

REDEFINING NORMAL

Strategic Communications For the Next Phase of the Global Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has shined a spotlight on communications, and communicators will play a vital role in redefining normal as we move to the next phase of this global crisis. As governors start lifting executive orders and the economy begins its restart, it will be our job to convey the process in which this must happen, and most importantly, why it's vital to take new precautions as we head back to post-crisis routines.



Communicate the **WHY**

There's a lot of news to share. New safety protocols in your workplace. Flexible schedules to accommodate caregivers. Evolving customer requirements.

Your audience wants to know one main thing: "What does it mean for me?"

When rolling out new policies and procedures, it's important to emphasize the personal and public health benefits they'll produce. Remember to connect individuals with the bigger purpose they're serving in their roles. How do they fit into the performance of the organization, the economy and the world at large? These connections can motivate and uplift employees.

Internal Communication Comes **FIRST**

Employee communication has become crucial for connecting newly remote teams and helping preserve employee morale and workplace culture. Organizations are increasingly turning to email and social media platforms to communicate with employees. How will you communicate with your employees once they're back to work, but with presumably fewer in-person meetings? Short videos from leadership, even recorded on mobile phones, is an authentic and transparent way to communicate now and in the months that follow.

It's likely your employees have been your first communications priority. Think about how you give them that same dedicated attention when your business environment heats back up. The best organizations will keep their employees in that "first priority" position.

Create Content That's **SIMPLE + VISUAL**

Replace long words with short ones. If your industry is one often cluttered with acronyms and jargon, take this opportunity to simplify your language with employees. People are on information-overload, and they'll comprehend your message if it's simple and relevant to them.

Humans can process and absorb an image in just 13 milliseconds — 60,000 times faster than text. Break down those complex processes into infographics or short videos. When you can incorporate visual ways to deliver your message, comprehension and retention go up!

Take Time to **REFLECT**

What's working? What isn't? What messages are being well received, and which are misunderstood? Schedule time to review and reflect, then adapt your plan and messages accordingly. If you can gather feedback directly from your audience, use it to enhance your future communications.

Your Time to **SHINE**

Communicators are reporting better access to the C-suite since the pandemic hit, according to a new report from Ragan Communications, "*COVID-19's Impact on Communications.*" Sixty-seven percent say they are partnering most closely with the C-suite since the pandemic hit. In fact, many respondents (54%) say leaders have an increased appreciation for communicators' value, and 53 percent report having a "seat at the table."

This is a crucial time for communicators to be essential resources for leaders—offering an unprecedented opportunity to lead collaboration among other departments and functions and prove the value of your role in the organization.

We're Here to Help

Need advice on communicating with your employees, clients or customers? Not sure what (if anything) you should post on your social channels? Connect with us at FrancoCares@franco.com to discuss your communications strategy as employees return to work and business heats up again.



Founded in 1964, Franco is an integrated communications agency that builds strategic programs for B2B and B2C clients in a variety of industries. The company's integrated programs include a wide range of PR, marketing, digital and crisis communications counsel. Franco serves organizations in the automotive, technology, healthcare, consumer, nonprofit and professional service industries. Contact President Tina Kozak at kozak@franco.com or visit www.franco.com for more information.