

THE **10** WORST THINGS
TO DO IN A CRISIS
(AND WHAT TO DO INSTEAD)

THE 10 WORST THINGS TO DO IN A CRISIS

1

Run Silent.
Say Nothing
At All.

2

Put 50 People
In a Room.
They'll Fix It.

3

Get Ahead
of the Story.
Declare Victory.

4

Get Out There
and Make Your
Voice Heard.

5

Post It on
Social Media.

6

Use Pictures.
Use Video.

7

Give Out Numbers.
A Lot of Them.

8

Point a Finger
at a Worse
Offender.

9

Confuse a
Statement with
a Solution.

10

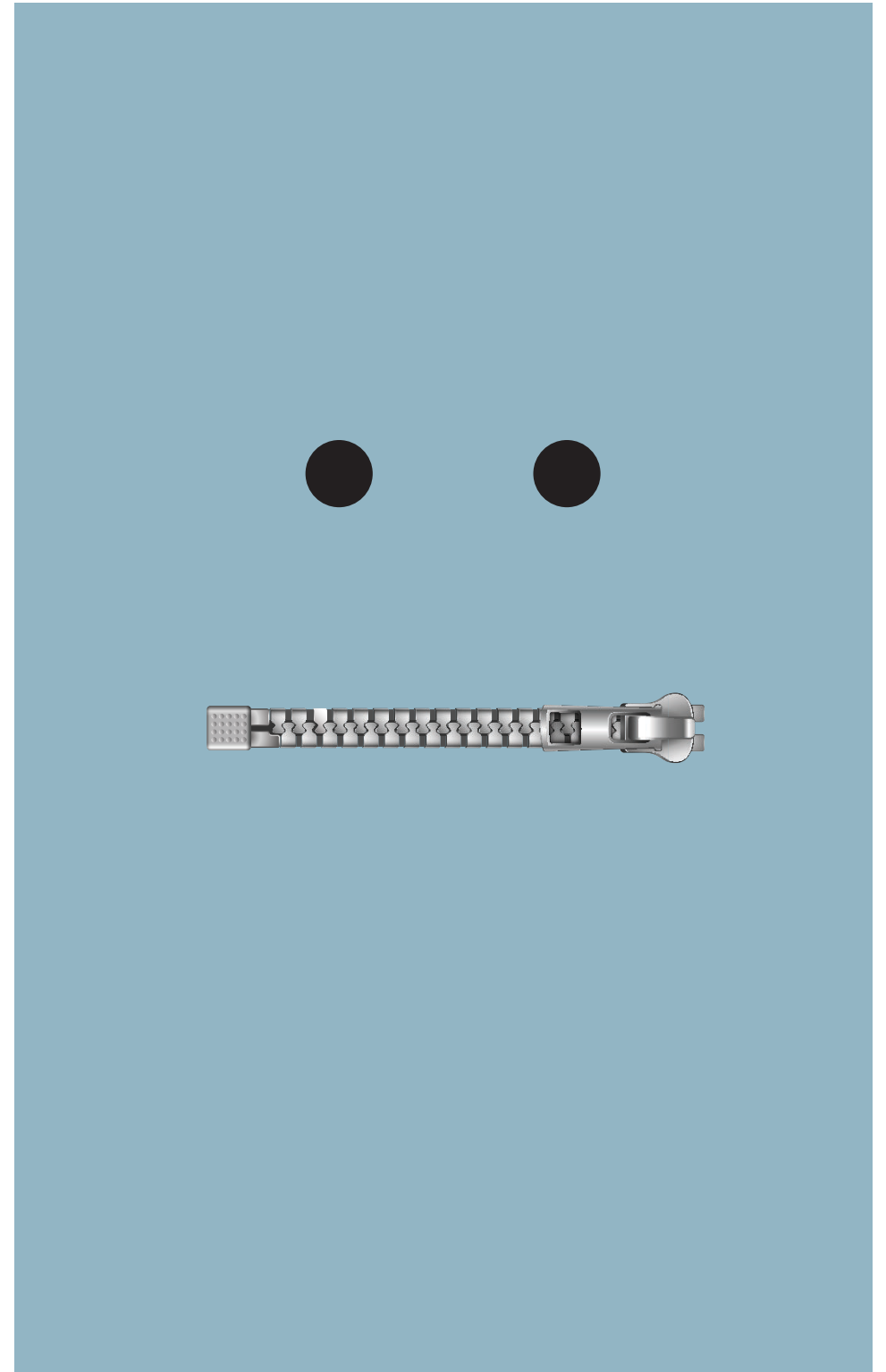
Believe the Crisis
is Forever... or
Already Over.

1

Run Silent. Say Nothing At All.

Total silence can cause confusion, anger, accusation. There are people who need to hear from you.

Who's the most important audience? Speak to them directly. What's their central question? Answer it. Be truthful.



2

Put 50 People In a Room. They'll Fix It.

Crisis management requires focus, speed, decision-making authority. Small empowered teams work best.

Let everyone else focus on running the business.



3

Get Ahead of the Story. Declare Victory.

The first “facts” that emerge will probably be wrong. The planned solution may not work. What is said first must stand the test of time. So announce nothing, predict nothing that isn’t solid and certain. Speak in themes rather than using specific details.



4

Get Out There and Make Your Voice Heard.

Whatever the company says about itself in the press will be less credible than what is said about the company. Media may not reach the most important audiences anyway. Speak directly to those who matter; take needed action.



5

Post It on Social Media.

Social media can quickly make things go viral, but is not as effective at calming things down. Monitor very closely and engage thoughtfully, but participate selectively. Even better to take issues out of social media and solve them as close to person-to-person as possible.



6

Use Pictures. Use Video.

Fresh images can bring a waning story back to life. Very few images are worth prolonging media attention. Stay away from visuals and concentrate on solving the issues.



7

Give Out Numbers. A Lot of Them.

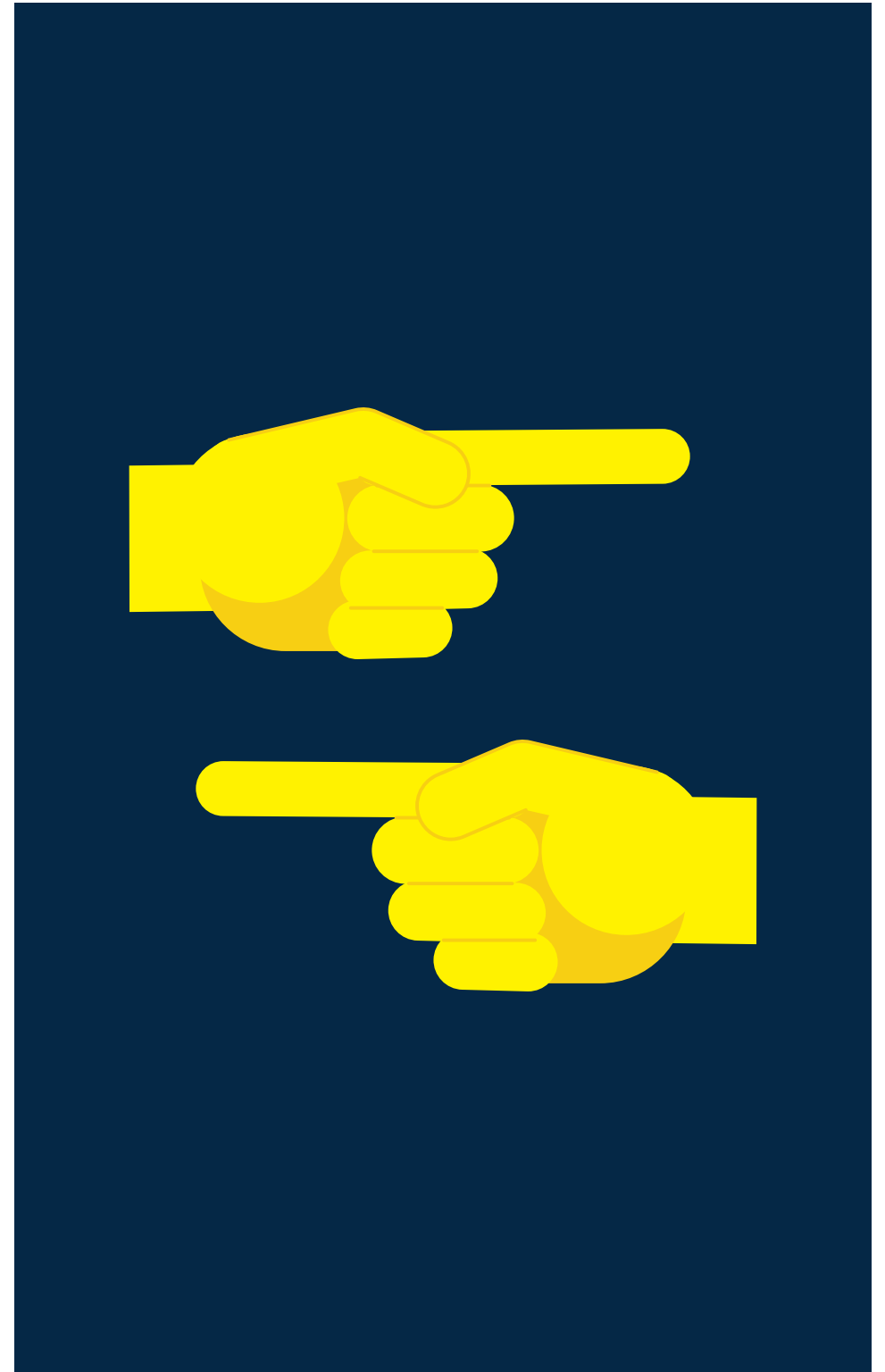
Numbers are as good as pictures for breathing life into a moribund story. And the first numbers are usually wrong or incomplete, breathing life into the next story—and the next lawsuit. Themes work better than numbers.





Point a Finger at a Worse Offender.

Others may have contributed to the crisis at hand. Others may have done worse. But when the spotlight is on the company, it's best to work on fixing the issue rather than shifting the blame.



9

Confuse a Statement with a Solution.

In times of crisis, people don't believe (or even hear) what you say. They see what you do. Until the problem is solved, everything else can wait. No statement, no matter how eloquent, can substitute for doing the right thing. Communications should be rooted in action.



10

Believe the Crisis is Forever... or Already Over.

It may seem a crisis will never end. While it's important to get back to normal, don't declare victory too soon. Listen to employees, customers, and those closest to the situation. They will give you a real sense of when is the right time to get back to normal. And avoid prolonging crisis mode once normalcy has resumed.



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