


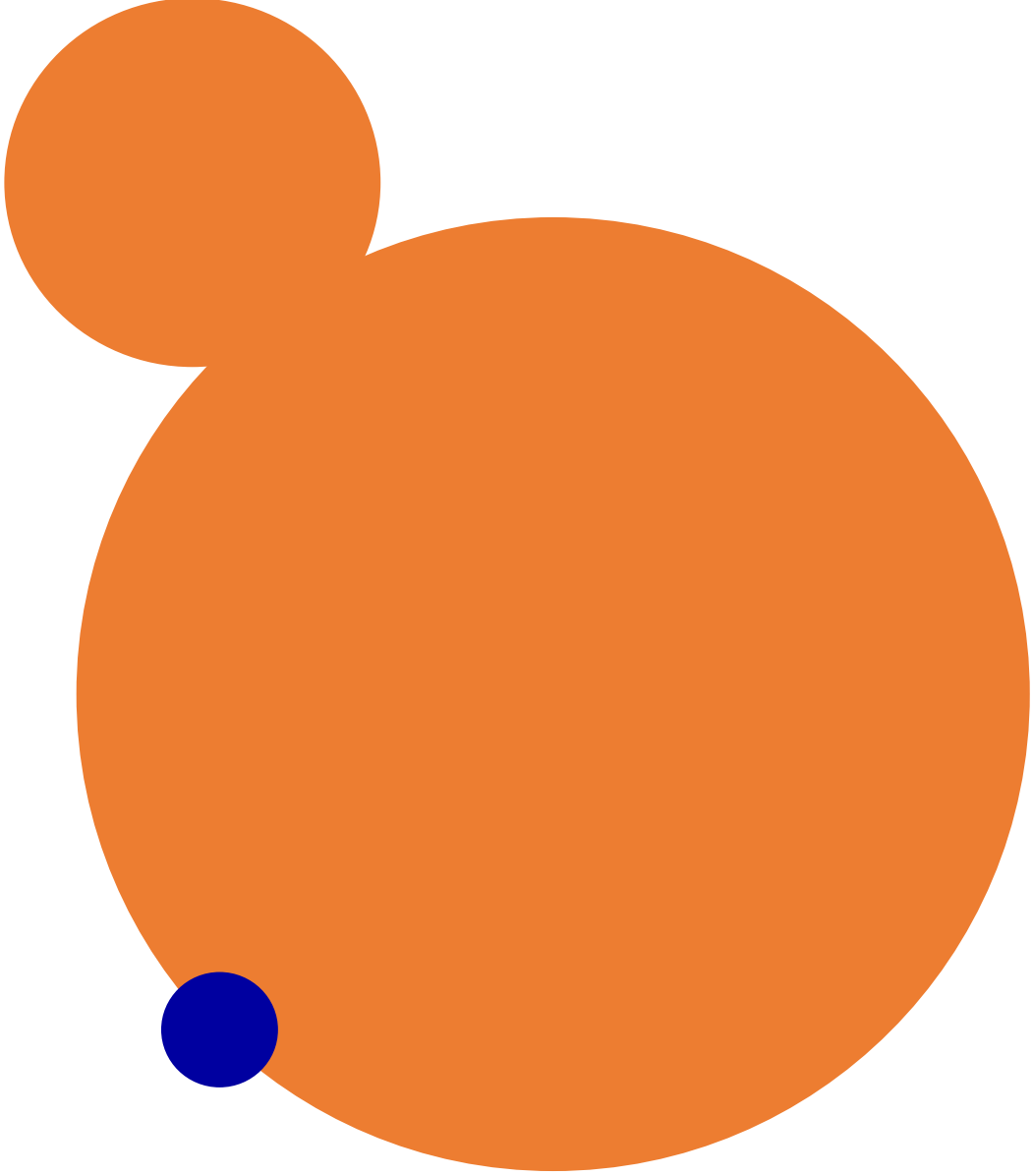
The Heat is On: Navigating Smoldering Crises in High-Pressure Situations.

Ed Hoover, Crisis & Issues Management Senior Manager
Mars, Incorporated

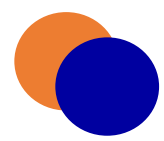
&

Eliot Hoff, Executive Director, Global Crisis Practice Lead
APCO Worldwide





A crisis is an abnormal situation that threatens reputation, viability and credibility



The top crises facing organizations today

- Global supply chain issues impacting customers and the broader business
- Product quality, safety, and performance issues
- Civil/human rights abuses and racial justice issues (e.g., police-involved killings)
- Discrimination based on race, gender, religion or lifestyle (e.g., paying women less for equal work)
- Leadership disruptions/transitions and organizational shifts/transformations
- Labor issues or disgruntled employees with a mobilized, unionized workforce
- Corporate responsibility around energy, sustainability, and climate issues (e.g., environmental contamination)
- Cybersecurity (e.g., ransomware, breaches)
- State and/or federal policy trends creating barriers to conducting regular business
- Constitutional and legal changes/issues (e.g., Roe v. Wade)
- Geo-political incidents impacting the consumer perception and company accountability (e.g., Russia-Ukraine conflict)



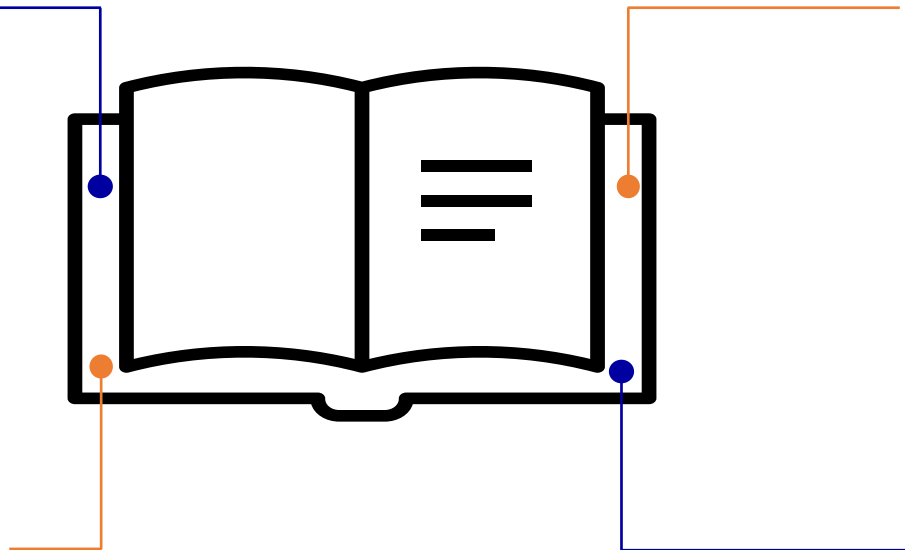
Guiding principles in a crisis response

- Be prepared beforehand with a plan and escalation process
- Tell the truth – always
- Set expectations with stakeholders early
- Be personal and empathic in communications
- Understand the facts and stick to them
- Customize responses, but stay consistent as a whole
- Stick to your company's values and brand persona
- Understand that timing is key – you need a quick, yet thoughtful response

Anatomy of a crisis plan

A crisis plan should be flexible and change with the times. Think of this as a living document/process that should be consistently updated.

Templates of previous external messages used, or links to internal comms that has previously been published – that way the crisis response team can easily access and ensure the new messages and plans coordinate with the overarching brand.



Clear escalation plans that entail spokespeople, crisis response team, their contact information and who needs to be informed depending on the specific situation.

Provide quick tips and tricks that are easily digestible. In a crisis, your team isn't going to want to read through a massive document.




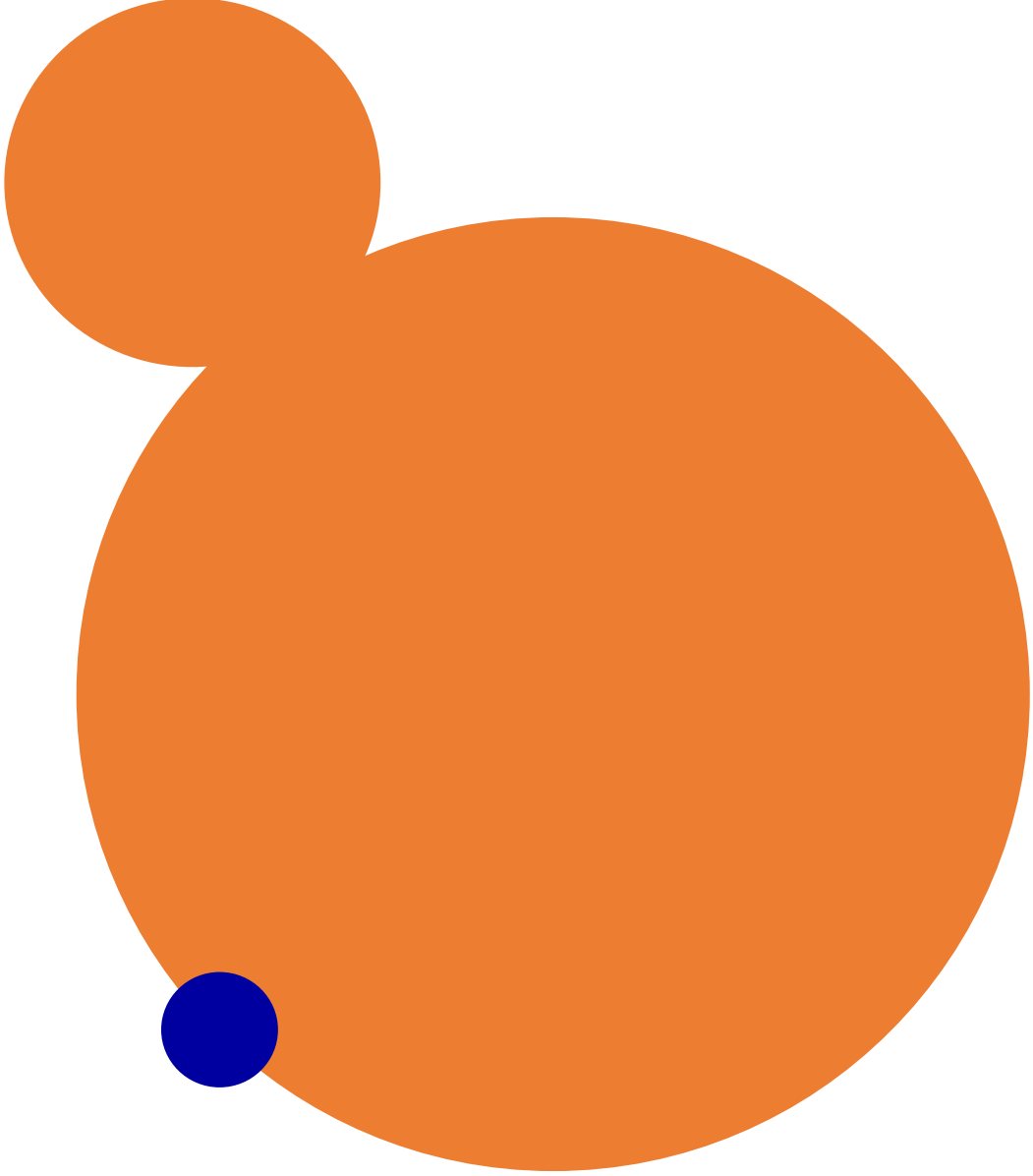
Managing social media during a crisis

DO

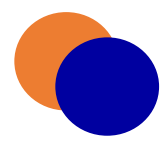
- Determine relevant keywords and establish ongoing proactive monitoring leading up to key moments
- Flag all comments/direct messages from verified users or high-engaged with influencers for relevant teams
- Assume a posture of acknowledgement and take steps to redirect off social channels (i.e., direct to published statements, etc.)
- Pending real-time context, suspend social media accounts or regular marketing activity, as needed, for 48 hours
- Monitor and track volume of commentary to align against engagement thresholds

DON'T

- Respond to every comment or direct message
- Respond to any comment without final signoff from legal/relevant teams
- Engage with content that is inflammatory or overly combative
- Be combative or defensive in your responses




Your values and corporate purpose should be your **North Star, especially during a crisis**



Objectives checklist

- Based on your corporate values and purpose, work through a checklist of questions based on what you're trying to achieve in solving the crisis.
 - What is your realistic, best-case scenario?
 - What do you want stakeholders to understand about the situation?
 - What could this crisis impact for your business in the future? Are you able to combat any of this within your response?
 - Where do you see your company in a week post-crisis? How about a month, six months, a year or five years down the line?



A crisis is a gap between stakeholder expectations and realities – think outside in, assess what your stakeholders need, how it aligns with your principles and let this process tactically guide your response