

# WHAT PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT INTERNAL CRISIS COMMUNICATION

When it comes to Disaster Resilience, one of the most effective ways to increase your organization's ability to cope and recover is through effective crisis communication. Florida EDEN has gathered various tips and methods of crisis management and best management practices for internal communications following a disaster in order to best prepare you.

## BRAINSTORM BEFOREHAND <sup>2</sup>

While you will never be able to predict the exact circumstances that will accompany a crisis or disaster situation, you can come up with some general guidelines for responding to the different concerns you will be faced with. Questions employees might have include when should they report to work, how their safety will be addressed, and financial security in the event of shutdown. Administration questions might include the impact to people and property, what assistance is necessary, and the potential impact on provided services.

## CRISIS COMMUNICATION <sup>1</sup> DURING THE RECOVERY PERIOD

Your crisis communication plan should not end with the immediate disaster. During the recovery period, it should include an evaluation of how the crisis was handled with areas for improvement, an examination of similar scenarios that may occur in the future and continued communication regarding ongoing needs of those within the organization as they recover.

## COMMUNICATION STEPS DURING A DISASTER



1. GET IN CONTACT



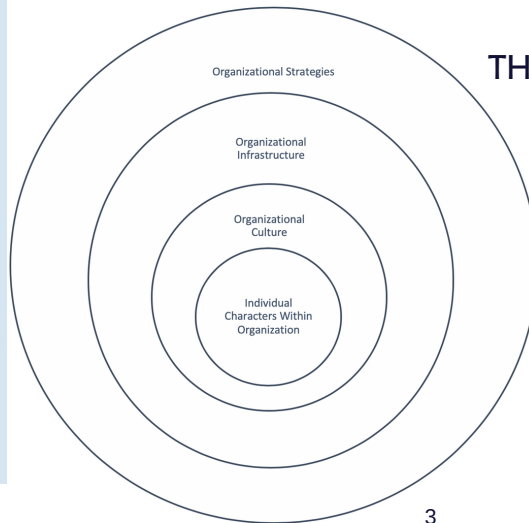
2. GET THE FACTS



3. IDENTIFY IMMEDIATE NEEDS



4. CENTRALIZE INFORMATION



Model: Pauchant and Mitroff (1988) <sup>3</sup>

## THE ONION MODEL OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT <sup>3</sup>

The onion model shows how the different layers of an organization's assets and its infrastructure play into the overall effectiveness of its crisis management. The innermost layers are the character of individuals, such as their coping mechanisms, and the organizational culture, defined by its beliefs about crisis management. Strong Crisis Communication is key to both.

# "Miscommunication heightens during a crisis..." <sup>1</sup>

## SELECTING COMMUNICATION TEAMS <sup>1,2</sup>

It is important to have a designated spokesperson to centralize information. This person must communicate effectively, know your communication plan and comes across as trustworthy and caring. In addition, your team should include a list of people who are responsible for fielding phone calls and dealing with the media and public as necessary. Human Resources (HR) is responsible for the day-to-day communications with employees regarding employment issues and benefits administration and should assume a similar role on the crisis communications team in coordinating communications with those involved with the care of employees and their families.

1. "Risk and Crisis Communication: When Things Go Wrong" by Ricky Telg,

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wc093>

2. <https://www.ready.gov/business/implementation/crisis>

3. "Making Sense of Crisis: Cognitive Barriers of Learning in Critical Situations" by Ramona Pergel and Alexandros Psychogios,

<http://managementdynamics.ro/index.php/journal/article/viewFile/20/17>.