

AUMA Local Media Preparation



Expectations

- What we want you to get from today
 - Basic understanding of the media environment
 - More comfort with key messaging
 - Preparation for what a crisis may look like
 - Review of what not to do

Crisis Communications at Alchemy

- Crisis Communications
 - National recall, baby food
 - Public Anger over Waste Water Treatment Project
 - Accusations of mismanagement of government funds from public to a large non profit
 - On site murder of client

Current State of Media



Your First Interview

- Do your homework: learn all you can about the reporter or interviewer:
 - ☐ What is their background and what other types of interviews do they do?
 - ☐ Why have they been assigned or chosen to interview you on this topic: is it a hot topic
 - Do they have a personal expertise, or was it an assignment?

What's the Plan?

Ask whoever is setting up the interview some questions before your appearance:

- What is the topic or angle of the interview?
- Why was it chosen?
- Is there a prepared set of questions you'll be covering?
- Are you the only person being interviewed, or is it a panel?

OFF THE RECORD, NO COMMENT

Never Go Off the Record, but if you do:

- Consult with a communications professional – either in your own company, organization, or agency – or with an external firm, preferably one with crisis communications capabilities. You may be unaware of the landmines that exist in your specific case.
- Consider your relationship with the reporter. Journalists you know well and who have treated you fairly for several years are generally safer risks than reporters you are working with for the first time.
- Make any agreements with a reporter in advance of the interview. You can't say something interesting and then suddenly declare it off the record.

Split Screens

- Beware the split screen: In some formats, you will appear on camera even when you're not speaking. Those "split screen" shots show you and at least one other person at the same time, and "reaction" shots show your reaction to another guest's comments. Act as if you're always on, being careful not to wipe your face, adjust your hair, or fix your outfit during your segment.

Props

- Avoid (or preplan) props: We've all seen that television guest who holds up a piece of paper or newspaper article during a television appearance. It's usually a bad idea. Few people know how to position an item properly for the camera, so it usually ends up distracting the audience.
- Speak to producers prior to interview if you want to use a prop
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR_QZpebjo8

Eye Contact

- Make eye contact with the reporter, not the cameras

Key Messages

A key message is the most important thing you want your audience to remember after the interview.

- It will take time to create a key message that is clearly understood
 - no jargon
 - short enough to remember
 - interesting to the audience
 - says what you want the audience to do or remember

Control the Message

- Regardless of what the interviewer asks you, you need to direct the response back to your key messages.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohVXYmlkLFc>

When things go wrong

- Refer back to your key messages
- Plan responses
 - “I am not able to speak to that issue but I can say....(key message)
 - Be polite but firm
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyYqYhJmQbA>

Apologies

Good

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIsN5AkJ1AI>

Bad

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4jIBlTlkSk&ebc=ANyPxKro4GXnnuM_PyXlvFNrOhmpQP8tsuu72AsPQ-djFyf-DyFoAOQEOkQLmZfzYmlwoqgyGynvdmSly3KpQ3fqNbrWNvzSSA

Crisis Communications

Facebook

- 2016 Cambridge Analytica scandal, fake news epidemic, 42% users drop off
 - Facebook responds with slowly
 - Lack transparency
 - Questionable authenticity

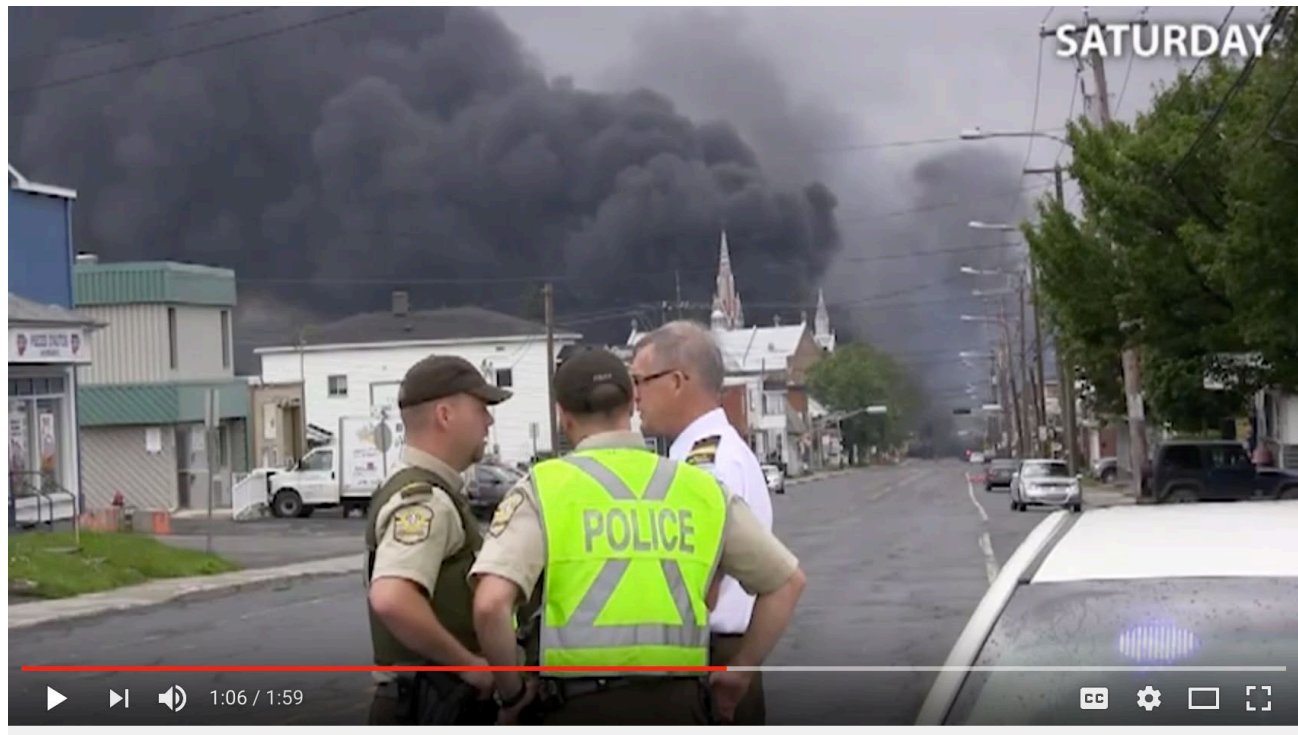
“The reality of running a company with over 10,000 people, is that you are not going to know everything that is going on.”

Facebook vs. Nike

Authenticity

- Facebook backs away from taking any responsibility
- Nike, in the Colin Kaepernick situation, doubled down on the new spokesperson, engaging with the audience that admired him.
<https://youtu.be/-grjUWKoBA>

Crisis Communications in Transportation – Lac Megantic



Crisis Communications in Transportation – Lac Megantic

The first statement arrived 36 hours after the fire began.

- poorly translated, no social media

- Rail World President doesn't arrive for 4 days
- Prior to visiting the accident site, the Rail World president commented: "I hope that I don't get shot at. I won't have a bulletproof vest on."
- Rail World President continues to blame the accident on the train being tampered with, doesn't wait for investigation to conclude
- A number of months after the incident, the Rail World CEO once again goes on to say that he was "also a victim" in this whole incident, while offering an apology

Local Responses

Due to the lack of reliable statements, much of the story rested squarely in the hands of local police and citizens, sharing a high level of social media about the incident. Research as indicated that there was no attempt by MMA or Rail World to get into immediate contact and coordination with these individuals over social media.

Local social media was put to strong use by the government organizations, keeping everyone updated from the area.

Crisis Communications

BP Deep Water Horizon Crisis



General Rules in a Crisis Situation

Preparation

- Have your messages well rehearsed on note cards
- Memorize your messages, key words only
- Only state facts, no guessing.

Introductions

- Dealing with reporters is not a social gathering, state your name and title, then move to messages

How you Speak

- The shorter your sentence, the better it will be. Think sound bite.
- Be as clear and concise as possible
- Use emotional language only in expressing your concern for people affected by the incident
- Imagine your listener has the comprehension of a 12 year old, speak at that level
- Start at the beginning, don't assume everyone knows the context
- Don't lie or mislead – ever
- Numbers can give you credibility, but use only a few and keep them rounded for simplicity

General Rules in a Crisis Situation

Messaging Structure

- When writing statements for media, or answering questions, always follow this structure.

COMMUNITY, EMPLOYEES AND ENVIRONMENT FIRST

- Context
- Facts
- Future

Classic Responses

Here are some classic responses to awkward questions:

- That's a very important question, but what is even more important is....
- I'm very glad you asked me that....
- Before I answer that question, I think I should say that...
- That's a very good question, and I will answer it in a minute, but before I do....
- I think what you meant by that question is....
- I don't have the exact details, but what I can say is....

Classic Responses

Don't be afraid to contradict or correct:

- You might say that, but my experience is...
- No, that is not true. The truth is...
- I think you are wrong. In my view....
- Please let me finish....
- I don't believe that is accurate. I don't have that exact detail, but I can clarify that for you shortly. Would 20 minutes work for you?

Classic Responses - Conclusion

Ending of Press Conference or Journalist Conversation

- Thank you, we will not be taking questions at this time.
- I will take two more questions (choose journalists strategically) before we move back to the issue at hand.
- I have 3 more minutes before I have to move on, what question can I answer for you?

Practice – the Errors

1. Correct business name, personal name, website.
2. Correct misinformation.
3. Correct facts.

Practice – Antagonistic Journalist

- What makes you a credible speaker?
- What makes your organizations philosophy



Questions

- Slides are available at kathryn@alchemycommunications.ca