



devoteam



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Crisis management and tools: advice and best practices

Creative tech for Better Change

About Devoteam

Devoteam is a leading consulting firm focused on digital strategy, tech platforms and cybersecurity. By combining creativity, tech and data insights, we empower our customers to transform their business and unlock the future.

With 25 years' experience and more than 8,000 employees across Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Devoteam promotes responsible tech for people and works to create better change.

Creative tech for Better Change



Introduction



It is clear that crisis situations that might previously have been described as exceptional have become increasingly everyday for many organizations.

However, effective issue management cannot be improvised. Additional external support is sometimes needed to enable businesses to concentrate their energy into a full recovery.

If you are reading this, you are probably already considering **how crisis management tools could benefit your organization**. In this report you'll find our expert overview and research findings, coupled with customer feedback on our crisis management tools, to ensure you have the information you need to future-proof your company for any eventuality.

“A worker who wants to do his job well must first prepare his tools.”

Confucius

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1 Best practice advice

'Traditional' crisis management is based on many principles and relies on our ability to react quickly and efficiently.

According to the IE portal, "A crisis is any event that occurs suddenly, which destabilizes an organization (country, region, company...) and which is accompanied by a strong emotional charge making this organization lose its reference points. Crisis management is the action methodology of a company, a State or a local authority facing a specific crisis, often violent, which can be natural (disaster), economic, physical, psychotic, or crises related to information, reputation or human resources."*

Looking at crisis scenarios from this position, it is useful to consider any resources which could help a business best respond to disruptive situations.

Capable of being accurate, fast and efficient, crisis management tools can be a good choice when a destabilizing moment such as a crisis occurs and a company is most vulnerable.

However, it's critical to fully understand the role such a tool can play to help you deal with a situation, starting from change management itself to employee perspectives on what is happening.

Finally, it is important to understand that - for it to be effective when it's needed most - a dedicated crisis management tool must be continuously managed and regularly upgraded.

*<https://portail-ie.fr/resource/glossary/76/gestion-de-crise>



2 What do we mean when we talk about crisis management tools?

Our aim here isn't to compare the merits of one tool against another – the internet is already a goldmine of similar information.

When considering the right crisis management tool for your business, it's critical to understand how it can help improve and speed up your response, while ensuring the smooth flow of all processes to minimise any operational impact.

For example, if there are two key people holding the fort and accessing a large Excel file, a tool could be very useful. Not only could it free up at least one of them to focus on other priorities, it will also reduce the margin of error.

In this scenario, let's imagine the tool automatically logs all crisis-related activity and actions, keeping an all-important record which can be presented to the authorities in the event of a post-crisis audit. In addition to their time-saving benefits, crisis management tools allow for more precise preparation and greater precision of the actions.

Preparation is key to any crisis and, as with any resource, it's essential your team has mastered the tool's capabilities for your business to be crisis-ready. This means ensuring relevant team members are fully versed in the software's functionalities, with regular exercises so they are clear how to benefit from its crisis-management features when it matters most.

3 Crisis management tools and associated change management

“We change our tools and then our tools change us.”

Jeff Bezos

A key question is how to deal with the change in an organisation, when moving from a ‘traditional’ system to a ‘tool-based’ one.

There are many effective change management methods you can use to best support your employees during the transition process, and to manage any resistance that may arise.

In fact, for an organisation to successfully adopt a crisis management tool, the whole business needs to adapt and evolve together.

To achieve this, we recommend several essential elements:

- **Communicate** promptly about the upcoming project and the details of any ‘structural’ changes needed to incorporate the tool
- **Involve** the employees targeted by this change to identify their needs and training requests, and address these through a series of workshops. While it is essential to listen to the needs of your teams, it’s important they understand the parameters of the tool’s capabilities.

- **Know how to decide:** Be clear on what you're looking to achieve, so you can decide which functionalities and approaches are most critical to your business”
- **Train:** Ensure all personnel who may be involved in a potential crisis are trained and kept updated on any tool-related upgrades or developments
- Take the time to **define** your tool essentials in line with the wider business need – once clear, this will help you identify the right organisational structure.

When it comes to implementing any tool, it can often be beneficial to adopt a three-way approach, involving the organization, the tool's creators, and an independent consulting company that can support the adoption process.

It goes without saying that the consultancy must already be familiar with the tool. This will help you take a step back from the decision-making process, while also enabling ongoing reviews to determine the roll-out success at every stage, from configuration and set up to pilot runs and final adoption.

It is essential to understand that the transition from a 'traditional' to a 'tool-based' way of working is reliant on robust adaptation and change management.

Similarly, it's important to think about how the tool will be administrated. You will need to allocate one, or ideally more, resources to manage your tool to ensure it operates successfully under any condition.

Furthermore, employees will need time to get used to the tool and its design. Don't forget that this tool may be replacing a well-established work pattern, so employees will need to understand their role within the platform, and its likely use - whether regular or not.

Whilst change management can be done in several stages, involving gradually different scopes, successful implementation will depend on the original strategy.

4 How to make the right choice?

The first stage to choosing a tool is to understand your needs and your target structure, so that you can be clear on the expected added value.

After that, your decision can be determined around four stages, namely:



Consider

- What is our need?
- What is the objective of the tool acquisition?
- What will be the scope of requirements for this tool?
- What organisational changes could be associated with this acquisition, from initial implementation to ongoing management?
- What is our budget?
- What is our management's involvement in this project?
- How will our organization evolve in the short and medium terms?
- Will the tool be able to benefit other areas of the business, such as communication, security, supply-chain, etc?

Evaluate

- Which tool would best suit our need/s?
- What is the gap between “what I have” and “what the tool will allow us to have”?
- What are the relevant tools to benchmark?
- What are the total costs of this acquisition?

Rank

- What is the best tool according to our criteria?
- Which one is the most appropriate for our needs, budget and criteria?

Select

- What is our final choice?
- Have we taken into account all the relevant short / long-term parameters for our organization?



Reflecting on these four elements should help you build a more complete picture of what exactly you are looking for.

The list below – whilst certainly not exhaustive - gives an idea of the variety of tools available on the market, and the wide variety of features offered:

- Everbridge
- RSA Archer
- Fact 24
- Mir3
- AtHoc

So the only way to determine the system that is right for your business is to be clear on your own unique selection criteria from an early stage. Below is a list of criteria that can guide your choice when reviewing potential crisis management tools:

Software provider	User Friendly	Cost	Set Up
Financial situation	Easy use	Integration costs	Time to set up
Workforce	Practicality	Consulting costs	User training
Worldwide coverage	Support	Licensing costs	Support and continuous improvement
Maturity level	Clear language	Training costs	Scalability

Resilience	Accessibility	Features
Techs and availability	Access quality	Mass alerting
Overlapping	Authentications	Mobile Apps
Security tests	Data hosting	Fluidity between features
Robustness of architecture	Support for access management	Incident management and communication

These criteria will help organizations determine their unique paths. Going through the process of prioritising certain criteria above others will ultimately help businesses make their choice. Once done, it is worthwhile assigning values to your must-have versus nice-to-have criteria to help your organisation arrive at a weighted score that factors in the elements that matter most to you.

5 Warning: tools alone can't achieve miracles

Never think that a crisis management tool on its own as a miracle or silver bullet solution - its effectiveness will be dependent on how you manage it after set-up.

Whilst all the criteria-meeting tools from the previous section are very powerful, it's important to bear a few other elements in mind:

- To achieve the tool's full potential, it's important to make **full and correct use** of all the functions and avoid changing the initial usage of the tool functionalities
- **Correct set-up of your tool is key** to ensure its full effectiveness Once your needs have been clearly identified, it's vital that you specify and track settings (ie. restrictions and administrator rights, etc.)
- **Man versus machine**: Keep in mind the tool's potential limitations: whilst some tasks can be replaced by a tool, others will never be done as well as by a real person, especially in a crisis scenario.

The tool is essentially a gateway to well-coordinated new horizons, but its power can only be fully harnessed if you put the right strategies and groundwork in place first.

Equally, if not correctly managed, such tools can have negative repercussions. Taking the Everbridge crisis management tool as an example, if its Mass Alerting feature is not set up properly, it will not send the right messages to the right people when required. This means that, if an organization is relying on this function, its crisis management could be set back and made more complex than expected if insufficient preparations are made from the start.

6 Tools and exercises: appropriating the tool

As a first step, regular checks and exercises are crucial to ensure the systems work well. But acquiring a tool is in itself not protection against potential crises. If well set up, the tool will certainly be useful but must be tested regularly to ensure it is adapted to your way of working.

Personalising the tool to your business needs is a pivotal step towards maximizing your crisis management response. To achieve this, we recommend:

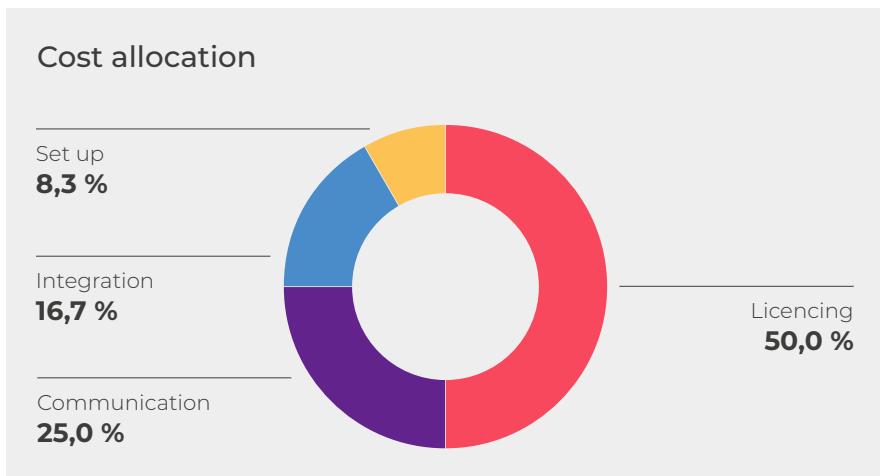
- Including the tool in crisis exercises (at least once a year): these exercises must be accompanied by constructive recommendations and a corrective action plan;
- Proposing a “question box” for the tool’s administrators, to answer the various questions expected from employees when using the tool;
- Creating dedicated support documents (eg: user guide, training materials, awareness materials, welcome guide, etc.)
- Reviewing the system (annually) and adapting to new functionalities as updates come through.

Finally, all these actions have one main goal: to embed the chosen tool into your corporate culture. Once the tool is an integral, routine and accepted part of your way of working, the change management objective will have been achieved.

Whilst this process may take a few months to become fully embedded, once achieved it will improve the crisis management culture of your company, making processes more efficient, and shaping employees' ability to respond and adapt.

7 A possible return on investment (ROI)?

There is an inevitable cost attached to mitigating risks. Whether in SaaS or On-Premise mode, there will always be licensing, integration, communication and implementation costs over contract periods of three years.



Source: <https://go.forrester.com/>

Whilst it is natural to ask about a possible return on investment, it's also necessary to look at the various functional gains associated with the use of such a tool.

To back this up, we have used data from the latest "Cost Savings And Business Benefits Enabled By A Critical Event Management Platform" economic impact report by the American firm

Forrester. Published in July 2020, this report contrasts non-tooled and toolled crisis management responses from different perspectives.

“Cost Savings And Business Benefits Enabled By A Critical Event Management Platform”.

1. Time saving

According to the report, a tool can help maintain business and revenue during critical events through both faster detection and response to unpredictable events. What's more, the tool will have a positive impact on employee productivity.

To illustrate this, the report uses as a reference an average loss of €7 333 per minute, as well as an estimated time of 30 minutes to bring the required crisis team together. Taking these two factors into account, the report notes a loss of €219 995 to a business before it has even started launching any of its various action plans.

In the tool-equipped version, the time to gather a crisis team is closer to five minutes on average. That is a reduction of nearly €183 329.



Source: private

Based on an average of 6% of workers unable to work due to weather conditions each year (and a resulting annual shortfall of 17 hours of work), and factoring in each employee's contribution to the organization of €350 per hour, the report presents an estimated contribution loss of €6,900 per employee per year.

In a tool-based scenario, reliable advance notification helps the organization plan and save 50% of potential lost hours, either by promoting working from home or by providing alternative routes and transport options. In this situation, 80% of the hours saved are recovered in productive work time.

2. Resource savings

A second possible approach when talking about ROI concerns resources. Let's take the example of a team working on monitoring alert signals, following up on incident files, and filling in X monitoring files and Y action logs.

Faced with these different tasks, the tool will allow, on the one hand, an increase in the speed of handling the above events, but above all an optimization of procedures thanks to digitalization. On the other hand, its automated qualities also factor in an increase in the scope of action.

Sharing tools is a significant economic gain. Indeed, we sometimes meet organizations that have:

- a different communication tool per business unit
- a different crisis management tool per department
- a security camera analysis tool
- a physical access analysis tool
- a physical security incident handling tool
- a logical security incident handling tool

This brings several contracts, with associated costs, training, licenses, system updates.

3. Energy savings

The data available through solutions such as Everbridge allows security teams to generate feedback that improves the organization's ability to predict future critical events, and therefore its ability to prepare for and respond to them.

A tool which regularly encounters a wide range of clients from different backgrounds and sectors benefits from an improved feedback panel; a huge positive that is therefore shared across all clients, helping each company be even better prepared. With no further questions about who to warn or how to do it, resources are freed up to focus on the essential matters and successfully resolve any crisis situation.

8 What do our clients say?



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What motivated the need for tools in your organization?

Not only is it essential to have some tools to manage a crisis, but it is also necessary to have set them up before the crisis, and to have practiced with them for a long time.

What is the added value?

The main advantage is being able to concentrate on the crisis itself, not wasting time with other problems. So, for example, it allows us to focus on the content of our communication without having to worry about how we'll deliver the message itself.

What's the main challenge?

The first risk is that the crisis tools could themselves be impacted by the crisis. So we have to give preference to outsourced systems, and also print hard copies of all our documents. The other risk is that, if tools are not well mastered, time could be wasted in working them out at a time when time is precious. The office automation tools have been developed with simplicity in mind.

What advice would you give?

The crisis we face is never exactly the one we prepared for. It is therefore important to master the tools to ensure that, in the heat of the moment, you can adapt them to the stressful context of a crisis. They should not be too rigid or too complex - if you take a long time to prepare, you have a problem.





Loïc MUTELET

Group Deputy Security Director
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What motivated the need for tools in your organization?

Geopolitical news regularly confirms the “VUCA*” character of our time. In this context, information can no longer afford to be fragmented: the use of multiple non-integrated media (handwritten reports, reports drawn up with office automation tools, reports by e-mail or handwritten, etc.) inevitably affects crisis management. The information must therefore circulate quickly and efficiently, in order to be able to identify weak signals that are precursors to crises, to assess a given situation, and also to be able to determine the options necessary for decision-making.

What is the added value?

The deployment of a crisis management tool promotes the sharing of information. This centralization allows for a rapid alert and ramp-up of the necessary teams as soon as the beginnings of a critical situation are detected. Throughout the duration of the operation, the teams work on consolidated situation reports that can be exported at any time, according to a shared and collaborative follow-up of tasks and procedures. The synergy guaranteed by the tool allows them to concentrate their efforts on the actions to be taken, without “chasing” information.

*Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity

What's the main challenge?

The perfect tool does not exist, and each organization has its own constraints and methods. In addition, crises increasingly involve teams that are not always used to this exercise and may be operating at very different levels. The challenge is therefore to set up and use the tool to the maximum of its capabilities, always keeping in mind that it should be able to be used by an untrained person. In short, simplicity and agility must not be overlooked.

What advice would you give?

The best user experience must be the target of the key stages of research, choice, set up, and deployment of a tool. It seems to me that the tool should also be chosen for its current features, but also for the ability of its provider to adapt it over time to both technological developments and user needs. A central administration capacity allows the support of these evolutions in the long term, but also to maintain daily skills and a good knowledge of the tool which will be useful at each crisis.



Muriel LEVEQUE

SVP Security and Crisis Management

KORIAN



What motivated the need for tools in your organization?

Crisis management has become increasingly important within the company. It is becoming more professional and structured from both a conceptual and functional point of view. The implementation of a dedicated tool is the result of this evolution. Working methods based on files and emails no longer fit the needs. They are a source of errors and misunderstandings, and generate a considerable work overload, not to mention the security risks that result from them.

What is the added value?

The crisis management tool must be an asset for the organization in terms of security, reliability of data and procedures and, above all, the fluidity of exchanges. The stakes are high for an international company. The difficulty lies not so much in the geographical spread of its locations as in the complexity of exchanges linked to cultural and linguistic specificities. The tool becomes essential because it offers a reassuring, customizable and facilitating work environment. In times of crisis, when stress naturally rises, it is essential to free oneself from technical or practical constraints in order to let the event be managed. This is what we expect from a tool.

What's the main challenge?

The main difficulty is the homogenization of practices and, with it, the cleaning of data. Both allow for the efficient customization of the tool. Without it, the project will fail and the tool will not be used as expected. The work of cleaning up the databases and updating the information is obviously key. Supporting the change and the overall transformation process will then be the keystone of a successful deployment and ongoing learning.

What advice would you give?

Involve the operational teams from the beginning of the project and support the change. The tool will not alter the way things are done, but it will support the transformation. It is imperative to have the support of the teams for this transformation before deploying a new solution.





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What motivated the need for tools in your organization?

In a large organization, tools are essential to inform a maximum number of employees efficiently and in a limited time. The use of a manual call tree quickly reaches its limits, especially when it comes to alerting several thousand employees on a regular basis (over a long crisis) and across several platforms.

What is the added value?

The added value of such a tool is therefore twofold: the provision of a service not previously covered, with the added bonus of real-time control of indicators to measure the effectiveness of notifications and ensure that the target population has been alerted.

What's the main challenge?

When equipping yourself with a tool, especially when it is as complete and rich in functionalities as Everbridge, the challenge is to make the right set-up choices: the danger is to want to take maximum advantage of the range of possible features which might mean you get lost in the use-case, multiplying the alert parameters or the selection criteria of the collaborators.

From experience, all communication models planned in advance and covering "all" the different crisis scenarios turn out to be quite ineffective if they are too precise when faced with a real situation. The advantage of Everbridge is its flexibility and ease of alerts setup to adapt in real time to a very specific situation.

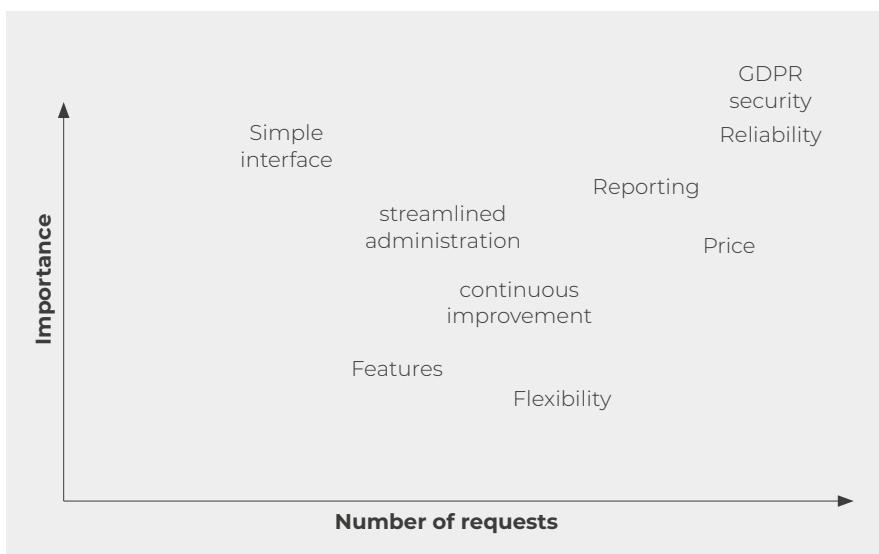
What advice would you give?

To be efficient, Just go to the essential and build simple use-case in order to keep a clear reading of the tool, especially for the administrators who will have to launch alerts in the middle of a crisis.

9

What are the essential qualities of a crisis management tool?

First of all, each organization that wants to acquire the best crisis management tool has its own criteria. Nevertheless, we can identify certain qualities that are mostly sought after by client companies:



Source : Gartner

There are many ways for a tool to satisfy an organization and, from one company to another, we can find varying criteria that supports this. Nevertheless, a tool that has the capacity to provide concrete and solid answers to these satisfaction criteria will be preferred by many of the organizations interested in crisis management tools.

Once again, a tool is never delivered off-the-shelf but must be adapted to the individual needs of the organization, its procedures, human resources and ways of working.

We design the tool based on what the software provider offers, but the magic only happens once you put your stamp on it. Not only will you have made the tool your own, but it will also be a full-fledged part of your organization, with all the changes that this implies. Deploying a tool or solution takes time and money, but the return on investment is huge, both in terms of time saved and lower costs

10 Tips for success

- **Identify the hidden costs before implementing a solution.** It is crucial you take into account all potential costs associated with properly embedding the tool. From associated contacts to any additional modules which may be needed for the tool to function, you must take the time to factor in all associated expenses to fully cost out the new tool's financial impact.
- **Minimize the effort required to manage the solution.** It's no use finding out you don't know how to use the tool once a crisis has occurred. Take the time to identify and set up tool training early in the change management process so the dedicated operational teams quickly master the tool.
- **Minimize the effort required to integrate the solution** by taking into account all of your processes and ensuring all systems interconnect effectively. From the beginning, it's important to consider how all relevant procedures will interact and feed into this new system. Unfortunately, it is very often necessary to rethink and redesign your escalation processes to take into account new possible uses, such as multilingual teams, on-call duty, forms, etc. Take advantage of the implementation stage to organize a full review of all the procedures to help you classify them into three action categories: 1) To be deleted, 2) To be updated, 3) To be created.
- **Stop thinking in silo mode.** Don't forget that crises are as varied and diverse as your organization: they are not just related to IT! Each crisis could involve a wide range of departments, from security, communication and HR to your supply chain and retail division.

- **Don't let everyone choose their own solution** - it's definitely not a case of the more the merrier. Whilst we have already seen how multiple systems can have a detrimental impact on cost and operations, it's also important to consider how a multi-tool approach could impact your ability to manage a global crisis in a unified way, and complicate reporting and feedback processes.
- **Be clear that great tools alone can't solve a crisis.** Crisis management requires all essential resources to be mobilized, with the tool itself playing a starring role. Whilst it could prove the keystone of your crisis management approach, the consequences of imagining the tool can take charge of managing the entire crisis by itself can be dangerous. The most effective crisis management comes from fully understanding how your company operates and working flexibly.



11 Before the next crisis hits...

1. Use the solutions to train and improve intervention skills

Some tools have developed “exercise” modes that perform training sessions, whether in terms of demand (such as call escalation) or reaction (such as a crisis exercise), delivered in a totally secure environment.

We can also find a “What if” mode that projects us into the situation, plus “if X and Y process is unavailable what are the impacts?” This functionality imagines and detects the impacts in advance, and the flexibility allows users to be better prepared for potential eventualities.

2. Use solutions to stay informed about threats at all times

We all know that the success of crisis management depends on how it started, how quickly you respond and the manner in which you do so. Being informed as soon as a disruption of any kind occurs facilitates rapid prediction and reaction. A properly configured tool will trigger a quick and efficient reaction to maximise reaction time.

3. Use solutions to create opportunities

The measurement of this value varies from organization to organization. There are several scenarios in which an organization might choose to implement such a solution and later devise additional business uses and opportunities.

If we go back to the Forrester study, more than one executive said they believe the investment in Everbridge has better positioned their organization's ability to do business in the future in geographies they would have considered too risky before adopting the platform. It is also possible to do due diligence on employees and partners, as well as on clients. If a store needs to close unexpectedly, for example, it is possible to use the tool to react and notify regular customers, giving them the address of another store nearby.

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