

Photo: Tradewinds

# SG SECURE@WORKPLACES WEBINAR



## Crisis Communication

Karen Cheah, Associate  
13 Sept 2022



# Crisis

- Major event with a potentially negative outcome
- Product recall; air crash; financial mismanagement; pandemic; industrial action; environmental disaster

# It only happens to the Big Brands ... really?



Photo Source: <https://worldakkam.com/chinese-fashion-photographer-chen-mann-apologizes-for-past-unfriendly-work-in-diors-controversy-sup-china/504314/>

## Clowns loitering outside schools: Enrichment centre apologises for stir over PR stunt after police alerted



The clowns have been reportedly spotted in several locations, such as Katong and Tampines. PHOTO: TAN CHUAN JIN

Osmond Chia

UPDATED 20 SEPT 2021, 6:52 PM SGT



SINGAPORE - The company behind a marketing campaign that got people to dress up as clowns and hang around outside primary schools has apologised for the panic caused.



<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/community/parents-urged-to-inform-children-not-to-follow-clowns-loitering-outside-primary>

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/irvins-salted-egg-apologises-for-dead-lizard-found-in-fish-skin-snack-packet-offers>

# A crisis of various proportions

# PRE-CRISIS

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A photograph of wooden blocks spelling out the words 'BE PREPARED'. The word 'BE' is on the top row, and 'PREPARED' is on the bottom row. The blocks are light-colored wood with black letters. The background is a solid yellow color.

BE  
PREPARED

# Crisis Life Cycle



# Sparks ... Festering Into A Crisis

Heating Up

- Escalating in intensity

Media Scrutiny

- Falling under close media scrutiny

Not Business as Usual

- Interfering with normal business operations

Public Image

- Jeopardising positive public image of the company

Financial

- Damaging company's bottom line

# Issues Management

Proactive and systematic approach to:



SU, P. (2019), COM302 Corporate communications (study guide). Singapore. SUSS





## Elements of Issues Management

- Starting from the top.
- Anticipating likely issues.
- Identifying issues selectively.
- Managing opportunities and vulnerabilities.
- Planning with the external environment in mind.
- Developing an action timetable.
- Focusing on the bottom-line.

SQ 117:  
26 March 1991

Importance Of Pre-crisis Readiness



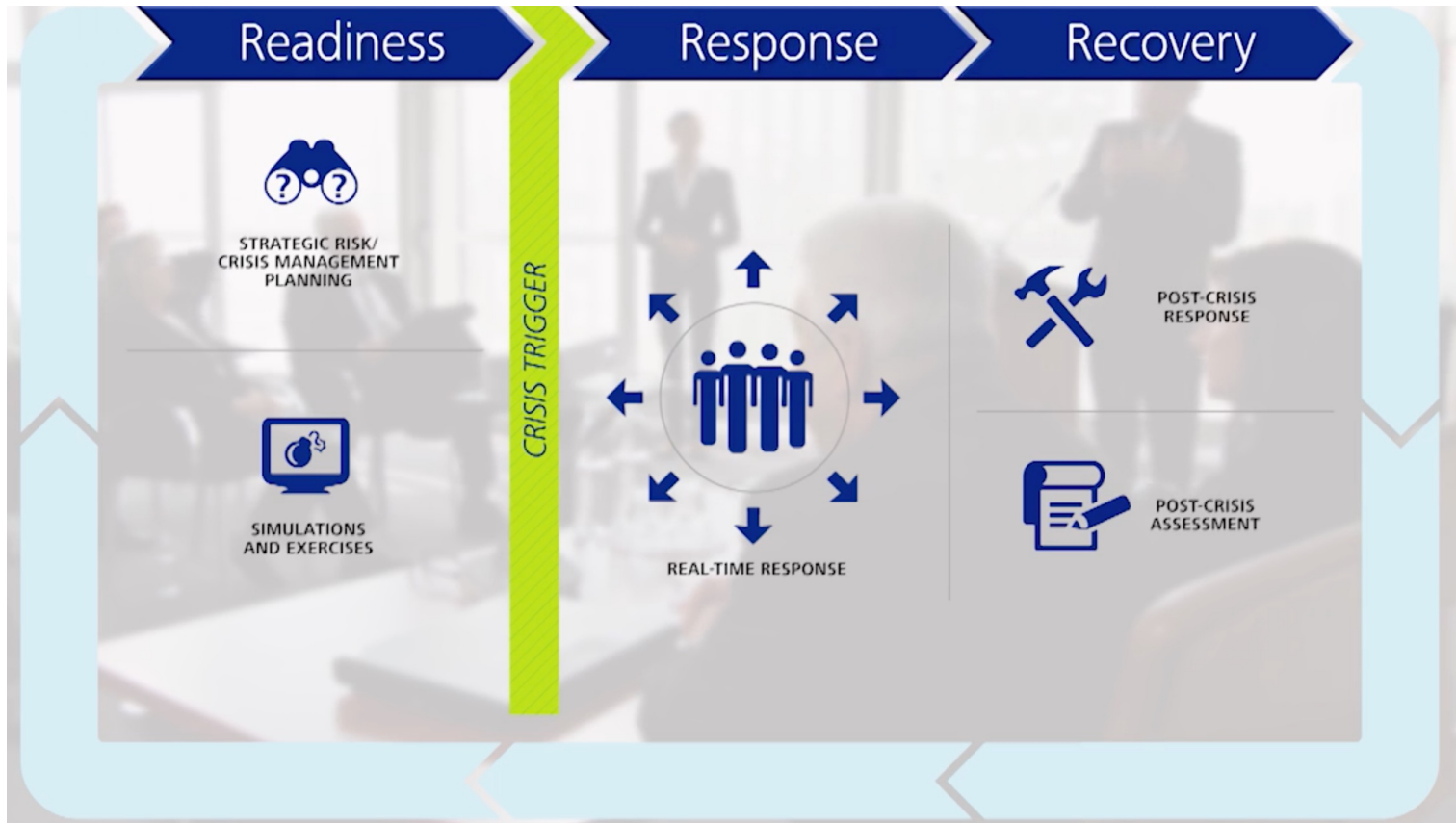
<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/video-on-demand/days-of-disaster/sq-hijack-11769932>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfLNs1EokMQ>



## The Importance of Planning

# Readiness ... Response ... Recovery



<https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/risk/articles/navigating-the-lifecycle-of-a-crisis-video-series.html>

# Pre-Crisis Readiness Plan

1. Crisis Management Team – Identify representatives from various departments with sufficient seniority
2. Appointed Main Spokesperson & Training
3. Contacts List & Emergency Response
4. Communication Means & Protocol
5. Physical & Virtual Meeting Point
6. 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Collaboration (Set Up Alerts Social Media; Counselling; Community Partnerships & Media Relationships)
7. Training & Simulation Exercises

[Reference: https://www.cassling.com/knowledge-center/six-elements-of-a-crisis-communication-plan](https://www.cassling.com/knowledge-center/six-elements-of-a-crisis-communication-plan)



# Why Crisis Readiness is Important

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“

It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently.”

Warren Buffett

BUSINESS INSIDE

Why bother? |



# The Importance of Reputation

If people do not trust your company they will...

- Refuse to buy your products or services
- Refuse to invest in your company
- Refuse to do business with you
- Ignore your attempts to communicate with them



# Detection: Characteristics of a Crisis

- 85% can be foreseen. Warning signs 12mths before crisis becomes public
- Escape of highly confidential information
- Can be triggered by employees (whistle-blowers)
- Crucial 1<sup>st</sup> 24 hours - Once public, escalation to an acute level
- 8 weeks - Median time of an acute crisis
- Without a crisis plan, crisis lasts 2 times longer – mismanagement from unpreparedness

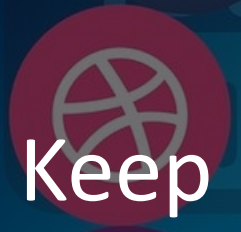
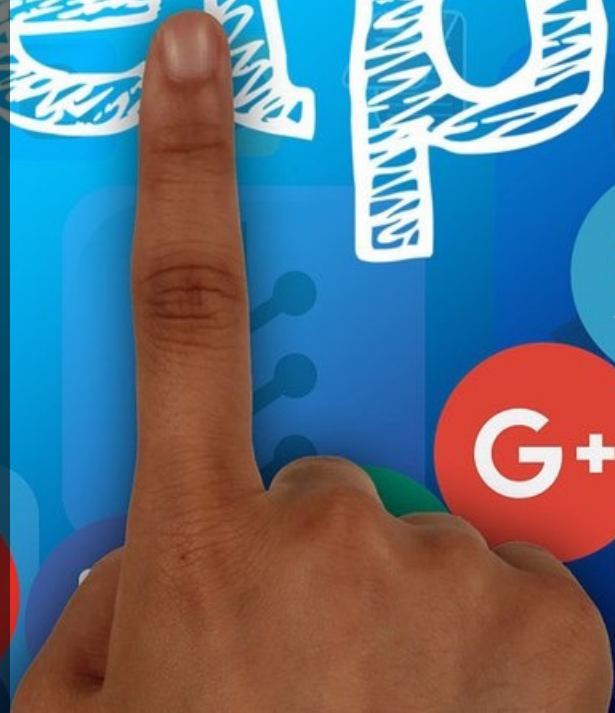




Crises are  
living things

Keep listening

help





## Cultivating Crisis Management Culture

- Implement annual formal vulnerabilities analysis
- Conduct annual research to assess company's reputation & goodwill
- Be alert to warning signs
- Conduct regular crisis management meetings
- Set aside budget for crisis management activities
- Work to facilitate communications with internal & external stakeholders
- Training for specific roles & areas including media training



## Crisis Communication What to Do and Say

## What is Crisis Communication?

Crisis communication refers to the dissemination of information by an organization to address a crisis that impacts customers and/or the organization's reputation.

Source: HubSpot

# Crisis Communication Plan

A set of guidelines used to prepare a business for an emergency or unexpected event. These plans include steps to take when a crisis first emerges, how to communicate with the public, and how to prevent the issue from occurring again.

Source: HubSpot

# WHO ARE YOUR KEY PUBLICS?

- People who have a shared interest in or concern about an organisation. Different sets based on the organisation and industry.
- Internal and External
- Level of Interest :
  - Their importance to the organization's survival and success
  - Whether they are a threat or an advocate
  - Their power to influence, their legitimacy
  - Urgency — when they might act

# Key Publics



EMPLOYEES



INVESTORS



CUSTOMERS



CORPORATE  
PARTNERS



VENDORS



MEDIA



OPINION  
LEADERS





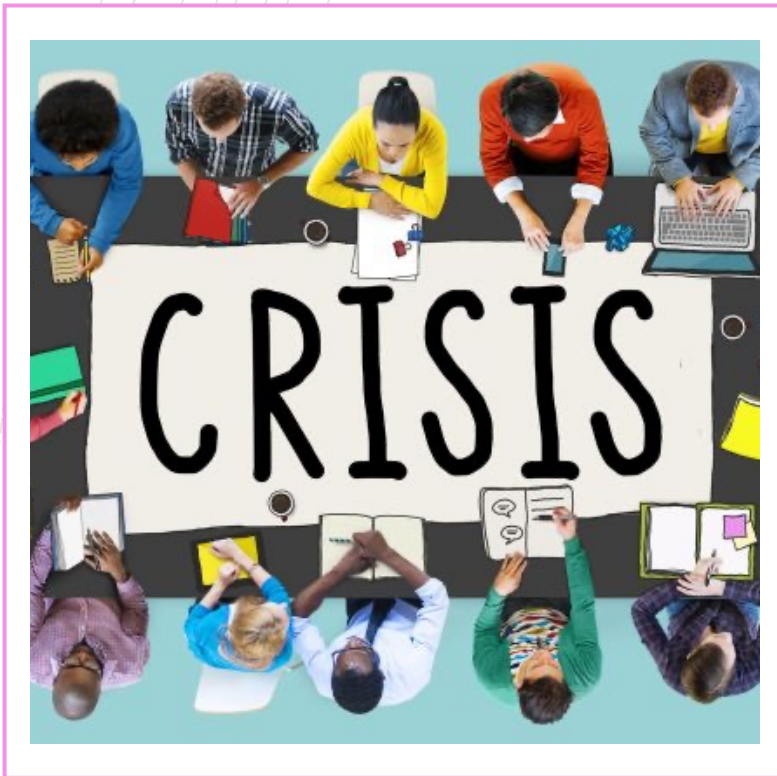
iStock/zubada

# Communicating in a Crisis

## 8 Steps to Consider

SU, P. (2019), COM302 Corporate communications (study guide). Singapore. SUSS

# #1 Containment Control Situation



- Mobilize the Crisis Management Team
- Identify problem
- Strategize on approach & message
- Firewall Crisis Containment Team
- Reach out to Internal & External Contacts
- Identify Spokesperson
- Dispatch relevant person to site

## #2 Gather the Information

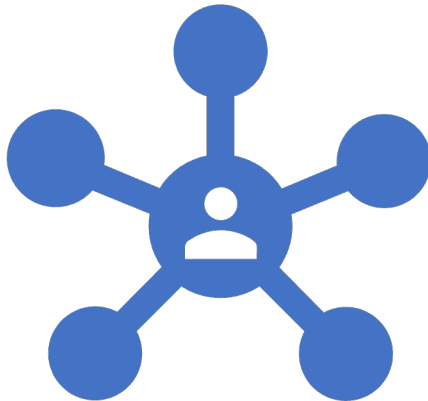
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- Get the facts – gather as much information as possible from reliable source.
- One key person to collate all information.
- Know that the information and situation may be fluid
- No speculation, no assigning of blame or providing a quick fix till you get the facts

## #3: Crisis Central Command

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- Physical or Virtual - Relocation to a centralized space (physical location with computers, internet connections, phones) or virtual work space (data retrieval and communication)
- Platform for all communication during the crisis

# Communication Channels

## Internal Channels

- TownHall / Internal Teams
- Intranet
- Company Website
- Emails

## External Channels

- Social Media
- Press Conference
- Company Website





## #4 Communicate Early & Often

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- Communicate as soon as possible with what ever information on hand, especially when it involves lives and property.
- Avoid silence and delayed responses. Share what you don't know and what you do.
- Give assurances - shield constituencies from panic by allaying probable fears that people have about the situation
- Employees, the media and affected constituencies should know that crisis centre will issue updates at regular intervals
- Communicate values - e.g. concern for public safety, show commitment to coming to the aid of people affected by the crisis, even if you do not have all the details yet



## #5 The Media & Social Media

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- Understand the Media's mission during a crisis
- Mobilize your media relations
- Social Media Listening
- Speak first and often
- Be prompt, frank and give full information – but be aware of who gets the information when (if it involves victims and casualties)
- Release an initial media statement first till you can call a press conference
- Get the first sound bite right



The Era of Fake News



# Citizen Journalism



**NTU student accused of standing on toilet bowl to peer at another man in next cubicle on campus**

75 views | 0 comments



**Ordering a dozen 1.5-litre bottles of water from GrabMart? Spare a thought for the delivery rider**

26,281 views | 22 comments



**Man attacks another with stroller for not holding lift at a Tampines mall, police looking into matter**

29,728 views | 88 comments

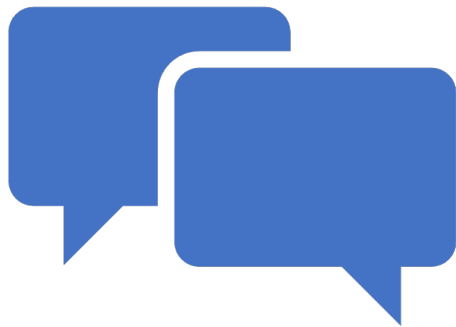


**National Geographic UK says S'pore is in M'sia, netizens respond: 'Welcome back'**

26,419 views | 20 comments

# #6 Communicate Directly with Affected Constituencies

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- Internal publics
- External publics
- Determine communication objectives
- Develop communication tactics – what and when
- Monitor and evaluate results of communication

# #7 Continue Business Operations

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- Can the business carry on? If yes, then do so.
- Find suitable replacements ahead of time for those who are on the crisis team

# #8 Plan for Recovery

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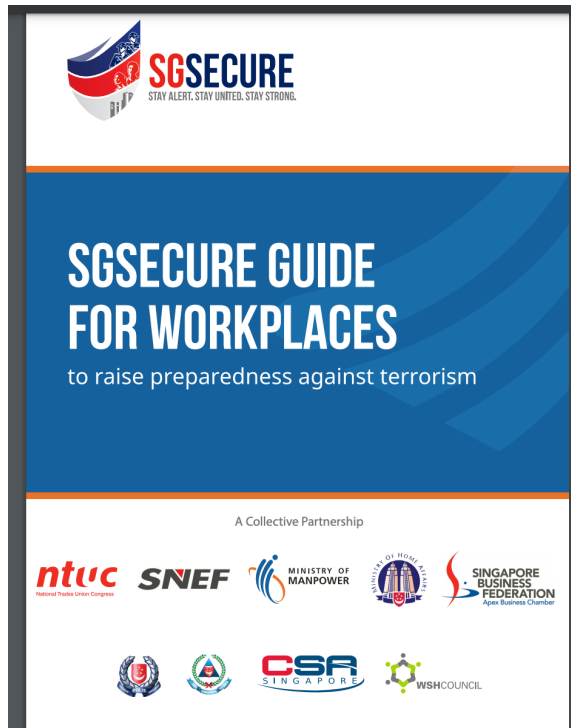
- Learn from experience
- Make plans to avoid another crisis
- After crisis has passed, executives should work with their managers that the organization is better prepared

Be  
Prepared



# Resources Available

- <https://www.sgsecure.gov.sg/resources>
- <https://www.mom.gov.sg/-/media/mom/documents/employment-practices/sgsecure/guides/sgsecure-retail-fnb-guide.pdf>
- <https://www.mom.gov.sg/-/media/mom/documents/employment-practices/sgsecure/guides/sgsecure-guide-for-workplaces.pdf>



# Additional Resources

- Ministry of Home Affairs: Community Engagement, Home Team Volunteer Network, Community Safety & Security Programme
  - <https://www.mha.gov.sg/about-us/key-topics/community-engagement>
- Media Training Courses
- Part-Time Courses on Crisis Communication at Institutions of Higher Learning



# Thank you!

Karen Cheah  
Associate Faculty  
School of Humanities & Behavioral Sciences  
SUSS

Email: [karencheah001@suss.edu.sg](mailto:karencheah001@suss.edu.sg)

