

Expert in The Room Webinar Series

Session 4: Communications, July 21, 2020

Summary & Q&A

Building updates from Doug:

- Completed Re-Activation Plan in accordance with ASM Global Venue Shield Program
 - This will cover every aspect of the building from housekeeping, customer/client journeys to our partners.
 - Is currently under review
 - We are currently working on a condensed version of the re-activation plan for our clients that will live on our website
- Our accreditation through GBAC continues
 - This is a training for all staff for Global Risk for Airborne Pathogens.

Question 1: Where do you begin when developing a communication plan where there is so much uncertainty?

- There is no owner's manual on this. You are learning as you go
- Communication is important more now than ever
- Have a communication plan
 - Step 1: Do your research. Reach out to your local resources (Example: Visitors Bureau)
 - Step 2: Look for information that is available through your local health department or the CDC
 - Step 3: Define/determine who your audience is (vendors, event attendees, staff)
 - Step 4: Determine what communication outlet you will use to relay all the information to your guests (Examples: email, social media, newsletter)
- When crafting your message make sure you seek out information from the venue you are hosting on their guidelines.
- Communicate often and clearly

Question 2: Why is it important to have a communication plan in place ahead of changes and updates?

- It is very important! You cannot plan ahead enough. It may change every day or every week, but at least you have that structure in place and can adjust as you receive new information.
- Make sure to have a communication plan on how you are going to notify your attendees if someone does test positive for COVID-19 and attended the event.
 - Plan for those "what if" scenarios. Who will be the person to communicate this information to attendees?
 - Make sure you have that statement ready to send ahead of time
- Gathering contact information from guests is very important. Planners need to make sure they have a plan on how they are going to retrieve attendee information in case there is a need to have let people know what is going on.
 - (Examples: Contact Tracing, Registration)
- If you have to send a notification out to your attendees, always assess it afterward's.
 - What worked & what did not? You will often tweak your communication action statements

Question 3: Why is internal communication essential? / What you can learn from your internal team in these processes?

- Internal communication is vital now a days due to having some staff working in the office and some still working from home

- Whichever communication outlet you chose to communicate with your employees make sure you communicate clearly and frequently
 - Notifying your employees of the latest information so when they are transiting back into the office, they are up to speed on everything. (Example: NY Governor adding states to the quarantine list)
- Receiving internal feedback from your employees and having internal dialogue/communication is also very important. (Example: Just asking the simple question, how are you feeling about being on site while an event is going on?) You want to make sure you get a feel for everyone's comfort level in his new world we are living in.

Question 4: What is the best way to gather feedback from your internal team?

- Whatever channel of communication you prefer. (Examples: surveying, phone conference, debrief)
- Similar of what you would do after the events complete. Asking the client how their experience was with us and what we could do to improve if we need to.
- Get a feel of what is missing in your communication plan & what you could better next time.

Question 5: What tools and platforms are most effective in your communications with your attendees?

- Video is a great. It is something people can easily digest, and you can be creative in making the video to draw people in.
 - Keep the videos short and clear as possible when sharing the information. It is okay to repeat often!
- Social Media Platforms: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. Know your target audience.
- Press Announcement/Press Release

Question 6: What are the foundations of an effective toolkit?

- A toolkit is a great resource to have available especially for people that are not from the area.
 - Have it available on your website
- Having FAQ's readily available
- Having a fact sheet
 - A (1) page overview with facts about the building the event will be held in, etc.
- QR Code to scan that goes directly to page with information

Question 7: Social Media: How important is it to have specific graphics on your social media and not pull pictures that you have elsewhere and put them on there?

- Very important! You want to make sure you are providing fresh content when sharing new information.
- You want picture/links readily accessible for the attendee to click on. It helps when you are sharing the same message over and all you have to do on your end is make sure you are updating frequently.
- Utilize your partners to help get your message out there on social media. See what they are doing and don't be afraid to ask for help!

Question 8: For those companies that do not have a large team how to do go about asking for help with communication information out to your attendees?

- Outsource! Do research on PR Companies. Hire interns (at office or virtually), they can be a great help.

Question 9: What if a person is not satisfied with the information you are providing?

- You will not be able to make everyone happy but take what they say to you and try to implement it as best as you can next time. It is good to receive honest feedback.

Question 10: What can you utilize and learn from others in similar positions/areas to implement into your plan

- Research other companies and see what they are doing to communicate information.
- Reach out to other colleagues in the business.

Question 11: How should you cover your basis with a Plan A/Plan B crisis plan should there be some unforeseen hiccups and obstacles as you look to move forward with your event?

- Always be planning for the future.
- Ask those “what if” questions before so you can provide clear information if something were to ever to happen
 - Always think about the worst-case scenarios that could possibly happen

Question 12: What is the best way to measure effectivity of your communications plan for the future?

- Did it meet your goals & objectives?
- Receiving feedback from the attendees on their experience at your event. Make sure to thank them for attending!
 - When sending out a survey for feedback ask about 3-5 questions. Make sure to not ask too many, but just enough to get the information you need.
- Debrief with your team
 - Keep track of the analytics, numbers, views, and engagement.
- Don't be afraid to outsource for any feedback or help.

Doug Question: There is always so much information to rely to people. Is there a such thing as information overload?

- Never! You want to make sure the information you have gets clearly communicated. You can always send out an update simply letting people know that there are updated materials available via link. You can specify to what pages were updated so they don't have to re-read the entire document and go directly to the updated pages.

Doug Closing:

- Next week's webinar topic is audio visual. We are proud to announce we now have a new in-house AV company, ACES!