ONGOING CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Planning, Managing, and Responding

W. TIMOTHY COOMBS | SIXTH EDITION

Ongoing Crisis Communication

To my parents who are now gone and will not read this edition. You are still with us.

Ongoing Crisis Communication

Planning, Managing, and Responding

Sixth Edition

W. Timothy Coombs

Texas A&M University

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Preface

PURPOSE OF THE TEXT

Crisis management is a challenge any organization can face and one that many fail. When crisis management fails, stakeholders and organizations suffer. All organizations must become prepared for crises. Boeing, Rio Tinto, and Tyson Foods are prominent and respected companies, but each has recently faced crises and handled them with varying degrees of success. Crisis communication is the lifeblood of crisis management because crisis communication brings crisis management to life. When crisis communication is ineffective, so is the crisis management effort. There is a lot of research (both from academic and industry sources) and many cases about crisis communication. The vast writings about crisis communication and management remain a blessing and a curse. It is great to have so much information, but it is hard to find and organize it all. The writings about crisis communication and management are fragmented, as people write about crises from very different perspectives. This situation can leave managers struggling to organize bits of information or missing critical resources entirely. Writers often focus on their specialties and fail to make connections to ideas and concepts developed in other specialties. In turn, this fragmentation precludes a fuller understanding of crisis communication and management that is gained by integrating the various perspectives. Add to this the fact that a number of related communication concepts have applications to crisis management but have yet to be integrated into the literature, and the situation becomes even more complicated. Practitioners, researchers, and educators are limited by this fractured approach. The primary purpose of this book is to provide a resource that integrates and organizes a wide array of practitioner and research writings about crisis management. Taken together, this information helps to create evidence-based crisis communication. Evidence-based is an approach taken in any discipline that involves interventions, such as medicine, social work, and management. An evidence-based approach combines the best research with practitioner experience to guide interventions. Crisis communication is an intervention designed to lessen the negative effects of a crisis for stakeholders and the organization in crisis.

The emphasis throughout the book is on the role of communication in the crisis management process. Crisis management is intertwined with risk and resilience. You cannot meaningfully talk about crisis without including risk, and resilience is in part a function of crisis management. Management in general must recognize the value of strategic crisis communication and the value of crisis management. The book is designed to be a body of knowledge that aids managers, researchers, and educators. *Process* is an important word here. Too many people think that crisis management means having a crisis management plan or responding when a crisis hits. This is a very reactive and rather limited approach to crisis management. A richer, more proactive approach to crisis management explores the entire process. Managers should think of crisis management as akin to SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Through crisis management, organizations identify what the weaknesses are and what an organization is failing to do to address threats and prepare for crises. Strengths are the elements of crisis management an organization does well. Opportunities are the resources an organization can access before, during, and after a crisis. Threats are those factors that can evolve into crises. A quick crisis SWOT analysis will awaken management to the need to take crisis management and crisis communication very seriously.

AUDIENCE FOR THE TEXT

The book is written for both students and practitioners. Students, primarily undergraduate, are given an applied approach to crisis communication that is rooted in theory. Ideally theory should inform practice, and I have selected the best of the crisis communication and management research for gaining insight into the process. Practitioners can use the book to enhance their understanding and execution of crisis communication. This book is designed to be used to help those who are or may become crisis managers. Any individual with a background in corporate communication, organizational communication, public relations, or management may find themselves on a crisis team. The information in this book should help to make a person a more effective crisis team member. This edition seeks to demonstrate the way artificial intelligence (AI) can aid crisis managers at various points in the crisis process.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT

Throughout this preface I have mentioned the crisis management process. Crisis management can be organized around three stages: precrisis, crisis event, and postcrisis. The book follows this three-part structure. Chapter 1 provides a discussion of the three-stage approach to crisis management. Chapter 2 highlights the increased importance of social media to crisis management. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the prevention aspect of precrisis, while Chapters 5 and 6 develop the preparation aspect of precrisis. Chapter 7 concentrates on the crisis event stage, and Chapter 8 explains the postcrisis stage. The epilogue considers how communication technology and globalization will influence the future development of crisis communication and reflects on the key insights the book provides.

PEDAGOGICAL FEATURES

Throughout the book are *What would you do?* cases. Each case fits the key points found in a particular chapter. Information from a real crisis event is presented along with a series of questions designed to allow readers to apply text concepts to the case.

This edition retains the *Crisis Leadership Competencies* boxes. These boxes highlight the essential leadership skills needed to manage crisis communication effectively in a wide range of situations.

Each chapter ends with a *Chapter Summary* that sums up the main points of the chapter as well as *Discussion Questions* that help readers extend their understanding of the material.

NEW TO THE SIXTH EDITION

Writing a sixth edition of this book was necessary because crisis communication and management is so dynamic that the field has changed significantly in the few years since the fifth edition. Researchers continue to yield additional insights into the crisis management process. Social media continues to be a challenge for crisis communication and needs to be integrated throughout the crisis communication process. Researchers have expanded our understanding of crisis communication by developing ideas particularly with internal crisis communication. I have tried to include elements of internal crisis communication throughout the book. The sixth edition tries to capture the more complex view of crisis communication that has emerged from research and translate that material into accessible and usable information for practitioners.

The main changes to the sixth edition are outlined as follows:

- *Chapter 1* draws distinctions between operational crises and paracrises and offers an alternative view of the crisis process through the regenerative model of crisis. Public health crises are now noted along with an extension of reputation to the more general concept of social evaluation.
- *Chapter 2* expounds on the enterprise risk management discussion. The risk, reputation, and issues around management discussion are reorganized.
- *Chapter 3* illustrates Boyd's OODA Loop for risk management using a running example. There is a new section of AI's application to risk and crisis along with the idea of brand heritage as risk.
- *Chapter 4* contains a revised and extended list of crisis types that include sticky crises. The importance of psychological safety in crisis teams has been added along with the value of curiosity to crisis teams.
- *Chapter 5* explores the crisis communication plan (CCP) with added material about the extended parallel process model from risk communication and the role translation can play in crisis management.
- *Chapter 6* provides some additional information about AI's application to crisis management along with new information on the moral mum effect and an extended discussion of heuristic biases.
- *Chapter 7* has an expanded discussion of crisis communication, including a review of various ways crisis response strategies are converted into tactics and

different ways of evaluating crisis threats. The information in this chapter is heavily informed by recent research in crisis communication.

- *Chapter 8*, now combined with the Epilogue, presents detailed examples on memorials and shrines. There is a new section on Threads that notes various themes that run throughout the book.

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CHAPTER

1

A Need for More Crisis Management Knowledge

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- Define what a crisis is and differentiate between the various forms of crises.
- Compare and contrast the three-phase model of crisis management to the regenerative model of crisis management.
- Explain both the external and internal factors that make crisis management important to an organization.

The Boeing 737 Max was grounded for 20 months, Wichita State University exposes the social security numbers of over 400,000 people with a breach, thousands of Google employees walk off the job because of improper investigation of sexual harassment claims, employees of Periscope walk off the job when told they cannot publicly support Black Lives Matter (BLM), and organizations around the world had to cope with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These are all reminders that no organization is immune to crises. Even exceedingly well-run organizations can suffer from a crisis of their own making or one driven by external forces. PwC's Global Crisis Survey 2019 of corporate executives found that 69% of the corporations had experienced at least one crisis in the past five years, with the average being three crises. Moreover, each crisis cost the corporation about 5% in shareholder value the year after the crisis. The survey also found corporations are facing an increasing diverse range of crises, adding to the difficulty of crisis management (PwC, 2019). If no organization is immune and crises can be damaging, then all organizations should be prepared. Pick any day of the week, and you will find stories about train derailments, plane crashes, funds used inappropriately at nonprofit organizations, explosions in manufacturing facilities, workers shot or injured on the job, or *E. coli*–tainted beef, turkey, chicken, or even bean sprouts. Crises are situations that test resilience and the ability of people and organizations to bounce back from adversity. The bottom line is that all organizations should learn as much as they can about crisis management.

Developing a comprehensive crisis management program (CCMP) that captures the ongoing nature of crisis management is not an easy task. The crisis management process is varied and requires the integration of knowledge from such diverse areas as small-group decision-making, media relations, environmental scanning, risk assessment, crisis communication, crisis plan development, evaluation methods, disaster sociology, and reputation management. A diverse set of crisis management writings must be navigated in order to develop a complete CCMP that covers every stage and substage of the crisis management process. It is a daunting but necessary task to sort through the plethora of crisis management information to identify the evidence necessary to create evidence-based crisis communication. The most effective way to develop a CCMP is to base your choices on practices and policies that have proven to be effective rather than depending on speculation.

The primary goal of this book is to offer an integrative framework that simplifies the task of organizing crisis management knowledge. An ongoing approach based upon a three-stage model of crisis management provides the foundation. The three stages are precrisis, crisis event, and postcrisis, each of which is composed of substages. The stages are used to summarize and to organize various insights into the crisis management process. Myriad ideas from different areas are synthesized into one continuous process. The end product is a guide for developing each stage in the ongoing crisis management process. This book is a living guide because future developments in crisis management can be easily assimilated into the comprehensive framework of the three-stage approach. The three-stage model articulated here provides a variety of suggestions about how to "do" crisis management. This book is designed to aid those interested in practicing, researching, or teaching crisis management and uses what is called an evidence-based approach. The evidence-based movement started in medicine as a response to the underutilization of scientific evidence in medicine. An evidence-based approach involves the conscious application of multiple sources of evidence to organizational decision-making (Barends & Rousseau, 2018). Four sources of information inform organizational decision-making: scientific findings, practitioner experience, organizational information, and stakeholder concerns. An evidence-based approach to crisis communication draws upon the best crisis communication research (scientific findings from academic and industry research), contextual factors that influence crisis communication (organizational information), and stakeholder concerns that are then viewed through the lens of the crisis managers' own experience with past crises. The book integrates the crisis communication research with practitioner observations, the key contextual factors, and salient stakeholder concerns.

To those interested in practice, the book offers a comprehensive approach for structuring a crisis management program. For crisis managers, the book is more useful to those just starting in the practice. Experienced crisis managers might learn something new but have strongly honed experiences to help guide their crisis decision-making. Newer crisis managers can benefit more from the lessons offered by research and the experiences of other practitioners. For those interested in research, the book provides an analytic framework for the study of crisis management efforts. Those involved in teaching are offered an additional resource for educating future crisis managers. The book ends with a summary of key ideas and highlights some of the insights offered to practitioners, researchers, and educators. In addition, an appendix suggests a number of crises that can be used for study and research.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT DEFINED

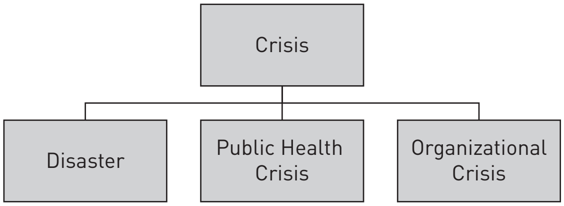
There are a lot of books written about crisis management, but there is no one accepted definition of a crisis. Having a specific definition is important because how a subject is defined indicates how it is approached. I choose to start with a definition so that readers will understand how this book approaches the subject.

Crisis is a very broad term that is used frequently by practitioners and academics. A general definition of crisis is some breakdown in a system that creates shared stress (Perry, 2007). Such a general definition can be applied to a wide variety of events. It is important that early on in the book I specify what I mean by the term *crisis* and differentiate it from similar concepts. Figure 1.1 is a visual representation of how I conceptualize crisis. We can take the general notion of crisis as the starting point, beneath which we have disaster, public health crises, and organizational crisis. There are volumes written about both disasters and organizational crises, but there is no one accepted definition of either term. It is important to draw a distinction between the two concepts in order to clarify how this book approaches the topic of crisis.

Disaster Defined

Disasters are events that are sudden, seriously disrupt routines of systems, require new courses of action to cope with the disruption, and pose a danger to values and social goals (Quarantelli, 2005). This is more a set of characteristics than a definition, but it does capture the nature of disasters. I would add that disasters are large in scale and require response from multiple governmental units. Disasters can spawn organizational crises. For instance, an organization may need to cope with the effects of the disaster on its operation. An example would be utilities needing to restore power to customers following a tornado. In rarer circumstances a crisis can trigger a disaster. Examples include the Union Carbide toxic gas release in Bhopal, India, and the crude oil spilled into the Gulf of Mexico when the *Deepwater Horizon* sank. Research has generated a significant amount of advice on how to cope with disasters, and there is some overlap between disasters and organizational crisis efforts. However, this book focuses on organizational crises. I choose to present a very specific definition of organizational crisis to clarify for the readers how this book will approach crises.

FIGURE 1.1 Types of Crises



Public Health Crisis Defined

Public health crises are a threat to public health that exist across multiple geographic areas (Maibach & Holtgrave, 1995). In addition, a public health crisis has the potential to overwhelm the routine community capacity to manage it (Nelson, Lurie, Wasserman, & Zakowski, 2007). COVID-19, SARS, and Ebola are examples of public health crises as are slower moving crises such as vaping. The health component is the unique dimension of public health crises. The health of people are affected across a range of areas and can be more than the health-care system can manage. Consider how the health-care system in New York City was overwhelmed during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Disasters can spawn a public health crisis by triggering disease outbreaks. Government actors and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) take the lead in managing public health crises. However, as illustrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations can be affected by public health crises and must prepare for that potentiality.

Organizational Crisis Defined

A crisis is the perceived violation of salient stakeholder expectations that can create negative outcomes for stakeholders and/or the organization. This definition is a synthesis of various perspectives on crisis that tries to capture the common traits other writers have used when describing crises.

A crisis is perceptual. What we typically think of as crises are events that are easy to perceive as such. That is why few people would dispute industrial accidents or hurricanes being crises. However, it is the perceptions of stakeholders that help to define an event as a crisis. A stakeholder is a person or group that is affected by or can affect an organization (Bryson, 2004; Freeman, 1984). If stakeholders believe an organization is in crisis, a crisis does exist, and stakeholders will react to the organization as if it is in crisis. For nearly a decade, the automobile manufacturer Audi told its customers there was nothing wrong with its transmissions. However, customers did perceive a crisis because a few cars were jumping into gear from neutral—with sudden acceleration—resulting in injuries and deaths. We fast-forward to 2009, and Toyota was wrestling with gas pedals that stick, causing cars to accelerate uncontrollably and at times fatally. Toyota was criticized for a slow response to the crisis. Toyota management had a difficult time seeing the problem and realizing the organization was in a crisis. Management must be able to see the event from the stakeholders' perspective to properly assess whether a crisis has occurred.

Crises can violate salient expectations that stakeholders hold about how organizations should act. These expectations are important to the stakeholders and can be related to health, safety, environmental, or economic concerns. Planes should land safely, products should not harm us, management should not steal money, and organizations should reflect societal values. Crises disturb some stakeholder expectations, resulting in people becoming upset and angry, which threatens the relationship between the organization and its stakeholders. That is why crises are considered dangerous to organizational reputations (Barton, 2001; Dilenschneider, 2000). A reputation is how stakeholders perceive the organization. When expectations are breached, stakeholders perceive the organization less positively: The reputation is harmed.

Crises have the potential to create negative or undesirable outcomes for stakeholders and organizations. Product harm crises place customers at risk of injury or death. If business is disrupted, an organization will usually suffer financial losses (e.g., lost productivity, a drop in earnings). Crisis damage extends beyond financial loss, however, to include injuries or deaths to stakeholders, structural or property damage (on and off site), tarnishing of a reputation/social evaluations, damage to a brand, and environmental harm (Loewendick, 1993). The damage can affect a variety of stakeholders. A plane crash can kill crew members, passengers, and people on the ground. In addition, an entire industry can be affected by a crisis for just one of its member organizations. An industry can suffer financial loss (e.g., new, costly regulations) or reputational damage as people project a localized crisis onto an entire industry. In 2006, the cruise ship industry became involved in the Carnival Cruise Line fire because the crisis was an industry-wide threat, not just a company-specific one. Fires were a risk on every cruise ship, and people needed to feel safe. Employees, customers, or community members can be injured or killed by industrial or transportation accidents.

Environmental damage is another outcome of accidents. Community members can suffer structural or property damage from accidents as well. Explosions can shatter windows, and evacuations can cost community members in terms of money, time, and disruption. Careless handling of an accident can add to the damage. Investors can lose money from the costs of the crisis. For example, an organization can incur repair expenses from an accident while a faulty product can result in product liability lawsuits and recall costs. A crisis presents real or potential negative outcomes for stakeholders, the organization, and even the industry. Crisis management is designed to ward off or reduce the threats by providing guidance for properly handling crises. The negative outcomes from crises are what bind it to resilience. Stakeholders and organizations must be able to bounce back from the shocks created by crises.

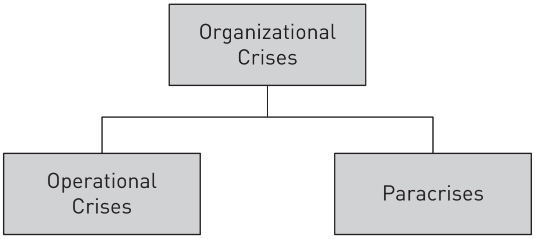
One final point to mention is the unpredictable nature of crises. A crisis is unpredictable but not unexpected. Wise organizations know that crises will befall them; they just do not know when. Crises can be anticipated, but their often sudden nature can give them an element of surprise or unpredictability (Barton, 2001; National Research Council, 1996). However, some crises offer a great deal of warning (Irvine & Millar, 1996). For instance, if a major television news magazine is planning to run a negative story about an organization, management will know the event months in advance. Metabolife, a diet supplement company, faced just such a crisis in 1999. It used the lead time to create an aggressive multimedia campaign to defend itself from charges linking its product to harmful side effects. Radio and newspaper advertisements were used to drive people to a specially created website where people could watch an unedited video of the interview and learn how news shows can distort the truth.

At this point, it is instructive to further separate organizational crises into operational crisis and paracrises. Operational crises reflect the roots of crisis management itself. One potential effect from a crisis is to disrupt operations either completely or partially. Many early definitions of crisis included disruption of operations as a key component (e.g., Barton, 2001). Crisis management was developed in part to limit disruptions to operations because an organization loses money when it is not operating at full capacity. Business continuity, a sister discipline to crisis management, is dedicated to preventing or limiting operational disruptions. Operational crises capture those situations where there is actual or potential disruption to organizational operations. Facility fires, natural disasters, and product harm situations are all examples of operational crises. I will elaborate on the various types of operational crises in Chapter 4. Operational crises create some specific communicative demands for crisis managers because they must consider the information needs of various stakeholders when there are disruptions. For instance, employees need to know when, if, and where they are working while suppliers and customers need to know if there will be deliveries and shipments and the size of those deliveries and shipments.

Paracrises are situations where crisis managers must manage a crisis risk in full view of its stakeholders (Coombs & Holladay, 2012c). Paracrises reflect the reputational/social evaluation focus of many crises. All crises will inflict some reputational damage on an organization. However, certain situations are primarily reputational and have limited effects on operations. The terms *reputational crises* and *social media crises* have been used in attempts to capture the emphasis on reputational concerns. The term *reputational crisis* is confusing because reputation also is an antecedent and consequence for a crisis and because all crises have a reputational dimension. The term *social media crisis* is extremely vague, referring to events that transpire in or are intensified by social media. Again, any crisis can have a social media aspect to it, and labeling a crisis by the dominant media involved is imprecise. Instead, I prefer to make a distinction between organizational crises that are operational crises and paracrises as illustrated in Figure 1.2

The term *para* means resembling or protection from something. A paracrisis resembles a crisis because it threatens the organization's reputation and related assets. However, a paracrisis would not require the activation of the crisis team and does not disrupt the organization. Still, a paracrisis warrants attention because neglect or mismanagement could escalate into an operational crisis. A paracrisis is a specific type of crisis warning sign. It mimics a crisis itself. Motrin's offensive ad to mothers is an example of a paracrisis. In 2008, Motrin created an edgy ad that noted how mothers have back pain from using sling-type baby carriers. The ad was in print and online in video form. Many mothers were offended by it and took to social media to express their outrage. Twitter was a popular location for mothers to attack Motrin. There was even a nine-minute YouTube video featuring the Twitter complaints. The ad appeared online on a Saturday morning. The social media criticism stormed Twitter by Saturday evening. On the following Monday, McNeil Consumer Healthcare, the maker of Motrin, removed the

FIGURE 1.2 Operational Crises and Paracrises



ad from the Internet and replaced it with an apology (Tsouderos, 2008). McNeil Consumer Healthcare did not see any disruption in the production or sale of Motrin. There was minor damage to the corporate and brand reputation that had the potential to escalate if the paracrisis was not handled swiftly and effectively. By removing the ad and apologizing, McNeil Consumer Healthcare managed the paracrisis, thereby defusing a potential crisis.

Paracrises that emerge in digital communication channels and platforms such as social media are unique crisis warning signs (crisis risks) because they appear in full view of stakeholders. Typically, crisis prevention efforts are invisible to stakeholders. For instance, organizations might revise safety procedures or replace a dangerous chemical to reduce the threat of hazardous chemical releases. Visibility is what gives a paracrisis its impact. Moreover, organizational stakeholders are driving the risk by raising it as a public concern (Coombs & Holladay, 2012c). The public appearance of the paracrisis demands public management. Managers must explain to all stakeholders what is being done to address the concern or why they are choosing to ignore it. The paracrisis blurs the line between precrisis and crisis response because addressing the paracrisis can appear to be a crisis response rather than mitigation actions. The key point here is that the digital communication channels and platforms increase the visibility and number of paracrises because the Internet can highlight the stakeholder concerns that drive paracrises. As one white paper on social media and crisis recommended, “Never ignore conflict/crisis on social media” (“Crisis Management for Social Media,” n.d., p. 4). I discuss the various types of paracrises and response options in Chapters 2 and 3 as part of the explanation of the links between risk management and crisis management.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

BP AND TEXAS CITY: ACT 1

It’s 1:20 p.m. on March 23, 2005, in Texas City, Texas. You work at the BP refinery in the town. Suddenly, an explosion rocks the ground. You go outside and see large flames and smoke coming from the direction of the isomerization unit. You know that workers were performing a start-up at the isomerization unit today, and start-ups are one of the most dangerous procedures at refineries. Alarms are going off, people are running and shouting, and some personnel are heading over to help. You are the public relations person on the BP Texas City crisis team. What do you do now? What does the organization need to do to respond to this event?

Crisis Management

Crisis management represents a set of factors designed to combat crises, to lessen the actual damage inflicted, and to facilitate resilience. Put another way, it seeks to prevent or lessen the negative outcomes of a crisis and thereby protect the organization, stakeholders, and industry from harm while facilitating a positive response to the situation. Crisis management has evolved from emergency preparedness and, drawing from that base, comprises a set of four interrelated factors: prevention, preparation, response, and revision.

Prevention, also known as mitigation, represents the steps taken to avoid crises. Crisis managers often detect warning signs and then take actions designed to prevent the crisis. For instance, a faulty toaster is recalled before its overheating problem causes any fires or injuries to customers. Prevention is largely unseen by the public. News stories about crises that did not happen are rare.

Preparation is the best-known factor in crisis management because it includes the crisis communication plan (CCP). If people know nothing else about crisis management, they know an organization should have a CCP. The CCP is the tip of the crisis management iceberg. Although people think the CCP is the crisis management process, in actuality, most of the process is unseen. Preparation also involves diagnosing crisis vulnerabilities, selecting and training a crisis management team and spokespersons, creating a crisis portfolio, and refining a crisis communication system. Preparation creates a more agile organization and fosters both individual and organizational resilience.

Response is the application of the preparation components to a crisis. A crisis can be simulated (as in an exercise) or real. The preparation components must be tested regularly. The testing involves running simulated crises and drills that determine the fitness of the CCP, crisis team members, spokespersons, and the communication system. A real crisis involves the execution of the same crisis management resources, only the outcomes are real rather than hypothetical. Response is very public during an actual crisis. An organization's crisis management response is frequently reported and critiqued in the news media (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Many publications critiqued Bausch & Lomb's failure to recall ReNu with MoistureLoc when it was linked to a 2006 outbreak of Fusarium keratitis, a form of fungal eye infection that can produce blindness (Dobbin, 2006; Mintz & Di Meglio, 2006). Bausch & Lomb did stop shipping the product and eventually asked retailers to remove the product from shelves. However, it was not until May 15, a month after the crisis began, that an official recall was issued (Mintz & Di Meglio, 2006). Remember, crises make for good news stories, and news of ReNu with MoistureLoc was everywhere. We witnessed a similar pattern of intense media coverage for Volkswagen's poor handling of its Dieselgate crisis (Clemente & Gabbioneta, 2017).

In an actual crisis, responses seek to achieve outcomes related to reducing the negative impact of a crisis on stakeholders and the organization. Put another way, the response helps to achieve the objectives of crisis management. Organizations try to limit the threat to public safety, reputational erosion, brand damage, and loss of sales, to name but a few of the common crisis communication objectives. There is even a chance that the response leads to an improved organization. Improvements can include a stronger reputation, a more powerful brand, and changes to the organization that make it a safer place to work.

Part of the response is *recovery*, which denotes the organization's attempts to return to normal operations as soon as possible following a crisis. Resilience is the key to recovery because the capacity to be resilient facilitates recovery. *Business continuity* is the name used to cover the efforts to restore operations to normal. As noted earlier, downtime from a crisis is a financial drain. The quicker an organization can return to normal operations, the fewer financial losses it will incur.

Revision is the fourth crisis factor. It involves evaluation of the organization's response in simulated and real crises, determining what it did right and what it did wrong during its crisis management performance. The organization uses this insight to revise its prevention, preparation, and response efforts. Ideally, in the future, the right moves are replayed while the mistakes are avoided and replaced by more appropriate actions. Revision is the development of an institutional or organizational memory, which can improve the effectiveness of crisis management by expanding the organization's perception of crises and its response capacity (Li, YeZhuang, & Ying, 2004; Weick, 1988). The more and varied the crises an organization experiences through practice sessions, the better it can handle similar situations in reality. The factors are linked in a spiral. If prevention fails, preparation is required for optimal performance. Revision is derived from performance and informs both the prevention of and preparation for future crises. In turn, improving preparation should improve response.

Understanding the crisis management process is a necessity for effective crisis communication. We can extend the notion of process by creating a framework for crisis management that involves distinct stages that influence one another.

THE INITIAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The idea that crises have an identifiable life cycle is a consistent theme that permeates the crisis management literature. This section explores crisis management as a process. The life cycle approach is explained along with details on the three-stage approach to crisis management and the regenerative model of crisis management. The section concludes by explaining the importance of social evaluations (centering on reputation) to crisis management.

Why a Life Cycle Approach to Crisis Management?

The crisis manager needs to understand this life cycle because its different phases require different actions (Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt, 1995; Sturges, 1994). The crisis life cycle has been translated into what I term *staged approaches* to crisis management. A staged approach means that the crisis management function is divided into discrete segments that are executed in a specific order. Moreover, the life cycle perspective reveals that effective crisis management must be integrated into the normal operations of an organization. Crisis management is not merely developing a plan and executing it during a crisis. Instead, it is appropriately viewed as an ongoing process. Every day, organization members can be scanning for potential crises, taking actions to prevent/mitigate them, or considering any number of the aspects of the crisis management