Crisis Communications
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Agenda

- Why Crisis Communications?
- Definitions
- Trends
- Covering the Basics
- Pro-tips for Messaging
- Post crisis
Why Crisis Communications?

Get excited about crisis communications:

- Crises are an opportunity to prove your organization’s values.
- Planning out Crisis Communications is a great way to reinforce your values internally.
- A good crisis communication plan will provide peace of mind now and efficiency if a crisis arrives.
“I always tried to turn every disaster into an opportunity”

- John D. Rockefeller
Crisis definition from Managing Crisis, Harvard Business Press “Pocket Mentor:”

“A change – sudden or evolving – that results in an urgent problem that must be addressed immediately”

What makes it a Crisis?

ISO 22300

Crisis
“situation with high level of uncertainty that disrupts the core activities and/or credibility of an organization and requires urgent action”

Incident
“situation that might be, or could lead to, a disruption, loss, emergency or crisis”
What makes it a crisis for you?

- Allegations of sexual harassment or child abuse
- Lawsuits
- Misconduct by volunteers, board members, or staff
- Unexpected death
- Disgruntled team members spreading dissent
- Damaging remarks from public figures or celebrities
- Destruction of facilities

The Goal

“Crisis communication ensures that all relevant personnel can quickly and effectively communicate with each other during such crises, sharing information that will allow the organization to quickly rectify the situation, protect employees and assets, and ensure business continuity.”

-Rock Dove Solutions
Social media sources can proliferate information in seconds, whether good or bad, correct or rumored.
“Emergency Mass Notification Software” distributes information instantly across platforms

News Travels Quickly

- “GIS mapping” is location-specific messaging
- “Multichannel” communications (i.e. text, voice, and email)
- Two-way messaging

Crisis Communications Basics
1 Designate a Primary Spokesperson

- Designate a primary spokesperson, and also a backup!
- Inform staff of roles.
- Consider board members and respected community figures for supporting communications.

2 Remember your Audience

- Staff and families
- Volunteers
- Participants and clients
- Board members
- Chapters
- Vendors and retained professionals
3 Be ready to respond

How quickly can you create

- An alert on your website?
- A global email update?
- A custom recording for all incoming phone calls?
- A special donation fund?
- A media fact sheet?

Design Check lists

- Are identities being protected?
- Have the correct parties been consulted?
- Have internal directives gone out?
- Have available communication tools been utilized?
- Do you have your keys?
Remember

Plan to have limited mental capacity! The distractions and stress of a crisis will inevitably detract from your usual presence of mind.
Be ready to comment

Remember, saying “no comment” can say a lot!

Stay “on message” || Be positive but concise || Be truthful || Express emotion

Have on hand:

- Pre-written statements
- Policies
- Documents
- Contact lists
Continue to communicate

- Families
- Media
- Press
Consider the emotional side effects

Stress

Loss

Reminders

Memorialize internally

Manage media at anniversaries
Resources

- “7 Crisis Communications Tips Every Organization Should Master,” Lauren Landry, Northeastern University Graduate Programs https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/crisis-communication-tips/
Thank you!

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