The single biggest predictor of harm in a crisis is the perception of not caring. Every stakeholder expects the organization to care. Time is the enemy in a crisis, so delays in demonstrating care cause trust to fall. That is why knowing when to engage stakeholders is essential to effective crisis response.

THE FOUR QUESTION TEST

provides the decision criteria needed for determining when to engage:

Will those who matter to us expect us to do or say something now?

Will silence be seen as indifference to the harm the crisis is causing, or as an affirmation of guilt?

Are others speaking about us now, shaping the perception of us among those who matter to us?

3

If we wait, will we lose the ability to influence the outcome?

If the answer to any one of these questions is yes, engage stakeholders now.