



# STOP, DROP, AND MONITOR

A GUIDE TO EFFECTIVELY USING  
MEDIA MONITORING DURING A CRISIS

Agility | PR  
Solutions





When a crisis arises, **the number of unknowns can be dizzying**. Just as it's essential to control the narrative by preparing a timely and thoughtful response, it's equally essential for communicators to listen during this high-stress time.

Not only does media monitoring during a crisis help you formulate your response to the incident, it also helps you grow as a brand and turn whatever crisis you're facing into an opportunity to better serve your audience.

To successfully weather a crisis, your brand needs to be agile, as does your media monitoring. Check out the five tips below on how to stay nimble and informed:

## ■ ■ ■ 1. GET ALL THE FACTS ■ ■ ■

Collecting all relevant facts is critical at the beginning of—and throughout—a crisis. Quickly assessing what's happened so far will help with your initial response and provide important direction on how to best monitor the unfolding crisis. We recommend taking the following steps to make sure you're fully in the know.

### MEET WITH ALL INVOLVED PARTIES

Work with the affected departments in your organization. Who has first-hand knowledge of the crisis? What teams are directly impacted by it? Everyone should have a seat at the table (for this initial stage at least). Relevant individuals could include the C-suite, company spokespeople, department heads, partner or client liaisons, or any others you think should be involved.

Once you've determined who the relevant parties are, bring them together with the communications team to discuss what has occurred so far and the facts that are being reported in the media (if it's already been picked up). Pay close attention to the specific language the various parties use to see if you need to add any new terms to your media monitoring parameters.

Set up regular meetings with those who have intimate knowledge related to the crisis to ensure you're staying on top of all pertinent details and that your media monitoring keywords are always up to date.

## SEEK OUT THE UNKNOWNNS

As you talk with the involved parties, try to uncover any possible unknowns. It's crucial to ask if there is anything that the public or media is currently unaware of that might come to light and detrimentally impact your reputation. Now's not the time to be shy.

If there are applicable facts which are not yet public knowledge, add them as additional keywords in your media monitoring tool. This information will also be key in formulating your response to the crisis and post-crisis actions.



## BE AWARE OF MISINFORMATION

As media coverage is published on the issue at hand, it's important to keep an eye out for misinformation or misinterpretation of the facts surrounding the crisis. This is especially true on social media, which has a reputation for disseminating misinformation the most.

It's important to track untrue versions of your brand's story as closely as factual ones, so be sure to include additional keywords originating from misinformation in your media monitoring searches.

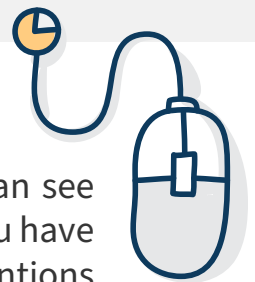
## 2. REVISIT YOUR SETUP



When you're in the thick of a crisis it can be a challenge to keep your head above water. Your media monitoring tool will be a big help, especially if you took the time to set up things correctly pre-crisis. Making regular tweaks to your media monitoring searches as you learn more about the situation will enhance your tracking capabilities.

## SEPARATE STORY ANGLES

By setting up separate monitoring topics for distinct angles of the crisis, you can see which topics are picking up steam and which are slowing down. For example, if you have a partner involved in the crisis you may want to separate the coverage that mentions them from the coverage that does not.



This approach will help with reporting and setting real-time notifications for only the most essential media mentions.

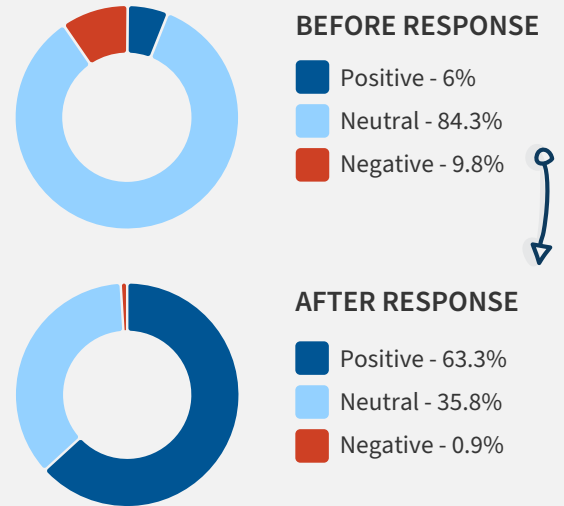
## ORGANIZE YOUR COVERAGE

Your crisis team will be more efficient if you have agreed upon practices for organizing your searches and media mentions. Use naming and tagging conventions to clearly label what you're tracking. This practice will also help with tracking storylines, creating PR reports, and compiling media briefings for stakeholders.

### MONITOR POST-RESPONSE COVERAGE

By tracking media coverage over time and the sentiment, you can quickly see the media's and the public's reactions and perceptions of your crisis response. This will help evaluate the effectiveness of your response and inform future statements made by your brand.

Keep a close eye out for any coverage that specifically mentions your response and don't forget to include social media.



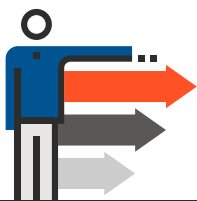
## REMOVE KEYWORDS SPARINGLY

As a crisis begins to wind down, you may be tempted to cancel some of your media monitoring alerts or remove certain keywords from your searches. We recommend doing this sparingly, as you never know when a crisis-related topic may pop up again.

### ... 3. PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO SOCIAL ...

It's well-known that social media can make news of a crisis spread like wildfire, but it can also be the point of origin. Whether it's an unflattering hashtag or a video shared on Twitter, it's important to be aware of how quickly a crisis can unfold when the social media platform's algorithm boosts the visibility of a story.

As a preventative measure, we recommend regularly updating your social media keywords and dedicating a team member to watching the coverage that comes in. **This will be critical in detecting the early signs of a crisis.**



**ON THE NEXT PAGE, YOU'LL FIND SOME SPECIFIC TIPS IF THE CRISIS HAS ALREADY TAKEN OFF ON SOCIAL:**



## ADJUST SEARCHES REGULARLY

Keep a close eye on the terms and hashtags journalists and influencers use in the posts discussing or mentioning your brand's crisis. If they're using terms not already in your social media monitoring parameters, adjust your searches to include them.



## REVIEW POSTS

What your audience posts about a crisis offers a glimpse into their values. Diligently reviewing these posts presents an opportunity to learn more about them and their thoughts on your brand's handling of the situation. Afterwards, you can apply your learnings to improve as a brand post-crisis.

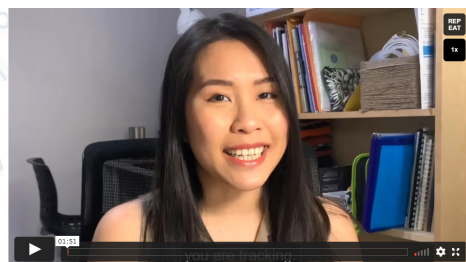
You can also pick out specific language your audience is using to formulate your response. There's a good chance that someone out there has articulately communicated their thoughts. Your brand should keep those in mind when planning messaging points and reactionary steps.



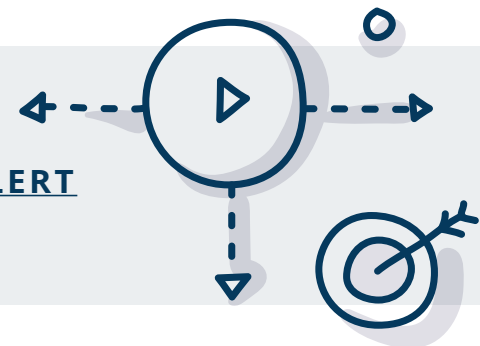
## USE AUTOMATED ALERTS

We recommend using automated alerts for social media mentions of your brand to quickly pick out new and potentially harmful references. Real-time alerts also help inform you of any spikes in volume of mentions, which is a potential sign of trouble.

Keep close track of the sentiment of posts. This can provide insight on how your brand is being perceived by the public.



## VIDEO: SETTING UP A COVERAGE ALERT FOR CRISIS DETECTION



## 4. TRACK JOURNALISTS COVERING THE CRISIS

One area where a PR crisis can have a silver lining is media relations. Monitoring the journalists covering the story may provide you opportunities to control the narrative. Reach out to them to offer your brand's statement and exclusives with spokespeople. This action may also result in the building of relationships with new media contacts who may continue to cover you long after the crisis is over.

### KEEP TABS ON KEY REPORTERS AND OUTLETS

Consult with your comms team to create a list of journalists and publications that your brand considers to be top tier. Then set up automated alerts for this list so you're immediately notified when they publish something new about your brand.



### CONSIDER JOURNALISTS AS PARTNERS

While relationships with the media can become contentious during a crisis, it's highly advised to remain calm—and make sure your spokespeople have the media training to do the same.

When your media monitoring tool catches unflattering stories, be sure to alert other crisis stakeholders before they see the article on their own. This gives you the opportunity to remind them that even if a journalist or outlet has published a negative story about your brand, it doesn't mean that they aren't willing to hear your side of the story. Be honest, cooperative and lead with the facts when dealing with the media during a crisis.

### REACH OUT

If your monitoring tool has built-in outreach capabilities, make use of it. Keep a list of anyone who has written about your brand and send them updates regarding the crisis—or better yet, reach out with a response. In some cases, it may be better to proactively and personally reach out to journalists.

You may want to consider a collaboration with key social media influencers in your industry. If you're able to have a conversation with them about the crisis they may offer their own insight into what you can do to recover and better serve your audience.






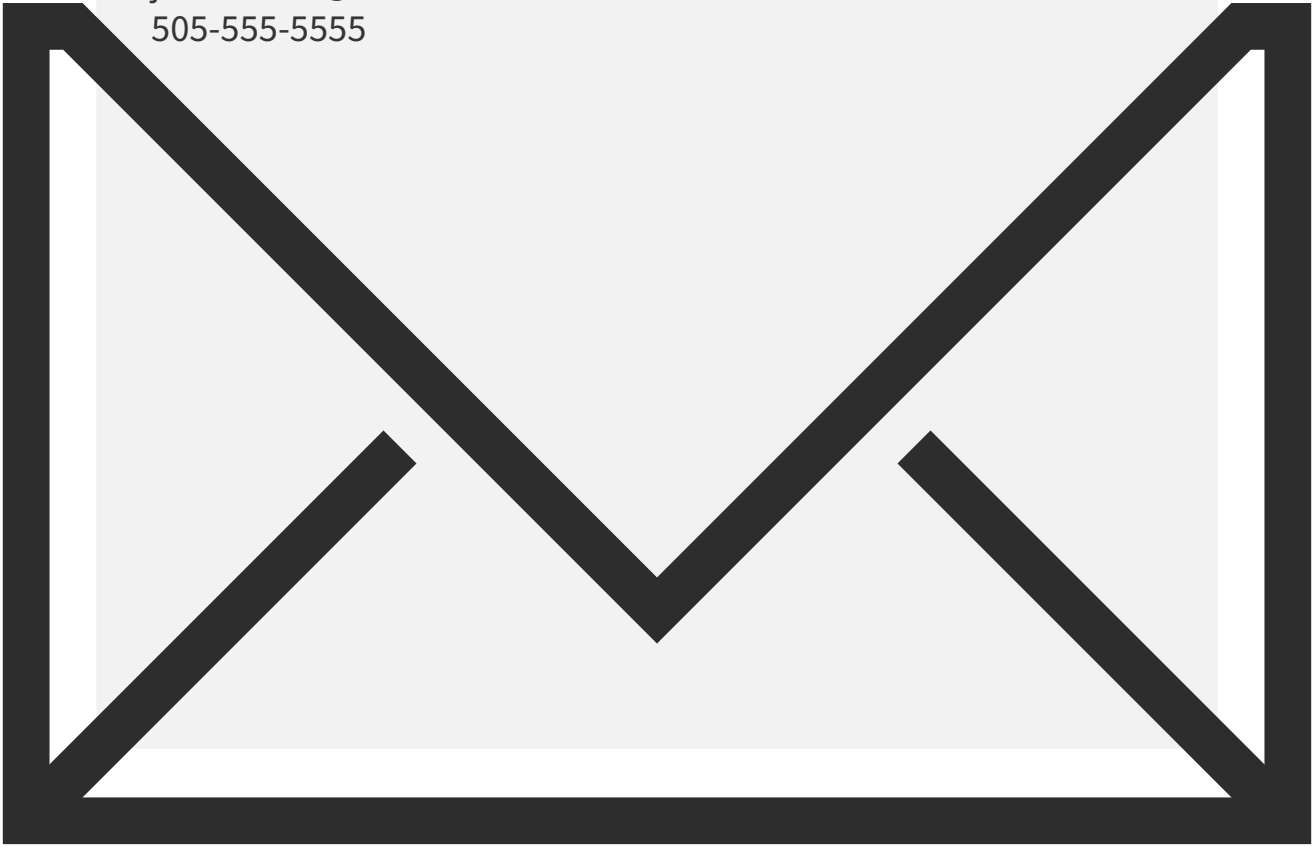
**HI [INSERT NAME],**

I saw your recent piece in INSERT OUTLET NAME about Education Bee's recent product recall. Would you be interested in an exclusive interview with our CEO as a follow-up to the story?

Thanks,

**Jane Smith**

Manager, PR  
Education Bee  
jane.smith@educationbee.com  
505-555-5555





## 5. TRACK OTHER PLAYERS' RESPONSES

There's a good chance you aren't in this crisis alone. There may be other parties involved that are not directly accessible to you or your team, such as a competitor or a former client. If you are unable to work directly with an involved party, it's critical to track their media coverage.

### ANALYZE THEIR RESPONSES

We highly recommend closely analyzing the responses of others involved in the crisis. This provides an opportunity to learn more about the inner workings of your competitors or other industry players. Look at their response times and the types of messages they are sending—are they personal, honest, and timely? Discuss their responses with your crisis team—how you could improve upon their messaging or actions? This useful discussion could inform your own methods.

### TRACK NON-CRISIS ACTIVITIES

Aside from monitoring their crisis-related activities, also keep tabs on what else they do during this time. Closely follow their social media by setting up alerts for anything they may be sharing. This will give you a glimpse into how and when they are returning to business as usual.

### GET THE FULL PICTURE

Ensure that you aren't missing any crucial coverage of these parties by monitoring them as closely as you do your own brand. Monitor more than just their company name and track their hashtags, spokespeople, and products for a comprehensive picture.



If you don't already have a formal monitoring program in place, keep in mind that it's never too late to begin. [A top-rated media monitoring solution](#), backed by an incredible support team, is a powerful tool to help you combat your next crisis.