Updated – date & author name (typically PR)

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Template – crisis communications plan

Overview: A brief overview of this document's purpose - the types of crisis your organization is preparing for and the core principals of response. The intent of this section is that anyone reading it for the first time can understand the purpose and function of this document and the organization's high-level approach to crisis.

Process: This is typically the most extensive and detailed section, going into sufficient detail about your crisis process such that someone new to the organization or unfamiliar with the process could participate in or even run it in a pinch after reading this document.

The key steps in managing a crisis are:

- **Notify –** There are two main topics here:
  - How you monitor for and detect a crisis;
  - Who someone who detects a potential crisis notifies, and how. Often, a company will have a crisis lead that is notified first, and who is then responsible for initial assessment, additional notifications (executive, legal, etc.) and directing the initial response (often holding messaging and activation of your crisis response processes). It is critical that your crisis team is well defined, with clear membership and approvals.
- **Research –** How you with gather data & inputs necessary to understand key considerations and thus how the organization will respond. Initially, you need to verify what has happened to the extent possible and (importantly) what you don't yet know. From there, appropriate team members should be assigned to gather additional information. You should expect that initial information will be incomplete or incorrect, so research will be an ongoing process. This process should be scalable. In more significant crisis this often involves the activation of a 'war room' type structure with a clear membership and reporting structure.
- **Respond –** Crafting and delivering a response, usually across multiple channels. Often, you will start with holding messages and then fill out a more robust response as research delivers insights. It is critical you do not make assumptions in your responses or report information that may prove incorrect upon more research, and that responses to different channels are not inconsistent.
- **Report –** How key data points and inputs will be reported back into the organization. For example, tracking response in channels such as social and traditional media, capturing customer response, input from regulators, and operational developments will be crucial. This then informs research, which in turn informs response.

These steps are typically cyclical, each informing the next and repeating.

<u>Principles:</u> The key principles that will guide your response. For example, who will speak in media, acceptable response times, handling of information, and steps taking to ensure accuracy of information provided by teams.

<u>Strategic considerations:</u> This section is typically a bullet-point list of key considerations unique to your organization that need to be considered during or could impact a crisis response. It could include information about facilities, vulnerabilities, past issues, and the like. This could also be done as a SWOT, and may be included as an appendix rather than in the primary plan (see below).

<u>Appendix:</u> In order be usable under stress a crisis communications plan should be brief. However, organizations often find it useful to generate appendices of additional information for fast reference. You want to avoid having to figure this stuff out as you go. Potential appendix includes:

- A matrix of employees and external contractors involved in crisis response, with their roles & authority detailed. This should include approval authorities.
    - Internal team members may include – CEO and executive, Legal, PR, GR, IR Marketing, Operations, IT, Privacy, Security, Corporate Secretary; business unit leads;
    - External team members may include – PR, Legal, insurance company, any of the above not on staff.
- Detailed list of internal and external team members who may be informed of a crisis and kept in the loop during the response, with all available phone numbers and email addresses. This will overlap with the list above, but typically includes additional individuals not involved in the crisis response but who need to be kept informed.
- A list of potential 'holding messages' for social and traditional media.
- A detailed list of audiences & channels you may use to communicate during a crisis. This may include social media channels, internal websites, traditional media outlets as well as specific media who cover your company or industry, a contact with a newswire service, internal email addresses, board member names & contacts, regulator contacts, etc. You may include this in a graph with details about how you will communicate via each channel – for example, what your policy is for your website and social media channels.
- More detailed discussions of specific crisis types, which may includes the likes of:
    - Food recalls
    - Death or serious injury onsite
    - Food poisoning
    - Flu pandemics or other health crisis that impact operations
    - Natural disasters
    - Hacks or other digital crisis
- A schedule for updating and training against this plan.