Crisis and issue management

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Sometimes things go wrong

- **Internal events:**
  - Statistical
  - Corporate
  - Continuity
  - Security

- **External events:**
  - Reputational attacks
  - Political interference (real or perceived)
  - Continuity
  - Statistical
Responding can be complicated

- Events may require coordinated responses from multiple specialists
  - Information technology
  - Statistical methods
  - Administration
  - Security, etc.

- In all cases, corporate communications is vital
  - Internal & external
Communications principles

- Communicate facts as quickly as possible
- Provide updates as circumstances change
- Prioritize the safety of the community and the continued operation of essential services to stakeholders
## Issue or crisis?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Timing</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Threat to long term reputation or</td>
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<td>High level of media, social media and/or political attention</td>
<td>Immediate action</td>
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<td>Full resources</td>
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<td>Highest level of attention and approvals required.</td>
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<td>Planning to prevent or mitigate damage</td>
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<td>Substantial resources</td>
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<td>Highest level of attention and approvals required</td>
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<td>Monitor situation</td>
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<td><strong>Medium</strong></td>
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<td>Threat to short term reputation or</td>
<td>Immediate action</td>
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<td>Substantial resources</td>
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<td>High level attention and approval required</td>
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<td>Planning to prevent or mitigate damage</td>
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<td>Resource appropriately</td>
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<td>Attention and approval levels to be determined</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Monitor situation</td>
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<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>No threat to reputation</td>
<td>Decide whether to take action</td>
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<td>Only certain groups interested</td>
<td>Resource appropriately</td>
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<td>Low level attention and approval required</td>
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<td>Planning to prevent or mitigate damage</td>
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<td>Resource appropriately</td>
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Crisis communications process

- In advance
  - Establish infrastructure
  - Develop procedures and plan

- During event
  - Assess threat
  - Tailor and execute plan

- Afterwards
  - Evaluate response
  - Improve plan
Advance planning: Infrastructure

- Crisis communications team
  - Senior personnel
  - Establish authority, roles, and responsibilities

- Threat identification
  - Staff and stakeholders on alert
  - Know how to report suspected threats

- Environmental monitoring
  - Track traditional and social media
Example: Crisis communications roles

- The Executive Oversight Board strategically plans the crisis communications policy.
- The Crisis Communications Team (CCT) determines and enacts the communications tactics best suited to the crisis situation.
- The management of the program that brought about the crisis resolves the situation and keeps the CCT informed. The Senior Executive for the affected program joins the CCT for the duration of the crisis.
Example: CCT membership

The team will consist of senior management officials. At a minimum, the core team will include:

- Head of Statistical Organization
- Deputy Head of Statistical Organization
- Senior Executive for Communications
- Director of Public Affairs
- Senior Executive for Administration
Advance planning: Procedures

- Identify likely issues and crises
- Define key audiences
- Plan scenarios and standby statements
- Conduct simulation exercises
- Integrate lessons learned from previous crises
Example standby statement

At [X:00 PM/AM date], the Statistical Organization announced that data from the [date and name] news release that was scheduled for release on [time and date] were inadvertently released from the website. The release can be found here: [link].
During event: Assess threat

- Investigate event (quickly)
- Assess the situation: Issue, crisis, neither?
- If issue/crisis:
  - Launch the issue/crisis communications group
During event: Execute plan

- Decide:
  - Proactive response
  - Reactive response
  - No response

- Confirm or tailor key audiences
- Confirm or tailor standby statements
- Implement the selected strategy.
Afterwards: Evaluate

- Follow up on promises made
- Evaluate effectiveness of the communications process
  - Review process should be prompt
  - Ensure that the lessons learned are fresh and comprehensive
- Use results to expand or improve planning
Be prepared!

- Crises are inevitable
- Response matters
  - Can mitigate or exacerbate situation
- *Ad hoc* reactions are risky
- Plan and practice
  - Until responses become ingrained
Contact Information

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