Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VII

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Describe the goals of a crisis communication plan and why it is important to have a plan in place prior to a crisis incident.

2. Identify and discuss the key elements which should be included in an organization’s crisis communication plan.

3. Illustrate guidelines appropriate to include in an organization's social media policy.

Reading Assignment

The Four Stages of Highly Effective Crisis Management:

Chapter 16:
Policy Guidelines for Social Media

Appendix D:
Nine Steps to a Crisis Communication Plan

Appendix G:
Social Media Resources for Crisis Communicators

Appendix H:
30 Things You Should Not Share on Social Media

Appendix J:
Social Media Embracing the Opportunities, Averting the Risks

Risk and Crisis Communications: Methods and Messages:

Chapter 8:
Developing a Risk and Crisis Communications Plan

Unit Lesson

A crisis communication plan needs to address the roles, lines of responsibility, and resources that will be used to provide information to the public, media, and other stakeholders during a crisis event. The crisis communication plan should be a controlled document with additions and/or revisions only being done through a systematic process to ensure the most recent and correct version is used if a crisis does occur.

Appendix D on page 253 in the Jordon-Meier (2011) textbook outlines nine steps that an organization can follow to help develop a comprehensive crisis communication plan.

Crisis communication plans can vary greatly between one organization and another depending on the nature of the work done and the internal and external environment of the organization. However, most plans will include the following (Walaski, 2011):

- Title page with approval date of the plan and the executive leader approving the plan.
- Regulatory bodies and/or authorizes requiring the plan.
- Purpose and philosophical position the organization takes with regard to crisis communications.
- Scope of what is covered by the plan, including specific crisis events and what parts of the organization may need to participate during those events.
- Situations and assumptions, including when the plan is activated and what resources are available in each situation.
- Audience profile for the different audiences the plan was developed for.
- Concept of operations, or the general plan of action during crisis response. This section typically includes chains of command and approval processes for what, how, and when communication is to occur.
- Key communication strategies for both internal and external communication.
- Assignment of responsibilities including lead spokesperson(s) and how news is to be disseminated.
- Evaluation of communication efforts.
- When and how the plan will be reviewed and updated.
- Appendixes as appropriate; for example, news conference guidelines, key prepared messages, call lists, etc.

Reacting in a crisis situation and communicating without a structured plan is not wise. Organizations need to create a plan before a crisis happens in order to ensure the appropriate stakeholders and public are informed and that the reputation of the organization is protected.

References:


Suggested Reading

Case Study:

Click [here](#) to access a PDF of the following Case Study that can also be found in the CSU library.


Listing of social media policies from various organizations: [http://socialmediagovernance.com/policies.php](http://socialmediagovernance.com/policies.php)

Airforce Social Media Guide


More resources can be found on page 259 in the Jordan-Meier textbook.

Policy Tool for Social Media:

[http://socialmedia.policytool.net/welcome/wizard](http://socialmedia.policytool.net/welcome/wizard)

Learning Activities (Non-Graded)

Find out if the organization you currently work for has a crisis communication plan. If they have one, review that plan. Does it meet all the criteria described in the textbook? When was the last time it was reviewed and updated?
If your organization does not have a crisis communication plan, consider educating the leadership team on the benefits of creating a crisis communication before a crisis happens.

Non-graded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to submit them. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information. If you would like your professor’s feedback on your work, send this document to them in an email with a note that you would like to receive feedback on your non-graded activity.

**Key Terms**

*Risk and Crisis Communications*

1. Assignment of responsibilities
2. Audience profile
3. Communication strategies
4. Crisis communication plan
5. Risk assessment
6. Scope

*The Four Stages of Highly Effective Crisis Management*

1. Social media policy