

# CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

During an emergency, it is imperative that those within your organization know how to communicate effectively. This includes both internal and external communications. The following checklist will highlight some recommendations for developing and executing a well-rounded communications strategy in the face of any disaster scenario.

✓	<b>DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS PLAN</b>
	<p>Start with a General Risk Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the top threats to your organization and any vulnerabilities</li> <li>• Analyze what business functions are critical to your operations</li> <li>• Identify the resources needed to protect those critical business functions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ People, Processes, Technology required and Communications needs associated with each</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Establish a Crisis Management Team, and those within that group responsible for Communications
	<p>Develop and regularly update an Emergency Contact List to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Phone</li> <li>• Alternate Mobile</li> <li>• Personal E-mail</li> <li>• Family Contact Information</li> <li>• Evacuation Plan</li> </ul>
	Consider setting up an Alert Notification System capable of multiple means of communication to employees, stakeholders & clients. TEST this system regularly and ensure employees are familiar.
	Ensure that employee, vendor & supplier mobile voice communications are not reliant on a single network. Utilize multiple carriers and train all critical personnel on the use of text messaging.
	Establish a separate, formal notification plan for employees' immediate families and close relatives in the event of loss of life, missing personnel, etc. Additionally, ensure that caregivers and daycare operators upon whom employees depend can receive appropriate information.
	Ensure that a formal system exists to integrate new hires into the Crisis Communications Plan
	Consider establishing a public hot line, or a "dark" Website that can be activated on short notice to provide information during an emergency to everyone in the community
	Consider an Online Social Networking Platform for web-based crisis communications (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)
	Establish a universal and easily accessible database of information about the company and disaster strategies and plans. Database should include company background information, critical documents, key contacts, passwords, etc.
	Consider setting up a password-protected online message board specific to your organization

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	<p>Establish remote hosting for your corporate website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure proper bandwidth capability for spikes in traffic during and after crises</li> <li>• Ensure remote access to your website, and establish a team to manage updates to the site during disasters</li> </ul>
	Develop a tactical response plan for Voice/Phone redirection
	<p>Establish processes &amp; plans to re-establish your network connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-mail</li> <li>• Virtual Private Network (VPN)</li> <li>• Remote Services</li> </ul>
	Coordinate all Crisis Communications Planning with key vendors and suppliers to ensure seamless transition
✓	<b>DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS PLAN</b>
	<p>Develop and test your Media Communications Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designate primary and secondary spokespersons.</li> <li>• Ensure all Employees know WHO the Spokesperson is</li> <li>• Arrange for media to have 24-hour access to a spokesperson.</li> <li>• Ensure designated spokespersons receive training in dealing with the media.</li> <li>• Establish a policy for all employee interaction with Media, ON and OFF-SITE</li> <li>• Maintain trustworthy, credible relationships with the media all of the time. If you do, the media will be less suspicious and more cooperative in the midst of a crisis.</li> <li>• Identify key audiences and develop a strategy for each.</li> <li>• Create Key Messages &amp; Talking Points to ensure consistent message</li> <li>• Ensure you have a media kit at the ready containing information about your company or organization, as well as a list of approved contacts</li> <li>• Discuss possible problem areas and potential negative impacts</li> </ul>
	Identify main media outlets through which information about your organization will be disseminated (Radio & TV stations, print media, etc.)
	Find a signage vendor with multiple regional locations to use for signage needs after a disaster
✓	<b>DURING THE CRISIS</b>
	Have all employee, vendor, client & media contact information on hand.
	Be the first to break the news about how your organization is responding. Even if the situation is still evolving, begin with full disclosure. ALWAYS respond to media requests.
	Continue to communicate with all key audiences until the crisis has passed. Consistency is important.

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	Continuously monitor online and offline conversations in order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your strategy and messaging.
	NOTHING is “off the record.” Confirm facts; communicating openly and accurately about the situation. Your communications team must know the proper, approved messages.
	During evacuation have a central point of contact for all employees, and ensure you know where your people are located.
	During evacuation consider your phones lines - redirection to cell phones, answering service, Google Voice, or backup lines could be critical.
✓	<b>AFTER THE CRISIS</b>
	Following the crisis, notify all critical people of next steps.
	Learn from the experience and anticipate the next crisis. Plan for likely and even unlikely scenarios based on this most recent crisis, and know the steps you are going to take before you have to take them.
	Debrief staff on their experiences, praising people for what went well.
	Improve your plan as needed, and aim to regularly update it, including response to lingering fallout from the most recent crisis.

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