

White Paper Compact



Supply Chain Management Good communication in the Corona crisis: You need your employees – prevent loss of motivation

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Communication in the Corona crisis: What characterizes good crisis communication?

What accounts for a good crisis communication?

The Corona crisis will pass...

... and then you need your employees - healthy and highly motivated to master the coming challenges together. Either your company could move into restructuring mode or being faced to a sudden upturn in business. Your employees (and the management too) will be expected to have a lot of recovery work (today and tomorrow).

Therefore, protect the motivation and commitment of your employees and always make sure that there is good communication in both directions. Be aware of the reservations and fears of your employees and deal with them proactively.

Health is most important

The health of the employees comes first - communicate this clearly and positively. All protective measures - acceptance and adherence to safety distances, right up to disinfection possibilities and workplace disinfection - must be introduced. Home work should always be used whenever possible. Meetings and business trips must be minimized.

Top management attention needed

As management, you have to react and communicate appropriately at the right time - this is the only way to control how the

crisis is perceived, communicated and passed on in the external environment of the company and among your own employees.

Internal and external communication are crucial

Internal and external communication is one of the most important tasks of management in a crisis. This is especially relevant in times of crisis. The company management needs to show leadership and start communicating pro-actively in order to retain control over communication during the crisis. In any case, the content of what you say or directly communicate counts far more than any reports or written messages.

Always stay transparent, measurable and honest in your communication and statements.

Things get critical when the communication of managers is not coordinated. Therefore it is important to have a common communication guideline ("official wording"). Therefore the company management defines the principles and content of the messages for the employees, the media and other external stakeholders during a crisis.

Please keep in mind: These principles should fit in with your corporate culture and the public image of the company. And ...



- Corona crisis communication is the planned, organized and structured communication during the crisis.
- Core tasks are the targeted exchange of information, engaging and staying in dialogue and the involvement of all affected and involved within/outside the organisation.
- Crisis communication managers must be involved at an early stage in order to identify and consider the emotional needs of those affected and to advise management accordingly.
- Enable the transmission of information, opinions and moods and support dialogues and discussions.
- Clearly define the goal of crisis communication: Do you want to convince, inspire, is participation possible?
- Express your message clear, understandable and appropriate for the recipient.
→ Do those affected really know the directions and reasons behind?
- Crisis communication must be precise, clear and understandable for all.
- Besides language, also pictures, symbols and persons play important roles.
- The same applies to the speed with which change is driven forward as a result of the crisis (quick wins provide stability and trigger new motivation after any initial doubts and uncertainties).
- The deployment of ambassadors (crisis agents) can support different locations or a broadly based, diverse workforce.

Good communication in the Corona crisis: Targeted use of media and methods

Getting the buy-in of your people/employees

It should never (ever) happen that employees learn about the effects of the crisis and the measures (e.g. short-time work or dismissals for operational reasons) from the press/media/internet – this may be “normal life” for some football coaches, but your employees never should be treated in this way.

Employees should always be informed as early as possible - not only when it comes to dismissals. Because they are the ambassadors of your company and multiply information inside and outside the company. For this reason, employees need to be precisely informed about the situation and measures, to what extent they are affected, what the management is planning and how they are involved and challenged in this.

You, as management must specify and agree on the “official wording” so that all employees speaking to external addressees pass on consistent information only. This applies especially to employees who are in contact with the media and customers.

If a “hotline” is set up during a crisis, the employees “picking up the phone” must be properly prepared. Crisis communication is a particularly challenging task for companies and their management. Anyone who closely observes the media coverage will see how many of them fail because of it.

There is small solace according the saying: “Only from damage one becomes wise” ... and another ground rule: Start with good news before the bad news – give hope – because there is always hope – proved by history.

The perfect PR work

Anyone who talks to the media needs to have perfect expertise in press relations. Because the media usually define what a crisis is. They determine when an unexpected event suddenly interests the whole world or at least the region.

Crisis communication - 9 tips for the right choice of media and methods

Media/Method	Advantages/ disadvantages	What to consider	Effectiveness
1 Town hall meetings and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can become very costly if there are several locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timing of events is crucial and the staging • Well suited as kick-off and at the end, but not in the emotional shock phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High, if it's not misused as a CEO show
2 Special issue of the company/ employee newspaper or magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideally achieves the goal of broadly distributing information top-down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a credible and well-established staff newspaper/magazine, „special issues“ attract a lot of attention • But it should be produced quickly in order to maintain topicality and thus authenticity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High, if the distribution works well • Tip: Instead of using the postal service, use digital distribution channels!
3 Bulletin board notices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forces the sender to provide short, precise information; can be quickly placed at important hotspots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bulletin board notices need to be at central locations where many employees are present (e.g. tea kitchen, canteen, etc.) • Good supporting medium, if there is no nationwide email distribution possible, e.g. at distributed small company workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High, if they are short and precise and are not used inflationary

Good communication in the Corona crisis: Targeted use of media and methods

Media/Method	Advantages/ disadvantages	What to consider	Effectiveness
4 Information poster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures emotionalize and are perceived faster than text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to a bulletin board notice in the form of meaningful pictures or graphics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High, if using expressive images • In case of general or implausible presentation, low
5 Circulars as letters, flyers, folder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast offline medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything is possible, from a personal letter to a leaflet • Depending on the design, however, it can look cheap and then inspire little confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalization, for example in a letter, increases the effect
6 Article in the company/ employee newspaper or magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-accepted medium • Depending on its attractiveness it will be read by the workforce and their families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The production time of employee newspapers and magazines is usually very long, so the question arises how up-to-date a communication can be here • Possible as additional background information with details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather low • It often has documentary value
Media/Method	Advantages/ disadvantages	What to consider	Effectiveness
7 Roundtables with the top management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group sizes are recommended for high interaction and honest exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the atmosphere is tense or the corporate culture is inexperienced with feedback, it is better to consult a moderator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will achieve different effects if you keep the group composition homogeneous or mix it
8 Peer group - exchange of experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All those who belong to the peer group - e.g. all managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is not so much an exchange of information as an exchange of experience and learning from experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Especially high
9 World Café	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 12 to 2,000 participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many stakeholders have their say • This method enables participation and increases motivation • Ensure a good atmosphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High, if the results are taken into account and will be implemented

Miebach Consultants - Crisis experience

As Miebach Consultants we have been developing and improving supply chains very successfully for more than 47 years. We know the relevant success levers of your value chain, especially also the topic of communication (based on change management principles) in all phases of transformation and crisis. In good times and in the current times of crisis, we are well recognized consultants for these topics. Please contact us if you would like to discuss your current challenges with us.

