

Communicating Online in Times of Crisis

It's a tricky time to be a brand or company on social media right now. You want to reach out to your customers and maintain those relationships you've spent so long nurturing, but at the same time, you don't want to push them away with tone-deaf messaging in a time of uncertainty.

While it might seem easiest to just go radio silent, that's not the best strategy. Instead, take a closer look than usual at what you're saying and how you're saying it. Examine your language and images for anything that could be misconstrued due to the new national context.

For the perfect example: the original version of this article featured an illustration seven people sitting around a board room meeting table. They definitely weren't practicing social distancing, so we found a better image to represent the content.

Before hitting send on any communication, ask yourself if you're putting your customer first. Not just in message, but in language—are you using first-person pronouns like I and we? If you are, there's a good chance that your centering the conversation on you, not them. And that's not the look we want right now.

Here are a few things to consider that affect the tone of your message:

- **Be authentic.** Honesty in our communications is not always pretty, but it comes with a clarity that both customers and co-workers will appreciate. Resist the natural urge to be practically perfect in every way.
- **Express empathy.** With authenticity comes vulnerability, and the ability to understand each other through shared experience. Our current situation levels the playing field for everyone – let your colleagues and clients know that you understand.
- **Be there to help.** Now is not the time for the hard sales pitch. Instead, focus your message on how you can lend a hand, whether it's a customer with a billing concern or a co-worker worried about how to deal with working from home while their kids are there.



- **Live Your Purpose:** The why behind the what we do is important in an authentic marketing campaign, but now more than ever our purpose is vital to creating empathetic, genuine messages. When in doubt, fall back on your purpose and let it guide your message.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[How to Navigate Through a Global Crisis on Social Media](#)

[How To Use Social Media To Improve Crisis Communications](#)

[The Importance of Social Media in Crisis Communications](#)