Issue Management

Prioritization and Consensus Building

June 2025

Origins of Issue Management

Howard Chase, 1976

- Corporate PR officer
- Noted the **rising influence of outside stakeholders** in 50s and 60s
- After advising many CEOs through crisis, designed a way for organizations to head off many potential crises: Issues Management.

*"Powerful social forces don't give a damn about widgets," Chase says. "To avoid being legislated or regulated out of business, the producers of goods and services must **build bridges** between themselves and today's prime movers of public policy."*
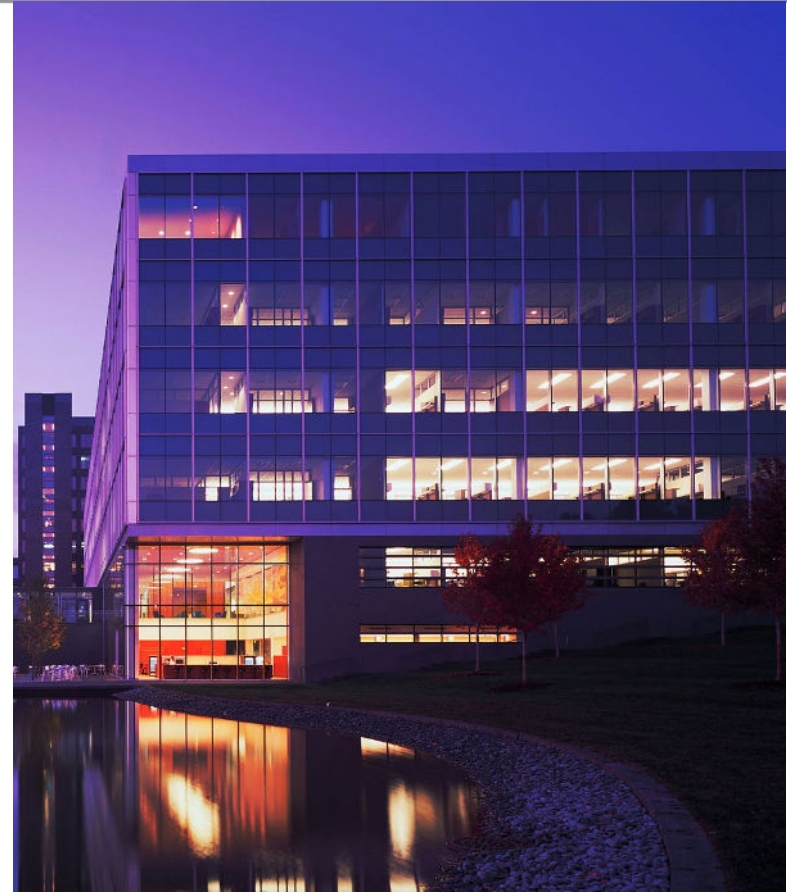
Issues: the gap between your organization's actions and stakeholder expectations.

Issues Management: the work you undertake to close or manage that gap.
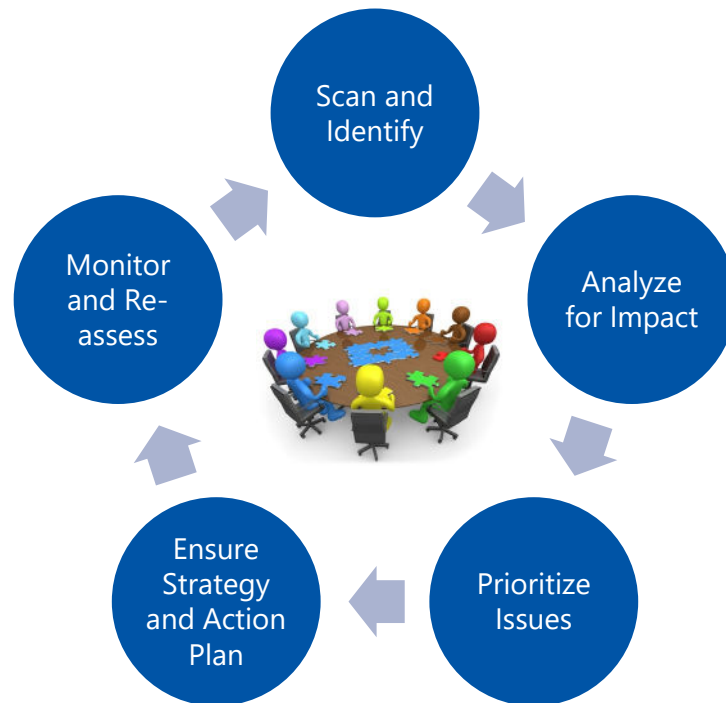
Key Steps

What

We detect, monitor and influence action on <u>regulatory</u> and <u>reputational</u> risks that impact the company.

Why

- To protect our license to operate
- To get ahead of the next crisis

We expect our cross-functional partners to:

➔ Raise issues

➔ Align on risk and response

➔ Ensure action where needed

Scanning and Identifying

1

Gather multiple perspectives

- Internal
- NGOs, investors and customers
- Consumers/public
- Think tanks, peer reports, media
- Science/objective

2

Attempt to measure change over time

- Consistent SMEs to help gauge
- Data reports that can show volume, intensity

3

Start broad

- Capture the universe
- Then put your criteria into action
- Show internal stakeholders what's in/out

4

Define and Document

- Define the issue and what drives it
- A record gives you clarity over time, helps internal stakeholders get up to speed
- Capture perspectives from 1

Analyze for impact

External Sensitivity

- How hot is the issue externally and to whom?
- Is interest driven by public, NGOs, investors, regulators, media, or other?
- Is there a scientific basis, or lifestyle/preference?

Internal Relevance

- What have we said or done before on this issue?
- Is it core to our industry, business, or values?
- What are the possible actions/solutions? How feasible or costly are they?
- What is this issue costing us in $, opportunity, or reputation?

Unique aspects?

- Litigation potential
- Company and issue history
- Timeline to fruition
- Other points of sensitivity

Prioritization tools

Any system or tool should:

- Be right for your audience

- Be multifactorial

- Be able to rank disparate issues

- Come with transparent scoring and definitions

- Other tools may rank by urgency / time

Potential Impact on Company *(cost, reputation, solutions, values, science)*

	Somewhat public, costly challenge to business	Public hot topic for industry including org – business at risk
Regulatory challenge with little media coverage		Public hot topic that could damage org reputation, not significant $ risk
		A sensitive topic externally, but one that has little direct impact on the company

Public Sensitivity *(NGOs, Media, Consumers, Authorities, Retailers, Competitor pressure)*

Strategy and Action Plan – Options

Business action
- Start or stop
- Change how you do something
- Share more information

Corporate action - CSR
- Fund / support mitigation
- Take a stand (commitment, coalition, etc)

Communication
- Awareness and empathy
- Transparency: Org values, goals, actions
- Responsiveness
- Consistency across channels and time

"*Did the issue go away, or did we just forget about it?*"

- R. Allendorf
former General Counsel, General Mills

Monitor and Re-Assess

External Environment	**Internal Organization Characteristics**	**➔ Appropriate Reaction**
• Volume/tone of public conversation • Connotation changing? • Have goalposts shifted?	• Exposure • Risk tolerance • Awareness/key partners? • Position embedded?	• Issue review cadence • Thresholds for reactivation or closing the issue

Key Steps

Scan and Identify

Analyze for Impact

Prioritize Issues

Ensure Strategy and Action Plan

Monitor and Re-assess
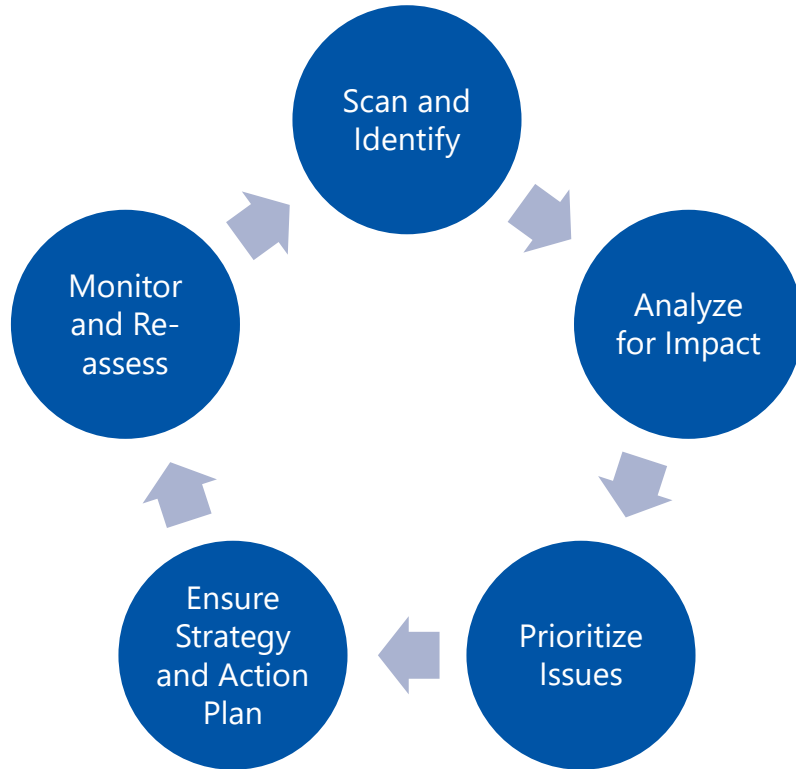
Challenges & Opportunities

- Business thinks we're telling them not to do something

- Functional partners don't want to see their remit presented as a hot issue

- Meetings feel different – not always a cultural fit for a decision-driven culture

- Get brought in too late

- Risk lens sometimes = a rain cloud

- "Bring us in early and we'll smooth the road for your success"

- We acknowledge the external challenges even if mitigations are sufficient

- Regular reminders – "why you're here"

- Demonstrate success and support for business strategy and goals - this gets better

- We're here to help navigate risks and capture related opportunities.

Cross-Functional consensus

Bring forward issues > tell us if this matters to the business

- Quality + Safety

- R&D

- Government & Public Affairs

- Consumer Insights

- Media/Social Media

- Sustainability

Bring forward issues **< Tell us if this matters to the business**

- Business Leader

- Regulatory / Compliance

- Investor Relations

- Direct Consumer questions/comments

- Legal

Consensus building

- Everyone's perspective informs the background context and prioritization

- Cross-functional partners are key in enacting mitigations, not just in identifying

- Clear scope, cadence, and use of the output helps people trust the process

- Continuity over time is helpful

- Elevate relevant expertise from across the group in examining/reexamining issues

How do we know we're doing this well?

IM Benchmarking:
- Public Affairs Council
- Issue Management Council
- Peer conversations

Other places you go?

Thank you!