

CRISIS COMMUNICATION READINESS CHECK

20 questions every organisation should answer before the next crisis.

IS YOUR PLAN ACTUALLY READY?

Tick a question only if you could prove it today: show the document, name the person or point to the last exercise. **"I think so" counts as a no.** Each of the six areas opens with a pattern seen repeatedly in the field. Work through it alone or, better, with someone from outside the communication team.

A AUTHORITY AND SIGN-OFF

Approver named on paper. Unreachable for hours in practice.

- ☐ ⁰¹ Could your communication lead brief the top decision-maker within minutes, without a chain of approvals in between?
- ☐ ⁰² Is it written down who approves the first public statement, and who steps in when that person cannot be reached?
- ☐ ⁰³ Have the people holding sign-off authority read the plan themselves, rather than being told that one exists?
- ☐ ⁰⁴ Do communicators know which decisions they can take alone in the first hour, and which they cannot?

B EARLY WARNING AND TRIAGE

The signal came days earlier. Nobody owned the response.

- ☐ ⁰⁵ Does someone own continuous monitoring, with a clear line between "watching" and "live"?
- ☐ ⁰⁶ Do you know what a normal day looks like in your information environment, so you can tell when something is off?
- ☐ ⁰⁷ Is escalation triggered by source credibility and relevance to your audiences, not by volume or follower counts alone?
- ☐ ⁰⁸ Can any team member raise a weak signal out of hours and be sure it reaches someone who will act on it?

C AUDIENCES, NOT "THE PUBLIC"

One statement written for everyone reaches no one in particular.

- ☐ ⁰⁹ Have you named the specific groups a crisis would affect, and set out what each needs to know and do?
- ☐ ¹⁰ For each group, do you know the language, channel and messenger that actually reach them, not just the ones you prefer?
- ☐ ¹¹ Are the people least able to help themselves, such as isolated or offline communities, written into the plan?

D COORDINATION BEYOND YOUR WALLS

Three organisations, three versions of the facts, one hour.

- ☐ ¹² Do you hold named, personal contacts in the partner bodies, agencies and authorities you would depend on?
- ☐ ¹³ Is it agreed in advance who speaks on which topic, so that you and your partners do not contradict each other?
- ☐ ¹⁴ Is your own staff planned for as an audience, so they do not learn the news from the press?

E PEOPLE, SPEED AND CAPACITY

Trained spokesperson on leave. Deputy never faced a camera.

- ☐ ¹⁵ Are your spokespeople trained, current and available, with a briefed deputy behind each one?
- ☐ ¹⁶ Could the team sustain a response for weeks rather than days, with rotas, relief and a second shift?
- ☐ ¹⁷ Can the team reach the plan, templates and contact lists when systems are down or the main office is closed?

F PRACTICE AND LEARNING

Approved, filed, never tested. The real event was the test.

- ☐ ¹⁸ In the last twelve months, have you exercised the plan under realistic pressure, with senior decision-makers in the room?
- ☐ ¹⁹ Do lessons from exercises and real events become dated actions with a named owner?
- ☐ ²⁰ Does the plan face today's information environment, including AI-generated falsehoods and coordinated attacks on your credibility?

COUNT YOUR TICKS

Organisation: _____

Date: _____ Score: ____ / 20

A directional guide for self-assessment, not a benchmark.

17 – 20

SOLID BASE

Pressure-test your weakest areas.

11 – 16

REAL GAPS

Start with areas A and B.

0 – 10

EXPOSED

Fix authority and early warning first.