

**COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES IN
TIMES OF CRISIS:
WHEN THE PUBLIC EYE IS CENTERED
ON YOUR PORT**

AAPA

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REVIEW OF MATERIALS

- ▶ Crisis communications response/roles
- ▶ Information flow
- ▶ Investigating the port's budget: a reporter's checklist
- ▶ Checklists
- ▶ Procedures flow chart
- ▶ Sample messages, holding statement
- ▶ Transition phrases
- ▶ Case study
- ▶ Why good companies (and good ports) say dumb things
- ▶ Bio

PRINCIPLES OF CRISIS RESPONSE

- ▶ **Tell the truth**
- ▶ **Residents/customers/industry right to know**
 - ▶ Why did this happen?
 - ▶ Could it happen again?
 - ▶ What will change?
- ▶ **Generate confidence**
 - ▶ Support port's ongoing decisions
 - ▶ Support port in a crisis
 - ▶ Support port when voting/approving
- ▶ **Empathy – acknowledge the problem**

PHASES OF THE CRISIS: TRIGGERS

- ▶ **What triggers a crisis communications response?**
- ▶ **Types of crises** – *Page 2*
 - ▶ Budget story angles – *Pages 4-5*
- ▶ **Initial response**
- ▶ **Must move from business as usual**
 - ▶ Drop what you're doing and anticipate, plan, implement, follow-up
 - ▶ Relentless focus on the team operating as a single body

PHASES OF THE CRISIS: INITIAL

- ▶ **The most critical moments**
- ▶ **All crises occur in phases** – *Page 6*
- ▶ **Notification**
- ▶ **Recognition: we do have a crisis**
 - ▶ Not always obvious
- ▶ **Pull *all* key players together**
 - ▶ Role of elected officials
 - ▶ Do you have an experienced crisis communicator?
 - ▶ Your view of the role of communications

PHASES OF THE CRISIS: CHECKLISTS

Pages 7-13

- ▶ **First 60 minutes**
- ▶ **First 90 minutes**
- ▶ **First half day**
- ▶ **End of day one**
- ▶ **Day two**
- ▶ **Ongoing**
- ▶ **Procedures flow chart**



Sacramento Utilities

AUDIENCES / MESSAGES / TACTICS

- ▶ **Basic communications strategy:**
 - ▶ Who are you trying to reach?
 - ▶ What are you trying to say?
 - ▶ How will you say it to each audience?

AUDIENCES

- ▶ **Consider everyone who will be impacted**
 - ▶ Those most directly affected
 - ▶ Port employees, managers, commissioners
 - ▶ Opinion leaders
 - ▶ Business community
 - ▶ Elected leaders throughout port's service area
 - ▶ Seniors
 - ▶ Parents
 - ▶ Investment community
- ▶ **Be creative**

KEY MESSAGES: WHAT YOU SAY

- ▶ **What you want listeners/readers to think after the story**
- ▶ **Keep it simple: 3 to 4 messages**
- ▶ **The port's point of view**
- ▶ ***Not optional!***



**Messages
are the
50,000-foot
view**

KEY MESSAGES: HOW TO CREATE

Pages 14-15

- ▶ **What does the public need to know about the crisis?**
 - ▶ NOT facts!
- ▶ **Support each message with:**
 - ▶ Actions, results
- ▶ **What is your purpose?**
 - ▶ Bring action?
 - ▶ Inform?
 - ▶ Generate or rebuild confidence?

TACTICS

- ▶ **How do you get the message out?**
 - ▶ Usual tools
 - ▶ Need extraordinary ones, too
 - ▶ Media relations
 - ▶ Consider small group sessions
 - ▶ Face-to-face: best way to gain credibility
 - ▶ Social networking sites
- ▶ **Be creative!**

TACTICS: MUST HAVE THESE

- ▶ **One-page message document**
- ▶ **Transitions, flags, bridging** – *Page 15*
- ▶ **Holding statement** – *Pages 16-17*
- ▶ **Q&A: internal and external**
- ▶ **Press release or fact sheet**
- ▶ **Other helpful tools:**
 - ▶ 90-second video “story” for web, CATV
 - ▶ Backgrounder
 - ▶ Visuals
 - ▶ Testimonials: list of observers for media

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Pages 18-25

- ▶ **Port of Long Beach: new interim executive director**
 - ▶ Situation
 - ▶ Strategy
 - ▶ Messages
 - ▶ Materials list
 - ▶ Schedule
 - ▶ Assignments
 - ▶ Release, talking points, Q&A

BAD PRESS COVERAGE: LESSONS

Pages 26-27

- ▶ **Shoot from the hip**
- ▶ **PIO / Comm. Dir. reporting relationship**
- ▶ **Timeliness**
- ▶ **Can't control all info**
- ▶ **Failure to anticipate, plan, prepare**
- ▶ **“Why should we talk to the media” mentality**
- ▶ **Who talks to the media**
- ▶ **Inadequate spokesperson training, prep**
- ▶ **Unauthorized, unprepared, undaunted**
- ▶ **Communications advisors not involved**

PHASES OF THE CRISIS: ENDING

- ▶ **Returning to business as usual**
- ▶ **Ready for the next one?**
- ▶ **Consider staying in contact with local media on long-term basis**
- ▶ **Report back to audiences on progress**
- ▶ **Be aware of who provided good judgment from within the port, community**

SCENARIO DISCUSSION

- ▶ **Read through scenario, think about:**
 - ▶ Reacting to negative media
 - ▶ Social media implications
 - ▶ Documents/tools to help tell port's story
 - ▶ Roles of commissioners vs. staff
 - ▶ Impacts on various audiences...
 - ▶ Terminal operators/carriers/BCOs
 - ▶ Residents
 - ▶ Sports fans
 - ▶ Business operators
 - ▶ Environmental interests