Communicating with the Media During a Crisis

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Agenda

- What is Crisis Management?
- Communicating with the Media during a Crisis
- Resources
Crisis management is a process designed to prevent or lessen the damage a crisis can inflict on an organization and its stakeholders (Coombs, 2014)

A crisis can create three related threats:
(1) public safety
(2) financial loss
(3) reputation loss

https://instituteforpr.org/crisis-management-communications/
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- What are important elements of an effective crisis response?
- What makes a spokesperson effective during a crisis?
- Videos of CEO interviews with the media during a crisis
How does the media frame a crisis? (An & Gower, 2009)

- Attribution of Responsibility
- Economic Frame
- Human Interest Frame
- Conflict Frame
- Morality Frame
What are important elements of an effective crisis response?

- Quick
- Consistent
- Open
- Expressing sympathy
- Instructing stakeholders
- Taking ownership for crisis, and making changes when necessary
What makes a spokesperson effective during a crisis?

- Importance of conveying concern and control
- Authenticity is important!
- An effective spokesperson will increase the likelihood that stakeholders will accept the company’s version of the story
What makes a spokesperson effective during a crisis? (Coombs, 2015)

- Body Language during interview
  - Maintain eye contact with audience
  - Use hand gestures to emphasize points
  - Vary voice to avoid a monotone delivery
  - Change facial expressions
- Verbal Communications
  - Answer questions effectively
  - Present crisis information clearly
  - Handle difficult questions
- Importance of Advanced Preparation and Training
CEO Interviews with the Media

United Airlines

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=90jSUe_vdhM

Toyota

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oH6u3r7-ZM
Laufer, Daniel “Charting a Course Through Crisis: How can business schools prepare students to anticipate, prevent, and handle disasters?” AACSB BizEd Magazine (Sept/Oct 2010):
https://bized.aacsb.edu/articles/2010/09/charting-a-course-through-crisis

Crisis Management Column in the Herald (2019)
• Guilty by Association - How companies can protect themselves from crisis contagion
• Beware of judging in uncertain times
• What causes consumer outrage, and how can companies prevent it from happening
Crisis Management Column in the Herald (2019)

- Should the CEO of a company be a spokesperson during a crisis?

- Risk of reputational damage – Can celebrity endorser crises spread to companies?

- Who should investigate a crisis?

- How to avoid costly mistakes when managing a product recall

- Firms losing victim status in hacker attack