



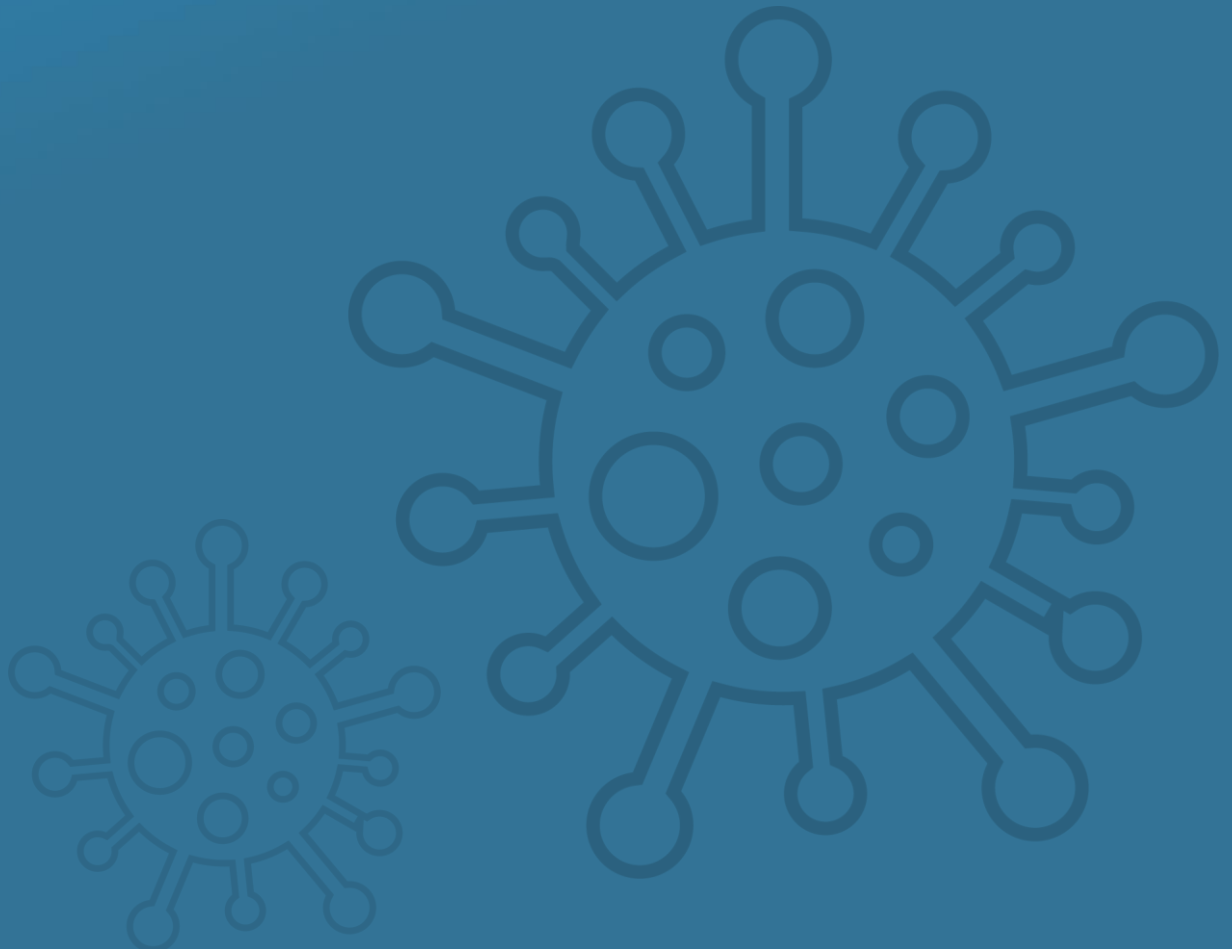
Fáilte Ireland

National Tourism Development Authority

MANAGING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS (ONLINE & OFFLINE)

THROUGH THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Connect | Inspire | Empathise | Clarify





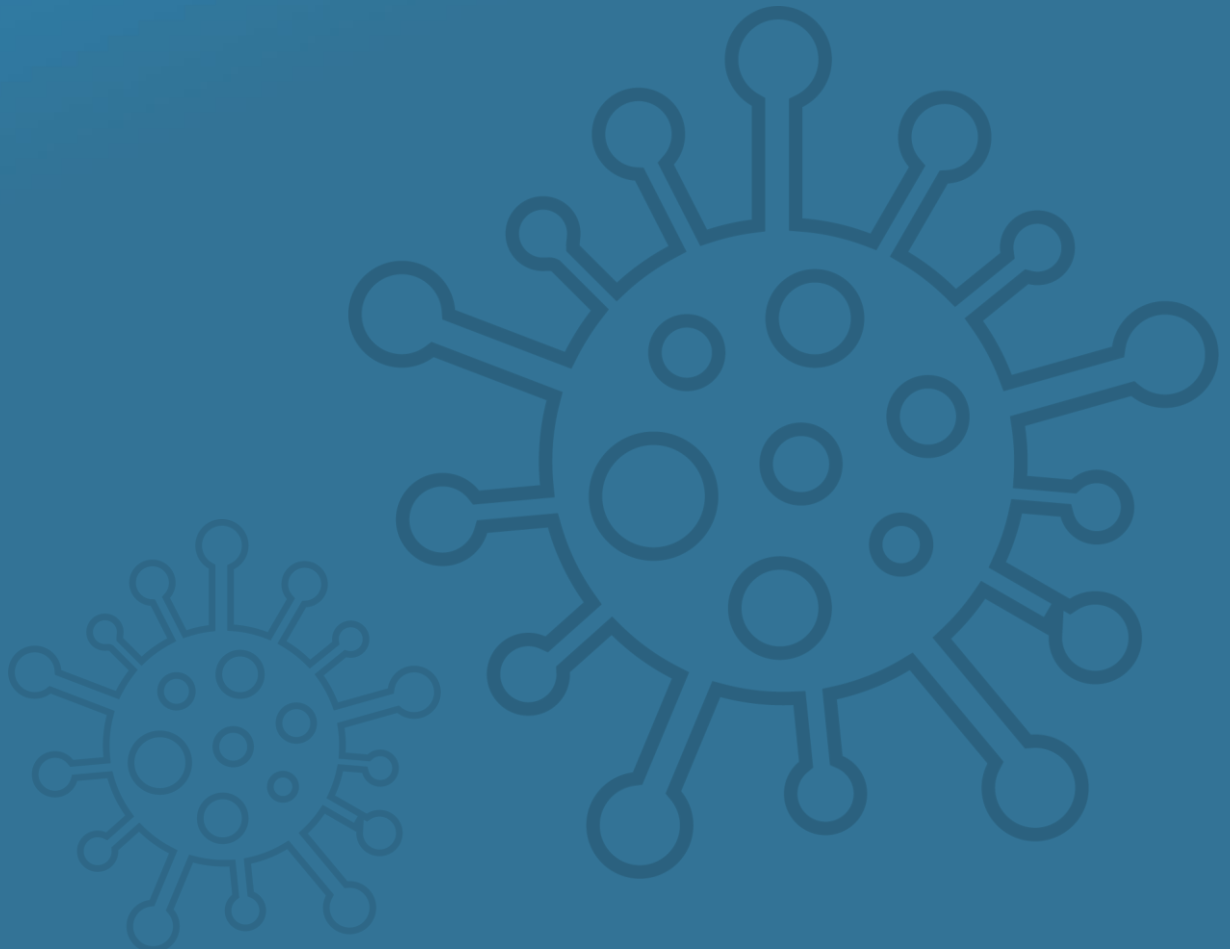
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INTRODUCTION

Engagement in positive communications during thriving periods is considered a must and when spirits are high and revenue generation is flowing, the skill of engaging with customers comes more naturally to us. This section will provide an introduction on how to effectively communicate during the Covid-19 crisis.





During a downturn, or the unprecedented pressures posed by Covid-19, communication can be more challenging. The instinctive reaction can be to bury our heads and hide away. Yet, this is exactly what we should avoid doing.

In fact, during periods like the current crisis, our behaviours and responses are even more crucial and need to be even more finely tuned. The truth is that how we behave now as individuals, businesses and collectively within Ireland's tourism and hospitality industry will:

- be forever remembered
- have a direct impact on how our businesses will be viewed by customers in the future
- heavily influence the speed of recovery for our individual businesses, destination Ireland and the industry as a whole.

The purpose of this document is to support tourism businesses by providing tips on how to manage communications during the Covid-19 crisis:

- Examples of how to communicate via offline and online channels
- A method for the formulation of a short to medium and a longer term plan
- Insights into how to adapt the communications plan as the crisis evolves

REMEMBER!

We are in the business of tourism which means that we are skilled in lifting spirits and showing understanding and empathy.





KEY COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

When defining our communication strategy, it is important to have the utmost clarity regarding:

- The words we choose
- The tone we use
- The timing of our communications.





CAREFULLY CHOOSE THE WORDS AND THE TONE YOU USE:

As the current crisis is fluid, there is a significant amount of complex information for us all to absorb. In an environment that can feel overwhelming, customers are naturally looking for communications that are:

- Empathetic
- Measured
- Concise
- Clear

The tone we need to strike therefore requires a balance between being professional, proactive and supportive.

REASSURE CUSTOMERS THROUGH YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

We are currently living in an extremely unsettled world. Loud communications in glaring colours and bold fonts are rightly being used in many sectors to warn us of danger and to inform us about how to stay safe.

The reality is that we are living through the Covid-19 Crisis and while there is no issue in stating that, as tourism businesses our communications need to be framed within the context of care. When communicating with customers, our role is to:

- Reassure them
- Give clear direction
- Provide them with peace of mind
- Show that people's well-being truly matters to us
- Show that we are supportive of our teams and our communities.

In this context, when the glaring colours and bold fonts that are currently being used in other sectors are applied to tourism businesses, they can have the effect of discouraging our customers. They can even add to the sense of panic and fear.





EXAMPLE: CREATING A BALANCE BETWEEN WORDS AND TONE DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The following communication **on page 8** demonstrates how to achieve a balance between words and tone during the Covid-19 crisis. In this case, the [fictional] business has chosen to:

- Personally, call their most valued repeat customers, before issuing the below communication in a hand signed letter (or personalised email)
- Issue an ezine addressed by the business owner to remaining customers. This ezine opens with a well-judged, professional picture of Nuala and John Burke (the business owners) standing with their team outside their hotel.





EXAMPLE: CREATING A BALANCE BETWEEN WORDS AND TONE DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Dear Guest

Together, we are facing a truly challenging and unprecedented period as the global coronavirus pandemic affects all our families, our businesses, our communities and our way of life.

It was with great sadness that we closed our doors last week for the safety of our valued employees and guests. Now, more than ever, we cherish the happy memories that have been created at our hotel. We would like to sincerely thank you for your loyal custom and we look forward to welcoming you back in the near future to create new memories with us.

Rest assured that our brilliant team remains available to help you by telephone [insert number] and by email [insert address]. Please also view our website [insert address] which we are continuously updating during this fluid time.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming you back to [name business]. Until then, please take care of yourself and your loved ones.

The very best,
Nuala and John Burke

A clear and measured acknowledgement of the crisis for what it is and; its impact on the business and on personal lives.

Clear that this team is valued and clear direction for the customer on how to maintain contact.

Thoughtful, personalised response. Owners reaching out to customers recognising their importance

Thoughtful words that acknowledge both employees and guests. Gently reminding customers of the hotel's important role in their lives

Clear display of empathy and a reminder of how the hotel can once again play a role in their customer's lives



EXERCISE GOOD JUDGEMENT IN THE TIMING OF COMMUNICATIONS

As this crisis unfolds, the kind of information that we can place in communications will inevitably change. However, we must exercise good judgement at all times regarding when and what we issue via our online and offline communication channels. It is important to neither under or over communicate to your customers.

- For example, the above communication by Nuala and John Burke marks a dramatic moment in the crisis as businesses and schools were closing and everyone began to face a daunting new reality where the clear focus is on saving lives. This is therefore not the time to issue an aggressive summer promotion. It would simply be inappropriate and ineffective.
- Our communication strategies therefore need to be sensitive and constantly adapt to the evolving crisis.

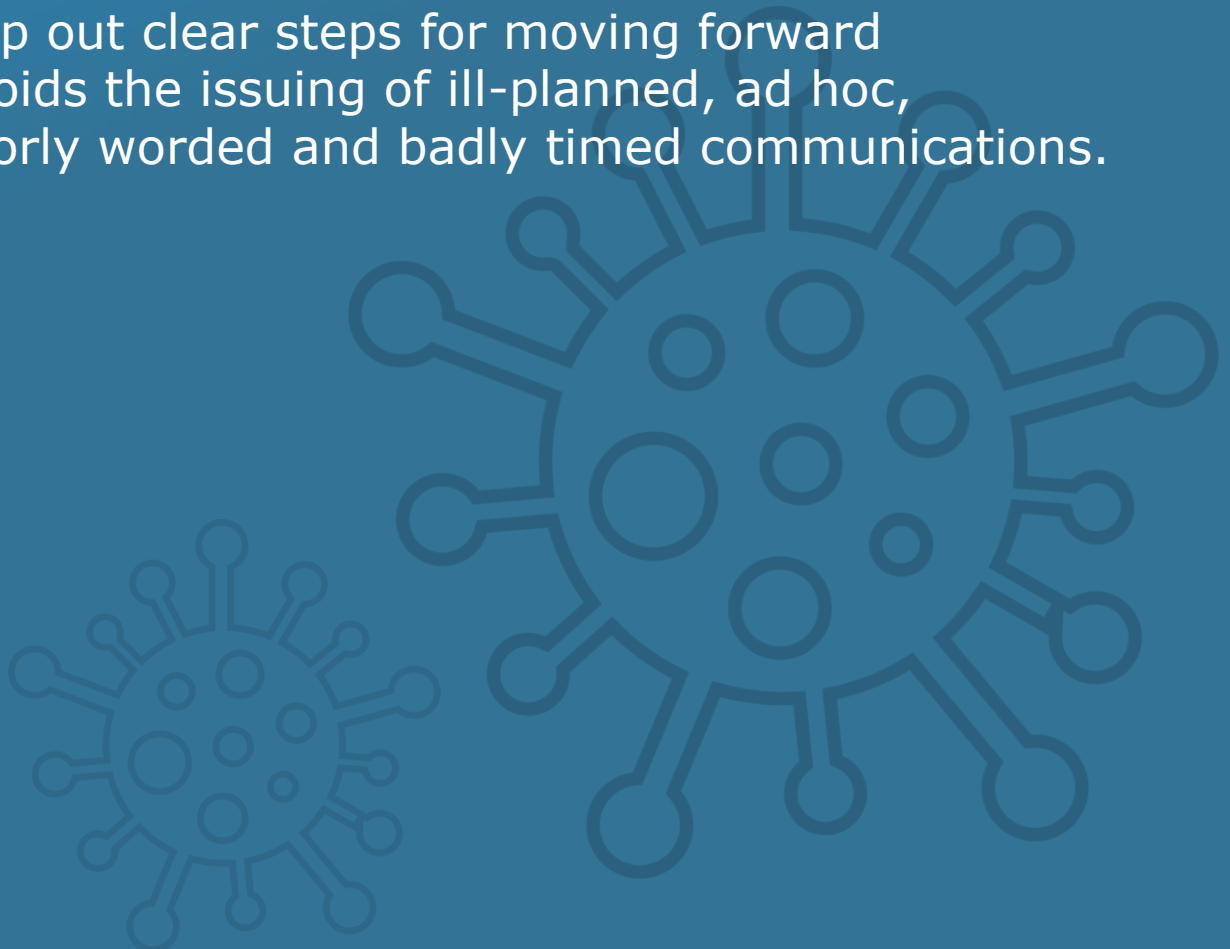




PLANNING COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM

It is advisable to create a communications plan for the short to medium and long-term. While the plan may require adjustment as the Covid-19 crisis evolves, a formulated plan should:

- Create a sense of confidence within the business
- Map out clear steps for moving forward
- Avoids the issuing of ill-planned, ad hoc, poorly worded and badly timed communications.





DEFINE WHAT YOUR BUSINESS WANTS TO SAY

To start your short to medium-term communications plan, think about what you can potentially say for now and during the upcoming days, weeks and months. For example:

- Are there special occasions (such as Easter) that offer communication opportunities?
- Is your business doing behind the scenes work that could be of interest to customers?
- Could you emphasise the beauty of the destination where your business is located through photographs or video?
- Do you have clients who have responded positively to how your business has cared for them during this time?
- Is your business engaged in a current innovation?
- Does your business have a skill that it can share, for example, online?
- Does your business have services that are available for free or services that can be purchased online?
- Is your business involved in community initiatives?
- Does your business admire other businesses or people within your community who are truly making a difference during this crisis?

Once you have worked out what you want to say, you can schedule:

- When you need to say it (being careful to engage, rather than bombard customers)
- How you need to say it, for example via well chosen imagery, video, words, tone
- The online or offline channel via which you need to communicate.
For example: offline via telephone and online via your own website, ezine, blog, Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn.



DECIDE WHAT OFFERS ARE MOST APPROPRIATE AT THIS TIME

There will come a point in the evolution of this crisis, when your business will have the opportunity to promote its full suite of services. Following this crisis, when people have stayed at home for so long, there will naturally be a desire to explore new experiences and to revisit places that have contributed to happy memories.

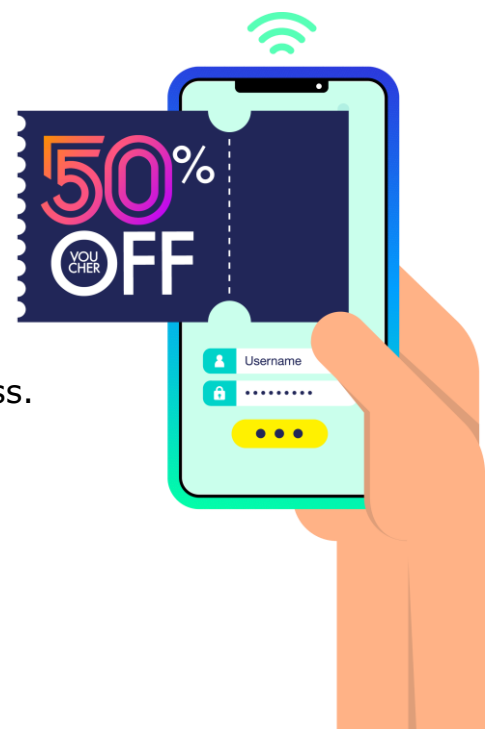
Currently, the majority of tourism businesses are fully closed and therefore the ability to sell is heavily curtailed.

However, in your communications plan, you should consider ways to promote what you can sell, for example via:

- Voucher sales
- Value added offers
- Early bird offers.

It should be noted that the tone, wording and timing applied to any of the above options needs to be extremely well chosen.

We find ourselves in a time when many of our colleagues and friends within our own industry and in other sectors have lost their jobs and, for a myriad of other reasons, many people are under significant pressure. At this time, an ill-judged promotion can potentially cause offence and damage the reputation of your business.



It is also true that there are potential customers who may wish to purchase a service from your business so that they can look forward to a happy memory once the world re-finds its balance. Even in this case, we need to be careful with how we communicate. At all times, it is important that our communications do not:

- Offend
- Appear opportunistic
- Damage or weaken our business' reputation
- Actively encourage cancellations.

Remember, we are in the business of tourism and, at this time, our communications need to reflect that we:

- Are community and Destination Ireland players
- Support and care for our previous and potential guests
- Are skilled in the diplomacy required of a crisis
- Are proud of our business and its reputation
- Are looking forward to the day when we can do what we do best via caring for people
- Via our businesses, will be able to create new and happy future memories for our guests.





SAMPLE VALUE ADD PROMOTION

- Take a look at the following communication issued by a [fictional] rural farmhouse that operates The Barn Restaurant.
- In this case, a value-add promotion is used:

I can visualize Katy Daly in her business

To all our friends,

I find myself in my empty restaurant the Friday morning before the May Bank Holiday weekend. At this time, my family and I would normally be scrubbing the place clean and cutting flowers from our garden to decorate The Barn.

Usually, this is one of my favourite times of the year and I look forward to welcoming people from all over Ireland.

But, as we all know, we will get through this period. The laughter will return. And, once again, we will welcome and look after you.

Until that day, if you would like to gift a voucher to yourself, a family member or a friend, please call me personally at [insert telephone], email [insert address] or view [insert web address where purchase can be made].

For each voucher, I am happy to include a bouquet of garden flowers. And I will be delighted to personally present those to you the next time you come to dine! In the meantime, look after yourself. Keep safe and take time to breathe in the fresh air.

Wishing you the very best,
Katy Daly

A positive, forward looking approach reminds us that Katy genuinely cares for her guests

Katy's disappointment is clear but note the tone is genuine and measured

Direct call to action
Language is measured, but clear

A well- judged value add that expresses the sentiment of this business



SAMPLE EARLY BIRD PROMOTION

In the following communication, The Barn Restaurant includes an early bird promotion:

To all our friends,

I find myself in my empty restaurant the Friday morning before the May Bank Holiday weekend. At this time, my family and I would normally be scrubbing the place clean and cutting flowers from our garden to decorate The Barn.

Usually, this is one of my favourite times of the year and I look forward to welcoming people from all over Ireland.

But, as we all know, we will get through this period. The laughter will return. And, once again, we will welcome and look after you.

Until that day, if you would like to gift a voucher to yourself, a family member or a friend, please call me personally at [insert telephone], email [insert address] or view [insert web address where purchase can be made].

For, vouchers purchased between now and 12th April, my gift to you is a 15% discount. And believe me, I will be delighted to personally welcome you the next time we get to meet.

In the meantime, look after yourself. Keep safe and take time to breathe in the fresh air.

Wishing you the very best,
Katy Daly

An early bird offer framed within kind words and sincerity. Clear call to action offering short term revenue generation opportunity and long-term goodwill.



DO NOT UNDERMINE THE VALUE OF WHAT YOUR BUSINESS DOES

When your business is considering the potential for promotions in your communication plan, please do not rush into diminishing the value of your business by heavily discounting price.

Remember that in your short to medium plan, your business should focus on making the customer aware of all the positive reasons why they should purchase your services post the Covid-19 crisis.

Rather than major price reductions, if your business does wish to offer an incentive to its valued customers, it is more advisable to consider:

- A genuine value-add offering
- A value-driven early bird offering

An example of how to use these tools is outlined in The Barn Restaurant example.

REMEMBER!

If your business executes a strong strategic communications plan, your customers should naturally want to engage with your business. In this case, it should not be necessary to apply hugely discounted rates in what is already a difficult year.





DO TAKE THIS TIME TO EMPHASISE THE VALUE YOUR BUSINESS OFFERS

- Ireland isn't considered to be a low-cost destination, we are a premium offering. Our tourism hospitality sector is generally very well regarded by visitors in terms of the quality of the service and the experience they get. Businesses often display a "more is more" attitude to their services.
- For example, if a guest pays €10.00 - €15.00 for a hotel breakfast in Ireland they receive a vast array of food from cooked to continental options.
- However, a common issue in Ireland is that we tend to state the price, without stating these multiple inclusions. Customers and, in particular, international customers can thereby have difficulty understanding the exact value offered at each price point.

Now is the time to clarify this messaging. A business should objectively assess its offline and online collateral to provide clarity so that for each price point, the inclusions are clearly itemised. Consider noting items such as:

- Included services (free parking, WIFI, access to the leisure centre, in-room tea/coffee....)
- Provenance: food and drinks that come from your local area or reputable suppliers
- Clear labelling of quality: for example, free range or organic produce.
- There will come a time in your communications strategy for the Covid-19 crisis where your business can use this clarity so that the full value of your services becomes apparent to the customer. This in turn will remove the pressure to engage in discount pricing.





PLANNING COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE LONGER TERM





As the longer-term plan builds on and follows the short-medium term plan, think about what your business will need to have in place for the lead up into recovery when actual bookings will rise once again.

Your business may wish to consider:

- the pricing and offers that need to be loaded onto offline and online platforms
- reasons why customers should explore your destination
- good news stories about colleagues returning to work to welcome and look after guests once again.

REMEMBER!

- The long-term plan will be significantly more effective if a well-crafted short to medium term communications plan proceeds it.
- Through this process, valuable customers are kept gently informed
- They are consistently included in your business story through the Covid-19 crisis.



HOW TO LAYOUT YOUR COVID-19 COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The rule for planning your communications strategy during the Covid-19 crisis remains the same as the rule for communications planning prior to the Covid-19 crisis.

A well-judged strategic **INPUT**



The associated **OUTCOME**

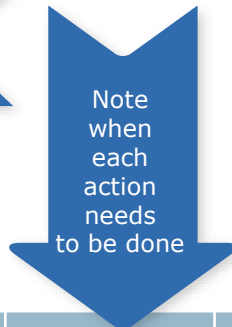
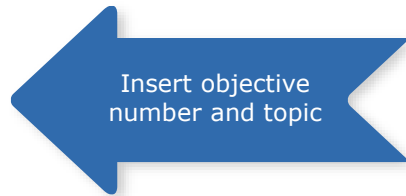
Through this, the business understands that each strategic input needs to be carefully thought through for the associated KPI or outcome it wishes to achieve.



SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

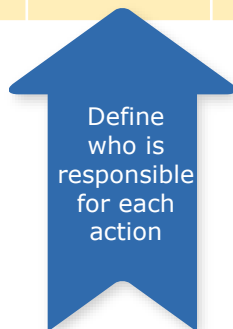
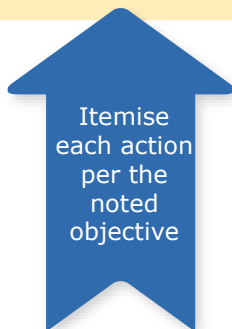
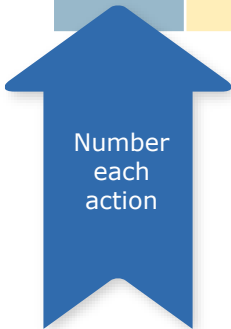
This document can help to clarify your business objectives in the short-medium and longer term during the Covid-19 crisis. Note that the document can be drawn up quickly as it forces the business to crystallise its actions into a bullet point format.

OBJECTIVE 1:



ACTIONS:

| No | Action | Who | When | KPIs/Outcome |
|----|--------|-----|------|--------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |





Below is an example of how Katy Daly in the [fictional] Barn Restaurant began to formulate her communication plan using this document.

OBJECTIVE 1:
Make customers aware of my new online services:
The Barn Restaurant brings country cooking online

ACTIONS:

| No | Action | Who | When | KPIs/Outcomes |
|----|--|-------|-------------|--|
| 1 | Call my regular customers and let them know about the new service | Nuala | Insert Date | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodwill created • Customers well taken care of • Customers remembering me during recovery • In a good position to promote sales for the recovery |
| 2 | Issue an email communication to the balance of customers | John | Insert Date | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for new or low booking customers rekindled |
| 3 | Upload video to LinkedIn and encourage industry colleagues to like and share | John | Insert Date | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attention of customers and buyers gained |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload video to B2C channels including Facebook and Instagram • Actively engage and encourage friends to like and share | Nuala | Insert Date | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attention of new and future customers gained. |



Below is an example of how Katy Daly in the [fictional] Barn Restaurant began to formulate her communication plan using this document.

OBJECTIVE 2: Make my customers aware of my beautiful destination

ACTIONS:

| No | Action | Who | When | KPIs/Outcomes |
|----|---|----------------|-------------|---|
| 1 | Take a daily walk to capture the views and sounds of the countryside via photographs and video | Nuala | Daily | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have reminded myself of the beauty of my destination Destination communicated with others Customers want to come here post the Covid-19 crisis |
| 2 | Diary my daily walk via brief and thoughtful communications on social media platforms including LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram | Nuala and John | Daily | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have reached out to direct customers and to indirect sales opportunities via travel buyers |
| 3 | Call colleagues from local businesses and in the local tourist office to make them aware of this campaign. Ask them to engage and for ways we can collaborate | John | Insert Date | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My local community know that I am working away and ready for action for the recovery We are working together locally to ensure to put our destination in the minds of customers. |

REMEMBER!

When creating a plan like his two (or more) heads are better than one!

- Seek inspiration from friends and colleagues
- Then, turn that inspiration into realistic and actionable objectives
- In this way, your business can move forward in a strategic stepwise manner
- That will heavily benefit your business reputation now and at the point of recovery





MANAGING CUSTOMER NEEDS INCLUDING CANCELLATIONS THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Tourism businesses are now facing cancellations due to the Covid-19 crisis that are beyond everybody's control including customers, travel buyers and the business itself.



While the Covid-19 crisis is an unprecedented situation, as tourism professionals we need to draw on our experience and skills to engage with our customers in a way that:

- Avoids conflict
- Reaches a resolution
- Protects the integrity of the business and its reputation.

When dealing with cancellations, it is recommended to telephone customers who will be eager to hear a compassionate voice and to clarify the status of their booking.





BUSINESS TO CONSUMER (B2C) COMMUNICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT OF BOOKINGS

The below communication might be considered when addressing a direct B2C customer with an upcoming booking via telephone:

"Hello Mary

I am calling to ask you how you are? The world feels so surreal at the moment and I am really hoping that it re-finds its balance soon..."

For example, let's assume the customer advises that they are finding it difficult to get to grips with the world at the moment, you could consider responding in a gentle and sympathetic tone as follows:

"I completely understand where you are coming from Mary. I think we are all trying to get the hang of our new reality. Personally, I am just holding onto the fact that this is temporary and together we will get through it."

Then, you will need to introduce the booking:

"Mary, I also need to speak with you regarding the booking you have made to stay with us in two weeks' time. It would be lovely if we could welcome you back in the future and I am wondering if we could move that booking to a later date..."

REMEMBER!

At this point LISTEN and ENGAGE with the customer's reply before addressing the booking.



REMEMBER!

In this instance, the customer has the right to reply and their decision needs to be respectfully accepted.





If the customer advises that they wish to cancel, you could consider saying something like

"Isn't that a pity. I fully understand though Mary and hopefully we will have the opportunity to welcome you and your friends at a later date..."

- Afterwards, the booking cancellation should be managed promptly according to what you have agreed with the customer
- A kind message should also be issued to the customer to confirm same.

You could consider a follow-up email such as the following:

*Dear Mary,
It was lovely to speak with you earlier.*

I am writing now to confirm that I have cancelled your booking as requested. I would like to sincerely thank you for thinking of [name business]. These really are unprecedented times and we are very disappointed that we did not get the opportunity to look after you on this occasion. Do be aware that we hope to welcome you, your friends and family in the near future. In the meantime, please keep safe.

If you need me for anything, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

*Wishing you the very best,
[include name]*



If the customer advises that they wish to postpone, you could consider saying something like:

"That's brilliant. Thanks Mary. I can guarantee you that you will be getting the warmest of welcomes when we next see you."

Then, proceed to manage accordingly before issuing an email like the following:

Dear Mary,

It was lovely to speak with you earlier.

I am writing now to re-confirm that you and your family are now booked for [insert date]. Rest assured that we are really looking forward to welcoming you in the near future.

In the meantime, look after yourself and keep safe. If you need me for anything, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

*Wishing you the very best,
[include name]*



BUSINESS TO CONSUMER (B2C) COMMUNICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT OF BOOKINGS

The below is a communication that might be considered when addressing a B2B customer with an upcoming booking via telephone:

“Hi Jane, how are you, your colleagues and your family?”

This really is an unprecedented and surreal time...

I had wanted to touch base with you regarding the booking you have with us...

How this conversation continues will be determined by:

- The contractual conditions and payments schedule your business has in place with the travel buyer
- Your relationship with the buyer
- Your approach which should ideally strike a clear, practical and understanding tone.

Tricky issues may arise during these conversations regarding refunds, or outstanding payments or postponement payments. It is most important to understand that no matter what arises on such a call the business must:

- Remain calm
- Be solution driven
- If a compromise is needed then ideally the aim should be that the business and the travel buyer meet each other in the middle
- Keep in mind that how we behave now will be remembered well into the future
- Remember that our businesses will need to rely upon these relationships again.

REMEMBER!

At this point **LISTEN** and **ENGAGE** with the customer's reply before addressing the booking.





MANAGING WEBSITE AND ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS

There has been a huge amount of online activity during the Covid-19 crisis, and this presents an ideal opportunity for customer engagement during these difficult times.





As tourism businesses, we need to be mindful of the human being sitting at the other side of a computer. We must think

- Of their needs
- How they are feeling

We must also think about our business

- What does it stand for?
- What reputation and image does it wish to project?

When creating online content at this sensitive time, we need to be mindful of the following

- The current need for brand awareness rather than special offers
- Building meaningful content that supports human needs via connection, learning and community engagement
- The crucial importance of respect avoiding being flippant or the use of humour
- Keeping up to date (check HSE updates and Fáilte Ireland website regularly and only reference official sources of information)

REMEMBER!

Via digital platforms

- Our communications need to **speak** to **human** beings
- Our communications need to **humanise** our business brand



WEBSITE COMMUNICATIONS

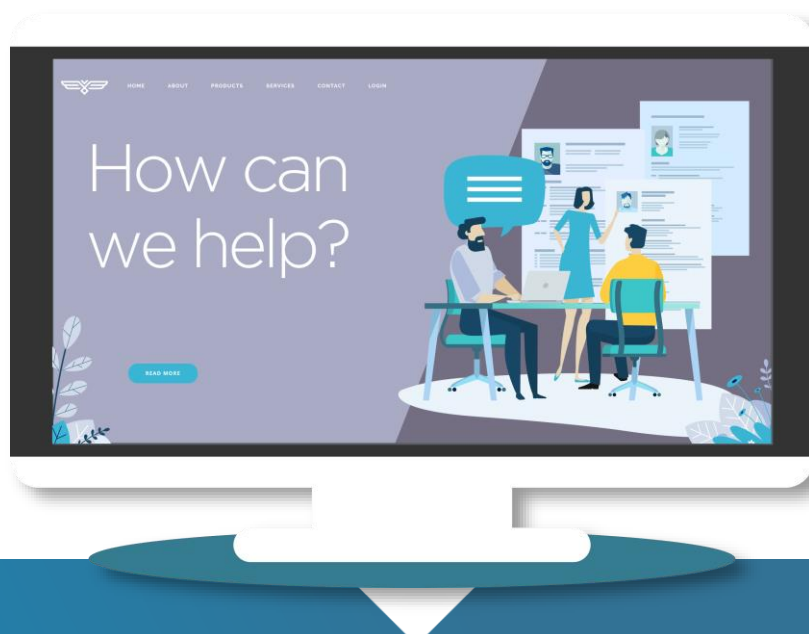
Remember that we are currently living through a difficult period, so it is important that all our communications – online and offline – do not add to a sense of panic, pessimism or fear.

Take an objective look at your website and ask yourself, does it reflect that my business is:

- Personable
- Conscientious
- Empathetic
- Supportive
- Hospitable
- Ready to assist.

Ideally, your messaging should feature on the homepage, potentially via a pop-up communication.

During this time, customers like to hear from General Managers or team members who effectively represent what the business stands for. A well-chosen photograph can help to create the connection between the business and the customer.





In terms of wording for this message,
your business could consider as follows:

To all our friends,

We truly find ourselves in an unprecedented moment in our lives. It is during times like these that we remember the many happy occasions that have been celebrated in our [name the business]. It is our hope that we will return to these happy times in the very near future.

For now, our [name the business] remains closed due to Covid-19.

Rest assured that as a team, we are available to help you. From 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, you can contact us at T: XXX Outside of these hours, we are available at T: XXX. We would also be happy to hear from you via email at XXXXX.

If you would like to make a reservation, or purchase a voucher for a future occasion, the following link is available to you at all times XXXXXXXX

We would like to sincerely thank you for your custom in the past. We are truly looking forward to extending the warmest of welcomes to you very soon.

Stay Safe. Bí Cúramach.

John, Mary and all the Byrne family.

Reminding customers of the role this business plays in their lives

Gentle call to action that is not forced and placed within the context of kind words

Clear direction regarding available services and contact details

Personal. Caring.
A tone of sincerity.



EXAMPLE:

During this time, a business can also use its website to communicate with customers during special occasions. While the communication will need to be adjusted, the sentiment of hospitality must always remain at its core.

Dear friends,

At this time of year, we are generally planning for our annual Easter Egg Hunt. Rest assured that next year, we will be returning with an even bigger event for all our customers to enjoy.

In the meantime, I would like to extend a very Happy Easter to you and your families.

If you would like to make contact with our team, we are on hand to help at T: XXX and via email at XXXXX.

If you would like to gift a voucher, please not hesitate to contact us. The following link is also available to you at all times
XXXXXXXXX

Most importantly, please look after yourself and keep safe.

Happy Easter,

From John, Mary and all the Byrne family.

The primary and genuine sentiment is care for the customer.

Within this context, a call to action is presented.



SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

During the period of the Covid-19 crisis, social media platforms offer excellent opportunities to connect with customers. While platforms such as Facebook and Instagram can connect your business with direct B2C customers, LinkedIn is an effective platform for liaising with colleagues, customers and indirect B2B professional travel buyers.

Think about the opportunity to speak through your brand online in way that is personal.

Some businesses have the potential to bring their business online. This kind of innovation presents a good news story, so make sure to promote any activity in this area. At all times, ensure that your communications are positive, to the point and encouraging.

For example, include a strong picture of you/and or your colleagues with a message such as:

- *"Stay home. Stay safe. And stay engaged with this incredible team building app..."*
- *"Stay home. Stay safe. And enter a new virtual reality that brings you right behind the secrets doors of our museum..."*
- *"Even though that was the oddest working week, let's find our Friday feeling with our online Go Green Yoga class...!"*

REMEMBER!

At the end of each communication, make sure to include a link where your customers can find your service and (depending on the business offering), pay for your service

Also consider including relevant and motivating twitter hashtags.





MANAGING YOUR BUSINESS REPUTATION VIA ONLINE PLATFORMS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The Covid-19 Crisis offers all businesses the opportunity to share their story and to project their offering in a positive light via online platforms. Many Irish tourism businesses have been actively showing exactly what being hospitable means in the current crisis through a variety of methods including:

- Cooking meals for the elderly
- Offering free services to hard working medical staff
- Sharing recipes and tips (for example on how to create the perfect afternoon tea)
- Sharing inspiring photographs of Ireland's beautiful sunsets and landscapes
- Offering business tips and insights
- Supporting the compelling communications of other people, friends and colleagues during this difficult time.

Look to representatives from other industries for inspiration too. For example

- Supermarkets that have liaised with well-known personalities, local personalities and sports players to create engaging "I'm staying at home content"
- Restaurants and cafés that have turned into greengrocers to support the food industry, their customers and their suppliers
- Distilleries that are supporting colleagues in the medical sector by producing hand sanitisers free of charge.

COMMUNICATIONS VIA VIDEO CONTENT

Other businesses have put their brilliant skills to use by creating online videos that are compelling and capture engagement. These can potentially include:

- Learning a new skill (with content such as cooking or wellbeing)
- Keeping people distracted and engaged via virtual tours of museums, castles and secret exhibition spaces that until now have been off limits to the public
- Remember too, that during these times, well-judged video content showing a manager or team member can be very welcome once the content is presented:
 - In an honest and direct way
 - Shows a good sense of consideration and understanding of the difficult time but also looks ahead in a positive way to the future.





CREATE YOUR OWN COMMUNITY VIA SOCIAL PLATFORMS

Consider looking after existing and potential guests by creating a group that is personalised to your brand on a platform such as Facebook.

Think about how your tourism business can lift people's spirits, encourage them to work together and stay connected by using this platform to share.

- Housekeeping tips such as how to make the perfect bed from an expert accommodation provider!
- Gardening and cooking tips
- Reading recommendations
- Learning new skills like a language, or a craft
- Insights into takeaway services your business may have available at this time.

REMEMBER!

- It is really important that all content issued by a business via social media (and other platforms) is genuine and effectively expresses the true brand or spirit of that business.
- In this way, the business is more likely to achieve recognition via positive third-party online referrals and commentary
- Communication must always be sincere to garner support.



PAID ADVERTISING: GOOGLE AND FACEBOOK ADS

Understandably, budgets are under pressure during the current crisis. However, if your business is in a position to retain even a small ad budget, this can be applied to:

- Protecting your brand name
- Ensuring your business is ready to drive later bookings for 2020 and bookings for 2021 via paid ads

If your budget is really small, then consider focusing on Facebook Ads.

- This is the cheapest option
- It allows you to effectively target locals in your community with the services and innovations your business can offer them
- Your ad budget can also be used to promote inspiring content and stories about how your business and teams are coping during the Covid-19 crisis.

