

# Crisis Mode

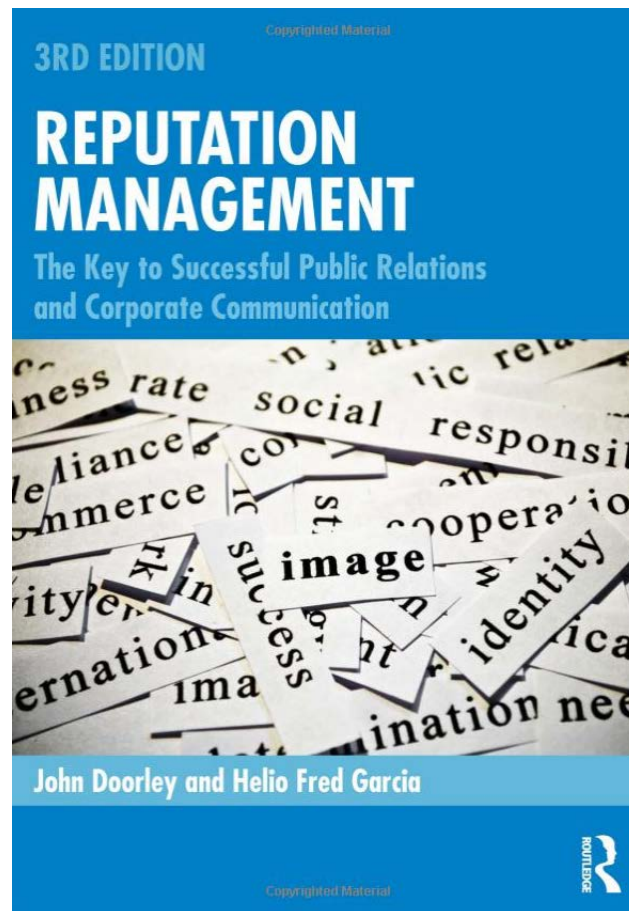
Coming out on top, even in a tragedy or scandal.

# The Presenter

- **John Guilfoil**

- Founder and Principal Owner of John Guilfoil Public Relations LLC
- Provides Public Relations Services, Crisis Communications, Websites, Social Media, and Consulting to more than 180 Police and Fire Departments
- 2015 and 2016 National Public Affairs Professional of the Year (PR News)
- 2016 National Crisis Manager of the Year (PR News)

Some material sourced from:



978-0415716284

# Crisis Planning Starts With

- **A CEO who understands:**
  - Serious damage can be done by a poor PR effort
  - The importance of trusting PR professionals to do their jobs
  - That the organization can actually emerge **BETTER** off than it was before the crisis
  - That honesty is the best policy

# Two Sides of the Coin

- **What is a crisis?**

# What is a Crisis?

- **A crisis is an opportunity to test yourself and potentially strengthen relationships and reputations through proper, calm, organized, and honest reactions.**

# On the Flipside

- A crisis can destroy a company, ruin relationships, permanently damage reputations, and cost people their jobs.
- Ineffective crisis management can destroy a company, career, politician, or cause

# Crisis Management

- A crisis can be defined as any event that runs the risk of:
  - Escalating in intensity
  - Falling under close scrutiny of media and or government
  - Interfering with normal operations
  - Jeopardizing the positive public image of the company and its officers
  - Damaging the bottom line in any way



# 10 Steps to Manage Crisis

- 1. Make sure everyone knows who's in charge. Chain of command.
- 2. Know who has what information.
- 3. Know who will speak on behalf of the organization.
- 4. Understand the feeding needs of the media. You have to feed the beast sometimes.
- 5. “First beats better” – while you're delaying, scrambling, and not ready to talk to the media, someone probably leaked already. Reporters are competitive.

## 10 Steps contd.

- **6. Monitor, monitor, monitor the media**
- **7. Make good use of your website and social media channels**
- **8. Talk to your employees.**
- **9. Don't hide. Be accessible. Answer your phone.**
- **10. Accept that it's not going to go 100% swimmingly.**

# Bad?

- A crisis is not necessarily bad
- It's the Greek word for "Choice"
- A crisis is an opportunity to show what you're made of

# Flight 1549

- On Jan. 15, 2009, US Airways flight 1549 took off from New York's LaGuardia airport
- It struck a flock of geese on its way up, and the plane lost power to both engines
- The plane was going down.

# Crisis Management

- **The captain was faced with a choice**
  - Try to turn around, with little airspeed, and go back to LaGuardia
  - Cross the Hudson River and try to land at Teterboro Airport
  - Or put down in the water
- **Conventional wisdom says to go for the airport. Who wants to land in the water?**

# Crisis Management

- But if he missed the runway or lost too much speed at either airport, the plane, loaded with jet fuel, would crash into dense residential neighborhoods
- What should he do?

# Crisis Management



# Crisis Management





# Crisis Management

- Captain Chesley B. “Sully” Sullenberger III became a folk hero
- He made a smart decision, used his skill as a former fighter pilot, and put down his 81-ton plane on the Hudson River
- The plane landed gently, the passengers were rescued by boats and ferries.
- **NO ONE WAS SERIOUSLY HURT**



# Crisis Management

- For US Airways, this was the best possible scenario
- The airline was not blamed for mechanical problems, poor pilot decision, etc.
- They have a celebrity now
- And everyone blamed the BIRDS instead of the company

# Crisis Management

- Why did this work the way it did?
- Because the company was:
  - Smart in its training
  - Hired a skillful pilot
  - Crew was properly trained to keep the passengers calm during danger
- US Airways stock rose.

# What if it goes right?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JItbos1tYZs>

# Crisis Management

- Reputations are won or lost in a crisis
- Relationships hang in the balance
- So do jobs
- So do stock price, operations, morale, business relationships, sales, support from government officials, and the company's strategic focus

# Crisis Management

- Whether your company/client survives a crisis in tact can depend less on the *actual* crisis and more on how it is handled
- Your worst enemy is indifference, especially in the face of victims
- People need to see appropriate action

# Do not forget

- **Monitor social media and information channels**  
– things change
- **Early warning mechanism – who do we call?**
- **Who has the keys?**
- **Conference calls – or get everyone in the room**
- **Always correct mistakes**

# Am I on the record??

- **ON THE RECORD**
  - Everything you say is printable and broadcastable, in its entirety, with your name and rank attached to it. **EVERYTHING**
- **ON BACKGROUND**
  - What you say is printable/broadcastable but the reporter agrees not to use your name. (Law enforcement source? Police source?)
- **OFF THE RECORD**
  - Reporter has to get it from another source. **CAN NOT** use the info until they get another source
- **FOR PLANNING PURPOSES**
  - Usually times/locations of press conferences, planning data not for broadcast/publication



# Control the Communications

- **Tell it all**
- **Tell it fast**
- **Tell'em what you're doing about it**
- **Tell'em when it's over**
- **Get back to work**