CONCEPT

# Crisis Leadership: Leading Through Uncertainty and Disruption

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**Technical depth:** Conceptual · **Practical mode:** Simulation

## Introduction

Supply shocks, cyber incidents, market collapses and reputational storms now arrive with little warning and rarely follow the plan written for them. When a crisis breaks, executives must make consequential decisions on incomplete information while staff, customers, partners and the media watch every move. This Core Concept course equips executives to read uncertain situations, direct the crisis response and lead the organisation through recovery using recognised standards and leadership models. Participants test their judgement in a live simulation and leave with a Crisis Leadership Playbook for their executive team.

## Course Objectives

- Judge the nature of an emerging situation using the Cynefin framework and sensemaking methods, and set the leadership response to match
- Direct the organisation's crisis management capability in line with ISO 22361 and its links to business continuity and risk management
- Lead a crisis management team through structured decision cycles when information is incomplete and time is short
- Oversee crisis communication to staff, customers, partners and the public using an evidence-based strategy
- Anticipate plausible futures with scenario planning and prepare the organisation's strategic options in advance
- Produce a Crisis Leadership Playbook that sets out roles, decision protocols and communication principles for the executive team

## Target Audience

- Executives accountable for enterprise performance and continuity during disruption
- Members of executive and crisis management teams who take strategic decisions in an emergency
- Directors of risk, resilience and business continuity who advise the executive on crisis capability
- Heads of corporate affairs and communication responsible for reputation during a crisis
- Senior operations directors who lead large sites, networks or service portfolios

## Course Outline

## Day 1: Uncertainty, Crisis and the Executive Role

- VUCA Diagnosis: Separating Measurable Risk from Radical Uncertainty
- Crisis Typology and Escalation Criteria Matrix
- Cynefin Framework for Reading the Leadership Context
- Weick's Sensemaking Model and Early-Warning Signals
- Crisis Readiness Self-Assessment Against ISO 22361

## Day 2: Crisis Leadership Frameworks and Standards

- ISO 22361 Crisis Management Principles and Capability Structure
- Boin's Crisis Leadership Tasks: Sensemaking, Decision-Making, Meaning-Making, Termination and Learning
- Meta-Leadership Model: Leading Down, Up, Across and Beyond
- Heifetz Adaptive Leadership: Technical Versus Adaptive Challenges
- Crisis Management Interfaces with ISO 22301 Business Continuity and ISO 31000 Risk Management

## Day 3: Leading the Crisis Response

- Crisis Management Team Structure, Roles and Activation Protocol
- OODA Loop Decision Cycles Under Incomplete Information
- Common Operating Picture and Situation Report Requirements
- Stakeholder Prioritisation with Mitchell's Salience Model
- Crisis Communication Strategy Using Situational Crisis Communication Theory

## Day 4: Foresight, Decision Traps and Recovery

- Scenario Planning Using the Oxford Scenario Planning Approach
- Decision Traps Under Pressure: Groupthink, Anchoring and Pre-Mortem Countermeasures
- Crisis Team Endurance: Battle Rhythm and Rotation Planning
- Recovery Transition and Crisis Termination Criteria
- Post-Crisis Review Using the After-Action Review Method

## Day 5: Crisis Simulation and the Crisis Leadership Playbook

- Simulation: Supply Disruption Escalating to a Reputational Crisis
- Simulation: Cyber Incident Disabling Customer Services
- Executive Media Briefing and Stakeholder Statement Rehearsal
- Crisis Leadership Playbook Drafting
- Board-Level Debrief and Playbook Challenge

## Skills You Will Gain

- Crisis Sensemaking
- Decision-Making Under Pressure
- Crisis Governance
- Crisis Communication Leadership
- Strategic Foresight
- Stakeholder Prioritisation
- Organisational Resilience Oversight
- Post-Crisis Learning

## Why Attend This Course

- Return with a Crisis Leadership Playbook that the executive team can adopt and exercise
- Experience the pressure of an unfolding crisis in a simulation, and review the decisions taken under it
- Know which standards, roles and protocols should already be in place before the next disruption
- Test judgement alongside executives from other sectors and countries who carry similar accountability

## Conclusion

Organisations are judged less by whether a crisis strikes than by how their leaders respond when it does. This course moves from reading uncertain situations and recognising a crisis early, through the international crisis management standard and the principal leadership models, to directing the response, communicating under scrutiny and steering recovery. The final day places participants in an unfolding simulation and turns the lessons into a Crisis Leadership Playbook that gives their executive team agreed roles and decision protocols before the next disruption arrives.