



## VA Sister Society- GWLN event 3/23/2021 Key Takeaways

### Rebuilding Teams Post Pandemic: Moving from Crisis Response Stage to Recovery Stage

*Lead by Stephanie Couldrey, Call Federal Credit Union*

1. **Building Trust** with your teammates and staff-
  - As leaders be vulnerable with your challenges but explain how you are turning these challenges into opportunities and change the narrative to something positive.
  - Connect at a personal level- have weekly/monthly/quarterly mental check-ins with your team- not to talk about work, but to know how they are doing.
  - Ask team for feedback, ask open ended questions: Listen and act (make sure you take action when you ask for feedback- this will build trust and engagement)
  - Show empathy- we are all facing similar challenges, some more than others- some have had financial impact, some are taking care of elderly family members, others their children
2. **Recognize** work/staff:
  - Everyone likes to be recognized, and different staff like recognition in different ways:
    - Cash rewards
    - gift cards
    - Shout outs in team meetings- from managers and colleagues/team mates
    - Shout outs in your intranet space- tag staff
    - Shout out via emails, or Payroll systems
    - Remembering birthdays, and anniversaries- a message from CEO
    - Hand written cards delivered to their home
3. Make sure you continue to state the **purpose**:
  - We are all in this together, our purpose as CUs has not changed
    - Switch focus from sales calls to calls sharing a positive story on how staff changed a members lives.
    - Hold weekly huddles with teams or entire organization
4. **Update processes, policies and best practices** to better match the current environment with both remote workers and those still coming into the office:
  - Allow for back office staff to dress casually



- Provide work flexibility where possible- this can be work schedule, ability to work remote and in the office
  - The goal is to get everyone rowing in the same direction regardless of what their workplace looks like
  - Ensure staff have all the resources needed to continue to grow and develop professionally
  - Ensure staff have all resources needed to connect with each other and create fun activities- technology, employee engagement budget
5. **Keep staff engaged** by introducing new cultural activities that build teamwork and include remote workers
- Virtual bingo
  - E-learning scavenger hunts
  - FOOD- create a Panera Bread event- staff can order their own lunch, send Doordash gifts
  - Virtual happy hours
  - Ginger bread house building- send staff a package to their home, and have them engage with each other and their families. Send pictures, create contest. Other ideas- Christmas ornaments, Halloween pumpkin decorating.
  - Using available technology, create group chats, share memes and laughter
  - To help get to know staff better, especially those new to the team since Covid- create a rotating game, where each person of the team shares 1 truth and 2 lies about themselves.
  - Hold virtual fireside chats with Senior Leaders
  - Create an introduction meeting of all new staff with Executive team
  - Create a FUN committee or Staff engagement committee to work on events
  - Use DATA to ensure staff's productivity and continue to hold them accountable, as you would in a pre-Covid environment

Covid 19 has forced us (physically) to embrace the digital world, in a post-pandemic world the challenge will be for the digital to embrace the physical.

## **Managing Remote Employees:**

*Lead by Lisa Lambrecht, ValleyStar Credit Union*

1. Equip employees
  - a. With the technology they need to be successful.
  - b. Example, if you are holding all meetings virtually then make sure everyone has cameras and microphones.
  - c. Collaboration and communication tools, like chat, zoom/webex, shared documents.
2. Set expectations early and often
  - a. The more clearly defined and measurable, the better.
  - b. Establish expectations around hours worked, after hour work emails and texts. If they feel like they have to be working 24/7 it could lead to employee burnout.
  - c. Establish expectations around communications. How will you communicate and how often?
  - d. Establish how performance will be measured so you are both on the same page.
  - e. Provide feedback regularly – more so than in the office since you don't have those impromptu conversations. One-on-one sessions are more important than ever.
  - f. Establish rules of engagement for types of communication to use when and how to use them – timeliness, cameras on, agendas for meetings, dress code, etc.
3. Communication
  - a. Use Video as much as possible
    - i. 55% of communication comes from body language.
    - ii. To get the most out of virtual meetings you need to see each other.
  - b. Use animated gifs and emoticons to convey emotion in chat or email. It can help with the 38% of communication that is comes from tone.
4. Adapt the length of meetings
  - a. A long meeting might work in the office, but spending hours staring at a screen can make it hard to focus. Adapt with short, virtual huddles on smaller focused topics.
5. Find the right communication style for each employee
  - a. Ask employees how they want to be managed while working remotely
  - b. Too much oversight, like constant emails or chats, can show employees signs of mistrust.
6. Build connections and be available to your team
  - a. Build in time at the beginning of meetings just to catch up with each other – how was your weekend?
  - b. Share positive feedback
  - c. Open a fun chat channel
  - d. Grab coffee together (virtually)



- e. Virtual lunch
  - f. Virtual happy hour
  - g. Whatever helps maintain a sense of normalcy and solidarity and keep employees from feeling isolated
  - h. Offer encouragement and emotional support – how is working remote working for you? Listen more, speak less.
7. Resist the urge to micromanage/Trust employees
    - a. Trust that if your team is communicating clearly and meeting goals and deadlines, your employees are being productive and doing their jobs effectively
  8. Celebrate success
    - a. Celebrate the same work milestones that would be celebrated in the office, virtually
    - b. Don't forget to help them build their career path and goals. It's easy to treat employees more like third party vendors with the distance. Career development discussions will help keep them engaged.
  9. Be willing to adapt to changing situations and individual employee needs.

## **Leading with Strength, Even When You Don't Feel Strong**

*Lead by Nicole Widell, Virginia Credit Union League*

1. Take care of yourself and putting yourself first makes a stronger leader
  - Being mentally and emotionally strong takes work and taking care of yourself is important
  - Taking time for yourself, exercise, healthy food choices, drink more water, just being more physically healthy are important in helping with mental clarity, focus, and strength
  - Many used the Pandemic and having time to slow down as an opportunity to put themselves and take time for mind, body, and soul
  - BREATHE – learn breathing exercises that help your mental performance (Yoga, meditation, taking a long walk help too)
2. Remember, even though you're a leader, you're human
  - Women tend to carry the weight of the World on their shoulders
  - It's okay to be human and make mistakes, ask for help, say you don't know something
  - Laugh at yourself more often, this also makes you more human



- We are our own worst critic, so give yourself grace
- If you fail at something or make a mistake, try to use it as an opportunity to learn, how you respond to mistakes says a lot about you as a leader

### 3. Leaders ask for help

- Surround yourself with people around you that are willing to help and lift you up
- Remember, you can't do it all and it's okay to ask for help when you need it
- Being vulnerable sometimes make you an even stronger leader, because people realize you're only human – they can relate better

### 4. Leaders celebrate success and be grateful

- Reward yourself when you meet a goal or accomplish something. This is so important because we tend to forget to celebrate our own successes.
- Reward your team, recognizing good behavior breeds good behavior
- Plan weekly shoutouts through virtual happy hours or meetings, invite employee's family/pets to attend these events so you can see their personal life
- Journal – both your successes and what you're grateful for
- Bookend your day with positive/inspirational thoughts whether it's through journaling, listening to inspirational podcasts, reading daily devotionals, celebrating your wins each day.