

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE AGE OF COVID-19



Maria Vetrano with

embedded PR

PR experts for technology leaders

CRISIS ROADMAP

RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BRANDS

OPPORTUNITY

During this time of crisis, companies have the opportunity to respond with purpose and empathy.

TIMING

While it may seem tempting to go quiet amid uncertainty, it's important to stay visible.

Assess where you are relative to your business goals – and plan thoughtful next steps toward achieving those goals.

EVOLUTION

We are all going through an emotional experience together.

While it's hard to see on a daily basis, we're growing, and our perspectives are changing.

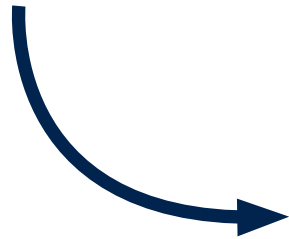
RECOVER

Companies that embrace the opportunity to empathize with customers through genuine shared feeling and prioritization of customers' needs will improve their recovery from this crisis.

THREE PHASES TO RECOVERY

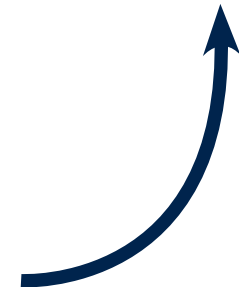
1 OUTBREAK

- Demonstrate your corporate social responsibility
- Educate your stakeholders
- Support your community



2 CONTAINMENT

- Adapt business operations
- Foster community spirit
- Communicate informative and relevant news



3 RECOVERY

- Embrace "new normal" communications
- Engage and inspire with call-to-action campaigns

PHASE 1: OUTBREAK

CUSTOMER SENTIMENT

- Experience fear and doubt
- Seek reassurance
- Consumed by updates on social media, news platforms, and messaging apps
- Look for trusted information sources
- Reduce spending
- May begin to experience some community resilience

BRAND COMMUNICATION

- Analyze your customer needs
- Review internal and external communications channels for appropriate style
- Provide your communications team and agencies with action plans
- Engage with stakeholders
- Collaborate with your industry to support the wider community

STARTING POINT: YOUR WEBSITE

Websites that don't have a note on COVID-19 seem strangely out-of-date. Tailor your messaging to connect with your community and speak to their concerns. Keep content up-to-date and relevant. Leverage content such as blog posts, social media posts, videos and customer success stories to drive traffic to your site.

Intel leads the way in this respect:



PHASE I: KEY POINTS

THIS IS NOT A TIME TO SELL; IT'S A TIME FOR SUPPORT

MONITOR

- Conduct real-time monitoring of the local situation across media
- Follow official channels for first-hand updates
- Activate social listening to understand your stakeholders' moods and needs

REVIEW

- Review internal and external communications channels for appropriate style

RESPOND

- Proactively engage with audiences
- Use simple messaging that shows care and support
- Communicate prevention and safety measures

ELEMENTS OF YOUR BRAND STRATEGY



PHASE 2: CONTAINMENT

CUSTOMER SENTIMENT

- Adapting to working from home
- Reduce spending based on real or perceived economic impact
- Respond to encouragement from brands that offer both support and clearly articulated, trustworthy content

BRAND COMMUNICATION

- Monitor brand and customer responses
- Adjust business model as needed, while staying mindful of brand values and mission
- Offer products and services that address new needs
- Show, don't tell

SHIFTING CUSTOMER TOUCHPOINTS



IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVES TO EVENTS TO ADDRESS THE NEW REALITY

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Direct well-networked PR firms to expand media engagement strategies, especially when product launches were planned during now-cancelled events.

ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Networking is the most important reason to attend a conference. Make up for this lost opportunity by engaging actively in an online community that fosters peer-to-peer discussions among your customers.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Thought leadership is another reason why people travel to conferences. Repurpose presentation content in articles, blog posts, whitepapers, email campaigns, videos.

HOLD PRODUCTIVE ONLINE MEETINGS

While many technology journalists and industry analysts work from home, and are familiar with virtual briefings, others are confined to their homes for the first time.



BEST PRACTICES

- Send agenda prior to meeting
- Mute your microphone when you're not speaking
- Turn off the camera when you need to step away
- Avoid bright windows and lighting behind you

GUIDELINES

- Nominate a host
- Invite participants carefully
- Call on people
- Involve everyone
- Keep it moving
- Share minutes with decisions, actions and owners afterwards

POPULAR PLATFORMS

[Google Hangout](#)
[Google Drive](#)
[Google DriveSlack Tips](#)
[Zoom](#)
[Skype](#)

CONDUCT MEDIA OUTREACH

You may question the appropriateness of continued media outreach. As we experience a constant stream of COVID-19 news, it can be hard to imagine that anything else is important to the media. But trade media need to continue covering the technologies and news that matters to their readers.

ACCELERATE

In challenging times like these, it is more important than ever to keep in touch with your current and potential clients via the media, to reassure them of your continued existence, support and production capability.

ADJUST

Take the pulse of the media before you pitch. As always, make sure you are offering something that's in their best interest, not just yours.

DELIVER

Trade press and analysts can no longer rely on live events that prompt news releases and press meetings. Journalists need to write stories, so we need to continue to help them know what's happening.



AN EDITOR SAYS:

From unpredictability in the electronics supply chain and falling demand for some chips to novel applications of technology used to fight the virus, the pandemic has already made a massive and immediate impact on the electronics industry, and our readers are naturally interested in staying on top of the evolving news cycle. But what hasn't changed is that they remain just as engaged in getting ongoing information about new product introductions and updates, technology trends, and best practices that they need to do their jobs—and do them well.

Karen Field, Group Content Director, FierceElectronics, Sensors Expo & Conference





AN EDITOR SAYS:

During this time, it is more important than ever for me to provide high-quality articles to the engineers who use our print and online media. One of the benefits of working in an office setting is informally trading ideas with others. This has been the story of many of the most important innovations in technology. So, it's up to our tech media to put out as much high-quality information as possible. I'm reminded of a conversation I had with an award-winning scientist who said he's been reading our magazine for 40 years because the serious quality of our articles has often stimulated him to think of new ideas for research.

So, I feel that at this moment, it's my obligation to provide a 'water cooler' for technologists of all kinds to exchange ideas. And the best way for me to do that is to publish meaty articles on the latest technology.

Ed Brown, Editor, Tech Briefs Media Group





A CLIENT SAYS:

We are finding that our PR efforts are having more significant results in this timeframe. Our articles and stories receive more prominent placement in publications, and the readership seems to be more engaged by the content. I believe the reason to be threefold: We adapt our content to the situation, publications are hungry for content during these times of general business slowdown, and many technology and business professionals are finding extra time to read their favorite publications, or their professional social media feeds.

Our PR agency has managed to place 7 articles in the top 12 positions in one particular online publication. 7 headline articles at one time! I have never before seen such enthusiastic response from the technical press to the materials we have provided. Nor have I ever before experienced so many incoming inquiries that mention that they have recently read about us.

Mark Singer, Director Marketing, Excelfore



SOCIAL MEDIA

Rediscover social media in times of social distancing, or rather physical distancing. This is the channel through which you engage directly with your community. Don't sell, support. Provide relevant up-to-date information to your audience.

UPDATE

Inform your community of news and changes in a timely open manner.

ENGAGE

Share what works for you with your community. Be positive. Invite feedback.

INFORM

Reassure your community of your continued existence, support and production capability. Provide alternatives if services cannot be provided at present time.



PHASE II: KEY POINTS

THIS IS A TIME TO SHOW, DON'T TELL

UNDERSTAND NEW REALITY

- The economy is slowing down
- Travel is restricted
- Events are cancelled
- People work from home
- We all practice social distancing

ASSESS BUSINESS IMPACT

- Anticipate how this new reality will affect your business
- Which areas are most affected, and which require new levels of service or support?

ADAPT YOUR BUSINESS

- Adapt your business model. This may require quick business-wide operational changes.
- Adapt deliverables and communications models

BRAND STRATEGY



PHASE 3: RECOVERY

CUSTOMER SENTIMENT

- Post-recovery release
- Pent-up consumption
- Excited to return to new normal
- Cautiously optimistic

BRAND COMMUNICATION

- Express appreciation and positivity in your communications
- Revisit your communications mix
- Capture opportunities for business growth
- Start with creative campaigns to inspire target audiences

THE PANDEMIC ACCELERATES TRENDS

that were already reshaping businesses, such as:

- **Factory automation**
- **Home office**
- **Big Tech become Digital Utilities**
- **Biomedical devices change healthcare monitoring, assessment and management**
- **Virtual reality/augmented reality for education and entertainment**

Industries can learn from each other, as some are more advanced in certain disciplines than others.

The semiconductor industry, for example, leads the way in factory automation.

"Take a look at the world's most complex manufacturing operations, those that produce semiconductors. Chip factories have hardly felt the impact of covid-19 at all. This is because laying down nanometre-scale transistors by the billion is far too complex for human minds to contemplate, let alone human hands to achieve, and so humans do not need to gather together on a shop floor to do it.

The world's leading contract manufacturer of semiconductors, Taiwan's TSMC, runs its most advanced facilities from central control rooms in which humans manage machines that move the silicon being engineered around in a hyperclean environment that human workers rarely visit.

For the manufacture of chips and screens, all-but-complete automation is unavoidable. In other contexts, the cost of re-engineering systems and buying new kit has kept people in the loop and on the floor. They will not vanish overnight. But covid-19 has provided a new spur for more factories to approach the machinic perfection of chip foundries."

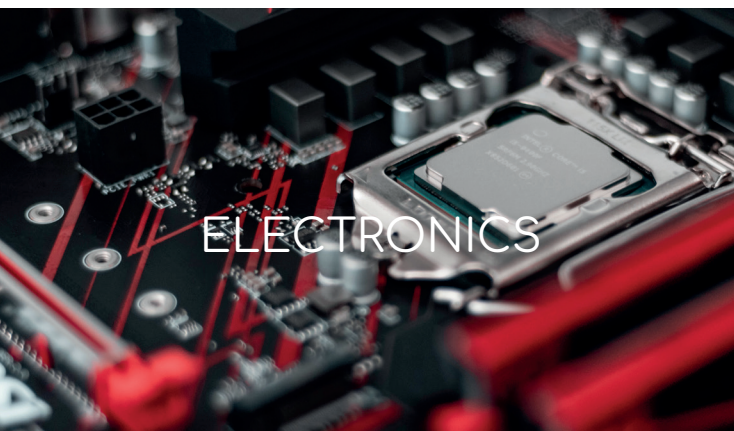
Source: The Economist, April 11, 2020

BRAND STRATEGY



WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

With a strong team of highly experienced, dedicated experts based in the world's major technology hubs, we provide a central point-of-contact for our clients' global and regional campaigns.



ELECTRONICS



MANUFACTURING



RENEWABLES

THANK YOU

We'd love to hear from you!
Contact us to discuss how
public relations can help
to sustain your business.

Maria Vetrano
Phone +1 617 876 2770
maria@vetrano.com



Anja-Maria Hastenrath
Phone +49 89 64913634-11
ah@embedded-pr.de



embedded PR
PR experts for technology leaders