

It's Not If, It's When

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR WORKING WITH THE
MEDIA DURING A CRISIS

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Master Builder Association of Western PA
631 Iron City Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15205





we tell stories for people who build things

We are a marketing communications agency with offices in Pittsburgh and Lancaster, PA.

We create and deliver stories via research and media planning; design and creative; print, social and digital communications; and public relations.

About me

Chris Martin



President/CEO of Atlas Marketing since 2008

Served as spokesperson for
PENNDOT, City of Pittsburgh, Zippo Manufacturing,
Dow Chemical, Westinghouse, Flight 93 National Memorial

Managed crisis situations for clients in construction,
nuclear, healthcare, natural gas and manufacturing
industries

EXPECTATIONS

Communicating during a crisis offers opportunities for safety officers to strengthen corporate reputation and media relationships.

WHAT THIS MEANS

At the conclusion, you will feel confident in

- Preparing a response in the face of a crisis
- Speaking with the media with a goal in mind
- Managing the media conversation so your message is not misunderstood



CRISIS

What is a crisis?





A CRISIS IS ...

Stressful, because it creates

A disruption to an organization's daily operations

A potential brand damaging event

A media response, potentially

CRISIS

A potential brand damaging incident that requires a media response.





QUESTION

How many of you have experienced a crisis?

DURING CRISIS

people



01

Absorb information
differently

02

Process information
differently

03

Act on information
differently

Why is this important?



INFORMATION IS CURRENCY

Understanding that people collect and review information differently allows for wider opportunities to inform and educate.

THAT CURRENCY AIDS DECISIONS

Decisions drive business and if you help your customers make easy decisions you are not only informing, but educating. This leads to opportunities that improve your corporate reputation.

CRISIS RESPONSE OFFERS

- Opportunities to strengthen our reputation
- Opportunity to share our messages/story
- Opportunity to influence the media coverage
- Opportunity to shape public perception



Corporate Reputation

Reputation has an impact on sales, revenues, the ability to attract better employees and increase profits.

HOW REPUTATIONS ARE MEASURED

Identity

Goodwill

Community leadership

Social media

Previous customers

Response to issues

EXAMPLES

Harvard University

Tylenol

The Catholic Church

The White House



PREPARATION

Preparation

How to prepare your company for the inevitable



Ask yourself several basic questions:

- Do I have a safety program in place?
 - Is my safety program up-to-date?
- Do I know what to do when a crisis hits?
 - How will my team respond to a crisis?
- Can my business survive a crisis on the job site?

Preparation

How to prepare your company for the inevitable



Steps to prepare your business

- Establish a crisis communications plan
- Review, practice and update the plan regularly
- Research the business ramifications such as lowering insurance premiums, the impact on health plans

Preparation

What should you include?



Typical Crisis Communications Plans include

- Crisis definition specific to your company
- Crisis response team members
 - Roles and responsibilities
- Messaging
- Policies and procedures
- Resources
 - Checklists and guidelines
 - Spokesperson guidelines



MEDIA EXPECTATIONS



QUESTION

How many of you have granted a media interview?



QUESTION

How many of you have granted a media interview during a crisis?

Media Expectations



What the media expects

- Their job is to gather information
 - Interviews with multiple people, companies & entities
- They will ask the same question in a variety of formats

Your expectations

- Protect your business
- Follow your crisis communications plan
- Share your side of the story



Interview Bill of Rights

The Bill of Rights are useful tips to ensure your message is heard, understood and included in the coverage.

YOU OWN THE INFORMATION

Be confident

Be concise and clear

Be honest

Establish credibility

PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE TO SAY

I don't know

I'll get back to you with an answer

TO ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY

One message, One voice -
SINGLE VOICE

Repeat your message
throughout -
SIMPLE MESSAGE

No such thing as
NO COMMENT

Be prepared!



SPEAKING WITH THE MEDIA

An interview is not an intellectual exercise; it is an *OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER SPECIFIC MESSAGES TO SPECIFIC AUDIENCES* with the reporter as the conduit.

Key to speaking with a reporter

SAY WHAT YOU WANT

THE AUDIENCE TO KNOW

Before the interview, ask yourself ...

*IF THE INTERVIEWER USES
ONLY A 12-SECOND SOUND
BITE, WHAT WOULD MY
MESSAGE BE?*

Speaking with the Media

Packaged answers



This is done via packaged answers

- Lead with key message
- Reinforce message with facts, examples or statistics
- Close by reiterating key message

Speaking with the Media

Packaged answers



Packaged answers –

Challenge is to ALWAYS
close with key message

Reinforces what you want
the reporter to share with the audience

Ensures that the reporter
knows its importance



TO SUM IT UP

01

Establish your Crisis
Communications Plan

02

Understand the media
expectations

03

Know your
rights



TO SUM IT UP

04

Package your answers
for the media

05

PRACTICE
PRACTICE
PRACTICE

A man in a blue suit is seen from behind, standing at a podium with several microphones. He is facing a group of people, many of whom are holding professional video cameras on tripods, suggesting a press conference or a formal media event. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the speaker and the media equipment.

TO SUM IT UP

“There is no harm in hoping for the best, as long as you are prepared for the worst.”

- Stephen King

Thank you

Feel free to reach out with questions.

Chris@AtlasStories.com

Or

Connect on LinkedIn



(412) 749-9299
[AtlasStories.com](https://atlasstories.com)

A close-up photograph of two hands holding a piece of white, torn-edge paper. The paper has horizontal lines and a spiral binding on the right side. The words "SHARE YOUR STORY" are printed in large, bold, dark blue capital letters on the paper. The background shows a person in a dark suit and white shirt.