



PART OF OUR HR CONNECTED SERIES

The Emotionally Connected Business

Tips and tools for staying close to staff in a remote or hybrid world

IRIS. Look forward



SECTION ONE

What is emotional connection?

Imagine your business as a car. Your strategy is your steering wheel: setting your direction, pursuing your vision. You and your employees are the engine: converting energy into movement.

And your fuel? That's emotional connection. It's the gas in your tank. Call it motivation, mojo, morale... it's what we feel when we're happy and engaged in our jobs. And it's one of the most valuable assets in your business.

This eBook looks at why emotional connection is so important, whether you've got a dozen people on the payroll or a couple of hundred. We outline five 'disconnection danger zones' and look at how the right digital tools can make it easy to keep your tank topped up.

Pssst: you already have it

Small and mid-sized businesses often have high levels of emotional connection. Leaders who know their staff personally or interact daily have a better chance of creating rapport and keeping a family feel. You've been through a lot with your staff, and bringing your employees through tough times has given you a strong emotional connection.



The challenge now is to hold onto it

Here's why it's getting harder to keep up an emotional connection:

- You've been remote: if you've had to furlough staff or set people up to work from home, you've been physically disconnected. That makes emotional connection harder to maintain.
- You're busy: you're juggling all the balls and wearing all the hats. You don't have unlimited budgets or dozens of HR colleagues to support you with people-related cares.

- You're coping: cash flow is a delicate balance, and your market remains unpredictable. You want to invest in people but need to consider the cost-efficiency and ROI of every move.
- You're growing: if your headcount is going up, establishing emotional connection with new hires is challenging if you don't have the right digital tools at your disposal.

But the good news is, hanging onto emotional connection is not rocket science. As we'll see in this eBook, it can be won (or lost) in the details, moments, and day-to-day processes.



So read on if...

- You're a business owner, director or manager with people or payroll responsibilities
- You'd like to protect or strengthen the emotional connection in your business
- You'd like to take the non-strategic legwork out of HR & payroll as you grow or streamline your business

SECTION TWO

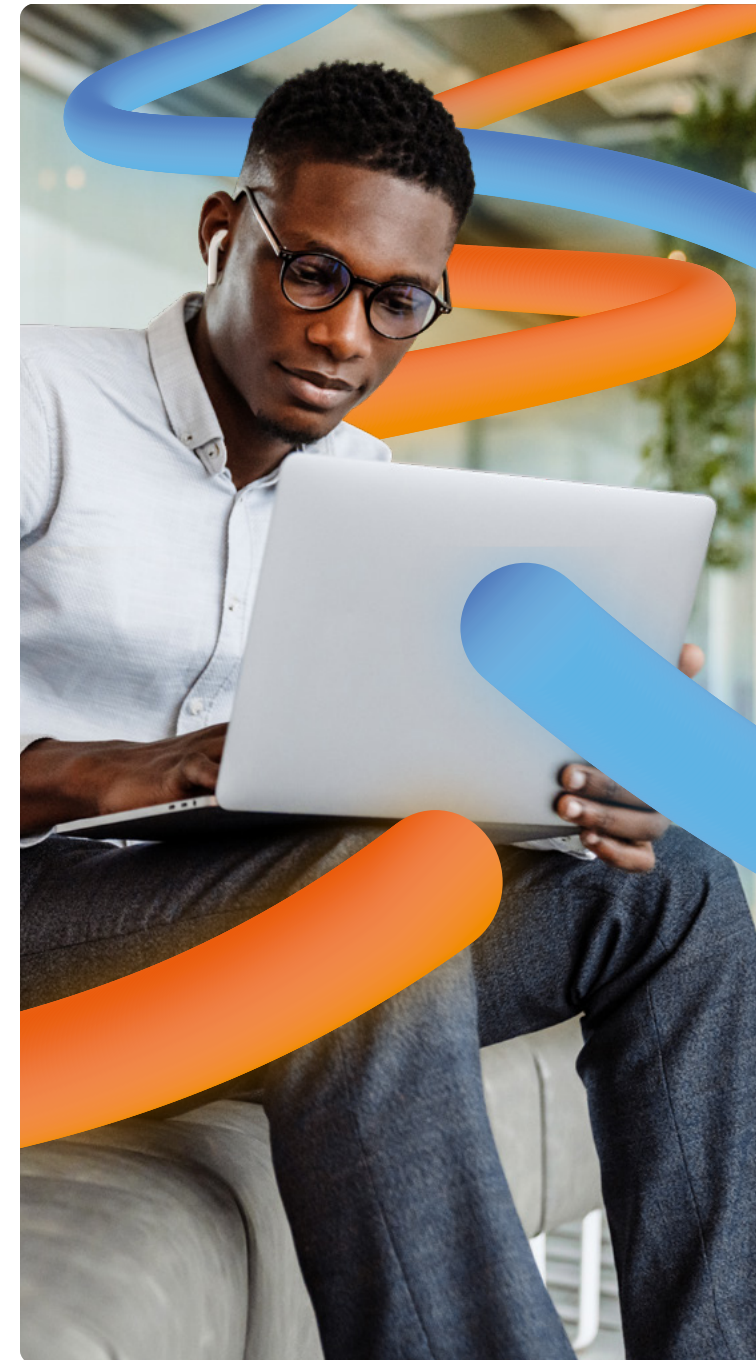
Emotional DIS-connection: 5 danger zones

Disconnection danger zone 1:

Getting new recruits up to speed
and settled in

A good onboarding process helps new recruits feel valued and get to grips with their role as soon as possible. Not only is it essential to get them quickly set up with all the right equipment, apps, and passwords, but it's also just as important to make them feel part of a human network. This means kickstarting connections with managers, colleagues or buddies – crucially, with HR and payroll too.

For new joiners, getting your personal and bank details put onto the HR system correctly, for payroll or pension, is a reassuring touchpoint. It brings with it a sense of relief and belonging. For the business, it's an early opportunity to establish trust. When this part of the onboarding process is delayed, clunky, or prone to errors, it can be worrying, distracting, and time-consuming for everyone. Integrating HR & Payroll software can automate data entry, speed up payroll, and make errors a thing of the past.



Disconnection danger zone 2:

Training, coaching, and giving feedback

Once new recruits are up and running, they're (hopefully) keen to impress and show you what they can do. It's important for you to have visibility of how they're performing, particularly when teams are working remotely. Absence patterns, for example, can be a sign of emotional disconnection, and the sooner you can spot them, the better your chance of fixing them and preventing a productivity slide.

It's equally important to recognise and reward employees' efforts more regularly than scheduled appraisals. Giving public kudos (on your workplace social channels, for example) is a powerful way to create emotional bonds, showcase good performance, and motivate people in other teams, no matter where they are. Good HR tools can show you exactly what's happening in your business and make it easy for you to celebrate good work.

Disconnection danger zone 3:

Communicating change to the team

One thing that can make or break emotional connection inside a business is how you handle change. Both 'big picture' change – such as introducing a new hybrid working policy – as well as day-to-day changes, like requesting a holiday or giving HR your new address when you moved house. Businesses that handle change smoothly – and give staff some sense of control – will reap the engagement rewards.

Some HR software offers the option for employees to manage their own data with self-service portals. They can make holiday requests and update their personal details without you needing to step in at all. Giving people autonomy over their information makes them feel valued, trusted, and gives them a sense of shared ownership. It also reduces the burden of admin that comes with small frequent change requests, freeing managers up to focus on what matters most – your people.



Disconnection danger zone 4: Keeping employee data private

Employers store a lot of personal information about their employees, some of it highly sensitive, such as salary, religious beliefs, trade union membership, medical records, mental health status, and so on. Keeping that data safe, secure, and private is a huge responsibility. A data breach's financial and legal consequences could be enormous, but it would certainly be game over for employee trust and emotional connection.

Staying compliant with workplace regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires some businesses to rethink their approach; for example, adopting highly secure cloud-based systems. These enable you to store, maintain and update employee records easily and securely, and allow staff to see and update their own personal details while leaving you in control over who sees what.

Disconnection danger zone 5: The monthly payroll panic

If you're a business owner or finance manager with responsibility for HR, you're the one people come to with all the questions. Payslips, holiday requests, tax codes, appraisals, benefits, policies, pensions, maternity cover, sickness, training, expenses, and more. But if you've also got added responsibility for payroll, there's a certain part of every month where you're pretty much unavailable to employees. The queries pile up, answers get delayed, staff get frustrated.

Trying to DIY both HR and payroll – without the right software to take care of the admin – means you're probably not doing either thing as well as you could. Too busy getting staff paid on time to respond to their other concerns and queries, you're stuck between a rock and a hard place. To harness the emotional connection in your business, get the tech to take care of the legwork. Or, even better, outsource your payroll to experts who handle it all perfectly, freeing you up to focus your time elsewhere – like taking care of your people.



SECTION THREE

Emotional connection builds business resilience

Technology isn't always the answer to business challenges, of course. It's people that drive success, right? But increasingly, cloud-based HR software is giving small and mid-sized businesses the flexible, forward-thinking solutions they need.

This is particularly true today when you need to give employees secure and reliable access to workplace tools from remote locations, as well as keep them motivated and focused as they navigate an unpredictable situation.

From onboarding to offboarding and everything in between, an effective HR & Payroll solution can help you keep people anchored while moving ahead with technological transformation. Building their resilience fuels yours.



SECTION FOUR

What next?

If you're trying to decide whether to invest in HR and payroll solutions, you have a strong case. To complete the picture, download the other eBooks in this series:

- > **How connected HR drives culture, operations and performance**
- > **The Operationally Connected Business – how cloud-based HR & payroll software boosts efficiency and productivity without disruption**
- > **The Commercially Connected Business – how investing in affordable HR & payroll software saves time and builds value**



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IRIS offers the greatest range of specialist accountancy, financial management, human resource management, payroll and education solutions, delivered as a choice of integrated on premise and cloud-based applications.

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