

5 Tips On Assessing Crisis Readiness

It's that time of year when you, your colleagues, your boss want to know if your organisation is ready to face a big one. Whether a product recall, industrial accident, cyberattack, ethical or behaviour meltdowns, social media nightmare, extreme climatic event, terrorism or active shooter, being crisis-ready is no longer a nice to have but a must have. Like a life jacket you hope you'll never need, the day you do, you want to make sure it works and that you know how it works.

Here are five tips to help you assess your current state of crisis readiness.

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1 What keeps you awake at night?

Focus on category and severity of impact and not only likelihood. The most challenging crises are the ones affecting people and/or causing major disruption to your activities. But remember, some crises can slow burn and emerge from seemingly insignificant issues. Think worst-case, don't try to cover all bases, and prioritise! If you're prepared for the big ones, you'll be prepared for the small ones.

2 Inventorise

Draw up a list of all the relevant plans and procedures you have in place: when were they issued and by whom, and whether they are still up-to-date. Are there duplicates? Can you streamline or consolidate? Remember sound crisis preparedness is best when kept simple and easy to follow.

3 Develop an improvement plan

Is everyone speaking the same crisis language? Are the plans practical? Do you have designated crisis response teams in place? Do they have crisis management experience? And if not, how will they gain the right set of skills?

4 Put someone in charge

Appoint a crisis focal point in key geographic locations and/or for each business unit and make them accountable. Without these relay points to make things happen, the plans will remain on the shelf, you won't be any more crisis ready than when you started and you'll have wasted your time.

5 Make sure your people are crisis-ready

A crisis is not a bad week at the office, yet real crises are rare and they call for special skills and experience. Train and exercise your teams, not just once, but regularly. Set up a training and practice schedule and get everyone to commit to it.