

**Executive Summary**

*Notes from select sessions at the virtual conference.*

11:05-11:30 a.m.

PANEL

**Keeping patient and employee trust in the age of COVID-19**

*Roy Reid, Executive Director of Communications at AdventHealth*

*Christy Noland, Senior Director of Corporate Communications at Astellas*

* **Emphasize safety and alleviate fears**

Astellas

* Stress to employees that you are looking at all options when making decisions. While Astellas closed their US headquarters early on in the pandemic, they don’t want to rush and try to be the first that’s fully reopen
* Safety is the combination of facts with empathy
* Communicate swiftly and frequently

Advent Health

* Streamline your communications. Advent Health activated command center last February that consolidated communications and made them more efficient
* Align your communications with your mission statement or purpose. Advent Health aligned theirs with their service standards when communicating with internal or external audiences:
  + Keep me safe
  + Love me
  + Make it easy
  + Own it
* **Communicating clearly (for internal & external audiences)**

Astellas

* Closely monitor guidelines from CDC or local authorities – help distill for your team and explain how it impacts them
* Take a gradual pace to re-opening to make sure proper procedures are in place – acknowledge that situation is fluid and could change at any time
* Develop employee and manager toolkits that provide resources, procedures and protocols at-a-glance. Astellas’ toolkit features infographics and easily digestible data
* Do what you can to visualize processes for your team. Astellas created a “Day In the Life” video that showcased safety procedures for their US Headquarters. They ended up sharing the video across their global communications network, too
* Create additional training opportunities for your team to brush up their skills

Advent Health

* Reassign your team as necessary. Advent Health’s comms team is organized around newsroom model – beat reporters support key areas like supply chain, clinical briefings, HR briefings, etc.
* Regularly distribute messaging in various formats for difference audiences, such as huddle messages for leaders or cascading messages for frontline workers
* Create similar resources for internal and external audience:
  + Advent Health has a COVID site on SharePoint for employees to access data, but also has one for external audiences.
  + They also launched a hotline/800 number and chatbot service for patients/external audiences to use
* **Top priorities: addressing the needs of your employees and patients/customers**

Advent Health

* Tier your communication based on public health developments – team is currently focusing on the vaccine and its subsequent rollout
* Use tools like Facebook Live to put clinical experts in front of community and media
* Make sure your employees have the ability to work. Advent Health created a redeployment system that allows employees to shift their worksite in case of shutdowns in their community
* Highlight tools such as telehealth to show that there are accessible tools available to patients

Astellas

* Focus on your dispersed workforce. Disseminating communications through an app/mobile to deskless workers like your salesforce is critical – be sure to monitor what’s happening in their various regions
* Designate microsites to push out comms quickly on various topics related to COVID
* If you relaxed the pace of certain communications, be prepared to push them out more frequently.
  + Astellas highlighted top tools and resources for internal audiences in a weekly newsletter but reduced its cadence in recent weeks – had slowed down in recent weeks, but can increase if necessary
* Look out for your employees’ families, too. Astellas introduce a program that provided career development and training to employees’ family members who experienced job loss during the pandemic
* Increase volunteer hours to your team so they can have a chance to give back to their communities
* **Prioritizing transparency and empathy**
* Recognize your audience – convey a conversation instead of merely providing information
* Use video, such as recorded messages from your CEO, to convey transparency – show first to your internal audience, but push out to the public as well
* Make it know you’re a trusted resource for employees and provide the facts and resources they need at a moment’s notice

11:35-11:55 a.m.

**Use storytelling to drive support and stand out in a crowded digital environment**

*Jim Ylisela, Co-founder and Senior Partner, Ragan Consulting Group*

* Health care has already stood out significantly this year. There are a lot of great stories to tell.
* Jim has 7 ideas on good storytelling in 2020:
  + Idea #1: You can’t bore your audience but first and foremost you shouldn’t be boring yourself. Think about what stories you’d want to read.
* Idea #2: Don’t fear creativity. Use your meetings to brainstorm and kick ideas around with everyone, rather than just go through your tasks for the week.
  + Use data in new and interesting ways, like interactive maps
  + As a team, brainstorm six word stories about a topic, like “your 2020 experience.”
* Idea #3: Work people into your stories—not just executives. Go to the people closest to the work, in the trenches. This will never steer you wrong.
  + Gets to the emotional center of the story
  + Stories don’t always have to be about the great heroic work theyre doing, it can also be about their feelings and daily experiences
* Idea #4: Have a point of view. Use your organization’s expertise to take a stance or offer a one-of-a-kind perspective on something.
  + Example story: “Why I vaccinate my child”
* Idea #5: Let one represent many. Find a good example story that sheds light on the experiences of many.
  + Example: Chadwick Boseman’s battle with colon cancer, a first-year nurse’s experience during covid-19
* Idea #6: Make the news your own
  + Find your organization’s angle—how does your field relate to COVID-19 and the vaccine?
* Idea #7: Great images and great headlines are the winning formula to make your stories sing
  + Images grab attention, while headlines lead the audience to click on the link
* Final piece of advice: Find something distinctive for your story, even if its just one word or phrase

1:50-2:05 p.m.

**Addressing health care inequity during challenging times**

Melissa Gomez, Vice President, Health Care Sector Lead, Miami and Latin America, Edelman

* Health inequity is caused by systematic or behavioral factors that keep individuals and groups from reaching positive health outcomes
* Has always been a major problem, but the demonstrations this year has shed more light on it.
  + We’ve reached a tipping point to push for change
* Best practices to reduce health inequity:
  + Trust is a crucial prerequisite to addressing health inequity
  + The health sector has actually seen an increase in trust from the public
  + 70% of individuals trust the healthcare industry, a 8 point jump from January to May
  + Even pharma, which was distrusted before, has improved.
  + Expectations are also higher for the industry now. COVID-19 and protests highlighted health inequity.
  + Businesses are failing to act on racial justice—which makes health inequity worse
  + Anti-racism is a long term expectation for businesses—can’t change things in a few months. Identify your long-term journey.
    - Develop products/processes that take into account diverse audiences and patients
  + CEOS must build diverse partnerships to gain credibility.
  + Communicators play a huge role in dismantling racist tropes.
  + This is first and foremost about Black Americans who have faced widespread oppression in the country.
* Best practices for engaging multicultural audiences:
  + Understand there is diversity within each population group and different health inequities.
  + Take concrete action to address health inequity in society—don’t just make statements against it.
  + Don’t just translate campaigns—lean on audience insights to build integrated campaigns
  + Description of the problem shouldn’t overshadow potential solutions. Focus on what you’re doing to help.
  + Make sure your messengers are credible to your target audience
  + Amplify often unheard voices
  + Don’t only engage during certain cultural moments like awareness months and holidays—make a long-term commitment.
  + Multicultural communications can no longer be an afterthought

3-3:25 p.m.

**The top trends health care communicators need to know today to be successful tomorrow***Kelli Teno, Director, Pharmacy and Healthcare Services Communications, Walgreens*

*Josh Zembik, Director of Media, American Medical Association*

* **Covid-19 has spurred telemedicine growth.** People, especially those with chronic conditions, are struggling to maintain access to their healthcare because of Covid-19. Telemedicine is helping to provide that needed access.
* **Communicators must clearly communicate the availability of telemedicine and other services.** This includes providing materials to remind consumers how to prioritize their health during the pandemic (beyond Covid-19 concerns).
* **A hurdle to telemedicine adoption is whether it’s covered by insurance.** CMS was initially a challenge in this regard. So AMA released a telehealth playbook and other materials so consumers knew they could do video consultations—and that it was covered by insurance.
* **Healthcare facilities are still addressing PPE shortages and must reassure workers.** PPE was a massive concern at beginning of Covid-19. Messaging was also not consistent with regard to the usefulness of masks. Communicators must now be more stringent about reassuring team members with the latest data and science that they are safe. We must also provide the latest CDC guidance that lets them come to work safely. The knowledge is there, but it must now be reinforced. Similarly, healthcare facilities must escalate advocacy efforts to acquire PPE for front-liners (e.g., AMA working with Project N95 to acquire and distribute PPE to hospitals).
* **The public is experiencing Covid fatigue, so reprioritize education.** This means healthcare facilities must reinforce safety measures with data and educational materials.
* **Vaccine communications is evolving rapidly. The challenge for healthcare facilities in this rapid environment is to ensure you’re not creating confusion—and are instead bringing clarity.** Do that by keeping all stakeholders informed about accessibility while ensuring you’re providing only accurate and reliable information. That means NOT taking advantage of every media or outreach opportunity**.** Share only what you’re confident and comfortable with. Don’t rush to get (mis)information out around vaccines. Ways to do this:
  + Collate and share information for customers and invite guests and SMEs to share information in forums like webinars.
  + Conduct editorial board meetings with SMEs/execs to educate media outlets.
  + Overcome “vaccine hesitancy” by answering questions, educating reporters and physicians, etc. to communicate vaccine information. Education helps build trust.
  + The worst case scenario isn’t that there are side effects to a vaccine—but that people won’t take it. Trust has been eroded in institutions and it’s hard to discern fact from fiction due to misinformation and (YouTube) videos being shared. The solution is to deliver only information you are clear and confident about. Avoid speculation. If you don’t know the answer, say so.
  + Note that people trust their doctors the most—so this is the place to start with education and direct communication. Doctors and pharmacists must be provided with the latest information to rebuild trust. They need the latest and most accurate information to compete with “Dr. Google.”