

# *Strategic crisis communication. Lessons from Covid-19 pandemia*

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## ■ SPEAKERS



**Prof. Marco Bardus, Ph.D., American University of Beirut**  
“Risk Communication and Community engagement (RCCE) for COVID-19”



**Prof. Manuel Chavez, Michigan State University,**  
“COVID-19 Pandemic and the Absence of Strategic Communication in the United States”

## ■ SPEAKERS



**Prof. Angeles Moreno, Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid**  
“Euprera Com-Covid Project” (pre-recorded video)

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## ■ DEFINITION OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

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- The practice of deliberate and purposive communication a communication agent enacts in the public sphere on behalf of a communicative entity to reach set goals.
- The ultimate aim of strategic communication is to maintain a healthy reputation for the communicative entity in the public sphere.
- Strategic communication is said to examine how organizations use communication purposefully to fulfill their mission.

DEFINITION BY HOLTHAUSEN AND ZERFASS (2014)



## COVID-19 IS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

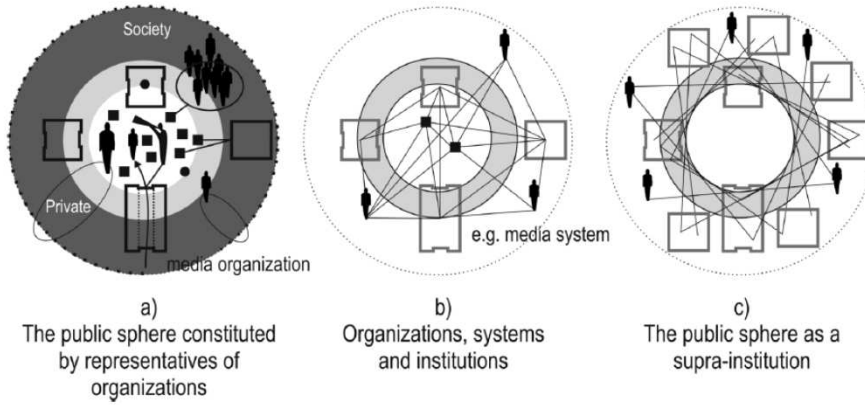
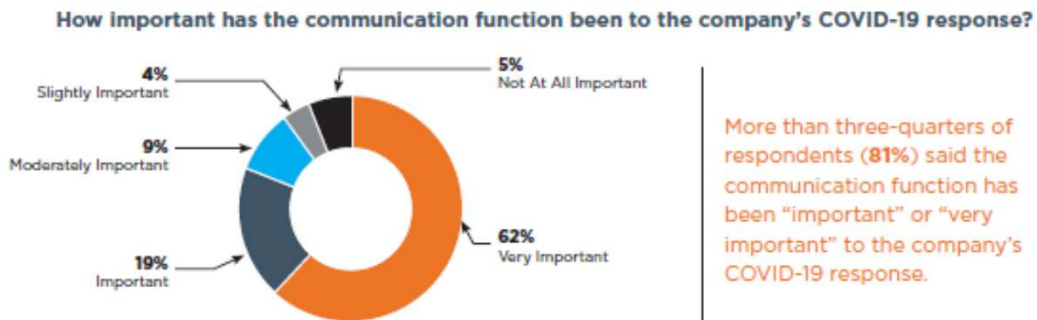


FIGURE 3 The public sphere.

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND COVID-19



Institute for PR (2020) 300 communication executives and senior leaders

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND COVID-19

### Who should be the primary communicator about COVID-19 within the organization?

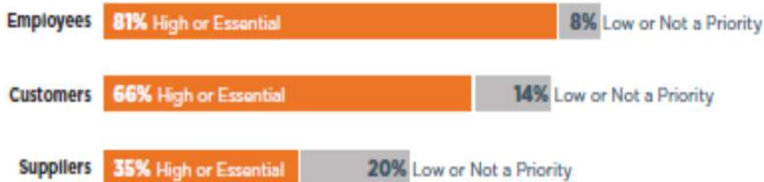
Nearly half (**49%**) of communication executives said the CEO should be the primary communicator, even though a few noted this may be contextual. After the CEO, significantly fewer respondents noted other C-suite executives should be primarily responsible for communicating: CCO (**12%**), CHRO (**10%**), and COO (**8%**).

CEO	49%
CCO	12%
Other	11%
CHRO	10%
COO	8%
Another C-suite Executive	4%
Lower-level Staff	3%
Outside Consultant	1%
CMO	0.8%

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND COVID-19

### How much of a priority is the communication function placing on communication to specific stakeholders?



Communicating to employees on COVID-19 was a “high” or “essential” priority to the communication function for **81%** of respondents, versus **66%** for customers and **35%** for suppliers. Some **20%** said communicating to suppliers was a “low priority” or “not a priority.”

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## ■ STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND COVID-19

### What is the state of the company's crisis communication plan?

We have made good progress on updates.....	32%
Plans have been fully updated.....	23%
We have not updated our plans, but we will be updating them .....	11%
We do not have a crisis communication plan.....	10%
We have not updated our plans nor do we have plans to do so.....	8%
I don't know.....	6%
We have made little progress on the update.....	5%
Others.....	4%

Communication executives differed on the status of updating their crisis plans with nearly one-third (32%) reporting making good progress on the updates. 23% said their plans had been fully updated. 10% did not have a crisis communication plan, and 13% had either not updated and would not, or had made little progress.

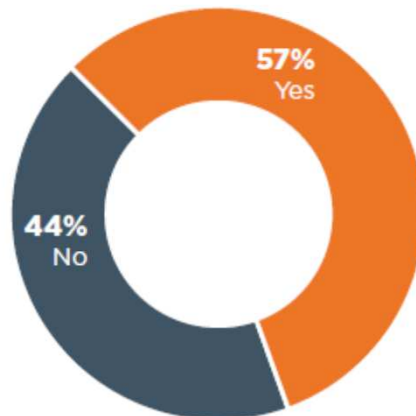
<sup>9</sup> Institute for PR (2020) 300 communication executives and senior leaders



## ■ STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND COVID-19

### Does your company's crisis communication plan specifically address an infectious disease outbreak?

More than half of respondents (57%) said their crisis communication plan specifically covers an infectious disease outbreak, while 44% said it did not.



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