

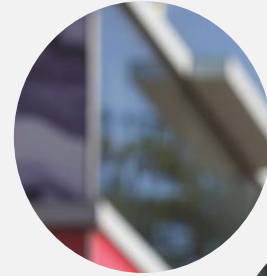
Safety & Sustainability

Let's 
Be Clear

Understanding the Role of
Communications

About Me

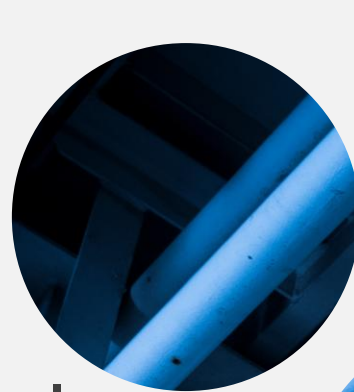
- PR for 16 years, and worked with the Chemical Industry for 11 years reputation risk management, crisis, and governmental affairs in WV.
- Started my firm, Coffman Collaborative, in 2021 with the goal of focusing on external relations for the industrial sectors.
- [Find me on LinkedIn!](#)



Why This Matters

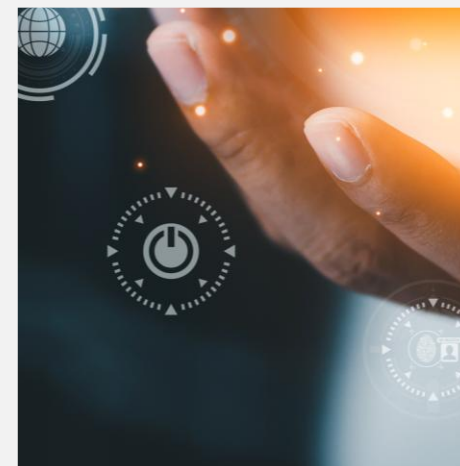
Communication is a Risk Management Tool

- In moments of crisis, perception becomes reality
- Safety and sustainability efforts mean little if not communicated clearly
- Stakeholders expect transparency, speed, and accountability
- Poor communication can escalate operational issues into reputational crises



Why Prepare

- Crisis Communications is **NOT** just a reaction to an event.
- It is a safety management tool to be reviewed, practice and utilized like all emergency management tools and relationships.
- Crisis communications is a **planned and trained** effort to address unexpected events prioritizing stakeholder relationship and the company's reputation.



Exercise – Message Evolution in Real Time



The 90–60–30 Challenge



How Messages Change Under Pressure



Break Into Groups of Three

Exercise

Goal

- Maintain the **core message** while adapting to **less time and more pressure**
- Focus on what matters most



Section One

Person A describes their favorite movie to Person B in 90 seconds.

Section Two

Person B describes why the movie is person A's favorite to Person C in 60 seconds

Section Three

Person C describes their favorite movie back to Person A in 30 seconds.

What Did You Learn?

- What details were lost or kept?
- What became clearer as time shortened?
- How does this relate to crisis communications?

Why External Affairs Matters

- External affairs is **essential to building and maintaining trust with the communities** where you operate.
- Proactive engagement helps organizations identify concerns early, address issues before they escalate, and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders.
- Strong external affairs strategies also play a critical role in **crisis prevention and risk management**—ensuring clear communication, reducing misinformation, and positioning your organization as transparent and accountable.
- Finally, effective external engagement supports **long-term sustainability** by aligning business operations with community expectations, regulatory environments, and social responsibility goals.

Bottom line:

Organizations that communicate openly and consistently are better equipped to prevent crises, manage risk, and **earn lasting community trust.**

Understanding External Affairs



Sustainability & Safety



**Operations/Risk
Management**



**Governmental
Relations**



Community Trust



Understand
Your Risks and
Develop
Relationships.

**Shifting The Sustainability
Conversation**

Shifting and Communicating Sustainability

- Sustainability has become a political issue, but it is still a business decision.

Why Sustainability Remains a Business Decision

- **Operational Efficiency:** Reducing waste lowers costs
- **Risk Management:** Prevents regulatory and reputational issues
- **Workforce Expectations:** Employees want responsible employers
- **Market Demand:** Customers increasingly value sustainability

Trends in Policy



**Anti-
WOKENESS/ESG**

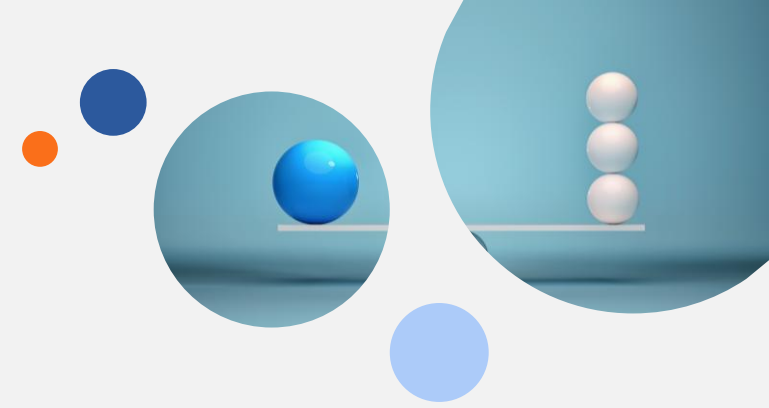
VS

MAHA

Political

Community Based

Understanding the Balance



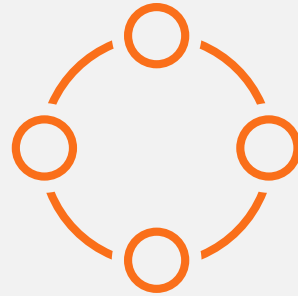
Always Connect it Back to the Business

- **Lead with operations:** safety, efficiency, reliability
- **Make it local:** jobs, community impact, environmental improvements
- **Use plain language:** say what you're doing, not what you "stand for"
- **Be consistent:** same message to employees, community, and regulators

Establish Constant Communication

- Regulators are one of your more important relationships you should be cultivating.
- But - **Be aware of the type of communication** you are having and who the audience could be .

Understanding Your Risks



Vulnerabilities

- Audit your organizations Risk?
- Do you have internal communications flows?
- Look for weaknesses
 - Safety, Communication, Oversight.
- Done Confidentially

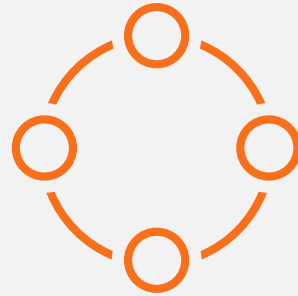
Stakeholders

- Are you communicating properly?
- Do you have established relationships?
- How is your brand viewed in the community – Is it already negative?
- Are your contact lists up to date.

Planning

- Create a Plan of Action
- Go beyond EPA and other reporting requirements.
- Understand media needs.
- Schedule planning drills along with all other trainings.

Understanding Your Audience



Expectations Are Evolving Rapidly

- Stakeholders are more vocal, more input across channels.
- Stakeholders are more informed.
- Rapid change.
- Communication gaps can create reputational risk.

Compliance to Expectation

- The status quo no longer is to meet requirements but exceed what is needed.
- Increased misinformation and political engagement.
- Before – technical focus, now = transparency

Understanding Your Stakeholders

- Do you know what they care about?
- What the needs are to the community?
- **Perception is shaped by what you communicate and not by what you do.**

Developing Relationships



Emergency Response

- LEPCs
- Emergency Management Offices (State/Local)
- Volunteer Fire Departments
- Dept. of Transportation, Environmental Protection, etc.

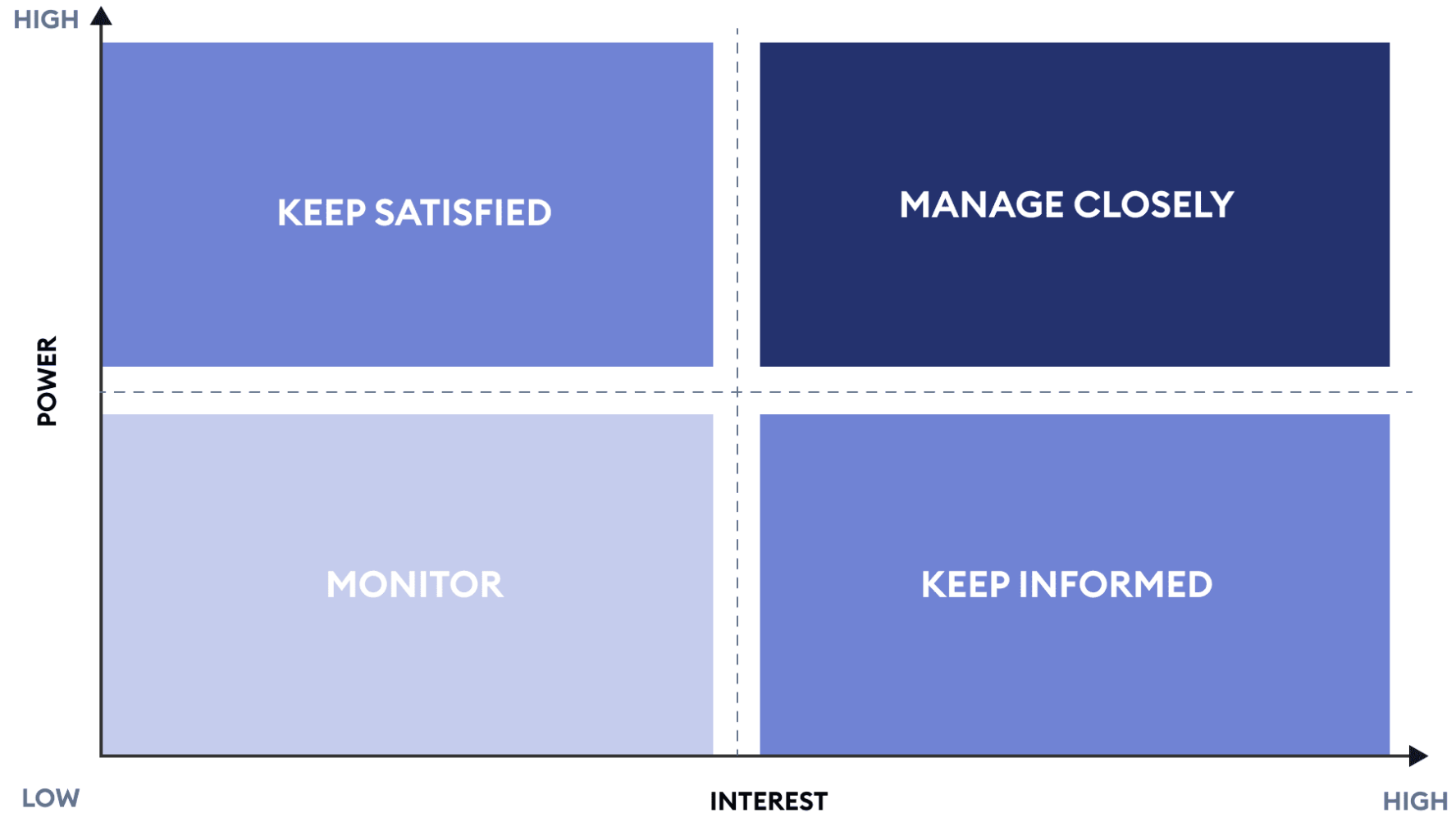
Elected Officials

- City/Municipal
- County Commission
- State Legislators
- State agencies/Governor's Office
- Federal

Community

- Local Schools
- Local Businesses
- Community Groups
- Nonprofits
- Other

Stakeholder Analysis - Power-Interest Grid



High

Keep Satisfied

- Toledo Rotary
- Toledo-Lucas County Sustainability Commission
- Toledo
- University of Toledo
- Toledo NW Foodbank
- Sen. Joe Bellino (R) MI
- Rep. William Bruck (R) MI
- Office of US Congresswomen Marcy Kaptur
- Sen. Paula Hudson-Hicks (D)
- Paul Pirrone - Bedford
- Lake Erie Waterkeeper
- Ohio Environmental Council

Manage Closely

- Sen. Theresa Gavarone (R)
- Ohio EPA
- Lucas County Commissioner Pete Greken
- Ohio Chemical Technology Council
- Rep. Josh Williams (R)
- Toledo Chamber of Commerce
- Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz
- Lucas County LEPC
- Ohio Manufacturers Association
- LC Commissioner Anita Lopez
- LC Commissioner Laura Sobeki
- Rep. Michele Grimm (D)
- Rep. Elgin Rogers (D)
- Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments

POWER

Monitor

- ConnectToledo
- Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy
- Toledo Naturalist Association
- Toledoans for Safe Water
- The Junction Coalition
- LISC Toledo
- Whitmer CareerTech School
- Sierra Club Western Lake Erie
- Lake Erie Advocates
- United Way

Keep Informed

- Councilwoman Theresa Morris
- Adam Cassi Keep Toledo Beautiful
- City of Toledo Environmental Services
- Toledo Police
- Bedford Township Fire Dept.
- Washington Local Schools
- Toledo Fire and Rescue
- Bedford Schools
- Monroe County Business Alliance
- Imagination Station
- American Heart Association
- Toledo/Bedford Public Libraries

Low

INTEREST

High

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING EXERCISE





Understand
Your Risks and
Develop
Relationships.

Let's dive in

Crisis Communication Stages



Preparedness

Planning Process
Manuals/System of Command
Training & Simulations



Prevention

Understanding Risks
Emergency Response
Issue Management



Reaction

Response
Managing the Situation
System Alerts

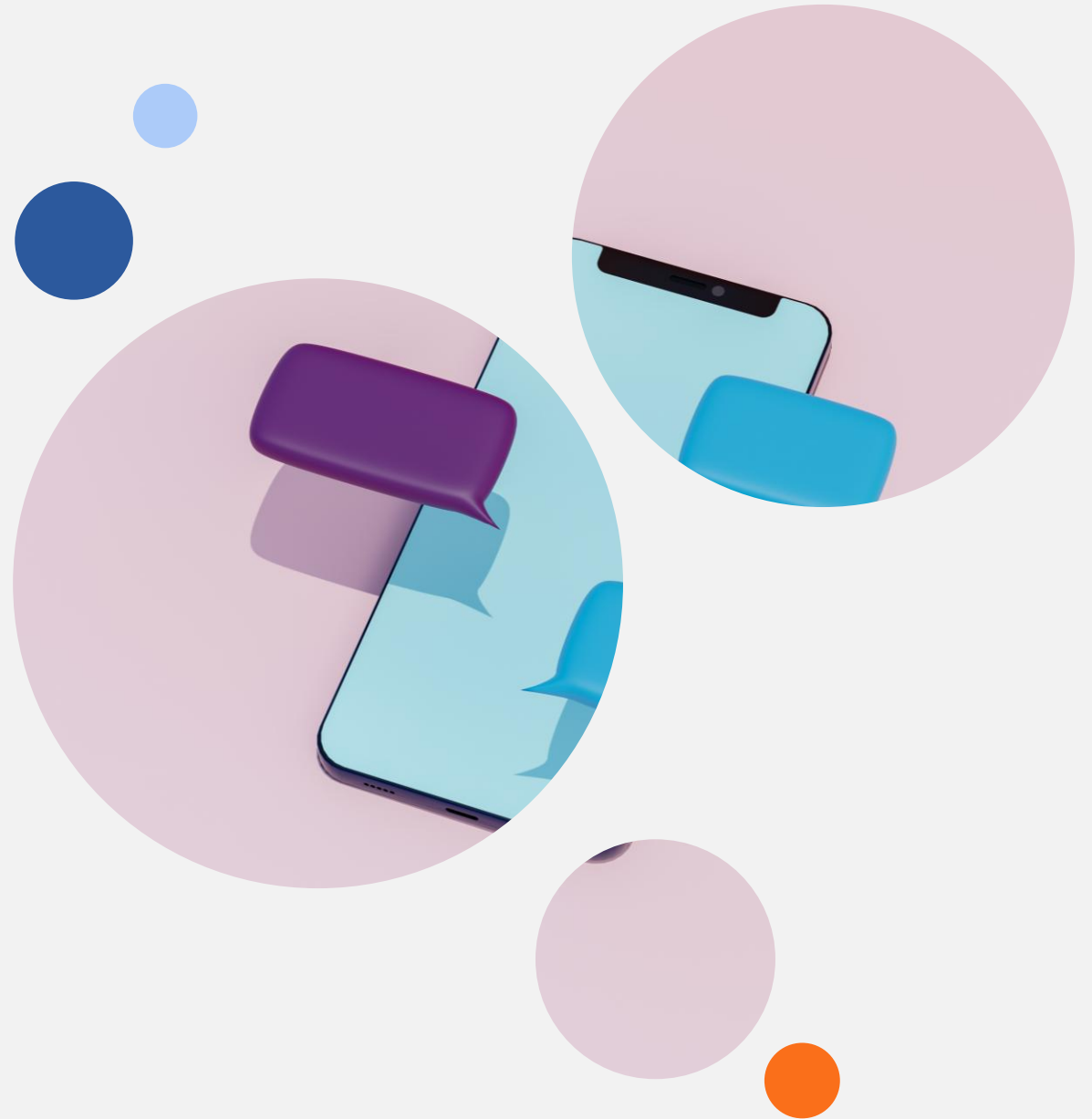


Recovery

Relationships
Impacts
Evaluation/Change

Why Prepare

- How you **react** to the crisis determines the **impact** of the event and your reputation.
- 24/7 news cycle and information is not solely transferred by the media.
- Perception is reality.



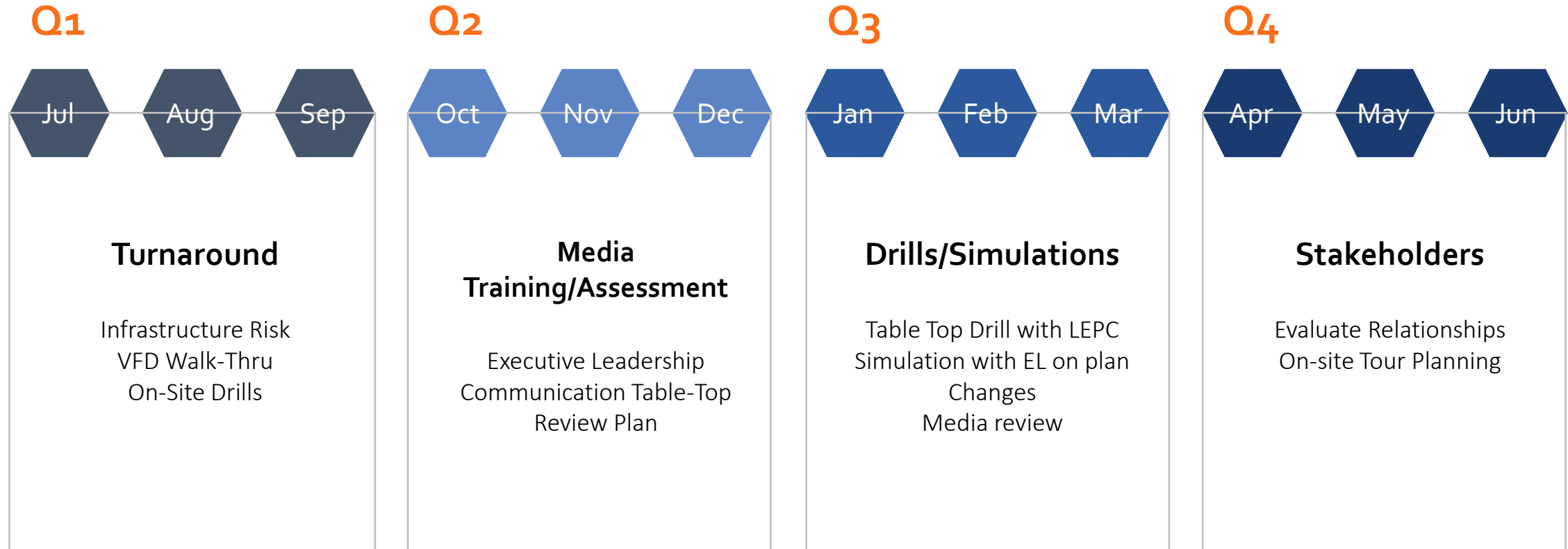
How to Plan for a Crisis

- **Vulnerability Audit** – This helps you see what the weaknesses are and to develop your formal plan and action steps.
- **Develop the Plan** – Understand crisis communications can range from a small release to a major event. Each event is a response and reaction to your relationship with stakeholders.
- **Divide your plan into levels** – This creates roles and accountability for crisis reaction.
- **Develop a training schedule** – It is recommended you review your crisis plan on a quarterly basis and actively analyze gaps in communication with stakeholders.

Crisis Levels

| Area of Concern | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|
| People | No Injuries or threat of Injury | Minor Injuries | Serious Injuries, | Multiple Fatalities |
| Scope | Controlled, no-offsite harm | Confined to the facility. | Affecting the facility and nearby area (SIP issued). | Affecting major areas of the offsite area. |
| Public Concern | Unlikely, Internal Only. | Local, limited stakeholder impact. | Increased Local Interest and concern. | Substantial public interest and concern. |
| Media Coverage | No public coverage | Likely 1-2 days of media coverage | 2-7 days of media coverage, statewide news, some national. | Weeks of national/globally news. |
| Customer Impact | None | None | Possible short-term delays | Long-term delays that pose loss of business threat. |

Crisis Safety Planning





Response, Reaction, & Reputation

You Must Always Have a Response

Never Say NO Comment



Communicate



Timely



Accurate



Trust

Ammonia Leak - August 2025

Chemical Manufacturer Located in WV's Ammonia Sensor Alerted to Operators that an Ammonia Leak was Active.



At the same time, an odor complaint came in through metro 911 and alert the site tenant.



Kanawha Commission and site tenant issued a shelter-in-place, but then rescinded the order, shortly after the public statement.



This caused confusion, frustrations, etc. with local community. Also, distrust.

Example

Shelter-in-place lifted for area near Belle Chemours plant after 'minor' ammonia leak

Staff reports Aug 16, 2025 Updated Aug 29, 2025 1 min to read

MORE INFORMATION



At public meetings, officials to address Belle ammonia leak, shelter-in-place order

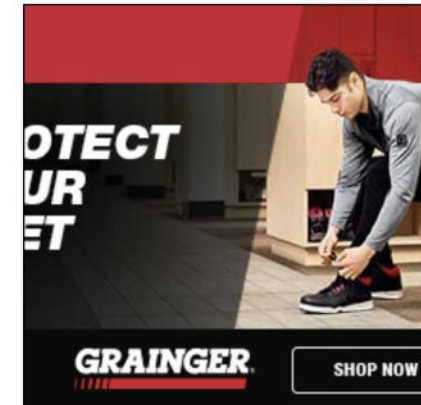
Two public meetings have been scheduled for residents to learn more about last weekend's ammonia leak at the Arclin Chemical Company facility

...



Fire trucks from Upper Kanawha Valley fire departments spray down a tank at a Belle chemical complex after reports of an ammonia leak at the

Buy Now



TRENDING NOW



Articles

Example

- Framed the message around Safety, “The Sensors Worked” Focus.
- Talked about Safety protocols, trainings, etc.
- Held open houses, in conjunction with LEPC and Kanawha County Emergency Management within a week of the event.
- Called all elected officials, personally.
- Overview to CAP within a month of incident.

EXAMPLE

NEWS

Shelter-in-place open houses scheduled following Belle ammonia leak

By Aaron Parker
August 20, 2025 - 5:37 pm



Belle Plant facility in eastern Kanawha County.

CHARLESTON, W.V. — A recent ammonia leak in Kanawha County has prompted the company involved to

NEWS

Residents in Belle hear from Arclin plant officials about recent ammonia leak during second open house

By Morgan Pemberton
August 25, 2025 - 9:02 pm



Residents in Belle at Arclin's open house

NEWS

Belle-based plant hosts emergency preparedness open house Friday

By Morgan Pemberton
August 22, 2025 - 9:20 pm



Belle Plant facility in eastern Kanawha County.

Building Trust

- Develop a yearly plan for community impact.
- Doesn't have to be monetary-based.
- In-kind time, STEM Demos.
- Use earned media opportunities.



Community Impact



Relationships

- Stakeholders Know Who You Are
- Long-standing relationships establish trust.
- Reduces Communication Gaps.

Brand Trust

- Stakeholders will trust you are responding correctly.
- Reduces regulation risk.
- Reduces customer risk.
- Community reputation will have less impact.

Recovery

- Recovery period of the crisis is reduced if reaction time is quick.
- Recovery period is reduced if trust is already established.

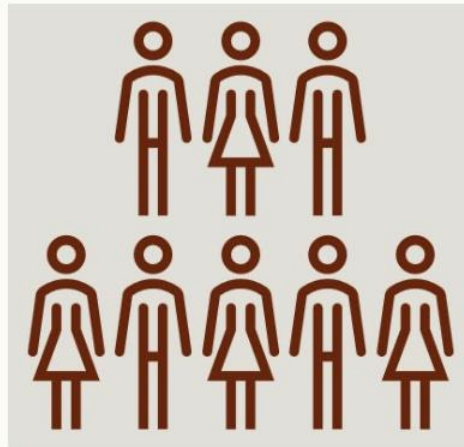


Community Relations

End of Year 2025



Over 260 volunteering hours in 2025 with STEM partnerships



Conducted STEM activities with over 1,200 students.



Arclin was a proud supporter of the public libraries and schools in Kanawha and Putnam County.



Donated over \$22,000 in community donations to support the local community, STEM and education.

Office on the web Frame

BELLE AND MARMET COMMUNITY

3rd Grade STEM Celebration

We held our annual STEM Celebration with the area 3rd Grade students from Belle, Chesapeake, Cedar Grove, Mary Ingles, and Pratt this year.

Over 140 students participated in 8 STEM stations.

Employees who participated:



Summer Library Club

This Summer's KCPL SLC was themed
– Color Your World.

- Riverside
- Elk Valley
- St. Albans
- Charleston- Main
- Dunbar
- Clendenin



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Riverside Back-To-School

Arclin supported **\$2,000** in school supplies for Riverside Public Library.

On August 1st, Heather Henson, Jason Jeffrey, and Jana Meadows donated time to pass the supplies out to over 65 students.





Crisis Response

Connects Back
to the
Stakeholder
Map





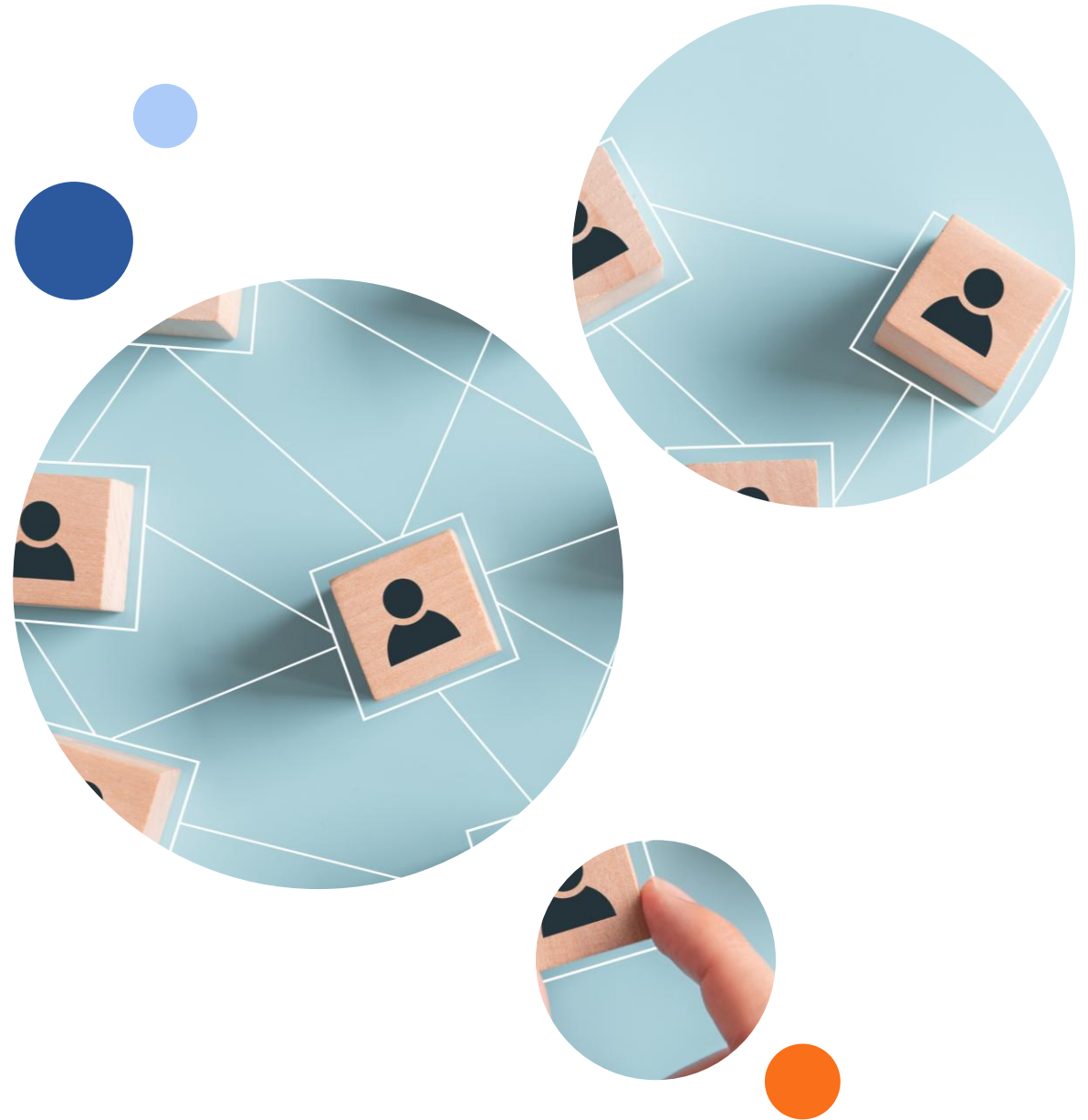
BREAKOUT SESSION

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

How would you respond?

Conclusion

- Establish a Crisis Plan.
- Develop a Timeline to Practice.
- Build and Review Key Relationships.
- Create a Reputation Through Community Impact.

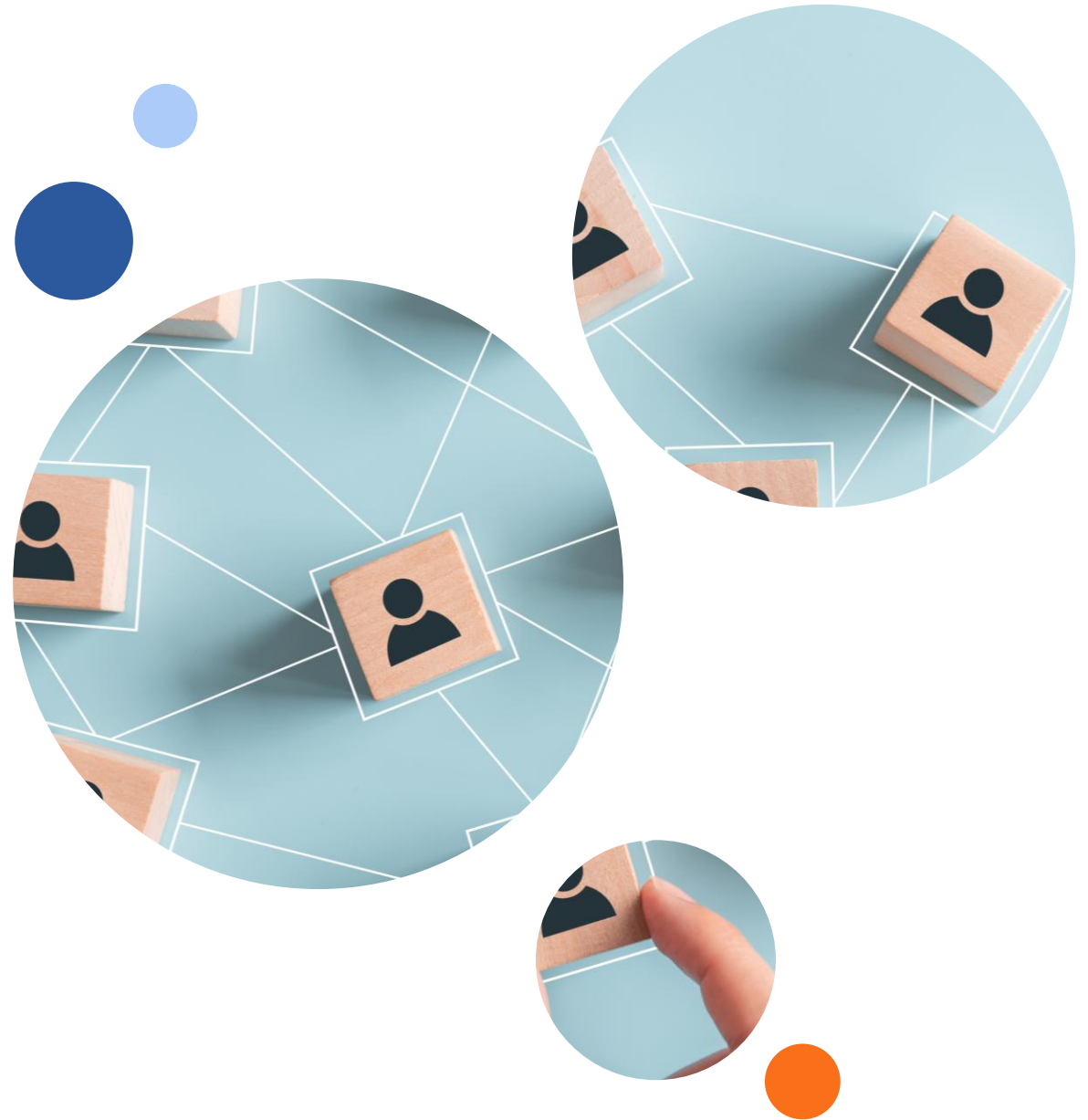


Conclusion

The Bottom Line is -

**It is all centered
around**

RELATIONSHIPS





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