

# How to Help Managers Communicate During a Recession



Protection or defensive stock in economy crisis or market crash, business resilient to survive difficulty or insurance concept, businessman holding umbrella to cover and protect from downturn arrow.

**Bolstering your internal communications is especially important now. Here are three ways to do it.**

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Are we in a recession?

Already companies ranging from 7-Eleven and Walmart to Netflix

and JPMorgan are letting employees go. Even if you're not losing your job, you're seeing those pandemic-induced pay hikes eaten up by inflation. Whether we're in a recession or not, many employees are anxious about their livelihood, which is tied to the company.

That's where internal communicators need to step up, providing a link between employees and the enterprise amid the uncertainty.

So, what are communicators to do?

Your organization should already be sharing information about its financial performance and outlook in a way that anyone can understand. That will make your task easier when the news is bad.

For those unhappy occasions, your first step is to determine exactly what a downturn means to your company. Layoffs? Store closings? Office consolidations? Compensation changes? Just as economic downturns don't affect every person in the same way, they also don't affect every company in the same way.

### **1. Clarify managers' role**

If you haven't done it already, use the downturn to create an expectation that all managers in your organization will play a significant role in communicating the change. It will pay off for all future efforts. Use existing meetings or communications channels targeted to your managers to state the business case for their involvement in the communications process.

Three-quarters of companies with high-performing employee communications have above average employee performance compared to their competitors, according to a 2021 HR Research Institute study. In contrast, only 43% of companies that are laggards in employee communications have above average employee performance.

Most employees look to their direct supervisors for guidance, which gives managers an opportunity to ease fears. To support managers' efforts to address employee concerns, establish a clear feedback loop and plan for answering questions. Make sure managers know how to put employees' feedback into the loop as well as how and when they can retrieve answers and information to support their teams.

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