

RED SKY



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# Crisis Communication



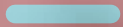
Every message opportunity is  
a business and reputation opportunity



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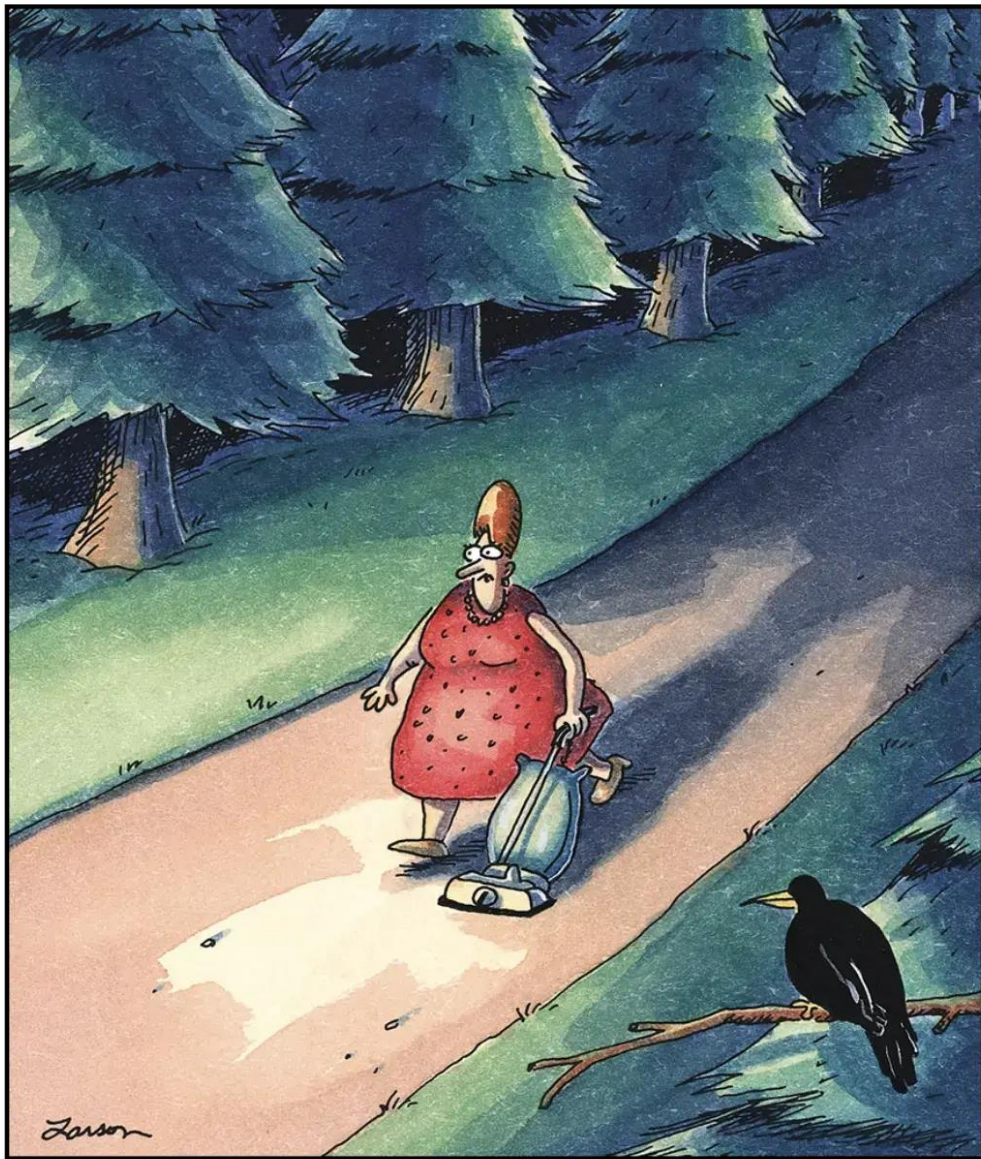
“

We live in a 'speed  
of thumbs' world.



# Misinformation & Mistrust





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“

Information vacuums  
are breeding grounds  
for mis- and  
disinformation.

The woods were dark and foreboding, and Alice sensed that sinister eyes were watching her every step. Worst of all, she knew that Nature abhorred a vacuum.

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# Preparing for Crisis

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**CRISIS  
AHEAD**



By the time you hear  
the thunder, it's too  
late to build the ark.

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# Plan for it



Identify your team (CMT)



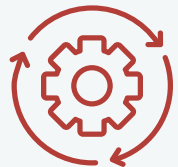
Anticipate the bad



Develop an actionable plan



Prepare messages



Review, practice and refine

# Define Your Roles (CMT)



- Leadership
- Operations / Facilities
- Legal
- Human Resources
- Communications / IT
- Event/situation-dependent resources
- Public Safety

# Key Partners



- ☐ Regulatory agencies
- ☐ City / County / State leadership
- ☐ Law enforcement
- ☐ Hospital / Health Centers
- ☐ Industry networks / associations
- ☐ ?

# Vulnerability Assessment



# Vulnerability Assessment



- ☐ What could happen?
- ☐ Where could it happen?
- ☐ Who/what could be the cause?
- ☐ What is outside of your control?
- ☐ What are you most concerned about?

# Crisis or Issue?



# Crisis

- Sudden, urgent & significant threat
- Disrupts normal operations & requires immediate action
- Potentially involving safety concerns &/or significant impact to reputation.

# Issue

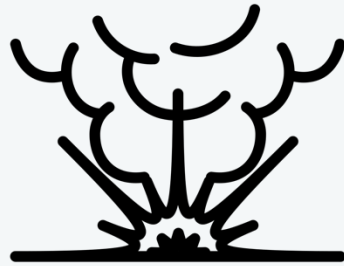
- Actual or potential threat that can be identified & managed proactively
- No immediate disruption to normal operations, urgent safety concerns or meaningful impact to reputation.



# Categories of Crisis



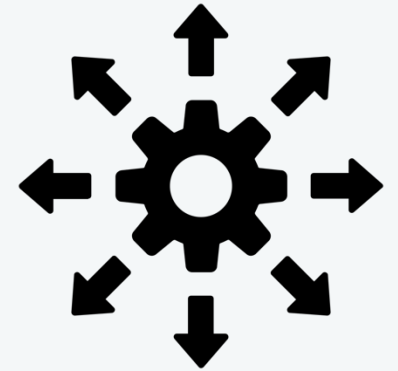
Natural Disaster



Accident



Public Health



System Failure



Acts of  
Violence



Cyber Attack



Misbehavior  
Malfeasance



Financial  
Hardship



Unrest/Protest

# Catalyst Events



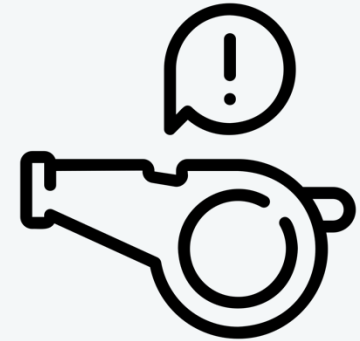
Legal  
Filing



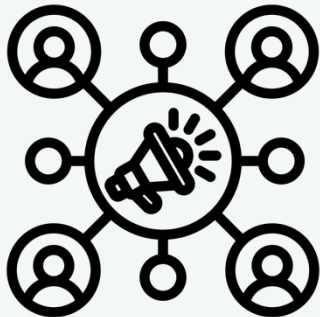
FOIA  
Request



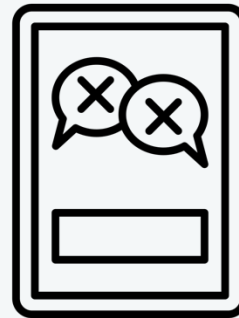
Regulatory  
Filing



Whistleblower



Virality



Disinformation



Media Leak

**WHAT IF?**

# Plan for it

- Map a wide range of potential crises
- Identify processes and procedures
- Develop messaging and tools to expedite efforts

## Table of Contents

1. Purpose
2. How to Use
3. Definitions
4. Policies
5. Crisis Types
6. Crisis Management Team
7. Flowchart: Determining Crisis vs. Issue
8. Tools
9. Appendix
10. Other Resources

### Tools: Situational Assessment

#### Situational Assessment:

The Crisis Management Team will assess the situation, determine facts, and begin delegation. Below are recommended steps to help manage communications in the event of a crisis. Be sure to record all actions taken and related coverage gained, to evaluate efficacy and measure intended plan objectives. Modify the plan after evaluation, if needed.

#### Establish Crisis Verification System – What, When, Who, How, and Why

The first step is to determine what happened. Then, immediately identify and document as many facts as possible based on essential questions: What has confirmed the situation through credible information sources? Need to put the event into perspective? When did it happen? Happen? What is currently being done?

#### Crisis description

#### Analysis & Verification

Crisis spokesperson  
What happened?  
Which credible information sources have you confirmed?  
What additional facts do you need?

### Tools: Public Statement Checklist

In general, a public statement should be brief and to the point, but it should also let the public know you care and are taking action.

A good public statement should follow this outline:

- This is what happened
- This is how we feel about it
- This is what we're doing about it/ going to do about it

To build the statement using this outline, the crisis team will need to gather a variety of information and should determine how it will answer the following questions.

- What happened?
- When did it happen?
- Where?
- Was anyone injured/ killed?
- Is there a public safety/health/environmental issue?
- Have the appropriate public officials been notified?
- Were /are staff at risk or hurt?
- Have you informed any families that are affected?
- When did you find out about it?
- What have you done about it?
- What was the cause?

### Crisis Assessment Table

| Crisis Levels | Check if Applicable | Crisis Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A             |                     | The initial event is clearly recognized as a public health emergency that requires immediate communication with the public to prevent further widespread illness or death. Deaths are expected within a short window of time (catastrophic event). Diagnosis and/or treatment are uncertain. |
|               |                     | The media and public perceive the event as the "big," "worst," or "biggest," etc.                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| B             |                     | The event is occurring in a metropolitan area (with dense media outlets) versus a sparsely populated area (with fewer media outlets).                                                                                                                                                        |
|               |                     | The event is sudden, is national or international in scope, or has the potential to have a national health impact.                                                                                                                                                                           |
|               |                     | The event predominantly impacts children or previously healthy adults.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|               |                     | The event is possibly "man-made" and/or deliberate.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|               |                     | Persons involved in the event must take active steps to protect their personal health and safety.                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|               |                     | Responsibility for mitigating the event falls within the scope of your organization.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|               |                     | The event has some "known" or "suspected" agent.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

### Audience Identification and Outreach

During a crisis, \_\_\_\_\_ will have to communicate with a variety of audiences. And, depending on the situation the audiences will vary, as will the channels for reaching these audiences.

**Tier 1-** These people are most affected or directly impacted by the event or involved in the response and will need information that enables them to take immediate action.

**Tier 2-** These people are not immediately affected by the event but will need information about safety and will need the facts about the event.

**Tier 3-** These people are not affected by the event but still need information that will reassure them and their audiences and enable them to plan for their own safety.

| Tier Level | Audience | Key Messages | Supporting Evidence | Channel(s) | Internal Responsibility |
|------------|----------|--------------|---------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 1          |          |              |                     |            |                         |
| 2          |          |              |                     |            |                         |
| 3          |          |              |                     |            |                         |

\*The media should be considered an important audience. The media can be used effectively to get your message across accurately, timely and to a broad audience.

#### Audience & Channel Identification-

The Audience Identification phase requires that the Crisis Response Team and Crisis Communication Team collaborate to determine all the possible audiences to which the company needs to reach out during and after the event.

In addition to identifying relevant or affected audiences, it's also important to identify the communication channels that will be used to communicate to various audiences. For example, by using existing means when communicating with customers they will be more apt to feel reassured by messages coming through channels with which they are comfortable.

### Tools: Response Checklists

#### Immediate Response: 30 Minutes

- ☐ Be engaged in the initial steps to contain the immediate crisis.
- ☐ Quickly assess and gather known facts.
- ☐ Ensure all relevant authorities and emergency responders are notified as appropriate.
- ☐ Follow the notification process.
- ☐ Notify organization phone operators of potential media/investor/customer calls.
- ☐ Request they send all media, government and community calls to \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ Initiate communications response, based on facts not speculation. If information is limited, think about the organization's core values and rely on pre-approved crisis key message themes.
- ☐ Draft an appropriate statement or media release based on the situation. Ensure employees remain informed and receive consistent messaging while the organization communicates with external audiences.

#### Immediate Response: 60 Minutes

- ☐ Go to crisis command center or participate on conference call
- ☐ Reinforce roles and responsibilities.
- ☐ Reinforce internal roles and responsibilities to keep employees informed.
- ☐ Assess the need to bring in additional assistance.
- ☐ Continue to maintain contact with executive team and emergency response team.
- ☐ Identify and prepare organization spokesperson(s).
- ☐ Assess whether to pause/delete scheduled social media posts, ads, emails or other externally facing communications that conflict with or do not align with current circumstances.
- ☐ Set up a media alert that monitors for issue-specific keywords in real time
- ☐ Be responsive to any outstanding media calls. If time is limited, be sure to get back to them as rapidly as possible.

#### Ongoing Management

- ☐ Shift from reactive to proactive communications.
- ☐ Prepare a communications plan for the day and communicate with internal audiences. Do not leave without preparing the communications plan for the next 24 hours.
- ☐ Report on news to response team. Evaluate the following questions: Are messages getting through to key stakeholders? What needs to be calibrated and corrected?
- ☐ Review status of and update all appropriate communications materials including website, social media, public statements, etc.
- ☐ Coordinate the briefing of key legislators and local government officials, if applicable.
- ☐ Assess media reports to ensure that what is being reported is what actually is occurring.

#### Avoid Costly Mistakes

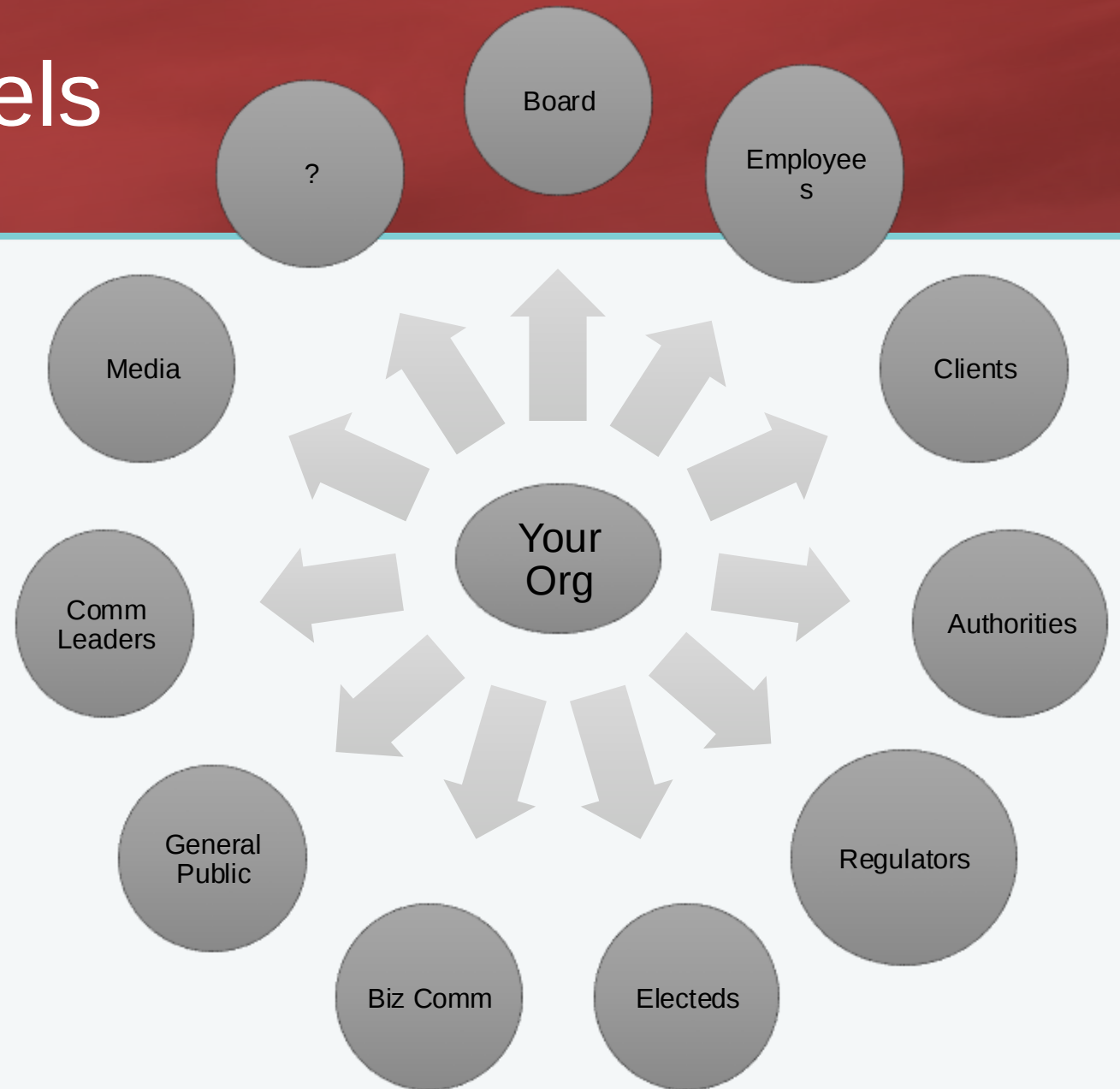
Do not:

# Elements of a Crisis Plan



- ☐ CMT
- ☐ Process & Protocols
- ☐ Key Audiences & Partners
- ☐ Communication Channels
- ☐ Crisis Scenarios
- ☐ Messages & Holding Statements
- ☐ Templates & Checklists

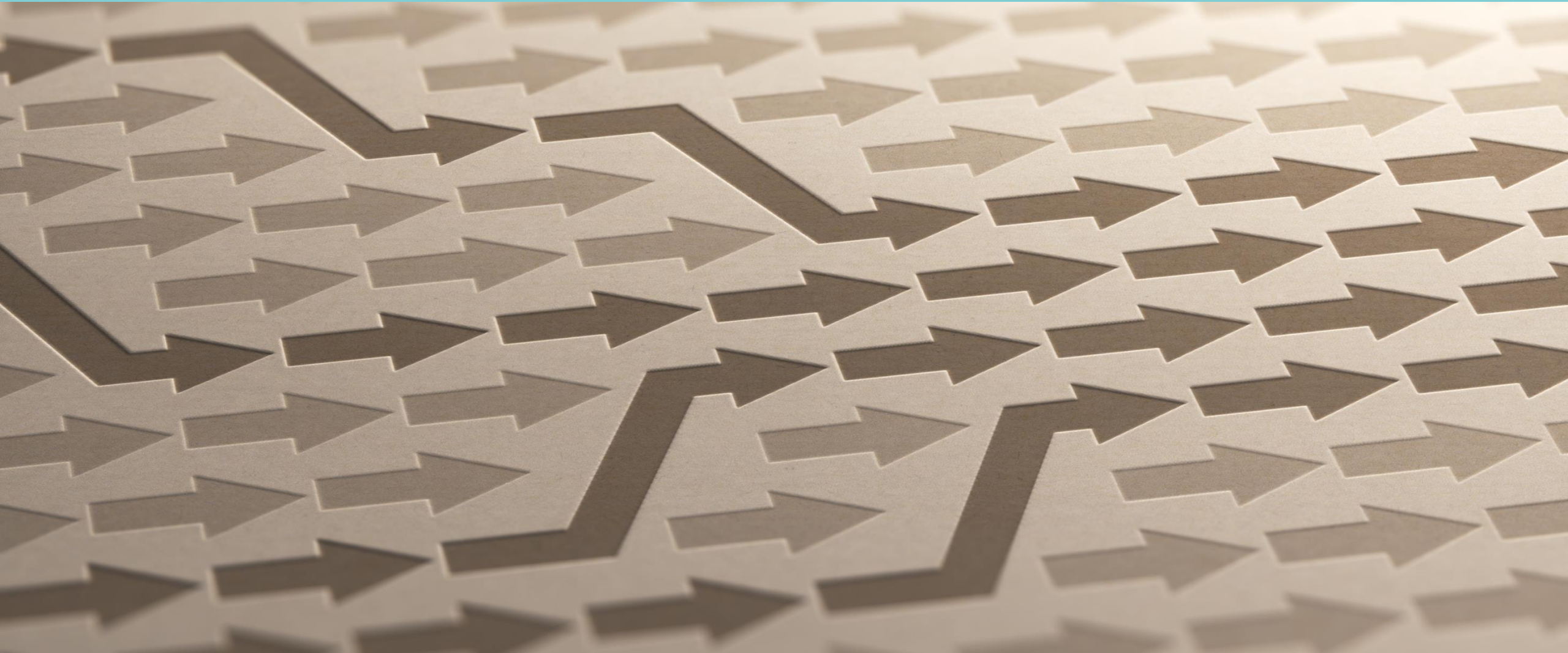
# Audiences + Channels

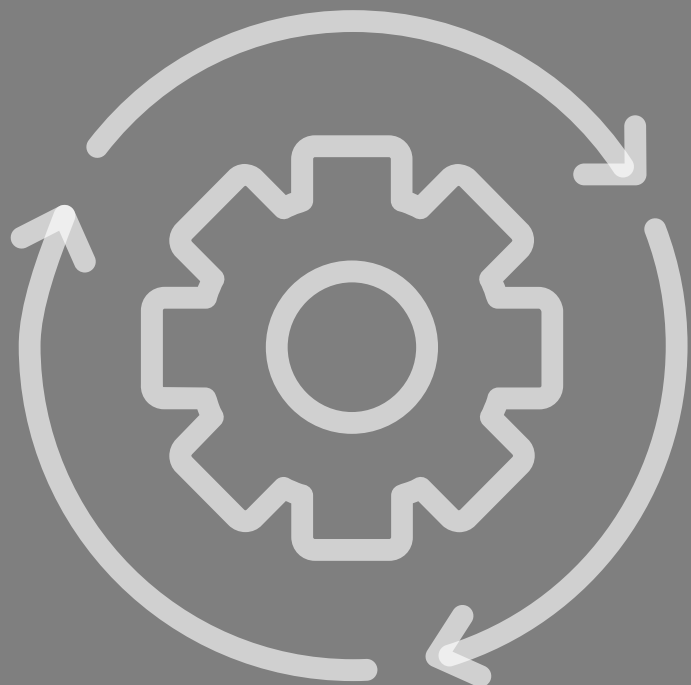


# Circles over Silos



# Define / Refine Your Process





Awareness

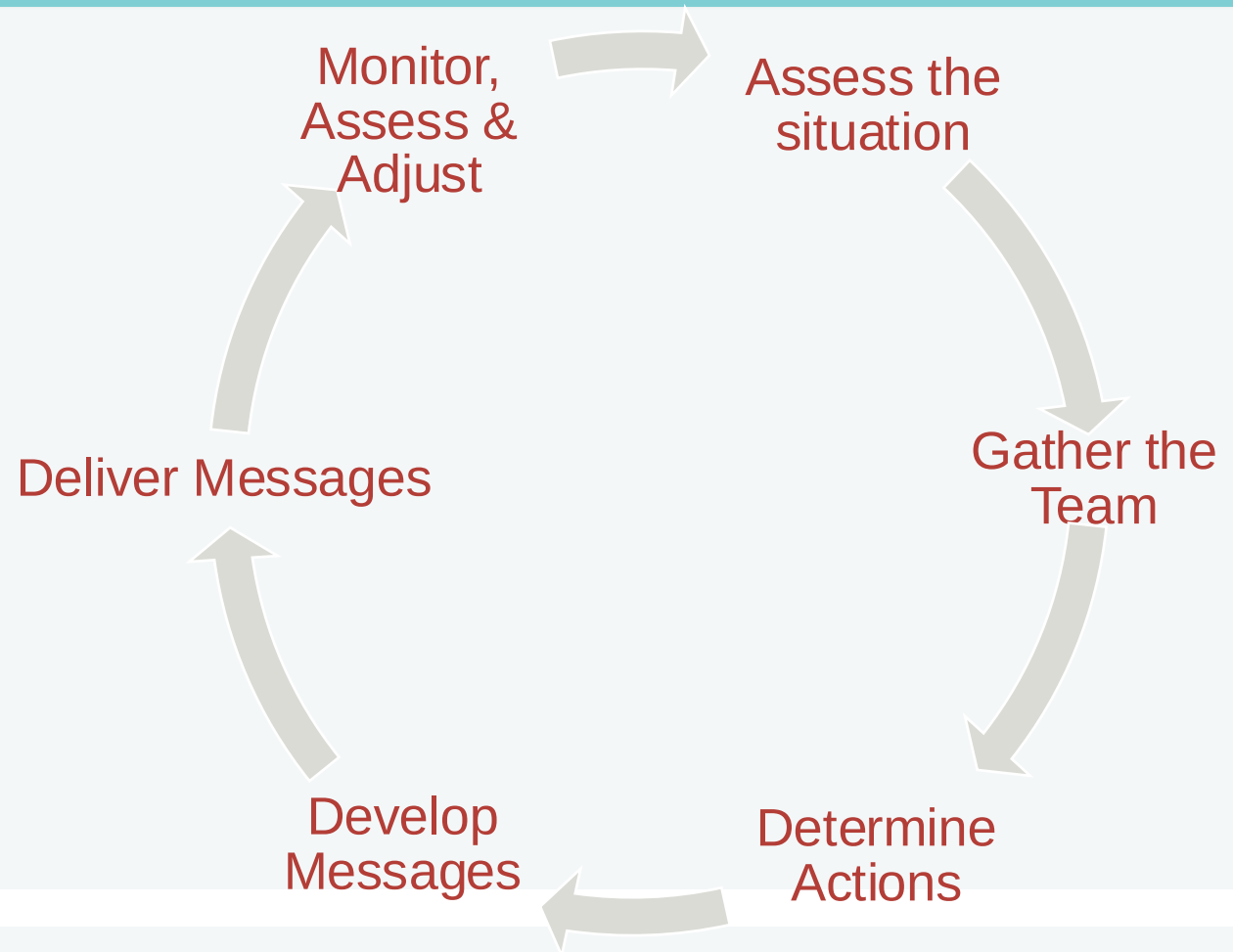
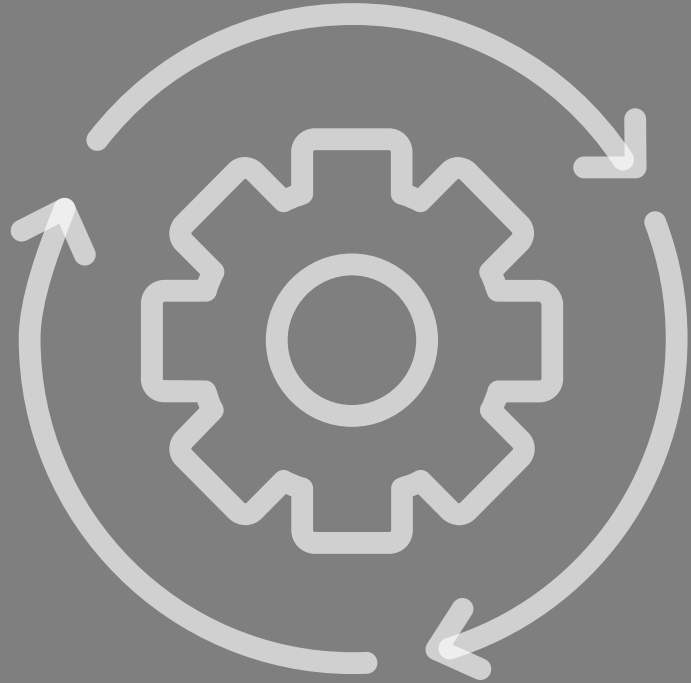
Monitor

Reactive

Proactive Engage

Offense /  
Brand Defense

# Refine & Evolve



“ Be agile and  
adaptable;  
assess and adjust.

A background image showing a close-up of a hand moving a white chess piece on a chessboard. The image is split into two main color zones: a dark red on the left and a light blue on the right. The chessboard and pieces are visible in both zones, with the hand and the piece being moved being the central focus. The text is overlaid on the red zone.

# Prepare Your Messages



# Get Prepped



- ☐ Your 'boilerplate' overview
- ☐ Your mission &/or values
- ☐ Holding statements



What you  
want to say

What they  
care about



# What They Care About



- *How did this happen?*
- *Does it impact me? My family?  
My business?*
- *How do I know it won't happen again?*
- *Who's at fault?*
- *Can I trust you?*
- *What happens next?*

# Situation-specific



- What do you know?
- What can you share?
- What questions can you expect?
- What key messages do you want to communicate?
- What is the main takeaway?



“ Keep the human  
impact at the  
forefront.

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# Message Delivery

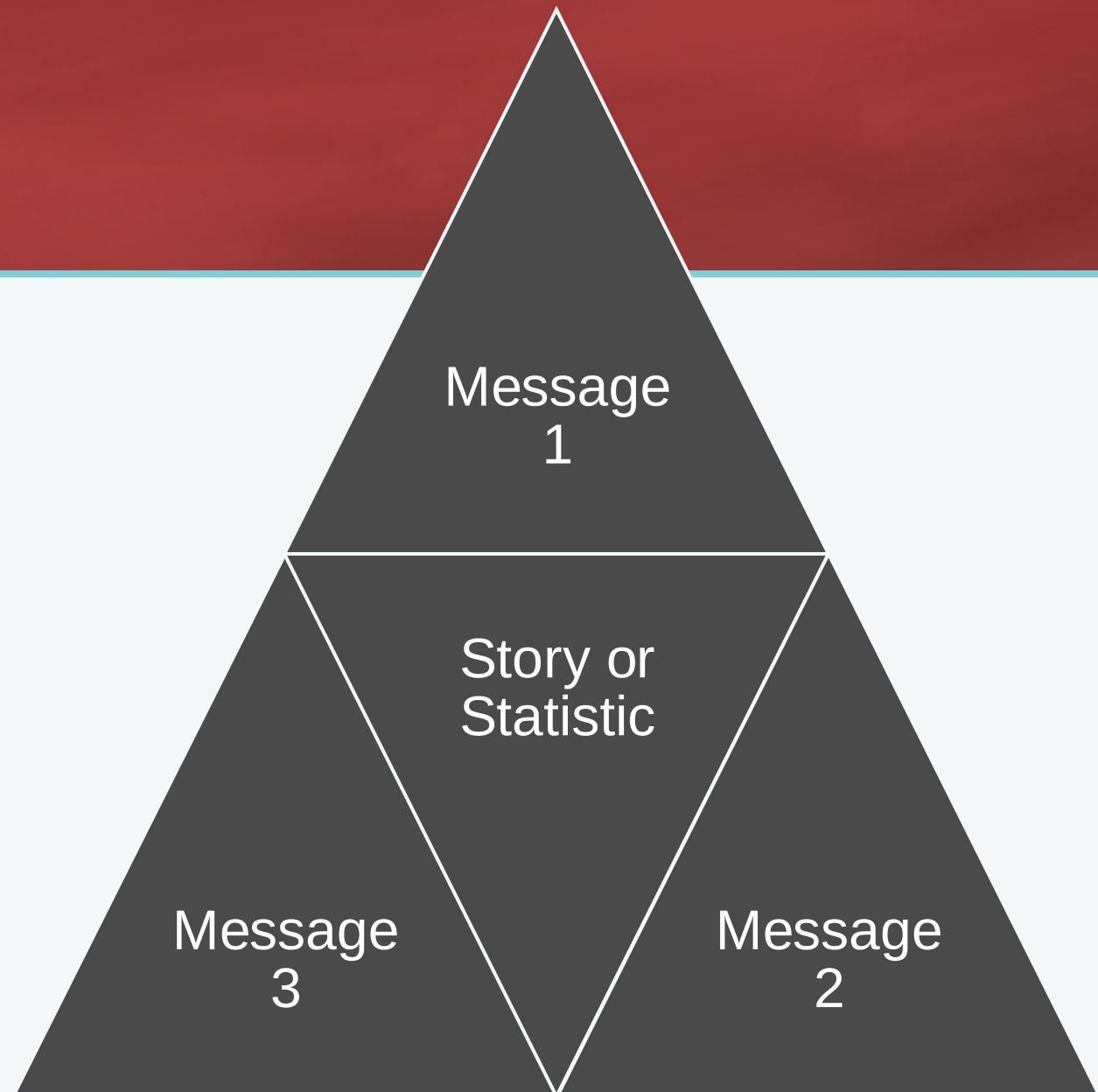


# Message Triangle

3 main points for  
each concept

Bolster with  
a story or statistic

Deliver each  
in <15 seconds



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# In Practice

# The Situation

Healthcare technology startup Sancron is pursuing a Series C round of VC funding. The board brought in a new CEO six months ago after concerns came to light about the culture created by the founder. Several tech blogs had relayed allegations from unnamed employees about inappropriate behavior in the workplace.

Last night, an anonymous hacker announced via Reddit that she had accessed your payroll records, and claims they show blatant salary discrimination against female employees. The hacker has included a link with pdfs of the financials and internal emails that she claims proves her point. The post went viral overnight.

# Your Assignment

Your table = Your Sancron team

- Establish your CMT roles
- Define the CMT's priority steps
- In *your specific* role, what are the top things to address?
- As a group
  - Name triggers/outliers that could impact your main course of action
  - Identify your priority audiences & partners
  - Identify main communication channels
  - Craft the key messages & main takeaway
  - Determine the cadence of your communication

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