

## Crisis Communication

Crisis communication is vital when disruptive events occur, and depending on the nature of the circumstances, company leadership needs to be proactive and visible with their employees, clients, vendors, and financial connections. With the focus on social media, any delay in the delivery of information and how it applies to each relationship will impact confidence and lead to loss of trust.

When identifying the best candidate to represent your company in times of crisis they should possess the right position, the right skills, and specific training related to crisis communication. It's important that she or he is well informed and can speak on behalf of your brand and have a balanced combination of confidence and empathy, is well-spoken, and maintains their composure under pressure.



An informed crisis communication strategy for any organization starts first and foremost with its employees. Not only are they the production and service capacity for the organization, their interaction with other stakeholders, i.e., customers, vendors, and investors, can support or unintentionally undermine any corporate communication strategy.

Although generic “holding-statements” are a necessary bridge to enable the organization to investigate the crisis and develop a responsive strategy, it is critical for the organization to establish and meet stakeholder expectations with regular updates, timelines, and commitments. Written documentation is the best form of communication, as it can be scrubbed and referenced in emails, social media, and websites. It also provides a script for any verbal communication. Personal interaction with specific stakeholders will be necessary, but should be managed, as it is easy to go off script and convey uncertainty or doubt.

Post crisis communication is equally important and should highlight specific responses that build trust to focus on the future. The organization’s reputation will be formed during the crisis and will endure beyond when it has passed. The stakeholders will want post crisis messaging that is consistent and accurate, to instill confidence and builds trust.

Whether an individual is preparing for a leadership role, or has been in a position of leadership for a time, a leadership assessment is a powerful tool to determine their natural leadership orientation.