



**EVENT GARDE  
MARKETING**



# **Communicating in a Crisis**

**CULTIVATING CONNECTION AND CREATIVITY  
THROUGH THE C.A.R.E MODEL**

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## CREATIVE ADAPTATION IN A CRISIS

Changes happen quickly in a crisis, requiring that we adjust how we live and go about our routines as well as how we work with each other, engage with members, conduct business with clients, collaborate with partners, and so much more.

Marketers are charting choppy waters too. Some of us might feel like we're entering a daily war room with loads of projects and meetings as organizations cancel or re-envision events, consider different types of programming, and strive to communicate the right information in the right ways to those they serve. On the flipside, there might be a lack of work as leadership struggles to determine the best strategy for moving forward so that we can support it with complementary messaging. While it is certainly stressful to be in these positions, there is a silver lining to embrace.

Marketers are natural problem-solvers and champions of innovation who have the ability to not only survive, but THRIVE in the face of adversity. As communicators and connectors, we're experts at sparking inspiration, instilling hope, and building community. We have much to contribute to the conversations happening right now that will lead to new ways of engaging---from driving practical solutions in response to current needs and concerns to planning for how this major cultural moment will shift long-term behaviors and shape what success looks like into the future.

Now is not the time to silent. It is the time to roll up our sleeves, leverage this unique set of skills and perspectives, and make some marketing magic happen! But how exactly can we do this while also embracing a healthy dose of mindfulness? **The C.A.R.E. Model (Communicate, Assess, Respond, Evolve)** offers four simple steps to help marketers build creative momentum and pave an effective path forward with tangible results.

# THE C.A.R.E. MODEL



# THE FOUR STEPS OF C.A.R.E.

## CONNECT

- Identify Your Audience
- Share Relevant Info
- Personalize Messaging
- Embrace Collaboration
- Be the Connector
- Leverage Technology

## ASSESS

- Redefine Success
- Mind Tone & Timing
- Replace Imagery & Language



## RESPOND

- Listen to People's Needs
- Highlight How You Can Help
- Build Community
- Let Your Brand Heart Guide You

## EVOLVE

- Adjust Strategies
- Reallocate Budgets
- Expand Online Services
- Invest in Social Media
- Explore Alternative Delivery Methods

# Connect



## IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

Connect with internal stakeholders like staff, board, and volunteers, as well as external stakeholders like members, donors, clients, vendors, and partners. Determine the questions people have and learn what needs must be addressed to inform your communication plan.



## BE THE CONNECTOR

Collect, synthesize, and share marketplace intelligence and connect the dots between industry-wide challenges to provide support, context, and opportunities for community-building.

## EMBRACE COLLABORATION

Work with community partners, engage across industries, and reach out to teams from other departments to gather valuable insights and explore resource-sharing to provide more services, fill existing gaps, and expand to reach new audiences.

## SHARE RELEVANT INFO

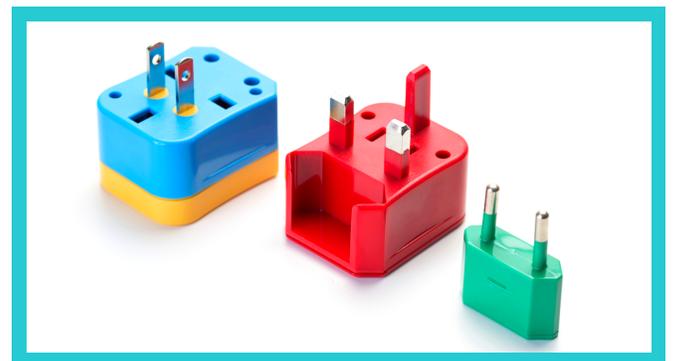
Tailor messaging to the unique needs of each audience and factors in the most effective outlets and timing for delivery.

## PERSONALIZE MESSAGING

Move away from blanket language and generalized templates. Address people's concerns and offer real-time assurances to foster feelings of connection. Keep in mind that content delivery strategies will differ based on who you're trying to reach.

## LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY

Explore options that will allow you to automate and streamline operations, maximize staff capacity and messaging reach, and minimize team burnout.



# Assess



## REDEFINE SUCCESS

Engage with leadership, staff, and key stakeholders to set realistic expectations, goals, and action plans. Remain flexible and evaluate next steps often as conditions continue to shift in the months ahead.



## REPLACE IMAGERY & LANGUAGE

Swap out visuals of crowds or people touching. (Examples: People working in close proximity or interacting in a crowd). Reframe marketing language that describes close interactions (Examples: “get in touch” or “work hand in hand”).

Perform a thorough review of all content (live/published, scheduled, new). This includes major things like blogs and web content as well as simple/small text such as email subject lines, social media posts, renewal reminders, and campaign taglines.

## BE MINDFUL OF TONE & TIMING

Keep people informed, but don't add to the panic. Avoid overly dramatic language, confirm the information you're sharing is credibly-sourced news, avoid hard sells or bragging about certain products or tools as being the best, and check to ensure messaging is on target with tone. It's all about finding the right balance and adjusting when the need arises.

Monitor the frequency of your messaging. Inboxes are flooded with information right now (whether requested or unsolicited) so don't overwhelm your audience. Determine what you can offer that is unique and send communications only when it is necessary.



# RESPOND



## LISTEN TO PEOPLE'S NEEDS

Look for emerging patterns that can help inform steps for further engagement and support. Ask the hard questions and always ensure that those you serve have multiple ways to provide their input (Examples: personal phone calls, targeted surveys and polls, website feedback forms, stakeholder focus groups, etc.). Don't underestimate the story that data can tell about an audience. Review analytics to discover how people are engaging with each other on community message boards, social media, and more.



## HIGHLIGHT HOW YOU CAN HELP

Clearly communicate new and existing benefits, linking people to important industry updates, and creating helpful content that is educational, entertaining, and/or inspiring.

## BUILD COMMUNITY

Now more than ever before, people are looking for ways to connect. It is the perfect time to share staff stories, create fun contests and incentives on social media, and encourage others to share their stories. Look for ways to help the larger community as well, including those who have been affected by this virus.

## LET YOUR BRAND HEART GUIDE YOU

Support existing audiences. Thank loyal customers, sponsors, and/or members. Go above and beyond to fill customer needs. Whenever a strategy might be in doubt, always go back to the source and consider how it relates to the brand's purpose, vision, mission, and values.



# Evolve



## ADJUST STRATEGIES

Adjust annual marketing plans, campaigns, and scheduled timelines. Double down on what's working and get rid of what isn't. Stop non-essential press releases and push timelines back on campaigns or launches that might get lost in the current deluge of news or might not be appropriate in tone or scope.

## REALLOCATE BUDGETS

Shift traditional expense items like trade shows, travel, conferences, and print materials to social media, SEO, virtual learning, digital outlets, and virtual events.

## EXPAND ONLINE SERVICES

Encourage virtual gatherings like association chats, webinars, and happy hours to build community, deliver important updates, and increase engagement overall.

## INVEST IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Experiment with livestream events, interviews, games, polls, competitions to showcase your brand. Enlist key supporters as social media influencers to increase brand awareness for little to no out-of-pocket cost. Provide these natural partners with a media kit so they are set up for success. Think about creating a mini-campaign where multiple influencers work collectively and ramp up visibility within a set timeframe.



## EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY METHODS

Short, digestible videos, whether it be a live chat or a recorded session, can help keep communication lines open and brands stand out from the crowd. Consider having leadership send out a video message to those you serve at-large or to key funding partners. This personal touch goes a long way toward fostering feelings of connection, especially in uncertain times. [Check out our tips for capturing quality video content in this handy guide!](#)

# The C.A.R.E. Method Crisis Marketing Assessment Tool

## IT'S TIME TO SOAR

Self-assessment is key to continued development in any profession. Using the tool below, reflect on each one of the four steps of the C.A.R.E. Model within the context of marketing during a crisis. First, identify your level of expertise for each row under the "Knowledge & Skills" section on the left and mark your response by placing an "X" in the appropriate column. Perform the same self-evaluation under the "Confidence Level" section on the right to determine your degree of confidence relative to each competency. Once you've completed this assessment, you can use it to leverage collective understanding within your organization and make a plan for growth in areas where gaps exist.

Our team welcomes the opportunity to chat with you about the results of your C.A.R.E. assessment. [Email Sara Krueger, Director of Communications & Engagement](#), for a free 30-minute consultation to jumpstart your strategies!

### KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

None Limited Moderate Extensive

### CONNECT

### CONFIDENCE LEVEL

None Limited Moderate High

Identify Your Audience

Share Relevant Info

Personalize Messaging

Embrace Collaboration

Be the Connector

Leverage Technology

### ASSESS

Redefine Success

Mind Tone & Timing

Replace Imagery & Language

### RESPOND

Listen to People's Needs

Highlight How You Can Help

Build Community

Let Your Brand Heart Guide You

### EVOLVE

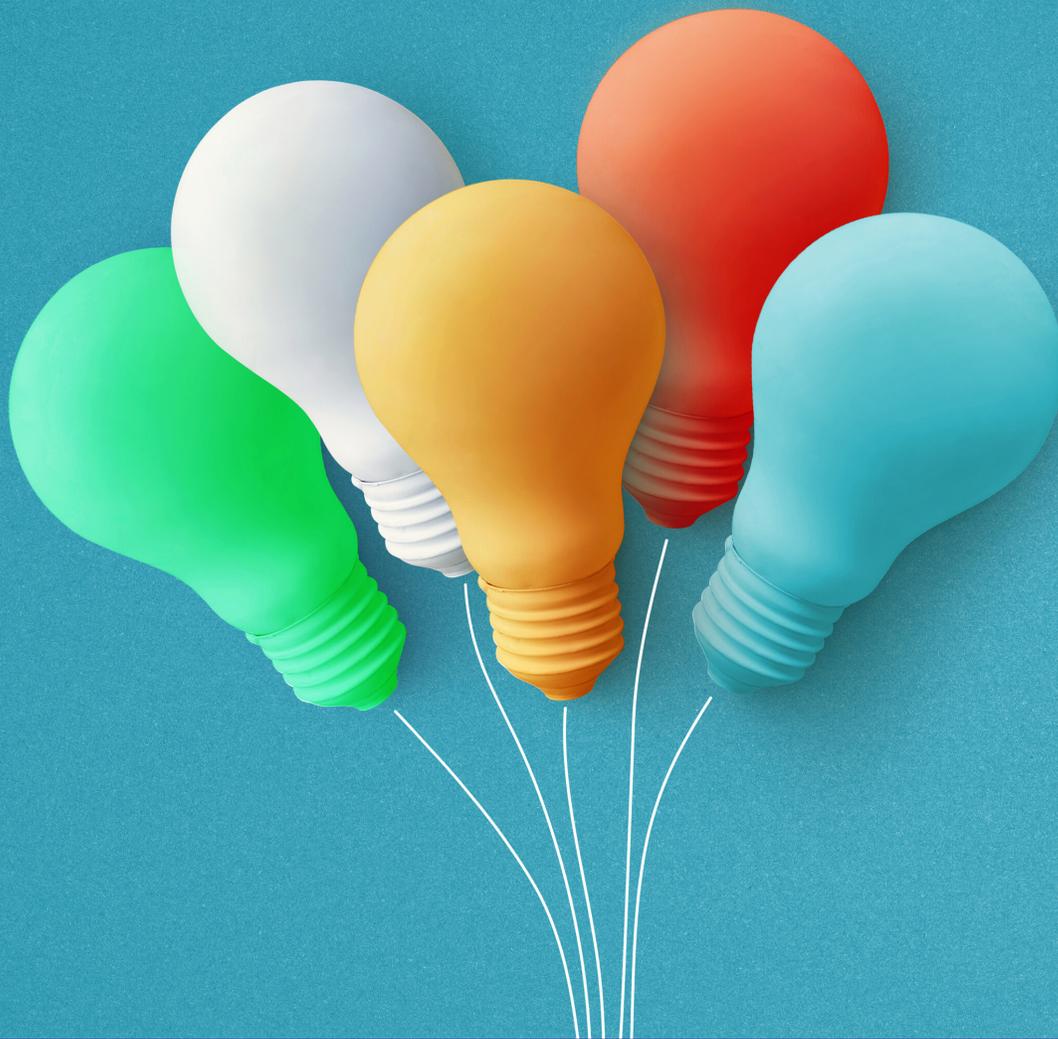
Adjust Strategies & Timelines

Reallocate Budgets

Expand Online Services

Invest in Social Media

Explore Alternative Delivery Methods



## Marketing & Communications

Our expert storytellers craft powerful, inspired messages that pack a punch---leaving audiences engaged, informed, and hungry for more. We specialize in strategy, campaigns, annual planning, event marketing, communications development, coaching, trainings, and more. Contact us for a consultation!



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