Communication post COVID-19: what is the 'next normal'?

EuropCom webinar | 29 June 2020 | 11:30

with Stijn Pieters and Dr. Hugo Marynissen
PM • Risk Crisis Change
Learning from a pandemic while preparing for global recession: the political edition by Pieters & Marynissen

The vital importance of crisis communications in how to cope with wicked problems through transdisciplinary collaboration.
Just sit back and relax, it will be fun.
Really.
Why crisis communications is important?

**POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS**
- Putting forward problem
- Communicate position
- Persuade to adopt policy
- Attack/Defend policies

Sense – analyse/categorize – respond
Probe – sense – respond

**CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS**
- Express emotional involvement
- Notice emotions of public
- Analyse and define uncertainty
- Take away uncertainty by:
  -- Communicate unambiguously
  -- Reluctance to simplify
  -- Remain consistent (but agile)

Act - Sense - Respond
The crisis cycle

1. Plan
2. Incubation Period
3. Precipitating event
4. Onset of the crisis
5. Rescue & salvage
6. Cultural readjustment

Turner, 1978
Lauder & Pieters, 2019
Why politicians lose their job over crisis communications?

Window of recovery phase: repeating pattern + evocative + emo/ethics
thus: Trust

Crisis phase (Hell / Recovery): failing leadership expressed by partners
thus: Trust

Adjusting phase: not the right manager for the adjusted objectives
thus: Trust
Summary

Do we live in an ordered world where exceptionally things become chaotic?

(Option 1)

(OR)

Do we live in a chaotic world where we manage to create a few oases of order?

(Option 2)
Politicians are ‘crisis managers’. What is that?

Tame problems need a rational power.
A manager providing *the right process*.

Critical problems need a coercive power.
A commander providing *the answer*.

Wicked problems need an emotional power.
A leader asking *the right question*.
It’s a wicked problem…
YOUR PLAN.

REALITY.
... in a chaotic universe
PM’s catalytic framework for chaos
Ask the right questions

Marynissen & Lauder, 2018
Focus on structure

Governance

Management

Operations

Communication

CoR
DIGITAL MASTERCLASSES

Pieters & Marynissen, 2017
CoR
DIGITAL MASTERCLASSES

Pre crisis network
20/01-01/03
17 issues
28 actors
89 ties

Pre lock down network
02/03-15/03
44 issues
32 actors
146 ties

Lock down network
16/03-29/03
195 issues
57 actors
482 ties

Crisis network
30/03-12/04
97 issues
53 actors
416 ties

van den Oord, et al. 2020
The power of the network in a wicked problem

Anticipatory
- 1. Complicated
- 4. Wicked

Reactive
- 2. Simple
- 3. Compound

Monodisciplinary
Trans-disciplinary

Cambré, Marynissen & Van Hootegem, 2020
Identify the needs and wants of the network
3 stages of perception analysis

Collecting data

Analyzeing Data

Preparing advice

Bruggemans & Van Achte, 2018
How we identify patterns & structure in a vast amount of unstructured, raw data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN Identify</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Sense making</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Findings</td>
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<th>OUT Interact</th>
<th>“We Know”</th>
<th>“We Do”</th>
<th>“We Care”</th>
<th>“We’ll Be Back”</th>
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- **IN** Identify: Information, Behaviour, Sense making, Expectations
- **OUT** Interact: “We Know”, “We Do”, “We Care”, “We’ll Be Back”
- Facts and figures
- Actions required: encouraged, discouraged
- Emotions
- Further communication

Marynissen et al, 2018; 2020
Example: Students analysis NCCN

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<tr>
<th>Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We're almost at the peak of the epidemic</td>
<td>FUTURE. Youth expect a lot from upcoming press conference</td>
<td>😞😞😞 - Measures are having a big impact on mental state: lockdown blues</td>
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<td>What's the use of wearing mouth masks and gloves in a supermarket?</td>
<td>NEWS CONSUMPTION - interest in news is dropping. Latest updates are not coming through. Habituation around mortality rates</td>
<td>😊confidence in government and experts drops every day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will we be able to graduate this year? What with our summer plans? Travel? Festivals?</td>
<td>CREATIVITY - young people are being creative with measures, pushing the limits</td>
<td>😞 ECONOMY - Fear of not being able to find a job after graduating</td>
</tr>
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<td>+ Add another card</td>
<td>CIVIC CITIZENSHIP - Helping out others - urge others to follow up on measures</td>
<td>😞 😞 AVERSION / FEAR POLICE - Fines for misconduct are excessive, too much arbitrariness</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>😞 DISAPPOINTED - in communication about festivals: &quot;what are we with a maybe&quot;</td>
</tr>
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+ Add another card

+ Add another card
**Key Take-Aways**

1. Crisis communications is about acting, sensing and responding meaning putting yourselves in a vulnerable position ready to earn **trust**.

2. Dealing with wicked problems in a chaotic universe working against you is about asking **the right questions** and governing your transdisciplinary **network** of networks.

3. To know your network you need data. By analysing this data you generate crisis intelligence. Decision makers need **more intelligence and less data**.
Thank you for watching!

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