

# Governor's Occupational Safety & Health Conference

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR WORKING WITH THE  
MEDIA DURING A CRISIS

**OCTOBER 29, 2019**  
Hershey Lodge  
Hershey, PA



An overhead photograph of five business professionals sitting around a large, light-colored wooden conference table. They are all focused on their devices: one man in a white shirt is using a laptop, another man in a blue sweater is on a smartphone, a woman in a grey blazer is on a smartphone, a man in a plaid shirt is on a tablet, and another person is on a smartphone. The scene is brightly lit, and the background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# atlas MARKETING

we tell stories

Atlas Marketing tells stories for companies who build things. We are a full-service marketing communications agency with offices in Pittsburgh and Lancaster, PA.

We create and deliver stories via research and media planning; print, social and digital communications; and public relations.

# About me

Chris Martin



President/CEO of Atlas Marketing since 2008

Served as spokesperson for  
PENNDOT, City of Pittsburgh, Zippo Manufacturing,  
Dow Chemical, Westinghouse, Flight 93 National Memorial

Managed crisis situations for clients in construction,  
nuclear, healthcare, natural gas and manufacturing  
industries

# EXPECTATIONS

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Communicating during a crisis offers opportunities for safety officers to strengthen corporate reputation and media relationships.

## WHAT THIS MEANS

At the conclusion, you will feel confident in

- Preparing a response in the face of a crisis
- Speaking with the media with a goal in mind
- Managing the media conversation so your message is not misunderstood



# CRISIS

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What is a crisis?





## A CRISIS IS ...

Stressful, because it creates

A disruption to an organization's daily operations

A potential brand damaging event

A media response, potentially

## CRISIS

A potential brand damaging incident that requires a media response.





## QUESTION

How many of you have experienced a crisis?

# DURING CRISIS

people



01

Absorb information differently

02

Process information differently

03

Act on information differently



# Why is this important?



## **INFORMATION IS CURRENCY**

Understanding that people collect and review information differently allows for wider opportunities to inform and educate.

## **THAT CURRENCY AIDS DECISIONS**

Decisions drive business and if you help your customers make easy decisions you are not only informing, but educating. This leads to opportunities that improve your corporate reputation.

## **CRISIS RESPONSE OFFERS**

- Opportunities to strengthen our reputation
- Opportunity to share our messages/story
- Opportunity to influence the media coverage
- Opportunity to shape public perception



# Corporate Reputation

Reputation has an impact on sales, revenues, the ability to attract better employees and increase profits.

## HOW REPUTATIONS ARE MEASURED

Identity

Goodwill

Community leadership

Social media

Previous customers

Response to issues

## EXAMPLES

Harvard University

Tylenol

The Catholic Church

The White House



# PREPARATION

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# Preparation

How to prepare your company for the inevitable



## Ask yourself several basic questions:

- Do I have a safety program in place?
  - Is my safety program up-to-date?
- Do I know what to do when a crisis hits?
  - How will my team respond to a crisis?
- Can my business survive a crisis on the job site?

# Preparation

How to prepare your company for the inevitable



## Steps to prepare your business

- Establish a crisis communications plan
- Review, practice and update the plan regularly
- Research the business ramifications such as lowering insurance premiums, the impact on health plans

# Preparation

What should you include?



## Typical Crisis Communications Plans include

- Crisis definition specific to your company
- Crisis response team members
  - Roles and responsibilities
- Messaging
- Policies and procedures
- Resources
  - Checklists and guidelines
  - Spokesperson guidelines



# MEDIA EXPECTATIONS

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## QUESTION

**How many of you have granted a media interview?**





## QUESTION

How many of you have granted a media interview during a crisis?

# Media Expectations



## What the media expects

- Their job is to gather information
  - Interviews with multiple people, companies & entities
- They will ask the same question in a variety of formats

## Your expectations

- Protect your business
- Follow your crisis communications plan
- Share your side of the story



# Interview Bill of Rights

The Bill of Rights are useful tips to ensure your message is heard, understood and included in the coverage.

## YOU OWN THE INFORMATION

Be confident

Be concise and clear

Be honest

Establish credibility

## PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE TO SAY

I don't know

I'll get back to you with an answer

## TO ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY

One message, One voice -  
***SINGLE VOICE***

Repeat your message  
throughout - ***SIMPLE  
MESSAGE***

No such thing as ***NO  
COMMENT***

Be prepared!



# SPEAKING WITH THE MEDIA

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An interview is not an intellectual exercise; it is an *OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER SPECIFIC MESSAGES TO SPECIFIC AUDIENCES* with the reporter as the conduit.

Key to speaking with a reporter

*SAY WHAT YOU WANT*

*THE AUDIENCE TO KNOW*

Before the interview, ask yourself ...

*IF THE INTERVIEWER USES  
ONLY A 12-SECOND SOUND  
BITE, WHAT WOULD MY  
MESSAGE BE?*

# Speaking with the Media

Packaged answers



This is done via packaged answers

- Lead with key message
- Reinforce message with facts, examples or statistics
- Close by reiterating key message



# Speaking with the Media

Packaged answers



Packaged answers –

Challenge is to ALWAYS  
close with key message

Reinforces what you want  
the reporter to share with the audience

Ensures that the reporter  
knows its importance

A man in a blue suit is seen from behind, speaking to a group of photographers and videographers. The scene is a press conference or media event. The man is standing at a podium with microphones. The background is filled with people holding cameras and tripods, some on the floor and some standing. The lighting is bright and professional.

# TO SUM IT UP

01

Establish your Crisis  
Communications Plan

02

Understand the media  
expectations

03

Know your  
rights



# TO SUM IT UP

04

Package your answers  
for the media

05

PRACTICE  
PRACTICE  
PRACTICE

A man in a blue suit is seen from behind, speaking at a podium. In front of him are several microphones, including a prominent red one. Behind him, a group of people are operating professional video cameras on tripods, capturing his speech. The scene is set in what appears to be a formal or media event.

**TO SUM IT UP**

“There is no harm in hoping for the best, as long as you are prepared for the worst.”

- Stephen King

# Thank you

Feel free to reach out with questions.

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Or

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A person in a dark suit and white shirt is holding a piece of white, torn-edged paper with both hands. The paper has the words "SHARE YOUR STORY" printed in large, bold, dark blue capital letters. The background is a blurred image of the person's torso and hands.