Crisis Plans That Reposition a Brand for Success

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"The crisis of today is the joke of tomorrow."
H.G. Wells

Crisis Communication Plan

Well-developed and consistently updated crisis communications plan ensures your organization has the infrastructure to respond as needed to a range of natural or man-made crises.

The plan involves a number of elements, but should be kept as simple as possible.

During times of crisis, people need a document that is ready to act upon and easily understandable.

Keep it clean and simple.

So…What's YOUR Plan?

Your crisis communications plan is a reference tool, not a blueprint. It defines scenarios and provides lists of key contact information. It's an overview of what typically should be done in a crisis, and gives you and your crisis team structure to document and address the crisis.

Steps to incorporate in your crisis communications plan:

1. Assess and Identify Potential Risks

2. Always Be Monitoring, have central system and define red flags/risk assessment

3. Build a Team – Ensure Broad Coverage and Buy-In

4. Identify Stakeholders and Influencers

5. Create Messaging Platforms, Templates (e.g. dark website, release, Intranet, social, customer email etc.) and Social Guidelines

6. Have a Response Infrastructure (wire services, phone trees, email systems etc.)

7. Test, Execute and Review

Risk Assessment

What to look for in a crisis?
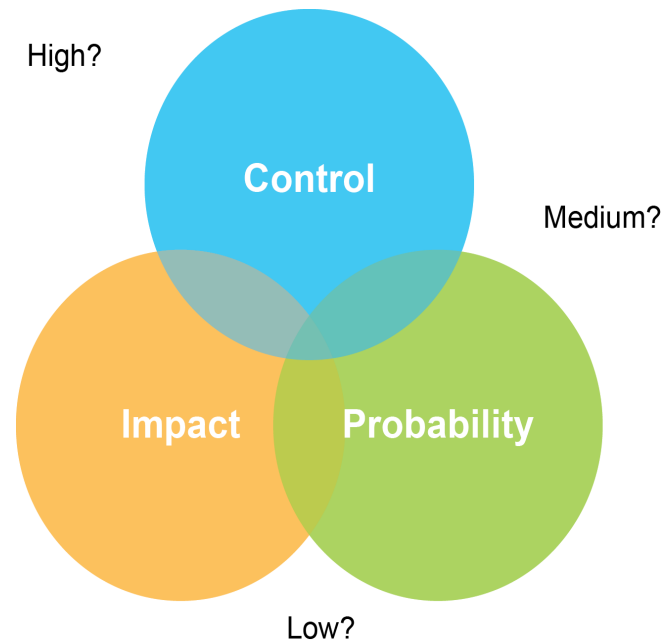
Define the Crisis

- Not everything that goes wrong is a crisis
- What makes an issue a crisis?
- Man-made vs. Natural and Crisis vs. Business Continuity
- 80% of most likely vs. 20% that will bring your company to its knees?

Crisis:
A crisis is an unexpected event that can threaten the health and safety of consumers, customers and employees, as well as the image and value of our brand and company.

Incident:
Unexpected event that has been triggered by a deviation from internal and/or external standards. If mismanaged or left unattended, it has the potential to turn into a crisis.

Issue:
Usually the subject of an ongoing debate (often spread by the media) that occasionally peaks as it gathers attention. It can become an incident or a crisis. An unusual trend in customer complaints should also be defined as an issue

Media Monitoring Process

Key elements

1. <u>Intelligence monitoring team</u> consisting of members who will monitor daily key stakeholder sources of information that may be helpful in predicting a crisis. This team is headed by INTELLIGENCE TEAM CAPTAIN, who ensures that monitoring sources meet frequency and coverage requirements.

2. <u>Daily monitoring</u> by team members during times when a potential issue may arise, or when an issue is emerging.

3. <u>Weekly data capture and risk assessment report</u>, drawing from DATABASE sources, to ensure due diligence against all information and acts as an archive over time. See appendix for a template of this report.

4. <u>Risk assessment criteria and scoring</u> to provide clear guidance on how to rate the risk level of the data.

5. <u>Central platform</u> where weekly crisis reports will reside and where the full Intelligence Monitoring Team has access. These can be found on DATBASE

6. <u>Instant red flag alert</u> procedure should an individual member uncover information outside the weekly capture that might result in a crisis.

7. <u>Red flag monitoring protocols</u> to enable the crisis team to receive regular constant updates that will guide decision-making should a crisis be imminent, or during a crisis.

Who Monitors What?

Intelligence Team Captain:			
External sources		**Internal sources**	
Target	**TriNet owner**	**Target**	**TriNet owner**
Traditional media		Sales	
Social media and bloggers		Consultants	
Security Research Community		HR / HRIT	

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Monitoring & Decisions

When Do You Communicate?

Do we want to be or have to be...

Proactive

- Prepare key messages
- Refresher training for spokes-persons

Prepare and activate communications plan

Reactive

- When will we go proactive
  - What time suits us best
  - What would force us to communicate
- Prepare key messages

Prepare contingency plan to include triggers for action and communications

Reasons to be proactive
- To counter a negative story that is already running
- To pre-empt impending negative coverage (if we have warning)
- To exploit an opportunity

Reasons to be reactive
- When there is no imperative to communicate and we will be better equipped later (warning received but story unlikely to break immediately)
- When there is doubt if the story will break (e.g. extortion)

Factors that could force us to communicate
- The media breaks or is likely to break the story
- Another stakeholder – e.g. law enforcement, security consultant, a business partner – "needs" to break the story

Securing Buy-In From Executives and Across Departments

Give executives examples what has happened to similar organizations when they have faced crises?

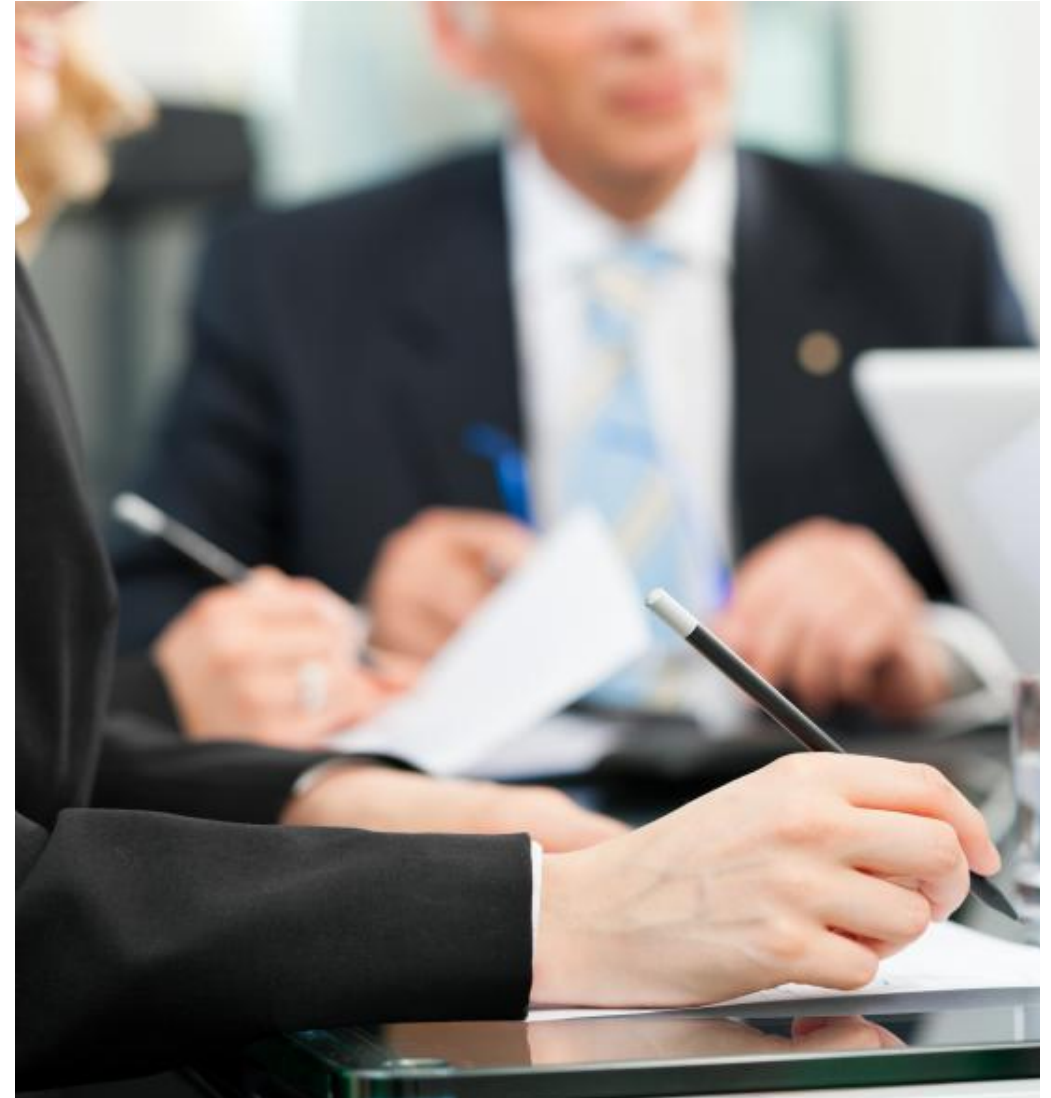Don't just ask the "what if" questions. Provide answers, scenarios and give examples of what can happen if *your* organization is not prepared for a crisis.

Key Components of the Plan

Have policies and procedures so everyone involved in crisis response knows exactly what their next steps are. Include:

- Mandate for the organization's crisis response and communications team.

- Names and 24-hour contact information of the members of the crisis response team and trained spokesperson(s).

- Alternative meeting points and means of communication in case you cannot meet at your offices.

- Contact information of key internal stakeholders and crisis media list

- One (or more writers) with access to equipment to produce and distribute information bulletins.

- Pre-prepared background information on your organization.

- A pre-prepared new release template.

- A schedule for regular testing of your crisis response program.

Crisis Stakeholders – Internal Team Setup

Monitor

Intelligence Monitoring Team: Regularly monitors key sources of information that may be helpful in predicting of and responding to a crisis.

Manage

Crisis Management Team: 3 divisions drive all strategy and activation.

Crisis Chair: Acts as the overall lead and comes from the business.

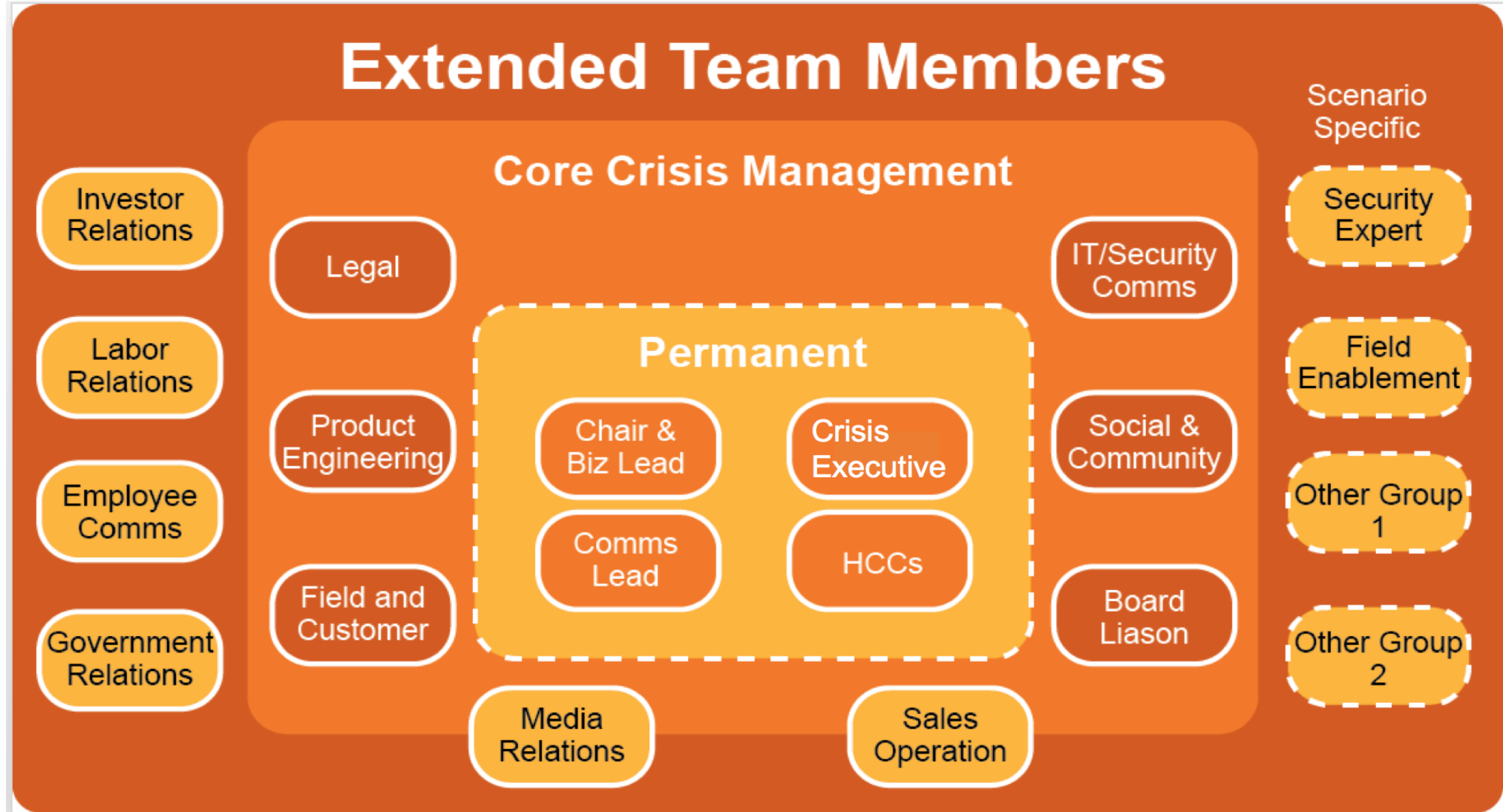**Communications Lead:** Oversees all internal and external communications, e.g. Head of Comms

Crisis Executives: Play a strategic and operational role in driving and managing the full crisis team. Come from key areas of the company (e.g. CMO & CTO)

Operate

Core Crisis Team Members: Representatives for key business functions, i.e. Legal, Customers, Sales, Data Security, Product Engineering and Board relations.

Extended Team Members: Scenario-specific experts as well as communications drivers for executing the strategy with specific audiences such as Investor Relations, Employee Communications and Government relations etc.

External and Internal Spokespeople: Serve as the human face and voice of the company during a crisis.

Board Sponsor: Briefed by the team ensures stewardship at the highest levels but not playing an active role in the crisis team.

Core Team Structure

Extended Team Structure

Your External Stakeholders

Identify exactly who your key stakeholders are.

Examples of your stakeholder group list may include:

- Board members
- Candidates
- Counterparties / lenders
- Customers / clients
- Employees
- Government organizations
- Investors

- Partner organizations
- Regulators
- Shareholders
- Subsidiary brands
- The media
- The general public
- Trustees
- Vendors
- Volunteers

Communicating in a Crisis – the Phone Tree

Contact crisis management team and key employees first. Inform the rest of the organization as needed.

Your phone tree must:

1. Send emergency messages to all stakeholders (and staff) instantaneously.

2. Request registration from specific individuals to confirm receipt/wellbeing.

3. Exchange messages or provide a question and answer service to staff and stakeholders (which may include what to say – or not say – in case of contact with the media).

Automated notification systems can be connected to human resources records to send out messages using different channels of communication.

Some automated solutions:

-   Phonetree

-   CallFire

-   OpsCentre

-   One Call Now

Communicating in a Crisis – the Phone Tree

FORM XX: INTELLIGENCE MONITORING TEAM & DEPUTIES
{ALERT SYSTEM} CONTACTS LIST

MASTER CONTACT LIST					
Name (Lead then deputy)	**Title**	**Email**	**Office phone**	**Mobile Phone**	**Home phone**
External Sources					
Traditional Media					
Social Media and Bloggers					
Security Research Community					
TriNet Community and Network (e.g. Partner portal)					

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What's in Your Emergency Drawer?

SOCIAL STATEMENT

XXX experiences an issue with YYY. Resolution by TIME/DATE. 800 888 8888 or XXX@COMPANY.COM for 24-hour immediate, live assistance

What's in Your Emergency Drawer?

QUICK STATEMENT

XXX is currently conducting a thorough investigation to identify and resolve the issue. We're sorry for any inconvenience this has caused, and we're committed to helping any customers with urgent needs. XXX offers the following protective/reparative measures: XYZ.

XXX employees can call +1 800 888 8888 for 24-hour immediate, live assistance, or email XXX@COMPANY.COM

What's in Your Emergency Drawer?

LONG STATEMENT

XXX self-discovered [situation and scope of situation]. We have immediately taken steps to rectify the situation [other actions]. We have also [other steps to ensure this does not happen again]. Affected customers are limited to those who provided [what information] using [what technology] to [to what] from [date range]. There is no indication that this issue had any impact on customers (who) [define the scope of the damage and which customers are not effected].

We're committed to helping any customers with urgent needs. XXX employees can call +1 800 888 8888 for 24-hour immediate, live assistance, or email XXX@COMPANY.COM.

On behalf of XXX, we regret any inconvenience this may have caused you.

Sincerely,
NAME, TITLE

Bringing it All Together

1. Detailed plan
The plan should outline and explain how your organization will communicate about the crisis and handle the crisis. Include:
- Purpose of the plan
- Activation criteria
- Procedures
- Stakeholders

2. Crisis communications team
Responsible for collecting information, creating and disseminating key messages and working with the media. Also monitors response to the crisis and crisis communication.

3. Monitoring and Messages
Define the method and cadence of monitoring and process of evaluation. Consider all possible crises your organization could face and develop key messages to be used in response. Incorporate possible questions you'll need to answer.

4. Internal communications procedures
Once a crisis occurs, determine how core team and employees will receive key messages, e.g. phone tree, department meetings, voicemail, company intranet or all of the above.

5. Contacts and media lists
Gather contact information for key media contacts and local government offices, public health departments, evacuation centers, police and fire departments, Red Cross centers etc.

6. Appendices
Include guidelines, checklists and forms that support and facilitate your crisis communication – i.e. your playbook with templates.

Key Takeaways

- Start planning for the crisis when you get back to the office on Monday!
- Know your crisis!
  - What is most likely?
  - What can severely cripple your business?
- Set up monitoring
- Don't try to do it alone – get executive buy-in and work with other groups
- Identify your stakeholders and influencers – internal and external
- Get organized: create a workflow and infrastructure to use when you need it
- Prepare statements for press, social, website and direct outreach that cover your most likely AND your most critical scenarios
- Don't create a plan and be done. Practice regularly with everyone.
- Wash, rinse & repeat

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