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18 top public-relations experts CEOs scramble to hire in a crisis

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- **When companies, execs, and celebrities face crises, they call on PR experts to control the damage**
- **CEOs keep these pros on speed dial to influence press coverage and keep their businesses humming.**
- **Insider identified 18 PR execs who've handled some of the biggest controversies in recent years.**

Brands once sought crisis PR for one-off incidents like an airplane crash, a product recall, or a scandal. Now, in a deeply polarized world grappling with labor unrest, online misinformation, and cultural conflicts, crisis communications have become an everyday need.

Crisis PR has also grown to encompass risk assessment and mitigation, and clients are relying more on PR pros to advise on potential outcomes of regular events like product launches, marketing campaigns, and even executive hires.

Insider identified 18 top crisis-PR pros across the US, based on their clients, influence, and impact. To choose the people on this list, we spoke with journalists, clients, and in-house PR staff who often work with crisis firms.

Featuring both boutique firms and global agencies, our list includes crisis veterans including the CommCore founder and CEO Andy Gilman, who counseled Tylenol through its 1982 poisoning scare; The Levinson Group's senior managing director Kaye Verville, who worked with E. Jean Carroll during her lawsuit against Donald Trump; and Second Floor Advisors' cofounder Thomas Isen, a former Biden White House advisor.

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Thomas Isen, Second Floor Advisors



Isen, a cofounder of Second Floor. Second Floor Advisors

Isen and Alex Yudelson, both former Biden White House advisors, founded this “impact engagement and strategic communications” firm in July. “We specialize in the area where issues intersect with politics,” Isen told Insider.

In 2023, “we’ve seen politics arrive at the doorstep of our clients,” Isen said. “Speaking out on every issue in the news cycle is the wrong approach. Instead, building an authentic and meaningful social-impact platform has served as our clients’ best defense.”

Rather than just respond to crisis situations, Isen said his mission is to “help companies and individuals be proactive to avoid a crisis in the first place,” he said. “We had an NFL team reach out to us about whether or not to advocate for a gun-control bill in their state legislature.”