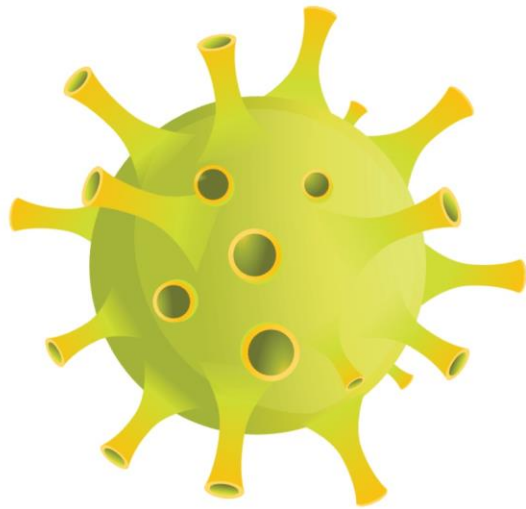




31st Line Strategic
Communications

LEADING THROUGH COMMUNICATION

in times of adversity



Introduction



- My background
- Leaders Eat Last: Simon Sinek
- Key communication principles during a crisis
- Building employee morale
- If an employee tests positive...
- Questions



Who I am....



- Farmer/dairy farmer
- Ag and AgriFood communicator
- Issues management experience
 - Quality Meat Packers



Leaders Eat Last



- US Marines: most Junior served first, most senior served last

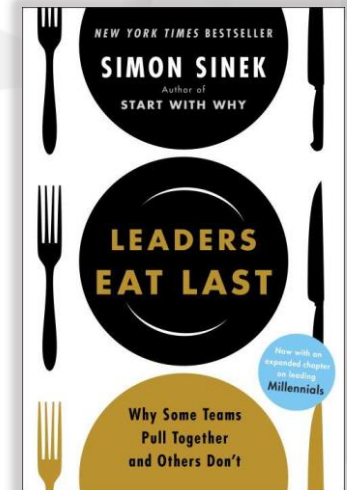
“The true price of leadership is the willingness to place the needs of others above your own”

“A leader who takes care of their people and stays focused on the wellbeing of the organization can never fail”

George J Flynn, Lt General USMC ret.

“Every single employee is someone’s son or someone’s daughter. Like a parent, a leader of a company is responsible for their precious lives.”

Simon Sinek



Employee Crisis Communication Principles



- **During any crisis – employee communication is top priority**
 - Employees confused and worried
 - May spread misinformation inadvertently
 - Silence = misunderstandings, confusion, rumors
 - Employees are going to communicate with each other – better to know the facts
 - Do you have an *issues management plan that includes communication?*



Principle 1: Communicate frequently



- **Communicate frequently to employees**

- Have a plan to communicate regularly and stick to it
 - Daily CEO update – 10 minutes
- If you have nothing new: COMMUNICATE status quo
- Reassure them you will update as new info occurs
- Offer a forum to answer questions – from the top



Principle 2: Always tell the truth



“Building trust requires nothing more than telling the truth.” (Simon Sinek)

- **Always tell the truth**

- If you don't know, say you don't know
- Reinforce what you do know
- Explain behind the scenes fact finding
- Say thank you – often and sincerely
- Reinforce the essential work they are doing - food

Principle 3: Build trust and team



“When trust and cooperation thrive internally, we pull together and the organization grows stronger as a result”

- **The Circle of Safety** (Simon Sinek)
- **Eliminate “I and me”**
 - Talk in terms of “we”, “us” and “together”
 - Team
 - We all need everyone to pull together

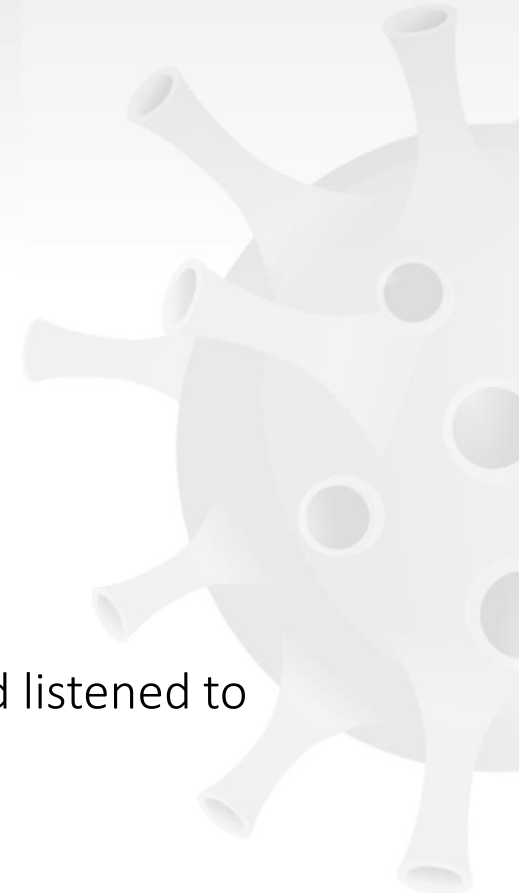


Principle 4: Put yourself in the employee's place



- Put yourself in the employee's place

- Do I have a job?
 - Will I get paid?
 - Will we survive?
 - How will you protect me at work?
 - What if I get sick?
- Empathize
- Your employees need to be informed, reassured and listened to
- Informed employees are less likely to panic



Principle 5: See and be seen, hear and be heard



- **See and be seen, hear and be heard**

- Rounding
- Observe – facial expressions, mannerisms
- Listen – what are they talking about
- Ask questions
 - How are you doing today?
 - How is your family doing?
 - Is there anything I can do to help?
- Talk to employees one on one over time



Principle 6: Key Messages



- **Build Key Messages**

- We are a team
- We will get through this together
- We care – I care (management cares)
- You are important and your role is critical
- Thank you for everything you are doing
- Talk to us – door is open

- *These key messages don't change – reinforce frequently – keep repeating them*



Principle 7: Coordinate information flow



- Centralize all communication materials in one place for efficiency
- Ask for all employee cell phone numbers for emergencies
- Communicate key information from trusted sources – WHO, Public Health, Ministries – Labour, Public Safety, OMAFRA etc.
- Use visuals, videos, images whenever possible
- Know who is responsible and how/when/where it will be shared internally

Other Key Tips

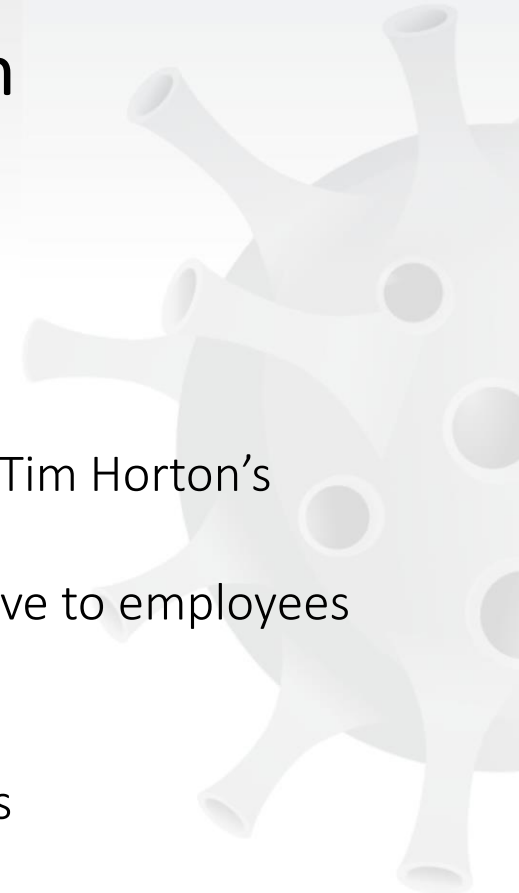


- **Look after yourself!!!!**
- **Be proactive** – anticipate employee questions and concerns
- **Act fast** – if there are changes, new developments, make sure they hear about it from you first
- **Share success stories** - people going above and beyond
- **Be positive** – no doom and gloom!
- **Address practical employee concerns** up front
- **Consider language, cultural differences**
- **Reach out if you need help**

Other Key Tips



- Do the basics first – good communication
- Add in other perks as you can
 - Free coffee/soft drinks
 - Doughnuts once a week or sweets (local bakery?)
 - Weekly pizza lunch/subs/whatever – local
 - Give each employee a simple thank you card with a Tim Horton's card inside
 - Use up stash of “stuff” (I call trinkets and trash) – give to employees as you walk through, talk to them
 - Share cartoons, humour
 - Set up employee morale volunteer group – get ideas



Other Key Tips



- **Some employees more anxious than others**
 - Some don't show it
 - Over achiever millennials
 - Moms – now teachers
 - People with special needs children, elderly parents, immune compromised
 - Offer access to mental health resources, post hotline numbers
 - “Counselor” role/listener

Employee Morale



“Customers will never love a company until the employees love it first”

“It is not the work we remember with fondness but the camaraderie, how the group came together to get things done.”

- Communication is key to make employees feel “safe” and appreciated and that builds morale!

If an employee tests positive...



- Prepare now, not when it happens
- Do you have a plan for communicating?
- Draft key messages – now (ask for help if needed)
- Can you reach everyone asap?
- Do employees know how you reach out?
- Prepare a “just in case” notice for what you will be doing (basics) IF that happens
- This will reassure employees

If an employee tests positive...



- Other employees will want to know...
 - Have I been exposed?
 - What do I do if I have?
 - Is the plant closing?
 - Do I still get paid?
 - What are the next steps – what will happen now
 - If I get it, will I continue to get paid?
 - Is the plant safe for the rest of us?
 - When will I hear more from you (tell them how often and when and how you will be reaching out)



If an employee tests positive...



- Follow government recommendations and procedures
- You need a plan to notify suppliers and customers
- You need to be ready for possible media attention
 - Ask for help MPO
 - Public Health
 - Me – Free consultation if needed

Remember...



“When leaders inspire those they lead, people dream of a better future, invest time and effort in learning more and do more for their organizations and along the way become leaders themselves.”

George J. Flynn

Questions





We thrive on the adrenaline rush of unconventional thinking to grow ideas that inspire change.

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