Crisis Response

From Chaos to Clarity

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What’s Covered in this Webinar

Whether your worst nightmare is a hurricane, an angry donor or negligence by a licensed caregiver, you won’t want to miss this practical webinar on crisis management. This program explores the essential planning steps that should be taken long before the crisis, and the key facets of effective crisis response. By the end of the webinar you will have the information you need to draft or update a crisis management plan and the peace of mind to ensure uninterrupted focus on your mission.
What’s a Crisis?

A change — sudden or evolving — that results in an urgent problem that must be addressed immediately.

Source: Managing Crisis, Harvard Business Press, Pocket Mentor

Crisis Management Truisms

• “…anticipation and preparation are not always possible.”
• “…the crisis that you prepare for may not be the one you experience, but that preparation will improve your resilience, come what may.”

Source: Surviving and Thriving in Uncertainty: Creating the Risk Intelligent Enterprise, by Frederick Funston & Stephen Wagner
Examples of Crisis Threats

- Result in serious injury or death
- Result in litigation
- Impair the agency’s ability to meet basic operating expenses
- Deter current or prospective funders/donors
- Render the organization unable to deliver core services
- Garner negative media scrutiny
- Make it difficult or potential impossible to continue

Is a CRISIS evidence that risk management has failed?
YES

• If you view risk management narrowly—as a discipline focused on avoiding or minimizing losses.

NO

• If you view risk management as a discipline for coping with uncertainty.
  ➢ Agility
  ➢ Resilience

“Risk management is not about providing certainty, it's about living with uncertainty.”

Grant Purdy, Broadleaf Capital International Pty Ltd
Biases Get in the Way of Effective Crisis Management

1. The bias of experience
2. "The Prediction Trap"
3. Failing to learn from failure

The Bias of Experience

- The “Perfect Past”
  - We are guilty of polishing past experience
  - We are defensive about the past and we filter out negative feedback
The Prediction Trap

Tony Hayward, Former CEO of BP

“Alternate Futures”
Failing to Learn from Failure

- Many crises are preceded by near misses
- Near misses may be overlooked or viewed as “successes”
- Drowning vs. Near Drowning

Weaknesses in Failure Analysis

- We favor evidence that supports our existing beliefs rather than alternative explanations.

Misconception

- We can't have a high-performing culture that allows failure
What Could Go Wrong?

Sources of Crisis

External Sources
The source we imagine for most crisis events

Internal Causes
The most likely source of your next crisis
Crisis Management Starts with Organizational Values

- Timeliness
- Transparency
- Humility
- Learning
- Accountability
- Compassion

LEADERSHIP is key to SURVIVING a crisis.

Should the same group of leaders be planning for a crisis and responding to it?
Who?

- Represents the organization
- Serves as the final decision-maker
- Files insurance claims
  - To trigger defense coverage or cover medical expenses for victims
- Responds to internal and external stakeholders
- Investigates the event to inform and guide response

Crisis Response Team

Possible Roles

- Crisis commander
- Financial expert
- Legal guru
- Medical response leader
- Safety/evacuation leader
- Spokesperson
- Resource protector/Document preserver
- Liaison to internal stakeholders
Creating a Crisis Response Team

- What roles are pre-filled based on job duties?
- Will anyone immediately volunteer to lead, or will people be reluctant to snag a role?
- What roles may no one be suited for or interested in? How could you compensate for that?
- What tension do you anticipate in structuring your crisis response team, or will it go smoothly? How might you deal with team conflict before or during a crisis?

How can your team respond to a crisis?
Crisis Management in 7 Steps

Step 1

• Convene the Board and/or other essential leadership team members
Step 2

- Gather information needed for sound decision-making

Step 3

- Define the boundaries of confidentiality
Step 4

- Determine the need for independent help

Determining the Need for Help

- What perspective is not represented but would be helpful in understanding and managing this crisis?
Step 5

• Consider more than one course of action

Step 6

Reflect on the long-term implications of decisions

Example: An initial promise of immediate action may shore up support in the short term... but lead to an erosion of trust when months pass before the agency is able to act on its promise.
Step 7

- Evaluate and adjust

- Conduct a postmortem on the agency’s handling of the crisis as soon as possible after the crisis has subsided.
- Resist the urge to “move on” and “ahead.”
When in Crisis...

• What's your action plan for responding to this crisis?
• Who are the stakeholders you need to communicate with? Who first? Using what communication channels?
• What will each of you contribute to crisis response?

Action Plan

• Does anyone need to be removed from their position right away to avoid further harm?
• Who needs to be notified of the crisis?
  ➢ Insurers
  ➢ Stakeholders
Communicating the Crisis

- What information should be shared? What should not be?
- Who will you share it with?
  - Board, staff, all stakeholders, or your community?
- How will you share information?
  - Press release or press conference?

Who Does What?

- Your crisis response team should know their responsibilities and duties when in a crisis.
- Remember, you can never fully anticipate a crisis, so you may have roles they are not filled but will need to be.
Post-Crisis

• Revamp and reevaluate
  ➢ Policies, plans, procedures
• Retrain
  ➢ Staff, volunteers, board
• Reassess
  ➢ Contracts and vendors

Any follow-up communication?

Three Categories of Risk Communication

Precaution advocacy ("Watch out!")
  ➢ Alerting people to serious hazards when they are unduly apathetic

Outrage management ("Calm down!")
  ➢ Reassuring people about minor hazards

Crisis communication ("We'll get through it together!")
  ➢ Guiding people through serious hazards when they are appropriately upset (or even in denial)

Source: Peter M. Sandman, Ph.D., and Jody Lanard, M.D., www.psandman.com
Essential Elements

• CARE - express concern
• OWNERSHIP - accepting responsibility
• SHARING – what you’re doing to:
  - Control situation
  - Repair damage or harm
  - Prevent recurrence

The 5 Cs

1. Care
2. Commitment
3. Consistency
4. Coherence
5. Clarity
What's in a Crisis Communication Plan?

- Stakeholder calling tree (internal & external)
- Materials that need to be produced
- Who needs to be in the loop? Who should be left out?
- List of staff trained on media contact
  - Who should talk & who shouldn't?

Selecting a Spokesperson

- Good under pressure
- Can stay on message
- Assertive body language
- Willing to PREPARE
- Can act as point person
  - Review all outgoing messages
- The CEO?
Talking Points

• Mission-focused
• Show compassion, sincerity
  ➢ Language & tone
• Be HONEST!
• Acceptance of responsibility?

"No Comment."

The vacuum created by a failure to communicate will quickly be filled with rumor, misrepresentations, drivel, and poison.

C. Northcote Parkinson
Spokesperson Debriefing

• Biggest challenge for spokespeople?
• How do reporters have the advantage?
  ➢ Unexpected questions
  ➢ Putting spin on your words
  ➢ Filling your silence
  ➢ Undermining your credibility

What to Do About It?

• Train spokesperson
• Be honest
• PREPARE!
Public Relations Tips

• Media call list
  ➢ Connect with spokesperson
• Be mindful of reporting deadlines
• Prep PR materials ahead of time
  ➢ Draft press release or statement
  ➢ Emergency phone message
  ➢ Website splash page
• Train staff on media contact
• Consider communication channels
  ➢ Social media?

10 Tips for Social Media Use in Crisis Communication

1. Cease normal operations
2. Acknowledge the situation immediately
3. Get your message to as many platforms as possible
4. Be prepared to address vulnerabilities
5. Find the right balance
6. Don’t participate in a conversation when your brand doesn’t belong
7. Don’t feed the trolls
8. Correct - don’t delete
9. Listen to your audience
10. If you have to disengage, say so

Source: Nicole Stillwell, New Media Unit, Office of Policy Coordination & Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Resources

• www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/articles/crisis01002003.shtml

• www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/fact-sheets/communicate.shtml

• www.thenonprofittimes.com/management-tips/7-elements-of-a-crisis-management-plan/


Thank You!

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