



Weathering the Storm

An Action Plan for Brands
During a Crisis

Presented by



Right now, it isn't about capitalizing as a business. It's about how we can help each other.

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Continue responsible stewardship of your business in uncertain times, putting creativity to work to help your brand take insightful action and assist your communities at a time of crisis.

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All brands, regardless of industry,
are at the same crossroads

Urgent Reaction

- How to use media already in flight
- What to say, if anything at all
- How directly to address the subject, and in what tone
- Relevance of a brand's platform and planned messaging

All brands, regardless of industry,
are at the same crossroads

Responsible Proactivity

- Determining the brand's role
- "Show up or shut up"
- Where to have an impact, and who to impact
- Adapting to the changing cultural mood and consumer experience

Dos and Don'ts

Do **Be Real**

Communicate authentically with people—be honest and human, not slick/corporate. We don't have all the answers. We can't fix the problem. How CAN we assist?

Do **Be Useful**

Identify unmet needs and use our resources to find creative ways to meet them. It's about actions—not ads.

Do **Be True to the Brand**

We're a leader. How can we act like one at this time?

Dos and Don'ts

Don't **Be Opportunistic**

Doing brand actions in a way that feels solely designed to get attention or positive press during a crisis time; not actually meeting a need or adding genuine value.

Don't **Be Insensitive**

Making light of the direness of the situation (even if the audience does too). Assuming we have a role or place in the conversation that we don't.

Don't **Be Territorial**

Not doing something helpful or pitching in just because another brand already has and we won't get sole credit for it.

Pandemics follow a curve, and every region's at a different stage

	STAGE 1: WARNING	STAGE 2: SPREAD	STAGE 3: PEAK	STAGE 4: POST-PEAK	STAGE 5: RECOVERY
Situation	Outbreak begins in isolated cases	Pandemic "made real," initial spike in cases; restrictions start	Exponential rise in cases; restrictions escalate or extend	Widespread cases; restrictions are a way of life	Reduction in cases; restrictions begin to lift and life resumes

We don't have all the
answers, but here's what
we do know:

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The pandemic's progression is
extremely unpredictable.

We don't have the ability to predict
where things will be in a week,
let alone a month.

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Every region is at
a different point right now.

Therefore what's fine in one region
may be extremely insensitive
somewhere else.

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We know the cadence, not the calendar.

While we feel comfortable predicting what we'll need to do now, near-term, and further out, rapid changes to the situation mean we have to be comfortable with fluid timelines for production and launch of assets.

Nearly every brand
is responding somehow,

which means we must use our platform to add
genuine value and be there for consumers in a
way that meets a true unmet need.

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How consumers are behaving
and their sentiment changes rapidly,

meaning the levity they want today may not be the mood they're in tomorrow, which requires us to be VERY careful about how we choose to communicate.

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While we need to be true to ourselves and what we stand for, we also are at a critical, frightening moment:

The Calm Before the Storm

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What Needs Can Brands Address During This Crisis?

Immediate Needs

How can we provide reassurance and do the right things (within our power) for public health and safety?

Financial Needs

Address hardship caused by COVID-related measures and individuals with affected livelihoods

Social Impact

How can our brand fill in social gaps and losses in consumers' lives as they navigate uncertain times?

How will these needs evolve as the pandemic progresses?

	STAGE 1: WARNING	STAGE 2: SPREAD	STAGE 3: PEAK	STAGE 4: POST-PEAK	STAGE 5: RECOVERY
Immediate Context	Health and safety procedures	Resource and supply shortages			More thoughtful, discerning spending; responsibly indulging in luxury

How will these needs evolve as the pandemic progresses?

	STAGE 1: WARNING	STAGE 2: SPREAD	STAGE 3: PEAK	STAGE 4: POST-PEAK	STAGE 5: RECOVERY
Social Context	Denial, reluctance, distancing, or depersonalizing	Confused and anxious; looking for help or ways to help out	Reality sets in; people begin grappling with existential doubt/dread	Acceptance; people are seeking new ways and solutions to cope with this "new normal"	Lasting alteration of our perspective on what matters; seeking joy, appreciating life

How will these needs evolve as the pandemic progresses?

	STAGE 1: WARNING	STAGE 2: SPREAD	STAGE 3: PEAK	STAGE 4: POST-PEAK	STAGE 5: RECOVERY
Economic Context	None	Job loss and instability, particularly with hospitality and service workers	Under- or unemployment, reduced or reprioritized spending, recession		More thoughtful, discerning spending; responsibly indulging in luxury

What role does
your brand play
at each stage?

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Where to focus brand actions today:

	STAGE 1: WARNING	STAGE 2: SPREAD	STAGE 3: PEAK	STAGE 4: POST-PEAK	STAGE 5: RECOVERY
Brand Role	How will your brand reassure its employees? Prepare?	How can your brand make a real, tangible difference? Put its money where its mouth is?	How can your brand provide something good when things have been bleak for awhile?	How can your brand provide something good when things have been bleak for awhile?	How can you cautiously re-enter with optimism while adjusting brand perspective in line with relevant fallout?

Where to focus near-term planning efforts:

	STAGE 1: WARNING	STAGE 2: SPREAD	STAGE 3: PEAK	STAGE 4: POST-PEAK	STAGE 5: RECOVERY
Brand Role	How will your brand reassure its employees? Prepare?	How can your brand make a real, tangible difference? Put its money where its mouth is?	How can your brand provide something good when things have been bleak for awhile?	How can your brand provide something good when things have been bleak for awhile?	How can you cautiously re-enter with optimism while adjusting brand perspective in line with relevant fallout?

When to consider nuancing, returning to promotional campaigns:

	STAGE 1: WARNING	STAGE 2: SPREAD	STAGE 3: PEAK	STAGE 4: POST-PEAK	STAGE 5: RECOVERY
Brand Role	How will your brand reassure its employees? Prepare?	How can your brand make a real, tangible difference? Put its money where its mouth is?	How can your brand provide something good when things have been bleak for awhile?	How can your brand provide something good when things have been bleak for awhile?	How can you cautiously re-enter with optimism while adjusting brand perspective in line with relevant fallout?

The difference between being helpful and being opportunistic is all about tone

	STAGE 1: WARNING	STAGE 2: SPREAD	STAGE 3: PEAK	STAGE 4: POST-PEAK	STAGE 5: RECOVERY
Tone	N/A	Earnestness Transparency Proactivity Straightforwardness	Empathy Vulnerability Understanding Perspective	Resilience Cautious positivity Self-awareness Some levity	Reflectiveness Wisdom Togetherness A return to joy

Channel considerations

	STAGE 1: WARNING	STAGE 2: SPREAD	STAGE 3: PEAK	STAGE 4: POST-PEAK	STAGE 5: RECOVERY
Channels	None	Channels that can support outreach, impact efforts	Organic community engagement focus for authenticity	Continuing to focus on community outreach; can resume promotions or consider promoting e-comm in appropriate circumstances	Restoration of promotional media efforts; continue to focus on community engagement

What you should
expect in the future,
and how to respond:

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Now is the time to build your brand

Consumers will reward your brand for leading with its heart. Institutional marketing (brand building) should be prioritized over direct response marketing.

Your brand must work harder to stay top-of-mind

Consumers are currently forming buying habits influenced by the coronavirus quarantine - habits that **may not include you** unless you maintain awareness of your brand.

Make sure your web presence is meeting the needs of your market

Consumers of all kinds must now rely on the internet for information while your doors are closed. Providing the knowledge and engagement opportunities they're looking for is vital.

Make sure your web presence is meeting the needs of your market

- Review website content
- Update Google My Business information
- Make regular GMB posts
- E-newsletter

Stay active and intentional on social media

Connect with your audience regularly via social channels, and foster conversations and engagement using your platform.

Stay active and intentional on social media

- Facebook Live content topics:
 - » How you are adapting to the change
 - » How you are helping the community
 - » How you are looking forward to seeing your clients
- “Behind-the-scenes” content on social

Evaluate messaging and creative and make shifts where necessary

Review current and planned campaigns in light of the current circumstances, adjusting tone and intent to respond to new consumer dynamics.

Evaluate messaging and creative and make shifts where necessary

- Emphasize the human element
- Be positive, but not ignorant
- Consider internal and external stakeholders

Questions?

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Free marketing tips tailored to the Auburn area

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