

Virtual Meetup: A/E/Crisis Communications

Debrief: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- Q. How do you differentiate your message when so many firms are focused on prevention tactics and general “coming together” jargon?
- A. At this point, personalization and tone are key. We recommend differentiating your message by using video. In times of a crisis, your team needs to know that you are a leader, who is supportive and motivating. Incorporating video in relaying your message to your team and/or clients is one great example of rising above the many messages being sent out right now about “coming together,” because through video you can relay your body language and vocal tone.
- Q. What are some suggestions that you have for internal communications when you have half the team WFH, but half the team working in the field and/or on jobsites? A lot of our field staff feel cut off/not as supported no matter how much our communications convey, "We support you." What more can we do?
- A. We recommend hosting weekly video calls or even having video lunches with the team on the jobsites. An idea would be for this to take place during their break time or earlier in the morning as they get started on a project (almost like a team huddle). Also, we recommend directly asking the team for their feedback on how they can best be supported.
- Q. Is it possible to over-communicate? How do you gauge an appropriate frequency of communications to employees, clients, etc.?
- A. Yes, it is possible to over-communicate. During a crisis and/or emergency, we know that trust is a must in making sure that you are communicating with your internal and external stakeholders, and that the timing and channel of your communications is dependent upon the relationships with your team members and clients. With that said, you should consider incorporating a schedule to time each message going out as well as list the designated communications channel to be used, per message, in your crisis communications plan. Regarding external communications to your clients, we also recommend sending regular messages (one-to-two per week) to keep consistent touchpoints.
- Q. As a new business development professional in the industry, how would you supplement in-person meetings? I've been sending emails and trying to set up phone calls, but is there anything additional that you would recommend?

A. Yes, we recommend using Zoom to take the meetings that would be in-person to online via the use of webcam. Since the meeting would be in-person, it is important that you maintain the face-to-face connection through the use of the webcam meeting. Zoom is also great, because it is a free resource.

Q. When speaking about the use of media placements as a metric to your crisis communications strategy, is this regarding advertising, thought leadership, and/or paid opportunities?

A. Metrics, like the number of media placements (articles/interviews), and the tone of the coverage, are tangible metrics to include in your post-crisis communications internal team debrief evaluation. Crisis communications is a subset of public relations. A/E/C marketers and business developers can look at the engagement rates and overall reception of the message as tangible metrics. As discussed during the virtual meetup, looking at the engagement rates and responses (from an email and social media posts) are examples of key metrics to assess in your marketing team's evaluation.