



## **Pandemic Communications Recommendations for Event Managers**

**It is important to begin and stay in regular communication with all stakeholder groups during times of crisis to help avoid undue panic and maintain normalcy. Initial steps in this the ongoing communications should include updating your event's Crisis Communication Plan for modifications that the current situation demands, sharing the modified plan with leadership and the event team for input and implementing the plan. Frequent, clear and reliable communication, education and information will reassure your audiences, avoid panic and reduce risk.**

- Keep stakeholders updated regularly via best methods (web, email, twitter feeds, etc) on the situation
- Coordinate with your Communications and PR teams closely regarding all communications on this topic
- Remind internal staff to refer the press to the proper executive spokesperson
- Refer to official news bulletins from government agencies
- Remember to keep all stakeholders informed of your actions and decisions
  - Event staff
  - Speakers
  - Delegates, potential delegates
  - Exhibitors, sponsors
  - Supplier partners
- Talk to venues (hotels, convention centers and local CVBs) to understand the venue's communication policies and position
- Monitor public travel advisory services in the inbound city
- Limit information to facts; do not provide opinions of status or severity
- Update your information regularly and actively communicate the latest actions you are taking
- Encourage attendees to take personal hygiene precautions (see suggestions below)
  - Provide or encourage the use of hand sanitizer
  - Review food handling processes with venue
- Advise delegates that you are looking forward to seeing them, to allow extra time at the airports
- Provide hand sanitizer at your events (bulk and personal)
- Inform your attendees to monitor their home state's travel advisories to be prepared when travelling in to the event
- Monitor and respond to blog, twitter and email concerns as soon as possible to help diffuse panic and avoid misinformation

### ***Tips on things to avoid:***

- Using information or wording that creates panic
- Making decisions without consulting key stakeholders, internal and external
- Acting or speaking as the expert on the topic (limit information to official sources)
- Providing information based on opinion or is unverifiable

### **Basic Hygiene Information to Share**

Unlike the experience in Mexico, the United States is seeing less severe disease. Health officials recommend people continue to take precautions to protect themselves as they would from colds and seasonal flu:

Make good respiratory etiquette and hygiene habits a part of your daily routine especially in confined spaces like automobiles, airplane cabins, train cars and the like. Currently recommended prevention methods include the following:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- If you have no tissue, cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- The use of alcohol-based hand cleaners is encouraged.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, call your doctor; CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

### **Official Information Sources**

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** is an excellent source of updates and information in regards to public health. This should be your primary source of information for US-based events:

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

CDC has posted a short-form for how to prevent the spread of germs:

[http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm?s\\_cid=swineFlu\\_outbreak\\_internal\\_003](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm?s_cid=swineFlu_outbreak_internal_003)

**The World Health Organization** is an important source of issues with regards to global health issues and is the organization who sets pandemic alert levels:

<http://www.who.int/csr/don/en/>

General information regarding the phases of pandemic alert

[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/phase/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/phase/en/index.html)

Swine influenza information

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>

**US Department of Health & Human Services**

<http://www.hhs.gov/>

Recent press release (April 26<sup>th</sup>)

<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/04/20090426a.html>

**Airline Information**

Many airlines have been issuing their own travel advisory regarding ticketing rules and travel to affected areas.

US Airways:

<http://www.usairways.com/awa/TravelAdvisory/TravelAdvisoryCenter.aspx>

American Airlines:

[https://www.aa.com/aa/listNewsAndOffers.do?locale=en\\_US&method=View+All+News](https://www.aa.com/aa/listNewsAndOffers.do?locale=en_US&method=View+All+News)

**International Travel Advisories**

Contact your local embassy or public health service.