

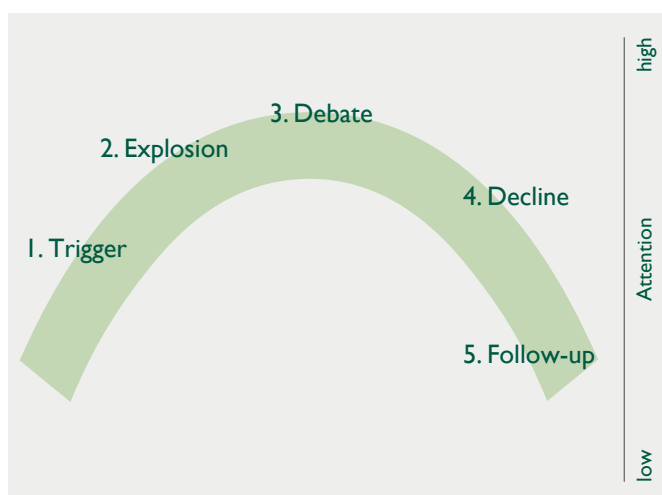
Communication under pressure

Dialogue during a crisis

**Prepare comprehensively and train processes.
Because: a crisis can come any time.**

A crisis can hit anyone. Whether it is an authority, a large corporation or medium-sized business. All crises have one thing in common: there is always not enough time and high pressure. Decisions have to be made quickly, mostly with a lack of information. Dynamics develop that can hardly be controlled. Internal rumours become external ones. Public accusations threaten to cause the loss of customers and partners. In these situations, it is important to remain calm and to be well prepared.

The good news is: it is possible to be prepared. Processes can be rehearsed, responses can be trained. But another thing is certain, too: good dialogue alone cannot solve the crisis. Dialogue may defuse front lines and help to re-establish trust. However, permanently, a reputation can only consolidate by a binding perspective. To achieve this, all responsible departments have to cooperate – a crisis always demands an operative as well as a communicative answer.



Preparation is key. Credibility the biggest asset.

Not everything is foreseeable. But nearly everything. Almost every crisis is foreshadowed – sometimes with a warning in a professional expertise or via critical discussions in social networks. It is possible to prepare for even the most unforeseen scenarios. And more than that: one has to prepare.

navos consults in these processes, shapes and implements them. navos supports in analysing possible crisis scenarios, in building monitorings and in defining action processes. Especially social media monitorings function as an important radar for upcoming crises. navos prepares Q&As, mailing lists and dark sites for emergencies, creates crisis manuals and helps to implement crisis teams. Above all: navos trains the company leaders for the emergency communication – with a precisely planned and precisely “escalated” crisis simulation.

However, good preparation sets in even earlier and even more fundamental. The best crisis prevention consists of transparency and credibility. Those who communicate well in advance can count on a resilient basis in times of a crisis. Therefore, it is essential to establish networks of important multipliers – like journalists, online communities, scientists and NGOs – and to build trust by continuous information there.

**During the crisis: act fast and concentrated.
Try to keep a cool head.**

The top maxim during a crisis: keep calm! Then collect the facts, initiate necessary measures and communicate those clearly. The first 24 to 36 hours are crucial – group dynamics and the direction of the public discussion form here. Therefore, it is important to act fast, but not hasty. Hereby dialogue always has



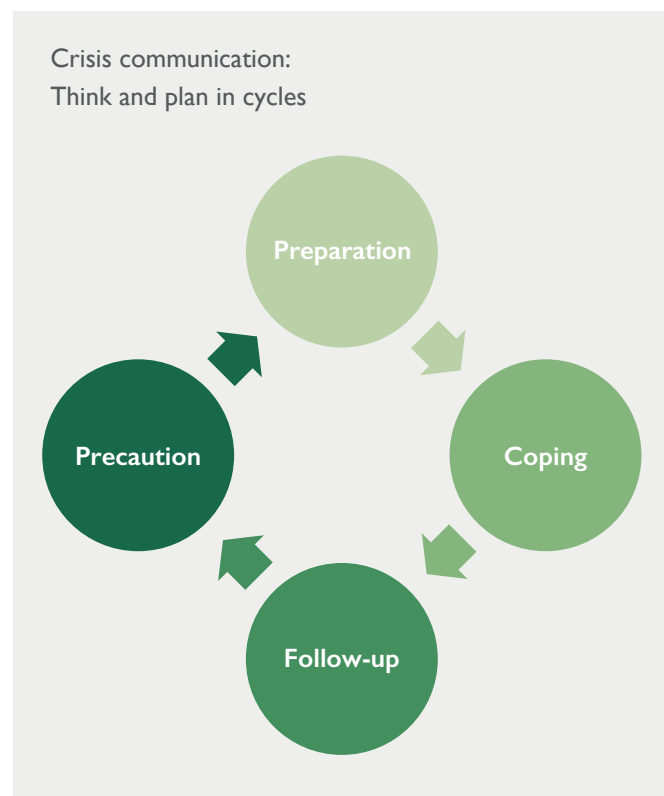
to be objective, transparent and true, comprehensible and clear. No matter whether the approach is a more proactive or defensive communication strategy, one thing is sure: one cannot not communicate! Even silence is a statement.

Important to keep in mind: PR begins at home, with internal communication. The colleagues are the most important multipliers. Without internal support, there is no way of standing one's ground externally. Furthermore, the focus has to lie on the external stakeholder groups who need to be informed: whether they are authorities or corporate partners, local residents and communities, classical media or social networks. For all those different stakeholders and information channels, scope and trust need to be built early on. In doing this, it is important that the information follows the logic of the respective communication channel – classical media and social media differ in that regard, as well as for example information for authorities and addressing residents.

After the crisis is before the crisis

Even if the crisis management was successful, there is always something to learn. Because the next crisis can come at any time. Therefore, it is important to ensure that all events and actions are documented during the actual crisis. Based on this it is possible to analyse what went well and what could be improved in future – and which consequences, operatively and communicatively, should be drawn.

Even while keeping up hope that the past crisis was the last one, crisis communication always has to be conceived and planned as a cycle; a cycle that goes from preparation and crisis management to follow-up – which then again serves as crisis precaution.



navos – Public Dialogue Consultants. Effective PR in dialogue for our clients.

Our communication habits and infrastructures are changing rapidly. What unites this development is that they encourage and demand dialogue. Each and every individual is becoming increasingly significant in communicative terms and thus also relevant for a company's reputation and economic success. For navos, sustainable, serious dialogue with all stakeholder groups therefore provides the basis of communication. We have mastered the art of conducting essential dialogue and are specialised in stakeholder dialogue, crisis communications and public affairs. navos stands for groundbreaking, contemporary and functional communication. With our 50 employees from our offices in Berlin, Düsseldorf and Hamburg, we particularly work on behalf of clients from the energy, environmental, telecommunications and financial sectors.

Berlin

Kurfürstenstraße 87
D-10787 Berlin
Fon +49 (0)30 / 467 24 25-0

Düsseldorf


Volmerswerther Straße 41
D-40221 Düsseldorf
Fon +49 (0)211 / 96 08 17-0

Hamburg

Glashüttenstraße 79
D-20357 Hamburg
Fon +49 (0)40 / 696 387 64-0

info@navos.eu

www.navos.eu

 navos on facebook