

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

“We have to remember that it is in a crisis that reputations are won or lost.”

– American Express CEO
Ken Chenault

A crisis can strike any company, often with no warning. Even the best-prepared executives can be caught off-guard.

When considering how to respond, it pays to be guided by the thought “What would reasonable people appropriately expect a responsible organization or leader to do when confronted with this kind of situation?”

Four questions to answer when a crisis strikes

- Will those who matter to us expect us to do or say something now?
- Will silence be seen as indifference to the crisis, or as an affirmation of guilt?
- Are others speaking about us, shaping our perception among those who matter to us?
- If we wait, will we lose the ability to determine the outcome?

If the answer to any of these is “yes,” then you need to overcome fear, inertia or inattention and respond effectively – without delay.

Crisis response checklist

- Empathize and apologize early
- Send the right spokesperson, right away
- Be open – list needs, reveal capabilities, predict problems
- Seek help
- Express and show concern
- Coordinate private sector and government involvement
- Show that people, animals, and the environment come first
- Involve people/victims in the solution

Crisis Management Dream Team

These team members are charged with setting policy, providing direction, securing resources, and managing the response strategy during a crisis:

- Chairman
- President & CEO
- CFO
- COO
- General Counsel
- VP Human Resources
- VP Investor Relations
- VP Corporate Communications

Acting like the strong, silent type may not be the best course of action

- It could be construed as indifference or even guilt
- It may allow others to define your crisis, motives and actions
- It could let critics and adversaries rally their allies to define you

The Dirty Dozen

Crisis responses guaranteed to make things worse

- 1 (Apparent) lack of empathy
- 2 Communications delay caused by lack of legal or administrative preparation
- 3 Failure to accurately anticipate a problem or degree of community anger
- 4 Lack of coordination among groups within the organization and outside agencies and resources
- 5 Lack of clarity on key decisionmakers’ roles
- 6 Failure to communicate quickly and directly with those most affected, especially employees
- 7 Inconsistent messages
- 8 Failure to forecast changes in situations
- 9 Overestimating readiness
- 10 Underestimating community or government concern or appearing unwilling to cooperate
- 11 Insufficient commitment and onsite leadership to respond quickly, compassionately and conclusively
- 12 Lack of training or familiarity with the company’s crisis communications plan

Arketi Group is a public relations and digital marketing firm that helps business-to-business technology organizations accelerate growth through intelligent strategy, messaging, public relations, digital marketing, branding, and lead generation and nurturing. Consistently recognized by BtoB magazine as one of nation’s “Top BtoB Agencies,” Arketi’s core belief is that marketing generates revenue.



where
marketing
generates revenue

To discuss how arketi Group can assist you in planning for and handling crisis communications, contact Mike Neumeier at mneumeier@arketi.com or 404.929.0091 x210