

Communicating Effectively During Times of Crisis

There is no such thing as over communicating. Or so they say.




We receive a flood of information on a daily basis. These are not just emails from our workplace, they are often from those in the community, schools, banking institutions, retailers, and local businesses we support. While the senders' intentions are noble, this daily barrage of information can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed and often paralysis.

From an employer perspective, it is important that the information we bring to our employees is timely, intentional, and customized - keeping in mind where they are in absorbing the implications of the pandemic.

EMPLOYER CHALLENGES AND EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVES

Employers are at different stages of responding to the pandemic. In the spirit of transparency, it is important for employers to be straightforward regarding the challenges their organizations are facing behind the scenes while trying to maintain a sense of normalcy.

Employees are also in differing stages of understanding the crisis and have varying communications needs. Each individual's journey will be unique. Now more than ever, it is important for employers to streamline and customize how they connect with their people and support them in getting through the stages as effectively as possible.

STAGES OF THE PANDEMIC	SHOCK AND AWE	BUSINESS CONTINUITY	RECOVERY	THE NEXT NORMAL	RELAPSE
 <p>EMPLOYER CHALLENGES</p>	<p>Do we have enough cash flow?</p> <p>What are the immediate needs of our employees and customers?</p> <p>Do we have what we need to work in a remote environment?</p> <p>How do we ensure the health of our employees (if an essential business)?</p>	<p>How do we align our go-to market strategy with the needs of our customers and community?</p> <p>How do we need to diversify our products/ services?</p> <p>How does this impact our supply chain?</p> <p>How do we continue to keep our employees supported and engaged?</p>	<p>How do we continue to diversify and adapt?</p> <p>Has the crisis highlighted any gaps in services and product offerings?</p> <p>Are we in a position to change this?</p> <p>What kind of scenario planning do we need?</p> <p>Do we need to revisit our product channels?</p> <p>How do we go back?</p>	<p>What does 'normal' mean?</p> <p>What is our revenue return plan?</p> <p>Should remote working be a part of our future?</p> <p>What does the new normal do for our real estate footprint?</p> <p>What did we learn from this initial experience with the pandemic?</p>	<p>What did we learn from our previous experience?</p> <p>How will this time look?</p> <p>Will we have new challenges?</p> <p>What can we do differently this time?</p>
 <p>EMPLOYEE QUESTIONS</p>	<p>How did this happen?</p> <p>How long will this go on?</p> <p>What does this mean for me?</p> <p>What does this mean for my job?</p>	<p>What does the future look like?</p> <p>Do we have enough work to stay busy?</p> <p>How long will my work remain at home?</p> <p>How can I support my clients, customers, and fellow colleagues?</p>	<p>How does my work change?</p> <p>How can I support my team?</p> <p>How do I need to change to support our evolved strategy?</p>	<p>What does 'normal' mean?</p> <p>How do I go back? Do I go back to our previous way of working?</p> <p>How will this impact my career growth?</p>	<p>What can I do differently this time?</p> <p>What did I learn from the last time this happened?</p>
 <p>EMPLOYEE EMOTIONS</p>	<p>Anger</p> <p>Disbelief</p> <p>Confusion</p> <p>Insecurity</p> <p>Lack of safety</p>	<p>Insecurity</p> <p>Lack of safety</p> <p>Uncertainty</p>	<p>Insecurity</p> <p>Uncertainty</p> <p>Hope</p>	<p>Uncertainty</p> <p>Acceptance</p> <p>Innovation</p> <p>Hope</p>	<p>Innovation</p> <p>Uncertainty</p> <p>Confusion</p>

HOW JABIAN CAN HELP

Most of the teams responsible for communicating to their organizations are maxed out developing communications to react to this rapidly evolving situation. No matter what stage of the pandemic they are in, leadership and communication teams often lack the bandwidth to stop, reflect, and plan for communications in the next stages of the recovery. That's where Jabian can help. Our structured workshop approach will help your team develop a detailed understanding of all of your stakeholders' needs (customers, employees, suppliers, regulators, etc.) and develop an executable Communication Plan to guide the team through the next phases of recovery.

- 1. PREPARE**
Agree on workshop objectives and outcomes.
- 2. DESIGN AND FACILITATE**
Design workshop agenda and facilitate the session. Topics will include: identifying current stage of the crisis, stakeholder impacted, and the key messages that need to be communicated to each stakeholder group.
- 3. SUMMARIZE**
Summarize feedback from the workshop and consolidate into themes by stakeholder group. Develop a Communications Plan by stakeholder group and determine if/how messages will need to change as stakeholders progress to different stages.
- 4. EXECUTE**
Execute the Communications Plan with continuous review of the Plan as the pandemic progresses. Solicit feedback on an ongoing basis to gather insights on the communications' effectiveness.

WORKSHOP COLLABORATION AND BRAINSTORMING TOOLS

Online tools will be leveraged to make the virtual workshop engaging.



COLLABORATIVE PRIORITIZATION

Use online spreadsheets and ranking tools



VIRTUAL VOTING/ POLLING

Gather live positions and opinions from a large group of people



VIRTUAL POST-IT NOTES

Capture and organize thoughts in real time

VALUE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

How you treat your employees during times of crisis will dictate how they treat the company during the rebound. Keep track of your A-players and make sure they remain engaged throughout the crisis. Check in on your people and make them part of your recovery efforts. Use this as an opportunity to build brand loyalty with your employees as well as your customers.

All organizations have been affected in material ways by COVID-19, and will continue to experience shocks and stressors as we return to the next normal over time. Acting now is critical to sustain operations and to optimize your position for a rebound.