

bread & Butter

Best Practices as Related to COVID-19

March 13, 2020

We're here for you!

As our partner, and given the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19, we wanted to touch base to reassure you that we are here to provide support, to listen, to help and to provide strategic recommendations as to how to communicate with media and your community via social media. As a member of your team, we want to help navigate news cycle and consumer response needs that are changing hourly. We understand that you may be experiencing a myriad of questions and challenges. So now more than ever, let's work together to develop strategies that will ensure continued success and achievement of your goals long after we're through this current situation.

Your team here at bread & Butter is working hard to support you, brainstorming inventive ideas, solutions and media strategies that will help you plan for potential short-term losses while also safeguarding your bottom line for the long-term. Please lean on us, utilize our expertise and our direct connections with media and influencers, and involve us in key decision-making that may impact the future of your business. We have more than 13 years of experience in culinary, travel and hospitality PR and have handled difficult situations of all kinds. We want to reassure you that COVID-19 is a storm that we can weather together.

We have created the following guidelines to make sure you and your team feel supported, informed and prepared. We'll remain in close contact and are here to help you work through all the ways that COVID-19 is impacting your business.

Crisis Communications Overview

While you may never have utilized bread & Butter for crisis management, we have extensive experience developing and executing successful crisis programs and campaigns that are reactive to the industry's most complex challenges.

In this situation we have and will continue to develop and execute:

1. Immediate action plans
2. Strategic, real-time consulting
3. Brand messaging
4. Social media monitoring and community management, digital marketing and influencer engagement
5. PR strategy

What We're Doing

- Studying the way the media are shifting and reporting trends to better identify how COVID-19 may affect your business at this time. We will share trends and findings as they relate to you and your business as necessary and/or appropriate.
- Contacting the CVB in your markets and collaborating on new initiatives to help local tourism efforts.
- Shifting to hyperlocal outreach. As we're seeing, travel has taken a dip and people are staying put. We will be focusing on local media and influencers while working to create ideas that will open your doors to the people of your market in ways you may not have considered before.
- Dedicating efforts that get the local and feeder market consumers into the building for a drink, meal or stay.
- Thought leadership, ensuring you and your brand are positioned positively, as appropriate. Examples: "What's your opinion on how travel bounces back; what's the future of the cruise industry; should events still take place?"
- Creating forward-looking pitches in anticipation of a decline in cases or vaccine breakthrough.
- Monitoring and listening to social media messages, working to answer community within your brand guidelines.

What Media Are Asking

Below is a running list of stories that media have requested comment on relating to the current state of affairs. This is not to say they are not covering their daily beat, but COVID-19 questions and answers are finding ways into their coverage.

QUESTIONS WE'RE BEING ASKED

- "What safety and hygiene measures are being implemented at hotels, restaurants, gatherings, etc.?"
- "What are your clients doing to step up their efforts with regard to sanitization at their respective locations?"
- "Are you continuing to pay hourly employees if they are unable to report to work?"
- "What are your clients advising employees who feel ill?"
- "Are restaurants, who don't normally offer delivery, now expanding to include this option?"
- "In this age of COVID-19 threats, does anyone have any new, value-driven travel deals intended to inspire people to get up and go?"
- "How are you addressing cancellations? Are you waiving fees? Refunding travel?"
- "Are your clients beginning to cross-train staff for multiple positions in the event they are short-staffed due to COVID-19?"
- "How are you dealing with employees who require travel to conduct their business? Has this been cancelled, postponed, done via video chat, etc.?"
- "What recommendations are insurance agencies providing to event organizers?"

Transparency is Critical

To advise you appropriately, we need to have honest and open conversations about your businesses and the realities of the current environment. Everything shared will be in confidence—your transparency will remain with our team.

- Provide us with real-time feedback about what you are seeing and hearing from employees and patrons.
- In some cases, provide honest responses to questions from consumers to rally support (i.e. “we are slower than usual and do attribute this to the public’s confusion whether or not it’s a good idea to dine out.”).
- Keep us updated on negative business effects - ex. significant drop in sales or cancellation increases.
- Provide immediate notice of all media inquiries for interviews or comments and the need for internal/external statements.
- Alert staff that under NO CIRCUMSTANCES should they discuss your business with members of the media or share any related updates on their personal social media channels.
- Share all internal and external communications with us prior to dissemination.
- Flag any additional trends you are noticing.

Social Media

As social media is the most immediate form of communication, special sensitivity must be observed as it relates to messaging and influencer programming.

- On a case-by-case basis, we're evaluating if and where COVID-19 statements need to be made or acknowledged.
- We will closely monitor user engagement and immediately flag any comments and concerns.
- Review current social strategy and adjust as needed in visuals and messaging.
- Be ready to immediately hit pause on any content based on the news cycle.
- Monitor all competitors and their ongoing social media activity.
- Determine the ROI in a paid strategy with the current climate in mind and changing consumer trends.
- Communicate with influencers (paid and in-kind) and determine strategic next steps in coverage.

Sample Statements

With the goal of being proactive, we have prepared sample statements:

Any immediate inquiries that warrant a response:

- (RESTAURANT) is closely monitoring COVID-19 and complying with health department guidelines in (LOCATION / EACH OF OUR MARKETS) to ensure the safety and wellness of our guests and employees. Currently, (ALL RESTAURANTS/ RESTAURANT NAME) remain open during normal hours.

Possible situation - guest or team member contracts COVID-19:

- On (DATE/ TIME) we were notified of (SITUATION). At (RESTAURANT) the health and safety of our (GUESTS / TEAM MEMBERS) is of utmost importance. We are working with the (ORGANIZATION) closely to monitor the situation and taking necessary precautions including (TEMP CLOSURE / QUARANTINE / ETC.).

Possible situation - temp closure:

- As a precautionary measure to ensure the safety and wellness of our team members and guests in response to rising COVID-19 cases in (CITY/ COUNTY), (RESTAURANT) will be temporarily closed, effective (WHEN TO WHEN). We are monitoring the situation closely and working with officials at (ORGANIZATION). We look forward to welcoming our guests back soon.

Possible situation – event/opening cancellation:

(RESTAURANT/PROPERTY) is acutely aware of the health and safety concerns surrounding the current COVID-19 pandemic. We are also mindful of how this virus is negatively impacting the hospitality industry at large, both from a well-being and economic standpoint. As such, we have taken the guidance of the CDC and have worked closely with our partners to make the decision to postpone (EVENT/OPENING.) Of prime concern is the health and safety of our staff, guests and all attendees. We also recognize the responsibility of every organization and individual to do what they can to contain the spread of the virus. We will continue to work to identify new dates for (EVENT/OPENING.)

Please refer to the CDC website for information on COVID-19 related travel, event queries, and virus prevention.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/faqs.html>

Sample Talking Points

The following are reactive talking points for any inquiries from guests with current or future reservations who express concern about the impact of COVID-19. Remember that we should never speak outside of our area of expertise. In this case, that is the World Health Organization (WHO), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and local health organizations and governing bodies.

Please direct any incoming media inquiries to your bread & Butter team.

REACTIVE TALKING POINTS:

- The health and wellbeing of our guests and employees are paramount.
- As part of our ongoing commitment to providing clean, safe accommodations and hospitality environments, we have re-instructed all our employees on proper hygiene.
- We have continued/enhanced our cleaning practices around disinfecting public areas and services that come into regular contact with guests and team members such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, counter surfaces, phones etc.
- We are monitoring all CDC and (STATE ORGANIZATION) information closely. Per the CDC, for most of the American public who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is compiling information on the COVID-19 outbreak at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>
- World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- National Restaurant Association: <https://restaurant.org/Covid19>
- US Travel Association: <https://www.ustravel.org/toolkit/emergency-preparedness-and-response-coronavirus-covid-19>



We are here.
