

SHIFT/*reboot*

AUGUST 2020

A PLAYBOOK FOR
LEADING THROUGH
A POST-PANDEMIC
WORLD

Hi all.

The measures to stop the spread of COVID-19 have drastically altered people's lives, daily behavior and activities. Entire markets have been redefined with new distribution models, protocols, offerings and customer expectations.

Many of the behaviors being formed today will create permanent changes in people's attitudes, beliefs and values. We cannot assume that what worked before will work after, because it quite likely won't.

Businesses need to adapt accordingly. In the short-term, that means staying in lock step with people's needs and wellbeing. But long-range planning, business transformation and creative communications is imperative to resiliency when this ends. **We believe this is an opportunity for PR and Communications to lead.**

The following guide was developed by SHIFT Communications to help our clients think through, prepare for and lead in what comes next. It follows our strategic approach to crafting breakthrough communications:

- **Informed by Data:** applying data, analytics and insights to engineer the who, what, when, where and how behind programs
- **Crafted with Passion:** harnessing creativity, empathy and expertise to create narratives and activations that connect with people on an emotional level
- **Distributed with Precision:** reaching the people who matter most with advanced targeting across paid, owned, earned and social channels

Our role can be as big or small as you'd like. The guide can serve as a prompt for an internal exercise with your key stakeholders or for deep-dive sessions, research and strategy facilitated through SHIFT via a team of cross-functional senior experts from across the AVENIR GLOBAL network.

Our goal is to support you and help you understand what is impacting your business and programs to maintain trust, relevance and awareness—in whatever the next phase of this looks like.

*Our next normal will be
anything but.*

Annie Perkins
Managing Director, East

Informed by Data & Insights

Exercise 1

Pulse Check: Market Assessment

- How did our industry weather phase one of the crisis? Is our industry positioned to succeed in phase two?
- Who and what is stronger? Who is weaker? Why?
- What industry-specific initiatives, offerings and messaging resonated during the crisis? Which competitors benefited from them?
- What lasting damage and changes will impact our industry?
- **How do we stack up? What are our differentiators/gaps? Will we survive whatever comes next?**

Pulse Check: Stakeholders

- How has life/business changed across stakeholder groups (employees, customers, end users, investors, supply chain, media/influencers, regulators)?
- What new needs have emerged?
- What organizational changes did we make that impact them?

- How have attitudes, beliefs and behaviors shifted for each—in general and towards our business?
- **What implications do these findings have for our business?**

Post-Pandemic SWOT

- What part of our business will emerge first and fastest (product, markets, sectors?)
- What new concerns or trepidations exist about our business?
- What signals is our market giving? What is it engaging with/wanting more of?
- What new product, channel, vertical opportunities/risks exist?
- **How must we re-establish product-market fit and what communications must support that?**

A Playbook for Leading Through a Post-Pandemic World

Crafted with Passion & Empathy

People expect brands to deliver functionally. Now more than ever, they're choosing brands that connect emotionally.

Heath Rudduck
Chief Creative Officer, EVP

Exercise 2

Strategic Leadership Opportunity Identification

- What new white space can we own?
- Where can/do we want to be first?
- What questions do our buyer personas have that we can offer insight/thought leadership on?
- **What solutions can we offer to help solve problems, questions, or gaps?**

Narrative & Messaging Development

- How do corporate/brand narratives, vision and purpose need to be adjusted or straight-up changed to remain relevant in everyone's new reality?
- How does corporate/brand and product/service messaging need to be adjusted to break through in a meaningful and authentic way?
- What aspect(s) of your former narrative and messaging do you want to retire?
- **What are the core pillars of our new narrative?**

Brand Platform

- Has what our brand does, who it does it for, or its 'why' changed?
- Does our brand persona, style, or identity need to change as a result?
- What aspect(s) of our former brand do we want to retire?
- Should we consider new programs to bring our brand to life, in accordance with our values?
- Are there partnerships/CSR/community-oriented initiatives we can lead that our industry or customers can benefit from?
- Does our new brand support our employees? How?
- **How must our brand platform and expression be updated?**

Distributed with Precision

No one is waiting for your content. It needs to find its target on their terms: when, where and how they want it.

Rick Murray,
Managing Partner

Exercise 3

Media & Engagement Strategy

- What are the media consumption habits of each subset of our audience?
- When and where are they most likely to be predisposed to looking, consuming and engaging with our content?
- What new engagement channels/formats have emerged and been well-received?
- What are our target users searching for/sharing/consuming?
- **How does this change what/where/how/when we use marketing communications?**

Media & Influencer Mapping

- Who is more relevant to each aspect of our business than ever before?
- What topics are those individuals and publications writing about?
- **How do we reprioritize our media and influencer relations?**

90 Day Go to Market Plan: Agile Communications, War Room Mindset

- Updated goals and KPIs
- Messages to address short-, intermediate- and long-term needs of stakeholders
- Calendar and strategy for rolling out new initiatives and offerings
- Creative activations to engage stakeholders and stand out among other launches/re-openings
- **Parallel communications streams to address and connect with each stakeholder group**

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Operating Within the New Environment

Every crisis is different. Unique responses and approaches are required. The one constant? The opportunity to learn from each experience and use that new knowledge to create a stronger business.

Alan Dunton
Managing Director, West

Exercise 4

Company Policy & Protocol Review

- How have any operational changes impacted existing policies, protocols and workflows?
- What new realities exist that we need to address?
- Do new information hubs/channels need to be created?
- **What needs to change/be created/be communicated to be relevant in the new normal operating environment?**

Crisis Plan Review

- What worked and didn't? What would we do differently in future crises?
- How can we better reach all our stakeholders?
- What is the approval process/critical group for crisis decision-making?

- Scenario planning around all potential related and future crisis
- Documenting operational and communication response plans
- Simulation training with leadership
- **Update crisis plan for ongoing and future issues management**

Ongoing Monitoring

- What long-tail effects could we see from this pandemic? (customer churn, employee burnout, new competition, etc.)
- **What, how and who will monitor ongoing business impact?**

**A Playbook for Leading Through
a Post-Pandemic World**

How We Can Help You Lead Through a Post-Pandemic World

Learn how we can help you lead through a post-pandemic world with the following services and expertise from across our network:

- Custom insights & research (secondary and primary)
- Crisis preparedness: anticipating the next wave
- SEO / SEM audits
- Corporate narrative & messaging development
- Stakeholder mapping & strategy
- Internal communications & employee engagement plans
- Influencer & ally/partner relations
- Community building, engagement & experiences
- Content strategy & creative
- Paid, earned, owned & social media strategy
- Brand, product & service innovation

If interested in learning about these capabilities or working with SHIFT, contact us [here](#), and please review our other COVID-19 communications [resources](#).

Stay well,

SHIFT Communications

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About SHIFT Communications

SHIFT is an integrated communications firm that operates at the nexus of art and science to help brands break through and thrive. We leverage data and analytics to engineer the who, what, when, where and how behind programs. We harness deep human insights, empathy and expertise to craft compelling narratives and campaigns that connect on a personal level, and then use advanced targeting to get them in front of the people who matter most. Established in 2003, SHIFT is an AVENIR GLOBAL company representing global brands and emerging category disruptors in the technology, b2b, healthcare and consumer sectors. Learn more at shiftcomm.com