

Leading in Crisis: Connect Your Team With Employee Engagement

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We are in a time of change, and if you are a leader, now is the perfect time to think about employee engagement.

How are you at employee engagement? Do you thrive on getting your employees active and involved in your organization? Or do you have a more removed, hands-off approach to your employees?

Employee engagement is crucial, especially now.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a leadership crucible moment. This is a moment of extreme challenge and adaptation—our leadership abilities are being tested daily and the way we respond to this crisis will separate the winners from the losers. What side of this line do you want to fall on? How do you ensure your organization emerges stronger than ever?

Use your brand to increase employee engagement and motivate your team to new levels of success.

Your brand isn't what you think.

It isn't your name, logo, or image—it's not even what you promise your clients and customers.

It's what you deliver.

A good way to think of your brand is that it is **what you do and how you do it**. And employee engagement is included in this.

When you think of (and use) your brand in this way, it can serve as a powerful connector for your employees.

Here are three strategies for using your brand to inspire and engage your employees.

Your brand should embody and express your company's overarching purpose. So use it to **connect employees to that mission** and help them derive meaning from their work.

- Be open with your employees about why your organization exists. Share why you started your business, or the vision you're working toward, or even what would be missing if your business no longer existed. Employee engagement can be sparked by including them in your personal mission.
- Explain why your organization and its purpose are important particularly at this time. People need a compelling reason to get out of bed and put in their best effort, even in these challenging times.
- Ensure your employees understand how their individual work contributes to your overarching purpose. As a leader, you should always be doing this. But it's critical now more than ever if you've had to lay off or furlough employees—morale may be low. Preserve employee engagement by connecting the dots between your people and your purpose in a tangible way. This will ensure that they know that they matter.

Use your brand to connect your employees to customers.

Your brand is about the value and the customer experience you deliver to customers, so use it to keep your customers at the forefront of your employees' minds.

- Share stories of how your organization continues to serve customers and create value for them in new and different ways during the crisis.
- Share feedback from customers about the exceptional experiences that they've received from your employees or what they say they love about your brand.

- Consider spotlighting some of your core customers. By helping employees get to know who your most valuable customers are, you create a human connection between them. This connection is so important right now when people are physically isolated from each other. The best part is, it will continue when the pandemic is over and we all (hopefully) return to our normal lives. And it will be based on the connections you forge right now.

Online presence is more important than ever, now. Read [this post](#) about how to make the most of social media marketing.

Carry this connection through to include your employees. Your brand can **connect employees to each other** when you enable them to share stories and encourage each other. This will foster employee engagement as your team works together to interpret and reinforce your brand.

- Remind employees of great moments when they worked together to overcome challenges. And share how employees are currently working together to continue to build your brand.
- Encourage human connection among your employees by collecting and sharing their favorite stories about your brand or what interests or excites them about it.
- These are extraordinary times. Recognize employees who demonstrate your core values in extraordinary ways. Not only that; empower your team to recognize each other.

Now is the time to cultivate employee engagement.

Use your brand to connect employees to **why** they're doing what they do, who they're doing it **for**, and who they're doing it **with**.

With an engaged and motivated workforce, you can lead your organization through these tough times with confidence and increased success.

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Denise Lee Yohn is the go-to expert on brand leadership for national media outlets, an in-demand keynote speaker and consultant, and an influential writer. She is the author of the bestselling book *What Great Brands Do: The Seven Brand-Building Principles that Separate the Best from the Rest* and *FUSION: How Integrating Brand and Culture Powers the World's Greatest Companies*. **Leading Through Challenge & Change, Cultivating Culture & Building Brand In Crisis**, and **Lead Your Field: Establish Competitive Advantage** are just a few of Denise's timely topics.