



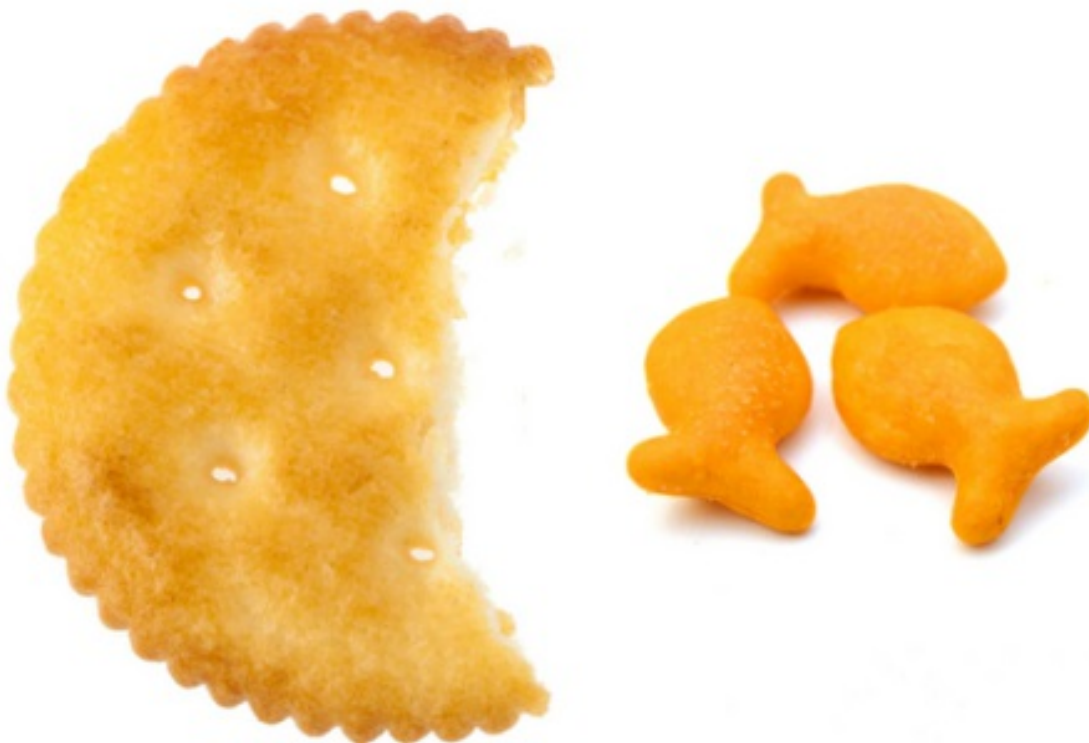
Crisis Management

A Crisis Communication Process Map for Product Recalls, or for Any Old Crisis



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By [Steve Goldstein](#)



It hasn't been a good week so far for cracker makers and food phobia sufferers. Two snack food giants, Mondelez Global and Campbell Soup subsidiary Pepperidge Farm, have recalled iconic cracker products because a whey powder supplier has notified them that its ingredient may be tainted by Salmonella, which can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and fever, among other symptoms.

Mondelez recalled several Ritz cracker sandwich products, while Pepperidge Farm recalled four varieties of Goldfish crackers. The recalls were precautionary; at the time of the recalls no cases of Salmonella related to the snack products had been reported.

Mondelez and Pepperidge Farm used Twitter to relay information about the recalls, but visits to the company sites for both corporate entities revealed a stark difference between the two. Mondelez's home page makes no mention of the Ritz recalls; the same goes for the company's online newsroom. There's a separate site for the Ritz crackers brand; a short alert about the recall linking to a press release runs in tiny text at the top of the Ritz home page.

Pepperidge Farm's home page features a large vertical box with this text in a large point size: "Voluntary Goldfish Crackers Product Recall Information."

Easy access to information about potentially tainted consumable products should come first, but covering all the bases is usually a challenge in a crisis for brands both large and small. Product recalls, in particular, can be immensely complicated as a communications team must work internally with its legal department, marketing team, C-suite, product engineers and sales department, and externally with retailers, consumers, health officials, the media

and social media users.

This is where a crisis map comes in handy, to put it lightly. And we're talking about a real document, not a bulleted list of crisis management concepts. Writing specifically about product recalls in PR News' [Crisis Management Guidebook](#), Stanton Communications CEO Peter Stanton says that "a crisis map brings structure into an otherwise chaotic situation, allowing [a] team to engage their critical thinking skills—an all-important element of crisis communications."

CRISIS COMMUNICATION PROCESS MAP

This process map is intended as a guide. Every situation will vary and communication must be adjusted accordingly.
**Communication must adhere to all applicable industry, geographic, and legal/regulatory requirements.*

ADOPT A PRINCIPLED APPROACH CONSISTENT WITH COMPANY CORE VALUES

Integrity

Excellence

Respect

Humility

Generosity

1

ASSESS SITUATION

The crisis may be immediate or probable. Strategic communication may influence the potential impact of the issue on the brand reputation. Knowledgeable associates determine whether situation warrants crisis response.

DOES IT MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA?

An Event that Threatens Company's Brands and Reputation Internally and/or Externally
 AND
 Interferes with Normal Business Routine and Creates Uncertainty

2

FORM ISSUE CORE TEAM

BUSINESS ASSOCIATES: Focus on actions to remedy the crisis;
COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATES: Collaborate with Business Associates with a focus on internal & external messaging & outreach.

COMMUNICATION MEMBERS

BUSINESS MEMBERS

A

AGREE ON ROLES

A

*EXAMPLE OF POSSIBLE TEAM MEMBERS



C-SUITE
COMMUNICATION



BUSINESS /
DIVISION



LEGAL /
REGULATORY



PRODUCT
SPECIALIST



CUSTOMER
FACING

B

AGREE ON PROTOCOL

B

Identify Waterline Consultants
 Identify Stakeholders
 Adopt Decision Making Model

C

MESSAGE APPROVAL

C

Timely
 Technically Accurate
 Legal/Regulatory Approval
 Communication Consistency (Positioning, Tone, Aligns with Previous Messaging)

A brand doesn't have to be a cracker maker to be vulnerable to a crisis and fall prey to frenzy and chaos when things go terribly wrong. Print out this crisis plan, make copies, pass it around and discuss it before you get that fateful email from your version of a whey powder supplier.

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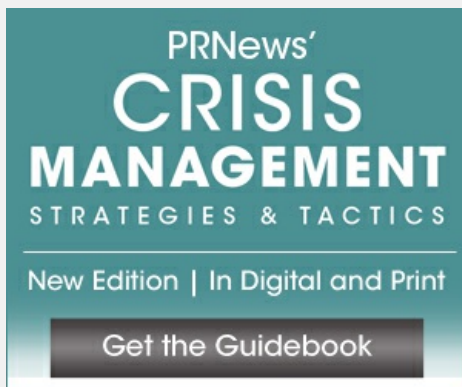
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