

# 8 Tips for Supporting Your Employees During Difficult Times

The recent COVID-19 pandemic has impacted almost every aspect of life and work — and small business are no exception. How can you continue to support your employees in the midst of unprecedented change? Which areas can you focus on to help work towards the best future for both your business and your employees? By taking time to take stock — and take the lead — you can continue to cultivate that small-business feeling of family and help to foster a more productive future.

## 1 Lead with Positivity.

**Positive motivation** helps to move three key markers of employee productivity: memory, attention, and executive function.<sup>1</sup> Even in hard times, brainstorm how you can make the most of the situation and continue to lead with encouragement.



## 2 Support Mental Wellness.

**80% of workers report feeling stressed**, and half struggle to manage stress well.<sup>2</sup> Support your employees by promoting a culture of self-care, from encouraging PTO to sharing mental health self-assessment tools available or providing referrals to professionals.

## 3 Become a Super Communicator.

Times of crisis are stressful, so two-way communication becomes even more important. Put in extra effort. **Listen carefully.** Make tasks and objectives very clear. And check-in with your employees regularly.



## 4 Instill a Sense of Community.

Improving communication and collaboration can **boost productivity by 20 to 25%**<sup>3</sup> so it's important to keep your team as connected as possible. Make time for socialization at the beginning of remote meetings. 68% of workers strongly agree that it's important to work for an employer that creates an inclusive workplace culture.<sup>4</sup>

## 5 Foster Financial Fortitude.

**62% of Americans cite money as a top stressor.**<sup>5</sup> Calm those worries by sharing resources and financial education on topics like life insurance, investment and government programs. Encourage your employees to set aside time each week to up their financial IQ.

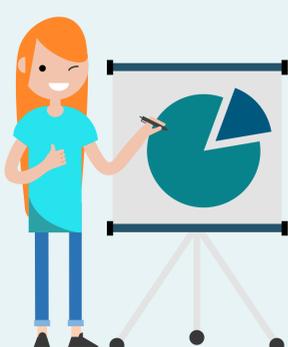


## 6 Consider Flexible Work Policies.

Many employees are working from home amid the coronavirus, which can leave you worrying about accountability — but working from home has shown a **13% increase in productivity.**<sup>6</sup> Focus on overall effectiveness and employee satisfaction above working specific hours at specific times if your business model can accommodate.

## 7 Encourage Ownership.

**72% of employees** wish their bosses would give them more responsibility.<sup>7</sup> Help to empower and engage your team during difficult times by inviting them to be more involved in the business whether it's through idea sharing, committee chairing or leading special initiatives.



## 8 Create a Resource Hub.

Stay one step ahead by connecting your employees with the resources they need related to the crisis. **Create a hub** where they can go for the latest updates, instructions, and any help that is available to them.

### SOURCES:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/neuroscience-behind-stress-and-learning-judy-willis>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.stress.org/workplace-stress>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/technology-media-and-telecommunications/our-insights/the-social-economy>

<sup>4</sup> Guardian 8th Annual Workplace Benefits Study

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.stress.org/stress-research>

<sup>6</sup> <https://news.stanford.edu/2020/03/30/productivity-pitfalls-working-home-age-covid-19/#:~:text=The%20experiment%20revealed%20that%20working,home%20to%20the%20whole%20firm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://hrdailyadvisor.blr.com/2019/12/02/most-employees-want-their-bosses-to-give-them-more-responsibility/>

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