

## Managing Your PAC in Uncertain Times

PAC professionals often have to adjust their communication and solicitation strategies during times of organizational change. Navigating through uncertain economic times or a public health crisis, such as COVID-19, requires a similar adjustment in PAC fundraising and outreach.

Here are tips for guiding your PAC through uncertainty.

### **Don't be afraid to pause fundraising**

Every organization will be impacted by uncertainty or crises in different ways. As a first step, take stock of your internal environment, including any communications or policies the organization has put in place.

- Adopt similar language and tone as your corporate or association communications. Present a united front with the larger organization when communicating to your audience.
- Meet with your PAC board, government affairs team and other key stakeholders to determine a course of action, especially if preparing to launch a PAC campaign or other activities already underway. Each organization may come to different conclusions on how to proceed, but it's important to have consensus on the approach.
- Trust your gut. Taking a break or pausing solicitations and other communications is always an option. If it doesn't feel like an appropriate time to solicit, it most likely isn't.

### **Manage expectations and re-evaluate your goals**

In challenging and unprecedented times like the COVID-19 public health crisis, PAC and advocacy goals will likely be impacted. Make sure to communicate regularly with your PAC board and governance structures to manage their expectations and adjust programmatic goals as early as possible. Many organizations are facing travel restrictions, canceled meetings and other shifts that significantly impact PAC activities. Use the time to focus on other opportunities.

- Consider shifting fundraising or monetary goals to engagement or communications efforts.
- If you find yourself with extra time, focus on the to-do list items you rarely get to — data clean-up, content creation through free online tools such as Canva, etc.
- Think outside the box.
  - Are there opportunities to engage donors and communicate virtually within your organization?
  - Focus on related non-fundraising projects, such as developing your PAC ambassadors or peer program, providing training materials and updating collateral to better position your PAC for when activities resume.

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- Consider donating unused PAC match funds to support pandemic relief efforts.
- Promote your PAC charitable match program as a way employees can double their impact.
  - Depending on the structure of your match program, remind participants they can select any charitable cause of their choice, including those supporting relief efforts.
- Recreate your content calendar and PAC plan to keep yourself on track. Decide what's important to reschedule, what activities can be skipped, the timing of communications and more. Revisiting your plan will help maintain accountability as well as reprioritize key efforts.

### **Promote good government and show appreciation**

When appropriate, shift PAC communications to valuable grassroots or advocacy information, such as GOTV resources and political education. It's a good time to focus on the basics of political involvement.

- Be a resource to members and employees; talk about the postponed primary dates and other GOTV communications, provide education on current events and potential implications for the industry.
- Cater your messaging to an "all in this together" approach
- Thank your PAC members and show your appreciation for your broader PAC community.

Need ideas, sample resources or a virtual speaker? The Public Affairs Council has you covered. Contact us at [membership@pac.org](mailto:membership@pac.org) to let us know how we can support you and your PAC programs.

Tell us what you're doing! Continue the conversation, share best practices and how you are approaching your PAC activities in this current environment at **Council Connect**, our members-only, online community platform. Access **Council Connect** by visiting [community.pac.org](http://community.pac.org).