COVID – 19

Communication Evaluation Checklist

Before sharing that tweet, press release, influencer note, or Facebook video, consider the below questions to determine if it is appropriate.

During these unprecedented times, content should come from the following pillars:

Help:

what kind of resources, products, services, and/or assistance are we providing during this time?

Information:

what kind of useful, reliable education, tips, practices, and information are we uniquely able to provide?

Leadership:

with an understanding of the disruption in people's lives, what confidence, advice, or inspiration can we give them?

Celebration:

how can we celebrate people in our communities, our employees, or other heroes during this time?

Before posting, ask yourself:

Relevancy

☐ **Is this communication relevant for now?**
  - While some aspects of our lives are adjusting to a new normal, others are not. Avoid talking about things that are irrelevant right now.
  - **AVOID:** topics like concerts, beauty appointments, eating out, social gatherings.

☐ **Are you acknowledging a National or Key Awareness Day?**
  - It's okay to celebrate these days, but ensure your language is sensitive to how the current times may impact the day or way that it is celebrated.

☐ **Was this content created recently?**
  - In order to ensure your content is relevant in an ever-changing situation, create content on a short lead basis when possible and avoid scheduling content. Re-evaluate whether your content is still appropriate before posting manually daily.

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Messaging

☐ **Does this align to an existing brand content pillar?**
- While you may be posting about things you normally wouldn't, it's important that your content still maps back to the overall brand strategy. Pressure test your content against your brand archetype or brand voice attributes.

☐ **Have you acclimatized the humour or fun of your content?**
- While certain brand archetypes and content will align to humour of high spirits, ensure this is tempered.
- Ensure you're not making light of the situation and are being sensitive to how it's potentially impacting your audience.
- **AVOID:** "Everyone in self isolation means no more rush hour traffic, winning!"

☐ **Have you ensured your content does not evoke fear or cause anxiety?**
- It's ok to be serious, but content should never cause your audience to feel fear, anxiety or guilt.
  This is not the time to be relying on scare tactics for sales.
- **AVOID:** "if you're not supporting your immune system with supplements right now, you could be at high risk."

☐ **Are you avoiding content that feels opportunistic?**
- Providing your audience with something useful or that would improve their day-to-day life is still okay but avoid positioning content in a way that implies that you are capitalizing on the situation.
- **AVOID:** "Online shopping is easier than ever right now, so we're offering customers 20% off all our online merchandise."

☐ **Does your copy and CTA align with social distancing practices?**
- Avoid any language that suggests people should get together or go outside.
- Ensure you're not driving your audience to buy products in-store or encouraging them to leave their home for non-essential reasons.
- Be sure that the landing page does not display any content that might be perceived as tone-deaf to the situation.
- **AVOID:** "Available at your local retailer", or "Come visit us today!"

☐ **Are you using appropriate hashtags and handles?**
- Avoid using COVID-19 hashtags and instead use more positive and optimistic ones like #StayTogether.
- If applicable, consider using relevant local and community-based hashtags like #OntarioSpirit.

☐ **Are you referencing third parties?**
- If so, be sure to keep in mind their own business changes. Some vendors may be operating differently, which could impact the consumer experience.

☐ **Have you checked your copy does not make any promises about health or safety in relation to COVID-19?**
- Avoid using language that promises your audience an outcome that cannot be guaranteed.
- **AVOID:** "Taking our vitamin C daily will protect you from COVID-19."

☐ **Are you using simple language?**
- Now more than ever it's important to use everyday language and avoid using any industry jargon or complicated explanations.

☐ **Is this content sensitive towards your front line and essential workers?**
- Ensure you are taking their concerns and experiences into consideration when posting content. For example, encouraging your audience to stay home may cause issue with your front-line workers who are unable to.

☐ **Does this content align with your stakeholder groups?**
- Ensure content will not cause conflict with other stakeholders such as regulatory bodies, government, investors, or industry partners.

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Creative

☐ **Do your visuals align with social distancing practices?**
- It's okay to show images of nuclear families, couples, or parents with children, but avoid using imagery of groups of people, particularly in public or crowded spaces. Also be sure not to use old imagery of employees that are not protected or social distancing.

☐ **Have you ensured your imagery doesn't include people wearing protective gear or masks?**
- To avoid any potential criticism, avoid using images of the general public wearing masks. Only images of medical professionals wearing masks should be used, where appropriate.

☐ **Have you checked that your imagery or thumbnails do not induce fear?**
- Avoid using imagery of close-up hands, people in groups and virus particles. All visuals should be neutral or comforting.

Channel Considerations

☐ **Is the content appropriate for this channel?**
- Some things that are appropriate on one channel, like Instagram, may not be appropriate on another channel, like LinkedIn. Be sure to evaluate your channel selections before posting.
- Also consider if this content could work on other channels, as it's important to maintain a brand presence and content cadence.

☐ **Are you cross pollinating your content?**
- If you have implemented an initiative to support your consumers, employees, or communities, it's important to re-post the initiative on the relevant channels during multiple moments in time (as some of your audience may not have seen your first post)
- Should this content be coming from your brand channel? Take into consideration if your content would be better received coming from a spokesperson's/executive's social channel and reposted by the brand channels.

☐ **Are you regularly monitoring your channel, posts and ads?**
- Be sure that your team is regularly monitoring your channels for any questions, comments or issues that may arise on one of your posts.
- Now, more than ever, timely responses from brands are needed and expected.

If your answer was NO to any of these, you should revise your content before posting.

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Notes