

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS SEMINAR

Crisis Communication

- Crisis communication is a dialog between the organisation and its publics prior to, during and after the negative occurrence. The dialog details strategies and tactics designed to minimise damage to the image of the organisation.
- Crisis communications plan should be part of the overall crisis management plan.

Crisis Communications -Objectives

- PR Objectives in a Crisis:
 - To provide accurate and timely information to all targeted internal and external audiences
 - To maintain a positive image of the organisation as a good corporate or community citizen
 - To show that the organisation takes its responsibilities seriously
 - To demonstrate concern for people

Key Principles of Crisis Communications

- Containment
- Openness
- Responsibility
- Compassion (or Empathy)
- Action

• *Prof Jim Macnamara*

Before you start to communicate

- Know your organisation – its mission, vision, goals, values, organisational set-up etc
- Be familiar with your organisation's key policies and its positions on major sensitive issues
- Be conversant with your Organisation's Communications Procedures and Reporting Channels
- Draft your communications plan

Crisis Communications Plan

- Pro-active, strategic communications:
 - Identifying of Issues
 - Who are your target audiences?
 - What are your Key Messages?
 - Preparing appropriate Responses
 - Crisis Communications Plan
 - Crisis Management Team

Elements of Crisis Communications Plan

- Objectives
- Target Audiences
- Key Messages
- Communications Strategy
- Channels of Communication
- Evaluation – post crisis

Channels of Communication

- Press Statement
- Anticipated Q and A
- Press conference
- Media Interview
- Website
- Social media strategy – twitter, facebook,instagram
- Spokesman

How to Communicate and React in a Crisis

- Centralise communication functions
- Communicate both good and bad news
- Communicate as early as possible
- Do not rely on one method of communication
- Give information
- Give reassurance
- Tell the truth, tell as much as you can
- Resist combat
- Monitor the media reports
- Appoint a spokesperson (besides the CEO)
- Know your plan and procedures

Getting the message right

- Work on two or three key messages
- Messages are more than the facts
- Focus on the key messages ALL the time
- Convey your key messages through your actions (or inaction), your words and your body language
- Key messages are more important than facts and figures

Types of Messages

- Position Messages
 - To calm the public
 - To restore confidence
- Instructional Messages (eg weather, traffic conditions, advice to consumers, etc)

Message for employers in a terrorist crisis

- This crisis has affected all of us. Whether you are an employer or employee, regardless of your race, religion or nationality, we all feel the impact of this unfortunate event.
- Do not be affected by or spread rumours that may be circulating around. Please let us know if you hear of any disturbing information or developments at the workplace.

Dealing with the media in a crisis

- Respond quickly
- Have a communication strategy
- Have good and credible spokespersons
- Be accessible to the media
- Convey your own bad news
- Be honest and accurate
- Limit to issues on fairness and accuracy

Dealing with social media

- How do you use social media during a crisis?
 - Push information through right platform
 - Use integrated approach
 - Rally communities
 - Deal with rumours and speculation
 - Deal with inflammatory and negative comments
 - Deal with fake news

Role of the Spokesperson

- Lends a human face to a faceless organisation
- Provides on-the-spot update
- Correct misconceptions and answer queries
- Gauge media / public mood and respond
- Coordinate and speak with one voice
- Provide room for maneuver

Spokesperson

- Characteristics
 - Credible
 - Knowledgeable
 - Well-trained
- Duties of the Spokesperson
 - Administer the Media Centre
 - Establish the facts
 - Produce press statements
 - Prepare for press conferences and interviews
 - Give press conferences and interviews

THANK YOU

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Resources

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