CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING CHECKLIST

During an emergency, it is imperative that those within your organization know how to communicate effectively. This includes both internal and external communications. The following checklist will highlight some recommendations for developing and executing a well-rounded communications strategy in the face of any disaster scenario.

✓	DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
	Start with a General Risk Assessment: • Identify the top threats to your organization and any vulnerabilities • Analyze what business functions are critical to your operations • Identify the resources needed to protect those critical business functions • People, Processes, Technology required and Communications Needs associated with each
	Establish a Crisis Management Team, and those within that group responsible for Communications
	Develop and regularly update an Emergency Contact List to include: • Home Phone • Alternate Mobile • Personal E-mail • Family Contact Information • Evacuation Plan
	Set up an Alert Notification System capable of multiple means of communication to employees, stakeholders & clients. TEST regularly.
	Ensure that employee, vendor & supplier mobile voice communications are not reliant on a single network. Utilize multiple carriers and train all critical personnel on the use of text messaging.
	Establish a separate, formal notification plan for employees' immediate families and close relatives in the event of loss of life, missing personnel, etc. Additionally, ensure that caregivers, day care operators and others upon whom employees may depend for family member support can receive appropriate information.
	Ensure that a formal system exists to integrate new hires into the Crisis Communications Plan
	Consider establishing a public hot line, or a "dark" Website that can be activated on short notice to provide information during an emergency to everyone in the community
	Consider an Online Social Networking Platform for web-based crisis communications (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)
	Establish a universally available and easily accessible database of information about the company in case of emergency to include company background information, critical documents, key contacts, passwords, etc.
	Consider setting up a password-protected online message board specific to your organization
	Establish remote hosting for your corporate website • Ensure proper bandwidth capability for spikes in traffic during crises • Ensure remote access to your website, and establish a team to manage updates to the site during disasters
	Develop a tactical response plan for Voice/Phone redirection
	Establish processes & plans to re-establish your network connectivity • E-mail • Core Processing • Virtual Private Network (VPN) • Remote Services
	Coordinate all Crisis Communications Planning with key vendors and suppliers to ensure seamless transition

	Develop and test your Media Communications Strategy: • Designate primary and secondary spokespersons. • Ensure all Employees know WHO the Spokesperson is • Arrange for media to have 24-hour access to a spokesperson. • Give designated spokespersons training in dealing with the media. • Establish a policy for all employee interaction with Media, ON and OFF-SITE • Maintain trustworthy, credible relationships with the media all of the time. If you do, the media will be less suspicious and more cooperative in the midst of a crisis. • Identify key audiences and develop a strategy for each. • Create Key Messages & Talking Points to ensure consistent message • Ensure you have a media kit at the ready containing information about your company or organization, as well as a list of approved contacts • Discuss possible problem areas and potential negative impacts
	Identify main media outlets through which information about your organization will be disseminated (Radio & TV stations, print media, etc.)
	Find a signage vendor with multiple regional locations to use for signage needs before, during & after a disaster
✓	DURING THE CRISIS
	Have all employees, vendors, client & media contact information on hand.
	Be the first to break the news about how your organization is responding. Even if the situation is still evolving, begin with full disclosure. ALWAYS respond to media requests.
	Continue to communicate with all key audiences until the crisis has passed. Consistency is important.
	Continuously monitor online and offline conversations in order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your strategy and messaging.
	Confirm facts, communicating openly and accurately about the situation. Your communications team must be fully aware of all the facts and know the proper, approved messages. NOTHING is "off the record"
	Use an Alert Notification System to keep all stakeholders posted on status and next steps.
	During evacuation have a central point of contact for all employees, and ensure you know where your people are located.
	During evacuation consider your phones lines - redirection to cell phones, answering service, Google Voice, or alternate locations could be critical.
✓	AFTER THE CRISIS
	Following the crisis, notify all critical people of next steps.
	Learn from the experience and anticipate the next crisis. Plan for likely and even unlikely scenarios based on this most recent crisis, and know the steps you're going to take before you have to take them.
	Debrief staff on their experiences, praising people for what went well
	Improve your plan as needed, and aim to regularly update it, including response to lingering fallout from the most recent crisis.