



## Marketer's Guide to Media Response Planning

A guide to developing a framework for how and when your business shows up in key moments

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by **ovative**group



## Do you have a Media Response Plan?

A guide to developing a framework for how and when your business shows up in key moments.

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Each day, marketers are faced with decisions on how their brand should show up to consumers in key moments - from shifts in social sentiment to global crises. The stakes are higher than ever before as marketers navigate how and when to place, pause, or amplify media, all while balancing consumers' evolving sentiment.

Every marketer should have a **Media Response Plan** that outlines both proactive and reactive strategies for making sure their brand is showing up as desired in key moments.

Marketers have had a year of challenges like never before in strategically marketing and reaching their target audiences. A global pandemic, national and global lockdowns, and periods of social unrest have forced marketers to pause and ask their teams:

- *“How is our brand showing up in these key moments?”*
- *“What do our actions in a key moment signal to our consumers about our brand? To our employees and stakeholders?”*
- *“What causes are we aligning with (or not aligning with)?”*
- *“What can we do to live our brand values through our marketing?”*
- *“Can our brand participate in an authentic way?”*

In key brand moments, marketers must act quickly with media decisioning to best position their brand. This is where a Media Response Plan can prove most effective. By outlining your framework, and proactive and reactive planning steps ahead of time, you will be able to respond to varying levels of crises efficiently and with peace of mind.

This guide will walk you through the necessary steps to **1)** build a proactive Media Response Plan and **2)** react in the moment with confidence and efficiency. Plus, we have included a downloadable template for you to use in creating your own response plan.

Contact us to get ready for what's next!





# What Will This Guide Cover?

In our experience, while majority of brands have a crisis management team and framework dedicated to handle key PR moments, a small percentage of brands have a proactive Media Response Plan. Brands who have this type of proactive plan are far more effective in making decisions in the moment. Here are the actions we recommend you take to develop your Media Response Plan and in turn, make your brand more effective at responding to key moments in a timely and productive way.

## Tips For Building Your Media Response Plan

### **TIP #1**

Develop a framework that defines the potential brand moments and proposed media actions to take

### **TIP #2**

Organize a cross-functional response team to review and align with on the framework

### **TIP #3**

Develop a scenario calculator to estimate the long-term and YoY business impact

## Steps For Reacting in Key Brand Moments

### **STEP #1**

Alert the cross-functional response team

### **STEP #2**

Assess the situation using your framework

### **STEP #3**

Take action and kick-off your communication tree

### **STEP #4**

Measure, reflect, and adjust plan as needed



# Tips for Building Your Plan

## Tip #1: Develop a framework that defines the potential brand moments and proposed media actions to take

**Why?** Having a framework that defines potential brand moments and proposed media actions helps marketers make in the moment decisions to protect or amplify their brand.

### What to Include?

- Example tiered scenarios
  - Consider levels of crises from low impact to significant impact
- Impact on business operations, employees, and customers
  - Ask questions such as, “How will this impact our reputation? Will it impact employment? Revenue? The health and longevity of our brand?”
- What is most important to your brand in each moment
  - Consider which brand values and sentiment you want to convey to internal and external stakeholders when responding to the situation at hand
- Recommended media actions
  - Should you pause all media or does the situation call for a less drastic measure like monitoring media activity or shifting messaging?
- Who is the internal approver
  - Does this plan require approval and input from executive leadership, or can it be approved and managed by mid-level leadership?

Level	Description	Business Impact	Employee Impact	What Matters to Brand	Media Action	Approver
Level 1	Highest level of crisis that significantly impacts customers, partners, employees, and business operations. <i>Examples: Natural Disaster (Hurricane Harvey, CA Wildfires), Executive Misconduct, Product Recall, National Social Unrest Moment, National Pandemic</i>	High	High	Brand Values and Reputation  Examples: Genuine, Engaged	Pause all paid media, re-asses twice daily based on sentiment  Update website with relevant language on impact on business operations (store closures, shipping delays, etc.)	CMO
Level 2	Moderate risk/impact customers, employees, and business operations. Isolated to specific regions, but not widespread. <i>Examples: Regional Outbreak, Regional Changes in Policy, Regional Social Unrest</i>	Medium	Medium - High	Clear Communication on Business Operations	Monitor media activity but likely do not pause, shifting messaging to be relevant to consumers in the situation  Update website with relevant language on impact on business operations (store closures, shipping delays, etc.)	Director of Marketing
Level 3	Some impact to employees and customers, but no major impact on business operations. <i>Examples: Specific Causes or Caused-Based Holidays, Local Social Unrest, Local Natural Disaster</i>	Low	Low - Med	Alignment of Brand with Social Cause	Monitor media activity and proactively adjust messaging to align to causes that matter to the brand	Director of Marketing, Social and Media Team Leaders

[Download](#) The Template



# Tips for Building Your Plan

## Tip #2: Review and align with a cross-functional response team

**Why?** Getting buy-in on example scenarios will help marketers move quickly in the moment. Media response is just one component of the marketing strategy and should be considered in coordination with PR and internal communication plans.

### **What to include?**

- Organize a cross-functional response team empowered to make decisions and understand implications for other internal and external communication plans, considering members from:
  - Organic Social and Paid Media
  - Public Relations and Brand Relations
  - DE&I
  - Ecommerce
  - Stores
  - Finance
  - Functional BU Representatives
- Agree on the framework and designated approver for each scenario level, defining key causes and moments to be aligned to
- Setup alerts with national and local news outlets and on social listening tools to notify the team
- Define how quickly the response team will react in the moment and provide media recommendations to the organization based on framework
- Determine the flow of communication outside of the response team

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## Tip #3 Build a scenario calculator to estimate business impact

**Why?** Creating a scenario calculator will help leadership and teams in the moment understand how pauses or pull backs in media will impact the bottom line of the business.

### **What to include?**

- Financial assumptions on impact to business at go-dark or reduced media spend levels in above scenarios built in partnership with finance



# Steps to Take in the Moment

## Step #1: Alert The Response Team

- Trigger the response team to take action based on changes in consumer sentiment, brand perception, national or local news
- Error on the side of alerting and allow the response team to recommend media action

## Step #2: Assess The Situation Using Your Framework

- The response team should utilize the framework to assess and assign levels of severity and recommend media action
- Gather information on social media volume and sentiment, customer inquiries, impact to employees, customers, and business operations
- Example questions to ask during this step:
  - *What happened?*
  - *Where and when?*
  - *What was the impact on employees and customers?*
  - *What is the impact/likely impact to business operations?*
  - *Is there/still immediate danger?*
  - *Is the situation still evolving?*
  - *Would responding to this situation greatly impact our reputation?*
  - *Is this a cause we want to align ourselves with?*
  - *Have we done our research?*
  - *What is the reaction and/or sentiment from competitors in our industry?*

## Step #3: Take Action

- Seek approval and execute the actions aligned upon in the framework
- Kick off the communication tree with internal and external stakeholders
- Monitor the situation for ongoing changes requiring media adjustment

## Step #4: Measure and Reflect

- Measure the impact of the event and media decision – include both traditional business metrics as well as social sentiment metrics
- Keep a log of emergencies that are likely to effect YoY comps when looking in future years
- Discuss opportunities to improve response time and decisioning in the future
- Adjust response framework or team as needed



## What Marketers Should Do

By following these planning tips and in the moment steps, you can ensure your brand is showing up as desired in key brand moments. Marketers should always be cautious of a set it and forget it mindset, and instead consistently review media response plans to ensure alignment to consumer sentiment. While key brand moments look different based on your industry, size, and consumers, the key to helping your marketing team navigate in the moment is as simple as having a plan.

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