

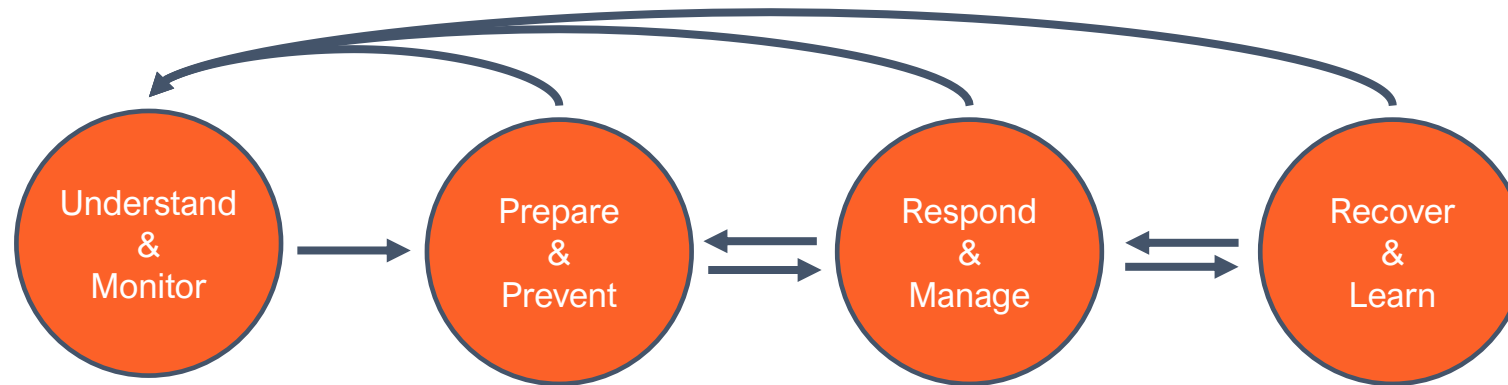
# Crisis & Reputation Management Credentials

Holdsworth Consultancy Ltd

# Approach

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- Whilst every organisation is different, the approach to preparing organisations can follow the same tried and tested process.



- Holdsworth Consultancy Ltd works with individuals and organisations, both large and small, to;
  - **Understand** what risks and issues may impact the organisation and ensure robust monitoring is in place.
  - Ensure the organisation considers mitigation measures to minimise and **Prevent** risks if possible, and is **Prepared**, ensuring a plan and process are in place, to handle issues that do arise quickly and effectively.
  - **Respond** to crisis situations and minimise potential reputations damage.
  - **Recover** reputations, ensuring we **learn** from the crisis and rebuild the organisations credibility.

# Prepare & Prevent

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Crisis planning is essential for every organisation no matter what size. Understanding how an issue could materialise and impact as well as having a process and team in place to ensure that an issue can be dealt with effectively and swiftly, with minimal long term business or reputational impact, is crucial.

- Organisations should have a Crisis Management Plan and Crisis Communications Plan in place. Using experience we can ensure that a workable plan with an identified process and protocols is available. Plans always include:
  - Escalation processes to ensure information reaches the right people quickly,
  - Identification of a Crisis Management Team,
  - Individual roles and responsibilities,
  - Templates to ensure information and decision making is captured.
- Risk assessments help organisations to understand the issues that they may face. This enables planning and mitigation strategies to be identified.
- Testing both Crisis Plans and designated Crisis Teams is essential - authentic crisis simulations that includes media enquiries, new information emerging as the situation develops, media coverage, social media, all appearing on a real-time basis alongside questions from a variety of stakeholders.

# Respond & Manage

When a crisis happens you need communications and crisis counsel you can trust and quickly.

- Experience means we know crises don't occur in normal working hours so Holdsworth Consultancy Ltd is always on call to provide immediate counsel to your senior team; manage communications to media, stakeholders, customers, staff and all of your audiences; and keep you fully abreast of developments and coverage of the issue.
- We can be your first line of defence – handling all media requests, managing the media messaging and reporting. Preparing required materials such as press releases and Q&As, for issues as they arise. This allows you time to concentrate on the task at hand of responding to the issue.
- We can be your spokesperson, set up press conferences or manage interviews if required.
- We will ensure spokespeople are fully briefed on key messages and possible questions prior to a media interview.
- We will monitor and analyse the crisis meaning we can respond and rebut, where necessary inaccurate, reporting as well as constantly consider the response strategy.

# Recover & Learn

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Following a crisis, organisations have often lost reputational equity, stakeholder and employee confidence and even share value.

Depending on the situation, organisations may need to keep the media and stakeholders informed of what is happening and how they are ensuring that they are providing the services they always have done.

- Unless there is a clear strategy in place to help a company recover or rebuild its reputation, the original crisis can harm the business years after the event.
- Helping organisations that have been impacted by an issue or crisis is as important as helping through the event itself. They often need to rebuild, protect and secure their reputation for their longer term.

# Case Studies

Holdsworth Consultancy Ltd

# Prepare & Prevent

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When your business portfolio contains numerous businesses it is essential that possible risks are understood and a clear crisis process is in place that enables the organisation to support all of its assets.

- To ensure the parent company was prepared we went through a process of first identifying potential risks our client, that focuses on hospitality and catering, could face. This involved interviewing key personnel within each business and mapping risks against possible likelihood and impact. A draft holding line was developed in response for each risk as well as the probable media reaction.
- Secondly a Crisis Management Plan was written, identifying how the organisation would respond rapidly to any issue. This included identification of process to ensure an issue is escalated and how information flows between individual brands and the parent company. A Crisis Management Team (CMT) was identified along with an agenda for the first CMT meeting and key questions that needed to be asked at the meeting to establish what had happened and how it was being responded to. The Crisis Management Plan also included the roles individuals would undertake and some crucial actions they would need to undertake.
- Finally, an Crisis Simulation Exercise was prepared and conducted to test the new processes and procedures, ensuring they were fit for purpose and effective.

# Prepare & Prevent



Any Government organisation needs to understand the risks that they face and how that could impact on the countries reputation and, crucially, how they work with other Government Departments to respond

- The National Media Council (NMC) in the UAE needed to understand the risks they faced and the role they would play if an issues was to arise. The NMC wanted to understand how they would respond to a crisis and what their role would be.
- A number of risks were initially identified using current materials and research. A comprehensive risk assessment was completed looking into different areas of risk. Under each individual risk is a potential scenario was identified alongside clear roles and responsibilities the NMC would undertake.
- In addition, a Crisis Communications Manual was created for the NMC that clearly identified escalation protocols and the teams individual roles and responsibilities.
- The NMC now have a clear understanding of the potential risks the UAE could face, what these would look like and crucially how the NMC might respond and the role they could play to support any response. Additionally, the NMC have a clear idea on what could be possible, with staff and resource should they get the remit to increase their role and take on a 'horizon scanning' function.



# Prepare & Prevent

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Understanding how issues affecting one asset of a global company could have a wider impact, and therefore what support is available and how one interreact with the other, enables a more efficient and effective response.

- Mubadala needed to update their crisis communications processes . This was to ensure that divisions within the organisation understood the escalation protocols and the need to inform Mubadala of issues so they could get the support they needed.
- Focusing on the aerospace division we carried out a range of visits and interviews with key personnel to understand the risks they faced but also what resource and support they needed from Mubadala in a crisis.
- A crisis management plan was created that explained the process as well as individual roles and responsibilities within Mubadala and how the internal team would work. Following the completion of the plan, a crisis simulation was carried out with the internal team and one of the aerospace divisions.
- Following the crisis simulation, changes were identified to the internal team alongside training that would be appropriate for members of staff in different roles.

# Prepare & Prevent

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Ensuring all parts of your business, regardless of location, can identify a potential crisis or issue, understand how it may affect the rest of the business and follow a set procedure to ensure it can be dealt with can ensure the organisation managed issues appropriately.

- I designed a crisis escalation process that enable issues to escalate through the appropriate management chain swiftly. The process ensured that issues were escalated to country leads, regional leads and to head office if required. This ensured that if issues could be dealt with at a local or regional level they were.
- Success for the client was that the process was activated on a regular basis, even if it did not result in an activation of the crisis management team, as it ensured they were being informed of issues.
- Webinars where held with every office globally to explained the new process, how it worked and that it was in place not to take over in an issue, unless required, but to provide support. Additionally, during the sessions we gave the participants scenarios and asked what they would do. This was to test understanding of the process in place but also to ensure there was an understanding across the business of what should be escalated and to where.

# Prepare & Prevent

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The opening of any large entertainment venue requires meticulous planning, including crisis planning. Ensuring a new team has clear responsibilities and processes is critical.

- Prior to the opening of IMG World or Adventure in Dubai, management wanted a Crisis Communications Manual that would sit alongside the Theme Parks Crisis Manual. It was essential that should an issue occur, management had processes and protocols in place so they could communicate effectively with both customers but also key stakeholders such as the Marvel brands present in the park.
- A comprehensive Crisis Communication Plan was written which identified how communications would be handled in the event of an issue materialising. Additionally potential risks were analysed and specific responses, including holding lines, were drafted.
- Communications and reputational advice and support were provided to IMG World of Adventure prior to it opening. These included advice following a fire in the offices of the parks management as well as when delays to the opening of the park were announced.

# Respond & Manage

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In any crisis it is essential to have consistent messaging and think about your stakeholders and what are the messages they need to hear. Ensuring the media accurately report is crucial

- When Dana Air flight 992 crashed in a Lagos neighbourhood, tragically killing all 153 people on board and another 10 on the ground, communications and crisis counsel was paramount for the plane operator.
- Analysing the media coverage of the event, it quickly became clear that the majority of reporting was based on one journalist from Reuters who was based in Africa. Our priority was to make contact with them, ensure they had the operators statement, answer questions and dispel rumours.
- We made contact with the journalist and ensured he had the latest statements as well as access to the company 24/7 through ourselves. Following swift media training, we invited the journalist to meet with the airline operator.
- This enabled the operator to express their sorrow at what had happened, explain what they were doing in response to it as well as dispel speculation on the cause of the crash.

# Respond & Manage

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Having the ability to call on external advisors who can take a unhindered and holistic view of the situation can prove invaluable, particularly following the death of an employee and friend.

- Following the murder of a UK worker and their partner (from a different nation) on a beach in Libya it was essential that the organisation that employed one of them, was prepared for the inevitable media scrutiny and questions.
- Limited in what they could say due to nature of the tragedy, the company sought to limit media coverage as per wishes of both families. The company were not at fault and this needed balancing against the family wishes when media were asking questions.
- It was difficult for the leadership team to think clearly and strategically, having lost a colleague and a close friend. It was essential that reputation and crisis counsel was sought from a uninvolved party that could give clear advice and guidance.
- Statements were drafted that were cleared through family liaison and sought, and achieved, to minimise coverage of the tragedy.

# Respond, Manage and Recover

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A national tragedy led to a school finding themselves unable to access their building and in media spotlight. Communications support was required so the teachers could bring their students back together and teach.

- Provided a barrier between students, staff and the media. Giving the Senior Leadership Team the space they needed to re-open the school within a couple of days. Working with media, providing what information I could, rebutting inaccurate coverage and speculation. The aim was to ensure that coverage had minimal impact on students and ensure media did not overstep the mark.
- Working with Government Ministers and Departments on communications and finding a solution to issues as they arose. Assisted with communications to bereaved families, National and Local Government, local community, school's sponsors and Governing body.
- Worked with the school and media to build reassurance in the education the school was able to provide following the tragedy and in temporary accommodation.
- Continued support throughout the year in temporary accommodation and through consultation on whether the school could return to its original building. Worked with communications team in the school and outside agencies to present positive media where appropriate about what the school was achieving, including an Outstanding assessment from Ofsted.

# Respond & Manage – Working with individuals

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Reputational issue can impact not just businesses but individuals as well. Be it protecting people from invasion of privacy or correcting inaccurate reporting, it is essential that reputational advice is on hand.

- Worked with a high-profile retail entrepreneur and investor in response to allegations by a mainstream newspaper who believed there was a viable story concerning his former partner. After understanding the allegation and what actually took place, we had conversations with the journalist and convinced them that there was no story.
- Acted for one of Africa's wealthiest businessman, building his profile in the Western media prior to a high profile litigation in the UK. Supported the client throughout the trial with daily attendance in court, working closely with lawyers to prepare media statements as they were needed.
- A senior female MP in west Africa found that their reputation, and previous achievements, were being tarnished and undermined, following a politically move by her coalition partners that removed her from her senior position within the coalition and parliament. This meant that the good work they had been doing, including on women's rights and fighting sexual violence, was becoming harder. We worked with her to build a narrative, not only around her removal from the coalition, and questions on that matter, but also around her current and previous work as an MP. Our work enabled the MP to continue fighting for the causes closest to her as well as serve her constituents.

# Respond & Manage – Working with individuals

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**Working closely with family offices and legal teams ensures clients receive the best advice and clearly know what options are available to them**

- Supported a distinguished British businessman and politician, as he faced highly damaging – and untrue – allegations. Fuelled by speculation and high profile individuals taking to Twitter to repeat the allegations the defamation was repeated by the BBC and ITV, as well as in several media titles. We worked swiftly to refute the allegations and present the facts of the matter, demonstrating that the allegations were wholly false. Numerous apologies were issued by mainstream broadcasters as well as success libel action against media and twitter users.
- Assisted a prominent family with the management of the media following the unexpected death of a family member. This included preventing the media from directly approaching family members both in the UK and overseas, and included on-the-ground presence and support. Working closely with lawyers, we ensured accurate reporting. The family were provided with at least daily updates and analysis into the media coverage and direction of the story.



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