

Importance of a Crisis Communications Plan

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What is a Crisis Communications Plan?

A crisis communication plan considers the messages that will be communicated to those affected by the crisis including employees and families as well as stakeholders and members of the media.

-Cassling



What are Crisis Nonprofits Face?

- Sharp Increase in Client Demands
- Reduction in Funding Opportunities (Smaller Business & Individual Donor Contributions, Special Event Changes)
- Unemployment
- Reduction in Volunteers
- Facility Closures
- Changes in Leadership



POLL QUESTION

How many of you are with organizations that have a crisis communications plan?



Step 1: Assess and Discuss Possible Outcomes

- Gather your organization's leadership.
- Examine the situation.
- How does it impact your organization?
- Who are the stakeholders? (i.e. staff, students, parents)
- What are the needs of the stakeholders?
- What are the needs of the organization?



Step 1: Assess and Discuss Possible Outcomes

- Ask questions of the stakeholders: What do you need?
- Internal communications: What does your education foundation board/staff need?



Sometimes You Have to Think Negative.

Ask yourselves what is the worst possible outcome.

Then PREPARE.



Step 2: Create Your Key Messages

- Be Honest.
- It needs to be timely, but don't let time rush your thinking.
- Confirm what you can disclose.
- Create the main points of your message and communicate them at least SEVEN times.



Step 2: Create Your Key Messages



Examples of Key Messages

Austin Ed Fund Video-Fox
Austin



Best Practices for Crisis Communications

- Know the mechanics of how you would quickly (within hours) set up donation links or crowdfunding pages and who would be responsible for doing this.
- Know who on your team can serve as an emergency response steering group of sorts that can be executing quickly.
- Know how you would get the word out quickly via media and social and who would be responsible, work with the district to amplify.
- Ensure you have strong relationship with district leadership so you can move quickly -- be ready to propose a response vs waiting for the district to ask.
- Ensure you have strong relationships with partners - who would you go to right away to ask for support?

Suggestions from Austin Ed
Fund Executive Director
Michelle Wallis



Step 3: The Crisis Communication Team

- Who is your most effective spokesperson?
- Does that person have media and public speaking training?
- Have a current media contact list
- Who will craft your communication pieces? (i.e. E-blasts, E-fliers, Website postings, Press Releases)
- Who will create social media messages?
- Who approves all copy/content?
- Keep a consistent



Tell Them and Then Tell Them Again.

- Restate Key Messages
- Clear up any rumors or misinformation
- Stress need (Honesty really is the best policy!)
- Make sure you have respondents for all platforms (Don't post and ghost!)
- Keep your message from the heart when it's about your clients
- Create a schedule for posts and outreach



Bonus

Bloomberg Crisis Communications Plan

Free Template





Thank you for attending!

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