

SAMPLE

COVID Communications Activity To-Date

March 24, 2020

General Communications Strategies

- COVID communications launched when it impacted staff and external spaces/facilities
- Tell staff about COVID organizational changes first. Public informed shortly thereafter
- Update COVID messages when significant organizational, city, state, or national decisions impacting our community are made (i.e. changes in approved gatherings size from 50 to 10; state stay-at-home order, etc.)
- Don't appear 'tone deaf' to the pandemic but realize there will be COVID message burn out. Have daily COVID and non-COVID messaging, particularly with social media content
- Leverage graphics and memes to communicate key messages (i.e. social distancing, safe usage of parks, healthy benefits of parks, etc.)
- Be creative (i.e. leverage technology to create a new type of park experience; use chalk to help communicate safe social distancing on favorite trails, etc.)

Channels

- We communicate through four primary channels: email, website, social media, media relations
- We recently added an FAQ section to our COVID webpages, recognizing some people learn best through this format

Messaging Strategies

- Tell the same story through email, website, and press releases. A story we alone craft and control. Social media is also telling that story, but we layer additional messages generated through multiple channels:
 - Example 1: Curate relevant and timely media stories from across the country and globe
 - Example 2: Leverage our social media influencers to communicate specific messages (i.e. how to use parks in a family-friendly manner, how to use parks as your outdoor gym, etc.)
- Be mindful of our language. For example, in relation to programming and events impacted by COVID, we are purposeful as to when to say 'cancelled' vs. 'postponed.' We are working to reschedule as many programs and events as possible. As such, we are postponing rather than cancelling many more activities
- Take our role in supporting safety messaging (i.e. social distancing, etc.) seriously. This health issue is bigger than us
- Help people identify ways to enjoy the parks. Initially, we listed five park activities that could be enjoyed with simple social distancing: Walk your furry friend, Hike your favorite trail, Catch up on that reading list, Go fly a kite, Explore the urban forest. We added a sixth once schools in the area closed: Embrace the Outdoors as your classroom
- We modify our messages when the landscape changes, as it did with the stay-at-home order. Our messages are now: Walk your furry friend, Hike your favorite trail, Explore the urban forest while enjoying a run, Get in your daily steps

Primary Messages

- Importance of social distancing
- Safe usage of the parks

- Healthy benefits of the parks

Secondary Messages

- Parks are Essential — we brainstormed an idea working off the government's positioning of only 'essential' businesses being open during this crisis. Since parks are open, we label them as 'essential.' In Marketing's perfect world, this message, along with the community's behavior, elevates community awareness and stature of parks so when Development figuratively knocks on, folks will be receptive to the donation message
- Parks are here for you
- Parks provide people with a sense of peace, a sense of wellbeing, a mental escape, a chance for solace, a chance to connect to nature during trying times, etc.

Media Relations

- Develop core set of messages. Update to reflect the ever-changing landscape
- Be accessible to media. To date, we have received and responded to three media requests
- Engage park champions to draft letters to the editor highlighting the importance of parks during this difficult period
- Create proactive media outreach campaign offering Jayne as a spokesperson to discuss the role of parks and green spaces during these difficult times. Our pitching strategy highlights that the community's behavior makes parks an important aspect of this COVID story versus trying to position the parks as important. The importance of the parks is happening naturally through community behavior

Development Support

- Create messaging to assist Development in the age of pandemic
- Identify timing for Development outreach post pandemic. We believe there is a sweet spot when the pandemic is behind us, people feel more financially secure, but the memories remain.

Additional Tactics

- Develop Mindfulness map to help people handle the mental and emotional stress of our current situation
- Work with Education department to create digital/virtual content for the community