

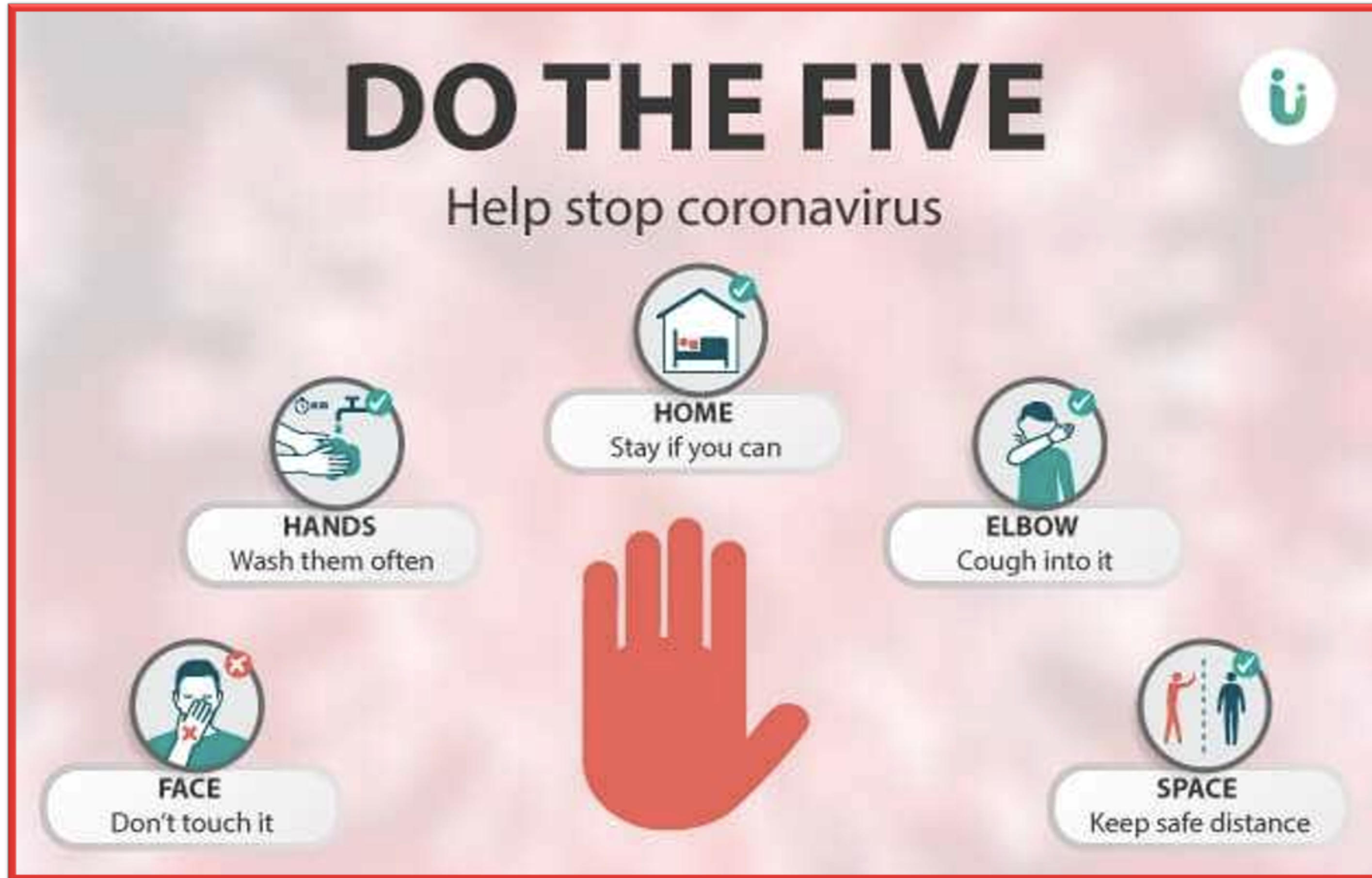
Kith

Crisis Communications & Reputation Management

KITH'S CRISIS FRAMEWORKS: REAL-WORLD APPLICATION IN THE AGE OF COVID

Hosted by Bill Coletti

Webinar#7 in Kith's COVID-19 Communications Series



CLARITY TO POWER

We want to empower you to be a strategic advisor to your CEO, President, or leadership team.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Everyone is just over it.

**“You can’t stop the waves
but you can
learn to surf.”**



South Korea is a few weeks ahead of the US and the picture there is grim, according to this WSJ report:

When meeting in an office, people will wear masks. At meals, diners will sit next to each other or in a zigzag pattern, not directly across. Hotel rooms will be ventilated for 15 minutes after travelers check out. Visitors at zoos and aquariums must stand 6 feet apart. Shouting and hugging will be discouraged at sporting events. So will high-fives...

...Kwon Sae-min, 29 years old, who works at a bakery in Seoul, is now taking shoppers' temperatures at the entrance and asking them to sanitize their hands and swipe their credit cards themselves.

*"It's a **lot of extra work** to manage customers now," Ms. Kwon said.*

WHAT WE WILL COVER:

- Recap of Kith's COVID-19 crisis response models and framework
- Deconstruct real-world responses and statements from companies who have followed the frameworks and others who have missed the mark.
- Kith Playbook on the way....

WHY USE A FRAMEWORK?

- They are lenses we can hold up to see more clearly and help create simplicity.
- Forces us to focus on what matters most: the most relevant needs, people and to-dos.
- For a framework to work we need to agree on where we stand and where we are going.



A-B-C

Always Be Communicating

This moment has changed how and how often we need to communicate.

**“I never realized how important it was to communicate and communicate often.”
Hospitality CEO**

Kith's Equation for Crisis Success

EQUATION FOR CRISIS SUCCESS



What do you stand for + Who's in charge / how decisions are made =
How quickly you communicate with your stakeholders

MISSION AND VALUES - PURPOSE

A truly powerful purpose statement is one that achieves two objectives: clearly articulating strategic goals and motivating your workforce. - HBR

- Why do we exist?
- Why are we here?
- Whose needs are we here to meet?

A great purpose statement is of limited use if your firm cannot execute on it. HBR

HBR: WHY ARE WE HERE? | BLOUNT & LEINWAND | NOV-DEC 2019 ISSUE

CHAIN OF COMMAND

An Oral History of the Day Everything Changed

On March 11, 2020, the coronavirus pandemic seemed to crystallize in the national consciousness. Americans look back on the turning point.

Highlight critical decision points for the weeks leading up to March 11 – 23.

- Who was in the room?
- Who did you call?
 - Board, Trustees, outside experts, trade group, the usual ELT?

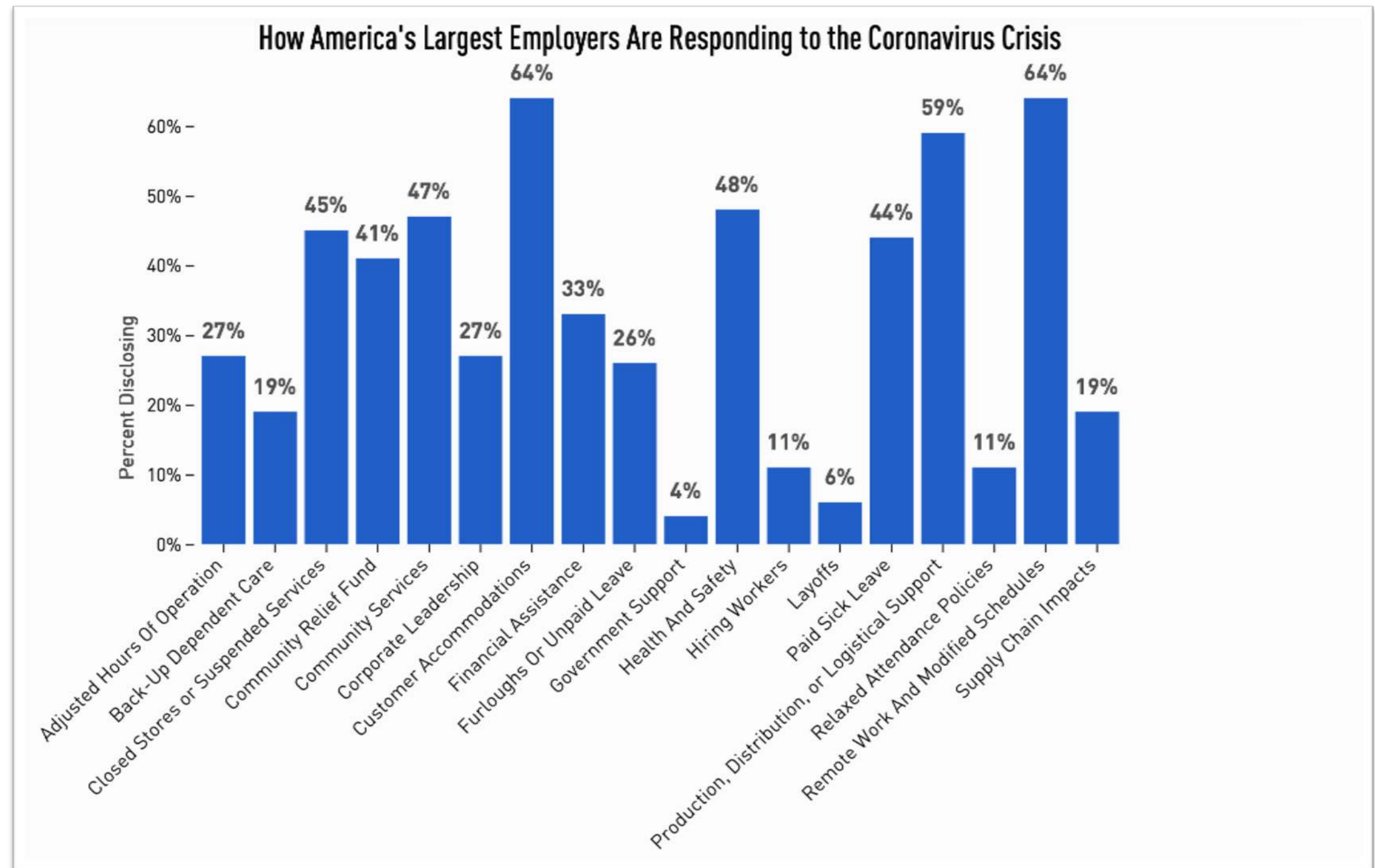
“On one day we had three plans, and in the end we just reacted.”

Large Not for Profit COO

WIRED | APRIL 2020

SPEED

HOW QUICKLY YOU COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR STAKEHOLDERS



CASE STUDY: MARRIOTT



KEY QUESTION:

In hindsight, have you been responding with speed and clear purpose?



Elements of a Good Statement

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD STATEMENT 6+2

- **Empathy** – express sincere, genuine care for anyone affected
 - **Authority** – demonstrate that an executive has ownership of this issue
 - **Transparency** – be real about what is happening (unprecedented) and how it's impacting your people; address the fact this is a dynamic and evolving situation
 - **Decisiveness** – say exactly what specific steps are being taken to mitigate the situation
 - **Reassurance** – think about who is hurt, angry or scared, and what would calm them
 - **Consistency** – explain how when and where you are going to keep the updates coming
-
- +1: Make a Hero – give shout outs to employees, first responders or others who have stepped up to make a difference
 - +1: Give Back – what steps are you taking to help the broader community

CASE STUDY: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY



Office of Communications & Marketing



TTU / Office of Communications & Marketing / Emergency Communications Center / Coronavirus Information

April 29, 2020

Dear Texas Tech University Community,

We have now been away from our campus for more than a month, working and learning remotely while we focus on the health and safety of all members of our community. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered much of our daily lives, yet I continue to witness acts of great compassion and generosity throughout our University community and our hometown. Along with our fellow Texas Tech University System institutions, we have answered the call to serve our community and state through the increased testing capabilities of our campus labs, providing PPE and emergency housing assistance to frontline healthcare workers, and serving as members of local and state task forces.

You may have seen the [recent announcement](#) that Texas Tech University graduates are among the most sought after in the country, according to a national survey of corporate recruiters. This poll of corporate recruiters ranked Texas Tech ninth in the nation and first in the state of Texas with the best-trained, educated, and able-to-succeed graduates, citing their preparedness and work ethic. This speaks to the quality and the culture of a Texas Tech University educational experience that reflects the personal connections between our students, faculty, and staff. What has traditionally distinguished Texas Tech graduates cannot be replaced by remote learning.

So, today, I want to inform you that we intend to safely resume in-person teaching, learning, and residential life for the fall 2020 semester using a phased return approach. This decision is predicated on the fact that COVID-19 cases in the City of Lubbock continue to decline and that health officials

CASE STUDY: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Empathy: Shows empathy by acknowledging the impact the pandemic has had on daily life and also recognizes that his audience has doubts and fears about returning to campus.

Authority: The president of the university is the author. He demonstrates his active participation by discussing how and what he and his team are doing.

Transparency: Outlines a timetable for decisions providing students and faculty with a definite horizon to plan accordingly. It also outlines some of the “social distancing and safety protocols” that will be in place when the campus reopens.

CASE STUDY: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Decisiveness: Declares his intent “to safely resume in-person teaching, learning and residential life for the fall 2020 semester using a phased return approach.” The lead is not buried and it makes clear the only reason reopening would be delayed would be for health and safety reasons.

Reassurance: Addresses vulnerable populations, showing a thoughtfulness that their concerns are woven into the planning process, and also reassures others that changes to the on-campus experience are for a greater good.

Consistency: Repeatedly promises more information is coming, including “plans for a phased return to campus in the coming weeks” and a pledge to “provide additional communications with more details in a timely manner.”

CASE STUDY: TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

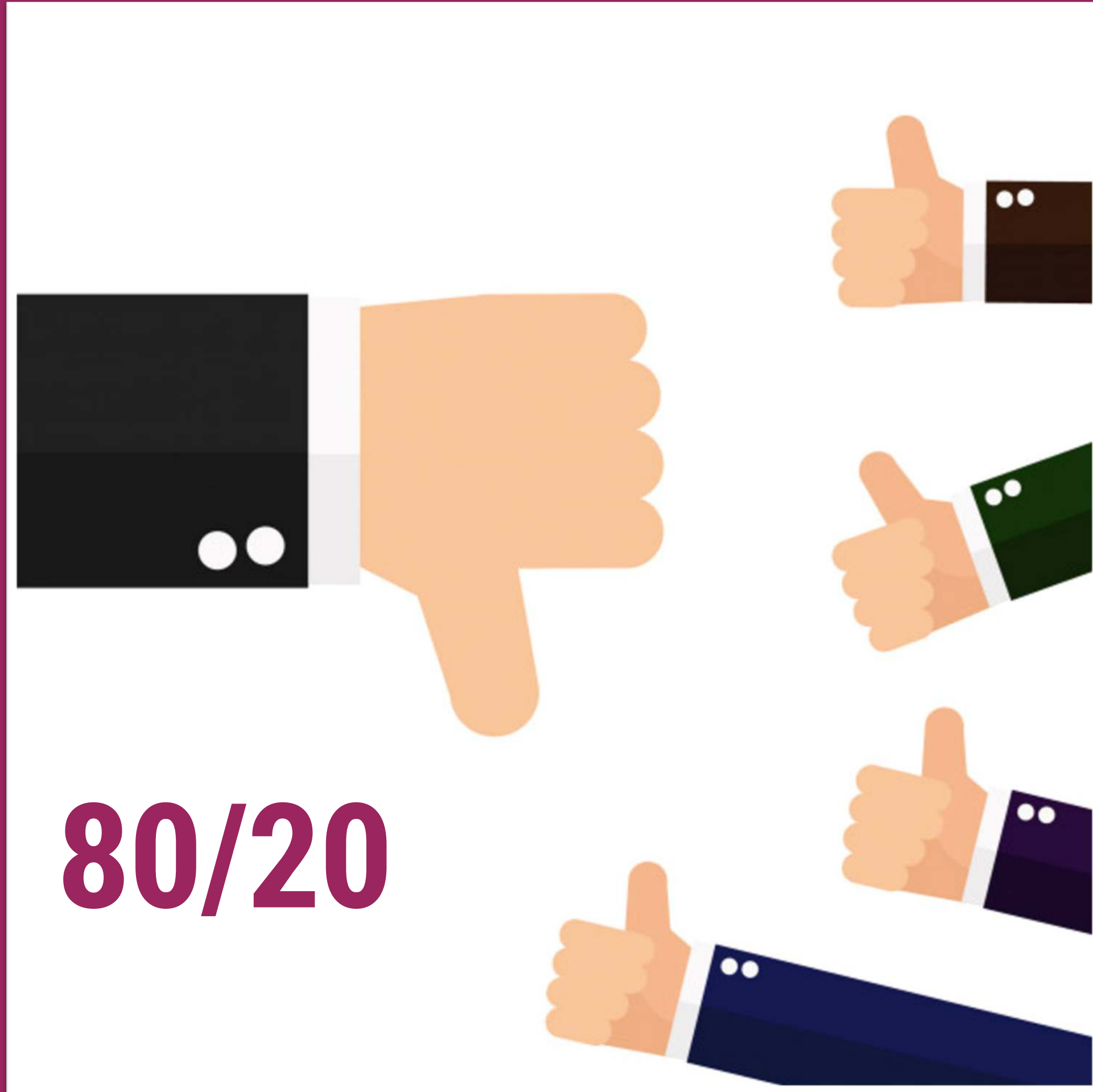
+1 Make a Hero: Schovanec wrote that he continued “to witness acts of great compassion and generosity throughout our University community and our hometown.” An opportunity was missed to highlight some of those great acts and the people behind them.

+1 Give Back: Includes several specific examples of how the university system has “answered the call to serve our community and state” including increasing its labs’ ability to perform COVID-19 tests and providing PPE and “emergency housing assistance to frontline healthcare workers.”

A QUESTION TO CONSIDER

What would reasonable people appropriately expect a responsible organization to do in this situation?

80/20



KEY QUESTION:

Are you telling a story that
reasonable people would
expect a responsible
organization to tell?



SPE RISK FRAMEWORK

SPE RISK FRAMEWORK

#1

Strategic

Risks taken
for superior
strategic returns

Companies should be prepared to
defend strategic risks when
something goes wrong,
not apologize

#2

Preventable

Risks arising from
within the company
that generate no
strategic benefits

Companies must rapidly apologize
and fix risks that could have
been prevented

#3

External

External,
uncontrollable
risks

In this case, being “in the herd” of
affected parties is the place to be.
An opportunity for leadership.

APPLYING SPE

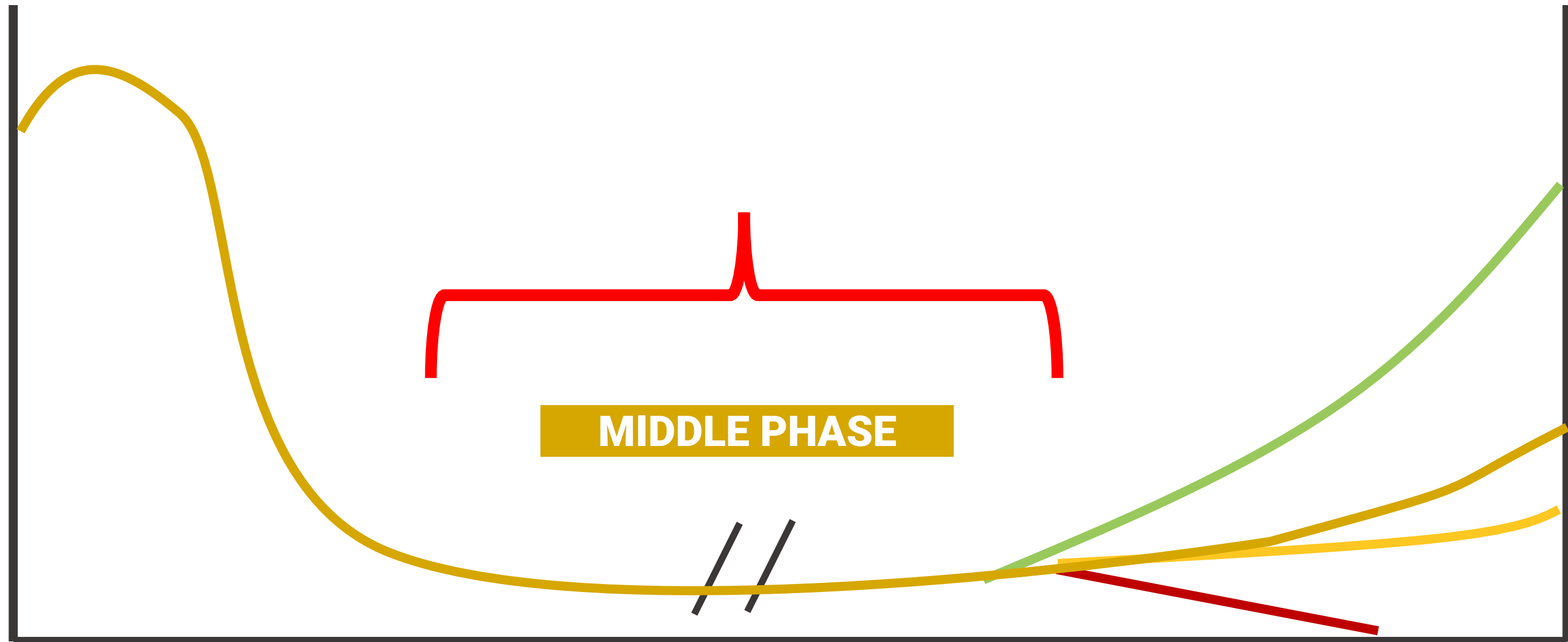
- Closing, reducing operations and changing policies on the fly were responses to **external** risks.
 - External risks come at you fast and randomly
 - Very little time to prepare or consider reputation when responding
- Keeping or eliminating “changed” policies are **strategic** risks.
 - Strategic risks arise from deliberate, proactive decisions – you see them coming
 - Reputational impacts can be considered when:
 - Leadership is making those decisions (seat at the table)
 - You need to message those decisions (no seat at the table)
- Not thinking about your reputation is a **preventable** risk.

COMING BACK CHECKLIST

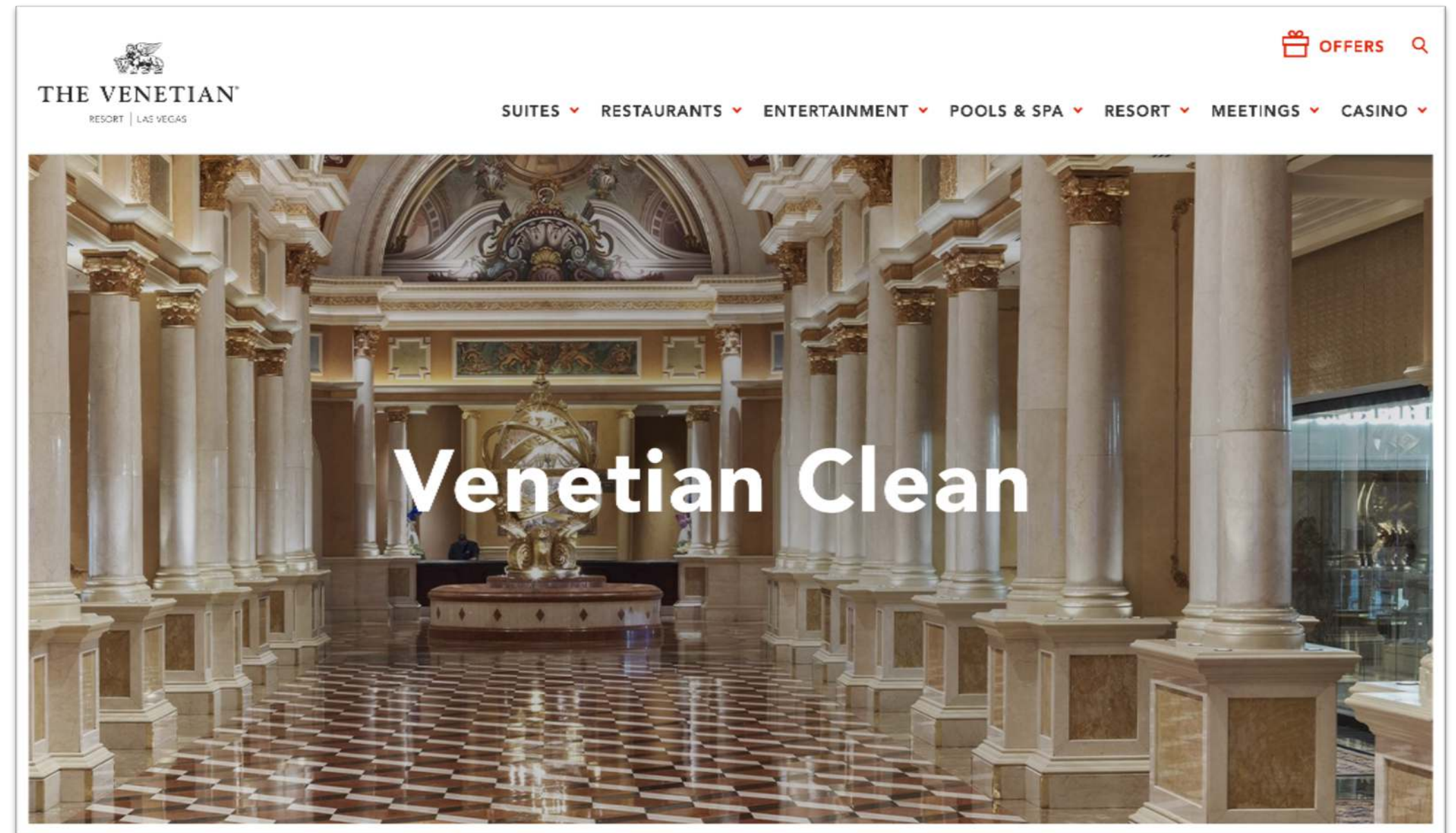
WE ARE IN THE LONG MIDDLE

INITIAL RESPONSE

COMING BACK



CASE STUDY: VENETIAN CLEAN



CASE STUDY: VENETIAN CLEAN

Tactical

- Convince those that matter – details about cleaning, meeting or exceeding official government standards,
- Tone – matter-of-fact, with a seriousness matching the concern for health & safety
- When? – doesn't say when, only what is being done and what will be done once it reopens

CASE STUDY: VENETIAN CLEAN

Operational


- Need to change customer experience – detailed depiction of a guest's stay from arrival to departure
- “Changed” policies stay – it's clear that some policies are direct results of pandemic and appear to be the new “normal”
- Customers' expectations – describes how some guest services will be different, transparent about changed experience
- Plan for positive test – included

CASE STUDY: VENETIAN CLEAN

Transformational

- New habits to regular behavior – gloves and masks, physical distancing
- “Beacon of information” – factual, transparent and thorough
- Create services – stresses commitment to an enjoyable and safe guest experience, but no real transformation in the business model
- Why not? – found ways to permit group meetings to resume when it would have been easy to simply prohibit them

CASE STUDY: 7 CLANS CASINOS

[Reopening](#) [Casinos](#) [Gaming](#) [Promotions](#) [Entertainment](#) [Hotel](#) [Dining](#) [Waterpark](#)


In response to numerous client requests, and in line with the Governor's call for a measured reopening of the state, 7 clans casinos will be following a phased approach to reopening in a very limited invitation-only, speakeasy way, starting this Saturday, May 2nd, at First Council casino (Newkirk Oklahoma) only. Our phased approach will be to open our other four casinos in various phases.

Reopening details:

First Council Casino, Newkirk, Oklahoma

- Hours: 4:00 pm – 12:00 am daily
- Your Free Play offers will be the same as they were in March
- Food and drinks will be available
- Table games will not be open
- The hotel will not be open this week, however, we anticipate opening it beginning of May 8th
- Appropriate Social Distancing and Protections will be followed

Please, for your own and everyone else's safety:
As much as we would love to see you, if you are experiencing any symptoms, please do continue to shelter in place.
Although we will have limited PPE supplies available, we ask that you bring personal PPE just as you would when going into any public venue such as the grocery store.



KEY QUESTION:

Are you looking at your world
through the eyes of the
people that matter?



SAYING HARD THINGS

Be Honest:
TRUTH v. YOUR
TRUTH



Be clear & specific:
Begin with the end in mind -
Explain the bigger picture

Be okay with feedback
and give it room

Keep lines of
communication
open

Share how this impacts you and
the team

CASE STUDY: RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE



CASE STUDY: RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Note: Affected employees were notified prior to this announcement going out, so this is the public notification, not how the employees were told.

Honest

- Second sentence is the big news: made the difficult decision to furlough a portion of our workforce
- “not a reflection of the skills, knowledge, ability, or overall job performance of furloughed employees”

CASE STUDY: RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Clear & specific

- Furlough effective May 1 through July 31
- Will reinstate based on health guidance and business needs
- Continue to provide health coverage & provision of confidential counseling services
- CARES Act unemployment benefit

Feedback

- Provides specific points of contact for employee questions and assistance

CASE STUDY: RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Show impact

- Could do more here – does not paint a clear picture of the conditions that led to the decision
- Limited to not being “an exception” to institutions struggling with financial challenges worldwide

Keep lines open

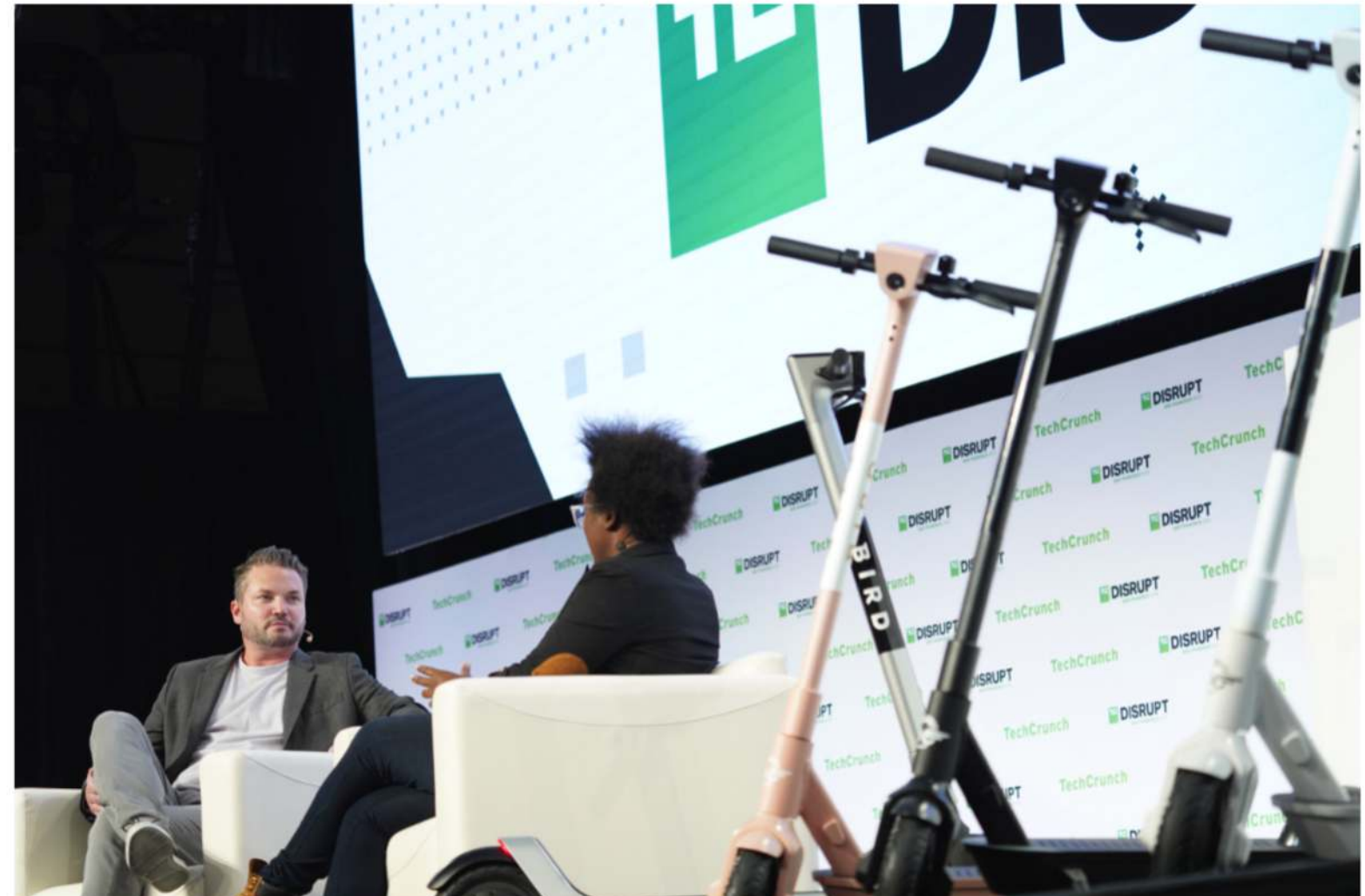
- Could do more here – does not provide a source for furloughed employees to stay up-to-date.

CASE STUDY: BIRD

Bird lays off about 30% of workforce amid COVID-19 pandemic

Megan Rose Dickey @meganrosedickey / 1:26 pm CDT • March 27, 2020

Comment



CASE STUDY: BIRD

Honest

- Most honest statement: “As you know, we just raised hundreds of millions from investors, but given all the uncertainty, we needed to ensure a cash runway to last through the end of 2021.”
- There is a decent amount of empathy expressed, but it rings a little hollow given the statement that they’re sitting on a lot of cash.

Clear & specific

- Mentions several policies to support employees during this transition
- Not much in the way of other steps they took in an effort to sustain workforce
- Leaves impression that this was an easy way out for leadership

CASE STUDY: BIRD

Feedback

- Stresses “lean on each other” and “over communicate” with each other – not with leadership beyond “your managers”
- Purpose of this: “to understand what you can do to keep us moving forward”

Show impacts to team

- Does show a glimpse into the psyche of the CEO: “Until today, there wasn’t a problem we couldn’t solve together.”
- Does not show impact beyond emotional level
- Vagueness of steps taken prior to layoffs also hurts demonstration of impact to team overall

Keep lines open

- Leaves no sentiment of that at all

KEY QUESTION:

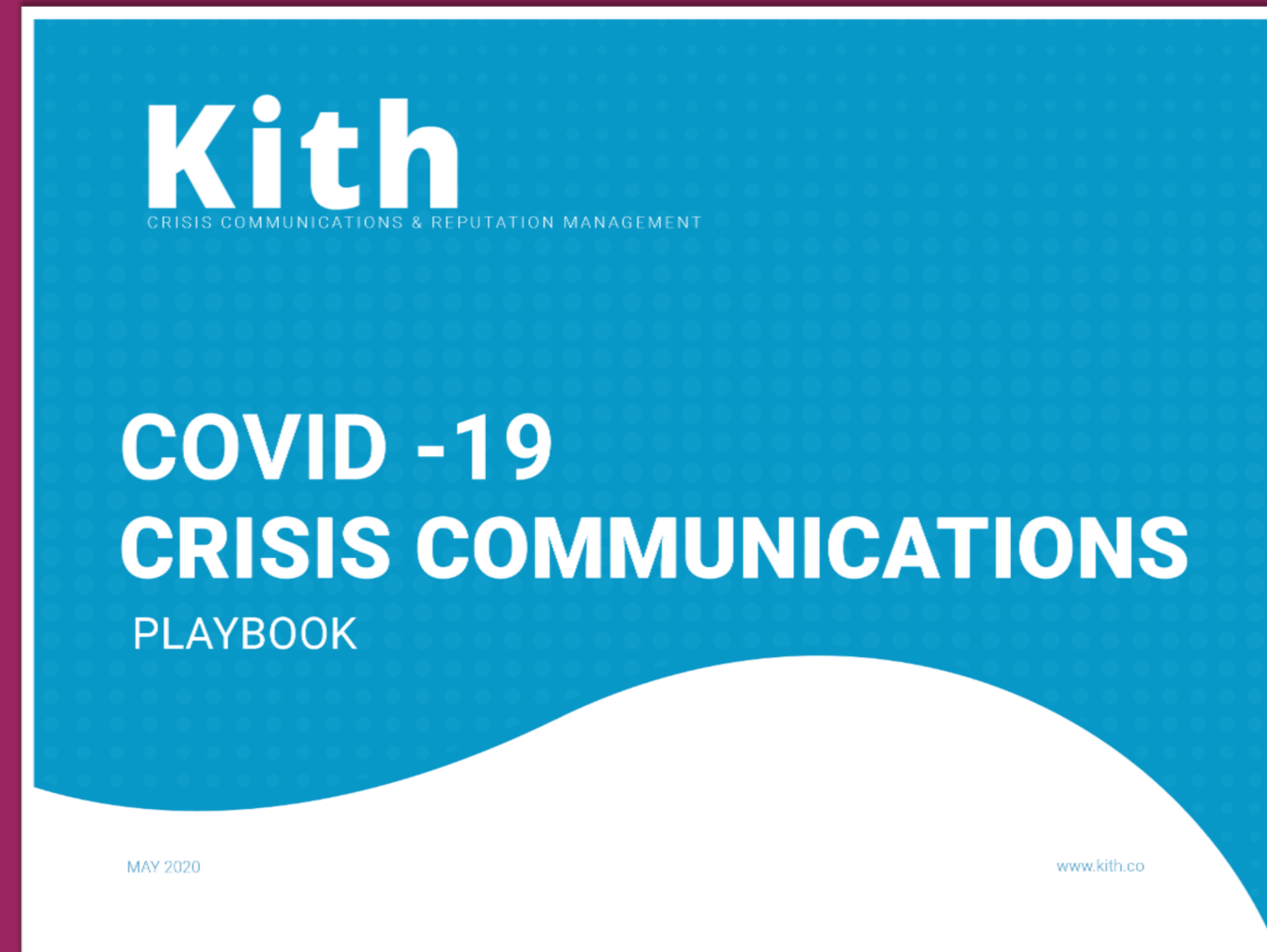
When things get tough are
you speaking like a human –
how you would want to hear
it?



WHAT WE COVERED

1. Reflect on what happened.
2. Use frameworks to simplify and explain – why and how.
3. Coming back will be bumpy and confusing – decide on your voice and cadence.

COMING SOON: KITH'S COVID-19 COMMUNICATIONS PLAYBOOK



NEXT WEEK'S WEBINAR :
CRISIS Q&A WITH BILL COLETTI
ASK US ANYTHING!

Send your questions in advance or participate live.

Q & A

Kith
THANK YOU

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