

Preface

"A Word with Your Boss, Please..."

If I could speak to the chief executive of your company or organization about the importance of communications in your preparation for crisis or emergency, we would discuss just a few career preserving subjects, and the conversation would take only a few minutes. In short, we would discuss:

1. How responding quickly in the first 60-120 minutes of an emergency or disaster can save assets, markets, and reputations – and avoid or delay career-defining moments, his or hers.
2. How managing victims immediately, humanely, with compassion will de-escalate the visibility that poorly handled victims always causes.
3. The reputational toxicity of silence.
4. How well-handled and perfectly managed crises that are poorly communicated will always be remembered as poorly handled crises.
5. If you fail to manage your own destiny from the start, there is always someone out there waiting and willing to do it for you.
6. Speed beats smart every time. Waiting to execute the perfect response will cost you your reputation, and likely your job, and you will still fail.
7. Bad news always ripens badly. Bad news brings bad stories. Mistakes will be made and the media will make things up. Fifty percent of your energy and 25% of your resources will go to fixing yesterday's mistakes, yours and the media's.
8. Effective crisis communication involves simple, sensible, sincere, constructive, positive, and ethical approaches applied from the start.
9. How to overcome the abusive, intrusive, and coercive behavior of new media bloviators, bellyachers, back-bench bitchers, activists, and critics (and the media).

The unplanned visibility that a crisis creates builds expectations of your honorable behavior among your most critical audiences and stakeholders including your own employees, the community, the government, and the victims. Are you ready?

Managing this unplanned visibility, combined with a real sense of unconventional wisdom, is precisely what this book is about. Most managers and leaders consider themselves to be truly excellent communicators. This book will help you move these critical people, as well as your constituencies, to new levels of understanding and more prompt response when crisis strikes. This book is about going beyond the conventional wisdom. It's about doing things that matter, now. When you get what there is to do and say, done and said during that first golden hour of response opportunity, the victims will thank you and the media will leave you alone.

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