

OneOcean Communication Top Ten Tips

The COVID-19 pandemic has not changed what we are working towards for the ocean, but it has necessarily changed the way that we communicate. Through weekly (and subsequently fortnightly) legacy and social media monitoring, we have regularly provided the OneOcean flotilla with recommendations on how to communicate sensitively and effectively in this period. Although some of our guidance has changed in response to the shifting communications landscape, some key recommendations hold true. These are summarised below.

1. **Connectivity is key** Connection – to each other and the planet – has been a consistent theme throughout the pandemic. We recommend continually emphasising this connection in communications. As we emerge from lockdown, we need to do things differently to achieve a better relationship with the natural world and with each other.
2. **Focus on human wellbeing** Human-centric communication is effective in this period. The ocean is important because it is vital for human wellbeing. We are protecting the ocean for the sake of humankind and the wellbeing of the global population – in terms of food security, jobs, oxygen, climate stability, leisure, mental health benefits etc. Fairness is central to this. In our work to protect the ocean/planet, we are working towards this shared goal of a just and more equitable world for all.
3. **Nature over environment** During this period ‘nature’ has carried more emotional resonance than environment. Use the language of nature where possible as people appear to relate to this more.
4. **Keep the ocean relevant** The ocean is important, but we can’t expect everyone to understand why. Make it clear how the ocean links to current topics (the pandemic, wellbeing, economic recovery) to keep it relevant. Don’t expect audiences to be able to make that leap without you.
5. **Avoid environmental opportunism** Do not use the language of opportunity around the pandemic as it creates backlash and disconnect. COVID-19 is a crisis and a tragedy. We may choose to use this moment to reflect and do better, but that is not a silver-lining or a golden chance.
6. **Beware of inadvertently excluding the ocean through green terminology** In discussions around economic recovery, it can be easy to slip into use of the word ‘green’ as shorthand for environmental protection, e.g. ‘green recovery’. However, this can inadvertently exclude ‘blue’ and the ocean from consideration.
7. **Actively resist the decoupling of people and planet** Some economic arguments decouple the wellbeing of the people and the planet by positing that what is good for humans (and short-term economic recovery) is not compatible with what is good for the planet. Do not fall

into using this dichotomy. We are not faced with a choice between the two. Place nature at the heart of recovery conversations.

8. This is not a competition of crises It is unhelpful to compare the size/scale of risk presented by environmental degradation to that of COVID-19, as it simply comes across as insensitive. These are both connected crises we need to address.

9. Be authentic In many ways, the pandemic has been a humanising experience. There is value and cut through in authentic, personal voices at the moment. Talk about why the ocean is vital to the planet, but do not shy away from talking about why it matters to you personally too.

10. A shared voice is a powerful voice We are stronger together than as individuals. As an ocean community, we need to align around key messages and asks to ensure progress for ocean protection continues in these difficult times.