

COMMUNICATION IN A CRISIS
6 BEST PRACTICE IDEAS TO HELP

DRIVEN.
SPECIAL REPORT



GOLDSAND
DIGITAL

COMMUNICATION IN A CRISIS: 6 BEST PRACTICE IDEAS TO HELP

With the nation on lockdown and industries at the mercy of the government, it might seem as though your hands are tied, at least temporarily. However, the one thing businesses still retain, is autonomy over their internal and external communications and, while now is a time to be sensitive, it is not a time to go silent.



In these unprecedented times, communication is changing. With doors closed and face-to-face interaction no longer an option, consumers are being forced to re-evaluate how they navigate the world. From remote working and dialling into Zoom conferencing, to ordering bread via Deliveroo, customers are acclimatising to a new level of virtual living and it is important that businesses respond and react accordingly.

With the pace slowed and uncertainty rife, now is a time to be touching base, reassuring and occupying that virtual space – not

with spam or sales talk, but with content that is going to add value, build your brand and continue engagement with your core audience.

The team at GoldSand Digital, where automotive content and communication is at the very core of our business, wanted to share six pieces of best practice that we have been talking to clients about and, indeed, have seen from various leaders within the industry. Something to consider, perhaps, when crafting and curating a content strategy while the impact of Covid-19 continues to hamper operations:

1 BE AUTHENTIC WHILE FOCUSING ON THE POSITIVES

Covid-19 has the potential to shape both society and the economy beyond recognition. There is no escaping the

news reports and, to put it bluntly, any form of sugar coating is futile.

With so much uncertainty surrounding customers, a direct, honest and decisive approach is key.

While times are undeniably difficult, it is impossible to log on to social media in the current climate and not be served a post

about renewed community spirit or RAOK.

“
WHAT IDEAS OR INNOVATIONS IS YOUR BUSINESS CONTRIBUTING?
”

Keep your communication genuine and provide inspiration. Highlighting any positives will be a welcome cut-through from the influx of bad news. What ideas or innovations is your business contributing on a national or local scale? And, how will this positively impact your customers or, better still, the wider society?

2 CONSISTENCY IS KEY

While you do not want to bombard customers with information, it is important to be consistent.

In the current lockdown, a week can quite easily feel like two, so consider how you are planning and scheduling your content and decide what is right – both for you as a business, potentially running on a reduced team, as well as what will be most useful for your customers.

“
A WEEK CAN QUITE EASILY FEEL LIKE TWO, SO CONSIDER HOW YOU ARE PLANNING AND SCHEDULING CONTENT
”

The frequency will also depend on the channel you decide to use. While social media lends itself to more frequent content, email is quite often saturated and too many send outs can quickly be considered spam. With the uncertainty surrounding just how long we will be on lockdown for, maintaining customer relations is essential for the long term, so striking a sustainable balance is important.

3

CREATE TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

With the lack of face-to-face communication within the industry creating a barrier to business, it is more important than ever to keep the conversation going. This means seeking new opportunities for interaction and focusing on increasing two-way communication.

We saw lots of automotive retailers asking for customer feedback pre-Covid-19, and rightly so. This shouldn't stop. There are simple and effective ways of doing this, and it is especially important in this rapidly changing landscape. By letting customers come back to you, you are essentially enabling them to shape the communication themselves. This results in improved knowledge for the business and opens up the capability to deliver what your

customers really want. Effective two-way communication relies heavily on responsiveness, as well as fluidity of content. There is little point finding out what customers want, if you are then unable to adapt and respond to fulfil their needs

accordingly. Ensuring all communications are optimised for mobile will also allow for an enhanced customer experience and greater engagement levels.

“
[ENABLE CUSTOMERS]
TO SHAPE THE
COMMUNICATION
THEMSELVES
”

Something we're seeing in the B2B environment is invitations to webinars and 'surgeries' following high value content like [this](#) being shared by MHA MacIntyre Hudson's Motor Team.

This approach builds communities and discussions that culminate in loyalty and commitment.



4

ENGAGE THROUGH MULTIPLE TOUCHPOINTS

Now, more than ever, media consumption is at an all-time high and, with an abundance of platforms readily accessible, it has never been easier to take a multi-channel

approach. Seeding out your communications across a variety of platforms ensures that you are maximising your audience and the potential to reach people multiple times via different touchpoints.

It is important to consider which channels work best for you in terms

of both engagement and reach. While an email may hit a wider audience, depending on the size of your database, a social media post has a better chance of creating 'talkability' and promoting shares.

“
...IT HAS NEVER BEEN
EASIER TO TAKE
A MULTI-CHANNEL
APPROACH
”

A blog, on the other hand, would be the ideal forum to share deeper insights, information and ideas.

Different content lends itself to different platforms. Matching the two, utilising a variety of channels and ensuring that content is high value will give the best chance of cut-through.



5 TRACK THE TRENDS AND TAILOR

Something we have learned as a business is that there is nothing more powerful than feedback to fuel future content engagement. However, by leveraging tracking technology, you can further understand the kind of information that is most in demand and harness this knowledge to create bespoke communications.

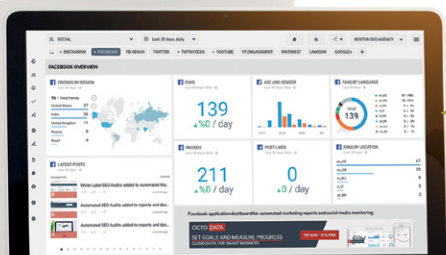
Take Facebook, for example, which provides a range of insights so you can tailor posts for maximum effect. Information such as peak follower times – are your followers more active in the morning or afternoon? Are they busier on a particular day of the

week? It also provides valuable insights on your customer demographic, which is essential for effective targeting. Imagine if you knew exactly which area of content your audience was swarming to? How would that shape your next piece of communication and allow you to be surgical with future content?

Of course, tracking extends beyond content. It can be used to tailor timing, length, channel and format. The more

you know about your audience and the way they consume information, the easier it will be to schedule and deliver an effective and tailored content plan.

“
THERE IS NOTHING MORE POWERFUL THAN FEEDBACK TO FUEL FUTURE CONTENT ENGAGEMENT
”



6

WHERE POSSIBLE, THINK LOCAL

Working with and producing communications for the automotive industry on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis, we have always found that localised content performs the best. It

makes sense from a consumer perspective, that information that directly correlates to the customer is going to prove not only the most valuable but also the most relatable.

Localising does not refer solely to content but also to the tone and

approach taken within a communication. This means talking as a local retailer rather than using a formulaic brand voice. From our experience, we find that

engagement rates soar when local and brand are blended.

Our digital content tends to be a blend of brand and local content for automotive retailers,

and we see engagement levels far higher on a consistent basis when we cover themes related to local issues and people.




“
*ENGAGEMENT
RATES SOAR WHEN
LOCAL AND BRAND
ARE BLENDED*
”



FROM TEAM GOLDSAND DIGITAL

We certainly hope this provokes some ideas or offers enough insight so that you revisit what has already been delivered and consider whether it could have been done differently. Is there anything here that could be applied to future content? In this time of transition and uncertainty, it is essential to continue to engage with customers. Consumers want to be spoken to but content must

be reliable, relatable and relevant. As an experienced communications specialist, we are here to support your business and share best practice. We strive to provide high-value content and can also assist with ready-made mobile-first platforms, updatable on a weekly or monthly basis. Or, if you just fancy a chat to escape the monotony of isolation, we are always at the end of the phone.

 [goldsanddigital.com](https://www.goldsanddigital.com)  020 7287 9233  info@goldsanddigital.com

