

## CHECKLIST

## Disaster Response

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Every company has a unique approach when responding to disasters, and no single guide can provide a comprehensive cookie-cutter checklist. Establishing a strategic disaster response plan requires multiple stakeholders, detailed discussions about philosophies, resources, and responsibilities, and a coordinated effort.

It's crucial to have your company's plan of action created well before disaster strikes. That way, you're ready to act if the time comes. The following framework can be used as a guide for creating a strategic disaster response strategy.

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- Identify your stakeholders.  
Stakeholders may be decision-makers responsible for implementing your disaster-strategy-CEO, HR, CSR, and others. It might also include employee representation if impending disaster threatens close to home.  
*Who are your key stakeholders?*
- Understand your resources and evaluation criteria.  
While it is important to help as many victims of disasters as possible, there are certain budgetary and resource limitations that you'll have to work within. Understanding what your company is able to give and how you'll decide to utilize those resources will be key to your strategy.  
*What is your disaster response budget? What key resources (in-kind donations, employee time) can you utilize in your disaster response framework?*
- Have your technology solution in place.  
Technology will help you communicate disaster response initiatives, facilitate transactions, coordinate efforts through engagement elements, and distribute payments. Having the site running before disaster strikes ensures your company can help immediately and quickly.  
*Is your technology solution in place? Have you determined best practices for communicating disaster response initiatives through that platform?*

- Determine how your company can support affected employees.  
If disaster threats reach close to home, employees will want to understand how they can support each other. Employee assistance funds can be a great way to provide a scalable opportunity for employee donations. It's important to understand income tax laws within your country and work with those. If you feel an employee assistance fund will work well for your company and need help finding an organization to work with, we're happy to recommend a few of our favorites!

*Have you taken the time to set up a fund before disaster strikes? How can employees contribute to it? How will you decide how funds are distributed?*

- Establish your nonprofit partner.  
It's important to work with a nonprofit before disaster strikes. To determine a strong nonprofit partner for your company, think about different areas of response: immediate relief, direct care, indirect care, or long-term recovery. Once a partnership is established, put together a strategy for communication during disasters, understand nonprofit needs, and employee response opportunities.

*Have you identified a nonprofit partner for your company's disaster response efforts? What is your plan for communication during a disaster and your mutual disaster response strategy?*

- Prepare your employees.  
Before disaster strikes, it is important to get employees registered with your nonprofit partner, trained in response, and have background checks completed. Often those three things are needed for an employee to deploy to a disaster site. Completing that process before aid is needed saves valuable time. It is also a good idea to start the process of collecting information that employees are willing to share, like whether they are a bilingual speaker - providing relief in a victim's native tongue can make all the difference in an otherwise impossible situation.

*Have you determined a process for employees to understand how to set up in your nonprofit partner's system? Do you have a process in place to collect key information?*

- Don't forget about long-term recovery efforts.  
Just because the sun is shining, doesn't mean the work is done. Volunteers, power, clean water, and housing are all still needed almost a year after 2017's string of devastating hurricanes. Work with your nonprofit partner to establish plans for long-term recovery assistance either through grants or skilled volunteer efforts.

*How is your company prepared to facilitate long-term recovery after a disaster?*

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