DISASTER COMMUNICATION TIPS FROM A HEALTHCARE EXPERT

HOW ONE CONTENT LEAD RESPONDS TO LOCAL AND GLOBAL EMERGENCIES

As part of our partnerships, the Lionbridge team often comes across customers with extensive knowledge in niche areas. With the spread of COVID-19 on everyone's minds, we're sharing some of the wisdom our network has accumulated about disaster responsiveness. Here's what the content lead at a large healthcare company had to say.

1 HOW DOES CRISIS MANAGEMENT WORK AT YOUR COMPANY?

Our company has always had a crisis management team to address emergencies from the employee perspective. Over time, our group's role evolved, and we became more involved in messaging, especially for client-facing communications.

2 WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT YOUR COMPANY'S APPROACH?

We made a decision to post externally about a crisis only if we can offer something of value to those affected. When natural disasters hit, for example, we can loosen certain requirements to accelerate our clients' access to resources after being displaced.

3 WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR COMPANIES AS THEY NAVIGATE RESPONSES TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK?

First off, simplify. Find out ahead of time who has the final sign-off so you're not sending drafts around and around. We used to have a different phone number for every crisis we were responding to, but that became too much to manage for both our clients and our employees. Now we have one streamlined number.

Second, localize wherever you can. Our customer portal can access zip codes, which means we can include specialized information for people hardest hit by an infectious disease, a mass shooting, a natural disaster, etc. This also lets us provide information in a customer's first language; we offer Spanish translations according to location and preference.

Third, always be ready to change. Our response to COVID-19 changed extremely rapidly as the disease went from a mostly overseas phenomenon to one in the continental United States. My team has direct edit access to a detailed resource center, so we can make updates without disturbing the rest of our main website. These events are unpredictable; we need to be flexible in our responses. We want to be proactive, not reactive.