



ADOBE BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAYBOOK

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new challenges to every business, including Adobe. We're sharing the lessons we've learned in this six-part series.

Lesson #2

Agility is key when pivoting your communications in a pandemic.

Once you understand how the coronavirus is impacting your customers, use this insight to adjust your communications. Agility is absolutely essential. A strong digital foundation allows you to pivot and scale quickly, and keep evolving as the situation changes to support the needs of employees, customers and communities.

As soon as the COVID-19 situation intensified in Asia and started spreading globally, we activated our crisis response team. Like many companies, our first priority was and has always been to protect the health and safety of our employees and their families first, as well as our customers and the communities where we live and work. We made the important decision to start closing offices around the world and support our employees as they quickly shifted to working from home.

Stacy Martinet, VP of marketing strategy and communications, gathered her team to collaborate on crisis management best practices and monitor employee sentiment, to inform our forward-looking response plan. The group consulted daily with our COVID-19 committee and engaged an external agency for real-time market and industry updates. Regular consultation with internal and external stakeholders was critical as key messaging was evolving at a fast rate.

We also reached out to several customers to gain perspective on what was happening in each industry, so we could arm our teams with helpful and relevant information.

We focused our communications strategy around key themes, transparency, clarity and empathy. These themes were not new to meet the moment — they've always been a part of Adobe's culture — but when faced with a global pandemic, it's really all about that.

As our key messaging was developed, it was cascaded to employees, customers and our community across multiple platforms, engaging Adobe leadership and collaborating with key stakeholders across the company. We did this by leveraging existing platforms and creating new channels. For employees, we redesigned pages on Inside Adobe, our company-wide intranet, to prioritise COVID-19 updates, launched dedicated Slack channels, and held regular employee meetings and town halls.

To connect our internal efforts with our customers, we launched our Honor Heroes campaign, galvanising the creative community to create emotional personal tributes to friends and relatives on the frontline. We launched programmes to engage our community to #StayInStayInspired, from Adobe Fresco-enabled Colouring books to a partnership with Time for Kids — Draw with Us! to help engage thousands of kids who were schooling from home. And we quickly created a comprehensive COVID-19 section on Adobe.com to ensure our customers had the support and resources they needed to navigate this challenging time.

We also piloted a “Digital Emergency Preparedness” theme in a webinar with the American Marketing Association. The response was extremely positive, so we adapted it for the different industries. This, too, was well received because it provided an in-depth view of how others in their industry were responding to COVID. And it engendered a sense of community.

Martinet says having a robust digital foundation gave us the agility to create, personalise and deliver new messaging as fast as we did, and the ability to monitor and measure sentiment to inform the next steps. But she also credits stakeholder trust, an expert team, great collaboration and a strong connection to their communities and customers.



We knew we just had to act, knowing that with the evolving situation, agility was key. It might not always have been perfect, but it was effective. Nothing is more authentic than clarity, being transparent and having compassion.”

Stacy Martinet

VP of Marketing Strategy and Communications
Adobe

Other businesses understand that too. India's [1mg](#) provides a marketplace for medicines and medical services, and was one of the first companies to clarify confusion about COVID-19 online. The company has always focused its communications on trusted relationships. Since the pandemic began, they've seen many of their users reach out to them seeking a single, reliable source of information. With around 14 million active online users per month, they were able to quickly send emails at scale, which nearly doubled their engagement on customer platforms. “This has been the key motivation behind our COVID-19 strategy, says Prateek Verma, leader of product, design and marketing at 1mg.

Delta Air Lines is another example. They started sending weekly emails from their CEO, Ed Bastian, titled “Updates from Ed” about what they’re doing to protect customers’ well-being, how they’re dealing with cancelled travel plans and how they’re helping those on the front line.

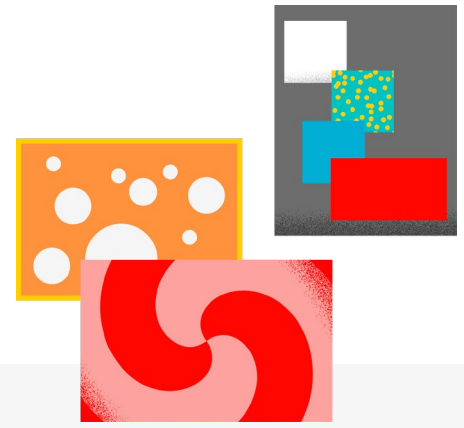
Equally important during this time is letting your employees know how you are supporting them. Send regular communications and establish two-way channels to ensure they stay connected and informed. DXT Technologies created an Employee Health and Communication Crisis app for employees to check in about their health, get help, get information about COVID-19 and receive alerts about important company news. At Adobe, we all receive a weekly communication titled “Take 5 with Adobe.” These cover COVID-19 updates, how to stay connected to our teams, how to get help and ways Adobe is supporting the community — such our #HonorHeroes campaign that was featured on Jimmy Kimmel Live.

With Inside Adobe, we’ve managed content for more than 50 locations in one site while personalising the experience, so that employees are exposed to the most important and relevant information for them.

The OneWalmart intranet has become a daily habit for many Walmart employees. With more than 1 million unique visitors every month, it’s become a destination not only for things like work schedules and benefits, but also to showcase employee stories, resources for community impact work and more. When done right, an intranet becomes more than just a storehouse for documents and PowerPoints. It provides a sense of stability and ensures that in both good times and bad, employees always feel informed, engaged and looked after.

Collaboration is also essential. While we’ve probably all become adept at using video conferencing tools in the past few months, there are many other ways to encourage collaboration — such as empowering your teams with digital tools like pdfs, digital forms, e-signatures and asset sharing. As Martinet explains, “Digital is foundational. Employees are number one. Customers matter more than ever. Those are what business leaders should be thinking about right now.”

And lastly, don’t forget we’re all having to face these challenges in our own ways. “I’ve seen a level of bravery that I don’t think people knew they had,” says Martinet. “For people around the world to cope with this pandemic, get up and face the world from their personal space — a bravery has emerged that is truly inspiring.”



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Invest in a robust digital foundation to increase your ability to quickly pivot messaging.
- Involve leadership and key stakeholders in developing a strategic COVID-19 communications plan.
- Be authentic, helpful and relevant to the pandemic in all your messaging.
- Let your customers and communities know how you can help when they need it most.
- Use collaboration tools and two-way channels to keep your employees connected and informed when working remotely or furloughed.

[Explore](#) the whole playbook.



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