

**Crisis Communication and Management: Surviving
a Public Relations Crisis**

Eric Eramo

**A Projected Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Masters
of Arts, Communication and Leadership**

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The author may be contacted at ericeramo@yahoo.com

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Communication Topic

“Real news is bad news — bad news about somebody, or bad news for somebody,”

(Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 1984. p. 17).

Crisis management, or crisis communication, is (as evidenced by the quote above), never a good thing. It is, however, a public relations’ professional moment to shine. A good crisis management plan is not only action during the crisis but preparation and reflection. Hiring a PR firm that deals with crisis management DURING a crisis is less advisable for all concerned, for you should already be prepared, and have a plan in place, before a crisis occurs. Time is always of the essence during a crisis. That is the reason behind this consulting session – to be ready for a crisis.

Task Analysis of What I Trained

This task analysis would ideally be used as a consulting lecture/instruction to a PR department without crisis management experience. Or, it could be taught/presented from a guest lecturer in a public relations course. It is designed to present to the staff of a business, whether they are PR professionals or not, (or PR students) how to develop a crisis management plan BEFORE the crisis occurs. The reason behind this is as follows:

They are not caught off guard.

They have a quicker response time to public inquiries.

They have a response that is applicable to the crisis at hand.

They can move on from the crisis both promptly and efficiently.

Annotated Bibliography

Adubato, S. (2008). *What were they thinking? Crisis communication; The good, the bad and the totally clueless*. Rutgers University Press. NJ.

Steve Adubato, public relations expert, examines notorious crisis communication blunders and what could have been done differently. It is an important book, for it shows that a crisis can strike at any time and when it does you must be prepared to respond effectively and quickly.

Dezenhall, E. (2007). *Damage control: Why everything you know about crisis management is wrong*. New York, NY.

Eric Dezenhall reviews many public relations disasters and presents alternatives to the way they were handled. Mistakes are pointed out, and ulterior options are presented. Many of his ideas go against the grain or the traditional line of thinking in PR, and some go against what many of us were taught or trained to do. The book does a good job of pointing out that every crisis is different and, therefore, must be dealt with differently.

Beebe, S. A., Mottet, T. P., and Roach, K. D. (2004). *Training and development: Enhancing communication and leadership skills*. Allyn & Bacon.

The textbook *Training and Development* is a “how-to” guide on the processes and procedures used to train, consult and teach. It explores the differences between the latter three, as well as the steps needed to describe your services and what to do after you’ve made the sale. *Training and Development* is not only a guidebook on how to reach your destination, but what you can do once you’re there – and beyond.

Mitroff, I.I. (2001). *Managing crises before they happen*. Amacom. NY.

A crisis is always around the corner, and being prepared for such a crisis is oftentimes the only way to survive it. Not every crisis is predictable, but studying the crises of the past can help us deal with those in the present. *Managing crises before they happen* points out many of these “modern-day” crises, and describes how those who manage these crises succeeded or failed.

Newsome, D., Carrell, B. (2001). *Public relations writing: Form and style*. Wadsworth. CA.

Public relations is a broad subject, and the textbook *Public relations writing: Form and style* specializes in the area of how to write for public relations. The backbone of an effective PR campaign is quality, concise writing – not bloated text like one may find in other courses. Some basics of PR are covered, but the text focuses on issues such as grammar, writing styles, and aiming your writing toward select audiences.

Vivian, J. (1999). *The media of mass communication*. Allyn and Bacon. MA.

The media is a means to communicate. The textbook *The media of mass communication* examines the different areas of communication that are best used for what situation, and which ones to avoid. Many different topics are examined, such as public relations, entertainment, advertising and ethics. The media's effect on society is also emphasized.

Wilcox, D.L., Ault, P.H., and Agee, W. K. (1998). *Public relations*. Longman. NY.

Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics is a beginner's guide to the world of public relations, and it can also be used by pros in the field to research and refresh their memories of the all-important basics. Not only is public relations as a practice discussed, but the history of the craft is explored as well; from its beginnings in the late nineteenth century to modern times. The evolution of public relations is explained, as well as where the practice may go into the future.

Needs Analysis

As a public relations/crisis management professional, it is your job to stay one step ahead of them by having the skills and knowledge in the field of public relations, and crisis management, to know what needs to be done efficiently and correctly. According to Professors Lawrence W. Long and Vincent Hazelton, public relations is best defined as:

A communication function of management through which organizations adapt to, alter, or maintain their environment to for the purpose of achieving organizational goals (Wilcox, Ault & Agee, 1998, p. 4).

In relation, crisis management is best summed up by author Eric Dezenhall:

Crisis management is the enterprise of telling ugly truths. Ideally, it is the pursuit of redemption in the marketplace. When one has done wrong, repentance is required. When one has been wronged, a vigorous defense must be mounted (Dezenhall, 2007, p. 3).

We live in a “gotcha” society where almost everything is captured; our actions and words are recorded for everyone to see and watch over and over. Nothing is private, and the slightest misstep is fodder for the public domain. These crises can impede the function of an organization, which is to provide a good or service to a customer or client. From a public relations standpoint, a PR practitioner’s main job duty is to provide information – truthful, honest information, and to protect the company’s image. During a public relations crisis the company’s image is under attack, either from the inside or the outside, oftentimes by the company’s own wrongdoing. The people of the company are likely not trained in crisis communication, and therefore need someone who can speak for

and defend them. A successful crisis management campaign can rebuild a company's tarnished image and present a contrite or unified front to a skeptical public.

At the onset, a crisis is never a positive occurrence. It is, however, a public relations' professional moment to shine. A good crisis management plan is not only action during the crisis but preparation and reflection. Hiring a PR firm that deals with crisis management DURING a crisis is less advisable for all concerned, for you should already be prepared, and have a plan in place, before a crisis occurs. Time is always of the essence during a crisis. That is the reason behind this lesson – to provide the guidance and knowledge to be ready for a crisis.

For this lesson I presented to a small group of associates and co-workers who all are employed in state government. They were not all public relations/communication professionals, but during the course of their careers those that weren't could hypothetically be asked to be on a crisis communication team. Their job titles ranged from technical writer, graphic designer, administrative assistant, paralegal, etc. I originally asked for 10 volunteers, after confirming ten I ended up with seven. The group/team work project was designed for a scenario that they may encounter in state government.

Learning Objectives

1. To define the roles and functions of a public relations practitioner.
2. To be able to identify a public relations crisis.
3. To react successfully to a public relations crisis with a crisis communication/management plan (planning, action, reflection), applying what was learned.
4. Identifying the role of the media (and how to use it to your advantage) in a crisis.
5. To recognize and explain the importance of a crisis management team.

The behavioral objectives for this training session will prepare the students/trainees to practice crisis communication/management. I determined the needs of the students/trainees then move forward with the objectives to meet these goals. This session will ideally be presented to a group, by a consultant, to a communication department or as a guest-lecturer to a public relations class. The sessions are designed to apply to the audience I am consulting. I will research beforehand to find the rules and regulations of the company, as well as the space available for training. For my purposes, I will give the trainees a “crash-course” in what public relations is and the practice of crisis management.

For the training session I used PowerPoint, visual aids and handouts to present my material, and a clip-on microphone so my voice can be heard clearly. I also used a number of handouts with the presentation available in paper form for dispersion (participant guide). From a physical standpoint, the room had comfortable seating and temperature, and the technology needed for vision and acoustics was of a high quality. I not only instructed the trainees on what crisis management is, but I give them the

confidence that they can weather the storm and maneuver their company through their crisis.

I allowed a 5-minute break in the middle of the presentation, which prevented students from taking a break themselves and missing an important part of the lecture. I suggested to them that they could excuse themselves at any time if they must. Due to the short timeline, the presentation was more of a lecture rather than a discussion/Q&A forum. I allowed the students to ask questions as we go, or at the end of the presentation, and encouraged them to see me afterward for a more detailed answer. This format was well received.

I was neatly groomed and dressed appropriately for my audience. For seating, I chose the **Traditional Seating** format for the first part of the lecture, then a **Modular Seating** format for the second part after the scheduled break. During the break I rearranged the seating. The learning activities for this session were designed to give the students “hands on” practice in working with a crisis management team. Rarely will someone be required to face such a crisis alone unless they are a seasoned PR professional with experience in the field. The role playing exercise was practiced *after* the **Prepare** and **Action** training sequences but *before* the **Reflection** sequence. This exercise will allowed students to reflect on not only the crisis communication training they have learned but their actual role-playing outcome.

The 20 minute rule on presentations applied to this 2-hour session.

- a. Intro – who I am and what I do (5 minutes)
- b. Pre-test (5 minutes)

- c. PR (15 minutes)
- d. Crisis Management Preparation (20 minutes)
- e. Break (5 minutes)**
- f. Crisis Management Action (20 minutes)
- g. Role playing (20 minutes)
- h. Discussion/feedback of role playing results (10 minutes)
- i. Crisis Management Reflection (10 minutes)
- j. Post-test (5 minutes)
- k. Questions (5 minutes)

Assessment for Trainees/Students

These tests will be given for help in determining a person's knowledge of Public Relations and Crisis Communications/ Management. The following 20 questions will be asked both before and after training, using a Likert Scale system of rating. This scale will help determine the audience's knowledge of PR and CC both before and after the presentation, and also measure the effectiveness of the presentation.

The higher the score, the more public relations and crisis management knowledge is present.

Public Relations

Public relations is a noble profession.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

I understand the functions of public relations.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Public relations is needed in a company.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

A public relations team should have diverse expertise, not just PR professionals.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

When acting as a public relations practitioner, it is not okay to lie.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Public relations can be an external or internal function of a company.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

It is ethical for PR professionals and reporters to become friends.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

It is not wise to ignore the media if you're in PR. They will not go away.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

A spokesperson should be smart and skilled, not necessarily handsome or beautiful.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Every public relations issues is not necessarily a crisis.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Crisis Management

Crisis management is a noble function of public relations.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

I understand the functions of crisis management.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

A crisis management plan should be planned in advance.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

I feel I could handle myself in a public relations crisis.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Panic is not acceptable in a PR crisis.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

It is never okay to lie or to cover up the truth in a crisis.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

The company spokesperson does not have to be an employee of the company.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Studying past crisis management actions is a good practice to learn how to deal with a crisis.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Saying “no comment” during a crisis is never acceptable.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Reflection is an important part of crisis management.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Assessment for Trainees/Students (results)

**Eric Eramo Core Assessment
Comm. Training and Consulting
Presentation results
before and after
using Likert Scale assessment**

- 1. Strongly disagree**
- 2. Disagree**
- 3. Neither agree nor disagree**
- 4. Agree**
- 5. Strongly agree**

John D.
Public
Relations
Before

knowledge After	% change
4	4
3	4 *
3	5 *
3	3
2	5 *
3	4 *
3	4 *
4	4
3	3
2	4 *

60%

Crisis Management
Before

knowledge After	% change
2	5 *
4	5 *
3	4 *
3	4 *
4	4
4	5 *
3	5 *
2	4 *
2	5 *
2	4 *

90%

Katelyn J.

Public Relations
Before

knowledge After	% change
4	4
4	4
2	4
4	4
3	3
2	4 *
4	5 *
4	5 *
3	4 *
3	5 *

50%

Crisis Management
Before

knowledge After	% change
3	4 *
2	4 *
3	5 *
4	5 *
3	4 *
4	5 *
4	5 *
4	4
4	4
5	5

70%

Felicia A.

Public Relations
Before

knowledge After	% change
3	4 *
2	4 *
2	4 *
3	3
4	5 *
4	5 *
3	5 *
2	4 *
4	4
4	5 *

80%

Crisis Management
Before

knowledge After	% change
2	5 *
4	5 *
2	4 *
5	5
2	4 *
2	4 *
2	5 *
5	5
5	5
4	5 *

Steve B.

Public Relations
Before

knowledge After	% change
1	4 *
1	2 *
2	4 *
5	5
2	4 *
4	4
1	4 *
3	4 *
5	5
4	4

60%

Crisis Management
Before

knowledge After	% change
2	4 *
1	2 *
2	4 *
1	2 *
1	2 *
2	4 *
3	4 *
3	5 *
3	5 *
2	5 *

100%

Tyler G.
Public
Relations
Before

knowledge After	% change
2	4 *
3	4 *
2	4 *
1	2 *
2	4 *
3	5 *
3	5 *
4	5 *
4	4
3	4 *

90%

Crisis Management
Before

knowledge After	% change
5	5
4	4
4	5 *
3	4 *
3	5 *
3	4 *
3	4 *
4	4
1	4 *
1	4 *

70%

Chris H.
Public
Relations
Before

knowledge After	% change
3	4 *
4	4
3	4 *
4	5 *
3	4 *
3	5 *
3	4 *
3	4 *
4	5 *
3	5 *

90%

Crisis Management
Before

knowledge After	% change
5	5
5	5
5	5
5	5
5	5
4	4
4	4
4	5 *
4	5 *
5	5

20%

Amy S.
Public
Relations
Before

knowledge After	% change
3	5 *
3	4 *
3	4 *
2	4 *
4	4
2	4 *
3	4 *
4	4
2	5 *
1	2 *

80%

Crisis Management
Before

knowledge After	% change
3	4 *
2	4 *
1	4 *
1	5 *
1	4 *
2	4 *
3	4 *
3	4 *
4	4
3	5 *

90%

These are the results of my assessment measure using the Likert Scale. I was very happy with the results, as both my training on public relations and crisis management netted positive change, on average, of the questions overall. I was also happy with the fact that if there was a score of "3 - neither agree nor disagree", I educated them in a positive direction to decide on the topic.

Depending on the instructor's discretion, these scores could be tallied in many different ways; not only to see the overall success or failure, but specifically what areas need improvement.

Crisis Communication/Management

A plan to survive a crisis



Brought to you by Eramo
Communication Consulting



Hello, and welcome to Crisis Communication/Management. My name is Eric Eramo, and I will be your instructor for this lesson – which is titled *A plan to survive a crisis*

Brought to you by Eramo Communication Consulting

In this lesson, I will point out the basics of how to survive a crisis by using the Three P's: proven public relations principles

For those of you unfamiliar with public relations, I will also cover the basics of this broad topic as well. For those seasoned public relations practitioners, this lesson will be a valuable refresher for some of the basics you may have forgotten.

Eric Eramo – Communication Director

My credentials:
Education

- A.A. Fine Arts,
Columbus State
- B.S. Applied
Communication,
Franklin University
- M.A. Communication
and Leadership, Park
University (EGD 2010)



A little bit about myself and my credentials: My Education

A.A. Fine Arts

B.S. Applied Communication, Franklin University

M.A. Communication and Leadership, Park University (EGD 2010)

Eric Eramo – Communication Director

- My credentials (cont.) Work experience
 - 7 years as Communication Coordinator in State Government
 - Co-founder of The E Group, Communications Consulting, 2002-2007.
 - Founder of Eramo Communication Consulting, 2009.



My credentials (cont.) Work experience

7 years as Communication Coordinator in State Government, fifteen overall in government.

Co-founder of The E Group, Communications Consulting, 2002-2007.

Founder of Eramo Communication Consulting, 2009.

Pre-test

- To test your knowledge of public relations and crisis management, please complete the multiple choice pre-test
- Answering honestly and quickly
- I will collect your tests in five minutes



To test your knowledge of public relations and crisis management, please complete the multiple choice pre-test

Answering honestly and quickly

I will collect your tests in five minutes

I will also give you the same test at the end of this lesson. By doing so, I not only test your knowledge before and after but I also test my own effectiveness.

What is public relations?

Before the crisis: *PREPARATION*

Defining Public Relations: What it is and when was it formed?



Now let's begin. Determining what is, and isn't, a crisis is essential to crisis management. Do not create your own crisis. Meaning, do not overreact to a public relations occurrence. What purpose does it serve?
How is it related to crisis management?
First let's define Public Relations: What it is and when was it formed?
PR isn't just spreading your message, however. It is helpful to think of public relations as Message Strategy.

What is public relations?

According to Professors Lawrence W. Long and Vincent Hazelton, public relations is best defined as:

“A communication function of management through which organizations adapt to, alter, or maintain their environment to for the purpose of achieving organizational goals”
(Wilcox, Ault & Agee, 1998, p. 4).



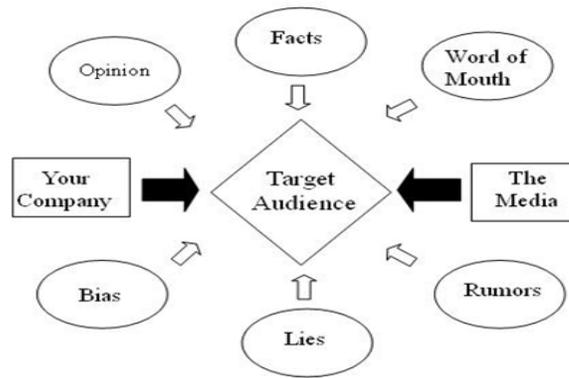
According to Professors Lawrence W. Long and Vincent Hazelton, public relations is best defined as:

“A communication function of management through which organizations adapt to, alter, or maintain their environment to for the purpose of achieving organizational goals”
(Wilcox, Ault & Agee, 1998, p. 4).

.

What is public relations?

Public Relations Reaching a Target Audience



**Can you think of any other influencing factors?
Which are negative and positive?**



What is public relations, exactly? To many, it is considered a “tug of war” for a company’s message. As this graphic shows, the tug of war could be between your company and the media, fighting over the attention, and loyalty, of your target audience. Take a look at the factors that can influence this struggle, such as Opinion, facts, and pre-conceived bias. Some may appear as negatives, but they can indeed work to your advantage. Can you think of any other influencing factors that may effect your public relations success? If so, what may they be?

What is public relations?

Public relations and the media

*“Real news is bad news — bad news **about** somebody, or bad news **for** somebody,”* (Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 1984, p. 17).



This quote concerning the media is quite telling. *Real news is bad news — bad news **about** somebody, or bad news **for** somebody.* This quote from author Marshall McLuhan, from his book *Understanding Media*, details the type of fight you may be up against. The news media LOVES bad news, and if this bad news could be about you or your company. Therefore, you will need to formulate a plan, a crisis management plan, to combat it. Be aware of this quote every time you deal with the media. I have it posted over my office telephone, just so I remember it whenever the media calls. In most cases, bad news sells; but good news is buried on the back pages.

What is crisis communication?

“Crisis management is the enterprise of telling ugly truths. Ideally, it is the pursuit of redemption in the marketplace. When one has done wrong, repentance is required. When one has been wronged, a vigorous defense must be mounted” (Dezenhall, 2007, p. 3).

Dezenhall, E. (2007). *Damage control: Why everything you know about crisis management is wrong.*



According to author E. Dezenhall, Crisis management is the enterprise of telling ugly truths. Ideally, it is the pursuit of redemption in the marketplace. When one has done wrong, repentance is required. When one has been wronged, a vigorous defense must be mounted. Now that we're familiar with the world of public relations, let's move on to crisis communication and management. Take a deep breath and hold on tight, as a wild ride is about to begin.

But remember, as in any ride, no matter the risk you end up enjoying it!

Crisis Management-Preparation

Defining a crisis: Determining what is, and isn't, a crisis is essential to crisis management. Do not create your own crisis. Meaning, do not overreact to a public relations occurrence. A crisis may consist of any of the following, or a combination of more than one.



Defining a crisis: Determining what is, and isn't, a crisis is essential to crisis management. Do not create your own crisis. Meaning, do not overreact to a public relations occurrence. A crisis may consist of any of the following, or a combination of more than one.

Crisis Management-Preparation

- A negligent loss of life
(carelessness in the workplace)
- A loss of reputation (embezzlement,
sex scandal)
- The ruin of a company.
- Entertainment missteps.
- Loss of public trust.



A crisis can occur at any time, and it can be big or small. Among many others, it could be the following scenarios:

- A negligent loss of life (carelessness in the workplace)
- A loss of reputation (embezzlements or sex scandals)
- The ruin of a company.
- Entertainment missteps.
- Loss of public trust.
- Other unforeseen circumstance.

Crisis Management-Preparation

Can you define a crisis?

- Johnson and Johnson Tylenol Scare
- Value Jet crash
- Exxon Valdez tanker oil spill
- Don Imus foot-in-mouth disease
- Michael Jackson child abuse trials
- Virginia Tech Massacre
- Janet Jackson wardrobe malfunction
- Titanic disaster
- Firestone tires
- Catholic Church pedophile scandal
- The New York Times plagiarism case
- FEMA fails during Hurricane Katrina
- Rudy Giuliani peccadilloes
- Kanye West/Taylor Swift MTV awards interruption
- The Craig'sList Killer



Please take a moment to review the following crises. A crisis could be big, or it could be small; worldwide or just in your community. One thing they all have in common is you'll know a crisis when you're in one. Which jump out at you as particularly damaging? Which do you define as a crisis and which ones would you not?

The correct answer is, almost everyone defines a crisis based on different criteria. One man's crisis is another man's opportunity. An opportunity to spread a message about your product or service. Free marketing, perhaps? Is any publicity good publicity? *You* must decide.

Crisis Management-Preparation

Choose members for a crisis management team.

- Choose a writer who can write quickly and efficiently.
- Choose a spokesperson.
- Stay away from “spin-doctoring”, as spin doctors are not a favorable asset to honest public relations.



This first step in crisis management preparation and planning is to form a crisis management team. Choose a writer who can write quickly and efficiently. Choose a spokesperson, AKA a mouthpiece for the company. Stay away from “spin-doctoring”, as spin doctors are not a favorable asset to honest public relations.

Crisis Management-Preparation

- Identify potential crises, based on previous experience in your line of business that may occur. Review how these crises have been handled in the past.
 - Were their methods successful? What did they do right?
 - Were they unsuccessful? What did they do wrong?



Next, you should identify potential crises, based on previous experience in your line of business that may occur.

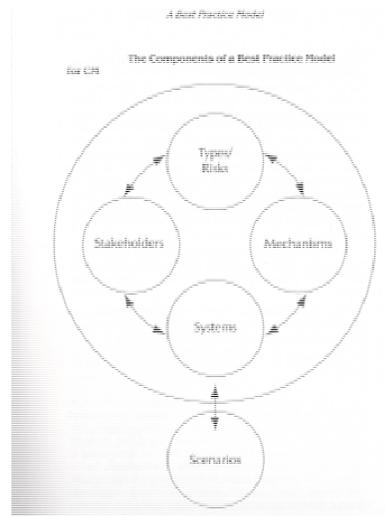
This could include your business or others similar to it.

Then, review how these crises have been handled in the past.

- Were their methods successful?
- What did they do right?
- Were they unsuccessful?
- What did they do wrong?

Crisis Management-Preparation

Develop a crisis management plan.
“Do not repair, prepare.”



Mitroff, I.I. (2001). *Managing crises before they happen*. Amacom. NY 

Once you have reached this point in the planning stages, develop a crisis management plan. ***“Do not repair, prepare.”***

Develop news release templates.

Spokesperson templates, transcripts and talking points.

Experiential Activities (role playing, case studies, simulations, demonstrations, etc).

As you can see from the following graphic, one must take special care in taking stock of all factors involved, including stakeholders, risks, mechanisms, and systems. All of these factors apply to any possible scenarios that may arise from a PR crisis.

Crisis Management-Preparation

Use technology to your advantage



Blogs
Message boards
Twitter,
Facebook,
MySpace,
YouTube
Create a “dark
Web site” to deal
with a crisis



Use technology to your advantage. While the ample new technology available may make it harder to control information, you can use these outlets to your advantage. If you do not use these methods such as Blogs Message boards Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube to prepare and deal with a crisis, those working against you will. Master these technologies in your crisis planning stages. Also, create a “dark” website that can be posted right away. This is a website that will immediately replace your existing one that deals with the crisis at hand. Begin using a news-monitoring service to follow the news more closely.

Establish media contacts. Know the names and contact info. of local reporters who handle your area of business.

Local newspapers and magazines

Television stations

Internet sites

Crisis Management-Preparation

The media is not necessarily your enemy,
they can be your best friend.



It is important to remember that the media is not necessarily your enemy, they can be your best friend in a crisis. Many PR practitioners get their start in the newspaper industry. Use their resources to your advantage, and spread “good news” items about your company as often as you can. This builds a good reputation. The media’s job is to report news – so give them news.

At this time, please take a five minute break
Please return promptly to complete your training session

Crisis Management-Action

A crisis has occurred. **Do not panic!** Stay calm.

- You have prepared. ***“There ain’t no scandal you can’t handle”***.
- Act and believe that, as a company, you will survive this.
- Present an image of company strength, confidence and unification.



Thank you for returning from the break promptly. As you do, we will hit the ground running. Since you’ve been gone, your company has been caught in the middle of a crisis. A crisis has occurred. **Do not panic!** Stay calm.

You have prepared. ***“There ain’t no scandal you can’t handle”***.

Act and believe that, as a company, you will survive this.

Present an image of company strength, confidence and unification.

Crisis Management-Action

Immediately assemble the team that will be handling the crisis management procedures.



Now, immediately assemble the team that will be handling the crisis management procedures (legal, communications, senior staff, etc) to review their crisis communications plan. Also, establish a crisis communication center so all information coming and going is the same.

Crisis Management-Action

Management team cont.

- Review ethics policy. Behave responsibly.
- At times you may need to be vague; AKA ***vague by design***.
- Do not “cover up” anything.
- Compare the crisis happening/that has happened to the scenarios you have available.



Next, review your ethics policy. Remember honesty is the best policy. Behave responsibly. You are still in the information gathering stage of your crisis. At times you may need to be vague; AKA ***vague by design***. Not all information needs to be made public, or may not be readily available, to protect the business or client. But, do not present yourself as secretive.

Do not “cover up” anything. Compare the crisis happening/that has happened to the scenarios and plans that you have available. Then, put the correct plan into place.

Crisis Management-Action

- Measure the severity of the crisis and how to proceed.
- Is it really a crisis? If not, do not act as it is. Usually, if a crisis occurs you will know it.
 - Was someone guilty of a crime or arrested?
 - Were someone's actions illegal or immoral?
 - Was there a loss of life?
 - Did a product fail and cause damage?



Now you will measure the severity of the crisis and how to proceed.

Is it really a crisis? If not, do not act as it is. Usually, if a crisis occurs you will know it.

Was someone guilty of a crime or arrested?

Were someone's actions illegal or immoral?

Was there a loss of life?

Did a product fail and cause damage?

Crisis Management-Action



Again, remember do not push the panic button. Move forward with confidence and precision. Remember, you have prepared for a crisis.

Crisis Management-Action

Some possible stances for the severity of the crisis are:

- Apology. Has your company committed wrongdoing?
- Defense. Is your company under attack or wrongfully accused?
- Explanation. Is something unclear that needs clarified?
- Determination.



You now know that your company is in a crisis. So, what do you do? Some possible stances for the severity of the crisis are:

- Apology. Has your company committed wrongdoing? It is important to remember that accepting blame does not always mean you must apologize. Assess the situation and react accordingly.
- Defense. Is your company under attack or wrongfully accused? If so, fight this attack vehemently. Remember, much is at stake.
- Explanation. Is something unclear that needs clarified? If so, explain what has happened in as much detail as possible.
- Determination. Present the following stance- what has happened is still unclear, but rest assured, you (as a company) will find out. Find this information and make it public quickly.

Crisis Management-Action

- Finalize your crisis management plan.
- Determine where and when to present information.
- **Control** the flow of information. When you control the flow of information, you also control the crisis.



Finalize your crisis management plan, based on your preparation and the info. in the previous slide, to present to the world or whomever you may be held accountable to. Determine where and when to present information. **Control** the flow of information. When you control the flow of information, you also control the crisis.

Crisis Management-Action

Determine who needs to know this information. Is it an internal crisis or an external one?

Telling the Truth

		Another Person**	
		Known	Unknown
Yourself*	Reveal/ Tell	1. Forced to Tell the Truth	2. Preemptive Strike
	Don't Reveal/ Don't Tell	4. Stonewall It	3. Play the Odds

*The two rows indicate two very different kinds of actions that a person can take.
**The two columns represent whether another person knows or does not know the truth about a first person, or "yourself."

Mitroff, I.I. (2001). *Managing crises before they happen*. Amacom. NY



Determine who needs to know this information. Is it an internal crisis or an external one?

Could it be your

Shareholders.

Fellow employees (co-workers).

Customers.

General Public.

Media.

Remember to tell the truth. This graphic shows that if you are prepared with information, and know how to use it, honesty is the best policy.

You now know what you want to say, so say it. Remember, *Message Strategy*

The public most often believes the first news they hear. The news that follows is less likely to be believed. Therefore, get your side of the story out to the public first.

Crisis Management-Action

- Contact the news media as soon as possible, hopefully **before** they contact you.
- Never, ever say “No comment”.



Contact the news media as soon as possible, hopefully **before** they contact you. This is not always possible, as the news media loves bad news and may already be in top of the story – publishing information before you have the chance to comment. If the media contacts you, and your crisis team is not ready for a response, promise to reply as soon as possible – and mean it. Never, ever say “No comment”. If you must, say your spokesperson is “unavailable to comment” but will do so shortly.

Crisis Management-Action

- Do not appear overconfident or as a smart-aleck.
- Again, present an image of company strength, confidence and unification.



Do not appear overconfident or as a smart-aleck.

Do not steer from the plan. If the plan needs to be amended, do so with another meeting – everyone needs to be united and be giving the same information. This does not mean, however, you cannot think fast on your feet.

Again, present an image of company strength, confidence and unification.

Crisis Management-Action

Never, ever lie. Again, do not lie.



Did I mention not to lie?



If you uncover a lie, do not perpetuate it. Instead, assess the situation and see if it can be repaired.

If you are caught in a lie, you will lose all credibility and the damage may be un-repairable.

If you are caught in a lie, apologize immediately and move on.

Crisis Management-Action

Provide a clear, concise news release that addresses the crisis at hand.

- Sum up the news.
- The “lead.”
- The news release will need to be proofread and edited before being delivered.



A public relations professional’s calling card is the news release. Provide a clear, concise news release that addresses the crisis at hand. This includes both Web and print publications.

A quality news release will sum up the news item and who to contact with questions concerning the news item.

The “lead”, usually the first or first two paragraphs, will sum up the news story with less important news as the release goes on.

The news release will need to be proofread and edited before being delivered. Errors will undermine your credibility and hamper your crisis management efforts.

Crisis Management-Action

- Update the company website as soon as possible.
- Update any social networking sites or blogs (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) that your company is associated with.
- The presence of a spokesperson emerges.



Moving on, update the company website as soon as possible. Include a copy of the news release and any video available.

Update any social networking sites or blogs that your company is associated with.

The presence of a spokesperson to address any questions from the media emerges at this time. This is important, as different information cannot be flowing from different employees in a crisis.

Crisis Management-Action



An effective spokesperson will answer all questions from the media, either in a press conference or interview format.



An effective spokesperson will answer all questions from the media, either in a press conference or interview format.

If an answer to a specific question is not known, be honest. State so with a guarantee you will contact the questioner when an answer is known.

Crisis Management-Action

After responding to the crisis and a plan has been enacted:

- Determine if a new plan needs to be implemented or stay the course. Follow the news of your crisis in the media to see if it subsides or grows.
- ***“It ain’t over till it blows over.”***



After responding to the crisis and a plan has been enacted:

Determine if a new plan needs to be implemented or stay the course. Stick to the plan or devise a new one.

Once you decide on a plan ride out the storm. Continue to stay calm and in control.

Follow the news of your crisis in the media to see if it subsides or grows. ***“It ain’t over till it blows over.”*** If the crisis is worse than expected, do not push the panic button.

Batten down the hatches, continue to ride it out. Nothing lasts forever. It will indeed, blow over.

Nothing stays in the news forever.

Crisis Management-Action

Analyze/measure public opinion **during** the crisis.

- Focus groups.
- Polls.
- Surveys.



If your crisis management plan is ongoing you must measure its success. Analyze and measure public opinion **during** the crisis, after your plan has been enacted.

- Focus groups.
- Polls.
- Surveys.

Crisis Management-Action

Good job! You have maneuvered through the crisis. Now, reflect on what you learned.



But your work is not yet done.
In many ways, it is only beginning.



All things must end, and your present crisis will. It may take months, days or years perhaps – but, as always, stick to the plan.
Good job! You have maneuvered through the crisis. Reflect on what you learned.
Even though your crisis is finished your work is not yet done. In many ways, it is only beginning.

Crisis Management-Reflection

- Repair any damage cause by the actions of the company.
- Continue to communicate with the media on efforts to correct this damage.
- Analyze public opinion ***after*** the crisis.



Now is the time for reflection and to repair any damage cause by the actions of the company.

Pick up the pieces and move on.

Continue to communicate with the media on efforts to correct this damage.

Give updates on these results and efforts.

Just as you did during the crisis, analyze public opinion ***after*** the crisis as well to see how you did.

- Focus groups.
- Polls.
- Surveys

Crisis Management-Reflection



Did you company successfully maneuver through the crisis?

- Was it successful? If so, why?
- Was it a failure? If so, why?



Did you company successfully maneuver through the crisis?

Was it successful? If so, why?

Was it a failure? If so, why?

Crisis Management-Reflection

Assess how your crisis management team performed.

- Were they successful? If so, why?
- Was they a failure? If so, why?



Assess how your crisis management team performed.
Was it successful? If so, why?
Was it a failure? If so, why?

Crisis Management-Reflection

What would you do differently if you could go back?

- Was it a team or a plan failure or success?
- Was the failure in the plan or the execution?
- Did the plan need to be amended during the crisis, or was it followed successfully to the letter?



What would you do differently if you could go back?

Was the failure in the plan or the execution?

Did the plan need to be amended during the crisis, or was it followed successfully to the letter?

A new crisis always looms on the horizon Are you ready for it?

Will a new plan need to be formulated?

Was the current plan so successful that it can be used again?

Crisis Management-Reflection

A new crisis always looms on the horizon.

Are you ready for it?

- Will a new plan need to be formulated?
- Was the current plan so successful that it can be used again?



A new crisis always looms on the horizon Are you ready for it?

Will a new plan need to be formulated?

Was the current plan so successful that it can be used again?

Now, it is time to apply what you learned in a role-playing exercise.

Role playing exercise

- Work as a team to respond to the following Crisis situation.
- You have twenty minutes, so act quickly.
- This will be a good assessment of your crisis management and teamwork skills and “thinking fast on your feet”.
- Start now, for the clock is ticking...



For this exercise, work as a team to respond to the following crisis situation.

Afterward, the results will not be graded, only discussed and reviewed, so speak freely among your group.

You only have twenty minutes, so act quickly.

This will be a good assessment of your crisis management and teamwork skills and “thinking fast on your feet”.

Start now, for the clock is ticking...

Role playing exercise

In this role playing exercise, the CIO of a company has just been indicted for skimming money from the company's resources. To make matters worse, these monies were meant to be used for public health and safety. Your public relations team must act accordingly.



In this role playing exercise, the CIO of a company has just been indicted for skimming money from the company's resources. To make matters worse, these monies were meant to be used for public health and safety. Your public relations team must react accordingly.

Role playing exercise cont.

- First, decide if this is actually a crisis.
- Access the situation - Accept blame, defense, etc.
- Decide who needs to be brought onto the team in your company.
- Educate the public/media on what happened. Devise an initial plan of response/statement to the media
- Decide which other modes of communication you will use



First, decide if this is actually a crisis. HINT – YES IT IS.

Next, Access the situation. Accept blame, defense, etc.

Decide who needs to be brought onto the team in your company.

Educate the public/media on what happened. Devise an initial plan of response/statement to the media

Assure the public that guilty parties will be dismissed and monies will attempt to be recovered. Reassure the public that business will go on as usual. Decide which other modes of communication you will use: News release, video, press conference, etc.

Most importantly, TALK about what you have learned and how you will apply it.

Discussion/feedback of role playing results



- Did you complete enough tasks in time?
- Did you define roles?
- Did you assign tasks to others?
- What would you do differently?



Thank you for participating in the role playing assignment. This exercise was conducted more to give you an idea of how you must act quickly in a crisis, and the pressure you will be under as you raced against the clock.

Did you complete enough tasks in time?

Did you define roles?

Did you assign tasks to others?

What would you do differently?

Closing

- Takeaways.
- Questions?
- Thank you for your attention.



Feel free to ask any questions at this time, or stay afterward if you'd like a private audience.

Please be sure to collect your lesson outline and takeaways.

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Participant Guide

Participant's Guide table of contents

1. Outline of presentation; *Preparation, Action & Reflection*
2. Handouts, visual aids
3. Tests/Assessment measures
4. *Results of tests/assessment measures*

Outline of presentation
Preparation, Action & Reflection

- l. Intro – who I am and what I do/qualifications (5 minutes)
- m. Pre-test (5 minutes)
- n. PR (15 minutes)
- o. Crisis Management Preparation (20 minutes)
- p. Break (5 minutes)**
- q. Crisis Management Action (20 minutes)
- r. Role playing (20 minutes)
- s. Discussion/feedback of role playing results (10 minutes)
- t. Crisis Management Reflection (10 minutes)
- u. Post-test (5 minutes)
- v. Questions (5 minutes)

Introduction: *Eramo Communication Consulting*

I. My credentials: Education

- A. A.A. Fine Arts, Columbus State
- B. B.S. Applied Communication, Franklin University
- C. B.A. Communication and Leadership, Park University (EGD 2010)

II. My credentials: Work experience

- A. 7 years as Communication Coordinator in State Government. 15 years overall.
- B. Co-founder of The E Group, Communications Consulting, 2002-2007.
- C. Founder of Eramo Communication Consulting, 2009.

III. Pre-test

- A. To test your knowledge of public relations and crisis management, please complete the multiple choice pre-test
 - 1. Answering honestly and quickly
 - 2. I will collect your tests in five minutes

Before the crisis: *PREPARATION*

I. Defining Public Relations: What it is and when was it formed?

- A. What purpose does it serve?
- B. How is it related to crisis management?

II. Edward L. Bernays (November 22, 1891 – March 9, 1995)

- A. Early practitioner of public relations
- B. Practiced the craft beginning in the early 20th century
- C. Image = Reputation Building
- D. *The Engineering of Consent*
- E. Nephew of Sigmund Freud
 - Wilcox, D.L., Ault, P.H., and Agee, W. K. (1998). *Public relations*. Longman. NY.

III. Ivy Ledbetter Lee (July 16, 1877 – November 9th, 1934)

- A. Early practitioner of crisis communications
- B. Represented oil and railroads, among others
- C. *Declaration of Principles* – The PR practitioner has a duty not just to the client, but to the public
- D. Accuracy, Authenticity, and Interest
 - Wilcox, D.L., Ault, P.H., and Agee, W. K. (1998). *Public relations*. Longman. NY.

IV. Public relations defined

- A. According to Professors Lawrence W. Long and Vincent Hazelton, public relations is best defined as: “A communication function of management through

- which organizations adapt to, alter, or maintain their environment to for the purpose of achieving organizational goals” (Wilcox, Ault & Agee, 1998, p. 4).
- B. To many, it is considered a “tug of war” for a company’s message. (Graphic #1).
The tug of war could be between your company and the media, fighting over the attention, and loyalty, of your target audience. The factors that can influence this struggle are opinion, facts, and pre-conceived bias. Some may appear as negatives, but they can indeed work to your advantage.
- C. Public relations has a long history – dating from Charles Darwin to the present day. It is an always-changing profession. (Graphic # 2).
- D. Public relations and the media - “*Real news is bad news — bad news **about** somebody, or bad news **for** somebody,*” (Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 1984, p. 17).
- V. Defining a crisis: Determining what is, and isn’t, a crisis is essential to crisis management. Do not create your own crisis. Meaning, do not overreact to a public relations occurrence. A crisis may consist of any of the following, or a combination of more than one.
- A. “Crisis management is the enterprise of telling ugly truths. Ideally, it is the pursuit of redemption in the marketplace. When one has done wrong, repentance is required. When one has been wronged, a vigorous defense must be mounted” (Dezenhall, 2007, p. 3).
- B. Defining a crisis: Determining what is, and isn’t, a crisis is essential to crisis management. Do not create your own crisis. Meaning, do not

overreact to a public relations occurrence. A crisis may consist of any of the following, or a combination of more than one.

1. A negligent loss of life (carelessness in the workplace)
2. A loss of reputation (embezzlement, sex scandal)
3. The ruin of a company.
4. Entertainment missteps.
5. Loss of public trust.

C. Can you define a crisis? A crisis could be big, or it could be small; worldwide or just in your community. One thing they all have in common is you'll know a crisis when you're in one.

1. Johnson and Johnson Tylenol Scare
2. Value Jet crash
3. Exxon Valdez tanker oil spill
4. Don Imus foot-in-mouth disease
5. Michael Jackson child abuse trials
6. Virginia Tech Massacre
7. Janet Jackson wardrobe malfunction
8. Titanic disaster
9. Firestone tires
10. Catholic Church pedophile scandal
11. The New York Times plagiarism case
12. FEMA fails during Hurricane Katrina
13. Rudy Giuliani peccadilloes

14. Kanye West/Taylor Swift MTV awards interruption

15. The Craig's List Killer

VI. Choose members for a crisis management team.

- A. Choose a writer who can write quickly and efficiently.
- B. Choose a spokesperson, AKA a mouthpiece. For the company.
- C. Stay away from “spin-doctoring”.

1. Spin doctors are not a favorable asset to honest public relations.

VII. Identify potential crises, based on previous experience in your line of business that may occur.

- A. This could include your business or others similar to it.
- B. Review how these crises have been handled in the past.
- C. Were their methods successful?
 - i. What did they do right?
- D. Were they unsuccessful?
 - ii. What did they do wrong?
- E. Distribute handouts/takeaways on what a crisis is, including previous situations that may have been described above.

V. Develop a crisis management plan. ***“Do not repair, prepare.”***

- A. Develop news release templates.
- B. Spokesperson templates, transcripts and talking points.
- C. Experiential Activities (role playing, case studies, simulations, demonstrations, etc).
- D. See Graphic #3.

VI. Use technology to your advantage

- A. Blogs
- B. Message boards
- C. Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube
- D. Create a “dark Web site” to deal with a crisis

VIII. Begin using a news-monitoring service to follow the news more closely.

IX. Establish media contacts. Know the names and contact info. of local reporters who handle your area of business.

- A. Local newspapers and magazines
- B. Television stations
- C. Internet sites
- D. The media can be your friend, not necessarily your enemy.
 - 1. Use their resources to your advantage.

BREAK

During the crisis: ACTION

- I. A crisis has occurred. **Do not panic!** Remain calm.
 - A. You have prepared. *“There ain’t no scandal you can’t handle”*.
 - B. Act and believe that, as a company, you will survive this.
 - C. Present an image of company strength, confidence and unification.
 - D. Many companies have public relations and/or crisis management teams in place ready to tackle the numerous crises that may come their way. Not all companies have this luxury. You can either call a professional, such as Eramo Communication Consulting or another reputable PR firm, or,

armed with the knowledge from this lesson, you could tackle this crisis yourself! *I* think you're ready.

II. Immediately assemble the team that will be handling the crisis management procedures (legal, communications, senior staff, etc) to review their crisis communications plan.

- A. Review ethics policy. Remember honesty is the best policy.
- B. Behave responsibly.
- C. You are still in the information gathering stage. At times you may need to be vague; AKA *vague by design*. Not all information needs to be made public, or may not be readily available, to protect the business or client. But, do not present yourself as secretive.
- D. Do not "cover up" anything.
- E. Compare the crisis happening/that has happened to the scenarios you have available.
- F. See Graphic #4. This decision matrix graphic shows how you can take different roads to making a decision. Which one will you take? Will you accept or deny responsibility? Will you think and act systematically, or panic? At this point, based on your training you know what you must do.

III. Measure the severity of the crisis and how to proceed.

- A. Is it really a crisis? If not, do not act as it is. Usually, if a crisis occurs you will know it.
 - i. Was someone guilty of a crime or arrested?
 - ii. Were someone's actions illegal or immoral?

- iii. Was there a loss of life?
- iv. Did a product fail and cause damage?
- v. Again, do not panic.

IV. Some possible stances for the severity of the crisis are:

- A. Apology. Has your company committed wrongdoing (see above)?
- B. Defense. Is your company under attack or wrongfully accused?
- C. Explanation. Is something unclear that needs clarified?
- D. Determination. Present the following stance- what has happened is still unclear, but rest assured, you (as a company) will find out.

V. Finalize a crisis management plan, based on the info. in step IV, to present to the world or whomever you may be held accountable to.

- A. Determine where and when to present information. **Control** the information. When you control the information, you also control the crisis.
- B. Determine who needs to know this information. Is it an internal crisis or an external one?
 - i. Shareholders.
 - ii. Fellow employees (co-workers).
 - iii. Customers.
 - iv. General Public.
 - v. Media.
 - vi. See Graphic # 5. Remember to tell the truth. This graphic shows that if you are prepared with information, and know how to use it, honesty is the best policy.

VI. Presentation. You now know what you want to say, so say it. The public most often believes the first news they hear. The news that follows is less likely to be believed. Therefore, get your side of the story out to the public first.

- A. Contact the news media as soon as possible, hopefully *before* they contact you
- B. This is not always possible, as the news media loves bad news and may already be in top of the story – publishing information before you have the chance to comment.
- C. If the media contacts you, and your crisis team is not ready for a response, promise to reply as soon as possible – and mean it.
- D. Never, ever say “No comment”. If you must, say your spokesperson is “unavailable to comment” but will do so shortly.
- E. Do not appear overconfident or as a smart-aleck.
- F. Do not steer from the plan. If the plan needs to be amended, do so with another meeting – everyone needs to be united and be giving the same information. This does not mean, however, you cannot think fast on your feet.
- G. Again, present an image of company strength, confidence and unification.
- H. Do not lie.

VII. Provide a clear, concise news release that addresses the crisis at hand. This includes both Web and print publications. See Graphic #6.

- A. A quality news release will sum up the news item and who to contact with questions concerning the news item.

- B. The “lead”, usually the first or first two paragraphs, will sum up the news story with less important news as the release goes on.
- C. The news release will need to be proofread and edited before being delivered. Errors will undermine your credibility and hamper your crisis management efforts.

VIII. Update the company website as soon as possible. Include a copy of the news release and any video available.

IX. Update any social networking sites or blogs that your company is associated with.

X. The presence of a spokesperson to address any questions from the media emerges at this time. This is important, as different information cannot be flowing from different employees in a crisis.

- A. An effective spokesperson will answer all questions from the media, either in a press conference or interview format.
- B. If an answer to a specific question is not known, be honest. State so with a guarantee you will contact the questioner when an answer is known.

XI. After responding to the crisis and a plan has been enacted:

- A. Ride out the storm. Continue to stay calm and in control. Stick to the plan.
- B. Determine if a new plan needs to be implemented or stay the course.
- C. Follow the news of your crisis in the media to see if it subsides or grows.
- D. ***“It ain’t over till it blows over.”*** If the crisis is worse than expected, do not push the panic button. Batten down the hatches, continue to ride it out. Nothing lasts forever. It will indeed, blow over.

XII. Analyze public opinion ***during*** the crisis.

A. Focus groups.

B. Polls.

C. Surveys.

After the crisis: REFLECTION

I. Good job! You have maneuvered through the crisis. Reflect on what you learned.

A. Your work is not yet done. In many ways, it is only beginning.

II. Repair any damage cause by the actions of the company or client.

A. Pick up the pieces and move on.

III. Continue to communicate with the media on efforts to correct this damage.

A. Give updates on these results and efforts.

IV. Analyze public opinion *after* the crisis.

A. Focus groups.

B. Polls.

C. Surveys.

V. Did you company successfully maneuver through the crisis?

A. Was it successful? If so, why?

B. Was it a failure? If so, why?

VI. Assess how your crisis management team performed.

A. Was it successful? If so, why?

B. Was it a failure? If so, why?

VII. What would you do differently if you could go back?

A. Was the failure in the plan or the execution?

- B. Did the plan need to be amended during the crisis, or was it followed successfully to the letter?

VIII. A new crisis always looms on the horizon Are you ready for it?

- A. Will a new plan need to be formulated?
- B. Was the current plan so successful that it can be used again?

Role Playing Exercise

I. Work as a team to respond to the following Crisis situation. Afterward, the results will not be graded, only discussed, so speak freely among your group. You have twenty minutes, so act quickly. This will be a good assessment of your crisis management and teamwork skills and “thinking fast on your feet”. Start now, for the clock is ticking...

II. In this role playing exercise, the CIO of a company has just been indicted for skimming money from the company’s resources. To make matters worse, these monies were meant to be used for public health and safety. Your public relations team must act accordingly. Now, act as a team.

- A. First, decide if this is actually a crisis.
- B. Assess the situation
 - a. Accept blame, defense, etc.
- C. Decide who needs to be brought onto the team in your company.
- D. Educate the public/media on what happened. Devise an initial plan of response/statement to the media
 - a. Assure the public that guilty parties will be dismissed and monies will attempt to be recovered.

- b. Reassure the public that business will go on as usual.
- E. Decide which other modes of communication you will use
 - a. News release, video, press conference, etc.

III. Discussion/feedback of role playing results. This exercise was conducted more to give you an idea of how you must act quickly in a crisis, and the pressure you will be under as you raced against the clock.

- A. Did you complete enough tasks in time?
- B. Did you define roles?
- C. Did you assign tasks to others?
- D. What would you do differently?

IV. Post-test

- A. To test your “updated” knowledge of public relations and crisis management, please complete the multiple choice post-test
 - 1. Answering honestly and quickly
 - 2. I will collect your tests in five minutes

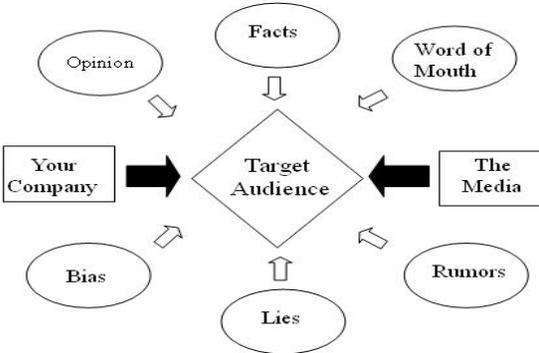
Closing

- I. Takeaways.
- II. Questions?
- III. Thank you for your attention.

Handouts/Visual Aids

Visual Aid/Graphic 1.

**Public Relations
Reaching a Target Audience**



**Can you think of any other influencing factors?
Which are negative and positive?**

Visual Aid/Graphic 2.



media **timeline**

...**evolution of public relations**

1859 Charles Darwin advanced survival-of-fittest theory, which led to social Darwinism.

1880s Public dissatisfied with unconscionable business practices justified with social Darwinism.

1906 Ivy Lee began first public relations agency.

1917 George Creel headed federal agency that generated support for World War I.

1927 Arthur Page became first corporate public relations vice president.

1930s Paul Garrett created term *enlightened self-interest* at General Motors.

1942 Elmer Davis headed federal agency that generated support for World War II.

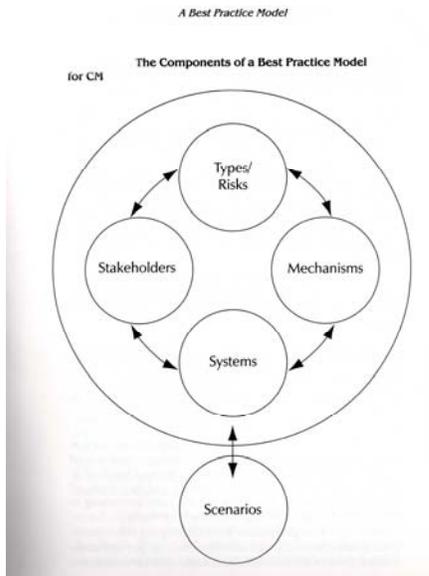
1965 Public Relations Society of America created accreditation system.

1970s Herb Schmertz pioneered adversarial public relations at Mobil Oil.

1987 PRSA adopted ethics code.

Vivian, J. (1999). *The media of mass communication*. Aayln and Bacon. MA.

Visual Aid/Graphic 3.



Mitroff, I.I. (2001). *Managing crises before they happen*. Amacom. NY

Visual Aid/Graphic 4.

A Decision Matrix

	<i>Accept Responsibility</i>	<i>Deny Responsibility</i>
<i>Think and Act Systemically</i>	1 Crisis prepared	2 A fundamental contradiction in terms
<i>Do Not Think and Do Not Act Systemically</i>	4 Luck? A lack of understanding may produce a chain reaction	3 Crisis prone, subject to a chain reaction of crises

Mitroff, I.I. (2001). *Managing crises before they happen*. Amacom. NY

Visual Aid/Graphic 5.

Telling the Truth

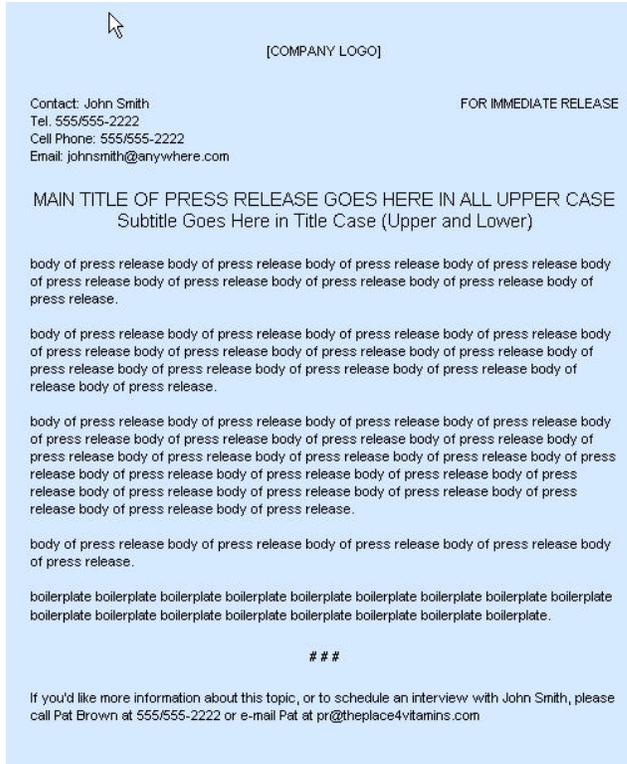
		Another Person**	
		Known	Unknown
Yourself*	Reveal/ Tell	1. Forced to Tell the Truth	2. Preemptive Strike
	Don't Reveal/ Don't Tell	4. Stonewall It	3. Play the Odds

*The two rows indicate two very different kinds of actions that a person can take.

**The two columns represent whether another person knows or does not know the truth about a first person, or "yourself."

Mitroff, I.I. (2001). *Managing crises before they happen*. Amacom. NY

Visual Aid/Graphic 6.



☞

[COMPANY LOGO]

Contact: John Smith
Tel. 555/555-2222
Cell Phone: 555/555-2222
Email: johnsmith@anywhere.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAIN TITLE OF PRESS RELEASE GOES HERE IN ALL UPPER CASE
Subtitle Goes Here in Title Case (Upper and Lower)

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If you'd like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with John Smith, please
call Pat Brown at 555/555-2222 or e-mail Pat at pr@theplace4vitamins.com

<http://www.publicityinsider.com/release.asp>

Handout/Graphic #7. In-depth news release.

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2009

Leon County Students To Get Expanded Civics Lessons

TALLAHASSEE—Leon County School students this year will benefit from a newly-developed civics curriculum designed to be replicated state-wide, thanks to support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

With Florida students lagging in civics and U.S. history, the pilot project will provide students with the skills they need to make decisions about and participate fully in their communities. Leon County, the seat of state government, will provide an ideal backdrop for the project.

"No matter what their profession, everyone needs to understand what it takes to be an effective citizen in a democratic system," Jackie Pons, superintendent of Leon County Schools, said. "The strength and stability of our way of life depends on that."

All 32,000 K-12 Leon County students will be enriched by the interactive program, which includes moot court exercises at the local courthouse, a mock election that coincides with this fall's votes and participating in service learning projects. Also, seventh graders will take a year-long course in civics. Teachers who helped craft the program emphasized the importance of fostering reflective discussion and debate along with other skills needed to influence leaders at the local, state and federal levels.

About the Joint Center
The Florida Joint Center for Citizenship is a partnership between the Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government at the University of Central Florida and the Bob Graham Center for Public Service at the University of Florida. Established in 2007, the Joint Center will develop a variety of initiatives intended to strengthen civic education and improve the condition of Florida's civic health.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation promotes journalism excellence worldwide and invests in the vitality of communities in the United States where the Knight brothers once owned newspapers. Knight Foundation invests in ideas and projects that can lead to transformational change.

Contacts:
Leon County Schools: Raine Smallridge, Leon County Schools, 850-487-7240
Knight Foundation: Mike Pate, program director for Tallahassee, 850-915-0258

Headline sketches out full story in 6-12 concrete words

"Lead" tells the news in a nutshell – the who (Leon County students) and the what (new civics classes)

Second paragraph explains larger issue to be dealt with – "Florida students lagging in civics."

Next paragraph(s) gives more details about further activities and results.

Brief official background paragraph on your organization as well as on Knight.

Knight referenced clearly, near the beginning, using the foundation's correct full name.

Strong quote from key player gives the "so what," or why average people should care -- we need "effective citizens."

Names and numbers leading to more information. Note: Web sites to contact should be listed as well!

http://www.knightcommunications.org/workshop/model_news_release_1

In this role playing exercise, the CIO of a company has just been indicted for skimming money from the company's resources. To make matters worse, these monies were meant to be used for public health and safety. Your public relations team must act accordingly. Now, act as a team.

- First, decide if this is actually a crisis.
- Access the situation
 - Accept blame, defense, etc.
- Decide who needs to be brought onto the team in your company.
- Educate the public/media on what happened. Devise an initial plan of response/statement to the media
 - Assure the public that guilty parties will be dismissed and monies will attempt to be recovered.
 - Reassure the public that business will go on as usual.
- Decide which other modes of communication you will use
 - News release, video, press conference, etc.
- Discussion/feedback of role playing results. This exercise was conducted more to give you an idea of how you must act quickly in a crisis, and the pressure you will be under as you raced against the clock.
- Did you complete enough tasks in time?
- Did you define roles?
- Did you assign tasks to others?
- What would you do differently?

Assessment Measure

These tests will be given for help in determining a person's knowledge of Public Relations and Crisis Communications/ Management. The following 20 questions will be asked both before and after training, using a Likert Scale system of rating. This scale will help determine the audience's knowledge of PR and CC both before and after the presentation, and also measure the effectiveness of the presentation.

The higher the score, the more public relations and crisis management knowledge is present.

Public Relations

Public relations is a noble profession.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

I understand the functions of public relations.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Public relations is needed in a company.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

A public relations team should have diverse expertise, not just PR professionals.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

When acting as a public relations practitioner, it is not okay to lie.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Public relations can be an external or internal function of a company.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

It is ethical for PR professionals and reporters to become friends.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

It is not wise to ignore the media if you're in PR. They will not go away.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

A spokesperson should be smart and skilled, not necessarily handsome or beautiful.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Every public relations issues is not necessarily a crisis.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Crisis Management

Crisis management is a noble function of public relations.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

I understand the functions of crisis management.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

A crisis management plan should be planned in advance.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

I feel I could handle myself in a public relations crisis.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Panic is not acceptable in a PR crisis.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

It is never okay to lie or to cover up the truth in a crisis.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

The company spokesperson does not have to be an employee of the company.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Studying past crisis management actions is a good practice to learn how to deal with a crisis.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Saying “no comment” during a crisis is never acceptable.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Reflection is an important part of crisis management.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree