

# POWERING THROUGH COVID-19

## COMMUNICATIONS: YOUR LIFELINE TO THE COMMUNITY

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Presented By:

**DANOSKY ASSOCIATES**  
*Consulting for Nonprofit and Business*



The Community Foundation  
*for Greater New Haven*



# Introductions



**Presenter:**

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# About Today's Seminar

- Housekeeping:
  - Everyone's devices are muted to diminish background noise
  - You will find a bar where you can ask a question or respond to a poll
  - There are several polls we will be asking you, look for them as we go.
  - We will also be asking you a few questions during the session. Answer them using the Q&A box on the bar
  - We will be recording this and will make it available through the Foundation.



Quiz Time

Let's have  
some fun!

## Poll

How many ZOOM conference calls or webinars have you been on so far this week?

## Q&A

What's your favorite non-work ZOOM activity?

# Who is participating in this webinar?

- Question 1:
  - How many of you are on the front lines of providing some type of human service support during this crisis – food, transportation, health, childcare, animal shelters – anything that might challenge your existing resources?
  - How many of you are organizations that are not providing direct service – but are helping people cope, such as libraries, cultural organizations, museums, historical organizations, etc.
- Question 2:
  - How many are Executive Directors?
  - How many are Development Directors and responsible for raising money?
  - Any Board members?
  - Other?

WE'RE  
HERE  
FOR YOU

Is No Longer Enough

# Good Communications Are Vital

## Insufficient Communications

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Uncertainty
- Suspicions



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## Consistent Information

- Calm
- Trust
- Confidence
- Certainty



# Trust-Based Language is Essential

- Factual
  - Current
  - Reliable
  - Empathetic
- 
- **No:** “we’re here for you” ...
  - **Yes:** “What we are doing for you and how that will help you and others”



# Mission and Values First

- More people trust nonprofits than any other institution
- Your mission and values should drive your decision-making
- Mission and values should drive your communications



# Communications Evolve

- **Phase 1 – Crisis Communications:** We are in the midst of this right now and are figuring things out. Here's what we know day-to-day.
- **Phase 2 – Constrained Communications:** There is a new rhythm to life, and it is time to communicate value, comfort, and consistent re-assurance
- **Phase 3 – Targeted Communications:** Once again things will change as we re-open and re-emerge. Information is vital to let people know new changes
- **Phase 4 – A Different Normal:** There is a new stability; but still uncertainty. Consistent communications about what you do and the value you bring.



# Have A Communications Plan

- Identify your communications scenarios or objectives
- Who are your target audiences: internal and external
- What are your key messages?
- What platforms are you using to communicate?
- Who is your chief spokesperson; have they been trained?
- Is everyone giving the same message?



# Segmenting Your List

- **One Size Doesn't Fit All**

- Clients
- Client family members
- Board of Directors
- Advisory Boards or Councils
- Volunteers

- **Donors**

- Elected officials

- **Funders**

- Contractors
- Vendors
- General Public



# Internal vs. External Audiences

## Internal

- Employees
  - Management
  - Staff
- Board members
  - Board committees
- Active volunteers
- Clients
  - Client family members

## External

- Elected Officials
- Funders
- Advisory Boards/Councils
- Donors
- Vendors
- General Public

# Key Messages

- Phase I – Crisis Communications
  - Now, immediate, urgent changes
  - Communicate frequently
- Phase 2 – Constrained Communications
  - Information that is factual, useful and meets your constituents' needs
  - There is a rhythm, consistency and dependency on the regularity
- Phase 3 – Targeted Communications
  - Information specifically related to recovery and how you are re-emerging
  - More frequent communication as the need arises
- Phase 4 – A Different Normal
  - How are you offering your services – what is available and how
  - Rhythm, consistency important once more as you define your different normal for your constituents



# Tone – Speak with An Authentic Voice

Measured  
Factual

Honest  
Empathetic





**People in their fourth week of being at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic..... watching their bird feeders!**

# Tone – Speak with An Authentic Voice

Measured

Honest

Factual

Empathetic

HUMOR



# Media & Platforms

- Which platform is right for which audience?
  - *Social media is not for everyone*
- Personal communication is important with employees and certain other audiences
- Donors, funders, elected officials should hear from you more often and in certain instances, by phone
- Zoom, Go-to-Meeting are all tools available to everyone on a selective basis
- E-newsletters are incredibly effective
- Traditional media outlets have a place



# Open Forums and By Invitation Only

## Open Forums

- Great way to communicate over a wide band of people
- Regular updates
- Critical information



## Invite Only

- More frequent
- More personal
- Great for feedback
- Promotes discussion



# Frequency of Communications

- Crisis Communications
  - Often as urgency dictates
- Constrained Communications
  - Rhythm, consistent, dependable
- Targeted Communications
  - More frequent as things change
- A Different Normal
  - Back to a dependable rhythm



# Template and a Plan

|                    |                          | Phone | Text | E-mail | Closed<br>Social<br>Media | E-<br>Newsletter/<br>E-Blast | Direct<br>Mail | Traditional<br>Media | Virtual<br>Open<br>Forum | Virtual<br>Closed<br>Forum |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-------|------|--------|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Internal Audiences |                          |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | Client                   |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | Client Family Members    |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | Employees                |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | Active Volunteers        |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | Board of Directors       |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | Board Committees         |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
| External Audiences |                          |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | Donors                   |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | Elected Officials        |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | Govt. Funders            |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | Inactive Volunteers      |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | Vendors                  |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | Advisory Boards/Councils |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |
|                    | General Public           |       |      |        |                           |                              |                |                      |                          |                            |

DATE:

How are we doing?/Where are we now? How have contributions helped?

What is planned for the near future?

What do we hope for the longer term?

What do we need?

# Communicating with Nothing to Say

- WHERE IS YOUR ORGANIZATION NOW?
- WHAT IS IT PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE?
- WHAT IS THE HOPE FOR THE LONGER TERM?



**For tomorrow belongs to the people  
who prepare for it today**

*African Proverb*



# DANOSKY ASSOCIATES

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