



# Crisis Communications Plan

## Getting Prepared

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Keep the lines of communication **open.**

# What is crisis communications?

## Crisis communications is characterized by:

- decreased reaction time
- focus on informing and assuring the public / media / stakeholders
- satisfying expectations of accountability

## Some of the key elements, internal and external, are:

- Fear
- Avoidance
- Helplessness
- Denial
- Anger
- Frustration
- Confusion

# Why is it important?



# More than just reputation...

## Crisis communications plan objectives...

- To assist in emergency response efforts
- To meet the increased societal demand for accountability, transparency and responsiveness
- To retain goodwill among key stakeholders and the general public
- To protect the reputation of the organization
- To avoid confusion and uncertainty around the communications roles and accountabilities amid the complexities of a crisis

# Determine policies and philosophies

- How does the organization want to react in times of crisis, what image / personality does the organization want to present?
- How do we work with partners, the government, our employees, the media, etc.?
- How will things get approved, how much autonomy will the crisis communications team have?
- What are our standards of excellence? Where do we set the bar?

# Consider the risks

## The **SITUATIONAL** crisis

- Environmental
- People
- Operational

## The **REPUTATIONAL** crisis\*

- Issues
- Rumours
- Complaints
- Challenges / Accusations

**Your risks will determine what key messages you should have ready to go**

# Prepare your team

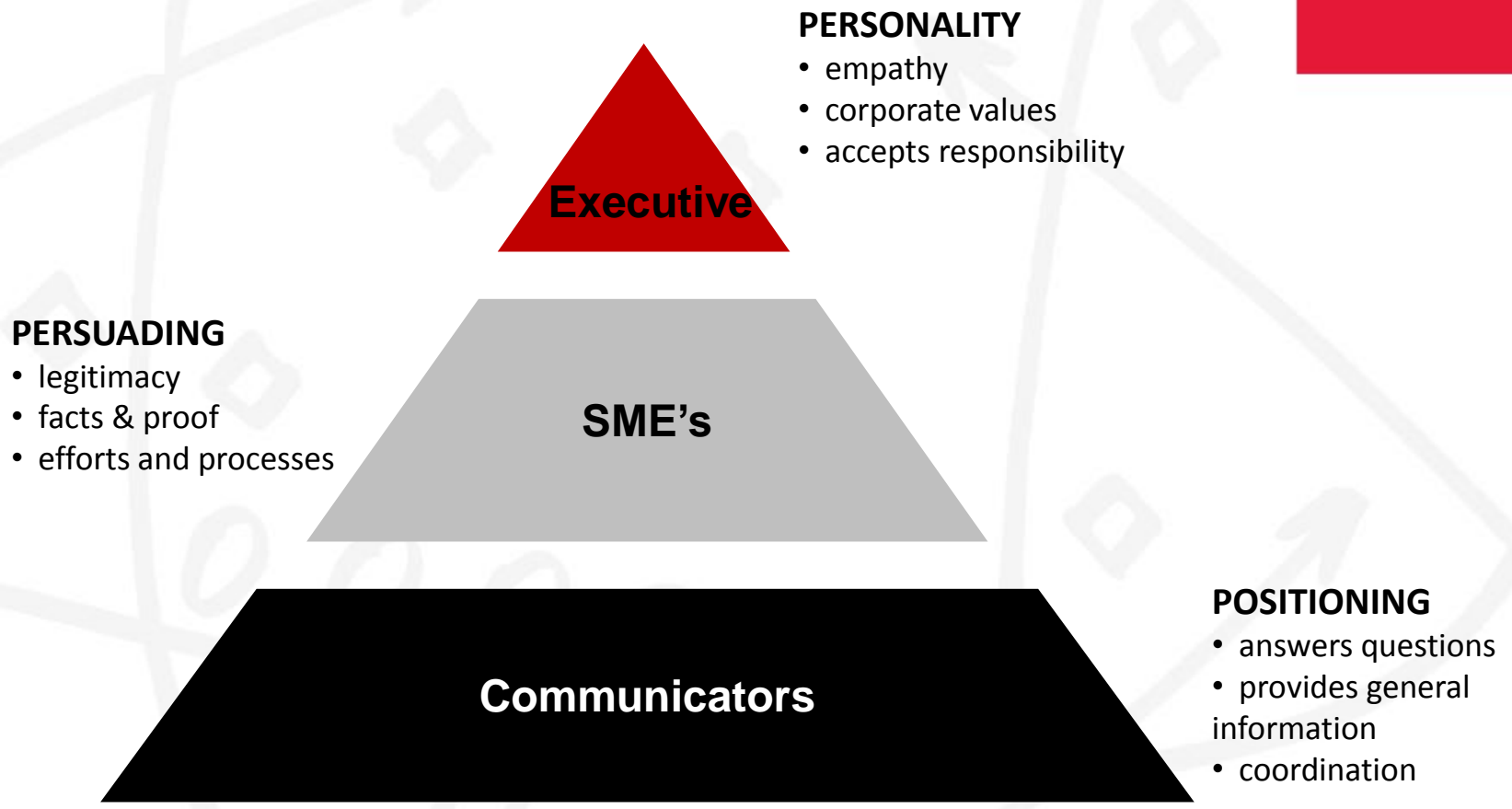
## Identify the team members

- Define their roles
- Assign specific tasks
- Assign strategic direction
- Provide enabling tools

## Train and train again

- Familiarization
- Tabletops
- Communications Exercises
- Full-scale emergency response exercise integration

# Identify and coach spokespeople





# Create templates, forms

- Personal activity log
- Facts gathering sheet
- Communications team agenda
- Initial statement template (traditional and social)
- News release template
- Media advisory template
- Internal information templates
- Etc.

# Consider the tools and tactics

- Incident action plan Template
- 1-800 on-call number
- Media wallet cards
- Social and traditional media monitoring service
- Social media usage
- Dark website?
- Press release distribution
- Passwords / logins / access
- Etc.

## A final thought...

“You can’t transform the **personality** of your institution or its corporate **culture** just because a major news story is about to break. But you can be **pragmatic** in developing a **strategy** for disclosing what has happened and for providing **background** information and visuals, **updating the media**, and protecting the **privacy** of the participants from the reporters and television crews who will be at your door **within minutes**”

Robert Irvine  
Institute for Crisis Management

# Thank you

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