COMMUNICATING IN CRISIS
Both Inside and Out

May 7, 2020
INTERNAL
What to say

• Start with CARE
• How are you protecting them?
• Thank them for their work
• Set expectations
• Ask for their flexibility
• Break down policy & operational changes
INTERNAL
What tools to use

- Regular updates from the GM
- Video – needs written reinforcement
- Human Resources support
- Frequently asked questions
INTERNAL
How to deliver it

OVERCOMMUNICATE
• Email
• Intranet
• Supervisor trickle down calls
• Virtual meetings
• Paystubs/posters
• Employee association/union
• Be open!
Why it matters

- Safety
- Morale
- Performance
- Compliance
- Optics
- Legal
• Start with CARE

• Reassure: water is safe, reliable

• How are you protecting community, employees

• Use images from lab, personnel masked in uniform

• Share your policies – even if mandates
Evolving Messages

We’re all in the same boat.

Stay healthy and well.

We’re working to protect our team.

Here’s our team safe & hard at work.

Picture your team here
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

• What have you done?
• What are you considering?
• Increased scrutiny of public employees/agencies during recession
• Messaging water bills due after deferrals
Who to reach

- Cities, counties, legislators
- Developers, business community
- Customers - segments
- Media
- Anyone who will experience outage during the pandemic
- Anyone affected by limited services
- Anyone you can help!
Your website, eblasts
Postings at your building
On bills (links are key)
City/partner websites, eblasts, public access
Social media
Video/virtual meeting
• Trust “reservoir”
• Protect employees
• Limit strain on staff
• Elections

EXTERNAL
Why it matters
Don’t go silent

• Continue the existing communications
  o Employee/customer newsletters
  o Staff/business meetings
  o Tour/workshops

• Let people know when things go back to “normal”. Prepare for possible backlash.
Context matters

• Try to limit photos/videos of gatherings or people close together at work. You may get complaints.

• Consider all of your pre-planned outreach, ad, social postings. They may seem tone deaf.

• Think about options for any large gatherings planned in the next 3-6 months.
You’re doing a good job.
I’m here if you need help.
QUESTIONS?

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Navigating the New Normal

Upcoming Sessions

Ensuring Safety of Workers – May 14, 2020
2:00 EST/ 1:00 CST / 12:00 MST 11:00 a.m. (PST)

Dealing with Emerging Financial Impacts – May 21, 2020
2:00 EST/ 1:00 CST / 12:00 MST 11:00 a.m. (PST)