

How to Handle the Media ...in a crisis situation

- A media crisis is an excellent opportunity to deliver your company's messages and ideologies to a 'captive' audience
- The four stages of a potential media crisis are: Latent, Emerging, Hot and Residual

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A Latent Issue

- A latent issue is an issue that exists within a company, but has not yet reached the public arena
- With proper management, a latent issue will not develop into a media crisis

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A Latent Issue - What to do

- Identify and appoint an authorised spokesperson
- Reinforce your media policy internally
- Gather facts surrounding the latent issue
- Decide on key messages you want to air to the public

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Selecting a media Spokesperson

- A spokesperson should be:
- High-up in the organisation
- A quick thinker
- Someone well versed on the issue at hand
- Well rehearsed
- Good at steering questions back to your chosen messages

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An Emerging Issue

- An emerging issue is indicated by the issue being aired in local media, in newsletter or trade publications, but not yet picked up by mainstream mass media
- Now is the time to put into action your crisis plan so the issue does not become hot

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An Emerging Issue - What to do

- Cover-ups never work!
- Demonstrate your concern about the issue
- Impart your chosen key messages
- Send a statement to the inquiring media
- Do selected interviews
- Always tell the truth!
- Identify any other issues which may come up as a result of this issue

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A Hot Issue

- Your company and its problem is being featured on all mainstream media
- 'Hangers on' will want to use your media spotlight to promote their own agendas

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A Hot Issue - What to do

- Be prepared to answer three basic questions:
 - What happened?
 - How did it happen?
 - What are you doing to ensure it won't happen again?

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A Hot Issue - What to do

- Show your concern
- Give the facts in a simple way
- Resist the urge to lay blame on someone else - it can backfire
- Highlight what your company has achieved
- Show your willingness to fix the situation and show how you are going to fix it
- Be quick, upfront and honest!

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A Residual Issue

- The crisis is over but the media will still be following-up so don't get complacent!

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A Residual Issue - What to do

- Follow-up on promises made
- Keep the lines of communication to the media open
- Plan a comprehensive crisis strategy in the event of a next time!

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