



Issues and Crisis Communications

Bespoke training programme for TG4

Course Director: Niall Quinn

SESSION 3 – WEDNESDAY, 22ND MAY 2024

Key dates

Sessions

✓ Session 1 – Wednesday, 24 th April 2024	Introduction & risk	Live online
✓ Session 2 – Wednesday, 22 nd May 2024	Stakeholder environment	In person
▶ Session 3 – Wednesday, 22 nd May 2024	Crisis plan/manual development	In person
▶ Session 4 – Friday, 28 th June 2024	LEADER™ crisis response programme	Live online
▶ Session 5 – Tuesday, 17 th September 2024	Legal, media, post crisis, review etc.	(TBC)

Key session topics

- ✓ Issues and crises in context – The Risk environment Categorising Risks – Risk Register development – Reputational Risk environment – Issue/crisis stages – Introduction to risk mitigation – Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) role in risk mitigation
- ✓ Stakeholder environment, identification and prioritisation
- ▶ Crisis communications manual – key elements
- ▶ LEADER™, a Crisis Communications Response Programme
- ▶ Issue and crisis communications planning – issue/crisis lexicons – Resourcing issues and crisis communications planning, management and response
- ▶ Media interview preparation and training considerations
- ▶ Crisis simulation exercise – methodology and approach

Toolkit development

- ✓ Operational environment awareness
- ✓ Risk team identified
- ✓ Risk register developed
- ✓ Potential issues and crises identified
- ✓ Description of issue/crisis scenario documented
- ✓ Stakeholders identified
- ✓ Stakeholder mapping completed
- ▶ Crisis management plan/manual
- ▶ Crisis response programme tailored to TG4's needs
- ▶ Understanding crisis simulation exercises
- ▶ Media interview preparation and training considerations

Session 3 – Learning outcomes/objectives

- ▶ Understand key elements in developing a crisis plan
- ▶ Be able to identify what planning needs to be put in place, what logistical support needs to be available and the procedures that are activated when an issue or crisis arises
- ▶ Understand the need to be able to take control of, activate and utilise communications channels
- ▶ Be able to identify what supporting documentation and information resources are required to support a crisis communications team
- ▶ Have an awareness of the need for periodic review



Crisis communications manual

Key elements

Crisis manual – Key elements

PART 1 – PLANNING

- ▶ Team – roles, responsibilities and training
- ▶ Development of checklists, logging sheets
- ▶ Holding statements
- ▶ Social media guidelines
- ▶ Employee briefing
- ▶ Press call procedure for staff
- ▶ Key documents and checklists (risk register, stakeholder map, operational response plan)

PART 2 – LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

- ▶ Crisis operations facilities
- ▶ Crisis control room requirements
- ▶ Mobile press office requirements

PART 3 – PROCEDURES

- ▶ Key principles
- ▶ Team, roles and responsibilities
- ▶ Approach to dealing with crisis
- ▶ Issue/crisis definition and categorization
- ▶ Process for dealing with a crisis
- ▶ Checklists – Team; 'Golden Hour'; End of day debrief and Day x + priority setting; crisis review

PART 4 – COMMUNICATION CHANNEL MANAGEMENT

- ▶ Login and access codes for channels
- ▶ User manuals for updating channels
- ▶ Key contacts lists

PART 5 – REVIEW

- ▶ Review process

PART 6 – APPENDICES



Crisis communications manual

Part 1 - Planning

Crisis manual – PART 1 (PLANNING)

Key contents

- ▶ Definitions of risk, issue, crisis
- ▶ Key crisis management principles
- ▶ Risk register
- ▶ Crisis communications team members and contact details
- ▶ Document roles and responsibilities of each team member
- ▶ Identification of alternates for each key role
- ▶ Create 'Golden Hour' checklist

Crisis manual – PART 1 (PLANNING)

Categorising potential crises

How we categorise potential crises:

1. Define scope of issue: ensure appropriate response
2. Categorise crisis level: Identify most suitable approach as under or over/reaction can exacerbate media/stakeholder reaction

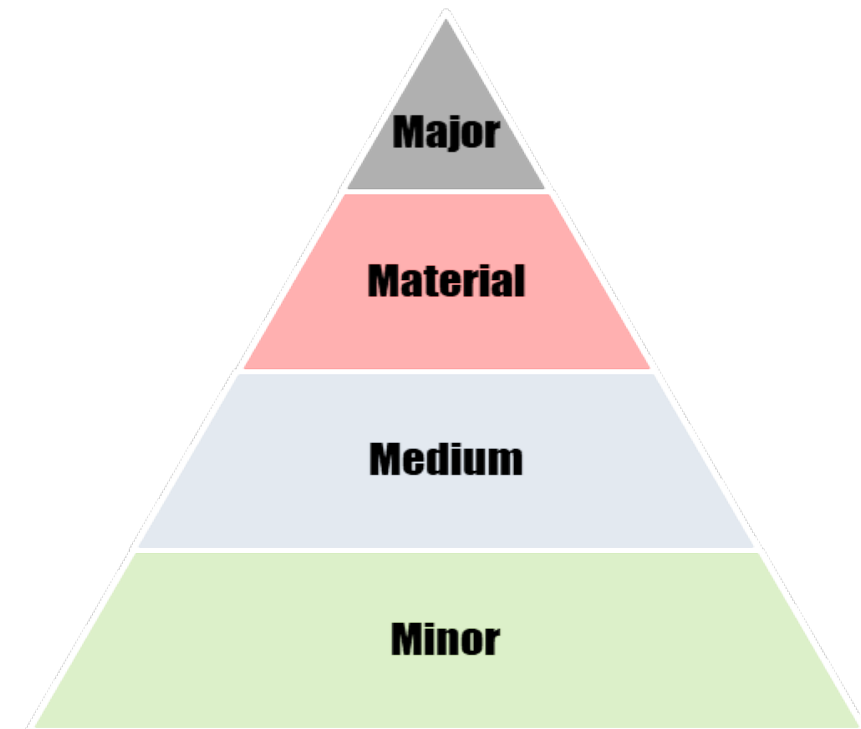
Examples of categorisation for, say, an airline would include:

BLACK – Major crisis with actual or potential loss of life (plane crash, hi-jack, serious accident on-site, major fire, release of hazardous waste etc.)

RED – Material issue (prolonged service interruption, significant legal/regulatory issue, food contamination issue on-board, pilot/cabin crew airport protest/blockade, etc.)

BLUE – Medium level issue (regulatory issue, industrial relations dispute in IR process, safety recall, data breach with no customer details released etc.)

GREEN – Minor issue (minor accident on site, small issue with staff/supplier)



Crisis manual – PART 1 (PLANNING)

Holding statements

- ▶ Identify scenarios for which statements may be required e.g. data breach, cyber attack, [ADD OTHER SCENARIOS IDENTIFIED]
- ▶ Ensure scenarios based on risk areas with highest scores
- ▶ Develop statements for each scenario based on colour coded categorisation (green to black)
- ▶ Consider shorter statements for social media integration (if short statement not possible possible use of picture of full text)

Crisis manual – PART 1 (PLANNING)

Social media guidelines

- ▶ Three key pillars and principles
 1. Tone/Style – appropriate to scenario
 2. Content – Repost key messages and important information regularly; consider using URL/screenshot of statement where 280 characters
 3. Frequency – maintain regular content even if little new information to share
- ▶ Create sample tweets to convey key information
- ▶ For sensitive issues consider switching off reply/comment function
- ▶ Be careful of planned/timed tweets which may be inappropriate
- ▶ Monitor activity, identify urgent/high profile/media queries and process to take offline if possible

Crisis manual – PART 1 (PLANNING)

Employee briefing

Processes developed for communicating:

- ▶ What's happened
- ▶ What it means for employees
- ▶ What actions the company is taking
- ▶ What is required of them during the issue/incident/crisis phase
- ▶ Q&A documents to assist team deal with queries
- ▶ Press call procedure
- ▶ Importance of staying within Q&A document and not being drawn into conversation or speculation

Crisis manual – PART 1 (PLANNING)

Press call procedure – option 1

Develop procedure for distribution to key external facing colleagues:

- ▶ Once caller identifies as being from the media:
 - ▶ State there is a dedicated team handling media queries
 - ▶ Provide the telephone number(s) and email address(es) for the media team
 - ▶ Do not engage in any discussion about the issue or crisis and reiterate the contact details for the media team
 - ▶ If pressed to discuss the issue outline their role in the organisation and that the media team would be better placed to assist them
 - ▶ If under pressure to comment ask the journalist to hold while you try to make contact with someone who can assist them
 - ▶ If contact/transfer of call to media team not possible execute option 2

Crisis manual – PART 1 (PLANNING)

Press call procedure – option 2

Develop procedure for distribution to key external facing colleagues:

- ▶ Once caller identifies as being from the media ask the following questions:
 - ▶ Can I take your name?
 - ▶ What media outlet are you ringing from?
 - ▶ What are your contact details? - get mobile, landline and email address
 - ▶ Do you have a deadline?
 - ▶ State that someone will be in touch with them.
- ▶ Outside of providing the above information do not engage in any further conversation other than thanking them for their call and reiterating that someone will be in contact.
- ▶ Advise contacting member of media team with information. If call not answered/voicemail leave message but if no confirmation received within five minutes call an alternate
- ▶ NEVER ASSUME MESSAGE HAS BEEN RECEIVED JUST BECAUSE IT WAS SENT

Crisis manual – PART 1 (PLANNING)

Key questions

- ▶ What if any aspects of issue/crisis management are included in:
 - ▶ Employee inductions
 - ▶ Staff HR manuals
 - ▶ Performance reviews
 - ▶ HR staff exit debriefs



Crisis communications manual

Part 2 - Logistics

Crisis manual – PART 2 (LOGISTICS)

Crisis operations facilities

It's not just one room!

Team

- ▶ Crisis team control room
- ▶ Room for phone calls
- ▶ Press office
- ▶ Ante room – quiet zone for rest
- ▶ Ante room – refreshments

Media

- ▶ Press briefing room
- ▶ Press centre facilities
- ▶ Press interview room

Other

- ▶ Non media briefing room for staff/families
- ▶ Consider separate entrances for media and internal team/staff

Crisis manual – PART 2 (LOGISTICS)

Crisis control room requirements

- ▶ Location and alternative locations identified (head office and regional offices/sites)
- ▶ Electricity and back-up generator
- ▶ Multiple telephone lines with internal extensions for each room, high quality video conferencing phone
- ▶ Access to highspeed broadband
- ▶ High quality mobile broadband hub as back-up and mobile phone signal quality testing
- ▶ IT – computers, printers, scanners, photocopier, large display screens
- ▶ Radios, tape recorders
- ▶ Television with cable/satellite tv access (don't forget TV licence)
- ▶ Furniture – desks, chairs, whiteboards, flipcharts
- ▶ Stationery
- ▶ Catering supplies – kettle, coffee machine, microwave, fridge, crockery, cutlery
- ▶ Food and drink supplies
- ▶ Toiletries

Crisis manual – PART 2 (LOGISTICS)

Mobile press office requirements – “Grab Bag”

- ▶ Smartphones aren't everything – all eggs in one basket
- ▶ Laptop (fully charged) with chargers
- ▶ 3G/4G/5G mobile internet hubs
- ▶ Printer
- ▶ Radios, tape recorders
- ▶ Mobile phone x 2 (incoming and outgoing) pre-programmed with key numbers and chargers
- ▶ Mobile power packs
- ▶ Press lists (hard copy and remotely stored)
- ▶ Crisis statement templates (hard copy and remotely stored)
- ▶ Stationery
- ▶ Pilot cases for storage

Crisis manual – PART 2 (LOGISTICS)

Mobile press office requirements – “Grab Bag”

Where is your Grab Bag?



Crisis communications manual

Part 3 - Procedures

Crisis manual – PART 3 (PROCEDURES)

- ▶ Key principles
- ▶ Team, roles and responsibilities
- ▶ Approach to dealing with crisis
- ▶ Issue/crisis definition and categorization
- ▶ Process for dealing with a crisis
- ▶ Checklists & templates – Team; 'Golden Hour'; End of day debrief and Day x + priority setting; crisis review
- ▶ PART 6 APPENDICES includes key documents to be considered as part of response

Crisis manual – PART 1 (PLANNING)

Key questions

- ▶ Consideration of following for key issues/crisis team:
 - ▶ Promotion
 - ▶ Job share
 - ▶ Maternity leave
 - ▶ Parental leave
 - ▶ Extended sick leave
 - ▶ Retirement/redundancy/exit



Crisis communications manual

Part 4 – Communication channel management

Crisis manual – PART 4 (COMMUNICATION CHANNEL MANAGEMENT)

- ▶ Login and access codes for:
 - ▶ Remote storage file
 - ▶ Main inward press office email account
 - ▶ Website
 - ▶ Twitter
 - ▶ Facebook
 - ▶ Media monitoring and tracking accounts
 - ▶ Conference phone call/remote video conferencing platform
 - ▶ Company intranet/app
 - ▶ Point of sale display screens
 - ▶ Switchboard messaging service

Crisis manual – PART 4 (COMMUNICATION CHANNEL MANAGEMENT)

- ▶ Process for editing/stopping/pausing:
 - ▶ Planned adverts
 - ▶ Timed social media postings
 - ▶ Sponsorship activity
 - ▶ Third party ambassador activity
- ▶ User manuals for:
 - ▶ Uploading news items on website
 - ▶ Changing banners on website
 - ▶ Accessing and report generation from media monitoring and tracking accounts
 - ▶ Accessing company phone call/remote video conferencing platform
 - ▶ Updating organisation intranet/app
 - ▶ Changing switchboard message service
 - ▶ Editing/stopping/pausing timed social media postings

Crisis manual – PART 4 (COMMUNICATION CHANNEL MANAGEMENT)

- ▶ Company's call centre
- ▶ Outsourced call centre
- ▶ Need for Q&As

Crisis manual – PART 4 (COMMUNICATION CHANNEL MANAGEMENT)

- ▶ Security considerations



Crisis communications manual

Part 5 – Review

Crisis manual – PART 5 (REVIEW)

- ▶ Who has responsibility to review?
- ▶ How often is document reviewed?
- ▶ Does ongoing risk monitoring include a trigger process for updating the crisis plan when operational changes arise?
- ▶ How frequently is the plan reviewed externally?
- ▶ Is the status of the crisis manual a standing agenda item at least once a year for the organisation's Board of Directors?



Crisis communications manual

Part 6 – Appendices

Crisis manual – PART 6 (APPENDICES)

Key documents

- ▶ Company's mission, vision and values
- ▶ Crisis handling principles
- ▶ Staff HR manual and company policies document
- ▶ Internal codes of conduct
- ▶ Governance manual
- ▶ Key legislation, Statutory Instruments and regulatory responsibilities
- ▶ Industry guidelines and codes of practice

Crisis manual – PART 6 (APPENDICES)

Key contact lists

- ▶ Key management
- ▶ Key spokespeople
- ▶ Primary stakeholder contact sheet – emergency services, board, investors, regulator, political
- ▶ Stakeholder database
- ▶ Media list
- ▶ Expert commentator list
- ▶ External advisor contact sheet – legal, IT, PR, finance, regulatory
- ▶ External suppliers contact sheet – security, trades, locksmith, photographer, videographer & editor, outsourced call centre, disaster recovery centre provider, catering, 'hire all' provider, media planner/buyer, media monitoring company

Crisis manual – PART 6 (APPENDICES)

Content/info sources

- ▶ Operational video footage
- ▶ Photography of sites and key personnel
- ▶ Biographies of key spokespeople
- ▶ Internal crisis lexicon
- ▶ Glossary of industry business terms, acronyms etc.
- ▶ KPI measurement tools access

Crisis manual

► Discussion



Issue/crisis

‘Golden Hour’

'Golden Hour' – General considerations

- ▶ Origins of term from medicine – time is muscle
- ▶ Unless you can get to the heart of an issue and arrest control risk losing control
- ▶ This is THE opportunity for the organisation to take control
- ▶ Need to balance having all the information with establishing credibility, concern and commitment to correcting crisis and communication
- ▶ A vacuum will be filled by media with speculation and process stories
- ▶ Speed trumps perfection BUT NEVER at the cost of accuracy
- ▶ The 'Golden Hour' is under pressure with social media and 24 hour news cycle

'Golden Hour' – General considerations

- ▶ Go to process – you have a manual. Now is the time to use it!
- ▶ Establish your command centre
- ▶ Convene the crisis team, assign roles, back-ups. Ask, do you have any gaps?
- ▶ Use time to develop communications cascade and communication with priority stakeholders especially internal audiences
- ▶ Prepare spokesperson/people
- ▶ Identify key opinion formers spokespeople who media gravitate to for comment and establish contact where possible
- ▶ Establish information sources, flows and feedback loops
- ▶ Switch-on any monitoring agencies
- ▶ Prepare message for own channels – added benefit of a dress rehearsal for any media engagement
- ▶ Consider you and your team's safety and welfare at all times

'Golden Hour' – General considerations – key first steps

- ▶ Exactly what has happened?
 - ▶ What can we be sure of, what still needs to be confirmed?
 - ▶ What are our information and data sources? Are these accurate and how can they be improved to provide more timely and accurate information?
 - ▶ Are others able to access better sources of information? Risk of being undermined as most credible source.
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- ▶ Where? – address/location details
 - ▶ When? – at what time?
 - ▶ Who/what is affected? People? Environment? Property? Products? Services?
 - ▶ Do we have any confirmed injuries or fatalities? Are we sure?
 - ▶ Is the situation contained? If not, what can be done to contain it at earliest opportunity?
 - ▶ What is happening now?
 - ▶ Who else is involved? (e.g. emergency services, local community etc.)
 - ▶ Has the media/social media shown any interest at this point?
 - ▶ Is any other relevant information or facts available?

'Golden Hour' – key first steps

- ▶ Consider what needs to be done from a strategic perspective
 - ▶ What are our objectives in managing the crisis?
 - ▶ What is the best-case scenario we are seeking to achieve?
 - ▶ What is the worst-case scenario we are seeking to avoid?
- ▶ Is there anything critical?
 - ▶ Where does the priority need to be operationally? – Communications will need to be aligned with this.
 - ▶ What's critical from a people/reputational/operational/legal/regulatory perspective?
- ▶ Decisions – Actions – Communications
 - ▶ What decisions must we make, what actions need to be taken on foot of decisions and what communications considerations are there?
 - ▶ Is the decision-making, execution and communication process aligned?
 - ▶ How much time do we have to react?
 - ▶ Who is responsible?

'Golden Hour' – what can you say?

- ▶ Acknowledge what has happened
- ▶ Clarify/correct any misinformation circulating
- ▶ What you are doing to address the issue
- ▶ Commit to corrective action
- ▶ Provide whatever reassurance you can BUT NEVER overpromise
- ▶ Establish timeframe for further updates if possible build in buffers to increase likelihood of communicating next phase earlier
- ▶ Do not overload the message – holding back non-pertinent information can be added to subsequent updates to help convey momentum
- ▶ Direct interested parties to your information source where updates will be provided

Insight – Head of Comms – Major Utility

- ✓ Resolving the problem is only one part – “50% service restoration, 50% communication”
- ✓ Importance of structured crisis response team with key roles defined, strength in depth with a 3 deep team to cover absences, communications having a seat at the table – don’t forget to have a notetaker!
- ✓ If you know a storm is coming get ahead of the storm, quite literally!
- ✓ The authentic authoritative voice – Deep spokesperson bench with regional spokespeople: “Right people saying right thing at the right time”
- ✓ Mind the team – Major outage endured for eight days – mistakes more likely to be made when team members fatigued
- ✓ Desire to be open and transparent but challenges of being too “open” with AAA for media and exposing non-media facing colleagues to media – unfamiliar with on/off record dynamics
- ✓ Managing expectations key – company-owned information source effective communication tool to keep stakeholders updated and reducing reliance on press team to give constant updates/field unnecessary calls
- ✓ Benefit of good stakeholder engagement and well-resourced and effective communications response – neutralises potential detractors

Session 3 – reflection and developmental work

- ▶ Consider your own organisation's crisis plan
 - ▶ Does it have the key elements identified in the sample template?
 - ▶ What areas could your plan improve on?
 - ▶ Are there additional elements your plan has not covered in the course sample template?
- ▶ Developmental work to be co-ordinated by Comms/HR function

Session 3 – Learning outcomes/objectives

- ▶ Understand key elements in developing a crisis plan
- ▶ Be able to identify what planning needs to be put in place, what logistical support needs to be available and the procedures that are activated when an issue or crisis arises
- ▶ Understand the need to be able to take control of, activate and utilise communications channels
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- ▶ Have an awareness of the need for periodic review



Next session

FRIDAY 28TH JUNE 2024

LINE ONLINE

Toolkit development

- ✓ Operational environment awareness
- ✓ Risk team identified
- ✓ Risk register developed
- ✓ Potential issues and crises identified
- ✓ Description of issue/crisis scenario documented
- ✓ Stakeholders identified
- ✓ Stakeholder mapping completed
- ✓ Crisis management plan/manual
- ▶ Crisis response programme tailored to TG4's needs
- ▶ Introduction to testing of plans with simulation exercise
- ▶ Media interview preparation and training considerations