

COMMUNICATING DURING COVID-19

COMMUNICATIONS BEST PRACTICES

1: Start with empathy.

While your business is a high priority for you, your stakeholders are primarily worried about themselves, their families, and their communities and then their colleagues and companies.

3: Conduct a stakeholder analysis.

Every group has different interests and needs, and information is important to different groups at different times. Determine how best to keep each group appropriately informed so they can help your business continue to operate.

5: Keep customers and partners informed.

Use your external webpage to keep customers and partners informed of updates as soon as they become available. Use email to share developments that affect them directly.

7: Consider the medium.

Difficult topics, such as layoffs, should be initially discussed by personal phone call, not by written message. When we come out the other side of this crisis, you want your employees to remember how well they were treated.

9: Offer help to your customers.

If you're in a position to make things easier for customers, then you should. Working together during these difficult times is extremely important, and will go a long way to building trust, nurturing a collaborative environment, and reducing stress.

2: Establish a centralized team to lead crisis communications.

This group should meet regularly to discuss ongoing developments and agree on plans and tactics. They should be seen by the organization as the trusted source of information.

4: Create a repository for employee information.

Answer all questions honestly and openly, then make those answers available centrally. Maintain a list in an easily accessible place with up-to-date information and FAQs. You could also consider sending out a daily email to employees with the latest updates.

6: Be proactive by developing messaging for various scenarios in advance.

The more you can develop messaging in advance for different scenarios, the better prepared you will be should they become reality. Remember to lead with empathy and reassure employees that their well-being is of utmost importance to you.

8: Know your brand, but study what your competitors and others are doing.

It's important to know your brand and stick to your company values. At the same time, you can learn a lot from other organizations. Tap into your network to make sure you're doing everything you can.

10: Communicate about the good you are doing.

If your company is giving product away or helping a particular community group, share that information via social media and put it on your website so that your efforts can be celebrated. We're all in this together, and contributions should not go unnoticed.

WHAT NOT TO DO

1: Don't communicate unless you need to.

There are a lot of messages that can wait, given the broader context. Ask yourself: Do people need to know this right now? Is this necessary? If not, don't share it.

3: Don't announce promotions or celebrate company wins externally.

Right now, when many businesses are struggling and laying people off, any external promotion should be focused on how you're helping in the fight against COVID-19. Any other messaging risks coming off as tone-deaf.

2: Don't assume you know what's on people's minds.

Speak with people and encourage them to submit questions, anonymously if they want. Ask your leadership team to listen for issues, and help them determine how to best address them.

4: Don't suggest privilege in video meetings and messages.

Many people are working from their kitchen tables with kids around them. Minimize any suggestion of privilege by choosing a modest environment for your own video background.

5: Don't expect as much of your people as you might in the office.

Recognize that people have personal obligations. Encourage them to take breaks. This will help protect their mental and physical health, and ultimately make them more productive.

At Broad Reach, we believe that every organization can improve their business outcomes by strengthening how they communicate. We work with you to build custom communications programs that tell your story, strengthen your brand and build your company's reputation.

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