

# LEADING YOUR TEAM DURING COVID-19

For many of us, work as we know it changed shape overnight. In response to COVID-19, leaders are now faced with the new challenge of how to best engage their teams remotely in these rapidly changing and uncertain times. Here are some actions leaders can take to be most effective.

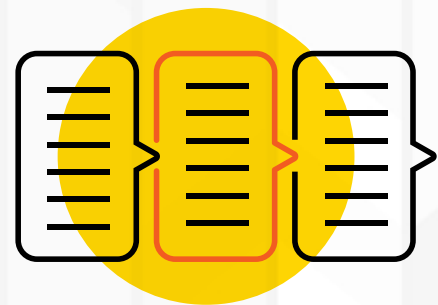


## MANAGE THE CHAOS.

It's likely that your organization is scrambling to respond, and new directives are coming on a daily, if not hourly, basis. This state of chaos and uncertainty is unavoidable, but as leaders, we can help our teams by focusing on what's actionable. Ask, "What can we do right now that will make the biggest difference?" Approach it from a team and individual (or role) perspective. As your organization's response changes, keep asking this question. Knowing what to focus on and prioritize ensures you are managing the chaos and not adding to it.

## TRANSLATE THE MESSAGE.

In an effort to communicate in real time, your team is likely getting bombarded with information. This can be incredibly overwhelming and often confusing. Embrace your role as translator of all of this information for your team. This might mean you need to seek clarity for yourself first. Pausing to do that and think through what it means for your team is key.



### REMOTE TIP

*Schedule a short daily connect to share information, confirm, or realign on priorities. Make sure to choose a time that works best for your team members, recognizing that many are juggling children at home and care of others. When a meeting isn't possible, send an update via email or chat, encouraging questions.*

## REMEMBER, THIS IS PERSONAL.

Regular connects with your team as a whole will help you maintain a sense of community, collective spirit, and team engagement, but it's even more important to check in with your people individually. Each of us is managing a whole host of personal challenges, and with that comes a range of shifting emotions. As leaders, we need to honor all that our team members are facing and respond with care, empathy, and grace. Ask, "How are you and your family doing right now?" Calibrate your response to their needs and be sure you are actively listening to what they have to say. Remember that you don't have to offer solutions or be a cheerleader; simply listening and letting them know they are heard is your objective. From a work perspective, remember that your role as a leader during this time is to help them stay engaged and be successful. Offer support and be ready to advocate for their needs. You're their voice in the business.



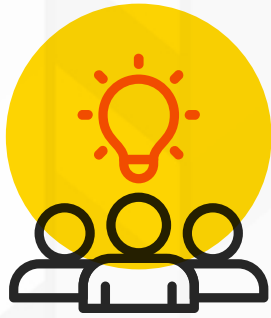
### REMOTE TIP

*For one-on-one check-ins, whenever possible, make it a video conference. This will allow you to better interpret tone, see body language, and dig deeper where needed. In addition, seeing each other will help you to actively listen and tune in to the conversation. If a video conference isn't possible, it's even more important to listen carefully and check for understanding and clarity on what you hear in their voice.*



## BE READY TO GO BEYOND ROLES.

Now is the time to access your people beyond their job descriptions. Get a handle on the work that needs to be done and be ready to pivot. You're familiar with your team's strengths in normal times, but these are not normal times. Check in with everyone to uncover any past experience or capability that might be useful to the work at hand on your team or across the business. You may also need to approach your role differently from how you do today. You may need to be even more accessible to help troubleshoot remotely, or you may need to empower your people to make decisions that you would normally collaborate on or make yourself. An agile mindset will serve everyone well.



## DO MORE OF WHAT YOU KNOW.

It's easy to become overwhelmed or caught up in the ambiguity of these times. What's important to know, however, is you already have what it takes. It's not about new leadership skills, it's about more focus on the skills that matter: communicate, coach, listen, model behaviors, put your people first, and help them see the big picture.



### REMOTE TIP

*Look for ways to make yourself as accessible as possible during this time. Much of our impact as leaders comes from the coaching opportunities we get during informal, hallway-type conversations – and that can be challenging in a remote environment. To get around it, encourage your team to text you when they need you throughout the day or set aside “office hours” so that your team knows they still have that informal access to you even while we are practicing social distancing. If you don't get any takers during your office hours, repurpose that time for proactive outreach, gratitude and recognition.*

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