

4 Steps to Effectively Communicate in a Crisis

One important caveat up front — sound communications cannot make up for poor decision-making on the part of leadership. However, when leaders do become aware of issues, they should follow these actions:

1. Gather the Facts

Understand the situation, its components, results and future implications as much as possible. Figure out what you know; **what you don't know**; what you need to find out; and what are myths and rumors that abound.

2. Tell the Truth

There is no substitute for this. While you should work with your communications team on what information you will be sharing, whatever you share needs to be the unadulterated truth.

3. Plan Your Communications

With the exception of FCC and/or regulatory requirements, all communication should be executed from the “inside out.” Employees should be communicated to first and foremost, followed by outside audiences.

4. Build Communication Skill

No matter how successful the leader, there is one common truth — communication is a learned skill. When crisis situations arise, those leaders who have taken the time to build that skill beforehand are far more successful than those learning “on the fly.” To drive **effective communications**, leaders must:

- Have a platform that outlines their core messages and actions.
- Be visible, open, honest, trustworthy and candid.
- Be consistent.
- Communicate frequently.
- Understand that everything they say and do communicates.
- Answer questions employees have.
- Be engaged in developing and planning their communications.
- Engage their communications team as a business partner.
- Ask employees for their input and use it.

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