

# PREPARATION AND RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF CRISIS

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# How Do I Know It's Time to Declare a Crisis?

- Is there an immediate threat to safety or to the reputation of the company?
- Have you been notified of a crisis by a credible source?
- Have you lost contact with your group?
- Have there been any fatalities?
- Are the media calling and reporting on the situation?

# BE PREPARED!

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What Needs to be Done Before a Crisis Hits

# 5 Steps to Preparedness

1. Appoint a Crisis Team
2. Develop and Circulate Crisis Procedures
3. Create Emergency Communications Vehicles
4. Train Spokespeople
5. Organize an Annual Crisis Drill

# APPOINT A CRISIS TEAM

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# CRISIS TEAM

## WHO?

- President or CEO
- Chief operations officer
- Chief financial officer
- Chief communications officer
- Legal counsel
- Safety officer
- Board president

# Crisis Team Imperative

All members of a crisis team must have the trust of the organization and the authority to make decisions on behalf of the organization, independent if necessary, of the CEO or president.

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## **Crisis Team Leader**

- Initiates action of the crisis TEAM
- Acts as primary spokesperson to the media and to immediate victims and family of victims of the crisis
- Communicates directly with key stakeholders, e.g., Board, members
- Primary decision maker

## **Chief Communications Officer**

- Implements phone tree protocol
- Immediately takes control of social media monitoring and communication
- Deploys staff to monitor media coverage and craft responses
- Responsible for briefings on the crisis situation for Crisis Team
- Assists Crisis Team Leader in crafting key messages
- Makes decision as to need for deploying dark site on website, emergency number, responses to social media inquirers and comments
- May act as spokesperson to media if the CEO is unavailable



# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## • **Chief Operations Officer**

- Ensures that communications technology remains intact
- Identifies alternate working space / headquarters if needed
- Provides for transportation, accommodations in alternate location
- Responsible for all operational functions in absence of CEO, e.g. locating missing employees, determining alternate transportation or accommodations for accident victims, etc.
- Works with finance officer to arrange for funds needed for emergency procedures

## • **Senior Legal Counsel**

- Assesses liability of the company as the result of crisis
- Reviews messaging for spokesperson to advise on any legal issues, in partnership with senior communications officer
- Reviews media coverage and social media posts for potential legal liabilities or action and advises team

# SET CRISIS PROTOCOLS

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# Communications: Operations

- Ensure that systems and budgets are in place for maintaining and replacing if necessary:
  - WiFi network
  - Phone system
  - Email servers and back up
  - Financial Records
  - Website
  - Crisis App
- RESPONSIBLE: Chief Operations Officer

# Communications: Monitoring

- Start now to identify resources that are in house or will have to be hired to:
  - Monitor all news outlets, social media channels (including not just your own channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, etc., but also foreign channels in the event the crisis occurs in another country)
  - Implement emergency 800 number, dark site on website, multi-channel app
  - Be prepared to employ a crisis firm to assist your efforts in the event of a major crisis
  
- Responsible: Chief Communications Officer

# Communications: Content

- Starting today, create crucial content that will be necessary from the onset of the crisis:
  - Key Messages
  - Holding Statements
  - Social Media statements
  - Contact, Resource and Media Lists

Responsible: Chief Communications Officer

# Key Messages

- “Elevator” description of the company
- Company’s mission
- What are the values the company represents
- In the face of an accident, a scandal, a tragedy – what do you want the world to know about the company, its principals and its work
- Concise statement about the crisis and status of people involved
- What’s next? Who/how do I contact?

# Key Elements of a Statement

- Concise statement of what happened — including a description of injuries or fatalities; harm to physical structures; extent of losses, etc.
- Where the incident occurred
- Cause of the incident, if known — if not known, do not speculate
- Status and location of guests, travelers, employees, etc.
- Next steps
- Phone number, website, etc. for people to call, check status, etc.

# Holding Statements: What are they?

- Pre-approved, prepared in advance statements that can be sent to key stakeholders in event of a crisis
- Should be tailored to event specifics once the event occurs
- Should be distributed to entire crisis team, group leaders, partners, etc.
- Should be updated at least annually – every quarter or six months is preferable



# Holding Statements

- Create a statement for a variety of possible crisis situations
  - For Example:
    - Bus, airline, cruise accident
    - Hotel fire
    - Act of terrorism
    - Lost or missing guest
    - Bankruptcy
    - Food poisoning
    - Natural Disaster
    - Inappropriate sexual behavior by a guide, guest

# DEVELOP COMMUNICATIONS VEHICLES FOR READINESS

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# Communications Vehicles to Develop in Advance of a Crisis

- An 800 number in reserve
- Facebook Page/Instagram/XAccounts
- Dark site prepared for website
- Non-internet based communications
  - Satellite phone
  - Two-way radios (“Walkie Talkies”)
- Smart phone app
- Hashtag to aggregate messages
- Snapchat
- Outside of U.S. – What’s App. WECHAT, etc
  
- **MOST IMPORTANT:** Establish a safe meeting place in event of emergency wherever you stop and ensure everyone knows it.

# TRAIN YOUR SPOKESPERSON

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# Characteristics of a good spokesperson

- Preferably most senior officer
- Has extensive knowledge of the company and the situation (or can access it)
- Has the self-discipline to stay “on message”
- Is continuously updated on the situation
- High energy and able to sustain that energy under pressure
- Is able to remain calm especially when injuries or fatalities have occurred, or when national or international media are covering the specific crisis as major news

WHEN THE CRISIS HITS

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# Time For Action

- Mobilize the Team and Communications Vehicles
- Monitor the Media
- Prepare a Brief
- Brief the Team
- Assign a Spokesperson

HONESTY IS ALWAYS  
THE BEST POLICY

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# BE STRAIGHTFORWARD IN COMMUNICATIONS

- SILENCE IS DEADLY. DON'T REFUSE TO COMMENT UNLESS STRICTLY ADVISED BY LEGAL.
- FALSE STATEMENTS – EVEN LITTLE WHITE LIES – WILL ALWAYS COME BACK TO BITE YOU AND WILL DESTROY TRUST IN LONG TERM
- IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER, ADMIT IT AND PROMISE TO GET BACK WITH AN ANSWER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

# EDUCATE AUDIENCES ABOUT REALITIES

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- **DON'T UNDERESTIMATE GEOGRAPHIC IGNORANCE**
  - People are generally unaware of distances outside their own environs
- **SOCIAL MEDIA AND SHORT ATTENTION SPANS PROLIFERATE MISINFORMATION ABOUT THE SEVERITY OF CONDITIONS**
- **IMPORTANT TO PROMOTE OPTIONS TO AFFECTED AREAS**
  - Alternate transportation
  - Nearby attractions, activities
  - Focus on infrastructure issues that affect customer comfort

WHEN THE CRISIS  
PASSES

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**DON'T ASSUME –  
ASSESS**

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# ASSESS THE DAMAGE

- WHAT IS THE REAL DAMAGE TO YOUR DESTINATION – AND YOUR IMAGE – VS. THE HYPE
- HOW HAS YOUR DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM BEEN AFFECTED?
- WHAT ARE YOUR CLIENTS' AND YOUR AUDIENCES' CONCERNS?
- DO YOU HAVE INAPPROPRIATE ADVERTISING/PROMOTION IN THE FIELD?

KEEP LINES OF  
COMMUNICATION OPEN

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# COMMUNICATIONS TO MEDIA

- **SOCIAL MEDIA #1 PRIORITY**
  - Crises can resurface, even when you think they are over. Monitor all of your SM channels – Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, etc., and respond in timely manner
  - Include international channels, WeChat, LINE
  - Use your channels – and others that may be most appropriate for the situation --for immediate and consistent updates
- **KEEP MONITORING PRINT AND TV**
  - Stay in touch with your contacts – be proactive if necessary to assure them that all is well
  - Maintain your monitoring services, establish alerts
- **KEEP WEBSITE CURRENT!**



# COMMUNICATIONS TO CLIENTS

- DIRECT CONTACT TO CLIENTS, PARTNERS, SUPPLIERS
  - Act now to have up-to-date contact list with email and phone numbers so you can be in touch with clients, families, suppliers
  - Create a high priority list of clients and partners to whom you can send status reports, updates

TURN UP THE VOLUME ON  
GOOD NEWS

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# FIND STORIES TO CELEBRATE!

- As the crisis subsides, seek out stories of strength, resilience, heroism, kindness to celebrate
- Promote openings of affected areas, hotels, etc., to signal a return to normalcy
- Remind potential visitors of the importance of their presence and business to the area's economy, well being
- Create or recognize milestones in recovery

# TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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# SOCIAL MEDIA OFFERS REAL-TIME ADVANTAGE

- PRODUCE REAL TIME VIDEOS FOR YOU TUBE
  - If you don't have a channel, open one
  - Simple phone videos of tourist sites, recovered beaches, re-opened attractions
  - 24-7 footage of beaches, active tourist areas
- Keep your Instagram feed filled with positive images – before and after shots can be compelling
- Enlist influencers to post on your behalf with positive messages and photos
  - Board members, friends, media influencers
  - Invite Storytellers to tell their real life experiences

# UNDERSTAND THE REALITY OF RECOVERY TIME

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# Crisis Recovery Takes Time

- World Travel and Tourism Council published average recovery times for major crises:

Type of Crisis	Average Months to Recovery
Political Turmoil	26.7
Terrorism	13.0
Pandemic	21.3
Environmental Disaster	23.8

WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT,  
PARTNER AND PROMOTE!

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# Create Proactive Recovery Promotion Plan

- Seek partners on a large scale to “re-launch” your destination or attraction
  - OTA and booking partners
  - Travel agents and consortia
  - Tourism associations
- Invite industry conferences and meetings to your location
- Organize Fam Tours for media, tour operators, agents
- Develop discount deals with partners
- Launch aggressive media relations, advertising and social media campaigns

# THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK!

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For help with your crisis plans and spokesperson training --

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