

Crisis Public Relations

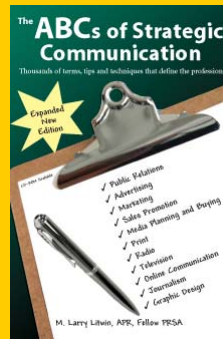
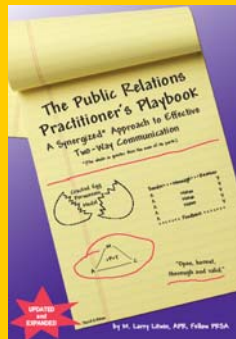
R U prepared?

M. Larry Litwin, APR, Fellow PRSA

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Portions taken from...



Golden Hours

First 2 to 4 hours
following the crisis

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Practice your ABCs

- A = Anticipate
- B = Be prepared
- C = Communicate clearly, calculatingly (measure each word), concisely, consistently, completely (specifically and simply)

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Three Rules of Damage Control

1. Get information out early
2. Get it out yourself
3. Get it out on your own terms



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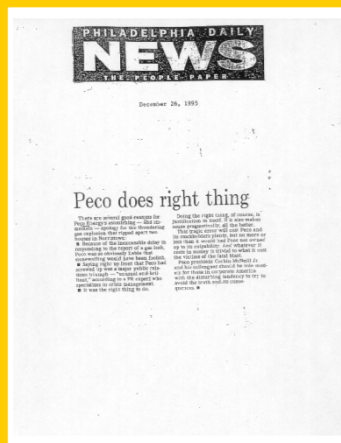
Tell it:

- First
- Fast
- All
- Yourself



Follow Peco's example...





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Communicate Early and Often – 1

- Contact the media before they contact you
- Communicate internally first, then externally
- Put the public first
- Take responsibility
- Be honest
- Never say “No comment”
- Designate a single spokesperson



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Communicate Early and Often – 2

- Set up a central information center (staging area)
- Provide a constant flow of information – two way
- Be familiar with media needs and deadlines
- Monitor news coverage and telephone inquiries
- Communicate with key publics
- Be accessible



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Lessons Learned

- Don't duck the issue
- Take responsibility
- Offer to make good on broken promises
- Cover the bases
- Measure results (on-going evaluation)



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Get Down to Basics

- Get the facts
- Once facts are gathered, make strategic changes to best manage crisis
- Communicate plan – first internally, then externally (it is not a secret)
- Seek feedback
- Evaluate



The 10 D's

- Direct
- Distance
- Deflect
- Distract
- Divert
- Diffuse
- Defuse
- Dilute
- Dissolve
- Dodge



10 Commandments of Crisis Communication

1. *Perception is reality.* If your audience thinks it is, it is.
2. *Response is control.* The community wants access to information, and no crisis is unmanageable if you give clear, cool facts.
3. Information is power.
4. Credibility is survival.
5. Body language is crucial. If you behave like you have something to hide, people will think that you do.



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10 Commandments of Crisis Communication

6. Calmness is essential. Unflappability is your best asset. Always act knowledgeable and calm.
7. Give a confession. The public and the media want a confession. So, don't be afraid to admit mistakes.
8. Tell the franchise what happened. It is in the best interest of the community to keep them informed.
9. Preparation is 99% of success.
10. *Out of every crisis comes the chance to "build a better mousetrap."* From every crisis there are major lessons to be learned.



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10 Commandments – Make that 11

11. Pray like hell that you never have to handle numbers 1 through 10!



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Questions ???

M. Larry Litwin, APR, Fellow PRSA
larry@larrylitwin.com
www.larrylitwin.com

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