



# **Crisis Management & Communication Plan**

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# Managing a crisis

[FIRM] and its associated companies operate on a strict code of client trust and top-class service. It is therefore vitally important to protect our reputation and that of our clients should a crisis arise, through effective communication and a proactive approach.

A PR crisis is any situation that has the potential to damage the integrity or reputation of the company, a staff member or a client, if in connection with us.

A crisis can arise at any moment and usually without warning. Social media now means that news travels quickly, 24/7. It's important to be prepared and know what to do if and when a crisis occurs.

With proper management, damage to us, our company and our long-term reputation can usually be minimised.

## Types of crises

A PR crisis can take many forms. By staying aware of what constitutes a crisis, we will all be in a suitable position to identify a crisis as it develops and act promptly to inform the correct people.

We have identified seven crisis scenarios covered by this plan:

- Product or service outage
- Data loss or breach
- Historical wrongdoing
- Personnel misconduct
- Financial mismanagement
- Rumours of acquisition or closure
- Accidental injury or death

In any of the above scenarios or other situation that may constitute a crisis, please refer to the following procedure.

# Rating a crisis

In each crisis, we will need to identify promptly the severity of the situation and its potential impact. This will determine the course of action that we follow.

Please refer to the following table:

Level	Description	Action
Level 1	<p>This is the highest level of crisis escalation and should involve an all-hands-on-deck approach. This is an immediate priority to all staff and stakeholders.</p> <p>Examples include stakeholder mismanagement, fraud, violence and professional negligence.</p>	<p>Person/Team #1: Task/action</p> <p>Person/Team #2: Task/action</p> <p>Person/Team #3: Task/action</p>
Level 2	<p>Level 2 presents a moderate potential risk or impact on business operations, customer success, and/or company reputation.</p> <p>Examples: persistent outages, historical wrongdoing.</p>	<p>Person/Team #1: Task/action</p> <p>Person/Team #2: Task/action</p> <p>Person/Team #3: Task/action</p>
Level 3	<p>This is unlikely to pose a long-term risk to or impact business operations, customer success, and/or company reputation, but the team should still be on the same page for responding.</p> <p>Examples: instances can include an executive leave of absence, a moderate customer impact that can easily be (or already has been) remedied, or rumours (such as a merger/acquisition).</p>	<p>Person/Team #1: Task/action</p> <p>Person/Team #2: Task/action</p> <p>Person/Team #3: Task/action</p>
Level 4	<p>This is where most “crises” will fall. They tend to be slightly bigger versions of day-to-day issues that may need a bit of extra effort to be fully resolved or addressed.</p> <p>Examples: Some examples include a short outage with no impact on support or an angry customer on X.</p>	<p>Person/Team #1: Task/action</p> <p>Person/Team #2: Task/action</p> <p>Person/Team #3: Task/action</p>

# The crisis communications team

In a crisis, it is important that we all know who to speak to and who is responsible for speaking on behalf of the company.

With the exception of those listed below, no member of staff or associated person should speak publicly on the company's behalf without prior permission.

The following people have responsibilities during a crisis as stated below:

Always informed:

- Point person: [NAME, PHONE, EMAIL]
- *Named Director or manager #1*
- *Named Director or manager #2*
- *Named Director or manager #3*

Informed of Level 1-3 crises:

- PR and press team: [NAME, PHONE, EMAIL]
- Internal spokesperson: [NAME, PHONE, EMAIL]

In the event of a crisis, the crisis communications team is to converge at [LOCATION] immediately before further action is taken.

If any required member of the team is working remotely, they are to be contacted immediately by [VIDEO CALL/PHONE/TEAMS/INTERNAL PHONE SYSTEM].

# The crisis management process

## Stage One – Alert

*Complete the below instructions with the names and contact details of all key points of contact, along with any further instructions to alert the team of a crisis.*

As soon as you become aware of a potential or active crisis of any severity level, you should contact [NAME] **immediately and directly** by [email/internal chat/phone].

If the crisis is severe, you should alert [NAME] **immediately and directly** by [PHONE].

## Stage Two – Assess

Once the Response Team has been notified and has gathered at [LOCATION], we need to identify and assess the situation.

*Complete the table with further specific information that you'll need, and who is responsible for collecting it. Also include how urgent the information is and who it needs to be sent to once you have obtained it.*

Do – things to remember:

- Stay calm
- Follow relevant procedures
- Contact our point person – [NAME, PHONE, EMAIL]
- Refer all press enquiries to our press department – [NAME, PHONE, EMAIL]
- Be polite
- Stay professional

Don't – things to avoid:

- Panic
- Make statements of liability
- Share information outside of the firm
- Respond to press enquiries – pass all contact on to [PRESS TEAM]
- Comment on the situation publicly
- Get upset or angry

We need to be able to answer the following as quickly as possible:

Question	Urgency	Responsible	Report to
What happened?			
When and where?			
Who was involved?			
Is there immediate danger?			
Is there possible immediate damage to clients?			
Do we understand the entire issue?			
Is the issue ongoing?			
Any action taken at this point?			

## Step Three – Communicate

Once the crisis has been identified and the facts set out, we must then communicate quickly, efficiently and accurately with customers, stakeholders and the internal team.

The following are responsible for communicating with the press and stakeholders.

External spokespeople:

- Default spokesperson – [NAME, POSITION, PHONE, EMAIL]
- Alternative spokesperson 1 – [NAME, POSITION, PHONE, EMAIL]
- Alternative spokesperson 2 - [NAME, POSITION, PHONE, EMAIL]

If the crisis requires, the following person is responsible for contact our PR team, JE Consulting, on 0121 355 4774 (office hours) or d. 07971 869 141 (out of hours).

We have chosen to nominate a single spokesperson in the event of a crisis to ensure cohesive, measured messaging. The default spokesperson or 'point person' will be thoroughly briefed on crisis management and familiar with the company crisis action plan.

If the default spokesperson is unavailable, please refer to the nominated alternatives in order of priority.

For all staff – if you receive a media enquiry, you should respond:

**“Thank you for contacting us. I will refer you to our press department for further enquiries.”**

You should also take full contact details for the enquirer to pass on to our press team.

It is the responsibility of the following person to communicate the crisis and next steps to our staff:

- Internal spokesperson – [NAME, PHONE, EMAIL]

# Holding statements

In the case of a crisis where rapid comment to the media is required, please refer to the following prepared statements which address crises common to the [SECTOR] sector.

## Accusation of personnel/management wrongdoing

*“We are deeply saddened by the recent accusations against [NAME] surrounding the [INCIDENT]. We are still assessing the situation to understand exactly what happened, and our next steps will be to work with our team and those affected to reach the best conclusion for all involved. While we do this, we would like to offer our sincere apologies to all those impacted or affected by these allegations.”*

## Confirmed personnel/management wrongdoing

*“We were deeply saddened to hear of the [ACTIONS/WORDS] of [NAME]. The opinions expressed by [NAME] do not align with the principles and ethos of [COMPANY], and we extend our deepest sympathies to those who have been harmed, offended, or troubled by this individual's [ACTIONS/WORDS]. We explicitly condemn the [ACTIONS/WORDS] made by [EMPLOYEE]. Our professional relationship with [EMPLOYEE] has been terminated. We are also working with our [LEGAL/HR TEAM] to determine the best route forward from here. Once again, we extend our sincerest apologies to all who have been impacted by this situation.”*

## Historical wrongdoing

*“We’re aware that details have come to light regarding [INCIDENT] that happened [DATES/TIMINGS]. These [WORDS/ACTIONS] are completely unacceptable and do not reflect the position of our employees, management or company as a whole. We apologise to everyone who was affected by this incident. We’re working to identify how this happened and to ensure that there is no place for [NATURE OF INCIDENT] in our organisation.”*

## Unexpected death

*“We were all deeply shocked and saddened to learn of the death of [NAME]. Our thoughts are with [NAME’S] family and friends at this incredibly difficult time, and they will be sorely missed by their colleagues at [FIRM].”*

**If the death was related to workplace negligence or error, continue:** *“We’re conducting a full investigation into the circumstances surrounding [NAME’S] death. Safety of our staff, clients and visitors is our top priority. If you have been affected by this tragic incident, please reach out to us on [EMAIL OR PHONE].”*

## Rumours of merger or acquisition

*“We have become aware of rumours circulating regarding [FIRM] and the potential for [MERGER/ACQUISITION/JOB LOSSES]. While we cannot confirm or deny any specific plans at this time, we would like to reassure all [STAFF/STAKEHOLDERS/CUSTOMERS] that we will continue to provide a top-tier service and minimise disruption going forward.”*

## Unavoidable outage

*“We became aware of an outage to [SYSTEM] on [DATE] between [TIMES]. We apologise to [PEOPLE AFFECTED] and assure all our customers that we’re working quickly to resolve the issue.*

*“If you have been affected by the outage and require further assistance from one our team, please contact our service desk on [NUMBER AND EMAIL]. Once again, we apologise for the inconvenience caused by this issue and are working to ensure that it is avoided in the future.”*

## Step Four – Assess

Once the crisis is acutely managed, those involved should assess the situation, how it was handled and how it arose to prevent it from happening again.

The findings should be formally shared with all members of the company and any action required from individual employees should be expressly stated in writing.

## Summary of actions and responsibilities

[Complete as per each crisis].

What happened?	What was done?	What could have been improved	Actions going forward	Long term impacts
<i>Crisis 1</i>	<i>Response action</i>	<i>Reflection</i>	<i>E.g. new policy</i>	
<i>Crisis 2</i>	<i>Response action</i>	<i>Reflection</i>	<i>E.g. new policy</i>	
<i>Crisis 3</i>	<i>Response action</i>	<i>Reflection</i>	<i>E.g. new policy</i>	
<i>Crisis 4</i>	<i>Response action</i>	<i>Reflection</i>	<i>E.g. new policy</i>	

0121 355 4774  
je-consulting.co.uk  
info@je-consulting.co.uk



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