



Your Crisis Management Plan: Proactive, Preemptive, Practical

Crises rarely give us time to prepare. That's why it's important to have a Crisis Management Plan in place *before* a crisis occurs.

A Crisis Management Plan allows you to be proactive and preemptive – to tackle the problem calmly with a network of support that brings a variety of skills to the table. Here are simple and practical steps to help you put your Crisis Management Plan in place.

1 Assemble a team of 4-8 coworkers who become your Crisis Management Team.

While a member of your executive staff should be on the team, don't rule out other key leadership and support staff who are gifted with good communication skills, balance and courage in the face of hardship. And don't exclude those who ask hard questions or are "too detailed."

Pull your Crisis Management Team together the moment a critical situation is identified. If you see it coming from a distance, even better – bring the team together and get to work!

A. Provide an overview of the situation from every perspective: public relations, development, operations, programs and services, finance and administration. Identify each area's potential strengths and weaknesses in the current situation, and the impact the crisis might have on them.

B. Discuss the worst-case scenario: this is not the time to say "Oh, that would never happen to us!" Remember, you didn't expect a crisis at all. What is the worst case and how will you handle it? Hope for the best, but plan for the worst.

C. Identify your support system: staff, volunteers, donors, prayer partners, vendors, supply chains, media, attorneys, medical community, etc. How will they be impacted? How will they impact your ministry? Who do you need to ask for assistance? When and how

do you need to ask? Who will be tasked with contacting the individuals in the support system?

D. Assign tasks to every member of the team: Identify the best team member for each task – often tasks can be assigned according to each member's area of professional responsibility. But don't rule out assigning jobs according to gifts and skills: organizational health, spiritual and emotional support, communications, etc.

E. Develop key messages: Agree to three or four statements that communicate your situation to your community. Include the situation itself, your response to it, and your critical needs. Once your messages are developed, don't veer from them unless the team agrees to revisions for the sake of clarity, accuracy or changing circumstances. If revisions are made, make sure everyone has a copy of the new version.

Discuss the following and set policy for:

- When and how the messages will be distributed
- Where messaging will be archived and who can access it
- How follow-up messaging will be drafted and released
- If legal or other expert counsel should be consulted before the messaging is used
- Accessibility to credible sources of information you can cite when necessary

F. Choose a spokesperson or spokespersons:

To ensure your ministry is communicating a clear and unified message, choose a spokesperson who will communicate your key messages to your staff, volunteers, donors and community. Your spokesperson should be:

- Comfortable in front of a crowd, camera or microphone
- Calm when faced with the unexpected question and able to stick to message
- Able to give brief, concise and clear responses
- Not swayed by personal feelings or doubt

- Readily accessible and available no matter what time of day
- Able to cite sources of information that provide credibility



Remember that a crisis can affect the entire organization. To avoid creating a siloed response to crisis, make sure each department has a voice on the team. For example: operations (including food service, maintenance, etc.), programs and services, development, administration, finance.

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Now that you've pulled together your plan, talk to your staff immediately – before anyone else – to let them know the situation is being handled by a competent and committed team. Equip them with general responses so they can represent your ministry at church, and with friends and family.

A. Let them know:

- They can focus on their work without worry and with confidence that the situation is under control.
- They can come to any member of the Crisis Management Team with questions and will get a quick response.
- The Crisis Management Team values their feedback and suggestions as they talk with other staff, clients, friends, family and community members each day.
- They should refer specific questions, media calls and donor inquiries to a member of the Crisis Management Team.

B. Equip them with a memo, approved by your CEO. Include:

- A summary of your plan
- Contact information for everyone on your Crisis Management Team
- Ministry-wide policies and procedures for the duration of the situation
- A recap of do's and don'ts
- Assurance and encouragement that your leadership and Crisis Management Team are guided by the Holy Spirit and through prayer in all they do.

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Finally, remember that Brewer Direct is always squarely in your corner – especially during times of crisis! Don't hesitate to contact Shellie Speer, (719) 210-6207 or sspeer@brewerdirect.com, if you need assistance with crisis management or to request a presentation for your leadership team.

This strategy sheet is provided to you by Brewer Direct's Academy and can be located in the Library. If you'd like to discuss the ideas found here or want to know more about the Academy, contact Shellie Speer, Senior VP, Academy at sspeer@brewerdirect.com or (719) 210-6207.

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