Media Boot Camp

"Ready"

By Ernie Arboles

Overview

The challenge with managing media crises often boils down to one thing: Dealing with the unknown. As you look over recent headlines involving accounting scandals, accidents, allegations of improprieties, and the list goes on, the need for a cogent, polished and quick-acting plan is more important than ever. One client had the foresight and business smarts to get out in front of a problem before it ever happened. To be clear, this client did not have anything to hide, did not have anything to spin, did not even operate in an area with a high probability of media fallout. But its management team had the self-awareness to know that it did not always know everything, and anything could happen!

The Need

The client expressed interest in developing a comprehensive plan involving training for its top executives on handling "hot" questions from reporters. It also wanted to develop a plan for a potential crisis—even one that would be impossible to predict and might never happen. This included a basic plan to call into action at a moment's notice, plus the vetting of four to five possible crisis scenarios applicable to its industry. As one executive put it, "It's kind of like insurance. You may never need it, but if you do, and you don't have it, it's too late to get it."

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The Plan

We worked closely with management to understand the breadth of a potential crisis, the type of crisis, and the impact on key external and internal stakeholders. We then fashioned a plan designed to quickly communicate and collaborate with media outlets in a compelling fashion. Next, we trained the key spokespeople from C-level on down in the key aspects of the plan--putting them through a series of mock interviews using our exclusive Media Boot Camp approach. Finally, we developed a set of talking points managers could use off the top of their head, should they ever need to respond in that time-sensitive situation.

The Payoff

Leaders and managers could get back to the work at hand without the worry of what a potential scandal or unknown event could to do to their business, their reputation, or the stock. The best way to win the war is to never have to fight the battle. The Media Boot Camp gets you savvy leaders fit!

This company also enjoyed a side-benefit. Managers used the skills they developed in the Boot Camp in other areas. They communicated more clearly with staff and customers. Some managers used Boot Camp principles to "seed" positive stories about their company and work in trade journals and community papers.

Your Opportunity

Creating a good media crisis plan and properly training your top people may be much easier than you think. A carefully crafted plan and training can handsomely deliver financial and intangible benefits in the long run. Call today for a free consultation on Media Boot Camp. With our experience and expertise, we can deliver a tailor-made program for your success.

Mr. Arboles is President of JASEC Consulting, a highly specialized boutique focusing on crisis media management, customer-focused process improvement, and cost reduction disciplines. He has more than two decades of experience around media, business process, finance, and general management.

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Case notes: The cases are presented as illustrative examples. The names of the companies involved and any identifying details are omitted to protect the confidentiality of our client relationship.

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