

# Crisis Communication



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# Crisis Communication

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- One of the types of communication in crisis and before the crisis.
- Standard communication in a non-standard situation.
- Specific form of social communication.
- It is a crisis management tool and is part of crisis scenarios.
- It is about interpersonal, interpersonal, group and mass communication

# Mortal Sins of Crisis Communication (Antušák, 2009)

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1. unpreparedness
2. unconscious
3. ignorance
4. silence
5. withdrawal
6. fabrications
7. naivety

# Purpose and Subject of Crisis Communication

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- The purpose of crisis communication is
  - releasing the right information at the right time and in the right place, thus achieving the timely preparedness of authorities and elements of crisis management for follow-up;
  - reduce public uncertainty, thereby helping to ensure their "effective" behavior;
  - prevent or at least mitigate the extent of negative publicity damaging the reputation of the organization.
  
- The subject of crisis communication is the communication of information:
  - between and within the authorities and elements of the crisis management system;
  - the public, the media, experts, forensic experts and law enforcement authorities;
  - subordinates, employees of the company, family members and other interested legal and natural persons.

# Principles of Crisis Communication (Hálek, 2008)

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- principle of direct responsibility
- principle of independence
- principle of accuracy and brevity
- principle of credibility
- principle of knowledge of things
- principle of expected response worst case principle
- principle of seeking support
- principle of truth
- principle of openness

# Crisis communication during crisis proceedings

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## The emergence of the crisis

- The greatest intensity of communication, speed, truthfulness, unambiguity

## The course of the crisis

- Decrease in communication intensity

## The final phase of the crisis

- Increasing the intensity of communication

# Internal crisis communication

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- appear before employees and clearly provide them with unpleasant information (what the situation is) so as to prevent the spread of rumors, misinformation and distortions;
- to inform employees what it means for them and what is expected of them in order for the company to be able to get out of the crisis (temporary reduction of salaries, increased efforts, partial redundancies, etc.);
- explain the next steps and present the vision of the future so that key employees, informal leaders and important employees can be recruited.

# External Crisis Communication

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- Media character, communication with the external public through the media - creating a media image (media image)
- Recipients of external crisis communication: Customers Investors Government, regional and local actors Insurance companies and lawyers



# Exposed media image

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- It is an event, sometimes more, sometimes less significant, which becomes the subject of an agenda that the media informs in detail.
- The main goal of the company in case of a media-exposed problem is to solve the problem satisfactorily.
- Ways of solution: the problem of being publicly acknowledged to an extent that declare that there is no recurrence of the present (move it to the past) declare that it is now being worked on not to repeat itself.

# Extremely negative media image

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- The sharply negative media image is created by combining several exposed problems together. The media creates a negative image of a company that is the "embodiment of evil".

## Possible Solution:

- Solution of the overall media image
- Introduction of means to improve the media image
- Increasing active positive communication with the media
- Increasing contacts with journalists

# Managed campaign

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- The managed campaign is reflected in negative comments and information about the company in various media at regular intervals and with increasing importance. Mentions tend to escalate into larger media problems. They are often not based on any facts or, conversely, information that is not commonly available.

## Campaign sources:

- Employees
- Business Partners
- Competition
- Dissatisfied customers

# Imbalances

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- Imbalances are manifested in texts that are essentially related to the problem of the company or interest, where the company is not mentioned or only very marginally.
- Preference is given to competition that the company considers to be less significant.
- The competition is getting significantly more space.

# Media image enhancers (Bednář, 2011)

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- Responsive press releases and statements
- Press conferences on media-exposed issues
- Media lobbying
- Crisis advertising
- Striving for social activation
- Media patronage by the authorities
- Concentration / dispersion of the source of the problem
- Externalization of the problem

# Effective crisis communication

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- Communication
- Organizational security of crisis communication
- Choosing the right medium

# Communication

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- Identification and knowledge of target recipients
- The aim of creating a message is to convey the maximum amount of information that the audience will be able to perceive, understand and remember.

## Basic recommendations for the formulation of the communication:

- provide a message that promotes kindness, openness and commitment;
- the communication should not only contain technical data and information;
- the communication should help build credibility;
- the communication should be structured and organized, limiting the information to only three key messages, message always short (range 7 - 12 words);
- repetition of key information

# Organizational Security of Crisis Communication

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- Communication team
- Spokesperson
- External expert



# Choosing the Right Medium

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- Internal crisis communication - reports, press releases, fact summaries, websites, meetings with employees, telephone information lines, intranet, e-mail, articles in the internal press, etc.
- External crisis communication direct - reports, SMS messages, leaflets, community meetings, newspaper articles, websites, telephone information lines, home visits, radio and TV, billboards, summaries of facts, manuals, instructional films and videos, letters, etc.
- External crisis communication via media - press releases, press conferences, clear fact sheets, personal visits, websites, e-mail, etc.

# Crisis Communication Planning

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## Crisis communication planning parts:

- Acute situation management (short-term and fast)
- Consequence recovery (medium term)
- Prevention of similar situations in the future (long-term)

## Crisis communication planning procedure:

- Performing threat analysis and comparison of possible crises
- Awareness of opportunities and setting goals and tasks of crisis communication
- Determining the main building blocks of crisis communication
- Formulation of basic topics of crisis communication
- Selection and comparison of alternatives
- Elaboration of a crisis communication plan
- Implementation of an accepted model of crisis communication within the organization

# Communication Strategies in Crisis

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- The spectrum of strategies in reputational crises is wide and the boundaries between them are permeable.
- There are no clear solutions.
- Generally speaking, crises (or responsibility for them) can either be denied or accepted, either in full or in part.
- The theory usually recommends full acceptance.
- deny - diminish - deal.

# Communication Strategies in Crisis: Deny-denial Strategies

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- "There is no crisis."
- "The crisis exists, but we have no responsibility for its outbreak."
- "There is a crisis, but it has nothing to do with us."
- This approach is ethically justifiable only if it is based on truth.
- Even if you deny the crisis, you must thoroughly explain the whole situation and the attitude of the organization to the media.

# Communication Strategies in Crisis: Strategies diminish

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- Partial acceptance of responsibility, efforts to reduce the impact of the crisis on the reputation of the organization.
- Efforts to weaken the link between society and the crisis. An attempt to show that the problems also have other causes and causes, or that the problems are not as great as presented by the media or opponents.
- An effort to put events into a broader context.
- An attempt to present a different perspective.

# Communication Strategies in Crisis: Deal Strategy

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- Accept full responsibility.
- Controlled openness, cooperation with the media.
- Efforts to resolve the crisis and repair the damage, preventive measures for the future.
- Active steps in finding an agreement with the injured party.
- It has been shown many times in the past that if an organization has really made a mistake, it pays to admit responsibility.
- An honest and proactive approach will usually prevent far greater losses associated with the complete destruction of the company's reputation.

# Tactical Variants

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## Distraction.

- An effort to shift the attention of the public and the media to another agenda.
- Common in politics (film Shake the Dog).
- Ethically questionable.

## Offer a different perspective

- Comparison with another similar event.
- Emphasizing minimal impact.
- Transfer to another, more favorable context (transcendence).
- A reminder of past merits and "good deeds".

## Complete reversal of the angle of view

# Tactical Variants

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## Problem concentration

- An attempt to translate the core of the problem into a single cause "It's all to blame ...".

## Scapegoat

- Dispelling the problem
- Finding the core of the problem in many small factors
- Emphasizing the complexity of the matter

## Externalization of the problem

- An attempt to move the core of the problem out of the corporation and out of the zone that can affect "The supplier is responsible for everything (government, unions ...)".
- May lead to "ping-pong"
- The corporation itself is a victim (force majeure, competitive attack, employee malice).
- Problems are the result of provocation.
- The company could not influence or prevent the event in any way, it had no control over it.
- The company had good intentions.
- It was an accident.



# Tactical Variants

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- Apology: Only if the organization has made a real mistake and accepts full responsibility.
- Expression of regret: Appropriate even if the organization is not the sole or main culprit.
- The promise of victim compensation.
- Active damage repair.
- Take measures to ensure that the situation does not recur.

## Inappropriate tactics:

- "If they do, so can we."
- "Nobody ever minded."
- "In the end, it always turned out well."

# Ethically Questionable Communication Strategies

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## Spin doctoring

- Reckless enforcement of the perspective that is most beneficial to the organization;
- Manipulation, lies, half-truths, doublespeak, propaganda.

## Astroturfing

- Creating the misleading impression that the public (customers, readers, listeners ...) has a certain attitude, prefers a certain product or has a certain opinion on a certain topic;
- Fake reader letters, phlogs, klaka, activity in social networks.