

Successful PR in times of crisis

Using new opportunities in a targeted and relevant manner

The year 2020 is already an extraordinary one: the global pandemic is attracting all kinds of attention and changing consumer communication and behaviour in many places.

A study for effective decisions

The cross-national D-A-CH study "Effective communication in times of crisis" by the consulting and research company [Accelerom](#), based in Zurich, shows how the crisis influences personal, future economic perspectives. The majority of those surveyed assume a negative development. 32 percent of Austrians are skeptical about their own economic situation in a year's time. Among the under-30s, the assessment of economic prospects is still slightly positive, while the older ones are worried about a crash. The negative outlook is not without consequences. In Austria, the issues of health, safety, cohesion and community are becoming increasingly important, even surpassing the issue of environmental protection. At the same time, power, reputation and status are losing massively in importance. These are not good prospects for the car and fashion industry and for the luxury industry in general. Nevertheless, it is a snapshot during the crisis and agile industry representatives know right from the start how to successfully counter this trend. After all, they see it as an opportunity to take advantage of the increased media consumption of consumers during the standstill.

"In a crisis, communication always follows different rules than classic sales communication, but the mechanics are identical," says Christoph Spengler, Managing Director of Accelerom. Christof Baron, one of Germany's best-known media managers, adds "this also documents very clearly how important it is to have an overall understanding of the function and effect of individual touchpoints as part of the customer journey." According to Baron, the study shows touchpoints in all countries that are normally not considered in a communication strategy. However, despite their limited reach, they do a lot and people assign them high relevance and effectiveness. One example: Doctors in Austria have a low reach, but above-average relevance.

Challenges for the media

According to a study by [CISION](#), a global provider of media management software, journalists' distrust of the media continues to decline, but much more needs to be done to restore trust between the media and the public. The "[Edelman Trust Barometer 2020 Special Report](#)" published by market research company Edelman shows that the major news organizations are among the most trusted sources regarding the COVID-19 virus. For classic quality media, however, the relationship with social media remains complicated. According to the study, 18 percent of respondents described the fact that social networks and influencers bypass traditional media as a challenge. Meanwhile, the high expectations for AI technology are declining.

Realistically, a certain fatigue towards the topics of the Corona crisis is already setting in. Nevertheless, this is a dynamic situation and the population still wants to receive regular news about it, especially with local relevance. At the same time, the number of readers of articles that are not related to COVID-19 is increasing. According to the study, public relations (PR) initiatives and campaigns must be more targeted and relevant than ever before. In connection with the current crisis, the study advises to initiate positive topics with regional or local reference.

Conclusion from [M2 Maydell](#)

Right now it is important to be even more proactive in reaching consumers. But never try to capitalize on the crisis, because it will be seen through immediately. Understand your target groups, the target audience of your media partners and always know what is relevant for them. Using modern digital PR tools, you can identify and address them precisely. Consider demographic data, reach and content focus. It is equally important to consider the right time - because the right timing in life is everything.

This is why you should take advantage of the new opportunities now: If you act now, you will be present in the future.

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