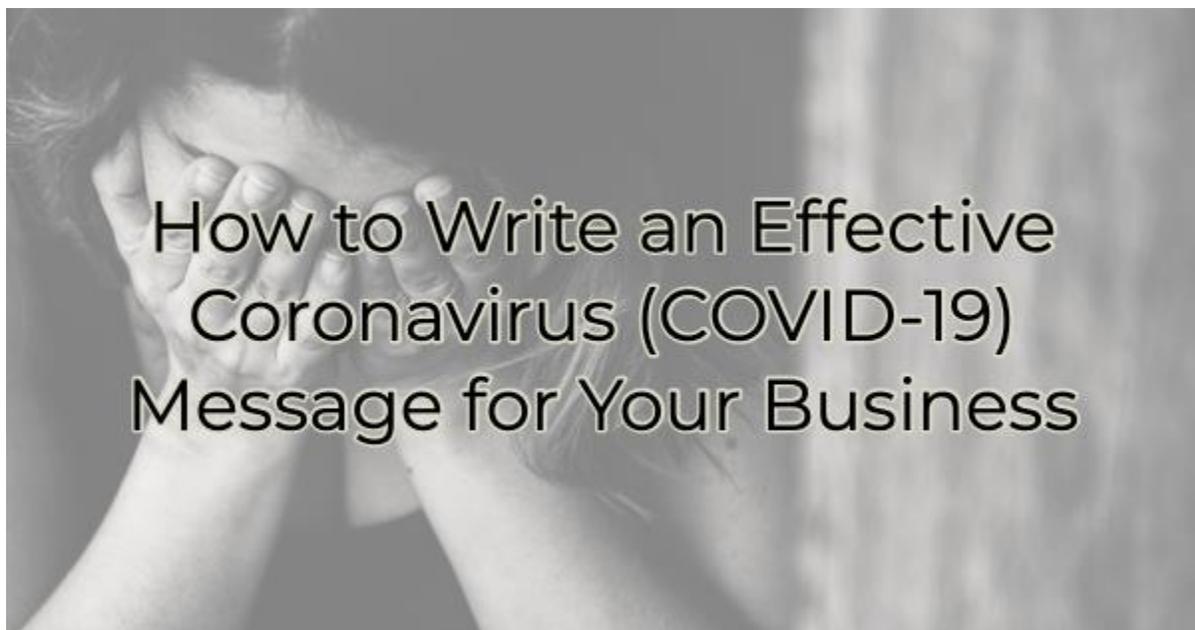


How to Write an Effective Coronavirus (COVID-19) Message for Your Business

If you have had time to look in your email inbox recently, it's likely cluttered with messages from big brands telling you what they're doing as we're facing the global pandemic of COVID-19. The point behind these communications is to quell fear and reassure people that it's safe to patronize these businesses.

If you have a physical location, it's likely you need to write one too.

People are scared and when fear is a motivator, logic goes out the window. Business owners must convey important messaging to customers or risk losing them.



But writing this sort of message isn't easy. I've written several in the past 24 hours and each of them weighs heavy on my heart because the messaging is critical but you have to take care not to incite panic.

You want to come across as helpful and transparent but you also want it to be a marketing piece that will encourage people to continue to spend money with you. It's a very delicate balance.

Here are a few tips on the things you need in this type of critical communication.

1. Acknowledge that this is a difficult time and share that your thoughts (and prayers, if that fits your lifestyle and beliefs) are with those who are sick or have been directly impacted by the virus.
2. Share the resources that you have found helpful. The CDC and SBA have a lot of great information. Avoid sharing any resources that could cause panic or push forth more conspiracy theories. Also, don't speculate and editorialize the situation. Use researched facts from reputable organizations/agencies. Avoid anything that insinuates the government/leaders or healthcare has botched the handling of this so far. Dwelling on inadequacies does nothing to help people feel more prepared or in control of a desperate situation. Instead, share resources that provide ways to make good decisions. They are more empowering.
3. Talk about what your company/business is doing to ensure the safety and wellness of your customers. Describe any increased cleaning or screening that is going on. If something will affect the way you do business, share that. It's exceptionally important to be transparent during this time.
4. Share ways in which people can safely support businesses by changing some of their habits. Complete quarantines will be hard on mental health but people can still go out, they just need to be smart about what they choose to do. For instance, suggest they come to your business during less crowded hours. If you offer delivery, share that as another way they can partake of your services with less exposure risk. If there are virtual ways to enjoy your business, share those.
5. Remind the community of your commitment to them and thank them for their support. Reiterate that you are in this together and that their safety, as well as the safety of your employees, is your top priority.

If you are not a writer, you may want to take a cue from American Airlines. They have created a series of video messages. The benefit of video messaging is that the watcher can see a face. A face often helps build trust and can make people feel more at ease. However, if you go this route it is a good idea to transcribe the video messages as well. Some people prefer to read while others simply can't watch with the volume up because of where they are when they choose to view your message.

Share your messaging on social media, on your website, and to your email list. This is not a set-it-and-forget-it document. You will need to update this consistently, maybe hourly. No one knows how long precautions will need to be taken. The best things you can do in your business communications right now are to be available, be transparent, and build trust.



People are scared. Some are worried about the virus, while others are concerned about the economy, their jobs, and their savings. It's likely you're concerned about your business. While your first instinct may be to beg people to buy from you, it is important that you use your platform to communicate and share resources instead of sales messaging.

Your communication will be constantly evolving but the underlying tone should be:

**It will be tough but we will get through it.
Here's what we're doing and what you need to know.**

[Christina R. Metcalf](#) (formerly Green) is a marketer who enjoys using the power of story and refuses to believe meaningful copy can be written by bots. She helps chamber and small business professionals find the right words when they don't have the time or interest to do so. Christina hates exclamation points and loves road trips. Say hi on [Twitter](#) or reach out on [Facebook](#).