



Crisis Communications and Covid-19

AMGA Webinar | March 17, 2020





You are a trusted expert in risk management...

This is an opportunity to reinforce your reputation as a trusted guide and business owner. And to continue building client trust and relationships - because at the end of this, they're going to need to get outside and into the mountains.

Agenda

1. The situation
2. Communications framework
3. How to keep clients engaged
4. Member Q&A
5. Resources for more information

The Current Landscape

- Unprecedented cancellations
- Businesses temporarily shutting down
- Mass uncertainty
- The situation is changing daily (sometimes even hourly)
- What can we do to survive and thrive in this time of uncertainty?



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Unanticipated twists and turns will be revealed with each news cycle, and we will only have a complete picture in retrospect.

- Harvard Business Review, Lead Your Business Through the Coronavirus Crisis



Communication is more important than ever.

Clients are emotionally connected to you and your business and are looking to you for guidance and support right now. Clients want to, and need to, hear from you.

The Framework

Step 1:

Identify and prioritize your audiences

Step 2:

Agree to a goal and guiding principles

Step 3:

Identify a vehicle to communicate with and cadence

Step 4:

Be consistent and fact-based

Step 5:

Mind your channels





Step 1: **Identify and prioritize your audiences**

- Internal workforce - staff
- Internal stakeholders - contractors, athletes, brands, partners
- External stakeholders - clients, students





Step 2:

Agree to a goal and guiding principles

Set a goal to help guide and manage expectations.

- Keep employees safe
- Continue to serve customers with highest standards
- To do our part to slow community spread of the virus





Step 3:

Identify a vehicle to communicate with and cadence

- An internal newsletter, social media, website
- Tip: If you're a small company, the CEO should author
- Tip: Be consistent and timely
- Every touchpoint brings more trust with your stakeholders



Step 4 Continued: Consider the following outline

- Create context; regionalize or localize your communication
- Explain the precautionary measures being taken
- Ensure your team knows that this is a living plan
- Update on operational changes (fact-based)
- Share [CDC best practices](#)
- Provide additional reassurance of your approach



Step 5: **Mind your channels**

- Company website - this is where clients will look for your position and additional information
- Encourage communication - offer an email that consumers can use to reach out to your company
- Make sure you post an overview of how often you'll be updating the platform
- Social media - keep this fact-based, and update when you have something substantial to post.



Keep clients engaged

- Channels:
 - Newsletters
 - Social media
 - Website
- Create and share relevant content
- Video conferencing
- Trip planning updates
- Home workout programs for climbers
- Tech tips people can work on from home



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Let's do this!



Member Q&A

1. What is the 'right thing' to do when I feel a local course (AMGA SPI Course/Exam) can be run safely-meaning we can maintain social distancing and mitigate the risk- and the client still cancels and asks for a refund? What if a course requires international travel but the rest of the time we can maintain social distancing? Is the AMGA cancelling international courses?
2. What can a small boutique guide service (newer, 3 years old) do to help weather the storm of this?
3. How do I have a big, international (Canada), private trip fast approaching. Departing the end of this week. There are currently no explicit restrictions that prohibit our trip, but the writing seems to be on the wall. I have a hard time imagining how this trip will go on without major complications. The clients, a father-and-son duo, are not concerned at all. **"I think this virus thing is BS! I'm going with you guys"**. It seems that this trip is the only thing in their lives that is facing imminent or even indirect impact. And I feel like the sole messenger to them. **How do I best act as that messenger?** You think it's possible that I could explain the gravity of this situation without being lumped in with the rest of (what they see as) a fear-mongering buzz-kill society? This family has been very important clients to me, for years and years now.

Member Q&A Cont.

1. We have been communicating the CDC message and how we are doing our best to comply, what else should we be communicating with the community.
2. How best to continue doing what we do and avoid the hype. How do we separate the reality from the hype?
3. How best to deal with cancellation when, at the moment my losses would be nearly as great as my average yearly income.
4. Do you have any tips and/or ideas on how to manage comms. when we're back up and running?



List of Resources

Verde Brand Communications

- [How to respond to the COVID-19, coronavirus, and your crisis communication plan](#)
- [4 businesses communicating effectively during the COVID-19 crisis](#)

Harvard Business Review

- [Lead Your Business Through the Coronavirus Crisis](#)

Brand examples to pull from

- [Patagonia](#)
- [REI](#)
- [NOLS](#)
- [AMGA](#)
- [Climbing Wall Association](#)

Book recommendations:

[Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How to Tell Your Story in a Noisy Social World](#) - Gary Vaynerchuk

Please feel free to contact me at any time as well. As a partner with the AMGA, we are here for you!

- Email: KC@Verdepr.com



Thank you!

