

What Employees Want to Know About Coronavirus

With the coronavirus – or COVID-19 – dominating the news cycle, it's not surprising that 99% of full-time employed adults say they've heard about it – and 79% say they've heard a lot. But how much are they hearing from their employer? And what do they want to hear more about?

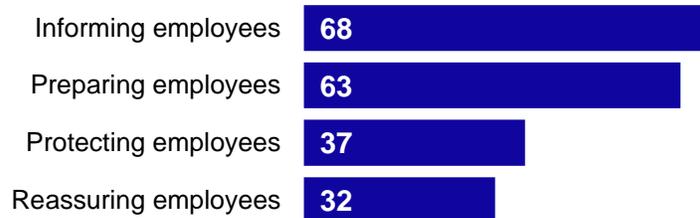
New GSG Employee Communications research provides insights on how organizations should be communicating with employees during this critical time. 88% of employees already say they've heard at least a little from their employer (38% say they've heard a lot) – and there's appetite for even more information.

As communicators, here's what you can do:

1. Share your contingency plans.

Employees want to know how you plan to respond as the situation develops. Employees want to be **informed** and **prepared** about what might happen.

In communicating to employees about the coronavirus, what do you think are the two most important things employers should be doing?



Specifically, employees want to know:

- How you plan to respond if someone contracts the coronavirus (75% extremely/very interested in employer communicating)
- If someone at your organization contracts the coronavirus (74%)
- What steps employees should take if they believe they've been in contact with someone who has the coronavirus (73%)
- When not to come to work if they aren't feeling well and might have the coronavirus (72%)

2. Address the economic implications.

Employees are concerned about how the coronavirus will affect the US economy. 67% of full-time employees nationwide are extremely or very concerned about the virus' impact on the economy – putting the economy above “someone you know becoming infected with coronavirus” (50%). Employees are also highly concerned about how the virus will impact their personal wages or job earnings (53%) and the financial stability of their employer (48%).

In addition to sharing steps that are being taken to prepare staff and the workplace for the coronavirus, leadership should be as transparent and proactive as possible in communicating how the virus may affect jobs, earnings, and the organization’s financial outlook over the next several months – or longer.

3. Reiterate the options available to employees – and see if you can offer additional options.

It’s not just about working from home – employees are interested in a variety of solutions and extra measures that employers can take. As many organizations move to remote work for their employees (just 48% of employees surveyed said they can work remotely), know that there are other options that employees think would be helpful.

Organizations should reiterate the things they’re already doing – like deep cleaning workspaces or re-sending information from the CDC – and look to explore additional options to bridge the following gaps between what employees would find helpful and what employers have done:



4. Put health organizations and company leadership front and center.

Large, well-known health organizations like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC – 71% say they are one of their two most trusted sources on the virus) and the World Health Organization (WHO – 55%) are far and away the most trusted sources for accurate and useful information about the coronavirus. Make sure their guidance is baked into your materials and be sure to name-check them in your communications.

Following medical or health professionals, employees are most interested in hearing from organization leadership (65% extremely/very interested in hearing from), defined as the CEO, President, or head of the organization.

5. Don't worry about over-communicating.

Most employees are hearing a fair amount about the coronavirus from their employers – and they like it that way. 88% of full-time employees have heard something from their employers about the coronavirus, including 38% who have heard “a lot” from their employers. Just 27% of employees say they've received more information than they'd like about the coronavirus from their employer, the remaining 73% are happy with the level of information they've received so far or would like to hear even more.

Don't worry about sharing too much information or sharing information too often. The coronavirus is dominating the news and so much changes every day that employees are very open to more frequent news from their employer.

Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 1,000 adults nationwide who are employed full-time between March 10 and 12, 2020. GSG excluded those who are employed in the public sector (government, public school system, etc.) or partners/members of company leadership.

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