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 loangivers, sponsors, Friends
  - Facts and economical consequences, insurance issues
- Neighbours
  - Consequences for/Security in the area
- Partners & underwriters
  - Cancelling of meetings, deliveries
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 updates, 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 crisis team 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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