Communicating During a Public Health Crisis

Responding to COVID-19: Best Practices for the Gov Community

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Chief Marketing Officer,
Granicus
Why We’re Here
What is COVID-19

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Communications on Coronavirus

1,780 bulletins to 86.9M subscribers with 20.2M opens and 1.9M clicks

Stats as of 3/6 with Granicus Customers
Communications on Coronavirus

**Bulletins**

- 29-Feb: 0
- 1-Mar: 50
- 2-Mar: 100
- 3-Mar: 150
- 4-Mar: 200
- 5-Mar: 250
- 6-Mar: 300
- 7-Mar: 350
- 8-Mar: 400
- 9-Mar: 450

**Subscribers**

- 29-Feb: 0
- 1-Mar: 20,000,000
- 2-Mar: 40,000,000
- 3-Mar: 60,000,000
- 4-Mar: 80,000,000
- 5-Mar: 100,000,000

**Opens**

- 11-Feb: 0
- 18-Feb: 500
- 25-Feb: 1,000
- 3-Mar: 1,500

**Clicks**

- 3-Mar: 0
- 4-Mar: 500,000
- 5-Mar: 1,000,000
- 6-Mar: 1,500,000
- 7-Mar: 2,000,000
- 8-Mar: 2,500,000
- 9-Mar: 3,000,000
Comprehensive Updates via Web

300+ pages of information addressing Covid-19

Stats as of 3/6 with Granicus Customers
Declaring Local Emergencies
Legislators are mobilizing to handle the situation, passing emergency resolutions, engaging the public in city meetings.
Reminder: Where to Find Credible Sources of Information

cdc.gov

WHO.int
Echa Schneider
Digital Communications,
City of Berkeley, CA
Berkeley’s Communications Team

2 full-time staff citywide
• Communications Director/PIO
• Digital Communications Coordinator

Supported by multi-department staff during EOC activations

Serving population of 120,000
COMMUNICATING IN A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Communications in a Crisis

- Media Inquiries
- Regional PIO Coordination
- External Messaging
  - Web, Email, Social, Print
- Staff Messaging
- Local Agency Liaison
- Create Outreach Materials
- Support Public Health with Information for Providers
- Berkeley is its own Public Health Jurisdiction
COMMUNICATING IN A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Coronavirus Status

First Confirmed Case **Tues 3/3**
- Travel acquired

Sent Community Notification **Within 3 Hours**
- Announce positive test
- Remind community members that risk is still low
- Actions to take to slow the spread

24-Hour Message Reach
- 5,000 email opens
- 36,000 web views
- 300,000 twitter impressions
## Where We Are Now

### Preparing for Increased Spread
- Preparing as an organization
- Help community members prepare

### Connect Community Members to Resources
- Building out website
- Developing outreach material
- Twitter town hall with Health Officer
Lessons Learned: Messaging

Know your goals

- Ask **why** is the first step in crafting any message
- How will you know you were successful?

Know your audience

- **Who** is your message for?
- How will it help them?
Lessons Learned: Messaging

**Essential to build trust**

- Maintain consistent messaging rhythm
- Speak directly to community members
- Be honest, be human
- Address their concerns
Lessons Learned: Messaging

**Combat misinformation**

**Elevate voices of Public Health authorities**

- WHO
- CDC
- County & State agencies
Lessons Learned: Messaging

Give people actions to take

• For coronavirus:
  • Steps to protect yourself
  • What to do if you get sick
  • Where to learn more
Lessons Learned: Messaging

Don’t reinvent the wheel

• Use pre-existing resources from trusted sources
• Share resources with peer agencies
Lessons Learned: Messaging

Consider what your community responds to

• Berkeleyans respond well to appeals to altruism
• Look at what has worked well in the past
Lessons Learned: Platforms

One message, every channel

• Let people get information in the way that works best for them
• Tailor distribution strategy to what’s appropriate for each platform

Enlist partners to maximize reach

• Community organizations
• Business groups
Lessons Learned: Self-care

Take care of yourself so you can best serve your community

Breaks are important
- Unplug, eat, take a walk

Go easy on yourself
- Mistakes happen
- Do your best to repair and move on
Betsy Burkhart
Communications Director,
City of Walnut Creek, CA
Throw Out the Usual Playbook

Why is this so different from our “usual” crisis events?

What does that mean for our audiences?

What does that mean for communicators?
Rules of Engagement

- Stay in your lane
- Know where to find help and approved messaging
- Consider your capacity to respond
Connecting With Vulnerable Populations

City of Walnut Creek example:
**Senior community of Rossmoor**

One size does not fit all

City population: 70,000

Rossmoor residents: 1 out of 7

Challenges

Approach
Bay Area Joint Information System project

- Launched after series of Homeland Security sponsored exercises and trainings, identifying a gap in our region
- Born from “a coalition of the willing”
- Formed in 2014, formalized in 2017
- Activated multiple times for fires & utility-forced power shutoffs

Most recent activation: Today
Communicator Resources

- CDC
- Your state health department
- Your county health department
- Professional organizations:
  - CAPIO
  - 3CMA
Preparing for the Next One

- Hard to think of the next crisis in the moment
- Carve out time to document your own gaps
- Know that tools only continue to get better
Nick Geier
Senior Platform Strategist, Granicus
Lessons From the Zika Virus Epidemic

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

NICK GEIER
Goal
Provide Zika awareness and prevention before, during and after travel.
Zika primarily spreads through infected mosquito bites.

Take steps to protect yourself.

Zika is linked to birth defects.

Pregnant women should not travel to areas with Zika outbreaks.

Returning travelers infected with Zika can spread the virus.
Problem

Increased world travel and tourism for the Brazil Summer Olympics, to a region heavily impacted by Zika virus.

Solution

Reach travelers on the go via airport, email, and online promotion to deliver critical information about Zika.

Give mobile audience a way to ask for information about Zika and travel.
Zika Global Map

Outbreak Countries
- American Samoa
- Anguilla (46)
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina (108)
- Aruba (451)
- Bahamas (242)
- Barbados
- Belize
- Bolivia
- Bonaire
- Brazil
- British Virgin Islands (73)
- Cape Verde
- Cayman Islands (45)
- Colombia
- Costa Rica (595)
- Cuba (258)
- Curacao
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic (559)
- Ecuador (60)
- El Salvador
- Federated States of Micronesia
- Fiji (47)
- French Guiana
- Grenada (85)
- Guadeloupe
- Guatemala (33)
- Guyana
- Haiti (88)
- Honduras (83)
- Jamaica (456)
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mexico (3,137)
- New Caledonia
- Nicaragua (82)
- Panama (91)
- Papau New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru (130)
- Puerto Rico (1,279)
- Saba
- Saint Barthelemy
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia (85)
- Saint Martin (62)
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Samoa
- Singapore
- Sint Eustatius
- Sint Maarten
- Suriname
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Turks and Caicos Islands (214)
- United States - Florida & Texas (684)
- US Virgin Islands
- Venezuela

Endemic Countries
- Angola
- Bangladesh
- Benin
- Brunei
- Burkina-Faso
- Burma (Myanmar)
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Easter Island
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Gabon
- Guinea-Bissau
- India (56)
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Laos
- Liberia
- Malaysia
- Maldives
- Mali
- Mozambique
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Philippines (42)
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- Somalia
- Tanzania
- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Uganda
- Vanuatu
- Vietnam (42)
- Zambia
Result

Interactive text survey giving proactive travel advice on planning travel, tips while traveling, and symptom information upon returning home.

Worldwide database of outbreak and endemic status.

Promotion in airports and targeted digital promotion.
Participants by Area Code

This map displays participants by area code of phone number used to subscribe.
Data current as of February 26, 2017
Total Responses and Participants

- A **response** is the act of texting into the beginning of the interactive text flow.
- A **participant** is the unique phone number used to text-in.

This data shows a healthy ratio of unique participants compared to responses.

Total Responses: 25,913
Total Participants: 22,005
Participant Journey

START

Where are you traveling?
+16,425

Would you like messages?
+2,793

MESSAGESENT

PLAN 1
19,218

PLAN 2
18,077

PLAN 3
17,998

MESSAGESENT

TRIP 1
17,203

TRIP 2
14,348

TRIP 3
13,302

MESSAGESENT

HOME 1
11,701

HOME 2
7,671

HOME 3
2,765

MESSAGESENT

STOP REQUESTS

0

STOP REQUESTS

267

STOP REQUESTS

443

STOP REQUESTS

537

0

410

489

439

365

Complete

Total

11,185

Completed

43%
BETTER CITIZEN EXPERIENCES, DELIVERED.
Digital Ad Targeting Pilot

Facebook Ad Targeted Expansion

- **Hypothesis:** Targeted expansion of Facebook ads in areas with high participant concentration will generate a lift in response activity.

- Pilot focused on:
  - New York
  - Los Angeles

- Scoped analysis to area codes in NY and LA

- Targeted ad expansion ran December 20 – January 5

NY Responses: +4.0%

LA Responses: +7.1%
Email Outreach Promotion

Key Findings

- Subject lines phrased as questions performed better among this audience than subject lines phrased as statements.
- Short subject lines garnered better open rates among this audience than longer subject lines.
Total Responses: 25,913
Total Follow-Up Messages Sent: 135,132
Total Country Status Messages Sent: 30,187
Total Awareness to Action Messages Sent: 165,319+
“With Interactive Text, we have the ability to send text messages to travellers who have subscribed for Zika-related information, but we’re also in a position where we could communicate on an emergency quickly with subscribers if we needed to.”

- Travelers’ Health CDC
Subscriber Survey Feedback

92%

Plan to use a CDC text message service in the future
Interactive text is a powerful tool to reach users on the go.

Building and connecting with a mobile audience is key to delivering public health and other critical information for communities.

Data-driven refinements: Measure and track user response data to optimize and enhance the conversation.

Granicus Experience Group brought into highly visible and impactful initiatives to deliver mission and vision.
Panel Q&A

Susan Ganeshan
Chief Marketing Officer, Granicus

Echa Schneider
Digital Communications, City of Berkeley

Betsy Burkhart
Communications Director, City of Walnut Creek

Madeline O'Phelan
Director, Marketing & Communications, Granicus

Nick Geier
Senior Platform Strategist, Granicus
Thank you