

DISASTER RECOVERY  
COMMUNICATION PLAN  
TEMPLATE



# DISASTER RECOVERY COMMUNICATION PLAN

VERSION HISTORY				
VERSION	APPROVED BY	REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	AUTHOR

PREPARED BY		TITLE		DATE	
APPROVED BY		TITLE		DATE	

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. IDENTIFY PEOPLE .....	3
A. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS TEAM.....	3
B. CRISIS SPOKESPERSONS .....	4
C. STAKEHOLDERS.....	5
2. IDENTIFY POTENTIAL CRISES AND A PLAN .....	6
A. BRAINSTORM POTENTIAL CRISES IN ADVANCE.....	6
B. CRISIS COMMUNICATION RESPONSE PLAN.....	7
3. IDENTIFY SYSTEMS .....	8
A. ESTABLISH NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS .....	8
B. ESTABLISH MONITORING SYSTEMS.....	8
C. ESTABLISH CRISIS VERIFICATION SYSTEM .....	8
4. IDENTIFY MESSAGING.....	9
A. DEVELOP AND USE “HOLDING STATEMENTS” .....	9
B. KEY MESSAGES.....	9
5. IDENTIFY KEY LEARNINGS.....	10
A. POST-CRISIS REVIEW .....	10



**B. CRISIS SPOKESPERSONS**

The pool of potential spokespersons/subject matter experts should be identified and trained in advance, even though you will make the ultimate decision about who will speak will be made once the crisis breaks. Consider all the different channels of communications, both internal and external, that you may need to cover.

CRISIS SPOKESPERSONS			
NAME & TITLE	EXPERTISE	PHONE	EMAIL

**C. STAKEHOLDERS**

Identify and Know Your Stakeholders. Create a complete database of internal and external stakeholders to guarantee that they obtain the exact messages you want them to hear and potentially repeat to other individuals or media outlets. Use the Smartsheet Stakeholder Communication Plan Template and update it frequently.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION PLAN					
STAKEHOLDER	POWER / INTEREST	CONTACT METHOD	FREQUENCY	CONTACT INFO	COMMENTS

## 2. IDENTIFY POTENTIAL CRISES AND A PLAN

### A. BRAINSTORM POTENTIAL CRISES IN ADVANCE

The Crisis Communications Team should identify every potential threat based on your known vulnerabilities. It may become clear that some crisis situations may be preventable by shifting existing conditions or operational methods. You should consider possible responses, and best and worst case scenarios. Often organizations are aware of an upcoming event like layoffs, a merger or a move, so you can begin to plan well in advance of the actual event.

<b>ADVANCE CRISIS PLANNING</b>	
<b>POTENTIAL SCENARIOS</b> Security Breach, Product/Technology Failure, Natural Disaster, Financial Crisis, Workplace Violence, Environmental Crisis	
SCENARIO 1	
SCENARIO 2	
SCENARIO 3	
<b>UPCOMING EVENTS</b> Mergers, Acquisitions, Moves, Layoffs	
SCENARIO 1	
SCENARIO 2	
SCENARIO 3	

## B. CRISIS COMMUNICATION RESPONSE PLAN

Your brainstorming and assessment process should lead to the creation of a Crisis Response Plan tailored to your organization.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION RESPONSE PLAN TEMPLATE	
EVENT NAME	
COMMUNICATION GOAL	
TARGET AUDIENCES	
ISSUE ANALYSIS AND VERIFICATION	
WHAT HAPPENED?	
WHICH CREDIBLE INFORMATION SOURCES CONFIRMED?	
WHAT ADDITIONAL FACTS ARE NEEDED TO PUT THE EVENT INTO PERSPECTIVE?	
WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?	
WHO IS INVOLVED?	
HOW DID IT HAPPEN?	
WHAT IS CURRENTLY BEING DONE?	

### 3. IDENTIFY SYSTEMS

#### A. ESTABLISH NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS

Set up notification systems to rapidly reach your stakeholders. Employing more than one type of communications platform (email plus text for example) the chances are much greater that the message will go through. Using your stakeholder database, you can purchase or rent an emergency notification system to automatically contact pre-established database.

##### NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS DESCRIPTION

--

#### B. ESTABLISH MONITORING SYSTEMS

Monitoring what's being said about you on traditional and social media can alert you to negative messages that could foment a crisis. Monitoring all stakeholder feedback during a crisis supports logical changes to strategy and tactics. Free services include Google Alerts and Hootsuite, but you can also use paid monitoring services to report results in various formats. Train personnel, such as Customer Service reps, who have front-line contact with stakeholders to immediately report to the Crisis Communications Team.

##### MONITORING SYSTEMS DESCRIPTION

--

#### C. ESTABLISH CRISIS VERIFICATION SYSTEM

##### **What, When, Who, How and Why:**

The first step is to determine what has happened and immediately identify and document as many facts as possible based on essential questions: What happened and has the situation been confirmed by credible information sources? What additional facts are needed to put the event into perspective? When did it happen? Who is involved? How did it happen? What is currently being done?

##### CRISIS VERIFICATION SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

--

## 4. IDENTIFY MESSAGING

### A. DEVELOP AND USE “HOLDING STATEMENTS”

You'll need to develop full messages based on the facts and that may take some time. Using pre-determined “holding statements,” immediately after a crisis gives you breathing space and communicates that you're aware and working on the matter. For example: “Expect a statement from our CEO within two hours” or “Check Twitter or our website for updates.” Holding statements should be reviewed regularly.

HOLDING STATEMENT PLANNER Acknowledge the crisis   Give yourself some time   Show commitment	
STATEMENT SAMPLES	DELIVERY MODALITY/MODALITIES

### B. KEY MESSAGES

The Crisis Communications Team should aim to develop three crisis-specific messages based on verified information for all stakeholders and, if needed, some targeted messaging for specific stakeholder groups based on identified scenarios. These can be modified based on the actual crisis. Messaging will also need to be adapted to different forms of media. For example, Twitter may require links because of character limits.

KEY MESSAGE PLANNER		
AUDIENCE	TOP THREE KEY MESSAGES	DELIVERY CHANNELS & SPOKESPERSON
ALL STAKEHOLDERS	1. 2. 3.	
AUDIENCE 1	1. 2. 3.	
AUDIENCE 2	1. 2. 3.	
AUDIENCE 3	1. 2. 3.	

## 5. IDENTIFY KEY LEARNINGS

### A. POST-CRISIS REVIEW

Once the crisis has passed, a best practice is to conduct a formal analysis in team meeting by the full Crisis Communications Team. Review what worked, what failed, and what could be improved prior to the next event, and use the results to update the Crisis Communication Response Plan.

CRISIS REVIEW FORM			
STRATEGY / TACTIC	DESCRIPTION	RESULT	IMPROVEMENT POSSIBILITIES
SUCCESSFUL			
SUCCESSFUL			
PROBLEMATIC			
PROBLEMATIC			

## **DISCLAIMER**

Any articles, templates, or information provided by Smartsheet on the website are for reference only. While we strive to keep the information up to date and correct, we make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability, or availability with respect to the website or the information, articles, templates, or related graphics contained on the website. Any reliance you place on such information is therefore strictly at your own risk.