



Communications Strategies for Unprecedented Times

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About MAPRagency

- MAPRagency is a full-service communications and creative services firm with offices in Boulder, Denver and Fort Collins serving clients locally, nationally and internationally.
- Doyle’s crisis communications background includes:
 - Assisted a client on actions following a major explosion (caused by a gas leak) in their headquarters building. The incident made national news.
 - Advised and assisted client HealthONE in the aftermath of the Aurora Theater Shooting.
 - Led communications for \$332,500,000 IPO for Maxtor Corporation.
 - Was a part of the PR leadership team that handled the Coors "mouse in the can" issue to a successful conclusion.
 - Served as media spokesperson for numerous industrial accidents resulting in injury and when a body washed up on company property for Coors.
 - Served as main spokesman when Coors made an unpopular label and formula change which prompted consumer boycotts (a smaller New Coke).
 - Worked on the team when Bill Coors was quoted as saying "Blacks lack the intellectual capacity to succeed." (Not as bad as it sounds, but a poor choice of words that resulted in a multi-year issue.)
 - Led PR for client The Cable Center when major donor and Cable Hall of Fame Member John Rigas was indicted on securities fraud as a part of the Adelphia Cable scandal.

OUR CAPABILITIES



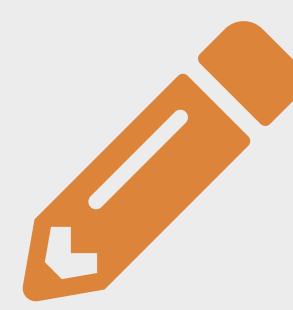
**Public and
Media Relations**



**Content
Development**



**Website
Development**



**Branding and
Creative
Services**



**Video Strategy
and Production**



**Search Engine
Optimization**



**Social Media
Strategy &
Management**



**What your
stakeholders expect.**

Communication Expectations



STEP UP! Businesses are a critical source for trusted information during the Covid-19 outbreak. Edelman conducted a 10-country study in March which confirmed the role business *must* play to meet expectations.

- **“MY EMPLOYER” IS #1:** “My employer” was the most trusted source for pandemic information: 18 points over business in general and NGOs and 27 points over government and media. Now is the time to build credibility.
- **FREQUENCY IS EXPECTED:** Employers are expected to update information regularly on COVID-19. 63 percent of employees want daily updates and 20 percent even more.
- **EMPLOYERS MUST SHARE:** Employees want clarity on everything from how many colleagues have contracted the virus (57 percent) to how it is affecting the organization (53 percent). Employees want to be informed beyond the company, including advice on travel and what can be done to stop the spread of the virus. They want email or newsletter (48 percent), posts on the company website (33 percent) and phone/video conferences (23 percent).

Communication Expectations

- **SOURCES:** Scientists and MDs are the most trusted, along with WHO and CDC officials (scores range from 68-83%). 85% of respondents said that they want to hear more from scientists and less from politicians. Nearly 60% worry the crisis is being exaggerated for political gain.
- **“MAINSTREAM NEWS #1:** The major news outlets are relied upon nearly twice as much as global health organizations (WHO) or national health organizations (CDC). Friends and family and social media lag badly. There is definite concern about fake news and false information being spread about the virus (74 percent).
- **TEAM WITH GOVERNMENT:** Neither business nor government is trusted to go it alone. There is twice as much trust in a combined business/government effort than in government combatting the virus alone (45 percent versus 20 percent). Business alone is one-quarter as trusted as government alone in fighting the virus.



Stages of a Crisis

Crisis Stages

- **THE LEAD-UP:** As in – the hurricane is coming. News cycle: what to expect and how to prepare. Opportunity to be an expert. *Note:* not all crisis have a lead-up time period.
- **THE CRISIS:** This is the actual time of the crisis. This can be seconds (e.g., an explosion or mechanical accident) or prolonged (a hurricane lasts for days; a pandemic lasts for ... ?). News cycle: facts and figures. Frequent updates with accurate figures. Updates can/should be “nothing new to report.”
- **THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH:** The actual crisis is essentially over, and recovery and/or clean-up begins. News cycle: final stats (damage, injury, etc.), causes, blame and next steps. Opportunity to analyze, show empathy for those affected, discuss rebuilding.
- **THE LONG-TERM IMPACT:** Will there be layoffs? Will regulations be enacted to prevent this from happening again? Will any charges be brought? News cycle: Analysis. What’s being done to prevent a repeat. Impact on employees/customers/neighbors/etc.



Get started.

This isn't going away by itself.



CRISIS COMMS: BEST PRACTICES

DEVELOP A PLAN – QUICKLY! *With a situation like COVID-19, this is more important than ever.* In many cases, a crisis happens and is over in hours or days. This will go on for weeks and each day brings new information. What’s your road map for communications, both internally and externally? It doesn’t have to be perfect (and it will change), but don’t start each day from scratch.

BE TIMELY: People want information, and they want it *now*. If you don’t have a fact, don’t wing it, but get out there. “We’re checking” is better than silence.

BE TRANSPARENT: Be clear about what you know and what you don’t — even if it’s bad news. If something changes, update and correct immediately. If you get caught hiding something (and you will if you do), it’s a hole you won’t get out of.





CRISIS COMMS: BEST PRACTICES

BE CONSISTENT: Are you updating all your channels? If your media update gives one number and your website shows something different, your credibility takes a hit. Things change, but update!

MONITOR DEVELOPMENTS LIKE IT'S YOUR DAY JOB:

Because it is. A keyboard and internet connection means anyone can comment and share information — correct or not, positive or negative. Watch what's happening and be prepared to react — quickly, honestly and transparently.



Building Your Crisis Plan



- **BEFORE THE CRISIS (AND WITH REGULAR UPDATES):** Compile your “Crisis Folder” and update quarterly. Items should include:
 - Key contact information 24/7. Board members, C-suite. Be sure to include things like vacation homes, etc. Also include key vendor partners: accounting firm, law firm, PEO, PR firm, etc.
 - HR contact. You may need to contact employees’ homes — make sure you have access.
 - If possible, know in advance if there are any media members in your employee circle.
 - Include up-to-date stats you might need in your kit: last quarter’s/year’s sales, number of employees, locations (and employees by location), year founded, product details.
 - Who is authorized to speak to the media for your organization? Have at least three spokespeople not members of the c-suite that can be reached 24/7.
 - Access to your website and social media. You need to make updates, so someone with all the passwords and ability to update needs to be accessible in all emergencies.
 - Have a plan for spokespeople — can’t be just your CEO.

Building Your Crisis Plan

- **DURING THE CRISIS:** It's critical you make timely, regular and factual updates. This will not always be easy, as information will likely move and change – and news may be bad.
 - Start a page on your company website for updates and include a button on your home page for the duration of the crisis. If you are overwhelmed by media or customer inquiries, you can enlist any staff member to return calls and direct callers to the website – as long as it's current!
 - Provide regular, timely updates to management, board members, etc.
 - Time/date stamp all updates and indicate when you'll make the next update.
 - An update can be (and should be) even a simple, “there is no new information. To recap what we know...”
 - Care must be taken to respect privacy and family notification protocol while also providing appropriate information as soon as possible.
 - Depending on the crisis and general situation, members of the media may try to go around you. It's important to maintain the media in a specific area.

Building Your Crisis Plan



- **IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CRISIS:** This is when the media and your other constituents begin to look for analysis and answers.
 - Share what you know when you can (legal and PR should be in lock-step at all phases).
 - If you can't disclose certain information, explain why (e.g., we're working to notify the family).
 - If something changes (and it likely will), update immediately. *And keep doing it.*
 - This is the time when accusations, rumors and lawsuits can begin. Work with your legal team to be as transparent as possible without breaking confidence.
 - Be prepared for a second crisis (executive resignations, injured could die, etc.), so be prepared for the long term.
 - Be sensitive to “business as usual.” It's easy to appear tone deaf in the aftermath of a crisis.
 - Work to keep media relationships you built during the crisis.
 - Keep an open channel to management, board members, etc. What are you being asked? What story is coming?



Use your tools.

All of them.

Your Crisis Toolbox



EMAIL: Quick, easy, inexpensive and expected. Internal and external. *Facts and fast over fancy.*

SOCIAL MEDIA: Pew Research shows 62% of U.S adults get news from social media. Three-fourths get news from e-mail or social media site updates.

OWNED MEDIA: Your website. Your social media feeds. Your blog. Use them – and make sure they're all telling the same story.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS: While physical meetings are currently off the table, webinars and similar options give you the chance to speak with audiences (employees, vendors, etc.) and have conversations. Break large audiences into manageable sub-sets for easier interaction. Key contact information 24/7. Board members, C-suite. Be sure to include things like vacation homes, etc. Also include key vendor partners: accounting firm, law firm, PEO, PR firm, etc.

MEDIA RELATIONS: One of your employees tests positive. The media calls for comment. Are you ready? (No comment won't work.) Do you have a plan to disseminate information and manage/react?



How to fail.

In five easy steps.



HOW TO FAIL

WITHHOLD OR DECEIVE: This is the quickest way to turn one crisis into two — or more.

DON'T MAKE A PLAN OR DON'T FOLLOW IT: Things move fast in a crisis. Having a plan frees up time to focus on surprises (and there will be surprises).

GO DARK: People assume no news is either (a) bad news, (b) indifference, or (c) an unwillingness to share potential bad news. Even an update that's repeated information can be reassuring.

DON'T LISTEN AND RESPOND TO FEEDBACK: People will tell you what they want to hear and let you know when they disagree. Engage (positively). *Don't hide.* If you can't share, explain why.

REFUSE TO WORK WITH THE MEDIA, SOCIAL INFLUENCERS, ETC.: Even if the news is bad, cooperating increases your chance for fair, accurate coverage. Remember the executives on *60 Minutes* who ran by cameras with trench coats over their heads? *Did you trust them?*





Questions.

Comments.

THANK YOU!

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