

### **Tips for communicating with employees at times of crisis specifically COVID-19**

1. People will look to you for trusted information and guidance. They will want information regularly (with timings clearly communicated) – without this they will fill in the blanks and that will lead to speculation and rumours. Use trusted sources to make your decisions, such as NHS, WHO and Public Health England.
2. It's ok to not know the answer to everything but you do need a plan – tell people what you are doing, who is involved and where they can ask questions. You can set up a dedicated email address or a group on one of your internal social networks if you feel it is needed.
3. Make sure everyone knows how, where and when future updates will be provided. It is important that there is a single source of news and updates for the organisation and that everyone knows what this is. Have a clear channel for the communication so that people know where to get correct, accurate and up to date details. Make sure the message is consistent and if you're making changes to the guidance, make it clear where those changes are.
4. Video messages are a great way to communicate messages from your CEO. At times of uncertainty employees like to see updates directly from leaders, it can help bring reassurance and clarity on the organisations approach.
5. This isn't the time to introduce new communication tools or platforms – stick to what people already know and use. Remember traditional channels can be effective such as posters and leaflets, especially in a large operational workforce with hard to reach workers.
6. Do you have a Business Continuity Plan? If you do, this is where to start. If not, then think about creating a core group. You need to have IT, Operations, HR and Comms together. They should be meeting daily each morning, even if it's only for half an hour – this is a fast-paced issue and the need to keep on top of it is key - weekly meetings won't cut it.
7. What is your work from home policy? Can people access the tools they need to do their jobs and do you have the technology for conference calls/video call?
8. You need to work closely with HR to discuss the policies or plans you have in place for those people who want to stay at home (self-isolate) – whether they need to or not, what is the answer when they ask to do it and do they work in a customer facing role? There is no right or wrong answer here, but you'll set precedent with the first decision so this needs to be a decision that can scale.