



## Developing Your Company's Crisis Communications Plan: 5 Critical Steps

Every company – regardless of how responsible and attentive – has the potential to face a crisis at some point. Whether it be a financial setback, natural disaster, stakeholder incident, or issue with company personnel, things happen. Though you never know when a crisis may hit, you can prepare with a comprehensive crisis communications plan. Consider these five tips when creating yours.

### 1. Determine your weaknesses and assemble your team

Analyze your company's vulnerabilities and determine potential crises that may arise. Then, assign your crisis communications team. Consider your head of corporate communications or investor relations (or an outside consultant) to head the team. Then, consider representatives from HR, operations, medical and regulatory affairs, and legal.

### 2. Develop communications protocols and choose spokespeople

Establish communications protocols and decide which individuals from your team will speak for your company according to the type of crisis that occurs. Train the appropriate leaders on responding, and create a media policy for who can speak to reporters.

### 3. Define your messaging in advance

Have your basic materials (including a draft of your holding statement) ready to be fleshed out and tailored to the unique situation and distributed as necessary. Your messaging considerations should include timing of the release of information and how to coordinate the dissemination.

### 4. Identify stakeholders

Who will you notify first, and how? Ensure that your stakeholders – including board members, regulatory officials, business partners, investors, and others – are notified of a crisis directly rather than learning about it in the media.

### 5. Practice

Even the best crisis communications plans may fall apart without practice. Rehearse your plan with a crisis simulation one or two times each year. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of your plan after each run and make changes accordingly. Communications team members and management should meet quarterly to update as necessary. This will ensure you're fully prepared if faced with a real-life crisis.

Adapted from [5 Steps to Develop Your Company's Crisis Communications Plan](#)

Get more tips about planning for a crisis. Download our [Guide to Crisis Communications Planning](#).

