

NEW Directions in Crisis Management and MANAGING Media Relations

Presented By Dr. Bob May
Mainstream Unlimited
www.mainstreamunlimited.com

Workshop Takeaways

Getting your agency ready before, during and after a crisis

Tips for handling media relations in the face of a crisis incident

Understand the new media environment

Work with your peers on recent case studies

News Headlines Drive Emotions

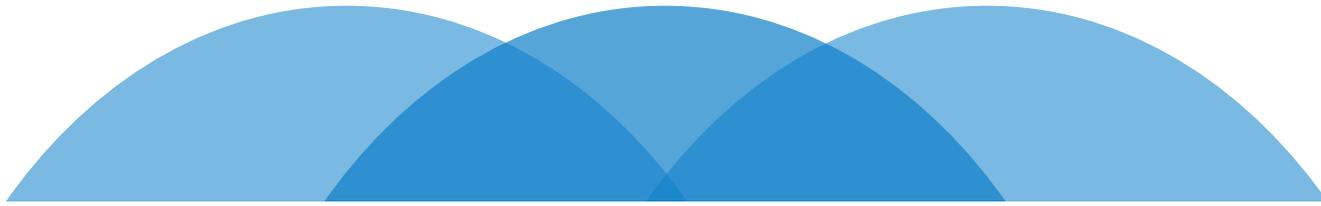
Video shows police cornering mentally ill man and fatally shooting him: 'This was an execution'

San Bernardino County Sheriff's Deputy Accused of Having Sex With Teen Girl in Explorer Program

Millbrae teacher arrested for inappropriate relationship with teen girl

Los Altos H.S. Teacher Accused Of Having Sexual Relationship With Student, 15

Inmate died in SLO County Jail after 46 hours in restraint chair, coroner says



A successful crisis management and media response plan incorporates organizational programs such as emergency response, event recovery, risk management, communications and business continuity, among others. In addition, crisis management and media response is about developing an organization's capability to react flexibly and thus be able to make the prompt and necessary decisions when a crisis happens.

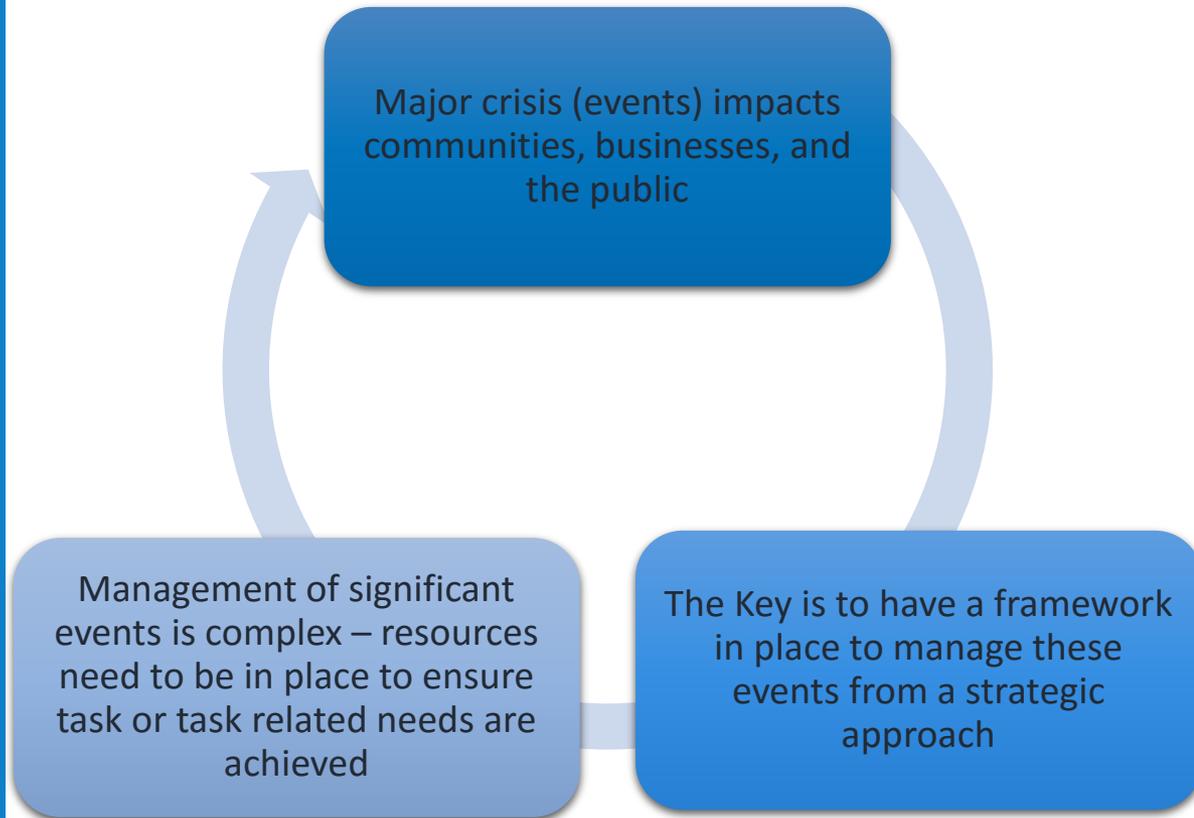




Strategic Application

Command	Command - Establish a strong leadership presence
Contain	Contain - Isolate the problem – protecting people, property
Control	Control - Managing the event, response. Communications and containment
Coordinate	Coordinate - Ensure goals/objectives are established. Everyone works together
Communicate	Communicate - Share information and work toward accomplishing the goals
Critique	Critique - Review the response and management

Strategic Response





Situation Assessment

The most important component of the initial response

- Facts of the event
- Constant updates



The Need for Skilled Crisis Leaders

A crisis will affect multiple systems; there is a need to manage conflicting goals, values, and responsibilities

Acute threats; natural and human-caused

There are differences between management and leadership

A crisis causes dramatic systems change

Essential
Leadership Skill
Set

Collaborative leadership

Systems thinking

Creativity

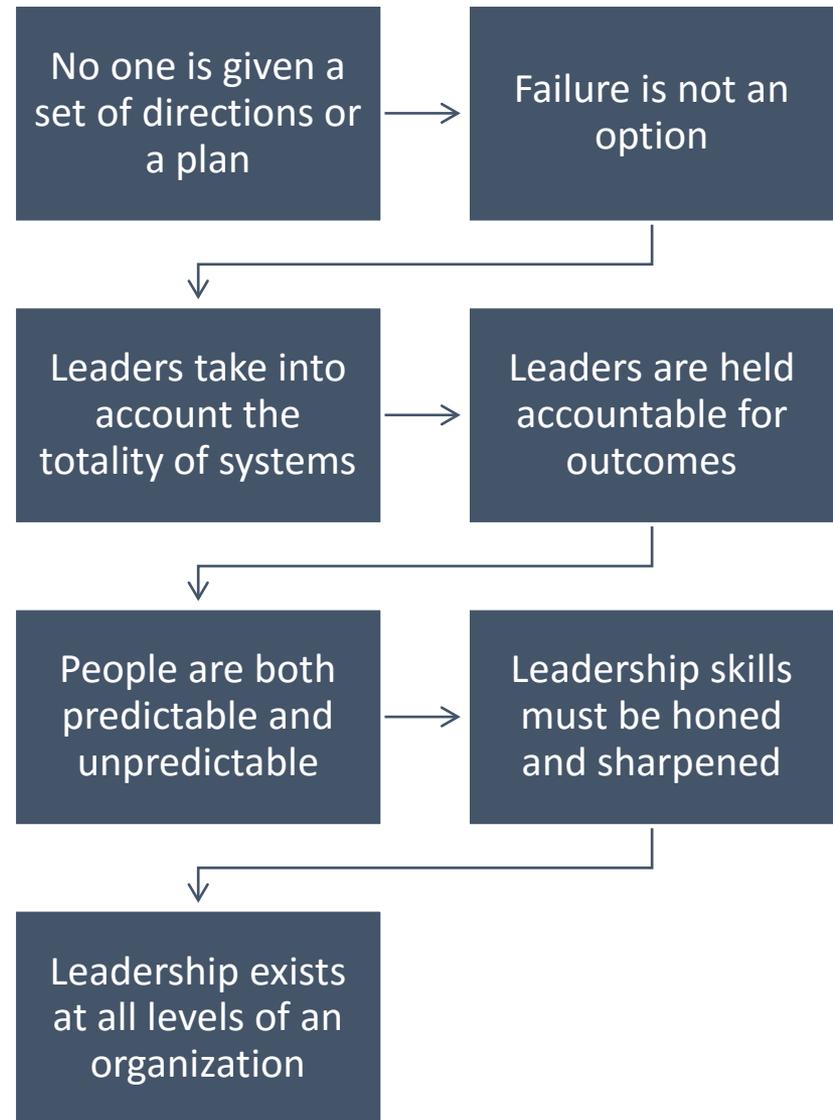
Emotional intelligence

Risk communication

Influence and negotiation

Conflict management

Leadership is Complex

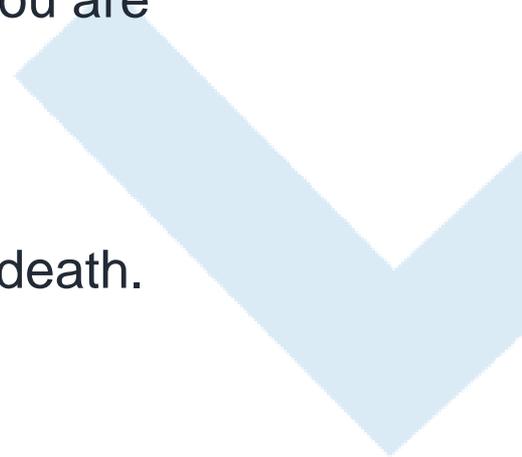


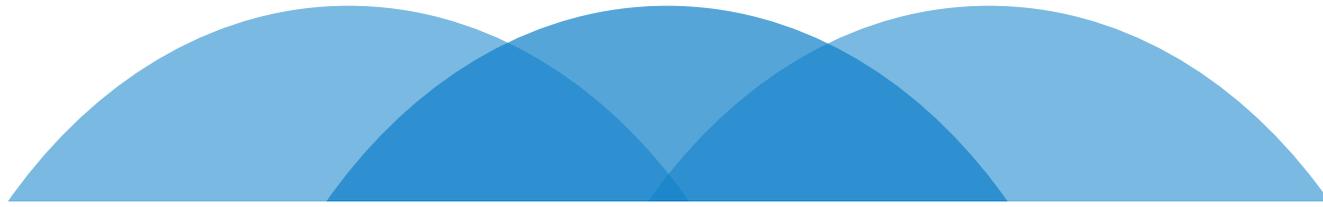
Are you ready?



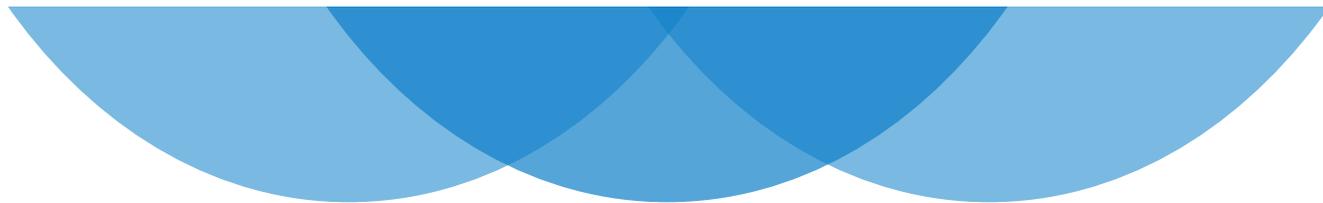
In a crisis management, you will react as you are organized and trained.

Knowing what to do can be the difference between chaos and calm, or even life and death.





Your Crisis Response Plan: The Effective Elements





A
representative
set of planning
scenarios.

It's essential to create a set of
crisis scenarios that serve to
guide planning.



Leaders should be able to pull combinations of pre-set response "modules" off the shelf.

A flexible set of response modules.

A plan that matches response modules to scenarios.

This is the core plan that links each of the planning scenarios to the response modules that will be immediately activated. For example, a "shooter on site" event triggers an immediate facility lockdown plus a police response plus preset communication protocols to convene the crisis-response team and warn staff.



**A designated
chain of
command.**

One finding of research on crisis response is that decentralized organizations, which are so good at helping promote innovation in normal times, prove to be woefully inadequate in times of crisis.

Pre-set activation protocols.

Preset signals for activating and coordinating the various response modules in the event of a crisis situation. There have to be clear triggers to move the organization from "normal" to "war-fighting" mode as well as to activate specific response modules. There also have to be "all clear" signals that shift the organization back to its normal operating mode.



Easily activated channels for reaching people on site and outside.

Clear communication channels.

Regular simulation exercises.

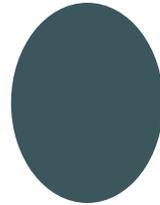
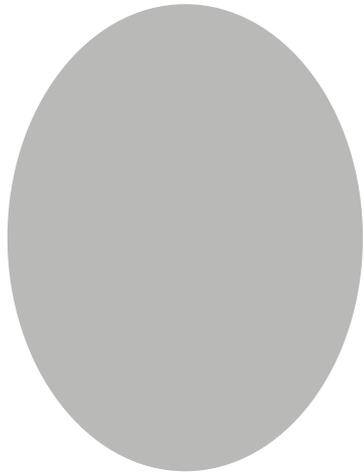
The best plans are worthless if they exist only on paper. There needs to be regular, at least biannual, exercises conducted by the crisis response team, and regular testing of channels, inventorying of resources, and the like.

These tests should be done regularly, but not scheduled in order to test speed of response.

Disciplined post-event review

Each crisis provides an opportunity for organizational learning to occur and plans to be revised. But this learning only occurs if the mechanisms are in place to make it happen.

A post-crisis review should be conducted by the crisis response team after each significant event. The guiding questions should be: What went well and what went poorly? What are the key lessons learned? What changes do we need to make to our organization, procedures, and support resources?



MANAGING NEWS MEDIA
RELATIONSHIPS:
WHAT TO SAY AND NOT SAY
BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER
INCIDENTS, ACCIDENTS, OR EVENTS

**PUBLIC
EXPECTATIONS:**
Timely, Accurate,
Updated Information

Incidents

Accidents

Injuries

**Civilian or Line-of-Duty
Deaths**

Mass Events

**Law Enforcement: Murders,
Shootings, Children, Riots,
Use of Force**

Disasters

Weather

MEDIA INTERACTIONS

You will *always* want the best spokesperson in front of the media, who may or not be your boss, CAO, CEO, Department Head, or elected official.

Resist their egos. Choose wisely. The Internet never dies.

If you become the go-to person / PIO for your agency, ask for media training.

Best PIOs or media spokespeople: have media experience; have many journalism contacts in local and national media; are calm and calming; have a good speaking voice and camera presence; are fast thinkers, good on their feet; are not “slick,” but are polished, empathic, neutral, professional information-providers.

Have updated press kits about your agency available to hand out or e-mail.

OLD-SCHOOL vs. NEW-SCHOOL JOURNALISM

Field reporters, cameramen,
soundmen, producers.

Evening newscasts and 11 pm newscasts.

Not much crossover to print newspapers.

Few follow-up stories.

Loyal viewers.

MMJs who carry it all and do it all: Drive to the story (in their own cars); shoot video; do interviews; do a live shot; shoot still photos; write captions; write a blog; write the copy for air; edit the video; do the story in-studio or as part of a package; post it all on station social media platforms.

Never - ending newscasts; lots of media partners; fickle viewers.

STOP SAYING. . .

“No comment; we can’t comment on that; we will have no further comment; our attorneys told us not to comment; we wish we could comment, but we just can’t.”

“It’s a personnel issue; it’s a personnel matter; you should know we can’t comment on personnel matters; it’s a privacy issue; it’s a confidential personnel matter; the employee in this case has the right to privacy.”

“We’ll let the courts decide; that’s up to the courts to decide; our attorneys will argue/fight/present our case in court; we believe once this issue gets to court, we will prevail.”

“Let’s not rush to judgment.”

BRIDGE!

Do what (skilled) politicians do: answer a tough question by bridging over to what you really want to say:

“Do you think your deputies used excessive force?”

“On a daily basis, the men and women of our Sheriff’s Department are faced with life-and-death decisions. Our community knows how hard their jobs are and how they have to make split-second decisions, as may have happened in this case.”



INSTEAD OF “NO COMMENT,” SAY.

• •

“That part is not clear to us right now, but what we do know is this . . .”

“There are still some things we don’t know at this early stage, but what I can clarify is this . . .”

Instead of saying, “We can’t comment because it’s a personnel issue,” say “Our Personnel Department is conducting a full investigation, which will give us more clarity at that point.”

“That’s a question we’re still trying to answer at this early part of the incident or investigation. We’ll have more later once we know.”

“We feel confident in our response to this incident, and we want the public to know we’re actively investigating what occurred, with information and support from . . . or in support of our colleagues at . . .”



IS IT EVER OKAY
TO SAY “WE’RE
SORRY”?



PRESS CONFERENCES

Manage the batting order.

Stop thanking everyone!

Offer help from your IT people with their audio, lighting, and camera setups.

Provide press releases with the names of the speakers, key officials, and contact information.

Keep your face and tone neutral, friendly, professional, and polite.

Never lose your cool. Be patient with stupid, obvious, long-winded, and compound questions. Know they will always ask one more after it's over.

Use your substitute “No Comment” phrases as necessary.

PRINT INTERVIEWS: Newspapers, Magazines, Blogs

Usually done by phone. Ask them to record you, so you have some hope they will quote you accurately.

If not, speak slowly, provide one sound bite at a time, take breaks in between your ideas. Don't assume they can take fast or accurate notes.

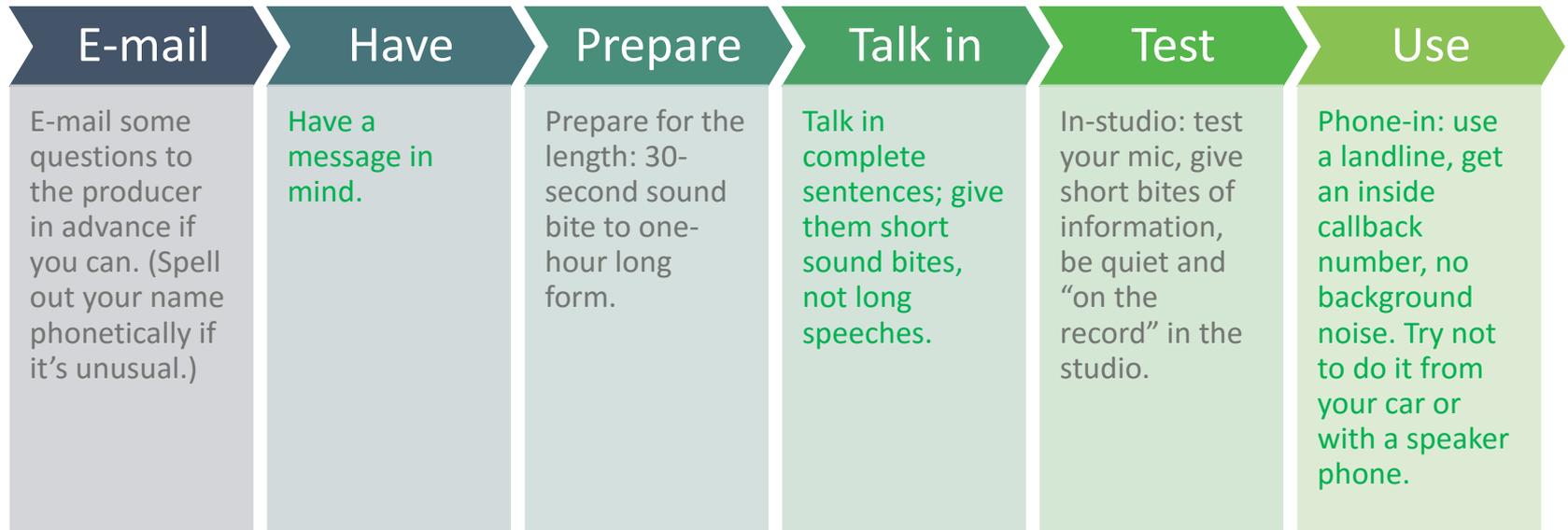
Stick to your themes. Use bridging and your "no comment" protocols.

Ask about their deadlines and be prompt in getting back to them.

E-mail over a press kit, either right before or right after.

Send a thank-you e-mail when they capture your words correctly and write a true and favorable story.

RADIO APPEARANCES



RADIO APPEARANCES

Be	Be careful answering compound questions; break them up or come back to the second.
Don't start	Don't start your sentences with "Well, . . ."
Let	Let the host(s) finish the question; only interrupt if they are way wrong.
Have	Have patience while the host pontificates.
Talk	Talk quickly and clearly to get your point made in a short time.
Disagree	Disagree with respect and don't let them wrap up with bad information.
Try	Try to drive listeners to your agency web site.
Thank	Thank the host on-air and send a thank-you e-mail to the producer.

TV APPEARANCES – IN THE FIELD

Give your business card and a press kit to the talent and/or the camera person.

Help them choose a good location – low noise, good light and background.

Discuss the questions they will ask in advance of the shoot.

Help them co-develop a theme for the story.

If you get tongue-tied, it's okay to ask them to reshoot it and answer the question again (once, probably).

Know your 20 minutes will get edited down to 20 seconds.

TV APPEARANCES – IN-STUDIO

Dress

- Dress carefully: no vibrating checks, big plaids, or bright blues or greens (matches the Chromakey screens they use); no loose jewelry. Check hair, makeup, and outfit one last time. Sit on your suit coat.

Give

- Give everyone on the production staff your business card (so they spell your name right in the Chyron captions and crawls).

Keep

- Keep your head and your hands still. Keep your face neutral at all times (you never know when the camera is on you). No side chats.

Radio

- Like radio, answer in sound bites.

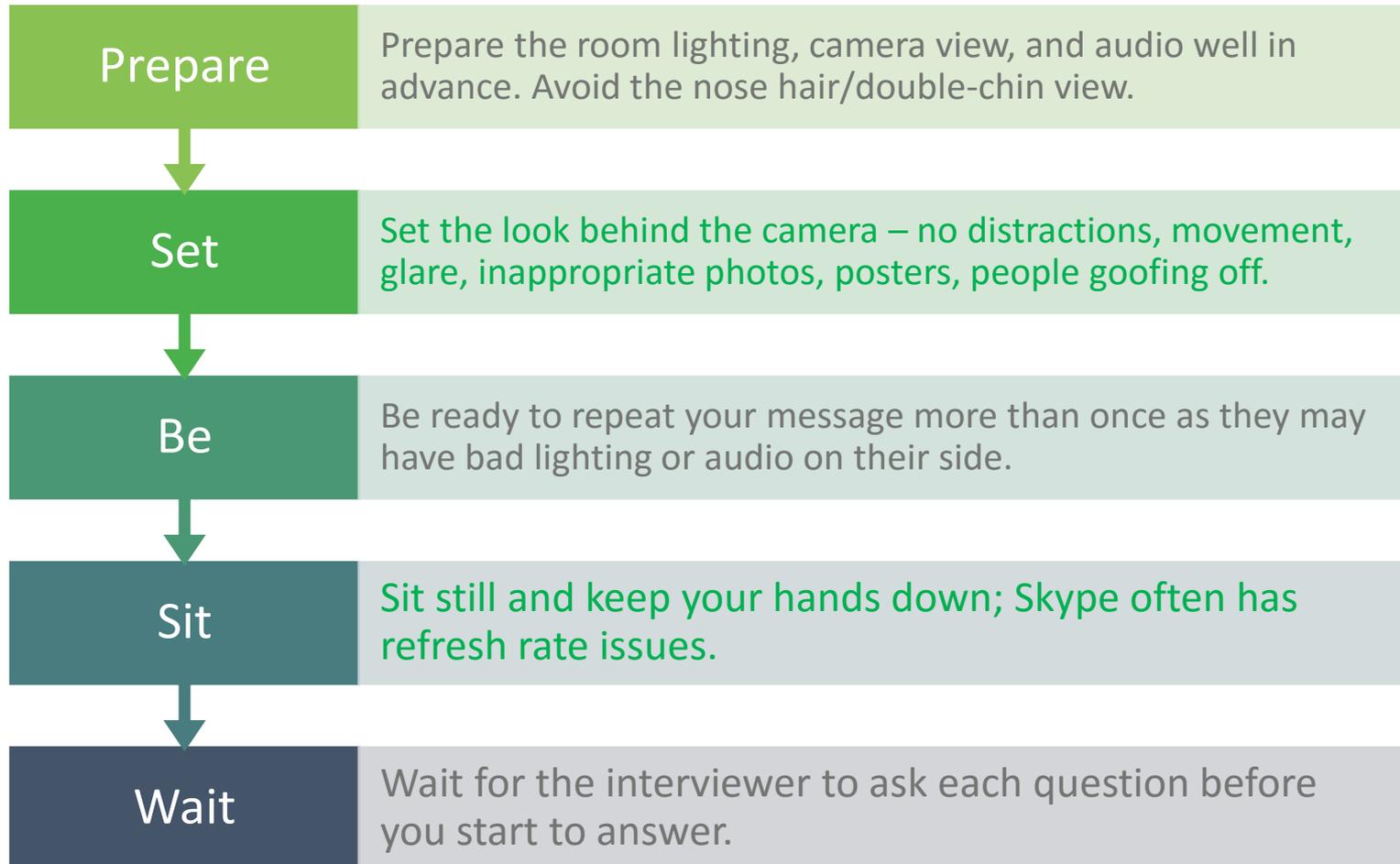
Jump in and disagree

- Jump in and disagree with an “opposing guest.”

Remember

- Remember your bridging responses to provocative questions.

SKYPE APPEARANCES



SOCIAL MEDIA

Interviews: Blogs and Bloggers, Political and Media Sites, Working With Freelancers

It's okay to say no to sites you've not heard of, goofy freelancers, or groups you don't know or trust to provide accurate stories.

Try to get a sense of the scope of their readership. Don't waste your time with sites that will skew your words to match their agenda.

It may be safer to do all work with them by e-mail, so you have a record of what both sides said.

Ask them to take down stories that are factually inaccurate or write and post a new version.

Create a good list and a no-way list for the future.

MEDIA MANAGEMENT

Recognize the shortness of their news cycles. Update the story immediately for them. Send over press releases and press kits quickly.

They will be on to another story tomorrow. But don't miss a chance to get them to do another, corrected story on your agency then.

Kill them with kindness; they'll always have the last word.

Send thank-you emails to them and/or their bosses when you get fair treatment.

Update your media rosters; these people change jobs frequently.

“It was our fault on that,” said OEM Director Robert Lewin. “It’s a complicated [alert] system. One of the boxes was inappropriately clicked, despite our training and having our very best person sitting right next to me performing it.”

Wine Country fires: Why didn't Sonoma County send a cellphone alert?

Sonoma County officials said it would have done more harm than good; other jurisdictions including Santa Clara County have faced similar questions over the alert system.

Questions

It is opening day of the County Fair. The sun is shining and temperatures are expected to reach 74 degrees Fahrenheit at the County Fairgrounds. The opening day parade has concluded, and the BBQ Cookoff is underway. To celebrate opening day of the fair the fair entrance fee is waived. Large numbers of families and individuals are flocking to the Fairgrounds to enjoy the BBQ Cookoff, the carnival/amusement park, an evening concert, and other activities.

1. What public information considerations have been made in the event planning process? What has been done regarding public information dissemination.
2. What does the county's public information structure look like at this point in the scenario? The Who, What, Why, and How to disseminate information if necessary.

Report of Shots Fired

People have reported hearing gun shots near the BBQ Cookoff area.

1. How should the public information officer (PIO) be notified?
2. Who does the PIO call next?
3. Given the information currently known, how does the PIO determine what system needs there may be?

Shooting Confirmed

Law enforcement confirms that at 3 p.m. fair goes, BBQ Cookoff participants, and Fair staff heard gunshots. People ran toward exits as two men, who appeared to be loaded down with weapons, approached the area. The two men split up and moved to different parts of the Fairgrounds, firing at random.

1. How does the PIO get information about the incident at this point in the scenario?
2. Who does the PIO notify now?
3. Which agencies, organizations', and departments' need to be present in public messaging?
4. How should the system for coordinating messaging between these groups be organized?

Police Action

SWAT teams storm the Fairgrounds and fatally shoot two gunmen and several bystanders. A third gunman escapes, leading SWAT and law enforcement on a chase away from the Fairgrounds. Law enforcement at the Fairgrounds evacuate the facilities. Now, the casualty number is high, with an unknown number of fatalities.

Fair attendees, families and friends, and the concerned public are clamoring for information related to the incident. Photos of the suspected gunmen and victims begin appearing on social media. Some fairgoers are being interviewed over the phone on national news channels as news of the event spreads across the world.

1. How and when does your jurisdiction/agency decide to conduct physical or virtual information operations?
2. Where would a physical information center be located?
3. What equipment and supplies would you need to set up an information center?
4. What roles are needed in the information center now, given the scenario? What other roles may be needed in the information center as the incident unfolds?
5. What role does the PIO play in ensuring the safety of the media covering the incident and the integrity of incident operations?

Media Inquiry

Media and public calls are primarily requesting updates on the status or location of the possible third shooter, the names of the killed suspects, and the status of VIPs who had been present at the Fair for a concert that evening. A social media manhunt and rumors are taking off and numerous sightings of the third shooter are popping up across the county. Why did innocent people get shoot by the police.

1. Given the scenario, where should the information center be receiving information from?

2. Given the scenario, what public information would be disseminated to the following, and how would it be disseminated?

To the Public?

To the Media?

To First Responders?

To other response partners (e.g., EOC)?

To the families of victims?

1. What methods and tools would staff use to communicate internal incident information with each other? The rest of the response effort?
2. How will you address concerns related to disseminating information in a format that is accessible by the whole community?
3. Given the scenario, what other information coordination issues do you anticipate?

Additional Facts

About an hour after the shooting ended at the Fairgrounds, a staff worker notices a Twitter post from an individual claiming to be the third gunman. The post states that if law enforcement does not stop chasing the gunman, he will blow up “the mall” with prepositioned explosives.

1. How do agency plans and processes anticipate other jurisdictions within the region also operating information centers.

A Juvenile Hall Supervisor is accused of sexual misconduct with an offender resident. Social media is now talking about the County's lack of protection for residents. In fact, the Sheriff has been aware of the situation and has failed to take appropriate action. The County is now receiving calls from the parents and press.

1. What public information considerations have been made in the pre-situation planning process? What has been done regarding public information dissemination.
2. What does your jurisdiction's public information structure look like at this point in the scenario? The Who, What, Why, and How to disseminate information if necessary.

Media and Parent Inquiry

The next morning, headlines read – “A Juvenile Hall Supervisor was arrested this afternoon by the Police Department on charges related to sexual misconduct with a juvenile hall resident”.

Questions from the media and parents.

Was this the first report the county ever received about this supervisor? Do you have any reason to believe this supervisor had inappropriate contact with other residents? Why has the county suspended the supervisor from their position and all duties associated with his employment with the county? How come the Sheriff failed to protect the residents?

1. Who does the PIO call next?
2. Given the information currently known, how does the PIO determine what system needs there may be?

The supervisor has a Facebook account with questionable material.

Does the county have any authority over the content of material on a staff member's private Web page? Have you talked to an attorney about this?

IF you were aware of the Facebook page, were you monitoring it to see if any residents photos appeared on it?

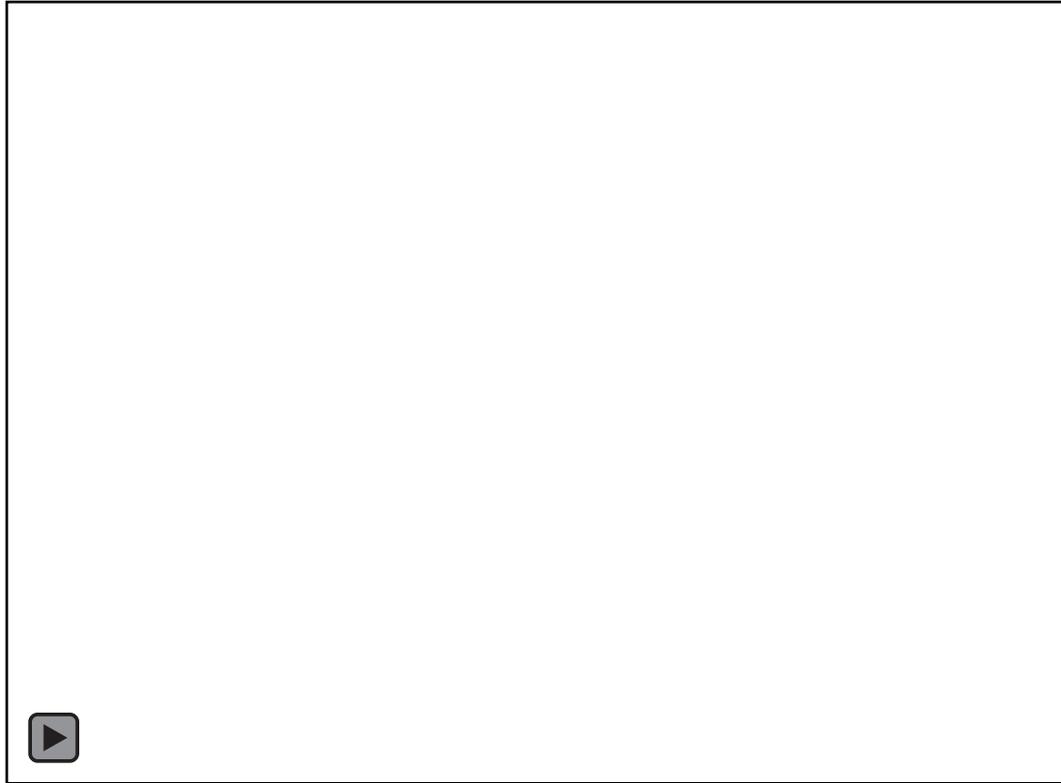
1. How does the PIO get information about the incident at this point in the scenario?
2. Which agencies, organizations', and departments' need to be present in public messaging?
3. How should the system for coordinating messaging between these groups be organized?

Prior events at the Juvenile Hall

This is not the first time this has happened. Last year a correctional officer was arrested for inappropriate toughing of a resident. What safe guards are in place? What is the role of the county in preventing sexual abuse of residents. Why is the Sheriff still working?

1. Given the scenario, where should the information center be receiving information from?
2. Given the scenario, what public information would be disseminated to the following, and how would it be disseminated?
To the Public?
To the Media?
To the families of victims?
3. What methods and tools would your staff use to communicate internal incident information with each other? The rest of the response effort?
4. How will you address concerns related to disseminating information in a format that is accessible by your whole community?
5. Given the scenario, what other information coordination issues do you anticipate?

Media relations “What to Expect”



Go after the “Censorship by PIO” like the deep corruption it is.

Any entity that prohibits people from communicating except when they notify the authorities is keeping information from the public. And that’s a misallocation of resources as serious as any other we investigate. It also creates an opacity that’s fertile ground for malfeasance and an unconscionable conflict of interest allowing officials to strangle investigation of their actions.

Investigate how long has it been happening in your area.

Why do officials feel they have a right to do this? How often are delays and blockages happening? What about the fact that many times staff have tipped reporters off to serious issues? Are officials trying to stop that process?

Hone in on one incident or series of nonresponses.

Who in the food chain said a staff person could not speak? What was withheld? What were the power plays and the political motivations?

Ask why the public should trust official reasoning.

Like, “We have to coordinate the story. We just want to know what is going on. We need to tell reporters the right person to talk to.”

Explain it to the public.

It's not "inside baseball." It's the public's business. If you don't feel you can write an unbiased news story, make it an editorial.

Explain it when it happens.

Don't just say, "XYZ agency declined to make an expert available."
Say, "XYZ agency prohibits all employees from speaking to the press about anything unless they notify the press office. It often denies such interviews. The PIO did not explain why experts could not speak to this reporter."

Collaborate with journalists, news organizations and journalism groups on resistance.

When agencies hold press conferences or briefings have reporters take turns asking why journalists can't speak to people in the agency without the PIO guards. And report the response.

Don't kid yourself that your great reporting skills get you all you need to know.

We have no right to take that risk. Millions of employees have been told to shut up. So chances are good some silenced staff people—including those you talked to after going through the PIO—could blow your award-winning story out of the water. Or educate you about the mind-blowing stories you don't have a clue about.

Remember that journalists' acquiescence to "Censorship by PIO" is just as dangerous as the worst thing it will keep covered up.

For instance, the press did hundreds of stories that CDC and FDA handed out over the last couple of years. But with PIO guards on us, we didn't get—and probably could never have gotten—the fact that there were not strong, consensus guidelines for Ebola containment in place and there was a storeroom for pathogens that hadn't been inventoried in decades (the one that contained smallpox).

Remember that likely the biggest reason we can't do anything about these restraints is that journalists keep saying we can't do anything about them.

In the meantime, as we fight the policies, we are obliged to use all techniques possible to undermine the blockages.

Rely on PIOs as little as possible.

Get away from PIO and agency oversight whenever you can, including during routine reporting. Many people will say something different away from the guards. Find out for yourself who you should talk to. Analyze staff listings, hearings and meeting agendas. Ask outside source people who in the agency works on the issue. Use search engines and literature searches to pinpoint who in an agency spoke or wrote on an issue. Then study the hierarchy to understand their position in it and other people close to them you might talk to.

Contact people directly and tell them you want to talk to them, even if you have to contact the PIO also. Sometimes the internal expert will advocate for the interview.

Interview outside sources and then contact the inside source persons in hopes they will want to respond to what you know.

When you talk to a source person, even if the PIO is listening in, ask who outside the agency is working on the issue. The source person may mention an interest group or person that the agency is actually talking to.

Consider holding the source person, particularly if they are an official, responsible:

“Mr. Doe did not respond to attempts to contact him.” They should be responsive even if agency cultural norm is to hide behind the PIO.

Keep a running descriptive list of responses and nonresponses and hold agency leadership and elected officials accountable. Consider keeping the list on the web.

At least occasionally, do a series of incessant follow-ups.

Let your audience know what subjects the agencies are blocking information on.

Go to obscure meetings or sessions.

Speakers sometimes forget reporters could be there. If possible, sign in as a member of the public, not as press.

Regularly give agency staff every possible way to contact you.