Sample Communication
 *Please Customize for Your Organization*

**Employee Separation Notification Meeting**

Notifying employees of their layoff or separation is considered to be one of the most difficult tasks in business. Below are a sample guide and script for conducting a notification meeting. Although not meant to represent the ideal conversation, the script below is intended to act as a starting point in developing your own notification script as you approach a reduction in force.

**Preparing For the Notification Meeting**

It is essential to prepare for the notification meeting. To start, confirm the logistics. Select a location for the meeting that will allow the affected employee some privacy. If you are conducting the conversation via phone, we suggest sending them an innocuous calendar invitation beforehand so you can ensure you’re not catching them at a wrong moment.

Typically, layoff meetings include the affected employee, a leader from the organization, the employee’s manager, an HR representative or another company representative.

Further, we suggest that you coordinate with your IT department on how/when access for the impacted employee will be blocked.

In addition, collect all the materials you’ll need for the meeting. This could include an employment termination letter, COBRA paperwork, a final paycheck, a severance agreement, a check for accrued unused paid time off, and an unemployment brochure.

**What to Say**

Below is a sample script to help ensure you cover all the details you need to go over with the affected employee in a clear, professional, and empathetic manner.

* **Welcome and communicate the difficult news.** Warm welcome, introduce those involved in the meeting and then get right to the point – try to keep the conversation direct, providing the facts.

**Suggested language:** “Thanks for joining us today. As you know, our current pandemic has put a financial strain on [COMPANY]. Unfortunately, we’ve had to make some difficult decisions and have some hard news to discuss.  Based on current business conditions and needs, your role has been affected by a layoff effective [DATE]. We certainly didn’t come to this decision lightly/We appreciate your work/I know this is hard news...”

* **Pause.** Allow for a brief pause in silence and actively listen for the employee’s reaction.
* **Discuss logistics**. “I know this is hard news to hear. I’d like to discuss the transition with you and provide you information regarding benefits and final pay.”
* **Review Separation Paperwork** with the employee, including, and as applicable:
	+ Termination Letter
		- Final pay (direct deposit, live check)
		- Vacation/PTO
		- Benefits information
		- COBRA and benefits continuation
		- Unemployment Insurance
		- Other considerations (stock options, 401k, expenses, etc.)
		- References
		- Change of address
	+ Severance Agreement (if applicable)
		- Amount offered
		- How and when the pay will be administered once executed
		- Time period for consideration and execution (varies by state law, how many people are being terminated, and employee’s age)
		- How to execute and return
		- Confidentiality
		- Remind the employee that the severance agreement is a legally binding document which they should review with legal counsel prior to signature
	+ Return of Company Property/Equipment (laptop, equipment, keys, credit card, access cards, company vehicle)
* **After addressing any questions:** “If there is anything you think we should know about the transition or updates to your current projects, please discuss with your manager. We appreciate your contributions to the company and wish you the best in your future endeavors.” Then, provide any final logistics on the employee’s last day (gathering personal property, exiting the building, etc.)