

### **The Power of Planning in Crisis Management**

As Benjamin Franklin said, “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.” This quote has resonated with me over the past few weeks as we've discussed how communicators can help organizations prepare for and navigate reputational crises. The media is filled with crises that highlight the importance of proactive planning, and it's exciting to see the real-world impact of what we're learning in class.

One of the best parts of this course has been connecting the readings and articles to real-world events. There always seems to be a recent news story that illustrates the topics we're discussing. While watching and reading the news, I constantly reflect on our case studies and Coombs' book, viewing these situations through a new, more critical lens. The transition from theory to practice is incredibly rewarding and has shown me how valuable these planning skills are.

So why do we plan in crisis management? From class and my own perspective, here are key reasons:

- To anticipate and prepare for risks.
- To facilitate rapid responses.
- To minimize chaos and be in control.
- To increase the likelihood of a positive outcome by establishing a structured path forward that takes into account the 6 R's.
- To mitigate uncertainty: knowing what needs to be done helps me think more rationally when considering potential risks and outcomes in specific scenarios.
- To stay motivated through a sense of accomplishment: celebrating milestones, big or small, brings a sense of success and motivation.

When we plan in a corporate setting, we equip ourselves to move at the speed required to protect an organization's reputation. In today's media environment, a timely response is essential.

As the oldest daughter in a family of four, I've always been a planner by nature. Growing up with two women in my household taught me that planning was essential to experience milestones like venturing to my first parties, discovering new travel destinations with my family, adopting our

fifth family member, Pascal (my companion for 11 years), and exploring new academic paths, from law school to communications and advertising.

This role has sharpened my organizational and planning skills over the years, but this class has broadened my understanding on a much larger scale. I now see how these skills can serve me professionally, helping me navigate complex situations in the communications field.

A plan isn't just a formula or a fixed list of steps; it's a flexible framework based on risk assessment, designed to adapt as situations change. It's not a one-size-fits-all solution but an approach that evolves to suit each circumstance; it can guide organizations in making choices aligned with their long-term goals. Without it, decisions can be more reactive, leading to missed opportunities or mistakes. Ultimately, planning is about facilitating success.

While a plan won't guarantee a positive outcome, it makes success far more likely. For communicators, having a plan is essential because we're responsible for guiding organizations along the reputational road.