

*when*

# **BAD THINGS HAPPEN**

*Effective Communication  
Strategies For Difficult Situations*

Drinking Water Leadership Summit | October 16, 2013  
Karen Gordon, Squeaky Wheel Communications

# WHAT IS A CRISIS?

*an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; especially : one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome*

# KAREN'S TOP FOUR STEPS FOR HANDLING A CRISIS

*Assess*

*Monitor*

*Plan*

*Sign Off*

# THE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN | Crisis Team

*decision maker*

*operations*

*communications*

*government relations*

*legal counsel*

# THE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN | Early Warning System

*How to notify members of the Crisis Team*

*Phone tree*

*Email tree*

# THE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN | The Spokesperson

*Only one spokesperson*

*Determined based on severity of crisis*

*Used for all types of communications – not just media, families, government, etc.*

*Media Training/Spokesperson training*



# THE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN | The Audience

*Who are we talking to? And how do we reach them?*

*Families*

*Staff*

*Public*

*Government - Local, Provincial, Federal*

*Funders, fundraisers*

*Suppliers*

*Secondary audiences:*

*Government regulators – WSIB, Ministry of Labour*

*The Office of the Fire Marshal, Coroner's Office*

*Ministry of Health and Long Term Care*

# THE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN | Key Messages

*What do we have to say?*

*What do want to say?*

*What is our story?*

**Karen's Note: This is perhaps the most critical place for legal sign off.**



# THE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN | Statements, Tweets And Letters

*What are the tools we are going to use to  
communicate with the various audiences?*

*Statements*

*Letters*

*Emails*

*Meetings*

*Phone calls*

*Website updates*

# THE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN | What Would We Do If....

*Take the time to anticipate potential crisis scenarios.  
Talk through your plan.*

# **A CRISIS IN 2013**

## **(aka Life In The Social Media Bubble)**

*Take all we have talked about and:*

*Condense it into a 5 minute decision period*

*Make a 140 character Tweet*

*Post it on Facebook*

# THE MEDIA

*Preparation is the key.....*

*Know your opponents' viewpoints and have counterpoints ready.*

*Write down your messages and practice, practice, practice.*

*Use your KEY MESSAGES*

*BRIDGING MESSAGES – the line or phrases that helps you “bridge” back to your key messages.*

*Clear your head. Get in the zone.*

*Repeat your messages.*

*TAPE YOURSELF.*

# THE MEDIA

*Things to remember.....*

*PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE and then  
PREPARE some more.*

*Concise, conversational and catchy.*

*Look relaxed and act prepared.*

*Be friendly and honest.*

*Remember that you have control of the situation –  
say what YOU want to say.*

# **LINES TO FORGET - IMMEDIATELY.**

*It can't happen to me.*

*This is off-the-record.*

*I didn't think anyone would find out.*

*All publicity is good publicity.*



# QUESTIONS?

# KAREN GORDON



Squeaky Wheel

*communications inc.*

**416.699.1624 P**  
**416.997.9478 M**

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