TiE RAJASTHAN
FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

PEOPLE & COVID-19
A Business Challenge

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ZOOM SESSION
with

TOPICS

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MANAGE SELF

ENGAGE EMPLOYEES

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ENGAGING WITH EMPLOYEES
By Kevin Dias, CEO, ShareYourHR

Talking to your employees about the coronavirus is no easy feat. It's hard to strike the right balance between informing staff of the facts and sharing the protective measures your business is taking without sowing fear or anxiety amongst an already tense workforce.

Yet now is the time for resolute action, strong leadership, and clear communication. Above all, your staff need to know you're closely monitoring the outbreak and that you have their best interests at heart.

The Roots - EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE, COMPANY ETHOS, HOW YOU TREAT PEOPLE.

Timely communication during a crisis goes a long way. It's crucial that leaders don't get sucked into the panic. Leaders should not hold back during this time. "It's vital to maintain perspective through this pandemic. While employers can't completely do away with employee fears, they can try to mitigate them as best as possible.

1. Create a coronavirus crisis management plan
In order to handle the coronavirus crisis properly, employers need to have a clear plan and strategy around it. Here are some key points to develop an efficient plan.
- The plan should be flexible.
- Involve your employees in developing, managing and reviewing your plan.
- Frequently evaluate your plan to find out ahead of time whether the plan has gaps or issues that need to be fixed.
- Share the plan with all employees and explain what human resources policies and flexibilities as well as pay and benefits will be available to them.
- Sharing is caring! Share best practices with other businesses in your communities to improve community response efforts.

2. Appoint a designated crisis management team
It is very important to appoint the right set of people who will be responsible for managing the situation during coronavirus. (HR+ Leader of the division+ Admin+ WFM)

3. Keep employees informed (with accurate and updated information)
Yes, coronavirus has shocked us all the internal communicators need to keep employees calm and try keeping stress levels at the very minimum.

This is why you need to communicate with your employees openly and frequently. Give them regular updates, tips and tricks on how to stay safe.

4. Create an environment that fosters online collaboration

So, how to ensure that employees stay connected and collaborate efficiently while working from home? Be transparent, Recognize and Acknowledge Your Employees' Efforts. Enable working from home rather than just a directive. People are social beings so enable them to meet each other on-line.

5. Stop the spread of misinformation in the workplace

We are also in a "Infordemic", Coronavirus is probably the most popular topic covered by the media right now and your employees talk about it every day. We need to reiterate the government directive.

6. Update employees' contact numbers and emergency contact details

Having updated employee information is important in case of an emergency. Even though this may seem like an easy task, reaching all your employees providing needed information in a timely manner is not that easy to achieve.

7. Respect self-isolation guidelines and stay in touch with your self-isolated employees

Be aware of those who have been told to be in quarantine or in self quarantine or in marked localities. They need your care and assurance more so.

8. Organizations should evaluate the effectiveness of their crisis management efforts and identify opportunities for improvement.

- How well did you handle remote work?
- Did employees feel informed all the time?
- Did employees follow your advice?
- Were you fast enough in answering employees' questions?
- Was the information you shared with your employees useful to them?
- Did employees actually read your updates?
- Were you able to control the spread of misinformation in the workplace?

9. Be Intentional About Communications

- providing education about prevention, managing risk, and
- What do you expect from employees
- Dress code during video calls
- Communications should be sent to educate employees about their working
- Provid weekly guidance to all employees on key topics such as self-care, working from home, travel / movement restrictions and staying safe.
- Leaders should encourage video calls for brainstorming sessions, meetings and keeping communication open.

10. Working from Home……Relax Policies And Adjust Guidelines
- It's not possible for every company to offer remote work, However, getting work done remotely can be a huge challenge. Communication gaps can arise. Managers can also find themselves unprepared to supervise workers remotely. These problems can cause low productivity and poor-quality output.
- Companies should consider loosening restrictions surrounding certain policies.
- Hosting awareness wellness sessions to educate and reduce anxiety.
- At one end employees need to get used to working from home on the other side there is the issue of getting people to switch off from work while at home - start by evaluating current managers and rally a team of experts who have remote work experience to help others.

11. Working from Home…Fun@home activities
Employers can improve morale by making training fun. Fun@home events –
- Have a hand-washing contest to see who does the best job.
- Tissue box decorating contests
- Face mask decoration contest
- World Message contest
- Best Children messages (keep the family active)
- Best dish made by Male member
- Maximum dishes washed in 5minutes contest (videos)
- Examples / blogs of the value of Care (or any value of the company)
- Spreadsheet Pixel Art

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES

12. Going the extra mile
Most companies have focused their initial employee communications on travel guidelines, 'work from home' rules and protective measures to safeguard employees' health. We can provide additional support including:

- Counselling hotline or employee assistance programs for employees and their families.
- Reimbursement of medical expenses for affected employees, through corporate insurance.

Employers with hourly/daily workers are keeping a close eye on those employees whose hours have been reduced and working to find bridge solutions to ensure they do not face an undue financial burden during an already uncertain time. Employers should be careful to not over-promise long-term compensation arrangements and, where applicable, ensure they are working closely with relevant union representatives and works councils.

Employers should also keep close track and develop policies for groups who may have special communications needs. These include:

- Employees confirmed or suspected of being infected and their family members confirmed or suspected of being infected.
- Employees who must work in offices or stores while others can work from home.
- Employees whose contracts will end soon.
- Employees joining the team during the response to the coronavirus.
- Foreign employees who may want to travel back to their home countries.

13. Connecting with Remote Employees

Communications to employees should be regular and frequent, so people know when to expect an update, even if there's little to update on. Nothing is more unnerving than silence. Understand where employees with low internet access or access to PC is limited are and attempt to connect with them via phone.

All employees

- Short videos can capture the key messages (and the 'one version of the truth') and can also be made accessible to those who couldn't attend the video conference. Employees who can't access email can be connected by phone or Whatsapp
- Develop a series of short podcasts with different voices from across the business to help people feel connected on work topics and beyond.
- Consider sharing some content beyond the region for the wider colleague audience to understand and appreciate the challenges.
- HR Forums - Weekly all-employee video conferences or conference calls allow employees to hear from their executives directly and get answers to their questions. Capture questions and concerns and use them to inform the content of other communications.

Teams

- Twice weekly team conference calls will help employees maintain a working mindset, get connected with their colleagues, discuss work in progress, and keep abreast of what's going on with the company and the team. Consider shifting from regular telephone calls to multiparty video conference.
- Projects - Develop projects that get different people from the company together. These project could be to address immediate business need or future need such as (innovation, robotic solutions, dashboards, market approach, additional services, process improvement etc). This challenges the mind and build purpose.

14. Mentees and Direct Reports

Establish a regular schedule of short calls with mentees and direct reports to ensure that they are connected and continuing to develop to their maximum in a work from home environment. (Especially to Critical Role holders / SME)

15. Tips on working from home

• Encourage employees to share working from home experience and tips – what do they find challenging, how to stay focused and productive and so on. Dress Code for calls

• Share advice on setting up a home office – even if employees don't have a room in their home designated as an office. Advice would include how to make sure you have an ergonomic workspace and the tools you need to stay productive. And arrange competitions where employees share photos of their workspace – and how they're being productive and efficient at home.

16. Avoid micromanaging

For companies that are used to a traditional office environment, it can be tempting for leaders to check in constantly to make sure employees are on task while they're working from home. However, micromanaging your team will only make them feel like you don't trust them, keep communication channels open.

17. Get employee feedback on how they're feeling

Emotions are high right now and your team is going to take some time to adjust to this change. Setup up an employee engagement survey (two question feedbacketc) to understand the general mood within your remote workforce.

18. Recognise good/great work (reward & recognition)

Make it a point to recognize remote workers for the many contributions they're making to your organization. But don't stop there. Make recognition highly visible so other members of the organization are aware of the valuable contributions remote workers are making on a daily basis.

19. Help them know how they contribute

This is also a good time to explain to employees the mission and vision statements, Values, company performance genesis, etc. help employees understand how their role contributes to the company's success, resulting in a more engaged employee.

20. Time management /Training

Providing tools, tips, and training that can help remote workers better manage their time is a great motivator. Provide training especially training required as per succession planning, Performance Improvement, Career Development Plans.