

In-Crisis & After-Action Reviews

Whether you are navigating through a crisis or have recently emerged from one, it is critical for leaders to capture cross functional feedback on the effectiveness of their organization's response.

April 2020

Many leaders conduct reviews after significant events occur, but having one or more reviews during a crisis can be highly beneficial as well. On that note, for major incidents that last longer than a few days, we advise clients to hold routine In-Crisis Reviews (ICRs) to capture the right information to align, adjust course, and execute faster. Depending on the circumstance, ICRs can save lives, jobs, money, and the perception of your brand.

After-Action Reviews (AARs) are more common and essential for all crises. AARs include a full look back so the organization can become more resilient. ICRs and AARs provide leaders valuable feedback on planning, enterprise-wide performance, and task execution. They also review the effectiveness of the task force and response governance structure and dig deep on communications shortfalls and successes. A well facilitated review will inform leaders how to correct deficiencies, sustain strengths, and focus on future performance, but the timing of each is the difference.

This chart below provides a quick visual on when to use one or both exercises:

WHEN TO USE ICRs VS. AARs	ICR	AAR
Are you in a crisis that will last longer than a few days?	●	●
Has the crisis already passed?		●

STEPS TO CONDUCT ICRS AND AARS

01. Facilitator to gather key information from the lead executive(s).

02. Introduce or remind the team about the review process (internal communication).

03. Facilitator to interview key functional leads individually.

04. Facilitator to talk to select external stakeholders where applicable to provide a 360 look at the crisis.

05. Facilitator coordinates with the lead executive(s) to discuss the best format for the session with recommendations for approval.

06. Conduct the session focused on how well the team navigated the crisis (thus far) in areas of team performance, individual performance, interdependent and cross functional performance, and internal and external communications performance.

07. Conclude with key learnings and a review of the areas and policies to continue and areas to change.

08. A report is prepared by the facilitator for the firm in partnership with the lead executives and legal or risk management.

09. A Table Top exercise facilitated internally or externally is recommended as a refresher in six months.

10. The leadership team continues to keep preparedness as a priority on a routine basis.

Jabian's unique perspective and expertise enables organizations to host a virtual or in-person workshop to increase the effectiveness of your team and your crisis response.

We first meet with the senior executive lead(s) to understand the crisis and current needs. We then suggest interviews with each functional leader before holding a 2-4 hour workshop identifying the key lessons learned, opportunities ahead, and ways to increase communication internally and externally. We will share other examples and approaches based on our experts' experiences leading through crises. We also coordinate with your legal and risk departments and advise clients to hold a Table Top preparedness exercise six months after the AAR to keep the lessons learned fresh. Table Tops are facilitated by an internal or external expert who conducts mock scenarios that could happen to your company (e.g. a pandemic, cyberattack, negative national media story, etc.).

Our expert facilitators have substantial experience facilitating and leading through major crises. From military activities to bridge collapses, national news incidents, and an unprecedented power failure at the world's busiest airport, our people in senior leadership roles are living and solving major incidents. The marriage between leading through the crisis and strong facilitation experience will provide your company with highly effective results from ICRs and AARs.

To learn more about how Jabian Consulting can help your organization learn from crises during and after their resolution, please contact us at planahead@jabian.com.