

STAYING CONNECTED TO YOUR TEAM



In these unprecedented times Club Managers have found themselves steering their club by remote control. Some have even had the remote controller taken from them, at least until the country has managed to steer away from the dangers we currently all face.

I know from your many calls that you are missing the regular contact with your colleagues who are no longer under the same roof, or just a cup of coffee away.

You clearly want to support your team and now is undoubtedly a time when you can lead, support, challenge and inspire that team, to stick together. This is a big transition for everyone, and you will have an anxious workforce sitting worrying about their future. There are risks associated which include -

- Mental health concerns
- Financial worries
- Family dynamics tested due to prolonged confinement in close proximity
- Reflection time and consideration if their job is really 'for them' or not
- Head's turned by potential job offers in the supermarket retail world

Now is a good time for ME to remind YOU that you are not THE leader, you are THEIR leader.

I'm not entirely sure what the rules about staying in touch will be with the furlough scheme, but I would imagine you should be fully entitled to check on everyone's health and to keep them informed about latest guidance/projections on when you intend to re-open, and how the club's activities may look at that stage.

If you cast your mind back to how quickly the tee sheets were filling up in the fortnight prior to the lockdown, its encouraging to think how people will react when the restrictions are lifted again. This should create a buzz amongst the team, in particular as it becomes much more apparent to people what the true value of their membership of their club means to them. I am sure that such thoughts will help reduce anxiety and give people something to focus on in the future.

Many clubs are using remote web meeting software (MS Teams for internal 'meetings' and Zoom for external) simply to see people 'face to face' which is hugely important. There is a lot of scientific evidence to suggest that seeing people's face is important for 'connection' and mood. If everyone had remote facilities to do so you could get them together for a team 'huddle' on an optional / frequent basis. You could also deliver 'in house' training on a scheduled basis to help them stay ready and busy.

Some of the other ideas to potentially consider might include:

- Establishing a full team WhatsApp group for business/work communications
- Establishing a separate full team WhatsApp for fun and support
- You could consider running pub quizzes or fun challenges online to raise spirits
- A bit 'leftfield' but you could all download the 'Houseparty' app and have a bit fun down a 'virtual pub' or coffee shop. (Mrs Fish ran one of these last week and rang her "prosecco bell" every time she needed Mr Fish to top her up!)
- You could send something to the team as a 'care package' to show you are thinking of them. The list of options for this is endless, but you will know your own team and what might be valued by them right now.
- You could encourage a 'book group' or 'movie club' with a catch up weekly to discuss, or better still, agree with everyone to watch a series one episode at a time to re-create some virtual "water cooler" moments (No spoilers!)

You have heard me talk many times about the important of the three Cs in communication, two of which we can all generally claim to be good at, which leaves one that we need to work on. All three are going to be evident in your leadership style this Spring:

1. Courage – to talk about the difficult things when necessary,
2. Candour – to be honest and open about the facts, even if you don't have as many facts as people would like,
3. Consideration – put yourself in that person's shoes, to make sure you are giving sufficient consideration to that person's own circumstances at this time.

I will also share with you three G's of employee retention, which are –

1. Growth – what can you do to help people develop themselves (as people as well as in their careers) at this time?
2. Gratitude – can you ever tell people how much their efforts are appreciated often enough?
3. Good-will – there will be many times you need to dip into that particular bank account so now is a great time to be making deposits, regularly.

"When you're part of a team, you stand up for your teammates. Your loyalty is to them. You protect them through good and bad, because they'd do the same for you." (Yogi Berra)



I am sure that this crisis will result in an increase of humanity towards each other, now and in the future, so I encourage you to look after each other more than ever. Please find a way that fits your culture and style but don't be strangers while in isolation from each other.

I sincerely hope you and your loved ones continue to stay safe and well.

Take Care.

Kevin



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