

2021

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

PROJECT 3
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Crisis Management Plan – Toyota

Emergency Crisis Management Plan

PR Objectives

- **Business/brand**

Recently, there has been an incident within the test driving period for the new hybrid car at the company. The braking system failed during the test drive at the Tokyo Motor Show on the prototype and this has proven to have given negative and bad press to both the company and the product itself.

The Tokyo Motor Show is the perfect opportunity to engage with people about the issue itself. It will show that the organization is in fact visible, up front and willing to answer any question about the issue. It will also provide the chance to give Toyota to move on from the incident and prove that all necessary precautions, health measures and product recovery modes have been taken. The best course of action is to speak and minimize the damage of the brand as quickly but thoroughly as possible. It is important that the public are reassured about the product and the future prospects of said product. The following objectives are crucial to ensure that the damage to the Toyota brand is limited, that the media can be kept fully up to date, in some instances recover the brand and enhance. There needs to be strategically placed opportunities to reinforce the brand and its power.

Below is an outline of the benefits:

- Recover the image of the brand, repair and eventually enhance.
- It is important to highlight that this is a setback and they regularly occur in all tests.
- The overall objective is to relieve the panic and the stress which has been created around the incident.
- Ensure the brand power recovers and alleviate all fears of the new product.

- Take full responsibility for the fault
- Inform the media regularly on the progress being made
- Educate the Toyota company on what is going on and how media works
- Speak to customers and stakeholders
- Help employees understand and reassure those who need it
- Show that it has been rectified, reassure it can never happen again.
- Provide support to employees and stakeholders who need it, showing this was a freak event.
- The tone needs to be calm to assure this doesn't impact other facets of the business.

Business impact: Toyota had been intent on launching this however it will need to be pushed back to first of all assess the damage and to then ensure that there is time to figure out what will be the impact in both the short term and the long term.

Media management

Toyota's management, intermediate and senior, must understand how the media works. As an experienced media operative, it can be explained to them through different documents and presentations which should be shown to all who require. Management and those throughout the company must understand that 'no comment' or the lack of information flow can lead to mortal results and that communication needs to lead from the top. A word from the top of the company and management needs to be sent out to the relevant media outlets, this is crucial as there is always a possibility for an off the record comment or through 'sources' which is likely to come from within the company on the condition of anonymity. The entire company must understand that there is a need for comment in the new media age. There will be an intensity and need for information. As the PR operative, I will advise, draft statements, brief on potential questions with answers and co-ordinate all the relevant news conferences, press briefings, interviews and internal communications including a situation room.

In every media engagement, it is imperative that the focus is on the positive and innovative aspects of the hybrid car itself. Toyota are the pioneers in this field and this is important to be front and centre. It should be central to the brand rebuild. They are the future of the world, the future of our company and it is important that this positive outlook forms the crucial part of our communications strategy. We have the opportunity to make it central and that should be the key message which comes out of the company at all briefings. This is to be communicated to all senior management and wider company the strategy.

Set up a crisis team

Due to the fact that we have prepared for this, it is important that the plan of creating a crisis team is now put into action. Who is required on the crisis team?

It is imperative that a Crisis Communications Team is established to begin with who will advise on each step along the PR plan. This will be chaired by myself with others from the in-house media team and wider members of the company. The in-house PR team will be key to that and will be the main drivers of this team. Further to that there will be the following:

- Doctor
- Production Manager
- Finance Manager
- HR Manager
- PR Manager/Consultant
- Safety Manager
- Transport Manager
- Other Facility Manager

Task list

- A checklist of what is required and what has been done to date.
- Contact details of key people – Senior Management contact, PR, Safety Officer
- Draft messages and metmos to those within the organisation
- People to call
- Nominate a spokesperson and brief them as to their role
- Make stakeholders aware of the situation and challenges which are faced
- Ensure an efficient notification and monitoring system

Action Plan.

It is important that there is a clear and rapid plan in place throughout the company. All must be aware in Toyota that this plan is to be followed and there can be no deviation. It is as follows:

- Collaborate all of the available information in chronological order
- All details must be collected and all must be truthful while respecting the privacy of all
- When the facts have been established, it is important to explain to everyone what has happened and carried through all stakeholders.
- A switchboard to be established to answer calls to the press department to dispel any questions. Always will be a comment and notes available. ‘No comment’ should never be an option.
- As the PR consultant, the statements will come from here regularly, a holding statement to buy time will be issued first.
- There will be regular updates should there be information and even just to prevent questions. A press conference may help and will allow information to be presented in real time and ensuring we are in full control.

- A constant flow of information combined with regular updates is required to ensure there is no questions and dispels with constant queries. Easier for the PR department to brief and continue to control the situation.
- As the situation improves, it is important that this new information and good news is passed on in a timely and efficient manner.
- At the end of the situation, emergency as such, then a final statement is to be issued to confirm that everything has been taken care of and is under control with a final note of when the launch is anticipated to take place.

Long-term Action Plan

- Collaborate with the PR Team at Toyota to implement a long term strategy
- Reassure the wider public and ensure people understand these issues will be in the past
- Focus on the good points, innovative, creative, visionary aspects of the company and product
- Go back to the 'Best Built Cars In The World' moniker, showing that the brand is trusted.
- PR editorials should be used intermittently to boost the profile of the company and the product.
- Sponsorship opportunities should be taken at every opportunity to show the organisation's commitment to the safety of and belief in electric cars.
- Show that the company operated to professional standards throughout all channels and points of the plan
- Provide evidence of further safety tests are carried out on each product and across the company to restore and maintain the confidence of the public, employees and potential customers.

Collaboration with in-house staff

Obviously working as a consultant this overall outline is just something which can be used as a guide however the intention is to implement the strategy with all various components with the in house PR group. The work will be shared with the consultancy and the in house PR specialists. Below is a table in which plans out what jobs will be undertaken between the two.

Task	Who?
Setting Out Objectives	Consultancy Team
Tokyo Motor Show	In house
Set Up Crisis Team	Consultancy Team
Press/Holding Statement	In House
Press Conference	In House
Task List	In House
Long Term Plan	Consultancy Team

The intention is to work closely with the in house media team to ensure that the best and most efficient crisis action plan is achieved and implemented. The implementation will need to be monitored and constantly pushed to ensure that the full impact is felt. This can be done with the help of the in house media team. This is important in the long and also the short term. As part of the plan, the consultancy firm will require 3 members of the staff, an office space to work with, a laptop and free reign to brief all members of staff when required. This plan can be achieved over a 3 month consultancy period where the plan will be implemented and monitored throughout the entire organization and all of the press platforms. For the services, the fees will be €8,500 and there will be a further €2,500 required for future PR campaigns to ensure that they reach their full potential.

Holding Statement

'Toyota are aware of an incident which occurred at the Tokyo Motor Show involving a prototype of the new hybrid car. This was during a test drive of the car at the show where there was an internal fault with the new car. This should not impact on our plans for the release of the car although we will be reinforcing our safety measures across the board to ensure all protocols are followed. There is an investigation ongoing into the circumstances surrounding the incident. All other operations of Toyota are fully intact and this is an isolated incident which has our full attention at the moment. We have prepared for a situation like this and our we have responded accordingly. Our first priority is the safety of those involved and there are currently emergency services attending the scene. We will provide support and help to all who need it at this time. We will be making no further comment at this time.'

There are a number of things to take into consideration:

- The company need to be up front and honest with everything
- They need to be accessible
- Need to build trust and confidence with the publics, the key stakeholders, the media and everyone within the company need to be behind this.
- It is important that the news is monitored and important that the employees can trust and believe what is happening
- Take notes from other organisations and adopt ideas which may work in the current issue.
- Be the sole information source
- Don't play down the facts , speak the truth.
- Monitor the news, be ready to react
- For the most part, be proactive not reactive.
- Keep in contact with all the relevant services and all of the emergency services, stakeholders, employees

- Protect the brand, limit the damage, be honest, reassure customers
- *It is important that as this is an evolving situation things can happen at pace. That generally means that updates could be more frequent and there should be a provision always for additional, ad hoc media updates.*

Marketing Mix

It is important for the marketing mix to be considered – 4 p's – to repair the organisation's brand.

Price - To ensure that the price is accessible and looks good for the consumer to protect the brand in the interim and repair the issues within the brand. It is to show that there is value to the product and the brand.

Product – Have a product which in this case is the electric car to show a commitment to safety and the carbon neutral and green future. This will connect with people and repair the brand should it be needed.

Promotion – The promotion this can be pushed is everywhere and it can be shown across all necessary and realistic channels. The Tokyo Motor Show is the ideal opportunity to push the product and how the brand itself can be recovered and repaired showing the organisation is safe and cares about the overall issues.

Place – It is important that the general public know that the product which is available can be bought across the globe, it is a global product and this is to protect and show the organization and its brand as worldwide with a global appeal.

Media Relations and Press Events

Holding Statement

'Toyota are aware of an incident which occurred at the e Motor Show involving a prototype of the new hybrid car. This was during a test drive of the car at the show where there was an internal fault with the new car. This should not impact on our plans for the release of the car although the company will be reinforcing our safety measures across the board to ensure all protocols are followed. There is an investigation ongoing into the circumstances surrounding the incident. All other operations of Toyota are fully intact and this is an isolated incident which has our full attention at the moment. Toyota have prepared for a situation like this and the team have responded accordingly. Our first priority is the safety of those involved and there are currently emergency services attending the scene. Toyota will provide support and help to all who need it at this time. There will be further updates in due course. Toyota will be making no further comment at this time.'

Roles and responsibilities for press officer of Toyota

- Main contact for the press for all queries relation to every aspect of the company
- Prepare press releases
- Organise press conferences
- Liaise and deal with the press on a daily basis
- Build and maintain excellent relationship with the press
- Monitor the press coverage of each product and venture of Toyota
- Develop and action PR plans to promote and increase the Toyota brand
- Regularly evaluate the Toyota brand and be innovative in new ways to connect with the press
- Host regular press events and launch events to remain engaged with the press about Toyota
- Write and constantly edit relevant press kits
- Be proactive in terms of news and potential news stories which would benefit the brand
- Protect and enhance the Toyota brand at every opportunity
- Respond to all press queries in a prompt and efficient manner
- Be able to identify a news story which will promote the brand and act on it
- Be innovative and decide on new forms of media which will benefit the brand
- Initiate the media coverage for all aspects of the company
- Develop and ensure that the crisis management plan is put into action when required

- Supply a regular stream of information to the media to ensure that the brand is in the media
- Be reliable and consistent in the approach to the media
- Be accessible and facilitate the coverage and access to the press when they need it
- Provide accurate information to the press on all queries and maintain updated libraries of important details as they are needed
- Build database of media contacts
- Engage and give media training to all members of staff in the company
- Actively try to be persuasive, be proactive and generate as much goodwill with the press at every opportunity

Press Conference

There will be a press conference held at the Toyota HQ at 5 p.m.

It is important that we have defined the message beforehand for the press conference. That is the key to this and it is to ensure that we all are on the same page in terms of what we are saying and what we are trying to say. The invites have been issued to those who should be there and those who are interested. The details such as the venue, time and schedule of the press conference.

A schedule has been issued to all who will be attending from Toyota. This has also been issued on the invites which have been sent out to the local, national and international press. Those who wish to attend have been asked to respond confirming their attendance before 3 p.m. today. Those who are not on the list will not be admitted to the press conference.

We are holding it within the Toyota HQ media room as it is a ready made facility which is fully equipped with all of the necessary apparatus such as microphones, table, chairs, AV and hospitality. There will be a platform for cameras should this attract television attention and anyone who wishes, there will be access to the audiovisual facilities. Ensure that there are some light refreshments – tea, coffee, biscuits and sandwiches – on site for those who will be in attendance.

There will be brief media training with those who are to face the media – the CEO of Toyota – and I will be the one undertaking this. Briefing the CEO on the type of questions that may be asked and the type of answer which will need to be given to ensure both protection of the situation and also

divulging enough details to allow the press to do their own job and paint the situation in a favourable light to the company.

As part of the press officer's role, it is imperative that the staff are media trained. For the press conference staff will be fully informed of the context of the event and have rehearsed answers to potential questions. Each person involved in the press conference will have full knowledge of the kinds of questions that will be asked by the press in attendance as well as the answers that they will be expected to give.

Fifteen minutes before the press conference, a copy of the statement will be issued to those who are in attendance and via press release. This will then be read out by the CEO at the press conference. Also at this point, a press kit will be distributed both via email to the press and also issued to those in attendance by the staff on the ground to ensure that the press have a hard copy. Within the press kit, there will be a copy of the holding statement, the press release that will be read out, background of Toyota, the plan for the Hybrid car, biographies of those in prominent positions in Toyota, including the CEO and staff that will be at the press event, the contact details of the press officer and Toyota branded pens and paper.

On the topic of branding, the press conference will be kitted out in full Toyota branding. This means a backdrop with Toyota behind the table and chairs of the press conference. On the backdrop, there will be the Toyota logos emblazoned all across it, with the social media logos and handles to Toyota. 'www.toyota.com' also across the bottom. On the table, there will be Toyota branded water and glasses in front of each seat. On the front of the table there will be a large Toyota logo with the website address on a board with the Toyota logo across each microphone on the table. There will be Toyota logos on all the seats with those in attendance wearing Toyota branded clothes such as blazers or jackets. Finally on the refreshments, there will be branded cups for those using those using them and across the carpet/floor within the room.

As the press arrive, it is important that they are greeted and welcome into the event. This can be accompanied by a press kit about Toyota and a background on the new Hybrid car should it be deemed appropriate by the hierarchy.

To begin the press conference, I will greet and open the press conference by introducing the CEO and giving a brief background as to why we are all gathered. I will explain the schedule such as whether questions will be asked and then will hand over to the CEO to read out the prepared statement. Following this, I will manage the floor and take the questions in the order such as they are required. There will be a time limit on the press conference such as 10-15 minutes before it closes.

I will then cease the press conference, usher the CEO out of the room and then brief the press in attendance on any questions that they may have and should they require any further detail on some particular issues.

Be welcoming and be friendly. Be open and transparent to the press, show that we are looking to help and generate goodwill. When the press are leaving, ensure that they are thanked for their time and let them know that there will be a follow up press statement and possible event to go along with it.

Monitor the response across all forms of media – online, papers, television, social media and all forms of print media.

Press Statement

Good evening,

We wish to make you aware that this afternoon an incident occurred involving the new Hybrid Car which we have been testing. This is an ongoing situation and at the moment we are assessing. The circumstances of the incident itself are unclear at this time. As soon as the incident happened, we took all the necessary precautions, notified the local authorities and the emergency services. We

ordered that the site be closed off from the outside to ensure the best conditions were available to those on the ground.

The driver is being cared for by the medical authorities and we will provide an update on his condition as soon as we are in a position to do so. There was no others injured on site however some are suffering from the shock of the event and we are committed to and offering full support to all those who need it at this time.

The safety measures on the day were carried out to the best of their ability and this is something which has been unexpected. At the moment, it appears that there was a defect within the system and this will be confirmed in due course. There is a full investigation ongoing into the circumstances as to how this has happened and what the next steps will be. We will wait for the full report on that investigation and implement the recommendations which comes from the report. The report will be communicated to the public at a suitable time.

The Hybrid car is also being assessed at present and this will be a key component of the investigation. We will be taking on board fully the information from the investigation and implementing those as we see fit.

At the moment, there are no plans to postpone the launch. We will be doing our best to keep that on track however this will be reviewed as we move closer to the event. The safety and welfare of our test drivers and staff is of paramount concern to us now and going forward.

We wish to take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to produce the best product we can and that we are fully committed to our customers and staff. We will work together as a company and a community to ensure that all the available support, treatment and any other requirement for those within the Toyota group is provided and available should they so need it.

I hope all has been answered within the statement however if anyone has any questions please ask now.