KOM5327: CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Unit 1: Introduction to Crisis Communication

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Background of Crisis Communication

1. Introduction
   - Communication Revolution

2. Crisis alleviated or prevented by relatively new technology
   - Blogs
   - Cell Phones
   - Internet/Website

3. Crisis started with relatively new technology
   - E-mail
   - Hackings
   - Websites and Blogs
4. What is crisis and what is crisis communication
   i) Definition
      - Crisis
      - Crisis Management
      - Crisis Communications
   ii) Examples of Corporate Public
   iii) Five stages of crisis
   iv) Public Opinion
• Concerned with the transferring of information to significant persons (Publics) to either help avoid or prevent crisis (or negative occurrence), recover from crisis, and maintain or enhance reputation.
1. Updates to an issues or crisis
2. Help information seekers locate
3. Provides a record of response to a subject or issue
4. Spark public concern in express opinions and prediction:
   • **Before**
     • Public demonstration
     • TV man-on-the-street interview session
     • Radio call-in-show
   • **Now**
     • E-mails
Crisis:

A major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting the organization, company, or industry, as well as its public, products, services or good name (Fearn-Banks, 2002).

A crisis interrupts normal business transactions and can sometimes threaten the existence of the organization.
WHAT IS CRISIS MANAGEMENT?

Crisis Management:

Process of strategic planning for a crisis or negative turning point, a process that removes some of the risks and uncertainty from the negative occurrence and thereby allows the organization to be in greater control of its own destiny (Fearn-Banks, 2007).
Importance of crisis management

- Stakeholder activism:
  - angry stakeholders
  - stakeholders becoming more vocal when dealing with organizations
  - Customers awareness about consumer issues and willing to speak out
Types of crisis

- Product tampering
- Hostile takeover attempt
- Challenges to propriety data
- Embezzlement
- Environmental accidents
- Unexpected resignation or termination
- Recall of product
Crisis Communications

The dialog between the organization and its public prior to, during, and after the negative occurrence. The dialog details strategies and tactics are designed to minimize damage to the image of the organization (Fearn-Banks, 2007).
5 STAGES OF A CRISIS

1. Detection
2. Prevention/preparation
3. Containment
4. Recovery
5. Learning
Unit 2: Organizational Crisis Management

MANAGING THE CRISIS
MANAGING THE CRISIS

1) Communicating with the NEWS MEDIA
2) Communicating with LAWYERS
3) Communicating with INTERNAL PUBLICS
4) Communicating with EXTERNAL PUBLICS
5) Communicating directly with the MASSES
The organization:

1) Is put out of business, **ruined**, possibly sued, and key executive possibly charged with crimes.

2) Continues to **exist, but it has lost some image** and respect in its publics’ eyes and perhaps a great deal of financial position.

3) In a hard-fought battle, has **won a war** of public opinion and is seen as favorably as before or perhaps more favorably.
1) Communicating with the NEWS MEDIA
   1.1) PREVENTION

- Warning signs called *prodromes* (crucial) – prevention is the best cure for a crisis.

- Before a crisis/at the onset of crisis:
  - Anticipate what the news media need and want
  - Media want to sell newspaper & win rating stars
  - Media give the public what it want to know rather than what it needs to know
WHAT THE NEWS MEDIA WANT TO KNOW

- What happened?
- Were there any deaths or injuries?
- What is the extent of the damage?
- Is there a danger of future injuries and damage?
- Why did it happen?
- Who or what is responsible?
- What is being done about it?
- When will it be over?
- Has it happened before?
- Were there any warning signs of the problem?
### 3 TYPES OF RESPONSE TO A MEDIA REQUEST:

1. We know and here’s all the information.
2. We don’t know everything at this time. Here’s what we know. We’ll find out more and let you know.
3. We have no idea, but we’ll find out and tell you.

Give the media access to the material they need: background information, statistic, photographs, and spokespersons.
Communicating With External Publics During A Crisis

1) With news media
2) Communicate with loyal customers
3) With community members
4) Labor representatives & government officials
5.0) COMMUNICATING DIRECTLY WITH THE MASSES

- New communication technology
  - Possible to get information out to the masses with the use of the print media/the broadcast media

- Internet
  - Possible to communicate with vast numbers of people
    e.g.: e-mails, bloggs, web site
Crisis communication theory
INTRODUCTION

• Theories applied to crisis communications often are theories in communications including persuasion and rhetoric, sociology and psychology.

• It is necessary to change theories regularly. Variables and relationships and conditions change and results are sometimes vastly different in subsequent tests.

• Theories also build on previous theories.
Apologia is used when there is a crisis of a misdeed accusation to an organization.

It is an effort to defend reputation and protect image.

The organization’s effort may deny, explain, or apologize for the action through communication discourse.

BUT not necessarily and apology.
This theory builds on apologia theory.
In this theory, the organization determines what is threatening reputation or image and also determines which public must be addressed and persuaded to maintain restore positive image.
Organization should seek bad news as much as they keep positive news clipping and read them carefully.
Decision theory is concerned with counseling management and other leaders to make the most effective decision.

Decision theory may be applied to all areas of management but it is useful in public relations management and crisis communications.

The theory is especially applicable to issues management and the effort to prevent crisis.
Diffusion or innovations theory, examines how new procedures, practices, and objects are adopted and accepted by companies or individual.

Diffusion theory has a five step process:

- **Awareness** (the body is exposed to the idea)
- **Interest** (the body develops interest in the idea)
- **Evaluation** (pros and cons are determined and considered)
Excellence theory

Developed by J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) and later expended by J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1992)

Based on types of PR practices called “models”
Marra and the excellence theory

Marra (1992), suggested that theoretically based crisis PR model that would allow practitioners to identify variables that can be adjusted to make CCP work and which would cause it to fail.

Model will enable PR practitioner to identify before crisis what will or will not work.
Marra and the excellence theory

Strategies and techniques identified by the following hypotheses;

An organization having strong and well-developed relationship with key publics prior to a crisis will suffer less financial, emotional or perceptive damage than organizations with weak and poorly developed relationships with its key publics prior to a crisis.
Two additional characteristics are suggested (Fearn-Banks, 1996);

An organization that anticipates, through crisis inventory, the precise type of crisis will suffer less financial, emotional and perceptual damage than the organization that does not.
See you next face-to-face ...