



Crisis Communication & Issue Management

Always be prepared. Act don't react.

vulnerability audit | crisis plan | crisis simulation | issue management | media training | media monitoring 24/7
crisis assistance | message development | (social) media relations | stakeholder management | after care

Two general truths about crises:

1 They almost always happen when you least expect it and certainly at the wrong time. Murphy seems to particularly like Friday afternoons.

2 Even if your company is the most stable, most trustworthy company in the world, in today's 24/7 (social media) society, a small spark can become a blazing fire in no time at all. But here is the good news: a crisis can generally be avoided. Sound preparation can prevent a potential crisis situation from escalating into a real crisis.

Crisis communication – if well executed – can also deflect or contain a crisis without damage to your reputation. And in the best case scenario it can even make you emerge stronger and positively boost your reputation. This is easier said than done: in this information age, crises pose a tough challenge for your company.

Today's 24/7 news cycle is greatly influenced by citizen journalism and online conversations. Consequently, transparent, honest and timely communication is not just an option, it is a must, before, during and after the crisis.

At Whyte Corporate Affairs we help you to prepare for, manage, and recover from any crisis situation.

Discover W CRISIS

Our App for better Crisis Communication

- ✓ Immediate access to a list of all major Belgian media
- ✓ Tips and tricks in case of crisis
- ✓ Optional secured access to your own contacts and crisis manual
- ✓ Connected 24/7



Whyte's 10 golden rules for crisis communication

1. Always be prepared. Respect the old boy scouts' motto. Because by the time you hear the thunder, it is too late to build the ark.
2. Forget about office hours. Make sure you are not caught off guard late in the evening or during the weekend.
3. No time to waste. Act quickly, the first few hours can make or break your approach to a crisis in this instant information age.
4. Act, don't react. Communicate proactively, anticipate questions and keep the upper hand in your communication.
5. Never ever lie. Always be honest, the smallest lie will backfire right in your face.
6. Stick to your message. Share verified information, show empathy and explain which actions you took to solve the problem.
7. Define roles and responsibilities.
8. Perception is reality. Like it or not, perception defines the impact and the scale of the crisis. You must also manage this perception.
9. Practice makes perfect. Don't wait for a crisis to happen. Handling a mock crisis can teach you a lot about handling a real crisis.
10. A crisis is an opportunity. If you manage the crisis well and come up with a quick and powerful reaction, your company will emerge stronger.

Our crisis communication offering

Vulnerability audit

Some companies are well equipped to deal with a crisis, while others are sitting ducks. Whyte analyses whether your company is prepared for a crisis. What are the weaknesses and blind spots in the organisation? What are the biggest risks and exposures? Which crisis situations are most likely to occur?

Crisis plan

We then use the findings of the vulnerability audit to adapt and improve your crisis communication manual, or develop one. We streamline the processes and procedures to be followed when a crisis occurs and we define the roles, so every member of the crisis communication team knows what to do. We map the media and the other stakeholders with whom you must communicate and develop templates for press releases and other types of crisis communication.

Crisis training & simulation

To make sure your crisis communication manual is effective and realistic, Whyte organises crisis exercises. We use a script to test the procedures, assessing the people who use them to identify further training needs. Afterwards, we evaluate the exercise very thoroughly and adjust the procedures, the key team members' roles, the specific tasks and so on where necessary.

Issue management

The majority of an organisation's issues can be identified and appropriately managed beforehand. Issue management prevents issues from turning into a full-blown crisis. Whyte assists its clients with issue monitoring, early-warning systems and ongoing initiatives aimed at an organisation's many stakeholders.

Media training

Spokespeople are the key players in crisis communication. If they retain their composure, the various stakeholders tend to remain calm as well. Media training prepares the key spokespeople, and their back-ups for a real crisis. At Whyte we work with experienced journalists who provide intensive camera trainings. We play the role of the devil's advocate. At the same time, they also share valuable advice and tips and tricks on how to always keep the upper hand in your crisis communication.

Media monitoring

It takes 20 years to build a reputation, and only 5 minutes to destroy it. In an age where social media channels set the agenda, it's more like 5 seconds. In order to detect a potential crisis, you must be permanently aware of what is being said about your company, not only in the news but also on social media. At Whyte we have monitoring tools that enable you to anticipate on a crisis and prevent a potential crisis situation from turning into an actual crisis.

24/7 crisis assistance

Our crisis hotline guarantees 24/7 crisis assistance. We help you assess the situation and provide "first aid" advice and support. If necessary or useful, we assist your crisis team on site and take some of the heat of your spokespeople. Our experienced consultants are very skilled at managing crises and coordinating crisis teams. We make sure everyone in the crisis room keeps a cool head.


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crisis communication hotline



Message development

Whether a crisis is well-anticipated or whether you already find yourself in the eye of the storm, our consultants will help you identify your key messages to be used in a wide range of internal and external documents: an internal memo for your employees, a press release, a speech for your CEO, an e-mail or letter to your most important stakeholders, a message for your Twitter account, and so on. In addition, your spokesperson will be prepared with sound bites and a targeted Q&A document.



(Social) media relations

Whyte adapts your key messages to your various communication channels. Short newswires for the news agencies, clear press releases, pointed tweets, compressed sound bites for radio and television. With journalists breathing down your neck throughout the entire crisis, we keep track of the various media requests and help you prioritise which media you must get back to first. We have several former journalists in our team who will teach you how to anticipate on difficult, tricky questions.



Stakeholder management

In crisis management success largely depends on how quickly and how accurately your organisation communicates with its stakeholders, internally – your employees – and externally – customers and suppliers as well as, for instance, the mayor of your headquarters' city, a key opinion leader or a local committee. Ultimately, all those stakeholders will talk about you to their contacts or even to the media when you are in the midst of a crisis. You must establish an ongoing and long-term relationship with these stakeholders to ensure that they will be your allies during more difficult times. We map and monitor your stakeholders and develop long-term strategies for stakeholder communication and relation-building.



Crisis recovery

Like a fire, a crisis can smoulder and flare up again. You cannot let your attention slip, even for a moment, in the aftermath of a crisis. You must continue to monitor the news and social media, contact your stakeholders to let them know the crisis is contained and explain to them how you achieved this. When customers, co-workers, authorities and other stakeholders notice your quick and powerful response to a crisis, your company's reputation may even improve as a result. Or how to never let a good crisis go to waste!

Contact

Would you like to know more about our services?

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