

Digital Communication Strategy During a Major Trigger Event and Crisis



For internal teams

- Start with a clear head so let's take a pause
- Gather a team with diverse backgrounds
- Give everyone a refresher of your values and missions statements, and
- Do a thorough review of your content plans for the week following the triggering event
- Listen
- Determine next steps and the timeline before you return to a regular schedule. You can use the guidelines below as a starting template

Here Are Recommendations and Next Steps for the Day Of and Immediately After the Triggering Event:



Paid Advertising



Turn off ads and decide how and when it's safe to turn them back on.

Picture your ads showing between a post expressing grief and a post expressing anger. What do you think those reading will do?

If you choose to keep running ads, be aware of the consequences. Here are a couple:

- You may be perceived as tone-deaf, or insensitive, or annoying, or all of those and more. That may affect the perception of your brand in the long term.
- If your ads use a pay-per-impressions strategy, you may be wasting your money on ads that get impressions but not clicks. In our experience, during times of crisis, social media attention is somewhere else and CTRs drop.
- Note: Often we get pushback on this under the argument that “business must go on.” Know that this is not just us, the little marketing agency that recommends this. Big brands are well-known to be **sensitive to current events**.



Organic Content

Do a sensitivity test. Here are a few questions to ask, this is just a start:

How will our brand be perceived if our ad/post will show up between a post from someone grieving and a piece of news that may be triggering to readers?

What are we teaching our young ones with what we are showing in these messages during this time?

Pause social media posts except those appropriate to the circumstances. If you choose not to do so, here are some of the potential consequences:

You may be perceived as tone-deaf, or insensitive, or annoying, or all of those and more. That may affect the perception of your brand in the long term.

When social networks are seeing an increased volume of organic content, your posts may drown in that volume, and since other posts related to the current events will naturally get more comments, the algorithms will favor those posts and yours may not get displayed at all.

What to post:

Post one simple statement if appropriate and if it's an authentic reflection of your brand values. Less is more

Show support for the cause of the problem

- Offer practical support to those affected
 - Post where to make donations
 - Show practical support for a segment such as small businesses
 - You can share the content of those affected
 - You can encourage people to make donations and directly support those affected
- Let's not get distracted by the riots
- Empathy and compassion
- DO NOT say contrarian things or deflections such as “all lives matter”

Closely monitor notifications, brand comments, and mentions and respond where appropriate with kindness and compassion. Do NOT make promises you can't keep

Add annotations in Google Analytics



Other Communication Areas

Reschedule email marketing due to go out within 48 hours of a triggering event for a later date

Reschedule blog posts except those that pass the sensitivity test

Think twice before you send cold messages via email or LinkedIn messenger

Counter Arguments:

It is also possible to see a positive change in certain KPIs during such times.

- Fewer advertisers may lead to lower ads costs
- Fewer emails may lead to higher open rates

We usually conclude with a call to action, to get on a call, to set a timeline etc.

In some instances, I may make the executive decision to pause certain marketing for certain brands, then ask for approval and forgiveness. Since we move very fast at our end to communicate with the clients, **usually any pause is inconsequential but delayed action could be very damaging.**

Once again, this is a template and a starting point. When you initiate with a pause, you will give yourself the brain space to craft your own approach. But I know that often, having a template can trigger new ideas and help you get unstuck.

I would love to incorporate your tips so please reach out.

In peace,

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