

Preparing today for a new tomorrow.

The past two weeks have been chaotic. From massive healthcare ramp ups, government actions and reactions, to formulating business mitigation strategies on the home front, life has seemingly changed by the hour. And still is.

As in most crisis situations, however, staying calm and being decisive are the keys to not only surviving, but building results long term. Amid the unknowns, taking the right steps now is crucial. Consider these essentials.

01 Speed is everything.

Response times that worked two weeks ago no longer do. The world has moved to an hour by hour landscape where information that's needed is needed now. Respond quickly and concisely.

02 Stay online.

Don't discontinue your online advertising. [Current national research](#) found only 8% of consumers feel brands should stop advertising right now. People may not take action and convert at the rate they usually do, but that doesn't mean they have stopped researching or making decisions. When the situation starts to turn, you'll be top of mind and ahead of those who fell off the radar. Data shows that after the 2008/2009 financial crash, brands that kept a presence recovered up to *nine times faster* in stock market value than others.

03 Double-down on social.

Not posting on social media means you can't say anything wrong, right? In actuality, it's saying just the opposite. Now's definitely not the time to go dark. According to [TechCrunch](#), Facebook and Instagram have seen a 40 percent increase in usage since the onset of Covid-19. In fact, views for videos on Instagram Live and Facebook Live doubled in one week. *Your markets are on social media more than ever before*, presenting a unique opportunity to get your message across to more people, faster. This is also the time to prove yourself as the relatable, valuable resource you are. Acknowledge the current climate, offer any reassurance you can and let them know you are there to help.

04 Update your messaging. Now.

Message consistency is certainly important, but reacting to a changed environment is essential. It's an important time to be supportive and encouraging, while avoiding blatant self-promotion. If you're selling a product or service, try to frame it in terms of a value or convenience you're extending to your audience. In a time of increasing anxiety, messaging that would have been fine only days ago can now feel off-note. Pay close attention to tonality, especially in social media and advertising. If you already have your marketing in queue, review any scheduled work to make sure it matches the mood of those you're trying to reach. Even with the best of intentions, tone-deaf language can easily set your organization back.

- 05 Don't avoid the elephant in the room.**

Address the situation! Now is not the time to be silent, but it is the time to frame messages thoughtfully. Share what you are doing - include a clickable COVID button on your website noting changes you are making, team support, etc. Put a message from leadership on social platforms acknowledging the landscape and offering hope. Send an email sharing words of encouragement and how you are here to help. Celebrate the good news about team members, healthcare workers or others who you feel are making a difference.
- 06 Stay nimble.**

Watch the market, particularly for competitors or new businesses that may be meeting a need you have overlooked. How? Ask. Communicate with your clients now more than ever. Provide them with information and listen to their feedback. Monitor their behaviors. Give them an easy way to ask you questions. Share as much as you can, as often as you can.
- 07 Watch the trends.**

There is high demand right now for work from home strategies, deliveries, virtual meetings and even easily accessible entertainment. Offer suggestions that tie into what you are about, and you'll strengthen goodwill long term.
- 08 Stay in your lane.**

Don't try to shoehorn your brand into COVID 19-related stories if it doesn't fit. Instead, use this time to assess and refine your media relations efforts. Update your editorial calendar. Write new leadership bios. And be ready hit the ground running with a strong PR outreach strategy when the news cycle shifts.
- 09 Learn the lessons.**

As we go through this unprecedented chapter of our history, lessons abound. What have you learned about your people? What has your organization learned about its mission? Its policies and practices? You may discover new skills within your team, or better ways of communicating. Of course there will be stumbles, but these are also teachable events. If you're paying attention, new efficiencies may emerge.
- 10 Keep a close eye on the horizon.**

It's crucial that you and your team start planning for tomorrow now. No one knows how long this will last but it will have an end. As we enter the economic recovery phase, there will be pent up demand. *Get moving on it.* You need a plan in place right now to be ready for the opportunities when they arrive.

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