



**HOW TO GUIDE:
SCENARIO PLANNING &
RISK ASSESSMENT
DURING THE
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**



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SCENARIO PLANNING & RISK ASSESSMENT DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic is presenting businesses with an ever-evolving range of scenarios, many of which they may never have encountered before. Below, we outline some simple steps you can take to identify your organisation's highest risk scenarios and get the right plan in place for dealing with them.

- 1. Assess your risks.** The first step is to identify the reputational threats to your organisation presented by different coronavirus-related scenarios. This means conducting regular and detailed risk assessments. How would you be impacted if your supply chain is disrupted? What will happen if you get a confirmed case of Covid-19 among your employees or an outbreak in a community where you operate? Might you need new ways to get your products to customers? Asking yourself these questions – and more – can help you stay ahead of the crisis and be ready to deal with issues smoothly, efficiently and sensitively as they occur.
- 2. Establish a core crisis team.** While the impact of the coronavirus will no doubt be felt across your entire organisation, we recommend you establish a core crisis team tasked with identifying and planning for specific ways in which that impact may play out. In order to retain a holistic view of the organisation, its challenges and its people, this core team should be cross-functional, including representatives from senior leadership, communications, HR, legal, IT, finance and sales/marketing. They should also be empowered to take decisive action when preparing for or managing different scenarios.
- 3. Create a risk matrix.** A risk matrix is a great way to track and rank different scenarios, according to the likelihood of them occurring and the potential negative impact they may have on your organisation. The risks that score highest on this matrix should be prioritised for scenario and response planning.
- 4. Allocate clear roles and responsibilities.** Who is monitoring social media for announcements from the medical community or analysing conversation among industry peers and the general public? Who are your go-to media spokespeople? Who is leading on employee and customer communications? Who should liaise with public health officials in the event of your organisation or local area being affected by a coronavirus outbreak? A key part of scenario planning, especially in an ever-evolving situation like this, is knowing in advance the key roles you require and agreeing the best people for the job.
- 5. Plan what you are going to say and to whom.** From customers and suppliers to employees, investors and local government officials, it is likely that your different stakeholders will require different information when coronavirus-related scenarios arise. Try to prepare messages for high-

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risk scenarios in advance – bearing in mind you will almost certainly need to edit and nuance them according to the specific situation. You should also determine which messages go to which stakeholder group, what internal and external platforms you will use to reach them and who in your organisation will deliver the information.