STEPS TO CREATE A CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. Risk Assessment

Identify all the potential issues and crises that would disrupt your business function and processes.

- Work with all stakeholders and your leadership team and list all relevant threats and vulnerabilities that could impact the organisation.

These might include public relations blunders, social media gaffes, product recalls, cyberattacks, workplace issues, and extreme weather events. Or COVID!

2. Determine the business impact.

A business impact analysis (BIA) qualifies the potential impact of a business-disrupting issue.

Completing a BIA can reveal a variety of impacts, including:

- Employee harm
- Customer dissatisfaction or attrition
- A damaged reputation in the public eye
- Lost or delayed sales or income
- Increased costs
- Regulatory fines

Consider every angle of a threat. Identify stakeholders who don't see the value of issue and crisis management plans.

3. Identify contingencies.

Once you have determined what risks could impact your business and identify which actions will help your organisation respond effectively to each threat.

Think about the steps required to resolve the issue, what resources would be necessary, and how employees can help.

For example, the response to a social media blunder might include your digital team issuing statements across all your social media platforms. In contrast, your customer service team has details on what to say on incoming calls.

A product recall may require help from logistics to determine how to fix the problem. At the same time, customer service, sales, and public relations work together to answer customer questions and protect the company's reputation.

4. Build the plan

Once you have determined a contingency for each potential threat, create a plan with all relevant stakeholders.

Key employees, such as department heads, can help to provide insight into available resources and potential hurdles.

- You also may need input from outside parties, such as contractors and partners that work closely with your business.

Keep in mind any relevant regulatory requirements, and determine how you will continue to meet them, even during a crisis.

For example, we are complying with occupational safety laws.

5. Communication and roles

All employees must understand their roles during a crisis.

Stress and panic can make it difficult to remember your role in crisis response. However, there are two ways to mitigate the effects of stress.

a) Ensure your employees have the information they need.
    - During the tense moments of a crisis, people require immediate access to detailed information.
    - Consider ways to quickly and effectively distribute crisis checklists and information that may be available, which includes real-time access to up-to-date documents, incident reporting, contact lists, messaging capabilities, and collaboration tools.

b) Induct each new employee and frequently train stakeholders on your issue and crisis management plan.
    - Stage regular drills and rehearsals to ensure that every individual is familiar with the plan, can respond confidently, knows where to get additional information, and understands their role

6. Review, Revisit, Update

Once your plan is written and approved and has been tested, be sure to revisit it regularly.

Keep the plan up to date. New technologies are implemented, and other changes occur in a business.

- Set regular review dates and test the plan at least annually to keep the content fresh.

Need help to create a plan?

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