

HRACC WELCOMES MEMBERS AND GUESTS

- Welcome Our Speaker and The Managing Partner of Somers HR Solutions: Ken Somers for our Program:
- **“MANAGING COMMUNICATIONS IN TURBULENT TIMES”**
- Please use the “Chat” feature to ask questions
- You will be on “Mute” so any distractions do not interfere with the program
- Please Type “Goodbye” into the “Chat” feature when you leave the program
- The slide deck will be posted on the HRACC website under the event title.



Communicating in the Time of COVID-19

Leadership Opportunities and Perils

Prepared for HRACC May 28, 2020



Somers HR Solutions LLC
Answers for the real world

Our Agenda

- Why opportunity and peril
- Understanding your audiences and their different needs
- Identify the messenger
- Selecting the right communications vehicle(s)
- Preparing for the communications session
- Next steps

Why now and what's different?

Opportunities and Peril

Never let a good crisis go to waste

Crisis: an event that exposes a serious risk to the organization

Overcoming the Perils of Instincts	
“Normal” Behavior	What’s required in a Crisis
Seek more information	Act with urgency
Minimize the threat and release information selectively	Communicate transparently
Confusion? Repeat the messages more clearly	Own the confusion and focus on solving the problem
Stay the course	Update frequently with new information as you learn more

A photograph of Jacinda Adern, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, sitting on a dark brown leather sofa in a modern office environment. She is wearing a dark blue blazer and has her hands clasped in her lap. The background features large windows with a view of a city skyline. The text "Jacinda Adern Prime Minister of New Zealand" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Jacinda Adern
Prime Minister of
New Zealand

What did Jacinda Adern do?

- On March 21, she delivered an 8-minute TV address
 - Implemented a 4-level COVID-19 alert system
 - Leveraged the familiar (NZ's culture) to deploy a system patterned on the country's fire alert system
 - Spelled out crystal clear guidelines for how the government would respond and what it would ask of the citizenry
 - 52 confirmed cases on March 21 – implemented at level 2 → Social distancing
 - 4 days later – case count up to 205 – announced level 4 → country locked down!
 - By April 7, case count was down to 54 with only a single death
 - Curve was “squashed”
-

Successfully communicating in a crisis means understanding where employees are and what they need

- 5 Key themes to explore as you prepare
 - Reputation or Brand Management
 - Finding opportunities that exploit the circumstances
 - Leverage your culture to influence the way you deal with the crisis
 - Use common sense whenever possible
 - Build trust (Adern's approval rating during the crisis was over 80%)

Above all – you must understand your audience and their needs

Understanding Your Audience – 5 W's & an H

Why <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is this the right decision• Why now• Why is it important	What <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the decision• What does it mean• What do I need to know• What does it mean for me
Who <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who made the decision• Who is leading• Who is impacted	Where <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where is the decision coming from• Where or what groups are affected• Where do I find out more
When <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When is this happening	

How

- How was this decision made
 - How will it actually happen
 - How will communications happen – both internally and externally
-

Understanding Your Audience Some Key Questions to Consider

Who is my audience?

- *Managers?*
- *Staff?*
- *A mix?*
- *Other demographic considerations*

What is their state of mind now?

- *Put yourself in their shoes*
- *Do they know what's going on in the business?*
- *Will this be the first time they are getting the information you are sharing?*

What is your objective?

- *Is this information sharing?*
- *Do I want them to do something?*
- *What outcome(s) am I seeking?*

What is the best vehicle considering my message and the audience?

- *How much information is involved?*
- *Is my message simple or complex?*

Who will deliver the message?

Effective communication begins when you have a clear idea of who you will be talking to and what you need to achieve.

Presenter Credibility & Authenticity

- Everyone is affected by the current situation – but we are all different
 - S/he who delivers your messaging needs to be credible
 - Is and/or can your presenter be genuine without being emotional
 - What does genuine mean?
 - The ability to sincerely and honestly express oneself. Important because:
 - People want to be led – especially in periods of great uncertainty
 - Decisiveness in the face of uncertainty is critical and expected by your people
 - Your communicator needs to be able to define reality but also create **realistic** hope for the future
-

Steps to Preparing Your Message

1. Take care of yourself
 2. Anticipate the questions your people have
 3. Be human (genuine)
 4. Be ready to commit to the frequency of updates
 5. Frame the situation – provide context
 6. Be open and honest – building trust
 7. Rehearse your message with someone you trust to provide unfiltered feedback
 8. Practice the Q's & A's
-

Preparing for your presentation

What is foremost on employees' minds?

What is happening to my job?	Will I have medical coverage?
Does anyone care about what's happening to me/my family?	How is the business doing and how does that affect me?
What is the strategy coming out of this?	How will things change?
Will I be safe at work?	Will I be able to adapt to the new normal?
Do I understand the need to return to the workplace?	Why is the return to the workplace important for my function or my role?
How will the return to the workplace impact my role or function?	How can I keep myself safe in the workplace?

What is the Right Communication Vehicle

- Is this the first time or have you been communicating previously?
 - What has worked well/what hasn't?
 - How many people do you need to reach?
 - Are there separate messages for management and staff?
 - Is this information sharing or a call to action?
 - Is it good news or not-so-good news?
 - How much information are you sharing?
 - Do you have a way to communicate digitally?
 - For essential businesses – can you get people together (with social distancing)?
-

Selecting the Right Communication Vehicle

Message Characteristic	Webcast or Webinar	Written
Quick update	★	
Reopening Plans	★	★
Impacts on pay and/or benefits	★	★
Furlough	★	★
Layoff	★	★
The new normal	★	★

- In most cases, a combination of oral communication with supplemental documents is best
- Webinars allow for interactive Q&A sessions – consider using Slido for confidentiality
- Webcasts can be saved for later access
- Consult your legal counsel
- If needed, get professional writing support

Next Steps – Learn From the Session and Adjust

Ask for feedback

- Do people understand the message
 - Are they doing what you expect them to do
 - Do they trust the message
 - What's the “buzz” about your company on social media
 - Facebook
 - LinkedIn
 - Glassdoor
 - Other
 - How are the people responding to the frequency of your messages
 - Get ready for the next communications event
-

QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

- PLEASE FILL OUT THE **“20 SECOND SURVEY”** WHEN IT COMES SO WE WILL KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS PROGRAM
 - WE WILL SEND OUT SHRM (1 PDC) AND HRCI (1 GENERAL) RECERTIFICATION CREDIT SHEETS AFTER THE PROGRAM
 - PLEASE GO TO HRACC.ORG TO REGISTER FOR OUR UPCOMING PROGRAMS:
 - *June 10: “Networking in the Digital Age – Staying Connected While Being Apart”, Presented by Debbie Goldbarth – Lee Hecht Harrison*
 - *July 14: “Financial Bootcamp for HR’s Seat at the Strategic Table”, Presented by John W. Rogers, PhD Professor of Economics at American International College*
-



THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING AND REMEMBER TO FOLLOW US ON

- FACEBOOK:
<https://www.Facebook.com/teamhracc>
 - LINKEDIN:
<https://www.linkedin.com/companyhracc/>
 - TWITTER:
<https://twitter.com/teamhracc>
 - INSTAGRAM:
<https://www.Instagram.com/teamhracc/>
-