

# CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN PRs

- **Overview**
- A public relations professional has to be prepared for the crisis as because of his devious nature of business he may have a magic stick to overcome them. In this lecture we will explain the meaning, type of crisis and how does the PR professional overcome them. We will also explain the do's and don'ts in a crisis and cover the role in dealing with opinion leaders besides suggesting the ways to conduct interviews and to deal with interviewers and reporters.

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- **Meaning of crisis:**
- The best meaning which is appropriate from PR point of view is that crisis means “both danger & opportunity”. Or an appropriate response to a challenge depends upon an appropriate decision.
- A crisis is an event that disrupts normal operations of a company or organization and, if badly managed, can ruin hard-won reputations in just days and even, in some cases, destroy companies.

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- The key to PR crisis management is preparedness. It is vital to effective crisis management that a crisis is identified before it happens and, when it does, that it does not get out of control.
- **2 Things Necessary For Preparedness:**
  1. Better to have a crisis committee consisting of CEO, Personnel manager, works manager, now a days security officer & Public relations manager.
  2. These people should have regular contact by meeting for an overview & regular appraisal of the situation.

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- **Do's In A Crisis Situation:**
- Basically in a crisis situation like an individual a public relation professional or the management tends to panic. Therefore following are important things to do and not to do in order to face and resolve the crisis in an efficient manner. Firstly let us identify the Do's in such a situation.

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- **Do's In A Crisis Situation: ( continued )**
- Gather all facts.
- Only credible spokespeople to speak or talk.
- Be accessible to the media.
- Report crisis yourself.
- Provide sufficient evidence of statements.
- Record events as the crisis evolve.
- Update crisis communications plan periodically.

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- **Don'ts In A Crisis Situation:**
- Following are the Don'ts in a crisis which must be avoided at all costs to face them effectively.
- Avoid “no comment” as it leads to speculation.
- Don't debate the subject.
- Don't attempt to assess blame, rather address & solve the problem at hand.
- Don't over react & exaggerate the situation.
- Don't deviate from corporate policy or agreed upon crisis procedures.
- Don't make “off the record” statements, there is no such thing.

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- **A typical PR Crisis Situation:**
- In order to explain a crisis and how to overcome them following example of Survey report for Buner Poppy Substitution Project: (Pakistan) by PNCB is explained below:
- Buner in Lower Swat where almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of total opium poppy was being cultivated.
- The survey was to be conducted over an area of 600 square miles or 155,400 hectares.

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- It was an area with poor communication & transport facilities.
- The people living in this area were hostile to the idea of abandoning poppy cultivation.
- The concerned staff was apprehensive for non cooperation of the residents.



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- **Objectives of the Plan:**
- Following objectives were designed to convince the inhabitants.
- This socio economic survey was in their interest.
- Government wanted to develop this neglected & under-developed area.
- Government could launch development schemes only after collecting the necessary data through a survey.
- Furthermore the inhabitants were to be assured that the proposed development schemes would open up new avenues for jobs & bring the area (Buner) at par with rest of the country.

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- **Plan Of Action Adopted:**
- Once the objectives were determined and identified following plan of action was adopted:
- Specially written articles were inserted in newspapers.
- Radio & TV was used to run special programs in local dialects (Pashto & Gojri) mainly spoken in the region.
- Leaders of public opinion, including headmasters, notable religious figures apprised of the importance of
- the survey & motivated to lend their support.

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- **Results of Action Plan:**
- The above carefully devised plan of action resulted in following manner:
- Inhabitants became cooperative and were ready to help.
- They also not only provided all help but also extended hospitality.
- The earlier resistance faded and the survey went on smoothly.
- The inhabitants were convinced that survey was in their interest and for their benefit..

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- **How To Deal With Opinion Leaders:**
- Who are opinion leaders.(Whose opinions are listened to with respect.)
- What can they do?
- They can be dangerous & / or indispensable.
- They can help or hinder.
- They have to be identified.

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- **How To Deal With Reporters & Interviewers:**
- Reporters and Interviewers are generally well prepared and critical people. It is therefore essential that they are tackled carefully and professionally.
- **Keys To Tackle Effectively.**
- Following the keys to tackle them effectively.
- Interview at your place.
- Here you are the Host.
- The big question is, why does the Journalist want an interview?
- Make sure you know your facts.

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- **Keys To Tackle Effectively. ( continued )**
- Do your homework.
- Be articulate, as this shows confidence.
- Welcome journalists courteously. Thank them for coming.
- Do not fudge issues. Always have some answers ready.
- You are the host. They are your guests so look after them well.

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- **Interviews In The Studio:**
- Remember here you are the Guest
- How do you sound?
- Be more guarded, and don't be provoked.
- Speak slowly, confidently, in a warm attractive style.
- You should sound as if you are enjoying the broadcast and communicating with the audience.

# REFERENCES

- Fundamentals of Public Relations –MCM 401, Virtual University of Pakistan.
- Exploring Public Relations Ralph Tench I Liz Yeoman's Second Edition.
- Heath, R. L. (2004). Handbook of Public Relations. London, Sage.



**That's All  
Thank  
You**