

# Don't Sprint a Marathon:

## Corporate Communications for a New Administration

JANUARY 31, 2025

### ■ STATE OF PLAY

The past weeks have felt like a series of breathless sprints to navigate sudden and massive potential changes across society and the economy, stemming from consequential orders from Washington, D.C. As the new Trump administration reveals its plans and intentions - particularly regarding tariffs, DEI programs, and federal funding freezes - there is wide-ranging uncertainty about the impacts, and how to address them. No one wants to exacerbate the problem or become a target, yet without speaking up it feels like valuable business models are at risk and critical programs are on the chopping block.

**This Is Just the Beginning.** While our clients consider how they position themselves and their brands under this new 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 fully 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. Begin strategizing 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, your members of Congress – to get a seat at the table.

**While events are happening quickly,** keep in mind this is actually a marathon. 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 (one 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](http://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 is 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 for 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— start preparing for the marathon ahead. RH Strategic will continue to support and advise you along the way.*