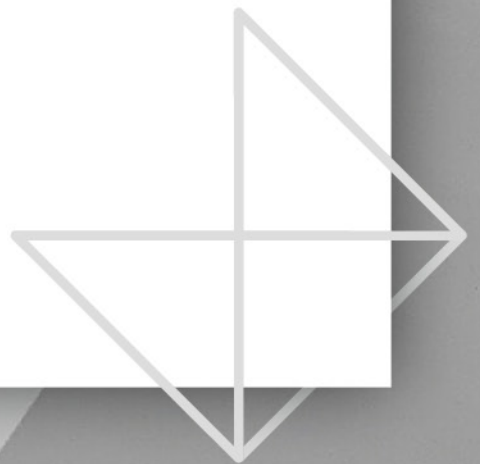


**HOW TO GUIDE:  
PUBLIC SECTOR PR &  
COMMUNICATIONS  
DURING THE  
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**



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## Section 1

# HOW TO GUIDE: PUBLIC SECTOR PR & COMMUNICATIONS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

In the current environment, the public sector has a unique and central role, both in providing medical, financial and logistical support to individuals and communities and as a trusted source of information. But it is also a sector under unprecedented pressure. You need to think carefully about how, when and why you communicate with them.

- 1. Establish an open line of communication.** If at all possible, you should try to set up a line of communication between your organisation and local public authorities. Or, if not, at least ensure you and your organisation's leadership know whom to contact and how if you experience a confirmed case of Covid-19.
- 2. Demonstrate competency and accountability.** When engaging with public officials, you should be prepared to outline the measures your organisation is taking to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in line with medical guidelines as well as any further steps you are taking to protect the health of employees, your communities and the wider public.
- 3. Get your timing right.** The public sector is facing perhaps the greatest challenge of its modern history, especially the medical community. You should therefore be choiceful about communicating with them. When messages or campaigns targeting public organisations can be delayed without negatively impacting your own business, consider doing so. Where they cannot, approach public entities transparently with facts, challenges and, if possible, solutions.
- 4. Focus on social impacts.** When engaging with the public sector, it is vital to demonstrate empathy, compassion and action, focusing first and foremost on employee and community impacts. Unless absolutely necessary, you should avoid any proactive discussion of the economic issues you are experiencing. Your organisation should be seen as protecting and fighting for its people, not its business interests.
- 5. Be aware of freedom of information requests.** In many countries, including the UK, public sector organisations are subject to various forms of freedom of information requests. When working with them, it is therefore important to understand that any written communications may one day become publicly available to media and consumers.
- 6. Consider the local landscape.** If you are an international company working in multiple countries, remember the level of government involvement in the local business community will vary. In some cases, there may be little difference between a business partner and a public entity. In these

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situations, consider how information may be shared and spread, the stakeholders that could be involved and the potential issues that could arise as a result.

*Visit the Edelman Coronavirus Hub for more practical advice on how your organisation can communicate effectively during the coronavirus pandemic to boost resilience, protect employees and ensure business continuity.*