

Crisis Communication Pitfalls: Common mistakes and how to avoid them



Government Events

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Pitfall 1: Not seeing
the crisis coming



An aerial photograph of a rugged, volcanic island. The island is primarily brown and grey, with some patches of green vegetation. A large, dark, smoldering crater is visible on the left side of the island, with a plume of dark smoke rising from it. The island is surrounded by deep blue ocean water. The sky is a mix of dark blue and white clouds. The text "Crises can be SMOULDERING" is overlaid in white, with "SMOULDERING" in a larger, bold font.

Crises can be
SMOULDERING



Crises can be
SUDDEN

An emergency or issue can become a crisis:

- **SCALE**
- **IMPACT**
- **DURATION**

When a crisis happens:



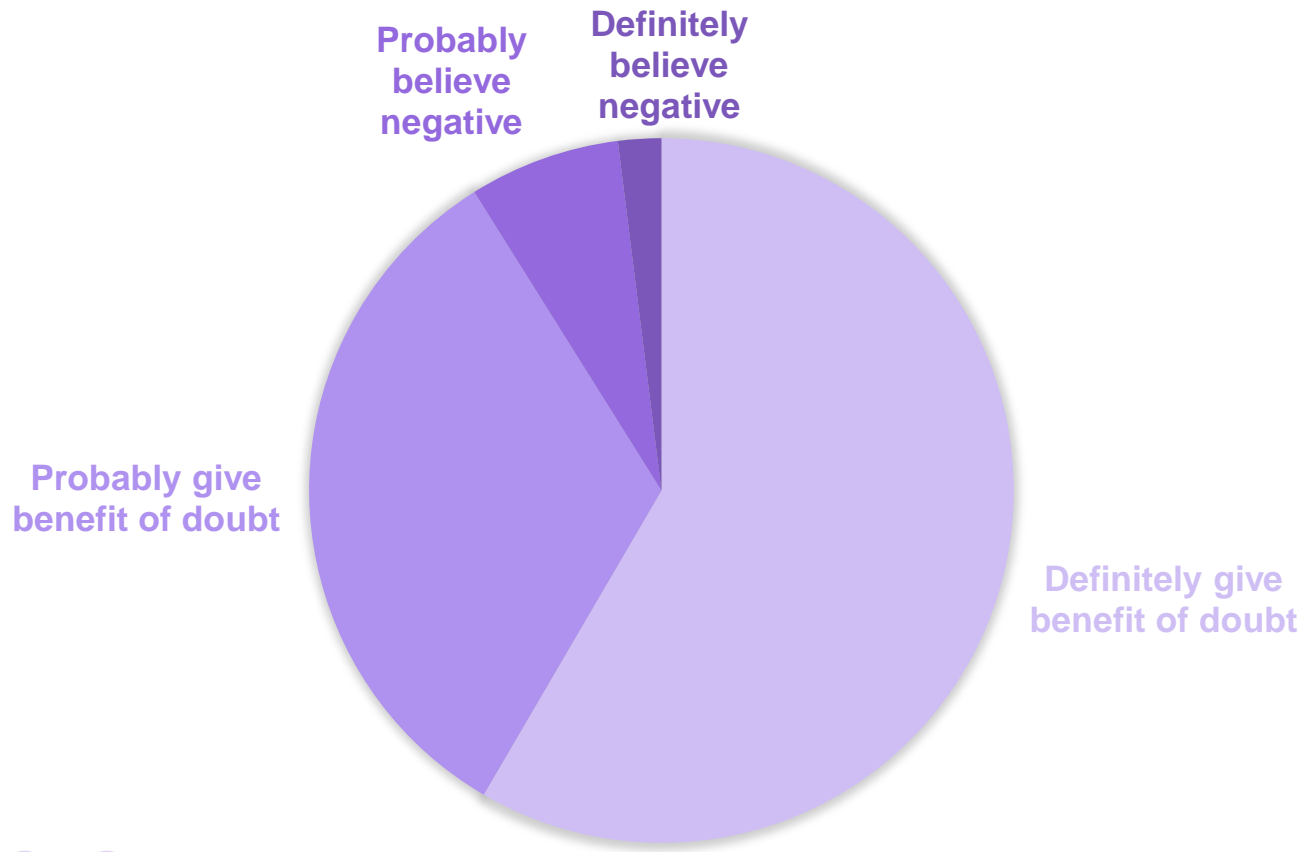
Do you
have a
reservoir of
goodwill?



Are you
seen to
deal with it
well?

I trust the organisation:

In a crisis I would:



IPSOS

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a wooden table in a meeting room. Several people's hands are visible, interacting with various documents and sticky notes. One hand in the center is pointing at a blue sticky note on a document. Other documents feature charts, including a colorful bubble chart and a grid of colored squares. The scene is dimly lit, with a desk lamp visible in the background. The text "Pitfall 2: Not testing the plan" is overlaid in white on the center of the image.

Pitfall 2: Not testing the plan

A person in a light blue shirt is leaning over a table, pointing at a document with their right hand. Their left hand is resting on the table. In the background, another person is visible, gesturing with their hands. The scene is a professional meeting or rehearsal. The text "Rehearse the plan" is overlaid in white on a purple gradient bar at the bottom.

Rehearse the plan

Pitfall 3:
Listening to
the wrong
people when
a crisis
happens





Pitfall 4: Not saying sorry

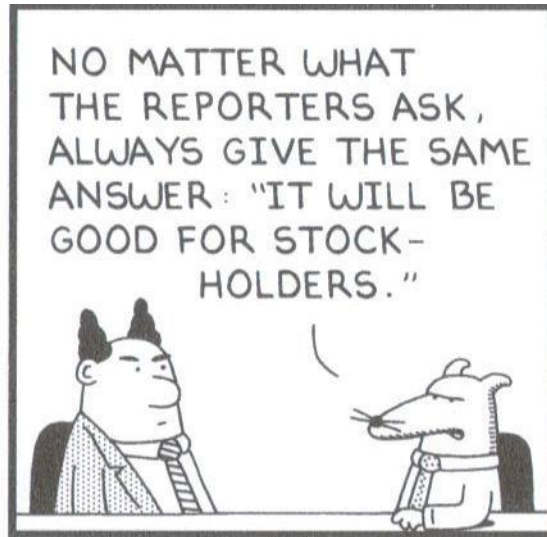
A row of golden Oscar statues is shown against a background of bokeh light spots. The statues are arranged in a line, and the background is filled with out-of-focus golden lights.

How you say 'sorry' matters:

“We sincerely apologise ... for the error that was made during the award announcement for Best Picture. The presenters had mistakenly been given the wrong envelope...”



What do you say?



Final Thought:

This comes from the leader of a council in the midlands, at the end of a media training session:

- ❖ “I get it now.
- ❖ If you don’t want the bad publicity,
- ❖ don’t do the bad stuff in the first place.”

Any questions?



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