Crisis Communications Checklist

A crisis can happen at any moment. When it does, organizations need to be prepared to act quickly and communicate with their employees, customers and other stakeholders.

Use this checklist along with your detailed crisis communications plan to guide your team through your next crisis situation.

1. IDENTIFY AN EMERGING CRISIS
   Does the impending situation:
   - Pose a threat to your brand’s reputation?
   - Have the potential to cause a loss of trust in your organization?
   - Put the health, safety or livelihood of your employees, customers, partners, vendors or other stakeholders at risk?

2. NOTIFY YOUR CRISIS TEAM
   Be sure to include relevant details about the situation:
   - Who is involved?
   - What is at stake?
   - What is the status of the crisis? Is it an emerging situation? Is the immediate threat active or contained?

3. COMMUNICATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS
   Disseminate your messages through the appropriate channels. Consider the following:
   - Personal phone calls can reassure important clients or board members, helping you maintain close relationships.
   - Identify the most effective way of reaching your stakeholders. Recognize how they are impacted and be there to help.

4. DEVELOP YOUR COMMUNICATIONS
   Begin developing messaging for your different audiences. Generally, you will need the following:
   - Internal statement
   - External statement
   - Media statement
   - Social media post

5. REVIEW YOUR MESSAGES
   Run drafted messages through your chain of approval:
   - Executive decision-makers
   - Legal team
   - Communications team

6. MONITOR MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA
   Set up real-time media and social media monitoring to track mentions of keywords related to the crisis.
   - Pay attention to what is being said and reported to monitor public sentiment.
   - Track the status of the crisis and respond accordingly.

7. CORRECT MISINFORMATION — THE RIGHT WAY
   If you see media reports or social media comments that are objectively wrong (as in, figures or statistics have been misreported), you can do something about it.
   - Reach out to the reporter and explain the inaccuracy. If there is a factual error, you can ask that a correction be made.
   - On social media, be polite and gracious when pointing out any inaccuracies. Invite the poster to discuss the issue further offline.

8. ASSESS AND RESPOND
   After initial communication, assess the situation:
   - Check scheduled social media posts to see if they are still appropriate in the current environment.
   - Are people still talking? Find out why and see how you can communicate to address their concerns.

9. EVALUATE AND LEARN
   After the crisis is contained, conduct a debriefing with your team:
   - What was effective? Where does your communication need to improve?
   - Incorporate these insights into your crisis communications plan.

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