

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR HOTEL TEAMS DURING COVID-19

Effective crisis communications in the workplace is essential. The way hospitality leaders communicate and engage with their employees today, can help them weather the storm and emerge strong when it comes time to re-open and ramp-up.

Property communication has traditionally relied on an in-person cascading approach and bulletin boards. In times of crisis, this becomes blatantly ineffective as information changes quickly and most employees are no longer working on-site. Digital communication platforms like Beekeeper have proven effective in helping hotels stay connected with their employees in situations like these.

As we look at the COVID-19 crisis, it is important for hotel operators to understand the three phases of employee crisis communications, what the business needs are, and how a communication tool like Beekeeper can support.

With a platform like Beekeeper, hoteliers can:

- Reach all employees instantly and deliver a consistent message in their preferred language.
- Connect with workers who don't have a valid phone number or email on file
- Target and segment information based on different levels of the organization
- Understand who has received the information and who still requires a targeted follow-up message
- Enable quick trainings, quizzes, and tips/reminders
- Give employees a voice and create a sense of community in the workplace





Phase 1 - Crisis Onset

Circumstances change rapidly, businesses need to react quickly.

Business Needs

- **Real-time, top-down communication & updates**

Information changes quickly and communication needs to reach everyone, before it becomes obsolete.

- **Consistent messaging**

When crisis circumstances require immediate changes in policies and procedures, there is no room for error in the messaging.

- **Communication consumption in language of choice**

Today's workforce is multicultural with a mix of native languages. When it comes to employee or guest safety, it's imperative that information is thoroughly understood by all employees regardless of their preferred language.

- **Receipt of information**

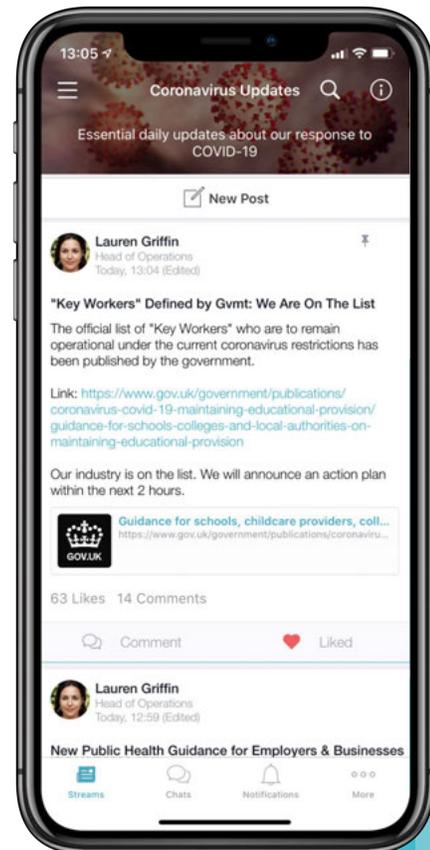
Success requires all employees to be aware of the communicated updates and changes. Management needs a feedback loop that shows who has read messages and who still requires follow-up.

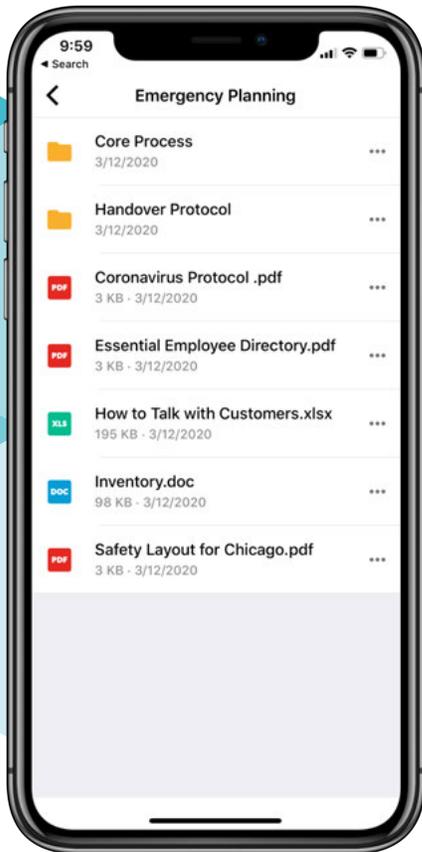
- **Quick trainings that can be delivered instantly**

A crisis requires many immediate changes to protocol. What normally can be done with hours of training, now has to be done immediately.

How Beekeeper Supports

- Messages from leadership (e.g. CEO video)
- Chatbot that answers frequently asked questions from employees
- Automated updates feed on the crisis from trusted sources
- Home for revised policies and procedures (e.g. disinfecting rooms)
- Training "how-to" videos (e.g. clean common areas, answer guests' questions)
- A forum where colleagues can support one another with uplifting messages





Phase 2 - Furloughed employees

Reduced property operations, majority of the employees are being furloughed.

Business Needs

- **Scalable & effective way to communicate remotely**

When employees are not on property, managers calling their teams, and sending letters is not scalable. And yet, employees are more hungry for information than ever before.

- **Control the communication**

The need for communication and community support is so significant that employees take the matter into their own hands to fill the void (e.g. Facebook and WhatsApp groups). These take on a life of their own and management loses control of the communication.

- **Answer questions and alleviate concerns**

On property, employees are used to talking to their managers daily and knocking on the HR door at any time. How can they get answers when everyone is sitting at home?

- **Support furloughed employees with resources**

All employees should understand what benefits they are entitled to and how to access them.

This is also an opportunity to grow and pursue trainings and certifications.

- **Keep employees motivated through difficult times**

Hotels are hurting and employees are hurting too. Everyone's personal situation is different, but what management can do is keep everyone in the loop, show they care, and give them an outlet to support one another.

How Beekeeper Supports

- Post information on how to apply for unemployment insurance
- Updates about the hotel (e.g. closures, expected opening date)
- Answer employee questions directly by managers or chatbot
- Push training content and certifications
- Communicate temporary employment opportunities
- Showcase what the hotel is doing for employees (e.g. gift packages, active health benefits)
- Keep the employee community engaged with fun discussion topics (e.g., what are you cooking this week)



Phase 3 - Re-opening and Ramping Up

Properties get ready for recovery in a world that is likely very different from before.

Business Needs

- **Focus on planning a successful recovery**

Management focus should be on how their property can bounce back faster than their competitive set (e.g. driving occupancy, exceptional guest safety and satisfaction). Communication should be an enabler for success, not a burden (e.g. not calling 100 employees to inform them of their new schedule).

- **Share best practices**

Within a hospitality group, properties in certain geographies may be ahead of others on the recovery curve. They can share best practices with the rest of the organization.

- **Update employees on the recovery plan**

Employees are anxious to get back to normal. By communicating the recovery plan proactively, management avoids countless inquiries and potential confusion and frustration if, for example, one colleague gets called back to work and others don't.

- **Understand how roles and procedures have changed**

The post-pandemic world will be different from before. Roles and procedures will change and fewer employees may need to cover more functions. Communication and training will be essential.

- **Bring back employees to an environment that may not be 100% safe**

Until a vaccine is developed, the risk of infection remains, even if the economy and hotels gradually re-open. Will employees be motivated to return to work early under these circumstances? Management communication will be essential to drive emotional readiness.



How Beekeeper Supports

- Communicate opening dates and recovery plan
- Share return to work schedules
- Highlight employees' wellness and safety
- Share best practices across properties
- Motivate teams to keep up the good (and hard) work
- Training videos and SOPs for changed procedures and roles
- Chat groups for management teams and departments to discuss their re-opening/ramp-up plans

For more information visit:

[Beekeeper.io/hospitality](https://beekeeper.io/hospitality)

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