

Crisis Communications & Media Training

Presented By:

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Public Relations • Marketing • Government Relations



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- Owner, Brown Communications
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- Experienced Media Trainer and Public Speaker
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Crisis, Controversy and Conflict

- Reporters look for it.
- It sells newspapers, generates high viewership and listenership.
- If your story has it (but most of us hope our story doesn't), you have a great chance for coverage.



Recent Search on “Trucking” on WSAZ.Com

- ▶ I-77 Southbound lanes closed for hours after several accidents

Sep 18, 2016: It was a long afternoon for commuters traveling South on the West Virginia Turnpike Sunday

- ▶ UPDATE: I-77 south near Chelyan back open after truck fire

Sep 18, 2016: All I-77 southbound lanes near Chelyan are closed after a truck caught fire.

- ▶ Late night crash leaves two Ohio men dead

Sep 17, 2016: Two Ohio men died after their van was hit by a truck during a late-night crash according to a report.

Words Frequently Appearing in Trucking Stories

Among the key words that frequently appear in stories about trucking:

accidents, crash, police, killed, injured, fatal and died.

- TruckingInfo.Com; “Killer Trucks No More”; Nov. 2007

Keys To Communicating During A Crisis

- ▶ Be prepared and have a plan in place
- ▶ Train your drivers and key staff
- ▶ Be responsive and demonstrate concern
- ▶ Monitor coverage and respond appropriately

Be Prepared, Have A Plan

- ▶ Who receives the incident call and where does it go from there?
- ▶ Who is responsible for addressing media inquiries?
- ▶ Does the situation warrant communication to a broader group of company stakeholders (clients, board, state association, etc.)
- ▶ Who develops the messaging/response?
- ▶ Who monitors news and social media coverage of the incident?

Train Your Drivers & Key Staff

- ▶ Drivers involved in an incident typically should not speak with media on the scene.
- ▶ If the driver has the ability, he/she may collect media contact information to relay to the home office OR provide media with the information for the company's media contact.

Be Responsive & Show Concern

- ▶ Prepare media response statements in advance of an incident.
- ▶ These “generic” statements can be updated with pertinent information to reflect the situation.
- ▶ Show concern, sympathy, empathy and compassion.
- ▶ Statements typically shouldn't address “fault” or “cause”.
- ▶ Develop “fact sheets” highlighting the company and driver's safety record.

Monitor Coverage & Respond Appropriately

- ▶ Monitor all coverage - print, broadcast, social media - to learn what people are saying about the incident (first responders, the public, media).
- ▶ If statements are found to be untrue, consider options for responding to correct errors.
- ▶ Social Media:
 - ▶ In some cases, incidents are broadcast via social media even before first responders arrive
 - ▶ Monitor Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. for incident interactions
 - ▶ Only engage in very select situations.

When A Reporter Calls...

- ▶ Never do an interview without preparing.
- ▶ Ask the reporter the focus of the interview.
- ▶ It's ok to tell them now is not a good time; but ask them what their deadline is and tell them when you'll get back to them.
- ▶ Write down your main messages and practice them!

Walmart Case Study

- ▶ A Walmart truck collided with a limo bus carrying comedians Tracy Morgan and James McNair, and others in June 2014. McNair was killed in the accident, while Morgan was severely injured.
- ▶ The NTSB later determined the driver had only had four hours of “sleep opportunity” in the preceding 33 hours, diminishing his awareness.
- ▶ How did Walmart respond?

Walmart Case Study

“We’re praying for the family and friends of the passenger who lost his life in the terrible accident in New Jersey. Our hearts go out to everyone involved and we hope those who were injured get the care that they need and make a full recovery.

This is a tragedy and we are profoundly sorry that one of our trucks was involved. We are working quickly to understand what happened and are cooperating fully with law enforcement to aid their investigation.

The facts are continuing to unfold. If it’s determined that our truck caused the accident, Walmart will take full responsibility.

Safety is our absolute highest priority, but that is no comfort whatsoever to the families and friends who are suffering today. We offer them our deepest condolences. We can’t change what happened, but we will do what’s right for the family of the victim and the survivors in the days and weeks ahead.”

Walmart Case Study

- ▶ A Twitter handle bearing the Walmart driver's name had the phrase "move or get hit" in its biography section, creating a firestorm of additional scrutiny.
- ▶ Wal-Mart has denied that the account belonged to him. "The driver has not had and does not have any involvement on social media."

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“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and 5 minutes to ruin it. If you think about that you’ll do things differently.”

- Warren Buffet

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