

Title of the course:	Crisis Communications		
Course ID:	VE-KMT002		
Level of education:	Regular & Erasmus	Academic semester:	Fall
Professor's name:	Dr. Palotás Henriette	Academic title:	
Hours per semester:	30	Credits:	4
Exam:		Pre-requisites:	

Aims of the course

Understand and provide practical examples of what a crisis situation means. How different crisis situations are handled at world/country level, within different companies and at individual/personal level. In crisis situations, why proper, effective and calm communication is important. Responsibilities and roles in crisis communication. This course will give an overview of the nature of crisis situations, of their stages of development, of the possibilities to prepare for crisis and to handle them optimally. We will learn more about how to develop crisis communication plans and strategies and through case studies and role playing there will be a possibility to exercise some effective communication tools.

Every organisation needs to plan how to communicate internally and externally in the event of a crisis. In this course we walk you through the process of preparing an organization to communicate with employees, customers, suppliers, media and the public at large. We will cover identifying audiences, assembling a crisis response team, crafting an initial statement and evaluating their response once the crisis has passed.

Learning objectives

- Define crisis.
- Explain how to respond quickly and confidently.
- Identify different audiences in crisis.
- Assess technical and physical resources.
- Describe how to establish a chain of command.
- Develop hold statements.
- Identify how to avoid common crisis response mistakes.
- Review your crisis communication response.

Content of the course:

1. **Lesson:** Crisis communication is the right way to deal with critical situations: Introduction and course overview. Define crisis, basic definitions. What do crisis situations mean? Types of the crisis. When can we talk about crisis situations? The stages of crisis situations and their recognition.
2. **Lesson:** All about the effective communication- tools of effective communication. Communication styles. Removing barriers to communication. Method of communication. Sensory communication. Impact of verbal and non-verbal communication.
3. **Lesson:** Crisis management- the process. How to prepare for possible crisis situations? What is a Crisis Management Plan? Responsibilities and roles in crisis situations.
4. **Lesson:** Why is crisis communication important? How to respond quickly and confidently? What is a Crisis Communication Plan? How does a crisis affect the business? Practical examples- case studies.
5. **Lesson:** Internal crisis communication. How should we communicate with employees during a crisis? How should we plan the Internal Crisis communication? Practical examples- case studies.
6. **Lesson:** Preparation for possible crisis situations I. The Communication Audit (1)- How to handle crisis situations? How to communicate in crisis situations? Respond quickly and confidently. Developing statements. Apologizing during the crisis. Avoid common crisis response mistakes. Shaping Crisis Communication messages.

7. **Lesson:** Preparation for a possible crisis situation II. The Communication Audit (2)- The Crisis Communication Handbook. Crisis communication plans and strategies. Practical example- Case study through an organisation. Incident Management system. Process of Incident Management.
8. **Lesson:** Company Brand- what does it mean? Company reputation- what are the differences Brand vs. Reputation? Why it is important to have a strong brand? How do we can protect our company's Reputation/Brand? How crisis situations can have a potentially major effect on the business, its brand and reputation?
9. **Lesson:** Crisis at individual level- what does it mean? Types of crisis situations. Crisis situations at individual level- practical examples. Stress management. Crisis intervention. Crisis counselling.
10. **Lesson:** Case studies/ Practical examples: how do the organizations/ companies handle crisis situations. Group work- let's practice what we have learnt so far!
11. **Lesson:** Crisis communication and the media. The role of social media in crisis communication. What role does the social media play in crisis communication plan? Tips for communicating on social media in crisis or emergency situations. Social media crisis communication examples.
12. **Lesson:** Crisis management- crisis termination. Post crisis and decision. Reviewing the crisis response. Realising a post-crisis assessment. Crisis as opportunity- crisis mindset. Crisis Leadership. Business/ Crisis recovery- Learning points. What should we do after crisis situations?
13. **Lesson:** Summary of what we have learnt during the course. Further practical examples of recent crisis situations and communication issues. Final exam.

Requirements and assessment

Final test	40%
Case study assignment	40%
Class participation	20%

Marks will be calculated as the combination of class participation, case study assignment and test result. Students will get their marks after submitting the written exam and the test.

1) FINALTEST. At the end of the semester there will be a test about the content of the lessons with multi-choice questions and some short essay questions. Students may get one score for each right answer and 1-5 score in case of each short essay question. – 40%

2) CASE STUDY ASSIGNMENTS. Students are required to write one case study about a major international or Hungarian business crisis till the end of the semester. The teacher will help the students to choose a case if they need. The recommended length of a case study is max. 5-6 pages. We do expect to publish the correct use of articles and reference materials. - 40%

3) CLASS PARTICIPATION. The lessons of the Crisis Communication course are to a large extent based on discussions, highlighting a topic from different points of view, debating on the pros and cons of a given solution related to Crisis Communication. This interactive style of teaching requires students to be present and actively participate in the discussions, exercises and role plays. - 20%

Readings

Recommended literature:

1. Jonathan Bernstein: Manager's Guide to Crisis Management, McGraw-Hill 2011
2. Steven Fink: Crisis Communication- The Definitive Guide to Managing the Message, McGraw-Hill 2013
3. W. Edwards Deming (2018): Out of the Crisis
4. Bert Spector (2019): Constructing Crisis- Leaders, Crisis and Claims of Urgency
5. Richard K. James, Burl E. Gilliland (7th Edition, 2012): Crisis Intervention Strategies

Other sources:

1. LinkedIn Learning- Laura Bergells (Business communication expert): Crises communication presentation
2. Incident Management System- Basic course (Yusen Logistics Group)

3. Communicating effectively course (Yusen Logistics Group)
4. CRT (Crisis Response Team)- roles and responsibilities in case of a crisis situation-InterContinental Hotels Group
5. <https://hbr.org/topic/crisis-management> (Harvard Business Review)

