

# 5 TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING THROUGH A CRISIS



*The COVID-19 global pandemic has made its way into our communities. As more organizations across the nation are faced with making difficult decisions, Agency MABU offers the following tips for communicating through this crisis.*

## 1. MAKE HEALTH & SAFETY YOUR TOP PRIORITY

Make decisions and take actions based on protecting the health and well-being of your employees, customers and others served by your organization. Although such decisions may be detrimental from a financial or operational standpoint, nothing supersedes the health and safety of your constituents or society at large. Therefore, monitor and follow the guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), State health departments and other public entities.

## 2. DON'T PANIC & OVERREACT

Avoid over-reacting or using words that carry supercharged emotion. Instead, use words that balance both the gravity of the situation along with the facts as they unfold. Refrain from making quick decisions based solely on emotion or speculation. Instead, be thorough and thoughtful in your decision making. Be incremental in your response to the situation. Therefore, you don't need to know or do everything now. Evolve and remain flexible as the situation unfolds.

### 3. ORGANIZE YOUR THOUGHTS & TEAM RESPONSE

Take time to organize your thoughts. Create an outline with your primary message, supporting messages and desired actions or outcomes of your target audiences. Also, in times of crisis communications, it's important to organize a team to execute your plan of action. The crisis team will most likely consist of owners, managers, key personnel, outside consultants and subject matter experts. Of course, not all organizations have the same amount of resources so understand that some people wear many hats and take on multiple roles.

### 4. PLAN FOR CONTINGENCIES

As with any best practice, having a plan to implement will help you respond proactively and avoid misinformation. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 Coronavirus is rising rapidly. Pre-approving the language on press release drafts and having them ready to go out will save precious time. Timely communications in conjunction with activation of the crisis communication plan or other resources are keys to the success and effectiveness of a response team.

### 5. FOCUS ON THE RAINBOW

Although much uncertainty exists today, rest assured that this storm will ultimately pass. Therefore, anticipate a rainbow. Envision your organization after the storm. Think about the needs that you and your associates are uniquely qualified to meet. Prepare for a new future. Look for the sliver lining. Be proactive in learning and adapting from the experience. Our greatest challenges often become opportunities for our greatest triumphs. Take time to reflect now on ways in which you and your organization can evolve to meet future needs and opportunities when the rainbow emerges.

*These are uncertain times, indeed. However, together we **will rise** up to meet the challenges ahead and steer the course of our communities and organizations in a way that inspires the world. Let us know if we can be of assistance to help navigate during these challenging times.*