

# Coronavirus Advice for Business – 5 November 2020

## MARKETING – THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Your customers will want to know that there is someone there who cares about their business, they will also want to know whether you are still 'open for business'. However, email traffic is currently full of companies communicating their COVID-19 policies, this will soon lose impact and will be ignored/deleted.

Ensure you have emailed or spoken to all of your customers, if this is not possible – contact your key customers first and gradually work through the list. Where possible, provide reassurances about your resilience and ways in which you can help them or avenues in which you can collaborate to overcome economic difficulties.

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

It is vital to know the facts and communicate proactively with all employees-using clear, compassionate, and understandable messages. This not only demonstrates leadership, but also provides reassurance and instils a sense of trust among employees.

An internal communication plan should be established (if you haven't one in place already), or updated, as a means of reaching employees through combinations of emails, intranet postings, flyers/ posters, manager talking points, FAQs or a website hub. The plan should identify simple, key messages, along with a reliable process for providing continual updates and collecting feedback from employees.

**State the facts:** Connect employees to timely, accurate information from the Government. Provide clear instructions about what to do if employees suspect they have been exposed to Coronavirus (COVID-19).

**Demystify the fear and outline the steps you are taking on behalf of employees:** Communicate the facts from authoritative resources on how Coronavirus is spread and how to avoid infection. Clearly articulate and communicate preventive actions you are taking to avert or contain transmission of Coronavirus at work (focus on technology and techniques for employee safety, hygiene, disposal).

**Promote safety steps that employees can take at work if they are still in working premises:** Use posters, memos, emails, intranet postings, manager talking points, FAQs, etc. to promote preventative actions employees can take (hygiene and avoidance) – see Government recommendations. (Describe the impact this would have to the business, the potential impact of an outbreak on your operations, services, travel, supply chain, business, revenues, etc., so employees can plan accordingly).

**Summarise company policies/procedures:** Attendance, paid time off, payroll, travel, and group meetings, work-from-home policies where possible (to potentially limit any spread of the virus among employees/ reduce human-to-human contact).

**Promote safe travel policies:** Consider your stance on employee travel and restrictions. Promote alternatives to travel, such as web conferencing and phone meetings. If employees must travel, offer clear guidance on safety protocols, referring to guidance from the Government.

The frequency of the communications will depend on the business need, but in general the information should be cascaded whenever there is a change of direction or policy that impacts the business and employees. In addition, if there has been no material change to the situation for several days, it is good practice to send communications that reiterate the current situation within the business.

**Working from Home measures:** for workers who are working from home and not furloughed, keep in contact with them using the various methods of communication technology which are available, agree what working hours they will keep (many are also managing childcare and home schooling), support their mental health and physical health, and ensure access to your technology considers cyber security.