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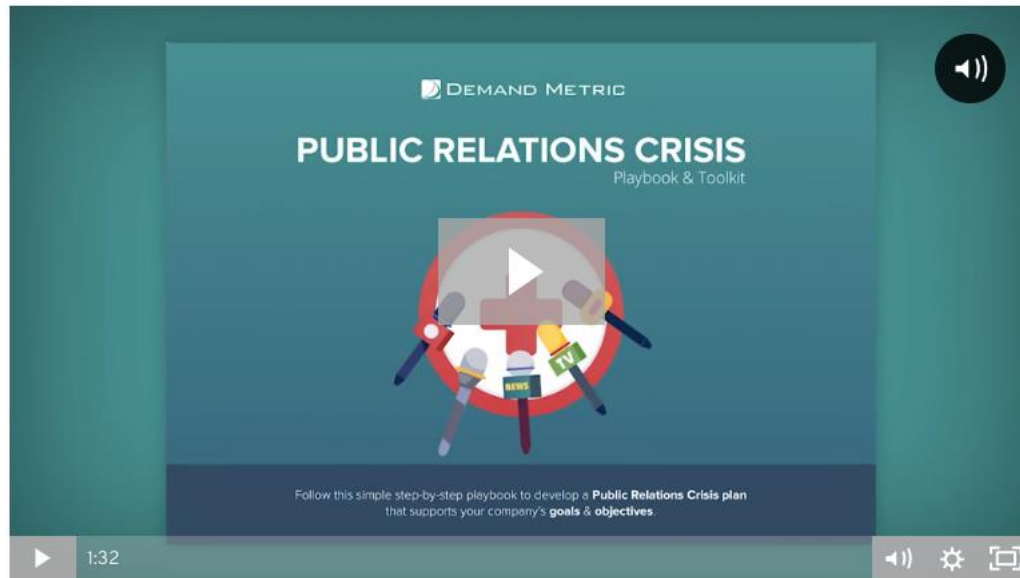
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# Public Relations Crisis Playbook

April 1, 2018



1:32

Our Public Relations Crisis Playbook is a planning methodology that highlights our premium tool-kit of 23 tools and templates to develop a Public Relations Crisis plan that supports your company's goals and objectives.

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# Crisis Level Chart

April 1, 2018



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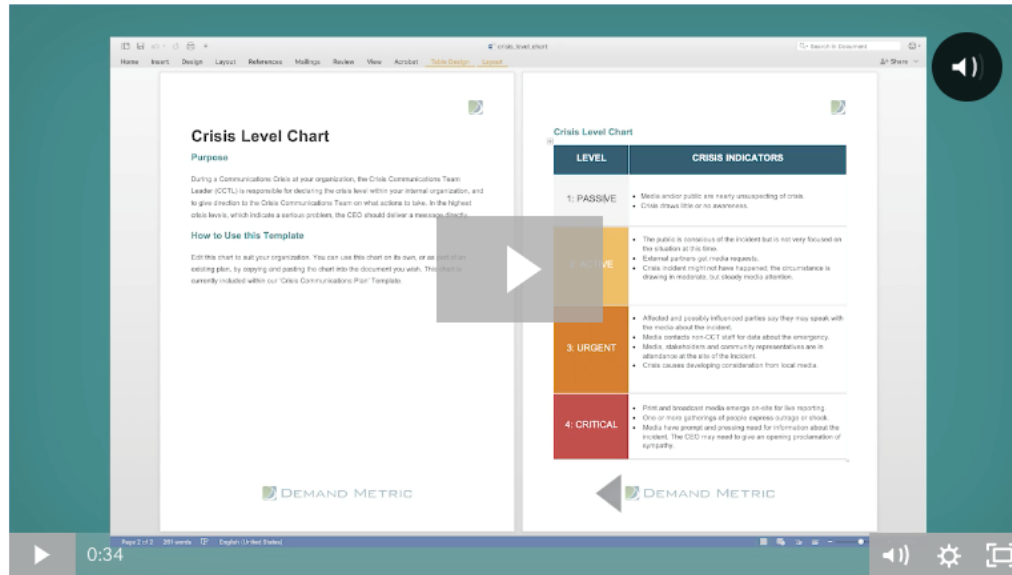
## Your Problem

During a Communications Crisis at your organization, the Crisis Communications Team Leader (CCTL) is responsible for declaring the crisis level within your internal organization, and to give direction to the Crisis Communications Team on what actions to take.

## Our Solution

Use the Crisis Level Chart to understand the different crisis levels within your organization.

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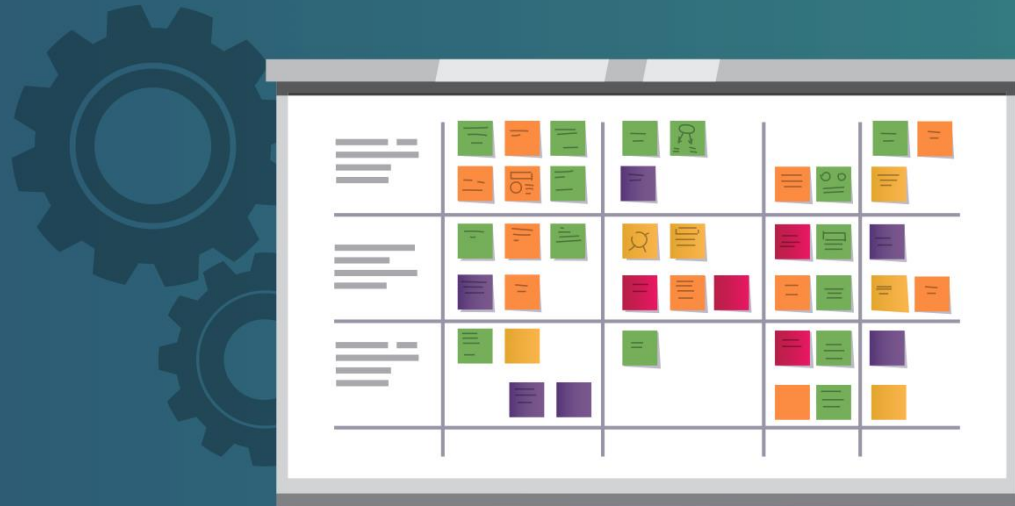
EFR

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# AGILE MARKETING

Playbook & Toolkit

Follow this simple step-by-step playbook to develop an **Agile Marketing plan** that supports your company's **goals** & **objectives**.

# Our Agenda

- The COVID-19 Crisis

- PR Crisis Overview

- Step-By-Step Plan

- Recommendations

- Q&A

# Special Thanks



Dr. Vincent
T. Covello



Dr. Tim
Tinker



ROBIN COHN

HOW TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE MEDIA

THE PR CRISIS BIBLE

WHEN ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE



CIPR

"Practical, relevant, clear and usable. Should be on the bookshelf of anyone interested in this area. This is the book I wish had been available when I first started learning about crisis management – an invaluable resource."
Kieron O'Keefe, Head of Crisis Management, BG Group

Crisis, Issues and Reputation Management

PR in Practice

Andrew Griffin
foreword by Mike Regester



ATLAS RESEARCH



WIDMEYER COMMUNICATIONS

A FINNPARTNERS COMPANY

# CliffsNotes

## On Krakauer's
# Into the Wild

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# PUBLIC RELATIONS CRISIS

## Playbook & Toolkit



Follow this simple step-by-step playbook to develop a **Public Relations Crisis plan** that supports your company's **goals** & **objectives**.

# PUBLIC RELATIONS CRISIS
## Framework

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**Leverage the framework below** to quickly empower your organization's public relations crisis strategy.

> ℹ **Click the buttons** below to access all related training, tools, templates, and other resources.

| ① ASSESS | ② NOTIFY | ③ MANAGE | ④ DEVELOP | ⑤ MONITOR |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Crisis FAQ Template | Crisis Level Chart | Crisis Communications Schedule | Key Audiences and Groups Questions | Crisis Coverage Checklist |
| Holding Statement for Media Template | Crisis Communications Team Chart | Key Audience and Groups Crisis | Crisis Messaging Map Tool | Story Trends and Stakeholder Issues |
| Press Release Template | Crisis Communications Roles Matrix | Crisis Inquiry Journal Template | Messaging Approval Form | |
| Media Response Policy Template | | Spokesperson Designation | Crisis Internal Notifications List | |
| | | Spokesperson Procedures Guide | Crisis External Notifications List | |
| | | Topic Matter Expert Contact List | | |
| | | Crisis Procedure for Family Members | | |
| | | Crisis Procedure for the Media Template | | |

| 1 ASSESS | 2 NOTIFY | 3 MANAGE | 4 DEVELOP | 5 MONITOR |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Crisis FAQ Template | Crisis Level Chart | Crisis Communications Schedule | Key Audiences and Groups Questions | Crisis Coverage Checklist |
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| | | Topic Matter Expert Contact List | | |
| | | Crisis Procedure for Family Members | | |
| | | Crisis Procedure for the Media Template | | |

# THE COVID-19 GLOBAL CRISIS
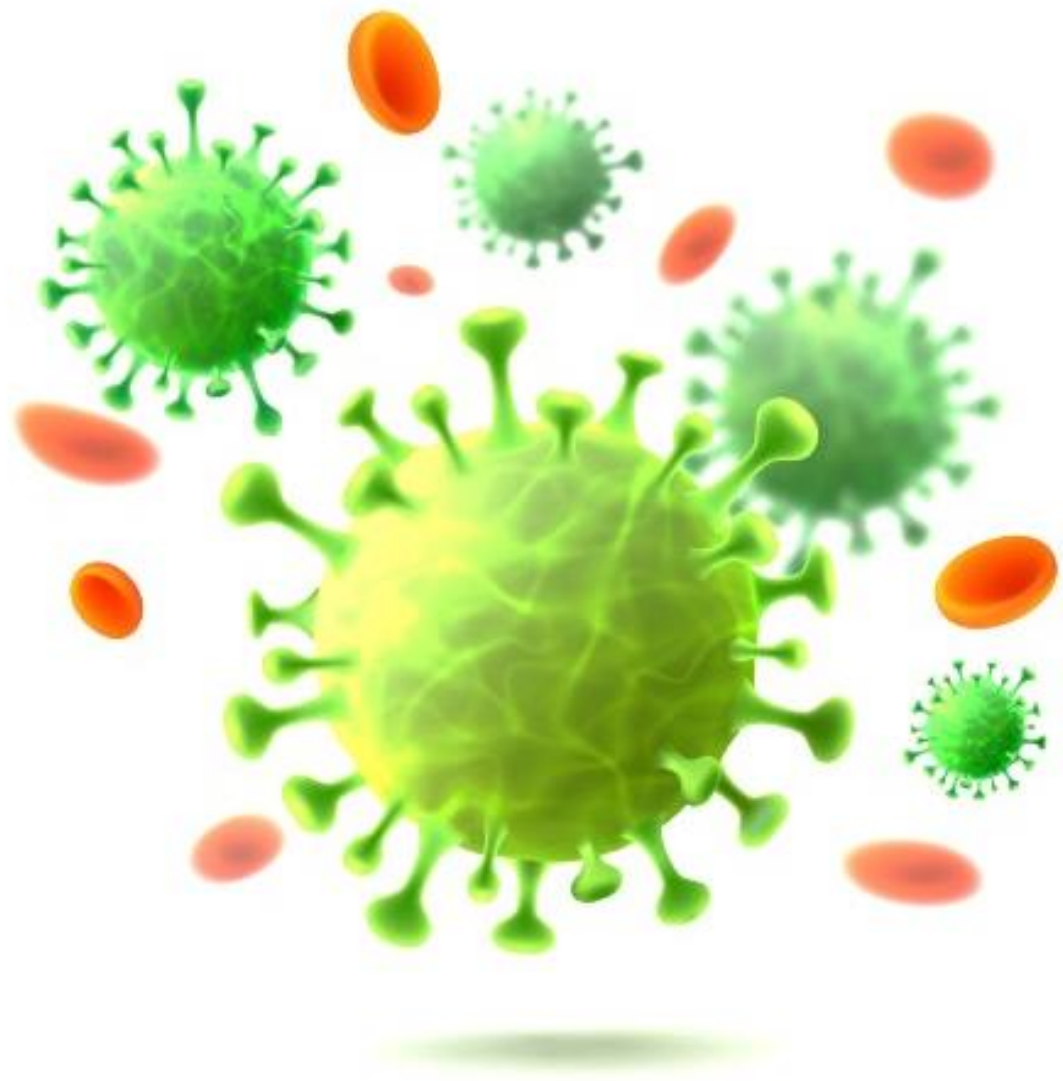
- **Just the Beginning?**
- **Could Peak May/June**
- **Borders/Schools Closed**
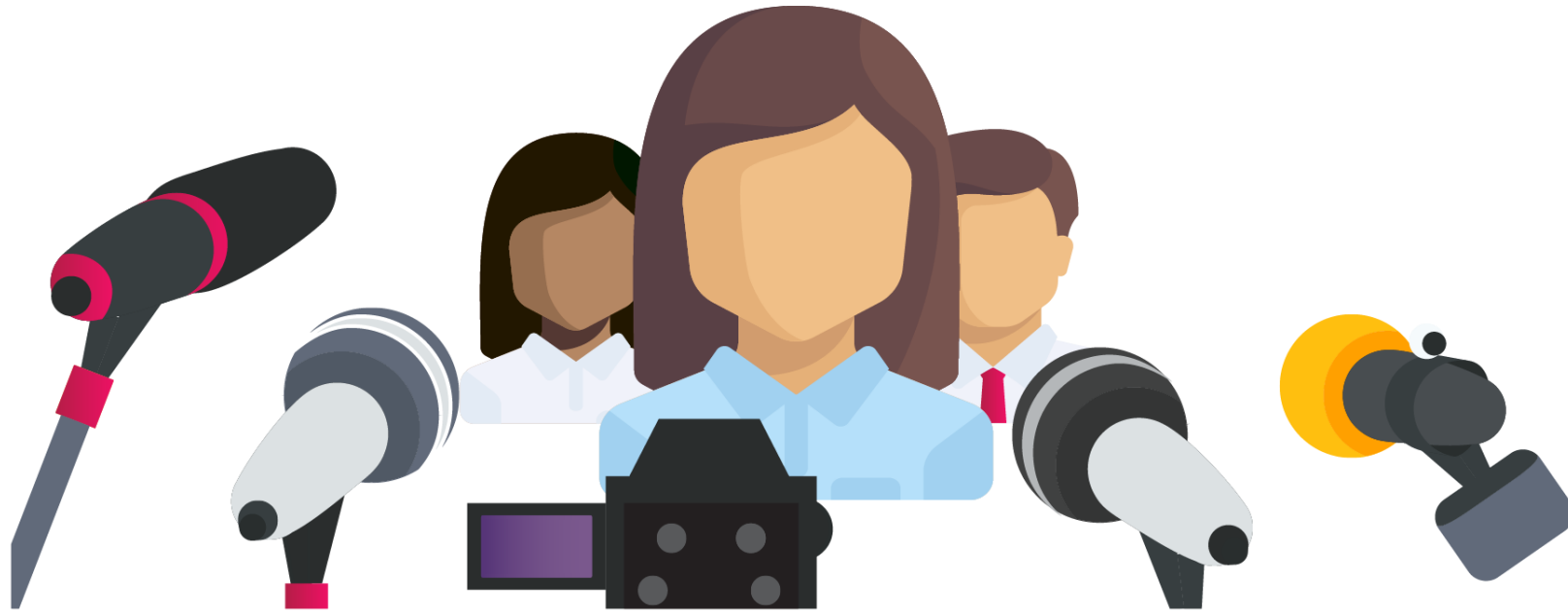- **Self-Isolation Mandated**
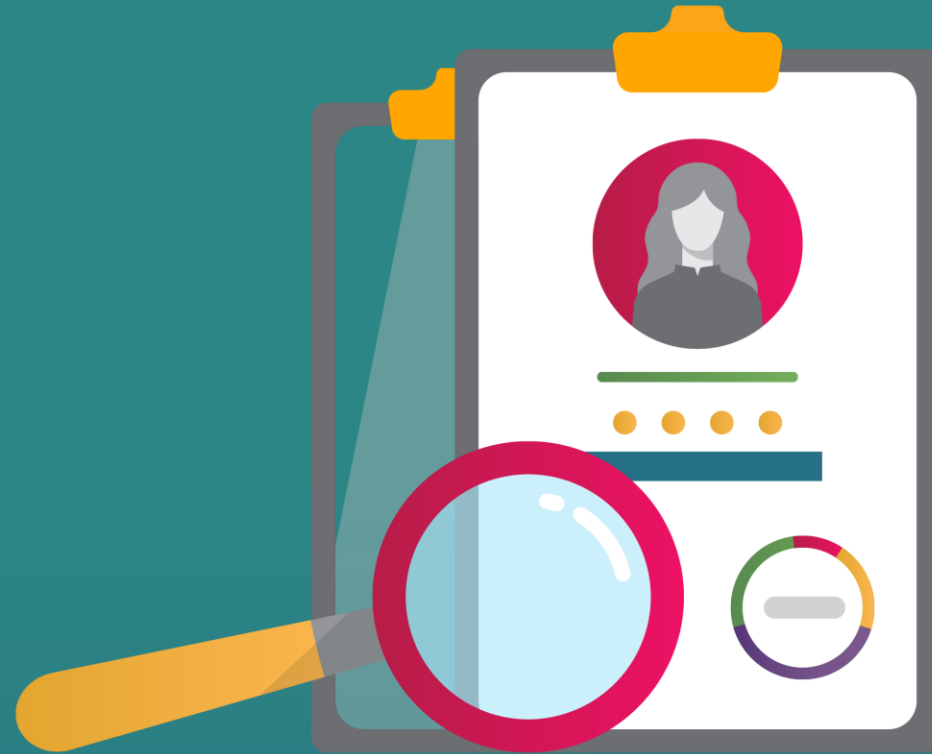- **Stock Market Crash**

# VIDEO GAME RETAILER

- Multiple store managers as whistleblowers

- Company leaders are focused on sales bump

- Stores are kept open regardless of danger

- Reddit thread is building with employee stories

- **Paid Sick Leave Policies to Protect Employees**

- **Work-From-Home Whenever Possible**

- **Corporate Goodwill Campaigns for Customers**

PR CRISIS OVERVIEW

SOURCE: HTTPS://CORONAVIRUS.JHU.EDU/MAP.HTML

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# PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

Playbook & Toolkit

Follow this simple step-by-step guide to develop a to develop
a **public relations strategy** and **program** that drives **measurable results.**.

# PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN
## Framework

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**Leverage the framework below** to quickly empower your organization's public relations strategy.

> **i** **Click the buttons** below to access all related training, tools, templates, and other resources.

| 1 ESTABLISH | 2 ASSESSMENT | 3 UNDERSTAND | 4 CRAFT | 5 INVENTORY | 6 MEASURE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Training Course: Public Relations | Media Relations and PR Audit | Customer Profile Template | Positioning Statement Worksheet | Press Kit Checklist | Budget Template |
| Strategy Scorecard | Media Specialist Job Description | Editorial Calendar Template | Message Mapping Tool | | Metrics Dashboard |
| | PR Agency RFP Template | | Public Relations Calendar | | Competitive PR and Advertising Analysis |
| | PR Agency Selection Tool | | Press Release Template | | |
| | Public Relations Solution Study | | | | |
| | Digital Marketing Roles Matrix | | | | |
| | Public Relations Vendors Matrix | | | | |
| | PR System Vendor Evaluation | | | | |
| | PR System RFP Template | | | | |

# PR Crisis Essentials

1.  Build a Crisis Communications Plan

2.  Create a Crisis Communication Team

3.  Monitor changes to the plan over time

# Build a Crisis Comm. Plan

## 2.2. Step 1 – Initial Assessment of Crisis

The first action step is to determine what has happened; and there may be plenty of questions (by leveraging our 'Crisis FAQ' Template for a great head start) that need to be answered such as:

- "What happened?"
- "When did this happen?"
- "Where did this happen?"
- "Who is involved in this incident?"
- "How was the incident discovered, and by whom?"
- "What is currently being done about this incident?"

All data and facts available should be collected to help understand what exactly is going on with this specific incident. When collecting facts and data, ensure:

- The incident has been verified
- The sources of information are trustworthy
- All of the facts have been gathered
- All of the information gathered is consistent
- No information is missing that gives the incident context

Every crisis is different, but several potential crisis situations have been identified that could affect [Company] in a detrimental way:

- [Scenario 1]
- [Scenario 2]
- [Scenario 3]
- [Scenario 4]
- [Scenario 5]

The media may reach out before the company is ready to respond. At this time, a holding statement, media response, press release or press statement should be prepared in accordance with [Company Name's] 'Media Response Policy' (also found in the resources at the end of this document). A holding statement can be used to inform the media that the incident is under investigation and as soon as more information is available an update will be provided.

> **IMPORTANT:** Before responding to any media, the Crisis Communications Team Leader (CCTL) must be informed about the incident immediately and all information gathered for them so far about the incident should be shared. Even if the incident doesn't seem like it would gather media or local attention, the CCTL should still be informed.

**STEP 1 RESOURCES:**

- 'Crisis FAQ' Template

- 'Media Response Policy' Template

- 'Holding Statement for Media' Template

- 'Press Release' Template

# Create a Crisis Comm. Team

# Crisis Communications Team Framework

| ROLES | RESPONSIBILITIES | DESIGNATED | ALTERNATE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Crisis Team Leader | Crisis Communications Team Leader (CCTL) manages communication response, ensures resources and equipment are ready and available for team members to help them complete their tasks, manages team operations, has final approval for releasing messages to the public, and schedules team meetings. | TBD – To be determined | TBD – To be determined |
| Assistant Coordinator | Assists the Crisis Communications Team leader (CCTL) with media communication, helps CCTL prioritize tasks and inquiries, steps in and takes over CCTL tasks whenever the CCTL is unavailable, and works closely with all spokespersons to ensure consistent adherence to approved messaging. | TBD – To be determined | TBD – To be determined |
| Spokesperson(s) | Acts as lead representative at press briefings with collaboration from other team members, and helps Crisis Communications Team (CCT) publicly release statements to the media. | TBD – To be determined | TBD – To be determined |
| Senior Advisors | Experts provide advice regarding their area of expertise to aid the CCT. Senior advisors include (but are not limited to) government affairs, investor relations, human resources, finance, operations and safety. | TBD – To be determined | TBD – To be determined |
| IT Lead | Manages the technology required for the incident (including but not limited to) Wi-Fi wireless internet, computers, phone lines, printers, photo copiers, fax machines, email servers, and website server. Helps setup and manage technology needs for both media and family members when they are onsite. | TBD – To be determined | TBD – To be determined |
| Website Lead | Works with CCTL to ensure updated information is available and easy to access on the company website, as well as monitoring comments placed on company web properties. | TBD – To be determined | TBD – To be determined |
| Social Media Lead | Works with CCTL to ensure updated information is available on the company social media networks, as well as monitoring comments placed on company social media properties. | TBD – To be determined | TBD – To be determined |
| Legal Advisors | Assists CCT with approving messages before they are released to the public to prevent any liability issues, legal advice for any communication procedures or strategies, including advice for messaging concepts for family members and media. | TBD – To be determined | TBD – To be determined |

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# Monitor Changes to the Plan

# 5 Stage Crisis Comm. Action Plan

**1**
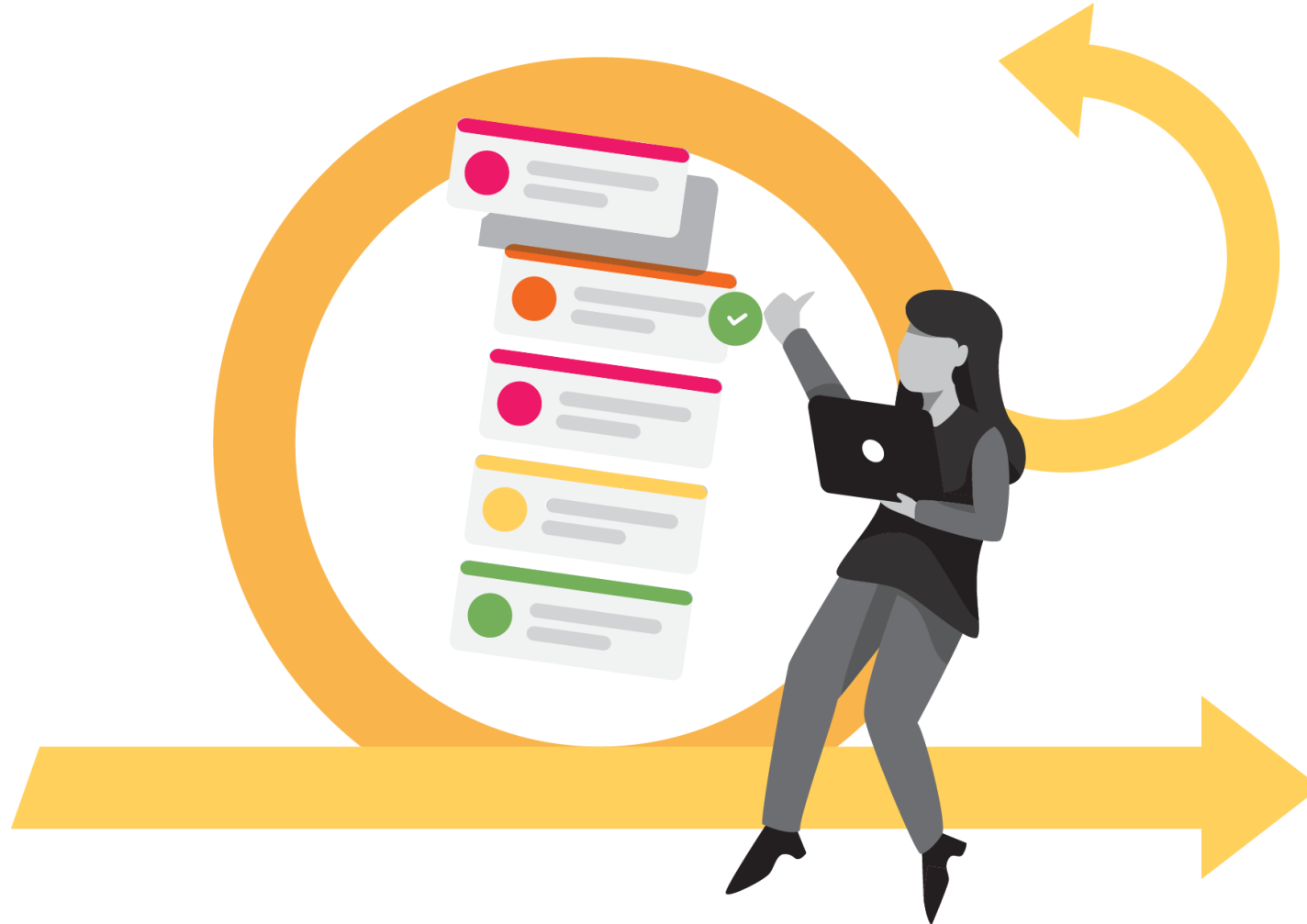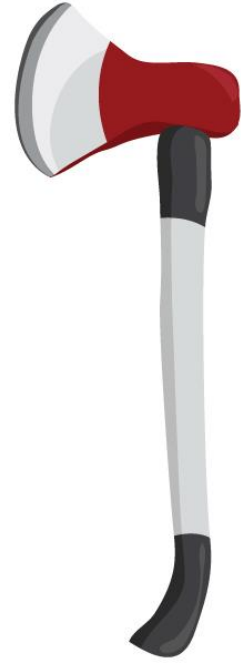
## Initial Assessment

Determine what has happened, and collect data and facts available.

**1**

**Initial Assessment**

Determine what has happened, and collect data and facts available.

**2**

**Notifying Crisis Team**

Outline the level of the crisis, and meet with the entire crisis team to coordinate activities.

## 1

### Initial Assessment

Determine what has happened, and collect data and facts available.

## 2

### Notifying Crisis Team

Outline the level of the crisis, and meet with the entire crisis team to coordinate activities.

## 3

### Managing Crisis

Plan consistent internal updates, begin a crisis log and assign a spokesperson.

## 1

**Initial Assessment**

Determine what has happened, and collect data and facts available.

## 2

**Notifying Crisis Team**

Outline the level of the crisis, and meet with the entire crisis team to coordinate activities.

## 3

**Managing Crisis**

Plan consistent internal updates, begin a crisis log and assign a spokesperson.

## 4

**Preparing Messaging**

Develop, approve and release messages for different audiences and groups proactively.

**1**

**Initial Assessment**

Determine what has happened, and collect data and facts available.

**2**

**Notifying Crisis Team**

Outline the level of the crisis, and meet with the entire crisis team to coordinate activities.

**3**

**Managing Crisis**

Plan consistent internal updates, begin a crisis log and assign a spokesperson.

**4**
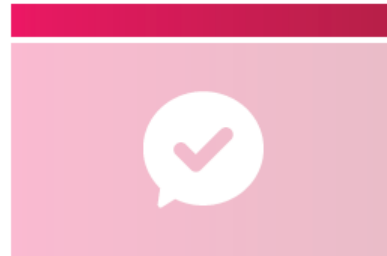
**Preparing Messaging**

Develop, approve and release messages for different audiences and groups proactively.

**5**

**Monitoring Media**

Evaluate the handling of the crisis coverage, recognize trends in opinion and storyline.

| 1 ASSESS | 2 NOTIFY | 3 MANAGE | 4 DEVELOP | 5 MONITOR |
|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Crisis FAQ Template | Crisis Level Chart | Crisis Communications Schedule | Key Audiences and Groups Questions | Crisis Coverage Checklist |
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| | | Crisis Procedure for Family Members | | |
| | | Crisis Procedure for the Media Template | | |

# STAGE 1

# Initial Assessment of the Crisis

In this first stage, you will need to figure out what has happened and collect all the data and facts available about the crisis to share with the Crisis Communications Team Leader.

**STEP 1:** Inform Crisis Communication Team Leader

**STEP 2:** Determine What Has Happened

**STEP 3:** Prepare Your Initial Statement

# Inform Crisis Team Leader

# Determine What Happened

# Prepare Initial Statement

# Media Response Policy Template

## Purpose

This template is designed to get you started on crafting a basic policy on how your organization handles the media. It is important to ensure that when media contacts your organization, that every member of your staff is on the same page on how to respond, according to company policy and procedures. The goal of this policy is to stress that employees should never speak with any media channel, and that actions can be taken against them (such as dismissal) if they do not follow this procedure.

This policy is also meant to provide answers to the following important questions:

- Who is permitted to speak with the media?
- What should be said if an employee is contacted by the media?
- Who should employees refer the media to for responses?

## How to Use this Template

This policy template is meant to be a starting point for creating a simple one-page document that gives the parameters for your company's media response strategy. It can be copied and pasted into an existing plan (such as the 'Crisis Communications Plan') or used on its own. All highlighted areas need to be replaced with the correct language.

## Media Response Policy

[Insert Name and Title] is the official spokesperson for [Company Name], and is trained to communicate approved messages regarding [Company Name] and its employees, for both general and controversial situations (such as a crisis). Any inquiry from the media should be immediately referred directly to [Insert Title of Designated Person], with no comment given about any area the media addresses. No one else but [Insert Title of Designated Person] is permitted to speak to the media about any issue or topic, without prior consent by [Insert Title of Designated Person]. If this policy is not followed, the individual who does not obey this procedure could be dismissed from working further at [Company Name].

It is important to take down the name of the media outlet contacting [Company Name] and making an inquiry. Ensure that you get the name of the reporter, their contact information, the name of the media outlet they represent, and the questions they would like answered. This information should be sent immediately to [Insert Name and Title, and their contact information including email and phone number].

Contingent on the situation [Insert Title of Designated Person] may elect another individual to serve as spokesperson for a particular incident or situation. If any crisis unfolds, small or large, and media is approaching any employee of [Company Name] the Crisis Communications Team Leader (CCTL), [Insert Name of CCTL], must also be contacted and informed via [Insert email and phone number for CCTL].

# Determine Level of Crisis



## Crisis Level Chart

### Purpose

During a Communications Crisis at your organization, the Crisis Communications Team Leader (CCTL) is responsible for declaring the crisis level within your internal organization, and to give direction to the Crisis Communications Team on what actions to take. In the highest crisis levels, which indicate a serious problem, the CEO should deliver a message directly.

### How to Use this Template

Edit this chart to suit your organization. You can use this chart on its own, or as part of an existing plan, by copying and pasting the chart into the document you wish. This chart is currently included within our 'Crisis Communications Plan' Template.

## Crisis Level Chart

| LEVEL | CRISIS INDICATORS |
|---|---|
| 1: PASSIVE | • Media and/or public are nearly unsuspecting of crisis.<br>• Crisis draws little or no awareness. |
| 2: ACTIVE | • The public is conscious of the incident but is not very focused on the situation at this time.<br>• External partners get media requests.<br>• Crisis incident might not have happened; the circumstance is drawing in moderate, but steady media attention. |
| 3: URGENT | • Affected and possibly influenced parties say they may speak with the media about the incident.<br>• Media contacts non-CCT staff for data about the emergency.<br>• Media, stakeholders and community representatives are in attendance at the site of the incident.<br>• Crisis causes developing consideration from local media. |
| 4: CRITICAL | • Print and broadcast media emerge on-site for live reporting.<br>• One or more gatherings of people express outrage or shock.<br>• Media have prompt and pressing need for information about the incident. The CEO may need to give an opening proclamation of sympathy. |

| LEVEL | CRISIS INDICATORS |
|-------|-------------------|
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# Assemble Crisis Comm. Team

# Crisis Communications Team Framework

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| Senior Advisors | Experts provide advice regarding their area of expertise to aid the CCT. Senior advisors include (but are not limited to) government affairs, investor relations, human resources, finance, operations and safety. | TBD – To be determined | TBD – To be determined |
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# STAGE 3

# Managing all Crisis-Related Communications

During stage three, both on-site and off-site communications will be managed, including internal updates, beginning a crisis journal, assigning spokespeople to the crisis and setting up an off-site media area (if the crisis is large enough).

**STEP 1:** Coordinate and Schedule Communication

**STEP 2:** Recognize Key Groups For Messaging

**STEP 3:** Maintain a Crisis Journal

**STEP 4:** Assign a Spokesperson

**STEP 5:** Manage All On-Site Communication

**STEP 6:** Manage Media Presence

# Schedule Team Availability

# Recognize Key Groups

# Maintain a Crisis Journal

# Assign a Spokesperson

# Spokesperson Procedures Guide Template

## Purpose

During a crisis you may have several designated spokespeople representing your company on your behalf. It is important that they all understand the procedures on how they should behave in front of the media and the public at all times. This template is a starting point for you to include in your crisis communications planning effort.

## How to Use this Template

This template is ready for modification but is also ready to be leveraged as-is in your 'Crisis Communications Plan Template' (by copying and pasting it into the additional resources section for reference by your Crisis Communications Team in the future). As an additional tool to help in this process, be sure to also leverage the 'Spokesperson Designation Template', which is used to determine who will represent your company.

## Spokesperson Procedures Guide

The way in which a spokesperson delivers their messages is of critical importance to your organization. Representing a company requires someone who is articulate, sincere and compassionate for the message to ultimately be respected. As a spokesperson, it is important

to stick to the chosen response (i.e. approved messaging), be honest and willing to discuss difficult topics, work with other spokespeople for consistency in approach, all while addressing the concerns the public has about the incident.

It's important to remember that the media is simply doing their job. If the spokesperson makes the media feel that they truly want the public to know more details about the incident, the reporters will be less likely to take an aggressive position in their final report.

The audience or group should:

- Never see the spokesperson as rude, arrogant or impatient
- Understand that their concerns and questions are being addressed
- Consider the spokesperson to be a compassionate individual
- See the spokesperson as both intelligent and trustworthy
- Feel they are being respected by the company represented

Spokespeople should always:

- Be ready to diffuse and satisfy surprise or attack questions elegantly
- Demonstrate expertise and knowledge about the incident
- Have a respectful tone when communicating
- Be ready and capable to handle the media
- Be honest with whatever is shared
- Display positive body language
- Stay peaceful and patient throughout the crisis
- Be empathetic to any fears the public may have
- Be perceived as dedicated and reliable
- Express sympathy for any losses caused by the incident
- Be optimistic about the future

# Topic Matter Expert Contact List

## Purpose

During a communications crisis, it can be important to bring other resources into the process of planning a response. Whether it is additional computer equipment in an emergency, or a group of experts such as legal advisors, this contact list template is designed to get the ball rolling and establish the necessity to organize these resources in advance of a crisis, or during a crisis, to assist the Crisis Communications Team (CCT).

## How to Use this Template

This template is ready to be filled in and modified to your organizations needs. Although this template can be used on its own, it's also ready to be included (via copy and paste) into your 'Crisis Communications Plan Template' document, to give insight into who is available for assisting your team during a crisis.

## Topic Matter Experts

| Area of Expertise | Name/Title | Organization | Contact Information |
|---|---|---|---|
| Legal and Labor Law Advisors | | | Office:<br>Cell:<br>Home:<br>Fax:<br>Email: |
| Crisis and Risk Communications | | | Office:<br>Cell:<br>Home:<br>Fax:<br>Email: |
| Human Resources and Family Liaison | | | Office:<br>Cell:<br>Home:<br>Fax:<br>Email: |
| Security | | | Office:<br>Cell:<br>Home:<br>Fax:<br>Email: |

# Manage All On-Site Comm.

# Manage Media Presence

Home   Insert   Design   Layout   References   Mailings   Review   View   Acrobat

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# Crisis Procedure for the Media Template

## Purpose

During a crisis, the media becomes an important part of the incident. Public opinion can be easily swayed by local and national media coverage of your crisis, and how you handle it. This procedure is designed to help you prepare for dealing with media during a crisis.

## How to Use this Template

Use this crisis procedure as a part of your larger 'Crisis Communications Plan Template' document. Copy and paste it into the additional resources at the end, and feel free to modify and add anything specific to your organization. Whenever you see a highlighted area, be sure to change it to whatever is relevant to your organization.

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## Crisis Procedures for the Media

It is important to control the media from the onset of any crisis, especially if there is a crisis involving the safety of employees. The first to the scene are often local reporters, and they will play an important role in keeping family members up to date. When it comes to national coverage, syndication services will be the most influential in getting the story out nationally or even internationally. The most effective way to satisfy national media (who may not have feet on the ground to report in person) is scheduled press conferences and releasing statements.

No matter what the level of the crisis may be, the media can take a small incident and make it massive or ignore a large incident and make it almost non-existent. The power the media yields is tremendous. The more critical the event is to the health and well-being of [Company name] employees, the more likely the media will get involved, and often in very large numbers. There are a few key points to consider when dealing with media during a crisis.

### #1: Be prepared to deal with Media onsite

- Setup a media area away from family members immediately
- Setup a podium with microphones and lighting
- Prepare a strong WiFi (Wireless internet) connection
- Have office stationary ready for those who need it
- Prepare for seating, portable toilets and drinking water
- Have security ensure they are indeed real media personnel
- Ensure parking is easy for all media trucks (with satellite dishes)

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# STAGE 4

# Developing, Approving and Releasing Messages

For stage four, all collected 'facts' must be verified and assembled into scripted key points to address various audiences and groups, that will be released upon internal approval.

**STEP 1:** Collect all the Facts

**STEP 2:** Prioritize and Analyze Crisis Messaging

**STEP 3:** Approve Messaging

**STEP 4:** Deliver Messages Internally and Externally

# Collect all the Facts

# Prioritize/Analyze Messaging

# Approve Messaging

# Deliver Messages

# STAGE 5

# Monitoring and Responding to the Media

In the final stage, you will need to evaluate how the media is covering the crisis, including local responses, and monitoring any social media, blogs, comments or forums for comments reflecting public opinion.

**STEP 1:** Monitor Crisis Coverage

**STEP 2:** Recognize Trends in Crisis Coverage

**STEP 3:** Leverage What Was Learnt

# Monitor Crisis Coverage

# Recognize Trends in Coverage

# Leverage What Was Learnt

# RECOMENDATIONS
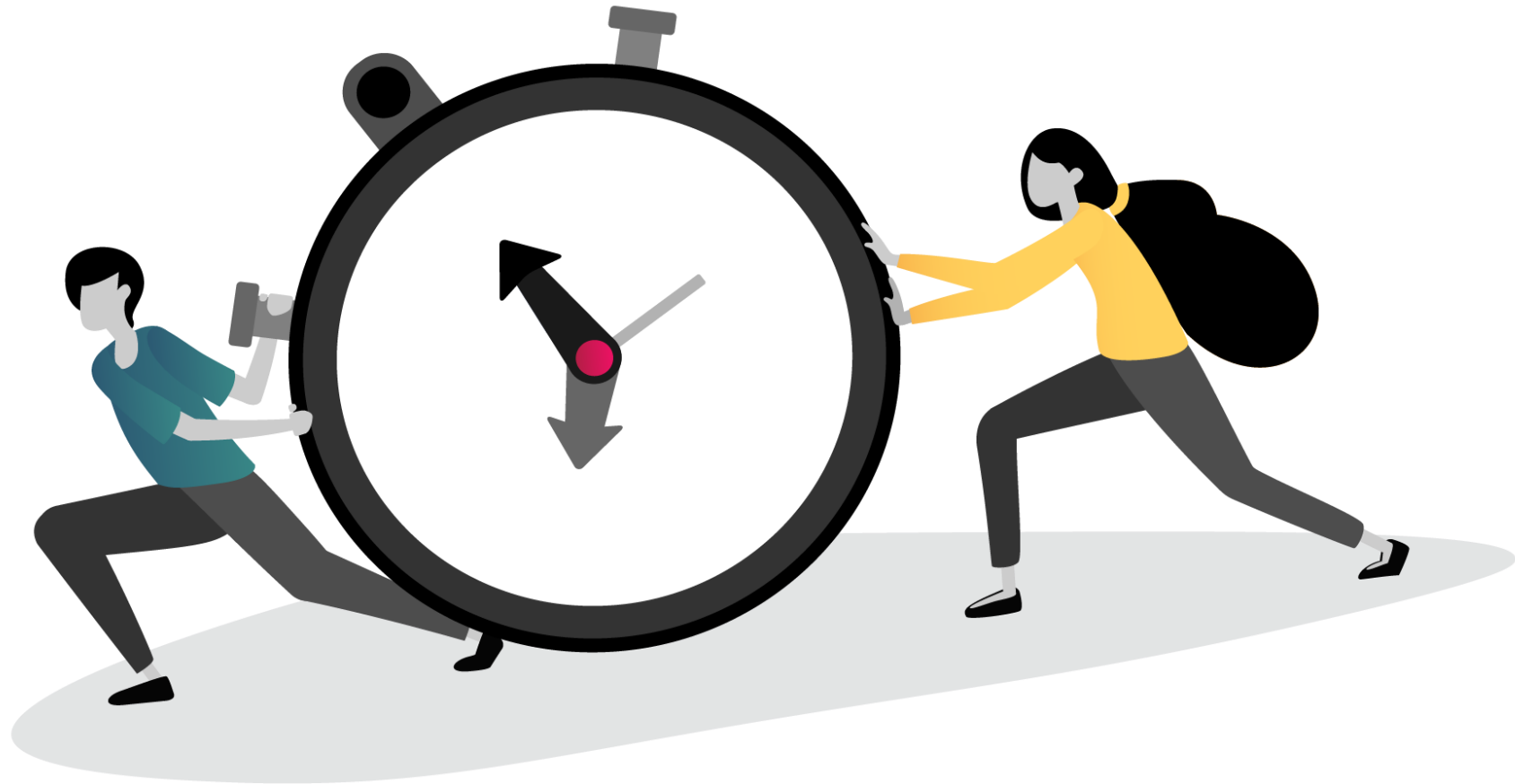
ANA **POWERED BY:** Demand Metric

# AGILE MARKETING

Playbook & Toolkit

Follow this simple step-by-step playbook to develop an **Agile Marketing plan** that supports your company's **goals** & **objectives**.

RECOMMENDATION #2

SEND GOODWILL MESSAGES FROM CEO

# Letter to customers: Our role and responsibility in navigating COVID-19

March 12, 2020 · 2 min read

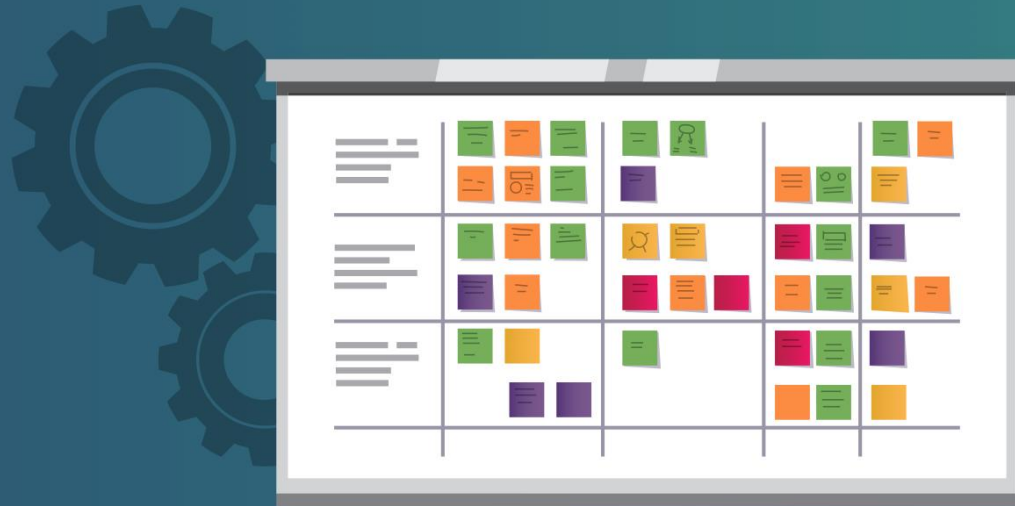*A letter to Starbucks Customers and Starbucks Rewards Members from Kevin Johnson, Starbucks ceo and president*

The world is grappling with an issue of enormous scale and human impact, and our hearts go out to all who have been affected by the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19).

At Starbucks, we believe it is our role and responsibility during this time to prioritize two things: the health and well-being of our customers and partners while also playing a constructive role in supporting local health officials and government leaders as they work to contain the virus. Through that lens, we will continue to make decisions with vigilance and courage informed by the latest science-based information and guided by Our Mission and Values.

- Ensure Customer Service is Ready

- Have Response Templates Ready

- Respond in Real-time on Social Media

- Track #Hashtags for trends

# Q&A

# DEMAND METRIC

## HAVE A
## GREAT WEEK

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