Plan Against Panic

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Three Rules Guide Crisis Comms and Rapid Response

Anticipate & Think Ahead

Play Out

Follow the Process
Which is it?

Crisis Comms VS. Rapid Response
8 Dead in Atlanta Spa Shootings, With Fears of Anti-Asian Bias

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Follow our latest coverage of the Atlanta spa shootings.
Federal authorities charge 47 with stealing $250 million from food program for low-income children

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Federal authorities charged 47 people in Minnesota with conspiracy and other counts in what they said Tuesday was the largest fraud scheme yet to take advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic by stealing $250 million from a federal program that provides meals to low-income children.
How many of you have a crisis plan/rapid response in place today?
Rapid Response

**Related**
- Directly related to your mission
- Directly related to your team (staff and board)
- Directly related to your community

**Adjacent**
- Allies ask you to weigh in (sign-on letter).

**Other**
- Something bad happens in the world, like war.

It's a gun rights group, and there is a shooting.
The team is directly impacted by the shooting.
The shooting is in your community.
Anticipate and Think Ahead
Rapid Response

What might happen and when, and why might you comment?

In advance, decide and announce what you will comment on.

Decide what you won’t comment on and why but how you can still show empathy/solidarity.

Be open to discussions about this.

Create a checklist to guide you in the heat of the moment.

Set a system for responding, including approvals, messages and lists.

Be open to discussions about this.
Play It Out
Rapid Response

Whom to engage
Audiences

What to say
Messages

How
What formats and platforms

Review

For issues you will respond to, where are you ready and when do you need to get ready?
Follow the Process

Rapid Response

1. Use checklist to confirm decision.
2. Focus on priority audiences
3. Use the ready-made messages when possible
4. Confirm you have the systems in place to do what you want to do (approval, messages, lists, etc.)
5. Create feedback loops to know you are hitting the mark or need to course correct
Is this even a crisis?
You keep using that word.
Is this a real crisis?

Congratulations! This is not a crisis.

Will this harm your reputation? NO
Will the impact extend beyond the organization? NO
Will there be a media frenzy? NO

Will there be backlash from partners? NO
Will funders potentially pull their support? NO
Will you become a trending topic on social media? NO
Does the situation pose a danger or threaten harm to anyone? NO
Will this situation reduce staff, board or external audience trust? NO

Ready yourself. You’re in a crisis.
If yes...

- Gather the facts.
- Convene the crisis team.
- Review/tailor the crisis plan.
- Monitor media/social media.
- Exercise caution on internal/external communications.
Four-step process to prepare

1. Identify & assess risk.
2. Assess opposition/internal vulnerabilities.
4. Deploy strengths.
I. IDENTIFY & ASSESS RISK
How many of these are a “Yes”?
Identify + assess risk

Federal authorities charge 47 with stealing $250 million from food program for low-income children

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Does your organization/issue have strong opposition?

Is your issue popular or hot on the agenda?

Does your organization get frequent media attention?

Are high-profile people affiliated with your organization?

Are you affiliated with organizations/communities frequently the target of harassment/disinformation?

Are you a large organization that doesn’t have internal systems buttoned down?
Identify + assess risk

Good thing you have a plan.

But you probably won’t need to use it.
Identify + assess risk

Watch out.

You’re not ready for what might be coming your way.
Score: 5-6

Identify + assess risk

Time to hustle.

It’s already inside the house.
### Identify + assess risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential crisis</th>
<th>Risk factors</th>
<th>Rate it (1-6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food program fraud</td>
<td>Stakeholders are upset (legal consequences, media attention)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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</table>
II. ASSESS OPPOSITION/INTERNAL VULNERABILITIES
How can we minimize risk ahead of time and set up for success?
What **pre-work** can we do?
Assess opposition and vulnerabilities

➢ Scan the opposition and third-party voices.
   ○ Website, email, social media, comments in the press.
   ○ Set up Google Alerts and social media listening tools to monitor.

➢ Assess the tools of well-funded and coordinated opposition so that you can plan how to counter it.

➢ Look out for ads, lawsuits, in-person harassment.

➢ Review the past to prepare for the future; develop a dossier.

➢ Ask internally: What are the current/potential challenges that are a risk to your brand? Are staff at risk?
   ○ Example: change in leadership, staff transition, mishandling of operations.
   ○ Example: staff morale, conflict among staff, distraction
   ○ Example: retention and recruitment
III. MINIMIZE RISK
III. Minimize risk

➢ Do you work on electoral, advocacy and/or politically charged issues?

➢ Do you need legal training to understand permissible activities and keep you legally/ethically sound?

➢ Do you communicate clearly with internal staff/board/volunteers/partners about what should/should not be shared publicly (e.g., financial statements, funding decisions, personnel issues)?
## III. Minimize risk

**THINGS YOU COULD DO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DON’T</th>
<th>DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have a knee-jerk reaction</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assume a public fight is best</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be afraid to apologize</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat opposition messages</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forget to thank those who supported you!</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions?
Thank you

For more information, check out spitfirestrategies.com

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