



Crisis Communications & Reputation Management

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TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE COMMUNICATIONS

OFFER ASSURANCE

- Let your customers* and employees know that your top priority is their health and well-being.
- You are on top of this situation and closely monitoring news/updates from local, state and national health authorities.
- Share what additional steps you're taking to protect customers and employees (e.g., increased frequency of cleaning/sanitizing public areas, making hand sanitizer available, using video conferencing in lieu of travel, providing work-from-home options).
- Be transparent about your decision-making, share what you're doing and why.

FOLLOW THE EXPERTS

- Follow government guidelines and advisories for your area
- Point your customers to official sources of information about how they can protect themselves and limit the spread of the virus
 - e.g. CDC's page on the virus. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>), local and state health authorities)

WATCH THE HERD

- Keep an eye on what similarly situated organizations are doing.
- While there is no need to be in lockstep with them, you must be strategic about following a different path than everyone else. This includes reducing operations or putting in place policies to deal with the virus AND going back to business as usual when the threat passes.

ASSESS HR POLICIES

- Review sick and leave policies, and adjust as necessary, to ensure that employees can stay home if they're sick or need to care for a family member who is sick.
- Provide options for employees to work remotely or from home.

BE PREPARED TO SHUT DOWN

- Even if health authorities do not require you to suspend operations, have a plan in place in case you decide temporarily shutting down is the best way to protect the health and well-being of your customers and employees.

BE PREPARED TO RETURN TO NORMAL

- Eventually, we need to go back to our "regularly scheduled programming." Watch for signs that it's okay to return to business as usual – government notices or cancelations of advisories, shifts in news coverage toward other topics, significant drops in new cases, etc.
- When you're going back to normal operations, tell your customers and employees what you've done to ensure their continued safety and earn an "all clear" from them.

* "Customers" means the people you serve, however you describe them.