

CHECKLIST | CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Presented by Robertson Ryan & Associates

Date:

Review conducted by:

Planning is critical in business and can make all the difference when it comes to generating revenue, building a reputation, reducing insurance exposures and satisfying customers. However, while proper planning can help you grow your business, the fact is that—even if you take every reasonable precaution—a crisis can occur without warning and lead to significant disruptions and business impacts.

Simply put, a crisis is any situation that falls outside normal business and emergency response plans. A crisis may be an event your business could have avoided if the proper protocols were in place (e.g., a social media crisis, or organizational errors and omissions) or a situation that’s completely out of your control (e.g., natural disasters or a pandemic). When such an event occurs, it’s critical that you’re prepared to respond effectively with a crisis management plan. This checklist provides an overview of best practices when it comes to creating a crisis management plan of your own.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	YES	NO	NOTES
<p>Have you assessed your risks and establish goals?</p> <p><i>As part of your crisis management plan, it’s important to think critically about the adverse events that are most likely to impact your operations. In addition to identifying the crises that are most likely to impact your business, it’s important to set clear goals. This ensures that, should a crisis arise, your firm has concise objectives to work from and understands what a successful response looks like.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Have you created a crisis management team?</p> <p><i>One crucial step in crisis management involves establishing a team to help with the creation and execution of a formal, written plan. Additionally, your crisis management team will be tasked with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evaluating each crisis situation</i> • <i>Determining the threat level of each crisis situation and responding appropriately</i> • <i>Identifying outside experts to help execute or improve crisis response efforts</i> • <i>Coordinating with the proper authorities</i> • <i>Crafting and executing communication strategies</i> • <i>Reviewing and improving the crisis management plan on a regular basis</i> <p><i>Crisis management teams will differ from company to company based on the availability of qualified staff members, organizational resources, types of exposures and similar factors.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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<p>Have you identified key stakeholders?</p> <p><i>It's critical to identify the different stakeholders your business will need to reach during an emergency. These individuals and entities will likely differ depending on the incident, but could include the following stakeholders:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Customers and clients</i> • <i>Employees and their families</i> • <i>The media</i> • <i>The general public</i> • <i>Company management, and directors and officers</i> • <i>Investors and shareholders</i> • <i>Board members</i> • <i>Government organizations, regulators and other authorities</i> • <i>Suppliers</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Have you considered what communication channels you will use for outreach during a crisis?</p> <p><i>With your key stakeholders identified, you can now determine what communication channels you will use to disseminate information during a crisis. Potential communication channels can include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Social media</i> • <i>Company websites</i> • <i>Intranet portals</i> • <i>Mass notification systems (e.g., emails or text message alerts)</i> • <i>Conference calls</i> <p><i>It's important to note that each of your stakeholders will likely require a different communication approach. Sending an email may be appropriate for some stakeholders, but inappropriate for others. As such, it's important to think critically about how to contact each of your stakeholders in the midst of a crisis.</i></p>			
<p>Have you set alert levels to help you rank threats to your business?</p> <p><i>To ensure your organization and its crisis management team know how to respond to individual crises, it's important to establish an alert system. This system should allow your organization to rank various threats to your operations and outline recommended response practices.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Have you practiced the crisis management plan?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<p><i>Organizationally, there's more to implementing a crisis management plan than simply executing it during an emergency. Your firm needs to integrate the plan into your operations and train employees on what it entails. One way to accomplish this is through the use of tabletop exercises.</i></p> <p><i>Essentially, tabletop exercises are discussion-based sessions where team members meet in an informal setting to discuss their roles during a crisis. Generally speaking, a tabletop exercise asks the crisis management team to address a simulated problem, focusing on the efficiency and effectiveness of the plan.</i></p>			
<p>Do you have a documented system for initiating your crisis management plan?</p> <p><i>Once you have determined a crisis exists, it's important to activate your crisis management plan. This involves getting your crisis management team together to go over objectives and individual responsibilities.</i></p> <p><i>Tasks to account for when initiating your crisis management plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rolling out the communication plan</i> • <i>Developing a response timeline</i> • <i>Seeking assistance from external parties, including legal or technology experts</i> • <i>Moderating and responding to media</i> • <i>Monitoring the crisis and escalating response efforts</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Do you have a system in place for evaluating your crisis management plan?</p> <p><i>One of the most important actions to take following a crisis is to evaluate and update your crisis management plan. This is because every crisis event is unique and offers an opportunity to learn from your mistakes, improving your response to future incidents.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Do you have a system in place for updating your crisis management plan?</p> <p><i>Once you have evaluated your crisis management plan, you'll want to review it to ensure it is up to date. This is especially important if, during your evaluation, any of the following occurs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There's an organizational change (e.g., a merger or acquisition).</i> • <i>A new process or technology is introduced.</i> • <i>A crisis management team member's responsibilities change.</i> 			

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- *New insight is gained following a crisis.*
- *A new exposure that threatens your business is discovered.*

Be sure to share the most recent version of the plan with the crisis management team following any updates.