

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The way we respond in emergencies can be the difference between a set-back and a crisis. This session will help your delegates to put a plan in place for when things go wrong.

INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed for a manager or a facilitator to deliver a short workshop featuring videos from the Video Arts Leadership Essentials Series. Each video comes with a series of activities around the following structure:

LOOK - watch the video and reflect on the content and message.

THINK - activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

These activities will take about 15 minutes to complete. At the end of this guide is a practical exercise to help bring all of the learning points together.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Communicate fully (Jimmy, let's keep this between us)
- Act swiftly (Confuse them! Distract them!)

VIDEO 1 – ACT SWIFTLY

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Act swiftly and take responsibility to stop a crisis escalating out of control.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to discuss what steps leaders can take to stop problems spiralling out of control.

Build the following points into the discussion;

- **Take action**
Act swiftly. Don't jump to conclusions but move quickly to find out the facts.
- **Be transparent**
Be open and honest about the problem and what you know.
- **Take responsibility**
It might be too early to find out where the fault lies but that doesn't mean you can't take responsibility for helping people that are affected.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

Act swiftly;

- Take prompt action to stop the problem getting worse.
- Take responsibility for dealing with the problem.

VIDEO 2 – COMMUNICATE FULLY

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

Hiding information in a crisis usually makes it worse!

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to discuss who should be contacted during a crisis and when?

Responses could include;

- Find out who needs to know about the problem first. This is usually head office and your team. Let them know immediately.
- You may have a PR team who will put together a crisis communications plan and develop a statement for your customers and suppliers.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

Communicate fully;

- Know in advance who you need to contact in the event of a crisis.
- Keep your team fully informed.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT – PRACTISE

This exercise provides participants with practice in dealing with crisis situations.

Divide participants into groups of 3 or 4 and assign leaders in each. Allocate a different case study to each group. Instruct groups that they have a maximum of five minutes to come up with a plan to deal with the situation. They need to be able to tell you what they would do and in what order.

Case 1

You run a small chain of local convenience stores. It is the afternoon and you have just had two calls from store managers reporting that customers have been complaining of food poisoning. Apparently some chicken sandwiches that you got in early that morning are the likely cause. What would you do?

Case 2

You are the manager of a branch office of an insurance company. You have just been informed that there is a leak in the ceiling of your top floor office and, with heavy rain all day, water has come through. An employee has slipped and twisted their ankle, and a large stock of printed brochures has been soaked. What would you do?

Case 3

You work at the logistics centre for a distributor of medical products. You have just heard that one of your delivery lorries has broken down on the side of the motorway with a full load on board. Many of the products are required urgently by hospitals across the region. What would you do?

Case 4

You are manager for a company that operates ferry crossings between the mainland and neighbouring islands. You have had a call from ticket office manager at a major port to say that the ticket office staff have gone on strike. Apparently the company has been reluctant to provide refunds for cancelled crossings and some customers have become really abusive. One member of staff was attacked by a customer who had lost their temper. What would you do?

After the five minutes, bring the groups back together to debrief. Ask each to present their plans of action. Check their plans against the learning points from the two films, specifically:

- Did they plan to first find out what was going on?
- Did they stop the problem getting worse?
- Did they take responsibility for dealing with the situation?
- Did they make plans to inform the appropriate authorities, the team and any affected customers or suppliers?

Ask also how the leader handled the task:

- Did they act quickly and decisively?
- Were they calm under time pressure?
- Did they make use of the expertise in the group?