

Communications to Prevent Crises

WHICH PUBLICS SHOULD BE
ADDRESSED?



“Warning signs, called *prodromes*, are crucial because prevention is the best cure for a crisis.”

Strong **proactive public relations programs** that get positive media coverage and create positive impressions toward the public will **help detecting warning signs.**

Preventing Crisis Using Proactive PR Program

Action Strategies

- Organizational performance
- Audience participation
- Special events
- Alliances & coalitions
- Sponsorships
- Strategic philanthropy
- Activism

Communication Strategies

- Publicity
- Newsworthy information
- Transparent communication

(Based on Smith, 2005)

Planning for The Worst Situations

When you find yourself in a crisis communication situation you have one goal:

to protect the reputation of the organization

by: communicating the right message; at the right time; to the right people.

(Peter F. Anthonissen, 2008)

Communicating with The News Media

News Media Demands

**Selling
newspapers**

**Winning
rating war**

The media give the public

what **it wants to know** rather than what it needs to know.“

What the News Media Want to Know

- What happened?
- Were there any deaths or injuries?
- What is the extent of the damage?
- Is there a danger of future injuries or damage?
- Why did it happen?
- Who or what is responsible?
- What is being done about it?
- When will it be over?
- Has it happened before?
- Were there any warning signs of the problem?

“No comment!”

Never say it to the public. Refusing to comment appears to be an admission of hiding information or even guilt.

Formulating Media Contact Team

The press contact team will need to:

- have **good press contacts**;
- have a clean and **updated full media list** at any given time;
- understand how **journalists and editors** from different news media work;
- be practised at **producing media tools**;
- have facilities to **translate documents** and provide simultaneous translations at a press conference or media interview, if required;
- have the ability to **move very quickly**.

Communicating with Internal Publics

Achieving Objectives with Internal Publics

- Employees must learn **what positive performance is** and how it will **benefit** the organization and the employee.
- Employees need to know **the consequences of a job well done** and of a job poorly done.
- Employees must learn what the **job priorities** are.
- **Positive performance** must be rewarded.
- **Poor employee performance** should be punished.
- Punishment for good work **must be avoided**.
- **Help employees** cope with personal problems.

Communicating with Customers

Building Sales and Gaining Loyal Customers

- ***Keep the old customers.*** Longtime contented customers bring other customers.
- ***Attract new customers.*** Good prices, excellent quality, and word-of-mouth referrals from loyal consumers help to attract new customers.
- ***Market new services and products.*** Customers and consumers want to see that a company or organization is constantly making efforts to better itself in every area.
- ***Handle complaints swiftly.*** A customer who complains and is subsequently satisfied will return and bring other customers.
- ***Educate customers.*** Companies develop programs to educate customers about products and services.
- ***Organize outreach programs.*** In the area of community relations, companies and organizations adopt outreach programs in an effort to build loyalty among persons in the community surrounding its place of business.

What You Need to Show During Crisis

- **Concern and consideration** for what happened. Be honest and open that a crisis has occurred and that as an organization you are doing everything in your power to find out what happened and how it happened.
- **Expressing relief**. This is where you show that your company actually had the crisis under control well before it got out of hand.
- **Showing reassurance** that all possible steps are being taken to right the wrong and to make adjustments to keep the event from happening again.