



CONNECTING DURING COVID – 19 A CODA PARTNERS INITIATIVE

Discover What Your Employees Really Need Now

Fifteen years ago, I was privileged to represent Florida’s Human Resources leaders on the SHRM Katrina Taskforce. Nearly nineteen years ago, post 9-11, I was part of SHRM’s efforts to support the Human Resources leaders in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and beyond.

HR leaders spent time after those tragedies reflecting on what we had done in the face of those tragedies. What had we learned from our responses? What lessons should we carry forward? What could we do to prepare for the next crisis?

We asked, should and could these tragedies change how and where we work? How we communicate with each other? How we employ technology? How we experience travel? How we should treat our employees, before, during, and after the next challenge?

The COVID-19 crisis presents many new challenges and will require many new responses. The challenges we are facing today are wider in geography, longer in terms of the upheaval, greater in scope in terms of number of persons and organizations directly affected, and more transformational for workplaces.

But what has not changed is a crisis response requirement that HR help organizations focus on what employees need now.

HR and organizational leaders must have increased awareness of employee needs.

Brian Pompos, Human Resources Manager, BioDerm, Inc.

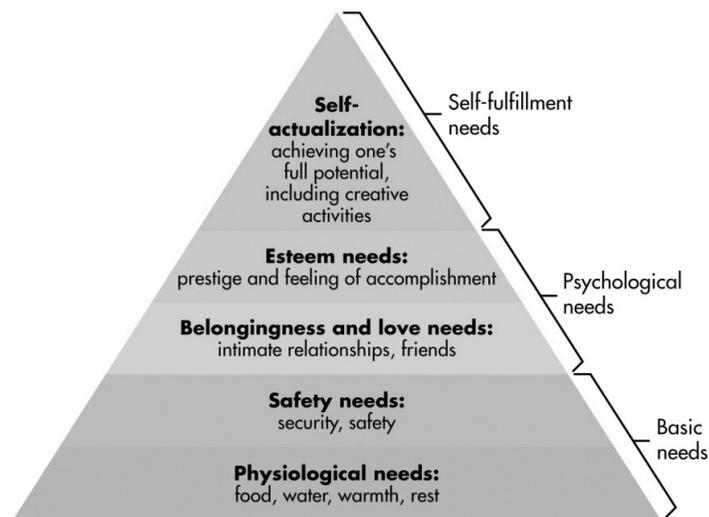
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs gives us a framework against which to consider employee needs and our response to those needs. Maslow helps us recognize where employees are now, while we simultaneously predict, what will motivate them once the lower level needs are met. It



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helps us emphasize HR policies and processes and select the supervisor and leadership actions most likely to motivate employees now addressing their basic and psychological needs on a path back to highest levels of achievement. (See Also – *Questions to Ask: Employee Needs Through the Lens of Maslow's Hierarchy.*)



To discover what your employees need now we suggest the following actions.

1. **Check-in Personally.** Group emails announcing changes in policy or benefits, and truthful video messages from the CEO about a “return” to normal, are important. These communications have a role in moving us through the crisis. But these one-way messages do not provide the connection you can have, or the knowledge you can acquire, when you open up two-way, communications.

Our meetings start off with individual employee “check-ins” to see how things are going from a personal stance.

Aimee Hull, Director of People Services, ENA



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When you seek to understand what is creating anxiety for your employees, individually and personally, you provide comfort and care. You gain information and insight. Look for ways to connect at the human level. This might mean:

- A. Starting any “zoom” meetings or trainings with a check-in question and round robin process to collect a response from each person.
- B. Individual phone calls between supervisors and each team member during which the supervisor is “asking” and “listening” not “telling.”
- C. An HR facilitated “zoom” focus group that invites employees to share with HR and their co-workers:
 - the challenges they are facing,
 - what they want and expect from the employer, and
 - even the clever ways they are finding to meet or minimize their challenges.
- D. A Live-Chat Helpline for employees with questions or concerns.

PLEASE EMAIL US AND SHARE HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION IS CONDUCTING
PERSONALIZED CHECK-INS. CONNECT@CODAPARTNERS.NET

2. Engage and Educate Supervisors. As with your general employee population check – in with your supervisors.

- A. Seek to learn and understand:
 - The challenges they are facing in motivating employees who continue to work in the workplace or remotely.



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- The fears and concerns they have about re-engaging temporarily remote and furloughed employees who may soon be called upon to return to a “re-opening” workplace.
- B. Help supervisors understand Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and what it means for the way they supervise in the coming months. For example: Maslow teaches us:
- An employee who does not feel safe is not able to fully engage in their work or the relationships required for their success.
 - A newly “remote” worker who feels alone is unable to fully focus on carrying out that which is most important for the organization’s success.

PLEASE EMAIL US AND SHARE HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION SUPPORTING SUPERVISORS.
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We can motivate and engage our employees – those in the workplace, those working remotely, and those returning from furlough. **But first we must discover what each employee really needs now, for meeting those needs, are their biggest current motivators.**