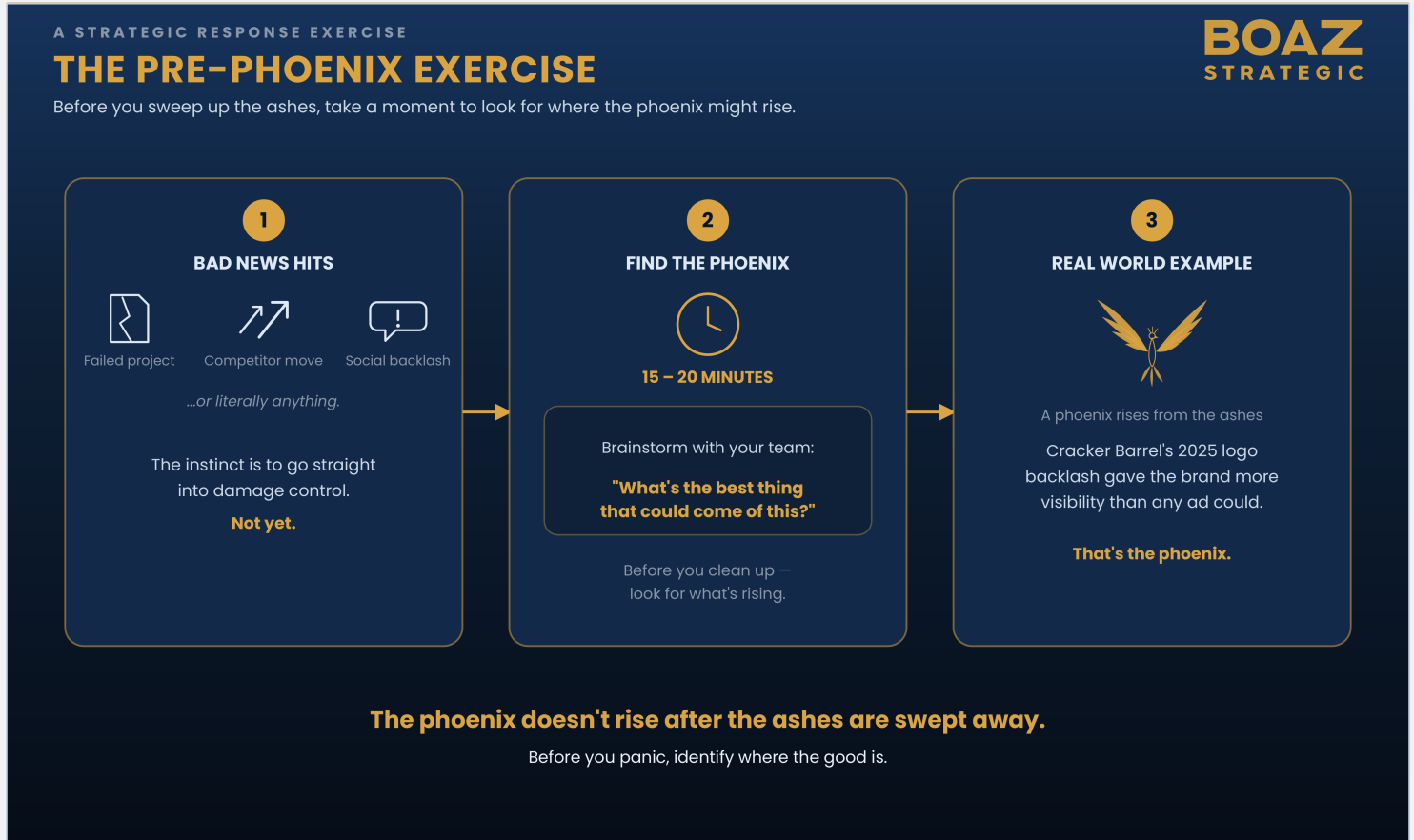


Find the phoenix *in the ashes*.

“ *The phoenix doesn't rise after the ashes are swept away.* ”



When bad news hits, what's your first move? Panic? Straight into damage control? The Pre-Phoenix exercise is a simple framework for focusing on the positive despite the negative in the air.

Before you react, pause.

Take 15–20 minutes to brainstorm with your team and ask one question: what's the best possible outcome that could come from this?

A phoenix is a legendary bird that dies in flames and is reborn from its own ashes. The name fits: you shift from dwelling on the damage to finding where the phoenix will rise.

Take Cracker Barrel. When they dropped “Uncle Herschel” and the barrel from a logo used since 1977, the backlash was enormous — until you spot the phoenix.

As P.T. Barnum put it, there's no such thing as bad publicity. The temporary change gave them more visibility than any ad could.

They owned the moment, affirmed loyal customers, and kept the logo.

That's the phoenix.