

SURVIVING A CRISIS

HOW TO PREPARE AND RESPOND

A large, solid red silhouette of a camel, facing left, which serves as the background for the main title text.

PICTURE YOUR ORGANIZATION IN A CRISIS

No matter the industry, you are bound to undergo at least one major crisis—the straw that breaks the camel’s back. Crises are unavoidable incidents that put your brand and reputation on the line.

How will you respond?

If you’re in a leadership role, the responsibility of “making it out alive” ultimately falls on you. You can go to sleep one night with everything in order, and awaken to utter chaos.

The tour starts with our definition of a crisis, and then moves onto an examination of crisis communications as a methodology.

Finally, we’ll pinpoint what you can do about it. We’ll share with you our leading strategy: the safety sandwich. Soon, you’ll have new weapons for your arsenal, awaiting deployment.

BAD ORGANIZATIONS
ARE DESTROYED
BY CRISIS.

GOOD ORGANIZATIONS
SURVIVE THEM.

GREAT ORGANIZATIONS
ARE IMPROVED BY THEM.



Headlines that featured Forbes 100 companies and the word "crisis" appeared **80% more often now** than in the previous decade.



FIRST: WHAT IS A CRISIS?

An assault upon...

1

The public's trust in your organization.

2

How the public views your reputation and image.

A crisis can take on many forms at varying degrees of urgency and seriousness. Without a crisis communications strategy in place, the **smallest of situations** could turn into your **biggest nightmare**.





~~WHY SHOULD I CARE?~~
~~NOTHING BAD EVER~~
~~HAPPENS TO ME.~~

*It's Monday. In the last 48 hours, your school district was hit by a major crisis.
Wasn't everything fine on Friday?*

*Your employees are suffering, unable to keep up with questions from parents.
You knew that a crisis training program should've been mandatory.*

*The news media is outside of your door. You have no talking points prepared.
Don't you wish you had your responses ready?*

**ALL BETS ARE OFF.
YOU ARE AT YOUR BREAKING POINT.**



CAN YOU RECALL A TIME WHEN THE WORLD WAS
AS UNPREDICTABLE AS IT IS TODAY?

**TAKE A STEP BACK AND PUT YOURSELF
IN THE 'WHAT IF?' FRAME OF MIND.**

IT'S TIME TO EVALUATE WHETHER YOUR
ORGANIZATION IS CRISIS READY OR NOT.





WORKBOOK

Take some time and identify three to five potential crises that your organization could face. These should be realistic—not necessarily worst-case scenarios.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

P.S. Don't worry if you can't think of anything. Sometimes it's hard to predict what's going to go wrong until it just does.



SO, WHAT IS CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS?

The method of corresponding with people and organizations to provide tactical information during a disruptive event.

A SUCCESSFUL CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOLLOWS THREE MAIN PHASES:

1

Preparation

2

The Crisis

3

Rebuilding the Trust



Before the crisis strikes, you should already be somewhat prepared.

What's your plan? Who is your designated media spokesperson?

HERE ARE SOME CRITICAL QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ANSWER DURING THE PREPARATION PHASE:

- Has the spokesperson been trained for the media? To what extent?*
- How are you going to get the word out—to parents/guardians, citizens, the media?*
- Have you already developed messaging?*
- Have you established a leadership culture with a "crisis instinct"?*



By failing to
prepare, you are
preparing to fail.

- BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



An organization that is primed to perform...

exemplifies a leadership culture with a "crisis instinct"

has developed messaging strategies

thoroughly briefed its staff on crisis guidelines and criteria

has a designated media spokesperson

is fully aware of the key channels for information distribution

Overwhelmed yet?

Our team at IGPR can take the stress out of preparation. Let us train you. *We know how to prepare.*



THE CRISIS STRIKES.

A student brought a gun to school.

Your personnel has engaged in misconduct or unethical/illegal activities.

An unexpected fatality or untimely death has occurred.

Funds have been misplaced.

Your database was hacked.

A racial/ethnic conflict has occurred via social media.

A systemic crisis has struck (illness outbreak, product defect, etc.).



During this second phase, you must follow the absolute law of crisis communications.

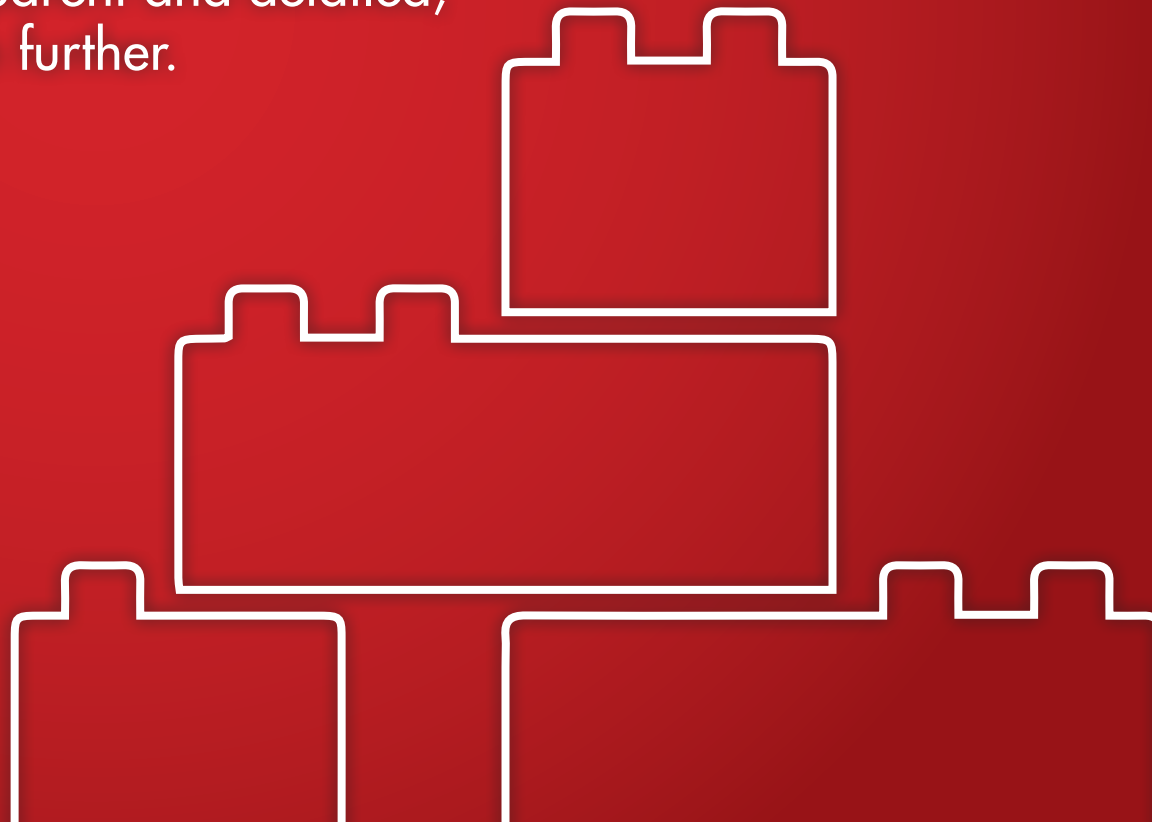
Your audience will not tolerate inaction, although the natural reaction is to defer.

Be proactive. Be upfront. Know your audience. And take action—**right now.**



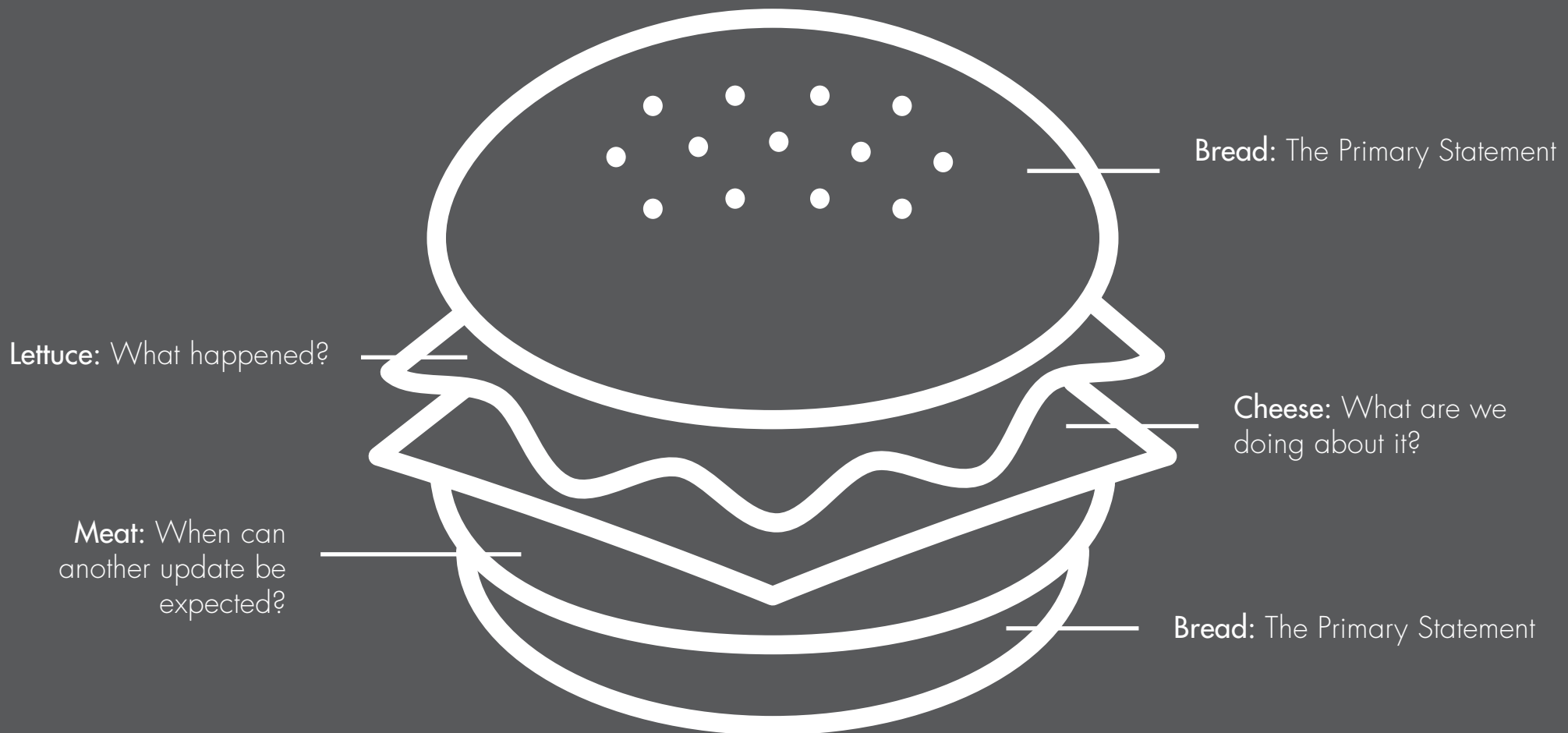
AFTER THE CRISIS STRIKES, YOUR **ABSOLUTE PRIORITY MUST INVOLVE REBUILDING TRUST.** PEOPLE WILL WANT INFORMATION—AND FAST.

If your outreach isn't consistent, transparent and detailed, you will damage your reputation even further.



Part of taking action is getting ahead of the media.

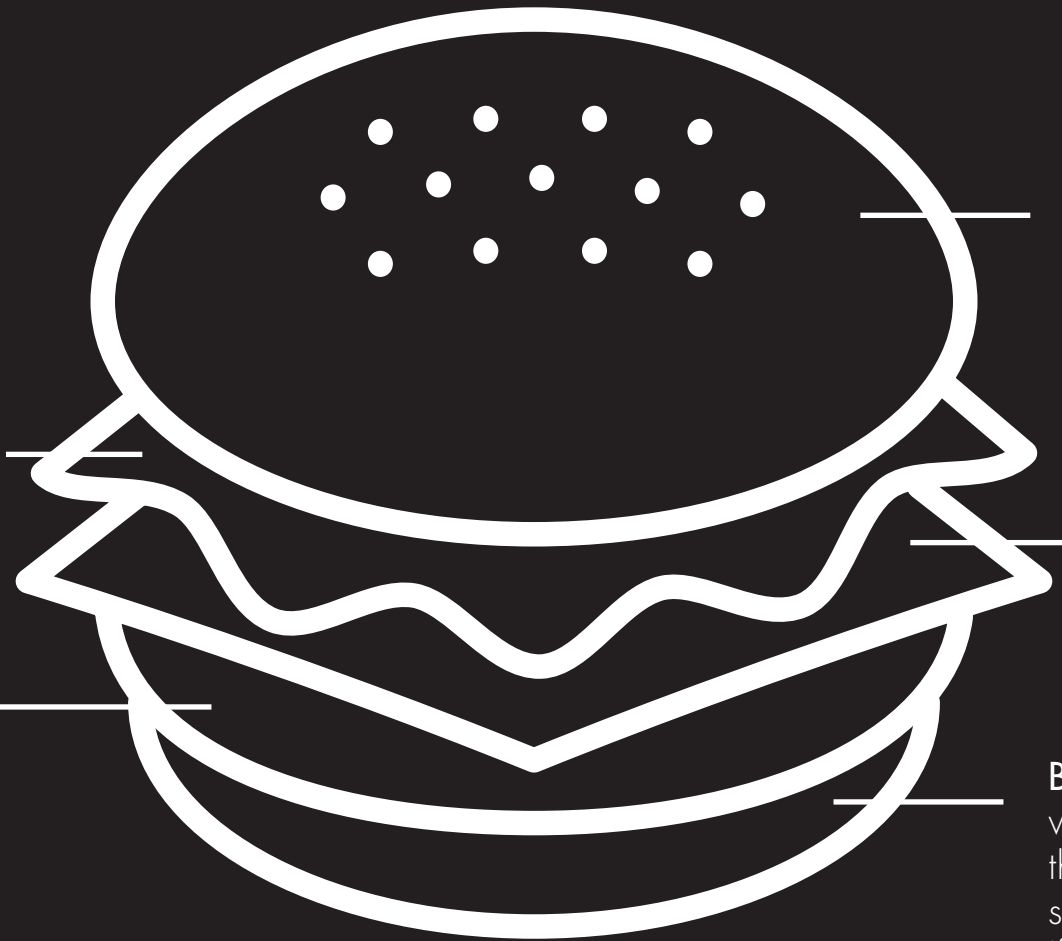
EVERY RESPONSE SHOULD FOLLOW A SIMPLE FORMULA KNOWN AS... A SAFETY SANDWICH



HERE'S A FOUNDATIONAL EXAMPLE OF A NON PROFIT'S SAFETY SANDWICH:

Lettuce: On April 10, an allegation was brought to our attention in reference to misappropriation of funds by a senior staff member in excess of \$30,000.

Meat: We will provide further comment when deemed appropriate.



Bread: The safety and well-being of those we serve is our highest priority.

Cheese: The Jewish Community Board of Akron is conducting a thorough investigation of the incident in collaboration with the authorities.

Bread: As an organization, we take all situations involving the ethics and integrity of our staff members very seriously. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us.





Now that you're aware of the three phases, you're probably realizing that your current strategy isn't up to par. Let us help you get there.

The Impact Group is a talented team of full-service marketing and communications professionals that have one thing in common: results.

Our track record of managing crises for school districts, government entities and corporate clients make us more than prepared to safeguard your organization. Want to know more about what we do? Visit our website www.igpr.com or call us today at **330.655.5522** for a free crisis communications consultation.

