

Do You Have a Crisis Communications Plan in place?

Here are some considerations when assessing your audiences and stakeholders:

1. Assess your readily available communications channels. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Email
- Electronic newsletters
- Your website or a special informational landing page
- Electronic collateral material (jpeg and pdf versions of flyers, brochures, posters, infographics)
- Social Media platforms (your corporate or branded accounts and possibly even the accounts of your key executive leadership)
- Direct messaging through social media platforms
- Online Discussion groups (corporate, community, industry or customer focused)
- Professional and special interest organizations/associations
- Media
- Paid/sponsored ads/posts
- Miscellaneous internal and external communications portals

2. Framing your message:

Identify your audience(s) and stakeholder(s)

- Employees (and their families)
- Existing customers
- Past customers
- Vendors and strategic partners
- The communities you serve

Frame your message in an authentic and transparent way to each of these audiences you need to communicate with.

- Keep messages relevant
- Keep messages simple
- Be sensitive to the fact that all that are receiving/hearing your message are going through stressful and unprecedented times
- Be sensitive to how your message might be interpreted by the recipient

- Understand the differences between messaging that might be perceived as coming off as self-promotional, self-serving, opportunistic versus messaging that is useful, informative, considered “news you can use”, and/or is helpful to your audiences
- Keep messaging frequency in mind – don’t over message

3. Consider as part of your Crisis Communications Plan:

In General:

- Set up a Covid-19 communications team and/or primary communications contact.

For Your Employees:

- Set up your communication channels to effectively and efficiently communicate and reach your employees. What are these channels? How will you direct your employees and stakeholders to pay attention to these channels for messaging?
- Have you assessed your organizational and functional vulnerabilities? Identify and define how they will be handled.
- Build strategic and tactical plans to mitigate these vulnerabilities. You will need to communicate these plans authentically and transparently to your employees and relevant stakeholders.
- Identify unpreventable risk so measures can be put in place to minimize impact. How will you communicate these elements to your employees?
- This is also a time for you to review your plans for emergency employee support
- What are your remote working policies? Have these been simply and easily explained to your employees?
- Make sure your communication embraces an empathetic tone that allows for a two-way discussion so that worries and difficulties can be raised and addressed.

For Your Customers:

- Set up your communication channels to effectively and efficiently communicate. What are these channels? How will you direct your stakeholders to pay attention to these channels for messaging?
- What is your current business status? Develop a simple message that explains how you are handling the crisis and how your business is or is not operating during these challenging times. Remember that you will want to communicate these plans and information authentically and transparently.
- What safety measures have you put in place for your employees (and their families), for your customers and for the general community/public you serve? How do you want to communicate these measures?
- This is also a time for you to review your Crisis Communications plan
- Make sure your communication embraces an empathetic tone that allows for a two-way discussion so that worries and difficulties can be raised and addressed.