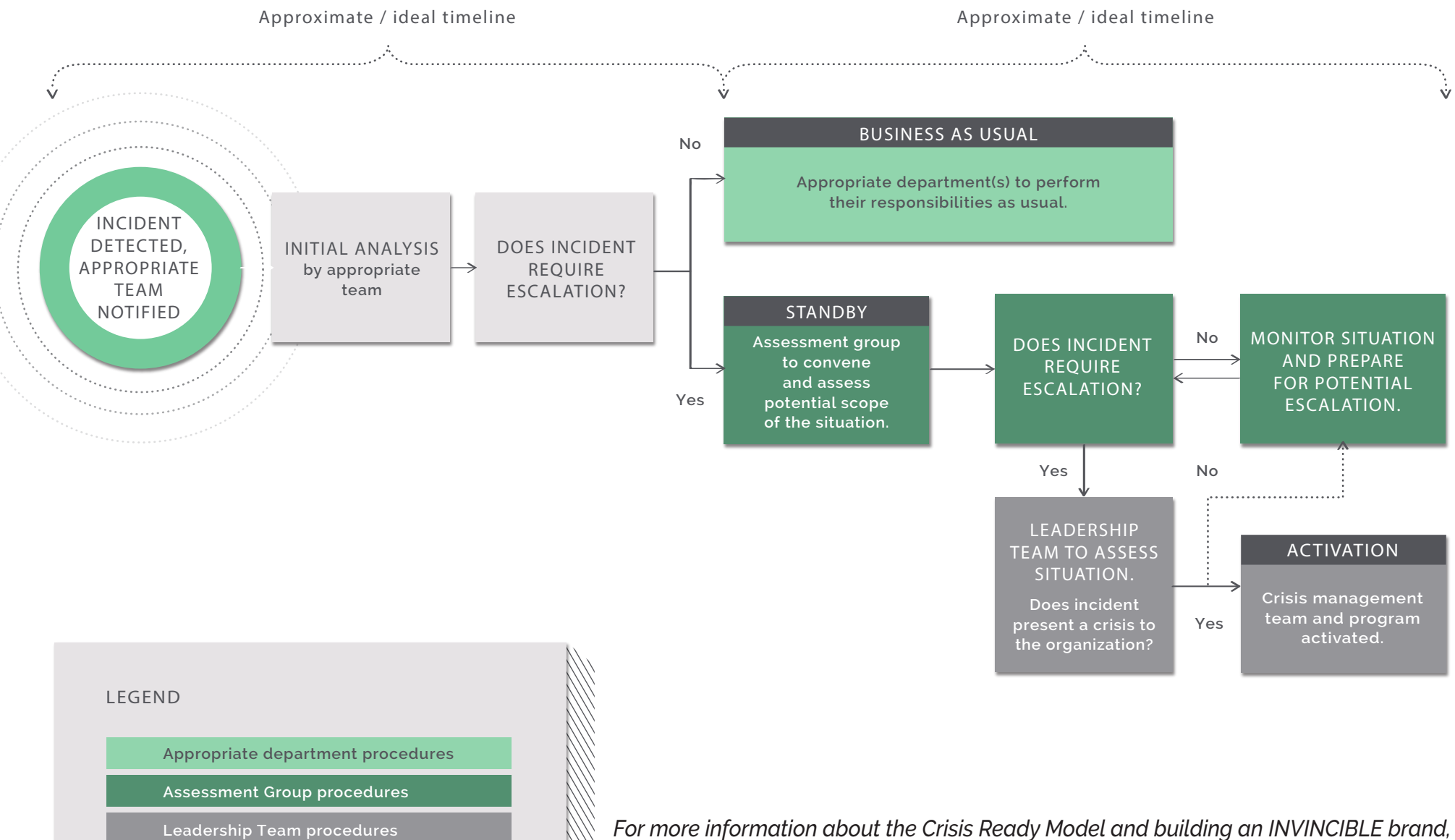




# CRISIS READY HIGH-LEVEL ESCALATION PROTOCOL OVERVIEW

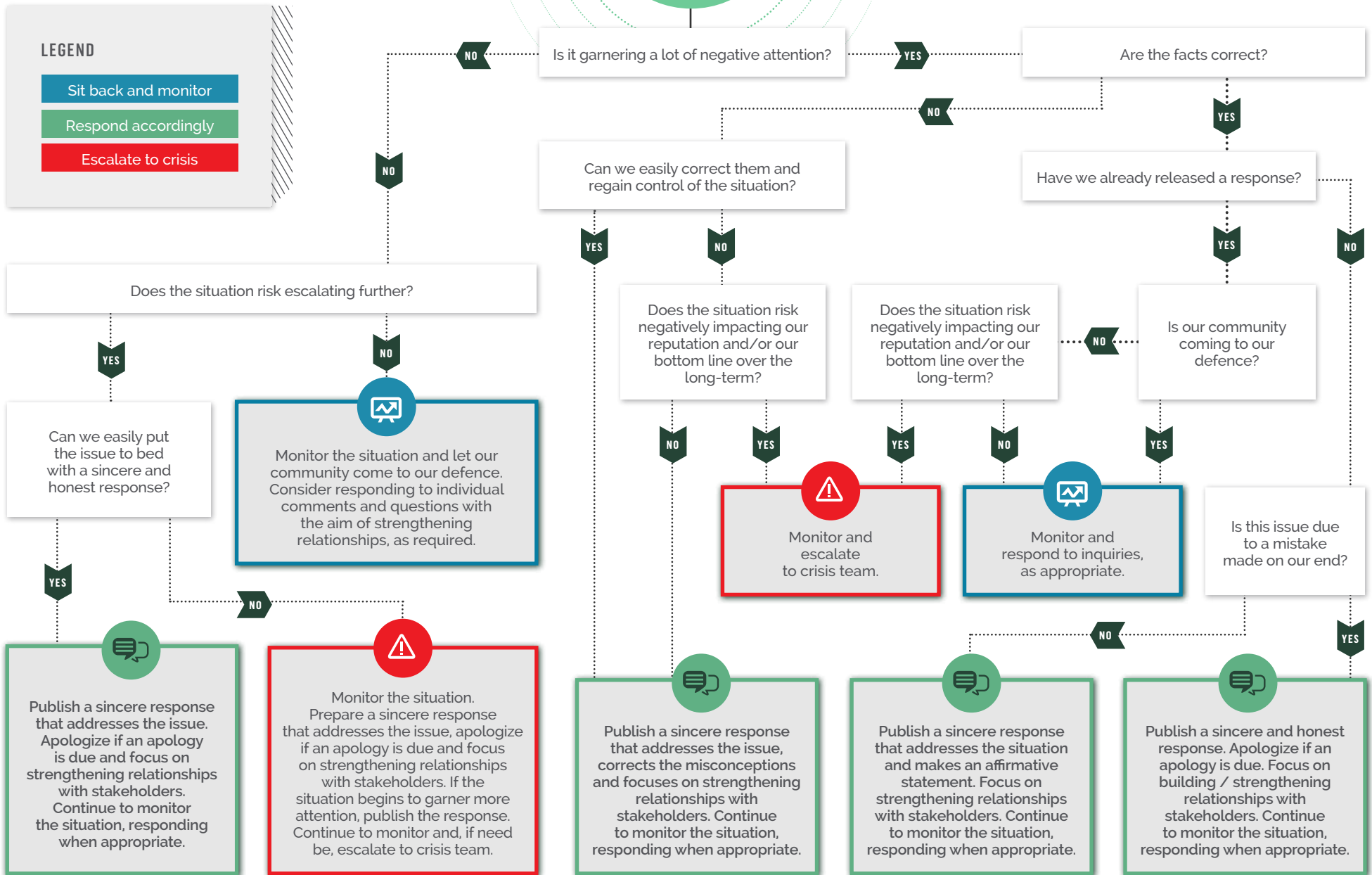
By Melissa Agnes



For more information about the Crisis Ready Model and building an INVINCIBLE brand, visit [melissaagnes.com](http://melissaagnes.com).



# CRISIS READY™ FLOWCHART











# CRISIS READY™ FORMULA RESPONDING TO EMOTIONAL RELATABILITY

By Melissa Agnes

HIGH EMOTIONAL  
RELATABILITY

LOGIC ( VALIDATION + RELATABILITY + PROOF )

## DISSECTING THE FORMULA

In order to overcome the effects of human emotion and resonate logically in instances where negative emotional relatability is high, you have to first get into the hearts of those you are trying to reach. To do this, wrap your logical response in:

### VALIDATION

Sincerely validate the emotions being felt.

### RELATABILITY

Emotionally relate to what matters to those who are feeling the emotions.

### PROOF

Only once you are successful in Validation + Relatability, will you be granted the opportunity to prove your logic through simultaneous and effective action and communication.

### CRISIS READY™ ACTION ITEM

Teach your team to detect emotional relatability and be able to act and communicate with emotional intelligence. This is one of the secrets to being Crisis Ready™.



# THE **CRISIS READY™** FORMULA FOR MANAGING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES



By Melissa Agnes

Controversies are amongst the most difficult types of negative events to manage effectively. Why? Because they are **emotionally charged situations that automatically segregate your audience**. Not to mention that, due to their emotional relatability, they present a high-risk for fast escalation and virality.

Furthermore, with our current societal climate—with everything from the *Me Too* and *Time's Up* movements, to society's collective stance against racial discrimination, and more—**controversial issues are an increasing high-risk scenario for many organizations**.

Fortunately, there is a **4-step Crisis Ready formula for effectively managing the majority of controversial issues**. Share this formula with your team prior to experiencing a controversy, and be ready to get ahead of this type of incident that threatens both high-velocity of reach, and long-term impact on your brand's reputation.



## THIS FORMULA SHOULD BE USED

- When preparing for an inevitable or self-imposed controversy
- When managing an escalating controversial issue

*Being crisis ready is a powerful initiative that builds brand invincibility.  
To learn more about becoming crisis ready and building an INVINCIBLE brand,  
visit [melissaagnes.com](http://melissaagnes.com).*



# The Crisis Ready Model

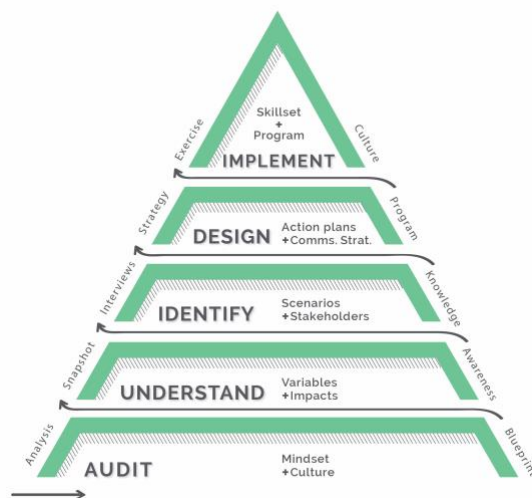
By Melissa Agnes

## Crisis Ready objective

The goal of being crisis ready is to have a culture where your entire team knows how to:

- ✓ Identify rising risks in real-time;
- ✓ Quickly and appropriately assess the potential impact of that risk on your organization; and
- ✓ Respond in a way that increases stakeholder trust and goodwill in your brand—making your brand INVINCIBLE.

Following is a high-level description of each phase of the Crisis Ready Model. For more information on these phases, visit [melissaagnes.com](http://melissaagnes.com) or order Melissa's book, *Crisis Ready—Building an Invincible Brand in an Uncertain World*.



## Audit: your organization's current mindset and culture

The audit phase is about analyzing where your organization currently sits on the crisis ready spectrum, with the aim of crafting a blueprint of strategic next steps towards building an INVINCIBLE brand.

## Understand: the different variables and impacts

The blueprint created in the audit phase gives a clear snapshot of the level of internal education required. The goal is to build a consistent baseline of understanding and awareness for everyone who will be involved in developing and implementing the crisis ready program.

## Identify: your high-risk scenarios and stakeholder expectations

The more in-depth your investigation into your organization's current processes, culture, and requirements, the more practical your crisis ready program will be. That's the point of this phase: to gather the data required to create a robust, scalable, and practical crisis ready program.

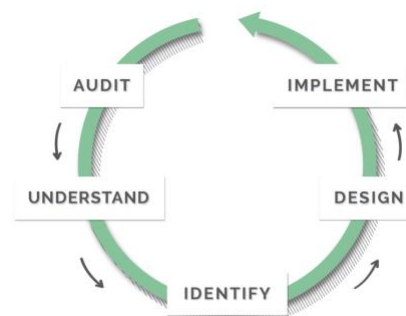
## Design: your action plans and communication strategies

Having a program in place that's scalable across all types of issues and crises enables you to be ready for the worst, but also allows you to excel at handling the minor issues, meaning you will always have a solid strategy no matter what arises.

## Implement: the crisis ready program and skillset into the culture of your organization

This is where you proactively begin to implement the crisis ready culture by conducting simulations that are designed to test the program and strengthen your team's issue and crisis management skills.

While there are five phases of the Crisis Ready Model, just because you've reached phase 5 doesn't mean you're done. Building, implementing, and maintaining your crisis ready culture requires an everyday, proactive commitment.







## ABOUT MELISSA AGNES



Author of *Crisis Ready: Building an Invincible Brand in an Uncertain World*, Melissa Agnes is a leading authority on crisis preparedness, reputation management, and brand protection. Agnes is a coveted speaker, commentator, and advisor to some of today's leading organizations faced with the greatest risks.

As a strategic advisor and keynote speaker, Melissa Agnes has worked with NATO, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense, financial firms, technology companies, healthcare organizations, cities and municipalities, law enforcement agencies, global non-profits, and many others, helping them understand risk and build invincible brands that can withstand even the most devastating of events. In 2015, she gave a TEDx talk in Los Angeles where she discussed the secret to successful crisis management in the 21st century.

Agnes is the editor of the Crisis Ready Blog, a contributor to *Forbes*, and a go-to source for the press, with recent coverage including *the Wall Street Journal*, *VIBE Magazine*, *USA Today*, and many others.

As a university guest lecturer, Agnes teaches crisis management in university courses around the world, including at NYU and McGill.



# Crisis Ready Rules

By Melissa Agnes



If you don't **own the crisis**, the crisis will own you.

If you ask a question, be prepared for answers you don't like. If the question is important, **ask it anyway**.

Never launch a new product, campaign or communication without **assessing the potential risk**.

**Greater trust** instilled with stakeholders gives you the merited **benefit of the doubt** at the onset of a crisis.

You can't outrun the Internet. You have to **outsmart it**.

Always assume **there's video**.

**Emotion always** overpowers reason.

When in doubt, **focus on** (re)building and strengthening **relationships**.

You never know where you will be when crisis strikes. Ensure multiple **remotely accessible copies** of your program are **safely stored**.

**A mistake can be forgiven**. The appearance of a cover-up will not be.

A **legal strategy** is vital to dealing with a crisis, but it is **NOT the public face** of your response.

**Social media** is the gasoline, **not the fire**. (It can also be the smoke and **the rainbow**.)



# Crisis Ready Rules

By Melissa Agnes



There is **no such thing** as a social media crisis.

The more you think you don't need a **crisis ready program**, the more desperately you DO need one.

Plans give you steps to follow; **programs strengthen your culture.**

**No part** of crisis preparedness or crisis management should happen in a **vacuum.**

No matter what happens to the ship, **the captain is always responsible.**

**People above** process and bottom line. **Always.**

**One poor statement** (or tweet) can **undermine** an entire crisis management **strategy.**

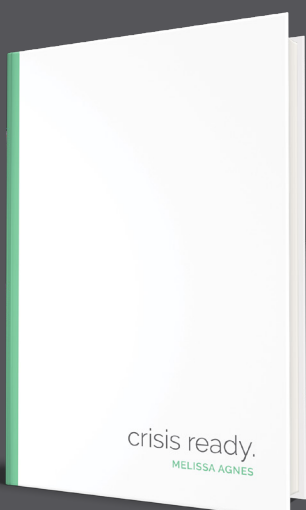
When it comes to in-crisis communication, **the press release is dead.**

The longer you take to **effectively respond** to a crisis, the more of a **Crisis Response Penalty** (CRP) you will suffer.

Just because an issue goes viral, **does not make it a crisis.**

A crisis for one organization **does not automatically translate** into a crisis for another.

Successful crisis management requires **effective action and communication** to happen **simultaneously.**



## Crisis Ready Rules

Taken from the book *Crisis Ready – Building an Invincible Brand in an Uncertain World*, by Melissa Agnes.

For more information visit  
[melissaagnes.com](http://melissaagnes.com)