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# I. Purpose Of The Business Continuity Communications Plan

The purpose of business continuity is to enable ABC Company (Company) to continue offering critical services in the event of a disruption. The Business Continuity Communications Plan (Plan) allows ABC Company to communicate with employees, vendors, consultants, customers, service providers, and the media.

# II. Business Continuity Philosophy

Business continuity planning is a process designed to reduce ABC Company’s business risk arising from an unexpected disruption of the critical functions and operations (both manual and automated) necessary for the survival of the organization. A critical element of business continuity is ABC Company’s ability to communicate effectively and clearly with our employees, vendors, consultants, customers, service providers, and the media.

# III. Plan Statement

This Plan provides procedures for the coordination of communications within the organization, and between the organization, the media, and the public in the event of an emergency or controversial issue. Emergencies may include fires, bomb threats, natural disasters, or major crimes. Controversial issues may include police investigations, protests, or other situations that demand a public response.

This Plan is not intended to change the way emergencies are initially reported. All emergencies should be reported immediately to management.

This Plan not only addresses media relations and communications issues, but also includes procedures for the rapid identification of potentially harmful situations and the methods for responding to these situations quickly and effectively.

It is the goal of this Plan to establish guidelines for dealing with a variety of situations, and to ensure that management and its authorized representatives are familiar with those procedures and their roles in the event of a disruption. The Plan is designed to be used in conjunction with the normal decision making hierarchy of ABC Company and does not supplant that decision making process. It is designed to be used in conjunction with operational crisis response plans managed through facilities, operations, and other units.

# IV. Objectives Of The Plan

ABC Company has a large variety of processes whose continuous operations are critical to the organization’s continuing viability. The team leader of the Communications Team is responsible for:

* Factually assessing the situation and determining whether a communications response is warranted.
* Assembling the Communication Team that will make recommendations on appropriate responses.
* Implement immediate action to identify staff that should be informed about the situation, communicate facts about the situation, minimize rumors, and help restore order and/or confidence

This Business Continuity Communications Plan is only one component of ABC Company’s business continuity planning processes. Business resumption plans are needed for all organizational units and include the logistics of getting personnel to work locations, temporary offices, recovery facilities, and housing. Employee safety orientation and insurance programs must also be included in business resumption planning.

# V. General Procedures For Communications

A. Assessment

The individual who encounters the potential crisis should gather accurate information from the appropriate sources. After fact gathering, the appropriate individual should determine whether an immediate response is necessary and, if so, should consult ABC Company management.to determine whether to convene a Communications Team.

B. Assembling the Communications Team

Composition of the Communications Team will include at minimum (Core Team):

* Chief Operating Officer
* Department Head or chief contact in area affected (ABC Company-related, or non-ABC Company related)
* Human Resources

Other personnel may be added to this core team to form the larger Communications Team, which will then formulate a response based on the nature of the disruption. Those added depend upon the situation.

# VI. Response

A. Spokesperson

The Communications Team, after assessing the nature and scope of the situation, should call together all members of the Communications Team to develop a plan of action including:

* *Spokesperson*. The Communications Team should designate a spokesperson. In most cases the spokesperson should be the person possessing the most direct knowledge of the situation.
* *Communications*. In cases of a significant disruption, the President or the highest ranking ABC Company official must take the lead in conveying the administration's response, showing that ABC Company has control of the situation and calm public concern. Communications spokesperson(s) from specific areas may also be designated.

B. Draft a fact sheet

The fact sheet should contain a summary statement of the situation including all known details to be released to the media. This information should be made available to (and approved by) the President and appropriate Vice President. This fact sheet should be analyzed with respect to the public's right to know and concerns for privacy and security in consultation with legal counsel.

C. Notify key contacts

Determine key constituencies that should be informed of the disruption. It is important to keep management, staff, contractors, vendors, and customers, informed of appropriate details and actions taken by the ABC Company during an emergency. Effective communications will help quell rumors, maintain morale, and ensure continued orderly operations of ABC Company’s services.

D. Communicate facts

Assign members of the Communications Team to communicate the facts of the situation (contained in the fact sheet) and ABC Company's intended response. Among those that may be notified, depending on the situation, are:

* Law enforcement agencies - should be notified by local Police representative.
* Employees - information to employees, other than those selected to serve on the Communications Team, should be provided via facsimile, electronic mail, local mail and/or mass meetings. Employees can be automatically e-mailed important updates upon recommendation by the Communications Team. Notices to employees can be posted on an internal web site page, circulated via broadcast e-mail, submitted for publication, and through mass meetings if needed. Fliers may be distributed in company communication areas.
* Mass media - News Services may prepare news releases for distribution. All media inquiries should be directed to News Services.
* Customers - This group can be reached by Customer Service.

E. Alert the media

Determine whether a news conference and or news release is an appropriate means of conveying information to staff, employees, the news media and the public. ABC Company management will determine logistics of the news conference including when, where and how the media will be contacted, which media will be contacted, who will supervise the news conference, who will appear, etc.

F. Establish a Communications Command Center

Determine whether the magnitude of the disruption merits establishing a Communications Command Center and/or a Media Briefing Center (for larger gatherings of the media for briefings or press conferences).

G. Photography

Decide whether to assign videographers and photographers to take pictures of the scene. This may prove helpful in responding to media inquiries, to possible later litigation, as well as documenting events. Determine need to supply video footage from files. Decide whether to provide TV footage for immediate distribution. Determine whether it is appropriate to allow location shooting by TV and newspaper photographers. Determine when, where and who will accompany the media.

H. Other communications

The Communications Team will evaluate and consider:

* Radio responses. Discuss need to produce taped response for radio, or who to make available for radio interviews.
* Other spokespersons. Identify any other individuals who may serve as spokespersons or who might be made available to the news media; assign a public information staff person to provide counsel to those individuals
* Internal communications. Determine strategy of internal communications to be used if the disruption affects ABC Company employees, working closely with Human Resources and the ABC Company web site.
* Alternative communications. Discuss alternative or additional means of conveying information including letters or e-mails to spouses of employees, third party service providers, letters to newspaper editors, and consultation with editorial boards.
* Phones. Receptionists may receive high volumes of incoming telephone calls and should be notified regarding the key facts of the situation (fact sheet) and where to refer calls pertaining to the disruption.

# VII. Ongoing Procedures During Disruption

A. Alert news services

Alert the ABC Company staff member handling newspaper and video clippings to give highest priority to immediately scanning daily newspapers and video reports for stories related to the situation. Deliver copies of these clips or reports as appropriate to the President, Chief Operating Officer, and appropriate Vice President.

B. Information files

Set up information files on the issue. Material related to the disruption, including clippings, statements, letters, memos and any other documents, should be filed in chronological order.

C. Monitor

Monitor the situation at least daily, and frequently update staff and appropriate administrators. Take notes during crisis to be reviewed and used to improve future response.

D. Key groups

Listed below are key groups and procedures to follow when communicating the events of the disruption.

* *Employees* - communicating the continuity plan to staff is essential as employees need to understand what to do if an incident occurs. Let all staff members know as soon as possible. Make sure that people who are not at work that day are aware of the incident. Tell staff about next steps and when the premises will be available. Ask line managers to talk to their teams about the experience and how it will impact their roles.
* *Local police and authorities*. To work smoothly with these experts, you need to be aware of what your local authority and emergency services will do in an incident and discuss the communications plan with them once it has been developed.
* *Customers or clients* - reassure customers and clients that ABC Company is prepared to address the incident and will let them know how they are affected. Consider using the ABC Company web site to communicate information. Transfer key phone numbers to an alternative phone, so people can still get through. Ask staff to contact any clients they work with closely to explain the situation.
* *Media* - Skillful handling of the media can prevent potentially negative comments. Coordinate media management.
* *Suppliers* - let suppliers know if deliveries need to be sent to a different location or postponed.
* *Financial services (banks)* - Contact bank as quickly as possible with a report on the situation. Be prepared to outline any losses and give an estimate for when ABC Company can resume normal business. Organize loans or overdraft protection.

# VIII. Aftermath

A. Communications

Following any disruption, appropriate action must take place to ensure that members of the ABC Company community, and others as necessary, receive needed information and assistance to help bring closure to the issue as well as relief from the effects of the event. Attention also should be placed on identifying and implementing measures to improve the action plan used during the disruption.

* If needed, a public forum should be scheduled and coordinated by Public Affairs to communicate details of the incident and events to all interested members of ABC Company. The timeliness of this meeting is critical and every effort should be made to see that it occurs within one week from the close of the disruption. Representatives from local Police, employees, and Human Resources should attend and be prepared to answer questions and share pertinent information. Specific departments and/or individuals also may be requested to attend and participate depending upon the nature of the issue.
* Immediately following a disruption, it is imperative that ABC Company be sensitive to the needs of faculty, staff and employees who may have been personally affected by the disaster. There may be a need to assist a victim, or victims with obtaining information and/or a referral to available resources.
* It is not unreasonable to expect that rumors might follow a disruption, further creating an atmosphere of anxiety. One means of combating rumors would be to take full advantage of electronic mail, web site notices, rumor-control hotlines, and report facts as appropriate.
* Depending upon the nature of the disruption, services and assistance may have been provided by agencies, companies, and/or individuals from outside ABC Company. Management should ensure that applicable follow-up information, as well as thank-you letters, are forwarded to appropriate persons.
* The Communications Team shall meet within 10 days following a disruption and review all actions taken as a result of the issue to determine effectiveness and efficiency of operations and make any needed changes to this Plan.

B. Clean up

Facilities is responsible for overseeing and implementing services necessary to clean and repair areas and facilities damaged as a result of a crisis. Facilities and IT should jointly ensure clean up after a business disruption.

C. Facility evacuation/operational shutdowns

It may become necessary to evacuate buildings and/or areas surrounding facilities to protect and ensure the safety of staff. If such a situation occurs, decisions regarding work space accommodations, leave requirements for staff, work schedules, and possible housing accommodations for employees needs to be addressed.

Issues surrounding leave for staff employees should be directed to Human Resources. Note: normally time away from work is accounted for through current leave policies.

D. Updates

This plan will be updated regularly. The Communications Team should be assembled periodically to discuss the plan and any updates. The Chief Operating Officer will serve as Team Leader and convene these meetings. Results of the meetings and revisions of the plan are to be documented. Copies of this plan should be addressed to all employees listed in this Plan and any other personnel who might play a role in the event of a disruption.

# Appendix A – Distribution List

President

Chief Operating Officer

All Department Heads

Human Resources

# Appendix B – Receipt and Acknowledgement

I have read ABC Company’s (Company’s) Business Continuity Communications Plan and agree to abide by it as consideration for my continued employment by Company. I understand that violation of the enclosed policies and guidelines may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination.

This document supersedes all prior electronic equipment policies, guidelines, understandings and representations. I understand that if any of the provisions of this manual are found null, void, or inoperative for any reason, the remaining policies and guidelines will remain in full force and effect.

If I am uncertain about any policy or procedure, I will check with my immediate supervisor or Company management.

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Employee Signature Date

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Employee Name (Printed)