

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS 101

A quickly happening crisis can quickly change how your organization needs to operate. It also changes what you need to communicate to clients, employees, and other constituents. Having a strategic plan and staying calm are key. Follow these steps to stay on track:

Gather information and establish ongoing monitoring

Tap into local, online, and other sources to learn what has happened so far and what is expected to occur in the coming days and weeks. Monitor media coverage and social media updates on crisis developments. Prepare searches with relevant keywords.

Inform your team

Update your employees on the crisis and its implications for day-to-day operations and clients. Establish a clear chain of command and communication flow.

Update your social media and communication plans

Determine which social media posts, client emails, articles, etc. need to be put on hold or canceled, if any. Develop crisis-specific messaging for internal and external communications, and decide on the voice you wish to convey. Identify trustworthy sources of information. Name a spokesperson if necessary.

Prepare relevant communications

Write and schedule social media posts. Draft a press release. Establish talking points for a press conference. Having these on hand for use as needed brings calm to the storm.

Distribute communications for review

Share information and external communications with internal management and lawyers as necessary.

Release communications

Post on social media channels. Send out a press release. Conduct a press conference if appropriate.

Monitor the response and the situation at large

Keep tabs on social media comments, and respond accordingly. Engage with appropriate message points. Watch for media coverage spikes. Contact journalists/influencers and create new messaging if needed.

Assemble and assess

Meet with your team and objectively review your response to the crisis. Identify which steps were effective and which could be improved. With that information, update your crisis communication plan so you're ready for the next crisis. (Sorry, there's bound to be another.)