

Are you ready?

LAUNCH  
MARKETING

# B2B Crisis Marketing Toolkit

A GUIDE TO COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING  
STRATEGIES FOR TURBULENT TIMES

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# Before You Begin...

First and foremost, we at Launch Marketing hope you and your loved ones are safe. If any of you are directly affected by the novel coronavirus, our hearts and thoughts are with you.

COVID-19 is a highly unusual and unexpected disruption to our daily personal and professional lives. To help adapt to these changes as best as possible, we compiled our years of expertise into a communication and marketing toolkit that addresses the new challenges that are coming with these uncertain times.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide B2B companies with strategies, tips and resources that will help them respond in this uncharted and fluctuating environment.



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

Not sure where to begin? [Making Adjustments in Turbulent Times](#) is a good resource to help get you started.



# 4 Phases of Crisis Marketing

The following is a guide to help you and your team tackle the shifts that have happened in the market. We've broken the steps into phases to help ease the uncertainty in such an unprecedented time. To keep up with the rapidly changing pace of our current global health crisis, these phases are meant to be executed over a few days or, potentially, hours.

**Phase 1—Examination:** Review your current plans, content and goals.

**Phase 2—Direction and Motivation:** Practice agility as you guide your team to navigate the fluctuating new normal.

**Phase 3—Modification and Action:** Begin to modify your plans and content. This will involve moving some campaigns, rewriting others and creating new ones to meet the constantly shifting environment.

**Phase 4—Evaluation:** Evaluate how your messaging is resonating with audiences.



A magnifying glass is positioned over several wooden blocks, each featuring a stylized human figure icon. The scene is set against a light blue background. The magnifying glass's lens is centered on one of the blocks, which is in sharp focus, while the others are blurred. The overall image has a soft, professional aesthetic.

# Examination

PHASE 1

# Examination

Examining your current marketing plan and all its components is the first step when dealing with an unexpected crisis. While COVID-19 is not a standard company crisis, now is the time to get your organization's name out to the public in a positive and helpful manner.

Three crucial areas to examine before getting started:

1. Personas
2. Content and Calendars
3. Goals



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

Does this crisis find your team stretched too thin or do you need additional skillsets to meet this challenge? Read: [How Leaders Bridge Unexpected \(and Expected\) Gaps in Marketing Talent.](#)



# Personas

You and your team shouldn't need to create new personas for the COVID-19 circumstance. Instead, simply reexamine existing personas, their needs and how best to communicate with them. To do this, take your existing profiles and think about how COVID-19 is impacting each one.

## Three key questions to ask yourself include:

1. What persona needs, wants and pain points are new, which remain the same and which have shifted in priority?
2. What offers and terms should be introduced, emphasized or extended to make it easier for audiences to do business with you now?
3. What do your personas need to know about the current state of your business operations?

Once you've answered these questions, you can begin to craft new messaging on how your service or product can help.



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

We've detailed how you can start this process in our blog [Building on Buyer Personas When Needs Suddenly Shift.](#)

You can also deep dive into [effectively developing and building personas,](#) as well as [using personas in campaigns.](#)



# Content and Calendars

In addition to updating your personas, it's important to review your content and social calendars, as well as the messaging you had in the upcoming queue. You'll want to identify which campaigns need to move out, which need to be rewritten and if you need a new campaign. We'll go further into the specifics on how to modify your content in Phase 3.

## 5 questions to ask as you start the process:

1. Which campaigns/deliverables in your upcoming queue can be rewritten to address COVID-19?
2. How can you adjust your content to resonate with your audience pain points?
3. How will you uniquely address these pain points?
4. What in your plan can be digitally focused?
5. How will you and your team measure, reassess and put new plans into action?



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

Curious how other organizations are handling this crisis? AdAge is compiling [marketers' responses to coronavirus](#).





# Goals

In this phase, you will also need to reconsider your marketing and sales goals during this time. This does not mean all is lost. *You may already know that your service or product fits well into this new normal, but if you are not quite sure, determine:*

1. Does any part of your product or service make remote working easier, more secure or boost performance?
2. Does it help people connect virtually or do personal business from home?
3. What are the key differentiators and how are they enabling people to live and work more easily or comfortably right now?
4. Does it positively affect any part of healthcare or first responder work or lifestyle?



## QUICK TIP:

As you reschedule your campaigns and strategize how you can rewrite or switch gears, realistically set new goals for the next 3 months.



A golden maze with a path leading to a coin with the number 1.

# Direction and Motivation

PHASE 2

# Direction and Motivation

Impactful, positive leadership is always critical to success. It's not just executives and managers that affect the organization, each member of your team can step-up to the plate and be a leader in their own way. Companies can use leadership in two very impactful ways during this time.

1. Demonstrate resiliency by providing optimistic leadership and sturdy guidance.
  - **Unify/reunify your team regularly.** Have daily huddles to ensure your team feels confident and prepared.
  - **Show agility.** It is imperative to be an agile leader, showing your team how to switch efforts as needed.
  - **Delegate and motivate.** Call your team to action and rely on them. Most people want to help and feel valued if they are part of the solution.
  - **Give kudos.** If teams or individuals feel undervalued, they are less likely to produce. It should be a team effort.



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

Get inspired with Management Psychology Groups article: [Leading in Tough Times.](#)



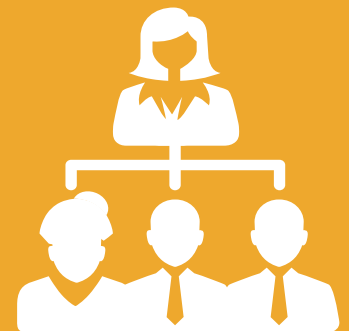
# Direction and Motivation

2. Use social platforms and email to share your insight and knowledge.
  - **Share.** Find educational and informational pieces, both about your industry and what is going on right now and pass along that information to your peers.
  - **Generate.** You and your team can write internal blogs, articles or other pieces on a myriad of subjects, relating to your industry and how COVID-19 is effecting your trade.
  - **Connect.** Use [LinkedIn](#) to connect with other leaders in your industry and share ideas and resources.
  - **Engage.** Don't just share, make sure you engage. Comment, like and share relevant and thought-provoking content.



**ADDITIONAL  
TOOLS:**

Need more insight?  
Read our [Guide  
to Generating  
Leads with  
Thought Leadership.](#)





# Modification

PHASE 3

# Content and Calendars

When developing new or revised campaign content, use COVID-19 as an example of how your product or service can better help with business or personal needs during times like these.

There are 4Rs of crisis marketing communications:

1. Reevaluate
2. Reschedule
3. Rewrite
4. Reunify and Reassess



**ADDITIONAL  
TOOLS:**

Learn more about  
the **4 Rs of Crisis  
Communication.**



# 1. Reevaluate

There are a wide array of B2B companies in the market today, each with its own set of unique offerings and abilities. Revisit your company's messaging and positioning and focus on how your product or service can help in the current circumstances. For example, does your product or service make working remote more convenient, secure and/or enhances performance? There is no better opportunity to personalize and tailor your content to highlight how your company can help others during the current circumstances.

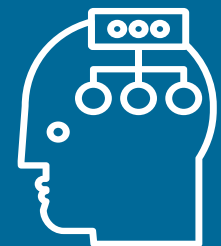
Now could be a time to evaluate if you are able to offer any discount, promotion or other financial assistance to current clients or to consider free trials and promotions for new customers.



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

As you rewrite, remember to keep your new messages on brand.

Boost results with personalization and 3 key personalization strategies.



## 2. Reschedule

Review your current content calendar and identify the key milestones that were planned in the next few weeks and months. You'll need to strategize which campaigns can move and what timeline makes the most sense for them. You'll also need to determine which content can be rewritten and shared quickly.

### Content going out now should:

1. Focus on caring, shared empathy and offers of help.
2. Address audience pain points and how your product or service can help.
3. Reflect current circumstances and approach customers and prospects with sensitivity and flexibility.



### ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

There are numerous resources to help you create a **content calendar** if you need assistance.





# 3. Rewrite

Any communications going out within the first few weeks of the onset of COVID-19 should first read as a message of compassion. If you have not yet done that, don't worry, it's not too late to start. Right now, it is best to avoid including sales messages or CTAs. Trying too hard or soft selling at this point could come off unfavorably with your audience and hinder your efforts. You are simply marketing a message of care and concern. If your company decided they can offer a financial promotion or extend other types of help in the situation, you could make that part of your communication.

After you've reevaluated your messaging and positioning to see how you could focus your content, your team should ensure your content focuses on how your company's product or service can help.



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

Zoom is an example of a B2B SaaS platform that has taken steps to keep their audiences thoughtfully informed, while marketing their solutions.



## 4. Reunify and Reasses

Come together, albeit virtually, and keep coming together as a team on a consistent, possibly daily, basis. Because these are uncertain times, your plans and messaging may need to change more than once. It is imperative that leaders demonstrate flexibility and ask their team to do the same.

Keep your finger on the pulse of what is happening in the world and in your company, as well as the needs of your audience and your team. Reassess each week the current conditions, tactics, metrics and messages and adjust them as needed to help your company move forward and continue to produce content that compels and enlightens your audience.



### ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

Review the principles needed for coordinating a successful team.





# Evaluation

PHASE 4

# Evaluate

Evaluating and reevaluating is a normal part of any marketing plan. As you navigate the market and environment, reassess how your messaging and campaigns are going over and what is developing each day with COVID-19.

Flexibility will be a key word and trait during this time. Remaining agile with your team, your approach and your plan will be vital.

It's essential to evaluate what content and tactics are resonating and keep your finger on the pulse of what is happening around you. Reevaluate as needed to match the mood of the environment and ensure your audience is responding positively to your messaging.



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

Learn why [focusing on long-term ROI](#) and fostering the customer lifecycle ultimately wins the race.





# Digital Connection

THINKING OUTSIDE THE DIGITAL BOX

# Making a Digital Connection

Your marketing plan and campaigns most likely had strong digital components or were digitally focused. However, digital will now be a key part of our everyday work and personal lives. Think outside the digital box during this new normal.

## 5 ways to make a strong digital connection:

1. Use video/web conferencing and chat
2. Utilize webinars
3. Strategically post on social media
4. Personalize email
5. Leverage your website



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

Way to make a digital connection:

1. Create digital empathy
2. Review digital marketing best practices



# 1. Use Video/Web Conferencing and Chat

No one has ever said the solution to something is more meetings; however, keeping connected with your team, customers and prospects should be a high priority. Customers, current and future, appreciate easily accessible channels where they can ask questions and get answers, from the convenience of where they reside. While some people prefer to meet in person, these platforms offer a suitable alternative to keep business moving. Remind yourself and your team that almost everyone is currently remote and working. With video conferencing, the lack of in person meetings should not impede any sales or marketing conversations and deals.



**ADDITIONAL  
TOOLS:**

[Think Outside  
the Digital Box:  
Benefits of a Digital  
Connection During  
a Global Pandemic](#)



## 2. Utilize Webinars

Canceled in-person events, conferences and prospect meetings do not mean you have to cancel your presentation or promotion plans. Utilize webinars to engage with your customers and prospects while ensuring your audience is participating in a safe location. Audiences right now want to keep working, learning, connecting and growing, and luckily webinars help them access all four.

**Webinars are a great way to:**

1. Promote your product or service to a targeted audience
2. Promote discourse
3. Offer thought leadership
4. Personalize your organization



### ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

Webinars can transform into a virtual classroom or showroom for your business.





# 3. Post Strategically on Social Media

Social media is an amazing medium considering how many ways it can be used.

Use social media to do two essential things:

1. Establish yourself and your company as a leader
2. Promote your corporate culture

Each platform offers a different opportunity and audience reach. Don't make the mistake of crafting one message and posting it over all mediums. Each platform should have slightly revised content of each message to match the tone and audience. The four platforms that still see the most success are LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. LinkedIn and Twitter will be your primary B2B focus. While Facebook and Instagram will also address B2B content, these are great avenues to showcase company culture.



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

Learn why your B2B should be using social media or if you need a best practices refresher.



# 4. Personalize Email

Use the digital empathy strategy and create an empathetic email. One way to begin to create empathy is through connection and personalization. Personalized emails have 6x higher transaction rate.

Studies have found numerous benefits to personalizing marketing, including the top five benefits of personalization which are:

1. Increased visitor engagement (55%)
2. Improved customer experience (55%)
3. Improved brand perception (39%)
4. Increased conversion rates (51%)
5. Increased lead gen and customer acquisition (46%)

Personalizing your messages will add a personal touch that is appreciated now more than ever.



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

Explore why personalizing your emails helps to revamp your strategy.



# 5. Leverage Your Website

With all the applications, programs, platforms and mediums in our daily lives, sometimes the website can get overlooked as the immediate solution.

You can leverage your website, and put your audience at ease, by adding something as simple as:

1. A crisis communication page
2. An FAQ page related to how your product or service can help or special information regarding current circumstances of your organization and operations
3. A pop-up or banner with messaging that addresses the situation
4. Easy to find contact information or form



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

Personalization is important for your website content as well.

Platforms like Unbounce can help you easily create pop-ups for your website.



A photograph of two hands holding a small, folded paper airplane. The hands are positioned on either side of the airplane, with fingers gently gripping it. The background is a solid, vibrant green. The text "We're in This Together" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

**We're in This Together**

# ...In Closing

None of us are sure how long the COVID-19 situation will last or how it will change over the next few weeks or even months, but if you follow these guidelines and use them as needed, you should find your marketing plan and your company in good standing.

Almost all B2B work can be done remotely to ensure you are keeping yourself, your loved ones and your team healthy and safe. In an ever changing and scary environment, the CDC has released a [guide to coping with COVID-19 stress](#). There are also many other resources, like [Psychology Today](#), that help with self-care and how to deal with this unprecedented anxiety.



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

If you find you need help adjusting your marketing plan or are low on resources, [contact us](#) to see how we can help.

The ABA put together a free [mental health resource guide](#) to help manage the onset or rise in anxiety you might feel during this crisis.



# Ways to Help

- Research if your local schools are taking offers to help make and/or distribute sack lunches to children.
- Support small businesses and restaurants with online orders, take-out or gift certificates.
- Check apps like Next Door to see if anyone near you needs help.
- Donate to funds dedicated to displaced workers.
- Donate food, money or time to your local food bank.
- Donate blankets, towels, food, money or time to your local animal shelter, or foster an animal (or two).
- Take an online fitness class from a local studio. It keeps the business open, the teachers employed and you in your best health.
- Honor those going above and beyond during these trying times: first responders, healthcare workers, truck drivers, customer service employees and farmers.



## ADDITIONAL TOOLS:

[Find inspiration in other organizations.](#)

Give [blood or plasma](#) if you are able.

Coronavirus affects animals as well, see more at [Humane Society COVID-19 fund.](#)



# We are here for you.

Do you need help developing or changing your messaging or marketing plans due to COVID-19. [Connect with us](#) or call 512.495.9900.

 [Schedule a Consultation Now](#)

## About Launch Marketing

Launch Marketing is a boutique business-to-business (B2B) marketing firm in Austin, Texas that provides turn-key services focused on generating leads and driving revenue. The team brings a breadth of senior-level expertise with a full-service approach to help clients maximize the impact of marketing for their business. Since 2001, they have helped countless clients successfully launch their company, dive into new markets, introduce new products, and generate more qualified leads.

For more information, visit [www.launch-marketing.com](http://www.launch-marketing.com).

