**Messaging and tone guidelines for COVID**

Globally, we’re facing an unprecedented situation. And that impacts the way we can talk and communicate with our customers and clients.

People are sensitive right now. They’re worried and anxious. And that means they’re more likely to be offended or take offense where none is intended.

To combat this, we need to consider what we’re talking about, what our images say, and how we’re speaking.

**Content types**

Focus on engagement and help. How-tos, tips and tricks and tutorials are fantastic. Highlighting members of your community and their efforts is great. Stepping up and helping directly is ideal.

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| **Yes** | **No** |
| Product descriptions and details | Large promotional campaigns |
| Tips, tricks and tutorials | Excitable or urgent messages |
| Templates and downloads | How we’re keeping staff/customers safe from COVID-19 |
| Engaging social posts |  |

**Talk about**

We need to stay relevant to the current experiences of our customers but also stay clear of topics we don’t have expertise in.

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| --- | --- |
| **This** | **Not this** |
| *e.g. Family* | *Social events* |
| *e.g. Working from home or flexible work* | *The economy* |
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**Tones and messaging**

Our tones should stay casual and uplifting, understanding and kind, simple and human. We should not be celebratory or braggy, excitable or pushy, demanding or aggressive.

Be very careful about jokes and being cheeky or clever. And if it’s about COVID or the economy, don’t even try.

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| --- | --- |
| **This** | **Not this** |
| *e.g. Keeping business stable* | *Take your business to the next level* |
| *e.g. A backyard picnic* | *The ultimate dining experience* |
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**Images**

Our images need to stay relevant to the situation our customers are finding themselves in. We should steer clear of large groups of people, social events, restaurants, personal services like massage or facials, retail, offices and holidays or transport.

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| --- | --- |
| **This** | **Not this** |
| *Examples of current imagery that are ok* | *Examples of current imagery that are not ok* |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**Not sure?**

If you’re not sure, it’s usually best to err on the side of caution and avoid it. You should also check in with colleagues and suppliers for their opinions and advice.

**Action plan**

While we need to take these guidelines into consideration on content we’re creating now, existing assets including our website, campaigns and advertising should be reviewed and updated as necessary.

*Note:* Don’t update published social posts. Blog posts published within the past month should be reviewed and updated if necessary.

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| **Now** | Review and update or discontinue:   * Advertising * Remarketing * Campaigns * Social posts |
| **Next** | Review and update:   * Homepage * Key or high-traffic webpages * Lifecycle and customer engagement emails * Sales funnel emails * Cross-sell product flows |
| **Fast follow** | Review and update:   * The rest of the website * Servicing emails * Product flows |