

## Proactive Communication Plan for Trader Joe's

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## **Introduction to Crisis Communication**

What is a Crisis?

A crisis is any event that harms, or has the potential to harm public safety, an organization's reputation, or an organization's financial viability.

The purpose of this communication plan is to prepare the Trader Joe's communication team for any crisis that may occur. Speed is essential when handling a crisis, so having prepared messages and pre-collected information will make any crisis manageable.

## **Introduction to Trader Joe's**

What is Trader Joe's?

Trader Joe's is an American grocery store chain originated in California. According to their website, "The mission of Trader Joe's is to give our customers the best food and beverage values that they can find anywhere and to provide them with the information required to make informed buying decisions. We provide these with a dedication to the highest quality of customer satisfaction delivered with a sense of warmth, friendliness, fun, individual pride and company spirit." When communicating on behalf of the company, one should keep this statement in mind to remain consistent with Trader Joe's messaging.

**Crisis Team**

These are people that you may want to contact in the event of a crisis.

Name	Title	Contact Information
Dan Bane	CEO	<a href="mailto:dbane@traderjoes.com">dbane@traderjoes.com</a> 714-326-2263
Kenya Friend-Daniel	National Director, Public Relations	<a href="mailto:kfrienddaniel@traderjoes.com">kfrienddaniel@traderjoes.com</a> 536-923-7436
Virginia Castellano	President, Customer Communications	<a href="mailto:vcastellano@traderjoes.com">vcastellano@traderjoes.com</a> 847-446-4222
Tara Miller	Marketing Director	<a href="mailto:tmiller@traderjoes.com">tmiller@traderjoes.com</a> 827-264-5537
Robert Moss	Digital Marketing Manager	<a href="mailto:rmoss@traderjoes.com">rmoss@traderjoes.com</a> 762-378-6677
Guadalupe Ballard	Marketing Manager	<a href="mailto:gballard@traderjoes.com">gballard@traderjoes.com</a> 482-325-8732

## Media Outlets

When in a crisis, you need to contact the media as quickly as possible, ideally within an hour of the story breaking. If you don't release a message, you are allowing a media vacuum to form.

There are many different forms of media that you should consider, including:

- Television
- Print news
- Online news outlets
- Social media

Before a crisis occurs, the Trader Joe's media team should be in contact with a few reporters. Having a repore with reporters will make them more likely to spin the story in your favor in the event of a crisis.

Here is the contact information for some relevant reporters:

Name	Organization	Contact Information
Soshy Ciment	Business Insider	shoshanaciment@binsider.com
Kelly McCarthy	ABC News	kmccarthy@abc.com
Jennifer Strailey	Grocery Business	strailey@grocerybusiness.com
Rebecca Jennings	Vox	jennings@vox.com

**Tips on Talking to the Media**

1. Speed is extremely important! The faster you can respond to a crisis, the faster you can gain control of the story.
2. Be prepared. If you have messages prepared (like the examples given after this list), you can respond with more confidence and speed.
3. Research the reporter you will be talking to. Knowing the reporter's biases and standard questions can help you prepare.
4. Always tell the truth. This doesn't mean that you have to disclose everything to the media, but everything you say should be true.
5. Know your facts. Before contacting the media, make sure that you know the details of the case. If reporters ask you a question that you don't know, it is better to admit that you don't have an answer quite yet than to make up an answer that could be proven untrue.
6. Be consistent. Your message should be the same no matter which form of media you are talking to.
7. Take responsibility to what is your/the company's fault. This will make you more believable to the public.
8. Involve top leadership. If the crisis is big enough, the top leaders of the company (CEO, founder, etc.) should be the face in the media.
9. Practice your message. Whoever is going to be speaking to the media must practice their speech so they appear confident and honest to the public.
10. Decide whether you want your message to be verbal and/or written. A written response can seem impersonal, but it could be better if no one on your team is media trained or a natural public speaker.
11. Never say "no comment." Anyone who uses that phrase looks instantly guilty.
12. Nothing is ever off the record, even if you ask for it to be. A reporter's job is to report the truth, so they will use any information they get.

**Examples of a Crisis**

What could possibly go wrong at Trader Joe's? You should prepare statements for any type of scenario, including, but not limited to:

- Hostage situation in a store
- Natural disaster (earthquake, flood, fire, etc.)
- Food contamination
- Warehouse accident
- Executive misconduct
- Inappropriate actions of a crew member

**Potential Questions and Answers**

For the purpose of this plan, I will propose answers to questions that are likely to be asked in a food contamination crisis. You should prepare similar messages for all other crises that you can think of.

Question: How did contaminated food get on the shelves of Trader Joe's?

Answer: At Trader Joe's we are passionate about giving people access to quality food, so we are shocked and remorseful that our inspection process failed. At this moment, we don't know exactly where the error lies. To ensure that our products are safe, we have shut down the affected distribution centers until we can find and correct the issue.

Question: What have you done to reconcile with the poisoned customers?

Answer. First of all, we would like to deeply apologize to all of our customers who were negatively affected by our products this week. We recalled the contaminated product and offered refunds as soon as we were made aware of the situation. Trader Joe's has already covered the medical bills of two affected customers. I hope that every affected customer reaches out so we can personally remedy the situation.

Question: How can your customers trust the Trader Joe's brand after this situation?

Answer: Our customers have been loyal since our start in 1967 not just because of our quality food, but our exceptional friendly service. The crew members in each store are the ones who truly create the Trader Joe's experience that bring our customers back every week. Once this issue is resolved, we can guarantee that it will not happen again.