Crisis Management:
You Can't Plan for a Crisis While You're Having One

February 23, 2011

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Why You're Vulnerable

- Road work is outside and in the midst of traffic.
- The work-zone moves day to day.
- Operations sometimes occur at night.
- The industry utilizes chemicals and makes materials that may be considered hazardous to humans, animals and the environment.
- There's a potential for product failure.
- Everyone wants good streets, roads, highways and parking surfaces . . . but few people have patience while this type of work is on-going.

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What is a Crisis?

You know it is a crisis when . . .

- There are victims.
  - People
  - Animals
  - The Environment
- Your company or organization will be judged on how you manage the "victim dimension" of any crisis.

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Crisis Plan

A comprehensive and managed approach to every aspect of crisis response:

- Crisis Team Personnel and Responsibilities
- Emergency Contacts
- First Hour Response Check List
- Notification Procedures
- Workplace Violence Procedures
- Natural Disaster Procedures
- Media Response
- Company Fact Sheet
- Post-Crisis Evaluation
- Forms
- Social Media Response

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Buy Time Statement

"My name is _____ and I am with _____. I can confirm that there has been an incident. We want to help you with your story, but we need to gather the facts before saying anything. I don't have enough information to answer your questions. I know we all want to get the story right. Our spokesperson will be back with you in 60 minutes to give you an update. Until then, you should stay in this safe area. This is where we will deliver our next briefing in 60 minutes (time to be determined).

I don't have enough information to answer your questions.

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Duck and Cover Strategy

- Ignoring the media won't make them go away.
- Reporters will tell the story they want to tell if you don't tell your story.
- Not presenting a spokesperson makes everyone else a spokesperson.
- Once the story's been told, it is impossible to take back.
- Not connecting with the media demonstrates a lack of command and control.

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The Media

The Media will act in a predictable way:

- Will seek to get close to the action.
- Will talk to anyone.
- Will research past incidents.
- Will seek out third party experts.
- Will seek to establish cause or blame.
- Will identify with victims.
- Will often get the story wrong.
- Will have a short attention span.

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Best Media Practices

- Establish media “Safe Area”.
- All media contact through one spokesperson.
- Treat all media equally.
- Stick to the facts. Never comment on causes.
- Use pre-approved crisis messages.
- Make referrals to authorities or emergency responders.
- Coordinate with owner/client.

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The Internet's Role in a Crisis

Communication is real time

- Cell phones with camera and video
- Text messaging
- Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, Bebo, Tagged, Goodreads, Friendster, and Plaxo
- Blogs
- Chat rooms
- Skype
- Comment pages on mainstream media sites

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Today's Technology

The Challenge:

Electronically stored information (ESI) is discoverable material and is defined as any type of information that can be generated on the computer or cellphone, including but not limited to: e-mails, instant messages, text messages, documents, spreadsheets, databases, file fragments, metadata, video, digital images and digital diagrams.

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Today's Technology

- Establish a policy that restricts the use of cell phones with picture and video capability.

  All images taken during work time on job site are property of the company.

- Initiate a no-text, no-twitter and no-email policy by employees during the crisis.

  Except to inform family members that workers are OK.

- Monitor but don't necessarily respond to comments.

  The Social Media is an on-going conversation. Pick your battles and response mechanism carefully.

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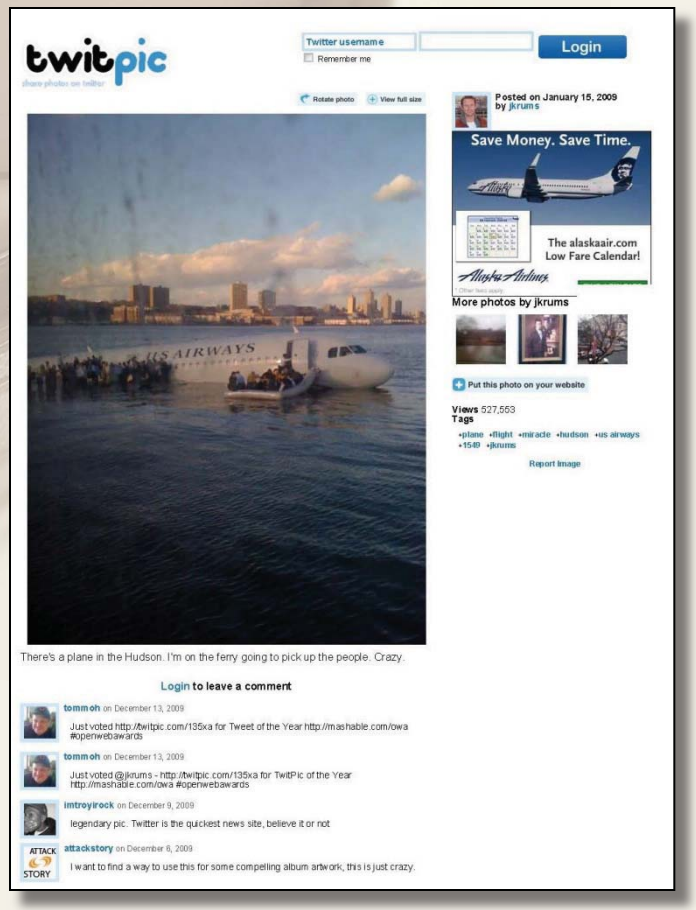
The Internet's Role in a Crisis



There's a plane in the Hudson. I'm on the ferry going to pick up people. Crazy.

@jkrums
aka Janis Krums
January 15, 2009
3:36 pm

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The Internet's Role in a Crisis

1. 3:25 USAir Flight 1549 takes off from LaGuardia
2. 3:27 Bird strike
3. 3:29 Flight 1549 down in the Hudson
4. 3:30 Content about flight on Twitter
5. 3:35 Initial AP coverage breaks
6. 3:36 @jkrums posts famous Twitpic of rescue
7. 3:57 USAir issues first news release
8. 4:15 The headline runs "Twitter Spreads News of US Airways Crash in an Instant"
9. 4:30 US Airways dark site activated (crashes, it takes two more attempts before it is up for good at 5:02)
10. 5:04 AP reports all passengers and crew are safe
11. 5:42 Sen. Charles Schumer announces flight was brought down by geese
12. 6:15 Passenger from flight appears on CNN in studio and Fox asks for amateur photos and video

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Today's Technology

Reporters using Social Media every day

- 37% of traditional journalists now contribute to Twitter.
- 39 % produce content for a blog.
- 24 % consider sites like Facebook and Twitter an important way to connect with experts.
- 46% say they sometimes or always use blogs for research.
- 33% of journalists surveyed report using social networks in their research.

Source: PRWeek/PR Newswire Media Survey, April 2010

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Today's Technology

The Social Media is how journalists will get their information.

- Just as typewriter, phone, fax, computer and cell phones became standard business practice, so will the Social Media.
- Time to get on board.

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Incident Response Website

Known in PR Circles as a "Dark Site"

- Activated with information specific to incident
  - Linked from corporate homepage
  - Helpful links (FEMA, Red Cross, , municipality/agency)
  - News Releases
  - Contact Information

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Incident Response Website

Possible Incident Response Website Triggers

- Disruption of normal services such as communications, traffic, power and/or water.
- Prolonged incident lasting more than 24 hours.
- Overwhelming news coverage.
  - -24/7 News Coverage
  - -Live national and international feeds
  - -Massive presence of reporters, cameras & sat trucks

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Our Best Advice

- End the problem . . . limit the problem . . . control the problem
- Manage the victim dimension of the crisis
- Have a plan or checklist
- Practice and test the plan
- Update the plan periodically
- Coordinate with authorities, client and subs before a crisis
- Engage with the News Media
- Monitor and utilize the Social Media and internet
- Don't assume a crisis won't happen to you

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