

# Prepare, Share, Update and Engage: A Crisis Communications Strategy for Olympic Gold



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Would you sacrifice your chance at taking home Olympic Gold, if you knew the possibility existed you might get infected with a virus? I think a survey of Olympic athletes would reveal they'd take the chance, however, that doesn't diminish concerns the Olympic Committee may have about poor attendance at the 2016 Games due to the concentration of the [Zika Virus](#) in Rio. From a [crisis communications](#) perspective the Olympic Committee has a unique opportunity to get in the forefront of this issue. I'd suggest a strategy of **Prepare, Share, Update and Engage**.

## **Prepare:**

Develop a section on the website dedicated to information about the virus. The goal of the site section is to keep people informed and calm. On the site visitors should be able to access a downloadable awareness and action kit. The kit should take a "feel good tone," using language that can be translated with ease to provide information about the virus, preventative measures and what athletes and visitors can expect in Rio. There should be calls to action, Get Your Kit Today! In addition, each person that purchases a ticket to the games should be taken to a link to download the kit.

**Share:**

Capture expert opinion about the virus. Take video from athletes asking them about the games and how they're protecting themselves against the virus. The idea is to provide information from expert sources about the virus and balance it with athlete experiences on the ground. The final piece of this is to talk to and capture the sentiments of visitors. All of this goes on Social Media.

**Update:**

Create a tight alliance with the government, the health department, understand how to participate in their briefings on the issue, invite their expertise. Leverage the Zika section of the website to post updates, invite elected officials to speak during breaks about advances against the virus. We're creating a sense of calm.

**Engage:**

Establish a charitable giving opportunity to help support those who have been impacted by the virus. With each awareness opportunity, talk about the steps being taken to eradicate the virus, how to protect yourself from the virus and what can be done to support those impacted. Keep a running tally so by the end of the games the Olympic committee can say how we've come together as a global community.

Overall, in this situation, the Olympic Committee has an opportunity to be a voice of calm, cool, reason, that, in the best interest of athletes and visitors, is providing essential information and tools people can use to make the most of their Olympic experience. In a crisis, what people want most is information so they can understand the situation and, if necessary, make a decision about what they're going to do. In this case, the Olympic Committee can get in front of this by toning down fears and being a source of information and guidance.

**About the Author:** *Nikki Wheeler is a seasoned integrated marketing communications professional, with a background in Crisis and Risk Communications living in Denver, Colorado.*