

Media Relations Crisis Cheat Sheet

Faced with a Crisis? Stop, Drop and Roll!

- ✓ Stop what you are doing, and give your full attention to the matter at hand.
- ✓ Drop the urge to be defensive.
- ✓ Roll out the facts in a strategic way.

Lessons Learned in 2011

Anticipate supply chain disruptions, accept the fact social media speeds the first impact of a crisis, look ahead and anticipate what can go wrong and then plan for it.

Media Interview Reminders

- 1. When to Say No** - Every interview is not an opportunity and every interview request should be judged separately. There are some stories you don't want to be involved in especially if you feel it could negatively impact your business.
- 2. Talk to Your Grandmother** - We know you're smart which is why we're interviewing you, so please don't use big words. Speak simply and conversationally.
- 3. Don't Assume The Reporter Knows What You're Talking About** - Reporters are often assigned stories because they were nearby or not busy at the time. Many know a little about a lot, not a lot about a little.
- 4. Reporters Are Storytellers** - A reporter's job is to gather factual, accurate and reliable information and condense that information into a story.
- 5. When to Complain** - Just because you don't like the way a story turns out doesn't mean you should call and complain. Media mistakes are not usually intentional, but are often driven by the rush to make deadlines and beat the competition. People will forgive a screw up, but they won't forgive a cover up.

Crisis in The Time of Twitter

If you are the communications director facing a crisis precipitated or exacerbated in social media, as part of the core team approach, you should:

- Listen carefully.
- Think before you tweet.
- Do not hit delete.
- Social media shouldn't be scripted, and it's not always perfect or predictable.

Crisis PR Checklist

Every PR professional should have a "what to do" crisis checklist. Here are some traditional and out-of-the box recommendations for what to include in the list:

- ✓ Treat your PR rep as if he's your corporate attorney.
- ✓ Just as it is necessary to have a crisis communication plan and policy manual, create an e-mail manual detailing what company information can and cannot be e-mailed.
- ✓ Never try to hide a problem or hope it will go away.

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- ✓ When speaking to the media, always tell the complete truth.
- ✓ Never answer a question with “no comment.”
- ✓ Don’t get victimized by a media feeding frenzy.
- ✓ Transcribe questions and answers at the press conference so you can better prepare for future ones.
- ✓ Don’t hide your CEO.
- ✓ Always have a prepared statement for media distribution at the press conference.
- ✓ Just as you should have a crisis communication plan and team in place, you should also have a “prepare the damage” team.
- ✓ Don’t play the “good guy” and acquiesce to every request for an interview.
- ✓ Treat reporters with respect.
- ✓ Never appear arrogant at government hearings.
- ✓ Don’t play the blame game.
- ✓ Study the actions of politicians, the commissioners of Major League Baseball, the National Football League, the National Hockey League and the International Olympic Committee executives during crisis situations. More often than not, their actions will provide a postgraduate education on how not to act during a crisis.
- ✓ Remember, the good old days are over.

What to Ask When Creating A Winning Town Hall Meeting

Every PR professional should have a “what to do” crisis checklist. Here are some traditional and out-of-the box recommendations for what to include in the list:

- ✓ What Can Be Resolved, and What Can’t?
- ✓ What Organizational/Presentational Structure Works Best?
- ✓ What Venue Fits With The Issues and The Discussion?
- ✓ What Authorities Need to Be Present, and in What Way?
- ✓ Who Will Moderate, and How?
- ✓ What Supporting Materials Can Be Offered, and in What Way?
- ✓ What Happens Afterward?

The New Rules for PR and Crises on the Digital Frontier

- Loyalty produces quantifiable profit enhancement, and is built customer-by-customer—not through campaigns.
- Assess loyalty by whether customers’ repurchase and/or recommend products and services to other people.
- Loyalty is destroyed when companies handle individual customers poorly.
- One unhappy customer is not just one unhappy customer.
- Avoid unhappy customers by designating a single point of customer contact.
- When employed properly, effective customer relations can improve consumer loyalty.
- One effective way to use customer relations is to solve any post-sale problems with the customer.
- Another effective use of customer relations is to have them feed product problems back to engineering and design.
- One other effective use of customer relations can be to pass information to and from consumers.
- PR can engage with customer relations to identify problems, synthesize and test new products and solutions and formulate sound strategies for dealing with a wide variety of issues.

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Five Stages of PR Grief—

A Quick Look

- Denial
- Anger/Blame
- Bargaining
- Depression/Pride
- Acceptance

Top 10 Executive Presence Tips

1. Always Tell the Truth.
2. Focus on Your 3 Vs. Executive presence is comprised of the 3Vs:
3. Express Concern and Empathy.
4. Be Proactive.
5. Talk about What You Know, Not What You Think.
6. Use Qualifiers.
7. Don't Repeat Negatives.
8. Address Rumors and Misconceptions.
9. Acknowledge Uncertainty.
10. Remain Calm and in Control at All Times.

The Crisis Team

In the event of a crisis situation, you need to know who your team is and what role each should take:

- Superintendent
- Site Administrator
- Local Law Enforcement
- Communications/Public Relations Officer
- Counselors, Social Workers, and Psychologists
- Local Media

Senior leadership, management, directors and officers need to know the answers to these questions:

1. Has my company identified potential hazards, risks and their impacts?
2. Does my company know how to monitor whether those risks are occurring?
3. Does my company know how to mitigate the impact of a wide variety of hazards?
4. Are the business impacts identified?
5. Does my company have Crisis Management, Crisis Communications, Business Continuity and Emergency Response Plans in place?
6. Are there pre-determined triggers to activate plans?
7. Has my company conducted training and exercises to support and evaluate those plans?
8. Does my company's program include regular maintenance of plans?
9. Has the leadership team received media training and have spokespeople been identified?
10. Has my company evaluated its supply chain and determined both internal and external dependencies?