

Has Your 2020 PR Plan Been Disrupted?

To date, the events of this year have been disruptive (to say the least) to the public relations plans of most businesses. The coronavirus, which dominated headlines for most of the first half of this year, had a negative effect on almost every industry in the United States. However, while COVID-19 did create challenges, it also provided thought leadership opportunities for professional services firms. For instance, law firms were able to promote their knowledge and educate their clients through contributed content about the quickly evolving legal ramifications of the pandemic, including its impact on bankruptcies, real estate and employment matters.

Before the pandemic could abate, another major event took over the news cycle on May 25: the killing of George Floyd, an African-American man, by a Minneapolis police officer. This has led to weeks of protests against police brutality and racism in cities and towns across the country. Once again, companies had to change the focus of their PR and marketing efforts. This time, it led to many companies declaring their support for organizations and efforts that promote social justice. Others created special internal task forces to identify ways to combat racism both internally and externally.

Odds are your firm has had to alter or scrap some of its planned PR initiatives for the year. That's why it's more important than ever to take some time to audit your PR activities to date and evaluate whether you need to make any changes to reach your target goals.

Where Do You Stand?

When assessing your PR initiatives in 2020 so far, take some time to review your existing communications plan and acquaint yourself with what was planned for the remainder of 2020. Pay special attention to any major campaigns or other planned **communications activities** (e.g., the firm's thought leadership track) so you can determine how, if at all, to pivot messaging, or whether to delay or cancel any campaigns. Key points to keep in mind when auditing your communications plan include:

- Make sure the status of all goals and actions has been updated.
- Review your action plan to determine which goals are on target, off target or critically late.
- Identify what you need to accomplish in the remaining half of 2020.
- Determine whether any goals should be deferred.

What Are Some PR Plan Alternatives?

It might not be possible to salvage the PR plan you had developed before the many events that have occurred thus far in 2020. Therefore, you may want to invest time and energy into other related **marketing and PR initiatives**. For instance, this is a great time to



Carlos Arcos

Senior Vice President
Public Relations
713.826.5195
carcos@jaffepr.com

leverage social media. Although the country is beginning to reopen, many people are still working from home who rely on social media for news and entertainment. This means you may have more eyes on your social media profiles than usual.

This is also a good moment to use any free time to create, update or enhance the LinkedIn profiles for your [company](#) and its [professional staff](#). (I'm still surprised by how many key professionals in a firm have little or no LinkedIn presence.)

Many live events, including conferences and seminars, have been cancelled or postponed indefinitely due to the ongoing pandemic. That has eliminated a lot of networking and business development opportunities for firms and professionals. If your firm was focused on attendance and sponsorship of industry events and conferences, consider shifting that money and effort to webinars, podcasts or online/virtual marketing programs.

Make Diversity Your Top Priority

With so many major events dominating the news cycle, it's challenging to [develop and execute marketing and PR plans during a global crisis](#). However, savvy companies can do many things during these uncertain times to maintain visibility and a leadership role. The recent protests and demonstrations have emphasized that efforts at addressing diversity and inclusion in the workplace must always be a focus of your company. You must continue to support these efforts both now and especially when "no one is watching." Diversity and inclusion is probably the most important work a business can do right now – and tomorrow.

If you are not sure on how to handle the ever-changing PR landscape, contact me, [Carlos Arcos](#), at carcos@jaffepr.com.