Long Beach Water

• Retail water agency serving Long Beach residents and businesses

• Drinking water provider and wastewater collector

• Part of umbrella of City of Long Beach
  • Allows us to participate in the Joint Information Center
COVID-19 Crisis

• Long Beach Water made a series of announcements in response

• Used crisis communications best practices to manage efforts

• Proactive, and in some ways, reactive

• Also lessons learned along the way

• Trust was key factor in how we communicated
1. Suspension of water shut offs for non-payment
   • Messaging partnership with Mayor
   • Best practice: Show empathy for your customer base
Announcements

2. Tap water is safe to drink
   • Tool – social media
     • Why? Most people are getting quick news from feeds

   • Best practice: Get message out early and often
New Crisis: Toilet paper in short supply, wipes block pipes

- Tools – video on water quality (still important and timely), now adding on extra layer

- Best practice: Use credible spokesperson
Partnership Opportunities

Joint water quality statement with regional partners (MWD + WRD)
  • Advantages: bigger audience and bigger ad budgets

City’s Joint Information Center (JIC)
  • All messaging on COVID-19 coming from this center

Best practice: Partner with who you can to create unified messaging
Lessons Learned

Posted a graphic on shutoff suspension that caused panic about turning water off to entire city

• Best practice: Make communication simple and clear that doesn’t create fear
Communications and Engagement survey

- 76% see LBWD as a trusted source of info
- 76% moderately to strongly agreed they found LBWD trustworthy

- With people staying at home, they are engaging in more online surveys

- Recommend to put out surveys to your customers
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