



# Creating an Engagement and Communications Plan



# What is a Crisis?

Anything that causes a disruption in an organization's operations, the ability to meet its mission or that negatively impacts its reputation.

# Edicts of Crisis Comms Management

- 1. You will never have all of the information you need at any given time in order to make a decision.**
- 2. Focus on controlling what you can control based on the information you have in hand.**
- 3. Two types of crisis: the Known Known (crisis playbook) and the Unknown Unknown (crisis comms management principles)**

# Assess Crisis Impact Metrics

## Formal - Media & Business Analytics

- Media outlet – name, location, audience reach, demographics, type (print, broadcast, digital)
- Social Media – Who posted, level of engagement, notable influencers
- Business status – How sales or stock price are impacted

## Informal - Anecdotal Impressions

- Third Party Buzz – Organizations, leaders, members, impressions
- Internal Buzz/Chatter – Feedback from trusted internal leaders and voices
- Influencer personal/individual reactions – Friends and associates of the organization



# Crisis Playbook

A pre-determined plan for managing a crisis response based on established protocols, content and rules of engagement

# Crisis Response Team (CRT)

The core team responsible for briefing, managing and driving response to crisis

- Communications
- Legal
- HR
- C-Suite
- Government Relations
- Subject Matter Experts
- Area/section Leaders

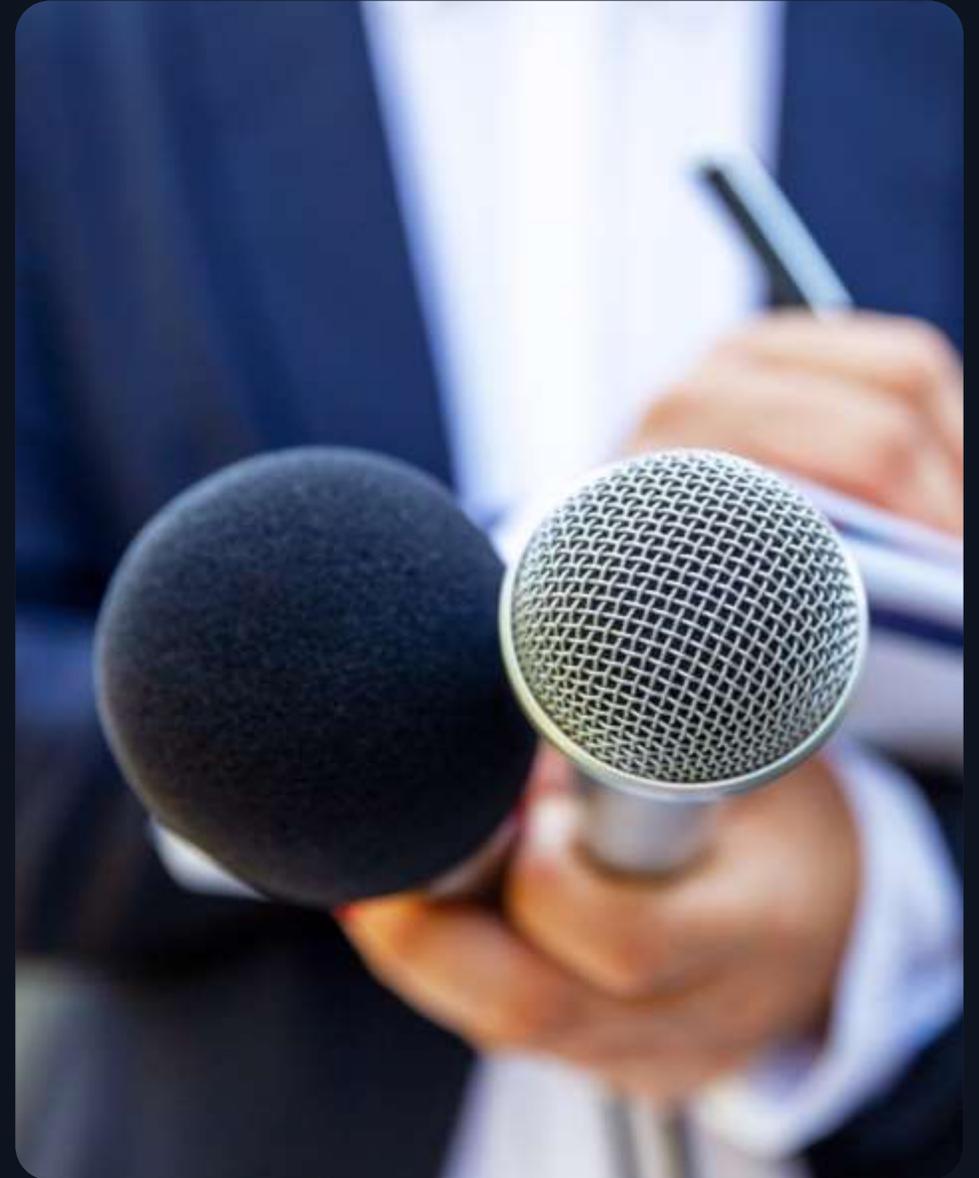
This group can be augmented as needed over the course of the crisis until it is resolved.

# Core Elements of a Crisis Playbook

- Core/Anchor Messaging
- Issue Messaging and Statements
- Tough Q&A for each issue
- Channel Engagement & Media Monitoring
  - Earned – media contact list
  - Owned – Internal channels for stakeholders (employees, board of directors, etc.)
  - Shared – Social channels protocol
  - Paid – Digital, Social, Broadcast, Print

# Spokespersons and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

- Individuals or groups who may engage with media and key stakeholders for interviews, statements or direct communications
- Prepare with media and presentation training
- Practice, practice, practice



# Internal/Stakeholder Communications Protocol

Consider if, when and how to notify...

- Employees
- Board of Directors
- Partners & Suppliers
- Supportive Third Party Organizations
- Key Influencers/Marketing Spokespersons

# External Communications Protocol

## Determine the rules of engagement for the media

- No response
- Background briefings
- Proactive outreach to key outlets
- Reactive statement and from whom
- Spokesperson interviews

# Pressure Test the Plan

## Conduct a tabletop exercise at least twice annually

1. Assemble the core Crisis Response Team in person
2. Alert SMEs that they may be called upon for the event
3. Run the exercise
4. Conduct an After Action Review (AAR)
5. Update the plan as needed

# Crisis Comms Management Principles

Working through a sudden event that impacts operations or reputation

- Assemble the core Crisis Response Team in person or virtually
- Assess the environment (operations, reputation, media, influencers)
- Make decisions based on the information in hand
- Use elements of the playbook that are material to the situation
- Assess and respond as appropriate

# Microsoft responds to OpenAI turmoil

## Develop Options

- A. Support interim CEO, work with her to convince board to reinstall Altman
- B. Use financial leverage to reinstall Altman and restructure governance
- C. Hire Altman and as many of his team as possible, and rebuild OpenAI within Microsoft

## Establish Communications Strategy

- Go on offense; communicate externally early and often
- Use CEO Satya Nadella to make the company's case
- Negotiate publicly
- Activate dissatisfied OpenAI employees
- Coordinate with Altman to demonstrate a unified front

## Remain Flexible

- Crisis developed and evolved quickly – Microsoft stayed engaged and offered CEO perspective throughout
- By setting out options in public, they established that several outcomes would constitute a win

“Microsoft executives have since concluded that the current situation is the best possible outcome... Indeed, the conclusion to this soap opera has been seen as a huge victory for Microsoft, and a strong endorsement of its approach to developing A.I.” – [The New Yorker](#)

# Any Questions?

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**Thank You!**

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