

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT GUIDE

▶ **GATHER YOUR TEAM TO ASSESS THE SITUATION ASAP; INCLUDE LEGAL COUNSEL, IF APPROPRIATE.**

- Don't get caught wondering if a situation is a crisis or not and hoping it will go away.
- Be available 24 hours a day and stay ahead of the crisis.
- Never manage a crisis over the phone.

▶ **COLLECT AND CONFIRM AS MANY FACTS AS YOU CAN.**

- Issue an initial statement: "We are gathering facts, so we fully understand what has happened (or what needs to happen), and we will communicate more as soon as we can."

▶ **ASSESS RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES, AND CONSIDER ALL AUDIENCE GROUPS (IMPACTED, CLOSE TO THE IMPACTED, NONIMPACTED, ETC.).**

- Temporarily pull out all advertising campaigns.

▶ **DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF RESPONSE AND HOW TO RESPOND. THE WORSE THE NEWS, THE MORE IN-PERSON YOU SHOULD BE.**

- There are two sides to every story. Have a retort ready.
- No live interviews during a crisis.

▶ **DEVELOP A COMMUNICATION PLAN TARGETING WHAT YOU WANT EACH AUDIENCE TO KNOW AND DO. THEN ASSIGN RESOURCES, ESTABLISH DEADLINES AND GUIDELINES TO IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN, AND MEASURE ITS EFFECTIVENESS.**

- Author key messages based on facts, never speculation.
- Shape your comments so that they clearly demonstrate how we are positively impacting our customers.
- When acknowledging a product recall, decide how you're going to show that on main website.

▶ **ACTIVATE YOUR COMMUNICATION PLAN, USING OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS IF NEEDED.**

- Monitor the media, all channels and websites.
- Be aware that there is no such thing as “off the record.”
- Don’t speak in clichés (i.e., “shoot from the hip,” “nail this one”).
- Use your prepared key messages. Acknowledge any questions you're asked, but always bridge back to your key messages during the interview.
- Maintain control of the interview by rephrasing any negative or misleading questions, to create a positive and accurate understanding of the issue.

▶ **DEBRIEF AFTER THE CRISIS PASSES. FIND OUT IF YOU GOT THE OUTCOME YOU WANTED. THAT'S THE ONLY WAY TO KNOW FOR SURE THAT YOUR PLAN WAS SUCCESSFUL.**

- Create a positive publicity campaign to run after the crisis is over.