



Communications handbook for event cancellations and modifications



Introduction

Your communications handbook for event cancellations and modifications

RACE ROSTER IS MORE than just a platform that facilitates registration — we are real people with a passion for racing, consistently bringing our best efforts to help event organizers, fundraising coordinators, and timers overcome the challenges that come with organizing events with many moving pieces. We provide dedicated support to our customers so they can manage and deliver their event from start to finish. Everything we do here at Race Roster is about making sure your event is a success.

COVID-19 has tested our industry and has forced many of us to make some very hard decisions. This pandemic is proving difficult for many different types of businesses around the world, but especially for those businesses that rely on organizing and delivering events when strict social distancing mandates are in place. This situation has resulted in cancellations across thousands of endurance events, and current projections indicate a strong probability that more will be canceled or rescheduled in the coming weeks and months.

Participants train for months and sometimes even years for these events. Compounded with the financial hardship and the general uncertainty that the current lockdowns are imposing on all of us, it's understandable that some may direct their frustration, disappointment, and anxiety toward event organizers who have had to make some tough

calls. This is happening directly through private messages and emails, but also publicly on social media threads, posts, and comments in online forums and groups. The result is both heartwarming and disappointing; while there are those who understand and support the decisions that need to be made in the name of public safety, there are also those who feel a cancellation warrants backlash and are directing their resentment at event organizers.

“

COVID-19 has tested our industry and has forced many of us to make some very hard decisions.

In addition to responding to the negative public feedback to cancellation and/or postponement announcements, you also need to manage the reputation of your organization's brand. While some will choose to make their comments public, others will remain silent, watching it all happen and forming opinions based on how it is being handled. The perceptions that are

created now will follow your brand into the next event, and over the years to come – potentially having a longer-term impact on the trust and credibility you've spent years building.

We appreciate that everyone is doing their best with the situation at hand. We also understand that managing public perception may not be something you're comfortable with, having spent the majority of your time focused on event operations. We also recognize that with the many challenges that come with managing an event in the middle of a crisis, you and your team may not have the time to assemble a communication plan necessary to efficiently

respond to a quickly evolving situation. As your registration provider, we are here to help. Not only will we ensure our platform and the features we offer continue to support your efforts, but we have also collaborated with a team of marketing and communications specialists to develop resources that will help you navigate the Public Relations (PR) now requiring your attention. This e-book provides in-depth strategies on how to communicate with your participants, fundraising partners, sponsors and vendors, including usable copy for the various types of content you may need to use to manage communications about a change or cancellation to an event.

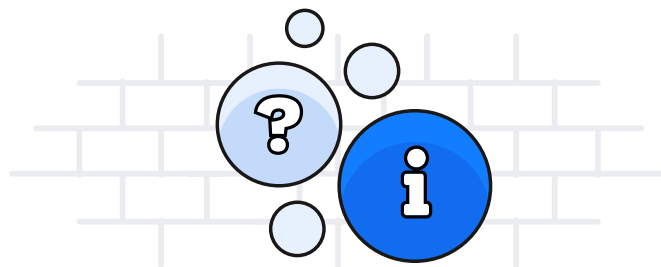
“

...you and your team may not have the time to assemble a communication plan necessary to efficiently respond to a quickly evolving situation. As your partner, we are here to help.

Table of contents

How to use this e-book	4
Strategy & timing	5
Cancellation/post-ponement process	7
Plan	9
Timing	10
Bring it all together	11
Templates & guidelines	13
Messaging guidelines for populating or customizing these templates	15
How to communicate about COVID-19	16
Key messages & FAQ	17
Blog	19
Email	20
Website	24
Social media	28
Video	36
Media statements	42
Conclusion	50

How to use this e-book



RACE ROSTER'S communication handbook for event cancellations and modifications is a guide for the effective implementation of the Public Relations (PR) activities and communications that will help:

- Repair impact you may have sustained due to a recent announcement
- Prepare to effectively communicate an announcement and mitigate negative
- Preserve your reputation, using this current situation as an opportunity to come back better than ever for your next event

Whether you need to repair, prepare, or preserve, this e-book is designed to provide useful tools to help communicate changes to your event and the support to manage the response. In order to get the most of this resource, we recommend considering your current situation – this will inform the approach to take with the information provided:

1) I've recently canceled, rescheduled, or modified an event.

Review this e-book to first get a high-level understanding of PR and communications best practices. Reflect on what you have done to date. What has gone well, and what could use some support to recover?

Next, revisit the sections that are aligned with what you're experiencing to take the necessary steps or pivots on your communications approach.

2) I am expecting that I will soon need to make an announcement about an event:

If you haven't made an announcement about a cancellation or event modification yet, but expect that you will need to, use this e-book to map out your communications strategy and the various materials you need to create, using the templates and guidelines provided here to do so.

If you feel you require additional support, see the 'Need more?' section at the end of this e-book to leverage the marketing and communications specialists that we've collaborated with for additional training, consultation and/or help developing any other materials you may need.

Strategy & Timing

Strategy & Timing

WHEN IT COMES to effective PR and communications, timing is everything. Be honest, share what you can and what you know, provide solutions up front, and share what's going to happen next.

When you are faced with canceling an event, follow the steps outlined on the following pages as quickly and carefully as possible.



1

Cancellation/ Postponement Process

Develop a cancellation message

Create a cancellation message for all of your communication channels (social platforms, website, email, etc.) so that everyone in your organization is using the same information and wording. Consistent, fact-based messaging is absolutely critical.

Clear, concise communication with participants is very important

Communicate to participants, sponsors, vendors, and volunteers within a short period of time so that you can control delivery of the news and reduce the risk of rumors and hearsay. You may consider beginning with sponsors to give them a heads up on your communication plan; keeping in mind that your decisions may also impact their brand reputation as well. Once the decision has been made to cancel or postpone an event, inform everyone as quickly as possible. For example, participants may have flights, rooms, and other reservations to cancel.

Timing is of the essence and may impact the potential for a refund

When communicating with participants, remind them this is a global situation, similar measures are being adopted worldwide, and their safety and well-being are the primary concern. Then address their immediate concern – refunds – as quickly as possible. If you are unable to offer a refund, inform them that the costs needed to

set up an event are often required up to a year in advance, and that staff and vendors have already been paid for their time and services to date. Acknowledge you understand that this is a difficult time for all, but that refunds are not available. If you are able to offer a partial or full refund, let them know what they can expect and be specific about the amount, whether a full or partial refund or a credit for a future event date.

Note: Unfortunately we cannot reimburse the original processing fees. Our processing fee is used to cover merchant fees that occur at the time of transaction, as well as software and services provided through our platform. We've found that if you provide transparency on what the processing fee entails, your participants will be more understanding on why it cannot be refunded.

Close or pause registration

Close off registration (or pause if you plan to re-open for postponement) as soon as you decide to cancel or postpone your event. Inform all parties involved with the event, including vendors, sponsors, affiliate partners, and volunteers. Review any pre-scheduled social media or email campaigns and remove all references to attending the event. Archive all blog posts that you may have written and scheduled.

Listen and respond on social media

Closely monitor your event hashtag. Once you have notified all participants of the event's decision to cancel, it's important to continue listening and watching for references to your event or your event's hashtag. After all participants have been notified directly, make the announcement on social media.

Update the information everywhere

When canceling or modifying an event, communicate consistently and often. Add the cancellation or modification information to your website, phone message, and social media, and consider adding the update to any email signatures for those people supporting the event. It's better to over-communicate than have someone call shortly before the event because they are just getting the information. There's a lot going on right now, so it is important to ensure every measure is taken to communicate information broadly and frequently.

Consider an incentive for next year

Whether this is an annual event or held several times throughout the year, a last-minute cancellation could have an impact on the next scheduled event. Consider offering a discount or incentive, or extending early-bird pricing for the group that had already registered for the canceled event(s). This incentive could be an early registration code for next year that is valid for a few weeks to obtain commitment. Showing recognition by offering some kind of compensation will be appreciated.

Facilitating acceptance of this difficult decision will require a plan for timely communications, such as how – and how quickly – you respond to a comment, and the order and timing for emails and blog posts.

Let's go a bit deeper →



2

Plan



A DIRECT EMAIL should go out to all participants and vendors before any public communications – it’s important that the people who will be most affected hear the news directly from you. This will help them feel informed and not blindsided by a public announcement. However, “don’t hide behind your email”, as J.T. Service of Soul Focus recently said, about crisis communications in the endurance event industry. Before the announcement goes out, prepare answers to FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions – and key messages that help you communicate the reasons behind the decision, what’s important for people to know, what happens next, who to call, and where to go for more information, etc. Consider recording a video to deliver the news with a human element.

Post the FAQs to your website so that you can link to it from the email for more information. The same approach applies to blog and

social posts. Stay on top of incoming comments and use the prepared key messages and responses necessary to answer questions, provide additional context as required, and to thank individuals as necessary. These comments may provide useful feedback for subsequent rounds of communications, whether in a video (if you didn’t do one for your first post), additional social posts on updates, or directions on where to sign up for next year’s event.

This cycle repeats with every new announcement or update.

Email an official cancellation announcement to your participants that is consistent with the communications you’ve been using so far. It’s important these emails are sent out the same day as the announcement, or immediately after, to ensure consistent and timely communication.

3

Timing

TIMING IS EVERYTHING! The time between when you know you'll need to cancel or modify the event and when you announce the decision and the related details is very important. It's also important to respond quickly, and be first to share information.

This is why it is critical to start preparing communications well in advance of the moment you think you may have to announce something, rather than being forced to do so after the fact.

If you've already made an announcement, but need to provide additional information or a

follow up, follow the same guidelines and communicate as soon as you're able to – and in the same consistent manner.

Take the time you need to prepare for an announcement or adjust any current efforts so that you're managing communications consistently going forward. This approach will ensure your stakeholders are informed, aware, and have access to the most current information – knowing exactly where to get new updates as they become available.

“

...it is critical to start preparing communications well in advance of the moment you think you may have to announce something.

4

Bring it all together

DEFINING YOUR APPROACH and process for communicating with stakeholders is important. Consider the following example:

GOAL - Announce the cancellation of XYZ Run 2020 with empathy for all stakeholders – participants, sponsors and vendors, and volunteers.

Articulate the negative impact the cancellation and the lost funds will have on the fundraising or charitable organization that's associated with the event (if applicable).

Provide comprehensive information about what the cancellation means, what happens next, and where to go / who to call for more information.

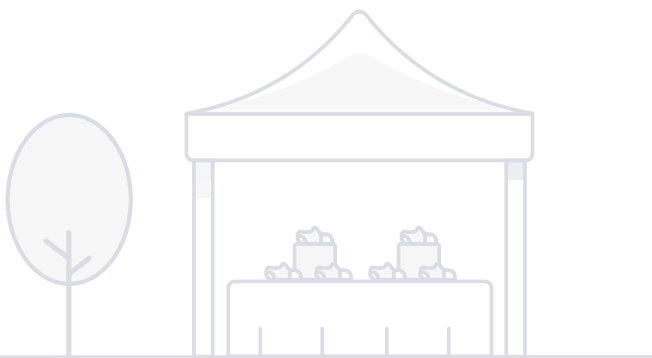
STRATEGY & TIMING – Perform in sequence

Complete as soon as possible (ASAP)

- Develop the key messages required to support consistent communications

Complete day before announcement

- Identify the most common questions you expect from participants. Use the key messages to develop answers for each. Create an FAQ document.
- Develop a blog post for participants, knowing that sponsors, volunteers, vendors, and the media will also have access to it once it is posted and made public.
- Develop an announcement to be sent out via email, indicating you're letting them know in advance of a public announcement. Review your email lists for deployment.
- Develop copy to update your website.
- Draft an email that will be sent out to your participants.
- Develop a social post for all social media channels.
- Develop prepared social media responses for the various types of responses you may receive (similar to FAQ).



- Develop a video script and record a video message, if required. Embed in blog post or email, if relevant.
- Develop an outreach script or email pitch for media, if engaging media for coverage that coincides with your announcement.

Day of announcement

- Post an update to your website, as necessary.
- Post FAQ content to your website.
- Post blog post (ensure that notifications for new posts your audience may be signed up for is turned off).
- Test email deployment before distributing to ensure all links work, the layout is consistent, and the content loads properly, etc.
- Deploy email to stakeholders before public announcement
- Post prepared social media announcement - Post within 2 hours of email announcement.
- Post recorded video message (may or may not have been included in email or blog post as part of the social media post, if necessary - Post within 2 hours of email announcement.
- Monitor social media channels, responding with your pre-drafted template responses as necessary. Customize responses as required – Announcement day and ongoing.
- Take a deep breath, pour yourself a tea, coffee, or drink of choice and address the inbox replies (a spike in email is likely to go on for several days).

After announcement as needed

- Respond to media inquiries, if any, coordinating interviews with yourself or spokespeople, as necessary.
- Post follow up social posts as required, such as when there is new information to share, or if feedback has indicated additional information is required, or video if relevant, available and not originally shared.
- Reply to email responses (take breaks and share the workload – the messages can be negative at times, making it a tiring task)



HEADS UP

The next section of this e-book provides the templates and guidelines for developing each of the pieces necessary to effectively communicate a cancellation or event modification. Keep in mind the timing and strategy required to roll each piece out.

Templates & Guidelines

Templates & Guidelines

Deciding to cancel, postpone, or modify an event can be stressful. There are calls to sponsors, vendors, and volunteers that need to be made, as well as decisions and confirmation of next steps.

The following templates and guidelines are designed to help you get it all done. Tips and framework suggestions for each piece of content or communication channel you will need to engage are outlined on the following pages.



1

Messaging guidelines for populating or customizing these templates

1) Consider your social media feed. Think about pausing pre-scheduled social media posts, reviewing them to make sure the tone and content is appropriate to share in the light of current circumstances, such as quarantine and social distancing. Use your voice to share stories of kindness, generosity, and human spirit in the running community.

2) Provide value to your community. Consider how you can provide value or resources to the running community during this time of shared challenges. Moments of positivity and hope in times of crisis will go a long way in creating long-term positive brand awareness for your organization. Simply creating a short piece of content that fosters community and provides valuable resources at a time of required distance will resonate with your audience.

3) Place value on the well-being of your participants. Prioritize the well-being of humans – your participants, volunteers, employees, sponsors, vendors, etc. before concerns about refund losses and event cancellations.

Continue to lead your messaging by wishing others well in this difficult time. When communicating with participants, providing insight from a standpoint of comradery is beneficial. We are all going through this together and rallying to tackle a shared challenge is a powerful tool in uncertain times.

4) Lead with empathy and compassion. Messaging should be earnest and pragmatic. Maintaining ‘business as usual’ messaging and ignoring, or being overly optimistic of, the current situation can be interpreted as insensitive and tone deaf to the current global situation.

And remember, nearly every communication about a canceled event should include a component of each of the following:

- The reasoning for canceling – explain the rationale behind the decision
- The impact cancellation has on charitable partners
- The impact on next year’s event
- The impact on sponsors and vendors
- What goes into putting on an event
- An apology – empathy for what this means
- What participants will still be getting, and how (ie. medals, swag, shirts, virtual events, etc.)
- Next steps
- Commitment to sharing updates if and when available (and actually do so!)

2

How to communicate about COVID-19

No matter the content or channel, there are specific things to keep in mind when talking about COVID-19 that will keep your posts accurate, neutral, responsible, and free from undesirable repercussions.

Here are some tips for communicating about the current situation:

DO'S	DONT'S
• Be factual • Avoid inflammatory words and phrases such as catastrophe, or “the end of times” • Direct to reputable websites such as the WHO or your city or government’s websites for expert information • Acknowledge the difficulty that everyone is facing • Honor frontline health workers and other essential services	• Don’t act like an expert • Don’t make assumptions or guesses about what will happen next • Do not offer health advice • Do not make light of restrictions or people’s responses • Do not publicly shame or accuse • Do not share unverified information • When referencing it by name, don’t call it anything but “COVID-19”

3

Key messages & FAQ

Your key messages are the consistent information and calls to action that will be communicated in every interaction. Your FAQs are the most common questions you expect, with an appropriate answer for each. Answers are informed by your key messages.

It's important to take the time to determine and identify what information you need to convey in your communications, as well as answers to questions you expect may be asked.

To start, consider the following when developing your key messages around an event cancellation or modification:

- What is the event? Why is it important?
- What is the value proposition of your event and of your fundraising partner, if you have one?
- What is the situation at hand?
- What is the value proposition of your event and of your fundraising partner, if you have one?
- What decision has been made?
- What was the decision process?
- What problem are you trying to solve?
- Who is involved? Who or what has been consulted?
- What are the key dates and locations?

- What do you need your participants to do?
*keep in mind that participants in different distance events may need specific communications and actions based on your plans
- What are your participants trying to do?
- What are the pain points of your participants?
- What are the realities or pain points of your partners, such as your sponsor(s), vendors, volunteers, staff, and fundraising partner(s)?
- What are you currently doing to relieve these pain points?
- What will happen next?

With this information in mind, develop key messages that operate as stand-alone statements that address each of these points. Your key messages also serve as an internal document for your team and partners to ensure everyone has the same information and can speak consistently about the situation. These key messages are shared publicly within social media posts, emails, responses, media interviews, etc.

Next, craft your FAQs.



The process for developing FAQs:

Draw on your FAQs for speaking notes and social media responses, as well as using it on your website as a place to direct participants for more information.

1. Put yourself in the shoes of your participants and consider what information you would need or want to know if you were them.
2. Document the questions that come to mind. Allow one question to inspire additional questions you may not have originally considered. Follow this process along until you feel that you have covered every angle.
3. Next, put your event organizer hat back on and revisit your developed key messages to consider how the questions you've documented can be approached.
4. Using your key messages, develop clear, concise answers to each of the questions.
5. Review, adjust, and polish your FAQs document so that you can be confident that it is sound and ready to be put into use.
6. Leverage your FAQs to develop other communications collateral, such as your response list for social media comments.
7. Post your complete FAQs to your website and update the necessary materials, such as your email and blog post drafts, with the link.
8. Revisit your FAQs periodically to add new questions you have received and to update answers that you may have new, additional information for.

4 Blog

IF YOUR ORGANIZATION has a blog, communication about canceled or postponed events should be prominently displayed and consistent with the messaging on your event page or website.

Your blog post should be an expanded version of the communications shared in your email or letter. This post or page may be where you are able to direct participants to learn more about the decision that has been made.

Also, your blog may be used to share running resources and connect with your audience. Everyone, including your participants, is practicing social distancing, which means they're home a lot more than they normally would be. Consider engaging with them and creating content they find either helpful or entertaining such as information on alternative training methods, challenges or virtual events.





Templates for emails

An email may be the first time your participants hear about a cancellation or modification to the event. It is important that this email is carefully drafted and sent to your participants as soon as possible so that they are hearing about it directly from you, before anyone else.

This should happen before a public social media post, website announcement, or media coverage.



Email: Event cancellation

Use this template to create an email that can be distributed to your participants when an event is canceled:

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. [EVENT ORGANIZATION], along with the global community, has faced unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19. We are all in uncharted territory. The safety and health of our runners, employees, volunteers, and community is our foremost priority. In accordance with government orders and public health guidance, we have made the difficult decision to cancel [EVENT NAME] on [DATE] in [LOCATION].

We appreciate and understand your disappointment. These are challenging times for all of us, but with the support of our participants, staff and volunteers, we are confident that we will return to the [RACES/ROAD/PAVEMENT] stronger than ever, when it is safe to do so.

More information about this decision can be found on our website [HYPERLINK TO WEBSITE] and our updated FAQs section [HYPERLINK TO FAQs].

Thank you for your continued support and understanding. We appreciate every one of our valued partners and participants as we manage through this together.

[SIGNATURE, IF NECESSARY]



Email: Ask for donation of fees to fundraising partner, if an option

Use this template suggestion for additional messaging if asking participants to donate their registration fee to a fundraising partner:

The safety of participants, volunteers and our friends and families is our top priority. We are deeply disappointed to cancel [EVENT NAME]. Like many nonprofits, [FUNDRAISING PARTNER] has been hit hard. [INSERT GENERAL AMOUNT: HUNDREDS, THOUSANDS, MILLIONS] of fundraising dollars have been lost for [CAUSE] as a result of endurance runs, walks and other events being canceled around the world.

Please help us mitigate the financial challenges now facing [FUNDRAISING PARTNER AND THEIR CAUSE] as a result of the pandemic by considering donating the value of your registration fee.

Your generosity will help us to continue to support [FUNDRAISING PARTNER] during these difficult times.

[SIGNATURE, IF NECESSARY]



Email: Thank you messaging for donation of fees to fundraising partner, if an option

Use this template suggestion to complete an email or letter that acknowledges a donation:

We'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the outpouring of support of [EVENT ORGANIZATION] and [FUNDRAISING PARTNER, AS APPLICABLE] have received during this time, as well as to thank our registrants, many of whom are choosing to donate or defer their registration fee to a future event rather than ask for a refund.

Thank you to our volunteer community for their unwavering commitment, our staff who have been working tirelessly during this crisis, and our wonderful running experts who are staying strong and helping us connect with our community online. We also want to extend our admiration and deep gratitude to the healthcare and front-line workers for their commitment to community during this pandemic. Thanks to your support, we will get through this together.

[SIGNATURE, IF NECESSARY]



Templates for websites



Website: Thank you messaging for donation of fees to fundraising partner, if an option

Use this template suggestion to complete an email or letter that acknowledges a donation:

We'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the outpouring of support of [EVENT ORGANIZATION] and [FUNDRAISING PARTNER, AS APPLICABLE] have received during this time, as well as to thank our registrants, many of whom are choosing to donate or defer their registration fee to a future event rather than ask for a refund.

Thank you to our volunteer community for their unwavering commitment, our staff who have been working tirelessly during this crisis, and our wonderful running experts who are staying strong and helping us connect with our community online. We also want to extend our admiration and deep gratitude to the healthcare and front-line workers for their commitment to community during this pandemic. Thanks to your support, we will get through this together.

[SIGNATURE, IF NECESSARY]



Website: Asking participants to donate their registration fee

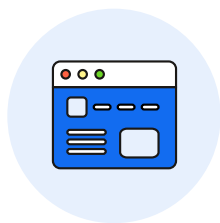
Use this template to communicate additional messaging from your event or organization's website if asking participants to donate their registration fee to a fundraising partner:

In the current climate, charities and nonprofits are facing tremendous challenges and are working hard to help their communities face the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Charities are experiencing significant revenue losses and challenges as very few fundraising organizations have the cash reserves required to maintain their operations and sustain the important funding they provide to so many worthwhile causes.

At the same time, many of these organizations are also experiencing increased demand for the services they provide, [INSERT MESSAGING APPLICABLE TO YOUR FUNDRAISING PARTNER - particularly organizations involved in food security, services to the homeless, providing support for people with serious illnesses, and providing assistance to seniors, etc.]

The cost of providing services is also increasing, as volunteers self-isolate and extraordinary measures are taken to ensure the health and safety of the public. The current situation is jeopardizing organizations' abilities to provide vital services. Like many nonprofits [FUNDRAISING PARTNER] has been hit hard. Please help us mitigate the financial challenges now facing [FUNDRAISING PARTNER] as a result of the pandemic by donating the value of your registration fee.

Your generosity will help us to continue to support [FUNDRAISING PARTNER] during these difficult times.



Website: Donation options

Use this template to provide options on your event or organization's website for participants to donate, defer, or receive a refund of their registration fee. You can resource Race Roster's customer success team to help you collect answers directly from your participants through their personal dashboard.

- What would you like to do with your [EVENT NAME] registration fee?
- Donate the full value of your [EVENT NAME] registration fee to [FUNDRAISING PARTNER] and receive a charitable tax receipt:
- This is an unprecedented situation that will have a significant financial impact on [INSERT FUNDRAISING PARTNER]. If possible, please consider donating your registration fee to support [FUNDRAISING PARTNER, CAUSE] in this challenging moment.
- Apply your [EVENT NAME] registration fee towards a future [EVENT ORGANIZATION] event:
 - You can transfer the face value of your registration fee to a future event.
- Refund your [EVENT NAME] registration fee:
 - We understand the difficult position that this global health crisis has put all of us in. If the above options are not feasible for your circumstances, we are able to refund your registration fee.

7 Social media



SOCIAL MEDIA will be one of the most important communication channels for your participants, after the initial email has been distributed. They will be checking your event's accounts for information, updates, guidance, and for a safe place to connect and maintain a sense of community with their peers.

Cancellation or postponement announcements should be kept consistent across all social media platforms. Many people do not follow all social platforms of a single organization, maintaining consistent messaging across all social platforms ensures participants are all receiving the same information consistently.

Social media can also be the source or the conduit for complaints, harsh words, and blame so it's important that you're prepared to provide meaningful communications, supportive messages, answers to questions, and timely updates.

Do not engage in discussions other than to provide useful information, do not react to negative comments, but reply with verified information, empathy, and understanding.

To avoid missteps on social media channels, use the following social media templates as guides to deliver messaging when an event is canceled or postponed.

Social post templates

These templates can be customized according to your unique situation and are a general framework for response. Note that although they should be used across every social channel – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, for example – each platform does have their own nuances that need to be taken into consideration for slight tweaks to one message, such as character counts and how links can be shared. For example:



Facebook nuances

- Facebook post character limit: 63,206 characters
- Facebook username character limit: 50 characters
- Facebook page description: 155 Characters
- Facebook comments: 8,000
- Including a link will pull an image or logo from the webpage



Twitter nuances

- Maximum tweet length: 280
- Direct messages (DMs): 10,000 characters
- Twitter handle maximum length: 15 characters
- Twitter profile name maximum length:
- Use a link shortener, such as bitly, to save on characters



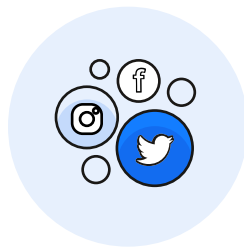
Instagram nuances

- Instagram maximum character
- Instagram caption character limit: 2,200 characters
- Instagram hashtag limit: 30
- Instagram bio character limit: 150 characters
- Instagram username character limit: 30 characters
- Links can only be shared in the bio of the account
- Beginning a post with a @ tag will only broadcast to those who also follow the account tagged. Avoid doing this or add a period ".@"

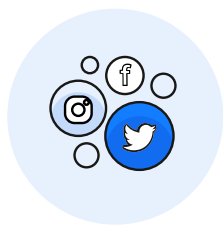


LinkedIn nuances

- LinkedIn publishing post headline: 150 characters
- LinkedIn publishing content length: 120,000 characters
- The following templates can be used or customized for your communications across social



Templates for social media posts



Post templates

Upcoming event not yet canceled

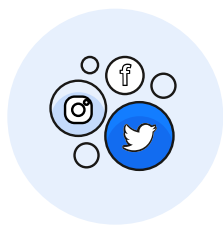
[EVENT ORGANIZATION] continues to meet and work closely with city and government officials involved in the [EVENT ORGANIZATION]. Our collective priority is the health and safety of residents, participants, and all who come to [CITY] for this event. This is a rapidly evolving situation and details will be forthcoming.

Canceled event with new event date

[EVENT ORGANIZATION] has been postponed – We understand the city’s decision that the event cannot be held on [DATE], and we offer our full support to take all efforts to postpone until [NEW EVENT DATE]. Our primary focus remains the health and well-being of participants, staff, volunteers, spectators, supporters, and everyone in our greater community. Participants are asked to join us on [NEW EVENT DATE]. However, while we are in the midst of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, we want to extend an offer of [INSERT REFUND, CREDIT, INCENTIVE] to our entrants so they can plan accordingly.

Canceled event with unknown next steps refund/postponement etc

The safety of our participants is our top priority. In coordination with our local partners [SPONSORS, FUNDRAISING PARTNER], we have decided it is in everyone’s best interests to cancel [EVENT ORGANIZATION] due to the situation with COVID-19. [EVENT ORGANIZATION] appreciates the support, patience, and understanding from all of our participants. We’re working quickly to address all cancellation and postponement-related inquiries and have created an FAQ page that will be regularly updated. [LINK TO FAQ PAGE]



Post templates

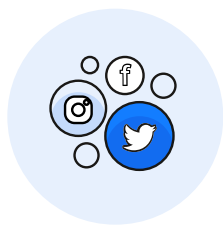
Canceled event unable to reschedule to a new date

The safety of our participants is our top priority. In coordination with our local partners [SPONSOR, FUNDRAISING PARTNER], we have decided it is in everyone's best interest to cancel [EVENT ORGANIZATION] due to the situation with COVID-19. [EVENT ORGANIZATION] appreciates the support, patience, and understanding from all of our participants. We are deeply disappointed to cancel [EVENT ORGANIZATION] and are unable to reschedule a new event date at this time. We're working quickly to address all cancellation and postponement-related inquiries and have created an FAQ page that will be regularly updated. [INSERT LINK]

[OPTIONAL: Opportunity to share an additional note about availability of a virtual event, webinars, podcasts, virtual physiotherapy or running related stretching videos, along with information on how or when to access them.]

Asking participants to donate their registration fees to the affiliated fundraising partner

The safety of our participants is our top priority. In coordination with our local partners [SPONSOR, FUNDRAISING PARTNER], we have decided it is in everyone's best interest to cancel [EVENT ORGANIZATION] due to the situation with COVID-19. We are deeply disappointed to cancel [EVENT ORGANIZATION]. Please help us mitigate the financial challenges now facing [FUNDRAISING PARTNER] as a result of the pandemic by donating the value of your registration fee. Your generosity will help us continue to support [FUNDRAISING PARTNER] during these difficult times.



Post templates

Asking participants to donate their registration value to the event organization:

The safety of our participants is our top priority. In coordination with our local partners [SPONSOR, FUNDRAISING PARTNER], we have decided it is in everyone's best interest to cancel [EVENT ORGANIZATION] due to the situation with COVID-19. We are deeply disappointed to cancel [EVENT ORGANIZATION]. Please help us mitigate the financial challenges now facing [EVENT ORGANIZATION] as a result of the pandemic by donating the value of your event registration fee back to the event. Your generosity will help us continue to share online resources [Opportunity to insert virtual event, webinars, podcasts, virtual physiotherapy or running related stretching videos, along with information on how or when to access them.] during these difficult times and be able to come back next year to run our 2021 event.

Thank you message for donations and registration credits towards a future event

Our heartfelt thanks to the many participants of [EVENT ORGANIZATION] who have donated their registration fee to [FUNDRAISING PARTNER] or exchanged their registration fee for a future [EVENT ORGANIZATION] event. Your support is deeply appreciated during this challenging time.

Guidelines for responding to negative comments on social media

These are difficult announcements to make and may also be difficult to accept for many who are experiencing stress or financial pressure due to the COVID-19 crisis. Some people just need a place to ask difficult questions and they may do so publicly if they don't have an outlet to do so privately and directly.

Expect negative comments will nearly always occur when bad news is delivered or when the delivery of information doesn't take into consideration the information or tone your followers are expecting.

When crafting social media posts, put yourself in the participants' shoes and consider what they are feeling, what they are thinking or concerned about, what they need acknowledged, and what information they require or questions they may have.

When crafting responses, consider the following:

- Do not place blame. Instead, say something such as "We have all worked together to find workable solutions for this current situation."
- Always thank them and ensure responses take a "kindness-first" approach and do not make assumptions. Acknowledge the situation or what they have experienced – most of the time, people simply need validation, and posts that do this have the power to diffuse issues. For example, "Thank you for reaching out. This is not an easy situation for anyone, and we appreciate you taking the time to share your [CONCERN/FEEDBACK]. We hear you and understand that this isn't ideal."
- Let them know how you're shifting, leaning on the reality that things are changing day to day. For example, "The reality of the situation we are all facing is that things are changing and shifting day-by-day, and hour-by-hour in some areas. We are doing our best to keep you informed and we are committed to finding solutions that keep everything moving in the safest way possible for our communities, volunteers and sponsors, our fundraising partners who depend on us, and to our incredible participants who trained to take part in this event in the name of [FUNDRAISING PARTNER, ORGANIZATION, CAUSE]."
- Keep the language as clear and concise as you can, responding with quantifiable facts. For example, "The decision was made on [DATE] based on measures mandated by [NAME HEALTH ORGANIZATION CONSULTED] and in the name of public safety. The next event has been scheduled for [DATE]. More information can be found at [LINK]."

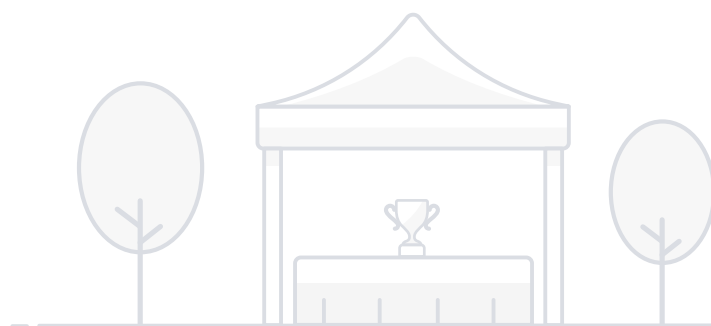
- Provide a resource or action item that will empower them. For example, “We have made some options available to [PARTICIPATE IN VIRTUAL EVENT, DEFER FEES, REGISTER FOR 2021 SO PLANNING CAN CONTINUE, CONVERT TO A DONATION, ETC.]. Please visit [LINK] to [LEARN MORE/PARTICIPATE/TO GIVE]. You can also share ideas, feedback, or reach out to us to chat or ask questions at [EMAIL, PHONE NUMBER, OR DM DIRECTION].”
- Manage expectations and give your team some space to complete the necessary actions by under promising on a virtual time window or virtual distribution logistics. For example, “At this moment, delivering a virtual event program is complicated, but we are doing all we can to make it happen for our community. We are hoping to have something to share in the coming weeks for all of you. Please check [OUR SOCIAL ACCOUNTS, YOUR INBOXES, OR OUR BLOG] to stay up to date.”

is no place for your corporate message or an "official" tone of voice. Show empathy and understanding toward your audience and always offer assistance offline or ask if the information you are sharing is helpful.

- Communicate your efforts to manage the cancellation or postponement of the event and diffuse its impact.
- Create trust and confidence by sharing facts in real time, rather than waiting until you have all the answers. If you don't immediately have an answer, share that you will get one and share it as soon as possible.
- Don't respond to abusive comments.
- Collaborate and communicate internally so employees have their own holding statements if they are approached online, or if multiple people are responsible for your channels. Keep it factual and indicate where more information can be found.

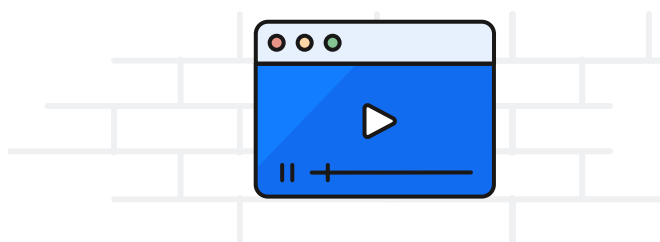
Below are guidelines on how to approach negative comments when they come up:

- Always respond, don't hide in the shadows and remember – your response window is narrow. You should respond as quickly as possible.
- Do not delete comments.
- Decide how you will use social media to deliver your message. Tailor your message to your audience, be personal, and keep in mind that social platforms may have millions of participants, but they are all unique, personal feeds. This



8

Video



VIDEOS ARE A HELPFUL vehicle for getting a message out to your audience, as it allows a human connection to a mass group. Facial cues, vocal tone, and body language can come together for a powerful impact.

However, for the same reasons video can work for you, it's important your message is prepared. Like any other piece of content or communications, take the time to consider the best practices behind a successful video and the qualities that will ensure your message is heard, understood, and accepted in the most positive way.

Script template

Consider a script for your video. What are the key messages you need to relay to your audience about the event? You can repurpose the blog post or email you have already developed. Just remember to keep it short; ideally 60-120 seconds.

And remember – audiences respond well to content that is relatable, especially when paired with a real human being on screen.

“

Like any other piece of content or communications, take the time to consider the best practices behind a successful video...



Video templates

Video script example

Hi, my name is [NAME], and I am the [TITLE/ROLE] for [EVENT ORGANIZATION] [which runs EVENT NAME].

[DISCUSS THE CURRENT CLIMATE] [EXAMPLE:] COVID-19 is having a significant impact globally – in our cities, our towns, and on our streets. Reduced travel, shutdowns of nonessential services, and social distancing mandates have all been put into effect to help us all flatten the curve and stop the spread of this deadly virus.

For the health of our families, friends, colleagues, and neighbours, we support these measures. [TRANSITION TO ANNOUNCEMENT]

However, we can't ignore what these measures mean for events all over the country, including large scale endurance events, where hundreds and thousands gather to bring awareness to, or raise funds for various important causes and fundraising organizations throughout the year.

These events include interactions between countless volunteers, staff, vendors, participants, supporters, and media, as well as public transportation, accommodations, and restaurants, and local citizens of the towns and cities hosting such events.

[MAKE THE ANNOUNCEMENT] The safety of our community has always been our number one priority. Today, we made the difficult decision to [CANCEL, POSTPONE] [EVENT NAME] for the 2020 season.

We have made this decision in compliance with [NATIONAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION NAME] guidelines, and this was not a decision we made lightly. Safety is always the number one concern for our events. Social distancing mandates have made clear that it is not safe for this large-scale event to continue at this time. While we are deeply disappointed to have to delay this event, we also need to ensure that we are all doing our part to end the spread of this highly infectious virus

Script continues on next page →



Video templates

Continued script from previous page

[SHOW EMPATHY, ACKNOWLEDGE THOSE IMPACTED] We are sensitive to the impact COVID-19 has on our valued vendors and sponsors, the hardworking volunteers and [EVENT NAME] staff, and our incredible participants, who have been training so hard to give their all to this 2020 event. We also want to acknowledge the impact a canceled event has on our fundraising partners, whose [EXPLAIN THE INITIATIVE – for example, lifesaving] initiatives are funded with the money raised.

[NEXT STEPS] Our team is working together to get this event back on track for next year's event, as well as considering virtual options that will keep our community working together during this challenging time, whether that be a virtual event, online run clinics, or something else entirely. We look forward to sharing more information with you all in the coming weeks.

[ACTION ITEM] We encourage you all to visit our website, [EVENT WEBSITE], or our social feeds to stay up to date on event-related news for 2021.

[WRAP UP WITH A THANK YOU AND A PARTING SENTIMENT] Thank you for your support and for understanding the difficult steps we have had to take for the 2020 season. We appreciate every one of our valued partners and participants as we navigate this together. We look forward to finding ways to stay connected and to come back together stronger than ever.

[END VIDEO].

Guidelines for creating video content

Once you have your script and know what you need to say – and how you will need to say it – it is time to film. Use these guidelines to create professional, high-quality video content.

1) Use plenty of light - If you're filming outdoors, the sun is a great source of light for video. If you're filming in natural light, do your best to get your footage in the morning or evening, when the light is softer. Midday light coming from straight overhead can cast harsh shadows on your subjects, while morning and evening light is more flattering. If you do have to film in the middle of the day, try to do so on a cloudy day, or find a shady area for softer light.

If you're filming indoors, you will need to be more intentional about the types of lights you use and where you place them. One thing to avoid is overhead lighting - it can cast unflattering shadows on your subjects' faces. Windows are a good natural light source – be sure to face the window to capture good light. You can also use a large lamp or two to cast the type of light you want, taking the same angles and effects into consideration.

2) Use a clean background - A wall, a bedsheet, or a large sheet of backdrop paper are all good options. Make sure your subject stands several feet away from the backdrop to avoid casting shadows on it. If a backdrop is not an option, use a bare wall, or a clean and tidy interior area that will not distract from you or the message you are trying to convey. Remember – every detail reflects your organization, so keep your background clean and professional.

3) Prioritize crisp, clear audio - Capture clear audio by putting your microphone as close to the subject as possible. If using your laptop, good quality Universal Serial Bus (USB) microphones are readily available. When using a microphone to capture your audio, consider using a pop filter – an attachment for your microphone – to eliminate blips and crackles on the finished recording. As well, be aware of any background noise that your microphone might be picking up. It's easy to tune out things like traffic, birds, and even the noise of the wind in everyday life, but these sounds will be obvious on your recording.

4) Use a quality camera - Videos should be high-resolution with high audio quality; an iPhone is not going to produce the same effect and using one may reflect an unprofessional image. Source and use a professional camera whenever possible.

5) Avoid shaky footage - Use a tripod to film and try not to move it unless you have to. Panning around constantly detracts from the professional look of a video. Rather than moving the camera around, if you must change perspective, cut from one shot to another when editing.

6) On screen personality - Use calm, open body language, and stand up straight - poor posture is obvious on camera. Avoid crossing your arms, as this makes you look closed-off. Smile, especially at the beginning of your video, it makes a huge difference in how friendly you seem. Slow down slightly when you speak and try to enunciate clearly.

7) Allot time for editing - Sometimes you can film content in one clean take. However, this isn't always realistic. That's why it's important to consider what editing you may need to do to prepare your video for distribution to your audience. If someone who can quickly and professionally edit video footage is accessible to you, it is strongly recommended you engage them for this step. If this is a do-it-yourself (DIY) project, there are many free or affordable online editing software options or software already on your computer, such as iMovie on Mac OS. Editing goes beyond cleaning up awkward pauses, or transitions; you may want to layer content on top of the video footage, such as a logo, text that has the name and title of the spokesperson who is speaking, or a URL that will have more information.

Uploading and distributing video content

Once your video has been recorded and edited, and you feel confident it is ready to share with your audience, it is time to upload and distribute.

The following steps are a helpful guide to do so:

Upload to a platform

There are multiple places you can upload a video, such as Vimeo, YouTube, or directly to social media. The option you choose should have a sound strategy behind it. For example, uploading directly to social will allow you some measure of control. Uploading to YouTube will mean you have an easy-to-find home for the video, as well as a link for embedding and navigating to if the video fails to play for some users. Remember that YouTube videos have a comments section, so be sure you are

monitoring your YouTube account and responding in the same way you would on any other social media channel. You will also need to consider the content that appears in the description for the video. This may include a brief summary of what is covered in the video, a request to watch, and an invitation to visit a site, or register for next year's event.

Thumbnail photos

One of the main channels for sharing your video will be on social media, which requires a thumbnail image. A thumbnail is a quick snapshot of what the user will see in the video. Videos on social only autoplay when a user stops on your post. As users quickly scroll through their newsfeed, instead of autoplay, videos display a still image – or thumbnail – with the play button overlaid to entice the user to watch. To create a thumbnail image, select an image from the video by using a timestamp of a compelling snapshot. Alternatively, a text screen can be created using your organization's logo or campaign creative over a white background. Thumbnail photos should be the same size as the video; standard photo sizing for each platform does not apply.

Video length

Optimal video length for social varies according to content, channel and audience. It is recommended to keep videos that are embedded within Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn to a maximum of 1:30. Content that exceeds the recommended length of 1:30 or less should include an embedded preview style video on social platforms with the full version uploaded to YouTube. For instance, social copy on a video would include a link driving people to watch the complete video on

your organization's YouTube account. The same action is recommended when sharing the video in an email, where the embedded video may not play or work for all recipients.

Call-to-action

Many people do not watch a video on social media from start to finish. However, when it comes to a video announcing the cancellation or modification of an event the viewer is involved in, there is a good chance you will have a captive audience from beginning to end. Use this opportunity to use a call-to-action (CTA) to guide your audience on necessary actions, such as:

- How to sign up for a virtual event or select another option
- Where to go for more updates
- A link to your blog post or FAQ
- Asking the viewer to defer their event fee to a fundraising organization or register in advance for next year
- Sharing images from the runs they are doing during lockdowns
- Asking the viewer to submit questions to a provided email address
- Asking the viewer to share the video*

*A typical call-to-action on a video is to ask viewers to share a video, but this may not be the best course for a video on a potentially inflammatory topic, where sharing of the video may result in it being in places where you are unable to engage with comments or monitor sentiments. Use calls-to-action that keep your audience engaging with you directly in this situation.

“

A typical call-to-action on a video is to ask viewers to share a video, but this may not be the best course for a video on a potentially inflammatory topic, where sharing of the video may result in it being in places where you are unable to engage with comments or monitor sentiments.

Should the first video go well, and your audience is responding positively, consider a follow up video about a week or so later to discuss updates since the last recording. Follow the same process outlined in this section for your next video, and any others that follow.

9 Media statements

IF YOUR EVENT had a large impact on a specific geographic area, expect that communications may need to be relayed through local media outlets, such as newspapers, radio and television news stations.

Media relations can be daunting for those who haven't had to do it before. However, it is important to remember that local media outlets are another great way to distribute your information. If you approach it humbly and professionally, armed with the facts and key messages that make up your announcement, you will be able to harness this powerful communications channel to distribute the news.

Whether you are going to the media to share cancellation information, or the media has approached you to comment on the evolving situation, the following guidelines are recommended:

1) A reporter has reached out to you for comment on an event cancellation

In this scenario, you have received an email or phone call from a reporter who has heard about the decision to cancel or postpone. They may have read about it online and considered it important news for the area due to the potential economic impact, or they observed some public responses to the news and want to investigate a potentially divisive story. In this situation:

1. **Respond quickly** – Being prompt with your response is critical, as a lag may result in coverage that does not include your input or context, which means that there are information gaps that are being filled by someone else. You want to be in control, and you want to be the primary source. With a reporter likely reaching out to multiple people, you want to be first with the accurate information.
2. **Thank them for reaching out** – It's in your best interest to be polite and formal when interacting with the media, whether that is over the phone or through an email. First impressions matter, and as human beings they are just as susceptible to the phenomenon of forming a favourable one if they are met with some degree of warmth from the beginning. This is also an opportunity to give yourself a moment to collect your thoughts while exchanging pleasantries, if on the phone.
3. **Inquire about what they know so far, or why they contacted you** – On the phone, you are within your rights to inquire on this front, especially if done with a degree of pleasant curiosity. You're collecting information so that you know how best to help the media contact. If you are responding to an email, recognize they may need to move quickly to gather details and sources. Consider inviting them to give you a call or skip this step altogether in order to

provide information as efficiently as possible to ensure the correct details are relayed in any resulting news coverage.

4. **Offer to supply additional information**

– This is an important step, as it signals that you are the primary source for information and that you have materials available to support coverage. On the phone, offer to send links to the announcement details. This could be the blog post you published, the FAQs page, and a link to the video you uploaded. If you have time to gather a quote from a sponsor or additional stakeholder in the event, now is a good time to do so, as well as any relevant high resolution photos you may have on hand, such as photos of past events or your logo. In an

5. **Be prepared to answer questions –**

There is a chance that the reporter will be asking you questions on the phone that will constitute an impromptu interview, with your answers being used as statements in any coverage. Remember that there is no such thing as “off the record”, so this is not the time to complain or share negative viewpoints on participant feedback, even if you feel comfortable with the reporter and don’t think it’ll get out. Everything you say can and will be used. Instead, focus on neutral facts – being overly positive here will make you seem out of touch with the impact for many, such as your sponsors, vendors, and participants – and answer with information that would be fit for public consumption. Having your FAQs

accessible while you answer questions (just don’t sound like you’re reading verbatim) may be helpful. The same goes for any questions that may have been posed in the original email from the media contact.

6. **Offer a follow-up interview –** Whether

on the phone or in email, acknowledge that you understand they may be gathering resources, and that you are happy to give a formal interview as the spokesperson for the event. Offer to call into the radio show, to do a remote interview from home (the rules of social distancing will have an impact with what you can do here) for a television cast, or to schedule a time to answer any additional questions for a write up the contact may be working on.

7. **Thank them again and offer to be a go-to source –** When signing off, thank them

again for reaching out, and articulate your openness to being considered their primary source for information. Offer additional ways to get in touch or ask if you can send additional updates directly to them as they become available. They will nearly always say yes, which means you will have a media contact where you can filter information to the public through them and their outlet directly, saving time in the long run.

8. **Follow up with helpful materials –** If

you promised to supply links, materials, or information for answers you couldn’t immediately answer on the call (it’s

always okay to say “let me get you an answer to that one”), immediately after hanging up is the time to do so. Be sure to get their email address before saying goodbye and start to assemble your materials and follow up notes, using the same steps you just went through.

Note – If a reporter reaches out via direct message on a social media channel, thank them for reaching out, share your phone number, and invite them to give you a call. Then work through the above guidelines.

2) You are reaching out to media to share information

In this scenario, you are reaching out to the media to distribute information about the decision to cancel and what it means for the area. Many of the same guidelines as above apply, but with an outbound perspective. In this scenario, it is recommended that you:

1. **Know who you are reaching out to –** Consider which types of media you will need to distribute information through, such as newspapers, radio, or news television, then pinpoint the outlets for each that are credible and have the audience you need to connect with. Once you know which outlets you want to engage, investigate which individuals you need to send your news to, if you don’t already know which media contacts those are. Do some research on the area media outlets and familiarize yourself with who covers what. For example, it wouldn’t be a good use of time or effort to send information about your canceled event to

the host of the local cooking show. Look for stories or topics that are similar to what you need to get out and learn who it is who wrote or covered them and document their contact information in a media list for outreach.

2. **Craft your outreach –** Decide on an email or phone pitch, or a combination of the two. Smaller newsrooms or media contacts you are already familiar with will appreciate a call, followed up with an email that has additional information. Larger newsrooms may prefer that your news is filtered through a submission portal, or to a general inbox. If you’re able to find the contact information of the news director or reporter you want to get in touch with directly, then reach out to them directly. Whatever approach you take, develop (and practice) a script to follow to ensure you’re hitting everything you need to so you’re covering the angles that audiences will care about. Remember to keep it short, to the point, and inclusive of why this is important information for their audience – why is this news?
3. **Share helpful materials –** This is an important step, as it signals that you are the primary source for information and that you have materials available to support coverage. On the phone, offer to send links to the announcement details in a follow up email. This could be the blog post you published, the FAQs page, a link to the video you uploaded, or even a drafted press release. If you have time to gather a quote from a sponsor or

additional stakeholder in the event, now is a good time to do so, as well as any relevant high resolution photos you may have on hand, such as of past events or your logo. On an email, you should just include all of this in your response. Also, if you are reaching out for news coverage that will coincide with your organization's public announcement, or with follow up information, share what that date is. Media will appreciate knowing the timelines, as it helps them do their job.

4. **Offer an interview** – Whether on the phone or in email, articulate that you are happy to give a formal interview as the spokesperson for the event. Offer to call into the radio show, to do a remote interview from home (the rules of social distancing will have an impact with what you can do here) for a television cast, or to schedule a time to answer questions for a write up.
5. **Be prepared to answer questions** – Make yourself or any other spokespeople available for interviews and promptly respond to questions as they come up. Also, remember there is a chance the reporter will be asking you questions on the phone – whether during your pitch or in follow-up calls – that will constitute an impromptu interview, with your answers being used as statements in any coverage. Know that there is no such thing as “off the record”, so this is not the time to complain or share negative viewpoints on participant feedback, even if you feel comfortable with the reporter and don't think it'll get out. Everything you

say can and will be used. Instead, focus on neutral facts – being overly positive here will make you seem out of touch with the impact for many, such as your sponsors, vendors, and participants – and answer with information that would be fit for public consumption. Having your FAQs accessible while you answer questions (just don't sound like you're reading verbatim) may be helpful. The same goes for any questions that may have been posed in email exchanges with a media contact.

6. **Follow up as necessary** – Media are busy, so they may not have gotten back to you after you've reached out, or they may not immediately see the value in sharing information about the canceled event. If it is important that this information is shared with the general public, and you haven't gotten a response, follow up with a quick email or phone call to inquire if they were able to access the information you shared, and if they have any questions for you. Be prepared to restate the news, or to go deeper into its significance for the area and the participants, many of whom may be part of the outlet's audience.

Note – You may not receive coverage, and that is okay. Focus on the communications channels that you can control and must continue to engage with or monitor. Also, be prepared for unexpected outreach from local media outlets later on if, or when, they do decide to cover the news. Should this happen, revisit scenario 1 in this section.



Crafting a media statement

You may need to provide a statement to the media to use in their coverage of a canceled or modified event. In such a situation, consider the following framework:



Crafting a media statement

Acknowledge the situation with neutral facts:

"The decision to cancel [EVENT NAME] on [DATE] in [LOCATION] was announced this week."

Explain the decision:

"This was a decision that was not made lightly. Safety is always the number one concern for our events. Social distancing mandates from [NATIONAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION NAME] have made clear that it is not safe for this large-scale event to continue at this time."

Emphasize with those who this decision impacts and highlight the highest priority lost; the lost fundraising dollars:

"While we are deeply disappointed to have to delay this event, we also need to respect health officials' orders. We are sensitive to the impact it has on our valued vendors and sponsors, the hardworking volunteers and [EVENT NAME] staff, the hotels and restaurants that would have been booked up, and our incredible participants, who have been training so hard to give their all to this 2020 event. We also want to acknowledge the impact a canceled event has on our fundraising partners, whose [EXPLAIN THE INITIATIVE (for example, lifesaving)] initiatives are funded with the money raised."



Crafting a media statement

Articulate what next steps are, or what to look forward to.

"We are currently considering ways to keep everyone working together and on track for next year's event, whether that be a virtual event, online run clinics, or something else entirely. We look forward to sharing more information with our participants in the coming weeks."

Include a light-touch call-to-action:

"We encourage you all to visit our website, [URL], or our social feeds to stay up to date on event-related news for 2021. We also welcome your ideas and feedback to [EMAIL]."

End with a thank you and a positive "coming together" message:

"Thank you for your support and for understanding the difficult steps we have had to take for the 2020 season. We are all working through extraordinary times. We appreciate every one of our valued partners and participants as we navigate this together. We look forward to finding ways to stay connected and to come back together stronger than ever."



Crafting a media statement

Now, put it all together:

“The decision to cancel [EVENT NAME] on [DATE] in [LOCATION] was announced this week. This was a decision that was not made lightly. Safety is always the number one concern for our events. Social distancing mandates from [NATIONAL HEALTH ORGANIZATION NAME] have made clear that it is not safe for this large-scale event to continue at this time.

While we are deeply disappointed to have to delay this event, we also need to respect health officials’ orders. We are sensitive to the impact it has on our valued vendors and sponsors, the hardworking volunteers and [EVENT NAME] staff, the hotels and restaurants that would have been booked up, and our incredible participants, who have been training so hard to give their all to this 2020 event.

We also want to acknowledge the impact a canceled event has on our fundraising partners, whose [EXPLAIN THE INITIATIVE (for example, lifesaving)] initiatives are funded with the money raised. We are currently considering ways to keep everyone working together and on track for next year’s event, whether that be a virtual event, online run clinics, or something else entirely. We look forward to sharing more information with our participants in the coming weeks. We encourage you all to visit our website, [URL], or our social feeds to stay up to date on event-related news for 2021. We welcome your ideas and feedback to [EMAIL].

Thank you for your support and for understanding the difficult steps we have had to take for the 2020 season. We are all working through extraordinary times. We appreciate every one of our valued partners and participants as we navigate this together. We look forward to finding ways to stay connected and to come back together stronger than ever.

Note – As well as a framework for developing a media statement, it can also be used in a press release or social media post, broken down for FAQs or responses to public comments, or expanded to become an email or blog post.

Conclusion

MANY OF US haven't been here before. This is a first – like the first event, the first time we took on a new distance, or challenged ourselves to hit a new personal best. But we do know how to prepare, how to plan, and how to be disciplined, resilient and stubborn when we need to be.

We know how to overcome adversity, know how to dig deep when things get tough, and know that while some may train alone, we are part of something much bigger than any individual. Like any training journey, we have to take this step by step, ready to adapt as subsequent obstacles arise.

It takes the efforts of many people to create an exceptional event day experience, one that keeps participants coming back, and gives them the best chance to achieve their personal goals. This is the business we're in, and while we currently have some bumps in the road to work through, we're in it together and we'll finish together.





Need more?

The Race Roster team is here to support you.

This e-book has been developed by Race Roster in collaboration with The Marketing Department (TMD), a London, Ontario, Canada marketing specialist.

As part of our ongoing commitment to work with you during these challenging times, we are pleased to offer TMD's ongoing support to all of our event organizers and customers at a discounted rate. TMD has also offered to work directly with event organizers to support your efforts on an ongoing basis as the COVID-19 situation continues to develop, and as the situation continues to impact planned future events.

If you would like to engage with TMD directly to support your communications, Public Relations and media relations efforts, please contact:

Trisha Beausaert

Director of Client Engagement & Solution Delivery

tbeausaert@tmd.ca

519-878-3022

