

**Canadian Public Relations Society
Edmonton, Alberta, June 13 - 15, 2007**

Crisis Communication

What People Really Want to Know

June 15, 2007

10:30 - 1130

My Objective Today

**To encourage senior officials to be
timely, proactive, strategic,
message driven communicators.**

Crisis Definition

A turning point, a decisive, critical time which threatens great danger *if not handled properly.*

The world changed forever on September 11, 2001

Presenter Experiences

In an emergency the burden of keeping people informed can become overwhelming within minutes, *managing information is as important as managing the response.*

If your operational emergency response plan is in place, but your communications plan is incomplete, vague or non-existent, *you are unprepared.*

Wei-ji

***The Chinese symbol for crisis is a combination of “danger” and “opportunity”
- wei-ji***

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Wei-ji

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**We must learn from the past;
from break down comes break through.**

Preparation is Essential

... because the media will show up.

“If you aren’t ready for the media, your plan is not complete.”

Gen Rick Hillier

Canadian Chief of Defense Staff

Stories Gets Big Fast! Health Authority

What was missing, what should she have done differently?

July 2005, London Tube

What do you say when things go terribly wrong?



**Not only have things gone
terribly wrong, you don't
know why and you don't
have all the information.**



**Another complication is,
you know some things that
you cannot speak to the
media or the public about.**

**The pressure is on, media
are hounding you for
answers, the political
leadership wants to know
what's happening and the
public needs reassuring**



**Your primary responsibility
is to respond to and
manage the incident.**

However, in this day of instantaneous communications, it is critical to get your message heard in the blizzard of rumor, misinformation and speculation that abounds at a crisis.

Who do the public want to hear from when crisis occur?

They want to hear from the men and women in charge of the response.

Who do we trust?



Phrases to Avoid

Never say:

“Don’t panic” - say “stay calm.”

“We’re reacting” - say “we’re responding.”



Phrases to Avoid

Don't say:

“We're trying ...”

“We're doing the best we can...”

“We're hoping ...”

“It would be nice if ...”

Eight Essentials



Branding

**Say the name of your
organization with frequency.**



Develop Holding Messages



Develop Holding Messages



Key Phrases

Saying It Right

Industrial Accident

WebSite



**Use it as an effective
communications tools from the
“get go.”**

Topics to Avoid

“Never say ‘No Comment’ because it means to me that you are admitting guilt because if you weren’t you’d tell me what your position is.”
Wolf Blitzer, CNN

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How Do You Handle the Media Spotlight?



Be committed to communicating what you are doing, even when you don't have all the facts. Use these holding phrases and some common sense. Share your knowledge and experience.

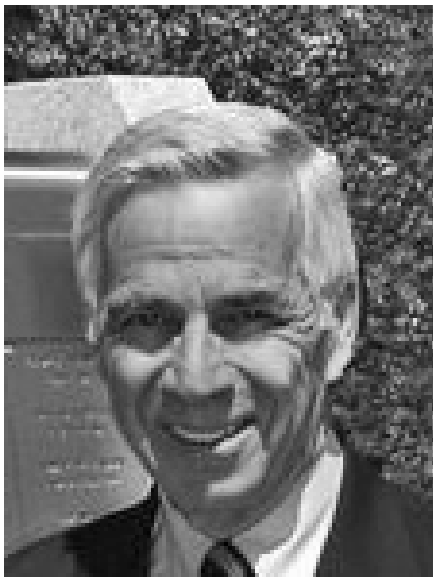
Questions





2007 Connecting Canada

Your Voice, Your Issues
Emergency Medical Services Chiefs of Canada
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA MAY 30 - JUNE 1 2007



Thanks!

