



Media Readiness Worksheet

INTRODUCTION

When media calls during a crisis, being “media ready” will allow your organization to respond quickly, control the narrative, and ensure essential information is shared correctly. Media often have short deadlines and demand a quick response, so knowing the steps to prepare your organization will help you successfully manage media during a crisis.

PROACTIVE VS. REACTIVE

Media relations can take two forms: proactive and reactive.

Proactive means reaching out to media to share information (e.g. issuing a media release, holding a press conference, etc.), whereas reactive means responding to media inquiries as they come in.

PREPARING YOUR PROACTIVE MEDIA RESPONSE

During a crisis, only the Lead organization should be conducting proactive media relations. Assessing readiness and preparing to manage media in advance of a crisis is essential to crisis response. Use this worksheet to help prepare proactive media management by:

- Assessing your media readiness
- Identifying and preparing your spokesperson
- Creating your media contact list
- Building proactive relationships with media outlets



EXERCISE

Assess Your Media Readiness

Use the checklist below to evaluate your organization's media readiness. If a crisis happened today, would your organization be prepared to:

	YES	NO	UNKNOWN
Ask the media outlet the right questions to prepare your organization's response?	☐	☐	☐
Provide a holding statement to media?	☐	☐	☐
Offer a phone/radio interview with a prepared spokesperson?	☐	☐	☐
Provide an on-camera/virtual interview with a prepared spokesperson?	☐	☐	☐
Offer background information?	☐	☐	☐
Know whether or not your organization needs to redirect media to another authority?	☐	☐	☐
Hold a media event or press conference?	☐	☐	☐

Review your answers above. If you have answered "No" or "I Don't Know" to any of the items above, those are the gaps you need to fill in your media readiness strategy. Continue to the following exercises to increase your preparedness.



EXERCISE

Prepare for Interviews

In any role during a crisis (Lead, Support or Observe), your organization may receive a call from the media.

See the [Know Your Role Worksheet](#) to determine your organization's role in a crisis.

When you receive a call, first consider what role your organization will be playing:

- If you are the Lead, create a plan for your response based on the media outlet's request.
- If you are in a Support or Observe role, you should refer all media to the Lead organization and share with them which media outlet contacted you.

As the Lead organization, when you receive a call from media, collect the following information from the media outlet to help you prepare your response:

- Media outlet name, contact name, and contact information.
- Deadline for a response.
- Whether they need an interview, a statement, or background information.
- If an interview is needed, what type (phone, video, radio, etc.) and if the interview will be live or pre-recorded.
- What information they want from your organization.
- What questions they're planning to ask in the interview.
- Any other organizations, businesses or agencies that will also be interviewed.



EXERCISE

Identify and Prepare Your Spokesperson

Your organization's spokesperson is the voice of the crisis response for media, employees and key interest holders. During a crisis, best practice is to identify a sole person for the initial response and to be consistent with them as the spokesperson through the crisis.

Depending on the crisis, you may need to also seek a subject matter expert as a secondary voice for media. For example, if there was a cyber attack, your Executive Director would be the main spokesperson for the organization; however, you may also want to have the cyber security company supporting the crisis response speak to the technical aspects.

Identify Your Spokesperson:

Identify your key spokesperson and at least one alternate. If you have multiple alternates, list them in order of preference.

ROLE	NAME	TITLE	EMAIL	PHONE
Alternate 1				
Spokesperson				
Alternate 2				

Prepare Your Spokesperson

Your spokesperson is the public voice of your organization during the crisis. What they say and how they say it will impact how the public, media and interest holders receive and understand your response. Your spokesperson must be trained and ready to deliver clear and professional messages as needed.

Spokespeople may include a member of your executive team, board chair, or communications lead, and you may need more than one person depending on the type of crisis.

Ensure that your spokesperson and any identified alternates are prepared to speak with media when a crisis hits.

Consider the following:

- Do they know to refer to the Crisis Communications Plan? Make sure they know who says what, when, and through what channels.
- Do they understand their role as spokesperson and how they must speak on behalf of the organization?
- Have they been trained in media relations? They should be able to:
 - Communicate calmly, clearly, and with empathy
 - Handle tough questions and sensitive information
 - Stay on message and redirect off-topic questions
 - Avoid speculating or placing blame
 - Be comfortable with on-camera interviews



EXERCISE

Media Contact List

Use the table below to create a media contact list. Consider what local, regional, provincial, or national media outlets would be interested in covering information about your organization or location. Include any outlets that have covered past crises or major events in your area—a quick Google news search of past crises in your region is a good place to start. Look for reporters from outlets you don't normally interact with and track their name and the types of stories they cover.

This exercise is to brainstorm new media connections you do not have a pre-existing relationship with.

This contact list should be reviewed and updated regularly. Once the table is complete, take the time to:

1. Follow all of these outlets and the specific reporters on their social media channels.
2. Add a reminder to your schedule to review and revise this list on a regular cadence.

OUTLET NAME	CONTACT NAME	CONTACT INFORMATION	WEBSITE LINK	SOCIAL MEDIA	NOTES (Beat, coverage area, relationship)



EXERCISE

Being Proactive with Media Relationships Outside of a Crisis

The best way to prepare for media is to build relationships before a crisis.

There are many opportunities to engage with media during times of regular business to pitch stories of interest and to build positive coverage for your organization.

Building these connections now will also support proactive coverage during a crisis.

Some sample opportunities are listed in the table below, but the list is not exhaustive. Use the empty spaces at the bottom of the table to brainstorm additional prospects. In the angle column, identify what would make the story interesting or unique. Consider how it could relate to the media's interests. Lastly, identify which media outlet(s) would be interested in the story, and add any important information in the notes.



TIP! Media Monitoring

Establish media monitoring systems to stay up to date on what is being said about your destination. Monitor things like mentions of your location, mentions of your brand, or other industry-related topics. See a journalist, media personality, or influencer talking about your location often? Build a connection!



EXERCISE

OPPORTUNITY	ANGLE	OUTLET(S)	NOTES
Introduce media to a new attraction or event			
Offer exclusive access to new attractions			
Provide expert insight into tourism trends (local data, reports, visitor testimonials)			
Invite media to cover an event or announcement			
Share updates after a crisis, about local recovery—think comeback stories			
Share highlights of local tourist attractions to enjoy			
Pitch positive news story with feel good content			
Share branded storytelling assets (short clips, photos, media kits) on tourist attractions			
Partner with local media on a spotlight series highlighting reasons to visit the area			
Celebrate local milestones with media celebration events			
Create a dedicated media hub that hosts your visual assets, contact options			

