

# TIPS ON MANAGING IN TIMES OF CRISIS

It can be challenging to be a manager and leader in ordinary situations. In a crisis situation characterised by unpredictability and extraordinary political decisions in Sweden and around the world it can feel even more difficult, while the demands and expectations on you as a manager may be increasing. To a greater or lesser extent, you will need to lead the way for your employees. Here is some advice on how you, together with your employees, can best manage the situation:

## **Communicate and make yourself available**

- Stay up to date on the **advice and guidelines** available in society and in your own organisation
- **Provide information** in your own organisation, even when there is no new information, in both speech and writing
- Be **honest** about what you know and what you do not know
- Make yourself **available** to your employees, both out in the organisation and for individual conversations

Crises create a need for information. Therefore, it becomes especially important for you, as an LU manager, to communicate and explain any decisions you and/or management take, how you are working on managing any difficulties that arise, as well as to encourage dialogue between employees and management. Ensure that your employees can contact you to fulfil the need for information and the wish for communication. Most employees feel secure and trust a management that is present, open to discussion and decisive. Try to maintain close dialogue with employees and together decide on general guidelines for the dissemination of information in the organisation while being open to exceptions for special situations that require different decisions.

## **Continue to run the organisation as normally as possible**

- **Maintain procedures**

Most people benefit from maintaining procedures, work processes and structures. Concern, depression and anxiety are given more space when natural daily structures are lost. Put simply, working as usual, where possible, makes us feel calm and secure. Even if employees are working from home and meetings with external parties are harder to carry out, the advice is to continue running the organisation as normally as possible. Switch to digital meetings, video conferences and other solutions if you can, however, do not cancel all activities just because the circumstances have changed. Keep working wherever possible. Continuing and maintaining activities can create increased cohesion and unity in the organisation.

### **Take care of the group and respond to concerns**

- **Focus on the employee!** Do not do anything else during the conversation.
- **Listen** and take anxiety seriously
- Show **empathy**, both for people who are in the workplace and those who are working from home or on sick leave or taking care of children or other family members
- Demonstrate **confidence** and **trust**

Many people are concerned about the current feeling in society. Anxiety spreads between people and in turn leads to increased anxiety. Many employees want answers to 'if x and y happens, what will we do then?'. Most employees feel secure and trust a management that is present, open to discussion and decisive. Show that you understand their concern, but try to remain calm and create a sense of control. Take things one step at a time. "Right now we are taking this decision but it may change if the situation changes".

Do you usually have coffee breaks? Can you continue to do this online? Encourage social contact among employees. Ask each other how you feel, offer help and support. Call employees who are working remotely and check in on how they are feeling. Many brief check-ins are preferred over meetings that are long and lacking in content. Be present, visible and listen. Create clear rules that make it ok to call, email and 'get in touch with each other' in the working group and in the organisation.

Try to demonstrate confidence by describing how you all can contribute to improve the situation. Try to lead by example and show that you are following the agreements you make, e.g. with regard to social distancing, travel policies, forms of communication etc.

### **Take care of yourself**

- Ensure you have your **own support**, do not isolate yourself, talk to somebody, e.g. your own manager or a fellow manager
- Ensure your **own recuperation** through sleep, physical activity, food and drink and socialising with family and friends (in a form that is possible)

As a manager, you also need to be taken care of. Review your networks and look at who can act as support and makes you happy, and do not hesitate to reach out. Remember to try to continue doing things that make you feel good, although possibly in a different format to the one you are used to.