

ARE YOU CRISIS READY?

FIVE KEY STEPS OF CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS



1. ANTICIPATE CRISES



QUIT HOPING NOTHING BAD HAPPENS

- **DISASTERS (NATURAL OR MANMADE)**
- **LAWSUITS**
- **ACCUSATIONS OF IMPROPRIETY**
- **SUDDEN CHANGES IN PERSONNEL**
- **DATA BREACH**
- **TWEET MADE IN BAD TASTE**
- **FALSE ACCUSATION OR RUMOR**
- **EMAIL SENT IN POOR JUDGMENT**

THE THREAT OF SERIOUS DAMAGE TO PEOPLE, PROPERTY, REPUTATION IS REAL FOR VIRTUALLY ANY ORGANIZATION, AND MANY INDIVIDUALS AS WELL.

**REGARDLESS OF THE SOURCE OR NATURE OF THE PROBLEM,
EVERY CRISIS NEEDS A RESPONSE -- AND QUICKLY.**

BAD BEHAVIOR WILL CONTINUE TO BE EXPOSED ON A GRAND SCALE

SOCIETY IS SATURATED WITH RECORDING DEVICES **[ASSUME THERE IS VIDEO]**

THERE'S A CULTURAL MOVEMENT TOWARDS OUTING THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES IN THEIR WORDS, ACTIONS, AND CHOICES

SO MORE BAD BEHAVIOR WILL BE EXPOSED THAN EVER BEFORE

2. IDENTIFY YOUR CRISIS TEAM

GATHER YOUR BEST:

- **LEADERSHIP**
- **PUBLIC AFFAIRS PERSONNEL**
- **GOOD SPOKESPEOPLE**



A WORD ABOUT LEGAL COUNSEL

**ATTORNEYS WILL FOCUS ON THE COURT OF LAW WHILE A CRISIS MANAGER
FOCUSES ON THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION.**

**THE ORGANIZATION IN CRISIS CAN BE DESTROYED IN
THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION YEARS BEFORE THE
LEGAL PROCESS PLAYS OUT.**

**ATTORNEYS NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT “NO COMMENT” TRANSLATES AS “WE’RE
GUILTY OR HIDING SOMETHING” TO THE PUBLIC. BUT THERE ARE WAYS TO SAY VERY
LITTLE WITHOUT COMPROMISING LEGAL MATTERS, WHILE STILL APPEARING
RESPONSIVE TO THOSE SEEKING MORE INFORMATION.**



LIVE
WDAZ abc
11:17 AM  

3. GET SOCIAL SAVVY

- START AHEAD OF TIME; GET PEOPLE TRAINED / SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE DEVELOPED
- ESTABLISH TRUST WITH THE **LITTLE** THINGS; YOUR FOLLOWERS WILL HELP IN THE **BIG** THINGS
- IF FUNCTIONAL AND USED PRIOR TO EVENTS, THEN YOU'RE NOT BEING REACTIVE
- GET TRAINING ON HOW TO POST SOMETHING TO BE EYE CATCHING, READABLE, SHAREABLE
- HAVE SOMEONE DEDICATED TO SOCIAL MEDIA AND NOT TOO IMMERSED IN OTHER ASPECTS OF THE EVENT
- HAVE A TEAM OF PEOPLE TO MONITOR SITES - PULL FROM THIS POOL DEPENDING ON THE NEED

DO NOT RATE YOUR SUCCESS ON HITS, VIEWS, LIKES OR FOLLOWS. RATE SUCCESS ON COMMUNITY TRUST AND ENGAGEMENT. SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ACCORDINGLY.



Sponsored By:



GuardianTracking
Igniting employee performance

Copyright © 2017 The Virtus Group, Inc., All Rights Reserved

4. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

**WHO ARE THE INTERNAL AND
EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS
THAT MATTER TO YOUR
ORGANIZATION?**



5. DEVELOP KEY MESSAGING



Most likely/Most damaging

Most likely/Least damaging

Least likely/Most damaging

Least likely/Least damaging

DEVELOP MESSAGING IN ADVANCE FOR VARIOUS SCENARIOS

**EX. You're hit by a crisis, but don't have any
hard factual information yet:**

“We have implemented our crisis response plan, which places the highest priority on the health and safety of our customers and staff.”

“We will be supplying additional information when it is available and posting it on our [name] Facebook and Twitter accounts.”



**REASSURE
ALERT
INFORM**

RESPOND QUICKLY

IF YOU DON'T RESPOND WITHIN THE FIRST HOURS, PEOPLE TYPICALLY JUMP TO TWO CONCLUSIONS: THAT YOU ARE GUILTY/INEPT OR THAT YOU ARE NOT IN CONTROL OF YOUR MESSAGE.

ONE PRINCIPLE THAT'S EXISTED IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS FOR DECADES:

**IF YOU DON'T TELL YOUR STORY,
SOMEONE ELSE WILL.**

- **CONSISTENT MESSAGING**
- **TIMELY AND TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION**
- **BE A VOICE OF TRUST, CREDIBILITY, LEADERSHIP**

*"The media is like hungry dogs.
You must feed them or they'll go through your trash."*

A man with short, light-colored hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue shirt, is speaking at night. He is looking slightly to his left. The background is dark with some blurred lights and shapes, suggesting an outdoor setting at night.

WV WATER CRISIS

LIVE

GARY SOUTHERN

PRES., FREEDOM INDUSTRIES



1. WHAT HAPPENED?

2. WHAT ARE WE DOING?



3. WHAT DO WE WANT YOU TO DO?



LEARNING FROM STARBUCKS

BAD: STARBUCKS TOOK MORE THAN 24 HOURS TO ISSUE A STATEMENT.

GOOD: ONCE RELEASED, CEO'S STATEMENT WAS QUICK AND TO THE POINT.
"EMBARRASSED AND ASHAMED." "WE'RE BETTER THAN THIS."

SINCERELY APOLOGIZED.
SHARED A SOLUTION.



- ✓ WHAT DO CITIZENS/STAFF/MEDIA/OTHER STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS CRISIS?
- ✓ KEEP MESSAGING SIMPLE
- ✓ ADAPT MESSAGING TO DIFFERENT FORMS OF MEDIA (TWITTER VS. WEBPAGE VS. PRESS RELEASE)
- ✓ ANTICIPATE: WHAT ARE THE NEXT 2-3 THINGS WE FORESEE?
DEVELOP TALKING POINTS
- ✓ DEVELOP FACT SHEETS FOR INTERVIEWS/MEDIA

ONE MESSAGE, ONE VOICE

2016 PULSE NIGHTCLUB
SHOOTING IN
ORLANDO – ELECTION YEAR!

EVERYBODY WANTED TO BE ON
CAMERA GIVING INFORMATION.

TARNISHES THE OFFICIAL SOURCE.



THE PRESIDENT

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

CONGRESSIONAL
DELEGATION

STATE/LOCAL ELECTED
OFFICIALS

WHO ARE THE MEDIA?

- LOCAL TV/NEWSPAPER/RADIO – ALWAYS YOUR FIRST PRIORITY.
- TRADITIONAL REGIONAL/NATIONAL MEDIA – BE RESPONSIVE AND PROVIDE DETAILED INFO BECAUSE THEY DO NOT COME IN WITH LOCAL KNOWLEDGE.
- BLOGGERS/CITIZEN JOURNALISTS – DO NOT TURN THEM AWAY, BUT THEY SHOULD NOT GET PRIORITY. STICK TO THE FACTS AS THEY'LL COME IN WITH AN AGENDA.

FIRST ON CBS7: Texas Rangers say they found evidence of narcotics trafficking in house where Midland Police shot a 3-year-old



DON'T FORGET TO TAKE TIME TO EVALUATE

**“WHAT DID WE LEARN
FROM THIS
SITUATION/CRISIS?”**

“

**BY THE TIME YOU HEAR THE THUNDER,
IT'S TOO LATE TO BUILD THE ARK.**

—UNKNOWN

”

MAXINE HERR

MORTON COUNTY
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

(701) 426-1587

PIO@MORTONND.ORG

DONNELL PRESKEY

ND ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
GOVERNMENT/PUBLIC RELATIONS SPECIALIST

(701) 328-7300

DONNELL.PRESKEY@NDACO.ORG