



Real World Futures



Business *unusual*: Communicating and trusting in a COVID-19 world

Welcome

real world **futures**

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Welcome

Business *unusual*: Communicating and trusting in a COVID-19 world

In a COVID-19 world, we face “business *unusual*” through constant change and uncertainty. **In these times, trust matters.**

Yet, communicating and leading in this time can also bring opportunities for brave choices for our employees and other stakeholders. Sometimes we get the timing just right and sometimes, we struggle to navigate the process.

This short webinar shares evidence-based, good practice principles for communicating crisis narratives to maintain trust or re-orient for trust.



Your expert Real World Futures team



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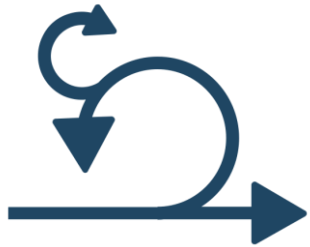


Associate Professor Amisha Mehta

What is your anchor and navigation point?

- Trustworthiness comprises competence, other-orientation, and integrity. When things go wrong:
 - you can only arrest a fall in trust with an **apology**. Other responses further reduce organisational trust.
 - your organisation's response affects **trust in your industry**, and **acceptance** of issues or products.

Mehta et al., 2020



Seed for trust in
your communication
and actions.

Balance care and
responsibility.

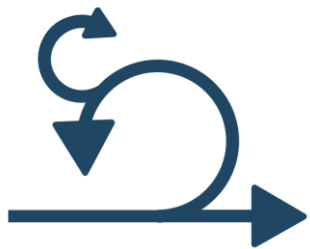
Think both within
and beyond your
organisation.

What is your organisation's story and what are others' stories?

- Narratives of blame, renewal, hero and victim compete and converge
 - Renewal: Built on communicative action, future-focused, leader-led, involves people, organic, comprises stories and images
 - (Return to) Blame: Who and what were at fault.

Seeger & Sellnow, 2016

- Map out the crisis phases. It's a long response for all but recovery may look different. But don't plan too far ahead.



Think in words and images. How do you take responsibility? Is your justification believable?

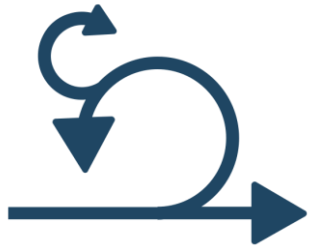
Listen to other narratives. Are you the hero, victim, or follower? How can you engage? What will you avoid?

What's in your back pocket? How can you escalate?

Decision-making under stress

- Continuous change and stress affects decision-making
 - Business leaders can struggle to identify discrete decision alternatives during simulated crisis
 - Systematic risk judgements can be impaired
 - Most businesses lack business continuity plans, disaster response plans, or crisis plans

Mehta et al., 2014, 2015



We are learning every day. You'll make mistakes. Seek feedback and re-set.

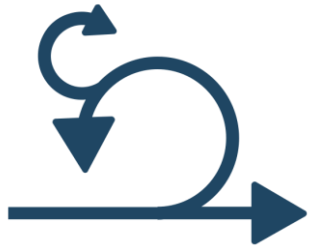
Force yourself to identify discrete decision alternatives—ask others to help.

Share the rationale behind your decision. It helps others decide and comply (Liu & Kim, 2011).

Words. Structure. Gestures. They all matter.

- Effective risk communication comprises consistent, clear and specific information about the source, context, hazard, location, actions, and timing
 - Action-oriented headings + colour blocked-text + rationales perform
 - Be specific and clear (e.g., not *social distancing* but *keep 1.5m away*)
 - Order and structure your content with headings
- People will validate, confirm, or verify information so provide alternative sources
- Encourage or support self-efficacy and confidence

Dootson et al, 2019; Greer et al., 2020, Mehta et al., 2017



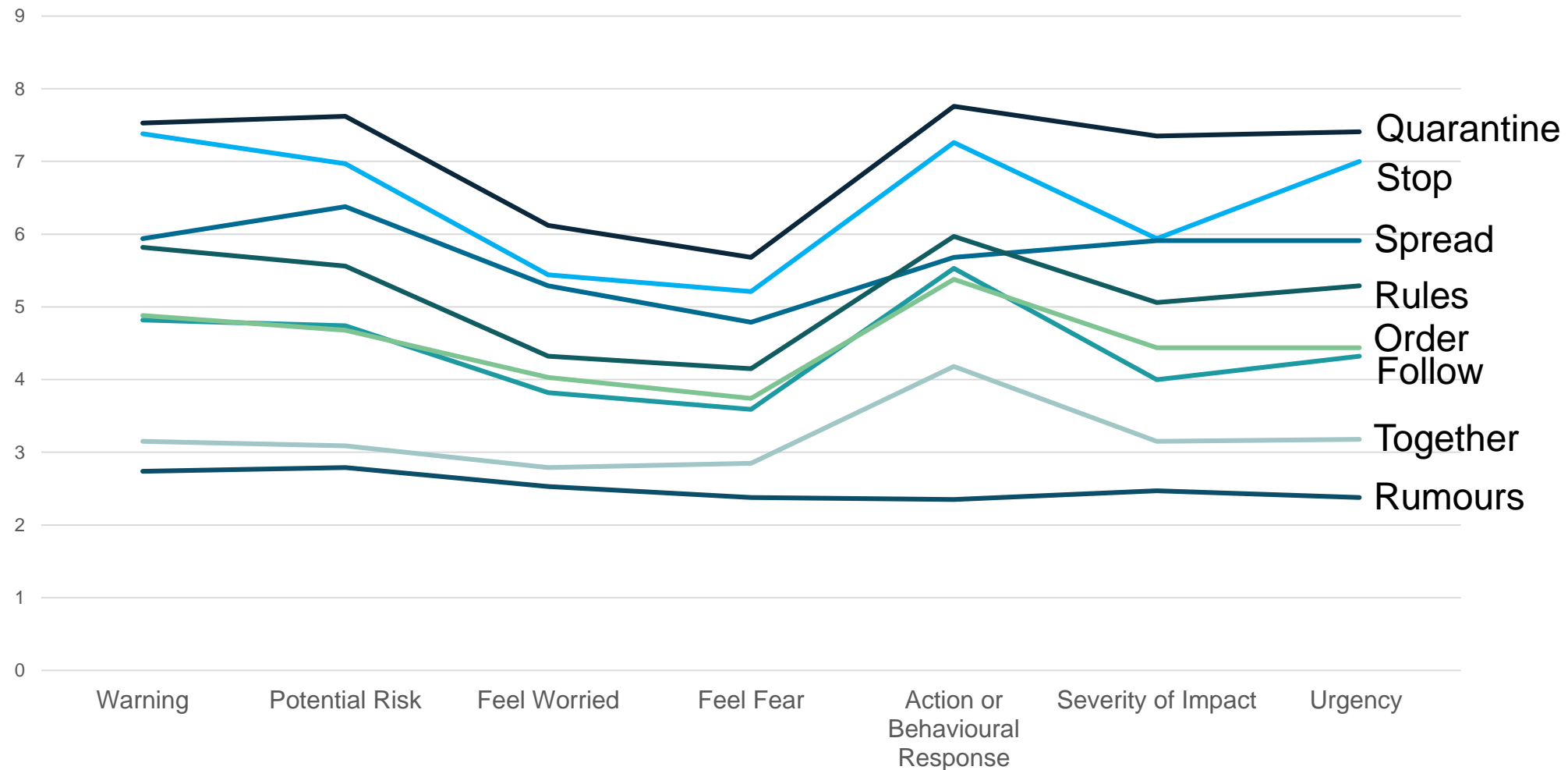
Use engaging or action-oriented headings or subject lines.

Keep your messages short, regular, and structured.

Model the behaviours you want to see and talk about their ease.

What words signal for COVID-19

- Misinformation about COVID-19 is the new enemy—WHO, 28 March 2020





Questions?

For more information, please get in touch.



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Thank You

See you at our next Real World Futures event

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