



Crisis Management Workshop



PR News Boot Camp for Emerging PR Stars

Presented by: Roddy Young, Vice President, Communications & Marketing, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health
Myra Oppel, Regional Communications Vice President, Pepco Holdings Inc.

September 8, 2014

#PRNEWS

About Pepco Holdings Inc.

- Provides regulated electricity service to about 2 million customers – total population of 5.6 million – in New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and the District of Columbia
 - Delmarva Power also provides natural gas service
 - Pepco Energy Services is a non-regulated subsidiary that provides energy efficiency and renewable energy services



#PRNEWS

Remember the Basics

Myra Oppel

#PRNEWS

The best way to handle a crisis is to prevent it

- Keep a finger on the pulse of your environment
 - Malaysia Airlines' "Bucket List" promotion
 - *Sleepy Hollow's* "Headless Day" campaign



Back to basics

- **Be proactive.** Get out first to frame the story
- **Be transparent.** If you have bungled something, you need to confess and repent. Take the initiative to explain what you did wrong, what you're doing to ensure it doesn't happen again and how you will try to make it right for those you've failed
- **Be consistent.** Make sure all strategic areas of your company know the facts and messages and stick to them

#PRNEWS

The first 24 hours

- Identify a crisis
 - Online buzz
 - Media calls
- Speak first about your situation
 - The most important advice: Be quick, but don't be too hasty
 - By getting ahead of others who might speak against you or distort the truth, you can frame the narrative for your story
 - By getting out the facts, you have a better chance of getting accurate reporting
 - You may not have all the facts up front so update regularly
- Talk about actions you're taking
 - Keep stakeholders informed on the scope, schedule and impacts
 - Be specific about consequences and remedies
- Solve for the long term

Have a plan

- Start by building a strategic communications plan
 - Situational analysis
 - What other organizations might be involved and require collaboration?
 - Objectives
 - Audiences
 - Key messages
 - Outreach strategy
 - Tactics
 - Timeline
 - Budget
 - Measurements

#PRNEWS

Remember your audience

- Frame the project from the public's perspective
 - How will the crisis affect them?
 - Avoid acronyms, jargon
- Use tactics that will meet them where they are
 - News releases
 - Fact sheets
 - Q&A
 - Media embeds or tours
 - Maps
 - Photos
 - Talking points (one set for all users)
 - Social media
 - Employee ambassadors
 - Direct mail
 - Advertising

#PRNEWS

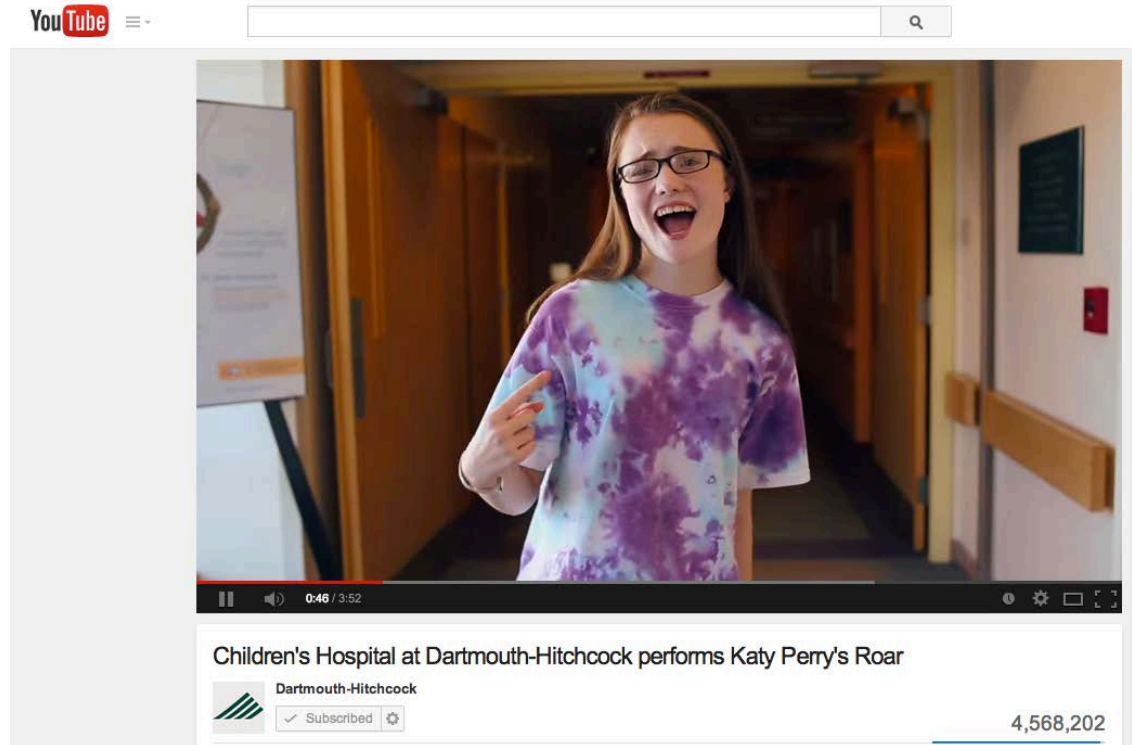
Improving Crisis Communications

Roddy Young

#PRNEWS

About Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health

- Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health – a national leader in patient-centered health care
- NH's only Level 1 trauma center
- One of only 40 NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center and Children's Hospital Association-approved Children's Hospital at Dartmouth-Hitchcock



imagine healthier futures

#PRNEWS

Improving crisis communications

- **Be honest.** Live your values
- **Prepare.** Get ready ahead of time – way ahead of time
- **Listen.** Understand the context and your landscape
- **Act.** But prepare some more before acting

#PRNEWS

Cutting down on cycle time

- Stay in touch with your audience even as senior leaders scrutinize every message
 - Preparation is key
 - Create messages for potential scenarios
 - Have a pre-identified core team
 - Keep updated internal and external contact lists
 - Crisis exercises help, but don't expect a cookie cutter approach
 - Ensure that communications is brought in early on all major initiatives – anticipate problems
 - Understand that you may not get all the facts as quickly as you need them - response must take that into account
 - Update, update, update
 - Solve for the long-term
- There is no silver communications bullet

Give employees the story first

- Internal communications must be part of every reputation management and crisis communications plan
- Employees being out of the loop can damage morale and credibility
- Use your employees – as well as allies and followers – to help share your messages
 - Brief employees on the facts and the messages. They have a critical credibility in their communities.
 - Make social media easy to share

#PRNEWS

Your crisis team

- Identify your team before you need it
- Time is the most under-valued asset
- It's too late to find new friends
- Trusted advisors become a critical resource

We're firefighters. You want someone who has done it before and often, who will bring calm to the situation and can help lead you through the firestorm

#PRNEWS

What to look for in crisis response

- Experience
- Calm and poise under pressure
- Ability to balance work among all key decision-makers
- The right tools

#PRNEWS

Real-world example

- Global food company recall
 - There's a problem
 - Assemble core team
 - Identify the cause(s)
 - Pressure test the facts – are they right?
 - Initial response – proactive but limited to known facts
 - Develop timelines / audiences / channels / appropriate message(s) for communications
 - Extended response – communications center, build strategies that include opinion research/testing, advertising, digital, public forums, testimony, news appearances, third-party validation, call center, two-way consumer conversations, signage at locations

Key Takeaways

- Be aware
- Be first
- Be open
- Be consistent
- Be considerate
- Be prepared
- Be the right team

#PRNEWS

Interactive Exercise

- We'll distribute a simulated crisis scenario
- Tables will work as a team
- You'll have about **20 minutes** to develop a crisis plan
- Team spokespeople will share highlights from their plans, and Roddy and Myra will critique

Questions?

#PRNEWS

MYRA OPPEL, APR, is regional communications vice president for Pepco Holdings Inc., where she ensures communications alignment as the primary communications interface across its three electric utilities: Atlantic City Electric; Delmarva Power; and Pepco, which serves Washington, D.C., and Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland. She began her communications career of more than three decades in newspapers and The Associated Press before transitioning to Connecticut-based Northeast Utilities, where she headed media relations. Myra left NU in 1997 and worked as an award-winning political media consultant and PR consultant until she joined PHI in 2012. She was named PR News' 2013 PR People Awards Media Relations Professional of the Year.

RODDY YOUNG is vice president, communications and marketing, for academic health system Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health, a leader in creating a sustainable health system. He is responsible for working with the health system's leadership to shape strategic marketing, brand development and patient and stakeholder communications programs across New England, including internal communications, web services, video and visual design. Before joining Dartmouth, he led the reputation management practice at MSLGroup/TMG Strategies, a Washington, D.C.-based communications firm that is part of the Publicis Groupe network. With experience working on Capitol Hill, for NASA and representing Fortune 500 clients and academic institutions, Roddy brings exceptional background in creating and managing large-scale communications efforts across multiple sectors.

#PRNEWS