



Media relations for housing

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Today's Discussion

- **How to make media outreach effective**
- **Relationship building**
- **Crisis communications**
- **Outside resources**
- **Measuring success**
- **Q&A**



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Crisis Communications Tips

April 17, 2018

Overview: The Basics

- ▶ **What is a communications crisis?**
 - Something negative has occurred that poses serious risks to the reputation and well-being of an individual and/or organization.

Overview: Common Misconceptions

- ▶ **“You can make the crisis go away.”**
 - No.
- ▶ **“Things will go back to normal soon.”**
 - Maybe.
- ▶ **“Crisis Management is like “Scandal.”**
 - Sort of.



When Crises Might Occur

- ▶ Accidents / human error
- ▶ Corruption, fraud or malfeasance
- ▶ Criminal behavior (accused or actual)
- ▶ Employee misconduct (harassment)
- ▶ False facts / misconceptions
- ▶ Lawsuit

NYCHA Lead Paint

Classic Communication Error

NYCHA Lead Paint

1. NYCHA had issues with lead paint exposure issues for years.
2. Even when they found more evidence they continued to publically deny the problem.
3. Finally, political leaders forced out some of the leadership. But not the top person.
4. Now residents are suing NYCHA.
5. NYCHA continues to release only short, carefully worded statements.

Guidelines: Initial Steps

1. Establish your team. Get them on a call.
 - May include:
 - Executive Director/CEO
 - Communications Director
 - Manager of problem area (HR for personnel matter, manager at a site, etc.)
 - Counsel

Guidelines: Initial Steps

2. Gather all of the facts.

- What is the main issue? What will be greatest public concern?
- Who is affected?
- Is wrongdoing implied? Is the crisis a consequence of human error?
- What is the level of public and stakeholder interest?
- What are our strengths? What kind of public and community relations equity can we leverage?
- What steps must be taken? How do we correct the situation?
- Who is our spokesperson?
- How can we best gather and disseminate information?

Guidelines: Initial Steps

3. Consider ethical, legal and process questions **before** taking action.
 - What are our legal obligations? Do we need to inform law enforcement? Other government agencies?
 - What are our ethical obligations?
 - What is the best way and time to let these people know?

Guidelines: Initial Steps

4. Take a moment to breathe and check your personal well-being.
 - **Disassociate yourself.**
 - **Communicate.**

Guidelines: Initial Steps

5. Prepare for hands-on management.
 1. Determine whether we should contact media before they contact us.
 2. Before we speak or respond, do we have the necessary facts surrounding the situation?
 3. Proactively monitor and quickly respond to misinformation on social media.

Guidelines: Initial Steps

6. **Carefully** execute your plan.
 - Remember to stay calm and thoughtful.
 - Pay attention to detail and slow things down whenever possible.
 - Inform employees and your internal audience first.
 - Demonstrate concern and communicate what the organization is doing or planning to do to solve the problem.

Rules: Manage Discourse

1. Demonstrate that we are in charge.
2. Keep ahead of the release of information.
3. Don't speculate.
4. Conduct rumor control.
5. Don't duck and cover.

A Unified Message

- ▶ Doesn't mean we all agree
- ▶ Board holds variety of opinions and values
- ▶ Best decisions come when all sides of argument are heard
- ▶ Once a decision is reached on public response, board must speak with one voice

Social Media

- ▶ Assign a member of your team to monitor Facebook/Twitter – sweep regularly
- ▶ Develop a statement and post on your website. Use this statement to respond to negative posts.
- ▶ Develop an FAQ or Info Page on your website
- ▶ Share positive news stories, when appropriate
 - They don't have to be related to the ongoing crisis issue

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Questions?



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