



Communicating with Employees During a Crisis

HR professionals and management teams know that communicating quickly, often, and well with employees is often the most important task they have during a crisis. Employees will be one of the biggest determinants in how fast and how well an organization recovers from an emergency situation, and they'll be the first contact with your customers as recovery occurs.

Your employees will be much more likely to show up in a positive, willing way to work if you handle the communication in a swift and transparent way.

Tips for Communicating with Employees During a Crisis

1. **Be proactive.** Have some templates ready for employee communication, even if it's simply "We realize this is a major source of concern for many of you; we're gathering resources and will be back in touch as soon as we have more information."
2. **Get a team together now.** Which employees will make up the crisis management team? These people will plan together and know what to do if a disaster or emergency strikes.
3. **Reach out to them; don't wait for them to ask you.** Implement a notification system (text or email) or build a company intranet page to proactively provide employees with expert information and guidance.
4. **Don't put up roadblocks.** Social media is ubiquitous; instead of discouraging online posts, help them shape their messages by giving them correct information in a timely manner. Set a good example by providing expert, vetted fact sheets and posters on your company's social media.
5. **Act fast—but only say what you know to be true.** If you don't know all the details yet, say so. Speed is often of the essence but should never come at the price of accuracy.
6. **Don't go silent.** If your organization is not yet ready to respond to an emergency, HR should at least let staffers know that the organization is gathering information and will follow up as soon as it can.
7. **Test—then test again.** At least once a year, test the information flow within and from the crisis communications team, and find out from workers what works and what doesn't.
8. **Don't stop talking once the crisis ends.** Example: "Based on how the crisis affected you and your department and what you're hearing from your community, how can we make communications better next time?"

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