

HIERARCHY OF COMMUNICATION

Making Remote Work Work for the Long Term

IMPORTANT URGENT

What it is: Something that absolutely, positively needs a response RIGHT NOW.

Examples: "The choir loft is on fire!" "Mr. Jones just called to let us know that his daughter has been in a car crash and would like someone to meet him at the ER."

Consider: These types of messages are few and far between and we need to avoid making everything important and urgent.

Potential Tools: Phone call, text message.

IMPORTANT NOT URGENT

What it is: Messages that need a response soon (within an hour or two), but do not involve a crisis situation.

Example: "I am finishing up the design of the sanctuary signage encouraging people to stay six feet apart... do these look like you thought they would?"

Consider: These types of messages require a response, but disaster will not happen if they are not immediately replied to. Senior leaders will struggle the most with this as they realize that not every question they have requires an immediate response.

Potential Tools: Slack, Basecamp, instant message apps

UPDATES & CHECKINS

What it is: Think of this as an online staff meeting, letting teams know what is being worked on, progress being made, and potential problem areas.

Examples: "This week, I am working on developing our online communication strategy. I am planning out our social media posts and email newsletter and am concerned that it will be late because I am waiting on updates from ministry leaders."

Consider: Doing this in writing allows you to be more thoughtful about what you are working on and more clearly communicate where things stand.

Potential Tools: Slack, Basecamp, Trello.

PITCHES & PLANS

What it is: A pre-meeting tool when new ideas (pitch) or team project (plan) is being discussed. Write out what you are wanting to do and how you'd like to do it.

Example: "I'd like to create a new landing page for the website that informs people about our COVID 19 reopening plan. Here is what I am thinking and how I would like for it to look..."

Consider: To be successful, the pitch and plan should be detailed, but not the final version.

Potential Tools: Basecamp, Trello

ANNOUNCEMENTS

What it is: Messages that everyone needs to read.

Examples: "Healthcare paperwork is due next Tuesday." "Our next staff meeting will be on Zoom at noon on Thursday, bring your lunch."

Consider: These messages need to reside in one place and your entire team needs to be held accountable for reading them. "I didn't see the message" is not a valid excuse.

Potential Tools: Basecamp, internal blog

WATER COOLER

What it is: This is the connective tissue that keeps your team together even when they are miles apart: celebrate wins, let people know how to pray for one another, and have silly conversations about someone's cat.

Examples: "What was the best part of your weekend (pics or it didn't happen)?" "Y'all, Jamie did an amazing job on Sunday morning leading our kids... I'm so proud of her!"

Consider: This will require some planned spontaneity in order to become a normal part of the team rhythm. Leaders must drive this!

Potential Tools: Basecamp, Slack, group text

CHEMISTRY  STAFFING