

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF A CRISIS COMMS PLAN

Having a crisis communications plan in place when difficult situations arise helps to ensure that everyone knows their role and is aligned on how to proceed in terms of next steps and external messaging.

Use this checklist to start building your own, or to check that your current plan has all the items we've found to be vital when crisis strikes.

✓ Lock-Tight Messaging

Is your mission statement solid? Does your brand have clear and concise value positioning? Everything in your crisis communications plan should map back to strong messaging that reinforces what your company stands for.

✓ Current Employee Code of Conduct and Media Policies

Every business should have its standards and rules published on an employee network and updated annually or as policies evolve. This is not only important for avoiding potential issues in the first place, but also so that you have something to point to when an employee incident violates the code of conduct or media policy.

✓ A Crisis Communications Team

Identify who is on your crisis team and list them in your plan, including their contact information and responsibilities. Some examples of people you'll want to include are: leaders of the communications and/or marketing team, the CEO or president, an investor relations leader, your legal counsel, lead product manager, and your security, risk and compliance officer.

✓ Crisis Action Process

Establish a step-by-step process that outlines what to do and who does what. Make sure to include every stage of a crisis, including what happens at the onset, the team activation protocol, the statement approval process, the notification and communications outreach, and ongoing monitoring steps.

✓ Crisis Communications Control Center (Virtual and/or Physical)

Location-based, local crises often call for a physical, "command center" location so all crisis team members are in one place working seamlessly. However, most crises can and should be managed virtually to ensure expedient execution across teams located in various places. To ensure you're prepared for both situations, proactively designate physical locations, web conferencing systems, and online tools as your control center tools.

✓ Crisis Scenarios

Put your crisis team's heads together to brainstorm any and all potential crisis scenarios that you might face so you can plan how you would respond to each. Some of the scenarios we've helped manage include: security breaches, employee misconduct, product failures, messaging/ad/social media mishaps, natural disasters, executive deaths, business partner crises, legal action, and more.

✓ Media Response Templates for Each Scenario

Fast, transparent communication with media is paramount to a successful crisis response. Many companies have executive and legal review chains that can make media interactions painfully slow. Develop template statements for each of the above scenarios and get them approved before a crisis hits so you can expedite your response.

✓ Monitoring and Reporting Process

The crisis isn't over after you've issue statements. Use your monitoring and reporting process to measure key indicators like media and social media sentiment, website activity, and employee feedback to ensure you're headed in the right direction.