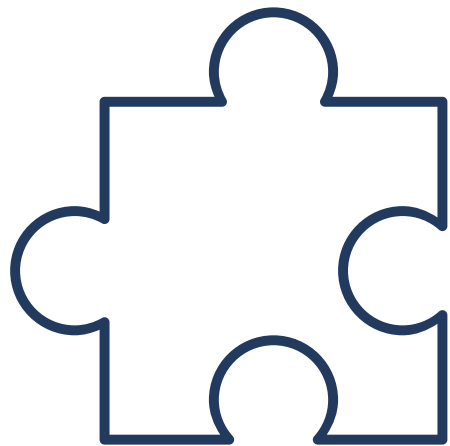


# **Turning Crisis into Currency**

## The Cost and Reward from Crisis Work

Presented by Sally Branson  
Crisis & Reputation Specialist – SBCG



## **Summary: The Benefits of Crisis Planning for Family Businesses**

Family businesses, with their unique dynamics and challenges, stand to gain significantly from proactive crisis planning. Regardless of the specific issues they face, having a robust crisis management strategy can transform potential threats into opportunities for growth and sustainability. Here's how:

### **1. Those Who Plan for Crisis Lose the Least**

Crisis planning equips family businesses to respond swiftly and effectively when unexpected events occur. By anticipating potential crises and developing response strategies, businesses can minimise disruptions and financial losses. Preparedness ensures that when a crisis hits, the business can maintain operations, protect its reputation, and safeguard its assets. This proactive approach reduces the impact of crises, allowing businesses to emerge stronger and more resilient.

### **2. No Stakeholder Map? Flying Blind When It Matters Most**

A comprehensive stakeholder map is crucial for effective crisis management. It identifies key stakeholders, their influence, and their needs, enabling businesses to communicate effectively and manage expectations during a crisis. Without this map, businesses risk making uninformed decisions that could alienate stakeholders and exacerbate the crisis. By understanding stakeholder dynamics, family businesses can maintain trust and support, which are vital for navigating challenging times.

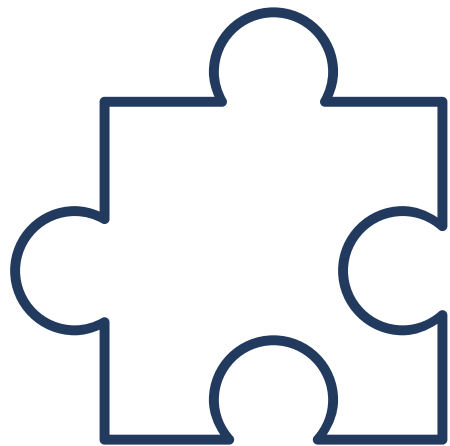
### **3. Crisis Planning Isn't Special—It's Essential Business Planning**

Crisis planning should be integrated into the overall business strategy, not treated as a separate or special activity. It involves assessing risks, identifying critical functions, and establishing communication protocols. This integration ensures that crisis management becomes a natural part of the business's operations, enhancing its ability to adapt and thrive in a volatile environment. By embedding crisis planning into the business culture, family businesses can ensure long-term sustainability and success.

### **The Difference Between a \$5K Problem and a \$50K Disaster? Preparation and Process**

The financial impact of a crisis can vary dramatically based on the level of preparation and the processes in place. A well-prepared business can address issues quickly, turning a potential \$50K disaster into a manageable \$5K problem. This difference underscores the value of having a structured crisis management plan that includes clear processes for decision-making, communication, and recovery. By investing in preparation, family businesses can protect their bottom line and ensure continuity in the face of adversity.

In conclusion, crisis planning is not just about mitigating risks; it's about seizing opportunities for growth and resilience. By planning for crises, family businesses can navigate uncertainties with confidence, ensuring their legacy and success for generations to come.



1. Create a Stakeholder List:
  - Identify key stakeholders, including customers, employees, partners, and media contacts.
  - Understand their influence and interests related to your business.
2. Set Up Google Alerts:
  - Use Google Alerts to monitor mentions of your business name, key executives, and relevant industry terms.
  - Adjust alert settings to receive notifications as they happen or in a daily digest.
3. Implement a "No Surprises" Policy:
  - Develop a list of individuals who need to be informed immediately about potential issues.
  - Ensure that these stakeholders are kept in the loop to prevent unexpected surprises.
4. Know Your Communication Channels:
  - Identify where your audience engages with your brand (e.g., social media, email, forums).
  - Ensure you have a presence on these platforms and can respond promptly.
5. Regularly Review Social Media Mentions:
  - Use social media monitoring tools to track mentions and sentiment about your brand.
  - Engage with your audience by responding to comments and addressing concerns.
6. Monitor Online Reviews:
  - Regularly check review sites like Google Reviews, Yelp, and industry-specific platforms.
  - Respond to reviews, both positive and negative, to show that you value feedback.
7. Track Competitor Activity:
  - Keep an eye on competitors' reputations and how they handle crises.
  - Learn from their successes and mistakes to improve your own strategies.
8. Conduct Regular Reputation Audits:
  - Periodically assess your brand's online presence and public perception.
  - Identify areas for improvement and adjust your strategies accordingly.
9. Establish Clear Communication Protocols:
  - Define how and when to communicate with stakeholders during a crisis.
  - Ensure that your team knows the protocols for consistent and effective messaging.
10. Engage with Industry Influencers:
  - Build relationships with influencers and thought leaders in your industry.
  - Leverage their platforms to enhance your brand's reputation and reach.
11. Prepare Public-Facing Employees:
  - Ensure everyone who is public-facing knows the key issues and how to respond.
  - Provide training and resources to handle inquiries and concerns effectively.
12. Develop Pre-Written Scripts:
  - Create scripts for employees who answer phones or work at front desks.
  - Include responses for common questions and guidelines for escalating issues.

# What is a Crisis?



**Urgent Attention**



**Threatens damage**



**Needs special management**

A crisis is anything that starts to pull your attention away from business as usual, disrupting your ability to undertake your core business or operate on a daily basis. It challenges your capacity to maintain normal operations and can manifest in various forms, from internal disruptions to external threats. What constitutes a crisis can vary greatly from one organisation to another, as everyone has their own perspective on what would significantly impact their operations. This subjectivity means that what is a minor issue for one business could be a major crisis for another, underscoring the importance of tailored crisis management strategies that reflect the unique vulnerabilities and priorities of each business.

# Crisis Taxonomy

*“The crisis you have to worry about most is the one you don’t see coming. ●●”*

*— Mike Mansfield*

# Crisis has it's own PR issue



**myth making**



**Paralysis**



**Overcomplexity**

Crisis management is often shrouded in mythmaking, creating an aura of complexity and insurmountability that can deter businesses from engaging in this crucial work. Many perceive it as an overwhelming task reserved for experts, filled with unpredictable challenges and requiring extraordinary skills. However, the reality is that effective crisis management is fundamentally process-driven. It involves systematically identifying potential risks, understanding their implications, and developing clear, actionable plans to navigate them.

# Types of Crisis



## Slow Burn

- Progressive development
- Identifiable indicators
- Strategic preparation window

Example: Compliance issues,  
legal matters



## Creeping

- Gradual escalation
- Subtle warning signs
- Can accelerate quickly

Example: Bad reviews, rumour  
control gaps



## Sudden

- No advance warning
- Immediate response required
- Maximum impact potential

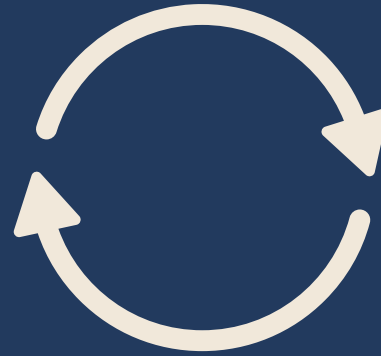
Example: Workplace fatality,  
catastrophic events

It is very rare to see an urgent overnight crisis; while events like a sudden workplace incident can occur without warning, the steps to address such crises can be pre-planned, and most crises I encounter are slow burn or creeping, with no excuse in 2025 not to be prepared for these.

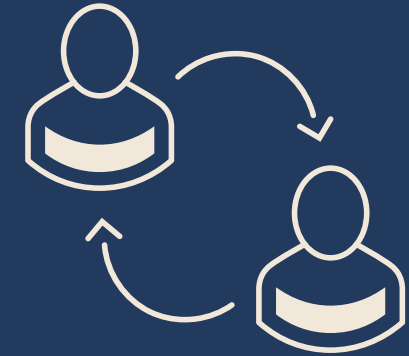
# Types of Crisis



**Leadership transitions**



**Decision-making challenges**



**Differing visions**



***“A Crisis is a terrible thing to waste.”***

**— Paul Romer, Stanford economist**

# Crisis as Opportunity



**Crisis can drive  
innovation**



**Opportunity for growth  
and improvement**



**Reveals leadership  
strengths**



**Builds stakeholder trust  
through transparency**

***“In the midst of every crisis lies  
great opportunity.”***

**— Albert Einstein**

# Success Factors



**Rapid Response**



**Stakeholder Empathy**



**Information Transparency**

***“Out of crisis comes clarity.”***

**— Randolph O’Toole**

# Values-Based Decision Framework



**Identify ethical  
dimensions**



**Consider core  
values**



**Evaluate  
options**



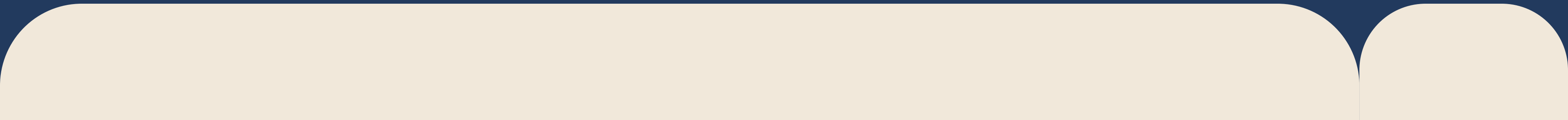
**Document  
reasoning**



**Communicate  
transparently**

# Value Assessment Workshop

Core Value	What This Means During Crisis	How We Demonstrate This



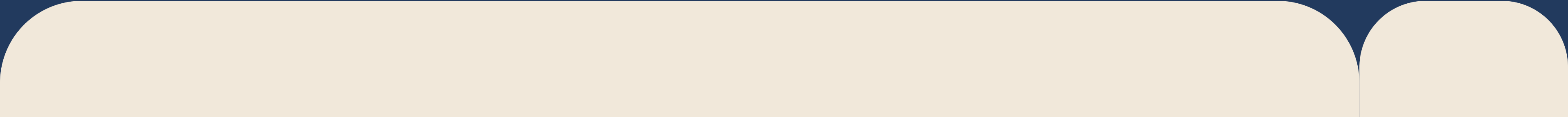
***“ Meet your market where your market really is,  
not where you would like it to be. ”***

**— My next tattoo**



# Stakeholder Mapping

Stakeholder Group	Level of Influence	Current Relationship	Potential Role in Crisis



***“Never let a good crisis go to waste. It's an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before.”***

**— Winston Churchill**

# Advocacy Development



**Identify potential advocates**



**Cultivate relationships**



**Prepare advocates**



**Express gratitude**

# Chain of Command



**Decision Makers**

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**Communicators**

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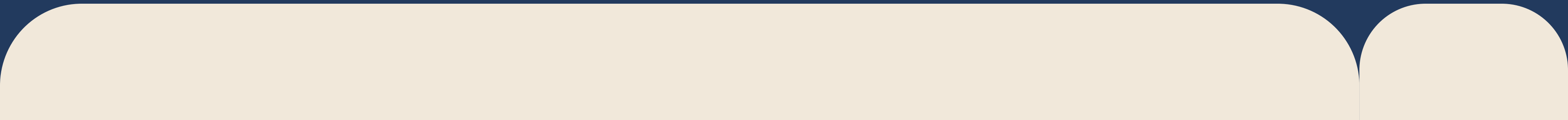
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**Implementers**

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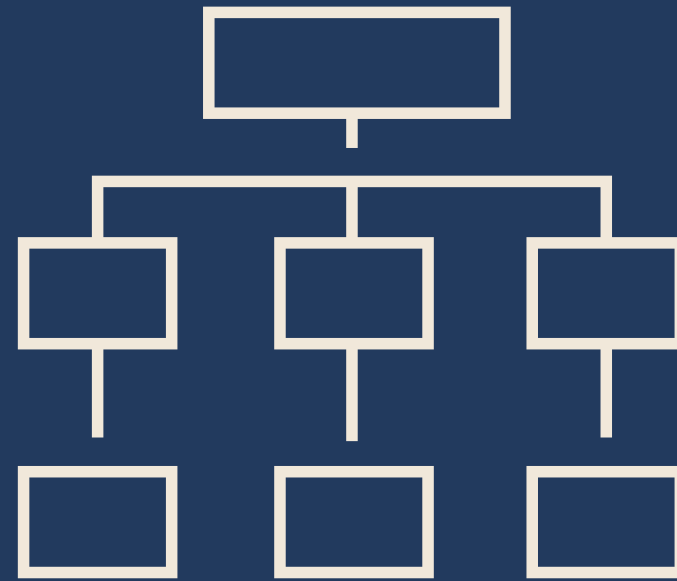
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# Crisis Preparedness



**Risk  
assessment**



**Identify critical  
functions**



**Communication  
protocols**



**Recovery  
strategies**

# Key Takeaways



Review your current crisis plan quarterly



Assign clear roles before a crisis happens



Identify your top 5 stakeholders



Run a mock scenario or tabletop exercise

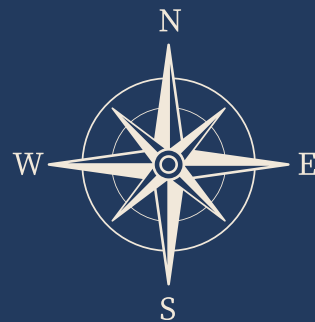
# Key Takeaways



Understand the nature and types of crisis



Use crisis as an opportunity for growth



Prepare clear roles, values and plans



Build trust through communication and empathy