

Animal Nutrition Association of Canada

Crisis Communication

Plan and Toolkit

October 2015



Table of Contents

Purpose of the Crisis Communication Plan.....	2
Principles of Crisis Communication.....	2
ANAC Crisis Communication Policy.....	4
ANAC Crisis Communication Checklist Overview	5
Detailed Crisis Communication Plan	7
Appendix 1: Preparing for a Crisis Before it Happens.....	9
Appendix 2: Decision Tree – Potential Actions and Guiding Considerations	10
Appendix 3: Lessons Learned from Other Industry Crisis Communications	11
References	17

Purpose of the Crisis Communication Plan

This plan is adapted to the operating environment and overall capacity of the Animal Nutrition Association of Canada (ANAC). It outlines tactics and principles for communicating, in the event of a crisis, with ANAC's key internal and external audiences (e.g. association members and their elected leadership, the media, politicians, government officials, stakeholder organizations, and the general public).

The goal of this plan is to ensure the level of readiness necessary for responding to an emerging crisis or controversial issues in a unified and timely way, in a manner that protects the reputation of Canada's animal feed industry while positioning ANAC as the authoritative voice of the industry.

Principles of Crisis Communication

Two major food safety crises have hit Canada's meat processing industry in the last seven years, and each illustrates the importance of effective crisis communication (with one serving as a best practice, the other as an example of what not to do). The examples also highlight the basic principles that must inform ANAC's approach to crisis communication and issue management (for other examples and a more detailed discussion, see Appendix 3).

Maple Leaf Foods

When a deadly strain of Listeria turned up in luncheon meats and other Maple Leaf Foods products in 2008, the company's CEO Michael McCain took ownership of the issue, accepted responsibility for the tragic health consequences, and provided reassurances that his company would get to the bottom of what went wrong. He also became the face and voice of the crisis and its resolution as he kept the media and Canadians informed with timely and credible information. His quick, clear and forceful response was widely credited with helping stave off what could have been crippling reputational damage for the company.

XL Foods Inc.

Almost exactly four years later, XL Foods Inc. was embroiled in the largest beef recall in Canadian history, with more than a dozen cases of gastrointestinal illnesses in six provinces linked to beef from its plant in Brooks, Alberta. The limited and defensive response from XL management garnered widespread criticism of the company, damaged its reputation and left the provincial government and industry stakeholders scrambling to salvage consumer confidence in Alberta beef.

For Canada's animal feed industry, the lessons from these two food safety scares are sobering. In addition to the damage that such events can cause to individual companies, the reputational spillover effect can damage an entire sector's commercial standing and potentially lead to tighter and costlier regulations.

As these two most recent and well-known food safety incidents clearly show, how such situations are managed can have a direct impact on how well a firm or an entire industry recovers. With Canada's animal feed industry once in the crosshairs of regulators and media over the 1990's BSE outbreak, having a crisis communication strategy in place could mean the difference between containing an isolated food safety mishap and dealing with industry-wide fallout.

For ANAC and Canada's livestock and poultry feed industry, there are two key scenarios it must guard against: an isolated and contained food safety incident and a systemic failure of the kind blamed for the BSE outbreak. While the tactics involved in management of the issues would be different in each case, the strategic approach for ANAC would be the same and must rest on sound crisis communication and issue management principles. These principles are:

1) Readiness

ANAC will review and enhance key components of this plan on an ongoing basis to ensure full operability and timely and appropriate responses to emerging issues.

2) Leadership

ANAC will demonstrate leadership in a crisis by proactively positioning itself as the trusted voice of the Canadian animal feed industry and the authoritative and timely source of industry information.

3) Member engagement

ANAC staff will ensure members are informed and engaged in every aspect of its crisis planning and management through the proactive socialization of this plan, the engagement of its board and Executive Committee and the timely distribution of crisis alerts, updates and background information.

ANAC Crisis Communication Policy

1. The Executive Director (ED) is the crisis communication lead. The ED is responsible for determining whether an emerging situation represents a crisis for the purpose of this plan.
2. Following an assessment of an emerging situation, the ED activates the crisis communication process in tandem with the ANAC Chair and Executive Committee.
3. For the purpose of this plan, the ANAC Executive Committee is the Crisis Communication Committee. It is coordinated by the ED as crisis communication lead and provides industry input, oversight and validation of the management process.
4. Upon becoming aware of the emergence of an issue or situation that could result in a crisis, ANAC staff, the board of directors or Executive Committee, as well as individual association members, should inform the ED immediately to start the assessment process.
5. The ED is the chief spokesperson for ANAC in the event of a crisis. He/she may name secondary spokespersons as required (e.g. on technical issues).
6. In the event of a crisis, only the chief spokesperson and secondary spokespeople are authorized to release information to outside groups including government, the media and to the public on behalf of the organization.

ANAC Crisis Communication Checklist Overview

Overview of crisis management steps – All ANAC staff and members of the Crisis Communication Committee should be familiar with this checklist and refer to it in the event of a crisis.

- **Notification** – ANAC staff and members of its leadership must notify the ED immediately of any issue they believe could develop into a crisis.

Remember, the adage “better safe than sorry” applies to crisis management!

- **Crisis Communication Committee** – The ED will inform the ANAC Chair and trigger the Crisis Communication Plan. He/she will inform the members of the Executive Committee who may convene as the Crisis Communication Committee to review the situation and manage the communications surrounding the issue. If in fact there is a crisis, the Crisis Communication Committee will determine whether the situation should be handled by ANAC, by an individual company, or by another organization.

Note: After advising the Executive Committee of the crisis, the ED, as lead of the Crisis Communication Committee, has the discretion of convening a meeting of the Committee as needed, but in general is responsible for keeping the Executive Committee fully informed.

- **Before Going Public**

The ED (with support of appropriate staff) will:

- Assess the situation to determine the facts (see Detailed Crisis Communication Plan, page 7).
- Determine appropriate response including tactics, and whether a proactive or responsive approach is warranted (see Appendix 2 Decision Tree).
- Determine what internal and external resources (e.g. expert technical advice, secondary spokesperson(s), press conference/media availability needs) as well as collaboration with other organizations or government agencies may be required to execute the plan.
- Develop factual, detailed messages that reflect the status of the crisis, the association’s response, and if necessary/possible, proactive steps to resolve the situation.
Note: The ED will validate the approach and messaging with the Executive Committee.
- Prepare and provide a script and instructions for the receptionist receiving incoming calls. (All enquiries must be forwarded to the ED.)

- Inform the board and Executive Committee of the situation and of the association's planned response including tactics and messaging. Key messaging and documents should be approved by the Executive Committee.
Note: It will be important at this stage to remind members that only the official spokesperson (or secondary spokesperson as may be appointed) speaks for ANAC in the event of a crisis.
- Inform external partners and stakeholders (including key government agencies) of the association's planned response, including messaging.

□ **Going Public**

When the decision is made to proactively go public with statements, news releases or general information, the following steps should be followed:

- Communicate with critical internal audiences, including ANAC members, industry stakeholders and/or government, etc... Begin media and other external audience outreach only after having reached out to key internal audiences. **You do not want internal audiences to get their information from news media.**
- Update ANAC web site (and phone message if appropriate) using pre-prepared messages and other background material (see Appendix 1).
- Evaluate message effectiveness as the situation progresses.
- Implement methods for updating key audiences with ongoing information.
- Evaluate crisis communication efforts.

Detailed Crisis Communication Plan

1. **Notification and triggering of the Crisis Communication Plan** – In the event of an emergent crisis, the ED shall notify the ANAC Chair immediately. Notification of the Executive Committee in its role as the Crisis Communication Committee will follow.

2. **Situational Assessment** – The ED as lead will assess the situation, determine facts, and delegate tasks as necessary/appropriate.

Once the ED has determined that the emerging situation meets the crisis threshold test (see sidebar), the following questions will help guide the appropriate crisis communication response:

- What is known and who already knows it?
- Who will be most affected (consumers, the feed industry, the larger food chain, government/politicians)?
- What immediate steps need to be taken?
- Who on staff/association needs to be involved? What role will they play?
- What information is needed and who beyond ANAC staff has a role in securing it? When will it be available?
- What should ANAC do about the issue? What communications approach is warranted: proactive or reactive?
- Should ANAC contact or refer to another stakeholder organization/government agency?
- What opportunities exist for collaboration of messaging with other stakeholders?
- What CAN and CANNOT be said?
- Is legal or communications counsel needed? Is a subject matter expert required?
- Should the ED remain as sole spokesperson or are additional experts/spokespersons needed?
- If a proactive communications strategy is adopted, what are the appropriate tactics to communicate ANAC's positions/reactions, what background information is required, etc...?
 - Is a media briefing necessary? Would a news release to frame ANAC's position be sufficient? In addition to media, what other organizations/individuals (stakeholder organizations, government agencies, legislators) should be contacted and how?

Crisis Communication Triggers

A crisis will likely take three possible forms: an industry-wide (food chain) issue, a feed industry sector-specific issue or a company-specific issue. Each of these scenarios would carry different implications for ANAC and the Canadian animal feed industry and require different responses, ranging from the implementation of this Plan to responsive issue management.

The definition below is offered in order to provide guidance to ANAC's leadership in making a determination on whether an emerging issue would represent a crisis and require triggering of this Plan.

A **crisis** (for the purpose of this Plan) is defined as an emerging situation within the animal feed sector with **potential to significantly** challenge the public's confidence in

- the safety of the food chain,
- their health and safety; or
- ANAC's or the feed sector's reputation and/or commercial standing domestically and/or internationally.

- How frequently should information updates be provided (how and to whom)?

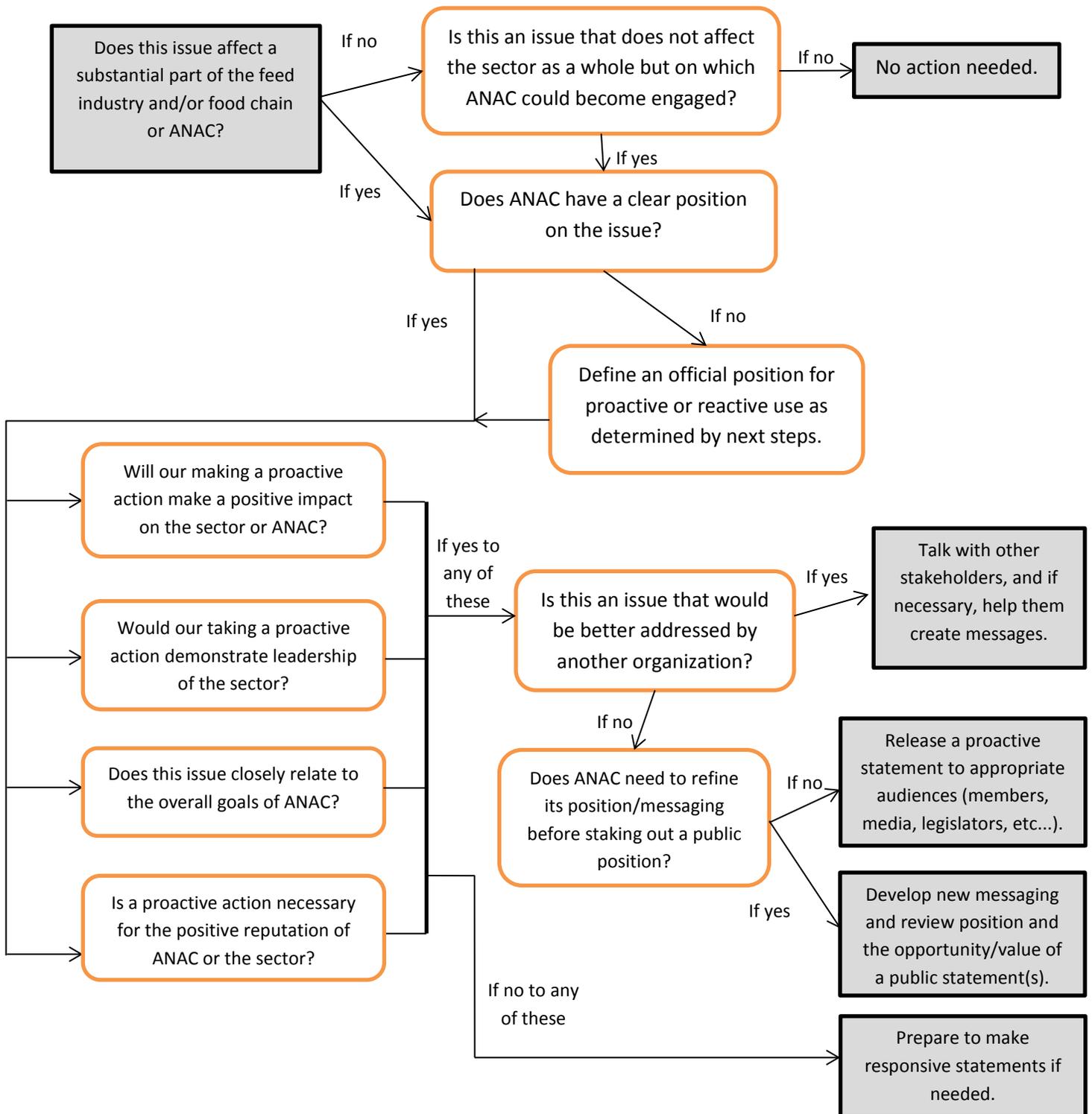
NOTE: In a crisis, other stakeholders may be activating their own crisis communication plans. In the event that ANAC's role is usurped by another group, ANAC will need to reach out to the other party to try to resolve the situation, perhaps by deciding on an appropriate shared responsibility. If such a solution is not achievable, the best thing would be to stay on message and not get drawn into a public disagreement. If ANAC has handled the crisis assessment and preparations properly, and the communication role does fall squarely in ANAC's area of expertise, this scenario should hopefully not materialize.

3. **Developing Key Messages and Backgrounders** – The ED will oversee the development of timely, factual and responsive messages and information backgrounders to be used by the association and its representatives to supplement material already available on the ANAC site or prepared in advance. Experts should be contacted where necessary. Key messaging and backgrounders should be approved by the Executive Committee and ANAC board. If time permits, consult with other organizations to try and coordinate overall messaging and tactics. Messages should always:
 - Be factual and authoritative (they must not inadvertently be challenged by industry members, or government agencies); reflect the organization's overall narrative and industry leadership role; and focus on positive and solutions-oriented approaches if possible.
 - Reflect and respond to what media know about the situation and what is their potential interest. Q&A's should be developed and updated as the situation evolves.
TIP: Think like a reporter and anticipate questions that will be asked in order to prepare answers for them – including (and most importantly) the questions you hope will not be asked.
4. **Managing Internal Communications** - Immediately following the triggering of the Crisis Communication Plan, the ED ensures that staff as well as the Executive Committee and board members are briefed on the situation and on immediate steps being taken. A script is developed for the receptionist to use when fielding media and other calls (e.g. ANAC members, stakeholders) related to the emergent crisis. If appropriate, holding lines are also developed for key industry members who might be contacted by media and other key stakeholders. The purpose of these media lines is to ensure that all key communications are forwarded to the ED as principal spokesperson.
5. **Recordkeeping** – In order to properly evaluate the effectiveness of the plan, document critical conversations (including with media), decisions made (including how they were made), and tactics used.
6. **Media/message monitoring and evaluation** – Monitor effectiveness of messaging to make necessary adjustments to messages/tactics and to allow for post-crisis evaluation of the plan.

APPENDIX 1: Preparing for a Crisis Before it Happens

1. **Phone/E-mail List** – Maintain a readily-accessible list/database with emergency contact information: phone numbers and e-mail addresses for staff, board and key external stakeholders (key contacts in other industry associations, government agencies). To be updated quarterly or more frequently as needed due to staff turnover and contact changes.
2. **Media Training** – Identify and train organization spokespeople: ED (main spokesperson) and potential industry technical spokespersons (subject experts).
3. **Crisis Management Checklist** – Review and update (if necessary) the Crisis Communication Checklist periodically and ensure that staff and members of the ANAC Executive Committee (as potential members of the Crisis Communication Committee) are familiar with it.
4. **Key Audience and Media List** – Keep contact information for key audiences updated so that they can be easily contacted in a crisis. This is a separate list from the emergency contact list (see above) and should include names and contact information for key media outlets and reporters.
5. **Key Messages and Background Information** – Core industry background and other information collateral such as backgrounders and Q&As and key messages will be developed and updated as necessary. This background material will be designed to provide a reporter or an industry stakeholder quick access to authoritative information. Topic and issue areas should include: industry profile and demographics, industry feed safety-related information (e.g. FeedAssure®, industry safety norms and systems).
Note: Crisis or issue-specific information will have to be developed in real time to respond to particular circumstances. Spokespeople should be familiar with the organization’s key messages and core background. As much as possible, these should be used when conducting media training.
6. **Drill Session** – At least semi-annually, key ANAC staff should review the Crisis Communication Checklist as well as relevant communication material to ensure that they are up-to-date and aligned to changing circumstances.

APPENDIX 2: Decision Tree – Potential Actions and Guiding Considerations



APPENDIX 3: Lessons learned from other industry crisis communications

Crisis	What was done	Lessons learned
<p>BSE in Canada:</p> <p>The first case of BSE in Canadian-born beef cows was discovered in May 2003. Several ranches in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia were quarantined as a precaution and 1,400 cows were slaughtered.</p>	<p><u>What was done:</u></p> <p>1997 – Feed Ban, no ruminant fed to ruminants</p> <p>2004 – Removal of SRM from human food chain</p> <p>2007 – Enhanced Feed Ban, removal of SRM from all animal feed, pet food and fertilizers</p>	<p>1) CFIA made unfounded assumptions throughout the 2003 ordeal, significantly affecting its credibility. For example, the agency mentioned repeatedly that animals could not develop BSE under the age of 30 months.</p> <p>2) CFIA seemed only concerned about the politics of food safety, which severely limited its understanding of the scope of the crisis that was unfolding. Food safety is first and foremost a public health issue.</p> <p>3) Communicating food safety risks to the Canadian public was also a challenge for the CFIA during the mad cow scare, a challenge that the federal regulator faces to this day.</p>
<p>Avian influenza (AI):</p> <p>The most serious avian influenza outbreak in Canada was in 2004. A high-path strain of H7N3 spread to 42 commercial farms and 11 backyard coops in the Fraser Valley.</p> <p>In December 2014, British Columbia had confirmed the presence of a highly-pathogenic</p>	<p><u>What was done:</u></p> <p>In 2004, the federal government ordered the slaughter of 17 million chickens, turkeys and other domestic birds.</p> <p>In December 2014, CFIA placed the two farms under quarantine to control disease spread and the industry sector was notified to adopt enhanced biosecurity practices. The infected barns at the first two farms together housed</p>	<p>1) Emergency Response Team: CFIA has a dedicated response team of experts that will be activated in the event of an AI outbreak.</p> <p>2) Development of detailed procedures for response: Among the many detailed plans and procedures, there are plans for: humane and rapid destruction of infected flocks;</p>

<p>H5 avian influenza on two farms in the Fraser Valley, a turkey farm in Abbotsford and a broiler breeder farm in Chilliwack.</p>	<p>18,000 birds, but an additional 17,000 turkeys in adjacent barns at the Abbotsford operation were also euthanized.</p>	<p>minimizing the spread of virus; effective disposal of carcasses; movement restrictions on susceptible livestock and products; protecting the health and safety of staff deployed during an AI outbreak; protecting the health of farmers and producers during an AI outbreak; and capturing information in databases for epidemiological analysis of the outbreak.</p> <p>3) AI scenarios and exercises: CFIA conducts a number of internal and external exercises to further enhance preparedness for a possible AI outbreak.</p> <p>4) Partnership with other government departments, other levels of government and external bodies (all of which have a focus on AI).</p>
<p>PEDv (Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus)</p> <p>Known to have caused outbreaks for several decades in Europe and Asia, PEDv was reported in US hog herds in early 2013, and thereafter in several Canadian provinces in early 2014.</p>	<p><u>What was done:</u></p> <p>1) OSHAB/Ontario Pork investigation of high-risk trucking events and reduction of risk from October to January was invaluable in being better prepared to respond to PEDv in Ontario.</p> <p>2) Advance preparation of who the response team would be and what they would do was also invaluable. The public/private partnership of the response team made up of OMAF, Ontario Pork, OSHAB, OASV, AHL and practising veterinarians was quite effective.</p> <p>3) Producers and service companies</p>	<p>Communication to industry was not timely, accurate or open. The broader industry was operating in a vacuum of rumours and misinformation. In future, there needs to be a clear communication plan to keep industry in the loop as to what we know, what are we investigating, timing of results, update on what we know and what we are planning.</p>

	<p>were transparent with information, supportive of containment and control measures and invaluable in assisting with investigation. Without the openness of industry and producers, they would not have been successful.</p>	
<p>Maple Leaf Foods:</p> <p>In 2008, Canadian food processing giant, Maple Leaf Foods, experienced a crisis that changed the organization: Maple Leaf’s products had been contaminated by Listeria.</p> <p>23 people died; 57 others became very ill. Production at their Toronto-area plant came to a complete stop. Nearly 5,000 unique media stories were written, and surveys showed a near 100 per cent recognition rate among Canadians of the story.</p>	<p><u>What worked:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Act with urgency: CEO Michael McCain called a press conference the evening that the outbreak was announced publicly. 2) The company went on the record immediately, sharing all of the information they had with customers. 3) Take accountability: McCain and the senior leadership team took accountability for the mistake once investigators pointed to Maple Leaf products, rather than trying to shift blame to food safety standards, equipment manufacturers, or individual employees. 4) Be transparent: “Our values said to do what’s right, be transparent, open and honest,” Huffman said. “So that’s what we did.” 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Use a noticeable representative: Maple Leaf Foods President, Michael McCain, spoke to the media and gave a complete version of the story. 2) Apologize to the public. 3) Take charge of the situation: When the link between Maple Leaf Foods and Listeria was established, they immediately began to eliminate all 220 packed items at the plant. 4) Repair the problem: The company worked with CFIA, Public Health Agency of Canada and internal experts to regulate the specifics of the food safety protocols under which the facility could be reopened. 5) Use suitable messaging: The company has repeated the same sympathetic messages. 6) Be constant: The company was constant in its messaging. 7) Be open: The company recognised the situation and dealt with it accordingly.

<p>XL Foods Ltd.:</p> <p>In September 2012, CFIA suspended their licence after up to 15 cases of E. coli were linked to meat processed at the Brooks plant. The result of this was that over 1,800 beef products were “voluntarily” recalled. However, during this recall, the XL Foods plant remained open and continued to produce beef en masse until its license was suspended on September 27th.</p>	<p><u>What did not work:</u></p> <p>1) They did not address concerns with media directly; they waited until media approached them.</p> <p>2) Engaged in a lot of finger-pointed towards government.</p>	<p>1) CEO must deal with actual problem first.</p> <p>2) Make media appearances from time to time to provide updates.</p> <p>3) Set boundaries with the media – be honest and transparent, but on your terms.</p>
<p>AirAsia:</p> <p>In December 2014, an AirAsia flight mysteriously disappeared mid-flight en route to Singapore from Indonesia carrying 162 people.</p>	<p><u>What worked:</u></p> <p>1) Response right from the top: CEO Tony Fernandes directly tweeted about the incident, updates and what he and his team were doing.</p> <p>2) The brand changed colour to reflect the seriousness of the matter.</p> <p>3) Within minutes of the first update on the incident being posted, AirAsia changed the colour of its logo on its Twitter page from its festive red to a sombre grey. A little while later, its Twitter background image was changed to just a plain black image.</p> <p>4) Business can wait: Within hours of the incident, not only did AirAsia have a prominent message with updates on its website home page, but it removed all promotional messages from its home page.</p> <p>5) Focus on passengers and their</p>	<p>1) Take charge: From the earliest moments of the crash, Fernandes clearly signaled that he was in charge and actively doing everything in his power to help the families and find out what happened.</p> <p>2) Take appropriate action: Fernandes and his team set up centres for the families to provide them food, transportation, accommodations and other necessities.</p> <p>3) Take responsibility.</p> <p>4) Communicate: Fernandes is an active Twitter user and shared his thoughts, feelings, and information through social media. He also made himself available to traditional media, providing frequent updates to reporters.</p>

	<p>families: Through numerous tweets, CEO Tony Fernandes reiterated that his first and foremost concern and focus was his passengers, their families and his crew and staff. He said AirAsia would do whatever it takes to handle this and not once did he refer to following policies or 'rules of compensation'.</p> <p>6) More support received than questions asked.</p> <p>The quick, open, personal and constant flow of communication that was not cloaked in corporate speak generated an outpouring of support for AirAsia and its CEO.</p>	<p>5) Be human: Fernandes was not afraid to show his emotions and convey his own pain.</p>
<p>Malaysia Airlines:</p> <p>On March 8th 2014, Flight MH370 from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing vanished without a trace with 239 passengers and crew onboard.</p> <p>On July 17th 2014, Flight MH17 was believed to have been shot down by a missile on its journey from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur while flying over a contested area on the Ukraine-Russia border. All passengers and crew were killed.</p>		<p>1) When multiple parties are involved in responding to an incident, a clear understanding of their respective crisis management roles and responsibilities is essential.</p> <p>2) Be ready, willing and able to communicate quickly (especially via social media) or else rumours will grow and speculative comment will be sourced from third parties to fill the information vacuum.</p> <p>3) Minimise the number of spokespeople and align messaging to ensure clarity and consistency of communication.</p> <p>4) When an incident results in loss of life, your priority must be</p>

		<p>to care for and communicate with the families of the victims.</p> <p>5) The impact of a crisis and how you are perceived to have managed it will be shaped by previous history and the context in which the incident occurs.</p>
<p>Tylenol:</p> <p>In October, 1982, seven people were reported killed after ingesting cyanide-laced Tylenol capsules in Chicago.</p>	<p><u>What was done:</u></p> <p>Johnson & Johnson recalled all of their products and over the following week, every Tylenol product was removed from every store around the world and destroyed. The 31 million capsules were valued at \$100 million.</p>	<p>1) Values-based brands outperform non values-based brands on trust.</p> <p>2) Crisis management is not about public relations-driven ‘damage control’. It is about business continuity and affirmative, strategic, business-centric actions with a strong focus on the victims in a crisis.</p> <p>3) Assume responsibility for the solution, even when not required, because it’s about the publics’ trust in your brand and the test of your character.</p> <p>4) Act quickly, honestly and decisively.</p> <p>5) Good behaviour delivers great returns. Remember the high cost of low trust.</p>

References

<http://cinwal.blogspot.ca/>

<http://www.ivey.uwo.ca/news/news-ivey/2014/11/maple-leaf-foods-urgency-accountability-transparency/> <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/communication-breakdown-how-canadians-were-let-down-on-e-coli-response/article4595708/>

<http://www.waingergroup.com/our-blog/communications-planning/corporate-communications/crisis-communications-done-right-powerful-lessons>

<http://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/et-commentary/what-brands-can-learn-about-crisis-management-from-airasia/>

<http://www.ipra.org/itl/10/2014/malaysia-airlines-annus-horribilis-crisis-management-lessons-learnt>

<http://www.biznews.com/thought-leaders/2013/11/15/five-key-lessons-from-tylenol-crisis/>

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/ai/prevention-preparedness-and-response/eng/1375982718329/1375982719875>

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/ai/2014-2015-ai-investigation-in-bc/statement-2014-12-06/eng/1417908993045/1417908995514>