



The Coronavirus Conversations:

Communicating with Your Employees About Risk

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Communicating Risk

Risk Communications: When harm is possible or probable

Crisis Communications: When risk has materialized

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Be First. Be Right. Be Credible

— Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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The Goal:

Trust through Authentic Engagement

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The Evolution of Risk Communication:

- Sharing Information
- Assessing scientific and medical data
- Identifying both reliable conclusions and information gaps
- Addressing legitimate concerns and fears
- Creating ongoing engagement

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Your employees are both the most influential audience and the most credible spokespeople.

Your goals:

- Create knowledgeable ambassadors
- Keep them well informed, keep their trust
- Identify ascendant issues early
- Help employees feel ownership of solution

Fear cannot be eliminated. Trust, engagement are key.

Open communication builds confidence and resilience

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I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

— *Maya Angelou*

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63% Employees want information daily.
(Edelman Research)

More employees believe their employers than
the government, health companies or the media

Communicating Risk

- Who is the most trusted and credible messenger in your organization?
- Be present and accessible in the workplace, start the conversation
- Consistent message among leaders of your organization
- Solicit questions, concerns and ideas

A new reality



After Coronavirus, Office Workers Might Face Unexpected Health Threats

Stagnant plumbing systems in emptied commercial buildings could put returning employees at risk of Legionnaires' and other illnesses.

McDonald's workers plan strike over coronavirus protections

Workers in 20 cities are planning a job action



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Best Practices:

- Stick to the facts, don't speculate
- Be confident but do not over-reassure
- Avoid absolutes
- Acknowledge gaps and uncertainties
- Listen and engage
- Communicate frequently

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Best Practices:

- No politics, no personal opinions
- Do not dismiss fears or ridicule emotion
- Frame information in positive, actionable ways
- Focus on the shared goal of enhanced safety, rather than how new protocols may limit previous activities
- Be visible
- Model your message: Wear a mask
- Stick to what you know and can control

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If an Employee Tests Positive

- Inform fellow employees, customers, vendors, visitors
- Protect confidentiality
- Self-isolation for those in contact
- Cleaning protocols
- Protecting cleaners

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What customers need and want to know

Will products or services will be affected?

What relief can you provide?

What are you doing to protect employees?

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Is my job secure?

What is the future of our organization?

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Help your employees do the good they want to do

Use the opportunity to build a stronger, more resilient work community.

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Your Questions?