

## BE PROACTIVE, HONEST, AND TRANSPARENT

We guarantee you'll need to communicate sooner than you will feel comfortable. But, put yourself in your customers or donors shoes. Give yourself permission to notify before your forensic analysis is done. Have a timeline for updates. People will appreciate your transparency.

# WHAT TO DO WHEN IT'S *YOUR DATA* THAT JUST GOT BREACHED

By Mandy O'Neill

## RECORD A TIMELINE OF EVENTS

**66% of data breaches take months to discover.**

A fact-based timeline is your primary map to figuring how to explain and "fix" the problem. Your legal and PR team will rely on the accuracy of this deliverable .

## EXPLAIN EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED AND WHAT YOU'RE DOING ABOUT IT

As succinctly as possible, explain what happened and exactly the steps taken, or being taken in your media releases, emails, and direct mail. Use plain language. Refer to your support site for more details about the breach.

## DESIGNATE YOUR INTERNAL RESPONSE TEAM

Keep this response team small and nimble to allow rapid response and approvals. It should include your operation staff, your legal team, your public relations team, CIO, and CEO.

## ESTABLISH CONSUMER OR DONOR SUPPORT WEBPAGE

Set up a dedicated webpage and helpline that your consumers or donors can call with the latest news, FAQs, and other facts and reassurances that your donors and customers will want to see.

## EXPRESS GENUINE REGRET

Use your most visible or highest ranking executive to issue a heartfelt apology. Own the breach and apologize fully. It doesn't matter to your customers or donors that you were the victim of a crime. They will only feel a loss of trust in you that you exposed them.

## DON'T GO IT ALONE

You're in for some sleepless nights. Hire outside help to get you through. If you need security specialists, hire them. If you need a temporary crisis public relations team, hire them. If you need a good copywriter to set up your consumer page, hire them.

## COMMUNICATION TIPS

Avoid absolutes. Acknowledge that details may change as you learn more. Share a timetable for getting information out. Avoid misleading statements. Don't withhold key details or developments. Share what's being done to prevent further loss, internally, as well as for your consumer/donor.

## MONITOR SOCIAL MEDIA, BUT IF YOU'RE 'BIG' MAINSTREAM MEDIA IS WHERE PEOPLE WILL GO FIRST FOR INFORMATION

Do your best to make this a "one-day" story by delivering regular updates and timelines.