

A Simple Messaging Plan During A Crisis

For Small Business Owners

Control what you can. Connect with your vital audiences.
Stay positive.

March 2020

Why a crisis messaging plan...

Because small business owners don't have the luxury of hiring a crisis communication consultant. I created this framework plan to get you started with our new normal.

We must prepare to communicate with our audiences during continuous uncertainty.

In my 25+ year marketing career, one of my clients was U.S. Army Recruiting during the First Gulf War. This was my baptism by fire. Planning communications in life and death circumstances – far beyond our control.

You may not know what to do right now. *But you do know a lot about your business.*

And I don't have all the answers either. But what you do know *plus* what I know – can help.

You can handle this.

Arlene O'Reilly

President of [Really Clear Marketing](https://reallyclearmarketing.com)

Your one simple objective

Retain support of your audiences – people vital to your business – by

- **Putting people above profits**
- **Doing right by the people you serve**

Get started...ask yourself

- ✓ How will COVID-19 affect my business?
Reputation? Operations?
Bottom line? Relationships?
- ✓ What could I see that would indicate the business has been affected?
- ✓ How has my business been affected so far?

What actions will I take?

Four steps to creating your plan

Your Actions + Communication

1. Who
to talk to

2. What
to say

3. Where
to say it

4. When
to say it

1. Who to communicate to?

Decision makers? Influencers who affect my future?

- Customers / clients
- Consultants / advisors
- Community leaders
- Employees
- Insurance company
- Landlord
- Neighboring businesses
- Partners
- Suppliers
- Contractors
- Creditors / bankers
- Others...

Who are your 3 most important audiences?

2. What to say?

Respond to increase trust and credibility

- **Correct misperceptions quickly**
- **Strengthen relationships with different audiences**
 - ✓ What do ***you*** want your audience to know?
 - ✓ What does ***your audience*** want to know?
 - ✓ What is your audience most ***likely to get wrong?***
 - ✓ What does your ***audience feel -- emotionally? Fear?***
 - ✓ What does this ***mean to them?***

2. **What** does your audience want from you?

- **Communicate quickly**
- **Give them the facts**
- **Repeat the facts**
- **Be credible**
 - > Be empathic & caring
 - > Express your competence & expertise
 - > Be honest & open
 - > Be committed & dedicated

2. Map each audience

AUDIENCE:

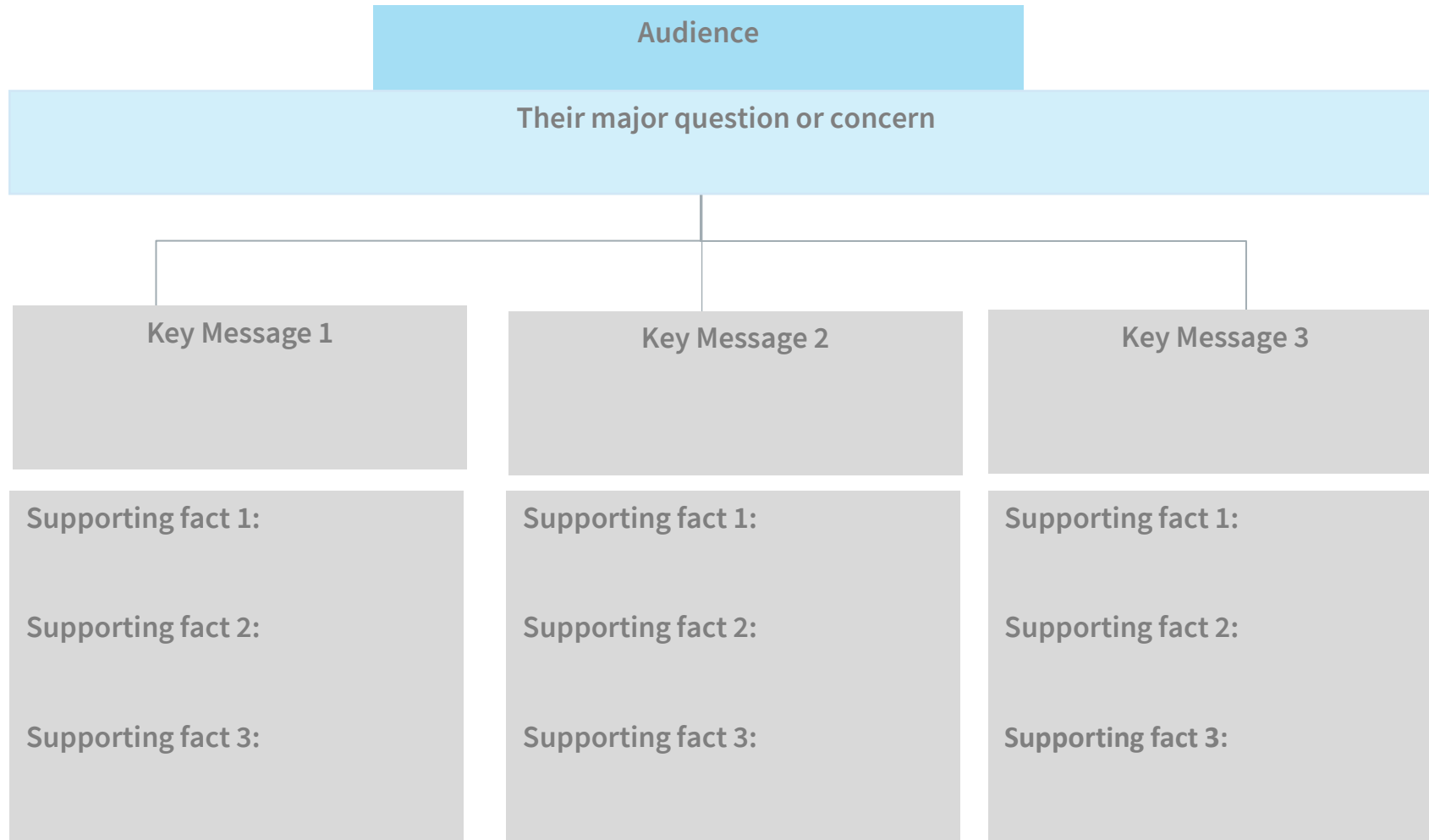
WHAT THEY'RE WORRIED ABOUT

WHAT THEY EXPECT OF YOUR ORGANIZATION

THEIR QUESTIONS FOR YOU

WHERE THEY EXPECT TO SEE YOUR MESSAGE – THE CHANNEL

2. Simple message mapping strategy



3. Where to communicate?

In which channel does each audience expect to get your message?

- Phone call
- Website
- Email
- Social media
- App
- Others...

4. When?


A simple messaging plan template

<i>AUDIENCE: Prospects</i>		<i>TIMING</i>			
		MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE
FACEBOOK/GROUP	MESSAGES	[Blue bar spanning MAR, APR, MAY]			
EMAIL TO LIST	MESSAGES	[Blue bar MAR]	[Blue bar APR]	[Blue bar MAY]	
LINKEDIN/POSTS	MESSAGES	[Blue bar MAR]		[Blue bar MAY]	
CHANNEL/PROGRAM	MESSAGES	[Blue bar spanning MAR, APR, MAY, JUNE]			

What to do next...

- **Create your plan now & implement**
- **Do ongoing re-evaluation & update**
 - ✓ Who else to talk to?
 - ✓ What way will your message change?
 - ✓ Where will it appear?
 - ✓ When will you send/post?

Get answers to your crisis planning questions

 Send any questions you've got about your plan to arlene@reallyclearmarketing.com
I'll get an answer to you as quickly as possible.

AND

 Get more answers in a **free 30-minute call**. After our call, you'll understand how to use the 4-step strategy for your crisis messaging plan. [Reserve time on my calendar.](#)

A reminder...

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