



---

# **Communications Plan Template**

January 2021

The information provided by **mdg**, A Freeman Company, in this Communications Plan Template is for general information purposes only. All information is provided for you to use as a framework for your own Communications Plan.

As we think about the return of live events, it's important that we focus both on the logistics – floor plans that facilitate physical distancing, cleaning measures, hand sanitizer stations, etc. – as well as our approach to crisis communications.

We have provided a few recommendations below to help guide the communications strategy for your next live event, as well as a template for you to adopt and customize for your own events and use as a practical resource.

Best,

**Kimberly Hardcastle-Geddes**  
Chief Marketing Strategist,  
**mdg**, A Freeman Company

# Crisis Communications Planning Recommendations

## **Let participants and staff know what to expect before they arrive.**

By setting expectations in advance, you'll avoid issues later. Clearly communicate the details of enhanced health and safety measures to your attendees, your exhibitors, temporary staff and anyone else who will be involved in the onsite experience. Including a code of conduct in your registration flow and presenting it to employees can be helpful in making sure everyone's on the same page and could also come in handy, should you need to provide evidence that participants were made aware of your onsite safety measures.

## **Define roles, audiences and channels early on.**

Information travels fast, which is why you have to be able to move faster. To react as quickly as possible in the event of a crisis, make sure your team is clear on a few points early on:

- **Task assignments.** Designate a single spokesperson who will communicate with the media and make sure everyone on your team knows who's in charge of which tasks (who's monitoring social media, who's contacting key stakeholders, who's pausing scheduled content, etc.).
- **Audiences.** Know who you'll need to notify and when you'll need to notify them.
- **Channels.** You have an arsenal of communication methods at your disposal (email, phone calls, SMS, etc). Align them with your audiences to make sure you get the message across in the right way, at the right time.

## **Prepare (at least some of) your messaging ahead of time.**

Make sure you have the messaging essentials at the ready: a statement or press release, talking points and a robust Q&A to help your internal team tackle the tough questions. That way, you'll be able to tailor your drafted messaging for the specific situation and get it out the door a lot earlier than if you were starting from scratch.

Develop your messaging with your legal team or advisor to ensure that you're maintaining confidentiality, meeting your reporting obligations and being accountable and transparent without saying anything that could cause trouble later on. Also, don't forget to put the cardinal rule of marketing—know your audience—to use. By thinking about what your different audiences need—straight facts for your spokesperson, genuine compassion for attendee and exhibitor communications, etc.—you can make sure your messages resonate. While customization is definitely the way to go, anything you or your team drafts should be concise, clear, factual, express concern for your participants' well-being and explain the steps that were taken to protect their health, where appropriate.

### **Monitor and Respond.**

If a situation does arise and you need to put your plan into action, it's important to keep up on what's happening, what people are saying and what's working. Leverage social listening, Google alerts, searches for key terms and any other metrics or tools that will help your team monitor the current sentiment and developments, as well as determine which messages are most effective. Every situation is different, which is why staying agile and proactive is critical.

### **Evaluate.**

All experiences are learning experiences. After the dust settles, call a team meeting and, together, look at what happened, which channels and messages worked best and what could have been done better. Hopefully there isn't a "next time," but if there is, you'll be even better prepared.

---

## **Crisis Communications Plan Template**

### **Our Health & Safety Plan Details**

**Health and Safety Component (examples)** Check all that apply

- Health Questionnaire / Self-Assessment
- Touchless Registration
- Temperature Screenings
- Masks Required
- Masks Provided
- Social Distancing (with clear signage)
- Testing On-Site
- Pandemic Compliance Officer
- Medical Personnel On-Site
- Enhanced Sanitation Services
- Hand Sanitizer / Hand Wash Stations
- Contract Tracing
- Transparent Barriers
- One Way Aisles
- Other

## Role Definition

Name	Role (examples)	Cell Phone	Email Address
	*Media Spokesperson		
	*Monitoring Social		
	*Contacting Stakeholders		
	*Pausing Scheduled Content		
	*Other		

## Audiences

Audience Type (examples)	Primary Communication Channel	Secondary Communications Channel
Staff		
Registrants		
Attendees		
Exhibitors		
Sponsors		
Other		

## Prepared Messaging Statements

H&S Message (examples)	Audience Type	Drafted	Approved by Legal
Acquisition	Exhibitor		
Acquisition	Registrants		
Confirmation	Exhibitor		
Confirmation	Registrants		
Your Safety / Our Plan	Exhibitors		
Your Safety / Our Plan	Registrants		
Know Before You Go	Exhibitors		
Know Before You Go	Registrants		
COVID Exposure	All		
Survey / Thank you	Attendees		
Survey/ Thank you	Exhibitors		
COVID-19 Post Report	All		
Other			

Need help developing a customized plan for your organization? The public relations experts at **mdg** can help. Contact [Kimberly Hardcastle](#) for a no-obligation consultation.