

Managing Crises of Confidence: *When Bad Things Happen*

AAPA PR/GR Workshop
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Review of Materials

- Plan table of contents
- Response/roles
- Information flow
- Checklists
- Procedures flow chart
- Sample messages, holding statement
- Transition phrases
- Budget: a reporter's checklist
- The art of a Q&A
- Why good companies (and local agencies) say dumb things
- Biographies

Principles of Crisis Response

- Tell the truth
- Public and customer's right to know
 - Why did this happen?
 - Could it happen again?
 - What will change?
- Generate confidence
 - Support ongoing decisions
 - Support when things go wrong
 - Support when voting

Phases of the Crisis: Triggers

- What triggers a crisis communications response?
- Types of crises*
- Initial response
- Must move from business as usual
 - Drop what you're doing, anticipate, plan, implement, follow-up
 - Relentless focus
 - Resist temptation to place blame on a specific agency

Phases of the Crisis: Initial

- The most critical moments
- Notification
- Recognition: we do have a crisis
 - Not always obvious
 - Why is this the case?
- Pull all key players together
 - Role of elected officials, board
 - Communications: role of the PIO



Sac Utilities

Phases of the Crisis: Flow

- Incident flow chart
- Gather information
 - Many sources: list?
- Verify information
 - How do we do this?
- Develop crisis approach
 - Audiences, messages, tactics, follow-up
- Dissemination
 - Use as many communications tools as possible
 - Media relations

Phases of the Crisis: Checklists

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

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
 - Customers
 - Internal: employees, managers, commissioners
 - Opinion leaders
 - Business community
 - Elected leaders throughout region
 - Seniors, parents, neighbors
 - Investment community, analysts
- Be creative

Key Messages: What You Say

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



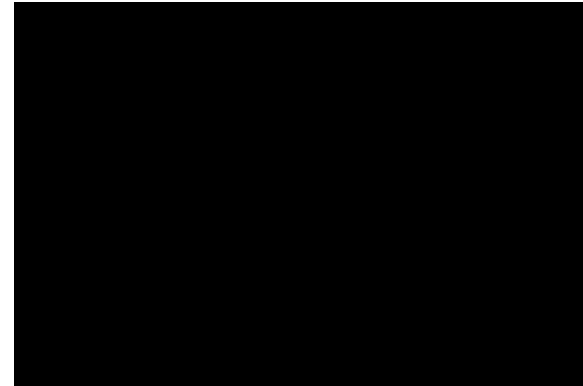
**Messages
are the
50,000-foot
view**

Key Messages: How to Create

- What does the public need to know about the crisis? *NOT* facts!
- *Support* each message with:
 - Facts, anecdotes, testimonials, actions, results
- What is your purpose?
 - Inform?
 - Generate confidence?
 - Bring action?

Messaging *Can* Make a Difference

- Two retreat stories
- First: not well handled
- Second: better with messages



Merced College Retreat



Fairfield Police Retreat

Tactics

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

Tactics: Must Have These

- One-page message document
- Q&A
 - External, internal
- Press release or fact sheet
- Other helpful tools:
 - 90-second video “story” for web, CATV
 - Background: 2-3 pages
 - Visuals
 - Testimonials: list of observers for media

Bad Press Coverage: Lessons

- Shoot from the hip
- PIO 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 on long-term basis
- Report back to targets on progress
- Be aware of who provided good judgment from within the overall response team

Building a Message Platform

- **Message #1**
 - Proof Point #1
 - Proof Point #2
- **Message #2**
 - Proof Point #1
 - Proof Point #2
- **Message #3**
 - Proof Point #1
 - Proof Point #2

Case Study

- Stuck to message
- National stage
- Transformed from defense to offense
- Became heroic



Break-out Exercise

- Choose one of six topics
 - Scenarios to be distributed
- Determine who is in what role
 - Elected official
 - PIO
 - Commissioner
 - Subject matter experts
- Devise communications strategy
 - Messages, audiences, tactics
- Determine media briefing structure
- Conduct media briefing