

The image features a dark red background with a repeating pattern of white line drawings of various mechanical components, including gears, springs, and structural parts. The Southco logo, consisting of the word "southco" in a lowercase, sans-serif font with a registered trademark symbol (®), is centered in white. Below the logo, the tagline "Creating first impressions that last." is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

southco®

Creating first impressions that last.

## **Leading through Uncertainty**

Using Coaching Questions to keep communication fresh

# Coaching Questions to improve communication

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- One of the biggest challenges for managers and their teams is to keep connected as remote or home working patterns become a feature for us to manage
- Being away from the normal work environment creates a distance that we can bridge by frequent and positive communication with our teams
- The challenge can sometimes be; “what will I talk about today?” (not the virus again!)
- So the opportunity is to look to Coaching Questions
- Later in 2020 we will be rolling out coaching training for managers, so we can make a head start on some of the skills we’ll look at in those workshops – Using Questions.
- On the following slides, practice the questions to enhance the daily calls or contact you make with your teams. Experiment with them, make them yours, and try and fit a number of them in to each of your interactions.

## Benefits of questioning

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- Using coaching questions in your calls enables you to vary the topics you talk about as it provides an open ended discussion
- Questions reassure your team that you are interested in their situation and progress, and increases the quality of two-way communication.
- Questions allow you to uncover issues or problems that may be hindering the person working at home at an early stage, thus maximising the support you can provide

## Try these, then adapt them as you go...

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- What do you find easy about working remotely?
- What is the most difficult thing you find about working at home?
- What tips can you give me that I can share with the team? What has worked well for you?
- What extra support or input from me would make working at home easier?

## And try these too...

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- Who have you been in touch with? What system did you use? Do you find video easier than voice?
- Do you have any technical issues that cause problems?
- How often are you in touch with other team members?
- Who would you normally be talking to that you're not right now?

## And remember – It's not all about work:

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- How are you relaxing?
- Do you have a go-to TV series you're watching?
- How are you keeping active? (Even if isolated)
- What tips do you have to unwind at home?
- What concerns do you have?
- What books / blogs / media can you recommend?

## In the Facilities...

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- And for those whose work continues in operational settings:
  - What challenges does other people working remotely give us?
  - What would be useful contact and updates to maintain with people who would normally be in the office?
  - What concerns do you have?
  - What ideas do you have on how to maintain our work community while keeping safe practices?
  - What can I help you with?
  
- Also, while it's very clear that a lot of people are working from home, discussions around the importance of Southco products in critical industries is useful to maintain motivation and encouragement of our teams in the facilities or wherever they work.

## Good Questioning Technique

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- All of the questions on previous slides can prompt good, extended conversations. Some may not hit the mark. That's fine. But take the opportunity to practice good questioning technique including:
- Ask questions the way you would conversationally and normally (try and avoid sounding like you're reading a script, but if you do read, let it flow)
- Give the recipient time to let the question sink in, don't worry about a short pause.
- Listen to the full answer! Don't interrupt if you think you get the general point. Often people find out they say more than they expected if the listener gives them time.
- Show active listening. Pay attention visibly if you're on video, paraphrase or check your understanding verbally if it's a complex point
- Let the questions lead to a conversation and more questions, don't seek to conclude too soon.
- Be Human.



## Links and Resources

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- [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC\\_88.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_88.htm)

- The moral of good questions:

"Does your dog bite?"

"No."

\* pets dog, dog bites him\*

"I thought you said your dog didn't bite!"

"It doesn't. That is not my dog."

- <https://storycorps.org/participate/great-questions/>