

# Break It Down: COMMUNICATION PRIORITIZATION

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The first step to take is to check your communications that are on auto-pilot, as well as any fundraising appeals scheduled to be mailed imminently.

Items in this category are likely to include acknowledgment letters, and monthly renewals and e-renewals, for example.

**DO NOT** stop mailing these out.

**DO** keep them on their regular schedule.

**DO** revise copy to match the tone of the moment. (This may need to be done again next month as the situation evolves too. This is a rapidly-changing, fluid event.)

**DO** check with any production partners to make sure they are still running seamlessly, have plans for the crisis, and are still able to get your campaigns out on time.

## **Tips for revising copy for tone:**

- ✓ Look for copy that feels too happy or celebratory for now. If a line says something along the lines of “Support the programs you love!” Consider changing it to something more along the lines of “Support essential programs you care about.” This is the time to dial into the very powerful mission PBS and its member stations have served for decades.
- ✓ Highlight properties that are the most prominent and powerful right now – the trusted, in-depth news of PBS NewsHour... the intense look at the crisis on Frontline... the valuable children’s services, especially as our kids are out of school for an extended period of time.
- ✓ Most exclamation points should be toned down to periods now.
- ✓ In almost every case, any fundraising appeal should have at least a brief mention of the current health situation. It can be as simple as adding an ending to an already existing sentence, such as, “particularly as we all face this unprecedented global health crisis together.” Let your donors know that you are in this with them.
- ✓ Consider how you refer to the virus. While there is no hard and fast rule, know that language and how it’s presented matters. Referring to it as COVID-19 (highly clinical), or Coronavirus (highly personal/emotional), may take your donors back out into their worried head space rather than keeping them on your message. Instead, it’s recommended to speak in broader terms about the situation, leaving your detailed descriptions for talk about how you’re helping and why donors should care and support your station.