7 Dos and Don’ts in Crisis Communication

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don’t #1

think it’s impossible to happen

There cannot be a crisis next week. My schedule is already full.

Henry Kissinger
do!

- develop a crisis management plan with clear objectives that’s regularly updated
- top executives must be readily available
- make sure everyone is briefed
- carry out crisis exercises
- develop documents on critical issues
- maybe: establish a crisis management team
don’t #2

______ ignore it

if you are not talking about it, it won’t go away
do!

- start working on a potential crisis situation before it becomes public

you still may discuss and test key messages
don’t #3

think that you have to know everything before you go out and talk

Silence is never a good option!
do!

- communicate quickly to protect human health
- in the early stages of an emerging incident:
  - say what you know
  - acknowledge what you do not know
  - indicate what you are going to do

What information should be released?
What information should be released?

Decision making tool

1. Is the information needed by at-risk parties to avoid illness, reduce the spread of a disease, and/or help cope with the impact of an event?

2. Is the information relevant to decisions made by public health authorities or about the emergency management decision-making process itself?

3. Is there a compelling reason to withhold or modify the way of giving information, such as:
   - Could the release of the information compromise national security or an ongoing police investigation?
   - Will release of the information violate privacy laws and/or existing confidentiality policies or unnecessarily violate personal privacy?
   - Could the release of the information result in stigmatisation of specific ethnic groups or people in specific geographical regions?
Don’t be afraid that you will sound too simple!
do!

- keep the message short and clear (3 or 4 consistent key messages)
- keep the language simple and practical
- use analogies or day-to-day comparisons
- use infographics
- publish frequently asked questions
don’t #5

hold back to take responsibility
do!

- be sincere
don’t #6

______ address only issues and ignore feelings
do!

- people want honesty and transparency
- show sympathy… but stay authentic!
- take the audience seriously: relate to their fears, emotions and doubts

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*Theodore Roosevelt*
don’t #7

treat media/bloggers like an enemy

No comment is never the right answer!
do!

- keep your promises to media/bloggers

transparency
reliability
openness
timeliness
By the time you hear the thunder, it’s too late to build the Ark.

Unknown
Thanks

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Thank you for your attention

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