

## How to Handle Crisis Communications

### 1. What is a crisis?

It's a serious business problem that has become public knowledge.

### 2. Is this a crisis?

What do you know, and what don't you know? Who knows or is likely to know soon? How serious is it?

### 3. Who rang the alarm?

Do we have a quick-response system for finding out about crises and alerting leadership and spokespeople?

### 4. Identify the stakeholders

Who does this crisis affect? Who needs to be communicated with?

### 5. Identify the spokespeople

Who will speak for the company, and to which audience(s)? Are they prepared? Do they need media training?

### 6. Create your messages

What do you need to tell people, and whom do you need to tell? Do different audiences need different messages? If there are things you don't know, figure out how you will explain that to people.

### 7. Communicate, communicate, communicate

Talk to all your audiences through multiple channels. Be available and authentic. Don't hide – and especially, don't hide key decision-makers or leaders.

### 8. Keep communicating

Don't stop after the first announcement. Keep talking until the crisis is over and the situation has settled down.

### 9. Takeaways

What did we learn from this crisis? What would we have done differently? What can we do to avoid the next one or do better when the next one hits?

### 10. Next steps

Consider bringing in a crisis communications expert to develop crisis-response plans for operations, communications and business-recovery.