

CORONAVIRUS

Emerging positively

Report



EMERGING POSITIVELY

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Optimising future opportunities

The pandemic has affected every business differently. From the challenges of unexpectedly high demand for goods or services, developing new products, services and delivery mechanisms in response to the new conditions or at the other end of the spectrum disastrous trading conditions and shrinking business.

Wherever your business lies on that continuum internal communication can dramatically improve or exacerbate the situation. Just as people are just beginning to 'normalise' their lives and come out from under the fearfulness, uncertainty and anxiety they felt now is the right time for 'right communication'.

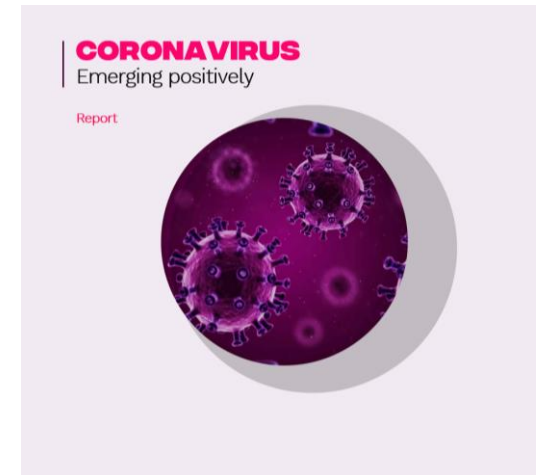
What do we mean by that? Right message, right time, right vehicle, right intent and right language: The 5 'Rights' of internal communication.

In order to emerge positively from the pandemic's restrictions, businesses that up the quality of their internal communications will be the winners in the race to optimise the opportunities that present.

As social interaction has reduced so the desire for communication has become more important to people, a sense of connectedness.

We identify ways to ensure that your business delivers 'right communication' post Covid:

- Tips and strategies to develop great communication that energises and motivates people
- Actions to take to ensure that a climate of positivity emerges as your business emerges



Confidence brings energy and engagement – We can do that.

What every business wants

The Covid emergency has brought mixed results for most businesses.

- Exceptional trading may have brought growth in employee numbers along with the cultural and quality challenges that brings. Uplift in demand and good trading results may have brought employee exhaustion too and flagging enthusiasm.
- Poor trading may have heightened anxiety and insecurity but also brought a sense of ‘all in it together’ and growing resilience. Each business will be positioned in a unique place as we emerge. Whatever the situation you find your business in there is a common denominator determining how well your business performs. Communication.

Of course every business emerging from the emergency wants to build energy and urgency amongst their teams. Ground needs to be made up, processes improved, holes plugged and new approaches deployed. This requires an **engaged** and **motivated** workforce within an overall climate of improvement. There may be a need for additional effort along with flexibility to meet new conditions and customer requirements or expectations. And while most employees want to do a great job some may succumb to negativity when faced with further anxiety and stress.

Exhortations to additional effort, to working ‘above and beyond’ will fall on deaf ears if we do not make real efforts to engage individuals and their psychology. So what needs to happen? Because these responses to the emergency are often unconscious and emotional it is at an emotional level that a communication strategy needs to operate. In practice that means building certainty.

Every communication is scrutinised closely in times of uncertainty to a level that is not the case during less challenging times. People try to ‘read between the lines and fathom true meaning and identify the ‘real’ facts. This is usually a symptom of poorly crafted communication. People do not want *more* communication, even though they may say they do. What they want is real, open, trustworthy and believable information that they can rely on.

Exhortations to additional effort, to working ‘above and beyond’... fall on deaf ears

Building trust, building confidence

Actions clearly speak louder than words of course but in the absence of contact during the pandemic what remains is communication. People want to trust information so that they know what they are dealing with. Not shying away from challenging messages but trusting them to process them and respond positively builds trust and confidence. When people themselves feel trusted they are more inclined to trust in return.

Being in receipt of information and facts that can be trusted will also lead to good decision making, a sense of urgency, creativity and resilience in the workplace. In order for communication to be trusted there needs to be honesty *and* expertise.

Cautionary note: Good intent does not always lead to good communication. When we survey managers, senior managers and their teams (separately!) the results are surprising:

- Only **15%** of senior managers / senior teams are considered to communicate well with their business
- Over **85%** believe they are good communicators
- Only **23%** of senior managers / senior teams are considered to be good at keeping the business informed

‘Good intent does not always lead to good communication...’

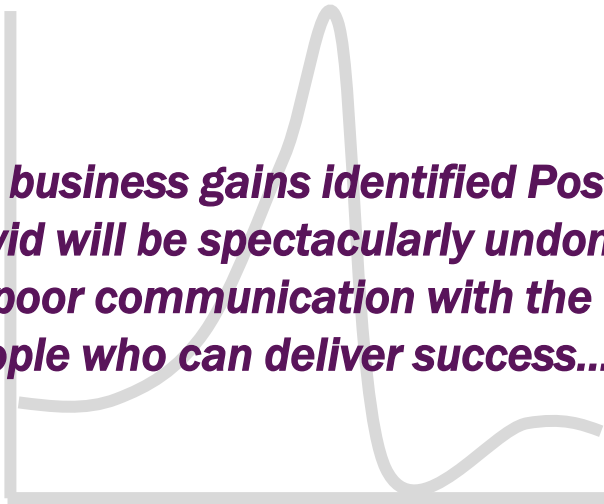
- Over **90%** believe their business is well informed
- **98%** of senior team members believe they are good written communicators.
- We experience only around **25%** of senior team members being good written communicators (and we are probably being generous!).

The challenge Post-Covid

Beyond communication...

Disruption creates space for innovation and step changes. Are you focussing your best minds on the Post-Covid landscape?

Big business gains identified Post-Covid will be spectacularly undone by poor communication with the people who can deliver success...



We believe that the pressure to survive that was the key characteristic of the early days of the pandemic needs to be turned into tangible benefits in the medium term. Here are some examples.

1. The near-term challenge, then, is to move from reacting to the crisis to building and integrating what has been done well so far
2. Reconfiguring that occurred in your business now needs to become an opportunity to transform it.
3. Managing risk has changed during the pandemic. “just in time.” becomes “just in case,” What vulnerabilities has the COVID-19 pandemic revealed your supply chain?
4. Returning to work is not just a matter of demanding it happen. The role of the office itself, which is the traditional center for creating culture and a sense of belonging needs to be considered, carefully. Returning to the office shouldn’t be a matter of simply opening the doors. Businesses need to understand how the office contributes and to what degree. Could it be a creative space not a geographic location?

Not only is there a great deal to consider Post-Covid but also a great deal to communicate. As these and many other changes emerge and decisions are taken how will the people that are most effected be communicated with?

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At **DOWDING** we understand that communication means something slightly different in every new situation. We don't provide one size fits all solutions; we provide solutions tailored to your business and commercial need. We ensure that the communications we create with our clients (not just *for* you) are fresh and effective and reflect the unique DNA of your business.

We offer a flexible service to our clients. For clients in the early stages of growth we bring board level expertise without the costs of a communications director. For larger businesses we bring specialist expertise making it unnecessary to cover the cost of in-house resources on a full-time basis.

Ask us

Why not get in touch and find out how we can provide solutions and support to support in addressing your communication challenges.

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