

The Six Stages of a Crisis

Stage Six: Recovery



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COMMUNICATION DURING A CRISIS

Executive Summary

To reach the recovery stage of a crisis, an organization must coordinate its critical communication strategy, prevent rumors and misinformation, and avoid communication breakdowns. Returning to normalcy is the major goal of communication during recovery. Message content should include ways to access available resources and address long and short term plans for crisis recovery.

The Facts in Brief

A crisis disrupts normal operations and can result in significant financial, security, safety, and reputational harm. Depending on the nature and severity of a crisis, an organization and its stakeholders might be endangered. Organizations could face complex threats and risks as well. As a result, every stage of a crisis dictates the audience's requirements, including the need for information and the response of the organization that issued the warning.

There are six identified stages within every crisis: (1) Warning; (2) Risk Assessment; (3) Response; (4) Management; (5) Resolution; and (6) Recovery. This is the sixth and final topic briefing that will explore each stage of a crisis, identify specific areas of concern, and provide manageable solutions

The sixth stage of a crisis is the recovery phase. Each of the six stages may vary in length, ranging from a few days to a couple of months. The recovery phase is generally

the longest. During this stage, the focus is getting back to normal and resuming daily operations.

Communication during the recovery stage revolves around post-crisis counseling and a return to pre-crisis policies and operations. Recovery stage messages should contain simple, declarative statements that reflect anticipated steps required to return to normal operations. Reassurance, confidence, and stability are all important meta-message aspects for effective communication throughout this stage.

To fully recover from a crisis, it is important to consider the "cost" of the event and its toll on people, performance, and perseverance. Crisis responders may have experienced sleep deprivation, sensory over-stimulation, physical discomfort, fear and dread, isolation, and incessant pressure – all of which can negatively affect individuals and their communication effectiveness.

In the recovery phase, social media is an effective tool for communication. Evaluate the effectiveness of your crisis communication plan to deliver timely, accurate messages and monitor event updates on social networks. Gather situational intelligence from social media sites, weather feeds, threat monitoring, and other data streams to help enhance the mitigation of crisis damage. Collecting data using situational intelligence can also be valuable when planning for future events.

Key Recommendations

1. **Incorporate social media into a crisis communication plan**

Use insight from social media to bolster your crisis communication strategy. Twitter, weather feeds, and various social networks provide relevant, real-time data that is important to your organization. Monitor social media platforms throughout the life cycle of a crisis to leverage situational intelligence during the event, deliver up-to-the-minute notifications to affected individuals, and make better decisions.

2. **Provide details about how to access critical information and resources**

Communicate policy and procedural changes that are being implemented before, during, and after a crisis. Use multiple contact paths (email, fax, SMS, text messaging, etc.) to effectively deliver critical information to large groups of people.

3. **Understand how long it takes to fully recover from a crisis**

Consider the "cost" of the crisis and its immediate and long-term impact. Many emotional, physical, and psychological factors can negatively affect individuals, communication effectiveness, and recovery. Post-event analysis helps you determine how long it will take to fully recover from a crisis.

4. **Use meta-messages to support your recovery efforts**

Every message should include clear, concise instructions. What you say, how you say it, when you say it, the context, and the mental and physical status of the audience will affect the meaning/interpretation/behavioral response of target audiences. To avoid misinterpretations and confusion, craft your messages carefully and ensure notifications are validated for specific contexts and audiences.

About Robert C. Chandler, Ph.D.



Dr. Robert C. Chandler, (Ph.D., University of Kansas; M.A., Wake Forest University; B.A., Harding College) is Professor of Communication and Director of the Nicholson School of Communication (NSC) at the University of Central Florida (UCF).

Dr. Chandler's research spans the range of crisis communication, leadership, teamwork, decision making, psychometric variables during crises, and emergency communication, including specific areas of crisis and incident notification, warning messages, cognitive processing, and message comprehension. He also investigates organizational communication, communication and conflict, risk communication, multicultural and intercultural communication issues, and business ethics. He is the creator of several widely-used planning models for crisis and emergency communication preparedness, including: (1) Communication Planning for the Six Stages of Crisis, (2) the 3-3-30© principle for incident notification, and (3) Message Mapping: The Chandler Model.

Dr. Chandler is an internationally recognized social scientific researcher with more than 150 academic and professional papers, including widely-circulated "white papers" on emergency and crisis communication. He has authored more than 75 academic and professional publications, and is the author or co-author of eight books including: *Emergency Notification* (2010); *Surviving the Pandemic: A Communication Management Guide for Business* (2009); *Media Relations* (2008); *Disaster Recovery and the News Media* (2007); *Managing the Risks for Corporate Integrity: How to Survive an Ethical Misconduct Disaster* (2006); *Pandemic: Business Continuity Planning Priorities for the Coming Outbreak* (2005); and *Crisis and Emergency Communication* (2006).



About Everbridge

Everbridge provides a unified critical communication suite that helps clients be better prepared, make better decisions, and respond quickly and confidently during disruptive events. When an incident happens, whether it's a natural disaster or an IT service outage, we automate communications to ensure that the right messages get to the right people at the right time.

Widely recognized by analysts as the market leader, Everbridge solutions are trusted by clients in all major industries and government sectors to connect with over 50 million people around the world.

THE ONLY END-TO-END PLATFORM

- **Planning:** Everbridge is easy to set up, maintain, and organize, meaning that you're always ready for a quick, coordinated response. Everbridge ensures that the right messages get to the right people - with the most advanced opt-in portal on the market, streamlined integration with internal and external data sources, and simple group and contact management.
- **Assessment:** When trouble strikes, you need rich insight, presented simply - so you can quickly assess potential impact and make an informed decision to avoid loss. Everbridge offers the only solution on the market that meets these demanding requirements, with the most advanced interactive dashboard in the industry.
- **Response:** In critical situations, ease-of-use can mean the difference between an effective response and a mistake that carries serious consequences. Everbridge is engineered to be simple to use under pressure, with a user interface that accelerates time-to-message and reduces the likelihood of errors.
- **Delivery:** Even during large-scale disruptions, Everbridge stays on. The most advanced platform in the industry ensures that you reach your contacts - every time. And with worldwide coverage and capabilities, including globally local calling infrastructure and data storage, we're ready to support you wherever your people are in the world.

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