

Crisis
Communication
PLAN
TEMPLATE

ROCK
Social



ABOUT ROCK SOCIAL

Hi! 🙋

I'm Jessica- social media strategist and founder of Rock Social, a social media consultancy dedicated to helping brands rock their social through strategy, management, coaching and communication planning.

With over 20 years of experience in PR and crisis communication for big brands such as Disney and Discovery Networks, I combine my social media savvy with in-depth knowledge to guide brands on how to strategically navigate through a crisis.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO CRISIS MANAGEMENT

CRISIS

/'krʌɪsɪs/

noun

a time of intense difficulty or danger "the current economic crisis"

Similar: catastrophe, calamity, cataclysm, emergency, disaster, set back

Crisis management is the practice of planning your communication for the unexpected, unwanted and unthinkable. But how can you?

How can you **not**, as a brand? One in four brands do not have a crisis communication plan with start ups being the worst offenders (and potentially the worst sufferers for it) and out of the businesses that do, 40% only update them once a year, which in this fast-moving landscape means they're on the shelf gathering dust.

A crisis communication plan is the very back-bone of how your social media, and all other digital communication will be handled when that unexpected event happens.

More than a quarter of crises spread internationally within the hour. On the flip side, it takes businesses on average 21 hours to respond to the crisis.

Crisis management is a spectator sport, every move a brand does in a crisis can set the tone for how they are viewed by the customer for years to come. It takes years to build a reputation, and mere minutes to tear it down.

In crisis management, being prepared is more than half the battle won.



"It takes 20 years to build a reputation, and five minutes to tear it down" Warren Buffett

CREATING THE CRISIS COMMS PLAN

Let's get into the nitty-gritty of creating the crisis communications plan.

The purpose of a crisis communication plan is to outline set of guidelines used to prepare a business for an emergency or unexpected event.

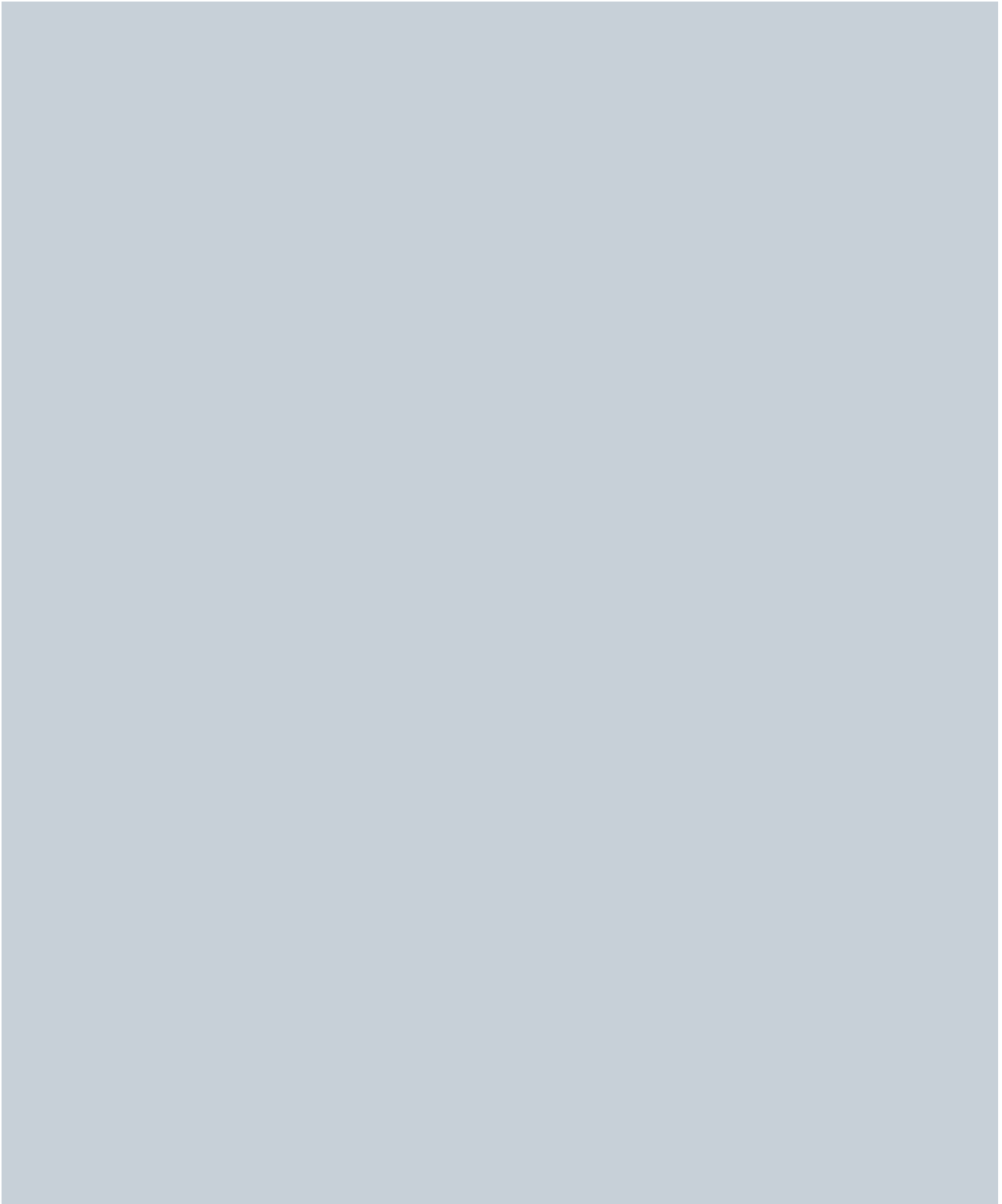
These plans include steps to take when a crisis first emerges, how to communicate with the public, and how to prevent the issue from occurring again.

Crisis communication plans focus on the company's response and how it will communicate with its stakeholders. These steps ensure information reaches employees, partners, customers, media, the general public, and any other valuable stakeholders.

Most importantly, these plans guarantee a quick release of information, as well as a consistent message on all company platforms. While your communication plan will differ depending on the crisis you're dealing with, a crisis communication plan normally consist of six core elements. Use the template to help create a crisis communication plan of your own.

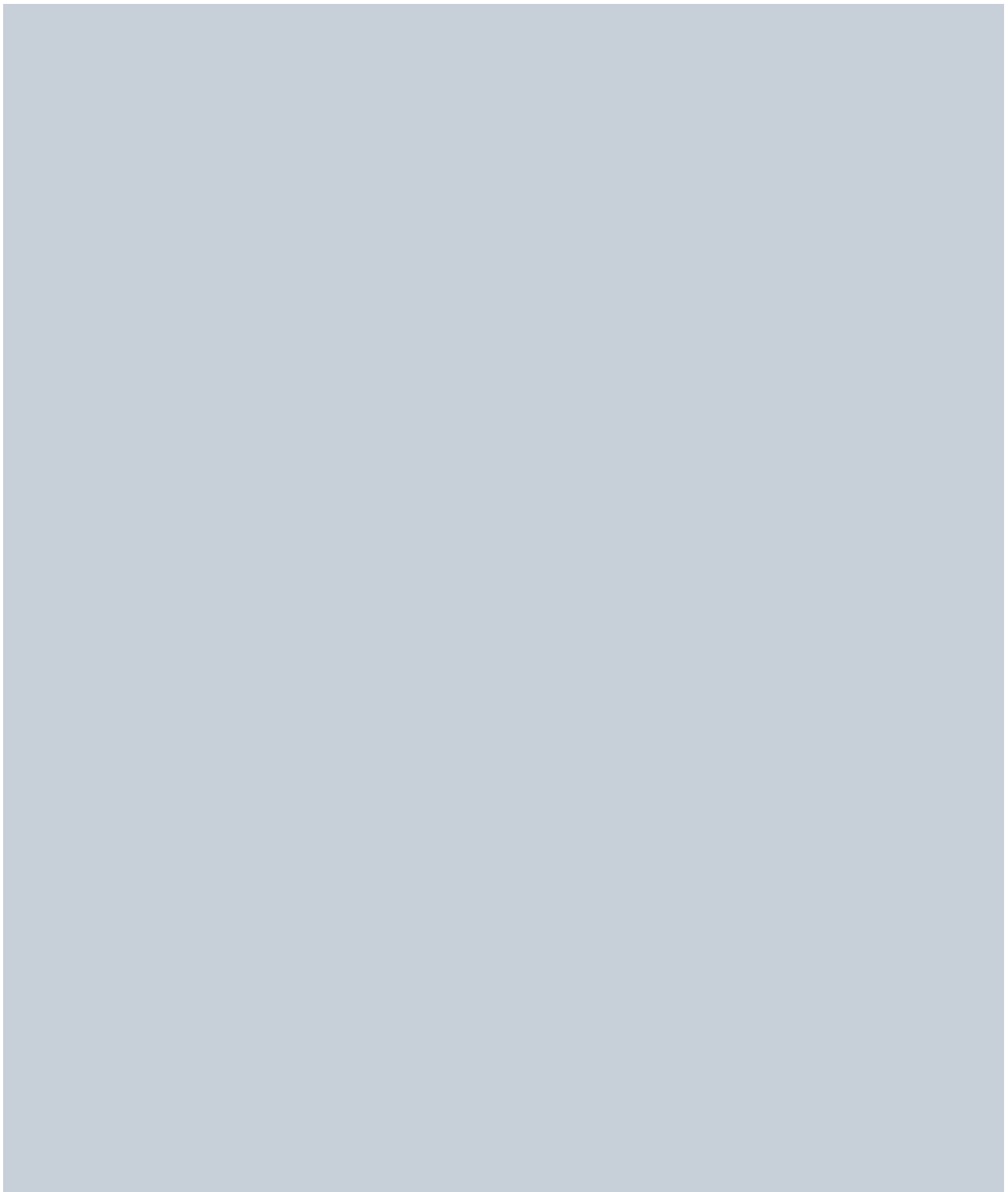
1 Crisis communication plan outline

Details of the plan. This includes purpose, activation criteria and most importantly, procedures. For instance: "This plan creates a structure for communicating with internal and external stakeholders, in the event of a crisis that affects the reputation or normal business functions of the organisation."



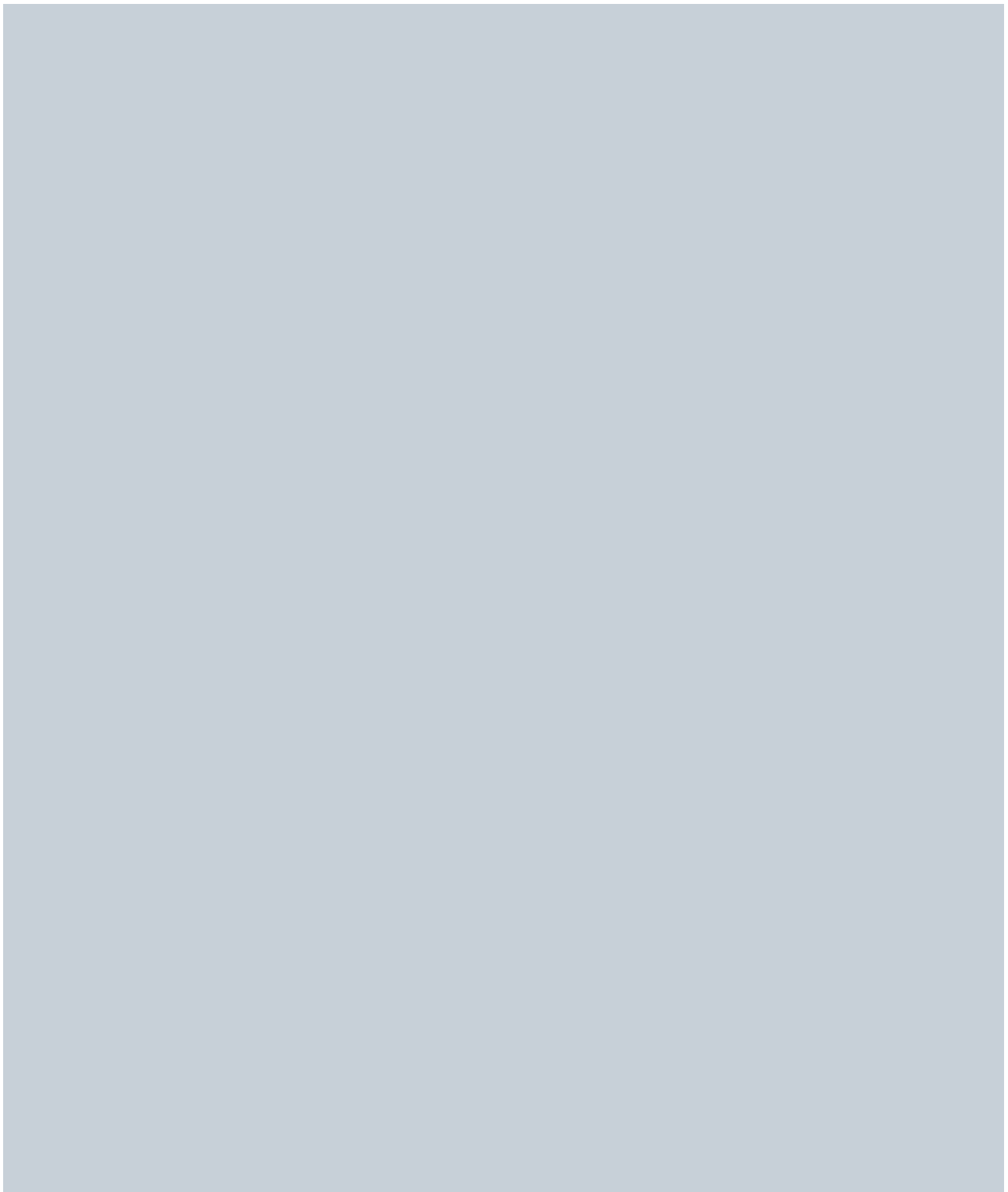
2 Crisis communication team

Crisis communication team. Information on members and their roles and all contact information. Key roles are: social media crisis management, key spokesperson/s, internal and external communication management, fielding media calls etc.



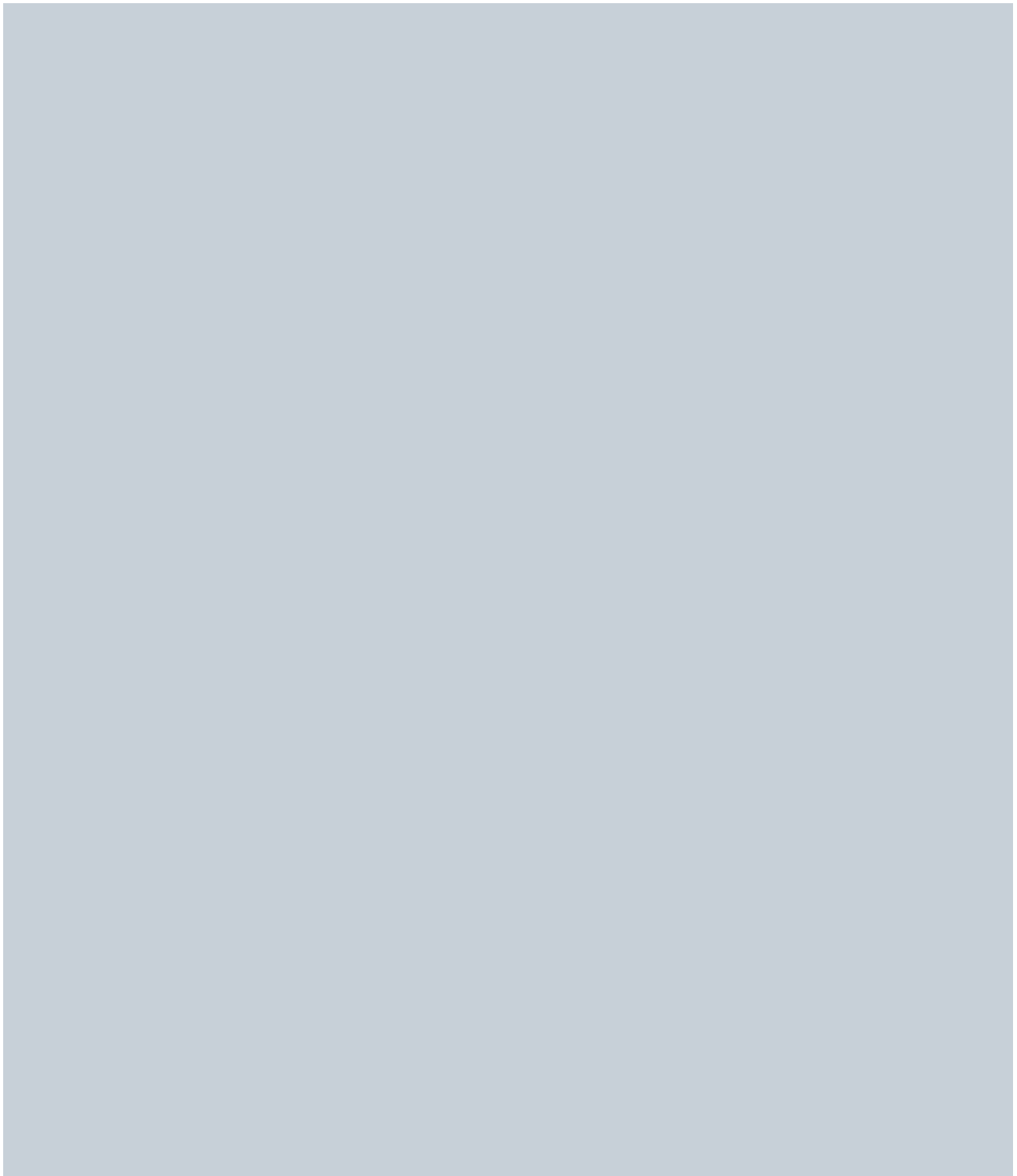
3 Key messaging

Key messages and holding statements. A plan will typically contain examples of these that are produced in advanced and can be used to quickly amend and apply to any crisis. These include, but are not limited to: cause, description, timetable, tone of voice and including suggestions for protection, such as "thorough handwashing in flu season".



4 Internal communication procedures

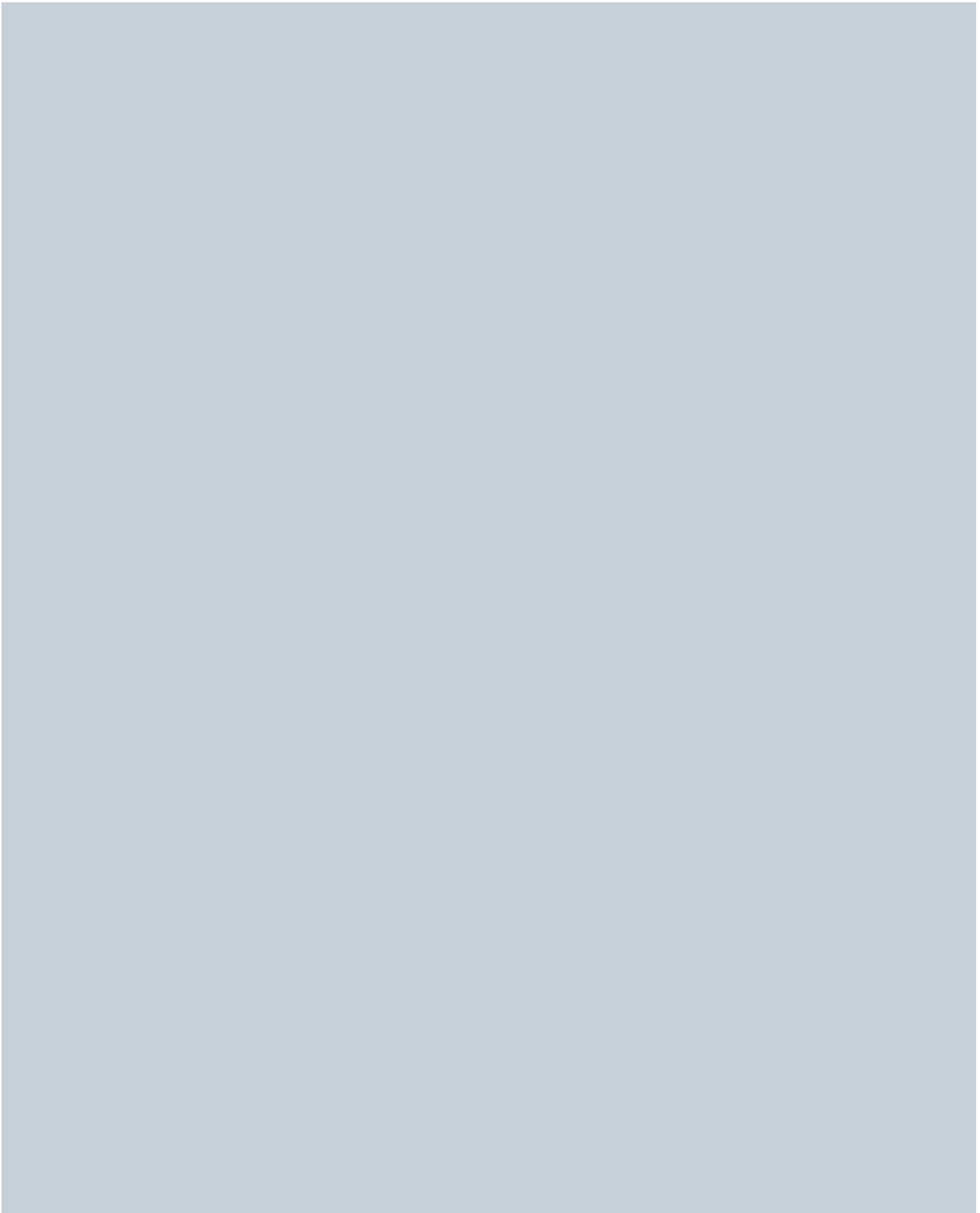
Internal communication is of utmost importance in a crisis as all key stakeholders must be aware of developments at all times. Additionally, any employee can become a spokesperson in social media so a social media policy is key as well as informing staff of key developments. This section should also include a contact list of all key internal stakeholders ranked in order.



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Key media contacts list

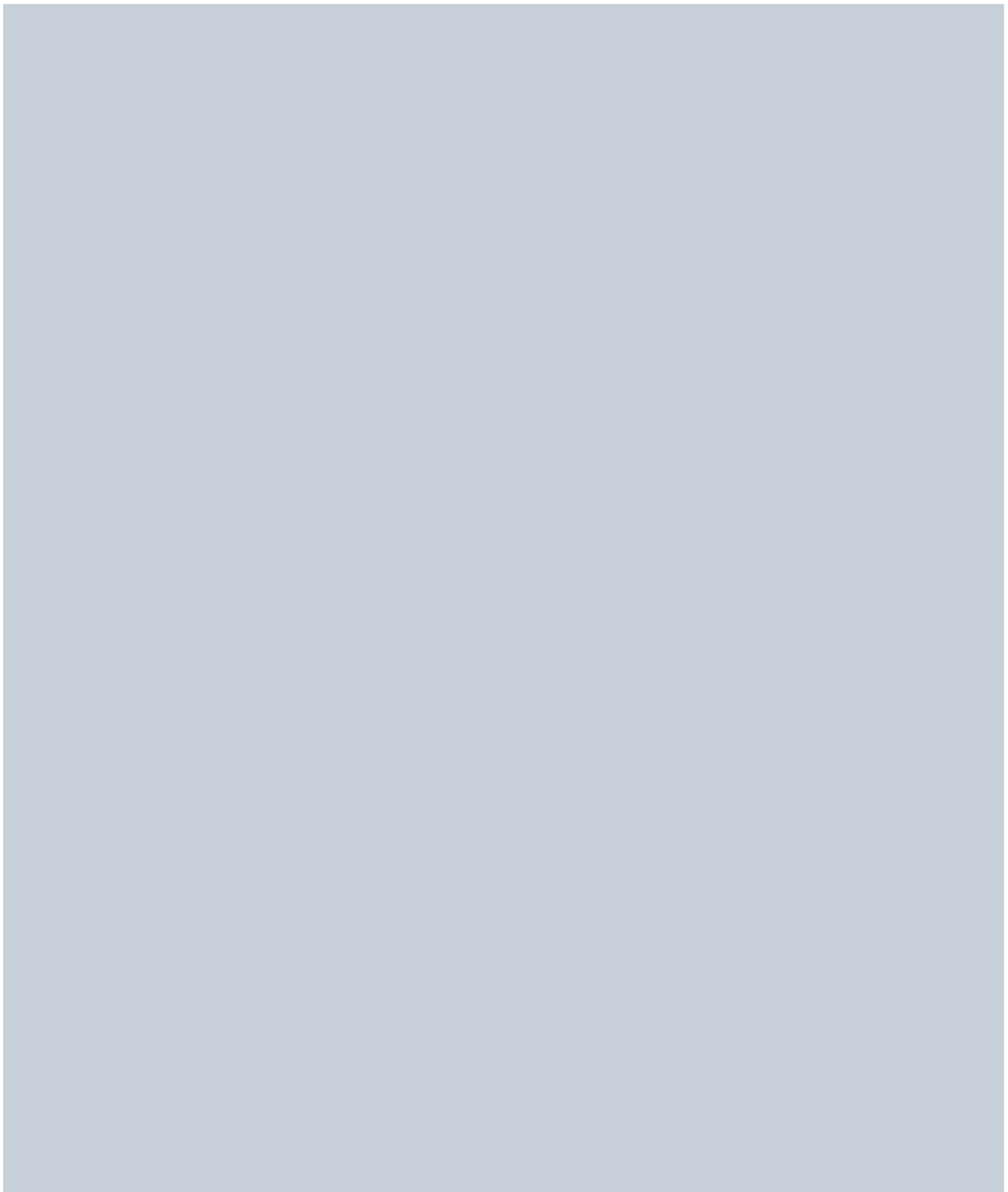
List all key media contacts including name, position, social media handles, email, phone number etc.



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Appendices

Appendices. These can include, but are not limited to: social media checklist, social media policy or guidelines, internal and external communication checklists, fact sheets, profile and bios for spokesperson/s, press kit, holding statements and news and/or press release templates.



Creating a crisis communication plan...

...is not done in a day so thank you for making it this far. All businesses are different and require a different approach, but crisis management planning is something all business should think of before the crisis occurs. Forewarned is forearmed and you will be better prepared - speed is of the essence when a crisis occurs. This template is not exhaustive and there may be parts that you want to add.

Please let me know your thoughts and drop me a line or a DM any time if you have questions, need a quick brainstorm or require advice.

You can sign up to the newsletter on the website: www.rock-social.com

Please do give me a follow to stay up to date:



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Stay safe,

Jessica Audsley

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