

Crisis Communication - When Disaster Strikes

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Two Types of Museums

- Those museums that have had a crisis
- And those that haven't YET

How Do You Treat a Crisis?

- You leave it to chance:
- you love lotto-leadership!
- You try to steer and control as best as you can:
- the image of the museum is at stake

What is a Crisis?

- Theft, robbery, assault on guards
- Fire, water damage, explosion
- Accident in museum, danger to visitors
- Financial scandal, swindle - by a staff member
- Director fired, lay-offs, budget cuts
- Scandal about a collection piece, damage to collection
- Construction plans <-> neighbourhood
- Problems in exhibition, delay of opening date
- Sponsor problems, loan problems
- Public disagreement with other museum
- Negative press campaign, political pressure / action

Identify These Information Needs:

- Staff
 - - Influence on their workplace, environment
 - - Crisis help (doctor, nurse, psychologist)
- Relatives of victims
 - - Contact and care
 - - Police has 1. responsibility to inform relatives of victims
 - - If possible - involve staff as well
 - Crisis help

Inform

- Municipality, Ministry
- - Formal report required? PR matter
- Board and loan-givers, sponsors, Friends
- - Facts and economical consequences, insurance issues
- Neighbours
- - Consequences for/Security in the area
- Partners & underwriters
- - Cancelling of meetings, deliveries

- Public
- - Consequences for opening hours, admission, alternatives?
- Not to mention: The Press!

5 Press Questions You Need to Answer:

- 1) What has happened?
 - - Give time, place, situation and scope
- 2) What is the cause?
 - - tell the truth, also when you don't know
- 3) Any victims - is there still danger?
 - - Status over staff's security/ evacuation
 - - Number of victims
 - - Security risk for area
- 4) Why did it happen, when it should not?
 - - Inform on normal procedures, training, rehearsals and plans
 - - (never info on security systems!)
 - - What plans to avoid a repeat in the future
- 5) How long time do you need to re-establish/correct/clean/reopen ?
 - - Avoid guessing & prognoses you can't keep
 - Say you have to look into that
- - Extra information:
 - - When you expect more news
 - - How and when you are going to inform
 - - If possible give the press a special phone number to call
 - Refer to your web site for up dates, and post it!

10 Golden Rules:

- 1. Establish crisis team
- 2. Keep it small: 2 or 3, and keep in touch
- 3. One spokes (wo)man
- 4. Inform the staff of crisisteam and spokes person
- 5. Start preparing (press) information
- 6. Take care of possible victims and relatives
- 7. Contact important stakeholders: board, municipality, mayor, ministry, loangivers, main sponsors, friends association
- 8. Organize information to staff on a regular basis
- 9. When over, consider final press information
- 10. Evaluate what went wrong and right

Need More Advice?

- Seminar on Crisis Communication (Danish/ Nordic language)

12th October in Copenhagen, Worker's Museum/ Arbejdermuseet

3 museum cases, one study, one corporate communications adviser

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