



Crisis Communication

Crisis Communication in the 21st Century

**How Professional Services Companies Protect
And Enhance Brand Equity, Reputation And
The Bottom Line In Times Of Crisis**

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Show Of Hands

How many of you have experienced a
business crisis at work?

How many of you think your company is well
prepared to communicate effectively with key
stakeholders during a crisis (Crisis Comms
Plan, recurring training, etc. are in place)?

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Wrong Approach



“Okay, people, the question is should we deny first and then delay, or delay first and then deny?”

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Crisis

crisis / 'kraisiss / n.

Any adversity that severely disrupts business
and causes damage to brand equity,
reputation and the bottom line.

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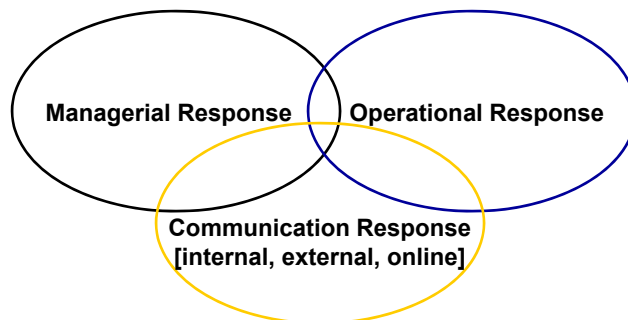
Crisis communication is a sub-specialty of the public relations profession that is designed to protect and defend an individual, company, or organization facing a public challenge to its reputation.

Wikipedia



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Crisis Response: Communication Is Critical





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Crises Do Happen

“In today’s world, it is not a question of if or whether an organization will experience a crisis; it is only a matter of what type of crisis will occur, what form it will take, and how and when it will happen.”

Dr. Ian I. Mitroff
University of Southern California



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When written in Chinese, the word ‘crisis’ is composed of two characters. One represents *danger* and the other represents *opportunity*.



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Crisis Response Team

The *Crisis Response Team (CRT)* is a cross-functional group of pre-selected managers (standing CRT members and their backups) who convene upon the occurrence of a crisis and manage the crisis response with the goal of protecting and enhancing brand equity, reputation and the bottom line.



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Sample CRT Chart





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Response Steps

1. Impact Assessment
2. Stakeholder Analysis (internal & external)
3. Business & Communication Objectives
4. Message Development (internal & external)
5. Channel / Tool / Venue Selection
6. Message Testing & Delivery
7. Evaluate & Adapt (includes social media)

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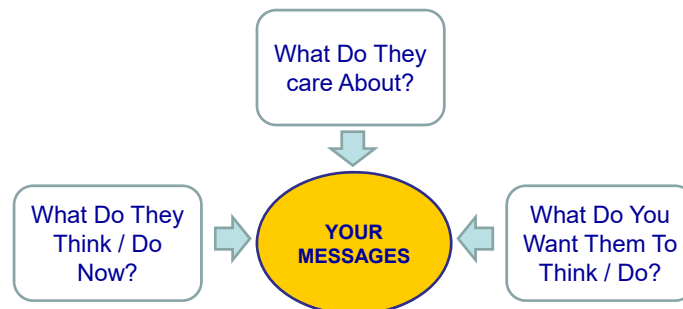
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Stakeholder Specific Communication



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Information Needs

1. *What* happened?
2. *When* did it happen?
3. *Where* did it happen?
4. *Who* is affected?
5. *Why* did it happen?
6. *What* danger does it pose?
7. *How* do you feel about it?
8. *What* are you doing about it?

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Key Messages

- Prepare to say what you know (Facts)
- Prepare to say how you feel about it (Feelings)
- Prepare to say what you will do about it (Actions)



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Employee Communication

- Uncertainty
- Pressure
- Anxiety
- Stress



Remember that well trained and dedicated employees are any organization's key asset!



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Lack of Communication

- A lack of effective employee communication in times of crisis often leads to rumors, false information, loss of trust, panic, resignations, etc. and always effects the bottom line





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Crisis & Mass Media



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Role Of The Mass Media

- Reports information (alerts the public)
- Interprets information (informs the public)
- Influences issue portrayal (educates the public)
- Highlights or restricts information (gatekeeper)
- Proposes solutions (advocacy)

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Mighty Media?!



*"Since you have already been convicted by the media,
I imagine we can wrap this up pretty quickly."*

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Mass Media Traits

- Event focused & looking for drama
- Controversy oriented (villain & victim)
- Seeking balance & opposing views
- Condensing & simplifying
- Personalizing & sensationalizing
- Deadline driven & competitive
- Independent & profit oriented

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Spin Doctor



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The Bottom Line

Effectively working with traditional news media is an important crisis response factor because heightened media scrutiny and unfavorable coverage may translate into reputation and bottom line damage.

How your organization responds to news media attention in times of crisis may determine the difference between success and failure.

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Realistic Expectations



"O.K., but what I'm about to tell you does not leave this news cycle."

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Why Media Interviews?

Every media interview and news conference presents a *valuable opportunity* to convey prepared messages to specific audiences using the reporter or blogger as the filter.

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Practice Is Key



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Reporters Need Help

- They often have limited background information regarding your organization
- They often have limited scientific and technical knowledge and experience
- They often have limited access to important crisis and risk related information
- They usually want to be accurate and therefore appreciate fact sheets and other relevant information

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Crisis & Social Media



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Social Media Impact

- Huge and ever growing number of social media users
- Traditional journalists utilize social media and user generated content for story ideas, fact checking, etc.
- Information sharing is *uncensored, global, immediate, automated, syndicated, long lasting, potentially damaging*
- Opportunities due to improved *stakeholder notification, stakeholder dialogue, impact measurement, etc.*

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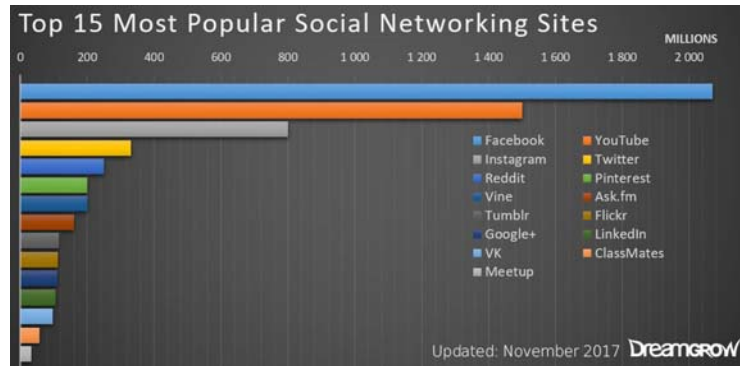
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Social Media Reach



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Social Media Tasks

- Monitor (continuous online monitoring)
- Analyze (who, why / motive, legitimacy)
- Prioritize (potential damage, urgency)
- Shall we respond? (why / goal, when, how)
- Engage (get across that you care)
- Respond (solve, defend, ignore, negotiate)
- Evaluate outcome, adjust approach

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Readiness Is Essential



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What You Need

1. Crisis Communication Readiness Assessment
2. Crisis Communication Plan (CCP)
3. Crisis Response Team (CRT)
4. Media Policies & One-Voice Policy
5. Social Media Crisis Strategy & 24/7 Monitoring
6. Recurring Media & Crisis Communication Training

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Thank You

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and Crisis Management*