**TEMPLATE: Message to COMPANY Staff***Audience: Internal Team Only*

*Please modify this sample communication below to suit the needs of your organization.*

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As was suggested by the CDC and others, COMPANY is following recommendations to plan and prepare for possible local business disruption due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus. We know that recent news coverage can be confusing and distressing, so we will use communication and patience to help each other understand the right approach. While we hope that the worst-case scenario never comes to fruition, it is important to take seriously our responsibility to our staff and our clients and talk about this now.

**CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS:**

Several customers may have already asked questions about our plan to continue operations in the event of a partial or full closure. In the next few days, we will launch a dedicated hub on our website where we will post helpful information about our plans for operations, key contacts and official news. We will share that information with you as we go live, but be sure to check out [http://www.COMPANY.com/prepare](http://www.nextrio.com/prepare) for more details.

**EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS:**

We will be working with your manager in the coming days to determine the resources and responsibilities needed for each employee to be able to work from home and we will communicate it in your department team meetings. Now is a great time to ensure your personal and emergency contact information is updated in our primary employee directory.

**ONGOING GUIDELINES:**

We expect that more information from official sources will continue to come in the days and weeks ahead, but for now we would like you to carefully read and adhere to the following COMPANY guidelines:

**Treat yourself well.** Eat healthy, maintain good sleep habits, manage stress and drink plenty of fluids.

**Make it hard for illnesses to spread!** The number one recommendation for prevention of illnesses is frequent handwashing and avoiding touching your eyes, mouth or face as much as possible. Covering coughs and sneezes and disposing of tissues are also top tactics. We have hand-sanitizers every few feet in the office, so please use them. We have Clorox wipes and you are welcome to wipe down your desk, chairs, keyboards/mice and phone surfaces. We will increase the frequency of disinfecting community spaces like lobbies, conference rooms, bathrooms and other door handles. If you go to customer or supplier locations, you should exercise similar care and caution.

**If you are sick: stay home.** We have always recommended this practice and now we will strictly enforce this policy. Regardless of the cause of your illness, if you are unwell you must stay home. This is not only respectful of your coworkers’ and clients’ health, it also is your fastest way to getting better! And that means you should not be working when you are sick either, even remotely.

**If someone in your family is sick: stay home.**  Please care for your family member and err on the side of caution when it comes to spreading potentially contagious viruses. If you are not ill, but required to stay home and you want to do remote work, please talk to your manager and see if that’s appropriate and possible.

**Tell us about travel.** If you, or someone in your family has recently traveled out of our town, we ask that you inform your manager before returning to the office. Depending on the current nature of any outbreak, your manager may ask that you work remotely for a period of time to ensure you are well before returning to the office.

**Limits to onsite visits at clients.** Your manager will let you know if and when COMPANY starts limiting customers in our office or restricting visits to customer sites. This will largely depend on the nature of the outbreak at the time and we will always err on the side of caution for our staff. It is never too early to start advocating for remote working whenever and wherever possible. Additional tools and training will be made available to make it easier to help customers from afar, but it will mostly require excellent communication and an abundance of patience from both you and the client. If at any time you are on onsite at a client and feel uncomfortable because you are concerned about infection or illness, please excuse yourself professionally from the client office, and contact your manager immediately for further instructions.

**Official quarantine.** If you, or anyone in your household, are instructed by a doctor or other official to be placed under quarantine, please contact your manager immediately. If you are not ill and want to work remotely, we will make arrangements wherever possible. In such cases, you must provide official health clearance to be able to return to work.

**Large scale quarantine or office closure.** If the majority of COMPANY employees are healthy, but unable to come to the COMPANY offices or the facility is closed, the business will operate in a remote-only fashion to the degree that is possible. Note that managers will work with employees to ensure Essential business functions are available. Depending on the nature of the situation, your manager may temporarily change your role or business functions to accommodate the needs of the business.

**School and daycare closures.** If schools and/or daycare providers are closed, we ask affected employees to stay home with their children. Wherever possible, we will try to accommodate remote work requests for these staff, so long as the child(ren) are safe and supervised while work is being performed. Unfortunately, if it is deemed unsafe for your kids to remain in schools and daycare, then it is not safe to bring your children to the COMPANY offices.

**What is considered “Working Remotely”?** It is important to make a clear distinction between the flexible benefit we have today called “working from home” and the new notion of running large parts of COMPANY’s business operations strictly from remote locations. For the foreseeable future, the ability to work from home comes with commitments to availability, productivity and accountability. Please expect your manager to set specific expectation for your role and the essential business functions that are expected to be accomplished. However, the following definitions apply to every COMPANY employee:

* **Exclusive Focus:** You are not considered to be working if you are dividing your attention with any other task in your home, including supervising children, working with maintenance providers, caring for a sick relative, painting your garage, etc.
* **Availability:** You are expected to be available by Teams/Slack, email, phone or similar method to both staff and clients within 10 minutes of contact during business hours. There is an exception for your lunch period which should be communicated using one of our presence/status tools (Teams, In/Out Board, etc.). If you want to work on a project that makes you unable to respond to requests in 10 minutes, you must clear that with your manager before starting.
* **Communication with Team/Managers:** Your managers and team members will depend on your proactive communication to keep them informed about your progress, your need for assistance or your challenges. You must meet your manager more than half-way to keep them in the loop.
* **Time Sheets/Clocking-In Still Matters:** Actually, they matter more than ever! Do them, keep them current, and turn them in on time.

**When should I use my Sick Time? What if I run out?** You can use your Sick Time for any issue you deem necessary for your health and wellbeing, no questions asked. If you are sick or caring for someone who is sick, don’t work. Just submit a request to your manager. If you are working remotely, it is not considered sick time – it is considered paid time, assuming you meet the definitions for **Working Remotely** above. If you are healthy and want to stay home, but not work, it is considered Personal Time Off and you should submit a request to your manager. If you run out of Sick Time or Personal Time Off, talk to your manager about our ability to provide unpaid leave or extend a small grace period of negative hours, BEFORE you take the time off.

**What if I want to work from home now, even though the building is not closed and I am not sick.** Because this is a time of potentially extraordinary circumstances, we will not approve individual voluntary work from home requests on a one-off basis. With healthy staff, we will make departmental and role-based decisions that affect entire teams to ensure fairness and fulfillment of our business obligations.