

Don't Sprint a Marathon:

Corporate Communications for a Shifting Policy Landscape

■ STATE OF PLAY

Six months into President Donald Trump's second administration, and the policy landscape is still shifting beneath our feet. From sweeping tariff and tax policies to fluid federal funding priorities and evolving rules around energy and infrastructure, organizations are navigating rapid change with real-world implications. This environment, defined by intensity as well as speed, has given rise to a public discourse that can shift sharply in tone and focus overnight.

With these changes come communications challenges every bit as complex and consequential as the policy swings driving them. Effective strategies during these uncertain times must be as durable as they are agile—designed not just to respond in the moment, but to steer your organization through sustained volatility.

Resist the pull of reactive messaging. While our clients consider how they position themselves and their brands under the current administration, we advise taking a measured and tempered communications approach that will strategically achieve long-term goals. Recognize that there is signal and noise and it is not always clear in the moment which is which.

Get Ready-Set-Go. Although you should be measured in your immediate response, we don't advise waiting before you start thinking about how to message your mission and value proposition. Strategize now on how your work aligns with the priorities coming out of Washington D.C., and gather the evidence to demonstrate it. Activate your network of relationships – like trade associations and your members of Congress – to get a seat at the table.

While events happen quickly, keep in mind this is a marathon, not a sprint. There will continue to be orders, actions, and announcements that foment immense uncertainty. To support you, we've created this brief playbook designed to help establish a strong foundational strategy—one that can adapt and grow with your brand over the coming months. It includes key data points and messaging frameworks your organization can rely on during uncertain times.





Taking the time to understand the impact of proposed changes and developing a thoughtful response that leaves politics out of the message, protects you from making premature conclusions without knowing the full set of facts, or from needing to walk back statements.

ELIZABETH FAWCETT
Associate Vice President, Public Affairs
// RH Strategic



RAFFETTO HERMAN
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

WASHINGTON D.C.
1301 K St. NW, Ste. 220 West
Washington, D.C. 20005

SEATTLE
601 Union St., Ste. 2404
Seattle, WA, 98101

www.rhstrategic.com



■ THE 1-2-3 PLAYBOOK

1. Own Your Message.

Avoid choosing sides. Keep politics out of responses, indicate a desire to wait and see what is signal and what is noise, and commit to helping decisionmakers be fully informed.

Find points of alignment with the Administration's agenda. Ensure that your mission and the data that demonstrates success (i.e. jobs numbers or economic contribution) is seen as aligned with at least some points of the agenda.

Be transparent and authentic about your fact-finding process. Be measured and patient in communications with internal and external stakeholders as federal guidelines evolve. Take the position that there are still many unknowns, and the situation is fluid.

Prepare reactive statements. Prepare a media holding statement to address reporter inquiries, along with Q&A documents/key messages for customers, employees, and prospects to support sales and customer service teams. Remember questions about political positions are some of the most difficult questions and will be asked, so be prepared to block and bridge.

2. Ready the Team for the Long-term.

Assemble a tiger team. Bring together members from customer relations, corporate communications, legal, government affairs and human resources to assess the latest federal guidelines and adjust response strategies. Let them know they are on point for the duration, as more needs will arise.

Don't get comfortable. Assume all private communication can be made public.

Audit messaging. Assess your marketing materials (website, email blasts, social media channels, press releases, etc.) for any messaging and data points that would conflict with the latest federal guidance. Adjust as appropriate for your organization (and be prepared to answer questions about why the change was made).

Control the chatter. Inform internal team on who and where to go for the latest information on federal guidance and the impact on your organization. Remind employees about social media policies to maintain control of brand communications and avoid unintentional associations.

Be aware of the impact. Understand your company's current policies, how they are communicated externally and how administrative actions may impact these policies. Be clear and confident with your stance and ready for questions.

3. Activate Your Ecosystem.

Engage your partners. Open lines of communication with your trade associations, coalitions, and Congressional delegation to request participation in discussions and to serve as a resource. Arm them with facts and data that demonstrate the important value your organization is delivering, and in ways that are aligned with political priorities, such as job growth and domestic economic activity.

Don't unnecessarily exhaust your energy sprinting— be prepared for the marathon ahead. RH Strategic will continue to support and advise you along the way.