

Strategies for Managing and Motivating Employees During a Pandemic

Chris Zimmer, Director of Human Resources for [CFJ Manufacturing](#), gave some fantastic advice on managing employees during our recent [Virtual Coffee Talk](#). See below as she shares her insights for communicating, motivating, and encouraging her team members during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

On Communicating with Employees -

Being a people person, I knew that communication to our employees would need to be a top priority, especially as many teams are working remotely. Everyone is experiencing some level of anxiety during this time; one of my efforts to help relieve this amongst our staff was to start new series of daily themed emails.

Monday – I start the week focused on tips about staying safe and preventing the spread of the disease. I will also include reminders of our company protocols and any employee procedural changes.

Tuesday – These emails are a little lighter, and focus on a fun or organizational topic. A few examples include:

- Songs to sing when you wash your hands
- TV and Movies to watch during this time
- Games to play with your kids, etc
- How to Organize Your Home Workspace
- Tips for Working from Home

Wednesday – Back to more serious things on Wednesday. These emails consist of news items about the pandemic, legislation and what the community needs during this time.

Thursday – Is Health/Safety/Family day. I look for resources and articles to send on topics such as eating healthy during a pandemic, or keeping your kids active during this time.

Friday – Is Friday Funday! Recently we shared “co-worker” stories; everyone sent in pictures of their pets or kids (“co-workers”) and wrote something funny about them. Other ideas have been a company “quarantine play list” (catchy songs that fit the quarantine theme), an online Scavenger Hunt, pictures of everyone’s favorite coffee or tea mug, and sharing our best movie quotes.

On Staying Informed -

To keep up with what is happening with the actual COVID-19 virus, I attend a weekly CDC webinar, and visit [Track the Curve](#) first thing every morning. Our executive committee meets daily and I give them an update on the numbers, and if the curve is flattening.

Keeping up with legislation has also become very important during this time, so I block off two hours a day to read up on legislation or attend relevant webinars and conference calls. The best sources for legislation information are places like your payroll company, [SHRM website](#) and local and state government entities.

On Keeping Organized -

For my position, I keep a list of HR items that need to be handled for our organization, and to be addressed at our daily executive meetings. Examples of these include the below:

- **Developing** a COVID-19 protocol. This contains all the procedures that employees who are working in the office follow, and is updated as guideline recommendations change.
- **Writing new company policies.** These have included such as a telecommuting, infectious disease control, social disease policy, and safety procedures like OSHA face mask guidelines.
- **Creating a process for Layoff/Furlough/Share-Work Programs.** Whether this has been necessary for you or not, it's important to have a plan just in case.
- **Updating payroll procedures** to comply with items in the CARES Act.

We hope these strategies give you some inspiration for managing your employees over the upcoming weeks. We are also grateful to CFJ Manufacturing for being a 25th Anniversary Signature Sponsor for the Women's Business Council – Southwest! Follow them on Twitter ([@CFJMFG](#)), Facebook ([@CFJManufacturing](#)), or visit www.cfjmanufacturinglp.com for help with your branding, promotional product, and merchandising needs.