



Crisis Media Plan for Beak and Skiff Apple Orchards

By Kendall Hymes

PRL 530

Introduction to Crises

A crisis is an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact the organization's performance and generate negative outcomes (Cheng, 2018) Crises can arise from various expected and unexpected factors, and often require immediate attention. A crisis management plan is a documented set of procedures and guidelines designed to help an organization respond to a crisis effectively. These plans include guidelines for identifying potential crisis situations, establishing crisis management teams and their responsibilities, determining protocols for managing crises.

Crisis Management Team

Marianne Brennan - *Director of Brand Management*

As the Director of Brand Management at Beak and Skiff, Marianne Brennan is responsible for both the strategic vision and marketing efforts for Beak and Skiff. She develops and implements marketing strategies to promote both Beak and Skiff as an orchard, and their related products.

Pete Fleckenstein - *Apple Hill Campus Manager*

As the campus manager for Beak and Skiff, Pete oversees the day-to-day operations of the entire campus, including the orchard's cultivation and harvest, the restaurant's food preparation and service, and the distillery's production and sales.

Bryan Atkins - *Director of Operations*

As the Director of Operations at Beak and Skiff, Bryan oversees the overall management and coordination of all operational aspects of the business. He is also responsible for managing the distillery operations, including production, quality control, and compliance with regulations.

Purpose

The purpose of this crisis management plan is to provide a timely and effective response to stakeholders in the event of a crisis. Beak and Skiff Apple Orchard is committed to enforcing the preventative measures required to limit the possibility and severity of potential crises. Through this plan, we seek to ensure the safety, well-being and enjoyment of all staff and visitors of our campus.

Summary of Organization

Located in the heart of Central New York, Beak and Skiff is a pick-your-own apple orchard, cafe, and distillery campus. Our orchards operate from August to November, offering apples native to Central New York. In addition to enjoying the apples fresh off the tree, visitors can enjoy a wide variety of apple treats baked fresh at our cafe and sold in our general store. Year round, we distill our own apple cider and flavored whiskey that we distribute to retailers across the state. In the summer, we host a concert series that brings in talent from across the country. For five generations, we have been dedicated to providing quality products and experiences to the Central New York community.

Prior Crises and Media Monitoring

Beak & Skiff Apple Orchards has enjoyed a long-standing reputation for excellence, with no notable crises since its establishment. The absence of major incidents does not diminish the importance of having a comprehensive crisis management strategy in place. As one of Central New York's prime destinations for apple picking, dining, and entertainment, Beak & Skiff understands the value of its reputation and the need to be prepared for any unforeseen circumstances.

Key Stakeholders

- Beak and Skiff staff
- Beak and Skiff visitors
- Tourism partners
- Local grocery stores and retailers
- Local breweries and liquor stores
- Government officials

Internal and External Communication Networks

- Instagram: @beakandskiff
- Facebook: Beak and Skiff Apple Orchards
- Twitter: @beakandskiff (inactive since 2017)
- Internal blog: <https://beakandskiff.com/news/>

Media Contact List

Outlet	Outlet	Outlet	Outlet
<i>Syracuse.com</i>	<i>Don Cazentre</i>	<i>Food Reporter</i>	<i>dcazentre@nyup.com</i>
<i>Syracuse.com</i>	<i>Samantha House</i>	<i>Feature Writer</i>	<i>shouse@syracuse.com</i>
<i>WSYR</i>	<i>Megan Hatch</i>	<i>Digital Producer</i>	<i>meganhatch@local syr.com</i>
<i>WSYR</i>	<i>Nicole Sommavilla</i>	<i>Reporter</i>	<i>nicolesommavilla@l ocalsyr.com</i>
<i>WSYR</i>	<i>Clare Normoyle</i>	<i>Digital Producer</i>	<i>clarenormoyle@loc alsyr.com</i>

Risks and Potential Threats

Victim-level risks

- Severe weather and natural disasters
 - Moderate susceptibility and high severity
 - Warning signs: Poor weather forecasts, emergency weather alerts

Accidental-level risks

- Equipment malfunction
 - Low susceptibility and moderate severity
 - Warning signs: Maintenance checks identifying potential interviews

Preventable-level risks

- Consumption of rotten produce
 - Highly susceptible and moderate severity
 - Warning signs: Visible decay, discoloration, mushy texture on produce

Crisis Response Strategies

Risk 1- Severe Natural Disaster

Extreme weather, such as hailstorms, frost, or flooding, can have devastating effects on Beak & Skiff Apple Orchards, posing a risk to the orchard's apple crops, buildings, and infrastructure, potentially leading to operational delays and revenue loss. Trees within the orchard are vulnerable to damage from hail or frost, which can destroy blossoms or fruit, impacting the yield. Additionally, severe storms or hurricanes can cause damage to buildings and infrastructure, disrupting operations and further compounding the financial impact.

Organizational Response

In the case of extreme weather, the first step would be to close the Beak and Skiff campus until weather subsides. An announcement will be posted on all official social media accounts and the website, explaining the closure and providing safety information. In the aftermath, we will conduct a thorough assessment of the orchard grounds to evaluate the extent of damage to apple crops, machinery and buildings on campus. A detailed report of the damage assessment findings, including photographs and descriptions of the damage, will be prepared and shared with the management team and stakeholders.

A statement addressing stakeholders will be drafted to inform them of the impact of the extreme weather on Beak & Skiff Apple Orchards. This statement will include key messages regarding the extent of the damage, steps being taken to address the damage, and plans for recovery and reopening. A second statement will be shared via email to customers who have subscribed to the orchard's mailing list and provided to local news outlets for dissemination. Regular updates will be provided to stakeholders on the progress of recovery efforts and plans for reopening Beak & Skiff Apple Orchards.

Risk 2- Equipment Malfunction

Equipment malfunctions at Beak & Skiff Apple Orchards can have significant effects on operations across all facets of the orchard. In the case of an equipment malfunction, the orchard may need to temporarily halt production, affecting both apple picking activities and the operation of the distillery, café, and general store. Production delays caused by these malfunctions could impact supply chain timelines, affecting the availability of products for sale. It is crucial for Beak & Skiff Apple Orchards to regularly maintain and monitor their equipment to minimize the risk of malfunctions and mitigate their potential impact on the business, and to have a plan in case such malfunctions occur.

Organizational Response

In the event of equipment failure, Beak and Skiff will halt all operations that involve said equipment to prevent further damage. Upon this pause, we will notify our maintenance teams and management to assess the severity of the damage. While the broken equipment is down, we will utilize backup equipment to minimize downtime. We will notify any relevant staff of the situation to keep them informed and adjust production schedules accordingly. Once the equipment is repaired or replaced, thorough testing is conducted to ensure it is functioning correctly, and operations are gradually resumed to full capacity, with specific post-incident reviews conducted to identify areas for improvement in the equipment maintenance and production strategies.

Risk 3- Consumption of Rotten Produce

Pick-your-own apple orchards pose the threat of visitors picking rotten fruit. Since orchard-goers don't have the expertise that expert growers have, they may not be able to identify signs of bad fruit. Consuming rotten fruit can cause harm to the individual's health, leading to illness. This could result in legal liabilities for the orchard, as well as damage to its reputation and loss of customer trust.

Organizational Response

In the event of a visitor getting sick from consuming a rotten apple at Beak & Skiff Apple Orchards, we will take immediate action to address the situation and prevent further harm. We will ask that the visitor identify the area in which they picked the apples. We will temporarily close this area of the orchard and survey the area to determine whether or not there is a problem related to the tree itself. We will also review our agricultural safety protocols and provide additional training to our staff to ensure the highest standards of food safety are maintained. We will place educational signs throughout the orchard, educating our visitors on the signs of a rotten apple, including soft or mushy texture, wrinkled or shriveled skin, dark spots or discoloration, an unpleasant odor, mold growth, leaking juice, or visible decay. We will also update our website to include a page about food safety, and how to identify bad apples.

Proactive Recommendations

While crises are unpredictable, we can take several steps to limit the possibility and severity of the damage of these events. Here are some preventative measures that Beak and Skiff can take towards limiting the occurrence of crises.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation:

Regularly assess the orchard's vulnerability to severe weather and natural disasters. Implement mitigation measures such as reinforcing buildings, securing equipment, and developing emergency response plans.

Regular Maintenance:

Implement a regular maintenance schedule for all equipment, including machinery in the orchard, distillery, and restaurant. This helps identify and address potential issues before they escalate into major malfunctions.

Backup Production Methods:

Purchase additional equipment that can be brought in for production in the case of malfunction from any regular equipment. Additionally, establish an alternative production method that can be used in the absence of certain equipment.

Visitor Education:

Educate visitors about how to identify rotten apples and other produce. Provide signs and information that explains the signs of rotten fruit and the signs of food poisoning.