

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

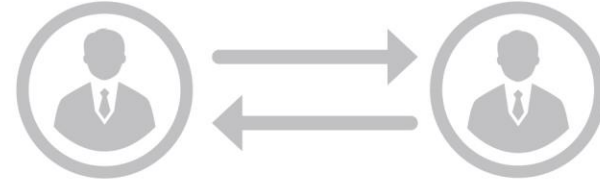
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WE ARE AUREON

**AUREON
TECHNOLOGY**



**AUREON
CONSULTING**



**AUREON
CONTACT CENTER**



A man with a beard, wearing a striped shirt, is looking at a whiteboard. The whiteboard is covered with many yellow sticky notes and some handwritten text. The image has a blue tint.

PHASE I **PLANNING**

ATTRIBUTES OF A CRISIS

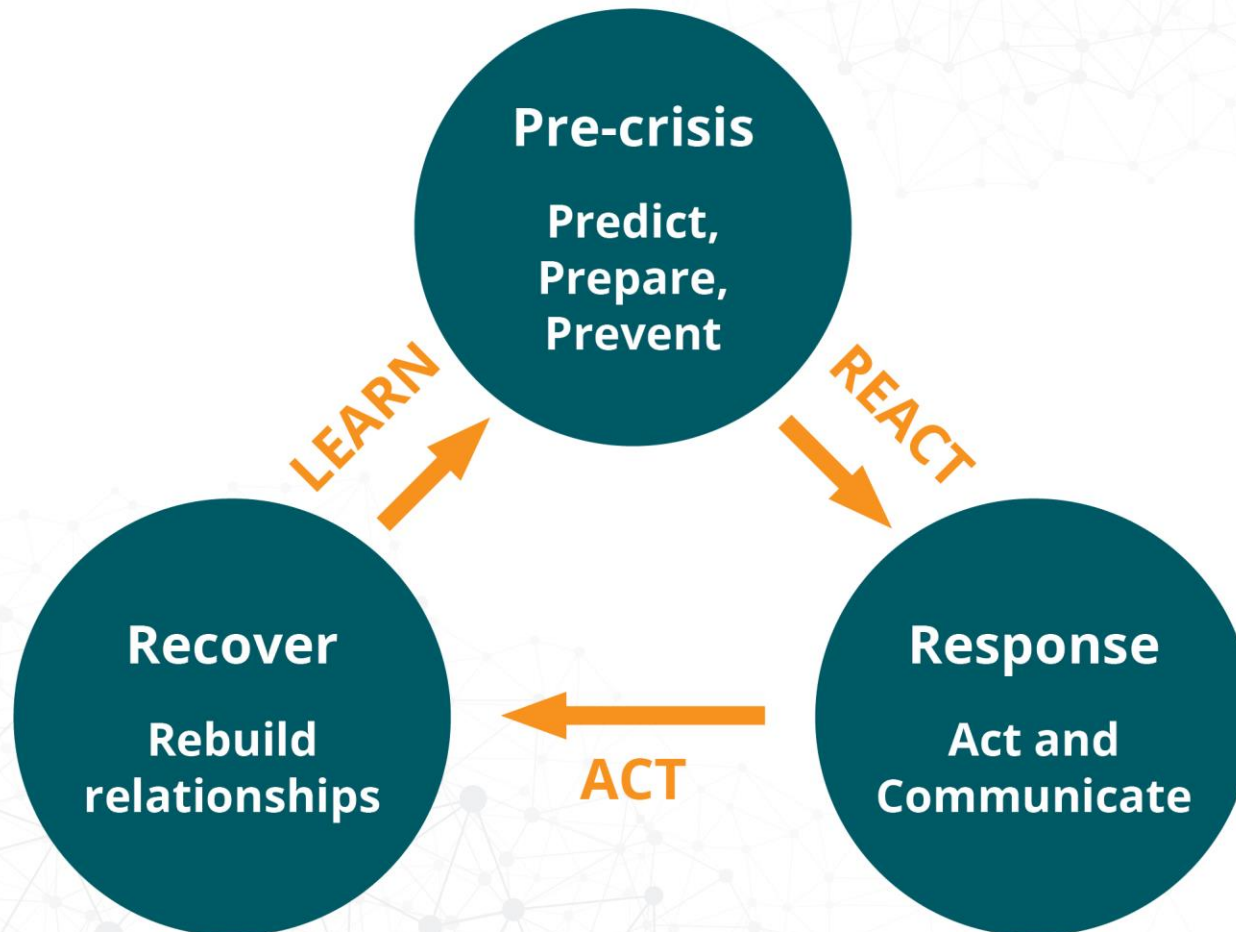
- Potential to significantly damage reputation
- Damaging to consumer, shareholder, and employee confidence
- Directly involves multiple audiences and stakeholders
- Media interest
- Unique and entirely unpredictable

WHY DO YOU NEED A CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN?

- Crises are unpredictable, but should not be unexpected
- Uphold and maintain an organization's reputation by communicating with stakeholders and target publics
- Mitigate impact with issues management vigilance and open communication
- Protect reputation, market share, competitive edge, investor confidence and the long-term health of the organization
- As such, if you want your people and your organization to respond well to a crisis, your employees need a plan, leadership, and a level of knowledge and training to respond appropriately

Preparation can be the difference between success and failure

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS CYCLE



PREPARE CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Strategize regarding the kinds of crisis that may impact your company
- Undertake a risk audit
- Develop a crisis management team
- Develop an agreed upon crisis response philosophy with senior management

PRE-CRISIS: ISSUES MANAGEMENT

Identify and Prepare Proactively

- Identify vulnerabilities
- Develop strategic planning matrix to guide response
- Create cross-functional team
- Define roles and responsibilities
- Draft scenario plans
- Identify potential 3rd party advocates
- Identify spokesperson(s)

Continuously Monitor Issues

- Don't neglect your good crisis planning work
- Have a functional team meet and track issues within the matrix
- Conduct annual training and simulation
- Debrief, learn, update plans

CRISIS: RESPONSE PRINCIPALS

Tell it truthfully

- Forgetfulness can be forgiven, lies will not
- Demonstrate empathy
- Never say “no comment”

Tell it accurately, quickly

- Rush to gather accurate information
- Do not let issues linger
- The first 24
- Communicate regularly

Tell it fully

- Have the facts
- Anticipate questions

Tell it yourself

- Acknowledge responsibility
- Control the agenda
- Enforce message discipline



**American
Red Cross**

Feb. 15, 2011 tweet from an employee of the Red Cross –

“Ryan found two more 4 bottle packs of Dogfish Head’s Midas Touch beer...when we drink we do it right
#gettingslizzerd”

Turning a negative into a positive – brilliant play



THE EQUIFAX BREACH:

What happened, the bungled response

- July 2017, Equifax discovered a massive data breach impacting the PII of up to 143M Americans
- The company believed that the hack had taken place several weeks earlier – potentially mid-May
- Equifax **waited until September** to make a public announcement
- Their website and telephone lines for consumers to get information and sign up for credit protection were overwhelmed and it took weeks to get them working effectively
- Three executives sold nearly \$2M in shares after the breach was discovered but before being publicly revealed
- Equifax subsequently twice upped its estimate of the number of consumers impacted – by 2.5M in October and then another 2.4M in February

CRISIS COMMUNICATION IS AN ART, NOT A SCIENCE

- Wherever and whenever possible, communication should be:
 - Open
 - Transparent
 - Frequent
 - Sincere
- A deserved apology is not a sign of weakness, it is a sign of ownership

Reflect and respond – don't react!

A group of people in a meeting, with a woman standing and pointing at a document on a table. The image has a blue overlay.

PHASE II **PRACTICE**

PREPARE YOUR PLAN AND PRACTICE

- Crisis management team should have good understanding of all aspects of the company and business
- Based on team configuration, each team member may report on their area of the business or prepare a fact sheet
- Utilize discoveries from the risk audit to determine probable scenarios to prepare for crises
- Brainstorm and role play – war games
- Assign other team members as a devil's advocate committee

FIRST HOUR CHECK LIST

- Include and maintain information on major projects in-progress
- Assign team members' responsibilities
- Detail contact information for team members and other important individuals (outside counsel, insurance, utility companies, vendors)
- Incorporate your company's vision and ethical standards into your plan
- Develop and prepare your response to the crises that you have identified
 - Product recall
 - Injury due to your product/service
 - Visit by law enforcement
 - Weather events

The background is a vibrant blue digital landscape. It features a perspective view of a city skyline at the bottom, with buildings and streets. Above the city, there are numerous binary digits (0s and 1s) floating in the air, some appearing to be part of a data stream or network. The overall aesthetic is high-tech and futuristic.

PHASE III

RESPONSE

CRISIS – *THE FIRST 24 HOURS*

How an organization acts and responds in the first 24 hours of a crisis situation sets the tone for the narrative...

- Show leadership
- Actions speak louder than words
- Day 1: Crisis story
- Day 2: Company's response
- Monitor the news media and social media
- Communicate widely and consistently

RESPONSE

- Take charge of communication quickly, but cautiously
- Consider making a preliminary statement
- Understand the facts and the situation before making a more detailed statement
- Understand the dynamic between admissions and future litigation
- Be aware and monitor social media
- Be prepared to address any past issues
- Understand your audience in a crisis situation

RESPONSE

- Be certain employees know who the authorized spoke person is and are trained to not respond to media
- Act FAST – the media will mobilize quickly, and you should be helpful and cooperative to them
- Maintain contact information for media
- Schedule additional updates both for the media and employees
- Providing some media statement is better than not talking
- Do not provide “off the record” or “no comment” statement
- Tell the truth - do not speculate
- Continue to be accessible and responsive

JOHNSON & JOHNSON'S TYLENOL CRISIS

The 1980s Tylenol poisoning murders spurred panic, wide-spread fear and perhaps the best-ever corporate response to a major public relations crisis.

1. Forthcoming and honest
2. Acted quickly and decisively
3. Took responsibility, even if they didn't have to
4. Treated people with respect
5. Good behavior pays dividends



DISASTER THREATS TO TELCOMS

1. **Loss of Connectivity** – critical component in running any business or telecommunications system.
2. **Infrastructure Failure** – deliberate or unintentional damage to critical components of the physical network such as a fiber optic cable at a single point of failure. The loss of multiple, critical network elements within a facility or the facility itself such as a major, network exchange. A loss of this type will have major, network-wide impact affecting end users of multiple services.
3. **Software Failure** – failure of network wide distributed operating system or control program software. Software on the live network may not be rolled back without causing network outages.
4. **Large Scale Temporary Absence of staff** – issues such as pandemic flu or large scale natural disaster could indirectly cause the networks to fail through lack of staff availability for maintenance or manual operation.
5. **Cyber Threats** – the use of Internet based attacks in terrorist activities, including acts of deliberate, large-scale disruption of computer networks.
6. **Natural Disaster** – disruptions in service caused by power outages, floods, snowstorms, tornadoes, lightning strike.
7. **Health Epidemics** – these occur when a disease becomes widespread, clearly in excess of expected levels in a certain location and for a specific period.

AUREON CONTACT CENTER – TORNADO

In July, the Aureon Contact Center was impacted by the Marshalltown tornado. The tornado caused extensive building damage, but employees were not physically harmed. Our response from a communication standpoint:

1. Pulled together crisis response team
2. Recapped incident and effects
3. Rerouted client calls to Newton Contact Center
4. Internal communication to Marshalltown team
5. Internal company-wide communication
6. Social media
 - Recognized team's hardship and leadership
 - Thanked first responders
 - Offered support to community



The background of the image is a view of Earth from space, showing the curvature of the planet and the blue oceans. A network of white lines and dots is overlaid on the image, suggesting a global or digital network. The text "PHASE IV" is in orange and "RECOVERY" is in white, both in a bold, sans-serif font.

PHASE IV **RECOVERY**

REPUTATION RECOVERY

- Accept responsibility for your role
- Help those immediately impacted
- Take long-term corrective action
- Address systemic problems
- Rebuild bridges with stakeholders
- Communicate openly and transparently
- Doing the opposite of any of the above is the WRONG choice

REPUTATION RECOVERY – RESTORE CONFIDENCE

- Create a PR campaign
- Industry support speaker's bureau
- Community relations
- Media outreach
- Consumer education
- Develop an advertising campaign
- Implement government affairs programs

13 GOLDEN RULES OF PR CRISIS MANAGEMENT

1. Take responsibility
2. Be proactive, be transparent, be accountable
3. Get ahead of the story
4. Be ready for social media backlash
5. Remember to be human
6. First apologize, then take action
7. Monitor, plan, communicate
8. Seek first to understand the situation
9. Listen to your team first
10. Develop strong organization brand culture
11. Turn off the fan
12. Avoid knee-jerk reactions
13. Be prepared



PHASE I
PLANNING



PHASE II
PRACTICE



PHASE III
RESPONSE



PHASE IV
RECOVERY

QUESTIONS?

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