

# the **COMMUNITY** BANKER

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## COVID-19: Time to Discuss Your Strategic Direction

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# Morale-Building During COVID-19

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**T**his crisis has also been tough on our employees. As this crisis continues, it is more important than ever to keep up morale among your teams. It isn't easy with a spread-out workforce. But, it is crucial as employees may feel more isolated and disjointed from the rest of their team.

Not only that, Smarp.com, an employee communications platform, found that companies having high employee engagement are 21% more profitable and generate four times higher revenue growth. While you may still be in survival and stabilization mode, the day will come when you will hit growth mode again. You will want to be ready with some morale-boosting practices in place. So, here are some ideas to help raise the spirits of your employees today and in the future to keep productivity going.

Leaders and managers should be seen and heard. Providing regular updates and even individual "check-ins" can help keep employees feel connected and valuable. Talking about the industry, your institution, and then providing thanks and kudos to your employees for rising to the occasion will give them a friendly virtual pat on the back. This also makes employees feel more confident about their position in the company and their future. Making a quick 30-60 second video (on your phone, posting to your company account on YouTube and providing the link) is an unconventional but fun way to let your employees know you care.

Allow your team's humanity to show. Give your employees a way to express themselves, such as virtual hangouts or sharing of family pictures online. Encourage employees to contact each other to stay more cohesive. Sharing experiences makes staff feel a sense of community and provides a social outlet. It could also give them an ear to bend, especially if employees live alone. Last but not least, it could help with productivity too, as people share remote working tips and tricks.

Encourage creativity and fun. We have heard of some bankers that have initiated games of bingo for staff still on-site in the drive-up windows. They have also provided snacks or meals to employees on-site to make things a bit easier and make them feel appreciated. For remote workers, some institutions have spirit days where they allow employees to dress up in their favorite sports team or college gear and share pictures. Still, others have remote employees take pictures of their pets and then try to match them up with the employees. Having fun and light ways to socialize is important as the stress levels can easily rise during today's coronavirus crisis.

We know you and your employees will find creative ways to boost morale and keep everyone connected. If you have unique ones you want to share, we would love to hear. Stay healthy and engaged! **UNITY**

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