

Marketing in the middle of a global crisis

 By [Rirhandzu Shingwenyana](#)

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The world is currently experiencing an unprecedented chain of crises, from the outbreak of coronavirus also known as Covid-19 to racism which has become a public health crisis. Communication practitioners are always advised to prepare for a crisis in their organisations.



Photo by August de Richelieu from [Pexels](#).

This simply means an organisation communications team particularly those responsible for crisis communication management, has to put a plan in place in an anticipation of a crisis befalling their company in the future. But how would you plan for a crisis in which you have no idea the degree that which will be happening?

Marketing must continue

Nevertheless, always have a communications crisis plan in place, it does not matter what type of a crisis it would be. When the crisis happens your organisation must be highly ready to circumvent any negative situation. The worst-case scenario is that you finding yourself wanting amid crisis.

But what about marketing in the middle of a global crisis as huge as a pandemic? So would you stop marketing while hoping the crisis will go away then go back normal, and then later commence with the marketing? Like a communication crisis plan which tells us that we have to plan for a crisis, marketing must also continue amidst a crisis.



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It's important to note that consumers and customers see brands as some form of a friend or family member that which they can rely on. Simply put; remember those FMGC product containers at home in the kitchen. See that's a family member right there. And whenever you see the same brand name you instantly miss home.

Decide on strategic actions

A marketing strategy should be augmented while the situation unfolds. If your marketing drivers are wrapped around the ethos of the brand rather than product/service promotion, it is therefore much easier to redirect the focus to respond to the crisis, per se. However, it is the responsibility of the marketing team to do situational analysis and then decide on the strategic actions.

We have seen in the past weeks how brands became vocal about the impact of coronavirus, and show care for the general public. Some brands have become the information portal for facts and myths about the crisis. We have also witnessed a plethora of brands voicing out their commitment to ending systematic and institutionalised racism in the wake of the brutal killing of an unarmed black man by the white police officer in Minneapolis, United States of America.



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The latter would somewhat be justified by some brands as a commitment instead of been some form of marketing tactics. The truth about branding and marketing is that anything that a particular brand does is a form of marketing, even if the real intention is not to market.

Over and above, what is important for brand reputation is to continue communicating and marketing even amid a crisis as big as a global pandemic. Remember, marketing is not an ad-hoc but rather a deliberate, and strategic intentional process of building brand equity, and consequently converting consumers and customers to be advocates.

ABOUT RIRHANDZU SHINGWENYANA

Rirhandzu Shingwenyana is a marketing, advertising and communications professional with experience in account management, social media and digital marketing campaign management.

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