



TOP 5 INSIGHTS FOR **RESILIENCE, TEAMWORK, & SERVICE** IN THE TIME OF COVID

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

5 PRACTICAL
TIPS TO BUILD
A **PANDEMIC-
RESILIENT**
ORGANIZATION

3 TOOLS TO
**FINE TUNE YOUR
ADVOCACY**
BEFORE THE 2020
ELECTION!

REGISTER!
EDUCATE!
VOTE! USE *YOUR*
POWER! **REV UP!**

5 PRACTICAL TIPS TO BUILD A PANDEMIC-RESILIENT ORGANIZATION



Is your organization pandemic-resilient? Just like you, it's a question we at ACS grappled with in March.

We felt confident in some of the pieces we had in place: robust work-at-home structure and workflows tested since our inception in 2004 and bench strength of the best employees whom are experienced working virtually and our subcontractors with the same skills and with whom we've partnered with for years.



We all, however, faced unforeseen challenges: the impact of social isolation on our team's wellness, pushing endurance and concentration on virtual calls to new limits, interruptions from dogs, cats, spouses and children, and how to foster relationships with no in-person face time.



Six months into a continuously evolving way of living and working, we reflect on what's worked for us, with the hope that some of this will help you, too.

Here are the top 5 tools, tips and tricks we've relied on to thrive through the pandemic. These are simple and easy to put into action.

5 PRACTICAL TIPS TO BUILD A PANDEMIC-RESILIENT ORGANIZATION

1

Adjusting the pace

Reset expectations for your team. Even if your team is high performing by nature, you can't expect them to operate on all cylinders 40+ hours a week on the phone or virtually. Here are a few things we've done to keep our team motivated:

COMPRESSED HOURS

We have contracted our hours and close early on Fridays but have kept salaries consistent. This gives our team members the flexibility to tend to pets, manage childcare issues, or just get out of the house – without the added stress of juggling work schedules.

INCREASE TIME OFF

We've given our team more vacation time, so they can have mental health days and give us their best when they're present.

GIVE BONUSES OR GIFTS OF APPRECIATION

In July, we gave everyone bonuses because we know how diligent they've been working to keep a high standard of client work. We've sent surprise snack boxes too. Some firms retract resources during an economic downturn; we double down what we invest in our people.

HAVE A LAUGH

Our team shares memes, pet photos or snaps of their outdoor adventures. A weekly Zoom or Microsoft Teams meeting among staff without the bosses gives the team an opportunity to connect and unwind. To try and create a sense of normalcy, we've scheduled team happy hours as well.



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2

Leading with grace

Reset expectations for your clients, too. We've had to become more flexible and nimbler in our work.

BUILD REASONABLE TIMELINES

Now, our project timelines account for the clients' other priorities and build in time they might need to gather information from other partners. Some projects have stalled or are much slower. Others are going at warp speed. Plan on timelines that are not your own or are not ideal.

ACCEPT REASONABLE PROGRESS

Some days, a success might be if we get only a part of what we need from a client to move a project forward, and we accept it with grace and a "thank you." Focusing on forward progress lowers the stress level and helps everyone feel accomplished about a project.

BUILD IN BREAKS

If we are facilitating a meeting virtually, we build in more breaks than we would for an in-person session. We have discovered this helps hold the audience's attention.

RECOGNIZE WE'RE ALL HUMAN

There are some days when clients aren't available because of illness or they've hit a mental roadblock. And no one bats an eye or feels guilty anymore when a pet, family member or child interrupts a video meeting. This flexibility reinforces and elevates the human connection and sense of community that we are all in this together.



5 PRACTICAL TIPS TO BUILD A PANDEMIC-RESILIENT ORGANIZATION

3

Dedicating the space

Aside from giving everyone the mental space they need to thrive, physical space is critical, too. Prior to COVID-19, we had been diligent about making sure our team members had dedicated space to work and with robust equipment. When one of our employees had non-stop construction across the street from her house, we offered to pay rent for temporary office space. We provide each team member with:

UPDATED EQUIPMENT:

computer, external screens, mobile phones and headphones

LANDLINES AT HOME IN CASE CELL TOWERS GO DOWN

PORTABLE HOT SPOTS

These investments have served us well, because our team had the tools to thrive in a full-time work-at-home environment.

4

Learning to embrace tech

As soon as the pandemic hit the U.S., Zoom was everywhere! In fact, the firm's growth jumped 30-fold in April alone. Many of our clients had never used it before. We needed to adapt – quickly.

TAKE TURNS RESEARCHING NEW SOLUTIONS

Each month, one employee researches and demos a new technology tool to the team. We evaluate whether it would be good for ACS and/or for clients.



5 PRACTICAL TIPS TO BUILD A PANDEMIC-RESILIENT ORGANIZATION

Right now, we really love [*Jamboard*](#), an interactive whiteboard collaboration tool from Google.

SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE

Our role has evolved to teaching our clients how to use virtual tools or setting up software for them.

ADJUST YOUR SERVICE OFFERINGS

We had to quickly learn how to conduct media interviews and roundtables virtually instead of in-person. Now, we're going to share this knowledge through webinars so all clients can benefit. Want to know more just let us know!

5

Rethinking how to nurture your client base

Our business is built on relationships, but we haven't seen most of our clients in person since March! Human connection is more important – and wanted – than ever.

MORE CONTACT

We deepen our human connection with our clients through more touchpoints. At least half of every workday is dedicated to checking in with clients on the phone or through Zoom, Google Hangout, Microsoft Teams, FaceTime or whatever way they want. In some cases, we actually speak more often than before the pandemic.

ASK ABOUT THEIR LIVES

Virtual meetings aren't the same as grabbing a cup of coffee, but it's still important to make time for chit chat to get to know what's happening in clients' personal lives and to foster deeper connections.

BREAK THE ICE

One of our team members starts client meetings with a funny story to put everyone at ease.



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OTHERS WILL LEAN ON YOU

Clients are stressed and, many days, overwhelmed. Don't be surprised if they seek your advice and are vulnerable in ways they've not been before and be prepared to lend an ear. The outcome will be better for everyone.

BONUS

Internally, each ACS team member has reached out to another and asked for help...saying more than once

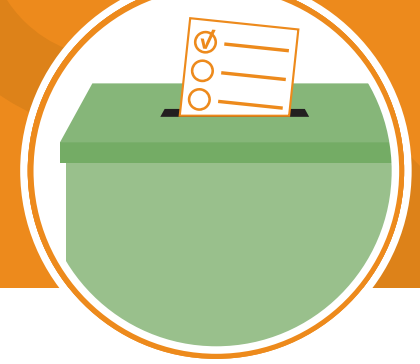
“ I'M STUCK, I NEED HELP, I'M NOT SURE HOW
TO NAVIGATE THIS WITHOUT YOUR INSIGHT. ”

This was always what we did, but asking for help more often has spurred even greater trust and growth.

Do you have new ways of working that have helped your organization become pandemic-resilient? Share them with morgan@advocacyandcommunication.org, and we will feature your tips, tricks and tools in an upcoming newsletter.



3 TOOLS TO FINE TUNE YOUR ADVOCACY BEFORE THE 2020 ELECTION!



With so much at stake during the 2020 General Election, it's time to take stock of your advocacy skills.

Are you running on all cylinders? Could your electoral advocacy strategy use a tune up? We've refined three field-tested ACS tools to help you turn your passion into action.



Do's and Don'ts of Electoral Advocacy

We cover what 501(c)(3)s are permitted to do regarding election advocacy, including advocating for or against ballot measures, interacting with candidates/legislators, rules for staff participation, and more!



Guide to Developing a Successful Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Program for 501(c)(3)s

Nonprofits are well positioned to leverage their trusted role in the community and their leadership, staff, volunteers, clients and supporters to promote nonpartisan voting and related activities before and on Election Day. This guide offers step-by-step instructions for creating and implementing a successful Get Out the Vote (GOTV) effort, as well as a sample script for voter engagement and frequently asked voter questions.



501(c)(3) Advocacy Basics: Lobbying 101

All 501(c)(3) public charities are legally permitted to lobby, but there are some rules to follow. We cover direct lobbying, grassroots lobbying, how much your organization can spend on lobbying activities and more!

View and download our tools at

<https://www.advocacyandcommunication.org/tools-resources/>

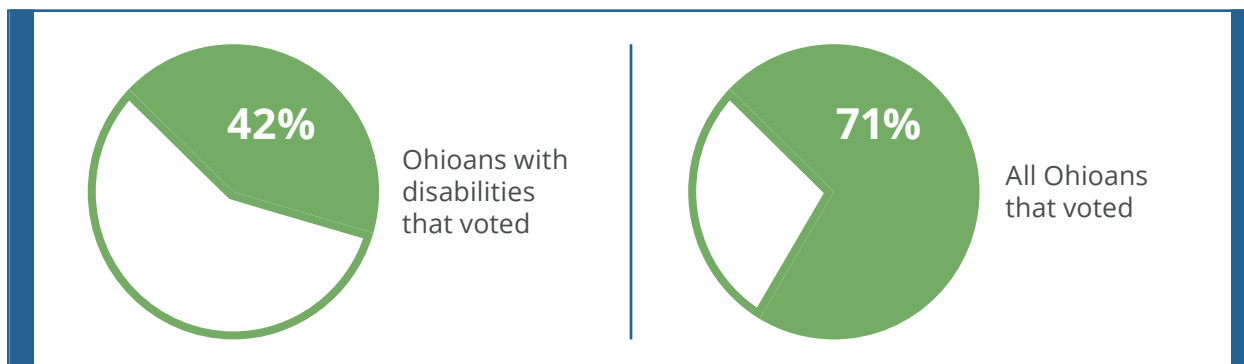


REGISTER! EDUCATE! VOTE! USE *YOUR* POWER! **REV UP!**

OCALI inspires change and promotes access to opportunities for people with disabilities by informing public policy and developing and deploying practices grounded in linking research to real life. **Learn more at ocali.org.**



Did you know that only 42.4% of Ohioans with disabilities voted in the 2016 election...compared to 71% of all voters?



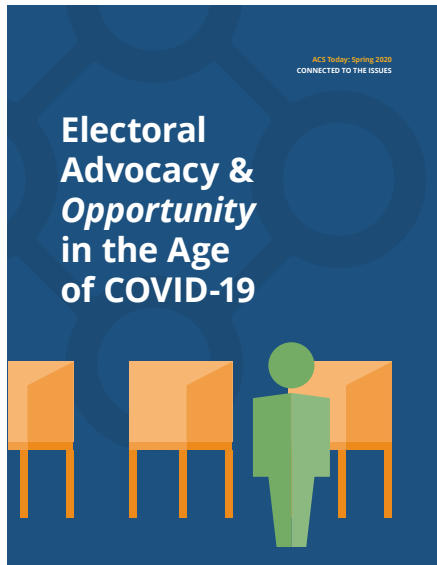
If Americans with disabilities voted at the same rate as people without disabilities, there would be 2.2 million more voters!

Now is the time to ensure people with disabilities register to vote and exercise that right. The REV UP Campaign, launched by the [American Association of People with Disabilities \(AAPD\)](#) in 2016, is a nonpartisan initiative that coordinates with national, state, and local disability organizations to increase the political power of the disability community, while also engaging candidates and the media on disability issues. The Campaign focuses on voter registration, education, access, and engagement. REV UP stands for Register! Educate! Vote! Use your Power!

OCALI has created a [one-page overview](#) that includes facts and other resources that you can use to ensure your voice is heard to help others do the same!

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2020 NEWSLETTER



WANT MORE?

Want to learn how communication, strategy development or advocacy can move your organization forward?

Need an expert for training sessions or conference presentations?

Contact one of our team members. Call toll free at **1-877-372-0166** or [visit our website](#).

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