COVID-19: Manager Toolkit

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Guide for
Managers

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Tool #1: Conversation Guide for Managers

We are facing unprecedented times in our personal and professional lives. Your role as a manager has never been more important in helping your employees feel connected, supported, and focused. The below guide is designed to help you have conversations with your team members on a very human level. In addition to the conversation prompts below, LinkedIn Learning has free online courses dedicated to employees and managers on how to prioritize your workload and manage your teams remotely.

Pre-Conversation

Before you connect with one of your team members, check in with yourself. Are you okay? Are you in the right physical and mental condition to have a conversation right now? Are you able to be present? If not, it might be best to reschedule. We are all facing this together and your team will understand if you need to shift the time. If you are ready to have the conversation, make sure you are clear on the most pressing priorities for your team. Aside from support, the most critical need for most employees is understanding where they should prioritize the time that they are able to commit to work.

Tips for a Successful Conversation

- Listen more than you speak to create space for your employees to share their individual experience
- Show empathy and share your own challenges and experience, when appropriate. Now might not be the best time to talk about work, so don't force it. If they are having a difficult time, consider offering taking some time off or reducing the workload. If their challenges are beyond your ability to help as their manager, connect them to HR and/or employee assistance resources.
- If meeting virtually, try to be on camera and avoid distractions
- Stay on top of communication from leadership to stay aligned with messaging and share relevant resources
- It is OK to say "I don't know"!
- Make sure you and your employee leave the conversation with a clear idea of where they should prioritize their time, any adjustments to expectations, and a plan to check in on progress

Questions to Ask in Your Next 1:1 Conversation

1. How are you doing? How are your family members and loved ones?

2. How have you been adjusting to the changes in how we work due to Covid-19?
   What are your biggest challenges/concerns? What's working?

3. What are the most impactful things for you to spend your time on right now?
   Are any of those priorities at risk? What can be pushed back, transferred to another teammate, or removed?

4. What support or resources do you need to help you be successful during this time?
   How else can I support you?

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Tool #2: Survey Results Conversation Guide

This is probably the first time you are receiving employee feedback from a pulse surrounding a pandemic. You might be concerned about what to do with this data. Your company is taking action on this feedback at the organizational level, and although we know you can't resolve everything that will come up, we think there are aspects of the data that will help you be a better leader for your team. Below are some questions to help you think about the pulse result data and how to discuss with your team members.

4 Questions to Consider as You Review Data

1. What are the most common needs for my team?
    Note that if COVID-19 related feedback comes up as part of a larger Engagement pulse — vs. a standalone crisis pulse — you may also see broader results. Look at all of the feedback together and think about both the opportunities in the dashboard, but also, what will feel most relevant to your team right now.

2. What are areas that are within my or the team's control? What is out of our control, but I should acknowledge?

3. Does my organization have an employee resource center for COVID-19? If so, is there anything there I can review to help me with the upcoming conversation with my team?

4. What resources or additional information or resources do I need from my organization to better support my team?

Discussion Prompts for Your Team

As with any pulse, we suggest you follow an ACT Conversation when discussing results with your team.

1. **Opening:** Thank you all for taking the time to respond to the survey. I know these are unusual because of the rapidly changing times. It's more important than ever that we regularly discuss how you are doing.

2. **Acknowledge:** Here are a few things I learned when I viewed your feedback. Is that accurate? Is there anything else you would add or change?

3. **Collaborate:** Based upon this discussion, what one thing should we focus on over the next few weeks? What should we NOT focus on over the next few weeks?

4. **Take One Step Forward:** What's one thing we can each do to support our top focus area?

Throughout the coming weeks, even if it's small, share what's been done or has changed as a result of your team's feedback during this time. This could be as simple as instituting a daily coffee standup to help the team feel more connected. When action has been taken and tied back to the team's feedback, they will feel their voice has been heard and be more willing to give open and honest feedback in the future.

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Social distancing does not mean being disconnected from your team. It is more important than ever to proactively check in as a team and with each individual. In fact, this could be a time to get to know your colleagues in a new, more personal way. Find a platform to communicate with your team remotely (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Slack) and consider establishing a task force responsible for crowdsourcing ideas to share across the team. Below are some suggestions to virtually connect with your team:

1. Virtual happy hour / coffee chats

2. Implement a collaboration app - Microsoft Teams is available for free

3. Virtual book or TV watching club

4. Take virtual learning courses and debrief on lessons learned (LinkedIn has unlocked these 16 free ones related to the new way of work)

5. Family / roommate / pet introductions

6. Have fun with Zoom backgrounds

7. Spirit Week: Create a theme for each day of the week for employees to participate in and share photos via your communication platform (i.e., "Walking Wednesday" - post photos of meetings you've taken while walking outside)

8. Don't forget milestone moments - birthdays, work anniversaries for that week

9. Parenting during a Pandemic group -- can be done as a Microsoft Teams Channel

10. For managers: office hours / Microsoft Teams Channel to share what is working well for your team or what can improve

Compare notes and ideas with peers

For more ideas about employee surveys, feedback, and engagement in challenging times, you can check in with peers in the LinkedIn Group, People Success Forum. Join today.

Want to learn more about Glint and how we can partner with you? Get in touch.