are currently experiencing stress

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How Crises Affect Employees

- Uncertainty
- Pressure
- Anxiety
- Stress

There are many stressors including health concerns, job concerns, etc.

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Employee Covid-19 Needs

- Stability-Hope-Compassion-Trust (Gallup)
- Messages must inform, educate & motivate
- Want to know & buy into “Clear Way Forward”
- Feel empowered to show resilience
- Practical Support incl. Unpaid Leave, Health Insurance, Flex Time, Remote Work, PPE
- See company mission, vision, values in action

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Important Questions

Ask before communicating with employees:

1. What is the desired result of the communication? [objective]
2. What will be communicated? [message]
3. Who will initiate the crisis communication? [sender]

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Important Questions

4. Which groups of employees and managers will be communicated with? [recipient]

5. How and / or where will the crisis communication happen? [channel and / or venue]

6. When will the crisis communication take place? [timeline]

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Important Questions

Ask before communicating with employees and as part of the evaluation process and ongoing pandemic response planning:

7. Was the crisis communication objective met? [evaluation]

8. How can we do better? [optimization]

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What You Need

1. Communication Readiness Assessment
2. Pandemic Communication Plan (PCP)
3. Adjust Channel, Content, Frequency, Volume
4. 2-Way Communication & Listening Are Key
5. Effective Message Development & Delivery
6. Eval incl. 24/7 Internet & Media Monitoring

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Words of Wisdom

It is far better to

Prepare and Prevent

than to

Repair and Repent

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Thank You

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Leaders in Strategic Communication and Crisis Management

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