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Managing Simulation Exercises: Delivering Impactful Preparedness

Simulation exercises are essential tools for testing plans, training participants, and identifying lessons learned. Effective management ensures exercises meet strategic objectives and foster readiness.

Exercise Management Team: Scale for Smooth Execution

Clear roles, coordinated communication, reliable logistics for large-scale exercises

- 1 Exercise Manager**
 - Oversee exercise delivery and alignment with objectives
 - Make high-level decisions and resolve escalations
 - Coordinate across teams and stakeholders

- 4 Logistics Support**
 - Ensure resource availability and venue setup
 - Manage equipment, transport, and supplies
 - Provide on-site technical and admin support

- 2 Facilitators / Controllers**
 - Guide scenario flow and enforce rules
 - Inject events and manage timelines
 - Monitor participant performance and safety

- 5 Team Communication**
 - Establish clear channels and reporting lines
 - Share objectives, status, and changes in real time
 - Document decisions to ensure coordinated action

- 3 Liaison Representatives**
 - Maintain communication with partner agencies
 - Relay decisions and operational updates
 - Resolve inter-organizational issues promptly

1

Exercise Director — Owns overall exercise design, objectives, approvals, and final decisions

2

Controller / Lead Facilitator — Manages exercise flow, injects scenarios, ensures safety and realism

3

Evaluator — Captures performance data, monitors objectives, and produces after-action findings

4

Facilitator — Guides participating teams, clarifies rules, and supports scenario progression

5

Role-Players — Portray scripted roles to create realistic interactions and stress test responses

Exercise Management Team: Roles that Ensure Effective Exercises

Clear responsibilities for planning, conduct, and evaluation



Exercise Director: Strategic Oversight & Authority

Approves purpose, objectives, plans and steers the exercise lifecycle to align resources with organizational goals



Approves exercise purpose, objectives, concept note and exercise plan



Provides **strategic oversight** to maintain alignment with organizational goals



Ensures effective **resource allocation** for planning, execution and evaluation



Decisions guide the full **exercise lifecycle** from planning to evaluation

Exercise Controller / Lead Facilitator — Overseeing Execution

Ensure drills, functional, and full-scale exercises run to plan, meet objectives, and keep participants engaged

Appointed by Exercise Director to supervise execution and ensure objectives are met

Required for **drill, functional, and full-scale exercises** to coordinate real-time activities

Maintain **exercise flow** by monitoring timelines, injects, and participant actions

Address issues promptly to preserve realism and **participant engagement**

Coordinate with facilitators, evaluators, and controllers for seamless execution

Facilitator: Delivering Injects & Guiding Participants

Drive scenario realism, answer questions, and keep the exercise on track



1 Deliver injects to simulate scenarios and prompt participant actions



2 Monitor exercise progress to maintain momentum and timing



3 Primary contact for participant questions and clarifications



4 Facilitate clear communication and preserve exercise realism



5 Support engagement through timely, relevant prompts

Role-Players (Actors): Add Realism with Scripts

Use experienced actors, clear scripts, and defined boundaries to keep exercises credible and consistent

Actors follow managed scripts to ensure consistency and credibility

Prefer role-aligned experience (e.g., journalism) for authentic interactions

Define clear boundaries & expectations to protect exercise integrity

Manage guidelines centrally so behavior stays consistent across scenarios

Summary: Scripts + experience + clear limits = credible exercises

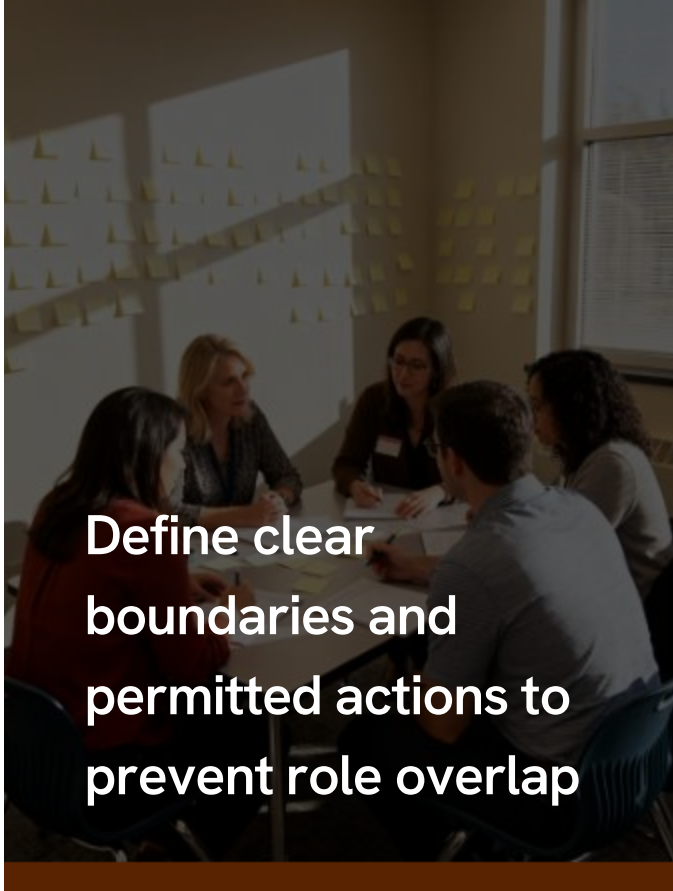


Manage Role-Players for Realism and Credibility

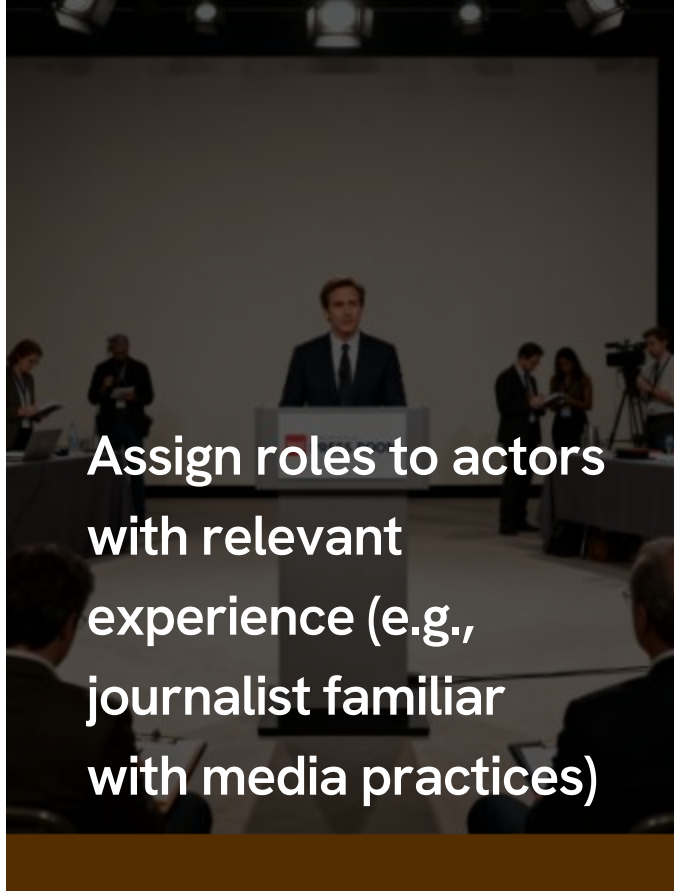
Clear scripts, boundaries, and relevant experience prevent confusion and boost authenticity



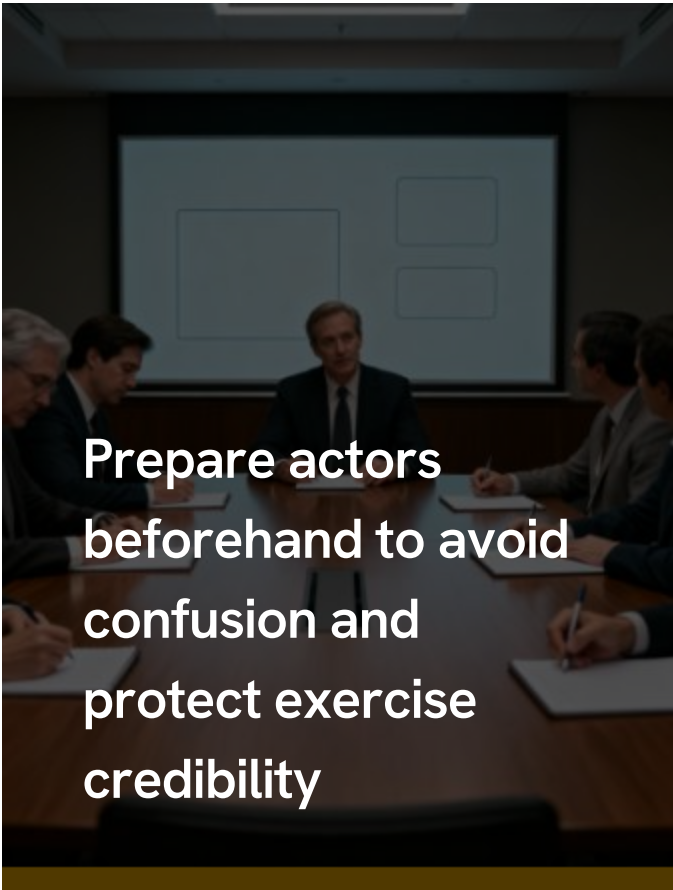
Use strict scripts and written guidelines for every actor



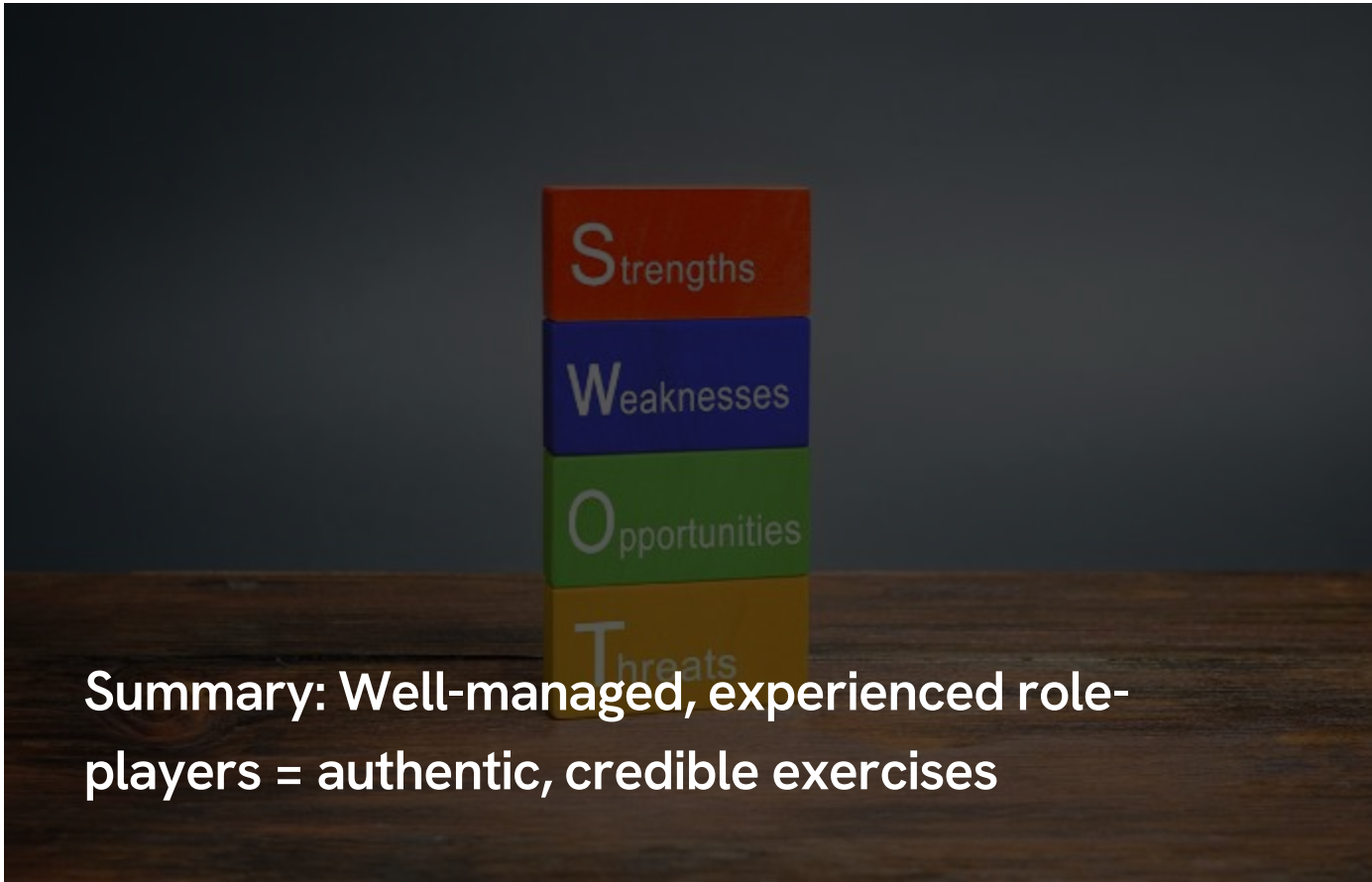
Define clear boundaries and permitted actions to prevent role overlap



Assign roles to actors with relevant experience (e.g., journalist familiar with media practices)



Prepare actors beforehand to avoid confusion and protect exercise credibility



Summary: Well-managed, experienced role-players = authentic, credible exercises

Selecting & Briefing Players for Effective Exercises

Ensure role-fit, clear purpose, and cross-agency collaboration to test systems and procedures—not individuals



Select by purpose: choose players aligned to exercise purpose, scope, and objectives



Role-fit & training: ensure participants have relevant training or receive clear instruction



Focus on systems, not individuals: emphasize procedures and system testing over personal performance



Thorough briefing: provide comprehensive briefings so players can effectively contribute



Multi-agency involvement: include participants from multiple agencies to foster collaboration and shared learning

Evaluator: Measure Effectiveness, Capture Lessons

Impartial analysis of exercise performance to pinpoint improvements



Assess objectives — Determine whether exercise objectives were met



Measure operational effectiveness — Evaluate real-world performance and systems



Identify strengths & weaknesses — Capture performance highlights and gaps



Quality control & lessons — Produce insights to enhance preparedness



Impartial & scalable — Internal or external evaluators scaled to exercise complexity

Evaluators and Observers: Role, Limits, and Value

Minimize disruption while maximizing impartial feedback during exercises

Observe without intervening — watch exercises without direct participation to avoid disrupting flow

Define permissible actions — clarify when observers may ask questions, take notes, or record events

Enable constructive feedback — focus comments on lessons learned and actionable observations

Protect exercise integrity — set boundaries to prevent influencing participant decisions

Capture missed details — observers often identify issues overlooked by participants or management

1

2

3

4

5



Why include external stakeholders, private sector & press in veterinary simulations exercises ?

Purpose, outbreak impacts, and measurable learning goals

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External Stakeholders in Veterinary Simulation Exercises

Who they are, what they want, and what they bring to exercises

Stakeholder category

NGOs / Charities

Academia / Research

Private industry (pharma, diagnostics)

Farmers / Producer groups

Suppliers & logistics

Trade bodies & insurers

Regulators & licensing bodies

Typical interests

Animal welfare, outreach

Data, field sites, validation

Market protection, product demo

Business continuity, biosecurity

Timely delivery, storage needs

Standards, member support

Public safety, legal compliance

Common resources they bring

Surge volunteers, community access

Diagnostics, expertise, labs

Drugs, vaccines, cold-chain

Vehicles, on-farm networks

Warehousing, transport fleets

Industry data, funding levers



External Stakeholders: Roles & Boundaries in Veterinary Exercises

How NGOs, academia and community groups support surge capacity, access, coordination and ethics



01

Expertise & surge capacity

- Field teams and **laboratory capacity** for diagnostics and interpretation
- Academic protocols to guide study design and data use
- **Community outreach** support for mobilization and messaging

02

Community access & trust-building

- Trusted local leaders and NGOs increase **compliance**
- Improve participation in community surveillance activities
- Watch for variable **representativeness** and conflicts of interest

03

Coordination & legal/ethical

- Establish **MOUs**, single liaison points, include in ICS
- Share SOPs and clear **data-sharing agreements**
- Ensure consent, research ethics approvals, protect vulnerable groups

Private Sector Roles in Veterinary Simulation Exercises

How industry, farmers, suppliers and logistics support preparedness, response and recovery



Pre-exercise

Sign MOUs; map supply chains; nominate liaisons; pre-position stock and cold-chain capacity.



Post-exercise

Reconcile invoices; adjust contracts; share after-action data on lead times and shortages.



During exercise

Activate commercial logistics; provide consumables, lab reagents and transport; support business continuity.





Press & Media Roles in Veterinary Simulations

How media influences public risk perception, accuracy, and community response



Functions of media:
inform public, shape risk perception, amplify official guidance, mobilize community action



Typical behaviours: seek rapid updates, eyewitness accounts, human-interest angles; may publish before verification



Risks & opportunities:
misinformation risk vs. platform for trusted messaging to foster compliance



Accreditation & spokespeople:
pre-approve access, train spokespeople, hold media and embargoed scientific briefings



Transparency requirements: timely factual updates, clear attribution, and corrections policy to curb rumours

Stakeholder Inclusion Cuts Response Time and Boosts Trust

Before/After comparison showing operational and communication impact during veterinary drills



Scenario A: Stakeholders excluded

- Lab-confirmation delays
- Ad hoc transport arrangements
- Conflicting public messages
- Mobilization 48–72h longer; lower compliance

Vs

Scenario B: Stakeholders included

- MOUs in place; industry pre-committed stock
- Trained spokespersons; consistent media briefings
- Rapid sample testing; next-day reagent delivery
- Faster mobilization; higher community uptake



Engaging External Stakeholders, Private Sector and Media in Veterinary Exercises

Clear protocols to align partners, protect data, and manage public messaging

Step	Do	Don't
Pre-exercise engagement	Sign MOUs; map liaisons; run tabletop with partners	Assume availability; omit NDAs
Media preparation	Pre-brief media; train spokespeople; prepare Q&A and holding statements	Release unverified data; use ad-hoc spokespeople
Operational agreements	Agree SLAs; set stock-release triggers; define data-sharing protocols	Rely on informal promises for critical supplies
Rehearsal & evaluation	Run joint drills; enact media injects; rehearse logistics handoffs	Treat media as observers only; skip partner AARs