



# CRISIS READINESS CHECKLIST

Every organization will face a critical moment: a situation where trust, reputation or operations are on the line. What separates resilient organizations from the rest is not luck but preparation.

This practical tool is designed to help your team focus on five essentials: **anticipating the crisis, aligning the team, communicating with care, demonstrating discipline** and **reinforcing and rehearsing your plan**. The more often you return to these steps, the more confident your team will be when the next high-stakes moment arrives.

## ☐ Anticipate the Crisis

- ☐ Identify the most likely scenarios that would disrupt your organization and consider how they'd play out in the public eye.
- ☐ Put a monitoring system in place (media, social, internal reports) to catch issues before they escalate.
- ☐ Consider: *What would our customers, employees and community expect us to say or do in each scenario?* Next, define what a successful outcome looks like for each crisis.

## ☐ Align the Team

- ☐ Define "first-hour protocol": who assembles, how decisions are made and how updates flow. Make a list of key stakeholders (those directly impacted or forming expectations).
- ☐ Establish a process to provide accurate, real-time information to leaders and a clear chain of command for communication decisions, including backups if primary leaders are unavailable.
- ☐ Outline clear guidance on when outside partners (PR, legal, security) should be pulled into the room.

## ☐ Communicate with Care

- ☐ Prepare a bank of pre-approved holding statements (acknowledgement, empathy, values, commitment) that can be tailored quickly.
- ☐ Which voices carry the most weight with your stakeholders, and are you prepared to reach them directly? Identify the most credible spokesperson(s) for each audience.
- ☐ Coordinate with your designated spokespeople to conduct media training and practice with tough Q&A. Have we outlined the most effective communication channels for each group (media, email, social, direct calls, etc.)?



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## Demonstrate Discipline

- ☐ Ensure your leaders are skilled at considering organizational values and stakeholder impact without being swayed by personal preference or internal politics when making decisions under pressure.
- ☐ Equip leaders to recognize and avoid crisis mind-traps like denial, defensiveness or blame-shifting.



## Reinforce and Rehearse

- ☐ Conduct scenario drills with your leadership team that expose blind spots in judgment and alignment.
- ☐ Rotate roles in simulations so backups and emerging leaders are prepared to step in if needed.
- ☐ Is your crisis plan treated as a living document, refreshed at least annually?

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## SCORING YOURSELF

**12–14 checks** → Strongly crisis-ready

**8–11 checks** → Some gaps — focus on the lowest areas

**4–7 checks** → Vulnerable — significant work needed

**Below 4 checks** → At risk — start building from basics now

***Pro Tip: The more often your team runs through this checklist, the more confident you'll be when the unexpected happens.***