Oregon Launches Blunt COVID-19 Message: Stay Home or You Could Accidentally Kill Someone

|
9 hours ago
In the handling of communications of the coronavirus crisis, some state leaders have emerged as direct, strong voices. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo is likely the best example, but others have been forceful advocates for keeping citizens safe.

In Oregon, however, Governor Kate Brown faced criticism for her fumbling of the state's lockdown. The indecisiveness prompted a group of mayors, including Ted Wheeler of Portland, to compel action from the capitol in Salem.

Eventually, the state moved to keep people home. Yet, as spring break started, residents and visitors from out-of-state flocked to the Oregon Coast, hoping to escape COVID-19. This resulted in mayors in those towns issuing emergency evacuation orders, evicting vacationers.

Though the order to stay home is well-established, the state seeks to be very clear about its importance. In a stark ad from Portland agency Wieden + Kennedy, the stakes of leaving one's home—and the possibility of infecting others—is laid strikingly bare.

While other COVID-19 advertising and communication are essential, the math is undeniable, and this could very well be a good template for other states to use. The stark background and simple message are potent reminders in a society that deservedly values the ability to move freely (though it would be good to have a version with a voiceover for those with low

vision).

The agency and state could have danced around the subject of death related to the disease. Instead, they chose to address it head-on.

Posters and social media posts are equally impactful and blunt (not necessarily a Portland or Oregon trait) with messages

like “Don’t Accidentally Kill Someone” and “Keep Portland ~~Weird~~ Alive.”

“We created this campaign with the governor because we don’t want to look back and wish we had done more,” said Jason Bagley and Eric Baldwin, executive creative directors at Wieden + Kennedy Portland. “We have a lot of heart for Oregon and all who live here, and we know that staying home will save lives. This campaign provides clarity and conviction around what staying at home means—and how we all have a role to play to help our community.”

Another ad celebrates the state’s “essential heroes” on the frontline of the pandemic and again reminds people that they should stay home so that they can do their jobs.

“We are facing an unprecedented crisis. None of us have been through anything like this before,” said Governor Brown. “The single most important thing each of us can do to protect our community and frontline workers, and to save lives right now, is to stay home.”

https://www.adweek.com/agencies/oregon-launches-blunt-covid-19-message-stay-home-or-you-could-accidentally-kill-someone/